

Search For The Squire

by Charles Taws &
Dave Fletcher

Doris Falls, research assistant

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Everyone loves a good mystery. It doesn't matter if it's Sherlock Holmes, Columbo or Jessica Fletcher, mysteries have long fascinated the public. However, when you combine a mystery with local history then we get excited! One question that has popped up many times over the years is where is Squire Alexander Fletcher buried? No relation to Jessica of T.V. fame this Fletcher was one of the

earliest and most influential settlers of the Bowmanville area. In fact, a large part of the town now sits on his former property. Why then, if he was such an important person can we not find his burial place?

Like a true detective, if we want to solve this puzzle we have to do our homework. A quick look through the history books will show that like town founder Charles Bowman, Squire Fletcher was a wealthy early pioneer who helped establish the town of Bowmanville. The Squire came to this area in 1800, well over 20 years before Charles Bowman, and unlike him actually lived in the community. This has

prompted one old-timer to remark, "maybe they should have named it Fletcherville instead of Bowmanville."

We have neither a picture of Charles Bowman nor of Squire Fletcher, but in the case of the latter we, at least, have some written descriptions of him. A great grandson wrote in 1951, "It was said [The Squire] was a Presbyterian, red-headed, hot-tempered, but a just magistrate". Another source says he was "blond". A grandson wrote a more vivid description in 1896, "He was a small man of considerable attainments; was very bright, systematic, shrewd, active, nervous, quick tempered, a very loyal

British subject and a strict Presbyterian." A Scottish clergyman, Rev. Proudfoot, who interviewed him in the 1840's left us this description, "[He was] restless, rude and smelling of whiskey." The fact that the Squire and he were on opposing sides of a serious religious question could have prejudiced the clergyman's view.

Alexander Fletcher was born in 1769 in New Jersey, the same year his parents had immigrated from Glen Orchy, Scotland. His Father was not a supporter of the American Government and that is how his son decided to come to Canada. He was

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in the capitol Newark (now Niagara-on-the-Lake) by 1796 and here he married Rachel Corwin. Tradition says they had a son, John, before moving to Darlington in the year 1800. Their next child, Archibald, was born that year— one of the first to be born here. Squire Alexander held land in Darlington, Monaghan (much of it where the city of Peterborough now stands) and Ops Township. It is not clear how he acquired so much land, but J.B. Fairbairn, writing in 1906 states, “[The Squire] was well connected in the old country being related to some of the leading families. The historic names of Gordon and Drummond were either among the patronymics of his forebears or belonged to them by marriage.” He was also the nephew of Sir Allen MacNab the Premier of the Province of Canada in the 1850’s. MacNab’s large house, Dundurn Castle, is a museum in Hamilton. No doubt the Squire purchased some of his land, and it was cheap in those days, but he was also given large grants from the government.

Their first home was a log house, but he built a large frame house in 1805 where the Hendry Apartments (252 King Street East) are today. In 1812 he built a brick resi-



The Fletcher House, one of the earliest brick houses to be built in Ontario, shortly before its demolition. Through the years it had become the Loscombe Family Home and finally Kingsway Apartments. Its location is today behind the medical centre at 222 King Street East.

dence behind the present day Medical Centre at 222 King Street East. He sold his land in Monaghan to pay for this house. This was one of the first brick structures built in Ontario and became known as the Loscombe House and finally Kingsway Apartments. The bricks had to be made on site and were smaller in size than bricks of today. Mr. Jury was a later owner of the house when it was apartments. Nora Allin, daughter of famous runner Alfred Shrubbs, remembered living there after her marriage to Lorne Allin. She remarked on its lovely gardens and lawns.

The War of 1812 had begun as Squire Alexander completed his brick house and he constructed several log structures near it that were used to store munitions destined for York (Toronto). It has been said that the munitions had been conveyed here by bateaux, but perhaps the cannons that Roger Conant conveyed to York (Toronto) from here were also stored here for a while (see previous article on Clarington in the War of 1812, go to www.claringtonpromoter.ca). Alexander was also a Captain of a Battalion Company as well as a magistrate. In those early years ministers were hard to come by so most couples had to be married by a magistrate. One listing in an early marriage register mentions that the marriage had to be performed by Fletcher as the nearest Anglican minister was 18 miles away. The earliest marriage record for Squire Alexander dates back to 1805 and one internet source even cited him as being known as the “Marryin’ Squire.” As Bowmanville grew and developed, the Fletchers gradually sold off their land. By 1868 they had 168 deeds for properties in town including the Farmer’s Hotel (which stood in the present parking lot east of the Olympia Diner). Alexander and Rachel had seven children in total and while

some remained in the area, over the years, most of them moved away and their local land holdings diminished.

