

# THE FRASER REMINISCENCES

## Donald Fraser (1841-1933)

### Introduction

On June 30, 1905, the *Perth Courier* published a special edition to coincide with the town's 'Old Boys' Reunion'<sup>1</sup>. Among the columns of reminiscence, nostalgia and history were a dozen items contributed by 'Old Boy' Donald Fraser of Victoria, British Columbia. The following are notated transcriptions of those articles.

Fraser was born June 2, 1841, in the 'Red House' on Craig Street, the first house built at the Perth Military Settlement. He was the son of William Fraser (1802-1870), Lanark County's first Treasurer, and Catharine Adamson (1810-1886), whose father, John Adamson (1775-c1842), had built the 'Red House' in 1816 as an inn and tavern.

Donald of Victoria, BC, was the grandson of Colonel<sup>2</sup> Donald Fraser (1772-1856) who had served with the 74<sup>th</sup> Highland Regiment of Foot under Wellington in the Peninsular War, earning a General Service Medal with bars for Busaco, Badajoz and Vitoria, and with the 41st Regiment in Upper Canada during the American War of 1812-1814. He retired on half pay and came to the Perth Military Settlement in 1820.

Colonel Fraser first settled on the Scotch Line (Bathurst C-1) and then moved to Lanark Township (C-3/L-1). He was elected to the Upper Canada Legislature in 1829 on the Reform ticket together with William Morris (1786-1858), but nevertheless it was Fraser who tabled the motion that expelled arch-Reformer William Lyon Mackenzie (1795-1861) from the Assembly in 1832. Fraser himself was then removed from office in November 1832, when it was discovered that he was not qualified to serve because he lacked the required property qualification. Always popular at the Perth settlement, he was promptly re-elected in January 1833.

His grandson was educated at Perth and at age 17 went to work for the Commercial Bank of Canada. He was employed at several of the bank's branches across Ontario and became manager of the Walkerton Branch. He married Winewood Mary McKenzie (1841-1894) at St. Thomas, Ontario, in 1872.

Fraser moved to Montreal when appointed a Supervising Inspector with Merchants Bank of Canada after it had absorbed the Commercial Bank in 1867. He later launched his own bank at Kingston, Ontario, and when it failed, he moved to Victoria, BC, where he ran a bakery. In 1923 he joined the staff of the *Victoria Daily Colonist* as an accountant and worked there until two weeks before his 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

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<sup>1</sup> aka 'Old Home Week'.

<sup>2</sup> He was a Captain when he arrived at Perth. The rank of Colonel is a later militia rank.

Although Fraser had only lived at Perth into his teens, he remained closely attached to his hometown, its history and his family's place in that history. Even after the 1905 reunion itself had become history, he periodically contributed items to the *Courier* on bygone days at Perth into the 1930s.

Fraser died at Victoria, BC, on February 11, 1933, at the age of 92 years.

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## Early Military Days

By Donald Fraser,  
Perth *Courier*, June 30, 1905  
Old Boys Reunion Edition

Perth was a military settlement and has always maintained a military spirit. In the trouble of '37<sup>3</sup> it did its duty and during the Trent Affair<sup>4</sup> and Fenian Raids<sup>5</sup> the old spirit showed itself in a marked degree. I must only refer, however, to personal knowledge of its military affairs.

Prior to the 24th of May being proclaimed our national holiday, the 4th of June was the great day. It was our training day. The militia was called out and reviewed by Col. Matheson<sup>6</sup> on Drummond Street, in front of the Court House. My father<sup>7</sup> was a captain, his company consisted of the able-bodied men over twenty-one and under forty-five years of age in the East Ward. William Smitherman<sup>8</sup> was his sergeant. It was the duty of the sergeant, a certain number of days in advance, to personally 'warn' the men to meet at the place appointed on the 4th day of June.

My father, decked out in all the bravery of his regimentals, blue coat, silver buttons, crimson silk sash and sword, with the assistance of his sergeant, a good deal of coaxing and shoving, managed to get his company into some kind of a line, and the roll was called. To my boyish mind I would say there were a hundred companies, so big and grand did they look. But possibly there were eight or ten companies on the ground. Capt. William Allan<sup>9</sup>, grandfather of the present proprietor of the *Courier*, was there with a company of stalwarts from Balderson.

Officers and men alike were perfectly innocent of drill. I believe one officer did venture a word of command, on one occasion. He said, "Wheel round like a gate and turn your backs to the Court House". While they had no knowledge of drill, there was not a man among them but would fight to the death in defense of his country. And for physical strength I venture to say they would over-match the average volunteer companies of the present day.

The colonel reviewed his troops, made a stirring address, sincerely congratulating the country on having such a reserve strength in case of need. How simple the machinery! how inexpensive to the country! and yet what satisfaction to know its fighting strength so accurately!

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<sup>3</sup> McKenzie-Papineau Rebellion 1837-1838.

<sup>4</sup> A diplomatic incident in 1861 during the American Civil War when an American Navy vessel forcibly took Confederate States diplomats from a British flagged vessel, thus threatening war between the United States and Great Britain.

<sup>5</sup> Raids by the Fenian Brotherhood in 1866 and 1870-1871, attempting to seize territory in British North America to exchange for Irish independence.

<sup>6</sup> Roderick Matheson (1783-1873), merchant, later Canadian Senator.

<sup>7</sup> William Fraser (1802-1870), Lanark County Treasurer.

<sup>8</sup> William Smitherman (1821-1881), married Susannah H. Locke (1822-1920)

<sup>9</sup> William Allan (1791-1868), Balderson farmer.

The usual cheers were given for the queen and the colonel, then all hands adjourned to the long bridge to fire the royal salute of twenty-one guns, under the supervision of John Manion<sup>10</sup>. Mr. Manion was out in '37 and had a good knowledge of artillery tactics.

During the Trent affair it was said in twenty-four hours Canada bristled with bayonets. Perth gave a good account of herself at the time. A public meeting was held in Robertson's Hall, D'Arcy Street; a company was formed at once. Donald Fraser<sup>11</sup>, barrister, was chosen captain, John A. McLaren<sup>12</sup> Lieutenant, and William Wordie<sup>13</sup> Ensign. Sergt. Cox<sup>14</sup> was the first drill instructor, subsequently two other companies were formed, one officered by Hon. A. J. Matheson<sup>15</sup> and Col. Scott<sup>16</sup>, the other by Hon. J. G. Haggart<sup>17</sup>, John Ryan and the writer. Sergt. Lambert<sup>18</sup> was our drill instructor for some time. During the Fenian Raid many of our boys were called to the front and, had occasion required, would have given a good account of themselves, but happily no engagement with the enemy took place. Under the present system I have no doubt the military affairs of the district are in very efficient shape.

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## Some Ancient Political History

By Donald Fraser  
Perth *Courier*, June 30, 1905  
Old Boys Reunion Edition

My grandfather, Col. Donald Fraser, belonged to the 74th Highland Regiment. He exchanged into the 41st Regiment of Foot, when that regiment was sent to Canada, during the American war of 1812-15. He was in the battle of Queenston Heights, Lundy's Lane, and some others. After the war he returned *[to the UK]* with his regiment. He retired on half-pay and brought his family to the Perth settlement in 1820.

As a half-pay officer, he was entitled to considerable land in the new country. He first settled on a farm on the Scotch Line; afterwards, owned by James Cameron. He moved from there and took up what is now known as the Manahan farm, adjoining the village of Lanark on the Perth Road.

In the early thirties political feeling was running very high in Canada, the people were getting more than restive, under the regime of the Family Compact. An election was coming on, the power of the Family Compact in the Bathurst District must be broken, my grandfather was prevailed upon to be the people's candidate. He was elected, Captain McMillan<sup>19</sup> being his opponent. He was only a short time in the house but long enough to secure a grant to build the first long bridge in Perth at Drummond Street and some other grants for roads in the district.

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<sup>10</sup> John Manion (1804-1893), son of soldier-settler Sergeant Thomas Manion (1779-1860), 49th Regiment of Foot.

<sup>11</sup> Donald Fraser (1832-1871), lawyer, Lanark County Clerk of the Peace, County Attorney, and author Donald Fraser's uncle.

<sup>12</sup> John Alexander McLaren (1831-1901), distiller.

<sup>13</sup> William Wordie (1839-1866), harness maker.

<sup>14</sup> John Cox (1841-1897), Tay Canal Lock Master.

<sup>15</sup> Alan Frederick Matheson (1845-1913), banker, youngest son of Colonel Roderick Matheson (1793-1873).

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Scott (1841-1915), newspaper publisher.

<sup>17</sup> John Graham Haggart (1836-1913), miller, MP, Minister of Railways & Canals 1892-1896.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Hamilton Lambert (1838-1869), Sergeant 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Canadian Rifles and Drill Instructor at the Royal Military College, Kingston.

<sup>19</sup> Alexander McMillan (1783-1850), former Captain of the Glengarry Light Infantry and later appointed County Registrar.

