TOWNSHIP of CRAMAHE HISTORY

The BEGINNING OF SETTLEMENT

By Percy L. Climo

Early in the year of 1979, the writer produced a story for the Colborne Chronicle newspaper on the above subject. It was again published in the 1984 Special Commemorative edition of the Chronicle. When this article was prepared, the local information was drawn from an earlier pamphlet "The First Century of Methodism in Colborne, 1823-1923." Since the 1979 writing, old records have been reviewed in the Archives of Ontario with the result a more accurate story emerges which we wish to present at this time.

We must give credit to Joseph Keeler who is reported to have visited this area in 1789, then returned to his home in Vermont, only to come back again in 1793, and remain permanently. This traditional account is probably correct. He did not bring with him forty settlers as reported in other stories. The settlers came later. The term "Forty Settlers" is a figure of speech imported from the U.S.A., and not a figure in numbers.

In preparing for settlement, the Quebec Government first had to make a deal with the Indians, for the territory desired. A Treaty was made in 1788, whereby the Crown obtained a strip of land along the north shore of Lake Ontario, westward from the Trent River and about ten to twelve miles inland. This was followed in 1791 by the marking out of eleven townships from the Trent River westward to the Humber River, all facing the lake. For each township the base lines and the side lines for one mile inland were marked. Northumberland was still a solid forest.

The Canada Act of 1791 divided the Province of Quebec into

the Provinces of Lower Canada and Upper Canada. JOHN GRAVES SIMCOE
was appointed Lieutenant Governor for Upper canada and his first
Parliament met at Newark in the Niagara Peninsula in September of 1792.

The new Province needed population and to encourage settlement some thirty-six townships were set aside for settlement by agent.

Cramahe Township was one of these townships.

Settlement of Townships by Agent was an idea that had been practised in the settlement of United States Colonies. In some instances, it was successful where certain religious or ethnic groups came to-gether in one area. In many other cases, the agent or land jobber, through dishonest practises created severe problems and hardships for new arrivals. Simcoe was well aware of these conditions.

Agents, if successful, were paid off with extra grants of land, which in Upper Canada amounted to 1,200 acres maximum.

Within six months, some Upper Canada agents of township settlement were attempting to sell townships wholesale to U.S. buyers. This went against government regulations, and no additional townships were set aside for agent settlement. In the meantime, Northumberland County was not laid out to receive settlers.

Joseph Keeler was given the agency for this area. By the year 1795, some settlers started to move into Haldimand Township. Aaron Greeley and his cousin, Zaccheus Burnham were in this group. The Government hurriedly sent in two survey parties to mark out the boundaries of Haldimand and Cramahe Townships. This was done in the summer of 1795.

In the same year, the central government threw open Cramahe

Township to Regular settlers. A statement in a report of the Department

of Public Archives of Ontario reads as follows :

"In May of 1796, a Proclamation had been issued declaring certain grants of townships null and void because of failure to comply with the conditions of settlement"

"Prior to that event, in August of 1795, the Surveyor-General had reported to Council that no settlers as yet had been placed on the Townships of Clarke and Cramahe by the persons to whom they had been granted. The Council forthwith recinded the grants, and threw open the townships."

This seems to be a strange move on the part of the Executive Council of the central government. The Township boundaries were not then marked out until later that summer in 1795, and the following year saw the marking out of township lots and concessions by Aaron Greeley and his survey party. Settlers arriving earlier than the survey parties would be termed as "squatters". No mention is made of such in the surveyors' notes. We can conclude there were no settlers in Cramahe in 1795. Mention is made of Mr. Weller, living at the Carrying Place.

In contradiction to the 1795 order to make Cramahe Township open for settlement, agents did proceed to locate settlers. A further order was issued in 1796 for the closing out of the Township Settlement schemes :

"All persons who intend to avail themselves of the benefit of any appropriations made in any township are hereby directed to signify the same to the Clerk of the Honorable Council on or before the 1st of June, 1797 and show cause not to be made null and void."

On the 17th of June, 1797, Asa Danforth and Aaron Greeley personally attended the Executive Council meeting at York, and presented lists of settlers for Hamilton, Haldimand, Cramahe and Percy Townships respectively.

For Chamahe Township 41 names were submitted at that time. The

Executive Council "Ordered (the lists) to be sent to the Surveyor General's

office and an appropriation made of the lots mentioned in the lists respectively till further course be directed therein."

