

The First Survey

So it was that the hunting grounds became Crown land, and in turn portions of it were offered by the Crown as “Free Grant” lands. The “Queen’s Bush,” it would appear, had its southerly boundary along what roughly is now the Huron-Bruce boundary. It was so termed to designate it as Crown land in contrast to other blocks of land taken up by the Canada Company and others, largely for speculative purposes.

In a ten-year period preceding 1850, the population of Upper Canada had soared rapidly and the demand for arable land was such that plans were made for the opening up of the “Queen’s Bush.” In this regard an Order-in-Council was passed on April 19th, 1847, as follows: “To open up the waste lands of the Crown in the Huron District, by the survey of a double concession of lots on a line from the northerly angle of the Township of Mornington, to the north-east angle of the Township of Wawanosh. Also, a single concession along the rear boundary line of the Townships of Wawanosh and Ashfield, and one along the shore of Lake Huron, northerly from Ashfield.”

This survey was commenced in the Spring of 1847 by Alexander Wilkinson, P.L.S. With a surveying party of twelve men and supplies, they started for the “Bush.” At Goderich they were unsuccessful in obtaining a guide who knew the land to the north sufficiently well to take them to the north-east angle of Wawanosh, where he planned to commence the survey. Following the Maitland River the survey party finally reached their destination. Mr. Wilkinson’s diary read, “I was forced to find the place myself from the best information obtained from the settlers in Wawanosh, which was but little, as none of them had ever been back that far.”

After surveying the Wawanosh road south-easterly to Mornington and Maryborough, Mr. Wilkinson retraced his steps, and blazed the line westerly to Lake Huron, placing the survey posts along the north side of line, marking out the farm lots on what became the first concession of Kinloss and Huron Townships, which farm lots became the first surveyed farm lands in the County of Bruce. This line formed the northern boundary of Ashfield and Wawanosh Townships, which had previously been surveyed.

The Huron District, previously referred to, became known as the united counties of Huron, Perth and Bruce by an Act of Parliament which came into force on January 1st, 1850, with Bruce as the junior member and which date is regarded as the birthday of this new county.

“Free Grant” Offer Speeded Development

The first few scattered settlers in Bruce County established squatter’s rights on land of their choice by making a clearing and erecting a shanty. However, it was the “Free Grant” land offer that speeded the settling and formation of this new county. This was a government offer of 50 acres of land to bona fide settlers. These farm lots were on concessions north and

south of the Durham Road, which the Government promised to clear and open. The “free grants” were offered in 1848-49. Those who came into “Queen’s Bush” prior to 1850 did so before there was a County of Bruce and before even one township within its boundaries had been surveyed in farm lots.

Eli Stauffer’s Arrival

So it was that the first white man to eventually settle in Lucknow, came to this district. He was Joel Eli Stauffer, a German from Waterloo County, who, in 1850, followed the trail to the northern end of Kinloss Township, later to be termed Black Horse because of a tavern by that name opened in 1854 by Wm. Shelton. Mr. Stauffer was one of those enticed to the Queen’s Bush by the Government offer of “Free Grant” land, and he built the first sawmill in Kinloss at Black Horse in 1854. Kinloss was the Post Office name. The remaining portion of the Township came onto the market at the “big” land sale held at Southampton on September 27th, 1854. Lots on the First Concession of Kinloss, classed as School lands, sold for ten shillings, or \$2.00 an acre. Crown lands, Concession 2 to 12 in Kinloss, sold for \$1.50 an acre.

It was six years later that Eli Stauffer came to what was to become the Village of Lucknow. That was in 1856 and he was credited as being the first white man to traverse the Township of Kinloss. Again it was the prospect of free land that spurred him on. He was enticed here by the Government’s offer of a grant of two hundred acres of land to any one who would erect a mill on the Nine Mile River near where it crosses the Kinloss-Wawanosh boundary, then referred to as the Woolwich and Huron Road.

Surrounding Settlements

Prior to this, what was to become Lucknow was literally encircled with the first settlers in Wawanosh, Ashfield and Kinloss, indicating that this swampy land was avoided and skirted, until it became increasingly important to harness the latent power of the two rivers flowing through this place, and which were to provide the water power for such essential pioneer industries as a sawmill, a grist mill and flour mill, and the Lees and Douglas carding mill.

