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## History of Prince Edward Island Plebiscites

**Source: Charlotte Stewart**  
**Heritage Officer, CCA-Culture, Heritage & Libraries**  
**Dated: March 2001**  
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Note: the sources referenced are held in the collections of the  
Public Archives and Records Office of P.E.I.

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### ◆ **1878 Prohibition plebiscite**

Proclamation dated 21 November 1878, printed in **Royal Gazette**, 30 November 1878, declaring 28 December 1878 as a date for an election of the electors of Prince County re petition received re the Canada Temperance Act 1878.

Proclamation dated 13 March 1879, printed in the **Royal Gazette**, 29 March 1879, declaring 24 April 1879 as a date for an election of the electors of the City of Charlottetown re petition received regarding the Canada Temperance Act 1878.

Proclamation dated 21 April 1879, printed in the **Royal Gazette**, 3 May 1879, declaring 29 May 1879 as a date for an election of the electors of Kings County re the petition received regarding the Canada Temperance Act 1878.

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### ◆ **1893 Prohibition plebiscite**

1893, Cap. IX, An act to enable the electors of Prince Edward Island to register their votes upon the advisability of the introduction of a law totally prohibiting the importation, manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquor as a beverage into or in the province of Prince Edward Island.

“At the next General Election for this province a vote by ballot shall be taken to ascertain the number of voters within the province who are in favor of or against the prohibition of the importation, manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquor within this province.”

1893    Prohibition plebiscite - continued

The form of the ballot to be used shall be as follows:

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FOR PROHIBITION

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AGAINST PROHIBITION

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Returns to be published in the Royal Gazette.

General election held 13 December 1893

Results: For Prohibition: 10585. Against Prohibition: 3331

Source:

**Royal Gazette**, 3 February 1894, p. 19

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◆    **1898    National plebiscite on prohibition**

29 September 1898

Yes    9,461

No    1,146

Source:

3466/HF78.131.717d “The Prohibition Plebiscite” printed pamphlet December 1898, Dominion Alliance Executive Committee.

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◆    **1901    Prohibition**

No references located.

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◆    **1913    Automobile Plebiscite**

Date: ?Summer of 1913

Question: ?

Results:

From *If you're stronghearted. Prince Edward Island in the twentieth century*. Edward MacDonald. (PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation, 2000): Held in the summer of 1913 at district school meetings. Government suppressed the results. The rural communities overwhelmingly rejected the automobile. Some estimates put the NO vote at 90%.

A.E. Arsenault fonds, Acc. 4135, File 14 “Story of automobiles in PEI” 1954 by A.E. Arsenault. References to 1912 Act re automobiles, and meeting of Legislative Council decided to hold a plebiscite. Public largely opposed to opening of roads to automobiles.

1913 Automobile Plebiscite continued:

See also Acc. 4289 *Deoradh. The Dewars: Storytellers and relic keepers. A history of the family Dewar of Perthshire, Scotland and PEI*, by Katherine Dewar, pp. 57-59.

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◆ **1923 Plebiscite under the Scott Act (Canada Temperance Act)**

Date 22 January 1923

Question: Shall the importation and bringing into this Province intoxicating liquors be forbidden?

9,685	In favour of Prohibition
3,576	Against Prohibition

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◆ **1929 Prohibition plebiscite**

Held 18 July 1929

An Act to provide for a plebiscite on questions relating to the control and suppression of traffic in alcoholic liquors, 1929, Cap. 15. "The Plebiscite Act, 1929"

1. Are you in favour of the Prohibition Act as now the law in this province?
2. Are you in favour of the sale of alcoholic liquors under a Government Control Act?

Results:	In favour of Prohibition	11,471
	In favour of Government Control	8,080
	Rejected	71

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◆ **1940 Prohibition plebiscite**

Held 25 June 1940

Questions:

1. Are you in favour of the sale of beer and light wine through Government Vendor Shops, under permit for beverage purposes?
2. Are you in favour of retaining the present provisions of the Prohibition Act requiring medical prescriptions for beer and wine, as well as for other alcoholic liquors?

1940    Prohibition plebiscite - continued

1.    Are you in favour or against Government Control?
2.    Are you in favour or against limiting the number of certificates or prescriptions available to each doctor at 50 per month?

1940 Prohibition plebiscite - continued

Results:

10,426	in favour of retaining existing Prohibition Act
8,861	in favour of relaxing the law
11,401	in favour of present system
8,207	in favour of government control
10,838	in favour of limiting doctors to 50 prescriptions per month
8,731	against limiting doctors to 50 prescriptions per month

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◆    **1942    Conscription National plebiscite on manpower**

Held 27 April 1942

PEI results

Yes    41,720

No    5,821

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◆    **1948    The Temperance Act, Cap. 37.**

Plebiscite held 28 June 1948 to ascertain the approval or otherwise of The Prohibition Act by a majority of persons qualified to vote. Conducted in manner of a general election.

Questions and results:

For the New Temperance Act?    20,019

For the Old Prohibition Act?    7,265

New Temperance Act proclaimed 18 July 1948.

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◆    **1954    Potato plebiscite**

The Federation of Agriculture in its annual presentation to the Provincial Legislature asked that the PEI Potato Marketing Board hold a plebiscite on the potato marketing scheme as soon as possible.

