



AMONG THE DIGNITARIES present at the unveiling of the historical plaque at Ballinafad Sunday were representatives from municipal and provincial and

federal governments. Mrs. Jesse McEnery, president of Ballinafad W. I. who initiated the project is in the centre.—(Staff Photo)



THE FOUR CORNERS at Ballinafad — a pioneer meeting place — were again the centre of attraction Sunday when an historical plaque was unveiled on the

cemetery grounds commemorating 150 years of settlement. (Staff Photo)

History of Erin twp.

# Nathaniel Roszel first Ballinafad settler 150 years ago

Erin Township was formed from the Mississauga Tract - an area of land extending from the western line of the Toronto Purchase (now the west boundary of York County and Metropolitan Toronto) to another "Purchase Line" running north-west from the outlet of Burlington Bay (Hamilton Harbour). This tract had been reserved for the aborigine, or sept, known as "the Mississaugas of the Credit".

These Mississaugas had been the largest and most important part of the "Eagle Totem" of the Chippewa or Ojibway Nation, amounting almost to a separate nation themselves. Since the coming of Europeans, disease had reduced their numbers. By a preliminary purchase treaty signed on August 1, 1805, they had surrendered to the Crown a strip between five and six miles wide along Lake Ontario in front of their tract, reserving only some lands on the rivers to protect their salmon fisheries and corn-fields. This treaty was ratified in September, 1806.

This strip along the front of the Tract was surveyed in the first half of 1806, laid out in three townships - Toronto, Trafalgar and Nelson - and opened for settlement which was very rapid. In the next 10 years the numbers of this band of Mississaugas declined still further and those frequenting the Tract became even fewer.

Crown gets title

A treaty signed on October 28, 1818, gave the Crown title to all the remaining land in the Tract, except the small reserves on the rivers excluded by the treaty of 1805. The three lakeshore townships were extended northwards by "New Surveys" and room was found for two tiers of new townships within the Tract.

The new townships in the Mississauga Tract were laid out under a system of survey adopted in December, 1818, a result of the reluctance of settlers to take out their patents and pay the patent and survey fees until they were forced to do so. This was a long-standing difficulty in providing for the expenses of the survey office, to which the settlers survey fees were appropriated.

Lieutenant-Governor Peter Hunter had solved the problem during his term of office by ordering that all fees must be paid within three days of the date of the location ticket (which gave the settler the right to occupy a particular holding). This order was unpopular, especially after all land fees were increased by the Regulations of 1804, and Hunter's successor, Francis Gore, was forced to rescind it.

The method tried in 1818 was to survey townships by contract, paying for the survey with a percentage of the area surveyed. About December 14, 1818, a rather vaguely worded advertisement was published in various newspapers, calling for tenders for surveying a township or townships in the Mississauga Tract.

Magistrate replies

Among the replies received was one from Abraham Nelles, Esq., of Grimsby, dated April 2, 1819, offering to survey a township in association with Charles Kennedy, of Gainsborough Township. Nelles was a well-to-do magistrate, a merchant and the owner of land and mills at Grimsby and a tract on the Grand River near the site of York. His part in the contract was to provide funds for the survey parties under Kennedy, who lacked the means to do so and wait to recoup his expenses until the lands became valuable. Nelles was willing to accept 4 1/2 per cent.

His offer was accepted about April 7th and he was told the next day that he might "survey the rear of Esquesing and the front of a Township at its rear." The fact that the boundaries of the Tract had already been surveyed,

allowed the townships to be laid out on paper, and it would seem that the names chosen for them by the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland, were known in his office by November 11, 1818, although his formal announcement of the first three of these names was on April 2, 1819 and the name "Erin" had evidently not yet reached the Surveyor-General by April 8th.

Charles Kennedy had completed his survey of the front part of Erin Township before November 10, 1819, and by November 11, Nelles seems to have drawn his lots, which he divided with Kennedy. A mill site was reported on Lot 14, Con. 9 which seems to have been drawn by Nelles, but he was evidently not permitted to keep this lot.

