

ASH FAMILY HISTORY

There were four Ash brothers, Samuel, George Jr., Joseph and James. In 1795, accompanied by their father, George Sr., they emigrated to Upper Canada from Genessee County, New York State, attracted by Governor Simcoe's offer of land. All five secured grants of land on the lakeshore east and west of Cobourg and around D'Arcy St. James Ash received lot 12, concession 1; Geo. Ash Sr. lot 12, concession B; Geo. Jr. Ash lot 13, concession B; Joseph Ash lot 31, concession 2; Samuel Ash lot 9, Concession B. George Jr and James Ash were the first settlers on the site of the town of Cobourg, according to W. Allen Fisher, C.M., B.A., Lld., Ash family historian and a descendant of Samuel Ash.

Samuel Ash's daughter, Margaret Ann (Mrs. James Wells), in an interview with Ellen Boggs, Cobourg historian, tells the story of how her father, Samuel, and his wife, Ann (Wolcott), entertained Governor Simcoe for the night in their primitive home on lot 9, concessions A and B. Samuel is listed in Hamilton Township assessment rolls as having a 1-storey frame house by 1814 as did his father, George Sr. The latter's house was later owned by Archibald MacDonald and known as "Merina". It was said to be the second frame house built in Hamilton Township. The house is on the Northumberland and Durham Atlas map of the township but no longer exists. (See COBOURG 1798-1948 p.31 by E.Guillet)

The Ashes, like many other early settlers, were hostile to the ruling Tory aristocrats. Samuel's opinions when he was asked to vote for one of these people are quoted on page 59 in COBOURG 1798-1948 by Edwin Guillet: "We toiled up and dragged our luggage up through miles and miles of wilderness, and we took our axes and hewed a place out of the solid wilderness for you to come to! We have made roads for you to drive your carriages over, and now you want to drive your carriage wheels over us! We are not fit to associate with! We are to be put down to the lowest grade of society because we have not had those advantages of education that the country could not afford! You want to ride roughshod over us!.... No sir! I use my influence to put no such people in power!"

It was his brother, Joseph, however, who, with his son, Joseph Jr, became embroiled in the Cobourg Conspiracy. (See VICTORIAN COBOURG, p.108, for details). The Joseph Ashes disappeared from township records in 1848. They had occupied lot 9, concession B, during the 1837 Mackenzie Rebellion. James Ash returned to St. Mary's in the U.S. The other brother, George Jr., moved to the Cold Springs area where he founded a large family.