

## A HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE OF BALTIMORE, ONTARIO

### Who Named Baltimore?

When Hamilton Township was first surveyed in 1796, lot 8 in the third concession was designated a clergy reserve and lot 8 in the fourth concession one of the four masting reserves in the township, where white pine was reserved for the Royal Navy.

Baltimore, Ontario, the oldest village in Hamilton Township, is located in the 2nd and 3rd concessions of lots 7 and 8 and 9. Highway #45, once known as the Grand Trunk Road, begins north of the town of Cobourg on Lake Ontario and passes through the centre of Baltimore village forming the main street.

Every village has its *raison d'être* and Baltimore's attraction for settlers was the large stream that provided water power for carding, saw and grist mills. Surrounded by wooded hills, the main settlement began in the valley formed by Baltimore Creek, that rises in the fourth concession and is part of a larger system draining much of the township. Baltimore Creek is joined lower down by Solomon's Creek and other streams to become the Factory Creek (Cobourg Brook on old maps) that flows through Cobourg and into Lake Ontario.

The origin of the village's name has always been a mystery and a matter for speculation. There are a number of improbable stories that have been handed down over the years; such as the tale that a drunk man wandered into the settlement, thought he was in Baltimore, Maryland, and from then on the place was called Baltimore.

This story was quoted in Campaign Echoes, written in 1893 by Letitia Youmans. Mrs Youmans was a famous temperance lecturer, the daughter of an Irishman, John Creighton, who settled in Hamilton Township in 1823. Twenty years later Creighton bought land in lot 12, concession 2, on the Cobourg to Baltimore road, where he built a stone house in the area that is now called Creighton Heights. Creighton was reeve of Hamilton Township in 1851 and buried at Hull's Corners Cemetery in 1875. Hull's Corners no longer exists but was located at the junction of Highways #45 and 401 and named for Edward Hull who kept tavern there in the 1830s.

Although Mrs Youman's story was probably intended as humour many people believe that it does contain a grain of truth and that Baltimore in Ontario does have some connection with Baltimore in Maryland. Research has established, however, that most of the villages in Upper Canada were named for early settlers or for places in Great Britain to which they were attached by ties of

birth and loyalty. American names were not popular because of the animosity toward that country after the Revolution and the War of 1812. Loyalists did occasionally name new settlements for their former homesteads in New England; names that had come from the old country in the first place.

The American city of Baltimore was named for George Calvert, first baron of Baltimore, who was born in 1580 in Yorkshire, England, the son of a simple Yorkshire gentleman of Flemish extraction. Calvert, who was well educated and fluent in three languages, became a valuable public servant in the reign of James 1st who knighted him in 1617. Although Sir George had to resign his position in 1625 when he refused to give up the Catholic religion, his grateful sovereign gave him an Irish peerage. Calvert assumed the title of Lord Baltimore as he owned extensive estates both in Yorkshire and in Ireland. The Calvert family seat was located in County Cork and named "Baltimore" which came from the Gaelic "Baile na Tighe Mor", meaning "townland of the big house".

Charles 1st gave a large grant in America to Lord Baltimore and the Calvert family became the planners, founders and proprietors of what is now the State of Maryland. Maryland was named for Queen Henrietta Maria, the wife of Charles 1st. The Baltimore oriole is so named because it sports the same colours as Lord Baltimore's coat-of-arms, black and orange.

Near Lord Baltimore's estate on the south coast of County Cork there was also a small village named Baltimore, the only place of that name in the British Isles. (Its modern Irish name is "Dun na Sead" as all Anglicized names in Eire have been changed back to Gaelic.) Five miles northeast of this Irish village is the market town of Skibbereen. A few miles northeast of our Baltimore village in Ontario there was an early settlement in Haldimand Township east of the junction of the Centreton road and Highway #45. The O'Brien family, who were Irish settlers in the 1840s, named the place Skibbereen. The Canadian Government later changed the name of Skibbereen to Mill Valley when a post office was established there.