Probably because the Fletchers’ time of greatest influence was so early their contribution was largely forgotten. That is until the hobby of genealogy caught on. The rise of the internet has enabled everyone to look into their family history. Clarington Museums get requests everyday from people researching their roots. With the Fletcher family the research usually leads to one question: where is Squire Alexander Fletcher buried? You can check the records for the Bowmanville Cemetery or any of the Darlington cemeteries and you won’t find him. He’s not in the interment record either. It was a mystery to me and one researcher even resorted to shouting in frustration! However, Fletcher descendant George Vice came up with a probable solution.

George said the early Fletchers were buried in the Auld Kirk churchyard. To understand this we must look at the history of the Bowmanville Cemetery. This cemetery was established in 1857, but the first settlers came in 1794. So where were people buried until 1857? Early pioneers lived an isolated life and often they buried their recently deceased on their farm. You can still see this type of family plot along some country side-roads. There is one on the north side of highway # 2 just west of Welcome (north of Port Hope). The earliest cemetery in Clarington was at Port Darlington, but others were soon established. In those days people wanted to be buried close to their church so most churches had a burial place known as a churchyard around them. St. Andrew’s, Church Street Methodist (now Trinity United), St. Joseph’s Catholic and St. John’s Anglican all had churchyards. All, except St. John’s, were removed to the Bowmanville cemetery for sanitary and development reasons. As anyone who has taken the Museum’s Spirit Walks knows the removal of most of the cemeteries took place in 1867, but St. Andrews was later, 1883, so we have a bit more information about it. The bodies were kept in the fire hall across the street (present day Town Hall) before being transported to the Bowmanville Cemetery. Mr. A. Herbert Fletcher remembered seeing them there as a boy. Sixty-seven bodies and their associated stones were removed from this little churchyard. But why then is there no record of Squire Fletcher? Mr. Vice thought the graves had been so disturbed and the bones so mixed up that they didn’t know who was who anymore. That could be so but what about the stone?

This remained a mystery until Dave Fletcher of Coldwater contacted me. He said that family members had gone to the Bowmanville Cemetery in 1938 looking for the Squire’s stone but could not find it. He also had a family photo from the 1920’s which showed a lady standing near a stone in the cemetery and the caption said she was next to Squire Fletcher’s grave! He also suggested I call Ken Sherwood the operations employee at the cemetery who has books that give detailed listings of who is buried in the cemetery. I had already checked all the genealogical records available so I was sceptical anything new would be gleaned from these books. How wrong I was; Drummond Gordon Fletcher’s stone is listed (and we knew of this stone), but two other plots with no names are also listed.



No picture of Squire Alexander Fletcher is known to exist.

This is his second oldest son Archibald (1800-1882) who was born shortly after the family’s arrival to Clarington. Archibald was one of the first children to be born here.

Ken said all three plots had people buried in them. We went to D.G. Fletcher’s stone and its location matched perfectly to the old photo from Dave Fletcher. Near it we found another stone half buried. Ken uncovered it and while badly damaged we could make out a “6”. Later Ken re-covered the stone to protect it, but before he did museum volunteer Mac MacDougall and I went and photographed it.

I contacted Dave Fletcher with my findings and he reminded me that, while the stone is damaged, you can still make out a “6” and Squire Alexander Fletcher died on the 9th Day of June 1846. Dave also offered two further pieces of family information. His records



Museum volunteer Lowell MacDougall stands next to the stone we believe to be Squire Alexander Fletcher’s in the Bowmanville Cemetery.

state that the stones fell off the transport wagon when being moved which would account for the bad shape of this one. Dave also mentioned that A. Herbert Fletcher thought the stones had been relocated to his father’s plot. This is a problem because his father, Gordon Drummond Fletcher, is not buried in this part of the cemetery. However, his great uncle, Drummond Gordon Fletcher, is right next to these two plots. The similarity in names could have created the confusion. With all this corroborating evidence I think we have found the last resting places of Squire Alexander Fletcher and his wife Rachel Corwin. What do you think?

We have put all the pieces together, but can we say 100% that Squire Fletcher is buried here? Maybe not, but I would challenge anyone to find information that would refute it. The last resting places of two of Bowmanville’s most influential early pioneers we’re unknown. We think we’ve found one. Can we find the other? A book on place names mentioned that Charles Bowman was buried in Italy but gave no source, but it is a lead. So perhaps, one day, we’ll find his last resting place too.



This badly damaged stone is believed to be that of Squire Alexander Fletcher. This stone had been half buried and was reburied to protect it after this photo was taken in August of 2013.

