

Enid Rogers – Benefactor of Trinity Anglican Church

Introduction

Enid Rogers was an important benefactor of Trinity Anglican Church in Colborne. When she died in 1990, she left significant funds to the church on her own behalf and in memory of her aunt Emily McTavish.

The following lines are provided as a collection of information about Enid Rogers and her context in the Village of Colborne and Cramahe Township. Since my work is heavily weighted toward genealogy for families in this region, much of the information provided is the result of research into Enid's family tree.

This document does not aspire to be a comprehensive biography of Enid Rogers. That would require much more research into her life as a whole and, unfortunately, resources are limited at this time.

It is hoped that The Friends of Trinity Anglican Church, Colborne will find this information useful in educating the public about the rich history of Trinity and its community.

Any errors or omissions in this document should be brought to the attention of Dan Buchanan, 12 Chapel St., Box 705, Brighton, ON K0K 1H0. Email: danbuchanan@cogeco.ca.

Donation to Trinity

According to an email from Jane Urquhart, the will of Enid Rogers stipulated that her estate be divided into four equal shares. One share was “.. to Trinity Anglican Church for general maintenance in memory of Emily McTavish”, the dollar amount being \$41,000. Emily McTavish was Enid's unmarried aunt who inherited the property south of Colborne where Enid lived for many years.

Also, “Two shares to Trinity Anglican Church Special Rectory Fund to be used in the construction of a new rectory.” The dollar amount for these two shares was \$82,000. The final releases were signed January 10, 1991.

Family History: Rogers, McTavish and Campbell

Many folks around Colborne might see the name “Rogers” and assume that Enid Rogers was part of the larger United Empire Loyalist Rogers clan that is well known in this area. Not so. Enid was born in Winnipeg and has no connection to the local Rogers family at all.

Enid's father was Robert Arthur Rogers, a successful businessman in Winnipeg. He was born in Franklin Centre, Huntingdon County, Quebec in 1862, came to Park Hill, Ontario as a twenty-year-old bank clerk but by 1890 was in Winnipeg where he dealt in wholesale produce and then organized the Crescent Creamery Company which provided dairy products to the western provinces.

Enid's mother was Florence Edith McTavish, known as Edith, and it is through her mother that we find the connection to Colborne. Edith's father was Donald Campbell McTavish who was a Hudson Bay Trader. The transient nature of trader lifestyle is clearly illustrated by the locations we see in his family tree. He was born in Haldimand Township but spent most of his life at trading posts in what was then called The North West Territories and what we know today as Manitoba and Saskatchewan. He was married in 1875 to Lydia Catherine Christie at St. John's, North West Territories. Their son Gordon is shown to be born in Ontario but then Edith is born in 1876 at Norway House, Manitoba. The 1891 Census shows Donald C. McTavish as a widower living at Chapleau, Algoma West, Ontario. He died in 1913 and was buried in Lakeport Cemetery, just inside the front gate.

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If we look farther back, we can see that Enid's grandfather came by his trader lifestyle quite naturally. His father was Donald McTavish, a well-known Hudson Bay Trader during the early decades of the 1800's. Even more important, Donald McTavish's father was the famous Simon McTavish who was involved in founding the North West Company as competition with the Hudson Bay Company in the 1780s, soon after the War of Independence was over. Obviously, it ran in the family!

And that's not the only illustrious connection in this family tree. In 1833, Donald McTavish married Maria Simpson in Inverness, Scotland and then in 1837 they settled on property in Haldimand Township, at the lakeshore just west of Lakeport. Maria was one of several illegitimate daughters of the notorious Chief Factor of the Hudson Bay Company, Sir George Simpson. The word "notorious" is apt in this case because Sir George Simpson was known to have fathered many children by several women, mostly outside of marriage. Genealogists and historians have had a tough time documenting this man's progeny and even then, some of it is cloudy. However, the connection with Maria is clear.

Now we must follow Maria (Simpson) McTavish a bit further. Her husband, Donald McTavish, died in 1849 and she is shown as a widow with children in census records for Haldimand Township in 1851. Then, in 1865, she married Donald Campbell, a single 59 year-old local farmer and miller. Donald Campbell had owned the property at Concession 1, Lot 33, Cramahe Township for several decades and had built a wharf nearby at Lakeport to support the growing local commercial traffic.

