

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Fri., Oct. 10, 1969

## ACROSS THE ISLAND

### Doctor's Pay Small Here From 1860-80

By NEIL A. MATHESON

I WAS looking for something else this week when I found my copy of "History of the Practice of Medicine in P.E.I." by Dr. R.G. Lea.

A previous column told something of the many interesting items in this book. A look at some of the medical fees, and payments is interesting.

Dr. William Grigg practiced in Tyne Valley about the period 1860-80. "His home and office were in Tyne Valley" but, says Dr. Lee in his book, "his practice ranged over a large area from Cascumpec to O'Leary, to Egmont Bay and down through Lot 16.

"His book indicates many long trips by wagon or sleigh." In many places the doctor noted "For night's lodging for self and horse – 80 cents" A dinner for self and horse only cost 40 cents.

SOME OF the unusual methods of payment – or was it unusual in those days? crops up in one case where the doctor charged one dollar for "opening a finger and attendance". He accepted 30 mackerel, total value of 25 cents, as part payment for an account of \$1.75.

One family in Egmont Bay ran up a bill of \$14.25 between April and August 1877 that was paid in full in 1881.

For opening a gathering at the back of the neck, and a poultice, Dr. Grigg charged \$1.00. He charged a man at Rocky Point, Egmont Bay, \$5.00 to journey, to self, medicine, travelling expenses as agreed.

Travelling expenses are noted in many cases, observed Dr. Lea, "but the total bill never exceeded \$6.00."

"One man had the following three items on his account: To tooth drops – 10 cents, to attendance to finger - \$1.00, to drawing tooth – 32 cents."

### Pulling Tooth Cost 32 Cents

DR. LEA noted after examining many of such accounts from the medical practices of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: "The amount of 32 cents was apparently his standard fee for pulling teeth, when he noted that two teeth were drawn the bill was 64 cents."

Several cases are cited where the doctor's fees were paid, partly at least, by goods and services.

One woman was paid 20 cents per day for spinning. A man was paid eight cents a load for hauling 230 loads of mussel mud.

Here is an interesting excerpt from Dr. Lea's book: "One particular account became very involved with Dr. Grigg supplying medicines and giving attendance to the man's family to the value of \$8.75. The man in turn mended Dr. Grigg's wagon spring, supplied him with butter to the value of \$1.09 and did 'Blacksmith work to the jaunting sleigh' to the value of 30 cents.

"Finally in April the man sold the doctor a new sleigh for \$21.41, so the doctor ended up paying him \$14.41.

## 290 Dollars A Year

TOTAL VALUE of the accounts entered in Dr. Grigg's book for the year 1877 came to \$290.71. This included the cost of medicine provided. If this account records all the work done during that year, and from the way entries are recorded, it would appear that it does, then this would be his total accounts receivable."

Of this, Dr. Lea notes in his book "he records as cash receipts \$38.40 and credit, presumably goods and services of \$38.33.

Dr. Grigg "records as 'disputed', accounts totaling \$10.69 and one dollar was spent in court costs enforcing collection.

"A large number of unpaid accounts are recorded as 'Drawn' in March 1881, some are shown as settled in full, and others are simply marked 'square'.

## General Store Is Opened

DR. LEA notes, "In the light of conditions and circumstances prevailing at the time, Dr. Grigg probably was considered as having a good living. However, at the same time about 1877, Dr. Grigg opened a general store, which he conducted along with his practice."

Other doctors who had similar businesses included Dr. Darrach who had a drug and General Merchandise store in Kensington. Dr. Collins had a drug store in Vernon River and Dr. Martin had a general store in Grandview.

These are a very few excerpts from "History of the Practice of Medicine in Prince Edward Island by Dr. R. G. Lea, Prince Edward Island Medical Society". There are many other interesting items which are made available from the research this man devoted to the task.

## Another Seven-Leaf Clover

THIS COLUMN two weeks ago noted that Mrs. Elmer McQuaid, Bedford had found a seven-leaf clover. I observed that I had never previously heard of such a thing.

This week an Orwell lady, Penelope McLeod, brought me a seven-leaf clover which she had picked up about two weeks before my column reference appeared. Miss McLeod is one of those gifted with the ability to stop casually and pick four-leaf, five-leaf and occasionally a six-leaf clover. But never previously had she seen one with seven leaves.