

Olden Days In Charlottetown Are Vividly Recalled

Scene of Bustling Activity Even Before Incorporation

Charlottetown's development since its incorporation in 1855 can best be appreciated by a glance at conditions at a still earlier period when the town was emerging as a thriving business centre and colonial capital. The following description, taken from the files of the old Prince Edward Island Magazine of more than half a century ago, was compiled by a then "old timer" and presents a vivid picture of the town and its activities in the early part of the nineteenth century.

One had visited Charlottetown at that time he would probably have come by water, either in a sailing packet from the mainland or in one of the larger sailing vessels that plied between here and the Old Country.

By the latter came many of our earliest settlers. Their first view of Charlottetown was a short front broken by only one short wharf or jetty at the foot of Queen Street. Near the head of the old landing place were a number of buildings fairly close together. Partly up Queen Street also they were not very widely separated, but outside of that radius the houses and other buildings were few and far between.

Passengers disembarked, and cargo was loaded from the larger vessels by lighters or vessels of light draught came in to the wharf to discharge.

Taking up the description of the old houses of that time it is perhaps best to start with the Post Office. This was a dilapidated building, one story in height, and not much wider. It was built about 1800, and the first postmaster of Charlottetown was Benjamin Chappell. He was a personal friend of John Wesley, and a firm Methodist.

The old Post Office was used until 1834 or thereabouts, when it was pulled down. It was the second house south on Water Street from the corner later occupied by Sidney Grey. In Mr. Chappell's time the corner was tenanted by the widow Smith, Mr. Chappell, on the 26th July, 1789, took possession and passed his first night in the structure.

WATER STREET AREA

East of the old Post Office there were but one or two little buildings before the river was reached; at high tide the water overflowed the land very nearly up as far as the Post Office.

The land on the south side of Water Street, opposite to the old Post Office, was vacant until between 1835-40, when Andrew Duncan built upon that site his shipyard, and launching therefrom the first vessel, called the Robert Hutchinson. Duncan's shipyard occupied the space later occupied by McMillan's coal depot and Full's mill.

On the corner where the Railway round-house later stood was the residence of Major Beet, which was built at an early day by Donald McKay, merchant, who was lost by shipwreck on St. Paul's Island, Newfoundland, in 1824. The dwelling house, store and afterwards foundry of Waters & Birnie (the foundry was under the management of Wm. Hobbs, brothers of John Hobbs, a resident of Charlottetown) was situated on the land later occupied by Judge W. S. Stewart. Adjoining this on the westward was a property purchased and occupied afterwards by D. Reddin, father of Judge Reddin, who had a store on Queen Street and did a considerable shipping business on this site, where he built a wharf at the foot of his property which afterwards was joined with a wharf built on its eastern side by Andrew Duncan, later to be known as the Steam Navigation Wharf.

INGS' CORNER

Crossing Great George Street we come to "Ings' Corner". This lot, at that early period, belonged to a Mr. Gainsford. He had a bakery attached.

Next to Gainsford's was the old Longworth House, which disappeared about the time Charlottetown became incorporated. Then came a house owned by William Batt.

Coming to the corner later occupied by Mr. Morris, there was a house and store occupied by T. B. Tremaine, who did a general business. He afterwards conducted the ferry between Charlottetown and Southport, adding to its facilities by providing a "teamboat"—a fearfully made concern operated by four horses walking around an upright windlass to which was attached a bevel gear which set the paddles in motion.

There were clustered about these houses mentioned a number of outhouses and stables, so that the ground appeared to be fairly well occupied.

Opposite Tremaine's on the other side of Queen Street was Peake's corner. The first store built by Peake was the wooden structure later used as Nicholson's tobacco factory, which was moved from its corner to its present site to make room for the brick building that succeeded it. This brick house was erected by Mr. Peake as his dwelling, and was in those days one of the finest houses in Charlottetown.

OLD LANDMARK

We now come to a famous old landmark, the Rankin House. The first house put up on this corner was a dwelling owned by one Antoine, a Frenchman, who was a surgeon. It afterwards passed into the possession of Rhaito Webster, being afterwards held by Andrew Duncan and after that by W. W. Lord, who built a wharf

and did quite a large business there. On the other side of Pownall Street, near where Foster's forge later stood, there was an old windmill. Around it were a number of buildings including a well known boarding house kept by a Mrs. Whelan.

Next to Mrs. Whelan's was a house occupied by a Mr. MacLean; and then the barrack fence blocked all progress further west.

THE GARRISON

Charlottetown at this time was a garrisoned town—or we might call it so, for then we had a company of permanent soldiers, with their captain, one or two lieutenants, an ensign, a doctor, a commissary, and an ordnance store keeper. The barracks were two long, low buildings, situated on the ground reaching south from the jail square (now Connaught Square), Sydney Street to Water Street, and including Union Street westwardly to the water.

All along that part now called the Esplanade and the lower corner of Water Street was The Battery, of nine guns. Earth works were thrown up six or eight feet high all round on the bank, or water front, and any one passing along the shore could see the muzzles of the cannon pointing towards the harbor.

