

The London and Middlesex

2021

HISTORIAN

Volume 29



Roller bins in the Arva Mill used to ground wheat kernels into flour.

**Official Journal of
The London and Middlesex
Historical Society**



Joshua Applegarth: An Example of Failure on Upper Canada's Western Frontier

Dan Brock

Introduction

Many are the instances during the early years of the nineteenth century in which emigrants who were considered of inferior station in their native land came to Upper Canada (now Southern Ontario) and in time achieved a moderate or conspicuous degree of social and financial success. On the other hand, there are also examples of men of capital, arriving in the province with good connections and from the “proper” family background, who failed to adapt to the frontier way of life and to give direction to their community.

Two striking examples from the London area are Richard Talbot (1772-1853), the co-founder of the Tipperary Irish settlement in London Township, and Joshua Applegarth (1779-about 1857), that township's first European settler. Although the lives of both have been traced elsewhere,¹ the purpose of this report is to discuss, in greater detail, the life of Joshua Applegarth, his pioneering attempt to cultivate hemp in what is now part of the city of London, together with his rise and fall in social and economic status in the general community.

Background

In September 1818, Colonel Thomas Talbot (1771-1853), the “Lake Erie Baron,” was granted the superintendency of settlement in London Township by Sir Peregrine Maitland (177-1854), lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada. It was at this time that the township was at last thrown open to settlement and the first pioneers began to arrive shortly after September 25th. Prior to this date, only two European families resided in the township: the Joshua Applegarths and the William Montagues. It was the “very comfortable log building” of the Applegarths, on the flats on the north side of the trunk of the Thames River, at the forks, which became the last outpost for the London Township settlers before plunging into the wilderness in search of the lots they had drawn.²

A personal inspection of the forks of the Thames, early in March 1793, by Upper Canada's first lieutenant-governor, John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806), confirmed that the site was ideal for the capital of the province and “eminently calculated for the metropolis of all Canada.” In April 1796 Abraham Iredell (1751-1806), deputy-surveyor of the Western District (basically the present Southwestern Ontario), was instructed to survey a block of land encompassing the present townships of London and North Oxford together with that part of North Dorchester north of the Thames. This parcel of land was surrendered by the Chippewa Indians the following September. A vast tract of land to the south of the Thames, a small portion of which comprised the former

Westminster Township (now, mainly part of the city of London), had earlier been purchased from the Ottawa, Chippewas, Pottawatomy and Huron Indians of the Detroit area in May 1790. Following the purchase of the tract north of the Thames, Simcoe then reserved on paper some 3,850 acres (1 559 ha) in London and Westminster for the actual town plot of London.³

While Simcoe's plans for the provincial capital to be erected at the forks of the Thames never materialized, they delayed settlement in Westminster until 1810, in London until 1818 and within the town reserve itself until 1826. Meanwhile, settlement had already begun in Delaware and Dorchester townships, as well as in the Long Point and Talbot settlements to the south and east when Joshua Applegarth crossed over the Thames and squatted on the plain just west of the forks, thus, with his family, becoming the first Europeans to reside in London Township.⁴

Apart from the all too brief but valuable references to Joshua Applegarth in the *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Middlesex Ont.* (Toronto 1878), reprint (Toronto 2008); *History of the County of Middlesex, Canada* (Toronto and London 1889), reprint (Bellville 1972) and Freeman Talbot's two articles which appeared in *The London Old Boy* (1901) i, 1, (July 1901) and *The London & Middlesex Historical Society Transactions*, Part VII (1916), little or no additional information was found in print about this elusive settler at the Forks of the Thames prior to my four-part series on Applegarth which appeared in *The London Free Press* on January 2, 9 and 16 and February 6, 1971. What follows, for the most part, as an update of my article which appeared in *Applegarth's Folly*, 1 (Summer 1973, 10-20).

The Applegarth Family

Joshua was born on October 11, 1779, at Barnard Castle, a market town six miles (9.7 km) southwest of Staindrop, Durham County, England, the third of seven children of John Applegarth (1746-1818) and his wife Sarah Baker (1752-1820). The Applegarths were members of the Quaker community in Staindrop as early as the mid-17th century.⁵ John Applegarth was variously described in the records of the Society of Friends as a shopkeeper, weaver and yeoman farmer.⁶

In 1791 the first member of the Applegarth family immigrated to Upper Canada. Joshua's elder brother, William (1774-1839) settled in the vicinity of present-day Hamilton where he taught school for the next several years. Joshua and his younger brother, John (1784-1854), joined William in 1801, and that December lots 7 and 8 in concession 1 and in the broken front of East Flamborough Township, then in York (later Wentworth) County, were purchased in the name of the eldest brother. It is believed that this transaction was made possible through funds given to the brothers by their father.⁷

The following year, while living in this township, the Applegarth brothers petitioned the provincial government for 200 acres of land apiece, stating that they were natives of England and had brought a certain degree of wealth with them. The government at York (now Toronto) recommended that their petition be granted and William was later to receive a crown patent for the adjacent lot 6,

concession 1 and broken front in East Flamborough, but there is no record of patents being taken out by his brothers in that township. The lands in William Applegarth's name, later forming the settlement of Aldershot, became known as "Oaklands" and there in 1809 it is believed William and John joined in erecting the first grist mill in that area, probably on the north part of lot 8 along what became Grindstone Creek west of the settlement of Aldershot.

Destroyed by fire in the mid-1810s, the mill was rebuilt of stone, about 1823, by John, who had often been heard to say that he would build a mill that "God Almighty could not burn." In January 1826, however, it too was consumed in a fire believed set "by a disgruntled workman," and the younger brother was obliged to build this mill a third time.⁸ While William and John were to live out their lives in the vicinity of the head of Lake Ontario with a certain measure of social and financial prestige within their respective communities, such was not to be the course pursued by the second eldest brother Joshua.

