

HISTORICAL DATA OF YARMOUTH TOWNSHIP

- Compiled by Daniel McIntyre
- and embodied in his address -
- at Old Boys Reunion at Yarmouth Centre, June 25, 1910 -

On the 21st of May, 1803, the late Col. Talbot felled the first tree in what has always been known as the Talbot settlement. Yarmouth, although a part of the Talbot settlement at that time, was not then surveyed. It is a source of pride to us to know that the Colonel in making application to the Home Government for a grant of land amounting to 5,000 acres (the very first grant), asked that the location be made in the Township of Yarmouth. He failed to secure the grant, the Canada Company, and Baby family, having received grants already.

There was scarcely any settlement in Yarmouth until 1810, one hundred years ago. The first two families reported in the records are Daniel Rapelje and David Man-deville. That was in 1809.

Yarmouth was surveyed in 1809 by ^{Col.} M. Burwell. It is one of the best surveyed townships in the County. We have in the township 71,000 acres. Yarmouth was called after a seaport town in the county of Norfolk, near the boundry of Suffolk, and also as a compliment to Francis Seymour (Lord Cornway), who in 1703 was made Earl of Yarmouth.

Up to 1840 municipal government was by quarter-sessions.

In 1840 an act was passed dividing the Province into districts. On the 18th of February, 1842, the first district council met in London. The late Thomas Hutchinson and the late John Oill represented Yarmouth. This system continued till 1850. Municipal government since that date, has been practically what we enjoy at the present time.

The Reeve of Yarmouth, the late E. S. Ganson, was the first warden of the County of Elgin.

The first meeting of the first Yarmouth Council was held at the Mansion House, St. Thomas, on Monday, the 21st day of January, 1850, at twelve o'clock noon. The following gentlemen comprised the council: David Parish, Marshall T. Moore, Randolph Johnson, Daniel Black and Alexander Love. Alexander Love was appointed reeve and Randolph Johnson deputy reeve, John McKay municipal clerk and treasurer, G. T. Claris auditor, John Lanning auditor, Asa Fordyce, John McDermid and John Thomson assessors, Joseph Lang collector.

The tax levied in 1850 was as follows: School, 150 pounds, at $\frac{3}{8}$ of a penny to the pound; roads and bridges, 250 pounds, at $\frac{5}{8}$ of a penny to the pound, making a total of 400 pounds, equal to $4 \frac{1}{10}$ mills on the dollar.

The amount of money raised last year (1909) for

township purposes alone was \$21,020. at a rate of six mills on the dollar

The assessed value of the township at the present time is \$3,503,333. — 1962[#] - 8,445,425^{UN TAXABLE} #10,895,225[—]

The total estimated value of land, buildings, implements, field crops and live stock, is \$7,025,023.

The estimated amount of money coming into the pockets of the people in one year from all sources in the Township of Yarmouth is \$1,060,663.

Some of the best thoroughbred stock in the world is to be found in Yarmouth. At the world's fair held in Chicago 1893, the chairman, Mr. W. G. Sanders, had some of his herd on exhibition. He was awarded the fifth prize.

The first public school, so far as I can learn, was organized in 1818, and conducted in one room of a house built in 1810 by the late Capt. Secord. This house was built of logs, and the location was on Talbot Street in the vicinity of the brick school that stands at the present time a little west of Yarmouth Centre. Many are the changes that have taken place since then. At that time all was one dense wilderness. As farm after farm was cleared the township began to put on a better appearance so that at the present time Yarmouth is one of the wealthiest townships in the province. In the old days all kinds of field labor

was done by hand; today we have machinery for doing all kinds of work.

Those of us who are left to enjoy the rich heritage bequeathed to us by the first settlers of this township, the men of iron will, the men who knew no defeat--while we have no desire to boast feel that we haven't done our best, yet feel that we compare as a whole favorably with any other township. Our farming interests are well guarded. The universities have not been left untried. We are represented on the Bench, at the Bar, in the banks, in the mercantile trades, in medicine, in all honorable walks of life; and when the call to arms ran through the country, some of our boys ready and willing, journeyed to distant Africa in defence of the British flag--a flag that knows no defeat. Unfortunately, too, many have been cut down; they have been gathered in by the grim reaper long before manhood's morning reached the hour of noon. These were not permitted to reach that stone on life's great highway, that marks the highest goal. Those of us who are left to guard the gates are doing the best we can.

Nature has been most bountiful and the sun of prosperity shines on this fair township as it never did before. Neither blood nor earthquake, neither storm nor plague, neither disaster from without nor disaster from within, hath laid a blot upon our fair name. From the most humble

cottage to the most beautiful mansion there is but one story to tell--freedom and plenty are everywhere within the gates. And freedom with plenty has been man's greatest ambition, mankind's greatest hope. We have had our portion of joy and sadness, our seasons of thanksgiving and regret. These come to all people and all individuals, but no township has had a greater measure of happiness and prosperity than this township. So we are reminded of the writer who said, the rustic family were more happy and contented than the beautiful lady who sat her foot upon a triple throne.

Some little time ago a discussion was conducted in one of the American magazines. The publisher asked the young women to state what was their idea of the right kind of a man. The general verdict was a sound mind in a sound body with a good character and spirituality. Wealth and position were given a second place. If this principle were acted upon oftener there would be fewer scandals, fewer lawsuits, more happy families, and altogether a better outlook for humanity's sake.

