

# NEWCASTLE VILLAGE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Newsletter \*\* June - July 1997

**The Wilmot Creek & the Newcastle Marsh have been recognized as regionally significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest.**

**- from THE WILMOT CREEK NATURE RESERVE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN**

"After remaining a few days at York, the family proceeded to take possession of a farm my Grandfather purchased in the Township of Clarke about 30 miles below York. They traveled in open bateaux, when night came on pitching a tent on the shore of Lake Ontario. The journey generally occupied two days, sometimes much longer. They found on the land a small log hut but with a bark roof and a chimney made of sticks and clay. The chinks between the logs stuffed with moss, and only a ladder to the loft above, and only ten acres cleared. To this home my Grandfather brought his 4 daughters and 3 sons. The oldest son, Dr Baldwin, was at that time about 24, and the youngest, "John" about 12 years. My mother, the youngest of the family, was only 7, and my three Aunts young women.

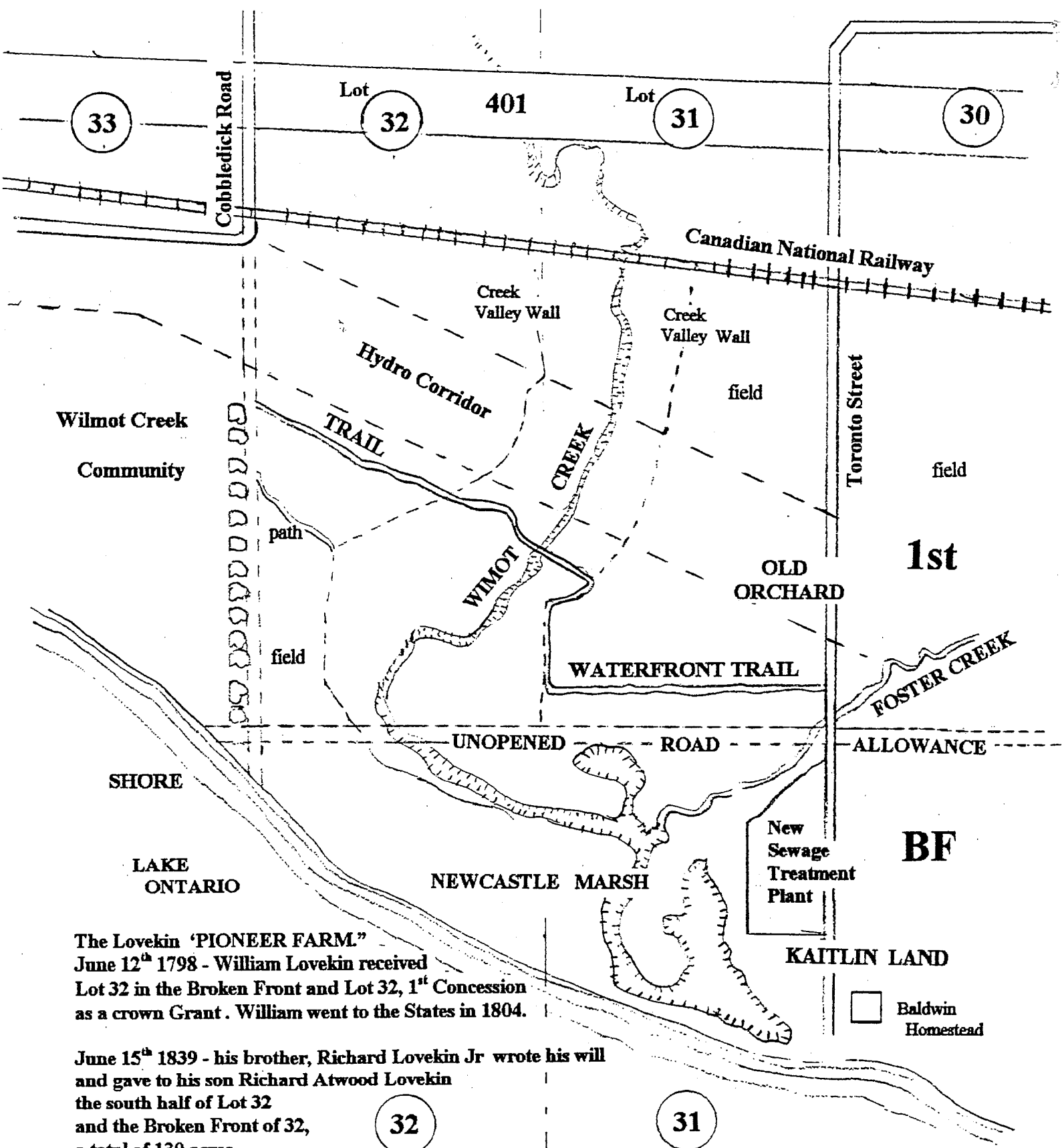
"From perfect want of experience and ignorance of the country, my Grandfather had brought his family into the wilderness without properly arranging for their comfort - consequently the winter found them miserable with an unfinished log hut - no stove, only a great open fireplace with a blazing log heap on it - and one corner of the room boarded off for the 4 sisters, where they had to sleep in beds laid on the floor."



