

Huge snow drifts plug this country lane near Dean's Mill, Hope Twp.

163 1157

John Brown - Early Hope Twp. Character

(This is the first in a series of articles by Mr. Reeve on outstanding residents of Hope township in the past.)

By HAROLD REEVE

John Brown was a notable character of the early days of the Township of Hope. He came to Port Hope in 1818, when there were only a few buildings (15 in 1817). His presence was felt from then until the day of his death in 1842.

Over the years he had a store, blacksmith shop, distillery, saw mill, chop mill and built a hotel. I think the Anne Jane Brown was his schooner. He was on the Board of Police (the council of that time), president of the Port Hope Harbour Company in 1829, and was elected to the Parliament of Upper Canada in 1830 and again in 1835. He sued the town and the town sued him. He had feuds with some of the residents that ran for years and one with the collector of customs that ended in a famous libel case.

A short article can not do justice to Brown. The most that can be done is to touch lightly on his many activities and more heavily on some.

Henry Elliott, in "Pioneers of Old Ontario", says that he clerked for Brown and "Brown had a novel way of bringing business to the store. When he heard of anyone in the back country of Clarke, Cartwright and Manvers whose business was worth having and who was not buying at the store, he would enter suit against the prospect for an imaginary bill. The next stage was, of course, a call at the store by the party sued in a state of indignation.

"What do you mean by suing me? I don't owe you any money", the indignant one would say.

"Of course you don't. I only sued so as to bring you out so I could see you".

The caller as a rule saw the humour. In any case he enjoyed the dinner and entertainment offered and usually became a friend and customer.

In the files of the Guide it is stated that among other things Brown's blacksmith shop made copper coins and they were a great convenience to the merchants, coins being very scarce.

In "Echoes from the Minute Book" by Stuart Ryan, Brown's Distillery was reported as a nuisance. In 1839 he was summoned

and slept in the barn.

In 1823 he built the first brick building in Port Hope. This was on Mill Street opposite Walton and was the Royal Hotel. Many will remember this before it was torn down and replaced by the Shell Service Station. The stone with "J. Brown 1823" was rescued and placed in the fireplace of the late George Garnett.

The Brown stone mills were near Corbett's Pond. There was a saw mill and a chop mill. I think they were built about 1818-1819 by Adam Scott, the founder of Peterborough. At any rate he had dealings with Brown, to his sorrow. Brown bankrupted him in 1827. Scott carried a 250 pound crank shaft from Peterborough to Port Hope to be repaired and then carried it back again. This was in the spring when there was plenty of mud and no roads. Such a man deserved a better fate than bankruptcy.

At the first election after the incorporation of Port Hope Brown defeated James Robertson, the tanner, by 16 to 12. Robertson protested that there were but 20 good votes in Ward 1. Brown retorted that he would continue the election as long as Robertson liked and would poll seven votes to every one of Robertson's. Brown's election was confirmed.

They continued to feud for years. When their adjacent buildings burned down, there was a dispute about the property line. The wall that Robertson put up during the day was pulled down by Brown at night. This was solved by Robertson patrolling with a shotgun till the wall was up.

In 1837 Crawford's election was protested by Brown but was confirmed. Crawford was in the lumber business, had a harness shop, was a rival distiller and above all a Tory. Brown was a Reformer and was elected on that ticket in 1830 and 1835 to the Parliament of Upper Canada, as member for Durham.

The Cobourg Standard, 1832, describes a political riot in Port Hope. Persons assembled with banners, pistols, guns, axes and a drum and paraded the streets yelling and shouting. A stone was thrown and struck Crawford causing a painful injury. They were said to be instigated by John Brown, the member for Durham, who is said to have encouraged them in person by the

meetings of the Board.

In 1837 in a fight between Crawford and Brown employees, one of Crawford's men, O'Neill, was killed. Robert Brown, an employee of John Brown, was tried for murder. For some reason the key witness was not called. The jury disagreed, so it is said, because two of them were lodge brothers. The result was—discharged.

Another feud of province-wide interest was with Whitehead, Collector of Customs. Brown and Fothergill combined to write lengthy letters to the Government accusing the customs collector of taking a bribe of 75 pounds to release a smuggled load of pork at Pickering; also that a person friend, Phillips of Port Hope, was allowed to import goods without paying duty and that a seizure of tea stored a Whitehead's house had mysteriously disappeared in the night.

Whitehead lost his job. He then sued Brown and Fothergill for 2000 pounds for libel. The Inspector-General and the Attorney-General gave evidence. A York paper "The Sapper and Miner" (November, 1832) devotes two full pages to the account of the trial. The jury returned a verdict of 112 pounds in favour of Whitehead.

It is well to remember that these were the times of MacKenzie and strong opposition to the Family Compact. Both Brown and Fothergill were strong Reformers and a chance to embarrass the Government was not to be overlooked. Whitehead was the son-in-law of Ward who was the Registrar of Deeds. Here was a chance to get two birds with one stone, although Ward had previously been stoned and lost the judgeship.

Hope and Port Hope seemed to be strong for the Reform, but only one person is known to have taken part in the Rebellion—Warner of Lot 25, Con. 2. Others hearing of the turn things had taken may have turned loyal on the way to York.

Reform was sufficiently strong to elect Brown for two terms. He was helped in one election when he bought up the supply of pick handles for his supporters. The opposition was caught short-handed and lost the election.

