

History of Mississauga

Provided by Heritage Mississauga

Introduction

Mississauga can trace its roots back before European settlement – over 200 years. In the early 1600s, French traders encountered Native peoples, the Mississaugas, around the North Shore of Lake Huron. The Mississaugas were an Ojibwa band, and by the early 1700s had migrated south and settled in the area around the Etobicoke Creek, Credit River and Burlington Bay. “Mississauga” translates as meaning “River of the North of Many Mouths”.

The First Purchase

On August 2nd, 1805, near the mouth of the Credit River, representatives for the British Crown and the Native Mississaugas signed a treaty – Treaty 13A – which surrendered a vast tract of land to the British Crown. Referred to as the “Mississauga Purchase” or the “First Purchase”, the Crown acquired over 74,000 acres of land excluding a 1 mile strip on each side of the Credit River from the waterfront to the base line (modern Eglinton Avenue), and this became known as the Credit Indian Reserve. This tract of land surveyed in 1806, known as the “Old Survey,” was named Toronto Township, and opened up the area for settlement.

The Second Purchase & Other Treaties

Additional treaties were signed between the Mississaugas and the British Crown, allowing the Crown to acquire title to more land. On October 28th, 1818, Treaty 19 – known as the “Second Purchase” – was signed, surrendering over 600,000 acres of land, which included most of today’s Region of Peel. This vast area was surveyed and opened for settlement in 1819. Known as the “New Survey”, this area was divided into the townships of Toronto, Chinguacousy, Caledon, Albion and Toronto Gore. The Mississaugas signed two other treaties on February 28th, 1820. The “Credit Treaties.” 22 and 23, surrendered much of the Credit Indian Reserve lands set aside in 1805. The Mississaugas relocated in 1847 and settled on the New Credit Reserve at Hagersville near Brantford.

Settlement & “Lost Villages”

Gradually settlers began to take up lots throughout the new and old surveys, and over time small settlements became established. These settlements developed into the villages of Clarkson, Cooksville, Dixie, Erindale, Malton, Meadowvale Village, Port Credit and Streetsville. Over time, communities blossomed too at Lakeview and Lorne Park, while others – the “lost villages,” - disappeared entirely: the hamlets and villages of Barberton, Britannia, Burnhamthorpe, Derry West, Elmbank, Frogmore, Hanlan, Harris’ Corners, Hawkins’ Corners, Lisgar, McCurdy’s Corners, Mount Charles, Nunan’s Corners (also known as the Catholic Swamp), Palestine, Pucky’s Huddle, Richview, Sheridan, Snider’s Corners, Summerville and Whaley’s Corners.

Clarkson

Settlement initially began in Clarkson in 1806, shortly after the first Mississauga Purchase. Among the first settlers were the Bradley, Greeniaus, Hammond, Jarvis, Merigold, Monger, and Thompson families, many of whom were United Empire Loyalists and were among the founding families of the Merigold’s Point settlement here in Mississauga. Warren Clarkson arrived in 1808 at the age of 15, and in 1819 he built a house and farm; the house still stands and is believed to be one of the oldest surviving buildings in Mississauga. The Clarkson family also operated a general store and post office. In 1855 the Great Western Railway came through the area and the station “Clarkson’s Corners”, later shortened to “Clarkson”. In its heyday, Clarkson was known as the ‘Strawberry Capital of Canada’, and Strawberry Socials were a focal point of life in the early community. Both of the Museums of Mississauga, Bradley Museum and Benares Historic House, are located in Clarkson.

Cooksville

Cooksville became a hub of commercial activity in the early township, centered on the intersection of two important early roads, Dundas Street and Hurontario Street. It also became the early administrative centre for the surrounding township. The village of Cooksville was originally known as "Harrisville", named after its first settler Daniel Harris, who arrived in 1808. Jacob Cook arrived in 1819. By 1820 Cook was awarded a contract to carry mail between York and Niagara and was operating a stagecoach service throughout much of Upper Canada. He was awarded a tavern licence in 1829, and immediately built an inn. The village was renamed "Cooksville" in 1836 and it continued to grow until 1852, when a fire destroyed a large portion of the village. Cooksville rebounded, and became the centre for civic, industrial, commercial and education interests in Toronto Township.

Dixie

If Cooksville enjoyed civic and commercial success, Dixie revelled in its importance as a place of worship and an agricultural centre. Protestants in the southeastern section of Toronto Township worshipped at the early Union Chapel for many years. The community was originally dubbed "Irishtown" for the many Irish Catholics who chose to settle here. It was later named "Sydenham", before adopting the name of "Dixie" in honour of a prominent Welsh pioneer doctor, Beaumont Wilson Bowen Dixie. While Dixie's close proximity to Cooksville prevented it from developing a strong commercial character of its own, Dixie became a prosperous agricultural produce-oriented community, with garden markets dotting the Dundas Highway. Dixie was also home to Toronto Township's first indoor ice rink, Dixie Arena, the Dixie Beehives, and the Dixie Cold Storage facility.

