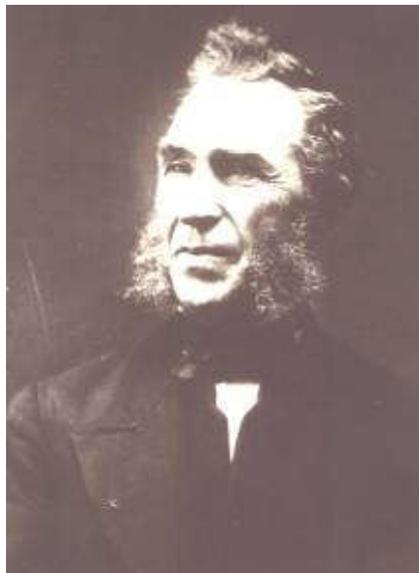


Isabella McCowan (1816-1910) daughter of John McCowan and Annie Clarke, granddaughter of Alexander McCowan and Florence Mccorquodale

As I was researching Isabella McCowan's family I was very surprised to discover that there was a separate McCorquodale branch of the family dating back to about 1747. John McCorquodale, was a school teacher in Kilninver, Argyle and married to Isabella McKenzie. In 1771 their daughter, Florence, married Alexander McCowan. Alex and Florence had fourteen children and it was their ninth child, John, who in 1816, married a young woman, Annie Clarke. John and Annie's daughter, Isabella, married Duncan McColl (1813-1876) on June 21, 1841 in Renfrew, Scotland. Shortly after their marriage Duncan and Isabella emigrated to the Glanworth, Ontario area travelling by team and wagon from Port Stanley, Ontario to their homestead. According to Great Uncle Robert it must have been fall as he tells the story:

'It must have been the fall for my grandmother told me of how, as she was walking along side the wagons, she saw the large yellow obstacles on the fields. She asked a man what they were and he said oranges. She said, 'My, I never knew oranges grew that big'. He said, 'Oh, everything grows like that here.' Grandma asked, 'Will you sell me one?'. He said, 'No, but I will give you one'. So she put it away for at least that night. What it turned out to be was a pumpkin.'

Duncan McColl was very religious and served as a catechist with the 'free Church' in and around the Westminster and Elgin Townships. Duncan and Isabella had seven children, three sons and four daughters.



Duncan McColl



Isobelle McCowan

It wasn't surprising when, in 1880, their daughter Catherine 'Kate' McColl married 'the boy down the road', John Humphrey Elliott. The two had grown up together and went to the same school on the 5th Concession.

Duncan McColl died on April 12, 1876 several months after preaching his farewell sermon on the text 'For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.'

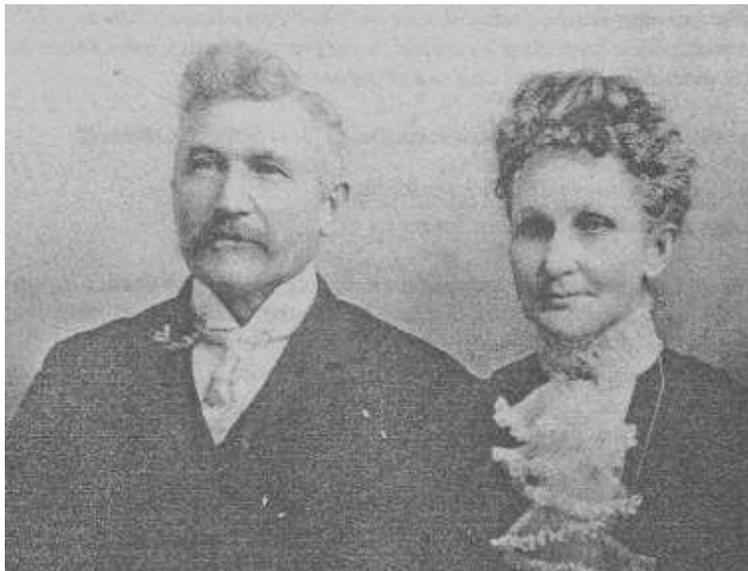
Isabella died thirty-four years later on September 18, 1910. Her obituary reads:

***'South London Lady dies Ages 94 Years
Westminster Pioneer Has Passed Away***

Mrs. Isabella McColl, widow of the late Duncan McColl, and one of the pioneer residents of Westminster Township, died at 40 Askin Street on Sunday afternoon at the ripe old age of 94 years. Mrs. McColl was born in 1816, in Barhead, Scotland, and was married in 1842. Coming to Canada on her honeymoon, she settled with her husband on a pioneer homestead in Westminster, which came to be known as Lilac Farm. Here Mrs. McColl lived for 65 years, removing only four years ago with her daughter, Miss Flora to 40 Askin Street. Notwithstanding her advanced years, Mrs. McColl was a cheerful, active, and bright old lady. Her husband, the late Duncan McColl, was a prominent Presbyterian, and assisted in the pioneer founding of Presbyterian churches in Elgin County. Since her removal to London, Mrs. McColl had connected with Knox Church, South London.

