

# McDonald Family Recalls Early Years of Centennial Pickford Farm

By Audrey Hutchison

One of the many centennial farms in the Pickford area is the one with the huge, bright-red barn owned by John "Jack" and Audrey McDonald on M-129.

Mr. and Mrs. McDonald have a strong interest in local history, and they know a lot about their family's early years in Pickford. Their property was purchased by John's great-grandfather, William McDonald, in September 1882.

The McDonald family came originally from Ireland and settled in Canada, where he was not content, and yearned for rich, fertile farmland.

A Mr. Pickford owned land near the family in Canada, and he told of the richest farmland ever, in Pickford, Michigan.

This began the sojourn from Ontario by boat down the Munuscong River to the end of navigation in Sterlingville, named after the captain of *The Northern Belle*, Captain Sterling.

Once there, their plans were to hitch up the wagons and transport everything the five miles to Pickford. But finding no road, just a path, they had to disassemble the wagons and carry the parts on horseback. The family walked and carried what they could. Horses, cows, and all their worldly goods came along on the journey, Mr. McDonald said.

Fall was closing in and building was postponed until spring, so the McDonald family stayed with the Pickfords all that fall and winter.

During that winter, the trees were cut off the land for lumber to begin building in the spring. A beautiful, two-story structure was built in the spring for the family of 10.

In 1893, William P. McDonald, John's grandfather, married Mary Elizabeth Kennedy. The following year, he bought the 80 acres adjacent to his father's farm, clearing the land to build the barn that stands there today. The barn's measurements are 66 feet by 80 feet, with stone foundation walls two feet deep and seven feet tall. The stable below housed 34 stanchions for dairy cows, and there were 35 horse stalls.

It took a year to complete the entire barn, which was constructed with hand-hewn beams that measured at least 12 inches square. The barn floor holds two haymows and graineries. The entire structure is held together with foot-long wooden pegs.

When, after long and arduous



McDonald family members pictured are (back row, from left) Issac, William Parker, James Davis, Stewart; (middle) Marie Esabelle, great-grandmother Margaret, great-grandfather William; (front) Hope Elizabeth, Margaret, and Mary Ann. (McDonald family photographs)

At right: *The Northern Belle* when the family landed in Sterlingville in 1882. (Photograph courtesy of John McDonald)



preparation work, the barn was ready to assemble, family, friends, and neighbors came for the barn raising. It was completed in one day in 1900.

The McDonalds were livestock dealers and provided horses for Mackinac Island, then housed them in the winter. Of the 600 horses used on Mackinac, 100 of them would spend the winter at the McDonald farm.

John's father, W. Forbes McDonald, bought the farm from his grandfather in 1920. Soon after, he started the Cloverland Livestock Auction in Rudyard, where Wick's Lumber Yard was located for a long time.

John was born in 1931. He met and married Audrey Armstrong in 1952. She attended the Donaldson church on M-129 near 12 Mile Road in Sault Ste. Marie before her marriage. The church building sits where the original store and post office once was. Her mother's grandparents, named Smith, came to the area about the same time, 1882. That family's old barns still stand behind the present-day site

of the Campers Truck and Service Garage. Mr. McDonald bought the family farm from his father the year they were married. Mr. and Mrs. McDonald have lived here for 57 years, and they choose not to leave for warmer climates during the winter, preferring to remain here year around. Six generations have known this family barn, jumping in the mow, playing with kittens, and riding the Tennessee Walking horses. Visiting travelers are awed by it, particularly those who have never been in a large old barn. Today the barn houses a number of antique pieces, including

sleighs, carriages, and farm equipment. New siding and roofs have been replaced to keep it in a carefully restored condition.

Now retired, Mr. McDonald goes out to the barn daily, where he admires his five horses. Recently, the couple went for a horse-drawn sleigh ride with Jesse and Shelli Bishop, friends who live on M-129. Mr. Bishop works at the local quarry, and Mrs. Bishop works at War Memorial Hospital.

Mr. and Mrs. McDonald enjoy spending time at home, visiting with their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They attend the Methodist Church every Sunday morning. In addition to her inter-

est in history, Mrs. McDonald spends her time babysitting her great-grandchildren from Sault Ste. Marie, daughter Allison's grandchildren. Her brother, Tanny, lives north of town, and on Saturdays he plays guitar and

sings at the weekly musicians' get-together in Pickford. Mr. and Mrs. McDonald are content here, and say they plan to live on the old farm and enjoy their horses for the rest of their lives.

