

Welcome to the Digital DIGBY COURIER

1877-1978

100th Birthday

The hundredth anniversary of the Digby Weekly Courier has brought to mind some fond memories as contained in the following historical chapter of the writer. But first, I wish to congratulate the current editor of the Courier, Mrs. J.M. (Edith) Wallis, for a job well done over the years and still being well done, good service rendered with great fortitude.

According to any record, I have at hand, the Digby Courier, in one hundred years of publication, was controlled under the same family management for 42 years, 1931 to 1973, under the control of Wallis Print Limited. The late J.J. Wallis became editor of The Courier the second time, in 1929, and at the same time of the business, which he had been running for some time previously and which became Wallis Print Limited sometime between 1929 and 1931.

I well remember the last year of the twenties when I worked in the office of the son with the husband and father of the late J.J. Wallis, the Courier. Sometime in 1928 or early 1929, the late J.M. Wallis (Mac), son of "J.J." engaged me to work every day after school hours, Saturdays, and for some months after finishing school. The place of work was in the building of the present Digby town hall on First Avenue. J.J. Wallis then worked occasionally at the print shop but mostly across the street at the Courier office which was then located on land in the general area where The Royal Bank of Canada is now.

Wallis Job Print operated in 1929 with a staff of four consisting of J.J. Wallis, J.M. Wallis, Miss Eva Haynes, who later became Mrs. George Kicup, and myself. I was added to the staff in early 1929.

Eva's job was to run the printing plant but mostly at the Courier office. "Mac" worked nearly full time at all the different jobs at the Job Print, and I worked at various duties, most of the time being spent at operating printing presses.

We worked ten-hour days, six days a week. "J.J." and "Mac" sometimes worked overtime. I worked only the regular hours being paid a weekly wage which was comparatively good for those times and my lack of experience. I received four or five dollars a week for working after school hours to six o'clock and on Saturday all day, and nine dollars a week for full weeks after finishing school. A two or three dollar a week raise was offered to me in the fall of 1929 for me to stay on at printing, but I had made up my mind to enter a branch of the Royal Bank of Canada, starting salary of \$300. The bank salary figured out about the same per hour as for the printing job. Nevertheless, the congenial atmosphere of the printing plant those days, and, experience however short, were helpful and appreciated by me.

"J.J." was very jovial in his occasional trip to the Job Print and did considerable kidding all in good fun. "Mac" was a witty person who mixed in a good natured sarcasm now and then for one reason or another. Eva most always had good answers to all the kidding she was called upon to take, and, generally held her own in a quiet sort of way, always busy setting type. We four all got along very well indeed. However, I do remember that some days did seem long and weary because of the monotony of some repetitious jobs.

In spite of the great demand for printing those last boom days of the twenties, business generally being brisk, it looked to me that people had to work long and hard to make any decent profit. There was

including treatment of the hands. However, nails and finger ends were used and I was soon back to work.

Now and then a printing job had a dose on parchment paper which required a special kind of printers' ink which smelled very bad those days. I always dreaded it when "Mac" would do that job on the largest press, in spite of the fact that we always opened an outside door to lessen the effects on the constitution.

One of the jobs I had to do, being the junior and printers' devil on the staff, was to clean up now and then. One day not long after I started my job at the printing plant, I decided to clean the floor that apparently hadn't been cleaned in some considerable time.

"J.J." came along and said, "how are you making out Vince?" I assured him that I thought I was beginning to see the floor. "J.J." laughed very heartily, he thought the remark pretty good and suitable.

Sometimes the gasoline engine or a piece of machinery would refuse to work, and after "Mac" the fix-it man had patiently worked for a certain length of time to get it going again, without results, "Mac" would then stand back and cuss quite strenuously, then he would immediately start working. "See," he would say, "all it needed was a bit of cussing."

On other occasions when some gadget refused duty for me and, seemed to be broken, "Mac" would say, "use a little oil," and sure enough, often that is all it took. How often since, have I thought of the value of that remark and the actual need of "oil" in many life situations, applied at the right time, right place and, in the right way.

