

Early Settlement of McLean and Ridout Townships. (page 2)

While staying with relatives in Bracebridge they made locations in McLean Township. Mark Langford then just a young man of between seventeen and eighteen made location for his father Thomas Langford of Milverton, Perth County. Mr. Langford was a cripple, having been hurt in a mill accident. Having a large family of mostly boys, he thought it would be a great opportunity for them to acquire land and be near his sister.

When Mark Langford, E. Attridge and two others set out on Sept., 1870, from Bracebridge with their blankets, axes, etc., and provisions of fifty pounds of flour, bacon, tea, sugar and tin dishes, they found only a very rough road five or six miles through Macauley Township and after that only a foot-path.

The first day they only made seven or eight miles, staying with the Bruce Family overnight. Next day, they started on. Three locations had been taken in McLean Township on the road which was to be built later, D. Lee, T. Ball and Wm. Huzzy. Mr. Huzzy was working in a lumber camp and his wife and son were living in their log cabin. From the Huzzy home on there was only a blazed trail for three miles to their location.

It was almost night when they arrived at lot 18, Con. 9, weary and discouraged, they built a fire beside a shelving rock, cooked some supper and rolled up in their blankets to rest. In the morning they decided to return to Bracebridge and get work there. They buried their flour beneath a tree, sold their other provisions and dishes to Mrs. Huzzy for almost nothing and returned to Bracebridge where Mark and Attridge secured work, the other men returned to their homes and gave up their locations.

Mark wrote to his father that it was no good, but his father wrote back that he had made plans to come on in the spring, so Mark and Attridge set out again in October accompanied this time by Dan. Gammage who had located on the 8th Concession opposite the Langford location. They had to carry in fresh provisions and dig up their flour. It was a big undertaking to build cabins or shanties as they called them. They chopped down trees, carrying them after cutting into logs and built the walls. The roof was made of split cedar. They got the walls up and roof on before the snow got too deep. Mark returned to Bracebridge and Mr. Gammage to his home in Brant county.

In March 1871, Thomas Langford and his family arrived in Bracebridge. By this time a road had been cut to Bracebridge and they were able to bring their horses. Oxen were far more useful in clearing land so they sold one team of horses and bought a yoke of oxen. Mark and his two younger brothers, Joe and John (twins) set out with supplies to finish the shanties for the rest of the family.