

The colonists were disheartened by the fact that the promises of land allotments were not kept. The farms were narrow, reaching along the river front and extending back one or more miles. The lots were first ten chains wide. Later on the Hudson's Bay Company changed them to eight chains and finally to six chains. There were no implements to till the soil nor was there sufficient food, but they struggled bravely on until the spring of 1815. In August of 1814 a son, John, was born to John McKay's wife. He later lived in Aldborough Township and died in September of 1906. Provisions were available from the North West Company at much higher prices. Some of the settlers decided to leave and move on to Colonel Talbot's settlement which they had heard about while in Scotland. They approached the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company and voiced their discontent. The Governor pointed at the moon that shone over the prairie and said, "You may as well try to get to the moon as get out of this." Some of the settlers met opposition from the Hudson's Bay Company and decided to leave on their own with the assistance of the North West Company. For the safety of those leaving the colony, the young men went to the Hudson's Bay fort with Angus Gunn as their leader and threw all the guns into the river. In one incident Angus Gunn, who was as strong as he was brave, was followed into the fort by a half-breed with a gun. Gunn tore the gun out of the half-breed's hands, threw it into the river and the half-breed through the window. Angus Gunn led the party along the rivers to the Lake of the Woods and then to Fort William, a journey that took over six weeks. There they halted for two or three days for a rest and there Angus Gunn made some money cutting hay for a British half-pay officer. Leaving Fort William, they skirted Lake Superior to Sault Ste Marie, and there coasted along Georgian Bay. From Georgian Bay they turned south by way of Lake Simcoe until they reached Bradford. Here many of the settlers decided to locate in the township of Gwillimbury. Some of the Gunns went on to Toronto, among them Angus Gunn and his wife and child. At Little York, as it was called then, they came up for examination for the high-handed doings on the Red River, word having been sent on ahead of them. A military officer, who happened to be there from Red River, was asked what kind of people they were, and he replied they were honest, brave people, and you could trust your life with them. In 1817 the Gunns left Little York and settled in Dunwich Township. They were followed by Angus McKay the following year from Gwillimbury. Others followed them down to the Talbot Settlement and settled in Dunwich and Aldborough townships, among them the Bannermans, Matthewsons and John MacPherson. Probably about the year 1826, Benjamin Gunn came from the Red River and settled near Wallacetown. B.B. Gunn of Seaforth, Ontario, was his grandson. Gunn was once an M.P. for the Conservatives. Donald G. Gunn passed from this earth on the 17th of August, 1913, when he was eighty-six years of age, leaving behind his wife, Catherine (Grant) Gunn, and ten children: Mrs. J. Linch, North Dakota; George Gunn, Washington State; Mrs. W.H. Penniger, Washington State; Mrs. J.B. McGully, Knife River, Minnesota; John A. Gunn, north Yarmouth; Donald Byron Gunn, Essex; Robert A. Gunn, St. Thomas; Mrs. Hiram Winger, Glencoe, and Christina Gunn, north Yarmouth. There were three other children by his first wife, Nancy, who died in 1866 when only forty years of age. Donald G. Gunn was born on his father's farm near Coyne's Corners in 1827 and farmed in the area until 1876. Then he moved to Michigan, where he farmed until 1883 before moving to Melbourne, Ontario, where he remained until 1905. Finally he moved to a farm on Edgeware Road in north Yarmouth where he died. At the time of his death his sister Helen, who was Mrs. Garbutt, was the only one left of the Gunn family.

Early Families

The Gow family was part and parcel of the fabric of the Wallacetown area for many years. This is evident in Black's Cemetery. Robert and Peter Gow, sons of John Gow, were born in Perthshire, Scotland, and came to New Brunswick with their parents. In 1840 Robert and Peter decided to strike out for themselves. Robert Gow and a friend, James McNair, went to the United States, where they spent the winter months. In the spring Robert Gow removed

