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Wellington County History

Ontario Farm Service Force: The Farmerettes
Barns and Barn Raising • Threshing • Cattle Breeding
Chicken Plucking • Plowing Matches
Ontario Agricultural College • Women at O.A.C.
Gordon Green • Kenneth Cragg • Margaret Leatherbarrow

Volume 12 • 1999

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Introduction

It is difficult for me to acknowledge that twelve years have passed since the first issue of Wellington County History appeared. In 1987 Jim Gow and I concluded that Wellington County should have an annual historical publication, and that such a project should be a major activity of the Wellington County Historical Research Society, as it was then known.

Several of the directors were wary, and one stated that we could not hope to publish for more than two or three years. It is most satisfying that, on the contrary, the journal has continued to be published, and over the years has attracted talented authors and dedicated volunteers to the editorial committee.

This issue of the journal salutes the rich agricultural traditions of Wellington County. Theme issues are not new to Wellington County History. Volume 4, published in 1991, has become known as "The Railway Issue," and is now a desirable collector's item. I hope a similar fate awaits this volume.

It is particularly appropriate that agriculture be the theme for 1999. The Ontario Agricultural College, now part of the University of Guelph, is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year. As well, excitement is mounting for IPM 2000, the International Plowing Match to be held near Elora in September of the year 2000.

Both the OAC and Plowing Matches appear in the table of contents in this issue. University of Guelph historian Terry Crowley, a former director of this society, has authored a new history of Ontario's primary agricultural school, an introduction to which appears here. The history of the OAC has not been without controversy, as we learn from the comments of celebrated alumnus John Kenneth Galbraith, and from the article about R. Alex Sim.

All too often the OAC is regarded as an exclusively male institution. Gloria Troyer's article should help to dispel this notion. The lengthy article on the Farmerettes also fleshes out our understanding of the contributions of women to the successful pursuit of agriculture.

Elora lawyer Gregory Oakes is no stranger to these pages. His comments on Wellington County's barns, illustrated with sketches by Susan Strachan Johnson of Everton, serve as an introduction to other articles describing the day-to-day practical aspects of local farming traditions.

Margaret Leatherbarrow, who lived in Pilkington Township in the 1950s, wrote a book that is now regarded as a pioneering work on sustainable agriculture. This issue includes a brief excerpt from *Gold in the Grass.*

Agriculture is the oldest economic activity in Wellington County, going back to the first settlers some 175 years ago. It is still the most important one. I hope you find enjoyment in the work of the various authors and the editors of this salute to Wellington County's agricultural heritage.

Steve Thorning

THE FARMERETTES AND ONTARIO'S LAND ARMY

compiled by Jane Robertson

An article in *ThefencePOST* offers insight into the Farmerettes:

> "The battles of World War II were fought not only by men with guns in the faraway fields of Europe. An ambitious food production campaign was mounted every year right here in Ontario by an army of volunteers called the Farm Service Force. Hundreds of thousands of women, students, children, and older people made their contribution to the war effort by planting and harvesting fields, tending livestock and working in canneries.
>
> The force was run with military precision. There were several "brigades" ranging from the Farmerettes, who were women students and teachers 16 years and older, to the Commandos, who were men and women from the city willing to give up their weekends, evenings and holidays. There was even a children's brigade, for the 12 to 16 year-olds who worked on their own farms, or those of neighbours and relatives.
>
> At its peak in 1944, there were 48 camps across the province, with 4,600 workers. A total of 10,800 people registered with the Farm Service Force that year."[1]

The basis of the Government's appeal to join the Ontario Farm Service Force was that of Patriotic National Service. The fact that men could not fight without tools and food was receiving increasing recognition in Canada and farming was recognized as an essential war industry. This was later made clear by A. Maclaren, Director, Ontario Farm Service Force, in a letter published in *The Harvester*.

> "Canada has a large part to play in the furnishing of food, not only for our own people but for the people in the British Isles, for War Prisoners and War Slaves, who are being released by the millions and finding very little to eat. There is no doubt that food will be the most powerful weapon that we can use in fashioning a Peace that we all hope will last for the next 100 years at least. Ontario farmers cannot do their share of this work unless they have a greatly increased supply of labour. Here is your chance as a patriotic Canadian citizen and as one interested in the humanitarian task of feeding the liberated countries of Europe to play a worthwhile part in the matter of food production."[2]

In 1942 alone, Ontario's Land Army included 3,088 young girls and women who volunteered to be part of The Farmerette Brigade.

Throughout the war years, girls and women interested in forms of gainful patriotic service took the following oath:

> ***"I hereby pledge allegiance to my king, Canada and the British commonwealth of nations. My purpose as a member of the Ontario Farm Service Force is to support our Navy, Army and Air Force by assisting in the production of food. I promise to keep myself physically fit and mentally alert and at all times conduct myself in such a manner as to build up and maintain the prestige and honour of the Ontario Farm Service Force."***[3]

Many women answered this call to patriotic duty and became Farmerettes. Eight, with connections to Wellington County, shared their reminiscences and experiences through the 1996 Essay Contest held by the Wellington County Historical Society.

These participants were:

Anne (Mclntosh) Wilson from Pilkington Township who worked at St. David's in 1942. She was with her friend, Catherine (Main) Gale also from Pilkington.

Mary (Barnaby) Fountain of Guelph, who worked between Cooksville and Port Credit in 1944, Thedford in 1945 and Beamsville in 1946.

Janet (Howes) Hassan from Harriston and her cousin Dorothy (Livermore) Flanagan from Toronto. They worked in Thedford in 1943.

Cecelia Johnson and Eileen (Johnson) Tonin, sisters who were from Schumacher but later residents of Guelph; they worked at Queenston.

Joan (Tolton) Bosomworth of Elora worked at Grimsby in September 1944. Her sister Dora (Tolton) Fowler and cousin Margaret (Cartwright) Palmer also worked there earlier that summer.

Mayda (McFaydzean) Dobbie of Fergus worked at a fruit farm near Port Credit.

The following is a collage of memories constructed from their stories:

REASONS WHY

Some went out of patriotism, some for adventure and some to earn money, most for all three.

• • •

Most of the girls who volunteered were about 16 or 17 years of age. For many it was their first time away from home. For all it was an opportunity to earn some money of their own and to achieve a sense of independence.

• • •

We had all the components of a holiday; a warm climate, lots of sunshine, warm companionship and fun.

• • •

I was accepted! I had farm service badges to sew on the front of my overall's bib and my jacket. I gathered up my working shoes, socks, rubbers, rubber boots, some of my father's old shirts, a straw hat and bandana. I was ready to "Lend a Hand".

ACCOMMODATION

Thedford bunk house.

We were placed in an old house that had been converted to house a lot of girls.

• • •

Home for the next few months was an old flax mill, probably dating back to the last century, with the old mill grinding wheels on view and not long vacated by its pigeon residents.

The downstairs of the building was a combination of offices for the Camp Mother and the Labour Secretary, a sort of lounge area with ping pong tables, a bit of a library and the eating area, this being painted, picnic tables and a kitchen. Added to this were toilets, showers and a large wash area with

big steel tubs that could be used for washing clothes as well as ourselves. Upstairs was the sleeping area, which consisted of rows of army bunks.

Beamsville camp cabins.

THE LABOUR

Onions stacked to dry.

Thedford in those days was a very fertile growing area for crops like onions and celery. We had yet to meet an onion in the flesh, but as the summer wore on we would live them, breathe them and sleep them. Their odour was everywhere.

Our workday began at the crack of dawn, up and make the bed, breakfast already on the table and your boss at the door in some broken down prewar vehicle that passed for a truck.

The favourite seat on the truck was sitting on the fender, legs firmly around the headlight, to keep from falling off, so one had to be quick in order to secure one.

The onion fields were flat and rich. Each person was assigned three rows of the little green onion devils, with the idea being to straddle the centre row and weed all three.

The following morning we were awakened bright and early for breakfast after which we were picked up by a wagon and taken to the field for our first ten hour day of picking plums.

After the plum harvest was completed we picked peaches for Canadian Canners (Aylmer). Tomatoes were probably the hardest to pick. The dust from the plants was very itchy so we had to cover our arms before we picked. To relieve the itch we virtually bathed with ripe tomatoes at the end of the day.

At 6:30 in the morning I was awakened before the bell by Dee Dee to go pick strawberries at the Scriven's farm. We were in the field by 7:30 a.m. and home, as we call the camp, by 4:30.

It was very hot when we picked strawberries. There were salt pills beside the water cooler in the camp which we were encouraged to take to replace the salt we were losing from perspiring. June 20th it was over 90 degrees in the strawberry patch. One of the girls became ill and had to be taken back to camp before noon. Mr. Scriven thought it was too hot and we stopped picking at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. He took us in to Cooksville and bought us ice cream cones.

• • •

There were two men working at the farm. They spent all their time on tractors, controlling weeds in the orchards or picking up and hauling the baskets of peaches we picked. They left all the picking and packing to us. They didn't talk to us.

Back breaking work.

There seemed to be lots of ripe ones on the ground so we ate lots of those. We also sorted and packed peaches into six quart baskets in a packing shed. Sometimes the husband would not show up to take us home so we hitch-hiked.

My worst day, was being driven by the husband in the truck loaded with baskets of peaches to the train station. There I was to hand four baskets of peaches at once to a man in a box car (by myself) I was slow and awkward. Soon there was a line up of trucks behind us, honking impatiently. No one, not the husband or any of the other drivers got out to help me and so get on their way.

• • •

I weeded parsnips and cut asparagus. I got an itchy rash on my hands from working in the parsnips. Traces of this were on my hands for six months.

We used 3-legged ladders while picking cherries. The one leg was shoved into the ground near the tree trunk and we climbed up the steps between the front two legs. A harness over our shoulders held a basket in front of us. I had to get over the fear of climbing as I leaned into the tree and

picked with two hands. The older couple who were running their fruit farm were very kind. We were picking sour cherries so Mrs. Scammel brought us sweet ones to eat. She let me come into the house during the noon hour to play her lovely piano.

THE WAGES

Off to work.

We were paid 25 cents for filling a 6 quart basket. On a good day I made $2.25.

After the harvesting was completed some of us went to work inside the canning factory peeling peaches and pears. It was a new experience and the pay was a big incentive - 43 1/2 cents per hour.

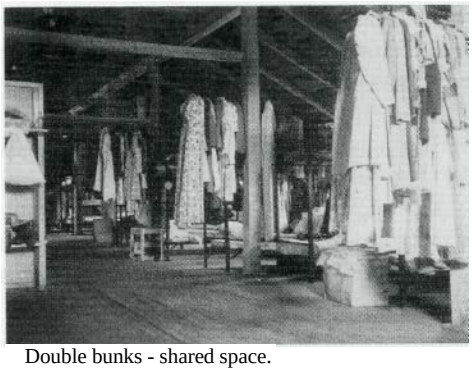
I made $3 and picked 90 boxes of strawberries. Our hourly wage was 25 cents an hour when we weren't working piece work. Board, which included house laundry, of $4.50 was paid to the camp director each Friday night.

CAMP LIFE

Behind the house, was a building where we showered, and did our laundry. Everyday we came home from wherever we had been working, we put our lunch bags in the hall, and headed upstairs for clean clothes. Often [we wore] just our pajamas ... we tied the top tails of the pajama tops, and rolled the legs above our knees, and just wandered around this way, wrote letters, etc. when there were no plans for the evening.

Lunch was eaten on the side of the field, in a shady spot if possible. On a few occasions the FW (farmer's wife) drove back to the farm in her car, leaving us the old truck. On one occasion, my cousin attempted to drive the

truck to a shady spot down the road with the rest of the gang. She didn't know that the truck had to be double clutched in order to change gears. With the help of a local male worker, who wasn't fit for the Military as he suffered from a mental disability, [and who] kept shouting out unintelligible instructions, we drove a mile or so to an old well, a lovely place for lunch! Unfortunately backing up was tricky and I believe some fencing was rather destroyed in the bargain; however, we were never caught and nothing was ever mentioned about the incident.

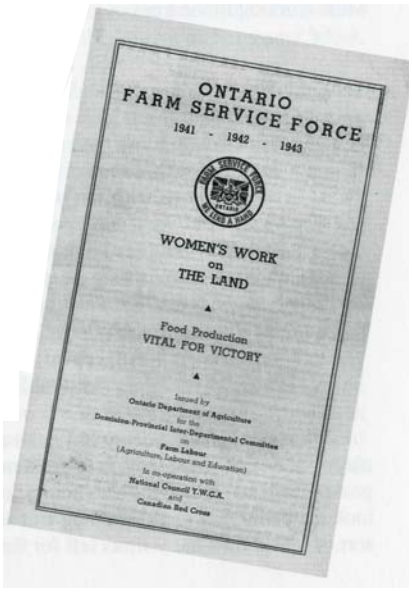


Double bunks - shared space.

• • •

Most of the girls were about 16 or 17. One girl was referred to as "The Hag" because she was 21 years old. Another was very embarrassed when she realized she had switched the letter to her parents with the one to her boy friend.

A popular song on the hit parade of the day was "Dippsy Doodle", a nonsensical song of little merit. Wilma Caldwell of Barrie purchased the record (78 r.p.m.) in Niagara Falls, N.Y. and could hardly wait to write and tell her parents about her good fortune. She soon received a reply requesting more information as to just what kind of disease was "The Dippsy Doodle"!



• • •

Settling in took some organization, due in part to the many items of clothing required and the limited space in which to stash it. Ah! those days before wash and wear clothes, the work shirts, the necessary overalls (with bibs of course) work socks, pajamas, shorts, blouses and that Sunday dress all kept clean by super human effort. We did solve the

overall problem though, we just never washed them. After awhile they became quite stiff with concentrated onion juice and were able to stand by themselves, up at the end of the bed each night waiting for their owners to reclaim them in the morning. Each bed sported a laundry bag, hanging in rows like sentinels, mostly bulging with disgustingly filthy things that should have seen soap and water long before.

Mid summer saw the girls tanned beyond all reason, the days before sun tan cream, overalls completely green from the knees down and emitting a dreadful odour all of their own, something between a smashed onion and an unwashed sock.

SOCIAL LIFE

After the first few days, when we found out our backs really weren't broken, and being on all fours wasn't the end of the world, we actually began to enjoy ourselves! The town wasn't ready for fifty girls tasting their first bit of freedom, of course we acted outrageously. We invaded the pool hall, smoked corn cob pipes, wore cotton plaid shirts hanging outside our pants and wore straw hats. I'm sure there was a lot of tut tutting going on.

• • •

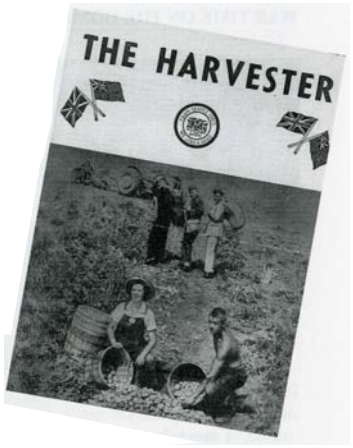
I remember going to a neighbouring farm, for a weiner roast, put on by their girls. We sang camp songs, which we all knew, as we often sang them, while working in the trees.

St. David's Howl
(Tune: The Ranger Song)

Give us some men who are good-looking men
And we'll soon lead the life we adore;
Start us with ten who will come back again
And we'll soon get them out on the floor.
Oh! Shoulder to shoulder and cheek to cheek
We dance as we wait for the bell
Men, the Farmerettes of St. David's
Really think you're swell, Men - good looking men -
Will crowd our doorstep.
"Man oh! Man!"[4]

We invited another camp in the area to come over for an evening. We played scavenger hunt, and this was a mixed bunch. We were divided into groups, and then toured the area homes for the things named on our list. This took the better part of the evening and we had so much fun. We had some sort of lunch, then the visitors left for their camp.

On our last days of work, our leaders, told us to dress our best. We had supper, then walked a few miles to Cooksville, where the leaders had invited some new recruits to come to the hall in Cooksville. We danced, played games, and had a great time.



We had a baseball team that competed with other camps in the area, or sometimes we'd go to Toronto to see a show.

• • •

Our social outings were pretty limited to a picnic at the beach on Sunday. The farmers were a good bunch and kindly gave up their Sundays to drive us to the beach. Occasionally we attended some event outside the Camp, but always had to have transportation arranged. An Army camp, Camp Ipperwash was fairly close and we did have a few soldier visitors from there, come over for a game of ping pong. Pretty dull stuff, no wonder not too many of them braved it. On one occasion we got to attend a dance at the Ipperwash Sergeants' Mess.

Sometimes some of the local farm boys would come by and we would go for a walk down the road or stop in at the United Church to play the piano and perhaps have a little sing along. The curfew for the girls was 11 p.m. and the house mother did a head count to make sure we were all there.

After supper ten of us hitch hiked to Port Credit. We went to see the double feature *The Phantom of The Opera* and *Redhead From Manhattan* at the theatre. We paid 30 cents admission. After the show we went into "Guys Restaurant" and bought soft drinks which were 10 cents each.

The district farmers took turns driving trucks up to Lake Huron on Sunday afternoons. We were taken to the Ipperwash Pavilion, which was near an army camp, on dance nights. The jitter-bug was all the rage. One of our girls and her soldier partner were extremely good at it and were beautiful to watch.

They (the farmers) had to get special permission to be out with the truck and special gasoline coupons, as gasoline was rationed then, so they took turns, with some of them even inviting their workers to their homes for Sunday dinner.

Absolutely important was your ration book, which was handed to the Camp Mother on arrival.

My father could not spare gasoline to drive me to Cooksville and so I took the bus.

I went by train to Grimsby. It seemed to take me until just before supper. I had a long wait in Hamilton. I don't know whether it was the war time fifty mile limit on travel that made catching a connecting train impossible.

Celery fields.

The fourteen of us who go to Scriven's farm are taking sugar from the breakfast table out to Martha. She promised to bake us a chocolate cake if we brought the sugar. A few days later we had our cake.

We climbed Brock's Monument, although once was enough. Anyone who climbed that many steps ended up with wobbly legs, back at the base. We were proud of Brock's Monument and feeling sorry that the Americans didn't have such a monument, we gave them one - we dubbed the Lewiston water tower as General Herkimer.

AND THE LAST WORD

Our evening outing was to walk into Queenston, to watch the *Cayuga* come in from Toronto.

The river was always busy, in the evening, with Canadian and American boats.

We would stand and call out to the fisherman,
"We won the war!"
Invariably, the reply came back, "Like Hell you did!"

NOTES

The extracts above are taken from essays written by the Farmerettes (A996.89/MU 306), held by the Wellington County Museum and Archives, midway between Fergus and Flora. We are grateful to Joan (Tolton) Bosomworth of Flora, Mary (Barnaby) Fountain of Guelph, Janet (Howes) Hassan from Harriston (now of Guelph) and her cousin Dorothy (Livermore) Flanagan from Toronto (now of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia) for lending materials to illustrate the Farmerette story.

1. *The fencePOST,* October 1995.
2. A. Maclaren, Director, Ontario Farm Service Force, *The Harvester,* Volume 3, Issue 1, May 1945.
3. *Ontario Farm Service Force 1941-1942-1943* (application form, 1943).
4. *The Harvester.* Volume 3, Issue 1, May, 1945.

CATTLE BREEDING IN WELLINGTON COUNTY: THE STORY OF ROWLAND WINGFIELD

by Anna Jackson

"Wellington Owes its Excellence in Beef Cattle to Pioneer Importers." That was the first sub-caption on a full page of the Centennial edition of the *Guelph Mercury*. The two importers detailed by the *Mercury* were Rowland Wingfield and John Howitt.[1]

The importation of livestock across the Atlantic was an enterprise only the wealthy could afford, and Rowland Wingfield, a young Welshman, son of a clergyman, and nephew of Lord Bagot, had plans to do just that. He attracted more than usual attention in south Wellington County when he arrived in 1831. He had grandiose plans. He planned an estate of 800 acres, and when none could be found in Guelph Township, he sought the advice of David Gibson who had just finished surveying the western portion of Puslinch. Wingfield purchased lots 7-10 in the rear of concession 4 and the front of concession 5 in the north-west corner of the township.

