



# *Historic Gloucester*

Newsletter of the

**GLOUCESTER  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

Vol.16, No. 1

Spring 2015



**Two Ottawa Streetcars at Confederation Square**

## Contents

From the President's Desk.....	Glenn Clark	3
Why Streetcars Never Ran on Montreal Road?.....	Glenn Clark	4
Graham David Ritchie.....		7
GHS Annual General Meeting.....		8
It All Started One Dark and Stormy Night.....	Lois Kemp	9
A Gloucester Centarian Remembers the Blair Road.....	Edith Woodburn	11

THE GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
WOULD LIKE TO ANNOUNCE  
THAT ITS HISTORY ROOM WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
EVERY  
WEDNESDAY FROM 10:00 AM TO 3:00 PM  
BETWEEN JUNE 3RD AND SEPTEMBER 4TH, 2015  
OR BY APPOINTMENT

LOCATION: 4550B BANK STREET (AT LEITRIM ROAD)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Cover Photo:**

*The cover picture shows two old Ottawa streetcars stopped in front of the old Union Station), in Confederation Square. See story on page 4.*

**Historic Gloucester** is published by The Gloucester Historical Society. It is intended as a Newsletter to members of the Society to provide interesting articles on Gloucester's past and to keep them informed of new acquisitions by the Museum, publications available, upcoming events and other items of general interest. Comments and suggestions regarding the Newsletter



*Gloucester Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the City of Ottawa.*

**President's Report**

By Glenn Clark

A long bitterly cold winter is finally coming to an end and with new growth come new ideas.

We are excited to announce that all our publications can now be purchased on our website using Paypal, a very easy and secure system for buying products on-line. We also continue to add content to our website with lists of Police and Fire Chiefs and Township Clerks. More ideas will be implemented as time permits. We have also recently purchased two full sized reproductions of the Gloucester flag, one of which will be on display at our Annual meeting. We hope to have Gloucester fridge magnets soon.

I am pleased to announce our Annual Meeting, which will take place on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2:00 p.m. at the Gloucester South Seniors' Centre, 4550 Bank Street. Our guest speaker will be Les Goodwin of the Bytown Railway Society who will speak on the rich history of railways in Gloucester Township. Please come and enjoy this presentation and bring your family and friends. There is no entrance fee.

You will also notice that this is an expanded edition of Historic Gloucester. We ran into some technical problems in the last edition resulting in the articles being truncated at the bottom of each page. We have decided that the best recourse is to re-print the articles while continuing to provide some new content. We are also enclosing our recent World War I commemorative Post Card. The plan is to produce additional commemorative Post Cards as we continue to honour the Great War centennial. In order to do this well, we could use your help. Do you have any World War I military oriented photographs that include some sort of Gloucester connection, whether including someone with Gloucester roots or showing a Gloucester location? If you do, we would like to hear from you.

Finally, we will be opening the Grace Johnston History Room again this summer. This year, we will open every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. from the first week of June until Labour Day. Please come for a visit. And of course, we will be participating in Doors Open Ottawa on June 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. This will be your annual opportunity to visit the Gloucester museum collection.

*Be sure to check out our website at*

***[www.gloucesterhistory.com](http://www.gloucesterhistory.com)***

*for a complete list of publications available from the GHS,  
as well as various links and resource material.*

*You can now pay for your book purchases online through  
Paypal,  
a safe, secure, speedy and easy method to obtain our books..*

## Why Streetcars Never Ran on Montreal Road?

By Glenn Clark

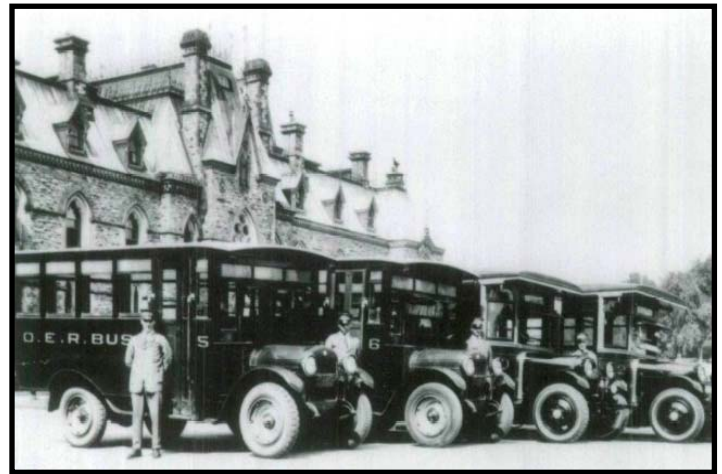
This is the first of a series of articles on transit service in former Gloucester neighbourhoods.

On January 1, 1908, Janeville, Clarkstown and Clandeboye joined together to be incorporated as the village of Eastview. By this time, the Ottawa Electric Railway had been in operation for almost 15 years with electric streetcar service extending to nearby Rockcliffe and New Edinburgh.

At the time, it was impossible to serve the central part of Eastview, centred on Montreal Road, with streetcars. The old Cummings Bridge crossed over Cummings Island and faced a steep incline up to Rideau Street in Sandy Hill. Streetcars could not have travelled up that steep grade.

