

.... And So We Sojourn Together

This story is compiled by Larry R. Cowan with the help of many family relations both near and far who are as much a part of producing this anthology as me.

It is an ancestral and genealogical family record of Robert and Eliza Cowan whose families hail from Scotland and of their son William M. Cowan of Quebec City, QC; Huron County, Ontario, Canada and of Ransom County, North Dakota. Included are the families of McMichael, McMillan, Laidlaw, Carr, Nead, Van Horn, Donovan, Akre, Ovre, Bidne, Christiansen, Penfield, Clairmont, Bowen, Siems, Christensen and many others spread out through 23 U.S. states and 3 provinces of Canada.

It continues with a series of books that tell the stories of my family and it includes many genealogical records. It tells of the Cowan name through history from a variety of sources. The series concludes with a memoir of youth and some poetry and essays that help tell my story. The texts were pretty much completed in 1996 but there have been a few updates.

Thank you for coming along on the journey.

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And updated from time to time

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. . . And So We Sojourn Together

Begotten of a place I never have seen,
From long ago toils upon a road much forgotten;
You are my friend, my neighbor, my lover.
Let us hold hands, hold tight, don't let go;
For when it's time to go, it was good holding hands.

Ah, youth, reach out thy sovereign hand;
Hold tight to the ring; hold it high!
Flex your sinews and shout your song,
Dance in the meadow and dance on the sea,
And embrace her glory with all thy might!

From the depths of sorrow and the abyss of grief,
Comes the dawn of knowing the breadth of great joy.
Joy! Oh Joy! Catch the ring! Hold my hand!
What is joy but an opposite measure of grief;
For sorrow and joy meet in the Presence of God.

A collage of families across this broad this Earth;
Unique, diverse and remarkable;
From high desert sands and high mountain slopes,
To low windy coastlands and low fertile plains;
Join hands in a circle; we're one in this place.

Until one approaches the face of death's battle,
Courage is a shallow thing.
At the deathbed of one loved, or when faced by one's own;
Courage is not to lay fault or say who is to blame;
Courage is to say I forgive, I have loved, hold my hand.

Brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers,
Let us bear one another's burdens; bless; celebrate and delight.
Let us hold hands as we sojourn together.
Let us hold hands, hold tight, don't let go;
For when it's time to go, it was good holding hands.

Six verses on our walk through life

Larry Cowan, the winter of 1994 - 1995

Introduction

For everyone's life there is a story - - a tale that is meaningful and important; for in its fabric is woven the very fact of existence. But after a while that story is forgotten. Hopefully, I have preserved here for future folks some of the fabric of our heritage by telling stories about a few who have come before.

This work began on a long summer afternoon of 1972 when first I visited with my grandpa's nephew Dudley Cowan in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. I went to visit with him specifically to ask about our family history. We sat in the back yard and, over lemonade, he reminisced and told me story after story of years gone by. Many hours later when I got home I sat down and wrote down everything that he said. I was enthralled and so it began.

This book begins with an accounting of how the Cowan name came to be over the centuries and a description of the lands that comprise our roots. Our Cowan family story begins with Robert Cowan and Eliza Gunston[e] who are recorded to have come from Scotland and were residents of Quebec City when they were married there in 1833. It is then that I begin a specific account of some of the family and descendants of their son **William M. (Bill) Cowan** who was born Sep. 22, 1840 in Quebec and who died June 4, 1918 on his farm in Owego Township of North Dakota. I have no other record for Bills' parents and none of siblings but the record of his life and family is substantial.

Bill and his first wife Margaret McMichael began life together in 1866 at Seaforth in Huron County, Ontario and they later homesteaded at Highland Township near Sheldon in Ransom County of Dakota Territory. After Margaret died Bill married Della Carr whose family lived nearby and they then lived at Shenford for the balance of his life. Bill and Margaret both have roots in Scotland and Dell's roots are in England and we will examine some of their ancestry.

I estimate that at this time in 1995 there are about six hundred descendants of William M. Cowan and most of the earlier names are listed in this anthology. Included is a fairly complete genealogical record of William's first wife's family, the McMichaels of Dumfriesshire, Scotland which dates back to the late 1600's. I have listed also a record of the family of the wife of his son James - the John Johnson Akre family of Norway.

The stories and genealogical records are compiled from information that has been received in the mails and from conversations. It represents work and research done by several people. Mostly, my job has been to collect the information and put it together. It is far from complete and, I am quite sure, inaccurate in some instances. Please, if you see errors or corrections that need to be made or items you would like to see included, I will make the changes.

