

Francis Family Bus Tour
July 16, 1999

Thank you for joining us. We have prepared a brief synopsis of the points of interest that we will see today. We are pleased to have Earl and Marjorie Lindsay along to share their knowledge of the history of Renfrew as it relates to the Francis family. They have prepared a summary of the Allen S. Francis, Lumber Baron locations of interest. J. Allen Francis and Fay Bennett will be available to respond to questions about the Francis homesteads in Admaston and Bromley Townships.

Stop # 2 Thompsonville (Thomsonhill) Public Cemetery

- Samuel Francis, one of three brothers to settle in the area, came to Horton Twp. in 1849 and later moved into Renfrew. He became a successful manufacturer of stone axes and built his factory on the Bonnechere River. He was a school trustee and served on Renfrew Council. Samuel, his wife Lydia, and her mother and three infant children are buried in this cemetery. Their daughter Eleanora and her husband W.H.Kearney, a watchmaker and businessman in Renfrew, are also buried here. Samuel's sons Arthur, a minister, and Peter, a banker, moved to Iowa.



Stop # 3 Tour Featuring Allan S. Francis

- Allan S. Francis was the son of Jonathon Francis, one of three brothers to settle in the area.
- See highlights as written by the Lindsays.



Leaving the Pinnacle and Continuing on the Tour

- As we travel west the Bonnechere River is on our left.
- The Bonnechere River acted as a travel route for the early settlers.
- The lots surveyed along the north side of the Bonnechere are string hundreds "acres" and called the Bonnechere Range North. The lots on the south side are referred to as the Bonnechere Range South.
- When Elisha Francis, the third of the three brothers settling in the area, considered location, he traveled the Bonnechere River and located just out of the Bonnechere Range. He envisioned the standard hundred acre lot as more suitable for livestock farming.
- West of the railroad tracks are several farms adjoining and owned and operated by the Crozier family. To your right in the distance is the farm of Dwight Crozier and Cecil Crozier; on the left is the farm of Bob Crozier.
- As we travel past Cecil Crozier's farm we find Wellington Crozier's farm on the south side of Hwy 60 . Surrounding the Rosebank Cemetery are the farms of Jim, Dawson and Murray Crozier.

Stop # 5 Rosebank Church & Cemetery

- Rosebank Church is located east of Haley Station, on old Highway 17 and was established in 1846. It was part of the Bonnechere Mission of Wesleyan Methodists. The name Rosebank came from a ship that carried some of the Northcote settlers across the Atlantic Ocean. The Rosebank Women's Institute erected a cairn with a descriptive plaque. The Rosebank Church was the first

church in the Community. It is a log church, no longer in active service, however it is available for use each year on Decoration Day, if rain is a problem.

- Rosebank Cemetery is especially significant to the descendants of Elisha and Margaret Ann Francis because including these pioneers, there are at least 36 descendants and spouses buried here. Decoration Day is an annual Sunday afternoon gathering at Rosebank Cemetery, under the old oak tree, to remember our relatives, friends, and neighbors.



Continuing the Tour

- Austin and Velma Berry live on the right. Mrs. Berry is a step-daughter of the late W.L.Crozier.
- The next farm is Ross Crozier.

Stop # 6 Elisha Francis Family Homestead

- As we cross the side road we visit the farm owned by J. Allen Francis (commentator) and his sons John and Stanley. This farm was the former Elisha Francis Farm. Allen's sons are the fifth generation owners of this farm.
- Elisha Francis established three of his sons in Admaston Twp.
- On the south side of the Elisha Francis homestead was the James Francis holding now owned by Tim Briscoe. Jim purchased 100 acres of land from his father on Lot 25 Concession 2 W1/2 on October 31, 1889, a few weeks before he was married. This farm

was later owned by his son Henry until 1933 when it was sold to J.B.Briscoe. There are no living descendants of Jim.

- On the west side the farm was occupied by William Francis now owned by Paul Villard. William purchased the 100 acres, Con 2 Lot 26 E1/2 from Duncan McLaren on Dec 12, 1876. There are no descendants of Wm.
- Allen's grandfather Allen H. Francis operated the home farm with his Mother Margaret Ferguson Francis. It was then passed on to Ellsworth Francis and then to J. Allen Francis.
- The farm for over 60 years operated as Mountain View Stock Farm. Allen H. and Ellsworth Francis were designated as the sixth Master Breeder of Holstein cattle in Canada.
- Over the first mountain range, the Simpson farms were located on Concession One, Admaston Twp., and one of the farms was later purchased by the Francis family. One of Elisha's granddaughters, Maimie married Lorne Simpson. Descendants of theirs are on the tour.



