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MEMORIES OF THE REBELLION OF '37.

By Gilbert Robinson.

(The following Narrative was written down by his grandson, Percy J. Robinson, M. A., St. Andrew's College, Toronto on the occasion of its recital, Aug. 4, 1892).

Our attention had been turned to Lower Canada where the Rebellion had already broken out. We thought those who were disaffected would go to join the rebels in Lower Canada, never dreaming that a Rebellion would break out in Upper Canada, although it was well known that there were many who were rebelliously inclined.

One evening my brother-in-law, Mr. Hunter, came running in and said, "Do you know that the rebels have massed around Queensville and Sharon and are marching to take Toronto"? I did not believe it at first; then he said, "Let us go down to Bradford and hear the news." So we went to the village and there found the report was true. Everybody was in a state of excitement, and there was quite a crowd of people in the village. "We'll have to fight for the country," said I, "for if these rebels are unopposed they will take the country at once." That night, knowing of several in the village who belonged to the party of the rebels, I organized expeditions and we went to their houses and demanded their arms. I said to them "Either give up your arms or promise to take no part in the rising." They all chose to surrender their arms, and thus a few guns were secured. But the forces which gathered were armed mostly with pitchforks and pikes. Mr. Driftil, the blacksmith, worked all day and night putting iron pikes upon poles to furnish arms for the gathering forces.

It was some time before we could get the men from the surrounding country together. We could get no dispatches to or from Toronto, but in two or three days we were on the march fully expecting to have to fight our way to the city. News reached us of the battle at Montgomery's, but the danger seemed to be by no means past so we marched on. We suffered much from want of food; the taverns had abundance of salt pork, but it was impossible to eat it so strongly was it salted.

Demands for bread met with little response; many people were rebelliously inclined so we could expect but little. Under these circumstances I headed an expedition to search a house. We were refused any bread, but with one or two others I went up the stairs and away to the back of the house where we discovered a table covered with a white cloth. Lifting the cloth we found provisions in abundance. I called for steelyards and we weighed all that we took and gave the people a receipt. The food had been prepared for the rebels, and consisted of about eighty pounds of the finest mince pies and some hundred and fifty pounds of bread.

At one point of the Ridges it was rumored that the rebels had fortified themselves, so volunteers were called for to reconnoitre; but only six were found, so great was the fear which the rebels had inspired. Word was brought that there were two guns in a house near by. I was one of the party despatched to search for them. When we reached the house we found only a woman and her son, a young boy. The woman began to cry but was assured that no harm was meant if she would give up the guns. On her refusal to do so I said jokingly to the boy "Then we must take you along." This frightened him and he immediately promised to give up the guns. He took us away to the top of the house and there we got the guns. I then asked him for the ammunition which was in the house. He produced a mug filled with bullets and a horn of powder; after getting these we departed.

In the city there had been no soldiers and only some sixty could be got to turn out for the defence of the place. After a few days stay in Toronto, during which scarcity of food was the general complaint, we were given discharge and began our march back. When in Toronto I had an opportunity of shaking hands with Sir Francis Bond Head. On our way back we were assisted by all the horses that could be pressed into service.

Biographical Note.

Gilbert Robinson J. P. whose recollections of the Rebellion are here recorded was born in 1807 and became a pioneer of Simcoe County. His father, William Robinson, came to Canada from King's County, Ireland, in 1822, and being joined by his family a few years later they settled in West Gwillimbury on the Penetanguishene Road about a mile and a half north of Bradford. The ancestors of the family had come originally from Yorkshire, England, and this circumstance

is said to have suggested the name Bradford in memory of the place of that name in Yorkshire. There had been a suggestion to call the Canadian village Molloytown, but Thos. Driffil and other Englishmen supported the English name. In 1835 Gilbert Robinson married Miss Mary Hunter, a native of Coleraine, Co. Antrim, Ireland, who had then but recently arrived in West Gwillimbury, and they began married life on lot 15, con. 8, of the township, two miles north of Bradford, on the Penetanguishene Road. Afterwards a large brick house was built, long known as Mount Pleasant, perhaps in memory of Mount Pleasant House, King's Co., Ireland, which was the ancestral home of the princely set of the O'Connors. Mr. Robinson prospered in life, and in addition to his farm conducted a brick yard, being the first to make bricks in that neighborhood. In 1885, Mr. and Mrs. Robinson celebrated their golden wedding, when a friendly address and presentation to them bore witness to the esteem in which both were held in the township. Their family consisted of William Robinson, at one time member of the township council; James Robinson, ex-reeve of Wallace; John Robinson, ex-reeve of Maryboro and now License Inspector, Bond Head; George H. Robinson, M. A., formerly principal of Whitby Collegiate Institute, and editor of the Presbyterian Review; Dr. Robert H. Robinson of Toronto; an adopted daughter, Mrs. Robert Hunter; and Mrs. James Wilson, wife of James Wilson J. P., who was for many years Treasurer of West Gwillimbury and also ex-reeve of the township. On the burning of "Mount Pleasant", and after the death of his wife in 1890, Gilbert Robinson lived with his daughter Mrs. Wilson till his death, Dec. 30, 1896.

REMINISCENCES OF LAKE SIMCOE

By Henry O'Brien, K. C.

[The York Pioneer and Historical Society, printed in their Annual Report for 1909, a synopsis of this Address or Paper which its author read before them. The printed synopsis was limited for the most part to only the first two pages of the manuscript, this being the general introduction. As the paper is of local interest in Simcoe County, especially the portion omitted, this is here printed in full.]

This lake has seen many illustrations travellers,—La-Salle, Sir John (then Capt.) Franklin, Captain Basil Hall, John Galt and others, all of whom have recorded their trips across it. The latter (father of the late Chief Justice Galt) speaks of the distribution of presents to the Indians at Holland Landing. My mother in her diary, 1830, also describes the scene.

In later days the westerly branch of the Holland River was used as a jumping off place for Lake Simcoe, just where the present railway track crosses the Holland River near Bradford. I well remember, as a boy, the wharf and log storehouse there, from whence started the boats to carry settlers to and from Orillia, Shanty Bay, Barrie, etc. The first steamboat to make regular trips to the Bradford landing was the "Beaver," a paddle wheeled steamer, which was larger to my imagination then than are now the great liners crossing the Atlantic.

In 1820 surveys began of the Townships round the Lake, the head of the principal parties of surveyors being J. G. Chewitt, afterwards the first President of the Bank of Toronto, and George Lount, afterwards Registrar at Barrie, and father of the late Judge Lount.

South Simcoe was of course settled first, few caring to cross the Lake, though some straggled through towards Penetanguishene crossing Kempenfeldt Bay at Tollendal, where the first mill was built by an uncle of my father's, Admiral O'Brien, one of England's great Sea Captains, with whom my father went to sea as midddy in the Royal Navy in 1812.

At that time an impassable swamp at the head of the Bay prevented travelling northward in any other way than by crossing the Bay. The first settlement was therefore at the beginning of the road to Penetanguishene, about 2 miles east of the present town of Barrie, and the second settlement was Shanty Bay.

I come now to the more personal and family reminiscences.

My father, having retired on half pay at the close of the war, was in 1830, put in charge of the settlement of what is now North Simcoe, by the then Governor of Upper Canada his friend and fellow soldier, Sir John Colborne; and a number of half pay officers went to share his fortunes in the wilderness, my father being in charge. He was subsequently appointed chairman of the Quarter Sessions, commissioner of the Court of Requests, and Colonel of the Militia. The latter found its usefulness some seven years later at the time of the rebellion when the Colonel marched to Toronto at the head of the Simcoe Militia to uphold the authority of the Crown.

It is unnecessary to say that a settlement in the backwoods in those days was no summer picnic, and it is well to remember the hardships so bravely and uncomplainingly endured, not by men only, but by delicate, cultured women, and we have cause to thank God for these mothers in Israel.

It must have been a weird experience for example, for my mother coming as she did from a comfortable Rectory in Somersetshire, to find herself with her husband and her baby of less than a year old, with a party of Highlanders as axemen, in February of 1831, at a settler's shanty on the south shore of Kempenfeldt Bay. All of this is duly recorded in her diary. In the early morning they started across the ice in sleighs to what is now known as Shanty Bay. Going a short distance into the bush; before nightfall a space was cleared and three small log shanties were built, one for the family of three, one for the men, and one for a kitchen. She tells how she spent part of her idle time in chinking up the walls with moss gathered from trees, and at night, hung her husband's great coat in the doorway to keep out some of the wind. A difficulty arising as to the disposal of the baby she rolled him in blankets, and made a soft bed for him in a snow drift. Who will say that the present occupant of the old homestead (named by relatives in England, "The Woods") did not appropriately take possession of his future farm, and entitle him to its comfort and when the time shall come to a resting place in the

Churchyard of the beautiful Church built by his father almost on the spot where the three shanties were first put up.

