

McDonald – River Lot 22

Donald McDonald owned Lot 22 in 1870. He was the son of John McDonald, an Orkney HBC retiree who had begun a checkered career with the HBC in 1815 as a labourer at Oxford House. In a very short time (by HBC standards), he became a Trader.

This might have had something to do with the fact that he had married Sarah Swain, his boss' daughter!

Although described by Nicholas Garry during his inspection of HBC posts as a "Good trader – active – steady". John McDonald's stock fell dramatically, when later bosses stated in their reports that he was "stupid and indolent". They implied that he had acquired his status as trader only through favouritism.

Nepotism (using family connections to give friends or relatives good jobs) was not unknown in the Hudson's Bay Company. Sir George Simpson, himself likely acquired his office by the influence of his father. Sir George used his influence to advance (or to hinder) the careers of many HBC employees. Like an absolute ruler, he could also show his pleasure or displeasure in the land grants the HBC gave. A good example was his charging rent on the river lots. For Reverend Cochran, with whom he often clashed, he charged full price for Lots 61 and 62. For a particular friend, he charged "5 peppercorns" per year and wasn't fussy about collecting.

John McDonald was "surplussed" out of the HBC after the merger of the Northwest and HB Companies. In 1823, he took his growing Metis family to Red River. He must have been very industrious as the censuses of the 1830's and 40's show the acreage cultivated as rising and the numbers of livestock increasing year by year. Eventually, he and his relatives held St Andrews River Lots: 22, 26, 110 and 128. By 1870, one or more of these may have been owned by his son, John or his grandson, also John.

John's son, John had the good fortune to have married Elizabeth Anderson, sister to Anglican Bishop David Anderson, with this marriage came a high degree of social status and perhaps wealth, showing that luck stayed with the McDonalds.

Through marriage, McDonald family members have spread out across the region, helping to pioneer Clandeboye, Petersfield, Selkirk and small farming communities in between.

For more information on the McDonalds of Red River check out www/reddriverancestry.ca or the HBC archives.

The Scottish and Orkney roots of the McDonald Family

The McDonald family is one of the largest pioneering families in St. Andrews. There are several branches, but all trace their roots to Scotland and Orkney. The earliest McDonald recorded in the future Manitoba was Archibald, who said a Presbyterian prayer in Gaelic upon his arrival at Point Douglas in 1814 as one of the first Selkirk settlers.

It is noted that he was from Sutherland. It is not that the Scots were being tricky in naming their northernmost county " Sutherland" (literally, Southern land): it was that when the Scots claimed the area, it was already named. It was the southernmost province in the ancient island kingdom of Orkney. That kingdom has always maintained its Viking linguistic and genetic connections to Norway while contributing to the settlement of Iceland, Greenland ...and the Red River Valley!

McDonalds on St Andrews River Lots in 1870.

West Side of the river:

22 - Donald McDonald
#26 - John McDonald (First Hudson's Bay Company Scot)
#35 - Alexander McDonald
#36 - William McDonald
#50 Duncan McDonald
#78 Donald McDonald
#80 Donald McDonald
#81 William McDonald
#110 John McDonald
#125 Alexander McDonald
#128 John McDonald

East Side of the River:

#149 "Widow" McDonald
#191 William McDonald
#236 Donald McDonald
#239 Alexander McDonald
#260 Cuthbert McDonald

The following is from "Beyond the Gates of Lower Fort Garry."

Donald McDonald was born and grew up in the Parkdale district, a descendant of the Red River settlers. His father was John McDonald, who migrated from Scotland as an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company. His mother was Elizabeth Anderson a sister to Bishop Anderson. He married Isabella Monkman, daughter of Thomas Monkman and Mary Inkster who were also Red River settlers.

Many of the McDonalds on the east side of the Red River moved in 1911. Donald farmed in the Clandeboye district and served as councillor in ward 4 of the St. Andrews R.M. for 16 years until his death in 1943.

