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ACROSS THE ISLAND

History Is Told Of Revere Hotel

By NEIL A. MATHESON

A CHAT last week with Mrs. Ethel (Brown) Bentham took us back into the history of the Revere Hotel which was purchased recently by Hugh Simpson and his Wizard Business Machine Company. Mrs. Bentham is the grand-daughter of the late P.S. Brown.

An old indenture of mortgage, dated in 1876, indicates the property was then owned by Simon Fraser of Charlottetown and the man loaning the money was Rev. Isaac Murray of Cavendish.

The mortgage was for 670 pounds. The apparent dollar value is marked in at \$2,443. I know Halifax Currency, as it was called, had a pound value lower than the Pound Sterling, but I cannot recall a pound value previously that would figure out to that amount in dollars.

My informant, Mrs. John Bentham, is the daughter of the late Byron Brown and grand-daughter of Pictou Stanley Brown who was mayor of Charlottetown 1916 – 18.

The Rockland House

THE BUILDING, then known as the Rockland House, was purchased in 1894 by Pictou Stanley Brown and his wife Margaret Lydia Frances Brown. Witnesses to the conveyance were Dennis O'Meara Reddin and James J. Johnston, the latter, I believe, was the man who I remember as one of the most exciting, thorough and successful defense counsels of his day. This man, if I have identified him correctly, was the father of James Johnson, present Provincial Magistrate.

The document was signed by John P. Nicholson, Land Surveyor.

"When Uncle Pict (Brown) – brother of the late Byron Brown came home from the First Great War, he built on an ell which furnished additional rooms. About three years later Grandpa and Grandma, Mr. and Mrs. P.S. Brown bought that from Uncle Pict and thus it became a part of the whole Revere Hotel," Mrs. Bentham told me.

No Charge For Veterans

P.S. BROWN was mayor of Charlottetown 1916-18 and his grand-daughter, Mrs. Bentham tells me he used to go to meet the returning war veterans of the First Great War. She heard that if a veteran had to stay in town overnight, there were no cars running then, or very few, he would put them up at the Revere without charge.

P.S. Brown came to Charlottetown with horses from Ubridge, Ontario, met the girl who became Mrs. Brown and settled down to become a Charlottetown resident and business man, his grand-daughter tells me.

Father of P.S. Brown was a circuit judge in Ontario and the son had been destined to study law - his father's wishes – but the son loved horses so he came here to race some of them and found his lifetime home.

INCIDENTALLY I made an error last week in locating the old North American Hotel. Mrs. Bentham tells me it was located where Sid Stead's drugstore and lunch counter are now.

Patterson's Jewelry store is located where the King Edward Hotel was once. Mr. and Mrs. Abram Peters, Rustico ran that hotel in later days. A Mrs. Andy Murphy had run it previously, Mrs. Bentham tells me.

Byron Brown became Revere Hotel manager when his father died in 1925; he became the owner when his mother died about 1942.

Byron Brown died in 1961 and his son Frank took it over. He died suddenly in 1969. Frank had assisted his father, Byron from 1955. Mrs. Brown died after her son.

Arthur, Frank's brother, managed the Revere for the last three years.

The Hotel dining room had been closed for many years, but names of people who ate there came flitting back through Mrs. Bentham's thoughts – Jack Kennedy, Leo Frank and many others.

"When Grandma (Mrs. P.S. Brown) died in 1943 or thereabouts, she left it to Dad." - Byron Brown, Mrs. Bentham told me.

P.S. Brown died in the original Old Home Week, in July, 1925. He had driven one of his race horses at the Exhibition racetrack that afternoon, came home and was found dead about an hour later, Mrs. Bentham tells me.

I recall that the Maritime Fireman's Tournament was held as part of the celebration, the Charlottetown team won and of course there was great rejoicing in the Charlottetown Fire Department. I remember it well for I had the privilege of running on that team.

I've tried unsuccessfully to recall all the names of the 12 men involved in the Hose and Reel Team Race. I'll list them in a future column for a picture in the Firemen's room at City Hall has those names listed.

One reference from Cyrus Eaton recalled the "grand blueberry pie Mrs. P.S. Brown used to make". The late Judge Inman is another Mrs. Bentham recalled.

Byron Brown starred as a bike rider in track and field sports of his younger days. I recall an old program I came upon a few weeks ago and Byron had won every race in which he competed.

A silver urn, a bicycle race trophy Byron Brown won, is one of Ethel's most treasured possessions.

Horse racing people will recall that Mr. Brown was a long-time official.

He was presiding judge at Charlottetown for a period in his later years. I recall that he had been timer in my years as a sports writer which ran from 1932 to about 1941.

Mrs. Bentham tells me that her Dad was captain of the Abegweit football team for some years.

World Bicycle Championships

Dad was about 16 years old when he went to the World bicycle championships in Montreal, his daughter told me.

"I can't remember just where he placed in the events, but I do remember that he did very well in it," she added.

A football picture of 1911 says the Abegweits were champions of the Prince Edward Island League.

The players included R. Fitzgerald, full back; half backs O. MacEachern, Jim (Toby) MacMillan, Frank MacDonald, S. F. (Sam) Doyle.

Quarters were A. Hennessey, Byron Brown Captain, H.L. Bethune. Forwards included Parker Hooper, a man who later held the Maritime record for the 440 yard race for many years, J. Robertson, Dr. Jack Dorsey, Dick Brown (a son of Byron) Fred Nash, Frank Hennessey, Gordon Hughes.

The picture was from the studio of Thomas H. Cook and he had set the individual players pictures into a back ground of the Victoria Park, scene of many a football battle in former years.

The Revere, a hotel that has been carried on by three generations of the Brown family, still has Brown management. Manager now is the former Reta Brown, now Mrs. J. Addie Peterson, with her brother, Arthur, as assistant.

Story Of Pirates

EMERY MACEWEN, a former miller in the West St. Peter's area brought me an interesting story on sea piracy, or attempted piracy, with a Mount Stewart background. It will be in next week's column. I should say that the Mount Stewart men were the threatened victims, but they foiled the "pirates" with devastating effect.