

Inside Professor Vinnecombe's Citizen Band

By Mark Mitchell, DMA



Professor Vinnicombe's Citizen Band, Charlottetown, PEI, ca. 1890

This delightful portrait is from the glass negative collection of my great-grandfather, A.W. Mitchell.¹ A copy hung in my father's den for years, which he told me was "Professor Vinnicombe's Citizen Band".

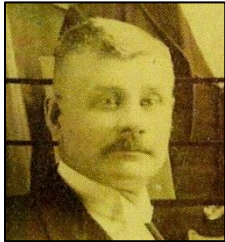
In 1992 I showed my copy to a researcher at the National Archives who was working on the Encyclopedia of Canadian Music for MacMillan. She asked to borrow it and the photograph was published attached to the article on "Charlottetown". It also appears in Fall 1981 issue of The Island Magazine in an article entitled *Musicians of Olden Times*.²

¹ In 1972 my father, Ivan K. Mitchell, donated 225 glass negatives to the PEI Heritage Society. Albert took dozens of photographs of Island life, places and people which are now recognized as an unusually rich heritage and record of PEI at the end of the 19th century. See <http://www.archives.pe.ca/atom/index.php/w-mitchell-fonds-2>

² Hornby, Jim. "Musicians of Olden Times." *The Island Magazine* 10 (Fall-Winter 1981): 20-21.
<http://vre2.upei.ca/islandmagazine/fedora/repository/vre%3Aisleomag-batch2-132/OBJ>

Now this picture hangs in my music studio where I see it every day. One day I took a break from my pastime of family history research and wondered if I could find more information about the men in the photograph. The answer was a resounding yes. My research has filled in some of the blanks in the name list and uncovered a network of relationships³ reflecting the interconnectedness of musicians in this small colonial town of 10,000 inhabitants⁴.

Henry Westaway Vinnicombe (15 March 1843 – 11 November 1928) 47 years old



Professor Vinnicombe

"Professor" Henry Vinnicombe was born in Exeter, Devonshire. His father, John Pewtner Vinnicombe is listed in the 1851 census as a "Music Seller" with his wife, Betsy, eight children (five-year-old Henry is the sixth) and two servant girls.⁵ "He was chorister in Exeter Cathedral from 1853 to 1863, also a member of Exeter Oratorio and Philharmonic societies. Mr. Vinnicombe emigrated to Canada, landing at Quebec in 1864 and came to Prince Edward Island in 1865, where he founded a family the first of that name in Canada. He was married in 1883 to Mary Isabel Carruthers and they had two daughters and two sons"⁶, (all preschoolers at the time of this

³ Most of my genealogical research was conducted on the Family Search website of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <http://familysearch.org>. All of the men discussed in this article along with many links to primary genealogical sources can be found on that website.

⁴ http://www66.statcan.gc.ca/eng/acyb_c1942-eng.aspx?opt=/eng/1942/194201570095_p.%2095.pdf

City or Town	Province	Populations							
		1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941 ¹
*Charlottetown.....	P.E.I.....	7,872	10,345	10,098	10,718	9,883	10,814	12,361	14,460

⁵ 1851 U.K. Census, Exeter, Devonshire, England: Vinnicombe's parents and siblings

Name and Surname of each Person who abode in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1851	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of		Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born
			Males	Females		
<i>John P. Vinnicombe</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>46</i>		<i>Music Seller</i>	<i>Exeter, Devon, Eng.</i>
<i>Betsy E. do</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Mar</i>		<i>58</i>		<i>Exeter, Devon, Eng.</i>
<i>William do</i>	<i>Son</i>		<i>16</i>		<i>Pupil to Father</i>	<i>Exeter</i>
<i>James A. do</i>	<i>Son</i>		<i>14</i>		<i>Scholar</i>	<i>do</i>
<i>Maria C. do</i>	<i>do</i>			<i>10</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>do</i>
<i>Betsy P. do</i>	<i>do</i>			<i>8</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>do</i>
<i>Ann M. do</i>	<i>do</i>			<i>7</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>do</i>
<i>Henry W. do</i>	<i>Son</i>		<i>5</i>		<i>do</i>	<i>do</i>
<i>Edward M. do</i>	<i>do</i>		<i>4</i>		<i>do</i>	<i>do</i>
<i>Thomas do</i>	<i>do</i>		<i>3</i>			<i>do</i>

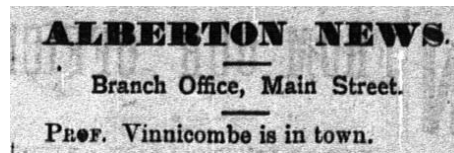
⁶ Charlottetown city website, "Search a property": 55 Fitzroy St.

<http://www.city.charlottetown.pe.ca/searchaproperty.php?propid=1854>

photograph). His Charlottetown home was at 55 Fitzroy Street and the city's official website gives us detailed information on its notable former owner:

"Regardless of who the builder may have been, to the people of Charlottetown this was the house of Henry Westaway Vinnicombe (1843-1928), professor of music. Mr. Vinnicombe played the violin and was the leader of an orchestra that provided music for most festive occasions in the 1870-1910 period, often furnishing accompaniment for Professor S.N. Earle's minstrel shows, light operas, or concerts. Live music was very important part of town life in an age when phonographs were only coming into use. There was the Philharmonic Society, which held concerts at the Opera House (later Prince Edward Theatre on Grafton Street), the Charlottetown School of Music, under the direction of Professor C.M. Wright; the Orchestral Club; and musical productions at the Empire Theatre (market building) and Lyceum on lower Prince Street. Earlier there had been Lobban's and Galbraith's bands. For added inspiration and enjoyment, outside entertainment was brought in. The band of the John Philip Sousa played at the Exhibition building in June 1897. Madame Albani, the foremost opera singer of her day, appeared in "Faust" in June 1906; and the high poetic and drama talent of the renowned Indian princess Pauline Johnson approached music when she entertained at the Opera House in August 1895. But reverend as musical people were in the 19th century, it is no easier to make a living then than now. Professor Vinnicombe was also a pianoforte tuner, and he became a very well-known figure visiting homes to keep pianos in tune."⁷

Charlottetown was not the only beneficiary of Vinnicombe's talents. An interesting but very brief notice appears in the *Guardian* on July 23, 1892.