to West Elgin where he worked as a labourer splitting basswood logs into rough planks for the home of Angus Gunn on the Talbot Road, and for George McBeth. The next year he purchased two hundred acres of land on Lot 19 of Dunwich Township on Willey's Sideroad from Colonel Talbot. After purchasing the land, he erected a log cabin and married Catherine McKillop, daughter of Archibald McKillop of Back Street. In 1843 the third son of John Gow, John Jr., decided to come to Dunwich Township and join his brothers. He brought with him a close friend, James Robertson, who picked up work cutting fallow and making staves. Young John purchased a piece of land on Willey's Sideroad and assisted in fencing his brother Peter's farm with walnut rails. John Gow decided to settle down, married Elizabeth Grey and by her had nine children. Gow lost his first wife in 1867. He married again to Christy McCallum and by her had seven children. After the death of the parents some of the children moved to Montana while others stayed in Dunwich. Jane Gow, the fourth daughter of John Gow, Sr., came to Upper Canada in 1845 with her brother Peter and lived with him until his death in 1863. Then she married Elijah Page and took up residence west of Tyrconnell and later on Clay Street in Dunwich Township. Mary Gow, daughter of John Gow, Jr., married James McLandress, a young man from Cupar Angus, Perthshire, Scotland. McLandress was a tailor and opened a business in Iona. He came to Upper Canada in 1847 and his marriage to Mary Gow produced five children. He came with John Gow, Jr., through the United States to Buffalo, then took a schooner to Port Stanley and hired a team to haul his goods to Peter Gow's home on the lake shore near St. Peter's Cemetery. John Gow bought the west half of the Peter Gow farm east of Tyrconnell. This farm was originally owned by Captain Smith who purchased it from Colonel Talbot for three grains of barley. The captain left the farm to his son-in-law, Robert Thompson, who had it for ten years and then sold it to Gow for \$1,600. About this time Robert Gow sold his farm on Willey's Sideroad to his brother, John, and with his wife and two sons, Archibald and John, moved in with his father, who was an old man by this time, on the lake shore farm. John Gow, Sr., died in 1859. After Peter Gow's death, Robert purchased the east half of the farm. One season Robert Gow and Peter Cameron cradled the grain on the old Gow farm and Mrs. Robert Gow and Elizabeth Gow bound the wheat, a total of one thousand bushels. Robert Gow was instrumental in the founding of the Presbyterian Church in Wallacetown and was an elder there. John R. Gow, son of Robert Gow, became reeve of Dutton.

The Cameron family story began when Peter Cameron left Scotland in 1851 from Greenock for New York. From there he journeyed to Albany, Buffalo, and Port Stanley. He worked for a year in St. Thomas as a blacksmith and from there went to Fingal, where he stayed for a short time before moving to Iona. Peter Cameron married Elizabeth Gow, daughter of John Gow, Jr., moved to Tyrconnell and operated a blacksmith shop there for eighteen years. He also was the postmaster for a number of years. During the time of the Fenian Scare, he enlisted and became one of the guards patrolling Pat's Point. Peter and Elizabeth Cameron had four sons: Daniel M., John R., Peter G., and James R. Cameron later purchased one hundred acres of bush north of Coyne's Corners. In 1872 he and his wife and family moved to the farm where he died in 1914. His wife predeceased him in 1911. His son, Peter G. Cameron, sat in the Ontario Legislature from 1919 to 1923 for West Elgin. Donald Cameron, Peter's twin brother, a shoemaker from Bankfoot, Scotland, came to Upper Canada in 1856 with his father, mother, and sister Catherine. His parents settled near Wallacetown. Catherine Cameron married James Robertson, who bought the north half of John Gow, Jr.'s, farm on Willey's Sideroad. Mungro Cameron, the father, lived with Catherine until he died in 1882. Donald Cameron had a shoemaker's shop at Tyrconnell and Fingal and finally at Wallacetown. He married Nancy McKillop, daughter of Archibald McKillop, and had nine children. Peter, his son, became a successful merchant in Wallacetown and finally in Dutton. Donald Cameron died in 1904. Anne Cameron married Robert Kirkland, an early druggist in Dutton. John A. Cameron was a merchant in Wallacetown. Donald A. Cameron became a physician and first

practiced in Dutton and later in London. Dr. Cameron died in 1899. Duncan, another son of Donald Cameron, Sr., also became a medical doctor.

Malcom McIntyre, a native of Argyleshire, Scotland, settled north of Wallacetown on Lot 13 in 1830. He was one year old when his parents came to Dunwich Township. When he grew of age, he married Janet Gunn and had eight children: Daniel, Benjamin, Eliza, Annie, Neil, Archibald, George and Mary Jane. The first four children later took up residence in Manitoba. Benjamin McIntyre became ill and came home to die on May 25, 1899. Malcom McIntyre lived eighty-one years and closed his eyes forever on January 23, 1907. His wife Janet breathed her last three days before Christmas in 1875. I understand that Archibald G. McIntyre, a son, carried on the farm until his death in 1934.

