

OVER CENTURY OF SETTLEMENT FOR DOLSON FAMILY HERE

This article was written by the late Hon. Duncan Marshall and appeared in the Family Herald and Weekly Star in August, 1939. It is an intensely interesting story of a pioneer family, typical of many Ontario "family histories."

To bring the story up to date, there have, of course, been changes since Mr. Marshall wrote his article. Alkin Dolson, last of the original family died two years ago, and his son Harold sold his farm this spring to Allan Beardmore and now lives in town on Charles Street, in a house he bought from Joseph Gibbons.

T. O. Dolson increased his property by buying Joseph Dolson's farm and Frank, a high school student in 1939, now works in partnership with his father and is himself married and father of a little girl.

Albert Dolson turned his farm over to his son Herb when he married and bought the Petch farm. He too has just retired and moved this week to Georgetown where he purchased a house on Market Street where Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Thompson formerly lived. Another son, Howard, who has just married Mildred Eason, will continue on the farm.

Clarence Dolson has moved to a nearby farm purchased from Henry Clarridge and his son Clure is farming the home property.

Donald, son of S. R. A. Dolson, stayed with his father on the farm, while brother Keith, an OAC graduate is still closely allied to farming as a salesman with Canadian Industries, Ltd. He lives in Guelph.

It is not uncommon to find a century of settlement in farming in Ontario. It is not often, however, that a single settler, who came into the woods as a pioneer in agriculture, is represented on the same land in the same neighbourhood by a dozen or more successful and progressive sons, direct descendants of himself, after a period of more than a

hundred years has passed.

Chingacousy township, in the county of Peel, was surveyed in 1818 and that same year William Dunn Dolson came up from the State of Pennsylvania to the town of St. Catharines to seek his fortune in the British colony north of the new American republic. This young man belonged to a Dutch family from Holland, whose name was Van Dolson but had dropped the Van in their move to the new world. Four years later, 1822, Wm. D. Dolson married Miss Margaret Plummerfelt and with his wife settled on Lot 17, 5th Line west, in this township just opening to settlement, the crown deed to this lot being a possession of the bride. This young man was evidently well qualified for the hardships of pioneer life and took to the clearing of land and the acquiring of more farms in a way which soon marked him as one of the most progressive settlers in his neighbourhood. He thoroughly understood the cropping of new land and the planning of farming operations, by which the proceeds of such crops could be utilized for the clearing of more woods and the widening of crop areas.

Those were the days when most farm work was done by hand and the labourer was paid upon the basis of his work. A man who could follow a saddle and tie all the cuts was paid \$2 per day. If it took two men as it often did, to bind what one cradler cut they were given \$1 per day each.

Horse Follow Oxen

The logging and early cultivation was done by oxen but W. D. Dolson was one of the first settlers to purchase horses, and with his enterprise soon had several teams at his command. Some years later, as many as six or seven spans. His work was always done in a methodical fashion and one of his rules was that while the teamsters cared for their horses they fed no grain, all the grain being fed by himself so that each horse might be rationed according to its need and no grain wasted. That after all, was the secret of the success of pioneers. They eliminated waste as largely as possible and planned and saved so they grew into a competence.

W. D. Dolson did more, however, as he had the sort of enterprise which would have made for great success in almost any business. The land claimed his attention and its possession and the farming of it was with him a great ambition. In time he owned and farmed 1100 acres of the best land in one of Ontario's best townships, and so became the master farmer of his district.

In this work he was ably assisted by his family for his ambition was to establish his sons on good farms near by home. Twice married, the first family consisted of four sons and five daughters. After the death of his first wife he married Miss Jane McLaren of Caledon township and the second family comprised six sons and two daughters. Two of these sons died in early youth and a third, Silas, died at 21 years. There were thus seven sons of Wm. Dunn Dolson, every one of whom had the desire to farm, to be settled on land, and they so settled that there are now fourteen Dolson men, only two or three of whom are youths, farming 1350 acres of Chingacousy land, breeding high class live stock, and their farms are fitted out with buildings second to none in any section in Ontario. All live within a radius of from three to four miles. It is truly the Dolson settlement.

