

One of the things that our neighborhood was proud of was that the cheese from our Factory took first prize at the Chicago World Fair. I feel that I haven't given you much of value about the Cheese Factory, but you can take it for what it is worth. I can give you more about West Magdala.

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The name "West Magdala" means much to me. It takes me back to the days of my childhood and youth; to my school days when all we barefoot children of our neighborhood learned together much of the rough and tumble of life, shared together in laughter and tears, and suffered the agonizing awkwardness and bashfulness of growing youth.

But the name "West Magdala" to me more than anything else means the West Magdala Post Office in the Dan Turner home. And Mrs. Turner acting as post-mistress, -- always cordial and smiling, and ready to wait on us, -- although surrounded with children, and with all the responsibility of the house upon her shoulders. The school children too, were often none too considerate, when they rushed over there after school to get the mail, on the days when the mailman arrived. Sometimes when old Mr. Angus Turner thought we were going too far, he would disperse us by threatening us with an uplifted cane.

I remember the long old fashioned clock on their living room wall, and the square of brick floor beneath the kitchen stove. And I remember old Mrs. Turner sitting at the far side of the room, and spinning yarn with one of those old-fashioned spinning-wheels, that so operate that the spindle goes toward and from you at your will. I remember too, the spring on the hillside of the Turner place, by the lower barn, and the V shaped trough that carried the water to the watering-trough at the foot of the hill.

I remember too, the Turner family burying-ground, to the left of the driveway as you drove in, and the kind of fence that enclosed it. Then there was a small square on the hill top across the road, on the McArthur place, where Peter McArthur was buried beside his brother, (I think Donald by name.) When the public requested the use of this ground for a gravel pit, and the present McArthur cemetery was established, the bodies were all removed to the new burying ground.

I do not remember the date on which West Magdala Post Office came into being. But I do remember that before it started my father got his mail at Fingal; and that neighbors who happened to be in Fingal brought the mail to one another. As I remember it, the mail was first carried past the school house to the new Post Office, on a buckboard, -- was it from Shedden? And ~~was it~~ carried by one of the Hortons? I'm not sure. Later it was carried on horse-back from Southwold Station, -- most of the time for years by Bob Miller's boys. But Walter Miller of Shedden can tell you all about that. Mail was first delivered to the Post Office once a week, then twice a week. And when I left home in 1881, three times a week.

In writing about West Magdala, I suppose one should include the church, the school, and the neighborhood life. I have data at hand which will give a glimpse of them all, even over 90 years ago, as well as after West Magdala came into being.

A good Scotch community could not long exist without some religious life. I don't know who first started a Sabbath School there. But we have the record that away back in 1853 the Sabbath School was thriving, apparently under the leadership of William Lynn (my grandfather). He held this position until the year of his death, 1866, when his son Robert Lynn succeeded him in office.

From a letter that my Uncle James Lynn, then a boy of 14 years, wrote to his brother, I quote: "Southwold, June 13th, 1853-----Our Sabbath School is prospering well. We had all the books (library) read two or three months ago. There are fifty scholars. There was a collection lifted at which we got better than five dollars. Every scholar gave whatever he liked. The teachers are Miss McGeachy and Margaret McGeachy, Father, Hugh, Rose Ann, and Robert Lynn". Then he speaks of his father being in London and his getting more library books there. This was in 1853. I don't know how much earlier the S. S. was started. Neither do I know where it was started. It is said it was in the home of Angus Turner. Again it is spoken of as being in the Old Log School house. I don't know.

At my earliest recollection Sabbath School was being held in the frame school house, with my Uncle Robert Lynn as Superintendent. In 1868 he moved away, and my father Hugh Lynn was pressed into the position. I remember in those days as we little children sat on the side bench in the school house, we had Nancy Munroe as our teacher, and I thought she was pretty nice. Archie Turner and Peter Thompson and others were in our class. We only had Sabbath School in the summer months, and occasionally we had a preaching service in the school house, until the new church was built. For about 22 years my father continued to serve as Superintendent, - until he came to Redlands, California in 1889, - except for a short time when John Turner took it over.

The Presbyterians all these years, had been going to Fingal to church, a distance for some of us of 6 or 7 miles, and more, and it was thought that we ought to have a church of our own, in our West Magdala neighborhood. The site selected was two acres on the Northwest corner of the John Turner farm. This land was given to the church by Mr. Turner. The church was built in 1876, as a branch of the Fingal Presbyterian church, and dedicated on June 7th of that year. At a meeting of Presbytery, the name "McBride's Church" was proposed by Neil McKillop, which name was officially adopted. For many years, however, it was well known throughout the community as the "Lynn church" -- perhaps partly because of my father's activity in promoting both the building, and the religious life of the church, and partly because of its location across the corner from our home.

