

Who was Clem Dawes?

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It was Edgar A. James, the first engineer of the Toronto and York Roads Commission, who suggested that Dawes Road got its name from Clement ("Clem") Dawes who kept a hotel at the northwest corner of Danforth and Dawes in the 1840s.

Historians have repeated this with little actual data to accompany it.

According to Ancestry, an online genealogical source, Clem Dawes came here as an infant in 1833 from Micheldean, Gloucestershire County, England, with his mother Jane Lodge and his siblings. His father, William, followed a month later. Clem's older brother, Thomas, became a minister in London, Ontario.

The family had a long history of tavern keeping and farming. Although the history of St. John's Norway Church cites William as an early parishioner and farmer, it is he who would have established the tavern in the 1830s, and had been running it in the 1840s.

First, let's look at circumstances of land ownership in the area at that time.

Both lots 1 and 2 of the second concession from Bay in York Township were originally crown reserves. In 1828 Lot 2 became King's College land (providing funds for the new university that became University of Toronto).

D'Arcy Boulton, who was Auditor General of Land Patents, received the first crown patent land grant for the northern half of lot 1, concession 2 from the Bay in 1839 (the lot east of the to-be site of the Dawes

Tavern). In 1855, after D'Arcy Boulton's death, his son-in-law William Cayley, was involved with the sale of 33 acres of land in the northern half of lot 1, concession 2 from the Bay, to Robert Boyd. In 1858, William Cayley, Minister of Finance, admitted that he had advanced 10,000 pounds of public money to finance railway dealings with D'Arcy Boulton's son, D'Arcy Edward Boulton, (Cayley's wife's brother).

Guillet tells us that such "indefensible conduct" was "characteristic of the financing of the Grand Trunk and other early Canadian railways." In spite of this, railways were continually in financial difficulty.

According to records in the Boulton papers held in the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) library, D'Arcy and Sarah Ann Boulton of the Grange (the historic mansion that is today part of the AGO) acquired over 2,000 acres of land, including lots in Whitchurch, Gore, and Vaughan townships. Ownership of the land came into the possession of Sarah Ann and was then passed to her nephew James Lukin Robinson.

Thomas Smith, who built and leased the Butcher's Arms Inn on Broadview Avenue in 1845, took possession of the land at the corners of Dawes Road and Danforth Avenue in 1852, and then the land passed to William Smith in 1871. The Dawes family would have leased the land for their hotel/tavern, never having owned land at the corner, according to land registration records in the Archives of Ontario.

To get some idea of land values and appreciation (or possibly corruption of the

Family Compact!) we can consider Sarah Ann and D'Arcy Boulton's 100-acre park lot at the Grange that was purchased in 1808 for 350 pounds from the estate of the late Solicitor General, Robert Gray (who drowned on the schooner *The Speedy*). In 1828 D'Arcy sold the northern half of the lot, 50 acres, to King's College for 1,250 pounds! Samuel Peter Jarvis, who conducted the sale (noted for pilfering funds from the Department of Indian Affairs, which he ran) bragged: "I cannot suppose you will think the rear 50 acres of your lot badly sold".

Then, as now, land was being held for speculation and causing social problems. Land held for crown and clergy was also a cause of strife among the early settlers as it affected roads, travel, access to water and settlement patterns. It was the policy that the first concession, from Queen to Danforth, and the broken front along the harbour would have no crown or clergy lands designated; thus the second concession would be given a double dose of these aggravating land holdings. This would have affected Clem in the second concession.

Now, let's look at political and population factors affecting area development.

To put the area in the context of the 1830s, immigration was increasing rapidly from the British Isles; and farms, sawmills and roads in the greater Toronto area were growing by leaps and bounds. Although water transportation was still a critical means of transit, Kingston Road was being planked and by 1839 there were daily stage coaches all the way to Kingston, Ontario. Railways were being constructed in Quebec and in the Niagara area. Talk of a railway in York County was in the air.



