

Steamer tells of toe-tapping swinging good times

Give me a moment here to add a little resin to my story telling bow, and I'll tell you a cute old-time toe-tapping fiddle story.

It was a long time ago. You could bet your bottom loonie that a dance at the old community hall meant round and square dancing.

Clarence Varey's talented bow and nimble fingers were blessed with the musical touch of Venus when it came to fiddling. A featured member of Doris Hull's orchestra for years, Clarence was a very good musician.

Ernie Parker was the caller. Some thought Clarence just kind of picked up the art but he actually studied music in Toronto, and had the diploma to prove it. Clarence often played as a soloist.

But by George it was when Doris Hull, Bill, Ken Cotton and Clarence swung into Doc Boyd's Jig that the party livened up. Ernie Parker would call for couples then chant:

"Head couple go down the centre

Go down the centre and cut off six,

Lady go right, and gent go left

Swing when you meet

And do it up neat

Swing your head and your toes

Swing to

Swing them around as you used to do."

The little old hall would just be

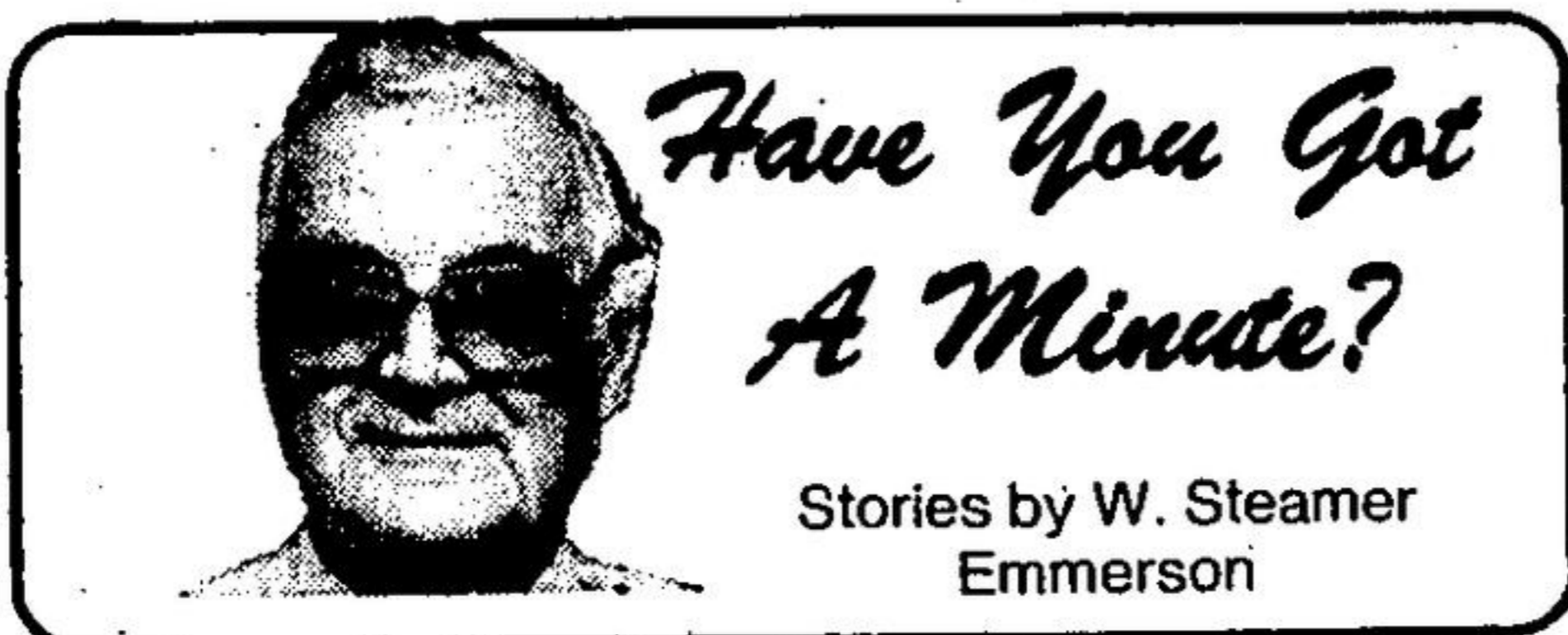
ajumping. This was a time for fun

inside and sometimes outside the

hall. One old timer told me about

a young cattleman, who liked to

squeeze and pinch his lady part-



Stories by W. Steamer Emerson

ner in the driving shed. One gal got pinched so much she thought he was going to buy her.

Their music made you let go of worry, trouble and sorrow. It made you want to jump, whoop, holler and dance.

Why, one night I got so caught up in the music I actually danced with my wife. Yep. Couldn't dance a step.