Because of the deteriorating condition of Cummings Bridge, Carleton County council passed a by-law in 1917 forbidding motor traffic from travelling on the bridge [*Ottawa Journal*, December 1, 1924 pg. 4]. This accelerated its replacement and a new bridge was under construction by 1921. The new bridge was designed to accommodate streetcars with a much gentler slope and bypassing Cummings Island. As a result, it was decided to lay tracks during bridge construction in preparation for the eventual extension of streetcar service into Eastview [*Ottawa Journal*, May 13, 1921 pg. 7]. On January 27, 1922, the new Cummings Bridge opened for traffic.

Previously, on January 2<sup>nd</sup> of the same year, Ottawa ratepayers voted in favour of the renewal of the Ottawa Electric Railway's transit franchise for a further 5 years [McKeown p.116]. With this vote, a study was funded in order to improve streetcar service. Robert M. Fuestel was contracted on July 22, 1922 to perform the study. The final report known as the Fuestel Report was delivered to City Council in October of the same year [McKeown p.118]. One of the report recommendations was to extend streetcar service from the intersection of Rideau and Charlotte across the new Cummings Bridge and onto Montreal Road as far east as Main Street (now Granville Street). This was to be completed within two years [McKeown p.121].



Ottawa Electric Railway buses likely used on Montreal Road between June 1924 and April 1929.  
Courtesy of the City of Ottawa Archives.

By August 1923, the Ottawa Electric Railway had sent a letter to Eastview Council expressing an interest in extending service but council had already received a petition in favour of an alternative bus service. Some controversy existed as Mr. R.C. Cummings who supported a bus line was a shareholder of one of the proponents. By this time, a motor car service was already in place serving Eastview. Public transit was considered an important development tool with new subdivisions approved for the former Hurdman farm just south of the town and to attract new industry [*Ottawa Journal*, August 2, 1923 p.3]. The motor car service was operated by Irwin's Blue Ribbon Bus Line [*Ottawa Journal*, September 10, 1923 p.16] and they were granted exclusive rights by Eastview town council on October 17, 1923 [*Ottawa Journal*, October 18, 1923 p.20].

Meanwhile, the proposals made by Fuestel Report were continuing to move forward with streetcar service extensions planned for Beechwood Avenue to serve Beechwood Cemetery and Lindenlea and along Montreal Road through the heart of Eastview as far as Notre Dame Cemetery. The one complication that existed was that the Montreal Road extension was outside the city limits and beyond the exclusive franchise offered to the Ottawa Electric Railway by the City of Ottawa [*Ottawa Journal*, December 21, 1923 p.15].

On November 20, 1923, the Civic Street Railway Committee submitted a report to the city outlining the implementation of the Fuestel Report and



what streetcar line extensions were to move forward. As part of this report, the Eastview streetcar extension on Montreal Road was deferred until permissions were obtained from Eastview town council [*Ottawa Journal*, November 21, 1923 p.3]. Negotiations were undertaken but an agreement failed to be tabled at an April 2, 1924 council meeting as concessions had not been agreed to [*Ottawa Journal*, April 3, 1924 p.12]. Specifically, this related to a five cent fare for Eastview residents, the same fare offered within the City of Ottawa boundaries. Without the agreement, Eastview Council began to consider a municipally operated bus line.



Photo taken at Montreal Road and Granville Street in 1949 showing an Eastview Transit Company Twin Transit Coach. Photo courtesy of Ontario Ministry of Transport

In response to this, the Ottawa Electric Railway proposed to implement a bus route within a month following the proposed streetcar route. Tickets would cost three for twenty-five cents. Eastview Reeve Leon Petegorsky suggested that this did not meet the wishes of council and suggested that Eastview could quickly set up a bus service of its own with direct service to downtown at a lower five cent fare [*Ottawa Journal*, April 22, 1924 p.1].

Both moved forward and began operation of competing bus lines into Eastview at the fares and routes specified. The Ottawa Electric Railway began bus service in June 1924 [*Ottawa Journal*, March 30, 1925 p.3]. At about the same time, the Eastview Transit Company began operations with two buses which offered 15 minute headways for a five cent fare and 10 cents on Sundays [*Ottawa Journal*, August 15,

1924 p.7]. On August 6, 1924, town council received a letter from the solicitor of the Ottawa Electric Railway (OER) suggesting that Eastview was interfering with the operation of OER buses. The response was quick and angry from Eastview Mayor Dr. Arthur Desrosiers [*Ottawa Journal*, August 7, 1924 p.7]. As a result, there was a proposed by-law to debar OER buses from Eastview giving exclusive franchise to the new municipal Eastview Transit Company [*Ottawa Journal*, August 7, 1924 p.1]. The by-law was passed and the Ottawa Electric Railway was charged with operating buses without a license and collecting fares within Eastview for passengers whose destination was also within Eastview [*Ottawa Journal*, August 11, 1924 p.1]. The courts overruled the by-law pointing out that buses that cross municipal boundaries were under provincial jurisdiction [*Ottawa Journal*, September 4, 1924 p.6]. This left a stalemate.

On August 19<sup>th</sup>, the Ottawa Electric Railway applied for a license to operate buses in Eastview. The Eastview Transit Company quickly made a counterproposal for a five year franchise guaranteeing five cent fares for adults and three cent fares for children. No decision was made [*Ottawa Journal*, August 20, 1924 p.14]. In an attempt to resolve the matter, a plebiscite was proposed asking Eastview ratepayers to choose between the two competing transit options. The vote took place on municipal election day December 1, 1924 [*Ottawa Journal*, November 7, 1924 p.40].

