



Dalmeny Cheese Factory

Osgoode Township Historical Society & Museum

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

Newsletter

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Notes from the Museum and Archives by Shirley Lowe

The many activities of the Historical Society are carried on by a very dedicated but a small group of workers. We have a great need for volunteers to assist with research, recording, typing, filing, setting up displays, keeping the building open to visitors, and tending displays set up for public viewing. If you could spare a few hours to work with us please contact one of our executive or board members. There's a place for everyone in preserving and displaying the History of Osgoode Township.

We have taken advantage of a Grant Programme to hire Ann Leighton-Kyle to work in the museum five days a week for a number of weeks. Ann was with us last summer and is well known for her keen interest and excellent work in all areas of museum and archives work. We invite you to drop in at the Museum, meet Ann, and enjoy the interesting and informative displays she has set up.

Our main projects this year are Cheesemaking in the Township and the recording and preservation of our very large photograph collection. An excellent display of information and materials related to our cheese factories has been set up in the newly-renovated central hall. Any information or artifacts you could add to this exhibit would be most welcome. There is much work to be done with the picture collection. Each photo is catalogued by donor. Although many came to us with valuable information, many others are not identified. A display of pictures needing clarification has been set up in the hope that someone will be able to identify people and places. Our plan is to renovate the washroom at the back of the hall to provide an appropriate storage and filing area to preserve the pictures in the best possible condition.

For some time we have recognized the need to expand our display area. Osgoode Township was primarily an agricultural area. We need space for displays of early machinery and related artifacts. Unfortunately we have had to decline offers to put large pieces in our limited space. We know that when gone these relics of our past in the township are lost forever. At one time we discussed the possibility of moving a log building to the museum site but this idea, although valuable and worthwhile has been put on hold in favour of erecting a structure large enough to store farm machinery and other large exhibits. At a recent Board meeting it was decided to seek assistance in erecting a steel building. This will be an expensive and hopefully, a rewarding effort. We need your support and suggestions in this important project.

We are very pleased to report a large number of visitors since the museum opened for the season. In June we had approximately 200 people, some to view the exhibits and some primarily to use our extensive collection of records and documents related to the twp. and the surrounding areas. We also receive numerous letters requesting information from the records and copies of the materials written and collected by our members. In return for our efforts, documents, pictures, and artifacts are added to our collection.

We sincerely ask our members and friends to offer their help so that we may continue and expand the efforts of the Historical Society.

Notes of Interest

Marvelville, A Tribute Booklet to our pioneer Ancestors compiled by Margaret Robb whose roots run deep in the Marvelville area (Osgoode Twp.), with its many pictures and stories, bring vivid memories to many, of years gone by. (Available from the museum, or Margaret Robb. Price \$4.00. Wed. July 1st, Canada Day, a special exhibit on Canada Emblems was set up at the museum, commemorating this Historic event.

The Vernon Women Institute are celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the organization, in September 1987. This very active group of women are noted for

their outstanding contributions to their community, in good works, charitable donations etc.

In Search of their Roots by Elizabeth Stuart

Visitors dig for roots at township museum: Recent visitors at the Osgoode Museum have been digging for their roots. Herbert Leon MacDonell of Corning, N.Y., returned to Osgoode with his brother from Bolivar. The seven people in the party wanted to visit the site of the great-grandparents' home. Duncan MacDonell and his wife Isobel Bailey lived beside the Castor River where Ian Boland now resides. The MacDonells left 100 pages of genealogy and plan to return in October to attend the Metcalfe Fair held on land granted to Archibald MacDonell 160 years ago. Rosemary McDiarmid Wark came to visit museum from Carleton Place for additional information on the Glen Lyon McDiarmids who operated mills in Kenmore from 1851 until the mills burned down before the turn of the century. There are no descendants in Osgoode, but Mill Street in the new Kenmore subdivision commemorates the work of the four McDiarmid men buried in the Springhill Cemetery.