Kingston Road, from a water colour by Lt.-Col. Jas. Cockburn (about 1830)

Dawes and Danforth was a rural hinterland of the new city of Toronto, population just under 10,000 in 1834, with the populist radical reformer, William Lyon Mackenzie, as the mayor. The town of Markham had been settled in 1794 and the village of L'Amoreaux at Victoria Park and Finch was established in the first decades of the 19th century. In 1801 early residents of Scarborough petitioned the government to open a Town Line to Markham in order to get to the saw and grist mills there.

Norway, an unincorporated village just east of Kingston and Woodbine, had a steam sawmill operating since 1835 at the intersection of the present Queen and Kingston Roads. Further up Kingston Road just west of Victoria Park, at the five-mile post from the market, was the Painted Post Inn, built about 1835. It was a hangout for supporters of Mackenzie's Rebellion of 1837, and run by a character named Ballard.

"The Painted Post" also became synonymous with the toll gate established there and the York/Scarboro' surveyed boundary line.

By the 1840s the tension from the Rebellion and the world-wide recession that lasted from 1837 into the 1840s was ebbing and new spurts of growth were taking place. The population of York Township grew from 3,127 in 1830, to 5,720 in 1842, and to 8,874 in 1850.

The Guarantee Act of 1849 encouraged railway investment and speculation. The Baldwin-Lafontaine government achieved responsible government in 1849 in the province of the united Canadas and the Baldwin Act of 1850 established elected municipal government in the townships.

The Boyds, Chapmans, and Moffats settled in the area along the present Dawes Road in the 1840s. The Boyds were farming, the Chapmans farmed and then ran a brickyard, and the Moffats operated the Royal Oak Inn one-quarter of a mile north of St. Clair from 1845. Wexford at Lawrence, with St. Jude's Church nearby, was being settled in the 1840s. It was common for individuals to have more than one property, business or trade, and, as is the case today, immigrants often moved to new locations to seek better opportunities.

Around this time some other entrepreneurial spirits entered the scene in the Dawes Road vicinity along Kingston Road. In 1847 George Munro, one of Toronto's leading wholesalers and the city's mayor in 1841, bought and leased 60.5 acres of lot 1 south of Kingston Road that was known as the Painted Post farm. Originally coming from Cork County, Ireland, Daniel O'Sullivan in 1848 built the Norway Inn at the intersection of Kingston Road and Dawes Road which was the first meeting place for the congregation of St. John Norway Anglican Church before they moved to Woodbine Avenue (then a concession road).

When and why "Dawes Road" came into being

Dawes Road had been a native indigenous trail. Archeologist Ronald Williamson informed me that these trails in the glacial Lake Iroquois sand and clay basin lands would have been used for at least 5,000 years. Dawes Road was considered a "given" road because of the difficulty in navigating the surveyed official boundary line. Victoria Park, the surveyed Town Line and the boundary between Scarborough Township and York Township, was not used between Kingston Road and St. Clair due to the deep swampy ravine at Taylor Creek. The Dawes Road route began to be used by early settlers from Scarboro, coming down the boundary line of York and Scarboro Townships (the present Victoria Park Avenue), then turning onto Dawes Road and connecting at that time to Kingston Road as a route to the Market Square (today's St. Lawrence Market).



Dawes Road became an "official" highway through a by-law of the Home District in 1848. According to records in the Hope United Church Archives and a map in *The Beach in Pictures*, Dawes Road, itself, was called the "Town Line" through the 1870s. The highway from Kingston Road to Steeles Avenue (both the present day Dawes Road and Victoria Park Avenue) became known as (Old) Dawes Road in the 1880s at a time when more roads were being built and named. The present Victoria Park Avenue assumed its name in the 1950s as confirmed by Rick Schofield, archivist for the Scarborough Historical Society.

The 1848 by-law stated that the surveyed road began at the Painted Post along the Kingston Road (presumably the four-mile Painted Post). The posts, painted red for

visibility, designated the mileage from the Market Square. (At the eastern end of the province, red cedar posts were inserted every mile along the Kingston Road for the same purpose.) Opening the road as an official highway was petitioned by the residents and involved some straightening and adjustments as well as widening the road to 40 feet throughout.

