

# The Chatham Daily Planet.

(MAGAZINE AND EDITORIAL SECTION.)

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(PAGES NINE TO TWELVE)

## A Successful Life

Mrs. McDonald, of Harwich, One of the Oldest Pioneers of Kent County Talk Entertainingly of Her Life Here Over Half a Century Ago.

It has been so often remarked that Kent has become a well known fact at the County of Kent is probably the banner County of the Province of Ontario from both an agricultural and an industrial standpoint. Industries are established here which make their influence felt on the markets of the world and the outputs of these industries are always and to rank high in public favor wherever they are entered in competition, while the products from Kent farms are used the world over, and there are none more eagerly sought after. This is indeed a matter of congratulation for the people of Kent and in bestowing the credit for such a desirable condition of affairs we naturally look around for our industrial and enterprising farmers and our bright up-to-date business men.

At such a time, however, we are probably too ready to think only of the present, and to forget that the present satisfactory state of affairs in the County of Kent, was not brought about during the last twenty-five or even fifty years. It seems almost impossible to imagine that the time was, when the County of Kent was a mere swamp and bush with only a few scattered homes here and there. Yet the fact remains the same that this was the case, and the hardest part of the development of Kent's agricultural district fell to the lot of the pioneers who came here, far from their friends and relatives, settling down in the heart of the forest to build out homes for themselves and their families. Many of these pioneers are living to-day, and must be a source of great satisfaction to them to look around them and see the results of their energetic and faithful efforts.

It seems very improbable that a person living to-day could remember the time when Kent was a forest and a swamp. Nevertheless it is true. Mrs. McDonald, who is now in the 89th year of her age, residing with her son, James McDonald, in Harwich, at four miles from the city, is one of the very few people living, who her husband came to Kent under such circumstances and under the hardships of establishing a home in Kent County sixty-two years ago. Although Mrs. McDonald is one of the oldest residents of the County, she is far brighter and more intelligent than many who are as old as she. It is remarkable how she remembers the days of this County, the days which the pioneers had to contend with, and the contrast between life then and the modern life of to-day. Mrs. McDonald has been a student of nature and history, and this fact alone has brought her a large number of bright and observant men in these declining years of life. It is safe to say that there are few people of Mrs. McDonald's age who can converse as intelligently for people and happenings. It is indeed a remarkable fact.

A Planet reporter called Mrs. McDonald at her son's home and found her seated in an armchair by the window, as is her wont in some of her grand old age, and greeted her with a smile. She was a hearty and cheerful "good afternoon" and appeared and conversed as fully in the prime of her life as if a privilege to meet with a person of Mrs. McDonald's age, and it is extremely interesting to hear from her own lips the happenings of her early life as seen from Kent County.

In a very pleasant conversation which followed it was learned that Mrs. McDonald was born in Fife, Scotland, almost 89 years ago, and it was there she met, was married, to Mr. McDonald. Twenty-two years ago they decided to come to Canada and establish a home. This they did, bringing with them, which then consisted of three children, with them. They were accompanied by Mrs. McDonald's brother, James McDonald, who settled down in York State, but shortly afterwards came on to Canada accompanied by one of Mrs. McDonald's sons, Duncan, who died two years after he arrived in Kent. Mrs. McDonald's other brother remained in York State.

Mrs. McDonald described here in the morning and whole of that day was taken up with a house to live in. By the time the night came the house was completed. This remarkable house situated on the same site as James McDonald's handsome residence now stands in Harwich. Not a trace of it remained, however, the present residence a third which has been built on the site, might be very interesting to the

present generation of people to know at this house was built of basswood logs piled together, as there were no nails or ropes to bind them together. Instead of lumber for flooring, a long basswood log was peeled and split up into lumber and nailed down with wooden pins. Their first crop consisted of wheat, potatoes and a small amount of corn. Both Mr. and Mrs. McDonald worked in the bush chopping down trees, logging and burning brush. Of course the work of clearing off a farm was done very slowly as the ground was very swampy. Their farm consisted of 45 acres and Duncan McDonald took up the adjoining 45 acres. There were no roads then and the only guide at night to a person's home was the lighting of a light from the hut, through the trees. It speaks well for this energetic couple of pioneers when it is considered that the small farm of 45 acres has gradually grown in dimensions until it now covers 900 acres of land.

