

Monticello hall is rubble

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Guardian photo

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Demolition of ceilidh hall comes as a surprise to local musicians

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ST. PETER'S — One of P.E.I.'s musical meccas has been torn down.

The Monticello ceilidh hall behind the old school house was demolished Tuesday.

It's been a source of regional entertainment for decades with the likes of comediennes Bridget and Cecily to the modern day performances of J.J. Chaisson and the musical family.

"I can't believe it," said Chaisson on his Facebook page after being contacted by The Guardian. "I didn't even get a phone call that it was coming down."

Chaisson has operated the summer ceilidhs for the past three years in the hall that has featured some of the best entertainment around. Monticello was the place to go for many visiting musicians who were touring the Maritimes from other parts of the world and would show up to perform Sunday night. Such luminaries as Jerry Holland have performed at the site.

"I'm just shocked and don't know what has happened," said Ray Brow, chair of the Small Halls festival. "I just hope another Monticello hall will rise again."

Details are sketchy, but the building was apparently for sale when a number of musicians hoped to purchase it. However, the effort didn't materialize and the new owner has done away with the building. Some said it was beginning to show its age, but locals had hoped to maintain it.

Tucked away east of the Greenwich National Park, between Goose River and Naufrage, the Monticello ceilidh was considered one of the last of a vanishing breed and always featured a local set dance with the music of many of the Chaissons who cut their teeth performing on the wooden floor.