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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Famous P.E.I. Violin Family

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IT'S a long time since I promised Lester O'Donnell that I'd get something further on the violin-playing Chaisson family from Bear River. I can't recall the year, but the family provided six contestants at the first Potato Festival held in the Forum, now the Sports Arena.

Led by Peter Simon Chaisson, the father, there were sons Joseph, Emmett, Peter, Bill and Roddie. Peter won the championship and Emmett was runnerup. Roddie, who runs a restaurant in Souris now, went to the finals in the step dancing competition, although he didn't finish in the first three. There were contestants from all over the province and it was past one o'clock in the morning, if I recall correctly, when the champions were finally selected.

Peter won the provincial championship again in 1959, I find, and Emmett and Bill were also provincial champions on occasion, if I am reading correctly the notes I took in the home of their sister, Mrs. Clifford Peters, Rollo Bay, sometime ago.

PETER SIMON, who died in March 1961, went to the international competition in Boston's Intercolonial Hall, sponsored by Henry Ford back in the late 1920's, a competition that was won twice by Prince Edward Islanders. Neil Cheverie of Elmira and Mel Beaton, East Point, were two Island winners, I was told.

There were eight boys and four girls in the Chaisson family, but the girls were not musical, Mrs. Peters told me, though the boys used to gather around the kitchen and play at fiddling with sticks of kindling, when they were small. But her husband, Clifford Peters, is widely known throughout Kings as a violinist, has his own orchestra, has appeared over TV, and he played for their charming little daughter, Peggy, as she sang "Mother Machree" for Dr. A.A. (Gus) MacDonald at the dinner the Souris Hospital trustee board tendered to mark his 60th anniversary of medical practice.

The Chaisson boys still live on the Island. I had hoped to visit some of them in Bear River on my trip, but as usual, time ran out on me before I could complete the day's itinerary.

Dairy Performances Are Improved

EXHIBITION coming up next week and a remark from Livestock Director L.W Roper that livestock production records are constantly improving, reminds me of a talk I had with Keir Heatherley, North Wiltshire, a few weeks ago at the home of his niece, Mrs. Beatrice Graham, in Breadalbane.

Mr. Heatherley recalled that he had hauled milk to the North Wiltshire factory in 1906 and again in 1909, and the factory only ran through the summer months and closed

about the end of September. The factories at that time opened anywhere from mid-May to the first of June, and some of them ran into mid-October. Regular production of milk in winter months was unknown.

THE NORTH Wiltshire man couldn't recall the price that was paid for milk at that time but he remembers he got three and one-half cents per hundred pounds for hauling it the first year, and five cents the second year. I hauled milk to Kinkora cheese factory from Rose Valley about 25 years later, when I was 14 years old. The price for milk that year averaged about \$2.16, as far as I can remember, and that was an unusually good price then for it was far lower a few years later. I can't recall how much per hundred I received for hauling, but remember clearly that I received \$125 for the season. That was a great deal of money for a youngster at that time. The \$25 went to buy a much needed suit, and the rest went into the bank until I went to Prince of Wales College some years later.

Those were the days when cows were "roughed through" the winter and some of the treatment was really "rough". Horses got all the oats, the hay and just about everything else, including care and attention, to keep them slick and stylish looking. A visitor was taken to admire the horses - most of them rugged and sleek as a shiny bottle - while the cow stable was usually ignored when visitors came.

Bear Story Reactions Interesting

THE RECENT bear stories have brought some unusual reactions. They varied from some of our older people who take the stories with a shrug, and tell me that bears were not unusual in the older days, to the younger people like Frankie Roper who tells me "My generation find it incredible to think there were bears here at one time." Frankie is better known to the sports pages, as he is one of the province's best goaltenders in hockey.

I think I'd better drop the bear yarns, but there's two reactions I want to list before I do. Frank Tinney, Charlottetown, recalls there was a hollow or depression in one of the fields - "obviously an old spring that had gone dry" - on his old home farm at Glen Valley, near Fredericton, called "Bear Spring". The name stuck to it, even though there was no water there in his time. The legend was that a Phil Sellick had shot a bear there at one time.

The other letter comes from a Cherry Valley lady who recalls "as though it were yesterday" the day about 81 or 82 years ago that Mrs. A.M. MacRae at Waterside, near Pownal, saw a bear while she was picking berries. Her husband thought it unlikely, when she told him that evening, but next day they saw the bear making for the shore.

Mr. MacRae took his gun and a neighbour, Michael Haley, took an axe and they killed the animal which "brought visitors from far and near." to see it.

Old Cook Book Story Coming

OUR WOMEN'S editor, Anne Bond, has just showed me an old cook book brought to her by Edward Bowser, Vernon River. The book, more than 100 years old, was found between two floor joists when they were repairing an old house. I don't want to

tell you anything more about it now, because Mrs. Bond is going to do a story on it for these papers tomorrow, so I suggest you watch for it as it should be interesting.