He was unseated for the want of property qualification; he had neglected to take out the patents on crown grants for his lands. A new election was called. In the meantime, the crown grants were obtained, Malcolm Cameron<sup>20</sup> in making the nomination in the hustings literally covered himself with the documents. The effect was wonderful, the people were aroused to the highest pitch of excitement. The voting was all done in Perth, it took about a week to record the votes. The return of my grandfather was almost unanimous in this election; Dr. Reade<sup>21</sup> was his opponent. On the chairing day he was carried shoulder high on the stringers of the long bridge which was then in course of erection.

William Lyon McKenzie was then agitating his reforms; my grandfather would no doubt support him so long as he did so constitutionally, but anything savouring of rebellion was too much for a soldier who had fought to save the country. He moved one of the resolutions expelling McKenzie from the house.

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## Early Banking

By Donald Fraser  
Perth *Courier*, June 30, 1905  
Old Boys Reunion Edition

For many years, the only bank in Perth was the 'Commercial Bank of the Midland District', afterwards called the 'Commercial Bank of Canada'. Capt. Leslie<sup>22</sup> was the agent. The office was in the stone building adjoining his then suburban residence, west end of Wilson Street, in those days very far remote from the business centre of the town. The office was provided with a bell, the rope of which hung outside the gable end. Customers were few, but when one did come along, he was obliged to ring the bell. In the course of time the captain came, wandering from some distant part of the fields, and had a little quiet conversation outside the building. Most likely no business was transacted; probably the customer called some other day when he may have been more fortunate.

The words strenuous and keen competition in banking were then unknown. When John McIntyre<sup>23</sup> gave up teaching, he was appointed agent of the 'Bank of Montreal'. The office was in a back room of Mair's building, now owned by 'A. Meighen & Bros'. His clerk was William Munro, of Lanark. This was a great accommodation to the businessmen of the town, several of whom were obliged to do their banking in Kingston.

Shortly after this Capt. Leslie resigned and James Bell<sup>24</sup> was appointed agent of the 'Commercial Bank'. He built a small office adjoining his residence on Drummond Street. Owing to Mr. Bell's popularity and extensive knowledge of the community the business of the bank grew rapidly; additional assistance and more commodious premises were required.

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<sup>20</sup> Malcolm Cameron (1808-1876), founder of the Perth Courier, politician.

<sup>21</sup> George Hume Reade (1793-1854), former Army Apothecary (Pharmacist).

<sup>22</sup> Captain Anthony Leslie, formerly Lieutenant of Glengarry Light Infantry. Bank Manager and Crown Lands Agent.

<sup>23</sup> John McIntyre (1821-1858).

<sup>24</sup> James Bell (1817-1904), son of Reverend William Bell (1780-1857).

Mr. S. S. Revans<sup>25</sup> was appointed accountant and the fine building now occupied by the 'Merchants Bank' was built. The merchants, manufacturers and farmers were well satisfied with the banking facilities of the town generally, and society very well pleased with Mr. Munro and Mr. Revans, they were great favorites and very much in demand at all social events.

The 'Commercial Bank' amalgamated with the 'Merchants Bank' in 1868, at which time the writer was manager at Walkerton, county town of Bruce. Mr. McIntyre's successors were Mr. Ness, Mr. Despard, Mr. Richards, and Mr. Gray. At amalgamation Mr. Gray was appointed manager of the 'Merchants Bank of Canada'.

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## Old-Time Industries

By Donald Fraser  
Perth *Courier*, June 30, 1905  
Old Boys Reunion Edition

I see the old town, under its energetic mayor and council, is making an effort to attract manufacturing industries and thereby increase the population. More than forty years ago, the population was considered in the neighborhood of two thousand; the town has grown, but not nearly as much as it should have in that time. It is idle to recount the reasons for this.

In older days everything was handmade, and markets were local. Now, everything is machine made, and the markets are the four quarters of the globe. Another thing: In old days there were only two markets for the farmer's produce, Perth and Ottawa. Now the trade is intercepted, rival towns have sprung up and the old town cut out. Carleton Place, Smith's Falls, Lanark, etc., were only villages when Perth was considered a very substantial town. For years I gave Smith's Falls all the banking facilities it required, between trains on Saturday afternoons. Now all this is changed. To succeed, you must manufacture something of universal consumption, and then over-advertise and undersell all competitors.

A glance at some of the old-time industries which gave Perth a reputation and a name as a respectable and satisfactory place to live in:

Rutherford's wagon shop; Tom Farmer's<sup>26</sup> blacksmith shop; Cornelius Farmer<sup>27</sup>, blacksmith; Neil Campbell<sup>28</sup>, axes; George Cox<sup>29</sup>, wagons and ploughs; Tait's blacksmith shop, Felix Harishaw<sup>30</sup>, blacksmith; Holliday's tannery<sup>31</sup>; Jamieson's<sup>32</sup> harness shop; Ned Dougherty<sup>33</sup>,

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<sup>25</sup> Samuel Stebbings Revans (1838-1917), moved to New Zealand.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Farmer (1818-1871). Blacksmith shop was located at 67 Brock Street.

<sup>27</sup> Cornelius Farmer (1854-1914).

<sup>28</sup> Neil Campbell (1822-1896), blacksmith, 16 Gore Street West, 1872-1880.

<sup>29</sup> George Cox (1814-1884), Shops located at 144 Gore Street E.

<sup>30</sup> Felix Harrishaw (b.1835), blacksmith.

<sup>31</sup> David Holliday's tannery, south side of Tay Basin.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Jamieson, saddler and harness maker, 69 Gore Street East.

<sup>33</sup> Edward Dougherty (1827-1890), saddler and harness maker with shops on Colborne Street 1859-1870 and at 46 Herriott Street from 1870.

harness shop; Canwith's<sup>34</sup> brewery; Korry's<sup>35</sup> axe factory; Kilpatrick's<sup>36</sup> tannery; Templeton's<sup>37</sup> tannery; Millers<sup>38</sup> foundry; Shaw's<sup>39</sup> foundry; Lillie's<sup>40</sup> foundry; Hunter's carriage works; James Lafferty<sup>41</sup>, blacksmith; Lett James<sup>42</sup>, blacksmith; John Bell<sup>43</sup>, blacksmith; Dick Walker's<sup>44</sup> and John Rodgers<sup>45</sup> pork packing establishments; Publow's<sup>46</sup> wagon shop, and Haggart's<sup>47</sup> mills, were hives of industry; the flour mill in charge of Donald McIntosh, the oatmeal mill in charge of David Mitchell<sup>48</sup>, the saw mill in charge of James Leggatt<sup>49</sup>, and the carding mill in charge of Dick Code<sup>50</sup>. And what a business there was in teaming lumber during winter to McLaren's on the Rideau! There seemed to be employment for everybody, and no strikes.

As I look back upon the old times, I see we were a very highly favored community. Our creative [*creature*] comforts were well looked after by such men as Ralph Smith<sup>51</sup>, Owen Stanley<sup>52</sup>, John Rodgers and George Barrie<sup>53</sup>, butchers. For bakers we had James Allan<sup>54</sup> and J.K. Fairbairn<sup>55</sup>. If our temporal affairs got mixed up, we had men like T. M. Radenhurst<sup>56</sup>, Daniel McMartin<sup>57</sup>, W. O. Buell<sup>58</sup>, McNairn Shaw<sup>59</sup>, Judge Deacon<sup>60</sup> and Donald Fraser<sup>61</sup> to straighten them out.

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<sup>34</sup> John and William Canwith's brewery was located on Market Street near the Little Tay.

<sup>35</sup> George Corry (1826-1907), blacksmith and axe manufacturer 1860s-1880s, also Perth's Chief Constable and License Inspector 1870s-1880s.

<sup>36</sup> Father and son Peter Kilpatrick (1823-1891) and William Cunningham Kilpatrick (1859-1914) operated tannery at 53 Herriott Street 1840s-1882.

<sup>37</sup> Father James Templeton Sr. and sons George Templeton and James Templeton Jr. (1841-1916) operated tannery at 13 Herriott Street 1837-1894.

<sup>38</sup> George Miller (1811-1860) and John Miller (b.1821) operated a foundry at 10 Herriott Street 1840s-1859).

<sup>39</sup> Farmers' Foundry operated by Richard Shaw (1822-1872), son of Senator James Shaw (1798-1878), on North Street.

<sup>40</sup> William Lillie (1805-1871) established foundry at corner of Gore and North Streets, family operated 1847-1897.

<sup>41</sup> James Lafferty (1824-1881), blacksmith shop 1851-1865) at 16 Gore Street West.

<sup>42</sup> Lett James (1824-1861), blacksmith shop at 7 Drummond Street West 1854-1872.

<sup>43</sup> Blacksmith shop at 8 Drummond Street West.

<sup>44</sup> Richard Walker Sr. (1798-1880), butcher and pork inspector.

<sup>45</sup> John Rodgers (b.1800), butcher and pork inspector.

<sup>46</sup> John Publow (1824-1877), workshop at 9 Drummond Street West.

