

floor with a scrub brush and soap - one board at a time to get all the dirt out from between the cracks where the boards joined. Then came the big job of moving the stove out from the main kitchen unless you were fortunate enough to have an old stove left there from year to year. When everything looked pretty clean then the finishing touches went on..... a gay checkered oilcloth on the table, a bouquet of flowers in a fruit jar on the table, newly ironed curtains (possibly made from bleached sugar bags) on the windows.

The first meal in this kitchen was something extra for the children - just like a day going picnicing or camping.

What a problem the flies were! With the cooking aroma coming from that wood stove, flies settled thick on the old screen door, just waiting a chance to come in when the door was opened.

At the end of the summer when the days became a bit chilly and the heat from the wood stove felt welcome, once again, we moved back into the big kitchen. This too was exciting - like coming home from a trip. A few days later this summer kitchen was cleaned up again - furniture etc. moved back to a corner - then the task of carrying wood for the winter's fire. This part of the building served as a wood shed in winter and a summer kitchen in summer.

Today, gas, propane, electric ranges and barbecues predominate in farm homes and the old "summer kitchens" are long gone. But for some of us, they are still part of our childhood happy memories.

As I was writing this I was thinking of some of the family homes in the Crinan district that had summer kitchens. How many more can you ladies add?

John D. Campbell

John Carmichael

Stewart McIntyre

John J. Stalker

Duncan McEachren

Mac Livingstone (J. McLean)

Ronald Walker

Archie Campbell

Duncan Stewart

James Andrews

James McPherson

CRINAN CHEESE FACTORY

(by - Mrs. Mildred McCallum)

A cheese factory was built in Crinan in the year 1869 on the farm of the late James McLean (presently the Gilbert Livingstone farm) and operated by Robert McMillan.

The factory was situated on the road now known as Hwy 76, north of the McLean residence and approximately opposite the west end of the Argyle Presbyterian churchyard. The curing-shed, which was a two storey building which stood behind the factory. There was a well just outside the factory from which water was pumped into a trough for a boiler similar to that on a stream threshing engine. The steam from this boiler heated the milk in the big vat.

In 1909 John Colridge bought this farm, which belonged to the McLean family for 47 years. In 1909 he sold it to Thomas Markham, of Ingersoll, subject to a lease to the Crinan Cheese Factory property to the Crinan Cheese Company. Mr. Markham built a store between his house and the factory. He brought with him a herd of pure bred Holstein cattle. Most of the local cattle were Durham.

The majority of the farmers drew the milk in large cans, although one man might pick up his neighbors in a busy time. A milk stand was built at the laneway so it would be easier to lift the cans to the democrat. When he emptied the cans at the factory he could refill them with whey from the tank beside the factory. The whey was fed through a pipe from the factory to this wooden tank which was on a much higher platform. The hog farmers were especially pleased to get the whey for pig feed.

The factory was closed during the winter months and re-opened in April or May. During the winter months the farmers' wives made butter which they traded at the stores for groceries.

Later, Mr. Markham put in a large separator to separate the butterfat from the whey and dissatisfaction grew among the patrons. Also, by this time some of the patrons had purchased cream separators and continued to send the cream to the creamery all year because the calves were better fed with the separated milk. Thus milk delivered to the factory became scarce. To the best of our knowledge the factory closed around 1916 or 1917.

Mr. Malcolm Livingstone purchased the farm in 1926. He later sold the cheese curing-room building, which had not been used for many years, to Thomas Morrison, who lived at the corner of the Division Line and Concession 4, West Aldborough, to be used as a barn. The building which was the entrance to the factory became the framework of Livingstone's garage.

Some of the cheese makers were William Chivers, Clarence Beckett and Walter Thompson.

The following is an account written this summer by Mr. Clarence Beckett of West Lorne, who is now in his 90th year.

October, 1975

NEWS OF CRINAN CHEESE FACTORY*-1902-1906

(Mr. Clarence Beckett-Cheese Maker)

I came to Crinan April 8, 1902. I boarded at the home of James McLean.

On April 10 Mr. McLean called a meeting of all the farmers who supplied milk to the factory. We had a very nice meeting to report on the previous years business. I met all the farmers and enjoyed meeting them very much. This is the list of the farmers: Mr. W.H. McLean, Duncan McPherson, Archie McMurchy, John Matheson, J.D. Stalker, A. McMillan, Peter Stalker, Dougal Andrews, J. McGill, A. McColl, D. Carmichael, Neil Currie, Grace McColl, J.D. McIntyre, J.D. Campbell, Neil McEachren, Charles Cook, James Jamieson, T. Dymock, Colin Campbell, A.J. Campbell, Dan Matheson, David Johnson, Jack McIntyre, Dan Currie, Elijah Sutton.

On April 15 we received our first amount of milk. We received 7000 lbs. and it increased as the time went on.

Now to make it into cheese. First to colour the milk. Stir it in well and then it was time to set the milk. First heat it to 68 degrees, then I used 3 oz. rennett to a 1000 lbs. of milk and that would thicken the milk. It took about 20 minutes to coagulate and when ready I would cut it length-wise and then crosswise into little squares about 1/4 inch size. Stir very gently until the whey had separated from the curds. I would cook it to 86 degrees and stir it for about an hour till the curds went to the bottom, nice and firm. Test the curd and if ready remove the whey and dip the curd in a curd sink. We would stir until quite dry then we would cut it in blocks about 5 x 7 x 14^{2"} and pile one block high. Wait for 15 minutes and pile it as high as we could and let it stand till it would flatten out like leather, then test it again and if ready we would mill it, cut it in small strips about 2-1/2 inches long and about 1/4 inches square and stir until it would mat together, then salt it, stir well till all the salt was dissolved in the curd, then we would put it into the hoops. We would weigh the curd so each cheese would be the same. Put the hoops into press till the next morning and take them out and put them in the curing room and repeat the same the next day.

