

PATHMASTER

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OF THE CATHOLIC PERSUASION

By Pat McCauley

What's Inside

Catholic immigrants and their descendants have made a great contribution to the history of Pickering Township. One of their enduring legacies is St. Francis de Sales Church in Pickering Village.

Tom Thomson is one of Canada's best known painters, because of his memorable paintings of Algonquin Park, the inspiration he provided the Group of Seven, and the mysterious nature of his death. Less well known is the fact that Tom was born in Pickering and that he had a brother George who was also an accomplished artist.

Personal reminiscences are an important source of our history. Going to the cottage was different 70 years ago from what it is today. One man remembers cottage life in Pickering in the 1930s, when he was a young boy. A different kind of reminiscence involves the thrill and glamour of the film industry. One family's opportunities for movie immortality ended twice with a brusque, "Cut!"

How do hobbies begin? An interest lying dormant can come to life as unexpectedly as finding a jar beside a hiking trail. Collecting can become an obsession, but it has many rewards.

Religion was for many early settlers in Pickering a focusing force which gave meaning and direction to their arduous lives. The earliest religious group of settlers was Quakers, who, led by Timothy Rogers, immigrated from Pennsylvania in 1810. Other Protestant settlers arrived sporadically. Some were United Empire Loyalists, a few were soldiers and retired officers, and some came from earlier settlements in Upper Canada. Until the 1820s there were no known Roman Catholics in Pickering Township.

In the 1820s and 1830s immigration from the British Isles began, driven by the promise of free land and the chance for a better future. In the British Isles, large landholders and the class system gave the ordinary tenant farmer little hope of rising above a life of struggle and subsistence. In southern Ireland the outlook was especially bleak. The trickle of Irish Catholic immigrants in the 1820s became a stream in the 1830s when repeated blights of the potato crop began.

By 1825, names of Irish origin appeared in the list of offices in Pickering and Whitby, such as Carling, McKay, O'Brien, Gormley, and Tracey. By 1836, officials of the townships included O'Connor, Heaney, Sullivan, and Brennan. Some of the early pioneers were young bachelors like Denis O'Connor who came with George O'Leary from County Cork, Ireland, in 1831. Denis located at what is now Rossland and Lakeridge Roads (Con3, Lot1), while George settled on Lot 6 Concession 4.

Other members of their families followed from Ireland, including Timothy O'Leary in 1832, and Denis' brothers Daniel and Jeremiah O'Connor, with their families, in 1837 and 1854 respectively. Some of their female relatives came to Canada as well. George married Denis' sister Mary O'Connor, and Denis returned the favour by marrying George's sister Mary O'Leary. Their son Denis O'Connor, after whom the Ajax school is named, became Archbishop of Toronto. The O'Connor family and many other Irish pioneer families contributed numerous nuns and priests to the Roman Catholic church.

James and Harriet Hardgrove Morrissey from Kilkenny were among the early settlers in Pickering Village. They built a frame house on Church Street which stood until about 1966, when it was replaced by a rectory for St. Francis de Sales church.

Another Irish family, the Lennons, settled on a farm near Greenwood where Highway 7 now swings north as a Greenwood by-pass. The Lennon house was one of the stations where the mission priest said Sunday Mass for Catholics in the surrounding area.

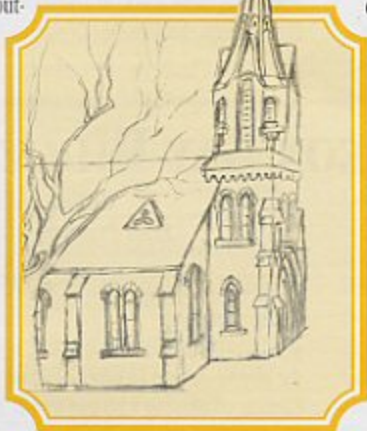
Patrick Teefy, born in Tipperary in 1839, came to Canada with his parents as a boy. His family also settled in Greenwood. Patrick was a labourer on the Grand Trunk Railway which was completed from Montreal to Toronto in 1856. About 1866 he was awarded a medal for loyalty during the Fenian Raids. Patrick and

Alice Curtis Teefy had nine children, and farmed at Greenwood until 1896, when the family moved to Cherrywood. Among other Irish settlers at Greenwood were Charles and William McGuire from County Wexford. Charles never married, but William married Margaret Parrell and they had ten children.

Greenwood became a lively hamlet with two flour mills, three hotels, and several general stores. It also boasted of shoemakers,

blacksmiths, and a harness shop. There was also a cooper's shop which made the barrels used to ship the local flour to Frenchman's Bay. Many Irish found their first jobs in the cooperage industry. The area west of Greenwood became known as Cooperstown, and the residents were for the most part Catholics.

Audley was another, smaller centre of activity. Though it had no mills, it had a blacksmith's shop, a general store, and other small shops. A number of the Irish settled in this area. Timothy O'Leary, a cousin of George, acquired Lot 4, Concession 4 near Audley in 1832. Thomas McCann from County Cavan also settled in Audley about 1832. One of his daughters, Margaret, married Emmanuel Maddaford, one of the postmasters for Audley after the post office was opened in 1853.



