

Roads, bridges, ditches occupied Brooklin politicians during Confederation

History



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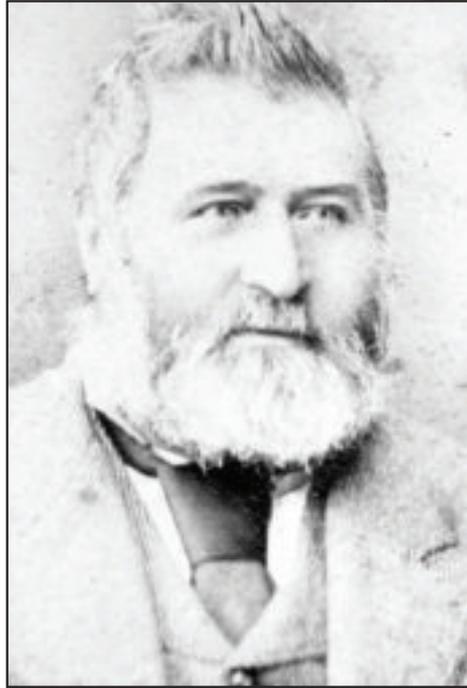
Canada celebrates its sesquicentennial this year and to mark this occasion, I put together a small exhibit showcasing Whitby and Brooklin at the time of Confederation. Last month, I wrote about Whitby's Dominion Day celebrations which took place on July 1, 1867. Now, let's turn our attention to Brooklin.

In 1867, Brooklin was a self-sufficient little village. An account of Brooklin in 1867 from the Oshawa Vindicator provides a comprehensive description of the services, businesses and organizations in the community. In addition to its five churches, Brooklin supported several stores and taverns, factories and manufacturers, a jeweller, blacksmiths and carriage-makers, tanneries, mills, an apiary, and photography studios.

The writer also boasted of the village's temperance society (Brooklin Council of the Royal Templars of Temperance), its "industrious and respectable" youth, the fine styles of the many private residences, and its literary society, which offered debates, public readings, and lectures. Clearly, Brooklin was a desirable community in which to live.

Brooklin was the administrative centre of the Township of Whitby. Its boundaries stretched from Townline Road in the north to Lake Ontario in the south and surrounded the Town of Whitby, which was centrally located south of Rossland Road, east of McQuay Boulevard, and west of Anderson Street. Township council was made up of prominent men from the village of Brooklin and surrounding farms. In 1867, James Bickell served as Reeve and John Dryden as Deputy Reeve.

Unlike the Town of Whitby, the town-



ship did not appear to be concerned with celebrating Confederation. In the months leading up to July 1, council meetings consisted of discussions about road and bridge repairs, the construction of culverts and ditches, community petitions, bylaw amendments, and appointing officials.

New bylaws similarly failed to address Confederation and focused instead on the necessary daily responsibilities of a rural township, including licenses and raising money.

To be sure, the Township of Whitby didn't exist in a vacuum. Residents and local politicians would have read the newspapers and been aware of national events. But it is worth noting that no special official events were planned to mark Confederation. I would guess that most residents of the Township and Brooklin travelled to Whitby for the town's celebrations, which included a feu de joie, a 350-gun salute.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE WHITBY ARCHIVES

BROOKLIN -- Brooklin was the administrative centre of the Township of Whitby. Township council was made up of prominent men from the Village of Brooklin and surrounding farms. In 1867, John Dryden, above, served as Deputy Reeve while James Bickell, top left, served as Reeve.

If you want to find out more about Whitby and Brooklin at the time of Confederation, travel to the Archives and Local History Gallery at the central branch of the Whitby Public Library.

-- Sarah Ferencz is the archivist at the Whitby Public Library. Contact her at archives@whitbylibrary.on.ca

Explore the arts with Station Gallery lecture series being held at Whitby library

Activities planned in April and May

WHITBY -- Join Station Gallery curator Olex Wlasenko for the final two parts of a five-part lecture series taking place at the Whitby library every second Thursday.

Expand your appreciation of art and culture with popular art talks:

• **The Vinyl Story** - April 13 at 7 p.m.

An art talk just in time for Record Store Day. Vintage album covers are a fascinating entry point to the world of visual art. Learn interesting stories behind the music.

• **The Daves We Know** - May 11 at 7 p.m.

An arbitrary look at artistic notions of "David." From Michelangelo's famed sculpture to works created by artists with the same name, this hour will explore the works of David Blackwood, Caspar David Friedrich, David Hock-

ney, David Bowie, Jacques-Louis David and Micah Lexier.

Lectures will be held at the central branch of the Whitby Public Library, 405 Dundas St. W., Whitby. Registration is required. Visit www.whitbylibrary.on.ca/node/370 or call or visit any branch.

thecitizen

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