It may be in order here to report further comments by the Executive Council:

"In August of 1797, Surveyor-General Smith laid before the Council a report on the grants of townships, and as a result the Council submitted to the President a number of comments;"

"First, they drew attention to the fact that persons obtaining such grants rarely understood in full the conditions attached to them.

"Many appeared to think that after settling forty families in a township on 200 acre lots, the rest of the land was their own.

"Others, although they understood their obligations to settle two hundred families on 200 acre lots, yet considered themselves free to sell out at any time.

"Still others believed that after settling the two hundred families, they in some fashion could acquire personal holdings beyond the 1,200 acres maximum.

"The Council members were fully satisfied that there was no foundation whatsoever for any of these impressions; on the contrary they were convinced that in all such grants, the nominee was entitled to only 1,200 acres himself, with the same quantity for each of his three principal associates. Of several nominees examined by the Council, none could state any grounds on which more was expected, save general report and hearsay.

"The original principles upon which the township grants were based had never been lost sight of, nor had there ever been any idea of giving more than 200 acres to each settler."

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The Executive Council, again meeting in York on September 1st, 1797, read a number of petitions. Among them was the following:

"Joseph Keeler. Praying for 1,200 acres of land each to Isaiah Hall,
Aaron Wallace and Martin Keeler, for having assisted him in the settling
the Township of Cramahe.

"The petitioner Keeler being the only original appropries of the Township of Cramahe can alone be entitled to the donation of land promised to the four original petitioners, 1,200 acres of land, consequently ordered to Joseph Keeler as the only petitioner for Cramahe, which closes his claim for this service.

"Joel Merriman, Benjamin Richardson, Resolved Cleavland and Daniel Silver. Praying for 1200 acres of land each for having assisted in settling the Township of Percy. The petitioners do not appear to have been of the principal original nominees.

"Messers Keeler, Danforth and Greeley appeared and laid before the Board, lists of settlers in the townships of Hamilton, Percy, Haldimand and Cramahe, who were ordered to be confirmed in their several locations."

For this time 55 names were submitted as settlers in Cramahe
Township. The Cramahe list was signed by Asa Danforth and Aaron Greeley.
The Council did not accept the lists submitted in 1797. The Deputy
Provoncial Surveyor was ordered to visit the settlers in Hope, Hamilton,
Haldimand, Cramahe and Percy Townships, and ascertain the exact condition
of settlement. Augustus Jones made a report to his superiors on the 1st
of May 1799. We give here the Jones return of settlement for Cramahe
township. The writer has arranged this list in alphabetical order, and
has added in brackets, the date and to whom the Patent or deed was issued
for the listed lot. The Jones' list for Cramahe contained 39 names.

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THE AUGUSTUS JONES RETURN for CRAMAHE TOWNSHIP May 1st, 1799.

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The list reflects the exact condition of settlement at that time.

1. ALGER; Elias- Lot No.33 - 3d Concession. About six acres partly clear.

(Patent issued Oct 2, 1807 to Elisha Alger.)

 BEACH; Amos - Lot No. 25, 2nd Concession. About six acres clear. (Patent issued July 15, 1803 to Amos Beach.)

3BEATY; Jeremiah- Lot No. 7, in front. About seven acres clear.

(Patent issued 17 May, 1802 to Jeremiah Beaty.)

- 4. BELCHER; John- Lot No. 2, 2nd Concession. About six acres partly clear.
 Living at the Bay of Quinte. (Patent issued July 8th,
 1819 to David M. Rogers.)
- 5. Brunson, William -Lot No. 20, in front. About three acres clear. (Patent issued May 17, 1802 to William Brunson.
- 6. Campbell; John Lot No. 13, in front. About two acres clear. (Patent issued June 30, 1801 to John Campbell.)
- 7. CAMPBELL; Oliver Lot No. 12, in front. About 20 acres cleared.
 (Patent issued 17 May, 1802 to Oliver Campbell.)
- 8. CAMPBELL; Stephen Lot No. 16, in front. About one acre clear. (Patent issued June 30, 1801 to Stephen Campbell.)
- 9. CAMPBELL; William Lot No. 14, in front. About four acres clear.

 (Patent issued June 30, 1801 to William Campbell.)
- 10. Carle; William Lot No. 4, 8th Concession. About ten acres clear.

 (Patent issued June 19, 1809 to William Carl.)
- 11. CRANDLE; Palmer Lot No. 29, 2nd Concession. About ten acres clear.

