

Upper Canada

voices from the past



April 2002, Volume 2, Number 2

The Land of Hope

Editor's note:

Catharine Parr Traill was one of Upper Canada's most famous authors (along with her sister Susanna Moodie). In this excerpt from her The backwoods of Canada: being letters from the wife of an emigrant officer, illustrative of the domestic economy of British America (published by C. Knight in 1836), she recounts her family's arrival at their new home and the dramatic improvements that had been made, particularly in transportation, over the two and a half years that they had resided in Upper Canada. The glowingly positive tone of this letter is typical of Traill, despite the extreme difficulties with which she had to contend. A recent biography of Traill and Moodie, Sisters in the Wilderness, is reviewed on page 10 of this issue.

September the 20th, 1834

I promised when I parted from you before I left England to write as soon as I could give you any satisfactory account of our settlement in this country. I shall do my best to redeem

that promise, and forward you a slight sketch of our proceedings, with such remarks on the natural features of the place in which we have fixed our abode as I think likely to afford you interest or amusement. Prepare your patience, then, my dear friend, for a long and rambling epistle, in which I may possibly prove somewhat of a Will-o'-the-wisp, and having made you follow me in my desultory wanderings—

*Over hill, over dale,
Through bush, through briar,
Over park, over pale,
Through flood, through fire—*

possibly leave you in the midst of a big cedar swamp, or among the pathless mazes of our wild woods, without a clue to guide you, or even a blaze to light you on your way.

You will have heard, through my letters to my dear mother, of our safe arrival at Quebec, of my illness at Montreal, of all our adventures and misadventures during our jour-

ney up the country, till after much weary wandering we finally found a home and resting-place with a kind relative, whom it was our happiness to meet after a separation of many years.

As my husband was anxious to settle in the neighbourhood of one so nearly connected with me, thinking it would rob the woods of some of the loneliness that most women complain so bitterly of, he purchased a lot of land on the shores of a beautiful lake, one of a chain of small lakes belonging to the Otonabee river.

Here, then, we are established, having now some five-and-twenty acres cleared, and a nice house built. Our situation is very agreeable, and each day increases its value. When we first came up to live in the bush, with the exception of S____, there were but two or three settlers near us, and no roads cut. The only road that was available for bringing up goods from the nearest town was on the opposite side of the water, which was obliged

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Published by:

Upper Canada Genealogy
2807-33 Isabella Street
Toronto, Ontario, CANADA
M4Y 2P7

website:

www.uppercanadagenealogy.com

e-mail:

newsletter@uppercanadagenealogy.com

Telephone: (416) 920-6743

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EDITOR

Janice Nickerson

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Michael Nickerson

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Want Ads from Early Newspapers

Editor's note:

The following employment wanted notices are typical of the advertisements found in Upper Canada newspapers. These notices make it clear that one's references and general character were worth more than experience or education.

Kingston Gazette, February 19, 1811

WANTED, A young man, about 14 or 15 years of age, to attend in a store; good recommendations will be required. Inquire of the printers. Jan. 15

Brockville Recorder, September 21, 1830

TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS. The subscriber will receive one or two respectable Young Lads as Apprentices to the Medical Profession. Dr. Rob't Edmonson, Surgeon. Brockville, August, 5th, 1830

Brockville Recorder, September 21, 1830

WANTED Immediately by the subscriber, two smart BOYS of steady habits, about 16 years of age as APPRENTICES in the BLACKSMITH BUSINESS to whom liberal encouragement will be given. The term of servitude will be 5 years.

ALEX. McEATHRON. Perth, 24th March, 1830

The Cobourg Star, and Newcastle General Advertiser, March 1, 1831

WANTED for the Church of Cobourg, a person qualified to instruct a Choir in SACRED MUSIC, and to lead the same during divine service. A liberal salary will be given, exclusive of the emolument which would accrue from tuition in psalmody. Application may be made at this office, either personally or by letter, post paid.

Cobourg, Feb. 26th, 1831

The Niagara Chronicle, September 19, 1839

WANTED immediately by the subscriber, an assistant—one brought up to the business in England would be preferred. Satisfactory reference required. Apply (if by letter, post-paid) to: James Harvey, Chemist & Druggist.