Sometime after arriving in Upper Canada the three brothers had become members of the Church of England and William and Joshua had married local women. Joshua's first wife was Abigail Hughson (b.c. 1783), a daughter of Nathaniel and Rebecca "Kate" (Land) Hughson who lived on the present site of the city of Hamilton. Joshua and Abigail are believed to have married in 1798 or 1799 and to have had at least two children—Marian and Pauline—before Abigail's death, sometime prior to 1809.⁹

The Tiffany Family

Meanwhile on March 23, 1801, Moses Brigham (1753-1814), then of Dover¹⁰ and his brother-in-law, Gideon Tiffany (1774-1854), printer, of Niagara (now Niagara-on-the-Lake), had purchased 2,200 acres of land in Delaware Township, Middlesex County, including the site of the present village of Delaware, from Ebenezer Allan (1752-1813) who then held the promissory notes on the property.¹¹ Moses was married to Lucinda Tiffany (1751-1814). Her brother, Gideon, had become Upper Canada's first journalist in 1794 when he was appointed publisher of the *Upper Canada Gazette* (Newark/Niagara). In 1799, he and their oldest brother, Silvester (1759-1811), began publication of the *Canada Constellation* (Niagara), Upper Canada's first non-official newspaper. After the failure of the *Constellation* in 1800, Silvester began publication of its successor the *Niagara Herald*.¹²

Sometime prior to 1804, the Moses Brigham and Gideon Tiffany families had moved to Delaware Township, had taken over Ebenezer Allan mills, were producing lumber for the Detroit market and were apparently engaged in fur trading with the Indians in the area.¹³ Pressed for funds, however, Moses and Gideon, together with Ebenezer Allan who still held their unredeemed promissory notes, had a lease and release of almost the entire property drawn up, on November 19, 1806,

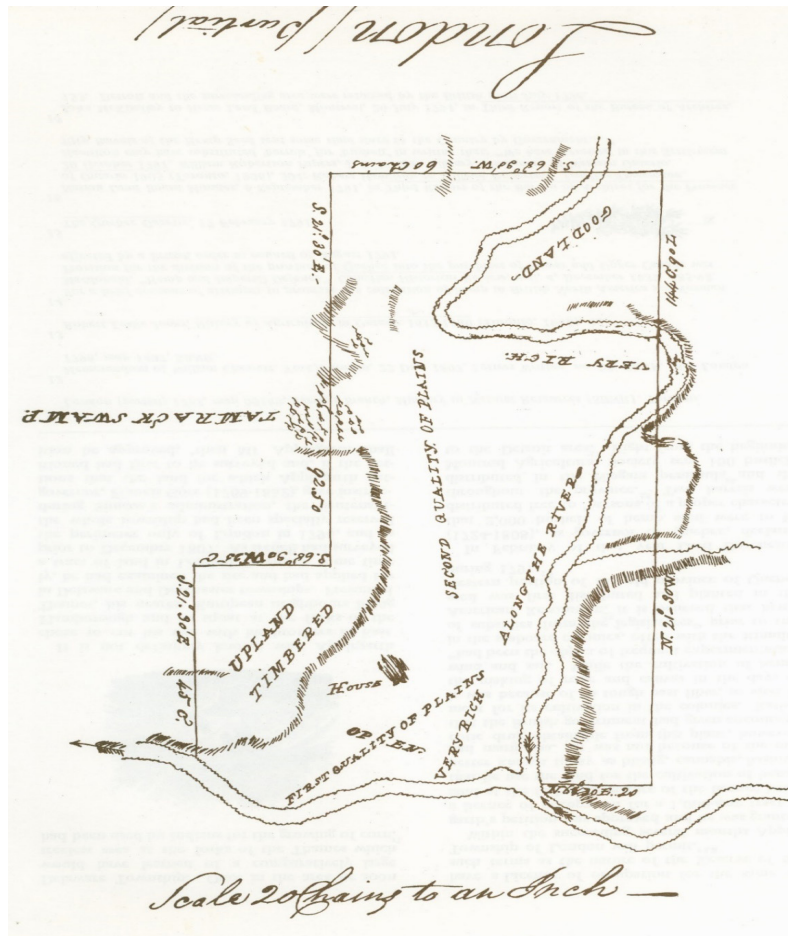
in favour of Dr. Oliver Tiffany (1763-1835), Gideon's well-to-do older brother then living in Ancaster Township, Wentworth County.¹⁴

It is believed that the Applegarth brothers were acquainted with Dr. Oliver Tiffany by this time, and that Joshua Applegarth was persuaded by Tiffany to have a look at Tiffany's lands in Delaware Township.¹⁵ It was probably in the summer or fall of 1807 that Joshua viewed the Tiffany holdings in Delaware Township. But he also viewed lands in the vicinity of the Forks of the Thames, particularly the extensive, fertile flats on the north side which had earlier been used by the Indians for the growing of corn.¹⁶ This was all part of London Township, the perimeter only of which had been surveyed by Abraham Iredell in 1796 and Lieutenant Governor Simcoe's reserve for the town plot of London, his intended capital of Upper Canada. Applegarth liked what he saw at the Forks and, even though this was still part of Lieutenant Governor Simcoe's reserve for the town plot of London, he made application for a tract of land which would include this plain. The then lieutenant governor, Francis Gore (1769-1852), informed William Chewett (1753-1849), one of the joint acting surveyors general of Upper Canada, that Applegarth could only obtain a license of occupation on the site, and then only for the sole purpose of growing hemp.¹⁷

The Applegarth Family and the Cultivation of Hemp in London Township

As hemp was vital in the making of rope and canvas in the days of wind and sail, the British government had given encouragement for its cultivation in the colonies. While it "had been the object of frequent experimentation in the seaboard colonies, often with the stimulus of subsidies from the legislatures"¹⁸ prior to the American Revolution, it is believed hemp seed was first distributed and planted in the western portion (i.e. Upper Canada) of the old province of Quebec during 1791.¹⁹

In February of that year, Lord Dorchester (1724-1808), as governor of the province of Quebec, declared that 2,000 bushels (72 740 litres) of hemp seed were to be distributed free to "persons of proper character," throughout the province.²⁰ Two barrels were distributed in the Niagara peninsula.²¹ Right from the beginning, a dark cloud hung over the hemp industry in this province. Robert Hamilton (1750-1811) reported that he had sown a little toward the end of September 1791, when it was first received at the Landing (now Queenston), and again four weeks later but the seed was too old.²² A treatise on the cultivation and preparation of hemp appeared in the *Upper Canada Gazette* in the winter of 1806.²³



Mahlon Burwell’s Plan of Joshua Applegarth’s License of Occupation, Dated London, October 15, 1808.
 (Map 10504, Surveys Branch, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Toronto)

By the autumn of 1808, Applegarth had erected a cabin on the 1,000-acre license of occupation he was allotted at the Forks of the Thames.²⁴ In October of that year, Mahlon Burwell (1783-1846) was instructed to survey this parcel which he was to describe in June 1810 as “The most considerable Tract of Land in the Township of London, which is free from Timber and suitable for the Growth of Hemp.”²⁵ It is likely that Joshua was cultivating hemp by 1810, in association with Gideon Tiffany, for, in that year, Gideon had rented out one of his farms in Delaware Township to a tenant for the purpose of cultivating hemp and was himself engaged in the construction a breaking mill for the processing of the same.²⁶ The above plan shows Applegarth’s “License of Occupation.” The tract of land extended from the Thames River and present-day Dundas Street on the south to the vicinity of the extension of Ridout Street on the east, to about the bridge over the North Branch of the Thames on Western’s University Drive on the north. to west of Platts Lane in

the northern portion of the tract and east of Beaverbrook Avenue in the south on the western side of the plot. The “House” would have been Applegarth’s cabin, apparently in the vicinity of the curve in Charles Street in West London.

