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"OLD TIME STUFF"

Reminiscences of the Ottawa of Earlier Days. Personages, Scenes and Incidents Recalled for Evening Citizen Readers

This is a story of barber-shops, beards, and things tonsorial generally, back in 1888—or well over half a century ago.

Moses Desjardin, who tells the story, is still in active business as a barber, and is stated to be the oldest barber in Ottawa, who is active in the calling. He has owned a shop in Ottawa for 44 years, and for eleven other years he served as apprentice and journeyman barber at 35½ years in all. His present place of business is on Rideau St., near the corner of Cumberland, but when he started business 44 years ago he was located on Dalhousie street in the heart of the lumberman's hotel district. This was at the period when the sheetiymen thronged lower town by the thousands. What he doesn't know about the hair and beards of sheetymen isn't worth knowing.

Mr. Desjardin was 20 years on Dalhousie street. Then he moved to Rideau street, and for 24 years he has there conducted a barber shop and tobacco store. On Rideau St. he came to a different trade. Although 68 years of age Mr. Desjardin still wields a subtle razor, and seems likely to be able to do so for some time to come.

Was Real Apprentice

Moses Desjardin was born at Grenville on the Ottawa River, and when thirteen years of age came to Ottawa and was apprenticed to his uncle, the late Charles Desjardin who was one of the pioneer barbers of the town. In those days, as Mr. Moses Desjardin puts it, barbers learned their trade thoroughly. They began as boys of from 12 to 15 years of age and were required to serve an apprenticeship of at least three years and sometimes four, articles of apprenticeship being signed between the barber and the parents of the boy. Frequently the boy lived with the barber, who then supplied him with clothes, and a dollar a week or so for pocket money. If the boy lived at home, he was allowed a larger cash allowance. The apprentices did all the dirty work of the shop, brushed the customers' clothes, and, at time and on they were allowed to father the customers' faces, and by degrees were worked into the intricacies of the trade. Such was the grounding which Moses Desjardin received at his uncle's shop.

Had Long Hours

The Old Time Stuff editor saw Mr. Desjardin about a o'clock last Saturday night, and he was preparing to go home.

"We do not have long hours like we used to," he said, "when I first went into the barbering 54 years ago, all barber shops kept open every night till between nine and ten o'clock and on Saturday nights it was always 12 o'clock when we closed the doors. I say closed the doors, for after the doors were closed a often had to work a couple of hours more. It was a common thing for us to start home at 2 o'clock Sunday morning. You see the clerks in the stores did not get out of it nearly midnight and then they came over to us to get flaed up for Sunday. The customers would often let their chaans back and go to sleep. But the barbers could not go to sleep.

Barbering Different

"Was barbering any different then than now?" the Old Time Stuff asked.

"Very much different," replied Mr. Desjardin. "In the first place fifty years ago there were no pneumatic swivel chairs such as we have now. The chairs in those days tilted back a certain distance. But that was all they did. They did not turn round and they did not raise or lower. The barber as a result had often to shave in a bad light.

"Fifty years ago there were no electric hot water heaters and there was only hot water for the customers in the winter, when the water was heated in tins on the shop stove. Then the stoves went out in the spring the hot water stopped.

Styles of Beards

"Fifty years ago," said Mr. Desjardin, "most men wore some form of beard. Quite a few men still wore the old time full beard, and we did for them was to cut their hair and trim their beard. But as a matter of fact we did not get many the bearded men as customers, of those we did get we did not get rich, as those who wore the full beards generally wore their hair long.

"A lot of men fifty years ago wore a fierce side whiskers (Dundreary) with the chin bare. That was a popular style. Some wore a short stubby side whisker. A few wore a short chin whisker and clean cheeks. Some wore what was known as the Imperial or small pointed chin whisker. Everyman nearly wore hair of some style on the face. The day of clean shaving had not then begun. Big moustaches were popular in those days. Some men thought that the biggest moustache they could raise the more manhood it showed.

Day of Hair Oil

"In those days," continued Mr. Desjardin, "nearly everybody used hair oil. It was generally highly perfumed, and when a man got enough with a barber shop it could easily be told where he had been. There was no singeing in those days, no fancy lotions or face massages. We did not have any electric hair clippers then. In fact we did not have any sort of clippers. All cutting was done exclusively with the scissors.

