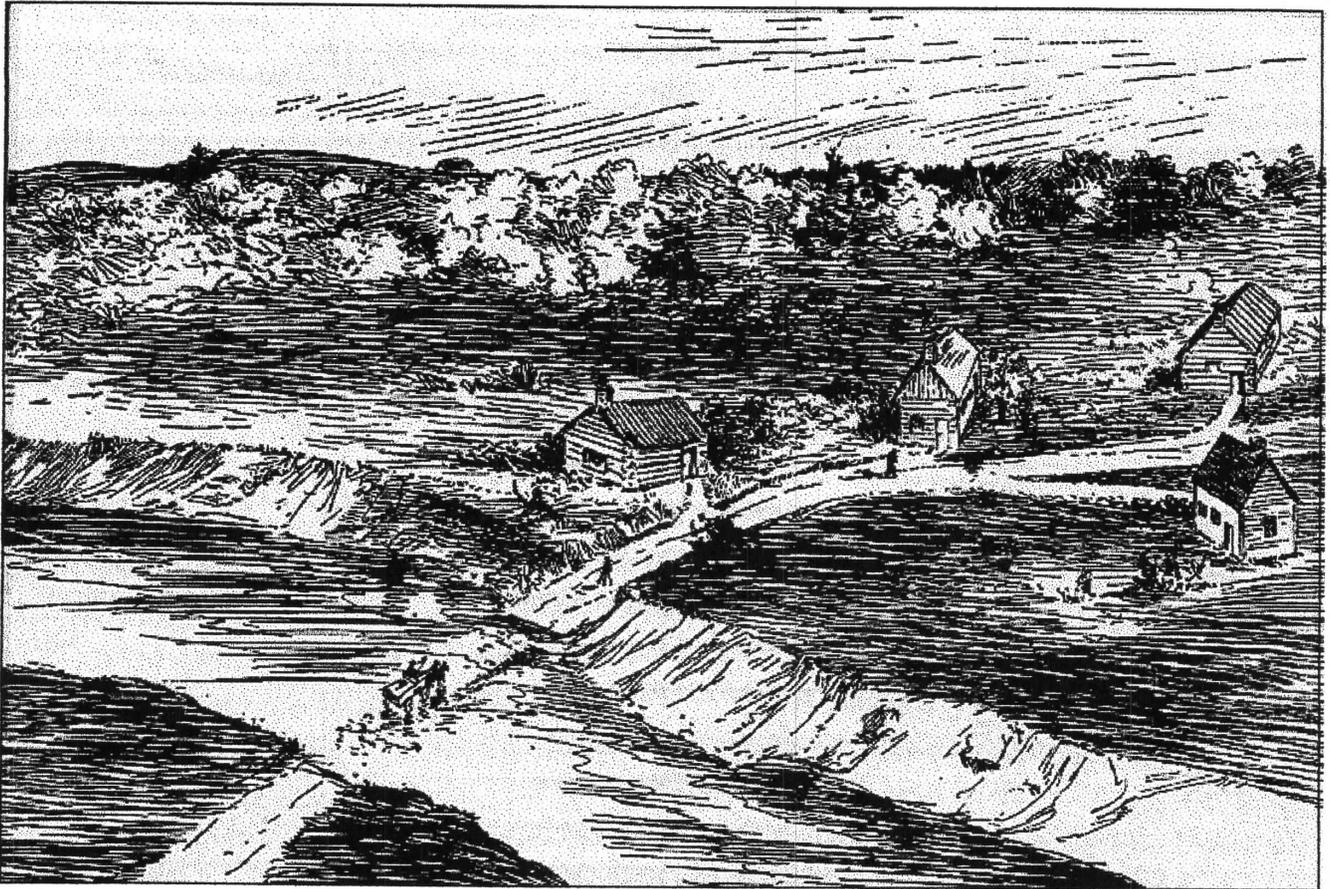


The Village of Brantford in 1830



By Roger Sharpe

Brant Historical Society

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N3T 2W6

John Wyatt, President

Publications Committee:

Angela Files (co-chair)
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David Judd
Gloria Neamtu

Brant Museum & Archives
57 Charlotte Street
Brantford, Ontario
N3T 2W6

Stacey McKellar, Director/Curator

The Village of Brantford in 1830

The early village of Brantford, before the purchase of the town site, was a very small but growing settlement. In 1830, it was estimated that Brantford village's population was about 300 to 400 souls. Early resident James Wilkes noted that around this time the town site was covered by scrub oak. It also had numerous streams flowing through it said to be filled with trout.

The Six Nations originally used the market square as a trading centre and it was here that the white settlers built the first public building in 1826. It was a two-storey frame schoolhouse erected by private subscription which also served as town hall, courtroom, church and meetinghouse. It was surmounted by a bell which was rung for fires and when someone in the village died. Resident Arunah Huntington disliked this practice of ringing the bell for every death and threatened to stop paying his subscription for the pay of the caretaker unless it was stopped. Much of the area to the north and west was dense virgin forest of a variety of hard wood trees, filled with deer and bear. To the east was a swamp of thick cedar trees, called the Grand River Swamp. This swamp was so difficult to travel, a corduroy road had to be built to support the traffic.

The road to present Paris, or at that time Nithsdale, passed through a forest of oak trees averaging one and a half feet across. Brantford's present Colborne Street was part of the road that joined Hamilton to Detroit. Many preferred this route to the Governor's Road because they did not have to climb the steep hill at Paris.

One reason Brantford developed was because it was a good place to cross the Grand River. When the route west was nothing more than an Indian path, it naturally led to the most convenient place to cross the river at Brant's Ford. Initially a ferry was operated at the ford. By 1812, early history says that a bridge existed but did not last long and was again replaced with a ferry. Other bridges were built, like Biggar's bridge in 1823, built by Marshal Lewis. Yet, most of them were eventually swept away in the spring, when the ice broke up into large chunks and floated down into the structure.