Donald and Isabella had eight children. Alexander McDonald married Isabel Leask, Mary McDonald married Allan McDonald, Clarence McDonald married Julia Leask, Ethel McDonald married William Moar, Clifford McDonald married Nellie Sabel, Myrtle McDonald married Victor Stockton, Hubert McDonald married Clementine Cavanaugh, and Cecil McDonald married Eva Cavanaugh.

More McDonalds..

Duncan McDonald was born in Lambton County, Ontario in 1851. He spoke Gaelic until the age of seven. In 1870, he homesteaded north of Stony Mountain. In 1885, Duncan married Alice Gillespie of Teulon. Their three boys, Archibald, Edwin, and Andrew were born in Stony Mountain. Times were hard, grasshoppers were bad. Duncan and his younger brother found work at the penitentiary and worked on draining St. Andrews bog. In 1892, Duncan moved to the Petersfield area (where he died at the age of 92 years in 1943). Their daughters were born at Petersfield. Four daughters worked in Winnipeg as domestics for three dollars a month.

Mary (Mamie) McDonald married Dick Leask of Clandeboye, Sarah McDonald married Ted Moundle of Dunara, Lily

McDonald married Hugh McMahon of Teulon, Margaret (Maggie) McDonald married _____, Anne McDonald married Moe Gillespie of Winnipeg. Archie McDonald married Minnie Leask of Clandeboye, and Andy McDonald married Mabel Stoch? of Ontario.

Joseph McDonald married Anne Eveline Beddome, who was born in 1862 at Lower Fort Garry. Her father was Dr. Henry Septimus Beddome, who came from London to York Factory in 1832. He was the ship's surgeon and married Frances Omand.

Eveline Beddome as the daughter of a former HBC officer, went to Miss Davis' School for Young Ladies. She was a day pupil and walked to school with Mary Kennedy. If they misbehaved in school they had to stand in the corner and hold a black board behind their shoulders. This also helped to improve their posture. They walked to church two by two with Miss Davis in the front, and Miss Lane at the rear. They were not allowed to speak to boys. The school food was satisfying. They had good fish, and bread and butter. The meal they detested was bacon. If you didn't eat it, you wouldn't get dessert, which was pudding with treacle. The only candy available was peppermint from Mrs. Kennedy's store.

Life in St. Andrews was comfortable. Carron stoves made of iron kept their homes warm. They baked bannock on top of the stove. Other baking was done in outdoor clay ovens.

Joseph and Anne Eveline (Eva) lived on section 9, Township 15, 4E. They had nine children.

Frances McDonald was never married, Alexander McDonald was a blacksmith and carpenter, and Roy McDonald married Flo McHaffie who was a teacher. Hugh-John never married, William McDonald was mentally handicapped, Belle McDonald never married, Roderick McDonald and his brother Chester McDonald moved to the United States, and Dorothy McDonald married Stanley Kirkness.

*On pages 374-376 in the Beyond the Gates of Lower Fort Garry there is a great story of the MacDonalds and the McKays.

Adam McDonald was born and raised in the St. Andrews district. His home was the corner of Donald Road and River Road. He had two brothers, one was his twin, Robert. Robert was on the east side of the river in Gonor while Adam was on the west side on the extreme east of Donald Road.

Adam and wife Bella raised two boys and a girl. The first boy, Thomas, never married. The girl of the family, Esther McDonald, married Ben Roberts, but they had no children. The second boy, Walter James, was born in 1884, attended St. Andrews School, married a woman named Elizabeth, and lived in Rosssdale. They had eight children, and three were still living in 1980. Esther McDonald, married George Tebay, Isabel McDonald married Jim Tebay, and Victor McDonald worked at Fairfield Woolen Mills and Selkirk Rolling Mills. Victor married Helga Lillian Bell from Hecla. They had three girls. Geraldine Joan McDonald married Larry Davis, Esther Anne married George Vander, and Denise Fay married Ken Mlodzinski.

Taken from Beyond the Gates of Lower Fort Garry