

John Lyon was the first to build a grist mill in this Province, or at least in the midland portion of it. He also erected a saw-mill and a distillery which was likewise the first of its kind. These mills were situated on Yonge Street at his farm (lot 33). In their construction and management he was assisted in some way by Nicholas Miller of the adjoining lot (No. 34) who was a miller by trade as well as by name. To bring their mills into existence they made a dam on the small creek crossing Yonge Street at the place. The neighbors, generally, helped in the work. The grist mill had a capacity of about two bushels per day, and it resembled a coffee mill. This advent of these pioneer industries is sketched as follows in the **History of York County* (page 126) [C. Blackett Robinson, Publisher, Toronto, 188—.] In some instances the statements are incorrect, especially the figures:—

The first saw-mill in Vaughan was built in 1801, by John Lyons, who came to Canada from New York State in 1794, and after living for a while in York (Toronto) settled on lot 32 (should be lot 33) concession 1, in Markham. The mill was built on the main branch of the Don, where it crosses Yonge Street. In 1802 he constructed a small grist mill with a dam over 200 feet long and ten feet in height. The pond was used to conceal articles taken from the Government warehouse in York at the time the Americans were in possession of the town, during the war of 1812. The invaders generously presented the settlers with a quantity of agricultural implements belonging to the Canadian Government, and when they left a search was made through the country for these articles. Many of the residents in this locality consigned their share of the plunder to the waters of Lyon's Mill Pond for safe-keeping. John Lyons died in 1814 (should have been 1813), and his mills and other real estate were purchased by William Purdy, who added many improvements. His sons, in connection with their cousin William Wright, built a tannery and a grist mill. The Lyons' mill was afterwards used as a carding and fulling mill.

John Lyon belonged to the Light Horsemen during the war of 1812, but was not in action. He died, August 24th, 1813, and his remains were laid at rest upon his own farm. His executors were Messrs. Hoshel and Benson, the surveyor. Benson is said by members of the family to have mismanaged while administering the estate. As widow Lyon was in comfortable circumstances, she was not without suitors, one of whom was one Eckhardt of Markham, but she never married again. After a life containing perhaps more than the usual share of trials, she died in 1850 and was buried in the Thornhill cemetery. Her daughter Phoebe had grown up to womanhood and had married George F. Warnica in 1829 as already stated, retaining distinct memories through life of the scenes of her childhood, and of Toronto in its infancy—the old Court House and its other celebrated landmarks.

*The same work (page 116) also gives the following information, which is, however, incorrect in some particulars:—"Another early pioneer in the industries of Markham was Nicholas Miller, who built the first mill on the Humber. In 1794, Mr. Miller settled on lot 33, concession 1, of Markham, and built a small grist mill on a tributary of the Don."

But again on page 117, the same book reads:—"On the north half of lot 33, John Lyon built a distillery, in 1810 (?), and ran it for a long time. To the northward again, on the same creek, Nicholas Miller built the first flour mill in the township, in the year 1793. It was an old-fashioned coffee mill, on a very small scale."

The foregoing information is incorrect on various points. John Lyon died shortly after 1810, viz., in 1813, so that the distillery must have antedated 1810.