

Clarkson and its Many Corners

Kathleen A. Hicks



Clarkson and its Many Corners



▲ Clarkson's Corners, 1915

(Mississauga Library System, Barnett Scrapbooks)

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Written by Kathleen A. Hicks

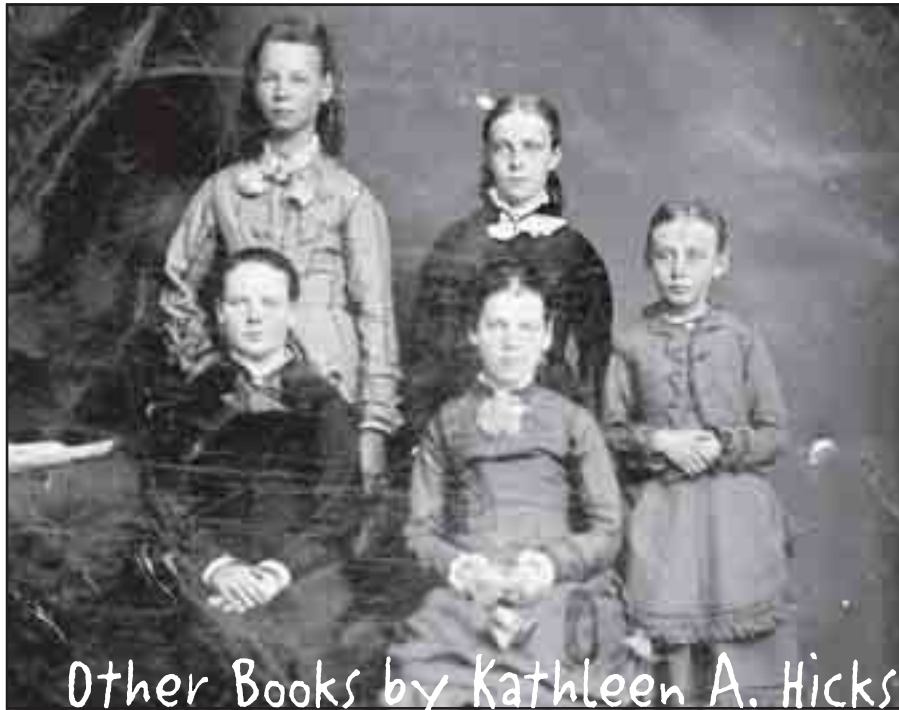
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Dedication



I dedicate this book to Richard Barlas, formerly of the Mississauga Heritage Foundation, who suggested such a book was necessary and to Don Mills, Director of Library Services, for seeing the potential of this publication. Also to the many people of Clarkson whom I have met, especially those born and raised there and who still reside in their old hometown.

◀ (Edith Nadon)

Clarkson and its Many Corners



▲ Lifetime Clarkson Residents with the author
(Don Mills)

This is a different kind of historical book than I am used to writing. My other books have more text and are full of historical facts that required overwhelming research. This was a fairly easy writing assignment, thanks to the many cooperative Clarkson residents, who gave me their wonderful stories and made it simple to put the text together, although many days were spent at Land Registry to verify ownership of the properties involved, and the Mississauga Central Library and Peel Archives clarifying facts.

Little has been written over the years on this tiny hamlet that lies at the southern most section of our City of Mississauga. It does have an intriguing story though, that I bring to you with all the fervour beknown its start in the Township of Toronto. The early pioneers were courageous, adventurous people, who were community minded enough to put their hard work, sweat and tears into establishing a centre to their new locale, a village that would be the heart and soul of their efforts. I tried to get under the skin of the former village of Clarkson to bring you stories not previously told. I hope I have succeeded.

The pictures, however, required some time to accumulate. The Mississauga Library System did a promotion to notify the public about the book and requested anyone who had pictures of the area to come forward. At first there was little response, but once I started contacting people and interviewing them, one thing led to another until I managed to pull together enough to make this an extremely interesting presentation.