In 1830, a bridge existed across the river. (See map 1.) It did not cross the river completely, as it does today, but spanned the widest section of the river to a large island owned by Arunah Huntington and the executors of Nathan Gage. A smaller bridge then crossed a channel to West Brant. Two smaller bridges also existed on Colborne Street, bridging two small streams. A bridge crossed the stream that powered Wilkes' Mill, just east of Clarence Street and a second bridged a stream crossing Colborne Street just east of Rawdon Street.

Another reason for Brantford's development was that the water of the local streams and Grand River could be conveniently harnessed to drive machinery. In 1830, the river was powering Jedidiah Jackson's gristmill and Asahel

Hulbert's sawmill. One of the streams at the west end of the village powered John Aston Wilkes' gristmill. (See map 2.)

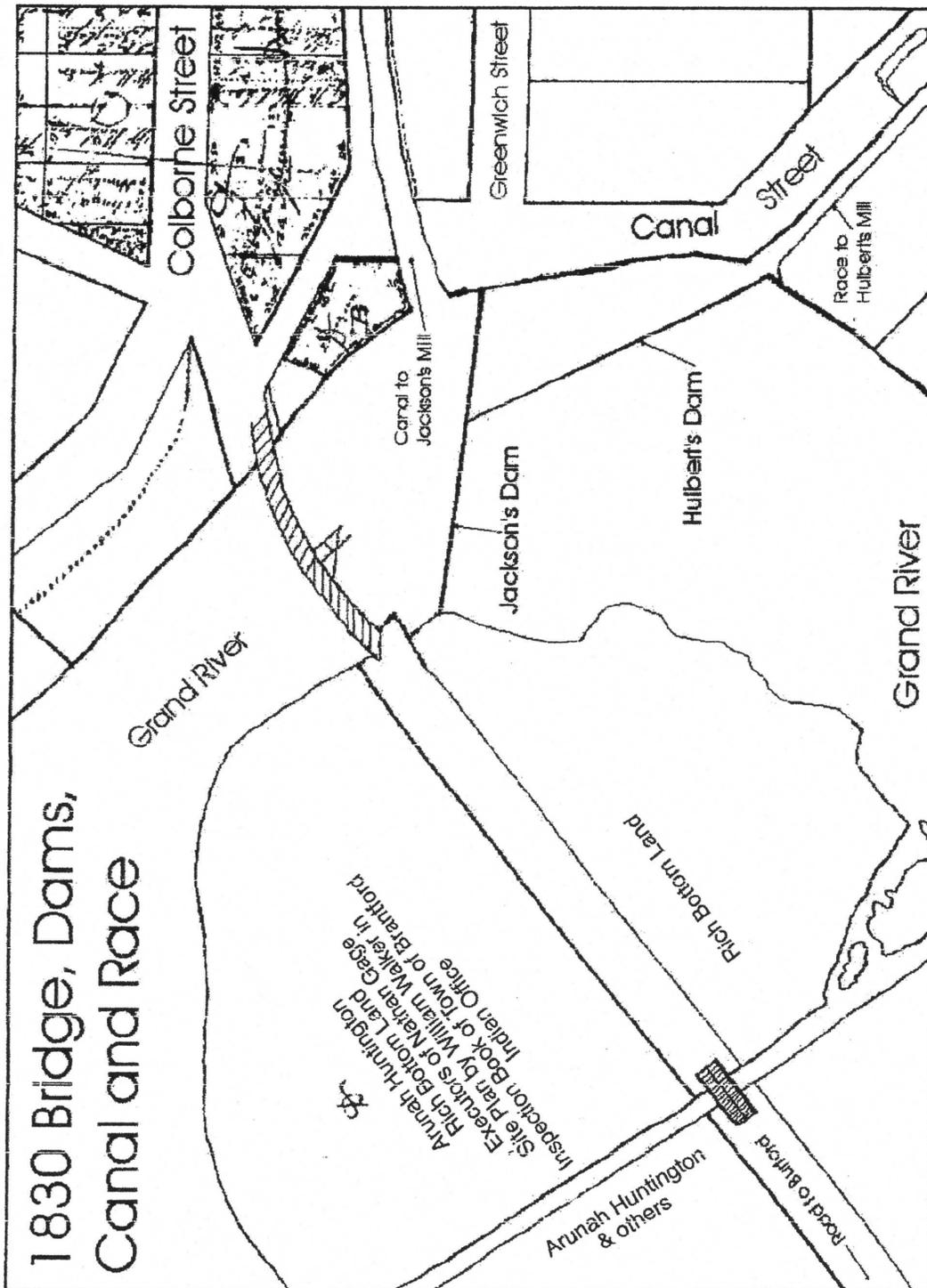
The surrounding area was also developing slowly. Much of the area around the town plot was designated as Indian farms or irregular tracts of land granted to early white or aboriginal settlers. William Kennedy Smith had a tract to the northwest, John and Jacob Brant to the southwest and the Mohawk Parsonage and Mission School were located to the southeast. In 1830, an aboriginal presence still dominated the immediate area, but this would soon change. The Six Nations had given the government permission to begin selling off the land around the town. (See map 3.)

Many of the early Brantford inhabitants had made land purchases from local aboriginals. Many of these purchases were similar to the land claims all along the Grand River Valley that plagued the government and Six Nations for many years to come. Individual aboriginals would sell a portion of the land they claimed ownership to and these deals were sometimes of an informal nature. Proving ownership became the question.

