

I got a letter form our cousin Archibald Gillis from Caledonia and he was inquiring for you. He says he has an abundance of the necessaries of life, and he has his family joining together, that is their land aside his own. That wise man says he is surprised that so many of his country men are lairds, when it is in their power to leave them now, brother you want my advice and you shall have that sincerely. It is my advice to you, come. If you had come when I came, you would be an independent man now. I am glad that I came. I was not satisfied with the country when I came and that is the case of a great many but they will soon get reconciled with the new country. I do not urge you to come against your will, but if you have a wish yourself and you must not be reflecting on me again, am laying everything before you as plain as I can and let you judge for yourself. If you come, you should bring John McGinnis, your son-in-law with you, as you would be a great benefit to one another, on the way and after coming. It is very expensive coming here, and after coming until people get settled, and any one that comes must work hard. The old proverb is in great reality in this country, nothing is to be got for nothing. Be sure to take good care of your money and lay nothing out for anything but what I mentioned. You will take your passage to New York, it is the safest and best, suppose it is a little dearer at first, it will be cheapest at last. When you come to New York ask for Buffalo. When you come to Buffalo ask for Port Stanley, when you come to Port Stanley ask for St. Thomas and when you come to St. Thomas ask for Mr. Shaw

storkeeper and inquire of him for me and he will give you my address. Your nephew James Ferguson is only three miles from Port Stanley. If you wish to go to see him, you may, but you must not take your luggage there. You will please have your luggage well secured in strong portable boxes, easily handled between two men, and you will keep a watchful eye over everything, particularly at a stopping place. Be sure to bring as much wearing cloth as possible and be sure to have it made, for the making in this country is very dear. If it is possible you make take some moleskin for summer, the best scythes, pitch forks, spades, grapes adz, hand saw, or any implement that is not heavy, any that you have but do not buy any, as you will get innumerable here to buy. Take books Gaelic and English bound.

The seasons have changed materially for the last seven years, the winter is considerably longer.

With regards to provision on the passage you will take oatcake as we did, it will last long enough, butter, cheese and plenty of salt pork or beef, a little wine, brandy and whiskey, and fine biscuits and potatoes, a good deal of oatmeal, barley, molasses, cream of tartar, castor oil, salts, a little dry fish and herrings.

Angus McIntyre wishes you to tell Duntroon herdsmen that he is much surprised that he got no letter this year. His family is well.

I am sorry to tell you that Solomon McColl died 9th of August last. The rest to the family are well and doing well. Donald McColl is as well as prospect as any that came here penniless. Tell John Munroe that his mother-in-law was here a few nights after your letter came. He is to receive a letter along with this one, his friends

are to give him some assistance, but if he should run short, if you will give him some to help him and depend you will be paid. This is a good country, fertile land, mild climate, very healthy, very palatable food, and genteel way of taking it. We have knives and forks on the table at every meal, it is the custom in this country.

Give my respects to Alexander Thompson, Balenanyach and brother and sister. Remember me to Camasery people, William Todds, Knockalva. I must conclude all my family join in their respects to you, all wishing you a pleasant voyage on the Atlantic.

The number of my lot is No 5, 11th concession, Yarmouth. Please write as soon as convenient and let us know if you are intending to come, or not so that we would be looking for you and have land in view.

Duncan Ferguson

Iver did not come to Canada, so Duncan wrote again, four years later.

Yarmouth, Oct. 16th, 1841

My Dear Brother:

To give you all particulars is almost impossible, for Canada is large, but as far as I know I will give you the true statement and nothing but is true and in which I am well informed. In the first place then, the settlers that came here about the same time as our nephew James Ferguson have now their ground cleared and orchards planted from which they supply themselves with cider and fruit for tables and this from year to year. Houses are nothing short of the one formerly occupied by the Ruggles family, with

regard to comfortableness and hospitality, and these very people when I came here were possessed of no better houses than the one I have at present.

