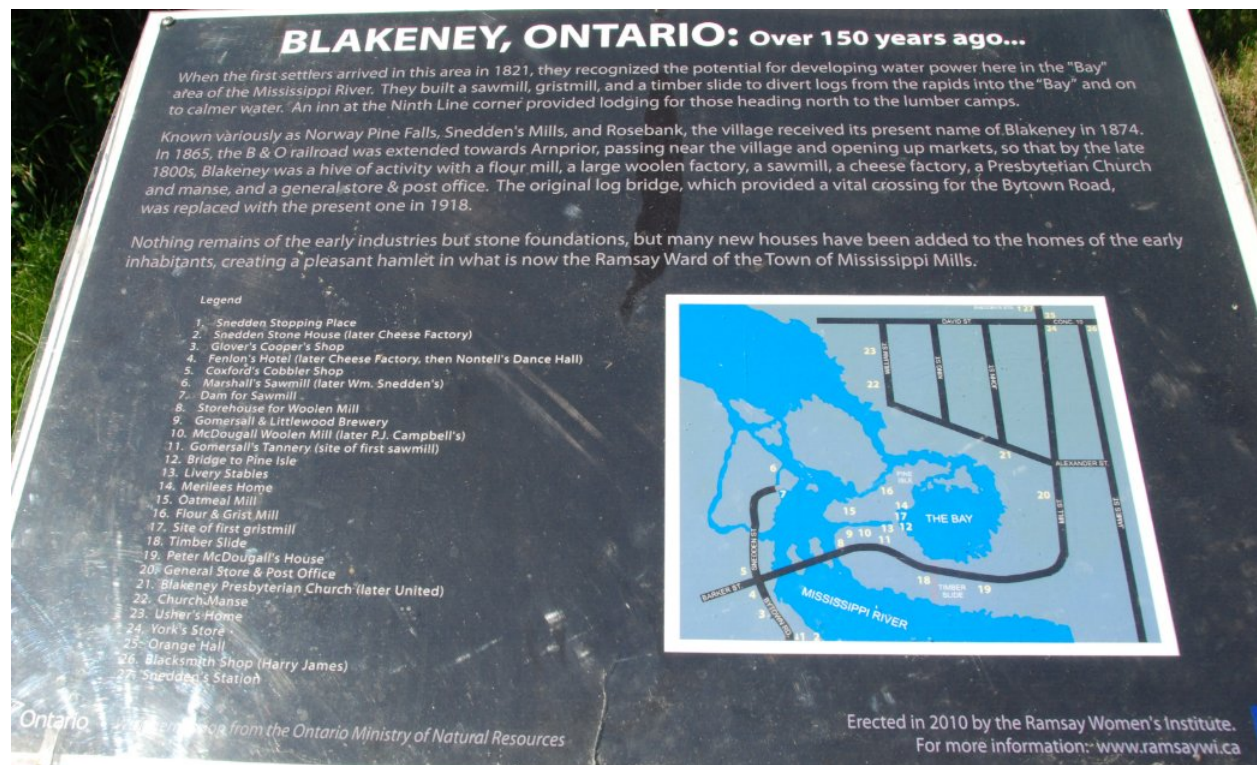


Merilees Home named on the Blakeney Plaque

June 2017

By Ginny Merrilees Frederick

In July, 2017, The Merrilees clan of Lancaster NY is planning to have a reunion of the children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of William Merrilees and Jeanette Church Merrilees. I thought it would be a great opportunity to share some family history with the younger generation. Using much of the information I had from our Merrilees Clan meeting in Edinburgh in 1998, I began to pull some facts together.



In researching the birthplace of our father, William H Merrilees, M.D. in Blakeney, Ontario, Canada in 1918, I came across a photo of this plaque erected by the Ramsey Women's Institute in 2010.

The plaque purports to show the homesites of the early settlers seemingly from the mid 1800's. The plaque lists, at #14, the Merilees Home.

We knew our grandfather, the Rev. Dr. William Merrilees (1887-1962), son of Robert Merrilees and Jane Brown, had immigrated from Scotland to Canada in 1907 and then attended Presbyterian College in Montreal. His mother and siblings joined him in 1908 and the story handed down was that they were "strangers in a strange land" knowing of no other relatives or friends before their arrival in Canada. My father's cousin also wrote:

"After graduation from Presbyterian college in 1912, [Uncle] Willie accepted the call to the Presbyterian Church in Altmonte, ON." (Altmonte is 6.2 km or 4 miles from Blakeney)

Is it possible that the Merilees home noted on the plaque refers to a home our grandfather lived in? It seems to be the wrong timeframe but it would be a great coincidence that 2 Merrilees families settled in the same town in Canada without knowing of each other.

I have written to the Women's Institute in Ramsey who erected the plaque to see if they have more information on the Merilees home and await their reply. But I am wondering if anyone in the Clan knows of a Merilees who lived in Blakeney ,Ontario, Canada in the mid to late 1800's.

I welcome any input: Ginny Merrilees Frederick at glfred@gmail.com.