As previously noted, Joshua’s wife, the former Abigail Hughson, appears to have died by 1809 and Joshua was left with at least two children, Marian and Pauline, to raise, his nearest white neighbours being several miles distant. He certainly was acquainted, by this time, with a third Tiffany brother, the aforementioned Silvester. It was about 1809 that Joshua had married Silvester’s eldest daughter, Elizabeth “Betsy” Tiffany (1787-after 1860). Joshua had six further children with Betsy: John (1810-1876), William (1812-1872), Sylvester (1814-1870), Elizabeth (1817-1910), Frances (1818-1910) and George Augustus (1821-1870).²⁷



Dr. William Applegarth (1812-1872) with his second wife, the former Irena Kelley, and three of their daughters, Eliza, Cordelia and Mabel, c. 1870.

This is the only photo I know of one of the children of Joshua Applegarth.

*From photo album of Janie (Morgan) Applegarth,
courtesy of her great-granddaughter, Debbie Clifton of Lexington, KY.*

In March 1810, Mahlon Burwell was instructed to survey one or two concessions in London Township and to note other areas “as may be free from Timber and suitable for the growth of Hemp.”²⁸ Burwell surveyed the first four concessions and the front of the fifth concession,²⁹ between May 20th and June 12th, and reported that, apart from “nearly Three hundred Acres of the first Quality, and entirely free from Timber” comprising part of Applegarth’s lease, only a few other areas were regarded as suitable for the growing of hemp.³⁰ Joshua had chosen well.

The Abandonment of the Hemp Culture by Joshua Applegarth

His efforts to cultivate hemp, however, were doomed to failure. As Edward Allan Talbot (1795-1839), a later resident of London Township, was to write in 1824, Upper and Lower Canada together “cannot at present afford a sufficient quantity [of hemp] to hang their own malefactors.”³¹ While the soil and climate in the Canadas were acknowledged ‘to be quite as favourable to its growth as those of Poland and Russia’,³² the failure of the hemp culture in British North America was attributed to the prohibitive labour and transportation costs which prevented competition with the Baltic product. Talbot further noted that ‘the Canadian farmers are actually too poor to purchase the machinery necessary for the proper manufacture of hemp, or to send it to any distant market....’³³

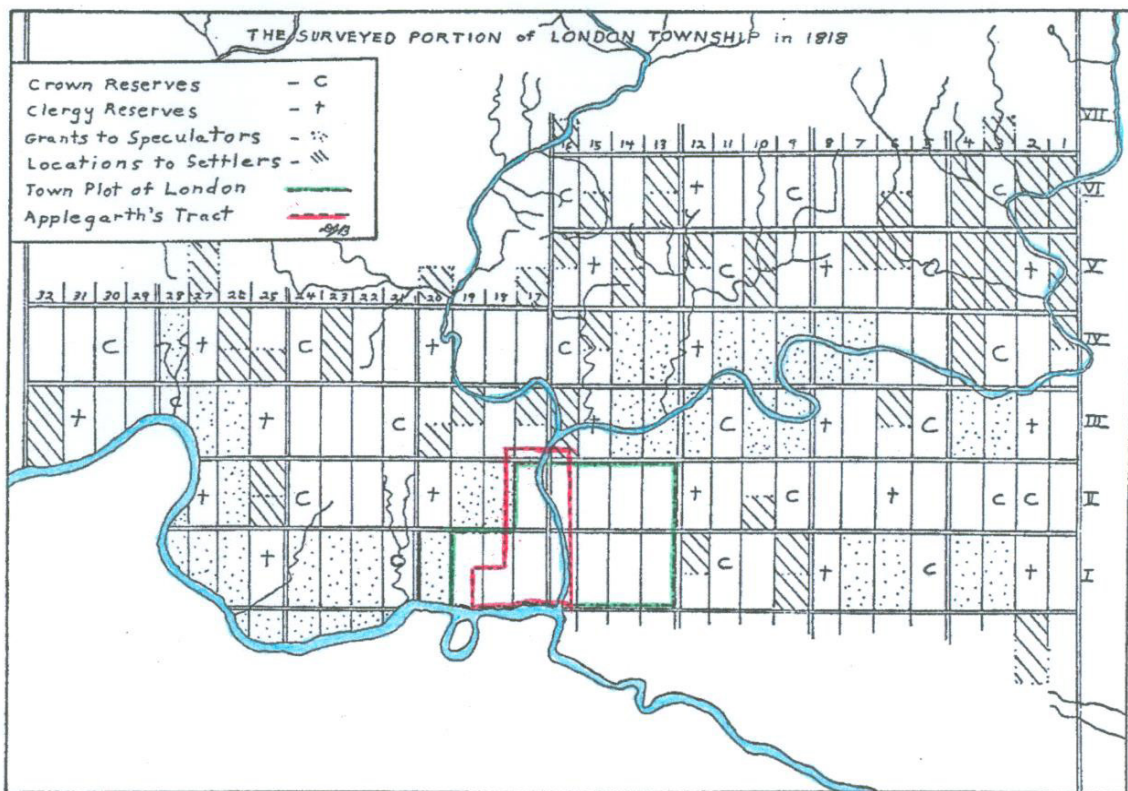
The Applegarths were compelled to leave London Township, in the aftermath of the Battle of Thames which occurred on October 7, 1813. It is probable that they waited out the rest of the War of 1812 with members of Betsy Applegarth’s family, probably in Canandaigua, southeast of Rochester, New York, where they had settled in 1802.³⁴ In January 1816, however, we find Joshua listed as living in West Flamborough Township, York (Wentworth) County.³⁵ This then would explain the old claim that he first arrived in London in 1816. In fact, the family would have been returning to the township after a few years’ absence.³⁶