Catholic families settled in many parts of the township. Some Irish men began as labourers, saving money to establish farms or businesses. Jobs were available at the mills which sprang up on the waterways of the area, or as farm labour. Other families, such as Jeremiah and Ellen O'Leary, from County Cork, were relatively affluent immigrants and were part of an Irish group settlement in Pickering Township in the 1830s. Irish Catholic family names are found in the records in Greenwood, Audley, Whitevale, Cherrywood, Dunbarton, Brock Road, the Baseline Road, and along Kingston Road east of Pickering Village.

Before 1843, the Catholic settlers in Pickering were visited only occasionally by missionary priests. The nearest parish was in the east end of Toronto at Power and Queen Streets. Sometimes parties of Catholics would gather in Pickering on a Saturday morning for the day-long trek to Toronto. They would stay overnight, attend Sunday Mass, and then begin the long journey home. Many small children accompanied their parents to be christened. Margaret Maddaford was said to have been one of these.

In 1843, Pickering became a mission district of the parish of Oshawa. Father J.B. Proulx, appointed in 1848, built the first Catholic mission church in Pickering, St. Wilfred's.

It was a wooden structure which by

1870 was in a dilapidated state and required propping up. The old building which was situated on the east side of Notion Road is long gone now, but its cemetery remains. The gravestones were reassembled in the centre of the graveyard around 1940. Most of the names still legible are Irish.

The parish of St. Francis de Sales was established in 1860. Many of the early Irish settlers were founders according to the parish records. In 1863, Father A.T. Pinan reported 812 Catholics in the parish, which included a mission church at Highland Creek, as well as St. Wilfred's. The building of a new church was commenced in 1869 by Father Francis Hayden, and it was completed in 1871. Parishioners contributed their time and labour to its construction. All the bricks were hauled by horse team from Whitby, and the names of volunteers are recorded in the parish history. Stained glass windows were donated by several families. Later, a one-acre lot was acquired across from the new church and furnished along three sides with hitching rails to facilitate the worshippers who came by horse and buggy or wagon.

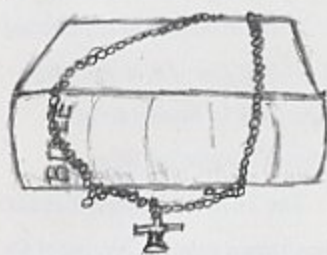
The ebb and flow of the St. Francis parish mirrored that of Pickering Township. The township population which was about 4500 in 1840 climbed to more than 6000 in 1860, only to fall

again by 1911 to 4500. By 1915 there were just 35 Catholic families left in the St. Francis parish district. Bishop McEvoy decided to set up a new parish in Whitby to serve both communities and for the next 29 years St. Francis' parish was administered from Whitby. However, the defence industry of World War II brought a new surge of Catholics from many backgrounds into the township and the parish of St. Francis was re-established in 1942, with its own mission in Ajax.

In 1950, a new parish named St. Bernadette was established in Ajax. St. Francis, suddenly losing the new Catholic industrial workers, seemed in danger of slipping back into rural languor. Father Vincent L. McGivney, the pastor at the time, cast about for remedies for his depleted congregation. He organized an emigration of Catholic families from the Netherlands in co-operation with the Bishop of Holland. Dutch war brides had sent home good reports of life in Canada, and families left behind found the prospect of a new start very attractive. Homes and jobs were arranged for the new arrivals. Some eventually left Pickering but many settled down to stay, so that in the post-war years Dutch immigrants and their families made up a significant proportion of the St. Francis congregation. The priests of St. Francis de Sales were also in charge of a mission at

Rosebank starting in 1860, and a mission church was established in a vacant building there. In 1965 the Rosebank mission was transferred to Bay Ridges, and is now the parish of Holy Redeemer.

Since that time the population of Pickering/Ajax has soared as people sought more affordable homes and space. A new Catholic church, St. Isaac Jogues, has been established on Finch Avenue in Pickering, and there are now 15 Catholic elementary schools and 2 high schools in the former Pickering Township. The Catholics of Pickering are now welcoming a new wave of immigrants from all parts of Canada and all over the world.



SOURCES:

- Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Ontario*. Toronto: J.H. Beers and Co., 1877.
- Phelan, E. C. *The Parish of St. Francis de Sales: A Centennial History*. 1966.
- Interviews with Marguerite O'Connor of Ajax, great-granddaughter of Denis O'Connor.

From illustration: St. Francis de Sales Roman Catholic Church, Pickering Village. Copied from drawings by Pat McCauley

ODEON BAY RIDGES DRIVE-IN THEATRE

Submitted by Judith Goulin

From *Pickering News* (3 January 1963), p. 8.



The new Odeon Bay Ridges Drive-in theatre opened on the first day of winter, and while it began to snow during the showing of the movie, the people were warm in their cars, because of the flexibility and advantages of electric heat. This is Canada's first Outdoor All-electric Theatre and is located between Highways No. 2 and 401, just east of the Liverpool Road.

There is no need to run car engines, wasting gasoline, nor is there any risk of dangerous fumes. Safe, clean, portable 750 watt electric heaters are brought into the car interior with the sound amplifier. The electric heater circulate[s] warm air evenly by means of a tiny built-in fan which provides plenty of heat and proper air circulation for all

occupants of the car...

