



Newcastle Village and District Historical Society

Newsletter Issue # 101
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President's Message

I'd like to thank our members of NVDHS for your continued support. This organization plays an important role in cataloging and making available information about the heritage and history of our district. What you may not know is that we are often called upon to make representation to local government about the historic importance of the buildings and residents of our community.

We play an important role in support of our community history and, while the executive gladly volunteer their time to do so, we also remember that it would not be possible without the support of the general membership at large for which we serve.

I encourage you to drop by on a Saturday or Tuesday morning to see our "Time Machine". Go back in time to see what went on in our community more than 150 years ago. Come out and see the moving pictures of our community 70 years ago at our movie night, and see how many of the locations and people you recognize. I look forward to see you there.

Allan Kirby
President
NVDHS

NV&DHS is open in Newcastle's Community Hall
Tuesday & Saturday mornings from 9:30 - 12:00.
Contact NVDHS at info@bellnet.ca or visit the website:
www.nvdhs.info

Coming Events

Days Gone By (Movie Night) - April 13 at 7:00 pm
Lions Room at Newcastle Community Hall
NV&DHS Will present a selection of three historic area films covering Orono circa 1940 , Newtonville circa 1939 and Newcastle 1956.
Admission one loonie for three films. Old time popcorn will be served.

Doors Open - Sunday, June 6
NV&DHS will participate in this event.
Residents and visitors are invited to discover Ontario's hidden heritage treasures first-hand, some of which have never been open to the public. For individual site visit times or information on others participating, visit "doorsopenontario.on.ca".

Canada - Past & Present on Saturday, June 26th
This all day event draws on the rich history of our community with activities planned throughout the town. NV&DHS will be open and will host walking tours from 10:30 - 3:00. Different routes will be available; north residential; business community; & south residential which will finish with a tour of St. George's Church (which will host a lunch that day).

Did you Know?

Newcastle was a thriving metropolis in 1858 with over 98 businessmen on record. Newcastle Agricultural Works (as Massey was known in 1862) employed 100 men by 1867. In 1872, Newcastle Woollen Manufacturing Co., one of the largest woollen mills in Upper Canada, employed 60 persons.

The Mill, incorrectly noted in our last issue as being destroyed by fire in the 1890's, was actually destroyed in 1880, a year after Masseys moved their operation to Toronto. The loss of these two employers caused a substantial drop in population in the village by 1891.

Learn more about the history of Newcastle village and Clarke Township in Helen Schmid and Sid Rutherford's book, "*Out of the Mists; A history of Clarke Township*".

Visit NV&DHS to see the many books available for members' use.

Horse Racing in Newcastle?

Editor's Note: Unknown to many, Newcastle was once the host of an active horse racing circuit. The track was in Bond Head, held on the ice in winter.

From an article in West Durham News of January 26, 1883.



NEWCASTLE

RACES - Owing to the weather being so stormy today, at first it was thought advisable to postpone the races; but the committee of management were induced by a large number of those present to have one.

The first race called was the Township race, open to horses owned in the township. There were five entries, viz., Mountain Girl, Billy B., Nelly Garfield, Kitty and Sleepy Jim. Nelly Garfield was the favourite and came in first, taking three straight heats, Billy B. second, and Mountain Girl third. No official time given.

The second race called was the 2:40 race; four entries; viz., Ned Hanlan, Bay Chief, Little Walter, and Norway Boy. There were two heats run. Little Walter came in first; time, 53-1/4 and 51; Norway Boy second in the two heats. The races were then postponed until tomorrow (Thursday) at 1 p.m. on account of a heavy snow-storm which prevailed during the day. Everything passed on satisfactorily and all were satisfied.

Judging from the crowd on the ice at 3 o'clock, there must have been nearly 2,000 people present. We have now in town 32 race horses, some come from as far as St. Catharines and Niagara. The prizes are good and the track is new in good condition. The hotels tonight are filled and, if tomorrow be a fine day, and the Grand Trunk nearly on time, we shall have to get more accommodation.

Races are generally put down by a great many on account of the evil influence. But so far, although every hotel is full, you cannot hear an angry word or see a drunken man more than usual. ...

Aunt Lizzie's Reminizzies

Editor's Note: These are the memories of Elizabeth Wilmot, granddaughter of Major Samuel Street Wilmot, as recorded by her great niece in the 1920s. Ron Locke read this at the AGM on Feb. 1st and here we share a slightly edited version with those members who missed the AGM.

