

The John McGill Farm

The original McGill settlers arrived in Canada from Argyll, Scotland in 1854, settling in Yarmouth, then in Crinan in 1861. It was Duncan McGill and Mary Galbraith's son John who purchased the present farm in 1874 from Colonel Richard Airey, Colonel Talbot's nephew. The original farm consisted of 100 acres.

In 1872, John had married Mary Sillars and together they raised a family of three sons and two daughters. Their first home was built of logs. In 1911, the present two storey yellow brick house was completed. For many years, the log building was used for different purposes, having been dismantled about thirty years ago.

Through the years, water needs for the house were served by a cistern, and a dug well for drinking water, while ponds were a source of water for the barn. About 1960, an electric pressure system was installed both in the house and at the barn. Electricity was brought to the farm in 1946, but the telephone had been in use since the late 1920's.

For some time, John and Mary McGill shared the present house with their son John and his wife Florence (Stalker) as they had taken over the farm from John's elderly parents. In 1953, John and Florence's son John D. and his wife Norma (Richardson) moved to the house after the death of Florence in January of that year. They became the owners in 1955 after John J. McGill's death.

In the spring of 1952, the barns were rebuilt and improvements made. Later, a silo was built. In more recent years, an implement shed was added to the set of buildings.

At the present time, John and Norma's second son Brian is in partnership with his father in the farming operation. Brian and his wife Nancy (Coleman) were married in 1974, and chose to stay on the farm at that time. In September 1979, their new grey brick home was started, located a short distance east of the family home. They moved there in March, 1980 from their mobile home.

Through the years, mixed farming has been carried on. In the early years, grain, hay and some livestock were produced. At present, cash crops, such as corn and soybeans, as well as beef cattle, are the source of income from the farm.

At this time, steadily declining prices and spiralling costs are taking their toll in farming communities everywhere. In Crinan, the Scotch names are disappearing one by one from the mailboxes along the rural routes. We are proud the McGill name has been connected with our farm at Lot Z, Concession Three, Aldborough Township, for well over one hundred years.

Mrs. John D. (Norma) McGill
February 12, 1991

EARLY FARM AND FAMILY LIFE OF DUNCAN J. CAMPBELL 1834 - 1924
AND HIS SON, JOHN D. 1872 - 1954

John Campbell aged 53 came to Canada West in 1852 from Kintyre, Argyllshire, Scotland with his wife and six children: John (33), Elizabeth (21), Duncan (18), Catharine (15), Neil (12) and Archie (9). The other three daughters: Christina, Mary and Euphemia were already married and remained in Scotland but Christina and Euphemia later emigrated with their families.

The farm that John (Sr.) and family settled on was situated on the east side of the Aldborough-Dunwich Townline and consisted of 161 acres, being Lot 1, Concession A, Dunwich Township and Lot 1 Concession B, Dunwich, Elgin County. As the farm backs onto the river its eastern boundary is described as a "broken front". It is intercepted by one deep gully and other smaller ones and by at least one small creek running into the Thames River. Beside the mouth of this creek was a higher bank, known as the "Frenchman's Bank", where logs purchased in the mid-nineteenth century from local farmers by a French Canadian lumber dealer, were piled during the winter to be driven down the river to Chatham in the spring.

John (Sr.) was not directly experienced in farming as he had been a school master in Ballochroy in Argyllshire, and had supplemented his income by acting as an agent for farmers and merchants. According to information his only teaching in Canada West was a short period at Tait's Corners, Middlesex County, across the river from his farm. He crossed the river by row-boat, accompanied by young Archie who finished his schooling there as there was not yet a school at Crinan.

The land, which had not been cleared, was purchased from an absentee owner, James Gordon. John Campbell received the deed to his farm in December 1863. The preceding year had been difficult for them. Their oldest son, John, had died in June 1862, and their third son, Neil, in May, 1863. There were happier events to follow. In May 1864, Catharine married Thomas O. Simpson and moved to her new home on the Longwoods Road, Middlesex. Their daughter Elizabeth ("Betsy") who had worked as a housemaid in Eldon House, London, had come home to marry Dugald Stewart who lived on the Graham Road (now Hwy. 76). On February 23, 1865, Duncan married Anne Stewart of Dunwich. They were married in Wallacetown by Rev. Arch. McDiarmid, minister of that church. This couple settled on Duncan's recently purchased farm of one hundred acres on Lot Y Concession 2, Aldborough.

Duncan and Anne had four children. One son died in infancy. Daughter Kate married William H. McLean and lived across from Argyle Presbyterian Church, Jessie married John McIntyre who was later in charge of the Crinan Post Office for many years. John D. married Elizabeth Andrews of Dunwich Township and lived on the home farm (Lot Y) which he purchased from his father who lived with them

for many years. They had two daughters: Annie Mildred, who married Douglas (Bud) McCallum on April 6, 1935, and they have two daughters: Marion, married James Blake, Lucan and Eileen, married Robert Edgar, London who have two children, Sandra and Jeffrey: and their second daughter, Elizabeth, married John M. Watson, of Camlachie.