After arranging with Absalom Shade to clear 60 acres of land and building a house, he returned to England to purchase stock and supplies to complete his scheme. This was not a simple immigration. He chartered the ship *Bolovar*, a 3-masted sailing vessel; with him came several settlers and servants; among these were Thomas Philipps, William Thompson, Harry Hoskins, John Perry and two families of Smiths. There were twenty passengers in all, and a crew of nineteen. His farming outfit was the most complete that ever left the Mersey for Canada.

He brought fourteen shorthorn cattle of the Bate strain, which were unusually large and well-proportioned animals; Berkshire pigs, Leicester sheep, game fowl, geese, turkeys, pigeons, and a marvellously intelligent Collie dog, capable of understanding commands in both Welsh and English; all these were the best that money could buy. Besides, he brought iron frames for windows, an iron-sheeted oaken door, sheep's feeding troughs, etc., and a large quantity of household and personal goods.

The party left Liverpool on June 1, 1833, and in 8 weeks and 3 days reached Quebec; from Montreal, the stock was driven, and the articles carried, to Lachine; from there they sailed up the Ottawa River to the small village of Bytown, now Ottawa, and there, owing to a misunderstanding, the vessel was unloaded. The hotel keeper at Bytown (Ottawa) was so fascinated by the splendid farm stock, the like of which had never before been seen in the country, that he entertained the whole party overnight, refusing to accept payment. They ultimately reached Puslinch September 1, 1833, exactly three months from the day they sailed.

Upon his arrival, not yet having farm buildings on his estate to shelter his stock, Rowland Wingfield made arrangements with Mr. Ryfe, on the Waterloo Road, to take charge of the animals during the winter. Ryfe accepted a thoroughbred calf as full payment. Among the shorthorns were three bulls; Comet, the largest and finest, was white; Forester, a roan, and Farmer, red and white. This may have been the first importation of pure-bred stock to Canada. The news of the important importation by Wingfield became widely known in Upper Canada and in the United States. During the following summer, 1834, Wingfield sold one or more of the Shorthorns for large sums, to Americans.

While he was in Britain, land was cleared and a house, a well-built log structure, stood on the brow of a hill, overlooking the Speed River. Now a fair-sized orchard was planted in front, as well as flowers and shrubs; Wingfield brought the iron window frames, oaken door, glass, nails, hinges etc. The oaken door of the Wingfield bungalow was more than two inches thick, and its outer surface was iron-plated by nails driven closely together, with heads an inch square. The window frames required small diamond-shaped panes. Wingfield's less well endowed neighbours felt that the house, with its thick wall, small windows and nail-studded door was intended as a fort against possible attacks by Indians.

When finished, it was a well-built log bungalow, where settlers and visitors were wont to gather and enjoy Rowland Wingfield's liberal hospitality, cheerful company, and contagious laughter, refreshed meanwhile, with excellent Irish whiskey.

Wingfield was described as well-educated, courteous, genial, a favourite among his friends for his optimism, affability, and cheerfulness. Notwithstanding his happy prospects in the Old Land, his adventurous spirit led him to a pioneer life in this new country.

A concession road ran through Rowland Wingfield's estate, and at each corner, and on the bank of the river, he placed a corner stone sufficiently long to reach below the frost line; the upper part of each stone was well dressed, and cut with his initials.

During the fall of 1834, an election was called, and Wingfield was induced to become a candidate for the House of Assembly in the "Gore

District," which at that time extended from Wellington to Lakes Huron and Ontario. Despite profligate spending, Wingfield was not successful. His lack of prudence in campaigning in this election brought him to financial ruin. Despite liberal assistance from his family in the old country, he was obliged to sell his personal effects at an auction in Guelph, even to his silk stockings and ties. This provided social gossip for many months. His stock and farm had to be sold also.

John (Quaker) Howitt was the only buyer with enough money to relieve Wingfield. Howitt had purchased 500 acres immediately south of Guelph, which was afterwards known as "The Grange.". He had already more land than he wanted, and was not particularly desirous of investing in fancy stock, but Wingfield was driven to straits, threatened with expensive lawsuits and ejection, if he did not settle his accounts. The property thus changed hands for less than half of what would have been its value. Howitt acquired a fine property and the thoroughbred stock. The effect of this stock was evident in the superior class of animals produced in the neighbourhood as a result.

Howitt kept the herd intact, although his own importations were not extensive, the only important one being a white bull from the States. Owing to Wingfield's herd being first, its effects were more manifest than any later importation.[2]

Wingfield's grand plans had ended in bankruptcy. He was still fulfilling his Magistrates duties in Guelph in 1836, but he later moved to Sarnia, where he resided for several years. Finally he returned to his native land, where in time, he became Lord Wingfield. Although Wingfield lost his money by his own folly, the County of Wellington was a great gainer. His importation of thoroughbred animals to the county established it as a prime livestock section of Upper Canada.[3]

The famous Collie dog, Stranger, imported by Wingfield, also became the property of Mr. Howitt. On the occasion of a visit from a gentleman interested in sheep, the dog was told to bring up the flock, which were pasturing in a distant part of the farm more than half a mile from the house, and not visible from it. When he brought the sheep, Mr. Howitt found on counting that one was missing. Stranger was sent back for it. An hour passed, and the men went to investigate the cause of delay. A sheep had died during the previous night, and Stranger, when found, had dragged it half of the distance home, a marvellous feat for a dog.

Patrick McGarr, son of a Guelph blacksmith, began working for John Howitt in 1841, when he was 12, and became superintendent of the Howitt farms and the Wingfield herd of imported cattle. Young McGarr drove the herd from the farm to the first provincial fair at Niagara. It took three days to reach Niagara, and the same length of time to make the return trip. From this herd the origin of some of the best cattle in the country can be traced.

One day during 1842, Howitt was working in the stable, when a stranger

entered and without ceremony, walked up and down, examining the fine cattle. He pointed first to a bull, and said, "I'll give you $1,500.00 for that beast," and then went on to offer unusually high prices for five or six more of the herd. The prices offered were far beyond any that had ever been given before, and his offer was accepted. He paid the full amount in American cash. As the man was a stranger and as Howitt was not conversant with American money, he invited the visitor to stay to dinner while he privately dispatched Patrick McGarr to obtain the opinion of Mr. Sandilands of the Gore Bank. Sandilands sent word back, "The bills are as good as those of the Bank of England." While Howitt was helping the stranger drive the cattle away, seven half-grade calves galloped up. The stranger paid $70.00 for each of them. In 1927, descendants of the transaction were still valued in Kentucky/

Howitt continued to sell and import Shorthorns and Southdown sheep. His herd of Durham cattle and Leicester sheep, to which he later added Southdowns and Gloucesters, soon became noted for their purity and excellency all over the United States and Canada, and were eagerly bought as the stock increased, bringing very high prices and bringing Howitt into repute as a breeder and agriculturist, besides being very profitable. In 1851 Howitt sold the herd to F.W. Stone who continued to improve it.[5]

NOTES

Portions of the above article appeared in the ***Puslinch Pioneer,*** *Volume 20, Issue 7, March 1996.*

1. *Guelph Evening Mercury and Advertiser,* Wednesday July 30, 1927, p. 108.
2. Pioneer Days, the memories of David Stirton. Pages from *Guelph Mercury,* March-November, 1899. Wellington County Archives.
3. *Guelph Evening Mercury and Advertiser,* Wednesday July 30, 1927. p. 108.
4. *Guelph Evening Mercury and Advertiser,* Wednesday July 30, 1927. p. 111.
5. Greg Oakes, "Beef Wellington", *Wellington County History,* Volume 9, 1996, p.59.

TROOPER RAY MUIR
CHICKEN PLUCKER

by Greg Oakes

Ray Muir, with Flora, ca. 1940.

John Muir III was born in 1905, at Cumnock in Nichol Township, Wellington County. His father and namesake operated a blacksmith and wagon shop in Cumnock and farmed on the 13th concession of Nichol. His grandfather of the same name was an original settler to Cumnock and operated the British Hotel in that hamlet for many years.

John gained experience with poultry on his father's farm. Moving to Fergus, he established a poultry hatchery and butchery on the northwest corner of Hill and David Streets. He sold chicks to area farmers and slaughtered mature birds for vendors in Fergus, Orangeville and Guelph. His son Ray grew up in the poultry business.

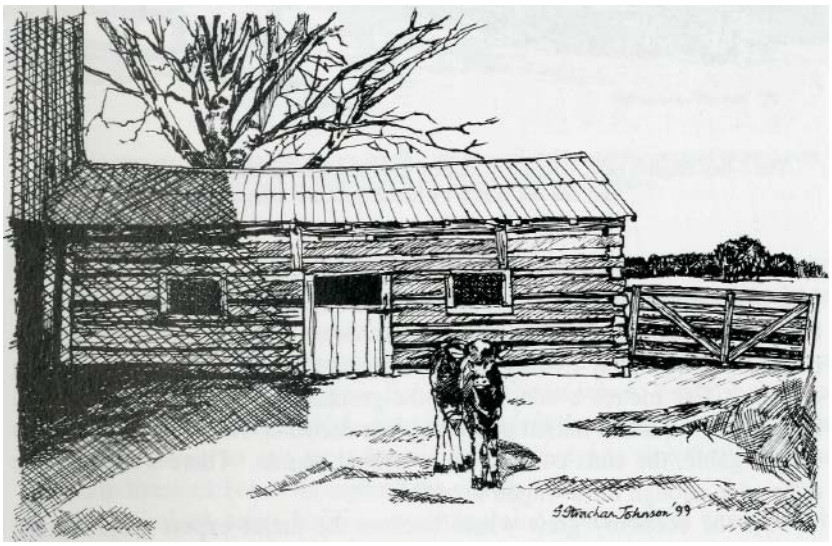
Earlier in the century, farming converted to specialization and the poultry industry experimented with the new assembly line methods. Small hatcheries developed improved genetics for the farmer.

Unfortunately John Muir died in 1938 and World War II interrupted Ray's life so the family poultry business was closed. However, Ray Muir's notoriety as a poultryman was about to blossom. While stationed in Scotland in 1943 with the Canadian Armour Corp, Trooper Muir astonished all the poultry experts at the Poultry School at Auchenevire, Ayrshire with his poultry dressing skills. Muir was used to working with such large numbers of birds manually that he killed and plucked the quickest way. Sixteen seconds to pluck a chicken was Muir's personal record. Even when preparing a number of birds he could take less than a minute per bird when commercial machines required a minute and a half. In those days expert Scottish pluckers consumed ten minutes per bird.

Muir's secret was a common method which would loosen the feathers so they fell out in handfuls in seconds. Unfortunately, we will never know if the Scots made use of Muir's expertise. Muir did admit that it took much longer to kill and dress a turkey; he needed almost 45 seconds to make a good job of him.

BARNS IN WELLINGTON

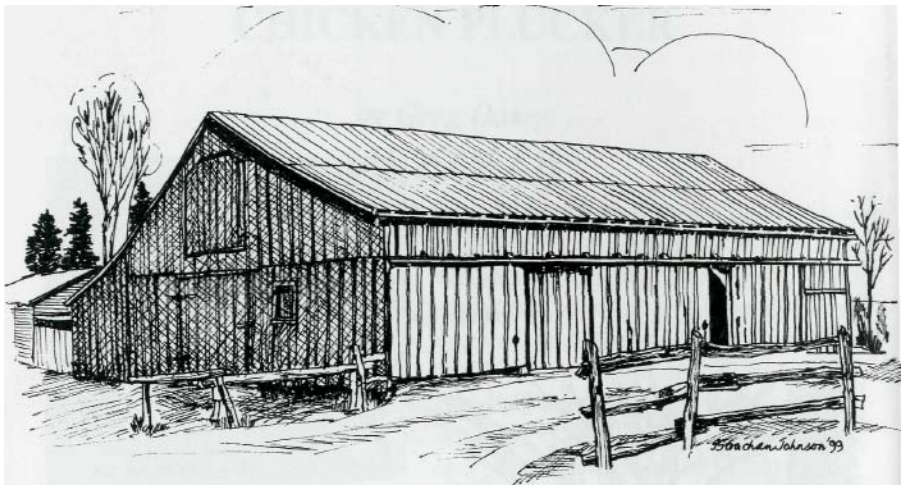
by Greg Oakes



Most log barns have disappeared, but this pioneer log structure is still used on the MacDonald Farm in Marden; pen and ink sketch by Susan Strachan Johnson.

"Barns, wrote the late Canadian architect Eric Arthur, "have joined the ranks of endangered species. No funds from wealthy societies, heritage trusts or governments are spent on the purchase and preservation of our oldest barns, and their demise can be expected."

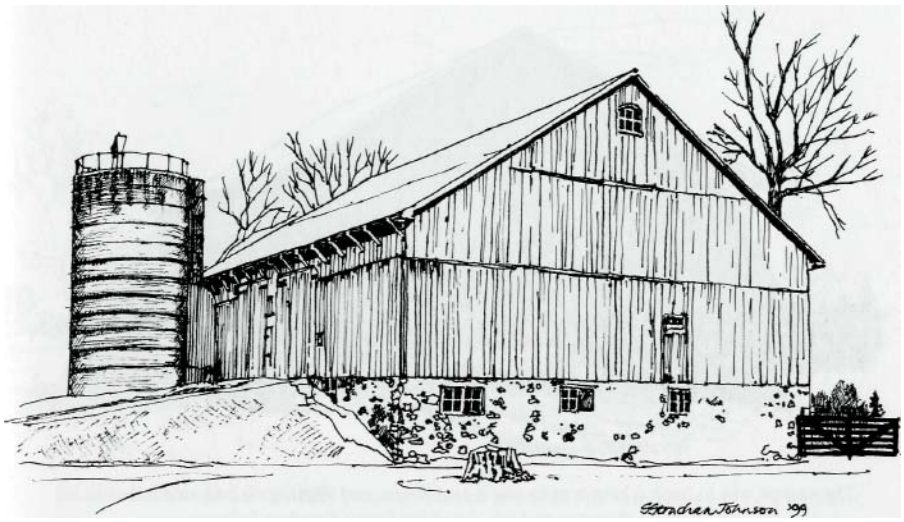
Except for houses, the most numerous buildings in Wellington County are barns. Early settlers established rudimentary storage facilities for their produce from readily available elements. Improvements in technology and materials coupled with the growth in agribusiness contributed to the construction of massive structures of efficiency.



The 3-bay English barn, covered in vertical pine boards, was entered on the long sides; pen and ink sketch by Susan Strachan Johnson.

Early barns were constructed from log and were of modest dimensions. Like a warehouse they stored crops, tools and livestock. We would consider them as storage sheds and the early pioneers used them for that precise purpose. Wellington County settlers employed a basic plan, a single log cribwork, five metres a side, flat on the ground without foundation. Often large rocks would be buried under the four corners. The roof would have a simple gable, the ends covered with vertical boards. There would be one door wide enough for a wagon to enter.

As the economy grew wheat became the major export crop. A log building could easily withstand the force of a heavy stack of grain, but as production increased framed structures became popular. Although more expensive, they were easier to adapt and expand in size. The timber framed, three bay English barn, gable roofed, covered in vertical pine boards, and entered on the long side replaced the log structure in utility. Six times the size of their predecessor and ten times the price they were unencumbered by internal support walls. They could be expanded by extension and erection of more timber. A span of horses could easily enter. They were filled to the rafters with wheat at harvest time and emptied at a rate determined by market conditions. Lack of commercial storage in pre-Confederation times forced the farmer to hold on to his produce. Wheat is very hardy and does not require fancy storage space. Had a sophisticated market existed would these barns have ever been built?



Raised barns were constructed at two levels - the ground stable and the second storey drive floor; pen and ink sketch by Susan Strachan Johnson.

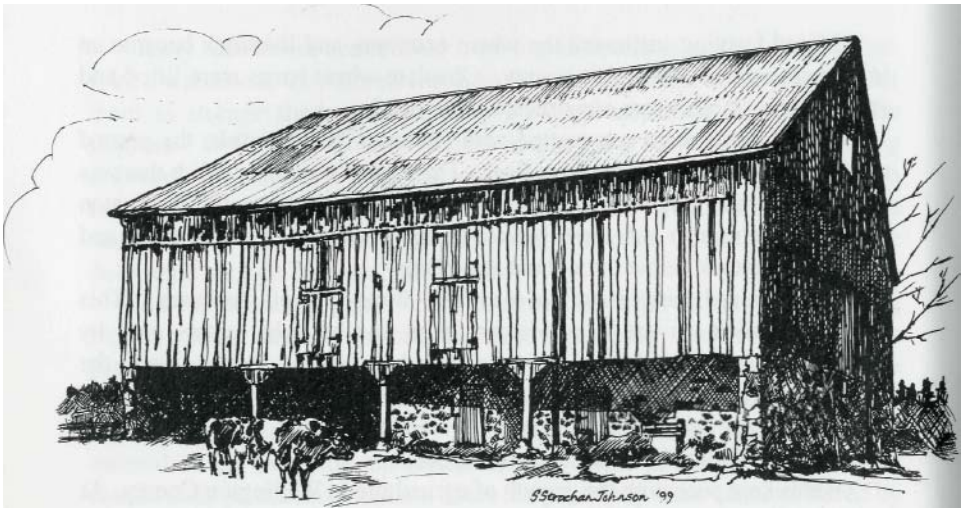
Mixed farming surpassed the wheat economy and livestock became an important commodity in this county. Obsolete wheat barns were lifted and sturdy stone stables were constructed underneath.

Raised barns were constructed with entrances at two levels, the ground stable and the second storey drive floor. The easiest way to establish this was to site the barn on a slope which acted as a ramp to the upper area. Wellington had ample terrain to suit these banked barns. Feed was stored upstairs and forked to livestock below throughout the winter.

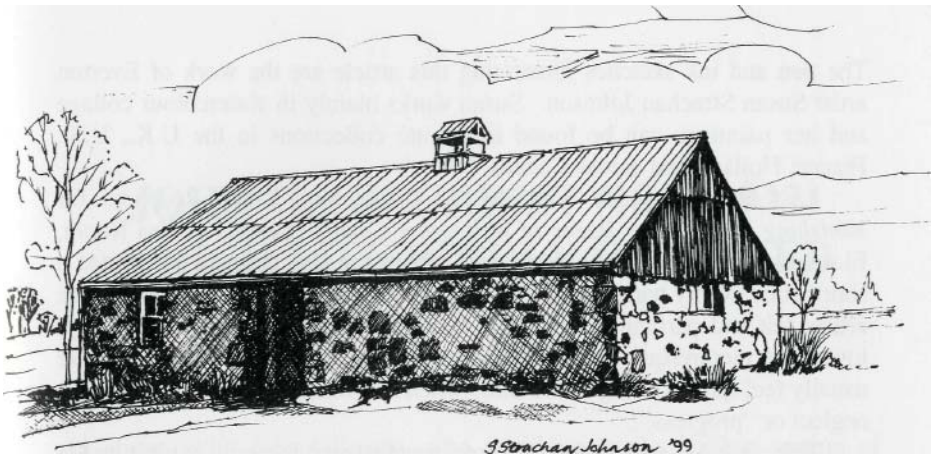
Many raised barns have an overhang along one of the eaves. This adaption, known as the Pennsylvania barn was brought to this area by German-American settlers. Feed was stored above and dropped from the overhang to a sheltered feedlot outside. A further architectural improvement was the substitution of the gambrel roof replacing the gable. This modification allowed for more storage space.

Barns kept pace with the growth of agriculture in Wellington County. At the turn of the century larger barns were being erected with double width drive floors permitting a team and wagon to turn around inside. Smaller structures were recycled and incorporated into larger ones. The Ontario Agricultural College was founded in Guelph in 1874 and took the lead in barn design research. Farmers were advised to erect new large barns laid out for the efficient flow of livestock, feed and air. Basement stables were evidence that thoughtful rebuilding replaced clustered sheds. By 1880 raised

The easiest was to bank a barn was to site it on a slope, and Wellington had ample terrain for this; pen and ink sketch by Susan Strachan Johnson.



The Pennsylvania overhang afforded a sheltered feedlot outside for cattle; pen and ink sketch by Susan Strachan Johnson.



