

THE OLD WINDMILL

Written by Eva Rose,
Ridgeway, Ontario,
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Frequent enquiries are made regarding the age and history of this familiar old landmark. Such an inquiry, headed "Who Knows About This Windmill?" published in the NEWS on June 22, 1894, led me, the grand-daughter of the builder and original proprietor of the mill, to search the family records for information.

On July 9, 1758, in the State of New Jersey, Silas Carter first saw the light. When in 1776, the young American colonies had no further use for Matron England as a chaperone, and resolved to walk alone, Silas Carter, too young ~~as a teamster~~, served General Washington as a teamster, and during three months of the time, found shelter under the General's roof. *for the ranks*

At the close of the war, when England was inducing the New England Loyalists and others to settle in Canada, he took up the homestead at what is now known as Windmill Point, and at present owned by Messrs. Fox & Holloway.

On the site of the present City of Buffalo, there was then only the log hut of an Indian trader. Grinding wheat on the smooth top of a hardwood stump with a flat stone swung by a rope fastened to a bent sappling was a tedious method of making flour. The hand mills furnished to settlers by the British Government were not much better, and for years my grandfather took his grist of two bushels of wheat in a canoe down the lake and River Niagara to Chippewa Creek. Landing there, he would shoulder the bag and follow the Indian trail to the mill at the Falls, returning at night with his load considerably lightened by the miller's toil.

When the season of the "Hungry Summer" had come and gone, leaving the pioneers weaker for want of sufficient food and wiser in that they were determined to provide a supply ahead for a future contingency, he conceived the idea of building a windmill on Lake Erie. There was plenty of limestone and a kiln was built to burn the lime for the walls of the mill. One run of burr stones was made from broken boulders found on the farm. The second run of burrs was brought on the ice from Buffalo. With unflagging zeal each obstacle was in turn surmounted, and the autumn winds of 1832 turned the huge, canvas covered swifts of Silas Carter's mill. And a busy mill it soon became, running night and day when Erie's fitful temper would permit. Settlers came with grists from sixty miles away, and for forty odd years, the mill was patronized by the whole countryside. The structure was solidly built, but the wear of time and tempest begins to show effects.

My grandfather passed away at the ripe old age of ninety-eight years. Will this monument of his industry fall nearer to the century mark than he?