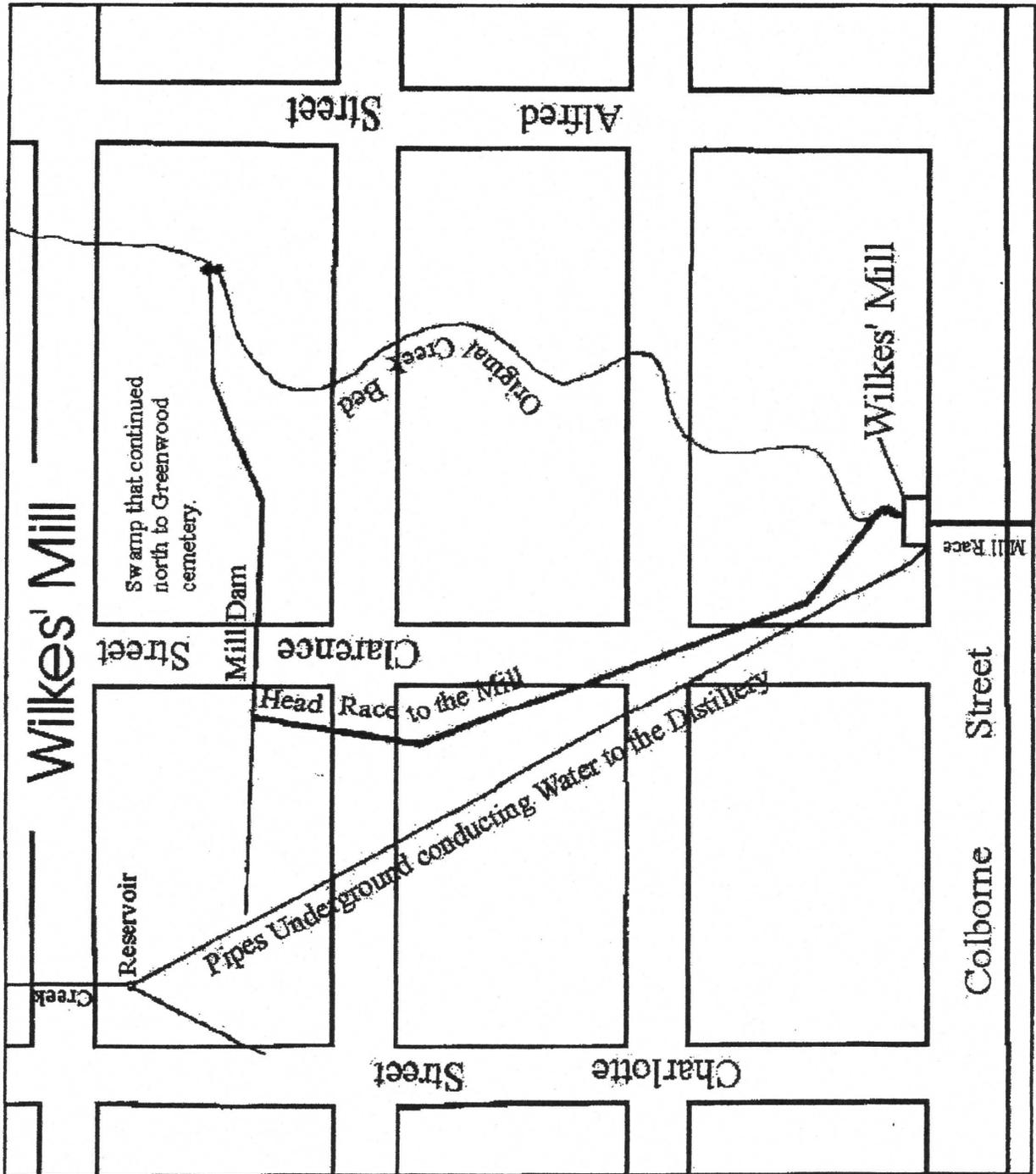
Some of the early land purchases can be traced back to the original aboriginal landowner of much of the town site, the Hill family. Chief David Hill (Karonghyonte or Flying Sky) was a well-respected Mohawk chief, who was second in status only to Joseph Brant (Thayendanagea). David's father Aaron, a Mohawk of the Wolf clan, had been chief of the village of Tiononderoga in the United States and often represented Sir William Johnson as an ambassador to the Western Indians. David was an officer in the Indian Department and a veteran of the Revolutionary War. During this conflict, he led many war parties that caused havoc and destruction up and down the Mohawk and Schoharie valleys in America. He was an educated man who spoke and wrote in both the English and Mohawk languages. His personal letters can be found among the Governor General's correspondence. In 1784, David was with Joseph Brant during the negotiations over the proposed settlement of the Six Nations along the Grand River. Two physical descriptions of him noted he was a strikingly handsome figure and a person of quality. In November 1790, Joseph Brant wrote to the Governor of New York, that Flying Sky had died a few days earlier, after a fit of sickness.

His son Henry Aaron Hill (Kenwendeshon) of the Wolf clan was an educated man, a supporter of the Anglican Church and lay reader. Kenwendeshon was sometimes called Dr. Hill because he dispensed medicines to his people. Henry Aaron was also responsible for the translation of many of the books of the New Testament, Psalms and hymns into the Mohawk language. He was a veteran of the War of 1812 serving at the battles of Beaver Dam in 1813 and Brant's Ford in 1814. During the later battle, he was wounded in the thigh and hand.