She is survived by four daughters: Miss Flora, at home; Mrs. J.H. Elliott, in Westminster, Mrs. James Armstrong, widow of the late James Armstrong, ex-M.P., and Mrs. (Rev.) S.T. Eastman, of Meaford; Professor Eastman formerly a professor in the Western University, and now continuing his studies in Europe, is a nephew. Three sons of Mrs. McColl predeceased her, John McColl, Rev. Duncan McColl, and Dr. Hugh McColl, of Lepeper, Michigan.'

In 1876 after the death of his father-in-law, John Elliott bought the McColl farm and built a small house beside the old farm house. Isabella continued to live in the farm house and the Elliott's took up residence in the new house. John was very interested in community life and in 1892 ran for council, losing to John Anderson. He was also very active in the Church and from 1892 until his death on March 17th, 1916 he held the post of Superintendent of 1st Church Sunday School.



John Elliott and Kate McColl

My grandmother, Hughena Dickson Elliott was born on Lilacdale, the family farm, on September 6, 1881, the first child born to John Humphrey Elliott and Catherine 'Kate' McColl.



Hughena Elliott

After Hughena's holiday to Calgary and Banff (see Wanderlust of Eastern SchoolMa) she began a courtship with Alexander McCorquodale. On January 24th, 1908 Alexander was admitted to the Law Society and in the spring he moved to High River, Alberta where he worked with the law firm of Ballachey, Burnet. After their marriage on June 30, 1908, Alex and Hughena settled in the little community and in 1910 he left Ballachey, Burnet to establish his own law practice.

After their two elder boys were born the family settled into a little house on 9th Street S.W., High River. It was here that Hughena discovered her writing talent. She freelanced articles to magazines such as Survey Graphic Magazine and Chatelaine as well as writing for the Winnipeg Free Press, The Calgary Herald, and

The Lethbridge Herald.

When the family first moved into their new home there was no running water or electricity. They had a well outside and a pump was installed on the kitchen sink. Their lighting was by coal oil or kerosene lamps and it was the boys' job to keep the chimney free from soot and the wick trimmed so the flame would remain even. Every Saturday night was bath night so the stove was stocked with coal and the reservoir filled. An extra pail of water was heated on top of the stove so that the hotter water could be added along with the reservoir water to the wash tub.

Hughena was the only woman among the men and she was well suited to adventure otherwise she may have had trouble handling 'the boys'.

Alex ran his own law office until 1940 when he was appointed a King's Counsel.

Hughena began work for the High River Times in 1927 and remained there as a writer and editor for twenty-nine years. In 1944 the Stoney Indians expressed their appreciation by bestowing the honorary title of 'Eagle Woman' and gifts of an eagle feather and sweetgrass necklace. During that period she wrote many supportive articles on the Stoney Indians' behalf, and helped them to petition their rights to the land at Eden Valley.



Hughena McCorquodale (Elliott, McColl, McCowan)

Alex died April 24th, 1949. His law office is now preserved at Heritage Park in Calgary, Alberta:

Hughena was well respected and loved by all in the community. When Hughena retired from the High River Times in 1956 the town honoured her by declaring a 'Mrs. McCorquodale Day' on June 7th of that year. More than six hundred people came to pay tribute to her including aspiring author W.O. Mitchell and her employer, Charles Clark. Mr. Clark's talk to and about Hughena on June 7th, 1956 'McCorquodale Day' follows:

Mr. Chairman, Mrs. McCorquodale - and her friends:

I have been asked to speak today on Mrs. McCorquodale's association with the Times. She came to The Times and its readers in the fall of 1927 and I would imagine that her first request upon arrival was for a gross of soft lead pencils. In my memory - no pencil is of value on her desk unless it is at least 2B - and capable of bold clear inscription. On recollection that pencil was an insight into her character for her thoughts and her actions are clearly defined and considerate and within them all a softness for humanity. Her writing is bold and frank, filled with an appreciate of humanity, and understanding of their weaknesses and their strength and her thoughts so rapid that only a soft leaded pencil could keep pace with the run of ideas.

