

The Porters of Paisley and Canada  
 Part 1, 1821 - 1858  
 by Robert Ewart Butler, December, 1993

John Porter and family came from Paisley, Scotland to Canada in 1821. As reported by Carol Bennett in the "Lanark Society Settlers" they settled in North Sherbrooke Township, Concession 1, Lot 8 E. The family probably included:

- 1 John Porter (1795? - 1858), his wife Elizabeth McDonald (1793? - 1847), and children: (a with the dates signifies after)
- |                                  |                                      |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1.1 Mary (1814 - ?)              | 1.7 Thomas McGuffog (1829? - 1843)   |
| 1.2 John (1816 - 1841)           | 1.8 Mary (1830 - <u>a</u> 1853)      |
| 1.3 William (1817? - 1870)       | 1.9 Alexander? (1831 - 1914)         |
| 1.4 Third Son (1818? - 1821?)    | 1.10 David (1834 - <u>a</u> 1875)    |
| 1.5 Elizabeth (1820 - 1877)      | 1.11 Jane (1836 - <u>a</u> 1871)     |
| 1.6 James (1827 - <u>a</u> 1868) | 1.12 George? (1838 - <u>a</u> 1859). |

The first Mary (1.1) did not come to Canada; she may have died in Scotland. The oldest 3 sons and Elizabeth came to Canada.

The Lanark Society Settlers were given government loans to buy supplies. They were supposed to have been given £3 when they arrived, another £3 after 3 months, and a final £2 after another 3 months. John Porter received the following amounts:

Aug 1, 1821	20 £	0 Shillings	0 Pence	( 6 * 3.33 £ )
Nov 1, 1821	16	13	4	( 5 * 3.33 £ )
<u>Feb 18, 1822</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	( 5 * 2.22 £ )
Total	47 £	15 Shillings	6 Pence	

There is no indication as to why the loans were increased to £3.33 per person. Since the loan was reduced on Nov 1, 1821, the third son (1.4) may have died between August and November.

John Porter was granted ownership of his lot in North Sherbrooke township on Nov 28, 1839. Land registration records show that he sold the lot to John Warnock officially in 1840. According to Colonel William Marshall, John had already sold the property and was living in Perth in 1834.

Before moving to Perth, John Porter bought Lot 27, Concession 4 in Bathurst Township in July, 1827. This was a 100 acre farm on the road between Perth and Lanark village, close to Perth. The Memorial to purchase this lot contains John Porter's signature.

It seems to match his signature for his government loan, as recorded in "The Lanark Society Settlers".

John Porter bought commercial property in Perth in February, 1832, on the SW Corner of Foster and Gore St. He sold pieces of this property in 1833, 1834 and the remainder in 1842. He was a merchant in Perth, in partnership with Robert Gemmell and Malcolm Cameron. They operated under the name of "Porter and Gemmell". Advertisements in the Bathurst Courier from 1834 to 1837 show that they sold a general assortment of dry goods, hardware, groceries and crockery. They accepted payment in "pot ashes", pork, staves, timber, butter, wheat, corn or oats. From the mix of goods they sold, and from the mix they accepted as payment, it appears that their clientele were townsfolk, farmers and lumbermen. The dissolution of their partnership was announced in the Bathurst Courier on Aug 4, 1837.

The Porter family were apparently living in Bytown in 1840, when the lot in North Sherbrooke was officially sold. The 1842 census of Bytown lists John Porter, his family and a servant. The Lanark 1842 census shows that William Porter (1.3)

remained on the farm on Lot 27, Con 4, Bathurst by himself. John Porter bought Lot 16 York St. S in Nov, 1844. He erected a one and one half storey stone dwelling that covered half of the lot. This lot is currently occupied by a Holiday Inn.

In 1848 he acquired Lot 28 on the North side of Wellington Street, the current site of the Confederation Building.

John Porter was a lumberman in Bytown. He had his own business, and he worked for Gilmour & Co. According to the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol XII, page 366-368, Gilmour & Co. opened "... an agency in Bytown (Ottawa) under the management of John Porter, who continued to procure timber and sell supplies." John likely started in the lumbering business while a merchant in Perth, or possibly even before.