After settling here the first year we had a very good crop, but the two succeeding years the crops did not prove so satisfactory, which was very discouraging, and that especially to a new beginner. But we thank God every year since we have been getting on far better, or as well as I expected so that I now have seventy acres clear and as many cattle, horses, cows, oxen, steers, calves, sheep and swine. Prices are so low at present time that there is not much profit in rearing them, but as it is the will of Providence to bestow, to have plenty to take and to spare, and it is our duty to praise Almighty God for his goodness towards us. Now, my dear brother, you know the condition I was in when I left Lechuary, and I came through a great many trials with my family, but after all I wish you were able to purchase just the clearance and cattle that I am master of. Not that I brag or pride myself in worldly prosperity for I am well aware of temporal happiness, yet if it were your will, or if you could think of coming I would feel happy to see you. I will just take the liberty of quoting you a few lines from a wise man---"I am glad you were so smart as to leave the yoke of your highland lairds and come over the ocean where you can have land enough for yourself and family, if you will be well in health and industrious."

Now I hope you will write me when you get this, and when you write I wish you to post it at Lochgilphead paying the postage as they are the most certain to come

to my hand. It is but a trifle for if you pay eight pence,  
it will come free to St. Thomas, whereas I have to pay  
two shillings and two pence sterling with each letter to you.

Your loving brother

Duncan Ferguson

Iver did not emigrate to Canada, remaining on the  
farm at Lechuary where descendants of his are still on the  
same farm, while others came to the Canadian West, and  
now many in Ontario.

Great-grand children of the pioneer Duncan Ferguson  
and his wife Catherine McColl, now living in this district  
are Archibald J. Ferguson on the old homestead, Donald A.  
Ferguson, Donald M. Ferguson, Ferguson Campbell, Donald M.  
McGregor, Stewart Ferguson, Robert J. Ferguson, Alex  
Ferguson, Carl Ferguson, Charles McBain, Mrs. W. J. Shaw  
of St. Thomas, and Mrs. William Fingland of Niagara Falls  
who compiled the Ferguson history.

Mary Campbell Poole

(Mrs. Forrest Poole)

1966----

Great Grandson Duncan Ferguson is on the homestead  
settled by Duncan Ferguson in 1831.

LOT 5 - CONCESSION 12 - NORTH SIDE - NORTH YARMOUTH - "FERNDALE"

"Ferndale" was a Clergy Reserve released in 1837, purchased by Donald Ferguson (died October 3, 1833). This farm was known as the Dan'l Ferguson homestead. The pronunciation Dan'l is somewhat like the Gaelic. The children of this household were all distinguished as "Dan'ls", the description after the Christian name.

The other two large Ferguson families across the road were "Eds" and "Jims". Edward (Iver) and James were younger half-brothers of Donald.

This farm was the second home in which Donald Ferguson lived on Concession 12, his father's (Duncan) home was across the road. The name Ferndale may refer to Femoch and Lecheury from the old home farms in Scotland, in the Glen of Kilmaechel, Glassary, Lachgilpead, Argyle.

Through the years, the Ferguson family in Canada has kept in touch with the old home farm Lecheury in Scotland. The old home there is a tract of a thousand acres, 139 acres of it described as "arable" land. At the time of writing, the Government of Scotland has taken over some of the land in the National reforestation scheme. Several of the Ferguson family from Lecheury visited Canada in recent years.

In 1952, Elizabeth Ketchum, a sixth generation Ferguson in Canada (Southwold) visited in Lecheury. Elizabeth Ketchum's great-great-great grandfather, John Ferguson is buried in the Killfinlay Cemetery, the oldest Cemetery is Aldborough. This cemetery is known also as "The Pioneers' Cemetery", "McDiarmid's Cemetery" and by many it is still called "The Presbyterian Cemetery". This cemetery is situated on Highway No. 3 the Old Talbot Road, West of Eagle and just East of New Glasgow. The John Ferguson above was an uncle of Donald Ferguson. The names of John Ferguson's family (spelled Farguson) are in the tax map of 1820, as recorded in the glass window of the cairn at New Glasgow, at the Pioneer's Landing Place. Nelly's Neck and Nelly's Hill (in Gaelic it is Cnoc Nealliadh and Eildah Snock). Nelly is after the renowned pioneer, Nelly Campbell.