The soldiers' quarters backed on and closed up the end of Dorchester, King and part of Water Streets. The ordnance and non-commissioned officers' buildings, reached from Water Street northwardly toward Sydney Street.

The whole of the land was surrounded by a high, pointed picket fence. There was a large double gate opening on the Jail Square and a sentry marched backwards and forwards continually.

The officers lived in houses nearby. Commissary Lamont resided in a house later owned by Mrs. J. D. Mason on the west part of Richmond Street, and Dr. Poole lived at Frogmore, on the corner of Rochford and Euston streets. A number of retired naval and military officers were also settled there. Some were comparatively wealthy, others had good positions under the English Government, and there were also many descendants of the old Loyalists, who had come to the Island from the United States years before.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE

Government House, at that time, was not as it is now. The main building was the same but there was a verandah, and the portico was supported by four round pillars, standing on stone supports and reaching above the second story. There was sufficient room for a horse and carriage to drive or stand underneath, as the carriage drive passed along close by the front door and underneath the portico. Any stranger coming in the harbour could see at once that it was a building of some importance.

General Edmund Fanning, the second English Governor of this Island, knowing the necessity there was for a proper residence for the Lieutenant Governor, granted one hundred acres of land to the Governor General for all time, on which a suitable residence should be erected. The present Government House was built on this land about 1830. It is said that Governor Ready, the third Governor, planned it after one he had lived in at Barbados. When the house was completed the furniture, and everything necessary to make it comfortable for the residence of His Excellency, was sent from England at the expense of the British Government; fuel and light were provided, the Governor's salary paid, also that of his private secretary, the orderly and one or two servants. The aides de camp were chosen from the military, a position much thought of. A sentry marched backwards and forwards before the door and another at the lodge gate. No one dared enter the grounds without permission.

His Excellency, Sir Henry Vere Huntley, was the Lieutenant Governor from 1841 to 1847. Every year on the Queen's birthday he held a levee at Government House, followed in the evening by a state dinner or ball. Sir Henry was a fine-looking man, with ruddy complexion and white hair. One amusement he took great interest in was the Tandem Club, as it was called, and in winter he was often seen driving his pair of horses at the head of a procession of sleighs, driven tandem by the officers and young men of the town.

NAVAL OFFICERS

The second Gulnare was built in the summer of 1846. She was a two top-sail schooner launched from a shipyard on the shore, between Prince and Great George Streets; her tonnage was 170 tons burthen. Many ladies were present at the ceremonial affair. The naval officers in Charlottetown at that time were Captain Bayfield, Commander Bedford, Lieutenant Orlebar, Mr. Forbes, master, and Dr. Kelly, who were all Royal Navy officers. The sailing captain was named Mayor. In the summer of '44 Captain Bedford returned to England with his family. Captain Orlebar took his place, and Lieutenant Hancock came to the Island. He and Dr. Kelly were unmarried, the older officers being married. Captain Bayfield took the house on the corner of Euston and Queen Streets which had been occupied by the Countess of Westmoreland and her daughter Lady Jane Georgiana Fane, both of whom had returned to England. The Countess being a landed proprietor, had been living here to look after her estate. Captain Orlebar lived in a house on Kent Street owned by Henry Palmer, Esq., near the present City Building. He afterwards moved to a house on Prince Street, later occupied by John Higgins.



Queen Square As It Appeared Over A Century Ago

In 1849 with the old Round Market House, the Colonial Building, old St. Paul's Church, and a section of Richmond Street on the right.

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COLONIAL PARLIAMENT

The opening of our Colonial Parliament in the early 1840's was a very grand function. The Lieutenant-Governor, dressed in his military uniform, with his outriders, aides-de-camp and secretary, the officers from the garrison and the naval officers all in full uniform, preceded by the sergeant-at-arms, drove from Government House to Parliament Building, where the soldiers from the barracks were drawn up in line. The booming of cannon announced His Excellency's arrival, and crowds lined the streets to see the show.

The Provincial Building was rather unpretentious. Its arched windows and doors were the only indication of its importance. It was a wooden building about 55 feet long, and about 36 feet in width, situated on Queen Square at the north side of the present Market House and about thirty feet in from Queen and Grafton Streets. This building was divided into two rooms, the Council Chamber and Assembly Room, with a hall about eight feet in width between them, and an ante-room off each chamber. Over the hall were the galleries for each House, and as they were small, few people could be admitted to the opening.

The building was afterwards used for post office, court house, and police court. It was eventually moved to Euston Street and made into tenements. The other buildings on Queen Square were the round Market House, St. Paul's Church and St. Paul's Sunday and week-day school.

