

LEE DICKSON GENEALOGY: Taking a peek into a family's 1787 land settlement in Upper Canada

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Thomas Mathews, U.E., a Butler's Ranger - www.insidetoronto.com/news-story/5656365-lee-dickson-genealogy-upper-canada-lands-records-help-trace-a-butler-s-ranger-from-the-american-rev/ - settled his small family in Upper Canada ca. 1787. Allowed privileges for his adherence to the unity of the Empire during the American Revolution, it is through the land records that glimpses of his life are revealed.

Consulting the Ontario Archives Land Records Index on microfiche is an important first step when searching for transactions prior to patent and a good introduction to the archives' vast holdings of land records. The index can be accessed at a number of repositories across Canada.

The earliest reference to Thomas is found here is in the form of an Assignment Register. Thomas received a grant by means of a Land Board Certificate: 200 acres in Clinton Township, Concession 3, Lots 17 and 18. The certificate was then found in the township papers.

The Township Papers (Archives of Ontario, RG 1-58) is a wonderful collection of miscellaneous records organized by Township, Concession and Lot. Anything from deeds to location and settlement duty certificates, grants, correspondence, wills and so on can be found here.

Thomas' certificate was given at Newark in 1795 and indicates he was originally assigned the land in 1791. A further addition is found attached to the certificate:

"An application having been made by Thomas Mathews for leave to sell the within Lotts to Nath. Mabie & Z. Mabie they give this consent to this Transfer - Newark, Jany 2nd, 1793, (signed by the Land Board.)"

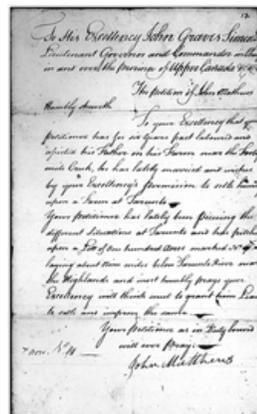
In September 1793, Thomas's son, John Mathews, petitioned the Executive Council for land. John describes, having for "six years past laboured and assisted his Father on his Farm near the Forty mile Creek (Grimsby Township), he has lately married and wishes by your Excellency's permission to settle himself upon a Farm at Tarunto...and has pitched upon a Lott of one hundred Acres marked No. X laying about Nine miles below Tarunto River near the Highlands..."

French Traders named the Humber River "Toronto" in the early 1700s and referred to the greater area near Lake Ontario as Toronto: it was native Mississauga land. By 1787, the British concluded the Toronto Purchase. A much contested land deal, it was not until 1805 a formal deed of surrender was signed.

Sir John Graves Simcoe established the settlement of York here in 1793, considering it a more desirable location than the existent capital of Newark in the Niagara District. Less vulnerable to attack by Americans, it became the capital of Upper Canada in 1796.

A must read is the Archives of Ontario Research Guide 215 - From Grant to Patent: A Guide to Early Land Settlement Records, ca.1790 to ca.1850: www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/access/research_guides.aspx

Toronto Artist Lee Dickson has been a practicing artist since the '70s. She is also a professional general and visual records researcher and a genealogical specialist in Ontario Land Records and the United Empire Loyalists. She can be contacted at www.leedickson.ca and research@leedickson.ca



"John Mathews Upper Canada Land Petition M1/12", RG 1, L3, volume 327, 1793 (Library and Archives Canada/ microfilm C-2190)



"Thomas Mathew's Lot Certificate", Lots 17 & 18, Con 3, Clinton Twp from the Township Papers, RG 1-58, p165 [Formerly RG 1 C-IV] (Archives of Ontario/microfilm MS 658 reel 84)