No one who had read her material will ever have grounds to say that her voice pen ever contributed

deliberate hurt for any person - but rather explained away some unfortunate incident - or cleared the air of some unfounded rumour. Her comments are calculated by her nature to better, to improve and to lighten the spirit.

It is with no provincialism that she protects and praises her own. Mrs. McCorquodale knows this country and the people in it are her friends. This little piece of Canada is her chosen site - and because it is her home it is naturally the best. I believe that wherever she had chosen to live, her happy friendly outlook would be the same - and the community of her choice would be better for having her amid its people.

A gathering honouring this lady is natural - for the wish to honour her is in the heart of all with whom she has associated - the parade that have lingered at her desk in the Times - the casual visitor on the street, the meetings or in her home - the Teen Town group in which her interest has been constant and practical, her advice and assistance always available, the string of gangly high school kids now going and now gone who came for information and assistance in varied problems - and were never disappointed - many of whom scattered over the world, still keep in contact with Mrs. Mc. - the country correspondents that didn't know how to present their news so called at her desk, week after week - by phone and by personal visit and they had little lessons - pleasant social visits - and turned out cracking good correspondents.

Saturday afternoon has always been her special day in the office. Then there would be a bustle of skirts around her desk and chit-chat of every imaginable thing. A man just couldn't understand it all - but in her unique and womanly way and out of that welter of words, information appeared, background was provided, friendships solidified and a better paper appeared.

There are striving writers - and have been by the score who helped wear the seats out of our office chairs in their search of advice and information. Not one ever went away empty handed. There have been subscribers, advertisers and general citizens who called in anger and left more peaceful with the world. She doesn't bother much about going to church, but the churches come to her - every denomination - and she helps them all.

It goes on and on - it's just a part of being the kind of person she is - because within her there is a love and an admiration of all. A personality that shines through her writing. How can a story - or a life be dull when the writer sees brightness in all.

Perhaps my remarks should be confined alone to office associations but that is impossible for me to do - for it has not been an office association alone that has been mine to enjoy - rather one of earliest recollections of a kindly lady who a dirty faced boy was sure had some home baked cookies - or a crusty boy-sized jam sandwich. It is a recollection of happy side stops at a friend's home to patch a bruised knee - or bandage a cut finger. She was the lady with the new setter pups and the one who helped us kids bridle the quiet roan mare - and knew that once in a while we put a flank rope on her to make her buck.

With me, the associations, the kindnesses of childhood just continued on into adulthood. Mrs. McCorquodale is just part of my life and has always been. To me - as to the community, she is a part of life in High River and a kindly and understanding friend.

And with you I look forward to a continuance of these pleasant associations in the office and in the community and pray that no ill health, no circumstances will deprive us of her pen, her kindnesses, understanding and her continuing contributions to a better life in this community.'

After retirement in 1956 Hughena moved to Trail, BC to live with her youngest son and daughter-in-law. There she was very prolific in her writing with much of her work being published in the Star Weekly and a play 'Inside Out' aired on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in 1960. Hughena died in Trail on December 21st, 1961. Murray and Dots returned her to the foothills to be laid to rest beside her husband in

the Hillside Cemetery in High River.

Alex and Hughena's middle son, Hugh McCorquodale (1911-1987) married Dorothy Bonney (1912-1997) in front of a justice of the peace on August 6th, 1940 in Yellowknife, NWT. Mom was soon to find out that life in the mining camp was so very different from her sheltered childhood in London, Ontario but she was a trooper



Waterfront view Negus Mine 1938 circa page 221 Yellowknife N.W.T. An Illustrated History by Susan Jackson
Sutherland's Drug Store photo - Bob Orrey

There was no running water. So each morning, noon and night Dad or Mom had to make the trek from their log cabin to the lake to punch open the water hole with an ice pick. A wood stove used for heating the house and cooking required about ten cords of wood each winter. Trees in the north are very, very small so I can't imagine how many trees were chopped to produce those ten cords.

During World War II Yellowknife's population dwindled and consequently Negus Mines ceased operations. In 1944 Dad began work as chief assayer for a new mine, Giant Yellowknife Gold Mines, which had started up around 1938. When he first found employment with Giant, Dad and Mom were still living at Negus, so for the first few months he had to commute daily on a rocky path about four miles long (each way).

