



Osgoode Township

Historical Society & Museum

Vernon School

P.O. Box 83 - Vernon, Ontario

Newsletter

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During the first four months of 1976, the weather in Osgoode Township has been worthy of considerable conversation. Because of the record cold spell early in the year, the plumbers were busy trying to keep water running in our modern homes and barns. The garages were overworked starting stalled cars. Then there was the record flooding of the Castor and the Rideau rivers over fields and into homes along the banks. Easter Sunday, April 19, had a record temperature of nearly 90° F., while a week earlier, the thermometer read almost 100° lower. It is no wonder that we who have our roots in Osgoode Township have had to be a sturdy lot.

It was in the early part of any year that the first settlers had to get onto the land they would claim as their own. It was on December 6, 1832, that Archibald McDonell wrote, "There are now 37 respectable Scotch families, 25 Irish, 5 English, 4 Canadian born residing in the Township, and a number of other families ARE COMING IN THIS WINTER." It was necessary to get into the forest wilderness somehow before the snow left the ground and rising rivers made travelling impossible.

In a letter written by Donald McKerchar 1855, and quoted in part in an earlier Newsletter, he says, "maybe tea 3 times a day and no sugar used in the tea in Canada. It would be too expensive there is only one certain time in the year that the sugar will run off the Mappel tree that is in april but there is geart trubble in making it.... this country is very rough for a stranger covered with woods but sinkholes hear and there. The trees are one third longer here than in the auld country and thicker than Drummond Hill three times."

Making maple syrup and maple sugar was almost a necessity for each early family. What a demand there must have been for home-made wooden spiles and wooden buckets, as new families steadily arrived and more and more maple trees were tapped! I wonder how they washed and stored the awkward buckets. And how did they carry sap through deep wet snow when oxen and horses were so scarce?

A second letter written back to a cousin in Scotland the following year gives impressions that interest us.

Dear Gilbert (McLaren)

I write you these few lines to let you know how I am coming on in this new country I am in good health and so is Mary and little Jessie and wee Donauch McKerchar is a fine boy although he was born on the sea.

I was very unpleased in this country the first we got great trouble on the sea and little Anns death which made America black at the first.... I bought a place the price of it was 100 pounds I paid 50 pounds down and the rest in March 1857 which will be hard on me but I will get it on interest but I must give 10 per cente which is very high there is 100 acres and 20 acres clear lands is getting very high in price now there is so much people after land I would get 200 pounds for my place if I would sell it.

After I bought the place I had to engage myself a year with Alex Stewart at 25 pounds and I came on my own place in December last my stock is but little yet I have 2 cows and 3 calves and 3 sheep and 3 pigs and a cat and a number of hens.

I was not pleased in this country at first it is to wild and rough bad roads you never saw so bad I was determined to goe back to auld Scotland but every person was making a fool of me but I am a little more pleased now.... suppose I would stop in Stronfernan all my lifetime I would not be worth 200 pounds but the climate is not so pleasant hear hot in summer and extra cold in winter it is a level track of land but great many places very stoney I thought there was no stones in America but there is a great many the woods are very thick large hemlock is the longest and some 5 feet through the length of the heavy timber is from 90 to 100 feet and the acre is 70 yards square and when the poles and brush is cut out there is 40 and 50 large trees in the acre and a good axeman will chop that in 8 days and make them in short pieces 15 feet long and pile the brush and when summer comes we set fire to the brush then get the oxen and make the heavy timber in large piles and burn them and we call that clear land.

Full of stumps about 4 feet high but they will come out in 10 years time I have excellent wheat among the stumps you would think in the night it is men standing among the wheat. There is a great mixture of people in this countre there is French Dutch Irish English and Scotch and highlanders."

