

LOCAL

Calling all McKagues

This family tree spreads right across the continent

By MANDY MARTIN
Staff Writer

The McKague family union might as well be a Northumberland County open house. As the computer data bases whirl and intermesh across e-mail connections, McKague family reunion organizers realize the family tree is a veritable forest.

"We're linked one way or another with every family in Cramahe Township if not Northumberland County," Linda McKague van Will says. "We have made connections with people all over North America."

On Saturday, August 14, all McKagues are invited to attend the first family reunion organized in over 40 years' time. At least 150 people are expected to arrive at the Castleton Municipal Building where Linda and her sister Carla McKague will have the computers and photo

archives, displays and memorabilia set up.

"There will be people from north Saskatchewan, Louisiana, Virginia and other far points," Mrs. McKague van Will confirms. "It is also a McGregor family reunion too, because my grandmother was a McGregor."

"Anyone who has a connection to the McKague family is invited," says Linda. "There's no charge. It's potluck and people can come and go. It will be nonstop talking and remembering. It's going to be just great."

Eric is the current patriarch of the McKague family.

"My father will be 90 on his next birthday," Linda announces as we move to the front room of the Castleton home for introductions.

At this point, all preconceived ideas of age and acuity go out the window.

Mr. McKague is nattily attired in shorts and sport shirt. He has foregone his high-top sneakers and blue jeans for this occasion. He waves a greeting, jumps out of his chair and retrieves his latest computer imagery project. He's manipulated old family photos of forebears, placing the peo-

ple aboard elephants, in an old car that was a favourite of his decades, against a Northumberland Hills horizon. Eric McKague is connected. He surfs the the Internet, browses on the world wide web, researching the interest of the day.

He still does income tax returns for people.

Last year, for the first time in his life, he had a hole in one while golfing at Salt Creek. Life doesn't get much sweeter.

Note: There were several minor errors in names and dates in this article. I have corrected these before making copies. All corrections are mine and do not alter the sense or slant of the article in any way.

Linda van Will



The fourth generation

ABOVE LEFT: John Bruce McKague, a son of Robert and Caroline Eagleson McKague, married Lena Maud McGregor December 25, 1907.

"I went down to the municipal office to buy garbage tags last week," he tells me later in the afternoon. "It took 15 minutes because they couldn't get their computers to work properly." Not impressed.

On Saturday, he drove out to Red Cloud Cemetery for a look. He's read the article in last week's *Chronicle*.

"My brother Clarence was on the cemetery board," Eric relates. Clarence died last year. "Clarence was responsible for planting the pine trees there, the pines they removed."

Eric assessed the tallgrass prairie ecosystem with an open mind.

"To the undiscerning eye, there's not much to see," he declares.

Eric was an executive with CN Rail before his retirement. He and a sister bought the house he currently resides in with daughter Linda van Will when their parents retired and brother Jim married and took over the farm.

Jim McKague's son D'Arcy is operating the Cramahe Township farm that has been within the family since 1875.

Eric married Margaret Richards of Warkworth. When Eric retired from CN Rail, he and Margaret moved to the Castleton home. Margaret passed away in 1985. Today, Eric lives in the home with daughter Linda McKague van Will.