Surprisingly, while Eastview Mayor Dr. Arthur Desrosiers was re-elected, the plebiscite favoured the Ottawa Electric Railway option despite the mayor's support for the other option [*Ottawa Journal*, December 2, 1924 p.1]. No action was taken. On January 28, 1925, the Ottawa Electric Railway Company told the Civic Street Railway Committee of their continued desire to build the Montreal Road streetcar line but there had been no communication with Eastview Council [*Ottawa Journal*, January 29, 1925 p.7]. Negotiations were at a standstill as Eastview council was adamant about getting a five cent fare before giving access to Montreal Road for construction. While all of this inaction was going on, bus service continued to be operated by both companies [*Ottawa Journal*, March 10, 1925 p.5]. The matter of exclusive franchise was then taken to Carleton County Council but they refused to consider the issue, claiming that cross boundary transit also was not within its jurisdiction [*Ottawa Journal*, March 19, 1925 p.4].

The state of negotiations for the streetcar extension was outlined in detail on March 30, 1925. It was clear that the main issue was about fares with the Ottawa Electric Railway offering 7 ½ cents, while Acting Eastview mayor Leon Petegorsky insisted on a five cent fare. The only room for compromise was a willingness to allow the Ottawa Electric Railway to charge as much as it wanted on Sundays. The OER felt that a flat fare seven days a week was fairer to customers and it needed to be able to recover the capital cost of building the line [*Ottawa Journal*, March 30, 1925 p.3].

The issue was finally resolved with another plebiscite held on August 8, 1925. The voters of Eastview clearly rejected higher fares for streetcar service this time [*Ottawa Journal*, August 10, 1925 p.7]. Despite the results of the plebiscite, the Ottawa Electric Railway did not abandon its bus service, which was operating with 10 minute headways during off-peak hours and as frequent as 5 minute headways during busy times.

The bickering between Eastview Council and the Ottawa Electric Railway Company continued. The dispute was taken to the Provincial government by Eastview Council with a proposed private member's bill that would have granted exclusive franchise to the Eastview Transit Company. The Ottawa Electric Railway Company considered this a major threat as passage of the bill would have encouraged other outlying communities to do the same thing, to operate direct transit service to downtown Ottawa, bypassing the streetcar network and resulting in a loss of ridership and revenue. Ottawa City Council was also concerned and suggested that it could follow the same course and refuse entry of Eastview buses across the city limits. The end result would have been even higher fares (10 cents versus the offered 7 ½ cents) [*Ottawa Journal*, March 31, 1926 p.1,2,15] with OER buses travelling to the east end of Cummings Bridge where it would pick up Eastview Transit Company riders. The reality would have had many Eastview transit riders walking to the bridge to avoid the double fares. In the meantime, Eastview council had come to terms with Captain B. Pilske to operate the Eastview Transit Company. But he soon saw the writing on the wall with Eastview council's proposed provincial private member bill. If the bill passed, he would lose too many riders to make his service viable. This forced Eastview Council to quickly withdraw the bill [*Ottawa Journal*, April 3, 1926 p.2]. Although Captain Pilske

offered to continue to operate the bus company after this failure, he soon withdrew. In May 1926, the Eastview Transit Company was replaced by the Eastview Bus Company managed and owned by Leon Petegorsky. Yes, the same Leon Petegorsky that had sat on Eastview town council as Reeve.

Again, another attempt was made to obtain an exclusive franchise by a provincial private member's bill [*Ottawa Journal*, March 9, 1927 p.11]. In the end, resolution came by obtaining a license from the Ontario Department of Highways. Montreal Road was a provincial highway at the time. This eventually gave the Eastview Bus Company with its lower fares and direct downtown service a competitive advantage over the Ottawa Electric Railway Company.

The streetcar issue came up seriously one further time in 1929, when the City of Ottawa offered annexation and a seven cent streetcar fare. Eastview politicians were not opposed to annexation but believed that if they accepted annexation, they should receive the same fare as the rest of city. They argued that their bus service was financially viable with a five cent fare and the parallel Beechwood streetcar line was also operating with the same fare, so why couldn't a Montreal Road streetcar successfully operate on the same basis [*Ottawa Journal*, November 16, 1929 p.13]?

Unfortunately, 1929 also brought the beginnings of the Great Depression which was followed by the shortages of World War II. By the end of the war, streetcars were a thing of the past and it was only a matter of time before all of them would be replaced with diesel buses. The last streetcar was taken out of service on May 1, 1959. Time ran out on the Montreal Road streetcar proposal and the world moved on.

Although on the surface this was all about fairness in transit fares, it was clearly also about personalities and people who could not work together in the public interest. The result was a parting of the ways that produced two transit systems, which somehow served most of the public adequately. In the long-term, it was all pointless.

### Postscript

The Ottawa Electric Railway eventually withdrew bus service in Eastview on April 3rd, 1929 [*Ottawa Journal*, April 4, 1929 p. 2]. It could not

compete with higher fares and was losing money. Meanwhile, the Eastview Bus Company was gradually expanding its service. By the late 1940s, service had grown well beyond its boundaries including Manor Park, the Quarries, Rockcliffe Air Base and the neighbouring village of Finter with some runs to the National Research Council campus, and to the Village of Hurdman Bridge via Overbrook. Its service did not include McArthur Avenue, which had long been served by Cyrville Bus Lines.

