Bicentennial Address

By the Honourable Eric Richard Lovekin, U.E. in Bond Head at the Municipal Bicentennial Celebrations on Saturday 13th, July 1996.

Salutation

Mayor Hamre, Mr. Alex Sheperd, M.P., Mr. John O'Toole, M.P.P. and friends:

In our early school years, I think we can all remember the couplet:

" In 1492, Columbus sailed The Ocean Blue."

The impression we were left with as children was that Columbus discovered America. He was the first. We now know that the Vikings beat him by some 500 years arriving in Vineland, now known as Newfoundland, around 1000 A.D.

A lawyer friend of mine was explaining this correction of our childhood serious misconception of history to his young son while showing him a Viking map that was on display at The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. The boy asked him if the Indians watched the Vikings come ashore.

When the father admitted that might well have been the case, the boy replied, "Well then, Father, the Vikings weren't the first people in Canada were they? "

Our purpose here today is not however to attempt to determine who was the very first person to set foot in this area but rather to commemorate the 200th ANNIVERSARY OF THE REAL BEGINNINGS OF PERMANENT ENGLISH SETTLEMENT IN THE TOWNSHIPS OF DARLINGTON AND CLARKE.

What I say here today can only scratch the surface. If you are seriously interested in our local history. May I make three suggestions. Buy and read two texts: First, Out of the Mists by Helen Schmid and Sid Rutherford and the Townships of Darlington and Clarke by Professor John Squair. Thirdly, if you are a local resident, join the Newcastle Village and District Historical Society. I see its President Herb Taylor on the grounds and I am sure that he will make you welcome. And now to our subject:

When were Darlington and Clarke born? Who or what were the parents? What were the great historical forces that created these townships and brought the first permanent settlers to this place? Why did they come here in the 1790's rather than earlier or later?

Many of you knew my only brother, James Patrickson Lovekin, Professor of History at LakeHead University who is not here today as his faint heart stopped on Easter Friday of this year. If his ghost does not smite me down for my historical oversimplifications may I try and paint in the background against which local settlement occurred.

When the sun came up on the morning of September 13th, 1759 the brave and competent soldier Montcalm looked our from the battlements of Citadel Quebec and saw General Wolfes army.

".There they are, " he said, " where they have no right to be."

He was correct, Henry Hudson and others staked out the far north of North America for England and the 13 colonies on the Atlantic seaboard were English; but the St. Lawrence, the Great Lakes and the Mighty Mississippi all the way to Louisiana were French.

When we use the term, "Quebec," today, we think of the present city or the province: but that is only a shadow of the French Quebec of yesterday. The land on which you are standing was once part of Quebec.

The French trader, Antoine Cadillac pushed past here and founded Detroit in 1701, over half of a century before Wolfe took Quebec. La Salle passed this place on his way to the mighty Mississippi and to his death at the hands of his own men in what is now Louisiana. Champlain, The Count de Frontenac and their ilk all passed by.

Even the North American Indians had no major settlements here. It was a summer hunting area for the Iroquois from the east and the Mississaugas and Hurons from the west. Then came two great events, the American Revolution and the troubles in Ireland that arose out of the French Revolution and they unleashed forces that directly affected Darlington and Clarke.

Following the victory on The Plains of Abraham the French Canadians were by the terms of the Quebec Act of 1774 guaranteed their linguistic and religious rights by a wily Sir Guy Carleton, later Lord Dorchester who as a soldier was anxious to have a secure military base for British forces on the flank of the rebellious American colonies.

French Quebec became British Quebec in law with the conquest but remained French in flavour. Soon after the Quebec Act the American rebels were successful and the United Empire Loyalists came north so that they could remain loyal to the crown. They were not impressed with the fact that the laws, religion and customs of Canada were all French oriented.

They quickly began to forward petitions and memorials to the British Parliament at Westminster praying that they:

"Might be governed by the British Constitution and laws
for the support of which, and his Majesty's crown and
dignity, we first took up arms in opposition to the American congress."

To accommodate their loyal subjects the British Parliament eventually passed what has become known as the Constitutional Act of 1791 which created Upper and Lower Canada (Upper Canada getting it's name from the fact it was further up the river.) Thus, two solitude's were created, English Upper Canada and French Lower Canada and we are still sorting that one out.

This constitutional change brought a de facto semblance of representative government to Upper Canada but by royal instruction, an executive council was established and the Governor in council took over the actual day to day operations of the government. This situation bears a startling resemblance to our modern method of government with the Canadian Privy Council and it's Orders In Council.

Governor John Graves Simcoe vigorously began to organize Upper Canada along traditional British lines and to grant lands to the intensely loyal British immigrants coming north. The first land grant in this newly created Township of Clarke was to Jasper Murdoch and Associates, who were obviously a group of land speculators. The Murdoch grant was made on March 22nd, 1793. This grant was rescinded for non-performance of conditions on May 26th, 1796 and the Township was declared open for general settlement but three years had slipped past while Murdoch doddled and this is why Darlington was ahead of Clarke in bona fide settlement in the early days.

The first effective land grant to a permanent and genuine settler in Clarke was then made to the Lovekins by what we now call an order in council on June 3rd, 1796, approximately one week and one council meeting after Murdoch's land grant lapsed. It is thus quite clear that there could be no earlier bona fide settlers other than the Lovekins as the entire township completely belonged to Murdoch and you can't have two owners of the same land.

The grant was made by Governor John Graves Simcoe sitting with his Executive Council in Navy Hall in the Country of Lincoln (i.e.: Niagara on the Lake) as the capital had not yet moved to York (later called Toronto). Roger Bates received the same sort of grant by order of the Executive Council later that same month namely on the 28th of June, 1796. The dates on later deeds are not that significant as the paper work to verify the grants made by the Executive Council took some time to prepare and were registered helter skelter by the grantees.