"...I remember sitting by the kitchen fireplace engaged in my Saturday morning task. The little ones of the household made the weekly supply of "tallow dips" and I could not have been more than six years old when I knelt by the great round pan of melted beef fat dipping my stick of suspended candle wicks in and out of the warm tallow. When this got so heavy that my small arm could hardly lift it, Mother would call out "that will do now, Lizzie" they were large enough. I would go on to the next task; polishing the many brass candle sticks that we used daily. How delighted we were when lamps came in. Hanging lamps were considered very elegant but years later, when gas was discovered and became general, we thought nothing could surpass it as the last word in illumination. Life was simple in the early eighteen hundreds.

My father, Col. Allan Wilmot, was proud of the fact that he had walked in the year 1816 from 'little York' to the thousand acre farm that Grandfather (Major Wilmot) had taken up three miles east of Bowmanville in Clarke Country, near Newcastle.

A forty-five mile walk, as a lad of twelve. Father had accompanied a farm hand who was driving the family live-stock to the new home, "Belmont" just being completed and built as an exact copy of the old U.E. Loyalist homestead in New Brunswick. What would you think father if you could make that same journey today (1920s) over a four lane highway of amazing smoothness or maybe by air? Inconceivable to you as you trudged along in your cowhide boots behind your strolling cattle. Little did such thoughts enter your contented young mind as you trod the peaceful forest trail.

At the age of 29, father courted and won the favour of Julia Ann Turner (the fair maid of Quinte) and rode regularly the long journey to Belleville to visit her. He used to tell us as he neared his destination he would draw his horse up by some roadside pool and tidy himself by the shining water. After his marriage, he lived with his father until the big timbered and wide boarded farmhouse was built on the 160 acres of land which became his to proceed in his own way and found a large family.

/ ... Cont'd. of Pg. 3

Cont'd. from Pg. 2: Aunt Lizzie's ...

Our ways were peaceful and simple one hundred years ago. In the early winter, a fatted steer would be butchered and hung in the woodhouse. I remember father making a rite of cooking a steak. The grid was placed over a glowing bed of hardwood coals and the thick steak nicely browned on each side when it would be removed to a great platter, bathed in sweet butter seasoned and put back on the coals for further broiling. It was very delicious and that and bread baked in the huge brick oven remain happy memories. Fourteen large loaves of bread and a little round crusty one that we all loved; a number of fruit pies and the week's baking would be finished.

In the spring of the year, a young calf would be slaughtered and hung in the cool depths of the great dirt floored cellar. All the supplies were housed there; home cured hams and bacon sides hung from the ceiling, stone crocks of jams and preserves, pumpkin and ginger, barrels of cider, maple molasses (syrup), vegetables, apples, dried fruits. The cider must have been particularly potent as a humiliated young Scottish servant could testify. She had been sent to the cellar to sort potatoes and was found sprawled among the sprouting cobbles gloriously tipsy.

Farmers led such busy lives that there was little time for ornamental gardening but my father was an exception. Tomatoes were grown but brought in to site on the mantle to be admired; I do not remember eating them until much later.

The traveling shoemaker usually spent a fortnight with us each year using our tanned leathers. He measured my foot, muttering "you have a nice little foot but not as small as your Aunt Burnham's." A small foot and a handsome bust were decided acquisitions in those days. A bust was never referred to. A gentleman might speak of a lady having a "handsome neck and shoulders": one inferred the rest.

The traveling tailor also came annually, making suits from our own wool which had been sent to the factory to be woven into homespuns (for 25 cents a yard) and plaids and blankets.

The older children had breathtaking expeditions into Toronto to King St. for "coming out" and wedding silks and satins. They had lovely imported materials and fine wools. My first pair of bought shoes were worn on my first train journey and I am quite sure the marvels and thrills of the train could not surpass the joy of my beautiful "Prunella" cloth shoes with black kid toes and heels. The buttonholes were scalloped and they had shiny red buttons. Luxury indeed.

I wonder if modern children, in their summer camps, experience the enjoyment that we did on summer days, picnicking and fishing for trout in Wilmot Creek.

