

Recollections Of Old Times In The Scotch Settlement

(By T. A. Pratt, Islington)

I haven't written for some time but there are several things about which I would like to say something and hope to do so yet. It seems strange to me to think that it was twenty-one years ago last March that I wrote my first letter and since then a number of people have come into the Bradford world by birth or otherwise and it grieves me to recall, many have gone out. I read a couple of weeks ago, in the Newton Robinson correspondence—I always read the country correspondence—that Mrs. Paul West had arrived in this land of ours about five or six days before I did so perhaps that is why I do not write so often. I hadn't the pleasure of meeting the lady till about twenty-one years later when I saw her and her sister in their home at Steele's Corners. I wonder if she remembers that as well as I do!

What sort of pinned me down to writing now was a coming event that I did not hear about till Friday night. Then Victor Hunter phoned me from the city and told me that a memorial plaque is to be set up in the Auld Kirk cemetery in the Scotch Settlement on Sunday, Aug. 24, at 2.30 p.m. I did not see anything about it in The Witness so I hope I am not in error in speaking about it now. Well, I thought I would write something about the good Auld Kirk and the almost equally good old Settlement and some of its people of the days gone by. When I read the Settlement correspondence these days in The Witness I see few of the old names but times do change and I might truly say the same of Bradford itself.

About 1812-1815 Lord Selkirk brought out about two hundred people from the northern part of Scotland and settled them along the Red River in Manitoba where they had a hard time getting food and clothing. Also the North-West Fur Trading Co. made it very uncomfortable for these settlers, even threatening their lives. So a number of them in 1816 decided to 'escape' from this Red River settlement and try to get to

the older part of the province. With great difficulty they managed to get to the head of Lake Superior and then down into Georgian Bay and to the mouth of the Nottawasaga River—present day Wasaga Beach. They went up the river and finally got to the west end of Kempenfelt Bay. Then down Lake Simcoe to Yonge St. and three years later they decided to go up the Holland River and so at long and perilous last they got to what has since been known as the Scotch Settlement.

In this first group of Scotch Highlanders are said to have been six Sutherland men, some with wives and families, Donald, Harman, William, Robert, James, and Angus; four McKays—James, Roderick, Robert, and Donald; two Matthewsons, both named John, so they were known as Red John and Black John; two McBeths, Andrew and Charles; Geo. Ross, Arthur Campbell and George Bannerman. A little later came H. Grant, W. McCausland, the Frasers and the McLellands. Then along came the Irish: the Wallaces, the Armstrongs and the Algeos who "crossed the river in nineteen" as I have heard Bob Wallace say when feeling a bit 'high' and no beer strike on! the Farises—is that the correct plural?—came about 1821 and the Watsons via Bond Head, somewhat later. I have known descendants of most of these pioneers but I do not know just when the Auld Kirk was built, but sometime in the '20's, and the newer church, I think, in the '50's. Of the Sutherland descendants I knew Donald (Danny) father of Dave, Jack, and the three girls; Robt. (Robbie), father of Ferg., Harry, the late Gertrude, and a younger sister (I know her name but I forget it); Jim, who lived across the road from No. 3 school, and his brother Tom, the barber—I do not know if the Bradford Sutherlands are of the same connection—Alex. the baker, Alex., the shoemaker, Black Donald, Red Donald, etc. The Sutherlands have played a very important part in the history of the Settlement. There have been a number of McKays in the Settlement but I think Henry is the only one left—

at least living in the Settlement. There have been George and his sons, Innis and his twin brothers, sons, Innis and his twin brother, doctor, his aunt, Mrs. Simon Fraser, and others. Danny Campbell had the farm on the north-west corner at Ham Corner. McDonald is another Scottish family with descendants still in the Settlement and throughout the township.

