

Memories of Doxsees

By EMILY MOORE

I attended anniversary service at Doxsee Church, one of the small rural churches where services are still held.

After listening to the numbers by the all-girl choir, a solo by Miss Anne Doxsee with Mrs. Lois Brooks at the piano, there was an inspiring message by Rev. Mr. Stobbart who spoke on the miracle of Elisha, making the axe to swim. "As the iron did swim, or the iron did float" (2 Kings 6: 1-7).

It turned my thoughts back to anniversaries of yesteryears, as I noted that the pianist and choir were third and four generations of the organist and choir of other days.

What a wonderful heritage they left us — may we guard it well.

As I sit in a chair by the window on this Sabbath day, looking towards the leafless trees of the Big Swamp across the way, I see the preacher of those days, in a little brick church on the corner, and seated on the plush-covered wind-up stool, Miss Susan Doxsee playing the organ by lamp-light. Miss Margaret Musgrove taught in the Sunday School. There we learned Bible verses, hymns and sacred songs, "the love of God and right from wrong".

In those days, in a spring wagon, or by team and sleigh, by lantern light, whole families went to that little church to meeting on Sunday nights.

"And under the long wooden shed the horses stood while we met for worship near Big Swamp wood".

My reverie was suddenly interrupted by the sirens of two fire engines, with numerous cars following, coming down the highway. So dry, Oh, where is the fire? Soon the telephone is ringing. A fire is burning out of control on Doolittle's Island, could the men come and help? On arrival the fire was found to be in the Swamp Wood itself. This incident brings to mind another fire on this island in the mid 1920's. The island farm was then owned by my father, the late W. A. Broadbridge. This fire too happened on a Sunday. As these lines from a poem about it speak for themselves.

Sitting along with my memories,
from my eyes I wipe a tear,
For that little home it is no more,
that home I once held dear.
For while all were away at meeting,
one summer Sunday afternoon,
Something happened to fill our hearts with gloom.
A match! by careless berry-pickers dropped;

Fire! spread o'er half the farm before it was stopped.

Then into a field of new mown hay, soon house and barn had fallen prey.

A heap of ashes and blackened space, was all that was left of that dear old place.

So all that is left of that home to me

Is just a beautiful memory,
Of a Dad and Mother kind and good,

In that pioneer home in "Big Swamp Wood".

The recent service was well attended from Demorestville, Northport and Bethesda, but still room for more.

As I write, the men have just returned from the fire to say it was in the swamp of Roy Brooks' and my own home farm that butts the island from Ben Gill St.

MEMORIES

By MRS. EMILY MOORE

OLD TIME REMEDIES

Remember grandmother's Spring tonic — sulphur and molasses? My mother called it "brimstone and treacle". The treacle was an English product, I believe, made from honey. I remember the tin had a lion's head on it with bees swarming around, as its trademark. It was called Lyon's Treacle.

Whenever I saw it, I would think of the riddle asked the Philistines after finding a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of a lion he had slain. The riddle is found in the 14th chapter of Judges. Steeped Peruvian bark and Burdock Blood Bitters, bought at the chemists — remember how bitter it was. Catnip tea for the nerves and a sleeping potion. Catnip was gathered in the young stage before it blossomed, tied in bunches and hung up to dry.

Tamarac gum, for sore throat, was a product of the Tamarac tree of which there were some in father's swamp. The gum formed on the tree, wherever a branch was broken. One needed strong jaws and teeth to chew this, as it was quite coarse till you had chewed it awhile. Of reddish colour, it had a pleasant taste all its own.

Slippery elm bark for a laxative (slippery describes it perfectly). The slippery stuff just slipped all around in your mouth as you tried to chew it. I was sick to my 'tummy' every time I tried it.

Squares of camphor hung on a string around the neck. This as we breathed the camphor smell from the heat of our bodies, helped to prevent colds. Mother always placed the camphor in a little cotton bag and sewed it inside our dress or the boy's shirt. She said it was not safe to hang around our necks on a string.

And skunk oil the best thing for a baby with pneumonia. Old Maggie, our Indian neighbour, told mother when my youngest brother had pneumonia in March 1914. Remembering an experience with skunk perfume we thought: Oh no! Me bring some for baby, she says, coming back in a little while with a small bottle of oil as clear as crystal and no odour whatever. Thanking Maggie for the oil, Mum

found it much better than goose grease, and after two or three times using, softer for baby's skin.

The cattle too had their tonic during the months of February and March. Dad bought a product sold 60 years ago by Hogg and Lytle's in a 25 lb. or smaller package called Royal Purple stock tonic. Cows, horses, pigs got their weekly ration. A dessert or tablespoonful mixed into equal parts of oats, corn, bran, a portion of salt, and a little molasses added. The molasses also bought at Hogg and Lytle's, by the quart or small barrel. (Hogg and Lytle's then being in the building now Master Feeds). When the treacle was in short supply then molasses was mixed with the brimstone. We kids didn't like molasses, it was too thick and tasted bitter.

We had no telephone in those days and the doctor had to visit his patients by horse and buggy or sleigh. If a child woke in the night choking with croup, a mother had to be nurse and often act quickly. One remedy Mum used was a small ball made from vaseline or butter rolled in a little white sugar and small portion of camphor oil, which we sucked down and usually this brought relief. But how we hated to take these croup balls.