

Who was Charles Bowman Anyway?



Streetscape of downtown Bowmanville in the early 1900's. View of Northwest corner of King and Temperance Streets.

by Charles Taws

**CLARINGTON MUSEUMS
AND ARCHIVES**

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Bowmanville is named after a Scotsman named Charles Bowman. Unfortunately, not much is known about this important man. One curious fact is that he never lived in or anywhere near the town that bears his name. How did this happen? And just who was this man anyway?

The museum has recently been in contact with two researchers in Scotland and this has shed some new details on the life of our elusive founder. Still, most of the evidence comes from a group of legal papers that were acquired in 1972 by then Bowmanville Museum

chair, Andy Thompson. This in itself is an interesting story and I still shudder to think where these important papers might have ended up had Mr. Thompson not been in the right place and the right time. He and his wife were attending a wedding for a distant relative in Montreal when they were approached by another guest who explained he worked for a local law firm which possessed many old Bowman papers with some relating to Bowmanville. Evidently, they had, at one time, handled the legal affairs for Mr. Bowman's descendants but the papers were now very old and they no longer required them. Mr. Thompson jumped at the chance to acquire these for the museum. Among the many legal papers were

Charles Bowman's last will and testament. Bowmanville historian and museum founder Elsie Lunney spent hours pouring over these papers to glean the significant local details.

Let's first look at the facts we know about Charles Bowman. Charles Bowman was the son of William John Bowman who owned and operated a starch works in Laurencekirk Scotland. We know this because of the many complaints still existing in legal records of the smell from the starch works. This part of Scotland is known for its textile industry and William John Bowman did good business with the various firms. The family estate was called Greystones and the Bowman's could be considered to be of comfortable means. Of Charles' ear-

ly life little can be said except that he travelled in Europe, notable Malta and Italy, and he had a sister Ann, who never came to Canada but stayed in Scotland.

When Charles was born is not known, but at some point in his youth he came to Canada to seek his fortune. He settled in Montreal and in 1830 he married Elizabeth Savage. Their ceremony was in St. James Church in York (Toronto), but the couple lived in Montreal where Charles built a large Italian Villa style house. Elizabeth was the eldest daughter of George Savage who was a Collector of Customs at York. They had at least 8 children, but 3 died very young. The surviving children were two sons, Charles and John, and three daughters Elizabeth, Ann and Victoria Sophia.

The Legend Of Charles Bowman

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All were under the age of 18 when Charles died in 1848.

Even before his marriage

Charles was building his fortune. Upon his arrival he went into the employ of the Honorable James Leslie as a clerk and stayed with him



This picture shows Charles Bowman's house in Westmount, Montreal. He acquired the property in 1828 and shortly after 1830 constructed this magnificent Italian Villa style house for his wife, Elizabeth Savage, and their growing family. The estate was called Forden and it later became the home of Charles Bowman's only surviving child Elizabeth Raynes and her husband Captain Robert Raynes. When the last Grand-child died the estate was sold and torn down in 1949. Today you can see Forden Crescent which used to be the estate driveway. The carriage shed still exist. It was converted to a home and owned for many years by the Birks Family of the Birks Jewellery Store chain. When the house came on the market a few years ago its price tag was in the millions!

for a number of years. He attended the Scotch Presbyterian Church on St. Gabriel Street and took an active part in church administration. He became senior partner in his own firm, originally known as "Bowman and Smith", probably around 1820. With headquarters in Montreal they had business holdings throughout Upper and Lower Canada. Besides Montreal they had interests in Trois Riviere, Colborne, Port Hope, in the Goderich area and, of course, in Bowmanville. Bowmanville historian J.B. Fairbairn wrote in 1906, "Mr. Bowman spent a good deal of time in the old country purchasing supplies. He had extensive means and knew how to buy to advantage."

It was Charles' business interests that led to his con-

nection with Bowmanville. When he arrived in 1824 there was already a small village in the area called Darlington Mills. One can imagine Charles Bowman standing at the crest of the hill where the corner of Scugog and King Streets are now located. To the southeast he could look down into the valley and see the small village and to the west his property on which he saw so much potential. Darlington Mills had already started growing out of the valley to the west (Roenigk Drive area today). Up on the hill, which became known as Westmount, lies Chapel Street. A reminder that the first church in the village was built there. Charles could not purchase that land as it was not for sale so he purchased 300 acres from the Honourable Wil-



The term "Scotch" is generally frowned upon these days (especially by people from Scotland), but saw widespread usage in the old days. That is what the church called themselves so essentially it is correct. This church was long ago absorbed into a larger one.

liam Allan of York (Toronto). This is the land where most of the Town of Bowmanville now sits. Mr. Allan was likely an absentee landlord and Mr. Bowman also purchased the business of Mr. Lewis

Lewis who had taken over a general store and mill started by the Burk Family many years earlier. This old store still exists today, although the building has had many renovations and additions

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The Legend Of Charles Bowman

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added to it over the decades, as Tim's Rent-All.