So I wish to thank Richard Barlas for advising Chief Librarian Don Mills that the small community of Clarkson lacked historical documentation, therefore this book materialized, and for his help in providing pictures from the Mississauga Heritage Foundation files; Don Mills for his endless support and dedication to heritage in Mississauga; Vicki Gregory for her splendid work on designing this book - fabulous job, Vicki; Bruce Carr, City of Mississauga's Community Service Department for the Foreword; Dorothy Kew, of the Mississauga Library System's Canadiana Room, for her assistance in putting a slide display on Clarkson together for Don Mills and myself, which got us off to a good start. It was splendid and appreciated and extremely helpful; Rowena Cooper of the Peel Heritage Complex, who reproduced all the Clarkson photos that her department had on file - great work, Rowena; Betty Mansfield in Library Administration for being my liaison with people who had pictures available; Mark Warrack, Heritage Coordinator, City of Mississauga Heritage Department, for his generosity of time and files; Catherine Soplet, who worked on the Hillcrest Public School's 40th anniversary celebration and gave me help with local contacts; John Speck and his mother, Enid, and her sister, Doris, who were born and raised in Clarkson, for their family's story; Stephanie Meeuwse, collections coordinator for the Bradley Museum and Benares Historic House, for assisting with photographs; Mary Finley and Marion Johnson Josiak for sharing their knowledge of the area; Wendy Davies, Peel School Board (Ward 2) Trustee, for leads to longtime Clarkson residents, who

were extremely helpful, namely, Jim Dickson, Margaret McNair and Bill West; former president of the Mississauga South Historical Society, Lorne Joyce; Ward 2 Councillor Pat Mullin for contacts from the City of Mississauga's Planning & Building Department; former Mayor Ron Searle for his unending support and assistance of a political nature; thanks to Viola Herridge for information on Herridge's Market, Kumeetus Klub, the Canadian Cancer Society and many other topics; Barbara Larson, Joan Terry Eagle, Isabel McArthur, Phyllis Williams, Eva and Ralph Manley, Anson Hardy, David Johnson, John and Doris Bodley, and Jean Lindsay for supplying such lovely pictures and information on their families; Doug and Bill Auld, Thelma and Archie Izatt, Jane and Frances Barnett, Eileen Gilroy, Doris Vernon, Lorraine, Wendy and Bruce Borgstrom for their input; Dena Doroszenko, archeologist for the Ontario Heritage Foundation; Judy Dobson and Jean Moore from Clarkson Public School, Irene Yeudall of Clarkson Road Presbyterian Church, Ann Moore, The Christ Church, Noreen Bruce, St. Bride's Anglican Church, Jim Geddes of The Clarkson Music Theatre, Ken MacDonald of Enersource Hydro Mississauga, Marie Woods, St. Christopher's Roman Catholic Church, for their histories; Gladys Coleman and Bill Lawrence for Spring Creek Cemetery's history; Jill Concodie from the CIBC Archives, Pat Hammill from Petro-Canada Lubricants, Cindy Monaco from GO Transit Archives, Joe Costanio of the Ministry of Transportation, Karen Stone and Linda MacLeod of Sheridan Nurseries, Archivist Yolaine Toussaint from The Bank of Montreal, Michael Dutnerski, former manager of Clargreen Gardens, and Ian Sharpe of CFRB, for information and photos on their businesses. A special thank you to John Hunter for allowing me to use his wonderful biography on the Lush family called "*A Remarkable Couple*" for research. To all the other interesting citizens of the Clarkson area my deepest gratitude for their cooperation.



▲ Mike Gilbert, Manager of Ontario Power Generation LGS, presents a cheque to Kathleen Hicks
(Larry Onisto)

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▲ (Hydro One Networks Archives)

The Village of Clarkson is one of the oldest communities in the Region of Peel. The City of Mississauga is proud of its heritage and the many vibrant villages and towns that were amalgamated in 1968 to form the Town and then Streetsville and Port Credit in 1974 to complete the City. Clarkson is not only significant because it is one of our older communities but also because right up to the present time it has been able to retain its older building fabric and character. The original Warren Clarkson home is still standing, as well as the Bradley House and Benares and many other older homes built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as you will discover in this book. These buildings scattered among mature trees, large lots and scenic roadways provide well-established and unique character in the Clarkson neighbourhood.

