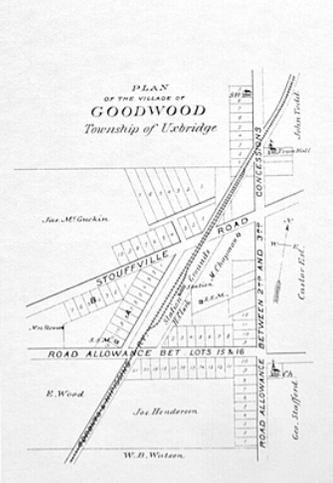
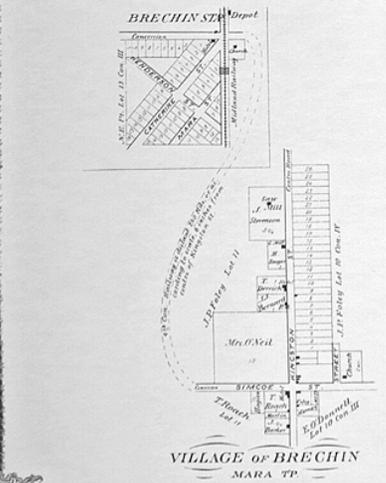


MAP OF UXBRIDGE TOWNSHIP





Stories from Uxbridge Quaker Heritage

Talk given by *Allan McGillivray*
CFHA Annual Meeting
Sept. 18, 2004

This evening I am going to share with you some accounts or stories related to the Quaker heritage of Uxbridge Town and Township. I don't have a Quaker background, but my information has been gathered over 20 years of doing research in the Uxbridge area.

My father's ancestors were Presbyterians from Scotland. Dad's cousin said that when he was a boy and went to his grandmother's on Sunday, she would say, "Don't whist boy." He wasn't even allowed to whistle on Sunday. My wife, however, does have some Quaker ancestry as she is descended from the Terrys of East Gwillimbury, who came to Pennsylvania with William Penn's earliest colonists.

The museum where we met earlier today is located on Quaker Hill. I wonder how

many Quaker Hills there are in North America. As we saw earlier, the Friends Meeting House is near the south end of Quaker Hill. The Scotch Kirk was built at the north end of Quaker Hill in 1839. One time a prominent member of the Scotch Kirk decided to attend a Quaker Meeting to see what went on there. Afterwards he remarked at how quiet it was. He was used to the minister at his church pounding the pulpit.

However, there were similarities. For example, like the Quakers, the Presbyterians sent a delegation to meet with members who were seen to be straying from the proper path.

The setting for my accounts will be primarily Quaker Hill and Uxbridge Town, and hopefully these stories will leave you with

some understanding of the Uxbridge Quaker settlement community.

The Beginning of Uxbridge

The Township of Uxbridge was surveyed in the winter of 1804-05, by Samuel Wilmot. Winter surveying meant that there were no black flies or mosquitoes, water was frozen over, and there were no leaves to block the view. Samuel Wilmot's little, leather-bound journal is in the Archives of Ontario in Toronto. It is of interest to us tonight because a couple of times he mentions going to the Quaker settlement on Yonge Street for supplies. Whitchurch Township was already surveyed, and he would have been able to find a way through the woods to Yonge Street.

At the front of his journal, he said he was going out to survey a township called Uxbridge. So the township was already named before the survey was started. Actually the name appears on a map as a township to be surveyed as early as 1798. This proves wrong published information that Uxbridge was named and founded by Joseph Gould. Joseph couldn't have named the township. He wasn't born until Dec. of 1808, 3 years after the survey and the first settlement.

Uxbridge was probably named after Uxbridge, Middlesex, England.

We are now into the fall of 2004 which is 200 years after the survey began, and this is actually the first public event at which we start to look at Uxbridge's bicentennial. The first settlers, and they were mostly Quakers, started coming into the township in 1805. The first settlement activity took place on the site of the town in 1806. So starting in 2005 and carrying over into 2006 we will be celebrating the bicentennial of the beginning of settlement in Uxbridge. A committee has already been working on plans this year, and I am very pleased with their progress.