Evidently the Professor travelled to Alberton, a village in the far north-west part of the Island, and was known and expected in town that July (just a few miles, incidentally, from the hamlet of Campbellton on the western coast, where my grandmother, Marion MacKendrick, was born in 1905). It seems he was in the habit of touring the outer reaches of PEI in the summertime, probably mixing work and pleasure.

⁷ *ibid.* This information-packed entry bears a footnote to the *Guardian* of November 11, 1928, as the source for this information. That is actually Vinnicombe's death date. It makes sense that there would be an extended obituary about him in the newspaper, but it wouldn't appear on the day he died. I have not been able to locate any notice of his death in subsequent issues of the *Guardian* available online.

Grand Millinery Opening....

We're going to keep open house in our store.



Thursday Evening 7.30 O'clock until 10

YOU ARE INVITED

to come in and make "your self at home" walk round, examine our magnificent Millinery Exhibit.

Our display this time will surpass everything heretofore attempted in Charlottetow.

Handsome, untrimmed Hats, newest trimming materials, Wings, Tips, Birds new effects in Silk Vervets and the thousand and one other millinery necessities.

The feature of the evening will be the display of imported models and the beautiful designs by our

Miss McKeiver.

Vnnicombe's Orchestra

will be in attendance all the evening, to furnish music

Positively Nothing Sold

anywhere except in the Millinery Department.

You won't be asked to buy there either.

We will close Thursday Afternoon at 4 O'clock and Re-Open at 7.30 o'clock.

Moore & McLeod.



It seems Vinnicombe played in most public performances of any size in Charlottetown of the day. For example, in February 1892 he played a violin solo in a benefit concert for the Charlottetown Hospital. This concert included a variety of vocal and instrumental solos, readings and recitations. Vinnicombe's performance of Raff's "Cavatina" was the final musical selection (aside from the obligatory "God Save the Queen" of course), a position indicating his prestige.⁸ A review of the concert was effusive: "The Concert in aid of the Charlottetown Hospital on Tuesday night was a grand success musically and financially. One of the best programmes of the season was offered, including the best talent of the city. ... The violin solos by Miss May MacDonald and Prof. Vinnicombe were up to the usual mark and were much enjoyed."⁹

A similarly grandiloquent newspaper notice from 1900 reads: "The entertainment and social held last evening in the basement of the first Methodist church was all that its promoters could wish from the standpoint of attendance, program, enthusiasm, collection and refreshments. ... The closing words of the pastor brought Rule Britannia to the lips of the performers and audience. The orchestra was ably led by Mr. Vinnicombe who kindly assisted and whose valuable services were greatly appreciated by all."¹⁰

More prosaic, but delightfully pragmatic, is the notice of a special evening sales event at Moore & McLeod, shown at left, which advertises in-store entertainment provided by Prof. Vinnicombe's Band: "Vnnicombe's [sic] Orchestra will be in attendance all the evening to furnish music".¹¹ The Professor was certainly not above taking a paying gig, even if it was in a department store.

Two months after the hospital benefit concert mentioned above, he played for a performance of "Elijah" by the Charlottetown Philharmonic Society: "In connection with the instrumental music we need simply name, Messrs Vinnicombe and Hartz, and Mrs. Lloyd as a guarantee of its character. No

⁸ *Charlottetown Guardian* February 16, 1892

⁹ *Charlottetown Guardian* February 17, 1892

¹⁰ *Charlottetown Guardian* January 4, 1900

¹¹ *Charlottetown Guardian* September 28, 1898

true lover of the sublime art, we feel sure, will fail to attend this concert."¹²

However, the performance didn't live up to the reviewer's expectations:

"[Elijah] is one of the most difficult musical productions we have, and its rendition is very rarely attempted except by those who have superior opinions of their musical abilities. To say that the performance last night did not do very well would hardly be doing them justice. In our opinion they did as well as could be expected. But at the same time it must be acknowledged they attempted more than their abilities warranted."

"The choruses were not properly attacked, and the orchestral music was strikingly weak. Six musical instruments are not sufficient for this production. The time, particularly in the solos, was noticeably poor."¹³

Perhaps one reason for the weakness of this performance was that it came just a week after a major concert given by Vinnicombe and his "Citizen Band", the program of which was published in the Guardian.¹⁴