<sup>47</sup> John Graham Haggart (1836-1913), miller, MP, Minister of Railways & Canals 1892-1896.

<sup>48</sup> David Mitchell (1797-1865), millwright.

<sup>49</sup> James Leggett (1808-1880).

<sup>50</sup> Richard Code, worked for Allan's Mills ion Grant's Creek.

<sup>51</sup> Ralph Smith (1799-1884), farmer and Elder at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

<sup>52</sup> Owen Stanley (1811-1861), butcher.

<sup>53</sup> George F. Barrie (1856-1911), operated butcher shop at 22 Gore Street East 1879-1895.

<sup>54</sup> Bakery & Confectionary, 58 Gore Street East, 1840s-1880.

<sup>55</sup> John Kinnimond Fairbairn (1816-1881), baker and confectioner, Darcy Street, 1840s-1870.

<sup>56</sup> Thomas Mabon Radenhurst (1803-1854), lawyer, member of Upper Canada Legislature.

<sup>57</sup> Daniel McMartin (1798-1869), lawyer.

<sup>58</sup> William O. Buell (1850-1920), lawyer.

<sup>59</sup> William McNairn Shaw (1822-1868), lawyer, MLA Ontario 1867-1868.

<sup>60</sup> Refers to either John Deacon (1823-1909), appointed Renfrew County Judge in 1866 or his brother Thomas Deacon (1832-1911), appointed Renfrew County Judge in 1895.

<sup>61</sup> Donald Fraser (1832-1871), lawyer, Lanark County Clerk of the Peace, County Attorney, author Donald Fraser's uncle.

And our spiritual affairs were in the hands of Revds. Mr. Bell<sup>62</sup>, Michael Harris<sup>63</sup>, Father McDonagh<sup>64</sup>, Dr. Bain<sup>65</sup>, and J. B. Duncan<sup>66</sup>, and our physicians were Dr. Wilson<sup>67</sup>, and Dr. Nichol<sup>68</sup>. I trust there are many still in Perth who remember these names.

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## How Writing Was Taught by Old School Masters

By Donald Fraser  
Perth *Courier*, June 30, 1905  
Old Boys Reunion Edition

My first recollection of school was a very great unwillingness to be taken to Mrs. Jessop's. I cannot remember the cause of my aversion to this seat of learning, but I do remember that it was only by physical force I found myself within its walls. I expect it is safe to say that nearly all the children of the town, for at least a generation before my time, received the groundwork of their education at Mrs. Jessop's hands. Hon. John G. Haggart, Robert Moffat<sup>69</sup>, the Dorans and many others I think may call Mrs. Jessop's school their primary. The Jessop property was situated at the corner of Beckwith and Brock streets and comprised at that time about one acre of ground.

Mrs. Jessop<sup>70</sup> taught school, and Mr. Jessop cultivated a very fine garden. I can hear now his far-reaching unmelodious voice shouting to the children to "keep off the borders." Mr. Jessop also kept sheep, where, I don't know, but I remember the wool we had to tease. I have also a lively recollection of the hooks and eyes we had to cut off, and old garments to rip; kindergarten was unknown then, but we had it in its essence.

Mrs. Jessop taught music to the more advanced girls of the school, (boys didn't take music lessons then.) I can both see and hear the piano, and the dear prim old lady sitting beside her pupil with a knitting needle in her hand, and very much on the watch for a wrong note, and I think tears were not an uncommon occurrence during what is now called an amusement.

I never got farther than the first book of lessons with Mrs. Jessop, she made no pretense of teaching the higher branches, but she taught thoroughly as far as she went, painstaking and conscientious to a fault. Her works do follow her. A girls' school was kept on the same street, I think, by Mrs. Kay, near Mr. Rutherford's. I can remember our old faithful man, Geordie Graham taking my eldest sister to this school in the wheelbarrow; this was before the days of sidewalks of any kind, and Gore Street was often very muddy.

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<sup>62</sup> Reverend William Bell (1780-1857), Presbyterian, first Minister at the Perth Military Settlement.

<sup>63</sup> Reverend Michael Harris (1795-1856), Church of England

<sup>64</sup> Father John Hugh McDonagh (1812-1866), Roman Catholic.

<sup>65</sup> Reverend William Bain (1814-1889), served St. Andrews Presbyterian Church 1848-1881.

<sup>66</sup> Reverend James B. Duncan (1825-1909), first pastor of Knox Presbyterian Church where he preached 1847-1866.

<sup>67</sup> Dr. James Wilson (1798-1881), practiced at Perth 1821-1869.

<sup>68</sup> Dr. James Stewart Nichol Sr. (1804-1864), practiced at Perth 1837-1864 or Dr. James Nichol Jr. (1841-1870), practiced at Perth 1863-1870)

<sup>69</sup> Robert Moffat (1802-1852), Robert Moffat & Co. Merchants, 100 Gore Street East, 1827-1835.

<sup>70</sup> For several decades from the mid-1820s, the Jessop sisters, Margaret (1789-1859), Jane (1801-1878) and Eliza (1803-1868) operated a day school on Brock Street between Drummond and Beckwith Streets. When they moved to Smiths Falls in the 1840s, they turned the school over to their brother, Francis William Kinnear Jessop (1798-1870). His wife, Frances Brooks Wright-Jessop (1799-1886), the Mrs. Jessop who taught Donald Fraser, continued to operate the private school until she became a teacher at Perth's first public school in 1851.

As the pupils graduated from Mrs. Jessop's they generally entered Mr. Morrison's, afterwards Rev. Dr. Morrison<sup>71</sup>, of Owen Sound. He taught in a building owned by Malcolm McPherson<sup>72</sup>, on the corner of Drummond and Herriot streets. I never attended this school. The school, now occupied as a separate school, was built and I was transferred from Mrs. Jessop's to it. Mr. Cruikshanks was our first teacher, no doubt a Scotchman, and well educated. The leading spirits in this school were Godfrey<sup>73</sup> and Alfred Bell<sup>74</sup>, Michael<sup>75</sup>, Pete<sup>76</sup> and Richard Doran<sup>77</sup>, John and Jim Sutherland<sup>78</sup>, Dick Leggatt<sup>79</sup> and others I could name. While no doubt much instruction was received by the pupils, the pranks and practical jokes were also numerous, and I fear Hon. William Morris' fine apple trees in close proximity were a temptation, greater than many of us could bear, and Mr. Radenhurst's butternut trees, which stood by the gate at the entrance to his grounds, gave a beautiful tan to the fingers of every boy in school, while the nuts lasted. Examination day was the great day at this school; trustees and parents turned out in goodly numbers, the pupils did their best, they were under the impression that the length of holidays they received depended upon the manner in which they acquitted themselves.

Here a break takes place in my connection with the Perth schools. My grandfather, who lived near Lanark, intimated that he required help to work his farm, at least that was what I was given to understand; being his namesake I was selected. My grandfather had two hobbies, one was surveying the farm, and the other taking observations of the heavenly bodies. He made almanacs and sun dials for his own amusement and set enormous sums in multiplication and division for my benefit, but greatly to my detestation.

Miss Maria Dayton was my first teacher, and afterwards her sister, Charlotte, in the country school. This school was primitive in the extreme, built of logs and destitute of furniture; our seats were sections of tamarack trees. I expect we had lesson books of some kind, but what I remember most about was the rivalry as to who could repeat the greatest number of chapters in the New Testament from memory. The school was built on the farm of John Ralston<sup>80</sup>, about one mile on the Lanark side of the Mississippi bridge<sup>81</sup>. Children came long distances to that school. We all brought our dinners (luncheons) with us. After our refreshments were over, the remainder of the hour was spent in learning to dance Scotch reels, under the careful eye of our teacher, our only music the vocal lilt, now I expect quite unknown, certainly not practiced. I remained at this school three or four years. I have undying memories of the Headricks, Ralstons, McIlquhams, Jacksons, McCullochs, not forgetting old Roma Henry and his peripatetic wife Bet. At this period, I secured the friendship of the late W. C. Caldwell<sup>82</sup>, M.P.P., which lasted until the end.

When I returned to Perth, I was sent to what was called the district school, taught by John McIntyre. Here, work began in earnest. McCulloch's course of reading, Lennie's grammar, Reid and Walkingame's arithmetic, Norse's geography, Pennock Goldsmith's history of England,

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<sup>71</sup> Reverend Dr. Duncan M. Morrison (1816-1917).

<sup>72</sup> Malcolm McPherson (1806-1893).

<sup>73</sup> Godfrey B. Bell (1836-1912).

<sup>74</sup> Alfred J. Bell (1858-1921).

<sup>75</sup> Michael Doran (1833-1883).

<sup>76</sup> Peter Doran (1835-1868).

<sup>77</sup> Richard Doran (1837-1878).

<sup>78</sup> James Sutherland (1835-1905).

<sup>79</sup> Richard Leggett (b.1836), later a carpenter.

<sup>80</sup> John Ralston (1805-1889).

<sup>81</sup> Ralston's School, later S.S.#18 Knowles School, Drummond Township C-12/L-6, near McIlquham's Bridge.