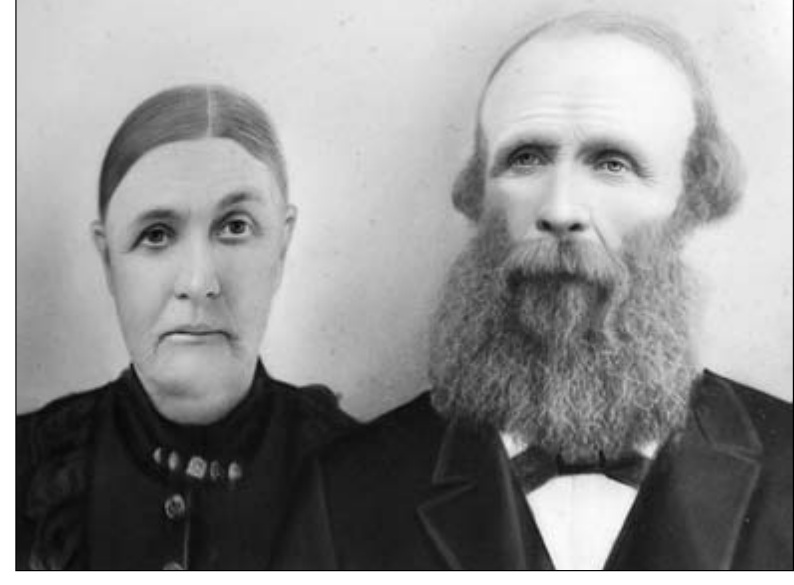
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A photograph of the 1900 barn today.



Audrey and John McDonald of Pickford (The St. Ignace News file photograph)



William and Margaret McDonald purchased the Pickford farm property in 1882, after migrating to Michigan from Canada.

## Education Trends From Other Nations Now Serving as Lessons for American Schools

### Political Leaders Work To Bring U.S. Schools in Line With Global Economy

By Stacy Teicher Khadaroo

The Christian Science Monitor

After each 45-minute class, students at the Vaajakumpu Primary School in Jyväskylä, Finland, suit up in their snow gear, and for 15

minutes, they frolic on ice skates, sleds, and skis.

These breaks provide a clear contrast between Finnish schools and their recess-starved counterparts in the United States. But it's

not the contrasts on the surface that have prompted thousands of educators from around the world to visit this Nordic nation. Rather, it's their curiosity about what underlies an education system that boasts some of the highest scores among countries on PISA – a test of reading, mathematics, and science literacy for 15-year-olds.

No single factor can explain the students' strong showing. They grow up in a highly literate, bilingual society (Finnish and Swedish, with most learning English, as well). Finns also enjoy strong governmental supports for parental leave, day care, and healthcare (in exchange for high taxes), which means that problems associated with poverty don't show up at the schoolhouse door nearly as often as in the U.S.

One essential element, though, is the high caliber of Finland's teaching corps, education leaders say.

"We trust our teachers," says Reijo Laukkanen, head of international relations at the Finnish National Board of Education in Helsinki. "That is very important, and it's not easy to realize in all countries – the culture of trust we have in Finland."

Since 1979, master's degrees have been required for teaching in primary and secondary schools. And the profession is so popular – even with its moderate salaries – that only 10% to 15% of applicants make it into university teacher-education programs.

#### A contrast with America

That selectivity "in and of itself is just such a huge difference from the U.S.," says Kevin Carey, research and policy manager at Education Sector, an independent

policy group in Washington. American education programs at universities don't tend to set difficult standards to get in, and top students aren't lining up at their doors, he and other experts say.

Perhaps that needs to change, some policymakers suggest as they eye not only Finland, but also a range of high-performing countries where the teaching profession is more selective.

Indeed, education trends from abroad are gaining cachet as political and educational leaders strive to bring American schools in line with the demands of the 21st-century global economy. Researchers cite effective practices from places as varied as Korea, Australia, Singapore, and Switzerland. (See sidebar, a roundup of practices in other nations.)

When it comes to improving education, "there's a globalism in the perspective of ... the high-achieving countries, [and] they're all talking about each other," says Linda Darling-Hammond, an education professor at Stanford University in California. "It's an important change that there's some interest in that now" in the U.S., she says.

