Cream of Barley Mill, Courtesy of Clarington Visual Arts Centre

Swimmers at Port Bowmanville Courtesy of Clarington Museum & Archives

BOWMANVILLE/SOPER CREEK WATERSHED EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT CHAPTER 2 – HUMAN HERITAGE

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Central Lake Ontario Conservation

DURHAM REGION

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1.0   INTRODUCTION

History is an important backdrop for a watershed management plan.   Understanding the historical interactions between the creek and its surrounding community assists in understanding the relationship between the land, water and human populations in the watershed. In other words, current issues within the Bowmanville/Soper Creek watershed are better understood in the context of the history of the local area. This chapter explores some of the historical interactions between the watershed's human population and the creek that runs through their area.

The Bowmanville/Soper Creeks have played a role in the lives of the local human population since the time when only First Nations people inhabited this land. Initial European settlers and their descendants also made use of the creek, and the legacy of their interaction with the watercourse is still apparent in the landscape today.

Vanstone Mill Pond, Leetooze

2.0   STUDY AREA AND SCOPE

The Bowmanville/Soper Creek watershed is situated entirely within the Regional Municipality of Durham and, with the exception of a very small area located in the Township of Scugog, this watershed lies completely within the Municipality of Clarington covering an area of approximately 170 km^2 (Figure 1)and drains mostly lands within the former Darlington Township. Only small portions of the eastern most part of Soper Creek watershed drains lands within the former Clarke Township.   Draining southerly towards Lake Ontario from its headwaters in the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Bowmanville/Soper Creek watershed consists of 2 primary subwatersheds: Bowmanville Creek and Soper Creek, whose tributaries join together prior to outletting to Lake Ontario.

Bowmanville Creek watershed is comprised of the following 5 subwatersheds: Hampton, Haydon, Tyrone, Bowmanville Main, and Bowmanville Marsh. Soper Creek watershed is further divided into the following 4 subwatersheds: Mackie, Soper North, Soper Main, and Soper East.

Both urban and rural land uses exist in this watershed with the urban area occupying the south portion of the watershed.   There are a number of hamlets situated within the Bowmanville/Soper Creek watershed: Enfield, Burketon, Enniskillen, Haydon, Tyrone and Hampton.