There are many features of this outdoor theatre that are outstanding. It has the largest motion picture screen in Canada, measuring 120 feet by 58 1/2 feet [36 x 17.5 m] and, the screen tower is equal in height to a nine storey building. The Odeon Bay Ridges outdoor theatre screen is approximately five times larger than the Odeon Carlton theatre screen in Toronto... [The] screen picture can be seen clearly for more than a half mile-even beyond No. 2 Highway...

Al Hewitt, Odeon's Bay Ridges outdoor movie manager, stated that the large paved theatre lot can handle a total of 1,000 cars in summer, and in winter there is provision for 550 cars with this number of post-mounted 750 watt electric heaters available to keep

patrons warm and car windshields free of ice. He also said that the concession building was large enough to cater to the refreshment needs of 2,000 persons each half hour.

The Odeon Theatre chain is confident, Mr. Hewitt pointed out, that outdoor movies will become as popular in winter months as in summer with movie patrons because of the heating advantages of electricity. He said that the whole family is able to go as a group, which enables them to dress as they like, and

eliminates the need for baby sitters. The popularity of summer outdoor theatre-going simply is being widened to include winter months, thanks to the flexibility and many benefits of electric heating, he said.

NAMES IN THE NEWS

THE THOMSON FAMILY

by John W. Sabean

An Artistic Note with a fish tale



Most Canadians know the name Tom Thomson. They know him as the artist who first began to paint the north country, and as the artist who inspired the Group of Seven. They also know that he died under mysterious circumstances in the one of the lakes of Algonquin Park. After his death in 1917, some of his friends erected a memorial cairn on a bluff overlooking Canoe Lake.

The plaque on the cairn was designed by J.E.H. MacDonald, who was one of the leaders of the Group, which was formed three years after Thomson's death. At the bottom of the plaque it reads: "His body is buried at Owen Sound, Ontario, near where he

little stone cottage just east of Claremont, in Pickering Township.

Tom Thomson was named for his grandfather, Thomas—known locally as "Tam"—Thomson (1806-1875), who emigrated from Scotland to Upper Canada in the mid-1830s. After marrying Elizabeth Brodie (1812-1879) in 1839 (she was from the same parish in Scotland), they settled on the NE 1/4 Lot 14, Concession 8, in Pickering Township.

Rev. William Wood, writing in 1911, told about the difficulties the Thomsons faced in their early years, when neighbours were few and supplies were obtained only at great distances and with great effort. "Eventually, like other early pioneers, they cleared the land, built a home, gained a small but adequate living, and were in time able to enjoy some leisure time.

Tam Thomson had a great passion, one which he shared with fellow countryman

Peter McNab, who owned the general store in Claremont. Each in their youth in Scotland had learned the "gentle art" of fishing in the streams that flowed through the glens. Whenever one reads anything about either Thomson or McNab one invariably finds some allusion to their readiness at any time to leave work behind and head off together with fishing tackle and basket in hand to angle in the waters of Glen Major for trout or in Frenchman's Bay for pike.

Tom and Elizabeth Thomson had only one child, John, who apparently inherited a love for the "gentle art." Was it for the fishing that John, after the death of his parents, moved to Leith?

Blodwen Davies told of John's search for land: heading northward from Claremont in horse and buggy he stopped occasionally to turn over a spadeful of soil, but unsatisfied, continued on. "Finally," she wrote, "he came to a spot at Leith, on Owen Sound, which satisfied him. It was a beautifully wooded country reaching down to a sheet of water that promised good fishing."¹

Thomson returned to the stone cottage in Pickering to gather his family, including his youngest child, two-month old Thomas John Thomson, the sixth of ten children. Davies continued: "So Tom Thomson made his first journey, in his mother's arms, toward the north country of which he was to become priest and prophet."

Commercial art became Tom Thomson's livelihood, landscape painting was his road to fame, but it was the "gentle art" of fishing that was always his passion as it had been for his father and grandfather before him. Many are the stories that have been told of his abilities with rod and reel, and many photographs have survived from his Algonquin years that show him displaying his day's catch.

As a commercial artist, Thomson began to work for Grip Limited about 1907. There he was to meet most of the artists who would later form the Group of Seven. In company with some of them, and with other artists, he began to travel into the countryside to paint. In the country around Toronto and in places like Lake Scugog, Thomson "first began painting the themes which would constitute the major part of his *oeuvre*...."² In the spring of 1912, he went to Algonquin Park; he was to return to this setting each of his remaining years. The names of Tom Thomson and Algonquin Park have since become inextricably linked.

Tom had an older brother, George, who was also a landscape painter, and, but for the overwhelming fame of his brother, George might be better known today. George Thomson (1868-1965) was older than Tom by nine years (and thus has a better claim on Pickering as he lived his first nine years in the stone cottage set back from the 9th

Concession Road). He ran a business school in Seattle, Washington, for a while, before studying law. But art was to claim him in the end. He studied art at the Art Students' League in New York City, then moved to New Haven, Connecticut, where he lived and painted from 1910 to 1926. He exhibited

TO THE MEMORY OF
TOM THOMSON
ARTIST, WOODSMAN
AND GUIDE
WHO WAS DROWNED IN CANOE LAKE
JULY 8TH 1917

HE LIVED HUMBLLY BUT PASSIONATELY
WITH THE WILD. IT MADE HIM PROPER
TO ALL UNTAMED THINGS OF NATURE
IT DREW HIM APART AND REVEALED
ITSELF WONDERFULLY TO HIM.
IT SENT HIM OUT FROM THE WOODS
ONLY TO SHOW THESE REVELATIONS
THROUGH HIS ART. AND IT TOOK
HIM TO ITSELF AT LAST.

