

The Old Boys Reunion Movement

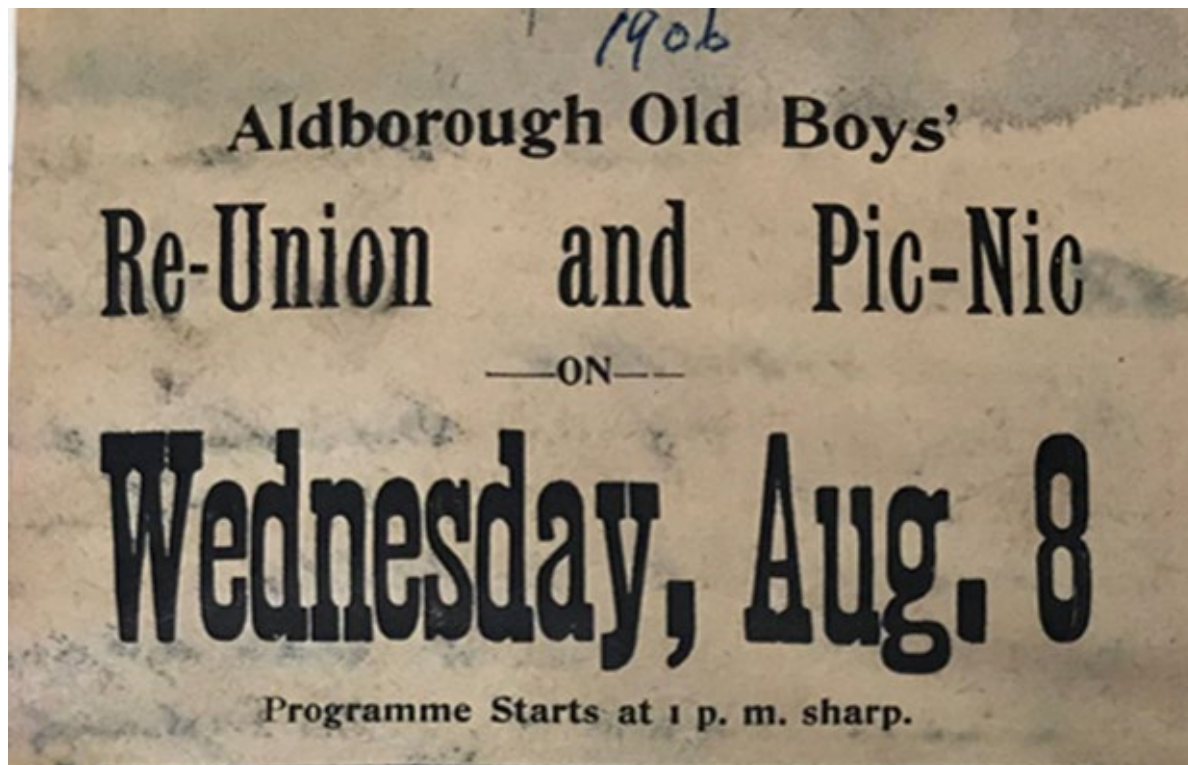
By 1900, many of the children and grandchildren of Ontario's pioneers had gone far afield to find jobs and farms of their own.

Their desire to see the old homestead and visit family was the start of the "Old Boys" reunion movement.

These 2 or 3 day events were held in nearly every village, town and city usually around Civic Holiday (Aug. 1st).