On a personal level, the Village of Clarkson holds a fond place in my heart as it was instrumental in the direction of my professional career.

foreword

As a Landscape Architecture student, I was commissioned, along with two other Ryerson students, to work with the Clarkson Business Improvement Area to prepare a design for a new streetscape for Lakeshore Road. This work resulted in my being hired by the City of Mississauga as the project manager responsible for construction of the project in 1976. I had the opportunity to work with an enthusiastic and dedicated group of business people, community volunteers and City staff whose contributions made my first professional project a great success.

Over the last twenty-five years my path has crossed with the community of Clarkson in many different projects I have worked on, such as Birchwood Park, the Bradley Museum, the Waterfront Trail, Clarkson Park, Rattray Marsh and many others. I was pleased to have been involved with the latest addition to the community, the redevelopment of the Clarkson Community Centre and Library. I know this project, which opened on September 21, 2002, will be a welcome addition and be valued by the residents of Clarkson.



▲ (Bruce Carr)

Every time I visit or travel through Clarkson, I am amazed by how much the community has changed but not really changed. It still has a character of a small village but also has grown and is more vibrant than ever. The future of Clarkson is bright and I look forward to our paths continuing to cross in the years to come.

Bruce Carr, Director,
Planning & Administration,
Community Services Department,
City of Mississauga

The Beginning

A new province was created and called Upper Canada eight years after the English were defeated in the American Revolution (1775-1783). Following the war, over 10,000 British sympathizers poured into the province of Quebec, with 6,000 settling on the Niagara Peninsula, where in 1784 over three million acres (1,200,000 hectares) were purchased from the Mississauga Indians for the purpose of extending land grants to those loyal to King George III. These United Empire Loyalists, so named by Governor General Sir Guy Carleton, who had given up farms, homes, livelihoods, family and friends, settled in to establish a new beginning in a new fertile land.

The province of Quebec was ruled under the Quebec Act of 1774, or French Civil Law, and the English came to resent this. So the Loyalists set about to establish their own laws and thus in 1791, the Constitutional



King George III

(Shell Canada Ltd.)



Sir Guy Carleton

(Toronto Public Library)

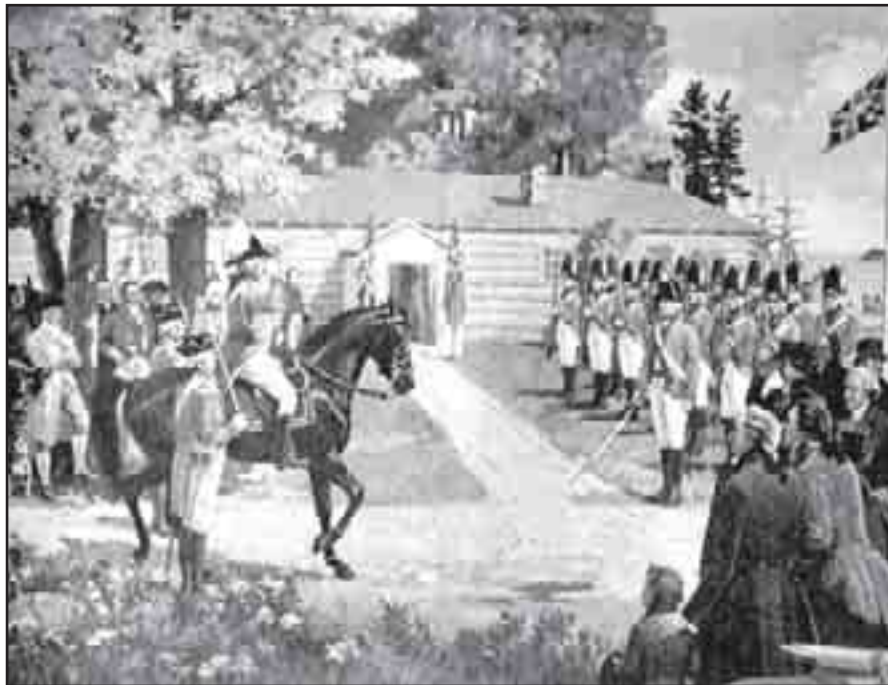


John Graves Simcoe

(Toronto Public Library)

Introduction

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Act was passed. The province was split in two to form Upper and Lower Canada (which would become Canada West and Canada East in 1841 and Ontario and Quebec in 1867).

