

The Turnip Trade

THESE WAS A time when Charlotte County was famous for its turnips and, during the last decade of the 19th century, shipped out 150 to 200 railcar loads to Boston every fall - enough, it was said, to fill Boston harbour. The turnip trade seems to have begun with one or more potato blights in the 1840s, encouraging farmers to avoid the fate of the Irish emigrants then filling the streets and Poor Houses. Newspaper records show that the Boston turnip market dipped seriously in the 1890s, perhaps because of Canadian turnip dumping, and did not seem again to reach the high point of the 1880s. ~

Standard

Aug. 21, 1850

Turnip Culture

Now that the Blight has again attacked the potatoes, it should be evident to all that no confidence should be placed in that crop so long as it is subject to a disease so destructive and prevalent. Our farmers should turn their attention to the cultivation of turnips for feeding and fattening cattle, and endeavour by so doing to keep up that necessary rotation of crops so much recommended by practical agriculturalists in Great Britain. They should be convinced, by this time, that so long as they adhere to their present system of tillage, they cannot expect to progress onward, or "hold their ground" with the advancing spirit of the age. They should therefore abandon, at once and for ever, that delusive self-sufficiency and confidence in their own knowledge, which has hitherto kept them poor, and learn the true genius of husbandry from the agricultural experience of England and endeavour by imitating as far as practicable the example of farmers in that country, to change their present prostrate and miserable condition, as a body, to one of prosperity and happiness.

*Standard***Nov. 5, 1856**

The parish of St. Andrews the present season has raised more turnips than in any previous year. Upwards of eight schooners have been loaded with these roots, for Boston, Eastport, Calais, St. John, and St. Stephen, and at the present time there are two vessels at the Market Wharf taking in turnips. One vessel left thereon Friday with 800 bushels, besides a large number of carrots and parsnips in barrels. We hope our agricultural friends will realize good prices.

*Standard***Nov. 10, 1869**

For the last week the annual "Turnip Chorus" has been kept up from early morn to dewy eve. Double teams loaded with turnips have been driven to the vessels at the wharves for shipment to St. John, Boston and New York. The quality is good but the roots are not so large as they were last year. We will endeavor to ascertain the quantity shipped this fall, which from appearances must be very large; and trust the farmers will realize remunerative prices for their labor pursued under so many disadvantages during the season just passed.

*Pilot***Oct. 19, 1882**

The boom of the turnip wagon is now heard on the streets.

*Pilot***Feb. 23, 1888**

Some idea may be formed of the large benefit derived from the turnip crop of the Parishes of St. Andrews, St. Croix and St. Patrick, from the fact that during the past winter Mr. B. F. Estes (representing T. P. Blake, now the Boston Produce Co., Consolidated, of Boston, Mass.) has bought and shipped 68 cars and one schooner load, paying in round numbers \$12,000 in cash. This has gone into the pockets of some 20 farmers in St. Patrick, and 40 in St. Andrews and St. Croix. Mr. Estes has a good record with the farmers as a square businessman. This does not begin to represent the actual quantity raised and exported. A number of farmers who are prominent in

agriculture such as John Mowat, the veteran turnip grower of St. Croix, market their own crop, thereby making all that is to be obtained therefrom. From careful enquiry we have ascertained that there remains still some 10,000 bushels for disposal in the three parishes.

Pilot

Sept. 27, 1888

Mr. E. L. Andrews laid on the editorial table a turnip which weighed 12 pounds. Mr. Andrews understands farming so as to get the best results for his labor. He is shipping large quantities to the Boston market by every steamer.

Beacon

Nov. 28, 1889

Charlotte County's Resources

We doubt if there is another County in the whole Dominion which offers such tempting opportunities for capitalists as does Charlotte County. Where is there another County so rich in natural resources, in mineral wealth, as Charlotte? Coal deposits at Lepreaux, granite and slate quarries at St. George, silver and gypsum at Frye's Island, copper on another island, salt wells at the Bayside, immense cliffs of red sandstone at St. Andrews. What more could we ask for? What more do we want? And yet we have not mentioned the St. Andrews turnip, or the St. Andrews sardine, or the Grand Manan herring and cod, all of which possess considerable importance. Nor have we dwelt upon the glory of its scenery, or its beautiful, capacious harbors the fame of which is almost world-wide. Surely, if there is a happy people on the face of the earth they should be the people of Charlotte. And so they would be, if the capital was at hand to develop the rich resources of the County.

