

Society News & Updates

Presentation by David Hobden to the TTHS on March 6, 2019; "Early Settlement of Halton".

To set the context of communications “back in the day”, David used his extensive knowledge gained by examining authoritative and primary sources. From indigenous peoples and pre-Lake Ontario, the trails evolved. Our roads



and land use today still reflect how the land was travelled from 1650 when the Iroquois dominated the area and the Mississauga people moved in a hundred years later. In the 19th century, the British military needed to improve the east-west trails into better roads with bridges over the north-south creeks to ensure swifter transport of soldiers and dispatches.

With the exception of one, roads in Halton were professionally surveyed. A creek or cliff might require the surveyors to bend the road or angle it, or the curve of the lake might require a change, but for the most part, they are nice and straight in a grid.

David knows that there is one trail in Halton that is an exception to this; it is a “given” road, ie one that

was in use already. The surveyors plotted it into their maps as a road. This was a trail that ran north, along the west side of Twelve Mile Creek up to Dundas to the area, as per the 1850 Tremaine Map, called Nelson Mills and St. Ann.

(David previously spoke to us about the hamlet which opened its Post Office on Dundas at Twelve Mile Creek in 1852. He knows that the St. Ann name was taken by a Lincoln County Post Office in 1852 so it was no longer possible for the Dundas/Twelve Mile Creek St. Ann’s to continue as such. This may have been the reason when the Dundas/Twelve Mile Creek Office opened in in 1852, it was called the Merton Post Office.)

In the early and mid-eighteen hundreds, the military needed to improve the old trails and to bridge the larger creeks along the Dundas Highway in order to expeditiously handle military personnel and military communications throughout Upper Canada. David’s curiosity in regards to this has led him to investigations and discoveries that might be unexpected. He found, for example, that the 1813 Muster Rolls show many soldiers were working on building the Dundas Highway between the Sixteen and Twelve Mile creeks. He also phoned and talked to the Vice President of the Canadian Warmbloods

