

Some Further Recollections Of Old Times In Bradford

(By T. A. Pratt, Islington)

Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgotten—so wrote Robert Burns. Well, if auld acquaintance should be forgotten this, I think, would be a sad, lonesome world. And auld acquaintance, I think, should mean auld streets and auld buildings as well as auld people. I know if I went up to Bradford now I would miss those old stores that were burned down last Ash Wednesday. And the auld acquaintance that used to be in them! In order—Billy Hockridge, Jim Mills, butchers; Stevenson Bros., hardware; Mrs. John McGee, dressmaking and millinery; R. F. Green and Son, grocers; Robt. Spence, tailoring; W. H. Strong, boots and shoes and making and repairing same, employees—Geo. White, manager after Mr. Strong's death in the early '80's, Alex. Sutherland lived in cottage across from Presbyterian church—Wm. Spence, later managers Mrs. Strong and Walter Strong; in the big stores—John Boddy, Benj. Barnard, Sam Drifill, Jack Bemrose, Paul Chapelle, Moore Bros., and Jim Bemrose; these big stores had back doors opening on hotel yard—and the hotel, now Bank of Commerce. The first hotel keeper that I remember there was Billy Innis, quite a character. I don't recall ever seeing Billy wearing a hat or coat—or speaking to a woman! His housekeeper was his sister, Mrs. Anderson. He carried on his business well and people liked him but the hotel was his only interest in life—till, quite unexpectedly, he acquired a fine heavy weight stallion which he named Lochnagar. I used to meet him sometimes when I would be bringing Wallace's cows home in the early morning from pasture in the field, leading the big horse out for exercise—long, long ago. Later he got a second big stallion, a bay one, that he named Defiance. So, I presume, Billy, coat or no coat, was now quite happy with his two big stallions. Poor William would be quite out of his element these days, wouldn't he, with machinery replacing the horses? I haven't been on a farm for, perhaps, sixty years and how farm life has changed! In those days of long ago the average hundred acre farm had five horses—two teams to do the heavy ploughing and hauling and one of lighter weight for the buggy and the hayrake. We boys on the hill used to go potato-picking in the fall.

The Jim Rose farm—now Ken Wood's—was a popular one for us. We used to go across the fields before breakfast, have the morning meal there and start the potato job. Jim in those days was a bachelor and he had an Irish woman as housekeeper and I can still hear her as she came to the back door and called out—"The breakfast's ready and the 'tays' poured out"—and we would 'pour' in—the auld long ago! Jim Rose later married a sister of Mrs. Kilkenny, Frank's mother. If I should ever wander to that door again might I still get a cup of 'tay'. I wonder. I would really like to stray that way again but I'm afraid too many years have passed since I came into this world for that pleasure to come to pass. In those days of auld lang syne practically every farm had a bush or woods of several acres. Ivan Metcalfe's two hundred acre farm had the largest bush of all as it extended from one side of the farm to the other and as it contained lots of hard maple trees it produced a lot of sap leading to maple syrup and maple sugar. In those far-off days this big farm extended—as I presume it still does—from the Bond Head road to the first road on the north side—concession 9? In those days this big farm belonged to John (better known as Johnny) Wood, brother of Robt., Clarence's father, and Clarence will probably remember him. I remember spending a day once pulling mustard in that big front field. There were three or four of us but I remember just one—Bob McKinstry. And I suppose I remember Bob because in the evening just before we left for home he discovered that he had lost two cents—and the tears came to his eyes. I had seen Bob cry once before. A boy named Sam (Henry) Low had

SOME FURTHER RECOLLECTIONS OF OLD TIMES IN BRADFORD

(Continued from page 1)

came from a machine about one hundred feet outside the barn. This 'machine' had a name but I can't think of it at the moment but there were five poles running out from it and a team of horses hitched to each. There was a platform in the middle on which a man stood with a long-leashed whip and it was his job to keep the horses going. Of course later the horses were replaced by a steam engine. All of this was, of course, in the days of Auld Lang Syne. The farm where I used to see all this farm work most frequently was a thirty-four acre strip running north from the Bond Head road just west—again—from Toronto street and if I read the Witness correctly there is now a street running through it on which Bruce Collings and Mr. Devlin and some others live. In my long-ago boyhood days this strip of land was worked by Bruce's grandfather, Bob Collings, and his great grandfather, Wm. Collings, and there was a barn about two hundred yards from where Frederick street meets this land. There was a gate there and this was the main entrance. This barn was later moved farther north. This threshing machine outfit was owned by Jim Bruce and the boss of the horses was Bob Sutherland. Well, Bruce, you can at any time look out and see where your grandfather and great grandfather plowed and harrowed, planted, reaped, and threshed. I don't recall ever seeing Dan on that land.

Well, to come back to more recent times, although it does give one pleasure to look back on those days of long, long ago in the fargone '70's and '80's. I just got last week's Witness today and I see by it that Ivan Metcalfe has at least three sons. If there is still any mustard in that field, well, three young men could make it scarce.

As I haven't written for some time there are several items that have appeared in The Witness about which I would like to say something. It gave me quite a shock to read in the Toronto paper of the unexpected death of Mr. J. C. Wood, principal of the High School, at the age of only fifty years. I had met Mr. Wood and I thought him a very fine man and a very fit man for his position. I had often noticed in the paper that he had taken a prominent part in the affairs of the community. Such a man will surely be sorely missed in the old town. I had mentioned in one of my recent letters that he had been principal for a longer period than any of his predecessors.

Reading about Mrs. Mazel McGee and her return home reminded me of a little incident in her school life under my care. I was called out of the room one day by Mr. Scarrow, the principal, and when I re-entered the room a plumpish ten-year-old young lady was sitting in the wastepaper basket. I was sorry to read that it took Mazel McGee so much longer to get out of that convalescent hospital than it took Mazel McKinstry to get out of that wastepaper basket. I'm very sorry, Mazel, that you have been unwell for so long.

It pleased me very much to read what The Witness' Mt. Pleasant correspondent said in the Jan. 21 issue about our British flag and our national anthem, "God Save the Queen," and the editress said about the same thing. Of course we are proud of both and will keep them. The author of the anthem was Henry Carey and he wrote it in 1742.