<p style="text-align: center;">IN THE EVENING A GRAND CONCERT WILL BE GIVEN IN THE LYCEUM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PROGRAMME.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PART I.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overture—Medley.....Prendiville Orchestra. Introducing pleasing Cornet, Clarionette and Violin Solos. 2. Tableau—"Justice," "Truth," "Mercy." 3. Operatic Selection—The Power of Love (from Satanella).....Balfe Members of Orchestra. Vocal solo by Mr. A. I. Rice. 4. Vocal Duet—"In Filial Love,".....From Il Trovatore, Verdi Miss Earle and Mr. F. DeC. Davies. 5. Violin Solo—(Selected)..... Mr. Vinnicombe. 6. Comic Song..... Mr. J. Rogers. 7. Baritone Solo (instrumental)—..... Romance.....Bennett Mr. C. E. Rodd. 8. Vocal Solo—Spinning.....Cowan Miss Minnie I. Palmer. 9. Tableau—"Minerva."..... Intermission—Citizens Band. 	<p style="text-align: center;">PART II.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grand Potpourri—How Delightful.....Catlin Orchestra. (This brilliant medley contains many beautiful solos for Cornet, Flute, Baritone and Cello, with a grand finale.) 2. Military March, Song and Chorus—The Fusileers.....Hart & Skelly 17 Brethren. 3. Waltz—Reverie (Superb)Waldteufel Orchestra. 4. Song—Il Marinaro.....Tito Matti Mr. A. I. Rice. 5. Recital—The Ruined Cottage..... Mrs. MacLean. 6. Vocal Solo—Ever Constant.....Leslie Conyers Miss Earle. 7. Character Sketch..... 8. Waltz—Marien (Brilliant) Eilenberg Orchestra. 9. Tableau—"Skill," "Strength,"....."Patience." <p style="text-align: center;">GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.</p> <p>Tickets 50, 35 and 25 cents, to be had at the usual places, and from members of the Order, also at the door. A plan of the Hall may be seen at Watson's Drug Store on and after the 21st inst. Doors open at 7.30 p.m. Concert to begin at 8.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">H. M. DAVISON, Chairman. H. H. BEER, Secretary.</p>
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Oddfellows Natal Day Concert Programme featuring Vinnicombe's Band, April 26, 1892

¹² *Charlottetown Guardian* April 30, 1892

¹³ *Charlottetown Guardian* May 4, 1892. It should be noted that the orchestra in question was evidently not Vinnicombe's. The conductor of the Philharmonic, Mr. Lloyd, also acted as tenor soloist which, according to the reviewer, was an unfortunate mistake. He is said to have filled three roles, so he probably was playing as well as conducting and singing.

¹⁴ *Charlottetown Guardian* April 26, 1892

While more grand in musical forces, the style of the Oddfellows entertainment is similar to the benefit concert two months before: a variety of selections from light classical composers of the day, including instrumental solos, vocal solos, as well as tableaux and dramatic recitations (a la Anne of Green Gables). In fact, it is striking that, aside from Verdi, no great 19th century masters are represented. This is, I believe, what would have been considered popular entertainment of the day.¹⁵

Beginning in 1867, Vinnicombe was involved in providing music for Charlottetown's theatre companies, such as the Amateur Dramatic Club, lead by trained British actress and music teacher Mrs. Stevenson. In these productions, Vinnicombe worked alongside of Samuel N. Earle¹⁶ (undoubtedly, the "Miss Earle" of the April 1892 programme is one of his daughters or a relative). Later, Vinnicombe was music director for the Charlottetown Dramatic Club which was founded in conjunction with the new Masonic Temple Opera House, opened on October 31, 1893. He also provided music for many touring companies and visiting artists performing in Charlottetown.¹⁷

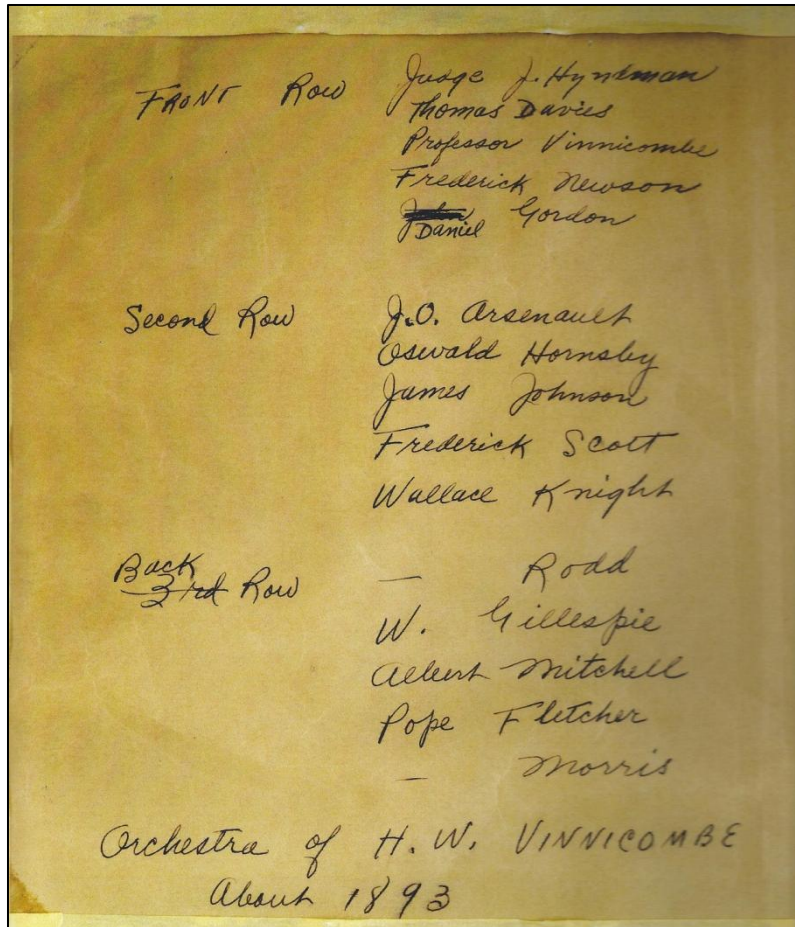
Most interesting for our study of the portrait of Vinnicombe's Citizen Band are the Dramatic Club's performances of H.M.S. Pinafore in 1885, 1890 and 1895. Vinnicombe's Band provided the accompaniment for the spring 1890 performance. As will be shown, the tentative date of the portrait, "About 1893" (see the handwritten list below), which was, perhaps, proposed because of the opening of the Opera House that year, is mistaken. The picture could not have been taken later than 1890. I propose that it was taken in conjunction with the spring 1890 performance of Pinafore, surely a big event for the players and in the musical life of the city.

