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ACROSS THE ISLAND

First Daily Paper Dated May 20, 1877

By NEIL A. MATHESON

“WE HAVE GREAT pleasure today in presenting to the reading public the first number of the first daily newspaper ever published in Prince Edward Island.”

The paragraph is taken from an editorial note in the Daily Examiner dated May 20, 1877 which was given to me last week by Mrs. Bruce Smith at New Dominion. Mrs. Smith and her husband were enjoying a visit from Bruce’s brother, Les Smith, who came all the way from Vancouver, B.C., or a town very close to Vancouver – the name I have forgotten.

The Examiner was published by W.L. Cotton who was the father of Robert Cotton, commonly known as (Bobby) and William Cotton who was commonly known as (Billy) when he ran the Maritime Stationers here for many years.

There are many interesting items in the old newspaper. For example Vale Colliery was offering “Round, Nut and Slack” coal and Carvell Brothers were the agents.

Carvells were also agents for sole leather.

Queens Birthday Levee

ANOTHER ITEM said the Lieutenant-Governor will hold a Levee on Thursday, May 24, in honor of the Queens Birthday. The time was half past twelve o’clock noon.

Prices of household food needs may interest readers.

Chicken were 40 to 55 cents a pair, ducks were 26 to 35 cents each. Geese sold at 50 to 70 cents.

A quintal of fish was 100 pounds, or 112 pounds under the English measures. A quintal of codfish sold at four to five dollars.

A barrel of herring was \$4.87 to \$6.42.

Partridges were sold on the market at that time. The price was not given as apparently none was available on May 22, 1877.

Homespun was sold at the time. For men’s wear the price was 65 cents to one dollar a yard; for ladies wear the price was 35 cents to 48 cents.

Homespun flannel sold from 32 to 36 cents a yard.

Sheepskins sold at 70 to 90 cents each.

Straw was 30 to 40 cents a hundredweight, hay was \$0.50 to \$10.00 a ton.

A bushel of Timothy seed sold for \$2.50 to \$3.00.

Apparently all of these prices were retail prices, or the price a person paid who went to the store to purchase one of these items.

Tallow sold at seven to nine cents a pound.

Prices Then For Potatoes

POTATOES WERE 40 to 50 cents a bushel.

Turkeys sold at one to two dollars each.

Brant were also sold commercially but there was no price on that day, which meant, likely, that none was available.

Fresh butter sold for 25 cents to 28 cents a pound. Butter by the tub was slightly cheaper at 23 to 24 cents.

Barley was 70 to 75 cents a bushel. Pearl barley sold at three to four cents a pound, and I don't know what pearl barley really was.

Wool sold at 17 to 20 cents a pound and turnips at 16 to 20 cents a bushel.

Flour was \$8.50 to \$9.00 a barrel. Oatmeal was \$3.50 to \$4.00 per hundred rounds.

Under 'Market Prices' for beef the prices ran eight to 14 cents a pound for small pieces, or seven to ten cents a pound by the quarter.

Ham sold at 12 to 13 cents a pound, and pork (small pieces) was seven to eight cents a pound.

Waltham Watches For \$18.00

W.W. WELLNER was advertising jewelry including Waltham watches, highly trusted for timepiece accuracy in the years that are gone. Waltham is still sold and advertised by some dealers.

They sold in 1877 for \$18.00 in "handsome engraved solid silver cases", or at \$14.00 in nickel cases, new style.

Under shipping news the barkentine "Ethel Blanche" with 31,000 bushels of oats and 1,100 pieces of deal containing 3,300 feet, superficial measure, sailed for Plymouth, Great Britain on May 16. The shippers were Peake Brothers.

The steamship "Prince Edward" had 71,000 bushels of oats and 7,000 superficial feet of deal, sailed for Plymouth on the same day and Peake Brothers were the shippers.

The S.S. Carroll sailed for Boston on May 16 and passengers included W.H. Miller, J. MacLean, Jane A. MacLean, Mary Murchison, Sarah Murchison, Mrs. Mary Howatt and many more.

Battle With Ice, Heavy Snow

THE BARQUE Ringwood arrived in Charlottetown after a voyage of 30 days with a cargo of general merchandise for Messrs. Longworth and Co.

The ship James Duncan took 36 days coming from Liverpool. The ship had encountered heavy gales and at one place heavy drifting ice "where the front end of the ship got chafed" and lost her steering wheel.

Heavy snow was encountered at the same time as the ice. Loss of the steering mechanism was caused by the heavy ice coming in contact with the rudder, the captain explained on arrival in Charlottetown.

Charles Full was inviting gents to look him up, for the newest styles of shirts, collars, ties, coats, pants and vests.

To the ladies he said "Come and look at the new hats and flowers."

Beer and Goff were advertising apples by the barrel at a very low rate.

