

SETTLEMENT

"DUNAIN" - 345 Ridout Street, Port Hope, Ontario.
owner - Mr. John Cumberland.

The present owner of Dunain, a descendent of the original builder, W. A. Fraser, feels that the significance of his home lies in its continuous family occupancy, and its illustrious family members.

Commander J. T. Williams, father of Port Hope's well-known Colonel A. T. H. Williams, was the owner of Penryn Park. As a wedding present to his daughter Augusta, and her husband, W. A. Fraser, he gave them seven acres of land on which Dunain now stands. The daughter of this marriage, Seraphina Fraser, married Frederick Barlow Cumberland, whose father was the architect for University College at the University of Toronto, and for St. James Cathedral, also in Toronto. Barlow Cumberland himself built up an extensive Canadian history library, still in Dunain, and was an original member of the Champlain Society. Other museum pieces include a gun collection which dates back to 1689.

Adding to the authenticity and continuity of Dunain is the original furniture which first graced this home in 1857.

The following history was written by Mildred Cumberland Wotherspoon, to celebrate the centennial of Dunain in 1957.

The Story of a Home "Dunain" 1857 - 1957

written by Mildred Cumberland Wotherspoon

Prologue

This property was original Crown Land and given by deed, through the Duke of Richmond, to my great grandfather, Commander John Tucker Williams, R.N., when he retired from the English Navy in 1818. His family lived in Cornwall, England. At an early age he went into the Royal Navy and was a midshipman under Nelson at Copenhagen in 1801.

In May 1813, Sir James Lucas Jr arrived in Kingston, Canada, taking full command of his Majesty's ships on the lakes of Canada. A draft of naval officers came out of service on the Royal ships, and Lt. John Tucker Williams was among these.....

When in 1817 an arrangement was made between the Br. Plenipotentiary at Washington and the sec. of state for the U.S. as to the naval force to be maintained by the respective government's on the Great Lakes, the dispersion of both Lake Navies follows.

My great grandfather then retired from the navy and returned to England. He came back to Canada in 1818 bearing with him a dispatch from the Earl of Bathurst to the Duke of Richmond authorizing a grant of land to be made to him in proportion to his rank. He received by patent from the Crown a number of properties in the County of Durham and established for himself a homestead in Port Hope, comprising one hundred acres. He named his home Penryn, and built it in 1829, becoming a large landowner in the district and quite a personage in the county. He married Sarah Spradbrow Ward, whose father sometime before had settled in Port Hope.

He was familiarly known as "The Squire". He was appointed a magistrate and from the books in his library he evidently took his position seriously and had versed himself in the study of law. He represented the United Counties of Durham and North in the Parliament of Upper Canada from 1841 - 1848 giving particular attention to the agricultural interests of his constituency.

During his tenure of office from 1841-1848 he was sent to London, England to address the House of Commons ... "On matters vitally essential to the peace and prosperity of Her Majesty's faithful Canadian people." His plea was for ... "An improvement in the importation of the agricultural products of Canada with the United Kingdom." What my great grandfather requested was granted.

...He was offered a Knighthood but he declined as he said his wish was to help others and not to gain honours for himself.

When his eldest daughter, Augusta Williams, married Wm. Alexander Fraser, he gave her a number of acres on the north west corner of his "Penryn" property, on which to build a home for themselves ... so Dunain came into being.

Commander J.T. Williams, R.N., died at "Penryn" in 1854.

CHAPTER 1. Wm. Alexander Fraser.

Wm. Alexander Fraser belonged to the Lovat-Fraser Clan, Riverness, Scotland.

His ancestral home was "Dunain" ... meaning "the hill of the birds". Wm. A. Fraser's mother was a Baillie so he was brought up on the old estate [Dunain, Riverness, Scotland]

As a young man my grandfather Fraser went out to British Guiana, S. America. He came to Canada in 1840 and entered commercial life in Montreal. In 1846 he came to Port Hope as a general agent for a large syndicate of Montreal merchants. He soon became closely associated with the municipal affairs of Port Hope and the policies of the County. His commercial career was enterprising and prosperous. He was for many years agent for the Trust & Loan Co. and later became a Director of the Bank of Toronto. He was one of the first and most prominent stockholders in the Midland Loan & Savings Co.