Stone barns, though aesthetically pleasing, are not practical, and ventilation can be a problem; pen and ink sketch by Susan Strachan Johnson.

barns of mammoth 25 metre by 13 metre proportions tested the practical limits of a self supporting roof.

Trusswork barns were slow to make inroads as the supply of usable timbers held out. Canada's largest promoter and supplier of this type of barn was Beatty Brothers in Fergus, hence Wellington County hosts a disproportionate number of early big truss barns.

Though most log barns have disappeared many examples of the timber frame stand in various states of repair. There are also a few stone barns. Field stones were used in the construction of foundations for barns, but some built the whole wall of stone. Limestone predominates with granite worked in. The walls carry the timber plates and rafters to support the roof. Aesthetically pleasing, stone barns are not practical. They are more expensive and not adaptable. They still require a lot of timber for roof support. Ventilation can be a problem. Wellington has a higher than average number of stone barns due to the easy availability of limestone.

The beginning of the end of the traditional rectangular all purpose barn occurred in 1900. Changing marketing and industrial procedures made them obsolete. Tower silos are the earliest evidence of their decline. Prefabricated steel, farm elevators and pit silos are newer examples of labour saving agritechnology. Many barns stand empty and forlorn. Crops are now harvested and transported immediately for processing.

Despite their uncertain future many barns remain. Resourceful Mennonite farmers in the north of the county still cling to the old ways and modern hobby farmers prefer life at a simpler pace with their grandfather s technology.

The pen and ink sketches illustrating this article are the work of Everton artist Susan Strachan Johnson. Susan works mainly in watercolour collage and her paintings can be found in private collections in the U.K., U.S., France, Holland and across Canada.

Last fall she joined with Rosalyn Insley and Lilian Rosendal for *Vanishing Landmarks: Barns of Wellington County* (Leyanders Tea Room, Elora, October, 1998). The exhibition, which she also curated, celebrated a shortlist of twenty barns - not only those in hazard, but also those which the artists felt had particular artistic or architectural merit. "We have always loved the picturesque barns around us," noted the three artists "and we usually feel quite a twinge of sadness when one falls victim to development, neglect or "progress"'.

This year, Susan Strachan Johnson was featured in a solo exhibition *On a Light Fantastic Toe* (Bookshelf Cafe, Guelph, March, 1999). Her next 3-artist show will be *The Twelve Stone Churches of Eramosa* (Guelph, October 1999). Susan may be reached at (519) 856-2364 for further information, or for cards and reproductions of these and other works on paper.

JOHN W. GILCHRIST (1865-1942)
A RICH LIFE RICHLY OBSERVED

by Anna Jackson

In about 1929, John Gilchrist, who was born in the Killean section of Puslinch Township in 1865, began collecting his memories in a series of scribblers. "I have often thought of writing some of the little happenings of my life," he recorded, "knowing that sometime in the future, someone will be interested in how we lived, and in the impulses that shaped our lives."

In seven handwritten notebooks, he described his childhood and his careers as a carpenter (he built about six two-story homes in South Puslinch) and as a fiddler in Wellington County. He was an active militia volunteer and a keen long-range shooting marksman. He participated in three international marksman competitions at Bisley, England, and in 1906 he also visited Kintyre, Scotland, his parents' birthplace. The scribblers were transcribed by his grand-niece, Anna Jackson of Puslinch.

Gilchrist is no stranger to the Wellington County Historical Research Society - he entertained with his fiddle at a 1930s meeting, and his descriptions of pioneer dances and music appeared in Volume 6 of *Wellington County History*. He crafted the wooden models of farm implements and a miniature of Crieff Church (1854-1882), all of which are part of the museum collection.

"Three months before his 13th birthday," wrote Gilchrist, of his own youth, "he left school, to work with his farming father, as was usual for the eldest son of the time." So began a rich life, richly observed and recorded - a wonderful glimpse into the rural social life in nineteenth Wellington County.

BARN RAISING

Gilchrist attended more than 50 barn raisings during his life, and he described the way it was done from the time he "was chosen" to participate

Barnraising at Sandy Eraser's, Lot 17, Front Concession 2, Puslinch Township, ca.1900.

in 1881. By this time, log barns were being replaced by the bank and pole barns which still dot the countryside. Many have been refurbished to accommodate more modern farming practices. Others were not modernized. Boards are missing, roofs are falling in, foundations are crumbling. Many of these once proud structures are now a blot on the countryside.

A definition of terms used in the construction of barns may be useful:

Bent:	The basic unit of assembly in a timber frame, in which vertical posts are joined with one or more tie beams and often stiffened with paired frames. Designed to carry both vertical and transverse loads.
Brace:	A piece of scantling about three feet long framed into the corners.
Sleepers:	Sill Plates: Squared log which was placed immediately on top of the foundation between end posts. To carry the floor joists, and support the posts and studs.
Sills:	Framework around windows
Girt:	A horizontal beam between posts

The following description of barn raising in simpler times has been excerpted from Gilchrist's notebooks:

"There was much hard work for the owner in preparing to put up a barn. Usually the first task was getting out the lumber. Before my time, this was the beautiful white pine. Those not having pine could easily get it for $1.00 a tree, if the buyer did all the work. Many of the timbers, 40, 50 or the full length, 55 feet were well hacked and hewed;

By 1880, those not having timber on their own farm would buy a swamp; fine tamarack made the best frame, being strong and firm, and not straining with it's own weight. The logs were hauled to the sawmill for lumber; in summer, along with regular work, the basement had to be dug out of the stony hillside, and endless loads of stone and sand were hauled away. Neighbours were obliging and freely gave valuable help. For an average barn 55' x 65', the framer would charge about $125.00, to complete the barn with granary and stables, not including hewing the timber.

The least interesting and hardest work about building barns was "laying the foundation." That meant placing the sills and sleepers on the walls before the actual raising, so that the masons could "bean fill" (fill between the sleepers with stones and mortar.) As all raisings were before harvest, the framers were always in a hurry to get as many barns as possible ready for hay. The masons were the same; therefore as soon as the men gathered, we were carrying, pushing, rolling, and lifting these heavy timbers onto the foundation ("bull work"), without any of the excitement of a race or even the incentive of spectators, and often merely the nearest neighbours present; the clever competent men would prefer to wait for the big event.

Though we could lay claim to a sense of duty in going to these raisings, we went for the fun of it too. Unless the ladies were invited, nearly everyone walked.

In my time straight post frame was introduced to create a higher barn. This style did not require such long beams. In my time any variety of tree would be used if it was straight and the proper size.

A tree was selected for its place in the structure, and if it had rough bark, it was scraped for the chalk line. Then ordinary axe men hacked the tree to nearly the chalk line, and the hewer made a flat surface. The timber, if convenient to a saw mill, would be hauled there and sawed. Often there would be enough lumber taken off to pay for the sawing. Sometimes we hewed at the bush, but later, if at all possible, the round tree was hauled to the site and then hewed. The chips were kept for the kitchen stove. On stony ground, the big broad axe had to be "checked" after it had passed through. The hewers were not as expert as those who hewed for export. I have heard it said that the presence of lady spectators was an additional incentive.

From 100 to 150 wooden pins were required. A tree, white oak or rock

elm, would be sawed into blocks 8-10" long, and marked into 1 _" squares, the standard size of the pin holes; it was then split along these lines by striking the big broad axe with a heavy beetle. These beetles or mauls were always called "commanders" at a raising. These slabs were split into pins, and pointed so as to enter an iron, fastened on a block with a hole under the iron. The pins were finished by being driven through the hole in the iron. Youths and young men were eager for this job. There would be as many braces as pins; these were cut from scantling, usually 3" x 4", and had to be accurate to the laying out marker of an experienced framer who supervised. This work was superior to pin making and if one was selected, one was entitled to feel he was making his way up.

While this was going on, others would be engaged in covering the sleepers with lumber intended for the sheathing. The main frame would generally be complete; sometimes, though, the plates, (the timber that reached from end to end of the barn, which rested on the posts) was not. Placing these plates properly on the high posts, and then building the rafters, was the basis of the "race." All youths were eager for a spell at the boring machine, and sometimes got a chance finishing the plates. When the temporary floor was inspected, the boss framer asserted himself, and set all to work carrying the heavy timbers on the foundation, in their proper order. One or two of his best men stood at the piles of timber, which were marked and numbered. The posts, beams, girts, and plates were usually in separate piles. I knew one framer who did not require that; he could lay out his timber as he came to it. This gift was rare. The plates, if short and spliced, were placed on the floor where they were required. If long, they had to be passed up at the end of the frame.

Where at all possible, bank barns faced south, for warmth in winter. The west bent was usually assembled first and the successive bents followed. This arrangement caused the raising of the bents to begin at the east end, to avoid facing the afternoon sun. All raisings took place in the afternoon. A bent is the four main posts connected with beams and girts. The outside bents have more girts, so the siding can be nailed to it. When these bents were assembled, all hands were ordered off the foundation.

Captains were selected, and sides chosen. The captains drew lots for side. As the south side was so much higher then the north (which had the bank), the South captain was allowed the first choice of the men. To be one of these two men was many a youth's ambition, even if not always realized. As well as I can remember these first chosen young men bore the honour with becoming modesty. All hands were ordered to the first bent. The pike poles were put in position and "followers", short pieces of scantling, were placed under the posts to hold them for another lift. Reliable men with crowbars guided the heel of the post into the mortar. The framer then gave the "Yo Heave" and continued till the bent was nearly plumb. Some men

who did not know fear, went up with the bent, to place the long pikes. It was very important that the outside pikes should be well placed. Temporary braces were nailed to hold the bent in position. The tie girts were next. Once the second bent was pinned, the remaining bents usually went up easily and quickly until the last one, which was raised in the opposite direction, and had to be drawn on the foundation as it was being raised. It also had to go past the plumb to allow the girts to get in place, a ticklish job.

All framers tried to keep the race from starting till all these girts were pinned in position, but they did not always succeed. The race would begin, and it was a real free for all, with men above shouting for timber, and men on the floor in each other's way. Somehow the plates would get on the posts and then the rafters, often green, heavy poles, would be put in place.

Getting chosen on a side was very important to a young man. You really did not go to a barn raising unless you were chosen. Before my first raising I had been at a few before, mostly looking on. My first was a large barn with a large straw shed attached. The boys and old men were sent to raise this shed, while the big fellows were at the main barn. A couple of smart framers looked after us. We got our building up, but the last bent, which had to go past the plumb to let the girts in, proved difficult. Ropes were not so plentiful then; the bent was held from the outside by two long pike poles. I was holding the brace for my framer and when ready, he told the men on the long pike to "rack her up." However, the inside men were not paying attention, and they pushed the bent out till it looked as if it might go over. Everybody was startled by the framer, who looked down on the inside men and told them, in a fine clear voice, "Don't be pushing this over like G. D. fools". This remark caused them to drop their pike, and the spring of the big one forced the bent into its place, to be promptly pinned.

Why we raced or where the fashion came from is a mystery. The west side of the township learned much from the Pennsylvanian Dutch, but they did not race to my knowledge. Instead, the framers used to coax us to go to raisings in Waterloo County to make sure of getting the frame up. Nor was it the use of stimulants. I only remember of whisky being served at four raisings, and at three of those it was served in very polite quantities. You got one bracer when you stepped on the foundation after your name was called, and one at supper. Beer was served at a few others, but it was usually lemonade, if anything. Neither could it be rivalry because those on opposite sides at one raising would likely be on the same side at the next one and when the race and supper over, there was not the slightest sign of ill will. To be sure there were individuals anxious to excel, some to maintain a reputation already established, and some to make a reputation. This was, however, a personal matter; it had no effect on the side as a whole.

There were not always races. Some framers were afraid of them and if they could, would not allow choosing sides, but that had little effect. The

men would divide anyway, and some of the worst races we had were caused by the sides not dividing evenly. I never saw a serious accident, beyond a bruise or scratch. But there were close calls. A heavy battle for driving the pins would sometimes cause some to drop from above, and there were narrow escapes; the same with the braces, a piece of scantling about three feet long framed into the corners, but with so much practice even this was rare and no timbers ever fell or went wrong.

When the raising was complete, there was a sumptuous supper, during which events were talked over; we then engaged in games, and often a tug of war. At a few of the earliest barn raisings there was sometimes a dance. Except that they were larger, barn dances did not differ from our house dances.

One thing impressed us - how some men who never had their feet off the ground would equal and often surpass those who followed the business. It did not always follow that the best men were always chosen first. Some men who could clamber like squirrels about a frame, no matter how high, may not have great strength; others, less showy, had tremendous ability to move heavy timbers. At that time there was no other way of raising a barn."

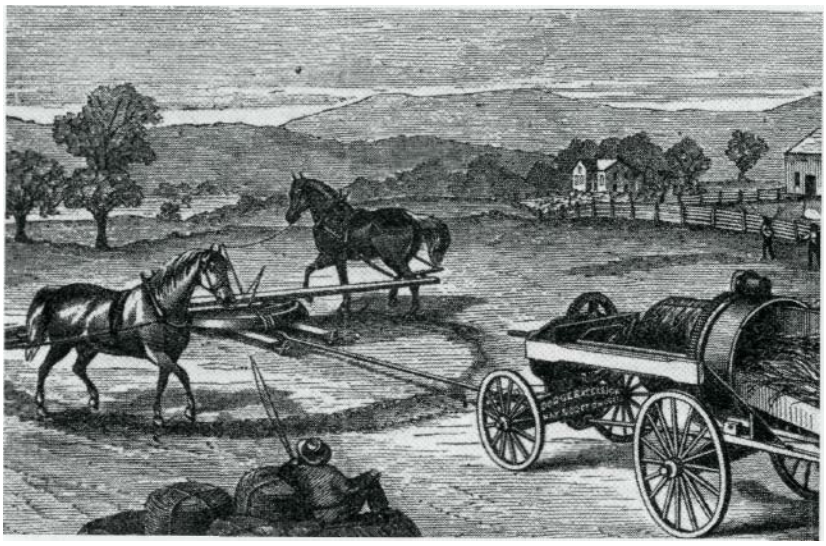
Portions of the above article appeared in the ***Puslinch Pioneer,*** *Volume 19, Issue 1, September, 1994.*

THE THRESHING

The culmination of the harvest season in rural Ontario was "The Threshing." In pioneer days the separation of grain from straw was accomplished with the flail, a hand-held tool. The threshing machine which replaced it in the mid 1800's was gradually refined through several stages, before it was eventually replaced in the mid 1900's by the combine. Gilchrist wrote of his threshing experiences with a variety of machines, in the company of many different men. He remembered threshings early in the 1870's, when he was a small boy. The following material is an edited quotation from Gilchrist's written memories.

"Before my time, there was a little machine with an open cylinder of wooden bars and metal teeth which took the grain from the straw, but did not separate it from the chaff. I never saw one of these in operation. The first threshing machine I knew, though small, was complete with a separator.

It was operated with horsepower using 1O horses. The thresher provided two teams of horses, and the farmer was responsible for the other teams; a common reciprocal arrangement was for three neighbours to share their horses at each other's threshings. The power unit was moved by loading it on a wagon which went ahead of the separator. When it reached



From G. Elmore Reaman's *A History of Agriculture in Ontario*, Volume 1, plate 8; photo courtesy of the Wellington County Museum and Archives.

the barn, the power unit was pulled out of the way, and the separator was run into the barn. The end where the straw and chaff escaped went in first. The power unit was then unloaded in front of the barn, and set, raised with rollers, or loaded above the axles, by removing the hind wheel, and drawn up with horse power. When the power unit was in position, about a dozen ironwood stakes were driven into the ground to hold it firmly in place. Then the ten horses were attached to it. Two men would have to work even with the horse power.

In very severe winter weather, some threshers, if they arrived in the evening, would pack snow about the frame of the power unit, and thoroughly wet it. By morning, it would be frozen solidly enough to hold the power unit in place.

In the barn, a table of rough boards was built to connect the separator and the mows.

Boys were usually sent to work in the mow, where they forked the sheaves. Although the work in the mow might be harder, forking the sheaves allowed the boys to move about and change position. One boy remarked "he would sooner go into the mow and work like the devil, than have an easy time in the straw". Unless the mow was large, 3 men to the mow was the rule; two pitched sheaves to the "dropper", the person who put the sheaves on the table for the band cutter. The sheaf had to be thrown so that the band cutter could work on it; if one was too slow dropping the sheaves we would hear complaints from the feeder.

The first task in the mow was to tear a hole in the mow to get below the level of the beam. Dropping sheaves over the beam correctly was almost impossible. I can still hear one old thresher shout "Get a hole below the beam, boys". The last person to arrive in the mow was supposed to "drop", though we usually took turns. In dropping, the work got difficult when the mow went below the level of the table.

When I was old and big enough, I was promoted to "cutting bands". When the sheaves were properly dropped, that task was not too hard; with a fair wind, there was little dust in that position. When twine came in for bands it was easier.

Thistles were the worst problem; no matter what kind of mitts one wore, thistles would work into your hands. One got skilful in picking them out. This job also allowed me to know all sorts of threshers, and many a different one I stood long days beside. I never cut the hand of any feeder, though some had a bad habit of snatching at the sheaf.

The feeder had to feed the grain stalks according to the hum of the cylinder. When that got high, the sheaves were handled faster, as too high speed would cause the grain to blow over. The self feeders do all that now and few now understand what we talk about when we discuss horsepower machines.

Being a Carrier meant picking the full bushel from the floor, and carrying it to the granary. There it was carefully counted on a tally board. Being a carrier was not a difficult job with the horse power but it was often too lively when steam came in, particularly when the grain was oats. My record was carrying 500 bushels of oats at the rate of 3 bushels per minute; 4 steps to the granary door and 20 feet to the last bin. This was not unusual.

In the early days chaff was considered important fodder, and it was carefully stowed away in a part of the barn reserved for it. The labour was not so hard or monotonous as the carriers' job, but it could be even worse for dirt. The early separators merely sent the chaff out in a cloud at the back of the machine and when aided by wind from outside, horrible even to think about now. The chaff man gathered the chaff in a heap with a long rake and drew it away by going backward.

This position behind the carriers was dreary, tiresome, monotonous and one got more than his share of dust. Bits of straw or chaff and the awful barley ends next my skin was next to torture. In our district, the owner was supposed to attend to the carriers and the chaff at his own threshing. If one in this position was not able to fork the straw away as fast as it came, one was blocked. Usually the work was not really hard, though standing so long in one position and swinging the fork the same way every time would make the muscles sore and stiff till one got used to it.

The older men usually went to the straw. They were adroit in packing it solidly.

The threshers threshed by the day, $8.00 in harvest time, and $7.00 after. Most of harvest threshing would be half days during the period of horsepower. One of the threshers told me long after he retired, that he once tried threshing by the bushel, but some of his patrons might say a grace as long as his arm, but cheat the thrasher out of every tenth bushel. One year, probably after the American Civil War, Canadian silver was at a discount; some patrons would scour the countryside for silver to pay him.

Steam Power changed the threshing routine. First, the farmer was expected to help to fill the water tank and haul it to the next job. When one was threshing at home, there were many things to look after, and this added responsibility was no light matter after a hard day behind the carriers.

On one occasion I was part of the tank filling operation. We went to the Mill Creek, backed the wagon into the Creek, and placed a plank on the reach of the wagon, the other end held by the tank, which were square. Bill Young placed himself on his knees on this narrow plank, dipping and handing out the pails faster than we could empty them. Except when it was my job, I kept away from tanks after that experience. We seldom had to go far for water in our locality. It was a serious matter in some localities, as few wells would fill a tank for half a day's threshing - it took about 100 pailfuls to fill a tank.

