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# Heritage Property Registration Report and Recommendation



The McCurdy Creek House  
**Upper Onslow**

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May 20, 2026



**Report & Recommendation**  
**Heritage Property Designation Application**  
**The McCurdy Creek House, Upper Onslow, N.S.**

**Application:**

Ulrich vom Hagen, owner of the McCurdy Creek House since July of 2024, has made application to the Municipality of Colchester to have this house designated as a *Municipal Heritage Property* (refer to Appendix 1). The house is located at 8 Old Tatamagouche Road in the community of Upper Onslow. (refer to Appendix 2).

**Building History and Characteristics:**

The McCurdy Creek House has a long history in the Upper Onslow area with the home said to be around 240 years old, according to research done by Mr. vom Hagen, based on family history and a physical inspection of the building.



*McCurdy Creek House, rear view*

Style-wise, it is a simple vernacular neo-classical house, built by the McCurdy family. It is a one and one-half storey timber-frame structure, with wood clapboard siding and trim, and a steep gabled roof, clad with asphalt. It has a balanced, symmetrical front façade with four, 1/1 plain single sash windows with a central entrance with a modest entry projection. The house has a notable plain and conservative, practical appearance with little decorative trim and simple, rectangular massing. Inside, there is a low second storey wall height, and the bedrooms are tucked beneath the steep roof slopes.

There are some interesting features and areas inside the house, such as these views of the main floor, second floor rooms, basement and staircase (photos provided by the applicant). The building remains in good condition structurally, and they are committed to restoring it.



*McCurdy Creek House, main floor*

It is located in a prominent part of Onslow and the applicant notes that its large massing and position on the hill is immediately striking to motorists driving by, heading to Bible Hill. The house overlooks the fields and salt marshes leading to the Salmon River. The McCurdy Brook forms the eastern boundary of this property, as it flows toward the river.



*McCurdy Creek House, staircase and second floor and fireplace bases in the basement.*



Local historian and author Joseph Ballard has been in the house at the invitation of the applicant and is hoping to be able to date the age of the house more accurately by the tree rings in the logs in the fireplace bases, as there is a national tree ring data base available. Using tree rings is considered one of the most accurate ways to date early buildings. He noted that the chimney base is a singular work of much marvel to him as well, due to the construction technique. Often in 17th or 18th-century homes, massive chimneys were built on a "crib" or foundation, sometimes made of timbers or large, hand-hewn logs, which were then infilled with stone and mortar.

**Its Role in the Community:**

Mr. Ballard examined reference books such as Thomas Miller's Historical and Genealogical Record of the First Settlers of Colchester County and Israel Longworth's History of the Township of Onslow, Nova Scotia, and found much reference to the McCurdy name but found nothing specifically connected with the house. Mr. vom Hagen noted in his application that the McCurdy family were first associated with the arrival of the Ulster Scots as part of the settlement of Colchester County, post Acadian deportation and later were associated with the Presbyterian Church, Provincial Executive Council. The family was strongly affiliated with this church, which became deeply embedded in the region. The McCurdys became prominent in Nova Scotian politics and business over the following generations. Notable figures included descendants who served in high positions, such as the Honourable David McCurdy, with several descendants of the Nova Scotia McCurdys listed in historical genealogical records