"I notice a great change in the County now," said Mrs. McDonald, and she added with a smile. "There was not quite as much style then as there is now. If a person had a good big bowl of mush and milk and a biscuit they were exceedingly well off. Food was very scarce, and it added to that the work was far harder than now." "We were two or three years working here before we could get a team of oxen and ten years before we had a span of horses, and when we wished to draw anything to town through the bush we were forced to borrow a wagon from a man named Donald McQuarrie, who owned the only wagon around here then. It was a good many years before we could get a wagon and the most of our hauling was done with a home-made sleigh."

"I tell you we had potatoes then, far better than the ones grown to-day. The way they were planted was to dig a big hole, throw in the potatoes and then cover them up with earth. Corn and wheat were planted with a hoe and cut with a sickle of scythe, and later on cradles came in. I remember the first reaper I ever saw, and it was a fine days wonder. It took 10 or 12 men to run it. The first threshing machine I ever saw just separated the grain from the stalks and it took three or four men a week to clean a good day's threshing. Of course there were no barns and we were here two years without stock. Then we got one cow, and Mr. McDonald chopped wood for another man and got another cow. When the road between Charing Cross and Blenheim was put through my husband was for two months working on it."

"Wolves and Indians were everywhere, although I did not see many wolves. They would not come near any place where there were human beings. The Indians, however, were different. They would camp any place in the woods, and often they would come to your door and ask for food. They generally got it, as they were dangerous enemies, and the people were very hospitable. The Indians were not dangerous except when they had too much whiskey—and there was lots of that going around. They would get intoxicated and whoop around through the woods all night. I never heard of anyone being injured by them, but it was not very comforting to hear them yelling at night. They were very true friends if they were not intoxicated—then they forgot everything."

"I got lost in the bush twice. When a person went for a walk it was necessary to leave a trail of branches behind you so that you could trace your way back. My brother, when he was building his house, walked for half a day around through the bush and could not find his way out. People were very hospitable then and we considered people in Dover our next door neighbors."

"I remember distinctly the first brick house that was built in Chatham. It was owned by a man named Eberts and served as a residence and a general store. It was situated on King street. The first grist mill was known as Holmes' and was situated on McGregor Creek and run by water power. It was located near the Pere Marquette bridge. Some of the farmers near here used to skid on the ice to Windsor for their grists and in the open season they went in huge canoes. The first hotel was Taylor's tavern. It was a large frame and log structure and many a dance was held there."

"You never saw white sugar then. You made your own out of maple syrup. Tea was made out of coffee peas, oats and burnt bread. Bears were scarce where the settlers were and I did not see many. There were lots of turkey and deer but they soon disappeared when the settlers began to come in."

"It was a surprising thing to see a man getting up a frame house. In the houses we lived in you could

see the stars blinking in through the roof. Still it was not cold in winter as the bush tended to keep the atmosphere warm. Of course I spun all of the clothes we wore. After the yarn was spun we took it to a weaver, brought back the cloth, and made our clothes. There was not much money then and all our shopping was taken out in trade. Six shillings paid for a cord of wood, and we made money by selling wood at \$1.00 per cord."

"Everything was done by bees then—and jolly good times we had at those bees," said Mrs. McDonald as her face lit up with a pleasant smile as she remembered the joyous times she spent in those early days. "They generally ended up with a dance and I don't think people ever enjoyed themselves more than we did at those bees."