Thus began "Shanty Bay". But, not long after, its founder erected near by what was then a more pretentious mansion, but which was appropriately built of huge logs. It stands today as sound as the day it was built in 1831, one of the monuments of the energy and resource of the men of iron who first carved out of the forest their homes and their farms.

Davin's book on Irishmen in Canada gives some interesting incidents in connection with the life of this founder of the settlement on the north shore of Lake Simcoe, and many incidents, not there related, I could tell if time permitted.

His magisterial book or record of proceedings, a marvel of neatness and military precision, is in my possession, and it often interests me to see how carefully he noted the evidence and copied out the proceedings in the often strange cases that came before him. But he was not only the judge, for he often tied their marriage knots, and was generally in charge and at the head of everything. He was a man of strong personality, knew his own mind and was not afraid to express his views. It needed men of resource and strong hands in those days, and we owe them much.

After the settlement had been in existence for some years habits of drinking by the half-pay officers and others became all too common. My father felt that as the leader he should set his face against this, and with characteristic directness commenced a temperance campaign by telling the others that there was to be no more brandy and water at least till dinner time. Some strenuously opposed this, especially a brother officer and an old friend. There were hot words between these two fiery spirits, resulting in a challenge from Captain Oliver, because he was not given his usual glass of brandy and water when he called at "The Woods" as had been the custom, and because the Colonel refused to drink with him at his house before the allotted time. As chief magistrate it was not of course possible for the Colonel to gratify the irate Captain as would cheerfully have been done in former days, and so there was no meeting. Duelling in his younger days was of course common sport, and he came of fighting stock, which reminds me of an incident related by Justin McCarthy of my father's cousin, William Smith O'Brien, who, before the handkerchief was dropped, called, "Stop!" to the annoyance of the seconds; but all was explained when this courteous

dueller called attention to the fact that the percussion cap had dropped from the nipple of his opponent's pistol.

Another incident occurred suggestive of these days. When holding court in his parlor at "The Woods" on the trial of a prisoner for some offence, a deer was seen on the ice which then covered Kempenfeldt Bay, followed closely by a pack of wolves. The temptation to take part in the chase could not be resisted and witnesses and spectators at the trial, headed by the chief constable, started for the ice through the deep snow which covered the intervening space. The deer escaped from his foes and the wolves made off and in course of time the trial was resumed. I hope the prisoner was let off in honor of the occasion!

But the romance of these days was changed when the County of Simcoe was set apart for judicial purposes in 1843 and a judge of the District Court appointed.

In due course, there, as elsewhere, came the iron rails and the steam horse. A novel and interesting sight to the remains of the savage race that once held sway there. When I was on the engineering staff of the Northern Railway we had a half-breed from Penetanguishene as axeman. When the road was finished and we were paid off I was living in Barrie, and very frequently had to be at the station, and frequently saw our former axeman on the train. One day wondering what he was there for I said to him, "Michel, are you a brakeman now?" He said "No", I said 'I see you on the train all the time. what are you doing?' to which he replied "Riding up and down till pass runs out!" He was doubtless looked upon as a great traveller when he got back to his native town.

Another incident of the railway. A farmer asked the price of a ticket from the landing to Toronto. He was told, I think, 7/6. He then asked "how long does the journey take." "About two hours." "Why" said he 'for the same money we would ride on the coach for a whole day."

The men and women who began the Building of this country of ours were strong of heart and hand. They feared God and nothing else. His blessing rested on their work.

THE DAYS OF THE PIONEERS AT BIG BAY POINT.

By Donald McKay.

One of the earliest settlements in the County of Simcoe was at Big Bay Point, which name is locally applied to a considerable tract of land comprising the north-eastern portion of the fertile, and now thickly settled, Township of Innisfil. The point or headland proper, however, is of small area, and is situated about ten miles east of Barrie, on the southern shore of Kempenfeldt Bay, just where that beautiful sheet of water widens away into the bosom of "Old Simcoe" itself. The "Point" at present is a very attractive place, having splendid groves of butternut, beech and maple, with delightful little clearances between, and is much visited in the summer months by fishing and camping parties, who find it a most pleasant place to while away a few days or weeks during the heated term. During the present summer (1885) it has also been the scene of a camp meeting conducted by the pastor and members of the Agnes-street Methodist Church, Toronto, and several other meetings of a similar character have been held during the past few weeks.

But the pleasure grounds of to-day differ greatly from the scene that presented itself to Francis Hewson, one of the Innisfil pioneers, when in the early days of the present century he landed there and essayed to hew himself out a home amid the trees of the forest. The task as it presented itself to Mr. Hewson might well have deterred him from the attempt, but before many years had elapsed he saw smiling grain fields around his rude log house and barn, where on his arrival had stood the oaks and the hemlocks. The sons of Mr. Hewson sought out homes for themselves elsewhere, one of them, William H. Hewson, J.P., now is living at Painswick, some ten miles distant from the old Point farm, where he was born. The farm was for many years left deserted until about ten years ago, when it was bought by Isaac Robinson, who still owns it. Mr. Hewson's nearest neighbor was David Soules, whose little log house was built about three miles west and near the shore of Kempenfeldt Bay. The land here, except a narrow strip near the water, is free from stone and of good quality, and is still owned by Samuel L. Soules, the only child of the old settler. Then came the Hayters and the Hammonds, who have left only

their names and traditions, and Redferns, the Robinsons, whose descendants are still there, and later the Cullen, Hunt and Webb families, while farther west George F. H. Warnica settled and raised around him a family of sturdy boys, who with their sons now own some of the finest farms in the township.

The old days were the times of many trials and vicissitudes of which the farmers of the present day know little, and one when he hears, as your correspondent has heard, the old settlers relate what they had to undergo cannot but admire the pluck and fortitude which carried them so bravely through difficulties, the mere thought of which would have been enough to daunt an ordinary person.

David Soules at the age of eighty, when he was best known to your correspondent, was hale and hearty, and full of anecdotes. Few of the settlers in that neighborhood but remember well the long straggling grey locks, the kindly smile, and the hearty grasp of the hand of the "old squire," as he was familiarly called. But that was more than a half score years ago, and the old familiar form has long since been laid at rest. He had taken part in the war of 1812, and his memory of events extended away back into the beginning of the present century. He was never tired of relating incidents of the doings and sayings of people in those early days, and as related by him these anecdotes had a delightful quaintness which rendered it a pleasure to listen. His faith in the acts of the M.D. was very slight, and he frequently told how that when a boy on the old homestead near Thornhill the first doctor who settled there was paid a certain sum yearly by each family. Although the Soules family was large the year passed on with no occasion for the services of the family physician, until almost the last week when the father was taken unexpectedly and unaccountably ill and the doctor had to be called in, and the "squire" with a peculiar twinkle would add, "but there was nothing the matter with my father, he only wanted to get some value for his money" In the early days of Innisfil, bears, wolves, and deer were numerous, and Mr. Soules and his brother killed many of these animals. Preachers were, however, scarce, being seen only about once in six months or a year, when some itinerant minister would make a journey through the district, staying a few days with each of his widely scattered flock and preaching whenever he could get a few of the settlers to congregate in some house. In those early days there were matrimonial jars the same as there are now, as witness the relief that must have been experienced by a neighbor who rushed to the house of Mr. Soules and announced the death of his better half by stating:

'My wife's dead, I'm free as air.' The old clocks that were first introduced had wooden wheels, and were of much larger size than those now commonly in use. Many of them were famous time-keepers running right along for half a century or more, but others of them were far from being trustworthy, and to this latter class belonged the clock owned by 'Bob' Robinson. Mr. Soules happening to call there one day found Mrs. Robinson baking and noticed that as she passed and re-passed she would start the pendulum into vigorous motion with a swing of her finger, but after a few ticks it would again become stationary. Her visitor ventured the remark that the clock did not appear to be of much use, but was rather tartly informed by the lady of the house that the clock was all right when she had time to attend to it properly, which attention as we have seen consisted in keeping the pendulum in motion with her finger. But enough of anecdotes of this nature, as Mr. Soules had other subjects to remember than these.

