

The House Built Upon the Rock
A talk given by Kay Stanley (née Mulvagh)

Lunch & Learn

Parkwood Presbyterian Church

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The House Built Upon the Rock

Like a wise man who built his house on the rock...as noted in Matthew Chapter 7, Verses 24-27... my Great-Grandfather James Mulvagh did exactly that in the early 1850s.

Those of you who witnessed the demolition of the former manse and Fellowship Centre in the spring of 2015 will have no doubt that it was well constructed and definitely, “built upon the rock”!

For purposes of this presentation, I plan to do the following:

- 1) Outline the early history of my Great Grandfather James Mulvagh and his family on this property;
- 2) Provide some background about the life and times of Thomas Alexander Mulvagh, my Grandfather and his wife Mathilda White;
- 3) Share some stories about my father Clarence Wellington Mulvagh and my mother Florence Lenore Barrett and our lives growing up in City View and on the farm;
- 4) Lastly, I will say a few words about the changes which evolved in the mid-fifties when the farm was sold and Parkwood Hills began to take shape.

From County Cavan, Ireland to Nepean Township

James Mulvagh was born in 1799 in County Cavan, Northern Ireland. He married Jane Humes from Antrim, Northern Ireland (a woman still in her early teens) and they emigrated from Ireland in the early 1830s prior to the great Potato Famine of the 1840s. (This was the time when many Irish workers came to Ottawa to work for Colonel John By and the building of the Rideau Canal which was completed in 1832.) In August and November of 1834, my Great Grandfather James bought 220 acres

of land described as Lot 33, Concession A, Rideau Front, Nepean Township from John Berry and Isaac Firth. People who study the history of this area will discover the names of Berry and Firth in connection with the activities of Captain John LeBreton and the British Government's emigration plans to locate a loyal population in the Rideau area around the core of the military settlements at Richmond and Perth. (Remember that the impact of the War of 1812-1814 was still a concern at that time.) Ten years after Great Grandfather James Mulvagh acquired the farm lands, John A. Macdonald, a Kingston lawyer was elected to the legislature of colonial United Province of Canada, becoming the Premier in 1857.

The Dominion Census of 1851-1852 records the following:

James Mulvagh – Farmer, Age 53

Religion: Free Church

Jane Mulvagh – Age 30

Two children, John George – age 2 and Eliza Jane – age 1

Living in a one story log house

(Let me explain that this small house was located in the middle of the hill closer to the area behind the apartment buildings and Tiverton Dr. and that the remains of its cellar was a place where we played as children.)

The Census for Carleton County West done in 1861 reveals that nine years later the family was listed as Religion: Church of Scotland (*I don't know what happened to the earlier designation) and the family had grown to six children (one of whom was my Grandfather Thomas Alexander, who was 6 yrs. old) with three older and two younger

siblings. Also living with Great Grandfather's family were two men servants, a woman servant and her child. Thus, there were 12 occupants of this homestead which leads us to believe that the second family home had been constructed in the mid-1850s...and this was the house that we are discussing to-day. *(Please note that I said that "we believe that the house was constructed in the mid-1850s although a map of the area done in 1879 shows a house located closer to the line between the two Mulvaugh* farms exactly where that original one-story cabin had been. The name also had a "u" in it which was dropped by my Grandfather at a later date.)*

James Mulvagh died on April 2nd, 1861 at the age of 62 yrs. (six years before Confederation) and he is buried in St. John's Anglican Cemetery behind Merivale United Church. His wife Jane, lived a further 17 years and died on January 3rd, 1878 at the age of 56 years. She is also buried in Merivale Cemetery.

In his will, my Great Grandfather James divided his property among three sons, namely John George, Thomas Alexander and Robert James. It is assumed that the oldest son, John George did not take up farming even though the 1879 map has the name of J.G. Mulvaugh on the section which became the farm of his brother Robert J. Mulvagh. All we know of him was that he died in 1900 at the age of 50 yrs. His death is noted in the records for Merivale Cemetery but his name does not appear on the Mulvagh headstones there whereas the deaths of his infant brother Phineus (Phinehas) in 1849 and a brother also named Robert who died in 1854 are noted on a separate headstone close to James and Jane Mulvagh.

That meant that the 220 acres was divided into two farms. The part on the north side went to Robert J. Mulvagh, a great uncle and my

grandfather Thomas A. established himself on the southern half of the property.

