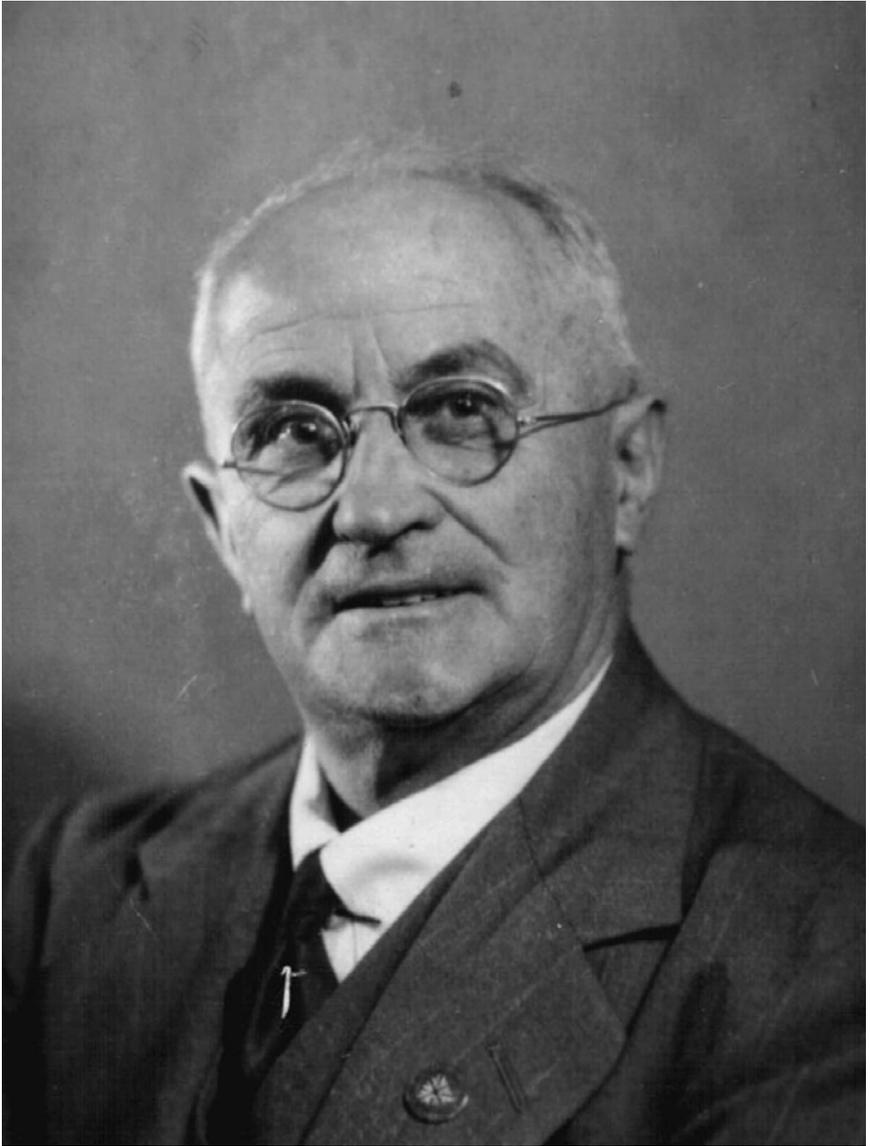




George Metcalfe Wigglesworth MM
1889 - 1974



George Metcalfe
Wigglesworth

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The Butcher's in Malkirk

Introduction

George Metcalfe Wigglesworth was born in Emsay, near Skipton, Yorkshire, served his apprenticeship as a butcher in Leeds and apart from time in the Canadian Army and a post retirement holiday was in Alberta for most of his life. This is a simple attempt to record what is still known of Uncle George. He was a bachelor and his emigration to Canada has left the story in at least two parts, for as far as I know only Vernon Turner from England visited him in Canada, in his case as an airman. It was prompted by my visit to Halkirk with Margaret, my wife, when at last Uncle George's letters and photos could be put into context. Gadsby and Halkirk had included items about him in their Local Histories and I have gathered these and a few other pieces together.

Our thanks are due to the people who so kindly contributed and to Colin Kingsbury whose computer expertise helped with the art work.

George Wigglesworth, Editor.



