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Interesting Exhibit of Historic Relics At York Mills Drew A Large Crowd

Ancient Church Books Dating Back to 1815—Descendants of Early Pioneers Take Part In Unique Program.

YORK MILLS HISTORICAL TEA
The parish hall of St. John's church York Mills was the scene of an interesting event on Saturday, June 9th, when an Historical tea was held by the members of the congregation. The wonderful display of relics of the early days of this district surprised even the people who were responsible for the exhibition. At first it was intended to have only those things which originated in the district but when the conveners visited the different houses they met with such a generous response that many articles were included in the display that were many hundreds of years older than York Mills itself. It was one of the first settlements in York Township and the descendants of some of the original settlers still live there. It was an ideal spot for such a collection.

The old church itself which was built in 1843 was of great interest to the visitors who came from far and near and John Squire who was born the same year the church was built proudly played the old barrel organ which he has looked after for sixty five years. The ancient church books which were on display in the vestry, also aroused much interest. The first Bible and Prayer book used in the parish are about two feet long and in excellent condition although printed in 1815. In the book of burial receipts and the Parish register both dating from 1849, the writing is still clear and legible although some of the pages are somewhat mildewed. A small Bible had evidently been used in the Sunday School and bore the date, November 17th, 1859.

The display in the parish hall was formally opened by Mrs. Hanks, the daughter of Canon Osler who for twenty-eight years was the beloved rector of the parish. The next speaker was Mr. Hogg in whose grandfather's house the first church services were held prior to the building of the first church in 1816. At one time York Mills was known as Hogg's Hollow. Then Mrs. Thos. Humberstone gave an interesting little address about conditions in the community forty-seven years ago, when her husband was Reeve of York Township. She told of the difficulties met with when the more progressive land owners in York Township were trying to get the Metropolitan Railway extension. Her husband, as Reeve, had to put the by-law before the people and some rate-payers of North Toronto tried bribery and almost used force to prevent his doing so. The Council as a result had to sit for eight days listening to complaints from the farmers who had been told that the taxes would be raised so that they would lose their farms if this law went through. However the by-law was passed and the franchise granted much to the benefit of York County in general.

The next speaker was Col. A. J. Van Nostrand whose ancestor Cornelius Van Nostrand came from Long Island in 1797 and settled at York Mills. The speaker told many interesting little bits of local history which he had heard from his father and his grandfather. Miss Betty Barron sang a most appropriate song, "Grandmama's First Ball," and Mr. Cooper, aged eighty one, who was at one time a teacher in the York Mills School was called-up on for a few words.

Rev. A. C. McCollum, the vicar of the parish, called John Squire to the platform but the old sexton felt too tired to speak. He and Mr. McCollum between them, however, told the audience about the asparagus bed which John Squire had planted in the Rectory garden in 1863 and which is still in use.

Later in the afternoon when Hon. Geo. S. Henry arrived he spoke briefly recalling many pleasant church gatherings which he had attended at York Mills.

Tea was served in an enclosed space and there was also a candy booth which did an excellent business. The old-fashioned rag rugs which have been made by members of the W.A. were auctioned by Sir John Tulliken and the proceeds were very satisfactory. Four young girls in picturesque dresses which had belonged to their grandmothers and great grandmothers sold photographs of the church. The exhibits were so numerous and so varied that it was impossible to ob-

tain a complete list. They ranged from valuable antique jewelry lent by Mrs. Moore, to old farm machinery belonging to Mr. Harrison whose grandfather died in the Rebellion of 1837. A high silk hat which had been worn by the latter gentleman is still in excellent condition though somewhat out of style.

The walls of the parish house were hung with Paisley shawls and patchwork quilts. Two of the latter in red and white basket pattern and Star of Bethlehem were made by Mrs. Carson's grandmother and another lovely one in an intricate wreath design was older still. There was a very lovely Assumption sash lent by Mr. Robillard.

A photograph of the church, taken in 1870 showed a group of people who had evidently been having a "bee" to clear away some of the brush in the church-yard. The women at that time wore Quaker like bonnets.

There were handsome brass candlesticks lent by C. W. Jeffreys, and one of the first alarm clocks, which had been in the Van Nostrand family for 78 years.

A brass candle stick showed a bullet hole, this came from Quebec in the days of Wolfe.

Blue plates from Ireland, 103 years old were loaned by Mrs. Arnold. A Dutch Bible printed in Amsterdam and bearing signature of the original owner, Cornelius Van Nostrand 1730.

A pair of iron fire dogs more than two hundred years old.

Two sets of candle moulds, one for twelve candles and one for six. These are more than 100 years old and owned by Miss Bathgate, Willowdale.

A cap basket loaned by Mrs. Carson used for carrying her grandmothers cap when she went visiting one hundred years ago.

A painted kitchen chair labeled, "Bobbie Munro's chair, 150 years old." A beautiful melodeon in good tune. In the old days this instrument used to be taken to be played at the different temperance meetings throughout the country. Mrs. Wilkinson.

Mrs. Wilkinson also showed twelve old prints in black frames. Among some old letters belonging to Mrs. William Boulbee were three signed by Queen Victoria, King William and Florence Nightingale respectively. There was also an exquisite silver lustre jug and several other ornaments.