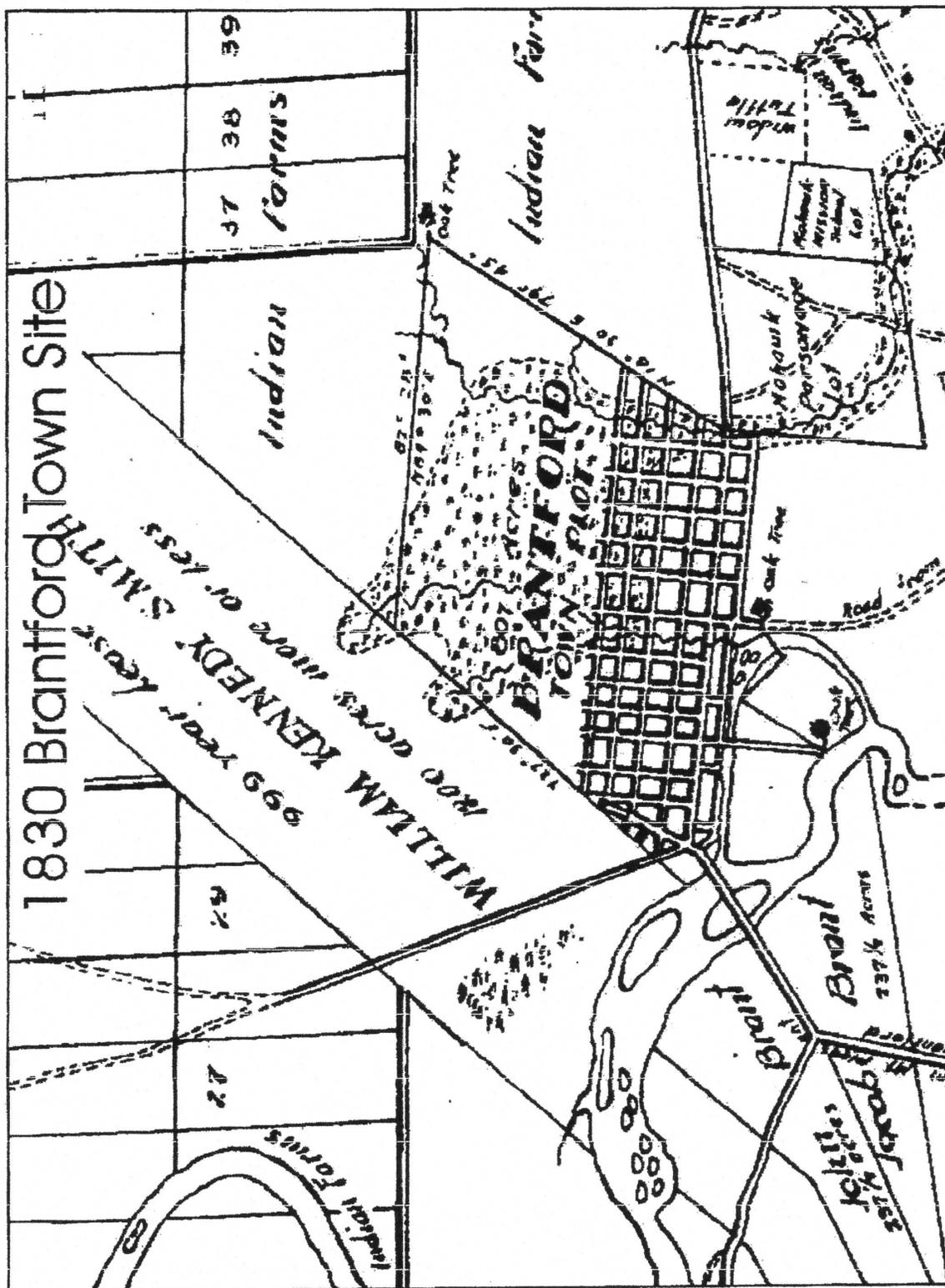
Map 1: 1830 Bridge, Dams, Canal and Race



