



# Newcastle Village and District Historical Society Newsletter

Christmas 2013 - Issue # 116

## *President's Message*

They say that time flies when you are having fun – so I must be having a blast because Christmas is just around the corner and it seems as if only yesterday it was spring. This will be my final report as President as my term is finished as of the next AGM. The AGM will be **January 21** starting at 7:00pm in the Historical Room.

Many things have been accomplished during my term as President – we created a very good video called “They made their own fun” thanks to a grant from CHIN and showed local youth what it was like before the electronic age of WiFi and video games. Our next venture into the video market was an excellent movie, put together by Myno Van Dyke and Ron Locke, telling the story of the Box factory. It too will be seen on the CHIN website.

This year we again joined the community in the annual Santa Clause parade – many thanks to Shellie Jackson and Bev Jeeves with their helpful elves.

Thanks to the further dedication of Beverly Jeeves, NV&DHS will have partnered with Clarington and produced a walking tour of our village.

I am proud to have been a part of this group and I look forward to what you will do next. Have a happy and safe Christmas and Happy New Year.

Deborah Leslie  
*President,  
NV&DHS*



Some of the crew who participated in the 2013 Santa Clause Parade for the Newcastle Village & District Historical Society.

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## Notice of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Newcastle Village and District Historical Society will be held in the Historical Room at the Newcastle Community Hall at 7 pm. on Tuesday January 21.

Please consider standing for an office; it can be quite rewarding. As in the past, we will host our popular “show & tell” following the business of the meeting.

# Christmas on the Farm - 1920's

*The following Christmas memories come from the archives of the NV&DHS, originally penned by Minnie Evelyn (Pearce) AKA "Peggy" Visser. Peggy was the second child of Harry Pearce and Pearl Rickard who farmed the property where the Port of Newcastle subdivision now stands. Peggy was born in 1910 at the farm and wrote this in later life.*

**T**was the morning of Christmas and all through the house, not a creature was stirring ..."or so I had thought.

Both the morning and I were approaching five as I felt my way down the frigid stairs to find out what Santa had left in my stocking. There was my father whom we called Paw, decorating the Christmas tree. I felt no disillusionment or trauma, as one would say to-day; only the wrath and chagrin of my father over being caught in the act. I cannot recollect when I ever really believed. My imagination served me for entertainment purposes, rather than impractical dreaming. That was the first Christmas I remember, and the last time my father got the tree without out help

An hour or so later my brothers and I raced down for our stockings and back again to snuggle in our beds, already beginning to cool down, to examine their contents; small toys, whistles, tiny candies in glass engines or elephants, a few nuts, an apple or an orange. We had neither fireplace nor furnace, and the stockings were hung over the uprights of a kitchen chair or on hooks behind the wood stove which served the general purpose for cooking, eating and living room in winter, as well as Saturday night bathroom. Our bedrooms were about 45 degrees F., sometimes less. The Quebec Heater in the parlour below was lit only on special occasions, week-ends or when the weather went about ten below.

We loved the patterns Jack Frost left on the window-panes and knew no hardship. Now my parents were out in the barn and stables. Maw milked the cows all her life and it was her favourite chore. About 7 am, we dressed under the blankets and rose again - we could wait no longer because we could not touch the TREE until the chores were done and dishes washed. We knew that "Santy Claus" filled our stockings but parents filled the tree - with what they could. Paw gave us everything money would not buy and a lot that it did. Eaton's was just as important to Christmas then as now. Sometimes the last gift would arrive on the morning train (just across the station field) - but never too late. Paw gave us all books and I read everybody's gift.

They ranged from Andersen through Meade, Alcott, Dickens, Scott, Hardy, Bronte, Conrad, Henty, the Canadians L.M. Montgomery and Ralph Connor, to John Buchan, who became Governor-General of Canada (Lord Tweedsmuir).

One Christmas week I read my brother's whole CHUMS, about 6 inches thick from cover to cover. It contained a story about aviators landing on Mars.