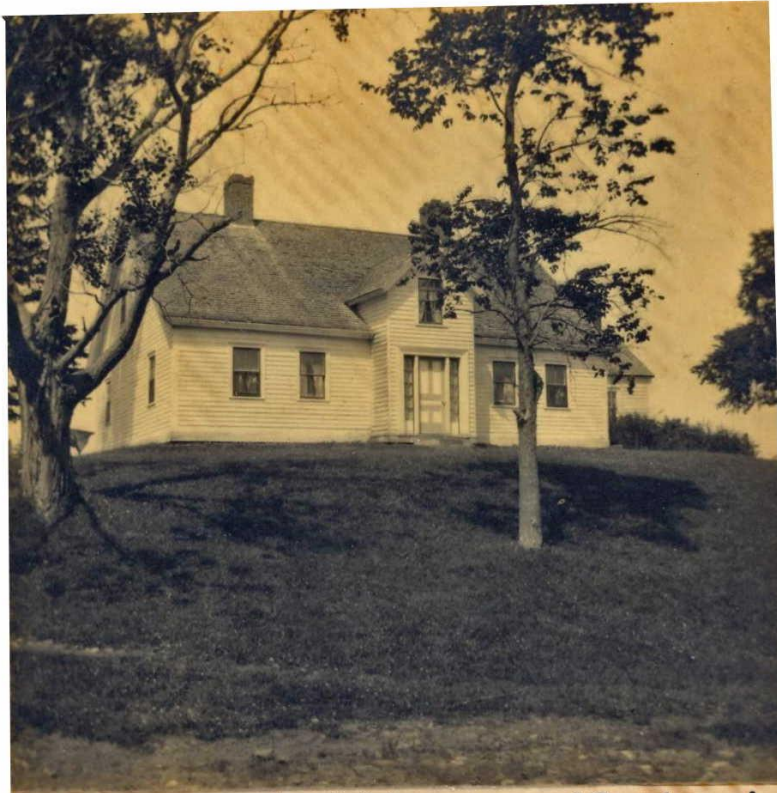
**Recommendation:**

The McCurdy Creek House forms a significant part of the history of Onslow and has been a solid and reliable landmark for generations. Through the ongoing diligent restoration efforts of the current owners, the house will remain part of Colchester County for future generations. Staff supports the request to designate the McCurdy Creek House as a Municipal Heritage Property.

Respectfully submitted,



Pam Macintosh, LPP, MCIP  
Manager, Planning Services



Grandma Archibald's grandfather's  
(Daniel McCurdy's) house overlooking  
the Salmon River, Onslow, N.S.

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*McCurdy Creek House, undated photo of front view*

## Appendices

Appendix 1.....Application form

Appendix 2.....Location Map

Appendix 3..... Additional Photographs and information

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**TO:** Mayor and Council  
**FROM:** Pam Macintosh, Manager of Planning Services  
**SUBJECT:** Municipal Heritage Property Designation application by Ulrich vom Hagen, owner of 8 Old Tatamagouche Road, Upper Onslow, PID 20106803  
**DATE:** March 26, 2026

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Please find attached an online application by Ulrich vom Hagen, owner of 8 Old Tatamagouche Road, Upper Onslow, for your consideration. The request is designate this property, the McCurdy Creek House, as a Municipal Heritage Property.



## **ONLINE APPLICATION, February 2026:**

McCurdy Creek House completed the heritage application form

Ulrich vom Hagen has completed the Application to Register a Heritage Property form.

Name of Property: McCurdy Creek House

Location: Upper Onslow

Present Owner: Ulrich vom Hagen

Action Requested by: Ulrich vom Hagen

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Age of Property: ca. 240

Condition: Good

Estimation or Source: Family history and physical inspection of building

Association with Individual(s):

Presbyterian Church, Provincial Executive Council,

Organization(s):

Presbyterian Church, Provincial Executive Council,

Historic Event(s):

Arrival of the Ulster Scotts, settlement of Colchester County post Acadian deportation

### **Architecture (if applicable)**

Type of construction: timber frame

Architect: n/a

Builder: McCurdy family

### **Landmark**

Landmark Information

It is located above McCurdy Creek on a small hill facing the salt marsh. The large massing of the house and position on the hill is immediately striking to motorists driving on the no 2 Highway heading towards Bible Hill.

### **Additional Information**

Additional information about Property:

The house seems to have had little attention paid to it in the published historical record.

**Application Preparer**

Application Prepared by: Ulrich vom Hagen

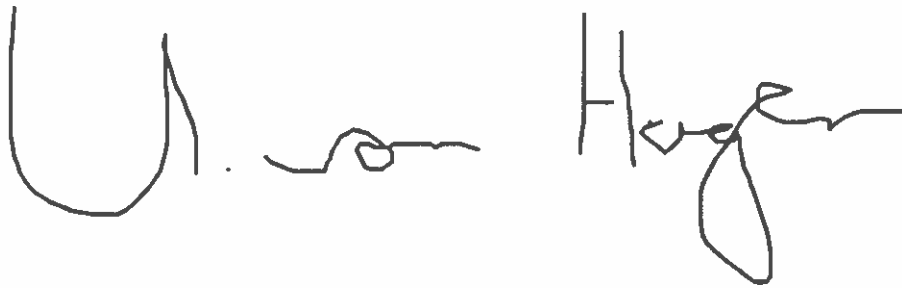
Address: 8 Old Tatamagouche Road

Phone (w): 9022211832

Phone (H):

Email: ulrich.vomhagen@gmail.com

Date: 08-02-2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ulrich vom Hagen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large "U" at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke for the "om" part.