We drove our pony cart to the harvesters to take their mid morning and afternoon refreshment. What a contrast to the noisy farm machinery today. The lovely peace of those sunbathed fields with the quiet swish of the scythes and the drowsy twittering of birds. We took the men great steaming pots of coffee made of ground peas or tea and large buttered buns. After enjoying this, Father would introduce a little brown jug and a tiny glass. They would all stand up and receive their measure of whisky straight from the jug. Work was resumed with great gusto.

I started school at seven at the weather stained school house with the hard benches. The great wood stove had a yawning crack that occasionally belched flame and smoke. I hated the cold and would huddle around the big heater while the other children rushed out to play. The school was supported by the country families who boarded the teacher in turns.

Later on, I went with my brother, Asa, to Mr. Boate's academy in Newcastle, a 3 mile walk. On stormy days, we stayed at the school all night. We hoped for bad weather so we could dance and have fun. Miss Massey, an aunt of Hon. Vincent Massey, married Mr. Boates around the time that government supported schools began and his academy was disbanded. He became Inspector of Public Schools.

I was a bridesmaid at 15 for my sister Kate who married Dr. Reid of Cobourg. I was soon sent to a private boarding school in Port Hope and spent weekends with Kate. Not a good plan as my mind was more taken up with weekend frivolities than with studies.

The most thrilling event of my school days was in 1860 when the young Prince of Wales (19 years) visited Canada. Cobourg was a flourishing town of some importance and was included in the itinerary. The new modern, grand town hall, newly completed, was officially opened with a reception and ball for the visiting royalty.

Everybody in town and country around was agog over the visit. Aunt Burnham (*wife of Senator Asa Burnham of Cobourg*), who was somewhat of an autocrat, decided that my cousin Annie and I should attend. We had new frocks made. Many handsome gowns and wraps were ordered from Toronto.

The Prince's party came from Belleville by boat late in the summer afternoon. There were few properly cooked dinners in Cobourg that evening as mistresses, maids and cooks flocked to join in the welcome.

NEVER SHALL I FORGET THE EVENING OF THE BALL.



H.R.H. The Prince of Wales

Cont'd. on Page 6 ...

Life in the C.P.R. Station

Editor's Note: The following are memories of Reita Virginia Carr (nee Cooke), as written in January 1996.

My father, Howard Cooke was the first agent at the C.P.R. Station in Newcastle. He and my mother, Evelyn, lived there several years before I was born in 1921. I lived in the station for ten years.

The station consisted of the C.P.R. office, waiting room and our living quarters. Our quarters consisted of two stories. On the ground floor, there was a large dining room, a smaller "parlour" and a kitchen with a sink. Beside the side was a small pump which pumped soft water from a cistern in the cellar. On the second floor, there were three bedrooms. My bedroom, which was the smallest, faced the railway tracks.



Newcastle Canadian Pacific Railway Station - Mill Street North

In retrospect, I do not remember being disturbed by the noise of the trains. When we had guests, however, they would be awakened by the midnight flyer and I'm sure they thought the world had come to an end. The basement had a dumb waiter on which dairy products, eggs and meat were kept. It was a manually operated elevator which could be raised to the dining room where the food could be removed for meals. The washing machine was also located in the basement. The wringer was turned by hand.

The Waiting Room for passengers was maintained by my parents. The wooden floors were kept highly polished and the benches on which the passengers sat were shellacked. My mother, who had a 'green thumb', provided a homey atmosphere by keeping beautiful ferns in pots and hanging baskets.

My father took a great interest in a large circular flower bed at the side of the station. The tall Canna Lilies were especially colourful. My father was very pleased when the C.P.R.

awarded him first price for the best station flower garden between Toronto and Kingston.

My father conducted his railway business by telegraph. Freight trains stopped and loaded and unloaded crates and parcels. Passenger trains made regular stops and I remember pleasant conversations with the village people while they waited for trains.

During my last few years at the station, the country was in the Depression. Unlike many unfortunate people, my father had a job. In addition to his income, there were a number of apple trees on the C.P.R. property. My mother had a large garden and some of the vegetables were stored in the basement or preserved. For a period of times, she kept chickens.