- to be continued -

There are many reasons for this mixture of races in Osgoode Township of more than a hundred years ago. The Liberty Bell stamp on the United States letter reminds us of one of the reasons. This bi-centennial year - 200 years since the Colonies declared their Independance from Great Britain on July 4, 1776 - means to many of us that 200 years ago one or more of our ancestors living in the Colonies at that time lost their freedom, their homesteads, and a way of life they had become accustomed to in a new land. They dared to believe that a Republican form of government was not better than the Monarchy for resolving the grievances that had arisen in the aftermath of the French War. 1976 would be a good year to search out the contribution made by the Loyalists and their descendants to the development of Osgoode Township.

The Loney family whose homestead is depicted on this Newsletter were known to have been in Cornwall before coming to Osgoode. We are fortunate to be so near the Public Archives on Wellington Street, Ottawa. If any of your ancestors have been in Canada since around 1800, there are a great many records written by them and about them that have been preserved. The name Louney, Lowney, Loeny, Lony, Loney, etc. is not a common name and search of the Upper and Lower Canada Land Petitions in 1797, each stating he was over 21, and that he was the son of John Louney (etc.), Loyalist and that he lived in Charlottenburg. (East of Cornwall). Eleanor Loney, asking land at the same time, stated that she was the daughter of Peter Fitzpatrick, Loyalist, and that she was the wife of William Loney. Each petitioner was granted 200 acres of land in 1798. But how were Samuel and Richard, brothers who settled in Osgoode, connected to the original John?

Christ Church Cathedral, near the Archives, is collecting and indexing all the records for the Church of England in this Eastern part of Ontario. The Archives there, under the care of Archdeacon Bradley, are open to the public on Mondays. There it was found that Richard Loney was baptized July 21, 1816, the son of William and Eleanor Loney of Charlottenburg. Other children were found, including Mary, baptized October 15, 1804, who became, it would seem, the wife of Richard Hall, who lived in the ninth concession next to the Loneys and Farlingers. The marriage of Samuel Loney and Mary Farlinger was recorded as well as some of the births of their children. On Dec. 5, 1823, the birth of Ann, twin daughter of Richard Hall, blacksmith, Cornwall, and wife Mary is recorded. This Ann Hall married Robert Kincaid of Kenmore. In the records of the Osgoode Presbyterian Church is to be found the birth of twins, Robert Rankine and Ann Maria, to Robert Kincaid and Ann Hall on March 10, 1861.

The present owner of the Loney farm has the same name as his great, great, great grandfather, John the Loyalist. We would like some one of the Loney family who are working on their history to give us information on the Loney residence in the Colonies

before John joined the Royal Regiment of New York 200 years ago.

In the Anglican Archives there are records of many families from the Cornwall area who came to Osgoode: Eastman, Wood, Silmsler, Latimer, Farlinger, Cameron, Spiers. Then there are records of the old Richmond area, and of the North Gower area which have the familiar names of Lewis, Stanley, Acres, James, Saunders, Kerr, McVey.

The Public Archives have miscellaneous records from a variety of churches from different areas, even some from Montreal around 1780. Since it was not required by law to preserve these vital statistics until 1869, we are fortunate to find any mention of our forefathers.

Osgoode Township does not have a personal census for the year 1851, but Mountain Township to the south has the 1851 census, and there you can find many whose descendants are in Osgoode: Carkners, Woods, Stoodleys, Whyatts, Kerrs, Reids, Allans.

From the agriculture census of Osgoode, 1861, we read:

"There is a R. Catholick Church built about the middle of lott 20 concession 3, a frame building 36 x 60, 4 acres of land belonging to it, 3 acres on lot no 20 and 1 in lott 19. Value of land about 12 dollars per acre and a barn cost \$1040 and a stoan building on same capable of accomodating about 400 persons."

Again:

"There is a school house built in froant of lott no 15 in 4th concession about 20 ft square."

This year, the Ottawa Historical Society is planning special celebrations to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Bytown. Our Township is certainly closely linked with the activity along the Rideau during the building of the Canal in the years 1826-32. We hope that new documents, unknown at present, dealing with work along the canal, will be discovered to throw light on that part of our History.

