

The Life and Times of
Mary MacIntyre (1836-1925) and John MacDonald (1835-1917)
in South Uist, Scotland and West Williams Twp., Ontario
by Donald E. Read

The long string of islands known as the Outer Hebrides off the northwest coast of Scotland serve as a 130-mile breakwater. The sea moderates island climate, but sends the highest winds in Britain over these treeless rocky isles. Gales and lashing rain are not uncommon. Two of several high precambrian mountains are located on the island of South Uist. They are Beinn Mhor, 2034 feet, and Hecla, 1988 feet, named in ancient times by Norseman invaders.(36)

Three large central islands are typical of the region. North Uist, 17 by 13 miles, is nearly half-covered by water. Lochmaddy, its chief village and port, stands on a sea-loch five miles long with three islets at the mile-wide entrance. Thus, excellent harbourage is provided. Benbecula, eight miles square, is quite flat and is also lake-studded. It is linked to North Uist and to South Uist by causeways. South Uist, 22 miles long by 7 miles wide, has no trees but there are excellent beds of peat for fuel. The west side of the island, which is exposed to the Atlantic, is a low, flat, sandy machair which forms the bulk of the island's arable land. The east side is mountainous, hilly and rocky, with some good pasture areas for mouflon sheep. The climate is very wet and there are many lakes and streams abounding in fish, especially trout. Lochboisdale is the main port of this island.(36)

On the 16th of January, 1836, I was born into a crofting family at Lower Bornish on the Isle of South Uist, Scotland. My parents were James MacIntyre (1779-1864) and Catherine Bowie (1798-1870). I was their seventh child. Three days later I was baptised with the name Mary in the small, St. Mary's Roman Catholic chapel nearby; our neighbour, John MacIntosh Jr., was my sponsor.(18) This chapel had been built during Rev. Ranald Macdonald's pastorship, 1788-1819.(38)

A crofter denotes a peasant who rented land, usually five to ten acres, from an estate owner; he would depend on the produce of his own place and would supplement his income by fishing or working for a farmer with a larger holding. Also on South Uist were cottars. These were peasants who occupied a cottage on an estate and worked as a labourer for a fixed rate of income whenever their services were required.(7) On our treeless island peat was the primary fuel for warmth and cooking. Neighbours helped one another in a peat-cutting bee; they shared the peat according to the number of days put in at digging. Enough was dug in June to last all year. They sweat in June lest they shiver in December.(35)

Most customs concerned the feasts of the Church. At Christmas, most of the men would bring their shinty clubs to church and after Mass would go to the machair for shinty. Even the old men would take off their shoes for the game, and there would be a small mound of shoes at the goal. For Christmas dinner, each household invariably killed a sheep, and had the best repast of the year. On New Year's Eve boys and young men would go from house to house and would have to say their piece of poetry before the door would be opened. Then they would go round the fire by the left (the fire was always in the centre of the floor) and before they sat down would say, "God bless the house and all its contents". To which the oldest person present would reply, "God bless you! God bless you!"(38)

At Easter the children would go from house to house gathering eggs, and would then play amongst themselves. One would strike his egg against that of his opponent, and the winner would have whichever cracked. People would rise early on Easter morning to see the sun rise, believing that it danced for joy. St. Andrew's Day was the beginning of the shinty season, which afforded endless amusement during the winter afternoons, while the evenings were enlivened with song and story, the bagpipe and the fiddle. Small wonder that Catholic Uist should have been a happy home where the ancient ballads survived better than elsewhere.(38)

Despite previous emigrations from South Uist, the population warranted the construction of a new church at Bornish in 1837.(8) My parents and older siblings watched its construction from our home across the small Loch Torornish. In 1755, the population of our island was only 2209; by 1801, it had doubled to 4595; and in 1841, a total of 7333 souls called the island home.(6)

South Uist, part of the estate of Clanranald, was exposed to sale on November 2, 1836.(29) It was purchased by Colonel Gordon of Cluny who didn't want to be bothered with the administration of small tenant holdings. He wanted large farms with sheep only, for quick profit!