A Seed Grower

The men in the first family were John, Wm. D. Jr., Andrew and Stephen. These four farmers settled on Lots 17, 21 and 18 in the 3rd concession and Lot 18 in 5th Concession. The three men of the second family were Samuel, Eli and Hugh Aikin, the latter being the only surviving son of the original William Dunn Dolson, and looking remarkably fresh and fit in the afternoon of his life. He has been well and familiarly known as Alkin Dolson and has not only been a good farmer but has been a useful member of progressive associations to encourage the production of good seed grain and good live stock. He has one son Harold and their farming of 250 acres of land is carried on as H. A. Dolson & Son and he resides on the first farm owned by his father, being across the road from the farm owned by Miss Plummerfelt. This fine old establishment is well carried on and its crops and live stock have been more than ordinary. Alkin Dolson has been a member of the Advisory Seed Board of Ontario for many years and a grower of good seed himself. Last fall he sold 800 bushels of fall wheat for seed, farmers driving trucks from as far away as Owen Sound to purchase seed. Last spring he sold 500 bushels of Erban Oats for seed. He has been also a producer of alfalfa seed in large quantities. Alfalfa has not produced as much seed in Peel in recent years as it used to and he leaves a field uncut for hay but the seed

falls to "set" he then cuts it and puts the hay through the cutting box blowing it into a mow. In this way he claims he will not lose nearly as much through woody fibre as if he harvested it as hay in the ordinary fashion. The machinery on this farm including a power binder and an oil bath mower, are all in excellent condition as this farmer believes in trading in his machines on new ones. When they show signs of giving trouble through wear.

The Dolsons are all dairy farmers and H. A. Dolson & Son are building up a choice herd of Holstein Friesians. Dairy cows, pigs, seed grain and clover seed are the cash crops on all these farms. Alkin is a believer in production for profit in cows and is breeding towards that end. He has two two-year-old heifers testing over 4 per cent and another 3.90 so he is working to a correct purpose. There is on this farm a two-year-old herd sire of great promise. He is a classy individual out of a dam that made a top Canadian record as a junior two-year-old giving 17,801 lbs. of milk with 780 lbs. of fat, and as a junior three-year-old a record of 20,916 lbs. of milk with 895.75 of fat. A sister of this bull made a junior two-year-old record giving 19,320 lbs. milk with 845.24 fat. This young sire which rejoices in the significant name of Project Lodge Rag Apple Piege, was bred by Alex McKinney of Chingacousy Twp. who is the third generation of McKinneys on this farm, and the bull is sired by a son of Mont Vic Rag Apple Piege, by Johanna Rag Apple Piege. Enough said, the talent will understand the breeding. H. A. Dolson is at the present time president of the Ontario Cattle Breeders' Association.

Mrs. Alkin Dolson was Miss Annabella Cation, whose father was a successful Chingacousy farmer and the place offers that quiet comfortable hospitality so highly prized by many friends.

Wm. Harold, the junior member of this farm, is quite as enthusiastic a farmer as his father and takes the brunt of the work when busy

times are on. He strongly favours mechanized farming as far as they can carry it on which includes a milking machine. Hydro power on all the Dolson farms is of great service. Harold married Miss Clarice Stewart, of Acton.

Prizes for Butter

To go on dealing with the present day Dolsons takes one to the home of Joseph M. Dolson, son of Wm. D. Dolson, second son of the original Wm. Dunn, Jos. M. and his unmarried brother, William grew up on this place where their father established an early successful dairy farm. Their mother, a Miss Mountain, was par excellence the dairy butter maker of her day. Her butter, swept the boards wherever it was exhibited, the result being a strong and steady demand for butter from this farm. The local shows were an easy prey and at Toronto Exhibition she distanced all competitors. Creamery butter was not easily obtained in those days, and N. B. Irish, proprietor of the Home House, in Toronto offered a prize of \$100 for the best 200 lbs. of butter which was to become his property. Mrs. Wm. Dolson captured the award and so sold her butter at 50 cents a pound when the market price was a trifle under 25 cents. This prize was paid in fifty cent pieces (200 of them) and the lot was brought home in a basket.

Like Alexander the Great this capable farm woman was looking for other worlds to conquer as she shipped butter to Ottawa Exhibition and captured two gold medals in two successive years. Christie Brown and Co., looking for good butter, made a contract in 1887, with Mrs. Wm. Dolson to take all her butter at a premium of 2 cents above the market price. I saw a number of receipts bills of that year for butter at 26 cents per pound, so 24 cents must have been the prevailing price.

On Jos. M. Dolson's farm Jerseys have been bred for some 55 years as they were highly esteemed for the making of dairy butter. Thirty to thirty-five Jersey cows are now

milked on this farm and they are the mainstay of its production.

Stephen Dolson, youngest son of the first family was another to establish himself on the land and to prove himself a good husbandman second to none in one of the most progressive settlements in Ontario. The splendid buildings which he erected on his holdings are a fine compliment to his ideas of farm life, and housing crops and live stock. His original farm is occupied now by Thomas Oliver Dolson (well known as T. O.) one of the most energetic promoters in Holstein cattle to be found in Ontario. T. O. Dolson has not only built up a fine herd but he has been an extensive exhibitor and an active merchandiser of good live stock.

Cattle Bring High Prices
T. O. Dolson has also made a good few notable sales, Cornucopia Lad Pouch won his class at the
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