

History of Halton

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

THE PIONEER WOMAN
The lot of the pioneer woman was just as arduous and most probably more heart-breaking than that of her husband. While he had more outside interests and would have the satisfaction of seeing the results of his labours slowly evolving into a farmstead, she had to make a home literally from scratch - cooped up in a small cabin, cold in winter, hot in summer with no screens to shut out the hordes of mosquitoes and flies that abounded then as now. Coming either directly from the "Old Country" or driven out by the anti-loyalist feeling of the United States, she would be cast adrift from a sheltered home and from her relatives, girlhood friends and associations with little hope of ever seeing them again. In most cases she would be inexperienced in all work of pioneering and would have to learn by trial and error. Meals would have to be prepared at an open fire-place with few cooking utensils apart from a frying pan and iron kettles. She would have to do the family wash with primitive equipment; engage in baking bread, making butter, spinning yarn and knitting, sewing clothes for the family and making soap; all this in addition to rearing a family the average size of which was considerably

larger than is the case today. The isolation and lack of neighbors near at hand would be a severe trial. There was always the fear of those dread epidemics and contagious diseases such as smallpox, diphtheria, tuberculosis, dysentery, typhoid fever; all of which have been pretty well eradicated today. The child mortality was high as indicated by reading the inscriptions in any ancient cemetery, each instance being mute evidence of some long-forgotten tragedy. It can truly be said that, of the privations and hardships of the pioneers, we know little today and of these we can take it for granted that the pioneer woman bore her full share.

MILLS

The great difficulty with regard to the grist mill was that the stones had to be imported and they were very cumbersome affairs. We see by the drawing on the following page that these stones rested one on top of the other, the lower one being stationary and the upper one revolving with the power supplied from a water wheel. The grain was fed from a hopper above and ground between the stones, the resulting meal working out at the sides. This was

passed over oscillating sieves with the fine flour passing through and the husks dropping off the front edge of the sieve in the form of shorts and bran. As payment, the miller took a portion of the wheat or flour. The usual charge was one-tenth but it is said one miller felt that this wasn't enough and, accordingly, took out one-twelfth!

We have also seen that sawmills were among the first requisites of a settlement, there being four in Trafalgar in 1817, all run by waterpower. Boards would be in great demand for flooring (including that of the loft in the log cabin,) furniture and for the eventual building of a new house. Before the circular saw came into use, an upright saw with an up and down motion was used with the log advancing on a moveable carriage. It was slow work, one was expressing it "up today and down tomorrow". In payment, if cash was not available, the miller retained a portion of the lumber.

Another mill of early times was the carding mill by which the wool was "carded" by machine into loose lengths of probably a yard in length and the thickness of a finger. This would be spun at home into yarn and knit into mitts or socks, or else taken to a weaver to be woven into

homespun cloth. This cloth would be taken back to the carding mill to be washed out and stretched before being made into clothing or blankets.

FENCES

One can well imagine how vitally important it was to have good fences in the early days as well as in later years. At first before pasture land was available the settlers' livestock had to roam at will to forage for themselves in the woods and along the road allowance. Each person had their own distinctive mark, generally snipped out of the ear and registered with the township authorities.

For this reason it will readily be seen how necessary it was to have adequate fences for the protection of the fields in crop. Each settler raised his own hogs, the mainstay of the winter's meat supply, and all fences had to be kept "hot-tight" as a pig was a notorious marauder if given a proper chance. Between neighbors too, it was important to have it definitely decided whose duty it was to maintain each half of the line-fence, often a dispute over the fences was the greatest cause of quarrelling and feuding between property owners. One of the first acts of the early township meetings was to appoint "fence-viewers" whose duty it was to see that fences were properly looked after, and to arbitrate over any dispute or difference of opinion between neighbors.

