



Osgoode Township

Historical Society & Museum

Vernon School

P.O. Box 83 - Vernon, Ontario

Newsletter

Maplehurst Sugar Bush March 25, 1977

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By the year 1938 - five years from now - Canada will be celebrating its Bi-Centennial; that is, 200 years of history as a Nation separate from "The Colonies" to the south of us. For although there was a "Declaration of Independence" in 1776, Britain did not accept it until 7 years later. It was at this time that one or more of the ancestors of many of us, called "traitors" or "Tories" because they wished to retain their allegiance to the Crown, had to leave their homesteads and head north.

Reading from the Quebec border, there were 6 Townships formed along the St. Lawrence: Lancaster, Charlottenburg, Cornwall, Osnabruck, Williamsburg and Matilda. Some of the Loyalists were given lots in the early parts of Osgoode that was surveyed by 1800, grants that were in addition to land they owned elsewhere. Each child of a Loyalist, when he or she reached the age of 21, was entitled to 200 acres. Many young people, marked S.U.E. or E.U.E., sons or daughters of an United Empire Loyalist, owned the Crown Deeds for land in Osgoode. There are many of us, who, until recently, did not realize that some of our ancestors were those who lost their homes in the Colonies and came into the Wilderness of Canada to form a new Nation.

Among our "Osgoode Papers" there is an incomplete list of the children of Loyalists who were granted lots in Osgoode. Alice Dalgleish (Mrs. Lorne) Craig, herself descended from Loyalist Jonas Wood of Cornwall, has made a summary of landowners in this category. A new U.E.L. Branch of the United Loyalists' Association of Canada has recently been formed in what was the old Eastern District and we feel we have valuable information for them. Of the nearly 100 who applied for land, the majority were from Charlottenburg, 14 from Cornwall, 9 each from Osnabruck and Williamsburg and others from Kenyon, Augusta, Lancaster, Matilda, Edwardsburg and Marlborough.

Mrs. Connie Sallans, our President, has Wright UE ancestors from the maritimes; our secretary, Harry Anderson, is a g-g-grandson of John Anderson and his wife Ellen Galbraith (Kilbreadth) who were living in Osgoode in 1832; our Past-President Gerald Hill and his sister Margaret Robb have Helmer and Wajor ancestors; our program convenor Vivian Shorey married a descendant of one of the earliest settlers in Prince Edward County; and the writer has Loyalist German ancestors from the Schoharie Valley (in the Albany district): Becker, Mattice, Kast, etc. These early ancestors, when you become aware of them, have a great deal of information written on them, information available at the Public Archives in Ottawa.

Examples from our Records:

Mary Anderson, wife of Wm. Anderson and daughter of John Dixon, UE of Osnabruck, requested land 6 July 1804, and received an Order in Council for 200 acres, lot 26 con 4, on Feb. 25, 1809.

At the same time Ann Annable of Cornwall, w/o John Annable the Younger and d/o John Dixon UE got L 30/4.

Catherine Markley w/o Geo Markley, Williamsburg, d/o Francis Ulman got L7/6.

Mary McNeil w/o John McNeil, d/o Duncan McArthur received L31/7 (the Spring Hill School Property) by OC, 7 Aug 1811.

We are drawing attention to this important strain in our ancestry - refugees of many, many different nationalities: German, Dutch, English, Irish, Scotch, Negroes, Indian. These people bore the brunt of opening up a new place where many would come and build their homes.

On March 10, 1978, over 100 people gathered at the Museum to 'Honour the Irish' in our Township, both of the past and the present. It was indeed a memorable evening of wit, laughter, the dance, song, anecdotes, and fitting Irish music played on a wide variety of instruments. It was our Vice-President, Michael Daley, who planned every detail of the exceptionally fine performance and we are looking forward to another such happy occasion in 1979.

Michael had assembled stories of yesteryear, a complete copy of which is in our Museum Archives. He related:

"About 5 years ago, I became interested in searching my family ancestry ... Talking to elderly people is often a great source of information. Pat Keogh, age 83, farmed most of his life near Greely. Memories of long ago were vivid in his mind. John Moran, a carpenter, made the windows and the doors for the Kearns stone house on the 10th line. Pat was told by Moran who had got the information from Kearns, that a group from the Kenmore area: Archie Campbell, Craig, Dempsey, Loney, Wilson, Kearns had come into the Township via the Castor and had maps showing the settlements in the Uplands area of Gloucester. The men set out to find the Rideau and Bytown in order to obtain supplies closer at hand than by returning to Cornwall. Their path took them west along what is now Co. Road #6 to Grey's Creek where the dense swamp made them turn north where they hacked out a trail toward our present day Greely. Kearns felled a tree across Dunlap's creek in order for them to cross and continue the journey to the Gloucester boundary where St. Mary's School stands, thence north and west to Johnsons' Crs and on to the settlement on the Highland of the Township known as the Front Road from Greely north - part of the Prescott Road.

