

“A Long, Useful, and Prosperous Career”

150 years ago yesterday, on October 12, 1865, the paper you hold in your hands assumed its first incarnation in the form of the *Summerside Journal*.

The Charlottetown Conference, the important meetings and legendary *soirees* that set us on the path to nationhood, had come and gone the year before. Confederation was just under two years in the future. Summerside itself was not even an incorporated town, let alone a city.

It was a momentous occasion on the face of it, although the full significance was likely not grasped by the masses, nor even by co-founders Joseph Bertram and Henry Barnard. Lacking a crystal ball, who could have imagined that, fifteen decades later, the *Journal* would still be in print? And that it would become one of the leading newspapers on the Island?

Over the past eight months, we’ve examined different episodes in the history of the *Summerside Journal* and its competitor-turned-partner, the *Pioneer*. Admittedly, these episodes largely favoured the former; however, it is with the *Summerside Journal* that the history of the *Journal-Pioneer* begins. And what a history at that!

What began with Bertram and Barnard all those years ago has wended its way down a winding road, a road at times smooth, yet also with its share of bumps and potholes. But even over its roughest patches, steely determination and a can-do attitude kept the *Journal* moving forward.

Much has changed, naturally, but one thing has remained the same: the *Summerside Journal* kept readers in the know then, and the *Journal-Pioneer* keeps readers in the know today.

In September 1865, touting the increasing prosperity of Summerside, and lamenting (but looking to capitalize on) the lack of an established advertising medium for the various industries currently in operation, Bertram and Barnard issued the prospectus for their journalistic venture.

“Time and tide wait for no man” ran the opening line, and they made it clear that “the time had arrived for Summerside to be represented by a new candidate in the shape of a newspaper”.

A newspaper that would “dare to assert truth and denounce error”; that would take up the cause of the oppressed but also give voice to the oppressor, “whose right to be heard in defense [would] never be denied so long as all personalities [were] avoided”; and that would promote commerce and agriculture.

Bertram and Barnard's was a bold move to make in a time when the newspaper industry had not gone far beyond the borders of Charlottetown; however, it was widely unacknowledged.

In the lead up to, and after the printing of the *Journal's* first number, it garnered very little attention from its established contemporaries. While both the *Examiner* and the *Islander* ran the *Journal's* prospectus for nearly a month prior to its advent, they were rather quiet when it did come to print. (This was especially strange of the *Islander*, given that Bertram had apprenticed there).

Of course, the mid 1860s were tumultuous times, and with quite a bit on the go, a lot of issues were forced to elbow aggressively for column space. Some things were bound to be overlooked.

Or perhaps it was simply that no one believed the labour of Bertram and Barnard would amount to anything significant, that it was unworthy of consideration. Only the *Charlottetown Herald* thought to comment - briefly - wishing the *Journal* "a long, useful, and prosperous career".

150 years on, it seems truer words were never written.

So here's to you, *Journal-Pioneer*, as you celebrate your sesquicentennial; to all those, past and present, who've helped to shape and guide you; and to a future just as newsworthy!