



First Meeting House of the Children of Peace, built adjacent to the Friends Meeting House in Hope (now Sharon)

Photo: Sharon Temple Museum Archives.

The War of 1812-14 and the Rebellion of 1837 from “The Story of Sharon”

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The Story of Sharon was published in forty-two installments from 14 June 1951 to 27 March 1952 in the Newmarket Era & Express newspaper, Newmarket, Ontario. In 2012-14, Ontario is noting the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812-14, and the 175th anniversary of the Rebellion of 1837. Three installments pertaining to these events from the Story of Sharon are presented here.

The continuity of the 18th century

passed to that of the 19th century. In 1792, John Graves Simcoe, the first governor of Upper Canada had arrived at Kingston. Here had come a man possessed of the abilities necessary to a period when a nation was in formative transition – he was determined, clear-sighted, and far-seeing, and intensely loyal. In the American War for Independence from Britain, he had fought in command of the Queen’s Rangers of Virginia, and he fully anticipated further

war. In fact, knowing at first hand conditions and aspirations to the south, he had warned the Home Authorities that another war was inevitable before the colony could feel established. When he found that the western forts, Niagara and Detroit, were to be given up to the United States, he decided that “the chief town of a Province must not be placed under the guns of an enemy’s fort” at Niagara.

On the north shore of Lake Ontario had once stood an old French Fort, Toronto, which also had the advantage of a good harbour. In every way, this seemed an excellent situation; so, here in the woods Governor Simcoe established the capitol of Upper Canada and changed its name to York. In strategic ways, he prepared as best he could for the contingency of war. As a soldier, he realized that roads were of first necessity for transportation of troops. With this purpose in mind, he had Yonge Street surveyed and opened in 1794. Its military value was doubly important in that it opened a direct route to the northern waters of Georgian Bay. The anchor at Holland Landing is a souvenir of the War of 1812. The hauling of that huge mass of metal – in measurement its arms extended 10 feet from tip to tip – would constitute a bit of skillful manoeuvring at any time. At that time in the history of Yonge Street, it required both engineering and brawn. The anchor was fastened to what was called a catapult which was used as a stone boat and drawn up through the underbrush by 12 yoke of oxen. The trip from York required four days.

In the case of many historic struggles, the nominal causes were not the real causes. For a number of years, England had been in a death grapple with Napoleon Bonaparte, and the retaliatory measures of the respective contestants, the Berlin Decrees, and the Orders-in-Council, bore

heavily on neutral nations. This was particularly true of the United States which already had almost monopolized the carrying trade of the world.

Meanwhile, around Sharon, memories of the American Revolution were receding. These law-abiding, peaceful, and loyal settlers were intent on a main purpose – to establish their homes for the future. Oxen-drawn wagons filled with settlers’ effects were still arriving, and heads of families and sons with their families enlarged the population.

But down at the front, along the St Lawrence River, and Lakes Ontario and Erie, rising from the very roots of the trouble which had caused these people to migrate to Canada, the war clouds deepened. That inflation which sprang from the ideas of a certain element still intoxicated with the lust of war and coupled with the ‘lingering and longing desire to round off the country by the acquisition of British territory’ were the real causes of the trouble. It had constituted an election pledge by American President Madison to declare war against Great Britain, and so sure of themselves were they that Jefferson described it to be a ‘mere matter of marching’, while Eustis, the US Secretary of War, declared, “We can take the Canadas without soldiers!”

In 1812, when the Legislative Assembly at York was aware that the war situation had become alarming, they passed the Militia Bill which authorized the Government “to embody 2,000 bachelors between the ages of 18 and 23 years for three months in the years, and in case of invasion of imminent danger thereof, to retain them for one year”. Before this was organized or the men equipped, war was declared.

The time of every threatened crisis has

brought forth a strong leader. In this case, it was the heroic Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, Commander of the Forces. Just as Governor Simcoe before him had anticipated this trouble, Brock, too, had warned the Home Authorities in England and had done what he could, with hampered means, to prepare to meet it. On his part, Brock well knew he could depend upon the loyalty of the mass of the people, a loyalty which transcended two centuries to the Old Land. In an address to the Legislature, he reminded them "that the free spirit of a free people will never die!"