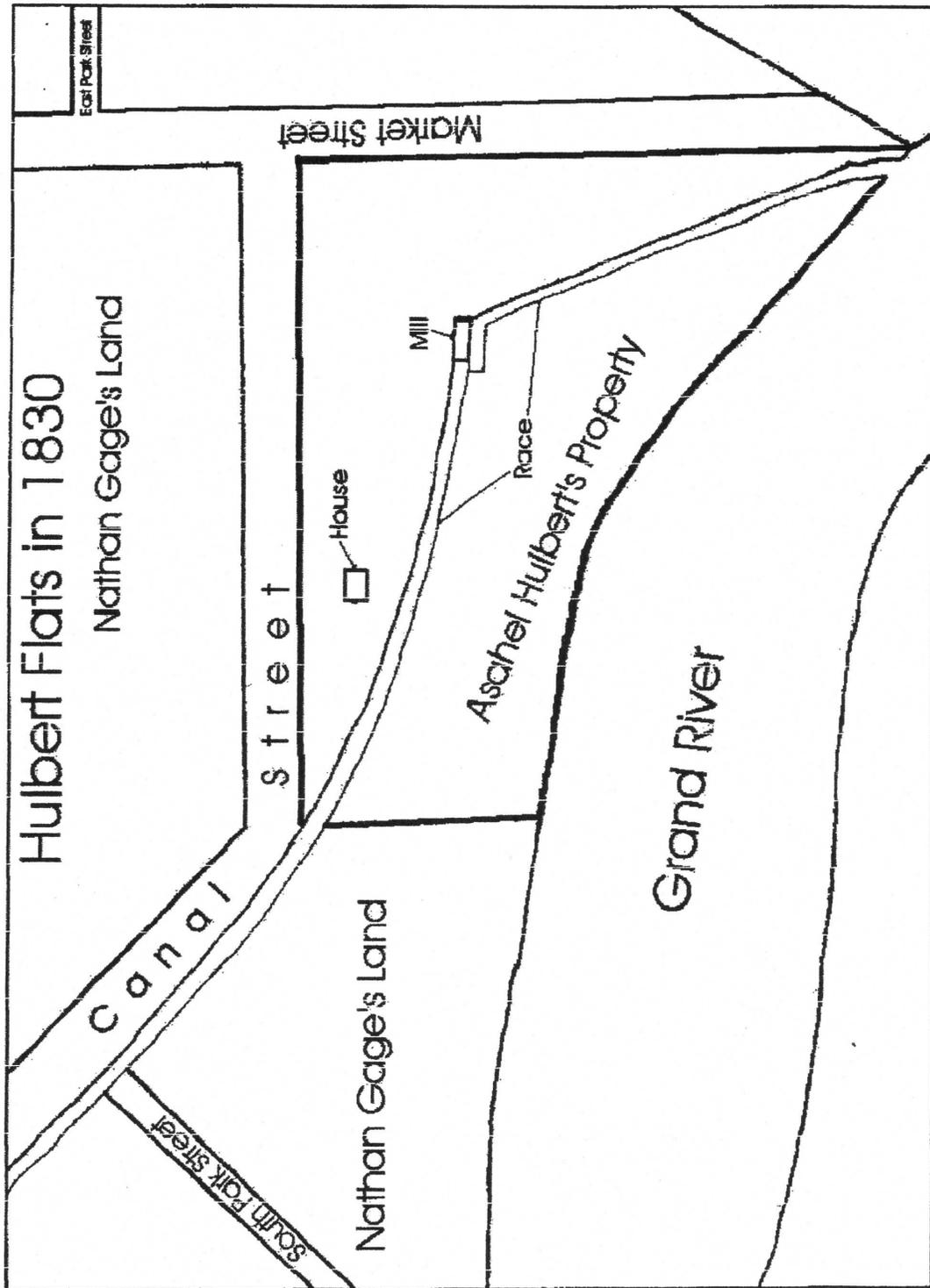
Map 2: Wilkes' Mill



Map 3: 1830 Brantford Town Site



Map 4: Hulbert Flats in 1830



The map created closest to this visit was Burwell's June 15, 1830, map of Brantford. (See maps 5 to 8.) On it you will see the names of many of Brantford's earliest residents like Reuben Leonard, Ignatius Cockshutt, Consider Crandon, Dr. Alfred Digby and future mayor William Muirhead. Added in the Addendum are the names of those listed on this map.

This brief glimpse of Brantford village was about at the end of its existence. Local Provincial Surveyor Lewis Burwell had already surveyed the future town plot, and very soon the lots would be sold at auction.

It was soon to grow into a thriving community on a completely different scale. The Town of Brantford was about to be born.



Lewis Burwell

Endnotes

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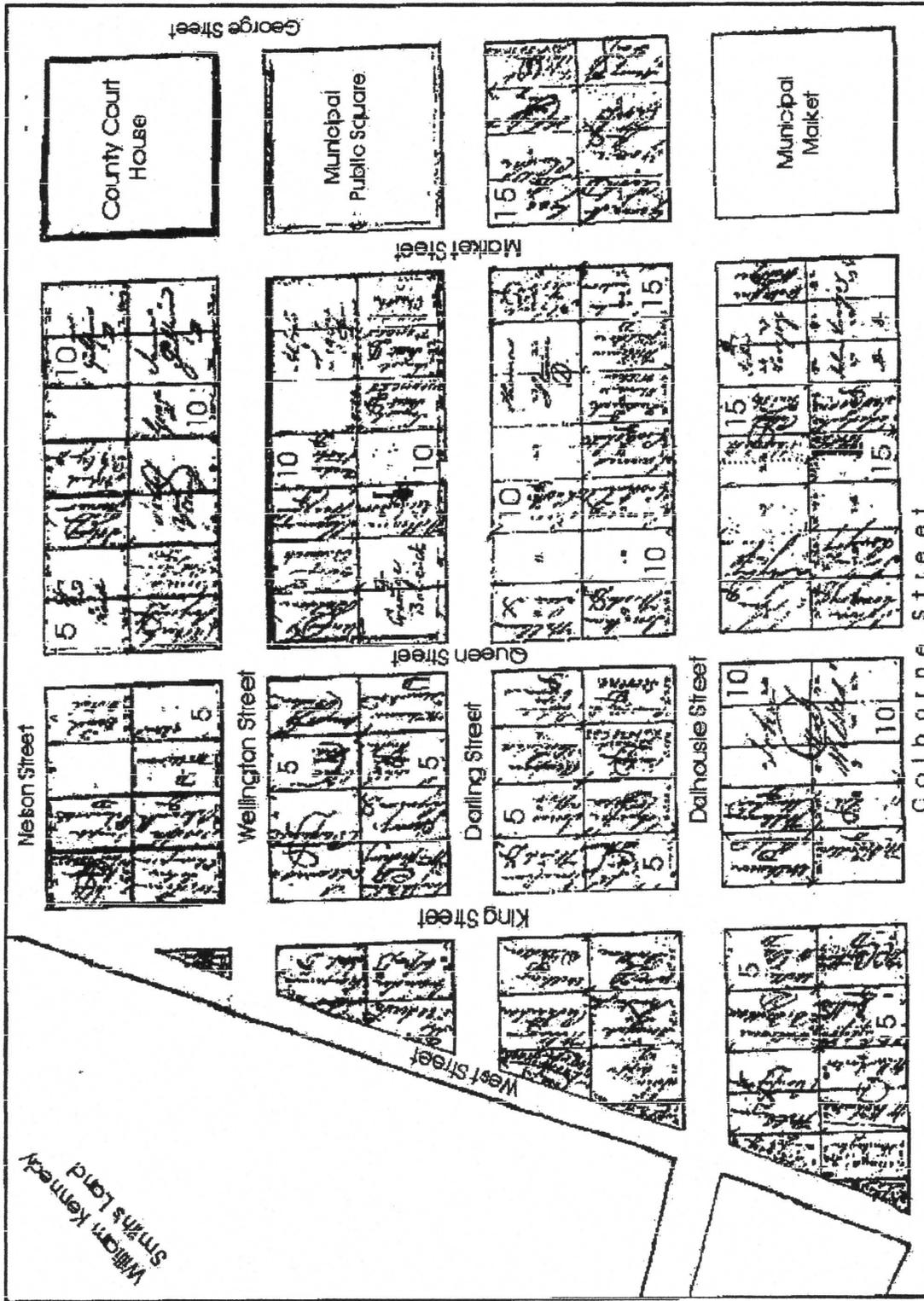
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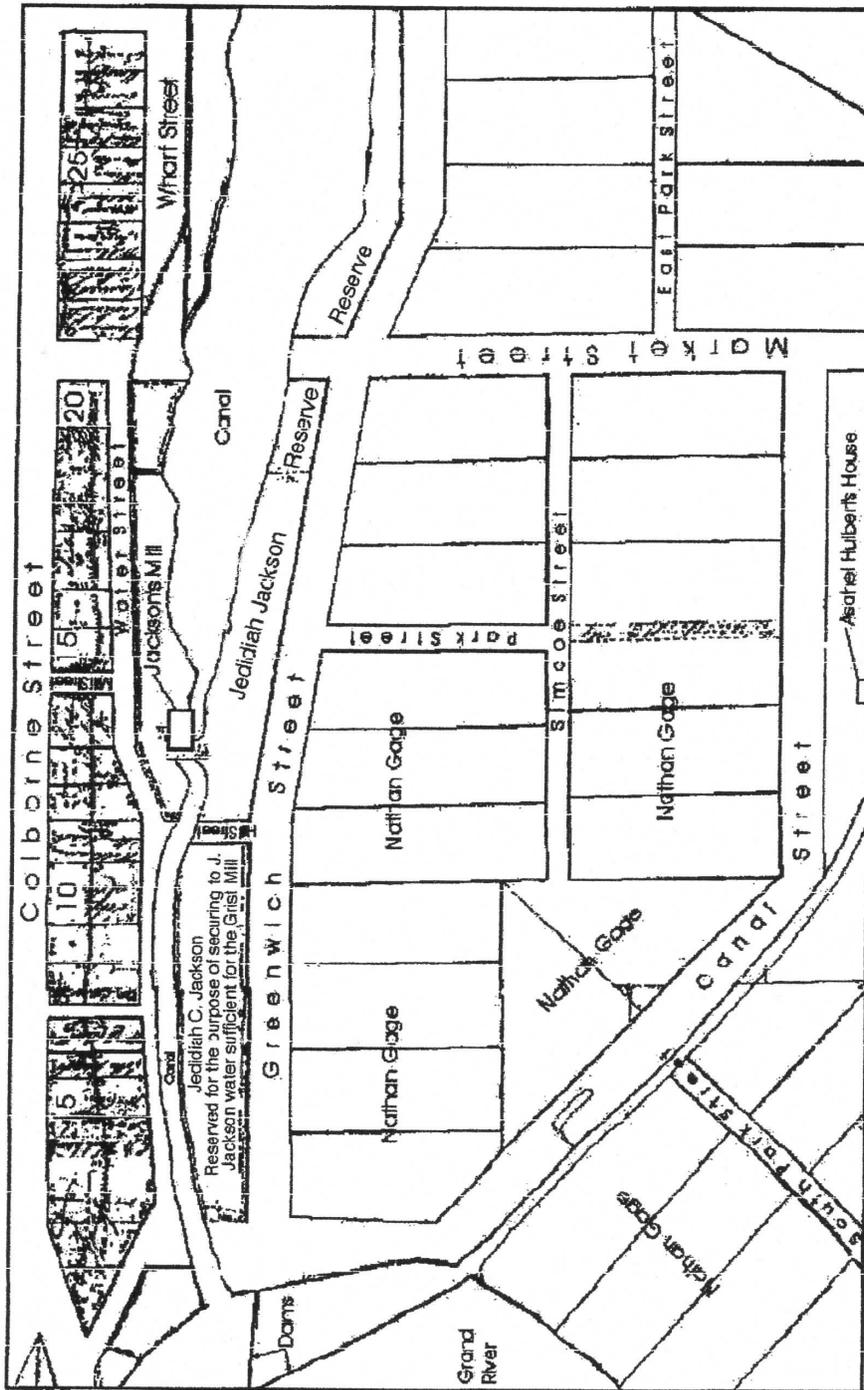
Various 1830 maps have been scanned and amended. The originals are courtesy of the collection of the Brant County Museum and Archives and National Archives of Canada, RG10, Department of Indian Affairs documents.