Daniel and Grace (Bannerman) McPherson came from Sutherlandshire, Scotland, and first settled at New Glasgow, Aldborough Township. They had eight children, five of whom were Peter, Hector, Janet, Anna and Catherine. Peter became a township councillor. He was born near Long Point in 1820. In 1852 he married Elizabeth McCallum, a native of Argyleshire, Scotland, and as a result seven sons and two daughters came into the world. They were Archibald, Daniel, Duncan, John, Elizabeth, Hector, Grace, Peter and David. Hector McPherson later went to the North West. The old McPherson home, which was the first brick house built in this part of Elgin County, stands on the south side of No. 3 Highway west of Wallacetown near Black's Hill. The house is still in a very good state of preservation. It was built by Daniel McPherson in the 1860s. Mrs. Daniel McPherson was the former Grace Bannerman, great-grandmother of Mitchell Hepburn, once premier of Ontario. She was also the aunt of Sir Campbell Bannerman, a prime minister of England. Lord Elgin's father was a member of the Bannerman government. Daniel McPherson died on October 24, 1854, and his wife Grace joined him on April 23, 1875. The homestead was carried on by their son Hector, who married Mary McIntyre. Hector McPherson died at ninety-six in 1918. His wife predeceased him by nine years. The home later became the farm market of Mr. Unich. Peter McPherson died on January 1, 1898, at seventy-seven years of age. His wife passed away on October 1, 1906. Hector's first wife Christianna died on November 4, 1861, at twenty-nine.

The Rapeljes always figured strongly in the history of Dunwich and Yarmouth townships. To tell the story of the Rapeljes, I must go back to the time when Daniel, his wife and three children, and his brother, Jeronimus, left New York in 1802 to settle in Woodhouse Township where they remained for eight years before coming to Elgin County. It was during those eight years that three more children were born. After they left Woodhouse Township, they sailed to the mouth of Aukiksabee (Kettle Creek) where they proceeded to Colonel Talbot's and purchased two hundred acres of land on Lot 1, Concession 8 of Yarmouth Township (the southwestern portion of St. Thomas). It was here that Daniel and his brother cleared a path from the edge of Kettle Creek to his cabin site on the summit of the hill. In 1811 Colonel Talbot had the Talbot Road surveyed and this was the beginning of the road settlement. The Rapeljes were of Huguenot extraction. Jeronimus Rapelje never married and died in 1846 at the age of seventy-nine. During the 1812 War Daniel Rapelje and his son George took part in the Battle of Lundy's Lane. Daniel Rapelje was promoted to the rank of captain. George, who was training to become a lawyer in York, fell ill and died on October 14, 1819. He was twenty-three at the time. When George Rapelje died he was given a Masonic funeral under the direction of Colonel Mahlon Burwell, who was a Masonic master. George was a member of the Masonic Lodge No. 30, known as Kettle Creek Lodge. Another son of Captain Daniel Rapelje, Lambert, died in his fifteenth year on the 25th of December, 1819. He was buried next to his brother. Jeronimus, son of Captain Daniel Rapelje, was born in Woodhouse Township in 1806. On October 19, 1826, he married Jannete Best. They became the parents of Peter of Dunwich Township, Henry and George of Wallacetown, Jeronimus of Yarmouth Township, Daniel of Jackson, Michigan, Mrs. Wellington Mean, Elizabeth Rapelje, and Mrs. Henry Couse of

Yarmouth Centre. Jeronimus or Jerome Rapelje, son of Jeronimus Rapelje, died in the month of October, 1917. He was the father of James H. and Alonzo A. of St. Thomas and two daughters who became Mrs. S.A. Payne of Payne's Mills, and Mrs. H.D. Howell of St. Thomas. Henry Rapelje had in the 1880s a carriage shop and in 1896 took over the undertaking business of J. Cullen. On December 20, 1834, Captain John Conrad and Jeronimus Rapelje, the latter then a young man, were returning home from St. Thomas after dark on a wagon with a board for a seat. The board slipped and threw both passengers under the wheels of the wagon. They were found shortly afterwards in a state of insensibility and were carried to the nearest house. The newspaper stated at the time, "We regret to say that Capt. Conrad [was] so much injured about the head that he died shortly afterwards and Mr. Rapelje, though much hurt is in a fair way of recovery." At the coroner's inquest evidence suggested that a team of horses had passed along after the fall, and so it was supposed that one of the horses trampled on the captain's head, as marks were found upon it, apparently made by a roughshod horse.