"Yes," concluded Mrs. McDonald, as she lifted one of her grandchildren to her knee, "we had to work hard in those days. Many a time I have put my children to bed and then worked with Mr. McDonald until midnight burning brush and clearing off a home, and then I would come into our old log house just as happy as a queen."

Mrs. McDonald is a widow, her husband being deceased for 16 years. She has a brother in Australia and a brother and sister in Scotland. She has enjoyed the very best of health until this winter, and yet she

is quite lively. She has not been out of the house since last October, but she is around the house every day and frequently seen at her favorite seat by the window. She has four daughters and four sons—Mrs. Gray, Raleigh; Mrs. McDonald, city; Mrs. Wm. Somerville, city; Geo. McDonald, Ridgeway; Dr. McDonald, Grand Rapids; Andrew McDonald, 5th concession, Harwich; James McDonald, at home, and Miss Janet McDonald, also at home. She has six great grandchildren.

Every Christmas the family hold a reunion at the old homestead, and last Christmas 26 members of the family were present. This is always the occasion of great festivity and fun making and none enjoy it more than Mrs. McDonald. A concert is always held in the evening and everyone present takes part. Mrs. McDonald surprised them all two years ago by taking her part in the evening's entertainment by dancing the Highland Fling.

Mrs. McDonald is in religion a Presbyterian and was a member of the old McCall church when it was held on Adelaide street. Of her many friends Mrs. Paxton and Mrs. Coltart, both of this city, are her nearest, as they were associated with her early life here.

Mrs. McDonald enjoys talking of those early days and she loves to remember the times she spent as a pioneer of Kent County.



The above picture represents four generations. On the left, holding the book, is Mrs. McDonald, whose interesting interview appears in this issue. On the right is her eldest daughter, Mrs. Gray, of Cedar Springs. At the back in the rear is Mrs. Charrest, of Winnipeg, and seated on the table is Mrs. Charrest's little daughter Irene, Mrs. McDonald's great grandchild.

## The Days of Auld Lang Syne

Interesting Events of Ye Olden Times Gathered from The Planet's Issues of Half a Century Ago.

From Jan. 20, 1858 to Feb. 1, 1858.

Small pox is very prevalent in Detroit.

The following gentlemen were elected members of the Separate School Board:—P. J. Flood, Adolphus Resume and J. W. Taylor.

In the county council proceedings, Dr. Cross and Rev. A. McColl were appointed to the Grammar School Board from the council.

It is stated that two more volumes of Lord Macaulay's history, bringing it down to the end of the reign of Queen Anne, are approaching completion and that they will shortly be published.

Married—On the 18th inst., by Rev. Mr. Stark, at the residence of the bride's father, Mr. Geo. Pulling, of the city of London, to Miss Alice Mitchell, of Newbury, C. W.

At St. Paul's church, on the 7th inst. by the Rt. Rev. Bishop McCorky, Capt. J. Fraser, of this city, to Mrs. A. D. Macdonnell, of Smith's Park, Sandwich, C. W.

The attention of our readers is directed to the fact that a lecture on India will be delivered at the Town Hall to-night (Wednesday) by Mr. Stanislas Goutier (colored), who, we understand has travelled widely in that country. Price of admission, one York shilling.

Married—At Park St. Cottage, on the 6th inst., by the Rev. G. W. Sandys, Thomas Hawkins Baxter, eldest son of Mr. William Baxter, this town, to Euphemia Browne, youngest daughter of Captain Baxter, late of H. M. 43rd Regt. Light Infantry.

Married—On the 13th inst., by the Rev. Mr. Harris, at the residence of the bride's father, Mr. Geo. Pulling, of the city of London, to Miss Alice Mitchell, of Newbury, C. W.

At St. Paul's church, on the 7th inst. by the Rt. Rev. Bishop McCorky, Capt. J. Fraser, of this city, to Mrs. A. D. Macdonnell, of Smith's Park, Sandwich, C. W.

