

A resident of St. Peter Street, has handed in an extraordinary volume — 13 x 14 inches — which contains an amazing fund of information regarding geographical, astronomical and historical facts, figures and maps.

The book was published in 1880 by Home Knowledge Association, Toronto. A brief reference to Lindsay and Victoria County discloses that W. W. Dean was judge of the county court; Sheriff J. McLennan, clerk of the peace; A. P. Devlin, county attorney, and local master of high court; W. W. Dean, local registrar of high court; W. Grace, registrar surrogate; county clerk and treasurer, Thos. Matchett.

Revising officers were Victoria North, A. Hudspeth and Victoria South, W. W. Dean. Lindsay police magistrate was Arthur O'Leary.

* * *

The Village of Sonya, located on the highway which links Manilla with Seagrave, was for many years the center of various activities, especially mercantile, church and sports, the days when entire families attended Divine worship, the days when the village blacksmith shop and the corner grocery were the meeting places for the entire district; also when many men belonged to fraternal societies and great interest was taken in baseball and other sports.

Mr. Malcolm Cameron is a veritable fountain of information when it comes to relating historical facts. "The Post" has already published an intelligent and interesting story of the history of the Sonya Church. This same gentleman, in an interview, said in part: "Sonya was very prominent in both a social and an athletic way. A Sons of Scotland Lodge was formed, and after the new church was built they used the old one as their headquarters. Once a year lodge members attended church. It was an impressive sight to see them on parade. Mr. Wm. MacTaggart who is in his 81st year and now residing in Little Britain, is the only member living who still belongs to the Lodge."

Mr. Cameron also recalls a family by the name of Mac-Millan who moved to Toronto from Sonya. Two of the boys joined the Toronto Police Force and helped form the

first Toronto Police Pipe Band.

Those two MacMillan boys would bring the band to Sonya, put on a programme in the hall. After the concert there would be a dance till five o'clock in the morning. They would then walk to the station, and take the seven o'clock train back to Toronto. Those visits from the police pipe band were probably the most prominent social events to take place in Sonya.

Some of the members paid the supreme sacrifice in the First World War.

"Prior to the First World War, Sonya had a famous skating rink, which was run by Wm. and Jack MacTaggart,"



William McTaggart

said Mr. Cameron. He continued: "There would be at least two carnivals held during the skating season. Attending the carnivals would be people coming in sleigh loads, generally from Little Britain, Sunderland, Pinedale and Port Perry.

"The first few years the shack wasn't large enough for the number of people attending and it was a common sight to see skaters standing outside warming their skating with matches. The two main attractions at a carnival would be the men's mile race and the old men's race. The contestants for the mile were generally Garfield and George Heatlie from Little Britain, Dan MacTaggart from Sonya and Noble Hicks from Valentia. The Heatlie boys were very speedy and graceful. Dan MacTaggart, a rangy boy, was also fast and graceful, while Noble Hicks wasn't a graceful skater but he made a race out of it.

"The old men's race was worth the price of admission to see. Mr. John Short of Seagrave and Mr. Sydney Wooldridge were usually the contestants. Mr. Wooldridge was the fastest skater on the sides, but when he would come to the ends, he would have to turn right around about three times or so before he could get started to skate down the sides again. Mr. Short would pass him."

Sonya, like many other districts was noted for its runners, and at that time long distance races and sprints were quite common. Mr. Cameron stated: "Jack MacTaggart who is now in his 81st year and living at Seagrave was quite famous as a distance runner."

"One day he sowed buckwheat in the forenoon, took the one o'clock train to Port Perry and there he won the five mile race."

"Another great sprinter was Jim King. One day at Port Perry he entered the 100 yard dash and while all the other contestants were in shorts, he had on his good clothes and his best boots, and he went on to easily win the race. They claimed he had never been beaten."

Thousands of people will remember the Toronto Star comic strip, "Birds Eye Centre". Mr. Cameron informed the writer that a "character called Archie was created from a member of the Sonya Church. Archie MacLean was his name and he lived on the west end of concession one in Mariposa Township. Jim Frise the cartoonist was well known around Sonya and district. The cartoonist lived at Seagrave and the cartoons actually depicted Seagrave and its people."

Returning to members of distant days Mr. Cameron said "Sonya at this time was a very busy community. It featured a post office, blacksmith shop, a store, a community hall and a church.

Every week-day there would be three trains go south as far as Whitby and then return back to Lindsay. It was also a common sight to see long caravans of wagons loaded with grain passing through from Manilla to Port Perry and at times continued on as far as Lake Ontario where the grain was loaded on vessels and transported to markets."

The reporter found Mr. Cameron to be a very versatile gentleman with a remarkable memory, a man who will be long remembered by many present day and former day residents of Sonya and district.