

CAPTAIN SHORE ROAD

Tucked away in a little valley just north of St. Thomas a country road winds around steep hills. It joins the Southwold-Yarmouth town line with the No. 4 highway south. The valley is narrow and quiet and in the spring a small stream overflows its' banks along the road. In the autumn the wooded hillsides turn from green to red and gold and in the winter the cardinals and the blue-jays find shelter in the thickets.

For many years it has been known as the Captain Shore Road taking its' name from the first settler in the vicinity. It has changed very little in the last hundred years but very soon a new roadway will invade its seclusion and the quiet little country road will be gone. The sharp curves of the hills will be sliced away; the stream enclosed and trees removed. Traffic will stream through the valley and the gravel will give way to concrete.

The first house to be built on the old road was erected by Captain Shore. Captain Shore was a military man and a man of some distinction in the community. He served in the rebellion of 1837 and it is recorded in the "Talbot Regime" that he was connected with a transport that carried supplies to the government forces who were fighting Dr. Duncombe's rebels near Scotland. Little else is known of his military career. Marrying rather late in life to a much younger woman he bought or was granted by the Government land on the upland west of the old road. There he built a comfortable house and surrounded it by a garden. Captain Shore with his wife on his arm was a familiar sight walking in the garden on summer evenings. Very little is known of Mrs. Shore's family or maiden surname but recently Mr. W.C. Miller of St. Thomas gave a colorful description of Capt. and Mrs. Shore and the time in which they lived. I quote from this letter....

"Captain Shore and his wife are buried in the old St. Thomas

Church burial ground on Walnut St. just south of the Rapelje's, one of the first families of St. Thomas. Capt. Shore was evidently considered as someone of consequence in the early history of the community. A reference to him in one of Judge Ermatinger's works is of much interest telling of the time when color as a part of sartorial distinction was worthy of notice. "Across the aisle and almost opposite was the pew of Captain Shore, a very regular attendant at the period referred to, with the English lady whom he had married somewhat late in life. It was worthwhile to linger at the gate to witness the arrival of this couple in their carriage, the Captain on the high box seat in the front handling the ribbons, she in the low box seat wearing her large white bonnet with the long wedding veil and her satin wedding gown, he in his swallow-tailed coat with brass buttons and a high collar, silk waistcoat and tight fitting corduroy breeches with fob and seals displayed. A ruffled shirt, a cravat wound many times around a high standing collar and a white beaver hat and lacquered boots with breeches straps attached completed his costume and set off to advantage his naturally handsome features, with whiskers brushed forward after the most approved fashion of the day. After putting his horse and carriage under a neighboring shed at Dr. Goring's the captain would return and proffer his arm to the lady who had meantime gathered and looped her train over her arm, adjusted her silk shawl, lifting and throwing back her veil and displaying a singular placid and soft-cheeked countenance. She would then take her husband's arm, pass through the gate and up the gravel walk to the church".

Not long after Capt. Shore settled on his land a second militia man took up land adjoining the Shore home. This was Silas Toles, an American who had come to Canada to live. He had fought in the War of 1812 and was on the field at Queenston Heights when General Brock was killed. He married Margaret Kelley and they built a house on the hill

about 1814 and they built so well that the house still stands. They raised a large family. When Mrs. Toles died Silas married again, this time to Jane Benjafield Wilton, a widow with a grown family also. She was an English woman who had emigrated to Canada in 1834. When John Toles, Silas Toles oldest son married the house and land were given to him by his father who built another house slightly to the west and north of the original house. It was an especially fine structure furnished throughout with black walnut. There one son, Silas Jr., was born to Silas and Mrs. Toles. The boy grew up along the old road among middle-aged people and a merry chase he led them. He was a good singer, a fine athlete and a crack shot. He was skilled in both wood and metal crafts. For many years before his death he was connected with the Galt Dietrich Saw Works. He married Margaret Campbell Willis of North Yarmouth. Her father, a soldier of the regular English army was stationed at Montreal, but resigning from the army had moved westward. Silas Toles and his wife Margaret had three children, Ida, who was born in the walnut house, Jennie and Farquard. Ida married David Collins of Galt and Jennie married Hill-yard Scott, the youngest son of the Scott family who lived at the corner of Wellington Rd. and St. George St. Farquard Toles was chief salesman of the Dietrich Saw Works for many years.

