

# Mrs. L. M. McConaghy Continued Forefathers' Ideals

(Honoring his grandmother Mrs. M. L. McConaghy on her 101st birthday July 28, as their Centennial project, Ralph John McConaghy and his wife Jeanne, Centre Street West, have prepared a life story of this descendant of pioneers and beloved teacher. Excerpts from the history appear below.)

**BORN JULY 28, 1866**

July 28, 1866, was a happy day in the Langstaff home on Yonge Street North, Richmond Hill, when to Dr. James Langstaff and his wife, the former Mary Ann Miller, another child was born. She was named Mary Lillian Langstaff, and was the pride of her father who rejoiced because it was another "red headed Langstaff". Her mother, Mary Ann Miller was the daughter of Henry Miller of Thornhill.

Mary Lillian Langstaff was not unlike any other child growing up during the time Confederation was still in its infancy. Little did she realize that one day she would be remembered lovingly by generation upon generation of students it was

her destiny to teach, but it was always her devout wish to do her grandfather's name proud. He was John Langstaff Sr., who in 1809 opened the first regular school in Thornhill, the school which still bears his name. There he taught with a firm but gentle hand.

Memories of her childhood recalled by Mrs. McConaghy include helping to hitch up the horse to the "gig" and going with her father on his rounds. In the winter the mode of travel was a cutter, which sometimes had to take to the fields because of snow-blocked roads. In those days a doctor had to repair broken bones, amputate when necessary, perform operations, and pull teeth at 25 cents each, all at the patient's home. There were no nurses then, a neighbor girl helped if necessary.

Mrs. McConaghy faced death many times. She recalls when she had inflammation of the lungs when just a few weeks old. Her father and her uncle Lewis and another doctor were struggling to save her life. Her uncle

said, "You can't save her, she is dead now," but she wasn't dead and 101 years later is still very much alive. Her father gave the credit to the prayers of the Rev. James Dick of the Presbyterian Church.

Another time she was kicked in the face by a freshly shod horse. In later years this caused her to have an operation for cancer when she was nearly 90 years old.

Mrs. McConaghy recalls going on a moonlight excursion in 1877 from Richmond Hill to Lake Simcoe, which was enjoyed "by all the young folk of the village".

Her father, Dr. James Langstaff studied in his early years under Dr. John Rolph, a prominent figure in the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837-38. He commenced practice in Richmond Hill in 1849 and continued until shortly before his death in 1889. His son Dr. Rolph Lewis Langstaff who was 98 in January, succeeded him.

Their mother was a Miller and the 10th President of the United

States, John Tyler, was her great, great uncle.

**GREAT GRANDFATHER ABNER MILES**

Mrs. McConaghy also recalls another great uncle, James Miles, son of Abner Miles, who came to Richmond Hill about the year 1800. He opened the first hotel on Yonge Street, similar to the one he had operated in York (now Toronto) in 1794, when he arrived from Genesee County in New York State. Between 1794 and 1798 he operated a hotel and general store combined, owned small vessels on the lake, was the first contractor and lumber merchant, operated an importing business and supplied York with meat and butter, etc. He was a man of such importance that we are told he once controlled the governor and the House of Assembly. His place of business was not only the hotel and marketplace but also the town hall. The "Gazette" published the following on December 8, 1798: "The gentlemen of the town garrison are requested to meet at one o'clock

Monday next at Miles Hotel, in order to arrange the York Assemblies for the season."

In 1806 his daughter Lucy Miles married John Langstaff who had come from Amboy, New Jersey. One of his sons was Dr. James Langstaff.

**BEGAN EDUCATION IN 1873**

Mrs. McConaghy was educated in Richmond Hill, starting at the age of seven years in 1873. She went to Mrs. Campbell's private school called "A Seminary For Young Ladies", being taught a little of everything including "Good manners and fancy work, e.g. samplers." She also went to the public school which had been erected in 1851. One of her teachers was a Mrs. Wilby, who taught there in the 1870's and for a total of 29 years or more. In 1906 it was Mrs. McConaghy who succeeded her former teacher when she retired.

**MARRIED AT 21**

Mrs. McConaghy started teaching school at 16, an age when most girls today are thinking of starting high school. She taught until she was 21, when she married Dr. Francis McConaghy, son of Francis McConaghy, a shoemaker in Richmond Hill. Dr. McConaghy, as well as being a doctor, was a qualified teacher. Five children were born to this marriage, but it was short lived. After 10 years Dr. McConaghy died in Midland where he had been practicing, at the age of 33 and a half.

**TAUGHT MORE THAN 40 YRS.**

One of Mrs. McConaghy's unhappy memories is that she was unable to attend her husband's funeral because three of her children had the measles and all were quarantined. She settled her affairs in Midland and arrived back in Richmond Hill to take up residence again. Her children were Rolph Ogden, Charles Alex, Stanley Kirkland, Eleanor M. and Francis Paul. She bought the house of Francis McConaghy on Centre Street West, where she raised her five children going back to the profession she loved. She taught for more than 40 years, being called back as a supply teacher in 1944 till 1947. She was 78 years old at the time she was called back due to the shortage of teachers during World War II and taught her last class at 81.

