

The last Cowal Sale was held on Thursday, May 4, 1961.

The sale was an event eagerly looked forward to by the school children as it meant a holiday from school, some years for the whole day, other years for only a half day. If the day was warm enough the winter clothes were shed and a new dress or shirt and pants were initiated for the first time. It was a welcome relief from the old brown stockings and blue bloomers. A few brave souls even dared to go bare footed. Some years Number 9 school played ball against Number 8 and 20 in the ball park on the Cowal Sideroad.

It was also a busy day for the ladies of the community as both dinner and supper were served in the Hall. Some years sandwiches and coffee were also served. These meals were organized by the Women's Institute.

As there were no trucks in the early days of the sale, the cattle were driven on foot along the roads to the stockyards and all morning herds of cattle could be seen heading for Cowal. Once there, they were numbered, each consigner having his own number, then separated into various pens until their turn to be sold. The pens were made of rail fences and more than once in the day a pen had to be repaired as an excited animal tried to get loose. It took a lot of volunteer labour to keep things running smoothly.

By nightfall most of the cattle had been dispersed to their new owners, money changed hands and most of the crowd headed for home. However some years it was much later before the last "drop" was consumed and the sale was over for another year.

Low Water Crossing

No history of the Community would be complete without mentioning the SCOW, - a flat bottomed boat maintained by the Community and used to cross the river at the end of the Cowal sideroad. Anyone wishing to cross the river took the Scow, crossed and left it tied at the opposite side. However, if you wished to cross, and the Scow was on the opposite side, you had to shout until someone on the other side heard you and took the Scow to you. Many times, John Campbell who lived nearby and his Ekfrid neighbors were called from their work for this reason. This Scow was large enough to transport livestock, teams and wagons etc., It was guided by a heavy rope stretched between trees on either bank. After Chalmers Presbyterian Church was built about one mile South of the river in 1856, the Scow was much used on Sunday mornings. People walked on road from as far as Melbourne and the Longwood road to attend church, and used the Scow to cross the river.

Low Water Bridge

Later a bridge was built across the river to replace the Scow. This was a much used bridge for many years as many people from the Cowal area used it to go to Middlemiss, in Ekfrid to shop and get their horses shod, etc. However the bridge was not too satisfactory as the ice and flodds in the spring usually carried the planks of floor off the bridge downstream, and these would have to be replaced each year. The bridge was finally abandoned about 1930.

Thames River Crossings

When Middlesex and Elgin were separated Lots A. B. & C. were added to the Dunwich survey by Col. Talbot so it would meet the Ekfrid townline and have the river bridge at this point. The first Dunwich - Southwold town line bridge was built in 1883 East of the present site. The current of the river near the bridge was such that the ice would jam in the Spring and threaten to displace the bridge. New stone abutments were made on the present site in 1892. Moses Lumley and Mr Crause of Iona had the contract to move the bridge. They cut timber from Friars woods and had the bridge on rollers when the river overflowed. The men had fears for the bridge for two days. A tree floated down the river and lodged against the bridge. This spelled disaster. A sturdy rope was put around the waist of Mr Crause and he was lowered over the bridge to the tree. He used an axe and chopped off the offending limb that wedged the tree. As the tree was freed the men hauled Mr Crause up on the bridge to safety. When the water receded the men floated the bridge to its new foundation where it served the public until 1936 when the present bridge was built much higher and the hill leading to the bridge cut down to make access to it much easier. When motor cars first came in it was found very difficult for them to go up the steep hill leading from the bridge, especially in muddy and icy weather. Many a stranded motorist was helped out of difficulty by the John Carroll family who lived at the top of the hill. Some Model T cars were known to back up the hill when they could not go forward. Now the road is paved on both sides of the river.

Tile Yards

- 1859 William Fraser made brick and tile.
Dan McIntyre made brick on Lot 17, Concession 4, for 10 years.
Hathaways took over for 5 or 6 years.
- 1883 Alex Smith started a tile and brick business on Lot 17, Conc.3.
In later years he was assisted by his son, Milton Smith.
The business supplied bricks for many of the homes in the neighbouring communities.
The business closed in 1935.

