

Copied from a write-up I found recently.

My Mother - Annie Sampson Bray Harbor had this among her treasures

THE PORT HOPE PICTORIAL,

July 25, 1956

SMITH'S CREEK MARCH 1803
(Port Hope 153 Years Ago)

By W.M.G.

It is generally known that the history of Port Hope goes back for many years but brief and meagre is the information we have of those early days. Too little is known of that stalwart race of pioneers who with their women and sober eyed children pushed westward the frontier of civilization.

The following is in brief the story of one of Port Hope's earliest citizens, Electra Newcombe Johnson, who married Timothy C. Haskill. Mrs. Haskill told the story to a group of friends on her 100th birthday and it was "committed to paper" by Mr. J. Hooper. The story follows.

"My maiden name was Electra Newcombe Johnson. I was born in Dorset, Vermont, U. S. on January 1, 1792 and came to Smith's Creek, now called Port Hope, March 1803. I was then between eleven and twelve years of age"

"I well remember the year 1800, we then lived near Johnsbury, N. Y. I was in my ninth year. We had a dance at our house at which an old veteran of the 1776 War of Independence played the Fife for the dance. One of the party fired his pistol up the chimney, bringing down the soot."

"We came here by sleighs touching at Wolfe Island, thence to Kingston and Belleville where we spent one winter; thence to Port Hope."

"There were only five families living here at that time including our. The others were Mr. Heywoods, Mr. Ward Sr., Peter Smith and Myndert Harris. At a party given that Christmas Eve we numbered only seven, all the then available white inhabitants of this place."

"There was one house up on the hill and Indian wigwams lined the river banks."

There were then in this neighborhood wolves, bears, deer and fish in great abundance. Have seen Indian War Dances and by compulsion have danced with the squaws in their dances to a chant, popular with the aborigines of that time." The Indians sold us clothes of deerskin, which we made over for our own use."

"The first Meeting House I went to was St. Marks during the 1830s. A small sized man preached - have forgotten his name. What is now Augusta Street was the first road through the village. My father was 89 years old when he died."

"We went to our farm in 1819, near Mr. Moore Fanning's farm. My children were two sons and one daughter. One son died recently at Mariposa Harvey, my only living son is in Michigan U.S.A. and is 71 years of age. My daughter, widow of the late John Doney, lives with me and is 65 years of age. My husband, Timothy C. Haskill died November 24, 1867 aged 80 year. He was four years my senior and the best of husbands. I helped him cut down trees, rolling them in heaps and gathering brush to help burn them. We had a very primitive shanty to live in at first. Have cooked as many as 80 pies in one day, to have them all cleared by visitors before night."

Thus ends Mrs. Haskill's own story, as told to those who assembled at her home on Charles Street. Mr. Hooper mentions that among those present were Mayor Burnham. Short speeches were given, songs sung and refreshments served. He also mentioned that it was "one of the most interesting events that it had ever been my privilege to record" It was also mentioned that Mrs. Haskill's hearing was good, her memory clear, her vision very much impaired but not entirely gone.

Justin Johnson, a brother of Mrs. Haskill lived to the age of 92.

The following lines are from a poem that was recited by Mrs. Haskill at her birthday party.

A HUNDRED YEARS TO COME

Who'll press for gold this crowded street
A Hundred Years to come?
Who'll trod these streets with willing feet
A Hundred years to come?
Other men our lands will till and others
then our streets will fill
A Hundred Years to come.



CV image courtesy of Chris Keeler

E. Hamble
— QUEEN STREET, ————— PORT HOPE.