No Girl Cuts Then

"Fifty years ago it was an unheard of thing to have a young lady enter a barber shop to have her hair cut. There were no Dutch cuts or Buster Brugna then. There was no bobbed hair. The longer a girl's hair was the more pleased she was of it.

Barbers' Wages

"Barbers did not earn big wages fifty years ago. Good barbers earned from six to ten dollars per week, and a man had to be a good barber to make ten dollars. Customers did not 'tip' much at that time, as a barber had to depend on what he made of his salary.

"The only thing that hasn't changed about a barber shop," concluded Mr. Desjardin in the place. "The razors are just about the same. They probably will not change unless somebody invents an electric razor and attempts in that direction have so far been failures."

THE CIVIL SERVICE IN THE EARLY DAYS

The Civil Service is getting to be old. Time Stuff so far as Ottawa history is concerned. It is 58 years since the first group of Government of Canada packed up their household effects at Quebec and prepared for the journey to Ottawa to settle into what was the first home of the government of the united provinces of Upper and Lower Canada. Previous to 1865 and back to 1841 the civil servants employed by the government of Canada used to move from Capital to Capital about every four years, as the government shifted. They were allowed the cost of moving their household belongings and also the passage money for themselves and families. But that concession did not make the job any the more pleasant. It can be imagined that when the civil servants who were then at Quebec heard that they were to move to Ottawa, no more to roam they were greatly pleased.

Small Beginning.

When the civil service was first established here in 1866, it was a small affair, the total staffs of all the departments numbering a little over 200. In 1868 after Confederation the total had increased to about 400. Of course there were but so many departments then, nor had the existing departments so many branches as they have now. The departments which existed at first under the government of the Dominion of Canada were as follows:—

Civil Secretary's office (later called Governor General's office).
Offices of the Senate.
Offices of the House.
Dept. of Justice.
Dept. Secretary of State.
Dept. Secretary of State for the Provinces (later changed to Interior Dept).
Customs.
Marine and Fisheries.
Finance.
Auditors Office.
Receiver General's Dept. (now only a branch of the Finance dep.)
Agriculture, Immigration and Statistics.
Militia.
Post Office Dept.
Public Works (the Railways and Canals were a part of the P. W. Dept. till 1879).

Steady Growth

Since 1867 many departments have been added and the personnel of the service has grown steadily, till today it numbers well over six thousand. The departments which have been added since 1867, are:

Archives in 1873 (under the Secretary of State).
Public Archives, 1904.
Labor Dept., July, 1900 (Hon. Mr. Mulock first minister).
Naval Service 1910 (Hon. Mr. Brodeur, first minister).
Mines Dept. 1907 (Hon. Wm. Templeman first minister). The Geological Survey had previously been in existence, but had been under the Interior Dept.
Railway and Canals 1879 (formerly under the Public Works. Sir Charles Tupper first minister).
Dept. of Marine and Fisheries 1909 (Hon. Charles Murphy first minister).
Trade and Commerce, 1892 (Hon. Mackenzie Bowell first minister).
Solicitor General's Dept. (J. J. Curran, later Judge Curran).

Permanent Commissions.

In the past 58 years there have also been added to the Civil Service various permanent commissions which have increased the number of civil servants greatly. These include:

Railway Commission, 1904.
Capital District Commission 1913.
Advisory Art Council 1907.
Civil Service Commission 1908.
Commission of Conservation 1907.
International Boundaries Commission 1909.

Very few of those who moved here from Quebec in 1865 are alive and none of the originals are still in active service. Many of those who were Junior clerks or held subordinate positions in 1865 or at Confederation, later were promoted and were men of importance in the service when they were superannuated or passed away.

The Originals

In subsequent articles the names of those who composed the staffs of the various departments in 1867 will be given. Most of them are dead, but their sons and grandsons and daughters and granddaughters are still here and playing their part in the city's growth and progress. Other interesting matter concerning the service will also be presented.

SOME GENERAL FACTS

In 1835 the whole month of December was so mild as to pass for June weather. In the skyline the sun shone warmly, and at nightfall the river was not enough to freeze over the smallest stream. In December, 1837, almost similar conditions prevailed. The river was open and boats ran as usual. December, 1848, was also very open. Christmas Day, 1853, was "green." It poured rain all day.