Eastview bus operations continued but not without a hitch. On February 16, 1943 at about 4:30 a.m., a fire engulfed the Eastview Bus Company garage at 142 Montreal Road. A total of eleven buses were destroyed as well as the building. Only one bus was not damaged plus two others under repair elsewhere [*Ottawa Journal*, February 16, 1943 p 1]. Service was interrupted that day but buses were brought in from Montreal, Gananoque and Kingston and others were loaned from the Ottawa Electric Railway and Colonial Coach Lines. Almost normal service was restored the

following day. The military also brought in their own buses and other vehicles to move the large number of military personnel at the Rockcliffe Air Base. Fire damage was estimated at \$150,000, of which one third was covered by insurance. The bus company was then sold on September 3, 1946 by long-time owner Leon Petegorsky to Lazarus Greenberg and Hyman Bessin also for about \$150,000 [*Ottawa Journal*, September 3, 1946 p.6].

Ironically, in the end, the Eastview Bus Company service was taken over by the Ottawa Transportation Commission (formerly the Ottawa Electric Railway) on December 29, 1950, the company it had so bitterly fought 25 years earlier [*Ottawa Journal*, December 29, 1950 p.5].

### Bibliography

McKeown, Bill, *Ottawa's Streetcars*, 2004 Railfare DC Books



**Graham David Ritchie**

The members of the Gloucester Historical Society are deeply saddened by the recent death of Graham David Ritchie, a long time member of the GHS Board of Directors and for many years our extremely efficient Treasurer. Graham died suddenly on February 27, 2015 in his 88th year.

As one of the owners of Ritchie Feed and Seed, Graham was a prominent member of the local business community. He was also a dedicated member of the Gloucester Lions Club for many years.

Graham is survived by his wife of 63 years, Nancy (Eastwood), his sons Neill (Christine), Tom, Douglas (Susan) and Peter. He also leaves grandchildren Kala, Ivy, Joey, Jennyfer, David, Sarah, Allison and Michael as well as great-grandchildren Jacob, Austin, Lexia, Kingston and Jonathon. He was predeceased by his siblings Shirley, Claire and George.

The funeral for Graham was held at the Tubman Funeral Home Chapel, 3440 Richmond Road, Ottawa, on Tuesday, March 3, 2015.

Our heartfelt condolences to his family. He will be sadly missed by all those who knew him.

# **The Gloucester Historical Society**

## **Presents**

**A talk by Les Goodwin**

**of the Bytown Railway Society**

**on**

## **The Railway History of Gloucester Township**



**Sunday, May 3, 2015 2:00 p.m.**

**Gloucester South Seniors' Centre**

**4550 Bank Street, Gloucester**

**Free parking and admission**

**Bus Route 144**

**The afternoon will begin with the Gloucester Historical Society Annual Meeting**

**[www.gloucesterhistory.com](http://www.gloucesterhistory.com)**



## It All Started One Dark and Stormy Night...

By Lois Kemp

Thomas Andrew Spratt was born in 1865. He married Annie Gamble, daughter of Alexander Gamble and Mary Jane Gamble in 1891. T.A. died in 1930 and Annie died in 1947 at the age of 81. They had thirteen children in 24 years:

Mary Elma	May 6, 1892
Sarah Gladys	May 4, 1894
James Emerson	May 19, 1896
Irene Elizabeth	Nov 10, 1897
Anne Beatrice	Apr 20, 1899
Albert Edward	Nov 5, 1900
Thomas Merrick	Oct 27, 1902
Alexandra Jane	Sep 1, 1904
Jessie Isabel	Jul 15, 1906
Margaret Loughton	May 5, 1908
Nellie Melba	Aug 30, 1910
Laird Whitney	Aug 13, 1914
Frances Gamble	Oct 3, 1916

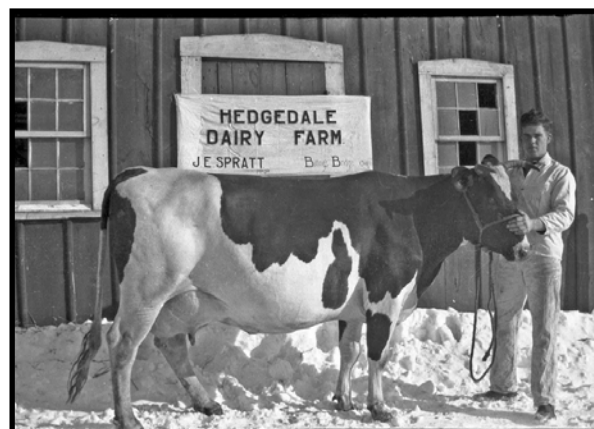
When T.A. and Annie were first married they rented a log house while they were building their barn on the 50 acres they had bought from Allick Heron. They couldn't afford to build the house as well as the barn but they painted the maple trees that grew so majestically where the white farm house would eventually be built. Over the years they bought more land until Hedgedale Farm was comprised of 320 acres.

