

OBITUARY

Lived in Acton Nearly 15 Years

Mrs. Nina Naomi McLean of Sarnia, British Columbia, passed away in Rest Haven hospital, Sidney, B.C. on March 31. Mrs. McLean lived in Acton for nearly 15 years and was a subscriber to the Free Press for the last 27 years.

Mrs. McLean, who was born in Surrey, England, was in her 78th year. She moved to Sarnia, Vancouver Island, 11 years ago. Her husband, John McLean, predeceased her in 1938.

She leaves to mourn her passing one daughter, Mrs. Rae Kerr of Sarnia and three grandchildren, Reggie, Dennis and Barry Kerr.

Halon's Pages of the Past

Letters of Lowville's Thomas Coulson Continue To Shed More Light on History of Nelson Twp.

BY GWEN CLARKE

This week we continue with extracts from letters written by Thomas Coulson of Lowville, which throw considerable light on conditions in Nelson Township almost 90 years ago.

June, 1866. To a sister in England.

"I think we will have pretty good spring crops but fall wheat was so badly killed farmers will have their bread to buy. I think the time is past for Canada being the great wheat-producing country she once

was. Farmers will have to turn their attention to stock raising and cereal grains. The manufacture of cheese is engaging the attention of farmers and will pay better than growing wheat. A good cow will make \$2 a week for four months by selling the milk. Two cheese factories have started this summer, one at Milton and one at Lowville. Lowville gathers about three ton of milk in a day."

August, 1867. To brother and sister in England.

"We have had a very changeable winter, plenty of snow but little good sleighing. There has been much sickness. Old Mrs. ... who has been going to die once or twice a year for 15 years has succumbed at last. Mrs. Featherston of Lowville died very suddenly two weeks since of malignant sore throat."

We are well at present and hope you enjoy the same blessing. Jeremiah is working out. He has \$13 a month all winter, and \$14 offered for the summer. We were pleased with your photography. My mother says she will send her likeness and

some more of our brothers and sisters in my next letter."

September 1866. To brother-in-law in the U.S.A.

"I am sorry you won't be able to get over to the Provincial Exhibition in Toronto this week. The Fenians talk of coming to help us run the Exhibition. I wish they would stay home. If they come I hope good accommodation will be provided for them all and they be made to adorn large picture frames kindly provided by the Government for such worthies."

April, 1868. To brother and sister.

"We had a very dry summer last year. I never recollect one so dry. The old saying 'The Indian's winter no come till swamps are full' was wrong for once. We had no fall rain at all."

"We decided to dig another well. We started last fall but did not finish until March. You will understand why when I tell you we dug down 90 feet. Stone was quarried for it and it took as many loads of stone as it will ever go dry although there is only 28 inches of water."

January, 1867. To friends in England.

"We had a very sad accident here last week. Three brothers were cutting sawlogs between here and the Sixteen. One brother was felling a tree in the opposite direction to where the two were sawing. The tree in going down struck a 'dry pine. It rebounded, broke off, and fell on one of the sawers, killing him instantly. His name was Elson, 20 years old, and due to be married in about a week."

March, 1872. To brother-in-law in the U.S.A.

"John Peart was married again yesterday so the young people thought to give him a chivaree of musical entertainment, to show their respect to the newly married couple. About 30 performers took part including several negro minstrels. The minstrels had a large 'tambores' in the form of a six-foot circular saw. It produced very able music. I can assure you, Tom, that 'playful' was the good service. The trumpets were tin dinner horns. There were fiddle players too and many others. My power of description utterly fails me in this case so I will only tell you that they must have satisfied John Peart for he

came out and gave them \$2 to drink his health."

December, 1870. In this letter Thos. Coulson speaks of a trip to Muskoka to inspect free government land. "Jerry, Will Coulson and myself took the cars on the Northern Railway to Barrie. Then the steamboat across Lake Simcoe to Washago. Then the Stage to Gravenhurst and finally the steamboat to Bracebridge."

"We were then within a few miles of free grant land. It is not such a bad country. A married man can get 200 acres free of charge but must commence settling duties within six months. Brother John took up 200 acres."

In a later letter the writer says that John, Jerry and Hubert took up 500 acres between them in the Muskoka district.

April, 1868. To friends in England.

"John Hewson will have written you about the melancholy event in Uncle James' family by which Cousin John's wife and son perished in the flames of their burning home. The child's body was wholly consumed and only a portion of (poor Jane was rescued. The house was divided into two parts but with only one staircase between them."

"John heard screams of 'Fire' and rushed upstairs to rescue Jane and the baby but was unable to find them. Apparently they fled to escape through the other part of the house and were trapped by the flames."

Thomas Coulson's account of his own family life after his marriage is tragic, to say the least. And yet so typical of the times. In 1865, he writes happily of his marriage on June 21, to Margaret Addison. Later he mentions a little daughter Elizabeth (Lily) who at the time of writing was 10 months old.

Five years later, in September, 1870, he writes to a married sister in England "My heart is sad as I mourn the loss of my dear wife who died August 16, in the hope of a joyful resurrection. In the midst of my sorrow I have the consolation of knowing she died happy in the Lord. Margaret took cold in March and although we had the best doctors in the county, Dr. Dice and Dr. Freeman, she gradually grew worse. At times she appeared better and would hope to get well, but these hopes would be dashed to the ground when she took a turn for the worse and we saw with pain and sorrow her we loved daily sinking. So soon, alas, to fill a consumptive's grave."