An Alberta native passing through Osgoode stopped to express his surprise that Alberta's first premier, Alexander Cameron Rutherford, was born in our area.

Delmer and Dorothy Earle came to see the family Bible of ancestors Duncan Cameron and Mary Grant, the first couple married in Osgoode. Delmer is the son of James Robert Earle, born in Metcalfe, who later went to China as a missionary in 1907.

Maybelle Paww from Seattle, Wash., is looking for ancestors. The Gallaghers from Lodi, Mich. are searching for the roots of the Terry family.

Malcolm Bow came with his daughter to visit the birthplace of his father, Malcolm Bow. The senior Bow was born in the house that became the Presbyterian Manse. He was the son of Thomas Bow, the first store-keeper in Vernon. Malcolm Bow senior later became the first Manitoba minister of health. Ancestor William Bow came to Winchester from Scotland at the age of 17.

Later in the same week, Jean Porteous Trotter, daughter of John Kennedy Porteous, came to the archives. John Kennedy bought the store from Thomas Bow, and she knew Malcolm Bow as a child. The store is now Porteous Foodliner.

The Lorne MacCormick family of Thessalon came to visit the museum.

The Maynard Hill, son of Dan Hill and his wife Edith Dewar, came from Toronto to talk about his school days in Vernon.

Donna McArthur of Ottawa came to see some of the artifacts and pictures that have been donated from her grandparents' stores. Ancestor Duncan McArthur was a blacksmith in Kenmore Parish, Perthshire, and he came to Kenmore where he and his sons continued the trade. The McArthur plow can be seen in the Museum of Science and Technology on St. Laurent Blvd. in Ottawa.

Clifford Burns of Southgate, CA., is in Osgoode searching out his Burns connection.

The Romantic Story of Alex Kennedy and his Wife by George Armstrong.

How they went from Glengarry in 1846 and settled in the wilds on the banks of the Castor River. Alex Kennedy became a great trapper. A real Pioneer Tale:

Alex Kennedy, when in his early twenties, left Glengarry and established himself in the new land of Osgoode near the Mountain twp. border. That was in 1846. His story is a romantic one. Alex Kennedy liked the wild life, and by 1846 Glengarry was becoming too civilized and too crowded for him. He walked West on a tour of investigation. On the Banks of the Castor River he found just the spot he wanted. The spot chosen was just about 50 miles from his old home. After locating the place he wanted, he went back to Glengarry and told his young wife (he had married at 18) about the new home.

Then he packed a week's provisions, took his axe and started for the Castor, arrived there and began to cut the forest to make room for a shanty. At the end of a week he walked home to see his wife and renew his provisions. In time (several months) there was a clearing and the home was up. How the wife and child got to the Castor, is not known now, but history records the fact that the wife was brave and helpful. At that time the Castor country was full of game, bears, foxes, mink, muskrat, etc. A few beaver were still to be found in the Castor. By nature Alex Kennedy was a trapper. He took chiefly to trapping for a living. It is told that in the first year he was on the Castor he captured 500 muskrats, 25 foxes, 15 or 16 bear and about a dozen mink.

The Kennedys made all the furniture they used in their new home. The table was made by boring holes in the wall and inserting therein round sticks. On to the tops of these sticks, split pine boughs were tied. The table didn't have any legs, but it held the few dishes they had. These dishes by the way, were carried on Mr. Kennedy's back from Glengarry. Instead of chairs the family used benches made from split pine logs, four legs (boughs of trees) inserted into the half round side. The bed was made like the table. At

first the hardness of the bed was only softened by pine boughs, and they only had a fireplace to cook with. Later roads came, a stove was brought from Prescott. In winter people could reach Alex Kennedy's farm with sleighs by using lumber camp roads. In later years they got some cattle and sheep but found it hard to keep their sheep as bears and wolves devoured them.

