

Fantastic diary tells historical sidelights

It was just another routine day in the life of this town. Fine weather ruled, but everyone knew the autumn was setting in as a prelude to another Island winter.

Relaxed in his office in the Colonial Building as employee of the provincial treasurer wrote in his personal diary. The date was Thursday, 1st Sept., 1864, when John Robins penned these words:

"Fine day. I made out monthly accounts for Comd'r The DELEGATES FROM N.S., N.B. AND CANADA ARRIVED TO GO INTO THE QUESTION OF A UNION OF THE COLONIES. Joseph Rogers and his wife were here this P.M. to see Stettford and two men painting house. My sister Esther came down from Bedouke. The circus still here, a great number of persons go to see it."

And in that leisurely manner and way of thinking the Dominion of Canada was conceived in Charlottetown.

There is little that is leisurely today about the pace of life in the Canada which was born of this meeting. At least some times the contrast between those days and now is startling; times it is the lack of contrast which is startling.

Preoccupation with the small things of daily living, an obvious tremendous interest in the American Civil War, a close watch on the penny earned and means of adding to the shillings and pence are evident. In the "diary" commencing the 22nd day of July 1858 and ending the 8th day of June 1866."

HISTORY COMES TO LIFE

A whole new world on Island life is revealed in the diary. In one passage after another, and much of Island history comes to life as the Journal rolls through the days and across an eight-year span.

With over 2,900 entries, this private diary provides a cross-section of a period of history of which too little is generally known. Many of the names mentioned have long since passed from the Island scene, but countless others are equally as well known today as then.

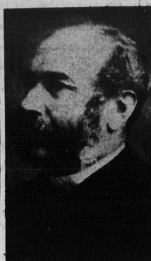
Frequently the spelling used requires thought to determine the word, and often that spelling varies as yesterday's counterpart of today's accountant apparently did not have as much preliminary formal education. Despite this there is a native shrewdness obvious, a careful handling of money matters to ensure an interest return and occasional recklessness spending on things now considered of doubtful value.

But let's look at the diary itself with its sometimes weird and odd sounding constructions; its laughter and pathos; and the insight it provides to a man, his thinking his daily conduct and the times in which he lived and worked.

Of necessity only a few of the diary entries can be given, but those provided are offered as nearly as possible in the form originally used.

1858
July 31— I got some poisoned paper for killing flies.
July 29— I am unwell. Went to Dr Jenkins and got some medicine. I hear that George Davies broke a blood vessel in Halifax and will be unable to proceed to England. Report says the Loan Bill is laid over for another season by the Imperial Government.

1859
Jan. 3— Catherine Jenkins still delivered of a fine boy today. Dr Jenkins attended her. Dr Jenkins here this evening and had a glass of whiskey with me.
Jan. 13— Cloudy. Thermometer 30 below 0
Jan. 18— The Executive Council met this morning at Government House the Gov being unwell



JOHN ROBINS
and unable to attend at the Council Chamber.

Jan. 21— I got over 1/2 Cord Wood for fire.

Jan. 22— News arrived a new Gov has been appointed for this Island. I got bottle wine at Dempsey's.

Jan. 30— I heard the Hon. Edw. Haythorne died at 10 o'clock this morning.

Feb. 1— Balanced accts this being the close of the financial year. Revenue \$2,300 (pounds), or thereabouts, for the year 1858.

HEAVY TRAFFIC EVEN THEN

Feb. 15— Met Ball and went with him to Hobkirk's for the doctor for his wife. She got hurt while out driving by being run into by another sleigh.

Feb. 2— I understand the new Gov, Dundas will not be here until next spring in the joy land of the SNATCHERS and grief of the Tories.

Feb. 8— Kenzie is to be discharged as Master of the Academy for drunkenness.

Feb. 17— The House of Assembly was called together at 2 O'Clock but WERE UNABLE TO DECIDE ON THE CHOICE OF A SPEAKER, consequently the Gov returned home without delivering his speech. John Ramsay of Malpeque refused to swear to his qualifications.

Nov. 36— Over 20 schooners arrived here today.

