

SURVEYORS 1829 EXPEDITION BECAME "LIFE OF RILEY"

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No one had coined the phrase "Life of Riley" in 1829 but after his experiences along the Ausable River in 1828, Samuel Smith had an easy time while working in the present County of Haldimand in 1829.

The trip was shorter, there were settlements along the shore of Lake Erie at which he could secure food, when provisions ran short, and the main inland trouble seemed to be a shortage of drinking water. There was considerable trouble however tracing old survey lines.

Smith's Field Notes listed his 1829 work as a "Survey of Examination of the Township of Rainham in obedience to the Commands of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor of the 1st of April, 1829. From the Surveyor general's office to me Directed. Instructions with a Diagram for my Guidance, dated Surveyor Gen'l. office, York 18th April, 1829. Commenced on the ground the 1st of June and finished the 26th of June 1828."

(Ed. Note. The lieutenant governor was Sir John Colborne who in 1828 had replaced the reactionary, Peregrine Maitland in office.)

The notes show he based his survey of the Line between Rainham and Walpole as "Commencing at Low water mark on the shore of Lake Erie and in the centre of an allowance for a road between the above named township.

(The present Haldimand County includes part of the land granted in 1784 to the Six Nations Confederacy, and which in later years was sold back to the government. Although there was some settlement along the lake front by veterans of Butler's Rangers, general settlement in Haldimand began in 1833, four years after Smith's trip. During the survey, the "Indian Lines" as they were called caused Smith and party a great deal of trouble, as they were poorly marked. The name Hoover (sometimes spelled Hover) occurs frequently. David, Abraham and Benjamin Hoover with whom he stayed were sons of Jacob Hoover, Pennsylvania Mennonite, and first Rainham Tp. settler.)

Diary excerpts as follow:

Monday, 1st June.

I started with my small party in search of more men and provisions. Traveled on the line between the 1 and 2nd Con. to the township line between Rainham and Walpole then went down to the lake and engaged some provisions of Abraham Hoover's. I then run from the lake up the township line 70 chains. Night came on and I was obliged to stop. Holmes and Armstrong chained. I kep (sic) an Eye on them as ofen (sic) as possible — I hired Isaac Thomas for 2s/6d per day to commence tomorrow.

Tuesday, 2nd June.

I ran out from the end of the 70 chains on the first Concession to the front of the second, being 21 chains further. I run this

to get the bearing of the line. Holmes and Wm. Armstrong chained it and John Rose was the picket man.

I then took the line out of the chain and Wm. Armstrong the loose end and Holmes took the compass and Rose the picket and we ran and measured out to the front of the third concession on the line between Walpole and Rainham . . . Isaac Thomas was packman and cook for us, sometimes used the axe. I returned to the front of the second on the town line and measured across 5 lots and planted posts. Holmes run on this concession in order to find the bearing. I had some difficulty in finding the line in front of the 3rd Con. Then returned back about 3 lots to get to a house to stop all night as we could not take our blankets with us.

Wednesday, 3rd June.

Rained some this morning so that I could not start early. I then started and measured across 11 lots . . . it rained in the afternoon. A shower so that we was obliged to stop work say 1½ hours. We then returned back across 5 lots to stop all night at a house for we got wet being caught in the rain. At Sunset it rained hard. I had some difficulty in linching the old corners.

(Ed. Note: In this diary Smith varied his pattern from 1828, usually listing the duties for each of his gang followed during the day.)

On Thursday, the 4th, he measured across Lots 17 to 23 and then worked on the boundary between Rainham and the Indian territory, commenting: "Now and then I had a great deal of trouble in finding the Indian Boundary line and found it to be Very Crooked and I returned to the front of the 2nd after Sunset to get lodging as I had not men to carry the bedding.

Friday, 5th.

Went with the party to the Indian boundary line where the front of the 2nd intersects the same. Then run and measured on the Indian line to Lake Erie being 146 chains . . . I concluded that I was obliged to go up the lake shore with the party to get provisions of Abraham Hoover — that it would be but little more expensive to scale (e) the lake shore as I had found the old survey did not agree with the diagram and that it appeared to me that the shape of the lake was different from the diagram. So I began the scaling line to the junction of this line on the lake and took the bearing of the lake across lots No. 24, 24, 23 and 22. I dined with Captain Evans at his house by his invitation.

Saturday he continued scaling the lake, stayed at Hoover's overnight, and continued scaling Sunday, then the lake "being ruff, I stoped scaling and went to writing in my diary and field notes, and laying out the outline of the township on a long sheet of paper which took me the remaining part of the day.

Monday, 8th.