Still remembered gifts included a toy piano, a cut-out paper and cardboard Dutch Village, and a Sandy Andy. Decorations were festoons and garlands of Crepe paper, real tinsel, and cedar, huge Santa Claus posters, always a streamer made of imitation birch logs saying "Merry Christmas" and all sizes of folded red crepe paper bells, hanging from the ceilings and archways. There were no popcorn balls on our tree. Popcorn was for eating. There might be a pig's bladder drying over the stove which would make a sort of balloon to throw around. Until my father started his own reforestation, the tree was always cut from Ike Selby's woods on the next farm. Nothing will ever smell so good as cedar.

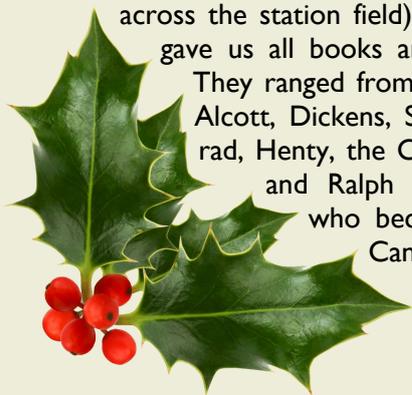
We had already celebrated the birth of the Baby Jesus on Sunday and again at the annual Sunday School Christmas concert: Christmas Day was purely secular and Santa Claus.

When the melee of yelling kids wrapping paper and reprimanding parents was all over, we set out for Grampa' Pearce's for the rest of the day, dashing or plunging through the snow across the fields in the cutter, with the jingle bells on the harness jangling all the way. On longer trips we would take hot bricks wrapped in old blankets for our feet but, on this short journey, the already roasted goose sufficed. Sometimes the Farmer's Almanac would send more mud than snow, in which case we rode in the democrat. Once horse and cart stuck hopelessly in the mud and we all got out to push losing our rubbers in the process.

Being a young family, we were poor and lived in a shabby frame house already a hundred years old, on a small but fertile farm called Silver Creek, our cellar had no flooring it was just fine for keeping potatoes and carrots in the earth. Grampa's farm (The Willows) was large and beautiful, cleared and landscaped by himself in 1877. Lake Ontario sparkled all along the front and a river full of fish ending in a wide marsh and bordered by magnificent rows of willow trees ran to the lake on either side.

The brick house had thirteen large rooms as well as a pantry with a dumb-waiter, an immense front hall with red windows shedding a glow over the interior; a huge walk-through linen closet between the front and back bedrooms, horsehair furniture, and, in the winter, a seven foot geranium plant in the parlour. A narrow corkscrew staircase led up to the rooms of the hired man and the boys.

Grandma was grampa's second wife and over 30 years younger so there was a young family.



Right up to my adult days, this house was an adventure playground for me. It also had a cement floor and furnace in the basement and beautiful hanging lamps. Neither house had indoor plumbing, electricity or an ice-box. The men cut ice from the harbour in winter and stored it in sawdust, mostly for making ice cream.

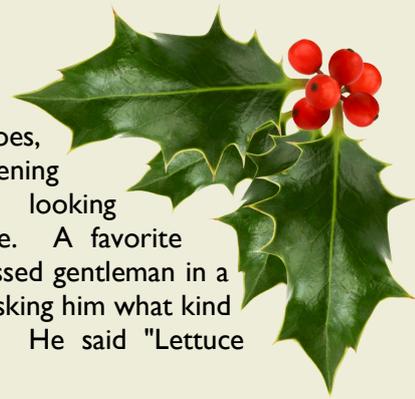
We were greeted by a horde of uncles and aunts, cousins and half-relatives and the lovely smells of good food and cedar. The first exciting moment was spent in standing over the register to warm my feet and let the hot air blow my skirt up: over my cotton stockings whichever stayed up and were bunched over long underwear untidily folded around the ankles. Outdoors I wore spats over rubbers.