The Rebellion of '37 stood out in bold relief in the background of his memory, and the stirring events of that period were often narrated by him to your correspondent. He was brother-in-law to Samuel Lount, and though not himself a participant in the rebellion his sympathies were with that patriot and his associates. When the rebellion was at an end and Lount was trying to escape, the house of Mr. Soules in that far away corner of Innisfil was visited and searched one night by a party of soldiers, but no trace of the fugitive was found. S. L. Soules still bears in his thigh the mark of a bayonet wound received that night from a soldier who thrust his bayonet several times through the bed clothes under which the boy was lying, asking him if his rebel uncle were there. Afterward when Mr. Lount had been captured and sentenced to death, Mr. Soules journeyed hither and thither with a petition to the Governor praying for a reprieve of the sentence, and few indeed were those who refused to sign, but when he visited his brother-in-law in prison with the cheering intelligence of the numbers who had signed the petition, he was told by the prisoner with sad prophetic instinct, "It's no use, David, every name you get on that petition but makes my death warrant more sure!" And so it proved. But these events belong rather to a political narrative, and I will not here venture further, but with a few general remarks will close this brief reference to the early days of Big Bay Point, and to him who for such a long period was its central figure. In the old days the first clearances were made along the water's edge and the houses were built close to the shore, as, no roads having been opened, the water formed the only means of communication with the Holland Landing, whence

supplies of all kinds had to be obtained by the settlers in this district, and where the nearest grist mill was situated. The 'squire's' old log house still stands, and near by is the frame house now fifty years old, the boards of which were cut with a 'whip saw,' before saw-mills were known. But time brings many changes, and those hardy pioneers, who felled the stout trees of the forest with axes fitted with straight handles and laughed when at one of their bees some peripatetic Yankee tried to convince them of the superior usefulness of a crooked handle, lived to see the flourishing towns of Barrie and Orillia arise where on their arrival had stood the forest primeval. They lived to see the steamer plough the waters of Kempenfeldt and Simcoe, that had previously been broken only by their rude oars, to see a network of railways built in all directions through their county, to receive perhaps a few telegraphic messages, and to see improved agricultural machinery introduced making the farmer's life that of a gentleman, and then they passed one by one away.—Toronto Daily Globe, August 31st, 1885.

PIONEER LIFE IN VESPRA.

By Geo. Sneath, Esq.

Having been solicited to read a paper before you, I have had some difficulty in choosing a suitable subject which I could make interesting to you. However, with your permission I will endeavor to tell you something about pioneer life in the township of Vespra, of which township I have been a resident for half a century. (Feb. 14, 1893).

Fifty years ago the town of Barrie was one of a few small settlements which Vespra contained, and was as much in the bush as any of them. But as I have already written my early recollections of it, which have appeared in print, and as His Honor Judge Ardagh, in his admirable paper read at your last meeting, covered the whole ground, so far as the early settlement of Barrie and the Penetanguishene Road is concerned, I shall not again allude to them in this paper, but try to give you some idea of what life was in the backwoods of Vespra at the time I have mentioned.

Vespra is only a third rate farming township, being very much broken by hills and swamps, and the soil being poor, except in a few sections where it is very good, and where very prosperous settlements exist.

When I first became acquainted with it, it was one of the finest timbered townships in the county. There were untold riches—which were unfortunately out of sight of the settlers—in its forests. Trees were only an incumbrance, to be got rid of in the most expeditious way possible. The finest of pine trees were logged up and burnt. At a later period, more were sold to lumbermen for a trifle, who made fortunes out of them. I will relate you an instance. A few miles from Barrie stood a block of pine lands, 600 acres, which was offered for sale, and was a long time without a purchaser, at \$2 an acre, (I think it was in 1856); later on it was sold at that price; again at \$4 per acre; and again at \$50 an acre to a lumberman, who built a mill on it and made a fortune out of it of many thousand dollars.

For a good many years—the most prosperous times Vespra

ever knew—go in what direction you might, could be heard the hum of a saw-mill. But now, alas! the timber and the mills are gone, along with the busy villages attached to them.

“But now, the sounds of population fail;
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.”

And the land is left desolate and unfit for cultivation.

At some remote time, there is no doubt but the township was thickly inhabited by some aboriginal tribes, probably the Hurons. There are evidences of such being the case. Large pits of bones have been found in several parts of the township; and pipes, arrow heads, crockery, etc., have frequently been ploughed up, of which the Indians of our day can give no account, neither have they the art of making them. The time of their occupation must be remote, for pits containing their bones and articles of their manufacture have been found under trees of the largest growth. From whence they came, or whither they went, is a mystery which I think has not yet been solved.

The first white settlers in the interior of the township, chiefly old soldiers, came in about the years 1833 and '34. They had commuted their pensions and were settled on free grants of land. They were in most cases, through age and in other ways, unfitted to bear the hardships of backwoods life. Being without means, they made slow progress in clearing up their lots. They suffered many privations. It has been told that some of them were days together without bread or meat, and of having to cook the buds of the basswood trees for food. The rebellion of 1837 was the means of improving their condition. They were taken to Toronto and Penetanguishene to defend their country, and for their services, besides being supplied with good clothing, of which they were in great need, a portion of their commuted pension, 4½d. per day, was restored to them. They were not successful farmers, and as a result their farms passed into other hands.

Farming here, at the time I have mentioned, was of the most primitive kind. Home-made wooden ploughs and harrows were used to till the ground, if a settler was fortunate enough to have oxen to work them; if not, the crop was hoed in, men, women and children taking part in it. The grain was cut with sickles, and often carried home on the backs of the settler and his wife. Threshing was all done with the flail. It would be a good idea to preserve a flail, if one could be found, in a museum, so that future

generations of farmers might see with what kind of an implement their forefathers threshed out their grain. It was nothing unusual to see a man trudging along to the mill on foot with a bag of grain on his shoulder to get ground. In 1843, excepting Barrie and the Penetanguishene Road, there was only one man in the township who kept a horse. Waggon's there were none. Oxen and sleds were used for every purpose, winter and summer, by those who were fortunate enough to have them.

If a journey had to be made to Toronto, it was made on foot, the traveller carrying his provisions with him. I have known one start from his home in Vespra on a Monday morning, travel all the way to Toronto and back on foot, do his business and be home on Saturday night, costing him only, in expenses, a trifle for his nights' lodgings.

A minister of the gospel was rarely seen, for there were few of them and their missions were without limit in extent. It seems now, at this time, almost incredible that the good and pious missionaries of those days, chiefly educated men from the old country, who had been brought up with all the luxuries and privileges of refined life, could endure the hardships they had to bear. I have heard some of them relate that they have been on horseback from Monday morning till Saturday night, travelling over roads at the risk of their lives, and having to eat in places where fastidious people might not go, and where the tea set before them to drink was made of hemlock leaves, and having to sleep in places where they could lie in bed and count the stars through the roof. All these hardships endured without fee or reward, purely for the love of the souls of the poor settlers, who, only for these self-sacrificing clergymen, would have been without the ministrations of the Gospel.

In those days of old, Vespra was the El Dorado of the sportsmen. The tract of land west of Barrie, including the valley of the Nottawasaga to the shores of Lake Huron, was an almost unbroken wilderness, over which roamed in large numbers deer, wolves, bears and other wild animals, hunted only by Indians who often killed more deer than they could dispose of. I have known them give a quarter of venison for a loaf of bread. Feathered game was so plentiful that powder and shot would not be wasted on any bird less than a partridge. Wolves in this tract of country were very numerous and for many years were a terror to the settlers, frequently killing their sheep and cattle, and putting them in dread of their own lives. I have heard of two instances of them attacking and killing travellers in this vicinity. In the fall of the year their dreadful howlings could be heard night

and day. I have heard his Honor Judge Boys relate that when he was a boy on a visit to his brother Henry, ex-County Treasurer, then residing at the Midhurst Mills, that the howling of the wolves while he was in bed appeared so close to the house and was so frightful that he dared not go to sleep.

Another danger which the settler had to dread was getting lost in the bush. It was a very serious matter at that time to find oneself astray in a wilderness extending to Lake Huron. I knew of one instance of a man who had started out from one settlement to the next, through the bush for a short cut, not far away, who was never seen or heard of again. It was a very easy matter to get lost, one had only to step off the road into the bush and turn round a time or two, and, unless he had the bump of locality pretty largely developed, he was lost. I will give you an instance. Two young men were cutting poles a few rods from the travelled road and started for the road with poles on their shoulders, but instead of coming to the road as they expected found themselves bewildered and lost, and were hours before they made their way out, miles away from their starting point, and only for their good fortune in coming across a creek and following its course which led them to a settler's clearing, they might have had a sad experience.

I had a not very pleasant experience myself of being lost in the bush:

In the year 1843 the country lying between Lake Simcoe and the Nottawasaga Bay, with the exception of two small settlements in Vespra, was an unbroken wilderness, inhabited only by wild animals. The lumberman had not yet found his way into it to strip it of its noble pine and oak trees with which the greater part of it was covered.

To the white man it was an unknown and unexplored land almost as much so as the then 'Great Lone Land' of the Northwest.

The dense swamps and thickly timbered pine woods of this great valley of the Nottawasaga, which is now a fertile country covered with hundreds of homesteads, harbored wolves and other savage animals which roamed through its fastnesses seeking their prey unmolested, which made it dangerous for one, unless well armed, to venture into it and still more dangerous that he might get lost in its labyrinths.

I, along with a friend, in the fall of the year mentioned, just when the trees had got their autumn tints, left our homes not far

from Barrie, for a stroll into the bush, without any particular end in view, unless it was to see nature in its pristine grandeur. We were just out from the Old Country, and knew nothing of bush life; everything we saw was a novelty to us. We carried no weapons with us, and, being cautioned, had no intention of leaving the blazed line on which we were travelling; but both of us being enthusiastic lovers of nature and amateur botanists, and finding something new to admire and wonder at, at nearly every step we took, it was little wonder that we lost the track of the blazed trees which had guided us out, and which we depended on to guide us home again. But lost them we had, nor could we get trace of them again, the more we searched the more bewildered we became. Our enthusiasm for the wonders of the bush was gone.