The first and most convenient kind of fence to be built was probably the "snake" fence which took the form of split rails or straight limbs of trees arranged zig-zag fashion to enclose a field. When the stumps of the trees became sufficiently rotten to be more easily uprooted, these stumps supplied readily available material for a good fence, particularly in the case of the long lasting pine, and in parts of the county, these fences are still serviceable after a period of, in some cases, well over a century. A later rail fence was known as the "stake and rider" when stakes were driven into the ground in pairs along the fence line, and the rails built up between the stakes, the ends of the rails overlapping those of the adjoining sections. This fence had the advantage of saving land space and allowing less room for weeds to develop. The wire fence which took less labor to set up didn't come into common use until well into this century.

Esquensing may increase land separation fee

Esquensing Council may consider increasing the fee for a land separation from the present amount of \$300.

Committee of adjustment member Tom Van Sickle appeared at last week's regular meeting to ask that council consider increasing the fee. He suggested an increase of between \$300 and \$1,000 per lot.

Mr. Van Sickle pointed out the township of Ancaster recently increased its fee for a separation to \$1,200 and that Oakville's land separation fee is \$800.

Use for increased fees
Councillor Ken Marshall wanted to know what the increased fees would be used for. Mr. Van Sickle thought the extra revenue should go into the

township's capital reserve fund. Clerk-treasurer Delmar French, who also serves as clerk of committee of adjustment, told council the committee had passed no motion suggesting the increase.

Committee chairman Denny Charles, who had spoken to council earlier in the meeting, on behalf of the Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital Board, was called on to clear up the situation.

Mr. Charles also said the committee had discussed the increase but had made no formal motion. He added that he didn't realize Mr. Van Sickle was going to appear before council. When reeve George Currie asked council if they were

prepared to consider an increase, councillor Ken Marshall replied, "In due course we'll consider it." Any fee increase must be approved by council, the reeve explained.

It's a good idea to keep a score sheet on what is in the freezer and refrigerator and what has been used. Shopping lists are easier to prepare and fumbling through an assortment of bowls and packages is avoided.

There is greater hope today for people with hearing problems than ever before, says the Canadian Hearing Society. See your doctor if you suspect hearing loss.

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FOURTEEN YEAR old Ovide Lacroque of 11 MacKenzie Drive in Georgetown was the lucky winner of a Royce Union fastback bike in a draw at Jackson's Bargain Centre, Georgetown recently.

Consolation prize winners included Mrs. K. Jensen of Acton and Mrs. E. Evans and Christine Robinson both of Georgetown.—(Staff Photo)

"Irrational politics"

Lots of questions, no answers

In a report to the Halton Board of Education, Trustee Bruce Edwards echoed sentiments of municipal councillors. Reporting on the conference held recently to explain the Toronto-Centred Region, he said there were a lot of questions asked and no one there to answer them.

Edwards told the Board that the meeting was enlightening and helped him understand some of the thinking behind the plan. However he explained that "politicians of any consequence" were absent and there was no one able to answer questions.

Edwards said there were several delegates to the conference who wondered if perhaps the plan was already finalized and it was only the democratic process of letting municipalities and boards of education have their say.

He told the board of cases where development has been stalled or turned down because it didn't comply with the report even though it wasn't legislation as yet.

The Trustee said there were many good questions and doubts about the plan put forward but there were no answers.

He said some wondered about the trunk sewer in Burlington on which the town has gone to great expense, which now appears to be running into the proposed parkway belt. He wondered if Burlington would be left with the trunk sewer and no development to pay for it. "Will this investment be lost?" he wondered.

Others wondering Milton and other municipalities are also wondering just what effect the plan, if enacted, would have on their towns.

He said there were questions about financing the plan and administering it. Edwards said he expressed concern at the conference because of the report's failure to consider educational requirements brought about by the recommendations.

Edwards summed up his impression of the report as "an irrational political move." He said the government took eight years to work on the report and gave the people less than six months to receive a presentation and develop a brief to the province.



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