

## THE EASTABROOK FAMILY

Late in the year 1824 or early 1825 a family of Eastabrooks took leave of their farm homes in New Hamstead in the County of Devonshire, England, to explore and settle on new lands in Canada.

Joseph Eastabrook and his wife and daughter, a widow of an English army officer who died in a war in India, and Joseph Eastabrook Jr., his wife and two small children, crossed the ocean in a sailing vessel, the trip lasting more than three months. They landed finally at the Port of New York and decided on coming to Canada. They made their first home at Port Stanley, Joseph Jr. working at odd jobs for a short time, while looking for land to settle on. He decided to locate next to the villlage of St. Thomas and secured land on the creek which wound its way around the village site and on to Port Stanley.

He then walked to the home of Colonel Talbot to bargain for the land. Colonel Talbot advised him to consider the land to the east of the site he finally bought. But Joseph Eastabrook had a sad experience of the shortage of water in the Old Country, so finally in 1831 had the deeds and lands in his name known as Lots 3 and 4 (south range Edgeware Road) now, but the crown deed, the only one in existence for this land, names a parcel of land in Upper Canada.

On these lands, they built a log house facing the Edgeware Road, cleared the valley land and sowed wheat and corn. The first returns on their investment was a sale of oak trees to a ship building firm, the stumps some nearly five feet across are still visible on the farm.

In a few years they built two more log houses, one in the valley for Joseph Sr., his wife and daughter, on the site where now stands the St. Thomas City pumping station; on the hill above, the other log house for Joseph Jr. and family.

They were never discouraged with their new venture, they found abundance of wild life to live on, until they established a domestic herd of their own; fish and game were always available. Their crops were good. Wheat sold very high in the late thirties, and Joseph Jr. secured more land for his family. In 1837 he bought two one hundred acre lots west of the town of Strathroy and two more near the town of West Lorne.

They had their heartaches, losing two sons in their early twenties with what was then termed - black diptheria, and at the same time, their oldest daughter Mrs. Ben Axford lost her three children with the same malady.

The Eastabrook children received their education mostly from a Richard Andrews who came from Devonshire, England, in the year 1831, settling on land north of the Eastabrooks. He was a close friend of the family in the Old Country and a well-educated man. He taught children of the district in his own log house during the winter months.

The old English Church was a factor in the Eastabrooks settling where they did. Grandmother found it so convenient just to go to church over the hills. This was the only church in the new country at that time.

Joseph Eastabrook's son, Daniel, inherited the home place and married a Devonshire native, Mary Ann Wickett, and the only son, Fred Eastabrook, the fourth generation is still farming the homestead as well as land bought by his father from the late Judge Hughes estate, and from the Billings estate.

The City of St. Thomas took the water rites by arbitration from Daniel Eastabrook and thirty acres of valley in 1890, and in 1910 the Hydro-Electric Commission bought a station site on the original farm and are still taking a parcel of land every year or so to expand their lines and storage rites.

Hazel Eastabrook Archibald  
(Mrs. A. Archibald)

2/4/52

1966 Fred Eastabrook lived on this farm, which was settled on by his great grandfather in 1831, until 1959 when he sold it and moved to St. Thomas.

## The Locke Family

In 1834 William Locke sold his well-established farm in Devonshire, and, with his wife and six children came to the wilderness that was North Yarmouth in the 1830's. They were people of firm faith and they came with a vision of a better life in a new land, a life of more opportunity for their children.

Mrs. Locke and the children booked passage on a faster ship, travelling through the locks on the St. Lawrence River, and arrived at the town of Cobourg on Lake Ontario. Here they took lodgings and waited for the men of the family who were bringing their cattle and horses on a cattle ship. This vessel took six weeks to cross the ocean, and, owing to storms and the salt water washing over the decks, the hay which had been provided for the livestock spoiled during the voyage. This necessitated a landing at Montreal to lay in fresh supplies.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Locke, who had her money in silver coins sewn in her bustle, remained with the landlady in Cobourg. The landlady began to be suspicious when her roomer did not pay and her husband did not make his appearance. Mrs. Locke herself was growing decidedly uneasy, wondering what could be keeping her husband. One of the things the landlady gave Mrs. Locke credit for was that she attended church during her stay with her.