The First Settlers Were Quakers

One-seventh of the township was kept as a Clergy Reserve, the established procedure in Upper Canada. The lots were rented on seven year leases, renewable, to settlers with the income going to the Anglican Church. Another one-seventh was kept as a Crown Reserve. Many other lots were granted to absentee people who were sons and daughter of United Empire Loyalists or soldiers. For example, Laura Secord was given Lot 37, Conc. 7. She probably never saw this lot as it was too far to follow a cow from Niagara.

Quite a number of Quakers received grants in Uxbridge township. Their lots tended to be in two groups, one in the southwest corner and the other in the northeast section. These were on the better land on either side of the Oak Ridges Moraine.

Those who received lots in the southwest corner were:

Nathan Bostwick

Jacob Winn

Joshua Winn

Thomas Hazard (who probably soon went back to Vermont. A biography at Vergennes in Vermont has the name of a Robert Hazard who was born "at Oxbridge, near Toronto, Canada, June 15, 1808.)

John Wilson (father of David Wilson of Sharon Temple)

Allen Howard

Stephen Howard

Timothy Millard (who actually settled in Uxbridge Twp., and later moved to Newmarket. Some of his descendants stayed in Uxbridge.)

John Evans

Russell Hoag (who also owned land where Stouffville is located.)

Some of the above such as Bostwick, the Winns and the Howards lived in the Newmarket area. Except for Millard and Hazard, I have found little evidence that any of these other land owners actually lived on their Uxbridge properties.

The following Quakers had Crown lots on the northeast side of the Moraine:

Levi Schooley

Moses Hambleton

Samuel Haines (who later moved to East Gwillimbury so his wife could join the Davidites.)

Benjamin Kester (Current head of the Uxbridge Works Department, Ben Kester, is a direct descendant.)

Charles Chapman

Jesse Teats

Jeremiah Lundy

John Siddens

Isaac Penrose

Andrew Moore

John Moore

Isaiah Chapman

Enos Lundy

Amos Hughes

Job Webb

Joseph Collins

Ezekial James Jr.

Amos Armitage

Stephen Chapman

Israel Lundy

Reuben Burr

George Webb

James Hughes

Elijah Collins

William McCausland

Francis Wasley (ancestor of President Herbert Hoover)

Benjamin Brooke

Job Hughes

Thomas Hilborn (the eldest and patriarch of the Uxbridge Quakers)

Robert Willson

Andrew Cohoe

A few others such as the Widdifields from Whitchurch moved in later.

Only a few of the above actually became settlers in Uxbridge Twp. Other Quaker settlers had to buy their Uxbridge lots.

Joseph Gould wrote that there were only about a dozen Quaker families that originally

settled here, and he listed their names: Elijah Collins, James Hughes, George Webb, Charles Chapman, Samuel Siddens, Samuel Haines, Job Webb, Ezekiel Roberts, Robert Wilson, Amos Hilborn, Joseph Collins, Ezekial James, Thomas Hilborn and Jonathan Gold. A non-Quaker settler was William Gold.

Joseph Gould mentioned that the settlers were “miles apart.” They were in scattered clearings because they could not get land close to each other. Reserve lots and absentee-owned lots stood in the way. He said they communicated with horns in emergency situations. His mother even had a sea shell that she used to blow to make a noise when necessary to call others.

The first reported settler was Elijah Collins who made his way through the forest from Yonge Street in 1805 to settle on Lot 21, Conc. 5. The second known settler was William Gold who lived across the road from the museum.

Getting an exact number of the first settlers is a challenge, as a lot of moving back and forth between the Yonge Street settlement and Uxbridge appears in the records. For example, when Joseph Collins Jr. bought Dr. Beswick’s lot on the site of Uxbridge Town in December of 1806, he gave his address as Whitchurch.

As we study the records and make an ‘educated’ count, we did have a Quaker settlement in Uxbridge Township consisting of a dozen or so families.

The Trip from Catawissa

The Uxbridge Quakers did not come from Catawissa as one group, but migrated to Canada over a period of 2 or 3 years.

Clayton Webb was a boy when his family came in 1806. They left Catawissa early in May. There were about 33 people and four wagons. His father had two wagons, four horses pulling one, and two horses and a yoke

of oxen the other, one riding mare and seven cows. With this particular group were Henry Roses, Jonathan Golds, John Hilborn, Jesse-Teats and wife, and the Isaac Webb family. The trip was slow because they could only travel as fast as a cow. The route was stony and sometimes very muddy.