The pictures are courtesy of the Brant County Museum and Archives.

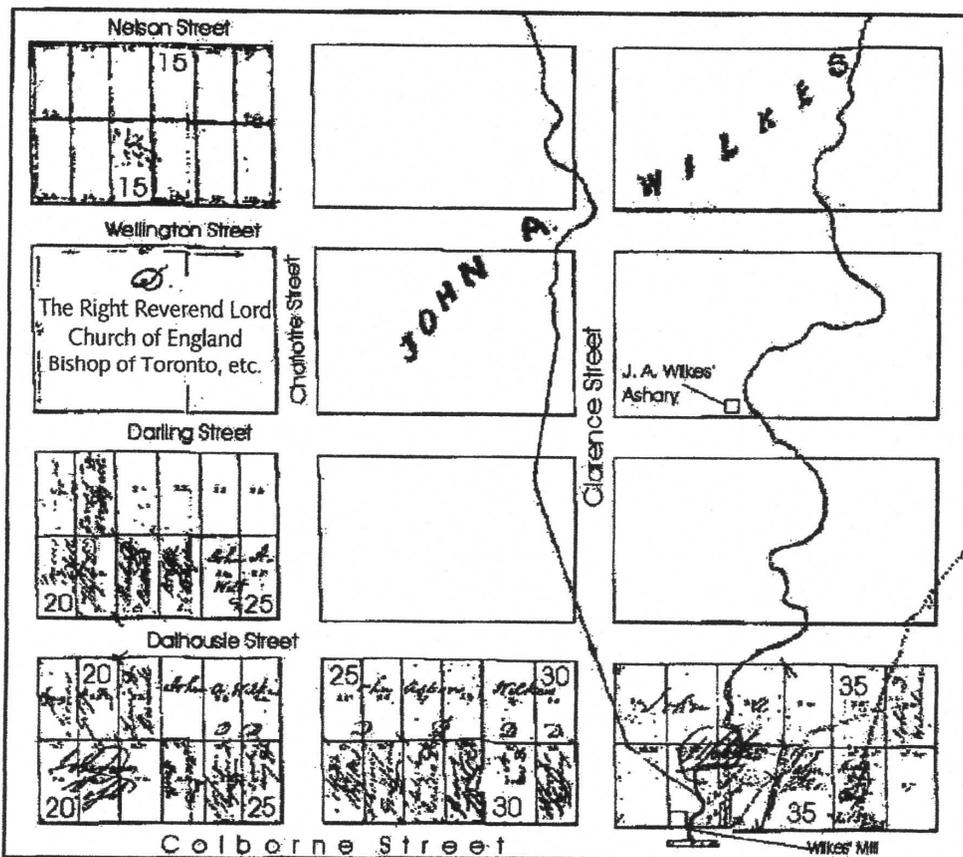
Map 5: Burwell's 1830 Map of Brantford (Part 1)