There is no evidence that any of the early Baltimore settlers came from Maryland. According to records, the majority of them emigrated from the British Isles, particularly northern Ireland and Scotland. The latter were mainly Presbyterian and settled on farms around the village. Mrs A.G. Mann, the former Isabella Haig (1853-1945), was a descendant of one of these families who had come from Berwickshire, Scotland. A dear friend and Sunday School teacher of the writer, Mrs Mann believed that the early settlers named the village Baltimore because the hills reminded them of "the old country".

There were also settlers who came from New England, primarily New York State, and some of these were United Empire loyalists or descendants of loyalists. Most of these former Americans were

Methodists, as were the first and most influential settlers in the village area. In order of settlement they were: McCartys, Fishers, Lapps and Carpenters.

#### John McCarty and the early Methodist Church

The very first settlers in the area were the McCarty brothers. They were of Irish ancestry but after the American Revolution they emigrated with their parents from New York State to the Kingston district. In 1802 David McCarty purchased lot 7, concession 3, Hamilton Township, from Nathan Hollenbeck, who was acting for the original grantee, Lydia Ferris. Baltimore Creek runs through the northern section of this lot and through the southern portion of clergy reserve lot 8, which would not have been for sale at that early date.

David McCarty and his brother, John, first appeared on Hamilton Township assessment rolls in 1805 when they began to clear their property. David sold John 100 acres in the south half of lot 7 in 1813. A few years later John had almost half his acreage cleared. It is significant that present Community Centre Road (named Haldimand Road in 1840 by Edward Caddy, surveyor), one of the earliest forced roads in the district, leaves Highway #45 and angles across lot 8 to join the road allowance between concessions 2 and 3 that bordered John McCarty's property. (This same property was bought by the writer's great-grandfather, Adam Burwash, in 1844 and remained in the family for over one hundred years.) "John McCarty always said he was the father and founder of Baltimore, the oldest village in Hamilton Township", wrote Walter Riddell in A Historical Sketch of The Township of Hamilton (1897). It would seem logical, therefore, that it was John McCarty who named the settlement. Why would he choose the name "Baltimore"? There are two possible reasons:

(1) John McCarty's father emigrated to New England from Ireland and likely came from County Cork. McCarty (also spelled McCarthy) is one of the most common names in the southern part of that county where the McCartys had been Irish kings for three centuries. In the sixteenth century they were dispossessed by the Tudor kings of England and their lands given to Englishmen such as Lord Baltimore.

(2) John McCarty may have named the village Baltimore because of his staunch support of the Methodist Church, which was not set up in America until 1784 and was located in Baltimore, Maryland. Perhaps he wished to establish a new Baltimore in Hamilton Township. To date this is the only connection to the American city that has been discovered.

John McCarty, a forceful man with strong opinions, had reason to be a committed Methodist. When his father, Charles Justin McCarty, first came to America it is said he was a Catholic who had been educated to be a priest but was converted by a Calvinist Methodist evangelist. During the Revolution Methodists in America were classified as Tories and British sympathizers until

they could prove otherwise and all the preachers but two, Francis Asbury and Thomas Rankin, fled the colonies. In 1778 McCarthy was arrested and tortured as a British sympathizer, probably because he was a Methodist. It wasn't until the year after the Revolution that Methodists were allowed to set up their first church in America. William Losee of Dutchess County, N.Y., was their first circuit rider to be sent in 1790 to the Kingston area in Upper Canada at the request of the loyalists there.

The Rev. Charles Justin McCarty married Catherine Lent c. 1780 and they had four sons of whom John was the youngest. They came to the Kingston area two years before Losee and, although not attached to any church, Charles McCarty was an active Methodist evangelist. Being especially eloquent he made many converts thus arousing consternation amongst the ruling Anglican hierarchy, who began regarding both McCarty and Losee with mounting fear and suspicion as rabble rousers and possible rebels.

In 1789 McCarty claimed he had been persecuted in America and that as a loyalist he should receive a grant of land to support his wife and children. His petition was turned down by the authorities, all of whom were members of the Church of England, the official church in Upper Canada. McCarty was arrested again in Kingston, Upper Canada, on the trumped up charge of being a "vagabond, imposture and disturber of the peace". After a mockery of a trial, in which seven people testified to his good character and only one to the contrary, McCarty was convicted and sentenced to be deported. He later disappeared and it was said he was murdered. Methodist writers have made the controversial claim that McCarty was a martyr persecuted by the Church of England. His widow, Catherine, married John McDougal, U.E.L., and they took up a grant in Hamilton Township c. 1800 along with her brother, the Rev. David Lent. Lents' Cemetery was named for her brother and his family.

