

When Firemen Wore Tippetts

Every House Had Its Fire Bucket

In 1827—twenty-eight years before the City's incorporation—an Act "to authorize the formation of a Fire Engine Company for the Town of Charlotte-Town" was duly passed by the Legislature. From the preamble we learn that a fire engine had recently been procured "at a considerable expense to the inhabitants of the said Town, but the same will be of little or no avail in case of fire unless it be worked by persons properly practised in the use thereof."

Accordingly the Act provided for the appointment of a Captain, 1st and 2nd Lieutenants, and thirty-two other "fit and proper persons, residents of the town," to constitute a fire engine company, which was vested with the "care and custody" of the engine, hose and buckets, and was obliged "to keep the same in good order, and fit for service on all occasions." Days of training in each year—six during the summer season, two during winter—were provided for, and members neglecting their duty in this respect were liable to a fine of five shillings. They were exempted, however, from certain other public duties, such as serving as constables and working on the highways.

GARB PRESCRIBED

Every member of the company was obliged "to provide himself with a strong leathern cap of such shape and form as the majority of the persons composing the said company shall appoint, on which shall be painted or marked, in Roman letters, the words 'Fire Engine', and to which cap shall be attached a cape or tippet of leather of not less than eighteen inches in breadth which said cap and tippet shall be worn at all times and times of training, under a penalty of five shillings."

The captain or other officer commanding was obliged, once a year, to publish the names of all persons belonging to the company; also, on request of the Commissioner or any overseer of roads for the Charlottetown district, to furnish "a true and correct list of the said company, with the date of the admission of each member thereof, without being entitled to any fee therefor." For neglect or refusal to comply with this regulation, or for delivering an erroneous list, the officer could be fined twenty shillings.

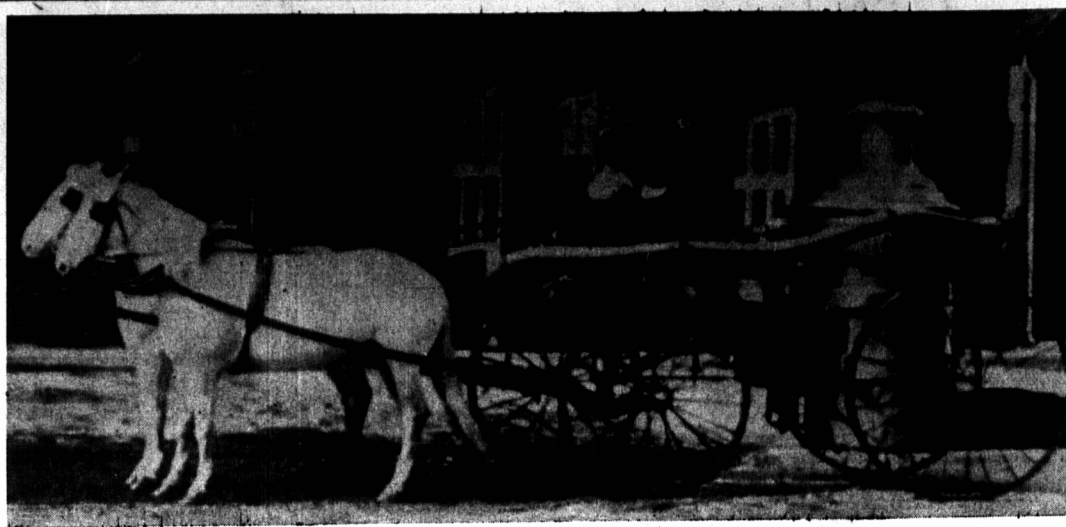
All the fines and penalties under the Act were appropriated "for and towards the keeping of the said Engine, hose, and buckets in repair, and providing new buckets for the same, and also for paying the expense of publishing the names of the persons composing the said company as aforesaid."

Having thus provided what was deemed to be "suitable encouragement" to citizens for their fire services, the Legislature ruled that the Act should continue in effect "for five years and from thence to the end of the next session of the General Assembly, and no longer." It was then re-enacted for a similar period without amendment.

