

THE WEBSTER FAMILY OF OAKLEAF

The following is an account of a branch of the Webster family that immigrated from Ireland in 1812. Nearly all of these immigrants settled around Oak Leaf.

The branch of the Webster family I am descended from came over to Canada in 1812. Their ancestors were English soldiers who fought in the Battle of the Boyne in Ireland and later settled in the county of Wexford, in the south of Ireland. They were loyal to the British Crown and members of the Church of England in Ireland.

There were nine brothers and sisters of a family of nineteen who immigrated. They had witnessed the killing of their father a few years before, in the war between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. They left their homes, and sailed in a ship that would take weeks to cross the ocean, going to a strange land where the land had to be cleared and the war of 1812 was just beginning.

Mary, who was thirty-five years old when they left Ireland and was married to Samuel Copeland, had seven children. Nathaniel, the youngest of the group, was sixteen.

They finally reached Kingston, Ontario. At first things were very different for them. They felt strange in a new land and they could not get work. Their money was running low. They finally showed their Masonic papers and got work right away.

Mary and Samuel Copeland had twelve children all together. She died at the age of seventy-seven. She and her husband and many of their children are buried in the family plot in Oak Leaf Cemetery.

Mattie Webster married Major George Johnston. They lived in Lansdowne Front Township and had a family of eight children.

Elizabeth Webster married John Foley of Lansdowne, and they had eight children.

Margaret Webster married Long John Johnston. Their homestead is now owned by Bert and Helen Williamson. They had a family of nine children. They are buried in the cemetery at Oak Leaf along with many of their children. John Frye postmaster at Delta is one of their descendants.

Eleanor Webster married Long George Johnston. Their homestead was part of Arthur Webster's farm. They had a family of seven children. One of their daughters, Ann, married a Maud and they were the start of the Maud family in Oak Leaf.

Robert Webster, my great grandfather married Alice Boardman. They had a family of eight children. Their homestead is now owned by Bob and Mary Godkin, who have improved the house considerably.

William Webster married Allis Murphy and had a family of seven children. They owned part of Arthur Webster's farm and a lot of land around Webster's Bay at Charleston Lake. One of their sons founded the village of Creemore.

Barbara Webster married Richard Leech. They had a family of ten boys. Some parents having a problem raising one boy would wonder how this could be accomplished. Their homestead is in Lansdowne Front and it is now the home of Eric Webster and his family. They are also buried in Oak Leaf cemetery.

Nathaniel Webster married Elizabeth Johnston. They had twelve children and lived in the Rear of Escott. A grandson, Henry Webster and his wife Nina Pritchard are the ones who prepared a history of our branch of the Webster family that came from Ireland. Bernard, Bob and Ron Godkin are three of the descendants of this couple now living

in Oak Leaf.

Our people who came from Ireland seemed to be a hardy race. They had much to endure in those times, they drank milk from cows, some of the cows had T.B. and Bangs disease. There was a lot of T.B. or consumption as it was called. There were no wonder drugs and not very many vaccinations. Some young women died at child birth. There were quite a few patent medicines, some perhaps good but a lot of them not.

THE MCCONNELL FAMILY

Thomas McConnell was born in County Tyrone, Ireland in 1832 and came to Canada when he was 9 months old. His father, Alec, his mother and an unknown number of brothers and sisters, settled in Cornwall. Thomas grew up and was married in Cornwall to Anna Blackadder. About 1870 he bought lot 17 in the 8th Concession of Leeds Twp. He and his brother, James, built a shanty there, overlooking Grippen Lake, in which they spent the following winter. During that winter they cleared the timber from enough fields to make a farm. Some of the logs were selected to build a log cabin. The rest of the timber was burned in a depression in the ground and the ashes were recovered and sold as potash for soap making.



THE MC CONNELL FAMILY CRADLE

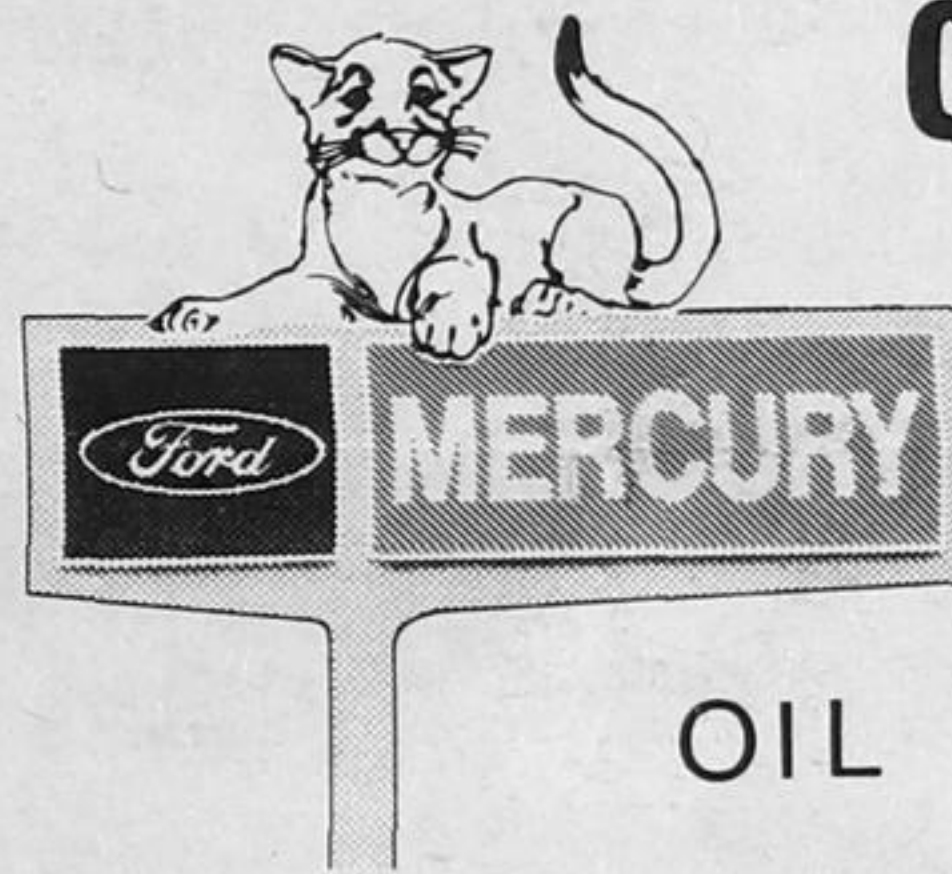
In the spring they erected a comfortable log cabin. The brothers then returned to Cornwall. James remained there and became a prosperous farmer on the site of the present silk mill. The exit to Cornwall from Hwy. 401 is called the McConnell Rd., named for the same family.

Thomas brought his wife, Anna and 4 children to their new log cabin, and among their possessions they brought the cradle shown. The oldest of their children was James, who was born in 1868. It is probable that the cradle was made in Cornwall at that time. (James drowned while working on the wooden bridge at Latimer Rapids, July 1887)

It is made all of pine, with simple rabbetted joints fastened with nails. cont'd on page 31

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