Many years ago I had the opportunity to interview Cecil Robinson, who at the time was a patient at the John Bobier Nursing Home in Dutton. He was a frail old man with a sharp mind. He talked of the days when his father, Samuel Robinson, settled on the old James Black farm. It was here that Cecil was brought up. When his father died, he took over and farmed until his health failed. Then he sold the farm to Malcom Gowan. He recalled the northern edge of the farm as being the location of a millpond and the remains of a saw and grist mill that at one time were operated by Lazarus McIntyre. The mill buildings were dismantled and some of the material was used in building a kitchen on the farmhouse. Francis Robinson, Cecil's grandfather, came from Scotland and settled near Eagle. When he arrived he had only the clothes on his back, a jackknife, a shilling and a determined mind. He first hired out as a farm labourer and after a time was able to purchase a farm and it was on this farm that Samuel was born. Cecil remembered when Wallacetown had four blacksmiths, one located on the northeast corner in a brick building. He recalled old Daniel Curtis's blacksmith shop north of the corners and how old Dan punctuated his verbal outpourings with squirts of tobacco juice. Daniel never kept books and a handshake was all that was necessary. He recalled how his grandfather had to walk all the way from Eagle to Payne's Mills with a bag of grain to be ground. After this interview Cecil passed away. His brother Russel predeceased him in 1943.

On October 20, 1817, Henry Coyne, his wife Anna and six children landed at No. 9 (Tyrconnell) and settled on the northwest corner of Lot 6 on the fifth concession of Dunwich Township. This land was originally settled by James Sutherland, who abandoned it when he became aware of how he had been imposed upon. Henry Coyne was born on the Isle of Man in 1774, the son Sylvester Coyne, and the youngest of four brothers, William, Sylvester, John and Henry, and one sister, Elizabeth. Henry Coyne's parents died when he was a small boy and after that the family crossed the Channel to County Down, Ireland, where the boys became linen weavers. When the Irish Rebellion broke out in 1798, Henry was drafted into the militia and sent to Glasgow on garrison duty to relieve the "regulars" for active service. Henry was musically inclined and while he was stationed at Glasgow, he played in the militia band until the Rebellion ended in 1802. He then returned to Belfast and married Anna Gardener. Anna was born in 1780, the daughter of Singleton Gardener, a well-to-do farmer in County Armagh, Ireland. (You will find more about Singleton in the story of Cashmere and Tyrconnell.) After the birth of his second son, Henry Coyne became anxious to leave the crowded city of Belfast and go to America, where there was more room. On October 20, 1810, they embarked on the sailing vessel *Danube* under the command of Captain Pearce at the port of Belfast for New York, which they reached in four weeks. They were greeted by John Coyne and Mr. Gardener, who had crossed prior to them. Though bound for Canada, they remained for a while in New York and were there when the 1812 War broke out. This delayed their move to Canada. Coyne, who remained a British subject, was ordered to move back one hun-

dred miles from the frontier, and therefore left New York and proceeded up the Hudson River to a small village called Pleasant Valley, opposite Newburg, where they settled down until the end of the war. It was at Pleasant Valley that Elizabeth Coyne was born along with Thomas and William Coyne. According to British law they were natural-born British subjects. The family crossed the Niagara River at Black Rock and arrived in Dunwich Township on the 20th of October, 1817.

William and James Coyne learned the building trade and in the years that followed erected many buildings in West Elgin. At twenty-one years of age William Coyne became a merchant in Colonel Henry's back acres, Clearville. During the Rebellion he joined the militia. When it was over, the two brothers entered the general mercantile business in St. Thomas under the name of J. and W. Coyne; this partnership lasted until 1852 when James Coyne removed to London. William Coyne carried on the St. Thomas store. He was a public-spirited man and became involved in local and provincial politics, became a member of the board of education and a trustee of the First Methodist Church. William Coyne was the first treasurer of Elgin County after its separation from Middlesex County in 1853. He died in 1895. William Coyne married Christina Patterson and this union brought forth seven children. At his death only four remained: Mrs. William Kettlewell of Toronto, John P. and James Henry Coyne of St. Thomas, and Daniel Coyne of Brantford. Two of his daughters predeceased him. The youngest daughter married Reverend A.M. Phillips. His eldest son Isaac died in Toronto in 1911. Dr. James Henry Coyne was born in St. Thomas in 1849 and as a lad served as a private in the St. Thomas Rifles and received the Fenian Raid medal and a veteran's land grant. He married Matilda Bowes, daughter of John George Bowes, who was a former mayor of St. Thomas and M.P.P. for Toronto, in 1877 and by this union had four sons and two daughters. Dr. Coyne became an educator, historian, writer and in 1889 the registrar of Elgin County. In 1891 he founded the Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute. In 1906 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. He was also an executive of Alma College. Matilda Coyne died in 1935 and Dr. Coyne followed her in 1942.

Let us hear once again the words of another early pioneer, Colonel George Henry of Tyrconnell and later of Duart.