We have painted a picture of our conductor and the activities of the orchestra. Now let us see what is known of the other members of the band. Key to this is the hand-written list that is found on the back of the portrait:

¹⁵ Peake, Linda M. "Establishing A Theatrical Tradition: Prince Edward Island, 1800 – 1900." *Theatre Research In Canada Vol. 2. 2* (Fall 1981) Along with information on Vinnicombe and his confreres in cultural society, this article describes an entertaining dispute in the Charlottetown newspapers about the artistic value of such musical/dramatic variety shows as the hospital benefit and Oddfellows Natal Day concert.
<https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/tric/article/view/7511/8570>

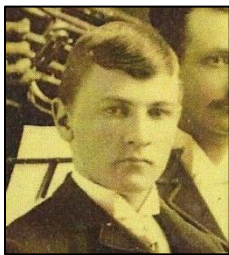
¹⁶ Samuel Noseworthy Earle was born in Newfoundland in 1845 and died in Charlottetown at the age of 100. He had 10 children, including six daughters, but his oldest, Florence, who would have been 24 at the time, is the most likely candidate for this concert. She married in 1902. There were also Marion and Amy, 18 and 16 respectively in 1892.

¹⁷ Peake, op.cit.



List of players in Professor Vinnicombe's Orchestra

Let's take them one at a time, following the order of the above listing: left to right, front row to the back row. I have included their birth and death dates, along with their age at the time of the picture (assuming 1890).



James Duncan Hyndman (29 July 1874 – 11 October 1971) 16 years old

Of all the boys in the band, Judge J. Hyndman was one of the easiest to identify and research. This strapping young man would be near finishing the equivalent of modern high school at the Prince of Wales College. After graduating, James studied law, reading under the direction of Angus McLean, K.C. (King's Counsel) and later a Conservative Member of Parliament for the PEI riding of Queens. James was called to the bar in 1899 and immediately moved west to Manitoba where his



age of 97.¹⁸

uncle was a prominent lawyer and judge. In 1903 he moved to Edmonton to practise law. There he served as a municipal alderman (in 1910 when the photo at left was taken). In 1914 he became the youngest ever Alberta Supreme Court Justice and then in 1931 began a career in Ottawa giving judicial and financial direction to several federal bodies, including the Exchequer Court of Canada. He was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1946 and lived in Ottawa until his death in 1971 at the ripe

Now, for our purposes James' marriage is of great interest. In 1902 he travelled to Ottawa to marry Ethel Davies, daughter of Sir Louis Davies, Minister of Fisheries in Wilfred Laurier's government, future Supreme Court Chief Justice and a native of Charlottetown.¹⁹ Sir Louis was also a prominent Island lawyer in the 1890's, so James certainly would have known him and his family during his law studies there. In fact, James' father, Charles A. Hyndman and Louis Davies were first cousins: they descended from grandfather James McNutt, whose daughters, Amelia and Anne, married Benjamin Davies and Robert Hyndman. One of Charles' brothers was named James McNutt Hyndman; he died at 23 – perhaps our James' was named for him. The young man playing violin next to James is Thomas Davies, little brother (by four years) of Ethel, James' future wife. So both Thomas and Ethel are second cousins to James, James McNutt being great grandfather of all three.

Also of interest to our photograph is James' father, Charles Hyndman. He was in business for years with Thomas Morris in a beer brewing venture. As we will discuss below, the Morris playing percussion in the picture is surely one of Thomas' sons, Harry or John.²⁰ Charles was also in business with Oswald Hornsby Sen., father of our viola player.

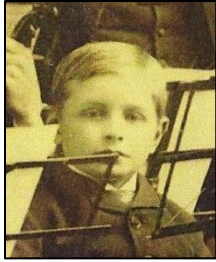
¹⁸ Provincial Archives of Alberta

<https://hermis.alberta.ca/paa/Details.aspx?st=edmonton&cp=506&sort=date&adf=false&ReturnUrl=%2Fpaa%2FSearch.aspx%3Fst%3Dedmonton%26cp%3D506%26sort%3Ddate%26adf%3Dfalse&dv=True&DeptID=1&ObjectID=PR0443>

¹⁹ Blue, John. *Alberta, Past and Present, Historical and Biographical*, Vol.2, 1924.

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/canada/alberta/james_hyndman.htm

²⁰ MacDonald, Edward and Carolyn MacQuaid. "'Spirituuous Liquors': Brewing and Distilling in 19th Century Charlottetown." *The Island Magazine* 58 (2005): 32-39. "The business may then have lapsed until October 1868, when Smith sold it for £2,600 to two young local businessmen, Charles A. Hyndman and Thomas Morris. The two had good credentials. Morris' enterprising father, merchant John 'Brick' Morris, had built the first brick building in Charlottetown. The Hyndman family would soon make their name in the insurance business, but most recently Charles Hyndman had been superintendent of the City's Anglo-American Telegraph Company. He now became manager of the brewery, living literally next door to the plant in a comfortable house on Brighton Road. Hyndman and Morris gave Smith's enterprise a new lease on life. With its tall red water tower, the Brighton Brewery became another local landmark. So was their beer. 'Better than can be imported', boasted their ad in the summer of 1877. 'Just the drink for this weather.'"



Thomas Davies

Thomas Attwood Davies (30 Sep, 1880 – 1943) 10 years old

Young Thomas was my first key to dating this photograph. It should be obvious that his little boy is no thirteen-year-old, which the 1893 date would make him. He looks to be between six and ten years old, putting the date of the portrait between 1886 and 1890. His apparent skill at the violin would argue for the later end of that range.

