

History of Halton

Author of the history is Ben Case of the Silverwood area.

LOG-HOUSE CONSTRUCTION



Squared Logs

Round Logs, Roof of Balswood bark



For over one hundred and twenty-five years agriculture was the main avocation in Halton County and it would be in order here to describe in brief the life of the farmer from early pioneer days to today's mechanized methods of tilling the soil. We have already seen how the settlers arrived with little of this world's goods and for the first few years it was a constant struggle for survival, the pioneer's main object being to keep himself and family from

starvation. The County Atlas of 1877 states — "Of the trials and privations of the pioneers those of their successors who have reaped the benefit of their labors can form little conception."

The first task would be to provide a shelter for the family and fortunately there was plenty and to spare building material ready to hand. The neighbors were generally ready to form a "bee" for this purpose as it presented one of the few opportunities for sociability and diversion. The fact that whisky was procurable for twenty-five cents or less a gallon was an added attraction and no doubt aided and abetted the willingness to lend a helping hand to the new neighbor.

The logs were cleverly notched at the ends, so they dovetailed together at the corners. The settlers from the Niagara Peninsula, being mostly descended from several generations of American frontier life would be much more adept at this work than new arrivals from Europe. The roof would be formed possibly by grooved boards of split logs overlapping each other to be replaced later by hand-split cedar shingles or "shakes". A fireplace of stone with mud as mortar, if lime was unavailable, would make the structure livable for the time being at least.

After the felling of as many trees as could be accomplished in the limited time available, another bee might be called for burning the logs and brushwood to clear the land for the first planting among the stumps. The next step would be to get the

wheat, thus raised, ground into flour and this often necessitated carrying a sack of wheat on one's back for many miles to the nearest mill. If this proved impracticable sometimes a rude mortar and pestle using the hollowed out stump of a hardwood tree was resorted to, resulting in a very coarse flour, as one can imagine. However by 1817 we have seen that there was one grist mill in Trafalgar and this number would increase with time and with the growth in population in this and the other townships.

With the opening up of the back country for settlement and the building of dams for water power for grist and saw mills, the salmon coming up from the Atlantic Ocean were unable to get up to their spawning grounds at the headwaters of the streams and also, with the dumping of the sawdust in the running water, we have the first case of water pollution. For these two reasons, the fish began gradually to die off. In addition, the game also began to disappear from the

settled country, so that hunting and trapping were no longer profitable. Accordingly the Mississaugas were in time persuaded to give up their lands at the mouths of the rivers. On August 16th 1827 a sale was held of their holdings at the mouth of the Sixteen Mile Creek amounting to 960 acres, the purchaser being W. Chisholm and the price twenty-one shillings and three pence per acre. The money was applied to the completion of the Mississauga village of log huts about a mile up the Credit where the Mississauga Golf Clubhouse now is situated. Most of the lands of the Indians for a mile on each side of the Credit had been previously sold but the proceeds had been insufficient for the completion of the buildings on the site reserved for them.

SKIN DRESSING AND MEAT DRYING



Scraping flesh from moose skin with bone-handled scraper with stone blade



Method of using scraper to hold it rigid



Rubbing fat into the skin



Smoking & drying moose meat

From the Imperial Oil Collection

It might be worth while to make mention of the subsequent history of the Mississaugas. The village at the Credit was largely built up under the leadership of the Rev. Peter Jones whose father was the early surveyor Augustus Jones, and his mother a Mississauga. His great object was to improve the lot of the Mississaugas whose condition had sadly deteriorated through contact with the white man, partly through the ravages of disease, particularly tuberculosis, against which they had little resistance, and partly through the sale of fire-water by the traders which the Indian could not resist. The Indian lands on each side of the Credit were sold about 1826 and a village started with a church and school. Peter Jones' elder brother John

taught in the school. In 1828 there was a total of 228 Indians in the village. The village progressed for some years and at one time there were five hundred acres cleared and cultivated. However more and more Indians succumbed to consumption and in the late 1840's the Government removed the Indians from the Credit, most of them to the Grand River Reserve. (See "Credit Valley Gateway" by Betty Clarkson, pages 53 and 55.)

It is worth noting that an article in the Toronto Globe and Mail of March 18 1968, describes the progress of a band of six hundred Mississauga Indians who have been living quietly on a six thousand acre reserve near Hagersville, Ontario, close to the Mohawk Reserve. Chief Fred

King officiated at the naming of the new town of Mississauga, formerly Toronto Township.

The article continues — "The Mississaugas have always been known as an industrious people quite capable of looking after themselves. The band members today are carrying on that tradition. All are employed and the band's welfare costs are nil. Many are busily engaged in their off hours building themselves modern housing, a new school and a community hall." Apparently, after they moved away from the proximity of the unscrupulous white traders, they found their proper niche in society. Undoubtedly these people are the descendants of the early inhabitants of Halton and Peel.

B2 The Acton Free Press, Wednesday, August 26, 1970

Obituary

Nelson Anderson dies buried Ebenezer cemetery

One of the first members of the Acton Golden Age club, a highly respected Acton resident, Nelson Anderson died in Guelph General Hospital on Tuesday, August 18 after a short illness.

Mr. Anderson resided at 98 Main St. N. Acton for the past 11 years, after retiring from farming in Nassagaweya township. He lived in the township for 72 years.

Born October 10, 1886, the deceased was well known in the district. He was the son of John Robinson Anderson and his wife, Catherine Cameron Kitching. He attended school at S. S. No. 8 school in Nassagaweya township and was a member of Ebenezer United Church.

Mr. Anderson had many friends, a quiet unassuming nature, and was widely

respected. He was married on March 18, 1914 in Nassagaweya. His wife predeceased him.

He leaves three children, Mrs. A. Diamond, R. R. 2, Rockwood, Mrs. W. Freeman, R. R. 1 Campbellville, and Douglas Anderson, 59 Cobblehill Rd., Acton. Five grandchildren and seven great grandchildren also survive.

The funeral was held from the Rumley-Shoemaker funeral home, Acton, Friday, August 21, with Rev. Russell Finley officiating. Interment was in Ebenezer Cemetery.

Palbearers were neighbors and friends he knew from his farming days and since including Irwin Little, Cal McIntyre, Charles Fatt, Charles Thomson, Lester Miller and Charles Cheyne.

Obituary

Alda Dobbs dies at Whitby

Alda Viola Dobbs (nee Gulley) passed away suddenly at Whitby on June 14 in her 53rd year. She was the only child of the late Richard Gulley of Grand Valley and Lorena Viola McLaughlin Gulley R.N. of Erin township, in the Acton area.

The late Alda Dobbs was born September 29, 1917, in Toronto. From the age of 11 to 18 she was confined to a wheel chair. She was educated in Toronto where her father was a carpenter and rooming house landlord. Her mother, a nurse, was always willing to help the less fortunate.

Early in 1942 she married Eli Carman Dobbs of Parry Sound in Toronto. In 1943 they moved to Mariposa township in the Lindsay area. She is survived by her husband and two sons, Ross Alexander of New Toronto and Richard Lorne, at home; three

grandchildren Stephen, Marie and Mary Lee-Ann of New Toronto.

Funeral service was held June 18 in Sunderland Baptist Church conducted by her pastor Rev. R. D. Guthrie. Interment was in Eden cemetery, Mariposa township.

Palbearers were close family friends Gratton Brumwell, Keith, Bob and Peter Doble, Bill Stewart of Sunderland and Harry Diamant of Gamebridge.

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