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Want Ad Page: Where Old Friends Meet

Group Entertained By School Board

Nassagaweya township school area board entertained the teachers and friends at S.S. 5 on November 30. Progressive euchre was the order of the evening and prizes were won by Mrs. Clara Black, Mrs. Ramona Storey, Miss Lilla Garrod, Joseph Frank, Mervin Thomson and Mr. Black. David Gray of Rockwood gave his film pictures of his trip south and of the Fergus Centennial. These were enjoyed by all.

The ladies served lunch, after which Miss Joyce Dawson of S.S. 7 thanked the school board for a very enjoyable evening. Stanley Robinson, chairman of the board, replied.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Frank were present. Mr. Frank being a member of the first area board in 1940. He has been present at each annual event. The absence of Mr. and Mrs. Lindsay Ferguson was regretted very much. Everyone was sorry to learn of his recent illness and hope he will soon be well again.

ST. NICK'S SPIRIT

It is thought that St. Nicholas died about 345 A.D. and for 30 days following his festival day his genial spirit roamed the earth, filling the hearts of mankind with love and generosity. He gave the gifts without thought of return—the true spirit of St. Nicholas and Christmas.

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Halton's Pages of the Past

John Stewart Provided Color and Controversy In History of Esquesing Township's Scotch Block

by GWEN CLARKE

The history of Halton would be incomplete without a biographical sketch of Patriot John Stewart, from the Scotch Block in Esquesing Township.

John Stewart was born in Perth, Scotland, 1806. Following the Napoleonic War, there were hard times in the British Isles. For that reason, in 1817, John's father decided to emigrate to Canada with his family. They crossed the ocean in a sailing vessel and were 13 weeks and three days on the water, arriving in Little York (Toronto) in November, 1818.

Mr. Stewart's opinion of Toronto at that time, like that of many others, was far from complimentary. He described it as "such a miserable hole that if we had money enough we would all go back to Scotland."

In 1819 John Stewart, senior, settled in the Scotch Block on Lot 9, Concession 4, Esquesing, the same year as James Hume, reputedly the first settler in the Block.

With Mackenzie's Rebels Educational facilities were naturally limited in those days but John Stewart was a clever lad and made use of every opportunity that came his way. At an early age he became keenly interested in what he considered the deplorable conditions resulting from the "Family Compact." In 1834 he joined the Reform Party, became an agent for Mackenzie's paper, the Colonial Advocate, zealously promoting its distribution among people in the Block. He visited Toronto about twice a year and had many long, confidential talks with William Lyon Mackenzie.

In June, 1837, Mackenzie told Stewart of his plans to reform the Government — by constitutional means if possible — otherwise he said the Reform Party must resort to arms to break up the Family Compact. Stewart was urged to do everything possible to arouse the interest of his friends in North Halton. Mackenzie, at that time, was addressing a series of meetings, one of which was on the Stewart farm, where, from the front steps of the present "Craiglea Guest Home", he rallied the people to action.

The next meeting was at Churchville. Here the Tories rushed on to the platform and attempted to throw the Rebel leader out. But Mackenzie managed to leave in



John Stewart

safety, guarded by his many loyal supporters. Stewart, however, took a homeward direction. The crowd, frustrated by Mackenzie's get-away, followed Stewart, shouting and yelling, "Kill him... kill him!" But Stewart was fleet of foot and outran his pursuers. Coming to the Credit River he plunged in and thus effectually evaded his enemies.

Plans for Rebellion John Stewart, when he realized the political storm was at fever heat, tried to warn his brothers, one of whom was in Toronto, another in Hamilton and a third, Duncan Stewart, farming on Lot 3, Concession 3, Esquesing. But they paid little attention to his warning.

Meanwhile Mackenzie after many secret meetings with his supporters, set December 7 as the day for the uprising of the Reformers against the government. Word to this effect was sent to John Stewart. He immediately arranged with Reform sympathizers in the Scotch Block for a march to Toronto to arrive on the date specified.

Communication was not easy as spies were everywhere and Stewart's movements closely watched and reported to Tory headquarters. And then the date was changed. Stewart received a message from Hincks and John Rolph to come at once, prepared to attack. This was the message, sent to every district, which proved to be a strategic blunder by Mackenzie's Advisory Council. Mackenzie at the time was holding meetings in the country.

Stewart invited his friends to meet at his house to prepare for the march. To quote from Mr. Stewart's own account: "They assembled to the number of 60, and immediately walked across two concessions to wait until I should arrive after visiting my mother, who had broken her leg during the day. When I arrived where my men were they appointed me captain, but on enumeration I found to my amazement that all had left but 22."

Sentenced to Prison However, nothing daunted, they began their long march. At Chinguacousy they came on to a chopping bee, and the choppers rushed on the patriots with their axes. But they changed their minds when

they heard the click of muskets. By this time the patriots were losing their zest for battle and began to drop out until only five remained—Stewart, Kilbourne, Hilton, Donald Campbell and Wm. Robertson. When they came to the Green Bush Hotel they saw and heard that all was over. They saw the Loyalists set fire to Gibson's house and barn and shoot his livestock, as they cheered lustily for their victory.

John Stewart, along with many others, was taken prisoner, and lodged in the Parliament Buildings. The men were sick at heart when they heard Lount and Matthews were condemned to death. Stewart expected the same fate for himself, but his sentence was imprisonment for life at the penal colony at Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania). After being sentenced the prisoners were sent to Fort Henry at Kingston, there to await a steamer to take them to their place of incarceration.

In a previous column we described John Stewart's remarkable escape from Fort Henry. Had he been unsuccessful in his daring attempt it is doubtful if he would have survived the ordeal at Van Dieman's Land. Conditions at the penal colony were so terrible it was little short of a living death, in fact those who did serve time on the island welcomed death as a merciful release from their sufferings.

Granted Amnesty The patriots who escaped from Fort Henry sought refuge in the United States. Some years later they were granted amnesty. John Gale, Two Pages of Past N...-hise Stewart came home and resumed once more the peaceful occupation of tilling the soil on his farm in the Scotch Block.

"Do Your Best" "Be Prepared"

CUB & SCOUT NEWS

With only three more Cub meetings left before Christmas and the end of the present six competitions, the Yellow Six seems to be proving itself better than last time winners of the Tawny Six. For three consecutive weeks the Yellows have managed to stay on top but by only a very slim margin. Six standings are: Yellow 113, Blue 99, White 99, Red 96, Tawny 90, Green 89.

Last week's meeting was opened with the grand howl led by Art, the Sixer Donald Price of the Yellow Six.

Immediately following the grand howl the investiture of two new chums was witnessed by the pack as Wayne Bowen and Philip Sutton promised "to do our best."

Games during the evening were taken by Ray Parkhouse and Gord on Clow. Instruction in both first and second star tests followed.

The campfire program consisted of a sing-song and a story by Akela.

—Murray Scovne, Akela

Thanks Esquesing:

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WALTER LINHAM Deputy-Reeve

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