

The Huntly and Glendenning Districts

Adapted from, "Huntly and Glendenning" by William Cummings



The site of Glendenning School, on the west side of Pleasant Valley.

The district of Huntly was named by Mrs. Wm. Easton from Huntly Brae, Scotland, who has gone to her last resting place twentyfive years ago.

To begin with, I landed in Emerson Sunday, May 14th, 1882. I started out to walk to the Marringhurst plains but was overtaken by a commercial traveller from Montreal, driven by a young man by the name of Joe Saddler. I came from the little village of Durham, Chateaugay Valley, Que, now a nice thriving town called Armstown. Quite a number of the Killarney residents came from the same place, the Coulters, of Wakopa, Cowans, Weirs, McGills, Fasburgs, Travers.

I accepted a ride from the traveller and we arrived in Calf Mountain that night after a drive of fifty miles. Many times the horses were so deep in mud and water that it was hard to tell whether they were swimming or walking. We were forced to tie our horses outside that night and managed to get the comfort of a bed on the floor for ourselves. The next night we reached Pilot Mound, here our ways parted and I got a ride from there with R. S. Thompson, at that time a resident of Marringhurst Plain. The first house to be seen as we came out of the Pembina Valley was that of John A. Wilson. The old house has long ago been replaced by a new one and is still occupied by his youngest son, James. There I was only four miles from my destination, the home of my uncle, John Cumming; who landed on the Plain the year of '79. He afterwards sold his place to Mr. Jas. Fraser of Pilot Mound and moving west to the Huntly district, where he still lives, now in his eighty-eighth year.

Among the pioneers of the district I might mention Wm. Stark, John O. Bell, David Maxwell, who turned the first furrow in that district, Jock Cumming who has resided since the fall of eighty on his present site, also Wm. Maxwell and Jim Graham.

I have attended picnics and dances in Huntly district where the crowd had gathered from as far west as Glendenning and east to Glenora, altho' the only means of travel at the time was oxen.

The first school was built in the spring of 1887, the lumber being hauled from Glenora by John Cumming, a distance of thirty miles, assisted by any neighbor who had a team of horses. The first teacher was Miss Kate McPhail, long gone to rest. The only families attending were those of Wm. Easton, Lancelot Williamson, David Maxwell and John Cumming.

George Cramer of Baldur was our first thresherman, with a horse-power outfit. He thrashed from John Wilson's on the east as far west as Cameron's at Tisdale. The threshing lasted all during the winter months, with the thermometer registering anywhere from twenty- five to forty degrees.

Our grain when thrashed had to be hauled to Pilot Mound or Gregory's Mill to be ground, a distance of thirty or thirty five miles. Our first Wheat was marketed at either Manitou or Brandon, fifty or sixty miles. The price paid for our wheat was not very encouraging but hope was high in the hearts of the people at that time.

Our first sawmill was built at Rock Lake by John Montague with Wm. Price as Montague's engineer. Mr. Price still lives in Baldur.

The names of Poe Nechin, of Neelin and John Harrower, who is still clerk of the Municipality of Argyle should be mentioned with the pioneers. –

I remember seeing T. J. Lawlor in his store in Tisdale before Killarney was started. The first time I visited Killarney, Mr. O'Brien was the only resident down by the lake. I now make my home in Belmont, my wife having passed away five years ago.

To the Glendenning Valley Store

Mrs. Franck often told of her grandmother, Mrs. John Stephens, walking from her farm home to a little store in the Glendenning valley and carrying her butter and eggs for trade. This was distance of eight or nine miles.

