

# IRMA AND THE DUKE OF SUTHERLAND

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To get to Irma's from here, you turn left, cross the railroad track and the Trans-Canada, keep going north at the Petro Can station, turn right at the Duke of Sutherland's house, turn left again at the ditch.....

The Duke of Sutherland's house!

It is a fairly unusual landmark for this part of the country--semi-desert, a corner of the Palliser Triangle, "where water works wonders" thanks to irrigation. So who is the Duke of Sutherland, and what is his house doing here?

Cromartie Sutherland-Leveson-Gower, the Fourth Duke of Sutherland, was born in London in 1851, but was mainly of Scottish ancestry. The Sutherland family tree goes back to Freskin de Moravia (c. 1160) through 18 Scottish Earls of Sutherland (from 1230) and five British Dukes of Sutherland (from 1766) to the present Countess. Besides descending from one of the oldest noble households in Britain, the Fourth Duke was a wealthy landowner and businessman. In 1883, among all the nobles in the United Kingdom, the Third Duke stood first in the extent of his lands and fifth in the income from them. In 1892 Cromartie inherited the title and thus 1,358,545 acres of land in Britain alone. The family owned potteries at Stoke-on-Trent, and invested in railways--the Second Duke in the Liverpool Manchester Railway, and the Third Duke in the Highland Railway and perhaps in the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Fourth Duke reportedly owned a diamond mine in South Africa as well.

In 1910, Cromartie bought 1600 acres of land near Brooks from the C.P.R., and the "Brooks Banner" reported that "in the centre of this tract he will build a residence". In 1911 he bought an additional 6800 acres, and the headline read, "Actual work to begin on his country castle at Brooks". The approximate total cost of the purchase was \$320,000. The land was divided into farms, on which the Duke arranged for the construction of houses and outbuildings for the settlers who were to come, and for which he supplied horses, Holstein cattle, range cattle, and farm machinery. Dry land farming was begun in 1911, and a canal was dug from the lake at Brooks out to the estate for irrigation farming, first used in 1916. The "country castle" was built in 1911; it was a wooden bungalow with all modern conveniences, including electric lights and hot water radiators, and eight bed and dressing rooms. It was actually the manager's family who lived in the bungalow, but they moved to a hotel in Brooks and servants came from Calgary whenever the Duke visited his property. He did not enjoy it long, however, for after spending considerable time there in 1912, he returned to Scotland and died



at one of his Scottish seats--Dunrobin Castle--on 27 June 1913. The land was subdivided in 1923 and sold by the Duke's estate in 1935.

The Duke might have been motivated to buy land near Brooks by several factors. In 1908, the British government passed a law to tax inherited wealth even more heavily than previously. In 1909, the C.P.R. authorized the building of an irrigation system for their lands east of Calgary to Brooks, and at the time wheat was in demand, and import laws were lax. In Europe, it seemed likely that war was on the horizon. Given the situation, an investment in Canada would be both lucrative and safe. The establishment of the Sutherland Colony was thus a business venture, not a benevolent one.

The Duke paid to recruit and transport about thirty families to settle on his land. The homesteaders were to buy their farms at cost price, with a nominal down payment and 6% interest on the balance. In addition, there were managers, foremen, and up to seventy hired men working on the estate at any given time. The following names of colony members have been recorded:

Addison, Bill, hired man, from Scotland  
 Baird family, with children Nan, Jenny, Bill, Minnie, Frances, Helen, and Jim  
 Bell, Charlie, from Scotland  
 Beur, Bert, with wife and daughter, hired man of Mr. Phillips  
 Bindle, Tom, blacksmith  
 Brindle, George, carpenter  
 Cann, Jack, head irrigator, from Holland  
 Crombie family, with children Harry, Georgina, and Mabel, from Dunrobin County  
 Duff, George, from Scotland  
 Duncan, Bill, from Scotland  
 Emslie, John and Barabra (nee Langmuir), with children Alan, Mary, Alexander, Gordon, James, and Betsy, from near Brechin, Forfarshire  
 Forbes, Dick, hired man, from Scotland  
 Freng, M. L., manager of home farm  
 Garrow, Alex and Mina, with children Helen, Pat, and Jessie, from Scotland  
 Gibb, Davey and Mary, from Perth (Mary originally from Bannockburn near Stirling)  
 Grant, Mr. and Mrs., with son Bob  
 Keil, J., hired man, from Scotland  
 Kempson, George and Tom, hired men, from London  
 Keyes, Basil, with wife, stepson, and daughter  
 Kittle, Miss, governess of Sangster children  
 Marlin, Luke, construction foreman  
 Maxted, Geoff, with wife and children Dolly, May, Truda, Charlie, and Geoff, from Kent  
 McKinnel, Mr., accountant for the estate  
 McKinnon, Mr., hired man  
 Melville, Alec, hired man