The fifth generation

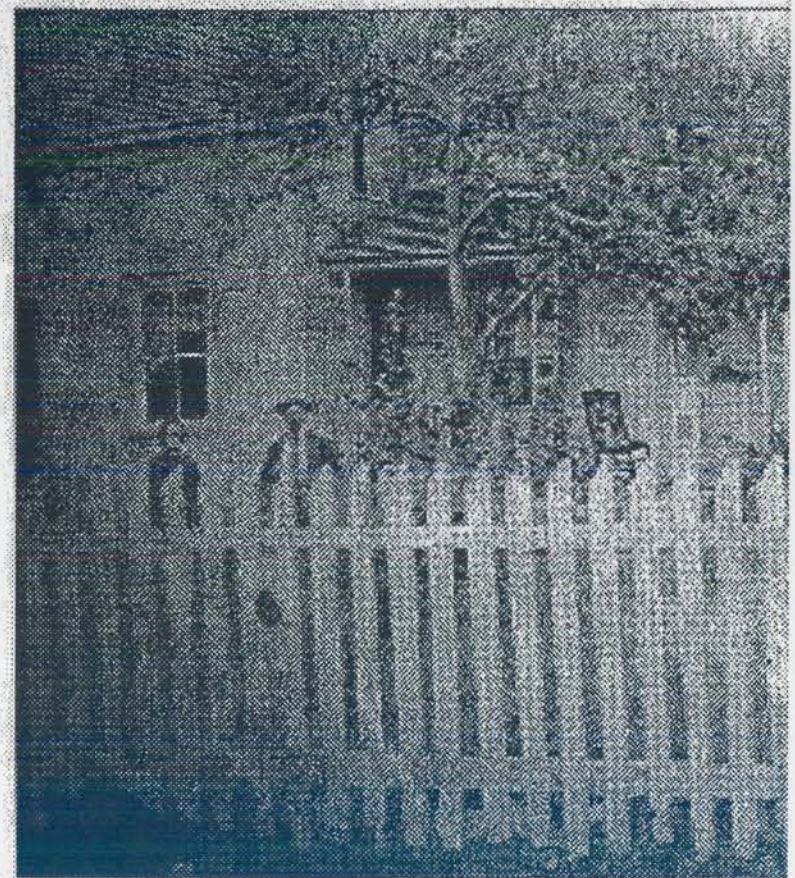
ABOVE RIGHT: Eric McKague (a son of John Bruce McKague and Lena Maud McGregor) and wife the late Margaret Richards, surrounded by family photos. Today, Eric is approaching his 90th birthday.



LEFT: One of five sons of William and Elizabeth Coyle McKague (grandson of original settlers) was Robert, pictured here with his family: back row, left to right; Beatrice, Hilton, John and Ida. Front row, left to right father Robert, Arthur, Hedley, and Robert's wife and mother of the children Caroline Eagleson McKague.

The third generation relocated to Cramahie Township

(Below) The earliest photo of Cherry Hill Farm: Cherry Hill was a 250-acre Crown Grant of land homesteaded by William McKague and Elizabeth Coyle McKague (shown above) in the early 1800s. The property remained in the family until 1919 when their son John retired to Cobourg. Other sons of the couple began farming in Cramahie Township. Today, a McKague still farms the Cramahie Township property.



The second generation at Cherry Hill homestead

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 In 1822, John and Jane McKague emigrated from County Cavan in Ireland to Cherry Hill, a small settlement east of Baltimore. There, they raised eight children. It is believed the direct-to-Canada contingent meshed with other family members who came to Canada at the same time as United Empire Loyalists receiving land grants.

Initially, the Cherry Hill homestead was a log home, later replaced by a larger, finished home.

One of the earliest photos Linda and sister Carla have garnered shows William, son of the John and Jane, standing in the garden of the Cherry Hill homestead with his wife Elizabeth Coyle McKague.

There's a lovely family story about the initial meeting of William and Elizabeth.

William went to the Coyle farm on an errand and when he arrived, there was Elizabeth stomping on laundry in a tub in the front yard. She had her skirts hitched up around her waist and apparently that was it for William."

Elizabeth was reputed to have been quite acrobatic and a very accomplished rider. Another family story relates she was riding a horse while carrying eggs for market when



The second generation

the horse suddenly shied.

"It is said she flipped off the horse and landed on the ground without breaking an egg," Linda relates.

William and Elizabeth had 10 children.

Two of their sons, George and Robert, together brought a farm in Cranmahe Township in 1875. Robert McKague (grandson of the original settler and great grandfather of Linda

No photos have been found of John and Jane McKague who emigrated from County Cavan, Ireland, to settle at Cherry Hill east of Baltimore in 1822. Shown here is a member of the next generation: William McKague, one of eight children of the original settlers, and his wife Elizabeth Coyle who settled at Cherry Hill, east of Baltimore. The couple had 10 children.

and Carla) married Caroline Eagleson. The couple had six children.