Silas Toles and Captain Shore were friends and close neighbors. Mr. Toles had one of the first orchards in the locality and he and the Captain enjoyed many a glass of cider together. Mrs. Collins (Ida Toles) recalls many stories of the Shores that her mother told her. One she remembers very vividly. Mrs. Shore was much secluded and had few friends. Two prominent women of St. Thomas, one the wife of Judge Hughes, decided to call on her. They walked up the old road to the Shore home one very warm summer day. They were shown into the well furnished drawing room by a serving woman and asked to be seated while she informed her mistress they were there. So they waited for Mrs. Shore and continued to wait

until they had almost decided she did not want to see them. Then, finally properly dressed and coiffed^{up}, she swept into the room. "Rise!", she said, "immediately! and always do so in my presence until you are permitted to be seated." The two women were so astonished they did as they were told, but the call was shortly terminated and not afterwards repeated.

The Silas Toles house was torn down after his death and the walnut wood removed. The John Toles house was sold later to William Dodd who lived there for many years. A few years ago the Toles family held a reunion at the original Toles home and they erected an inscribed boulder on the family plot on the hill-top where Silas Toles and his first wife were buried. The Captain Shore house has long since been torn down, but the Captain Shore Road has played its part in the local history of the community.

Hazel Gooding Munro

THE HONOURABLE JOHN ROLPH, M.D.

Dr. John Rolph, the subject of my brief address today, was one of the most interesting personalities in nineteenth century Upper Canada. A man of many parts, he was regarded by his contemporaries as a brilliant and eloquent lawyer; as one of the founding fathers of the medical profession in the province; and in the political field as one of the foremost exponents of the principle of responsible government.

The Rolph family had its origins in the County of Gloucestershire, England. John's grandfather, George Rolph, had been an eminently successful lawyer, and a leading member of the Corporation of Surgeons, known in later years as the Royal College of Surgeons. Dr. Thomas Rolph, John's father, was a respected physician in the market town of Thornbury, Gloucestershire, and the head of a family of eighteen children. Most of the family emigrated to Upper Canada between 1807 and 1810, and settled in Norfolk County. They were followed in 1812 by John, who certainly did not arrive in the province at an auspicious time, since at that time war had just been declared between Britain and the United States. However, on his arrival at the family homestead in Norfolk, he immediately volunteered for service with the Middlesex Militia and served as paymaster to that corps.

Hostilities ended in 1815 and John Rolph remained in Upper Canada until 1817, at which time he returned to England to complete his studies in law and medicine. After four years of hard work he was called to the Bar of the Inner Temple, in London, and was accepted as a member of the Royal College of Surgeons. With regard to the latter, it is an interesting sidelight to notice

that members of this institution traditionally do not use the title of "doctor", but are known simply as "mister". Actually it was not until 1829, when Rolph was accepted by the medical board of Upper Canada, that he could be called "doctor".

Rolph returned to Upper Canada in 1821, a fully-fledged lawyer and doctor, and that same year was called to the Bar of Upper Canada during the ~~Michaelmas~~ ^{Fall} Term. At this time his major interest was in the field of law, but several of his contemporaries remarked that often when he arrived in court to participate in a case he would carry a saddle bag with two separate compartments - one side containing his law books, and the other his medical equipment.

Over the years his professional status grew enormously in the pioneer community and he became a fast friend and legal adviser to the redoubtable Colonel Thomas Talbot. It was through the latter that Rolph obtained the property that is situated a short distance from this hall, and which he retained until 1832.

