

# Macdonald Papers Go Back 140 Years

BY NEIL A. MATHESON  
Provincial-Farm Editor

A PACKAGE of old papers concerning Sir William C. Macdonald, of whom I wrote last week, reached me by an unusual route. It came from Wallace Ward, whose father, William Ward, was for 40 years secretary, bursar and comptroller of Macdonald College which was founded by William Ward found them among his father's papers and mailed them to his friend, Burton Lewis, executive editor of this paper, who has made them available to this column.

There are so many interesting items I scarcely know where to begin, but I'll go along with the indentured Knighthood since it is so unusual. In proposing the letter to Macdonald from Major J.K. Drummond, secretary to the Governor General who was the Earl of Minto.

I have the honour by direction of His Excellency the Governor General, to transmit to you herewith a packet containing the Letters Patent of Knighthood bearing date the 5th of January, which Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen has been pleased to confer upon you by the letter enclosed herewith, dated 16, 1850.

Two months previously Mr. Macdonald had received a letter from Major Drummond informing him that for two pounds, 11 shillings and four pence will be payable to the Home Office in London before the Letters Patent can be proceeded with. The Knighthood was conferred at the opening of some of the new buildings at McGill University to which he had contributed as generously.

## Seeking Employment in New York

A LETTER from W.C. Macdonald to a New York firm in December 1851 seeking employment said in part: "In reply to the advertisement for an Assistant Bookkeeper... I have the honor to inform you that I am in possession of that capacity in Boston for upwards of two and one-half years having a general knowledge of business, solicits the attention of the party mentioned... I am 21 years of age and feel confident he can give perfect satisfaction."

"Should an interview be desired a note dropped into the Post office will promptly inform him that I am ready to go. Also notice to the New York firm was a recommendation from his Boston employers, George H. Gray and Company, saying among other things:

"WE CAN recommend him to you for industry, integrity, and as capable of doing any work which he is suitably represented in himself qualified," which is last about as good a recommendation as any young man could expect.

There is a receipt for three pounds for passage from Charlottetown to Boston on the schooner Swift, dated August 16, 1851. A receipt dated Boston May 11, 1849 is for two shillings nine pence, which is for a bottle of hair cream. Another receipt is for \$1.50 toll tax, plus 20 cents costs from Ward Nine in the City of Boston under date of December 2, 1850. A New York receipt for four weeks' board at \$1 a week, which would be a fairly high-class lodging at that time.

There is an invoice showing the purchase of 1,500 barrels of flour at \$2.20 per barrel, which is a recorded profit of 10 shillings and 11½ pence. The value of the pound in dollars and cents is not given but I would estimate it at \$2.20 as the original investment of 1,035 pounds returned a profit to the young commercial man of more than 200 per cent. It is close to the rate of exchange that would have been had in London.

## Marriage Settlement Document

ONE of the most interesting documents in the packet was an old marriage agreement written in beautiful long hand between Donald McDonald and Anna Matilda Brecken. Sir William's parent.

The agreement is long, wordy and cumbersome but I want to quote a few passages to indicate the involved language which lawyers indulged in at that time. Note there is virtually no mention of a generous sum of capital letters. The terms, for example, were indicated like this:

"An Indenture bearing date the day next before the day of these presents for the term of one year commencing from the day next before the date of these presents."

The settlement conferred on Anna Matilda Brecken from the said Donald McDonald the sum of 200 pounds annually plus some 20 acres of land by the name of St. Martins within the bounds and lines intended and described in the same deed of instrument being parcel of Lot or Township Number thirty-five (35) in Bedford parish and Queens County in the said Island TOGETHER with all Houses, Buildings, Gardens, Orchards, Land Tenements, Meadows, Pastures, Fisheries, Waters, Watercourses, Woods, Mill Races and Underwoods."

"IN TRUST to permit and suffer her the said Anna Matilda Brecken for and during the term of her natural life in case she shall outlive and survive the said Donald McDonald to receive and take to her own and sole separate use out of the rent issues and profits of the said Lands Hereditaments and Premises or such part thereof as she shall appoint for that purpose One Annuity Yearly Rent or Sum of ten hundred pounds of lawful Current Money of the said Island payable half yearly upon her own receipt without the control of any afterbirth husband."

A huge document, the agreement contained thousands of words, many of them almost impossible to understand in relation to present day language. Some of the younger people around this office suggest that marriage settlements must have been awfully involved in those days. Naturally they prefer modern methods.

There is also an old pass which was to admit the bearer to the Legislative Council on Thursday the 10th day of February 1851 and it was signed by Donald McDonald, the Council president.

