

CULTURAL MOMENT FOR JULY 22, 2024 CELEBRATING CHARLES MCKELLAR



With the current renovations to the entrance of the Mount Forest Cemetery, it's appropriate to remember someone who was dedicated to the cemetery's upkeep.

Charles Vincent McKellar was born on March 14, 1885, in Egremont Township to parents Isabella and Neil McKellar. His brother, William, was seven years older, and his sister Cora, who died in infancy, was five years younger. There were also a couple of older siblings.

In 1921, he married Mabel Gertrude Wells in Welland, Ontario, and they had one son, Frederic M. McKellar born in 1923.

An article in Homer VIII magazine, quoted one of his former teachers, Frances Galbraith. She advised that Charlie was a "very artistic and clever paperhanger" who lived on Elgin Street in Mount Forest. Homer had published a poem titled "Just A-Wondering" written by Charlie. Apparently, he liked to write poetry, did so when taking a break from paper hanging, and it was not uncommon for him to place the poems behind the wallpaper. This particular poem was written in 1951 and was discovered 30 years later by Stephen and Susan Westmore, who lived at Queen and Dublin Streets.

He was also talented at skating. The Tom Ellis skating rink was across from his home, and he entertained other skaters with his "wonderful figures."

On a more serious note, Charlie, as he was known, was a chairman of the Mount Forest Cemetery Board and a long-time custodian of the cemetery, member of the Hospital Board, and a member of the Mount Forest United Church.

Charlie died at the age of 73 on March 4, 1959. His only son, Fred, died in January 2000 but did not have any offspring. Both Charles and his wife, and their son and his wife are buried in this cemetery.



Just inside the main gate to the cemetery, there is a flowerbed and plaque to the dedication of Charles V. McKellar. Over the years, the walls of the flowerbed have deteriorated. As part of the renovations to the cemetery entrance, the flowerbed will also be refurbished. The upper tier will be removed, and the plaque restored.

An attempt was made to contact any family member through Ancestry explaining the condition of the memorial and permission to update it. Charles' sister's family were the closest relatives, but all have passed. (Not a real happy ending)