Other things that sort of stick in my memory and come to mind now and then are, like the time I told "Mac" of four teenage boys who in the spring season of 1929 got together just before dark one evening and decided to initiate the newly built outdoor Pines Hotel swimming pool which had just been filled with water. Clothes were taken off near the road just east of the pool; nobody else seemed to be around except the four boys; no thought or time for bathing suits up to the pool they went. They stood on the edge of the pool and looked at the chilly water, one soon jumped in, the rest quickly followed and across the pool they swam. "Mac" listened to the story and hardly said anything, but the next "Digby Courier" had a good story on the episode. The heading of the story went something like, "Four Boy Scouts Officially Open Pines Hotel Swimming Pool." Who were the four? Many years later they are known as: the late Dr. Earl H. Anderson, veteran of two wars (second world and Korean), was awarded the Victoria Cross; Sidney L. Smith, now prominent druggist for many years in Digby; Clayton D. Snow, Digby wholesale lobster king merchant; and myself.

As a young teenager I used to like doing some writing about different events interesting to myself and mostly for myself. One day "Mac" said to me "how about writing your version of the story told about 'The Marooning of Jerome'." I had heard and read at least two somewhat different stories about the man who was found marooned on a beach at some point on the French Shore of St. Mary's Bay, Digby County. When found this man's tongue had been cut out and his legs quite freshly amputated, were surgically well dressed and bound. He was presumably left by some vessel before dawn one morning, all for some mysterious reason.

"Jerome" appeared to have been a man of some considerable social standing and possibly of some considerable wealth. However the only thing the man could or would ever say after being found and cared for by some family in the French shore was, something that sounded like the word "Jerome". He either could not, or, would not, write anything about who he was or why he was left the way he was. Well, it was, and is, one of Digby County's mystery stories, and, different ideas have been expressed over the years concerning this man. However my response to "Mac" was, I felt no urge to write anything more or different about this man. The mystery seemed to have been very well explored in the mind of many people, and, he was a sort of curiosity for many people who visited where he lived for many years.

Three years later, I was quite a young man, and I was back in the street that I had lived in, and I was clanking my powered up car, and I was thinking of "Jerome", and as I remember it, I was thinking of "Jerome". "J.J." was noted for his sense of humor and his ability to make people laugh. In 1928 during the time Mr. Wallis was editor of the Scott Act (Prohibition Law) he was about and advocated by some people, and I was attached a boys' conference in the town of Digby.



Digby in the early days. Date on picture 1874.

Digby 172 Years Ago

Compiled by David Sanford

From the files of the Courier of January 23, 1867, the following account has been copied concerning Digby in 1800.

"Among a number of old newspapers kindly sent to us by friends is a copy of the Saint John Gazette of May, 1802, says the Telegraph and among other advertisements contained in the issue before us is one describing the town and township of Digby, and offering for sale certain lots in the town. In this area we are told the township of Digby extends from the Gulf of Annapolis westward to the extremity of the province of Nova Scotia, and contains about 130,000 acres." The town plot is thus described:

"The Town Plot is situated at the east of the township just within the entrance to Annapolis Basin, and twenty miles from Annapolis Town, and six miles across land from the head of St. Mary's Bay. This laid out from the water's edge, partly on level ground and partly on the declivity of a modern hill, dry and pleasant, and having with an eastern aspect, a view of the Annapolis Basin and its cultivated shores for twenty miles in where it terminates with the Fort and River's mouth of that name. It was settled by Loyalists from New York in 1783, the most of whom went early to farms, or, moving to older countries, left the whole

side to be bought or proved by about who now reside detached, built dwellings with orchards, and some fishery and. It has communal parts of the common provisions in a cheap, built readily to be from many circumstances, probability of place of some shipbuilding, the West India a cheap and of residence. This advertisement, at the December, 1802, were to be a No. 100.

free trade with the U.S.A., especially with the New England States. The question was then debated by some Digby High School students one of which was "J.J.'s" daughter, Florence (now Mrs. Melvin O. Tibert, Freeport, Digby Co.) Some days after the debate a man from some part of Nova Scotia came to the printing shop looking for Florence, one of the successful debaters; I had the impression that this man was interested politically but, maybe I was wrong.

Well, I felt that I had learned considerable from my short experience at "The Wallis Job Print". I was learning to do beginner jobs, receiving some knowledge about things like: embossing, stapling, perforating, counting, cutting and trimming paper stock, mixing inks for certain desired colors, and so forth, but, the only experience I had at setting type was just enough to make a "pi", the printers name for a confused mess.