After the War of 1812 there was even more animosity in Upper Canada toward the Methodist Church, especially the division of that body imported from America known as the Episcopal Methodist, of which the young John McCarty was an active member. McCarty was proud of having served in the British militia during the War of 1812 and must have bitterly resented the suspicion that the members of his church were American sympathizers. (Because of this bias Methodists in Upper Canada were more inclined to seek membership in the Wesleyan Methodist division that had direct ties to Great Britain. The Methodist divisions in Canada took most of the nineteenth century to work out their differences in church government but finally joined together.)

In 1819 John McCarty bought property in lot 17, concession 1. He was one of the founders in 1820 of the first Methodist Chapel in Hamilton Township, located on lot 16 and often called "the Back Chapel" or "McCarty's". This chapel property at Hull's Corners was bought in the name of three Methodists, Jeremiah Lapp, John Vaughan and James Williams, as the church itself could not

legally own land or its ministers perform marriages until 1828.

Until chapels were built circuit riders preached in homes and schoolhouses. The Smith's Creek circuit of the Episcopal Methodist church was established in 1805 and included the townships of Hope, Hamilton, Cramahe, Murray, Sidney and Haldimand. In 1820 the Hamilton Township Chapel with its small inadequate parsonage became the head of the Smith's Creek circuit.

The Rev. Anson Green, one of its circuit riders, recorded in his journal that he had conducted services in Baltimore on Thursday, September 25, 1824, and even listed the text used, Matt. 7:7. (The Life and Times of Anson Green, 1877). This is the first known recorded reference to the name "Baltimore". There were a number of itinerant preachers who preceded Green. They left no journals but undoubtedly they, too, preached at Baltimore during their one-year terms, almost certainly at the homestead of John McCarty, the first settler and first Methodist in the area. When John left Baltimore he remained active in Methodist affairs and served on the building committee of Upper Canada Academy (later Victoria College). He also, with Ebenezer Perry, built a school staffed with Methodist teachers for Indian children at Rice Lake. John McCarty died in 1877 at the age of 89, one of the highly regarded characters of Cobourg.

#### Early Roads

One of the first Hamilton Township Bylaws, Oct. 14, 1818, recorded that a road was "wanted from the mill place where John Merryan was to build a sawmill on #8 in the 3rd concession from thence to the southwest corner of the same and from thence until it intersects the road about the west side of #9 (present Dale Road) that leads to Walter Wilson's in the second concession". The petition was signed by John McCarty, Henry Fisher, Levi Bates, John Farmer, Joseph Ash, Roger Wolcott, Samuel Ash, Ephraim Nickerson, John Ingersoll, Duncan Lindsay, John McEvers, James F. Fisher, Aaron Ellsworth, Nathan Williams, Israel Ellsworth, Robert Williams, John McLean and David Ferris. These names are all prominent in records of the early grants and settlement of the township.

It appears that before 1818 the first road from Cobourg north to Baltimore took more or less the route of present Highway #45 and terminated at the second concession, where a very early road (now Dale Road) led west. The steep valley in Baltimore at the end of Dale Road forced early settlers to take two alternate routes to continue travelling east as is still the case today: present Gully Road or the first part of Community Centre Road. It wasn't until after 1826 that roads were surveyed north toward Rice Lake.

The Grand Trunk Road (Highway #45) originally went across Baltimore Creek and up the Harwood Road, turned east on Clapperton Road taking Hickerson Road south to continue north on

the present route of #45. In 1867 the route was changed north of the village to a more direct route; it passed in front of Ball's Mill taking McDougall Road, crossed several farms in concessions 3 and 4 and continued on into Haldimand Township. In the 1950s the highway was further straightened to its present route.

