

The Mysterious Colonel Black

by Charles Taws

CLARINGTON MUSEUMS
AND ARCHIVES

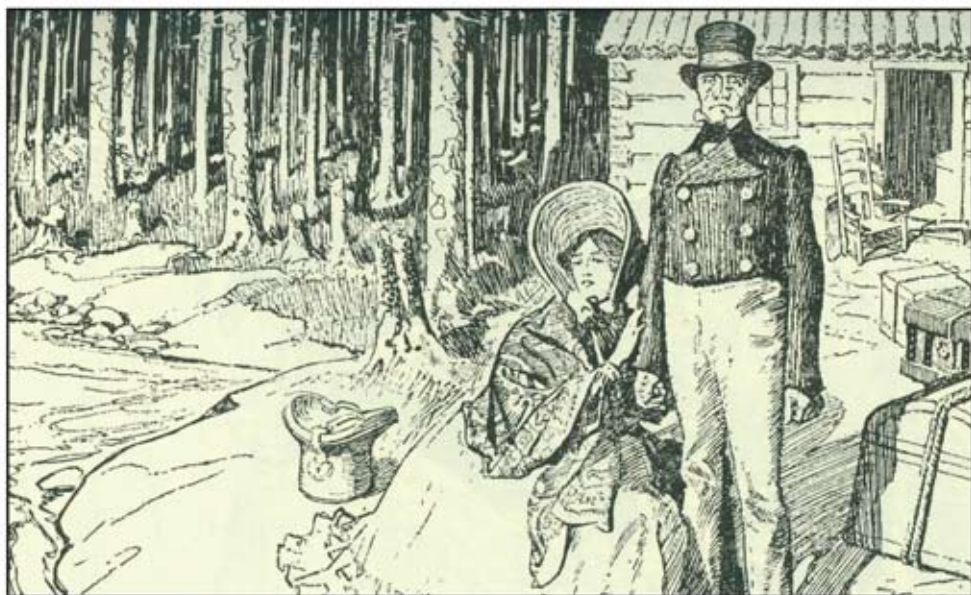
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This story is dedicated to the memory of George Vice, Bowmanville Postmaster 1954-1974 and noted local historian

We dispelled the myth that Courtice has no history with the article entitled "The Ancient History of Courtice" in volume 1 issue 5 of the *Clarington Promoter* (If you missed this story, go online to claringtonpromoter.ca and click on the PAST EDITIONS tab). Recently another historical Courtice story came to light and it came from an unlikely source—a well known and easily available Ontario history book.

In pioneer times many communities were first settled by wealthy pioneers who had come to the new world to make their mark or escape an indiscretion in the old. Many were the younger sons of well-to-do families who had little prospects of advancement in Europe. They would often come to a community stay a while and being unused to the hard labour or unprepared for the rigors of Canadian life fled to the cities or back home.

Where I grew up in Harvey



Early Settlers, approx. 1830

Township north of Peterborough a group of wealthy sportsmen settlers came to Sandy Lake in the 1830's. They built log cabins for their families and planned to survive by sports hunting. Needless to say they didn't last long. In Bowmanville the Barber Family were prominent at an early date. Bowmanville Creek's original name was Barber's Creek, but they soon left and almost nothing is known about this family. In a previous article I mentioned a Captain Ussher who ran a mill in Bowmanville. He was related to

Captain Edgeworth Ussher who was killed by Ben Lett in Niagara. His mill in Bowmanville failed, as J.B. Fairbairn wrote in 1906, "[He] was a gentleman without any business training and as a matter of course the venture ended in failure". He too left the area without a trace.

Many communities have followed this pattern and in most cases these early settlers fade into the mist of times never to be heard from again. Such was the case of Colonel James Black who ran the first post office in the area from 1825 to 1827. Until recently we knew more about the mule that brought the first mail to Darlington than Colonel Black himself (the mule lived a long life and died in Markham around 1863). Colonel Black ran the post office from his house and his property was on the north side of Highway # 2 at Prestonvale Road in Courtice. In fact, if you're heading west out of Oshawa, the hill you go up just before Prestonvale Road, is called Black's Hill. George Vice in his book "The Post Office and Early Development in Bowmanville" explains that the Black property was Lot 32, Concession 1. In 1827 the

post office moved eastward to the fast growing community of Bowmanville and Colonel Black fades from the scene.