20106803

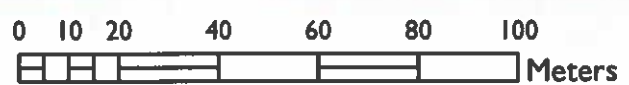
Old Tatamagouche Rd S

Crab Apple Lane

Onslow Rd

Greystone Lane

Service Nova Scotia







Old Tctamagouche Rd S

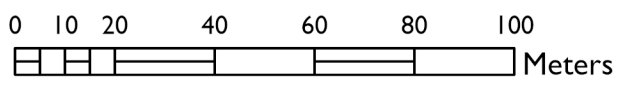
Crab Apple Lane

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Onslow Rd

Greystone Lane

Service Nova Scotia



**A CHAPTER**  
**IN THE**  
**HISTORY OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ONSLOW, NOVA SCOTIA.**

BY **ISRAEL LONGWORTH, C. C., TRUST.**

**I**N the early history of Nova Scotia it was customary to call new settlements after men of note, in the civil and military service of Great Britain. In accordance with this practice it is believed that the government of the day named the Township of Onslow in honor of Arthur Onslow, an English statesman, who was born in 1691; speaker of the Commons from January 1737 to 1764; pensioned in 1761; died 17th February, 1768; and after whom a county, and shire-town, known as Onslow Court House, in North Carolina, had been called.

The erection of the township was ordered by Governor Lawrence in Council, 24th July, 1759, though the grant did not pass the great seal of the province till the time of Lord William Campbell. The formation took place upon the application of Joseph Scott and Daniel Knowlton for themselves and fifty others, of the Massachusetts Bay, for a tract of land at Cobequid. Several were of the Fort Cumberland expedition of the previous year, and were attracted to the province from what they had seen of it, and in consequence of Governor Lawrence's proclamation<sup>\*</sup> for settling the townships. The fifty-two proposed grantees, with their families, were represented to number three hundred and nine souls. A grant of fifty-two shares or rights in the township to these persons passed the Governor-in-Council, 26th July, 1759.

The township was stated as being at the head of Cobequid Basin, to extend upon the north side of said Basin, and to run westerly six miles; from thence northerly about twelve miles; thence easterly about twelve miles; and thence southerly twelve miles; and thence to Cobequid Basin six miles. All to be laid out on the north side of Cobequid River.

<sup>\*</sup> Governor Lawrence issued two proclamations for settling the Townships. The first in October, 1759; the second in January, 1761. (See Murdoch's History of Nova Scotia, Vol. II., page 283.)

and included the names of the grantees, and attlers, directing that each have forty days notice of division to be made before two justices of the peace on the oaths of twelve men of the county of Halifax, after hearing all of the evidence of ownership of proprietors. The justices who acted were Eliakim Tupper and Doctor John Harris of Truro; and the jury, consisting of:—

Joseph Scott, Dy. Sheriff,	Thomas Gourley,
James Fulton,	Samuel Wilson,
Alexander Miller,	John Oughterson,
James Duniap,	John Logan,
James Archibald,	John McKeen,
Adam Boyd,	Robert Johnson.

with one or two exceptions were also residents of Truro.

They returned the writ, July 28th, 1783, dividing 81,750 acres into 98½ shares among 83 claimants, one being "the Church," and another "the School."

In Trinity Term, July 30th, 1783, the Supreme Court at Halifax having heard counsel on the Writ of Partition, gave judgment to confirm the proceedings thereunder, pursuant to the sheriff's return, saving only to Alexander **McCurdy** the possession of that piece of ground called the poundage, claimed under the return of said writ by John Barnhill, and in case it should appear that Alexander **McCurdy** had a greater proportion of land than he was entitled to, he should assign unto John Barnhill as much unimproved land as in the opinion of three indifferent persons appointed by the court was equivalent to the piece called the poundage reserved to Alexander **McCurdy**. To make the assignment under this order, the court appointed Lawrence Peppard and Peter McLellan of Londonderry, and Samuel Densmore of Noel.

To the Return a plan of the township, with the divisions made by the jury, was annexed. Copies of the plan and other proceedings were placed in the custody of the late Daniel **McCurdy** with whose widow they remained for a number of years. The plan was made in two parts, one containing the marsh lands, the other the upland, which was divided into three large blocks, known as the First, Second, and Third Divisions. The plan of the marsh is still in a fair state of preservation, but a portion of the south-western corner of the upland plan is much mutilated and worn, there being no remnant of that part sufficient to delineate the lands of and surrounding Fort Belcher.