After that when the caller was crying "One more couple over here," I just let him cry. He avoided eye contact with me. He wanted the dance to go well. Those who could really dance were silently anxious that I not complete their set. They were out for a good time, not a hard time. Clarence and his violin made me believe I was the Liberace of square dancing. In reality I was a clodhopper. To some simply a clod.

When you're young you're impressionable. Clarence and his music had me believing Arthur

Murray had taught me dancing in a hurry.

Thelma McEnery told me with nostalgia it was a treat to drive past the Varey house at the foot of Silvercreek hill on a Sunday to see Clarence and his brothers in their white shirts playing old-time jigs, reels, breakdowns, making family music 'till supper was ready. Music was part and parcel of the family.

But really I started out to tell you about a cute joke Clarence played on me and the audience in the old Limehouse Community Hall.

I was green in front of audiences. Couldn't ad lib a lick, do a darn thing so when something went amiss, I usually went blank.

Two or three times, maybe four, I had the pleasure to introduce him, and once he got the bow going it was a treat and a pleasure to watch him perform.

This was a local variety show in the old hall and I was asked to

M.C.

Clarence was the draw on the program. Mrs. Roughly was at the piano.

The hall had a little step-up stage at the front and everyone sat on chairs including those who were performing. As each performer was introduced they would rise from their chairs and come to the stage.

It was the usual country concert, some youngster reciting, Sea Fever, Indian Summer, or When the Frost is on the Pumpkin, a piano solo and so on. You get the idea.

Everyone was waiting for Clarence to liven things up. He did.

When I announced Clarence, arising from his chair he unintentionally bopped a lady on the head with his violin case. When he turned to apologize he knocked over his chair. Clarence had them laughing already and he wasn't even on stage yet. By this time the audience was giving him a good clap. They liked him. These weren't forty dollar seats, so what if a humorous incident was the prelude to Clarence and his magic violin. He could play and everyone in the hall knew it.

Why, in a minute, he'd be up there in his element, playing Kiley's Reel, Chinese Breakdown, Rock Valley Jig or even Waltz Quadrille.

Clarence shook my hand, plac-

ed his violin case on a chair beside Mrs. Roughly, opened it, took out his fiddle and asked loudly over the rustle of the audience for an "A". Mrs. Roughly gave him an "A". He repeated this two or three times, till he was satisfied his instrument was in tune. Would you believe this, he accidentally knocked his violin case off the chair when he turned away from Mrs. Roughly at the piano. The audience roared.

They loved him.

With a quick search of his case he looked me in the eye and exclaimed, "I guess I can't play after all. I forgot my bow!"

Then he winked.

He had me fooled for a second or two. He was a player, I'll tell you, with a sense of humor.

RUST CHECK SAVE YOUR BODY
NORTH END NISSAN 878-4137
610 Martin St., Milton

26 Guelph St
Georgetown, Ont.
877-9896
Division of Halton Floor Fashions Ltd.

COUNTRY SIDE BUTCHERING

- Custom Killing
- Cutting and Wrapping
- Government Inspected —

(416) 877-1194

Hours:
Mon.-Wed. 8-5 R.R. 2, Georgetown, Ont.
Thurs.-Fri. 8-6 (Behind A's Custom
Sat. 8-12 noon Meats on Trafalgar Rd.)

WE'RE YOUR INSURANCE BROKERS WE UNDERSTAND!

PAUL C. ARMSTRONG
INSURANCE BROKERS LTD.
143 MILL ST.
Halton Hills (Georgetown) Ontario
877-0133

DENTURES
FULL DENTURE SERVICES DIRECTLY TO THE PUBLIC

- New Dentures • Relines
- Repairs • Cleaning

★ Dental Insurance Honoured
★ Wheelchair Accessibility
A.W. TRENTON, D.T.
The Denture Clinic
18 Church St.
Georgetown, Ont.
877-2359

WIN 1/2 PRICE BACK ON YOUR PURCHASE UP TO \$10,000

On Now!

THE NEW GEORGETOWN HONDA MUST SELL 100 BRAND NEW CARS

Civics
Accords
Preludes

THE NEXT 100 CARS sold at Georgetown Honda will automatically qualify the purchasers to win back HALF THE PURCHASE PRICE up to \$10,000. Once 100 cars have been sold, Georgetown Honda will draw the lucky winner from the qualifying entries. You have a 1 in 100 chance of winning.

Contest rules are available at dealership. Contest ends upon sale and delivery of 100 vehicles or December 11th, 1991, see us for details.

THE NEW GEORGETOWN HONDA

JUST 5 MINUTES WEST
203 GUELPH ST. (HWY. 7) GEORGETOWN
798-4704