The Giant mining camp where they lived consisted of a few families, bunk houses for the single men, a cook house and fire hall, a commissary for shopping, and a recreation hall for entertainment. A pump house converted water to steam heat and pumped heat along with water to the mine and homes. Because of permafrost, water pipes had to be well insulated in wooden boxes and constructed above the ground. These were known as 'pipe boxes' and they ensured there was an uninterrupted supply of water and heat for the families during the cold, long winters. As children we would use the pipe boxes as a transportation highway to and from the mine site, friend's homes and the recreation hall.



Giant Camp 1960's

By 1950 Mom wanted to resume her teaching career. She decided that in order to stay at home with her children she would start a kindergarten class in their home. The class consisted of four children, all from the Giant camp. In 1955 Mom replaced Yellowknife's kindergarten teacher, which required her to move her Giant class to the town site. She rented the basement of the Anglican Church to set up her school. When she retired in 1971 she was teaching a morning and an afternoon class for total of forty-eight children. The parents paid her \$10 per month. Just after her retirement the town of Yellowknife recognized her dedication to the children of Yellowknife by holding a party in her honour.

Until 1967 when Yellowknife became capital of the N.W.T. the population stood at about 3,000. As a community it was totally isolated from the "outside" so air travel was the main means of transportation. In 1949 the first public roadway into the N.W.T. was constructed and linked Grimshaw, Alberta (Mile 0) to Hay River, N.W.T. During the 1950's Dad would have the family car flown out on the old Bristol plane, the work horse of the air, to Hay River on the south arm of Great Slave Lake. Upon arriving in Hay River we were able to start our yearly holiday by travelling down the MacKenzie Highway to Edmonton about 1,000 miles away. In 1960 the Yellowknife portion of the MacKenzie Highway was completed and the town was no longer isolated except when the MacKenzie River ferry was closed during 'break up' and 'freeze up'. The McKenzie River crossing is approximately two miles and takes roughly twenty minutes



N.W.T. portion of the MacKenzie Highway

Once our holidays were over and we arrived back at Hay River, instead of flying the car home, Dad would put it on a barge and float it back to Yellowknife across Great Slave Lake. It was always a welcome sight to see it arrive a few days later because there was always a possibility of a storm on the lake and the car would be lost to the waters.



Hugh and Dorothy Xmas 1962

Barges were very important to the life of the community, especially the first barge of the season because it carried the supply of beer. Dad recounts when the 'beer' barge arrived the men would congregate at the dock in the Old Town and form a line that reached from the barge, up the hill, to the Old Stope Hotel. The cases of beer would pass hand to hand through the line of men until the barge was emptied of the beer. When it was all safely at the Old Stope Hotel the men would begin to quench their thirst taking only several hours before they depleted the beer supply.



Beer barge arriving 1945 page 105
Vol 1 Yellowknife N.W.T. an Illustrated History
Edited by Susan Jackson

Our front room window looked out over Back Bay and during the winter time the lake was always a buzz with activity. If it wasn't the natives with their dog teams heading back and forth to their trap lines, then it was the cat trains taking supplies to the communities further north. Bombardiers and cat trains, used prior to the Yellowknife Highway opening in 1960, consisted of tractors and the sleds they pulled. It was a very dangerous occupation because although most of the ice was solid enough there were the occasional pressure ridge and cracks

During the winter months an ice road connected Giant Mine to the Old Yellowknife Town site. Winters seemed to be long and dark, lasting from October until April. On the shortest day, December 21st, the sun would come up around 11:00 am and go down around 3:00 pm. Once the days lengthened and the skies

warmed, the lake would start breaking up - a welcome sight.

The longest day of the year, June 21st, was celebrated by a golf tournament starting at midnight. It became an annual event. The golf course consists of rocky fairways, tufts of fox gloves, sandy greens and ravens that swoop down to steal the golf balls

In 1966 television first made its grand appearance in Yellowknife. CBC (Canadian Broadcast Corporation) would send a four-hour tape from Edmonton to Yellowknife for viewing in the evenings. I expect children were far more imaginative and fun loving without the influence of television.

In 1972 Dad and Mom, retired to Vernon, B.C. Dad died on March 25, 1987 Mom died May 25, 1997. They are gone but never forgotten.