

The 2025 McNeil Cemetery Report



McNeil Decoration Day June 15, 2025 at 1:30 PM

How quickly time flies! Wow...it seems but a short time ago that we were celebrating McNeil's 175th anniversary highlighting its wonderful history. Now, at this time we are looking to the future as we begin the next 175 years! McNeil Cemetery's Decoration Day will be Sunday, June 15th at 1:30 PM with Chairpersons Rick De Jong and the Board guiding the service. We are especially pleased to have Rev. Rick Horst officiate with special music being provided by guitarist and singer, Neil O'Brien, who has family members resting at McNeil, accompanied by Deb De Jong. We know the service will be a meaningful way to honour those at rest at McNeil Cemetery. In the event of inclement weather, the service will be held at Wick Church 1 km west of the cemetery.

In addition to the enclosed stamped donation envelope, donations will be accepted before and after the service. As well, please enjoy the refreshments provided after the service as you visit with friends and family. A self-guided tour will also be available in our effort to highlight some of those at rest in our beautiful cemetery.

Did You Know?

Did you know...

- that the Ferguson, Innes, McTaggart, and Williamson, families are well represented at McNeil? 35 Ferguson's, 9 Innes's, 40 McTaggart's, and 14 Williamson's, are at rest in our cemetery.
- that there is another "McNeil Cemetery"? It is located 170 km away in Priceville, Ontario.
- that there are over 260 plots purchased at McNeil?

Update on the 175th McNeil Anniversary Cemetery Time Capsule

In recognition of last year's special 175th McNeil anniversary our community was invited to celebrate the lives of those resting at McNeil by submitting a historical writing, poem, funny story, lesson learned, or memorable event to be placed in a time capsule to be opened in 25 years from now. Many submissions, all interesting and informative, were received and will be encapsulated in this project. It is still not too late to include your submission! Simply contact Rick De Jong at:

- 1825 Concession Road 4, Sunderland, Ontario L0C 1H0

- wickmcneilcemetery@gmail.com

Special thanks to those who have submitted their contribution to 2024 McNeil Time Capsule!

Winter Days of Old

This past winter was reminiscent of winters in days gone by! Lots of snow, ice on roads, trees and wires, dangerous whiteouts, colder temperatures, and loss of power! Although there was damage throughout our community, our cemetery had only some damage. Ice buildup on its trees caused limbs and debris to fall. Fortunately, no stones, monuments, fences, or buildings were damaged thanks in part to the Board's efforts to keep cemetery trees trimmed. Very special thanks to Director Doug Rennie, his son Nathan, and our grounds keeper, Colton Currins, for removing the extensive debris in the cemetery!

2025 McNeil Board of Directors

During the April 15, 2025 McNeil Annual General Meeting, the following McNeil Board of Directors was confirmed: President Warren Jibb, Vice-President James De Jong, Trustee Magil Darnley, Secretary-Treasurer Rick De Jong, and Directors Jim Carson, Neil Crockford, Brian Hadden, Doug Rennie, and Kevin Robertson. Additionally and with appreciation for their involvement and leadership, Beth Hooper, daughter of Murray and Norene (nee Hoskin) Hooper is our newest Board member. Beth

grew up on the family farm on Concession 1 with her brother Robert and sister Anne. Beth and Carlo along with her two daughters and their families are long time residents of Markham. Jim Munro is a long-time resident of our community living with his wife, Jolene and child, on their nearby family farm.

The Board is very proud of its commitment to enhancing McNeil Cemetery. This is your invitation to contact any Board member, President Warren Jibb, Vice-president James De Jong, or Secretary-Treasurer Rick De Jong with any suggestions or thoughts in this regard. We would love to hear from you.

McNeil Cemetery E-mail

To facilitate the increasing popularity of e-transfers by our community in support of McNeil, we have established our own gmail account. To communicate and to e-transfer, please use the McNeil Cemetery Gmail account at:

wickmcneilcemetery@gmail.com

or contact Rick De Jong at pinedale14@hotmail.com. We hope this account will enhance the efforts to safely e-transfer funds for those who wish to support McNeil Cemetery through this approach.