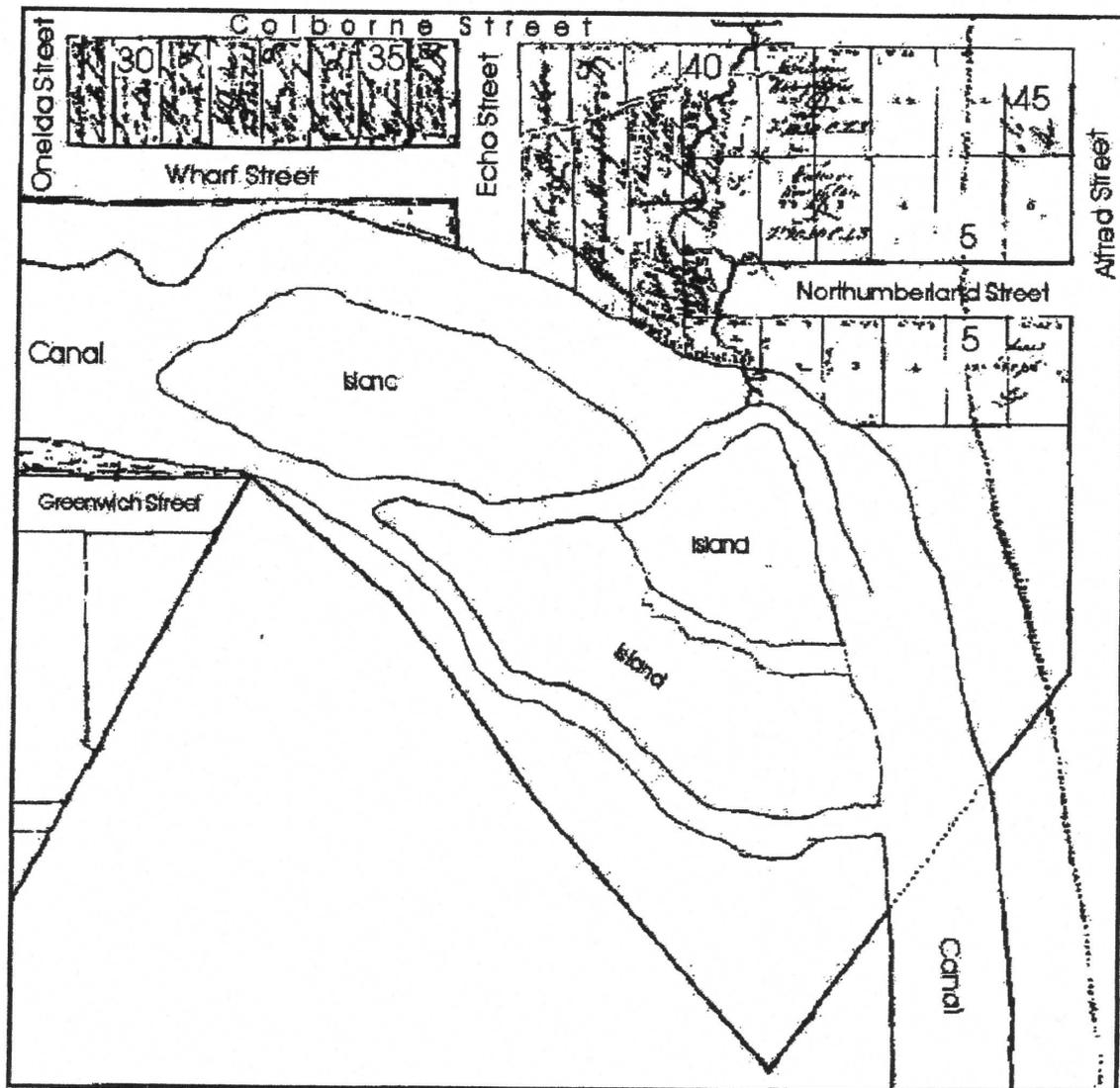
Map 6: Burwell's 1830 Map of Brantford (Part 2)



Map 7: Burwell's 1830 Map of Brantford (Part 3)



Map 8: Burwell's 1830 Map of Brantford (Part 4)



Addendum

Colborne Street, South Side

Lots 1 to 3	Andrew Sharpe	Lot 35	Abraham Wiglesworth
Lot 4 W 1/2	George W. Whitehead	Lot 36	James Clark
Lot 5	Arunah Huntington	Lots 37 & 38	Rufus Houghton
Lot 6	Seth Hurd	Lot 39 S 1/2	Rufus Houghton
Lot 7	William D. Dutton	Lot 39 N 1/2	Christopher Batty
Lot 8	name unreadable	Lot 41	Calvin Houghton
Lot 10	John Aston Wilkes	Lot 42	? Houghton
Lot 11	William Muirhead	Lot 45	John Hamstock
Lots 12 & 13	Arunah Huntington	Lots 46 & 47	William D. Dutton
Lots 14, 17 & 18	Jedidiah Jackson	Lot 48	name unreadable
Lots 19 & 20	John Aston Wilkes	Lot 49	James Coleman
Lots 21 & 22	James Cockshutt	Lot 50	& James McIntyre
Lot 23	William Spencer	Lot 51	George White
Lot 24	William Walker	Lot 52	Thomas Stubbs
Lot 25	Arunah Huntington	Lot 54	Joseph Squires
Lots 26 to 28	Consider Crandon	Lot 55	name unreadable
Lots 29 & 30	James Cockshutt	Lot 60	Henry Yardington
Lot 31	Abraham Cook	Lot 61	John Atkin
Lot 32	John Rae	Lot 62	name unreadable
Lot 33	John Deasley		Henry Yardington
Lot 34	Thomas Horn		

