

History of Bowmanville Valley Part II



The Canadian Pacific Railway Trestle over Vanstone's Pond was considered quite an engineering feat in its day. This photo shows it just after completion around 1912. To the extreme right a water tower, used to provide water for the steam locomotives, can be glimpsed.

by Charles Taws

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The conclusion to Bowmanville Creek and its very early history.

In the last edition of the Clarington Promoter I presented you with some of the very early history about our Bowmanville Valley starting with the early days of Bowmanville. I touched on the Highway # 2 bridge and some of the early Industries which flourished on the electrical power generated from the Bowmanville Creek. If you missed reading that story - please feel free to visit www.ClaringtonPromoter.ca to download and read Bowmanville Valley Part I. Today we continue.....

Trains Across the Valley

Beginning in the middle of the 19th Century all Canada was gripped by railway fever! No self respecting community that planned to grow and prosper could do without a railway. Consequently some communities, like Bowmanville, ended up with too many rail lines and not enough traffic.

The first line to come through Clarington was the Grand Trunk in 1856. Today it is the Canadian National Railway and the original track bed was located near where it is today near Highway 401. The station is gone today, but the old railway hotel, "The Arlington", can still be seen as you take the east-bound on ramp at Liberty Street (you actually see the back of the building. The station was just to the

west of this structure).

Railway fever arose again and the next three lines all came to town more or less at the same time around 1910-1914. They were the Canadian Pacific, the Toronto Eastern Electric Railway and the Canadian Northern (Ontario) Railway. The last line mentioned came through north of Bowmanville and a bridge was built at Stephen's Mill near Bethesda. Although gone today the cement bases can still be seen today if you know where to look. It was also at this time that the Goodyear spur line on the Grand Trunk that ran along Hunt Street was constructed.

The Canadian Pacific had an earlier line pass through Clarington but it was up north near Burketon. This new line was known as the Lakeshore Line and unlike

the Grand Trunk its Bowmanville station would be very near the downtown. The construction of the cement trestle through the valley, and Vanstone's pond caused a lot of excitement and was considered to be quite an engineering feat. Sadly, passenger traffic ceased on this line in 1968 and the station near Scugog and Wellington Streets was torn down.

The Toronto Eastern Electric Railway was a proposed commuter train that promised hourly service to Toronto! They too built a trestle across the valley but this one was made of wood. Their tracks went down Wellington Street and stopped at Liberty. This railway went

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After a flood in 1890 five local bridges were washed out or damaged. The Highway # 2 bridge was the busiest and needed to be replaced as quickly as possible. The old bridge had been built of stone and wood. A prefabricated steel bridge was purchased to replace it. This bridge was used from 1890 until 1973.

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bankrupt before it opened but a gas-powered official's car did run on the line once.

World War One in the Valley

July and August of 1916 were busy times in the valley. In an area known as "The Flats" (south of the Vanstone Mill and at the foot of Temperance Street) a temporary military camp was set up. It was for the 235th Battalion, the second to search this area for recruits (the first was the 136th).

Bowmanville historian, David Morrison Sr. wrote in his regular Orono News column on August 3rd 1916:

"The 235th Batt. Is now under canvas in the flats below the English church and it is some place for such a gathering, lots of shade, plenty of water, and if there is any breeze blowing it will find its way down that valley to the camp ground. A canteen on the ground will sell you anything in the way of soft drinks or ice cream, or smoke if wanted, and a

good business appears to be done in this line. The band has a fine place to practice under the shade of several elms, and their music is much appreciated by those who venture to the top of the "stairs" and stay there to listen..."

In those days there was a park where Rotary Park is today. It had a wooden staircase leading to the valley and a small wooden bridge over the creek to "The Flats".

The camp was called "Camp Hoskin" or "Hoskin Park" and was named after their Honourary Colonel Dr. John Hoskin. He had donated money for the Battalion to purchase band instruments. Dr. Hoskin was born in England in 1835 and came to Darlington at the age of 18. He taught school near Mitchell's Corners (then known as Saxon Settlement) but went on to lead a distinguished career in law and business. He never forgot his first home in Canada and over the years Bow-

manville benefited from his generosity. It was he who laid the cornerstone for the Town Hall on August 29th, 1903. He died at the ripe old age of 85 in 1921.

Colonel Hoskin visited the camp in mid-August 1916 and on September 5th the Battalion left Bowmanville for points east. They left for England on May 3rd, 1917.

Conclusion

A lot has happened in the Bowmanville Valley since 1794. The creek with its water power is the reason that Bowmanville is where it is today. But, let's not forget that other people were attracted to the Bowmanville valley before the arrival of the first settlers. Native People lived and travelled through the valley for thousands of years before the arrival of the settlers. Their history is largely unrecorded but perhaps one day the trowel of the archaeologist will shed light on some of their stories.

The \$10 Million Dollar Decision



by Jim Abernethy, Editor

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Please take a moment to read the Message from the Co-Chairs on page 5 of this edition regarding an update on the progress of fund raising for the Valleys2000 Project.

Also mark your calendars now for Saturday June 14, 2012..... the RCMP are riding into town (Orono) to put on a spectacular show..... see details on page 8 & 9.

The next time you are driving, walking or cycling past an orchard of apple trees..... remember that the Apple Blossom is Clarington's official flower.

Our thoughts go out to all of our many Fruit Farmers who have been sitting on needles and pins worrying about the negative effects that this unusually warm spring weather will have on the fall harvest.

The danger is the cooler nights (-4 degrees C) that tend to damage the buds resulting in a low yield come fall. Let's hope it is not too bad come this fall.

So, what would you do with \$10 Million Dollars if it dropped into your lap tomorrow?

Spend it? Share it? Save it? Buy something special?

That is the dilemma that Clarington Council will be facing when the Port Granby Low Level Waste Project begins later this year, or early next. The \$10 Million is due from the Federal Government of Canada in return for hosting in perpetuity the long term low level waste site in Port Granby.

I have been encouraging everyone to share their thoughts to how best our municipality could spend this money in such a way that benefits the entire community.

We have received a number of suggestions from various residents who suggest that the funds are used to start a

foundation that will save Camp 30, and to create a tourist destination centre and save some of our historical past.

Other less costly suggestions include: using the funds to create a legacy project that would improve and delight our community by establishing an "edible tree concept." Peterborough has planted fruit & nut bearing trees all over their town and issue grants for organizations to plant more.

Establishing allotment gardens throughout our municipality is another suggestion that fits nicely with the "edible tree concept."

Improvements to the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail where it passes thru Clarington will be expensive, however this would be a legacy lasting generations to come.

We have received many suggestions that we either relocate or make an substantial investment into our current Older Adults Program. This program is serviced by the Older Adult Centre on Beech Avenue in Bowmanville and by some of our many community town halls.

Funding a reduction in Juvenile Crime was another suggestion, the idea being to introduce programs for our younger people to teach respect for public and private property, thus prevent future property damage.

Some believe we should just keep the money in the bank for a rainy day, while others are afraid that the \$10 Million will be spent to shore up our reserve funds as a result of over spending.

Thank you for your suggestions and keep them coming!

My understanding is that Council has not made a decision how these funds will be spend.

Your input into that decision making is important.

Remember the old saying..... " it is easier to fight a decision before it is made."

Valleys2000 is still accepting donations. Drop by the Valleys2000 tent beside Lange's Photo during the Maple Festival on Saturday, May 6th 2012.