Much of the information presented in this chapter provides a broad overview of settlement at the municipal or township scale; however some of the site specific information is relevant to the historical settlement of certain areas within the watershed. The historic settlement and development of this area offers a framework and valuable insight into present settlement patterns. Native history is presented on a broader scale, partly due to the limited knowledge that exists regarding native settlement within the watershed.
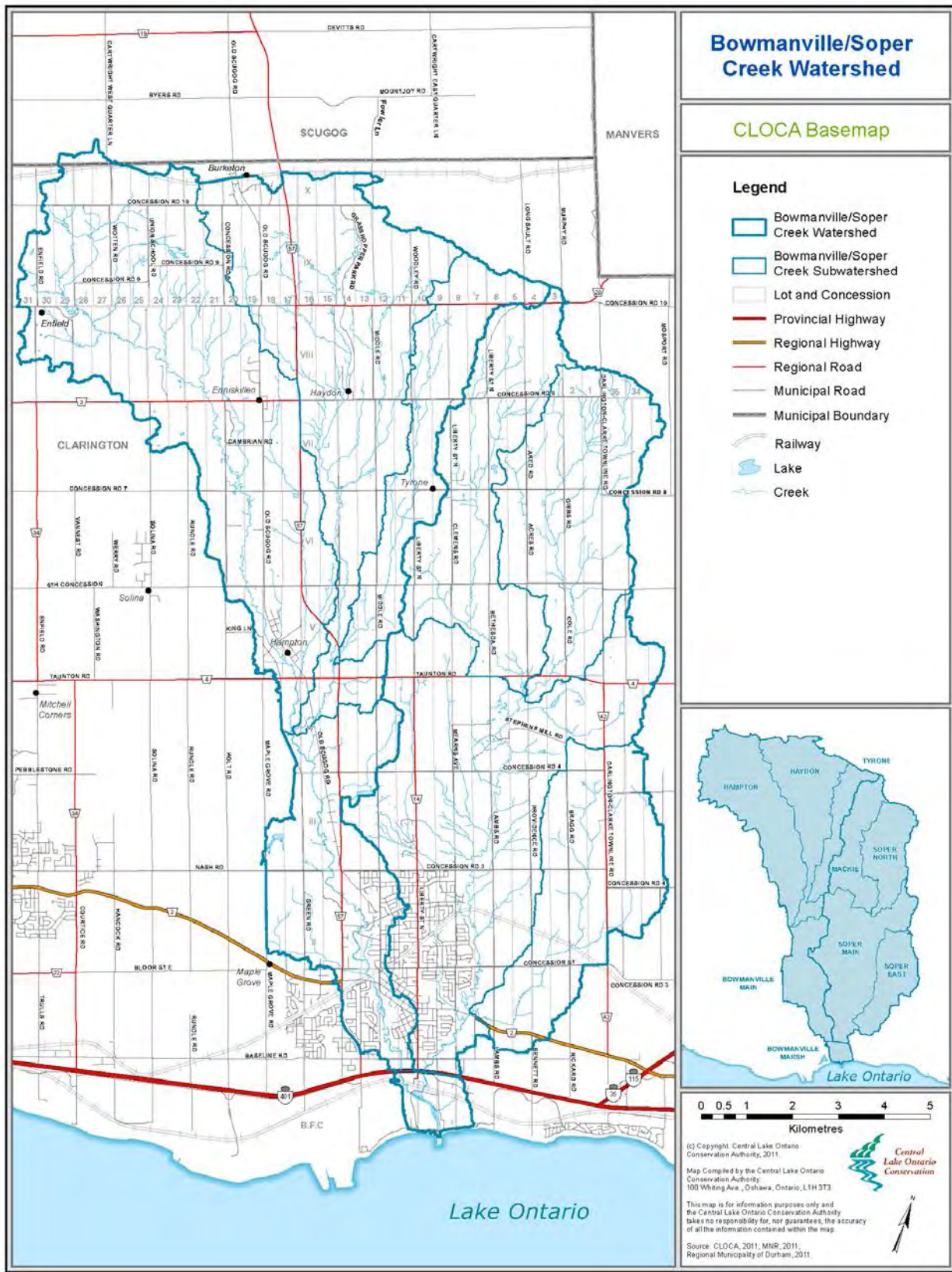
Figure 1: Bowmanville/Soper Creek Watershed.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Information was collected predominantly by means of a literature review, with much of the information coming from a variety of authors and sources including libraries, web resources, media publications, and the Municipality of Clarington.

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 Settlement of Bowmanville/Soper Creek Watershed

4.1.1 Native History

In the early seventeenth century the Algonkians and the Iroquoians lived in present day southern Ontario. The Iroquoians included the Hurons and the Five Nations or Iroquois Confederacy and lived south of the Algonkians. The Iroquoians were hunters and gatherers, but they also relied on horticulture for their survival (Smith, 1991).

By the eighteenth century, the Algonkians (the Ojibwa) had expelled the Iroquoians from southern Ontario and took control of the territory. Europeans called all the Ojibwa peoples "Mississauga" despite the fact that very few of them were actually from that band (Smith, 1991). A brief description of the general lifestyle which may have been experienced by those who utilized Bowmanville/Soper Creeks is provided by Smith (1991):

> "During the winter the Mississauga traveled to their hunting grounds (which reached from the lake to the heads of the watersheds of the rivers draining in to the north shore of Lake Ontario). In the early spring they gathered at their maple sugar bushes to collect the sap needed to make maple sugar. During the summer they speared salmon at their river encampments by the river mouths. In the late summer the women harvested the corn that they had planted on the river flats in the spring. When fall arrived the small villages broke up into family hunting groups who again returned by foot or by canoe to their inland ranges."

Printed sources of Native history specific to the Bowmanville/Soper Creek area are limited. Based on some limited knowledge of Native settlement in adjacent watersheds, specifically within the Black/Harmony/Farewell and Oshawa Creek watersheds; it can be assumed that Native peoples also occupied this watershed. The lack of written history can be augmented through the discovery of artefacts. For this reason, it is very important that sites be screened for determination of archaeological potential prior to development, particularly in high potential areas such as valleylands.