How they got into the dairy business is a very interesting story. When they were married they had three cows. Shortly afterwards a neighbour wanted to sell two dcows and his milk route in Ottawa. Annie urged T.A. to buy them and she would do the milking. Like many young men of the time he had never learned to milk himself. Before spring they had fifteen coews and T.A. peddled the milk from house to house. In those days they did not use bottles but filled the customers' milk jugs from the quart measuring lid at the door. The dairy herd grew to 50 head and in 1901 they started sending their milk to the Ottawa Dairy. T.A. was one of the founders and a director of the Ottawa Dairy. In 1922 he was the proud owner of the World Champion Dairy Cow, Maudie De Kol. When he began breeding registered Holstein cattle the name Hedgedale was registered.

There was a thorn hedge which ran across the front of the farm. The hedge is still there but has not been kept trimmed.



Thomas Andrew and Annie Spratt



The Hedgedale farm was well known for its barn dances. When the straw barn was empty it would be cleaned, the floor waxed and the musicians hired, and people would come from miles around.

Annie, after their trip to Europe in 1924, is quoted as saying that "People should try to get away to see the things they have always wanted to see, as soon as the family is old enough to be left, and before they, themselves, are too old to enjoy a trip." She was a smart woman.

When T.A. was busy with various municipal offices the family was older and the sons were able to take over the farming. It was with reluctance that he took over the task as Reeve of Gloucester. T.A.'s father, James Emerson, was also Reeve of Gloucester in 1888-91. Richard Spratt, an uncle was appointed Reeve when T.S. died in office in 1930.

The following is an excerpt from a write up in the paper on his death.

*"Death this week removed a very estimable gentleman in Thomas Andrew Spratt, Reeve of Gloucester Township. Mr. Spratt was well and widely known and highly esteemed in the community. His public spirit in taking hold of the affairs of his native township, at a time when the public mind was badly disturbed*

*through mishandling of finances by a former official, increased considerably the regard in which he had been held. Mr. Spratt represented the best type of rural politician, honest, approachable, clearheaded, and initiative."*

When we all look back to our own upbringing, many of the qualities that were passed on to us by our father or mother were passed down from Annie and T.A.Spratt. We were all given a legacy that we should be proud of.

*Reprinted from "News Spreader," Vol 1, No 1, Nov 1990.*

*Sources: Jane Graham, "History of Hedgedale Dairy Farm" by Eleanor Spratt and "A Big Family Keeps You Busy But Happy" by Ethel Chapman.*



**Spratt Dairy Barns**



**The Thomas Andrew and Annie Spratt Family**

Back Row from left— Jane Graham, Irene Dempsey, Bert Spratt, Merrick Spratt, James Spratt, Elma Kemp, Lottie Williams

Front Row from left—Gladys Whyte, Thomas (T.A.) Spratt, Frances Lillico (sitting on knee), Jessie Scharfe, Melba Hopson (behind), Annie Spratt (nee Gamble), Whitney Spratt, Beatrice Clark

## A Gloucester Centenarian Remembers the Blair Road

by Edith Woodburn (written in 1995)\

I came to this community, then known as Glen Ogilvie, in the fall of 1935 to teach in the one-room school located on Cyrville Road, now Innes Road.

I boarded with George and Kaye Blair. Their dairy farm bordered the Blair Road, then known as George's sideroad. George's sideroad went from Cyrville Road to Ogilvie Road and it was more of a trail than a road, passable only to horse-drawn vehicles during the summer. In the winter, George hauled his dairy cans filled with milk on a sleigh to the sideroad where there was a milkstand. For his Saturday trip to town every week, George's horses pulled his car to Cyrville Road all winter and well into spring because his sideroad was totally impassable.

For me, it was sometimes a difficult walk to the school. It was hard for Emerson too, if we had a date. He had to leave his car at Cyrville Road and trudge up to the house. One night his hat blew away, never to be recovered.

In the summer, George's sideroad was covered with grass and the Woodburns pastured their cows there. Little Ralphie (born 1923) the youngest of the Woodburns' eight children, did the herding.

Down the road about where the Pineview Golf clubhouse is now, there were crabapple trees, and some chokecherries. In the fall, Kaye and I used to walk down the road, the kids trailing along behind, to gather fruit for jelly.

One time, when my son Doug (born 1942) was a baby, I had him in the big old-fashioned carriage that is still in our attic (we'd bought it used for \$10). It was hard to push on that bumpy earthy road and when he fell asleep, Kaye suggested we just leave him and go ahead to gather our crabapples and cherries. I was a little hesitant, but leave him we did and on our return, mission accomplished we found him sleeping peacefully.

The chokecherry jelly was so good! I preferred it to the crabapple jelly.

As urbanisation approached, George's sideroad was paved and dignified with the name Blair Road. Since then, the Blair Road has run north all the way from Innes Road to the Ottawa River. At

some point I figure that the Blair Road will continue south from Innes Road: the road allowance is there.

I felt that the Blair Road should have been called Woodburn Road because my father-in-law, James Woodburn, purchased and farmed the land on the west side of the road long before George bought the farm on the east side. At one point I told my good friend Kaye that the Woodburns were here while the Blairs were still living in the bush. She did not take kindly to this remark but I felt privileged to make it, being through marriage equidistant between the Blairs and the Woodburns.