Stop # 7 Northcote United Church

- The name Northcote is a mixture of English and French meaning Northside. The reference is to the north side of the Bonnechere River in Admaston Township. Over the years, the location tended to shift to the west. The Briscoe store was the Northcote Post Office for many years. Approximately one mile south of the store, on the bank of the Bonnechere River, was the location of the

Northcote Railroad Station. The Station and railroad tracks are gone.

- At Northcote, you will note the farm owned by Tom and Mary Briscoe. Tom is a great-grandson of Elisha Francis and is Allen's first cousin.
- The United Church and the Northcote Community Centre are on land formerly taken from the Briscoe farm. Mr. & Mrs. Allen H. Francis were very active in their church. She was life member of Northcote United Church Women. He served as chairman of the building committee when the Northcote United Church was erected in 1937. The move from the Rosebank congregation to the Northcote congregation occurred as a result of church union in 1925 and the amalgamation of the two congregations under the Admaston Pastoral Charge of the United Church. Tom Briscoe is active in the church, Community Centre and Rosebank Cemetery.



Stop # 8 LUNCH at Northcote Community Center

- The Northcote Community Center was formally SS # 6 Admaston Twp.



Resuming the Tour

- As we leave the Community Centre we will pass the farm of Garry Brisco whose grandfather established a long standing apiary. The Brisco honey is still noted for its excellence.
- As we head down Hwy 60, the former Union Star Cheese Factory is on your right looking down the Barr Line. Allen H. Francis served as president. His son Ellsworth and grandson J. Allen were directors.
- As we continue towards the Cobden Eganville Road, we will pass three farms where descendents of Elisha Francis located in Bromley Twp. Jonathon, Elisha Stewart, and Merinda Francis Peever have descendents living in this area.

Stop # 9 Jonathon Francis Homestead

- Jonathon was the second oldest of Elisha Francis. He purchased a 120 acre farm in Bromley Twp., on Concession 6 Lot 3, from Henry Barr on March 14, 1883 for \$2500. Jonathon died leaving a young family. His widow then married Thomas Kaddatz. His namesake has been participating in our reunion. This property is now part of the Dick Farms.
- Children of Jonathon include the family names of James, Connell and Wolsey.



Stop # 10 Dunmore, ON - Stewart Francis Homestead

- Elisha “Stewart” Francis purchased Lot 9 Concession 6 N 1/2, Bromley Township from Robert Airth on April 25, 1882. This area of Bromley Township was known as the Dunmore Section. Three generations were to farm this land until it was sold in 1991. Charlie, son of Stewart continued to farm the homestead after Stewart, and his son Eldon carried on after Charlie's death.
- A granddaughter of Stewart continues to live on the adjacent farm.
- Children of Stewart include the family names of Francis, Phillips and Humphries.



Stop # 11 Wolftown, ON - Merinda Francis Peever Homestead

- Merinda (Minnie) Francis married Tom Peever who was already farming at the time of their marriage. He had purchased the 100 acre farm in Wolftown on October 9, 1883. This Homestead is

located in Bromley Twp., Concession 5, Lot 16 W1/2. The house was the second on the farm, built about 1911 and bricked some time later. The farm passed down through 3 generations to their son Wilfred and his son Ellard before being sold. Children of Minnie and Tom include the family names of Peever, Ross, McKibbon, and Smith.



Stop # 12 Douglas, ON - Richard Francis Harness Shop

- Richard Francis was a harness maker and he ran a harness shop with his brother Peter in Douglas. This shop operated for farmers and lumbermen who used horses extensively. The exact location on Main St. is not known.
- He married Mary Jane Bowes, a daughter and granddaughter of prominent Douglas residents. Her father James Bowes lived to the great age of 98.
- Mary Jane's grandfather Robert Robertson Smith was the Warden for the Bathurst District which included the area of Lanark and Renfrew Counties before they were formed. R.R. is also my gt gt grandfather. He was known as injunction Bob as he took out an injunction to try to stop the move to have Pembroke become the County seat instead of Douglas. R.R. donated the land for the Anglican Church where the Cemetery is located. This is also his final resting place.
- Mary Jane died at a young age. Richard remarried and lived at B165 Queen St. Douglas in 1901. He later moved to Detroit.

Stop # 13 Return via STONE RD & OPEONGO RD

- On the left is the South Bonnechere Range. The road we travel is a dividing barrier separating many years of commercial agriculture from lumbering.
- On our right you will notice terrain that is suitable for past and future lumber operations.
- The Opeongo Road is of historic significance. The Opeongo Road starts at the Ottawa River and travels to and through Algonquin Park. It was the road used to open up this part of Ontario.
- The location of the town of Renfrew played an important part in the social and business scene of the Ottawa Valley.

We hope you have enjoyed your trip and reminiscences of days gone by.