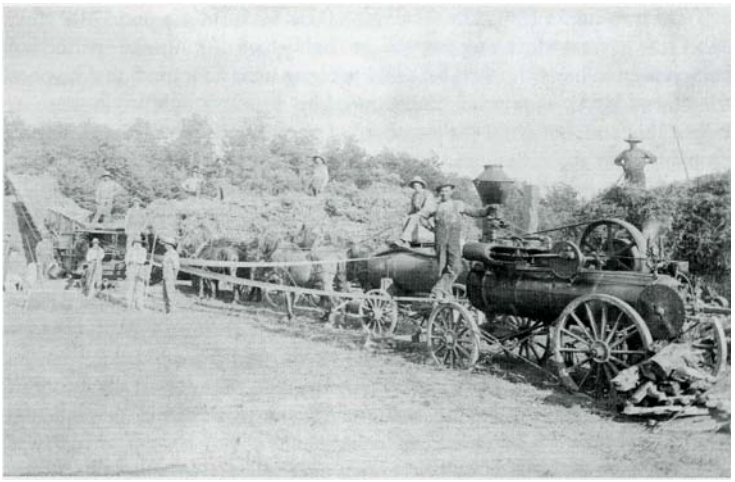
When steam came in, many of the horse threshers retired, and those with steam were rushed with orders. They did not want broken half days and if at all possible they would finish the job before quitting at the end of a day. As we felt it a disgrace to have the feeder urge us for more, we would work to exhaustion. The steam kept us too busy to have energy left. We rested when we got a chance.

My good mother always provided me with a substantial breakfast before I left for a threshing. Then I could always enjoy to the utmost the great meals that were always furnished. The women were all good cooks and did their best at threshings.

For many years, till the light buggies became general, it was the common practice for the farmer to prepare a choice sheep for the threshing meals; this was so common that it was the source of many jokes. One example: a new hand, starting off with the horse power, asked which way to go. His boss told him to turn to the right at the gate, and drive till he saw a sheep skin hanging on the fence.

In the days of the mutton one of our most prominent threshers was facing new competition. At dinner he asked a local wit how the new men were coming along. The wit replied "Fairly well, except that where they thresh they expect the farmer to kill a ram."

One of my earliest threshings was at the home of a German family. The first meal was supper and when we sat down there was nothing on the table but a great supply of pies and cream jugs. The rest of us were all Highland



Threshing at Lot 12, Front Concession 2, Puslinch Township; photo courtesy of the Wellington County Museum and Archives, ph 1184.

Scotch and knew of no other way of eating supper but our way. This was different and we looked at one another. The regular threshers began to eat and we soon followed. The pies were good enough for the Queen. But another surprise was in store, for when the pies disappeared, on came a big supply of roast beef with all the trimmings. As this was in the days of salt pork, and very rarely mutton, we certainly did well. We were disappointed at the next threshing at that farm, because they adopted our way, with meat and potatoes first.

A couple who had married somewhat late in life threshed shortly after their wedding and our first meal there was also supper. She was a real cook. The threshing hands were frisky and after the meat and potatoes course, each one took a pie or plate of cakes beside him, and even at her most insistent urging, would not pass anything about. We would trade a piece of pie for a cake on the point of our knives, but on no account would we allow our selection to move from our elbow. One scamp had a cake on a high glass stand and he would not even trade. The cake was just the thing - it was easy on his teeth. I can easily recall yet the surprised dazed look on that honest lady's face; finally her husband came and explained we were just fooling. Then I think she rather enjoyed a new experience of threshing hands.

What a number of different kinds of men one would meet in 30 seasons of threshings. I was attending early enough to meet many of the pioneers who came from the old land who had threshed with the flail, and then with the little open cylinder. It was common in my early days to stay a while after supper and listen to these fine old men talk.

Farm Scene near Fergus from the Robert Stevens Fergus Postcard Collection, Wellington County Museum and Archives, ph 13992.

Besides the journey to Canada, many of the elderly men I met at early threshings had also sailed on the Great Lakes and were not to be trifled with, so us boys did not indulge in the tricks that I heard about - digging holes in the straw at noon hour. These holes were covered with straw for some one to fall into. To adroitly drop a sheaf at the chaff man's heels so that some innocent boy would be blamed, was considered clever. There were other little practical jokes that seldom caused any ill will.

Bill Young, the old thresher, had a violent temper; during an afternoon, calves, (likely searching for salt), got into the horse stable and tore the lining of his horses' collars; this roused him to such wrath that he would not stop threshing till finished with the job, so he could get away from such a place. As it was in the short days of late fall, we threshed for nearly two hours using lanterns.

After a steady spell of threshing much mixed up stuff would accumulate about the front of the machine. It had to be gathered up after each variety of grain had been threshed, and thrown into the cylinder with a variety of forks. These soon became useless in the short chaffy stuff, and there was seldom more than one scoop shovel available. The man with the least iron in his soul finished the job. We were always glad when the floor cleaning was done."

Portions of the above article appeared in the ***Puslinch Pioneer,*** *Volume 17, Issue 3, October 1992.*

Poster by Allan Ross, reproduced in Alex L. Black's *International Plowing Match, Wellington County, 1968'*, courtesy of the Wellington County Museum and Archives, A997.32.

WELLINGTON COUNTY PLOWMEN'S ASSOCIATION

by Anna Jackson

In the year 2000, the International Plowing Match will be held in the Township of Centre Wellington, near Elora. This will mark more than 150 years of plowing events which have occurred in the fall of most years since 1847.

Since then, plowing matches in Wellington County have been a popular agricultural event, and an important part of rural life. They were first sponsored by Agricultural Societies, as a means of improving plowing skills, and also of introducing new improved models of implements. Less formal matches, sometimes several in each township, were also organized by groups of farmers, merely for the pleasure of competition. In this century, interest in the skill of plowing has declined, but the International Plowing Match will still attract a very large attendance, just as the small matches of the last century attracted many spectators.

Nichol township's 1847 match was recorded, as were several others in 1850, when Puslinch, Guelph, and Eramosa townships all hosted similar events. Soon Erin and Pilkington joined the growing trend. The West Garafraxa Plowing Association held its first match in 1886; in 1919 the first Plowing Match ever in the Arthur district was held; the same year a match was held in West Luther just north of the Arthur C.P.R. station.[1]

A typical match, planned for late October or early November, was preceded by fund-raising for prizes. These were usually cash, but might be implements or other goods. The match featured at least two plowing classes, one for men, and one for boys under eighteen years. Spectators came to watch and the competition was followed by a social time, with hospitality usually being offered by the family hosting the event. After the turn of the century, a banquet became more common.

Township and county plowing associations continued to sponsor matches after the turn of the century, but interest was declining. Officials from the most active matches met, formed the Ontario Plowmen's

Association, and organized the first provincial plowing match at a farm near the present Sunnybrook Hospital, in Toronto. This 1913 match attracted 30 competitors with horse-drawn plows and one competitor with a tractor-drawn plow. Crowds were fascinated by this curiosity and the event was such a success that the association decided to hold the event annually.

The 1914 match was held at the same site, but subsequently the event moved throughout the province annually to a site where interest was keenest. The Ontario Plowmen's Association remains the official sponsor of the International Plowing Match and Farm Machinery Show (IPM). The Association does not own land, but works with the host county or region to lease the acreage necessary to accommodate the plowing fields, parking lots, demonstrations and the Tented City.[2]

In 1915, the Provincial Plowing Match was held at the Ontario Agricultural College. Organizers attracted several implement companies to demonstrate equipment, including a giant tractor from western Canada, pulling a ten furrow, 14" plow. The success of the venture gave the County good publicity, and was talked about for many years afterwards.[3]

It may have influenced the plowing career of Alex Black, a Puslinch boy who plowed competitively from 1925, when he was 14, until after the 1947 season. Alex's father taught him the basics of plowing, and he practiced for three weeks before each match; he also cleaned the harness and polished the brass buckles and rings in preparation. Alex won top prizes in three categories in the boys' class, and following his father's wishes, continued to compete. Ten years later, he won his first Provincial Championship. His memories include interesting details. If he travelled to a distant match he requested that a team of horses be provided, but he brought his own plow. Good equipment and a skilled plowman were the important elements in achieving success.[4]

Another regular Wellington County competitor was quoted as saying "The man behind the horse-drawn plow had to hold the animals, keep them plowing in a straight line, and at the same time, make sure that the furrow depth and width were both correct."[5] Alex Black wrote that "Considerable skill was needed. It was common practice to plow some furrows one quarter to half an inch wider or narrower when making the Finish. We plowed nine inches wide until we were nearing the Finish; then we plowed narrower and shallower, our depth averaged six inches, but less in heavy clay soil, and deeper in sandy soil."[6]

By 1930, tractors with two furrow plows were being used on farms, and before the end of the decade, newer tractors mounted on rubber tires pulling two or three furrow plows were quite popular. As a result, many Plowing Matches had nearly as many classes for tractors as for horses. In 1937 Alex first competed in the tractor plowing class which presented a new challenge. One had to contend with two furrows instead of one. After two years of using

a tractor on the home farm, and entering twenty-one matches, he had sufficient experience for success.

After the very successful International Plowing Match held near Fergus in 1937, the Wellington County Plowmen's Association was formed to organize matches annually. The first was in 1938. Since then, Wellington has hosted two IPM's - 1968 in Guelph Township, and in 1984 near Teviotdale, in Minto Township. In 2000 IPM will be in Pilkington Township, near Elora.

NOTES

1. 1994 Wellington County Plowing Match program, p.50-51.
2. Ibid, p.51.
3. *Guelph Evening Mercury*, November 4, 1915.
4. *Career of Alex L. Black: Champion Plowman 1925-1968* (privately printed, 1994).
5. 1994 Wellington County Plowing March program, p.39.
6. *Career of Alex L. Black: Champion Plowman 1925-1968*, p. 13.

Natural History Museum, Ontario Agricultural College

AGRICULTURE FOR WOMEN AT THE O.A.C,

by Gloria Troyer

I grew up on a small hobby farm in Norfolk County, Ontario. The Ontario Agricultural College was no stranger to the area farmers, as the College offered advice through the local Experimental Farm. In my family, my mother ran the farm. She grew raspberries for the Cullver House Cannery, Port Dover; cucumbers for Bick's Pickles, Hagersville; potatoes for the neighbours, and operated a small fruit and vegetable roadside stand. She kept hens and raised prize-wining Bantees, which she entered in the Norfolk County Agricultural Fair.

Somehow, she managed to take care of three children, look after the house and attend local Women's Institute meetings. In Canada, many women like my mother have laid the foundations of successful farming, just as women have always played a prominent role at the OAC as students, faculty and staff.

RESIDENT MATRON

As far back as 1874, when the OAC was designed as a residential school (for boys sixteen years old), archival records indicate that there was a Resident Matron. Her job was to take care of the students welfare, such as attending to their housekeeping needs, laundry, and to prepare and serve their meals in the dining room. The Physician's Report of 1875 indicates that "the students were in good health and that their food was good and well prepared.[1]

Early campus records do not give us the name of the first Matron. She left the campus in 1877 and was replaced by Miss M.B. Dunn of Toronto, who received a salary of $300 per year and was there for four years. The position was later filled by Miss Speight, Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Craig, Mrs. Hardy. Mrs. Cunningham and Mrs. Galbraith.

TRAVELLING DAIRY

With the continuing growth of the College, the Department of Dairying extended its services to the community by sending out a "Travelling Dairy". Professor H.H. Dean started the program in June 1891. The Travelling Dairy was such a popular feature at local fairs that by 1892, two such dairies held meetings at 306 locations in 28 counties of Ontario.

The intent of the dairies was to provide the public with information to improve the quality of butter and cheese made on Ontario farms.

> "Good butter-makers can meet and compare notes and make friendly suggestions, indifferent butter-makers can improve, and those who recognize their ignorance can certainly pick up valuable information. If successful this year, the scheme will be more fully developed next year. The success of it, to a great extent, will turn upon the co-operation of the farmers and their wives. Here is an opportunity for the women of our Farmers' Institutes."[2]

By 1893, a two-month dairying course was introduced at the OAC. In the prospectus, it was announced that "Ladies are invited to take this course ... and this being the first time that we have opened the College to ladies, it is hoped that some will avail themselves of the opportunity now offered.[3]

Laura Rose (of Georgetown, Ontario) and five other young women were enrolled in the first class. After graduation, Laura Rose was employed by the Ontario Department of Agriculture as one of the staff of instructors at the College. She was in charge of the Home Dairy Department, and assisted with the Travelling Dairies:

> "We sent out one such dairy the first year and three the second year, and we kept them at work for six years, from May to November each year, till the whole province was covered. Nova Scotia has since sent out two similar dairies in charge of young women from our Guelph Dairy School, with two men to drive the teams and do the heavier and rougher part of the work. And I need scarcely say that the results in both Provinces have been eminently satisfactory.[4]

Laura Rose left the OAC after fourteen years of service and was succeeded by Miss Bella Miller who taught in the Dairying Department until 1943.

DEMONSTRATION TEACHING

The 1880 Act of Incorporation stated that the College was to have a museum of agriculture and horticulture. The OAC's Natural History Museum was housed in the old Biology Building. The early history of this museum is significant, because many of the collections were used by the faculty to assist them in their classroom instruction. It was sufficiently clear that showing people was a great advance over merely telling them.

"Demonstration Teaching" was a considerable improvement upon the plain talk which had preceded it. The College museum held a unique collection of wax fruit. These models were created by the artist Mrs. Stanley Potter, the widow of an Illinois farmer whose work was on exhibition in 1893, at the Columbian Exposition. Professor H.L. Hutt, Horticulture , was so impressed with the skill of Mrs. Potter that he hired her to work at the OAC.

Her studio in the Horticulture Building served as her home for seven years, and she produced more than 900 models for teaching purposes. During her stay at the College, Mrs. Potter taught a few students her craft - one of them, Mrs. Jean Lyan, who made thirty models of fruit.

MASSEY LIBRARY : MCLAUGHLIN LIBRARY

Florence Partridge, appointed Head Librarian, OAC, 1944.

For more than twenty-five years, the OAC Library consisted of a collection of text books and periodicals. These were housed in a designated reading room with limited hours of service. Resident Masters and Professors took turns in supervising the room. In 1901, the cornerstone of Massey Library was laid. Professor EC. Harrison was in charge of the Library until 1903, when Miss Alice Rowsome, an Instructor in French and German, was then put in charge. She was followed by Miss Edith Dwight, Miss AJ. Gardner, Miss Annie Hallett, Miss Louise Watt and Miss Partridge.

Florence Partridge had graduated from the two-year course at Macdonald Institute in 1936, and after a dietetic internship in New York, received a B.H.Sc. from the University of Toronto in 1929 and a B.L.S in 1938. Miss Partridge was appointed Assistant Librarian at the Ontario Agricultural College in 1932, becoming Head Librarian in 1944. She continued as Head Librarian of the Federated Colleges, 1962-1965 when she became Associate Librarian of the University of Guelph, and Chief Librarian in 1970 until her retirement the following year.

MACDONALD INSTITUTE

In 1903, Macdonald Institute opened - the result of the combined efforts of Dr. James Mills, Professor J.W. Robertson and Adelaide Hoodless. Macdonald Hall, the women's residence, followed in 1904. The opening of these two buildings had a major impact on the social activities at the OAC. "Mac" girls were allowed to take some short courses in OAC departments, for example Chemistry, Dairying and Horticulture; but they were taught separately from the men.

Meals were also segregated. Mac students ate in the dining room in Macdonald Hall and the "Aggies" continued to eat in the dining room in Johnston Hall. In 1914, when Creelman Hall was opened, men and women ate in the same dining room, but still had to sit at separate tables. The first dietician hired at Creelman Hall was Mrs. Rutherford. She was followed by Mary Montgomery, Carita McKiel and Helen McMullen. Catherine Beck was appointed as the Dietician in 1928; she held this position for over twenty-five years. She supervised the staff who prepared daily meals for thousands of students, and also managed special events, including banquets for the Women's Institute and food served to visitors during Farm and Home Week.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

In 1914, with the onset of the first World War, all activities at the College were disrupted. Meetings were suspended of the "Fireside Circle", a social club for faculty wives, first started by Ada Mills and carried on by her daughter Ada Creelman. Members joined the College Heights Relief Workers, formed, according to the Minutes of 1915:

> "... in order that the ladies connected with the College may in an organized way undertake their share of the work being so heartily done by Canadian women in general, of providing everything possible to relieve or prevent the suffering of our heroic soldiers, either at the front or in the hospitals."[5]

The group included all women on "the Hill" who wished to help with work for the Red Cross, and other wartime undertakings. Members made quilts and sewed pajamas, hospital shirts and stretcher caps. In 1915, twenty-five quilts were assembled for use on the front.

After the armistice in 1918, the group continued for some time to work for refugee relief. Later, the faculty wives at the OAC formed the College Women's Club, whose aim was to encourage sociability and to bring various parts of the campus together in a closer understanding.

WOMEN IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH

In 1914, women had begun to join the teaching staff of the OAC. Miss Alice Purdy was employed in the Chemistry Department. She assisted faculty researchers with their experimental work in the baking qualities of varieties of wheat flour; she retired in 1929.

The Department of Horticultural Science hired Miss Isabel Preston, who gave up her formal studies at the College to conduct practical work in plant breeding, assisting Professor Crow. Together they developed a new variety, the George C. Creelman Lily, named in honour of the OAC president. Isabel Preston left Guelph in 1916 for a distinguished career in plant breeding at the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa.

WOMEN STUDENTS

In 1918 the OAC's degree program opened to women:

> "Thirty women, all in earnest, and all willing to do hard work assembled and were taken care of in the college dormitory. They carried their own trunks to the third floor, took care of their own rooms and refused masculine help of any kind. They arose at five-o'clock every morning and took entire charge of the milking, cleaning of stables, feeding and currying of the horses, and so forth, and so forth. After breakfast again, they went to the fields and gardens and did a full day's work each and every day..."[6]

The first woman to graduate from the Ontario Agricultural College was Susannah Chase, OAC'21. After completing two years at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Truro, Chase enrolled in OAC's Horticulture program. After completing her degree, she returned to the Annapolis Valley and operated a farm in partnership with her brother. She was the first woman President of the Nova Scotia Fruit Growers Association. In 1928, Chase married her classmate John Steckle, OAC'21, and settled on the Steckle family farm near

Susannah Chase with entomologists, 1921

Kitchener. She continued to contribute to agriculture, planting the first commercial orchard in Waterloo County. Her father, Oscar Chase, had graduated from OAC in 1882.

> "From 1918 on, women also participated in all kinds of extra-curricular organizations and served on the Executives of the Philharmonic and Literary Societies, the Students' Co-op, the Rifle Association, College Royal, the College Orchestra, and many others."[7]

In the late 1920s, two European women joined the staff at the OAC. Miss Vi Engelbrecht from Denmark joined the Field Husbandry Department; Miss Louise Heringa, a landscape and floral designer from Holland was hired by the Horticulture Department. Vi Englebrecht left Guelph and went to work at the University of Toronto; Louise Heringa taught Horticultural Science until 1964. Women have always played an important role at the OAC. Today their choices of study and employment are unlimited. Unlike those women who, in 1892, were peripherally allowed to take a short course in butter-making, the OAC now allows equal opportunities in agriculture for women.

NOTES

The author would like to acknowledge, especially, Florence Partridge and Jean Steckle for their help with the research for this paper. The materials referred to below are held as part of the University of Guelph's Archival and Special Collections Division, where there is a particularly fine assortment of materials created by Florence Partridge, related to the changing role of women.

1 Florence Partridge, *The Role of Women at the O.A.C., 1874-1974* (1974), p.2.

2 *Farmer's Advocate*, Volume XXVI, 1891, page 254.

3 Partridge, page 5.

4 James Mills, *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Ontario Agricultural College and Experimental Farm for the Year 1903* (No. 14), page viii.

5 Mrs. W.A. Young, *Highlights of College Women's Club Activities Since Its Inception* (November, 1968).

6 [George C. Creelman], *Ontario Agricultural College, The Report of the President* No. 30, 1918, page 6.