TELEPHONES

The Dunwich - Southwold Telephone Company came in 1907. Peter Carswell and W.R. Pollard installed the lines and telephones. In 1906 the Dunwich and Dutton Company extended their lines to Cowal. Head linesman for Dunwich-Dutton was James Milton who held the position from 1948 to 1964 when Bell telephone took over the company and Mr. Milton was forced to retire at the age of 81 years. He was still nimbly climbing the poles at that age.

The dial system began on December 6, 1964 in Dunwich and in January 1966 in Southwold. Daniel McCallum and Ray Jewell removed the poles and wires as well as the battery operated telephones which are collectors items today. The switch boards in Dutton, Shedden and Fingal were closed.

The old lines carried up to 15 families on one line which at times caused problems and of course "the grapevine" flourished. Today there are 2 to 3 families on a party line. The telephone cable is buried underground which is a great advantage as the overhead wires were always breaking and repairs could take from several hours to several days, especially if a storm had broken the wires.

COWAL 4-H HOMEMAKING CLUBS

By Mrs. R.D. Campbell

In the spring of 1938 the Women's Institute felt they should be helping the junior girls in Home Economic Clubs. Mrs. Hugh Carroll and Mrs. Hugh McCallum were appointed leaders. Since that time the Institute has sponsored clubs every year (with the exception of the war years of 1941, 1942, 1943 1944, and 1945) up to the present time. A two day Instructional Course for the leaders is held by the Home Economist from the Department of Agriculture and Food, St.Thomas. The first club was "Cottons May be Smart". The girls enrolled in the first club were: Margaret Anderson, Dorothy Campbell, Katherine Campbell, Catherine Carroll, Kathyleen Campbell, Marjorie Bennett, Shirley Carroll, Nancy Little, Shirley Rowe, Margurite Rowe, Helen Patterson, Eleanor McCallum, Mary Campbell ,Marie Coulter, and Betty Donaldson. These girls made a cotton dress and learned the fundamentals of sewing. Mary Campbell and Katherine Campbell competed in Toronto at the Toronto Exhibition that year against other clubs from across Ontario.

Courses in cooking, gardening, entertaining and health are given as well as the sewing. Some of the clubs that have been given include Dressing Up Home Grown Vegetables, The Club Girl Entertains, Sleeping Garments, Supper Club, Cotton Accessories, Garden Club, The Milky Way, Being Well Dressed and Groomed, Meat in the Menu, Clothes Closets up to Date, Cereal Shelf, Working with Wool, What Shall I Wear?, Club Girl Stands on Guard , Cotton Accessories for the Club Girl's Bedroom, Featuring Fruits, Separates for Summer, A World of Food in Canada and Focus on Fitness.

Usually there have been two clubs a year given with Achievement Day held for the girls in the County at the completion of the club. The Cowal club girls have always had a high standard of achievement, with many receiving awards and scholarships. In 1949 Tena and Anne Campbell won honours for Ontario in judging clothing at the Royal Winter Fair. Yvonne Patterson was awarded the Sewing Course Scholarship in Toronto sponsored by the Canadian Countryman magazine. Women's Institute scholarships have been won by Eileen Jewell, Margaret Jane Campbell and Sharon Carroll. A bus trip to Washington was won by Margaret McTavish and a trip to Chicago Congress was given to Catherine Carroll, Janet McCallum, Marjorie Carroll and Mona Little. Judging teams of Cowal girls were often picked from the county to take part in the Nutrition and clothing competitions at the Toronto Exhibition. Some of these were Anne Campbell, Tena Campbell, Janet McCallum, Rose Marie Campbell, Dorothy Bennett, Margaret McTavish and Yvonne Patterson. Many girls were chosen to attend the Girl's Conference at Guelph and most of the girls have taken part in judging and demonstrations at Western Fair, London, with very credible showings. Practically all the girls have their County Honours (completing 6 clubs) a great many have Provincial Honours (completing 12 clubs) , many their Advance Honours (completing 18 clubs) as well some have completed 24 clubs.

Those receiving Provincial Honours were_ (12 clubs)

Tena Campbell	Mona Little	Sharon Carroll
Anne Campbell	Anna Jean Murray	Donna Watson
Janet McCallum	Anne Patterson	Mary Carroll
Dorothy Bennett	Eileen Jewell	Dorothy Carroll
Rose Marie Campbell	Elizabeth Murray	Linda McCann
Catherine Carroll	Alice Campbell	Beth Campbell
Margaret McTavish	Maribel McCallum	Marlene Watson
Yvonne Patterson	Margaret Jane Campbell	Kay Watson
Marjorie Carroll	Patricia J. Campbell	Linda Gosnell
		Louise Campbell

Those receiving Advanced Honours were (18 clubs)

Sarah Manning, Betty Ann Bobier, Susan Campbell, Darlene Murray, and Grace Campbell.

