

For the Sunday driver

Today's drive will take us to White Lake in McNab township, a beautiful spot for a leisurely drive in the country — and the place English Canada's only feudal fiefdom was established 160 years ago.

Laird Archibald McNab, the 17th chief of clan MacNab, came to Canada in 1822 to flee his creditors. In MacNab township, the laird established a reproduction of the feudal system, with himself as lord, magistrate and commander-in-chief of the local militia.

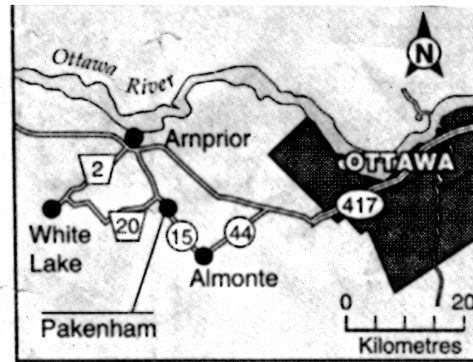
The Scottish settlers he brought with him and others he recruited to settle "his" township assumed that the laird owned all the land — and that MacNab ruled as the feudal lord. McNab did nothing to correct their misapprehensions.

MacNab, who was a staunch supporter of the Family Compact, had a lot of political support behind him. But the settlers were determined to oust the laird. After 17 years of the laird's rule, they drove him from the township in a quiet rebellion. He lived in Hamilton until 1851, and died in exile in France in 1860.

To get to MacNab township, take the Queensway west to where it branches off to Hwy. 17. Follow Hwy. 17 past Arnprior and turn left on White Lake Road (County Rd. 2). Follow White Lake Road all the way to the village of White Lake.

If it's lunch time, try Stirling House, built in 1861. To get there, turn right on Main Street in White Lake. It's about half a kilometre down Main Street on the right.

This building was used for many purposes in its 130-year life, including a post office, shoe shop and general store. Today, it's a craft shop and tea room, where sandwiches, hot meals and deli-



— Dennis Leung, Citizen

cious pastries ranging from pies to cheesecakes are sold. It's open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

After lunch, it's a short walk or drive of less than a kilometre to the Waba Cottage Museum. The four buildings and the artifacts in it are maintained by the township. Admission is free, although donations are accepted.

The four buildings on the site include a reproduction of the laird's stone house (the original was dynamited in 1936, and some stones from the original house were used in the reproduction), a log church, originally the home of White Lake's Temperance Society, and a log schoolhouse.

Interpreters are available to outline some of the history of the area. The museum is open from 1 to 4:30 p.m.

To get back to Ottawa, double back down Main Street and down White Lake Road.

An alternative route is to turn right on Waba Road (County Rd. 20). It's another 20 km to the village of Pakenham. Turn right at the foot of the hill and take Hwy. 15 to Almonte. Turn left on Hwy. 44 in Almonte, and follow it back to Hwy. 17. Turn right on Hwy. 17, and you'll be about 20 minutes away from Ottawa.

Thanks to local historian Peter Hessel and reader Herb Goszwich for suggesting a drive to White Lake.