With the new province established, a new government had to be put in place. To head up this undertaking, Lieutenant Colonel John Graves Simcoe was appointed Lieutenant Governor. He, his wife, Elizabeth, and their youngest two children of six, Sophia and Francis, arrived from Dunkeswell, Devonshire, England, on November 11, 1791.

Following Simcoe's swearing in by Chief Justice William Osgoode at St. George's Church at Kingston on July 8, 1792, he and his family left for the new capital, Niagara, which was immediately changed to Newark. (An Act of Legislation in 1798 would reinstate the name Niagara.) They were settled in marquees on the west bank of the Niagara River, next to Navy Hall, which was later renovated for their occupancy.

◀ The opening of the First Legislature of Upper Canada, 1792

(Confederation Life Collection, Rogers Communications Inc.)

Clarkson and its Many Corners

The opening of the Legislature took place on September 17th and an election for the first parliament was held. During the first session of the House of Assembly, September 17th thru October 15th, the laws of Britain would be adopted, trial by jury established and marriages validated. At the second session in the spring of 1793, it was passed that roadways be constructed and slavery be abolished.

Then on July 30th, the Simcoes left to establish themselves in the new capital of the province, Toronto, which was changed to York. (The name Toronto would be reestablished in 1834 when it became a city.) Here they set up residence in tents that had belonged to the navigator/explorer Captain James Cook. The Queen's Rangers built Fort York. Gradually the town blossomed with new, energetic arrivals, who began to put their imprint and expertise on the small colony.

In September, 1793, Simcoe initiated construction on the first roadway, Dundas Street, often called the Governor's Road. It was started at Burlington Bay and ran westward to the River Thames. (The York to Burlington Bay section was not completed until after Simcoe's departure.) Then a northerly roadway, Yonge Street, was set in motion in February, 1794, but complications prevailed and it was not opened until February, 1796.

Simcoe left for England in July, 1796, and was replaced by the Honourable Peter Russell, who would administer the duties of the Governor in his absence. It was during Russell's regime that the Dundas was completed in 1798. In 1799, Peter Hunter was made the Lieutenant Governor. Many prominent men such as John Beverly Robinson, William Allan, Judge Grant Powell, Reverend John Strachan, Joseph Cawthra and Reverend Egerton Ryerson brought their skills to York and prosperity prevailed.

On August 2, 1805, the Mississauga Indians sold the British Government the Mississauga Tract from the Etobicoke Creek to Burlington Bay, 26 miles of shoreline and five miles inland (43 kilometers/9k), consisting of 70,784 acres (28,713 ha). The negotiations took place at the Government Inn on the east bank of the Credit River under the supervision of Superintendent of Indian Affairs, the Honourable William Claus. The host was the operator of the Inn, Thomas Ingersoll. Toronto Township came into being, comprising 29,569 acres (11,827 ha) of this transaction, with a mile (1.4 kilometres) on either side of the Credit River designated as the Mississauga Indian Reserve.

This brought about the establishment of small communities in the Township. First came Sydenham (later Dixie) and Harrisville (later

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◀ In 1805, the Mississauga Indians sold the British Government the Mississauga Tract.

(Mississauga Heritage Foundation)

Cooksville) along the Dundas, with Lakeview to the east and Clarkson to the west along the shores of Lake Ontario. Gradually towns and villages were formed throughout Toronto Township.