There was a taste of trying to sell job printing outside the plant. Work was a little slack one early fall day and so "Mac" said to me, "how about trying your hand at taking orders for printed personalized Christmas cards?" I tried it, made several calls around town, spent most of the time at one particular house, and got an order, but, it was much time and got an order, but,

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The first time wireless telegraph ran into Digby was in 1890. The equipment was sent from London on her trip. The new telegraph was put in January 18, 1890. The old Lighthouse Passage and stone Northeast of it.

Loss of the ship "W. Coombs" is a story of the Digby Courier of January 18, 1890. The ship was on its way to the coast when it was hit by a storm. The ship was lost with all hands.

A story of the Digby Courier of January 18, 1890. The ship was on its way to the coast when it was hit by a storm. The ship was lost with all hands.

NOVA SCOTIA
Tourism, Culture and Heritage

Funding for this project was provided by:

Municipality OF Digby

Credits

This project was made possible with assistance from the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage through its Strategic Development Initiative. This initiative supports projects aimed at enhancing the self-sufficiency of the heritage sector throughout the province.

The Municipality of the District of Digby is the lead organization to spearhead this project. The Digital Courier is part of the municipal initiative to preserve the past and develop the future; Council is honoured to be part of the preservation of these significant historical documents.



1800's

- (1810) the first elections were held in the County.
- (1837) the County of Annapolis was divided to include the County of Digby.
- Old Post Road and rural school system improved.
- Weymouth Trading Post established.
- Ship Building is a major industry in the area.
- (1879) the District of Digby was incorporated.
- (1891) the railway (the missing link) between Annapolis and Digby was completed.
- Joshua Slocum sails around the world alone.
- Temperance Movement.
- Summer Tourism Industry develops.
- I.M. Singer invents the sewing machine.
- Canadian Confederation (1867)
- Klondike Gold Rush
- The Supreme Court of Canada is established
- Florence Nightingale takes London nurses to the battlefields of the Crimean War

1900's

- Poor Farm in operation
- Isaiah Wilson's Geography and History of the County of Digby Published.
- Prime Minister Sir Wilfred Laurier visits Digby.
- Marconi transmits wireless message across the Atlantic
- Queen Victoria dies
- The Boxer Rebellion breaks out in China.
- The Boer War in Southern Africa ends

1910's

- (1912) last race of the Brattain Cup in the Annapolis Basin.
- First motorized vehicle in the area.
- Communities collect cloths and money for the war effort.
- Spanish Flue kills many in the area.
- First Calgary Stampede
- Women in Canada get the vote
- Halifax explosion
- WW1
- The Titanic Disaster
- Norwegian Roald Amundsen becomes the first to reach the South Pole.

1920's

- Motorized vehicles becoming more common.
- Last wooden ship built in Bear River.
- Electric lights installed in villages.
- Motorized vehicles becoming more common
- Canadian Schooner "Bluenose" wins the International Fisherman's Trophy
- Agatha Christie launches her career as a mystery writer.
- George Carnarvon and Howard Carter unearth King Tutankhamen's tomb

1930's

- Economic Depression.
- Rural electric lines being installed.
- Electric lights installed in villages.
- Highway paving projects underway.
- First crossing of the Princess Helene Ferry.
- Rum running along the coast.
- Rum running in its heyday
- Dionne quintts born in Ontario
- Movie "King Kong" released starring Canadian Fay Wray
- WW II begins

1940's

- Digby home to WWII submarine base.
- CFB Cornwallis largest training base in the Commonwealth.
- Scallop Industry expands.
- Hog farming expands.
- Population decline in rural communities.
- Newfoundland enters confederation
- UN Formed
- U.S. planes drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki
- Orson Welles' film Citizen Kane, premieres

1950's

- Bus service along the Digby Neck.
- Population in villages continue to decline. NORAD formed with USA
- National Ballet of Canada founded
- Bear River Power Plant built
- Korean War
- Smoking linked to lung cancer
- Sputnik launched
- Castro takes over power in Cuba
- Elizabeth II coronation - Queen of England

1960's

- Sissiboo Power Plant built.
- Kejimikujik Park established.
- Conners Brothers Fish Cannery Plant closes in Freeport.
- Fish Meal Plant opens in Mink Cove.
- Weymouth Industries closure.
- Bear River Village Fire.
- Canada celebrates 100th birthday
- Pierre Trudeau sworn in as Prime Minister
- Bay of Pigs invasion
- Thalidomide deformities revealed
- Cuban Missile Crisis
- John F. Kennedy assassinated
- Demonstrations against Vietnam War

