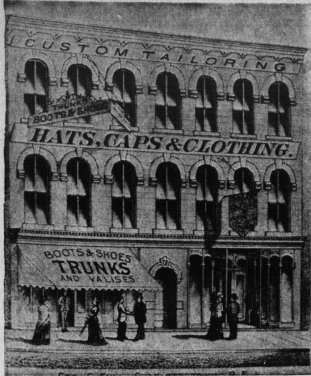


# FROM CHARLOTTETOWN ALBUMS



Few Islanders can remember the city like this. Above and on the immediate right are mercantile houses of the day. Centre top depicts the once-busy waterfront, and on the far right is one of the several town pumps where the people got their water or had it delivered for a penny a bucket.

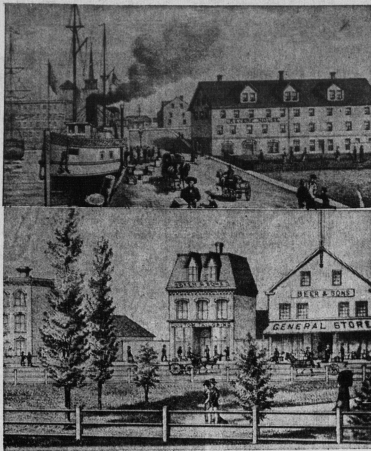
"Every member should recollect that though the Corporation of which he is a part, is destined to immortality; and that the work ordered by the Corporation should be in accordance with this difference, so that, though the original founders have mouldered in the dust, the monuments to their good government and prudent administration will proudly rear their heads and serve as an example to their successors."

That was the advice given the first Mayor and City Council in an editorial in Hazard's Gazette in 1855 when Charlotte town was incorporated as a city. That it would still serve as good guidance for present Council is self evident.

In one sense Charlottetown's growth and improvement has been the result of disaster. It was not until after the great fire of 1866 that a real effort was made to provide an efficient fire fighting force.

It was early in the morning of July 15, 1866, that fire broke out in a house on the corner of King and Pownal Streets. It raged throughout the day across streets, up and down blocks, as far as Great George Street and when it finally was out over 200 buildings had been destroyed.

Similarly, it took the terrible smallpox epidemic of 1885 to



show the need for providing pure water and installation of a sewerage system. Some people still living can recall the horrible cry of the driver of the dead wagon to householders as he passed "bring out your dead". In such a manner people were buried, and without benefit of clerics.

**STREETS A PROBLEM**  
From the earliest beginning village, town and city in turn were haunted by the question of streets. Willy dusty in summer, knee-deep in mud in spring and fall, and snow-clogged in winter, they offered every possible impediment to pedestrian navigation. When the Town or City fathers expended money to improve them they were criticized for 'waste' when they left them alone they were bitterly upbraided. Which proves there are some things time does not change.

Sidewalks were non-existent except in some cases where more enterprising merchants, mindful of their customers' welfare, constructed wooden walkways in front of their business establishments.

Charlottetown developed only as fast as the rest of the colony, later province. With its small population, largely of merchants and artisans, it was almost wholly dependent on the rural areas and there were no early roads.

Blazed trails through the heavy forests had to serve and visits to the Town were made on foot or by horseback.

Dr. Frank MacKinnon, in a brief review of the city's history at the time of its own centennial in 1885, wrote of the feelings of one man from distant parts of the Island. The man said: "If I go to Charlottetown I am led into desolation there and return home with an aching head, an empty pocket, and a half-starved horse."

More roads leading to the city meant more people using them to come to buy needed items which a people, though almost self-sufficient, were unable to create for themselves. That meant in turn more stores in town and a greater population.

Charlottetown was a great shipbuilding centre around the time of incorporation and many shipyards dotted the shore line from the ferry wharf at the foot of Prince Street all the way up the Hillsborough River. When the ships were built and fitted they were generally laden with grain or lumber, sailed to England and there both cargo and boat sold. The crews got home as best they could and repeated the process.

**ISLANDERS' LOAD GUNS**  
Perhaps nothing else could more adequately retell the absurdity of statements made in Britain about this colony by a noted grammarian of the day, Cobbett, as recorded in Campbell's History of Prince Edward Island. Said Cobbett: "From Glasgow the sensible Scots are pouring out annals. Those that are poor and cannot pay their passage, or can rake together only a trifle, are raking to a rascally heap of sand, rock and swamp, called Prince Edward Island, in the horrible Gulf of St. Lawrence. But when the American vessels come over with Indian corn and poultry and eggs and butter, trout and pork and beef and cabbages and green peas, and asparagus for the soldiers, and other tax-eaters that we support on that lump of worthlessness—for the lump itself bears nothing but potatoes—when these vessels return, the sensible Scots will go back in turn for a dollar a head, and not a man of them will be left except bed-ridden persons."

Mr. Cobbett may have been a celebrated grammarian, but obviously he was neither a geographer nor a prognosticator. The foods he mentioned were those the Island was shipping out by the boatload as fast as ships could be built. And Charlottetown was prospering and becoming widely

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