Now a day of uninhibited glee began. Soon we had dinner of goose and duck, mashed potatoes, turnips, home-made chili sauce, pickles and ketchup, perhaps stewed tomatoes or home-canned corn, apple jelly, bread dressing flavored with sage from the garden, scones, Christmas pudding with hot caramel sauce and hot mince pie, all washed down with tea, milk or sparkling well water. Once there was an accident - Ernie, a very musical uncle, put the pudding into the gravy to warm it up instead of into the caramel sauce. The same Ernie once messed up the fudge by using the regular quantity of sugar and twice the amount of milk. We finished dinner with half an orange "to take away the fullness". This was important because soon after we started to eat again around the breakfast room table - fudge and maple cream, cracking nuts by the hundreds; Spies and Russets and Muscat raisins, sweet cider.

I remember once wobbling on the marsh on my first bob-skates with the help of Uncle Eric. This meant putting on skates on a frozen log in perhaps four feet of snow. Most of the time we stayed in and read, slept or played games until supper-time. We had all year and a thousand acres in which to roam and play. We didn't want to miss Santa Claus who came in the late afternoon to hand out his gifts already on the tree. He sounded remarkably like my father and drove a reindeer into the dining room. He tossed a heavy gift across the room which sailed right through the window and storm window as well. It contained a weighted shoe box and a safety pin. Paw's gifts were always recognizable, being wrapped in brown paper. Every year he gave his sister and his step-mother a pair of goose wings for dusting and cleaning out the stove. These were valued gifts.

Soon it was time for supper and we sat down again to the laden tables, with cold fowl and cabbage salad and buns; chocolate and Christmas cake, Banbury tarts, doughnuts, cookies, coffee, jellied fruit salad with shipped cream, followed by more fudge, nuts and apples. The evening's entertainment began - adults in the parlour and children in the den, all playing Lost Heir, Old

Maid or Authors, dominoes, crokinole, checkers, listening to the Victrola and looking through the stereoscope. A favorite picture was of a half-dressed gentleman in a hotel and a young maid asking him what kind of salad he would like. He said "Lettuce without dressing."



We sang around the piano, Christmas carols, World War and Civil War songs, and the latest hits from Broadway and the movies. The latter were silent but always accompanied by pianists playing the appropriate music, and everyone had the sheet music. Perhaps due to United Empire Loyalist influence, we grew up on the same music, the same games, the same food as our counterparts in New England. We were the same people. This may shock some modern nationalists, but my father sang me to sleep with *Marching Through Georgia*, *My Darling Clementine*, *Swanee River*, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, and I played three-o-cat (baseball) before I ever heard of hockey.

After more coffee and home-made ice cream, we rode back across the fields to the little house where the stove had long since gone out and had to be lit again to warm up the flat-irons for the beds. Paw and Maw went out to the barn and stables to milk the cows and feed the horses and I went with them to feel the warmth and rather pleasant smell of the hay and the animals as the barn lantern swung and shone dimly from the cobwebby rafters. A more fitting ending to Christmas Day than I then realized.

And that's the way it was on a south Ontario farm, between the Great War and the Depression. A few years later my sisters grew up in an already changed world.

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Note: On reverse of the last page is a hand-written note:

"This is the story I had ...

in our Christmas paper...

which was printed gr. . . (part missing)

Love Peggy

(Minnie Evelyn known as "Peggy", who married Albertus Visser)

# The Bond Head Bates - Were They First?

By Myno Van Dyke

**M**urray Walton stopped into the room and provided us with some more fascinating information on the Bates family. My article about the Bates and Lovekins had some errors. The Bates family actually arrived in Clarke Township in 1796 but they did not stay long in Bond Head.

Roger Bates (1745-1819) and his wife Huldah (nee Stoddard) (1750-1840) were originally living in Vermont. Vermont was an "independent state" from 1777 until 1791 and Lord Simcoe was hoping to re-unite Vermont with "The Crown". To do this, he offered settlers from Vermont "inducements" which appear to be offering land. On June 28, 1796, Roger Bates was granted 600 acres in Clarke Twp at Lot 6 & 7 Broken Front. He had asked for 1200 acres. On June 20, 1796 his son Adna, who also asked for 1200 acres, was granted 200 acres at Lot 6 Con. 1. All of this land is in the Port Granby area.