1970's

- Evangeline Mall built.
- New CN Ferry Terminal built.
- Ground Hog Day Storm.
- Municipal Airport opens.
- Hwy 101 completed to Digby.
- First Computer used.
- Jones Bottling Plant burns in Weymouth
- War Measures Act invoked
- Pierre Laporte murdered
- Canada-Soviet Summit Series in hockey begins
- Quebec language legislation (Bill 101) passes
- Munich massacre at the Olympics
- Rock stars Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin die.
- At Kent State University in Ohio, protesting students are killed by National Guardsmen

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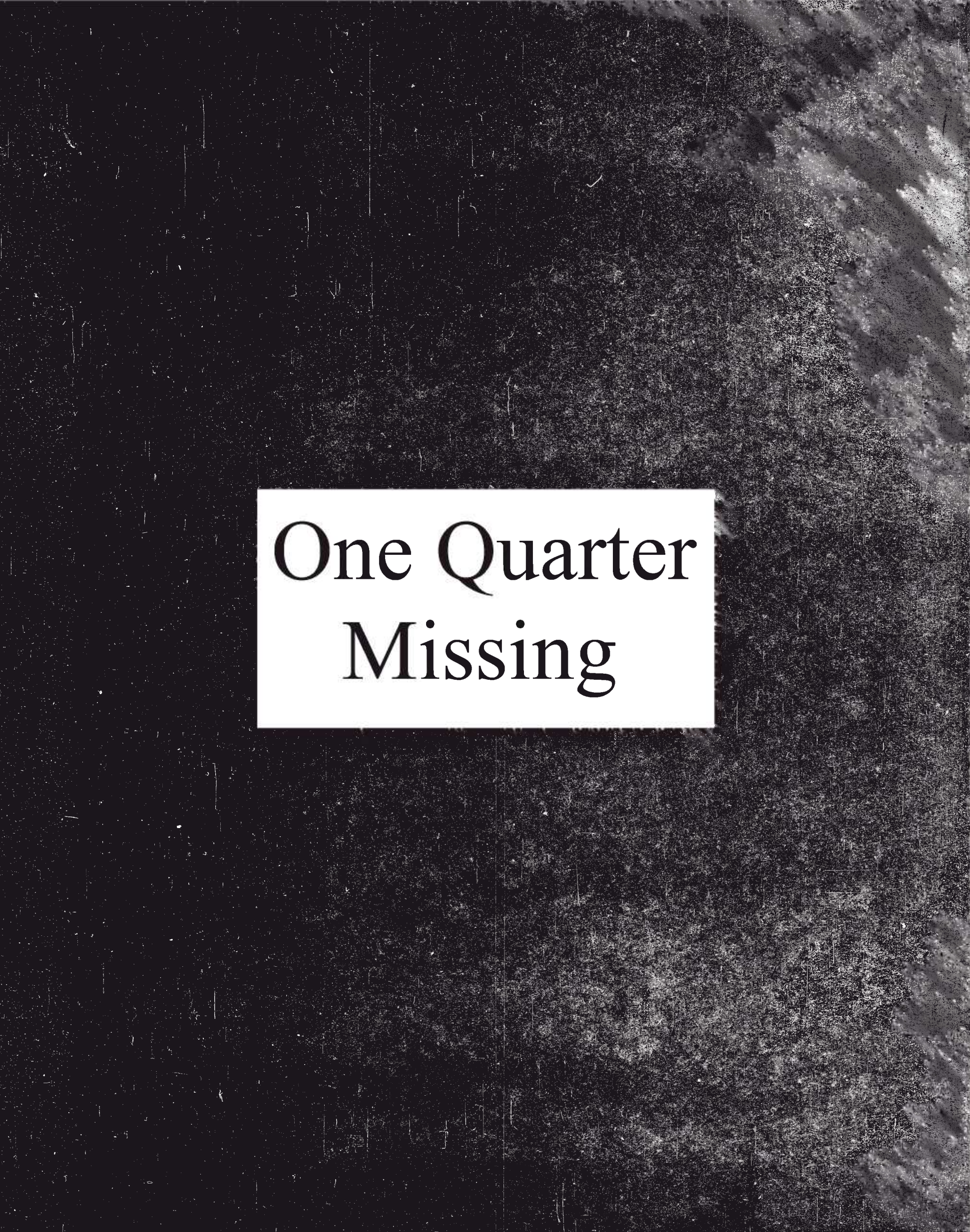
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One Quarter Missing