**Essays on Mount Crosby - Jobs That Used To Be**

From my schooldays, let's say forty years ago, I recall two predictions made by people that I should have taken more notice of. First, that the ridges behind the old school would one day have houses on them; and second, that the jobs of the future would mostly be different. I remember thinking these ideas were pretty odd, based on nothing but the ten years I had seen. After that, no-one really mentioned it, it just happened.

We should have been better prepared to believe it, especially about the jobs, because even at Mount Crosby the world was ever changing. I can illustrate this with a stores list from the Pumping Station in 1892, showing item after item now wondrous and archaic, every one of which made perfect sense at the time:

10 gallons of Stockholm tar, 25½ coils of tar rope, 4 firing shovels and 2 large shovels, 23 lbs asbestorous packing, 12 large hall lamps, 40 gallons of castor oil, 190 lbs of tallow, 5 gallons of China oil, 3 gallons of coal tar, 12 lbs of red lead, 3 gallons of copal varnish, 2 oil save-alls, 1 log slate, 150 wooden wedges, 1 plumb rule, 2 bottles of sperm oil, 1 top dray, 1 spring cart, 2 sets of harness, 1 horse, and a litany of items now altogether absent from our working lives.

Gone, too, are the firemen, the blacksmiths, the strikers, the gangers, the greasers, the drayman and others who used these old materials for their everyday work. Gone are the men who kept polished the steam engines and line shafts amid flailing oil and steam and dust, and gone are the engineers who thought it was all important. Mercifully, some would say, because these jobs broke men’s bodies and there was no reasonable alternative at the time.

I expect a list of our things will look just as quaint 100 years from now: an iPhone 5, a keyboard, a mouse, a television, a desk telephone, a petrol powered car ...

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