About a month ago Gordon Young of Lakefield Heritage Research contacted me with a question about Samuel Strickland. He is the brother of the famous Canadian pioneers Catherine Parr Traill and Susanna Moodie. All of them were authors and Col Strickland's book "Twenty Seven Years in Canada West" does mention a few tidbits of his early life in Darlington Township before moving on to other parts of the province. Gordon's inquiry caused me to take a closer look at Strickland's book (a book that has been sitting on my shelf at home for over 25 years). In this book we find a "Colonel B", an old family friend, whom he stayed with and eventually married one of his daughters. Colonel Strickland never calls Colonel Black by name but by the details he gives it is undoubtedly the same man.

The book tells us that Samuel Strickland (1804-1867) was the son of Thomas and Elizabeth



Mill, approx. 1830

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The Mysterious Colonel Black (Continued)

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Homer. In 1818 Thomas suffered a severe financial setback and died shortly afterwards. Young Strickland eagerly accepted an offer from family friend, Colonel Black, to join him on his newly acquired property in Darlington Township. On June 5th 1825 Strickland stepped off the boat at Whitby (then called Windsor) and reached Colonel Black's house after a two hour brisk walk. Here is what he wrote about his host:

"Colonel B- was an old and valued friend of my family, who had held a lucrative situation under the Government for many years. His retirement from public life, on some disgust, had eventually led to his settlement in Canada.

Now, his literally tastes and sedentary habits had ill-fitted him to the rough customs of the colony. Besides having scarcely seen a grain of corn...he knew nothing of agricultural operations. Of stock he was equally ignorant, and of the comparative goodness or badness of soil he was, of course, no judge. Such a man, in the choice of a farm, was sure to be shamed by a shrewd Yankee proprietor, and my poor friend was shamed accordingly." Strickland also mentions that Colonel Black had spent most of his life in London, England before coming to Canada. There had been some speculation that the Colonel may have been a War of 1812 veteran but this now seems unlikely.

Colonel Black was delighted to have Strickland stay with him.

Although he knew little about Canada's climate and soil he had considerable farming experience that he had picked up on his family's estate while a boy. He brought this knowledge and his boundless energy to the Black farm. He described the property thusly:

"Our farm consisted upwards of 200 acres of cleared land, the largest proportion of which consisted of meadows and pastures, but the soil was light and sandy and altogether very indifferent... the situation of my friend's house was close to the Toronto Road [Highway # 2], partly built of logs and framework. It had been designed by the former Yankee proprietor, and could certainly boast of no architectural beauties."

For the local historian Strickland's book does provide some

details of what Clarington was like in 1825. He mentions that only the first three concessions of Darlington Township were settled. He mentions Bowmanville by its name or its original name of "Darlington Mills" and it would be around this time that the name changed. Of Bowmanville, he says it is the principal town and boasts a grist-mill, a saw-mill, a store and about half a dozen houses. The total population for the area was only 1200.

Strickland married Black's daughter Emma and he went to Otonabee Township near Peterborough to clear a new farm for his young family when word reached him that his wife had had a son but was gravely ill. He walked back to his father-in-law's and while passing through Bowmanville overheard the news of his wife's death in a casual tavern conversation. His son, Richard, died a few years later. Strickland's connection with the Black family was broken along with his heart. He did remarry and successfully worked for the Canada Company in Goderich before moving to Lakefield to live out his days.

Samuel Strickland, like his famous sisters, has left us a valuable account of pioneer days in Ontario. In so doing he has also resurrected a long forgotten person from Clarington's past. Isn't it funny how a request can make you look at something in a different way. If it weren't for Gordon Young's request Colonel Black would still be just a name in the history books.



