



BRUCE COUNTY TARTAN HISTORY



by O. E. HEPBURN

THE STORY OF THE TARTAN

The beautiful Bruce County Tartan is derived from the family colors of James Bruce, Earl of Elgin and Governor General of Canada at the time the "Queen's Bush" was surveyed and incorporated in 1867.

Steeped in history, the red, yellow and greens depict not only the Bruce Clan Tartan but the beautiful foliage of millions of trees that cover the area, the white and deep blue of the glistening waves washing the 367 miles of shoreline bordering Lake Huron and Georgian Bay as well as the many fresh water trout streams that cover the area.

The Bruce County Tartan is registered in Edinburgh and patented in Canada and may not be reproduced without permission.

Bruce County virgin wool tartan, ties and souvenir giftware are available in leading stores in Bruce County.

A history of the Bruce County Tartan was written by Mrs. Gordon Hepburn in 1974 and put on sale in 1975.

In 1974, the Bruce County Tartan Committee decided to sell jewellery items to supplement sales. They decided to sell these items themselves. All items are handmade. The salesman, Mr. Weiler was not pleased to not have right to sell jewellery and resigned as salesman. His resignation was accepted. He has never ceased to claim the Committee owes him money but legal advice proves him wrong.

Recently in the Walkerton Herald-Times, someone wrote up about the Bruce County Tartan, Gifts and Souvenirs. The writer forgot to mention just who the promoters were, of the Tartan, Gifts and Souvenirs.

Going back several years, before 1973, Anna (McDonald) Meyer had the rights to sell the then tartan. Then in 1973 the writer was verbally hired to work as salesman for the Bruce County Tartan Committee, five women representaives, who now

had control of the selling of the Bruce County Tartan, Gifts and Souvenirs.

On January 23, 1974 the writer signed an agreement to be salesman and sales manager of the selling of the Bruce County Tartan, Gifts and Souvenirs. The agreement was drawn up and signed by Mrs. D. B. Blue and Mrs. Earl Busch, and by me, and the agreement was for five years, and I was to receive 50% of the net profits of everything sold, Tartan, Gifts and Souvenirs.

Things went along quite well, and after calling on about 100 places, I created about 50 regular customers for the Bruce County Tartan Committee.

Each day I would make about 10 calls, take orders, and the next day I would deliver the order from the stock room (of my home), which I received no rent for whatsoever. This sure was a lot of slugging, for all of the merchandise sold were mostly ceramics and heavy.

After several months of "slugging" and promoting", many of my customers would either phone me, or ask me on my call, where the jewellery items were.

Unknown to me, the Tartan Committee brought out a jewellery item, of many varieties, made with a little Bruce County Tartan showing. This was made by a friend of ours, who was instructed by the Committee, not to supply any other person, or persons, for they had the sole rights to produce, manufacture and sell.

In the first 15 months, the writer sold \$13,132.01 of Bruce County Tartan, Gifts and Souvenirs, which I received \$1,674.02 commission. Take about \$800.00 out of this for gas, oil and not counting wear and tear on the car, or clothing, or nothing for meals, I just had to be the most dedicated person in Bruce County, to work for so little money, and I was, until!

Then Would You Believe,— at one County Council meeting it was brought out that the Tartan Committee and L. J. "Sparky" Weiler had sold \$17,491.02 in their first year of operation.

Then why did I not receive commission on the difference from \$17,491.02 and \$13,132.00 which is \$4,359.02 or a commission of about \$400.00, which I did not receive. The late Bruce County Warden, Albert Worrall,

could not understand why the five committee women did not pay me commission for every item, a sthe agreement read, not keep one gift orsouvenir item, commission for themselves. He told me in person he would try to collect for me. However, the poor guy took real sick and passed away.

For the Life of Me—I just can not understand how anyone,

1976
Typical
Complaint

Note—not Bruce County
Tartan