

The Paul Family

Like many families of Stayner, the Paul family first settled in Nottawasaga on the 4th line, known as Ballygrant.

Neil Paul (1811-1883) and **Isabella Campbell** (1823-1901) immigrated from Islay, Argleshire, Scotland to Canada around 1834 to build a new home in the virgin bush land. Many a hardship was endured in the process.

Neil and Isabella settled on the south-half of Lot 21 (later, the Ed Beattie Farm) to raise their family of eleven. Between the years 1878 and 1885, eight of their children were lost due to illness. They were struck down in young adulthood between the ages of 18 and 21. Two more of their children were lost as infants, thus leaving the eldest son, John, as the lone surviving child.

The need for a place of worship was soon realized and in 1854 Neil and Isabella donated the land on which the East Nottawasaga Presbyterian Church and cemetery are now located. The original deed and list of donors still exists. This served as a church and meeting place where friends and neighbours gathered after the week's work. Many familiar names such as McQueen, McEachern, Campbell, Paul, McLellan, McLean and Currie are buried in this cemetery.

Neil wanted to be buried on the farm when his time came, so to appease him, his tombstone is partly on the farm and partly in the cemetery. Looking in from the road you can see that the stone is not in line with the rest.

John Paul (1845-1913) was married to **Flora McEachern** (1849-1923) from the Egremont area and together they raised a family of twelve. Of these twelve there were four that remained in the Stayner area to raise their families, namely Duncan, William, Jannet and Christina.

Duncan Paul (1876-1951) married **Christena Edmonds** (1873-1946) and had a family of seven. Until this marriage, only Gaelic had been spoken in the Paul household, but as Christena could not speak it, English became their spoken language. Duncan and Christena's family consisted of: Mary (died at the age of 13 after a fall and her leg had to be amputated), Florence (Mrs. Stan Handy), John, D.A., Sadie (Mrs. Smith), Luella (Mrs. Armon Thompson) and Christina (Mrs. Abbotts).

Most of John and his wife Ida (Hughes) Paul's family are still in the Stayner area. J.D. married Phyllis Knox (their family - Judy, Marjorie and Jim); Ruth married John Miller (11 children - Bob, Marion, Pat, Terry, Jack, Pauline, Mary, David, Glen, Carol and Nancy); Dorothy married Ken Barker (their family - Audrey, Shirley, Tom and Paul); and Lois married Charles Myles.

A carpenter by trade, Duncan's hobby was old time music and he was a well-known "Country Fiddler" of his generation. He was known to make many violins in his day with still a few in existence. The wood for the violins came from the farm of Murray Osburn on the 6th line of Nottawasaga. The wood for the necks was imported. Duncan once made a 3/4 size violin for his niece, Melba Paul. She never learned to play so he gave it to his nephew, Lloyd Gulley, whose family still own and play it.

At one time John and Flora Paul moved and lived on Manitoulin Island. While there, Duncan made his first violin using wooden shingles. When the family returned to mainland Ontario by boat, Duncan played that violin for the entertainment of the other passengers. He received his first few coins as a musician.

Duncan was awarded both a Silver and Gold medal at the CNE at the fiddling contest. The first year Duncan entered and was awarded a Silver; he was penalized for sitting down while playing. Apparently a country fiddler, when playing at home, usually sat in the corner.

The next year he is said to have challenged the judges to pick the best fiddle while being blindfolded. The second fiddle Duncan used for the test was yet unvarnished. That was the year that Duncan won the Gold.

They say that Duncan never went back to that competition because he contended that the judges were unqualified, having selected the unvarnished fiddle as having the best tone.

William Paul (1880-1956) married **Florence Taylor** (1893-1977) and raised a family of four: Melba (Mrs. Tom Bradley) is the only one that still lives in Stayner. Her family is Alice (Mrs. Keith Brown) and Bill Patton. Everett married Bea Thompson (family - Jim, David and Beth). Mary married Don Stephens and lives in Glencairn (their family - Robert, Carol, and Greg). Lastly Ken lives in New Brunswick with his wife, Mary Wylie (family-Stephen, Lynn and Catherine). William's family were all born and raised in Stayner.

William, also a maker of violins and a very well known country fiddler, played at many functions. One story goes that on the 2nd line, across from Glenn and Dorothy-Anne Millsap's, lived a Patrick McSherry in a very small wooden house. Years ago when a person died the wake always included a dance and merry-making. When McSherry died, to make room for a square dance set, the coffin was placed outside in a snowbank until the wake was over. William Paul played the violin at his wake.

Jannet Paul (1888-1988) married **Wilmer Gulley** (1890-1979) and had a family of six (Fred, Lloyd, Velma, Marion, Myrna and Ken). After their marriage they farmed on the 7th line of Sunnidate for 52 years, then retired in 1961 to Wasaga Beach. After Wilmer passed away in 1979, Jannett made her home among her three daughters until she passed away in 1988 in her 101st year.

Sons Fred and Lloyd remained in the immediate Stayner area all their lives. Fred married Florence Lamont. Lloyd, with his spouse, Thelma Gonneau, had a family of 14 children: Ray, Glen, Barry, Joe, Bonnie, Paul, Don, Lynda, Susan, Stewart, Ed, Dianne, David, and Sandra.

The Gulley family is well known in the area for their musical ability. Every year on the August holiday weekend the family hosts Gulleyfest, which is attended by friends, neighbours and relatives from far and wide. With over a hundred descendents of Janet and Wilmer, each inviting their relatives and friends, the mini bluegrass festival has grown immensely over the last decade. It provides a great weekend of family fun and entertainment.

The last child of John and Flora Paul remaining in the area was **Christina Paul** (1890-1978) who married **Joe Bristow** (1890-1966). They had no family.

Duncan, William and Jannett along with Mike Watson played in a band that was many a Saturday night's entertainment in the old Town Hall. They played for weddings, dances, concerts and other social functions. For their performances they would receive a dollar.

The story of the Paul Family adds to the rich tapestry that is our heritage in the Stayner area.

(This story first appeared in the Spring 2002 issue of our newsletter)