They left the north branch of the Susquehanna River, not far from Reading, Pennsylvania, and came north by way of Painted Post which is near Corning, New York. . They then followed the Genessee River Valley, and came across Tonawanda Swamp to arrive at Queenston. Some of the men, the women and children, with some of their goods, went across Lake Ontario in a schooner to York (Toronto). The rest of the men with the animals and wagons went around the west end of the lake to meet them. At York they stayed at the home of Samuel Jackson whom they had known in Pennsylvania. It took nearly three days to go up Yonge Street to Ezekial James place just north of Aurora. It could take almost as long now with today's traffic.

Jonathan Gold stayed for about two years on Yonge Street before moving across to Uxbridge.

Uxbridge Meeting Houses

After three or four years of meeting their needs for homes and barns, the local Quakers began work toward acquiring their own Meeting House. One of the first Meetings was held at the home of Charles Chapman who had earlier been active in the local meeting at Catawissa. Of course several from the Yonge Street Meeting were involved in helping to organize a Preparative Meeting in Uxbridge. The committee purchased land from Amos Armitage, and, in 1809, built a log Meeting House on the present site. At the same time, they bought land across the road from Robert Willson for a Burial Ground.

The log building was replaced by the present frame structure in 1820. We find in the

Joseph Collins' account book references to cutting boards for the earlier Meeting House.

The Hicksite split took place in Uxbridge in 1828, and the minutes of their Meetings provide some insight into that event. The followers of Elias Hicks came to a Meeting one Sunday morning, and found that the Orthodox Quakers would not let them into the Meeting House. So they held the Meeting outside on the lawn. They continued to do that until cold weather came, at which time they began meeting in the nearby farmhouse. Later they met for a while in a house further north on the 6th concession road. In 1844, they built their own Meeting House a half mile north of the present museum site. This building was closed and taken down by 1916, the materials recycled. Meanwhile, the more numerous Orthodox Quakers continued to meet in the original building until 1925.

In the 1890s, Alma Dale was a minister at this site. By then the layout of the building had changed so the men no longer sat on one side and the ladies on the other. Jim Tompkins told me that one time a lady and her two children were on one side and the husband was on the other side. The children were misbehaving. The husband then went over to sit with them, and said that a man's place was with his family. Others soon followed. It is interesting to note that the little boys sat with their mothers until they were old enough to sit still... with their fathers.

Alma Dale also built the pulpit that is still in the Meeting House. She may have helped in moving the partition back to create a smaller space across the back.

By 1925, the numbers had decreased so much that the congregation could not continue. Many had joined other denominations, married out, or moved away.

An annual service was held each year after 1925, and still occurs each year in June. However, at one time the Meeting House was advertised for sale in the Uxbridge newspaper. Fortunately someone intervened and this

type of windmill that were used to grind grain and run other machinery. There is one at Williamsburg in Virginia. Apparently the local Uxbridge Quakers had built one or more of those windmills in their former settlement.

Joseph Collins' mother and his wife were probably the first two women to live on the site of the town.

Joseph Collin came to a very unfortunate end when he was crushed to death while breaking ice away from the mill wheel. His wife found him there. That was in 1815, just ten years before this settlement began.