<sup>82</sup> William Clyde Caldwell (1843-1905), lumberman, MPP for Lanark North.



etc., became stern realities. Much was given in this school, and much was required of the scholars. Mr. McIntyre had a Mr. Davidson and afterwards Finlay McNab, as assistant, to help with the junior classes; Mr. McNab was not a large man, but I have painful recollections that he appeared to develop enormous strength into his bony fingers as he endeavored to instill the rules of grammar into our thick skulls, almost equal to a surgical operation.

My classmates in this school were Charlie Radenhurst<sup>83</sup>, George Kerr<sup>84</sup>, Jim Templeton<sup>85</sup>, Sam Sache<sup>86</sup>, and John Cameron, Ned Malloch<sup>87</sup>, George Templeton<sup>88</sup>, the McPhersons, William Meighen<sup>89</sup> and others were above us, but the head of the school, in a class by themselves, were Jack Haggart<sup>90</sup> and Bill Kerr.

Our favorite games at this school were Antony Over<sup>91</sup> and Prisoners' Base<sup>92</sup>.

A change took place in the school system whereby our district school was closed. Teacher and scholars moved to the frame building, which stood in the rear of the present stone building on Foster Street. Mr. McIntyre had charge of the higher branches. William Somerville and John Mangan<sup>93</sup> were the other teachers. Hitherto, the boys of the East Ward knew nothing of the boys of the West Ward, but with the amalgamation of the schools, what a change! The Kellocks, Kippens, Listers, Walkers, Halls, Campbells, and scores and scores of others were added to my acquaintance. Mr. Somerville was an ideal dominie, military in discipline and firmness itself in all his decisions.

For the benefit of the pupils of the present day, I will describe the method of teaching writing. We used quills. Steel pens were an abomination to him. He prepared the pens daily. A boy was selected to distribute the pens, and another the copy books to the pupils. When all was ready, he gave the word of command, "Dip." Each boy was obliged to shake off the superfluous ink and wait for the next word of command "Write." We then wrote as though our lives depended upon the beauty and symmetry of our writing. Each line had to be better than the preceding one, and we wrote only three lines during the exercise. The copy books were collected, each line thoroughly inspected, and woe betide the boy who showed any degree of carelessness. The pen was to be held lightly between the thumb and fore finger, the middle finger three quarters of an inch from the point of the pen: the handle of the pen pointing to the right shoulder and the knuckles pointing to the ceiling of the room, the whole hand resting lightly on the little finger.

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<sup>83</sup> Charles Radenhurst (1842-1869), son of Thomas Mabon Radenhurst (1803-1854).

<sup>84</sup> George Kerr Jr. (1843-1931).

<sup>85</sup> James Templeton Jr. (1841-1916).

<sup>86</sup> Samuel W. Sache (b.1841), son of Charles Henry Sache (b.1791) Lanark & Renfrew Clerk of the Division and Surrogate Courts and Deputy Clerk of the Crown.

<sup>87</sup> Edward G. Malloch (1842-1915), son of Judge John Glass Malloch (1801-1873).

<sup>88</sup> George Templeton (1837-1928).

<sup>89</sup> William Meighen (1835-1917), later a partner with his brothers, Arthur and Robert, in the Meighen Brothers merchant firm.

<sup>90</sup> John Graham Haggart (1836-1913), later MP, Minister of Railways & Canals 1892-1896.

<sup>91</sup> A game in which a ball is thrown over a building (the schoolhouse) to players on the other side. The name of the game is shouted as the ball is thrown.

<sup>92</sup> A game in which players of one team seek to tag and imprison players of the other team who venture out of their home territory, or base.

<sup>93</sup> John Mangan (b.1827).

Mr. Mangan was an Irishman, well up in English literature, and a good teacher, but hot of temper, which occasionally got him into scuffles with the larger boys, notably with Andrew Lister<sup>94</sup> and Tom Martin. These scuffles usually ended in a draw. Mr. Mangan took charge of the Separate School. In the early fifties the stone school was built. John McLean Bell was principal. Walter McDonald, Mr. Lister, and Joseph Warren had charge of the other departments. Mrs. Bell was the principal of the girls' department. This was the beginning of co-education.

Great strides were made during the next few years. Each teacher was a specialist in his own department. For some classes the girls were admitted to the boys' department. I have reason to remember this, because I have a distinct recollection of one occasion of McLean Bell announcing to the class that Miss Annie Fraser's<sup>95</sup> essay was the best of the boys. The explanation is that I had received so much help as to practically lose my identity.

My school days closed in 1856<sup>96</sup>, in which year I entered the service of Messrs. Murray, Morris & Co.<sup>97</sup>, but that is another story.

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## Sports and Pastimes

By Donald Fraser  
Perth *Courier*, June 30, 1905  
Old Boys Reunion Edition

Sports nowadays get into the professional class so soon that the average small boy is crowded out; in olden days it was not so, every boy had a chance in the game. Our amusements were simple, but thoroughly enjoyed. In summer, boating, cricket, quoits<sup>98</sup>, swimming, fishing, shooting. In winter, shinny, skating, coasting, show-shoeing.

Some may remember our first regatta. It was a great event. Neil McLean, of the Bank of Montreal, was the head and front of this, and of all our aquatic sports. Boats of all sizes, punts, monitors, bark canoes, and all kinds of craft were classed and started in due form. The course was from the long bridge to a buoy near the burying ground bridge and return. The Royal Dane took the principal race of the day; she was called after our beloved Queen, who that year wedded our Gracious King.<sup>99</sup> In the evening an illumination took place on the water. The Royal Dane sported a beautiful crown, prepared by Ned Spillman<sup>100</sup>. Neil McLean called his boat the *Fair Maid of Perth*. Very suggestive as it afterwards turned out, although nothing was suspected at the time.

We called our cricket club the Victoria. Dick Northgraves<sup>101</sup> was the moving spirit in the club and suggested the name. Our bats and wickets were made by John Kavanagh, turned out in the old carding mill, where he used the waterpower to turn his lathe. The wickets were all right, but the bats, made of solid hard maple, three times the weight of the regulation bat, were quite

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<sup>94</sup> Andrew Lister (1838-1920), carpenter.

<sup>95</sup> Anne E. Fraser (b.1873), the author's sister.

<sup>96</sup> At age 15 years.

<sup>97</sup> A foundry located at 10 Herriott Street.

<sup>98</sup> Ring-toss.

<sup>99</sup> Prince George (later King George V) married Princess Mary of Teck July 6, 1893.

<sup>100</sup> Edward Spillman (b.1839), painter.

<sup>101</sup> Richard James Northgraves (1840-1913).

guiltless of any spring in the handle. We were proud of them, nevertheless, and many a good match we played.

There was a narrow neck of land between the basin and the river, a favorite place for pitching quoits. Bill Lister was par excellence, the champion at this sport. I have seen a good deal of quoit pitching in the west, but I have never seen his match. He pitched with the left hand, and I think could cut the feather nine [*a line missing here*].

Probably the most enjoyable sport to the average small boy is fishing. I don't know what it is like now, but in my day the Tay was the boy's paradise. How alluring it's clear, soft limpid water and abounding in fish of all kinds and sizes. We fished for pickerel off the long bridge at the juncture of the Little River and caught them, too. We speared suckers from the parapet of Lock's bridge. Our spears had about ten feet of handle and twenty or thirty feet of stout cord attached; this was thrown with great force and unerring aim.

But the favorite spot was Haggart's mill. In early days trespassers were not allowed on the Dr. Thom<sup>102</sup> farm; we were afraid of the dogs, but more afraid of the terrible hired man. How often we have waded round the fence at the old potash [*unreadable*] and crawled almost on our hands and knees along the margin of the river past the grand old elm tree and reached the little flat rock close to the slide, our pockets filled with worms for bait. There was a small piece of water between the dam and the slide, deep and always covered with foam, quite still, all the rest of the water raging like a small Niagara. That pool was inexhaustible.

For ducks we used to go to Grant's Creek and down the river as far as Pelton's Bay. For pigeons, Matthew Bell's<sup>103</sup> harvest fields and John Spalding's<sup>104</sup>, down the Ferry Road. Wiseman's swamp used to yield up a goodly number of muskrats every spring, but I expect all this old-time sport has passed away, never to return.

Before the days of skating rinks, we were very well satisfied with the old basin to begin with and occasionally after a thaw the river would give us splendid skating for some time. In those days boys had everything; girls nothing. The skating rinks improved this very materially. Our sisters and cousins joined us in this most delightful of all out-door recreations. We were indebted to Judge Deacon and Mr. G. A. Keefer<sup>105</sup> principally, for our first rink; it was built alongside the Little River, near the long bridge. It was a great success but proved quite inadequate to the requirements of the town. A much larger one was built, I think the following year, about on the site of the old Gourley tannery on the property of the Hon. R. Matheson.