7 Partridge, p. 12.

H. GORDON GREEN
KENNETH C. CRAGG
... A SECOND LOOK

by Ian K. Easterbrook

In 1972, novelist Margaret Laurence wrote:

> "When I was 18, I couldn't wait to get out of that town...I did not know then that I would carry the land and the town all my life within my skull, that they would form the mainspring and source of the writing I was to do, wherever and however far away I might live.
>
> This was my territory in the time of my youth, and in a sense my life since then has been an attempt to look at it, to come to terms with it. Stultifying to the mind it could certainly be, and sometimes was, but not to the imagination. It was many things, but it was never dull."[1]

And in his publication *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination,* scholar Northrop Frye referred to "southern Ontario - surely one of the most inarticulate communities in human culture."[2]

The lives and writing careers of two Wellington County authors offer ample evidence both to support Margaret Laurence and to refute the claim of Northrop Frye. Kenneth C. Cragg (1904-1948) grew up near Drayton; H. Gordon Green (1912-1991) was raised in Arthur. Both are remembered for the image they reflected to readers of their own rural upbringing. For readers with rural roots of their own, and to the equal delight of those without, these two authors brought in to focus an earlier, gentler lifestyle and culture. For some readers, nostalgia; for other readers, history.[3]

H. GORDON GREEN (1912-1991)

Perhaps H. Gordon Green's approach to writing about his rural upbringing is best summed up in the following excerpt from his book *Goodbye Little Town:*

> "If you were a writer in search of the essential soul of a small town and the kind of characters who can warm the pages of a book, you would probably waste your time courting the confidence of the proper people of the community.
>
> Proper people have two great disadvantages, so far as the novelist is concerned. They lack the courage to tumble into adventure and they lack the honesty to become loveable.
>
> So you would waste little research on citizens who own the town and that superior few who have the better stands on Main Street, and the big stone houses up on Crown Hill.
>
> You would open your heart and your notebook to the little people; these ordinary, imperfect, impractical people who have long ago discovered that they aren't smart enough to pretend and have therefore no alternative but to be themselves, even if it means the death of them through damfoolishness."[4]

Henry Gordon Green was born May 8th, 1912 in Anderson, Indiana. He grew up on a 50-acre farm in the "Stumptown" area of the village of Arthur, Wellington County.

> "There were six boys in our family and only two girls, but our overworked mother never complained about such an unfortunate ratio. She simply and firmly insisted that each of her boys do his share of the housework. So it was that we churned, scrubbed floors, washed dishes, peeled potatoes, made beds, spun the washing machine, changed the baby's diapers and took our turn doing just about all of the chores generally regarded as feminine."[5]

Back in the early 20s, when his father bought three cows and started a dairy in that village, Gordon delivered the milk from door to door; by the time he was 15, he was serving nearly every house in town.

He attended Public and High School in Arthur and left home to attend Stratford Normal School, graduated in 1932 and was hired the same year to teach at S.S. No. 10 Arthur Township, near Kenilworth:

H. Gordon Green, ca.1974.

> "Here he stayed for three years, living in a log cabin which had previously been used as a sheep pen, and cooking his own meals. He recalls that many a night the cabin was so cold that he had to ask his pet bulldog to sleep on the foot of the bed to keep his feet warm."[6]

After Kenilworth, he left to attend the Ontario Agricultural College, but this appears not to have panned out. In 1936, Green left with $46 in his pocket for the University of Michigan.

> "When a youngster had suddenly become big enough and brash enough, he had to shift for himself, whether he wanted to or not ... I came from the wrong side of the tracks and before I could hope to establish myself comfortably among my own people, I must go to the city where, so the bright legend assured us, the intrinsic justice of the free enterprise system could not be booted aside by such things as pedigree or piddling politics, and success was guaranteed to be in direct proportion to a man's capability.
>
> So few of the farewell tears of that gusty February day in 1936 were mine. After all, it was only a matter of time before I would be back ... It was my grandmother who

> found the parting hardest... She was eighty then. She had watched dozens of her grandchildren grow up and away and she had seen too many of those allegedly temporary goodbyes prove to be the last. Besides, I was a favourite of hers, "I think you ought to be a poet someday, she used to tell me."[7]

By working the night shift in a steel mill, as a cucumber buyer for HJ. Heinz, as a pin setter in a bowling alley, as a precision grinder in a ball-bearing factory and by writing short stories, he was able to graduate with a B.Sc. in zoology in 1942.

After spending over a year at McGill medical school, he served with the U.S. Medical Corps from 1943, and in 1945 he transferred to the Canadian Army, by which time he had become an expert in tropical parasites.

> "After the Army gave me $100 and turned me loose, I went back [to Arthur] to see if there might be some way now for me to make a decent living ... I was indeed so certain that my beloved town would take me to her heart again that I bought a house there. Bought the very house where my grandmother had brought her thirteen children into the world and where she had said that last goodbye to me ten years previously. And again I nearly starved."[8]

Green then studied briefly at the Ontario College of Education until the Department of Veteran's Affairs plucked him to become Head of English at the Veteran's Rehabilitation School in Brockville until the school closed in the summer of 1947.

Awarded a fellowship from the University of Michigan, Green returned there and received his M.A. in creative writing. His novel *The Praying Mantis* was submitted for his thesis. He subsequently returned to Canada to the rural weekly *Family Herald* for 20 years (1948-1968), first as fiction editor, then editor, and later contributing editor.

He lived on a farm of several hundred acres near Ormstown, Quebec where with the help of his wife Cheryl, they raised Belted Galloways. It was during this time, in 1953, that he introduced Landrace swine to America and was National Secretary for the breed for many years. The farm also played host to sheep from Afghanistan and North Africa, as well as to silver foxes, Highland cattle and American Buffalo.

In 1962, perhaps restless, perhaps on a whim, Green decided (or was persuaded) to campaign on the New Democratic ticket in his home town. His address at the nomination meeting in Arthur, speaks to his affection and respect for those he had left behind:

"There is no use denying that the traditional, change-resistant farmer is still with us. He is that strangely inconsistent individual who likes the front of a bus, the back of a church and the middle of the road.

He is still that courageous soul who will spend a lifetime battling everything from brucellosis and blind teats to his bankrupt wife, and yet he will submit to a starvation economy as meekly as a man who is born with a hump on his back.

He is still the scientist and the innovator, forever keeping a shrewd eye open for new breeds, new seeds, a new louse killer or some bright new machine which the implement salesmen tell him that he cannot possibly afford to be without...

He is the most Godly soul on God's green earth; the man whose tithes make this nation of steeples, and whose sons keep our pulpits filled with their proper thunder ...

There might be some small justice if we could say of such an unchangeable man that the unchangeable governments he insists upon supporting will give him exactly what he deserves. The tragedy is that it is his sons who will suffer most for such cast-iron political attitudes, and they will suffer for them as long as they live on the farm.

Unless, of course there are enough clear thinking, rut-jumping neighbours in the countryside to outvote such stagnation and give the farmer and the little man a proud new voice in this nation's government."[9]

Clear thinking or not, Green's prospective neighbours failed to jump at the opportunity to elect him, and he returned to Ormstown, and kept writing. "I'd like to give up writing," he once said "and give my farm the time, but I don't know how I'd pay the feed bills then."[10]

From Florida State, he received a Ph.D. in Canadian Literature (1972); he lectured at Dawson College and then forcibly retired at age 66, taught part-time at Kahnawake Survival School, North America's first aboriginal high school.

He wrote over 700 short stories (published in, among others, *Weekend Magazine, Maclean's, The Montreal Star, Reader's Digest* and *Farm Journal)* as well as radio and television plays. His collection of essays *Goodbye Little Town* was televised by the CBC.

He was a columnist with the Toronto Saturday *Star* and the Montreal Sunday *Gazette;* his columns were syndicated throughout Canada.

On radio he is remembered for his half-hour programme "Gordon

Green's Almanac" and for his daily "The Old Cynic" broadcast, heard throughout Canada on cross-country radio for over 18 years, latterly on CBC's Sunday morning "Fresh Air."

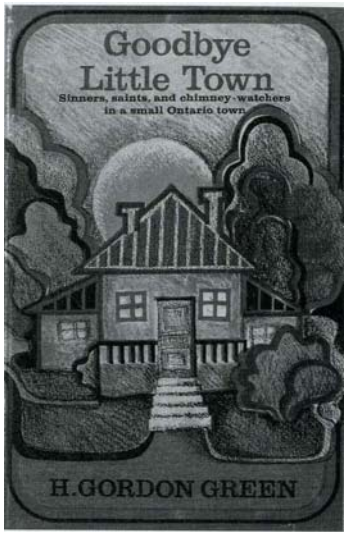
Green died in Montreal on November 3,1991, twenty years after he had mused about his death and return to Arthur:

> "Long after the practical part of my brain convinced me I could never go back, I would say to myself "All right then. When I die, I will be buried there!
>
> And the silly side of me built up quite a wonderful picture of how suitably magnificent such a homecoming would be. They would put a silver quill on top of my coffin before they put me on the train, and with all the haste compatible with decorum, the old town would be told the awesome news that I was on the way home at last. The minister would have time then to put together the praise which a writer is supposed to get after he dies. And since I would have been so long away, there would be few to doubt him, should he find something to say, with proper restraint of course, about the great soul of me. Nor would his audience be apt to realize that had I really been a great writer, people like themselves would never have understood me.
>
> Next day, when that fateful train would come in with me, the undertaker would certainly not be alone. The Reeve would be there, and two or three of the village councillors, perhaps. Maybe even a representative of the Canadian Authors' Association. Oh there would be quite an impressive gathering at the station that day ...
>
> But now I see by the paper that the railway station back home was closed down last month ..."[11]

Goodbye Little Town
Selections from Chapter Three

"There was still a place for the horse in the small town of forty years ago. First of all, there was generally an adequate place to board him because one of the inalienable rights of village living in those days was that every house could use the space which belonged to it in any way that the owner fancied. And at the back of that independent little piece of earth there usually sat a small shingled barn which in the beginning had probably been

designed to shelter a milk cow, a pen of pigs, a pair of geese, a couple of dozen hens and a horse. The family cow began to disappear in the '20s. (My father started the first milk route in Arthur in 1921.) And for those families which began to acquire social aspirations, the pigs were next to go. Though it was admittedly very cosy to have a barrel of your own pork and sausage frozen out in the woodshed to start the winter, there was something distinctly lowbrow about "sloppin' pigs." It was something you'd expect the Irish to do, perhaps, or some old man just moved in from the country.. Pigs smelled, broke out and rooted everything rootable. Butchering too was a disgustingly common thing to have to do in your own garden with all the neighbours gawking and giving advice and trying to dodge the blood gushes as the poor animal ran itself dry of life. Then there was the awful mess of guts and lungs and the little brats fighting for the bladder so they could empty out the urine and blow it into a football while it was still warm and rubbery.



So pigs were among the first casualties of the rising standard of living, and if the new progress was determined that nothing could stop it, the rest of the livestock disappeared from that shingled barn too, in which case its only function was to conceal the backhouse which invariably hid on the far side of it under an astonishingly luxuriant growth of wild cucumbers and hollyhocks. But in many of the village barns which were familiar to me as a boy, the hens and the horse were still there. The hens in fact have never disappeared; and now with the horse coming back from oblivion in the role of a playmate, rather than as a beast of burden, the hometown barns are again becoming almost as useful as they were intended to be.

When I was a lad of ten or twelve however, it was not exactly easy for the horse to survive the onslaught of the Model-T and all the noisy machines which came with it. But one could manage a much larger garden or potato plot if one had a horse to hitch to a plow in May and a scuffler in July. And that same horse was equally useful for an unpredictable variety of hauling jobs, most important of which was the bringing of the winter's fuel supply from the bush.

With a horse in the stable, a man simply had that added measure of independence which has always rewarded the possessor of power..."

NOTES

*Extracts from **Goodbye Little Town** reproduced with the kind permission of Cheryl Johnson.*

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KENNETH C. CRAGG (1904-1948)

"Father would not have approved of the mechanization that is taking place on the farm today." So begins the first line of journalist Kenneth Cragg's book, *Father on the Farm*, written in 1947. The story ends, twenty-eight chapters later, quoting Father again: "Work never hurt anybody yet, he was fond of saying, and he was always critical of the time anybody spent in the rocker between the cook stove and the window, looking back onto the farm. He called it the 'Wishing Window', because the boys spent so much time there looking out and wishing they were someplace else..."

Apart from the boy at the Wishing Window, and an early and brief appearance when he rescues Father from the ravages of a windmill gone wild, the author appears again only during a visit from the Minister, and "the young son of the house, who, all through the meal had spoken only when spoken to and such was his awe of the minister, had not aired a single opinion no matter how slight the subject."

Between Father's opening disapproval and the Wishing Window on the last page of the book, *Farmer on the Farm* is a tiny universe of lovingly imperfect people, and animals "of uncertain disposition."

The animals: "Among them were a number of out-and-out mental cases with definitely criminal tendencies, including the ram and a cow named Maybelle ...", sheep, poultry, the sow named Beatrice ("simply a hoodlum"), and Rosie the three-teated brindle cow -"Father got her in a trade that involved a set of drag harrows, a stone boat and a set of worn double-trees with a short piece of logging chain thrown in." Of course, most important

Charles Grigg, "Father" in *Father on the Farm.* Photo courtesy of the Wellington County Museum and Archives, ph 14395.

were the horses: "Aside from two horses of mixed and indifferent ancestry, Father kept Clydesdales ..." - usually called Maude - "Father always called his horses Maude ... He had only passing luck with dogs. Rover, a black and brown was good ... but so lazy ... [he] took his meals lying down."

Most of the characters who appear in Cragg's book are modelled on his relations and the family's hired hands. Here it must be explained that Father and Mother are in fact the author's uncle and aunt. But we must begin at the beginning:

"Cragg - In Drayton, on the 3rd June, to Mr. and Mrs. Jos. Cragg, a son." Thus, in the *Drayton Advocate* of June 9, 1904, was announced the birth of Kenneth Cecil Cragg - just next to the display advertisement for Gibb Bros, grocery department ("All kinds of plants kept in stock at this season of year"). Appropriately, perhaps, the notice followed the titbits of local news, which that day included a report of Mrs. Butterworth's fall while in the summer kitchen, Dr. Cassidy's preparations for a new residence, and a garden social on the camp grounds, sponsored by the Ladies Aid of the Methodist Church. Bathed in the warmth of the community, young Kenneth would long remember its rich detail.

But the happy announcement was followed swiftly by another: "Few deaths have occurred in this vicinity that were less expected or has caused more deep sorrow than that of Mrs. Joseph Cragg, early Monday morning, llth inst." began the obituary for Kenneth Cragg's mother, when she died "leaving to mourn an irreparable loss, a husband and three small children - one girl, and two boys, the eldest of which is only five years and the youngest [Kenneth] five weeks ... Mrs. Cragg was a member of the Methodist Church, and her Christian life was above all shadow of doubt."[12]

Thus it happened that young Kenneth found an adoptive home with his father's older sister, Hannah Maria, then married to Charles W. Grigg. In January, 1904, the Griggs had purchased land at Lot 3, Concession 6, Peel

Township. Charles "belonged to a family of pioneer Queen's Bush settlers, through whose energy and initiative this part of Wellington County was cleared and settled. In 1882 at age 25, Mr. Grigg went west "and resided for a time at Winnipeg, then known as Fort Garry. He served with General Middleton's forces during the Northwest Rebellion and later lived at Fort Qu'Appelle."[13] Mr. Grigg had returned to the east in 1894 and married Hannah Maria Cragg. Mrs. Grigg "was an especially ardent church worker in the Methodist Church prior to Union, being a Sunday School teacher and a member of the ladies' organizations where she was generous of her time and ability."[14]

Many of Kenneth's sketches arise from Mother's participation in church and social occasions. Much of Chapter 11 touches on Father's experience in the West: "Father hadn't many words for the West, and of these, few were good. Mostly he talked about the blizzards, hauling water, loneliness and waiting for the railroad. Sometimes he mentioned prairie fires and the night the whole convoy moving up toward Batoche - a little group of scared farm lads - crouched behind their wagon boxes waiting for the Indian attack that never came."

Overall, as J.V. McAree's Introduction to *Father on the Farm* points out

> "This is a plain tale, set down with tenderness ... the humour which ripples through it like a wind through a standing field of wheat, grows naturally out of the situations ... it will warm the hearts of farmers who read it, and will delight the farmers' sons who, for the most part, have escaped from the fascinations of farm life and are pursuing less adventurous callings in the city, some of them in factories where they are protected against angry bulls and terrified runaway teams and where the smell of the stables will not annoy their wives when they go home at the end of the day."

Though much of the book focusses on farm life of the period 1910-1920, Cragg admits that Father "probably would have been happier in the generation that preceded his, when steam began to replace water power, and farmers, as late as the 1850s, were buying labour-saving devices like the reaper because of the shortage of farm laborers ... No book farmer down at the O.A.C in Guelph was going to tell him how to feed his hogs or build his hen pen. And no one did."

Kenneth's own happiness is seldom in doubt, as much as it can be inferred from his writing. Father is "one of the kindest men who ever lived" and Cragg apologises to Mother "who is depicted in many of these pages as a woman of thin patience." But the period on the farm must undoubtedly

Hannah Maria Grigg, "Mother" in *Father on the Farm,* with Catherine Cragg. Photo courtesy of the Wellington County Museum and Archives, ph 14396.

have had its sadder moments, none of which are reflected in his book. Grandfather and grandmother Cragg both died during this period.

Kenneth had returned to live with his father Joseph, in Drayton, probably to attend Continuation [High] School there. He wrote the school's column in the *Drayton Advocate.* His dream was to become a journalist with the *Globe,* but he began in this field as a cub reporter with an Oakville weekly, and settled for a post as Oakville correspondent to the Toronto newspaper. He also spent a short time on the Maclean trade papers, notably *Sanitary Engineer.*

In 1926, Kenneth was hired as a reporter with the *Globe.* He married Margaret Reycraft[15] in 1929 and in 1930 he moved to become Queen's Park reporter for the *Evening Telegram.* The Craggs' son Brian was born in 1933 and daughter Catherine in 1936. When he left eight years later, a farewell address reported one staffer's remark "Cragg's a good scout; I'm sorry to see him go", and then:

> "... he has, as you know, an extremely inquiring mind - a curious mind ... His inquiring mind manifests itself in more than merely reading - in a continual searching of all questions and a deep, sincere human sympathy for people downtrodden and depressed - in the constant effort to get at the rights and wrongs of the people."[16]

Cragg returned as Queen's Park reporter to what had become in his absence, the *Globe and Mail.* By that time, Charles W. Grigg and his wife Hannah Maria, (Father and Mother in the book to come), were living with Kenneth and his family in Toronto. Charles and Hannah Maria had sold the Peel Township farm and relocated to land on the 6th Concession of Maryborough, near Moorefield, later moving to Floradale then Fergus and finally Toronto. Charles died in 1943, "particularly highly thought of and

respected for his fine qualities of neighbourliness and uprightness."[17]

"Father died nearly four years before the atom bomb, and in a way I'm not sorry" wrote Kenneth, in his introduction to *Father on the Farm*. "His kindly nature would have shrunk from the suffering ... His life coincided with the great expansionist period of this continent and an important era in man's history he saw a lot of developments; though to the end he was inclined to regret the passing of the habits and customs of other days."

Kenneth Cragg, with daughter Catherine. Photo courtesy of the Wellington County Museum and Archives, ph 14397

Later in 1943, Kenneth was appointed the *Globe and Mail's* parliamentary correspondent in Ottawa. He moved there with his family and Mrs. Grigg (Mother). Three years later he suffered a stroke, and during his recovery ("a long period of enforced idleness"), began writing a few 'reminiscences' and offered them to the paper.

Oakley Dalgleish, Editor-in-Chief of the *Globe and Mail* wrote to Cragg, noting that the articles were scheduled to begin as a series on the Editorial page the following Saturday. He also enclosed a list of numerous radio stations scattered throughout small-town Ontario through which the column would be publicized. Ted McCormack had been chosen to do the illustrations and "should your Father be annoyed by a striking resemblance to yourself, we accept no responsibility."[18]

The column, the first few of which were titled "With Father Cragg on the Farm" began on Saturday, April 26, 1947. Within a day or two a deluge of correspondence began. The Literary Editor of the *Globe*, William Arthur Deacon (who was also President of the Canadian Authors' Association and Chairman of the Governor-General's Awards) warmed to the planned series of four but "hoped you would end up with enough for a book ... This would be a jolly good idea. In the first place, a journalistic fellow rates higher if he has a book or two - plain superstition but it is so. Hard covers spell CLASS to the average citizen. Selfishly, I want some humorist to operate because

I'll have one Leacock medal to dispose of annually and candidates are few..."[19]

According to Dalgleish, reaction to the column had been "most favourable" and in an effort to keep the series alive, he suggested "How about Father Cragg at the C.N.E. or even Father Cragg on the budget?"[20]

On the same day, there arrived a letter from the CBC's Dan McArthur, the son of Peter McArthur, remembered by many and considered the doyen of such rural writing: "They are grand stuff, written with style and humour and solid old Ontario in character. Keep it up and you'll have a book, and a damned good one. Charlie Jennings (who is by the way a reader on the Gov.-Gen. literary award and therefore a man of discernment) said to me today that he hoped that you had a book in mind."[21]

Cragg's Managing Editor at the *Globe* was R.A. Farquharson, who kept in regular touch with the Ottawa bureau, suggesting, cajoling, prodding, sharing journalistic gossip and insight.