Impeded by the vacillation of the powers at Quebec, Brock turned to his volunteers. While any attempt at evasion was punished by stern measures, at the same time, he considered their difficulties and endeavoured to give them opportunity to harvest the crops, and in this they were aided and strengthened by the devoted efforts of the women. Speaking in 1840, in vivid remembrance of this leader, Chief Justice Robinson said, "It would have required more courage to refuse General Brock than to go with him wherever he would lead!". Historians, writing of the War of 1812, have reiterated that "almost the entire population was drawn into the vortex" – farmers, mechanics, and gentlemen. Out of this widely-scattered settlement of 500,000 persons against an organized republic of 8,000,000, the community of Sharon gallantly did its part.

In the early phase of this unsuccessful attempt to conquer Canada, the life of this courageous leader, Isaac Brock, was terminated by a bullet in the chest. His last command: "Push on the York Volunteers!" has become immortal. The results of this war have been clearly portrayed on the pages of history as the consolidation of British sentiment and the bringing closer the two inhabiting races, and unconsciously

laying the foundation for a permanent Federal Union.

A manuscript left by the late Titus Willson describes conditions in Sharon. He stated that the war between England and the United States in 1812 was a great drawback to Canada from which it did not recover for several years. We were often called out to do garrison duty for a month or two, and by the time we had got fairly home we would perhaps be called out again. By such continued interruptions, there was not enough raised upon farms to supply the people and the troops, but large quantities of provisions were brought into the country from Europe.

As soon as peace was made, the British government stopped sending over supplies. He remembered that very many of them joined together to send a man from Newmarket to Genesee River for a schooner-load of flour. They got two barrels which cost them when laid down at Sharon \$13.50 per barrel. However, this did not last until the next harvest. They were, therefore, under the necessity of cutting their wheat before it was fully ripe. They pounded it as best they could, cleaned and boiled it, and ate it with sugar and milk when they had these. They had but one cow at that time, but they had a good deal of sugar. Pork was quite out of the question. The troops had eaten their hogs; so, they had to wait until others grew. He knew pork to bring \$50. per barrel. A great depression followed the War. Prices had been fabulously high during hostilities and when peace was declared, they fell to lowest level.

A Sharon name prominent in the War of 1812 was that of Col. Thomas Selby who fought with Gen. Brock during the War, but was home at the time of the Battle of Queenston Heights because his wife was very ill. He saw service for three years and

received as reward 1,200 acres of land. Col. Thomas Selby and his wife had a family of 12 children and each was given 100 acres of land at coming of age or at marriage. In time, all the sons of Col. Selby became officers in the Canadian Army, and the military tradition was carried on during World Wars I and II. Another Sharon name connected with the War of 1812 was that of Captain Triviss.

At the close of the War of 1812, for reasons not known, David Willson, labouring under the impression that the government considered him to be a seditious person and designed to banish him, promptly composed an address proclaiming his loyalty and forwarded it to the governing body.

With the arrival of post-bellum days, it was reasonable to expect that peaceful pursuits would constitute the agenda; to open and develop the country would appear the logical interest. Settlers were coming in rapidly – English, Irish, Scotch, and American – each representing a different school of thought. They found that neither political nor economic conditions were to their advantage. Canada, a vast wilderness, was governed by military officers responsible to a government 3,000 miles away. It was an age of imperialism and class. Governor Simcoe, himself an avowed aristocrat, detested anything which smacked of republicanism. The correspondence between Simcoe and Lord Dorchester indicates beyond doubt that it had been the intention of the Home Government to make the Canadian constitution a replica of itself, create an aristocracy, and set up an Established Church to which most of the Loyalists belonged. This last was a missionary effort to underwrite support to Christianity in the new land where British sentiment was predominant and the native

population was heathen.

In 1791, 2,500,000 acres of land were set aside to support a Protestant Clergy which meant the Church of England. This enormous reservation was known as the Clergy Reserves. In addition, persons responsible for bringing in settlers, and disbanded soldiers, had been given tracts of land, each comprising thousands of acres.