The above is from a typewritten document entitled HISTORY OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE BALDWIN FAMILY IN CANADA A.D.1798 - sent to Lawrence Baldwin, of Toronto, from his "Aunt Bessie."

Other information in this Newsletter is from THE TOWNSHIPS OF DARLINGTON AND CLARKE by JOHN SQUAIR -

also VILLAGE OF NEWCASTLE ASSESSMENT ROLLS, the TREMAINE MAP OF DURHAM COUNTY of 1861 and the HBELTON plan of CLARKE TWP of 1878.



The Lovekin 'PIONEER FARM.'  
 June 12<sup>th</sup> 1798 - William Lovekin received  
 Lot 32 in the Broken Front and Lot 32, 1<sup>st</sup> Concession  
 as a crown Grant. William went to the States in 1804.

June 15<sup>th</sup> 1839 - his brother, Richard Lovekin Jr wrote his will  
 and gave to his son Richard Atwood Lovekin  
 the south half of Lot 32  
 and the Broken Front of 32,  
 a total of 130 acres.

**WILMOT CREEK  
 NATURE RESERVE**

Robert Baldwin received  
 ownership - or a lease -  
 on Lot 31 Broken Front and  
 Lot 31 1<sup>st</sup> Concession  
 c.1802-1816

200 acres  
 Lots 29, 30, 31  
 Broken Front Concession  
 inherited by W.W.Baldwin  
 April 11 1816

## ROBERT BALDWIN (1741-1816)

The "Grandfather" referred to by "Aunt Bessie" was Robert Baldwin, of Summer Hill, Ireland, who sailed with his family from Cork in 1798 - heading for America. This was the family that settled beside Wilmot Creek - on Kaitland land - Lot 30, Broken Front Concession - near the waters of Lake Ontario. Robert Baldwin knew Richard Lovekin Sr who had already taken up lands in Durham Co., and when the family arrived, the Lovekins invited the Baldwins to visit them in Clarke Twp. As a result, Robert Baldwin bought 1000 acres - broken front Lots 29, 30 and 31, at \$1 per acre - adjoining the Lovekin property - beside a small creek that was first known at Baldwin Creek - but later became Wilmot Creek.

<THE BALDWINS & THE GREAT EXPERIMENT by R.M. & J. Baldwin, LONGMANS>

The oldest son was William Warren Baldwin (1775-1844) who is credited with being the first colonial person to suggest Representative Government - in a letter to the Duke of Wellington. That was after the battle of Waterloo!

