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Roscoe Livingstone was a Good Truant Officer, but a Better Friend!

I have never been accused of having an abundance of tact nor have I ever been charged with going too slow, except in elementary School! A former Hamilton Postmaster and for a short time my boss nicknamed me *Running Bill*. So . . . my point? On August 17th a number of other local history nuts and myself, - hope they don't mind my terminology, are putting on a history display at my former elementary school in Stromness. The theme will be Port Maitland and everywhere else in Haldimand County. I unabashedly am using this column to promote my history day.

Come and find out things about Port Maitland, and Sherbrooke Township you never thought possible. Next month Angus (the Chronicle editor) has offered me a full page spread where I will try to wet your appetite. I have not yet written the column, but I will include a number of Stromness photos and tell you about some of the people and buildings that were once there. For the past few months I have been telling you about churches in Dunn and Sherbrooke. I will return to that subject in September, once I get beyond this history display.

To my knowledge there have only been two school sections in Sherbrooke. I attended S. S. # 3 in Stromness. S. S. # 5 was at Highbanks. Both schools were closed sometime around 1967. I am still working on that exact date. My hope is that the history display in Stromness will attract many of the former students from both schools and provide a forum for developing a school reunion committee. Sure hope the Barnes's have lots of fries and hotdogs in the freezer that day! If you have never eaten French fries at their little roadside stand then you have not lived to eat, nor have you received so much for so little!. At Barnes's you get lots, and sooo good! I wonder if I will get this free plug past the editor?

When I was growing up at Port Maitland and going to school at Stromness it was a three mile walk to school - up hill both ways, and the winters were much colder, with much more snow than we have today! It never seemed to dawn on me that many of the parents of my classmates trudged along the same road and took the same short cuts through the Dougher, or the Siddall farms. This short-cut took off a quarter mile of walking but added ditches, fences, ploughed fields,(therefore mud and lots of slips and falls on the frozen furrows) a bush full of thistles, snakes, muskrats and countless other distractions. I suspect for the quarter mile we saved, we added an hour walking time!

Carroll Kenney who is 93 years young, lives in a senior's home in Hamilton where I visit with him every Friday. We love to talk as my granddaughter would say *about the olden days!* He grew up in the former TH&B Railway station at Port Maitland. Macey and Bill Clark lived in a house at Port Maitland, which is now demolished. It stood across from the present day fish house of Wayne Siddall. Their walk to school made mine look like a cruise down a warm slow river. They often walked the ice on the Feeder Canal pushing a wood fish box attached to a sleigh runner. On one occasion near the McCallum mansion with Carroll and Macey in the box and little Bill pushing; the sleigh went through the ice. Bill grabbed his big brother Macey just before he hit the water, but Carroll went in up to his neck. Soaked and cold Carroll went to his Aunt Rose Livingstone at the Livingstone Hotel to get dried out, arriving at school at noon. On another occasion while walking home on the Feeder road

during an extremely cold day he became cold and recalls nearly deciding to crawl up along the rail fence for a nap. Alas, he made it to the lock, and home was just a short distance away!

I remember a verse Mrs. McAlonan, my principal at Stromness had for me. She use to sing it to me as I arrived at school promptly at noon. (School started at 9:00). *A dillar, a dollar, a school master's schooler. He use to come at 10:00 o'clock, now he arrives at noon!* Talking about the Livingstone's, Roscoe Livingstone during my growing up years worked for Canada Coal at Port Maitland. He was also the truant officer. My short cut to school was often to cross the old wooden bridge by the railway station where Archie and Mrs. Rickan lived. Then I would head for the Canada Coal office to spend the morning with Roscoe. He would suggest that maybe it was time I got started for school. "Wouldn't want to be late" he would say while looking up at the clock which already read 9:30. Don Rowe, Ernie Kinney, and a few other fellows in town made regular runs to the coal docks each day returning to town with a load of coal. Roscoe would say, "why not jump in the truck with Mr. Rowe, he goes right past the school." "No, I will wait until the next truck" would be my reply. Finally it was noon and Roscoe had long since given up coaxing me to school. "Want to come to my house for lunch?" Off to Stromness to Roscoe's home for lunch. Mrs. L. made the best egg salad sandwiches with pickles on the side I have ever eaten - anywhere! Finally after a hardy lunch and a little catnap I would make the short walk; only two doors from Livingstone's to school. When I did poorly in school; and boy did I do poorly in school, and later in life, when I realized my math and literary skills were lacking, I thought I must have had poor teachers! I never had poor teachers; I had good egg salad sandwiches!

Come and see me at Stromness and tell me some of your childhood stories. Just like Connie Chung, I will keep them *just between you and me!*

If you have items, you wish written about or pictures you would be willing to lend, please drop me a note. Let me know how you feel about these articles. William (Bill) Arthur Warnick 180 Rosslyn Ave. South HAMILTON, ON L8M 3J5 e-mail wwarnick@cogeco.ca Phone 905 531-4350.