4.1.2   Early Settlement

When the French came to southern Ontario in the early 1600's, they did not focus on settling the area; rather their interest was in developing trading and missionary activities with the Native tribes. It was not until after the American Revolution (1783), when the British Empire Loyalists began moving here from the United States that settlement of this area advanced significantly.

In 1791, the Province of Upper Canada was created and the following year, Districts and Counties were created. At this time, the District of Newcastle extended from the western boundary of Darlington Township (Municipality of Clarington) to Trent River and north to North Bay, and included the watershed area of the Bowmanville and Soper Creeks. The County system provided representation for members of parliament and this watershed fell within the County of Durham with its County Seat in Cobourg. This County structure remained unchanged until 1974 when Regional Government evolved and the Region of Durham was created.   The Township of Newcastle was formed through the amalgamation of Darlington and Clarke Townships and included the Towns of Newcastle and Bowmanville in 1974. Twenty years later, in 1994, the Township of Newcastle was renamed the Municipality of Clarington, alleviating confusion with the urban area known as Newcastle.

Darlington Township
Settlement of the Township progressed much slower than settlement of the Town of Bowmanville. Despite the fact that in 1796, Kingston Road was constructed and was the first major road crossing the Township, the land north of this road generally remained heavily forested until 1828. A census of Darlington Township was completed in 1829 identifying a population of 118 residents. Since much of the lakeshore lands were occupied, those settlers arriving after 1830 had to travel north to find land suitable for building. In fact, the abundance of the northern hardwood forests were an attractive source of income as the market for timber rose and by 1851 Darlington was considered to be the best settled township in Durham County (ASI et al, 2006).

Lumber and agriculture were the two major economic activities in Darlington Township. The lumber trade pushed north through the watershed, clearing land for agriculture and building roads to access lumber camps. This opened up the area, helping to attract settlers to the rural parts of this watershed. Lumber and agriculture remained important activities for decades, with agriculture continuing today as a significant economic driver in the rural areas. Mills supported these industries and there were a number of saw mills and grist mills located throughout the watershed. There were also a number of woollen mills in the mid to late 19th century. Growth in the rural areas continued steadily between 1830-1855, but with the completion of the Grand Trunk Railway in 1856 and the decline in market demand for wheat, flour and lumber, growth in the rural areas slowed. Despite this, agriculture remained an important industry, adapting from purely subsistence farming at first, then responding to market demand, with cash crops such as wheat, barley and oats gaining
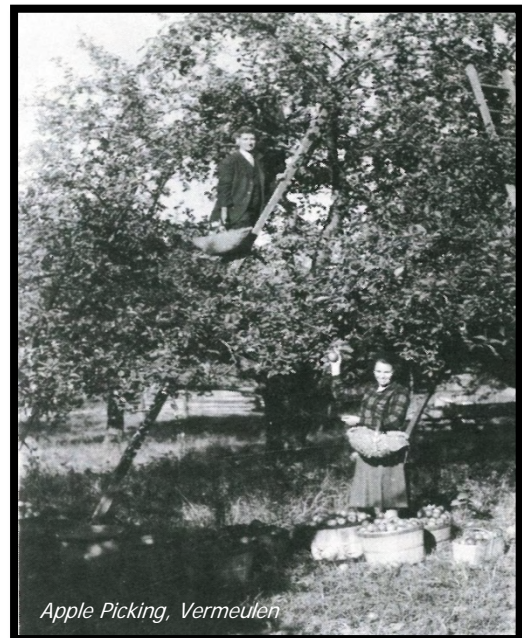
Apple Picking, Vermeulen

economic dominance in the last half of the 19th century. It is interesting to note that apples became an important secondary crop as early as the 1850's. Apple orchards and apple products continue to be prominent in the agricultural sector in Clarington. Around the turn of the century, the popularity of livestock farming increased with dairy and beef becoming significant components of the agricultural sector.

Small villages established around some of the local mills. Enfield, Tyrone, Enniskillen, Hampton, Haydon all had local mills and supporting businesses and homes. Hampton was the largest village with about 400 residents in 1870. Henry Elliot is considered to be the founder of this hamlet. Although he was not the first settler to arrive, he purchased the 65 acres of land where the settlement would establish in 1840 (Leetooze, 1994). This same parcel of land was sold complete with a frame grist mill later restored to what was called 'Elliot's Mill'. Some of the original names of the town were 'Shanty Town', 'Millville', and 'Elliot's Mills' (Adams, 1980). It was officially called Hampton in 1851.