The following lines in "How Firm a Foundation", page 37, explain the context: " The earliest large harbours in what is now Northumberland County were built at Cobourg and Port Hope, both in 1830. The Colborne Harbour Company was formed not much later, in 1837. By the 1850s there were at least three wharves in Cramahe Township, including Keeler's wharf, which handled salt, waterlime, pork, coal, lumber, cordwood, cedar posts and produce. This wharf saw so much traffic that Joseph A. Keeler applied for permission to build a road from the wharf to connect with the Cramahe Gravelled Road, so that goods for import and export could more easily be transported to and from the docks. Near where the St. Lawrence Cement pier is now located was Samuel S. Cole's wharf, from which lumber and produce were shipped. A third wharf, at Salem, was Spilsbury's wharf. A fourth wharf – Campbell's wharf - was also located in Lakeport, but in the Haldimand Township portion of the hamlet, which straddles the border between Haldimand and Cramahe."

We can see by this why Enid Roger's full name was Enid Campbell Rogers. It can be explained that Enid's mother, Edith McTavish, was a granddaughter of Maria Simpson, who had married Donald Campbell. The impact this had early in Enid Roger's life was many happy holidays spent at her relative's home near Colborne. In practical terms, the Donald Campbell property eventually passed on to Enid's mother and then to Enid; more about this under the heading "Bellevue".

Bellevue

The following lines from "How firm a Foundation", page 48, tell us about Bellevue: "At one time, on the corner southwest of Colborne where Ontario Street turns into Lakeport Road, there stood a stately home called Bellevue. From its vantage in the crest of a hill, it allowed its fortunate inhabitants to survey the lakeshore to the south and the once-bustling wharves of the former Port of Cramahe. The well-named manor house did indeed offer a belle (beautiful) view. Some sources claim the home was built on the site of an early native trading post. Donald McTavish was a factor of the Hudson Bay Company and some sources claim he established a trading post there about 1810. In 1820 it was purchased by one Donald Campbell ... "

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The house called Bellevue was built by Donald Campbell and was a very prominent part of the Colborne and Lakeport community for many years. The Rogers children from Winnipeg, including Enid, visited here often during the 1910s and 1920s. Maria died in 1891 and then Donald Campbell died in 1892. As a result, Bellevue passed to Maria's daughter, Emily McTavish.

There is an amusing piece about Emily McTavish found on the Cramahe Township web site as follows: "Miss Emily McTavish of the Hudson's Bay Company lived in a fine old home at the top of the hill on the road to Lakeport where her niece, Enid Rogers, makes her home now. Aunt Emily as we called her, drove a horse that was well-trained. Her first stop in town would be the Post Office, next to Colborne Posts' barber shop, and the horse would be left nose in to the side walk. Leaving the Post Office, she would walk across the road to Griffis' Drug Store. The horse would look carefully around for other traffic, back the buggy out on to the road, turn it, cross the street to the drug store and wait for her there, nose in to the sidewalk. "

On the Manitoba Archives web site we also see regarding Emily McTavish: "Mary Emily Isabella McTavish (1847-1932) was born to Donald and Maria McTavish near Grafton, Ontario in Haldimand Township, Northumberland County. Throughout her life she was a leader in church, social and welfare activities in Colborne, where she lived. An active member of Trinity Anglican Church in Colborne, she was president of its Ladies' Aid for many years. She also contributed to St. Peter's Anglican Church in Lakeport. McTavish died on 23 December 1932 and was buried in Lakeport cemetery, Haldimand Township."

When Emily died in 1932, Bellevue passed on to her brother, Archibald McTavish Campbell who was the only child of Donald Campbell and Maria (Simpson) McTavish. He was a successful businessman in Winnipeg. When he died in 1942, the property passed to his niece, Mrs. Arthur Rogers, or as we know now, the former Florence Edith McTavish and Enid Roger's mother.

We must pause and consider the life of this amazing woman. Wikipedia provides: "Rogers, who was born Edith MacTavish, had strong family connections to Manitoba's past. Her maternal great-grandfather, Alexander Christie, served as Governor of Assiniboia on two occasions, and supervised the construction of Fort Garry. His son, William J. Christie, worked for the Hudson's Bay Company in Manitoba from 1843 to 1873, and was named Inspecting Chief Factor in 1868. Rogers herself was born in the tiny outpost of Norway House, six hundred kilometres north of Winnipeg. At age two, she moved with her family to Rupert House, on the shore of James Bay."

Then, in "How Firm a Foundation", page 48: "... Edith McTavish Rogers, was the first woman to be elected as a member of the Manitoba legislature, a staunch Liberal who was never defeated in any election."