In due course, Mr. Locke arrived and the little woman was overjoyed and said, "Now the first thing you do, William, is to pay that landlady for our board and overtime-- as she has been nigh frantic and like to put me out of doors."

"But", her husband exclaimed in amazement, "you had plenty of money to pay."

"Yes," she said, "it is in my bustle. Did ye think I would slit open my bustle and let folk know about the gold, and endanger both myself and the money?"

The landlady was soon paid her overdue rent, and from Cobourg the re-united family resumed their journey. The red Devon cattle and horses were driven, often through dense woods, to their new home on Lot 8 on the eleventh concession of North Yarmouth.

A grist mill had been built by a man named Jones who was selling out to go to Illinois. Mr. Locke bought his property and mill. Two log cabins stood on the west bank of Kettle Creek. The miller occupied one cabin; the Locke family, the other. Six more children were born to the family after their arrival at their new home. Then tragedy struck the family. The first son born in Canada was standing in front of the fireplace when his clothes ignited, and he died as a result of his burns. Another son stuck his head out of an opening in the mill, and his head was struck by the water-wheel, stunning him, and he drowned in the creek.

Jim Locke built the large white brick house on the south half of Lot 8, concession 11, presently occupied by Robert Proud. He later moved into St. Thomas and built the large white brick house at 38 William Street.

Another brother built the brick house on the Locke farm on the South Edgeware Road, presently occupied by Jack Jennings. This farm was known as Chatsworth Stock Farm, where the Devon cattle were replaced by a herd of Holsteins by Charles Locke, the owner. This was a progressive farm, and one of the first to be electrified in 1912. At one time, the Locke family owned 1500 acres in North Yarmouth.

--As told to the North Yarmouth District Historical Association by Percy Locke,  
February 6th, 1972.

## THE LOCKE FAMILY

BY Fern Burton Locke  
(Mrs. W.E. Locke), May 25, 1933

In this machine age I wonder how many of us, as we drive along our paved highways in our motor cars ever give a thought as we pass the beautiful farms with every modern convenience, including hydro and water systems, that back in 1833, just over one hundred years ago, the world was first thinking of steamer service on the Atlantic, as we are thinking today of airplane service.

The highways were merely trails through dense forests where no human foot had ever trod, and we enjoy this heritage only because our ancestors possessed the calibre of which great nations are built. They endured loneliness, disappointments and privations that we, their children, might live in comfort--yes, even luxury.

In 1837 Mr. William Locke and his sons arrived at Cobourg Harbour with a herd of pure bred Devon cattle, the strain of which is now extinct in this territory. Mrs. Locke, having preceded him in a sailing vessel, was waiting his arrival, but Mr. Locke was delayed owing to storms and the salt water washing the decks destroyed the hay which they had brought to feed the cattle, and it was necessary to land at Montreal and lay in a supply of hay for the remainder of their journey.

Meanwhile, the landlady at Cobourg, who had given Mrs. Locke rooms, began, with all this delay, to have suspicions to which landladies are prone when roomers do not pay and their husbands fail to appear as promised.

The little woman's purse grew leaner and leaner, in fact quite empty, and still, day by day, no boat hove into Cobourg Harbour. The stiffening landlady was put off from time to time, and finally would be put off no longer. She grew furious, threatening to turn her lodger into the street. "I cannot pay," gasped the latter in desperation. "But I tell you again my husband, when he comes, will have plenty. I cannot help the boat being late. But, I promise you, you will be amply paid." The landlady went downstairs sullenly. How was she to know the woman had a husband at all? Even if she did, he might be at the bottom of the sea by now, with his purse, cattle, and all. On the other hand, if the woman was honest, it would be a great harm to refuse her shelter, and she being really a kind person, quite willing to entertain angels unawares. Besides, if she turned the lodger away, how could she claim her past board bill, should there come a happier turn of affairs?