HIS FELLOW ARTISTS AND OTHER FRIENDS AND ADMIRERS
JOIN GLADLY IN THIS TRIBUTE TO
HIS CHARACTER AND GENIUS

HIS BODY IS BURIED AT
OWEN SOUND ON TARIFF BEAK
WHERE HE WAS BORN
AUGUST 1877

1877

Design for Tom Thomson memorial on Canoe Lake, Algonquin Park.

his paintings locally, but also by 1915, began to send some of his work to Canada for exhibition.

In 1926, he returned to Canada for good. He became a member of the Ontario Society of Artists and painted landscapes especially in the neighbourhood of the old homestead near Georgian Bay. Albert Robson wrote about him as early as 1932: "George Thomson is a landscape painter of sincerity and his paintings have a fine sense of light. Since his return to Canada, his work has been improving in power and interpretative quality."⁴

Notes:

- 1 *Past Years in Pickering* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1911), p. 300.
- 2 *Paddle and Palette: The Story of Tom Thomson* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1930), pp. 6-7.
- 3 Joan Murray, *The Art of Tom Thomson* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1971), p. 21.
- 4 *Canadian Landscape Painters* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1932), p. 164.



Photograph from Claremont Past and Present

"Tam" Thomson and Peter McNab prepare for a day's fishing excursion

was born, August 1877." MacDonald later acknowledged his error and apologized to the Thomson family. For although Thomson grew up in Leith, near Owen Sound, he was born in a

BOTTLES CONNECTING WITH THE PAST

By Alyson Hazlett



My fascination with the past is a fairly recent development, historically speaking. About five years ago I became interested in old bottles. My husband and I and our three daughters were hiking along one of the many rugged and beautiful sections of the Bruce Trail when we noticed several shards of broken glass in the dirt. We bent down to have a closer look and found pieces of old milk bottles and fruit jars — relics from a farm long gone. We found one jar intact, a common Crown sealer in clear glass with the date 1936 and a *D* in a diamond embossed on the base (Diamond Glass Co. Montreal).

It is not uncommon to come across old pieces of glass or metal in areas where there were farms, but to find a piece with a date on it was fortunate. We continued our hike, with the fruit jar riding safely in my backpack. I couldn't stop thinking about that dump and how the fruit jar might once have held someone's peach preserves during the long cold winter season. I also tried to imagine how long that jar had rested

in the dirt on top of the limestone cliff. I didn't realize it at the moment, but something wonderful had happened: I had just made a connection with people and times from before I was born! The jar had seized my imagination. Perhaps the chance to discover and actually hold something from the past was what made the link real for me.

When we returned home that afternoon, I had a budding new interest. I pulled out a box of old medicine bottles I had found over the years, but had kept with only a limited interest. Something about them must have touched me, as I hadn't thrown them away. I went to the local library hoping to find even one book about old bottles. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that several books on bottles, both Canadian and American, had been published, many in the 1970s when the most recent surge of collecting interest had taken place. I went home with the books like so much treasure.

Most of my bottles had no markings at all. One had the letters *B.E.T.* on the base. Leafing through *Bottles in Canada*, by Doris and Peter Unitt, I



found a reference to the Beaver Flint Glass Company of Toronto; hence the *B.E.T.* on the bottle (page 185). This glass company was in business as early as the 1890s. Now I had stepped back into another century! I read all the bottle books I could find and began to realize that there were more sizes, colours, and shapes of bottles than I could have imagined. I also acquired a general understanding of glass blowing and the history of bottles in Canada.

Bottle collecting has become my hobby. Medicine bottles are my favourites, especially ones that pre-date Confederation (1867). Researching the people and places connected with the bottles is just as important to me as collecting. In this way, I can share my enthusiasm for local history and meet other people who also have a fascination for the past.

If you like old bottles and want to chat or just want more information, I may be reached at (416)745-8930 or by e-mail at hazlett@aims.on.ca

SOURCES:
Unitt, Peter and Doris,
Bottles in Canada, Peterborough,
Ontario, 1972.

LAST ISSUE'S WHAT'S IT?

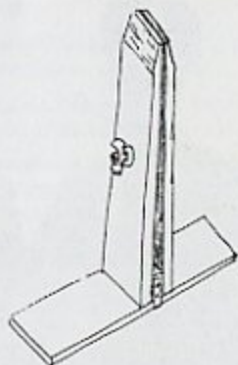
by Dave Marlowe



ANSWER :

The artifact shown is a maple sugar mould which was typical of those used in the early to mid-1800s in southern Ontario. Later in the century, imported cane sugar began to take the place of maple sugar in everyday use, and tin replaced wood as a material for moulds.
(Continued on page 28)

THIS ISSUE'S WHAT'S IT?



This item was common in most rural homes from the late 1800s on into the first quarter of the 20th century. It would most often be found in the home workshop, or possibly in the drive shed. It stands approximately 30 cm (12 in) high, and the base is the same length.

The two upright "jaws" are separated at the base by a piece of wood approximately 2.5 cm (1 in) thick. Higher up on the wooden jaws, they are held together with a bolt and adjustable thumbscrew. It is a mass-produced item, rather than being home-made. This particular artifact shows signs of wear from use, as well as stains from an oily substance around the upper edges of the jaws.