Much credit is due to the Women's Institute members and the mothers who have given the girls so much valuable help and leadership. A total of thirty-eight women have been leaders through the years, many of them leading more than one club. Special mention must be made of Mrs. Leonard Carroll who led 12 clubs between 1955 and 1965.

Economics has been, and will be, a wonderful asset to all the girls who have taken part in the clubs.

Since 1967, the following girls have received Provincial Honours:

Linda Gosnell	Sharon Bobier	Christine McTavish
Marlene Watson	Diane Campbell	Elaine Campbell
Sarah Manning	Rosemary McCallum	Joan Campbell
Betty Anne Bobier	Nancy McCallum	Donna Reeves
Beth Campbell	Marianne Hunter	Jean Campbell
Darlene Murray	Dianne McTavish	Pauline Campbell
Louise Schultz	Elizabeth Campbell	Mary Anne McCallum
Bonnie Watson	Margaret Campbell	Laura Campbell
Kay Watson	Janice Campbell	Lynne Campbell
Susan Campbell	Melissa Mezenberg	Cynthia McCallum

Those receiving Advance Honours since 1975 are:

Bonnie Watson (Lawrence)	Margaret Campbell	Joan Campbell
Nancy McCallum	Janice Campbell	Beth Harries
Elizabeth Campbell	Nancy Hunter	Donna Reeves
		Jean Campbell

Honourable mention goes to:

Margaret Campbell, April 1984 having 29 clubs
Beth Campbell Peternel, April 1984, having 27 clubs.

Special Awards went to:

Nancy McCallum for National Citizenship Seminar in Ottawa in 1975
Elizabeth Campbell for Interprovincial Exchange to Nova Scotia in 1977
Margaret Campbell for Interprovincial Exchange to Quebec in 1979
Melissa Mezenburg for Shell 4-H United Kingdom Exchange in 1980

SPORTS

In Cowal the young men organized a hard ball team before the first world war. Many an evening was spent in John Campbell's pasture field beside the No. 9 School House. Many a young lad learned the art of pitching a curve, - drop, etc. In the early days the boys team played against Mupcey and Lawrence Station. They re-organized after the war, but about that time the girls were getting interested in soft ball. Eventually the boys disbanded and became softball enthusiasts too.

The Elgin Junior Institute had a softball league and there were four teams in Dunwich, - Iona Station, Largie, Coyne's Corners & Cowal.

The managers were James C. Campbell, Hugh Carroll and Humphrey Campbell. The games were played in the pasture field by the school until a lot was purchased in Cowal in 1926 and a good ball diamond made by the boys, our faithful supporters.

Cowal won for Dunwich two years and met in Pinafore Park in St. Thomas against the Belmont Girls. The capable pitching of Miss Beatrice Harkness defeated Cowal both years, much to the disgust of Hugh Carroll and Humphrey Campbell.

Two tennis courts were marked on the playground and were used until the nets were burned in a house fire. They were never replaced.

Boys and Girls played Softball in Y. P. Union of the Church as mixed teams.

Boys once again became a majority in Cowal and a boys softball team was organized and played their games in Dutton under the lights for several years. They later joined the West Lorne League.

Girls Softball Team

Play off game at Pinafore Park



Standing, Left to Right:-
Agnes McCallum, Ethel Leitch, Ina McCallum, Agnes Jean McCallum, Hugh Carroll, Manager, Marion McCallum, Ellen McCallum, Wilma McCallum.
Seated:- Irene Anderson, Amy McCallum, Vanelda Smith.

In the early days it was generally known as "shinny", and this game later became hockey. When playing "shinny" no skates were used, but when spring skates became available they were fitted on the boys work shoes. A broken branch of a tree was often used as a hockey stick, and a tin can frequently used for a puck.

Hockey skates came into general use, and grown men learned to skate on the flooded rink on Robert Campbell's creek in the early 1930's. Great enthusiasm among young and old was experienced for a few years, and moonlight nights were often spent skating. The creek was used to flood the ice for the next hockey practise.