The first home on Duncan's farm was built quite a long distance from the road. In 1885 it was moved much closer to the road. This old part was now used as a dining-room, pantry, hall and stairway leading to two upstairs bed-rooms. A new part was built at the front to form an 'L' shape with the lower floor containing two bed-rooms, a parlour and a stairway leading to three upstairs bedrooms. A verandah was built across the front of the house. At the rear of the old part a kitchen was built. This house remained until it was destroyed by fire on January 28, 1956. A house was moved from London to replace it.

The barn contained the cow-stable, a granary, a partitioned room for the cutter, buggy, sleighs etc., and grain and hay mow was also repaired in early 1880's and a long shed built to it. Part of this shed held machinery while the rest was used as cattle pens and a horse stable with hay and straw being stored in the upstairs mow. Rail fences surrounded these buildings to form a barnyard with a big strawstack in the middle for cattle and pigs to lie around. Every farm had a house-well as well as a barn-well and a big pond for the water supply.

The back fifty acres consisted mostly of hard-wood trees - maple, beech, elm and some black ash. These supplied building material as well as fire-wood. Electricity was installed in 1946 in this house.

The main crops grown were wheat, oats, hay, corn and white beans and of course each farmer's wife had a vegetable garden.

John D. took the farm over from his father in 1904 and in 1954 sold it to John L. MacKillop. It has since had several owners until John Doby bought it. Now his daughter Margaret Gjebic of Detroit looks after it.

Mildred McCallum

Marriage Certificate

Mr. Duncan Campbell

&

Miss Ann Stewart

1842.

The Deacons

The Marriage by Licence
between Mr. Duncan Campbell
and Miss Ann Stewart in the
presence of John Campbell
and David Stewart, was
solemnized on the twenty third
day of February one thousand
eight hundred and sixty five
years

By me
Anti M' Donald
Presbyterian Minister
Wallahton
C.M.

The Early Farm and Family Life of John and Archibald Campbell.

The farm which was originally settled by John Campbell and his wife Janet McEachran is situated on the east side of the Aldborough - Dunwich townline, and consists of 161 acres, being lot 1, Concession A, Dunwich township and lot 1, Concession B, Dunwich. As the farm backs on the Thames river, its eastern boundary is described as "broken front". It is intersected by one deep gully and other smaller ones and by at least one small creek running into the Thames. Beside the mouth of this creek was a higher bank, known as "the Frenchman's Bank", where logs, purchased in the mid-nineteenth century from the local farmers by a French-Canadian lumber dealer, were piled during the winter to be driven down the river to Chatham in the spring.

John Campbell (aged 53) came to Canada West in 1852 from Kintyre, Argyllshire, Scotland with his wife and six children: John (33), Elizabeth (21), Duncan (18), Catharine (15), Neil (12) and Archie (9). Three other daughters: Christena, Mary and Euphemia, were already married and remained in Scotland, but Christena and Euphemia later emigrated with their families. John Sr. was not directly experienced in farming as he had been a schoolmaster at Ballochroy in Argyllshire and had supplemented his income by acting as an agent for farmers and merchants. According to family information, his only teaching in Canada West was for a short period at Tait's Corners across the river from his farm. He crossed the river by rowboat, accompanied by young Archie who finished his schooling there as there was not yet a school at Crinan.

The land, which had not been cleared, was purchased from an absentee owner, James Gordon, for . John Campbell received the deed to his farm in December, 1863. The preceding year had been difficult for John and Janet. Their oldest son, John, had died in June 1862 and their third son, Neil, in May 1863. Both men were bachelors.

There were happier events to follow. In May 1864 their daughter Catharine married Thomas O. Simpson and moved to her new home on the Longwoods Road. Their daughter Elizabeth ("Betsy"), who had worked as a housemaid in Eldon House in London, had come home to marry Dugald Stewart who lived on the Graham Road. In 1865 Duncan married Anne Stewart and settled on his recently purchased land on the second concession.

In 1867 the youngest son, Archie, purchased 80 acres of the farm, the northern portion, containing no buildings, from his parents for \$1,000. His father died on May 24, 1869, bequeathing the remainder of the farm to Archie who was entrusted with making a home for his mother. Archie married Flora Stalker on November 18, 1869. His mother, who was blind during her final years, lived with them until her death in 1885.

She spent her last years in a spacious brick house. Archie and Flora's first three children, John, James and Jessie, were born in the original log house which had been somewhat enlarged during the twenty five years of its use. In 1877 it was replaced, at the end of the long lane, by the brick house in which Kate, Tena and Maribel were born.

The farm, which they called "Glenwood" had heavy clay soil. They grew oats, barley and wheat, and had fairly good crops of hay. Since the farm was spread along the river, considerable time was lost going to and from the scattered fields and skirting the gullies. Probably because of Scottish experience they always raised sheep. Until early in this century neighbours several miles distant would drive their sheep to Campbell's, down the lane and back to the river to wash them preparatory to the spring shearing.