 (Patent issued October 9, 1815 to Palmer Crandell.)
- 12. CRANDLE; Reuben Lot No. 28, 2nd Concession. About ten acres clear.

 (Patent issued april 22, 1805 to Reuben Crandell.)
- 13. FRINT; Henry Lot No. 26, 2nd Concession. About seven acres clear.
 (Patent issued March 3, 1809 to Henry Frint.)
- 14. FRINT; Martin Lot No. 21, 2nd Concession. About two acres partly clear.
 Living at the Bay of Quinte. (Patent issued May 24, 1832
 to Jared Bellamy.)
- 15. GAFFIELD; Nathan Lot No. 32, 2nd Concession. About fifteen acres clear. (Patent issued May 13, 1804 to Nathan Gaffield.)
- 16. HALL; Isaiah Lot No. 29, in front. About fifty acres clear. He has also cleared about ten acres on Lot No. 28 in front. (Patent issued May 17, 1802 to Isaiah Hall.)
- 17. HURD; Zedack -Lot No. 19, in front. About six acres clear.

 (Patent issued May 2nd, 1823 to Zadoc Hurd.Lot 19,1st Con.)
- 18. KERR; John- Lot No. 11, 8th Concession.-About one acre clear.

 (Patent issued Sept. 11, 1839 to Abram Carr.)
- 19. MARTIN; Daniel Lot No. 5, 8th. Concession. About three acres clear.
 (Patent issued June 19, 1809 to Daniel Masters.)
- 20. McDonell; Alex. Lot No. 26 in front. About six acres clear. (Patent issued May 14, 1811 to Alex. McDonald.)
- 21. MERRIMAN; Joel Residing in the States. Said to claim Lot No. 24 in front, but has not made any improvements thereon, but half the improvements returned to Mr. Hall, No 28 & No. 29 in front belong to him.

 (Patent issued May 17, 1802 to Joel Merriman, B.F. & Lst Concession.)
- 22. MIX; John- Lot No.23, 2nd Concession. About five acres clear.
 (Patent issued March 20, 1807 to John Mix.)

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23. OGDEN; John - Lot No. 32, in front. About sixteen acres clear. (Patent issued June 30, 1801 to John Ogden, Sr.)

24. Ogden; Richard - Lot No. 31, 1st Concession. About one acre clear. (Patent issued April 12, 1842 to Joseph A. Keeler.)

25. OLDCOTT; Timothy - Lot No. 1, 2nd. Concession. About one acre partly clear.

He is said to have died in the States. Lot claimed by

John Dowling and Gudgen.

(Patent issued June 16, 1803 to Edward Goodyear.)

- 26. PALMER; George Lot No. 31, 2nd Concession. About ten acres clear. (Patent issued July 15, 1803 to George Palmer.)
- 27. RICHARDSON; Benjamin -Lot No. 4, in front. About six acres clear. He has also cleared about fifteen acres on Lot No. 5 and erected two small log houses. (Patent issued 17 May, 1802 to Benjamin Richardson, Lot No. 4. Patent issued January 3, 1828, to King's College, Lot No. 5.)

28. RICHARDSON; James- Lot No. 1, in frant. About half an acre partly clear.
Residing in Kingston. (Patent issued February 14,1809 to
James Richardson.)

29. RICHMON; Cyrus -Lot No. 4, 4th Concession. A very trifling clearing cut down. Living at the Bay of Quinte. (Patent issued October 31. 1803 to Cyrus Richmond.)

30.RICHMON; Silvester - Lot No.5, 4th Concession. A very trifling clearing.
Living at the Bay of Quinte. (Patent issued May 17, 1802
to Silvester Richmond.)

31.-SCRIPTURE; Jeremiah - Lot No. 6 in front. About eight acres clear.

(Patent issued February 23, 1808 to Jeremiah Scripture.)

- 32. SIMPSON; Obediah Lot No. 4, 2nd Concession. about sixteen acres clear. (Patent issued August 10, 1801 to Obediah Simpson.
- 33. STANTON; Eldridge -Lot No. 27 in front. About fifteen acres clear. (Patent issued May 17, 1802 to Eldridge Stanboro.)
- 34. TURNER; David Lot No. About eighteen acres cleared, being part of both lots. (Patent issued for Lot No. 23, 1st Concession on January 12, 1821 to David Turney, Sr.)

35. TURNER, David Jr.- Lot No.--About eighteen acres clear, being part of both lots. (Patent issued March 19, 1808 to David Turney, Jr. for Lot No. 22, 1st Concession.)

