

King Township Circa 1800

Largest township in York County

Area, 1878 - 86,480 acres.

Named in honour of Major John King, under-secretary of state in England.

Purchased from Mississaugas in 1787 by Toronto Purchase Act.

First survey - 1800.

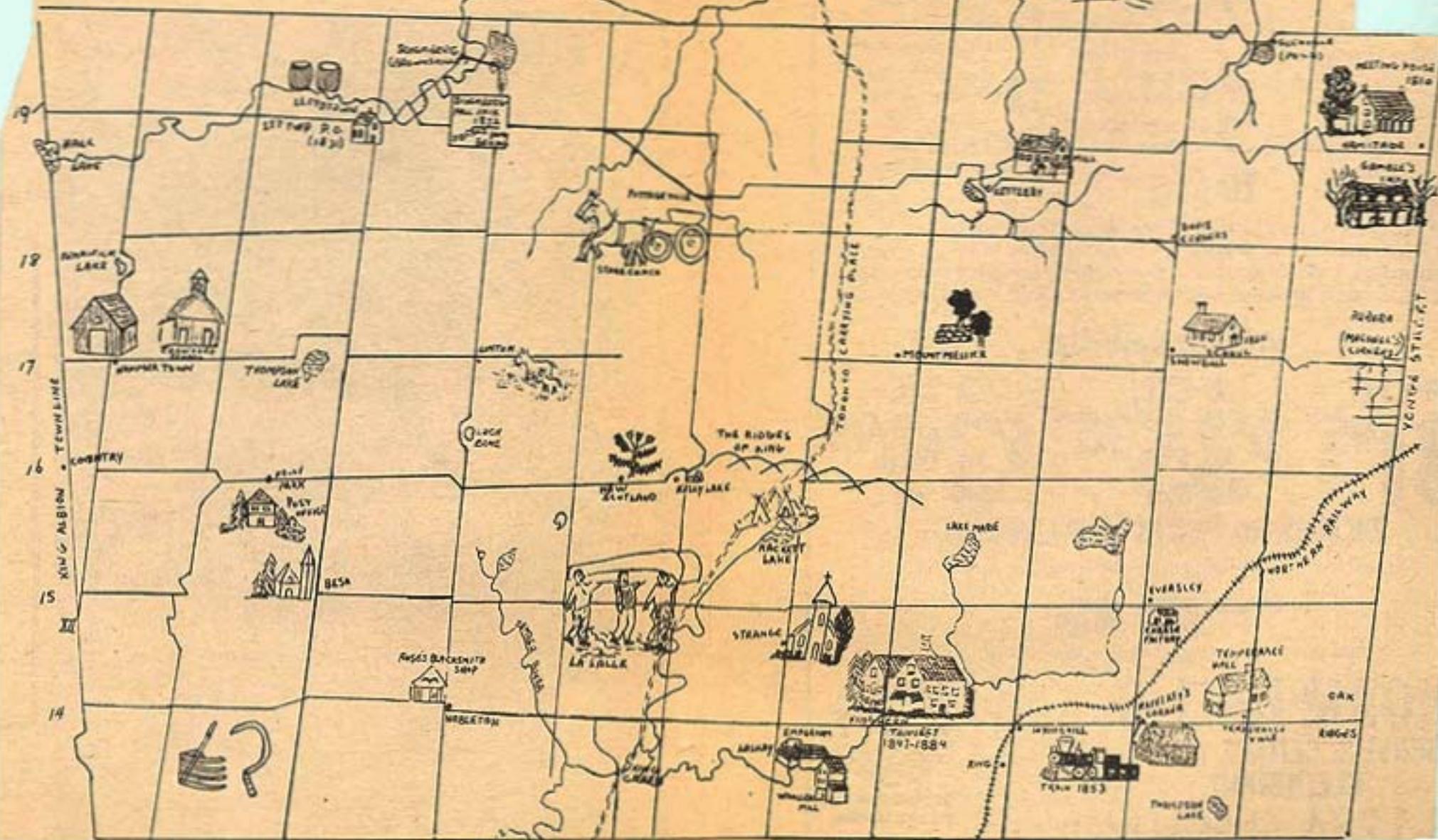
First Township Meeting held at Gamble's Inn, Armitage, in 1809.