Colborne Street, North Side

Lot 1	name unreadable	Lot 26	John Aston Wilkes
Lot 2	Arunah Huntington	Lot 27	name unreadable
Lots 3 & 4	William Richardson	Lot 28	Jedidiah Jackson
Lot 5 E 1/2	Stephen V. R. Douglas	Lot 29	Henry ?
Lot 6	William D. Dutton	Lot 30	John Aston Wilkes
Lot 7	M. Charlton	Lot 31	name unreadable
Lots 9 to 11	John Aston Wilkes	Lots 33 to 35	John Aston Wilkes
Lots 12 to 13	John Lovejoy	Lot 36	Henry ?
Lot 15	name unreadable	Lot 39	Robert ?
Lot 16	Jedidiah Jackson	Lot 40	Ignatius Cockshutt
Lots 17 to 19	John Lovejoy	Lots 42 & 43	Abraham Benjamin
Lots 20 to 22	J. Ross	Lot 46	Matthew Coleman
Lot 23	? Smith	Lot 49	James Coleman
Lot 24	John ?		& James McIntyre
Lot 25	Alexander Young	Lot 52	William Knotman
		Lots 55 to 57	Matthew Crooks Coleman

Dalhousie Street, South Side

Lot 1	name unreadable	Lot 18	William ?
Lots 2 to 5	William D. Dutton	Lots 19 & 20	James Gilpin
Lots 6 & 7	William Muirhead	Lot 21	Lewis Burwell
Lots 8 to 10	John Aston Wilkes	Lots 22 to 35	John A. Wilkes
Lots 11 & 12	John Lovejoy	Lot 36	John Waterhouse
Lot 14 E 1/2	Charles Petrie	Lots 41 & 42	Edward Montgomery
Lot 15	Charles Petrie	Lots 45 & 48	Frederick T. Wilkes
Lots 16 & 17	John Lovejoy	Lots 54 to 56	Matthew Crooks Cameron

Dalhousie Street, North Side

Lot 1	name unreadable	Lot 13	Frederick T. Wilkes
Lot 2	John Kipp	Lot 14	William Walker
Lot 3	Arunah Huntington	Lot 15	Alexander Richardson
Lot 4	William D. Dutton	Lots 16 to 18	George Clark
Lot 5	name unreadable	Lot 19	Henry Fay
Lot 6	name unreadable	Lots 20 & 21	names unreadable
Lot 7	Reuben Leonard	Lot 22	Richard Catton
Lot 8	Russell S. Stevens	Lot 23	name unreadable
Lot 9	Jonathon Wood	Lots 24 & 25	John Aston Wilkes
Lots 11 & 12	James Cockshutt		

Darling Street, South Side

Lot 1	Peter Westbrook	Lots 12 & 13	Thomas Storm
Lot 2	William Richardson	Lot 14	Alfred Digby
Lot 3	William D. Dutton	Lots 15 & 16	George A. Clark
Lots 4 & 5	Jonathon Wood	Lot 17	Henry Fay
Lot 6	Reuben Leonard	Lot 18	George A. Clark
Lot 7	Russell Stevens	Lot 19	name unreadable
Lot 8	William Qua	Lot 20	James Woodyatt
Lot 10	James Cockshutt		

Darling Street, North Side

Lots 1 & 2	Frederick Gander	Lot 6	William Muirhead
Lot 3	Joseph McLean & William Hocking	Lots 7 & 8	George Babcock
Lot 4	Henry Lyman	Lot 9	William Richardson
Lot 5	name unreadable	Lots 11 & 12	Samuel Street
		Lot 13	Methodist Church

Wellington Street, South Side

Lot 1	name unreadable	Lot 7	James Gilpin
Lot 2	William John Champion	Lots 8 & 9	John Young
Lot 3	Joseph Pilsworth	Lot 10	George Clark
Lots 4 & 5	William Muirhead	Lots 11 & 12	James Gilpin
Lot 6	Robert ?	Lot 15	William Mitchell

Wellington Street, North Side

Lot 1	name unreadable	Lot 7	James Gilpin
Lot 2	William John Champion	Lots 8 & 9	John Young
Lot 3	Joseph Pilsworth	Lot 10	George A. Clark
Lots 4 & 5	William Muirhead	Lots 11 & 12	James Gilpin
Lot 6	Robert Sergeant	Lot 15	William Mitchell

Nelson Street, South Side

Lot 1	John Hodge	Lot 7	John ?
Lot 2	Joseph Pilsworth	Lot 8	Alfred Digby
Lot 4	Daniel O'Neil	Lots 10 & 11	James Gilpin
Lots 5 & 6	Alfred Read		

Nelson Street, North Side

Lots 1 & 2 James Law

Northumberland Street, South Side

Lots 5 & 6 Andrew Sharpe

Northumberland Street, North Side

Lot 1	John Aston Wilkes	Lot 10	James Coleman & James McIntyre
Lots 2 & 3	Calvin Houghton	Lot 11	Henry Loftus
Lot 7	Edward Montgomery	Lot 15	James McMichael
Lot 8	name unreadable	Lot 19	Amos Culver
Lot 9	Alexander Kirkland	Lots 24 & 25	William ?

