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92 YEARS OLD ON MAY 15TH

James M. Fair, of Glenburnie, Born on Farm Where He Still Lives.

RECALLS THE OLD DAYS

USED TO DRIVE TO CHURCH WITH OXEN.

Remembers the Rebellion of 1837—He Has Read the Whig for Over Eighty Years.

On Saturday, May 15th, James Marshall Fair, father of W. J. Fair of the North American Life Insurance company, Kingston, and Robert Fair, county road superintendent, will celebrate the ninety-second anniversary of his birth and despite his years he is still an active man.

Mr. Fair was born in the township of Kingston in 1828 and has resided on the same farm at Glenburnie all these years. His wife, who was formerly Miss Annie Hunter, died in 1913.

On Tuesday afternoon a representative of the Whig had an opportunity to meet Mr. Fair at his home. While there he learned of many incidents which had taken place during his life. He can well remember when there were no macadam roads between Kingston and his home, and it took two days to go from Sunbury to Kingston. In those days there was no such thing as government money granted for the purpose of upkeep of highways, because the government did not realize the necessity of roads. Joint stock road companies were organized and roads were put through the woods, the government allowing the company which built the roads to charge a toll at the rate of three cents a mile. The companies only charged one cent a mile to each way.

The road which led from Mr. Fair's home to Kingston was cut through the woods, stumps being allowed to remain, meaning that the traffic was very slow. In many places it was absolutely necessary for the horses to walk. The road remained for some years in this condition. In those days oxen and horses were used to bring people to and from Kingston.

Many Exciting Times.

Mr. Fair remarked that in the early years of his life he could well remember lively times. The crops would be placed in the ground and would hardly be ready to be harvested before either the Indians, who liked to reside in the locality which the white man had cleared, or the squirrels, would steal the vegetables.

During three years of his life Mr. Fair left the farm and came to work in the Grand Trunk railroad shops at Kingston. He can well remember when the Grand Trunk railroad line running through Kingston was built. The rails which were made of iron, were very soft, and they would break down under the heavy steel wheels causing many wrecks. There was scarcely a day that there was not a wreck on the line between Kingston and Napanee. The engines in those days used wood for fuel. A train would be composed of fourteen cars as compared to some of our freight trains which at the present time draw up to ninety cars. Many conductors who were in charge of the trains would raise a complaint when informed that their train would be composed of sixteen cars.

Rideau Canal Built.

When asked about the building of the Rideau canal Mr. Fair said he could well remember being at the grist mill which was located at Kingston Mills and seeing the Rideau canal before the great volume of water was allowed to pass through. On each side of the canal there were beautiful woods.

In those early days the three stone houses at the Grand Trunk oyster station, one of which is now occupied by H. E. W. Nicholson, local Grand Trunk agent, were built. These houses were built for the working men. Mr. Beaumont had the contract to supply the restaurants, six in number, along the line of the Grand Trunk system.

Men did not work short hours as they do at the present time. A man who was getting from a dollar to a

\$1.30 a day was considered to be getting real good money.

Drove to Church with Oxen. It was a common occurrence for Mr. Fair and his wife to drive to church on a lumber wagon driven by oxen. The Battersea road was nothing more than a "blazed trail." In after days his son, W. J. Fair, who was the first man in Kingston to own an automobile, drove his father and mother to church in this more up to date conveyance.

To go to one's neighbor, buy the wood, and then make your own coffin was a common occurrence in the early days. Mr. Fair cited a case where a neighbor came and asked to get sufficient wood to make a coffin. When he was handed an excellent piece of pine, he remarked that it was too good and chose a piece of hemlock with knots, then went home and made his own coffin. One day when this man got into the coffin for the purpose of seeing if it was the right size, someone of the people who were nearby slid the lid over and laid him in it. The corpses were carried to the burying ground in Kingston on lumber wagons.

Conditions in Kingston. When asked about conditions in Kingston Mr. Fair said that he could well remember coming to the city when there were no good roads and when the north side of Barrie street in the vicinity of the cricket field was a sugar bush. The market was not very well attended and eggs sold for eight cents a dozen.

The clearing of the land was a difficult task. To accomplish this work the different residents would decide to have a logging bee on their property. There was nothing to see as many as sixty chopping trees at one time. When the night came on the whole lot of workmen would gather at the farm house, have a big feed, and other fun. After the trees had been cut down they were cut in log lengths and placed in piles where they remained until taken to the Kingston market and sold for a dollar to two dollars a cord. Some of the rougher logs were sold as low as a dollar a cord. Many of the residents had so much wood that they would place it in a large pile and set fire to it.

The removal of stumps was a very difficult task. After the trees had been cut down the stumps would be allowed to dry out for a year and then an attempt would be made to draw them out with horses. The farmers were so anxious to use the land that they would cultivate the ground between the stumps.

Remembers Rebellion of 1837. When asked about the rebellion in 1837, Mr. Fair said that although he was a mere child he could remember being in the field when his father came running across and said that the rebels were coming. His father accepted the position as sergeant and went about the neighborhood enlisting men to fight the rebels if they came that way.

Few people have any idea of the hardships which the early settlers were up against. In many places it was very difficult for a man to make a living. Although his ground was very hard to cultivate he was able in time to clear a real good farm. He said that he could well remember the days when he could cut a cord of wood in the morning, load it on the wagon, make a trip to Kingston and be back late that evening. After loading the wood it would be necessary in many cases for him to thresh enough grain for his team before leaving for the city. Many times food for the cattle was so scarce that it was necessary to cut branches off the trees to feed them.

Farmers' Government.

In the early days, not much time was taken up by the councils in transacting business. Before county councils were established the district councils, which were elected by the farmers, would meet and in one day's session transact the business of the year and then go home about their own business.

There was no trouble in making the people obey the laws of the country. Mr. Fair told of having a yoke of oxen which could plow more ground in a day than the team of horses which his brother drove. The oxen in those days sold from \$40 to \$75 a yoke.

Matches First Used.

He can well remember the time that the first matches were used in the township of Kingston. They were lighted in the home of Mr. Williamson. An American concern established on Princess street and started manufacturing matches. They were sold in one block and a person wanted to use one, it was necessary to break one off the block.

Mr. Fair was in London, Ont., attending a meeting of the agricultural convention, when the first electric light to be used in Ontario was turned on.

For many years Mr. Fair took an active part in municipal and political affairs having been a member of the township and county councils. It will be remembered that on one occasion he opposed the late D. D. Calvin and reduced Mr. Calvin's majority which was formerly about \$90, to about 200.

Read the Whig.

Ever since the British Whig was established, Mr. Fair has been a reader of it. He took the Gazette when it was published in the building opposite to Edwin Chown's wholesale on Bagot street.

The Indians in the early days were in the habit of locating near a place where some white man had cleared the ground. After the government decided that they should all be placed in colonies there was no more seen of them. Mr. Fair said that they were quiet, inoffensive people.

Wild game was plentiful on his farm. It was nothing for him to go out in the yard and shoot some game. The deer were very quiet. On one occasion he caught a deer and a fox.

The deer never got tams but he kept the fox for two years. The family consists of three sons and one daughter. The sons are W. J. Fair, of Kingston; Robert H. Fair, county road superintendent, and Alfred of Singapore; Mrs. A. P. Bond of Cleveland is the only daughter.

Mr. Fair joins in extending to Mr. Fair his congratulations and hopes that he will be spared to see more years of happiness.

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