

# Looking Into History Of Mississauga District

The First Of A Series

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The Government Inn stood on the east bank of the Credit on a rise above the river flats not far from the present Hotel le Surf. From early sketches it appears that the Inn faced the lake and was about a hundred feet from the river harbour where the yacht club now is.

The building was erected in 1798 after Governor Simcoe had returned to England, although four years before, the Governor had stated in his writings the need for such a building for the use of lake travellers and those passing through Indian lands to and from York, the new capital, and Newark the old. Later, on the June afternoon when the Simcoe family took shelter from a lake storm in the Credit harbour, the Governor may have selected this place for the inn.

In the order to build the "post house," the expense was not to exceed 300 pounds Provincial Currency. Twelve hundred silver dollars was a fine sum in those days, and the Inn, strongly built of squared timbers, measured approximately 40 feet by 30 feet. Sketches show large windows with many panes. Two chimneys built of stone from the river bed, each with two or three hearths, formed part of the divisions between the two large front rooms and the narrower back rooms. There was a small low attic above the ground floor which provided space for floor-sleeping guests. In all, there were eight or nine rooms, a good size for an inn in those days.

A Mr. Allan, merchant, leased the Inn for one dollar per annum for the first several years, although he never lived there. In 1805 and possibly earlier, after two or

three short termed sub-tenants, Thomas Ingersoll occupied it. Ingersoll was the innkeeper when the Mississauga Indian Chiefs, camping in their wigwam village on the flats nearby, each set their mark of beaver, fox or other animal, thereby signing the 1805 Treaty which ceded their lands to the British Crown. It was Innkeeper Ingersoll who furnished refreshments to the officials following the signing.

Thomas Ingersoll's household consisted of his third wife, three daughters, the oldest over sixteen, two young sons and one servant. Laura Secord, his daughter by a previous marriage, was thirty-one at this time and living in the Niagara district with her husband and children.

On December 8, 1805, records show that Ingersoll petitioned to lease the Inn for seven years at two dollars

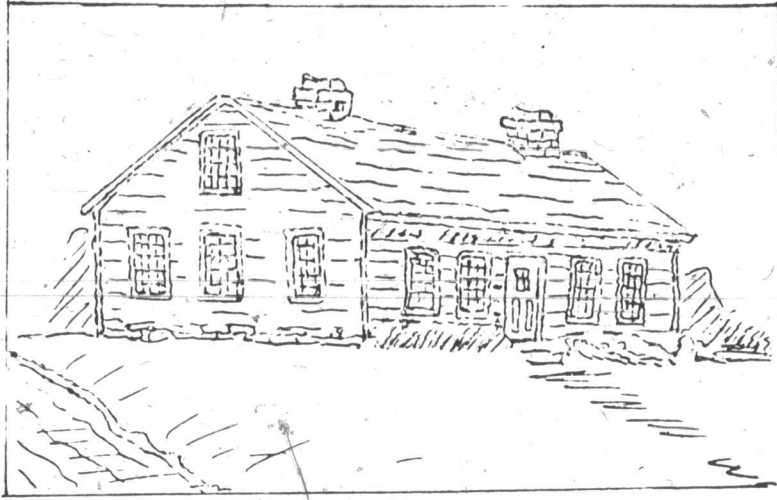
per annum. He offered to put the house in good repair and to lathe and plaster three rooms. He went in person to the Courts at York, then a town of 402 men, women and children, and proposed "to

keep a ferry" on the Credit. The Government agreed, specifying the dimensions of the ferry and the rates to be charged.

In 1807 and the years following, settlers took up their

grants of land in the South West corner of Toronto Township in what is now Clarkson. Obviously many of them stayed at the Government Inn until they had cleared enough land to put up their first shanty. A biographical record tells us the Clarkson family, newly arrived from New York State in 1808, first went to the

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THE GOVERNMENT INN 1798 - 1861

Near this site on the Credit River's eastern bank, the government of Upper Canada built a "post-house" or inn in 1798, for the use of persons travelling between York and such settlements as Niagara and Detroit. Constructed of dressed timber, it was for some seven years the only building between the Etobicoke River and Burlington Beach. Local Mississauga Indians gathered here to trade salmon and furs. Here also they signed the Treaties of 1805 and 1818 which ceded most of their lands to the Crown for European settlement. Used as an inn until 1834, the Government House, became private property in 1858 and was demolished three years later.



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