Understanding Our Master Fire Plan



by Jim Abernethy, Publisher

jim@claringtonpromoter.ca

Did you know that the largest identifiable ignition source (21%) of fire related deaths in Ontario is cigarettes?

This and other interesting facts can be found on the website of the Province of Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Did you know that the vast majority of firefighters in Ontario are volunteers (63%) followed by full-time (36%) and part-time representing only 1%.

In Ontario, there are a total of 457 Fire Departments.

• Total # Full-time Departments - 31

• Total # Composite Departments - 187 (incl. 1 Northern Fire Protection Department)

• Total # Volunteer Departments - 239 (incl. 49 Northern Fire Protection Departments (above data current as of: December 2, 2013 as provided by Office of the Ontario Fire Marshall)

Composite Fire Departments make up 41 % of all Fire Departments in Ontario. Clarington has enormous geography and a mix of rural and growing urban communities. The "Composite" Fire Department serves us well, meaning we hire both full-time and volunteer firefighters.

The Office of the Ontario Fire Marshall provides oversight for all Fire Departments in Ontario and is responsible for training of ALL firefighters (both full-time and volunteers) and other fire department personnel in Ontario, providing them with guidelines and best practices; and to assist them with providing the best fire prevention and fire protection services they can.

One such guideline is the Master Fire Plan which all municipalities in Ontario are required to develop and update regularly.

The Master Fire Plan defines the community fire problem and provides the future direction of the delivery of fire protection services to achieve the most cost effective and efficient level of fire protection services resulting in the best value for the community.

The implementation of the Master Fire Plan is based on our municipality's ability to pay. For example, subsequent to the worldwide recession in 2008 Clarington Council elected to delay implementing portions of the Master Fire Plan to

reduce the impact (increase) on property taxes.

There are several benefits to developing a Master Fire Plan.

- Supports the risk management program by identifying programs and levels of service.
- Improves public relations and promotes interest and direct involvement within the community.
- Sets standards of service the fire department is capable of providing.
- Potentially decreases costs, for fire protection and/or insurance coverage.
- Contributes to a reduction in the number of fires, fire deaths, fire injuries and property loss.
- Makes best use of available resources.

Both our full-time and volunteer firefighters are important resources which form integral components of the Clarington Master Fire Plan.

The Municipality of Clarington has a competent, capable, professional and well equipped "composite" firefighting force that has a proven track record of protecting our citizens.

As a community, we could not have been more proud of our firefighters than on April 29, 2008 when the efforts of both our volunteer and full-time firefighters worked together to fight a nasty fire, fuelled by westerly wind gusts of more than 50 kilometers per hour, which threatened to destroy the Bowmanville Historical Downtown Core.

However, managing a "composite" Fire Department is not without challenges. Clarington Council recently (2014) hired independent professional consultants to update our Master Fire Plan.

(For details of the Clarington Master Fire Plan, contact your Councillor at 905-623-3379).

This current Newcastle Fire Hall debate is an example of what is at stake for everyone as our community grows and the Master Fire Plan is implemented.

- For the unionized full-time firefighters this is an opportunity to expand their membership.
- For the volunteer firefighters there is a threat of job losses and the end of careers.
- For the Clarington taxpayers implementation means increased municipal spending and property tax increases.

No doubt Members of Council are being lobbied hard by all of these stakeholders. However, the recently updated (2014) Master Fire Plan is the blueprint Members of Council should use to guide them thru this Newcastle Fire Hall debate.

Let us hope that Members of Council base their decision on implementing the recommendations outlined in our recently updated Master Fire Plan, and do not bend under the pressures of union lobbyist and special interest groups in the hopes of winning support in this..... a municipal election year.

Everybody loves our firefighters!

So now for the less serious stuff - the winter that never ends is drawing to a close, we think.

Cathy and her horticultural friends seem to think so. They are primed and ready to go, planting heritage tomato & vegetable seeds indoors now, hoping



The No. 2 Fire Brigade of Bowmanville. They were stationed on Durham Street in the South Ward area. In this picture the brigade is preparing to march in the big parade to celebrate Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee on June 20th 1887.

to get a jump on the growing season - anxiously waiting for the weather to break so they can turn a shovel in the dirt.

These garden lovers have been meeting all winter throughout Clarington, planning for spring sharing ideas about vegetable, flower and water gardens.

Even our 8 year old granddaughter felt an urge to call Cathy the other morning, 10 minutes before she jumped onto her school bus to exclaim "her golden beet seeds have sprouted!"

If you are a new resident in Clarington or new to gardening, consider joining one of these groups.

See the article (in this edition) by Leslie James for contact information for gardening groups located throughout Clarington.

Community Service Clubs play an important role in developing the fabric of a community and where membership is truly rewarding. I encourage everyone to consider investing membership in one of our local service clubs.

