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### **The Late Harry Siddall, Writes his First Column!**

I have decided to write my article a bit differently this month, and again in August. It is a two-part story as written by a fifteen-year-old Harry Siddall in the year 1906. Harry died in 1958. Enjoy this story as you will discover a lot of information and a scrap or two of fiction.

My father George T. Siddall, and my mother Sarah Ward, are farmers trying to be fishermen. We had a nice seventy-five acre farm near Moulton Station until Dad sold it to John Kirk. There was an auction on January 22<sup>nd</sup> and we sold all our farm equipment and a lot of our furniture.

In February, Dad took me to my first funeral. Walter Henderson, from Wainfleet died and Dad thought it was time for me to see my first body. Mr. Henderson was an old Scotsman who came to Canada in 1831 at two years of age. He had, had, two wives. Dad says his first wife was Isabella Oliver who came from Louth Township. His second wife was Abigail Van Wycke, from Pelham. We went to Mr. Henderson's house where he was laid out on a bed. After the service they put him on a wagon and took him to Riverside Cemetery in Wellandport. The ground was frozen stiff, but somehow the grave diggers managed to dig a hole. Dad says that sometime they wait until spring to bury people who die in the winter. Wonder what they do with them!

We moved to Port Maitland on March 9<sup>th</sup>, where we have only four acres along side the Feeder Canal. Mom is going to run a boarding house and raises a few chickens. Dad wants to go into commercial fishing. My uncles, Henry, John, and Jim are fishermen. Uncle Bob who used to live in Bethel married Aunt Bessie Bufton, in 1904. Uncle Henry married Aunt Alberta in 1900. Alberta and Bessie, are sisters from Canboro. Uncle Jim was a fisherman when he died two years ago, after having a convulsion brought on by Brights Disease. Uncle Jim was a nice fellow, but stubborn as an ox. He lived in Port Maitland, by the mouth of the river and was always getting into it with Dilly Thompson. That is a nickname. His real name is Wellington. In 1898, Uncle Jim built a fence along the side of the sand hill where Dilly Thompson lived and Dilly thought the fence was on his property. He told Uncle Jim to move it. No dammed way was Uncle Jim going to move that fence, so Dilly did! Uncle Jim rebuilt it and while he was doing so, Dilly a shot him in the arm. Dilly was sent to Kingston penitentiary for three years for that!

I guess living here is all right. I have lots of relatives here; Uncle John and Aunt Henrietta - we call her Nettie, have a boarding house along the river. Aunt Nettie's parents also live at Port. They aren't related to me but they're just like family. Her parents, Frank Ross and Martha McKee, have a house that they call a hotel or a club house. I don't know the difference because you can get beer there just like in a hotel. Everyone calls it Ross's Club House. Their kids are all older than me, but they all fish. Dad and I can go out with them and learn about pound and gill netting. After Uncle Jim died, Gramma, went to live with Uncle Bob and Aunt Bessie, who moved to Port Maitland to care for her. They live in the house on the back road by the lock. She

is 83 and had a bad fall on some ice last January - in 1905, and broke her arm. It is nice to have Hannah so close. She does not like to be called Gramma Siddall, or even Gramma Stephen's, which I am sure was her maiden name. She likes to be called Hannah! She says that if "Old Tom," - that's Grandpa, had ever caught us calling her Hannah, he would take us out behind the barn for a whipping! I have a sister Hannah, who was named after Gramma. She married a fellow named Harcourt (Sparkey) Hannah. That makes my sister's name Hannah Hannah!

Life at Port will get better when the new electric railway is built. In February, a bill was introduced in Parliament to build a railway. It is going to be called the "Dunnville, Wellandport and Beamsville Electric Railway." It is going to start at Port Maitland and run through all the major centres from here to Beamsville. Then there is going to be a boat taking you to Toronto. Even if we never go to Toronto, at least we can get out of here without having to take the Feeder Canal or the river to Dunnville. In the summer when the ground is dry, we can take the path, they call a road, in Dunn Township to Dunnville!

Dad thought I could make some money helping Stephen Smith put the verandah on Aunt Matilda's house so I stayed with her while we built the verandah. She is Uncle Jim's widow. When Uncle Jim died the paper told us all about his father and mother and his brothers and sisters. It never even mentioned Aunt Matilda! Uncle Jim and Matilda, were married the same year that I was born. I do not know who her father is but she was a Smith from Moulton. They have two daughters, Edna and Annie. Now that she is widowed, she takes the girls back to Moulton in the winter. The girls go to school at S. S. # 2 on Inman Road. Anyway, my helping out at Aunt Matilda's worked out okay, because that was the week we finally moved to Port Maitland and I was one less mouth to worry about during the move and I didn't have to help them move what little was left after the auction. They moved most of the stuff down from Dunnville on the *Willie Wilson*, a tug that Aunt Nettie's brother Frank Ross owns. He won the Harbour Masters silk hat for being the first one up the river to Dunnville for the season.

Harry will continue with his story in the September 10<sup>th</sup> Chronicle. 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](mailto:wwarnick@cogeco.ca) Phone 905 549-6086.