And one focus is teaching, since high-quality teachers are important in improving student achievement.

The U.S. should recruit, prepare, and support teachers in ways that "reflect the ... practices of top-performing nations and states around the world," urged a report released in December by an advisory group convened by the National Governors Association and several education organizations.

President Obama raised a similar idea in his recent speech on education: "The future belongs to the nation that best educates its cit-

izens," he said. "[D]espite resources that are unmatched anywhere in the world, we've let our grades slip, our schools crumble, our teacher quality fall short, and other nations outpace us.... [That decline is] unsustainable for our democracy."

Yet observers caution that some attempts to compare U.S. and international education can be too simplistic.

"We can learn from other countries, but we do have to be careful with whether or not the practices of any one country can be imported into another," says Tom Loveless, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, a policy research group in Washington. "Many of these practices are so culturally bound that the fact that something works in Singapore doesn't necessarily mean it will work in the United States."

It's also worth noting that even in countries scoring higher than the U.S. on certain tests, educators have their share of complaints and worries about the future. Moreover, it's not as if the lessons flow just one way: U.S. schools and colleges regularly host foreign visitors interested in innovations they've tried.

#### The preparation to be a teacher

If Riina Haverinen were in the U.S., she'd probably be about to start a teaching job. She's nearly finished with her fourth year at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland, but she'll need two more to earn her master's degree in German, English, and teaching, she estimates. (Many Finnish students need just five years, depending on what they want to teach.)

In contrast to most beginning American teachers, she'll have a deep grasp of the subjects she'll be

teaching, as well as the ability to conduct graduate-level research that can improve her work.

The university's lakeside campus, with sleek buildings designed by famous Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, is a major center for teacher education. University education is free in Finland, and students receive living stipends based on income.

The only subjects of study more popular than teaching are law and medicine, says Elisa Heimovaara, an international liaison in the Department of Teacher Education at the university. In fact, the profession has been popular for so long here that it's difficult to explain why. One reason, Ms. Heimovaara says, is that "it has been for many a person [a way] to climb the social ladder ... and improve one's economic situation."

It's difficult, however, for teaching programs to attract enough men: They make up just one out of five applicants. It's also hard to enlist people to teach mathematics.

Ms. Haverinen chose teaching after observing her mother in the profession.

"I like to be around kids and young people, and I really like German," she says.

This is the second year she's observing and teaching a range of subjects at several schools, including the Vaajakumpu school in the lake-district town of Jyväskylä. She was nervous initially, but that's faded as more-experienced teachers at the schools have shown her how to plan lessons.

The most challenging part so far, she says, is that "you cannot always teach in the same way; you have to see how the group is." That's why she's glad her training

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### Round-up: Other Countries' Efforts To Develop Teachers

By Stacy Teicher Khadaroo

The Christian Science Monitor

A recent study of the professional development of teachers identified four key areas in which nations with high student achievement tend to have an advantage over the United States:

#### Support for new teachers

• Many countries mandate mentoring or other support for beginning teachers. In New Zealand, new teachers spend 20% of their time being coached. In Norway, each new teacher is paired with a teacher trained as a mentor. In Switzerland, novices meet with practice groups from other schools for peer evaluation.

• The U.S. has made progress in this area. In the early 1990s, about half of new teachers participated in support programs. A decade later, that had grown to two-thirds, and 7 out of 10 had a mentor.

#### Teaching versus planning time

• In most European and Asian countries, about half of a teacher's workweek, 15 to 20 hours, is spent outside the classroom – preparing lessons, meeting with students and parents, and working with colleagues. In South Korea, teachers spend up to 65% of their working time outside the classroom. In Japan, teachers study one another's best lessons in groups and analyze the strengths and weaknesses.

• American teachers are typically given three to five hours a week for planning.

#### Participation in decisions

• In countries such as Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland, national curriculum is a broad framework, and school leaders and teachers work together on the details of instruction. Teachers in many nations regularly help decide on budgets and design major tests. In Hong Kong, Australia, and Singapore, teams of teachers research improvements for the curriculum and solutions to classroom problems.

• In the U.S., about 6 out of 10 teachers report having moderate influence over curriculum decisions and standards. Only 22% say

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