Back in the fifties and sixties the Castor River in the springtime had great width. It has been known to be flooded to the full width of a mile for a length of many miles. In low water as narrow as forty feet in places. During the high water periods great quantities of splendid pine and oak went down the Castor from there and on to the South Nation from which stream it found its way into the Ottawa River and eventually to Que.

Alex Kennedy died in 1905 and his wife in 1914. They were the grandparents of John and Kathleen Kennedy.

A Story Worth Telling Twice (in part) as told by Banford McKendry

Wm. McKendry 1810-1887 grew up in Bushmills, and worked around the Giants Causeway, Antrim, Ireland, before starting out for Canada 1834. My Aunt Florence McKendry (Mrs. Dr. John) and I visited these places in 1964 and talked with some distant relatives. Various families had come to Osgoode from Antrim before 1834, and William was anxious to see them as well as his brother John who had settled in the Quinte district.

After a visit with John he explored Bytown: then he boarded the stage coach - a springless wagon that went from Bytown to Prescott and was let off at the Allens, lot 36, con 2, near the Osgoode-Mountain boundary. A few years working for settlers clearing land of the mighty trees gave him money to buy 100 acres from John Fisher, lot 38, con 5, where there was a small shanty. Probably the fact that his father William, married to Margaret McLeister, had come to Ireland from Scotland helped to make him feel at home amongst his neighbours: Campbell, McDiarmid, McMartin, Ferguson, Stuart, McCaul, McNab, etc. Some of these Scots went with William to the Presbyterian service at Hyndman's or South Gower where Rev. Joseph Anderson from Antrim preached. Their walk was by the Marlins where Wm. met a young widow, Frances Marlin Paul who had come out with her parents Robert Marlin and Fanny Banford c 1823. (Dau Christian Paul m Henry Merkley). Wm & Fanny decided to marry and Wm. worked months getting ready a small log house only to see it go up in flames. They were married anyway in 1844 and began a new home. There were 7 children born: Banford, William, Robert, Nancy (d 7 yrs), Margaret, Nancy, John. Our home was near that of Peter McCaul, a Baptist of very strong convictions, and near that of Rev. Daniel McPhail, Baptist minister 1840-1865. Is it any wonder the McKendrys became Baptists? There were many baptisms in the Castor R. much larger than now - that went through many of the farms in our neighbourhood.

The Swale school on a corner of Peter McCaul's farm suited us fine - it was the place two generations were educated, but the land was low with vicious mosquitoes, and Mr. Waterson's punishment was severe. After many years of feuding the large school Section was divided and I went to Belmede. The new school built, because the old one was mysteriously burned, had 2 doors in the porch, one each for students from opposing factions.

Castor What's in a name: Castor

I will in my inept way strive to portray a picture of another aspect of Osgoode Township History. The Castor, but first I would like to portray the topographical characteristics of this part of Eastern Ontario and land neighbouring to the east and south of this immediate area. I like to feel free to quote excerpts from the Historical Atlas of Carleton County, illustrated by H. Belden & Co. 1879.

Carleton County is particularly level very similar in most respects to the counties, south and east. We are simply affirming, that it belongs to what scientific writers denominate the Champaign Region, which consist of a territory bounded on the south by the Shickokok, or Notre Dame mountains, which leave the right bank of the St. Lawrence river about one hundred miles below Quebec city, and gradually diverge from the course of that river entering the State of Vermont about 50 miles south of Montreal, under the name of the Green Mountains, continuing westward till it strikes the eastern limit of the valley of Lake Champlain around which it sweeps in a southerly direction till it runs into the Adirondacks, of Western New York State, the eastern limit of which range of hills become the Western boundary of the above named region running in a northerly direction until they terminate at the St. Lawrence River in the neighbourhood of the Thousand Islands. The northern boundary of this region is known as the Laurentides or Laurentian Hills. This range of hills hugs the left bank of the St. Lawrence from the coast of Labrador to a point about twenty miles below the city of Quebec. It diverges gradually inland, being opposite Quebec city about twenty miles north of that city, and about fifty miles north of Montreal, striking the river Ottawa some sixty miles above its confluence, with the St. Lawrence, following its left bank up to the Chats rapids where it crosses the Ottawa river and runs an almost southerly direction meeting the