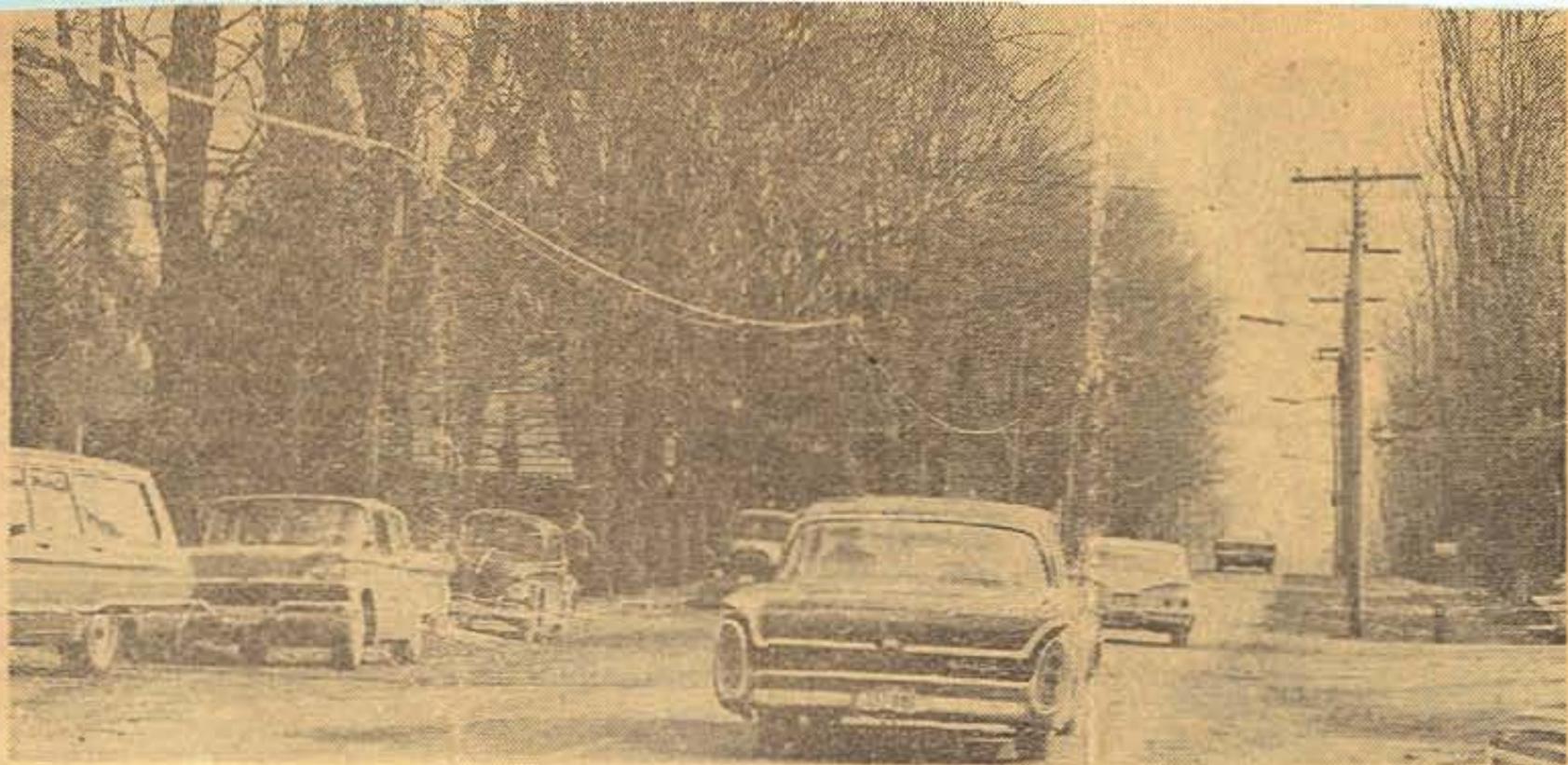
Etienne Brulé in 1615 travelled south on Toronto carrying place. First white man to visit York (Toronto).

LaSalle called the height of land "mountains." It forms the watershed between Lakes Ontario and Simcoe.

In 1855 first train through township to Machell's Corners (Aurora).

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 Sketched by Barbara Male





Despite two-month fight, King City's tree-lined main street is doomed by new road construction. —Globe and Mail

A tranquil past is doomed

By JOHN GILLIES

Globe and Mail Reporter

KING CITY — John Belknap awoke yesterday morning a bitterly disappointed man.

For more than two months he has been leading the fight to preserve the tranquillity of this police village of 1,900 persons less than five miles north of the Metropolitan Toronto boundary. Pressures exerted by the great urban complex of Metro and its immediate neighbors are pushing a swath of asphalt toward the village, a swath that will strip its main streets of their beautiful shade trees, eliminate several houses, drastically shorten the front lawns of others and probably eliminate a century-old general store where one can still buy whiffletree irons.

Mr. Belknap and his committee had pinned their hopes on a meeting Monday night with officials from the village, King Township, the Toronto and York Roads Commission and the Canadian National Railways, the four bodies involved in implementing a York County Roads program that would convert the village's two main roads, Keele Street and the King City Road, into efficient but barren four-lane thoroughfares.

Describing the meeting, he said yesterday that no one seemed to see his side at all. The officials, he said, were amazed that his group did not want the roads, one of which has already pushed its way through Maple, a few miles to the South.

And before he and his committee had a chance to plan the next move in their campaign the death knell was sounded for any hope of preventing implementation of the road program. King Township Reeve Gordon Cook

announced yesterday that the township had signed an agreement with the Roads Commission for construction of a new underpass at the village's CNR railway crossing and the widening of the roads.

