


IN DAYS OF YORE

Dundas True Banner
March 30th, 1899
Author unknown



The Early Times in Waterdown

The first municipal election conducted on voters from an assessment roll¹ was held in the ballroom of the North American hotel², proprietor Samuel Anderson; Jas. MacMonies sr, then township clerk, was returning officer. The candidates for councilmen were Alex. Brown, Tory, and Thomas Stock, Reformer. This election, the first of its kind for East Flamboro [sic], caused great excitement, both parties straining every effort to win, so much so that by three o'clock [it] was found that almost every available vote had been cast and

¹ Drawn up by Ebenzer Griffin, the first assessment of the population of Waterdown was in 1841, ten years after he had caused a village plan to be drawn up. The population of the village at the time of its first assessment was 165 people.

² Today's "American House" located at the corner of Mill Street and Highway Five. Built by Ebenezer Griffin, the building dates back to around 1824 and is one of the oldest hotels in the province. The hotel replaced a log school that had been erected in 1815 by Alexander Brown for the area's children (Miss Mary Hopkins was the first teacher).

each candidate had the same number of votes; for an hour longer it did not vary; the Reformers were jubilant, as they knew that Mr. McMonies would give the casting vote his then political friend, Thomas Stock, and it was too late to send out for remote voters.

But a sudden terror crept over them when Samuel Anderson rushed up and made the announcement that Alex. Brown and gone up to Widow Kinsula's and that she was coming down with him to vote. Anderson and several others had called on said Mrs. Kinsula that afternoon to try and get her to vote for Mr. Stock, but she had persistently refused to come at all. Anderson, in his zeal for his party. (by the way, all the Andersons were Reformers) said you must "detest" her vote, forgetting seemingly that he had tried hard to get it for his candidate. But Mr. Brown produced proof that widows with property assessed in their names eligible to vote. Her vote was cast and it gave Mr. Brown one of a majority. I

remember how blue the Reformers looked up in that ball room, as they had given up all hope.

As soon as Mrs. Kinsula had cast her vote, no trace of Anderson could be seen, until about 20 minutes before the poll was to close, when who should be seen but Samuel Anderson with his double team³, coming at a furious rate down Dundas Street, then proudly and gallantly handing out a lady in black, closely veiled, escorting her up the stairs to the table, where on giving her name it was found properly recorded. When asked whom do you vote for? Mrs. Bigelow answered, Thomas Stock. The applause of the Reformers was great then, but 5 mins . . . the time being up [Samuel Anderson voted . . . in favour of Thomas Stock].⁴

³ A carriage pulled by two horses.

⁴ This section of the reproduction of the article was damaged. I tried my best to decipher the remaining text.

Cheers were given for the Queen, . . . candidates both . . . , and bigger for Samuel Anderson, who received the honors [sic] modestly, mounted a chair and made the following laconic address: "I don't deserve particular notice; I just did the best I knew how and am glad it succeeded; all hands, ladies, candidates, Reformers, Tories everybody have a drink on me. What will you have?" He kept for an hour or more what might be designated an open house, which had the effect of allaying all anger and discord so much that an impromptu meeting was organized upstairs where the candidates set them up again, after making addresses. Mr. Stock's was fluent and lengthy; Mr. Brown's short but pointed. He declared that though beaten, he would try it over the next year.

Among others who were called on to speak was Mr. Buchanan, my school teacher, who was master of mathematics, and 7 or 8 foreign languages. I expected to hear a great oration, but whether he had imbibed too much, I cannot say, as he failed to respond until the third call. When he rose, he asked "What do you want me to speak on?" The chairman

answered "On what you like, politics or anything." He looked glum, but with an elegant wave of his arm, in a loud voice he said "Na! Na! Gentlemen I hae na preencipals ava." I felt disappointed, as I did many years later when I met him in an examination of school teachers at Hamilton and found that he had only applied for a third-class certificate, while the writer was trying for a first-class. On asking for the reason why he had not applied for a higher grade his replay was "I couldna be fashed and the lowest class draws just as much Government money."

Buchanan was a good teacher. After leaving Waterdown he taught in West Flamboro, Beverly and Ancaster many years. I was reminded in reading a late Banner in that very interesting write-up of that noted Reform family, the Binkleys, that my second school teacher in Waterdown was my old friend Henry Binkley's first in Dundas, namely , Mr. Dunning: J.M. Thornton of Dundas, was a later one, also a Mr. Howell, a lame man from Ancaster, who has relatives here, noted men hailing from Canada, Ancaster I think.

My next may be on the election that succeeded

this one, then will get back to other early village affairs.

Omaha. Neb.

LANTERN⁵

⁵ Transcribed by Nathan Tidridge, 2017.