In May of '48 the cornerstone of the present Provincial Building was laid, and by the next spring the stone work had risen only to the lower window ledges. The portico was not the same as now, the heavy stone work and arches were not there, but there were four handsome round pillars on each side, front and back; they were then only half way up; apparently they are the same pillars that are now on the balcony. The building was finished with

only the portico, but changed some years after, which improved its appearance very much. There had been a few brick houses built in Charlottetown previous to this time, but nothing so grand as a stone building had before been contemplated. The stone had to be brought from Nova Scotia and also the stone cutters and builder. Many watched it with pleasure, and at last when the stone work of the Provincial Building was completed, the ground was levelled off by a gang of criminals who were chained to the cart they hauled along. The men not only levelled off the ground, but broke up the useless stone and spread it all around the building. Criminals had in the same way to keep the streets in order, and it was a much harder lesson to them and greater example to others than their punishment is now.

or something of like nature, brought there her beer, cakes, apples and plums, for the refreshment of the hungry people. Places of entertainment and "good stabling" were few and far between, and as Charlottetown was then famed for its mud, Queen Square on Fair-day was ankle deep.

STREET CONDITIONS
The streets in spring and autumn were something like the Square; there were no sidewalks then nor for many years after; all had to walk in the middle of the street, both summer and winter. Ladies wore trained dresses on the street for it was the fashion, and considered graceful, but the mud was destructive and many handsome dresses were destroyed. If persons attempted to walk close by the houses or shops, they were liable at any moment to pop into an open cellar hatch or go through a broken one, and in winter the snow banks were not cleared away except from the doors, so you may be sure the walking was dangerous.

Children were often run over and badly injured by horses and sleighs, and as country people with their loads very rarely used sleigh bells, a law had to be passed insisting that every one who drove a horse and sleigh through the town must have a bell attached.

In spring and autumn it was an uncommon sight to see ladies standing on one foot trying to extricate their rubber shoes from the mud. A few years later—when the American rubber boot was worn—it often shared the same fate. The only good promenade we had in those days was the Queen's wharf, and ladies were often seen taking a constitutional there in the early morning.

CHURCH BUILDINGS
The churches in 1844 were St. Paul's, St. Dunstan's, the Kirk (St. James), the Methodist Meeting House, and the Baptist Chapel. The old St. Dunstan's (not the old Cathedral which was erected many years later) was then only in frame. The first Roman Catholic church was found too small to hold its increasing members, and it was thought advisable to build a much larger place of meeting. The small church was moved back, and a new one erected on the same site, corner of Great George and Dorchester Streets. Many thought the new chapel (as it was generally called) altogether too large, and that they would never have a congregation large enough to fill it. The corner stone was laid in 1843, and we have been told the first

funeral in the new church after it was opened was that of Hon. John Small Macdonald, who died in 1849. The priest was Father Malachias Reynolds, lately from Ireland, and had his nephew, John Kenny, B. A., living with him. The Roman Catholic Bishop, Right Rev. Bernard D. MacDonald, lived at Rustico.

St. James church was on its present site, corner of Pownall and Fitzroy Streets. The pastor, Rev. Mr. McIntyre, had returned to Scotland, and as the Presbyterians were without a minister for a while, they had to go to other churches. Quite a number took sittings in St. Paul's, which was then a new church, as it had been built only a few years before.

The clergymen who preceded the Rev. Mr. MacIntyre in St. James' was the Rev. Mr. MacIntosh. His residence was on Queen Street, between Kent and Fitzroy. He was a very tall man and always put on his gown and bands before leaving home for service in the Kirk. He had an old servant maid who, along with other duties kept his clothes brushed and in order. At one time Mr. MacIntosh had leave of absence for a while, and a very short man was sent to relieve him. Old Betty the maid was very indignant at this. "He would wear out all the minister's gown trapesing along the street with it trailing after him."

FIRST ST. PAUL'S
The first St. Paul's was on

Queen Square, opposite the Brown Block, and in about fifty yards from the street. It was pulled down about '41 or '42. The new church proved too small for all who wanted pews, and shortly afterwards about twenty feet in length was added to it at the east end. It had a three decker pulpit—clerk's desk, reading desk and pulpit—one towering above the other, the pulpit on a level with the gallery, and each one having crimson silk velvet hangings and cushions trimmed with fringe and tassels. The pulpit hangings were presented by the Countess of Westmoreland, who also gave handsome pulpit hangings to the Kirk and an altar frontal to the Roman Catholic Church.

The monuments to the memory of General Fanning who was Governor of P. E. Island for eighteen years and of Governor Sir Artees William Young, who died at Government House in 1835, were placed on the east end wall of St. Paul's, one on each side. Governor Young was buried under the church.

St. Paul's had the only pipe organ then in Charlottetown and we may say on this Island. It was a fairly good instrument and was built by Watson Duchemin, founder of the firm of Duchemin Bros., at his factory near his residence, corner of Prince and Sydney Streets. This organ was afterwards sent to Georgetown and used

in Trinity Church there for some years.

The soldiers' seats at St. Paul's were on each side of the choir, and the tramp, tramp they made marching up the stairs and into their pews could be heard all through the church.

METHODIST CHAPEL
The Methodist Chapel was a square wooden building with upper and lower windows. It was situated

on the corner of Richmond and Prince Streets (where Heartz Memorial Hall is now). There was nothing very prepossessing in appearance, but it was nicely furnished inside and furnished with comfortable pews (not like the prisoners' box kind that were at St. Paul's). There was a gallery all round the four sides, the pulpits stood at one side of the centre part and the Communion table was

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GREETINGS

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