Frightened perhaps at Cragg's modest report "that you were written out when you finished the first three" now Farquharson too offered suggestions for additional topics, adding "I am getting more fan telephone calls on your pieces than anything else appearing in the paper ... Dan McArthur says that you have caught the spirit of Ontario better than anyone he has read in years ... I asked Deacon to mention your pieces to [the publisher] Longmans, Green. I think we could manage, with any luck, to get a book out in 1947. It would be a candidate for the Leacock prize."[22]

The series also caught the eye of Norman Smith, editor of the *Ottawa Journal,* who wrote to his colleague at the *Globe:* "They're easy and good quiet fun and have that common touch that will enable a thousand people to say 'just like Dad!'"[23] Farquharson's next letter to Cragg reports "you are now working for the *Ottawa Journal*... $10.00 a piece" by which he meant that the series was being carried in that paper as well, noting "The length does not lend itself to syndication." And in a post script, Farquharson's secretary, Marjorie Budd, adds "We are getting a tremendous bang out of your farm stories, and the ones about Mother Cragg specially were lovely."[24]

Thus, less than a month after its debut, the column met with overwhelming success, with talk of extending the series to book length, and hints at the Leacock and Governor-General's awards. Even the possibility of filming the stories was raised: "Ken, you've really got something in that series, and here's hoping you sell a million copies and then have Arthur Rank jump onto the thing."[25]

And the mail kept arriving. Cragg was clearly meticulous about the courtesy of adequate replies. William Arthur Deacon offered "As for the correspondence, the hell with it... those letters will be consuming creative energy that ought to go in to the farm pieces ... Definitely put the fan mail under the bed. If you don't, you'll become a slave to it."[26]

About this time, Jack Marshall of the *Windsor Star* wrote "I think you have developed a real character in Father, a well-meaning, honest, somewhat religious little man, but also somewhat ineffectual against the "gremlins" which seem to possess his animals, machinery etc. I think you are probably wrong, however, in keeping yourself entirely out of the articles."[27] This comment was echoed by a reviewer who noted "The author does not shrink from the truth; but he never reflects on his story. And that is the book's limitation: it is spiritually as unimaginative as its subject. It depends for its humour on rough-and-ready effects, not on reflection. No exploration of the soul of his subject is even hinted at"[28]

One of the few reflections we have of Cragg's self-image lies in a thumbnail sketch written by his wife for the Longmans, Green promotion office:

> "His warmest admirer could not call his career distinguished but he is known as a 'good newspaperman' and has an outstanding capacity for making friends. He has done very little outside writing and probably wouldn't have done those stories except for being off work through illness. I might add that the incidents in the stories all happened to someone and the character of Father is or rather was a real person, though not his father.
>
> As to hobbies, he hasn't many - exploring back roads and picnicking with the family - likes fishing but is not a Fisherman. I think his favourite pastime is talking to politicians or other newspapermen ... also, he says that the one time he distinguished himself at agriculture was the time he skipped school to go to a farmers' picnic and won first prize at judging dairy cattle."[29]

If Cragg revealed little of himself in the essays, he was perhaps suffering the self-doubt which must affect every writer. "I agree with one of your notes that you're getting literary diarrhea now and again," wrote his *Globe* colleague Jack Fleming, "You might try shorting them up. Remember those 300-worders of yours that used to sparkle. How about polishing up that knife of yours?"3o

Within days, Royd Beamish with the Editorial Department of the *Globe* wrote "It has the whimsy of old, Craggeroo, and makes delicious reading. Hope you can keep on going without running out of ideas ..."[31] And ideas were arriving daily, from, among others, Thomas L. Kennedy, Ontario's Minister of Agriculture: "I am very interested in your Saturday stories and three or four things have come to my mind and I thought they might be of interest to you ... [he then offers suggestions] I do hope you will be able to collect a lot of these stories and put them in book form for I feel it would be

one of the classics of rural Ontario."[32]

Among those who praised Cragg were his often illustrious associates from his Ottawa Press Gallery days. John Diefenbaker write from Prince Albert, "your articles are wonderful, Ken - they express your philosophy and your quiet wit so well that one feels while reading them that you are present and we are talking together ... when you get restored to health I am looking to you to write the Canadian novel"[33] Tommy Douglas from Regina: "You have invested life with "Father" down on the farm with a spice and adventure which I found most entertaining."[34]

By September, the launch of the collected articles was imminent. "You've got a swell book, Ken," wrote Jack Hambleton, editor with the *Globe*, "You have managed, somehow, to make everybody who reads it see their own Old Man, and that's why your book is going to sell... I understand it is going to get one Hell of a send-off." He later added "You'll love it... People of whom you haven't heard for years will be writing or calling. Others you barely know will suddenly be sprouting out on the radio and elsewhere recommending YOUR book and saying the nicest things about it ... How good it makes me feel to see you hit it right on the nose with your first effort."[35]

Colleagues from Cragg's days at the *Telegram* rallied: "I'll do all The *Tely* can with and for your book, not because you are a good *Tely* boy, though you are, and we're proud of the fact, but because it is a good book." and another "[It] took me back to the old days when we batted out the Saturday pages. Some of those were good too, or were they?"[36]

Deacon wrote with more advice for the successful writer who had arrived: "You are going to be a very busy man as an author for the next several weeks. Pay attention to that and never mind the paper. You will do the *Globe and Mail* more good at the minute being a successful author than writing copy for the Desk. However, make notes of funny things that happen about the book because some day you will need to write a humorous piece (or speech) on becoming an author. So save up the anecdotes."[37]

But the book launch, and the resulting new tide of letters and exuberant reviews was not without some misgiving on Cragg's part. "Don't start feeling sorry for yourself!" wrote Jack Hambleton, "Your letter of Sunday, particularly with its conclusion " ... they feel sorry for the guy, stricken in the prime of life, give the bastard a break," would be funny if it wasn't pathetic. Don't get the idea that people are plugging FOTF *[Father on the Farm]* because they are feeling sorry for you, you nit-wit. The book is GOOD ... That's why it's going to be the biggest selling book in Canada."[38] Simpsons and Batons were sold out, reported Hambleton, and Longmans were preparing a second printing.[39]

"I sit down at a typewriter and just go banging right ahead, feeling that at least I'm talking to one guy who has been around this racket a long time

and there aren't a hell of a lot of us left," Hambleton continued, with a certain foreboding, echoed by Ken Mactaggart, Managing Editor at the *Globe*, "For the lovapete be sure to take things easy. Bob [Farquharson] tells me you are rapidly acquiring a reputation for wanting to work too hard and the *G and M* can't afford to have a successful author overworking himself."[40]

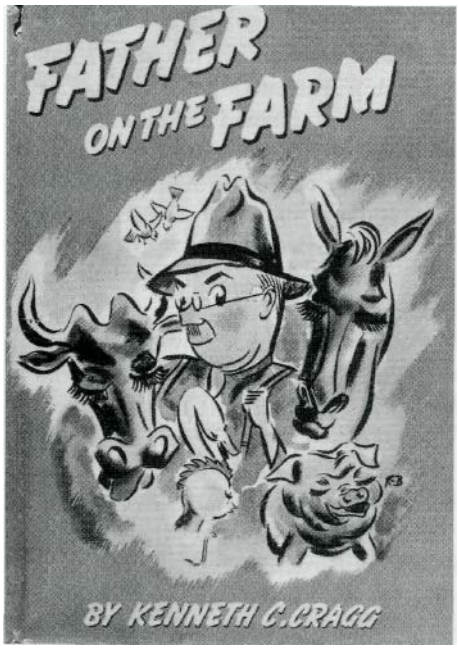
Farquharson himself wrote "Instead of being depressed at your inability to move around, you should be glad that you are able to do so much ... We have been getting more work out of you than we had counted on and everyone here is pleased that you can do so much." He added later, "Sorry to hear about the blackout but glad it left no damage." He commended Cragg's suggestion of another series like Father,[41] a sentiment echoed by Jack Hambleton "I'm glad to hear you've already started a new book ... If you don't win the Leacock trophy with that one, I'll eat it"[42]

But Kenneth Cragg's writing career ended abruptly and sadly on February 16, 1948, with his death in Ottawa, "in the midst of a brilliant career ... a colourful and all-too-brief life" noted the *Drayton Advocate;* "of overwork and the strain of writing for a large and hustling daily paper" observed Hugh Templin, wryly, in the weekly *Fergus News-Record.*[43]

In obituaries and tributes across the country and in letters of sympathy, the accolades and superlatives had all been used before at the onset of the columns and the launch of the book. In the House of Commons, in a manner unusual for a colleague of the Press Gallery, Gordon Graydon paid tribute to

> "an outstanding journalist. He was a widely read author; a kindly and witty philosopher; a fine, public-spirited Canadian; a devoted husband and father ... Throughout his journalistic career his agricultural background kept peeping out from behind in almost every story he wrote for public consumption ... *Father on the Farm* revived the memories of many thousands of Canadians whose interest in agriculture has never flagged nor failed, regardless of the avocation to which they later went during their lifetime ... The Press Gallery will miss one of its most popular personalities; the *Globe and Mail* one of it's high-class journalists; parliament one of its most honest and interesting commentators, and Canada, one of her finest native sons."[44]

And from Faraday, Ontario, came a modest letter of condolence to Margaret Cragg "I hope you don't think me too forward. I just wanted to say how sorry I was... I didn't know him, of course, except through his story ... It's been a long cold winter, but this last week really acts like spring, doesn't it. I'll close now."[45]



Father on the Farm Selections from Chapter 20: He Nearly Didn't Become a Farmer

"Father could never pass a pig pen, after he retired, without getting homesick for the farm.

His nose would twitch and his face would light up, and, depending on the season he would wonder how the seed was going in or how the hay was making, or if the mangles were thickening out

Father wasn't insensitive to the noisier smell of a farm, as much as used to them. He could enjoy a field of red clover in blossom just the same as any one else, but he was equally at home with the odor of his own stable when it was shut tight in winter. He liked the smell of his horses and the throat-cutting smell of ammonia in the stable itself.

He didn't like the smell of a hen-pen or of hens, and he liked even less the strange, sweet, unforgettable odor of the remains of a silly hen that had nested in a mow and got buried in hay or grain during the hauling in.

But, by and large, savoring and enjoying farm smells was one of father's little pleasures, even if he did let the other world of town and city in a little when he took lozenges to church. Actually these powerful medicated drops, with a bite to the tongue like a weasel and a range of several pews, were to help keep him awake.

Father was not alone in this little subterfuge and on any Sunday morning with the warm sun melting down and the breath of lilacs slipping in at intervals through the open windows, there were a good half-dozen farmers, all, like father, putting up a desperate fight against sweet sleep with the help of peppermints, horehound, patent preparations and their wives' elbows.

Father nearly didn't become a farmer at all and as nearly slipped into harness-making for a career. He liked leather, its smell and feeling ...

The general store was wide and divided roughly into departments. The groceries ran down the right with smells of coffee and vinegar and molasses and spice, and in the centre, broadening out to the back, was the hardware section, harness, stock feeds and coal oil, and on the far side was the general

dry goods with their low and flat smell of glaze and fabric.

The greatest struggle for domination was between the harness and coal oil and the groceries and soap, and the result was a blend that had no description other than general store.

The smell of spring itself and the even more demanding odor of steam rising from the sap kettle really started things off for father. It was a fine thing to watch him standing on the back stoop sniffing into the soft wind and getting the first sour smell of the wet land. After that, new smells tumbled one after another, the sweat of horses on the cultivator and apple blossoms and skunks passing in the distance.

In the early summer there was the pasture-field after a shower, suddenly speckled white with small, firm mushrooms, and the mustiness of the barn before the first hay went in; and freshly cut alsike and the too sweet smell of sweet clover and of hay mows cooling in the breezes pouring through the big open barn doors.

On a sultry night the smell of the hay mows with the doors shut against the threat of storm and the hay warm yet from sun heat or moistly hot with heating from under cure was something to remember - or wild strawberries on a sun baked pasture late in June.

In the fall there were smells of ripened apples and the earth took on a pleasant taint of decay and mould. On perfect days with a haze over the dying reds of sumac and maple, father followed his plow and was filled with contentment...

Father was never tempted by liquor, but the crisping fall days fortified his appetite, and he was a weak man - weak as the cattle in a way - before the fragrance of fresh-baked bread with the crust glazed with butter, oven-baked beans or a sugar-glazed ham. About the time the snow was due to fly, the pig was killed, and on cold dark nights for supper there were fried pieces of tenderloin or spareribs or a piece of fresh roast with the crackles crisp and spitting from the heat..."

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Quotations are from the second edition (December 1947) ***of Father on the Farm.*** *The author is grateful for the helpful advice from James andAthol Gow, illustrations ofH. Gordon Green and his book covers from Greg Oakes, and for the generous assistance of the* ***Globe and Mail*** *and of Catherine Cragg. Particularly useful were the resources of the Wellington County Museum and Archives, mid-way between Fergus and Elora, where the research materials for this paper have been deposited in the Cragg family history vertical files, and where the letters, reviews and photographs cited are held in the* ***Kenneth C. Cragg Papers, 1947-1948,*** *A999.18.*

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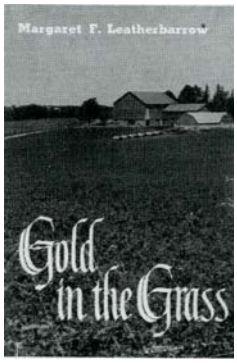
7. *Goodbye Little Town,* p.7-8.
8. *Goodbye Little Town,* p.9.
9. From the speech by H. Gordon Green, made at his nomination meeting, April 25, 1962; cited in James Hamilton, "By the Way", *Arthur Enterprise News,* November 20, 1991.
10. Sheila Bucher, cited above.
11. *Goodbye Little Town,* p. 142.
12. Obituary, *Drayton Advocate,* July 14, 1904. (Born 1869, died July 11, 1904).
13. Obituary, *Drayton Advocate,* January 29, 1943. (Born 1857, died January 13, 1943).
14. Obituary, *Drayton Advocate,* Nov. 25, 1948. (Born June 17, 1867, died Oct. 4, 1928).
15. Margaret Cragg's career in journalism is significant, and must be the subject of another story.
16. Charlie Pyper's address at *Telegram* farewell party, Jan. 14, 1938.
17. Obituary, *Drayton Advocate,* January 29, 1943. (Born 1857, died January 13, 1943).
18. Oakley Dalgleish, April 23, 1947. Ted McCormack had been given a photo of Kenneth Cragg as a model for Father Cragg.

19. William Arthur Deacon, May 2, 1947.
20. Oakley Dalgleish, May 5, 1947.
21. Dan McArthur, May 14, 1947.
22. R.A. Farquharson, May 6, 1947.
23. Norman Smith to R.A. Farquharson, [May 12, 1947].
24. R.A. Farquharson, Marjorie Budd, May 6, 1947.
25. Jack Hambleton, May 20, 1947. Bob Farquharson, September 17, 1947: "Dewey Bloom just called me and is interested in sending your book down to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer as soon as it comes out to see if they are interested in a movie. Dewey wondered if you could do a story on father's views on sex?"
26. William Arthur Deacon, May 12, 147.
27. Jack Marshall, ca. May 15, 1947.
28. *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Spring, 1948.
29. Margaret Cragg to Edith Ardagh, Promotion Manager, Longmans, Green & Co., May 31, June 2, 1947.
30. Jack Fleming, ca. May 15, 1947.
31. Royd Beamish, May 19, 1947.
32. Thomas L. Kennedy, June 10, 1947.
33. John Diefenbaker, September 12, 1947.
34. T.C. Douglas, Regina, September 18. 1947.
35. Jack Hambleton, September 21, November 1, 1947.
36. CPU. Snider, November 5; A.W.J. Buckland, November 6, 1947.
37. William Arthur Deacon, November 1, 1947.
38. Jack Hambleton, November 11, 1947.
39. In a letter of November 19, 1947, William Arthur Deacon reports that the first printing of 5,000 sold 3,200 in the first 2 weeks, following publication Nov 1. There was a problem obtaining paper for the second printing, but 5000 were now ordered. The pre-Christmas maximum sales would be 10,000.
40. Ken Mactaggart, ca. November 15, 1947.
41. Bob Farquharson, November 23, 1947; January 5, 1948.
42. Jack Hambleton, January 15, 1948.
43. Obituary, *Drayton Advocate*, and *Fergus News Record*, Feb. 19, 1948. (Born June 3, 1904-died Feb. 16, 1948).
44. *Hansard*, Tuesday, February 17, 1947.
45. Mrs. C. Rowe to Margaret Cragg, February 19, 1948.

Margaret Leatherbarrow with her husband Alfred
and son Jim, ca.1950.

MARGARET F. LEATHERBARROW
GOLD IN THE GRASS (1954)



Margaret Leatherbarrow [nee Wilson] grew up in Fergus, Ontario, After attending the schools of her home town she studied at Havergal College for a year, and graduated from Victoria Hospital, London, Ontario as a nurse. She later specialized in radio therapy under Dr. Gordon Richards at the Toronto General Hospital, and ultimately was engaged in psychiatric nursing at Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec. In the 1940s, she married Alfred Leatherbarrow and moved with her husband to the farm, Concession 2, upper Pilkington Township, which both made famous. They later divorced; Alfred remarried and developed a fish farm on the property, creating a pond and 6-acre lake, said to be registered on the Geological Survey map of Canada as Lake Windo'er.

It was Margaret's hope that the book which grew from their experiences at 'Friendship Farm' "would help the average fanner to break away from the traditions that are destroying his economy", and that it would "also help the people of both city and countryside to realize that our very existence depends upon the fertility of the good earth."

When the book was reprinted, she wrote, July 1975, "Reviewing the years that started in poverty, I realize that they were overcome by iconoclastic treatment which isolated us from our traditional neighbours, and eventually drew the interest and moral support of our agricultural college. We were supposed to fail: the farm was run out. Steady courage and determination to succeed gave us the most exhilarating life imaginable. I would not have missed one minute of those early years for anything."

The following excerpt from pages 136-137, describes the problems of agriculture as the Leatherbarrows saw them:

"The spring of 1950 was very wet, and it continued so right on through to haying time. At such times the silent submissive farmer can only stand still, his mind numb, waiting, waiting. Each day increases his anxiety as the lush crop grows to maturity. The thick rich green is gradually veiled in shades from white

on through lavender to deepest purple, as the alfalfa and clovers ripen and blossom, till finally they pass to that moment when the good farmer should cut it down for curing. Ten per cent in blossom is believed to be the time when it is at saturation point for protein. Some farmers, anxious to get a little more bulk, wait; but that is because they do not know. No farmer wants anything but the best. With the weather so uncertain, what will he do? Last year he stood on the same knoll and watched the storm clouds gather, promising life to his parched fields. They were so thick that the sun was obliterated, and a dark hush seemed the prelude of a storm. Then, as though a giant hand had suddenly scooped the storm clouds up, they disappear, and the sun pours down from a hot blue sky to blister the grain and grasses. Dejected, hopeless, the farmer plods to the cool, empty solace of his barn, where he can't see the desolation being wrought on this year's harvest.

What a contrast, what a tragedy! No wonder the farmer, through the years, too often with so little education, has become suspicious of anything coming from books. He reads the farm magazines, but does not absorb their information, his usual comment "Sounds all right, but I'll go on the way my father did." He is afraid, afraid to take a chance, for what he is doing is now uncertain enough.

"I don't know why I can't make any more," he says, "I work hard."

