

The Early Farm and Family Life of James Stalker and Catharine McEachra

James Stalker (aged 39) and his wife Catharine McEachran (aged 32) arrived in Upper Canada at the end of summer 1850 after a seven-week Atlantic crossing from Glasgow to Montreal with five small children: Euphemia (aged 8), Mary (7), Flora (5), Dan (2) and baby Catharine ("Kate") who had been born on shipboard.

They came first to the home of Catharine's parents, Donald and Mary McEachran, who had settled in Ekfrid township the year before. As uncleared land was readily available in Aldborough, James and Catharine took up one hundred acres, the south half of lot 23, concession 1, Aldborough, which was the property of an absentee owner, George J. Goodhue. With the help of his bachelor brothers-in-law from Ekfrid and in cooperation with his brother-in-law, Archie McEachran, who chose land for his family directly across the road allowance from him, James built the log house for his family. He received the deed to the property in 1858.

By that time there were two more children, Belle and John, who in his adult life would be commonly known as "J.J.". Two of the older daughters, Mary and Flora, lived through most of this period with their grandparents in Ekfrid and attended school. For the younger ones and the two youngest daughters, Eliza and Jemima, who were born in 1858 and 1861, the new school at Crinan was conveniently near.

The higher land on the south side of the 2nd concession road attracted James and Catharine as the best site for their permanent home. With this in mind they bought fifty acres (the east half of the north half of lot 22, concession 2, Aldborough) from Henry Archer for \$900 in 1862. A barn was built on the site and an orchard planted. However, it would be some time before the brick house was built. This occurred between 1873 and 1880.

By the time the $1\frac{1}{2}$ story brick house was built, the three oldest girls had married and moved away. Several of the other family members had worked or studied in towns or cities. Probably the decoration of the exterior of the house resulted from their ideas. The new house had a centre-hall plan with a little peaked gable over the front door. The side lights and the arched transom of the door were of red glass. Brick quoins decorated the corners of the house, and a continuous projecting band, known as a "string course" crossed the front about twelve feet from the ground. In keeping with the decreasing size of the family, the house was not large. A large kitchen projected at the rear. Above it was a spacious workroom for spinning, weaving, sewing and quilting. In the 1880's and 1890's the Women's Missionary Society gathered there to have sewing bees and to pack bales of clothing for the needy in distant countries.

A family of nine of which seven were girls might seem a handicap to a pioneer farmer, particularly as, of the two sons, the older became a minister and the younger was more interested in politics and law than in farming. That the girls made a great contribution to the progress of the family was partly attributable to the excellent training they received from their mother who seems to have been not only skilful in all the basic household arts but also an excellent planner and organizer. They learned from her to be good gardeners, always interested in trying new plants or varieties. Some of them also carried on her skills in home nursing which they used for their neighbours as well as their own families. Three of the girls became teachers, one as early as 1860 when teaching was principally a male profession. Like many other young pioneer women they learned from their father the necessary farming skills. Many years later a neighbour recalled one of the Stalker girls as "one of the best binders in Crinan" in the days when grain was cut with scythe and cradle and tied into sheaves with stalks of the grain.

The other very fortunate factor for this family was its phenomenal good health. There were no tragic deaths of babies or young people. The nine children lived to an average age of eighty seven years. This was probably attributable in part to heredity, but no doubt their parents' adaptability to their new country and their mother's homemaking and nursing skills also contributed to their health.

In 1888 James Stalker died as the result of an accident. Catharine lived on in their home until her death in 1902, accompanied in turn by unmarried daughters, then by her daughter Eliza with her husband, Dan Hyndman, who rented the home farm in 1892 and in 1895 bought the original farm across the road. When the Hyndmans moved to their new farm at West Lorne, Belle Stalker and her husband, Neil Currie, came to live with Catharine and remained until her death.