What happy times! But I must write carefully here; the child of Mrs. Jessop's kindergarten has grown into a susceptible youth. When I think of the Bells, Mallochs, Mathesons, McMartins, Moffatts, Thompsons, Templetons, Wordies, Haggarts, Dunhams, Deacons, Radenhursts, and many others a flood of tender memories is unloosed which can never be dried up.

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<sup>102</sup> Surgeon Alexander Thom (1775-1848), Perth's first doctor, formerly of the 41<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Foot.

<sup>103</sup> Matthew Bell (1809-1886), farm at Drummond Township C-2/L-3&4. Not related to the Rev. William Bell family. Matthew Bell was born in Germany and died at Williamsburg, Ontario.

<sup>104</sup> The North Elmsley Township (C-8/L-3) farm of John Rutherford Spalding Sr. (1819-1882).

<sup>105</sup> George A. Keefer Jr. (1799-1866), Perth Station Conductor, Brockville & Ottawa Railway, brother of Samuel Keefer (1811-1890), first Chief Engineer of the Board of Public Works for the Province of Canada (1841-1853), and Supervising Engineer of the B&O Railway 1853-1857.

## The Churches

By Donald Fraser  
Perth *Courier*, June 30, 1905  
Old Boys Reunion Edition

The Rev. William Bell was sent out by the British government with the early settlers, probably in 1815<sup>106</sup>. After the usual struggles incident to pioneer life, a church was built on the corner of Drummond and Cockburn streets.

Our family attended this church in very early days. Mr. Hart<sup>107</sup> was precentor, and old Mr. Sutherland sexton. I have no recollection of the service, but I do remember a lovely pail of cold water, and a tin dipper were always at the service of thirsty little boys in the vestibule.

Prior to this my father attended Rev. Thomas Clarke Wilson's<sup>108</sup> church but had a disagreement with him over the baptizing of my brother, John<sup>109</sup>. In consequence of this the child was called John Phares which means breach<sup>110</sup>.

Mr. Wilson had the reputation of being an able and most faithful preacher of the truth, but for some reason or another, several of the leading families of the congregation withdrew from the church at this time. He returned to Dunkeld, Scotland, in the late forties, and the Rev. William Bain, a young student from Queen's University of Kingston, received a call to the vacant congregation. After Mr. Bain's induction our family returned to his church. Of Dr. Bain's long and faithful service, I need say nothing; he has many seals to his ministry. But I may record some youthful impressions.

The pulpit, the sounding board in the centre of the ceiling, the old collection boxes, the long ranges of black stove pipes with small tin pails attached, always overflowing with soot, the sexton going his rounds during the evening service to snuff the candles. All these things occupied much of my attention. At one time I thought the sounding board was a large piece of Mrs. Quail's<sup>111</sup> gingerbread, so exact was the color. The precentor too, John Campbell, attracted me very much. During the evening service, he invariably lifted the candle and beat time with it during the singing, very much as the modern conductor uses his baton.

In early days marriages were more frequent than now, at least they were more conspicuous. How beautiful the bridal parties looked in the congregation decked out in a superabundance of white veils and gloves, the faces of the brides and bridesmaids wreathed in most wonderful artificial flowers! This good old custom also passed away.

The present beautiful and commodious building is the evolution of the old St. Andrew's church built in 1832.

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<sup>106</sup> Bell arrived at the Perth Military Settlement on June 24, 1817.

<sup>107</sup> John Hart Sr. (1808-1881), Hart's Bookstore, 27-29 Gore Street East.

<sup>108</sup> Reverend Thomas Clarke Wilson (1806-1877).

<sup>109</sup> John Phares Fraser (1836-1892).

<sup>110</sup> The name 'Phares' is derived from the Middle English word 'fair' or 'fayr', from the Old English 'fæger'; meaning 'handsome', 'beautiful', or 'fair' ... 'phares' is defined by Collins and Meriam-Webster as a beacon or watchtower or lightship to guide seafarers.

<sup>111</sup> Mary Quail, wife of James Quail (1784-1847), proprietor of a 'Temperance House' (boarding house) located on Craig Street, opposite the Fraser home at the Red House.

When Dr. Bain preached at Balderson in the afternoon, there was no evening service in St. Andrew's. We were occasionally free to attend some of the other churches. My father was kind of half Anglican, through his father being an army man, and always conducting the English church service in his house every alternate Sunday in Lanark. Frequently, we went to St. James's church. Rev. M. Harris was rector and Dawson Kerr<sup>112</sup>, clerk. Mr. Harris must have died in the early fifties and Rev. Mr. Pyne<sup>113</sup> was appointed rector.

The old church was torn down, I think, during Mr. Pyne's incumbency. Sam Bothwell<sup>114</sup> was the contractor for the new building. The heads on the stone columns at the main entrance were cut by John Allan, brother-in-law of John Lister<sup>115</sup>. During the building of the new church the congregation worshipped in the Court House.<sup>116</sup> I frequently attended the service, but as this was not my church, I felt at liberty to worship the organist, which I have continued to do ever since.

I have no recollection of Rev. J. B. Duncan's predecessor in the Free Church, but I remember him perfectly, and those he ministered to will not soon forget him. He was greatly in demand on all public occasions as a platform orator. Perhaps what I remember most about the Free Church was the wonderful congregational singing under such leaders as Matthew Bell, Ralph<sup>117</sup> and Alexander Dodds<sup>118</sup>, William Lister<sup>119</sup> and James Scott, but above all Duncan McDonald<sup>120</sup>, cast in herculean mould, he had a voice to correspond. How robust the worship in that church was in those days!

Father Lamothe<sup>121</sup> was the first Roman Catholic priest, who was succeeded by a Highlander, Father Macdonell<sup>122</sup>. Of them I have no recollections. Father McDonagh's ministrations, however, were in my time and are yet in my recollection. I remember the old church well. I have frequently assisted the sons of Fred O'Hare to ring the bell, and I remember assisting them on the occasion of Mrs. Finan's<sup>123</sup> funeral. I remember the consecration day of the new church; it was a great occasion. The bishop and all the clergy were in attendance. Father McDonagh carefully superintended the laying of the offerings of the people on the cornerstone.

I can never forget the wonderful tea meetings in the Methodist church under the direction of Judge Deacon, the speeches of Rev. Loughlan Taylor<sup>124</sup> on the Holy Land, his exhibition of the mummy and the costumes and relics of the ancient people. Referring to tea meetings reminds

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<sup>112</sup> Dawson Kerr (1794-1884). He kept a private school and worked at a hand loom.

<sup>113</sup> Reverend Alexander Pyne (1816-1897), returned to England in 1857.

<sup>114</sup> Samuel Bothwell (1825-c1900), a building contractor who also built St. James Anglican Church in 1861.

<sup>115</sup> John Clark Lister (1863-1915), bookkeeper.

<sup>116</sup> 1856-1861.

<sup>117</sup> Ralph Dodds (1826-1907).

<sup>118</sup> Alexander Dodds (1829-1875).

<sup>119</sup> William Lister/Lester (b.1835), joiner.

<sup>120</sup> Duncan McDonald (1809-1895), plasterer.

<sup>121</sup> Abbe Pierre-Jacques de La Mothe (1762-1847), first resident clergyman at Perth, arrived 1816, former Chaplain of the de Waterville Regiment.

<sup>122</sup> Not Father Macdonell. Abbe de La Mothe was followed by Father Patrick Sweeney 1820-1822, who was in turn followed by Father John MacDonald (1782-1879) 1822-1838.

<sup>123</sup> Jane Fitzpatrick-Finan (1811-1846).

<sup>124</sup> Rev. Lachlan Taylor (1815-1881). He visited at one time Egypt, Palestine, Asia Minor, Turkey, Greece, and Italy, and lectured on those countries.

me of John Adams<sup>125</sup>. What tea meeting or missionary meeting was complete without John Adams and his choir? How particular he was to have the vote of thanks to the choir on these occasions properly presented! To reply was his great opportunity.

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## The Old Courier

By Donald Fraser  
Perth *Courier*, June 30, 1905  
Old Boys Reunion Edition

There is no more conspicuous landmark in Lanark County than the old *Courier*. For seventy-two years without a break, it has been the faithful recorder of the joys and sorrows of all the people. I will not attempt to give its history, but merely a few personal recollections.

First the editors I have known: Sheriff Thompson<sup>126</sup> still with you hale and hearty; Charles Rice<sup>127</sup>, G. L. Walker<sup>128</sup>, and W. T. Walker<sup>129</sup>, who have gone to their reward; J. M. Walker<sup>130</sup> enjoying a well-earned relaxation from business cares in the beautiful town of Gananoque on the St. Lawrence. I have not the pleasure of knowing the present proprietor, but I know who he is very well. I expect his ambition is to follow in the footsteps of his predecessors as closely as possible, in conducting a clean paper not only for his own profit but to the advantage of the whole community as well.

Seventy-two years is a record which few newspapers in the country attain to. It reminds one of Tennyson's '*Brook*'.

"Men may come and men may go,  
But I go on forever."