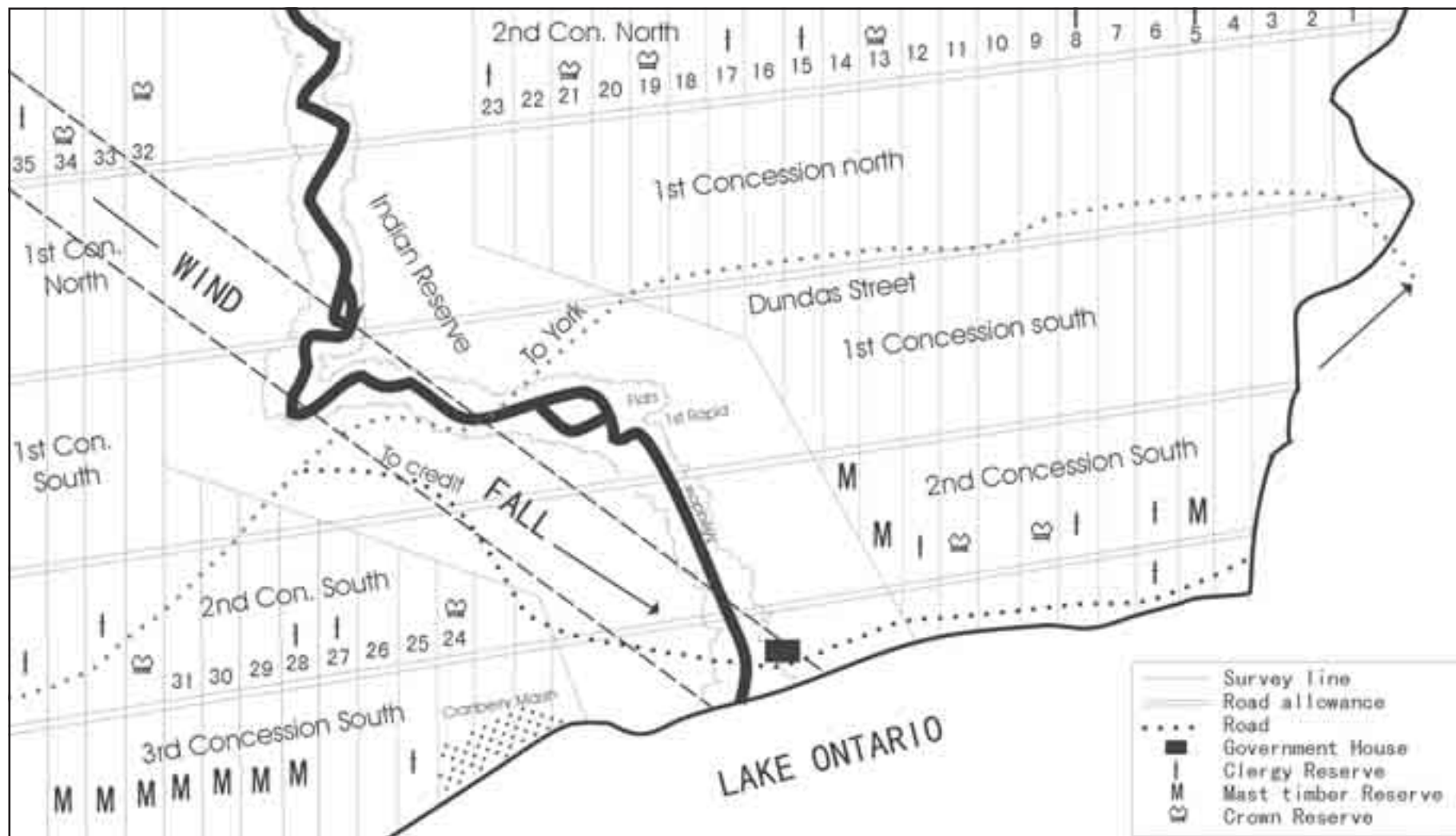
The first resident was Thomas Ingersoll, then Philip Cody, the grandfather of the legendary Buffalo Bill Cody, and Daniel Harris. The first children to be born were Sarah Ingersoll, January 10, 1807, and Elijah Cody, November 7, 1807. The first census was taken in 1807-08 by Deputy Provincial Surveyor, Samuel Street Wilmot, who had surveyed

and drawn up the first map in 1805-06, outlining the 200 acre (81 ha) lots that were designated grants to the incoming settlers. It listed the first families as Philip Cody, Daniel Harris, Joseph Silverthorn, Absalom Wilcox, Allen Robinet and William Barber.

