



FALLBROOK FARM HERITAGE SITE

UPDATE 30- DECEMBER 4, 2009.

A TRIBUTE TO TOM MURISON.

A DEDICATED, PASSIONATE AND VERY
COMPETENT CRUSADER OF ANCIENT PEOPLES,
THEIR WAYS OF LIFE AND THEIR
CONTRIBUTION. WHAT A BETTER WAY TO
BEGIN THAN WITH TOM'S OWN DRAWINGS OF
THE NATIVE WOODSLANDS VILLAGE AND MILL



FIRST A REMINDER. THE HHMC VOTE ON DESIGNATION OF THE FALLBROOK SITE IS THIS MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, AT 18.30.FOR DETAILS, GO TO OUR WEBSITE

www.electricscotland.com/hiStory/canada/fallingbrook.htm

BACK TO TOM. Once again, serendipity played its magical hand. Ian and Mary McGillvary who had prepared the first Impact Statement (Update 1) received an improptu visit from Wayne Gates, one of our team members as we fought to preserve the site. Mary and Ian referred Wayne to Tom in February of 2008. Tom had completed the restoration of the blacksmith's shop in Milton,among other projects.

Thus ensued a frantic, mostly nightly exchange of planetary communications between the Arctic and the deep south (of Ontario) between the Fallbrook campaigners. Tom is knowledgeable in many subjects and his passion is contagious. This was a godsend for us. We were not winning the battle and Tom gave us hope. In May, CVC permitted Tom into the home to do his research. In a previous visit, Tom had already documented the millsite. He was the first person to discover it. He produced his report (Update 13,Website) and the rest is history. The tide turned and at least part of the site will be designated. Tom learned much of his art studying in Cambridge, England. The skill that explains part of his uniqueness, and success, is called dendrochronology. The following is taken from his own report on Fallbrook.

2.01 Dendrochronology is a dating technique which uses the sequence of tree rings in a sample with a known date to provide a comparative date for a tree or log sample which has an unknown date of felling. This is one of the most accurate dating tools used by archaeologists, and had been used to re-calibrate carbon 14 dating sequences in the southwest U.S., Egypt, the middle east, and elsewhere. In Egypt, sequences of carbon 14 dates for ancient artefacts were discovered to be inaccurate by nearly 200 years (over a timescale of 4000 years), when dendrochronology was applied to the samples. Dendrochronology is the most accurate method for dating historic objects made of wood.

*2.02 The sawn sample (McClure-McKay Home) was taken from the end notch of the top gable log at south-east corner, just below the roof. (Photo 1.29). The sample was sawn with a razor saw and removed a cross section of the log (including bark) tangential to its axis. A total of 59 annual growth rings were included in the sample. The sample was found to be free from insect infestation, indicating that it was probably winter cut wood, that was prepared and used in the construction of the cabin early in the spring. The sample was sanded and prepared for photography, enhanced and enlarged over 525%. This allows a higher resolution for the measurement of data, and accuracy in the graph. The data was plotted against a data set (Waldies Tie Beam 1870) which is cross referenced to historical documents and other samples. The sample was plotted for every year between 1816 and 1867. **The best match was 1855.***



It has been reconfirmed that the recommendation of the Halton Hills Heritage Committee (HHHC) going to Council on December 7 does not designate the farmhouse and leaves it vulnerable to demolition. This is a complete turnabout and a major deception for the Friends of Fallbrook. The following is Tom's own evaluation of this development-



I am not sure why tearing down the addition to the log house would be considered appropriate. The frame addition makes the building more specifically special as an architectural type, because it is a linear extension to the side not to the rear or front as was so typical, and it is far closer in appearance to a Scottish croft house than the typical Ontario farmhouse, which makes this more special by virtue of how the necessities of an expanded house were interpreted here in Canada. If this had been a Hungarian, or Swiss, or Russian house which used particular folk motifs of their home culture the results would be more noticeably specific, and perhaps generate more desire to save the features. In my experience, this house represents an unusual type; I would even say a rare type, which should not be knocked down for several practical reasons.

1. If the addition were removed, the log house would require extensive repairs to the logs which have been cut out to allow access to the addition, the siding would have to be replaced on at least the east side, or heaven forbid, if someone who has no experience with repairing these structures got it into their heads that taking it back to a bare log house was the way to go, there would be significant maintenance issues with the chinking which can easily be avoided by keeping the clapboard siding which is contemporary with the addition. This was what all settlers did as soon as they had the means to cover up the logs, and reflects a changing technology. On the interior, the division of space into a series of small rooms is also indicative of the common settlement house, and we have no evidence that it was not done this way initially.

So I would strongly recommend maintenance of the original log house with stone and frame additions, and removal of the 20th. Century additions, as opposed to disneyfication of the structure by stripping it down to a log house that there is no evidence .to support having existed in this way when it was historically significant, (McClure and McKay families.) I would also bet that the costs of maintaining the house in its current form are less than removal of the additions with all that this implies. I have restored several log houses and know from experience what is in involved. Sincerely, Tom Murison.

Once again Tom's expertise determines our position which we shall present to Council on Monday night. Leaving the farmhouse is a repudiation of the Murison report. The Fallbrook site, limited to the mill site, cannot be a memorial to the native and Celt communities who pioneered this harsh land. It will not serve as an extension of the Education Center to educate the young about the contribution of their elders. After more than two years of intense labour, all volunteer and considerable personal expense, our vision will slowly wither away.

As stocky Celts, we are accustomed to adversity. We shall continue our battle.

When we were really down and out in the winter of 2008, Tom Murison offered his passion and expertise to save our vision. It is only just that we continue in spite of this major setback when victory seemed so near.



TOM MURISON. OUR MOST HEARTFELT APPRECIATION FOR YOUR PASSION, EXPERTISE AND DEDICATION. YOUR LABOUR WILL BEAR FRUIT. THANK YOU. FRIENDS OF FALLBROOK.