#### Fisher's Mill

Lot 8, concession 3, was a clergy reserve lot. Baltimore Creek runs through its southern half and there on its banks the nucleus of a village began. Clergy reserve lots were often leased with only certain ones being offered for sale by auction each year. The first settlers on lot 8, concession 3, were John and James Field Fisher, who leased the whole 200 acres in 1819. They built a sawmill and a rough board dwelling, recounted historian Wilhemina Peters in the Cobourg World (April-May 1896). It was located on the creek below the present bridge at the intersection of Highway #45 and the Harwood Road.

James Fisher Sr. (1755-1840) emigrated to New York State from Edinburg, Scotland, where he had apprenticed as a weaver. In 1795, influenced by the advertisements placed in American newspapers by John Graves Simcoe, he emigrated to Niagara Falls, Upper Canada, with his family. They were considered "late loyalists". James Fisher Sr. had several children, among whom were James Field, John and Henry. James Field Fisher received a patent in 1802 for lot 17, concession 2, Hamilton Township, where the family resettled. In 1819 James F. Fisher and his brother, John, built a sawmill on Baltimore Creek and left the farm to be operated by their brother, Henry (1788-1872), who had married John McCarty's half-sister, Elizabeth McDougall, a few years earlier. When James F. Fisher sold the farm property in 1832 Henry moved to Cold Springs, bought lot 6, concession 5, and fathered a large family.

In 1826 a road was surveyed from lot 8 in the 3rd concession to Rice Lake and another to James Fisher's sawmill. During their sojourn the settlement was called "Fisher's Mill", according to an item in the Cobourg Star, October 1, 1832. Hamilton Township By-laws mention other roads being surveyed from "James Fisher's sawmill" south to Cobourg and north to Rice Lake during the years 1830-33. John and James Fisher left for Detroit, Michigan, in 1835 taking their aged father with them and were considered pioneers there. The sawmill building was sold to J. Richard. Registry office deeds after that date record the Fisher's Mill settlement being known as "Valley Mills" as grist mills, carding mills and other businesses using water power were established along Baltimore Creek.

#### Baltimore Becomes A Village

The first mention of the "Baltimore Road" occurs in the Hamilton Township By-laws of July 1838. Also in the 1838 Cobourg Reformer there was the following marriage announcement: On Monday, July 9, in Cobourg, Mary Ann, eldest daughter of William Walker, auctioneer, to John Braden, of Baltimore; both formerly of the

County Cavan, Ireland (Rev.A.N.Bethune). Lot 8, concession 3, was not sold until 1840 when Austin Burke Carpenter purchased the south 100 acres containing the creek and commenced selling off the village lots that were laid out by Edward Caddy that year. Two years later large numbers of settlers began to arrive. In 1842, "the travelled road known as the Baltimore Road," was first mentioned in deeds, according to registry office records.

#### Austin Burke Carpenter

Austin Burke Carpenter was born in 1804 in the United States. He came to Prince Edward County where he met and married Catherine Sprague of an old loyalist family. Around 1829 the Carpenters came on the steamer William IV to Cobourg and established an hotel on the main street with Catherine's brother, Foster Sprague. Thomas Fowler, writing in 1832, tells of staying at Carpenter's "the best hotel in Cobourg" and of the attentive barkeeper "Mr. Sprig".

Carpenter purchased the former Fisher sawmill from J. Richard and there are references in some deeds to "Carpenter's Mill late Fishers". Just above his sawmill Carpenter sold 5 acres in 1842 to Lambert Stevens and gave him the right to divert the creek from its "proper channel" to run machinery. Stevens then had to divert the creek back so that it didn't interfere with Carpenter's mill and dam below.

In 1850 A. B. Carpenter became the first reeve of Hamilton Township. His name appears on a number of deeds for he acquired many properties and mortgages throughout the Newcastle District. By 1851 Carpenter had moved to Cobourg, where he attended Trinity Methodist Church and served as Chief Magistrate until his death in 1875.

