

By Bill Stevens (I wish to thank Alun Hughes and Alex Ormston for their assistance in compiling this article)

The settlement of what is now known as Ontario was precipitated by the declaration of American Independence and subsequently the fall of British rule in what is now the United States of America. Some of those wishing to remain Loyal to the British Crown fled to Fort Niagara. In May of 1781 the British purchased lands on the west side of the Niagara River from the Mississauga Indians. A small number of settlers had settled on the west side in 1780 and this number grew quickly with the land purchase and survey in 1782. In 1783 the Peace Treaty was signed and England officially recognized the U.S.A. The growing number of Loyalists resulted in the purchase of additional lands from Mississauga Indians on May 22, 1784 (and confirmed by a treaty signed on December 7, 1792). It was this second purchase that now allowed settlement in Grantham Township. Soon after the purchase settlers began to make their way into the area that would become Grantham Township. But it wasn't until after the survey undertaken between December 27, 1787 and March 31, 1788 by Daniel Hazen of Township Number 3 (which was later called Grantham Township) that these settlers could claim their land holdings with the Land Board.

During the above time period of 1780 to 1791, the area of Grantham Township was part of the British Province of Quebec and the following were the Governors of the Province of Quebec:

1778 – 1786 – Sir Frederick Haldimand

1786 – 1791 – Sir Guy Carleton, 1st Baron Dorchester (Lord Dorchester)

By proclamation of July 24, 1788 Upper Quebec, now known as Ontario, was divided into four districts for the primary purpose of administering justice and land distribution. The area of Grantham Township would become part of Nassau District.

On June 19, 1791 royal assent was given to the Constitutional Act, commonly called the Canada Act, which came into effect by proclamation of August 24, 1791, split the Province of Quebec into Lower Canada and Upper Canada. From December 26, 1791 to February 10, 1841 the area now known as Grantham Township was in the British Province of Upper Canada. The Legislature of 1792 for Upper Canada consisted of 16 representatives elected by the people and the Legislative Council consisted of 7 councilors nominated by the Crown. The capital was at Newark (now Niagara On-The-Lake).

On July 8, 1792 John Graves Simcoe was appointed the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. He served in this position until 1798, but was in England for the last two years of his term.

On July 19, 1792 a proclamation divided the Province of Upper Canada into 19 counties. The counties would provide a basis for elections, the distribution of lands and organizing the militia. Sixteen representatives were elected to the first Legislative Assembly. Lincoln County was divided into 4 ridings and the first representatives were: Riding #1 – Nathaniel Pettit who also represented York County and Durham County; Riding #2 – Benjamin Pawling; Riding #3 – Isaac Swayze; Riding #4 – Parshall Terry who also represented Norfolk County.

On September 17, 1792 the first parliament of Upper Canada met at Newark. At this first session of the Legislature, the names of the four districts (previously named by Lord Dorchester in 1788) were changed and the Nassau District became the Home District.

On April 9, 1793, there came into operation “An Act to provide for the nomination and appointment of Parish and Town Officers within the Province.” The era of town meetings and quarter sessions began and lasted until 1841, when Upper and Lower Canada were reunited. Presumably Grantham Township held meetings starting in 1793, however the records for 1793 – 1817 are lost.

On July 21, 1796, in the absence of Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe, Hon. Peter RUSSELL was appointed President of the Executive council of Upper Canada, a position he held until August 17, 1799. During his term the Provincial offices in Newark closed with the move of the capital to York.

On August 17, 1799 Hon. Peter HUNTER was appointed Lieutenant-Governor and held this position until his death on August 21, 1805. During his term of office, on January 1, 1800 the four districts were revised and the number of districts expanded, at which time the Home District area was changed and the District of Niagara was created. Niagara consisted of four ridings of Lincoln and Haldimand.

In 1800 the following officials of Niagara District are known: Clerk of the Peace – Ralfe Clench; Sherriff – James Clark; District Court Judge – William Dickson; Surrogate Court Judge – Dr. Robert Kerr.

In the absence of a Lieutenant-Governor, the head of state from September 11, 1805 – August 25, 1806 was Hon. Alexander GRANT who was President of the Executive Council.

August 25, 1806 – 1812 – the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Upper Canada was Hon. Francis GORE. He went to England on leave October 8, 1811 and until his return, the head of state was the administrator or president, which was committed successively to the senior military officer. During Gore's absence, the following served as President Administering the Government of Upper Canada:

– October 9, 1811 – killed October 13, 1812 – Major-General Sir Isaac BROCK

– October 20, 1812 – June 18, 1813 – Major-General Sir Roger Hale SHEAFFE, Bart.

– June 19, 1813 – December 12, 1813 – Major-General Francis Baron de ROTTENBURG

– December 13, 1813 – April 13, 1815 – Lieut. -Gen. Sir Gordon DRUMMOND, G.C.B.

– April 25, 1815 – June 30, 1815 – Lieut. -Gen. Sir George MURRAY (Provisional Lieut.-Gov.)

– July 1, 1815 – September 21 1815 – Maj.-Gen. Sir Frederick Phipps ROBINSON, K.C.B. (Provisional Lieut.-Gov.)

\* Francis Gore returned September 1815 and left the country again on June 11, 1817.

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– June 11, 1817- August 13, 1818 – Hon. Samuel SMITH

August 13, 1818 – November 4, 1828 – Maj.-Gen. Sir Peregrine MAITLAND, K.C.B. served as Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. Following the death of the Duke of Richmond Maitland served as administrator of Lower Canada between March 8 and June 30, 1820. During his absence Hon. Samuel SMITH acted as the administrator of Upper Canada.

From November 5, 1828 until he resigned and relieved on January 25, 1836 the Lieutenant-Governor was Maj. Gen. Sir John COLBORNE, K.C.B., later Baron Seaton.

From accession on January 25, 1836 until March 23, 1838 the Lieutenant-Governor was Maj. Sir Francis Bond HEAD, K.C.B.

From accession on March 23, 1838 until February 10, 1841 the Lieutenant-Governor was Maj. Gen. Sir George ARTHUR, K.C.B.

Grantham Township records from 1818 to 1900 can be found in the Special Collections area of the St. Catharines Public Library. These records list the following Township Clerks as of the first meeting in January of each year: 1818 – 1819 – William CHISHOLM; 1820 – Samuel WOOD; 1821-1842 – Charles ROLLS.

In 1841 the “District Councils Act” was passed and continued through 1849.

Between February 10, 1841 and June 30, 1867 Upper and Lower Canada became the united Province of Canada. Upper Canada became known as Canada West. The first Governor of the

Province of Canada was Lord Sydenham who served in that capacity from February 10, 1841 until his death on September 19, 1841. His death prompted the appointment of Sir Richard Downes Jackson as Administrator until Sir Charles Bagot was appointed Governor on January 12, 1842 and he served until March 30, 1843. He died at Kingston on May 19, 1843. Following Bagot as governor was Sir Charles Metcalf from March 30 to November 26, 1845. Lord Cathcart was then appointed Administrator on November 26, 1845 and governor on April 24, 1846 until January 30, 1847. Lord Elgin was governor from January 30, 1847 until December 19, 1854.

In 1849 the “Baldwin Municipal Act” was passed which provided for the creation of municipal councils.

Thus on January 1, 1850 Grantham Township was incorporated and Township Council was elected. The council members then elected a Reeve from the council members. The first Reeve was John Gilleland. A complete list of Grantham Township Reeves from 1850 to 1900 can be found in the Society’s March 2005 newsletter. — This article originally appeared in the June 2005 Newsletter —