These industrial services had become increasingly necessary, for prior to Mr. Stauffer’s arrival in 1856, the first settlers had crossed to the Second and Fourth Concessions of Kinloss. Port Albert, in Ashfield, had been settled and had a mill at the mouth of the Nine Mile River as early as 1843. By boat these pioneers made their way along the lakeshore and then started edging east-ward. About this time John Dean, Maurice Dalton and Jeremiah Flynn had settled along the Lake Range and Alexander MacLean and Roderick Finlaysan had settled on Concession 13 of the Western Division of Ashfield.

In the Eastern part of the Township, Wm. Mallough had, by 1843, reached what was to become Dungannon, and Robert Davidson located there the next year. During 1848 and 1849 Richard Treleaven, Thomas Anderson, David, Joseph and Valentine Alton, and Joseph Hackett pushed

northward to settlements that could be roughly designated as Crewe, Belfast and Hackettville. In 1852 Alexander McDonagh erected a small tannery on the Nine Mile River on Lot 10, Con. 11, Ashfield.

It was in 1854 that Daniel Webster pushed northward, until he viewed below him the expanse of bush and swamp land from the elevation we now term "Quality Hill". He took up a block of land that extended to what is now the Arena Corner, to the southwest of the intersection of Campbell and Ross Streets, and thus took up the first land which was to later become a part of the Village. That was two years before the arrival of Eli Stauffer.

The Webster Story

Daniel and Susan Webster were born in the County of Tipperary, Ireland, from where they came to Canada in 1837, with their three small children. First settling at Streetsville, Mr. Webster followed his trade as a Cooper. He served in the militia during the MacKenzie rebellion. resumed his trade at Norval, and then took up farming in nearby Halton County. Determined to procure farm land for their children, who now numbered five sons and five daughters, they came to Ashfield in 1854 where Mr. Webster took up 400 acres of land that extended to what became Lucknow's main street. The first Webster home—a log shanty on what is now Glen Walden's farm, was located near the Webster Cairn at Greenhill Cemetery and became the centre of hospitality for travellers and other pioneer settlers seeking land in this virgin forest.

Mr. Webster had engaged Samuel Alton of Belfast to build the shanty after having viewed the site, and while he returned to bring his family to this community, where fifth generation descendants still reside. Daniel Webster underbrushed a road from Belfast and built the first log bridge across the Nine Mile River two miles south of Lucknow.

He died in 1883 in his 86th year, and his wife Susan, died in 1894. Members of their family were: James, Robert, Thomas, Rachel (Mrs. Samuel Alton), Mary Ann (Mrs. David Anderson), Lizzie, Margaret (Mrs. James Turner). Daniel, Richard and Susan,

Wawanosh and Kinloss Settled

Portions of Wawanosh had been settled prior to this and in 1853 and 1854 there was an influx into the southern and central part of Kinloss Township by settlers who skirted the present village site. Kinloss was taken up rapidly and by 1855 the first municipal organization took place. It was almost twenty years later before Lucknow was incorporated as a Village, and prior to this it was a part of Kinloss for municipal purposes.

Among the earliest settlers in the southern part of Kinloss we find the names of Roderick Gollan, Robert Purves, Norman Nicholson, Duncan and Alexander MacKenzie, Martin McInnes, John MacDonald, William, James and David Henderson. James MacLeod, James MacKinnon, Wm. and J. Tiffin, Andrew McManus, Alex Graham, Patrick, John and Peter Corrigan and many more who might be mentioned were complete and accurate information available.

The southern part of Wawanosh (it was not divided into East and West Wawanosh until 1866) was first settled about 1840, and by 1846 the first log school was built on Lot 13, Concession 2, in the extreme south, to serve both Wawanosh and Ashfield children.

Settlement of the St. Helens area began about 1849 when John and Wm. Gordon and Joseph Gaunt and sons moved in. They were followed in 1851 by Hugh Rutherford who settled on Con. 14, and the next year by James and Thomas Somerville. The Altons had previously located at Belfast, John Sherriff on the Bruce Boundary, while others in the area were Duncan and Hugh MacPherson and Donald Cameron.