We have a baptismal record for Thomas and he is listed as a baby in the 1881 Census living with his parents and Ethel and one other older sister. As noted above, Ethel would later marry their second cousin James D. Hyndman, by whom he is seated. Thomas became a land surveyor and moved to Edmonton in 1907 where his sister and brother-in-law lived. In 1917 he moved to Ottawa to work for the Department of the Interior – his father, of course, was also in Ottawa at the Supreme Court. Thomas died in 1931 after an operation, sadly just as James and Ethel were settling in Ottawa themselves.

Perhaps the reader will indulge me a speculation about Thomas' musical heritage. Thomas Attwood (1765-1834) was a famous English composer in his day. The son of a tradesman, he was discovered by a wealthy patron and given a world-class musical education in Italy and Vienna, becoming one of Mozart's favourite students. He held prominent posts in England including composer to the Chapel Royal, and was a personal friend of Mendelssohn who would often stay at his house when visiting England.²¹ Attwood had five children, only two of which we have names for (John and George). A daughter was born in 1797 but nothing is known of her.

Our Thomas' grandparents were Benjamin Davies and Kezia Attwood Watts. Attwood is an unusual name for a girl, so we can safely assume Kezia's mother was an Attwood (it was common practise to give the mother's maiden name to a child as a middle name). Kezia was born in 1819 when the famous Attwood's unnamed daughter was 24 years old. Could she have emigrated to Canada and been the great-grandmother of young Thomas Attwood Davies? Was Thomas Attwood a name given in memory of a famous musical ancestor? The identification of Miss Attwood, born in 1797 (and her husband) could confirm this fascinating link. Genealogists will warn that such a missing link constitutes a big "if", but imagine, a violinist in Vinnicombe's Citizen Band a great-great grandson of one of Mozart's star pupils and a friend of Mendelssohn!

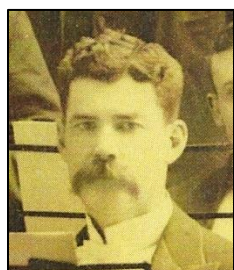
²¹ Stephen, Leslie and Sidney Lee, *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol.1. (1885): 712. Searchable online edition at <http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=1981>



Frederick Newson

Frederick Newson (3 Sep, 1864 – 14 June 1959) 26 years old

One of our second violins, Fred Newson was the oldest of 16 children; he married Edith Alice Good in 1885. The 1901 Census has Frederick farming in North Wiltshire, about 20 km northwest of Charlottetown²². But a few years before, in the spirit of the many entrepreneurs in the band, he was trying his hand at the bicycle retail business. His name appears in a May 1899 Guardian ad:



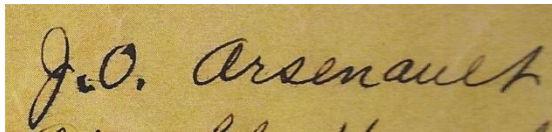
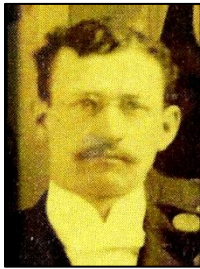
Daniel Gordon

Daniel Gordon (22 April 1852 – 1927) 38 years old

While they were just band mates in 1890, second violin Daniel Gordon and A.W. Mitchell (the cornet player standing in the centre) became related by marriage after World War I. Their sons, veterans John ("Jack") and Ivan, married two of the MacKendrick sisters, Myrtle and Marion. The boys had a mutual friend from the war, Howard MacKendrick, who had the habit of bringing his

²² Canada Census, 1901. <http://data2.collectionscanada.ca/1901/z/z003/jpg/z000123880.jpg>; c.f. 1911 Census <http://data2.collectionscanada.gc.ca/1911/jpg/e002041481.jpg>

buddies over to the house to meet his charming teenaged sisters. He found a match for a third sister, Florence, too. My father's cousin Janet (Daniel's granddaughter) has the picture of Vinnicombe's band proudly displayed in her home. She also had Daniel's tuxedo (recently donated to the Heritage Society), which I have seen: he was a small man, apparently, because his suit looks the size of an average 12-year-old these days. The buttons on his suit bear the inscription of "Gordon and McLellan", Daniel's tailoring business with partner Sextus McLellan. Perhaps they made the suits for other members of the band as well.



Joseph-Octave Arsenault (16 October 1866 – 11 October 1918) 24 years old

J.O. Arsenault would have been 24 at the time of the orchestra photo and four years before his marriage. He was the namesake of his uncle who was a provincial politician and later a Senator, and whose son, J.O.'s cousin Aubin-Edmond, became premier of PEI from 1917-1919.

Arsenault was an educator, particularly in the Acadian community. Around the time of this photograph, having already taught in French schools on the Island and taken specialized courses near Montreal, he was appointed principal of the model school at Prince of Wales College and assistant professor of French at the college. He also superintended French schools in the province and lead an association for the development of French teaching and curricula in PEI.

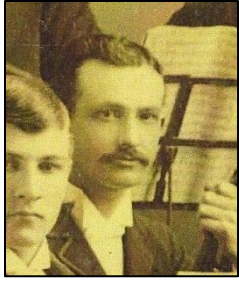


He was an ardent exponent of French language and culture, in the Maritimes in particular. "As long as we are French, as long as we care about our nationality, it will be impossible for us not to find the language of 'la Belle France' sweet and melodious. No sacrifice of any kind whatever should be too costly, then, for us to preserve it."²³

In 1903 he left education for a more lucrative career in the insurance business. Perhaps his acquaintance with the Hyndman family helped in this career change. Undoubtedly his many connections and honest reputation helped him become one of the most successful insurance agents on the Island.