## A STUDY AND A PLAN

The Municipality of Clarington has hired consultants to study the Wilmot Wetland Area and to prepare a conceptual plan, for community use - and protection - of the Creek and Marsh Region. As a result, the consultants and the Municipality have invited a number of community groups to meet, consider, and discuss the future needs and possibilities of the -

## THE WILMOT CREEK NATURE RESERVE.

On the opposite page is a plan of the Nature Reserve. The boundaries are Cobbledick Road on the west, Toronto Street on the east, the railway to the north and Lake Ontario on the south.

The Reserve is situated on Clarke Township lots 32 and 31. Note the "unopened road allowance." This is a continuation of Metcalfe Street - or Base Line Road. The land above the "allowance" is the "First Concession," the land below - between the allowance and the lake - is the "Broken Front Concession."

The Waterfront Trail runs through the Wetland from Cobbledick Road to Toronto Street; a small bridge crosses Wilmot Creek and Foster Creek is nearby. There are paths made by fishermen that run through the area. Wilmot Creek is a "meandering stream" - it flows under highway 401, then under the railroad tracks; the dotted line on either side indicates the edge of the "creek valley." The stream twists and turns, is joined by Foster Creek, flows into "Newcastle Marsh." - crosses a shale beach - and slips into Lake Ontario.

There is a new sewage treatment plant on the south end of Toronto Street - the Newcastle Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP for short) - <or how about "PP Control">. The plant is owned and operated by the Region of Durham. Below it - to the south - is a small piece of land owned by the Kaitland Group. This small field may be made into a storm water pond. For now it is an "Ex-Corn Field With Weeds" - a good holding situation. On its own, without much assistance from anyone other than mother nature, it will be joined to the wetland. -



## CONSIDER A VISIT TO OUR NATURE RESERVE AREA

To enter the area by way of Cobbledick Road, turn off highway no.2 just east of 35/115. The old farm on the left belonged to the Cobbledick family. Drive towards Lake Ontario and park where the fishermen park at the end of the road and walk towards the lake along a "country lane." To your right - to the west - are the houses of the Wilmot Creek Community.

## A VISIT TO THE WILMOT NATURE RESERVE AREA IN JUNE, 1997

Our leaders were - Norm DeFraeye, environmental planner, Rob Nisbet, biologist - both from Bird & Hale Ltd., - Caroline Marshall and Carolyn Woodland - consultants from Hough Woodland Naylor Dance Limited. In our party were Anne Dreslinski, Clarington Councillor - David Crome, Janice Szwarc & Cynthia Strike from the Clarington Planning Department - Frank Ierfino from Clarington Public Works and Thom Sloley from Region of Durham Works. Warren Coulter represented the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority, Esther Allin, from Durham Field Naturalists was with us as well as Roy Forrester, a bird watcher from Orono - Bill Newby represented Wilmot Creek Homeowners Association, Roger Howard, The Rice Capital Group, Chris Vanderreest, Ontario Hydro - and Herb Taylor represented the Bond Head Community Association - and put in a word now and again for the Newcastle Village & District Historical Society. (Tim Rance from MNR and Dave Lawson from the Bowmanville Creel Anglers Association were unable to Attend.) This group was to help the consultants form a plan - "a vision" - for the Nature Reserve.

## WE WALK TOWARDS THE LAKE

We walked down the lane at the end of Cobble Dick Road, & then angled off on a path through the tall grass to our left. We were on the edge of the Creek valley - with a field on our right separated us from the Wilmot Creek Community. Someone alerted us - we all turned. We could just see head & shoulders - a fox was watching us from the far side of the field. This field on our right had seen it's last crop. Corn and soybeans have been grown here but the wooded parts of the wetland area will spread and take over.

The land on our left - Lot 32 of the Reserve - was owned by William Lovekin, youngest son of Richard Lovekin Sr. William went off to the States in 1804 and his brother Richard Jr (1770-1840) & wife Theodosia Bates (c.1786-1850) acquired the land and they were owners when Richard died. A census taken in 1848 tells us that 60 acres of this land was "improved," 10 was in pasture, and 7 acres were "unfit."