The British Government had the sincere interests of the colony at heart. Always conciliatory, it had appointed governors, and in turn it had recalled governors, but it was becoming increasingly apparent that the methods of machinery of government in Upper Canada were thwarting progress and frustrating attempts for advancement.

The autocratic system was not functioning satisfactorily in the raw country. Suggestions from those who had been used to a responsible form of government in the country to the south were not accepted. When agitation flared up again in 1817, from out of the jumble of grievances, a main bone of contention was the Clergy Reserves, and an insistence on better land grants. These large sections of land – Clergy Reserves, land owned by King's College and absentee landlords – separated neighbor from neighbor and prevented establishment of schools, churches, and hospitals, and in many ways placed the settler at a disadvantage.

Time might have smoothed these difficulties to the satisfaction of most, but in the little backwoods village of York, the government had gathered about itself a pseudo-aristocracy which blatantly ignored the needs of the genuine settlers who, by might and brawn, were wrestling with indescribable hardships. This clique, the families of which were intermarried, came to be known as the Family Compact. Where such unlimited wealth was controlled by the few, the few were in a position to favour

themselves and their friends, and it seemed inevitable that abuses crept into the administration. The very air of York was fetid with scandal.

Grievances were many and pressed heavily upon the people. Appeals to the Compact at York were received with insolence. Mass meetings were increasing throughout the province. Petitions were sent to England, and petitions “breathing defiance” began to reach the Governor. The vicious effects of this Family Compact were convulsing the tempers of the settlers and jeopardizing the economic life of the country. There were unexplained delays in obtaining patents. These patents were declared void unless it was specially stated that a specified portion of the land be allotted and appropriated in order to maintain a Protestant Clergy. False patents were issued to favourites of the government which enabled them to obtain large land areas. Taxes were unfair, and the people were not allowed honest representation. Space forbids listing the unjust manipulations of the day, but “that shining thing in the souls of free men could not be crushed”. The three central figures in the controversy were John Beverly Robinson, Revd John Strachan, and William Lyon Mackenzie. During those last hectic days when Rebellion was openly talked, the governor was Sir Francis Bond Head.

David Willson had early incurred the dislike of the Family Compact because he had warned against their machinations. The fact that these Quaker-Davidites did not enter willingly into the prevailing attitude is evident from an entry in the O'Brien Letters written from Shanty Bay [on Lake Simcoe, south of Barrie], November 1831: “Mackenzie is doing all he can to make a riot, but I believe he will not succeed, and the business of the House proceeds so much more effectually since his absence,

that I think his credit must suffer. Besides that, his unwarranted attack on the governor will disgust many of his advocates. Persons in David Willson's Society are much disturbed thereat and enduring great storms on the subject of the propriety of supporting him”. The letter continues, “Edward went to York as he intended – Lucius returned to account for his absence. He returned at last, sick of York and raving at the officials – they had nearly given away some of his land”.

David Willson, the leader of the sect called the Children of Peace, was not content with simply teaching his followers at home. He wished to win new converts to his faith. Periodically, he deemed it proper to make a demonstration in town. Once or twice a year, the prophet's disciples and friends, dressed in their best, mounted white till-cloth covered wagons and solemnly passed down Yonge Street to York. In long procession, the Children of Peace wended their way through some frequented thoroughfare of York to a place previously announced where the prophet would preach. His topic usually was “Public Affairs: their Total Depravity”. In effect, the text of Willson's homilies might be the following mystic paragraph taken from the popular periodical, Patrick Swift's *Almanac of 1831*: The backwoodsman while he lays the axe to the root of the oak in the forests of Canada should never forget that a base basswood is growing in this, his native land, which, if not speedily girdled, will throw its dark shadows over the country and blast his exertions. Look up, reader, and you will see the branches – the Robinson branch, the Powell branch, the Jones branch, the Strachan branch, the Boulton twig, etc. The farmer toils, the merchant toils, the laborer toils, and the Family Compact reaps up the fruit of their exertions.