**DEDICATED TEACHER**

Mrs. McConaghy lived for years on a salary of \$660 a year and sustained a home and five children. There was no teachers' federation in the early days and teachers' strikes were unheard of. Mrs. McConaghy was one of those who was dedicated to the obligation of educating students. It would never have entered her mind to let her little friends down.

She kept a record of every student she taught in Richmond Hill from 1906 to 1940 and from 1944 to 1947 when she was a supply teacher. Altogether they number 2,071. She taught at Vellore and Carrville and at the

Queen Victoria School in Toronto, before her marriage, but the number of her pupils during that time is not known.

**TRIBUTE FROM PUPIL**

At the time of her retirement in 1940 a most fitting poem was written by Shirley Paris, one of her pupils; which expressed the high regard in which this teacher was held by children and parents:

**OUR FRIEND**

Her smile was always so sincere, She cared for us throughout the year. She always tried our friend to be, Her name is Mrs. McConaghy.

She never tried to be unkind, And never would she doubt our part. But always was so light of heart, And always would she play her part.

**MANY CONTRIBUTIONS**

Her many other contributions to the community have not been widely publicized. During the depression years of the 1930's, she helped families on which the hard times had left their mark, providing warm clothing, blankets, etc., anything she could collect or spare from her own belongings. Other citizens sent her donations of good used clothing and the village merchants contributed money for her to use in providing this help. Her door was always open and she listened with understanding and sympathy to all who needed help. This is another reason why this grand old lady teacher and friend will long be remembered in Richmond Hill as a fine and upstanding citizen.

# Carrville Neighborhood News

**Church Anniversary**

September 24 Carrville United Church will hold its anniversary services at 11 am. Rev. Albion Wright, formerly from Markham Village and now from Cedar Glen, will be guest speaker.

At 8 pm in the church, Mr. and Mrs. J. Naylor will show colored slides of their trip to Palestine. These slides are well worth seeing.

Junior choir practice will be held at 7:30 pm September 14. Those who are interested in joining the choir are asked to be at the church at that time. The hour is temporary, for two weeks only.

Sunday school will not begin for a few weeks because of expansion and construction of the church hall. This work is proceeding well, thanks to some very hard working men.

**Showers**

August 30 a shower was held at the home of Mrs. Robert Walker in honor of Gretta Middleton. Many relatives and friends brought gifts for the pantry shelf. Assisting Mrs. Walker were Mrs. J. Ash and daughter Donna and Nancy Middleton.

Following the September 6 UCW meeting at the home of Mrs. Adam Read, Gretta was the surprised recipient of many beautiful cups and saucers. Mrs. J. Barton assisted the hostess.

**Trousseau Tea**

A lovely trousseau tea was held in honor of the bride-elect Gretta Middleton at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Middleton, 23 Seaton Drive, Aurora, September 9.

**Church September 16**

Best wishes also to Miss Rhoda Lamb and Robert Campbell who were married September 2 in Kingsway Baptist Church. The reception was held at the Old Mill.

They will live in St. Catharines where Bob is studying for a BA degree at Brock University. Brian Walker registered at University of Toronto this week and next week begins his course in civil engineering.

Mr. and Mrs. Bob Walker and John, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Read, Joey and Jeannie along with Earle Richards, visited Mr. and Mrs. Bram Van Velden, Stoney Creek, Saturday evening.

The first meeting of the fall for the UCW was held at the home of Mrs. Adam Read September 6. The next meeting will be held October 4 at the home of Mrs. Helen Baker.

Now that the children are off to school and fall meetings are starting, everyone is trying to get organized after the summer activities.

There has been a nip in the air for the past few days which might suggest that one should put the swimming pool away and make sure the children are keeping their shoes on after going barefoot all summer.

Have you any news items for me? Give me a call, I will be glad to here from you, anytime.



For Of Such Is The Kingdom Of Heaven

Seventy children between the ages of five and 12 years enjoyed a busy program at the Daily Vacation Bible School at Richmond Hill Baptist Church from August 21 to 31. The school was under the direction of Mrs. Pat Morley, who had 24 volunteer assistants to conduct two and a half hours of stories from the New Testament with allied arts and crafts and singing each evening.

In the picture above (left to right) Susan Pack, Diane Fraser, Ian Scott and Kent Stevens show some of their handcrafts to Mrs. Judy McKenna, Mrs. Shirley Hails and Jim Morley.

**Tools, Money Taken**

Richmond Hill Police are investigating a break-in at Booth's Service Station, 371 Yonge Street North, which occurred sometime Friday night, or early Saturday morning.

Entry was gained by breaking some glass in the north side of the building and climbing through the opening.

Taken were \$535 worth of tools and \$150 in cash. Police said a store room in the basement also was forced open.

**Neighbors News**

Carrville residents extend to Gretta and her fiancé, Bill Gill, very best wishes for many years of happy married life. They will be married in Carrville United Church.