By far, the most interesting aspects of collecting a family record are the stories about the lives of people and I've tried to include many. These are stories of both of good times and difficult times; and of both joys and of sorrows. More importantly, however, these stories teach us about who we are and, I believe, give us some focus on the direction of our own lives for today and for the future as our grandchildren pass into the twenty-first and twenty-second centuries.

The stories of the people of our past all would be wonderful to tell. Unfortunately, however that cannot be the case and one wonders where their stories go. Indeed there is a place for them as acclaimed by one St. Augustine of Hippo in the 3rd century when he wrote, "O Good Omnipotent Lord, who cares for every one of us, as if you care for him

only; and so for all, as if they were but one!” Thank goodness Someone is keeping track!!
(See St. Matthew 10: 26 - 33 in your Bible.)

This anthology is dedicated to the children and young folks in our families who died before their time and I have recorded these children in the following pages. I am sure that I have missed some children’s names and for that I am sorry. As I become aware of these, the names will be acknowledged.

Acknowledgments

Above all, I want to thank my dear wife, Nancy Ellen Dornfeld, for being beside me; for your love and patience as I have endeavored over these many years in our family genealogical record. You are my treasure.

I thank all of the many persons who have contributed their stories, genealogies, photographs, maps and copies of certificates to make this anthology possible. For information regarding the McMichaels in Scotland, and the Cowan and McMichael families in Canada and in North Dakota: I thank Agnes Schroer of Eau Claire, Wisconsin; Dale McMichael (deceased) of Florida; Dennis Lloyd Cowan of Salem, Oregon; and Mabel McMichael of Walton, Ontario; and my sister, Mary Ann Jordan of Minneapolis.

For information about Jim and Inga Cowan, Robert and Anna Cowan, and of the Cowan family of North Dakota and of their children, I thank Lawrence W. (Dudley) Cowan (deceased) then of St. Louis Park, Minnesota; Dennis Lloyd Cowan of Salem, Oregon; Myrtle Peterson (deceased), formerly of South Minneapolis; Gary Cowan of Detroit, Michigan; Paul Nead of Independence, Missouri, Madelyn Dodd of Desert Hot Springs, California; and Doris Randleman of Toledo, Oregon. Dennis’ work has been particularly helpful in pulling this together.

I thank Beverly Christiansen of Mercer, North Dakota, and Pat Mohrbacher of Denver, Colorado for information about the Akre, Ovre and Christensen families; Sylvia Akre of Decorah, Iowa, Bobbe Akre of Coralville, Iowa and Margaret Akre Pearson of San Leandro, California for information on the Akre families; and of course my mother, Esther M. Cowan with whom I’ve had many conversations; and many others.

For the stories of my parents, Walter and Esther Cowan, I particularly want to thank my mother for our many conversations over the recent years; for the stories which she has shared; and for allowing me to read through and review her papers and letters. One of things for which I feel particularly privileged is the opportunity I’ve had in reviewing these papers to understand some degree of the grief that my father and mother felt on losing children Shirley, Betty, and Wayne; and to feel, for the first time, some of that grief.

IN MEMORIAM

1700's

<i>Elspie McCall</i>	1766 - 1773	7 years
Dtr of John McCall and Agnes McMichael Eastside Farm, Kirkconnel, Dumfriesshire		
<i>Janet McCall</i>	1760 - 1784	24 years
Dtr of John McCall and Agnes McMichael, Eastside Farm, Kirkconnel, Dumfriesshire		
<i>Elizabeth McMichael</i>	1780 - 1802	22 years
Daughter of Thomas McMichael and Margaret Hyslop, New Cumnock, Ayr, Scotland.		
<i>James Ritchie</i>	1786 - 1791	5 Years
Daughter of Gilbert Ritchie and Margaret McCall, Eastside Farm, Kirkconnel, Dumfriesshire		
<i>Margaret McMichael</i>	1787 - 1788	10 months
Daughter of Thomas McMichael and Margaret Hyslop New Cumnock, Ayr, Scotland.		
<i>Thomas Ritchie</i>	1790 - 1791	One year
Daughter of Gilbert Ritchie and Margaret McCall, Eastside Farm, Kirkconnel, Dumfriesshire		