Into all the points here suggested,

according to Dr Scadding, Mr Willson would enter with great zest. When waxing warm in his discourse, he would sometimes, without interrupting the flow of his words, suddenly throw off his coat and suspend it on a nail in the wall, waving about with perfect freedom, during the remainder of his oration a pair of sturdy arms. His address was divided into sections between which hymns of his own composing were sung by a company of females, dressed in white, sitting on one side, accompanied by a band of musicians stationed on the other. Considering the language the prophet used in his addresses, it is not to be wondered at that the Davidites were strong adherents of William Lyon Mackenzie in the Rebellion of '37.

The *Colonial Advocate* of February 1831 carried an account that the Children of Peace had presented a petition against unfair taxes, signed by George Hollingshead and 49 others. At the same time, David Willson was in controversy with the King's solicitor over the marriage bill, during which the latter used most abusive language against the Children of Peace. At York, in the summer of that year, David Willson had delivered a long discourse, by installments, on the prevailing question of Clergy and Class. In the advance notice of this meeting, "attendants were requested carefully to refrain from strong liquors, as all Sabbath drinking is disrespectful to the worship".

In July 1831, the taxpayers of East Gwillimbury petitioned the township clerk, John Weddel, to call a public meeting to discuss current questions. At this meeting, John Fletcher Sr moved that the meeting endorse the resolution previously passed at York. In *Sketches of Canada*, W.L. Mackenzie has left a description of the enthusiasm displayed in Sharon. "The meeting in East Gwillimbury was followed in the evening by

many demonstrations of joy, and the spirited young men of the volunteer amateur musicians, composing the powerful band of the Militia Regiment, marched up and down the street of Hope [Sharon] playing cheerful and enlivening airs. I had the curiosity to count three or four clarionets, two French horns, two bassoons, beside German and octave flutes, flageolets, etc. They have also violins and violincelloes, and are masters of their delightful art."

In June 1833, another public meeting was held at Newmarket at Hewitt's Inn. Samuel Hughes was elected to the chair, and William Reid Sr was appointed secretary. Both of these were Sharon men. It was moved to secure the return of an independent member from the third riding of the County of York. The committee for East Gwillimbury consisted of Murdock McLeod Sr, Samuel Hughes, Silas Fletcher, Brook Wakefield, Jacob Belfry, and Samuel Harrold. A month later, a meeting was held at the house of John Reid, Inn Keeper at Sharon, to consider the state of the province. Again, Samuel Hughes was chairman and William Reid Sr was secretary.

Titus Willson, an early resident of Sharon, related in a manuscript, that "In the fall of 1837 the political horizon looked rather squally. The Rads were holding frequent meetings in different parts of the country – that is the disaffected part of them and that was by far the largest part of York County. These meetings led to another district meeting in 1837. The account relates, "There was wild excitement, and the Reformers asked that the Assembly might have full control of public revenues and sale of public lands; that Clergy Reserves be secularized; that municipal councils be established; that right to impeach public officials be conceded; that judges and clergymen be excluded from parliament; and that the law of primogeniture be

repealed. To this petition were attached 25,000 signatures. These requests have for so long been a part of every day acceptance that the bitter struggle which brought them about has been forgotten. This was the year of the accession of the young Queen Victoria.

It was apparent that there was no hope for fair play, and on December 7th 1837, an uprising took place at Montgomery's Tavern on Yonge Street. "On the evening of December 6th, a wagon was packed at Sharon with old shooting irons, pikes, shillelaghs, provisions, etc, and in charge of John D. Willson, was sent down Yonge Street. Next morning, as arranged, the most enthusiastic reformers proceeded down towards York by way of Yonge Street and assisted in the encounter at Montgomery's Tavern where they were overtaken.

In a leather-bound Bible which bears evidence of much use, it is recorded in careful penmanship that "on the 25th day of the third month 1837, Ellen Hughes, daughter of Amos and Rebecca Hughes, was married to James Henderson". In the heavy volumes of Dent's *History of the Rebellion* is written the sequel. There, it is stated that James Henderson was shot by fire of Sheriff Jarvis's picket at the trouble at Montgomery's place in 1837. James Henderson was a discharged British soldier, and for some time before the uprising he had worked as a cooper in Davidtown [Sharon]. His widow was still residing in Sharon in 1895, and in a recent interview with her at her home, she informed this author that he left her on Monday morning for Montgomery's. From other sources, information was given that the body was left lying in the road when the rebels took to their heels. One informant, a hale old man of patriarchal age, was the last, except for Lount, to leave the spot. This history

further relates that "the two men who died from their wounds were James Kavanagh and Edward Stiles, both from the Township of East Gwillimbury. Kavanagh's son, John, later became postmaster at Sharon. These men were conveyed to Montgomery's, and later to hospital where they died. George Fletcher, a nephew of Silas Fletcher, was shot in the left foot. The bullet was finally cut out by Judah Lundy who resided at Sharon for many years.

