



A MAGAZINE FOR  
CANADIANS  
AT HOME AND ABROAD  
PUBLISHED MONTHLY  
ESTABLISHED IN 1907  
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\$2.00 A YEAR  
M. A. MCINNIS  
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

205 TWELFTH STREET  
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

June 14, 1939

Mrs. Joseph Campbell,  
Kinkora, Prince Edward Island.

My dear Cousin Minnie:

Your kind letter received some days ago, and from it I can realize, in a way, how sorrowful and broken hearted you must be to learn that your dear brother, so far away from the old home of his birth, has finished his labours on this earth and has been called to his eternal home by God, his Creator and Redeemer. When the end approached, John was ready and fully resigned to go. He was one of the most sensible of men in important things I have ever known; and to live a good life and die well prepared for death was always uppermost in his mind, even when the duties of his profession pressed heavily upon him.

John was principal of the public grammar school in the little town of Port Costa, in the adjoining Contra Costa County, for the past twenty-six years. This alone proves his efficiency as a teacher in the ordinary studies required by our system of education. In addition, he conducted and trained his pupils in music and singing. The Port Costa entertainments always brought patrons from nearby towns as well as the home people. Often have some members of my family attended these entertainments. I have been present on several occasions during the past. His last big entertainment was on St. Patrick's night, and I have been told that never before did John sing his songs so well, and was encored so many times, as on that eventful night. His heart was in his work, his generous Irish heart, and he gave the appreciative audience all he had. John McIver was still the popular teacher and musician of old, and the people applauded.

Next day John appeared to have a bad turn--his heart was acting badly and a doctor was summoned. After several days at home he was taken to the Martinez Hospital, a few miles away. I was notified that he was very ill, but did not at that time know that he had been removed to the hospital. It was on a Sunday and as Edwin was at home he offered to drive me there at once, and in an hour we drove up to John's home in Port Costa. I found no one at home. Inquiry at the next door, we were told that John had been removed to the hospital. So we continued our drive another half hour to Martinez. At the hospital I was told by the nurse in charge that Mr. McIver was very sick and only close members of the family were allowed to see him. I explained who I was and she permitted to go into his room for a little while. John greeted me with his usual welcome smile and wanted me to sit down and talk with him. He was breathing very heavily at the time. I shook his hand and told him to keep up his courage. He had been prepared for death that morning, I was told. I made my visit short.

Edwin and I then went to the home of Edward Lawrence and his fine young wife. There I met Nellie, Adrien, Kathleen, and other members of the family. Kathleen came from Arizona a few days before and was helping to take care of her father.



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In the course of several days John was removed to his home, apparently somewhat improved, and it was there I saw him a couple of times before his death. It was a great pleasure to meet Sister Mary Charles and Sister Damien on these occasions, and a greater happiness for John to have them so near during his last illness. They have probably told you more than I could about his last days on earth. The regular visits of the doctor, the attention given by a competent and sympathetic nurse, and above all the consoling visits of the Reverend Pastor of the churches of Crockett and Port Costa, Father Bandini, assured us all that everything humanly possible was done to make his last days as comfortable as possible.

Even in his sufferings, I was always greeted with a smile--the same welcome smile I received from him on so many occasions when I would meet him in Oakland or the less pretentious town of Port Costa. During all his busy life, John never neglected his religious duties. He used to make a practice of coming to Oakland during the Christmas holidays for supplies and toys for the school children and his own home, and invariably would take time off before returning home to visit the Franciscan monastery and church on 34th avenue, the largest and finest of our 30 Oakland parishes.

Often did we discuss the hoped-for trip together to the Island and friends, which we left together in 1907, on my first return visit. But John realized it was not easy to leave home for any length of time. His hope to see the green fields and red roads of his native homeland had never been realized.

John died in the early morning hours of May 30, our Memorial Day, and the day we all decorate the graves of our departed friends. It is also Mary's month. John always had a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin. His body was laid out in an undertaking parlor in Crockett, and it was here his friends gathered to pray for the repose of his soul on two evenings and the morning of the funeral, June 1. Many of the young men and women who passed by the casket and took a last look at the face of the man lying peacefully there, were former students of their beloved teacher.

Bennet and his daughter Minnie, with one of Pearl's boys, came from Lakeport as far as Santa Rosa one afternoon and in the morning continued on to Crockett, bringing with them John Sackett and his wife Laura. Annie McIver from San Francisco, Margaret McIver and her husband, William Slavan, and Irene McIver, attended from Oakland. The funeral cortège drove from Crockett to Port Costa where the solemn Requiem High Mass was celebrated by the pastor, assisted by Father Andrew Carroll, John's intimate friend, and a young priest from the parish. Father Bandini spoke words of appreciation for the great service the departed gave to the churches in the towns of Crockett and Port Costa all the years as organist and choir director. He was always willing to assist in the work of the parishes, his golden voice added to the solemnity of the services. Alone he would sing and furnish the organ music for the Mass and Benediction. And on special occasions would have a trained choir to assist in the services.

A Dominican priest, who had known John for many years, paid a



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beautiful tribute to the worth of his friend and consoling words to the bereaved family. He spoke of his fine character as a man, as a practical Catholic, a musician who gave generously of his talents to the church, a teacher who year after year instructed the children under his care in loyalty and obedience to the laws of our country, and in many other ways an upstanding citizen whose loss will be keenly felt for many years. The Church of St. Patrick was crowded to the doors with friends and relatives. After Mass, the parade of cars formed and almost everyone in the church followed the remains to St. Joseph's cemetery, near the old California town of San Pablo, and while all circled the grave in that beautiful place of rest, with the warm sun shining down, the casket was laid in the grave, while Father Carroll recited the burial prayers. There John's grave will always be green, for it is hardly probable that frost or snow will ever cover the green blades of grass above the body of your beloved brother. He is at peace.

As I looked on the features of my dear cousin for the last time the morning of the funeral, I thought of you all and wished you could see him through my eyes, for I saw that he was not changed in appearance, his face was round and happy looking, his hair was dark and wavy as he used to always wear it. The years did not begin to turn it grey.

At some future time I will be pleased to tell you something about all the members of my family, whose second generation seem to keep growing with the passing of the years. I was glad to receive your letter and find it so interesting, especially about all the children. We were all so pleased to have you speak of each one, as it refreshed our memories about names. Ramona and her mother, (who is not getting good health) often talk about their visit to Kinkora and other parts of the island. Ramona was officially graduated last Sunday afternoon in our Municipal Auditorium, when 300 boys and girls received their diplomas from His Excellency, Archbishop Mitty. All high school graduates. About 10,000 persons were there to witness the ceremonies. Ramona is the last of our seven to go through high school. Irene McIver, a fine young girl, graduated from the College of the Holy Names with her B. A. degree.

Please remember me to all my cousins who still remember me and the new crop of children coming along with the passing of the years. I suppose you can keep up the attendance at Mass on Sundays as formerly.

With every good wish, and again sincere thanks for your fine newsy letter, I remain,  
Your loving cousin,  
Michael A. McIver