1800

<i>Margaret McMichael</i>	1819 - 1827	8 years
Daughter of Robert and Grizel McMichael, Kirkconnel, Dumfriesshire, Scotland		
<i>Gilbert Ritchie</i>	1840 - 1856	Age 16
Son of Thomas Ritchie and Mary Thompson, Eastside Farm, Kirkconnel, Dumfriesshire		
<i>Catherine Ritchie</i> twin	1849 - 1859	age 10
Daughter of Gilbert Ritchie and Sarah Dalziel Eastside Farm, Kirkconnel, Dumfriesshire		
<i>Grizel McMillan</i>	1851 - 1861	10 years
Daughter of John and Janet (McMichael) McMillan, McKillop Twp, Huron County, Ontario		
<i>Mary McMillan</i>	1853 - 1873	20 years
Daughter of John and Janet (McMichael) McMillan, McKillop Twp, Huron County, Ontario		
<i>Agnes McMillan</i>	1855 - 1875	20 years
Daughter of John and Janet (McMichael) McMillan, McKillop Twp, Huron County, Ontario		
<i>Walter McMillan</i>	1856 - 1885	29 years
Son of John and Janet (McMichael) McMillan, McKillop Twp, Huron County, Ontario		
<i>John McMillan</i>	1860 - 1877	17 years
Son of John and Janet (McMichael) McMillan, McKillop Twp, Huron County, Ontario		
<i>Thomas Cowan</i>	ca. 1874 - 1915?	41 years?
Son of William M. and Margaret Cowan, Owego Township, North Dakota		

<i>Otto Christensen</i>	ca. 1876 - 1897	21 years
Son of Matthew and Johanna (Langer) Christensen, Wells, Minnesota		
<i>Christine Pauline Akre</i>	1882 - 1889	7 years
Daughter of John and Martha Akre, Highlandville, Iowa		
<i>Victor Dale</i>	ca. 1885 - 1904	19 years
Son of John and Mary (McMichael) Dale, Huron County, Ontario		
<i>William (Billy) Surname unknown</i>	ca. 1887 - 1889	2 years?
Son of Johan Martin ___ and his wife Inger Akre ___. Johan died same year? ND		
<i>Jeanette Rachel Grieve</i>	1888 - 1911	23 years
Daughter of William Grieve and Elizabeth McMichael, Seaforth, ONT		
<i>Lynne Elizabeth Cowan</i>	1889 - 1907	18 years
Daughter of William M. and Della Cowan, Owego Twp., North Dakota		
<i>Given name unknown Cowan</i>	189x - 189x	___ years
Child of William M. and Della Cowan, Owego Twp., North Dakota		
<i>Given name unknown Wiltse</i>	ca. 1890	at birth
Son of Milton and Polly (McMichael) Wiltse, Ontario, Canada		
<i>Alexander Clapperton</i>	1893	2 months
Son of William and Jane McMichael Clapperton, Huron County, Ontario		
<i>William A. (Willie) Cowan</i>	1893 - 1913	19 years
Son of William J. (Jim) and Inga Akre Cowan, Enderlin, North Dakota		
<i>Margaret Ann Nead</i>	1895 - 1896	39 days
Daughter of Ira and Elizabeth (Lizzie) Nead, Sheldon, North Dakota		
<i>Mabel Idella Ovre</i>	1896 - 1897	3 months
Daughter of Krogh and Hattie Ovre, Winneshiek County, Iowa		
<i>James Lawrence Johnson Akre</i>	1896 - 1899	34 mos.
Son of Martin and Lena Akre, Winneshiek County, Iowa		
<i>John Maurice Ovre</i>	1898 - 1899	8 months
Son of Krogh and Hattie Ovre, Winneshiek County, Iowa		

1900's

<i>Carl Zahradka</i>	1902 - 1905	3 years
Son of Anthony and Mary Zahradka, Minneapolis, Minnesota		
<i>Perry Johnsen Akre</i>	1903 - 1903	5 weeks
Son of Martin and Lena Akre, Winneshiek County, Iowa		
<i>Virginia Cowan</i>	1903 - 1918	15 years

Daughter of Robert A. and Anna Donovan Cowan, Douglas, North Dakota

Marion McMichael 1918 - 1920 2 years

Daughter of Thomas E. and Amanda McMichael, Wahpeton, N. Dak

Name unknown 1912 - 1919 7 years

Girl in care of Walter and Grace Nead Zimmerman, Granville, North Dakota

Theodore Harry Wassenberg 1919 - 1919 9 days

Son of Martin and Ingeborg (Akre) Wassenberg, McClusky, North Dakota

Given name unknown Zimmerman 1919 - 1919 3 days

Child of Walter and Grace Nead Zimmerman, Granville, North Dakota

John Morris Wassenberg 1919 - 1946 27 years

Son of Martin and Ingeborg (Akre) Wassenberg, Big Piney, Wyoming

Clifford H. Bowen, Jr. 1922 - 1923 8 months

Son of Clifford H. and ____ Bowen, Minneapolis, MN

Annie Grieve 1924 - 1924 1 day

Daughter of William Grieve and Annie Chesley, Niagara Falls, Welland ONT

Shirley Diane Cowan 1929 - 1933 3 ½ yrs

Daughter of Walter O. and Esther M. Cowan, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Lew Ann Roos 1930 - 1931 11 months

Daughter of Herbert and Louise Roos, Mankato, Minnesota

Wayne Owen Cowan 1934 - 1939 5 years

Son of Walter and Esther Cowan, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Betty Diane Cowan 1937 - 1938 17 mos.