36. TURNER; John.-Lot No. 7, 2nd Concession. About one acre partly clear.

Said to have left the country and is residing in the States.

(Patent issued July 10,1809 to John D,. Smith.)

37. VAN WYCKULE; Paul. - Lot No. 10, 8th Concession. About two acres clear.

(Patent issued December 17, 1839 to Cornelius Van Wicklin.)

38. WALLACE; Aaron.-Lot No. 30 in front. About eight acres clear.

(Patent issued about 1800 to Isaiah Hall, per Crown Office Letter.)

39. WARD; John.- Lot No. 3 in front. About twelve acres clear. Sold to
Benion, and has settled and cleared about twelve acres
more in rear of lot ditto, near the first concession line.

(Patent issued October 3, 1811 to William Hatton.)

(Signed) A.JONES, D.P.S.

in the Townships of Hope, Hamilton, Haldimand, Cramahe, and Percy, with their several improvements.

"The Board took into consideration the reports made by Mr. Jones in the Townships of Hope, Hamilton, Haldimand, Cramahe, and Percy to-gether with counter reports of Mr. Rogers, Mr. Greeley, etc.

"In perusing these reports and counter reports, the Board meets with anything but additional proofs of fraud, duplicity and unprincipled selfishness of the original nominees of those townships, who undertook to settle them with new inhabitants, but appear to have brought into them persons already settled in the Province, and in many instances have only borrowed their names. Warrents were only to be issued to those who had performed their settlement duties."

-- Russell Papers- Volume III - Page 257.

Apparently other settlers were given time to complete their duties. The Lists of settlers of 1797 are under a cloud and although there is a certain amount of truth to the names of actual newcomers, the lists cannot be relied upon. The Junes list of May 1st, 1799 is authentic and reliable.

Of the thirty six townships set aside for Agent settlement in 1792 -1793, it is reported about six townships were successful in their objective. We hope the above story will give the readers a clear picture of early settlement in this area.

August 21st, 1984. Percy L. Climo.

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THE EARLY SURVEYS. - By : Percy L. Climo.

Time moves on. The year is 1790. The Quebec Province of British

North America extends from the Labrador to the Detroit River and Lake Huron.

The recently arrived United Empire Loyalist settlers located along the Bay of Quinte are increasing in numbers and expanding their territory westward. some have already set up homesteads in the Township of Sidney to the east of the Trent River. The Governor at Quebec has realized the need for the opening of additional territory. Some preparations had already been made. Three years earlier a treaty had been signed with the Indians to acquire a strip of land along the north shore of Lake Ontario. In 1788, that part of Quebec west of the Seigneuries or Fiefdoms of former New France had been divided into four Districts. In each District a Land Board, appointed by the Governor, was the local governing body. The District of Nassau extended from the River Trent to Long Point on Lake Erie with its settlement at Niagara. What later became Northumberland County was then a solid forest. The Land Board held its meetings at Niagara.

The Augustus Jones Survey of 1791.

Instructions were issued to the Land board at Niagara to direct Mr. Augustus Jones, government surveyor, to lay out eleven townships in the recently acquired land along the north shore of Lake Ontario. He was further instructed "to engage ten chainbearers or axemen on the most reasonable terms they can be had, not exceeding one shilling and six pence per day for each man with an allowance of one shilling, three pence currency per day to yourself and attend for provisions, or a procuring of provisions from the King's store in lieu thereof at your option." He at once organized his survey party.

From his field notes we record the following :

front lines of a row of townships agreeable to instructions from

the Surveyor General's Office."

River and from there started out to measure series of traverse lines eastward along the lake shore. Each traverse was measured by a wire link chain 66 feet in length and the bearing or direction made with probably a transit. As the work proceeded Jones recorded the data and any observations such as "marsh," "sandy beach," "clay banks.," and creeks were specially noted.

Proceeding easterly, the party arrived at the future west boundary of Cramahe Township on July 1. His notes recorded , "to a creek running out of a pond that will receive a bateau." Apparently the groupe camped here for the night.

The next day, July the 23d, he mentions "side of a marsh," "rocky shore," "a small creek", His next move to take a bearing "to an object across lake to the west end of an island." He records this object as 504 chains or over six miles distant. This would be the island to the west of Presqu'ile Point. Continuing eastward his notes include "to a pond," "across a pond," He makes a second sighting on "the object at the west end of island." combining two sightings and shore measurements, Jones was able to calculate the distances across the water to the island.