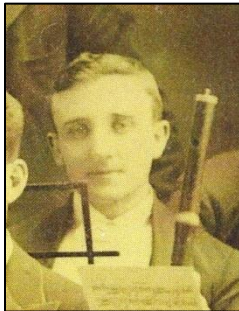
Finally, and most germane to our study, Joseph-Octave Arsenault was always known for his musical talent and enjoyed singing and playing instruments, particularly the piano and cello. He died in the post-war influenza epidemic on 11 October, 1918.²⁴

²³ Blanchard, Francis C. "Joseph-Octave Arsenault." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* Vol. XIV (1911-1920). http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/arsenault_joseph_octave_1866_1918_14E.html



Oswald Arthur Hornsby (12 July 1866 – 5 September 1928) 24 years old

Our viola player was born in Nova Scotia where his father, an Irish-born potter of the same name, had emigrated in the 1850's. In 1879 the family moved to Charlottetown where Oswald Senior would supervise the construction of a new pottery with Frederick William Hyndman, James Hyndman's uncle. The pottery operated from 1880 to 1896 when it was sold to Louis H. Davies, Charles Hyndeman's first cousin and James' future father-in-law.²⁵ According to the 1891 census, Oswald worked as a bank clerk. In 1900 he would marry Beatrice Laurence in Halifax, returning to Charlottetown where he died in 1928.



James Joseph Johnston (2 May 1868 – 1948) 22 years old

Our flautist is holding a lovely wooden flute. In the 1901 Census²⁶, James J. Johnston is listed as an Irish-born barrister (six years older than Hyndman, perhaps he gave the young law student encouragement). On page 45 of the 1937 Charlottetown City Directory²⁷, he is listed as a barrister living at 140 Rochford St. (a large, handsome house just around the corner from 16 Spring Park Road where our photographer, A.W. Mitchell, had lived forty years before). His gravestone in the People's Cemetery in Charlottetown names him James Joseph Johnston, K.C. (King's Counsel).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Webster, D. B. "The Prince Edward Island Pottery, 1880-1898." *Material Cultural Review* 16 (Fall 1982) <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/MCR/article/view/17148/22851#re1no4>

²⁶ Canada Census 1891 http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.item/?app=Census1891&op=img&id=30953_148185-00718; c.f. 1901 Census, <http://data2.collectionscanada.ca/1901/z/z003/jpg/z000123424.jpg>

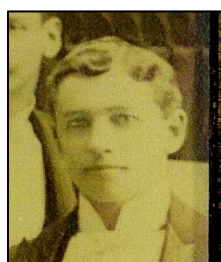
²⁷ "The City Directory of Charlottetown, P.E.I. 1937." Charlottetown, P.E.I.: Prince Edward Island Advertising Agency (1937) <http://www.islandlives.ca/fedora/repository/ilives%3A209090/PDF/ilives%3A209090/Full%20Text.pdf>



Frederick Scott

Frederick Scott

I have not been able to positively identify any sources linked to our keyboard player, Frederick Scott (he is sitting in front of a positive organ, his left arm reaching back to rest on the keyboard). They are both common names, making pinpointing him in genealogical research challenging. McAlpine's City Directory of 1887²⁸ lists two Frederick Scotts, one a hairdresser, the other a conductor for the PEI Railway. Our man looks quite stylish – maybe he was the hairdresser!



Wallace Knight

Wallace L. Knight (12 July 1871 – 14 December 1924) 19 years old

Clarinet player Wallace Knight was the youngest of six children. We can deduce from the 1881 census shown below, that the family immigrated to PEI from England between 1857 and 1863. Interestingly, his older sister Katharine (b. 1863) is listed in the census as a "Music Teacher", so we might assume she gave Wallace, eight years her junior, some of his first lessons²⁹.

NAMES	SEX	AGE	Born within last twelve months	Country or Province of Birth	RELIGION	ORIGIN	Profession, Occupation or Trade
Knight Joseph	M	50	✓	England	Bible Christian	English	Merchant
" Emma	F	50	✓	"	"	"	—
" Emma	F	24	✓	"	"	"	—
" Katharine	F	18	✓	P.E.I.	"	"	Music Teacher
" Jessie	F	16	✓	"	"	"	—
" Joseph	M	14	✓	"	"	"	—
" Harry	M	12	✓	"	"	"	—
" Wallace	M	10	✓	"	"	"	—

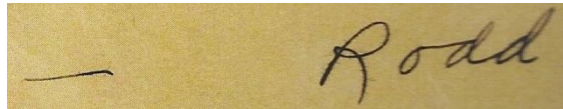
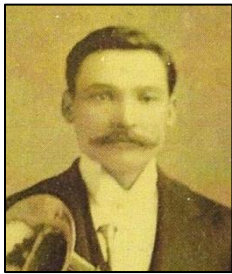
Family of Joseph Knight in the 1881 Canada Census

²⁸ McAlpine's City Directory, 1887-8. p.130 http://islandstories.ca/island_stories_viewer/ilives:190952/

²⁹ Canada Census 1881 <http://data2.collectionscanada.gc.ca/e/e325/e008113123.jpg>; c.f. 1891 Census http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.item/?app=Census1891&op=img&id=30953_148185-00668

Wallace is the second key to dating our photograph. According to the 1920 US Census, Wallace lived in Cleveland Ohio, his daughter Alice was born in 1895 in Massachusetts, and he had immigrated to the US in 1890. So he couldn't have been in the band in 1893. This photo must have been taken before the end of 1890: they performed Pinafore that spring.

The 1920 census also identifies him as a "Commercial Traveller, Oil Company".³⁰ His Pittsburgh Pennsylvania death certificate tells a tragic story: a salesman visiting from Cleveland, he died of tuberculosis after a six day stay at a Pittsburgh hotel. His body was taken back to Cleveland for burial.