Dec. 2— Thanksgiving.

Dec. 14— Over 100 persons sawing and cutting the ice to get 12 vessels clear of the ice and have left for their destinations. (The following day four of them returned to port. Edit note.)

1859
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Jan. 13— Cloudy. Thermometer 30 below 0

Jan. 18— The Executive Council met this morning at Government House the Gov being unwell

Feb. 19— The House of Assembly was dissolved this P.M. Great excitement in the House.

Feb. 20— James Pope came here with me from church and had some conversations respecting the Elections. He wishes me to take the office of Treasurer should they obtain the Gov. Wrote letter to the Dep. Com. Genl at Halifax asking appointment of paymaster to the Pensioners should Mr. Warburton resign.

Feb. 23— The Conservatives are very sanguine as to the certainty of their obtaining a majority. The leading men of that party appear inclined to give me the appointment of Treasurer should they obtain the Gov. Wrote letter to the Dep. Com. Genl at Halifax asking appointment of paymaster to the Pensioners should Mr. Warburton resign.

Mar. 4— News of the New Zealand ship by the English Mail at Pernambuco on the South American Coast on the 15th Jan. All well.

ELECTION BATTLES

Mar. 12— Nomination of candidates for Membership for the County took place. The Irish were fighting after nominations and three or four persons were badly hurt.

Mar. 14— John Ball here this evening to a lobster supper.

Mar. 19— Election. Voters who went to George Town and Prince Town returned in time to vote here. Revolvers and sling shots taken from some parties at the election.

Mar. 20— Benj. Davies I hear has lost his election at Prince Town. Pope and Howatt returned from Bedouke District. Andrew McDonald and Haviland for Georgetown and Finlay McNeill in the place of Harris. Tom Owen again returned. The Tories will have 17, I think, being a majority of 4.

Mar. 25— Warburton has lost his election by a large majority.

Mar. 23— For Queen's County Eight Tories and 1 Liberals returned.

Mar. 24— Wm. Warburton tendered his resignation as Treasurer to the Govt. and sent his resignation to Halifax to the Com. Genl as paymaster of the Pensioners. The Govt sent me this p.m. and wrote a letter to the Com. Genl at Halifax

recommending me as Warburton's successor.

Mar. 26— Wm. H. Pope in office. Had a talk with him respecting the change in Govt. and my prospects to retaining my office.

April 2— William Warburton came here (Robins' home) to board at the rate of 20 pounds per annum.

April 5— Ice nearly all out of the harbour. A schooner arrived from Piquet. The ferry boat commenced to ply (Across to Southport).

April 6— Alex Laird came to me this morning to know if I would accept the office of Treasurer at a salary of 300 pounds per year. James Yeo came to see me on the same subject. I DECLINED TO ACCEPT HIS PROPOSAL.

April 9— The new Govt. has been sworn in. The Members composing the Govt. are Palmer, Jas. Longworth, Gray, Laird, Jas. Pope, Jas. Yeo and Heath Haviland.

April 11— Geo. Wright came to me to know if I would serve under him as Dep. in the Treasury Office.

April 12— The House of Assembly met. Stood new Govt. 16 Opposition 4.

April 15— Duncan McLean, editor of The Islander died this morning.

April 23— Beef of excellent quality offered for sale in Market— best cuts 10 pence per pound.

April 30— Handed list of lands for judgement to the attorney General. (Edit. note: these lists made periodically by Mr. Robins of properties listed for non-payment of tax).

WEALTH

May 3— Made up my expenditures and income for the last year ending this day. I consider I am worth about 80 pounds.

May 5— The House of Assembly in committee this afternoon on the Land Question.

May 10— Telegraphic despatch from Europe stating that war has about commenced. The House of Assembly this evening discussing the Bill to render the Legislative Council elective.

May 16— I got a gal. whiskey from Robinson and a ham from Ball. A young girl murdered at Murray Harbour Road last week. Her name was Brown.

May 17— War has actually commenced between the Sardinians and the Austrians. The Emp. Napoleon to leave for the seat of war on the 2nd inst.



