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VOLUME 9
NUMBER 9

SACKVILLE, NEW BRUNSWICK, APRIL, 1919

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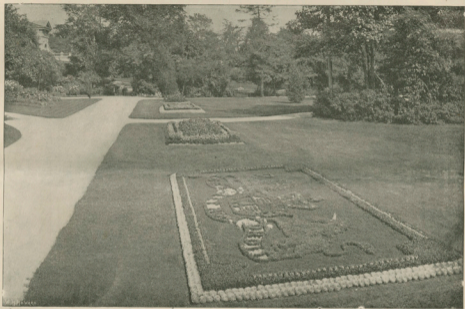
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PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY

THE BUSY EAST PRESS, LIMITED
SACKVILLE, N. B., CANADA



ARTISTIC FLOWER BED IN THE HALIFAX PUBLIC GARDENS

A HISTORY OF THE HALIFAX PUBLIC GARDENS

NESTLING under the granite ramparts of the Citadel, the Halifax Public Gardens stretch south and west, a beauty spot unsurpassed in America. The Gardens were a portion of the public common granted to the use of the first settlers for wood and pasture.

When Agricola's letters on Agriculture stirred the people to efforts in the direction of more scientific farming, a number of leading citizens of Halifax formed a Horticultural Society, as a sort of adjunct to the Agricultural Society of the County, and obtained nine acres of this Common for the purpose of laying out a garden. In 1865, a further part of the Common land was drained and levelled up, in the vicinity of what is now the lake, and a flower bed laid out. This tentative effort was due to Mr. John MacCullough, a Silversmith, and also an Alderman of the City of Halifax. This gentleman, while on a visit to Paris in 1865, noticed a square which attracted his attention and in which were set out flower beds; he drew a rough sketch of it and when he returned home had a copy of the design laid out on the improved Common land.

In 1867, the City Garden was formally opened to the public by Sir William Young, the Chief Justice of Nova Scotia. This garden comprised only two acres and was situated on the east side of Griffin's Pond, now known as the lake.

In 1870, William Barron, a Halifax merchant and a lover of flowers, became Chairman of the Common and Garden Commission, and he and his conferees set to work to improve the gardens—flowers were planted and borders cut. The plants and flowers were the gift of Alderman Barron and friends. Band concerts were inaugurated on this small City Garden plot. The western side of which is now a beautiful part of the garden was then nothing but a swamp. About this time (1873), the late Superintendent, Richard Power, was appointed. Halifax was specially fortunate in having obtained a Superintendent so thoroughly qualified to design and carry out such work. Mr. Power after serving the City in the capacity of its Chief Gardener has earned a well deserved respite from toil, and though superannuated still keeps a loving oversight over his beloved garden, the child of his creation. May his memory live long in the hearts of the present and future generations who profit by the wise ordering of things, which have been chiefly due to him. Evidence of good taste and fine judgment are seen on every hand, and the best use has been made of the opportunity to make art co-operate with nature.

On Alderman William Ackhurst becoming Chairman of the Board of Works, all City ashes, street

scrappings and clay from building foundations were dumped in the swamp to fill it up. In 1874, Mr. Ackhurst asked the City Council to grant \$2,000 to improve and lay out the filled up ground; walks were laid out, the land drained; and all being finished, it was opened to the public in August of the same year. This work was highly praised by the public. The first Sunday was a great day—thousands visiting the gardens on that occasion.

The Horticultural Society occupied what is now the southern part of the Public Gardens. In 1874 this society was heavily in debt—the members being called upon to meet the deficits and as they had never received any profits, a meeting was called by John MacCulloch to ask Parliament to pass an Act giving authority to sell out in building lots. Their plan was to open an entrance eighty feet wide from Spring Garden Road to where the small building now stands, and have this as a new entrance to the City Garden, selling the lots on Spring Garden Road. Fifty feet on the City Garden was leased from the Society and the lease had just expired. The lots on the west side of South Park Street to Spring Garden Road were owned by the estate of the Hon. Joseph Allison and were given to the City to be used as a garden as long as they continued as such. There was also a part of the Children's Play Grounds on the west side which was City property.