An original Ferguson farm (Colin) one mile west of Eagle on the south side of the road, retained by that worthy chatelaine, Mary Land Ferguson, the late Mrs. J. B. Ferguson, of the Black-Fergusons is now occupied by her son Jack Ferguson.

Relatives and friends from the Old Land meant much to each other in the wilderness. In the winter time people visited. There was a small population in the whole Lake Erie district.

Donald Ferguson's first home at Ferndale, North Yarmouth was a log cabin on the hillside, north of the creek. His second home was a white frame house nearer the road. This house is, in part, on Concession 13 to-day where its new owners keep it attractively. The third house, the red brick house of to-day was built by Donald Ferguson's son, Archie Dan'l.

Archibald D. Ferguson carried on this farm until his sixtieth birthday on a first of July, when a serious accident forced his retirement from farming, and he had to remove to St. Thomas. The farm was sold to Norman Watson in 1920.

Archibald Ferguson married Margaret Smith. There were three children, Donald H. (1899), Hattie F. (1901) and Catharine M. (1902).

The Fergusons took great interest and enjoyment in their farms. They were early interested in growing grain and raising cattle.

It is of moment to consider the Scottish scene early in the 19th Century. Donald Ferguson was born in 1805.

Copy: "That Duncan Ferguson and Catharine Kerr in Lechuary had the following lawful children born to them viz:

John - Born 23rd March 1804  
Donald - Born 12th April 1805  
Isabel - Born 24th February 1809

is attested as extracted from the register of births of the Parish of Glasrie Kept at Kilmichael, Glasrie, the 16th June 1809 by Duncan McCallum, Session Clerk".

Note: Ken is pronounced Karr.

In the year 1805, a cousin Archibald Gillies, or as the Highlander often expressed it, "a friend", left Scotland for America and lived in Caledonia, New York State, until 1813. He followed the Loyalists to Canada after the War of 1812. Gillies, Forbes and Haggart were the first three white settlers to live in Aldborough after a man named Fleming who lived there for a time.

Archibald Gillies' cousin, James Ferguson (James Ferguson preceded his father John Ferguson to Canada) came to this same locality in 1816, and after a short time moved to Southwold. Several of his brothers stayed west of Eagle on Highway 3. Since land was taken up for each son of the Family, all the Ferguson family names are in the tax roll of 1820, as mentioned above, Ferguson spelled Farguson.

Archibald Gillies, of whom Duncan Ferguson, father of Donald refers to as "that wise and steady man, our cousin" (in his letters of the 1830's), is also buried in the Pioneer Cemetery near New Glasgow.

Mrs. John McGregor (Maggie Dan'l) said she heard the older people speak of the earnest conclaves in Scotland. Scotland, the land they loved, gave the older ones quite comfortable homes, good stone houses, but the economic picture showed no opportunity for their large families.

The Fergusons considered emigrating to India, where one of the Kerrs, the unlikely one of the family, became a "tea-baron". Literature about this man's estate, mythical perhaps, was received in the log cabin at Ferndale, and ideas of how to claim it were as perennial as the Springer estate is in our day. India, Scotland, Australia and Upper Canada were a long way apart one hundred and fifty years ago, - in any case they wished to stay in the Empire. "That wise and steady man, our cousin, Archibald Gillies, was in Canada. They decided to come to Canada.

Born in 1805, Donald Ferguson was a child in Scotland in the era when, naughty children were reminded, "that Napoleon Bonaparte might come." Donald Ferguson remembered the bonfires on the hills ready to be lighted if there was an invasion.