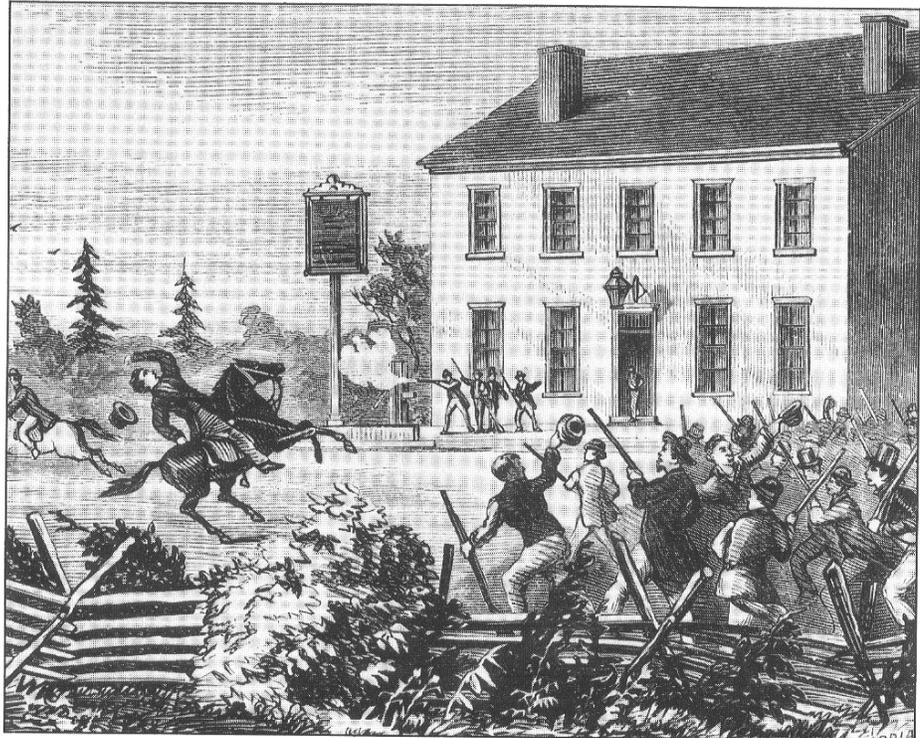
Joseph Gould later wrote that Joseph Collins' death "was a great calamity to the neighbourhood. It must have been a severe blow to the community." He said that if Collins had lived, Uxbridge would have developed into a bustling hamlet much sooner than it did.

Joseph Collins' widow moved back to Whitchurch Township and later married Eleazer Lewis.

The War of 1812-14

When this war came along, it brought settlement nearly to a standstill, even away out here in the backwoods of Uxbridge. Some settlers were even bothered so much about it that they moved back to the States.

Although the Quakers were pacifists, some were pressed into becoming involved some way or other in the war. Ezekial James Jr. was one of those, and as a result he had to later answer to the Quaker Meeting. After an



Death of Col. Moodie

investigation, he was pardoned. They said he was only drawing the cannons, pulling them along the road.. Others were firing them.

Likewise, Robert Willson, who owned the land which includes the Friends Burial Ground, was involved in the war.

Another Uxbridge landowner and Quaker, Moses Hambleton, refused to get involved, and, as a result, he and his son were imprisoned in York. There, the son became ill and died. When Moses was released, he left his property behind and went to live near a brother in New York State. Another son later returned to live in Uxbridge Township.

The James Murder

We often think of the early days as "the good old days" and happy times for the pioneers. However, in 1828, sadness and grief spread through Uxbridge and surrounding communities.

Ezekial James of Quaker Hill had a team of perfectly matched horses. He also had a

hired man by the name of Christie, who had a desire to have that team. Ezekial had agreed to take Christie and his family to York when the harvest was done. However, when the time came, Ezekial was ill, so he sent his son Isaac to make the trip which usually took three days to go and return.

Each night after Isaac left, his mother had premonitions that Isaac was in trouble. When he didn't return after the third day, his mother and another son, went along the trail to Yonge Street. The blacksmith reported seeing the team go by with a strange driver.

A search was started, and Isaac's body was found near Pine Orchard. Christie had killed him to get the horses.

A search was started for Christie and a reward for his capture was posted by the Government. Because of the perfectly matched horses, people were able to track them as far as Troy, New York. There a person reported seeing them, and made the arrest himself as he wanted the reward.

A trial was held when he was held when he was brought back to York, and Christie was hanged for his crime.

Several years later, Joseph Gould went to see Dr. Widmer in Toronto. When he went into the dark waiting room he bumped something which rattled. The doctor said not to be alarmed. It was just the skeleton of Christie. His body had been used for medical study.

Joseph Gould and the Upper Canada Rebellion

Joseph Gould was born in Dec. of 1808 at Quaker Hill to a Quaker family. This was on the farm where the Uxbridge Historical Centre is located. Although Joseph sometimes gets credit for naming and even founding Uxbridge, he did not do either. He was born nearly 10 years after the township was named, and when he moved down into the valley about 1831, when he was 23 years old, the hamlet of Uxbridge was already estab-

lished.

