

It was only 186 years ago

It was one of those subliminal things that hit me as I was adding a few things into my day timer.

I looked at the date—April 26, 2012.

The first thought that occurred to me was it was my grandfather's birthday. If he were alive today, he'd be celebrating his 115th birthday.

Another thought hit me. It's Brown Farm's birthday!

Yup, the family farm on which I live was acquired by the Browns on April 26, 1826—186 years ago.

My great-great-grandfather, Alexander Brown, purchased the farm for his eldest son, James Brown, my great-great grandfather.

At that time, all the Browns lived in the Niagara area, but land was not available, so they had to travel to find land.

Having one's father purchase a farm sounds pretty generous for the time, but in fact James had to work mighty hard to have this farm. It wasn't just a simple 'sign the dotted line and take possession of your farm Mr. Brown' situation.

Nope, the transaction involving Alexander and James, as well as a Mr. Jacob Cutler, (the first owner of the property, who acquired it directly from the Crown, probably a soldier's settlement) was a little more involved.

Jacob Cutler, a veteran of the War of 1812, fought with the Niagara Light Dragoons, in battles at Queenston and Fort Erie during 1812.

Cutler received his soldier's settlement, free land, then put it on the market. He never lived on the farm. Matter of fact, he probably never even saw the farm.

In 1826, it wasn't cleared. It was covered in a stand of virgin timber which would later be used to build the house, the barns and perhaps even buildings in Limehouse, a short distance up the road.

By the time Alexander Brown purchased the farm, Cutler didn't live in the Niagara area any longer either.

By 1826, Mr. Jacob Cutler, Esq., was living in a place called Madison, in the state of Kentucky.

Ted Brown



And the young James Brown had to travel to that place to acquire the deed to the farm—the same original deed I have at home today.

James also carried a letter of introduction from his father Alexander, explaining his son (James) was acting on his behalf.

James was born in 1799—he was 27 years old, traveling to Kentucky to sign and complete a deal on a piece of property he'd probably never even laid eyes on.

He returned to take possession of his newly-acquired farm, clear some land, build a cabin and make the farm what is today. In 1830, he married Mary Ann Hainer, and in the mid-1830s, he built the house in which I now live today.

During the 1840s, he built the first of the two barns still standing there today.

He raised six sons and two daughters in that three bedroom farmhouse, and served on the local school board for many years.

Now, 186 years later, I marvel at some coincidences of the farm's history.

While my grandfather was born 71 years to the day after the farm purchase was signed, sealed and delivered, the year 1826 holds significance too—100 years later, my dad was born in September, 1926.

So today we say Happy Birthday Brown Farm, a birthday that might have slipped by me this year, if I hadn't looked at the calendar.

Tonight, The Sidekick and I will sit back, and reflect upon the history that envelops us.

We may even tip a glass in celebration of that 186 years of blood, sweat, tears, and the dreams of those who went before me.

Those same dreams that still inspire me today.

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- Playing simple games like "peek-a-boo".
- Singing songs and nursery rhymes.
- Reading to your baby, using picture books and talking about what you see.



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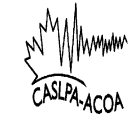
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