



Portraying The Past

Osgoode Township Historical Society & Museum

Vernon School
P.O. Box 83 - Vernon, Ontario
K0A 3J0

Newsletter

Volume XV No. 3 1989

President's Report

Pioneer Day will be celebrated on Saturday, 12 August and will include the official opening of our new building. We would have preferred to provide earlier notice but the building project was delayed by poor drainage in the early summer and was only completed on 20 July. What remains to be done are landscaping and whatever inside work as may be considered necessary before we begin to assemble the displays. There are many people in the township storing antique farm and industrial equipment which will have to be collected, cleaned, catalogued and moved in.

Fall Fairs have already started. We were represented at Kars fair by Ollie Cameron, Alice Craig and Anne Leighton-Kyle with our family histories, other publications, and Lorne Craig with a gas powered washing machine. We will be operating an exhibit at the Ottawa Exhibition from Aug. 17 to 27, and then Metcalfe fair from Sept. 29 to Oct. 1.

Recent Aquisitions include a Gaelic bible inscribed "James McPherson Osgoode Bytown Upper Canada 1852" and a rare old photograph of "Springhill Cheese Factory No. 1, the one that burned". Both items were from the Russell Village Historical Society, courtesy of the president, Keith Boyd.

Summer Help is being provided by Miss Donna Bowen of Vernon, who has been hired for the summer months to keep the shop open, welcome visitors, do the typing, dust the artifacts, answer the telephone, file correspondence and in her spare time, catalogue artifacts and do some historic research. She has recently completed a catalogue of our entire collection of photographs, a monumental piece of work and long over due. Well done!

Group Visits-We were honored this summer by visits from the Ottawa Historical Society and the Kemptville Branch of the Women's Institute. Such occasions make it all worth while. A chance to meet some truly fine people with similar interests. Many thanks to our members who volunteered to welcome our visitors on those occasions.

BOB USHER

Editor's Note

I would be remiss if I did not commend Murray Little, Director and Chairman of the Board of Directors, and Bob Usher, President of Osgoode Township Historical Society and Museum, for their untiring efforts to achieve a goal, of which many of us have long awaited for, working with Mayor Bouwers, township council, and township council's financial contribution, plus a grant from the Ministry of Culture and Communication there now stands an attractive and impressive looking impliment shed, one hundred feet in length and fifty feet in width to which we will use as storage and display area, for farm and agricultural related artifacts. This building now stands next to the township museum on a parcel of land owned by the township and leased to the Osgoode Township Historical Society for a period of twenty years.

MICHAEL DALEY

The Champion MacNabs

In view of the recent controversy over artificial means to bolster an athlete's performance, an interesting article was found within the pages of the McGregor family history. The author, Robert McGregor, as a young man lived and worked to pay the rent on a farm that the McGregors leased from Peter McNab on lot 37, 5th con. From there their lives were intertwined (Mrs. McNab being his father's sister) and he recounts the "giants" from his view. There are various accounts of the great exploits of the two MacNab brothers, John Lothian and Duncan, when they took part in the Scotch Games held, not only in Ottawa, but in distant places. An entry in yet another diary states "Champion MacNab is off at Chicago." In his memoirs, Robert writes: "In the year 1865 while we were living on Uncle Peter McNab's farm, their farm being alongside (28th lot, 8 con.) I saw the "giants" in action. They were the two oldest sons, John Lothian and Duncan. John Lothian, the champion shot-but and hammer thrower, was a strongly built, shapely man. Duncan was rather shorter but not so shapely, red haired, legs not very

straight. He had the appearance of awkwardness but was in reality most alert with tremendous dexterity. I very often saw them from our farm yard practising at the dinner hour while others would be lying on their lawns having a good rest. Duncan was the mighty man at tossing the heavy caber. I saw him once in action at the Ottawa Games. His competitors were all dressed in athletic suits while he appeared unabashed in ordinary homespuns. Some laughed or grinned at the dress and shape of him when he stepped up. Of the many aspirants, some were not able to upend the heavy caber. Duncan caught hold of it as if it were only a handspike, commencing at the big butt end raising it on end (next he) bent down catching the small end and raising to his shoulder, he stepped forward to the line. He threw it, the big end striking the ground far beyond all other marks. Champion that he was, he estimated how far he could throw it and still let the small end fall on the right side. He was loudly cheered.

There have been no McNabs in Osgoode since the Rev. "D.J." (Duncan John) (son of Duncan) sold the home farm a few years ago. His uncle John Lothian was always in demand as a capable barn builder.

Robert McGregor's book, some 200 plus pages makes mighty interesting reading. It has been donated to the Museum. Robert, known to many as the owner of a meat shop at the corner of Lisgar and Bank Street was born in Osgoode in 1847 a twin of "D.A." McGregor, Principal of the school and writer of the beloved "McMaster Hymn". In his 80's Robert was encouraged to write his memoirs, much of it describing early years in Osgoode. Robert's father Alexander, an early teacher in Osgoode, lived on lot 15 of the 5th concession, the one leased from Peter McNab. This farm later known as the Fraser Farm, Peter's daughter having married David Fraser.

