

The Surveyor and The Princess

By Mary Dawson

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As we have reported in a previous column, Augustus Jones was the surveyor who laid out Yonge Street in 1794.

He married Tu-ben-an-nee-quay, daughter of the Indian Chief Wash-banoshay.

Their son Peter Jones became a Methodist missionary to the Indians.

William Harrison reported hearing him state in a lecture to illustrate the intuitive knowledge the Indians possessed of latitude and longitude that when Surveyor Jones was trying to get the bearings of the Holland River from the shores of Lake Ontario to determine the line which Yonge Street should take, he was observed by the chief who was in charge of the Indians serving as guides and porters for the survey party.

The purpose of the compass was explained to the chief, who took it, adjusted it and then pointed in the direction the party should take.

Chief hit spot

His line came within eight rods of the desired location on Lake Simcoe, a minor deviation considering the almost 40 miles of the route and the numerous detours to avoid physical obstacles along the way.

After the Queen's Rangers had slashed out the road, little work was done on it, as a requirement of the land grant to settlers was that each should clear the road allowance to the halfway mark across the width of his land.

It was Dec. 19, 1800, when the surveyor-general's office ordered John Stegman — another surveyor whose home was on lot 51 Markham just north of the Elgin Mills Sideroad — to make a survey of the work which had been accomplished.

Although no mention is made of most of the lots in the present Richmond Hill and Thornhill areas of Markham and Vaughan, which would lead to the assumption that the early settlers on these lots had in the matter of a few years lived up to their obligations, his report does mention a few instances where the work had been neglected.

Clearing Yonge St.

Referring to Lot 33 in Vaughan, a quarter of a mile south of Highway 7, his report said "clearing completed with no house and nothing done to the street."

He reported that on the Markham

side "clearing is complied with on the south side but on the north nothing is done.

He reported clearing done at Lot 37 Vaughan, "but large trees and logs left on the street, no fence and a small log house."

He then reported on Lot 55 Vaughan, which would be on the south-west corner of Gamble Sideroad, that the "clearing was complied with, the street cut and logs not burned, and a very bad place in the road".

Logs in street

Farther south the report was not nearly so good as it read, "from York to Poplar Plains (Yorkville) the road is cut but for the greater part of the distance is not passable for any carriage on account of logs which lie in the street."

The report concluded with the statement the most ancient inhabitants were the most neglectful in clearing the street — the most ancient inhabitants having reached this area not more than five or six years previously.

For more than 50 years Yonge Street was a "hard road to travel" and helped give the capital its nickname of "Little Muddy York".

It was, however, of too much military importance as a highway between the lakes to be neglected for too long.

Some money spent

The expenditure was made of 8,000 pounds by the North West Fur Trading Company, which placed its bateaux on wheels and used the road to shorten the journey to the west.

Some government money lifted the road out of its primitive condition but it still remained muddy and rough.

To the north of the Hill, reaching to Elgin Mills was a corduroy bridge.

Another to the south spanned the Black Ash Swamp reaching almost to the toll bridge located at the Langstaff Sideroad, each end bobbing up and down through the slush.

Dragging cannon

When Pentanguishene was dismantled as a military station in 1832 the cannon were brought down Yonge Street, with five span of horses required to drag them through the mud-holes.

Five years later William Lyon MacKenzie was to blame the conditions of the road for the failure of his uprising, since they prevented many of his supporters from the north reaching Montgomery's Tavern in time to help.

In 1846 Sir Richard Bonnycastle wrote that he had "passed through Richmond Hill (without the Lass) having safely passed through the Slough of Despond, which the vaunted Yonge Street presents".

Retirement Savings Task Force Report

1. It is the committee's opinion that the Mitchell & Ryerson report concerning another plan **does not** give a viable alternative.

The various reasons:

a. The Excelsior Life plan they speak of has not performed much differently than Empire Life.

b. The benefits when compared to our present plan do not take into account leaving the present plan. Some benefits we now have are no longer available.

c. Each presentation, of course, shows their plan in a favourable light making individual assessments difficult.

2. It is the committee's recommendation that the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors members **continue** with the present Empire Life Plan.

a. It is also recommended that the Finance Committee have a continuing communication with Empire Life concerning investments on a monthly basis with a quarterly report to members.

b. It is also recommended that Empire Life submit to our Communications Committee through our publications, articles concerning the performance and new features available in the Pension Plan area.

c. It is further recommended that because of the past unfavourable publicity and concern over the Pension Plan a stepped up program be initiated to encourage additional participation in the Pension Plan.

R. A. Garden

R.R.S.P. Task Force Chairman
Committee: Al Cochrane, Wm. Bennett,
and Ed Carter.

IDEAS

When using a mechanical lead-holding pencil in the field, sharpen both ends of the lead before leaving the office. Reverse the lead when the first point has become blunted.

Similarly, if some drafting work is contemplated away from the office, sharpen a whole box full of refills.

Tudor Jones