

Places I've Done Time

by Clifford Francis

The Old Swamp Road

Someone asked me the other day if I knew where the Old Swamp Road was in Leskard? Did I know! Well I guess I did, having lived in and around Leskard for a long time.

By the time I arrived in Leskard, the village was small by comparison to what it had been in the late 1800's. The grist mill operated by Ernie Nickolson and the saw mill across the road owned by Roy Thompson were still in operation, and Roy had a small shop operating that made apple boxes. The store was the only other business there. Hemp was also grown in small quantities. There was also a cemetery south of the village that was abandoned. Colin Brown claimed that the people lived so long in Leskard that they shot the first man to start the graveyard. To this day I have no reason to doubt him as the cemetery was seldom used.

The Old Swamp Road starts about half a mile north of the store on the corner and goes on an angle to the Mosport Road that runs north and south to the west of the village.

The south end of Mosport Road would fill with snow each winter making travel down it impossible. Hence the road through the swamp. These roads were called a 'given' road and soon it would be used year round making the trip shorter.

By the time I arrived in Leskard, the Sons of Temperance who crusaded against drink were long gone, thankfully. But the Old Swamp Road was a handy way of getting moonshine down from New Park which was a community a few miles north of Leskard.

Some rather strange things happened on the Old Swamp Road. One time while out for a walk I was chased by a rather large black bear and badly frightened, causing me to fill the fruit of my looms

before I arrived home.

It was the talk of the village for a while, with lots of bear sightings until a rather large pony was captured which strayed down from Solina.

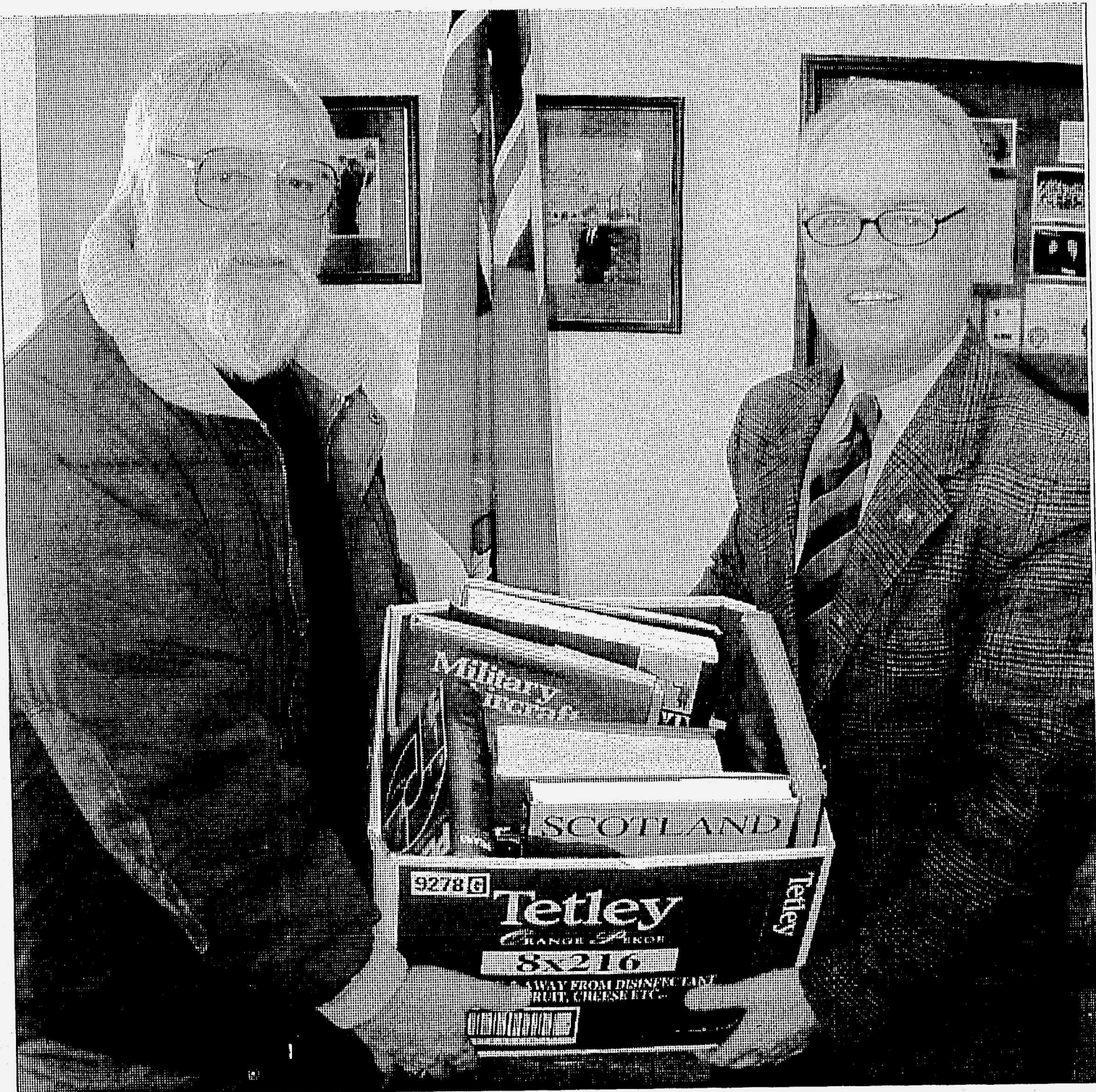
Another time while driving along the Swamp Road we observed a brightly lit flying object that we followed for a good distance only to lose sight of it by the trees that bordered the road.