Mowat, Jim, worker on the estate  
 Mundell, Walter S., manager of the south farm  
 Nakin, Mr.  
 Palin, Fred J., with wife, son, and two daughters, manager of the  
 south farm, from England  
 Patton, Peter K., with children Peter and Annie, returned soldier  
 Perry, Jim  
 Petrie, George, hired man, from Scotland  
 Phillips, Mr. and Mrs., with children Ray, Tom, Dolly, Leslie,  
 Jack, and Reuben, butcher, from London  
 Philpott, W. A., with wife and children George, Cecil, and Lez,  
 caretaker of the estate, from Folkestone, England  
 Philpott, Harry, brother of W. A.  
 Raeside, Jim, farm worker who married Mrs. Shields after death of  
 her husband  
 Raeside, David, brother of Jim, with wife and four children  
 Ross, George D., blacksmith of the estate  
 Sangster, Robert B., with children Pat, Beverly, Dorothy, Robin,  
 and John, manager of the estate  
 Shields, David Guthrie, with wife  
 Small, James, hired man and later manager, from Scotland  
 Sutherland, Alex, from Scotland  
 Taylor, Bob, from Scotland  
 Taylor, Bill, from Scotland  
 Walsh, John, schoolmaster from Olds.

The Sutherland Colony appears to have remained fairly isolated from the larger Brooks community. The land and buildings were distributed almost according to the pattern of an ancient manor, self-sufficient and self-contained. The colony had its own church services, its own cemetery, and its own school, as well as a store and blacksmith shop. The general opinion seems to be that the colony itself failed as a community after the death of the man who had planned and established it. Nevertheless, the Fourth Duke of Sutherland made a substantial financial investment in the area and was instrumental in bringing out settlers at a time when they were needed. Today few may know of his contributions, and few may be aware that the nearby villages of Duchess, Millicent, and Rosemary are named for his family, but he is still remembered by that landmark on the way to Irma's--the Duke of Sutherland's house.

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Information for the above article came from "The Contributions of the Fourth Duke of Sutherland to the Brooks Community", a study sponsored by the Brooks and District Museum Historical Society for the 1981 Canada Summer Student Employment Program.

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#### INTERESTING EXPERIENCES

Did you make any interesting discoveries while travelling this summer? How about sharing these experiences with our readers? Tell us what genealogical discoveries you made. Where did you go? What did you learn? Next deadline is September 15th.

**TERRIORIES 1881 CENSUS - PEACE RIVER (ALBERTA)**

(Continued from last issue. As previously mentioned, some of the writing was faint and difficult to read. Please excuse any errors. Where the word Halfbreed appears in brackets, it was crossed off on the census.)

The following are listed as located at Ft. St. John:

Name	Sex	Age	Pl/Birth	Religion	Origin	Occupation	
McKinlay, James	M	28	Scotland	Free Ch.	Scotch	Clerk	
Wesley, Patrick	M	33	Kewatin	Wes. Meth.	Indian	Stressman	
Kerr, Thomas	M	23	Scotland	Free Ch.	Scotch	Labour	
Courtoreille, Louison	M	70	N.W.T.	Catholic	Indian	Labour	Married
Courtoreille, Marie	F	35	N.W.T.	Catholic	Indian		Married
Courtoreille, Alexan.	M	7	N.W.T.	Catholic			
Courtoreille, Margar.	F	4	N.W.T.	Catholic			
Courtoreille, Alfred	M	3	N.W.T.	Catholic			
Lafleur, Baptiste	M	51	N.W.T.	Catholic	French(Halfb)	Interpretor	Married
Lafleur, Francoise	F	45	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		Married
Lafleur, Jean Baptist	M	20	N.W.T.	Catholic	French	Labour	
Lafleur, David	M	15	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		
Lafleur, Francois	M	10	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		
Lafleur, Genevieve	F	8	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		
Lafleur, Matilda	F	6	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		
Lafleur, Napoleon	M	4	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		

The following are listed as located at Hudsons Hope:

Dumais, Charles	M	43	Manitoba	Catholic	French(Halfb)	Postmaster	Married
Dumais, Susan	F	40	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		Married
Dumais, Marie	F	18	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		
Dumais, Elise	F	16	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		
Dumais, Helenora	F	14	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		
Dumas, Charles	M	10	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		
Dumas, Norbert	M	8	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		
Dumas, Olive	F	6	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		
Dumas, Rose	F	4	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		
St. Cyr, Francis	M	33	N.W.T.	Catholic	French	HBC Interpreter	Married
St. Cyr, Sophia	F	21	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		Married
St. Cyr, Isabella	F	4	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		
St. Cyr, Marie	F	2	N.W.T.	Catholic	French		

The following are listed as located at Battle River Post:

McKenzie, Alexander	M	37	Ontario	C of Eng	Scotch	Iner-Chief Trader	Married
McKenzie, Marie	F	37	N.W.T.	Catholic	Scotch		Married
McKenzie, Adam	M	12	N.W.T.	Catholic	Scotch		
McKenzie, Emile	M	11	N.W.T.	Catholic	Scotch		
McKenzie, Alexander	M	4	N.W.T.	Catholic	Scotch		
McKenzie, James	M	1	N.W.T.	Catholic	Scotch		
Boucher, John	M	23	Quebec	Catholic	French	Labour HBC	

The following are listed as located at Lesser Slave Lake Post:

Young, Harrison	M	34	Quebec	Unitarian	Scotch	Clerk	Married
Young, Elizabeth	F	28	Ontario	W. Meth.	Scotch		Married