Proceedingly easterly, he records "to a long beach," " to a carrying place across a beach," " a long beach," "near islands," Thus the Cramahe Township lake front is measured on the 23d of July, 1791.

On the 24th of July he records "crossed the beach and went to look for the Carrying Place to the River Trent."

It is interesting to note one settler is mentioned in his records,

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who had located on the west bank of the Trent River. On the 27th he records "to Mr. Blaker's house."

Jones connected his survey measurements with the bounds of Sidney Township, and on the 29th reports: "Protracting and drawing plans for the new townships to be laid out."

The eleven townships were laid out on what is termed the "single front township" pattern. Each township was to be approximately nine miles wide with thirty-five lots across. A road allowance of one chain in width was left at the edge of every second lot. The individual lots were 20 chains wide and 100 chains in depth, making a plot of 200 acres. The concessions were one and a quarter miles apart.

The base lines were continuous across each township and oriented to be parallel to the axis of Lake Ontario. In the east, Sidney and other townships had earlier been laid out to the same bearing. The part concessions' between the base line and the lake were known as "Broken Front Concessions and were lettered "A", "B", etc.North of the base line they were numbered, the original survey of the eleven townships was the pattern laid down for the registration of future deeds of land and their descriptions.

For Cramahe Township, the base line was much closer to the lake than the base lines for Murray and Haldimand Townships, and the township concessions were numbered accordingly from their own base line.

In those early days, there was much difficulty in moving supplies and equipment along the route of survey. Several men had to be fed and sheltered in bad weather. Back packs and where convenient, boats were employed for the conveyance of baggage. Jones' notes records: "July train." "August 1st, crossed the Carrying Place with boat and baggage from the Bay of Quinte to Little Lake." It was August 5th, when the start was made

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to mark off Cramahe Township. This took four days to locate the side lines one mile in from the lake, and the base line across the township. Several swamps and marshes were encountered in the eastern section of the base.

The work continued until the 14th of September when the last of the eleven townships were marked out. The party returned to Niagara where Jones paid off and discharged his men. This concluded the first survey in Northumberland County preparatory for later settlement.

Time moves on. The year is 1795. The Canada Act was passed by the British Parliament in August of 1791. This Act divided the Province of Quebec into two provinces, Lower Canada and Upper Canada. The division became effective on Canada Day, December 21st, 1791. JOHN GRAVES SIMCOE was appointed by the British Government as the first Lieutenant Governor for Upper Canada. He came to this country in November, 1791, spent the winter and spring at Quebec and was sworn into office July 8, 1792 at Kingston. He moved on to Niagara to meet with his first parliament in September of 1792. Northumberland, along with eighteen other counties were raised up by the new government. The names of the districts were changed and Northumberland formed part of the Home District. Upper Canada was being prepared to receive more settlers.

The Surveys of HAMBLY and WATKINS.

By the year 1795, newcomers were starting to arrive in Haldimand Township. Joseph Keeler had already settled in. No survey work had been done since 1791. The government of Upper Canada despatched two survey parties to mark out the boundaries of Hamilton, Haldimand and Cramahe Townships. The senior surveyor was WILLIAM HAMBLY and Seth WATKINS was the extra surveyor heading up the survey crews to do this work.

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It was the 23d of June, 1795, when William Hambly received his orders from the Surveyor General of Upper Canada. He made preparations and sailed for Kingston where he arrived on the 30th. From Kingston he proceeded with his party up the Bay of Quinte, taking on supplies en route. Crossing the Carrying Place with their boat and baggage, they moved on to Hope Township. His first assignment was to mark out the boundaries of Hamilton Township.

This work was completed on the 20th, and the group moved east to Cramahe. That night, they camped at what later became Lakeport, and had a conference there with Mr. Watkins and his party. Watkins was assigned to survey the west boundary of Cramahe northward and on to the River Trent.

On July the 21st, Hambly and his men reached Presqu'ile. Next day they made a start on the boundary between Cramahe and Murray Townships, working north. The axemen went ahead to cut a line of sight through the forest. Handicapped by a severe thunderstorm, the party reached the 9th Concession late on the 24th of July. The north-east corner of Cramahe was reached the next day, He had to send some of his men "to the Bay for provisions."