He was one of the advocates of the Midland Railway Scheme and during the construction of the road he was elected Vice-President...W.A. Fraser had the rank of Capt. and had charge of #1 Co. in the rebellion of 1866... He was a liberal patron of the [46th] Battalion and took great pride in its achievements.

He married Augusta Williams and built "Dunain" in 1857. My grandmother had a very beautiful voice, which was well trained by good masters in Montreal and a winter in Germany. She sang both operatic arias and oratorios.

In 1862 she [grandmother] and grandfather went over to Scotland ... She was only 25 then.

The first wedding at "Dunain" was in 1871, when on October 19th my mother, Catherine Seraphina Fraser, married my father, Frederic Barlow Cumberland. ... They were married in St. John's Church.

He [Wm. Fraser] died when ... in the 73rd year of his life. An extract from a Port Hope paper at that time said: "We announce with deep regret the death of Wm. Fraser, Esq., One of Port Hope's most honoured citizens...."

CHAPTER 2. Augusta Seaphina Fraser.

After my grandfather's death my grandmother continued to live at "Dunain" with her unmarried daughter, Lily, but as the Fraser Estate had been much reduced by financial losses, she decided to sell the old house.

As my mother was so fond of her old home, my father bought it from my grandmother in 1898, so it was kept in the family.

Grandmother devoted her time between staying at "Dunain" and with her daughter, Helen, who had married John D. Gilmour and lived in Quebec. She became ill and died in 1911.

CUMBERLAND.

CHAPTER 3. Frederic Barlow Cumberland. The third generation on this land.

He was born in England and came to Canada with his parents in 1847 when 3 months of age. They settled in Toronto and he received his early education at the Model Grammar School and later went to England and attended Cheltenham College. On returning to Canada he entered Trinity University, Toronto, where each year he won a scholarship, graduating with his B.A. in 1869 and his M.A. in 1870.

He joined the Royal Grenadiers, ... and when they served in the Fenian Raid he was the youngest officer in the field. He took a great interest in his college...

He was very interested in railroading and entered a railway construction firm, becoming General Freight and Passenger Agent for the Northern Railway.

My father then went into the Steamboat business and did much to foster the transportation facilities on the Great Lakes. He was the author of many books on Canadian historical events... He, with Sir Frank Smith, organized the Niagara Navigation Co. in 1880 and was its Vice-President at the time of his death. He was also President of the Niagara River Navigation Co. of the U.S.... He F.B. Cumberland belonged to both the Ontario and Wenworth Historical Societies and when President of the former in 1907 he organized a fund to prevent the spoilation of the "Old Fort" in Toronto... He took a great interest in the town [Port Hope] and in 1904 he represented Port Hope on a delegation to urge on the government the rapid completion of the Trent Valley Canal.

I was their only child and when I married Hugh C. Wothspoon of Montreal on November 1st, 1905, they had a large wedding for us.

My father died at "Dunain" on September 2nd, 1913 ... There were many articles written about him in numerous papers but I think the following extracts typify best the kind of man he was:... A representative Canadian, his motto was: Dominion before Province - Canada United and First"... He left "Dunain" to my mother.

CHAPTER 4. Sarah Catherine Seraphina Cumberland.

Mother was a real homemaker and social affairs did not appeal to her. She would willingly go to dinners, balls, etc. with my father when he wished it, but she was at her happiest when in their own home, and was a very gracious hostess to all their family relations and their many friends.

She was keen, alive and active up to the day of her death... in her 93rd year.

Mother left "Dunain" to me.

CHAPTER 5. Mildred Cumberland Wotherspoon.

...in 1943 my mother died and left "Dunain" to me....
... I have tried to keep "Open House" for the families and entertaining the members and Directors of various organizations of which I have been President - the Port Hope Branch of T.C.S. ladies Guild, the Red Cross, of which I was President for the six years of the last war, the Canadian Club, the Golf Club, St. John's Service Club, etc.

GEORGE PLAYTER Philadelphia, came to Canada in 1779
(settling in York now Toronto).

daughter Mary Playter
married Thomas Ward, Esq. "Ward Hill," Port Hope.
daughter Sarah Spradbrow Ward
married Commander J.T. Williams, R.N.
daughter Augusta Seraphina Williams
married Wm. A. Fraser, Esq.
daughter Catherine Seraphina Fraser.
married F.B. Cumberland, Esq.
daughter Mildred Faith Cumberland.