

Work of nine generations went into building up of Foster Century 115



Mrs. Eric Foster came to the Century Farm as a bride back in 1922



Both these pictures show the Foster farm as it was in days gone by. The woman in the top photo is the grandmother of the late Eric Foster and the man standing by the fence is her son, Martin Foster. The house was rebuilt about 1895 as shown in the lower photo. The little girl on the horse is Marie Foster (now of Northport), Eric Foster's sister.

Here and there, as you travel around Prince Edward County, you see signs outside farm houses ... Century Farm ... Showing that at least 100 years of generations of the same family have lived on, and wrested a living from it.

The Foster farm, on Northport Road in Sophiasburgh, is one of them.

Nine generations ago, the first Fosters, United Empire Loyalists from New York State, settled in the area. The father of the family may have been an invalid. There is a tombstone for him in the Lazier Cemetery. But whatever the reason, it was the mother, a strong minded woman, who took the responsibility with the help of her three sons and a daughter.

The Indians were fond of the mother. She knew a lot about medicines and was very helpful to them. When she died, many of them came to mourn with the family.

Her daughter, Sabara, married a man called Way, and it was in his name that the land grant for the present farm land was given.

As they had no children of their own, the Ways took in a grand-nephew, Joseph, one of the Fosters, who, in his turn inherited the property, and it has been a Foster who has lived there ever since.

The present matriarch, Mrs. Eric Foster, is the widow of the great-great grandson of Joseph Foster.

When Eric Foster brought his bride to the family homestead, back in 1922, things were a lot different than they are today.

Most little communities had their

own school, their own churches, stores, cheese factory, post office, and cemeteries.

'The cheese factory was basic to the local economy,' Mrs. Foster said. 'The farmers sold milk to the cheese factory and a lot of cheese was shipped to England.'

'The passing of the cheese factories has made a tremendous change ... not for the better,' she said. 'This county has pasture land to produce the milk.'

Mrs. Foster had taught for four years before she was married and she and her husband were very interested and active in bringing about changes in the education system.

'Our three children went to the Somesville School,' she said. 'The local school boards did their best but some of the conditions were very bad. My husband was on the board and one project he worked on was improving the lighting. They blocked off the windows on one side and put more lighting on the other.'

But there were bigger problems when her son, Martin, and his two sisters got to high school age. There were no school buses and the students had to board in Picton.

'It got to the point where it was hard to find good boarding places,' she recalled. 'My husband and I really worked on the school bus system and for the consolidated school.'

'Mr. Hector Knight, Inspector of public schools, was the leader in the latter project and my husband was secretary of the Township School Board.'

Continued on page 3