

## Down Memory Lane

by Russell Kidd

The first thing I remember about the 'B' line of Amabel would be about the summer of 1911. I was 6 years old. It was a Sunday afternoon; Mother and Dad were in our new red-wheeled buggy. My brother Gordon, who was 2 years old, was sitting on Mother's knee and I was sitting on a tiny seat in front of the dash-board. Our horse was Prince, a very wise and experienced animal, for he had been to the army militia camp in London a few times. My Uncle, Captain George Nelson in command of the old Thirty-second Bruce Regiment, rode him there in the reviews.

Well, Prince was trotting along briskly that sunny afternoon as we came around the bend at the outlet bridge on the 'D' line. Looking over my shoulder I saw that Joe Baker's barn was a mass of flames. We hurried to the 'B' Line corner and turned left up the hill. At the top, Father tied Prince to the north fence among the cedar trees.

Mother and Dad hurried across the narrow field. Mother had Gordon in her arms. I was too frightened or shy to go so I stayed in the buggy and watched the barn burn. In about ten minutes I got enough courage to go over to the fire. Father was nowhere to be seen. Mother was taking a turn pumping water at the well by the house. A bucket brigade was carrying water to save a driving shed between the house and barn.

In the house, sitting on a kitchen chair over in a corner was Mrs. Baker. She seemed to be old to me. She was dressed in a black dress and was crying softly. Joe Baker finally appeared at the well. The barn was levelled. There were red hot piles of burning hay where the mows had been. He saw Mother still taking her turn at the pump handle. "I'll remember you when I get my Fortune, Mrs. Kidd," he exclaimed. Always ever after, when he saw Mother even years later, he would say "When I get my money, I'll pay you back for your help". He was referring to an inheritance which was supposed to be coming to the heirs of a Baker estate from Philadelphia. It never came!

Our Monte Carlo Chev was taking me a few weeks ago, eastward along the 'B' Line. The next place on the left has no buildings. It belonged originally to my great grandfather, Wm. Nelson. He gave it to his daughter Jane so was known in the family as Aunt Jane's place. Here my Uncle George and Tom Shannon as young men of around 18 years cut body maple, twenty-four inches long for furnace wood. They split and piled it for 30 cents a single cord. Across the road on the right is where Bill Johnston lives and he is my cousin. I understand he farms and has become a very proficient stone mason, building beautiful stone fireplaces. Years ago I remember going to this home with my parents. The old farmhouse stands to the west of the Johnston home where the Robt. Forsyths lived, whom we visited.

Next I came to the farm on the left. What memories were here! This is where the Elders used to live. A daughter Hazel went to Continuation school with me in the

## The 'B' Line of Amabel

autumn of 1918 in Tara. I had to stay home in October to do the chores, when my family all came down with 'flu' that proved fatal to so many after the War. Jim Elder was accidentally shot and died in a deer hunting trip in Muskoka with a party of Allenford hunters. Another tragedy I remember about the Elder farm happened in the summer of about 1920. We were at Uncle Jack Geddes' farm at Arran Lake on a Sun. afternoon. About 8 p.m. a violent thunderstorm came out of the West. There was one very loud crack of thunder and Uncle Jack remarked "That struck somewhere closeby". Soon the phone rang and we heard that Ben Elder's barn had been struck by lightning and burned. The barn raising was early the following summer. I was there. I remember the activity of the men from far and near as the frames of the bents were assembled on the foundation, one by one. The man who impressed me the most was the master carpenter, the framer. This was his great day. He was in command and he gave his orders. After two captains had chosen their men, "Yo heave!" he would exclaim and how they lifted! The frame was going up and soon the real race commenced when the plates, purlines and rafters had to be assembled. Each team took one side of the barn. The last man of a side had to be down off the frame on the floor with their side completed before they could win.

Then everyone went over to the lawn in front of the house, where surrounded by lilac bushes and apple trees boards on trestles made tables. There was a plethora of cold meats, salads, pies and cakes all washed down with hot tea. How the men ate! Many a sly glance was cast by the young girls serving the food at the virile young men. "Are you going to the dance tonight Baxy?" one young man was heard to ask a buxum red-haired maiden. He married her that fall and they are still both living in Allenford. Who will play the music for the dance on the newly laid barn floor? Well that makes me remember the musicians as I continued my journey eastward a few weeks ago. I passed the home where Ross Smith used to live. He was a marvellous violin player and he had a trio of his son Roswell, who also played violin, and his daughter Nellie, who chorded on the organ or piano.

Passing along the road I could see Chesley Lake among the trees off to the north. I remember the picnics in Elder's woods. I can still see Uncle Willie Nelson sitting out in the centre of Chesley Lake in a rowboat still fishing for pike with a long bamboo pole, hook baited with worms. He would drive his horse and buggy back from Elsinore and leave it at Elder's stable. He would sit there by the hour. He was an old white-haired man with a white beard.

Perhaps he just enjoyed the solitude. Chesley Lake had few boats in those days. No highpowered speed boats with water skiers. No indeed! Just a placid glassy smooth lake with a rowboat anchored out in the centre with Uncle Willie sitting still and quiet. Perhaps he enjoyed the freedom of getting away from his wife, Aunt Lizzie.

