

# K.C. Lindsay disputes names, dates in Atlas

By Hartley Coles

Writing about history can be a risky business if for no other reason than it has several sides with different shades of opinion.

A few weeks ago the Free Press ran an editorial reviewing the history of the three municipalities which will make up the new town of North Halton. The "facts" were taken from the Halton County Atlas, an original of which we have in the office.

We had considered the Atlas (printed in 1877) as a reliable source of information but retired Esquering clerk K. C. Lindsay has other opinions of the history of the township which conflict with information from the Atlas.

Mr. Lindsay says the first councils of the township met at the home of Joseph Standish, not Thomas Thompson's tavern, and Mr. Standish was a great grandfather of the present Standishes. James Fraser was the first clerk, not John Murray and he continued as clerk from that January 1, 1821 meeting until 1823.

Pathmasters in the township at that time included John McTavish, Donald McKinnon, James Hume, Christopher Cook, William Mickle-John, and Christian Barnes. Joseph Standish and Thomas Barber were assessors and Thomas Fyfe the collector. Charles Kennedy and John Stewart were the town wardens.

In the original article it was pointed out that the population of the township in 1821 was 424. Mr. Lindsay adds that in 1822 there were 478 people and when Erin township joined Esquering at the time this added another 43 people. In 1823 the population had jumped to 1,720, not counting Erin township. Abraham Buck and Nathaniel Kirk were pathmasters in Erin in 1823.

The entire township was surveyed in 1819 by Hugh Black, and opened for settlement. Mr. Black was appointed clerk in 1823 and 1826. He was followed by James Fraser in

1827, John Barnes in 1828-29-30 and then by John McCall in 1831-32. James McNabb was clerk in 1833-34.

The township minutes take note of the rebellion of 1837. In 1838, all appointments to office had to take an oath of loyalty. In the first year all signed, quite a few of them with a mark, since writing did not have the universal application it has today. Even being able to sign one's own name was some claim to distinction. The next year, four or five didn't bother signing the oath. By 1840 about half didn't do it. By 1843 it was all forgotten in Esquering, which was generally regarded as a rebel "hotbed" anyway with John Stewart leading a force of 80 men to assist William Lyon Mackenzie during the rebellion.

Halton's Pages of the Past notes that the force started out for Montgomery's Tavern, rebel headquarters, but by the time they had reached the Green Bush hotel, wherever that is, the 80 had dwindled to five. The rest slipped away enroute but no mention is made as to how they accomplished this without notice of the redoubtable Stewart.

Stewart, of course, made it to Montgomery's Tavern and took some part in the abortive rebellion, which an aroused militia easily quelled. Stewart was among those taken prisoner and along with Montgomery and others was sent to Fort Henry at Kingston to linger in the dungeons while the province's high Tories considered what should be done about them.

Two leaders, Lount and Matthews were hanged. But this remarkable Esquering figure couldn't be caged long. He escaped along with 12 others by loosening the mortar from a stone wall four and a half feet thick, which made a hole big enough for them to crawl through to an underground tunnel—and freedom in the United States. Think about Stewart the next time you visit that stone fortress at Kingston and the nerve and

strength it must have taken to escape the donjon.

Later in the general amnesty which followed the rebellion, Stewart was pardoned and returned to Canada, where he became joint owner of a foundry at Paisley, which needless to say was another settlement of Scots in Upper Canada. He died there in 1899.

Stewart's home in the Scotch Block is still there, once the Craiglea guest home, but now a private residence again. William Lyon Mackenzie gave one of his harangues from the front steps of the frame Georgian home, which was the first house, other than a log cabin built in the Scotch Block.

Hugh Black, who Mr. Lindsay said, surveyed the township was another of Mackenzie's supporters. He also was from the Scotch Block from where he wrote some fiery contributions to Mackenzie's newspaper, The Colonial Advocate.

Like other editors in those days Mackenzie never hesitated to call a spade a spade or a scoundrel a scoundrel.