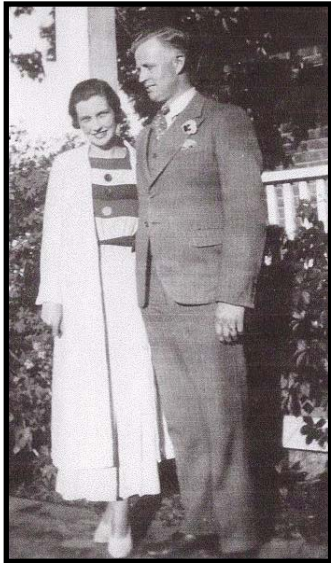
**Epitaph to Emerson, 1 -  
"He was nice to the "kids"**

One time, about 1-0 years after Emerson died (in 1988), I was having my hair done in Blackburn Hamlet when the hairdresser asked me what my husband's name had been. I told her that it was Emerson, but I also remarked that it was a funny question. She answered that another customer wanted to know. So she went and told her.

Upon hearing my husband's name, the other customer said, "He used to drive my kids on the school bus, and he was nice to the kids."

I thought it pretty special that she remembered this so many years later, and that she cared enough to tell. He must have been very nice to her kids, I thought! Of course Emerson was fond of kids in general. And he was nice in general, too.

One year when he had a kindergarten run, he took me with him (more or less against my wishes) on the last day of school.



Newlyweds Emerson and Edith Woodburn

He stopped at Joe's Market in Blackburn Hamlet (now a condo) and bought all the kids an ice cream cone.

It was fun. And it was nice.

*Postscript: In August 2014, a few weeks after Edith turned 100, a visitor dropped by the Woodburn farm, now run by Doug and Sherry Woodburn. He told them he was in town visiting his daughter and grandchild in Blackburn Hamlet, where he had grown up, and he wanted the Woodburn family to know what a difference Emerson had made in his life.*

*When he was in elementary school, Emerson had been his school bus driver and over subsequent years he had enjoyed many good times at the Woodburn farm. As he approached his last year in high school, he confided in Emerson that he was uncertain about what to do next. His marks were good enough to attend Queen's University but he was not sure his family could afford to send him there. "Emerson strongly encouraged me to apply to Queen's," the visitor told Doug and Sherry, "and said that if money was a problem, he would help me out. Although I did not, in the end, take him up on his generous offer to help financially, his encouragement played a big role in my decision to go to Queen's."*

*Dr. Alan Cruess, the Woodburns' visitor, now is head of ophthalmology at Dalhousie University and Capital Health, Nova Scotia's largest health services provider.*

## EPITAPH TO EMERSON, 2

Doug and I were with Emerson when he was passing on. When he had gone, Doug said, "I have lost my best friend."

I cherish those words.

## TREES

*I think that I shall never see  
A poem lovely as a tree.*

So wrote the poet Joyce Kilmer. And then along came Ogden Nash to amplify it:

*I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree.  
Perhaps, unless the billboards fall, I'll never see a tree at all.*

When Emerson and I were married in 1936 and moved into our house on Cyrville (now Innes) Road where I still live, there was only one tree in sight, a maple tree planted by Emerson's grandmother down the lane near the road. Our newly built brick house sat unprotected from sun and wind in the middle of a vast field.

All that summer we looked at seed catalogues and thought about planting trees. In the fall we planted two Schalder's maples, one on each side of the lane near the road. We also planted a mountain ash, the blue spruce that still stands tall on the front lawn and a weeping willow near the place that many years later Doug planted a spruce seedling given him by the Lion's Club to thank him for letting them sell Christmas trees on our property for their annual fundraiser.

We purchased these trees from MacDonald's Nurseries which were situated where the Montfort Hospital now stands on Montreal Road.

The blue spruce was a happy bargain. It's a Colorado blue spruce and was listed for five dollars in the seed catalogue. However for reasons of economics, we ordered a cheaper variety listed at two-fifty.

Oh happy day. They were out of the cheaper ones and gave us the other one for two-fifty!

It's the only tree that survived that fall planting.

As a matter of fact, I have since thought that perhaps we were too hasty in pulling out the others because we thought they were dead. I now know



that newly planted trees can be late in leafing out during their first spring and perhaps they weren't really dead.

However, we never favoured fall planting after that first attempt.

In the spring of 1937, Emerson bought a box of small evergreens at the market. Celia, one of his younger sisters, was on her day off from the Civic Hospital and walked up from the Woodburn family home further east along the Cyrville Road (still there) to help us plant them. Most of them are still standing, westward behind the house.

We had ordered 50 Lombardy poplars and as soon as the evergreens were planted, the poplar saplings were delivered-- 50 twigs in a bundle that could be carried in one hand. This time my brother Vic helped me plant the trees. This was especially helpful since Emerson was under the weather when they arrived.

We used to have supper at five o'clock in those days and after supper, Emerson went "down home" to help his father and brother separate the milk (*Raw milk went into a separating machine that produced cream out of one spout and skim milk out of another. The skim was fed to the calves and pigs and the cream was sold*).

Every evening while he was gone I watered the trees, pumping water until the well ran temporarily dry. And thanks to my nursing those trees like babies all summer long, every one of them has survived. Five years later they were as high as the house and they still provide a good windbreak all summer long.

## OUR NEW HOUSE

Our family house was built in 1935, the year before Emerson and I were married, by a builder named Wesley Davidson. The cost was \$5200. This seems like a ridiculously low figure now but at that time Emerson was selling milk for 10 cents a quart and I was teaching school for \$700.00 a year (and that was my maximum, having started at \$500 and progressed to \$600 and then to \$700). So relatively speaking, it was fair.