So, how did Darlington

Mills become Bowmanville? Some history books will tell you that after the 1837 Rebellion it was renamed because Mr. Bowman's store in Bow-

manville had sheltered and supplied forces loyal to the established Family Compact government. In fact it was called Bowmanville before that. It has been surmised by various historians that the name changed gradually from "Bowman's Village", to "Bowmansville", and finally "Bowmanville". The name "Bowmanville" seems to have been in general usage by the early 1830's (some historians put the name change at 1828) although it was not officially changed until 1853.

Charles' store in Bowmanville, called "Bowman and Company" became very successful and effectively served the surrounding area for many years. They carried a large variety of goods and extended liberal credit to pioneers who were struggling to make their new farms productive. In 1839 during a money shortage the firm issued its own script to facilitate trade. Such bills are now rare and valuable collector's items. Charles began having the streets laid out by a surveyor and one local legend says he gave a lot to the eldest girl in every local family. The truth of this statement has not been verified, but the logic is as these girls got married and had their family homes built on their lots the surrounding lots would increase in value. In 1825 he

donated land (the lot was just east of the Village Inn Restaurant) and had a meeting hall built for town meetings and for religious services (it was open to all denominations). He also donated land and money for the building of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church and St. John's Anglican Church. He also encouraged many promising young men in Scotland to settle in Bowmanville and this may explain our high number of Scottish pioneers.

Charles Bowman lived at his estate in Montreal, but travelled extensively until his death. One book says he died in Italy and his last will and testament was written on the Isle of Jersey. Perhaps he had developed an illness on his frequent crossing of the Atlantic and was in search of a warmer climate to recuperate. We are not sure. His beautiful house in Montreal was standing until 1949. One of his Grand-daughters was the last to live in the house. It was known she possessed a painted portrait of Charles Bowman. Prof. John Squair tired unsuccessfully to have a copy made for his 1927 history book "The Townships of Darlington and Clarke." The portrait is lost today so we don't even know what our town founder looked like.

Charles Bowman's daughter Elizabeth, was the only



In 1824 Charles Bowman had a vision when he purchased one lonely General Store and the vacant lands where Historic Downtown Bowmanville now stand. His vision was to grow a prosperous community. The Bowman & Company General Store became very successful and effectively served the surrounding area for many years. The old store still exists today as Tim's Rent-All, although the building has had many renovations and additions to it over the decades. Above photo - downtown Bowmanville during Applefest.

child to survive him and inherited his wealth. She married Captain Robert Raynes and lived at the Bowman residence in Montreal. She had eight children, 5 girls and 3 boys, but none married. An indirect ancestor of Charles Bowman was Margaret Raynes who lived on Wellington Street in Bowmanville. Her father was Captain Francis Raynes (believed to be a brother of Robert). When she died in 1945 Bowmanville lost its last connection to its founder. It is clear from the above that Charles Bowman left no direct descendents so anyone with the name of Bowman claiming to be a direct descendent of Charles

Bowman is incorrect. This happens at the Museum every few years or so.

Mr. Bowman's connection with Bowmanville may seem tenuous. But, he certainly gave the small village of Darlington Mills a push at the right time which led to it becoming an important town whose influence quickly extended from Oshawa to Port Hope and north to Blackstock. Bowmanville was one of the most important urban areas in the old United Counties of Northumberland and Durham and continues in the same role within the Municipality of Clarington.



John Simpson was a protégé of Charles Bowman. He began working in his Bowmanville store in 1825 at the age of 12. He opened the first bag of mail to arrive in town (1827), soon took over management of the store and eventually became a partner in the business. He was active in banking, politics and civic affairs. In 1857 he established the Ontario Bank in Bowmanville and in 1867 he became one of Canada's first Senators. His house can still be seen on the Southwest corner of Highway # 2 and Bennett Road."

The Family Farm - Backbone of Our Economy



by Jim Abernethy, Editor
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I hope you have enjoyed reading about the early history of the many communities that have helped to shape Clarington into what it is today. We are blessed with living in a community rich in heritage with a strong economy, based on energy and agriculture.

Energy and agriculture were the two resources that influenced Charles Bowman

in 1824 when he invested in the lands which later became the community bearing his name.

Today our largest single employer is the OPG Darlington NGS which now produces almost 20% of our Provincial electrical demands.

Since the days of Mr. Bowman, Agriculture has always been one of the leading industries in Clarington.

