

THE HISTORY OF THE LAWTON FAMILY

The exact date of the arrival of the Lawton family in Canada has not been established, but according to old diaries, they came from England to America first to the New England Colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island in the early 1700's.

In those days people were fond of adventure and kept moving farther west in search of new lands. Three of the Lawton brothers and their wives started west from New England and when they came to the Niagara river two crossed to Canada and the other brother went southwest and he and his family have not been heard of since. Mr. George Lawton, the pioneer ancestor of the present day Lawton family, continued west along the north shore of Lake Erie as far as Pt. Stanley and first took up and settled on land about 1 mile south and $\frac{1}{4}$ mile east of what is now known as Dexter. This land has gone into the lake many years ago. as many other hundreds of acres have disappeared into the hungry waters of Lake Erie. Later Mr. Lawton and his family located 3 miles north of Lake Erie, on Lot 14, 3rd Concession of Yarmouth on the south side of Sparta road and this location is now known, locally, as Lawton's Corners.

This farm, according to the first deed, dated 1837, was purchased by George Lawton from a man named Ellis, who in turn had procured the land from Col. Baby. Col Baby was the land agent for South Yarmouth at that time. But the Lawtons had cleared the land and had been settled here many years before that date, as we have a map in the South Yarmouth Tweedsmuir History showing their present location as early as 1816.

Mr. Lawton was a very public spirited man and was largely

instrumental in forming one of the first school sections in the county. This is now known as the Seminary School, Section 8, Yar. and he was its first teacher in the year 1816. In politics, he was a Liberal, ^a ~~and a~~ very independent and outspoken man, ^{and was} ~~and~~ an ardent supporter of William Lyon MacKenzie, at the time of the 1837 Rebellion against the Family Compact and in the Cause of Responsible Government.

This Family Compact was a name given to the group of men in charge of handling the affairs of the county and their headquarters were in London, the county town. At this time Elgin was not a county but was ~~part~~ of the county of Middlesex and anyone wishing to vote on the affairs of the day, had to go to London to do so. If they were in opposition to this Family Compact they were forced to go in groups in order to be able to vote, if they went singly they would be refused the privilege of voting.

Mr. Lawton bitterly opposed this state of affairs and took a very active part against it and as a result of this he and his family suffered many hardships. At one time when his home was being searched by officers, his children ill with typhoid fever, were made to get out of their beds, and as a result, five of the children died and are buried in the Seminary Cemetery.

After affairs in Canada had quieted and it was safe for him to return to his home he came back to his family and farmed until his death in 1848 at the age of 62. His descendants have lived on this property ever since.

His son, John, was the next owner, followed by Alexander, and then by Mr. Harvey Lawton; who like his pioneer ancestor, was a staunch Liberal and he, too, was intensely interested in community affairs. He served first as public school trustee and was active in the Yarmouth Mutual Fire Insurance Company, also, in Township affairs. He was first a Councillor, Reeve and then Warden of the County of Elgin and later was clerk of the Township of Yarmouth for many years until his retirement, a short time before his death.

And now, the sons of Harvey Lawton, Charles and Harry, fifth generation of this well known family, farm these productive acres engaged in both dairying and the production of flue-cured tobacco and have fine modern homes. Mr. Harry Lawton's son, Donald and his wife, also make their home on these farms and with their small daughter, Debbie, make the the 6th and 7th generations of Lawtons to live and make their homes at Lawton's Corners.

Ellen Russ

HISTORY OF THE PARKER FAMILY

John Parker was born in Cork, Ireland, in the year 1739 and was married to Nancy Watson, a native of the City of Dublin, who was born in 1743. They emigrated to Nova Scotia, and after a short residence there, they went to Pennsylvania and settled on the banks of the Susquehanna River, where they secured a proprietary claim of 200 acres of land and also a title to an island in the river where they had a residence. The residents of the island were to a source of discomfort at the season of the year when the river was swollen and often in danger as the river rises sometimes with great rapidity and on more than one occasion the family were in ^{imminent} ~~imminent~~ danger, barely escaping with their lives to the main land.

John Parker was in politics a Tory. Disgusted with the result of the revolution, he abandoned his property and went to Nova Scotia. Then he removed to Ontario and settled in Welland County on the Chippewa River, thirty miles from the mouth, where he remained until 1816 when he removed his family to Elgin County at Dexter into a dense forest on the same farm that Nelson Parker now resides.

The trials and privations they encountered may be estimated from the fact that they were obliged to go seventy miles to a mill. They carried their grain on their backs to the waters' edge on Lake Erie, one mile from home, placed it in a small canoe and rowed to Port Ryerse. In extreme cases the journey took a month and always required a number of days as the weather was very variable. They were frequently obliged to land and shelter themselves under their inverted boat.