As mentioned in the January Newsletter, our Historical Society undertook to serve pancakes and Maple Syrup on Friday and Saturday of the first two weeks of April. We had excellent coverage by the Citizen, the CBC, the Winchester press, and some fine sugar making weather that kept a hard working staff of about 15 persons very busy. Our social convenor Mrs. Harry Lee, present for the entire period, flipped pancakes for hours. The treasurer of the Society, Mrs. Wm. Dow, with 3 part time assistants, handled over \$1100 and made a net profit of nearly \$700 which can be used toward our ever rising maintenance costs. Harry Anderson, secretary, was on hand, greeting everyone, directing them to the Sugar Bush and having them sign their names and addresses. The birthplaces of the hundres who converged upon us ranged from coast to coast in Canada; and indeed nearly every continent was represented. At the sugar bush, James Stuart and his family welcomed the interested group, most of whom were complete strangers to the process of making maple syrup. All seemed to enjoy the friendly atmosphere and the efficient way so many in the kitchen kept the pancake platters and syrup pitchers and coffee cups well filled.

The meetings in May and June will be on the first and third Fridays, as usual; the first Fridays in the afternoon and the third Fridays in the evenings. Our Museum will be open in the afternoons on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and on all holidays. We plan special displays for the first week in July. The July Newsletter will have more information on the summer and fall program. The same Newsletter will print the names of all the 1976 paid-up members.

On July 15, we plan to honour our oldest member, John Campbell, now of Vernon, living with his sister Jessie, children of Thomas Campbell and Catherine McDiarmid of Dalmeny. Johnnie will be 100 years old, God willing, on that date.

Miss Arlowa Ferguson, Archivist and Curator, was a delegate to the Seminar in Hamilton of the Local Societies of the Ontario Historical Society. As intimated in the last Newsletter she is continuing an article explaining the details of the work that must be done at a museum.

YOUR GIFTS TO THE SOCIETY

Over the three years since the Historical Society was organized we have received a wealth of information and artifacts that has far surpassed our expectations. Consequently, although we have been able to record the receipt of gifts, we have fallen behind in our cataloguing and classification work. Ideally, each article should be described in detail when it is received and a receipt given to the donor. This is being done for current donations and, eventually, all gifts will be formally acknowledged.

Our procedure is to give the donor a receipt for the gift, retaining a copy for our files and a copy to be attached to the article. Then, in our Accession/Registration Register, we enter the name of the donor, the artifact donated and its brief description and date, and the catalogue number of the artifact.

This catalogue identification is placed on each article. If you notice, for example, an article marked "976.21.10", it means the donation was made in 1976, it was the 21st time a donation was made in that year, and the number 10 is the identification number of that particular artifact.

If you should wish to deposit an article with the museum on loan, we have a loan form agreement that will ensure the return of the article after a specified period.

Following is a list of names of donors, further to the one published in our last newsletter:

Mrs. Alex. J. Campbell
 Mrs. Bruce Campbell
 Mrs. Rolla Campbell
 Mrs. J. C. Cowell
 Mr. Peter Crerar
 Mr. Bruce Elliott
 Miss Arlowa Ferguson
 Mrs. John Hawkshaw
 Mrs. Etta Hill
 Mrs. Gordon Kennedy

Rev. M. Minvielle
 Mrs. Theodore McBride
 Mrs. George McDonald
 Mrs. Charles Patterson
 Mrs. James Pritchard
 Mrs. L. Renton
 Mrs. Norma Simpson
 Mrs. Ed. Snider
 Mr. Herlert Taylor
 Dr. Arnold Taylor
 Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Wallen

The Museum wishes to acknowledge receipt of records from the Osgoode Presbyterian Church, from the Kenmore, Ormond, Osgoode, South Gower, and Winchester Baptist Churches, and from the Osgoode and Vernon United Churches. There are as well pieces of information on the Roman Catholic Church in Metcalfe and its predecessor at Metcalfe corner.

We have also received school registers and records from Osgoode Township Schools in Kenmore, Metcalfe, Marvelville and Vernon.