

**Presentation to the Clarkson Town Board**  
**Tuesday, April 9, 2019**  
**Clarkson Historian, Leanna Hale**

What is now Ridge Road was the southern boundary of the glacial Lake Iroquois which when receded became Lake Ontario. The Seneca Indians used the “ridge” to travel to their hunting grounds. The area north of the ridge became known as the “black north” because of the thick vegetation. The Seneca Indians never lived in this area. Their homes were west by Buffalo Creek and east - named Ganondagan (near Victor). The ridge has always formed a natural roadbed from what is now Lewiston to Oswego.

Phelps and Gorham purchased the land west of the Genesee River from the Seneca Tribe for the purpose of building a grist mill. The property was then owned by Robert Morse, a “founding father” of the United States and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. In 1793 the area then known as the Triangle Tract was purchased by Messrs. LeRoy, Bayard and Evarts of New York City.

General Matthew Clarkson became an associate of the trio and obtained land; 100 acres of which he gave to help form the town later named for him. The location of the acreage is unknown. Clarkson was the Great Great Grandson of another Matthew Clarkson who first came to New York in 1690 as Secretary of the Province for the British. General Clarkson served in the Revolution under Benedict Arnold and was present at the Battle of Saratoga. He was also present at the surrender of Savannah and the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. He later served as Assistant Secretary of War, State Assemblyman, Regent of the University of New York, U.S. Marshall, State Senator, and President of the New York City Hospital and the Bank of New York.

What would become the Town of Clarkson, by Act of the New York Legislature in 1819, was originally part of the Murray Township. The “pie shaped” Triangle Tract extended from LeRoy at its point, to Lake Ontario at its widest point. After a survey of the Tract, land was put up for sale at \$2.50 per acre. Moody Freeman was the first buyer of a tract of 100 acres on what is now Lake Road, north of the Ridge for \$198. The Ridge at that point was still a trail and was approximately 15 inches wide. Freeman was the first to build a house, clear land and harvest grain. He was educated and would later serve as Justice of the Peace and an early “backwoods” lawyer. He was known as God fearing and instrumental in forming the first Christian church in Clarkson.

The next two land purchases were in 1804. James Sayer purchased land on the north side of Ridge and Elijah Blodgett purchased land which is between Ridge Road and East Avenue, on the east side of Lake Road. The brick house, painted white, which was built by his son John, is still standing. The remnants of the mill he built in partnership with Heil Brockway (founder of Brockport) can still be found on what is now the Duryea property.

In another part of Clarkson (in the area of Lawton Road, Ireland Road, Sweden Walker Road), there was an Irish settlement which would be later known as Otis. Among those settlers was the Huoy family.

It may be somewhat unusual, but we have three people in this room who are descended from the early settlers:

- Alan Hoy from the Huoy family, which settled in the Otis area in 1808;
- Sharon Mattison, whose husband's family members, Epaphras and David Mattison, are listed on the 1817 store list of the Seymour Store; and
- Leanna Blodgett Hale who is descended from Elijah Blodgett, land purchaser and 1804 and mill owner.

If anyone else is descended from any of the early 1800 inhabitants of Clarkson, please see me after the meeting.

Note: The Seymour Store was on the corner where the Town Hall now resides and was built by the Seymour brothers who with Heil Brockway (who had a hotel where Crosby's is located now) went on to be founders of Brockport.