

ACROSS THE ISLAND

Distinguished City Musician Recalled

By NEIL A. MATHESON
Provincial-Farm Editor

HENRY WESTAWAY VINNICOMBE was born at Exeter, Devonshire County, England March 15, 1843. He was a chorister in Exeter Cathedral from 1853 to 1863. He was also a member of Exeter Oratorio and Philharmonic societies. He came to Canada in 1864 and to Prince Edward Island in the following year.

I have heard a great deal about Prof. Vinnicombe since I came to Charlottetown more than 30 years ago. W. A. (Art) Gaudet, with whom I worked many years at the old Patriot on Richmond Street, often sang his praises, as "an outstanding musician and a most talented and interesting personality."

An old newspaper clipping kindly loaned me by his daughter Mrs. A. E. Davis, 55 Fitzroy Street, says he founded a family here which was the first of that name in Canada.

Musician Of Great Ability

"HE WAS a musician of great ability", the old clipping states, and one of the first teachers of violin in Charlottetown.

He was for many years bandmaster of the 82nd Regiment band, and he was founder and leader of the Charlottetown orchestra. He directed the orchestra in the then opera house, until it became a motion picture theatre, the old newspaper said following Professor Vinnicombe's death in November, 1928.

Professor Vinnicombe established the City's first band, also the first orchestra. I am told, reliably, Judge (Jim) Hyndman, a former Charlottetown man now living in Ottawa, is the only member of the Vinnicombe orchestra who is still alive.

It was the highly skilled technical advice obtained from Prof. Vinnicombe, I was told some time ago, that was responsible for the excellent acoustics in the old Prince Edward Theatre, which many readers remember with pleasure. "A pin dropped on the stage, could be heard distinctly at the back of the theatre," is the way one lady described the acoustical quality to me.

Professor Vinnicombe used piano wires to correct the acoustics of the building. I was told, I have been unable to learn just how this was accomplished.

Came To Province On Visit

I WAS particularly interested in the way Mr. Vinnicombe happened to come to this province. Though he was thoroughly schooled in music at home, the young man's reason for coming to Canada had nothing to do with music. "My father came to Canada on a dare, with a group of other young men who were going to the Hudson Bay," his daughter told me. I believe the occasion was a gold find, or some such thing.

His mother, who was a Westaway, wrote the young man urging him to go to Prince Edward Island and visit Roger Dart Westaway, Georgetown who was a large shipbuilder.

Mr. Westaway had three sons and one of them who had no children of his own, took an immediate liking to Henry Westaway Vinnicombe and showered gifts upon him. This man "made things so comfortable for my father," Mrs. Davis told me, that he decided to stay on Prince Edward Island. He would never leave, she added.

Many Musical Entertainments

LOOKING OVER the many clippings from Charlottetown newspapers of the period I am impressed by the many musical and literary entertainments that were made available in the city at the time. And the name of H. W. Vinnicombe was the most prominent I noticed.

There was a "Grand Amateur Concert" at the Athenaeum under the patronage of His Honor, Sir Robert Hodgson, Knight, Administrator, that was on May 10, 1870.

There was a "Grand Amateur Concert" under the patronage of Lieutenant-Governor W. C. Robinson and Mrs. Robinson in the Market Hall on May 4, 1871.

There was "Literary entertainment by the Charlottetown Debating Club" and this featured several piano-violin duets by Sam Earle on the piano and Professor Vinnicombe. The talented pair were listed five times on the program.

On another occasion there was literary and musical entertainment by the Charlottetown debating club, which appeared to be a most active organization. There were readings, poems, essays and musical selections, with the Earle-Vinnicombe pair supplying all of the musical numbers.

There was a "Grand Ballad Concert" under the distinguished patronage of His Honor Lieutenant-Governor and Mrs. Robinson, the Right Reverend Bishop McIntyre, the Legislature and the Mayor and Corporation, as it was termed.

This one was in aid of "French Relief Fund". The date was Monday March 27, 1871. S. N. Earle was the musical director at this one.

Music Was Classical

THERE WERE many of those concerts by talented performers. It is apparent from the descriptive stories written about some of the more published performances. In all cases the music was classical, the old reports indicate.

I note too that Miss Bessie Vinnicombe—now Mrs. Davis—was a featured performer in many of the concerts. She was listed, for example, as "pianiste" in the second concert of the Charlottetown Philharmonic Society on May 13, 1902. Indeed she was the featured soloist in one of the numbers "Astré de Notre Amour", a "Recitative and Aria".

One of the interesting numbers I noticed called for "10 hands on five pianos" and they were playing Mendelssohn's Wedding March. This concert was at the Athenaeum, which was later known as The Lyceum theatre, and it was located on Prince Street, approximately across from where the United Church now stands.

Care Of Pianos Spelled Out

I WAS interested in some rules "for the preservation of the pianoforte" given by Mr. Vinnicombe in an advertisement listing him as a "tuner, regulator and renovator".

The room in which a piano stands should be kept at a moderate temperature—from 59 to 69 degrees Fahrenheit. Below this temperature the wood is apt to swell and thus impede the freedom of action. The metals, the iron frame and the strings contract, thus making the tune sharper.

