

Further Recollections Old Times In Bradford

So some official in the Ontario Department of Highways thinks the name of the good old Holland river should be and is the Schomberg river. It is a fact, of course, that the river begins at Schomberg where it is a mere trickle but when the river was given its name there was no Schomberg. It gets its name Holland from a former surveyor general of Canada, who, in 1791, made a trip by way of Toronto Bay, Lake Simcoe and Raisin Lake chain for the purpose of exploring the county, and as he journeyed down our old river to get to Lake Simcoe the stream was named in his honour. That 'ancient' re-livened village that lies about three miles south of the river was also named after Major Holland and called "Holland Landing—or should it be Schomberg Landing?"

In 1819 a botanist named John Goldie visited the country about the river and Lake Simcoe and, in writing in his diary of Lake Simcoe he says, "at the south side there is what is called a river, the Holland. It apparently is stagnant and the water has more the appearance of flowing in a retrograde motion from the lake than the contrary." Poor old river! and yet he wasn't far away in his thought, was he? And on Oct. 17, 1818, by a treaty of sale between the Indians of the district and the government a great tract of land bounded by the District of London on the west, Lake Huron—really Georgian Bay—on the north, by the Penetanguishene purchase on the east and by the south shore of Kempenfeldt Bay, the western shore of Lake Simcoe and the Cook's Bay and the Holland River to the N.W. angle of the township of King." And no mention of the name Schomberg in all this!

I think the Witness "Office Window" is to be commended for taking this matter up and endeavouring to have the error corrected.

A little additional history connected with the river may be interesting to the folks up there. In 1825 Sir John Franklin in, I think, his first trip to reach the north pole travelling from Toronto went down the Holland river to Lake Simcoe and in 1680 the great French explorer La Salle, on his way to find the Mississippi River, went up the Humber river from Toronto Bay, portaged over the Divide and reached the Holland river down which he went to Lake Simcoe—and on by way of Georgian Bay to Michilimackinac and eventually to the Mississippi. La Salle we are told has with him about thirty Frenchmen and over one hundred Indians. So LaSalle sailed down to the mouth of the Holland river before he did the same thing to the great Father of Waters! But we have no New Orleans or St. Louis on the banks of our river. However the Marsh Gardens are now making the name of the old river and its marsh lands pretty well known. I bought a ten-pound bag of small Bradford onions in a vegetable store on Saturday—couldn't pass up the name Bradford.

Before leaving the river may I mention again that in 1838 surveyors made out a plan with street names and all for a village on the south bank of the river just south of Bradford and named it Amsterdam. The street names were Dutch too, such as DeRuyter, etc, Bradfordites always called it "Over the Bridge" and in the days of the sawmills a number of people lived there. One would think that these surveyors foresaw the day of the Dutch market gardeners.