Between 1846 and 1848 the parishoners of Bornish suffered greatly from the potato famine. In addition to charity, people were forced to eat the nettle and the root of the silverweed cinquefoil.(35) Our pastor, Father Chisholm, proposed the construction of the branch road south to Lochboisdale so as to provide employment, and the means of earning food. At the meeting when this proposal was made, the factor, Dr. Alexander MacLeod, shook his fist in the face of Father Chisholm, but he later sent an apology, when the road had proved itself to be so great a boon. In reply to the angry factor the priest had merely whistled, a favourite practice of his.(38)

Inevitably, we too were forced to leave. In the summer of 1849, we sold what possessions we could and made preparations for our departure. In August, three ships, the Tuscar, the Atlantic and the Mount Stuart, would arrive in the Outer Hebrides to carry many poor souls away from the islands of South Uist, Benbecula, and North Uist. Our emigration was not by choice; it was a forced eviction by Col. Gordon who was playing his role in the Highland Clearances.(1)

As the date approached we gathered together with hundreds of our neighbours and kinfolk from the middle district of South Uist.(18) Feelings were mixed; despair over our losses, imminent eviction, and unknown trials ahead was combined with hope for a better lifestyle elsewhere. From Bornish we were driven southward over the rough road. Our thatched roofs were dismantled and/or put to the torch to reinforce the finality of our exodus. We carried provisions of food, clothing, and a very few lightweight, household articles. As the throng moved slowly along on this one-way trek, it was joined by groups of emigrants from other parts of the island. After a walk of about ten miles we reached the harbour at Lochboisdale.

By now, children were crying and some of the adults became quite upset at the prospect of leaving their island for an unknown destination. The elderly people went meekly to the ships; however, some of the younger ones objected strongly. One family consisted of a widow, Mrs. Neil Johnson (née Anne Campbell), with seven or eight children from the parish of Iochdar. One of her sons, Angus, aged seventeen, resisted so valiantly that it took six soldiers to put the handcuffs on him.(10) An additional 1681 souls were evicted, even more harshly, from Barra and South Uist in 1851 by the same Col. Gordon.(39)

About 1000 people from South Uist and Benbecula were to be loaded onto two ships, the Tuscar and the Mount Stuart, anchored at Lochboisdale. As we reluctantly boarded the Tuscar, one of its crew members was overheard to say, "Oh, be sure that there is enough oatmeal on the boat and a barrel of treacle (molasses), and they'll survive on that till they arrive....".(3) The two ships sailed within three days of each other.(28) Of the 400 passengers on the Mount Stuart only five could speak English. One was a young boy of twenty, John MacEachin, who had attended school on South Uist at some distance from his home.(28) Other families evicted from Benbecula and North Uist boarded, at the same time, a ship named The Atlantic.(2)

The Tuscar was a three-masted, square-sterned ship which had been launched on January 16, 1845, at St. John, New Brunswick. She had 1029 tons burthen, a length of 152 feet, a breadth of 32 feet, and a depth of 23 feet at midships. She carried squared timber from Canada to Britain and, whenever possible, emigrants on the return voyage. We were not informed of our ship's destination until three days at sea; I suppose that this action was taken in order to avoid mutiny. Our destination could have been Australia, America, Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia, or Quebec. Our's was to be Quebec.(2)

During the passage Mrs. Mary MacPhee was successfully delivered of a son, John. Another child, Isabel MacEachin, was also born at sea. Several deaths due to weakness occurred and the bodies were committed to the deep.(11) One mother, Padraig MacCormaig's wife, Catroina, died of childbirth. The infant, Iain Padraig "John Peter", was later given to a childless couple to be raised. The baby's father, however, notched one of the child's ears so that he could one day identify and reclaim his son. This he did several years later, after he had remarried and settled in West Williams Twp.(2) Some of the families on the ship were Johnson, MacCormick, MacDonald, MacGregor, MacInnis, MacIntosh, MacIntyre, MacIsaac, MacLean, MacLellan, MacLeod, MacMillan, MacPhee, Morrison, Steele, etc.(44)

The voyage lasted six weeks, during which time we were crammed into the steerage section below decks. The rough hewn bunks were six feet by six feet; with only two and a half feet of space between each bunk, we could not sit up in bed. In fair weather we were permitted on deck.

