

History in the Making



William Dickson Collection

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Part Of: William Dickson Collection

Description Level: Fonds

Fonds Number: MC1

Material Details: Documents

Date Range: 1798 - 1857

History /

Biographical:

The Honourable William Dickson was born in Dumfries, Scotland in 1769 and emigrated to Canada in 1784. In 1794 he married Charlotte Adlam who became the mother of their three sons: William, Robert and Walter. Mr. Dickson received a special licence from the government of Upper Canada to practise law and he did so in Niagara Falls in 1803. In 1806, because of a misunderstanding, Mr. Dickson challenged another lawyer, Mr. Weekes, to a duel. Mr Dickson accused Mr. Weekes of abusing the memory of the late Governor Simcoe. The duel was fought with Mr. Dickson emerging the victor. During the War of 1812, Mr. Dickson spent his time as a soldier in Albany, as a prisoner. He had been captured when the Americans took Niagara but was able to return to Canada in 1814. In 1815 Mr. Dickson was elected to the legislative council of Upper Canada. In 1816, Mr. Dickson purchased the entire block of land comprising the Township of Dumfries from the Honourable Thomas Clark for the sum of twenty-four thousand pounds, or a little over one dollar per acre.

He lived for nine years in Galt, or what was at that time Shade's Mills, and then went back to Niagara, leaving the handling of his land to his son, William Junior, and to Absalom Shade, a building contractor from Buffalo, whom he had induced to come to Dumfries. Mr. Dickson made several trips back to Scotland to induce his countrymen to emigrate to Canada and settle on the lands he had bought. The Dickson family sold all of the township, except one or two farms, and retained an active interest in the community. Although Mr. Dickson did not reside long in the community, his family continued to settle their lands with the kind of emigrants they believed would make good Canadian citizens.

A few words about Mr. Dickson's family may be interesting. Mr. Dickson had three sons: Robert (1796-1846), William (1799-1877) and Walter Hamilton (1806-1884). Robert and Walter were barristers and lived at Niagara. They were both in the Militia and probably both served as cavalry officers during the Rebellion of 1837« Walter represented Niagara in the Assembly from 1841-1851. He was appointed a Legislative Councilor in 1855 and after Confederation, he sat in the Dominion Senate. Robert also was a Councilor. He died at Leghorn, Italy, in 1846. William lived at Kirkmichael, Galt, where he died in 1877. Walter lived at Niagara and married Augusta Maria Geale.

Scope and Content:

Collection consists of personal papers, correspondence, reports and newspaper clippings.

Storage Location: GSR Archives

Name Access: Dickson, Hon. William

Geographic Access: Galt, Ontario

Finding Aid: Finding aid, April 4, 2010.

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Source Organization: Kitchener Public Library

Collection: Archival Collection

Documents



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