The Frasers came to the Settlement in, I think, the 1820's and had their farms in the south-east section. W. H. Fraser, Simon and Robert were sons of the original settler. W. H. married a McGeary of Bond Head and they had several children. Ken. died several years ago when manager of the Standard Bank in Cobourg; Gordon is a well-known K.C. in Windsor, Ont., and Harry is also a lawyer in the West; Helen, Jessie and Una are the girls. Robt. Fraser's only living child is Ruby, Mrs. John Lloyd, and she and John are living now, I think, in Bradford. Simon Fraser, in my young days, moved into Bradford and lived in that white stuccoed house on the northwest corner of John and Toronto streets. They were there in the early '80's and later moved away. This Mrs. Fraser was a McKay, aunt of Dr. McKay, who lived with them while going to High School.

One of the oldest and largest of these early families is the Faris family of Irish descent. The pioneer of this family came out about 1821 and I think the original farm is that on which Murray is now living. The pioneer Faris left four sons: Matthew, Murray's grandfather and also grandfather of Mrs. Frank Wood (Ethel Sinclair); William, whose farm was that on which, I think, Mrs. Robt. Faris, or son, now lives; James, on whose farm Mr. Tom Brown now lives; and Robt., whose farm was next to the Auld Kirk. Matthew Faris' family consisted of: John, who married a daughter of Moses Watson and whose fine farm was one concession south of No. 3

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**SOME FURTHER
RECOLLECTIONS OF OLD
TIMES IN THE
SCOTCH SETTLEMENT**

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school; natural gas was discovered on his farm and the gas was used in the house for many years; John, when he retired from farming moved to Aurora; his oldest son has been a doctor in Brantford for many years; Peter Faris, whose farm was just east of his father's; Peter's son, Donald, was a missionary in China and his other son and three girls are all away from the old Settlement; W. G. (Will) Faris, the youngest son, remained on the home farm, married Bertha Strong and had three sons, Gordon, Keith, and Murray; Keith, as you all know, lost his life in the second World War while trying to help a wounded comrade; two daughters, Mrs. John Sinclair—Mrs. Frank Wood's mother—and Miss Kate, who passed away a few months ago.

While most of the Settlement people were helpers in the work of the church and Sunday School, the Frascers and the Farises have been outstanding in that regard.

Robert Faris, the youngest of these four sons of the pioneer Faris, had the farm, as I have mentioned, ad-

joining the Auld Kirk. He married one of John Wood's daughters—the John, or Johnny as he was called, whose farm is now owned by Ivan Metcalfe—and their children are all living but the oldest daughter who passed away just after she finished training as a nurse. The other children are Dalton, farming on Yonge St., John of Cookstown, Annie, Mrs. Stone in Bradford, and Gladys—Mrs. Elner Kneeshaw who didn't care to leave the old homestead too far away so she now lives across the road. She is also so fond of her old family name that she named her only 'child' Faris. Now to go back a bit—William Faris sold his farm and moved away and his brother James bought the farm and moved to it from the present Tom Brown farm back in the early '80's. James Faris' family consisted of: W. J., whose farm was just north of Middleton and back of Lorenzo Harvey's farm; Sam, who married May Orton and moved out west; Robert who succeeded his father on the farm, married Miss McAfee and whose son, I think, is still on the farm; and a daughter, Ida.

Another of the early ones was John Sinclair whose son, John, had the farm across the road from John Faris' farm. I remember Mr. John

Sinclair Jr. quite well as he was the first farmer for whom I ever did a day's work. He came to the house looking for my brother who wasn't home and he coaxed me to go out for the day. I didn't know anything about farming and that was the longest and hottest day I ever put in. I was in the mow forking back sheaves. Mr. Sinclair had two children, Ethel and Robert, the latter two years old. This two-year old has been farming for some years—at Churchhill and he married Mildred Todd who had been a young pupil of mine in Lefroy school.

I have written all this about these people because their early ancestors and buried, I have no doubt, in that Auld Kirk cemetery where the memorial plaque is to be erected.

I can't help but think what a fine lot of people those Settlers were—not one who wasn't a church worker or churchgoer.