We made cheese six days a week.

On Sunday we all went to Arygle Presbyterian Church. Mr. Kippen was the Pastor. After the service we would visit for an hour, then away home till the next Sunday.

I was very fond of the Crinan people. The most of them are gone but I see a few once in a while and have a visit.

October, 1975.

THE CRINAN STORE

(by-Mrs. Mary Andrews in 1975)

The Crinan store was built in 1911, on Hwy.76 (formerly Graham Rd.) in Aldborough Township. It was located south of the Crinan Cheese Factory. The building had a wooden frame with galvanized or metal siding.

Thomas Markham built the store on his property next to the cheese factory. His brother, David, operated a barber shop in it.

Other owners were the Wrights, the Brydens and the Tennents. In 1922, Charles and Matilda Cook became tenants and operated the Crinan store until it closed in 1923. Mrs. Donald Cadogan (Flora Cook) was the only Cook child born in Crinan Feb 11/1928. She was the youngest of a family of eleven.

In 1928, Tom Morrison and Jack Beatty bought the vacant buildings of the Cheese Factory and Store. Mr. Morrison moved the cheese factory to his farm to be used as a barn. The store was dismantled.

During its heyday, the store was an active place. The community used the upper storey of the General Store for gatherings such as- sparrow hunts, dances, card parties and oyster suppers.

I can remember our Institute holding a card party, dance and meeting in the Markham hall. As our secretary books were burned, our records of these few years are not too accurate. Our Crinan W.I. held a district annual in Crinan Presbyterian Church in 1924 or '25. As the church had no basement to sieve meals, we rented the hall to serve a dinner to the representatives of the different districts.

During one of our W.I. meetings there, Mrs. Thomas Morrison, with her Scottish accent answered the Roll Call, which was to be a proverb, with this one-

"Patience is a virtue often found in a woman but seldom in a man!"

Reminiscences of Pioneer Life in Aldborough
(as taken from 1877 Atlas of Elgin County)

(Direct Quotation)

The trials of the early pioneers may sound in our ears like an oft told tale, but those who endured them found them no silken sorrows nor sentimental sufferings, but stern realities, requiring stout muscles and stout hearts. There were no roads by which neighbouring settlements could be reached—no mills nearer than 30 miles on the east and Howard on the west, with a dense roadless forest between. Families sometimes subsisted for a week at a time upon turnips, anxiously awaiting the return of the "food haulers" with their hand sleighs from Long Point. In 1820, there were fearful visitations from remittent bilious fever—but few of the living able to move from their beds—whole families stricken down at one time—not one able to hand a drink of water to another, and no physician nearer than Long Point or Sandwich.

During the harvest of 1819, Finlay McDiarmid was confined to his bed with fever and ague, and unable to do any work or secure the 1½ acres of wheat, his only dependence for his winter's bread. More than this, there was no sickle to cut it with, but courage and industry will overcome all difficulties and Mrs. McDiarmid cut it all with the butcher knife, threshed it and ground it in a hand mill to feed her two infant children and husband when recovering from his illness.

One of the settlers of 1818, Duncan McKillop, whose health soon became impaired by change of climate and hard toil, had great difficulties in procuring the necessaries of life for his family. They had no money to purchase a cow, and Mrs. McKillop went to the river Thames, 9 miles above where Chatham now is, and earned a cow by working for Frederick Arnold, who ever after esteemed Mrs. McKillop highly for her heroism and devotion in the cause of her husband and family.

Dugald McLarty and James Ruthven did not come with the other settlers, but tarried a few weeks to visit friends at Caledonia in the state of New York. As they were approaching shore (at Port Glasgow, I think—then known as Port Furnival) with their boat load of luggage, the boat capsized and both men were

drowned. Their remains were the first that found a resting place in the new rooty leafy soil at Kiifinlay cemetery, near Airey - now known as New Glasgow.

Trade and commerce were of course of a primitive nature. The nearest store in 1818 was that of Hamilton and Warren, in a log building at Kettle Creek (now St. Thomas) On the west there were none nearer than Sandwich (or Windsor) Trade was wholly by barter until 1827, in that year cash was first paid for wheat, but for no other kind of grain. In 1829 the first shop with a small quantity of goods was owned and opened at Port Furnival, by a Mr. McFarlane of Glasgow, Scotland, who gave goods for produce, and paid cash for wheat at 60¢ per bushel. In 1830 he shipped to Montreal 6000 bushels of wheat, 120 barrels of pork, 300 raw deer skins, 1000 pounds of Indian dressed deer skins, 200 raccoon skins, and 50 bushels of flax seed, the first cargo sent from Aldborough.

Aldborough in the early times was the very paradise of game and wild animals. It was the favorite haunt of the sleek-eyed dundee, and they browsed around the fresh cut brush heaps in flocks, covering the earth with their tracks. Wolves, bears and raccoons were there: the first howled and stole sheep; the second growled and stole pigs; and the third whistled and stole corn. Wild turkeys were there, and here is turkey story as given by one of the pioneers:

"I had," said he, "a field of oats lying next to the woods, consisting of 5A. nearly ready to harvest, that would yield 50 bushels to the A. A friend who was residing with me at the time, fired into a flock of turkeys feeding in the field, and killed 7 at one shot, one of which weighed 22 lb. By Saturday night the field was trampled as level as a floor and not a spear left standing. I am perfectly sure that the flock numbered more than 2000."

These recordings give us an insight into the hardships suffered by the early pioneers and the courage shown by the founders of our community in overcoming all the trials they experienced in making their home in a strange, new land.