The Canadian militia from this upper part of the county, which made a gesture to assist the government, was generally-speaking not a war-like body of men who knew no more about military manoeuvres than the insurgents under Lount - those angry, frustrated, desperate, and determined farmers and mechanics from East Gwillimbury.

In those troubled times, Titus Willson relates that arms were scarce around Sharon - either in the hands of the rebels or hidden so that the government could not find them. Some 18 or 20 men about the Landing and Sharon joined and formed a company for mutual defence.

On Monday or Tuesday, as they gathered at Bradford, not one-third of them had arms of any kind, and many of those who were armed had nothing better than pitchforks, rusty swords, dilapidated guns, pikes with an occasional bayonet on the end of a pole. These persons, without the least authority of law, set about a disarming process, depriving everyone who refused to join them or whom they chose to suspect of disloyalty, of his arms. Powder was taken from stores, wherever found, without the least ceremony and without payment.

One of the young men who joined the group at Bradford was John Davis who had

come to Canada from Sligo County, Ireland, with his father and mother, about the year 1822. He was then a boy about 19 years of age. His father who had been a soldier in the British Army for forty years, received a grant of 100 acres from the Government of Upper Canada, being lot 9 Concession 13, Township of West Gwillimbury. At this time, because there was no bridge across the Holland River, a raft was used to cross the river.

Samuel Lount was at this at this time doing blacksmith work at Holland Landing, and John was one of his customers. In this way, a friendship grew up that was genuine, although John Davis was a Tory and Samuel Lount a Liberal.

About December 1st 1837 when Samuel Lount started down Yonge Street with his 90 followers from Holland Landing (called the pike men), John Davis was chopping cord wood on his father's Crown grant of land (lot 9 Concession 13, Township of West Gwillimbury). Reports of what the rebels were doing at Toronto were continually being brought up Yonge Street to Bradford. As a result of these reports, his father, James Davis, told him that he had better go and help the Government, or Mackenzie would soon be in control of the Government. John Davis walked to Bradford and two days later was marching down Yonge Street in what is described as, 'Die first Canadian militia'. He was armed with an old musket given to him by his father.

On Thursday, when they finally began to march down Yonge Street from Bradford to Toronto, the men numbered nearly 500, including 150 Indians with painted faces and savage looks. These grotesque-looking militiamen made a prisoner of every man who did not give such an account of himself as they deemed satisfactory. Each prisoner, as he was taken, was tied to a

rope.

At Holland Landing, some pikes which probably belonged to Lount were secured

When they had travelled a short distance down Yonge Street from Holland Landing, some of the band of militia wanted to go and burn the village of Sharon as some of the rebels were supposed to come from Sharon and vicinity. Others, including John Davis objected to this kind of warfare, with the result that Sharon was not burnt nor molested.

Fearing an ambush, these recruits did not venture to march through the oak ridges in the night. When smoke was seen to the south, they were led to the conclusion that Toronto was in flames. Those from Bradford and Holland Landing joined those from Newmarket at McLeod's Inn near the ridges south of Aurora, which they had taken over, as well as several other houses in the vicinity. In a neighbouring store, all kinds of provisions and clothing that could be obtained were unceremoniously seized. At the tavern, there was a regular scramble for food, and cake-baking and bacon-frying were going on upon a wholesale scale. Next morning, several who had no arms and others who were frightened returned to their homes.

When they marched into Toronto, with a string of 50 prisoners, all fastened together, they were about as motley a collection as it would be possible to conceive. Each man wore a pink ribbon on his arm to distinguish him from the rebels. Many joined from compulsion and a large number, including some who had been at Montgomery's, suddenly turned loyalists when they found the fortunes of their insurrection had become desperate. This description by an eye-witness who came down from the north would answer, with a very slight variation, for the militia of any

other part of the province.

