

## Newcastle

Following information collected regarding the town of Newcastle, the destination for HMS Speedy. This material was reduced and edited out of the manuscript at an early point, but may add some context for history buffs.

### When was the Court House and Jail Building Built?

Several unrelated pieces of information allow us to pinpoint the timing. We can be sure that the building was there in the fall of 1803 because the Fall Assizes were held there for the first time in October. Also, we can be fairly certain that the building was not present in the spring of 1803. An Act was passed in the legislature in York on March 5, 1803, "to establish the office of the Collector of the District of Newcastle in any place within the harbor of Newcastle" and it ended with "until a gaol and court house be erected in the said town."<sup>1</sup>

### Newcastle and its Inhabitants in 1804

In 1804, Newcastle was not much of a town. There were only three or four families that were permanent residents living on Presqu'ile Point at this time, including Charles and Elizabeth Selleck and their three children. Close by were George and Mary Gibson and their five children, minus their oldest, Elizabeth who had married Charles Selleck when they lived at Newark in 1797. Charles Selleck had received the Patent from the Crown for Lot 4 on the south side of Water Street in February 1803,<sup>2</sup> and there had only been time to build a relatively temporary abode for the family, considering that they were to live in the court house building when it was built later in the year. It is probably that the Gibson's lived on the Selleck property until they acquired lots here a few years later.

Even though there were few permanent residents at Newcastle in 1804, several choice lots had been purchased by important people. Folks with money were looking for a good return on investment once the new county town developed the expected commercial and real estate values. Timothy Thompson<sup>3</sup> lived in Fredericksburgh Township and was a member of the Legislative Assembly representing Lennox and Addington. In 1801 he had been appointed collector of customs for the port of Newcastle and then a judge for Newcastle District. Thompson received the Crown Patent for Lot 1 on the south side of Water Street in June of 1803<sup>4</sup> and would pass it to his wife in his will, soon before he died in 1823.

Thomas Ward<sup>5</sup> was in a similar situation. He was a lawyer who practiced for a time in York where he married one of George Playter's daughters, making him a brother-in-law of David McGregor Rogers. For a time around 1804, Ward practiced in Brighton and then move to Port Hope where he practiced law for many years. In February of 1803, Thomas Ward received the Crown Patent for Lot 2 on the south side of Water Street, and held it until 1837 when he passed it on to an associate in law, George S. Boulton of Cobourg, who held it until 1856 when he sold it to John Eyre, a lawyer in Brighton.<sup>6</sup> Speculation in land was rampant in these times as the old adage proved true, money makes money.

Another interested party was David McGregor Rogers<sup>7</sup> who was a member of the Legislative Assembly for Hastings and Northumberland. Although he was born in Vermont, his father, Col. James Rogers<sup>8</sup> had come from New Hampshire and served for the duration of the war as commander of the King's Rangers. After the war he received land grants in Fredericksburgh Township and his children would benefit with significant land grants of their own, as well as plenty of important connections into Upper Canada society.

His sister, Mary, married John Peters<sup>9</sup> of Cramahe Township, and another sister, Margaret, married Aaron Greeley,<sup>10</sup> the surveyor who came with Joseph Keeler to settle a group of families at Lakeport. David McGregor Rogers married, first, Sarah Playter, and later her sister Elizabeth, both daughters of George Playter,<sup>11</sup> an early settler at York. Initially, David M. Rogers farmed at Concession 2, Lot 2, Cramahe Township, where the town of Brighton is today. In 1814, he sold that property to Josiah Proctor<sup>12</sup> and moved to the Grafton area where the Rogers name would be prominent for many decades. His involvement with real estate at Newcastle was limited to acquiring Lot 5 on the south side of Water Street and then selling it to Samuel Gibson in 1810.<sup>13</sup>

Presqu'ile Bay was a safe and convenient landing point for settlers coming into the area, but by 1804, there were only a few permanent settlers. Obediah Simpson<sup>14</sup> had arrived in 1796 and would settle to the west of the present town of

Brighton. There is a memorial cairn at the entrance to Presqu'ile Provincial Park, indicating that the early members of this family were buried in the sand nearby.

Alexander Chisholm<sup>15</sup> had built the first mills in the area in 1798, near the mouth of what is now Butler Creek, which flows into the bay near the present village of Gosport. Cornelius Vansicklen<sup>16</sup> had recently arrived to settle east of there and the Lawsons were farther east, along the north shore of the bay. Peter Stoneburgh<sup>17</sup> had recently settled farther east along with others north of Weller's Bay.

William Simpson<sup>18</sup> had just recently settled north of his brother, Obediah, in the second and third concessions of Cramahe. Log cabins were still few and far between and only very small patches of woods had been cut down although that would accelerate in the following years. Most new settlers found lots near the lakeshore, with the exception of a group headed by Jacob Petrus Dingman,<sup>19</sup> timber men from the Hudson River valley, who ventured north into the south end of Percy Township to bring oak timber down the Trent River, out of the rich Oak Hills to the northwest. They settled near the present village of Norham, south of Warkworth.

On the north side of Presqu'ile Bay, across from Newcastle, John Nix<sup>20</sup> settled with his family on land that straddled the boundary between Cramahe and Murray Townships. These two original townships had only recently been surveyed, and the boundary between them can be identified today, in Brighton, as Cedar Street, Prince Edward Street and Number 30 Highway, more or less. Presqu'ile Point was considered a separate entity, but early census records included it in Murray Township, which makes sense if you look at a map.