Dave Marlowe
is Educational Officer of the
Pickering Museum Village.

THE BENTLEY HOUSE

[Commentary on the Bentley House, Brougham, from Kim Ondaatje and Lois Mackenzie, *Old Ontario Houses (Scarborough: Gage Publishing, 1977), p. B12.*]

[William Bentley established a patent medicine factory in the farming community of Brougham sometime in the late 1840s and then built his house directly opposite it in the early 1850s.]



Like his elixirs, Mr. Bentley's house is a florid melange but capped by a particularly grand belvedere. The porch, which is a late addition, almost obscures the fluted and free-standing columns of the Greek Revival entrance door. It also detracts from the "fifth window" in the upper storey, the three-part window which became one of the basic features of Georgian architecture and was sup-


posedly the most emphatic element in the facade. The three-part Palladian window traditionally found above the front door of Georgian houses has a central round-headed window flanked by two smaller flat-headed ones. This Bentley window is a regional style and can be seen in wood, stone and brick houses in the Brougham-Markham area. Its windows are pointed Gothic Revival style and very attractively set in an ellipse, emblematic of Neo-classical forms.

The house works (with the exception of the front porch) because each com-

ponent is of high quality. One historian has called the house "a simultaneity of styles." Like their clothes, the people in Ontario never, or rarely, discarded an architectural style they liked.

Belvederes became part of the architectural scene in the 1850s and were a feature of the Italianate style. They were often placed on the roof of large bracketed houses for interest rather than to illuminate the attic or a central hall. This one, is particularly grand with its multi-paned windows scaled to the six-over-six Georgian windows in the rest of the house.

PTHS MAKING OUR OWN HISTORY

 Our December meeting was Members Night. Since this was our first experiment in this type of programming, we didn't know quite what to expect, and could only hope that someone would bring in something to display. We should have had more faith. Members responded well to our requests. Sylvia Spencer and Alyson Hazlett both have hobbies that involve quite a bit of local history. Sylvia collects postal items and has a good number of items from Pickering's past. She covered a large table with her postal history.

Alyson's hobby is collecting bottles, especially medicine bottles. Among the items that she has acquired are two that relate to Pickering. Bentley's Patent Medicine Company in Brougham is well known in the community, but few now can boast of owning a bottle from that establishment. Even more unique—and

new to most of us—was a bottle marked A. Knowles. Knowles was a farmer in south Pickering who apparently sold what he advertised as a "celebrated German oil."

Other displays covered a great variety of topics. Among them were family items, including letters and examples of *fraktur*, brought in by Lys Laurence; some archaeological items that Tom Mohr has been collecting; family photographs of Doug Willson's; photographs of local sites, especially cemeteries, taken by Henry Gawman; and an unusual painted drawer displayed by Andrea Graham.

We thank all contributors for taking part. It was a learning experience for us all, as well as being an enjoyable evening.

"The Mennonite Settlement of Pickering" was the subject of our January meeting. Local historian, and Mennonite, Paul Burkholder told us of

the origins of the Mennonites in 16th century Europe, and then traced the migration of some of their members to North America. From the United States after the Revolutionary War some Mennonite families came to Canada, a good number settling in the Markham area, spilling over into the western side of Pickering Township. It was these Pickering families whose stories Mr. Burkholder related.

Pickering Township has had a significant artistic history. PTHS vice-president John Sabeau spoke about a number of the artists who have been connected in one way or another with this area.

Among the artists, critics, and historians under discussion were Charles Fothergill, Ebenezer Birrell, Florence McGillivray, Tom and George Thomson, Doris Mills Speirs, and Bess and Fred Housser.



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CONTRIBUTIONS TO PATHMASTER

If you have an article, book review, or other suitable item you would like to submit for publication in our newsletter, please phone John Sabeau at (905) 831-3811.

E-mail: athand@inforamp.net

COTTAGE HOLIDAYS IN PICKERING

Andy Rodgers and Lys Cambridge Laurence

Fairport Road back in the 1920s was just a narrow dirt road bordered by farms and a sprinkling of new summer cottages. To little Andy Rodgers and his brother, from the Main and Gerrard neighbourhood in Toronto, it was an exciting destination. A whole new world of experiences awaited them at Uncle George's cottage in Pickering.

Uncle George Fisher and Aunt Molly picked up the boys at home. The Rodgers family did not own an automobile, so riding in Uncle George's car was a treat in itself. But no talking was allowed! If an excited little boy spoke up, Aunt Molly would sternly tell him, "You don't talk to your Uncle George while he's driving!" Uncle George wore leather gauntlets to drive, and he was known to barrel along Kingston Road at 40 miles per hour.

The Fisher cottage was on the west side of Fairport Road, south of Finch Avenue. The farm across the road was operated by Dan Anderson. The cottage lots were cleared in front, probably former pasture, with bush at the back. A

creek ran behind the cottages, and can still be seen today, coming south behind the houses, and crossing under Fairport Road between Finch Avenue and Stroud's Lane. Uncle Harry Pimbley and Aunt Jenny also had a cottage on Fairport Road, and Uncle Jim Fisher often stayed with his brother George.