One son, John Bruce, married Lena McGregor. John and Lena had eight children: Wilfrid, Ethel, Florence, Leila, Clarence, Eric, Doris and Jim. All are alive today but for Clarence, Wilfrid and Ethel. It is Jim's son D'Arcy who currently owns and operates Longview, the McKague Cramahe Township farm, on Morganston Road.

Son Eric McKague, currently residing in Castleton, married Margaret (d 1985) Richards of Warkworth. There are three children: Carla, Linda and Rick.

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"We estimate there are 2,300 descendants of the two original settlers located all over the

continent," Linda says.

She and sister Carla have amassed a veritable treasure trove of stories, history and memorabilia - including an estimated 2,500 photos.

"The remarkable thing is that only 12 photos or so of all those photos cannot be identified," says Linda. "We put the mug shots up on the internet, put out there for information, and invariably we get a response. For example, someone in Iowa was able to identify people in a photo because her grandmother's photo album had the same photo and she had written all the names on the back."

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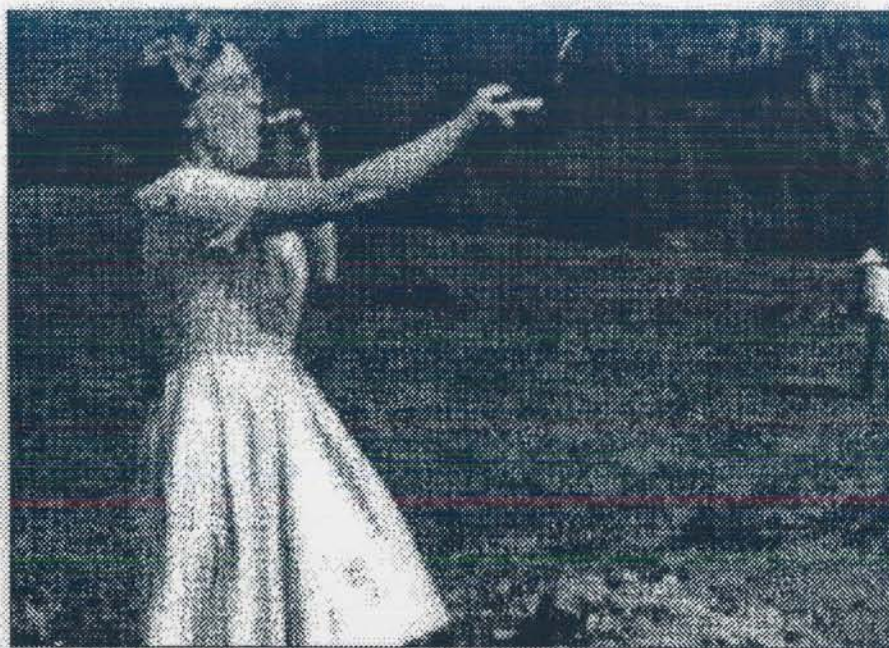
The McKague genealogy is about to become a website on the Internet. The site, its first page already posted at the address "mckague.com",

will give a complete roster of the family tree.

Adding special depth to the information is the inclusion of photos of individuals (where found) and group and scenic shots compiled.

"The Macintosh program "Reunion" has been absolutely marvellous," notes Linda. Her sister Carla has been spearheading the data base collection.

For PC users, the equivalent program is "Generations". With the information entered, whole files have been merged, sorted and demystified.



The fifth generation

One of the very few McKague family artifacts that survived from the original 1822 settlement in Canada was a horn brought to Canada by John and Jane McKague in 1822. The horn was used by the McKagues at Cherry Hill, east of Baltimore where they first settled, to call the men from the fields.

Above, the late Ethel Maud McKague is shown blowing the horn in 1968. Ethel's cousin, Eric Alexander McKague, of Baltimore, donated the horn other memorabilia to Barnum House museum. When the family asked to borrow the horn for the upcoming August 14 family reunion at Castleton, they were told the horn and several other items had been "stolen" from the museum sometime between 1992 and 1999.