As we entered the St. Lawrence River, green foliage was observed on the shore. For the first time in my life, I saw trees! All ships were required to stop for medical inspection at the Quarantine Station on Grosse Ile, thirty miles downstream from Quebec City. It had been established in 1831 and endured its maximum occupancy during the cholera epidemic of 1847. A first symptom of cholera was a brown coating on one's tongue. Fortunately, there was no cholera on our ship so we proceeded to Quebec where we disembarked. We spoke only Gaelic in an English and French-speaking colony.(2)

A few of the passengers decided to stay at Quebec and a few left for Prince Edward Island; however, the majority continued towards Canada West (Ontario).(28) From Quebec to Montreal the voyage differed from the ocean passage in little but length. The 180 miles could be covered in fourteen hours by steamship. From Montreal passage was acquired on Durham boats which were slowly propelled against the current by setting poles and square sails.(56) After several days and much seasickness, the immigrants had laboriously worked their way up the St. Lawrence to the village of Prescott. Here they transferred to a lake steamer which docked at Hamilton, at the head of Lake Ontario,

two days later.(2) I suspect that we had been directed here because there had been a cholera epidemic in Toronto in July and authorities did not want to aggravate the situation.(55)

What confusion! There were hundreds of newly arrived emigrants from Scotland, England and Ireland all jumbled together. They sought food, direction and assistance.

While at Hamilton, the dread plague of cholera broke out; few families escaped the loss of a dear one. In some instances, when parents succumbed, the children were left to the care and mercy of friends. However, when the time came to move onward, no one was permanently left behind with strangers. Our family escaped this fatal disease. In order to flee this outbreak, some of our group from South Uist walked to Toronto; others headed into an area northwest of Toronto that was called "The Queen's Bush" in Glenelg Twp.; still others decided to settle immediately west of Hamilton, near the village of Brantford.(2)

The Dundas Road, built by Colonel J.G. Simcoe, stretched from the head of Lake Ontario to London.(40) By stagecoach and wagon our group of fifty families made its way to London. After a brief rest we continued northwestward towards Williams Township. The women and children rode in the wagons carrying our few possessions; father and the other men walked behind. At the village of Nairn we were met by the miller, a Mr. MacIntosh, who very kindly gave us on credit food and supplies for the coming winter. Other residents of the area immediately took us into their homes.(2) At this period the Big Swamp was traversed by a corduroy road to which there was no bottom. To traverse it meant excitement and danger and many the tale is told of oxen and men who were almost engulfed in its treacherous depths.(25)

After a few days rest, we set out in search of a homesite. We had to carry our belongings on our backs and shoulders for six miles through mud up to our knees, swales, and dense forest with only a blaze on odd trees to direct us. In Gaelic we called the Big Woods "a Choile Mhor". At first, there was great reluctance to settle west of the Centre Road. The people considered these concessions as worthless; for the most part they were low, wet, and almost impossible to clear. However, the majority of our group took up land in the western half of the township.(1) There were trees everywhere ...maple, elm, bass, beech, white ash, black ash, hickory and oak.(17) The lowlands were wet and swampy with scrub vegetation. We scarcely had time to locate our selected parcel of land before the first frosts arrived. Father and my brothers quickly constructed a log shelter for the winter.