The 'Elm Tree', Emsay and South View Terrace, 1924

Ancestry

His father was George Walsh Wigglesworth born in 1862 at Emsay, his grandfather having died of consumption shortly before. His grandmother then remarried and became a Thompson. In 1881 he was residing at Mattoch's House and Shop in Emsay, near Skipton, North Yorkshire at the corner of Main St and Kirk Lane, where he is described as a boarder, apprentice grocer. At the time of the 1891 census they were living at South View Terrace, in Emsay, to be seen in the photograph of the Elm Tree Inn. The first record of a Skipton shop is in the Directory when he is shown as living at 31-33 Newmarket St where he was a grocer. This house is now pulled down and replaced by a telephone exchange, but even so it is recorded that the street "was not a thoroughfare on whose past inhabitants are inclined to dwell with nostalgic affection"! "The chimney pots were of amazing diversity" however! Family tradition has it that this shop was obtained with Grandma Jane's money; she died in Feb 1889. William Turpin Chippendale, George's step-grandfather, died in 1898. Reputedly the loan was called in by the Chippendale family and left them penniless, so much so that Mary Alice even had to sell her wedding ring.

In 1902 George Walsh Wigglesworth is recorded in the Leeds Directory at 3 Abyssinia Terrace, (off Belle Vue Road, where it joins St John's Rd.,) poultry salesman. Presumably therefore the family moved from Skipton to Leeds sometime between 1898 and 1902. A picture of Leeds is given by the fact that at that time three out of four houses (including Abyssinia Terrace) were in terraces such as 'back-to-backs'. Although employment and housing were very good reasons for the considerable movement to towns, Leeds was seen as 'a slum city'. It was, however, the time when far-sighted people began to improve Leeds, when for example Col. Harding conceived City Square as an Italianate Piazza, dedicating the statue of the Black Prince in 1903.

In 1906-7 George is manager at 22 Royal Park Road in Leeds for Bosomworth's, Grocer's. (Robert Bosomworth had at least two shops and eventually moved to a farm near Wakefield.) George eventually established his own shop there which he operated until his death in 1936. An announcement in the All Hallows Parish Magazine, Leeds, tells that he was a sidesman and a respected member of the Parish. At the time of his

marriage the local paper described him as "one ever ready to lend a helping hand in any movement which has for its object the benefit of the village (of Emsay) for in addition to being actuary for the Penny Bank and secretary for the Working Men's Club, he holds other positions of trust."

Mary Alice Metcalfe became the wife of George Walsh Wigglesworth in August 1888. In 1881 she was living in Emsay with her Mother who had been widowed and her step father was Turpin Chippendale, innkeeper at the Elm Tree Inn. She is described as a scholar in that Census. At about that time, age 14, she left Casterton School near Sedbergh (and was presented with a bible so inscribed). In this census she is known by the name Polly, but by her children she was to be known as 'Ma', chosen to match her initials. She was married from The Elm Tree and it seems two of her husband's step-siblings acted at the wedding, namely Miss Thompson as Bridesmaid and Mr George Thompson as Best Man. She wore a fawn dress, trimmed with silk, and a matching hat. 25 were entertained to a wedding breakfast at the Elm Tree. The honeymoon was in Scotland. Born in 1867 in Ingleton, Yorkshire she died in Leeds in 1942.

George Metcalfe Wigglesworth was born in Emsay 12 July 1889. His first name had been combined with Wigglesworth for two generations before him and before that probably came from the Willans in the 18th century. His second name is his mother's maiden name. He lived with his parents and his new born brother Fred at South View Terrace, Emsay, being the eldest child in a family which was to number seven. His sister Annie died in Leeds, just before she reached her teens. His apprenticeship to a master butcher was probably in Leeds. All five brothers survived service during the First World War leading to George speaking of the "lucky Wiggs."

The "Uncle Isaac" he stayed with at Nevin, Alberta, on his emigration to Canada age 21 was probably more correctly his Great Uncle and came from Emsay.



Jeff, Pete, Chuck, Nig, Dick, Kate, 1923

"From The Bigknife to the Battle - Gadsby and Area."
published in the 1970s

I remember George M. Wigglesworth from the time we moved to the Little Knife District in 1920.

Mr Wigglesworth (never "Wiggy" to us) had emigrated from England before World War I. A native of Leeds, Yorkshire, he had been trained as a butcher and he worked at his trade in Gadsby prior to his enlistment in the Canadian Army. Although small of stature, he was not lacking in courage and, as a result of having single-handedly captured the men manning a German machine gun in France, was awarded the Military Medal for bravery in action.

Following his discharge from the army he returned to Gadsby, and, under the Soldiers' Resettlement Plan, settled on a farm located four miles south and one-half mile west of Gadsby corner, a farm subsequently owned by Charlie Blackmore. He remained on the farm until about 1927, when he moved into the village to work in the butcher shop owned by T. Gravely. He subsequently moved to Halkirk where he operated a butcher shop until his retirement in the mid-50's. He continued to live in Halkirk until his death in 1975.

During the time that Mr Wigglesworth was on the farm he was a frequent visitor at our home. He and Dad were very good friends and he was always there to help with the haying, the threshing or to butcher the winter's supply of meat. He was very fond of children and was always very good to us. I can remember he was sometimes our "baby sitter" on those infrequent occasions when our parents went out for an evening.