Daughter of Walter and Esther Cowan, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Robert Clyde Hausken 1945 - 1966 21 years

Son of Clyde Olaf and Lois (McMichael) Hausken, [place?]

Linda Cowan ca. 1948 - 1958 10 years

Daughter of Wallace Richard (Dickie) Gerald Cowan, Long Beach, CA

Robert Cowan 1953 - 1982 28 years

Son of Walter and Shirley Cowan, Brooklyn Park, Minnesota

Davey Lawrence Cronin 1957 - 1978 21 years

Son of Larry and Mary Lou Cronin, Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Jon Morris Wassenberg 1958 - 1969 10 years

Son of Donald and June Wassenberg, Big Piney, Wyoming

Donald Roy II "Buzz" Wassenberg 1959 - 1986 27 years

Son of Donald and June Wassenberg, Big Piney, Wyoming

Mark Lee Cowan 1961 - 1983 22 years

Son of Wallace Richard (Dickie) and Geraldine Cowan, Long Beach, California

David John Argent 1971 - 1971 7 months

Son of Buzz and Sandra Lee Argent, Moorhead, Minnesota

Arafel _____ Osteroos _____ - 1987 ? years

Child of Kimble and Marcia Osteroos, Longmont, Colorado

Dillan Thomas Merges 1990 - 1990 1 day

Son of Michael and Donna Lyn (Clairmont) Merges, Los Angeles

Kenneth Burk 1990 - 1992 18 months

Son of Richard and Angela Rose Belcher (Cowan) Burk, Port Orchard, WA

Buried somewhere 'neath the brown earth, someone cherished you,
someone loved you long ago. You've gone to Jesus to play and romp, to
giggle and laugh. You look down on us and wonder, 'It's such fun - You
could laugh, too!' Larry R. Cowan

Some people brought children to Jesus for him to place his hands on
them and to pray for them, but the disciples scolded the people. Jesus
said, 'Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the
Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these.

Gospel of St. Matthew 19: 13 - 14

The Auld Kirk-Yard

Nae dreams disturb their sleep
In the auld kirk-yard;

They hear nae kindred weep
In the auld kirk-yard.

The sire, with silver hair,
The mother's heart of care,

The young, the gay, the fair,
Croud the auld kirk-yard

So live that ye may lie
In the auld kirk-yard,

Wi' a passport to the sky
Frae the auld kirk-yard;

That when thy sand is run,
And life's weary warfare done

Ye may sing o' victory won
Where there's nae kirk-yard.

Marion Paul Aird - 1846 Kilmarnock, Airshire
The Home of the Heart, and Other Poems
Two of its eighteen verses - Public Domain

Passages

As a pebble dropped in a nearby brook or faraway sea
Ripples in the water for a moment;
Like a wildflower blossoms on a nearby glade or faraway
Mountain and blows in the wind for a while;
Each of us is a small bit of history unfolding . . .
We serve in some small way for a time for a few.
A cup of water, the binding of another's wounds,
A kind word, a story of hope:
This is our treasure, this is our joy.
This is surely the example of Christ, our Lord.

Based on Romans 12: 9 - 13

Larry Cowan, (1940 - _____)

1992, Oakdale, MN

A Great-grandson of William M. Cowan

Legacy

I leave no legacy, no remembrance of me.
Of a life in a time that was, no monument can tell.
Like a moment lost in a dream,
I am soon forgotten.
The gold from this life I must leave behind.
What then? Is there any I can keep?
Is it all forgotten? Is it all for naught?
What token can I keep as a remembrance of me?
It is only the road that others will take
Because I was there.
The monument I leave is the difference in others;
Whether for good or for ill.
So to have mattered - to have counted,
To have made a difference in someone's life
Is the only gold that we take from this Earth.