In February of 1850 the first death occurred in our community; Mrs. Lachlan MacDonald (nee Catherine MacMillan) left eight children, ages two to twenty, and a husband to mourn her passing. Her body was interred on a hilltop on lot 8 concession 12.(2) One of her sons, John, would later become my husband. Some of Lachlan's brothers and sisters had gone to Nova Scotia at this time, but he was the only one of the family to come to Canada West. He did this in order to stay with his wife's parents, Alexander MacMillan and Margaret MacIntyre. Lachlan MacDonald obtained from the Canada Company lot 11, concession 13, West Williams Twp.; his father-in-law acquired lot 12, concession 12, nearby.(30)

The first years in this new land were difficult for children as we didn't understand the reasons for many of the decisions made by our parents. I'm certain that it must have been just as difficult, if not worse, for them. Our very survival depended upon their decisions and actions.

In 1853, the men of the community constructed a primitive log church facing south on the northwest corner of the intersection of concession 12 and the Centre Road. My brother, Allan, constructed the altar from a large plank of basswood.(43)

On January 12, 1855, my father received the deed to our 100 acres of forest on lot 7 concession 12 Williams Twp. west of the Centre Road. It cost 64 pounds, 13 shillings, 9 pence.(15)

My father, Seamus Mac an t-Saoir "James MacIntyre", became one of the first teachers in our community; he taught in Gaelic with a little English in a primitive log structure on the east side of the township. Later, he taught closer to our home in a schoolhouse constructed just east of the pioneer graveyard on the 12th concession.(2) As a youth, I went to London to work as a housekeeper. Fortunately, I was able to attend school in the afternoons and attained enough education to also become a teacher.(4) I returned to Williams Twp. and taught in the one-room schoolhouse near our home. Later, my brother Ronald also taught here.(2)

In 1860, the township was politically divided along the Centre Road into East and West Williams. The next year our log church was replaced with a more sturdy, frame building. The land for the church, school, and cemetery had been donated by Domhnall MacRuairidh "Donald MacDonald", husband of Margaret MacIntosh. Ironically, he remains interred in the original pioneer graveyard.(5) My brother, Allan, now a captain of a Great Lakes Steamer, again donated the main altar.(2)

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On May 13th, 1863, in the white frame church at Bornish, John McDonald and I were married. John inherited the 100-acre family farm and we lived in the small log house. Here, our seven children were born...James 1864, Catherine 1866, Catherine Ann 1868, Margaret 1870, Effie 1872, Lachlan 1874, and Mary 1876.(20) John had obtained a fairly good education in both English and Gaelic in the old country. Education was not compulsory and many grew up without any schooling, especially female members of a family.

In 1864 my father passed away in his 85th year. In July, 1865, our firstborn, James, died; he was just over a year old. I was pregnant at the time. We sadly placed his small body in the newly dedicated cemetery immediately west of the church. John's family decided that it was also an appropriate occasion to move their late mother's body from its hilltop site in the pioneer graveyard to this consecrated ground. This was accomplished with the approval and assistance of their father, Lachlan.(2)

In his youth, my husband, John had spent several summers sailing on the Great Lakes steamships. His brothers, like many of the young men in our settlement, went to Saginaw, Michigan, each summer in search of employment in the lumber camps.(24)

My sister, Effie, moved in with us to help with the children. The spinning wheel was a cherished and valuable instrument in our home. All our daughters were taught spinning and knitting. Stockings and mittens were their main products. Each year when the woven material had to be fulled, the women in the neighbourhood would gather at different homes. At our place we would do the waulking on a board in the barn; the house was not large enough. We kept the rhythm with song after song, always in Gaelic; some songs had as many as twenty-four verses.(3)

My brother, Lachlan Columba MacIntyre or, as he was more commonly referred to, "L.C.", was a highly respected individual and the only Justice of the Peace in the settlement. During the 1850's and 1860's he operated a small general store from the front room of his home, a half mile west of the church.(27) When accounts were paid in full he would thank his customer with a small bottle of whiskey.(2) The Gaelic word for whiskey is "uisge bheatha" which appropriately translates to "water of life".