Niagara, 3rd Sept. 1839

Last Will & Testament of William Dunlop

Editor's note:

William Dunlop, was a doctor and agent of the Canada Company, in charge of settling a large section of southwestern Upper Canada. His will was reproduced in In the Days of the Canada Company, by Robina and Kathleen Macfarlane Lizars (1896).

In the name of God. Amen.

I, William Dunlop, of Gairbraid, in the Township of Colborne, County and District of Huron, Western Canada, Esquire, being in sound health of body, and my mind just as usual (which my friends who flatter me say is no great shakes at the best of times), do make this my last Will and Testament as follows, revoking, of course, all former Wills:

I leave the property of Gairbraid, and all other landed property I may die possessed of, to my sisters Helen Boyle Story and Elizabeth Boyle Dunlop; the former because she is married to a minister whom (God help him) she henpecks. The latter because she is married to nobody, nor is she like to be, for she is an old maid, and not market-rife. And also, I leave to them and their heirs my share of the stock and implements on the farm; provided always, that the enclosure round my brother's grave be reserved, and if either should die without issue, then the other to inherit the whole.

I leave to my sister-in-law, Louisa Dunlop, all my share of the household furniture and such traps, with the exceptions hereinafter mentioned.

I leave my silver tankard to the eldest son of old John, as the representative of the family. I would have left it to old John himself, but he would melt it down to make temperance medals, and that would be sacrilege—however, I leave my big horn snuff-box to him: he can only make temperance horn spoons of that.

I leave my sister Jenny my Bible, the property formerly of my great-great-grandmother, Bethia Hamilton, of Woodhall: and when she knows as much of the spirit of it as she does of the letter, she will be another guise Christian than she is.

I also leave my late brother's watch to my brother Sandy, exhorting him at the same time to give up Whiggery, Radicalism, and all other sins that do most easily beset him.

I leave my brother Alan my big silver snuff-box, as I am informed he is rather a decent Christian, with a

swag belly and a jolly face.

I leave Parson Chevasse (Magg's husband), the snuff-box I got from the Sarnia Militia, as a small token of my gratitude for the service he has done the family in taking a sister that no man of taste would have taken.

I leave John Caddle a silver teapot, to the end that he may drink tea therefrom to comfort him under the affliction of a slatternly wife.

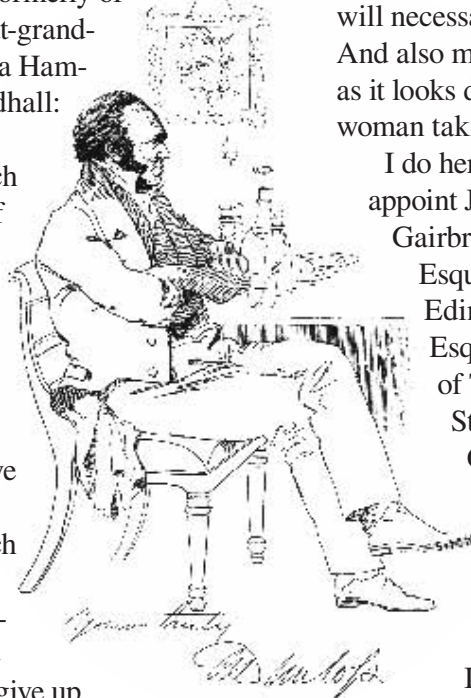
I leave my books to my brother Andrew, because he has been so long a Jungley Wallah, that he may learn to read with them.

I give my silver cup, with a sovereign in it, to my sister Janet Graham Dunlop, because she is an old maid and pious, and therefore will necessarily take to horning. And also my Granma's snuff mull, as it looks decent to see an old woman taking snuff.

I do hereby constitute and appoint John Dunlop, Esquire, of Gairbraid; Alexander Dunlop, Esquire, Advocate, Edinburgh; Alan C. Dunlop, Esquire, and William Chalk, of Tuckersmith; William Stewart and William Gooding, Esquires, of Goderich, to be the executors of this my last Will and Testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the thirty-first day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-two.