Elizabeth Stuart &
Anne Daughton-Kyle

Notes of Interest-Dominion Day 1895

Each year on Parliament Hill thousands gather to see the entertainment and celebrate Canada Day. In the Kemptville Advance, July 4, 1895 edition, we can see that celebrating Canada Day is a tradition rather than a modern invention. At the village of Burritts Rapids (20 miles west of Kemptville) on Dominion Day 1895, folks got together and as described in that column it was a First at Burritts Rapids. The account is as follows:

"The ancient village presented an unusually gay appearance on Dominion Day and over a 1000 people were attracted thither to join in or witness sports of the day. Evergreens had been tastefully arranged along the principal streets. While bunting floated from house top and pole, the village band filled the air with pleasing strains of their selections at intervals".

"About noon the steamer "Olive" with a very large party from Manotick and Kars arrived accompanied by their village bands."

"A sumptuous dinner was spread in the drill hall shed and the ladies who so kindly assisted in providing the necessities had been unstinting in every respect. The receipts for dinner alone amounted to \$120.00 but an accurate count (of attendance) cannot be estimated because many paid 15 cents and some only 10 cents."

"But the greatest difficulties encountered was deciding on a place where the sports were to take place. All things considered it was decided the streets were to be utilized and at once the sports commenced." The next column and a half is devoted to the events and the winners. It is evident that in 1895, rather than attending the entertainment, people were the entertainment.

Membership-New and Renewal of Membership Fee, have been adjusted to absorb the high cost of material and postage, to eight dollars per year. We sincerely appreciate your past and hopefully your continued support.

The Last Will and Testament of William McGirr (continued from last edition)

I give and bequeath unto my beloved wife Mary that portion of lot number twenty-seven in the Concession of the Township of Osgoode, County of Carleton and Province of Ontario whereon the dwelling house is erected and situated thereon and that portion on the east side of said dwelling house extending to east Concession line used for garden purposes, together with the dwelling house situated thereon for and during the term of her natural life or for and during the term she remains my widow, and after the term of her widowhood or of her natural life, I give and dispose of the said land and dwelling house with garden lot whereon said dwelling house is situated being part of east half of lot number twenty-seven in the Concession of Osgoode aforesaid to my said son Alexander McGirr to and for his own use forever. Also I give and bequeath to my beloved wife three cows, six sheep, four barrels of merchantable flour, fifty bushels potatoes, ten bushels of pease and a sufficient quantity of fuel wood for use of house, which flour, potatoes, pease and fuel is to be given and furnished annually by my said

sons Alexander and Robert in such proportions as follows by Alexander - four barrels of flour, ten bushels of pease, twenty-five bushels of potatoes and one half of fuel wood. By Robert - twenty-five bushels of potatoes and one half of fuel wood (but to be taken from bush of Alexander where directed) which fuel wood is to be furnished ready for stove use and in proper condition. The cows and sheep to be selected by my Executors and delivered within one month after my decease, my son Alexander to keep the cows and sheep with good and sufficient food and other ways properly during each and every year, which gift and bequeath is for the term of my beloved wife's widowhood or term of her natural Life, and in case that my beloved wife at any time during her widowhood or during her natural life should think proper to give to my said son Alexander the cows and sheep so willed to her and not receive the four barrels of flour, ten bushels of pease and twenty-five bushels of potatoes annually, and that in consideration thereof I give and bequeath to my beloved wife the sum of one hundred dollars annually to be paid to her by my said son Alexander annually the first payment to be made after six months notice of such change required to be made. (To be continued in the next edition)

The Soldier Priest

Little did Patrick Fanning (born March 17, 1818, C Lietrim Ireland) and his wife Ann Guilfoyle, pioneers of Osgoode (west ½ lot 14, Con 7) Township ever know that their Grandson Ambrose Madden would be a recipient of the Military Cross. (relates to the Fanning Storys of Pioneer Families Volumn No. 9 and 12)

A legend in his own lifetime, Father Ambrose Madden O.M.I. M.C. D.S.O. "the soldier priest", who organized the Catholic Children's Aid Society of Vancouver, died October 1968 at the age of 93 years. Born 1875 son of James Madden of Nepean, and Eliza Ann Fanning of Osgoode, made his Classical Studies at Ottawa University, and his Seminary course at the O Blate Fathers Scholastic, Ottawa, ordained to the priesthood June 1st 1901. His parents Homesteaded in Manitoba, he was assigned to Holy Rosary Parish in Vancouver. Later transferred to Kamloop, and the Mission of Chilliwack, Nancy and Abbotsford. For a time he was principal of Caribou School at Williams Lake, but with the outbreak of World War One, he joined the Canadian Army as Chaplain.

