

Grafton Historical Notes

(7) By T. R. M.

The following editorial comment from the "World" of Oct. 31, 1884 is self-explanatory.

"We have before us an old book, lent us by Walter Riddell, Esq., which contains matter especially interesting to the people of this county. It is no less than a printed report of the proceedings of the Northumberland Agricultural Society, from its commencement in May 1828, to the 9th of November, 1829. It bears the imprint of the 'Herald Press' of Kingston and was printed in the latter year, fifty-five years ago. After a well written 'Introduction' dwelling upon the importance of agriculture and the benefit of such associations, it proceeds to give the rules and regulations of the society. These are followed by the minutes of a meeting held at Mr. John Grover's Inn, Haldimand, on the 18th of May, 1829. At that meeting Benjamin Whitney was elected President, Capt. Spilsbury R.N. and Charles Powers vice presidents; Joseph A. Keeler, treasurer; and John Steele, secretary. It will be of interest to give the names of the directors:— Messrs. William Falkner, Henry Rutlan, Zaccheus Burnham, John Burnham, Archibald MacDonald, James J. Bethune, John Fraser, Chas. Rubidge, Benjamin Cumming, Jas. Lyons, M. P., Benj. Ewing, Esq., M.P., Shelden Hawley, Esq., Messrs. John Grover, John Kelly, Ephraim Doolittle, Ozen Strong, Jas. D. Goslee, David Brodie, Levi Loomis, Isaac Proctor. The first 'cattle show' of the society was held in the public square of the village of Colborne in the township of Cramahe' on the 19th of October, 1829, when prizes to the amount of \$77.00 were paid."

According to a paper written by Dr. J. J. Talman, and published in the 1931 report of the Ontario Historical Association, the first agricultural society in Upper Canada was formed in Niagara in 1792-3. Others were probably organized during these early years but there is little record of them. Charles Forthergill in his "Sketch of the Present State of Can-

of Grafton . . . in the months of October and April in each and every year." A full account of this fair, with a prize list, was printed in the "Star" of Oct. 23, 1839.

The dinner held on the evening of the fair was a convivial well attended event. The announcement for 1841 reads:—"Tickets for dinner at 2s 6d each will be had at the Bar of Mr. Arkland's Tavern any time before noon of the day of the show." The "Star" of Oct. 27, 1841 relates: "On Wednesday last this Society held its annual Fair and Cattle Show at the village of Grafton; the display of stock was very good, and although the lowering appearance of the morning deterred many from attending, yet the assemblage was sufficient to mark the interest taken in the proceedings. The exhibition of Domestic Manufacture was good, and we are particularly pleased with some beautiful samples of Maple Sugar (quite equal to Muscovado) which was made by Mr. Robert Rogers of Otonabie." Mr. Josias Gillard won the ploughing match. The president of the society at this time was George Manners who had been for some years the British Consul at Boston and who lived for a short while in "Haldimand Hall" north of Grafton. Under his able presidency the Fairs were attended with success. Donald McTavish, a well known mill-owner and former Hudson's Bay Co. employee, acted as secretary for several terms, and the carefully written newspaper reports of the fairs are from his pen. A printed notice of the annual meeting of 1845 signed by McTavish as Secretary is included among the John Steele papers in the Provincial Archives.

In 1845 the Society inserted the following warning in the "Star".

Farmers Beware

"Seed wheat, Black Sea, or Odessa wheat, imported by L. Card is infected by the Hessian Fly or weavel." Naturally Mr. Card arose in his wrath because of this, but it served to show that the Society was active-

PRESENTATION AT ROSE

Upwards of one hundred gathered in the Orange day night to do honor well to Edward Turner lived in the village and has been an employee Brown, general merchant six years. The evening socially in dancing every or her part to make a off to a young man who ly esteemed by both y Edward Turner is the of the late Frank Tur Lily Turner and had we the respect of everyone evening a suitable addr by Nelson Harvie and I made the presentation club bag. Edward w aware, but briefly repl his appreciation and th Mrs. T. A. Tucker h in making the even though it was touched w sadness, the losing a ber from the village. sponsored two spot couples Mr. Jack Loul Eileen Hall; Mr. Billie Miss Doreen Elliott w Refreshments were ser night and dancing cont other hour.