His association with the Gilmours may have started when he sold property in Perth to Allan Gilmour & Co in 1834. He was fairly prominent in the lumbering community.

In a report to the government about the lumbering trade in 1843, Malcolm Cameron wrote: "I have examined the statements furnished by John Porter Esq., the agent of the house of Gilmour & Co., who makes the most accurate statistics of the whole trade; and I find ...". John was a member of the Bytown Lumber Merchants. In 1847 he was on a committee which wrote a petition to the government requesting a reduction in timber duties.

John Porter bought Lot 5, Con 7 of Westmeath Township in May 1843, and sold it to lumberman Hugh Carmichael later the same year. This lot is near the Ottawa River, and may have been a base for lumbering operations. A letter from the Crown Timber office in Bytown in 1848 shows that Mr. Porter of Bytown, applied for timber rights on the Skootamatta river near Kaladar.

The Porter boys attended a school on Sparks St. conducted by Rev. Dr. MacKenzie, a graduate of Edinburgh University. In Daniel O'Connor Jr.'s Recollections of Bytown, he wrote: "It was recognized as the best school in the place, and among the scholars were the Jones of Brockville, and the Bakers, The Pinneys, the Porters, the Monks, the Lewis, the Greens, the McKays, and others of well known families of the time."

John Porter (1.2), the eldest son, died in Bytown in Aug 1841. The fifth son, Thomas McGuffog Porter (1.7), died in Oct 1843 after an accident with a canister of gunpowder. In Jan 1844, William Porter (1.3) married Janet Watt in Bathurst.

Elizabeth Porter (1.5) married Hugh Carmichael of Westmeath in Feb 1847. Jane Porter (1.11) married James Dyke in Aug 1853.

Elizabeth (McDonald) Porter died in July, 1847, at the time of the typhus epidemic.

John returned to Paisley, Scotland and married Janet (Sarah) Glen in Sept, 1848. She may have been a childhood sweetheart.

John Porter was apparently a political Reformer. He was an associate judge for the spring assizes of 1849 and 1850.

John retired around 1849 and reportedly sold his business in 1851. He died in April 1858. His obituary in the Ottawa Citizen, reprinted in the Sarnia Observer May 13, 1858, confirmed that he came from Paisley in 1821, carried on an extensive business in Perth with M. Cameron and others, and moved to Ottawa shortly after the commencement of the Rideau Canal to take charge of the lumbering establishment of Gilmour & Co.

His estate was estimated at £8,000 when he died. He left the York St. property

to his wife Janet, to be given to James (1.6) when she died. The Bathurst farm was given to William (1.3), and the Wellington St. property was given to James Dyke, husband of Jane (1.11). He gave £50 each to a friend, a servant and the Ottawa Protestant Hospital. He gave Janet Porter £1000 and all the household goods for her own use. The balance of the estate was given to Janet in trust, to be distributed to all John's children and grandchildren as she saw fit.

According to John W. Hughson and Courtney C.J. Bond in "Hurling Down the Pine", Porter's Island in the Ottawa River, now an Ottawa City geriatric center, was named after the John Porter who worked for Gilmour & Co.

Further history of the Porter family will be continued in Part 2, 1858 - 1900.

The author would like to thank Norman K. Crowder of Nepean for his assistance with this research.

The author is a great grandson of Alexander Porter (1.9), who was probably the ninth child of John Porter and Elizabeth McDonald. He would be very pleased to hear from anyone who would like to share information about the Porter family. Please write: R.E. Butler, 240 Sunrise Cres., Oakville, Ontario, Canada, L6L 3L3.

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Part 2, 1858 - 1900  
by Robert Ewart Butler, December 1993

Part 1 of the Porter family history covered the years 1821 to 1858, from the arrival of the Porter family in Canada, to the death of John Porter in Ottawa. Part 2 covers the next generation to about 1900.

