

1914 - 1918 Fight For Freedom Has Memories Of Doxsees Corners Boys For Mrs. Emily Moore

Today memory takes me back to some of the lads of 50 years ago, of Doxsee's Corners, like many other Prince Edward County boys, answered the call in the fight for Freedom 1914-1918.

Walter Scott lived with his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Alex Scott and uncle, Mr. Clayton Scott and attended school in the little red school house. He sat in the seat behind me, back in the days of 1908-9. He was the lad of which I wrote these lines in the Centennial poem 1967. (The day when I let out a yell, when rising quickly to my feet, to find the boy behind me, had tied my pigtales to the seat).

We were all so happy and care-free. There were some 40 pupils in that one room school, some taking grade 13 work. Walter paid the supreme sacrifice.

Then there was Harry Alexander, he made his home with Mr. and Mrs. George Munro and two daughters Essie and Ethel.

One Saturday evening in 1912, I had been sent to Bethel cheese factory with the milk. Cheese then was made on Saturday night.

The cows having wandered in the swamp, milking was late. When I arrived at the factory two wagons were ahead of me. The drivers of the wagons were kind enough to unload the milk for me before their own, so I would not have to wait. Thanking them, I drove to the pump to get the quota of whey for the pigs. This pump was on a stand 8 to 10 feet high with a large hose attached. Climbing up the steps I started to fill the cans, when two lads came running from somewhere.

Harry who was always ready for mischief, started to say, 'Get up, then whoa', to my horse. 'Florrie' got so confused I was afraid she would run away. I was on top of that stand begging him to leave her alone, he just stood below laughing at me. He was wearing a pair of loose baggy overalls. In desperation I turned that hose on him. He let out an awful yell, then ran off still yelling, whey running from the bottom of his pant legs. That whey was hot! I was scared I had scalded him. What an awful thing to do! But the cheesemaker told me not to worry, it was not hot enough to hurt him. Needless to say, he did not bother around there much after that.

He joined one of the 1st contingents in 1914. Returning in 1919 his hair which was black, was white from shell shock.

One Sunday morn in late summer 1914, as I was walking to Sunday School smoke from a bad forest fire in a nearby county, smarted the eyes and throat, and was so thick one could see but a few yards.

I heard the sound of horse walking leisurely behind me. Thinking it was a neighbour also coming

to Sunday School, I paid no attention. Then on reaching the church steps, a voice says: "Wait a minute, please Miss. I turned to see a young man in khaki, seated in a rubber tired buggy, driving a bay horse.

Driving up beside the steps he asked me if I would go for a drive with him. Oh, no, I said, my mother and the rest of the family are inside waiting for me. (Being too many to ride in the surrey I had decided to walk). I then invited him to come inside to Sunday School with me.

Looking at me with what I thought, a sad and scared expression on his face he replied, "Thanks young lady that was a nice try. But I don't think there will be a Sunday School where I'll be in a few weeks. With that, he turned his horse around, and drove back the way he had come. I did not ask his name, or did I see his face again. But I prayed for that young man every day all through the war.

Then there was Tom Clayton who worked for Jesse Cole and his son Albro. We waved him goodbye and a safe return from the church steps, as he left for Belleville one Sunday morning.

Sidney Parkins and Wm. H. Bowerman joined with the 155th Battalion. I sent them parcels frequently. Once I enclosed a testament in a parcel. On his return one of these boys showed me his testament, which he said, he carried in an inside pocket of his tunic. A bullet had passed through it, stopping at the back cover. It had saved his life. The lads of World War II from Doxsee neighbourhood were James York, Charles Smith, Alvin Zachariah, Percy Bannister and my brother-in-law Wm. J. Orsborne, in the Army. Wm. Orsborne also served in the 1914-1918 war before coming to Canada from England in 1920.

Clare C. Scott, R.C.A.F., son of Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Scott, now of 64 Queen St., Picton. Last but not least, Miss Mary Reed, R.N., daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. George P. Reed, and Miss Clara Roblin, R.N., daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Philip Roblin.

In 1939 after the visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth I wrote a poem of my home and school days in England, the last verse of which read:

Though my Canadian home has grown dear to me,
 Oft, those loved "Pals" I long to see,
 But, dear Dot and Jen for me now wait,
 Together beside Heaven's pearly gate;
 While red poppies, a silent story tell,
 With a little white cross of wood;
 For Dick and Will dear school day "Palls",
 Of that home in Ashurst Wood.

On hearing my best friend's son had arrived safely in England in 1940 and that some of our Canadian boys were billeted in the old school I attended, I was prompted to add these lines, as if he were my own son. The Gazette printed two poems for me in booklet form which I later sent to my old school teacher.

A quarter of a century has past,
 As I sit knitting, I breathe a prayer,
 God send my "Laddie" back safe to me,
 When this strife is ended "over there".
 Laddie's gone to take up the torch,
 That Dick and Will laid down,
 For the cause of freedom, peace and right,
 For peoples the whole world round.
 I'm knitting now, again 'tis eve,
 My eyes are wet with tears,
 I've just read a letter from my boy on leave;
 To "Mom", from "Somewhere over there."
 It says, I have seen your childhood home
 And under the yew by the gate have stood.
 The walls are covered with roses still,
 Of your home in Ashurst Wood.
 It's made me a little homesick.
 "Mom,"
 For a glimpse of Dad and you,
 I'd like to see the "dear old home,"
 When the orchard is in bloom.
 Please God, to you I'll soon return,
 When the flag of freedom is unfurled,
 I'll see again, and be again in the home for which I yearn,
 When wars cease, and everlasting peace,
 Is won for all the world.

These other poems were printed on a page of The Quinte Loyalist, Saturday, November 10 for Remembrance Day 1934.

There is a poem, "Red Poppies in the Corn" by W. Campbell Galbraith.

"I've seen them in the morning light,
 When white mists drifted by;
 I've seen them in the dusk of night,
 Glow 'gainst the starry sky.
 The slender waving blossoms red,
 Mid yellow fields forlorn;
 A glory on the scene they shed,
 Red Poppies in the corn. (wheat)
 "Bright blossoms fair by nature
 Set along the dusty ways,
 You cheered up in the battle's fret,
 Through long and weary days;
 You gave us hope, if fate be kind,
 We'll see that longed for morn,
 When home again we march and find
 Red Poppies in the corn."