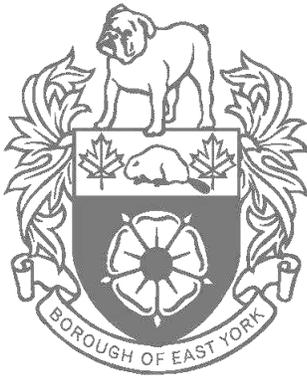


East York Tidbits

Stories About East York Presented by the East York Historical Society **Reflections of East York During the Great Depression**



Lawrence Main, a member of our Society, who now lives in Burk's Falls, Ontario, grew up in East York Township on Glebemount Avenue during the great depression with his parents Thomas and Bessie Main and his two brothers and sister. All four Main children served the nation in World War II. His sister still lives in East York. Here are some of Lawrence's reflections of East York during the depression years.

Fun fairs were held at the northern most stretch of Woodbine Avenue near what is today the Trillium Apartment building and Stan Wadlow Park. John Hollinger operated a general store and bus line from the location. The fairs included races for children and food booths. The highlight of each fair was the wrestling matches held in the evenings. On the east side of the valley, near where St Clair Avenue is today, was an extremely popular greyhound race track. Hollinger's first buses were so slow that boys took great delight in hitching a ride on their back bumpers.

East York did not have a public library during the depression. East Yorkers were able to use the City's libraries provided they paid 5 cents for a library card. I would walk from my home on Glebemount Avenue to the library on Main Street, below Gerrard Street. A long hike, but well worth the effort to get my hands on books to expand my horizons. On the way home I would stop at the feed mill on Dawes Road near Danforth Avenue to buy pigeon feed for my brother's pigeons. Many East Yorkers kept pigeons in those days. Sad to say, many had to resort to eating their pigeons to survive.

Most of our goods were delivered to our door by horse and wagon. We would get our milk from Hastings Dairy, who were located on Broadview Avenue, near Mortimer Avenue. The Ocean Blend Tea Company would deliver their tea packages in small wagons pulled by one horse. A man would come by the street every so often on a horse and wagon to buy anything from you, usually for not more than 5 or 10 cents.

A couple on Holborne Avenue placed a sign on their front yard reading "drivers may water horses here" with a pail of water at their front step. I never understood why they would want horses to stop in front of their house, until I noticed my father would spend hours walking all the surrounding streets scooping up horse manure in his pail to mix with water to spread on the vegetables and flowers he grew in our backyard. Then I realised the smarts of that couple, why not bring the horses to your front door and let them have a

drink and perhaps they will leave some manure behind. I'm sure it saved the couple valuable time walking the streets searching for manure. A kind of spin-off you may say from the old adage "you can lead a horse to water..." if it drinks who cares as long as it leaves behind some manure.

**Prepared by John Michailidis
November, 2006**

The East York Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and sharing information about East York's rich past. The Society meets 5 times a year usually on the last Tuesday in January, March, May, September and November.

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