Above 69 degrees the wood of which the case is made becomes too dry and so contracts, while the strings expand, hence the piano does not stand well in tune.

It is very important the piano should be protected from dampness. Mr. Vinnicombe said. It should never stand on a damp ground floor, or against an outer wall, or between two windows, or between a door and a window where there is a current of air.

The piano should be kept closed when not in use. It should also be covered with a cloth to protect it from dust. Mr. Vinnicombe tuned instruments for many years. One newspaper clipping I have in my possession says he once "retuned a piano throughout, in the short space of 15 minutes." This was done when it had been discovered, just before a concert, that the pitch of the piano did not agree with the other instruments.

Tuning Instruments Stolen

HIS DAUGHTER, Mrs. Davis, tells me that her father stopped tuning instruments when his valuable case of tuning instruments was stolen from the hall of his home. The instruments had been brought from England and could not be replaced, his daughter told me.

This occurred some 10 years prior to his death—that would be somewhere around 1918—and it meant the end of his career in that capacity. His daughter purchased several instruments in New York—there were two tuning hammers and the price indicated they should be good.

But one of the hammers split the first time her father used it. This was added discouragement, particularly to a man who had long been accustomed to the best of instruments. It confirmed his opinion that he could not carry on without the instruments he had lost. And he never could get a trace of them, his daughter tells me.

I RETURNED last night from an interesting two-day tour of the Annapolis Valley—two farms. I'll be talking about it in next week's farm column.

New York Stock Exchange Starts Computers Today

By AL COLLETTI Standard and Poors and the Associated Press
NEW YORK (AP)—The New York Stock Exchange starts tabulating by computer today a common stock index to measure price trends of more than 1,250 issues listed on the Board.

Exchange officials hope it will help provide an answer to the question "What's happening in the New York stock market?" But some experts feel it won't tell any more than the popular averages put out by Dow Jones.

NYSE's stock ticker every half hour. To make the new yardsticks more understandable, all five indexes have been set at 50.00 each as of Dec. 31, 1965. The NYSE said that since this figure is close to the current average price of all listed common stocks, changes in the index will be close to the real dollars-and-cents price shifts in stock prices.

The index is formulated by multiplying prices of the listed stocks by 50 (the base index) and dividing by the market value of the stocks on the base period date.

Net changes in the average price are determined by multiplying the average price of the listed shares by any index change and dividing by the current index value.

For instance, if the base market value is \$500,000,000 and the current market value \$550,000,000, the current index would be derived by multiplying the current market value by 50 and dividing by the base market value. The answer would be 50.00.

The change in the average price will be shown in points and in dollars and cents.

A decline in the common stock index of 0.80 of a point would reflect a decline in the market of 50 cents a share. A proportionate decline in the Dow-Jones industrial average at mid-1966 levels would amount to nine points, the NYSE said.

DIVISOR CHANGES

The Dow-Jones 30 industrial index is a weighted one, using a divisor that is changed often to take into consideration many factors. Generally, a point change in the average equals a slightly higher money figure than that placed by the NYSE—closer to eight cents a share.

The Standard and Poor index of 500 stocks, generally the most respected one, is derived by computer and it is based on current market value. A point change in the index equals about \$6,000,000,000 in paper value.

The Associated Press index of 60 stocks works in much the same way as Dow-Jones. It also uses a changing divisor. A point in the AP average is equal to about \$1,500,000,000 in paper value.

At the end of May, there were 1,632 issues listed on the Big Board including 1,254 common issues.

Shares outstanding totalled 10,507,000,000, with common stock accounting for 10,339,000,000 shares.

As of May 31, the value of all issues was \$507,768,000,000 with common stock worth \$498,547,000,000.

If the NYSE index reaches levels far above the average price of listed shares, the exchange plans to bring them in line with the average price by splitting the index or changing the base period.

POLISH OLD BRASS

VEGREVILLE, Alta. (CP)—Old Bessie, the first fire truck bought by this community 60 miles east of Edmonton, has been renovated and displayed by the amateur fire department. The 1927 vehicle, in service until 1950, will feature in parades.

DISPLAY CLAN MARK

VICTORIA (CP)—Both Scots and Scotch will be in British Columbia liquor stores for the next year. Store employees will wear red tartan to celebrate B.C.'s centennial this year and Canada's in 1967.

Is Ultra the ultimate in premium gasolines?

We believe it is. And we're gasoline experts. But we make the gasoline for you. So you're the one who has to make the judgement. It's easy to do. If you're not driving on Ultra now, take a breather from the premium brand that you're using, and try a tankful of Ultra. See for yourself if your car's performance doesn't pick up and if you don't note a pleasant difference in your acceleration and warm-up.

Ultra doesn't stop there. It works hard in a lot of other ways, too. For instance, the special summer blend of Ultra is designed to avoid trouble-

some vapour lock. The winter blend, to reduce cold, wet weather stalling and give fast, easy starts. Ultra helps your fuel system stay clean. And works to allow your spark plugs to give long, and reliable performance.

Those are just a few of the things that White Rose Ultra does for your car. There are a lot more. But you'll find them out when you try it.

You'll also find out one other thing. Your answer to the question: Is Ultra the ultimate in premium gasolines? We already have ours.

White Rose Ultra: The great gasoline



If you want your car looked after, try us.

