

The Old Train Station News

Newsletter # 121

April 2020

Dear Friends,

Spring is in the air and I can't wait for the snow to disappear and watch nature come back to life. My daughter who spent this winter working in Portugal, says she doesn't miss winter, but my theory is that spring is much sweeter because we have winter.

...

Duncan Macinnes of Ostaig House at Teangue on the Isle of Skye let me have a copy of the following letter to Lord MacDonald from Roy MacDonald of Camascross which was 'translated' by Maggie MacDonald at the Archives of the Clan Donald Centre. was the writer's second language hence some idiosyncratic phrases and problems with the original.

Notorious MacInnes on the Isle of Skye - contributed by Frank MacInnis, Creignish

"Being in a bad situation scarce able to put hand to paper wt...violent reumatism sciatick. My head continually troubles me wt violent's...ples. I cannot stand long in this transitory life. I am confined to bed this year and a half except some...days. No doubt some villains will have th assurance before I am dead to make...for the lands I possess at present.

There is a fellow at Leterfer an Angus McGinnish alias mac ie callumhew, he who gives a bad name to this country. There is not a year but he possesses eight or nine hundred cases of Brandy and Rum from the . . . end of the year. This or his money goes out of the nation and never returns. There is three brothers of them at Leterfer; Angus, Donald and John [1742-1801], a notorious . . . These three have done more mischief to your woods since they possessed your woods than the whole people of Sleat put together and will follow the old ways while in possession of the woods

Good Catl (ie:cattle get good prices in the country this year...were highly bought. I never saw half of the number Drovers coming over to the Island Skye in former years...so yt common rascals have sums of ...they have nothing to touch their riches only if they pay their rents...

I smile as I read the above. Our ancestors fed their families by whatever means they could. I wonder if they continued in their trade or if the Lord banished them from his wood?



Perhaps my maternal 1st and 3rd great-grandmothers will not be slighted by my oversight. I have been working diligently this winter on the pioneer families of the Ohio area. It is a project that never seems to end, only because I get frustrated and drop it for months on end.

The MacInnis families, and there are quite a few at the Ohio, have been making me pull my hair out. The untangling has been a challenge, but I am getting close to my goal with only a few pioneer families left to complete.

The Epistolarion

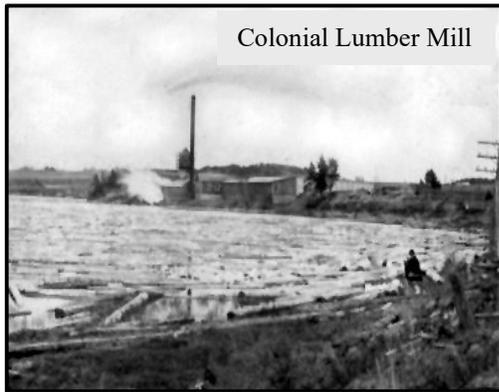
The Colonial Lumber Company Ltd

Lumbering in Antigonish County

In the early 1900s the Province awarded licenses for large swaths of lands in Northeastern Nova Scotia for the purpose of lumbering. By the winter of 1912 lumbering on these lands was in full swing with large operations dominating the small community mills.

The Casket reported in June 1912 that New York capitalist Mr. Walter Dixon had made several visits to Antigonish County and area surveying the area in making preparation for opening a lumber operation. In the Keppoch, extensive timber areas have been leased and men have been at work there since July 1912. "Log houses for use in winter have been erected, and other preparations completed, so that a large "cut" of high-class timber will result." By the fall of 1912, a new modern mill was being built at Gillis Cove, Antigonish County by the Colonial Lumber Company Ltd. under the supervision of Mr. Dewar. Gillis Cove, named for John Gillis who lived opposite, was located off the William's Point Road between the railway tracks and the West River.

According to the Casket, "When the plant is wholly erected it will consist of the mill, a structure 112x20



Colonial Lumber Mill

feet; a 30x44 foot boiler house; a dry house 80x20 feet; engine building, two buildings designated as factories, one 55x20, the second 65x35 feet, and some small buildings, such as blacksmith shop and storage rooms. In the mill will be a rotary saw, gang saws, lathe mill, two butters, planner and matcher, with the driving gear in the basement. There will be three boilers of 100hp each and two engines of 100hp each. The smokestack, of iron, exclusive of the spark arrester, will be 100 feet high. The capacity of the dry house will be some 30m feet of lumber." The equipment for the mill was manufactured by Robb Manufacturing Co. of Amherst, NS.