My mother still communicated with her brother, Roderick Bowie, who had remained on South Uist. His letters described the living conditions and events on the island following the evictions. The relatives who remained had fled to the east coast mountainous areas and were experiencing extreme poverty and hunger. Some of the crofters had settled on the nearby island of Eriskay. Both groups now relied more heavily on fish for food.(9) Our pastor, Rev. Allan MacLean of Bornish, had emigrated in 1853 with a group of his parishoners to Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia.(42) The middle district of South Uist from which we left would remain empty, except for sheep, until the Crofter's Act of 1912 permitted resettlement.(7)

On a warm summer day, July 20, 1870, my mother, Catherine Bowie MacIntyre, died at age 72. She had been suffering from dropsy or kidney failure. In the Nominal Return of Deaths in the 1871 census, my husband recorded the cause of her death as "poor doctoring, too much opium" administered by Dr. Barclay of Parkhill.(11) As enumerator, he knew that these words would remain secret for a century. At the time of her death, my mother's body had swollen so much that a new coffin had to be constructed; the original coffin was later used for Charles MacKinnon.(2)

Also written in the 1871 census are the words of my brother, L.C., its commissioner, "Respecting those Flannels, almost every second house in the Scottish Irish old Country Settlements here has a Loom in it to weave a web of cloth or flannel every Fall for their own use and perhaps a web for their neighbouring woman or sometime the neighbouring woman will be allowed the use of the Loom to weave her piece of flannel. In this respect, it is supposed to be their own produce..."(11)

In addition to being the enumerator for the 1871, 1881 and 1891 censuses, my husband, John McDonald, was a member of the Township Council for twenty-one years and served as Deputy Reeve for several years.(53)

I did not always agree with my husband's decisions or actions. John's kindness towards others often resulted in hardships for us; loans were seldom collected. For example, when his brother, Donald "Oak Dan" McDonald, experienced financial problems in West Williams, John willingly assisted him in starting a new life near Saginaw, Michigan.(24) On February 7, 1874, John mortgaged the west 50 acres of our land for 125 pounds, 5 shillings and on August 10, 1878, the east 50 acres were mortgaged for 120 pounds. The west half was again mortgaged in 1883 for 650 dollars and in 1886, the whole farm for 2400 dollars.(15) The bailiff was often at our door.

A post office had been established at the village of Sylvan on October 1st, 1854, with Robert Burns as its postmaster. This post office served our community until one was established in the home of Allan MacDonald at Sable on July 1st, 1860. It was not until New Year's Day, 1874, that we had a post office at Bornish on the NE corner. John Doyle (1837-1914) was our first postmaster.(16) In 1877 the post office moved to the SW corner in the home of Archibald McLeod on lot 10 of the Centre Road. As a child he had emigrated with his family from the Isle of Skye in 1841.(44) Joseph Kincaide built a two-storey, frame tavern on the SE corner. When James Anderson bought this hotel, Archie McLeod moved the post office into this structure.(27) Archibald Morrison replaced the hotel with a store and the postmaster resigned. Donald Morrison (1846-1921) was appointed to the position on Jan. 1, 1883; he operated the office from his residence on lot 5 concession 12 of West Williams Twp.. With its closure in 1888, we were again serviced by Sable. A post office at Bornish reopened in 1896 on the NW corner just north of the school in the home of Malcolm Morrison (1831-1898), a native of the Isle of Eigg. It closed permanently on Sept. 11, 1900, with the resignation of Mrs. Margaret (McMillan) Morrison (1857-1926) who had succeeded her late husband.(51) Thus, during its brief existence the post office at Bornish had been situated for different periods on the four corners of the intersection of the Centre Road and the 12th concession. Sable post office closed in 1910 and with the advent of rural mail delivery throughout West Williams Twp., the post office at Sylvan closed on May 1st, 1914.(16)