To the south of St. Helens was John Cameron's log cabin where a hearty Highland welcome awaited settlers, day or night, and became a well known stopping-off place for weary travellers.

Built First Mill In Wawanosh

James Somerville built the first mill in West Wawanosh on Lot 16, Concession 10, where to this day can be seen the earthen ramparts that dammed back a head of water to power the mill. And what a boon it must have been. To have wheat milled up to that time meant trips to Goderich, Bayfield or Port Albert, and from the latter mill could be obtained only "black bread" flour.

An interesting story is recorded of the oxen caravan that made the slow and tedious trip to Goderich and return with the castings for the Somerville mill, a journey that required the fording of the Maitland River which then had not been bridged.

Eager to have a mill close at hand it was not difficult to get helpers to make that trip, and among those who lent their services were John Armstrong, Donald Cameron, Duncan MacPherson, Hugh Rutherford and Eben Radford, the Somerville teamster. Eight yokes of oxen were used for that history-making journey.

As builder of the first grist mill in Wawanosh, James Somerville's knowledge and skill as a millwright destined that he was to erect Lucknow's first such mill a few years later and earn for him the title of "The Father of the Village."

Village History

While this feverish quest for farmland was going on all around, it was not until 1856 that the first step was taken to establish a settlement that was to become Lucknow. As has been previously mentioned, settlers in Ashfield and Wawanosh had long journeys for flour and other supplies. In Kinloss, to the north of the Township especially, the pioneers had to choose between trips to Walkerton or Kincardine to obtain their grist. It was the lack of water privileges in Kinloss, sufficient to drive a good grist mill, that focused attention on the potential water power here.

Eli Stauffer had built the first sawmill in Kinloss, to the south of "Black Horse," on a creek (now little more than a ditch) which emptied into Silver Lake. The site was on the present MacEwan

farm at the South Line, and the flats which were formed by damming the river are still evident at the back of Malcolm Lane's farm. Wm. Stauffer, now of Brantford, who farmed on the South Line of Kinloss until a few years ago, is a great grandson of Eli Stauffer.

Thus it was that potential water power brought Eli Stauffer to this place in 1856 and during 1856-57 he constructed a dam and built a sawmill, as the requirement for obtaining a free grant of 200 acres of land. It was reportedly not a first class mill but supplied the primary needs for lumber.

Ralph Miller purchased a small portion of land from Mr. Stauffer in the Spring of 1858 and built a log tavern known as "Balaclava House," and by which the settlement was first known, but briefly.

James Somerville's name was affixed as a witness to that agreement of sale, indicating that he was here at that time. It was during the Summer of that year—1858—that Mr. Somerville purchased the Stauffer mill and his land rights and proceeded to have the south halves of Lots 57, 58, 59 and 60 on the First Concession of Kinloss surveyed into village lots. This took in a frontage from the mill site to the corner at the "Gravel Road" which was opened through to Kinloss eight years later—in 1866—and gave impetus to the growth of the Village. The population in 1866 was 430.

By this survey Mr. Somerville became the "Father of Lucknow." He had his plan registered on September 21st, 1858, and on it were shown both a sawmill and a grist mill, he, presumably, having built the latter that summer.

These village lots were offered for sale by auction on September 1st, 1858, although we do not know who those first land buyers may have been. The event, however, was noteworthy for it was celebrated by a salute of twenty-one "guns," the "guns" being gunpowder charges that were exploded in auger holes in stately trees standing in the newly surveyed village plot.

The survey of village lots on the Ashfield-Wawanosh side of the settlement was not made until the Spring of 1861—some three years later.

Under these circumstances this settlement officially came into being one hundred years ago, and was named after Lucknow, India, because of the memorable events associated with that city in the quelling of the Indian Mutiny, a barbaric uprising of native rebels, whose hideous tales of massacre had reached even to the Canadian wilderness.