I got pork and flour at Abraham Hoover's. Started with the party and continued traversing the lake up to the boundary between the township of Walpole and Rainham.

He worked concession roads and by the 11th was able to write: "I began measuring on the boundary line of the Indian land and Rainham from the front of the 3rd concession up the front of the 5th in order to open the line so that I could find the . . . where the Con. lines intersected the said line." This concession work continued the rest of the week but on Saturday the 13th he wrote:

"We had a great deal of trouble in finding the old line. We then was out of provisions and was obliged to march in to the 3rd Con.

for provisions before we could get our dinner. Got in 4 o'clock P.M. Took dinner. I then sent 2 men (J. R. Rose and F. Row) down to the lake for pork. I then with Holmes and Armstrong prepared an apparatus for taking the variation of the compass.

Sunday morning at 3 he took observations of the Polar stars (probably the Big Dipper as he uses the plural) when they were horizontal and Gamma was easterly. (This was done to check the compass variation).

Thursday, 18th June.

(He was working trying to locate the line in front of the 5th) "it being badly blazed". At night "I marched across the 5 Con. to the front and to the camp where I stoped all last night as we could not find any water nearer. We then took our dinners. By that time it was late in the day. Then men went to cooking for tomorrow and I copied field notes. . . I sent Isaac Thomas out to the settlement for pork and butter and clothes.

Tuesday 23rd.

I started and went to our camp at Stony Creek. Took breakfast, then marched out the front of the 7th Con.

For the next few days he had trouble locating old survey lines and on the 25th noted: I then discharged Isaac Thomas and Frederick Row as I had no more want of them.

(Today it would be reported the men were "laid off" — no work.)

The work was nearing an end. He concluded the 26th with "N.B. I sent Wm. Armstrong out to Culvess for the horse for Holmes to ride to Ancaster.

Saturday 27th I was copying field notes from my memorandum book until the middle of the day then I went out Culvess and changed clothes. I wrote some more in my fieldbook. I discharged Holmes, Armstrong and Rose. Gave them this day to leave the Woods and return Holme (sic) again.

Wednesday, 1st July.

Started early in the morning and went to Abraham Hoover's writing out vouchers for

1828 CORN WINE RECIPE

(Editor's Note: Pioneer Samuel Smith ran into what he considered a good recipe for making wine during his 1828 expeditions and included it in his diary for that summer.

(It is being reprinted as a matter of record. Preparation of such concoctions was a regularity in the early days. Some packed what would be considered a "terrific punch". Indications are this one did.)

So here — for the record only — is Pioneer Smith's "Reicept for Making Corn Wine":

"1.—Take 2 quarts of corn juice and 3 pounds of Maple Sugar. Add cold water to it until it makes one gallon altogether and in that proportion for a barrel. 2.—Let your cask be clean and, when you fill it, you must keep it perfectly full so that when it works it will discharge the sediment. Sometimes the sediment will (be) so thick that it can't come out the bung hole. Now you must take a spoon or stick and try to draw it out or make the sediment some thinner. This barrel will be say 5 or 6 weeks working. What runs out you may save and let it stand and it will later (be) so that you may put it in the barrel again. Some 6 months after it is worked you may use it but the older the better. When it is done working rack it off."

David Gibson's miles out of town near Young street and wrote vouchers ½ of the night.

Thursday 3rd.

I remained at Mr. Gibson's and wrote vouchers all day. Finished at 6 o'clock p.m.

Friday 4th.

I started at Sun rise and went in to York and had my accounts inspected by George Ridout, clerk. Ordered to come tomorrow. I remained at the Steamboat hotel. G. Tiffany (Tippany) and all the clerks of the Canada company.

Saturday 5th.

I went to the Canada Com'y office to get a check on the bank for L3, 19s, 3d currency. Went to the bank and got it. Then went to the surveyor general's office and again got ½ Gr. paper and ordered to make accounts on their forms. I got the Horse Shoed and went 6 miles on Young street to James Anderson.

Wednesday 9th.

My horse got out of the pasture last night. I was all the forenoon hunting but in the after-

noon was busy writing out vouchers. .. Finished writing.

Thursday 10th.

Started early and went to D. Gibson's Took breakfast and then went to York to prove my accounts before Esquire Proudfoot I put them in the surveyor general's office. Was ordered to come the next day. I stayed in town at the Steamboat Hotel .. This closed my doings with Government. My account amounted to L69, 10s. Currency.

Friday 11th.