We were 'Lost in the Bush.' After travelling for some time, to make matters worse we got into a cedar swamp so dense that we could scarcely see a rod before us. After tramping about for hours to no purpose and most likely getting farther away from home, we came to the conclusion that we had to pass the night, which was now fast closing upon us, in the bush, and hope for better luck to get out of it the next morning. A search would be made for us by our friends and by travelling we were only making it harder for them to find us.

We commenced at once to prepare for the night. We were fatigued and hungry; our hunger we could not satisfy, but we could rest, at least we hoped so. We made a bed of cedar boughs which we found no trouble in breaking off the trees, and were congratulating ourselves on the good night's rest we were about to get, providing no wild animals molested us, when we heard a distant rumble of thunder, which made us quake, for we were lightly dressed in summer clothing and not at all prepared for rough weather. However, the thunder came on, each clap nearer to us, soon accompanied with heavy rain which wet us through and made our bed useless.

During that long night we had to stand in a pitiless rain storm worn out with hunger and fatigue, without shelter, only such as the dropping trees gave us, and that was not all. Just as darkness came on, between the claps of thunder we heard the howlings of a pack of wolves apparently not a mile distant. What were we to do? Fly we could not; we could only wait and tremble. Of course sleep or even lying down was out of the question. Every hour seemed to us an age. At different times in the night we heard the tramp of some animals among the

bushes and expected the wolves down upon us every minute, but we were not molested.

That long night at last came to an end. The dawn of morning was never more welcomed than by us. Drenched with rain, faint with hunger and tired out we commenced our tramp to try and find our way out. After travelling for hours through swamps and over wind-falls and apparently getting farther into the labyrinths of the bush, oh, joy! we heard the report of a gun at a great distance away in the opposite direction to that we were tramping in. We at once faced about and quickened our steps for the direction the sound came from; more shots and the sound of horns blowing gladdened our ears. We were sure now that our friends were looking for us and that our trouble was over. Shortly we heard the shouts of our friends which we answered with a will. We forgot all about our wretched condition. We were found.

Our friends welcomed us as though we had risen from the dead.

We had travelled a good many miles, and the wonder was that we had not a more serious experience of being lost in the bush. A party of a dozen or more men of the settlement had been out all night firing off guns and blowing horns but we were too far away to hear them. On our way home we found that the wolves had run down a cow, killed and partly eaten it. Old settlers told us only for the cow we would have been doomed men.

There is a good deal of agitation just now about the necessity of improving our bad roads. Can you imagine what kind of roads we had fifty years ago? Just paths winding in and out among the trees and if one happened to get off them he might have some trouble in finding his way on to them again. A clergyman, then residing in Barrie, now Archdeacon of Meath, in Ireland, (Rev. Garrett Nugent) was called upon to go to a settler's in the bush to marry a couple. On his way to the place he unwarily allowed his horse to get off the path; he dismounted, tied his horse to a tree, went himself in search of the road, and after some time found it, but in doing so lost his horse, which after searching for a long time he failed to find. Some of the settlers turned out and found it for him while he performed the marriage ceremony.

Churches there were none, schools there were none and doctors there were none—and very little sickness to need them. It was a very rare thing to see a newspaper. The doings of the out-

side world were unknown and uncared for. In fact the settlers were almost as much buried alive as the exiles of Siberia.

After all said there were two sides to pioneer life. Hardships there were undoubtedly plenty; but there was a bright side also. If privations were many, wants were few and comforts were not altogether lacking. Ask any old pioneer, no matter how much riches he has made out of his cleared up farm, or how fine a house he has built to reside in, and he will tell you that the happiest days of his life were when he lived in his comfortable log shanty and was chopping, logging and clearing his land.

I might go on and tell you something about the logging bees, house raisings, corn huskings, quilting bees, and whiskey drinkings of those good old times.

Yes, wiskey drinkings. At all gatherings, marriages and funerals included, it was served out without stint. A 'wiskey bos' would be appointed whose duty it was to take charge of the liquor, hand it around and see that every one was supplied and, as might be expected, a quarrel and fight frequently ended these orgies. In the family the jar of whiskey was considered almost as much a necessity as the loaf of bread. It was very convenient to be got at here. At Midhurst on the site where now stands the Barrie Electric Light Company's works stood "Olliver's Mills," grist mill, saw mill and distillery. These mills when first built, sometime early in the '20's, and for a good many years later supplied the surrounding country with their products and a very busy, and sometimes not very orderly, place it was. The mills were built by Mairs' Bros. and Olliver. Government granted them a tract of land—400 acres—on condition of them building and running the mills. The mills were worked by Olliver until 1841, when Mr. Henry Boys came into possession and were held by him and his tenant, Mr. Lawlor, until 1852. During their time the distillery was worked and whiskey sold at 25c. a gallon, and bought by the settlers in 5 and 10 gallon quantities and sometimes by the barrel. Was it any wonder if drunkenness was rife? It was not then considered a disgrace to be the worse of liquor. The distillery was abandoned in 1851 and the mills burnt down in 1887.

Before closing these rambling reminiscences, which I am sure you must be tired of listening to, I will give you a few notes I have taken of the vagaries of the weather: In 1842 snow fell on 7th Nov. and continued snowing until at Christmas it was four feet deep on the level; by the end of the winter, the middle of April, six feet deep. A good deal of damage by floods followed.

In July '56 fall wheat was destroyed by frost. On 6th June, '81, frost killed all the garden stuff, and injured the grain in the fields: same year, Aug. 30th, the mercury reached 102 in the shade, and on Sept. 1st rain fell after a drought of 25 days. Vegetation was completely dried out and cattle were starving; a great deal of damage was done by fires. On 24th Jan., '82, the mercury went down to 30 below zero. The summer of that year was noted for its coldness, on July 4th the mercury stood at 50; on 12th Aug. heavy frost; Jan. 25th, '84, the mercury went down to 32 below zero, the lowest I have known it to be.

Supplementary Note.

Since closing my paper I have received a note from a friend stating that Judge Ardagh in his paper read at your last meeting was in error in stating that Oro, in the person of Mr. Steele, had the credit of first sending a member to Parliament: That Vespra has a better claim to the honor, Mr. James Wickens, a farmer of Vespra, being elected to Parliament some years previous to Mr. Steele's election.

If I am correct, Mr. Wickens was elected to the Parliament of Upper Canada in 1836, and Mr. Steele to the first Parliament of United Canada in 1841. Probably what His Honor said and meant was that Mr. Steele was the first member sent from Simcoe to the Parliament of United Canada.

I have also been requested, as a favor, by a gentleman of Barrie, to read the accompanying lines with my paper, which I have very much pleasure in doing.

The gentleman informs me that they were written about the time of Confederation, by a friend of his who has resided and occupied an exalted position in our county for about forty years. He states that he is not at liberty to make known the author's name.

Here are the lines which I am sure will be listened to with a good deal of pleasure:—

'List to a yeoman farmer, Bluff Tom or Plain Tom Mairs:
I settled up in Vespra, the haunt of wolves and bears.
Since then some forty summers and winters too I've seen,
And things so strangely altered I sometimes think I dream;
But then my breeches pocket, unlike my stomach stout,
Says Tommy, mon, thou did it, thou brought the thing about.

Instead of partridge drumming, I now hear cattle low,
And sheep flocks bleating softly as they lick up the snow;
Instead of bye paths winding by forest and by dells,
Good graded roads are travelled to music of horse bells.
And right good horses surely, well bred and strong and stout,
And Tommy, mon, thou did it, thou brought the thing about.

Go ask of Butcher Bingham, whence comes the marbled beef?
And whence the juicy mutton? the veal so fat—in brief,
Just ask him, could he nourish a stomach well in town
If I had not imported good Durham and Southdown?
May I be lank as Yankee, stall fed on saurkraut,
If he don't say Mairs did it, he brought the thing about.

I've spent some English guineas, as British yeomen should,
And stock of all kinds bettered—importing and by food;
I'm not you know much richer, yet proud I've done my best
As all should do who follow when I am gone to rest.
And now I am contented to hear kind hearts cry out:
'Twas Bluff Tom Mairs that did it, he brought the thing about.

God bless you, brother farmers, God bless you kind friends all,
Your wives, your lads and lassies, aye bless you one and all,
And bless dear, dear old England, the England of my day
And bless our new Dominion in field and every way,
All bless the Queen we honor, stand as your sires have stood,
Stand by the flag of England, ye men of British blood "



JUDGE JOHN A. ARDAGH

(BORN 1825; DIED JANUARY 26TH, 1915)

SOME REMINISCENCES.

(Apr. 22, 1892.)

By His Honor Judge Ardagh.

When I consented to read a paper before the "Pioneer and Historical Society" of this County, I, rather unadvisedly perhaps stated that my subject would be "Some reminiscences of the County of Simcoe and the Town of Barrie."

