

HISTORY OF EARLY SETTLEMENT

Many of the Loyalists who took up land in 1784 in the first 4 towns later established themselves in 6th and 7th town as they were surveyed and opened up. In 1785 the survey of Sixth Town (Sophiasburgh) was begun. It started at the head of Picton Bay and ran north along the high shore to Green Point, then continued along the north shore, the lots always fronting on the bay. Still following the bay, the 7th township was created, the western boundary of which brought the surveyor to the head of the bay, or Carrying Place. Upon the oldest chart of Ameliasburgh in the Crown Lands Department is the following note: "The front of this township is a continuation of Lieutenant Kotte's survey from Green Point to the head of the Bay of Quinte in 1785".

General practice in surveying the new towns was to establish a base line. In Prince Edward these base lines were always along the waterfront. When enough settlers moved in a line was run parallel to the base-line $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles back. This became the 2nd concession. Roads along these lines became known as concession roads. Waterfront lots of course, were more desirable for water was the road. Lots farther in were considered quite in the remote part of the earth. Rear concessions were looked upon doubtfully, as to whether the land was worth having. Some Loyalists did not retain their lands because they were situated in a remote region; they sold it for little. Some drew land and never even saw it. A few private individuals were wont to buy the location tickets of all who desired to part with them. In this way a few persons came to own large quantities of land.

The actual process of drawing lots was simple. It was a lottery. The number of each lot was written on a piece of paper; then they were drawn out of a hat. The land was free but settlers had to swear allegiance to the Crown, clear 5 acres, build a house and open a road across the front of their lot - $\frac{1}{4}$ mile. Loyalist refugees and privates drew 100 acres; officers much more of course. Non-commissioned officers received 200 acres, staff officers 500 acres, captains 700 acres. The refugees drew 100 acres for each master of a family plus 50 acres for each person of which his family consisted. A single man was allotted 50 acres. Also in June, 1787 instructions were issued granting to every head of a family who had settled and improved his grant 200 acres in addition to his original allotment. This was called the Dorchester Bounty.

Under the terms of a regulation of 1789, the children of Loyalists were given 200-acre grants of their own; girls when they married, men when they reached 21. This was not always productive of the benefits expected from it. Grants were frequently sold for a small consideration.

At the base-line along the water an allowance was made for a road 60 feet wide, and at the back concession lines roads 40 feet wide. In addition, at intervals along the base-line and concession lines a space of 40 feet was supposed to be left at 2 or 3 mile intervals for side-roads to link the concessions. In Ameliasburgh, through carelessness or neglect, 3 such crossroads were omitted by the surveyors. Lots were usually 200 acres each with a frontage of 1320 feet ($\frac{1}{4}$ mile) and a depth of 6600 feet ($1\frac{1}{4}$ miles). However there was a decided lack of accuracy in the original surveys. Lots were measured in chains - 20 chains in width - and a chain was supposed to be 66 feet long. But the chains sometimes broke and were mended by the simple expedient of taking out the broken link and attaching the next two. So a farm measured with a chain with 3 links missing would be smaller than it should be. Haste was so important that surveys were quickly and haphazardly completed. In one instance, west of Carrying Place lots fronted on an old Indian trail. The surveyor's assistant was told to lay out a double row of lots, both fronting on the trail, which instructions were literally carried out, whereas it was intended they be laid out in a straight line. The result was a row of lots in a zig-zag pattern that later had to be resurveyed.

It was planned that the county would be surveyed into neat and tidy townships. Prince Edward's geography made nonsense of this idea. Fifth Town (Marysburgh) the first township to be surveyed in the county, divided nicely into 2 concessions back-to-back, one fronting on the Bay of Quinte, the other on Prince Edward Bay. But in Sixth Town (Sophiasburgh) when the lines running south from the north shore intercepted the survey lines from the high shore, difficulties arose. They were resolved by creating four gores - triangular pieces of land where lot lines meet at an angle. Prince Edward County is studded with a dozen gores - most of them in Sophiasburgh and Hallowell. There is only one in Ameliasburgh - north of the 2nd concession. Because opposite shorelines run almost parallel in Ameliasburgh and Hillier gores were unnecessary.