



**ROADHOUSE/MELLOW  
FAMILY REUNION 2002**

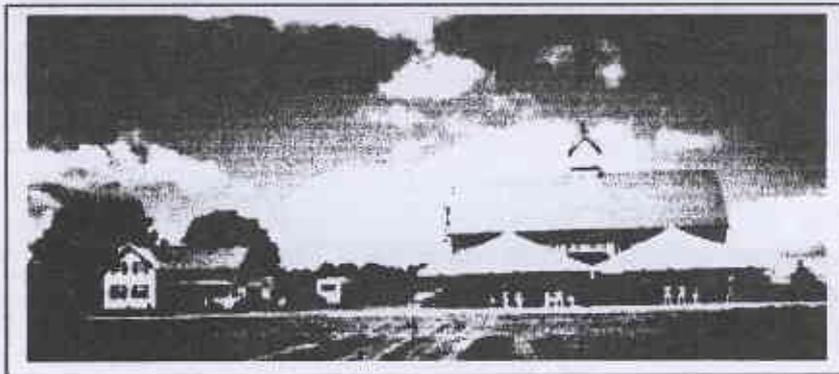
*Pleasant Ridge Farm*

**GARY DICKEY**

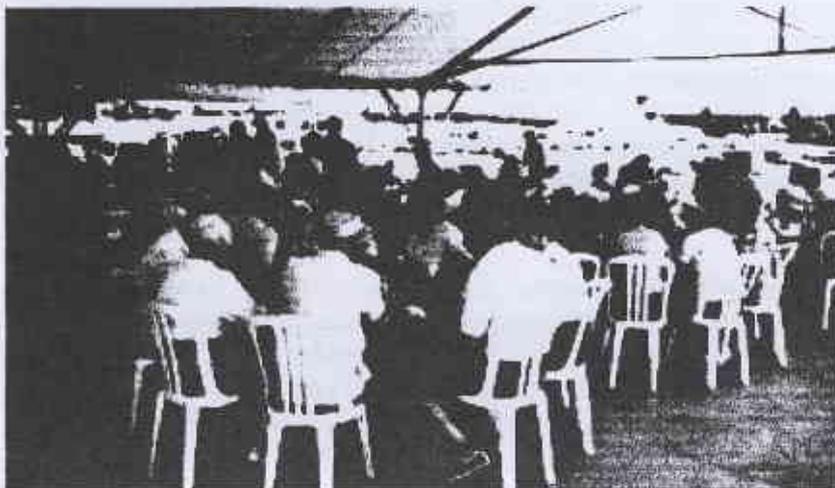
**CANOGA PARK, CALIFORNIA**

Elizabeth Roadhouse and Thomas Briggs  
Julia Ann Briggs and John White

I was able to attend the Roadhouse-Mellow Reunion in 2002, just north of Toronto. It met at the Ralph Monkman farm that was the original property of William Roadhouse when he came to the County in 1819. The following picture shows the restored barn and farmhouse, now belonging to Ralph Monkman.



It was a wonderful reunion and some 230 people attended over the three days. It was a finely organized affair and went off smoothly and without a hitch that I could see. Everyone was congenial and it was marvelous to see the restored barn and house and the grounds which have been well taken care of once again. Tami and I received the recognition of attending the reunion from the furthest distance away, some 2,300 miles. Some of the people gathered for dinner during the Reunion are seen in the next picture underneath the tents set up for the event:



On 4 August 2002, the final day of the Reunion, I lead a service of rededication for the new cairn and a brief worship service. Sharing a few words were Richard Whitehead, a Regional counselor and Nancy Stewart, Acting Mayor and Counselor. I also introduced Mr. Walter Bessner, the stone mason who erected the new cairn. Following a brief message, I rededicated the cairn to the memory of our Roadhouse forebears.