"Poor Margaret lies, in the English Churchyard between my father and her father, the three lots in a tier. I have one child, little Lily, three and a half years old."

Thomas Coulson also died young, when the little girl was only ten years-old. Previous to his death he went to England and in a letter to his mother gives an account of his experience on the trip.

"I write this on board ship between the Isle of Man and Liverpool, making something over 11 days passage. We had not a pleasant trip for the time of year as you will see by notes each day. We left Quebec, June 10, on board the Scandinavia. She is 300 feet long and the main mast 110 feet high. She is a million ship, with iron masts."

June 11. A fine day. Attended Divine service in the Saloon. After dinner wind began to blow and towards night many passengers were seasick. Out of our berth of 20 I

was the only one out for supper. Log marks 310 miles for the day.

June 12. Wind blows from the east with fog and rain. Ship pitching badly and occasionally ships a sea. Most passengers seasick. What with children crying and people trying to throw up and can't, it is a state of great discomfort below and above deck. Log for day, 210 miles.

June 13. Very cold. Foggy. Ship making only half-speed. Impossible to see length of ship. Stay on deck and you get half drowned with spray. Only 160 miles today.

14th. Cold and foggy. Captain has not got an observation for a day or two and is anxious. Does not know when he has encountered such fog. Afraid of ice. 180 miles today.

15th. Passengers all on deck enjoying themselves. Sickness all gone. 150 miles today.

16th. Misty rain, disagreeable day. Log—295 miles.

17th. Morning opens misty but clears away about noon. Log, 295 miles. The rest of the letter is missing.

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AUCTION SALE

40 Head Dairy Cattle; New Power Machinery, Dairy Equipment, Farm Implements, Furniture

The undersigned have received instructions from

GEORGE A. EWING

To sell by public auction at his farm, lot 27, 6th line, township of Nassagaweya (Blue Spring Line), 2 miles south of No. 7 Highway, 3 miles south-west of Acton, on

SATURDAY, APRIL 16

Commencing at 12 o'clock, the following:

REGISTERED HOLSTEINS—3 reg. Holstein cows, fresh; 3 reg. Holstein cows, due in May; 2 reg. Holstein cows, in full flow; not bred; 2 reg. Holstein cows, in full flow, bred Jan.; 1 reg. Holstein cow, bred in Oct.; 1 reg. Holstein cow, bred in Nov.; 5 reg. Holstein heifers, under 9 months old.

REGISTERED JERSEYS—2 reg. Jersey cows, in full flow, bred Jan.; 1 reg. Jersey cow, in full flow, bred Dec.; 1 reg. Jersey cow, in full flow, bred Nov.; 2 reg. Jersey cows, in full flow, bred in May; 1 grade Jersey cow, not bred; 1 grade Holstein cow, bred in March; 2 grade Holstein heifers, 15 months old. Maple Unit and Toronto District sires used in this herd. Breeding dates and pedigrees given day of sale.

Poultry—100 heavy hens; 9 Pekin ducks; 6 Mallard ducks.

TRACTOR, TRUCK AND IMPLEMENTS—Allis Chalmers ACWD 45 tractor, like new; Ferguson tractor, 53 model, 11-28 tires New Holly land hay baler with power take-off, used 1 season; Int. combine with motor, 6 ft. with pick-up and clover screens, just overhauled; M. H. fertilizer grain drill, 15 disc; mower lift; 7 ft. Ferguson power mower; New Idea manure spreader on rubber, tractor type; 2 rubber tired wagons with flat hay racks; Allis Chalmers 3 furrow tractor, plow, hyd. lift; Ferguson plow, hyd. lift; Deere hyd. pow. er disc; Ferguson adj. spring tooth cultivator; M.H. side delivery rake; new; Woods' oil roller; 10' Fleury grain chopper; 6' M.H. double disc; 5 electric motors from one-quarter to three-quarter h.p.; 2 section saw; harrow; May-Grath grain screw; 1951 Mercury 1 ton truck, 8 ply tires, canvas canopy top; Gurge electric milker with motor and 2 surge units; 1 Wood unit Veg cream separator; Moffat water pail heater; Challenger fog sprayer; power paint sprayer; set sleep sleigh; steel land roller; scales; bag truck; set tool shed 10x12; rubber tire wheelbarrow; 2 trailer axles with wheels and tires; grain bagger.

FURNITURE, ETC.—2 leather couches; 3 occasional chairs; 3 piece light mahogany bedroom suite; 2 kitchen tables; odd chairs; 4 piece wicker set; 3 lawn chairs; 1 verandah glider; 1 oak office desk; typewriter desk, walnut; 1 bed chesterfield; 1 walnut bed, spring, spring mattress; 1 deep freeze, Frigidaire, 15 cu. ft.; 1 2-burner Coleman camp stove; 1 2-burner with oven electric stove; 1 electric stove, 4-burner, Frigidaire, 1 Coldwall Frigidaire, 9 cu. ft. All on 25 cycle, 1 rug, 9x14, and under mat; 2 rugs, 5x7.

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