He was first posted to Camp Vernon and in October 1915 he went overseas with the Second Brigade, arriving in France, no one knew who he was and as a joke he was given a wild horse to ride. The pranksters gathered around to watch Father Madden thrown from the horse, but the only fun to take place, was Father Madden riding the wild horse to a standstill. He was an expert rider and had used horse transportation during his mission work.

Those who knew him then describe him as very cool and collected, others remembered him for his courage and human qualities. A stretcher bearer recounts, Father Madden came across a dying soldier on the ground, the man was using the most vile language I had ever heard, recounted the witness. Father Madden arrived, he stuck a lighted cigarette in the dying man's mouth to comfort him, and when the man died, Father Madden said, If you were suffering as much as this chap - you might be swearing worse than he was. Another time he had been cut off and had been ministering to the wounded for several days without a decent meal. He spoke fluent French and approached a farm in search of a meal, the farm woman refused and told him to return later. Father Madden was hungry and begged from her some eggs. He broke a small hole in the end, and sucked out the nourishment while the astounded woman watched, he consumed six eggs and returned to his duties. At one period dispatch riders were getting killed at an alarming rate. Father Madden volunteered and seemed always to get through unharmed, thinking that perhaps he might have some particular Saint under whose protection he placed himself, his Commanding Officer asked him about it. Father Madden explained it this way, he noticed the Germans were very methodical in their destruction, and established a pattern of fire. In observing this pattern, he noticed no two shells ever fell in the same place. He would watch a shell burst and after the debris had settled he would go to that crater till the next hit gurther away, following this pattern he always go through.

In 1916 he was awarded the Military Cross, in 1918 he was presented with D.S.O. for front line service. Returning to Vancouver when the war was over, he was accorded a public welcome, over the years he was assigned to various places across Alberta and British Columbia. With the outbreak of World War 2 he was released from his parochial duties to become District Chaplain in Vancouver and later Command Captain. A gentleman who served under him, remembers him to say "You will have to wait and wait and still wait, you will be paraded for this and paraded for that and paraded for everything; it is part of being a good soldier".

He returned in 1944 with the rank of Honorary Lieutenant Colonel. His body was laid to rest at O Blate Fathers Cemetery, Mission City, British Columbia.

Michael Daley

Excerpts From the Kemptville Advance 1894

March 8, 1894

The large staff of carpenters from Ottawa together with the local workmen, have completed the job of erecting a new pier and swing bridge at Becketts landing and all thats needed to make the job complete is a coat of paint.

March 11, 1894

It was reported that on Tuesday evening "Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show" had passed through town, but on further enquiry we find it was only a group of young people from Kemptville out for a drive.

March 15, 1894

If those who promised to bring in dry wood for their subscription to THE ADVANCE will do so at once, they will confer a favor.

April 5, 1894

The hatching of eggs by an incubator is being tried by John C. Bedingfield. Experience is imparting many lessons.

May 3, 1894

The oldest tombstone in the R.C. Cemetery is 1812.

May 17, 1894

It is said that hereafter the 1st Monday in September will be called Labour Day throughout Canada and it will be observed as a public holiday.

July 19, 1894 Local News

During a recent thunderstorm at Metcalfe hailstones were reported to have fallen as big as a mans fist. Some of them weighing as much as 6 oz. went through a verandah roof and fully 300 panes of glass were broken.

August 16, 1894

The city of Ottawa has decided to impose a \$1.00 tax on every bachelor living within the confines of the capital. The revenue that will pour into the treasury of the city from this source will be considerable.

Excerpts From the Bytown Gazette Sept. 11, 1836

Land for Sale The west half of lot No. 40 in the 6th and east half of 40(?) in the 3rd of the Township of Osgoode, for particulars apply to Arch. McDonell of said Township

Bytown Gazette 1839

For Sale or location a number of lots in Osgoode Township

Bytown Gazette 1838

Bytown Post Office Until further notice the mails will be closed and letters delivered as follows:

Mail Closed

Monday	} 10 A.M. Lower Canada
Wednesday	
Friday	
Sunday	} 8 P.M. Fitzroy Harbour
Tuesday	
Thursday	
Sunday	} 8½ p.m. Upper Canada, Hull
Tuesday	
Thursday	
Friday	10 A.M. Osgoode and Chelsea
Thursday	8½ P.M. Huntley

Letters Delivered

Monday	9 to 10 A.M. Lower Canada
Wednesday	} and again at 11 A.M. Fitzroy Harbour
Friday	
Tuesday	} 2 P.M. Upper Canada
Thursday	
Saturday	
Monday	} 11 A.M. Hull
Wednesday	
Friday	
Friday	11 A.M. Chelsea
Saturday	9 A.M. Osgoode
Saturday	2 P.M. Huntley

Hours of Business 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. and on Sunday 9 to 10 A.M. and 4 to 5 P.M.
Paid letters must be mailed by 5 P.M. signed G.W. Baker Post Master

Post Office Bytown 26 of July 1838