Erindale

Erindale was established around the once-vital crossroads of Dundas Street, Mississauga Road, and the Credit River. Erindale first came into being in 1822 when Thomas Racey, a land speculator, bought the centre block of land to build a mill and establish a village. When Racey was unable to meet his payments, the land was auctioned off to eager settlers. By 1827, a saw and flour mill were operating, a post office established, a new church built, and a burgeoning village was coming to life. Erindale has had many names over its existence: it was first called Toronto, but when the post office was established, the name Credit was chosen. By the mid 1830s the area became known as Springfield, and then later as Springfield-on-the-Credit. In 1890, the new name of Erindale was chosen after the estate of Reverend James Magrath, an early influential settler. He had named his estate "Erindale" in reference to his homeland – Ireland. Erindale was also home to Price's dairy, the first dairy to produce pasteurized milk in Canada in 1904. The power of the Credit River was harnessed to produce hydro-electricity in 1910, briefly forming 'Lake Erindale'. In 1919 a fire destroyed much of the central portion of the village, although many reminders of the past remain. The Robinson-Adamson Grange, home to Heritage Mississauga, is located on Dundas Street in Erindale.

Malton

The first recorded settler in Malton was Samuel Moore, who arrived in 1823. Among other early settlers was Richard Halliday, a native of Malton in Yorkshire, England, who had arrived in this area in 1819. By the late 1830s, Halliday had gained sufficient influence, being the only blacksmith in town, to have his new home named after his birthplace. The community of Malton developed around the "four corners" of Derry and Airport Roads, and by 1850 the village had a general store, a cobbler shop, a small hotel and a blacksmith. The arrival of the Grand Trunk Railway in 1854 provided local farmers with easier access to market, and the railway helped to turn Malton into a major grain handling and export centre. Malton was awarded the county seat in 1859, which it held for a year, and was incorporated as a police village in 1914. In 1937 Malton was chosen as the site for a new airport – now known as Pearson International Airport.

Meadowvale Village

Settlement of Meadowvale Village began in 1819, but without the conveniences of a store or mills nearby, ownership of lands around Meadowvale changed frequently. In 1831 saw and grist mills were

established, and the area enjoyed a period of commercial and industrial prosperity. Increased settlement culminated in 1844 with the arrival of Francis Silverthorn, who bought and enlarged the mill complex. By the 1850s, Meadowvale had two hotels, a wagon shop, a foundry, and a school. Due to the well-preserved historic character of the area, Meadowvale Village earned the distinction of becoming Ontario's first Heritage Conservation District in 1980. With the realignment of Creditview Road and Derry Road, Meadowvale Village retains the charm of a 19th century village.

Port Credit

In 1796, near the mouth of the Credit River, the British Government erected an inn and trading post, known as the Government Inn. The river takes its name from the custom of trading with natives based on a system of credit. On August 2nd, 1805, the British Crown signed a land treaty with the Mississaugas at the River Credit in which the Natives retained a one-mile strip on either side of the river. It was only in 1834 that the village plot for Port Credit was surveyed and harbour construction began in earnest. Port Credit experienced a number of economic booms and busts throughout its history. The arrival of the St. Lawrence Starch Company in 1889 and other large industries boosted the area's prospects. The village of Port Credit was incorporated in 1914, gained town status in 1961, and joined the City of Mississauga in 1974. Old Port Credit Village, located on the west side of the river and south of Lakeshore Road, was designated as a Heritage Conservation District in 2005.

Streetsville

When the survey of the northern portion of Toronto Township was completed in 1819, survey contractor Timothy Street received permission to build saw and grist mills. James Glendinning built the first small sawmill in the area on the Mullet Creek, but the building of the larger mills by Street on the Credit River attracted settlers to the area. Soon a small village had developed around the site. Street's initial business ventures marked the beginning of a long tradition of milling in Streetsville that is still strong today. The many Streetsville structures form the City's largest concentration of historic buildings, and makes a pleasant walk or guided tour. The BIA has regularly scheduled walking tours of the historic village, and Streetsville is home to the annual Bread & Honey Festival.

Faith in Our Future

The Town of Mississauga was created in 1968, and the City of Mississauga was incorporated in 1974, through the amalgamation of the Town of Mississauga and the villages of Port Credit and Streetsville, together with portions of the townships of Toronto Gore and Trafalgar. Mississauga has grown to be Canada's sixth largest city.