The opening of the road was not without its challenges, however. John Chapman who in 1847 bought five acres of clay-rich land on Lot 2, Concession 2 from the Bay, was compensated 35 pounds for damages to his land. He was asked to convey part of it to the County, which he refused to do. The Committee of Roads and Bridges then recommended that he not be required to convey the land and recommended the Council provide "payment to Charles D. Maginn of the sum of 6 pounds 6 shillings, being the expenses incurred in the prosecution of the said John Chapman for stopping up the said road and for removing the nuisance therefrom as shewn by the vouchers hereto annexed." It should be noted that Charles Maginn was a justice of the peace near Wexford.

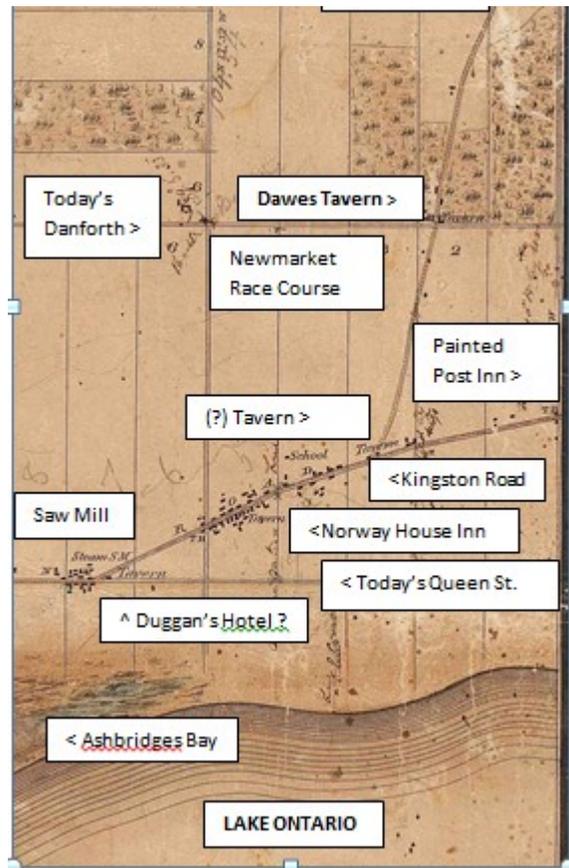
1842 Population and Civilization

Township	Population	Grist Mills	Sawmills	Cultivated Acres
York	5,720	8	35	24,238
Scarboro	2,750	1	10	16,083
Markham	5,698	11	24	29,005

Now let’s turn our attention to the Dawes Tavern and its impact on the area.

The earliest map that clearly shows a tavern on the corner of Dawes and Danforth is J.O. Browne’s map of 1851 (although the location of the tavern isn’t clearly situated on the northwest corner).

L'Amoreux Village (north of today's Finch)^
 Wexford Village (at today's Lawrence)^



J.O. Browne’s Map (1851), adapted for this article. It was at this time that Dawes Road, the "Town Line", attracted interest as an official public highway and major route to be taken by the farmers. Efforts were made to further improve it. The Church newspaper reported on a meeting held on April 4, 1851, at Smith's Inn on Kennedy Road to consider a proposed York and Scarboro' Plank Road. "The road commences at the Four Mile Tie [post] on the Kingston Road, along the Town Line to the 1st Concession of Scarboro' near St. Jude's Church, thence along said 1st Concession to its junction with the Danforth Road."

Planking didn't last long and wasn't the solution to the bad roads. It was also quite expensive. While Danforth Avenue (then known as the Don and the Danforth) was planked in the 1850s from Broadview to Old Danforth Road, it's not clear that Dawes Road ever was planked. It most likely

remained muddy, rough, and corrugated until gravel was quarried later in the century.



Early roads posed many problems, as the teams pulling wagons often got bogged down in mud.

Would Clem or his father have had any concerns about changes to their neighbourhood, including the widening or adjustments to their intersection? And how would it have affected the tavern or the volume of travelers?

When Clem was 18 and his father in his 70s, Clem was listed as the head of the household on the 1850 List of Inhabitants of York County. Clem was also enumerated as the head of household in the 1851 Census. Could this mean his father had become disabled or ill or just that Clem had assumed more responsibility in running the tavern?

