

Further Recollections Old Times In Bradford

B. T. A. PRATT

On Wednesday last I had a very unexpected caller in the person of Sam McKuen, a Witness subscriber who lives near Stouffville. Sam has worked in Bradford and West Gwillimbury and knows a number of the people there and so was interested in my letters about old times in and about Bradford although he did not know me nor did I know him. He runs a machine for crushing gravel and stone and on Wednesday morning something went wrong with the machine and he had the day off so he said to his wife—who was Clara Miller of West Gwillimbury—I think I'll go to Islington and see that Mr. Pratt who writes those letters in The Witness. So along he came, arriving here at noon, and we had a very interesting talk for a couple of hours about a lot of you folks up there. Among those about whom we talked was Edwin Kneeshaw, who had been in the General Hospital and who recently celebrated his golden wedding anniversary.

It does not seem that long ago since Edwin and Clara Steele decided to travel life's pathway together and I think that pathway has been a very pleasant one.

And, by the way, what would that north country do without the Kneeshaws? They seem to be in every good work that goes on up there: the Women's Institute and all the church activities. You see I read the country correspondence in The Witness and so am familiar with what goes on up there. There seem to be a lot of Kneeshaws up there and blessed indeed is the community that has that class of citizen—helpers in all good works. The original Kneeshaws whom I remember were William, at Coulson's Corner; Matt, at Steele's Corner; George at Gilford, and Jonathan who, in the 90's, sought the more salubrious climate of Bradford and bought the Allen Armstrong farm just southwest of the town where Wilbert, the youngest son, still lives his happy (?) bachelor life. I think Stetham was Matt Kneeshaw's son and I am not sure of the name of the father of W. J. and Edwin, and of Bob, who was at high school with me. I think he died a comparatively young man. I believe the Kneeshaws are of Yorkshire, England, stock—well, I suppose everyone can't be Irish!

Fine people though the Steele's Corner and Coulson's Corner people

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FURTHER RECOLLECTIONS OF OLD TIMES IN BRADFORD

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are they are evidently not wanted in the township council or school board. To get in there it seems as though you must be from the neighbourhood of Bond Head. They probably have a good council and a good school board but it does seem strange that representatives of such old and respected residents of the township as the Fennells, the Kneeshaws and the Hamblys didn't have a "look-in" in the recent election.

Well, now that I am up at Steele's Corner I may as well stay there for a while. In days gone by Billy (W. J.) Steele's blacksmith stood on the northwest corner and his home was closed by. My visitor, Sam, told me that Mrs. Steele lives in the old home, and is in very good health. Across the road from Ed. Kneeshaw's farm was the Tindall farm. Of the Tindall family George attended Bradford high school and in 1885 was a teacher-in-training or Modellite in Bradford Model school where one of his fellow-modellites was Mr. T. W. W. Evans. George taught in Lefroy public school and afterwards decided to enter the Methodist ministry. After becoming a minister he went to Minnesota where all of his ministerial life was spent. I think he was always a subscriber to The Witness when he was in the United States. He passed away a few years ago. George's brother, William, was living in Lefroy in 1900, the year I taught in the school there, and among my pupils there were his two daughters, Lottie and Verna, then aged 14 and 12. The family moved to New Lisheard and I have never heard anything about them since. Reuben Tindall, the third son, I think farmed for a time and then moved to Bradford where he built a nice home on the northeast corner of John and Barrie streets on the site of the James Lawrence & Son carriage shop. I think Reuben was the Massey-Harris implement agent. Reuben had a daughter who taught at one time in Bradford public school. Reuben, his wife, and daughter, I believe, all passed away. The two girls in the family became Mrs. Paul West and Mrs. Jack Metcalfe respectively. I remember the husbands quite well. Paul West was a member of the township council at one time and was a well-known and popular man in the township. Jack

Metcalfe bought the J. A. Woods farm where his son, Ivan, now lives, but ran into a lot of ill health. Mrs. West's son, Lorne, was a member of the provincial police, but I do not think he is now. Mrs. West will probably be reading this so you will be pleased to know that she is living now with her daughter, Mrs. Coburn, at Newton Robinson. I wonder if Mrs. West and Mrs. Metcalfe remember that they had the honour (!) of entertaining me one night in their Steele's Corner home? I went up to apply for the position of teacher in No. 14 school and as Mr. Tindall was a trustee I went to see him. The trustees had their meeting that night while I waited in the home. I did not get the position but I stayed the night at Mr. Tindall's very kind invitation. They engaged a teacher, a Mr. Agnew, who had some trouble later with Inspector McKee and was up in court in Bradford as some of you may remember.

Well, you northern folks, you will have to thank—or blame—Mr. Sam McKuen, of near Stouffville—for all this. I hope he got home all right.

Sam, by the way, isn't the only visitor that my old time recollections have brought me. I have had very welcome visitors from Nelson, B.C.; Mansfield, Ohio; and from Toronto, and letters from British Columbia, Manitoba, Providence, R.I., Eastborne, Eng., Whitby, Sarnia, Toronto, Bradford, from Overseas, etc. So The Witness gets around, doesn't it!

One nice summer day away back in 1881 I was sitting on the sidewalk at the Presbyterian Church corner when a lady came galloping past on horseback, going west on John St. She was sitting sidesaddle as ladies did in those days—and still should in my humble opinion. That was the first time I saw Mrs. Dr. Stevenson—nearly seventy-one years ago, and I read in last week's Witness that this very estimable lady had a birthday. She isn't doing any galloping now but I sincerely hope she will have many a happy birthday in the days to come.

I am sorry to see the Hipwell name disappear from the Bond Head business world. Bradford's western suburb will not seem the same without the Hipwell name on the store sign.