Now in April 1815, John Applegarth had sold his lands in East Flamborough Township to his brothers, William and Joshua. At some point John must have come in possession of at least the north parts of lots 7 and 8 in concession 1, consisting of 204 acres which William Applegarth had purchased in 1801. These are believed have been the lands purchased in 1815 by Joshua Applegarth for £500 and then sold by him in January 1816 for a mere £153.³⁷ It is believed that Joshua had borrowed the £500 to pay his brother from Samuel Andress and Samuel Tisdale (1784-1853) merchants in Ancaster. More about this later. It was about this time that John Applegarth paid a visit to England. After returning to Upper Canada, he later became a merchant in Hamilton.³⁸

In 1817, the Joshua Applegarth family was joined by London Township’s second European family, the Montagues. William Montague (1760-1822), a native of Mells, Somersetshire, England and of French Huguenot ancestry, had arrived in the province that year with his wife and eight of their nine children. Ostensibly, he may have entered the township to assist Applegarth in the cultivation

of hemp, but he subsisted largely through hunting and trapping and was later to augment his income by ferrying settlers across the Thames when the township was thrown open to settlement in 1818.³⁹

Owing to the influx of settlers in the autumn of 1818, Mahlon Burwell again surveyed several additional lots in the township, using Applegarth's "one and a-half story log house" with "a chimney at one end and a window in the upper part of the other end," as the survey party's base camp.⁴⁰ (See illustration below for the extent of the survey of London Township by the end of 1818 and the relative location of Joshua Applegarth's 1,000-acre license of occupation.)



Daniel James Brock, "Richard Talbot, The Tipperary Irish and The Formative Years of London Township: 1818-1826," unpublished MA thesis, The University of Western Ontario, September 1969, 50."

The Final Days of Joshua Applegarth

The Applegarth cabin also served as the location of London Township's first town meeting on January 4, 1819. Joshua was chosen as town clerk but did not complete his term of office as by the autumn of 1819 he had sold off his license of occupation and had crossed the Thames into the more established township of Westminster to the immediate south.⁴¹ Apart from his understandable

failure to make a financial success of the hemp culture, and therefore the need to sell his license of occupation, the traditional reason for moving across the river was the fact that the climate on what was once known as Applegarths Flats caused Joshua to suffer from ague.⁴²

At the annual Westminster town meeting, held in January 1820, Joshua Applegarth was elected a pound keeper. This was to be the first and last official position he would hold in the township.⁴³ The Applegarths appear to have been living at the time in a house owned by Edward Teeple (c. 1792-1855) on the north side of Commissioners Road on lot 33, concession 1, just east of present-day Beachwood Avenue in the city of London. The house is said to have been built by a man named Hubbard “who started a still-house across the road.”⁴⁴ Applegarth soon saw that there was more money to be made in the distillation of whiskey than in the cultivation of hemp. Unfortunately, he failed to abide by the formality of first obtaining a license for such activity and was “convicted on his own confession” in April 1820 of using two stills, in the “little log house” opposite his dwelling, “for the purpose of distilling spirituous Liquors for Sale” during November 1819. He was ordered to pay a fine of £10 provincial currency, plus £3 16s 6d to the prosecutor for his suit and to forfeit his stills to the Crown.⁴⁵

It was about this time that an amorous episode involving one of Applegarth’s daughters by his first marriage is said to have occurred. Dennis O’Brien (1792-1865), an Irish Catholic pedlar who made his rounds on foot at the time selling hardware and tin ware, had arrived Upper Canada in 1820 and had made his way to Middlesex County and Westminster Township. He was said to have made his acquaintance of the Applegarth family and to have taken a shine to Joshua’s daughter, Marian. The story was told, nearly 70 years later, by an early Middlesex resident, that O’Brien would frequently come to call on young Marian by climbing the gable of the Applegarth cabin and enter the loft “through the window in Romeo fashion. On one of such occasions a conspiracy to trap him for the purpose of blackmail was put into effect, but the Romeo, jumping from the window, escaped.”⁴⁶ When the new town plot of London was laid out in 1826, O’Brien became one of the original residents of the settlement and its first general merchant. His ardour for Marian, however, must have cooled with the passage of years as in 1834 he married Jane Shotwell (b.c. 1816), daughter of Abram & Sylvia Americana (Sumner) Shotwell of Delaware.⁴⁷ Nothing further is known of either Marian Applegarth or her sister Pauline.

As for Joshua Applegarth, we hear again of him on March 11, 1822 when he paid Henry Schenick £50 for the west half of lot 28, concession 1, to the west of present-day Wortley Road, in what was then Westminster Township.⁴⁸ This transaction is rather odd as Joshua was deeply in debt by this time. The Court of King’s Bench had issued a writ of *feri facis*, on February 2, 1822, against his goods and chattels for a £500 debt owed, as noted earlier, to Samuel Andress and Samuel Tisdale of Ancaster, for the delay in the recovery of their debt and for the cost involved in bringing this debt before the Court. This debt would appear to have been for the purchase of the 204 acres in East Flamborough for £500 in 1815 and which he sold for only £153 the following year. As

Joshua failed to have the money before the said Court of York on the first day of Easter term," his goods and chattels were apparently seized on March 1, 1822, just 10 days before he purchased the Schenick property. This property was in turn, seized by James Hamilton, the sheriff of the London District, on May 10, 1823. The highest bidder was Samuel Andress, one of Applegarth's creditors, who paid the same price as Joshua had paid Schenick the year before.⁴⁹

This is the last we learn of Joshua Applegarth owing any property. Henceforth, the lands on which he lived were in the name of his sons or his wife. His indebtedness to Andress and Tisdale, the failure of his hemp growing venture in London Township and his fine in 1820 for the illegal operation of stills in Westminster Township had all come together to bring about Joshua's financial downfall.