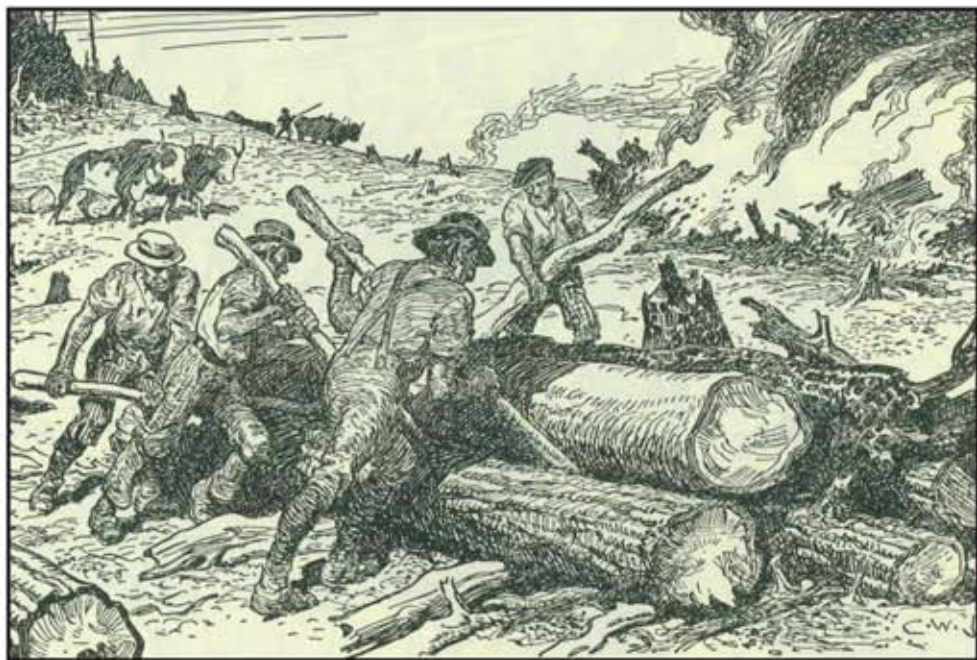
Immigrants, approx. 1830

So, what happened to Colonel James Black? A quick search on the internet provided a few clues. By 1836 Colonel Black, now James Black Esq., was treasurer for the Welland Canal in Port Colborne on Lake Erie. He seems to have been as successful at this job as he was a farmer. There were complaints that he was not keeping proper records. Suzanna Moodie's husband, J.W. Dunbar Moodie, visited him at Port Colborne in 1838. Here is what he wrote:

"He is living in a comfortable cottage on the top of a sand hill with a fine view of the Lake. He is still employed by the Company and is Post-master. Mrs. Black is still brisk and lively though she grumbles a little at the country. They had a daughter with them who was in bad health."

James Black Esq. resigned from his post on the Welland Canal in 1845.

If you find these articles interesting check out the local history blog on the Clarington Museums webpage at www.claringtonmuseums.com. Just click on the blog icon.



Clearing the Land, approx. 1830

Judge Dick Lovekin



by Myno Van Dyke

NEWCASTLE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Eric Richard Lovekin was born at Bowmanville Hospital on May 12, 1924. He was always called "Dick" and he grew up on the Lovekin farm named "Kilcolman", which was first settled by the Lovekins in 1796. This farm fronted on the north shore of Lake Ontario near the mouth of the Wilmot Creek just west of the village of

Newcastle. The Lovekins and the Bates were the first families to settle in Clarke Township.

He went to public school in nearby Newcastle and then to high school in Toronto. He earned a BA at the University of Toronto in 1949 and graduated from Law School there a few years later. Dick practiced law in Edmonton, then in Yellowknife and finally returned to Newcastle. He soon became the "Federal Crown Attorney" for this area and in 1977 he was appointed to the Bench as a Judge in Brampton. Later he transferred to Whitby and retired as a Judge in 1992.

The atmosphere in a courtroom is usually tense and serious.



Dick Lovekin

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Judge Dick Lovekin (Continued)

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Not so with Dick Lovekin's court. He was probably the only Judge that provided a constant level of humour and an interesting element of surprise during a trial.

In my former life as a police officer, I had the pleasure of testifying before Dick several times. He had an unusual courtroom demeanor for a Judge. He would unexpectedly break out into a roaring gale of laughter, often startling the unaccustomed witness beside him. He was the exact opposite of a "stuffy" Judge. He loved to get into long-winded personal conversations with a

witness, lawyer, crown attorney, court officer or police officer during a trial. He loved to find a way to talk about his war time efforts and flying planes.