The original grant, neatly engrossed on two skins of parchment; the upland plan, and the said notes of the jury on the partition of the

" Sacred to Memory of  
JENNIE GORDON  
the beloved wife of  
Rev. John I. Baxter  
who fell asleep in Jesus  
on the 8th day of June  
A. D. 1852, in the 64th  
year of her age.  
With permission  
the Presbyterian Ladies  
of Onslow have erected  
this monument as a  
token of respect."

" Mrs. SIMON KOLLOCK  
died in Truro Sep. 21, 1863  
aged 105 years."

Chapter 46, Acts of 1853, entitled " An Act relating to the Onslow Burial Ground," opens the burial island to all classes and denominations of persons, and provides for the appointment of three freeholders at any Town Meeting for voting money for the poor, whose name of office shall be " The Trustees of the Onslow burial ground." Under this Act the trustees have power to fence, make roads, improve, ornament, and protect the ground, and the inhabitants are authorized at any such meeting to vote and assess the sum they expend on the ground, not exceeding fifty pounds at any one time, to be collected by same means as other moneys voted at the meeting, provided twenty days written notice of the amount to be voted for such purpose is posted at four public places in the township.

Chapter 43 of the Acts of 1860, being " An Act to amend the aforesaid Act," provides a mode by which persons interested in other burial grounds can be relieved from assessments thereunder.

At a Town Meeting held on the ——— day of November, 1853, David **McHardy**, John King, and Silas Clarke, Esquires, were appointed trustees of the burial ground, being the first chosen under the Act of 1853. Those now in office are Silas Morrison, Charles Hill, and John A. Dickson, who will no doubt strive to carry out the intention of the law, and perform the duty imposed upon them by the inhabitants, by placing that beautiful resting place for the dead in the condition that all who feel a sentiment of veneration for the memory of their forefathers must desire to see it. May each consider with Daniel Webster that " the man who feels no sentiment of veneration for the memory of his

a large family of sons and daughters. The girls were handsome and married well. Abigail married Andrew Wallace of Halifax, February 27th, 1798, and after his decease became the wife of Robert Lowden of Merigonish. Mary married Doctor John Murray Upham, son of Judge Upham of New Brunswick, in 1803. Olivia married Colonel David Archibald, 7th, father of the late Hon. Thomas Dickson Archibald, Senator, Feb. 5th, 1801; and after his death, John Henderson; Elizabeth married Nova Scotia's greatest commoner, Samuel George William Archibald, 16th of March, 1802; and Lavinia, who was noted for her beauty among the fairest daughters of Nova Scotia in the days of Lord Dalhousie, married April 27th, 1823, the Reverend John Burnyeat, of Loweswater, England, the first clergyman of the Church of England stationed at Truro, and father of Lady Archibald of Truro.

The sons were also good looking, tall, and of fine commanding presence. Three of them at least were colonels in the militia. They inherited much of the military bearing and spirit of their grandfather, Charles Dickson of Fort Beau Sejour fame. It is also worthy of remark that these brothers, Robert, William and Thomas, were members of the House of Assembly at the same time, along with their brother-in-law, the Hon. S. G. W. Archibald, which made them men of great influence.

In 1796 Mr. Dickson visited the West Indies in one of his vessels. On his return he died of yellow fever at Halifax. At this time the highway from Onslow to the metropolis was in such a primitive state that it took Mrs. Dickson, on horse back, three days to get there. Her husband died soon after her arrival. His remains were interred in the cemetery opposite Government House. A stone is erected at his grave in the north-west corner of the ground, bearing the following inscription:

"Here lyeth the body of CHARLES  
DICKSON, Esq., who died Sept. 3rd, 1796,  
in the 50th year of his age.  
He lived Respected  
and died Lamented"

In 1799 Daniel **McCurly** son of Alexander and Janet **McCurly** who emigrated from the north of Ireland, and was among the first settlers of the township of Londonderry, was returned for Onslow. He was born at Londonderry 1st of April, 1768, and while quite young removed with his parents to Onslow. His brother James, who married Agnes, second daughter of Matthew and Janet Archibald, according to "Thomas Miller," had a remarkable family,—seven sons and seven daughters,—all of whom grew up, married, and had families. Two of

married Eunice Wright, 4th of August, 1792. They had four sons and seven daughters. He died on the 18th July, 1815.