Richard Lovekin Senior died on the first of January 1798. This death resulted in the founding of Clarke's first cemetery on Richard Lovekin's farm Lot 35. The cemetery is now in the center of the Rice Wilmot Creek Development.

As early settlers, the Bates family was closely associated with the Lovekins. The wife of Roger Bates, born in Massachusetts in 1750 died in 1810 and she is buried in this cemetery. Another headstone commemorates Theodosia Bates, wife of Richard Lovekin Junior who died in 1850. The net result of this Bates and Lovekin marriage is that all of the present Lovekin clan are descendants of both the Lovekins and the Bates so they are doubly connected to these early settlers.

You are all invited to an open house at the Lovekin farm this afternoon and you can tour the cemetery at the same time. It has been carefully preserved by the family.

The very day that Richard Lovekin arrived in Clarke cannot be determined but the official historical document which establishes the early Lovekin physical presence in Clarke is found in a letter from the Honourable Peter Russell, administrator of Upper Canada to D.W. Smith, the Surveyor General dated October 18th, 1796 and it reads:

Dear Sir:

Mr. John Lovekin informed me that he has not been able to ascertain his father's, brother's and his own lots in the Township of Clarke for want of the back concessions being laid off, but that he has pitched upon No. 32 for John Lovekin, No. 33 for Richard Lovekin Junior and no. 35 for Richard Lovekin Senior in the first concession with the broken fronts.

This official letter clearly establishes that following their grant on the 3rd of June 1796, the Lovekins quickly took advantage of the good summer weather to physically establish themselves in Clarke. The female members of the family had stayed in the United States of America in the summer and winter of 1796 as Richard Lovekin and two hired men came to Upper Canada. The women were then brought to the finished house in 1797. Some historians thought that they stayed in Muddy York (Toronto) but that is not correct, they stayed in New York State, U.S.A. fearful of coming to the wilderness until the advance party had constructed a home.

In 1793, Toronto, then York, contained 12 buildings. When the Lovekins came to Clarke in 1796 the civilian population of Toronto would be a few hundred persons. When Richard

Lovekin took off his first crop of wheat, he took it to Kingston in a canoe to have it ground into flour as that was the closest mill.

In the fifty years following the Lovekins arrival settlers streamed into the area and a prosperous municipal infrastructure was built including towns, roads, grist and woolen mills, etc.

What did the big achievers of the townships accomplish? May I cite some examples:

1) Industry - The first Massey Agricultural works was located a few hundred yards north of where you stand; it became a world wide corporation.
2) In the 3rd estate - the newspapers. Newcastle claims as it's own Joseph Atkinson, Founder of the Toronto Star;
3) In the ecclesiastical world Bishop Charles Brent, the son of Cannon Brent Rector of St. George's for 42 years was an implacable enemy of the illegal international trade in drugs. He was padre to General Perishing and hence to all American troops in Europe in World War One; he became the first Episcopal Bishop of the Phillipine Islands and he is credited with being The Father of the World Congress of Churches.
4) In the Environmental Sphere - Samuel Wilmot was the first person to breed trout in captivity. His fish hatchery on Wilmot Creek became the Dominion fish breeding establishment when Canada was born in 1867.
5) In Education - Prof. John Squair, a Bowmanville boy was awarded the French Legion of Honour for his work in Bilingualism and the list could go on and on. These were the giants of our area. However, as they say in American Western movies meanwhile back at the ranch Prof. John Squair in his excellent text is kind enough to say that the Lovekins steadily kept their place in the growth of the township.

In the military, in the judiciary and in local politics they found a modest place. Richard Lovekin made the militia roll call for the war of 1812-1814. J.P. Lovekin, Senior Justice in the area, was the reeve of the township at confederation in 1867, and so on.

The Lovekin family history is, I believe of general interest because it is not the story of a great family but rather the saga of a typical local family who while they are now in various parts of North America have preserved their local roots in these townships and have participated in a limited way in local development and municipal affairs over the past two hundred years.

Our present home on Lot 35, Clarke was built in 1845 for J.P. Lovekin's bride, Isabella Shaw, grand daughter of Major General The Honourable Aeneas Shaw who interestingly enough was on the Executive Council who gave Richard Lovekin his land grant. I hasten to say that this was well before they were related by marriage; no conflict of interest here Mayor Hamre.

Lynn and I invite you all to visit us this afternoon from 1:00pm to 4:00pm. Our house is not meant to be a shrine or a showplace but a livable family home.

I would like to publicly thank our American cousins who hale from Seattle, Washington, California, New Mexico, Texas and New England and elsewhere for their far more than token representation here today. A special welcome to you all.

In summary, then why did our ancestors come here? The common thread is that they came to escape political unrest. They came to build a new society by non-violent means based on justice, tranquility and hard work. The real strength of these early settlers was total co-operation in barn raisings, threshing of grain, etc., they lovingly and loyally built a strong local community.

We won our complete independence from Britain namely full dominion status within the family of the Commonwealth without violence. We freed the slaves with a pen, not a sword and gave American slaves sanctuary.

We, the descendants, are presently faced with a grave Constitutional Crisis. Let us trust and hope in the best of our non-violent traditions and our familiarity and acceptance of compromise that we will overcome and that to paraphrase the words of Sir Wilfred Laurier, "The 21st century, as well as the 20th century will also belong to Canada."

Thank you Mayor Hamre for inviting me here today and thank you all for being such a patient and attentive audience.

TO MY FRIEND MADRL GOODE
SEPT. 96