For the next decade the movements of the Applegarths are uncertain. At the time of the United States Federal Census of 1830, the family was living in Lewiston, New York.⁵⁰ By March 1833, they may have been squatting on land on the northeast side of the Goderich Road (now Highway 4) in the present village of Lucan.⁵¹

In December 1833, we definitely pick up the trail of the family in Caradoc Township across the Thames from Delaware, when Dr. Tiffany granted a deed of gift for the southeast half of lot 14, concession 1 in the name of two of Joshua's sons, William and Silvester.⁵² The 1842 census for Caradoc indicates that within the Joshua Applegarth household there was a boy and a girl under the age of five.⁵³

We find virtually all the members of the Joshua Applegarth family living beside one another in January 1852. Joshua and Betsy Applegarth were living in a one-story, frame house, apparently on the northeast half of the 100 acres gifted to William and Silvester in 1833. Also living with them were their sons John⁵⁵ and Augustus, daughter, Elizabeth Lawyer, and her daughter Cornelia (b.c. 1839).⁵⁶ Silvester Applegarth, his wife, the former Eleanor Harris (1819-1908), an older sister of Augustus Applegarth's dead wife, and their seven children lived in a one-story frame dwelling, apparently on the southwest half of the said 100 acres.⁵⁷

William Applegarth, his son Henry William (1837-1894) by his first wife Eliza Dowlin (1861-1840), his second wife, the former Irena Kelley (1827-1902), and their oldest surviving child, James (1851-1855) lived in a log cabin, apparently on the southwest quarter of lot 13, concession 1, immediately to the southwest of the lot on which his parents and siblings lived. This is was half the 100 acres purchased in 1847, by William's brother Augustus from the executors and devisees of the estate of their granduncle, Dr. Oliver Tiffany. Augustus farmed the northwest portion of the 100 acres.⁵⁸ Walter Dowling/Dowlin (1818-1870) and his wife, the former Francis Maria Applegarth and their two children Francis Caroline (1839-1911) and Sarah (1845-1934) lived in a log cabin on 70 acres of the northeast half of lot 16, concession 1, Caradoc, immediately northeast of Joshua Applegarth's farm⁵⁹

The agricultural census for 1851 gives us some insight into the state of farming on the 50 acres reported by Joshua Applegarth. Ten acres was still “wild land,” 30 were under crops in 1851, of which five acres had been in wheat, five acres in Indian corn, one-and-a half acres in beans, a half-acre in potatoes and another half-acre in turnips. The orchard comprised one acre, while nine acres consisted of pasture. Joshua had two milking cows as well as a calf or heifer, two horses and three pigs. He had harvested six tons of hay and, although the family did not have any sheep, five yards of flannel had been produced. His son Silvester, however, had five sheep at the time, while his son-in-law Walter Dowling had 27.⁶⁰

By this time Joshua Applegarth’s family was being drawn to the American West. In March 1855 William Applegarth sold his share of the southerly portion of lot 14, concession 1, Caradoc to his brother, Silvester. Their brother Augustus sold 50 acres of the southerly portion of lot 13 in the same concession in August of the same year and it would appear that he and William then travelled to Minnesota Territory as far as what became Pennington County in the northwestern part of the territory. They may also have journeyed to what became Wabasha County in the southeast part of Minnesota as well.

In any case, Augustus sold off his remaining 50 acres in Caradoc in July 1856 and appears to have married Mary Eliza Miller (b.c. 1835, Lamont, Michigan) about the same year. Their first child, George Augustus, Jr., was born in Wyandotte Township, Pennington County on October 9, 1857.⁶¹ Meanwhile, in August 1856, Silvester sold off the southerly portion of lot 14, concession 1 (100 acres), to Alfred Holloway of the city of London. This was the last of the Applegarth land in Caradoc to be sold. Joshua and Betsy were still residing in the township, however, as late as September 6, 1856. This is the last record we have for Joshua Applegarth.⁶²

Meanwhile, settlement had begun, in June 1855, in that part of Township 110 which was soon to become West Albany Township, Wabasha County, Minnesota. It is believed that both William and Silvester Applegarth purchased land in that township by 1856. In May 1857, Silvester sold the mortgage he held against Alfred Holloway. It was in the spring of 1857, after the town plot of West Albany was laid out on Range 12 of Township 110 that William Applegarth built his store, “which he stocked with a small supply of general merchandise...” The first town meeting was held in this store and, like his father before him, William was chosen the township’s first clerk.⁶³ In addition to the William Applegarth family, the Minnesota Territory Census of early October 1857 shows the Silvester Applegarth family on Range 12. Next door lived Betsy Applegarth and her eldest son, John. Nearby were to be found the Walter Dowling family. All three households were engaged in farming.⁶⁴

Augustus Applegarth joined the rest of the family in Township 110 by the spring of 1858. That summer it is believed he taught “The first term of school in this township....” Silvester Applegarth laid out the town plot of Albany, about a half mile from the town plot of West Albany in the spring of 1859. There, he built a grist mill on West Albany Creek.⁶⁵

The 1860 United States Census for Township 110, Range 12, shows the families of William, Silvester and Augustus Applegarth still present on Range 12 with West Albany as the postal address. It also notes this for Betsy Applegarth and her eldest son John as well.⁶⁶

It would have been sometime after the 1860 census that Betsy (Tiffany) Applegarth died but no record of her death has been found. Likewise, we have no record of Joshua Applegarth's death. We know he was living in Caradoc Township on September 6, 1856 but, as he does not appear on either the 1857 or the 1860 censuses for Township 110 in Wabasha County, Minnesota, we can assume he had died by October 1857. Did he die while still in Caradoc? Had he expired upon reaching his new home in Minnesota? Or, did he die along the way? Joshua's death, like many other aspects of his life, remains a mystery.

Conclusion

From what knowledge we have of the life of Joshua Applegarth, it would appear that he failed in almost every venture undertaken. Economic conditions at the conclusion of the war of 1812 probably forced him to sell off his land in East Flamborough Township at less than one-third its purchase price a year earlier. His attempt to cultivate hemp—the condition of his license of occupation at the Forks of the Thames—ended in failure. The same pattern was repeated in his struggle to begin a fresh start in Westminster Township. Applegarth's solution to failure in one place was to pull up stakes and move elsewhere. Along with his perennial optimism that circumstances would be different in the next settlement, his frequent migration may have also been a conscious attempt to elude his creditors, just as they have succeeded in concealing his whereabouts for years at a time from historians and genealogists, at least until recent years. As he lived, so he died, in yet another attempt to achieve success, if not for himself then at least for his children, in a part of the recently-opened American west. To a certain degree Joshua was somewhat representative of Frederick Jackson Turner's "professional" frontier farmer, always ready to move on when "civilization" had overtaken him.⁶⁷