My actual reminiscences in connection with this subject would be of very little value, as I am not yet entitled to be styled the "oldest inhabitant," and consequently there are others amongst us, whose recollections, going back a much longer period of time than mine, would cover far more ground and prove much more interesting.

What I give you will be mere *DISJECTA MEMBRA*—some *MEMORANDA*, some not, perhaps—which may prove helpful to the future historian of this county, when preparing a work, which, I have no doubt, will take its place among the annals of Canada.

For many years past I have been in the habit of briefly jotting down not only facts I thought worthy of being noted, but also 'odds and ends' of information coming to me, either from the lips of others, or from sources I had access to either in print or MS., and which at the time I thought worthy of being preserved—and it will be observed that I do not undertake to go back to a time much prior to that when I was able to make observations for myself.

To shew how usefu such a practice may be, let me remind you, (*PARVA COMPONERE MAGN:IS*), of the well known story of Marco Sanudo, the Venetian chronicler, who at the early age of eight began to note down circumstances in connection with his native place, which at the time perhaps seemed trifling and hardly worthy of being recorded. This practice he continued for upwards of fifty years, and left behind him some fifty-six volumes of his diary, chiefly of public events, a record day by day of

"all the news that came to Venice and all that happened there." These volumes he left by will to the State: but nothing was known of them till the year 1805 (some two hundred and seventy years after his death) when, strange to say, they were discovered in the Royal library of Vienna. Those portions given to the world are said to afford "to the careful student an almost unexampled guide and assistance to the understanding of the years between 1482 and 1533," and to be "a mine of incalculable historical wealth."

To come to our subject, however. And first, a few words as to the territory of our County. There is no other County in the Province which has experienced such changes in that way, as ours.

As originally established in the 38th year of George III., with the amendment of 2nd George IV., it consisted of the townships which now form part of it, the townships of Proton, Luther, Melancthon and Amaranth (now parts of the Counties of Dufferin, Grey and Wellington), and the townships of Rama, Thorah and Mara on the east side of the lake.

In the early part of the century the County of Simcoe formed part of the District of "Durham, Simcoe and East York," and later on, a part of the Home District, but had no separate judicial or municipal organisation.

In the year 1837, by Chapter 32 of 7 Wm. 4th, by reason of the increase of the population, and the great distance from the district town (Toronto), authority was given to the Governor-in-Council "to declare by Proclamation the County of Simcoe to be a separate and distinct District by the name of the District of Simcoe," as soon as a good and sufficient gaol and court house had been erected; and by this Act the limits of the county were defined to be exactly what we have at present, with Mono and Mulmur, (which then belonged to us).

For the erection of the Gaol and Court-House, authority was given the new District to raise the sum of 4,000 pounds (\$16,000). The year following, by 1 Vict., c. 30, authority was given to levy an additional tax, not exceeding 1d. in the pound, until the 4,000 pounds should be paid. This amount proving insufficient for the purpose, another act was passed in 1841, (4 and 5 Vict. c. 78) authorising the raising of a further sum of 3,000 pounds (\$12,000), making a total of \$28,000—a very large sum, it appears to me, for the purpose, when it is remembered that the Court House, as originally built, was only about one-half the size of the present one.

It was not till the year 1843 that the organisation of the District was completed, and public officials appointed.

The first officials of the new District were: James R. Gowan (now Senator), Judge.

B. W. Smith, Sheriff

Jonathan Lane, Clerk of the District Court.

W. B. McVity, Clerk of the Peace.

H. H. Gowan, Deputy Clerk of the Crown.

John Alexander, Crown Lands Agent.

Capt. J. Moberly, Inspector of Licenses.

Edmund S. Lally, County Treasurer.

George Lount, Registrar.

Of these, not one survives but Senator Gowan.

Of the fifty-five persons associated with Judge Gowan in the first Commission of the Peace, (issued on the 8th July, 1843), not one is now (so far as I am aware) alive and resident of the County, but the ex-Judge himself.

In 1845 (by 8 Vic. c. 7) the townships of Artemesia, Collingwood, Osprey, St. Vincent and Euphrasia, (now part of the County of Grey), were added to Simcoe.

On the 1st of January, 1850, COUNTIES were substituted for DISTRICTS, and the limits of each defined—no change, however, being made with respect to Simcoe, which remained as defined in 1845. 12 V. C. 78.

On the 1st of January, 1852, a new territorial division came into force. From Simcoe, the five townships added in 1845 were now detached, while 3 new ones were added, Balaklava, Muskoka and Robinson (the latter afterwards, in 1860, as having been an error, was changed to Morrison, its present name, after Angus Morrison, one of our then County members); and also all the territory now composing the Districts of Parry Sound and Muskoka, stretching as far north as French River and Lake Nipissing (now divided into nearly 70 townships).

In 1868 (by 31 Vict. chap. 35) the territorial District of Muskoka was organized, and the Townships of Morrison and Muskoka, with other territory, were detached from the County of Simcoe. A stipendiary Magistrate, Justices of the Peace, and a Registrar of deeds, were appointed for the new District, but for all municipal purposes, representation in the Legislative Assembly, and for the administration of civil and criminal Justice in all

cases not provided for, these townships and other territory were to remain as before.

In 1869, a similar act (33 Vict., Chap. 24) was passed for the organization of the District of Parry Sound.

In 1877, it was specially enacted, (as indeed was necessary,) that except for the purposes provided for (in the two last named acts), "So much of the territory comprising the said districts as is not already included in the Judicial County of Simcoe, is hereby annexed to and shall form part of the said Judicial County of Simcoe."

By this statute the provisions of the "Division Courts Act" were extended to these districts.

In 1884, (by 47 V. c. 3), the district of Muskoka was declared to consist of 22 Townships, as therein named, and Parry Sound of double that number; and both together were constituted the Electoral District of Muskoka and Parry Sound. Up to the first day of July, 1888, these Districts formed part of the Judicial District of Simcoe, but on that date they were erected into "The United Provisional Judicial District of Muskoka and Parry Sound," with all the machinery for the administration of justice, independent of this County.

While these changes had been going on, we lost a part of our territory, in the opposite direction, by the establishment of the County of Dufferin. In 1874, an act of the Provincial Legislature was passed defining the limits of the new county, the Townships of Mono and Mulmur being taken from the County of Simcoe.

Nothing further was done, however, in the matter till 1880, when another Act was passed, providing for the appointment of a Judge and other officials, as soon as the Proclamation declaring the erection of the new county should issue.

This Proclamation was duly made on the 25th day of January, 1881, and thereafter Mono and Mulmur ceased to form part of this county either for judicial or municipal purposes.

If I have appeared somewhat diffuse on this point, it is because I wish to trace out, for the information of those who may be interested in it, the various additions and subtractions by which we became what we now are, as a County, territorially.

I must, however, say a few words as to how we are situated for representation, for this must, for the most part, be understood by anyone wishing to trace out our growth in population.

For the Dominion, there are three ridings, North, South, and East; for the Local Legislature there are also three—East, West, and Centre: but for the former, the East Riding includes the townships of Muskoka, Medora, Wood and Monck, and the town of Gravenhurst, which for all other purposes belong to Muskoka.

The South Riding for the Dominion consists of Mulmur, Tossorontio, Essa, Innisfil, and Tecumseh. Of these, Mulmur belongs to the County of Dufferin; Tossorontio and Essa form part of the west Riding of Simcoe for the Provincial Legislature, while Innisfil and Tecumseh belong to Cardwell in the same Legislature.

The township of Adjala belongs to Cardwell both for the Dominion and Local; and, last of all, West Gwillimbury, while belonging to Simcoe for municipal and judicial purposes, belongs to North York for Dominion Representation, and to Cardwell for the Local Legislature.

To the above I will merely add that up to the year 1853, Simcoe was represented by one member only, in the Parliament of Canada, of whom Capt. Elmes Steele, father of John C. Steele, D. C. Clerk at Coldwater, was the first within my recollection. After him came the late Hon. Wm. B. Robinson, who represented Simcoe till the two ridings were created in 1853, after which he was returned as member for the South Riding, and the late Angus Morrison for the North.

It would be interesting to trace out the increase in the population in our County since its separation from the Home District, but owing to the peculiar way our Ridings are constituted (as shown above), a rather difficult task.

The last census (1891) gives to the North Riding a population of 28,206, to the South 28,827, and to the East Riding, 35,801, making a total of 84,834. From this total must be taken what belongs to Muskoka in the East Riding, and must be added what has been taken away in the South for other ridings.

I do not, therefore, profess to trace out our increase, but having a few figures at hand, I give them for the benefit of anyone wishing to undertake the task.

In 1842 (which I may here say was the year I first saw Canada,) the population of the Home District, which included the County of Simcoe, was given at 64,401, for the previous year, while the census of that year (1842) shewed 83,924, an increase in one year of 18,893. The only records I have seen, prior

to 1842 give Simcoe's population as 3,985 in 1832; 10,215 in 1836; 10,743 in 1839 (an increase of a little over 530 in three years, owing, no doubt, to the Rebellion, as it is called), and 11,576 in 1841.