In 1806 Nathaniel Marsters was elected to represent the township, and he was returned for a second term in 1811. He was born in Massachusetts, June 6th, 1758. His father, Jonathan Marsters, and his uncle, Abraham, with their families, removed to Falmouth, Nova Scotia, in 1760. He shared largely in the trials and vicissitudes of a new country. He lived with his father, who was a farmer, until he was about 26 years old, when he came to Onslow, where he married Sarah, daughter of Richard and Elizabeth Upham, 5th of July, 1787, by whom he had two sons. One of these—Richard Upham Marsters—became a skillful watchmaker. He invented an improvement on the chronometer, with which he went to England and presented it to the British Government. In about two years and a half after marriage Mr. Marsters wife died. He remained a widower for nine years, and on 5th of November, 1798, married Lydia, daughter of Thomas Lynda, by whom he had two sons and a daughter. One of the sons died young. The other—Jonathan Marsters—studied law, and was afterwards Judge of the Court of Probate for Colchester. His second wife died in 1830. Mr. Marsters was an active magistrate for upwards of thirty years. On the fourteenth of February, 1820, he was appointed Coroner for the District of Colchester, in place of Matthew Archibald, deceased, had a seat in the legislature for twelve years, and was for some time Registrar of Deeds. Though he was not what is termed an educated man, yet, possessing a vigorous mind, he rose with the improvements of the day, and perhaps for penetration of thought, ripeness of judgment, and wholesome counsel, he far exceeded many of superior advantages in literature. In 1790 he first became acquainted with the late Reverend Joseph Dimock. Mr. Marsters, then a widower, had been on a visit to Falmouth to see his parents and friends. In passing through Newport on his return, he made a statement in presence of Mr. Dimock, of the situation of Onslow, as it regarded the ministration of the Gospel, and dwelt on the effect produced by the preaching of Reverends Messieurs John Payzant, Harris Harding and Edward Manning. He urged the want of experimental preaching, and invited Mr. Dimock very strongly to accompany him home, which he did. Mr. Dimock had then been preaching some six or eight weeks. They made their way through newly cultivated farms and lonely deserts on foot, and in two days arrived at Onslow. The Reverend Henry Alline of New Light fame,

transpired which led to his being returned for a second term in 1843. Before the election of that year a public meeting was held in the church at Onslow to hear Joseph Howe and others speak on the great educational question then agitating this province. At eleven o'clock a. m. on Monday, the 9th of October, Mr. Howe entered the church accompanied by George R. Young, James F. Gray, William Annand, and others, and took their seats at a table in the middle aisle in front of the pulpit. The sheriff, Charles Blanchard, Esq., then read the requisition addressed to him, signed by a number of persons, authorizing him to call the meeting. Mr. John King, of Onslow, was proposed as chairman, and simultaneously the Sheriff was named, and to save a contest on the question of the chair, the friends of Mr. King waived their objection to Mr. Blanchard, and chose Mr. King as vice-chairman, when both took their seats as moderators of the meeting. The business of the day commenced by Isaac Logan, Esq., reading several resolutions and a speech favoring one college in Halifax, which was seconded by Isaac **McCurdy** Esq. They were followed by G. W. McLellan, Esq., M. P. P. for Londonderry, who spoke at some length, giving his own views on the subject. On resuming his seat, Mr. John Ross moved several resolutions in amendment of the others. They maintained denominational colleges at Horton and Pictou, and proposed to concede to Mr. Howe's party to unite with the Catholics to found one in Halifax. Mr. Ross' speech contained a number of sallies and home thrusts of a political character, some of which were rather personal to Mr. Howe. E. F. Munro, Esq., seconded the amendment very forcibly, but at less length. Robert Chambers, Esq., next spoke, and alluded to the dispute of Mr. Howe with the editor of the *Christian Messenger* as the source of the present attack on their institution at Horton. He was followed by Mr. McLeod, a teacher in Onslow, and a student of Pictou Academy, who in a neat and able speech showed the beneficial effects of such institutions by contrasting the sort of teachers which he remembered in the neighbourhood where his youth was spent, with those which followed after the Pictou Academy began its influence. Mr. McLellan, an aged gentleman, the father of G. W. McLellan, M. P. P., made some remarks on the unsuitness of a college in Halifax to benefit the country.

The Hon. Mr. Howe then rose. He spoke over two hours. His speech was chiefly a reply to Mr. Ross and Mr. Munro, and abounded in humorous comments. He charged the fall of Pictou Academy, not to the spirit of animosity between sects, but to the tory party in Halifax