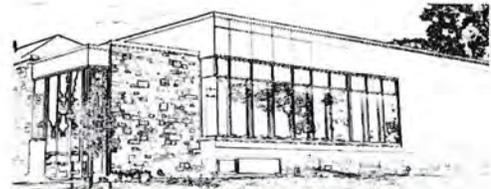


From the Archives

A Cupboard and its Story

Jane Foster, Manager



Lennox & Addington County Archives

In the collection of the Lennox and Addington Historical Society at the County Museum and Archives, there is a weathered cupboard that had been in the Davis family, Adolphustown, for over a century. The small two-shelf cupboard was salvaged by Archibald Campbell Davis from a house that stood just west of the old Hay Bay Church. The rosehead nail construction suggests an early 19th century date, before 1840. The house had previously been lived in by the Hugh Macdonald family when they moved to Hay Bay in 1824. In Canniff Haight's, *Country Life In Canada*, there is an artist's conception of this house. This small cupboard from Hugh Macdonald's store on Hay Bay is a window to the story of Allan Ross Davis's visionary campaign to restore the old Hay Bay Church and erect a monument to Sir John A. Macdonald on the shores of Hay Bay.



Cupboard detail: Rosehead Nail

Allan Ross Davis, seventh of nine children, born to Archibald Campbell Davis and Amy Ann Huffnail, was a man with a vision. In 1881,

his father mortgaged the farm, Lot 16, Concession 2, to allow Ross to attend McGill University in Montreal where he graduated in 1884, with a degree in Civil Engineering. 1884 was also the year that the Country celebrated the centennial of the arrival of the Loyalists. In his native Adolphustown, a monument to the United Empire Loyalists was unveiled on the shores of the Bay of Quinte. Four years later, he married Alice Maude Casey, daughter of Thomas W. Casey, a noted local historian, who published a series of articles for the *Napanee Beaver*, called "Old-Time Records."



Macdonald Cupboard

Then, in 1892, centennial celebrations were held at the Old Hay Bay Church which had been abandoned as a meeting house in 1860. Allan Ross Davis was a great grandson of Henry Davis, one of the founders of the old Hay Bay meeting house. Perhaps spurred by a series of articles in the *Christian Guardian* written by Reverend Richard Duke, a Methodist minister stationed on the Bath Circuit, in which he described the old church as the "cradle of Methodism," Davis began a visionary campaign to acquire and restore the old Hay Bay Meeting House as a monument to Methodism and the early Loyalists. In the March 1895 issue of the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*, he wrote a story about the "Cradle of Methodism," highlighting the arrival of the Loyalists in 1784 to the 1884 U.E.L. Centennial, the original subscription list for the old Hay Bay Church, the Quakers and John A. Macdonald.

With the support of Dr. Nathaniel Burwash, Chancellor of Victoria University, the General Conference of the Methodist Church named a five-member committee in 1910 to raise funds to acquire the old Hay Bay meeting house. The committee members, John Lake, C.C. James, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, A.R. Davis, F.L. Hooper, Napanee, and George Ruttan of Adolphustown, were all descendants of Adolphustown Loyalists. In 1911, a wharf was built behind the old church in preparation for a large

fundraising picnic attracting some 800 people. Reverend Dr. Carman, General Superintendent of the Methodist Conference, was the keynote speaker. He was met at the Napanee Train Station by Fred Hooper, a member of the Committee, and ferried to the church on board the Red Devil, Charlie Walter's private motor launch. . When he stepped ashore, Carman quipped, "At last I have the Devil under foot." The following summer, the church was dedicated as a monument to Canadian Methodism, August 12, 1912.

Allan Ross Davis continued his campaign for the church, now combining it with a vision of erecting a monument on the adjacent property to Sir John A. Macdonald, first Prime Minister of Canada, who spent his boyhood years on Hay Bay. Davis purchased the lot where the Macdonald house had stood, surveyed it and urged the Government of Canada to take it as a gift to create a memorial park. In 1927, the Jubilee of Confederation, the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board of Canada accepted the small plot, 25 feet square, and erected a stone cairn with a plaque.