William Porter (1.3) married Janet Watt in Jan 1844. Their family was as follows:

1.3	William Porter	(1817? - 1870)	Janet Watt	(1826? - <u>a</u> 1903)
1.3.1	John	(1844 - <u>a</u> 1894)	1.3.6 William	(1858? - 1860)
1.3.2	Isabella Maria	(1847 - 1885)	1.3.7 William	(1861 - <u>a</u> 1887)
1.3.3	Thomas McGuffock	(1849 - <u>a</u> 1887)	1.3.8 Mary Jane Byers	(1863? - <u>a</u> 1887)
1.3.4	Margaret A.	(1851? - <u>a</u> 1887)	1.3.9 George Alexander	(1866 - <u>a</u> 1887)
1.3.5	Elizabeth	(1854? - <u>a</u> 1887)	1.3.10 Jessie	(1868? - <u>a</u> 1891)

(a with the dates signifies after)

William Porter (1.3) inherited the farm on Lot 27, Con 4 Bathurst. He had an accident on the farm and was paralysed on Oct 10, 1870. He made out his will on Oct 11, and died Oct 12. He willed everything to his wife Janet, with the stipulation that the farm was to go to John (1.3.1) when Janet died or remarried. He also stipulated that John (1.3.1) was to pay each of his siblings \$100 when the youngest was 21 years old, and that each of these sums were to be considered a lien on the land.

In 1887, all the surviving children except Jessie (1.3.10) signed a release to turn the property over to their mother. Jessie was only 19 in 1887; she apparently signed a release in 1891. Isabella's children apparently signed releases individually when they came of age.

John (1.3.1) apparently married Mary Ann Moulton of Drummond in Mar. 1879. The land release was signed in Jan. 1887 by John and Mary Ann Porter from St. Thomas, Pembina, N. Dakota. Isabella (1.3.2) married John McLellan of Ross Township in June, 1867. They were living on Lot 4, Con 4 in Ross, near Beachburg, in the 1871 and 1881 census. Thomas (1.3.3) apparently married Ellen Kinsella of Beckwith in Jan, 1878. Thomas and Ellen Porter were living in Inkster, Grand Forks County, Dakota in Mar 1887. Margaret (1.3.4) married John Taylor and was living at McKellar, Parry Sound District in Sept, 1887. Elizabeth (1.3.5) married James Comrie and was living in Beachburg, Renfrew in 1887. William (1.3.7) was a Blacksmith in Dakota in May, 1887. Mary (1.3.8) was a spinster in Deseronto, Hastings in Aug, 1887. George (1.3.9) was a bank clerk in Perth in May, 1887.

Elizabeth Porter (1.5) married Hugh Carmichael in Feb 1847. Their family was:

	Hugh Carmichael	(1816? - 1864)	1.5	Elizabeth Porter	(1820 - 1877)
1.5.1	John Alexander	(1850? - <u>a</u> 1871)	1.5.4	James Wilson	(1859? - <u>a</u> 1881)
1.5.2	Duncan A.	(1852? - <u>a</u> 1871)	1.5.5	Thomas	(1862? - <u>a</u> 1881)
1.5.3	Hugh Andrew	(1856? - <u>a</u> 1881)			

Hugh Carmichael bought Lot 5, Con 7 in Westmeath Township in May 1843, from Elizabeth's father, before he and Elizabeth were married. In the 1861 census, he was listed as the owner of 26 lots in Westmeath, with a total of more than 3,000 acres. Most of these lots were in concessions 7, 8 & 9 which were the closest to the Ottawa River. All are listed as being "Under Wood or Wild", except for lots 4 and 5 in Concession 7. In the 1871 census, Elizabeth was listed as the owner of 3000 acres, as well as a lumbering business in Quebec.

The Carmichael family were not living in Westmeath in 1851. In the 1871 census, they were living on lots 4 and 5 in con 7. The oldest 3 sons were listed as having

been born in Quebec, and the youngest 2 were listed as having been born in Ontario.

The occupations of Elizabeth and her eldest son John were listed as "farm and lumber". Duncan was listed as a medical student. In the 1881 census the youngest 3 sons were all living on the farm, all listed as farmers.

Janet Porter issued a Quit Claim on the York St. property to James Porter (1.6) in July, 1858. James advertised an auction sale of household furniture, at his residence on York St, in Apr. 1860. He was listed in the 1861 census as a gentleman bachelor living with his sister Jane (1.11) and James Dyke on Wellington St. James sold the York St. property in June 1868. The land transfer documents show that he was married to Lydia ? at that time. Neither James nor Lydia Porter were listed in the 1871 census for Ottawa.