NUMISMATISTS, COIN COLLECTORS or even those who are just plain money-hungry would delight in adding a rare item like this.

Interest payment on a bond issued by the government when this Island was a colony, it indicates the holder was entitled to 6 pounds Sterling.

May 20— War has commenced between the Sardinians and French against the Austrians.

May 26— His Excellency Sir D. Daly left for England in the steamer. A great many people down to see him off. Chas. Young is to be sworn in as Administrator of the government until the new Govt. arrives.

June 7— The new Govt. Geo Dundas arrived at about 4 o'clock P.M. The cannons brought up to the Square and 17 rounds fired.

June 16— Thanksgiving Day by order of the Govt.

June 20— Old Mrs. Holman here to tea this P.M.

July 5— General Williams arrived in the Steamer 'Westmoreland' a salute was fired from the battery by Capt. Pollard's Company. The General then went up to Govt. House. A procession formed in front

of the Old Court House and marched to Govt. House to receive the general, who accompanied it around the Town to the Prov'l building where he answered the address to him. I never saw a greater number of persons in Town than were in today. Great bonfire on the Square this evening and a great display of fire works.

July 6— Fine large new potatoes in Market today.

July 13— Examination at R.C. College and Convent.

July 15— News of great victory gained by the Allies over the Austrians confirmed. Dr. Humphreys of Charlotte town has run away with another man's wife.

July 20— Had some green peas for dinner, first for season.

July 30— Balanced accounts this p.m. Revenue for 6 months over 14,000 pounds and increase of 5,000 over same period last year.

Aug. 11— Wheat and oats cut in the country. Very early. Fredk Goodman and Anne Maloney were drowned near the Blokhouse coming in from St. Peter's Island.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3A

Governor's Home sold under him

An ancient deed, one of the oldest located by The Patriot researcher and undoubtedly one of the earliest filed under British rule here, is now in possession of Mrs. M. MacL. Lusher, of Admiral Street.

It certifies it was registered at "half an hour past nine o'clock in the Forenoon this 12th day of June, one thousand and seven hundred and eighty seven" with the then register Thomas DesBrisay for The Island of Saint John.

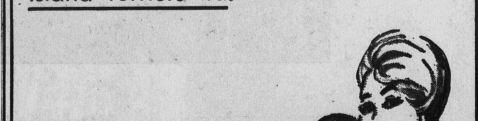
The deed was given in consideration of the sum of 230 pounds "being at the rate of five shillings per Spanish milled dollar," by Timothy William Hierlly to Phillips Calbeck a n d covered lots 70 and 71 in the first 100 town lots belonging to Charlotte township. It covered the "message, dwelling house, stable and out office" occupied by His Honour Edmund Fanning Lieutenant Governor.

However, certain specific rights were reserved for His Most Gracious Majesty and covered all "mines of gold, silver and coals". The new owner had also to pay, from time to time, any rents or quit rents which might later be assessed against the lands.

The property in question was on the north side of Dorchester Street and west of Pownall Street.

It is believed the Phillips Calbeck is the same man as the provincial secretary who was succeeded by the "Yankees" during the American Revolution and later released by George Washington personally.

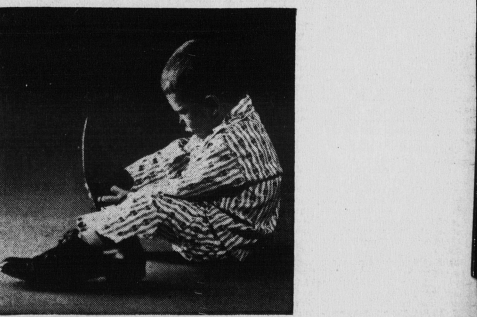
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and our
30th
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Looks like it's going to be a Wright Year!

For all of us at Wright's, 1963 was a big year. We helped boost the parlance of footwear to an all time high, and we're proud of it! During Wright's 33 years in business, over one million pairs of footwear has been sold to the people of Prince Edward Island.

At Wright's we try to deserve your confidence and warrant your trust in us.

If enthusiasm means anything, it looks, as if 1964 is also going to be a Wright Year.

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