The life of Thomas Alexander (1854-1930) and Matilda Mulvagh (1860-1919 -- Grandparents)

By all accounts, the farm provided a modest income for my Grandfather's family. From the Merivale Road, up over the hill and down to what became known as Fisher Avenue, my Grandfather raised Holstein cattle for milk production, as well as sheep and pigs. He grew the necessary hay, oats, barley and corn to feed his animals. Horses provided transportation as well as means for ploughing and taking in the crops. Due to its stony and rough surface, the land around the top of the hill was left for grassland while the fields at the front and the back of the farm were quite fertile. There was a woodlot close to Fisher Avenue which provided wood for the kitchen stove and at some later point, the house acquired a coal furnace.

My Grandparents had seven children between 1890 and 1906. One daughter, Olive died in 1897 at 7 yrs. of age and a son Norman died in infancy in 1898. (These were years when epidemics such as diphtheria claimed young lives.) That meant that my Father, Clarence Wellington, born in 1903 had three older sisters and one younger sister Isobel (1906-1994) whose bequest to this church as Isobel Mitchell helped to further the expansion plans for the church in the late 90s.

I recall seeing early photographs taken of our grandparents, our Dad and our Aunts in the early decades of the 1900s in the yard, beside the house. These showed that the white clapboard siding with the green trim around the edges and the verandas was in existence at that time. There was a productive apple orchard at the bottom of the hill, a huge vegetable garden close to the orchard and on the land between the

house and the barnyard. Four or five tall jack pines were present on the lawn and part way down the hill. (I believe that one of them is still standing and another had to be cut down a few years ago due to its proximity to the church).

A long lane, ending with a steep hill directly up along the south side of the farm (between our farm and the Stewart farm) meant that milk had to be taken to the Merivale Road by sleigh in the winter as the milk truck could not manage to get through the snow to collect the milk cans. Throughout the winters, Dad ploughed the lane with the team of horses and a sleigh with a wing-like plough attached under the sleigh. Even so, there were many times when we had to leave the family car at the Merivale Road and walk up to the house because the lane was impassable.

My Dad told me that for many years there was a toll gate on the Merivale Road (at Baseline) and horses and wagons or sleighs were charged a toll (5 cents) for going to the city. (Seems this idea is being discussed again for high occupancy roads... I assume this was to provide for maintenance of the Merivale Road at that time.) The streetcars ran from downtown to the corner of Holland and Carling (one of the reasons that the Civic Hospital was built at its current location in 1920) but the mode of transportation for the family was horse and buggy or cutter depending on the season.

Grandmother Eleanor Matilda, died in 1919 at the age of 59 yrs. while Grandfather Thomas lived until 1930 to the age of 76. They are buried in the Mulvagh family plot in Merivale Cemetery, Interestingly, I have the copies of the deeds for the two family plots we have at Merivale Cemetery. One was sold to John Mulvagh (that missing older brother) in August, 1879 for \$8.00 and a second plot was sold to my Grandfather in

1901 for \$10.00. This also included perpetual care for these lots!

Clarence and Florence Mulvagh...the end of the farming era.

Dad and Mother married on September 28th, 1935 at the Barrett family home in Leitrim. Although she was familiar with farm life, Mother had lived in the Glebe with her brother Dr. George Barrett, a dentist, after finishing high school. At the time she met our Dad, she worked for her cousins at the Barrett Lumber Company on Catherine St. She married Dad at the age of 26...he was 32 which is an indication that they didn't rush down the aisle. Our family grew quickly...Tom was born in 1937, Marjory arrived in 1940, I came along in 1942 and Leah was born in 1944.



clapboard farmhouse, March 28,1955

The farm prospered under Dad's hard work and leadership and it was necessary to have hired help in managing our herd of dairy cattle and in all that was involved in growing and harvesting the crops. Mother also had help in the house with a fulltime "Mother's helper" when we pre-schoolers as well as a cleaning lady one day a

week. When Marjory and I were big enough, the cleaning and baking responsibilities shifted over to us. Tom, Marjory and I also worked in the stables looking after the cattle and assisting with the milking...there was never an idle moment on our farm! Leah was excused from these chores as she was "the baby of the family". Tom, Marjory and I learned to drive the tractor, the horses and the truck depending on the jobs to be done. (Some of you may have heard my funny story about watching the show at the Auto Sky Drive-In theatre while cutting grain in the back

field along Fisher Avenue one summer evening.) Many hours were spent teaching our calves and cows to lead on a halter for show purposes in preparation for the competitions we entered with our herd.