* * *

The names of the chief passenger steamers which plied the River in the period from 1845 up to the time of the Empress were: the Union, the Shannon, the Porcupine, the Bytown, the Phoenix, the Queen Victoria, the Alexandra, the Mazaline, and the splendid boat the Peerless, which many of the present residents of Ottawa will remember.

* * *

The town clerks of Bytown in succession were: John Aylwin, Francis Scott, John G. Bell and Edward Burke.

* * *

In the early Bytown days there were no paid magistrates as now. A very few justices were appointed in those days, the local justices of the peace, who had to act, had very little to do. The mayor was called on to act when occasion demanded.

* * *

From 1833 to 1853 Bytown boasted a successful dramatic company, which was organized by William Pitman Lett. This company gave popular entertainments in the town hall. One William Gibson was said to be remarkably good as an Irish comedian.

* * *

It is stated by some old writers that the way By Ward came to be named was that when Bytown was changed its name to Ottawa, many felt that the then chief ward of the new city should perpetuate the name of Col. By, and so the old "North Ward" was given the new name of By.

* * *

When Ottawa was first incorporated a city in 1855, each ward elected two aldermen and two councillors.

THE SHINERS

The "Shiners" seem to have played a big part in the early history of Bytown. From the stories which have been handed down it is not quite clear whether they were an organized society, or a company of toughs who were drawn together by mutual interests and sentiments. From various accounts, it appears as though their chief object in life was to harass the French. Most of the Shiners seem to have been rivermen, or at least woodsmen of one sort or another. They are said to have been largely Irish. But in any event they seem to have been equal to any sort of dare-devilry, and they left behind them a very unsavory reputation for lawless ness. Leopoldine Pigeon, in an article written last year for the Women's Historical Society, says: "The Shiners thought nothing of moving the furniture out of a house in the middle of a night, if the owner was an enemy, of knocking down inoffensive passers-by, of spoiling water in wells, of setting stables on fire, of undressing children in the streets . . . in the snow. On one occasion they pasted a dead cow of a hearse and left it on the street, after dispersing the frightened followers. Bytown was then a byword of shame and terror to the rest of Canada. To strangers in Bytown alive was like coming out of a den of lions hitherto. When a man or boy was lost his friends would say, 'He has been killed in Bytown' (lost)."

Other writers tell of men having been thrown over the Chaudiere falls by the Shiners.

Of the Shiners, William Pitman Lett, writing in 1875, said: "In 1849 the 'Shiners' began their little reign of terror, and continued on their exploits for seven or eight years. There was no religious feeling—as some have erroneously imagined—in the Shiner business. It was originally a combination of Old Country ruffians to drive the French Canadian raftsmen out of the lumber trade; the shipments from Lower Canada, at the time, very far outnumbering the Old Country shantymen. A great many lawless acts were doubtless perpetrated by the Shiners, and revenged upon them also; but very few of the fabulous atrocities, attributed to either side, had any foundation in fact. With the advance of civilization and the advent of Art Council 1867, Shinerism, and many other relics of a darker time, disappeared."

EARLY TELEGRAPHS

Ottawa did not have any telegraphic communication with the outside world till about 1847. In 1845 the Bytown and Montreal Telegraph Co. was organized, but the company consisting almost exclusively of Ottawa men, Mr. Edward McGillivray, a leading grocer, was president. It took about two years to build the line, which followed the Montreal road. Mr. Duck, one of the contractors, became the operator. The office was in a small room in the Brown block on Sparks street, near Elgin. Mr. Duck, who was a young man, studied law while attending to the telegraphing. He eventually became a lawyer and practised here for years.

NEW YORK STYLE

In a description of Ottawa issued in 1854 by Mitchell and Co., the following appears:

"Ottawa is very well off for hotels, the Royal Victoria and Russell are kept in the best style of the New York hotels. Matthews' hotel as a commercial house is not to be excelled. Besides there are several family hotels, such as Armstrong's and Graham's, where country families can find quiet and comfortable rooms. Ottawa boasts of six very good hotels.

WHO WAS WHO 35 YEARS AGO

Thos. Beamest was the founder of the Beamest and Johnson gent's furnishing business. He was the father of T. Arthur Beamest, barrister, and Herman Beamest, of Beamest and Johnson. Mr. Beamest retired from business about 20 years ago and went to England to live. He was a man of high business integrity.

Charles Stuart, of the Northwest Mounted Police office, was a singer and amateur actor of note.

