

the Steamboat Landing. This Upper Landing was the ancient Indian place of embarkation of the war-parties and hunting-parties; and after the white men came upon these scenes it was still used as a landing-place for canoes and lighter craft which could get higher up the stream than the steamboat Landing. A small bytown, consisting of two or three business places, arose at the Upper Landing at an early date—sometime in the twenties. The cause of its origin was this. The fur trade of Newmarket, which was large in the early years of this century, was chiefly supplied “from the Great Lakes of the Northland”; and the Indians used to effect a landing on the Holland River at this place after travelling with their furs over lakes, rivers and portages for many miles. The business men of Newmarket saw that the nearer they were to the landing-place, the more easily they could catch the trade—“first there, first served.” In those early days it was a common sight to see 30 or 40 large wigwams of Indians from distant hunting grounds on the commons adjoining the landing-place. “To get the first bid,” was therefore the object of these men in locating as close as possible to the place of landing, for it usually happened that the first bidder became the buyer. In this way the small bytown arose. A day school was opened by the Methodists, amongst the Indians at this place, on Feb. 12th, 1828. It had an average of about twenty scholars, and was kept by Phœbe Edmonds, a young missionary, whose name is familiar in the records of early Canadian mission work.

The Upper Landing was more frequently called “Johnson’s Landing,” after its first settler, Joseph Johnson, sr. He was one of five brothers of U.E. Loyalist descent, and had originally settled on Yonge Street, between Thornhill and Hogg’s Hollow, about the time of the war of 1812-15. Shortly after this, however, he exchanged this Yonge Street Property with a Mr. Davis, (whose hotel, built upon it, has been a familiar landmark for later travellers), taking in exchange the property at the Upper Landing Place on the Holland River. He at once permanently settled upon the latter, and his name from that time onward was connected with the place.

Amongst other early settlers at Johnson’s Landing was Capt. Wm. Laughton, who was more familiarly known as “Squire” Laughton. He came from Newmarket, of which he had been an early resident, and was associated with Borland & Roe, the Indian fur traders. Laughton was the youngest member of this firm. In 1838 he was owner of the steamer “Peter Robinson,” and he subsequently became captain of the steamer “Beaver,” and of which he became sole pro-