Libel laws in those days were lax for Government supporters but rather severe for those who publicly criticized.

Editors were sent to jail for cases of "native malignancy" and often had to take families with them. In the case of one Frances Collins, editor of a York (Toronto) newspaper, the Family Compact saw to it that he was imprisoned for taking a swipe at the Government. Other grosser libels against those in opposition were usually overlooked.

Mackenzie must have had to walk a slender tightrope to stay out of jail. One Niagara editor, for instance, went to prison for a "slander" printed in his paper while he was away. And, of course, young Tories threw Mackenzie's type into Toronto Bay to silence him.

So there was a strong feeling in Esquering that the Family Compact must go and be replaced by the Legislative

Assembly as the governing power. The British Government had set up the system in Upper Canada along the lines of that in England where the ruling caste could veto any acts of the Legislature. This was a prerogative the appointed members of the Family Compact used with impunity.

The designs of the elected assembly were often disregarded and the ruling clique had its own way. This accounted for the sympathy of the colonizers of the Scotch block for Mackenzie and his ideas. However, it stopped short of actual rebellion.

Some of Mackenzie's supporters were also "tainted" with republican ideas from the United States and this reduced enthusiasm for his cause. By far the majority of people in Esquering and the remainder of Upper Canada were loyal to the British crown by choice and had no wish to set up a republic or be joined forcibly by the United States.

Education on a formal basis came to Esquering in 1842 when the first school commission was appointed. It consisted of James Stark, John Burns, Nin Lindsay, John Graham, John Atkinson, John Barber and William Stull, according to the township minutes to which Mr. Lindsay has access. Since then, few officials in Esquering have had to sign their name with a mark.

And, of course, after the riots in Lower Canada and the twin rebellions in the two Canada, and Lord Elgin made his famous report to the Mother Parliament in England passed legislation for responsible government, many of the problems dissipated and were replaced by new ones such as the Fenians and Confederation.

The township continued to grow sprouting two new municipalities at Georgetown and Acton, where manufacturing enterprises had established. Farms prospered, villages and hamlets gradually took shape from the land which once was home only for the Mississauga Indians.



FORMER CLERK of Esquering Township K.C. Lindsay relaxes in the chair from which he handled his clerical duties, recently presented to him by the township. A Georgetown resident now, Mr. Lindsay is spending his retirement gardening at home. —D. Pink photo

K.C. says;

## New library not first in Esquering township

### Oscar Drijber outlines his position

Rockwood, Ontario  
July 26, 1973.

Dear Sir:

It has been drawn to our attention that our fellow-Canadians are in doubt over our attitude regarding some publications which have appeared recently.

Our attitude regarding the tortuous murder of our daughter Marjan has however not at all changed, since we found out the true facts.

1. We do not have any feelings of revenge or vindictiveness towards anyone, and certainly not against the Zambian population.

2. We do not expect nor will we accept any compensation for the murder of our daughter for ourselves.

3. The matter of ex gratia payment brought up by our Government has in no way changed our minds regarding acceptance by us of any monetary compensation at all.

4. The ex gratia payment as requested by us, was on strong advice of our Government, and the allocation for the monetary gesture from the President Dr. K. Kaunda

in this respect, was designated by us to reimburse expenses incurred on Zambia's behalf by other people and definitely not for ourselves, our family or directly for Marjan, since her body has not been found and not very likely ever will be retrieved.

5. We are not interested at all in stopping aid to the Zambian people, but it is up to all of us, Canadians, to make sure that this aid is going to the right people, of which neither we nor our Government, can be absolutely sure under the present circumstances.

6. All my wife and I would like to see is that the true facts about the double murder are made known to our fellow-Canadians and the whole world for that matter, so that the proper action shall be taken to prevent any re-occurrence of similar crimes in the future.

7. Everyone interested in the true facts, as we found them after a lengthy and thorough investigation, is encouraged to contact us, as we do feel that you all have the right and the duty to judge for yourselves.

Oscar L. Drijber.