W. R. Stroud was one of the pioneers of the exclusive vending of teas and coffees. He was a leading Mason and an alderman for many years.

Edward Willans was for some time secretary of the Y.M.C.A. in the old building on O'Connor street. He went to Toronto. While here he was successful as secretary.

William Kehoe was governor of the county jail. He was the father of Louis J. Kehoe, barrister.

Frank Dey, of the Dey boathouse, was a sculler of note. The Deys and the Jones were the successors of the kings of the canal.

William E. Ditchburn was a newspaper printer and a well known lacrosse player in the earlier days. He went to Winnipeg.

E. Wilmot was well known as a Sparks street stationer and as a leading Baptist. A daughter married Rev. Mr. MacNaul.

Gen. Charles F. Winter 35 years ago was a clerk in the Fisheries Department.

W. W. Stumbles was a clerk in the Marine Department. He was prominent in fraternal society circles and well known as a religious worker.

Rev. Thos. Garrett was for years rector of St. Luke's church.

Andrew Cuddie, King street, was one of the leading van owners of the day and was widely known. He and James Curry controlled most of the moving business of the period. A Mr. W. H. Cuddie, was also well known as a carter. He went to Calgary.

H. L. Corbett, the present city treasurer, was then an officer of the Ottawa Cartage Co.

Patrick Brankin was one of the leading Irish merchants of Ottawa. He was in the butter business for many years on By ward market and was highly respected.

Rev. P. Owen Jones was then rector of St. George's church.

Wm. A. Lamb was a leading insurance agent and church worker.

Charles Medlow, clerk in the Department of Secretary of State, was known as a very clever illuminator of addresses and enroll work.

John Mercer was known to thousands in Ottawa. He was the leading chimney sweeper of the period, and had many friends.

Roger D. (Hody) Ryan, the pioneer lumberman, was still here, but was living the retired life.

George Stockdale was a leading building contractor of the period and a prominent member of St. Andrew's Society. He lived on Rideau street.

Arthur Thornton, of Thornton and Tassian, was then a leadsmith in the government workshops.

Dr. H. P. Wright was at this period achieving fame as a physician. He was generally regarded as an ideal family physician. His death was greatly regretted by everybody.

Frank Toller was controller of Dominion currency. He was for a number of years colonel of the Governor-General's Foot Guards, and was prominent socially.

Sir Joseph Pope was then private secretary to Sir John Macdonald.

John Lucy, the stationer, who used to keep store on the south side of Wellington, near Pooley's Bridge, was still alive. Mr. Lucy was a very religious man and though considered eccentric by non-religious people was very highly respected. Everybody knew John Lucy.

Robert W. Crouch was well known as the custodian of the Ottawa Literary and Scientific Society.

Chas. A. Christie was one of the early leaders of the city. He also manufactured soft drinks.

Sam Cassidy was then in his prime as the proprietor of the Balmoral restaurant. Many a juicy steak (and concomitants) were consumed in the old days at the Balmoral.

T. C. Boville, the retired deputy minister of finance, was then a clerk in the savings branch of the department.

The Editor of the Old Time Stuff will be glad to hear from any reader who has any documents bearing on the early history of Bytown or any relics of the early days. The editor will also be glad to get in touch with anyone who can relate any unpublished stories of men or things which would be likely to interest readers.

COLOGNE, Aug. 1.—Cologne is without newspapers and also is exhausted from lack of paper. Famine. This is due to a strike of the pressmen in sympathy with the striking printers who are demanding 2,500,000 marks weekly as wages.

That Reminds Me

Mr. Lloyd George has special articles on world affairs which appeared in last Saturday's Evening Citizen, passed caustic comment on the Lausanne treaty with the Turk. Mr. Henry Morgenthau, former United States ambassador to Turkey, has since declared that it was almost pitiful that United States citizens had to do with their interests, though their eyes were allowed to observe how this wily Turk triumphed at this conference over all other countries.

That reminds me. It is over twenty years now since I heard a former British ambassador, who resigned, or otherwise, under the stalwarting title of the Rt. Hon. Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant Duff, G.C.S.I., P.C., F.R.S., say that a Turkish minister of foreign affairs once said to him at Constantinople: "If Europe ever presses too hardly upon us we have one sovereign remedy; we have only to unbrace the Turkish guard at the Gate of the High Seguard and let the Russians in for a half dozen wars." Sir Grant Duff added that scarcely anyone doubted that sooner or later Rome and Moscow would have to try conclusions on the fields of Palestine.