Donald Ferguson came to Canada in the 1820's and before his father, Duncan Ferguson. He arrived at Port Stanley. The several gold pieces he had in his pocket were preserved.

For some years, Donald Ferguson lived and worked at Lechuary, Southwold, the farm home of his cousins, James Ferguson, - Mrs. James Ferguson was also a Kerr. This is the Mrs. R. D. Ferguson - Ketchum home of to-day. Then Donald Ferguson went to North Yarmouth with his cousin, John Black, making "cash money" again.

Thus Donald Ferguson had the advantage of learning to farm in the New World way, under two very able men.

Donald Ferguson's father, Duncan Ferguson, his second mother (McColl) and the nine other children coming to Canada in 1830, the family took up land on Concession 12. They stayed the winter at Peterborough with friends, the McFarlanes. Their first night in Elgin they stayed with James Ferguson, his nephew near Port Stanley. Their first night in North Yarmouth was spent at the Thomas Penhale Sr. home.

Two letters written by Duncan Ferguson to Scotland in 1837 and 1841, and returned by the family of his brother, Iver (Edward) of Lechuary many years later, provide valuable information of people and life in North Yarmouth. This brother, Iver, did not come to Canada, but some of his family came to Manitoba years later.

The letters are written in excellent English. For these Highlanders who "had the English", in Scotland before coming to Canada were taught a fine version of the language since their teachers were ususally Clergymen grounded and steeped in the classics.

The Duncan Ferguson homestead was Lot 5, Con. 12, South side. The first home was a log cabin on the brow of the hill.

Mrs. William Fingland of Niagara Falls has written a short history of the Duncan Ferguson family in North Yarmouth. Included are the two letters mentioned above.

Donald Ferguson married Margaret Stewart Munro. Margaret Stewart, Dunumuck Farm, Kilmartin, Argyle, was early widowed in the New World. Her three children, Sara, Katie and Mary Munro were the loved older sisters in a household where was born Duncan, John, Isabella, Archibald, Maggie and Donald Ferguson.

Another member of the household and regarded as a son was a young boy in his teens, Archibald McLachlin, a nephew of Mrs. Donald Ferguson's first husband, James Munro, who is buried in Kilmartin Churchyard, Concession 11, North Yarmouth.

This young man Archibald McLachlin, trained to be a teacher, in Scotland, taught school west of St. Thomas and later published "The Journal" in St. Thomas. His home 1 Wellington Street, still stands. This house was the centre of a great gatherine of the Scottish clans in St. Thomas when the Marquess of Lorne was present.

Archibald McLachlin was a Mayor of St. Thomas, later the County Registrar, and had a book store. McLachlin Hall at Alma College was named after him. Archibald McLachlin married Mary Ferguson, a daughter of James Ferguson, Lechuary, Southwold.

Mrs. Donald Ferguson readily adapted herself to the New World living. Her home was noted for hospitality. She was always at home to her family, to her friends and to all wayfarers. Donald Ferguson broke his hip in later years, and as was the case among many God fearing Scots brought up to be mindful that "things were temporal," he spend much time in his last years earnestly searching the scriptures. The late J. B. McLarty recalled to me that people expected to find Dan'l Ferguson seated in his chair in front of the west window in the kitchen with his Bible on his knee.

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Ferguson are buried in the St. Thomas Cemetery near the gate leading to the Gravel Road. Here, there is a veritable Ferguson settlement.

The North Yarmouth brothers, Donald, Edward, James, Colin, Duncan, their parents and some of their own children lie beside the large Southwold Ferguson connection. The first burial in the St. Thomas Cemetery is in this Ferguson plot. The St. Thomas Cemetery came into being when family cemeteries and church eemeteries needed to be augmented in centres of some population. Some of the Ferguson family are buried in Kilmory Cemetery which is the Stewart Cemetery, east of Belmont.