Others had established themselves farther afield, such as Asa Weller<sup>21</sup> on the Bay of Quinte at the Carrying Place, where he was making lots of money with his store and bateau railway. Squire John R. Bleecker<sup>22</sup> was an Indian Agent with his trading post at the Trent River and, nearby, Henry Ripson had his mills and a very large stone house.<sup>23</sup> John Drummond Smith<sup>24</sup> had settled on the creek that would take his name, where the village of Smithfield is located today. Off to the west, Joseph Keeler<sup>25</sup> had brought a group of families to settle in Cramahe and Haldimand Townships, near the future town of Colborne. There were a few others, and many more were coming, but it was a slow, incremental development.

#### Selleck/Gibson Lots

Land Registry Records show that Charles Selleck acquired Lot Number 4 of the "Water Lots",<sup>26</sup> which means the lots along the shoreline that included a good deal of land that was under water, as well as the land right along the shore. His father-in-law, George Gibson, would acquire the Patent for Lot 6 in 1816<sup>27</sup> and both lots, along with Lot 5, would end up in the hands of Joseph Gibson, a son of George.

#### Salt Point

The name Salt Point would not apply to this small peninsula until 1812, as I. M. Wellington explains: "At this time (1812), an American schooner, loaded with salt and bound for some port on the Canadian shore farther west, was driven into Presqu'isle Harbor in a storm; and, as winter was coming on, the captain feared to remain any longer lest his boat should be frozen in, seized, confiscated and sold by the Government. He unloaded the salt on a point at the entrance of the harbour, placing it in the cart of Mrs. Selleck and her mother, and immediately left the harbor under cover of the dark. That point took its name from that incident, and bears the name of Salt Point to this day."<sup>28</sup>

## Notes

1. Landmarks of Toronto, J. Ross Robertson, Toronto, 1908, Volume 5, Chapter LXXV, page 376, PDF download from Internet Archive.
2. Ontario Land Registry Records, Abstract Index Book, Northumberland County, Brighton Township, last page is Town of Newcastle, Lot 4, Water Street, South Side, Northumberland County Archives, Cobourg.
3. Becoming Prominent: Regional Leadership in Upper Canada, 1791-1841, by J. K. Johnson, Thompson, Timothy (1762-1823), page 230,  
<https://books.google.ca/books?id=EtY6RTPpTcC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q=Timothy&f=false>.
4. Ontario Land Registry Records, Abstract Index Book, Northumberland County, Brighton Township, last page is Town of Newcastle, Lot 1, Water Street, South Side, Northumberland County Archives, Cobourg.
5. The Town of York 1793-1815, A Collection of Document of Early Toronto, Edited with an Introduction by Edith G. Firth, Law and Order, Single Men in York, page 90, footnote 41, PDF from UTP.
6. Ontario Land Registry Records, Abstract Index Book, Northumberland County, Brighton Township, last page is Town of Newcastle, Lot 2, Water Street, South Side, Northumberland County Archives, Cobourg.
7. Robert Lochiel Fraser, "ROGERS, DAVID MCGREGOR," in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. 6, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed April 28, 2019,  
[http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/rogers\\_david\\_mcgregor\\_6E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/rogers_david_mcgregor_6E.html).
8. James Rogers (1728-1790), <http://www.treesbydan.com/>.
9. John Peters (1762-1847), <http://www.treesbydan.com/>.
10. Aaron Greeley (1773-1820), <http://www.treesbydan.com/>.
11. The Town of York 1793-1815, A Collection of Document of Early Toronto, Edited with an Introduction by Edith G. Firth, Establishment of the Capital, Petitions for Land in the Town and Township of York, page 17, footnote 57, PDF from UTP.
12. Ontario Land Registry Records, Abstract Index Book, Northumberland County, Brighton Township, Concession 2, Lot 2, Northumberland County Archives, Cobourg.
13. Ontario Land Registry Records, Abstract Index Book, Northumberland County, Brighton Township, last page is Town of Newcastle, Lot 5, Water Street, South Side, Northumberland County Archives, Cobourg.
14. Obediah Simpson (1758-1809), <http://www.treesbydan.com/>.
15. Alexander Chisholm (1748-1808), <http://www.treesbydan.com/>.
16. Cornelius Vansicklen (1775-1850), <http://www.treesbydan.com/>.
17. Peter Stoneburgh (1742-1844), <http://www.treesbydan.com/>.
18. William Simpson (c. 1755-c. 1818), <http://www.treesbydan.com/>.
19. Jacob Petrus Dingman (1738-c.1825), <http://www.treesbydan.com/>.
20. John Nix, Sr. (1765-1853), <http://www.treesbydan.com/>.
21. Asa Weller (1761-1825), <http://www.treesbydan.com/>.
22. Goddard, Jane Bennett, U.E., Hans Walmeyer, published privately by author, printed by Haynes Printing Co. (Cobourg), Ltd., Cobourg, Ontario, 1980, 1801-1805, page 375.
23. Goddard, Jane Bennett, U.E., Hans Walmeyer, published privately by author, printed by Haynes Printing Co. (Cobourg), Ltd., Cobourg, Ontario, 1980, 1794-1796, page 335.
24. John Drummond Smith (1761-1842), <http://www.treesbydan.com/>.
25. Homesteads: Early buildings and families from Kingston to Toronto" by Margaret McBurney & Mary Byers, 1979, pg. 144.
26. Ontario Land Registry Records, Abstract Index Book, Northumberland County, Brighton Township, last page is Town of Newcastle, Lot 4, Water Street, North Side, Northumberland County Archives, Cobourg.
27. Ontario Land Registry Records, Abstract Index Book, Northumberland County, Brighton Township, last page is Town of Newcastle, Lot 6, Water Street, North Side, Northumberland County Archives, Cobourg.
28. Isaac M. Wellington, The Tobey Book, Chapter III, 1811-1820, page 60, Brighton Public Library.