All photos courtesy of Linda McKague van Will



Country cousins host urbanite: In the early 1900s brothers Clarence and Eric McKague. Clarence died at the Cramahé Township McKague farm, Bill Bowen, last year. Eric currently lives in Castleton. the urbanite from Warkworth wearing white, visits with

Photo courtesy of Linda McKague van Will

This photo appeared in the same issue of the Colborne Chronicle as the McKague-McGregor Reunion feature

(Bill Bowen's mother was Myrtle McGregor)

McKAGUES AND MCGREGORS



The five surviving children of John Bruce McKague and Lena Maud McGregor. They are great-great-grandchildren of Alexander (Sandy) and Margaret McGregor, and great-grandchildren of William and Elizabeth McKague. Back row, left to right: Florence McKague Stephens of Peterborough, Eric McKague of Castleton, and Jim McKague of Castleton. Front, left to right: Doris McKague Rusk of Guelph and Lella McKague Kvisitbo of Toronto.



The southern contingent: Left to right, Bobbie and Fred McKague of Dry Forks, Virginia, Sylvia McKague Cormier, Karen McKague Hebert and Claudette Hebert Landry of Louisiana. Fred, Sylvia and Karen and great-great-grandchildren of George and Susan McKague. Claudette is a great-great-great-granddaughter. Bobbi is Fred's wife. Fred and Bobbi supplied the custom T-shirts for the family reunion.

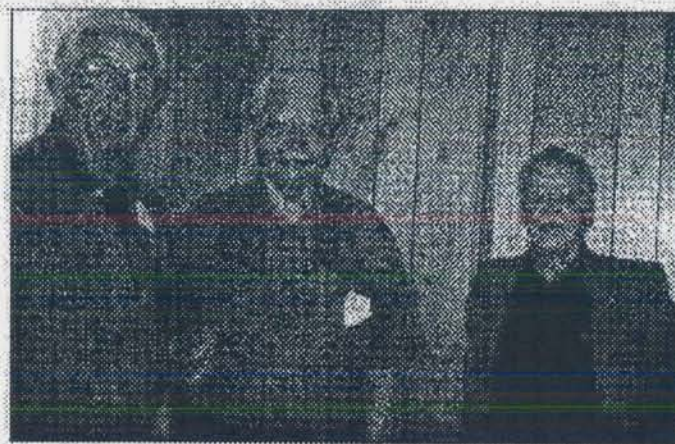


Dean McKague, left, with his son David and David's sons Ben, Ian and Jacob, all of Woodville, Ontario, pose with an old photo which includes two earlier generations of their family. Dean is a great-great-great-grandson of John and Nancy McKague.

PHOTOS BY
MANDY MARTIN



Carla McKague, great-great-granddaughter of William and Elizabeth McKague and a great-great-granddaughter of Alexander (Sandy) and Margaret McGregor, explains the computer database to Bryce Oliver of Ajax, Ontario. Bryce is the husband of Jean McKague Oliver who is a great-great-granddaughter of John and Nancy McKague.



A generation of first cousins: Left to right: Vernon McGregor of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Bill Bowen of Warkworth and Eric McKague of Castleton. The men are all first cousins and great-great-grandsons of Alexander (Sandy) and Margaret McGregor.



Linda McKague van Will, great-great-great-granddaughter of William and Elizabeth McKague, distributes a special treat - pralines from Louisiana brought by Karen McKague Hebert, standing left. The recipients are, left, Ben Wolfe of Peterborough, Ontario, and Lisa Deith of Toronto, both great-great-great-grandchildren of William and Elizabeth McKague. Add another "great" to the descriptions for the relationships to Alexander (Sandy) and Margaret McGregor).



Left to right: Joan Knight Hookings of Belleville, ON, (connected to both the McKague and McGregor families), with Margaret McKague Breuer of Calgary, Alberta, and Marlon McKague Buckler of Regina, Saskatchewan. Margaret and Marion are the twin great-granddaughters of William and Elizabeth McKague. All three women are watching the continuous-run "slide" show of old family photos on one of four computers set up at Castleton hall for the McKague-McGregor family reunion.