

OUR COUNTYContinued

mechanics to erect the first sawmill in the county. It was in working order by the later part of the year when the dam broke away and it was the next year before the first plank was sawed. Mr Horner also erected the first grist- mill but this was destroyed by fire in 1809 and never rebuilt. This catastrophe checked farther settlement in Blenheim Township.

When Governor Simcoe's term of office expired, his successor, Hon. Peter Russell, refused to give away such large tracts of land and even cancelled many existing arrangements. Horner nevertheless remained in the district with the usual settler's grant of 200 acres of land. He became a prominent figure in the life of the County as a politician and a soldier and one of Oxford's first representatives in the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada.

In the first territorial division of Canada West, what is now Oxford County was included in the Western District. In 1792 Simcoe divided the Province of Upper Canada into nineteen counties in which the division of the townships which form the County of Oxford were divided as follows: Burford, Oxford-on-the-Thames Norwich and Dereham were attached to Norfolk County and the townships of Blenheim and Blandford were attached to the County of York.

In 1798, an act was passed for the better division of this province which states "The townships of Burford, Norwich, Dereham, Oxford-on-the-Thames, Blandford and Blenheim do constitute and form the County of Oxford". Norfolk, Oxford and Middlesex together made up the London District. Another act passed July 4, 1800 states that the counties of Oxford, Middlesex and Norfolk shall together be represented by one member. From 1800 to 1804 in the Third Parliament, these counties were represented by Hon. D. W. Smith.

In 1821, Nissouri, Oakland and Zorra townships were added to Oxford County. Oxford became the District of Brock in 1837.

An act of January 1, 1850 repealed fifty previous acts and conferred powers of self government upon municipal corporations and Oxford became a self governing county, governed by five councillors who elected a Reeve and each township with 500 or more residents could elect a Deputy Reeve. A first settler, Thomas Horner M.P.P. became a first representative in Parliament.

In 1800 a Registry Office was established for the counties of Oxford and Middlesex in pursuance of an act passed in August 1795 and Thomas Horner received the appointment of the first Registrar. His office was a lean-to at the side of his