1954 Potato plebiscite - continued

The Federation's request was granted and a plebiscite date was set for May 1954. Mail in ballots - sent out on 24 May, to be returned by 29 May 1954.

Question: "Are you in favour of the continued operation of the PEI Potato Marketing Board?"

3282 in favour

1845 opposed

6747 registered voters, 5140 cast ballots

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◆ **1954 Potato Plebiscite**

Held 10 November 1954.

An Act to provide for the taking of Plebiscites on Questions of Public Interest, the Plebiscite Act. Assented to 10 April 1954.

Premier A. W. Matheson called the 10 November 1954 plebiscite as a result of the controversy surrounding the Board's new policy. Questions were worded:

"Are you in favour of retaining the P.E. Island Potato Marketing Board?"

"Are you in favour of the Potato Marketing Board operating a compulsory one desk selling agency?"

Results: Question 1- 3958 In favour and 1977 Against

Question 2 - 2706 In favour and 2991 Against

RG 7 Provincial Secretary, Series 10 Elections, Subseries 21, Potato Plebiscite 1954: 2 file folders, for polls 14 and 15, 3<sup>rd</sup> Queens. PARO records.

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◆ **1957 Plebiscite re amalgamation with Charlottetown.**

27 November 1957

Village of Spring Park	Yes	305	No	50
Parkdale	Yes	159	No	300
Central Royalty	Yes	48	No	32

**Patriot**, 28 November 1957, p.1

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- ◆ **1958 City wide (Charlottetown) plebiscite to determine status of Water and Sewerage Commission.** 14 May 1958  
**Guardian**, 19 April 1958
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- ◆ **1988 Fixed Link Crossing Plebiscite, 18 January 1988**  
Question: “Are you in favor of the fixed link crossing between Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick?”  
Eligible electors 86,042  
22,472 voted NO, 33,229 voted YES, (183 ballots rejected)  
Carried out under the Plebiscite Act, RSPEI 1974, Cap. P-8.
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- ◆ **1997 Video Lottery Terminal plebiscite in the City of Charlottetown. November 3, 1997.**  
“Do you wish to have the Provincial Government remove video lottery terminals from all establishments within the Province of Prince Edward Island?”  
Eligible electors 21,466 (3,007 voted NO, 10,953 voted YES, 216 ballots rejected).  
Held in conjunction with municipal election for the City of Charlottetown.
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- ◆ **2001 Stratford residents plebiscite** Plebiscites Act P-10.

**Held on the 26 and 27 March 2001 for Town Council to gauge interest to help fund a capital region aquatic centre or a town rink and community centre or both.**

Questions:

1. Would you be in favour of the multipurpose facility in Stratford?  
(Gymnasium, multi-purpose room, walking track, library, Town and RCMP offices)  

566 YES                      606 NO
2. Would you be in favour of a rink in Stratford?  
(200' X 85' ice surface, seating 800 people)  

570 YES                      589 NO
3. Would you be in favour of participating in the regional aquatic facility in Charlottetown?  
(8 lane - 25 m pool, recreation pool, slide, hot tub and sauna)  

591 YES                      571 NO

◆ **2005**            **Plebiscite for the Provincial Mixed Member Proportional System  
November 28, 2005**

Question:        “Should Prince Edward Island change to the Mixed Member Proportional System as presented by the Commission on PEI’s Electoral Future?”

20,515 voted NO        11,750 voted YES        (96 ballots rejected)

Carried out under the Plebiscite Act, RSPEI 1974, Cap. P-8.

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◆ **2010**            **Charlottetown Residents Plebiscite**

**Plebiscite held as part of the Municipal Elections in the City of  
Charlottetown asking electors if they were in favour of keeping the  
existing system of electing councillors to represent a single ward,  
November 1, 2010**

**Eligible Electors:        22,718**

Question:        “Are you in favor of keeping the existing system of electing councillors to represent a single ward?”

1,997 voted NO                      9,007 voted YES

If the existing system were to change, which method of electing councillors would you prefer?

(A) Mixed system which combines some councillors, elected “at large” and some ward councillors;

Mixed                      3,745

(B) At large whereby all councillors would be elected by all electors.

At Large                      3.605

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◆ **2010 Stratford Residents Plebiscite**

**Plebiscite held as part of the Municipal Elections in the Town of Stratford asking electors if they were in favour of keeping the existing system of electing two councillors to represent each of the three wards ( a dual ward system).**

**Eligible Electors: 5,469**

Question: “Are you in favor of keeping the existing system of electing two councillors to represent each of the three ward (a dual ward system)?

595 voted NO 1,965 voted YES

If the existing system were to change, which method of electing councillors would you prefer?

( A ) An at large system, whereby all councillors would be elected by all electors;

At large 582

( B ) A single ward system, whereby each councillor is elected to represent a single ward;

Single 760

( C ) A mixed system, which combines some councillors elected “at large” and some ward councillors.

Mixed 548

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Note: This document may be incomplete as there might have been other plebiscites that Charlotte Stewart was not able to track down.

December 20, 2010

Lowell Croken  
Chief Electoral Officer