You will enjoy the fellowship and discover it is a wonderful way of giving back to your community.

Here in Clarington we are fortunate to have a number of service clubs operating within our communities. Most notable are the Lions, Kinsmen and Rotarians.

The Lions have four clubs serving Clarington: Kendal (2004), Courtice (1997), Newcastle (1947) and Bowmanville (1935).

The Kinsman Club of Bowmanville has been serving our community since 1950.

2014 is a very special year for the Rotary Club of Bowmanville which celebrates 90 years of community service in Bowmanville on April 11, 2014.

Read about the achievements of Rotary in our community and around the world inside this edition.

Join with me in congratulating the members of the Rotary Club of Bowmanville for this remarkable milestone in the history of their club..... and call me if you would like to join with Rotarians, their spouses and friends for a special dinner celebration on the evening of April 11, 2014. Brokerlink Insurance is sponsoring Guest Speaker and Comedian Neil Crone. I may have a few extra tickets (905-261-7788).

Saving the best for last..... I am proud to say that my daughter-in-law Tina Abernethy has joined Royal Service Real Estate Inc., Brokerage. I look forward to working with her and ask that you keep her in mind when you are thinking of buying or selling property anywhere in Durham, Northumberland and especially Clarington. Tina's official announcement is on page 4 of this edition.



The last "steamer" of the Bowmanville Fire Department. This photo taken in 1912 at old fire hall which stood where the post office is today. This fire hall began its life as a church (note brick-work). The "steamer" was sold for scrap to the Bowmanville Foundry in 1925. From left to right: unknown, Fred Robinson, Fred Ferguson (driver), Tom Percy, Art Mingeaud, J.J. Moriarty, Mayor Archie Tait and Jack Cox.

Strategy Execution



by Peter Hobb

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In a previous article I wrote about the need to take your company through a strategic planning process every two or three years to reevaluate existing strategies and, if appropriate, identify new ones that should be adopted. Normally this process creates a lot of energy. New ideas are discussed, there is a consensus on the plan that should be adopted to move the company forward, and people become revital-

ized. The problem is that a lot of strategic plans do not get off the shelf and become a living reality. In an article published in Fortune Magazine it was stated that "less than 10% of strategies effectively formulated are effectively executed". Hopefully if we can understand why this happens we can avoid being on the wrong side of this statistic. This article analyses some of the reasons why companies are unable to turn good strategies into results. This article assumes that the strategies you are adopting are realistic and the goals achievable.

Implementation of strategies may fail because there is no accountability. A person may be given the responsibility to implement a strategy but there is no follow up to ensure this is happening. When a

person takes responsibility to implement a strategy they should be required to commit to a time line when certain milestones are going to be met. Their progress needs to be monitored against these milestones to ensure the plan is moving forward.

Communication can also be a major issue. Strategic plans have failed because they do not get communicated to all the people involved. If communication is poor people may not understand what you are trying to achieve or what is expected of them. As a result it is very unlikely they are going to willingly support new initiatives or properly execute existing strategies. People are naturally resistant to change. It is human nature. Frequent communication can break down this barrier. Fre-

quent communication allows people to become part of the process, allows them to provide input and become advocates. The more people understand what you are trying to achieve and how their role fits into the plan, the more likely they will be on board with what you are trying to do.

Day to day operational issues can make it very difficult to focus on executing the strategic plan. We all have likely experienced this. You need to make time to execute the strategic plan. For example, meetings to discuss operational issues should be held separate from meetings on strategy execution. If you don't make time for strategy execution you will likely find that the enthusiasm shown when you first developed the plan will wane and it will become more and

more difficult to execute the plan. Also, if you decide in the future to try this process again you may find that people are skeptical about your ability to carry out the plan, making it even more difficult to change the way you are doing business.

The company's leadership needs to be committed to the strategic plan and they have to show this commitment. Your people are not likely to become committed to the plan unless you show them that you are. It is not enough for you to say that this is a good plan. Your actions will tell people your level of commitment. Be an integral part of the monitoring process. Make your own commitments to executing part of the plan. Your enthusiasm can be contagious. This kind of commitment will also keep you more in tune

with what is happening on the front line in your business.

When executing your strategy it may be necessary to upgrade the skills of your people. You may need to provide specific training to your people to allow them to be more proficient in executing what is expected of them. Your plan may also require that you hire people that bring in skills that you currently do not have or cannot develop internally.

To enhance your chances of success strategy execution should be embedded into your reward system. Reward people who successfully execute and produce the results you are looking for. Rewarding good behaviour leads to more good behaviour. This should also lead to a culture of getting things done and more success for your business.