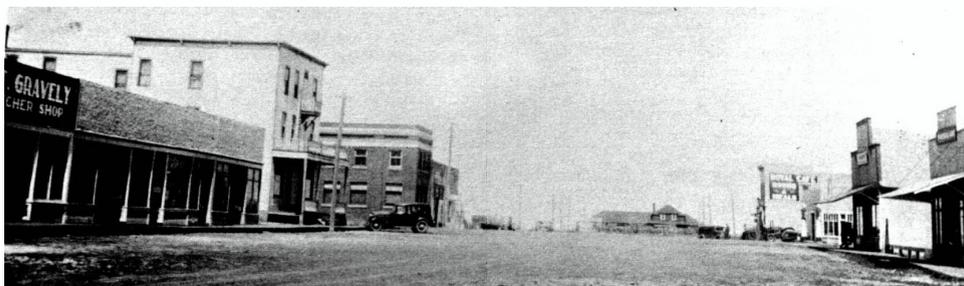
Mr Wigglesworth had suffered shell shock during the war and had great difficulty sleeping at night. I remember many evenings when he visited until very late and how I sat enthralled while he and sometimes Albert (Matey) Greenwood, talked of their experiences in the trenches, and of the people they had known.



Gadsby, 1909

We did not see as much of Mr Wigglesworth after he moved to Halkirk, but he acquired the only car he ever owned, a Model-T which he remodelled to suit his own needs, and which was unlike any other car on the road, and periodically he would arrive for a visit. The visits grew fewer as the years went by but he always maintained contact with us. He was a real story-teller, and until he died he always had a story for me whenever I saw him.

A great lover of nature his house always had many "trophyies" - snakeskins, birds nests, wasps nests, etc. I remember him showing us the first meadow lark's nest I ever saw. After he retired he sometimes took hunters out looking for game, and would chuckle over the fact that they never found any. It was a matter of pride with him that he never killed "for fun".



Gadsby in the 1930's

George Metcalfe Wigglesworth (Wig or Wiggy) 1889-1974

By Roy Phibbs, in the Halkirk History, "Halkirk Home Fires and Area" published 1985.

Wig came from Leeds, Yorkshire, England where he had completed his apprenticeship to the butchering trade. Wig found life and work too crowded at 'home' and set out in 1910 to see the world. His first stop was at the homestead of his uncle, Isaac Wigglesworth, north of Nevis. No more homesteads were available, so Wig found work in his trade at Gadsby until enlisting in the Canadian Army in 1914. He spent most of four years at the front, and was awarded the Military Medal for bravery in action after having captured, single handed, an enemy machine gun nest. Wig was wounded in action and he suffered from shell shock - both conditions troubled him all his life.

After his discharge in 1918, Wig took a Soldier Settlement farm four miles south west of Gadsby, where his interest in children earned him a term as secretary-treasurer of the Little Knife School District. Here too, in the days before rural electrification and deep freezers, Wig butchered for the Shooting Lake Meat Ring - that pioneer institution in which a group of neighbours would each, in turn, contribute an animal to provide fresh meat to members every week during the hot summer months. He also butchered for his neighbours when they were preparing their winter meat supply by freezing (outdoor storage), canning, salting or smoking.

Farming was not too profitable in the 1920's, so Wig left his land, which was later sold to Chas. Blackmore, and resumed his trade at Tom Gravely's butcher shop in Gadsby.

Adventure called again in 1928, and Wig headed for Australia. In those days the train stopped in Big Valley for dinner, so Wig strolled uptown to the butcher shop to pass the time - and there ended his world tour. The butcher in Monitor had taken ill and help was desperately needed while he recuperated. Wig answered the call and spent several months in Monitor.

In 1929, Wig bought the Harrison Wiltse butcher shop, and later the Fulton house, in Halkirk. The shop was destroyed by fire in 1944, and Wig reopened his business in a corner of Earl Jackson's store, and operated there until he retired in 1951. Wig took great pride in his trade, and in fact he never killed for fun.

Wig was a nature lover, bird watcher, butterfly collector, parrot owner (later donated to the Calgary Zoo), and for several years he raised canaries. He was fond of "little ones" and entertained generations of them with treats, stories and games.

Wig is also remembered for his cars, and for his ceremonious weekly trips, (usually accompanied by one or two "little ones") to pick up his meat order from Nichols Bros. slaughter house in Castor. His first car, "Liz", a model T Ford, sported a wooden cab and box after a fire on the way home from a Legion meeting badly damaged her original touring body. "Liz" had a four wheeled trailer to haul the tripod and gear used in earlier days for "on site" butchering. "Liz" was replaced in 1950 by "Mildred", a 1927 Model T coach, which was deftly modified by Fred Airey to become Halkirk's first 'station wagon'. It was Fred's magic touch that kept both cars running through the years! "Liz" was eventually retired to the Haeberle farm, and "Mildred" was sold to a Calgary auto collector.