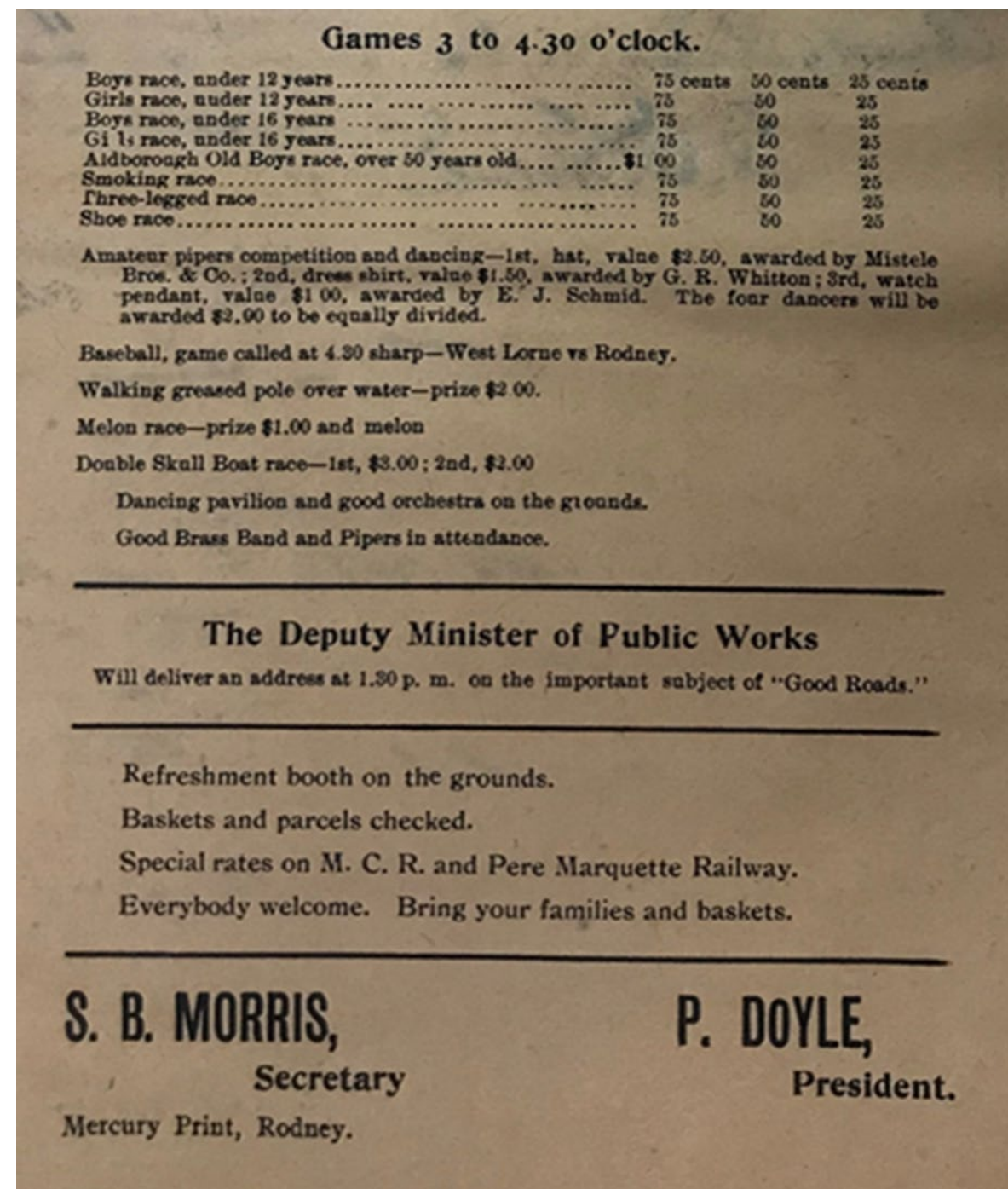
Aldborough Old Boys' Picnic, about 1905





1906 Old Boys Reunion Programme

The first Aldborough and Rodney (West Elgin) Old Boys reunion was in 1903 at Port Glasgow.