It was proposed to the City to sell the Horticultural Society's garden—Mayor Sinclair, William Barron and William Ackhurst, acting for the City. Mr. Michael Dwyer, Stephen Tobin and others convinced the Civic Committee that it would kill the garden owned by the City to have buildings and fences erected around it, and carried a motion to sell out the Society's property. A price of \$15,000, covering the Society's indebtedness and giving \$60.00 to each member closed the bargain. Mr. Dwyer had hard work to carry his proposition, as many members of the old Society were anxious to get return for their money beyond the price stipulated. The following year Michael Dwyer donated \$400.00 to the Public Garden Commissioners, as also did Jarvis Hart.

In October, 1874, John R. Murray, of the firm of Boggs & Murray, Hardware merchants, became Chairman of the Garden Commission. The City was now in possession of the whole property as now comprised in Garden square (17 acres). The Commission had on hand 2,000 trees which came in use for the Public Gardens, which was quite bare of trees at that time. A row of trees was planted on the Summer Street side of the land and a row of elms and one of



VICTORIA DIAMOND JUBILEE FOUNTAIN (HALIFAX PUBLIC GARDENS)

limes also, and two rows on Sackville Street walks. These trees now form the lovely avenues in that portion of the Gardens. At the time of the acquisition of the Horticultural Garden, Croquet and Archery Clubs used what is now the Children's Play Ground. These sports being supplanted by the new society game of Lawn Tennis, a court was laid down (the first Lawn Tennis Court in Canada). At these games two Military bands played each week.

In 1875 work was started to connect the two gardens and lay them out on a uniform plan. That year a sale of all the superfluous stock belonging to the old Horticultural garden was called and the surplus stock sold and the receipts appropriated towards improvements. In the middle of June, beds were planted and shrubbery laid out. The same year the Commission was remodeled by an Act of Parliament and extra Commissioners added. The old green house in the society part of the Garden was torn down and the present building erected at the cost of \$2,000. In 1878-9 the pond was changed from a square to a miniature lake at the suggestion of Superintendent Power who supplied the plan. The old skating rink, also the first in Canada, was remodelled at a cost of \$15,000.

On the arrival of the Marquis of Lorne and Princess Louise, a concert was held in the Public Gardens, under their patronage, which proved a decided success. His Excellency suggested an increase of salary for the Superintendent which was agreed to.

In 1884, Richard Power, Superintendent, visited Great Britain and Ireland to obtain new ideas in relation to Parks and Gardens in those countries. His expenses were defrayed by public subscription. Mr. Power sailed on August 24th and visited all the noted parks and gardens in the three countries mentioned and got many new and valuable ideas.

In 1887, the year of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, \$800.00 was provided for the erection of a band stand. The plan was drawn by Henry Bush, Architect, and built by contract. The statues and bases in the Gardens were donated by Sir William Young and placed in position Jubilee Year. The gates at the Pavilion, which were intended for the main entrance, were purchased in Scotland, they cost \$600.00.

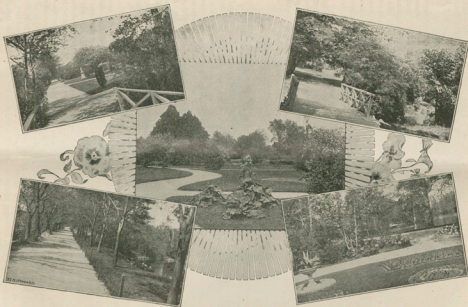
In 1901, the City Council granted \$1,600 for the purchase and erection of the South African Memorial fountain, which was unveiled by Mrs. Alfred Jones, the wife of His Honour, Lieutenant Governor Jones. A new iron fence at the cost of \$10,629 replaced the old wooden one which formerly enclosed the ground. The gates at the Pavilion were removed to the entrance at the corner of Spring Garden Road and a tablet commemorating the North West Rebellion affixed to the gates. In 1897, His Excellency, Lord Aberdeen and Lady, unveiled the Victoria Diamond Jubilee fountain in the presence of the Lieutenant Governor,