Regarding Clem's father, the 1851 Agricultural Census reveals that William Dawes had 10 acres under cultivation in lot 2, concession 2 from the Bay. He had one milk cow, one calf, two horses, and one pig, and produced 70 pounds of butter that year.

But what is more significant is that the census enumerator made a special handwritten note to the effect that the land is "covered with numerous shanties with labourers not occupying more than 1/2 acres each, who would be enumerated in the personal census, not the agricultural census.

While Clem was growing up, within a mile down the road in Scarboro' lived Margaret Armstrong, born in 1835 on the Armstrong

homestead. Perhaps they went to school together or attended the same church. In any case, a romance between Clem and Margaret developed, probably with a courtship of sleigh rides, picnics, barn raising "bees" and church functions. In 1854, Clem at age 22 and Margaret, age 19, were married. In the same year, Clem's father, William, died at the age of 76 and has the distinction of being the first person buried at St. John's Norway Church Cemetery. During the 1850s at the Dawes Tavern, Margaret gave birth to three daughters and two sons, leaving Clem at an early age not only head of the household but also a new husband and a father.

At this point in our story the Grand Trunk Railway makes its entrance in 1856 just south of Danforth, with a flag stop named "York" (later to be called Little York). Rail traffic soon replaces much of the lake cargo transit and for Clem a trip to Whitby would have been much quicker.



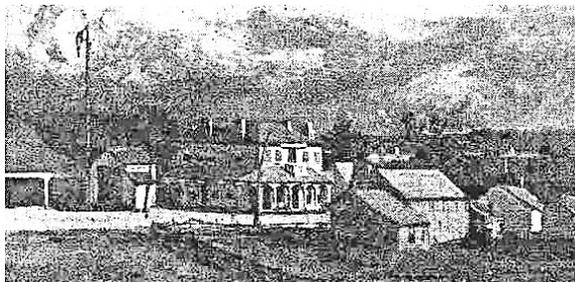
Adaptation of Tremaine's map (1861) illustrating the Grand Trunk Railway and Little York.

The first actual reference to Dawes tavern in an article was in the Globe in 1857 where the "road to Dawes tavern" is given as a description of the road going from Kingston

Road north. The year 1857 was also the beginning of a recessionary period after the financial crash in New York and London. It lasted until the American Civil War.

But our ambitious Clem was early in taking on other business operations.

We next hear of this enterprising young man from an ad in the Globe, March 1859, when he, as the "occupant" was selling Norway House Hotel at the corner of Woodbine and Kingston Road. This was described as a "well-established tavern stand" with a stable, driving shed and other outhouses. Wragg and Company, the ironmongers who built the Norway steam sawmill, provided plans of the land involved, and Wakefield and Coate were the auctioneers.



Norway House, south side of Kingston Road, just east of today's Woodbine Avenue.

Clem restlessly continued to acquire hotels. Classified advertisements in the Whitby Chronicle show him as proprietor of the Globe Hotel on Baldwin Street in Brooklin by Tuesday, January 17, 1860. The ads continue to show his ownership until Thursday, May 21, 1863, when a classified ad states that an unnamed person has purchased "the well-known, old established hotel and premises."



The 1861 Canada Census finds Clem in Whitby, a thriving harbour town of 2,648 people. Clem and Margaret's son William dies there in 1862. Perhaps they resettled therein 1860, coincident with purchase of the hotel in nearby Brooklin.

Clem is listed in Mitchell's Canada Gazetteer and Business Directory as the owner of Ontario Hotel in Whitby in 1864. William Bell is advertised as hotel keeper at the Dawes and Danforth intersection in the 1860s.



Ontario Hotel, Whitby. Courtesy Whitby Library

In a map of 1868 prepared by U.S. military engineers, the southwest corner of Dawes and Danforth is labeled "Smith's Corners" (William Smith had a tavern there) and on the northwest corner is the "Victoria Inn" (this was the name of George Empringham's first hotel on Danforth some twenty years later). On the northeast corner, the Rising Sun Inn is designated.