Wig closed shop early in 1951, and after a holiday trip home to England, retired in Halkirk. He passed away in the Castor hospital on October 9, 1974 and is buried in Gadsby's Omega Cemetery.

Wig enjoyed reminiscing about the funny side of things, and one of his favorites was the time in France when he and a fellow platoon runner were scouting ahead of the troops. A local Frenchman 'assured' them that a certain house contained only two of the enemy. Under such favorable odds, Wig and his buddy "surrounded" the house and demanded immediate surrender of those inside. To their astonishment, out walked twenty of the enemy, unarmed, and with their hands on their heads! You see - neither Wig nor his buddy understood a word of French!

In a letter he says:

When I was twelve years old in '35 along with my longtime chum, Ken Halkier we helped Wiggy in the back of his shop to make sausage and hamburger. It was a weekly ritual. For the tremendous incentive of two or three weiners we would help him for a couple of hours. After mixing flour into the big enamel container containing the hamburger, Wiggy would mix in two large scoops of water of approximately 1½ gallons each. He would say proudly, 'That's where the profit lies, lads.' He was dearly loved in the area and wore his 1st world war puttees until he died. He always sold good meat and was a happy character always.

Lucille Bain

She writes:

I did not know Wiggy when he had the meat market in Halkirk, but nursed him in his later years. Over the years patients would come and go and unfortunately forgotten, but I will never forget "Wiggy" as he was a character. He was brought into hospital and we knew it would be his last stop. All went well for a few weeks and then he decided he had enough and always in the late evening he would get dressed and tipping his hat (he was always a gentleman) would say "It's been nice ladies, but I'll be leaving now!" Then the fun began. Without being forceful we had to persuade him to stay - it wasn't easy. I told him that we were so busy we didn't have anyone to wash a sinkful of cups and would appreciate it if he would help us - he was more than willing and did this for a few weeks, every evening - we didn't let him know we had to redo them when he was asleep as tobacco from his curvy little pipe was sprinkled all over them - when this novelty wore off and he was determined to leave again one evening, I told him I'd serve him tea and lunch if he'd stay the evening - he said that would be lovely but he'd prefer an alcoholic drink - which I agreed to! Can you imagine a hospital kitchenette with nothing but baby food! I fixed a tray with a glass of apple juice and emptied two jars of baby custard into a fancy little dish and he insisted to have this at the nursing desk as we were writing our charts - he toasted a drink to me and one to himself and said the drink was lovely - I'm not sure who was fooling who!

This routine would work well again for a few weeks, when he decided lunch or no lunch, no one was stopping him from leaving. This was when the doctor ordered a sleeping pill every night for him - this only lasted a few nights when Wiggy refused to take a pill of any kind. We were sure we would outwit him and had the kitchen send us a meat sandwich and at bedtime we broke the pill and sprinkled it over the meat. In a few minutes we heard the Exit alarm ringing and there was Wiggy outside the door feeding the sandwich to a dog!! That ended the sleeping pills and from then on we would stay in his room and as long as he had someone to visit with he was quite happy. He told me he had gone to a private boys school in England and spoke of the Head master - his butchers shop in Halkirk made him a good living and his theory was that any butcher who didn't make money was a fool - Halkirk apparently at that time had a town pump and he said by adding water to the ground beef and his thumb on the scale it made him a tidy sum. He was very proud of having a still and claimed he made the best whisky - he seemed prouder still of the fact that the police could never find it. He told me exactly where it was by some creek and the police did seem to know he had it and were continually trying to find it but never did.

Wiggy rambled a lot around the hospital and visited everyone - he always carried a plastic bag over his shoulder and this too we emptied as soon as he was asleep, as in it we found all our catheter clamps, false teeth etc from other patients - we couldn't watch him close enough, but we did enjoy him. This is what I remember of Wiggys last year.



G.M.W., 1925

Letter from George Metcalfe Wigglesworth, of the Canadian Infantry to his brother Fred.