Catharine bequeathed the farm to her son, Dr. Dan Stalker, a Presbyterian minister who was at that time preaching in Calumet, Mich. In the eighteen years intervening before his retirement in 1920 various members of the Stalker family lived in the house. The land was sometimes rented out until Dan's brother, John J., returned to the farm about 1911 and resumed farming on a small scale. During this period the lawn was terraced, additional shade trees were planted, sidewalks and a picket fence were built and it was maintained as an attractive home. The lawn was often the scene of picnics and get-togethers of family and friends.

Upon Dr. Stalker's retirement he came back to live in the house, accompanied for various periods by his sisters Mrs. Kate Simpson, Mrs. Mary Findlay and Mrs. Belle Currie after they became widows. The property remained in Dr. Stalker's hands until his death in 1939 when it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Cadogan who lived there for some years. It was subsequently purchased by Duncan and Nancy McGregor. In 1983 the house, which had been unoccupied for some time, had reached a point where restoration was impossible and it was taken down.

Flora McPherson

^{cc} "Ups and Downs of a
Cattleman & His Family"

A Book by Harold Carroll

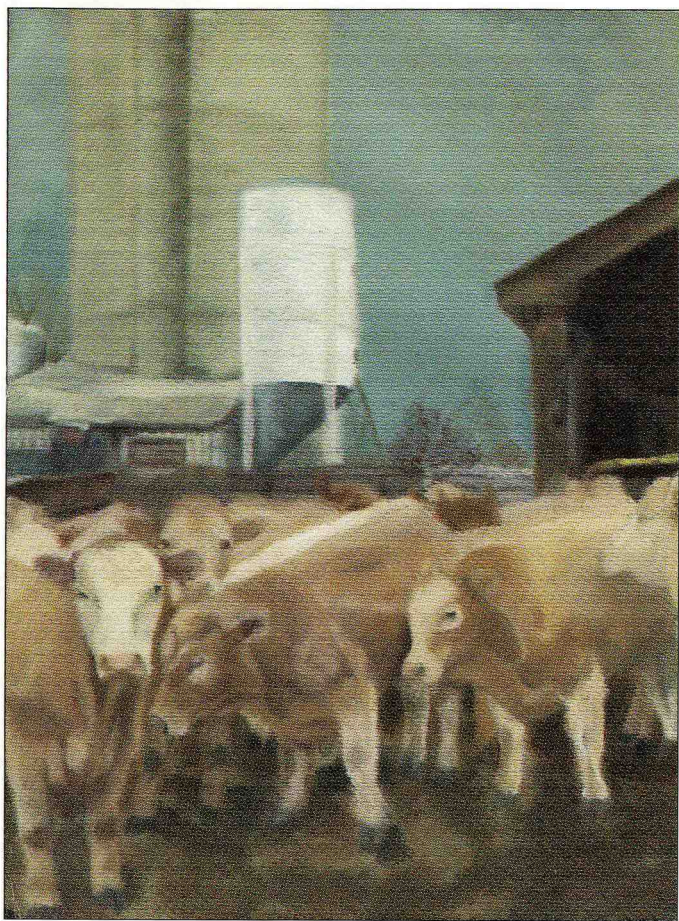
husband of Muriel "McPherson"

Carroll, a Crinan W.I. member.

June 1998,

Ups and Downs of a Cattleman & His Family

Second Edition



by **HAROLD M. CARROLL**

lived with a bad situation but she rose above it.

Beth is our youngest daughter. I don't remember having trouble with her when she was young. I think we spoiled her a little. As well as her school work, she liked music and was good at it. She was very handy - a good worker and could turn her hand to anything. She rode a pedal bicycle alone to Dawson Creek, B.C. to see her brother. She built houses with Bud Sutherland. One summer, she worked at the stock yards at Brandon, Man. She went to Malaysia for a spell, then worked in a store in Montreal where she was held up twice at gun point. She now lives in Vancouver and works at landscaping and hair dressing.

Cattle

Now we are moving on to the main chapter in this book - cattle! The first cattle business that I remember, I owned a share in a calf for doing chores. This steer, when it got bigger, was sold with some more for four cents a pound. We drove them seven miles to West Lorne for weighing and six miles back to the new owner's pasture. When we bought our first farm, I fed steers for other people, so much a pound for the gain.

