

On the Main Street



with Ford Moynes

A Centennial Project which might have been developed as one of the finest in Ontario might have included the building of a replica of one of the old time steam ships which plied the waters between Port Perry, Lindsay, Pleasant Point, Bobcaygeon, Sturgeon Point and Fenelon Falls. This might have been the Ogemah, the Manita, the Crandella, Kenosha, the Esturion, the Vanderbuilt, or the Lintonia. A boat of this old time design would in some respects be similar to the one which runs daily from the Muskoka Wharf in Bracebridge up to the Muskoka Lakes every summer.

The foregoing brings back to memory the history and the one time grandeur of the old Scugog River. Years ago the Scugog was unique for its great variety of its vegetation and growth of water plants and second for its being the summer habitat and breeding place for so many varieties of waterfowl. It winded its tortuous way in a continuous S past fourteen lighthouses at the bends in the stream through great masses of cattail, wild rice, smartweed, nut grass, wapato, bur reed, bulrush, meadow grass, cord grass, water celery, pond weed pickerel weed and water lily white and yellow. In some places these weed beds extended back for a quarter of a mile and here amid the haunts of the busy muskrat the wild fowl found an ideal nesting place.

The great Blue Heron, a scavenger protected by law stood motionless on some dead stump or flapped his way deliberately across the swamp, the Pied Billed Grebe or Hell-diver disappeared like a flash, her nest built on floating weeds and covered when left, the Wild Ducks with their eight ducklings, which disappeared one by one through the summer, the American Bittern with his protective colouring, the white-billed Coots and the red-billed Gallinules all were there to delight the lover of wild life.

Here, Ernest Seton Thompson acquired much of his knowledge which he passed on to the boys and girls of Canada in such an absorbing interesting manner. Overhead the Killdeer with its exquisite markings, the swift Plover and Tern, and immense flocks of red-winged Blackbirds and all the others, Crows and occasional Hawks flew on their own particular errands. Such was the Scugog of a few decades ago.