A more elaborate description of her career is found on Wikipedia: "After graduation, she moved to Winnipeg and married the businessman Arthur Rogers. She became prominent as a philanthropist in the 1910s, and particularly after the outbreak of World War I in 1914. Rogers worked for the Patriotic Fund, which distributed money to the families of soldiers fighting overseas, and became known for devoting several hours to personal consultations with family members. She also worked with the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, the Land Settlement Board and other groups. In 1916, Manitoba's Liberal government of Tobias C. Norris passed a law extending voting rights to women. In 1920, Rogers was asked to become a "star candidate" for the Liberal Party in the Winnipeg constituency, which elected ten members by a single transferable ballot. She accepted, contested the 1920 provincial election, finished eighth on the first count, and was declared elected for the ninth position on the thirty-seventh count. For the next two years, Rogers served as a backbench supporter of Norris's administration. Because of her work with Winnipeg's returned soldiers and unemployed men, she was more sympathetic to labour issues than were most others in the Liberal caucus. She played a significant

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role in steering Manitoba's Child Welfare Act through committee and into law. She also supported the prohibition of alcohol. The Liberals were defeated by the United Farmers of Manitoba in the 1922 provincial election. Rogers, who was re-elected in Winnipeg, served with seven other Liberals on the opposition benches. She frequently criticised social service cuts enacted by John Bracken's administration. Rogers was re-elected for a final time in the 1927 election, which the Liberals again lost. In 1928, she represented Canada at the Geneva Conference for the abolition of import and export prohibitions and restrictions. Her husband died in 1929, and she did not seek re-election in 1932. She resumed her philanthropic career in World War II, serving as chair of the Provincial War Council of the Red Cross."

An Adventurous Life

Enid's mother, Edith, lived at Bellevue until her death in 1947 and Enid moved there in 1946 after a considerable period of travel and adventure. It was common in those days for children of wealthy families to experience the "Tour" which meant travel to Europe and more exotic places for the purpose of gaining knowledge of the world. In the 1920s and 1930s Enid travelled in Europe and Africa.

We have this from "How Firm a Foundation", page 48, "At one time she operated a beauty salon in Capetown, South Africa, and visited the old white supremacist state of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe)." And then "At the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the 36-year-old Enid went to England to enlist in the Red Cross Ambulance Service as a driver. She worked as a FANY, a member of the Female Auxiliary Nursing Yeomanry and, during the Blitz, when Britain was being heavily bombed by the Nazis, she risked her life to bring aid to victims. Remarkably, she escaped unscathed."

In the Community

Enid Rogers lived in the Colborne area from 1946 until her death in 1990. For that entire time she lived at Bellevue. In 1947 Enid's mother, Edith (McTavish) Rogers passed away. Then, in 1949, Bellevue was totally destroyed by fire, resulting in the loss of Enid's home as well as many valuable historical artifacts. In 1950, Enid had a smaller house built on the property and she renamed it Inverawe Farms.

The following lines from "How Firm a Foundation", page 49, tell the story: "The loss of her home, following so closely upon the death of her mother, must have dealt Enid a heavy blow. She wasted no time in self-pity but rather rolled up her sleeves and got to work. Initially, she lived in makeshift quarters, improvised for her by local carpenter Arnold Ives, from what was left of the driveway for the former estate. Ives also built the small frame home on the site of the former, much grander one, in which Enid lived, and in which she died. She changed the name of the property from Bellevue to Inverawe Farms and set about becoming a raiser and breeder of champion Yorkshire hogs. Apparently she made quite a success of the venture as her nephew, Jim Lawson of Ottawa, told the Ottawa Chronicle after her death. "She and her pigs were written up in the breeders' magazines all over North America."

Some further lines from the same publication summarise Enid's work in the community: "All the years she lived in this area, Enid Rogers continued to be devoted to the causes of her family, especially to the Anglican Church, and to the Liberal party. She was a pillar of St. Peter's Church, Lakeport, until it was demolished in 1968; then she lent her considerable talents and energies to Trinity Church, Colborne, where for many years, she headed the Ladies' Aid that had been begun by her aunt, Emily McTavish."

One of many activities Enid Rogers was engaged in during her time in Colborne can be illustrated by the following picture from the Cobourg and District Images web site. It shows Enid Rogers in the middle surrounded by dignitaries

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attending the dedication of a historical plaque at Gores Landing in 1968. Enid is shown as “President of the Northumberland Historical Society”.