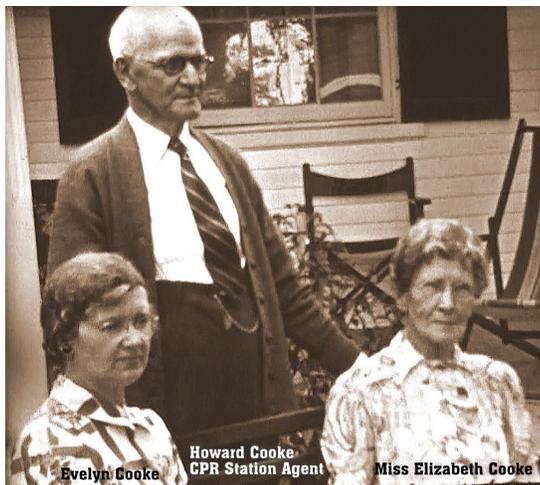
Of course there was no government assistance for the unemployed. It was not uncommon for men to "ride the rails". Occasionally, they would jump off the railway cars and appear at our door asking for food. My mother always prepared extra food and served them a tasty hot dinner.

A few personal incidents left a lasting impression on me. According to C.P.R. rules, people were not allowed to stay overnight in the waiting room. One night, two big men decided that they were going to stay overnight. My dad, who was not a big man, told them what the rules were and asked them to leave. I sensed my mother's fear as I waited beside her in our living quarters. The men left without incident. How different the results could be nowadays!

My father would always know when a celebrity was expected to pass the station. One of the celebrities was the late King Edward VIII, at that time, the Prince of Wales. Many people from the village came up to the station hoping he might wave to them from his private Pullman car. Much to everyone's disappointment, the blinds on his car were closed.

Apparently I was capable of getting into mischief when I was young. My mother told me she prayed every night that she would get through the next day without spanking me. As I became older, she occasionally used my father's razor strap on my legs. I distinctly remember reaching up as high as I could and dropping the razor strap into the cistern in the basement.

When my father retired, we moved to a house on Mill St., leaving behind many fond memories.



Howard Cooke
CPR Station Agent
Evelyn Cooke
Miss Elizabeth Cooke

Curator's Corner

By Leslie Wilson, Curator, NV&DHS

William Nicholson Rose, M.D.

After years of transcribing censuses, church registers, directories, assessments, old newspaper items, grave-stones, and the ledgers of the doctor himself, we now know a fair bit about Dr. Rose.

He was born, circa 1812/13 in Ireland and may have received his certificate from the University of Edinburgh. Why do I entertain that idea? Because his wife, Elizabeth McKenzie, was born circa 1812/13 in Scotland; and their first known child, Anne, was born in Scotland circa 1831/32. The doctor and his family may have been in what would later become Newcastle as early as 1841 when their daughter, Barbara, was reputedly born here on September 9th of that year. He was the only resident doctor in 1840s & 50s Clarke Twp.

Their religious affiliation fluctuated, possibly because he was born and raised in the Church of England but his wife was Church of Scotland. In February of 1850, their son James was baptized by the Anglican Rev Mr. Thomas Smith Kennedy but for the census of 1861, the Doctor told the enumerator he and his family were Presbyterian. This affiliation of the family, as far as an enumerator was concerned, continued until 1891 when his surviving spinster daughters, Barbara & Charlotte, said they were Anglican. The doctor smoked a pipe and took snuff but appears not to have been a heavy drinker. He was not an abstainer as he sometimes prescribed medicine be stirred into Port wine or a stiff dose of whiskey. He owned a horse, a buggy and a cutter but rarely traveled outside the township unless someone else took him. Until the trains began to run in 1857, he seems to have had the 19th century version of "fear of flying" as he avoided stage coaches and boats.

In the early years in Newcastle, he lived somewhere on Lot 28 Conc. 01 (south of King Avenue West). In 1850/51 he bought a lot on the east side of Mill St. S. on the north side of Caroline St. and had a house built there. In 1851, Mr. James Eilbeck Sr. papered the dining room. He did not own a dog but he owned a milk cow and his wife probably kept chickens as his purchase of eggs was negligible and he was not offered chickens or eggs for his services. His regular "odd job men" in the 1850s were Mr. Robert Birch Sr. & Jr. general labourers of Newcastle. They chopped and split his firewood; spread manure on his kitchen garden; dug, hilled and harvested his potato patch; and cleared his 'drains' (eaves troughs). His wife probably made little to no butter as he accepted butter in lieu of cash. He did not own agricultural property outside the village and, therefore, accepted beef, mutton, veal, oats, wheat, flour, wool, turnips, maple sugar, apples, etc. as payment.