We had very unhandy feeding at this time. The corn was cut with the binder and shocked in the

field. When we went to feed it, most of the time, it was frozen in and had to be chopped out. We drew it to the barn and dragged it across the yard among the cattle and fed in a high manger. Then we bedded with the stocks and carried the manure to a narrow door to go on the sleigh or spreader. We very gradually fixed this.

One of the men I fed cattle for years ago was called "I Say" Archie McMillan. He ran a livery stable in West Lorne and dealt in horses and cattle and later, just cattle. He was noted for being very careful. He put three steers in our place to be fed. Later, I saw one of these steers wasn't well. I called "I Say" and he said "I say, boy, I can't come. I am burying my mother-in-law."

I got rid of the steer. In the spring, we were settling up. Archie said, "I say, my boy, how much for the one fed part time."

I said I can't charge much.

Archie said, "I say, boy, I will give you \$10 - \$5 for each of the boys."

I said, "But we have three boys now, I Say." And he gave for three.

One of our neighbours, Donnie Stalker, was a bachelor, an older man. One year in January when he had to go to the hospital, he asked if our boys would do his chores. I said they couldn't because it was too dark when they got off the bus, but I

Aug. 26, 1994

The Donald George Johnston Farm

Before the Johnston family purchased the 100 acre farm, there were two other families who had owned the farm previously. The first, H. J. Mitten, resided there. In 1918, William Hathaway purchased the farm from Mr. Mitten. The Johnston family purchased the farm from Mr. Hathaway in 1935 and has resided there since.

The Johnston family, which then consisted of Mr. and Mrs. George Johnston (formerly Grace Marsh) came to reside in 1935. They were blessed with four daughters: Mildred, Hazel, Eva, and Jean, as well as four sons: Donald, Chester, Leslie, and Ray. Leslie was in the Second World War, and was reported missing in action on July 8, 1944. He was presumed dead on March 27, 1945 in France. Chester suffered from asthma and passed away after a severe attack.

Upon the death of Mr. George Johnston, Mrs. Johnston and two of her daughters moved to Ridgetown. Donald and his wife, Mae McNutt, resided on the family farm and continued to farm it until shortly after their 25th wedding anniversary. Mrs. Johnston died of a stroke. Donald and his only son, Fred, are still farming together. Fred was married to Helen Lamers five years ago. They reside on the home farm and have two children: Matthew Frederich, and Amanda Mae - the fourth generation of Johnstons to reside on the home farm.

On Sept. 23, 1989, Donald Johnston and Beatrice Irene Ford were married. They reside on Fred Johnston's 25 acres on the fourth concession of Dunwich.

The McPherson Farm History

By:

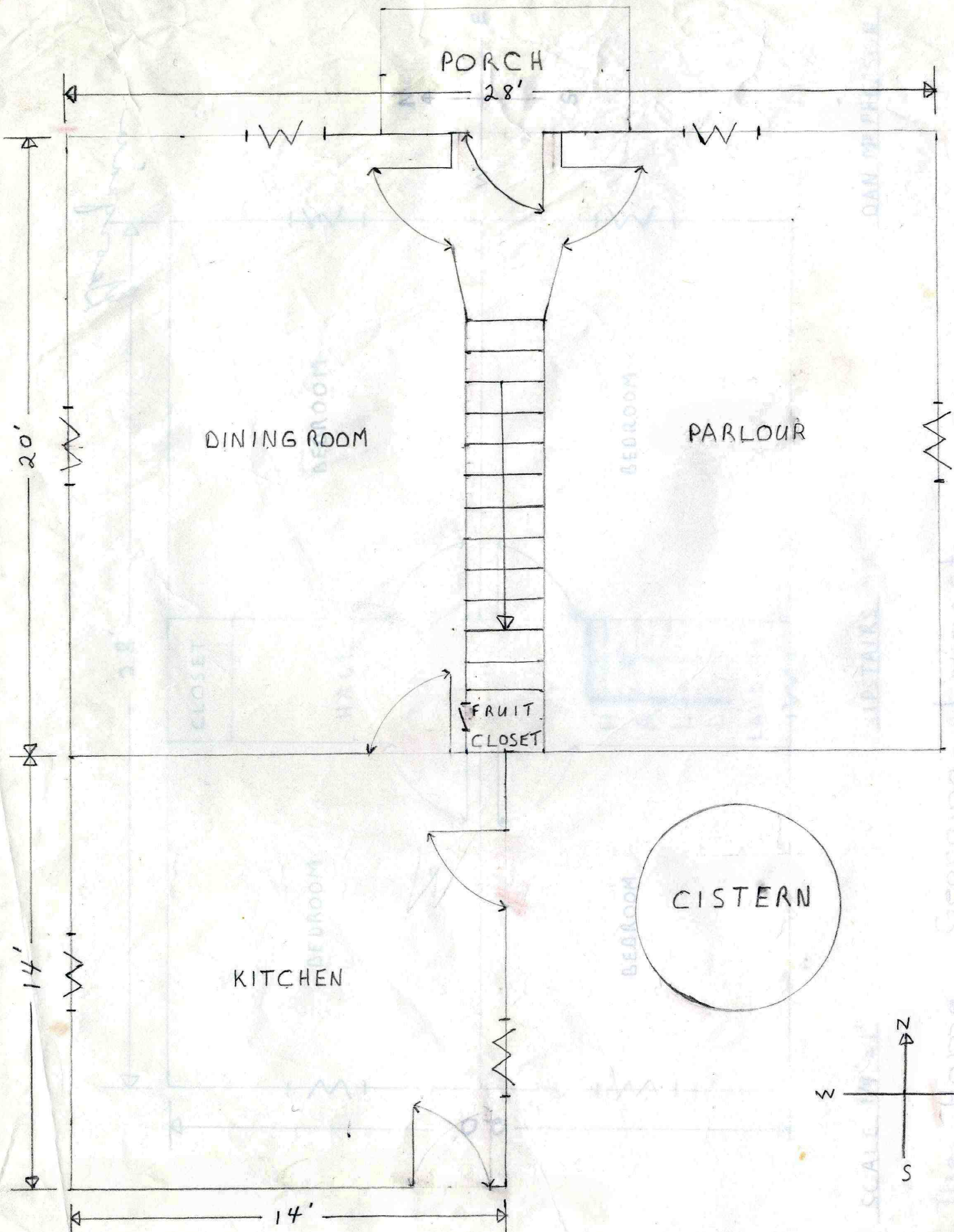
Murie I (McPherson) Carroll

Aug. 1994

My great grandfather and great grandmother, Hugh and Isabella McPherson, came to Canada from the Kintyre Peninsula of Argyleshire Scotland, along with their family, to settle in the Glanworth area of Dorchester Township. My grandfather and grandmother, Duncan and Sarah McPherson, rented a 200 acre farm on Lot 21, Concession 2, about a half mile from Crinan Church. Their three sons; James, Wilson and Bruce, and their two daughters; Mabel Ella, and Isabella Henrietta, resided there also. In 1907, they bought 100 acres on the Aldborough - Dunwich Townline for \$3,800.

The first house was white frame. Later, in 1917, the McPherson's built a cement block home. Riverside Farm, as it was called, had a barn raised onto a cement foundation. The cement was mixed by hand by Walter Hailstone of Mosa Township. The water system consisted of a pump and a drilled well. Mixed farming was carried on, raising cattle, milk cows, horses, and pigs. Crops grown were soybeans, corn and hay.

The farm was sold in 1985 to the Podebry's. Since this time, an air strip has been added, the barn has been dismantled and a new, smaller house has been built to replace the original stone home which was gutted by a fire.