We Remember

It is with respect and fondness that we solemnly remember those resting in our cemetery. We dutifully acknowledge those who have recently passed away:

2023

- Ross Neil Stainton - April 9, 2023
- George Luzerne Williamson– April 2, 2023
- Charles Leslie John Hartin - April 6, 2023
- George Russell Davidson – October 11, 2023
- Carol Ann Williamson – November 27, 2023

2024

- Dorothy Helen Miller– December 22, 2023
- Harry Herbert Miller – February 16, 2021
- James Ferguson Munro – March 3, 2024
- Isabel Eva Carson – April 30, 2024
- Daphen Ann Stainton – September 4, 2024
- Hugh Baird – October 25, 2024

2025

- Darlene Joyce Hadden – May 22, 2025
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-2: "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted."*

We Honour Those Who Have Served

As you are aware, one of the Board initiatives starting in 2024 was to catalogue and recognize those who have served our country. Grateful for responses from our community, we share the following names “Lest We Forget”:

Corporal Hugh Leask Ferguson, who was buried on February 17, 1992 at McNeil in Plot 226-1, served in the army in the Second World War with the Royal Canadian Signals. Hugh was attached to Montgomery's 21st. army group in the European campaign which included the United Kingdom and continental Europe.

Gordon Russel Innes was a private in the Canadian Army and served from May 1918 to November 1918 and arrived back in Canada in 1918. Gordon Innes was buried on August 25, 1982 in Plot 178-2.

Clark McLean was a private in the 116 Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force and was buried on July 26, 1971 in Plot 123-1.

King Charles III Coronation Medal

It is much pleasure that the Board congratulates Deb and Rick De Jong on receiving this much-deserved honour in recognition of their outstanding community support and involvement!

2024 Financial Statement Summary

The Board remains very grateful for the generous financial support provided to McNeil this past year with more than \$12 000.00 donated! These funds enabled the Board to continue to manage, plan and enhance this beautiful resting place! Sincere gratitude is extended to our community for its generous support and commitment to McNeil. The following is a brief summary of the 2024 McNeil Cemetery Financial Report.

Balance on Hand – December 31, 2023	\$6 776.78
Revenue:	
GIC Cashed In at Maturity	\$60775.95
Donations	\$12620.00
Funeral Receipts	\$5850.00
Plot Sales and Cornerstones	\$3000.00
Care & Maintenance Interest	\$1872.44
TOTAL 2024 RECEIPTS	\$84118.39
Expenses:	
Bank Fee/Safety Deposit Box	\$67.80
GIC Investment	\$57 161.75
Care and Maintenance Fund Transfer	\$1760.00
Insurance	\$1441.80
Secretary-Treasurer Expenses	\$1124.09
Secretary-Treasurer Honorarium	\$750.00
Decoration Day	\$959.05
Grave Opening/Closing/Cornerstones	\$4819.45
Cemetery Maintenance	\$7177.99
Cemetery Gras-cutting	\$5400.00
TOTAL 2023 EXPENSES	\$80661.93

Bank Balance December 31, 2024	\$10233.24
Long Term GIC Investments	\$130623.71

As noted, the McNeil Decoration Day Service will be held at the cemetery on **June 15, 2025 at 1:30 PM**. Please find enclosed a stamped, addressed envelope in case contributors are not able to attend this year's cemetery service. Please make cheques payable to "McNeil Cemetery" and E-transfers can also be made through our email: wickmcneilcemetery@gmail.com. Donations of \$25.00 or greater will receive a receipt for taxation purposes in February, 2026. We are most grateful to our McNeil community for their outstanding givings and generous support!

Plot Prices

The Board recently approved the following burial and plot prices for 2025 :

Grave Prices

Single Grave	\$850.00
Two Graves	\$1700.00
Three Graves	\$2550.00
Four Graves	\$3400.00

All grave prices include 40% or \$340.00 amount from the grave purchase price to be set aside for deposit in the CARE & MAINTENANCE FUND and held in trust with the Trustee.

Interment & Other Service Charges

Open and Close of Grave (May 01 to Nov 29) No Sunday Interment \$1250.00

Surcharge for late arrivals (after 04:00pm) and Saturday/Holiday burials \$250.00

Open and Close of Grave (Winter season Dec 01 to Apr 30)* \$1600.00

**Winter Burials are subject to Board approval depending on weather conditions*

Burial of Cremated Remains (opening and closing fee)* \$.550.00

** Winter Cremations (Dec 01 to Apr 30) are subject to Board approval depending on weather conditions.*

Cornerstones - set of four \$350.00

Disinterment Charge \$3500.00

Grave Location and Staking Fee \$60.00

Fee to Record Transfer of Interment Rights \$60.00

Fee to Issue Duplicate Interment Rights Certificate \$60.00

Proud of McNeil Cemetery Enhancements

The Board of Directors, with its ongoing commitment and responsibility to maintain and enhance our cemetery, undertook the following initiatives:

1) The Board explored the possibility of establishing a McNeil Cemetery website for our community to access. With sincere appreciation to Director Beth Hooper for her leadership, we will be announcing details of the McNeil Cemetery

website during Decoration Day! Sincere thanks to Beth for her work on this initiative!