Other valuable information related to the agreement made Nov. 6, 1874 with the landowner of lots 1-15 in concessions 5 & 6 regarding the Macadamized road. And there were stories of the telephone and of ashes and potash - all from Mr. Keogh's vivid memory.

Audrey Renton of Kars charmed us with her Irish costume, her Irish songs, her harp, and her dancing.

Jim Downey made us all want to take a trip with him to Ireland and sing with him along the way.

Mervin Kelly, a master in the art of story-telling, was Master of Ceremonies for an hour of varied entertainment.

Peggy Kendellan from Galway had a well-trained, poised, and graceful group of six dancers.

Frank McAlpine played and Tom Murdagh from Dublin sang.

Pat Kelly could dance, play various instruments, or sing. He, with Brian Byrne, and Kerry Adams were a fine singing group.

We surely appreciate the contribution that the Irish of the Township has made in the past and are still making.

The hardships suffered by both Irish and Scotch in their journey to the New World has been told in part by a Scotchman by the name of John M'Donald who kept a diary of his trip out in 1821. This trip was from Glasgow on the "David of London", one of 4 boats that arrived about the same time. M'Donald returned to Glasgow almost immediately since his account - "Narrative of a Voyage to Quebec" was written from Glasgow November 1821. In the introduction he says the reader will see "the hardships through which our unhappy and deluded countrymen are doomed to pass, the privations they must undergo, the sufferings they must endure, before they can be settled in their cold, comfortless and solitary log house

We should like to locate and read the complete diary and to know of the identity of the writer. His complete Narrative of 32 pages is being printed and offered for sale at a cost of \$3.00. We do know that Duncan McDonald who owned land in the Vernon area, and the Fergusons, came in 1821 to Lanark County. Eliza Ferguson, later of Dalmeny, was the only surviving baby on the boat "The Earl of Buckinghamshire". In the Osgoode census under country of birth, she is listed as born at sea.

Below are some excerpts from the first 8 pages:

"We left the quay on the 19th day of May, 1821...with fine agreeable weather we enjoyed the pleasure of walking on deck...and the bold, rugged and romantic appearance of the coasts bordering on both sides of the Firth, presented scenes that were truly delightful. But, alas, the picture was soon reversed. The wind rose, a heavy gale commenced and the waves rose mountain high, and made a mighty noise. To see a ship make her way in the midst of a storm, over those lofty billows is both grand and awful. We now became like drunken men, reeling and staggering. To walk on deck was impossible, and the places where the pots were erected for cooking tumbled down so that we could not get any victuals ready, and some of our associates were compelled to mix a little meal with molasses...as a substitute for better fare.

The want of food and the storm together rendered us very weak. This storm lasted nine days.... Several times many of our company got themselves drenched with the waves of a heavy rolling sea breaking over the deck, and which also entering the hatch hole, wetted us very much. On this account

we were completely shut up in the hold. The weather had become very cold and this, providentially, was greatly in our favour, from our being so much crowded together (nearly 400 passengers), which in several respects was very disagreeable to our feelings. This cold state of the weather continued until we reached the mouth of the St. Lawrence, when it became so warm that I was nearly suffocated from the smell and heat below deck. I was consequently compelled to sleep on deck. Every favourable day the Captain ordered all the passengers to bring up all their clothes and air them. The sick passengers were also all ordered above, those who were unable being assisted. The Captain was much afraid lest an infectious fever should get in amongst us, and he himself after landing at Quebec, was confined for some time by severe indisposition. Four births took place during our passage, but three of the children died, and a boy of four years old.

"Having entered the St. Lawrence it was necessary to obtain a Pilot.... The Surgeon having declared that there was no fever amongst us, we all got in at once. The Captain ordered the Mate not to suffer any ardent spirits to be brought on board. Nevertheless, some of the passengers who had gone ashore, returned with some rum which was taken from them, and thrown over board. This circumstance caused no little disturbance, and produced blows between the sailors and the passengers, and even amongst the sailors themselves; and till the scuffle terminated, it was a very disorderly night. We arrived at Quebec on the 25th of June, when we were all inspected by the Surgeon and then passed through the Custom-house.... By 6 o'clock in the morning the steam boat was laid along side of us, when we all set to work to get our luggage on board of it. As we were setting out (at 11 o'clock at night) a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning came on, the most dreadful that ever I either saw or heard. The rain was also uncommonly heavy. There were nearly 400 people on board the greater part of whom were compelled to sit on deck all that night. Reader, you may easily guess our situation; I can assure you we were as thoroughly drenched as water could make us and we all had to remain, drenched as we were, in our wet clothes, till they dried on our backs (Our chests were locked in the hold) and in this state we continued till we reached Montreal!"