The first carrier boy I remember was a very polite old Frenchman by the name of Curvier. We were very fond of meeting him on the street and airing our French, which was very limited. He was very patient and invariably assisted us with the pronunciation. I can remember him carrying round the New Year's addresses at least on one occasion; he was well received wherever he went, and I expect his finances were improved for his day's work.

Speaking of New Year's addresses, they were not makeshifts in those days, but elaborate affairs; they were the finest specimens of the printer's art, and no pains were spared to make them instructive and amusing. I remember a very excellent one which was supposed to have Holmes Mair<sup>131</sup> for its author; Mr. Mair had more than a local reputation as a poet. Another was

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<sup>125</sup> Fraser may have mistaken the given name. This is probably a reference to Joshua Adams (1779-1863) a leading member of the Methodist community at Perth.

<sup>126</sup> Sheriff James V. Thompson (1812-1912), County Sheriff of the United Counties of Lanark and Renfrew 1852-1866 and of Lanark County 1866-1903.

<sup>127</sup> Charles Rice (1822-1901), purchased the *Bathurst Courier* from James Thompson in 1852 and renamed it the *Perth Courier*. Appointed Lanark County Court Clerk in 1862.

<sup>128</sup> George L. Walker (1839-1874), purchased the *Perth Courier* from Charles Rice in 1863 and was publisher to 1874.

<sup>129</sup> William T. Walker (1849-1901), partner with brother James Murray Walker publishing *Perth Courier* 1874-1901

<sup>130</sup> James Murray Walker (1845-1938), partner with brother William T. Walker publishing *Perth Courier* 1874-1901

<sup>131</sup> Homes Mair (1828-1879), brother of Charles Mair, author, playwright, poet and 'Canada Firster'.

from the pen of Mrs. Grant<sup>132</sup>, about which there was no doubt as to the authorship. She treated matters and things historical, political, and social, dwelling on the happy occasions in which many of the families met, and referring to the brilliant attainments of the local celebrities. I remember the following words were used:

"And Mr. Grant, sedate and tall,  
Who quietly enjoyed it all,  
Would oft in confidence declare  
His little wife the brightest there."

Speaking of Mrs. Grant reminds me of Mrs. James Bell<sup>133</sup>; they were very intimate friends. I am sure there are many who will remember these two ladies as I do with a great deal of affection. There is an inclination to digress for a moment and refer to many others, whose kindness and hospitality at that time can never be forgotten, but I cannot particularize. I would like, however, to remind those who remain of many happy evenings at Victoria Hall<sup>134</sup>, Mrs. Richardson's<sup>135</sup> of the Bank, Mrs. Gamsby's<sup>136</sup>, Mrs. Bell's and many others.

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## The Old Fairs

By Donald Fraser  
Perth *Courier*, June 30, 1905  
Old Boys Reunion Edition

With improved transportation facilities the old Spring and Fall Fairs in Perth have become a thing of the past. I think, however, the Perth boy who has had no experience of these old fairs is to be pitied. We thought of them for weeks ahead; we had no money to save up for the occasion, but that did not interfere with our enjoyment for a moment. We had all our faculties and what more does a healthy boy need? Holidays were not given then as now on every possible occasion. But there was no school for us on Fair Day.

We rose early; to wash our faces and take breakfast (which) had to be done, but it did seem an awful waste of a boy's precious time. We were afraid something would come into the fair without our seeing it. We had to be on nearly all the leading roads at once, and see everything as it came in. What a comparing of information went on and how quickly wonderful reports had to be confirmed by personal investigation! The ubiquitous reporter of the present day isn't in it with us of those old times.

By ten o'clock the market square was well covered with cattle and rows of wagons along the street line. The apple wagons and the honey wagons, what boy can forget them? Think of one of Mrs. Allan's ginger cakes, and a whole copper's worth of honey in it. And her ginger beer in stone bottles; there never was before and there never will be again any half so good.

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<sup>132</sup> Mary Caldwell-Grant (1858-1934), wife of Dr. William Grant (1845-1897) who practiced 1884-1896 at the corner of Harvey and Gore Streets (McMartin House).

<sup>133</sup> Jane Judd-Bell (1818-1864), wife of James Bell (1817-1904) son of Reverend William Bell (1780-1857).

<sup>134</sup> The home of Judge John Glass Malloch (1806-1873).

<sup>135</sup> Wife of R. Richardson, Agent of Bank of Montreal 1863-1870.

<sup>136</sup> 'Kate' Amelia Radenhurst-Gamsby (1846-1872), wife of Guy Aylwin Gamsby (1842-1904), general merchant with stores opposite Town Hall and at 44 Gore Street East. Gamsby later married Helen Campbell (b.1863).

The cattle buying began early. McShane of Montreal; Murdock of Kingston; James McParland Sr. and his two sons, John and James Jr., were busy men. How quickly the bargains were made! No haggling, the cattle marked and driven off, every hoof sold by four o'clock, the farmers well satisfied and a good many dollars in their pockets.

When this was over horse racing began; in very early days the course was at the far end of the old burying ground bridge at the foot of Brock Street, in the neighborhood of James Murphy's. Latterly the course was from the 'White House' to 'Matheson Hotel' on Drummond Street. No record was ever taken then of the time on these occasions. I have seen some good trotting on the ice in the days of Andrew Hope<sup>137</sup>, James Patterson<sup>138</sup> and Hart's old black horse from the shanty used to surprise us.

Towards evening, I am afraid the faithful historian would have to record a few sanguinary contests; old grudges had to be settled, but we can conveniently forget them. Wireless telegraphy was undreamed of, but the rapidity with which we heard of anything going on from Pat Dooher's<sup>139</sup> to Geordie Barrie's<sup>140</sup> would surprise Marconi. Good old Father McDonagh could restore peace and quietness quicker than a score of policemen nowadays. His presence was sufficient, but occasionally the old gentleman caught the spirit in the air and wielded his heavy cane in true Connaught style.

After dark the horse trading, who can remember old Louis Campeau<sup>141</sup>? He lived in French village; this was a row of shacks on each side of Beckwith Street, east end of the present bridge. Sometimes it was called Slabtown. Louis was never known to refuse a trade; the more dilapidated the steed the quicker he closed the deal. The artist of the *Toronto News*, who portrayed the Liberal party in the saddle for thirty-two years, must have been a Perth boy, and had Louis' steeds impressed upon his memory.

Next day we took our corporal punishment and made no complaints. But wasn't it a shame to punish little boys, who had been so happy and who took so lively an interest in such important institutions as the Fair days in Perth?

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## The Old Fire Companies

By Donald Fraser  
Perth *Courier*, June 30, 1905  
Old Boys Reunion Edition

In the early fifties fire protection in Perth was very inefficient. A movement was made to repair this. Two fire companies were formed, one called the Union, of which Sam Bothwell was captain, and the other the Fountain, of which John Murray<sup>142</sup> was captain.

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<sup>137</sup> Andrew Hope Sr. (1821-1897) or Andrew Hope Jr. (1859-1895), tinsmiths and hardware merchant, 54 North Street.

<sup>138</sup> Proprietor of Patterson's Hotel at 15 Harvey Street, 1851-1874.

<sup>139</sup> Patrick Dooher (1815-1884), innkeeper.

<sup>140</sup> George Barrie (1817-1872), innkeeper 1844-1859 of Barrie's Hotel 27 Wilson Street West 1844-1970.

<sup>141</sup> Louis Campeau (1816-1897).

<sup>142</sup> John Murray (b.1821), partner in the Murray, Miller & Morris Foundry.



These companies were fifty or sixty strong, and I venture to say for physique could not be surpassed by any town in Canada. The Union uniform was red shirts and black trousers, the Fountain uniform, light blue jackets and white trousers.

As may be expected, rival feeling ran somewhat high at times. This feeling was not confined to the firemen alone by any means. Every citizen, young or old, ranged himself or herself on one side or the other. The East Ward to a man backed up the Fountain, the West Ward the Union. The Centre Ward no doubt was divided. The Union engine, a very superior machine, was imported from Montreal. The Fountain was of local manufacture, built at the foundry of George and Charles Miller<sup>143</sup>.

A day came when the merits of these two engines must be tested. It was made a great occasion. A grand parade of the firemen in uniform drawing their engines took place, finally halting on Drummond Street in front of W. O. Buell's<sup>144</sup> property; this point was convenient for placing suction hose in the river. The captains mounted their engines, the boxes were filled, and the trial began in earnest; "down with brakes," "break her down," rang out on both sides. Captains and men were wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement and exerted themselves to the utmost limit of their strength.

For some time, the contest seemed a draw as to the distance water could be thrown. Our hopes were running high that the Fountain men would put on a spurt and leave no room for doubt as to victory. The spurt was put on, but at the crucial moment the beam of the engine broke; thus ended at least one of the trials. Another beam was made and, if I remember rightly, it too, was broken. This would not surprise the present Perthites if they could see the men. Bob Caldwell<sup>145</sup>, Bob<sup>146</sup> and John Arkinson<sup>147</sup>, Pat<sup>148</sup> and Tom Cosgrove<sup>149</sup>, Felix Harrishaw<sup>150</sup>, Ned Connolly<sup>151</sup>, and I think Hon. John G. Haggart, was a member of the Fountain company. Capt. Murray, like Frederick the Great, had an eye for big men.

