

NEWCASTLE VILLAGE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER - MARCH 1991
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*** MARCH ***
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There is a proverb that says March borrowed three days from April!
In a verse that turns up in almost every language:

*March borrowed from Averil
Three days and they were ill
The one was sleet and the other was snow
and the third was the worst that e'er did blow.*

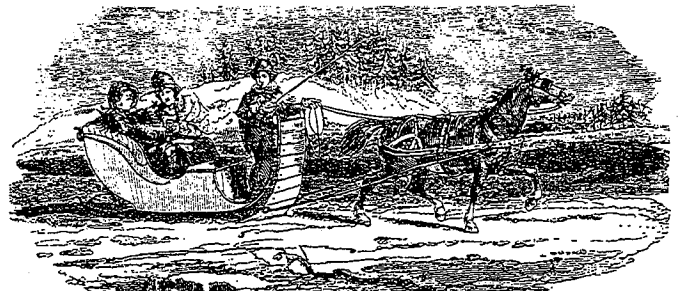
As we look out our windows and wonder when "it" will be over, we might reflect on the cheerful words and positive attitude of Catharine Parr Traill, writing from "Lake Cottage," Douro twsp, March 14th 1834.

I received your affectionate and interesting letter only last night. Owing to an error in the direction, it made the round of two townships before it reached Peterborough; and though it bore as many new directions as the sailor's knife did new blades and handles, it did at last reach me, and was not less prized for its travelling dress, being somewhat the worse for wear.

I rejoice to hear of your returning health and increased happiness;— may they continue long. Your expressions of regret for my exile, as you term my residence in this country, affected me greatly. Let the assurance that I am not less happy than when I left my native land, console you for my absence. If my situation be changed, my heart is not. My spirits are as light as ever, and at times I feel a gaiety that bids defiance to all care.

You say you fear the rigours of the Canadian winter will kill me. I never enjoyed better health, nor so good, as since it commenced. There is a degree of spirit and vigour infused into one's blood by the purity of the air that is quite exhilarating. The very snow seems whiter and more beautiful than it does in our damp vapoury climate. During a keen bright winter's day you will often perceive the air filled with minute frozen particles, which are quite dry, and slightly prick your face like needle-points, while the sky is blue and bright above you...

Mrs Traill suggests that in the more populous parts of Ontario, in towns and villages such as Newcastle: winter is hailed with delight instead of dread; it is to all a season of leisure and enjoyment. Travelling is then expeditiously and pleasantly performed; even our vile bush-roads become



positively very respectable; and if you should happen to be overturned once or twice during a journey of pleasure, very little danger attends such an event, and very little compassion is bestowed on you for your tumble in the snow; so it is wisest to shake off your light burden and enjoy the fun with a good grace if you can. (From: THE BACKWOODS OF CANADA)

Douro township, just east of Peterborough, with the Otonabee River on its north-west border, has produced several excellent, very interesting, pioneer writers. We mentioned Frances Stewart in our last Newsletter. Two others were Susanna Moodie (ROUGHING IT IN THE BUSH; or FOREST LIFE IN CANADA, London 1852), and her sister Catharine Parr Traill (THE BACKWOODS OF CANADA, London 1836). Mrs Moodie and Mrs Traill were sisters and their brother Samuel Stickland was also a writer (TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS IN CANADA WEST, 2 vols, London 1853). Strickland came to Canada in 1825 from Suffolk, England, and worked on a farm in Darlington before moving to Otonabee twsp near Peterborough.

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ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

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Our officers for 1991 are:

President -Francis Jose, 987-4789;

Vice Pres -Lorraine Lover, 987-4912; Secretary -Audrey Gogerty,

623-4950; Treasurer -Jean Rickard, 987-4822; Directors: (2 yrs), Kay Stephenson, 983-5890; Ken Stephenson, 983-5890; Mabel Goode, 983-5514; (1 yr), Ron Locke, 987-4406; Denis Schmiegelow, 987-4856; Lynn Lovekin, 987-4897; Archives Convenor -Pat Macdonnell, 987-5411; Membership -Florence Taylor, 987 5433; Newsletter -Herb Taylor.

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FROM OUR MEMBERS:

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Our member Royal Lee was born in New York City. His father, Dr Patrick Royal Lee, was raised in Gananoque, and served as surgeon, on a troupship during the First World War. After the war Dr Lee moved to New York City where Royal was born. Royal moved back to Canada, lived in Gananoque from 1932 until 1937, then moved to Oshawa where he worked for General Motors.