The barn was ell-shaped and included an open shed facing the barnyard, protected from the north and west winds, for sheltering the sheep in cold weather. An apple orchard, including many of the varieties popular toward the end of the nineteenth century, was adjacent to it. Cherry and plum trees grew near the house. Wild strawberries were plentiful in the fields and wild blackberries grew along the rail fences. The garden, which was between the house and the road, was always productive, although the clay soil required hard work. Lilacs and yellow roses grew beside the house and Virginia creeper shaded the verandah.

A disastrous period for Archie and Flora began early in 1894 when their son James, who had contracted typhoid fever while teaching in Manitoba, developed consumption as a consequence and came home to the farm where he died. Two years later their daughter Jessie died of consumption, followed in 1899 by their son John who had been taking over the management of the farm. Archie and Flora immediately sold their stock and implements and moved to Gladstone, Manitoba where their daughters, Kate and Tena, were already teaching.

Although he made many friends in Gladstone, Archie never felt at home there, so, within three years he and Flora were back again, re-stocking the farm and starting over. He farmed until his death in 1915. After that time the fields were rented out or share-cropped each year. The barn was in use until it was destroyed by fire in 1927. Flora and her daughter Kate continued to live there until 1935, often spending the winter months with Tena and her husband, John Cameron, in Wallacetown.

After Flora's death in 1940 the property passed to her daughter Kate. The land was rented for grazing. The house was maintained and furniture and other articles were still there until it was devastatingly vandalized in the spring of 1951. The house was then demolished and the property sold to Claire Dymock.

One of the distinctive features of the home was the line of maple trees up the lane and stretching north and south along the townline. They survived the house but are long since gone.

- Flora McPherson

The Early Farm and Family Life of James and Maribel McPherson.

The home of my parents, James and Maribel McPherson, was the south $\frac{1}{2}$ of lot Z, concession 2, Aldborough, located on the corner of the Aldborough - Dunwich townline and Elgin County Road 9.

This hundred-acre farm had passed from the Crown to Sir Richard Airey, nephew of Col. Thomas Talbot, in 1859. Presumably it was still wood-covered when it was purchased from Airey's agent in 1867 for \$700 by David Andrews. David was the older son of David and Agnes Andrews who had come to Canada from Paisley, Scotland and settled on the Dunwich side of the townline on the farm still owned by the Andrews family.

There is evidence that a log house was first built on a site west of the location of the present barn. However, possibly before his marriage to Anne McRae on October 26, 1871, David erected on his new farm a one-and-a-half-story frame house which was the basis of the house which is still there. A distinctive feature of it was the front door with its side lights and curved transom.

In a tragic sequence, common in those years of epidemic children's diseases, David and Anne Andrews lost their entire family of three small children between 1879 and 1881. Presently they left the farm and sold it in 1889 for \$5000 to Ronald Walker, a forty-one year old bachelor. Ronald, who never married, continued to live at his parents' farm, about a mile and a half north on the townline, where he worked with his brother. He never moved to his own house. On his new farm he planted an excellent apple orchard with a well-chosen assortment of apples for all seasons. The first barn was destroyed by lightning in 1902, but the adjacent shed which contained the pig pens, cattle pens, cow stalls and hay loft was saved. The barn, replaced in 1903, contained the hay mows, the horse stable and the granary.

James McPherson, whose family home was on the Aldborough - Dunwich townline (north $\frac{1}{2}$ lot Z, Concession A Aldborough) bought the farm in 1912 for \$5500. It was considered a very good farm. The soil was sandy loam which grew good grain and hay crops and, even in the days before commercial fertilizer, produced excellent crops of corn. The land was flat and easily worked. There was no natural water source except one small spring. Two large ponds had been dug, one at the barn and the other in the woodlot at the back of the farm. Later, Jim put eavestroughs on the shed to supply a new well at the barn. At the house a well and a cistern provided the water supply.

In 1917 Jim had renovations made to the house, changing some partitions, adding storage closets and a small cellar and building a verandah across the front. For decoration, the gingerbread around the dormer window was retained and above the front verandah there was added a balcony to which the only access was through an upstairs window.

In December 1918 he and Maribel Campbell were married. I am their only child. They lived on the farm until Jim's death in 1951.

During that period many trees --horse chestnuts, catalpas, maples, spruce --were planted around the house. A large lawn was always maintained. A garage was built in 1928 and an implement shed about 1938. Telephone service was installed in 1927 and hydro in 1937. Wire fences replaced rails and some tiling was done. Jim never owned a tractor although he hired tractor work when necessary. He did not enjoy machinery and probably would have been happy in an earlier society in which everything was done by hand. He was a strong believer in the security of mixed farming and the necessity of crop rotation. He loved the land and his horses and took pride in good quality cattle and hogs. It was fortunate that his farming

years occurred in a time when one man with good land, careful planning and hard work could make a satisfactory living on one hundred acres. Mechanization and expansion were completely alien to his way of life.

Jim's nephew, Duncan McPherson and his wife, Grace, bought the farm in 1953. They electrified the barn, installed indoor plumbing in the house, made other improvements, and maintained an attractive home and productive farm. Their sons, Jim and Dan, grew up on the farm. In 1979 Dunc and Grace sold the farm and moved to a new home in West Lorne.

-Flora McPherson