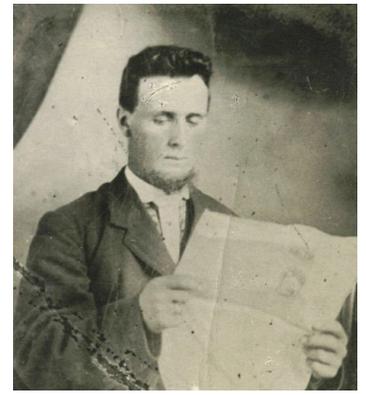


# JOHN PORTER MOWAT [1850 – 1899]

John Porter Mowat was born in Deeside on April 21, 1850. He was schooled mostly at home by governesses and possibly in Campbellton if a school had already been established. In 1877 he married Barbara Ann Nelson who was born in Deeside, on September 17, 1852. She was the daughter of David Nelson and Sarah Jane Bond.

Porter and Barbara Ann had 11 children, 9 girls and 3 boys - all lived.



It is obvious that Porter had a head for business. He was one of the Campbellton area's most enterprising business men and his name is identified with many industries, particularly with the lumber and fishing trades. He was one of the largest shingle operators on the North Shore, and also dealt extensively in railway ties, telegraph poles, etc. He also bought salmon and smelt in large quantities, which he exported to the American market as soon as the railroad was established. One of his first operations in the fish trade was the shipment of a cargo of frozen salmon to the English market in 1879, when he was only 29 years old! It was a marked success. Blocks of ice to keep the fish frozen were sawed out of the frozen river in midwinter and stored in sawdust in special ice houses built for the purpose.

Porter also established the B.A. (for Barbara Ann) Mowat Co. store where he kept a large stock of groceries, canned goods, fish, hams, bacon, flour, etc as well as goods imported from England. He had the name of selling very cheap for cash.

Porter Mowat made money and the family lived in style with good stables, and fine clothes. In 1890 he represented Ward Three in Campbellton and was reelected as councilor in 1894 and again in 1896. The large Mowat home, at the top of the hill on Patterson St. burned in the Campbellton fire in 1910. The trunks and boxes of their possessions that were saved found their way to Escuminac, Barbara Ann's family summer home on the Gaspé peninsula.

In 1899 the B.A. Mowat Co. warehouse caught on fire and in trying to save the building, Porter was badly burned. He died tragically of his burns on May 30 1899 at the age of 49. Jack, his eldest son was just 19 but he took over the business when he came home from Mt. Allison University.

When Porter died, all nine Mowat girls were left \$10,000 (worth about \$150,000 in today's currency) and I understand the boys were left much more which was the common Victorian way of handling inheritances. Probably much of this money was subsequently lost in the stock market crash of 1929 when everyone was playing the market and making large sums of money.



Barbara Ann [1852 – 1921] neé Nelson died in April 1921 in Campbellton at 68 years of age. She was an active member of the Methodist Church and in one account of her, she was as a business woman but my mother, who was the 9<sup>th</sup> of her 11 children, said she suffered from "nervous prostration", often taking to her bed. Her children were very lively and strong-minded and she had difficulty coping so the older girls had much to do with bringing up the younger children.

I have heard a family story so many times it should be recorded. It has to do with a period when Barbara Ann was having 'nervous prostration' and her sister was on her way to visit her at Escuminac. One of the girls, probably Sade, who was driving her, tried to race the train across the track and the horse froze. Though they tried to pry their aunt's hands loose from the carriage - she was just glued to the thing and refused to get down. The carriage was hit and she was killed.

I believe that Barbara Ann died of a heart attack like many of her children. Since the Mowats tended to live to a ripe old age, Barbara Ann's children must have inherited their heart problems from their mother.

Porter and Barbara Ann had 11 children:

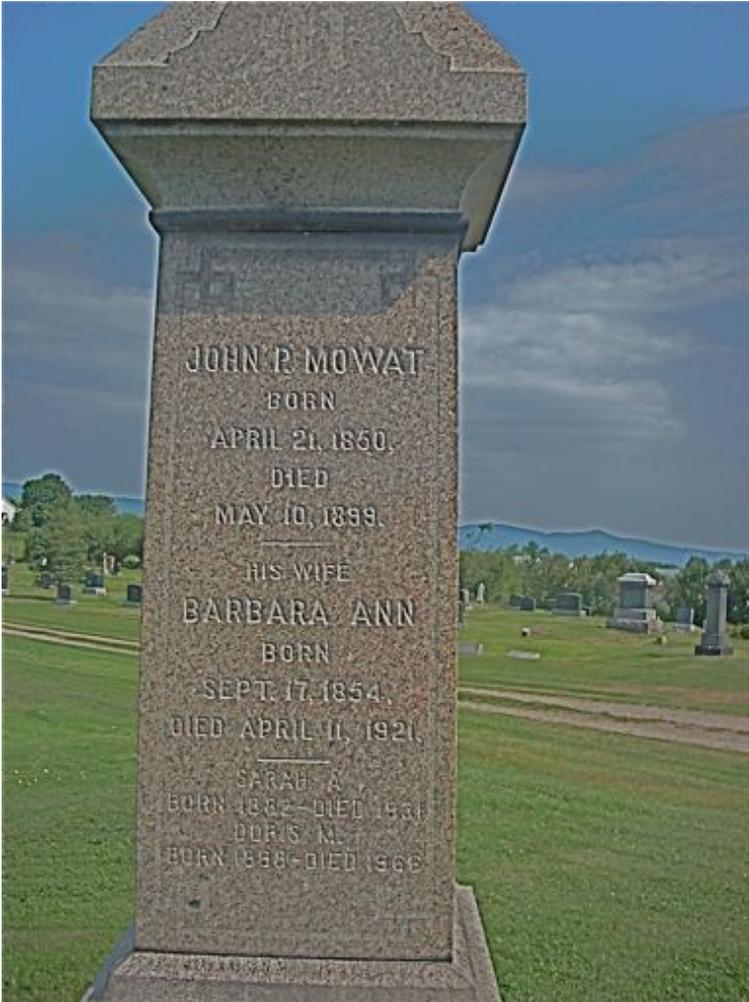
1. Bertha Mildred
2. John (Jack) Thomas
3. Sarah (Sadie) Isobel
4. Emma Louise
5. Etta Elizabeth
6. Laura Augusta (Gussie)
7. Alice Barbara
8. Earl Porter
9. Mary Hazel (Mouse)
10. Robert Harold (Hal)
11. Doris Marjorie

Porter Mowat's wife and children [taken about 1902]



L to R – Standing back row: Bertha, Emma, Jack, Sarah. Seated Etta, Hazel Doris, Mother Barbara Ann, Earl, Alice. Front Harold, Laura Augusta

One face of Mowat Gravestone reads:



John P. Mowat  
Born  
April 21, 1850,  
Died  
May 10, 1899  
--  
His wife  
BARBARA ANN  
Born  
Sept. 17, 1854,  
Died April 11, 1921  
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Sarah A  
Born 1882 – Died 1931  
Doris M.  
Born 1888 – Died 1966