The address read was the village people and Dear Ed. We take this opportunity to bid who was a school pal t good friend to all, and you Ed. that it is with ing of regret that we l evening necessary but ; to Pollyanna, "I we but I'm glad for you," the feeling of all pres loss will be the gain associates.

We feel that you will as you pursue your d new business home as y ped with the essentials for character, as you with a keen sense of w We have always found and openhearted and humility which you pos charm to your person you stand four square

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with oxen instead of horses." Then follows a list of 164 subscribers, most of whom gave five shillings. Others gave donations in addition. A scrutiny of the prize lists of succeeding years shows that many of the subscribers received their money back in the form of awards.

Government assistance was given in 1831 by the passing of an Act "to encourage the establishment of agricultural societies in the several districts of this province." It specified that when a district raised £50 the government on petition would give £100, this sum to be divided when more than one society was established in a district, the act was to be in force for four years only.

A letter published in the "Star" of Nov. 13, 1831, expressed disappointment in the new society. The writer pointed out that many were taking up farming as a new thing and that something practical and tangible should be done for them. "As for making a flourish in the newspapers," he scornfully concludes, "about cattle shows, premiums, great dinners, long speeches and bumper toasts, with Secretaries, President and a long list of etc's—all that may be well enough for parlour farmers; but it will little benefit the farming public in improving agriculture."

For a time the society appears to have been inoperative, although the directors met in 1832 and 1833, but it took a new lease of life in 1836. An announcement appeared in the issue of the "Star" for Dec. 21 calling "a meeting of the Gentlemen Farmers and others interested in the Agriculture of the County of Northumberland," for the purpose of establishing an Agricultural Society. At this meeting held in Arkland's Tavern, Grafton, Geo. Manners was President and Donald McTavish, Secretary. Among those present were Messrs. Mason, Steele, Barnum, Cooke, Warren, Mellis, Gillard, McNeil, Ewing, Grover, Rogers, Hammond, Innes, Jack, Hare, Taylor, MacDonald and Halliday. After this the fair was held more or less regularly for many years and soon became an established event. In 1839 permission was given under the great seal of the Province, "authorizing a fair to be held in the village

ants of those who won ploughing matches, and prizes for butter and cheese and quilts and maple sugar now attend the Canadian National Exhibition! The small fair is an institution of the past although it is partially creeping back under the guise of the School Fair. But Grafton on Fair day, ninety years ago must have been quite an exciting place, all the same!

TEACHERS ARE ENGAGED AT MILLBROOK

Millbrook Continuation School having been raised to Grade A standing, three teachers have been engaged, Miss C. M. Duncanson, B. A., of Mt. Brydges, as principal; Miss Bannister, B.A., of Peterboro, as assistant principal; and Mr. Denike Fennell, B.A., of Havelock as the third member of the staff.

SOYABEAN FACTORY

A meeting was held at Orono on Friday for the purpose of discussing the advisability of establishing a Soyabean factory there.

MINARD'S
KING OF PAIN
LINIMENT

NEW LARGE SIZE

Rubs out all sorts of muscular pains, checks colds, ends skin blemishes. Keep a bottle handy.

65

ALSO IN SMALLER REGULAR SIZE

MINARD'S
"KING OF PAIN"
LINIMENT

MINARD'S LINIMENT & OINTMENTS
YARMOUTH, N.S.

We ask you Edward Bible, follow its pre character which you ed as it is, upon the ro your influence for goo wherever you may dwc be destined to becom men.

The kindly thought mates and comrades neath United Sunday. low you along life's pa wish for you all the honor that is achieved nobility and beauty o the pleasant memories tions will forge a link chain of friendship t bind us together.

Signed on behalf of United Sunday School, 1934, Andrew Brown, J. Robins, (Teacher.)