W. DUNLOP. [L.S.] 



A Woman's Work

Editor's note:

This dramatic description of the lives of rural women in Upper Canada was penned by Jessie Campbell Buchanan in a chapter about the early days of Beckwith Township in, The Pioneer Pastor: some reminiscences of the life and labors of Geo. Buchanan, first Presbyterian minister of Beckwith, Lanark County, Upper Canada (published posthumously in 1905).

As has been the case in all lands and all ages, women bore their full share of the burden. Besides attending to the children and household affairs, all spring and summer they worked in the fields early and late, burning brush, logging, planting and reaping. Much of the cooking, washing and mending was done before dawn or after dark, while the men slept peacefully. At noon they prepared dinner, ate a bite hastily and hurried back to drudge until the sun went down. Then they got supper, put the youngsters to bed, patched, darned and did a multitude of chores. "Woman's work is never done." For these willing slaves, toiling to better the condition of their loved ones and never striking for higher wages, sixteen hours of constant labor would be a short day. They knew no respite, no vacation, no season at the seashore, nothing but hard work and child-bearing.

The Sabbath was the one oasis in the desert, the one breathing spell in the week.

When obliged to help outdoors, young mothers took their babies with them—babies were by no means scarce in Beckwith—to the fields and laid them in saptroughs, while they worked near by. The larger children would hoe, pile brush, pick stones, rake hay, drop potatoes and be utilized in various

infant's throat! She caught the reptile by the tail and hurled it into the field, saving her child's life. The boy grew to manhood. The world owes a debt beyond human computation to the patient, industrious, unselfish women who have stood side by side with fathers, husbands and brothers in the stern battle for existence. The pioneer women of Beckwith were noble helpmeets, kind, hospitable, self-forgetful and trustworthy. "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen," so the public has heard little of their struggles, their trials and their achievements. The heroic spirit is not confined to the soldier. Look to the gentle, long-suffering, self-denying mother, cheerfully bearing the wearing grind year after year in her humble home, for its highest development; yet some male bipeds in trousers talk glibly of "the



ways. A fond mother near Franktown, hearing a strange noise at the trough holding her baby, ran to find a big snake crawling down the

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A Visit to St. Catharines

Editor's note:

This account of a Sunday in St. Catharines is taken from Sketches of Upper Canada, by John Howison, which was first published in London in 1821. In his introduction, Howison explains that he spent 2 1/2 years travelling throughout Upper Canada and the United States and is making his observations public for the benefit of prospective emigrants.

It was Sunday when I first visited St Catharine's, and crowds of well-dressed people were hastening to church. Most of the young women were adorned with a variety of the brightest colours; but they did not seem to have adopted any particular fashion, each dressing herself in the style she conceived to be most becoming.

There was as much vanity and affectation among them as would be found in a congregation of any country church in England; but they assumed greater airs than rustic females are accustomed to do there. The young men who came to church were generally mounted upon jaded farm-horses, the decoration of which seemed to have occupied more of their attention than that of their own persons; gaudy saddle-girths, glittering bridles, and other tinsel accoutrements, being profusely exhibited by these candidates for the admiration of the fair. Large waggons carrying loads of amphibious Dutch, who had probably vegetated in some swamp during twenty or thirty years, occasionally arrived, and

conveyed the ponderous Fraus and Mynheers to the door of the church, which I entered along with the congregation. Presently an old man, dressed in a shewy blue coat, white pantaloons, top boots, and plated spurs, made his appearance, and to my astonishment, proved to be the priest. The form of the service was presbyterian; and during the whole course of

The young men who came to church were generally mounted upon jaded farm-horses, the decoration of which seemed to have occupied more of their attention than that of their own persons

it the people continued going out and in without any regard to silence or decorum; while the schoolmaster of the village, with a string of pupils, made his appearance only a few minutes before the blessing was pronounced. At

the conclusion of the service, the clergyman gave out a hymn, which was sung by a party of young men who sat in the church gallery. The sound of a miserably played flute, and a cracked flageolet, united with the harshness of the voices, produced a concert both disagreeable and ludicrous. When the hymn was finished, the preacher proclaimed several marriages, and dismissed the congregation.

