

## THE ENNOTVILLE GARDEN PARTY

WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL, THE BIG EVENT OF MY SUMMER WAS THE ENNOTVILLE GARDEN PARTY. IT WAS HELD ANNUALLY TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE LIBRARY.

MR. DAVE BEATTIE IN HIS BOOK ON NICHOL TOWNSHIP TELLS OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO ITS BUILDING. THE EARLY SETTLERS BROUGHT A FEW BOOKS WITH THEM AND PASSED THEM AROUND. LATER THEY WERE KEPT AT ONE HOUSE BUT THAT DIDN'T SUIT ALL. SOME WERE FARTHER AWAY THAN OTHERS AND ONE MAN FELL INTO A WET DITCH AND THE BOOKS HE WAS CARRYING WERE DESTROYED. THEY DECIDED TO RAISE FUNDS FOR A BUILDING. JOHN CUNNINGHAM OF THE 7TH CONCESSION AND JOHN MUTRIE OF THE 8TH CONCESSION WERE COMMISSIONED TO CANVAS THEIR RESPECTIVE CONCESSIONS FOR FUNDS AND WHOEVER RAISED THE MOST MONEY COULD CHOOSE THE SITE. WHEN THE MONEY WAS LAID ON THE TABLE, JOHN CUNNINGHAM HAD THE MOST BY FIVE POUNDS SO HE CHOSE NEAR ENNOTVILLE ON CONCESSION SIX. IT WAS COMPLETED ABOUT 1850. EVER SINCE, THE COMMUNITY HAS SUPPORTED THE LIBRARY IN MANY WAYS AND BENEFITED GREATLY FROM IT.

THE GARDEN PARTY WAS HELD AT THE FARM OF MR. AND MRS. HUGH COOK. AS WAS THE CUSTOM IN THOSE DAYS, FARM BUILDINGS WERE BUILT ON A SUNNY SLOPE EVEN IF IT WAS FAR FROM THE ROAD AND A CENTRAL LOCATION MEANT LESS DISTANCE TO TEAM THE CROPS TO THE BARN. THE COOK BUILDINGS WERE WAY WAY BACK AS THE FRONT OF THE FARM WAS WET AND SWAMPY. YEARS LATER THEY BUILT NEW BUILDINGS ABOUT HALFWAY TO THE ROAD AND THE OLD STONE HOUSE WITH ITS LARGE ORCHARD WAS AN IDEAL PLACE TO HOLD THE GARDEN PARTY.

WE ARRIVED IN THE LATE AFTERNOON AND TIED OUR HORSE TO THE RAIL FENCE ALONG ONE SIDE OF THE ORCHARD. THE GROWN-UPS SPENT A PLEASANT TIME TALKING WITH NEIGHBOURS AND FRIENDS. WITH FEW TELEPHONES IN THOSE DAYS THERE WAS ALWAYS MUCH TO TALK ABOUT. THE CHILDREN PLAYED IN THE ORCHARD AND ENJOYED THE SWINGS PUT UP FOR THEM. A TALL CAN OF ICE CREAM PACKED IN ICE ARRIVED AND WAS SOLD FOR 5¢ A CONE. ONE LITTLE GIRL FROM A LARGE FAMILY IN THE VILLAGE DIDN'T HAVE 5¢ SO MY MOTHER BOUGHT HER ONE. IT WAS HER FIRST TASTE OF ICE CREAM. ABOUT FIVE O'CLOCK THE POT LUCK SUPPER WAS SPREAD ON THE LONG TABLES AND THE TEA WAS READY. A LARGE IRON KETTLE (LIKELY USED TO

MAKE



MAKE MAPLE SYRUP IN THE SPRING) WAS CHAINED TO A STOUT TREE LIMB HIGH ENOUGH TO BUILD A GOOD FIRE UNDERNEATH. ~~WHEN~~ THE WATER BOILED MISS SCOTT MADE THE TEA IN THE KETTLE AS SHE HAD DONE FOR MANY YEARS. IT WAS DIPPED BY A LONG HANDLED DIPPER INTO LARGE TEA POTS AND SERVED PIPING HOT.

AFTER THE SUPPER CAME THE PROGRAM. A PLATFORM HAD BEEN ERECTED ALONG THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE BELOW THE TWO UPSTAIR WINDOWS (NOW JUST HOLES IN THE WALL) BUT HANDY TO USE THE UPSTAIRS AS DRESSING ROOMS. LANTERNS LIGHTED ALL. THE ENTERTAINERS FROM GUELPH COLORED THEIR FACES AND SANG MANY CATCHY SONGS AS WELL AS TELLING JOKES ON NEIGHBOURING FARMERS. ONE HAD DIFFICULTY EXPLAINING TO THE OTHER THE MEANING OF "SUFFICIENT". HE TOLD OF BEING AT A THRESHING WHERE THE DESSERT WAS PRUNES. MR. LEN NESBIT, A NEARBY FARMER, TOOK FIRST AND SECOND HELPINGS BUT THE THIRD TIME SAID "NO THANK YOU, I'VE HAD SUFFICIENT". WHEN ASKED IF HE NOW KNEW THE MEANING OF THE WORD, HE REPLIED, "LEONARD NESBIT'S FULL OF PRUNES".

WHEN IT CAME TIME TO GO HOME, MY FATHER WAITED A WHILE TO LET THE ENTERTAINERS CARS AND A FEW OTHERS GET AWAY FIRST. SOMETIMES ONE WOULD BE STILL AROUND AND COME FOLLOWING US OUT THE LONG NARROW LANE. WHAT AN EXCITING RIDE WE HAD. OUR HORSE WAS TERRIFIED OF THE NOISY LIGHTS BEHIND HER BUT THERE WAS NO ESCAPE - A BUGGY AHEAD AND A DEEP DITCH ON EITHER SIDE.

MEMORIES LINGERED AROUND OUR HOME FOR SOMETIME AS MY FATHER SANG BITS AND PIECES OF THE SONGS. ONE ABOUT A MUSTARD PLASTER ENDED

"MY WIFE SHE SAYS TO TAKE A BATH  
BUT IF THATS THE ONLY WAY  
THAT PLASTER IS GOING TO STAY  
RIGHT THERE TILL NEXT JULY"

AND ONE ABOUT THE FORD CAR

"IT RUNS OVER GLASS AND IT RUNS OVER NAILS  
IT RUNS OVER PIGS AND PUPPY DOGS TAILS.  
IF YOU RUN OUT OF DOPE, JUST FILL IT UP WITH SOAP  
AND THE LITTLE FORD WILL RAMBLE RIGHT ALONG.

*Submitted by Nellie Stewart  
Morrison.*

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