As the third great grandson of *William Roadhouse*, based on the message of St. Luke 19:37-41, I preached on "*If These Stones Could Talk*." That message follows:

"Wouldn't it be amazing if these stones could talk? As the Scripture tells us it is hard to keep the very stones silent, when in the sight of the Living Christ, His majesty must needs be proclaimed. But what of these ancient stones by which we gather here today? If these stones could talk, what stories they could tell. What emotions they might portray: the joys, sorrows, tears, and laughter of those who have gone on before us. I suppose this is what brings many of us here today to have this wonderful time together over the last three days.

I myself came some 2200 miles to be a part of this historic gathering on the same land that our forebears came to in 1820, 182 years ago! Many of us took tours of the area, enjoyed the company with cousins we have never met, and received the warm and gracious hospitality of Ralph & Earlene Monkman and the Reunion Planning Committee and hard work of Millie and Tom Clark and Dave and Dorothy Munro. This was a wonderful affair.

But what has brought us to this place today? Surely it is these stones! But more than these stones, what has brought us here today is the same blood we share, the same history we hold, and the same forebears we have in common. When William Roadhouse and Elizabeth Crissey and their family made the difficult journey from Yorkshire to Canada, they could not have envisioned the hardships they would face. Not only the difficult ship journey itself, but trying to find their new property, fighting against cold, hunger, and, at that time, a forest wilderness, as well as trying to make this place a new home. Divorced from upbringing, roots, and familiarity, they were hearty pioneers in the very best sense of that word. Leaving loved ones and family behind, they took the risk to achieve something better for themselves. William Roadhouse left Yorkshire, England with but his Bible and his Methodist Conference Book from 1814 (which he gave to his daughter who gave it to her family and they to their family and finally to me and which I still possess and is now 188 years old). William Roadhouse came to the New World with hope in his heart to start a new life—on this very ground; in these very ridges about us. And they and their loved ones were buried in this very same cemetery in which we now stand. If only these stones could talk.

I dare say our forebears did things none of us could have done ourselves. They were of sturdy stock, hearty soul, and filled with the love of God and knowledge sure and strong of their

salvation. They started Methodist chapels here as they did in England and of course, began some of the first Methodist burying grounds both in the old country and the New World. Most of these stones at this Roadhouse cairn were cut and incised by our Roadhouse forebears. Wouldn't it be something if these stones could speak out to us about some of those mysteries of our pasts we all waited too long to ask the right person about?

If only these stones could talk!! What a story they could tell. And so we gather here today in sight of these stones and in this place—to dedicate this cairn and rededicate this cemetery to the memory and to the lives of those who stood here before us 183 years ago, and because of them we now are here. The following words, written by my cousin, Edna Jaques, known as the Poetess of Saskatchewan, speak about her great-grandfather, John Jaques, who lived and died in the little town of Salem down near Lake Ontario. I think it speaks of the reason we all took the time to be here for this weekend:

“Great-grandfather”

“He has no place or part in this today,  
His very bones are dust, his heart is clay,  
And yet we follow little paths he laid,  
Walk in and out through sturdy doors he made,

His hands have crumbled down to golden soil  
And yet we reap the harvests of his toil,  
The trees he planted by the carriage shed,  
Blossom and bear their apples warm and red.

His tired feet have long since found their rest,  
And yet the part of home we love the best,  
Are little fields he plowed and worked alone,  
The pasture that he cleared of stump and stone.  
The well he dug and curbed with careful hand,  
Still yields its clear sweet water from the land,  
Bubbling up from deep springs of earth,

Old as the ancient hills ... yet new birth.  
He does not die ... but somehow in the sun  
Forever lives the good that he has done -  
The furrowed field ... the budding apple tree,  
Bearing its fruit for children yet to be.”

Let us therefore dedicate this place to the memory, honour, and faithfulness of our Roadhouse forebears. And though these stones cannot talk, may each of us talk often about this weekend and go forth back into the world to be more faithful in everything we do in life and rededicate ourselves, heart and soul, to God. Amen.”