In his two-month campaign, Mr. Belknap, a 21-year resident of the village, had obtained the support of more than 300 of the village's 502 homeowners. During their meetings with various township and village officials the group never put forth an alternative because, Mr. Belknap said, "we are purely laymen, not engineers; anything we put forth could be knocked down by the professionals."

As the campaign progressed it became intertwined with the long-standing need for an underpass at the CNR line that crosses both Keele Street and the King Sideroad within a few hundred yards of the village's main intersection. Those fighting to preserve the village's quiet character were said by others to be opposed to the underpass, a view not shared by Mr. Belknap and his committee.

His group, he said, has always been in favor of an underpass at the crossing and believed it could be built without greatly altering the face of the village.

Pressure for construction of an underpass has increased since the collision of a school bus and train at a level crossing in Dorion, Que., last month, in which 19 students were killed. More than 800 district school children ride buses over the crossing each day.

A report for King Township by planning consultant Eric Hardy gave momentary life to the group's attempts to save the village from the scars inflicted by road widening. In

the report, ordered before the start of the committee's campaign to save the village, Mr. Hardy urged the township council to resist plans to build the underpass and four-lane roads.

He stated that unless existing railway track is removed from the centre of the village, the community's potential for urban development will remain grossly inferior for all time. Mr. Hardy stated he could not see pouring volumes of traffic through the village.

But dollars and cents outweighed the recommendations of Mr. Hardy's report, which some officials wrote off as containing a lot of fantasy. Mr. Belknap and his committee were hopeful that the Roads Commission would suggest rerouting the four-lane roads around the village.

Such a proposal would have preserved the character of the village, but burdened its taxpayers. As a police village, the 1,900 residents would be responsible for the cost of maintaining the portions of Keele Street and the King Sideroad that run through the village, plus a share of the cost of an underpass, since they would become local roads if a bypass was constructed.

The road-widening program and the construction of the grade separation are inseparably tied together, with the cost shared by York County. Cost also killed consideration of Mr. Hardy's recommendation that the railway track be removed from the centre of the village.

Mr. Cook said yesterday it would cost \$1,000,000 to reroute the railway around the village.

Announcing the signing of agreements to proceed with the road program, he said: "In view of the costs it would be extremely unwise to make any change in existing plans."



Road program has already cut a swath to the south through Maple, which used to have tree-lined main street.







Bells wish Canada a happy birthday as King City's big crowd revels



KING CITY -- On July 1, 1867, the Daily Globe of Toronto reported:

"As the City clock struck midnight, and the Dominion of Canada began its legal existence, the bells of St. James' Cathedral, under the charge of Mr. Rawlinson, sent forth a merry peal."

On July 1, 1967, in King City, as the Dominion of Canada began the second century of its legal existence, the bells of King United's carillon, under the charge of Mrs. Glen Ferguson, also sent forth a merry peal -- O Canada, the bells sang: Happy Birthday; Auld Lang Syne. Bells from All Saints also clanged their welcome to Canada's Centennial.

Fireworks lit the sky, bringing to a close the biggest celebration in the history of the tiny police village.

All 13 organizations combined talents and good, old-fashioned hard work to make the birthday party an unqualified success.

Over 2,000 people -- more than the entire population, man, woman and child, flowed into the park to consume a ton of chicken, 300 pounds of potato salad, rolls, cole slaw and ice cream. Clouds of smoke

poured from the huge pits where the chicken barbecued.

Long lines of cheerful residents and visitors snaked their way to the serving tables. Those who swore they "couldn't eat another bite", succumbed at the sight of homemade pie sold by another organization.

Children and adults laughed with glee as doughty firemen were spilled into a huge drum of water by a well-aimed baseball, in one of several games in progress. Farther up Doctor's Lane, blocked off for the festivities, hundreds enjoyed an enthusiastic, well-performed concert by the band from King City Secondary School.

Bingo and euchre were also enjoyed, as was an hilarious "ball-game" between the Rangers and the Lions.

Teen-agers and those a little older danced to the music of their choice -- and when the rains came, jammed into the barns, and continued into the traditional "wee sma' hours".

In the back of a borrowed station wagon Mrs. L.J. Redman and a visiting relative who'd enlisted counted the money taken in that

night. Final figures are not yet available, but the proceeds of the celebrations, a very big bonus to the fun, are substantial, and will be turned over to the parks board for use in the new King Park.

Beautiful quilts provided by two organizations were won by Mrs. Bill Poulis and Gordon Baker.

Mrs. Bruce Hall, in authentic Centennial costume and pretty teenager Linda Millard were crowned Queen and Princess of King City.

Through rain-soaked branches the crowd watched the fireworks sprays of brilliant color and a group of youngsters spontaneously sang Happy Birthday to their country.

Canada's second century, destined for even greater achievement than its first, had begun.