Canada YMCA

Oct 20 1918

My Dear Fred,

Well hows things. I did not get to write during the week as we were too busy. We did great work too boy know what I mean. Eight of us with the Officer took 48 Prussian infantry prisoner; like knocking pups off a log. It sure was great we got them asleep the whole shooting match with 5 machine guns. It hap-pened this way. We were advancing in a town very early in the morning and there was a bit of a fog on when we ran onto a German Sentry and he hadn't an earthly, we were into him before he knew what was up. Well one of our fellows could Spracken Zee Dutch and he asked him about his comrades. Heine told us there were 15 of them asleep in a house further down the road. So they were our meat:- we made him take us down there and then surrounded the house and invited them to come out in the usual way:- talk about a row; the Devil among the Tailors (*) is a fool to it. They yelled and grunted and started to come out in the true camarad style Hands at the high port. I thought they were never going to stop: Lord they were a crowd against us but we sure had them with their pants down that time: Luckyly it was a broad street and we could keep them in the centre and there was no chance at all for them once we got them out. I guess they thought we were like the Yanks, 10 million strong instead of hardly a Corporals Guard. One had to laugh even then to see us stick them up and you can bet your life there was no bluff to use what came handy: I'll bet their arms ached before they got the all clear sign and were allowed to drop them. One fellow was trying to take a leak and our boys made him keep his hands up at the same time:- they were ugly looking bastards when we got them properly sorted out:- I didn't get a watch tho, I sure was anxious for one. But we were all alone and I had to go for an escort for them so I only got two of them frisked and they were blanks just a little money and a bunch of photos which I have sent home. Still I went through their outfit afterwards and got 4 pair of Heine glasses, 3 revolvers and two daggers. I would like to have sent you something down: I am getting a pair of glasses home by a fellow going on Leave. But the revolver will have to stay with me as there is too much risk that it might clutch his pass if they caught him with it.

I gave a pair of glasses and a small revolver to the officer. He had no luck you see and had to stick round and see that things went alright. May give the fellow a small gat to take my glasses home as he is going to Leeds, that leaves me with two pairs still one of which I will carry.

If only I had a chance to send you a pair. Do you think registered mail would be safe enough: let me know quick and I will hang onto them untill I hear from you. They are the usual NCOs glasses but pretty good ones at that and well worth having. If you can think of a better way just let me know:- I have just written home a good long letter to give them the news. Now don't worry boy as I am quite alright and I guess we have a bit of rest coming to us. We took 3 Villages of a pretty fair size in under 12 hours so thats going some and casualties practically Nil. Its a sight better than trench warfare you know and ones chances are better as he is getting out all he knows how these days. We are in good billets and have plenty of good grub and sleep warm at nights. I also have a good time. Dick will now be over here poor kid. I think he will be quite alright tho and when he gets used to it he will not mind much as like all of us he will make friends and it will be quite (illegible)..... I think this is all just now. Dont worry I am quite alright. Be good old man, Bless you,
Your affectionate brother George.

* Note
"The devil among the tailors" is said of a good slanging match. It may come from the Benefit Performance for the actor Downton in 1830 of "The Tailors" when a row was made by a large crowd of tailors who thought the play at The Hay-market slurred them.

"Is a fool to it"
means not come up to,
very inferior to it.

Editor

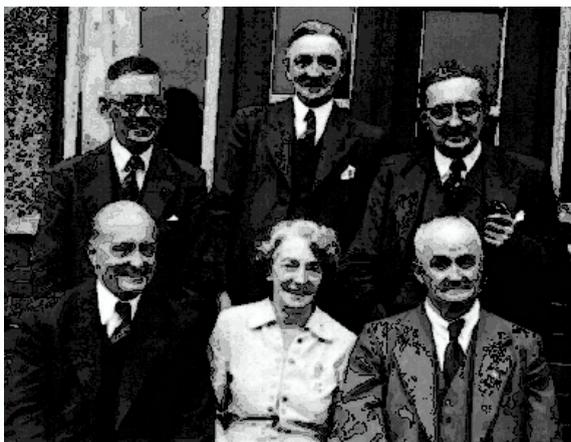


Jan 13 1951

....The roads are pretty bad now, quite a lot of snow around. I enclose a couple of photos taken by Betty Berry. They are Stoney Indians from Morley Reserve, down for the Calgary Stampede. The Indians are nobodys dam fools now, they charge for posing.

Its now 7pm and I have been cooking, washing floors and carrying snow to melt for water, its nice and soft and makes good coffee and tea. Yes we have lots of snow. Its more like home to have to pick your way round drifts when you go out: guess I'm a snow bird.

The trip across Canada was a thousand miles of Christmas Cards out of the train window, but you get fed up on it; was 12 below zero when I hit Winnipeg, so did not stop over, but fanned right through to Calgary, where I bought me a fur cap and overshoes, boy did I need em. My little Brass Budda is looking down at me with a jaundiced eye. Haven't seen anyone to speak to all day, so will go out and visit for an hour or so before going to bed. Well Happy Days and the best of luck, Love to all, Wig



Wigglesworths in 1951
Harold, Frank, Dick,
Fren, Hudge, George.

GMW letter to Dorothy and Len Horton.