**BLIND MAN'S BUFF**

Is no game to play with today's news. You have to know and understand it — because what happens in your home community and throughout the county affects YOU intimately and directly. That's why it's smart to read "The Liberal" every Thursday. It gives you more news than any other publication. EVERY THURSDAY, you should be reading "The Liberal".

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**Police Accident Report**

**Children Hurt Running Onto Street**

Two children were injured in separate accidents in Richmond Hill last week.

James Perry, 6, of 397 Centre Street East, a student at Walter Scott Public School, suffered a broken right thigh and a fractured skull when he ran out onto the street from behind a parked truck near his home September 7, about 12:40 pm, and was struck by a car driven by Harry Burton of Markham Township.

Rachel Armstrong, 2½, of 237 South Taylor Mills Drive, suffered a broken leg in a similar accident September 8. Police said the child had been playing in a ditch near her home when she suddenly jumped up and ran onto the road into a car driven by Frank Bishop, 307 South Taylor Mills. The accident occurred about 5:25 pm.

The James boy was given emergency treatment at York Central Hospital, where he was taken by King's Ambulance, and then was removed to Hospital for Sick Children.

His condition there Monday was reported as being "good."

The Armstrong child was reported in "satisfactory" condition at York Central Monday.

In an accident September 9, Philip Stephen Baile, 19, of 5 Trayborn Drive escaped injury when his car went out of control and struck a hydro pole at Newkirk Road and Crosby Avenue.

Police said the youth would be charged.

Another hydro pole took a beating in an accident September 9 at Markham Road and Pugsley Avenue.

Police said a car driven by John McIntyre, 23, of 42 Arnold Avenue, went out of control, mounted a curb and hit the pole. Damage was estimated at \$350.

Swerving to avoid hitting a dog, resulted in \$600 damage to a car driven by James Wright, Nashville, September 8 on Elder

**Where the Record Action is!**

**richmond hill MUSIC CENTRE**

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IN THE MALL

**Wins Gold Medal 'Ex' Music Class**

Congratulations are due Judith Dodson, who won a special Centennial gold medal in the vocal class for 16 years and under during the CNE music competitions. Her interpretation of "Down Here" brought her 87 marks and great praise from the adjudicator.

This first place standing entitled her to compete also for the junior vocal scholarship, in which she was a close second.

Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Dodson, Dufferin Street, RR 2, Maple, Judith is particularly proud of her latest win and her highest mark obtained in competitions. It is her third first place win this year, since she had already stood first in her class at both the Kiwanis and Davenport Music Festivals. Last year she was second in the Peel Festival and won a bronze medal at the "Ex".

Judith is also an accomplished pianist and has won awards in piano classes at several competitions. She is a pupil of Miss Ruth Garson.

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**Town of Richmond Hill**

The Corporation of the Town of Richmond Hill requests tenders for the purchase of nine (9) residential building lots which it owns on Mill Pond Court at the west end of Rumble Avenue.

The Corporation is not prepared to accept any offer of less than \$100,000 and the highest or any tender may not be accepted.

The lots will be fully serviced to the street line by municipal water, sanitary and storm sewers with underground hydro-electric and telephone services and paved roads with curbs, all of which will be paid for by the Corporation.

The terms and conditions of the purchase and the form of the offer may be obtained from the Clerk at the Municipal Office. Offers must be submitted before 4:00 p.m. on September 25th, 1967.

The purchaser will be required to construct dwellings personally with no right to re-sell vacant land.

R. LYNETT, Clerk

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**next time you blow a fuse remember these facts before you blow your top**

- 1 When a fuse blows it is a signal that you have overloaded part of your electrical system... a circuit.
- 2 If your home's electrical system is not adequate to serve all your needs you'll notice other symptoms: Lights may dim from time to time, your toaster will take longer to toast, and appliances with motors may appear sluggish.
- 3 If your home is more than 10 years old, the chances are your electrical system requires updating to take care of today's requirements. There are now more than twice the number of appliances used in the home than ten years ago.

**SOLUTION**

It is not necessary to put up with the inconvenience caused by an out-dated electrical system.

Have your household wiring examined soon. See how easily your home can be modernized electrically.

**BENEFITS**

- 1 You can use as many appliances as you wish at the same time... without giving fuses a second thought.
- 2 You can add any number of new time-saving appliances to your home.
- 3 Your appliances will operate more efficiently and with less strain on motors.
- 4 You can enjoy the convenience of having all the electrical outlets you desire. You will avoid the inconvenience of unsightly extension cords and the attendant risk of overloading the outlet.
- 5 Additional comforts such as electric heating and air-conditioning can be easily accommodated.
- 6 Modernizing your wiring system will make an important difference to the safety and resale value of your home. Re-wiring can be handled with little disturbance to your home and at a cost far less than you may think. Contact a qualified electrical contractor, soon. Or call your Hydro.

**your hydro**

**Richmond Hill Hydro - Electric Commission**

SAM COOK, Chairman

AL HORWOOD, Superintendent

56 Yonge St. N. 884-4466