

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Settlement in Peterborough and surrounding area

Adam Scott was one of the first white men to settle in the Peterborough area when he set up a mill, under contract of Charles Fothergill near the headwater of the Otonabee River. This site became known as Scott's Plains. The Scott family, along with one or two workmen at the mill, lived alone in the area for almost five years. Two notable incidents are connected with Adam Scott; the first is the birth of Peterborough's first citizen, Scott's daughter Jeannette, in 1820. The second incident followed the arrival of Peter Robinson's 2,024 Irish settlers in 1825, when Scott's wife became the first person to die in the settlement, having contracted fever from the newly arrived settlers.

The first large scale immigration to Peterborough County was conducted by Peter Robinson, brother of the then Attorney-General John Beverly Robinson. The British government sponsored a group of immigrants, 415 families, or about 2 000 people from Ireland to settle in the Peterborough area or Scott's Plains as it was known then. Before the winter of 1825 nearly all of the settlers were settled on land in the area surrounding Peterborough. Each family setting off for their new home received a cow, axes, an auger, a handsaw, a hammer, 100 nails, two gimlets, three hoes, a kettle, a fry-pan, an iron pot, three bushels of seed potatoes and one pack of seed corn. One pound of pork and one pound of flour per day were given to all settlers over the age of 14 for the next 18 months with those between 5 and 14 receiving half ration and those under 5 receiving quarter rations. In addition, a small clearing was made for the settlers on their grants and a log cabin was constructed at a cost of \$10.

Almost overnight Peterborough was transformed from a mill-site location to a service and market centre. Log buildings near the present site of Charlotte and Water Street were constructed to service the administration and the storehouses for the Peter Robinson settlers. By 1827 there were over twenty buildings including a school, stores and a church.



Early Map of Peterborough 1846 by Sandford Fleming.