We are sincerely glad that our suggestion of the celebration of the event of the marriage of the Princess Royal to the Prince of Prussia, which takes place in England to-day, (Jan. 25th, 1858) is being adopted by the loyal citizens of Chatham. To-night a grand picnic party is to be held in the town hall, the following being lady patronesses, viz.:—Mrs. Thomas McCrae, Mrs. Geo. Duck, Mrs. Miles Miller. The committee of management consists of the following gentlemen:—Messrs. R. J. Earl, C. H. Ross, and W. H. McCrae.

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## Getting and Forwarding War News

Giving the Public An Idea of the System and Expense Which is Involved in the Work of Correspondents.

The gathering of war news—of the kind the public wants, complete and at the same time confined to facts—requires a small army of trained correspondents, up to date methods and the highest order of organization, if the system is to be equal to the test and the result satisfactory.

No one war correspondent, however persistent, efficient or brilliant, nor any two or three, could undertake to furnish their paper, no matter at what expense, with complete news of a struggle such as the one that has just commenced between Russia and Japan in the far east. Every source of news must be closely watched, and at every strategic point there must be a man who can observe each move on the chess board and explain to the world what it means.

For that reason, as experience in the past has shown and as has again been demonstrated at the opening of this campaign in the far east, the most efficient work in an emergency of this kind is done by the large news agency which has both the men and the machinery at the scene and only needs to start the wheels going.

ASSOCIATED PRESS STAFF LARGE.

The Associated Press, the greatest news gatherer in the world, at the outbreak of hostilities between Russia and Japan and not less than nine trained war correspondents at or near the scene of conflict. Of these, the staff correspondents at Tokio, Manila, Peking, and the resident correspondent at Seoul, Nagasaki, Chefoo, Shanghai and Hongkong were already on the ground and had more or less familiarity with the diplomatic negotiations that preceded the struggle, and in addition, of course, a more or less intimate knowledge of the topographical conditions of what was to become the theatre of the war.

Three war correspondents who had served through the Spanish war, the Philippine campaigns and the Boxer uprising, were sent to reinforce this staff or workers as soon as it was seen that a clash was inevitable and imminent.

When the news of the naval skirmish off Port Arthur, which cost Russia so dear, was received at the Associated Press office in America it did not come in the way of any great surprise to the men in charge there. That actual hostilities were under way had been known there for three days, though the information was not to be given to the newspapers.

THREE DAYS' CENSORSHIP AT TOKIO.

The Tokio correspondent, Mr. Egan, had been informed by the Japanese government that in order to mask the initial movements of the fleet, there would be a three days' embargo on all press despatches, beginning at the moment the order to begin hostilities was given. This information reached the New York office with little delay, and when some time after the code word, which meant that his despatch had been held up, was received from Mr. Egan, it was known in an instant that this meant that war had begun.

The pact of secrecy was held inviolate as a matter of course—or perhaps the Russian warships would have worked their searchlights with a little more diligence on that fateful night, but without loss of time a code word was flashed to every correspondent at a point on the Yellow Sea, warning them to be on the alert for developments.

During the three days of rigid censorship no Japanese despatches could be handled, but the Associated Press worked its Chefoo cable, which is near Port Arthur, but not under the control of either of the contending powers, for all it was worth. Since then the Japanese censorship has been raised to a certain extent, and news can now be obtained from there but on account of its freedom from censorship Chefoo will be maintained as long as the naval conflict lasts, as the base from which cable news will be transmitted.

DESPATCH BOATS NOT TO BE ALLOWED.

During the Spanish war the despatch boat played an important part in the transmission of war news. The Associated Press spent more than \$500,000 during the three months that war lasted for war news, much of it to maintain its fleet of five specially chartered despatch boats. These fleet little vessels, besides carrying despatches to the various points in the West Indies, where they could be filed, followed the American war vessels, and thus were able to report their movements with great accuracy.

