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Some Lapsed Names in Canadian  
Local Nomenclature.

BY

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HENRY SCADDING, D.D.

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It is a matter of some curiosity to notice the vicissitudes which have taken place, in several instances, in the names of places, rivers, and other natural objects, during our short history here in Canada. In some cases, names imposed by royal proclamation, or other competent authority, have failed to be used, or have been displaced by terms and titles, resting solely on popular usage. It may be considered a matter of some interest to recall some of these now disused, or, as we may say, lapsed names, and to review very briefly their history.

The name of our own capital, Toronto, itself covers a lapsed name, so to speak.

When first laid out as a town, Toronto, as we all know, bore the name of York, and was so known for a period of forty years. It was then, viz., in 1834, incorporated as the City of Toronto, which, singularly enough, was a return to a name which had lapsed, the locality having been for a considerable time previous to 1794, known by the appellation Toronto, of Indian origin. This, again, was a name, which there is good evidence to show, had fallen into disuse elsewhere, and had been adopted here. In the time of La Salle, 168c, the lake which we know as Lake Simcoe was known as Lake Toronto, while the site of our city was marked as Ti-ai-a-gon on the maps, a name which La Salle also employs. This word Ti-ai-a-gon, I am assured, signifies a landing, and it here denoted the landing place for voyageurs, bound for Lakes Toronto and Huron, via a trail or portage well known.

When the Wyandotte population, inhabiting between Lakes Toronto and Huron, was extirpated by the Iroquois, the name Toronto came to be gradually attached solely to its Ti-ai-a-gon, or landing place on Lake Ontario, where it survived. And here, again, we have a glimpse of another lapsed name.

The trading post at the landing had been officially named "Fort Rouillé," in honor of the then Minister of Marine of that name in Paris, but the popular use having become familiar with the word Toronto as applied to the landing, failed to adopt the expression, Fort Rouillé, and employed only that of "Fort Toronto" instead. Hence the survival of the beautiful word Toronto, hereabouts, to this day.

It may here be conveniently added that the neighboring Humber River is given in the first Gazetteer of Upper Canada, dated about one hundred years back, as "St. John's River," from a French settler named St. Jean, who had a wayside inn, or place of entertainment, at its mouth. "Humber" displaced a long and rather

uncouth Indian name, which appears on the maps ; at the same time "Don" replaced an equally unmanageable Indian name, describing the river at the eastern end of our harbour. The interpretation of these two lapsed Indian names I am not able at present to give, but doubtless they were both significant. At the same time that the names "Humber" and "Don" were imposed upon these two streams, the name "Nen" was, by authority, given to the next river to the eastward, previously known as the Rouge or Red River. "Nen," however, became a lapsed name, and the Rouge retained, and still retains, its original appellation. "Nen," like "Humber" and "Don," was the name of a river in Yorkshire. It was the evident aim of the authorities to Anglicise the river names, and the notable river, still known as the Grand River, entering Lake Erie from the north, was enjoined to be known only as the "Ouse," another Yorkshire river name ; but again popular usage prevailed, and "Ouse" became another instance of a lapsed name. "Grand River," of course, had nothing distinctive in it, and every river of a considerable size was, amongst the French, a "Grande Riviere." The Mississippi was so par excellence among the Indians, such being, in an emphasized way, the signification of that word.

A widely-received French appellation for our Canadian Thames was *La Tranche*, until forcibly over-ridden by royal proclamation.

More than one lapsed usage in regard to the River Niagara may be in place here. Wherever the name occurs in early English verse, the metre obliges us to make the penultimate syllable long in quantity, showing that such was the prevailing pronunciation at the outset. Further, it appears from the early records, that an O has been dropped off from the beginning of this word, as has happened likewise in the case of other Indian appellatives ; thus we have Miami and Omiami, Swegatchie and Oswegatchie, Chouegon and Ochouegon (the modern Oswego), Mimico and Omimico, Chippeway and Ochipway, Tessalon and Otessalon, and some others. So Niagara was once Oniagara, a form of the word now entirely lapsed. There is reason to think that a like clipping off of an O has taken place in "Toronto," together with the suppression of a final N. Sagard, in his *Huron*, or rather *Wyandotte* vocabulary, gives both "Torontou" and "Otorontou." The expression signifies a large quantity, whether of human beings or of provision for their sustenance, both O and N probably representing a nasal sound very familiar to us in former days, in Indian *viva-voce* utterances. Another substitution in modern times of a short A for a long one in an Indian name, seems to be shown in Moore's "Uttawa's Tide" (read *Utah-wa's tide*) meaning the River Ottawa, the first syllable of which name he evidently caught as U and not O.

