

James Jackson

Life and Times of Quaker Offers Refreshing Insight

BY MARG HAYLOCK
Staff Reporter

PICTON—A Short Sketch of the Life and Times of James Jackson, 1828-1916, a booklet published by the Prince Edward County museum, has become the nucleus for a unique display planned there this weekend.

Mr. Jackson's journal, written in pencil in an old scribbler, was discovered in an attic by his granddaughter, Naomi McDonald and has been preserved and printed for sale.

On Saturday, Oct. 2 and Sunday, Oct. 3, Miss McDonald will visit the county museum to discuss her grandfather's journal and display an unusual family book titled *The History of the People Called Quakers*. The book deals with Quakerism from 1415 to the 1700's and is believed to be one of only three such volumes in Canada.

The large text includes the history of the Jackson family in Quakerism back to the year 1600.

Miss McDonald, now 80 years old, lives on Johnson Street where her family settled when she was just two years old.

She recalled that her family for many years operated the home as a boarding house, entertaining families from all parts of the United States each summer.

In the winter months, school teachers and high school students boarded at the house.

Miss McDonald noted that, in her grandfather's last years before his death, he was bed-ridden and she and her sister once modelled party dresses for him before going out for the evening.

"He admired and complimented us, but said Harriet, his wife, was to him the loveliest and most beautiful woman," she said.

"And we had thought her quite plain."

In his journal, James Jack-

son, did not mention his wife, Harriet Wilder, formerly of Hallowell. He did record, however, that he was married on Valentine's Day.

The 83-year-old "jack of all trades" describes his work as a farmer, a fisherman, blacksmith, factor, bus operator, boarding house landlord, hop grower, constable and innkeeper.

He noted in his journal that, "On January 24 of that winter I became 26 years of age and made up my mind that it was about time if ever, to take a wife which I did on the 14th of February, 1854."

He referred to his job as a constable in Bloomfield in the mid-1850s noting, "I done a lot of hard and dangerous work."

"I was never sent on a job (correct) and failed — always succeeded in what I was sent to do."

Mr. Jackson, who held the constable's job for 50 years, declared his dismissal was a political manoeuvre.

"I held that office for over fifty years, in fact until the Reform Government was defeated in Toronto. Soon after, the Tory government came in power all the justices of the peace was put out and a new batch appointed," he wrote.

"They in turn dismissed all the constables then in office, myself with the rest."

Mr. Jackson summarized the loss of his job by stating, "I felt the dismissal quite keenly being an old and faith-

ful servant and without any complaint, only a Grit, for that my head must come off, but I learn from history that is characteristic of the party."

Judge Robert Walmsley of Picton, who wrote the preface for *A Short Sketch of the Life and Times of James Jackson*, observed that his story is a challenge to all.

"It speaks to us of honesty, integrity, fortitude. More than that, however it illustrates a simple straightforward self-reliance. Its message is important for the generation of the welfare state," he stressed.

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