The large trees are oak, basswood and maple. The oak is a southern Ontario tree - generally found in mixed stands with basswood, white ash, black cherry and the various hickories. The wood of the white oak was preferred over the red oak by early settlers, for making staves, for barrels that were to hold liquids. The basswood is commonly found with other hardwoods and often on the banks of a stream. Because of its lack of smell or taste basswood was often used to make food containers.

"High ground" is near the lake and not behind us. The land here drains towards the wetland - not to the lake. Some parts of the woods beside the creek are "multi-cultural." There are visitors that are not indigenous - white pine, Norway spruce and black locust.

## THE BEACH

We work our way down a very picturesque path and find ourselves on a shingle beach. We are told that the beach was once "open to the lake," but now it is "barrier beach." Wilmot Creek has a slight challenge in entering Lake Ontario. "The beach is durable - not sensitive," but some of the plant life is sensitive - the sedum for example. So there are plants that may disappear if there are large numbers of visitors to the wetlands. We move along the edge of the lake to the west and find a wall of earth towering over us. It is glacial till - clay and sand - and spots on the wall ("lenses") are identified as about 15,000 years old. The wall has a story to tell - if one knows the language.

Another great misery was being obliged to receive every passer up and down who wished to stay...there was no sort of Inn...it was not quite so agreeable to have 15 or 20 boatmen come and take possession of your kitchen, and perhaps be stormbound and have to remain several days... <from "Aunt Bessie.">

## ON A SUNDAY IN JUNE 1997

### WE ENTER THE WILMOT CREEK RESERVE FROM MILL STREET

**FOSTER CREEK** - Turn off Mill Street, onto Toronto Street just south of highway 401, and head west. Near Mill Street there is a dip in the road - and if you look left and right, through the dense growth, you can get a glimpse of Foster Creek as it twists through Foster Creek Ravine.

**THE GRAND TRUNK & THE COMMERCIAL HOTEL** - Travel on and there are several small industrial buildings on the right hand side of the road. First MCI - Motor Coach Industries - where bus parts are manufactured. Next Avpex International, maker of the small plastic windows found in envelopes. Opposite Avpex - a dirt track entrance into tall grass - and the remains of several old structures that surrounded the Grand Trunk Railway Station. On the Avpex side of the road was the Newcastle Commercial Hotel

**In 1856 - Sections of the railway east of Newcastle were opened earlier, but on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October 1856, the first train - from Montreal to Toronto - steamed through Clarke Township. Daniel Massey was an invited guest on that train. Less than a month later the great Newcastle pioneer had died.**

**STEEN** - The land south of the railway yard was once owned by Robert Steen (1801-1885) and his wife Martha McNaull (1813-1897), both of county Tyrone, Ireland. He was a carpenter, also a farmer - and they had a son John. In our collection in the Newcastle Community Hall we have a beautiful large trout in a wooden case - 3 lbs 13 oz - caught by William Little Sr, "*taken in Kendal waters, spring 1892 - John Steen, Taxidermist, Newcastle, Ontario - Scientifically Stuffed at Moderate Prices.*"

**GROSE** - Move along Toronto Street to Newcastle Storage. In 1878 land on both sides of the tracks belonged to the Grose family. On Jan 16 1871 the village Council granted Richard & William Grose the right to take 2000 cords of wood through the Village Toll-gate for only \$50 per year. Richard Grose not only fed beech and maple to Grand Trunk engines - he - as innkeeper - fed potatoes and other victuals to guests at the Railroad Hotel. He died in March of 1877 and is buried in St George's cemetery. His wife Rebecca (died 1903) lived to age 91. Both were natives of Cornwall, England.