A wonderful collection of snowshoes of different shapes and sizes from different parts of Canada belonged to Mr. Robillard. There were also very fine examples of Indian bead and leather work and a French-Canadian chair with a seat made of woven thongs.

There was a collection of old guns and swords belonging to Col. Van Nostrand. Among them was a flintlock musket and bayonet used by Cornelius Van Nostrand when serving in the American War of 1812-1815. Two Wilkinson swords which came from Ireland, a sword presented to Col. Van Nostrand by John Squire and formerly owned by a gallant officer of the foreign legion, the sword worn by Col. Van Nostrand at the coronation of King George the fifth, 1911, and a sword with a crimson silk sash which was carried by a Captain Van Nostrand in the American Revolution. There was a horse pistol of unknown age which has been in the family for 100 years, an ancient dagger and a horn handled hunting knife. A musket in this collection which had been used by a Loyalist in the Rebellion of 1837 was lying beside an almost identical musket belonging to another family which had been on the rebel side.

Probably the oldest article on display was a sword owned by Mr. Commins, Bedford Park, which was used in the first battle of Falkirk 1298.

A corn husk mat owned by Mrs. Wilkinson was an example of old art of dying and braiding the ripe corn husks.

A hand made high chair used by W. F. Arnold sixty years ago.

An old fashioned wooden cradle in which three generations of York Mills residents have been rocked. Mr. Whitton.

A wooden mantel piece was removed bodily from the hundred-year old house of Mr. Carson and set up in the

parish hall complete with its crane, iron pot and fire dogs. There were old pewter mugs and other ornaments on this shelf and hanging from it a long-handled bed warmer with the original piece of string which was put on the handle 125 years ago.

A pair of splint-bottomed chairs made more than 100 years ago for Mr. and Mrs. Reekie, grand-parents of Miss Bathgate.

Child's rocking chair, the property of another branch of the Van Nostrand family for 80 years.

Candle holders 70 years old. A small wood box cover, and a very old coin with the Lord's Prayer engraved on it. Mrs. Fred Pellatt.

Among the things lent by A. A. Mulholland were Delft dishes and a pewter teapot, an exquisite silhouette 150 years old and a silk dress and hat the same age.

There was a white teaset with a dainty wreath design owned by the Harrison brothers. Also an old oil painting, a pocket compass and little wooden jewel box 90 years old. The box was made by Mr. Harrison's grandfather in Kingston penitentiary after the Rebellion and bears the following verse in very fine script. "Freedom's sons in misery dwell, In chains and bolts in dreary cell. Their hours of sorrow yet will end, And God will be the prisoner's friend." Mr. Harrison also brought a tea caddy made of dark wood beautifully inlaid with mother of pearl, and a pair of antlers from a deer shot by his uncle on the farm where they now live. There were spinning wheels, large and small and skein winders as well as ox-yokes, wooden harrows, an old turnip seeder a cheese press and a curd grinder. These last two belong to Mr. Wilkinson.

A quaint little rocking chair with a splint seat was made by David Grobb, wagon maker, in 1800. Owned by Mr. Nelles, Lansing.

A brass signal gun presented to Capt. John Elwood in 1831 for his ship the John O'Gaunt. A scale model of a clipper ship, the type of ship in which the pioneers of York County crossed the ocean. Mr. Elwood Cox. Among the old books in a glass show case there were several valuable Bibles including the Humberstone family Bible. There was also the first volume of Punch 1841.

An interesting set of old guns in a wooden case. Also a set of powder horns.

A Wedgewood teaset used by Mrs. Carson's mother and grandmother.

A horn drinking cup used by Miss Kightley's father 100 years ago. She also lent a peculiar little wooden spoon called an apple scraper made so that old people could enjoy apples after they lost their teeth.

A fine hand made blouse included in the trousseau of Miss Coats 150 years ago.

A dulcimer of unknown age owned by the Miller family, Lansing.

A high backed arm chair with splint, bottom, made on Long Island and brought to Canada in 1797 by Cornelius Van Nostrand, when as U. E. L. he re-entered British territory.

Old Willow platter owned by John

Squire. Said to have been a part of military mess equipment. Repaired by a wandering tinker in 1837.

Photograph of the house in which William Lyon McKenzie had his printing press prior to the rebellion. A painting of the original St. John's church done from a careful description.

Photographs of Mr. and Mrs. Shepard who gave most of the land for the church and churchyard.

A beautiful cream colored pottery jug dated 1635.

A footstool in use since 1850 with the original covering still in excellent condition.

A wreath of white cotton batting flowers in an old black frame. Made 60 years ago.

An old boot jack, razor-strop from a wooden frame and a shoe tree. Two beautiful tables and a whatnot. Mrs. Forsythe.

An old hatchet and an old fashioned earth auger. Geo. Peterman.

A small brass-studded chest covered with deer skin. Brought from England by Mrs. Boyd's family.

A pretty touch to the decorative effect was the use of two large century plants on the platform.

Mr. C. W. Jeffreys lent a number of his well known historical drawings depicting the early days in this district. This list is far from complete but the time was far too short to see everything. Great credit is due to those who carried this undertaking to such a successful end and special thanks are due to Mr. C. W. Jeffreys for his help in the artistic arrangement of the exhibits.

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