Although there has long been an established presbyterian church at St Catharine's, yet a large number of the people in its vicinity profess Methodism, and carry their religious mania to an immoderate height. Meetings are held at different houses, three or four times a-week. At some of these I have seen degrees of fanaticism and extravagance exhibited, both by the preachers and congregation, which were degrading to human nature. Several of the inhabitants of the place, like most other people in Upper Canada, are fond of dancing and playing at cards; but the Methodists, of course, condemn these amusements; for they made it a general practice, to pray that those addicted to them might be converted, and that the Almighty would not let loose his wrath on the village of St Catharine's; while their own lives were, in many instances, one continued outrage against decency, decorum, and virtue. ∞

Diary of a Voyage

Editor's note:

This account of four days on board the Thames, which left London on April 27th and landed at New York (bound for Upper Canada) on June 12, 1833, is taken from the diary of Ellen Frances Steele (published in the Ontario Historical Society's Papers and Records, Volume XXIII, 1926). The Steele family were among the cabin passengers, and thus travelled much more comfortably than those in steerage (the huge majority). By May the 4th most of the cabin passengers (and probably all of the steerage) were severely sea sick, this lasted about two weeks for most, although the authors' mother remained ill the entire voyage.

June the 2nd, Sunday

A very fine day, but quite calm—Mamma came on deck, all the Steerage passengers also, they are very quiet and orderly, when we go down to dinner at 4 o'clock they are allowed the whole of the deck and as we are in general a decent time at this meal they enjoy it very much. Our table is served in the most liberal manner—we have claret, Sherry, Port every day, with the addition of Champagne on Sundays and Thursdays, and those that are ill may have sago, gruel, arrow-root, lemonade, as often in the day as they like to order them.

June the 3rd, Monday

Stormy—we have been prettily tossed about to-day. I wonder there are no broken bones—Mrs Keating broke the hinges of Mrs Fawcett's door and fell into her room, the same lurch brought Mr Marshall head foremost down the stairs to breakfast quicker than he wished—at noon poor little George fell into the Steward's pantry, and cut his head dreadfully, but he is a noble little fellow with all his faults, and would

not cry for fear of frightening his Mamma. Elmes put a plaster on. At dinner time Mamma was crossing the room, Millie went to assist her, a lurch threw them down one over the other, but they were not hurt; and in the evening I was telling some long story and sat myself down on a rickety chair, when I was suddenly thrown chair and all into Mamma's

***you have no idea how
much more dreadful it
is to hear the wind, the
thunder, the screaming,
the running to and fro,
cooped up below***

room to finish it at my leisure. I was so surprised that I lay quite still and poor Mamma thought I was half killed and she very nearly fainted, so that I had some trouble to persuade her nothing was the matter. Every one looks despondingly,—this sad contrary wind; the clouds are very heavy, the sea looks black and I heard the Mate say the old

Gulf was going to give a stormy goodbye—the ship heaves from side to side, the air is so close and heavy—just after tea Mr Marshall whispered to Mrs Hargraves that a thunder storm is coming. I can see the lightning now, now comes the thunder, here it is, indeed, not such lightning as we have in England, but the whole sky is one sheet of flame—it is quite impossible to stay down here—at 10 o'clock we all determined to get up to the Cuddy, for you have no idea how much more dreadful it is to hear the wind, the thunder, the screaming, the running to and fro, cooped up below, where ignorance exaggerates every danger—we promised not to be frightened, at least not to say so, and the gentlemen took us up one by one and seated us on mattresses, so that we could see the deck. What a scene—it was beautiful, but how terrific,—the sky was so dark for a few minutes that we could distinguish nothing; in the next, the cuddy where we sat, the deck, the Sea, the masts, the sailors, seemed in one sheet of dazzling light too strong for the eyes to bear; how

strange we looked all clinging close to each other when that fierce light came for a moment and then left us again in complete darkness; the thunder bolt fell at a very little distance, indeed the shock made the first mate start back several paces, he thought the ship was struck—how helpless we looked tossing about at the mercy of the wind for they dare not put up a sail, but thank God the wind lulled by degrees and we determined to go to our beds, but not before we had seen them splice the Main brace—that is, give the poor sailors who have been up all night, some Grog.

