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## ACROSS THE ISLAND

### Scrap Book Recalls Car Trip On Big Ice

By NEIL A. MATHESON

A SCRAP BOOK brought to me by Mrs. Leslie Frizzell, New Haven turned up some interesting items for this week.

One from a local paper dated 1929, credits N. D. MacLean with being the first man ever to have driven a motor car over "The Big Ice" – Charlottetown to Belfast – and back again. The occasion was the funeral of Donald Nicholson of Charlottetown.

Passengers in the car included Mrs. John MacLeod, daughter of Mr. Nicholson, and her husband; Mrs. William MacLeod, Euston Street and Charles S. MacDonald of Wood Islands. Now in his 101<sup>st</sup> year Mr. MacDonald resides at Montague.

The return trip was entirely by ice, from Halliday's Wharf to the Western end of Richmond Street, through the harbor's mouth between Rocky Point and the opposite shore, says the item which did not specify the route the automobile took on the journey to Belfast.

I was reading this recently to my brother-in-law, John Court, Charlottetown who told me he had driven with the late R. E. Mutch of Charlottetown on "The Big Ice" some years previously. The time was January and they made the return trip by road.

### Side Hitch Letters Recalled

I FOUND a reference to "The Side Hitch" on winter roads. On our roads here the horse was hitched so that he walked directly in the middle of the sleigh track. In Ontario, we were told at the time, the horse was hitched so that his feet, or hooves, would tramp in the sleigh track. The shafts were hitched off-centre, hence the term "side-hitch".

I believe that teams were used in that province more than they were here, and when horses are hitched as a team, they would normally travel in the path of the sleigh runners. This made for better travelling, proponents of the side hitch used to tell us. The runner track was packed hard by the impact of the horses' hooves, and there were no such things as pitches, into which a sleigh would dip with bone-jarring results.

This is from memory, as I recall reading what people advocating the side hitch would say in their writing to the newspaper. S. F. Tarbush of Charlottetown is the man whose name stands out most clearly with his many letters to the editor on one of his favorite topics.

But the side-hitch never did come to the Island, though it was a perennial subject of interest to those who read the "letters to the editor's" column.

THERE WERE some interesting references to the "first wheeling" in several years. In 1926, a note said, Willie MacPhail drove to New Haven on May 9, which was "the first wheeling", and that would be with a horse and wagon, presumably.

Charles Moore's first trip with his boat was on May 9, a companion note stated. In 1928 Mr. Moore's first trip with his boat was made on April 3, another note states. The same year Charles Frizzell drove to Charlottetown with a wagon on April 3.

Another item reports that Clarence Frizzell, Donald McFayden and John Gass of New Haven drove to Charlottetown in Mr. Frizzell's car on January 22 and this was termed "a record breaker". Unfortunately the year was not given.

### Topped Canada In Examination

"ANOTHER ITEM said that Miss Gertrude Vaughn of Charlottetown had topped Canada in a civil service examination which had been written by more than 2,000 persons across the country. She was working in a building "just next to the Parliament Building and across the river from Hull."

"She was writing to Principal L. B. Miller of the Charlottetown Business College where she had received her business training.

"An item dated 1927 compared happenings of 30 years ago – that would be in 1897 – and "the present," which was just 40 years ago. Some of the observations are interesting.

"Eggs were three dozen for 25 cents, butter was 15 cents a pound, milk was five cents a quart, the butcher gave away liver and treated the youngsters with bologna; the hired girl worked for three dollars a month and did the family washing.

"WOMEN DID not powder or paint (in public), vote, play poker or scold.

"Men wore whiskers and boots, chewed tobacco and cussed; beer was five cents and the lunch was free. Laborers worked 10 hours a day and never went on strike, no tips were given to waitresses, no one was operated on for appendicitis or glands, microbes were unheard of: folks lived to a good old age and walked many miles every year to greet their friends.

Today (that was in 1927) "people ride in automobiles, play the piano with their feet, smoke cigarettes, drink rich juice, blame the high cost of living on the government, never go to bed the same day they get up, and think they are having wonderful time.

The item came from the Richmond County Record.

### 49 Years As Member Of Rotary

I SAW a long-time friend receive an honor at the Rotary luncheon Monday. Hon. T. W. L. Prowse was presented with a pin by president Claud Hunter. Mr. Prowse is completing 49 years as a member of the club, and that's a lengthy period of service.

I first met Bill Prowse in a volley-ball game on the old YMCA gymnasium floor, and that must have been a quarter century or more ago.

### Interesting Notes At Georgetown

I FOUND some interesting bits of Island history when I sat in the Court House at Georgetown last year during the recounts in 5<sup>th</sup> Kings.

For the most part the notes were scribbled inside the desks.

The name of Sir Louis Davies, for example, was listed several times. Fred Peters was attorney-general at one court sitting. He was Premier of this province 1891-97.

One note written in 1860 said that the judge had charged the jury at one o'clock in the morning in the case "of a man charged with shooting another with a loaded gun".

Another item said a man "had shot the horse from under Sheriff Sinnott". This note was found in a desk drawer. It was shown to me by Waldron Lavers, clerk of the county court in Georgetown.