In 1848 the population of the District of Simcoe was 23,050, and in 1850, 25,753, an increase in two years of 2,703.

Barrie was unincorporated up to the 1st of January, 1854. Its population in 1850, was 686; in 1851 about 800; in 1852, 1007. Its population by the last census (1891) was 5,550, an increase of only 700 in 10 years.

This year (1892) our County Council is composed of 54 members—in the year 1850, it had only 13 members. West Gwillimbury and Tecumseh alone had a deputy-reeve, while Vespra, Flos and Sunnidale, (which included Barrie, then unincorporated) had only one representative, their united population being only 1,883.

The County of Simcoe has the honour of being the objective point of almost the first railway in Canada.

In 1835, an act was passed (U. C. 6 William 4th, Chap. 5) entitled "An act to incorporate the City of Toronto and Lake Huron Rail Road Company" —but nothing appears to have been done under it. In 1845, another act (8 Vict. C. 83) was passed empowering the company to construct in lieu of or in addition to any RAILROAD, a planked, Macadamised or blocked road.

No further step in this direction was taken till the year 1849, when another act (12 Vict. C. 196) was passed incorporating the Toronto, Simcoe and Lake Huron Union Railroad Company for the construction of a railroad from Toronto to Lake Huron, touching at the Town of Barrie, or at some point or points on the shore of Lake Simcoe. Under this act, no step was taken for several years, though the charter was kept alive by subsequent amending acts.

The first locomotive that entered our county was the "Lady Elgin," after crossing the Holland River, on the 13th of June, 1853. For some time subsequent to this, however, passenger trains for Toronto started from the Holland Landing, leaving that place at 8 A.M. This made it a little inconvenient for those who found it necessary to go to Toronto and return the same day (a feat before that time impracticable, no matter how necessary) and I well remember, how, having to do this, I was compelled to ride from Barrie to the Landing before breakfast to catch the train. Passengers from Toronto could take the

steamer from Bradford wharf for Barrie on the arrival of the train, and this I was able to do, without having to repeat the morning's ride.

The line to Allandale was open for passenger travel on the 11th of October the same year, and to Collingwood by the end of the following year, the first regular train arriving there on 3rd January, 1855.

I have now before me the first time-table for the whole road, dated Toronto, December 30, 1854, and signed by A. Brunel, the first superintendent.

The hours for leaving Toronto were 8.30 A.M. and 3.30 P.M., arriving at Barrie at 11.30 A.M., and 6.30 P.M. The first of these only ran to Collingwood, arriving there at 1.30 P.M. and leaving the following morning at 5 o'clock. Trains for Toronto left Barrie at 7 A.M. and 2.30 P.M., arriving there at 9.45 A.M. and 5.35 P.M.

In 1853, the company obtained an act authorising a branch line into Barrie from Allandale. But it was not till after endless suits between the town and company, backed up finally by an Act of Parliament, that the famous 'Barrie Switch' became UN FAIT ACCOMPLI. Its opening was celebrated by a grand banquet and celebration, on the 21st of June, 1865.

Thus for nearly twelve years, passengers for Barrie had to leave the train at Allandale, summer and winter, wet or dry, and with their luggage and other IMPEDIMENTA take a crowded and not overclean 'bus to complete their journey, unless they were fortunate enough to have a private conveyance awaiting them.

In November, 1871, the main line was completed to Orillia, a cause of great satisfaction to me, as in my last WINTER'S drive, in February of that year, I had been eleven hours on the road. On the 31st December, 1877, the Hamilton and North-Western road was opened to Barrie; on the 10th of February, 1879, the North Simcoe branch was opened to Penetanguishene, and lastly, on the 28th of June, 1886, the first regular train from Toronto for British Columbia passed through the town of Barrie.

Two other dates I have—one the 30th of July 1879, when the Northern railway having ABSORBED the Hamilton and North-Western Railway, trains on both lines began to run to and from the one station here. The other, the 9th July, 1881, when the change of gauge on the line was completed.

Taking all these lines together, we have now about 230 miles of railway WITHIN the limits of our county.

Only those who had occasion to travel much before these railways were constructed, can appreciate the inestimable boon they were.

For many years my predecessor, Senator (then Judge) Gowan, had not only to travel over the county as it is now constituted, but also to hold his courts in the township of St. Vincent, many miles beyond Collingwood, without the help of a single mile of railway. And even after I took up the work, 20 years ago, I had for a long period 1200 miles of driving every year (besides railway travel), two of my courts being 85 miles apart.

As to the general public, who had not the luxury of a private conveyance, let us see how they were served by the public coaches carrying the mails.

As late as 1848, the Northern mail was as follows:—A passenger coach left Toronto every afternoon at 3 o'clock and arrived at Holland Landing, a distance of 34 miles, at 8 p.m., (I can remember being on this road once till 2 o'clock the next morning, but that was in the fall of the year). Arriving at Holland Landing, after his (AT LEAST) 5 hours' ride, the passenger, at 9 P.M. (provided it was Monday, Wednesday or Friday) stepped into another coach, for a further drive of 26 miles to Barrie, where he arrived—when he "got there," not ALWAYS a very long time before dawn. Here the luxury of a coach came to an end, and if there happened to be a passenger for Penetanguishene, he had either to mount behind the mail carrier, —though I never heard of anyone doing so—or, get there the best way he could. The carrier was supposed to arrive at 3 p. m., and often did so unless he was WOLF-BOUND (wolves were plentiful in those days). He had then till 5 o'clock the following morning, for "rest and refreshments," ere he mounted his horse again for the return journey.

It was said that on the stage-line from th's to Bradford, you could travel either 1st, 2nd or 3rd class. If FIRST, you could keep your seat the whole way, provided the coach did not turn over. If SECOND-class, you were expected to get out and walk whenever the road was bad—but if 3rd class, you were obliged not only to walk past the bad spots but to help with a fence rail, whenever a mud hole insisted on holding the coach fast.

Though in later years the road to Orillia permitted a stage-coach, yet in those days the mail for that place was carried on horse-back, leaving Barrie at 6 a.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and arriving at Orillia at 3 p.m.—the distance

being called 24 miles. Every Thursday, a mail-carrier left Barrie on horseback for Nottawasaga (there was no COLLINGWOOD then) 36 miles, and thence on to Owen Sound, 95 miles from Barrie.

Of course in summer time, then, you could reach Barrie and Orillia by the old BEAVER, which left Bradford in the morning to make the circuit of the lake, returning thither the following day. From Orillia a stage took the passengers for the upper lakes across to Sturgeon Bay, whence the steamer GORE set out for Sault Ste. Marie and other ports.

We did not seem, however, to be much worse off in winter than our neighbours to the South. If one of THEM wished to go to Montreal, he had to leave Toronto by stage at 6 p.m., arriving at Kingston (165 miles) at 2 o'clock the second morning thereafter. He could then sleep till evening, when at 6 o'clock he left for Montreal, arriving there if everything went well, at 8 o'clock, the second morning thereafter, 200 miles.

To reach Quebec, he would leave Montreal at 5 p.m. and arrive at 5 o'clock on the second morning thereafter.

Following this out, it will be seen that if a person had left Barrie in those days for Quebec on a Monday afternoon, he would arrive there (a distance of over 600 miles) on the following Monday at 5 a. m., if no delays occurred.—If he wished to return NOW, he would leave Quebec at 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon and be here at 11.30 to-day.

Talking of the mail routes suggests a comparison of the Postal service with what we now have. THEN, one mail a day south. For a letter to Quebec THEN, time one week, postage 1—6 (or 30c.)—NOW, time under 22 hours, postage 3c. Postage then was regulated by distance. To Toronto it was 4½ d., (8 cents); over the 60 up to 100 miles, 7d; to 200 miles 9 d., and so on.

Letters redirected were, then, rated afresh for the further distance, while now a letter can follow you all over the Dominion for the 3 cents originally paid. In the year 1846 we had 12 P. O.'s in this county, where we now have over 130.

S. M. Sanford (father of our County Treasurer) was Barrie's first postmaster, and was succeeded by John McWatt. As HE may be met any day on our streets, it would be well worth while to get his reminiscences.

There is no doubt that the construction of the N.R.R. was of great benefit to our county, costly though it was in the first instance.

An authoritative statement was once given, shewing that

while the average assessed value of land in 9 townships through which the road passed, was only 1 pound 10s. (\$6.00) before its construction, yet in 1856, this value had risen to 9 pounds (\$36.00), of which increase, 6 pounds was due to the railroad and 1 pound 10s. to other causes.

This may or may not be a correct estimate, because it must be borne in mind that during some of the years previous to this (in the beginning of the 'forties") land was assessed either as ARABLE OR MEADOW, OR AS UNCULTIVATED. If the former, the arbitrary value (for assessment) was 1 pound, or \$4 an acre; if uncultivated, only 4s., or 80 cts.