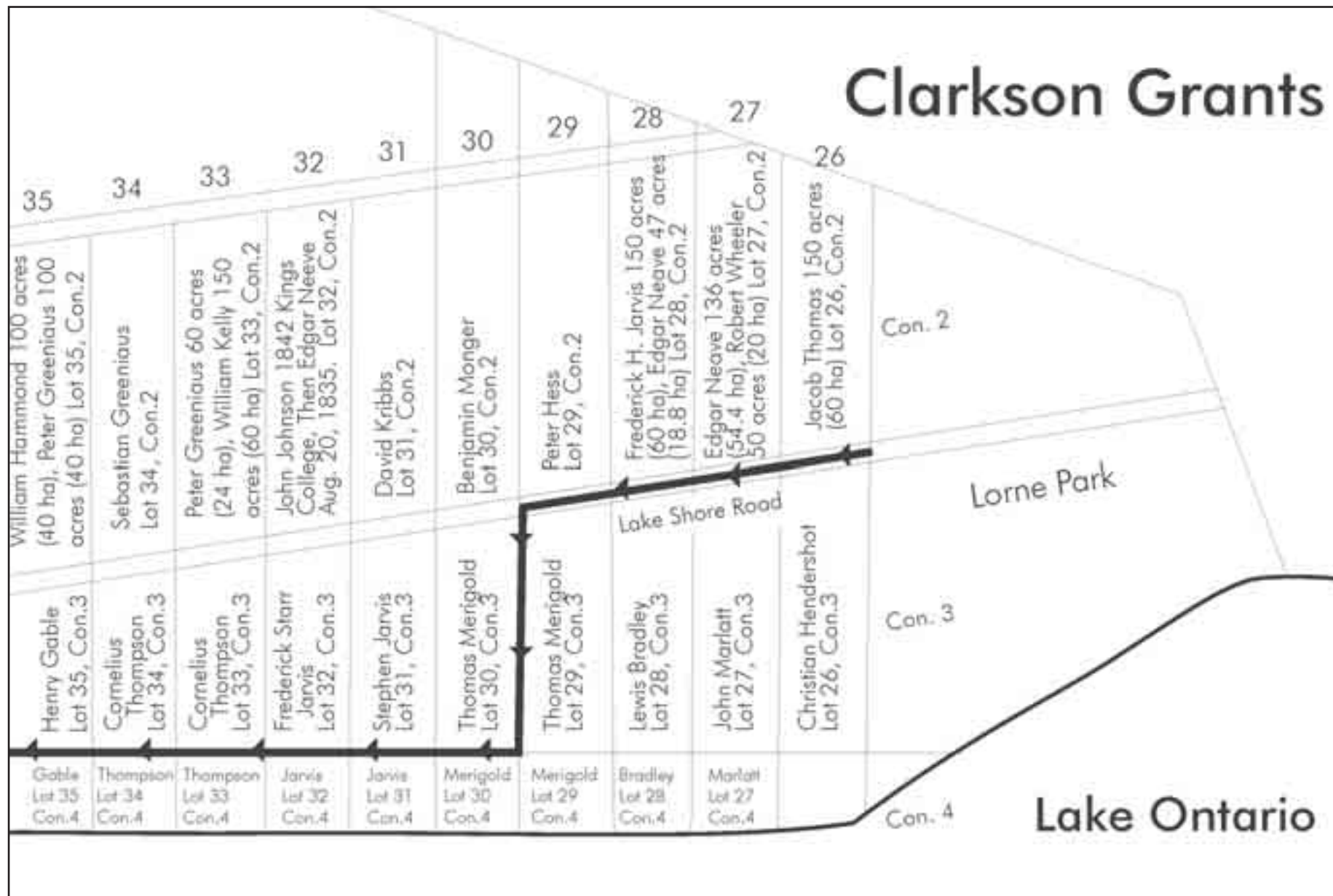
The first residents of the Clarkson area were the Gables, 1807, the Greeniauses, 1808, the Merigolds and the Mongers, 1808. The first birth to be recorded was that of Joshua Pollard Junior in 1813.

