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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Montague Museum Has Unusual Items

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I HAD a look this week at some of the things they keep in the Garden of the Gulf Museum at Montague.

A potato de-bugger – that's the name – was one item of special interest to farm people. It is built like a wheel barrow, has revolving beaters on the side which knock bugs from the tops into the body of the vehicle as it is wheeled along the row between the tops.

One of the paddles is partially broken, but enough of it is there to show what it was, and how it operated. There is no data on this one but it is not so old that some of our older people cannot remember it.

MANY of the items are of similar age. They're old enough to be saved as souvenirs of the past, because they are no longer used or made. But they are recent enough so that our older citizens can remember them.

For example there are wooden shuttles used in the looms of several generations ago. A wooden potato masher, a silver communion cup, and wax candle makers are some of the other items.

BUT LET'S get back to farm items. An old wooden plow is on exhibit. An unusual item was a sidehill plow with a lever for reversing the mould board.

There is an unusual looking horse yoke to keep the animal from breaking through a fence and a less unusual sheep yoke.

Jaunting Sleigh Is 143 Years Old

AN OLD wooden jaunting sleigh caught my eye. A card says it was brought from Scotland and it is at least 143 years old. The thing must have been kept under shelter through the years for it looks as though it could still move along cosily behind a fast stepping horse.

These's an innocent looking walking stick. Pull the handle a bit and out comes a vicious looking sword.

A pair of heavy woolen mitts are 85 years old. They were colored by Juniper bark dye. There are skates and a host of other things that catch the eye. But I was more interested in the things that had a farm background.

ARTHUR GAUDET would be interested, I think, in some of the old skates on display. Some of them are really interesting. The museum was started by the junior board of trade. It's closed now but Gilbert Clements kindly gave me the key so I could have a peek inside. A garbage disposal service for the town and a roadside table setup at the

foot of Bell's hill, were some of the board's other projects. Time marches on and they are no longer juniors. But they did some excellent work when they were.

Bird Sanctuary Visited With Interest

THIS WEEK I had my first closeup of the Moore bird sanctuary at Milltown Cross. The people who live nearby take it for granted, but I was amazed at the way the wild ducks, and geese, rest there with an apparent feeling of complete safety.

There's a picture elsewhere in these pages showing hundreds of the ducks resting along the bank of the pond. Jim Cudmore of our Montague bureau was in the car when I pulled reasonably close to the nearest birds. He took a picture from the car window. Then he got out carefully and moved slowly to within ten feet or less from the nearest ducks. The picture on today's farm page is the result.

THERE WERE other hundreds out on the pond. Jim estimated there were probably a thousand or more. He tells me that as many as five thousand come there to rest.

Canada's Best Naturalist

THE SANCTUARY was developed by the late Harvey Moore who grew to become Canada's greatest naturalist. I say that because Jack Miner, nationally known figure for many years, used great nets to trap the birds at his sanctuary for banding purposes.

But Moore never used nets. He didn't have to. The birds came and lit on his hands, or his shoulders. He placed bands on them and let them go. It was that simple.

Jim tells me that Moore started by taming a crow and a racoon and making pets out of them. He loved wild animals and birds from his boyhood days. He started the sanctuary as a hobby when he moved to Milltown. It seemed a tragedy when this man died and his wonderful skills were lost.

I HAD often passed the spot before and had seen the birds from the road. But this was the first closeup and it was well worthwhile.

As we drove away we passed a nearby grainfield where a couple of dozen wild geese were feeding with not a sign of concern. Jim tells me that the field is within the one-mile protected distance from the sanctuary. How the birds know this makes me wonder just how much sense is wrapped up in those beautiful heads.

I have been quoting Jim Cudmore a lot and here's one more quote. He tells me that geese live to be as old as humans. If you find that surprising, I did too.

Ayrshire Breeders To Meet Here

THE P.E.I. Ayrshire Breeders are holding their annual meeting at Birch Court next Wednesday when Agriculture Minister Andrew MacRae will be the guest speaker and present a number of awards to deserving breeders at the noon luncheon. The parley starts at 10 o'clock in the forenoon.

The minister should feel at home speaking to Ayrshire breeders. His background and his present experience as a successful Ayrshire breeder, give him the right to talk with conviction of what the Red and Whites can do in the stable and in the show ring.