

# The Galbraith Family Story

*submitted by Marion Haverson*

Five generations of Galbraiths have been respected Canadian citizens; most of these folks have lived for many years in the Stayner area.

**William Galbraith Sr.**, the son of William and Jane (Wilson) Galbraith, was born in Tyrone, Northern Ireland in 1842. He came to Canada by sailboat in his late teens. In the early 1860's, he used his "good hammer" to help build the Canadian Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. His farming experience began when he worked on a farm in the Streetsville area. The family of his first wife, Hannah Morrow (who died at the age of 29 in 1876) lived in that area. He then purchased about 140 acres of land on the 4th Concession of Flos Township and built the large, two-story brick house, still on the property. He married Martha Ann McMurray, daughter of James and Eliza Jane McMurray of Sunnidale Corners, on December 26, 1877 in Zion Presbyterian Church, when the church was a year old. Martha died, at the age of 22, in childbirth in October 1878. In 1896, he married Mary Speers. In 1927, William and Mary retired from farming and moved into their son's Sunnidale home, where two stoves burned all night to send lots of heat upstairs. William died June 25, 1928 and Mary died May 18, 1929. The names of all his three wives are on William's tombstone in the Stayner Cemetery.

**William James Galbraith** (October 13, 1878 to September 27, 1953) married Lucinda McCulloch (October 3, 1883 to March 21, 1972), daughter of James and Jane (Noble) McCulloch of Connor on February 28, 1906. Lucy had come to New Flos to teach school January 1, 1900 and stayed until February 1903 when she went back home because she had lost her voice!

William attended school during the winter months only, excused during the summer to help on the farm, beginning at S.S.#1 Sunnidale at the age of 4 and then later at the New Flos school. He was playing football at the age of 12 when one of his ears was hurt, causing deafness to settle in; no suitable medical care being available in those days. One of his teachers recognized his talent in artwork drawn on his slate. His cartoons and written articles appeared in several newspapers, including the Barrie Examiner, in the late 1930's. Their subject matter was a mixture of agriculture and politics.

William built a two-story frame house on a stone foundation on the lower Flos farm, next to his father's land. This house burned down in December 1917 as the result of a chimney fire. The family then moved to a farm on the Sunnidale Road, north of Sunnidale Corners. William and Lucy called this place "Mapledene", because of the row of maple trees growing along the length of the lane. The Mapledene farm was sold in May 1966.

In 1902 William and others travelled by train to Guelph to learn how to plant and nurture seedling trees. He planted evergreen trees along the fence rows, around his property, and bordering Ebenezer Cemetery to act as windbreaks. He and his family planted 1000's of Red and White Pine and Norway Spruce trees on the Flos farm between 1928 and 1935. This farm is now part of the Simcoe County Forests. Instead of heavy farmwork, he preferred to grow nursery stock. He planted crops from seeds obtained from the Guelph Agricultural College; i.e. new varieties of clover and wheat. He cleaned his clover and alfalfa seed by hand with a magnifying glass. There was good demand for this new wheat and its sale brought the income needed to feed his family. His strawberry plants (Senator Dunlop, Premier, and Everbearing varieties) and raspberry plants (Latham Viking and Marcia varieties) were bundled and shipped all over Ontario. He raised many types of apples and other fruit, perennials, and vegetables too.

The following are the members of William James Galbraith's family:

Unfortunately, **Mervyn Wendall Galbraith** (born June 19, 1911) spent many years at the Ontario Hospital in Woodstock and at the Penetang Mental Health Centre, but he always wanted to come home to take over the farm. Several implements and other pieces of equipment were still awaiting his return at the time of his death, April 23, 1970.

**Martha Muriel** (March 16, 1915-June 15,2000) had two big brothers to help her walk to school. She took classes at the Toronto Normal School to learn to be a teacher. But she worked along with her husband, William Clarence Haverson, on their farm in Sunnidale Township, from the date of their wedding, November 15, 1941 until he died March 28, 1985. Their three children, Marion Lucinda, William Donald and Clarence Douglas, and four grandchildren, are busy keeping the memories alive.

**Mary Jean** (born June 15, 1918) was a public school teacher for many years. She married Robert William Lynn Russell on September 14, 1940 and raised two children, William Robert Wayne and Lynda Jean. Mary now lives in Midhurst, helping her two great grandchildren with their schoolwork, because her grandchildren do not have time to do so.

**James Douglas Galbraith** (born November 8, 1908) has led a long and interesting life. He walked two miles to a one-room country schoolhouse, first in New Flos and then at S.S.#1 Sunnidale. It was a big step from there to the Stayner Continuation School. He bicycled the five miles to high school, but in the winter, he drove a horse and cutter. He'd take some hay to feed the horse, in the Wilcox drive shed, at noon. In January 1928, he started going by train to Collingwood to go to the High School to get University entrance requirements, especially Chemistry. After graduation from the University of Toronto's Medical School in 1935 and a year's internship at Toronto Western Hospital, he and his new bride (he married Florence Margaret Virgin, daughter of John and Annie Virgin of Toronto on June 12, 1936) traveled out

west to work in Bella Coola. He acquired a position in the United Church's hospital. While there, the tuberculosis problem among the Indians became a particular interest and concern for him. He would treat Native children with tuberculosis meningitis at the residential schools as much as possible, having no anti-tuberculosis drugs, and arrange to send others home to die. It was in Bella Coola that their first child, John Lynn, was born.

In September 1941, the Federal Government opened its first sanatorium for Indians at Sardis, B.C. Douglas' first task as its staff doctor was to choose those most in need of sanatorium care. This hospital and a second one at Naniamo soon filled up. When a third hospital was proposed, Douglas was appointed to take over an Air Force hospital at Miller Bay, near Prince Rupert. Shortages of material and personnel caused by the war prevented the hospital from admitting patients until 1946. By then, there was a great backlog of tuberculosis patients so that the hospital soon became completely filled. In addition to hospital care, there was an increasing emphasis on field work in the specialty of tuberculosis as well as in other areas of health care. So Douglas traveled to all the Indian reservations in northern British Columbia, taking with him special drugs for treating tuberculosis, that had become available in the early 1950's. Cases of severe tuberculosis could now be treated successfully.

Douglas was transferred to Edmonton in 1966, with the responsibility for the control of tuberculosis in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. The rate of tuberculosis among the Eskimos at that time was found to be one of the highest in the world. It was decided to give medication to these natives at their home, under a supervised plan. It was an immediate success as the rate of tuberculosis dropped dramatically by the late 1960's.

Douglas retired at the age of 65, in 1973, and bought a house in Victoria, B.C. Gardening can be a year-round venture in Victoria and he has had many flowers and vegetables to tend as a retirement hobby. He still goes for a walk around the neighbourhood each day and talks with his son, David and family in Edmonton on the telephone weekly. He is now busy writing his memoirs on a new computer.

*(This story first appeared in the Spring 2003 issue of our newsletter)*