meeting the Adirondack range at the Thousand Islands, thus it will seem that the county of Carleton is a part of the Champaign region, which comprises the valley of the upper St. Lawrence and the Lower Ottawa in Canada, and the valley of Lake Champlain in the United States and like the greater part of that region the surface of the county throughout the major portion of Carleton also is very level, the exceptions being so few and of such character as to be scarce worthy of notice as affecting the general topography.

Topographically, Osgoode presents no marked peculiarities. It is more generally, and more thoroughly in accord with the prevailing characteristics of the Champaign region of which it geologically forms a part of, than any other township in the county. Most of the surface is exceptionally even, tending to flatness through large portions of it, but in no place, so much so as to make it impracticable of drainage, here as elsewhere throughout the county much of the land which was at first perfectly worthless on account of its low level, has been brought into cultivation by a comprehensive system of drainage and now ranks, with the finest land in the county and at no distant day seems likely to become the leading township of Carleton as a first class agriculture section. It is watered by the Castor river and its branches which form a confluence further east with the Nation River emptying into the Ottawa. This stream is so called after a French word meaning Beaver, from the immense numbers of that valuable fur bearing animal which in early days were found along its banks. Before the actual settlement of the township, however, they became almost exterminated by the diligent application of trap and gun in the hands of the North-West and Hudson's Bay fur traders, and the Indians, who traded with them, with the exception of beaver, otter, and deer. The latter of which were exceedingly abundant and said to have been more plentiful throughout Osgoode township than in almost any other part of the county. Fish of every known variety and of the finest quality and almost incalculable quantity which frequented our inland waters were here found.

The timber particularly oak, lining the bank of the Castor, and its branches was of exceptionally excellent character, and in quantity, no locality surpassed it. It was drawn even from the banks of the Rideau and floated by way of the Castor and Petite Nation to the Ottawa and thence to Quebec, that route to the lower Ottawa being much preferable in a variety of ways to the Rideau route itself.

My grandfather, Michael Daley, interviewed by George Wilson of the Ottawa Citizen, dated Sept. 6, 1930 relates how when his grandfather Michael Daley came into the township in 1835 from Quebec province, there were scenes of a great deal of lumbering. Very large square timber, pine and oak were being drawn to the rivers and floated down river.

It was the acquaintance formed by the original oak lumbermen from the St. Lawrence front, while operating on the bank of the Castor that first brought the locality into notice as one worthy of settling, in a locality which hitherto had been looked upon as nothing but one dense and impenetrable swamp. This idea had originally prevailed to such an extent, however, that Osgoode was the latest township in the county to be settled. The first actual settlers located in the winter of 1826-27.

This interesting event was due to Archibald McDonell of Cornwall who had during his lumbering operations along the Castor selected a spot where the 8th concession line crosses that stream (lot 25 con 8) on to which he moved with his family at the above date. His route was northerly from Cornwall until he got into the wilderness where no roads existed. Then he took to the ice on the Nation River, following it down to the junction of the Castor up which he drove to the spot he had selected for settlement.

The McDonell Family had hardly got comfortably settled when they discovered that William York had settled on lot 21 con 9 the same day. The McDonells settled on lot 25 con 8. They were old neighbours in Cornwall. Neither knew the other had any intentions of moving. They both left Cornwall on the same day but by different routes, each thinking they themselves and their families were the only settlers in the township.

Archibald McDonell, his wife and twelve children left an indelible mark on the sands of time. Soon after the McDonells arrived, Richard Hall, and Samuel Loney and their families came in and settled on lot 19 and 18 con 9. During the season of 1832 the Rideau Canal was completed and then the number of settlers began to increase. Archibald McDonell built the first store in the township, and in 1835 he built the first sawmill in the township.