In 1958 he and his wife bought a hundred year old house on twelve acres, part of lot 34 concession 8, just west of Leskard. In 1802 the original property, consisting of 200 acres, was granted to a Miss Kirby who had married Lawrence Herchmer, of Kingston. On June 14th, 1847, the property was deeded to Rev.William Macauley Herchmer, of Kingston. Reverend Herchmer insisted that his children be born in England, so his wife, a niece of J.M.W.Turner, the painter, had to cross the Atlantic thirteen times to deliver her children in England.

Two of her sons, born and educated in England, were to hold high rank in the Royal North West Mounted Police. Lawrence William Herchmer served in the British army in India before arriving in Canada at age twenty-two. He founded the Redwood Brewery in Winnipeg, was an Indian Agent for Manitoba, and Sir John A. Macdonald appointed him Commissioner of the N.W.M.Police at age forty-six.

The youngest son, William M.Herchmer, was a Captain of Militia under Field Marshall Wolessley, and was sent to the west in 1870 to help quell the first Riel rebellion. A detailed description of the expedition can be found in DARLINGTON AND CLARKE, by Squair, (p.174).

In 1847 Lot 34, concession 8, Clarke, was sold for £75 to John Davey Sr. The Davey family homesteaded the property and farmed it for over one hundred years. It was John Davey Sr who was instrumental in choosing the name Leskard for the village of Rochester when a post office was applied for, in 1856. Later the farm was subdivided, and Royal Lee and his wife bought their property in 1947.

THE RICKARDS OF SHAW'S:

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 An excellent book has just been published entitled THE RICKARDS OF SHAW'S. Written by Marion Rickard Farr, the book gives details regarding the descendants of John and Maria (Parsons) Rickard who emigrated to Canada from Cornwall and Devon in 1847 and settled near Newcastle. Copies of the book are available from the publisher, Garnet B. Rickard, R.R.4, Bowmanville, Ontario, L1C 3K5, 416/623-7150.

CAPTAIN HORROCK:

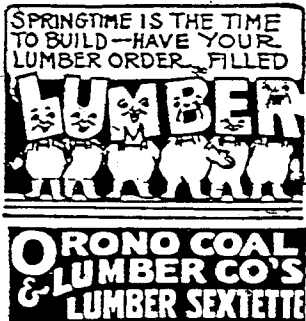
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 Reg LeGresley tells us that Mr. Horrock was a civil servant working for either the municipal or provincial government and not a "sea captain" as suggested in our last newsletter. Reg says that "Captain Horrock" came sailing along the Bond Head waterfront, liked the look of the land, and bought "the Horrock property" from Dr Alfred Farncomb.

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 SPRINGTIME IN NEWCASTLE IN THE 30'S:
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Seed Catalogues. The Garden show. For the spring cleanup one bought "Chipso," that had "Quick suds" that lasted. On sale, the large size was only 19c. Kellogg Corn Flakes, also on sale, 2 packages, for 19c.



