

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Sat., April 1, 1961

## ACROSS THE ISLAND

Drifts deeper 38 years ago

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CLIMBING OVER snowbanks on my way to work Tuesday - Monday was an enforced holiday - I saw a neighbour literally digging his house out of a snowdrift. The snow had drifted clear up to the eaves along the front of the building. The windows were blacked out, and the door had also been drifted in.

It reminded me of another year that stands out in my memory as the worst so far as snow drifts are concerned. That was back in 1923 when the crack Abegweit hockey team - some veteran observers still regard it as the best ever developed here - was stuck at Emerald for a week and trains battled drifts for weeks on end in some localities.

MY EXPERIENCES centered in Middleton where I was teaching school for my sister. She had become ill over the Christmas holiday and the relief job put me in the teaching role.

Farmers depended for wood for winter fuel, and I boarded with the Bradshaws who lived close to the school. Two of the boys, Wallace and Neil, were close to my age and we had many a happy experience together.

The snow was so deep that nobody could get a horse into the woods so they cut trees in the line fences or wherever they could find one close to the house. We cut many of them that year

### Convincing Story Is Told

THE ENERGY of youth made the chores easy - I helped just to pass the spare time - but we raced through them at times to get to more interesting occupations. Wallace and I were sawing a log into blocks one evening and the old cross-cut was being hurried through the wood when the blade suddenly buckled and snapped. It was Wallace who thought up an ingenious story to tell his father when he returned that night from nearby Kinkora, where he had been grading potatoes. The story must have been good, for it kept us out of serious trouble, and a broken saw was a minor disaster under the circumstances.

Wallace is a buyer for Holman's now. He lives at Summerside. Neil is a successful farmer in Searletown

Rev. J.W.McCardle, Montague was a senior Middleton pupil at the time. He'll probably chuckle as he reads this, for he could add many an interesting item to the tale.

### Abegweit's Emerald Visit Recalled

SPEAKING of the 1923 Abegweits, I met team member John (Sugar) Gordon on the street this week and he immediately recalled the Emerald incident of 38 years ago.

“We left Summerside at midnight after playing a hockey match there and bogged down at Emerald. The Borden train was a few hours ahead of us and she made it to Charlottetown”, he recalled.

“Most of us stayed in farm houses, although the station agent fed a lot of people. They were never short of food, although meat was scarce with eggs being about the only substitute.

SINCE THIS column is mostly storm reminiscences, I may as well include Gordon’s reference to the time the team tramped one and one-half miles across the packed ice to catch a train at Tormentine that had refused to wait any longer.

The Abbies were on their way to a playoff game at Sussex and First Mate MacKinnon led the boys to shore when the car ferry couldn’t buck its way any closer.

It would be nice to say the Abbies won after such an unusual effort to keep this engagement. But they lost by a single goal.

YES THE snow was deeper, and storms lasted longer in those days but nobody was trying to open roads for cars, and the horses could always find a way to get through, or around drifts although winter roads often took the traveller far from the summer highway. Detours were fantastically hard to find at times, and of course there were no markings. But traffic kept moving and that was the main thing.

Winter roads still go in the fields at times, I am told, even on the Trans Canada highway route. The “field road” is used on the road to Wood Islands.

### Walks 30 Miles Over Drifts

THE BEST walking story I’ve heard to date concerns the effort of Ralf Cobb who walked 30 miles from Long River to Charlottetown this week. Perhaps someone can top this.

Also unusual is the story of the New York man who came here to buy a summer cottage at Foxley River and ran smack into the latest storm and the highway snow blockades here and on the mainland. It must be hard to think realistically of summer breezes and vacation delights, when wintry blizzards rage.

### Coldest Drive Is Recalled

Stewart Wright, deputy minister of agriculture, recalled this week an experience when he was milk tester for the federal department of agriculture on the herd improvement program, in the winter of 1932-33. He covered the 17 miles from Souris to Elmira one bitterly cold Sunday with roads so bad that horses were able to only walk, and at a slow pace too. The late Peter MacIsaac, a former member of the legislature, was one of the men who drove him. “It was the coldest drive of my life”, Mr. Wright recalls.

The herd improvement program was dropped several years later. It’s just about the same sort of thing we are doing today with the provincial agriculture department’s “Dairy Herd Improvement Association program”.