Not only did Applegarth display a complete inability to manage his finances but, again as was the case with his contemporary, Richard Talbot, he was never to enjoy the prestige which might have been his. When London Township was first opened to settlers his fellow settlers assumed he would be one of the leaders in the new community and elected him town clerk, one of the most honourable offices within the township government. Applegarth in turn rejected this opportunity to assist in the direction of the township during its formative years and retreated to Westminster Township. Even in this more settled township he still had sufficient prestige to be elected to the minor position of pound keeper. After 1820, however, there is no record of him holding even so lowly an office as this.⁶⁸ Like Richard Talbot, he had the proper background to be considered for the prestigious position of local magistrate – the mark of a squire- yet, at a time when constant complaints were heard that it was impossible to find satisfactory magistrates, both men failed

to be appointed justices of the peace.⁶⁹ Applegarth did not even succeed in being appointed an officer in the local militia, while Talbot was commissioned a captain in the Fourth Regiment of the Middlesex Militia.⁷⁰

Yet, despite his failings Joshua Applegarth does merit certain claims to recognition in the London area. He and his family were the original European settlers in London Township and on the site of the present city of London. His cabin served as a sort of base camp for Mahon Burwell and his survey party in the autumn of 1818 and the last outpost for the pioneers of 1818 before striking out along blazed trails in search of their wilderness lots. The first town meeting of London, at which he was elected town clerk, was also held in Applegarth's dwelling. A less realized facet of his significance is that he was the first to introduce the hemp culture to the forks of the Thames and in so doing hemp became the earliest commercial crop grown by Europeans in London Township and within the present city of London.

Endnotes

- ¹ See Daniel J. Brock, "Richard Talbot, The Tipperary Irish and The Formative Years of London Township: 1818-1826," (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Western Ontario), (London 1969); "Richard Talbot," *London Free Press, The* (LFP), April 11 and 18, 1970; Daniel J. Brock, "Richard (Talbot) Talbot), colonizer, office holder, and militia officer," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (DCB) (Toronto, Buffalo, London 1985), viii, 855-56; "Joshua Applegarth," *LFP*, January 2, 9, 16, 23 and February 6, 1971.
- ² Brock, "Formative Years of London Township," 52, 56-59.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 48-9; Major Littlehales' account of Simcoe's visit to London, March 2, 1793, in E.A. Cruikshank, ed., *The Correspondence of Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe* (Toronto 1923-31), I, 293; *Canada-Indian Treaties and Surrenders From 1680 to 1890* (Ottawa 1891-1912), I, 1-5.
- ⁴ *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Middlesex*, i-ii, v, vi; *History of the County of Middlesex*, 29-30, 476-479, 486-88, 510; 567-68, E.A. Owen, *Pioneer Sketches of Long Point Settlement* (Toronto 1898), reprinted (Bellville (1972).
- ⁵ Upper Canada Land Petitions, A 6-4, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa; Piers Applegarth, Piers Applegarth Family Tree, ancestry.ca, accessed Aug. 24, 2021.
- ⁶ Charles P. Neat to Daniel J. Brock, Sunderland, Co. Durham, England, Aug. 17, 1970.
- ⁷ H.H. Robertson, *The Gore District Militia of 1821-1824-1830 and 1838*, Wentworth Historical Society (Hamilton 1904), 21; Neat to Brock, Aug. 17, 1970; T. Roy Woodhouse to Daniel J. Brock, Hamilton, [March 1970]; Register Burials, August 1851-October 1880, Office of the Church of the Ascension (Anglican), Hamilton; Abstract Index, Flamborough East Township, Archives of Ontario [AO], Toronto
- ⁸ Land Books, Upper Canada, E, 150, Library and Archives Canada; Abstract Index, Flamborough East Township; Robertson, *Gore District Militia*, 21; *Montreal Gazette*, 4 Feb. 1826; Mabel Burkholder, *Out of the Storied Past* (Hamilton, 1968, 112-13; Woodhouse to Brock, [March 1970]. The 1851 census for the city of Hamilton (Jan. 1852) found John Applegarth living on John Street. He listed his

occupation as a miller, and the fact that business had not been too prosperous during the previous few years may be recognized from the following angry note set down under the heading of “Remarks.” “We may with graet [*sic.*] propriety take great shame to ourselves that we have so few hands employed seeing so many Emigrants are becoming subjects of the Yankee republic driven there by free trade and other such detestable laws concocted by Lord John Russel and his silly cabinet and the Baboons here who try to equal him in folly. John Applegarth.: Canada West Census, 1851, City of Hamilton, St. George’s Ward, Library and Archives Canada.

- ^{9.} See *History of the County of Middlesex*, 512; Nelson Otis Tiffany, *The Tiffanys of America* (Buffalo, NY 1901), 41-3; Darren Ross, Ross/Runquist – Lowes/McKinnon Family Tree, ancestry.ca, accessed Sept. 14, 2021.
- ^{10.} This is believed to have been Dover Township, Kent County.
- ^{11.} Tiffany, *Tiffanys of America*, 41-3; Instruments 6 and 7 (1801), Middlesex County, Middlesex West Land Registry Office, Glencoe; Daniel J. Brock, “Gideon Tiffany,” *DCB*, viii (1851-1860), 887-88; Daniel J. Brock, “Ebenezer Allan,” *DCB*, v (1801-1820), 13-15.
- ^{12.} Douglas G. Lochhead, “Silvester Tiffany,” *DCB*, v (1801-1820), 814-16; W. Stewart Wallace, “The First Journalists in Upper Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review (CHR)*, xxxvi, 4 Dec. 1945, 380
- ^{13.} Patrick C.T. White, ed. *Lord Selkirk’s Diary 1803-1804: A Journal of His Travels in British North America and the Northeastern United States* (Toronto), 1958, 308
- ^{14.} Instrument 68 (1806), Middlesex County; Tiffany, *Tiffanys of America*, 41-3; Darren Ross, Ross/Runquist – Lowes/McKinnon Family Tree, ancestry.ca, accessed Sept. 14, 2021.
- ^{15.} The Cooley family were neighbours of Dr. Oliver Tiffany. In 1811, Joshua’s brother, William Applegarth, married Martha Cooley (1793-1857), a daughter of Preserved and Mary Ellen (Beemer) Cooley. As well as operating the mills in Delaware Township with his brother-in-law, Moses Bigham, Gideon Tiffany managed the lands in Delaware then owned by his brother, Oliver. Kevin Duke, Stephanie Stenabaugh Family Tree, ancestry.ca, accessed Sept. 14, 2012; Thomas Welch to Thomas Ridout, Aug. 26, 1811, Surveyors’ Letters, 38, 161, Surveys Branch, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) (Toronto); L.R. Gray to Larry [?], Jan. 20, 1968, photocopy sent to me from the file on Gideon Tiffany, by Lorne Ste. Croix, Heritage Development Officer, Heritage Administration Branch, Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation (Toronto); Instrument 3168 (1831), Middlesex County; Last will and testament of Gideon Tiffany, Jan. 31, 1838.
- ^{16.} This comprised much of what is now West London, including Labatt and West Lions parks and Kinsmen Area. Map No. 00189, “The Site of London [1793], Surveys Branch, OMNR notes “Old Indian Cornfields” on the flats.
- ^{17.} Memorandum of William Chewett, York, Letters Written, no. 20, Surveys Branch, OMNR; Brock, “Richard Talbot,” 52.
- ^{18.} Robert Leslie Jones, *History of Agriculture in Ontario 1613-1880* (Toronto 1946), 43.
- ^{19.} For a brief account of the attempt to promote the cultivation of hemp in British North America see Norman Macdonald, “Hemp and Imperial Defence,” *CHR*, xvii, 4, December 1939, 385-98.
- ^{20.} *The Quebec Gazette*, February 17, 1791.
- ^{21.} Nassau Land Board Minutes, September 6, 1791, in *Third Report of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario 1905* (Toronto 1906), 304; Robert Hamilton to William Robertson, Landing