Quick suds that last



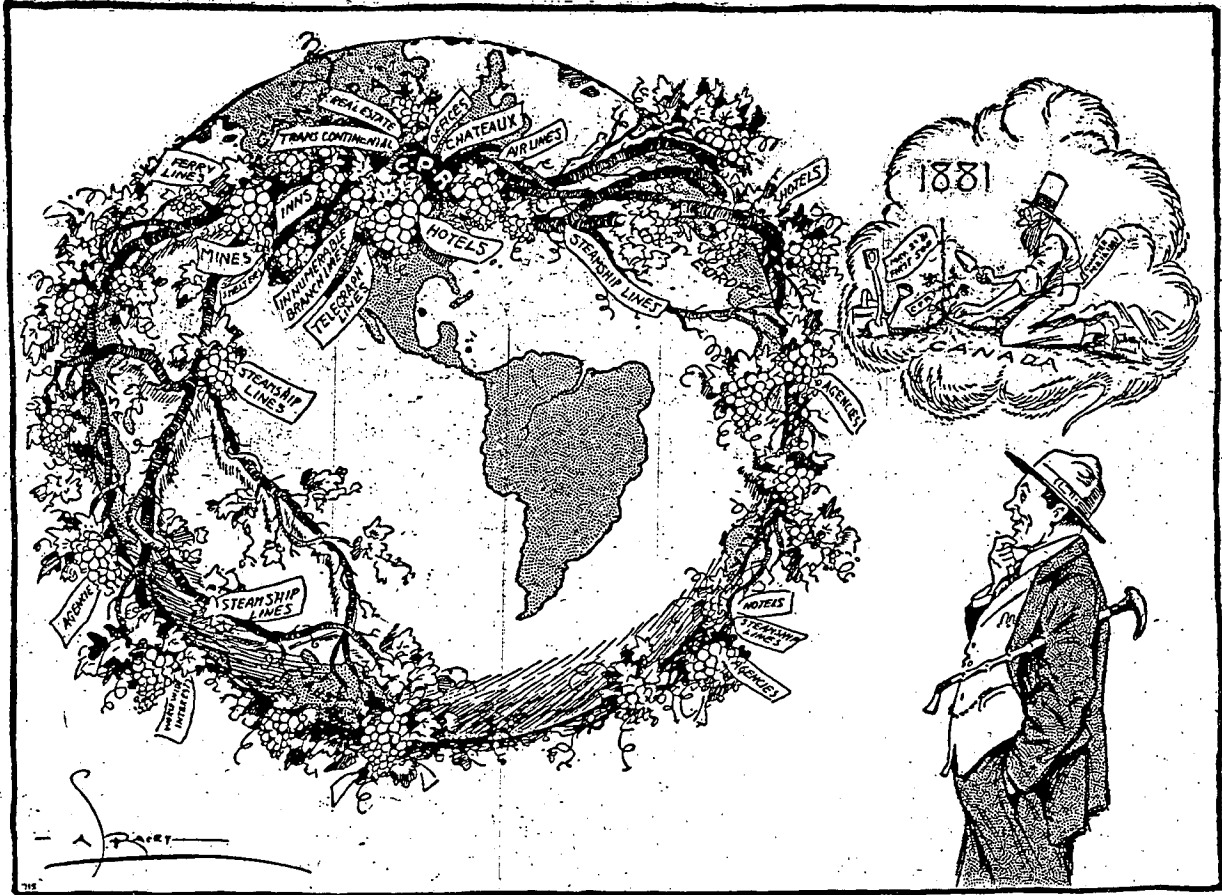
As the Orono Coal & Lumber co. told its clients, "Springtime is the season of the year when birds build their nests, sweethearts build plans for the future, and grown up men and women build homes." The Orono Coal and Lumber Company, founded in 1929, was run for its first ten years, by Cecil McLaren and his brother-in-law Harry Clarke. Mr Clarke then resigned to form his own company in Prescott, Ontario.

In the early thirties, the "Hall Committee" would hire George Wade and the Corn Huskers to warm up cold evenings at the Newcastle Community Hall. Admission to the dance program was 75 cents. Spectators 50c. Dancing... "Square dancing as well as the latest popular dances"... was from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Hilda Tamblin tells us that even with the "hot" music, it could be very cold in the hall. The Committee tried to save coal and turned the heat down after all the people arrived. When the dancing ended and people went downstairs for something to eat, one or two musicians would stay up in the hall, and continue to play, wearing their coats. Hilda remembers some people dancing with their coats on!



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Times were tough in the 30's, but the CPR had seen fifty years of successful growth by the time this cartoon appeared in the ORONO NEWS of March 19th, 1931. It had appeared two weeks earlier in the MONTREAL DAILY STAR. It was titled: "A WONDERFUL CANADIAN GROWTH."



That is "Mr. CANADA" standing on the right, and saying, "Well, well! Who would have thought that the little vine root planted fifty years ago would cover the world in that time. **

THE C.P.R.

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"A transcontinental railway within 2 years and completion within 10 years were conditions of British Columbia's entry into Confederation.

Between 1901 and 1914 the number of freight cars in the system quadrupled while their carrying capacity increased about tenfold. In 1901 there were 708 locomotives. In 1915 there were 2,255.

In 1904 the huge Angus Shops opened in Montreal. Here locomotives and freight and passenger cars were built in a shop that covered 200 acres.

1912 was the peak year of prewar traffic and prosperity, and the Angus shop was expected to produce freight cars at the rate of 30 each day! It was at this time that the CPR came to Newcastle.

NEWCASTLE, 1912:

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May 9th: Everything is bustling in the new town of Bulgerville, on the flats one mile east of the village. A Bell phone has been placed in the C.P.R. camp and work is rapidly going ahead on the big culverts. The latest C.P.R. survey runs pretty close to the village crossing the Orono road a little north of the forks. If this grade is adopted it will mean a saving in construction over the original survey at this point, railwaymen say, of \$3000.

Mr Morrow, head of the C.P.R. Real Estate Department was in the village on Tuesday afternoon lats, and appointed Mr. Joseph Coulson purchasing agent for the right of way through the district, for proposed C.P.R. new line. No doubt Mr. Coulson's knowledge of land values in the locality will materially assist him in making fair with the land holders.

