

CASE STUDY OF THE CARE PROPERTY.

written by Walter Lewis of Rosenbeath.

This property was granted in the summer of 1801 by the Crown to Richard Wilkinson as part of an 1050 acre estate comprising lots in the third, fourth and sixth concessions. At the time of granting all these properties were in unsettled portions of Hamilton township. The question immediately arises of what importance was Richard Wilkinson, of Cornwall that he should be given 1050 acres of land on which he never lived and dispersed of at a handsome profit four years later.

Wilkinson was one of the gentry of Upper Canada at work during the 1790's. In 1790 he was in possession of a lot near Newark on the Niagara frontier which was desired by the government as the future location of a town site. The accompanying petition\* indicates that Wilkinson was a Lieutenant in the Indian Department during the American Revolution. In 1791 he was acting Secretary in the Six Nations Department and instrumental in a land purchase from the Mississaugas along the Niagara. He was also in possession of a lot along the route of the Niagara portage which the Government wished to subdivide for a town site.

By 1792 Wilkinson was active in the Glengarry settlement where his father-in-law, Alexander McDonnell was Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. He is cited in several court cases as being a merchant living in Charlottenburg and in partnership with John Beikie, who in 1797 petitioned the government as having been a magistrate. In 1798 Wilkinson obtained a lot in York on which he could build a home.\* He was at this time a Member of the Legislative Assembly. Although he had already received 2000 acres as a retired military officer and 750 acres for his wife and family, the grant in Hamilton township was probably for his services as a Member of the Assembly. He retired to Cornwall from whence he disposed of the Hamilton township estate.

We don't know the reason why but four years later these properties were sold to the Montreal based firm of Mungo Kay and James Smith for the sum of 335 pounds, 11 shillings and 9 pence. (DEED #1 RE: COBOURG MAPS - CARE PROPERTY) The reasons for the sale are not known but it may have been mere land speculation or to raise capital for a building project on another estate or to settle a gambling debt. It is almost certain that Kay and Smith bought the estate with the intention of speculating on the property. However, at some point in the next twenty years this property seized from the firm, (by whom and for what reason we do not know) and passed into the hands of Thomas S. Whitaker of Kingston.

Whitaker broke the property up selling various lots to various settlers. Lots 11 and 15 in the 4th concession were sold to Parker Smith Sr. of Ernestown township near present day Napanee in 1824 for 102 pounds (DEED #2). Another of the lots, this one in the third concession was sold for 250 pounds (DEED #3). The reason for the difference in prices may be that the lot in the third concession had already been partially cleared and/or it was closer to the lakefront and supplies.

Cobourg  
Settlement.



## Cobourg Settlement,

This would seem to indicate that the two lots on the fourth concession had not yet been opened.

Either Parker Smith Sr. or his daughter-in-law Rebecca Smith, who had been born in the country north and west of Kingston, settled the property in the next few years. The Collector's roll of 1826 indicated 10 assessable households on the fourth concession of which the Smiths were probably one. Just who made up the family at this time is uncertain as it appears both Parker Smith Sr. and Jr. had died. Rebecca Smith had purchased lot 11, concession 4 from Parker Smith Sr. in 1826 for 50 pounds so she may have been the head of the household in this period. (DEED #4)

In January 1831 she sold the lot to Charles Clark, a merchant in what is now Cobourg for 100 pounds (DEED#5). On August 14th, 1832 the property was redeemed for the same 100 pounds. The reasons for this exchange are unclear. It may have been done in lieu of a mortgage or it may have been returned due to Clarke's inability to pay up the required 100 pounds. The final deed had to be drawn up in a law office in Kingston and was drawn up by a John Macdonald, later the Prime Minister of Canada.

During the next twenty years the land was gradually opened up. Two of Rebecca's sons, Sandford and Ira Smith came one summer and cleared some land and put up a rough shanty. The next summer they returned with their mother and another brother, John. They "came to Cobourg by boat from Kingston, bringing a yoke of oxen, two cows and their furniture, and a years provisions." The Smith family had come to stay. Both Sandford and Ira were to live till the turn of the century on the farm.

In the early days others lived on the same property. In the Hamilton township census of 1842 two others are listed as living on the lot; Edward Buchanan a farmer and John Fentan, a labourer. There is a family tradition that the present location of the house was influenced by the location of a squatters hut near the road, possibly Edward Buchanan's. John Fentan may have worked for or merely boarded with the Smith's. The extension walls of the present house date from this period as well. In February 1857 John sold his share in the property left by Rebecca to his brothers Sandford and Ira.

This sale took place in the midst of some legal storms about the property resulting from the seizure of the land from Mungo Kay and James Smith nearly forty years previously. On the 20th of December 1855 James McIntyre, his wife, her two sisters and their husbands seized the entire original estate by power of attorney. Their legal interests were being handled by William Kay Bainbridge of the town of Hamilton. That legal action should have been taken at this time is due most likely to the land speculation which was occurring as a result of the building of the railroad. Two years later when things had settled down a little William Kay Bainbridge sold the rights to the property



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MAY 23 1881  
to John D. Armour, later Judge Armour who sold the property back to Sandford and Ira Smith for 216 pounds (DEED #7)

On May 1, 1863 Sandford mortgaged the property, a move that would indicate that eighter crops were poor or else major renovations were underway. Both brothers had growing families and the brick addition to the house may have been to accomodate them. Three years later the mortgage was paid off with the taking out of another mortgage by Ira for 500 pounds on the north 100 acres of the property. At the same time the property was finally divided with Sandford taking the southern 66 acres and Ira taking the northern 134 acres of which 100 were mortgaged. This mortgaged was finally paid off in 1872.

By 1870 Sandford's property was valued at \$1060 while his personal and family property was valued at \$400. Ira's land was valued at \$1320 while his personal possessions were worth about \$280. The fact that Sandford's personal property was worth more is probably because he still occupied the old homestead.

During this period of the 1870's Sandford's sons reached their twenties and began to share responsibility with their father, then move away. First Parker, then William and Benson started farming on their own. By 1878 John F. Smith started farming with his father and it is believed he stayed on the land.

Thus we have a picture of this property through the nineteenth century. It passed from a Loyalist patentee, to a speculation firm, to Loyalist settlers. It passed through the period of the railway boom to a period of financial uncertainty to a period in which the two families spread out over this part of the township, farming both their own and rented land.

Cobourg  
Settlement,