Esquering's new library in a vault at the old township hall is not the first library founded in the township after all, former clerk K. C. Lindsay points out this week.

Delving back into township history, Mr. Lindsay points out there was a library kept in an addition to the Quatre Bras school house, which exerted a great influence during the years it flourished. His information comes from the book, "Records and Memories of Boston Church 1820-1920," which says there was no better selection of books outside the cities than in that library.

Quatre Bras school was situated at the North East corner of Five Sideroad and the Fourth Line. It has since been turned into a residence.

The book says: "That some of the solid books of information in this library found readers in the Scotch Block would in these days, probably be a matter of surprise to many people. The annual meeting of the Association was held in the evening, and the schoolhouse was crowded. Every member was entitled to propose a book, but a majority vote was necessary to a purchase. Many good books were contributed."

"When the Mechanics Institute in Milton was opened it was decided to close the library and divide the books among the members."

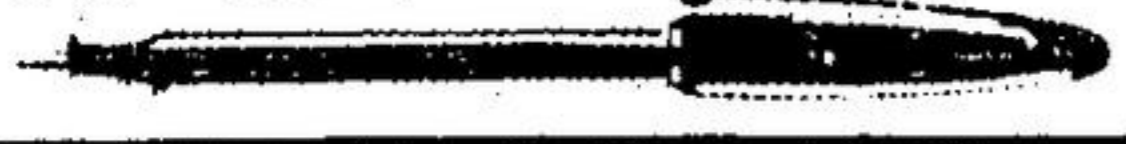
"A regular patron of the library coming on one occasion to get a book was told by the Librarian of a certain work, and asked if he would not like to read it. He answered, 'Na, it's nae sou.' These men, for the most part, had decided opinions as to what constituted good books, and good

preaching. They were very positive also in their political convictions, but sometimes likely to be prejudiced through partisan feeling. It was one's own party always in a general election that could save the country from ruin, while the candidates of the opposing party were blind guides, who should never be entrusted with the reins of government."

"They were at the same time very conscientious. As an illustration of this they generally believed that they should 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,' but with the best of them it occasionally cost an effort to do so. One of them returning home from Church on that day surprised his brother reading a newspaper recently received

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### Let's talk about HORSES

with Jennifer Barr



My neighbors are now completely convinced that I am bonkers after hearing me laughing like a drain out in the pasture without another human in sight. Mind you, I do that a lot—laugh, that is—especially at my animals. Either they are extraordinarily amusing or I see more in their antics than other people. Anyway, back to the event that caused such mirth.

As you horse owners know, face-fly season is upon us and horses looking like garbage trucks are a familiar sight. Up until this year our horses spent the hot hours in a cool fly-free barn but now they are roughing it on pasture. I've yet to find a fly repellent that actually works so made some old-fashioned fly fringes.

Squares of white sheeting (blue denim is better) were cut into fringes and attached across the horses' brow to each side of the halter.

Double take  
The first horse to receive one was Sahra who was a bit doubtful. She thought blue would go

better with her eyes. After I let her go, Nina took a look and did a beautifully executed double take.

"Oh my gosh, there's a new horse!" she gasped, arching her neck and starting to prance. Strutting over to Sahra, she snorted and blew, suddenly kicking out at her pal who was now a stranger. Cavorting and posturing, she proceeded to give Sahra the once-over in absolute astonishment.

Meanwhile Tommie had received his fringe and Nina went through the whole performance again. Not one of the other horses reacted. Only Nina felt that the pasture was suddenly becoming filled with alien horses from Mars.

I finally managed to catch the silly mare and put her fringe on and immediately she shrugged her shoulders and became the stolid grey tank again. It was as if she now recognized her mates because she looked the same.

Flooding off to join the others she was no longer the beautiful, dancing, astonished mare. I have spent eleven years

trying to figure out whether Nina is exceedingly clever, appallingly dumb, or just emotionally retarded. I'm still none the wiser.

The pasture was like a casualty ward this morning with horses' heads looking as if they were swathed in bandages.

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