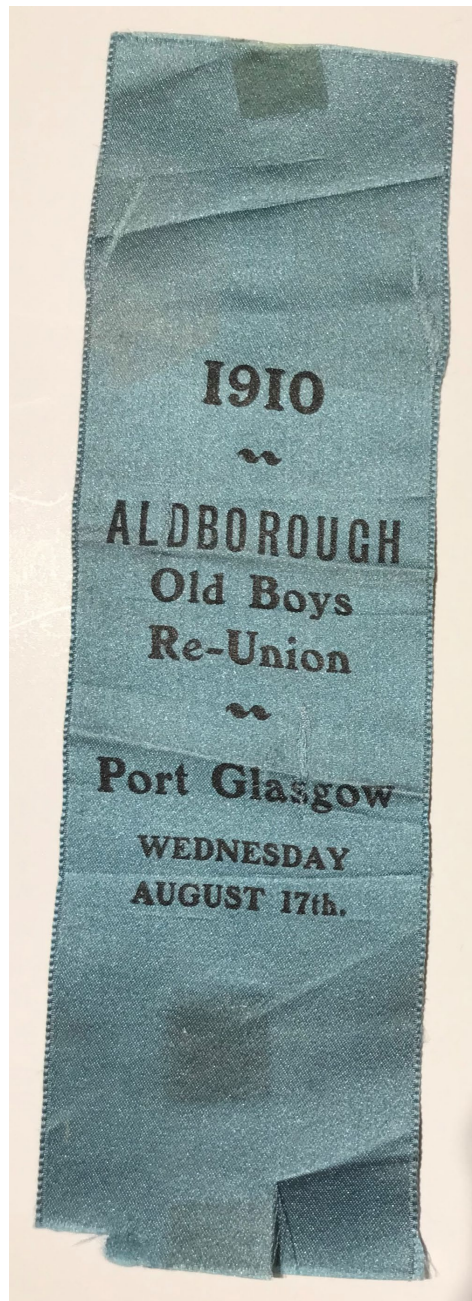


Heading to the
Old Boys Picnic
from Rodney,
c. 1900



In 1920 an Old Boys Association was incorporated and six acres on the bluff at Port Glasgow was purchased - becoming the Soldiers' and Pioneers' Memorial Park.

The first "official" Old Boys picnic was held August 12, 1921.



Alldboro Old Boys Picnic

WEDNESDAY
AUGUST 13th, '30

Unveiling of Cairn
AS A MEMORIAL TO SOLDIERS AND PIONEERS
OF ALDBOROUGH

THE EVER-POPULAR
Legion Pipe Band
OF ST. THOMAS WILL FURNISH MUSIC IN THE AFTERNOON

Base Ball and Soft Ball

MAKE THIS A HOLIDAY AND MEET YOUR FRIENDS AT
THE LAKE

Dr. O. O. Shaw, Barrister, 384 Talbot Street, Glasgow. At Rodney office Tuesday afternoon noon. Appointment other days at Rodney office of clients. Thomas, 56, res.

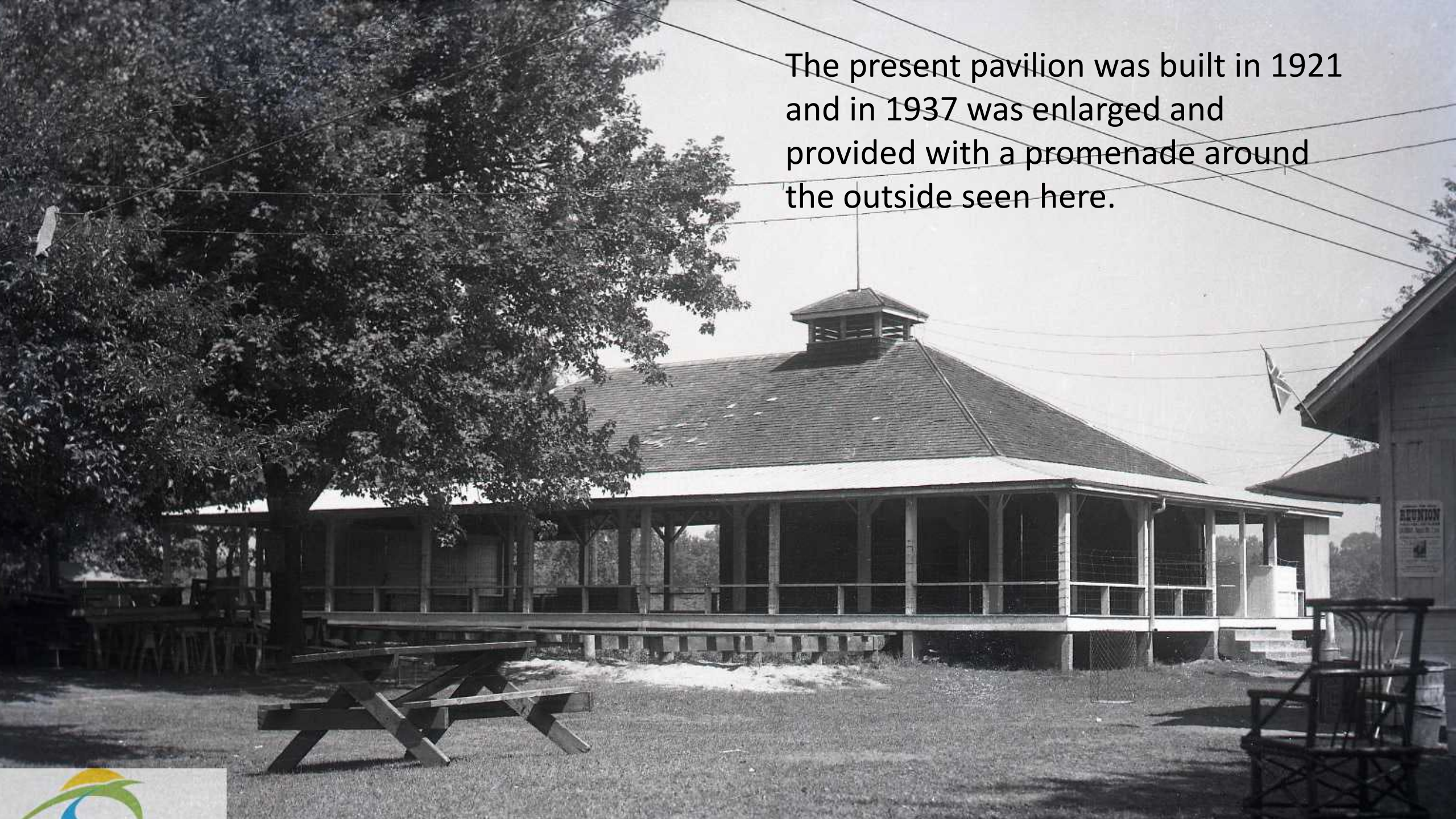
PLUMBING
Steam and Hot Water Pipe Fitting of all kinds. Artificial Rain Houses. Give Us a Try.