Such was the Canadian Militia in 1837 at a time when Sir F. B. Head had sent all the regular troops out of the province to Lower Canada.

On 7th December 1837, as Titus Willson was going up Queen Street towards Queensville [north of Sharon], he met five or six men with rifles whom he knew to be fond of deer hunting. He proceeded about a half mile farther when he met 60 or 70 men struggling along. Some had guns, some swords, and others unarmed. There were also several teams and wagons, loaded but covered. He began to suspect their object and questioned some that he knew, but could get no satisfaction. He met Edgar Stiles opposite his father's house and followed him in where his father gave him a pair of boots and some money.

On his way south, Willson went into the tavern of Hiram Moore on Tory Hill and asked the landlady if she understood the movement. She replied, "Yes, they are going to take Toronto. I knew it several days since. " I asked, "Why did you not tell me?" "I was told not to do so," was the reply. When she told him that, he immediately went across to the Landing, and on his way met Sam Sweasy whom he asked if he understood the movement. He replied, 'Yes, they are going to take Toronto, rob the bank, hang the Governor, and when they come back they will hang you!' He then went on to Holland Landing and saw Captain Loughton and the Playters, his brother Alfred Willson, and two or three others who had heard something about the stir but not the particulars. Some one went to Bradford to spread the news, and Willson went to Newmarket.

From Newmarket, he went home by way of the Selby's and found William and John ready to do all they could. He sent his

son, David, a sergeant, to warn those still at home to turn out. David went to Birchardtown [Mount Albert] settlement to warn men to turn out in defence of the government. He, himself, also went to a number, but could find none but James Evans. Willson was then a lieutenant and his brother, John, a captain in East Gwillimbury.

Mrs Mary Selby Kneeshaw of Bradford has contributed some interesting items about the part played by the Selby family in those days of anxiety. "William Selby was a colonel in the Royal Forces during the Rebellion of 1837. He had to collect all the firearms of the rebels in the neighbourhood. Once when the rebels came to his house where he had some guns and ammunition stored, he was all alone with some the family and a young boy. He hailed the rebels and said, "I have a gun to match every one of yours and hands to fire them." The rebels retreated after a few shots. With the aid of the boy, he loaded the guns and ammunition on to a wagon and drove all night to the garrison at Muddy York. William Selby's portrait hangs in Sharon Temple.

Insofar as can be found, the names of those from East Gwillimbury who were on the Government side were: Henry Fry, William and John Selby, David T. Willson, George Sullinger, Titus Willson. They were badly armed with a few guns, a walking stick, an umbrella, a butcher's cleaver, a bill hook, and a tremendous butcher knife.

The break being quelled, the men from the north returned to their homes under cover of darkness. On December 7th, 1837, Sir Francis Bond Head issued a Proclamation offering a reward of £500 for the apprehension of David Gibson, Samuel Lount, Jesse Lloyd, or Silas Fletcher. Samuel Lount had good reason to keep out of the

way of the Government militia.

Titus Willson was sent with despatches to Colonel Carthew at Newmarket, and that night he went with a strong party to Sharon where they captured some 30 or 40 of those who were implicated in the Rebellion. The Sharon rebels were back home only two or three days when they were arrested and confined as prisoners in the building on Botsford Street, Newmarket, (used in 1887 as a club room by the bicyclists). This was on the 12th of December, and they were kept in the old building which was then the Old Kirk, for three days, subsisting on bread and water. For three or four days Willson was at Newmarket attending to the guards for a number of prisoners. On the morning of the 15th December, 43 of them were fastened to a long rope and walked to York in command of Moses Terry on horseback, halting overnight in a barn. Three prisoners were taken in a wagon: Joel Lloyd, a cripple, Joseph Brammer, boots frozen to his feet during the melee at Montgomery's, and George Fletcher, wounded in the ankle at the same place.