Lest you think that we were somehow forced to do “child labour”, I should point out that we had many opportunities to play around the farm buildings, go tobogganing on the hill, skate on the farm pond, play “scrub...our form of baseball in the summer and swing on a wonderful swing held up by a branch on one of those jack pine trees in front of the house.

Our Mulbarr Jersey Farm raised prize jersey cattle and Dad was meticulous about building the herd along championship lines. We were involved in the 4H club and spent countless hours preparing for shows at the Exhibition, fall fairs (Richmond, Carp and Metcalfe) and the Winter Fair.



We attended City View United Church which had originally been a Methodist Church which had amalgamated with the Merivale Presbyterian Church in 1925. (I have a photo of that lovely church which was

located on the Merivale Road approximately where the Shell station stands across from what used to be the Red Barn.) We belonged to CGIT and to Girl Guides as Mother was determined that we would have experiences outside of our farm activities.

Mother was active in the Women's Institute and a women's Group at City View United. Dad as a descendant of Irish stock, was a member of the L.O.L. (Loyal Orange Lodge) #85 at Merivale and played a drum in the fife and drum band. The 12th of July was always a big day for us as we went to wherever the Orange Parade was being held in the Ottawa valley. At one point Dad was President of the Jersey Breeders' Association and he also served on the school board in the 1940s. The family had close ties with the Progressive Conservative Party both federally and provincially and Mother canvassed in every election through the decades taking Marjory and I along with her on many occasions. When we were still little kids, Mother and Dad bowled with a group of City View friends one night every week in Hintonburg and then in the late 50s they became curlers. Dad was a founding member of the City View Curling Club over on Capilano Drive and they enjoyed this hobby for many years.



Our school in the 1940s was S.S. #12 Nepean, a lovely two-story brick building on the corner of Merivale Road where it now meets Clyde Ave. One room was for grades 1 to 3 and the other was for grades 4 to 8. There was a boys' basement under one room and a girls' basement under the other so when the weather was nasty, we could play indoors. There was no kindergarten in those days. There was a general store (Leaver's) close to where the Merivale Road meets the Baseline Road near what was then, Davidson's Garage. A Post Office

was located in Hill's store in the same area (near where Myers Motors is to-day). Mother shopped for groceries in Westboro as there was no supermarket closer than that or when getting around was too difficult due to the weather etc., Dad brought things home from the corner stores in the Mechanicsville/LeBreton Flats area where he sold our eggs and chickens. City View was a very small community with half a dozen houses along the Merivale Road and a dozen or so farms in the area. (It is hard to imagine that quiet country road to-day given the congestion on the Merivale Road!)

Due to the growth of St. Claire Gardens in the late 40s and early 50s and the beginning of the Meadowlands subdivision, a new school named City View P. S. was built on land a couple of blocks off Merivale Road near Rossland Ave. and we girls moved there for the last couple of years in elementary school. Tom went to Nepean High School and we became students at the recently built Fisher Park High School on Holland Ave. in the 50s. (with Paul Anka as our classmate the first couple of years). By the time Leah was ready for high school, Laurentian had been built so she did not have so far to travel each day. Throughout these years we continued to work on the farm before and after school which meant that we had little time for extra-curricular activities at school as we had to catch the bus to get home as soon as classes finished.

The mid-fifties and the end of our farming days;

By the mid-fifties it had become increasingly difficult to farm as we were being surrounded by urban growth. Our fences would be knocked down by careless trespassers, due to this, our cows would frequently be running around the yards in Carleton Heights, much to the annoyance of the homeowners there. Crops were frequently damaged, hay bales cut and it became increasingly difficult to employ good hired men to assist in doing the labour required. The move to greater mechanization

the summers so we continued to enjoy interesting times at family gatherings.

Minto set up their lumber yard in the front field (where Emerald Plaza is to-day) and began to develop Parkwood Hills from the Fisher Avenue end beginning with the apartment buildings and town houses which are there to-day. Meadowlands Drive was created and sewer and water became available at our house after all those years of well water and a septic system.

By 1967, with Horizon House (Ottawa's first condominium) and the large apartments building up around the house property, Dad and Mother decided to move to a lovely home on Dunlevie Ave.

