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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Columnist Wonders About Short Pants

By NEIL A. MATHESON

WHEN DID BOYS stop wearing short pants? The question appealed to me when I read a column in a paper loaned to me by my friend Jim Williams. It quotes an old time seaman as recalling boys wore short pants in his time "until nine years or more".

The old mariner, Charles Publicover, was born in 1876, but boys wore short pants long after that. I recall wearing them when I was a boy but I have no definite idea when short pants for boys really went out.

For girls the trend is shorter and shorter clothing, if you forget about the very few maxi coats. But for boys, the short pants never did come back.

If anyone knows anything about the end of short pants for boys, I'd appreciate hearing from you.

90 Pupils In One Room

MR. PUBLICOVER tells of boyhood days when he attended a one-room school with 85 to 90 pupils to the one teacher. How one teacher ever handled such a task is difficult to imagine. I often wonder how a teacher in my school days handled a much smaller group of pupils with every grade in the works included. How teachers ever managed to hear the various classes that entailed, has caused me to wonder ever since my school days. How they managed to impart some knowledge into us is something even more difficult to understand.

Publicover, a Nova Scotian, lives now at Bridgewater, and his story appears in F.T. Freeman's column in the Bridgewater Bulletin.

Fishing At Nine Years

NOW 93 HE WENT shore fishing at nine with his father. I believe Beecher Court, North Rustico told me once he went with his fisherman father even younger than that, though I must check that with him next time I meet this friendly, knowledgeable man of the sea.

Publicover's first trip "before the mast" was on the schooner Ovando. On the voyage they went to P.E.I. and loaded potatoes and turnips for Boston. At Boston they took on a cargo of barreled flour for stores along the LaHave River, and that would be in the Bridgewater area.

On another ship he talked of loading heavy timber for Boston, discharged the cargo then loaded flour for different parts of Cape Breton, then loaded coal for Halifax.

I often wonder when reading of so many varied cargoes – flour and coal, for example – just how they would get a ship that had just discharged a cargo of coal clean enough to load flour on the next voyage.

Belief In Fairies

DAN MORRIS, Poplar Point, told me of a man he knew in his younger days that believed in fairies, and such things.

This man would tell, for example, of finding his horse in the pasture in the morning with braided manes, and in a lather of sweat. If the sweat had dried out the horses were all tired out. The horses were tired from having been ridden all night by the fairies.

The man believed that the fairies had been riding the horses during the night. The braided manes were used for tiny stirrups, or were they used to guide the horses.

I found that similar beliefs had existed in former days in the Western Prince area. I believe it was close to Cape Wolfe, or near West Point that I ran into a similar story several years ago.

Island Lady Near 111

THE PATRIOT carried a story Friday of last week about a California man who is healthy at 102 years. The story got me digging into my files where I found a letter from my friend Rae Barbour of Alma about an Island lady who lived to be considerable older.

I do not have a copy of "Past and Present Prince Edward Island" at present but Rae tells me she copied this much from one of those books.

It told the story of Mrs. Donald Graham who lacked but 14 days of being 111 years of age when she died a few years ago, an extract from "Past and Present" related.

"There can be no doubt about this case", the book said, "as the record of baptism is a matter of record in the church where it occurred."

Mrs. Graham, it said "was a daughter of John Brown of Charlottetown and she was able to read and sew without glasses until the day of her death".

The unusual lady "lived on the farm across the road from my father's farm, and lived with a family of Thompsons. After her death, they moved to Maine", my friend tells me.

Turret Belle's Bell

IF I MAY return to the Turret Belle story again, I want to include a note which I overlooked previously. S. Peter White, Murray Harbour told me by letter that he recalls being over to Port Hastings as a boy with his father, and was aboard the Turret Belle at the wharf there.

Mr. White adds "I have a remembrance of her. I have the dinner bell off the Turret Belle. It was given to me by Capt. Joseph Gallant of Rustico and is still in excellent condition at my home."