#### William G. McDougall

Lambert Stevens left in 1846 and sold his carding mill to William G. McDougall who changed it into a flouring mill. The area was then called "McDougall's Mills" until the name "Baltimore" became common usage. William McDougall (1809-1876) was born in Berwickshire, Scotland, and came to Quebec in 1832. Ten years later he settled in Hamilton Township and first operated a small gristmill on lot 9 lower down the creek (later William Mann's). His large flouring mill on lot 8 became known all over the district and he built a storey and a half brick house above his mill, the first brick house in Baltimore. McDougall extended his operations in 1868 to include a sawmill at Harwood in partnership with John Ludgate. Unfortunately the Harwood sawmill failed; the flour mill and brick house along with McDougall's heirs other holdings were put up for auction in 1880.

The flour mill and house were purchased by John Ball in 1884 and flour was sold under the name "The Belle of Baltimore". Around 1892, to accomodate their rapidly expanding family, the Balls enlarged the storey and a half brick house to two stories. Many additions and improvements were made over the years to the flour

mill by the three generations of Balls who operated the business until 1971. The flour mill was designated a historic building in 1988 and is undergoing restoration.

#### Other First Settlers

The title for the north half of lot 8, concession 3, was obtained by Jeremiah Lapp (1795-1863) in 1850, who had probably paid for it over a period of twenty years of occupancy. His father, Jeremiah Lapp Sr., was a United Empire loyalist who had established a tannery in Cobourg in 1806. Jeremiah Lapp Jr. is recorded in 1820 as one of the three purchasers of the land on which the Methodist chapel was built at Hull's Corners and he was buried in its cemetery. He moved to the Baltimore area c. 1830 and lived on lot 7 near the head pond on Baltimore Creek where he built the first gristmill. This mill was eventually purchased by John Ball and known as the "Old Red Mill", where Ball made shakes and shingles. Across the road on the other side of a smaller creek lived the first blacksmith, Stephen Canfield. He built a dam across his creek c. 1840 and operated an axe handle factory as well. Chester Lapp, who purchased the factory, changed it to a carding mill in 1853.

There were a number of settlers who preceeded Jeremiah Lapp, settling along and around the road to Cobourg. Hamilton Township assessments record the following on the second, third and fourth concessions in lots 7, 8 and 9: William Wilson 1820, John and Joseph Brisbin 1821 from the U.S., John Richard 1823 from Scotland, Samuel Liscombe 1825 from the U.S., James and William Baker 1827; later came Jesse Ingersoll 1833, George Kelly and John Linton 1837 from Ireland, John Walwroth 1837 and John McLaughlin 1839.

#### Schools

The first school was built a mile east of the village, wrote Miss Peters, which locates it around lot 4 or 5 on the third concession. Lot 5 was rented from King's College c. 1828 by James and Samuel Staples. James married an educated Quaker, Elizabeth Eplett, in 1823 and was thereafter known as "Quaker James". Three years earlier Elizabeth had come from England to Cobourg with the John Covert family as a governess or children's nurse. The Coverts were horrified at her marriage to "a wild Irishman from the back woods". It is thought Elizabeth met him while Staples was employed as a carpenter on the Covert farm. By 1829 both the Staples brothers had large families and would have desired a school nearby so one may have been built on their property. According to the memorial of Christopher Slater (1789-1889) of Baltimore, delivered at his funeral by the Rev. Nathaniel Burwash, the local school was one of the appointments on the Cobourg Methodist circuit. The first preacher mentioned in this connection by the Rev. Burwash was the Rev. David Wright, who served on the circuit from 1829-30.

The first schoolhouses were constructed of logs by the settlers themselves with a limited grant provided by the government if



there was an enrollment of at least 20 pupils. By 1829 there were four schools listed in the township: one in Cobourg, one near the Hope Township border on Highway #2, one at Rice Lake for Indian children and another taught by an H. Luscom with an enrollment of 20 pupils. Because the Luscoms (Liscombes) had emigrated from the U.S. around 1825 and first occupied lot 7, concession 2, it seems evident that a Liscombe was teaching school in the Baltimore area by 1829.

Tenders for the construction of eleven common schools in Hamilton Township were published in the Cobourg Star, Apr. 27, 1842. The schools were to be built of wood, brick or stone and lots and concessions were specified. One of these was to be located on "the northwest corner of Pringle's lot" which is recorded in assessments as being lot 7, concession 2. This was the school Miss Peters said was located across from the entrance to the Methodist Church, now Baltimore United. After that time the location of the Baltimore school was changed several times.

