

The Ballinafad story

Fire destroys two houses Oct. 13

Miss Bea Hills of Ballinafad continues her reminiscences of the early days in the 'Fad with this article which traces entire families who lived in the area.

On a lot just south of Mr. Ferguson's there was a frame house where Mrs. Alkon, her daughter Maggie and Percy lived.

Mrs. Alkon made a bit by keeping the Presbyterian church clean and making fires in two wood stoves twice a week in cold weather. She also cleaned and filled a dozen or more coal oil lamps. This was just across the road.

Maggie was a dressmaker and made a living by sewing dresses for other people as there were no ready made dresses for sale in those days. After a few years they left the 'Fad.

On a lot just below that there was a frame house with an upstairs. Mr. and Mrs. Dan Reid lived there with their family, Archie and Maggie, who attended Blue Mountain School. Archie and wife live in Toronto; Maggie in Cleveland.

A few rods to the south was a blacksmith shop which Mr. Reid operated and did very much the same kind of work as the Fergusons. Both were kept busy.

On the north side of that shop and joining it was a frame wagon shop. On the East corner of the lot was a small barn where a horse and buggy were kept.

All these buildings were there in 1886, but how much earlier I do not know.

On October 13, 1908, Mrs. Reid and Maggie drove to Georgetown to shop. About 5 p.m. Mr. Reid put on a wood fire in the kitchen stove and went out for a short time.

In some way the house took fire and had made some headway before it was noticed. The fire filled the house with smoke.

Very little was saved, not even his books where he kept accounts.

There was a good well west of the house but no other water close by.

It was a sad sight for Maggie and her Mother on their return home. The house on the lot above being so close was burned too, leaving Mr. and Mrs. Duncan McLean without a home. He was a stone mason and had been living there a few years.

Mr. Reid was deeply grieved. They were given a temporary home in elderly Mrs. McDonald's home on the hill east of the Presbyterian church.

It was a great loss but friends helped in many ways. In those days there was no presentation like there has been in the past 25 years, however.

After Mrs. Alkon moved away Mrs. Reid

consented to be caretaker of the church mentioned above.

Mr. Reid continued in the blacksmith work for some months, then moved to Georgetown where he got work in another shop.

Some time after the fire the wagon shop was taken down as it was no longer needed. Later, a new house was built with four rooms downstairs and some up, also a small woodshed over the side door.

A young man worked in the blacksmith shop for a couple of years, then left.

When this lot was for sale, about 1912, Mr. John McKechnie bought it. He and his wife, Jamie Young, moved in.

Previous to this they had lived about two years in a house on the east corner of the 'Fad as they had sold their farm on lot 30, ninth line, Esquimaux, Halton County, in 1910 to Mr. D. Moran and his wife, Annie Young.

Mr. and Mrs. McKechnie were quite contented in their home in the 'Fad till the winter of 1936. Mrs. McKechnie, not feeling very well, went to the home of their adopted daughter in Toronto. Some better, she intended coming home, but a message was received in March saying she had suddenly passed away. After that his sister-in-law, Miss Maud Young, kept house for Mr. McKechnie.

A year or so later, when Mr. McKechnie was unable to get around, his nephew, Jim, helped to care for him till July, 1939, when he passed away leaving Jim in possession. He rented the house to a Mr. Scott and his daughter for some months.

In 1942 Jim sold this property to Bert Rogers and his wife, Nettie Campbell. They got possession in November that year. Two years previous to this he had given up his work in Toronto and had been living with her brother Manassah in their old home on the farm just to the south of this.

Bert built a garage on the vacant lot above as they owned it, too. Here he repaired cars and mowers and etc. They were happy to be back among former friends.

In November 1953 Nettie passed away. Bert continued to live there and bached it. When he was no longer able to do this he decided to go to Georgetown and board.

In March, 1955, Bert was taken to Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital where he passed away a few days later.

In March, 1958, Mike Norton purchased these two lots from Bert.

The J. L. Case Co. employed Mr. Norton as salesman for all kinds of farm machinery displayed there for everyone to see. He did sell some.

