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Rear-view Mirror



'Immigrant Crisis' the Key to Survival for the Family Farm?

By Maurice Smith
 Stouffville Free Press

For centuries Canada has acted as a haven for immigrants. I leave the current worldwide immigrant crisis to the federal politicians and the hearts of all Canadians. However we can look back to earlier times and use as a reference the latter part of the 18th century when a sect known as The Huguenots fled from France and took up refuge in various countries in the British Empire. Many families settled in England, and after a few years many pulled up stakes and made their way to Canada.

In those days it was a 10 to 12 week journey from England by land and sea to Ontario. In 1852, the family of John Grose undertook that treacherous journey and eventually started farming in the community of Whitchurch. Shortly after arriving they were able to find an available property just south of Davis Drive

on what, even then, was known as The Ninth Line. Eventually John's brother, James, who subsequently made the same journey, purchased the adjoining fields. On these two properties the families struggled together to clear the grounds and start a new life as farmers.

Of course, upon their arrival 15 years prior to Confederation, there were no building developers with ready laid out roads and homes in which to reside. These settlers had to cut timber for their homes, barns and winter fires. The soil, although abundantly rich, had to be cleared of trees before any planting could be undertaken. Each family would start with a small clearing and over ensuing years expand the harvest across their entire land holdings. Wheat, corn, peas and potatoes were their main crops.

A log cabin was an essential part of any new homestead. Brick homes

with strong foundations did not sprout up till years later. The current two storey home which can still be seen on the property was not constructed until 1880. The first large permanent barn was not built until 1900 with an additional one erected in 1946.

Most chores were completed using an axe, hoe and rake and indeed it took a very industrious man and his family to develop the lands. An essential trait of those early farming days was the assistance between farmers within each community

The 100 acres John had chosen would become the family farm for generations. Today Kevin and Mary-Anne, the fifth generation to work these same fields, will attest to the long hours it takes to make a relatively small farm (now 147 acres) successful. They were raised as farm children, went to local schools and churches, married and have raised their own children

and continue to contribute to the local community.

The family farmer has a tough time trying to make a living in today's technological market place. Whitchurch-Stouffville's independent farmers are challenged with finding innovative ways to raise herds of cattle, grow fields of crops and take them to market just to survive. Automation is costly, the hours are long and the farmer's children often go off to University and look to the big cities for careers in many different disciplines

We often see the slogan "Farmers Feed Cities". We can only hope that the Whitchurch-Stouffville family farm community, along with many others just like it in Canada, survive to do just that. Perhaps having Canada take our fair share of new immigrants will help.

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RECORD CROWDS FOR 35TH TERRY FOX RUN



Over 1,100 participants and 120 volunteers took to the streets of Stouffville for Terry Fox Run 2015 September 20.

Over \$100,000 was raised for cancer research, bringing the Town's total to just under \$1.7 million since 1982.

The run marked the last hurrah for Sandy Schell Kennedy (top picture) as Chair of the Stouffville Terry Fox Run as she is stepping down after 25 years at the helm.

Bruce Stapley Photos