Not satisfied with mere trials, vacant buildings had to be burned to further test the efficiency of the rival companies. McFarlane's old foundry, at the end of the long bridge, was burned and the old Roman Catholic church. At the latter fire, George Miller<sup>152</sup>, one of Perth's most esteemed citizens, was killed. This put a stop to any further burning of old buildings for some time.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> George Miller (1811-1860) and Charles Miller (1822-1879), also a partner in the Murray, Miller & Morris Foundry.

<sup>144</sup> W. O. Buell (1850-1920), lawyer.

<sup>145</sup> Robert Caldwell (b.1854).

<sup>146</sup> Robert Arkinson (b.1831), teamster.

<sup>147</sup> John Arkinson (b.1836), lumber worker.

<sup>148</sup> Patrick Cosgrove (b.1824).

<sup>149</sup> Thomas Cosgrove (1821-1875), Perth Chief Constable and member of Fountain Fire Company.

<sup>150</sup> Felix Harrishaw / Harreshaw (b.1834).

<sup>151</sup> Edward Connelly (1823-1889), Brakeman Fountain Fire Company and later Captain of the Tay Steamer Fire Company.

<sup>152</sup> Member of the Fountain Company.

<sup>153</sup> The oft-repeated story of firemen intentionally burning buildings in pursuit of training opportunities is fiction. While the burning of McFarlane's Foundry and St. Bridget's Roman Catholic Chapel could have been the result of arson, the arsonists were not local firemen.

## The Old Red House

By Donald Fraser  
Perth *Courier*, June 30, 1905  
Old Boys Reunion Edition

The old red house is entitled to the distinction of being not only the oldest house in Perth, but I believe it was one of the finest houses built in the settlement. It was built in 1815<sup>154</sup>. With the exception of the massive logs with which its walls are built, all the materials came from Kingston. If Mr. Thompson has not improved his house on the opposite corner out of existence, that is to say if there is any of the original building left, it can claim an equal distinction. It was built by Colonel Josias Tayler<sup>155</sup> about the same time.

I don't know the year in which it was painted, but the story is that the Duke of Richmond<sup>156</sup> was stopping at the house at the time the matter of color was under discussion. He is reported to have said, "Mrs. Adamson<sup>157</sup>, paint your house red and you will never have to paint it again." Had it not been for the fire in the sixties his words would have been literally true; as it was, the original painting stood without a fresh coat for more than forty years.

It was the only house of any size in very early days, I believe it has been a public house, courthouse, church, printing office, schoolhouse, public hall, ballroom, and if there were any other uses required of it, I dare say it accommodated itself to them also.

My grandfather Adamson<sup>158</sup> was an army man. I am not sure whether he drew the property in Craig and Gore streets, but he was entitled to and drew twenty-five acres beginning on the west side of Foster Street and extending to the west side of D'Arcy street. The story about this property is that in a moment of good nature he went on the marriage bond of a man about whom he knew nothing and who it appeared had a wife in the old country. The wife came out and prosecuted, my grandfather then wished to settle, and I believe could have done so for a trifling sum, but his lawyer would not permit him; the usual result followed, the property passing into the hands of the lawyer who divided it into lots and called one of the streets his own name.

In olden days when a ball was on the tapis, one half of the upper part of the old house could be thrown into one room, one of the partitions being on hinges was lifted up and fastened to the ceiling by an iron hook. Folding doors were not then in fashion in Perth. In one corner of the room is a high permanent seat which tradition says was the fiddler's seat. If the old house could speak what a tale it could unfold.

While no one now living can remember it as a ballroom, many will remember the narrow escape it had by fire in 1865 or 1866. The fire originated in the house adjoining, owned by Frank White, which was completely destroyed. Owing to the heroic efforts of the Fountain and Union fire companies the old house was saved, but badly damaged. Captain John Murray<sup>159</sup> was

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<sup>154</sup> The Red House was built in 1816.

<sup>155</sup> Colonel Josias Tayler (1787-1844), Perth's first Postmaster.

<sup>156</sup> Charles Lennox (1764-1819), 4th Duke of Richmond, Governor General of the Canadas.

<sup>157</sup> Catherine Adamson (b.1787).

<sup>158</sup> John Adamson 1775-c1842.

<sup>159</sup> The author may have confused John Murray (b.1821) with Charles Murray (1822-1879). Although both were members of the Fountain Fire Company, John Murray seems to have been resident at Perth for only a year or two.

seriously injured at this fire, part of the roof fell upon him, and at one time it was thought he might not recover but owing to his fine constitution he pulled through.

What old-timer can forget John Murray! What a public-spirited citizen he was! I knew him well, gentle, true, and brave, one of the finest citizens Perth ever had. One of the ludicrous scenes of the fire was R. T. Livingston and Sam Revans struggling with a barrel of flour on the stairs; they were met by a full head of water from the branch pipe at close range. They were rescued, the flour was not, but they could never wear their suits again.

Warren Botsford<sup>160</sup> was active in seeing about the repairs to the house and while the repairs were going on the whole family was sheltered under the hospitable roof of Judge Deacon.

After the fire, my father divided one of the larger bedrooms, furnished it specially, and called it the 'Prophet's Chamber'; this was for ministers. He also built a small addition to the back kitchen; this was for waifs and strays. No one was ever turned away who required a night's rest, and it was no uncommon occurrence to see two or three squaws huddled round the hall stove on a cold winter's morning. The last thing a Highlander parts with is hospitality. On Sunday mornings he would pack out all the available drinking bowls in order that the country people coming to church could refresh themselves from the old well, which stands by the gate. Many will remember the large balsam tree which stood before the house so many years. My father cut it down and put a sundial on the stump; he thought it would be a convenience to every passerby.

Of the large family of eleven persons who called the old red house their home only two remain and they are three thousand miles away from the old spot. One is forcibly reminded of the words of Tennyson.

"Oh, for the touch of a vanished hand,  
The sound of a voice that is still."

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*Twelve years after his contributions to the Perth Courier's 'Old Boys' edition, the newspaper published another Fraser contribution on the occasion of the centenary of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church*

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## **The Early Days of St. Andrews**

By Donald Fraser  
Perth *Courier*, November 1917

If the stone placed in the tower has been preserved (and no doubt it has) in the remodeling of the old church, it will be found to bear the following: A.D. 1832. That day is indelibly engraved in my memory.

Dr. Campbell<sup>161</sup> of Montreal has recently given the history of Presbyterianism in Perth and surrounding country and is correct in stating that the old church was built by Malcolm McPherson, carpenter and contractor of that time. It was built of sandstone, most likely, taken from the Glebe

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<sup>160</sup> Warren Jarvis Botsford (1814-1900), merchant.

<sup>161</sup> Reverend Robert Campbell (1835-1921), Drummond Township Native, Moderator Presbyterian Church of Canada.

Quarries on the Brockville Road. These quarries were extensively worked by the veteran quarrymen Michael Finnan<sup>162</sup> and Tom Morrison within my recollection. The church was of gothic architecture with a seating capacity of about 400. Originally it had only an end gallery but in the early 60's side galleries were added. The contractor was James McPherson<sup>163</sup>, son of William McPherson<sup>164</sup> and nephew of the original builder.

About the same time a spire was added to the tower. The tinning of the spire was considered quite a feat at the time the work being done by William Godkin<sup>165</sup>, son-in-law of Warren Buteford<sup>166</sup> hardware merchant. The church was heated by stoves, two large stoves near the entrance and two small ones near the pulpit. If any of these stoves are still to the fore, they will be found to bear the names of William Stratton, Dundee. The church was lighted with candles in those days a pretentious homemade candelabra in the center and old-fashioned sconces placed on the walls. The pews were severely straight backed and provided with a door. The pulpit was imposing very high approached by winding stairs with presenters' desks about midway.

Rev. James Wilson<sup>167</sup> was the first minister. Although I appeared on the scene before he retired, I cannot say I remember him. I was present, however, at his farewell sermon. The story is that being awakened out of a deep sleep, I claimed so much of the attention of the congregation that Mr. Wilson leaned over the pulpit and said, "Better take the child out". Mother returned to hear the conclusion of the sermon.

My father and mother were married by Mr. Wilson in 1835. The hero and heroine of Troy were represented one Sunday morning in the old church when my brother Hector<sup>168</sup> and Helen McPherson<sup>169</sup> were baptized. An old Scotch lady told my mother to be sure and bring the laddie baird forward first or the lassie bairn would take his beard. The catastrophe was avoided.

