

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Fri., Jan 31, 1969

ACROSS THE ISLAND

1907 Praise Warm For Business College

By NEIL A. MATHESON

THE C.B.C. RECORDER – the initials stand for Charlottetown Business College – of midsummer 1907 came to my desk from a modest Charlottetown man who insists I do not mention his name. He has brought me many valuable items over the past few years.

I note with interest that the commencement exercises for the C.B.C. that year were held in the Market Hall which stood on the square where Confederation Centre now stands.

But the interesting note is that this hall was the largest in Charlottetown at that time. But, says the magazine report, “even this spacious hall could hold only a portion of the vast assemblage that gathered to do honor to the students and the institution which through its courses of instruction has done so much for the young men and women of this province.

The C.B.C. was under the direction of L.B. Miller when this magazine was printed and it was drawing unusually warm praise from some important sources.

“Indispensable Institution”

THE MAGAZINE item said in part, for example:

“Dr. Anderson, the chief superintendent of education for the province . . . is not easily moved to endorse anything. . . He must first be convinced, and his verdict is usually in accordance with the evidence.”

Then it adds that Anderson had termed the C.B.C. an “indispensable institution” and Principal Miller and his staff were justifiably proud of the warm endorsement from a no nonsense official.

Editor J.E.B. McReady (of the Guardian) styled it “one of the best institutions in the Maritime Provinces”.

I note the name of Owen Kiggins, Kelly’s Cross as one of the graduates that year in the Shorthand Department, and I’m wondering if this was the man I met in the middle 1950’s when I was in politics, and who died only recently.

I was interested in a paragraph from the speech made at the closing exercise by Dr. Anderson:

“I do not think you can have anything better when you go out into the world than a good character – a sound character for honesty, sobriety and truth, and for attention to duty. You cannot do anything better than to keep that before you.”

That same advice would apply today, I sometimes wonder if those facets of character are adhered to by today’s generation as they were in the days of our fathers.

First Lady Graduate

ANOTHER INTERESTING note says that Miss Bertha L. Bridges, our first lady graduate, whose salary now approached the \$2,000 mark (that would be a great deal of money in those days) was last year given six months leave of absence and a tour through Europe with all expenses paid. The item did not say when Miss Bridges graduated.

The Charlottetown Business College proudly boasted at that time that it had placed every one of its graduates. The indication was that the College was so widely and favorably known that it received applications for graduates from many parts of Canada.

Irishmen Triumph Over Judge

A SPRINGFIELD lady, Mrs. Cahill sends a most interesting document. It indicates that nine Irishmen were arrested, tried and convicted in the Young Irish disorders of 1848.

Indeed the nine of them were sentenced to death. Before passing sentence, however, the judge asked them if there was anything they wished to say. Thomas Meagher, speaking for all, said:

“My Lord, this is our first offense but not our last. If you will be easy with us this once, we promise on our word as gentlemen to try to do better next time. And next time – sure we won’t be fools to get caught.”

Thereupon the highly indignant judge sentenced the young Irishmen to be hanged by the neck until dead, and drawn and quartered.

Passionate protest from all the world forced Queen Victoria to commute the sentence to transportation for life to “wild Australia”.

In 1874, however, word reached the astounded Queen that Sir Charles Duffy, who had been elected Prime Minister of Australia was the same Charles Duffy whom England had exiled 25 years before that.

So the Queen demanded to be informed on what happened to the rest of the men whom the judge had sentenced to death in the most cruel way he knew.

Here is what she learned, and note that one of them played a notable part in Canadian political life – Thomas D’Arcy McGee became a Member of Parliament in Montreal and a minister of agriculture and president of the council of this country.

Here’s Their Story

HERE’S THE STORY of the rest of them:

Thomas Francis Meagher, governor of Montana.

Terence McManus, Patrick Donahue and Richard O’German became Brigadier Generals in the United States Army.

Morris Lyene, Attorney General of Australia to which office Michael Ireland succeeded him.

John Mitchell became a prominent New York politician. His son, John Purrey Mitchell, was mayor of New York at the outbreak of World War I.

This item is different from what is normally used in this column but I thought it too interesting to pass up

Strange Copper Tool

MANY UNUSUAL items came to my desk, sometimes to my home, but I was stumped this week when Terry Lamphier, Pleasant Grove brought me a copper tool that looked something like it might have been used as a hammer, and even more like an axe. Yet clearly it was neither a hammer, nor an axe.

A Charlottetown barber told him he thought the unusual tool was used as an old fashioned soldering tool. But I'll be darned if I could see how the unusual piece of equipment would be used to solder. Byron also said it had been a soldering tool so I have to accept that diagnosis.

Mr. Lamphier told me that they had bulldozed out an old stone dike. Later they were fencing in the vicinity, and they found the unusual tool. I sent him to Byron Burns, a Great George Street jeweler who often picks up old articles of various kinds. I don't know whether Byron knew anything about the copper tool or not.