



Kenmore Continuation School

Osgoode Township Historical Society & Museum

Vernon School

P.O. Box 83 - Vernon, Ontario

Newsletter

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During the last few months different members of our Society have been receiving interesting letters from various parts of our Continent. It is expected that when the mail strike is over that there will be several more from which we can glean valuable information and in return supply some of the missing information for which so many are searching.

Mrs. Myrna E. Warkins of Dallas, Texas wrote the Post Office hoping for information on her Porteous Ancestry. She is the daughter of Martha who married Duncan McIntosh. We were happy for information received regarding the ancestors William Porteous and his wife, Mary Lorimer, both buried in Spring Hill Cemetery. When mail service resumes we shall be able to benefit from an interchange of information.

Jas Douglas Campbell became interested in his Roots about 6 months ago. His ancestors, Duncan Webster Campbell and wife Isabella McDonald, are well known Osgoode families. But when so many moved as far west as possible it is understandable that the descendants would not know about our Township. Douglas Campbell has received a great deal of information during his visit during the 100th Anniversary of the Baptist Women's Missionary Circle of which Mrs. Duncan W. Campbell was a Charter Member.

Mrs. Norma Morrison is seeking information on the second marriage of the mother of John Campbell Bowen. His mother, Margaret (Nancy) Poaps married first Peter Bowen. After his death she married Peter Nelson. Some of the family are buried in Ottawa.

Lieut. Col. Amidon is still seeking confirmation of the father of Colin Poaps' wife, Sarah Jane Campbell. Information comes unexpectedly, if slowly, at times.

Harry Simser, age 75, wanted to know the place of birth and date of his grandfather Philip. The information was obtained at Christ Church Cathedral, Ottawa. Philip's father, Christopher Simser was one of Osgoode's first settlers - W $\frac{1}{2}$ of lot 34 con 6 - west of the land owned by John Wood of Cornwall where the U. E. Christopher and his wife Harriet Cameron came from. Harry Simser has become a walking encyclopedia on the Simser family and the numerous families inter-married with them.

Patricia W. Collins of Windber, Penn., wrote to the Ottawa Public Library hoping to find information on the Keough Family. The Library, having previously purchased all our copies of Pioneer Families, sent her a copy of the page relating to the Keough Family. Michael Daley, when writing about this family had stated: "Julia, b c 1820 m Melamphy...Can any reader give information on this family? Her frantic letter to the Historical Society asked for any clues to locate Michael Daley. He has written her. - no answer just yet.

Recently a young married couple moved onto the McDiarmid, McConnell, Fred Alexander farm. Christine Schroeder Heymans is a descendant of Leonard Wood who lived for a number of years beside his cousin John Wood - along the Dalmeny Road where it joins Highway 31. Leonard's son, Leonard, studied the Blacksmith trade from David Kennedy. Son Henry Osborne Wood was the well known Wood "The Surveyor". Leonard gave the land for the Wood Cemetery at Blossom Park, as well as land for the Jewish Cemetery when the Jews were denied a burial place in the city.

Below is a description of one of the many Communities which have meant so much to those of us who have known the understanding that can result from growing up in such an atmosphere. This Community-based life is one of our great blessings in growing up in an agriculturally based Township.

Michael Daley writes the present and past story of an Irish Hamlet.

ENNISKERRY: A PART OF OUR TOWNSHIP HERITAGE

On November 24, 1980, at 8 p.m., the Osgoode Township Planning Board held a well-attended meeting in St. John's Parish Hall, situated on the Old Prescott Road, now Regional Road 25, to discuss the possibility of designating parts of lots 19 and 20, con 3 as a Hamlet.

A lively meeting was held, conducted by the Chairman, Dr. W. A. Taylor. The size of the suggested Hamlet was discussed backwards and forwards, and a number of names for the Hamlet-to-be were suggested. When a vote was taken, by secret ballot, the name Enniskerry won by a large majority.

At a later date, Township Council officially designated the area as a Hamlet, allowing for an increase in size of 100 per cent - eleven or twelve lots - with St. John's Church in the centre of the Hamlet.

Aware of the historical background of the community, we are hopeful, pending the approval of the Ottawa Carleton Regional Planning Board, that the name ENNISKERRY will be once again recognized in our community.

ENNISKERRY is a pretty little village 12 miles from Dublin City, gateway to some of the loveliest scenery of County Wicklow, the garden of Ireland. In Osgoode Township it also depicts an Irish Community: on the west there is West Osgoode; on the south, Herberts' Corners; on the north, Snake Island; on the east Tobin's Island. And other little-known places are in the immediate vicinity: Welches Corners, Lizzie Corner, Fiddlers' Green, and Murphy Leap.