However, Joseph's capable hands soon got a hold on the 'handles' of the community, and for the rest of his life he was a leading citizen. He was a miller, merchant, and entrepreneur, a member of the Home District Council, the first reeve of the township, a Member of Parliament, and so on. He was also a rebel.

At a meeting in Stouffville in 1837, William Lyon Mackenzie asked him to be a leader of the Reform forces from the Uxbridge area. Having a Quaker background, Joseph said he didn't want to become involved in physically attacking the Government. His friends then reminded him that he had been speaking out against the Government for several years. Had he now become a coward? At that, he said he would lead the forces from Uxbridge.

He said he tried to get some order among the Reform members who had gathered at Montgomery's Tavern. Once the Government troops arrived, the poorly prepared rebels ran into the woods where, a few days later, Joseph Gould and others from Uxbridge were captured. They were imprisoned in the old Parliament Buildings in York, and Joseph was fond of saying, afterward, that that was the first time he took a seat in Parliament.

A trial was held, and Joseph was sentenced to time in jail. He was released finally in 1838, came back to his home community, and soon became a leading force in the area's development. Joseph Gould once owned No. 12 Highway and Whitby Harbour.

He died in 1886, and left \$2,500 in his will to be invested, with the interest being given annually to families who were in poor circumstances because the husbands and fathers drank in the Mansion House Hotel which he had built and owned. Believe it or not, that money is still invested after 118 years with the money going to needy families.

Another legacy is the Gould Institute, now the Uxbridge Library, for which Joseph had

drawn up plans, and which was built shortly after he died. It is a well known landmark on the main intersection in downtown Uxbridge.

Alma Dale

Joseph Gould and his wife, Mary James, had a large family, including a daughter Alma who married Thomas Dale. The Dales lived in the Uxbridge area where they owned a farm. Alma became greatly involved with the Quaker Meeting House, and was the minister there in the 1890s. She also built the pulpit that is in the Meeting House.

Alma Dale operated a Union Sunday School which was involved with the Uxbridge Methodist Church, which is now the United Church in which we are holding this meeting this evening. She travelled around Ontario preaching at other locations, and was well known for her team of ponies.

In the late 1890s, Alma and Thomas separated. He stayed in Ontario, while Alma travelled to Manitoba, to the Dand area where some of her James family relatives and other Quakers had gone earlier. Near Hartney, Manitoba, Alma helped build the Meeting House at Chain Lakes, south of the town.

Eventually she travelled to the West Coast and on to New Zealand where she met a Miss Gillet, a Quaker from England. They became friends, and she went home to England with Miss Gillet, to live on the farm there. Alma is buried in England.

Fairly recently, there were still farm implements on the Gillet farm that had been sent there from Uxbridge.

Stewart Taylor and John Brown

Stewart Taylor, the son of David and Elizabeth Taylor, Quaker from New Jersey, was born in 1836 on the farm behind the Uxbridge Quaker Meeting House. His mother, Jane Taylor, was not married. The family moved to Whitchurch Township where ten

years later Jane married Walter Foote.

Stewart was raised by his mother and his grandparents. He was apparently very clever, was into spiritualism and music. Like some other young fellows of the time, he went to the States looking for work, and eventually travelled to Missouri where he was introduced to John Brown. He immediately became a supporter of John Brown's wish to free the slaves.

John Brown held a meeting at Chatham, Ontario, at which he was forming plans, and Stewart Taylor's name appears in records of that gathering. In 1858, John Brown made plans to attack the Federal gun arsenal at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. From there he would get guns to distribute to the Negroes to help their cause.

Over several weeks, twenty-one of Brown's followers including Stewart Taylor, gathered at a farm house near Harpers Ferry. On a particular evening, they went over a railway bridge and into the town. Records show that Stewart Taylor fired the first shot.

The siege lasted three days. Several of the men were killed. Those remaining, including John Brown and Taylor, had moved into the fire engine house which is still there. In that location, Stewart Taylor was killed, and John Brown was captured.

After he was executed, John Brown's body was moved to his farm at North Alba, near Lake Placid, to be buried. There he lies, mouldering in the grave, as the song says, and with him is Stewart Taylor born to a Quaker family here at Uxbridge.