When they arrived, Roger was disappointed in the land at Port Granby. On November 15<sup>th</sup> 1796, he wrote a letter to the "Surveyor General" advising that he had 20 head of cattle and there was no hay on the property. He apologized for not writing sooner and indicated that he and his family had been ill for the previous 3 months (which means they likely arrived in Clarke no later than mid August). He also indicated in the letter that they had left Port Granby and were staying at Lots 26 and 27 Clarke. He wondered if he could just stay there and claim that land instead of lots 6 & 7.

They received word back that the property was already promised to someone else. That appears to be none other than Rachel Crookshank, John Graves Simcoe's wife's good friend. On Nov. 17, 1796 (just two days after Roger sent the letter) Rachel received 2000 acres, Lot 26, 27 right from Lake Ontario to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Concession of Clarke. This is where this story appears to tie in with the Walbridge property. In 1816, Asa E. Walbridge purchased 800 acres from Rachel Crookshank for 400 pounds.

It looks like the Bates took their cows and went back to Port Granby. In April 1797, they registered their two properties.

The Lovekins apparently had their land granted to them on June 3, 1796 and would receive proper possession once the land was selected and "pitched" upon. However, according the late Eric Richard "Dick" Lovekin, there is no clear date when they arrived but he surmised that it had to be between June 3 and October 18, 1796. Richard Sr. received 1200 acres and each of his sons got 200 acres. Roger and Huldah's daughter, Theodosia Bates married Richard Lovekin Jr. on Feb. 11, 1805. Adna Bates was appointed Constable of Clarke Township in 1801. In 1819, Roger Bates died of "fright". Apparently their home in "Hope" caught fire and Roger died from the exertion of trying to remove the furniture.



# Scenes from Christmas' Past



Christmas at the Elmhurst with the Butler family in 1910.  
Cora Butler Base Row, 3<sup>rd</sup> from left.

Originally constructed by J.K. Allen in 1886 The Elmhurst was purchased and resided in by Richard Butler from 1903 to 1921. It is now St,Francis of Assisi Catholic Church.



Gordon and Theresa Martin family Christmas 1953



The winners in the Newcastle and District Chamber of Commerce Christmas lighting competition. Harold Couch won first place and is shown being congratulated by incoming President, Barbara Chicoyne. At left is second place winner, Joe Darrach. Third place winner, Peter de Jong, is on the right. Also in photo; Chamber Directors Mabs Barr and Judy Hope.

## Annual Fees for Members -

### Single Membership (one vote):

Hard Copy delivered by mail or by hand ..... Annual fees for calendar year \$15.

Digital Copy delivered by e-mail (pdf) ..... Annual fees for calendar year \$10.

### Family Membership (two votes):

Hard Copy delivered by mail or by hand ..... Annual fees for calendar year \$20.

Digital Copy delivered by e-mail (pdf) ..... Annual fees for calendar year \$15.

### Corporate membership (one vote):

Up to 3 Hard Copies delivered by mail or by hand plus Digital Copy delivered by e-mail (pdf)

Annual fees for calendar year \$25.

Sponsors will get recognition in the quarterly newsletter as well as a digital copy of the newsletter  
Membership Chairman Ron Locke [ronald.locke@gmail.com](mailto:ronald.locke@gmail.com)

NV&DHS gratefully acknowledges the ongoing sponsorship of **Tim Horton's of Newcastle**, who generously supply the room with complementary coffee for visitors every Saturday morning. We are also grateful to **Swan Signs** for their support.

NV&DHS is open in Newcastle Community Hall every Tuesday & Saturday morning from 9:30 - 12:00.

**A** huge thank-you goes out to Charles Crowther for a job well done. When we asked for someone to take on the job of indexing all our past newsletters, Charles came forward and offered. That was about one year ago and he has now indexed all 115 newsletters. He has recorded 3944 names and events into a searchable document, which will be available to anyone researching Newcastle names or past articles.

Another valuable resource for the NVDHS.

Thanks again Charles.



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Tuesday & Saturday morning from 9:30 - 12:00.

You can reach NV&DHS at [Newcastle.historic@gmail.com](mailto:Newcastle.historic@gmail.com)  
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