CHIMNEYS & FIRE BUCKETS

About the same period (1830) legislation was passed providing that every chimney in use in Charlottetown "shall be regularly swept every two months between the first day of May and the 31st day of October, and once a month from the last mentioned period until the 30th day of April; and if any licensed chimney sweeper shall, when required to do so, refuse or neglect to sweep any chimney, or shall negligently or improperly do the same, he shall be liable to a penalty of Twenty Shillings for each and every offence."

Provision was made in the same act for the licensing of chimney sweepers by the Fire



The Old Silsby

Craswell Photo (Copy)

Stage Coach Days

The following reference to early transportation facilities is from an address, given about the year 1900, by the late Mr. W. L. Cotton, veteran editor of The Examiner:

"I came to Charlottetown in the month of February in the year 1865. The means of conveyance in and from the City to which the occasional passenger usually resorted was then the mail stage coach in summer and the mail stage sleigh in winter. In the rear end of both coach and sleigh there was attached a sort of bundle to which the mail bags and other baggage were strapped."

"Inside the coach and sleigh there was room for six or eight passengers. Attached to the conveyance there were usually two but sometimes three or four horses. The driver carried from his shoulder strap a tin trumpet which he blew frequently to warn ordinary travellers to get out of the way of Her Majesty's mails."

"An old farmer living in New London told me that he had occasionally come to town drawn by a large, strong and swift heifer, and returned the same day with supplies for his family. But such means of transport were out of date before I came to town. The whole country was then but partially cleared for cultivation. West of Miscouche it was for the most part still underwood; and in the settlements of Muddy Creek, Fifteen Point, Egmont Bay and on to Tignish there were still in much the larger number log houses of primitive construction."

"Throughout the winter there were loads of firewood and ship timber brought into Charlottetown on all the fine winter days, and also into Summerside and many other parts of the Province at which ships were built."

Wardens, such persons being required to give bond for the regular performance of their duties. For the sweeping of each and every flue or chimney they were entitled to receive "the sum of Four Pence, and no more."

It was also provided "that within twelve months from the passing of this Act, the tenant or occupier in every house in the said Town, of the yearly value of Ten Pounds, shall be provided with, and keep, one leathern Bucket, to contain not less than two gallons, on which his name shall be painted; which Bucket shall be kept hung up in the passage or hall of such house, under the penalty of Five Shillings for each and every time the said Bucket shall not be found so hung up in its proper place as aforesaid by the Fire Wardens when they shall visit the said house."

City Hall Contract

The contract for the City Hall on its present location (but without the wing on the Queen Street side which was added in recent years) was awarded in 1887 to Mr. W. H. Fraser, of Charlottetown, at a cost of \$10,176. Messrs. Phillips and Chappell were the architects. The Guardian of March 19 of that year stated that "preparations for commencing the building operations will be made at once, and the structure is to be completed within a year from next June." As planned, the building was to be "of two stories, constructed of brick, and trimmed with Nova Scotia freestone. It will front 60 feet on Queen Street, and 82 feet on Kent Street. A lower eighty feet in height will be placed on the southeast corner, standing out two feet from the main line of the building."

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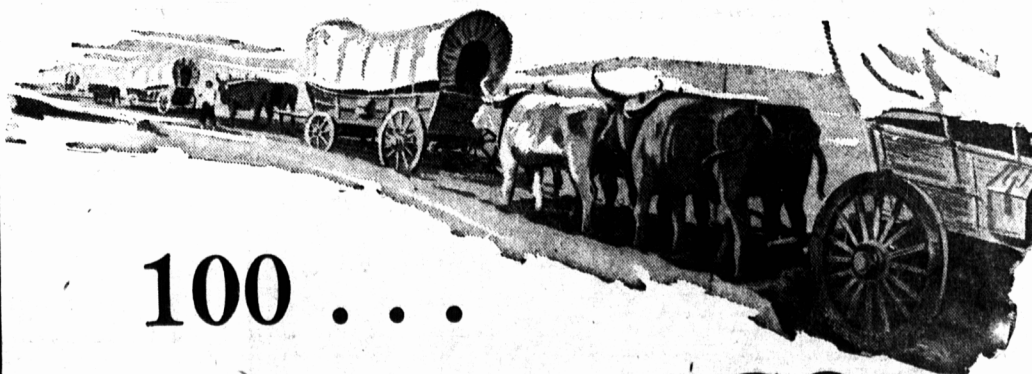
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