Five years later he was sent to England by the Case Co., accompanied by his wife and two children. (Continued Next Week)

SUDDENLY IT'S SPRING



The Acton Free Press. ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 1968



PUSHING LARGE CHUNKS of ice into the current to be smashed on rocks was the chore of Rockwood mill owner Jim Milne, right, and helper last week as the Eramosa River broke up. The old mill which predates the first survey of Rockwood still operates on water power. The ice went over the dam and then was pounded into millions of pieces on the scenic rocks below. Finally they cascaded over the foamy waterfall, a scene hidden most of the year by foliage, to disappear in the narrow churning channel which leads to less turbulent water in the valley. (Staff Photo)



Clean up rivers, streams first then Great Lakes will benefit

Some people are kidding themselves if they think the new frontier for water supplies is the Great Lakes, said G. M. Coutts, general manager of the Grand River Conservation Authority, speaking Thursday to the Canadian Club of Guelph.

People who point to polluted rivers and streams and say water supplies should come from the lakes are forgetting that the lakes are fed by rivers and streams from a multitude of watersheds, he said.

Mr. Coutts said if the rivers emptying into Lake Erie, for instance -- and the Grand is one -- are not taken care of and made clean first, Lake Erie will be useless as a source of water supply.

He pointed out that the authority's three dams -- the Shand, Conestogo and Luther -- hold back less than 20 per cent of the water runoff in the Grand River valley.

They can store about 29,000,000 gallons which is equivalent to a rainfall of .77 inches over the entire valley. Since the average annual rainfall is 34 inches, there is enough water to meet the valley's needs if it is managed properly. But the limited protection from

the three dams could result in damages in excess of \$40,000,000 in such cities as Guelph, Galt and Brantford.

Additional protection will be provided when five more dams are built at West Montrose, Everton, Guelph, Hespeler and Ayr at a cost of \$30,000,000.

Mr. Coutts said the unharvested and uncontrolled runoff that now flows into Lake Erie "is our future water supply."

In addition, the dams will provide constant flows in the rivers throughout the summer to dilute effluent from major centres, from the nucleus of major recreation areas and allow for additional river uses, such as boating.

The five dams are part of a comprehensive resource management plan being prepared by the authority, covering all aspects of land and water conservation.

The plan includes small dams, protection of natural waterholding areas, creating and enlarging forest tracts and opening new recreation areas.

Mr. Coutts made special mention of the authority's valley lands program which envisages the creation of open space alongside the river and tributaries by preventing undesirable building on land subject to flooding or erosion.

Municipalities in the Brantford-Paris area have set aside

money this year to start a valley land buying program, despite heavy demands on municipal budgets.

The authority is encouraging other rapidly developing areas, such as the Guelph area, to take similar steps, said Mr. Coutts.

He urged municipalities to take advantage of provincial grants and authority contributions available for valley land purchases.

"The tremendous competition for land is making it more difficult each year to accomplish these goals," he said.

Jack Lush is delegate

Jack Lush of Burlington has been named a delegate to the Liberal Leadership convention in Ottawa this weekend. Mr. Lush was the Liberal candidate for Halton West in the last provincial election.

He is one of 29 Liberal members of parliament and candidates who were named voting delegates at the last assembly of the Ontario Liberal Party.

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Rockwood scout wins Queen's Scout badge

Rockwood -- For the first time in many years, a Rockwood scout has been awarded a Queen's Scout badge. Robert Sinclair, son of Rev. and Mrs. Don Sinclair, was invested with scouting's high honor in a colorful ceremony in the town hall Tuesday of last week.

A gentleman came into a barbershop with a small boy one day and explained that since he had an appointment in the neighborhood he would like his own hair cut first. This accomplished, he handed the small boy up into the chair, urged patience upon him and departed. When the boy's haircut was finished, the gentleman had not returned, and the barber told the boy to wait. A half hour passed. "Don't worry," said the barber reassuringly. "I'm sure your father will be back soon." The boy looked startled. "He isn't my father," he said. "He just came up to me in the street and said, 'Come along, let's both get a haircut.'"

Robert also has a younger brother, Blair, who is a scout.

Included in the ceremony was the presentation of St. John Ambulance Association certificates and badges in Fundamentals of First Aid, to Michael Dales, Brian Death, James Gollatly and Dean Ingle. Presentations were made by Jack Massey, Guelph District Scoutmaster.

Robert has demonstrated to the satisfaction of his Scoutmaster and the Court of Honour of his troop that he has done his best in his daily life to live up to the Scout Promise and Law for a period of six months following his qualification as a First Class Scout. He has shown through his actions that he is fully aware of the service significance of the Queen's Scout badge. He has qualified to wear the First Aid, Pathfinder, Despatch Rider and Public Healthman badges. He is the only Scout to be so highly honored in Rockwood in many years.

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