Location tickets could now be issued for particular lots, for the positions of the reserve lots and the contractors' holdings had been ascertained. Nelles and Kennedy were given leave to recommend settlers and did so, for the names of two or three are known and there is an implied reference to their list. Unfortunately it has not survived; but it is notable that the first settlers in Erin were all from Gainsborough Township, Charles Kennedy's place of residence until he moved to Esquesing.

First settlers

These first actual settlers were George, Nathaniel and Eldridge Roszel and David Fowler. With a number of other applicants, they received location tickets for lots near the site of Ballinafad on November 12, 1819 and seem to have moved to their locations almost at once.

According to tradition, Nathaniel Roszel was the first settler in Erin Township. This may very well be the case, but he was probably accompanied or soon followed by the other Roszels and David Fowler. They all seem to have been established in the township early in 1820.

It was George Roszel who first got the Surveyor-General's "Description" of his holding (E-4 Lot 1, Con. 7), "settlement duty performed" and "patent fee and survey paid," on January 20, 1821. The other three received their descriptions on November 7th.

On December 10, 1819, Samuel Ryckman, D.P.S. wrote to the Surveyor-General offering to contract for the survey of "the rear half of the Township of Erin, and the Gore, a township lying in the rear thereof at Five per cent for every hundred Acres of land." This high tender was accepted (perhaps because Erin and Garafraxa were remote townships and contained a good deal of land of inferior quality.)

Complete survey

Ryckman could not get his instructions until near the middle of August, 1820. He probably completed his work in Erin Township by April 5, 1821, when he made a brief report on its soil, etc., but he does not seem to have turned in his plan until he had finished Garafraxa, late in the autumn, and it was not until December 29, 1821, that Thomas Ridout reported that Ryckman had drawn his lands.

Meanwhile, a good many location tickets were being issued for the Township.

By January 29, 1821, 103 locations were reported to have been issued for Erin Township, but the indications are that fewer than 10 families were living

there. Among the reasons for the large Crown purchases of Indian lands in 1818 was the need to provide for the children of Loyalists, who had come of age or married (if girls) during the war years (when little or no land was granted) and were each entitled to 200 acres. Besides there were claims from members of the regular forces who had served in Upper Canada during the war.

To these were added, in 1821, the claims of militia veterans of the war of 1812-15, who were now permitted to take their grants wherever they could find vacant land, instead of being settled in special townships as had been intended.

Sharp land demand

The result was a sharp demand for land in the townships of the Tract and the majority of the grants in Erin between 1821 and 1825 were to persons who had no desire to settle there; who paid others to perform their settlement duty and, though they might sometimes find a tenant, were apt to leave their grant vacant as soon as they had their certificate until it became profitable to sell it.

John Shingler, who worked in one of Kennedy's survey parties in 1819, and settled in Erin Township in 1825, said in 1866 that there were only about 20 families in the township when he came to Erin. This agrees quite with the assessor's return for 1824 (which may include Eramosa) - 115 persons.

The return for Erin and Eramosa in 1825 was 284 and for Erin only in 1826, 280. By 1828 the return had increased to 336 and by 1830 to 368, divided between 75 households. Five years later it reached 963.

These figures give an indication of the years in which settlers were entering Erin in some numbers - a few in 1821-25, more in 1825-28 and a considerable number in 1830-35.

Spread out

These settlers were spread out through the concessions, but certain important developments took place among two groups, one centred on Lots 24-26, Cons. 7 and 8 - the site of Hillsburgh 8 and the other on Lot 14, Cons. 10 - the site of Erin Village. Of these two developments the one at Hillsburgh may, perhaps, claim a slight priority, for Christopher Switzer, son of a U. E. Loyalist, got his location ticket for Lot 25, Con. 8 on May 8, 1821, had performed his settlement duty by November 28, 1823, patented the lot on February 27, 1824 and sold the whole lot to Aaron Wheller on April 21, 1824. (Both Aaron and James Wheller sign their names distinctly with this spelling, but it was sometimes spelled "Wheeler" and this seems to be the present form of the name.)