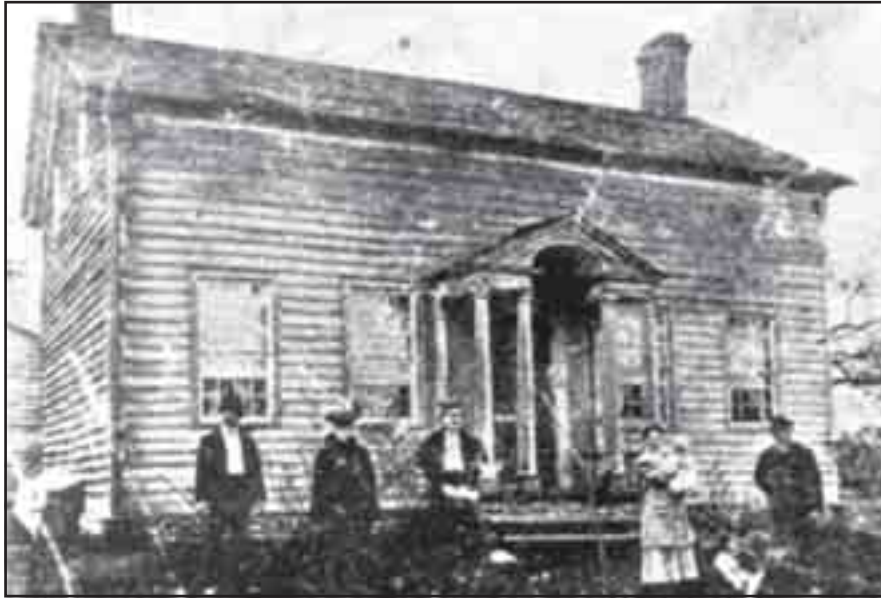


▲ Loyalists drawing lots for their lands, 1784
(C.W. Jefferys, Rogers Cantel Collection)



▲ Samuel Wilmot's 1806 Map
(Thompson Adamson)





▲ Clarkson House (Region of Peel Archives)

A Tribute to Warren Clarkson

Warren Clarkson, for whom Clarkson was named, was known to be an energetic man, hard working and reliable. He was born in 1793 and hailed from Albany, New York, where his father, Richard Rouse Clarkson, a British shipwright, had resided for many years. The Clarksons had originally emigrated from Cheshire, England.

When Benjamin Monger met up with 15 year old Warren and his brother, Joshua, in York in 1809, he encouraged them to come to Toronto Township, where his father-in-law, Thomas Merigold, had a grant, and work for him, which they did. Joshua, 12 years older than Warren, was married with children. He only stayed for two years, then he moved his family to Markham Township.

On August 4, 1816, Justice of the Peace, William Thompson, married Warren to Susan Shook (born, 1797, died, 1853), the daughter of Monger's good friend, Henry Shook, who resided in Trafalgar Township,

but leased Lot 35, Con. 2, South Dundas Street (SDS). They had a son, George, two years later. On February 2, 1819, Warren purchased the southern sections of Lots 29 and 30, Con. 2, SDS, parts of Peter Hess' and Monger's grants, for £200 (\$500, York currency being \$2.50 to the pound) from Archibald Wright and promptly built a generous four room timber frame house 20 feet by 30 feet (6 m x 9 m) on a stone foundation. This structure was soon abandoned when his daughter, Charlotte, was born in 1822. A much larger house that sat upon the crest of a sandy knoll was completed by 1825 with the help of brother, Joshua, who was a skilled craftsman. In this house, with its symmetrical five-bay facade, gable roof and cornice returns, another daughter, Lovina (b.1827, d.1850), and his next two sons, William Warren (1830-1894) and Henry Shook (1834 -1901), were born. A daughter, Isabella, born in 1837, died at age three. In 1827, he added an English three-bay style barn and several stone outbuildings, one being a smokehouse.

Warren immediately became involved in virtually every aspect of community life. He was very instrumental in the formation of the Chambers Spring Creek Grave Ground, which he maintained for nearly



▲ Smokehouse



▲ Clarkson/Barnett Barn

(Mississauga Library System, Barnett Scrapbooks)

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50 years as a trustee and the chairman of the board until 1873 when he resigned. Because of his dedication, the area was named Clarkson in his honour when the railway went through in 1855.