We are slowly becoming accustomed to the style and title of "Niagara-on-the-Lake," used in modern times for the purpose of distinguishing the old town of Niagara from what is now designated as Niagara South, meaning thereby Drummondville, which is expected hereafter to become a lapsed term, although, of course, it will take a long time to bring that about. Old Niagara might have fallen back upon a lapsed name of its own, viz.: Newark, the name borne by its site when the first Parliament of Upper Canada was held there. The place we now call Queenston was known aforetime as the "Carrying Place," the place of debarkation for the "Grande Portage" round the Falls of Niagara, in the voyageurs' route between Lakes Ontario and Erie. Another lapsed name for Queenston, in the same regard, was the "Lower Landing."

Burlington Bay, at the head of Lake Ontario, received that name by proclamation on July 16th, 1799. Previous to this date it had strangely borne the name of Geneva Lake ; so we are informed by the first Gazetteer of Upper Canada. The lapsed name, we may suppose, arose from the picturesque beauty of the sheet of water indicated.

On the north shore of Lake Ontario, close to Burlington Bay, a name has lapsed into disuse within the past few years. I refer to Wellington Square, now known as Burlington. The word "Square," I believe, referred originally to a square

tract of land granted to the Indian chief, Joseph Brant, at this spot. Wellington, of course, referred to the Iron Duke, but we already had a memorial of him in the name of the County of Wellington, in Western Ontario. A general name for Burlington Heights, and the whole range of high land on the west side of Lake Ontario, appears to have been "Dorchester Mount," when D. W. Smith's Gazetteer was constructed, but that expression has now long since ceased to be heard. A familiar name for the swamp now traversed by the Des Jardins Canal, leading from Burlington Bay to Dundas, was "Coote's Paradise," an expression now fallen into disuse. Coote was an officer in the regular army, an enthusiastic sportsman, who found in the wild fowl and other game frequenting this marsh a never-failing means of indulging his favorite pursuits.

Two grand thoroughfares were marked off and partially cleared out, at the very outset, through the Province of Upper Canada, one named Dundas street, and the other Yonge street. The latter continues as a well-defined highway, leading from Toronto to the Holland Landing, and thence virtually across the country, via Shanty Bay and Penetanguishene, to Lake Huron and the far West.

I fear the railway authorities are doing something to render Penetanguishene a lapsed name, or at all events, partially so. They are encouraging the practice of writing and printing "Penetang," instead of Penetanguishene." The name, thus mutilated, can have no complete sense, the whole word being descriptive of a landmark at the entrance to the Bay, consisting of a bank where the sands run down. (1)

Dundas street as a grand thoroughfare has, unhappily, not retained its name throughout. For a long time the whole route, from Chatham to Dundas, and thence to Toronto, was pretty generally known as Dundas street. The popular name for a portion of it, among settlers in the west was, for a while, and, perhaps may continue still to be, the Governor's Road, and it will be remembered, possibly, by many of us, that what is now called Queen street in Toronto, was, in its western portion at least, styled Dundas street, although "Lot street" was its more customary designation, as it passed on eastward to the River Don, from which point the leading thoroughfare became better known as the Kingston Road; but in well-engraved early maps the line of road eastward is to be seen marked as Dundas street, all the way to where it strikes the Ottawa, a few miles from the entrance of that river into the St. Lawrence.

The whole route from Chatham, in the west, to the Ottawa, in the east, was designated a street, with allusion to the great Roman roads (*viae stratae*), remains of which are traced everywhere in the Island of Great Britain and throughout the Continent of Europe—paved roads securing an easy transit for armies, arms and ammunition, and at later periods for merchandise. A noted instance of these is Watling street, reaching from Dover all the way to Chester, and passing through London, where a fragment of this same Roman highway is still known as Watling street. It is to be regretted, perhaps, that our "Dundas street" has become a lapsed term in so much of its route, but, happily, Yonge street still remains to us an interesting reminder of the past. On this street, six miles to the north of Toronto, "Hogg's Hollow" has been changed to the more euphonious expression, "York Mills." Of these mills, Mr. Hogg was the original builder and proprietor. Along the great thoroughfare, originally known as Dundas street, proceeding eastward from Toronto, we meet every now and then with lapsed names.