What has caused the downfall of the empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome? No lack of wealth, no lack of renown, for they had the world under tribute. It was a lack in the character of the people, a lack of righteousness.

The same defect would rend the mighty British Empire into

fragments; while right going will make this glorious Dominion the best country the world has ever known.

It is the simple truth to say that of the men who were cradled in Yarmouth the great West has many; and as we trace back the sources of American history to the homes of the English Puritans, so in the years to come when the Canadian west is filled with millions of prosperous subjects of an Imperial Britain, when its thriving towns of today have become mighty cities, and peaceful homes cover all its wide extending plains, the historian will trace the record of many of its pioneers back to the township of Yarmouth. May we hope that these old boys' reunions will keep green the memory of the first pioneers of this township whose monuments are about us, and whose achievements we all inherit. We are waiting for the writer who will feel the story in his heart and tell it so that the world will listen. South America has quarries of the whitest marble, but she produces none too white on which to carve the names of the first settlers of Yarmouth.

To the cherished haunts of the old timer,
Our eyes are backward cast,
A sweet voice calls thro' memories halls,
But however dear the vision
To woo us into the past
We do not dare to stay
For out of the game we must on
To the duties that call today.

We've the now in which to labor,
We've the now in which to die,
And the now alone we can call our own,
Through all eternity.
The past and the future are shadows
But the present is ours for aye
To us it is given to build our heaven
In the kingdom of today.



DANIEL McINTYRE

One of Yarmouth Old Boys Who con-
tributed to Success of Cel-
bration This Week.

YARMOUTH TOWNSHIP
AN HISTORICAL SKETCH

In the late 1700's when the Quebec Act was passed and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada were formed Governor Simcoe divided the Province of Upper Canada into 19 counties. The 17th county extended from the western limit of Norfolk County to about the present city of Chatham and bounded by the Thames River on the North. Yarmouth, Southwold, Dunwich and Aldborough lay within those boundaries.

During the second Parliament held at York in 1798 the County of Middlesex was formed and now Yarmouth with its sister townships was within this area. In 1800 this was called the District of London and held its sessions and events in Charlotteville and except for 13 years when they were held in Turkey Point met at Charlotteville until established in London. In about 1850 the Southern Townships of Middlesex separated and formed the County of Elgin, made up of seven townships with the County seat in St. Thomas. At that time Lord Elgin was a visitor to these shores so it was logical to name the new county Elgin.

So you see our township wasn't always part of Elgin County. The first reeve of Yarmouth was Mr. Alex Love and one of the earliest decisions of this first Council was to purchase a lot for the Town Hall. The site chosen was the Blackwood lot at the Western end of Talbot St. and their first meeting there was held on May 2nd, 1851.

You may be interested to know that in 1858 the records showed the change in currency from pounds to dollars. Also that in 1864 a buggy belonging to Benjamin Knight broke through the bridge over Catfish Creek at Talbot St. (#3 Highway) and the Council paid a claim of \$12.00. The first payment for sheep killed by dogs appeared on the books of 1866. In 1867 the Councillors voted to purchase a fire proof safe for \$250.00 and in the same year someone paid their taxes with a counterfeit \$5.00 bill. In 1878 Nathan Small was appointed caretaker of the Town Hall at a salary of \$10.00 per year but by 1893 had been raised to \$30.00. At the same time the Tollgate keeper on the St. Thomas to Alymer road was receiving \$4.00 a week. Duncan Munro was his name.

In 1793 when Col. Talbot came to this part of the Province with Gov. John G. Simcoe he was so impressed with the country that he chose Yarmouth as the land he wanted to lay claim to and service, but it was already promised to Col. Baby so Talbot cast his eyes westward to Dunwich. Before his retirement he had control of more than 60,000 acres and defied anyone to interfere with the rule of his kingdom.

In order that he might induce settlers and get control of all unallotted areas to the East of his stronghold in Dunwich he had Col. Burwell start a survey and construction of the Talbot Road running east and west. At that time , around 1803, it was unbroken forest from Long Point to Amherstburg. Col. Talbot required his settlers to clear and open half the roadway in front of their lot. By 1820 a stage service was operating along this road. It was later one of the first roads to be improved from the original corduroy and in 1837 it was considered to be the finest road in the Province-----perhaps because every male inhabitant from aged 21 to 60, not rated on the assessmsnt roll, was liable to work on the roadway for 2 days every year. thoes on the roll were liable to work in proportion to the assessment, starting 2 days for each \$500.00 supplying his own tools as well as a team and wagon. The roadwork was supervised by a Pathmaster.

The London and Port Stanley Plank Road was opened in 1822 and discribed in the following report.

" The Plank Road from London to Port Stanley is now about completed and we cannot refrain from expressing the pleasure we feel in travelling upon the one now made ---- we must say it looks remarkably well, and affords a delightful drive from London to St. Thomas and thence to Port Stanley."

And so Yarmouth was being settled. Those who took up lots endured the privations and trials, besides the horrors of war during 1812- 15, in clearing this choice agricultural land. It was densely forested and in order to build their homes a clearing with more each year had to be made until their lots were made into farms. These settlers are all worthy of remembrance especially for their bravery and fortitude. Justus Wilcox built the first frame house in Yarmouth, planted the first apple tree and kept a tavern in Yarmouth Heights near the old brick