A breach occurred between Mr. Wilson and my father over the baptism of my brother John. It appears that my father made the arrangements for the baptism without consulting Mr. Wilson. At the proper time the child was brought forward but no baptism took place. The child was afterwards baptized by Rev. William Bell and called John Phares which signified breach. The family attended William Bell's church until the arrival of Rev. Dr. Bain. My youngest brother Farquhar<sup>170</sup> was the only member of our family baptized by Dr. Bain. The legend regarding him is that Dr. Bain confided to Mrs. Bain that he was the sweetest looking child he had ever baptized. The secret leaked out in time. Perhaps those who remember Farquhar may quite agree with Dr. Bain.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Michael Finan (b.1811).

<sup>163</sup> James McPherson (1829-1876), carpenter & joiner with workshop at 21 Herriott Street 1859-1865 and 17 Drummond Street East 1865-1874, also a shingle and spinning mill at 29 Drummond Street East 1860s-1876.

<sup>164</sup> William McPherson (1798-1859).

<sup>165</sup> William J. Godkin (c1830-c1870), in partnership with his father-in-law Warren Botsford in a tin smithing business, 1855-1860.

<sup>166</sup> Warren Jarvis Botsford (1804-1890), hardware store 52 Herriott Street, 1850s-1870s.

<sup>167</sup> Reverend Thomas Clarke Wilson (1806-1877), not James Wilson.

<sup>168</sup> Hector Fraser (1836-1903), bank manager at Prescott and Pembroke, Ontario.

<sup>169</sup> Ellen Mowat McPherson-Campbell (1836-1910), daughter of Malcolm McPherson (1806-1898), married Archibald Stewart Campbell (1832-1888).

<sup>170</sup> Farquhar Fraser (1850-1876).

<sup>171</sup> The author seems to have confused the family story about the naming of his brothers. It must have been Reverend William Bell who commented that John Fraser was "*the sweetest looking child he had ever baptized*" and thus named him 'Phares', and not Rev. William Bain commenting on baby Farquhar Fraser. From the middle English 'Phares' means 'fair' or 'fayr' and from the old English 'fæger'; means 'handsome', or 'beautiful'.

The manse in the Glebe was not ready for occupation when Mr. Bain arrived. He occupied a house owned by Malcolm McPherson on Drummond Street. Mr. McPherson had just completed a fine residence for himself opposite, afterwards owned by William Meighen.

Mr. Wilson was always spoken of in our house with the greatest admiration and respect. He was a faithful preacher of the Word and an uncompromising advocate of temperance. In our day he might be called a litterist but high criticism was then unknown. The stone house on the corner of Gore and Brock Streets owned by Mr. Rutherford<sup>172</sup> was the manse. I believe I am correct in saying that Mrs. Wilson<sup>173</sup> at one time gave lessons to young girls at the Manse. Mr. Wilson returned to Scotland and settled in Dunkeld. There were two<sup>174</sup> children, Norman and Mary. Now that Miss Rutherford<sup>175</sup> has passed away, I know of no one likely to remember them. I have it on very good authority that the first couple married by Mr. Wilson in Perth were my aunt and uncle Mr. and Mrs. William Rogerson<sup>176</sup>. Norman was a partner in mercantile business with my cousin John Rogerson<sup>177</sup> in Urbana, Illinois to 1856. He was born in 1832 and died in the western states a good many years ago.

An incident is related of Mr. Wilson's righteous indignation in the pulpit. It appears one Sunday morning just as he had given out the text, a circus procession passed the church with a brass band playing. He paused and gave out another text "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy". His wrath was terrible in denouncing the Perthites for allowing such a desecration. The sermon was never forgotten by those who heard it.

Rev. William Bain, who had just graduated from Queen's University, was called and for 35 years was the faithful minister of St. Andrew's, being his early charge. He died in Kingston and was laid to rest in Elmwood Cemetery.

The members of session that I remember seeing officiate at Communion were William Rutherford, William Allan<sup>178</sup>, my father William Fraser, Donald Robertson<sup>179</sup>, John Jamieson<sup>180</sup>, Donald McPhail<sup>181</sup>, James McPherson and Alexander Morris<sup>182</sup>. The treasurer for many years was John Morris of Murray, Morris & Co., merchants. There was a variety of church officers until the appointment of Mr. Thompson<sup>183</sup> who filled the position satisfactorily for many years.

The Sabbath School was quite a feature of congregational work, about 16 or 20 classes and an average attendance well over 100. The school supported an orphan in India. She was called Christiana Bain after Dr. Bain's eldest daughter. This orphan either died or got married

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<sup>172</sup> William Rutherford (1790-1874), carriage maker 1863-1870, 66 Brock Street.

<sup>173</sup> Ann McDonald-Wilson (1806-1852), wife of Rev. Thomas Clarke Wilson (1806-1877).

<sup>174</sup> There were seven children, not two, but at least four of these died as children – John Norman (b.1833), Mary (1835-1851), David (1837-1853), Christina (1839-1851), Ann (1841-1842), Henry (1843-1888) and Colin (1847-1881).

<sup>175</sup> Mary Ann Margaret Rutherford (1833-1917).

<sup>176</sup> William Rogerson (1806-1856) married Sarah Sinclair Adamson (b.1814) on August 21, 1836.

<sup>177</sup> John Rogerson (1832-c1910)

<sup>178</sup> William Allan (1787-1868), wagon maker and building contractor.

<sup>179</sup> Donald MacDonald Robertson (1828-1896), carpenter and millwright.

<sup>180</sup> John Jamieson (1824-1892), schoolteacher.

<sup>181</sup> Donald Henry Y. McPhail (1822-1905).

<sup>182</sup> Alexander Morris (1826-1889), lawyer, MP for South Lanark 1861-1872, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba 1872-1877, son of William Morris (1786-1858).

<sup>183</sup> Sheriff James V. Thompson (1812-1912).

and another was adopted called Jessie Fraser Bain the first name in honor of Miss Rutherford who deserves a lasting memorial of some kind in St. Andrew's Church.

The presenters I have known were John and James Campbell and James Spaulding<sup>184</sup>, Archibald<sup>185</sup> and James Campbell, W. H. Grant<sup>186</sup>, George Lane and Mr. Horrocks. There was no organ in the early days. The vocal organs of the presenters and congregation were to say the least powerful.

There were no duplex envelopes in the early days. The revenue was raised by pew rents supplemented by open collections. A special collector was appointed to take around the missionary book quarterly in aid of the schemes of the church. This system worked very well but the envelope system is better.

I think in the early days when people were simple and good, as the saying goes, they loved to go to church. In fine weather in the summer the church was filled at the morning service and the churchyard filled with farmer's vehicles of every description. Communion services were especially observed. Friday preparatory services were held and the day in all respects observed as Sabbath day. No school for children on that day. All shops were closed and everybody went to church. No unnecessary work of any kind was done about the home.

On these occasions Dr. Bain would be assisted by Dr. Urquhart<sup>187</sup> of Cornwall, Solomon Milne<sup>188</sup> of Smith's Falls, John McMorine<sup>189</sup> of Ramsay, James Wilson<sup>190</sup> of Lanark, all good men. Dr. Urquhart was an uncle of Mrs. Bain and looked the part. I remember his text on this occasion was "What Mean You By This Service". Sunday services commenced at 11 and ended at three. No one ever thought it wearisome. People took their religion seriously.

I had the pleasure of meeting, too, the session of St. Andrew's on my way to the General Assembly in June last and renewing my acquaintance with Mr. Scott<sup>191</sup>, Mr. Samuel Wilson<sup>192</sup>, Mr. Glossop<sup>193</sup>, Mr. McPhail and others. I was present when Mr. McPhail was received by baptism into the visible church. His parents called him Peter Epstein<sup>194</sup> (Mr. Epstein was a converted Jew, who preached several times in St. Andrew's<sup>195</sup>). I was glad to see him follow in the footsteps of his worthy father, elder Donald McPhail, and his mother Christina Thompson<sup>196</sup>, who was my first Sunday school teacher.

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- *Notation by Ron W. Shaw (2023)*

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<sup>184</sup> James Spaulding Sr. (1826-1906), Spaulding & Stewart Distillery, 106 Gore Street West.

<sup>185</sup> Archibald Campbell (1827-1873), Divisional Court Clerk.

<sup>186</sup> William Henry Grant (1837-1914), Turnkey, Lanark County Jail.

<sup>187</sup> Reverend Hugh Urquhart (1793-1871).

<sup>188</sup> Reverend Solomon Mylne (1821-1910).

<sup>189</sup> Reverend John Kerr McMorine (1799-1867).

<sup>190</sup> Reverend James Wilson (c1829-1905).

<sup>191</sup> Reverend Alexander Hugh Scott (1853-1931).

<sup>192</sup> Samuel Wilson (1834-1903).

<sup>193</sup> Daniel Glossop (1840-1922), shoemaker 1870-1920, 53 Gore Street East, 72 Gore Street East, 3 North Street East.

<sup>194</sup> Peter Epstein McPhail (1859-1946).

<sup>195</sup> Jewish-Christian convert Rev. Ephraim M. Epstein (1829-1913) who probably preached at Perth around 1859-1860 while he was studying medicine at Queens University, Kingston.

<sup>196</sup> Christina D. Thompson (1825-1916).