In connection with Toronto itself, two may be mentioned, in addition to those already given. The township in which the city stands was, and is still named York, but previously, strange to say, it seems to have borne the name of Dublin. Thus, in our old, oft-quoted Gazetteer, we have, at page 55, "Dublin, now called the Township of York; which see." No further explanation is given. It was expected, per-

(1) Other lapsed names besides "Lake Toronto" are covered by Lake Simcoe's present name. The French styled it for many years *Lac aux Claires* (Hurdle Lake), from some arrangement for the capture of fish at the Narrows, a name sometimes corrupted by the English into *Lac le Clie*. Two islands in this lake have likewise lost names once borne by them: Francis Island (so called by Governor Simcoe from the name of his son), and Darline's Island (commemorative of a favorite aide-de-camp of the Governor's), are now respectively known as Grape Island and Strawberry Island.

haps, to be attractive to the Irish settler, but it quickly became a disused term. Previous to the setting off of Upper Canada as a Province, the region about here had been known as the District of Nassau, and various localities to the eastward had designations sounding very German-like given them, such as Charlottenburg, Lunenburg, Osnabruck, etc. Such names were simply compliments to the reigning Hanoverian family, or might be expected to attract German settlers; but if not actually become lapsed terms, they have ceased to draw. The other lapsed name in connection with Toronto is "Gibraltar Point," meaning the western portion of the Island in front of Toronto, and having a humorous allusion to the solitary Block House, erected there for the defense of the harbour and protection of a commissary store-house. "Gibraltar Point" has lapsed into disuse, although we still occasionally hear Blockhouse Bay for one of the inlets at the "Point."

On the lake front of the Township of Whitby there was, for a time, the town of Windsor, on Windsor Bay, where it appears, thus named, on the engraved maps of Canada a few years since. Windsor is now a lapsed name, obliterated, possibly, by the greater importance of the western Windsor on the Detroit River. Its site is included within the limits of the modern town of Whitby. In passing, it may be mentioned that the site now occupied by Port Hope is marked on some of the old maps *Ti-ai-a-gon*, which, as we have already seen, simply meant "a landing," this having been a distinguished landing place for Indians and voyageurs en route to the waters to the north, entitled by us Rice Lake. (2)

The name "Cobourg" is not, as might have been supposed, a survival of one of those German-sounding names prevalent in Canada just after the taking of Quebec. Like Guelph, it appears to have been a modern compliment to the reigning Hanoverian family. It alluded, probably, to the husband of the lamented Princess Charlotte, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Cobourg. The place, we are told, was for a short time good-humoredly styled "Hard Scrabble," by settlers near the locality, but this was simply a transient jest.

At Kingston we have to recall the now lapsed names of Cataraqui and Fort Frontenac. An attempted Latinized form of "Kingston"—*Regiopolis*—was for a time heard of in ecclesiastical quarters, but, mongrel as it was, between Latin and Greek, it is now dropped. As to the name "Bay of Quintè"—the original word was an Indian one—*Kentè* or *Kanti*. French pronunciation produced the form *Quintè*, conveying some notion of "five or fifth." While passing Gananoque on our way east, it should be recalled that, strange as it may sound, the river which enters here and bore the name of Gananoque, was at a very early period styled the Thames. This we learn from a proclamation by Lord Dorchester, better known as Guy Carleton, bearing date July 24th, 1788, wherein he speaks of a boundary line running north and south, and intersecting the mouth of the River Gananoque, now called "The Thames." This seems to have become a lapsed name at the time when the Province of Upper Canada was set off and separated from the old Province of Quebec, when the previous arrangement of the region into four distinct sub-divisions was dropped, and the terms District of Lunenburg, District of Nassau, District of Mecklenburg, District of Hesse ceased to be heard. The town of Cornwall, just below the Long Sault Rapid, was formerly known as New Johnstown, from the name of a neighboring township. For the inhabitants of Cornwall the lapsed name, New Johnstown, must, of course, possess some interest.