- 2) The Board ordered and will be installing two plaques in commemoration of those at rest. One plaque will be adhered to the Vault Room and another plaque will be posted in front of the cemetery's memorial tree by the south gate.
- 3) The Board examined the uneven floor and loose tiles in the Vault Room and is considering what action, if any, is required. Presently, the floor and tiles do not pose a safety concern. The Board also discussed the possibility of extending the Vault Room roofline to the south, but no decision was made.
- 4) The Board sought out four companies to provide a quotation on replacing the very old wire fencing and supports bordering the east and north side of the cemetery. The quotation included providing sufficient room at ground level to properly trim the grass along these perimeters. Depending on the quote, the Board will determine its next steps.
- 5) The Board requested that Director James De Jong provide a quote on replacing the aging windows and wooden door of the Tool Shed as we are anxious to preserve this cemetery asset.
- 6) The Board met with Colton Currins of King Currins Lawncare and confirmed this year's Service Agreement wherein the following rates were approved:
Spring/Fall Cleanup): \$42.00/hour (15-20 Hrs)
FULL Cut of the Cemetery: \$425.00/Full cut
HALF Cut of the Cemetery: \$290.00/Half cut

Many thanks to Colton Currins and his hardworking and dedicated team for taking such good care of McNeil!
- 7) Thanks to the generous donation of high-quality topsoil by Regina and Brian Marsh, the Board will continue level and grass seed low areas of the cemetery grounds. Many thanks to Regina and Brian for their donation!
- 8) Appreciation to Director Kevin Robertson who repaired the cemetery's pedestrian gate

Thank You, Neil Mcleod

Long-time Director and community member, Neil McLeod, kindly donated two items for use by the Board specific to cremation burials: a tamper to firm soil being backfilled, and a roll of artificial grass to

cover soil. Many thanks for your kind donation, Neil!

Take Some McNeil History Home

As difficult as it is to believe, the surplus, antique chairs that we offered to Decoration Day visitors last year were not entirely acquired. Thanks to Directors Doug Rennie and Jim Carson, the remaining chairs will be available on June 15th and yours to own and enjoy for whatever donation you provide to McNeil!

Honouring Indigenous Peoples

These lands of our community are the traditional territory of Mississauga (Michi-Saagiig) people who are part of the larger Anishinaabeg (Ojibway) nation. The closest Mississauga communities are the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation and Hiawatha First Nation. Georgina Island First Nation is also nearby and they identify as being Chippewa which are also a branch of the Anishinaabeg (Ojibway) nation. The Mississauga people of this territory signed the Williams treaties between 1921 – 1923. Community member, Karli Robertson-De Jong, with her Master's in Indigenous & Canadian Studies, shares these important anecdotes:

As of the 2021 Census there were 13795 Indigenous peoples living within Durham Region and the population continues to grow. Only 230 people within this population are members of Scugog Island First Nation so the vast majority of the Indigenous population within Durham region come from different communities and live off reserve.

Simcoe Street was originally a trail that was used for trade long before non-Indigenous people arrived to this land. If you look at where it is on the map you can see it runs alongside many rivers, lakes and waterways.

Lake Scugog was a marsh that was flooded to create the Trent canal in the late 19th century. In creating this manmade lake, it killed the wild rice and many medicines that were harvested within this marshland.

This area is still home to thousands of native plants that were used as medicines to treat numerous illnesses. Two examples of such plants are red osier dogwood bark for inflammation, infection and chronic pain and tamarack bark for nerve pain, balancing hormone levels and mental health.

Historic Wick Presbyterian Church

Available in various sizes and at reasonable prices, beautiful prints of historic Wick Church, by noted

artist Walter Campbell, are still available for purchase. To order your print or hold a special event at Wick Church, like birthdays, family reunions, anniversaries, etc., please contact Victoria Hadden at victoriahadden@gmail.com for additional information. We are proud that this special building, so historically connected to McNeil Cemetery, is being utilized to support many community events!

Miracles Still Happen!

If you are interested in reading about a miracle in our community, a miracle involving a special horse and a young girl, contact Denise Hoskin at denise.hoskin1958@gmail.com!



Photo of Director Brian Hadden's Grandfather plowing their family farm by horse in the 1940's!

Closing Comments by the Editor and Director Magil Darnley

The McNeil Board trusts you found this newsletter informative and enjoyable. The Board invites you to share any comments or anecdotes about our cemetery and its community. Please contact me through Rick De Jong at Pinedale14@hotmail.com!

In closing, receive a traditional Scottish phrase...

"Lang may yer lum reek"

which means,

"Long may your chimney smoke"

as best wishes for good health, prosperity, and a long life!