#### Churches

The first church services in Baltimore were conducted by circuit riders in the settlers' homes and later in the school. In 1849 A. B. Carpenter donated land on the plateau above the main street and a frame Methodist Church was built. When the second Methodist Church was constructed of red brick on the same site in 1899, Mrs Nancy Crawford, daughter of John McCarty, donated the altar furniture. The building, now Baltimore United Church, is still standing in its beautiful cemetery surrounded by trees.

The Methodist parsonage was located on the hill behind Cockburn's Hotel on Dale Road. Perhaps for the convenience of the minister, a long set of wooden steps were built and mentioned by Miss Peters in 1896. The steps were located across from Dale Road, arose behind the blacksmith shop and led into the southwest corner of the Methodist churchyard. They were known locally as "Jacob's Ladder" and required a stout pair of legs to ascend. Along with many of the old landmarks they are long gone.

The Presbyterians established their first church in 1848 but the white frame building was located near the Haldimand boundary to the east where many settlers of that denomination had farms. The manse was in the same location as it is at present, across the road from the public school. It was originally a one and a half storey frame house but it burned down sometime before Church Union and was replaced with brick. A white brick Presbyterian Church was built on the Baltimore plateau in 1872 and only the old cemetery, still in use, remains on the original site. The church was closed on union with the Methodists in 1925. The building was used as a community hall and then as a public school from 1936 to 1958, when it was torn down and the present school built nearby on the site of the old skating rink. The United Church ministers were housed in the former Presbyterian manse and the parsonage building was sold. It, too, eventually burned down and was replaced with brick.

### Baltimore's Rise and Decline

The first storekeeper in Baltimore was Gideon Phillips; a post office and second store were established in 1845 and operated by Robert Harstone on lot 9, concession 3. The store would have been located on the north west corner of present Dale Road (named Cockburn St. by surveyor E. Caddy, Mill St. by historian W. Peters) and Highway #45 (Baltimore St. by Caddy, Main St. by Peters). There were two taverns in Baltimore. The first one was built of frame by Adam Cockburn in 1845 and located across from the Harstone store on the southwest corner of Dale Road and Highway 45; it no longer exists. The second tavern was built of brick c. 1851 by Barnabas Jaynes on the corner of Gully Road (formerly Chapel or Church Street) and Highway 45 and is now preserved as a historic house called the Pickering Hotel. A map of Baltimore showing the village lots can be seen in the 1878 Northumberland and Durham Atlas. Unfortunately the old street names on this map are no longer used and were changed even by Miss Peter's time.

In 1878 the village was at its peak with many tradesmen and professional people, several mills, stores and small businesses; two churches and the school were located on the plateau above the business section. To connect the plateau with the business section there was a path, bordered with lush poison ivy, that rose through a pine and cedar woods. It can still be seen although seldom used. It began behind the post office, then located in the store at the bottom of the Gully Road, and also ended in the Methodist churchyard.

According to Miss Peters, Baltimore had expectations that the Cobourg to Rice Lake Railway would build a spur to the village. The railway became obsolete, however, and the spur was never built. The village declined and proximity to the town of Cobourg began to make itself felt, especially when first motor cars made their appearance shortly after the turn of the century.

- ✓ In 1919 a devastating fire destroyed many of the surviving businesses and old homes on the main street. Some houses were rebuilt and two general stores, a blacksmith shop, a garage and woolen mill were the only business establishments operating in the valley during the depression years. Baltimore village never regained its former prosperity but the fine farms in the surrounding district and the families who operated them continued to maintain the stability of the community.

Today even fewer small businesses remain on the main street in the valley that is often crowded with traffic heading for the northern lakes. The area along Baltimore Creek has been declared a flood plain; but numerous subdivisions and large business enterprises are being established on the surrounding hills. Farm land continues to shrink as beautiful Hamilton Township becomes more and more attractive to those fleeing the exploding metropolis of Toronto.

Catherine Milne, 1989