

A-Factory Creek/Hill (07-04)

A look at the cosy community of Factory Hill back in 1916

By Percy Climo

Factory Hill is that part of Cobourg west of the Factory Creek and south of the railways. Cobourg extends west of Burnham Street and as we were not too "sticky" about our boundaries we include the three or four scattered houses that fronted on Burnham Street to the north of the tracks.

We were a cosy community back in 1916. Everyone knew everyone else and there was a friendly, neighborly attitude all around and good people, wholesome and kind to each other. If someone needed a bit of help, that help was forthcoming willingly, cheerfully and generously.

In 1916, the country was deeply involved in an effort to fight the war that was raging in Europe. The whole town of Cobourg was involved in this struggle and as part of the town, Factory Hill was in there too.

One son of the Factory Hill, Thomas Aitchison, had the summer before returned from the war bearing the 14 wounds he had received at the Battle of Langemarck.

Stewart Walden had departed Cobourg with the First Draft of the Cobourg Heavy Battery.

A Mr. Hood had signed up for over-

seas and had left his family of wife and two children to live in the back part of the mansion built by Robert Henry about 1820, later named Torbreck.

Mr. Fox owned this property and he resided in the larger section of this old building situated opposite the end of Tremaine Street and the north side of King Street.

My oldest brother, Victor, signed up with the Third Draft of the Cobourg Battery at Christmas, 1915, and in the spring my second brother, Cecil, signed up in the Fourth Draft.

Private James Campbell, the son of a Scottish family living in the G.T.R. section house some half a mile west of Burnham Street, had gone overseas with the infantry and was killed in action.

Factory Hill had made its contribution to the armed forces.

Down at the end of Tremaine Street, living in an older house, was a family by the name of McEvers. They owned a portable sawing machine mounted on wagon which was used to cut firewood from cordwood, or any wood that was available. The son and father travelled about doing custom work.

The saw, mounted on a shaft, had a large flywheel on the other end of the

Golden memories

Percy L. Climo



shaft. This was powered by a gasoline engine driving a belt to the main shaft. The saw would enter a log at top speed and as the cutting proceeded, it slowly reduced its speed. The saw's high-pitched sound changed tone with the slowing process until the saw stalled in the log. One could hear that saw all over the neighborhood.

John Guy, the blacksmith, lived next along Tremaine Street. The Guys kept a cow and my mother often sent me to their place to get milk in a little tin pail at seven cents a quart.

Further along the same side of the street was the Matting Factory. The two-storey buildings are still there.

Then came the old woolen mill building. By 1916 the woolen business had terminated and the building was taken over by a new industry, the Cobourg Felt Company.

The building was demolished quite a few years ago, except for the lower

west end section. Today, that old section, that once was used as a hydraulic powerhouse driving the machinery in the mill, is used as the press room for Northumberland Publishers. (From the power of the loom to the power of the press.)

Where the Cobourg Daily Star office building is today was an open field. The steep hillside was used in winter for sleigh riding by young boys and girls in 1916, and the writer used it frequently for that type of childhood pleasure.

Tremaine Street is one of the oldest streets in town. From 1796 the location was used as an overland outlet for the settler Elias Jones. It connected up with King Street West which was part of the old Indian trail that later returned to the lakeshore about a mile westward.

The old Robert Henry building had an apple orchard to the north. Inside the east fence of this orchard was a St. Lawrence apple tree. Come September, that tree had the nicest, juiciest, well flavored St. Lawrence apples one could wish to sink their teeth into. Every boy knew this and how that tree was raided come fall.

Further west on the north side of King Street lived the Brenton family,

with the Hartman couple in another house on Sinclair Street. West of Brentons lived the Miss Eaglesons and sister Mrs. Grinlinton. Next came the Walden family, then the O'Hara people, a Hilliar family, then Burnham Street, with a Pillsworth family

just south of the C.P.R.

Pillsworth kept a market garden with a greenhouse attached to the dwelling. On July 2, 1916, a very severe electric storm came along with much hail. The greenhouse was smashed almost completely, giving Pillsworth a severe loss.

A Navin family lived further along King Street. Across the road the Billy Maher family had a fine brick house. Their property extended to the lake. Coming east from Burnham Street lived the Hilliards, the Flints, the Walkers, the Carruthers and the Kimmels, who had recently arrived with the coming of the felt factory. Next was the Bert Woods family.

Finally, on Stuart Street lived the Lloyds, the Climos, the Fullers, the Grants, the Cowles and Peter Wilfin on the west side. The east side had the Guttridge family, the Hynes and the Rumbelows.

The Factory Hill neighborhood was a great place to live.

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