June the 4th

The wind is favorable this morning; we are flying away before it at the rate of 9 miles an hour; the sea looks blue, the sun shines, and it is cheering to see so many happy faces; everyone is talking of N. York, a sure sign that we are near the end of our voyage; Miss Taylor was the first to perceive a sail at a distance and she is to have a patent for discovering them; all the glasses on board were in requisition, but Alas, our joy was soon turned to mourning, for this distant sail proved no other than the *York*, a Packet that left London a week after us. I never shall forget the rueful faces of

the two mates, one of them fairly worked himself into a passion, our poor Captain looks the picture of melancholy, he has never, he says, been beaten before, and that makes it more provoking, the very name of *York* is hateful to them, even the passengers, at least I can answer for some of them, would willingly have given the enemy a push back again, but in vain, all our wishes for the honor of our Captain and his vessel, could not lessen her speed, she gained on us and past at sunset. Mr Griffin, our 2nd Mate, pulled off his hat and jumped on it for very rage. The *York* gave Capt. Giswold an acute headache; he sat in our



Cabin without saying a word for a good hour—I don't know how it is but I have felt all this day the most unaccountable inclination to be merry—it cannot be from sympathy, for except Master George, who goes about singing—”*The York*—

The York” out of pure contradictoriness because he has been told not to mention the name of it, there is no one inclined even to smile—I begin to think I have a little of George's disposition myself. The Captain declares that if Mamma was not so ill he would put up every stitch of canvas till the old ship reeled again, so we have had a lucky escape.

5th June

A very fine day, fair wind, nothing but blue sea around, the *York* is out of sight, gone to tell of our defeat, but we laugh at her, every one is in good spirits, we have all agreed

that we would not change with those on board the other ship—Mr Fawcett is very provoking, he declares he could not drink his tea last night he was so afraid the *York* would jump through our cabin windows, it seems she is one of the swiftest in the line, but the *Thames* is

much safer, and though we have had so many storms the old Ship has been as dry as a cork, and as Miss Taylor says they would perhaps envy us our social chat, our Music, and our merry evening. ♪

The Attorney General's wife meets a Chippewa Chief

Editor's note:

This excerpt from Anna Jameson's travel-diary was published in Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada and published in 1838 by Saunders and Ottley on London, England. Mrs. Jameson was the wife of Robert Jameson, who had recently been appointed Attorney General for Upper Canada. She joined him at York in December 1836. Here she recounts her first experience with the natives of North America.

Jan 16, 1837

This morning, before I was quite dressed a singular visit was announced. I had expressed to my friend Mr. Hepburne a wish to see some of the aborigines of the country; he had the kindness to remember my request, and Colonel Givins, the principal Indian agent, had accordingly brought some Indians to visit us. Those to whom the appearance of these people is familiar and by no means interesting, were surprised by a curiosity which you will at least allow was very natural and *feminine*.

The party consisted of three—a chief named the White Deer, and two of his friends. The chief wore a blanket coat, and leggings, and a blanket hood with a peak from which depended a long black eagle plume; stout mocazins or shoes or undressed deer-skin completed his attire; he had about fifty strings of blue wampum round his neck. The other two were similarly dressed, with the exception of the

wampum and the feathers. Before I went down I had thrown a chain of wampum round my neck, which seemed to please them. Chairs being presented, they sat down at once (though, as Colonel Givins

