

V6-12

### The Crispin Bridge

(By McTuff)

Following is a correct history of the first bridge built at the late Mr. Crispin's.

As I have been asked so often how that bridge was built and who built it, I thought it wise to tell the readers of The Post, and it may be of some use to the councils of both Brant and Bentinck.

This bridge was built some little time before the county of Bruce was taken from Huron county, and was put up with a number of mistakes, like many other jobs that the ratepayers do without pay and without an inspector.

The bridge was put several rods down stream on private property that belonged to the late Mr. Crispin, and in those very early days there was solid bush on both sides of the river where it was erected, and the timber in that bush was the very best of cedar, pine and ash, but little did we early settlers think that it would bring the pile of money it would to-day.

They made a mistake when they built that bridge, (like many another thing in those days) in not keeping it on the town line, but as Messrs. Crispin and Metcalfe were so keen to get a passage out they felt like giving all the land the few settlers wanted. I am told by Ed. Lines that his late father got Mr. Macintosh, of Walkerton, to draw up an agreement between the parties, and how it was among his papers or sent to Goderich to be registered. And if the above bridge had been built in its right place what trouble might have been saved. Those sandy hills at Crispin's could easily have been dug out, and in time, by doing a little each year, they would have been all right. But it is a fault much like our county roads. The fathers in those days thought it much better to pay two, three or five hundred dollars to the owner of the land where those hills were, and to-day anyone with half an eye can see their blunder.

The first bridge at the late Crispin's was built by the first settlers. Some brought their teams, some their axes, and all brought their dinner pail, with, no doubt, pork, bread and potatoes in it.

In those very early days the river was never known to get very deep. The country being all bush, the snow and ice left very slowly, and those first settlers little thought of a big flood, and they built this bridge much too low, so much so that it went down the river the next year. Perhaps the abutments might have stood the strain, but the foolish settlers did not put stone in them. Stones were very hard to find in those days, and the poor struggling settlers had their hands full in order to get a bit of land cleared for crop.

It appears that the span over the river was nearly 70 feet wide. They put five pine stringers over the river, made, or squared, 16 or 18 inches, and those stringers were said to be 75 feet long. They were got out of Mr. Metcalfe's bush, near by, and if they were standing to-day they would be worth over a \$100 each, but as I said, in these early days all the new settlers wanted was to get them off the land.

I am told that a little west of Mr. Metcalfe's place a man gave out a job to cut and clear five acres of land along the road, on the 3rd con., and more than half of the timber was cedar and nearly all large trees. The cedar was tall and would have split into No. 1 shingles, and the man who had the contract burnt it all up in log heaps.

The plank on the bridge was got at old Mr. Hop's, who had a little saw-mill only 1 1/2 miles from where the bridge stood. But only think, those abutments were all made of cedar, those fine trees that must have been 3 or 4 feet in diameter, and all went down the river, never to be heard from again, and the dear old pioneers were left to get their necessaries over the best way they could.

But the above bridge was not the only one lost. In the course of a year or so there was another one built, and built on private property and in the same place. No doubt the council built the second one, and one would have thought that those smart picked fathers would have put the second one up so that it would be there for 25 or 30 years, just like the bridge at Maple Hill, all built by the writer, and has stood longer than any public bridge on that wild river.

The second bridge only stood the strain some 2 or 3 years, and away it went, just like the first, but I think they put some stone in it. But about this time the settlers had made clearings, the sun had to shine, although some years it was nearly May before it did, and by that time it was so powerful the river went up by jumps, the trees, stumps, rubbish and ice were mountains high, and this second bridge was very little higher than the first, so down the Saugeen it went.

After they got a lesson they built the third bridge, which stood only a reasonable time, and to-day the council has got it put into a bandbox, so that no team can get to poor Hanover, and how I pity those old pioneers on the South Line.

I could tell you much more in this letter about the doings of our town, but as I am much under the weather yet I find it hard on me to do so.