There was much discussion among the Woodburn family as to the location of the new house. Emerson's grandmother had hoped that the

family eventually would build a house where ours was built because it was closer to town than the homestead and also because the ground was "earlier." In anticipation, she had planted a row of maple trees near Cyrville Road at what later would be the bottom of our lane. (Emerson's mother said that this "earliness" saved Emerson's father's life over the years because every spring he was very impatient to get on the land. He could start work on this "earlier" land and not have to wait for the home farm to dry up.)

By the time our house was ready to be built, only one of Emerson's grandmother's maple trees was left. It was on the east side of an old lane leading to an abandoned building on its last legs. Emerson's mother, Mary Blair Woodburn, favoured building our house beside that one remaining tree but Emerson decided to build it in the middle of the field, even if it meant building a new lane to the road.

This has proven to be a wise decision. With the passage of time, the increase in traffic and the widening of the road, a house by the old maple tree now would be almost on the road.

Emerson and I had seen a house on Huron Avenue in the West end of Ottawa that we liked and we ascertained that it had been built by Wesley Davidson. Emerson contacted him and had this house built from the same plan, the only difference being the addition of back stairs. Emerson rightly foresaw the necessity of a back stairway in a farmhouse. How convenient for the children running up to the bathroom casually shedding along the way bits of straw or worse, and thus keeping the front stairs presentable.

That was long before the modern convenience of downstairs "powder rooms". Truth is very few farm houses in 1935 had an indoor bathroom at all.

Emerson's and my four children never used the front stairs but the next two generations of little ones have delighted in going up one side and down the other until they are tired. Often their mothers have demurred but I've always enjoyed watching them have fun this way. If any of those kids remember me it will be because of my house with the two sets of stairs!

The only mistake in our house was the kitchen. It was too small for a farm kitchen. When Emerson and I became six people instead of two it was

pretty crowded--and we often boarded one or two men as well. At one point we sacrificed the hall clothes closet, opening the wall at the back into the kitchen and putting the refrigerator into the space. The radiator was in front of the kitchen window and it was a great place on which little people could stand and see what was going on outside.

For years we talked about re-modelling the kitchen and adding a bathroom downstairs and finally after Mary, our eldest, was married, we did. That was in 1960.

By today's standards the clothes closets are small but when the house was built one of our neighbours exclaimed, "A clothes closet in every bedroom!"

To celebrate our fifth wedding anniversary – wooden – we had corner cupboards built in the dining room. I have enjoyed them, and the neighbours admired them (Kaye Blair and Agnes Keenan—a family friend and also a Blair relative—had similar ones built shortly after).

The hot-water radiator heating system served us well. In the early years we burned wood with the occasional addition of some coal, and later we switched to oil. From then on we had an even heat. Before that we were more often too hot than cold. The oil furnace lasted more than 40 years and when it expired we replaced it with a gas furnace.

A few years ago we saw a beautiful gas fireplace at Hulse and Playfair's on the Ogilvie Road. We were getting old and lazy, so we installed one. I am sorry we did because it didn't provide much heat.

In the 1980s we built a garage attached to the house. What a great convenience it is, especially in winter!

Apart from the above, the house is pretty much the same as it was 63 years ago when I much the same as it was 63 years ago when I moved in. It's been a good house to us, and Emerson and I had a good life here together for 52 years with more joys than sorrows.

And I carry on, as of March 1999.



**Shown above is the Murphy/Kenny House as it looked in the 1960s or 1970s and much as it looks today.**

### **The Murphy/Kenny House**

By Joan Scott

This house which is located on Blair Road North near the Montreal Road, has a long history. It was called "The Elms" because of the half dozen elms which once graced the property.

This story tells of some of the families who lived there over a century ago and some of the transactions which took place in its passing from one owner to another.

In 1803, a Crown Patent was issued to the Hon. W.D. Powell for Lots 20, 21, and 22, Concession 1, Ottawa Front, Gloucester, Ontario on the Montreal Road. By 1858 the land belonged to John Graham and he sold 300 acres, all of Lot 20, to Robert Skead for whom the adjacent street was named. In later years Skead Road became known as Blair Road North.

In 1886 Patrick Murphy purchased part of Lot 20, including the house, from one M.Carey and wife by Deed GL 7528. The family story was that this property was paid for twice due to some mix-up. In fact the Registry Office record does record two listings showing payments of two thousand and some dollars each.

Patrick Murphy was born in Ireland in 1819 and came to Canada about 1852 or 1853 by way of the United States, arriving at either Boston or Philadelphia. Apparently he came from County Clare in Ireland.

Children of Patrick and Mary Catherine were:

**Margaret.** Born 14 February. 1850 in Ireland. Died 1869, never married.

**Anne (Annie),** born 15 September, 1853 in Ottawa, married James McGovern. They had 4 children: Kathleen married David Dozie; Charles married Frances; Hugh married Beth: Ellen (Nellie) married Mr. Copeland.