Rolph's interest in politics was sparked initially by the case of Robert Gou^Rlay, a Scottish emigrant, who on coming to Upper Canada had conducted a personal survey of the social, economic and political conditions in the province. His published findings were considered almost treasonable by the local administration and he was severely prosecuted. Political power in Upper Canada at this time rested in the hands of a closely knit ~~group~~ ^{group} of men dubbed the "Family Compact". Although a semblance of democratic institution was preserved, since a House of Assembly did exist, the final power to pass bills and enact legislation

remained with the Executive Council formed by the lieutenant-governor and members of the Compact. Rolph strongly disapproved of this state of affairs, and on entering the political field he joined the ranks of the Reform party. He stood as their candidate for the riding of Middlesex, and was elected to the legislative assembly in 1824. During this first session he met and became fast friends with most of the leading Reformers of the day - such men as Marshall Spring Bidwell, Peter Perry, Matthews and of the famous, or infamous, William Lyon Mackenzie.

Rolph was defeated in 1829. The previous year he had given up his law practice, and henceforth directed his time to medicine. As previously mentioned, he received his license to practise in Upper Canada in 1829, although in 1824 he had been associated with Dr. Charles Duncombe who opened the province's first medical school at St. Thomas. Rolph moved permanently to York about 1831, and founded his own medical school. This proved to be so successful that the lieutenant-governor, Sir John Colborne, encouraged him to establish it on a regular basis. Rolph, however, was still very active in the political field. By now he was a recognized leader of the Reform party, and political affairs were rapidly moving to a climax in the province. The ~~in~~ demand for responsible government was met by the immovable force of the Family Compact, and the Reformers decided that open rebellion was the only course left to them. Rolph attended most of the party's meetings and caucuses, but was not prepared to bear arms against the government. The rebellion, led by William Lyon Mackenzie, broke out in December, 1837, in Upper Canada, and although Rolph took no active part in it, he realized that he was so seriously implicated as a leader of the Reformers that his arrest

would be only a matter of time. Deciding that discretion was the better part of valour, he fled to the United States and settled at Rochester, New York.

Here he set up a medical practice to support himself and his family, but according to his own account, it was probably the most unhappy time of his life. As an exile he could see that he had virtually thrown away all chance of a brilliant career in both politics and medicine, and there seemed very little hope of retaining much from his past glories. However, in 1843, the government issued a pardon for him and many of the other leading Reformers, and he gladly returned to Toronto.

Rolph finally decided that he would never participate in politics again, and devoted his considerable talent and energies to running his medical school. However, he was constantly assailed by his former political comrades to return to the party, since now the principle of responsible government seemed to be within their grasp. Mackenzie was back on the scene, and it was decided to establish a new radical wing of the party known as the Clear Grits. Rolph was in the centre of activities once again and participated in the founding of this new wing in 1849-50. Rolph's re-kindled interest in politics led him to stand for election once again, and in 1851 he was returned as the member for Norfolk. The government formed after the election, known as the Lafontaine-Hincks administration, depended quite heavily on the support of the Reformers, and Rolph as their leader was given the position of Commissioner of Crown lands. In 1855 he was appointed president of the legislative council and two years later he retired from public life.

The remainder of his days were devoted to the medical profession

and he lived to see his successful medical school incorporated into Victoria University with himself acting ^{as} dean. These were days of tranquility for Rolph, and he finally moved to Mitchell, Ontario, where he died in 1870.

It is hard to over-estimate the contribution that John Rolph made to the development of the province both in the field of politics and that of medicine, and it is appropriate that we are today honouring one of Elgin County's outstanding pioneer sons.

History of Union School Section No. 24 Southwold and
25 Yarmouth.

Before the year 1815 when, what is now known as Section No. 24 Southwold and 25 Yarmouth, was a dense wood and nobody but the Northern American Indian ever crossed its fertile soil in search of game, and no roads penetrated through it. Garret Smith a descendent of a U.E. Loylist, settled on the farm now known as Lynhurst, about two years later Joseph Ramey settled on Lot No. 43, London Road, and after five years of toil and hardship was accidentally killed by a hunter. After this no settlers came till between 1830 to 1840, and then a host of settlers came from the European countries.