In regard to the Long Sault Rapids, Guy Carleton, in the proclamation just above referred to, makes use of a good English word, now fallen somewhat into disuse. He speaks of "rifts," meaning thereby interruptions in the navigation of the

(2) The river at Port Hope still bears the homely name of "Smith's Creek." The Indian name of the stream, rightly treated, would have had a finer sound. Major Rogers, in his journey westward from Port Frontenac to Toronto, in 1760, passed two rivers bearing respectively the names of "The Grace of Man" and "The Life of Man," according to the somewhat fanciful translation which he gives of their Indian appellations. It is not easy to identify these streams, but Smith's Creek may have been one of them. "Lyons' Creek," a little to the west of Smith's Creek, was once known by an Indian term signifying "the river of easy entrance."

river. He describes the mouth of the River Gananoque as being situated "above the rifts of the St. Lawrence." In early maps of Canada and North America generally, the term rifts is to be seen at the several points of a river, where now we should see the word "portage" used, indicating thereby that the navigation at that point was interrupted by cataracts or dangerous rapids. Apropos of rapids, it may be subjoined that a certain swift portion of the St. Lawrence, not far from Cornwall, used to be designated by an English-speaking lumberman, "The Mill Rush," thereby barbarizing the neat expression, "Les Mille Roches," used by the French when speaking of the same spot in the river. The same lumberman has made Bobcaygeon out of some such Indian term as Baba-kad-juan, descriptive of the lockage between Pigeon and Sturgeon Lakes.

We now approach Montreal and Quebec. The Indian term for the former place is stated to have been Hochelaga, and of the latter Stadacona. These two can scarcely be termed lapsed names, as they still maintain a good standing in the primitive and poetic accounts of Canada. The ecclesiastical title of Montreal, Ville Marie, like that of Regiopolis for Kingston, is now seldom employed by the English-speaking portions of the community. The name of a town, situated at the mouth of the River Richelieu, on the St. Lawrence, a short distance from Montreal, must be mentioned. This is Sorel, which is another instance of the prevalence of popular usage over authoritative decrees. The name imposed on the spot by the English-speaking authorities was William Henry, a compliment to a Prince of the Royal Family, but the earlier French name of Sorel has survived, as being doubtless the fittest.

I here bring to a close my list, after all, not by any means perfect, of lapsed local names in Canada. To enter upon the changes that have taken place in street names in our cities and towns would be an undertaking too large for the present occasion. I cannot refrain from remarking, however, a usage which I observe to be growing, in regard to the name of one great, conspicuous thoroughfare in Toronto. A few years since it was universally known as Spa-dee-na Avenue. Dr. W. W. Baldwin evolved out of some such Indian expression as Eo-pa-dee-nong, the quite elegant and shapely name of S-p-a-d-i-n-a (pronounced by himself and all his belongings, Spa-dee-na). It denotes, I am assured, a rise of land, and has reference to the slight ridge which bounds the site of Toronto on the north side. A considerable portion of this ridge was owned by Dr. W. W. Baldwin, and here was situated his family residence, Spadina House, exactly at the extreme northern terminus of the great avenue, bearing to this day the fine, modified Indian title just spoken of, the polite pronunciation of which seems to be threatened, although it is to be confessed that Regina, Carolina, etc., certainly favor the innovation. Below the shield of arms on Dr. Baldwin's book-plate is to be seen "Baldwin, of Spadina, in the County of York, Upper Canada."

One word in regard to the names of two outside cities, with which, in Canada, we are sometimes brought into very near relations—Buffalo and Chicago. In some respects it seems a pity that these names have not lapsed and been replaced by others of a more becoming form, and nobler significance. Buffalo took its name, no doubt, from the accidental circumstance that the stream, at the mouth of which its first buildings began to arise, was named Buffalo Creek, in French, Riviere des Boeufs, that is, the river of the Buffalos or Bisons. If the word Buffalo had to be retained in the composition of the place-name, it should have been furnished with some customary prefix or suffix, to denote the fact that it was a place-name. We have, in classical geography, the city or town of Elephantine. The termination denotes that it was the city or town of the elephas or elephant. The founders of the place would have had scruples as to calling it Elephas (Elephant) pure and simple. So, another rather famous classical name—Bucephala—really meant the city of Bucephalus, that is, the city rendered famous as being the burial place of Alexander's steed, Bucephalus. It would have doubtless been thought very anomalous to have

called the place *Bucephalus*, wholly unchanged. The name of the city of Buffalo might have been a modification of the native Indian term for the bison or buffalo, showing, by an affix or final syllable, that it was the name of a place, and not of an animal. In regard to Chicago, the name, it is sad to say, intrinsically has a significance somewhat ill-savored. It involves as its root element the Otchipwe *Jikag*, which denotes a polecat or skunk, as Baraga informs us in page 572 of his *Otchipwe Dictionary*, Cincinnati, 1853. If Chicago should ever become a lapsed name, it is to be hoped that its place will be taken by one constructed on an entirely different basis. We hear of this city sometimes as the Windy City. Let now good Otchipwe be found for Windy City, and let that be transformed by a committee of experts into a euphonious place-name for the great capital of Illinois.