Rev. George Sutherland was for 37 years the beloved pastor of the Fingal church, and of ours from the time of its organization until the year 1900.

One excitement of the week in our neighborhood was the regular weekly practice of the church choir, (with the tuning-fork to give the pitch, of course). Neil Dewar was the first leader. But later John Monroe drilled and conducted the choir. I think I could still sing some of those wonderful old "new songs" that I sat back and listened to as he drilled them, - especially the anthems which were to be sung on some special occasions. I could even give the names of the choir members of -- we will say 1881. But they are all gone now, over on the other side!

I have in my possession an old "New Testament" which belonged to my grandfather, on the fly leaf of which he had written the names of a good many people, who, I think likely, were members of his Sabbath School Class, -- or at least were attendants of the school. That would be before 1866, which was the year he died. The names are almost all familiar to me, as belonging to the generation before me.

I will speak now about the school. I don't know when the first log schoolhouse was built. But I remember well seeing and being within its walls when the roof was gone, and only the walls remained. As I remember it, it had only one small window and a door. It stood just across the Oneida Road from the present school building and a trifle to the north, in Dan Turner's field, and right on the edge of the road, the rail fence ending against the building on either side. There was no floor in it at this time; and my sister Agnes, who attended school there when "Johnnie" Thompson was teaching, thought it had always been a dirt floor. I do not know how many teachers may have taught in the old log school house, but I know who three of them were. They were Miss Mary McGeachy, Mr. Neil McKillop, and Mr. John Thompson.

In the same letter written by my Uncle James Lynn when a school boy, to his brother and dated June 13, 1853, - from which I have already quoted, I will quote further: "Samuel and I got through the geography, and I got nearly through the Arithmetic. The scholars are getting along very well under Miss McGeachy.-----Miss McGeachy has now an average of about 20 scholars."

Neil McKillop was I believe, the next teacher after Miss McGeachy, and after him came Mr. John Thompson, or "Johnnie Thompson", as he was affectionately called. He was the last to teach in the old log school-house. He was the father of Margaret, Mary, Peter and Catharine Thompson, as you know.

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On June 2, 1861, work was begun on the new frame school-house, that was to take the place of the old log one. It was built by my father's brother, Thomas Lynn, who came from his home in Rochester, N.Y. to build it. In a letter from him to his wife, which I have before me, dated "Southwold, June 4, 1861", he says: "Saturday (two days before) I commenced work on the school house frame. I have got young Silcox to work for me. I will likely keep him. I have hired John Martin". On June 11, 1861, he writes: "I have wrought nearly 15 hours today, and feel quite tired. -----I cannot raise the school-house before the middle of next week, as the joist are not sawn yet." In another letter of June 21, he speaks of Sam Aiton, a cousin of my father's, doing the plastering.

I do not know who were the first teachers in the new school building. But beginning with 1867, when I started school, until 1881, when I left home, I think I can name them all, though not all in their proper order. My first teacher was Tom Leach, whom I liked because he was always nice to me. I think my next was Jim Black. Then there was Rachel Horton, the only lady teacher I ever had. (I am not real sure that I have her name right). These were followed by John B. Silcox, Ralph Stafford, and Jim Black for another term. Then there was Dennis Donahue, Colin McArthur, Albert Milligan and Tom Baldwin. Tom Baldwin was my last teacher, who must have taught about in 1879. I believe that the next year Miss Mary McNeill became the teacher of our school. Also Dan Campbell taught before Albert Milligan.

Much of the neighborhood life during all these years has necessarily been interwoven in what I have written. I will add but two short items, which tell ~~us~~ of the long-time-ago helpfulness between the neighbors. In a letter which I have at hand, written by my Aunt Rose Ann Lynn, dated "Southwold, June 18, 1853", she says, "Father and Hugh were at a raising yesterday of a frame barn at Angus Turner's, framed by Hugh Osburn." In a letter written by my Uncle Thomas Lynn, dated "Southwold, June 4, 1861", he speaks of attending a raising at Peter McArthur's.

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It has been a task not unmixed with pleasure to recall to mind the things that happened in the long ago. I hope that the reading of this long letter of reminiscences will not be too tedious for you, and that it may be of some help to you in getting up the history of West Magdala. If I can help you further, let me know.

My regards to all of West Magdala,

Her Native Son, your friend,

Walter J. S. Lynn.