On the other hand, Lot 14, Con. 10, drawn but not patented by Abraham Nelles, was rejected by the first grantee, Joel Talman, in 1821 as unfit for cultivation. At Nelles' request he was allowed another lot and a ticket of location was issued in January, 1822, to Henry Gabel, a militia grantee, for the west half of Lot 14, Con. 10.

Gabel, who probably continued to live in Toronto township, put in his certificate of settlement duty in April, 1828. This was signed by William Trout and Henry Trout, Jr., who, in addition to the ordinary duties, stated "... there is also a saw Mill built, and in operation - and an actual settler on the said half lot."

First mill

This sawmill, the first mill of any kind returned for Erin Township, appears in the assessment return for 1828, and was probably in operation and

taxable by the end of 1827. It may have been begun in 1828, as stated in some older histories, but was evidently not working when the 1827 assessment was made up. It was probably built and run for a time by the Trouts, under some unregistered agreement with Gabel, but they never became owners of the half lot. This was sold by Gabel in October, 1828, to William Chisholm, who in turn sold it in November, 1837, to Daniel McMillan.

Meanwhile Aaron Wheller had sold the east half of Lot 25, Con. 9 in February, 1827, to Ann Henshaw and may well have used the money to meet the cost of building a grist mill on the west half. The first grist mill is returned for Erin in 1829 and so was probably operative by the end of 1829. It is not quite clear whether Wheller actually built his mill on his own land, as he says in his petition of 1830, or whether he held a lease of Lot 25, Con. 7, a Clergy Reserve, which he tried later to purchase. The former is perhaps more likely, for Wheller found the mill site unsatisfactory.

In 1830 he not only tried to buy the east half of Lot 25, Con. 7, where the later mills at Hillsburgh were located, but also petitioned to be allowed to buy the east half of Lot 15, Con. 9, a Crown Reserve which George Trout had been making great efforts to purchase, first from the Canada Company (who did not own it) and then from the Crown.

Wheller asked leave to move his grist mill to this lot, pointing out that, when he built it, there was none in Erin, Eramosa or Garafraxa. The Surveyor-General favoured Wheller's application and it was granted. Apparently Aaron Wheller obtained this half lot and moved his mill there, though it was not patented until 1840 by George "Wheeler", who sold it to David and Charles McMillan in 1844.

Aaron Wheller's petition had been signed by 20 settlers including members of the Howe, Dowling, Hill, Farmer, Dunn, Henshaw, McMillan, Dean and Rott (now Root) families. (The names are spelled as in the signatures.)

The assessment returns suggest that the moving of Wheller's grist mill may have taken place about 1833 and that the mill was operative on the new site until 1836 or 1837. In 1833, no grist mill was returned for Erin Township, but in 1836 the number increases from one to two.

This suggests that Daniel McMillan began his purchase of the Trout-Chisholm mill site on Lot 14, Con. 10 about 1835 and had completed a new grist mill there before the 1836 assessment. This agrees very well with statements in the older histories. There is no return for 1837 and in 1838 only one grist mill is listed. It may be assumed that the old Wheller mill had ceased running. No second grist mill is returned until after 1851. No grist mill is returned for 1839; as might be expected, since it is recorded that the McMillans built a larger stone mill in 1838, which was evidently not running until after the roll was made up. Sure enough, the mill returned for 1840 had three sets of stones rather than one.

Village grows

A village had now grown up at "McMillan's Mills", where a post office for "Erin" was opened on October 6, 1839. According to the custom of the time "Erin" signified the township, but was soon adopted for the village. William Cornock was the first postmaster.

The pond on Lot 15, Con. 9 was kept up as an extra source of

power, but the sawmill and grist mill were on Lot 14, Con. 9, though later some installations were placed on the Wheller site.

There appear to have been no mills on the site of Hillsburgh between 1833 and 1851. At the most there could have been a sawmill in the later 1840's, but no mention of one has been found. David Hill had been granted land south of the site in the tenth concession and on his death his

eldest son, Nazareth, inherited the west half of this lot - the first land he appears to have owned in this vicinity.