On August 14, 1835, he bought 50 acres (20 hectares) of the south section of Lot 28, Con. 2, from Edgar Neave for £162 (\$405). A sign indicating directions was set up on this land for the stagecoaches which were travelling on a regular basis along the Lake Shore Road from Toronto to Hamilton. He put this property in his son Henry's name in 1856, for which Henry was to pay some monies to his sister, Charlotte. Henry left for Rochester in Minnesota Territory, where he got a job as a surveyor-foreman for the Railroad. He returned in 1860 and became a produce merchant and helped his father with the farm operations. He married Sarah Moseley and they had one daughter, Mildred, who became Mrs. Phillip Mitchell.

It was in 1835 that Warren built and opened the first grocery store in the area on the dirt trail that in 1850 would become Clarkson Road. With the stagecoaches travelling along Dundas Street and south from Erindale, it became a waiting room for travellers. In 1837, he built what

he called a trading post in the Port Credit area where the harbour was a port of call for the vessels that plied Lake Ontario. In 1852, he sold the Port Credit store to Robert Cotton, who sold it to James Hamilton in 1860. This is where the first telephone in Toronto Township would be installed in 1881.

Susan died in 1853. That same year, on November 17th, the Great Western Railroad purchased nearly six acres (2.4 ha) of Warren's property for the right-of-way, a station and siding space. A station was built on the north side of the tracks and called "Clarkson's." The first train travelled through on December 3, 1855.

Warren was remarried on November 20, 1855, to a widow, Mary Ann Kirkus, from Richmond Hill, whom he met through Joshua's son, Hilary. Warren put another addition, called the "spinning room," on his house in 1858, which connected his first dwelling with the main block.



▲ Corn crib

(John Barnett Collection)

By this time, at age 65, Warren's farm operation was run by hired help.

His son, William, who returned from a sojourn in Ohio around 1858, married Lorenda Hemphill, the daughter of Nathaniel and Hannah Hemphill that year. They often travelled to New York State on buying trips for Warren. They had Warren Frank in 1862, then Cora and Bertha and baby Edith, 1868. William took over the management of his father's store in the mid 1860s and opened a post office there in 1875.

In 1873, Warren and Mary moved to Oakville, close enough to keep an eye on his holdings. He passed away in 1882, leaving all his worldly goods to his surviving children, William, Charlotte and Henry. George had died in an accident on his farm in Milton in 1876. Mary retained the Oakville residence, and received \$140 a year from William and Henry for the remainder of her life. William continued in the store and farmed his property west of Clarkson Road, and Henry remained on the east acreage and maintained Warren's portion of Lot 30 until their deaths. Their children inherited their properties and parts of it were sold off in the next few decades.



▲ Store and Station
(Region of Peel Archives)

1835 ASSESSMENT

In 1835, taxes on a 100 acre (40 ha) farm were assessed at £50 to £60 (approximately \$125-\$150, as York currency was \$2.50 to a pound). Warren Clarkson paid 17 shillings 8 pence (approx. \$2.20, as there were 12½¢ to a shilling) on his farm's assessment of £212 (\$530). Roads — for each assessment of £120 (\$300), a farmer had to do six days labour per year on the roads adjacent to his farm.

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The remaining acreage of the old Clarkson estate was purchased in 1936 for \$5,700 by Major John Barnett and his wife, Blanche, from Warren's granddaughter, Mildred Clarkson Mitchell's estate. They immediately assigned architect, Douglas Catto, to draw up plans for an extensive restoration of the old homestead and outbuildings. The Major also planted over 5,000 trees on the property.

The old farmhouse ended up on 17 acres (7 ha) of land. The property was sold to Gwilliambury Investments Limited on June 26, 1980, for a subdivision and Feeley Court was named for its president, Thomas Feeley. Gwilliambury registered the land titles in January, 1981. In 1988, the barn was relocated to the Erindale Park, north of Dundas Street below the University of Toronto-Mississauga Campus, where it was enjoyed by groups of people at various functions. With age and deterioration, it was dismantled in April of 1999. The Clarkson/Barnett house, the second oldest house in Peel County, second only to the Cherry Hill House (built 1815-22), however, still exists. It is located at 1084 Feeley Court and is occupied by the Major's granddaughter, Jane.