If there ever were gravestones for the Doctor and his wife, they no longer survive. Dr. William Nicholson Rose died, aged about 68 years, in 1879/80 in Newcastle - as per the Northumberland & Durham Surrogate Court Index. His practice was taken over by Dr. Alfred Farncomb. It is not known when & where his wife died; although it appears to have been between 1871 & 1881 - as per the censuses. Their spinster daughters, Charlotte & Barbara, continued to live in the house on Caroline St. In 1909, they sold the west part of the property where, at the expense of the Masseys of Toronto, a "Queen Anne" style brick house was built, facing Mill St. S., as a residence for the Methodist minister. Barbara died in 1915 at the age of 85 and was interred at Bond Head. In 1922, Charlotte sold the house and remaining property to Richard Allin. She died in 1930 at the age of 84 and was also interred at Bond Head.

Even a cursory glance through his ledgers indicates Dr. Rose pulled more teeth than babies. How and why Mrs. Ormiston, the wife of the Presbyterian Minister of Newtonville, was badly burned on the face and neck by sulphuric acid is anyone's guess - he made no comment in his ledger concerning the circumstances.

Armed with the nostrums of the day, Dr. Rose also cupped, bled and applied a "galvinating machine". However, from his ledger, he appears not to have used the latter three methods to the degree they often were by other doctors at the time.

Then there were those; so many of them, who died no matter what he prescribed or did. Whatever their age, they were given morphine and opium, in what we now consider excessive quantities, in the faint hope they would recover - but the doctor probably knew all it did in most cases was ease their suffering.

Dislocations, fractures and severe cuts comprised most of the triage part of his practice. Injuries caused by axes and horses have been replaced by those from chain saws and automobiles but most doctors today have little to no experience with typhus, cholera, or fatal Erysipelatous inflammation and do not see measles or whooping cough on a regular basis.

Without anesthetic, what woman today would allow her breast to be lanced (cut open & drained) or restrain her infant while it's gums were lanced - or father hold his son's head immobile as the doctor inserted pins to draw together the palate, nose and lips split open by a kick to the face from a horse?

The "good old days" were not all that good.

Cont'd. from Page 4: Aunt Lizzie

When the Burnham carriage called for me, it seemed so overflowing with finery that I refused to get in and crush my flounces. "I shall walk" and I flew off before anyone could stop me. I had not gone far down the moonlit street when my cousin Jay caught up with me and escorted me to the entrance. We arrived at the entrance and I got my greatest surprise and joy of the evening. My sister Kate was just starting to dance with the Prince. Kate was radiant in her wedding dress of white taffeta with its rows of pinked ruffles and I thought she was the most beautiful woman there.

The ball room with its blazing gas fixtures; the gay uniforms and handsome gowns was a fairy land to me. After the Prince departed at midnight, there was a great rush to see who could be first to drink out of his wine glass; I do not remember participating in this.

Social life was very easy in the 1860s. I and my sister, Julia (later Mrs. Metcalf) came out together at a party given by Mrs. John Burke of Bowmanville for two very stylish young ladies from Whitby, the Misses Warren. My dress was a grass-green striped silk, trimmed with blond lace and I had a train. Julia's was two-toned mauve taffeta. We spent the winter in Cobourg with my sister, Kate Reid, and her husband and enjoyed the many large parties given by different people. Drawing room carpets would be covered with tightly stretched linen; the music was gay and the suppers were splendid feasts. The great dining room table would be laden with delicious jellies; gateau de pomme; trifles; tippy puddings; great boned turkeys, glazed and decorated; hams and beef. The drinks were punch wines and whiskeys. Champagne punch was my favourite.

We enjoyed life to the full in those early days. Boating parties, picnics at the beach, playing games such as Battledore, Shuttlecock and tennis. We visited friends, skated on ponds and lakes and had sleigh rides.

The modern young people, with their fast cars, speed boats, water skiing and dancing would think we led a dull life and no doubt they think they are very much ahead of us in their gaiety and pleasure. I wonder????

Membership

Newsletter rules 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.

Membership Chairman Ron Locke ronald.locke@gmail.com

NV&DHS gratefully acknowledges the ongoing sponsorship of **Tim Horton's of Newcastle**, who supply the room with complementary coffee for visitors every Saturday morning.

Please remember that *2010 membership fees are now due*

Visit the NV&DHS room in Newcastle's Community Hall on Tuesday or Saturday or contact Ron Locke at ronald.locke@gmail.com to make payment arrangements.