**Moses (Mogue),** born 26 February, 1855 – went to Northern Michigan and lost touch with family.

**Jane (Jenny),** born 14 August 1856, married John (Jack) McCarthy. They had 7 children: Mary Ann married Francis Meunier; Margaret married J.McDonald; Florence married R.Potvin; Ellen married F.Fawcett; John married Jean O'Rourke; Laura married Lyman Playfair; Lillian married Emile Paradis,

**James Michael,** born 11 February 1858, died 1858.

**Mary** born 4 October 1860, never married.

**Brigid or Bridget,** born 6 May, 1862, married Louis Langevin.

**Elizabeth,** born 1 April 1864, died in infancy.

**Catherine (Kate)** born 8 May 1866, married Thomas Wheeler. They had 4 children: Thomas (RC Priest); Charles; Kathleen married Mr. Heize; Marguerite.

**Ellen (Nellie)** born 26 October 1868, married Nelson Lane. They had 6 children: Charles married Ruth McCaffrey; Bridgid married Mr. Harkness; Mary married Mr. Constantineau; Emily married Mr. Jelley; Ellen; James J, born 1905, died 1991.

**Mary Elizabeth (Lizzie),** born 1871, died 1964, married Thomas Christopher Fagan. They had 5 children: James; William H, died 1956; Mary, died 1909; Gregory married Katherine Spears; Frances, born 1915, died 1980.

**Christina Louise,** born 1872, died 1948, married Thomas Henry Kenny. They had 6 children: Mary Elizabeth (May), born 1893, died 1976, married Michael Ernest Fagan, born 1889, died 1967; John Henry (Jack) Kenny, born 1895, died 1987 married Mary (Mollie) Roslyn Fagan. born 1900, died 1995;

William Kenny, born 1899, died 1970, never married; Christina Eveline (Eva) born 1903, died 1984, married Peter Hughes; Earl Robert, born 1905, died 1965, was married twice, the second time to Elsie Cook; Lillian Edna Margaret Anne, born 1908, died 1997, married Robert Burns Pryde, died 1976.

Although the records which I have discovered up to now are far from complete, they show some interesting transactions on this piece of property, or at least on Lot 20. For instance, after Patrick Murphy's death, some of his daughters must have received a portion of the original property. There are three unusual transactions in 1916. Mary Murphy (daughter of Patrick Murphy) transferred the north part of Lot 20 to Thomas H. Kenny (husband of Christina Murphy) for \$200.00. The next transaction was from Bridget Langevin (another daughter of Patrick) to Thomas H. Kenny, for the south part of Lot 20 for \$200.00. This meant that the house was now owned by Thomas H. Kenny.

A deed was registered transferring the north part of Lot 20 from Thomas H. Kenny to his wife, Christina L. Kenny for "natural love." This transfer by Thomas Kenny to his wife was probably made because he was going overseas at that time as part of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in which he was a Sergeant. Major.

Two of Thomas's sons, Jack and William, as well as a son-in-law, Ernie Fagan, also served in World War I. Several of Thomas's grandsons served in World War II and one was killed in Belgium in 1944. The final transfer from the Kenny family was from Christina L. Kenny to Severin Desjardins in 1919. This was by agreement of sale for the north part of Lot 20 for \$650.00 and a grant for \$1200.00 of part of Lot 20. Eventually some members of the Kenny family - Thomas, Christina, Eva, William and Lillian - moved to Detroit, Michigan, where they spent the rest of their lives.

In 1900, another Murphy daughter, Ellen, or Nellie as she was called, was also a resident of Lot 20 with her husband Nelson Lane, who apparently owned one acre of Lot 20 which was valued at \$150.00 at that time.

An unusual interrelationship existed between the Murphy/Kenny family and the Fagan family. Mary Elizabeth (Lizzie) Murphy married Thomas Christopher Fagan in 1901. Mary Elizabeth (May) Kenny married Ernest Fagan in 1911 and John (Jack) Henry Kenny married Mary (Mollie) Roslyn Fagan

in 1922. This led to a confusing relationship and Mollie Kenny used to say that Ernie Fagan was her brother, her brother-in-law and her godfather. The Fagan family came from Ireland to Stittsville in the 1850s and settled not far from where the original Kenny family, originally from Kilkenny, had settled in 1820. There are still descendents of the first Kenny immigrants living on their same property in Stittsville since 1820.

This article started out to be a history of a house and ended up also being a partial history of my own family. I am the daughter of Jack and Mollie Kenny. Thomas Henry Kenny and Christina Louise Murphy were my grandparents. Patrick Murphy and Mary Catherine Nolan were my great-grandparents. I am sure that there are still other descendants of Patrick Murphy living in Gloucester as many of the family were long-time residents of the Montreal Road area.

*If you would like to share your family history, please contact the Gloucester Historical Society by telephone at 613-822-2076 and leave a message for someone to call you back, or go to our website at [www.gloucesterhistory.com](http://www.gloucesterhistory.com) for information. We always welcome stories and photos of the past!*



Shown here are my grandparents,  
Thomas Henry and Christina Louise  
Kenny (nee Murphy) in their  
wedding photo.

**IF YOU HAVE NOT YET RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP, OR IF YOU WISH TO BECOME A NEW MEMBER, PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW AND SEND IT IN WITH YOUR CHEQUE.** (Membership year runs from April 1 to March 31.)

**Membership Form—Gloucester Historical Society/Société historique de Gloucester**

Membership/Adhésion - \$20.00 for one year..... \$150.00 for life membership.....

NAME:\_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS:\_\_\_\_\_

CITY:\_\_\_\_\_ PROV\_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: Gloucester Historical Society  
4550B Bank Street,  
Gloucester, Ontario  
K1T 3W6  
Tel: 613-822-2076