

The first apple orchard east of the house may have been planted in the 1840's. A few of these trees still remain in 1964. Some of the varieties were Tallman Sweet, Maiden Blush, Wagener, Russet, Winesap, Pumpkin Sweet, Twenty Ounce Pippin and others which are not now commonly grown. In 1891 "...the greatest apple crop we ever had - the best and the most so large..." : November 5, 1891, "... shipped 100 bbls. to Glasgow from Dorchester Station." That same year "...we have a pumpkin 60 inches round and corn 15 feet high - turnips over 22 lbs." Later in the 1890's, a second orchard was planted mostly of spies, Greening and Baldwin varieties.

Milk cows were first kept for income from the sale of butter. Each day a large number of pans of milk were skimmed of cream, before the use of a cream separator, which was then churned and put in crocks for sale. Later milk was sent to a Gladstone cheese factory. By 1891, "Dec. 3, 200 lbs milk to factory - 16 cows give 100 lbs at a milking." Ice for many years was taken from the farm pond, stored in sawdust and used to cool the milk during warm weather. Up to this time, Durham cattle had been kept for both milk and beef production. What must have been one of the earliest purebred Holstein sires in this area, Lord Lytle, No. 12324, is listed in a History of the Holstein-Friesian Breed in Canada as being purchased by William Thompson Jr., of Derwent, from Herman Bollert, of Cassel, Oxford County, in 1889. Interest was taken in the local fair when in 1880 "...took two 1st prizes on corn this month ... got 1 on apples at Belmont Fair - got the seed corn from Mr. Hillburn, Sparta." That same year "William bought a sheep at Belmont fair, Oct. 12th. Paid \$8."

Most of the provisions of daily life, in early years on the homestead, were provided from the farm. Mention has been made of wool being used from the sheep flock. Before the use of oil lamps, light was from candles of tallow made in the candle mould. Soap was made from wood ashes collected in the "ash barrel". This was still done until about the time of the First World War. Mattresses were made of straw and tickings of down. Rooms in the house were whitewashed before the use of wallpaper. "June 19, 1871, bought the first paper for the house." Quantities of fruit were preserved, apples and corn were dried for tables use. Meat was provided from their own stock. Hogs were slaughtered and the bacon and hams were salted and smoked in the "smoke-house". Eggs were preserved in water-glass. And of course, nearly all baking was done in the home as there were many to be fed. Nearly always, there was one or more hired men and usually a hired girl. For some years, the local school teacher was boarded. Ministers would stay and strangers "...July 9, 1892, a tramp and his dog here all night - left a little bag." Five generations of the family have been served at the same table since its purchase in 1871.

To help with the large washings mention is made "...July 13, 1889, we got a new machine for washing from Toronto".

Visits and dining out seem to have been frequent in the community. Picnics were held at our own pond from an early date. "June 27, 1873...went to Port Stanley with four children - first time for me - had a nice time on the shore".

There was a severe fire around the pond in 1871, on October 21 - 22. "...fire broke out at the pond, crowds of men there putting it out".

Each day, the mail was brought from the post office at Derwent, a distance of about a mile and a half. Rural delivery did not commence until 1913. Music in the home was provided when on "May 24, 1873, bought a new Esty organ, \$210."

In 1895, William Thompson sold to his son, James D., the 50 acre farm on Concession 3. That year, James D., married Elizabeth Emma Lennox, who at one time had been the teacher at the Derwent school. Also that year, a new brick house was built on the property.

Through the years, Mr. and Mrs. William Thompson were always active members in the local church. The family first attended the Wesleyan Methodist Church on the 5th Concession of Westminister, at the Dorchester townline. When the first Salem Church was built at Derwent, in 1855, timber was taken from the farm bush and used in its construction. Rev. Wm. Savage, pastor in charge, consecrated the work by holding a service "...under the great forest trees". William Thompson was for forty or more years a member of the Quarterly Official Board of the Methodist Church. James Thompson was teacher of the Bible Class in the Sunday School for many years.

William Thompson died February 5, 1898. The following year, on March 19, 1899, his wife Jane died. They were buried in the Grove Cemetary, London.

William Thompson, left to his son, George Robinson, the farm on Lot 22, Concession 2, consisting of 150 acres. He, on September 5, 1902, married Janet Ann, daughter of Edward and Jane (Stewart) Beattie, who lived on an adjoining farm. They were married by Rev. E. H. Sawers, of Westminster Presbyterian Church. Born on August 22, 1874, Mrs. Thompson was one of the earliest graduate nurses (1900) of Victoria Hospital, London. To them five children were born; George Edward, Norah Rea, Wm. A. Latimer, Robinson and Sarah Agnes.

An addition to the house was made in 1909, when the brick walls were raised over the kitchen, adding two more bedrooms and a bathroom.

A new Salem Church was built at Derwent in 1908, much of the interior was finished in oak that was taken from the farm.

James D. Thompson, in 1909, had a telephone installed in his house when a single wire was strung down the road on poles nailed to fence posts. His brother, George R., had his first installed in December 1917.

About 1918, George R., purchased from his brother, James D., the 50 acres farm he had owned on Concession 3.