This was the stimulus that led the Cowal boys to play hockey in the Bush Leagues in Dutton, and later on artificial ice at the West Lorne rink.



1950's

Back Row: Malcolm Reeves, Grant Calwell, Clifford Campbell,
Angus Campbell, Cliff Lilley.

Second Row: Don Graham, Cameron Leitch, Donald A. McCallum,
Donald McTavish, Donald Campbell.

Front Row: Ronald Campbell, Daniel McCallum, Aubrey McCallum.

Entertainment

By Mrs. R.D. Campbell.

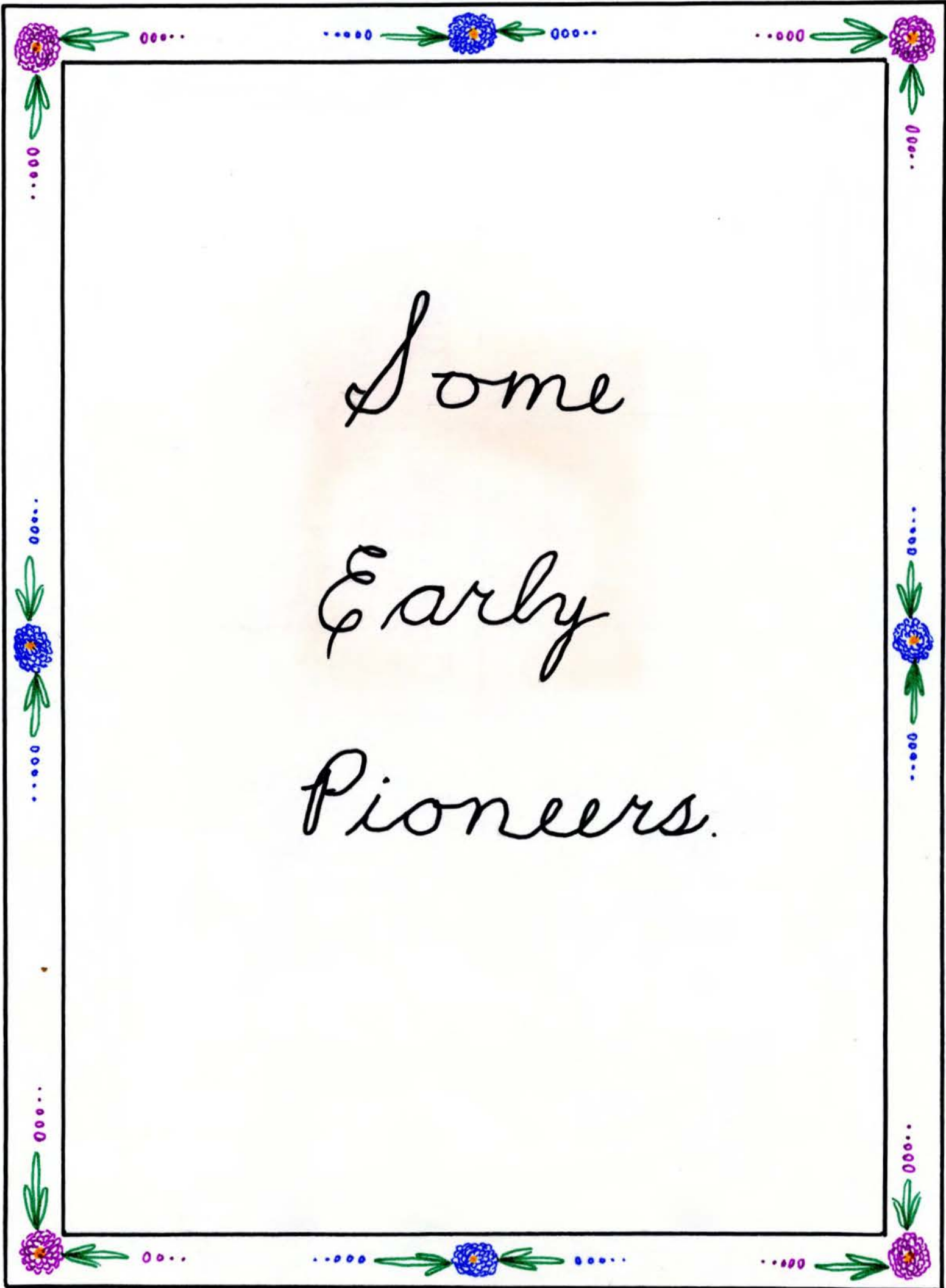
The youth of Cowal were interested in dramatics. During 1910 to 1912 there were many debates in the literary society. In early plays, Milton Smith and William M. Campbell were star performers.