The settlers from England were Mr. Atkins who settled on lot No. 1; Joseph Easterbrook on lot No. 3 Ninth Concession; Mr. Williams who settled on Lot No. 1; James K. Hill on lot No. 5, First Range of the Edgeware Road; John Bassett who settled on Lot No. 1; Rev. Richard Andrews on Lot No. 3, Second Range of the Edgeware Road. Michael Calcott and John Ferris who settled on Lot No. 1, First Range of the Tenth Concession. Henry Arkell who settled on Lot. No. 2, First Range, Concession C. James Dodd who settled on Lot. No. 1; Henry Arkell who settled on lot No. 2 First Range of Concession C also settled on Lot No. 2, Second Range of Concession D. John Trigger who settled on Lot No. 1, First Range of Concession D. Mr. Kimble who settled on Lot. No. 1 of the Bostic Line.

The settlers from Scotland were Mr. Chisholm who settled on lot No. 5, Ninth Concession; he also built a saw-mill on lot No. 4 in the year 1834. Mr. Alexandria who settled on lot No. 2, Second Range of the Edgeware Road. Mr. Sanderson who settled on lot No. 2; Donald Sinclair on Lot No. 3; John and Malcolm McClarty on Lot No. 4; Dougald McBrayne on Lot no. 5, First Range of the Tenth Concession. Captain Calder who was a Captain in the British Army settled on Lot No. 1, First Range of Concession C.

The settlers from Ireland were Patrick Bobier who settled on lot No. 4, First Range of the Edgeware Road. William Drakee who settled on lot No. 4, First Range of the Edgeware Road. Thomas Lawson a native of United States settled on lot No. 1, Second Range of the Edgeware Road.

The settlers who came across the ocean to settle in our section came in sailing vessels, taking them from six-to seven weeks.

After getting here they first cleared a small place to put a log hut. This hut had holes for windows, logs split into lumber by an axe for a floor and split timber fastened together for a door. The next thing they did was to clear a large patch of land, they burned the logs to get rid of them and then by the means of a rude drag, when harvest came they cut their grain by means of a sickle; and thresh the grain by means of a flail and then carry the grain sometimes over ten miles to get it ground into flour, but finding his load lightened on his way home by the miller's toll. Some settlers who had too far to go to a mill hollowed out a large stump and there pound the grain into flour. Here in the forest the pioneers lived their life of happiness, no place for invalids but for strong, healthy men who were not afraid of work.

A saw-mill was established on Lot No. 4, Ninth Concession, owned by Mr. Chism.

A Flax-mill was established on Lot No. 2, Eight Concession owned by Sheriff Munro.

A brick-yard was established on Lot No. 1, Eight Concession, owned by Sturgeon Sharon.

A brick-yard was established on Mr. Thomson's place on the London Road.

A Potash Factory established on Lot No. 1, Ninth Concession, owned by Henry Hill.

Services were held by Rev. Richard Andrews in his house on Lot No. 3, Second Range of the Edgeware Road untill a church was built in St. Thomas and the settlers attended there.

School was started in the year 1838 by Rev. Richard Andrews in his house and when he stopped teaching no person for a few years taught, and then Joseph Woof taught on the flats of Kettle Creek on James K. Hill's Farm, but unfortunately he became insane and roamed around the country, and then James Leavesley took his place teaching on Rev. Richard Andrew's Farm and after him L. C. Kearney taught in the same place. He, while teaching there, wrote the life and times of Colonel Talbot. The salary of those teachers, before the school was organized, was \$1.50 for each pupil every quarter year.