Both John and Nancy Parker resided at Dexter until their death. John Parker died at the age of 83, February 1822, and his wife who survived him, died at the age of 97 years in November, 1840.

William Parker was a son of John and Nancy Parker was born in Nova Scotia January 1797. When a young man, he willingly offered his

services in the battle of Queenston Heights under General Brock, when his company were taken prisoners and held for 48 hours without food or water. One night when all was still he told the other boys to keep watch as he was going to knock the guard down, which he did, and they all ran and jumped into the Niagara River at Lewiston. The enemy shot at them but William Parker escaped and landed on the Canadian shore where he made a further escape to safety. He accompanied his parents to Welland County, Ontario, where he married Nancy Sinsebaugh, who was of German descent. She was born in Welland County in 1800 and died at Dexter in Yarmouth Township, January, 1872. William Parker predeceased his wife in May, 1871.

In the year 1836, Nancy Parker acquired a crown deed for an additional 200 acres of land, Lot 15 in the 1st Comcession of Yarmouth. The original homestead of the Parker family was Lot 14, now occupied by Clifton Parker, grandson of Nelson Parker.

In 1851, Nancy and William Parker deeded to their son, Wellington Parker, the north half of Lot 15, and in 1873, Wellington Parker deeded the same parcel of land to his sons, Edward and Henry. In 1881 Henry deeded his holdings to his brother Edward. Upon his death in 1936 this 100 acres reverted to a son, Clarence D. Parker, and in turn, in 1962, was handed down to his son, Howard F. Parker, who presently occupies the said property where the Century Farm sign will be erected.

Wellington Parker removed and cleared a homestead at Marlette, Michigan with his two sons, Franklin and Wellington Jr., and spent the remainder of his life in the United States.

Recorded by Clarence D. Parker shortly before
the Centennial Year of 1967.

Lanning History.

1 Richard Lanning was born Oct. 12, 1782. He crossed the Niagara river at Black Buffalo in 1803, his father Robert lived in New Jersey. His ancestors had come to United States from England or Wales (the past history on the exact place is not to clear).

2 Richard settled on the north shore of Lake Erie around Vittoria. He selected 100 acres, built a log hut and began clearing the land. The tools that he had brought consisted of a gun, ammunition axe, fry pan, pickaxe and blanket. The taxes on 100 acres of land was \$3.00 to \$5.00. They could get cash for furs. The other source of revenue was to gather the ashes where they burned the log piles, build a leach, put in the ashes, pour on water, and get what they called ley. They boiled this down and made what was called black salt. Sail boats would call in at Port Dover and buy their furs and black salt.

3 Richard married Eva Johnson in 1806. ^{Eva died} They sold their farm ^{Richard} at Vittoria in 1822 and came up 3 miles east of Port Stanley and settled on 200 acres acquired from Colonel Talbot. In 1829 Richard purchased the south half of lot 10 concession 2 Yarmouth from George Salmon for 100 pounds. He built a log hut, lived in it until 1836 when he built a large frame house that still stands to - day.

4 The main crop grown after clearing the land was wheat. Once a year Richard would take 4 sacks of wheat to the lake with his oxen, load it in his row boat and take it to the nearest mill, Port Dover. This would take about 4 days and would give the family a years supply of flour. The story is told that Richard sold his other farm in this area for gold and Bank of Upper Canada bills, since banks at that time weren't thought to be safe, he buried the money in a powder horn near his home not telling anyone where.

5 Richard got older and couldn't remember where he had buried the money, and to this day

it was never found although many have dug for it.

6 Richard was a deacon of the Plains Baptist Church. He sold a Cauldron kettle to Deacon Jones^{Powell}, after trying many times to collect from Jones^{Powell}, Richard went to a Lawyer and sued Jones^{Powell} who finally had to pay. This was brought up in church and Richard was expelled from the church. He sold his lot in the cemetery and purchased one in Seminary. He had his grave stone made and delivered and it stood at the foot of his bed nearly 10 years before he died.

7 Richard had two sons John born in 1808 and Covil born in 1819. John never married and was killed by a train in 1873 at White's Station. Covil married Catherine Jane Dedrick and carried on the farm after his father died. Covil had eleven children of which ten lived to old age. Covil died in 1898 leaving the farm to two maiden daughters and two bachelor sons. As they died it was passed down to the remaining ones. Eluid or Ed was the last remaining and when he died in 1937 he left it to his nephew Harvey. Harvey never lived on this farm but farmed it until his death in 1960 and passed it on to his son Stuart, who lives there. Stuart Lanning two daughter^s Carol- Nancy.

1948 - 1973 .