MILNER
West Lorne

A cairn dedicated to the Pioneers and the men who fought in WWI was dedicated at the annual picnic in 1930.



The present pavilion was built in 1921 and in 1937 was enlarged and provided with a promenade around the outside seen here.



PORT GLASGOW SUMMER DANCE PAVILION

In 1921 the Aldborough Old Boys Association constructed this summer dance pavilion.

The first dance was held Wednesday, August 3, 1921 with the music supplied by a local group: Vernon "Hubby" Morris - violin, Ada (Johnson) Murray - piano, and Henry Gray - drums.

The first dances held were "Jitney" dances.

Dancers paid 5 cents per dance, with the floor being cleared after each number.

In 1937 the pavilion was expanded, adding twenty feet of floor space and a spacious promenade, constructed around three sides.

After completion, the first dance was held Wednesday, June 2, 1937.

The music was by the Casa Royal Orchestra from Strathroy.

This pavilion has been in continuous use every summer since it was constructed in 1921.

This grand old pavilion is the oldest summer dance pavilion in continuous use on the shoreline of Ontario's Great Lakes.



1937

Photograph from the Elgin County Archives



1975

Photograph from the Elgin County Archives

1976



The pavilion and booth about 1945.



Slide in the park, June, 1966.



Memorial Park, July, 1967



Port
Glasgow
Park.
Booth and
Dance
Hall.
November
28, 1974



Mr. and Mrs.
William Wallace,
superintendents
of the park,
July 22, 1976.



William Stalker, former reeve of Aldborough, introduced to Lord Elgin, during the County Centennial August 9, 1952.

One of the last descendants of the Selkirk Settlers in West Elgin whose maternal great-grandfather was Angus McKay, a leader of the Selkirk Settlers who walked to Elgin County from Winnipeg in 1818.

Left to right: Mr. Stalker, John Bandeen, chairman of the reunion program; and Lord Elgin."



Lord Elgin
addresses the
crowd on the
bleachers during a
light rain at the
Memorial Park,
August 9, 1952



Pt. Glasgow's Pavilion bandshell was never used as a cookhouse until members of the Michigan Travel Trailer Club installed three propane grills and cooked over 50 pounds of bacon and 30 dozen eggs for the hungry crowd of nearly 300 who attended the break-up breakfast. Rolls and a large amount of hot coffee were also consumed by the crowd who sat at picnic tables on the pavilion floor while a cold north wind howled through and the temperature read 56 degrees. June 28, 1967.



Square dancing at Port
Glasgow to Stuart
McIntyre's Orchestra,

Here Ann Carroll and Bill
McCallum, Jack Jamieson,
and Mrs. Duncan Gilchrist,
are seen promenading.

Stuart McIntyre, Alex and
Mrs. Morrish provide the
music, and guitar player,
Don Percival, Dutton,
doubles as caller.

July 21, 1967.