As for the lady upstairs, who was growing decidedly uneasy--whatever could be keeping the man? Daily she watched the harbour. This small woman from England never seemed to get over being weary. She was not partial to walking. She availed herself of every opportunity to sit. When she went to church (and this was one of the things the landlady gave her credit for), it was as much an occasion for physical as spiritual rest. This woman, of course taking the utmost precaution to camouflage her purpose, propped her bustle. The style of the time delighted in the heinous beauty of those bulky appendages for female attire, and this lady slyly propped that bustle, I say, against the back of the church pew, and, leaning back upon it, apparently enjoyed the service more than any other function of the week. It was a real rest, and the tired lines on her face would smooth accordingly.

In due course, her husband and sons arrived and inquired at the lodging-house, "Be there a lady here by the name of Locke?" Of course, the little Englishwoman was overjoyed and said, "Well, now the first thing you do, William, go and pay that woman my board for overtime; she's been nightfrantic and like to have put me out of doors." "But you had plenty, lass," he exclaimed in amazement. "It is in my bustle," she said, fishing that article of her apparel from a heap of clothing on the bed. "But not in my purse--ye won't find much in that, and did ye think, foolish man, I would slit open my bustle and let folk know about the gold? And so endanger both myself and the money? I told the woman true, I couldn't pay her till ye came, for I didn't dare!" "I suppose not," replied her husband with a grin, and went downstairs to appease a landlady beaming with smiles.

From there they proceeded acrosss the country settling in what is known now as the Township of Yarmouth, on the farm now owned by Mr. Fred Lewis.

The present Locke homestead was purchased by Mr. William Locke in 1839, from a Mr. Miller. Mr. William Locke (the son) married Jane Box of London Township, and came directly to the present Locke homestead. Two daughters and five sons were born of this union; the younger son, Charles, still resides on the homestead. But it was not as it is today, Mr. Miller having constructed a frame house which was the first of its kind in this district and was considered a very modern, up-to-date home. The house consisted of a large parlor at the front, with a bedroom off this room. The front door was on the side with a narrow hall leading to the parlor and extending to the dining-room, with four small bedrooms on each side. The dining-room was very large, and contained a fireplace which would hold six-foot logs of wood at one time. A large attic above this part was used as a store-room, and the part was used by a travelling shoemaker who came once a year to make boots and shoes for the family. There was also a lady who came once a year to do the family spinning. The kitchen was very large and had in it a stove which was called "King of stoves", with the oven at the top.

A trail led through the forest to the village of St. Thomas, which was situated at the bottom of the hill at the west end.

Some of the settlers at that time were Mr. and Mrs. Easterbrook, and at their home Mr. and Mrs. Locke spent Good Friday, that being Mr. Eastabrook's birthday; Mr. and Mrs. Eastabrook were Mrs. Albert Archibald's grandparents. Mr. George E. Casey owned the land now owned by the Waterworks. Mr. Casey later became a member of parliament. Other settlers included the Manns, Millers, Hills, and Penhales.

The present brick house on the Locke homestead was built in 1873.

I think we should all be grateful that we have been given the privilege of living in this present age with its many labour-saving devices, but, like our ancestors, we must press forward. With our forest rapidly diminishing, we are facing a problem of cheap fuel for heating purposes, and I feel that a means will be invented by which this can be done by hydro. I believe Providence placed such wonders as the Niagara Falls on the earth's surface for a direct use in making heat for the people. If this is so, and an invention can really compass the great problem of cheap heating with coal, what a boon to the world! Even the frozen Labrador might be lighted through its long winter nights, and be warm and cosy within. In that day the Grand Falls in Quebec will be the mine of gold and comfort.

Whittier tells us: "And all of good the past hath wrought  
Remains to make our own time gold;  
And step by step since time began  
Has seen the steady gain of man."

Fern Burton Locke  
(Mrs. W.E. Locke)  
5/25/33

1966

The farm purchased by William Locke from a Mr. Miller in 1839 was occupied by his youngest son, Charles, until his death in 1945 when it passed on to his son Percy R. Some of it has been subdivided into a choice residential district where a number of new homes have been erected.

