

The Story of the Trees in Station Park

*"I think that I shall never see
A poem as lovely as a tree"*



Ryerson, Fred and Grandson Ron Picot

It was the late thirties, times were tough, no money, but we still had dreams. There it was - a wedge of scrub land, covered with scrub trees. There was a drainage ditch running through it. No one wanted it. It did act as a buffer for the noisy steam trains, as they fired up steam for the next part of their journey. Scrub trees, not all. There were three maples that had promise of later beauty. The Station Master looked out his window all day long and saw possibilities of beauty. He and Fred Picot talked much of this. But, first, much work had to be done - the scrub trees removed, the ground leveled, etc. This being unwanted town property the work had to be done outside of the working day.

The Section Foreman, Fred Picot, decided he would get it done. So he went an hour early in the morning and worked at it and again two hours after his 8-hour working day. This upset Mrs. Grace Picot!

Her work schedule was messed up good! After all, she had five hungry kids to feed besides her husband. So breakfast was moved ahead and dinner was moved back - there was peace in the family again.

Who was this Fred Picot? He was born on the Island of Guernsey in the English Channel. He was one of eight children - four girls and four boys. His mother, whose husband was a soldier who deserted her, decided to send the four boys to the Bernardo Orphanage. From there, Fred was sent out to Canada as an orphan. He spent his teen years as cheap help on a farm.

The First World War came along and he escaped the drudgery by signing up in the army. He was sent back to Europe as a soldier. In England, he met his life-long partner, Grace. She left England as a war bride. When Fred came back to Canada they made a life for themselves. Fred worked on the railroad. They moved wherever there was employment. The family finally settled in Stayner on John Street.

Back to the park. Six trees were ordered, and arrived by rail car, where they sat waiting for Fred's shovel to make a home for them. He dug and dug until all the trees were planted. Now, today, what magnificent trees they are.

*"A tree that does in summer wear
A nest of robins in it's hair"*

This park is the crown jewel of Stayner. And only God can make a tree, with the help of Fred Picot and his shovel, that is. Much has been added - a gazebo, a clock etc. and the town is proud of their park.

This is as factual as I can remember. Many years have passed but it only seems like yesteryear.

- Ryerson Picot
(my father's son)

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