Peter McLaren the first settler in the Kenmore area 1832 built a grist mill on the Castor, thus eliminating the long trek to Cornwall or Bytown to get their grain ground.

The first death in the township occurred at Kenmore being that of Colin Campbell. He was buried on the banks of the Castor (S. Branch). The funeral was attended by all the grownup men in the township and there were just enough men for one change in carrying the coffin from his house to the burying place along a blazed and only partially chopped out path, which was so rough and uneven that the bearers several times missed

their footing, stumbled, and fell with their charge amongst the logs and brush while on their way to the grave site.

A stranger, an Irishman who was working for John McNab was accidentally killed by a falling tree shortly after. He was buried in the Catholic cemetery lot 20, con 6, land donated by Catherine McConell, wife of Archibald, on which the first church in the township was later built in 1839.

On a beautiful Sunday afternoon March 8, 1987 I criss-crossed our township roads, following the source of the main waterways of our township, the Middle Castor, in the west half of lot 2 con 3, winds its way south and east through swamps and fertile lands till its conflux with the North Branch of the Castor on lot 21 con 10. The water rise for the north branch on east half of lot 2 con 3 winds its way across con 4, 5, and into con. 6 heading in a north easterly direction to the border line draining the fertile land of the North eastern corner of the township and parts of Gloucester township, thence heading south to the conflux with the middle Castor and continuing into Russell township through lot 23, con X1.

The South Branch Indication on the 1863 map of the township is called the Main Castor. It drains approximately one third of the township. The stream enters Mountain township from lot 43, con 4 draining a vast area of that township reentering Osgoode township lot 44 in con 6, winding its way north easterly until it meets with the North branch on lot 15 con 1 in Russell township continuing in an easterly direction until its junction with the Nation River on lot 13, con VII in Cambridge township, County of Russell.

Russell Township In common with the other townships of this Region its topography consists of alternate level stretches of agricultural lands and swamp. In the years between 1829-1839 a number of mills were built along the banks of the Castor in this township.

I remember well in years gone by of cutting wood on the banks of the Castor where it wound its way across our farm, of drinking the cold clear water, as it murmured softly around and over the rock in the bottom of the stream. As the sun began melting the winter snows, like the breaking of a dam, the once quiet, tranquil stream becomes a raging torrent spreading out over the flat lands in its never ending race to the sea.

1977 Sesqui Centennial year, a year to remember. An outstanding achievement of the year was the design of the township crest. A contest was held among the school children and prizes awarded to the best entries. The crests were combined by Mrs. Ruby Young of Osgoode to form a colourful and an attractive symbol which is proudly displayed on all township vehicles and stationery.

What's in a name?

The name Snake Island (School) Centre is a befitting tribute, a commemorative plaque to the pioneer families, and a continuity with the past history of Osgoode Township. It is hoped that this brief documentary of facts and events and personalities will arouse interest and pride in the hearts of this generation, and of those to follow, and that it will stimulate a consciousness of our early history.

The drama of struggle, sadness, joy and pride encompassing the lives of the newly arrived settlers and pioneers staggers the imagination. One realizes these early immigrants from Ireland were a hardy folk, and hardy they had to be! They knew the realities of suffering, hunger and illness, and even death. Along with other pioneers they helped to open up this Township, and gave us the safe and happy environment in which we live. Our own descendants can live in peace and freedom because people of strength and courage took a chance on a new land. They followed their dream, and in so doing helped to make our dream come true.

Archibald McDonnell, according to the inscription on his tombstone in St. Catherine's Cemetery in Metcalfe, was the first settler to come into Osgoode with his family 1827-1828. The tombstone of William York in the Methodist cemetery in Metcalfe states that he was the first settler in the township!