Another harrowing experience I had was coming down the Swamp Road when all other roads were blocked by high snow drifts, and hitting a tree head on. Being heavily layered for winter time work, I went flying through the passenger side windshield and arrived on the ground with nary a scratch, but the truck was totally demolished.

To walk the Old Swamp Road in summer time is totally delightful. On the hottest of days it would be a cool walk underneath the cedars that grew on both sides. There is a small creek that runs along side the Swamp Road which is the start of the Wilmot Creek. When it gets down to the village it joins two other creeks to form the Wilmot Creek that is famous for its Rainbow Trout fishing in the spring. I still think of the fish that I caught at the side of the Old Swamp Road, and sitting at the table waiting for them to finish frying.

The Creek is now a mere trickle of what it once was. The Old Swamp Road is now nothing more than a walking trail, closed to traffic. Everything changes except the abundance of pretty girls in the village. It is still nice to walk up the Old Swamp Road, hand in hand and smile both ways.

Doug Ferguson and his entourage are having a hike up the Old Swamp Road on Saturday starting at 10 o'clock. You are welcome to join them.



Hugh Beauchamp of Orono dropped off a box of his surplus books at MPP John O'Toole's office in Bowmanville to be sent to needy schools in Ontario's north.

Aiding Northern Ontario First Nation schools

Lieutenant Governor launches used book program

Alarmed by the bare book shelves in the northern Ontario schools he visited, Ontario's Lieutenant Governor, Mr. James Bartleman has launched a book drive. The Lieutenant Governor's book program aims to collect used books to stock school libraries serving First Nations in Ontario's North.

The Lieutenant Governor invites members of the public to participate in this province-wide initiative. Used books (in good condition) can be dropped off at any OPP detachment in Ontario during regular business hours or locally at MPP John O'Toole's office at 75 King Street East in Bowmanville.

In February, the first book shipments will be sent to priority communities whose only land links are the winter ice roads. Books will be trans-

ported by the Canadian Rangers and the Ontario Provincial Police who are partners in this program.

The Lieutenant Governor's Book Program is part of Mr Bartleman's broader effort to encourage aboriginal students to pursue reading and education in order to get a good start in life. Mr Bartleman is spokesperson for the

Canadian Rangers' *Stay in School* program and often speaks with First Nations students in their schools and via radio and teleconferencing.

Support for aboriginal youth is a key priority of his mandate as Lieutenant Governor.

Mr. Bartleman is a member of the Mnjikaning First Nation.

The Annual Meeting
of the
**DURHAM CENTRAL
AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY**
Saturday, January 31st, 2004
at Orono Arena (upstairs)
at 1:00 p.m.

~ OPEN TO THE PUBLIC ~

~ HAPPENINGS ~

Wednesday, January 21

Orono Focus Group Meeting - 7 p.m. at Orono Town Hall, open to the public.

Saturday, January 27

Euchre Tournament - St. Francis of Assisi, Newcastle at 7 p.m. \$10 - includes lunch. Elevator Access

Saturday, January 31

Durham Central Agricultural Society Annual Meeting - 1 p.m. upstairs at Orono Arena. Open to the public.

Wednesday, March 3rd

"Canada Blooms" Bus Trip Sponsored by Orono Horticultural Society. Bookings required by January 23rd. Cost \$33 per person. Departures from Orono, Newcastle, and Bowmanville. Contact Lorna 905-983-5608.

BB's



Brigitte Brown

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