*Beacon***Dec. 5, 1889****About Turnips**

There are some subjects which a newspaper editor in Charlotte County must approach with considerable delicacy. One of these is the temperance question, the other is that of turnips. Nevertheless, there are times when an observant, honest journalist must approach both subjects, no matter what the consequence may be. In the few remarks that we have to make today, turnips and not temperance will be the theme. Everybody living in Charlotte County, especially in the neighbourhood of St. Andrews, knows the economic importance of this article of diet. When we say that \$100,000 are received annually by our farmers for turnips (we base this statement upon figures given us by a prominent agriculturist in the County) a better idea of its importance can be obtained. We hear it stated in some quarters that the St. Andrews turnip of today is not the turnip of ten years ago, that is has deteriorated. Is this true, or is it not true? If it is true, then what is the reason for it? Is it due to any controllable cause? Can it be remedied in any way? Is the ground too rich or is it not rich enough? Are our farmers using proper fertilizers? Are they using the right kind of seed? These are important questions, important from the fact that they bear upon a very important trade, the loss of which would be a great blow to our farming interest. The Agricultural Societies of the County, established for the better providing of food for man and beast, might look into the matter. It is one that, without doubt, should come within their purview. How best to promote the growth of the turnip is a project which might be discussed very profitably. A little ventilation of the subject would do no harm, and might do a great deal of good. We would suggest that our agricultural societies join in offering a prize for the best essay on "The Turnip - How to Promote its Growth, How to Preserve its Quality." Money spent in this way would be well invested.

*Beacon***March 6, 1890**

200 railroad cars are required to ship out last year's turnip harvest.

*Beacon***Aug. 6, 1891****As Others See Us****By Kate Prescott Ward, *Boston Courier***

The land here is well cultivated and the vegetable gardens very attractive, even while we looked in vain for the waving plumes of the cornfields. The fact that one hundred thousand dollars worth of turnips were shipped from here to Boston last year is ample evidence that the quiet villagers are neither dead nor sleeping, though their industry be of so quiet a kind.

*Beacon***June 8, 1893**

The total number of carloads of turnips shipped this season from St. Andrews was 150. Of phosphate, 289 cars were sent out from here.

*Beacon***Nov. 30, 1893**

The Boston turnip market shows no signs of recovery, hence the shipments of late have been small. This week, six cars were sent out.

*Beacon***Jan. 4, 1894**

During December, 43 car loads of turnips were billed from St. Andrews station for Boston. The revenue received by the railway from these footed up to over \$1,570, which was nearly \$300 in excess of the same month in 1892; and over \$760 in excess of 1891. During the past week there have been sixteen cars of turnips sent out from here.

*Beacon***April 12, 1894**

It is estimated that the total turnip crop in this section last season will run close to 75,000 barrels. In the neighborhood of 50,000 barrels have been shipped by Messrs. Hartt and Greenlaw. The principle other shippers are B. F. DeWolfe, G. D. Grimmer and Frank Mowat. Probably 10,000 barrels still remain in the farmer's

cellars. The biggest crop was raised by Martin Greenlaw of Bayside who pulled 1,015 barrels. Alexander Russell, of Bayside, got over 500 barrels off 1 ¼ acres.

Beacon

Jan. 30, 1896

The turnip market has not yet revived from the shock it received by the large influx of "Canadas" into the Boston market. Mr. T. A. Hartt of St. Andrews, who went to Boston last week to feel the pulse of the market, said he found things much worse than his correspondents had stated. The Boston figures now are about 90 cents per barrel. This is equal to 50 cents here, but as the farmers are holding out for 60 cents very few shipments are being forwarded.

Beacon

Feb. 14, 1901

"Fancy St. Andrews turnips, 150 lb. bag, 97 cents," is one of the items on a Boston grocer's ad.

St. Croix Courier

Oct. 30, 1941

Famous Turnips in Demand

A. B. O'Neill shipped a carload of turnips to Boston this fall, the first shipment since 1933. These turnips, which were of splendid quality, were raised on the O'Neill and Redmond farms. On some farms, in spite of the use of borax with the fertilizer, the turnips showed black or woody hearts. An effort is to be made to the the Dept. of Agriculture of the province to analyze the soil in this locality in order if possible to restore turnip raising to the profitable position it held a number of years ago. The market is waiting for unlimited quantities if the quality can be produced. Mr. O'Neill has an order for another carload which is now being loaded at the depot.