

Peach Growing in Niagara Township

IN the magazine section of the Toronto *Globe* of Saturday, August 14, appeared a picture of a unique summer house on the Niagara River, near Queenston Heights. In this picture were shown the wheels from a wagon which carried peaches from the first commercial peach orchard planted in Canada, about 100 years ago, by James Durham, a U. E. Loyalist, who came from Pennsylvania, about the year 1786. Mr. Durham received a Patent, or Crown Deed for this land, dated October 31st, 1803, it being Lot No. Nine, Niagara Township, one mile below the famous battlefield of Queenston Heights on the Niagara River.

This lot, comprising 100 acres, possesses the unique distinction of having had but three transfers since the Patent, — James Durham, Sr., to James Durham, Jr.; executors of James Durham, Jr., to John McClive; and John McClive to C. E. Fisher, the present owner, who is Registrar of Deeds for the County of Lincoln at St. Catharines, and secretary-treasurer of the Niagara Peninsula Fruit Growers' Association.

Mr. Fisher purchased this farm in April 1882. On the farm, at the present time, stands the building, in an upstairs room of which Col. Macdonald (aide-de-camp to Sir Isaac Brock) after he received his death wound, passed away. This building was in

use as a hostelry at the time of the war of 1812, and was frequented by the soldiers and travellers of those stirring days. Afterwards it was converted into a dwelling and was in use as such until the summer of 1889, when Mr. Fisher had it moved a short distance back from the site it occupied, to where it now does service as a carriage house and workshop. Visitors frequently call at the farm and ask to be shown the room where this gallant soldier succumbed to his injuries.

Notwithstanding the lapse of so many years (nearly a century) old coins are found every summer on the farm near where the buildings formerly stood, and bullets and Indian arrow heads of many sizes, are picked up very often, by the men working in the orchards. As an evidence of the wonderful fertility of this soil on the frontier, adjoining Niagara River, one of the best peach growing sections in all Canada, this land, which has been growing this luscious fruit for 100 years, has an orchard in bearing now, on which probably the first peach trees grown in Canada, were planted, and this year the crop bids fair to be the largest that was ever grown on the land.

Some of the trees in this orchard have been bearing over 20 years and the fruits on these old trees this year, promises to be as good as any before grown. These trees have borne as high as 33 eleven-quart baskets of prime quality peaches, which have sold at a net profit to the grower, of over \$1.25 a basket. The present owner has never had an entire failure of peach crop. Only once since the orchards began bearing in 1887, has the crop dropped below 1,000 baskets, that being the year 1889, when the peach and grape crops were nearly all destroyed by a hard frost, on the night of the 31st of May, many trees and grape vines being killed outright. In that year, peaches of extra fine quality, from this orchard, were sold on the commission market in Toronto, for \$2.75 per eleven-quart basket. Once or twice since then, on an off year in other peach growing sections, has the price reached that figure, for the extra fancy article.

In the season of 1891, Mr. Fisher shipped many baskets of this quality of peaches to James B. Stafford & Bro., Fulton Market, Buffalo, for which he received \$2.37 net,

put on the cars at Queenston station. These peaches retailed in that market for \$3.50 a basket.

These facts, teach several important lessons, showing among other things the inexhaustible nature of the soil; feed it carefully, cultivate judiciously and systematically and it will respond liberally. The soil will do its part, if the tiller does his. From this farm, now known as "Dulverton Fruit Farm," managed by Mr. Fisher's two sons, H. St. Clare, and C. Howard, it is expected nearly 25,000 baskets of fruit of different kinds, will be shipped this season, the large proportion being peaches. These bring the very highest price in Toronto and other markets. Results as to price and production are only achieved by the most thorough and careful attention to all the little details, in connection with fruit growing. The pruning, spraying, thinning and cultivation, are important factors, and then the most rigid and careful attention is given to putting the fruit up in a neat and honest manner. Fruit growers, like Christians, are "known by their fruits." No fruit is shipped that the growers on this farm would be ashamed to meet in the consumer's home. It is not all fancy and large, but the face of the package evidences the contents of the basket.

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Mention The Canadian Horticulturist when writing

As peonies may be planted successfully in October, and as various requests have been received, asking where Mr. R. B. Whyte's "best 12 peonies" may be secured, it will interest amateur horticulturists to know that Mr. Whyte will furnish the information if requested. His address is Ottawa. Mr. Whyte is a specialist in peonies.

The Hespeler Horticultural Society found a marked improvement in the gardens of its members, when they were judged this year. The method followed by this society was told in THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST for November, 1908. Much interest is taken in the work. The directors and the society deserve great credit for their enthusiasm and for their achievements.

A new catalogue of nursery stock has just been issued by E. D. Smith, proprietor of the Helderleigh Nurseries, Winona, Ont. In it are listed a full line of fruit and ornamental trees, shrubs, roses, hardy border plants, and so on. Descriptions of the varieties have been carefully prepared and are reliable. Much useful information on the culture of these things is given. It is a useful book for any horticulturist to have in his possession. It is now ready for distribution and will be sent free to all persons that make the request.