

place into which it has developed since becoming the property and the abode of Mr. Larratt Smith.

The primitive waggon track of Yonge Street ascended the hill at which we now arrive, a little to the west of the present line of road. It passed up through a narrow excavated notch. Across this depression or trench a forest tree fell without being broken, and there long remained. Teams, in their way to and from town, had to pass underneath it like captured armies of old under the yoke. To some among the country folk it suggested the beam of the gallows-tree. Hence sprang an ill-omened name long attached to this particular spot.

Near here, at the top of the hill, were formerly to be seen, as we have understood, the remains of a rude windlass or capstan, used in the hauling up of the North-West Company's boats at this point of the long portage from Lake Ontario to Lake Huron.

So early as 1799 we have it announced that the North-West Company intended to make use of this route. In the *Niagara Constellation*, of August, 3, 1799, we read: "We are informed on good authority that the North-West Company have it seriously in contemplation to establish a communication with the Upper Lakes by way of York, through Yonge Street to Lake Simcoe, a distance of about 33 miles only." The *Constellation* embraces the occasion to say also, "That the government has actually begun to open that street for several miles, which example will undoubtedly be no small inducement to persons who possess property on that street and its vicinity to exert themselves in opening and completing what may be justly considered one of the primary objects of attention in a new country, a good road."

The *Gazette* of March 9, in this year (1799) had contained an announcement that "The North-West Company has given twelve thousand pounds towards making Yonge Street a good road, and that the North-West commerce will be communicated through this place (York): an event which must inevitably benefit this country materially, as it will not only tend to augment the population, but will also enhance the present value of landed property."

Bouchette, writing in 1815, speaks of improvements on Yonge Street, "of late effected by the North-West Company." "This route," he says in his Topographical description, "being of much more importance, has of late been greatly improved by the North-West Company for the double purpose of shortening the distance