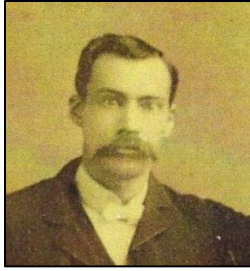
Charles Edward Rodd (4 May 1869 – after 1952) 21 years old

The baritone horn player in our band was a featured soloist in the April 26, 1892 concert playing a Romance by Bennett (probably mid-19th century English composer William Sterndale Bennett). Aside from Vinnicombe, he is the only soloist from the orchestra named on the programme, although other pieces are said to have lovely solos for cornet, flute, clarinet, violin and cello, so many in the band enjoyed the spotlight that evening.

Charles appears never to have married. He moved with his mother to Florida in [November 1915](#). In the [1920 census](#) he was single, living at his sister Lillian Warren's home in St. Petersburg, Florida with their aged parents. Like Wallace Knight, he lived and conducted business in the US for decades (dealing first in harnesses and later leather goods in general³¹) without becoming a citizen. In 1952 he applied for a US social security number at 83 years of age.

³⁰ US Census 1920 <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GRJ8-K1J?mode=g&i=8&wc=QZJY-PMQ%3A1036474301%2C1036860601%2C1037478101%2C1589336162%3Fcc%3D1488411>

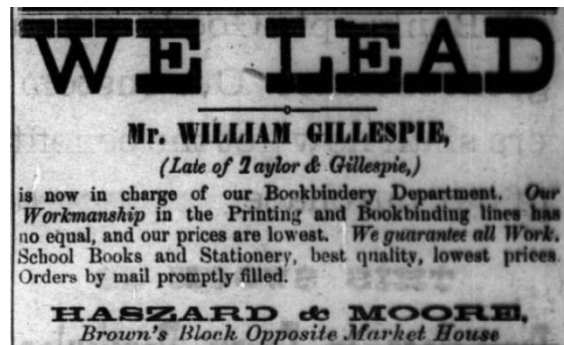
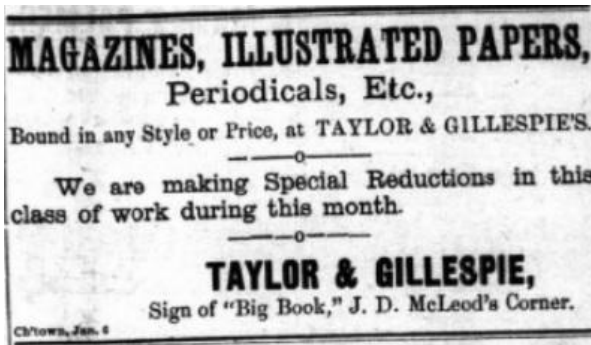
³¹ *Polk's St. Petersburg City Directory 1914*, which reads: C. E. RODD, DEALER IN HARNESES, TRUNKS and BAGS, Special Attention Given to Repairing of Trunks, Straps, Keys and Locks, HARNESS MADE TO ORDER, 511 CENTRAL AVE. https://archive.org/stream/referencedesk_myclearwater_1914/1914_djvu.txt



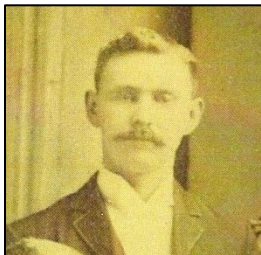
W. Gillespie

William Graham Gillespie (31 January 1858 - unknown) 32 years old

Little is known of William Gillespie, but he appears to be the only W. Gillespie in Charlottetown of the right age for our man. He was born in Montreal, but by at least 1888 he was living in Charlottetown, working as a book binder at Taylor & Gillespie.³² There is a notice in the Charlottetown Guardian of April 29, 1892, that he has just been hired as a bookbinder for Haszard & Moore.



Guardian newspaper advertisements, January 31, 1891 and April 29, 1892



Albert Mitchell

Albert William Mitchell (12 June 1868 – 11 April 1906) 22 years old

Cornettist Albert Mitchell, my great grandfather, was born, raised and died in Charlottetown. He is best remembered now as a gifted amateur photographer at a time when cameras were still relatively rare. Our portrait of Vinnicombe's Citizen Band is from his collection of glass negatives

³² *McAlpine's City Directory, 1887-8.* p.53

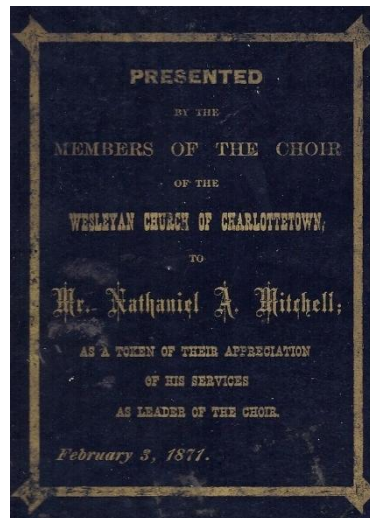
<http://www.islandlives.ca/fedora/repository/ilives%3A190952/PDF/ilives%3A190952/Full%20Text.pdf>

which my father donated to PEI Heritage and Archives in 1972.³³ Many of his pictures have been widely published as a record of life in PEI in the 1890's.



A.W. Mitchell portrait

He came by his musical abilities honestly: his father, Nathaniel Albert Mitchell, was the choir director of the Wesleyan Methodist Choir. I have a hymn book given to him as a gift upon his retirement from the choir in 1871.



N.A. Mitchell and his Methodist Hymnbook dedication (inside cover)

Six years after this band portrait was taken, Albert married Annie Stentiford, reputed to be the loveliest woman on PEI (according to her daughter-in-law, my grandmother). Albert worked as a bookkeeper at Prowse Brothers dry goods store in Charlottetown, later becoming a director and treasurer.³⁴ He lived at 18 Spring Park Road in a house which is still in use today.