Once, while I was testifying about polygraph and how it works, Dick asked me if the gauges on a polygraph were similar to those on a B52 Bomber. I explained that I wouldn't know, since I have never been in a B52 Bomber. This opened the flood gates and Dick went into a long dissertation (in front of the jury) on how to fly an airplane and how the gauges would jump back and forth when you made a certain type of maneuver. Later in

the trial, Dick gave his address to the jury. When he spoke of my polygraph evidence he told the jury the following; "Then you heard from Detective Van Dyke- he loves that polygraph machine so much that if I was his wife, I'd be very concerned!" The jury came back in just a few minutes with a guilty verdict..

Dick loved people and he loved to tell stories and joke around. He always made a point of eating in the courthouse cafeteria and he would never sit alone. He would sit with witnesses and accused person, it didn't matter to him. He never lost his small town lawyer attitude and this contributed to his success in making not only good decisions but also in helping those involved in a trial feel more comfortable with the process. Although he was considered somewhat unorthodox, he was known for making excellent decisions.

Dick retired from the Bench in 1992. In an interview with the Oshawa Times, he described penitentiaries as "stink holes". He

added, "No matter what anybody thinks, penitentiaries today are no more than a hole, where there are homosexual assaults and people are murdered in the yards".

Dick had a great personality and connected easily with everyone he met. He didn't drive a fancy car, you would usually see him in an old GMC flat bed truck. Although he was busy with his legal work, he always made time for his community. He was an active member of St. George's Anglican Church, a Director of the Newcastle Village & District Historical Society, Past President of the Durham Central Fair Board and a Past President of the Newcastle Lion's Club and active in the Liberal Party. He was an officer in the RCAF during World War Two. Dick Lovekin died of colon cancer on May 15, 2002. He was married to Lynn and his children were Kathy, Carol, Rick and Janet. He was Our Judge, our friend and neighbor, our Statesman.



Dick and Lynn Lovekin



E. RICHARD LOVEKIN
YOUR
LIBERAL CANDIDATE
FOR
DURHAM

Dick Lovekin

Election Rumours Dispelled



by Jim Abernethy, Editor

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It would appear that the new Editor of a local paper in Orono has started a rumour that I am pondering the possibility of running for the Liberal nomination for the upcoming Federal By-election.

For the record - his comments are a complete fabrication. A simple phone call, or email, to me could have established that I have never pondered running for the Federal Liberal Party.

My travelling days are over!

Cathy and I are very content with our recent "downsizing" into our home in Bowmanville..... just around the corner from Clarington Municipal Town Hall.

We love life in the country, but are embracing the benefits of returning to life in town.

Downsizing into a smaller home with less property can present major challenges for those who are used to a large home in town or a rural setting. But there is an upside.

Cathy and I just experienced "the downsize." This is something many of us have or will experience in the coming years.

Moving from a large house that has been a home for 10, 20 or maybe 40 years presents many challenges..... but there are rewards once you have made the decision to move forward.

Not surprising, some of my real estate clients are experiencing the same frustrations and dilemmas that come with divesting oneself of all the stuff that we have spent a lifetime accumulating?

Moving from a larger home/property into something smaller can be a daunting task, especially if you have outbuildings with who knows what stored in them.

Sorry, there are no easy answers or magic formula. The process can be very stressful.

A good first step is to sit down and make a list of your house "wants" verses "needs" and then list the pros verses cons to downsizing. Be prepared to give up some things and focus on the end game.

Give me a call if I can help walk you thru it. Take advantage of my knowledge of the community and my experience as a Real Estate Broker/Salesperson for more than 35 years.

As our community continues to grow I will continue to promote Clarington to people outside our community and educate those of us who choose to live here about our history, diversity and the many benefits Clarington has to offer.

In this edition we have profiled another individual who has contributed to our community in the past. (go online to www.clarington-promoter.ca to access all of our past editions, read about our history)

Myno Van Dyke's has written a wonderful article about Judge Dick Lovekin. The Judge was a descendent of one of the first families who settled in Clarington. He was a colourful character and a person who left his mark on our community.

Another person who has quietly left his mark and continues to contribute to our community is Dennis Sullivan, better known as Sully the Barber.



Sully the Barber chats up one of his customers - Conservative Candidate Erin O'Toole.

This coming September, Sully will celebrate the milestone of 50 years of service in this business.

Wow, that is a lot of haircuts and shaves! Recently I asked him just how many?

Sully replied "Lots.... maybe a few shy of 400,000."