Hugh Macdonald and his young family, including the young John A., then a lad of five years, emigrated from Scotland in 1820 to Kingston where they had connections with Lt. Col. Donald Macpherson and his wife, Anna Shaw, a half-sister of Hugh's wife, Helen Shaw. The previous year, Donald Macpherson's son by his first marriage, Allan, had married Mary Fisher, daughter of Judge Fisher, Adolphustown, and in 1820 moved his new wife and baby son to the tiny hamlet of Napanee where he had secured the postmastership.

Hugh Macdonald set up shop in Kingston and took Evan Macpherson, a half-brother of Allan, into the partnership. When this partnership was dissolved in 1824, Hugh moved his family to Adolphustown Township and set up shop in a sandy cove, close to the Hay Bay Methodist Church and the Quaker Meeting House. It was a spot where boats from the north shore came ashore. Perhaps the choice was also connected to Allan Macpherson's father-in-law, Judge Fisher, whose homestead was just down the road. The Macdonalds were living on Hay Bay by September, possibly before. An account of purchases from the Hugh Macdonald store which survives in the Burger Huyck papers in the County Archives begins on September 1824. Burger Huyck lived across the bay.

John A. was probably nine years old when he moved with his family to Hay Bay, and attended school in the old village of Adolphustown. He was later remembered as "superior in ability to others in attendance."



The Macdonald Homestead at Adolphustown
Anecdotal Life of Sir John Macdonald
 Emerson Bristol Biggar (1891)

John A.'s time in Adolphustown was relatively short, as he was then sent to Kingston to attend the Grammar School. By 1830, Hugh Macdonald moved his family to the Stone Mills on the Glenora side. Local historian, Thomas W. Casey, father-in-law of Allan Davis, believed Hugh Macdonald moved to Glenora about 1826, when John Macdonald was about ten. The accounts in the Burger Huyck papers support this as they end in June 1826. However, the move from Adolphustown may be as late as 1829. This was also the year that the patriarch Lt. Col. Donald Macpherson died. John A.'s cousin Helen Macpherson, daughter of Lt. Col. Donald Macpherson, later remembered John coming to Glenora for Christmas from Kingston. John A. and his friend, Tom Ramsay who emigrated from Scotland in 1829, organized The Society of the Vache Rouge, a humorous

reference to a red cow that strayed onto the Macdonald's property on Hay Bay in 1828. Helen Macpherson made a banner and presented it to John A. and his friends at the home of Allan Macpherson, Napanee. Most likely this occurred in 1832-33 when John A. had moved to Napanee to open a law office for George Mackenzie in Clarkville, across the river from the Allan Macpherson's gentry inspired house above the falls.

Preparation of this article is made possible by previously published research on Allan Ross Davis by Reverend William Lamb in the Hay Bay Guardian, Volume 16, 2008; and Jennifer Bunting's, Sir John A.'s, Napanee, published by Cranberry Hill, 1999.

In 2018, the Allan Macpherson House will celebrate 50 years since it was restored and opened as a historic house museum; the trustees of the old Hay Bay Church have initiated a \$300,000 campaign to replace the siding and undertake other maintenance to ensure its legacy for the future; and a series of plaques, coordinated by the County of Prince Edward, are being installed to create a Macdonald trail through Lennox and Addington and Prince Edward Counties. In Greater Napanee, plaques will be installed at the UEL Heritage Centre, at or near the Macdonald homestead site, the Allan Macpherson House and the Napanee train station.



Photo: Jane Foster
Macdonald Cairn at Adolphustown

2018 is also the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War. The 2018 exhibit featured at the Lennox and Addington County Museum, "The War is Done – Anything Goes," will highlight the 1920's decade, the Red Devil and leisure activities that developed along the river and the bays. In the Archive's corridor, photographs will showcase Camp Le Nid, a private club on the Ruttan farm, Adolphustown, frequented by lawyer W.S. Herrington and his colleagues from 1886-1947. The opening of the 2018 feature exhibits will take place May 31, 7- 9pm. For more details, visit www.countymuseum.ca.

Jane Lovell, who is assisting with curating the Led Nid exhibit, will be speaking on Camp Le Nid at the September Tuesday Night at the Museum, at the Lennox and Addington County Museum, Napanee, September 18, 7pm.