Square dancers enjoyed their rally at Port Glasgow Park on the week-end spending many hours square and round dancing in the pavilion.

Here Chatham Square Dance Club caller Frank Burgess, right, sings and calls for a new round dance - The Darling Waltz - which he and his wife taught the group Saturday morning. Pictured at left is Carolyn Gray Smith, Orford, a member of the Chatham Square Dance Club, and, others from a distance.

August 31, 1967



Newbury Barn
Dance Gang
entertained at Port
Glasgow Pavilion,
Al Pierce - Appin,
Bob McNaughton -
Newbury,
Alex Morrish -
Eagle,
Pat Van-Woodgreen
Caller,
Jack Sumner -
Leamington,
Jimmy Charron –
was absent.
July 31, 1969



September 3, 1970

Horne Family's "Generation Gap" orchestra played for dancers and listeners at Port Glasgow Park during their recent three-week vacation at Port Glasgow Trailer Park.

Here they are pictured as they appear on the job in suburban Chicago night spots, dances, wedding receptions, etc. They are Mary, Timmy, Terry, Larry and Bud.



John McColl's Orchestra provided music for Saturday night's dance at Port Glasgow pavilion and 150 dancers kept the floor full all evening doing old time dancing.

Left to right they are:
Bob Tiffin, Eldie Miller,
Rex Arnold, John and
Bert McColl.

August 26, 1976.



The orchestra plays once a month at the pavilion during the summer and every other Saturday night at Ridgetown Arena, where a large crowd gathers each time to enjoy the orchestra's music and old time dancing.

August 26, 1976



January 29, 1976.

Stuart McIntyre's
Orchestra at the
Crinan Community
Centre.

Left to right: Don
Percival, guitar;
Clifford Reid, Piano;
Stuart McIntyre,
violin.



May 26, 1977

Square dancers at
the Port Glasgow
pavilion.



May 27, 1976

"Allemande Left Your Lady" and 100 other modern square dance calls echoed throughout the township park's pavilion on the weekend, when 75 couples camped there for the weekend and danced in the pavilion Friday night, Saturday morning, afternoon and evening, the same Sunday, concluding Monday afternoon.



September 24, 1981.

Modern Square Dancers from all over the province filled the township park's pavilion on Sept. 11-12-13 dancing Friday night, Saturday morning, afternoon and evening and briefly Sunday afternoon. Here some are seen with organizer Bill Blaney from Dorchester, doing the calling."



September 14, 1981

Modern Square
Dancers from
Southern Ontario
gathered at
Aldborough Old Boy
Park.



"Bob-Bob-A-Lou"
playing at the Port
Glasgow Dance
Pavilion, c. 1998.

From left:
Robert Reardon,
Robert A. Miller,
Carolyn Malic,
Lou Malic, and
Bob Davis.

Photo provided by
Bob & Audrey
Miller.



Square & Round Dancers of South Western Ontario. These photos show the travelling dance crew who last hosted a regular dance at the Pavilion on September 18, 2018. This Dance was the Swing'n Canadians' Dance to celebrate their 50th Anniversary.



This group was the first NSDCA Club in Canada. They were originally based in Windsor but moved their base to Port Glasgow Trailer Park so that the dancers could travel from all over Ontario and have a place to camp as well as dance.



Denny and Judy Howlett were campers in the park and were the leaders of the club for many years. This club hosted Saturday night dances, pot luck dinners and Sunday worship services at the pavilion. When the Howlett's retired at the end of 2018 and the pavilion ceased to be the home base for the dance group.



Square &
Round Dancers
of South
Western
Ontario.



Square & Round
Dancers of South
Western Ontario.



Square &
Round
Dancers of
South
Western
Ontario.



Pierce Family Band in 1996



Mark Moore, Kevin Pierce, Craig Pierce,
Carla Pierce, Ryan Peddie, Ron Pierce

Aldborough Old Boys' Directors,
August, 1983.

Front row: Bob Miller,
John Gardiner,
Gordon Havens,
John Watterworth,
Secretary-Treasurer John Hux, and
Ross Lashbrook.

Middle row:
Victor Howard,
Keith Kelly,
Harvey Miller,
President Gordon McFadden,
Aldborough council representative
Harry Mezenberg.

Back row: Park operator Gary Ford
and Wilbur Baxley



The Association turned over the buildings and grounds to the municipality around 1999.