It was in the Fall of 1857 that the Relief of Lucknow, heralded the quelling of the mutiny, and naturally enough James Somerville's Scottish blood must have thrilled with pride that it was troops of his homeland, although outnumbered 10 to 1, who lifted the siege and won this tribute from their commander, Sir Colin Campbell: "There never was a bolder fete of arms," a fete which won six Victoria Cross citations for his regiment in two days—an unheard of demonstration of valour.

In the Summer of 1857, over 1,000 members of the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders (later to become the Argyllshire and Sutherland Highlanders) sailed for India from the shires of Inverness, Aberdeen

and Sutherland. Landing at Calcutta, they joined the 64th and 53rd British regiments to create a force of 4,000 men. The British army in India had been depleted by engagements in the Crimea and Persia, and the Indian uprisings had gained major proportions by the time reserves could reach India.

The force of 4,000 made a twelve-day forced march from Calcutta to Cawnpore, where they found wells choked with the bodies of 200 massacred British women and children. Shocked out of their weariness, the Sutherlands pressed on northward to Lucknow, fearing that this city's 1,600 Europeans, besieged in the Residency, might have met a similar fate.

In hand-to-hand encounters they routed the Indian troops numbering about 40,000 and who were "armed to the teeth." Tradition has it that the approach of the Sutherlands was heralded by the faraway skirl of the pipes, first heard by a Scottish maiden within the beleaguered city, who cried with joy, "Dinna ye hear it? Dinna ye hear it?"

Sir Colin Campbell, who led the relief force, had three years before commanded the British forces in the Crimea, when that immortal "The Thin Red Line," stretched across the valley at Balaclava, and in which campaign the "Charge of the Light Brigade" added a gory chapter of heroism.

Lucknow's main street was named Campbell Street, supposedly after Sir Colin Campbell, although there are those who claim it to be after Lucknow's first merchant of the same name. However, all records and early history which we can find substantiate the former assumption, and certainly other streets such as Havelock, Outram, Willoughby, Ross, Rose, Canning, etc., are after British generals of that Indian Mutiny era. The name Stauffer St., leading into the Village from the North, may well be after Eli Stauffer, who blazed the first white-man's trail over a century ago.

The First Merchant

The first merchant in Lucknow was Malcolm Campbell, great-grandfather of the writer. His wife was Margaret Armstrong, daughter of Walter Armstrong. Natives of Scotland, they were married in Canada in 1849, and came to Lucknow in 1858 before the village was officially named. Her father, Walter Armstrong, also a merchant, had settled east of Lucknow in West Wawanosh, a short time earlier.

As well as being Lucknow's first merchant, Malcolm Campbell was also the first postmaster, the first post office having been established in 1859. He also had the distinction of being the first express agent and Lucknow's first reeve.

Within the next half-dozen years we find other business establishments operated by Walter Armstrong, Bingham and Little, Alex Murray, Charles Secord and John Treleaven, the Treleaven store being in the building still standing on the south-west corner of Campbell and Outram Streets, now owned by Les Purves. Walter Treleaven, Sr., was by then operating the grist mill, and Lees and Douglas the carding mill at the south-end of the Village where another dam had been built on the Nine Mile River.

In 1863, five years after its founding, Lucknow became a police village upon a petition of 24 citizens being presented to the United Counties Council (Huron, Perth and Bruce). It was ten years later, 1873, before the municipality was incorporated as a Village, and up to that time was under the municipal administration of Kinloss Township. The incorporation of the Village was a contentious and bitter battle between local Bruce and Huron factions.

In 1866, as has been mentioned, impetus was given to the mercantile life and development of the Village by the opening of the "Gravel Road" through Kinloss.

The coming of the railroad in 1873 made Lucknow a flourishing centre and a focal shipping point for farm produce and with rail facilities, industrial expansion was encouraged. Another important forward step that year in the Village's advancement was the establishment of The Sentinel, the Village's weekly newspaper.

(Note: Excerpted text taken from the Centennial Book, "1858...1958, A Century In Retrospect, The Story Of Lucknow" published "In Commemoration Of The Centennial Anniversary of 'The Sepoy Town', August 1,2,3,4, 1958." Edited and compiled by Campbell and Margaret Thompson.)