That decision came as a result of another decision of the Board of Parkwood Presbyterian Church to purchase the farmhouse and its property with plans to erect a church here on the edge of the hill. This was a milestone for our family as the property which had been in Mulvagh hands for 133 years was finally moving to others.

Lastly, I should point out that after 13 or so years in the McKellar area of Ottawa West and due declining health, Mother and Dad returned to the farm property by renting a large apartment on Meadowlands Drive across from Sir Winston Churchill School. Once again, Dad could look out over the church property and what remained of the orchard and the area around his old home. I think he enjoyed being close to his roots and this is where he died in April, 1984 in his 81st year. Mother lived into her 97th year and died at St. Patrick's Home in June, 2006. They are both buried in the Mulvagh family plot in Merivale Cemetery. The three generations are all there along with one member of the fourth generation, my sister Leah who passed away in 2014.

Thank you for the invitation to share this story with you and to hopefully provide some insight into why the decommissioning of the former manse and Fellowship Centre and the demolition of the building



was another milestone for our family. Thanks to the workers and some members of the congregation, I was given a section of the clapboard siding, a beam and some handmade nails that had stood the test of time for over 150+ years. It really was a “house that was built upon a rock”.

Thank you and I would be pleased to answer any questions if time permits.

Prepared by Kay Stanley, Nov. 16, 2015

The Mulvagh children, c 1947:

Back, left to right: Kathleen, Tom and Marjory; Front: Leah

PERSONAL CENSUS—ENUMERATION DISTRICT, No. 300 OF

Names of Inmates.	Profession, Trade or Occupation.	Place of Birth.	Religion.	Residence if out of limits.	Age next birth day.	Sex.	
						Male.	Female.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Sarah A Hamilton	Daughter of last name	Neprean	Free Church		21		X
2 George Hamilton	"	Gaulbourn	"		8	X	
3 Thomas Scott	Laborer	England	English Church		29	X	
4 Margaret Scott	"	Scotland	"		31		X
5 Ann Scott	"	England	"		4		X
6 Elizabeth Scott	"	Ditto	"		1		X
7 Robert Power	School Master	Ireland	English Church		30	X	
8 Ann Power	"	Ditto	"		30		X
9 Ann Power	Widow	Ditto	"		60		X
10 William Power	"	Bytown	"		2	X	
11 James Mulrough	Farmer	Ireland	Free Church		53	X	
12 Jane Mulrough	"	Ditto	"		30		X
13 John G. Mulrough	"	Neprean	"		2	X	
14 Eliza Jane Ditto	"	Ditto	"		1		X
15 Thomas Cliff	"	Bytown	W Methodist	Bytown	9	X	
16 Amy Eagan	"	Ditto	"		14		X
17 John Furlong	Servant	Ireland	R C		32	X	
18 James Brown	Laborer	Ireland	Free Church		37	X	
19 Mary Brown	"	Ditto	"		28		X
20 William Scott	Farmer	Ireland	W. Methodist		35	X	
21 Mary Jane Scott	"	Ditto	"		31		X
22 Harriet M. Scott	"	Neprean	"		8		X
23 William L. Scott	"	Ditto	"		6	X	
24 Archibald Scott	"	Ditto	"		3	X	
25 Christina Scott	"	Ditto	"		2		X
26 Mary Duennlin	Servant	Ireland	R C		84	X	
27 Jane Moffat	Orphan	Canada	English Church		11		X
28 John Sullivan	Farmer	Ireland	W. Methodist		48	X	
29 Jane Sullivan	"	Ditto	"		47		X
30 Jane Ditto Jr	"	L. Canada	"		30		X
31 William Sullivan	Servant	Canada	W. Methodist		35	X	
32 Mary Jane Ditto	"	Ireland	"		34		X
33 William W. Ditto	Laborer	Neprean	"		11	X	
34 John Scott Ditto	"	Ditto	"		9	X	
35 Harry Ditto	"	Ditto	"		7	X	
36 Eliza Ditto	"	Ditto	"		4	X	
37 Archy Ditto	"	Ditto	"		3	X	
38 Christina Ditto	"	Ditto	"		12		X
39 Alice Conway	Servant	Ireland	"		22		X
40 Thomas Brown	Servant	Ditto	R. C		26	X	
41 John Scott	Farmer	Ireland	W. Methodist		63	X	
42 Christina Scott	"	Ditto	"		63		X
43 Joseph Arnold	Servant	England	English Church		26	X	
44 Thomas Beir	Ditto	Ireland	"		27	X	
45 Alfred Moffat	Orphan	Canada	"		9	X	
46 Amy Brown	Servant	Ireland	R C		26		X
47 Archy Scott	Farmer	Gaulbourn	W. Methodist		29	X	
48 Eliza Scott	"	Ireland	"		26		X
49 John Scott	"	Neprean	"		4	X	
50 Mary J. Scott	"	Neprean	"		6		X
						26	24
						26	24

