

Halton's Pages of the Past

Ripe with Historical Background, Stone House At 'Livingston Park' Has an Undecided Future

by GWEN CLARKE

Very often it is impossible to see the woods for the trees. In just the same way, surrounded as we are today by new houses and subdivisions, we often fail to realize the charm, solidarity, or the potentialities of older houses.

Just off Martin Street, in the town of Milton, there is one such house that probably a large percentage of people in Milton have never seen. It was even forgotten in the Fifty-Year history of Milton, although its story goes back to early in the last century. Here is a fine cut-stone house, with six acres of scenic woodlands, mostly beech and maple that would lend itself equally well to a kindergarten school, exclusive tea rooms, scenic parklands, or better still, a county museum, all of which are badly needed in the district.

In 1822 the Jasper Martin family settled in what was then the Township of Trafalgar. In all probability their first habitation was a log cabin. This, however, was evidently soon replaced by three fine houses which have withstood the test of time for well over 100 years. One of them is a brick house, the present home of Dr. Carl Martin; another the stone house on the property where the Separate School has recently been built; and the third the residence of the late P. L. Robertson, founder of the P. L. Robertson Screw Manufacturing Company.

House of Many Windows

A gravel driveway a few feet south of the C.P.R. tracks is the entrance to this attractive, early Colonial, three-story, ivy-covered house, as solid as the day it was built. It is a house of many windows, most of which are plate-glass. The second and third floor rooms have hardwood flooring throughout in a squared parquet design, and there is an imposing oak staircase with carved newel posts.

The house is built on a knoll which slopes gently down towards Martin's Pond, skirted by its six acres of wooded fairyland. Small wonder that such a house, in such a setting, should have plenty of historical background, for here, from time to time, lived several of Milton's notable citizens.

About the middle of the last century this particular Martin residence passed into the hands of Thomas Racey, one of Halton's prominent officials. He was the first Registrar for the County of Halton, but before settling down to the peaceful pursuits of civilian life, Thomas Racey had fought for the Loyalist cause in the War of 1812, and held the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. His wife, born at Grimby, was of Loyalist stock, being the third daughter of the Honorable Abraham Nelles, and grand-daughter of Commodore Ball of the British Navy. Mrs. Racey lived to the age of 84 and was said to have been a devout and constant member of the Anglican Church.

An Amusing Incident

The pond, in years gone by, not only provided water power for Martin's Mill but was also a sanctuary for a great number of wild ducks, which were, of course, protected by local game laws. A somewhat amusing incident concerning the ducks happened away back in 1871, which might suitably be described as "a comedy of errors."

Three prominent young men of the district, well known for their sporting activities, were summoned to court to answer charges laid by Joseph Martin for alleged violation of the game laws by shooting a duck on the pond. The young men in question were William Pantom,

Eugene Smith and Archie McIntyre. The shooting of the duck was admitted but proof was lacking that it was a wild one, although Joseph Martin and Charles Racey, declared under oath that they believed that it was so. However, the irrefragable Pantom, while the case was being heard in Court, carefully unwrapped a parcel which he had carried in with him. It contained the mangled remains of a tame duck, still in a wet and bedraggled condition. The plaintiff, Mr. Martin, much to his own disgust, was unable to prove that this was not the duck that was shot on the pond. The case was dismissed on the ground that there was not sufficient evidence to establish the identity of the duck. The accused William walked out of Court with the duck under his arm.

Turned into a Park

Having served its purpose, the bystanders were under the impression that William would find yet another use for it. Joseph Martin, "owing to the shock to his feelings" stated that henceforth pleasure-seekers would be barred from walking along the mill-bank and the navigation of the pond forbidden until time and circumstances should produce a change.

So far as we can gather the next occupant of this lovely old home was T. G. Matheson, Barrister, and Crown Attorney for the County of Halton.

Then came a public-spirited gentleman by the name of Livingston. Under his ownership the property became known as "Livingston Park" and was thrown open to the public for recreational purposes. There were swings and slides for the children; tables and benches for the convenience of picnic parties; canoes and pleasure boats on the pond; and facilities for sporting events both winter and summer.

The tree-shaded pond was used in summer for boating and swimming and provided a good field of ice for winter skating. Sunday school picnics and garden parties were held quite frequently, a band often being engaged to add to the enjoyment. At some time in its history house parties were a popular feature and dances were held in the ballroom. (The ballroom has since been divided to make a ground-floor dining room, kitchen and breakfast room.)

Need for a Museum

As far as we can gather the late P. L. Robertson was the next owner of the property. The grounds and the house continued to be maintained in excellent condition although they were no longer open to the public. When Mr. Robertson's estate

was settled the property was sold to Mr. and Mrs. B. A. Fromow of Toronto, who, much against their will, must presently return to Toronto, leaving a home which they have had so little time to enjoy.