On a Sunday night, August 7, 1921, a fire destroyed all the barns, including the old log house, that were on the farm on Concession 2. That fall, on October 21, an auction sale was held disposing of nearly all the livestock, as there was only time to build a small barn before winter. It is now used as a drive-shed.

During 1922, a new barn, about 122 feet long and 44 feet wide was built. Using nearly all the original stone walls for the foundation, it was built of fir shipped by rail to Belmont, from British Columbia. The joints were of elm cut from the farm bush. Robert Hair, of Derwent, was the builder.

In 1927, 50 acres of land was purchased from Mrs. David R. Beattie. This made the size of the farm on Lot 22, about 196½ acres. In 1916, 3½ acres of the south east corn were sold to David R. Beattie, to make a better driveway to his house.

The first automobile, a Ford Touring, was bought in July 1924. Hydro was installed in September 1928. A water pressure system, for house and barn, was installed in 1937. A Fordson tractor was first owned in 1931.

General mixed farming had been carried on through the years with the raising of cattle and hogs. For many years, a carload of cattle would be fattened through the winter months and sold in the spring. A flock of sheep was kept until the mid 1930's. The milking herd would number usually from 12 to 16. Then in the 1920's commenced the gradual increase to dairying. Milk was sent to the North Gladstone cheese factory for many years. For a time, milk was separated and the cream sold, or made into butter. Butter was made for home use until about 1940. A milking machine - Hinman - was first used in 1929. Later, in 1937, a DeLaval milker was purchased.

In April 1939, Robinson, son of George R. Thompson, purchased a number of purebred Holstein heifer calves. These were raised and from this initial purchase, nearly all the cattle in the herd of 1964 are descended. From the time a milk quota was obtained from the Gold Seal Dairy, in London, in 1944, the dairy herd has been gradually increased year by year from around twenty to over forty milk cows. In 1942, the name Cavanaugh was registered as the farm name and used as the prefix in the naming of the purebred cattle.

Cavanaleck, located in Fermanagh County, Ireland, had been the location of the family for nearly 250 years before coming to Canada. There, stands one of the oldest Presbyterian Churches in N. Ireland, having been established about 1675, by families of the Ulster Plantation, from England and Scotland.

The early part of the 1930's saw the depths of the depression, the gross total farm income during twelve months, from April, 1931, to April 1932, was about \$1,500. This was only to a little more than double the next few years. Milk produced that was sold in 1940, totalled 204,104 lbs.; in 1952, the total was 407,500 lbs. and by 1962, it had risen to over 500,000 lbs. This was brought about not only by a greater number of milk cows being kept, but by greatly increased production per cow. The herd was first placed on R. O. P. in 1947.

Through these years, great changes took place in farming operations. Horses were last used in our farm about 1954. For many years, neighbors had owned together a steam engine and grain separator for threshing. The steam engine was replaced by a tractor for power about 1937. The grain separator was last used on the farm in 1956, to be followed by a combine. Haying changes took place and a motor driven blower to put it in the barn. In 1960, a baler was purchased. Greatly increased yields from crops was brought about by increased use of commercial fertilizers, hybrid corn and higher yielding seed grains.

George Robinson Thompson, died at the farm where he was born eighty-one years before, February 21, 1947. His wife, Janet Ann, made her home with her son Robinson, who had inherited the farms from his father, till her passing, May 30, 1958, in her eighty-fourth year.

Robinson Thompson, on August 27, 1955, married Elizabeth Agnes, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George P. Moore, of Florence Hall Farms, Galt. They were married in Central Presbyterian Church, Galt, by Dr. David Gowdy. A graduate of Galt Collegiate and Hamilton Normal School, Mrs. Thompson was, for a number of years, a teacher at Princess Elizabeth school, Ingersoll. Three children to them have been born; James Arthur, George Robinson and Jane Elizabeth.

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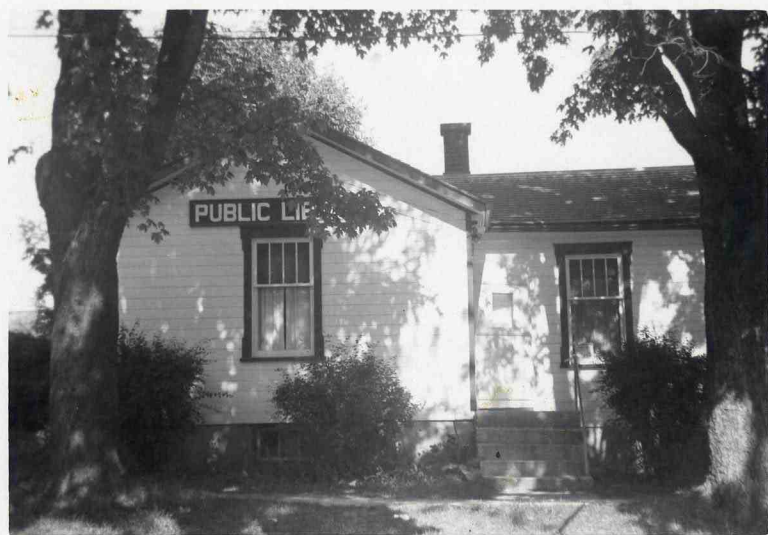


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