So he does, from dawn till long past dusk, and goes to church every Sunday. He's so superstitious he's afraid not to. He talks to his neighbour about the weather, and has got into the habit of always finding fault with it. It's too dry, or too wet, or too hot. In fact, he almost wills the worst to happen, perhaps that he may then indulge in self-pity and blame his inability to make much money on everything but himself. The government is a big bully; he's safe on blaming everything on it. With the reason for his failure securely placed where it belongs, he can swagger a little and be secretive about just what he makes, for that's *his* business, and besides it's little enough compared to the income of those capitalists.

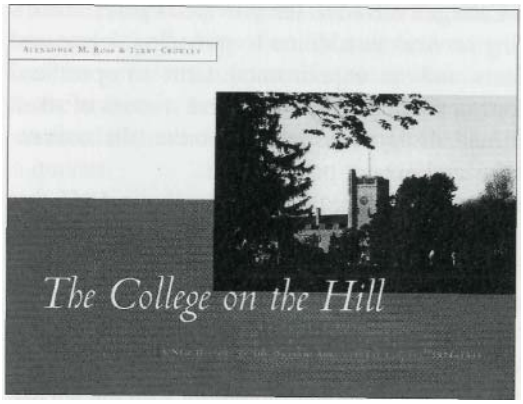
I wonder how many tread this treadmill, and refuse to make use of the wealth of practical assistance so readily available. I understand it is generally felt by our agricultural scientists that it takes ten years to get the average farmer to change his methods.

I firmly believe that the power is in us under any circumstances, in any climate where man can live, to improve our methods according to the nature of the land so that it will produce food and maintain life. For centuries everything has been taken out; now it is time to give back if we want to live. I can give no better example of how much more the soil returns to us, once its needs are considered, than this our own story."

Margaret F. Leatherbarrow, *Gold in the Grass* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1954; 2nd printing, Pauma Valley, California: The Rateavers, 1975). Excerpt reproduced with the kind permission of Bargyla Rateaver.

THE ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE: FROM SCHOOL TO WORLD-CLASS UNIVERSITY

by Terry Crowley



A new history of the Ontario Agriculture College by Alexander M. Ross and Terry Crowley was launched in May, 1999.

The Ontario School of Agriculture and Experimental Farm that was established in Guelph in 1874 was intended to contribute to economic progress. In a province where the vast majority of people were either farmers or lived off agricultural industries, the government believed that knowledge was critical to keeping Ontario internationally competitive.

Although inspired by the land grant colleges in the United States, the new institution was not endowed but made dependent on annual legislative appropriations. Situated on the farm of Guelph cattle breeder Frederick W. Stone, twenty-eight students registered initially, and facilities were rudimentary. The first chemistry laboratory, set up in the room of the veterinary science professor in the converted farmhouse, had space for only six students. When it was expanded into what had been a dual-purpose gymnasium/dining room, students built the equipment but lost their space for indoor athletics. Although the school became a college in 1880, fewer than fifty students graduated annually up to 1902.

As farmers wanted to see what their tax dollars had produced, more

money was spent on the experimental farm than the college. Students were expected to work on the farm six days a week in exchange for the experience and a few cents an hour in compensation. Education was geared to producing practical results through increased production.

To extend its influence, the college undertook two important initiatives in extension education. In 1878 the Ontario Agricultural and Experimental Union was formed to expand the school's work in improving field crops. Composed of instructors, students, and graduates, the union was much admired in American circles for its ability to test new crops under actual field conditions. The Union met annually on the Guelph campus to discuss results, but the second initiative, the Farmer's Institutes of Ontario, took college instructors to agriculturalists in their home locale. Following American precedents, a Christmas recess was created that allowed faculty members and recent graduates hired by the government to give lectures and provide discussions during the two-day annual gatherings of the Farmers' Institutes.

The Ontario Agricultural College evolved as the provincial government's extension and laboratory testing services in addition to providing degree and diploma programs for students and an experimental farm to spearhead progress in agricultural development. Unlike Quebec, where a series of small agricultural schools appeared and disappeared in rapid order, the concentration of facilities at Guelph insured greater permanence.

Especially important were government policies beginning in 1945 that provided faculty members with a year's paid leave of absence to pursue advanced degrees. As thorough-going scientific research supplanted experimentation at the college, graduate education expanded. The number of international students drawn from such areas as the West Indies also increased as Canada established a larger presence on the world's stage.

The decision in 1964 to create the University of Guelph with the O.A.C. as one of its three founding colleges was made personally by premiers Leslie Frost and John Robarts. Guelph became unique in Canada not only as home to the country's oldest and largest agricultural college, but also as the only university where the larger institution was implanted much later than its agricultural component. The special relationship that the college enjoyed with the provincial department of agriculture that funded research was maintained through the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario that was established by provincial legislation in 1961.

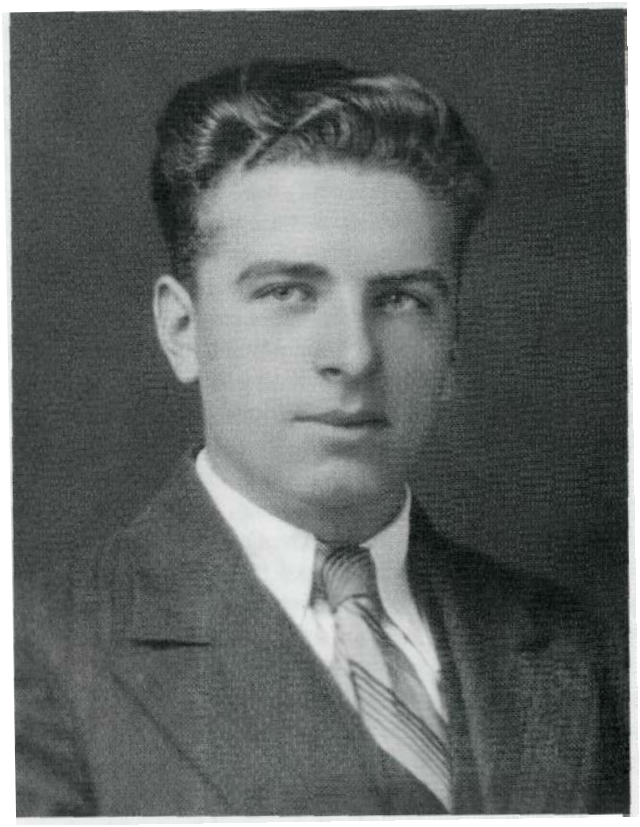
The synergy that developed between college and university enhanced Guelph's reputation during the second half of the twentieth century. The university brought academic freedom that sparked creativity within the O.A.C., while the college's growing reputation in research, graduate education, and international programs spurred others in the university to greater achievements.

The province also arrayed the university with a host of new or enhanced agri-food research facilities, but increasingly the O.A.C. responded to the private sector as government funding shrunk. During the 1970s faculty members started research directed at environmental concerns and the problems of rural society. International programs expanded beginning with the highly successful Guelph-Ghana project in 1970. Biotechnology and sustainable development implanted themselves firmly during the 1980s.

The enhanced partnership between the university and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs that began in 1997 added a variety of educational and laboratory facilities that stretched from Ontario's border with Manitoba to that with Quebec. Included were the colleges of agricultural technology at Kemptville, Ridgetown, and Alfred. As well, the city of Guelph emerged as a key nexus for agricultural industries as a result of the research and education provided by the Ontario Agricultural College.

The University of Guelph became recognized nationally as one of Canada's top universities after *Maclean's* magazine began annual surveys in 1992. Particularly impressive were the numbers of students entering with national scholarships, faculty members winning national teaching awards, and the generous support of alumni who donated eighty-six million dollars to the university between 1986 and 1996. Over twenty-six thousand students received degrees or diplomas through the O.A.C. during its first century and a quarter.

From modest beginnings in 1874, the Ontario Agricultural College has emerged from being a provincial school to one enjoying an international reputation within a world-class university.



R. Alex Sim: portrait taken for his campaign as Premier, Twelfth Ontario Older Boys' Parliament, 1932 [known in later years as the Ontario Youth Parliament].

THE ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE CONTESTED: A TRIBUTE TO R. ALEX SIM

by Terry Crowley

All universities that survive go through periods of creative growth, stagnation, criticism, and eventual renewal. The Harvard of today is a far cry away from the struggling college that trained Congregational Church divines in the seventeenth century. Oxford and Cambridge were notorious in the eighteenth century for their decadence, perhaps overstated by reformers who hoped to change them, but apparent nevertheless. At Oxford, there were no serious examinations for an undergraduate degree before 1770, while at Cambridge not a single Crown-appointed Regius professor of modern history deigned so much as to give a single lecture in the half-century between 1723 and 1773.[1]

The Ontario Agricultural College provided a case different from most other post-secondary institutions. Established in 1874 as an agency of the provincial government, it reported directly to the Minister of Agriculture until the University of Guelph was created in 1964. Although its degrees were granted through the University of Toronto, the College was subjected to political whims — just as nineteenth-century educationalists like Egerton Ryerson feared for the educational system as a whole — especially when the agricultural estimates were brought down annually in the legislature. As Guelph had not been endowed in the manner of the American land-grant colleges, all of the College's regular employees were civil servants dependent on annual appropriations. The glare of public scrutiny on the agricultural college was harsh during its first four decades but abated after a public inquiry in 1893.[2]

Still, each year the institution had to justify its existence in the face of parsimonious legislators and those in the farming community who saw little need for farmers' sons to have advanced education. The OAC responded to

this dual challenge by emphasizing how its research increased production and its programs improved practical farming through programs that trained young men to produce more food. Increasing bounty recompensed public investment through dollar returns. While this stress on the instrumentality of agricultural education was adopted as the official line, not all faculty members believed that undergraduate education should be so circumscribed. As times changed, students who had not been provided with a broader education might stick solely to the old skills rather than embrace beneficial advances. Critics argued that agricultural education had to be broader rather than purely instrumental.

The most prominent and trenchant criticism levelled at the approach to education followed at the Ontario Agricultural College appeared in *Saturday Night* magazine in 1948. Its author was John Kenneth Galbraith who had majored in animal science and graduated from the College in 1931. Advanced study at the universities of California and Cambridge, as well as participation in the American team investigating the effects of Allied bombing of Germany during World War Two, had honed the well-known economist's inherent iconoclasm. Galbraith attacked the inbreeding among the OAC's faculty, the lack of fundamental research, and the direct political control that stifled intellectual creativity. Political control, good research, and excellent education did not mix, Galbraith maintained.[3]

Closer to Galbraith's own student days at the OAC another controversy over standards of education at the College erupted that has eluded historians of post-secondary education. Some of the same criticisms that Galbraith voiced first surfaced a decade earlier in *The Farmer* magazine in 1934. When a young man named R. Alex Sim chose to attend the University of Toronto rather than the OAC, he took to print to explain publicly what he saw as Guelph's deficiencies.

R. Alex Sim had been born in Saskatchewan in 1911. His family moved east to Grey county in Ontario where they farmed near the small community of Holstein. Sim attended public school and then worked on the Great Lakes before returning to the family farm. Influenced by Agnes Macphail, the independent farm member of Parliament from South East Grey, Sim had joined the United Farm Young People of Ontario and won its annual public speaking contest in Toronto in 1932. Through this association he made the acquaintance of Alan Plaunt, one of the founders of the Canadian Radio League in 1930. Having recently acquired the United Farmers' newspaper, the *Farmers' Sun*, Plaunt worked with Sim and others to initiate the New Canada Movement as a response to the woes afflicting rural Ontario during the Great Depression.[4] More than seven thousand farm young people joined the New Canada Movement during 1933-1934, but Sim went off to complete high school at Pickering College in Newmarket with a rural life scholarship that he had won. When he formulated his reasons for choosing Toronto over

Guelph, *The Farmer* decided to publish his declaration and a rejoinder because "in recent years we have heard earnest young men looking to farming as a career, criticize the type of education the Ontario Agricultural College offered the farm boy."[5]

1934 was a very bad year for Ontario's farmers and for the Ontario Agricultural College. Rural Ontario resented having to share political power with its urban counterpart, but the rural vote remained a powerful force due to strength of numbers and agriculture's status as the province's largest employer. The severe economic slump that followed on the heels of relative prosperity during the 1920s deepened the siege mentality long prevalent in the rural parts of the province as the cities outpaced them in growth. Prices for agricultural commodities fell so disastrously that farmers could not find outlets for their produce. In 1932, the average Ontario farm earned only $147.26 from its operations, while mothers with four children on relief received $218.92 annually from the City of Toronto. Real net income for farmers had fallen 40 per cent in 1933 over 1929 at the onset of the depression. Not only in the prairie west were there rural dwellers so poor that they could only make clothes from flour sacks; they were seen in Grey County as well. Farmers were told that they were bearing the chief burdens of the economic tailspin. "The brunt of the economic blizzard," journalist Wilfred Eggleston informed readers in 1933, "has been borne by the Canadian farmer and other primary producers."[6]

Difficulties at the agricultural college derived both from financial stringency and the comfortable complacency into which it had lapsed. The provincial Conservative party had long criticized the OAC as being too elitist. In 1928, G. Howard Ferguson's Conservative government fired the college's president, Joseph B. Reynolds.[7] A talented educationalist who had improved admission standards and brought program changes, the liberal-minded Reynolds had previously been president of the Manitoba Agricultural College before it became a faculty of the University of Manitoba. The Conservatives chose noted agriculturalist George I. Christie as the sort of no-nonsense agriculturalist and vigorous promoter who suited their disposition.

Despite the eminence that Christie had attained in the United States, he was not an innovator. During his long term as president, students came to know the College as a decidedly family affair with limited horizons. While George Christie was initially able to secure a million dollars to construct Johnston Hall after the campus's main building was condemned as unsafe, his institution was not exempted from civil service wage cuts in 1932 and a large reduction in its budget. Because the college could not compete financially for the best faculty members, it relied on appointment of its own graduates. Some did not keep up with their disciplines. When a student at this time asked a physics professor what microfarads were, the only answer

he got was they were small farads, but without any explanation about the nature of the farad in electricity.[8]

Alex Sim was upset by the disparity between the OAC's public image and what it had to offer farm young people. President Christie liked to trumpet the college's renown, claiming on one occasion without substantiation that it was "the best agricultural college in the world."[9] University reputations are always elusive and impossible to pin down, but Alex Sim believed that the OAC's reputation was exaggerated. He was twenty-two when he sought university admission. The programs of the United Farm Young People of Ontario had brought him into contact with faculty members from the university of Toronto. The annual rural life conferences planned by Pickering College headmaster Joseph McCulley, a member of the reformist intellectual circle called the League for Social Reconstruction, furthered the young man's exposure to social problems broadly conceived.

The substance of Sim's criticism of the Ontario Agricultural College revolved around the point that it provided "an excellent technical training but a poor education." Here he hit upon a contradiction that had bedevilled agricultural education since its inception during the middle of the nineteenth century. Was the study of agriculture training or education? Was such study to be directly practical, and thereby purely instrumental and technical, or was it to provide a broader base for intellectual growth and development throughout life? Sim believed that the College did not genuinely prepare its graduates for rural living. He thought that too much attention was directed towards attractive facilities and towards enticing diversions such as winning sports teams. The more important function of teaching students to think seemed to play second fiddle in Sim's estimation. For students from cities who might study science there and work in an agriculturally related industry, the OAC failed to upset "their smug idealism" because its curriculum was too narrow.

Sim also indirectly attacked the deleterious effects of the College's subordination to the Ministry of Agriculture. Like many in the farm community, he had come to see the farmers' depressed condition as not of their own making, but as part of larger contradictions within the national and international economies. Under the Ministry's aegis, the College continued to emphasize the practical questions through which animal and field crop production might be increased. This appeared futile to Sim when farmers could already grow what was needed but could not sell their production at prices sufficient to survival. What sense did it make to grow a second blade of grass when you could not sell the first?

Sim thought that economics was accorded insufficient attention at the OAC and that what was taught was woefully antiquated: "shackled educationalists repeating numbly like a chant the meaningless phrases of

Eighteenth century laissez-faire economics." While the College taught the science of production, it forgot the economics of distribution. As its faculty members were afraid to challenge the status quo, Sim wrote colourfully of "these leaders of agriculture fearfully and steadfastly walking backwards [who] pronounce the old formula in a new setting." Such a stance amounted to no more than saying: "Every meat-packer and milk distributor for himself and the devil and the farmer take the hindermost — if any." Such attitudes failed to comprehend the farmer's special needs, but they did prepare the College's graduates "to join the muzzled ranks of the civil service" in which they had been schooled.

The narrow focus of the curriculum also came under fire. The continuing importance attached to farm efficiency prevented a larger understanding of rural life that could only be achieved through the study of subjects such as history, sociology, and psychology that were not offered at the College. Farmers in Denmark and New Zealand, Sim argued, were ahead of those in Ontario because education was viewed differently there. "Their approach is not crudely measured in dollars and bushels, with senses dulled by unprofitable labour. They approach life through literature, painting, music and dynamic religion." Students interested in rural life, he maintained, must be equipped with a larger intellectual understanding or otherwise they graduated "to assume positions of leadership, facing problems essentially cultural and social as well as economic, with a tremendous handicap."

The suppression of the OAC's first student newspaper in 1932 was used to illustrate how independent thought was not encouraged. *The Oacis*, which had begun in 1929, reminded its readers that its title had been chosen to refer to "a mental oasis and not the kind of oasis that Americans mean when they speak of Canada."[10] Following coverage critical of the way in which students had been dragooned to attend a boring literary evening with Sir Charles G.D. Roberts in 1932, college authorities had quashed the paper. Alex Sim used this incident to characterize the College's administration as 'a dictatorship that was terrified to find students actually thinking."

Sim's criticisms were remarkable for a young man about to enter university. As they were bound to excite controversy, the editor of *The Farmer* wisely accorded equal space to the contrary position. Written by OAC graduate John Dryden, the opposing article outlined the reasons why farm offspring might chose the OAC over the University of Toronto. Dryden lauded the College's reputation and its affiliation with the larger institution through which it granted degrees. He proceeded to argue that it was the only seat of higher learning particularly suited to the needs of rural youth. Invoking the stereotype of farm young people as "quieter and less aggressive" than their city counterparts, Dryden argued essentially that the OAC allowed individuals of like background and mind to be segregated for

their own betterment. Somewhat ironically, this was indeed the reason that the province's school of agriculture had been placed in the countryside in 1874 following the failure of the University of Toronto's agriculture program. Only splendid isolation might save agricultural education, or so it was thought.

Dryden rightly invoked the advantages of a smaller campus that allowed hesitant students to be less anonymous, but he exaggerated the comparison by maintaining that "every student at the O.A.C. receives an opportunity to lead and is given a development fitting him for a career." The insularity of the College, removed from urban and urbane lures, inculcated a strong school spirit. He also approved the generalist approach to agricultural study assumed at the College in preference to the trend towards specialization. This prepared the graduate "for a greater variety of positions than ... a mere specialist." Lastly, Dryden illustrated Sim's points about the emphasis on efficiency by saying that as costs at the OAC for the student were just over half those at Toronto, "an O.A.C. education provides much more value per unit of cost than does arts training" at the University of Toronto.

While the two men assumed a common language that sometimes employed the same words interchangeably, their positions were poles apart. Sim thought of post-secondary education expansively, contrasting it with training, particularly at the technical level. He wanted to understand the predicament that farmers found themselves in, while Dryden wanted to understand revenue generation in agriculture. The latter also believed that since college instruction was career preparation, education in the humanities and social sciences was similar to the training he had experienced during his college days. Sim's views unwittingly harped back to Plato's idea of knowledge as self-discovery in the attainment of self-knowledge, while those of John Dryden represented an instrumental view of education that had been abandoned more readily in the American land-grant colleges and Canadian faculties of agriculture affiliated with universities than they had been at Guelph.

Just as elements of both views continue to influence our outlook on university education at the end of the twentieth century, so Sim's and Dryden's positions provoked responses from the magazine's readers during the next two months. Even those graduates who defended their alma mater acknowledged that Sim had made some irrefutable points. Most responses contributed little that was new to the sparring match apart from that by Douglas Hart of Woodstock. Hart wondered whether the foremost purpose of the Ontario Agricultural College should be to train farmers in the first place. Such iconoclasm challenged an idea as cherished as any by the College and provincial agricultural authorities. Ontario agriculture would be better served, Hart maintained, by having OAC graduates assume positions in government and industry where their talents would have greater impact

than on the family farm. This proposition aligned with Alex Sim's stand.