So, while the county of Halton is gradually realizing the need for a Museum and a recreational centre, here is the property ideally suited for that very purpose—and within a stone's throw of the centre of the town. The lovely paths through the woods, the tree-shaded pond and the stately old home are still the same as they were when it was first created "Livingston Park." And what it once has been it could be again. Surely this property is a challenge to the historically minded people of Halton. But—thinking of the county as "he" this little warning couplet might be borne in mind—

"Of all the words that men can quote
The saddest are—he missed the boat."
(Next week—A story from Hornby)

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Alaska Highway Bus Has Long Route

Whitehorse, Y.T. (CP)—Donald (Fergy) Ferguson, an alert young man, says he has one of the world's most interesting jobs—driving a bus from Whitehorse to Dawson Creek, B.C.

In addition to driving the huge bus over 900-odd miles along the Alaska highway, Fergy delivers and picks up mail and express packets and sells money orders and stamps.

In the winter time he makes one trip weekly and two in the summer.

"I make 42 regular stops along the way," he said. "There are about 1,000 persons living along or near the route and they eagerly await the mail."

Cafes, filling stations, cabins or lodges and general stores have been built at intervals of 30 miles or so through the northern wilderness, and highway maintenance camps are located every 100 miles or so.

About 100 vehicles a day traverse the highway in the winter fairly evenly divided between trucks and passenger cars. Summer traffic is five times as great and is on the increase.



Livingston Park's Cut Stone House

— Staff Photo

CAMPBELLVILLE

AT ST. DAVID'S THANKOFFERING DISTRICT LADIES HEAR JANE SCOTT

(Intended for last week)

The fall Thankoffering meeting of the Women's Missionary Society of St. David's Church was held in the church school room on Tuesday afternoon. The president, Miss Simpson, opened the meeting with the call to worship, Hymn 410 was sung. Mrs. G. Inglis and Mrs. W. King had charge of devotional period. The offering was received and dedicated by a piano solo given by Mrs. Crawford, the organist. Mrs. Sinn and Mrs. McIntosh, guests from Ebenezer church sang a very pleasing duet.

Mrs. Greenlees introduced the guest speaker, Miss Jane Scott, writer of religious thoughts in the Globe and Mail. Miss Scott opened her talk with prayer and based her remarks on the three R's—Responsibility, Romance and Reward. Her theme throughout was "love for Jesus." Miss Scott has a fine personality and left many worth while thoughts with the large number of ladies present. Miss E. J. McPhail thanked Miss Scott for her fine message and Miss Simpson thanked all the others, including the social committee, for their help.

During the social hour, greetings were brought from Acton, Nassagaweya, Boston, Kilbride and Duff's Church, Puslinch. A very pleasant social half hour was enjoyed by everyone.

The September meeting of Grace Mission Band was held in the church on September 8. Hymn 783 was sung. The Bible lesson was read by Betty Coulter, and Carol Walters read a prayer. The roll call

was answered by 22 members naming books of the Bible. The birthday song was sung for Lois Greenlees.

Mrs. Parker read the story "The Closed Church" to the younger children and the leader, Mrs. Greenlees, gave the story "Within the four seas" to the Explorers. The meeting was closed with prayer by Sandra Black.

Special Prayer

The Blair Evening Auxiliary held their September meeting at the home of Mrs. Dewhurst on Wednesday evening. Mrs. Robertson opened the meeting with the call to worship and prayer. Mrs. Evans read the Scripture lesson. Mrs. J. Wallace offered special prayer for our minister, Rev. J. E. Sutherland, who leaves in a few days for Formosa.

Mrs. D. Martin had charge of the study period with Mrs. D. Inglis and Mrs. Austin assisting. The topic was a trip around the world. During the business session plans were made for packing the bale and for the bazaar, also for the Thankoffering.

At Anniversary

A large number attended the Anniversary Services in Nassagaweya church last Sunday when Rev. J. Sutherland preached farewell sermons. In the morning he took his text from Exodus 25-8 and in the evening from Jno. 20-24. The Milton male quartette of Knox church, Milton, assisted with the music at the morning service. In the evening the soloists were Douglas Dredge and Donna McMillan, members of the choir.



Apple pie... coming up

A KING-SIZE apple pie weighing over a hundred pounds was recently baked for the Washington State Apple Blossom Festival. The specially built aluminum pie pan—the largest ever made—measured eight feet across.

Made us wonder how big a pie you'd get if all the apple pies baked in one day on regular-size aluminum pans were put together. And that brings to mind all the different aluminum cooking utensils used today in homes and hospitals and restaurants... No wonder Canada is stepping up her production of this light, bright metal to one and a quarter billion pounds a year! Aluminum Company of Canada, Ltd. (Alcan).

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