His work continued with the northern boundary of Cramahe, which he double checked for measurement. He had orders to also lay out the east line of Percy Township and continued northward. He reports "Mr Greely being sick." One of his party gets lost for a day, which gave them some concern. On the 3rd of August Hambly reports "in the evening fell in with Mr. Watkins line close to the Trent and there camped." For the 4th of

August his notes record: "Having my hands all sick of the ague (Swamp fever) could not measure my West line, returned to the Northeast corner, met my hands who had been for provisions both sick, Mr. Baker and Smedley gone to Wellers with the boat. I was left in the woods with a band of sick men, not one well but myself so returned by crossing the Town of Murray."

On the 6th -"Settled with my hands at Wellers and discharged them."

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After discharging his men, William Hambly went to Mr. Manhers in Sidney Township, where he remained for a week, too sick to travel. He finally made it to Major Van Alstines "to look up hands for my next work but the sickness prevailed so generally, it was impossible to obtain one." Finally he went on to Kingston and took passage on the LADY DORCHESTER for Newark, where he arrived on the 3rd of October.

Briefly, the SETH WATKINS party had some very adverse conditions to face. He hired his men on July 9th, stocked up on provisions, and finally arrived at the "south-east corner of Haldimand" (Lakeport) on July 16th. It appears Watkins made Lakeport his base camp. He was to survey out the boundaries between Haldimand and Cramahe and extend his line of survey to the Trent "iver. Sickness with the whole party for days hampered the work. A number of rain storms added to the misery and the sickness of the men. Ague, intermittent fever or swamp fever continued among the men throughout the work. Shortage of food was another factor. Watkin's notes mentions about Joseph Keeler taking his boat to Niagara for food and supplies and being very late in returning due to storms. It was the first of October when he finished his work and he mentions "returned to camp very unwell." Slowly, the party made the journey to Kingston where they arrived on the 9th of October. Here Watkins settled with his men and discharged them. He returned to Niagara on the Kingston packet.

It is rather difficult for us, to-day, to visualize and realize the hardships experienced by the men of the survey parties of 1795. The shortage of food, hot weather in the woods, flies, mosquitoes, rain and other adverse conditions, all plagued the men and brought them down with billious fever. The markings of the boundaries of Cramahe Township was no easy task.

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The AARON GREELEY SURVEY.

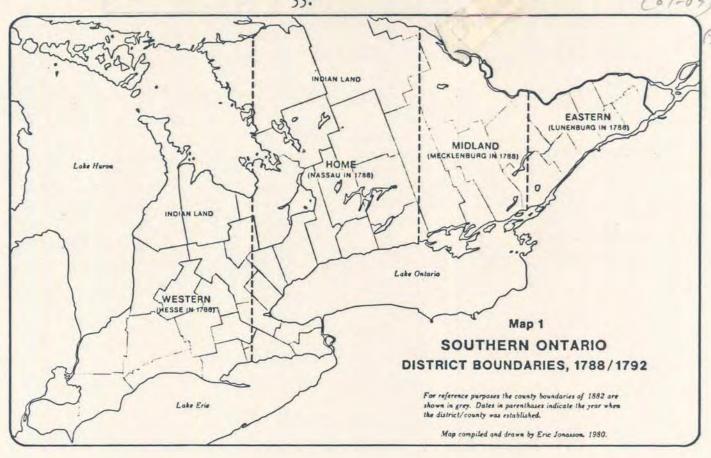
Aaron Greeley, a former school teacher, moved into Haldimand Township from New Hampshire in 1795. He joined the survey party of William Hambly and worked on the boundary surveys of Hamilton and Cramahe Townships. After these boundaries were laid out, Greeley was given the work to lay out the lots and concessions. His notes for Cramahe and Haldimand are available, but the records for the lots and concessions survey in Hamilton Township are missing. According to the family story, Greeley also done the same layout work in Hamilton Township.

Unfortunately, Aaron Greeley does not date his records. He may have started this work in 1795, after the boundary work was finished, but 1796 is most likely the date. In his "minutes for Cramahe," he records, "The base line or front line of the town is taken from the sketch that was given to me." He proceeds with Concession Two, numbering the lots from i to 35 inclusive, describing the soil, timber, and whether the ground is level or on a hill. He notes the location of brooks, swamps and other features. For Concession Two he records, "This concession has excellent timber for ship building."

Greeley follows through with Concession three to concession ten.

[With this survey completed, the township was ready to receive newcomers and place them on 200 acre lots.

Percy L. Climo August 25, 1984.



MAPS - Courtesy of "FAMILIES" - The Ontario Genealogical Society.