Agriculture will continue to play an important role in our foreseeable future considering the Provincial Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Morain Acts now regulate about 80 percent of the lands within Clarington.

Clarington farmlands are just too productive to be used for any other purpose other than what they have been doing for centuries..... feeding people.

The difference of course is that in 1824 a farmer, his wife and 12 children may have cultivated 1-20 acres, whereas today it is not uncommon for some of our farming community families to manage in excess of 1,000 acres.

Operating a profitable family farm is becoming more challenging each year. Unfortunately we may see the demise of the family farm model as we have known it for the last century or more.

Farming is becoming big business and like other businesses, new capital investments are required to continue to

improve and expand operations. New capital is not always readily available and may require farm owners to consider options such as: 1) Drawing down on existing savings. 2) Diversifying land use to increase revenues. 3) Mortgaging the farmland that may now be free and clear, or 4) Selling the farmland with a leaseback privilege allowing the family to continue to live on and operate the farming operation.

The sell/leaseback option may be ideal for the farming family which has recognized that, for a number of reasons, the days of operating the family farm are limited. The primary reason is because their children do not have an interest in carrying on the family business, and within the next 5-10 years they foresee a need to dispose of the farming operation.

Scotiabank's latest real-estate outlook in September 2011 said that Canada is showing resilience that few other countries have been able to maintain.

"In the majority of the major markets we track in North America, Europe and Australasia, inflation-adjusted home prices declined on a year-over-year basis in the second quarter of 2011," said Adrienne Warren, Scotiabank Economics senior economist and real estate specialist.

"While Canada's hot housing market also has begun to cool, it remains a notable outperformer."

The Scotiabank Report noted that of the nine major developed markets it tracks, only Canada, France and Switzerland showed housing price increases year over year.

The report went on to say that in Canada, existing home prices were up five per cent year-over-year from April to June, while prices appeared to level out in July and August.

The economy may be up and it may be down, but fortunately for the owners of farmland in Clarington, there is and always will be a demand for good productive farmland.

As Charles Bowman foresaw the economic potential of this area in 1824, investors who know the value of good agricultural lands have expressed to me their interest in buying Clarington agricultural lands - while being respectful of the families who have worked these lands for generations.

Will You Have Enough Money When You Exit Your Business



by Peter Hobb

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One very important aspect of planning for the exit from your business is to put a plan in place that will increase the odds that you, the business owner, and your spouse will have enough money to live comfortably in retirement. There are two key elements to this process. Firstly, you must decide what you want to do in retirement so an estimate can be made of the financial

resources that will be required in retirement. The second element is creating and or protecting the wealth you will need to meet your financial retirement goals.

The first element is sometimes difficult for the business owner. Some business owners have been so focused on their businesses that they have not had the time or the inclination to think what the future might be like when they don't have to come into work. In a lot of cases their businesses define who they are so they cannot imagine not having to come into work. The reality, unfortunately, is there will be a day when they will stop coming into work. Hopefully this day arrives on their terms and they have adequately planned for that day. When planning for life after retirement, be honest with yourself. What do you and your spouse really

want to do? Is it travelling the world, sailing the Caribbean, or going back to school. If you do not plan for what you really want to do in retirement, you may find, once you do decide what you do want to do, that you do not have the financial resources you need.

Your planned lifestyle in retirement is one aspect that will affect the financial resources you will need in retirement. Other issues to consider include the amount you want to leave to your children and your charitable giving plans. Although these items are not static you still need a starting point. Also there are a number of different strategies that can be implemented to achieve your financial goals. Having a financial plan will put you along way down the road towards ensuring your financial security in retirement and achieving your financial goals.

Surveys have told us that more than 80% of business owners believe that proceeds from the sale or transfer of their businesses is very or somewhat important in meeting their financial retirement needs. This is a very risky proposition. There are no guarantees that you will realize enough money from the sale or transfer of your business to meet your financial retirement needs or that you will even be able to find someone to take over your company when you are ready to exit. New products could be introduced that make your products obsolete, more competition could squeeze your profit margins or your customers' tastes change. We all know the risks in running your own business. To reduce those risks you need to plan.

There are many strategies that can be implemented to

meet your financial goals, one of which is realizing, from the sale of your business, the money you need. Another strategy includes transferring business wealth while you are operating the business. One common example of transferring business wealth in this manner is to take money from your company and put it into a Registered Retirement Savings Plan. Other strategies, which are more complex, include setting up an investment company and transferring cash not needed by your operating company to your investment company, setting up an individual pension plan, and refinancing the operating company and transferring the money to yourself. Your company's situation and your personal and business goals



will affect what strategies are the best. There isn't one recipe that will work in every situation. Know your options. Being ready for the eventual exit from your business isn't about deciding this week that you will sell next week.