During the first World War a play, Belldoon's Blunders, was staged with Milton Smith starring as Ottie Ross.

In the early twenties the Young Peoples Society put on several plays. Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Little directed the first in 1925, called "And Billy Disappeared". The following winters such plays as "My Old New Hampshire Home", "Turning the Trick" and "Climbing Roses" were produced. Later the church Young Peoples Society competed in a one act play in Dutton. Cowal had the honour of having two star performers, Margaret Clarke and William J. Campbell. The Junior Farmers also competed and minstrel shows provided entertainment for several years.

Each winter an instructive pastime was debating. Some champion debaters were John Thomson, Flora Carroll, Vanelda McTavish, Ellen McCallum, Jim Campbell and Hugh Carroll. In later years debaters for the Junior Farmers were Angus Campbell, Yvonne McCallum, Clifford Campbell, Don Philip Campbell, Jamey Campbell and Dan McCallum.

With the formation of West Elgin Dramatics Society a number of people became involved from Cowal with various roles of directing, acting and working backstage.



Some
Early
Pioneers.

MRS. CATHERINE McLACHLIN

1825_1921

November 3, 1921

Dunwich lost its oldest and one of its most respected residents on Saturday in the passing of Mrs. Catherine McLachlin, who died suddenly at the patriarchal age of 96 years and 10 months. The venerable lady was in her usual good health and was being interviewed by a St. Thomas newspaper man regarding her life history for publication and shortly after completing her story, suddenly collapsed and in a moment or two the spark of life had fled.

Mrs. McLachlin was the last survivor of a family of twelve. She was born in Scotland and came to Canada with her parents, the late Alexander and Mrs. McCallum in 1831, the days when steamships were unknown and the long and tedious trip across the Atlantic was made in a sailing ship, taking nine weeks before they were able to reach Port Stanley. Here the family resided for several years; receiving a grant from Col. Talbot for land in Dunwich Township they moved to that township which at that period was almost unbroken forest. The story of the now prosperous and contented community has been frequently related -- the privations, the hardships, and the utter feeling of loneliness that prevailed, but with all the indomitable perseverance and courage of the hardy band that ultimately led to better conditions. These were the experiences of the venerable lady, which she frequently recalled.

She was twice married, her first husband being James McBride of Dunwich who died in 1854. Her second husband, Archibald McLachlin, died in 1884. Many years ago diphtheria broke out in her home when she passed through a trying time, six of the family dying within a few weeks.

She was the last of the original members of Cowal Presbyterian Church, which was established 60 years ago. Despite her great age she was very active and took a deep interest in passing events, reading the newspapers with an eagerness of one many years her junior.

Of her twelve children she is survived by four; Mrs. John Kindree, Dunwich, Alex. McLachlin, London, Miss Effie McLachlin and Archibald McLachlin, Dunwich, with whom she made her home.

Funeral services were held in the church with burial in Cowal Cemetery.

DUNCAN McCALLUM

1841 _ 1925

September 3, 1925.

After an illness of four months with heart trouble, Mr. Duncan McCallum, one of the few remaining pioneers of Dunwich, died at home in Dutton on Friday, having reached the age of 84 and a few months. He was born in Glasgow, Scotland and at a tender age came to Canada with his parents, landing at Port Stanley after a long and tedious voyage of 7 weeks.

The family moved later to the farm of which Cowal Cemetery is a part. Several years after this was sold and they moved to the Gore Concession, in the same Township. Mr. McCallum was a carpenter by trade but on his marriage to Elizabeth McKirdy, he settled on his own farm, adjoining his father's, where he hewed out a home in what was then all woods and where he resided all his life until his retirement six years ago when he moved to his home in Dutton. His wife predeceased him nine years ago. The funeral was at Cowal Cemetery.

Mr. McCallum was the last surviving member of a family of five brothers and two sisters. He is survived by an adopted daughter, Catherine, at home.