It appears that there is growing usage of the Dawes Road route. 1868 was the year of the exciting Queen's Plate race held at Charlie Gates's Newmarket racecourse a half mile west of Dawes Tavern, attracting 12,000 people from all directions by rail and the planked Danforth. The racecourse, built in 1854, would have been a popular diversion, drawing thirsty customers to Dawes Tavern over the years.

Then in 1869, Clem is listed as "gentleman" in Dundas, Ontario. Was this a real estate investment?

In the County of York Directory in 1870, Clem is back again on Dawes Road, as the owner of Dawes Hotel (listed under Norway as the closest post office). Clem Dawes had his hand in owning and juggling several properties!

In Whitby, tragedy strikes the family. Three babies die there as infants and, on March 6, 1872, Margaret also dies there. The Whitby Chronicle reported:

"The announcement of the unexpected event startled the entire community... Mrs. Dawes' remains were followed to the grave by a large concourse of people, many of whom were from a distance".

In her short life of 36 years Margaret had eight children four of whom died as infants or were stillborn.

Yet daughters Jennie who married Robert Fraser, Sarah who married J. W. Meharry, Mary who married R.J. Wright and son Thomas who married Minnie Wheeler survived.

Later that year, back at Dawes Road, the Markham Economist reported on December 5, 1872:

"As Mr. William Derry, farmer on the Kennedy Road, Scarboro' was returning

from the city last week, he thought he could accomplish the crossing near Dawes Tavern before the approaching train could cross, but unfortunately the engine carried both him and the hay rack off and threw them on the cow-catchers. Medical assistance was immediately procured, Dr. Lizars being on the cars, but nothing could be done for him."

The next year in Whitby, widower Clem marries Euphemia Mill, 23, originally from Edinburgh, Scotland.

The marriage took place at the residence of the bride's father, William Mill, by the Rev. Mr. Ballantyne on Saturday December 6 as the Whitby Chronicle tells us. Euphemia and Clem had three sons and a daughter.

There is no sitting back and taking it easy for middle-aged Clem Dawes.

We next discover Clem, in Port Perry in 1874. He has become "Captain" Clem Dawes of his steamship the "Ogemah" and is offering the Scugog Presbyterian Church parishioners chartered cruises on Lake Scugog from Port Perry. Then again on Dominion Day 1875 Captain Dawes is offering cruises to 1,100 excursionists who are coming on the newly-built railway connecting Whitby and Port Perry. In July, 1876, the celebrations were more elaborate:

"A moonlight excursion on board the steamer Ogemah left Port Perry wharf Friday night with an excellent Quadrille band providing music for dancing".



Unfortunately, this was followed in November by a fire on the Ogemah, "...quick work by Mr. Legare, a night watchman ...resulted in saving the steamship Ogemah from destruction by fire. Captain Dawes offered a \$50 reward for conviction of the parties who set the fire."

Our multitalented Clem takes on politics as well. In 1877 he has become a member of Port Perry's city council and is recognized as "one of our most energetic and respected townsmen". He was the township reeve from 1878 to 1879.

In 1879 Clem moves back to Whitby and is again (or continues to be) proprietor of the Ontario Hotel on Brock Street.

Always taking on new challenges, Clem is listed in the 1881 Census with the occupation of auctioneer. Most likely that would have suited him well.

Would Clem have been impressed with the bursting activity in the new village of Little York that came into being when the Grand Trunk Railway established its roundhouse and yards there? Would he have been amazed at what his corner had become?



Clem Dawes' impressive grave marker at Union Cemetery, Whitby.

Clem died in Reach, Ontario in 1886 and was buried at the Union Presbyterian cemetery in Whitby. He was 54.

Euphemia outlived Clem and is cited in her obituary in the Port Perry Star as "formerly of Whitby, and for many years a respected resident of Port Perry... a very active member of the Church of the Ascension of Port Perry."

Who was Clem Dawes? He was a talented, energetic, entrepreneurial, creative man who remade himself many times, but spent a good portion of his life at the tavern/hotel at Dawes and Danforth for which he has been forever recognized by the name of Dawes Road.

Illustrations and layout contributed by John Ellis AOCA, President of The Beach and East Toronto Historical Society.