Nov 19 1959

Your airmail of Aug 13 was redirected to me at Calgary - where like Old Mother Goose - I was on the loose. I went down early in July to spend my 70th Birthday in Civilisation and to eat Fish and Chips. Got around quite a bit and was down by the Sarcee Indian Reserve at a little place called Midnapore; had a good time; theres only 3 filling stations and a very small restaurant on the McLeod Trail a little over 10 mile south of Calgary; I saw the Queen in Calgary and I was quite taken with her but she can have her job for me: it must be a terrific bore to her; we have had a little rough weather lately but it was nice out today.... Am glad you had a good holiday at Brid, I can remember when I was a very little Kid going to Morecambe a whole lot better than I can what happened when I went through the Rockies into BC; The world is a wonderful place when you are a Kid; I often wish Id gone up to Apple-treewick with you both when I was over - That was the only place I ever saw Otter Hounds, at that Pub at the bottom of the hill; Boy! that must be over 60 years ago....

Practically every house here has firearms of some description; at one time I had my Luger, Beef Rifle, Shot Gun and 22 rifle. Now all Ive got is the German Luger and the 22. I got three cats with the 22 last week. The Shot Gun and Rifle got to kick too hard for my shoulder. A friend of mine had a bunch of Cats gone wild on him and asked me to go out and clean em up; I got 3 in the first 3 shots, then the others headed for the bush; I felt kind of proud of myself; at my age - because a cats head isnt a very big target - and my eye isnt as good as it used to be - I think Ill get a heavier blade foresight as Ive a tenency to lose it if I sight long. The picture show I travelled with went bust [Roy and Marian Phibbs ran the last Cinema circuit from 1954-9.Ed.], Television killed that, so I dont get around as much as I did; but I got in over 1200 miles going down to Calgary with Cattle Trucks last week, we made three trips and its just over 200 miles each way. I wanted to get you a pamphlet on Dinosaur Valley as we go through at Drumheller South of here but we seemed to hit her in the middle of the night.



West Side of Halkirk's Main Street, 1910

I have my suet hung for the birds - a Downy Woodpecker is staying with me, but the Chickadees, Tom Tits) havent come in out of the bush yet, the weather has been a little too mild - the Wild Geese have pulled out but there are a few ducks around; all our lakes and sloos [sloughs. Ed.] are frozen over and you can travel on em now.

Best of luck to all, Your Loving Uncle, George

They say this is the land of long shadows and it sure is; I just noticed my WC throws a shadow fully 8 times its height.



East Side of Halkirk Main Street

George and Margaret Wigglesworth's Visit (1997)

At the end of a package tour to the Rockies we were able to spend a night out from Calgary seeing a little of the area and meeting a few people who remembered Uncle George.

I learnt that he stayed with his great uncle, Isaac Walsh Wigglesworth when he first went out to Canada in 1910 at Nevis, about 25 miles from Gadsby. I have a christening mug of Isaac (as well as the Jug of his mother Grace) and wondered why we had them and what became of that part of the Emsay family. Now I know that bit more.

Although a goods railway still goes through Nevis, Gadsby and Halkirk they are all smaller than they were in their heyday. The former is very much a dying town with one shop left. It has a few of the early dwellings. Gadsby is very small too, a few houses, a grain silo, village office. Halkirk is not much bigger. It has a cafe, a couple of shops and two grain silos! It used to have four silos. Uncle George's shop burnt down in the 1940s and from then on until his retirement he had a counter in the village store. There is a welding business connected with the Alberta Oil Industry where his shop was. His house has been replaced by a bigger modern one, and the Catholic church, shown in a photograph I was intending to use for identification, is also pulled down!



Sister and Mother

These two villages, Gadsby and Halkirk, seem fairly independent, each with a village office and an old people's centre, separate from the neighbouring village, eight to ten miles away. Stettler and Castor are the main towns now for the people with cars, the railway no longer taking passengers. They are about 40 miles apart in opposite directions from Halkirk and Gadsby, each with a couple of main shopping streets, sports centres, libraries, police posts. Halkirk and Gadsby are of mainly wooden houses, supporting the local farms on the roads a mile apart, making the prairie into a flat chequer board.

This gave us a physical context for the stories of those initial years. The very, very cold winters and the deep snow, the drought of the summer with clouds of mosquitoes and the poor quality of the ground water they drank, the communal disasters of hail wiping out the cereal crop in minutes, the Influenza epidemic after the first world war, the very low prices of their produce, pigs, wheat or cream during the depression of the thirties, the personal disaster of a localised typhoon or the pig or cow dying - all these seem to have fostered the feeling of community and good neighbourliness. There were dances, cinema shows, picnics and school fund-raising events; Saturday evenings were a time when many came into town to do their shopping and catch up on the gossip. With the coming of the telephone some farmers used the barbed wire to make a link with their nearest neighbours. Many of the farmers had a second job if they could get one to ensure a little cash income, with the railway, coal mining, hauling coal, stone or gravel.