(now Queenston), October 20, 1791, William Robertson Papers, The D.B. Weldon Library, Western University, London. Hamilton may have substituted the word “barrels” for bushels when he wrote: “We have Received in this Settlement fifty Barrels of the Hemp Seed sent some time since to the Country by Government....”

22. Hamilton to Robertson, October 20, 1791; Bruce G. Wilson, “Robert Hamilton,” *DCB*, v (1801-1820), 402-06.
23. Charles Taylor, “REMARKS on the Culture and Preparation of HEMP IN CANADA: Communicated at the desire of the Lords of His Majesty’s Privy Council for Trade and Foreign Plantations,” *Upper Canada Gazette*, 25 Jan. 1806, reprinted in the Feb. 22nd and March 1st issues.
24. See Map 10504, Mahlon Burwell’s Plan of Joshua Applegarth’s License of Occupation, Dated London, October 15, 1808, Surveys Branch, OMNR.
25. Mahlon Burwell to William Chewett and Thomas Ridout, June 21, 1810, Surveyors Letters, vol. 3, no. 13, Surveys Branch, OMNR.
26. William Bird to Chewett and Ridout, May 18, 1810, Letters Received, 16, 2728-29, Surveys Branch, OMNR.
27. Tiffany, *Tiffanys of America*, 41-3; Darren Ross, Ross/Runquist – Lowes/McKinnon Family Tree, ancestry.ca, accessed Sept. 14, 2021.
28. Chewett and Ridout to Burwell, March 11, 1810, Surveys Branch, OMNR; Instructions to Land Surveyors, vol. 3, 232-33, Survey Branch, OMNR.
29. Fanshawe Park Road now separates what would have been the fourth and five concessions of London Township.
30. Burwell to Chewett and Ridout, June 21, 1810, Surveyors Letters, vol. 3, no. 13, Surveys Branch, OMNR.
31. Edward Allen Talbot, *Five Years’ Residence in the Canadas*, 2 vols., (London, England 1824), reprinted in one volume (Yorkshire, England and New York), 1968, i, 304.
32. *Ibid.*, 304.
33. *Ibid.*, 305-06, 307.
34. Lochhead, “Silvester Tiffany,” 814-16.
35. This apparently was on leased property as no record of the Applegarths owning land in this township has been found. See Daniel J. Brock, “Joshua chose wisely, LFP, January 9, 1971, 28.
36. Woodhouse to Brock, [March 1970]; Wallace, “First Journalists in Upper Canada,” 378; Instrument 87991823), Wentworth County Land Records, Ontario Archives; Freeman Talbot, “London in Early Days,” *The London Old Boy*, i, 1, (July 1901), 4.
37. In light of the fact that Joshua Applegarth had held the land for less than a year and had sold it more than a decade earlier, the following advertisement which appeared in an April edition of the *Gore Gazette* of Ancaster, is rather curious. W. Crooks of Grimsby in Lincoln County was offering for sale: “That excellent and well situated tract of Land in East Flamboro, formerly possessed by Mr. Joshua Applegarth, contain Two Hundred and Four Acres, being composed of the North Halves of Lots Nos. 7 and 8 in the First Concession.” Daniel J. Brock, “Joshua chose wisely,” *LFP*, January 9, 1971, 28.
38. *Ibid.*; Karen & Steven Thompson, James/Cosens/Judd/Evans/Briggs Family Tree, ancestry.ca, accessed September 16, 2021.

- ³⁹ Upper Canada Land Petitions, M 3-Misc.-32, Library and Archives Canada; *History of Middlesex*, 34, William Horton, *Memoir of Thomas Scatcherd* (London 1878), 103-04; Carol Dickenson, BASIC Schwaderer Dickenson, ancestry.ca, accessed September 15, 2021.
- ⁴⁰ Thomas Ridout to Mahlon Burwell, York, September 17, 1818, Instructions to Land Surveyors, iii, Surveys Branch, OMNR; Mahlon Burwell's Surveyor's Diary, London Township, 1818, 1819, Archives of Ontario; *History of Middlesex*, 512.
- ⁴¹ London township Minutes, formerly housed in the London Township Office, Arva; Minutes of the London District Quarter Sessions, April 11, 1820, The D.B. Weldon Library, Western University, London; Upper Canada Land Petitions, M 3-Misc.-32, Library and Archives Canada
- ⁴² *History of Middlesex*, 121 511. Ague was denoted as a fever marked by sudden attacks of chills, fever and sweating recurring at regular intervals.
- ⁴³ Westminster Township Minutes, City Hall, London.
- ⁴⁴ *History of Middlesex*, 511-12; Abstract Index, Westminster Township, Land Registry Office, London; milam_april, Thomas Family Tree, ancestry.ca, accessed September 15, 2021.
- ⁴⁵ Minutes of the London District Quarter Session, April 11, 1820; *History of Middlesex*, 573. During this period, £1 provincial currency was generally equated with 16s sterling or \$4 US. Half the £10 fine was to go to the Crown and the other half to the presiding magistrate, in this case James Mitchell, the London District court judge. £10 provincial currency in 1820 would be the equivalent of about \$912 Canadian in 2021.
- ⁴⁶ *History of Middlesex*, 512.
- ⁴⁷ Daniel J. Brock, "Dennis O'Brien," *DCB*, ix (1861-1870), 603-04.
- ⁴⁸ Abstract Index, Westminster Township, Instruments 363 (1822) and 481 (18233), Land Registry Office, London. Two days later, on March 13, 1822, George Jervis Goodhue (1799-1870) purchased 10 acres in the northwest corner of lot 33, concession 1. This included land on both sides of Commissioners Road and, therefore, Applegarth's former cabin and still-house. *History of Middlesex*, 511-12
- ⁴⁹ Abstract Index, Flamborough East Township; J.C. Higgins Collection, Ivey Family London Room, London Public Library, London.
- ⁵⁰ United States Federal Census, Lewiston, NY, 381. Joshua, his wife, Betsy and their six children are accounted for but there is a boy under the age of five living in the same household who may have been a seventh child heretofore unknown. Any children by Joshua's first wife were not living with the family by this time.
- ⁵¹ Under the date of March 6, 1833, the Rev. William Proudfoot (1788-1851) noted in his diary that a settler surnamed Applegarth resided 3 miles (4.8 km) "On the right proceeding towards Goderich from London Township", i.e. the present Highway 7. Harriett Priddis and Fred Landon, eds., "The Proudfoot Papers," *LMHS Transactions*, xi, 88.
- ⁵² This parcel of land would be on the north side of the present Parkhouse Drive, about 3 km southwest of Mount Brydges.
- ⁵³ Instrument 256 (1833), West Middlesex Land Registration Office; G.W. Applegarth to Daniel J. Brock, Muskegon, MI, May 7 1970. Gerald Wycliff "G.W." Applegarth (1904-1995) was a grandson of William Applegarth. Bekasgraden1, Applegarth Morgan Kelley Family Tree, ancestry.ca., accessed September 22, 2021.