There will be nothing of that kind in the Russo-Japanese war, at least not with official sanction, nor will the correspondents be allowed to board either the Russian or Japanese naval vessels. What may be done is quite another thing. The naval fights will naturally be to cover their landing of troops or to threaten some strategic point on shore, as was the case at Port Arthur.

## GOING WITH TROOPS INTO FIELD.

The Associated Press, with the permission of the Japanese Government, sent two men with the expeditionary force landed in Corea. They will accompany the troops during their campaign in the Hermit Kingdom. Other correspondents have been sent with the Russian forces starting from Port Arthur for the Yalu River.

From interior points the sending of news will be slow, necessarily, and fraught with difficulties, not only on account of a rule issued by the Japanese Government, which makes it necessary for all despatches destined for points beyond Tokio to be filed with the censor in Japan.

This necessitates the sending of Japanese translators with each correspondent, and, of course, retards the work of getting out the news to a considerable extent. But the Japanese newspapers are enterprising and are likely to get more freedom in the handling of news, and the Tokio correspondent has been instructed to improve the opportunity, that will thus come his way.

HARD TO GET NEWS FROM RUSSIANS.

To get news through from the Russian side will undoubtedly be harder still. First of all, the censorship will be more rigid with the Russian lines, both as matter of well-known Russian principle, on account of the early setback to the Russian arms, and on account of the wretched telegraph facilities.

From the interior of Corea and Manchuria where the land campaign undoubtedly will be carried, there is one single telegraph line operated by the Great Northern Telegraph Company, which, straggling across the Siberian steppes and following the winding of the Trans-Siberian Railway, finds its way to St. Petersburg, and furnishes the sole purely Russian connecting link between the modern capital of Russia and its forbidding sentinel in the extreme east, Port Arthur. While this line is likely to suffer from the ravages of warfare, it will form the most reliable medium for transmitting news of the movements of Russian troops in the interior.

ST. PETERSBURG BUREAU IS SANCTIONED.

In view of this fact a full bureau has been established in St. Petersburg, and has sent its Washington correspondent, Howard Thompson, who served through the Spanish war, to take charge. A few days ago the general manager, Melville E. Stone, had an audience with the Czar, at which Mr. Stone received assurances that his St. Petersburg bureau would be made the medium of transmitting official news from the Russian capital to this country.

Already this bureau has rendered excellent accounts of itself. For over a week it has transmitted graphic and full despatches of news from the Russian capital, affecting the war. It was through Mr. Thompson's report of the Port Arthur defeat was sent out without delay, and practically uncensored, though damaging to the prestige of Russian arms and Russian credits, and on Tuesday evening the Czar's war edicts came through from the St. Petersburg office.

From Tokio Mr. Egan sent in advance the full text of the official statement regarding the causes leading up to the war given out by the Japanese government. This was sent to Chefoo and cabled from there to the New York office.

SENDING OF STATEMENT COST \$2,000.

The sending of this important despatch involved an expenditure of almost \$2,000 and arrived in the New York office fully 16 hours in advance of the giving out of the statement for publication by the Japanese ambassador at Washington.

With equal foresight preparations have been made to utilize various other avenues through which news is likely to trickle from the interior of Manchuria. From Harbin and Mukden there are some imperfect lines, with many relays leading through Peking to points on the coast, from where they are sent through various connections over the new Pacific cable, which was extended a year ago to cover the entire distance between San Francisco and Manila.

PACIFIC CABLE FACTOR IN REPORTING.

The Pacific cable will be an important factor in the transmission of war news. Its existence marks a distinct forward step in the rapid handling of news. The old way of sending news from the far east was from Shanghai through the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and Suez to London. This involved 32 or 33 relays. By this route despatches were likely to be long in transmission and less accurate. Across the Pacific with the new cable there are only five relays.

Under the old system the British capital practically became the clearing house for news from the extreme

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