The first school meeting was held in the year 1847 in Thomas Lawson's house on Lot No. 5, Second Range of the Edgeware Road. Rev. Richard Andrews was Chairman and they appointed James K. Hill, Joseph Eastabrook and Rev. Richard Andrews trustees and the site of the school house was decided on the edge of McVey's Wood but not

before a good deal of debating, everyone wanting it near their own farm so the children would not have to go far, but a school-house was built on the site decided just at the brow of a hill; certainly a romantic spot where every child could go coasting in the winter months every noon and recess. A large wood nearly all around where there were all kind of nuts and where every boy could learn to climb to the highest branches of the trees, and a creek running through the valley just below the hill where they could skate.

The school house which was of frame was built in the year 1847 costing only \$105. but after a few years was moved across the road into the McClarty place, an equal spot. The salary of the teachers were very low being only \$15. a month, but gradually increased untill it was \$30. a month. The teachers who taught in this frame school house were Mary Pierce, John S. McColl, afterwards local superintendent of the schools of West Elgin, Richard Monck, Patrick Gallacher, Charles Campbell, Richard F. Carrie, Catherine Walker, Donald Munro, John McKenzie, Archibald Boyd, Robert W. Stafford, Grant Silcox, Miss Rose, Frank Berry, Elizabeth Royal, John Mills, Dougald McBrayne, Flora Black, John McCallum, Dougald McBrayne, Mary Philips, Edward Miller, Col. Sinclar and Miss Brooks.

Many persons came out of this school to make their mark in the world, scattered all over the continent. Some of the most noted were Peter Lawson, a son of Thomas Lawson, after going to Port Dover was elected member of parliament for South Norfolk. Thomas Arkell a son of Henry Arkell, after going to St. Thomas, was elected member of Parliament for East Elgin. Archibald Sinclair, a son of Donald Sinclair, a prominent doctor of Paris, Ontario. Col. Sinclair, a son of Donald Sinclair, a mail clerk in the Michigan Central Railway and one of the most brilliant correspondents of the St. Thomas Journal, and John William Caughlin, a son of Bartholmew Caughlin, is a doctor of Bay City, Michigan.

A new frame school house was built in the year 1874 costing \$700. on Lot No. 1 First Range of the Edgeward Road and a Union School Section was formed No. 24 Southwold and No. 25 Yarmouth, the lots along the Eleventh Concession being left out. The Teachers who taught in the new school house were Robert Tabir, Sylvester Young, William Haight, Col. Sinclar, Archibald Coulter, William Haight, Charles Brant, Miss Taylor, Miss Kerpatrick, Miss Woods, Edith Murray, Misses Baileys, Edith Clark, Alice Sinclar, and our present teacher Jane Lees. The present trustees are Charles Saywell

and Jonas Axford for School Section No. 25 of Yarmouth and Wesley Trigger for School Section No. 24 Southwold.

John Andrews, a son of Richard Andrews, was a member of the council of the municipality of the township of Southwold for 9 years and was successively raised step by step to fill the highest position within the gift of the electors, a reeve of the Township.

William Bassett, a son of John Bassett, was elected member of the council of the municipality of the township of Yarmouth.

John Calcott, a grandson of Micheal Calcott, owns a saw-mill on Lot No. 1 First Range of the Tenth Concession.

Daniel Eastabrook, a son of Joseph Eastabrook, owns Lot No. 3, Ninth Concession.

William Hill, a son of James Hill, lives on Lot No. 5 First Range of the Edgeware Road.

Alexander McBrayne lives on Lot No. 5 First Range of the Tenth Concession.

John and Richard Andrews, a son and grandson of Rev. Richard Andrews, the former lives on Lot No. 2, Second Range of Concession D and the latter lives on Lot No. 3 Second Range of the Edgeware Rd.

William Bassett, a son of John Bassett, lives in a residence on St. George Road.

John and William Dodd, sons of James Dodd, the former lives on Lot No. 1 Second Range of Concession D and the latter lives on Lot No. 43 London Road.

The early pioneers would be surprised if they could only see the beautiful farms as there are in our section now. They little thought then that they would be the means of bringing the land to such nice farms.

Yarmouth Dec. 1895

History Competition written by

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