York was in a state of great excitement. Prisoners from York North were kept for three weeks in the market building. They later were transferred to the gaol, 53 persons obliged to occupy one small room. William Reid and John Montgomery were the first to kick the boards from the windows in protest of the unsanitary conditions. John Reid developed smallpox and was removed to hospital. The weary hours in gaol were frequently shortened by the music of Joseph Brammer's clarinet and Hugh D. Willson's violin, both members of the Sharon band.

The charges for which they were arrested were: "Being moved and seduced by the instigation of the devil as false traitors against our Sovereign Lady, the

Queen, did unlawfully, maliciously, and traitorously assemble to the number of 500 persons, armed and arrayed in a war-like manner, attempt and endeavor, by force of arms, to raise insurrection and rebellion to subvert and destroy the Constitution of this Province, contrary to the duty of their allegiance and against the peace of our Lady, the Queen, her Crown and Dignity.

Meanwhile, the trials continued. Willson Reid was transferred to Kingston, but escaped. Jacob Lundy took part in the skirmish on Yonge Street, also in the bush fight on December 10th. He was taken prisoner at Gallow's Hill ambush, but was relieved by the Lieutenant-Governor in hope that he would turn state witness. Alexander McLeod was sentenced to banishment for life to Van Dieman's Land [Australia], but died en route. Joseph Brammer was the only prisoner to bring away from the gaol the document, Bill of Indictment. When the grand jury brought in a true bill against him, Brammer said: "Your Lordship, I am an Englishman. I have a heart as true and loyal to the Queen and to Britain as any British subject in the country, but if you mean disloyal to the Family Compact and the men who are robbing the country, I am guilty!". He was never tried.

David Willson was not at the Yonge Street trouble; yet, he and his sons, Hugh D. Willson and John D. Willson, were arrested and taken from their homes. Later, the father was released, but the two sons were confined for five months in York jail. Hugh D. was then taken to Kingston and endured seven months of imprisonment.

Those from Sharon who actively opposed the Compact insofar as found, were: John Reid, William Reid, Willson Reid, Alexander Reid, Joseph Brammer, John Brammer, Ebenezer Doan, Charles Doan, Jesse Doan, Jonathan Doan, Hugh

D. Willson, Hohn D. Willson, David Willson, John Graham, Jeremiah Graham, William Graham, Adam Graham, Judah Lundy, Jacob Lundy, Reuben Lundy, Edgar Stiles, John Kavanagh, George Fletcher, Alexander McLeod, Joel Lloyd, Peter Rowen, Richard Graham, Robert Moore, George Y. Moore; these two latter were from Queensville.

There is hardly an old family living in Sharon district a century later that was not represented in the patriot forces. Peter Rowen, like Samuel Lount, the blacksmith of Holland Landing who was executed for his share in the Rebellion, used his smithy to turn out arms for the rebel forces. He took part in what little fighting there was and was seized by the Loyalist army. When his son was born, the father was languishing in the jail at Toronto. But the authorities were unable to prove anything against him; so, after a long confinement, he was released.

Lindsey's *Life and Times of William Lyon Mackenzie* tells of the part taken by Samuel Lount in the Rebellion of 1837, but little is recorded or written by Lindsey of the attempts made by Samuel Lount to keep out of the clutches of the Government and save himself from being executed after that fateful day at Montgomery's Tavern.

When they arrived at Toronto, the Rebellion was over, and Lount and several others were being held prisoners in the old Toronto jail (where the Toronto Street Railway offices stood in 1922). John Davis was placed as one of the guards of these prisoners, and he was sorry for the position he found his friend Samuel Lount in. One night when he was on guard, John Davis fell asleep (on purpose) and Lount escaped. Lount's horse had been brought to Toronto by friends and hidden near the Don River. Lount got the horse and made his way back

up the country and hid in the swamp near where John Davis had been cutting cordwood. Davis was soon discharged and sent home and started again at his wood-chopping job, and for about six weeks kept Lount supplied with food. He had a third task, as his father, James Davis, being a loyalist, would have given Lount's hiding place away had he know where he was hiding. One of John's methods of getting food to Lount was taking more lunch for dinner than he could eat when going to chop wood.