As, however, the value before the N.R.R. was constructed is given as 1 pound 10s. (that is an increase of 50%), either the fixed value was raised, or the assessor was left at liberty to value as he thought fit. I never took the trouble to look into the matter or to verify the correctness of the above statement.

At the same time that a fixed value for assessment of land was established, houses were assessed according to the number of storeys that composed them, and the number of fire places they contained. While horses (3 yrs. old and upwards) were assigned a value of 8 pounds; oxen, 4 years old and upwards, 4 pounds each; milch cow, 1 pound each, and so on.

In summer we had, as I have said, the steamers to travel by, to Bradford and Orillia—and as to steamers on lake Simcoe, I find the following mem.:—

The first steamer on the lake was the SIR JOHN COLBORNE built in 1833, which, however, drew too much water to pass through the 'Narrows' into Lake Couchiching.

In 1834, the PETER ROBINSON was built. Subsequently she was hauled out and repaired, and in 1839 was launched again under the name of the SIMCOE.

My first trip in her was from the Holland Land ng in October, 1842, when Capt. Laughton (father of Mrs. Dr. Morton) commanded her, with Hugh McKay as mate,—the oldest sailor on the lake, and from whom I derived some of my material on this head. He informed me, among other things, that in 1838 there was a horse-boat on the lake, but she was found not to answer.

In 1845 the BEAVER took the place of the SIMCOE. On the

27th of April, 1853, the MORNING commenced running from Barrie. On 30th June, 1855, the beautiful steamer J. C. MORRISON made her trial trip between Bell Ewart and Orillia, (by which route passengers for Orillia were carried in summer), but did not make her first trip to Barrie till August 6th. Almost to a day, two years afterwards (on August 4th), she was burned to the water's edge at her dock here.

On the 12th of July, 1861, the EMILY MAY began running, and continued till the completion of the railway to Orillia, when, her occupation being gone, she was soon after left to the operation of the dry-rot at Bell Ewart.

The IDA BURTON was the last passenger boat that plied on the lake between Barrie and Orillia, beginning in the latter part of the "sixties" and continuing till "elbowed out" by the railway.

A word as to the Press. I well remember when Mr. Thomas Fox Davies, now one of the staff of the EXAMINER (where he is as apt as ever at setting up), brought out the Barrie MAGNET, the first paper published here; as I used often to watch the type-setting in his office, then something new to me. I have now before me the first number. Though dated Aug. 6th, 1847, it was not issued (as itself states) till Aug. 13th. Though I have a number dated 7th January, 1847, I have reason to believe this was due to the typo forgetting to change the year as well as the month and day.

Since then we have had the NORTHERN ADVANCE, still in existence, and fresh and vigorous after some 40 years of life; next the HERALD, which was started in 1852 by Mr. J. W. Young, and afterward continued by the Hon. James Patton. It, as well as its successor, the SPIRIT OF THE AGE, have long passed out of sight.

About the year 1864 the EXAMINER appeared on the scene, and is still "to the fore" under the management of our worthy secretary, Mr. Andrew F. Hunter.

About 1868 the GAZETTE was started by Messrs. Richardson & Mann, (though now published by Mr. N. King) and has since made a worthy third to our other two Barrie "weeklies." An effort was made at one time to issue it as a "daily," but failed as might be expected, in a place where we have half a dozen Toronto dailies distributed before noon every day.

I must not omit to mention that the LAW JOURNAL, the foremost legal paper in this Province, now printed and published in Toronto, made its DEBUT in Barrie in the year 1855, edited by

James Patton "and others,"—the chief "other" being, it was well known, Senator (then Judge) Gowan, whose able articles, chiefly in elucidation and promotion of the D. C. System, brought the paper up to the standard which it has since enjoyed. The 2nd volume was continued in Barrie under the editorship of W. D. Ardagh, now Judge at Winnipeg. The 3rd vol., however, was begun after the removal to Toronto, where Mr. Ardagh associated with him, as joint editor, Robert A. Harrison, afterwards Chief Justice. Its present editor, there, is Mr. Henry O'Brien, an old Simcoe boy.

We have also newspapers published in almost every village as well as town in our county, so that it is no wonder that Simcoe stands as one of the foremost in freedom from crime; for vice and ignorance ever retreat before the advancement of the Press, with its civilizing and enlightening tendencies.

Being an old Barrie Grammar School boy, it is only fitting that I should say a few words about it. It was established in 1843, (when DISTRICT school was its title), and by the Act setting apart the District an annual grant of 100 pounds was made towards its support. Frederick Gore was its first head master, under whose care I was placed in the following year. The school was then held in the most easterly room of the Court house on the ground floor—that now occupied by Colonel Banting, the County Clerk. Mr. Gore lived at that time in a long, low white house somewhere between Major Roger's residence and Mary street. The cellar of the house next the Simcoe brewery, now owned by Mr. Geo. Cook, was being then dug by John Pearson, a carpenter, who built the house by degrees—and into it, when completed, Mr. Gore moved with his boarders. This was the second brick house in the town at that time, the other being a PART of the house now owned and occupied by Mr. Harper. These two houses, with a small shanty in which a family named Perry lived, (between them and the town) and another further north in the, then, bush, occupied by Timothy Haggart, were the only houses between that where Mr. Johnson, the coal merchant, lives, and the township of Innisfil, with the exception of two or three 'block' or "pepper box" ones standing where Allandale now is but unoccupied as early as 1844.

In the year 1849 the new Grammar school (as its title then was) on Blake st., in the rear of the present Collegiate Institute, was completed, and into it the school moved after the midsummer vacation, while Mr. Gore, with his boarders, leaving Mary st., took up their quarters in the new house he had built close by—that now occupied by the widow of the late Sheriff Smith.

The second masters of the school, while I was there, were, in succession, Robert F. Hutchins, P. A. Smith, John Bowker, and Robert C. Stuart.

Among the pupils in my time were Geo. Moberly, (now of Collingwood, Barrister); Walter, his brother, now a Civil Engineer in Manitoba; Harry, another brother, a factor in the Hudson's Bay Company; Samuel Lane, late Judge of Grey; John Creasor, his successor, in that position; Mr. Justice Osler, B. B. Osler, Q. C.; Judge Dean, of Lindsay, and W. H. Carney, now Sheriff of Algoma, whose father then kept the "Plough Inn," on Dunlop st.

As to the Head Masters of the school, I think that Mr. Gore was succeeded by the late Rev. W. F. Checkly, and he by the Rev. Mr. Johnson. Mr. Spotton then took charge, and during his long incumbency the school attained a very high degree of efficiency and was raised to the rank of a Collegiate Institute. Upon Mr. Spotton's promotion (I may call it) to a similar position in Toronto, the present Principal, Mr. J. M. Hunter, took charge, and under his management everything in connection with the Institute continues to advance and prosper.

Fires.

It used to be said that Barrie was one of the BEST BURNT towns in Canada. Certainly we had some very extensive fires, though SOME good has come of them, as a better class of house, generally brick, succeeded the old ones.

On the 24th June, 1871, the GLEBE block, as it was then called—the block south of Dunlop street and west of the post office, was completely "wiped out."

On the 31st of January, 1873, 'Boys' brick block," that south of Dunlop and west of Market (or Mulcaster) street, was pretty well destroyed.

On February 8th of the same year, Morrow's block, to the west of the Engine House, and the Engine House itself, went up in smoke and ashes

On the 18th of June, the north side of Dunlop street, from Owen street westward, was the scene of one of our worst fires.

On the 27th July, 1876, the Wellington Hotel block, and on the 18th of April, 1880, Crompton's block (north of Dunlop and west of Owen), were destroyed.

In 1878 two memorable events took place. On the 12th of

August the great Hanlan regatta came off on our lovely Bay—oarsmen from all parts of the continent making a vain effort to strip Hanlan of his laurels. While on the 18th of December, that year, our town was lighted with gas for the first time.

Having made mention of FIRES, I would place on record my recollection of two earthquakes—one on the 20th of October, 1870, in the day time, which caused all the house bells to ring, &c., and another at 1 o'clock on the morning of the 21st of May, 1871, when the violent shaking of the bed I was sleeping in, and the rattling of the shutters and windows awoke me, leaving me almost paralysed, so curious is the effect of a disturbance of TERRA FIRMA. I had experienced a shock some years previously, when living on the banks of the St. Lawrence, which caused the horse I was driving to stop suddenly, and tremble all over.

I find I am getting too prolix, so I will close with one or two remarks on that interesting subject, the weather. Among many recorded items I find the following:

Feb. 6th, 1855—Thermometer shewed AT LEAST—40°, as the mercury was frozen. I saw 55° below zero given in some newspapers, but " 'twas doubted by some."

1859—June 5. Snow this morning.

1862.—July 6.—Mercury said to be at 106° in the shade.

1876.—August 20. Frost to-night.

1877.—June 22. Frost at night.

1878.—July 17. Mercury over 100°.