Their deportment was taciturn and self-possessed, and their countenances melancholy; that of the chief was by far the most intelligent

said, they would certainly have preferred the floor), and answered with a grave and quiet dignity the compliments and questions addressed to them. Their deportment was taciturn and self-possessed, and their countenances melancholy; that of the chief was by far the most intelligent. They informed me that they were Chippewas from the neighborhood of Lake Huron; that the hunting season had been unsuccessful; that their tribe was suffering the extremity of hunger and

cold; and that they had come to beg from their Great Father the Governor rations of food, and a supply of blankets for their women and children. They had walked over the snow, in their snow-shoes, from the lake, one hundred and eighty miles, and for the last forty-eight hours none of them had tasted food. A breakfast of cold meat, bread, and beer, was immediately ordered for them; and though they had certainly never beheld in their lives the arrangement of an European table, and were besides half-famished, they sat down with unembarrassed tranquillity, and helped themselves to what they wished, with the utmost propriety—only, after one or two trials, using their own knives and fingers in preference to the table knife and fork. After they had eaten and drunk sufficiently, they were conducted to the government-house to receive from the governor presents of blankets, rifles, and provisions, and each, on parting, held out his hand to me, and the chief, with grave earnestness, prayed for the blessing of the Great Spirit on me and my house. On the whole, the impression they left, though amusing and exciting from its mere novelty, was melancholy. The sort of desperate resignation in their swarthy countenances, their squalid, dingy habiliments, and their forlorn story, filled me with pity, and, I may add, disappointment; and all my previous impressions of the independent children of the forest are for the present disturbed. ∞

William Smith, a founder of Little York (Toronto)

Editor's note:

This biography is excerpted from History of Toronto and County of York, Ontario, published by C. Blackett Robinson in 1885. The illustration is taken from the same publication and shows the residence of John Smith, William's grandson, including William's log house, built in 1794.

At the commencement of the reign of George III, was born in Nottinghamshire, England, one William Smith, who in early life acquired a knowledge of architecture and engineering, and who was employed on account of his skill in these branches by the monarch upon one of his royal palaces. In the year 1774 he was sent by the British Government to superintend the construction of works at Cape Breton. Upon his arrival he drew a large tract of land, which proved a valuable coal mine. This he developed, and in 1792 freighted a vessel with coal and sailed for new York where he deposed of his cargo and made his way to Newark (now Niagara). The following year (1793) he joined General Simcoe, and came with him to explore that section of the country of which Toronto is now the capital. He found three Indian wigwams east of the Don on the river banks (lot 15), one of which contained the Chief Kashago; the only white settler then being William Peak and his family.

The latter had been settled there some time, and knew the locality well, and often accompanied General Simcoe on hunting and fishing expeditions, that being Peak's principal occupation. The Governor gave Mr. Smith choice of land, and he selected one-fifth of an acre—a town lot—being what is now the corner of King and Sherbourne Streets. In the fall of 1793 he returned to Niagara to be with his family during the winter, and in the spring of 1794 brought them to Little York, and having erected a log hut upon lot 15, settled there. He



assisted Governor Simcoe in drawing plans for the building of "Castle Frank," the old summer house on the heights west of the Don, and in various ways brought his knowledge to bear in planning, surveying and laying out the future city. He followed his business of

builder and contractor for many years, during which time he constructed many public and private buildings. He erected the first English church; also the residence of Secretary Jarvis on the corner of Sherbourne and Duke Streets; and subsequently, in company with this son-in-law, John Thompson, laid the foundation of and erected the lighthouse on the Island. He was a volunteer in the War of 1813, and was taken prisoner at the capitulation of York in April, 1813. He died in the year 1819, at his residence on the corner of King and Sherbourne Streets, and was buried in the old churchyard of the English church, now St. James' Cathedral. His life was a long and useful one, as well as eventful, and he lived long enough to see the muddy Little York, at whose birth it may be said he presided, growing to life and vitality, with a prospect of future greatness which it

has more than realized. Mr. Smith had a family of six children, viz: Thomas, William, Mary, Betsy, Sally and Samuel. ∞

Book Review

Sisters in the Wilderness: The lives of Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill, by Charlotte Gray. Published by the Penguin Group, Toronto, London, New York, Victoria, and Albany, 1999.