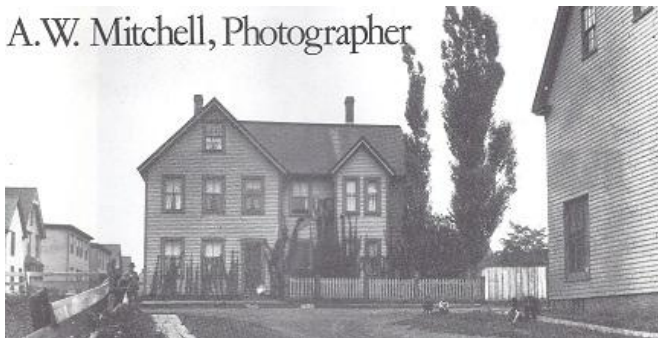
³³ Hornby, Jim, "A.W. Mitchell, Photographer." *The Island Magazine*. 12 (Fall-Winter 1982): 11-17.

<http://vre2.upei.ca/islandmagazine/fedora/repository/vre%3Aisleomag-batch2-157/OBJ>

³⁴ Hornby, Jim. "Albert William Mitchell." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*

http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/mitchell_albert_william_13E.html

A.W. Mitchell, Photographer



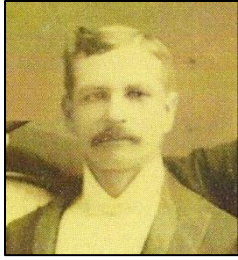
A.W. Mitchell home, 16 Spring Park Road, ca. 1900



A.W. Mitchell home, interior (note the piano on the right)

There is a photograph of him as a younger man in military style uniform, holding his cornet. He was a member of the Oddfellows Society, a non-denominational men's club, and there are newspaper reports of Vinnicombe's Band supplying music for Oddfellows parades and Natal Day celebrations (the April 1892 concert was for a Natal Day celebration).

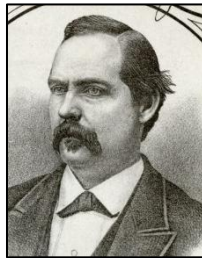
Albert died at 38 of Bright's disease, a malady of the kidneys which gradually poisons the blood and for which there was no cure. Annie died seven years later in 1913, leaving my 15-year-old grandfather an orphan. So he lied about his age and followed his cousins to war in France.



Pope Fletcher

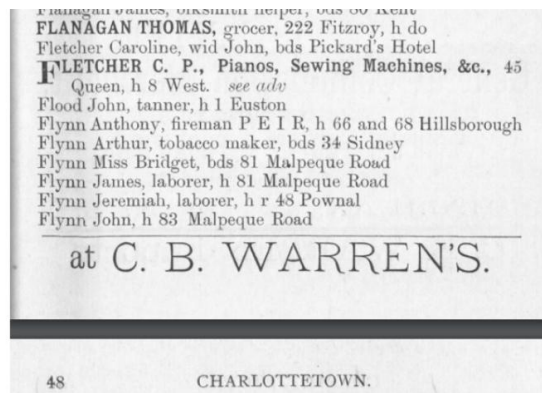
Charles Pope Fletcher (10 July 1850 - unknown) 40 years old

Our second cornet player, Pope Fletcher, while raised on a local farm, is listed in the 1871 Lovell's Directory of Charlottetown as a foreman printer, and is preceded in that directory by his brother J.H. [James Hayden] Fletcher, proprietor of the Island Argus newspaper. Presumably Pope worked for his brother who had bought the paper two years before, in 1869 (it was absorbed by the Examiner in 1881³⁵).



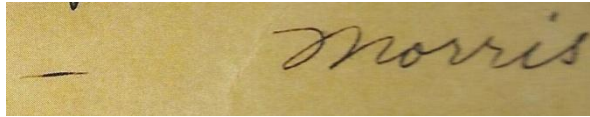
James Hayden Fletcher, publisher

However, C.P. Fletcher appears in the 1887 edition of McAlpine's Charlottetown City Directory as the proprietor of "The Music Store" at the "sign of the big fiddle" ("C.P. Fletcher Pianos, Sewing Machines, Etc."), which is an obvious link to his participation in the Band. Perhaps his establishment provided some of the scores they played.



Ad and listing for Pope Fletcher in McAlpine's Charlottetown Directory, 1887-88

³⁵ http://www.islandnewspapers.ca/islandora/object/newspapers:144/newspaper_about
See also <http://islandpines.roblib.upei.ca/eg/opac/record/209752>



Harry (or John) Morris (March 1, 1868/December 12, 1865) 22/24 years old

The only Morris boys living in Charlottetown at the 1881 and 1891 censuses the right age for this photo are Harry and John sons of Thomas. As noted above, their father's partner in the Brewery business was Charles Hyndman, our violinist James' father. They were the oldest of six children. In 1881 the youngest child, Eliza, was 11 months old and their father was noted as being a widower so their mother likely died in Eliza's childbirth. By 1901 Harry and John were still bachelors living together (with three domestics – which the family always seems to have had). Harry is identified as a farmer while older brother John is a general mechanic. I've always wondered if Morris is purposely holding his stick to look like it's in Pope Fletcher's ear. Drummers...

Conclusion

This wonderful photograph is testimony to the important contributions of Henry Vinnicombe to the cultural life of Charlottetown at the end of the 19th century. None of the band members were professional musicians (as the term "Citizen" suggests), but many were among the intellectual, professional and business elite of this small city, their lives highly intertwined. Not surprisingly, two thirds were single at the time (Vinnicombe, Newson, Gordon, Gillespie and Pope were married) and most were in their early twenties: they likely knew one another from Prince of Wales College. I often glance at their photograph with fondness as I work in my composition studio, sometimes arranging for amateur ensembles like theirs; I feel a kinship with them, "the boys in the band". Too bad they were a few decades too early for audio recording: wouldn't that be a treat!