As early as 1834, the Bytown-Prescott Stage Coach passed along this way. When the Post Office was established on April 1, 1875, the name chosen was Dawson Post Office, a name that honoured Father Aneous Macdonnell Dawson, whose distinguished career was linked with the Great Victorian Era. He was born in 1810, at Red Haven, Banffshire, Scotland, being descended on both his mother's and father's side from historically important Scottish families.

The first Postmaster was John McEvoy from April 4, 1875 to 27 Dec 1883. John J. McEvoy, appointed 22 May, 1884, remained in that office for many years. On November 1, 1909 the name Dawson was replaced by the name Enniskerry, and although the Rural Mail service ceased April 4, 1914 and the office closed, the mail was delivered from Osgoode Station. The name Enniskerry still appeared on maps as late as 1957.

Supposedly, the first Public Picnic ever held in Osgoode Township was put on by the Parish of St. John's the last week in September, 1872, in aid of St. Patrick's Orphan Home. It was the biggest gathering ever held in Osgoode Township. A field owned by Andrew Doyle was chosen for the picnic (now owned by the Carol Family) and it was a big day and a good cause was supported.

As one wanders through the tombstones in the cemetery and listens to the wind sighing through the pine trees, one cannot help but visualize the hard life these courageous people, our ancestors lived, clearing the land, acre by acre, building first a shelter, later a better home, a school house, and places to worship God.

Reading the Inscriptions on the tombstones, one notices the words: Native of County Kilkenny, County Tipperary, County Cork, King's County, County Wexford, County Sligo, County Mayo, County Carlo.

Below are a few of the Family Names engraved on these time-ravaged tombstones:

The Dooleys and Darcys,
Likewise the Daleys, too,
The McEvoy's, they number quite a few;
The Burns and the Blanchfields,
The Herberts and Jordons, too.

With names like Dewan, Doyle, Devereaux,
The Finlays and O'Briens, O'Boyle,
O'Rourke, O'Connor, O'Callaghan, and Leahys, too.
The Shields and the Mantles, Terrys,
Tobins, Turner, and Sullivan, too.....

Sure, 'tis little wonder that the name was changed from Dawson (Scottish) to ENNISKERRY.

Michael Daley

(More of the busy business life of the Community will follow in Number 4.)

OUR MILLS

Our early residents had, of necessity, to be both self-sufficient and very resourceful. What was done with the huge trees that had to be removed before seeds could be planted in the ground? What was done with the wheat that was grown for bread and other food? Where did the logs and boards come from so that the simplest shelters could be erected, or re-erected if the log fire burned the shanty and its meagre contents to the ground?

It would appear from the Assessment Rolls that the few people in Russell realized the importance of their geographical position, with all three or more Branches of the Castor converging in their area and that they therefore erected mills to make grist, saw lumber, make oatmeal. Elisha Loucks and his large family of 10 were progressive millers, paying more in taxes than any one else in the area. As well, the name of George Cook appears in Russell as one operating a saw-mill. Samuel Thompson owned a Saw-Mill in Russell in 1837.

In Osgoode, 1835, after living there, a few people, for 8 years there were still no mills. But in 1836 a Mechanics Shop appeared on lot 25 con 8 (south of Metcalfe.) Bob Usher, living on the McGirr property recently unearthed part of a hand made shovel. He lives next door to this interesting Mechanics Shop. In 1837 it was run by Messers Stetham and Cooms - Mechanics - and they paid the highest taxes - 16 shillings. This Richard Stethum evidently sold out to his partner, Joseph Cooms, and in 1841 Thos. Gold was the owner of the Mechanic's Shop.

During the same period, a saw mill was coming in to operation on the original land of Archibald McDonell - land that had been lost for a time to Philip VanKougenet, but shortly recovered. The 1838 assessment mentions a Saw mill on lot 20, con 6, but ever after that the location in lot 25 in concession 8, and many still alive have seen the ruins of this Mill. Because the Middle Castor curves through the farm land from highway 31 to the road south of Metcalfe, no road was ever constructed in this area, as was the custom every mile and a quarter. The River was the only Highway and still is. With the Dow property so close by. Bill Dow, now over 80, remembers the location well.

This Mill was important, as was every Mill, whether as a grist mill or saw mill and this fact shows the significance of the story that follows.

George Cook was still operating a Saw Mill in Russell in 1845 on lot 7 con 9. As well there was Jas Conway, and John R. Loucks. In 1848 Wm Cook Esq was the operator, and in 1850, it was James W. Cook. What do you know of this Cook family? Was this the Cook Family that bought up nearly 400 acres south of Kenmore - property through which the same Castor passed, and the land just south of that of Peter McLaren who owned the 100 acres on the west side of the Kenmore road from very early times.

Peter McLaren was the son of Alexander who lived east of Vernon, in the midst of Perthshire neighbours, and it was here that much land was improved - 18 acres in 1837 on lot 38 con 8, but none in Kenmore. Peter's father Alexander, was burned, when an old man, and buried in McTavish's Grove. Squire Peter McLaren sold part of his valuable land to McDiarmid brothers from Beckwith, millers, and then began the struggle with the Cooks as related by Tannie Fraser to a cousin (date uncertain) - a story never told until now.