Mr Sam Seymour has moved to the Hunter place on the Steen farm. We understand he will drive a team for Reeve Colwill on the C.P.R. Miss Lang, Milliner, who was occupying rooms in the Coulson block, was obliged to vacate for the C.P.R., and has moved her stock to Kirby.

May 16th: The new line of the C.P.R. is definitely located. It crosses the Orono Road north of the forks cutting through the Alf. Lake grove. We understand there will be a filling at the gravel road and a subway. Mr Joseph Coulson is having good success buying right of way. He has already made satisfactory settlement with a number of farmers.

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THE DUNCANS OF BOND HEAD:

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Erskine Duncan, of Glasgow, married Annie Cowan Todd, of Belfast. Erskine, as a young Civil Engineering graduate, arrived in Canada about 1906 and Annie in 1910. They had been engaged in the Old Country, but were married in Montreal, and then lived in Galt for a short time while he worked with railroad survey parties in the Lakehead area and in the maritimes.

Working for the C.P.R., Erskine came to Newcastle in 1912 and was in charge of a group of engineers building the Oshawa to Port Hope section of the railine. He, with wife Annie, their daughter Nancy and a Chinese cook, lived in the house now owned by Lloyd Stevenson. The cook prepared meals, and all the men ate at the house, but slept elsewhere in the village.

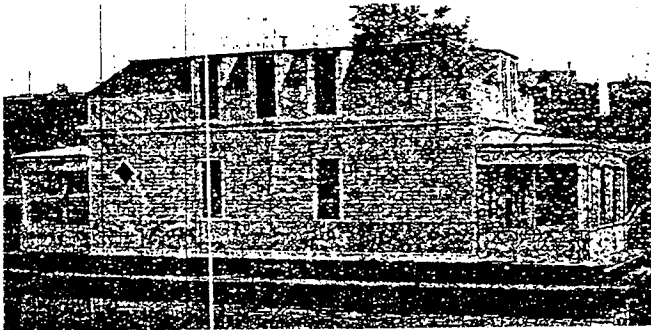
Sometime after the two years spent in Newcastle, Erskine Duncan joined the British army, and was in the Overseas Railway Construction Corps...probably part of the Royal Engineers.

Erskine and Annie returned to Newcastle in 1929 and rented "Tuckahoe," a cottage then, now the home of Fred Yates on Boulton Street. Next door, in "Woodholme" were the Lintons (Hope Carveth's family), now the John MacLean home. These two cottages were built by a Mr Woods, a carpenter from Toronto. Following their summer on the waterfront, the Duncans bought property in Bond Head. Our members, "Dunc" and Peggy Duncan now live on Boulton St, in a house owned by the Duncan family since the early 1930's.

"POCAHONTAS"

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About this time of year boaters start having serious thoughts about their boats. As mentioned in our last Newsletter (JAN 1991), James H. McGill of Washington, D.C., who had Clarke twsp connections, had a houseboat built in the Lindsay area. There was a report, with pictures, of great interest to all Clarke township readers, in the CANADIAN STATESMAN of August 22, 1906.



The "beautiful floating summer residence" had 8 x 20 foot verandas at front and back.

A door from the stern veranda entered into a gentleman's lavatory that was "comfortably fitted." Another door led to a 11 x 15 foot kitchen, with hot and cold running water and cooking range able to burn wood, coal or charcoal. Off the kitchen, the

cook's berth, also a pantry, both 6 x 7 feet. A hall connected to the livingroom which was 12 x 20 feet. Built in lounges at each end could be used for sleeping if the four bedrooms upstairs were filled with guests. The 9 x 12 bedrooms each had two windows, and the beds were arranged "to avoid drafts." There was a 7 x 6 ft bathroom with tub and every other convenience. What the reporter called "a raft," three timbers wide, ran around the outside of the boat. This was in fact a wooden sidewalk! It had "a floor, making a nice walk." All the rooms were lighted with electricity, and an interesting feature was the supply of storage batteries in a small boat which could "be dispatched to the nearest power house when the batteries are exhausted.

The house sat on a solid raft made of 16x10 inch timbers. It was 22 x 50 feet in size, and 36 inches deep. It drew 30 inches of water.

"Mr McGill has provided everything but a garden, and the walks around the boat can easily be utilized for that purpose if gardens on house boats become the fashion on the Kawartha waters."

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MEMBERSHIP DUES HAVE BEEN INCREASED:

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY -	SINGLE,	\$7.00
	FAMILY,	\$10.00
	CORPORATE,	\$12.00

Annual dues cover the period January 1st to December 31st.

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May your raft be large enough to hold flowers when "Flowers-On-Our-Rafts" becomes the fashion.

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