We met Mrs Mary Draganuk and Mrs Dorothy Anderson, successively storeowners in Halkirk, and Mrs Isabel Stewart. Their memories were full of interest. Mrs Stewart lived in Gadsby for 80 years and remembers George, a little man, as a farmer there. The Berrys had land next to his and one daughter, Betty, wrote about him in the local history, featuring in photographs of him.

Uncle George clearly was a bachelor hardened in his ways. "Gees - he was miserable". He rejected a customer who wanted meat for his threshing team, sending him to his "usual supplier", meat which fell on the sawdust covered floor was hygienic enough for burgers! He is remembered falling asleep on the coals after his celebrations.

Equally though he had time enough for children. Dorothy Anderson remembers her children often went round, perhaps drawn by the animals he had or the crazy rides round his house on the "dumb waiter" (tea trolley). He always had mints in his pocket for the children. The youngest child "always had his hand out - like a baptist minister" which also says something of his attitude to the clergy! He even argued with the sisters who ran the hospital in Castor, where he eventually died, about the display of the cross in his room.

His old age was characterised by the kindness of his neighbours, especially Dorothy. She used to take him meals, even though he came to see her as running a "take away" offering a couple of dollars. At his request she wrote to Aunty Madge in England, his younger (surviving) sister of whom he was very fond. With her husband, Stan, she chose his coffin.



His Father and the Shop in Royal Park Road, Leeds
? Frank, Annie and Harold with him in 1903 ?

Stories

His English relations probably remember him best for his stories (his friends in Canada remark on his story telling).

He recounts how his doctor was puzzled by the rash on his chest. All attempts to cure it failed until in a fit of inspiration the doctor asked Uncle if he smoked in bed. That would explain the rash. His burning pipe fell from his lips as he fell asleep and the smouldering tobacco left its mark on his chest!

His preparation for winter included boiling a cask of potatoes and putting them outside his back door to freeze, allowing him to chip a few off for his meal.

He claimed his only job for the village was as village "dog catcher" being the only paid employment and as such the only job he was prepared to take. (This is belied by the duties he undertook as secretary/-treasurer of the school district.) Catcher was a euphemism, loose dogs being a liability as much as coyotes in a community with ranches of cattle or sheep. He skinned the animals and used the cured pelts as rugs. He was seemingly delighted when ladies he invited in admired the rugs, never identifying the previous occupant.

During the war they used holes dug in the ground for a toilet and when it got clogged up dropped a hand grenade down to clear it, shouting a warning and running as far as they could during the short delay. The effect was spectacular and smelly. One day as they dropped in their "Mill's Bomb" they saw one of the least popular officers approaching, intending to use the toilet. Being sensitive creatures, him a distance away, they spared the officer's blushes, not drawing attention to him by calling out as he moved to perform this humble errand!

In Halkirk too they had holes in the ground, but made more private by a wooden shed erected round them. When the hole was full they turfed it over and moved the shed to another hole. One night, having nothing better to do, the boys in the town borrowed a horse and dragged all the sheds into a row down the middle of the main street, each one labelled as to the owner!

Photographs

(Taken from ones in the possession of Else Lindhard, George Wigglesworth and Dorothy Horton)

He wrote at varying lengths on the back of photographs and we learn a little from these, about his Halkirk house, his horses and his trips. The earliest is of his work horses on his farm at Gadsby in 1921 called Jeff, Pete, Chuck, Nig, Dick and Kate. He says he always called them short names that he "could snap at them and wake them up".

His riding ponies were a big part of his life. He calculated he must have ridden 1000 miles a year. From 1919-22 he rode Nellie, an Indian Cayuse. They rode on a halter because a bit froze their tongues and mouth when it got to 20 to 40 degrees below. we are told Nellie had the alias of Mary Anna and was "of uncertain age, known to have voted"!

In 1924 he had Pokey. "You could shoot off his back if he wasn't on the prod: we had some rough trips - brought me home in a blizzard once, I was lost and let him go on his own." Barney (whose real name was Cherokee) was raced in 1926 using "a kid to ride for me, I was too heavy. We won a few races at these local do's- I shot him when I quit: the best thing to do- that way they dont get abused: and I never did like to see anyone else riding my horse anyway. There would only have been trouble if I had sold him."

We have a photo of his car Mildred in 1952. Two doors at the front, but hinges at the back were so he could open it to load beef.

The photograph of Halkirk Meat Market has H Wiltse's name over the door and a bit of the hardware store next door. One taken at Battle River explains about the fossil rock. It is perhaps a tree trunk; the river valley is well known for Carboniferous fossils. Both his Gadsby farm and Halkirk house had outside toilets, two holers, moved when the hole got full. In Halkirk he only used the ground floor, up-stairs being reserved for guests. He mentions his neighbour Raymond O'Keefe and the Dog Rose (which is Alberta's national flower), the Poplar, Honeysuckle, Lilacs and Crab Apple. He changed from the mosquito screens to storm doors as early as Sept 11th because "snow was expected any time".