**BALDWIN - ARNOTT** - Follow Toronto Street - turn left - and Wilmot Creek Nature Reserve is on our right. This half of the Reserve was first owned by Robert Baldwin (1741-1816). He was talked into moving to York in December 1810, by son William Warren - and a Scot, Daniel Arnott, bought the land. Daniel was from Argyle in the northwest of Scotland - Lock Awe - and the wild and gloomy valley of Glencoe where the Macdonalds massacred the Campbells. His wife was Catharine, also from Argyle, and they had a son Andrew who died on Sept 15<sup>th</sup> 1831. Little Andrew was only 4 years and 2 months old - and he was buried on the other side of Graham Creek in Bond Head Cemetery. Daniel had 60 acres cleared in 1860 - 40 in crops and a 20 acre pasture. He grew spring wheat, oats, peas (4 acres - 60 bushels), and potatoes (200 bushels of potatoes - more than almost anyone else in the community - more potatoes for the Railroad Hotel).

**SELBY** - Half way down Toronto Street, the Selby house is on the left. Newt Selby lived here - and his father - and the Selby's still farm nearby fields. In 1878 this land belonged to E. Grose.

**PEARCE** - The Pearce family came to Canada in 1840. They lived first in Darlington Twp - but in 1877 William Pearce and Caroline Jane Baker married and moved to Lot 30 beside the lake. They lived in an old frame house - there is a picture of it in PICTURE THE WAY WE WERE - probably built by the Baldwins. Four years later William had built a new brick home which is thought to have been to the north of the original frame building. This brick house is the one that was torn down just a few years ago by - whom? We assume it was the owners of Lot 30.

**FENNELL** - Scott & Cecil Fennell called this house "WINDSWEEP FARMS." The Fennells lived here, and added extensions made from brick that came from the old Bank of Montreal in Bowmanville. The ruins can be seen today - just east of Toronto Street, close to Lake Ontario.

## SUNDAY IN JUNE 1997 - CONTINUED

Cars have followed a trail below the new sewage control plant and are parked very close to the beach. Two zodiac boats float on the lake near the beach and a few young men chat - sitting in the brilliant sunshine bobbing up and down on gentle waves. Their wives and one or two children swim in the shallow water of the marsh. Two swans drift with the current on Newcastle Marsh - without heads - their long necks reaching for food on the creek bottom. Several fishermen - without shirts - stand in the tall reeds in the middle of the marsh and their lines glisten as they fly through the air.

A young fisherman from Orono - in his early 30's, with lures pinned to his fishing vest - arrives on the beach, and talks about the fish in Wilmot Creek. "*Rainbows in the spring - some small mouth bass - the marsh is full of pickerel, big ones - some weighing 15 pounds*" How do they taste? He doesn't know - he releases all the fish that he catches.

The swans float on the open water between the beds of rushes. A redwing blackbird hangs onto a cattail and shouts at everyone present. On the horizon - out on the lake - there are 8 sailboats. Lake Ontario is very blue and the sun is very bright - and warm - on this very pleasant Sunday - in June 1997 - on the beach at THE WILMOT CREEK NATURE RESERVE.

### WILMOT CREEK

In 1816 Samuel Street Wilmot (1773-1856) moved from Toronto to Clarke Township and bought 400 acres from John Hartwell. He built a house on Lot 32, 2<sup>nd</sup> Concession that he called "Belmont" - a copy of the family home in New Brunswick.

The house stood beside a creek which was named after the family - "**WILMOT CREEK**".

In 1847 Samuel Street Wilmot gave land to the Rev T.S. Kennedy (died c.1863) , Rector of the English Church, of Darlington and Clarke - that became St George's Cemetery.

## COMING EVENTS

### ANNUAL SOCIETY POT LUCK PICNIC

**Sunday , July 27<sup>TH</sup> at 2:00 pm at BETTY & RON LOCKE'S**

We are planning a Society Picnic, to take place at Betty & Ron & Locke's, on highway no.2, including a study tour of St George's Cemetery.

Bring main course food or desert - anything that strikes your fancy - and Betty and Ron will supply the drinks. We will do our tour first, and eat afterwards.

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NEWCASTLE VILLAGE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Annual Membership: SINGLE \$8.00; FAMILY \$12.00