



Preserving, promoting, and developing Wellington North's unique cultural resources to build a vibrant community and a prosperous economy.

CULTURAL MOMENT FOR JANUARY CELEBRATES ROBERT & MARY SCOTT

Robert Scott was born in Ayrshire, Scotland in 1832 and immigrated to Canada in 1854 with his brother James after receiving a sizable inheritance. Robert and James purchased land in Proton and began farming and like most young men, they procured work off the farm during the off seasons of planting and harvest. They were both instrumental in completing roads from Mount Forest (Hwy 89) west to Clifford (County Road 1) and as well from Proton to Clifford.

After returning from a trip to Scotland in 1859, Robert brought with him a team of horses, wagon and harness and was hauling dry goods, hardware, and clothing from Guelph to Mount Forest. James opened a dry goods store. In 1865, Robert married Mary Ann Reid and shortly after formed the R. Scott & Co with his brother-in-law. They built a grocery store, creamery, icehouse and women's and men's department store all on the north end of Mount Forest. In 1875-76, Robert and Mary built a two-storey red brick house on the corner of Queen and John Streets where he could oversee his many businesses. The house added an addition along John Street as well as an *Italianate* tower at the Queen Street entrance as their family grew to include five children.



Photo taken, Jan 3, 2021

The European tradition of having painted scenes on the walls of homes was only for the rich and affluent. The Scott family commissioned travelling artists to come and paint lavish artwork on mostly the main entrance area. *“Opening the ground floor main door, visitors would have been struck by five unique hand-painted pictures with hand-rendered frames on green plaster. One painting depicts a Mediterranean style landscape with palm trees, mountains and a lake with a single figure and a sailboat. Another shows a landscape with a large villa near a semitropical waterfront. On the facing side of the stairwell are three paintings. The first depicts a rowboat race, with a Union Jack flag in the background; the next a Scotsman, with horse and dog beside a lake; a final painting depicts a cozy lodge with alpine trees on a cliff edge.”*



The actual date of these paintings is unknown but in 1975, fifteen layers of wallpaper were stripped off to expose them. This is one of only two houses in all of Wellington County with this rich cultural heritage. The Scott's are buried in the Mount Forest Cemetery and have left a lasting legacy to the town of Mount Forest.

Submitted by Bonny McDougall Wellington North Cultural Roundtable with information from Wellington County History, Volume 13.

Residence of Robert Scott, Mount Forest as it appears in the Topographical and Historical Atlas of Wellington County 1877.