

TIME TRAVELLER'S DIARY

By Michelle Johnson

You have likely heard the term 'blood and thunder hockey' but do you know where it comes from? It's believed that this expression was first used over 100 years ago to describe the local hockey teams competing for the Allan Moore trophy.

Beginning in 1913, the Toronto & York Radial Railway awarded the Allan Moore trophy to the top team in the Metropolitan Hockey League. This was no regular trophy; it was credited with meaning as much to York North as the Stanley Cup meant to the NHL.

Aurora consistently had a team competing in the league against clubs from Newmarket, Queensville, Sutton and Schomberg. Along with the trophy came the stipulation that the team able to maintain champion status for three years in a row would become the permanent owners of the cup. Needless to say, this ignited a fierce competition, especially between Newmarket and Aurora.

During the 1910s and 1920s both Newmarket and Aurora had the experience of winning the trophy two years in a row, only to be beat out by the rival team in the pivotal third year.

When Newmarket beat Aurora in 1922, they organized a parade of 20-30 cars to travel down the streets of Aurora and brag about their championship status. According to the Aurora Banner, onlookers were horrified at the behaviour of the Newmarket team and the previous sportsmanship shown by the Aurora boys was praised:

'When Aurora won the cup two years in succession they did not go to Newmarket to celebrate, but held a smoker in their own town to which all the clubs in the district were invited' (March 25, 1922).

Yes, it sounds like superb sportsmanship, however; the Newmarket Era reported that the winning team's parade down the Aurora streets was met with 'a shower of eggs, vegetables and what have you' (Newmarket Era, February 17, 1949).

To say the rivalry was fierce would be an understatement.

The Toronto & York Radial Railway folded in 1922 and the league followed soon afterwards along with the Allan Moore trophy. The trophy would lay hidden in the basement of a Pefferlaw restaurant until 1949 when it was rediscovered in time for a revival of the old league.

The revival, however, was short lived and the trophy once again fell out of sight although there were rumours of it being stored in a Councillor's basement in 1968.

One way or another (no one is certain how) the Allan Moore trophy ended up at the Aurora Fire Department and in 1995 it was donated to the Aurora Museum.

I think it's safe to say that Aurorans from 100 years ago would be quite proud, and very relieved, that the Allan Moore trophy is permanently ours. We welcome residents from across York North, and particularly our old rivals in Newmarket, to come to Aurora and view this iconic trophy, which is currently on display at the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame.