

THE CABOOSE



NEWSLETTER OF THE CUMBERLAND TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY (CTHS)

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President's message (Dorothy-Jane Smith)

I am happy to announce another fine collaboration by a number of members. Again we can count on Jeannie Smith to write an entertaining and informative article about the families whose houses now are part of the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum. We have contributions from Diego Elizando about the recent history of Cumberland as a city and from Gerry Boyer about the nineteenth century Roman Catholic church in Cumberland Village. As it is November, we pause to remember the sacrifices of Cumberland Township soldiers in past wars. Helen Burns, though, reminds us in her contribution to this issue that heroism is also quietly doing your duty day by day even while carrying a great loss!

Our Society

The Cumberland Township Historical Society (CTHS) was founded in 1986. We are a non-profit, volunteer and community-based organization whose goal is to preserve Cumberland Township history.

Our newsletter

The Caboose is published six times each year by the Cumberland Township Historical Society.

Our Executive

- Dorothy-Jane Smith, President
- Jean-François Beaulieu, Vice President
- Bill Woodruff, Treasurer
- Ross Bradley, Director
- Verna Cotton, Director
- Jeannie Smith, Director

Ex-officio

- Randall Ash, Newsletter production
- Dan Brazeau, Website

Our address and local history room

Cumberland Branch
Ottawa Public Library
Local History Room
1599 Tenth Line Road
Ottawa, ON K1E 3E8

Our World Wide Web address

www.cths.ca



On Sunday October 17, 2010, Navan unveiled a restored memorial to its fallen soldiers from past wars. The memorial has been directly in front of the main entrance of the Navan Memorial Centre since 1987 but, a year ago, a group of Navan citizens saw that it was time to restore and relocate it. The Navan Cenotaph Restoration and Relocation Committee of the Navan Community Association immediately launched a fund-raising campaign. We congratulate the community for their work in preserving the story of past sacrifice.

Next meeting of the CTHS

The next General Meeting will take place on Wednesday, November 3rd in the boardroom of the Ottawa Regional Police Station, Tenth Line Road and St. Joseph Blvd. Guest speaker Allan Tweddle will speak on Preserving Petrie Island. Doors will be open at 6:30 for a start-time of 7 P.M. Be sure to bring a friend along. Light refreshments, as always, will be served.

Society calendar



For more information on these and other upcoming 2010/11 events, please contact a member of the executive committee or visit our website at www.cths.ca.

At the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum

Oct. 31 st	Vintage Halloween Party
Dec. 4 th , 11 th , 18 th (Sundays)	Cultural Christmas
CTHS meetings	Unless other stated, all meeting are at 10 th Line Road Police Station 2 nd floor Boardroom. Doors open by 6:30 and start time 7:00 pm.
Nov. 3 rd	Allan Tweedle on Preserving Petrie Island
Jan. 5 th	Members will share stories about famous, and perhaps not-so-famous, Cumberland people (snow date January 12th)

Check for events at the Cumberland Museum: www.Ottawa.ca/residents/heritage/museums/Cumberland

The Caboose is made possible in part through a grant from the City of Ottawa.



Contact us

If you have questions or suggestions regarding any aspect of the Society including The Caboose, our local history room or anything else of interest to you or to the Society, you may contact any member of the executive by phone or by email:

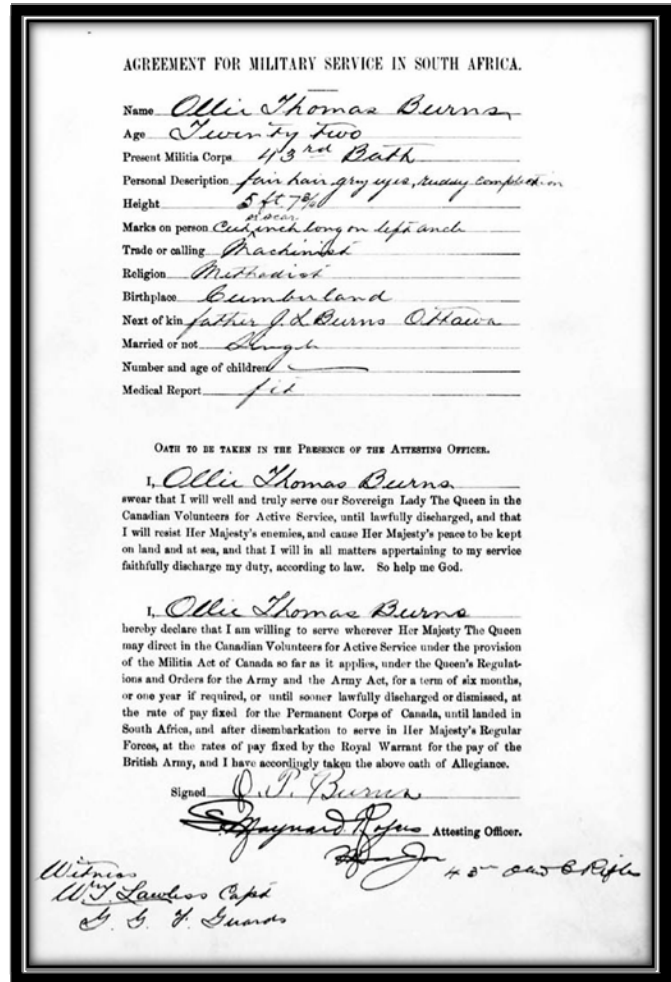
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Ollie Burns - A Soldier of the South African War

by Dorothy J. Smith

The Navan War Memorial preserves the names of 23 young men who have died in the wars of the past century. The very first name commemorated on the Memorial, Oliver Burns, fought and died in an almost forgotten war; the only Cumberland Township casualty from the South African War of 1899 to 1901. Oliver Thomas Burns, or Ollie, was a 22-year old machinist in 1899 when he volunteered. He had been born in Navan, the son of John L. and Jane Ann Burns. About 1890, the family moved to Ottawa where his father opened a hotel—the Navan Hotel.



Recruitment began on October 14, 1899 and Ollie Burns volunteered within the week. Five months later he would be killed on the battlefield. (Library and Archives Canada, attestation papers)

Private Burns signed up with the 2nd (Special Service) Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment for an enlistment period of one year or the duration of the war, whichever came first. And so, both government and recruits may have assumed, as they did only 15

years later in August 1914, that it would all be over by Christmas. Ollie left Canada on October 30, 1899, arriving in South Africa at the beginning of December. As part of a generation raised on Kipling and magazines such as Boy's Own Journal, he may have been both excited and scared as finally the big adventure began.

The Canadians did not go into action until February 12th. On that day, they joined British regiments in a march across the veldt. It was to be a bad week. February was among the hottest months of the year and the commissariat had provided inadequate water. To escape the worst of the heat, they

The Canadians came under fire even before they reached the crossing and remained pinned down for five hours. Then came the final destructive order from Kitchener. Late in the afternoon, he ordered British troops forward to attack through the Canadian lines. When the bugles sounded and as the British soldiers ran through the Canadian lines, the Canadians cheered and rose to attack with them. It was over in a few minutes as the charge was met with a hail of bullets.

Only with darkness were the Canadians and British troops able to retreat, bringing the dead and wounded from the battlefield. The 18 Canadians killed in that encounter, including Ollie Burns, were interred in a grave dug just north of the Modder River near the position they had held.

Those soldiers were now at peace and the grief and pain was left for those at home. The newspapers would not have prepared them for the casualties. The headline on February 17th told triumphant news of the Boer army in full retreat. On February 20th, the families at home learned that Canadians were to share in the glory for the headlines said "[t]he British have



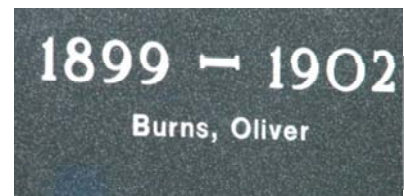
The news of the first Canadians killed in an overseas action came with startling haste. The Ottawa Citizen published a headline that would have shocked all those who knew the Burns family, both in Cumberland Township and in Ottawa. (Ottawa Citizen, February 21, 1900)

Cronje's Forces at their Mercy - Canadians to Fight." Under this, there was a special piece reprinted from The Star about the hard march undertaken by the Canadian contingent. It finished by saying "[o]ur men are standing the fatigue and the intense heat with great pluck and their enthusiasm [is] contagious ... all are eager for a battle in which they can prove their mettle. The heat and dust are dreadful but we are all well."

marched at night across a landscape filled with termite mounds and thorny shrubs. Then they reached a point on the Modder River where the Boer army decided to turn and hold the line. Here, on Sunday February 18, 1900, the Canadians had their first test in the battle of Paardeberg. They were to call this day Bloody Sunday.

The diary of Brenda Turner, a young woman who had known Ollie Burns in Ottawa, brings back to us the hurt and loss that would have been felt when finally

Ollie was not an unskilled soldier for, according to the Ottawa Citizen, he was noted for his marksmanship. But this counts for little when attacking an entrenched enemy across a river in flood and with a strong current. Yet this was Lieutenant-General Horatio Kitchener's battle plan, even though the British troops and guns were in position to made Boer surrender inevitable. Canadian military leadership also failed Ollie. When ordered to cross the Modder River, the Canadian officers chose a route that was direct but exposed to the fire of the Boers who were concealed in trees and shrubs on the other bank.



Oliver Burns is the first name inscribed on the Navan memorial. The four years of the South African war were to be the start of a century in which many young Canadians would lose their lives in war

the truth was learned on February 23rd. A year later she was still thinking of Ollie's loss. But more than a century has passed and Canadians have forgotten this little war. But in remembering the thousands who have died in war, we need to also remember them one by one, including Ollie Burns.

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Courage Today and Yesterday

by Helen Burns

I doubt if we will ever forget the courage and strength of the young Quebec figure skater, Joannie Rochette at the 2010 Olympics. Although devastated by the sudden death of her mother, Joannie decided to skate in the competition as planned. It was what her mother would have wanted. She was a brave young lady and, following her second performance, was rewarded with a third place finish and a bronze medal for herself and for Canada. Like so many, my eyes were glued to our television set throughout the 2010 Olympics. Yet, as I watched Joannie, I was reminded of a tragic event that happened in 1944 when I was a student at S.S.#6 Public School.

My brothers, Bob and Myles Edwards, and I were three of about 20 students who attended that one-room school west of Cumberland. One day, in April 1944, Myles and I had gotten a ride to school and so we were the first to arrive at our place of learning. As our teacher, Mrs. Sara Fraser, had the key to open the door, the two of us stood in front of the building to wait for her arrival.

Sara's husband, Leslie Fraser, was in the Army and stationed at Camp Borden near Barrie, Ontario. Sara and her two children, Grant and Margaret, were living with her father-in-law, Sam Fraser, up the hill east of Orleans. Mr. Fraser routinely drove Sara and his grandchildren to and from school every weekday.

That chilly April morning Myles and I watched as Mr. Fraser's car approached the regular drop-off spot across the road from the school. Sara got out of the car and waited as her children got out of the back seat. However, six-year-old Margaret was fast on her feet. She ran across the road ahead of the others and was hit by a car traveling in the opposite direction. The beautiful little girl was killed instantly.

We could hardly believe what we had just witnessed. Our teacher had just lost her child in a senseless accident. Sara's husband, Leslie, came home to be with his family and together they arranged the funeral for little Margaret.

I believe the accident happened in the middle of the week just before Easter. The school trustee told Sara Fraser that he would look for another teacher to take her place for the remainder of the year but Sara declined the offer. She said that she had to go back because she had to get Bob Edwards prepared to write his Entrance exams. In those days, all the grade 8 students in and around Cumberland had to go to the largest Cumberland school to write and pass a series of examinations in order to enter high school in the Fall.

The strength of Sara Fraser, returning to teach her students after the devastating loss of her daughter, compares greatly with Joannie Rochette. In times of grief and trouble, family members and friends support one another. Yet, we have to admire the courage these two ladies showed as they coped with agonizing losses, one in 1944 and the other in 2010.

L'ancien hôtel de ville de Cumberland

Par / by Diego Elizondo

Abstract – Cumberland's Old City Hall

In the 1980s, Cumberland Township had outgrown its second Town Hall and took a decision to build new in Orleans at 255 Centrum Boulevard. With Orleans the fastest growing locality in Canada in 1988, town officials saw the future was there. The new building was opened on June 16, 1989. It was the work of architect Harry Ala-Kantti and had a large space for council meetings as well as housing a local theatre group, Le Théâtre du Village. Cumberland's coat of arms was on display on the second floor along with a 1986 model of the plans for downtown Orleans. Since amalgamation, the new city of Ottawa has used this building to deliver services to the residents of Orleans and Cumberland.

À partir des années 1980, le deuxième hôtel de ville du canton de Cumberland, construit en 1946, ne répondait plus aux attentes des citoyens et l'édifice devenait de plus en plus désuet. C'est alors que les

élus du canton décidèrent de construire un tout nouvel hôtel de ville et de déménager à Orléans. Une troisième dans l'histoire du canton, où le premier



On choisit de construire le nouvel hôtel de ville près du centre d'achat Place d'Orléans, en bordure de l'autoroute 417, au 255 boulevard Centrum. L'hôtel de ville est l'œuvre de l'architecte Harry Ala-Kantti de la compagnie Pérez. (L'édifice en 2010).

hôtel de ville (construit en 1889) et l'actuel datant de 1946 avaient tous les deux été construits dans la communauté rurale de Leonard.

Depuis la fin des années 1970, Orléans grandit à vue d'œil et en 1988 elle devient la localité à grandir le plus rapidement au Canada! Les élus de Cumberland voient en Orléans l'avenir de leur canton. Pour eux, il ne fait aucun doute que le nouvel hôtel de ville doit être construit à Orléans, « On parlait à ce moment-là d'une future ville d'Orléans » se rappelle Bob Monette, conseiller municipal du canton de Cumberland de 1985 à 1991. Jadis, un petit village de fermiers, Orléans était devenu, le premier choix de milliers de nouvelles familles (surtout des fonctionnaires d'Ottawa) pour acheter une maison et fonder une famille. Déménager l'hôtel de ville du canton à Orléans était une idée avant-gardiste. Rien de moins.

Le 16 juin 1989, c'était l'ouverture du nouvel hôtel de ville. Malgré le ciel menaçant et l'air plutôt frais, l'ambiance était plutôt à la fête. Il y avait plusieurs dignitaires et résidents invités présents à l'événement. Par la suite, le maire du canton de Cumberland, Peter D. Clark, vêtu d'un tuxedo, a fait une arrivée remarquée en arrivant... en calèche!

À l'intérieur de l'hôtel de ville, une grande salle fut construite à pour y accueillir les réunions du conseil municipal. Cette salle fut aussi la résidence de la troupe locale de théâtre « Le Théâtre du Village », organisme parrainé par le Mouvement d'implication francophone d'Orléans (le MIFO). D'ailleurs, les

écriteaux originaux avec l'inscription « Théâtre du Village » sont encore visible de nos jours.

L'ancien hôtel de ville abrite plusieurs trésors. Dans un couloir du 2^e étage, en face de l'ancien bureau de maire Clark, on retrouve les anciennes armoiries de Cumberland qui trônaient jadis à l'entrée de l'hôtel de ville. Elles furent enlevées par la ville d'Ottawa lorsqu'elle-ci prit possession des lieux lors de la fusion municipale, en 2001.

Tout juste à côté, on retrouve une maquette (datant vers 1986) des plans d'un éventuel centre-ville à Orléans, construit aux côtés de l'hôtel de ville. Il est surprenant de voir que la plupart des projets de construction prévus, n'ont jamais aboutis tel: des gratte-ciels (au lieu du Centre des arts Shenkman et du YMCA) ou

l'implantation d'un grand marché intérieur (dans le style du Marché By) juste en face de l'hôtel de ville au lieu de l'ancien cinéma et des restaurants d'aujourd'hui. Nous retrouvons aussi des cartes datant des années 1980-1990 produites par le canton de Cumberland. Sur ces cartes, on peut reconnaître facilement aujourd'hui les ébauches des quartiers comme Fallingbrook et Queenswood Heights.

Au moment de la fusion municipale de 2001, l'hôtel de ville est devenu une propriété de la Ville d'Ottawa. On y installe le centre de service à la clientèle d'Ottawa pour les résidents d'Orléans. Des



nos jours, l'ancien hôtel de ville abrite les locaux de plusieurs organismes communautaires ainsi que les bureaux d'élus du quartier.

Bien que les murs du bâtiment du 255 boulevard Centrum n'entendent plus de débats municipaux depuis 2001, l'ancien hôtel de ville de Cumberland est devenu aujourd'hui l'un des plus grands témoins du développement et de l'intérêt que jouissait Orléans dans les années 1980. De plus, bien que non désigné, il est devenu aujourd'hui un bâtiment d'intérêt patrimonial.

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The Old Cumberland Mission - As Told in a 1897 History

translated by Gerry Boyer

In order for descendants of Cumberland Roman Catholics to properly search church records, it's important to understand that generally they joined parishes in Clarence Creek, Rockland, Sarsfield, Bearbrook or Orleans. Although Cumberland was one of the oldest Roman Catholic missions on the Ottawa River between L'Orignal and Bytown, it suffered a troubled religious history. R.P. Alexis de Barbezieux gives this history in *Histoire de la colonisation dans la Vallée de l'Ottawa*, Vol. I et II, commissioned by the Oblate order and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Ottawa. I have translated here the sections dealing with Cumberland.

In his notes on his first visit to Buckingham (October, 1848) Mgr. Guigues mentions this township [Cumberland] which was then ministered by Mr. John Brady: "A chapel is under construction in Cumberland, but the work has been suspended due to lack of funds. I have encouraged the inhabitants to undertake a new subscription to complete the church and to support the missionary... Pray God that they may succeed! Cumberland consists of fifty Catholic families all told and one hundred and fifty Protestant families. The land is good and almost all deeded. A savanna that crosses the township makes communication difficult."

Mr. Brady had a habit of providing a mission there, but seeing that the Catholics were negligent in providing for his services, he stopped going there. "I

asked them to provide 25 louis, promising them a mass once a month."

A few years later, a dedicated Christian, Mr. Foubert, with whom the missionary and the bishop always stayed, offered a four-acre lot in the village of Cumberland for the construction of a presbytery and a chapel. On August 15, 1855, Monsignor Guigues, always receptive to promoting the development of Catholicism, immediately sent Mr. Michel, a young French priest, vicar of Buckingham, to reside in Cumberland and to organize the area. After having received the hospitality of Mr. Foubert for a period of one year, he had a presbytery built in which he established himself.

The chapel was located three miles south of the village on land owned by Mr. Robitaille, but this location did not appeal to the people of Cumberland nor to the people who were settled more inland. This brought on several debates. The bishop decided that subscriptions would be levied and that three chapels would be built, one in Clarence Creek in the Township of Clarence, one in Bear Brook and finally a third in the village of Cumberland itself. Cumberland subscriptions amounted to £184 and those of Bear Brook £114.

Clarence's chapel was built first and blessed by Mr. Michel in May 1858.

The life of a missionary in Cumberland was no sinecure. Mr. Michel continued to carry out his responsibilities as vicar of Buckingham: he ministered to the missions of l'Ange-Gardien and of Thurso, on the other side of the Ottawa River; he was also put in charge of St. Joseph's, Orleans, the townships of Cumberland, Clarence, Cambridge as well as the township of Russell, as he often visited Embrun 33 miles away. Finally, in the summer of 1858, he was also responsible for covering the very large mission of Plantagenet after the departure of Mr. Hand for Aylmer and, undoubtedly, in the absence of Mr. Alméras.

....

The Catholic population of Clarence and Cumberland, in 1857, amounted to 120 families of which half were Canadian and half were Irish. While the mission of Clarence was growing and prospering, the village of Cumberland seemed destined to irrevocable decadence. Despite his gentle ways, the bishop of Bytown felt obliged to write, on September 20th, 1859, a letter of reproach and warning: "The Catholics of Cumberland have a resident priest and mass every fifteen days, yet they did not give 17 louis last year and only 11 this year. Therefore this is what we have decided: 1- If they wish a resident priest and mass every fifteen days, they will raise 60 louis before next July. 2- If they wish mass once a month, they must raise 30 louis. If they raise less, then no masses will be said, only once in a

while. May they reflect on this." They must have reflected, because the priest stayed with them.

At that time Mr. Michel was no longer in Cumberland. Named curate of Aylmer on September 12th 1858, he was replaced by Mr. Alméras of Curran, who ministered to both Cumberland and Gloucester Townships. On September 13th 1859, Mr. Alméras left for Renfrew; he was succeeded by Mr. Ebrard who came from St-André-Avellin.

Two years later, Mr. Ebrard was sent to Wakefield, where he died shortly after; and Mr. Onésime Boucher succeeded him in Cumberland on March 14th, 1861. The Rev. Mr. Boucher had been a vicar in Saint-Eugène. He was vigorous and active. He began by restoring the presbytery in Cumberland, then he built a large wooden chapel in the village. It measured 75 feet long and 36 wide and was blessed as Saint-Antoine-de-Padoue by the bishop on October 15, 1862. (translation of pages 343 to 345)

...

In a note dated July 1861, Monsignor Guigues noticed the progress of Clarence Creek and Bear-Brook compared with the decadence of Cumberland. At that time there were two hundred and fifty Catholic families living in the townships of Cumberland and Clarence.

Finally, in 1866, a fire, intentionally lit by, apparently, fanatical Orangemen, destroyed Cumberland's chapel and presbytery. This was the final blow for this unfortunate village. Mr. Boucher shook the dust off his feet, abandoned the village and established his home base in Clarence Creek once and for all. Since then, the mission of Cumberland ceased to exist. (Translation p. 525)

Grier-Spratt House: Fact or Fiction?

by Jeannie Smith

Truth lies in fact, documented in written form and preserved as history. Yet, truth lies, in fact! Oral recalling of events varies from one telling to another and exaggerations make great stories. Let's allow the Grier-Spratt house to tell its own story.

"In 1857 logs, drawn by horse from the shore of the Ottawa, were assembled into my square log L shaped structure. My front door opened to reveal a central staircase with banisters rising up to greet bedrooms which were covered by a gabled roof. Windows, quartered with panes, provided much needed

light, as I was centered in a mini forest. I assume a 'Foubert' put me together south of the old Indian trail on their subdivided farmland. The fact of the matter is, the truth of my early years is mere speculation.

Some claim Dr. James Ferguson called me 'home' and 'office' while he awaited the construction of his brick house, kitty corner to my north east. Yet John Darby Ferguson, his son, wrote in his 1940 address to the Cumberland W.I.: *After teaching school for a time to make money to put him through college my father entered McGill University and began the study of medicine, graduating and finishing off in the New York Hospitals and taking up his first practice in the little village of Cumberland in 1861.*" J.D.'s son, Douglas, wrote in 1964: *The young doctor set up practice in a corner room of the Wilson store & Post Office in Cumberland 1861...*

Museum articles suggest that William Grier possessed me from 1874-1914. The year of my construction, 1857, Eliza Dunning, William Grier's wife, died at age fifty. The couple now sleeps at Dales Cemetery. The 1851 census identifies a Mrs. Eliza Grier in Bytown who may be the same family for the children match up (Eliza Jane born in Huntley in 1826, Lavinia born in 1838, William Jr. in 1840, Olive Phoebe in 1846 and George Arthur in 1849 in Bytown). There were Griers here in the Village for the 1861 and 1871 census. James, Brock, Arthur and John Grier were merchants while shoemaker William Grier lived on Lot 14 Concession 1 OS. Beldon's 1862 Map and Atlas shows J.B. Greer residing in Osborne Village (as Cumberland Village was called then) on Lot 13, east of the Wilson Store and Wm. Greer living between the Foubert families on Lot 14 Concession 1 OS.

Hattie Dunning's 1947 account claims that in 1885 the Griers were still living in the village: *[there was] the*



Grier-Spratt house demolition 1977.
Bob McNarry Collection, CTHS archives

Antoine Foubert Hotel where John Watson has his garage now. The next house was one of the Grier homes and was on the corner of the lot where their garage is and Mrs. Willie Lough lived there. On the next corner was the Grier store. Across the corner on the Wilson property was a little yellow house, the first home Dr. Ferguson lived in until he built the brick cottage.

But the Griers moved on. There is no mention of the family in the 1902 Tax Collectors Roll nor in the 1901 Census.

Annie Watson Barnett, who lived to my west, labeled me the 'Paisley-Spratt' house in her 1975 map of Cumberland village. Wilfred Sharkey, born in 1919, mentions the Paisleys in his 1989 taping with Pat Wright, " *the Paisleys lived there when I went to school.*" They're buried in Dales Cemetery: Clara; Jane; John; Helen and Angus William.

I can remember like yesterday, though, when James Spratt and his wife Harriet Fraser bought me in 1924. The eldest of their eight children, William James Spratt, was 25 when he went to off to the First World War. His name is inscribed on the Cumberland Cenotaph for he did not come home. It was another son, Sid Spratt, who was to inherit me in 1941.

Now, he was quite an athlete! Earl Sharkey wrote in his 1981 Cumberland Sports History: *The players who composed the Cumberland Senior club of the 1932-33 season were: George Blaney and Roy Fitzpatrick in goal; Clint Armstrong and John Dunning on defense; Art Watson at centre; Donald and Morris Martin on the wings; with Gordon MacMillan, Syd Spratt, George Watters, Irwin Paquette and Lawrence Dunning as the substitutes.* Sid served as Private 207 Batt'n CEF in WW2 and now rests in peace at Dales Cemetery.

My tenants Arnold and Alta Moffatt and their sons Bob, Jim and Allan shared memorable times within my walls in the 1940s. The smell of Alta's cooking and the sight of her perfect writing, despite her arthritic fingers, will forever remain with me. However, the comings and goings of the Moffatt boys, I cannot tell!

When Martin Hidlebaugh retired as herdsman at Angus Wilson's in 1956, he moved his wife Anna and children Wilfred (Sonny), Ena, Shirley and Veronica from the double house they shared with Everett McCormick's family into my cozy 'nest'. I can still taste Mr. Hidlebaugh's vegetables, grown with care in my garden. Once again a family infused me with life but I was beginning to feel my age.

By the mid 1960s, no one wanted me. I sat empty, hidden in the overgrown lilacs and huge trees. Someone set me on fire but I managed to survive despite a severe scorching. I remember the day in 1977 when Carl Hansen and his crew dismantled my yellow clapboard exterior. They ripped off my gingerbread garnished verandah, tore me to pieces and loaded me onto Drummond's float and paraded me to the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum. There they put me back together.

Truth be told, I have spent the happiest years of my life at the museum these past thirty-three years. As a matter of fact, I have finally found my place in the history of Cumberland.