- ^{54.} These are believed to have been Henry William and Mae, the children of William Applegarth and his first wife, the former Eliza Dowlin (1816-1840). Bekasgraden1, Applegarth Morgan Kelley Family Tree, ancestry.ca., accessed September 18, 2021. Eliza Dowlin is believed to have been Elizabeth Dowling, a daughter of Thomas Dowling and Electa Brown and an older sister of Walter Dowling who married Frances Maria Applegarth, Joshua and Betsey's youngest daughter, on January 9 1843. SusanPosey49, Susan Dowling Posey Tree, ancestry.ca., accessed September 17, 2021.
- ^{55.} It is believed that John Applegarth, the eldest son of Joshua and Betsy Applegarth, may have been intellectually challenged. It was not to him that Dr. Oliver Tiffany gave any land in Caradoc Township. He never married and always lived with his parents. After the death of his mother, he was taken in by his brother-in-law Walter Dowling and, upon his death, was interred in the Dowling family plot. See 1870 United States Federal Census, town of Union, Pierce Co, Wisconsin, 5 for the whereabouts of the Dowling family and John Applegarth after leaving Minnesota.
- ^{56.} Canada West Census, 1851, Caradoc Township, Enumeration District No. 1, 17 and Agricultural Census, Enumeration District No. 1, 5. Augustus Applegarth was a widower, his 19-year-old wife, the former Elizabeth Julia Harris (b. June 21, 1832, Oxford Co.), having died in 1851. Elizabeth Lawyer's husband, Dr. Augustus Lawyer (c. 1810-c. 1871) of New York State, was apparently visiting the Applegarths over the Christmas season. darren ross, Ross/Runquist-Lowes/McKinnon Family Tree, ancestry.ca, accessed September 19, 2021.
- ^{57.} Canada West Census, 1851, Caradoc Township, Enumeration District No. 1, 17 and Agricultural Census, Enumeration District No. 1, 5. The seven children were Reuben George, William "Henry", Adelina Cecilia "Addie", Edmond or Edward, Elizabeth, Clarissa Mae and Francis "Frank."; darren ross, Ross/Runquist-Lowes/McKinnon Family Tree, ancestry.ca, accessed September 19, 2021.
- ^{58.} Canada West Census, 1851, Caradoc Township, Enumeration District No. 1, 13 and Agricultural Census, Enumeration District No. 1, 5. bekasgarden1, Applegarth Morgan Kelley Family Tree, ancestry.ca, accessed September 19, 2021.
- ^{59.} Canada West Census, 1851, Caradoc Township, Enumeration District No. 1, 13 and Agricultural Census, Enumeration District No. 1, 5. Frances Caroline Dowling/Dowlin's biological father was Dean Tiffany (1816-1888) of Delaware Township, a son of the aforementioned Gideon Tiffany and first cousin of Frances Maria (Applegarth) Dowling/Dowlin's mother, Betsy (Tiffany) Applegarth. Larrymicintgosh1, macintoshang2020, ancestr.ca, accessed September 20, 2021.
- ^{60.} Canada West Census, 1851, Caradoc Township, Agricultural Census, Enumeration District No. 1, 5.
- ^{61.} Darren Ross, Ross/Runquist-Lowes/Mckinnon Family Tree, ancestry.ca, accessed September 21, 2021.
- ^{62.} Abstract Index, Caradoc Township, West Middlesex Land Registration Office.
- ^{63.} Patricia Harpole to Daniel J. Brock, St. Paul, MN, July 7, 1970; *History of Wabasha County* (Chicago 1884), 779.
- ^{64.} 1857 Minnesota Territory Census, Wabasha County, Township 110, Range 12.
- ^{65.} *History of Wabasha County*, 779.
- ^{66.} 1860 United States Federal Census, Minnesota, Wabasha County, Township 110, Range 12.
- ^{67.} See Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *American Historical Association Annual Report for 1893* (Washington), 1894, 199-227.
- ^{68.} On the other hand, Joshua's elder brother, William, was one of three men appointed in 1823 as building commissioner for the Burlington Canal. Their young brother, John, became a member of the Hamilton Board of Trade in 1849. C.M. Johnston, *The Head of the Lake* (Hamilton 1958), 123, 185.

- ^{69.} Richard Talbot's eldest son, Edward Allen, however, was first commissioned a magistrate in 1829, while Joshua Applegarth's brother, William, had been first commissioned a magistrate in 1803. Canada, Provincial Secretary's Office, General Index to Commissions, Quebec, L.J. & U. Canada. 1651-1867, Weldon Library; Frederick H. Armstrong, *Upper Canada Justices of the Peace and Association 1788-1841*, (Toronto 2007), 22, 58.
- ^{70.} Joshua's brother, William, was known to have been an ensign in 1804 and a captain in 1812 in the Second York Regiment. Robertson, *Gore District Militia*, 13; Woodhouse to Brock, [March 1970]