When the day's labour was completed, people would often visit one another's homes. Evenings were spent exchanging news, singing songs, or telling long tales, especially ghost stories. Leabhar Na Ceilidh "The Ceilidh Book" was full of such stories to be read by lamplight.(3) On one such evening I sent young Effie out to get a pail of water. Just as she approached the well, someone, likely her brother Lachlan, tossed an object from an upstairs window to purposely frighten the little girl. She didn't take another step but turned around and promptly returned to the house with the empty pail.(2) She thought that one of the ghost stories that she had heard was coming true. In the early 1880's we replaced the old wooden hand pump over the well with a new iron model manufactured by The Robert M. McDougall Co. of Galt, Ontario. (It is still in place over 100 years later!)

In 1880, my brother, L.C., visited South Uist; he was the only one of the original emigrants in our area to return to his birthplace. While on the island he stayed at Garryhallie in the home of Charles Peteranna, a cousin on our father's side.(2)

Mail to and from relations in Scotland ceased before the turn of the century. For many years we subscribed to the Gaelic newspaper, Mac Talla, from Nova Scotia. In the evenings he would often read it to the children. The children spoke no English before starting school at age seven. Effie recalled that a rod was employed at school to discourage the use of Gaelic.(2) The children were taught all their prayers in Gaelic. To encourage them we told them that the language of the Gael was the most common spoken in heaven. Our home also received copies of the Oban Times from Scotland.(3) Many of the elderly never learned English. Young Catherine Morrison (Mrs. J.D. McRae), for example, was raised in her grandparents' home where only Gaelic was spoken.(4) Their house was located opposite the church at Bornish.

Our children attended the original log school at the sideroad corner about a mile west of the church. After it burned, classes were held in the auditorium of the frame church (built in 1861). Mrs. John Gillis was one of the teachers who taught school in the church. Later a frame school with siding put on vertically was erected just north of the church.(27)

From a small book of songs entitled, Orain Dhonnchaidh Bhain Mac an t-Saoir "The Songs of Duncan Ban MacIntyre", I taught the children many Gaelic songs by rote. One of my favourites was his last composition, Beannachd Libh, Beinn Dobhrain "Farewell Ben Doran".(3) (Ben Doran is a 3523 foot mountain southeast of Loch Tulla in east Argyllshire.) This song reminded me of the 2034 foot Beinn Mhor on South Uist.

About 1890, my husband shattered his left shinbone when thrown from a horse. He would walk with a limp for the rest of his life. His long convalescence and period of immobility was spent composing songs in Gaelic. One song was for the birds outside his bedroom window that woke him early each morning; another song was for the clock whose ticking wouldn't let him sleep at night. He even composed a song for his horse. In his lifetime he composed many Gaelic songs but none was ever written down.(3)

In the 1891 census John recorded our family first and listed our 16 year-old son, Lachlan as a student...the only youth in the township recorded as such.(11) To earn extra money, Lachlan went to sail on the Great Lakes for several summers during the 1890's. He was once shipwrecked off the north shore of Ile Royal in Lake Superior.(2)

Following high school graduation in 1891, our daughter, Effie, attended the London Model School for four months in order to obtain a temporary teaching certificate. While there she boarded with the Ashton family at 782 Colborne Street. With this qualification she began her teaching career at Maidstone, near Windsor. After a few years, she went to Toronto Normal School for a six-month course to become fully qualified in 1894.(4) In the same year her sister, Katie Ann, travelled to Ottawa to obtain her teaching certification at the Ottawa Normal School. While there she boarded at the Gloucester Street Convent. Upon graduation she returned home to marry John D. McPhee and to teach at the schoolhouse on the 12th concession. Effie and Kate went to teach in Chicago; Kate was not sufficiently qualified to teach in the city so she taught out in Cook County.(4) One of Effie's pupils was Roy Disney, Walt's brother.(2) When the girls returned home each summer the money which they had saved went towards the farm expenses.(4) Kate later taught in the schoolhouse near our home; one of her students, Steve McCormick, became her husband.

