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History and Reminiscences of Bowmanville.

By Jas. B. Fairbairn, P. M.

Having been asked to write a brief account of the early settlers and settlement of the town of Bowmanville, and as it may be published and thus may reach many outsiders who do not know the place, I would say there are very few, if any, more picturesque spots in the Province of Ontario. The principal part of the town is built upon a high ridge of land running north and south overlooking Lake Ontario and the lovely valley that intervenes. There are two streams -- one to the east and one to the west thus affording good natural drainage. In the olden time these creeks were quite large bodies of water giving power for several important industries that were of great benefit to the people. The springs from which they both originate rise below the Pine Ridge in the 9th or 10th concession of Darlington. Many a time I have traced them up to the fountain head. Sixty years ago large volumes came pouring out and this added to by additional springs along their route, made quite a quantity of delicious, pure, cool water. At that time they were full of trout, the millpond and all the stream down to the lake were teeming with this princeling of the finny tribe and in the fall of the year beautiful large salmon came up from the lake. You could throw them out of the water with an ordinary pitchfork. Between the bridge on the western stream and the lake it was a thick forest of large standing timber with a tangle of underbrush. It was quite a sight to see the fishermen with their Jack lanterns spearing them hundreds of which were taken every Fall.

In the preceding three or four decades what a glorious country this must have been for the sportsman. Even in my recollection, the forests abounded in deer and all kinds of game. I cannot refrain, while on this topic, from putting in writing what I have often said to our intelligent, progressive farmers, that if every land holder in Darlington would plant say, five to ten acres of young maples on every 100 acres, it would not only be a source of untold wealth, and if reforestation were extended to the whole Province, would make it one of the most lovely and fertile countries on the face of the earth. This would give a

more uniform rainfall and shelter us from the destructive winds, from which we now suffer so much. I was in Sweetsburg, Quebec Province, some few years ago and was surprised to find it the centre of a large section of the country abounding in what they call sugar orchard. They told me that the second growth maple is not injured by tapping, as is the case with the nature grown. There are thousands of dollars worth of maple sugar and molasses shipped from there every year. A further inducement to plant is their rapid growth. Some put out around my premises thirty years ago, are fine stately trees. But this is a digression.

Coming back to the town, it is surrounded on all sides except the lake front by hills and dales at a higher elevation in all directions affording fine landscape views. In the summer season to one driving in from the east, at Mr. W. S. Bragg's hill, a magnificent sight is obtained of the town and its environments, nesting as it does in a sea of green foliage, its public buildings, church spires with fine residential homes and gardens and the ever grand Lake Ontario in the distance, are distinctly seen. How this delights the eye and ministers to the aesthetic taste of the beholder. The same remarks apply equally when coming in on the Scugog road from the north and indeed with greater force, when coming from the west. The scene of course is different, catching the eye at another angle. There is spread under your immediate gaze more of the business portion of the town, the mill and dam and the stream which runs like a ribbon through banks and braes" if not equal yet nearly so to "Bonnie Doon," till it finds an outlet in the marsh.

Anyone wanting to get a complete and comprehensive outlook, taking in the whole town and portions of the township, with the hill lands of Clarke to the east, the old but ever new bright and sparkling waters of Ontario to the south, let him climb the height west of the electric light pond till he reaches the elevated land near Mr. Mark Munday's farm, then if he has any right conception of natural beauty, it will leave on the retina of his mental vision and scene of love-