This public controversy had little impact on the educational programs offered at the Ontario Agricultural College. Later in 1934 a provincial election swept out Premier George Henry, himself an OAC graduate, and his Conservative government. The new Liberal administration of the hard-drinking scrapper Mitch Hepburn immediately instituted a wholesale reduction in the civil service that resulted in the removal of twenty-six faculty members at the College. While the Depression era proved propitious to the development of new ideas, it was not conducive to education reform at an institution beleaguered through the assaults mounted by its political masters. The controversy that erupted in 1934 subsided in the face of more pressing concerns, but similar criticism returned to haunt the College in the next decade.

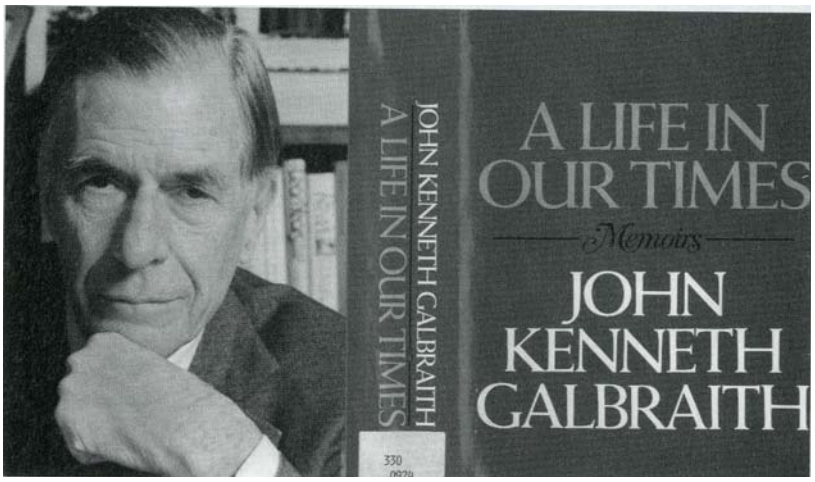
There also was another return of a different sort in a much later decade. R. Alex Sim completed his undergraduate education at the University of Toronto and then worked in extension services at Macdonald College in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Quebec. Following graduate study in adult education and sociology at Columbia University, he became the first national secretary for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's innovative Farm Radio Forum. Involved in many important initiatives such as the Canadian Adult Education Association, Sim retained his interest farming, but he also taught at the universities of Toronto and Ottawa. During those years he continued to write extensively and co-authored the first study of Canadian suburbia, *Crestwood Heights.* A half-century after he had initiated the controversy over Ontario's agricultural college, Alex Sim retired to Guelph. Active in the Rural Living Association, in 1988 he published a searching study of rural problems entitled *Land and Community: Crisis in Canada's Countryside.*[11] Near century's end and more than eighty years old, Alex Sim lent his active support to create a bibliography centred on rural Canada.

Historians have noted John Kenneth Galbraith's critique of the Ontario Agricultural College while ignoring the antecedent provided by Alex Sim.[12] Galbraith's views appeared in a national magazine, and their author attained international stature as public administrator, American Democratic party insider, prolific writer, and ambassador. Sim's criticisms appeared in the farm press, his academic acclaim was more restricted, and he continued primarily to address the countryside from which he had emanated. While Alex Sim was only beginning his university education when he made his criticisms of the OAC public, both scholars arrived independently at substantially the same conclusions. While both solicited flurries of responses, neither had immediate consequential impact. Sim's and Galbraith's publications formed part of the continuing dialogue characteristic of free societies. Fundamental changes at Canada's foremost agricultural college had to await the imposition of change by the

Conservative government of John Robarts in 1962. Two years later, the Ontario Agricultural College emerged as a primary constituent of the University of Guelph. That development provided the basis for the innovations anticipated by John Kenneth Galbraith and R. Alex Sim.

NOTES

1. G.M. Trevelyan, *English Social History* (London, 1942), pp. 365-66. J. Steven Watson, *The Reign of George III* (Oxford, 1960).
2. See Alexander M. Ross and Terry Crowley, *The College on the Hill: A New History of the Ontario Agricultural College, 1874-1999* (Toronto and Oxford: The Dundurn Group, 1999).
3. Galbraith's writings on the OAC in 1948, but not later, are reproduced in Alexander M. Ross, *The College on the Hill: A History of the Ontario Agricultural College, 1874-1974* (Toronto, 1974), pp. 166-69.
4. See Terry Crowley, *The New Canada Movement: Agrarian Youth Protest and Adult Education in Ontario.* University of Guelph, Department of Rural Extension Studies, Occasional Papers in Rural Extension No. 4 (Guelph, 1988) and "The New Canada Movement: Agrarian Youth Protest in the 1930s," *Ontario History* 80 (1988), 311-25.
5. *The Farmer,* January, 1934, p. 8. Rejoinders to Sim's article were published in the February and March issues.
6. Wilfred Eggleston, "Farmers' Incomes from Field crops Down 60 Per cent," *The Weekly Sun,* 16 March 1933. Ian Drummond, *Progress Without Planning: The Economic History of Ontario from Confederation to the Second World War* (Toronto, 1986), pp. 39-40. Neil McKenty, *Mitch Hepburn* (Toronto, 1967), p. 41.
7. Interview with Don Jose, Guelph, by Terry Crowley, 28 June 1998.
8. Thomas Jukes to Terry Crowley, 6 March 1998. Profiting from instruction under poultry scientist W.R. Graham, Jukes went on to do innovative research on vitamins and secured appointment at the University of California, Berkeley.
9. Quoted in Ross and Crowley, *The College on the Hill,* p. 124.
10. Quoted in Ross and Crowley, *The College on the Hill,* pp. 130-31.
11. R. Alex Sim *et al, Canada's Farm Radio Forum* (Paris, 1954); John R. Seeley and R. Alex Sim, *Crestwood Heights* (Toronto, 1956); R. Alex Sim, *Land and Community: Crisis in Canada's Countryside* (Guelph, 1988).
12. See, for example, David R. Murray, *Hatching the Cowbird's Egg: The Creation of the University of Guelph* (Guelph, 1989).



In the early autumn of 1926, in my eighteenth year, and as another aspect of the influence of agriculture, in particular of the Shorthorns of which by then I was considered to have a highly professional knowledge, I enrolled in the Ontario Agricultural College. I had been attending high school since the age of ten, but my schooling was subject to numerous interruptions for farm work and once for what my family believed was bad health. My record, which did reflect an early addiction to extensive but undisciplined reading, was indifferent. In keeping with many of my contemporaries and many of that age since, I had considered myself superior to sustained intellectual effort. But in those days, given a high school diploma, admission to a college, any college, was entirely a matter of money. This our farm provided, and there was also an arrangement by which the members of the family were so spaced that the earlier could contribute to the college costs of the later.

The Ontario Agricultural College, with which were associated schools of home economics and veterinary medicine and, oddly, an academy for instruction in the science and art of baking, was then, as it is still, located in the city of Guelph, some fifty or sixty miles west of Toronto. The University of Toronto granted us our degrees. ...

I arrived at the college by train and trolley on a golden autumn evening to see the football team at practice on the lower side of the campus, for there was, of course, no stadium in those primitive days. It was my first view of the game, and it, along with the uniforms, seemed deeply evocative of all that I had expected in college life. My appreciation of football has declined steadily ever since. I was assigned to a room in the freshman residence, a place of unspeakable squalor as it even then seemed, and was given as a

roommate a charming man, rather older than I, named Sydney Howe, who later became an important figure in Canadian dairying circles. He listened to my personal history and my political views through a long evening and promptly applied for a change. The dean of residence (one of whose predecessors had been John McCrae of Flanders Fields and the poppies) hastened to comply. My next roommate lasted until Christmas. ...

Across the streetcar tracks from the main campus were the buildings where women students were taught the rudiments of home economics, with impressive attention also to feminine decorum and virtue. Their part of the college was called Macdonald Institute after the leading Canadian tobacco manufacturer, but this involved no concession whatever to his product. The girls, as they called themselves, united on ceremonial occasions to cry out in unison:

> Rootely toot; rootely toot.
> We are the girls of the Institute.
> We don't smoke. And we don't chew.
> And we don't go out with boys who do!

From 1800 to 2400 students attended OAC in the several branches and classes in my time. Their mood, as also that of the faculty, was deeply anti-intellectual. Animal husbandry being the most anti-intellectual subject available, it attracted the largest number of students. This became my first field of specialization. ...

There was a rough division in the OAC student body in my time between the farmers and the countrymen, although this terminology reflects the distinction rather than any contemporary usage. The fanners were mostly from Ontario farms, although there were also some from the Maritime Provinces, where the local agriculture did not justify colleges of our grandeur. The farmers were studying agriculture more or less without exception in order to escape it. Their highest ambition was for a job as a county agent - called agricultural representative in Ontario - which provided one with an automobile, an office at the county seat and a sublime deliverance from manual toil. One went around telling the practicing farmers how to do better, a thing in which, at the time, an astonishing number were not interested. In Canada, as across the United States, agricultural extension agents gathered to tell of the classic rebuff - the farmer who blithely told one of their number that he was already not farming half as well as he knew how.

Failing a job as an "ag. rep.," there was hope, perhaps with some added training, of one as a teacher in some vocational high school or in the Toronto stockyards grading swine, as Canadian law required.

The countrymen, in contrast, intended to farm. They were the sons of affluent Toronto families possessed of land somewhere adjacent to the city.

The son in question had become enamored of the horses, cattle and inherited acres and had decided to make them his career. Or, not infrequently, his family had decided that that was about all he was good for. Countrymen similarly motivated or unmotivated came from elsewhere in Canada, from England and on occasion from plantations in the West Indies and ranches in Argentina.

The farmers wore sturdy suits of blue serge or gray worsted, white shirts and ties and exhibited in this unaccustomed attire the unmistakable culture of the farm. They - I could say we - were very serious about their work. The countrymen affected sweaters and trousers, flowing neck gear or none at all, and viewed our courses with contempt. Out of their superior social, sexual and athletic experience they were accorded an unchallenged preeminence in the community. They held all class offices and were given all nonacademic honors, and the rest of us yearned to display the slightest fraction of their sophistication. On Sundays they went to Church of England services in Guelph; some claimed, on festive occasions, to have gotten drunk. Throughout my years at the Ontario Agricultural College I never permitted myself even a glass of beer; alcohol, we had learned at home, was, in any form, for the wanton and the evil.

The countrymen had a durable effect on me. I have never ceased to concede to those of superior social assurance and grace. ...

John Kenneth Galbraith, *A Life In Our Times: Memoirs,* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1981. Pages 6-8. This extract reproduced with kind permission of the publisher.

REPORTS FROM THE ARCHIVES

WELLINGTON COUNTY MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES

1998 was another year of growth and change for the Wellington County Archives. In January, Karen Wagner was appointed Archivist to replace Bonnie Callen who took over the position of Administrator. Bonnie had served as the Archivist since 1981. On July 1, the Wellington County Museum and Archives was designated a National Historic Site due to its status as the oldest identified "House of Refuge and Industry" in Canada. In November a public access computer terminal in the Archives Ada Currie Reading Room became available for researchers wishing to access Archival records.

A diverse collection of over 30,000 primary and secondary research materials relating to the people, places, organizations and institutions of Wellington County can be accessed using the database. Whether large or small each item donated to the County Archives in 1998 helps to preserve the heritage of Wellington County. Staff and volunteers were kept busy cataloguing several acquisitions worthy of note.

The extensive **Municipal Records Collection** grew with the transfer of records from **Minto** and **Puslinch** Townships and the Village of **Elora.** These records included council minutes, bylaws, clerk's correspondence, voters lists, assessment rolls, financial records, architectural plans and maps.

The Photograph Collection was enhanced with the addition of several relevant contributions including: ***Fergus News Record*** **Negatives,** 1964-1969; **Elora Gorge Bridge** construction slides, 1980; **Fergus** fire hydrant colour photographs, 1983; and over 200 postcards in the **Robert Stevens Fergus Postcard Collection,** 1900-1995. Individual photographs of interest include: Harriston hockey teams, 1905, 1906-07, 1914-1915; tintypes of the **Innes** family of Elora; and a photograph of the exterior of the **Grand Theatre,** Fergus, ca. 1930.

The Archives also acquired minutes and yearbooks relating to the **Fergus and District Horticultural Society,** 1932-1997, as well as minutes and programmes from the **Farewell Women's Institute,** 1948-1993 and microfilm of the **Moorefield Tweedsmuir History,** 1904-1976.

Genealogical researchers will be interested to see the addition of records

documenting the history of Wellington County families including: the diary of **John Innes** of Elora which documents his journey to Canada in 1875; records relating to the **McCrae-Cleghorn** families of Guelph Township as well as a large collection of records relating to the **Phillips** and **Beattie** families of Fergus. The Archives also acquired a Depression brides scrapbook and a collection of 21 letters written during the Depression era, 1928-1935 from **Fred R. Short** (West Garafraxa Twp.) to his wife **Martha Ellen Foster** (East Luther Twp.).

Family historians will also be able to access several newly published research tools including: **Upper Canada Naturalization Records, Wellington District 1842-1849** (compiled by Frances Hoffman, 1997); **Roman Catholic Marriage Registers in Ontario, Canada** 1828-1870 (compiled and edited by Renie A. Rumpel); **Guelph Origin of Street Names 1827-1927** (compiled by Ross Irwin, 1998); **The Ontario Photographers List,** 1901-1925 as well as over 600 pages of transcriptions chronicling **W.F. Mackenzie's** historical notes on Wellington County towns and townships from the ***Guelph Mercury and Advertiser,*** 1907-1908 (transcribed by Janie Dickinson). This research tool is a valuable source of genealogical information because it lists the names of Wellington County families as well as the location from which they emigrated.

The Archives continues to collect local Wellington County weekly newspapers. In addition more microfilm was purchased of pre-1900 Guelph newspapers. Moreover, the following publications relating to newspapers were obtained: ***The Confederate:*** **Index to *The Confederate,* Mount Forest, 1870-1874** (compiled by Jeff Stewart and Sherilyn Bell, 1997) and **Genealogical Information Extracted From the *Elmira Signet* Relevant to the Counties of Waterloo-Wellington and Beyond, Volume II, 1900-1902** (compiled by Frances Hoffman).

Archivist, Karen Wagner would like to thank the following volunteers for their efforts in the Archives over the past year: Joyce Blyth, Janie Dickinson, Ian Easterbrook, Mildred Lang, Marian Marshall, Jean Moore, and Cheryl Rahn.

The Wellington County Museum and Archives is a National Historic Site, midway between Fergus and Elora, Ontario. The Archives is open to the public Monday to Friday 9:30 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4:30 p.m. The Museum is open Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and weekends 1 to 5 p.m. Telephone: **(519)846-0916** Fax: (519)846-9630, e-mail: **karen@wcm.on.ca** or visit our website at **www.wcm.on.ca**

Karen Wagner, Archivist

GUELPH MUSEUMS

Guelph Museums has had a number of very significant donations over the past few years. One that will certainly be remembered is the generous donation of John McCrae's medals from the Boer War and from the First World War. The medals were purchased at auction by Mr. Arthur Lee of Toronto who then gave them to McCrae House. Since the donation, security upgrades to McCrae House have been completed, and conservation and mounting of the medals has been done by the Canadian Conservation Institute in Ottawa. Guelph Museums wishes to thank all those who supported our endeavours to house the medals at McCrae House.

Another exciting donation received this year was a collection of 18 letters, written to a family friend by John McCrae while he was in South Africa during the Boer War, and while he was in Belgium and France during the First World War. The letters form a fascinating chronicle of McCrae's journey to South Africa on the ship *Laurentian.* He writes of sea sickness (he wasn't, but almost everyone else was ill, including the horses), his concern for the horses on board, and amusing incidents during the crossing. He also records his long journeys as his battery unit marches across South Africa. (He was almost drowned in a pond by his horse Jack). The McCrae House archival collection also includes the photograph diaries, scrapbooks, photo albums, sketches and correspondence of John McCrae and other members of the McCrae family.

Guelph Civic Museum archival collection was the repository for the donation of videotapes produced in 1998 and early 1999 by the Guelph Social History Project. Over 50 videotapes document the social history of Guelph during the early 1940s and 1950s.

Our photograph collection continues to grow, and now approaches 6,000 images. Another significant donation included photographs from the Lovett Sign company, who documented their work on buildings and vehicles from 1950-1970s. The archives collection also consists of post cards, Vernon Directories, pamphlets, land documents, maps, and records of many Guelph companies and organizations.

Guelph Civic Museum and McCrae House are open from Sunday to Friday from l-5pm. Research appointments may be made (519) 936-1221, extension 225.

Bev Dietrich, Curator

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Steve Thorning, popular local history columnist with the *Wellington Advertiser,* has long been a supporter of the Society and was the founding editor of *Wellington County History.* **Jane Robertson** is a freelance writer, currently living in Drayton. She is a seeker of history within expressions of human sentiment, genealogy and journalism of previous times. **Anna Jackson** grew up in Puslinch and after returning to her roots, became involved with Puslinch and Wellington County Historical Societies. She has written the "Puslinch Past" column for the *Puslinch Pioneer* and contributed to *Wellington County History.* **Greg Oakes** practices law in Ontario, and with his wife Sonja, raises Bashkur Curly horses on their farm outside Guelph. **Gloria Troyer** is a freelance writer/consultant and founding member of the Ontario Women's History Network (OWHN). She worked in Archival and Special Collections, University of Guelph Library 1981-1996. In 1997, working in the OAC Dean's Office, she compiled *Ontario Agricultural College, Inventory of Archives and Artifacts on Display, Dean's Office, 1997.* **Ian Easterbrook** was first published in the *Sarnia Observer,* when at a young age he wrote a Letter to the Editor, complaining of a record review. Professor **Terry Crowley** has been teaching with the Department of History at the University of Guelph since the early '70s. He has been a generous contributor to many cultural organizations in the area. **Karen Wagner** is the Archivist at the Wellington County Museum and Archives. She has an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Western Ontario and a Masters of Library Science degree from the University of Toronto. Karen lives in Minto Township. **Bev Dietrich** is the Curator at Guelph Museums, which includes the Civic Museum and McCrae House. She lives in Elmira, is actively involved in the Elmira Aquaducks, Elmira Theatre Company, and sings in the Celebration Chorale choir.

The back cover illustration has been reproduced from Alexander M. Ross's *The College on the Hill: A History of the Ontario Agricultural College 1874-1974,* page 109. Editorial assistance: Wayne Bridge. Illustrations scanned by Douglas Scott, Wellington County Museum and Archives. Optical scanning by Alexander Mowatt. Printing by Ampersand, Guelph.

WELLINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY EXECUTIVE: 1998-1999

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Local History Council: Anna Jackson
Puslinch Historical Society: Anna Jackson
Guelph Historical Society: Marjorie Durnford

Editorial Committee for Volume 12: Bonnie Callen, Anna Jackson
Michael Robinson, Athol Gow, Jane Robertson, Ian Easterbrook

The editors welcome for publication articles relating to all aspects of the history of Wellington County.

FARM AND HOME WEEK

ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

JUNE 2O, 21, 22, 23, 24, 1932.

A NEW PLAN:

The College announces a change of plan from the old time "Farmers' Week". Arrangements have been made to accommodate farm visitors overnight or for several nights, at a very low rate.

Room and meals $1.OO a day or 25c for single meals.

Courses of very practical demonstrations and discussions for both men and women will be conducted throughout the week, and there will be ample time for seeing the College farm, experiment plots, gardens and orchards, live-stock, and the College buildings as well as to get acquainted with neighbours from other counties.

Arrange your farm work so as to get away for a few days and enjoy this unusual opportunity.

ALL FARM FOLKS WELCOME.

Those staying overnight should register immediately on arrival, so that rooms may be allotted.

Ask your county agricultural representative for complete program of the week's proceedings.

DR. G. 1. CHRISTIE, President. J. BUCHANAN, Director of Extension.

ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, GUELPH, CANADA.