Went to the surveyor-general' office. had to make some little alterations. Then went to George Ridout's. Took a glass of with him and gave him an order to get my L69, 10s off the surveyor-general as soon as he gets it off the Govt for him to forward to me by the mail. I then traveled 14 miles to (Coady). Stayed all night.

Saturday 12th.

I went 40 miles by way of Dundas to Ancaster. Got home at 9 o'clock. Very unwell.

I charged 1 day hunting men, 2 days traveling to Rainham, 27 days in woods — 30: 2 days returning to Ancaster, 8 days making maps, 5 days working out vouchers and settling with the men, 4 days writing field notes. 2 days writing a diary — 21 (plus 30) 51 days. Not charged government, 7 days.

The diary ends.

* * *

Other pages are filled with copies of deeds granted John McKee, John Nicholson, George Nicholson, Samuel Ryerse (probably one of the Ryerse-Ryerse family which had been transferred to David Hover (Hoover). To Patterick (sic) McKee, then the property of Abraham Hoover, Charles Sequer (??), transferred to Wm. Dickson, Esq, and later to Philip Bender and then to John Millar, to William Gardner or Garner (This had been entered 1st March, 1797, and the property then belonged to John Millar; to Morgan De Shay (also Millar's property); to T. Steward, entered 17 March, 1797, and now belonging to David Depew.

(As Smith mentioned earlier in the diary he apparently took time to survey some privately owned properties and to write out new deeds, describing the property.

Then Mr. Smith included "An infalliable Cure for Mortification" (Gangrene — an ailment frequently contracted in pioneer days, through injury) — for both inwardly and external use. For the former equal amounts of "sulphur, salpetre, alum," were pulverized. Dose was one teaspoonful in a "Wine glass of good vinegar". This was best however when applied to the affected part, with gunpowder added. A spoonful was to be placed in a tea cup of vinegar and went the linin cloth of it and apply it to the affected part or parts as often the linin gets dry".

Then he included the words of a ballad "The Storm" (author not indentified), which was all about a storm damaged ship, whose crew tossed the guns overboard, finally rode to safety, and (after 19 verses) took a drink to celebrate and as the author (still not indentified) said:

"Where's the tempest now. Who feels it
None, the dainger's drowned in Wine".

the men to sign. At evening I went to Mr. Benjam Hoover's shed raising. Took supper. Then with home with Davie Hoover, and stoped all night. This was a cold day.

He remained at the Hoovers for some days, working on protracting the lake shore, and on the 4th noted "I heard the report of cannons from the American shore supposed to be at Buffalo (Presumably it was a July 4 celebration).

Smith then did private survey work for various farmers, writing deeds for their properties, Hands Holmes having joined him from Ancaster, on the 12th he went to the Grand River, staying with William Holmes, returning to Ancaster on the 13th.

On the 14th, 15th he attended the quarter sessions court at Hamilton and on the 16th had a trial with Henry Kuns "lost the Case. Returned home."

He gathered hay on the 17th, 18th, and on Sunday went to a neighbors and read the newspapers.

Then he began working on his Rainham map and calculating the area of lots, noted on the 29th "I charge for his day work." Meanwhile Kuns was helping with the harvest (apparently there was no enmity despite the civil suit. He probably was the man called Coons in an earlier diary.)

On the 3rd he wrote "I was working on the contents of lots on the map but was not well so I not charge for this day".
Sunday 9th August.

My 'boy (son) began to walk.

Friday 14th.

I went to court in Hamilton to and heard a trial of a rape convicted in waggon
Thursday 20th.

I went to Hamilton and heard James Young's trial for murdering Wm. Masters. (?) He got cleared. Trial lasted all day.

(Ed. Note. The Young case was a cause celebre in early Hamilton history. James and John Young had had a dispute with a man named Sheeler, who in turn accused them of killing their hired man who had disappeared. They were acquitted. Public feeling was indignant. They sold their farms, went to the U.S. and began a search for the supposed victim, finally locating him at Tonawanda, N.Y. Sheeler was prosecuted as a result and pilloried).

In late August he was still working on his survey but took time out to attend a camp meeting at Ancaster.

On Sunday, the 30th he started for York (now Toronto) and went 30 miles (by horse) staying near the 16 mile creek "toward York on Dundas street". The diary continues:

Monday 31st.

I traveled into York. Got their at 4 o'clock p.m. being too late to go the surveyor-general office. Put up at the Steam Boat Hotel. Tuesday 1st September.

I put in the Surveyor-General's office my map and field notes of Rainham. was ordered to come the next morning. then Went out 6 miles on Young (Yonge) street to James Anderson.

Wednesday 2nd.

I went to Surveyor Gen'l office and was ordered to put in my accounts there. Went to