I asked - anybody famous? "Sure," he replied. "Some of the old time NHL hockey players like Gerry Cheevers, Arnie Brown, Dick Gamble, Larry Hillman would drop by for a cut and a shave..... some of our current home town NHL pros when they were kids..... and of course when he was just a boy Paul Quantrill of Blue Jay and New York Yankee fame. Bob Rae came in once, but not for a haircut..... he was campaigning for the NDP, I think."

Looking back, Sully reflects on his career as a Barber. "The community has been good to me and my family. My business has weathered the ups and downs in the economy and changes to this industry. There was a time when my customers would come in once a week for a trim, just to look sharp..... and a lady would never cut a man's hair. Times have changed but I have no regrets. I always managed to pay my bills, and put our kids through university. Emily and I are comfortable..... life is good, I walk to work every day and we are very proud of our son and daughter."

And so they should be. Elke Sullivan is a step dancer who can out step most fiddle players. That could be because she had lots of practice stepping to the tunes played by her brother Mark, a 3-time Canadian Grand Masters Fiddle Champion and 3-time Canadian Open Fiddle Champion.

So next time you need a haircut - drop into Sully's located at 35 King Street East in Bowmanville just east of Norm's Deli.

Sully's shop has been a traditional barber shop since the early 1930's and if you like the fiddle..... Sully could probably tell you a thing or two..... you never know who you will see there and by the way..... make a point of thanking him for his 50 years of service.

Increase Effectiveness of Processes Within The Business



by Peter Hobb

HOBBS & COMPANY
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS
www.hobb.ca

This is the final article in a series on the "Four Ways To Grow Your Business". This final article, hopefully, will tie it all together (*missed the first three, go online to claringtonpromoter.ca and click on the PAST EDITIONS tab*). To ensure the strategies we learned about previously are working

you must make sure that your processes operate efficiently within your organization. If you don't it is unlikely that the strategies you are trying to implement will generate the desired results.

To build better processes you must understand the real purpose of your business. What is the overall mission for your business? Why are you in business? Write it down. Everything you do, everything your team does must support the mission. For example, BMW is not just about building vehicles, it is about providing its customers with "The Ultimate Driving Experience". When BMW designs a vehicle, it is designed to provide its customers with "The Ultimate Driving Experience". Their mission drives everything they do. Your mission statement will guide you in

developing a business plan, and setting goals. It will also build understanding and trust in your customers' minds and give your team members clearer direction.

To properly develop your processes you need to understand your business' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (S.W.O.T.). When you do a S.W.O.T. analysis you obtain information on your industry, your customers, your competition, your business operations, and your business environment. It will help you to understand your business better. This analysis will identify not only problem areas, which you can address and rectify, but also identify strengths and opportunities that you can take advantage of to win more customers, keep them coming back and spending more each

time they do. This analysis will focus the business on what is important so that processes can be refined to leverage the business' strengths, remove weaknesses, make the most of opportunities and avoid threats when moving the business forward.

Setting up proper processes will allow you, the business' owner, to focus on those things that bring the most value to your business. With a lot of small to medium sized businesses the business owner ends up fighting fires in addition to taking care of regular operations. They don't have time to implement new strategies in their business or even the time to think strategically about their business. Better processes will allow you to step back from the day to day operations because your team mem-

bers will know what is expected of them and how to deal with problems as they arise. They shouldn't have to come to you every time there is a problem. If you can free more time to work ON your business rather than IN your business you will drive more profit.

Another benefit of delegating more to your team members is that they will feel more valued improving the work environment of your business. Also by focusing on a job function and the skills required to do that job it will help ensure that you have the right person in the position. It is also important to remember that you must provide ongoing training so that you can continue to improve processes and keep good team members.

To make a business run more

smoothly you need to systemize every process that needs to be completed to serve your customers and generate a profit. A study completed by Edward W. Demming (redesigner of the Japanese car industry) showed that only 4% of business mistakes were due to direct human error. The other 96% were due to lack of consistent systemization. Documenting systems and processes can help to train team members, delegate responsibility and create consistency. As mentioned in previous articles this will make the business more valuable because it doesn't have to rely on you to operate successfully. In our experience we have found improving systems and processes to be one of the easiest ways to generate more profit and grow your business.