

"Toronto Carrying Place"

The Toronto Carrying Place which dates from 1615 to 1793 had other names such as Toronto Portage or the Humber Holland Trail. It was the ancient Indian Trail which followed the windings of the Humber River from its mouth at Lake Ontario up to the Holland River where canoes could be launched on the west branch of the Holland River to paddle their way to Lake Simcoe. This 28 mile forest pathway was called To'ron'to by the Hurons and was their best overland short cut between the waters of the lower and upper lakes.

The first European to travel the route was Brule, one of Champ-lains exploration party. The year was 1615 and he was the first white man on the present site of Toronto. The Humber River was used hardly at all in the passage between the lakes. Indian and white traders alike canoed up it only to just north of present day Bloor Street, at Riverside Drive, almost straight north up the east side of the Humber River following the routes approximately of present day Scarlett Road and Main Street, Weston; and finally the 6th Concession of Vaughan and King Townships. North of Weston the trail turned slightly away from the river for a distance, but towards Woodbridge it followed the course of the river swinging to the east without crossing the river.

About a mile below Purpleville which is on the 7th Concession Vaughan a small stream falls into the Humber and where the trail crossed the stream is where Governor Simcoe once camped. From this spot the trail ran north to the fiord at the east branch of the Humber River close to the spot where the Mill Road crosses it today, at the former site of the little village of King Creek. Then it swings north east over the W. C. Harris farm property to the King Sideroad in the area of the gravel pits just west of the 7th Concession. It followed the high ground west of the 7th Concession and crossed the concession about one mile north of the King Sideroad. The trail approached the high land in King which La Salle spoke of as "mountains."

Only in the steep wooded hills of King Township is the country still anything like it was in the day of Simcoe. Any man travelling the route with a canoe on his back and an average of 1200 pounds of supplies in the canoe, had reason to call the hills "mountains".

East of the 7th Concession the trail followed the west side of the creek draining Hackett's Lake on the Strathy property and across the 6th Concession to the former Crawford Farm.

In this general area the Indians had a village. Here the trail left the water completely as the height of land was reached at 1100 to 1150 feet above sea level. The trail continued to run north about halfway between Highway 400 and Concession #6, cutting the Lloyd-town Road near the former "Country Kitchen".

The trail stayed east of the 6th Concession until about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile south of Davis Drive or Highway #9, here it may still be possible to find the old trail in the woods of Gordon Cook's farm, Lot 34 Concession #6 (rear Concession 5). From here it swung west and crossed into the marsh.

(con't.)

With drainage canals and cultivation no signs remain between Davis Drive and the end of the trail at Concession 3 in West Guillimbury, but at this point on the property of George and Viola MacMillan is a bare knoll that has been identified conclusively as the place where Simcoe and his party camped September 28, 1793 on his trip over the route. Directly below is the Holland River. From here they canoed down the Schomberg and later the Holland River to Lake Simcoe.

The trail was doomed after the new governor John Graves Simcoe travelled it. He ordered construction of Yonge street to replace it and named it for Sir George Yonge, Secretary of State for was in England.

The Jesuits carried Christianity to the Indians over this trail; and it was used by La Salle at least 3 times, also Duluth and Frobenisher travelled the route in 1684.

West, East and North Guillimbury townships were named for Mrs. Simcoe whose maiden name was Posthuma Gwillim. The Holland River was named by Simcoe for Major Samuel Holland, surveyor general of Upper Canada.

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Thanks to Elizabeth Gillham