The Mill was under the management of Walter Dixon who had a large crew lumbering in James River, the Keppoch and other points throughout the area. Wood cut in the Keppoch was floated down the Ohio and West Rivers to the Mill while other logs were brought in by teams of horses. In 1915 a large boarding house was erected on the premises to give their men good accommodations and board as they ramped up their operations. That winter they were running their flooring division at full capacity.

In February 1916, the company reported that they had "produced 455,581 feet of flooring and sold 375,000 feet which was an increase over the previous year. The company was making plans to install further equipment and improvements which would increase efficiency, production and reduce costs." In May 1916, a fire in the boiler house destroyed the wooden roof. The probable cause was a pile of sawdust on the boiler house floor which is a common cause of mill fires. Plenty of men from the boarding house were on the scene and a plentiful supply of water kept the fire from spreading. Fortunately, the damage was estimated at only \$100 which was covered by insurance and the mill was back in operation within the week.



Floorboard donated by the late Mary MacGillivray, William's Point

The lumbering operations kept men busy throughout the county working in the woods, delivering logs to the mills and filling the trains for shipments abroad. Antigonish and James River Railway Station were

very busy as a result. The Casket reported, “A large number of teams are engaged hauling lumber from nearby camps to the station for shipment. Seventeen double teams loaded with lumber were at this railway yard at one time recently. Fulton Bros have two mills at the rear of James River, sawing principally for the Colonial Lumber Company of Antigonish; Grant and Campbell are operating at St. Josephs and shipping from James River; Black Bros have a mill and lumber crew at work at Mayfield and are also shipping from James River. Mr. John Kennedy will drive his cut down the West River to Antigonish and have it sawn here. Mr. James MacDonald is operating near the Gaspereaux Lake and shipping from Antigonish. Several other camps are located in other parts of the county.”

Changes, however, were underway as the war continued in Europe. Young able-bodied men were needed for the war effort and labour was in very short supply. It soon became apparent that lumbering on this scale could not be maintained without a large labour force. By 1917 the operations of the Colonial Lumber Company were wrapped up and assigned to the history books.

**In Honour of International
Women’s Day - A Girl’s Complete
Education**

- To sew,
- To cook,
- To mend,
- To be gentle,
- To value time,
- To dress neatly,
- To keep a secret,
- To avoid idleness,
- To be self-reliant,
- To darn stockings,
- To respect old age,
- To make good bread,
- To keep house tidy,
- To be above gossiping,
- To make home happy,
- To control her temper,
- To take care of the sick,
- To take care of the baby,
- To keep down cobwebs,
- To marry a man for his worth,
- To read the very best of books,
- To take plenty of active exercise,
- To be a helpmate to her husband,
- To keep clear of trashy literature,
- To be light-hearted and fleet-footed,
- To be a womanly woman under all circumstances.

The Casket: Oct 23, 1913



A' Chàisg shona dhuibh uile

News Item: Casket, Oct 23, 1913

Saw Mill Burned – The sawmill at the Glebe Road, Big Marsh, owned by John A and Dan A Gillis of Georgeville, Ant., was destroyed by fire on Wednesday of last week. Besides the rotary saw and edger there was a lathe mill and shingle mill in the property destroyed, so the loss will be very severe on them. How the fire originated is not definitely known. The owners were at work in New Glasgow at the time. The explanation we have of the cause of the fire is, that the mill, which is driven by water power, was left all geared, ready for operation and that the recent heavy rains raised the waters of the river and caused the mill to start and run for days. Finally, friction, due to lack of oiling and care created the fire.

Working in the Woods at Barney's River c. 1920



Left to right: John A Fraser, boss; Fred Kennedy, Lakedale; Duncan Green, Barney's River; Sandy Cameron, Hopewell; Neil Watson, Musquodoboit; John Paul MacDonald, Sunny Brae; Jimmy Dean, Dean's Settlement; Pat Shea, Guysboro; Kenny Green, Barney's River; Willie J Dunbar, Lorne; Thomas Dean, Dean's Settlement; Willie Duncan Chisholm, Lorne; Danny Ross, Barney's River; John Willie Green, Barney's River; Joe DeRoche, PEI; Leonard Anderson, Sunny Brae. On the roof of the shed, Dan Philip Robertson, Hopewell.

"If you've never been thrilled to the very edges of your soul by a flower in spring bloom, maybe your soul has never been in bloom."

— Audra Foveo