



# Historic Gloucester

Newsletter of the

## GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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



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Edith Woodburn Proudly Displays Queen Elizabeth's  
Congratulations Upon Her 100th Birthday,  
July 24th, 2014

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THE GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
 WOULD LIKE TO ANNOUNCE  
 THAT ITS HISTORY ROOM WILL NOT BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
 ON A REGULAR BASIS BUT IS ALWAYS  
 AVAILABLE BY APPOINTMENT

LOCATION: 4550B BANK STREET (AT LEITRIM ROAD)

FOR MORE INFORMATON  
 Contact  
 Mary Boyd at 613-521-2082 or boydmmary172@gmail.com

**Cover Photo:**  
*Some years ago Edith Woodburn decided to write down her memories of living in Gloucester and in particular, the Blair Road where she and her husband built their home. Edith is now 100 years old and the photo on the cover shows her proudly displaying the congratulatory message she received from the Queen.*

**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 are always welcome.



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

## President's Report

By Glenn Clark

With the first winter snowstorm in the forecast, we know the end of year approaches.

In the last newsletter, I announced the retirement of Robert Serré from the Board of Directors. Because of his enormous contribution to the society over the last several years, we felt that this could not pass without some significant thank you. As a result, it was decided to create a new award, the Grace Johnston History Award to be given to those who have made a major contribution to the Gloucester Historical Society and who have promoted the study, preservation and recording of local history. I cannot think of a more worthy first recipient than Robert Serré. This will be presented to Robert on December 13, 2014 at our annual Christmas party.

2014 is also the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of World War I. In recognition of this important anniversary, a commemorative postcard has been designed and will be distributed to all members. In addition, considerable research has been performed and a list of Gloucester war veterans has been assembled and posted on our website [www.gloucesterhistory.com](http://www.gloucesterhistory.com). This includes approximately 1,000 names from both world wars, the Korean War, the Boer War, the 1885 Northwest Rebellion and in one case, the Napoleonic wars. This list is far from exhaustive and we encourage you to provide additional names that have a Gloucester connection. E-mail me at [gbclark@magma.ca](mailto:gbclark@magma.ca).

### Board of Directors 2014-2015

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\*Indicates date when this person is up for re-election to Board of Directors.

*'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.*

## **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.

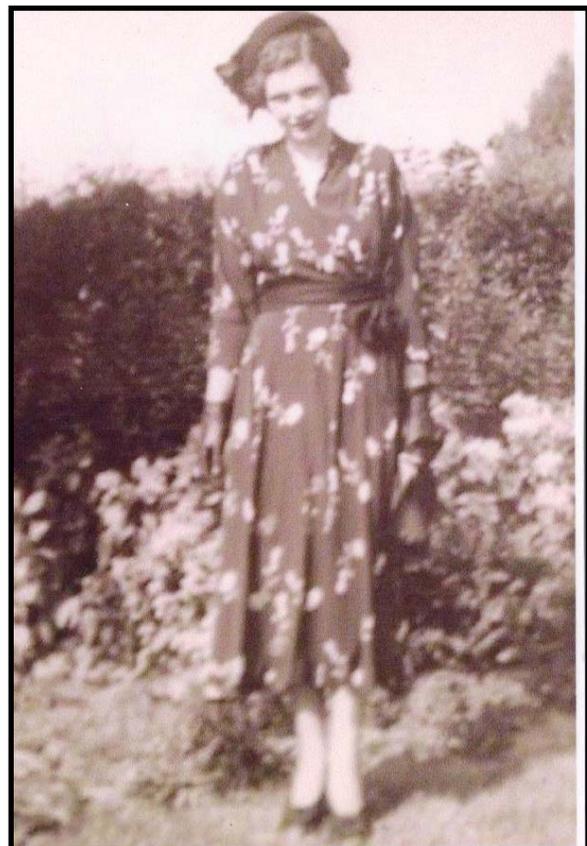
One time, when my son Doug (born 1942) was a baby, I had him in the big old-fashioned carriage that is still in our attic (we'd bought it used for \$10). It was hard to push on that bumpy earthy road and when he fell asleep, Kaye suggested we just leave him and go ahead to gather our crabapples and cherries.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

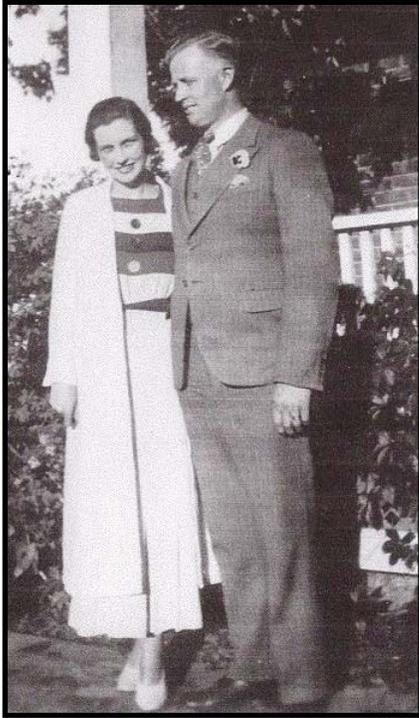
return, mission accomplished we found him sleeping peacefully.

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.





Newlyweds Emerson and Edith

## Epitaph to Emerson, 1

### “He was nice to the kids”

One time, about 10 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 that my husband's name was Emerson, 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.

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 \$5,200. 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 remodeling 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 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.

### The Murphy/Kenny House

By Joan Scott

This house which is 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 Boston. Apparently he came from County Clare in Ireland, somewhere near the City of Cork. He was accompanied by his wife, Mary Catherine (Nolan), and their daughter, Margaret who was born in Ireland in 1850.



The Murphy/Kenny House As It Looked In The 1960s or 1970s and Much As It Looks Today.

The family lived in Ottawa before moving to the Montreal Road and they were listed in the census at several Ottawa addresses in different years. The first appearance found in the census as a resident of Lot 20 was in 1885. At that time a son-in-law James McGovern was also a resident there.

It is thought that Patrick may have worked on the Rideau Canal because a family note says "he was the best educated man on the Rideau. He did tax slips for everyone, read letters and wrote letters for those who could not write, and never charged anyone."

After 1885 he is shown on the census records as being a farmer, but he apparently also worked at the Robillard Quarries for a period of time. Patrick died in 1889.

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, that is 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 at \$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 became 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 by a buzz bomb 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 Kenny family, originally from Kilkenny, had settled in 1820. There are still descendants 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 Montreal Road residents.



Thomas Henry and Christina Louise (Murphy) Kenny - my grandparents

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 [www.gloucesterhistory.com](http://www.gloucesterhistory.com) for information.