One day, his father grew suspicious and followed John to where he was chopping wood. Lount got none of the dinner that day. John kept on chopping until when it began to get dark, he put his axe on his shoulder and started for home. His father followed but had not gone far when he lost John, or John lost his father purposely. John then went back to the swamp and told Lount what had happened. Lount then wanted to leave his hiding-place and try to get to the United States, as others of his friends had managed to do. That night, Davis took Lount in a north-easterly direction through swamp and timber to one of Lount's friends at a place about 3½ miles north-east from where Cookstown now stands. Lount thought that he could make his way by himself from here; so, Davis bid him good-bye with his well-wishes. John went back home and received a 'calling-down' from his father.

A short time afterwards, Lount tried to go farther on his way towards the United States. He hired an Indian of a tribe who were then living on Snake Island in Lake Simcoe, and of whom Jim Snake was chief. For a sum of money, this Indian was to have taken Lount in a south-easterly direction along the shore of Lake Simcoe. Instead of doing this, the Indian showed his meanness and treachery by taking Lount

to the Government military camp near the mouth of the Holland River where he was again captured.

Titus Willson had been ordered to go to where Collingwood now stands to look for Lount who was said to be there at a lonely house of one John Braisier. Mr Eli Beaman was to go with him. They started and got as far as Bradford when a man was sent after them with the report that Lount had been captured and taken to Toronto. In the spring of 1838, executions for high treason commenced in Canada. On the 12th of April 1838, Samuel Lount and Peter Matthews, the first of the victims, were executed at Toronto

There is reason to believe that Lount could have purchased his life by putting the Government in possession of evidence that might have tended to place others in the position he occupied, but he resolutely refused to accept it on such terms.

There was none so sorry and bitter about this execution than John Davis. John Davis died 5th March 1903 at the age of 101 years and was buried at Coulson's Cemetery, a few miles north of Bradford. Many times during his late years, he would give as his opinion that if Sam Lount had stayed in hiding as Jesse Lloyd and others had done, he would not have been executed. And Samuel Lount died true to his friends, and would not tell on those who had helped him to keep out of the hands of the Government, even though he might have saved his life by so doing.

Relics or keepsakes of those times of 1837 are still in possession of the Davis family, being a swivel link for a logging chain made by Samuel Lount when he was blacksmithing at Holland Landing, and an old rifle which was given to John Davis by Sir Francis Bond Head when he arrived at Toronto after marching from Bradford to defeat William Lyon Mackenzie. William H.

Davis, 244 Margueretta Street, Toronto, is a son of the fine old pioneer whose portrait drawn by Owen Staples is from a much-faded photograph which is the only existing portrait of the pioneer.

In 1903 there was erected in the Necropolis Cemetery, Toronto, by the friends and sympathizers of Samuel Lount and Peter Matthews, a gray granite monument, surmounted by a broken column, on which is inscribed the following:

Samuel Lount was the eldest son of the late Gabriel Lount, an Englishman who emigrated to Pennsylvania in the middle of the eighteenth century, and of Philadelphia Hughes, his wife, a Quakeress. He emigrated to Upper Canada and settled near Newmarket in the County of York in 1811. In 1834, he represented the County of Simcoe in the Upper Canada Legislature and served two years. In 1836, he became a candidate again and was defeated by corrupt practices used by his political opponents. A petition of eight thousand people asked for a reprieve which was refused. He lived a patriot and died for popular rights. He was executed on 12th April 1838.

Washed by Lake Ontario on the south and by Lake Simcoe on the north, lies the fruitful land which could rightly be called the Runnymede of Canada, and the extraordinary township of East Gwillimbury is rich in unique historic evidence of the birth of Canada's Magna Charta, that fundamental constitution which guarantees the rights and privileges of the present day; yet, no tangible

memorial exists around Sharon or Holland Landing to those rugged souls, patriot or rebel, who were largely the means of bringing it about.

Still extant is a letter written at Hope [Sharon], 20th January 1839, by Samuel Hughes to his sister: “. . . The political state of the country seems very uncertain, and no one knows how to realize the worth of either his liberty or property, . . . , a commissioner from Lord Durham was in our village last night and speaks of a speedy settlement of the matter”. An American tourist, visiting York County in 1900, returned some pertinent remarks on the indifference displayed by Canadians in the magnificent heritage which is part and parcel of the community.

Sources:

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