The cottages were built in stages. In Andy's memory, it was as if a hammer was a natural extension of the uncles' arms. One year the foundation and floor would be built, the following year the shell would go up, and the walls would be finished the next year. The well was dug by hand. But the cottages were never "completed", for there were always new projects and improvements. The summer kitchen was a separate building, about the size of a small garage. It featured a wood cookstove, a table, and a stool. The walls were ingeniously designed to let out the heat of the stove. They were framed in only part-way up, and the rest was screening. Uncle George expected a good Sunday dinner, even at the cottage, so here Aunt Molly prepared the beef roast or chick-

en. She appreciated the ventilation of the summer kitchen while she was working, and at bedtime everyone else would appreciate that the frame cottage with its open ceiling had not been heated up by the cookstove.

The cottage did have a wood stove too, for use in cooler weather. Of course there was no electricity: light was supplied by oil lamps. The "biffy" was outside, not too close to the cottage. Refrigeration had been planned for in a most inventive way. Uncle George had installed a "flow" in the creek. This consisted of a wooden frame with shelves. The frame stood right in the stream, with its lower shelves right in the water. Bottles and jars were chilled here. The shelves that were higher were used for butter, cheese, and meat. The sides were enclosed, and a heavy stone on top of the wooden lid kept raccoons out.

At the cottage, a small boy could always find something fascinating to watch or do. Andy could watch one of the uncles carrying out a carpentry project. He could explore along the creek, and wade in the cold water.

Occasionally a group walked all the way to the general store in Dunbarton, with its attraction of penny candy. Across the road at the farm, Andy helped Dan Anderson bring in the cows for milking. It was interesting to watch the farmer working his fields with the team of horses. Riding on the wagon was something special, but only if there was no load. A high load of hay was considered too dangerous a spot for a city boy.

Andy enjoyed holidays at the cottage on Fairport Road in the late 1920s and early 1930s. When Andy and Marina moved to Pickering in 1976, Andy drove along Fairport Road to look for the old cottage. Some of the old places still stood, transformed over the years into regular homes. He could not identify the cottage, but the old Anderson farmhouse was still standing at that time. Now it is gone, and many new homes have replaced the old houses along Fairport. No indication remains that this was once cottage country, but the happy memory of holidays at the Fairport Road cottage has stayed with Andy Rodgers all his life.



By Andrea Graham, President, PineRidge Arts Council



I remember sitting in a pew in the old Whitevale Church with my husband Al, and our infant daughter Courtney. I wore a long homespun skirt, primitive blouse, shawl, and bonnet. The minister stood high behind the carved pulpit. At the back of the church, the old black stove barely heated the room. Outside in the snow the wagons were parked, the horses snorting with the cold. The date was circa 1880. A dream? A previous life? No.

Hollywood Hits North Pickering!

The year:	1970
The town:	Brougham
The location:	Pickering Township Museum
The movie:	<i>The Megantic Outlaw</i>
The star:	Lloyd Bochner

Along with several other Brougham and Claremont residents, our family of three was hired to be "extras" in the film. I believe we were paid about fifteen dollars each for the day. That was good pay for 1970! To my knowledge,

The Megantic Outlaw was the first feature to be filmed partly in Pickering.

Outside the church, baby Courtney was needed for close-ups with the two principal actors. At that point she decided that she had had enough of film making and began crying and screaming so loudly she drowned out the dialogue. After several "takes", she was "cut" and was replaced with a blanketed doll. The irony is that 28 years later, Courtney now has a career in the film business—behind the camera. She is second camera assistant on the TV series *Nikita*. She also worked on the TV series *The Rez* and on the recent Hollywood feature film, *Mimic*, with Mira Sorvino.

I remember watching the making of two other Hollywood films in and around Claremont in the 80s: *Strange Invaders* with Louise Fletcher, filmed in 1983, and *Pink Chiquitas*, a 1987 film starring Frank Stallone (Sylvester's brother). Neither movie could be described as a blockbuster.

During the filming of *Strange Invaders*, our dog, Alhasa Apso, was spotted by the director while out for his walk. The director was obviously

impressed with our little dog. I got a phone call asking if they could use the dog in the movie. They would be filming out at the Dunlap Observatory and would pay \$20 and send a car just for him! My response was yes, but Courtney would have to accompany him for another \$20.

The walkways and steps around the inside of the observatory were all metal grillwork. The dog was to walk along this grillwork with one of the very grotesque "creatures" featured in the movie. But alas, his small paws went right through the grille spaces. He balked and refused to move. They even put clear plastic over the grille, but, "once burned twice shy". It was another Graham failure to make it to the Big Screen. Courtney and the dog were sent home. She was embarrassed; he was on the cutting room floor.

The Black Stallion made in 1979 was commercially successful. Parts of it were shot west of Claremont at Sideline 24, using century barns that had been expropriated for the "Pickering International Airport". This movie starred Mickey Rooney. Carroll Ballard

was the director and Caleb Deschanel was the cinematographer. Both are internationally famous for their beautiful and sensitive imagery. Interestingly, they both returned to the area in 1996 to work on *Fly Away Home*, a film starring Jeff Daniels and Anna Paquin. Deschanel was nominated for an Academy Award for cinematography for this film. *Fly Away Home* was loosely based on the life story of former Pickering resident and local hero, Bill Lishman, whose dream was to fly with the birds. A beautiful century barn east of Claremont on Sideline 12 was used in filming the scenes involving the newly-hatched goslings.