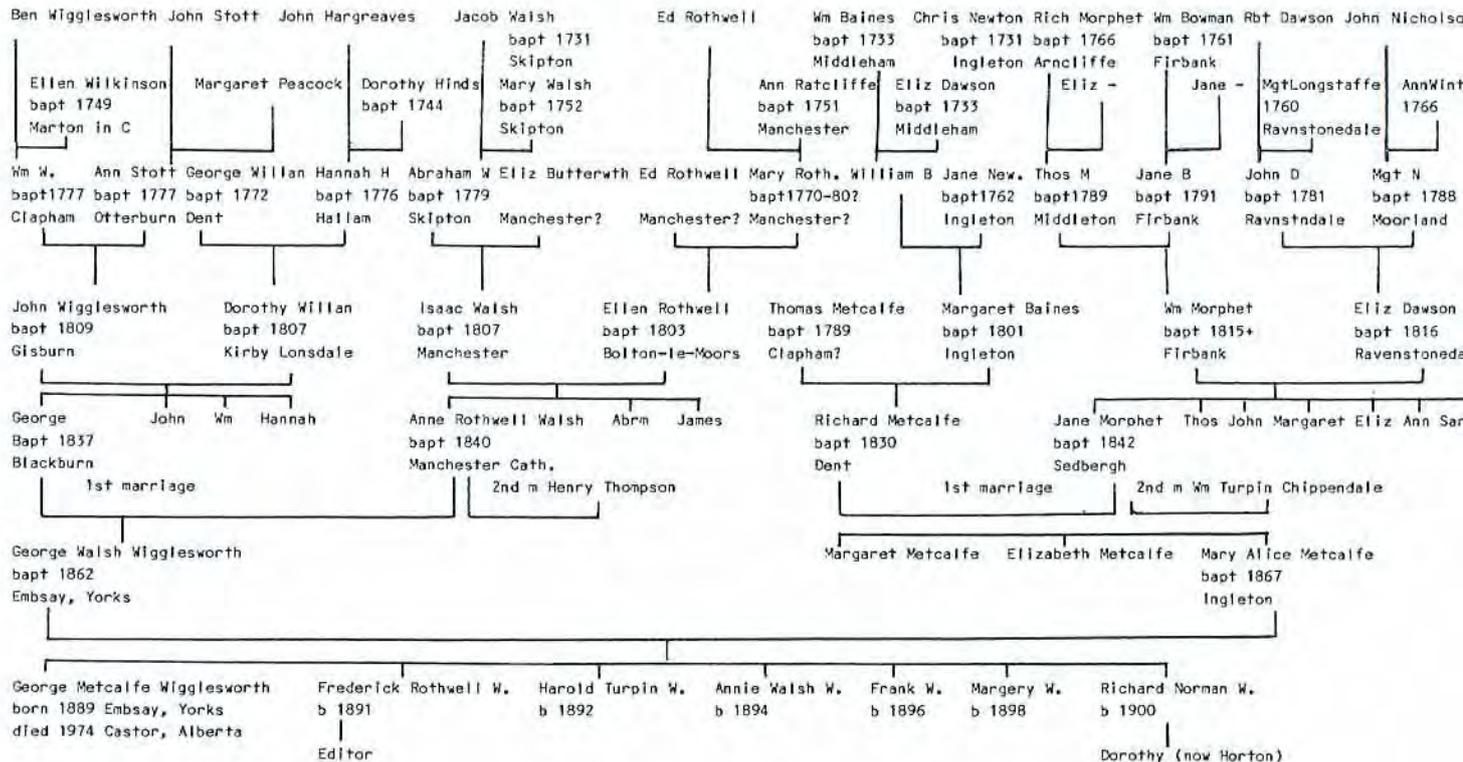


One of the places he visited was a Hudson Bay Co. site, the furthest west at that time in the 18th century. Only chimneys, built of stone, remain. He went to Ricinus and Caroline on his way over the Rockies in '62 writing "Real Hill Billy country - looked to me some of the old Bucks lived mostly on Moose Meat and Moonshine - They didn't mix much with strangers and looked Em over good. Thinly peopled country as you will see (from the sign post) from the distances it is to some of the Ranches." In 1967, he went to see the Rockies, via Rocky Mountain House village. A 1960 photo was in Calgary.

The last photo is dated 1967.



George with Nellie, 1921



NB Isaac Walsh Wigglesworth was grandson of John Wigglesworth, brother of Wm W., and Ellen Walsh, sister of Abraham W., (see 2nd generation of tree).

George Metcalfe Wigglesworth's Family Tree



G.M.W.'s House in Halkirk

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Mary Alice (nee Metcalfe)
George Walsh Wigglesworth, 1933