1879.—April 11. Sleighs out to-day.

1881.—Christmas Day. Dined with all windows open.

1881.—Dec. 28. Slept with all windows open.

1881.—September 5th. A wonderfully dark, hot day. Gas at 5 p. m. hardly giving any light.

1885.—April 13. Good sleighing on some of our streets.

In 1870 the snow was so deep in March, that from the 15th to the 19th, and again from the 26th to the 29th, the trains were completely blocked, leaving us for days together without any mails from Toronto.

The earliest date for the complete closing of the bay by ice that I have recorded is Dec. 1st, 1875—the latest Jan. 18th, 1889.

The earliest OPENING that I find was on the last day of March, 1878, and the latest May 9th, 1874. I may say, however, that I was informed by the late David Soules, that he remembered Sir John Franklin and his party coming up the bay in boats on the 15th of March, on one of his journeys to the N. W. via Penetanguishene—in 1825, if I mistake not.

But, gentlemen, I find that I must be exceeding my limits, so here I close; leaving you to pick out any wheat you may find in so much chaff, and thanking you for the patient hearing you have given me.



AN INTERESTING DOCUMENT.

(Orillia Township.)

An interesting document was unearthed by Mr. J. C. Rose, Township Clerk, in connection with the recent case against the Grand Trunk Railway for damages for killing cattle. The lawyers for the plaintiff, Messrs. McCosh & Thompson, applied to Mr. Rose for a copy of the Township by-law permitting cattle to run at large. After some search he unearthed the original, which was contained in the record of the municipal proceedings for the year 1834. This ancient document is an unbound pamphlet of twelve manuscript pages, tied together with thread, and in a good state of preservation. Within this reasonable compass is contained the minutes of all municipal meetings for the years 1834, 1835 and 1836, the business then evidently not requiring very frequent gatherings or protracted sessions. This is the earliest of the records of the Township that Mr. Rose has been able to find. Moreover, internal evidence seems to indicate that the proceedings which it records were the earliest held in a regular way and under authority.

It is noticeable, in view of recent disputes, that the "book" is headed 'Townships of North and South Orillia.' It opens with the minutes of a Town Meeting held January 6th, 1834, at the Tavern, Newtown," that being the name by which the hamlet which has since grown into Orillia was first known. Mr. John O'Connor, Constable, was in the chair. The following officers were appointed for the year, and were therefore the first to hold office in the Township: Wardens, Dr. Darling and Mr. J. H. S. Drinkwater (father of Mr. R. J. S. and Captain Drinkwater); Assessors, Mr. W. Mulock (an uncle of the present Postmaster-General and of Mr. S. S. Robinson, Orillia) and Mr. James Darling; Collector, Mr. Gerald Alley; Pound-keeper, Mr. John Lobb; Town Clerk, Mr. C. J. Rowe; Pathmasters, Mr. T. Atkinson, Lieut. Kersopp, Mr. J. Sanson, Mr. W. Wood, Chief Yellow Head and Chief Big Shilling. The election of the last two is a reminder that at that time, Orillia had more red than white inhabitants. The only other business that appears to have been transacted was the enactment of the by-laws which were produced in

court the other day, and which so far as the Township records go, have never been repealed, though amended somewhat in the two succeeding years. The by-laws read "That all horned cattle and horses as well as swine over three months old, shall be free foresters; that post and rail fences shall be five and a-half and all others six feet high; for two feet and a-half from the ground the rails shall not exceed four inches apart; the next two feet and a-half they shall not exceed eight inches apart." It is further recorded that the Town Clerk had been making enquiries as to what bonds should be required from the Collector, and had been advised by Mr. Hepburn, the Deputy Clerk of the Peace, that as there would be no taxes to collect that year there would be no need for a bond. This is one of the circumstances that incline us to believe that these are the minutes of the first "Town Meeting" held in Orillia, together with the fact that the settlement of this district did not begin till 1832, and as meetings were few, if there had been any previous ones they would have been recorded in this book.

The next Town Meeting recorded was held in the same tavern in Newtown, a year afterwards, on January 5th, 1835. On this occasion Mr. Gerald Alley was in the chair. Chief Yellow Head, who seems to have been a man of influence and importance in the little community, and Dr. Powers were elected Wardens. The Assessors appointed were Mr. A. Gordon and Mr. J. J. Roe (then and for years after the leading merchant of the place); Collector, Mr. Hume, (who then owned five hundred acres of land at Marchmont and named that place after his family's estates in Ireland); Pathmasters, Mr. Atkinson, Mr. J. Kersopp, Mr. J. Lobb, Mr. Wright, Smith Shilling and Peter Canise (we spell the names as is done by the "Town Clerk"); Fence Viewers, Mr. J. Darling, Mr. Jacob Gill, Mr. Sanson, Mr. Sibbald, Timothy Shilling, and Peter Ingersoll; Poundkeeper, Mr. M. Bowers; Town Clerk, Mr. C. J. Rowe. The by-laws passed the previous year were amended to except bulls of two years and over, rams and goats, which animals, presumably, had been making themselves obnoxious.

Another year went round, apparently, before the next meeting was held, in Mr. Lawrence's tavern, "Orillia" (note the change in name) on January 4th, 1836. Mr. C. J. Rowe in the chair. The "Town Fathers" are now known as "Commissioners," and there are three of them, Mr. J. Sanson, Mr. G. Alley and Mr. J. H. S. Drinkwater. Mr. C. J. Rowe is again appointed Town Clerk. There is only one Assessor instead of two, and he is Mr. J. Gill. The Collector is Dr. Robertson; the Poundkeepers, Mr.

H. Fraser and Mr. R. Bailey. The duties of Pathmasters and Fence Viewers have been amalgamated under the head of Overseers of Highways, who are Mr. T. Goulding, Mr. H. Fraser, Mr. J. Darling, Mr. W. Wood, Mr. Harvey, Mr. J. J. Roe, Mr. Gordon, Chief Yellowhead, and Smith Shilling. (We repeat the 'Mr.' in each case because the Clerk has carefully used it.) The age up to which bulls might run at large is extended to three years, and the fine for allowing them liberty over that age is doubled and made ten shillings. It is further provided that swine shall not be 'free foresters' until they weigh forty pounds. It was resolved "that a petition signed by the Commissioners on behalf of the Township shall be forwarded to the members for the County of Simcoe that they may present it to the Honourable the House of Assembly, praying for a sum of money to repair the Coldwater Road, the amount to be decided by competent judges." It was afterwards decided to ask for 250 or 300 pounds.

By this time the municipal affairs of the growing hamlet appear to have required more supervision from the authorities, and during 1836 the Commissioners held six meetings. The business was chiefly of a routine character. One meeting was devoted to drawing up a list of pound fees and feed of animals; another to the allotment of statute labour. Some of the items are interesting because they contain the names of well-known pioneers. For instance, at a meeting on July 9, 1836, Dr. Robinson was appointed an Overseer of Highways, and directed to superintend the making of the road to join town line between North and South Orillia from Lake Shore. At the same meeting Joseph Calverley's statute labour was transferred to the Oro road. Peter Lamb, H. Baskerville, L. Wilson, and—Secord were summoned to appear at the same meeting to discuss the placing of their statute. Another familiar name is that of J. Wright, who was instructed to do his labour "upon the Town Line from lot 3 to Coldwater Road." We note the Commissioners seem to have had the power to impose fines. Thus H. Fraser was fined twenty shillings for having neglected his duties as Overseer of Highways, and Captain St. John fifteen shillings for failing to perform his statute labour. In fact this seems to have been the chief source of revenue, as we learn from the Town Clerk's statement of "all money received and expended by order of the Commissioners between the 1st of January and the 31st of December, 1836." The receipts, less than \$9, now seem ridiculously small; but they appear to have been ample, as the expenditure amounted to less than half that sum. The receipts were made up of "fines levied by magistrates at the Court, Cold-

water Road, 15 shillings; fines levied by Commissioners, 1 pound; total, 1 pound 15s. Expenditure, for one quire of paper, 1s. 3d.; expended on Coldwater Road, under the direction of Mr. Roe, by order of the Township Commissioners, 15s.; total, 16s. 3d. Balance on hand, 18s. 9d." Such were the monetary transactions recorded by the first Treasurer's statement in the Township of Orillia. We may add that the Collector and Clerk gave bonds for 50 pound each, for the due performance of their duties, though they do not appear to have received any salary from the Commissioners.

There is no record of any "Town Meeting" in 1837. The same Commissioners seem to have continued in office, for they met on the third Saturday in January of that year, and having transacted their business adjourned to the first Saturday in April. The last entry in the first minute book reads "For continuation see new book." The new book, however, has not yet turned up. On the back page of the book, some scribe has been scribbling lines which suggested the headings for an advertisement, although the PACKET was not in existence in those days. They are "Imported Goods—New Cheap Store—New Cheap Store—J. Currie." We are further informed that John Currie left Curach, parish of Beumere, Island of Islay, year 1824. Orillia "Packet", March 30, 1899.