"Here we arrived in 24 hours, a distance of 190 miles, and this was the first of our trials in going up the country, and it was the source and cause of their trouble who are no more in this world...The beds of those on the lee side of the boat were made literally to swim with the rain water. Everything was spoiled, our very meal and bread being reduced to a state of dough. We now began to carry our luggage from the steam boat, Government having provided waggons in abundance. We mutually assisted each other in loading them with the women and children; and all who were unable to walk, got on top of them as far as the village of La Chine, ten miles up the St. Lawrence from Montreal. Here we remained 4 days until we got as many boats as were required. We then set out all together (366 persons) in 15 flat-bottomed boats. Here a very difficult part of our journey commenced, namely the passing the rapids of the St. Lawrence."

The horrible passage up the St. Lawrence will be given in the next Newsletter. In his remaining 24 pages John McDonald names very few people, but we know that many of us are descended from those rugged people who crossed the seas during the first half of the 19th century.

(The following is only part of a letter from Major Daniel S. C. McKay describing the Metcalfe & Vernon Militia. The complete letter will be inserted in the next issue.) Our apologies!

Uniforms, badges, and documents such as Company Order Books - while all donations or loans are gratefully received, we would appreciate being permitted to photograph and/or copy any relevant item for our files.

Any assistance in this project would be sincerely appreciated. Please call or write me.

Major Daniel S. C. Mackay,
Ch. of O Regimental Museum,
The Drill Hall, Cartier Square,
Ottawa, Ont.

Phone 992-3773

In the July Newsletter I shall tell something of the amazing collection of genealogical material that I was privileged to explore during my 10-day stay in Salt Lake City, the home of the Genealogical library of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints - Mormons.

Irish sources included land records - wills, marriage contracts, land surveys, all indexed. And there are many vital statistics. I read the following marriage report:

Wm McVea bachelor age 21
married 4 January 1833

Mary Carson age about 21

both of Ballymoney, Antrim

From the Scottish sources, with which I am more familiar, I was able to sort out many families. There are thousands of Campbells in the Breadalbane District, and if they can be untangled there is hope for all of us. But all local people are distinguished by the long established names of the property.

There was Colin Campbell and his wife Cathrine Campbell of Milntoun of Lawers (the same district from which came McMartins, McCauls, McDiarmids) and I found four of the children: Betty, James bpt Jan. 31, 1764, John, Alex. Cathrine was a widow in 1769. Her son James, who is buried at Lawers - north side of Loch Tay - married Margaret Crerar (d 1822). I found four of their children: Patrick, John, Margaret, Catherine. Patrick M. Christian Campbell and Isabella, one of the four children I found for them, married John Crerar 21 July 1839. John Campbell m Ann Campbell 23 Jan 1820 and the births of the seven children were all laid out in one place. Robert born 15 Feb 1830 came to Osgoode and his great grandson John Campbell of Spring Hill is a Sheep Farmer as was his g-g-grandparents over 200 years ago.

We regret that our efficient and energetic Curator, Miss Arlowa Ferguson is laid up temporarily. We are pleased that our dependable typist and printer, Mrs. Jack Twiname, has been able to resume her ordinary activities following an operation during the past month.

Beginning in May, our Museum will be open on weekends: Friday, Saturday, Sunday, from 1:00 - 5:00. Like all Museums operated with voluntary help, we are in need of personell to man our building in order that the responsibility will not be left to a few. Let us know when you can help. Our meetings are always held the first Friday of the month at 2:00 p.m.

Mr. P. Michael Dewan sends us greetings and enclosed a clipping telling of the high honour accorded his son The Rev. Wilfrid F. Dewan who as the second Canadian was elected president of the Paulist Fathers' community. Mr. Dewan's seven sons are all graduates of Toronto University. The Rev. Wilfrid Dewan has been stationed at Tuscan but will move on May 1 to the headquarters of his new position at Scarsdale, a suburb of New York.

During the summer we expect to have students working at display work in our Museum.