The James School

From what I have read, I understand that Quakers, then and now, were early, and are still, strong supporters of education. And so we find that it was the Quakers who built the first school in Uxbridge Twp. A school act was passed in 1816, and in 1817 a group led by Ezekial James built a log school at the site

of the present Uxbridge Historical Centre. For about 24 years, that was the only school in the northeast part of the township, and even children from the site of Uxbridge Town would have walked up there to go to school, over one mile and a quarter, and further, if one lived on the other side of town. Joseph Gould, a pupil of the log school, wrote that the first teacher was a little Irishman, and like the building itself he was not very good.

The school had other uses as well. In the summer of 1833, Rev. Adam Elliot, an Anglican minister, visited Uxbridge. In his journal, he wrote about conducting a service in the school. A Sunday School had lately been started in the area, and some of the Quaker permitted their children to attend it.

He was back for another visit in 1834, and recorded that he held a service, lectured, baptized three children in the schoolhouse built and owned by Ezekiel James, which stands on the side of a gently rising hill, the summit of which commands an extensive view of the surrounding woods.

Rev. Adam Elliot recorded that on one visit to Uxbridge he stayed overnight at the home of Ezekial James.

Quaker Poetry

Quakers enjoyed writing poetry, one of the few arts permitted in Quaker homes. Both Quaker women and men were involved in that activity, often writing poems to each other. Even Joseph Gould left behind several pieces of poetry.

I am going to conclude these sketches from Uxbridge's Quaker stories with a poem written, in 1845, by Sarah Hilborn of Yarmouth in Southwestern, Ontario, to her cousin, Phebe Hilborn of Uxbridge. I suspect they were educated in the old log school mentioned above.

Dear cousin, I send those lines to thee,
For to arouse thy memory;

Do not forget one former day,
We've spent in youthful childish play.

Those youthful days they are now are gone,
And riper days are hastening on;
If life be spared we soon may say
Our heads are surely turning grey.

Each rising sun we now do see,
Should warn us of Eternity;
For ev'ry day and ev'ry breath
Is drawing nearer unto death.
Why should we waste out precious time
And id'ly lose the gift Divine,
That's proffer'd to us from on high,
From God who reigns above the sky.

Although they face no more I see,
I still retain they memory;
My thoughts doth often dwell with care
Upon my own relations dear.

Whene'er my thoughts dwells on the past,
A sudden gloom my mind o'ercasts;
To think what pleasure we have seen,
And think when shall we meet again!!

Our gracious Master doth ordain
Apart awhile we must remain;
But still I hope to see the day
When thou no more are far away.

Now since we far apart must be,
Perhaps no more each other see;
A friendly caution I would leave,
For fear that thee might be deceived.

Should thou prefer the married state,
And think to choose they self a mate;
E'er it's too late to make amends,
Pray seek for council from thy friends.

Thy parent should consulted be
To see if she there to agree;
For often vows are rashly made
Which for a time should be delayed.

Do not on strangers place thy heart:
Fine speeches they sometimes impart;
Thy promise fair they will prove true,
And then at last they'll bid adieu.

From such delusions do beware,
And guard thy heart against a snare;
Their false pretensions don't believe,
Nor by their flattery be deceived.

Do not on riches place thy mind:
They fly away with every wind,
Their pleasures soon will fade away;
Then seek for love that won't decay.

Beware on whom thy choice is made,
Remember he must have a trade,
A farmer or some trade possess,
For to secure thy happiness.

And now this subject I must end,
Remember it is from a friend
Who at a distance now doth dwell
And doth sincerely wish thee well.

Those lines I now address to thee
Is pen'd with calm simplicity,
And if they should thy censure claim
Be mild in judgement of the same.

When thou dost see this simple rhyme,
Peruse it o'er at leisure time;
And sometimes cast a thought on me
Who lives so far away from thee

From thy affectionate cousin.

Conclusion

Finally a word from an old Quaker, William Penn. As you know, the King gave him land in America, and I have read that when William sailed across the Atlantic Ocean, and viewed some of his vast holdings, he wrote, "At last I have found a place away from the

hustle and bustle of the world." So some of the Uxbridge Friends must have felt when they arrived here.