Alexander Porter married Catherine Wilson in Beachburg in 1859. Their family was:

1.9	Alexander Porter (1831 - 1914)	Catherine Wilson (1839 - 1929)
1.9.1	John James (1862 - 1924)	1.9.7 Robert Andrew (1871 - 1945)
1.9.2	William (1864? - 1941)	1.9.8 Herbert (1873? - ?)
1.9.3	Alexander Jr. (1866 - 1930)	1.9.9 Walter (1875 - ?)
1.9.4	Alice (1867? - 1962)	1.9.10 Clara (1879 - ?)
1.9.5	Albert Edward (1869? - ?)	1.9.11 George (1881 - 1967)
1.9.6	Henry Alexander (1870 - 1960)	1.9.12 Addie (1883 - 1903)

There is no direct proof that Alexander Porter was the son of John and Elizabeth Porter. However, the author believes this to be the case for several reasons: 1. Alexander was born in Lanark while John and Elizabeth were there, at a time when they likely had a son, 2. Alexander's father came from Paisley, and worked for a large lumber company N of Ottawa on the Ottawa river, and 3. Alexander bought Lot 7 Con 6 in Westmeath township from Hugh Carmichael in June 1859, and sold 100 acres back to Elizabeth Carmichael in 1877. Alexander's farm was between the Carmichael farm and Beachburg, and within easy walking distance of both. It is possible that Alexander bought the farm with an inheritance from his father who died in 1858. John Porter's will directed that part of his estate be distributed to unspecified children and grandchildren.

The first 10 children were born in Beachburg. In 1880 the family moved to Morden Manitoba, where George (1.9.11) was born. After a year they moved to Walhalla North Dakota, where Addie (1.9.12) was born. About 1890 they moved to Northcote Minnesota, in 1896 to Elm Creek, Manitoba, and in 1906 to Landis, Saskatchewan. The eldest 3 sons were bachelors and moved with their parents to Landis. Alice (1.9.4) married Walter Armstrong and settled in Elm Creek. Henry (1.9.6) married Charlotte Jane in 1912, and settled in Paynton, Saskatchewan near Landis. Robert (1.9.7), Herbert (1.9.8) and Walter (1.9.9) all settled in Elm Creek. Robert married Gertrude Larter in Nov 1900, Herbert married Rhoda Lidster, and Walter married Minnie Brown. Clara (1.9.10) married Earnest Larter, brother of Gertrude. George (1.9.11) married Janetia Gee and settled in Landis.

David Porter married Mary Ellen Comrie in Nov 1866. Their family was as follows:

1.10	David Porter (1834? - <u>a</u> 1875)	Mary Ellen Comrie (1841? - 1881)
1.10.1	Carolyn Catherine? (1868? - <u>a</u> 1881)	1.10.3 Willmetta (1875 - <u>a</u> 1881)
1.10.2	Mary Ellen (1873? - 1882)	

Land records show that a James Porter bought Lot 4, Con 6, Westmeath Township from Hugh Carmichael in Aug 1859, and gave it to David Porter (1.10). This was likely James (1.6) buying a farm with funds from their father's estate. Porter Lake in

Westmeath is on the David Porter Property.

Jane Porter (1.11) married James Dyke in Aug 1853. Their family was as follows:

	James Dyke	(1823? - a1871)	1.11	Jane Porter	(1836 - a1871)
1.11.1	James Andrew	(1855? - a1871)	1.11.5	Gertrude L.	(1865? - a1871)
1.11.2	Elizabeth M.	(1857? - a1871)	1.11.6	Arthur L.	(1867? - a1871)
1.11.3	Beatrice M.	(1861? - a1871)	1.11.7	Hilda Jane	(1870 - a1871)
1.11.4	Herbert E.	(1863? - a1871)			

James Dyke was listed in census records as a merchant.

George Porter (1.12?) married Mary A. Wilson in Sept 1859.

Five Porter families were located near Beachburg in the 1860's and 1870's. This included the families of Isabella McLellan (1.3.2), Elizabeth Comrie (1.3.5), Elizabeth Carmichael (1.5), Alexander Porter (1.9), and David Porter (1.10).

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