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It was in 1846 (100 years ago this year) that William Lynn, his wife, five sons and two daughters, left Ireland and came to Canada. The first two years he engaged in working his sister's farm near St. Thomas. Sometime in 1848 he secured 200 acres of forest land. I ~~think~~ <sup>7</sup> this was bought ~~from the government through the agency of Thomas Talbot, who was the government agent for~~ <sup>from</sup> ~~allotting land to the new settlers.~~ <sup>the</sup> But I am not positive. *R. W. Talbot*  
*Lynn*

On this, he and his sons built a log shanty to shelter them while they (mostly the boys under his supervision) cleared away the under-brush, chopped down the heavy timber, logged with ox team and burned, to make room for planting crops among the stumps and for the erection of better home buildings.

This shanty (by the way) was built on what came to be the Robert Lynn farm, and as near as I can remember distances now, was about forty rods east and ten rods south of where the present brick house now stands. I remember well in later years seeing the remains of it and some apple trees growing near it. Mr. Warner later removed both the apple trees and the remains of the old shanty.

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While these boys or young men were clearing the land at the beginning, their provisions had to be carried from St. Thomas, a distance of 12 miles, mostly on foot.

I think it must have been in 1849 when my father, Hugh Lynn, and my Uncle, Robert Lynn, decided to start out for themselves. William Lynn, (my grandfather), divided his land in the middle, making two long 100 acre pieces instead of square ones. This was done I was told in order to have both pieces front on the second concession.

The east 100 was then divided and William Lynn's rights to it turned over to his sons Hugh and Robert for them to pay for; Robert getting the fifty fronting on the second concession, and Hugh the back fifty.

The next winter Hugh cleared off a piece, I think about five acres -- (or was it less?) of his fifty, fronting on the next concession, but did not like the situation so sold out his interests to Robert for \$50.00 which gave Robert the whole hundred acres. /

There was a log house on Grandfather's place, the place that is yours now. It was built after the shanty spoken of, but I do not remember the particulars about it except that it had a large beam that ran across the upstairs floor, that I had to climb over to get from one part of the room to the other, --- this was when I was four years old.

In 1866 William Lynn (my grandfather) began the building of a new brick house on his place. As I remember it, it was built north west of, and quite near to the log house where he was living. Grandfather did not live to see the house completed. He died in December that same year, leaving his <sup>one</sup> hundred ~~acre~~ home to his two youngest sons, James and Samuel, with the charge that they should care for their mother as long as she lived. James soon thereafter sold his interests to Samuel who kept the place until his coming to California in 1892.

You will note that this house that my grandfather started to build in 1866, is the one you are living in now.

It must have been in 1862 or early in 1863 that Robert Lynn built a frame house on his place. His three oldest children were born there. This house is the part of the present house, that was being used as a dining room by Jennie and Flora, when Mrs. Lynn and I visited them seven years ago.

In 1868 Robert Lynn moved to Missouri, and his farm was sold to Warren Warner. I do not remember just how long he held the place, but think he sold in about 1875. Peter McNeill was the next owner and you know the rest.

It was in 1853 that Hugh Lynn and his wife and baby, moved into the log house on the place that became our home. He and his wife (Sarah Milligan) had lived for a year in the shanty that had been put up to shelter the boys while they were making their first clearing, and the little daughter (Agnes) was born there.

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This place, 100 acres, was owned by Peter Milligan my Mother's brother, and in lieu of rent my father was to clear off five acres of forest every year, and whuld have whatever he could make on the place. This proved satisfactory. About eleven years later Uncle Peter died and my father bought the place from the heirs, agreeing to provide for the Milligan Grandparents as long as they lived. It was in April, 1865, that my Grandfather and Grandmother Milligan moved in with us, into a house of three rooms and an attic, with six children and our parents. Our grandparents made ten. I don't know yet how we did it.

That summer my father built another house which we moved into in the fall, - leaving the log house to the old folks. That new house constituted a part of the house that has burned down since the Bogarts had it. In 1889 Hugh Lynn sold the place to Robert Aiton and came to Redlands, California to live.

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In giving you this history of the three Lynn farms, it has seemed necessary to give some family history as well, since the two seem inseparable. I have been careful to state dates and all things as they were. I do not know how much of this may be of interest to you, but you are at liberty to use all or any part of this in your history of West Magdala as you deem best.

I have seen a number of histories gotten up, and I know how hard it is to get the facts and avoid errors creeping in, which make unreliable the history as a whole. If you think it would help you any I would be glad to look over your history before it goes to press. There are few if any who are older than I to remember the happenings of so long ago. I might be reminded of other things that happened or comment on what has been said.

I will send this part of the history on to you now, and will try to write something about the cheese factory and West Magdala to send to you a little later.

Yours truly,

Walter S. Lynn.