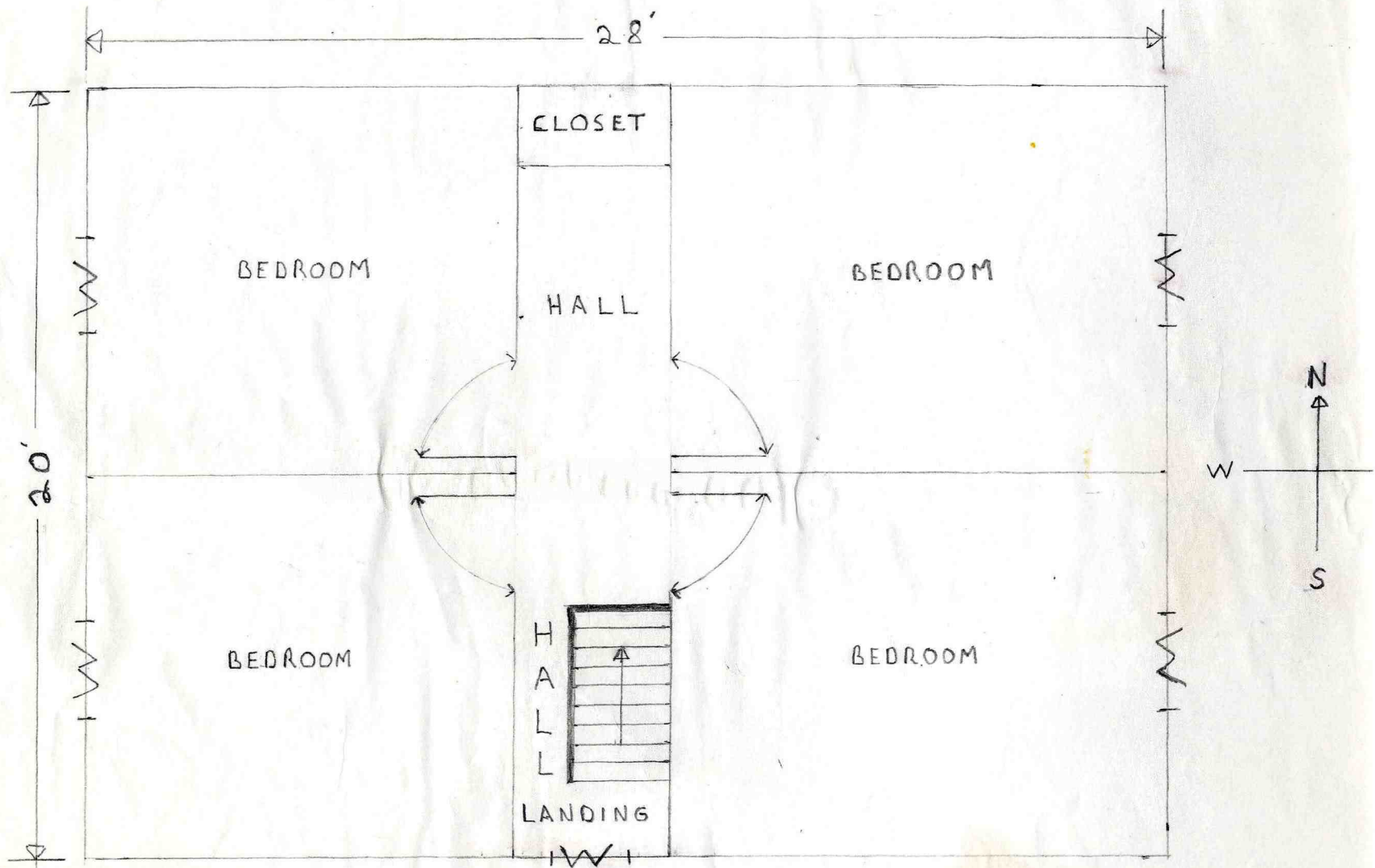


SCALE 1/4" = 1'

DOWNSTAIRS

DAN Mc PHERSON

The Home Georgina Livingstone grew up in.



SCALE 1/4" = 1'

UPSTAIRS

DAN McPHERSON

The Home Georgina Livingstone grew up in.