

John McIver—First Land Owner



John McIver, HBC employee at Fort Langley

ALTHOUGH SAMUEL ROBERTSON held the distinction of being the first settler in Maple Ridge, John McIver was apparently the first land owner. McIver was born on New Year's Day, 1832, in Scotland at a place called Knock, Carloway, on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides. Lewis was a barren and remote island inhabited by two main clans of Scotsmen—the Morrison and McIver clans. McIver and a teen-aged companion, Kenneth Morrison, had left the island in 1848 on a Hudson's Bay Company's supply ship bound for Fort Churchill on Hudson's Bay. These sailing ships travelled from London to Montreal by way of Scotland's Outer Hebrides and would stop at the Port of Stornoway to take on final provisions and water before crossing the Atlantic Ocean. The same day the pair left Kenneth Morrison's mother gave birth to a baby daughter and as the two young lads bade their goodbyes, McIver remarked that he would one day return home to marry his friend's newborn sister. The two lads joined a brigade that travelled by snowshoe and canoe across the prairies and through the Rockies

to eventually reach Fort Langley in rags. First Nations people along the route saved the party from starving and freezing to death. Upon reaching Fort Langley, the pair were so demoralized that they decided to run away. With nowhere to go, they had no option but to return to the fort and complete their contract.

As the boats came up the Fraser River from Victoria with Governor James Douglas, Judge Begbie, Colonel Moody, and other dignitaries for the swearing-in ceremonies for the creation of the Crown Colony of British Columbia, McIver and his friend Kenneth Morrison were posted in the fort's bastions with instructions to fire salutes of welcome. When the original St. John the Divine Anglican Church was built at the old Fort Langley of 1827 (afterwards the Derby Townsite), the Reverend William Burton Crickmer held his first service on February 20th, 1859. McIver was in attendance and followed the Royal Engineers into the church wearing kilts, presented to him by Judge Begbie, much to the amazement of the local Indians.

When Fort Langley changed from a fur-trade enterprise to the selling

of mining paraphernalia to the sudden influx of miners, McIver visited the Kamloops area and mined (and married an Indian wife according to the customs of the day) in the vicinity of Cherry Creek. He later travelled to the Cariboo and when the "Chilcotin War" broke out in 1864 joined a punitive party headed by Donald McLean, ex-chief trader at Kamloops, to go after the Indians accused of murdering the Alfred Waddington road building party. McLean, upon leaving the company, had built the Hat Creek stopping house on the Cariboo Road out of Ashcroft. McLean, upon going into battle, always wore a bullet-proof steel-plated breastplate for protection. Unfortunately for him, he bragged about his armour, the Indians found out, and one of them shot him in the back. McIver was closest to him when he was shot.

In 1877, at the age of 43, McIver returned to the place of his birth to visit his aging parents and to fulfil his promise to friend Kenneth Morrison's parents that he would one day return and marry the daughter that was born on the very day that he left Scotland bound for Canada. He found both his parents alive and well and still working on their farm. After a period of courtship, Catherine Morrison agreed to marry him and they, along with the groom's sister and her husband, Gilbert McKay, sailed for Canada to Montreal and from there crossed the US to California by rail and then came north by ship to the Fraser Valley. The McKay couple settled on a 160-acre parcel of land on the south side of the Fraser River and above the dilapidated Fort Langley. They called their farm Glen Valley. McIver called his farm Maple Ridge Farms because of a ridge of large maple trees at the back of his property.

Catherine and John McIver raised a family of seven children, four girls, Mary, Henrietta, Katherine and Archena, and three sons, John Jr., Angus, and Arthur. The family eventually sold the McIver farm and it is now the Maple Ridge golf course. John Jr. became a Reeve of Maple Ridge. There are now five generations of the McIver clan that have lived in Maple Ridge.

John McIver died on 3 May 1913 at Hammond and was buried in the Fort Langley cemetery.

PART OF YOUR
COMMUNITY SINCE
1977



CERTIFIED GENERAL ACCOUNTANTS

22377 DEWDNEY TRUNK RD. MAPLE RIDGE BC V2X 3J4
www.eprcga.com

An independent member firm of EPR Canada Group Inc.

Jim Isherwood



Owning Royal LePage-Brookside Realty since its inception in 1982 has been a heart-warming experience. With my son Nathan, we have grown to 80 salespeople and 10 staff with three locations. Doing a professional photo shoot and displaying picture boards of our clients' properties at all three locations has proven to be a tremendous marketing edge. We look forward to offering Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows residents the best in professional real estate services. Thank you for letting us be a part of your future.

604 250 7755 www.jimisherwood.ca

Three Locations to Serve You

- Our Office at 11933 224th Street
- Haney Place Mall Kiosk
- Valley Fair Mall Kiosk

ROYAL LEPAGE **Brookside Realty**
INDEPENDENTLY OWNED AND OPERATED
11933 - 224th Street Maple Ridge BC V2X 6B2