In 1899, we built a large, two-storey house of sand-based bricks on a knoll closer to the road. A new well was dug near its back entrance. Some papers and religious medals were embedded in the mortar of the alcove foundation on the west side of the building.(2) We moved our belongings from the small log house; it held so many memories. Eventually the log structure was dismantled.

Between 1903 and 1909 John wrote several articles for the Parkhill Post in which he described the pioneer days of our settlement and its founding families.(2)

On February 12, 1907, John and I sold the farm to our son, Lachlan, for one dollar subject to a \$2300 mortgage taken out in 1901 and subject to a \$100 annuity on the west half of the lot.(15)

On July 10, 1907, when Effie married "Smuggler" Dan McCormick their wedding reception was held in our home. My brother, Capt. Allan McIntyre, was visiting us at the time from a ranch which he managed in Sonora, Mexico.(4) Effie and Dan established their home on county road 6 at concession 15. Their house could be seen in the distance from our backyard. They had three daughters... Ann, and the twins, Tillie and Mary.

St. Columba's Roman Catholic Church at Bornish was used year round; long sheds provided shelter for horses during winter services. After Mass each Sunday families would congregate in front of the church to exchange news and opinions. It was a major social event of the week.(5)

My older brother, L.C., was quite active in politics. At the time of the 1911 federal election he gave a great speech for Wilfrid Laurier in the Rob Roy Hall, one mile south of Parkhill on Hwy 7. We McIntyres were, of course, all good Liberals; the McDonalds, including my husband, were all Tories. Our son-in-law, Dan McCormick, was Liberal.(5)

On January 24, 1911, our son, Lachlan, married a local schoolteacher, Hannah Dalton. Hannah was one of only three Irish girls in our Scottish community. (The others were Agnes O'Donell, Mrs. Jack O'Hanley, and Margaret Jordan, Mrs. Dougald McCormick.)(4) The couple were married in St. Joseph's Catholic Church at Kingsbridge, in the Irish settlement north of Goderich. It was the middle of winter.

In the fall of 1911, once the couple was established in the farmhouse, John and I moved to a house we had purchased on McLeod Street in Parkhill.(2) My sister Effie joined us. Despite her blindness Effie would knit for hours on end; many nieces and nephews received socks and mittens from her. Our daughter, Mary, widow of Donald C. Steele (1862-1906), also moved into this house with her three children... Donald 1904, Mary 1906, and John 1907, who was born five months after his father's death.(20)

Two years later, on May 13th, 1913, we celebrated our fiftieth wedding anniversary with our children, their spouses, and our grandchildren. Relatives and neighbours filled the yard beside our home.(2)

John and I would often take our horse and buggy from town to visit the old farmstead. On such occasions, while I visited, young James would be taken by his grandfather for buggy rides on the 25 acres that Lachlan now owned across the road.

On New Year's Day, 1917, John died at our home in Parkhill; he was eighty-three. On the 27th day of the same month, my sister Effie passed away at the age of 100. My brother L.C. died on Christmas Eve of the same year; he was ninety-four.(20)

When I passed away on February 28, 1925, at age 89 I was the last survivor of my generation in our family.(21) During my wake in our home on McLeod St., a verbal row erupted between my daughter Mary, "a real termagant" and Fr. M.D. O'Neill, our argumentative pastor. The day of my funeral was cold and windy. As was the custom, my daughters Katie, Katie Ann, Effie, and Mary wore heavy black veils which the wind caught as they boarded the high buggies to go to the funeral Mass and out to Bornish for the interment.(4) The house was left to our widowed daughter, Mary Steele, and her three children. She remained here until the late 1920's and then moved to Chicago. When she died there in 1967 she had been a widow for over sixty years.(2)

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