In 1841, Nazareth Hill bought 50 acres of Lot 24, Con. 7 and in 1842 he bought from Aaron Wheller the west 100 acres of Lot 25, Con. 8. According to a certificate obtained in February, 1847, Nazareth Hill had then settled on the east half of Clergy Lot 25, Con. 7 since April, 1842, but

whether as a tenant or a squatter is not stated. However, he seems to have been able to buy the east half, for in June, 1851, he sold the easternmost 25 acres to "William Godderham and James G. Worts of the City of Toronto, Millers," for 25 pounds. Such a price would not cover even a sawmill and the site is likely to have been vacant. Hill had already sold off a few small parcels from the various lands he had been acquiring

during the forties; but his formal subdivisions seem to be later than 1850 and the majority of his sales in Hillsburgh are later - as late as 1859. The same applies to subdivisions made by the Henshaws, Rows and others.

Hillsburgh missing

There is no description of Hillsburgh in W. H. Smith's Gazetteer of 1846. In 1851 he calls

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## A-B SUPERMARKET

9 MILL ST. — ACTON — 853-0650

<b>RED BRAND BEEF</b>	
<b>Short Rib Roast</b>	<b>69¢ lb.</b>
<b>Choice Blade Roast</b>	
<b>Cross Cut Roast</b>	<b>75¢ lb.</b>
<b>Chuck Steaks</b>	<b>79¢ lb.</b>
SCHNEIDER'S — KENT SLICED	
<b>Side BACON</b> 1-LB. PKG.	<b>79¢</b>
SCHNEIDER'S	
<b>BOLOGNA</b> 1-LB. PKG.	<b>59¢</b>
<b>FROZEN FOOD</b>	
SUNNY — 6-OZ. TIN	
WHITE OR PINK	<b>10 FOR \$1</b>
KRAFT — 16 OZ. JAR — (SAVE 12c)	
<b>MIRACLE WHIP</b>	<b>39¢</b>
HEINZ — 10 OZ. TINS (SAVE 24c)	
<b>TOMATO SOUP</b>	<b>8 FOR \$1</b>
AYLMER — 15-OZ. JARS — (SAVE 17c)	
<b>ASS'T PICKLES</b>	<b>3 FOR \$1</b>
HEINZ — 48-OZ. TINS — (SAVE 35c)	
<b>TOMATO JUICE</b>	<b>3 FOR \$1</b>
NESTLES — 2-LB. TIN — (SAVE 18c)	
<b>QUIK</b> CHOCOLATE DRINK	<b>89¢</b>
LIBBY'S — 14-OZ. TINS — (SAVE 15c)	
<b>SPAGHETTI or ALPHA-GETTI</b>	<b>5 FOR \$1</b>
MAXIM — FREEZE — DRIED — 8 OZ. JAR.	
<b>COFFEE</b> (SAVE 50c)	<b>\$1.69</b>
<b>FRESH PRODUCE DAILY</b>	
<b>Fresh Fruit &amp; Vegetables Arrive Daily At Lowest Possible Prices</b>	
PRICES EFFECTIVE SEPT. 2-3-4-5.	
OCEAN KING — 15 3/4 OZ. TIN (SAVE 40c)	
FANCY RED SOCKEYE <b>SALMON</b>	<b>99¢</b>
WHITE SWAN — 6-ROLL PKG. (SAVE 20c)	
<b>TOILET TISSUE</b>	<b>79¢</b>
PANTRY SHELF — 19-OZ. TINS (SAVE 35c)	
Orange or Grapefruit SECTIONS	<b>3 FOR \$1</b>
CHRISTIE'S — 24-OZ. LOAF — BUTTERMATE	
WHITE SLICED <b>BREAD</b>	<b>5 FOR \$1</b>
CAN. NO. 1 — FRESH CREAMERY	
<b>BUTTER</b> 1-LB. PRINT	<b>65¢</b>