MISS EFFIE McLACHLIN
1859 - 1950

Miss Effie McLachlin, a resident of Cowal for many years, and now living on Main Street, Dutton, celebrated her 89th birthday on Sunday. Referring to this noteworthy event, the St. Thomas Times Journal carried the following article in its August 12th, 1948 edition:

Gaelic was the tongue that Miss McLachlin learned at her mother's knee and Gaelic was the language of the McLachlin home until the children attended school. There were 15 children in all, as both Miss McLachlin's parents were married twice. She is the last surviving member of the family.

Her father, Archibald McLachlin came from Scotland as a youth of 17 years to settle with his parents on a farm along the Thames River. Her mother came from Cowal, Scotland as a girl of 9 years. For many years the McLachlin's home was in Dunwich Township.

Miss McLachlin was born in a log cabin a few rods from the Thames River in what was then virgin forest. At that time Dunwich Township was not the highly developed agriculture district that it is today. Deer and some bear, wolves, and wild turkeys were numerous.

For years Miss McLachlin lived in Cowal with her two brothers, Alexander McLachlin, former reeve of Dunwich and prominent in community affairs over a long period, and Archie McLachlin. They suffered a severe loss in 1939 when their home at Cowal was destroyed by fire. Many valuable furnishings from the old home, as well as personal belongings were lost. The destruction of their home affected the health of Archie, who was the last brother to pass on.

Except for the fact that her hearing is not good, Miss McLachlin is in good health, and takes pride in the fact she does her own housework and is a prodigious manufacturer of hooked rugs. She has a wonderful memory and likes nothing better than to talk about old times.

She is interested in the Presbyterian church and has taught Sunday School for many years and led the choir for three years. One Sunday School student was John D. Thomsom.

She has many old portraits in her home. There is a portrait of her father and mother that was taken in the Kindop studio in St. Thomas more than 70 years ago. Miss McLachlin recalls the occasion very well. Her parents and sisters drove up to St. Thomas in an old-fashioned cutter on a winter holiday. While her parents were shopping in pioneer St. Thomas stores, the two girls visited Lindop studio, where they were eventually found by their parents, who were none too pleased. However a photograph was taken before they left the studio and a copy (hangs)graces a wall in her home.

There was early tragedy in the home, as Miss McLachlin's mother had five daughters and four of them were victims of a terrible epidemic of the black diptheria.

FOOTNOTE

Effie McLachlin died January 11, 1950 and is buried in Cowal Cemetery.

John W. McCallum, "Jock"

Angus McCallum came to Canada in 1850 along with his wife, Margaret Watson, who was Lowland Scot and Angus was Highland Scot, from Argyleshire, Crinan, Scotland. They lived along the Crinan Canal. They had two children, Maggie and Malcolm.

When they came to Canada they landed at Port Stanley. David Bennett came at the same time so the two men went to London and bought their farms on lot 18, a hundred acres apiece, McCallum's taking the North half and Bennett's the south half. The rest of the McCallum family was born there (see Lot 18, Conc. 4, Angus McCallum)

John W. McCallum was the youngest of the family. He had a twin brother who died in infancy. John lived at home until he bought his farm and married Agnes Crawford and moved to Lot 19, Concession 4. He worked in the woods hewing lumber in the winter and farmed in the summer. He was a director and president of the Dunwich Mutual Fire Insurance Company.

Three children were born to John and Agnes: Alda who married Douglas Campbell and lived at Lot 21, Concession 4; Archie Tom who married Jennie Campbell and lived on the home farm; Duncan married Maribel Leitch and lived in the Largie district.

On October 25, 1948, John W. and Agnes celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary with a family gathering at the home of their daughter Mrs. Douglas Campbell.

Agnes McCallum died in 1951 and her son Duncan died in 1960.

Upon his retirement from farming, Mr. and Mrs. McCallum moved to Dutton. Following his wife's death, he spent his time with his son and his daughter.

On July 23rd, 1963 John W. McCallum celebrated his 100th birthday at a family gathering. His mind was still keen and he still enjoyed a good joke. He was still able to be up and around every day.

"Jock" as his many friends called him, passed away on November 3, 1963 in his 101st year, at the Bobier Home where he had spent the last several months. Interment was in Cowal Cemetery. Another colourful pioneer had passed from our midst.



John W. McCallum 1863 - 1963.
Pictured on his 100th Birthday.