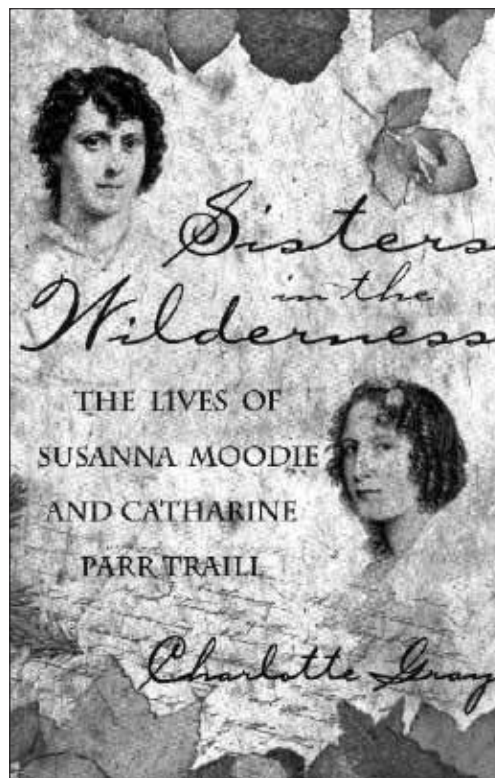
Charlotte Gray has done a great service to those of us who want to understand what life was like in early Ontario. Her double biography, *Sisters in the Wilderness* is both a richly detailed, sensitive chronicle of the lives of the Strickland sisters and a well-researched study of the social and historical context within which they led their lives.

As both Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill were authors who published a great deal about life in Upper Canada (as well as on other topics), much of the details of their lives can be learned by reading their own books (which I highly recommend). However, Gray takes us deeper, through her intensive study of their lesser known publications (many of which are long out of print or were published in obscure short-lived magazines), their voluminous correspondence and the history of the period.

Her account begins with a description of the comfortable circumstances of the Strickland family in England, when the sisters were young. She then proceeds to follow the lives of Susanna and Catharine, as they emigrate to Upper Canada with their new husbands in 1832, and struggle to survive, raise families and pursue writing careers in the

young colony.

We learn that while Susanna and Catharine were born to a wealthy family in England, and had many advantages in life, these did not protect them from the hardships



of life in a pioneer colony. In some ways, their experience may have been more difficult than that of their poorer neighbours, because they had no experience whatsoever with physical labour and “roughing it”. Their husbands had even less practical experience, despite their military careers, because they were

officers. Both men mistakenly believed that their half-pay military pensions and respectable backgrounds would allow them to “rise to the top” of colonial society. Instead, both found themselves struggling to make ends meet and heavily dependant on their wives for both income and emotional support.

We also learn a great deal about the political environment with which Susanna’s husband, John Dunbar Moodie had to contend in his role as Sheriff of Victoria County in the 1840s. In what might seem to us today to be a fairly homogenous society, political, ethnic and religious tensions were rife, and impossible to escape them.

The extreme difficulty of travel in the early years was another hardship that beset the two families, isolating them from one another, even when they lived only a few miles apart.

Finally, Gray gives us an inside look at the literary careers of Susanna and Catharine (and their other sisters in England), revealing the extreme difficulty involved in getting anything published, even for a successful writer with powerful family connections in London. In fact, neither sister was ever paid any substantial amount for their work.

Sisters in the Wilderness was published simultaneously in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, and so should be easily located through your local library or bookstore. ♪

“The Land of Hope” continued

to be crossed in a log (known by the expressive name of a dug-out), or birch-bark canoe; the former is nothing better than a large pine-log hollowed with the axe, so as to contain three or four persons; it is flat-bottomed, and very narrow, on which account it is much used on these shallow waters. The birch canoe is made of sheets of birch bark, ingeniously fashioned and sewn together by the Indians with the tough roots of the cedar, young pine, or larch (tamarack, as it is termed by the Indians); it is exceedingly light, so that it can be carried by two persons easily, or even by one. These, then, are our ferry-boats, and very frail they are, and require great nicety in their management; they are worked in the water with paddles, either kneeling or sitting. The squaws are very expert in the management of the canoes, and preserve their balance with admirable skill, while they impel the little bark with great velocity through the water.

Very great is the change that a few years have effected in our situation. A number of highly respectable settlers have purchased land along the shores of these lakes, so that we no longer want society. The roads are now cut several miles above us, and though far from good can be travelled by waggons and sleighs, and are, at all events, better than none.