In the late 70s, the Pickering Museum was moved to Greenwood as the Brougham location had been expropriated for the airport. In the mid-80s, scenes for *Anne of Green Gables* were filmed there, and the Museum has kept records of the numerous films since shot there. Today the Town of Pickering's Culture and Recreation Department is actively promoting Pickering and its urban and rural environs as a great location for film making.

THE ROLE OF THE PATHMASTER IN THE 1880s: TWO VIEWS

Compiled by John W. Sabeau

Charles Luther Burton, a president of the Simpson's department store, lived his first 12 years (1876-1888) in the village of Green River where his father ran the general store. Late in his life he looked back on these years in his Memoirs.

"One of my earliest memories is of my farmer grandfather as 'pathmaster'. It could hardly be described as a public office and yet working without pay he

was responsible for the maintenance of a certain section of the roadway. Good and faithful pathmasters were much respected among their neighbours, and were given ready co-operation. The Brock road running north via Brougham was always a good well-gravelled road, as was the sixth concession of Pickering, both the result of faithful pathmasters, good Reformers who did their duty but were always influential to keep local matters in local hands."

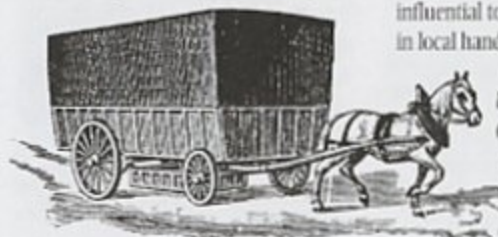
C.L. Burton, *A Sense of Urgency: Memoirs of a Canadian Merchant* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1952), p. 349.

During the years 1883-1884, Ross Johnston, a Whitby resident, wrote for the *Whitby Chronicle*, under the pen name of "Traveller", a series of articles about the County of Ontario.

"While in the neighborhood a little north east of Dunbarton, I fell in with a former Whitby acquaintance, Mr. Henry Chapple.... Harry thinks the present system of doing road-work in this country is *all wrong*. There is in it a sad want of adaptation of means to ends. The work, through want of proper supervision is often worse than labor thrown away. The appointment of a Path Master is often, if not generally a *hap hazard* appointment, and through frequent change of that

functionary the little good that may have been done one year is often undone the next. A *radical change is needed*. The making or improving of the roads should be under the supervision of a duly qualified Road Inspector, appointed and payed by the township or other council and *responsible thereto*. The present plan may have answered a good purpose in the past, and may do so still in some localities, but on the whole 'its usefulness is gone.' It is *rotten* and should be *buried*.... Take note of this ye Solons of the County and Township councils and consider the subject well."

Traveller, "Our County", *Whitby Chronicle* 28 (Friday, 16 November 1883), p.2.



MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS REWARDS

by Tom Mohr

Welcome to the third issue of *Pathmaster*, the newsletter of the Pickering Township Historical Society. As copies of the first two issues circulate in the community, I continue to hear many compliments directed at both their design and content. It is appropriate to acknowledge those responsible for a job well done. The reader's attention is directed to the masthead located on the last page of each issue, and to the individual bylines. I'd like to thank the designer, editorial staff, authors, and those who have loaned their photographs, for their time and effort in making this publication one of which to be proud.

Some readers may have received this issue free and wonder at their good fortune. This is not an oversight; it is an effort to familiarize folks with the PTHS, and what we are up to. We think

you will be so impressed that you will fill out a membership form and join the Society. Memberships are critical to our success. They define who we are and lend credence to our efforts. They allow us to speak with the voice of many, and the low annual fee provides funds for us to work.

Why do we need funds? Each newsletter represents an investment of about \$350, including fixed costs such as production and postage. Our monthly meetings, which we believe represent a high standard of programming, also require a cash outlay for the room and speaker's honorarium. We are dependent upon our membership fees for our operating capital. At the moment, membership stands at about 40, and that is gratifying for a young organization such as ours.

If you support our goals, and if you

have enjoyed our newsletter and programming, the best gesture of appreciation is to take out membership. To those who have already done so, to those who have made individual donations, thank you. Other benefits of membership will become apparent as we progress.

Members will receive a reduction in the price of publications, in field trips, and in special programming such as our upcoming co-sponsored workshop on writing history, and an opportunity to work on a real archaeological excavation.

We are now incorporated through affiliation with the Ontario Historical Society and are awaiting charitable status with Revenue Canada which will allow us to issue tax receipts for donations received.

Some of the other activities in which

we have been involved include: establishing ourselves as a commenting agency on local heritage matters, and taking part in Scarborough's Heritage Showcase with about 50 other heritage groups in the GTA. Watch for us at the Frenchman's Bay Festival and other community events.

Our members are engaged in individual research and collection of materials relevant to our past. We are eagerly anticipating the results of a core sampling survey of Frenchman's Bay which will tell us much about the changing face of this area. All of this information, which might languish unknown or unpublished, will be brought into the public record and made available for educational purposes or general interest.

The Pickering Township Historical Society welcomes all to share in its pursuit of preserving our very rich heritage.

BOOK REVIEW

Reviewed by John W. Sabeau

LOOKING FOR OLD ONTARIO: TWO CENTURIES OF LANDSCAPE CHANGE.

