

# Seniors' Month - Focus on Flora Barber

By Julie Conroy

I got to know a very interesting person on my trip to St. Lucia. I had seen Flora around

a farm on the third line Esquesing Township, Concession three Lot 21 in 1882 for \$1,250 from John Gordon. They had seven children -



Flora then

the Centre but had never really spoken to her until then.

We shared a room and sitting over a cup of coffee on our veranda she would talk about her early days living on the farm as part of a family of 13 children, I thought it was so interesting that I am writing about her this week to celebrate Seniors month.

Her story starts with her great, great grandfather John McIsaac and his wife Isabella leaving Lagan Parish, Invernesshire with five children in 1868 and sailing to Canada. They purchased

five children were born in Scotland, including James and Margaret. Peter (Mac Sprowls' grandfather) was born in Ontario.

Her grandfather James married Elizabeth Bell from Nassagaweya in 1897. They had two children Allan, Flora's father and Alexander (Sandy) her uncle. When her grandmother passed away her father was four and stayed on the farm with his father. Mac Sprowl is a cousin, and tells me his parents also helped raise young Allan. Sandy was a baby and went to live with

Flora's Great Aunt Margaret (her grandfather's sister). Teachers in those days were not allowed to marry. When Sandy grew up, he had a garage by the school lane called Highway Garage which he ran for many years with his two sons Ken and Barry.

Flora's father Allan was married twice. There were four children from the first marriage to Etta Creemore, and nine more when he married Flora's mother, Florence Troup.

Living on the farm was a hard life with no indoor plumbing or hydro. The house was heated with a large wood stove and another wood stove was used for baking and cooking. It must have been a hard life cooking and washing under these primitive conditions for 13 children. They had hay, and corn plus cattle, poultry and a large garden.

Her father would drive into town to purchase coal at the office where the parkette now is and pick it up at the railway tracks where the Hide House is. Although it was a hard life and the children had to help with the chores, they still had time for fun and played in the fields.

They walked two miles to attend a one room school Dublin SS #8 There were only 25 - 30 children attending the school while she was there, but later when the enrolment reached 50 children the new school was built at Speyside.

She went to school from Grade one to eight

and when she left, she started working at Mason Knit which is now the Hide House. She worked there for 15 years, plus several other businesses in town.

They were a very musical family. Her father and mother both played the fiddle and guitar and her sister Anne played the piano to entertain at the Literary Meetings. They also played at other social occasions where people would dance.

Her father would bring them into town to the old arena for band practice under the guidance of Charlie Mason and later George Elliot, where she played a horn.

Her love of music is with her still and as well as playing the piano she recently learned to play the fiddle, and "Jams" at Aberfoyle and Waterdown every Thursday.

In the fall, her father would take them in the back of the truck to the fall fairs, or if they were very lucky they would accompany him to Acton when he brought equipment to the blacksmith shop on Agnes Street, or the harness maker, which is now where Acton Motors is. Occasionally they would accompany their father to Milton.

Her husband Bruce grew up on a farm in Nassagaweya. Bruce's mother was sick, so Flora and her mother went to visit her. Flora knew his sister Dorothy, who introduced Flora to Bruce.

They married in November 1960. Once she

was married she appreciated in door plumbing, hydro, TV, and other luxuries that we take for granted these days

They lived for a short while on Yonge Street and then moved to Elgin Street where they lived for seven years before moving to their home on Mason Boulevard, better known as The Wartime Houses for 45 years. Her husband worked for Ajax engineering for 32 years.

Flora retired when she was 60, which gave her time to enjoy the grandchildren, music, and also line dancing.

Flora and Bruce had

daughter Kim, has two boys Michael and Gordon.

Grandson Michael was recently married in Cuba, so Flora enjoyed the wedding and a second winter holiday.

The original farm house is still on the property and two of her brothers live in it. Her brother Mac had a home built on the property facing Highway 25, and her sister Ruth built a home on the Dublin Line side of the property. She and her husband still farm the property and raise cattle.

The farm has been in



Flora now

two girls, Karen who has a girl Shalyn and a boy Creed. Their other

the McIsaac family for over 100 years. Quite an accomplishment.

*"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."*  
St. John 4:23 KJV

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