

History of North Norwich Township.

A hundred years ago the township of North Norwich was an unbroken forest, no roads except a few blazed trees made by the surveyor or the track of an Indian, and deer, wolves, bears, and other wild animals were numerous.

The township of Norwich, now North and South Norwich, was surveyed by Mr. Hamley in 1790. The survey did not include the Gore of Norwich, that being surveyed by Peter Carroll in 1835.

In a territorial division of Canada West made on July 16th, 1799, Norwich was made a portion of the County of Norfolk. By an Act of Parliament, which came into effect, Jan. 1st, 1800, Norwich became part of the County of Oxford.

On July 22nd, 1800, Mr. Wilcox, of York, (now Toronto), received from the Crown a grant of 15,000 acres of land lying east of the middle town line, and from the 1st to the 12th concessions.

Norwich was for many years a township consisting of 12 concessions, one mile in width, numbering from North to South and having 28 lots of 200 acres each in each concession, exclusive of the Gore on the east side. In 1855 it was divided into North and South Norwich; the road passing between the 6th and 7th concessions being the boundary line.

During the year 1809, Peter Lossing came from Dutchess County, N. Y., to look for a suitable home for himself and family, and being informed that there were desirable lands opened up in Oxford County, he visited them and found that they suited him.

He returned to Canada the same fall, (1809), accompanied by his brother-in-law, Peter De Long, (also of Dutchess County, N. Y.), and they purchased from Mr. Wilcox, of York, (now Toronto), for 50 cents per acre, his entire tract of land, 15,000 acres, in the township of Norwich; and on the 14th of July, 1810, Mr. Wilcox deeded to Peter Loss-



Peter Lossing.

ing and Peter De Long, jointly, the land referred to, first releasing a mortgage that was held against the property by one John Gray. Having secured the property, these two pioneers returned to Dutchess County to make suitable arrangements for occupying their new homes.

Peter Lossing, at once, made every effort to find persons who would purchase and settle upon the land in Norwich; and received hearty support in his project. Adam Stover agreed to accept 1,000 acres of land for each of his children who would go to Canada and live upon and improve their land. Three sons, Michael, Frederick and Adam, and one daughter, Mrs. Peter McLees, accepted the offer of their father and came to Norwich and made it their home. Joseph Lancaster agreed for 3,000 acres. Many others also decided to come to Norwich, including the Motts, the Cornwells, the Snyders, the Sackriders, the Emighs and others, about fifty families in all. Having secured the co-operation of these others, Peter Lossing and his family moved to Canada in the fall of 1810. He travelled all the way with his teams, bringing with them what goods they could, while another portion of goods was brought by rafts and boats through the Mohawk river, Lake Champlain and Lake Ontario, his two sons and some other young men, who came to seek a home in the wilds of Canada, having the management of the expedition.

After spending a few days at the home of John Yeigh in Burford (who kept an open house for travellers and new settlers), Peter Lossing accompanied by his three sons, Solomon, Edmund, and Benson, two hired men, and a surveyor named Halsted, started for Norwich. He left his wife and daughters, Mary and Athelinda, to remain with the family of Mr. Yeigh at Burford.

Peter Lossing and his company reached Norwich with a great deal of difficulty, the first 7 miles of their journey was to Cooley's