Going back to the town minutes we find that Brown was fined five shillings for the nuisance created by the still and a

A-Brown Family (Hope Twp) 103-01 P1

ope, 1963.

En- ok at ndon. part Why as- lage?

ffer? Why a for spe- sen- as a ; the own's g. ear his by Of- cal ld-

son act ng. re- ing ob- tell or vi- rt- rge the ld-

of. ice. be ash ing ded ope

Hope, 1963.

death tem- awe. re of John ; sta- with blue

Old Ontario", says that he clerked for Brown and "Brown had a novel way of bringing business to the store. When he heard of anyone in the back country of Clarke, Cartwright and Manvers whose business was worth having and who was not buying at the store, he would enter suit against the prospect for an imaginary bill. The next stage was, of course, a call at the store by the party sued in a state of indignation.

"What do you mean by suing me? I don't owe you any money", the indignant one would say.

"Of course you don't. I only sued so as to bring you out so I could see you".

The caller as a rule saw the humour. In any case he enjoyed the dinner and entertainment offered and usually became a friend and customer.

In the files of the Guide it is stated that among other things Brown's blacksmith shop made copper coins and they were a great convenience to the merchants, coins being very scarce.

In "Echoes from the Minute Book" by Stuart Ryan, Brown's Distillery was reported as a nuisance. In 1839 he was summoned before the board for a similar nuisance. Apparently nothing can equal the "nuisance" of a primitive still at run off time, and the private distillers who were running of a private keg frequently had to have their meals outdoors

Robertson then and would poll seven votes to every one of Robertson's. Brown's election was confirmed.

They continued to feud for years. When their adjacent buildings burned down, there was a dispute about the property line. The wall that Robertson put up during the day was pulled down by Brown at night. This was solved by Robertson patrolling with a shotgun till the wall was up.

In 1837 Crawford's election was protested by Brown but was confirmed. Crawford was in the lumber business, had a harness shop, was a rival distiller and above all a Tory. Brown was a Reformer and was elected on that ticket in 1830 and 1835 to the Parliament of Upper Canada, as member for Durham.

The Cobourg Standard, 1832, describes a political riot in Port Hope. Persons assembled with banners, pistols, guns, axes and a drum and paraded the streets yelling and shouting. A stone was thrown and struck Crawford causing a painful injury. They were said to be instigated by John Brown, the member for Durham, who is said to have encouraged them in person by the clapping of hands, etc. I think there was a small keg of etc.

In 1838 Crawford was elected to the Board; later by popular vote Brown was elected chairman. This was too much for Crawford—he did not attend any

turned a verdict of 112 pounds in favour of Whitehead.

It is well to remember that these were the times of MacKenzie and strong opposition to the Family Compact. Both Brown and Fothergill were strong Reformers and a chance to embarrass the Government was not to be overlooked. Whitehead was the son-in-law of Ward who was the Registrar of Deeds. Here was a chance to get two birds with one stone, although Ward had previously been stoned and lost the judgeship.

Hope and Port Hope seemed to be strong for the Reform, but only one person is known to have taken part in the Rebellion—Warner of Lot 25, Con. 2. Others hearing of the turn things had taken may have turned loyal on the way to York.

Reform was sufficiently strong to elect Brown for two terms. He was helped in one election when he bought up the supply of pick handles for his supporters. The opposition was caught short-handed and lost the election.

Going back to the town minutes we find that Brown was fined five shillings for the nuisance created by the still and a month later was reported again.

(Continued on Page 8)

Hope, 1963.

death tem- we- ne of John sta- with blue and husi- had as in bullet hawk, sted, wind cless was chat- lled, soon tten rant and

ee e. e. e. d ey ng ve

A-Brown Family Hope (03-01) P2

LAST TIMES TONIGHT, 6.30 & 9.00; "HATARI" With John Wayne, Elsa Martinelli and Red Buttons



TOMORROW

John Brown (Continued from page 2) In 1839 he was called before the Board for the same reason. but he was called before the Board for obstruction of the street. In 1835 he was fined with the In 1839 in a dispute with the In 1839 Brown's goods were put for sale. He had a counter claim for 26 pounds, 16 shill- up for sale. The town had to pay damages of 26 pounds, 16 shill- property. The town had to pay damages of 12 pounds, nine shillings for the sale and court costs of 12 pounds, nine shillings. Brown Street commemorates the name of John Brown. He gave the land for this, that the people could have easier access to the Methodist Church. An obituary from the Cobourg Star and reprinted in the Toronto Examiner on Friday last, at Port Hope, J. Brown, Esq., in the 52nd year of his age. Mr. Brown for several years represented the County of Durham in the parliament of Upper Canada. He came to Canada about 24 years ago, and his activity and public spirit were a great means of raising Port Hope to its present flourishing position. Indeed every town-ship in the County of Durham were indebted to him for many of the improvements. He was buried with Orange honours, and his remains ever placed in the largest ship in the County of Durham. It's a fair guess that John Brown enjoyed every minute of his 24 years in Port Hope and with some exceptions, Port Hope enjoyed him.

ADMIT 10 PENCE 18 YEARS OF AGE OVER

LAST TIME TONIGHT "Eve", in Color, with Christiane "Isle of Sin", Adult Entertainment

55, in Color "WILD WESTERNERS"

John Brown

FOR TRIP TO E

VIA LUXURIOUS FOR

Grand WEDNESDAY