William Locke, who came to Yarmouth Township in 1837 purchased altogether 1400 acres of land in Yarmouth. His holdings included land around Locke's Springs, some on Concession 10, as well as the land on the Edgeware Road where his son, William, built in 1873 the handsome brick house now owned by the Jennings family.

In 1912 the R.A. Penhale farm, the Charles Locke farm, and the Emerson Cahoon farm, all on the Edgeware Road, and the Alex. Anderson farm on #4 Highway just south of St. Thomas were the first farms to be equipped with milking machines and grinders run by hydro.

## THE MILLER FAMILY

Andrew Miller was born in Pennsylvania, United States, in October 1766. When he was a small boy, his people were all killed by the Indians, and he alone was taken alive by them.

In 1779 the Indians brought him to Niagara, a prisoner boy. Here he was redeemed from them by John Birch, Esq., with whom he lived until grown up.

He married the daughter of a United Empire Loyalist, and with a feeling of deep gratitude toward his benefactor, he named his eldest son after him, John Birch Miller, who was born in 1792--died 1872.

He, Andrew, in 1793, took up land in Lincoln, Welland County, on the Niagara River, five miles below Fort Erie, at the end of an Indian trail leading back through the woods toward Port Colborne. He did not receive the deed until 1801. Later he took up more land from the Crown in different parts of Ontario. Mr. John B. Miller (second) was born in Welland County in 1817, and when he was seven months old, the family moved to St. Thomas and settled on the north half of Ward 6 known as Millersburg, which is now the easterly part of St. Thomas. The son, John B., had a family of four boys and three girls: Andrew, Jacob, Edward, John, Mrs. George Mann, Mrs. William Jackson, and Miss Margaret. In 1809 Andrew was appointed to be an Ensign in the Regiment of Militia in the Niagara District, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John Warren.

Andrew, at the age of twenty-six, bought one hundred acres on the Edgeware Road, where Gordon Dennis and family now live, which he received from the Crown; the Lieutenant Governor at the time being Sir Francis Gore. In 1842 Andrew married Miss Mary Penhale, and had a family of five sons and three daughters--John, Albert, Dr. Andrew, William, Edward, Elizabeth, Eliza and Martha, still living. Mr. and Mrs. Miller celebrated their golden wedding in 1892. The grandchildren living today are Mrs. May Morrison, Miss Edna Heydon, Mrs. Walter Cole, and Mr. Norman Miller.

Mr. Andrew Miller was appointed a Corporal in the Yarmouth militia by Lord Elgin, who was then Governor-General of Canada. It was not necessary for him to go to the front. He was also Magistrate for many years, and the only one in this district--as well as councillor and reeve of Yarmouth.

Jacob, born in 1818, also a son of John B. Miller, bought a one-hundred-acre farm on the Edgeware Road, next to his brother Andrew. He married Catharine Misener of Talbot Street, and they had a family of four boys and three girls: Benjamin, John, Richard, Abraham, Sarah, Margaret, and Mary Jane. The mother of this family went to help a neighbour, contracted diphtheria, and died. The grandchildren of Jacob living today are: George Miller, Florence Logan, Violet Vail, William, Robert, Harold and Clarence Jackson, Roy Baker, Margaret L. Campbell (known as "Louie"), Mabel Cross, and Minnie Williams.

There are some relatives of the original Miller family still living at Fort Erie, Bridgeburg, and in the Niagara District; several of these have visited here in St. Thomas.

Louie Campbell  
(Mrs.) M.L. Campbell  
January 21, 1956.

### 1966

The farms on the Edgeware Road settled on by Andrew and Jacob Miller are now owned by Gordon Dennis, Peter Vanderwyst, and T.J. Smit.

### 1976

Andrew Miller's farm, formerly owned by Gordon Dennis, was purchased by the city. Hugh Fackrell lives in the house, and the property has recently been sold to the Schenley Co. (Distillers) who plan to build on the property in the future.

Jacob Miller's farm, formerly belonging to Norman Miller, is owned by Peter Vanderwyst.

### 1983

No building has been done on Andrew Miller's farm as yet. The house and outbuildings are still standing.