"When a boy, I left my mother, brothers and sisters on 1st of January, 1816, and came 150 miles west to the Township of Dunwich, now part of West Elgin, but in 1816 it was the district, and it has been divided into a number of districts. When I got as far as Dunwich I found nine settlers, and in that settlement I stopped and made my home for fourteen years. My former home, Aldborough, had not a single white man as a settler in it, south of the River Thames, and many of the townships west and north were not surveyed, at the time. When Orford was surveyed I drew the first or occupied the first lot that was occupied in the Township, and did what was called the settlement duties at that time and carried the provisions on my back 20 miles, and thought it no hardship at that.

"When I had done the settlement duties on my lot in Orford, I went to work again in Dunwich. Some time in the month of March, 1816, I came to the River Thames here near London, and crossed the river a little above where the oldest bridge now stands, upon a fallen elm tree that had fallen across the river, where the city now stands."

There was on the Lake Road a settlement of four or five families which had been there before the war. It consisted of Leslie Patterson, John Pearce, George Crane and Stephen Backus. In 1819, two years after the first family settled there, another colony of Highlanders came and settled with a larger percentage going to Aldborough Township. In 1820 Donald McGugan purchased the land claim of John Matheson, directly across the road from Henry Coyne. Matheson moved to Lobo Township. The next to come were George and Angus Gunn, who

had been with the North West Company in the Hudson Bay district. They settled on Lot 5, Concession 8 of Dunwich Township. John McLean settled on Lot 2 of the same concession and beyond the woods Angus McKay settled on Lot 24 of the thirteenth concession of Aldborough Township. Across the road is where Alexander McKinnon started his farm. He had for neighbours two brothers by the name of Neal and Gilbert Taylor, who lived with their sister until Gilbert Taylor married Nancy McCowan, daughter of Captain Hugh McCowan, in 1827, seven years after he and his brother settled in Aldborough. The Taylor brothers came from a fishing port named Loch Gilphead, Argyleshire, Scotland, and from Skipness, Kintyre, also in Argyleshire, where they obtained a large portion of their livelihood. As the country around there was rough and rocky, they were only able to raise a few potatoes and some oats, depending mostly on the harvest from the Loch for their support. They were hardy and industrious and although most of them were fond of a "drop of whiskey," they never permitted it to be their master. Remember tea and coffee were unavailable and all they had to drink were water, milk, barley water and whiskey. Sugar was also scarce and honey was used as a substitute. A hot drink was made from the roasted roots of dandelions. Gilbert Taylor died on January 19, 1852, when he was only fifty-one years of age, leaving his wife Nancy to look after the farm. Neal Taylor then got married and he and his wife Martha carried on Gilbert's farm. In 1863 Nancy Taylor lost her father, Captain Hugh McCowan, who settled near the Taylors in 1820. Captain McCowan married Isabella Graham. She outlived him by thirteen years and died at eighty-seven years of age. All are resting in Love Cemetery, west of Wallacetown, and Black's Cemetery.

A lot of the families who lived on the backroads had very little money to buy toys for their children. In some cases the children themselves made their own toys out of wood or whatever material was available. On the 3rd of January, 1920, Helen Gunn, wife of Hugh Gunn, was interviewed and she recalled that she was one of a family of girls and that her only toy was a hoe handle, which she adopted as her doll. Helen Gunn, one of the daughters of Archibald and Isabella McIntyre, was born on the farm three miles west of Wallacetown on the Talbot Road on February 13, 1828, and was educated at the old Gunn schoolhouse. Her parents were natives of Scotland who settled in Dunwich Township in 1819 as farmers. They raised a large family of girls and one son, Malcom A. McIntyre, who later became a resident of London, Ontario. "Auld Archie," as he was known, lived eighty-one years and passed from this life on May 27, 1883. Helen McIntyre married Hugh Gunn, a farmer upon whose farm Wallacetown was built. Hugh died in 1855. At the time of Mrs. Helen Gunn's death there remained one daughter, Isabella, and one sister, Kate Goodwin of Cleveland. Mrs. Gunn recalled the days of the 1837 Rebellion when the soldiers that were on the march stopped at her father's farm for a hot meal. Still later there were the trying days of the Fenian Scare, when the volunteers were marshalled at the Wallacetown drill shed, which later became the crystal palace on the old fairground. One of her fond memories was of Christmas when all the married men met and played hockey on the nearby pond and of her mother making a bushel basket of doughnuts for them. When asked how she dyed clothing back in the early days, she recalled using logwood and water for black, madder for red, goldenrod for yellow, walnuts for brown. Green she obtained by adding alum to the yellow weed and putting it through the blue dye. Mrs. Gunn in her last years lived in Wallacetown and was respected and loved by all.