The 1842 Census shows a population of 1279 inhabitants, by 1861 this figure had increased to 4,332, and by 1863 there were five Irish families settled on lots in what became known as Snake Island. This name was given because of the large

population of snakes of various sizes, some measuring five feet in length and twelve inches in circumference. Strange to say, the Irish had not been long in the area before the snakes took their departure. In Concession 4 there were - D. O'Connor, Lot 20, T. Devereaux, Lot 21, J. Mantle, Lot 22. In Concession 5 there were - Thos. Cangle, Lot 22, Rev. Thos. Boyle and his family (Father or Brother) - Lot 20, also William Otto and J. Bradley - Lot 19. By 1879 the population of Snake Island had increased considerably with names such as Minogue, Coleman, Dooley, Herbert, Leahy, McMahon, Brennan, Keough, Tobin, Shea, McEvoy and McCabe all from Ireland. Two other families also settled here, the Gray and Duncan families.

The area was covered with water and wild grasses and marshy hay. In the early 1860's a tragedy struck Snake Island. A story is told of a poor family living in the settlement by the name of John and Sally _____. "They kept a cow. John, knowing that winter was coming on, and not wanting the cow to go hungry, decided to cut some of the marsh hay for feed for the cow over the winter. He sharpened his scythe, got his lunch, old clay pipe and tobacco, and off he went to the meadow. He looked over the field and picked out the best spot, as he thought, and set to work. He had not been long mowing when one of those big black snakes bit him on the leg. Luckily there was a man passing by who came to his aid and bound up his wounds, but John died of the snake bite." There were some verses gotten up about this fatality but I will not include them here.

My Great Grandmother, Mary (Downs) Leahy, from County Down, Ireland, told that when they settled in the Island (Lot 24, Con 4) in 1845, they used to light pine torches to drive the wild-cats from the roof of their log cabin.

In 1867, Patrick Herbert, son of my Great, Great Grandparents Patrick and Bridget Herbert (Lot 15, Con 3) received from his father the Deed for the West half of Lot 23, Con 5. 100 acres in Snake Island. On July 10th 1876, Patrick Jr. and his wife Ann McKay donated one acre of land on the N. West corner of Lot 23, Con 5, for \$1.00 to the trustees of School Section No. 14, for the erection of a new English Public School. The agreement was signed by John Tobin, John Coleman and Patrick McCabe, in the presence of Thomas Devereaux. The building was erected of logs, approximately 22 by 26 feet in dimensions with two windows on each side. In later years an addition was made to the school making it approximately 40 feet in length. This building is now a residential home, but still retains the image of its past.

No religion was taught in this school because some of the students were Protestant, despite the fact that the teachers were Irish Roman Catholics by descent, and could teach religion. Children were instructed in their homes in their religious persuasion.

Around 1918 - 19 French families from Embrun, St. Therese, Sarsfield and Rockland came into the area and bought up the farms that the Irish families had spent a lifetime clearing and draining. Mr. Joseph Daoust was one of the first, with a family of eight boys and four girls. He was followed by other French families until there was only Irish family left - John Devereaux. Today his son Frank and family still reside on the homestead that was carved out of the wilderness of Osgoode.

In the early 1920's the French ratepayers bought the school and land from the Public School Board. It then became R.C.S.S. No. 14, and for many years as many as fifty students were in attendance. In 1960 St. Catherine's School in Metcalfe was built, and in 1966 R.C.S.S. No. 14 School Board was dissolved when a majority of French ratepayers and tenants voted to support St. Catherine's English Catholic School and to have their children educated there. For ninety years this little school house served the needs of the community, but like the closing of a book, the era of the one-room school house in Snake Island was no more.

Ironic isn't it, that once again one hundred and ten years later, that a rate payer, Mr. Norman Fenn of Con. 5 Lot 20, has donated a parcel of land for the erection of a building to further the education of our youth?

Michael Daley