Well I went on eastward past a red brick house where Fenwick's used to live. Roswell Smith, who died early this year, lived there. I must say a word or two about young Ross Smith. He was young to me but he was not so in years. He was a worthy citizen of Amabel Township, as he'd been councillor and reeve for many years and Warden of Bruce Township. But best of all to me at least, he was a splendid violin player.

On I went and came to what was the old Hewitson place. Jim Hewitson was married to my cousin Lizzie (Lillian) Nelson and they lived here. I remember the June evening when they were married out under the locust trees on Uncle Wilson Nelson's lawn with the odor of the blossoms heavy in the air.

'The late-leaved linden in summer'.

Jim was a good hockey player. I remember his saying he had played for Allenford for 18 winters. He was also a great teamster. He hauled sawlogs in the winter to Hec Diebel's mill in Allenford. He had a

good team of bay Clydesdales and his harness had plenty of brass buckles, high Scotch collars with red pompoms on their crests. The deep toned notes of his harness bells filled the air. He was a romantic person for a young boy like myself as he was lean, athletic and talkative. Of course he could carry on all these extra activities in the winter because his Father lived at home to do the chores.

I was now near the end of the B Line. I crossed a creek I had forgotten and turned right on the 15th sideroad. On the right I saw the big white brick house where my Mother's cousin named Fenton used to live. I was impressed with the huge field of corn growing there. I came to the north gravel road, now highway 21. I had reached the journey's end. But I forgot to mention a little incident on the way. On the southwest corner of the 'C' line across from Ross Smith's old place the site of the first school built in Amabel was located. I searched in vain for old field foundation stones supposed to be still there. Finally I had not time to call on Nellie Smith, now Mrs. Gowanlock. She has invited me by letter and in her column of the "Leader-Record". Next time I pass that way I shall surely stop by. She is going to take me to the Roswell Smith Memorial Park at Chesley Lake to see the plaque erected in her brother's memory. I shall be delighted!

## Mrs. Friar chairman of Bruce WI rally

Mrs. Fred Friar, RR 2 Chesley, was installed as chairman of Bruce County Women's Institute rally at the Sauble Beach community centre. Past chairman is Mrs. Richard Fenton.

Other officers include vice-chairmen, Mrs. Aylmer Klages, RR 2 Hepworth; Mrs. Dave Ireland, RR 2 Teeswater; Mrs. Jack Gingrich, RR 1 Southampton; secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Alex McLaggan, RR 2 Dobbinton; assistant, Mrs. Howard Hill, Tara; and public relations officer, Mrs. William Miskie, Chesley; assistant, Mrs. Richard Merkel, RR 2 Hepworth. Committee members and auditors were also installed.

The theme of the rally was, Enthusiasm makes the difference. Rev. Larry Marshall was the speaker. He defined the word "enthusiasm" and encouraged the women to live a life of sparkle and catch the good disease. All churches are beginning to realize that we are one family with different ways of expressing enthusiasm, the speaker said. He said peace and contentment were the result of enthusiasm. He sang several solos.

Outgoing chairman spoke on the theme but said life is not all sweetness. New born children have enthusiasm built in and this lasts through childhood. However, high

standards of living see many homes with both parents working. A working mother has many tensions and tends to neglect her husband and children, according to the speaker. Mrs. Fenton urged the women to be housewives and be proud of it. Do what you can and don't worry about what doesn't get done, she urged. "Fill your day with enthusiasm and you will have a good day."

Mrs. Frances Middleton, provincial board director of subdivision 17, brought greetings. Greetings were also brought from Mrs. Lloyd McTeer, Bruce east; Mrs. Tom Cunningham, Bruce north, Mrs. Ross Comings, Bruce south and Mrs. Harvey Weppler, Bruce centre.

The Bruce County tartan award for agriculture was presented to Jim Hamill of Dobbinton. Miss Vicki McKague of Teeswater received the citizenship award and Miss Virginia Hunt was the recipient of the Bruce County scholarship award. It was accepted by her mother as Miss Hunt is attending Fanshaw College in London. Mrs. Jack Gingrich of Bruce centre presented the inmemorial.

Bruce south presented a humorous skit. The rally will be held in Armour United Church, Kincardine, the third Thursday in October, 1979.

WRIGHT—Harriett Elizabeth (Hattie), in Shelburne Hospital, on Monday, October 23, 1978 in her 83rd year. Hattie Wright of R. R. 2, Allenford, loved wife of the late Russell Wright. Dear mother of Alma (Mrs. G. Bye) of Beeton; and Fred of Allenford. Sister of Millie (Mrs. C. Stevens) and Myrtle (Mrs. G. Lake) and William Ritchie and Ernie. Also survived by four grandchildren and ten great grandchildren. Predeceased by one daughter Dorothy. Resting at the Emke-Scarow Funeral Chapel in Tara after 2 p.m. Tuesday. Funeral service will be held on Wednesday, October 25, 1978 at 1:30 p.m. Interment Greenwood Cemetery, Owen Sound. 85-V