St. John's Anglican Cemetery deed, Merivale Road, 1879

Merivale

Received from John G. Miller
 the sum of eight dollars
 (\$8) as full payment for Lot
 573, in the Merivale cemetery,
 which was left unpaid for
 by Joseph Miller

Aug. 8th, 1879. William Hopper

Merivale Cemetery deed, 1901


Duplicate Lot 575 - Sec. 9

538

The Merivale Cemetery Company, (Limited)

Know all Men by these Presents, that "The Merivale Cemetery Company, Limited," in consideration of the sum of Five Dollars, paid to them by Thos. Mulvaugh of Nepean the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do grant unto the said Thos. Mulvaugh his heirs and assigns, that lot of land in the said Cemetery, of the said Company called the Merivale Cemetery, in the Township of Nepean, in the County of Carleton, containing by admeasurement one hundred superficial feet (which is lot designated on the Plan of the Ground and in the Books of the said Company as number Five hundred and seventy five Section Nine of part of the Cemetery Grounds, according to the plan lodged in the Company's Office), to have and to hold the above premises hereby granted unto the said Thomas Mulvaugh his heirs and assigns for a burial ground forever.

In Witness Whereof the said "The Merivale Cemetery Company, Limited" have caused their Corporation to be unto annexed, the fourteenth day of March in the thousand nine hundred and one

 George Hopper PRESIDENT
A. E. Hopper SECRETARY

Post Script

Parkwood Presbyterian Church was founded in 1964, and began worshipping in Parkwood Hills Public School, just down the street from the Mulvagh farmhouse. The first worship service was held September 20. In September 1965 a Building Committee began to look for a site for a property in the Parkwood Hills area. In January 1967 the congregation decided to request appointment of a full-time minister. The Rev. Leslie Files was appointed and started his ministry March 5, 1967. On June 26



the congregation approved that negotiations proceed towards the purchase of the Mulvagh property, and the sale was accomplished in September. A service of dedication service was held October 8, 1967.

In the following years the congregation would start a building fund, pursue one design in 1971 that had to be abandoned in 1972 as exceeding a cost limit of \$100,000, and adopt a second design in January 1973 that was approved by the Presbytery of Ottawa in March. The contract was let and a sod-turning ceremony took place on May 27. The building was completed in the spring of 1974 and the first worship service in the new building was held on March 17. The Presbytery of Ottawa held a service of dedication on April 21, 1974 led by the Rev. Dr. Agnew Johnson, Moderator of the 99th General Assembly. The house was continually



occupied as a residence (Presbyterians use the term “manse”) by ministers of Parkwood church until the summer of 1987 when Rev. Floyd McPhee moved into his own home and the congregation started paying him a housing allowance. At that time a passageway was “cut” between the church and the manse began to be used for Christian Education. At that time the kitchen was converted into a nursery, the porch became a pre-school room and the living room became known as the Fireside Room. The bedrooms upstairs were used as classrooms, as a “counting room” and for storage at various times.

As the building aged, it became obvious that it would be wiser to replace it with a more modern facility than to bring it up to current building code standards and insurance requirements. In February of 2010 the congregation decided to proceed with planning to prepare for the construction of an addition to Parkwood Church which would replace what had become known as the Mulvagh Wing. The planning came to fruition in the spring of 2015 and a “decommissioning service” was held on April 12, 2015 at which Kay Stanley was present. At the time this talk was delivered the farmhouse had been taken down and the shell of the new wing was in place.



l to r, back: Rev. James Hurd, Kay Stanley, Claire, Erynne, Matthew & Andrew McPhee, Fran McKenny
front: Stewart Elder, Samantha Sutherland - holding beam from original farmhouse, Apr. 12, 2015