General Commanding the Admiral and the members of the Legislature, Judges of the Supreme Court, Presidents of the National Societies, Mayor of Bristol, England, etc. School children were all assembled on a platform and sang choruses of patriotic songs. During the unveiling speeches by the Earl of Aberdeen, Mayor of Bristol, Lieutenant Governor and Mayor Stephens, were made.

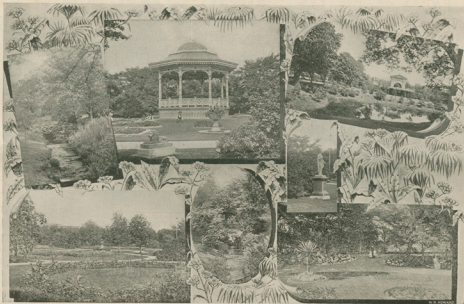
If you enter the Gardens from the north gate you will pass a bronze monument erected to commemorate the natives of Halifax who died in the South African war. Passing down the path in a diagonal direction you come upon a charming little lake with swans, wild geese and ducks swimming up its surface, miniature steamers and sailing vessels rest tranquilly in its quiet surface. East and west of the water wild flowers spread a fragrant carpet around and gay little songbirds are in concert on the trees. On the west side of the upper portion of the Gardens is a tall bronze fountain, in whose basin swim gold fish. All around are serpentine beds of variegated flowers delighting the eye of the beholder. The visitor will stop to drink in the beauties of the delightful scene, or watch the children feeding the fowl, in the lake, or about them on the green sward.

Schooner Launched in New Glasgow

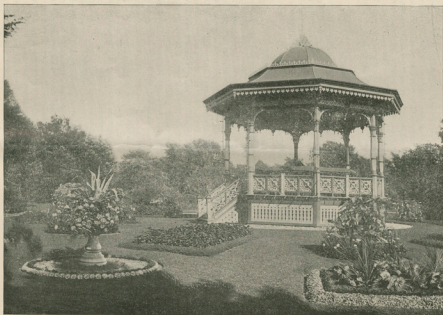
The Eastern Chronicle under date of April 22nd says:—"The McNeil vessel slid from the launchways at New Glasgow on Saturday afternoon as graceful as any of the long list of previously constructed East River vessels ever did. Due to the weather man the launching had been postponed from Thursday, but he delivered certain goods on Saturday. In these days of prohibition, launchings are dry affairs, so Saturday as the tidy vessel rushed into the water, it was during a sharp downpour of rain. A prettier model never floated on the river and she now lies at the public wharf having the finishing touches applied. She is three-masted and will be registered at 500 tons. The length of keel is 145 feet. Mr. Charles McNeil is surely entitled to every congratulation in the success of his building operation, much credit for the haste is also due to Mr. Oller Preuther who is constantly in the yard. To have turned out such a handsome craft would be an honor to any old experienced builders and it is certain that this ship will score well as a sailer and cargo carrier with any provincial owned schooner. The pity is that the ship marks what in all probability will be the last of wooden ships to be constructed in this county of Pictou. That good luck will attend this vessel on her sailings is a not too generous wish, and more especially so, as she will fly the McNeil flag and her sailings be directed from New Glasgow."



PICTURESQUE VIEWS OF THE HALIFAX PUBLIC GARDENS



BEAUTY SPOTS IN THE PUBLIC GARDENS, HALIFAX



BAND STAND IN THE HALIFAX PUBLIC GARDENS



HALIFAX PUBLIC GARDENS



HALIFAX PUBLIC GARDENS