More can be told of these McDiarmid men, cousins of the big men, builders of stone houses around Dalmeny, at a later date.

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To Mrs. Anne McDiarmid

But to continue with the MacDiarmids. The cousins of John and Angus had settled in Kenmore on the side across from what is now the United Church. Four men of Glen Lyon origin - our Grand Uncle Robert McGregor, James Lothian, brother of Mrs. Robert McNab, MacDiarmids from West Osgoode (Dalmeny-Belmead) - all of these took part in the bursting of a Dam which had been built by Cook, an outsider and stranger to "The Commonwealth of Israel". (When Cook built his Dam there was no rival in sight.) When Peter (Square McLaren) built another Dam where the river takes a turn as it enters the Village (near McTavish's Grove), MacLaren took the matter to Court and lost out.

The Highlanders resolved to take the matter into their own hands. Concerning what transpired, the utmost secrecy was kept, and even yet, after 120 years have elapsed (and more), varied accounts are given of the event.

Great Uncle Robert MacGregor - Cabinet Maker and Carpenter in Kenmore - Grand Uncle, too, of Fred McGregor, author of Mackenzie King's Memoirs, kept watch on the east shore. On the opposite side James Lothian handspike on his shoulder, walked to and fro on the opposite bank of the Castor. To the two MacDiarmid brothers fell the task of cutting the dam. The unpleasant task of cutting the dam fell to Angus. He was almost swept down by the torrent but managed to get to shore.

The Sheriff who happened to be staying with MacLaren (the J.P.) that night went out about 11 p.m. Hearing the chopping, he enquired as to its cause. He was told that the man of the house near by, had, on returning home to cut wood for the family.

The next morning the two brothers passed up the River and were seen by the father (John) of the late James Tweedie Dalgleish, about 4 a.m., axe in hand. Cook had placed a watchman in a small shack but the watchman never turned out.

The Account was transmitted through Robert MacGregor, one of the four participants in the episode. He was a second cousin of the McDiarmids - a son of Malcolm MacGregor and Christian Blaikie who had settled in Chatham, L.C. He was born in Inverar, Glen Lyon. All four had their origins in Glen Lyon; Peter MacLaren was a native of Kenmore Parish, Perthshire.

Information passed on to Tannie Fraser by her brother
R. MacGregor (Mac) Fraser.

According to the 1842 Census for Osgoode which lists the occupation of the Heads of families, we see that a variety of services had been provided:

Peter SWATSFIGURD - Tavern Keeper	Peter McLaren Esq - Pot-Ashery
Mich'l Fenning - Blacksmith	John C. Hawley - Store Keeper
Thomas Howes - Cabinet Maker	William Portious - Blacksmith
Henry Rossitter - Tavern Keeper	James McDonald - Carpenter
Tho's Gold - Pot Ashery	Thomas Bailey - Tavern Keeper
John Blair - Shoe Maker	John Guilfoyle - Carpenter

All other Heads of Families were listed as Yeoman or Labourers.

In the OLD TIME STUFF OF THE OTTAWA CITIZEN OF September 23, 1930,
we read

BLACKSMITH AND PLUMBER SETTLED ON BUSHLAND

Went to Osgoode from New York in 1848, and made good. The Blacksmith operated a Loom and made Cloth as a Side Line. Forbes McMenemy was a man of Resource.

A blacksmith and a plumber would not seem to be a good pair to go onto a bush lot to start to hew out a living for themselves.

The plumber was Forbes McMenemy; the blacksmith was John McMenemy, his brother. Prior to going to Osgoode the pair had lived in New York and just why they decided to leave the bright lights of New York is not known to the descendants.

Forbes McMenemy had 9 children; three remain in these parts: Mrs. Thos. Robinson who lives with her son on the Metcalfe Road, near Leitrim; Mrs. James Davidson, south of Bowesville, and Thos. McMenemy of Ottawa.

Soon after coming to Osgoode, Forbes McMenemy decided he was not a real farmer and needed a new string to his bow. He looked around Osgoode and found the people could stand a weaver in their midst. So he procured a loom and began to learn the trade of a weaver. Business soon began to come in and as the boys grew up the farm work fell on their shoulders. According to Mrs. Robinson, the immediate neighbours of the McMenoms when she was growing up c 1853, were Patrick Fanning, John Wallace, John Scott, and John McDowell.

In the year 1869, Mary McMenemy married Thos. Robinson who worked in MacLarens' Mills in New Edinburgh, but the Robinsons later ran a market garden at Billings Bridge and then a farm near Leitrim before Mary McMenemy became a widow and moved back to live with her son on the Metcalfe Road.

The Editor of the OLD TIME STUFF has found it rare for farmers to be living on the farms of their ancestors. They often moved.