Person

Mr. Fred J. Friend I Kemptville, after spe days the guest of h George Page, Universi

Mrs. Fred Friend at tr, Ruth, with her m Scott are visiting rela to for a week or two

Mr. and Mrs. Frank ilton are visiting the l Mr. and Mrs. E. A. C their guests are going Stoney Lake to spen Mr. Elmer Curvin's c

Captain Casey of T the Anglican Church ada, and Mrs. Casey fortnight's holiday Lodge.

The Very Rev. Dr. of the Cathedral, L tucky was a recent g tory of Dr. and Mrs

Rev. Dr. K. H. Palm Presbyterian Church, Rev. E. G. Thompsol are exchanging for U during the month of

Mr. and Mrs. Pre daughters, Oshawa, Mr. Merrill's sister Merrill and Miss J

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\$77.00 were paid."

According to a paper written by Dr. J. J. Talman, and published in the 1931 report of the Ontario Historical Association, the first agricultural society in Upper Canada was formed in Niagara in 1792-3. Others were probably organized during these early years but there is little record of them. Charles Forthergill in his "Sketch of the Present State of Canada" published in 1822 makes mention of fairs being held at Cobourg and Port Hope. After 1825, however, references to agricultural societies and fairs are more frequent, and we learn from the above note that the Northumberland society was founded in 1828. It so happens that what appears to be the original M.S. of the minutes of the meeting held at Mr.

John Grover's Inn on May 18th 1829 is still extant and may be seen in the Provincial Archives. These minutes are fuller than the above account and record in addition the minutes of a later meeting held at Mr. Stiles' Tavern to decide on premiums. At this meeting the directors contributed \$3.00 apiece to defray the expense of taking up subscriptions for premiums. Prizes were offered for live stock, and among other items were prizes for the best plain field roller made in the country and for the best written essay on the culture of wheat. A ploughing match was to be held, "a proper allowance of additional time being given to those candidates that plough with oxen instead of horses." Then follows a list of 164 subscribers, most of whom gave five shillings. Others gave donations in addition. A scrutiny of the prize lists of succeeding years shows that many of the subscribers received their money back in the form of awards.

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SECRET PAPERS IN THE PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES.

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How long the Northumberland Agricultural Society continued to function is not known. It must have stimulated interest in farming however, and it certainly did provide a day's entertainment for Grafton and other centres. As far as we are aware the fair ground was the field

then as now, belonging to the Rogers family, just west of St. George's Church.

A meeting was called at Arklands on March 5, 1845, to form the Newcastle Horticultural Society in connection with the Northumberland Agricultural Society. Probably the South Haldimand Horticultural Society of the present day is a lineal descendant.

By the 1870's the Township of Haldimand Agricultural Society had succeeded the older organization and the fairs were held in and around the Drill Shed erected in 1867 near the land now occupied by the Roman Catholic Cemetery. This Society too, having served its generation has become extinct. The effete descendants of those who won ploughing matches, and prizes for butter and cheese and quilts and maple sugar now attend the Canadian National Exhibition! The small fair is an institution of the past although it is partially creeping back under the guise of the School Fair. But Grafton on Fair day, ninety years ago must have been quite an exciting place, all the same!

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we feel that you will as you pursue your d new business home as y ped with the essentials for character, as you with a keen sense of w We have always found and openhearted and humility which you pos charm to your person you stand four square munity.

We ask you to accept it is wrapped about, no paper but with fond r all sorts of goodwishes l and we trust that L. may always attend you horn of plenty well health, wealth and happ At the close of the 5

noon on society board intendent, asked Messrs and Edward Turner to front and in so doing read the following add

Dear Edward As th departure draws nea allowed to express to loyalty and appreciat

As we sorrow, that come, when there is to of the ways, we rejoit unity has knocked at because of faithful an vice rendered in the j been called to prom vancement while we s genial personality, and smile, we realize th gain what we have lo

We ask you Edward Bible, follow its pre character which you ed as it is, upon the ro your influence for goe wherever you may dwe be destined to becom men.

The kindly thought mates and comrades, neath United Sunday : low you along life's pa wish for you all the honor that is achieved nobility and beauty o the pleasant memories tions will forge a link chain of friendship th bind us together.

Signed on behalf of United Sunday School, 1934, Andrew Brown, J. Robins. (Teacher.)

Person:

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