A village has started up where formerly a thick pine-wood

covered the ground; we have now within a short distance of us an excellent saw-mill, a grist-mill, and store, with a large tavern and many good dwellings. A fine timber bridge, on stone piers, was erected last year to connect the opposite townships and lessen the distance to and from Peterborough; and though it was unfortunately swept away early last spring by the unusual rising of the Otonabee lakes, a new and more substantial one has risen upon the ruins of the former, through the activity of an enterprising young Scotchman, the founder of the village.

But the grand work that is, sooner or later, to raise this portion of the district from its present obscurity, is the opening a line of navigation from Lake Huron through Lake Simcoe, and so through our chain of small lakes to Rice Lake, and finally through the Trent to the Bay of Quinte. This noble work would prove of incalculable advantage, by opening a direct communication between Lake Huron and the inland townships at the back of the Ontario with the St Lawrence. This project has already been under the consideration of the Governor, and is at present exciting great interest in the country: sooner or later there is little doubt but that it will be carried into effect. It presents some difficulties and expense, but it would be greatly to the advantage and prosperity of the country, and be the means of settling many of the back townships bordering upon

these lakes.

I must leave it to abler persons than myself to discuss at large the policy and expediency of the measure; but as I suppose you have no intention of emigrating to our backwoods, you will be contented with my cursory view of the matter, and believe, as in friendship you are bound to do, that it is a desirable thing to open a market for inland produce.

Canada is the land of hope; here everything is new; everything going forward; it is scarcely possible for arts, sciences, agriculture, manufactures, to retrograde; they must keep advancing; though in some situations the progress may seem slow, in others they are proportionately rapid.

There is a constant excitement on the minds of emigrants. particularly in the partially settled townships, that greatly assists in keeping them from desponding. The arrival of some enterprising person gives a stimulus to those about him: a profitable speculation is started, and lo, the value of the land in the vicinity rises to double and treble what it was thought worth before; so that, without any design of befriending his neighbours, the schemes of one settler being carried into effect shall benefit a great number. We have already felt the beneficial effect of the access of respectable emigrants locating themselves in this township, as it has already increased the value of our own land in a three-fold degree. ∞

“A Woman’s Work” continued

weaker vessel,” and think their own mothers and sisters not qualified to vote for a school-trustee or a ward constable.

Autumn and winter brought little relief, except to vary the style of work. The women carded wool with hand-cards and spun it on small wheels, for stocking yarn and the weaver’s loom. Knitting was the endless task, by the light of the hearth fire or the feeble flicker of a tallow-dip, and everybody wore homespun. Now all this is changed. The modest spinning-wheel is thick with dust in the garret, machinery knits and sews and turns out underwear, the music of the shuttle in the condy-loom is hushed forever, hand-me-down and tailor-made suits have superseded the honest homespun, and the kerosene-lamp has consigned the tallow-dip to oblivion. Threshing wheat and oats with the flail employed the men until plenty of snow fell for good sleighing. Then the whole neighborhood would go in company to Bytown—now Ottawa—to market their produce. Starting at midnight, the line of ox-sleds would reach Richmond about daylight, stop an hour to rest and feed, travel all day and be at Bytown by dark. Next day they would sell their grain, sometimes on a year’s credit, buy a few necessary articles, travel all night to Richmond and be home the third evening. A night’s lodging at Bytown, unless they

slept on their sleds, was the total outlay, as they carried food and hay with them to last the three days and nights of the trip. When the small grist mill was built at Carleton Place, the farmers would grind their wheat, often watching by their sleds two or three days and nights, in the open air, until their turn came. They sold the flour at Bytown, the nearest market. Four dollars a barrel for flour and eight for pork were the highest prices, while the dry goods and groceries were extravagantly dear. Leather was an important item in the purchases, as shoemakers went about in winter, staying at each house to make a year’s footwear for the whole family. In the absence of the men at mill or market, the women fed the cattle and hogs, provided wood and did much extra work. Yes, times were hard, not in stinted measure, but “pressed down, heaped up and running over.” ∞

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