## Made Potato Diggers, Cow Bells

AS ALFRED WEATHERIE, Cumberland Street, tells me "My grandfather Weatherie who was born in 1815, invented the Weatherie digger and it was known by that name for many years. I saw one about 35 years ago. It was a heavier digger with a hough front which ploughed out the potatoes, and the beater tossed them out of the furrow. He invented several things and Richard Creed, Albin told me his father once saw a gear-shift lever that Greatergrandfather exhibited at Georgetown." Mr. Creed had suggested the device should be used where it would be secure, but an American visitor to the fair saw the equipment and soon afterwards the same thing came out with a patent, Mr. Creed told him. At that time farm machines were not equipped with levers for shifting gears "which was strange because the device was simple," Mr. Weatherie observes.

BACK IN 1851 Mr. Hasegard gathered up some exhibits to send to the Crystal Palace Exposition in London, England and the Weatherie man had sent several. "My Greatergrandfather was troubled by a Swiss bellmaker and also a blacksmith. A great many Island blacksmiths learned to work from him," Mr. Weatherie told me. "His cowbell was a very simple thing; it didn't just clunk, but had a carrying bell tone and could be heard and distinguished as far as one mile or more long distances. He used to buy those bells and there still are a few left who remember them." Mr. Weatherie assures me.

The cow bell played an important part in the farm life of the past. Then cows would go to the woods to forage at times, or in their place where they had to be hunted and rounded up for milking time. A ringing bell tone was used to locate in locating the herd, though there were a few use old bell-tongues that could stand an almost perfectly still after they had finished grazing, that it was almost impossible to find them.

# Talks On Farm Education Scheduled For April 5

This week has demonstrated that it takes more than a few fine days to eradicate winter in this province. Moderate snowfall with high winds produced complicated traveling. The Federation of Agriculture had planned an executive meeting for Monday postponed it to Tuesday and Wednesday of that day and at the moment the prospects are still not good. This meeting was to concern itself with the brief to be presented to the executive council and a number of other matters of more than ordinary importance. However, the days go by and each one brings us closer to the joys of summer. It is perhaps quite difficult to realize that it is possible for the earth to be green with grass within 90 days but miraculously happen.

**FARM EDUCATION**  
A resolution passed at the annual meeting of the P.E.I. Federation of Agriculture in January directed that a conference on education for farm people be held for April 15 and planning is well advanced. It is hoped to obtain the views of a cross section of interested people. Panels are planned which will bring together the ideas of farmers, of farm women of a young group of high school and vocational school principals, and extension workers.

In addition to large role of radio, television, and agricultural colleges will not be neglected. Scarcity of and lack of interest in education for farming is notable in this province and is to some extent one of the major blocks in farm progress. The future of farming appears to be one in which it will hardly be possible for anyone to know too much about their job.

**AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE**  
The Legislature studies itself into a number of different committees that deal with different areas of their responsibility. Last Friday a number of Federation of Agriculture officers met with the agricultural committee and had a good two hours discussion on the matter.

Farm capital requirements, ARDA, potato marketing, farm machinery and land use were all discussed and a useful exchange of views resulted. Meetings of this kind continue so that if at all possible, it will be possible to make a useful exchange of views between the legislators to get together. However, time is limited, the responsibilities are many and getting the things done that should be done presents a real problem.

**HOG CONFERENCE**  
April 20 and 21 are the dates with the location still indefinite for the first Canadian hog quality conference. It will be recalled that last year provincial conferences were held on hog quality with the three Maritime Provinces meetings in Moncton in July. We have had a report from the Alberta conference which runs to very great length. The real reason for this conference is the fact that Canadian

hog quality has not been improving while the demands of the consumer are becoming more exacting. In addition, the United States is making progress in improving its hog quality and this has been pointed out in the hog picture in this country in so far as exports are concerned. Hogs are a tremendously important part of the farm economy and any action which can be developed in improving quality and efficiency will mean extra dollars for all concerned.

**FAT CATTLE**  
This week's big event in the livestock world is, of course, the Fat Stock Show and Sale, an event which brings together animals which have had a great deal of skilled loving care and attention. Real good beef is what the Anglo Saxon calls the hall mark of good living. In addition, the well fitted sleek and well marked are a lot to the eye of the livestock man.

This year's sale coincides with a cattle market that is on the dragsy side both for price and demand. We are having reports from farmers with market calls to dispose of who are finding a lack of interest on the part of buyers. This fact when weighed against the need for some additional national school principals, and extension workers.

**PENSION PLAN**  
Next Monday evening Farm Forum will be taking a look at the "Canada Pension Plan". The pension from the Canada Pension Plan together with Old Age Security would be considered modestly adequate with no other retirement income. Generally the plan would be quite attractive to those over 40 years of age as the returns would be very favorable in relation to the contributions. The Farm Forum Guide has a wealth of information set down in concise form and we would like to make guides available in any way you are interested if they write to Farm Forum at Box 546. In addition, we recommend listening to the program on Monday.

**DAIRYMEN**  
April 8 has been chosen by the P.E.I. Dairymen's Association for the annual meeting. The location will be in the Maritime Provinces and would appear to present the need for some additional national school principals, and extension workers.

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