Larry Cowan, 1989

Life's Gifts

When I grow gray and men shall say to me,
"What was the worth of living, truly told?
Lo! Thou hast lived thy life out; thou art old;
Thou hast gathered fruit from many a green-leaved tree,
And kissed love's lips by many a summer sea,
And twined soft hands in locks of shining gold,
But all thy days are dead days now, behold!
Life passes onward, - what is life to thee?"

Then I will answer, - as thy gracious eyes,
Love, gleam upon me from dim far off skies, -
"Life had its endless deathless charm, - and still
That charm weaves rapture round me at my will,
Life has its glory, - for I have seen thee;
And roses, and June sunsets, - and the sea."

George Barlow 1847-1913

Reprinted from the collection Because I Love You

Edited by Anna E. Mack

Lee and Shepard, Publishers. Boston 1894

Originally published as a collection of poems by George Barlow

FROM DAWN TO SUNSET

Book I The Song of Youth

Book II The Song of Manhood and

Book III The Song of Riper Manhood

By Swan Sonnenschein and Co., Pub. London, 1890

Not in Copyright

From Enoch Arden

Woman, disturb me not now at the last,
But let me hold my purpose till I die,
Sit down again; mark me and understand,
While I have power to speak. I charge you now
When you shall see her tell her that I died
Blessing her, praying for her, loving her
Save for the bar between us, loving her
As when she laid her head beside my own.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Published 1864, Public Domain

Together

They were young and glad together
In the dawn of life's first May,
When in bright and sunny weather
Sang the birds from every spray.
Clear the heaven shone out above them;
Blue and radiant were the skies;
All things living seemed to love them;
And the spring gleamed in her eyes.
Through life's summer still together,
Hand in hand and heart to heart,
They have borne the sultry weather
And have watched the days depart.
Still she is to him the maiden
Who stepped daintily of old
Through the grass, her apron laden
With bright buttercups of gold.
Still together, still together,
They will face autumn hours;
In the grim November weather

Love will strew their path with flowers.
For their love has ever brightened
Since the first long loving day,
And their happiness has heightened,
Though their hair is growing gray!

George Barlow

Reprinted from the collection

Because I Love You

Edited by Anna E. Mack

Lee and Shepard, Publishers.

Boston 1894

My Cross

His cross was but a common thing of cypress wood upon a tired hill.
Desolate, it stood, and yet its arms have reached from sea to sea,
Arms so strong it has set man free and love so bright, burning long ago,
Changed the cross to gold with its glow.
My cross, sometimes is a weary thing too hard to bear.
A tiny ugly thing, it floods my life in helpless care,
But with his love, I, Too, will make that cross of gold,
And pour the dark, tear stained wood into his mold.
My cross can never stretch its arms from sea to sea,
But it can raise my heart to God and set me free.

By Robert A. Cowan, 1879 - 1955

*Third child of William M and Margaret (McMichael) Cowan b. April 21, 1879
Seaforth, Ontario, Married Anna Donovan at Lisbon, North Dak., Farmer, Rural
U.S. Mail carrier at Douglas, North Dak. Bob died March 4, 1955, Douglas, ND at
age 75.*

Church Yards

"They tasted of life's bitter cup;
Refused to drink the potion up.
They turned their little heads aside,
Disgusted with the taste and died."

Nevern Churchyard, Wales.

" _____,

Since the torch is out,
Lie down and stray no farther."

Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Mass.

"Blessed are they who look
on graves
And still believe none
dead."

*Mt. Auburn Cemetery,
Cambridge, Mass.*

"This is the field and acre of
our God;
This is the place where
human harvests grow."

Shakespeare

"Time hath a wallet at his
back
Wherein he puts alms for
oblivion."

Shakespeare

One Generation Passes Away and Another Generation Comes Along

From Holy Scripture, the words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem

The Problem: What profit hath a man of all his labour which he has taketh under the sun? One generation paseth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever. Ecclesiastes 1: 3 - 4

To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which has been planted; a time to break down and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

Ecclesiastes 3: 1 - 2, & 4

The Solution: He hath made everything beautiful in his time: Also He hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. I know that there is no good in them but for a man to rejoice and to do good in his life. And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God. Ecclesiastes 3: 11 - 13

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Ecclesiastes 11: 9

The Reason: Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments - - For this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil. Ecclesiastes 12: 13 - 14

Scripture From the Bible of Emma Christensen,

b. Feb. 14, 1886, Blue Earth County, Minn.

(see On Third Street, Book 07, p. 358 1E-5)

The inscription at the front reads,

"Presented to Emma Christiansen, Oct 19, 1902

For learning the twenty-third Psalm."

Pub. The American Bible Society, New York. 1902

The Problem, the Solution, the Reason - Larry Cowan, 1988

