

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Sat., July 5, 1969

ACROSS THE ISLAND

Program Recalls Old Burns Concert

By NEIL A. MATHESON

BURNS CONCERT, as it was commonly known, was an outstanding part of the annual entertainment program. I recall as a boy hearing the people in the countryside talk of attending. Many talked wishfully, but here and there somebody went, and the stories of the concert were told and retold many, many times.

I have a concert program on my desk of February 28, 1906. It was held at the Opera House and staged by the Caledonia Club.

James Paton was chairman and John McPhee, the secretary.

I note a mixed quartette of Lena Murray, Hazel Bremner, Elmer Ritchie and Percy Barlow. Professor Watts was heard in a clarinet solo "Keel Row and Yellow Hatred Laddie". Professors Earle and Watts were pianists, Professor Vinnicombe was the orchestra leader.

Looking over some of the advertisements I find that the "Star Steam Laundry" operated on Kent Street East.

G.W. Taylor had a jewellery shop – he was also an optician – on Sunnyside – this is now a part of Confederation Plaza. Incidentally the recent fire in Taylor Jewellery Store – grandsons now operate it – removed the last of the original business structures on Sunnyside, if I recall correctly what Earl Taylor told me several years ago.

As readers will gather, I'm wading through a bunch of old newspapers, entertainment programs and one or two of horse racing, and track and field score cards are also included.

Crepe de Chene Dress Goods

JAMES PATON and Company were advertising "The first shipment of dress goods, and were featuring Crepe de Chine in Polka Dot, plain and embroidered effects". The dresses swept the ground and there was a note of elegance to the sweep of the garments. Those were the days when it was not so difficult to tell a human male from a female.

If you think that is funny, it's not intended to be. Several years ago I visited the Nova Scotia Agricultural College at Truro, N.S., dropped into a lecture room for a few minutes to take the weight off my legs.

Immediately in front of me was a person who may have been a boy, or a girl. It didn't really look much like either one. I left the lecture room without any idea what it was.

"First-class single and double teams to hire" was the advertisement sponsored by Larry's Livery Stable on an Athletic Meet program of September 4, 1904. The location was on Queen Street, across from the City Building "service prompt, prices moderate".

Won Hammer Throw

J. WALTER JONES – he was later premier of the province and a member of the Senate of Canada – won the hammer throw with a toss of 128 feet, one and one-half inches. R. A. (Bob) Donahoe was second.

Dr. H.D. Johnson was referee in charge of the meet.

Haddsley and Trainor were selling meat and fish at “New Meat and Fish Market” on Queen Street.

Incidentally the starter at the track meet was C.J. McMillan, later dean of English at McGill University and at one time parliamentary assistant to the minister of defense for air services – C.G. (Chubby) Power during the period of World War Two.

Before I leave that sports program, the firm of Weeks and Company was selling “Hawes best quality hats, latest in styles “for three dollars each”.

Cronin Scrap Book

ELLIOTT McGUIGAN, Charlottetown was one of the names before the P.E.I. Sports Hall of Fame directors recently when they were selecting three names to be in the all time greats selections.

Anne Cronin, 123 Water Street, Charlottetown brought me this week a sports scrap book and I found the story of Mr. McGuigan winning four first at the Maritime Track and Field Championship Meet at Halifax in 1924.

McGuigan won the 100 yards and the 200 yards, the running broad jump and the standing broad jump.

The story is poorly written and details are hard to come by, but the Charlottetown youngster won the 100 yards in ten and one-fifth seconds which was good for the tracks of that period.

McGuigan was 19 years old at the time; several days later he left to enter a Jesuit College. It was his final and parting salute to competitive sport. What a smashing job he made of it.

Charlottetown athletes won 75 points out of a possible 171 points, the old story says, though the latter number has to be a mistake. Track and Field Points are calculated on the basis of five points in an event. McGuigan represented the League of the Cross and won 20 points for the club by his great performances.

Coach of McGuigan was Bill Halpenny, one of the top men this Island has produced and a pole vault competitor at the Olympics in 1912. Bill would have been selected by Hall of Fame directors, but nobody sent his name in as a candidate. The members of the board of directors are not permitted to nominate candidates; they choose from the names that are sent in.

The old scrap book is really good, my thanks and appreciation for it.