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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Early Island Tractor Seen At Alberton So.

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Provincial-Farm Editor

I SAW at Alberton South what must be the oldest tractor in the province that is still in good running order. It was brought to the Island back around 1914 by Josh Henderson of Freeland, I was told by Norman Oliver the present owner.

Named the "Happy Farmer" tractor, it was manufactured by the LaCrosse Tractor Company of LaCrosse, Wisconsin, U.S.A.

A huge machine, it has 24 horse power on the pulley and 12 on the draw bar.

The rear wheels are approximately five feet in diameter, and the distance from the rear of the tractor to the one wheel that is out front is about 13 feet. The steering mechanism is a worm-gear that took heavy grease, I believe, to keep it in easy running order.

It has a sprocket drive, and the lugs on the drive wheels are three to four inches deep, which provides good traction.

The Happy Farmer tractor has one forward speed and one speed to the rear. It can handle a three-bottom plow, Mr. Norman told me.

I HAVE been speaking thus far as though the old tractor is still in operation, but it has been laid up in the Oliver barn for the past three or four years. The head was taken off some time ago, and had not been replaced when I saw it almost two months ago. But there is not a spot of rust on the entire machine, and the tractor could be put into operation with a few hours' work, I gathered from my own examination, and from what Mr. Oliver told me about it. It burns gasoline or kerosene, Mr. Oliver said.

The tractor started on dry cell batteries at first though a storage battery was used later. Pistons are six inches in diameter.

There is no crank, although it is not a self starter. A sort of wrench like device is used to grasp the fly wheel and turn it enough to start the engine.

Mr. Oliver told me he believes that the same type of tractor was purchased by St. Dunstan's College at the same time. St. Dunstan's had not become a university at that time.

The clutch on the machine is operated by a fairly large wooden lever, instead of by a foot pedal as has been the case for many years ago.

Bull Selection Vindicated

THE PERSON of Edison B. Mutch, North River and his fine Rivernorth herd of Jersey cattle came back to my memory when I saw in the Canadian Jersey Breeder that the get of Edgelea Beacon Jester Standard emerged as the top price cow of the "Quality Classic" sale by the Oxford and District Cattle breeding association recently in Woodstock, Ontario.

Mr. Mutch did not breed the Edgelea bull; as the name implies the animal was bred by Alfred Bagg and Sons, Thornhill, Ontario. But Edison selected him in a shed where calves were kept at the time that, apparently, were not deemed suitable for sale as sires. At least that was Edison's understanding.

HE SELECTED the calf for the Jersey Breeders Club of this province, kept him when they were not enthusiastic about the calf's possibilities, and had the satisfaction of taking him to the grand championship spot at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto several years afterwards.

It was the second year in succession he had hit that spot, for he had won the grand with Jester's Standard Dreamer on the previous occasion, and this bull was bred by Mr. Mutch himself.

Many were the enjoyable talks we had at the old Maritime Winter Fair when we would meet in his stable late at night, after both of us had completed our tasks for the day.

### Rory Mor Was Strongman

RALPH CAMERON has drawn my attention to a strong man story told by the late Malcolm A. MacQueen, the gifted writer from Belfast.

"The strength of some of the Highlanders was prodigious", noted MacQueen who told about one "Rory MacLean of Pinette who was recognized as one of the strongest men in Canada.

"While yet a boy he gave an exhibition of strength that won him a prize. In a grocery store in Charlottetown he was challenged to exhibit his prowess. He was finally offered a bedtick full of oatmeal as a gift if he could lift it.

One of the home made linen bedticks – a tick was the covering for a mattress stuffed with straw, or chaff, or sometimes with feathers – manufactured in the hand looms on the farm from native flax, was produced. "This was filled with oatmeal, and, thus filled, weighed about 1200 pounds," reports MacQueen.

"Rory Mor (big) without hesitation got under this huge ungainly mass and with it over his shoulders walked to the docks, from whence he took it by boat to his Belfast home," MacQueen relates.

It would be most difficult for a man to lift such an awkward mass that would be all but impossible to get a proper grip on, much less carry it to a wharf some distance away. But Malcolm A. MacQueen was a man who was not given to putting statements on paper without checking them most carefully. So his statement is accepted as part of the stories that have become the most interesting and colorful folk lore of the Belfast district.

RORY, MR. MACQUEEN relates, was often compared with Angus MacAskill, the Cape Breton giant who was seven feet nine inches in height and was three feet, eight inches across the shoulder.

So powerful was this man that he once shouldered a 2200 pound anchor which he handled so easily that he threw it from him. But a fluke of the anchor caught him behind the shoulder and injured him so seriously he later died from the effects.

BUT THE Island has other strong man stories too. Here's one that's just a bit different. Roland MacDonald, Southport tells me that his grandfather, William Acorn, Pownal used to hold a 56-pound weight on his little finger.

#### Old Forerunner Recalled

Recalling his boyhood days at Naufrage in this province Daniel McLean who writes often from his adopted British Columbia province recalls the days he spent as a small boy tramping knee-deep in the kelp and other rich sea plants.

"Above me on Neal's Cape", he recalls, "were five graves with the bodies of unknown seamen that washed ashore a hundred years before. Among us then (and I am sure it is now), there was that odd one, one of those born with a veil, who could see beyond the boundaries of the senses.

"ANGUS OWEN was one of those. He could tell when death was near because a Ghost funeral would appear. Angus never missed on the color of the horse. Well I remember one night after a card party on geese, talking and walking back home in a glazed runner track. Suddenly he had me waist deep in snow by the road. 'Dan', he said, "We must wait here a minute and let the funeral pass."

"Angus, I asked, who is driving the hearse?" "That's not for me to see, Dan, but the horse is Joe Hanning's Black Frank, and there are twelve buggies. The snow will be gone before this death will take place."

"It all came to pass as he described it to me over six years ago," Mr. MacLean tells me.

A BAND from a Canada goose, banded at Marshfield by Albert Boswell, in the spring of 1963 has been returned to him, as the goose was shot on Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> '64 at Etand du Nord, Magdalen Island PQ.