

Decoration Day 2015

The Coles

I remember seeing a quotation on a card on my grandmothers wall...I complained that I had no shoes, until I met a man who had no feet. This came to mind when I started this story. My complaint of “grief” or “it’s not fair” is little to what occurred to Cornelius and Phebe (Gaffield) Cole of Cramahe. They lost seven children in six years.

Sarah A Cole 1867

Isaiah Cole 1868

infant son 1869

Florence Cole 1872

Hiram Cole 1872

Henry Cole 1873

Infant son 1873

When Harold Harnden was working in the cemetery some years ago found these stones covered with earth and he worked to have them brought to the surface. Again the stones where getting buried and we have rescued them and have them standing in keys the way they where at one time. You can see the location is in the north west corner of the cemetery from Blyth Road. Each life no matter how long or short should be remembered.

Unable to know exactly what happened, can you believe that a family lost 7 children within 6 years? The pain and suffering that those parents must have been terrible. We would presume that some of the deaths were disease.

The infectious diseases of the day were cholera, smallpox, typhoid, tuberculoses, also included in deaths were poor diet and poor family genes.

Smallpox, for instances, was a highly contagious virus disease that occurred in devastating epidemics with a mortality rate as great as 30% to 40 % . It wasn’t until the a smallpox vaccine was successfully tested in 1796 by a British Country Doctor that the mortality rates decreased. These Cole children passed away 71 years later after the vaccine was tested, the same year as Confederation 1867. It goes without saying that doctors and

medicine in the rural areas were scarce. Vaccines were relatively new and could parents really trust that they would prevent disease.

Concerning poor diet I have read that farmers took the cream off their milk, sold it to the cheese makers and fed their children the skimmed milk. Probably never thinking that whole milk was what their children should be having. I think these scenarios were called survival.

Times were different then.

No refrigeration

No clean running water

No central heating

Over crowding

Sanitation was unspeakable in today's terms.

These conditions resulted in the establishment of a public health department that sent officials out to educate and encourage better living conditions.

Do you ever remember drinking from a dipper? Listen to this:

It is a pity the old fashion cup or dipper from which all humanity imbibed in a carefree, democratic fashion should have to go. But today, whoever hangs out such a vessel is simply issuing an invitations to a house party of germs.

If every public institution, particularly schools, hotels, railway stations and trains would do away with the public drinking cup the percentages of tuberculoses and other communicable diseases would simply be lowered

This statement was acclaimed to Mr W. Stephen Wilson at a Dominion Council of Health meeting 1919.

Another statement by a Dr. W.H. Hattice at the same meeting was:

Forty percent of the rural school houses are not fit to raise swine in. As far as heating was concerned, it would be nearly noon before the temperature was fit to live in. There were no play areas. The gospel of **PUBLIC HEALTH** should be preached to the rural districts.

Thank goodness we have listened.

Lenna Broatch

2015