By Thomas F. McIlwraith. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997. 400 pages. Illustrated. Bibliography. Index. \$19.95 pb



When I first moved to Ontario (near Guelph)

about 30 years ago, I was immediately struck by the number of brick houses in the province. It seemed to me that there was a much higher percentage of brick dwellings here than in any other place I had been across eastern North America. Over the years I have continued to suspect that my first impressions were correct, but I had no way of demonstrating the truth of my surmise. I found the proof recently in *Looking for Old Ontario*.

I was right. McIlwraith says that by 1931 Ontario was 27 per cent brick as opposed to 6 per cent in Quebec and only 1 or 2 per cent elsewhere in Canada. There are no exact records for states bordering the Great Lakes, but the figures appear to be corresponding

ly small. And the bricking of Ontario continues to this day. McIlwraith even claims that the "widespread use of brick is Ontario's most distinctive landscape characteristic." (p. 88)

McIlwraith also answers the question why Ontario is brick. There are several factors, but part of the answer has to do with the abundance of lumber available for export in nineteenth-century Ontario, combined with a free trade policy between Canada and the United States between 1854 and 1866. Ontarians built their homes of unexportable brick and shipped their wood to the south.

Not all wood from Ontario's forests was exported, however. Early settlers used wood for all sorts of purposes, and they had to learn by experience the special properties of each species in order to make the best use of the resource. Thus, for example, as McIlwraith states:

"Every Ontario barn is a gallery of the Great Lakes mixed forest." (p. 32) Framing was done in oak or red pine, while the frame was held together by pegs whittled from ash or birch. Floor joists were made from tamarack, white cedar, or elm, while cedar provided the material for roof shingles. Elsewhere on the farm a variety of tree species provided for the special needs of the farmer.

The next time you drive out into the countryside, stop for a while alongside a farm and consider what development and change has occurred over the years. Need help to formulate the right questions? Look no further than *Looking for Old Ontario*. This is a book which will help you to understand the landscape of southern Ontario.



McIlwraith shows you how to "read" a landscape, to look in a new way at houses, barns, fences, cemeteries,

farms, roadsides, and much else. His discussion covers not only the construction of vernacular structures, but also how these structures fit into the social fabric of the land. This is a book not only to be read, but also to be used for reference by all who are interested in local history, historic architecture, heritage conservation, or, for that matter, anyone who just loves to drive in the country.

The heritage conservation movement has been around for over 100 years — and McIlwraith provides some of that history. The movement has, perhaps, now come of age and conservationists now see the landscape in terms of decay and new life. In fact, this is the main theme of *Looking for Old Ontario*. The landscape of southern Ontario is undergoing constant change. "Southern Ontario offers a countryside of alterations, not originals," he says (p. 8). By comparing the way different places in the province have developed over the years, you may gain new insight into the way your own area has developed.

Consider, for example, the brick schoolhouses scattered throughout Pickering (and all across southern Ontario) that date from the latter half of the nineteenth century. These are

the legacy of J. George Hodgins who served as deputy superintendent of education from the 1850s to 1876, and as deputy minister until 1890. It was Hodgins who shaped the policy of public education in Ontario in its formative years. At the centre of his policy were the "attractive, durable, and functional" schoolhouses that are still readily identified by their "hall-like lines, roadside site, shade trees, and dated marker, frequently with the township name." (p. 160) Having learned this information from *Looking for Old Ontario* one has a greater appreciation for these buildings, so many of which are still standing — some lying empty while others are now transformed into homes or put to other uses. Here is an example of how the physical characteristics of the landscape have stories to tell to the person who is receptive to the hearing.

McIlwraith is an associate professor of geography at Erindale College and has been studying the landscape of southern Ontario for over 30 years. The notes, suggested reading, and selected bibliography are very helpful for developing certain themes suggested by the book, and for exploring these themes in more depth.



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(Continued from page 24)

These wooden moulds were usually carved from close-grained hardwoods such as maple, birch, or sometimes walnut. The candies produced from these would be a special treat, rather than for everyday use. Prior to the availability of imported,

refined sugar, maple sugar and syrup were the main source of sweetening for the early settlers. For everyday use, the sugar was formed in larger block moulds. As it was required for baking and other uses, it would be broken from these blocks and crushed.

COMING EVENTS:

General Meetings of the Pickering Township Historical Society

Day: Second Tuesday of the month, September through June

Time: 7:30 p.m. **Place:** Pickering Recreation Complex

ADMISSION IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

SPRING SCHEDULE:

Tuesday, 14 April 1998

Guest speaker: Chris Andersen
Chris Andersen, regional archaeologist with the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, will talk about the period of "Native Occupation of Pickering Township".

Tuesday, 12 May 1998

Guest speaker: Harvey Medland
World traveller and Toronto school teacher, Mr. Medland will tell us some "Stories Behind the Gravestones".

Tuesday, 9 June 1998

Guest speaker: B. Barclay-Fynche
Mr. Barclay-Fynche, a graduate of the medical faculty of the University of Edinburgh (1769), will address the Society on the latest medical techniques from Britain. Topics will include Bloodletting as both a remedy and a preventative. This is cutting edge 18th century medicine at its finest.

Spring at the Pickering Museum Village

May 9 & 10, Sunday:
Steam-up and Opening
23 & 24 May, Saturday & Sunday:
Muskets, Pifes, and Drums
June 7, Sunday: Kids Day

June 13 & 14, Saturday & Sunday:
Frenchman's Bay Festival