That used to be a common impression, especially among those who in pre-war days had seen some of the bitter rivalry manifested on the sacred sites by the contending sects. Since then, however, the Turkish guard has been forcibly removed, and the expected has not happened as a result. Rome, it is to be feared, has been too obsessed with the clash between Fascisten in Constantinople and Moscow with the battle between Fascisten and Capitalists in Moscow to concern themselves with the Palestinian fields. A British guard now holds the balance between the rival claims of religionists.

The incident was illuminating, however, as revealing something of the inner workings of the Turk mind. In the meanwhile he would appear to have found a more effective way of accomplishing his designs.

* * *

Lloyd George says that no one claims that the Lausanne treaty is peace with honor. It is not even peace, he says.

Again: that reminds me. It was from the famous Berlin conference of 1878 that Lord Beaconsfield returned with a treaty which he flatly boyantly declared to be: Peace with Honor. Within two years Gladstone, who had succeeded to the premiership, had to deal with the wily Turk. The result, as described by Lord Rosebery in one of the most vivid incidents recorded by him in his famous biography of the great Liberal statesman. Morley says:

"At the close of the session of 1880, ministers went to work upon the unfulfilled portions of the Berlin treaty relating to Greece and Montenegro. Those stipulation were possible, the case of Montenegro, as to Greece they were less definite, but they had obtained a promise of more or less territory by Turkey. They formed the basis of Lord Salisbury's correspondence, but his arguments and representations were without effect.

"Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues went further. They prepared and obtained a demonstration of the Italian vessel on behalf of Montenegro. Each power sent a man-of-war, but the concert of Europe instantly became what Mr. Gladstone called a farce. For Austria and Germany made known that under no circumstances would they fire a shot. France rather less prominently, took the same course. This defection, which was almost beautiful on the part of Austria and Germany, convinced the British cabinet that Turkish obduracy would only be overcome by force, and the question was how to apply force effectually with the least risk to peace.

"As it happened, the port of Smyrna received an amount of auxiliary force quite considerable for the Porte to spare it. The idea was that the united fleet at Cattaro would straightway sail to Smyrna and lay hold upon it. Russia and Italy were friendly. France had in a certain way assumed special cognizance of the Greek case, but did nothing particular. From Austria and Germany nothing was to be hoped. On October 4 the Sultan refused the joint European request for the fulfillment of the engagements entered into at Berlin. This refusal was despatched in ignorance of the intention to coerce. The British government had only received upon coercion in concert with Europe. Full concert was now out of the question. But on the morning of Sunday, October 10, Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville learned with as much surprise as delight from Mr. Goschen, then ambassador extraordinary at Constantinople, that the British had heard of the British proposal of force, and apparently had not heard of the two refusals.

"On learning how far England had gone, he determined to give way on both the territorial questions.....

"Between eleven and twelve Lord Granville came in with the news that the note had arrived and all was well. 'The whole of this extraordinary volte-face,' as Mr. Gladstone said with some complacency, 'had been effected within six days, and it was entirely due, not to a threat of coercion from Europe, but to the knowledge that Great Britain had asked Europe to coerce.'"

Was it such recollections, one wonders, that caused Lloyd George such heart-burnings with regard to the acknowledged triumphs of the Turk at Lausanne at the expense of all the rest?

* * *

Anyway it reminds me: said Aesop Osmanlieri: "My son, you will be surprised with how little wisdom the world is governed."

—BY THE WAY.

Civic Holiday Service.

On Civic Holiday, Monday, August 6, Canadian Pacific Railway will make the following alterations in train service:

No. 148 leaving Maniwaki at 1.25 p.m., will be cancelled, and a special train operated leaving Maniwaki at 6.00 p.m., arriving Ottawa 10.30 p.m., running on time o'. No. 149 and making all stops.

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3 Piece Suites Reg. $190 For $127.50
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"The Instrument of Distinction"
These phonographs will meet the requirements of every admirer of artistic instruments that are built for service.
The cabinets are strongly made of the best 5-ply veneer stock and highly finished. High grade silent motor. Automatic stop. Tone control. Spruce sound amplifier, etc.
Unequalled for perfection in tone, production, beauty of design and excellence in cabinet work.
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