

**Submitted to The Dunnville Chronicle
Via E-mail; April 29, 2003
For Publishing; May 14, 2003
By William A. Warnick
180 Rosslyn Ave. South
HAMILTON, ON L8M 3J5
Phone 905 549-6086 E-mail wwarnick@cogeco.ca
(Word count 842)**

Photo; waw812 Three trunk tree Peter DeBoer, Jerry DeBoer, June 1957 206 Boulton Tract Dunnville from Alida DeBoer

“Though difficult to see in this June 1957, photo the three branches of the tree behind Peter and Jerry DeBoer all begin at ground level.”

Babies buried under triple trunk tree!

My great-grandparents had fourteen children. Only three lived beyond their teens. Sadly, back then this was not as uncommon as one might expect.

On May 15, 1916, David Goodfallow and his wife, the former Ina Ecker, lived on Boulton Track Road, along side of the Grand Trunk Railway tracks. On this day they became the parents of triplet girls. Unfortunately, all the babies died the day of their births. David was a finishing carpenter by trade, and instead of handing out cigars on what should have been an exceptional celebration he spent the day making a little casket for each. In 1916, what was a parent to do with a new born child who died? David did, what many who lived in a rural communities, he found a little spot somewhere on his property he felt was special and there he buried Edith, Ida and Ada.

After burying his girls, David planted a sapling maple. It grew healthy and strong as if doing so it symbolically lived in place of the short-changed babies buried beneath it. But growing strong was only part of the story. Maple trees generally split into two or three main branches five to ten feet from the ground. What was unusual about this tree, was that the triple split began below ground level forming a tree with three trunks. “Nature trying to mark three babies’ graves.”

Recently, Art Goodfallow, a younger sibling of these three little girls took me on a tour of the area and showed me where his father interred the little caskets. All that is left are cut off tree-trunks with surveyors’ stakes only a few feet away.

A sad, yet novel story would end here if it were not for the fact that Taylor Road will soon be extended and joined with the extension of Ramsey Drive, using roughly the roadbed of the former G.T.R. line. Arthur wonders, what will become of his little sisters once the realignment begins. Will there be any remains, of either the babies or the caskets so lovingly crafted by his father eighty-seven years ago?

While on the subject of Art Goodfallow and unhappy stories, Art also told me of his grandfather George Goodfallow’s untimely end. Before I tell you about that, let me share with you, an oddly written article, I found in The Dunnville Gazette from August 1890. A fellow by the name of W. Thomson of East Saginaw Michigan, and a former resident of Dunnville wrote to the Globe, (presumably in East Saginaw) protesting details of a story found on its pages. Here is the first part of what Mr. Thompson wrote to the Globe who then shared it with The Dunnville Gazette.

In the Globe of August 1st. The Old Mans's Story, told to your correspondent E. Y., winds up with a statement that a Maskinonge taken by said "old man," and weighing 27-1/2 pounds "ware the biggest one ever caught here." I.e., near Dunnville, on the Grand River, Ontario. This is very far from being the fact, for, in 1861, I myself killed one of 42 pounds, and in 1869, a lady from Buffalo, NY, captured one of 40 pounds, both in the "dead waters" above the great dam at Dunnville. Moreover in the year 1851, George Goodfellow, [Correctly spelled as Goodfallow] the then noted hunter and fisherman, shot in the marsh below the dam, a Maskinonge which weighed 80 pounds. . . Signed W. Thomson East Saginaw, Mich., Aug 20th.

On April 20, 1869, one of Port Maitland's old-timers, William (Willie) Austin, a civil war veteran and father of another old-timer from Port Maitland, Park Austin, spotted the fifty-year old George Goodfallow in the marsh below the Byng bridge. The spring run-off was fast and heavy causing the dam to collapse, taking with it, the Byng bridge. With the river full of debris from the broken dam and bridge, and its banks overflowing with the cold spring run-off, George was unexpectedly trapped on the island where he was muskrat hunting. Willie could see George struggling in the marsh, and clearly in grave danger. Along with some other fellows a number of attempts were made to direct the logs from the broken bridge toward George, hoping he might grab onto one and somehow reach the shore. All efforts failed.

On that recent tour with Art, we also visited an abandoned cemetery just off the Feeder Canal Road, and east of the Mumby Road. Neither of us was willing to trudge through the brush and the deep snow to get to the cemetery. There on a small hill, lost in the overgrowth, is the cemetery, that Art last visited with his father, roughly in 1932. Art recalls that in this forgotten cemetery there was but one broken stone for a person now not remembered. The cemetery is the final resting place of George Goodfallow and not even a marker for the once well-known hunter and trapper, is to be found.

If you have items, you wish to have written about or pictures you would be willing to lend me, 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 905 549-6086.