The origins of General Motors of Canada arose from the business built by the McLaughlin family who lived in Enniskillen. Robert McLaughlin Sr. built cutters and wagons in 1867 in Tyrone and then later in Enniskillen. By 1876, the business had grown substantially and moved to Oshawa. The McLaughlin Carriage Works became the largest carriage company in the British Empire. In 1908 the company diversified and established the McLaughlin Motor Car Company. In 1918, the McLaughlin Motor Car Company was sold, creating General Motors of Canada (**www.parkwoodestate.com**).

At the time, these villages supported the surrounding area and were vitally important to many families and businesses. The prosperity of these villages relied on the natural resources of the area and the ability of local settlers to make the most of these resources. Today these small villages, referred to as hamlets, no longer are critically important to the local area and are primarily residential in nature.

Bowmanville
The Town of Bowmanville established between the banks of the Bowmanville and Soper Creeks. Bowmanville Creek was described by James Fairbairn as "....large volumes came pouring out and this, added to the additional springs along their route, made quite a quantity of delicious, pure, cool water. At that time they were full of trout, the millpond and all the stream down to the lake were teeming with this princeling of the finny tribe and in the fall of the year beautiful large salmon came up from the lake." (Municipality of Clarington, Valleys 2000)

The first settler to Bowmanville was John Burk in 1798 who settled along the bank of Barber Creek. Barber Creek is now known as Bowmanville Creek.   By the 1820's, John Burk had established a saw mill, grist mill and a store. The grist mill site is where the Vanstone Mill now stands. Between 1805 and 1823, additional mills were constructed and the area became known as Darlington Mills until 1823 when it was renamed Bowmanville after Charles Bowman, who held much of the land in the area and owned a local store. Mr. Bowman was a Montreal merchant and did not reside permanently in Bowmanville. Leonard Soper arrived in 1805 and promptly built the first saw mill on Soper Creek on lands where the Cream of Barley Mill is now located (Town of Newcastle, 1992).
In a description of the early history of Bowmanville, Charles Taws references a 1930's article written by David Morrison Sr. describing Bowmanville in the 1820's.

"The valley south of Vanstone Mill was the principle business district of the corporation where besides an oatmeal mill there was Jacob Nead's Foundry . . . A woodworking shop, and a machine shop. All those got their power from the dam below the bridge....Then there was Gifford's Tannery....The Milne Distillery with its long rows of cattle sheds . . . The soap making works...The old pottery works on the west part of the Vanstone's pond." (Municipality of Clarington, 2008)

A number of industries set roots in Bowmanville, including the Upper Canada Furniture Company, the Dominion Organ and Piano Company, the Durham Rubber Company (Goodyear Rubber Company), Rehders Foundry (Bowmanville Foundry), Durham Textiles Company and the Ross Can Company. With the exception of Goodyear, which is now known as Veyance Technologies and the Bowmanville Foundry, none of these businesses remain. The Goodyear Bowmanville Plant was the first plant to open outside of the United States producing at first tires and then conveyor belts. During World War II, the plant produced rubber soles for the boots of Allied Soldiers. The Bowmanville Foundry has been casting iron into many different items, parts and components since 1901. It is the only malleable foundry left in Canada and manufactures about 15 different grades of iron and currently focuses on smaller castings. Both Goodyear (Veyance) and the Bowmanville Foundry are situated on the banks of Bowmanville Creek (Metroland, June 2008).

Another industry that played a significant role in the history of Bowmanville was the Dominion Organ and Piano Company which established in Bowmanville in 1873. Pianos and Organs made in this factory were shipped across the world and in 1916 this factory sold 80,000 instruments. The factory was a marvel of 19th century engineering, having 4 stories, a large elevator to move the pianos and organs, and was heated by steam. In 1937, the business closed and the building was taken over by a paper company (Metroland, June 2008).

Along the banks of the Soper Creek, on a 100 acre parcel, the Bowmanville Training School for Boys opened in 1925. By 1941, it was the largest facility for juvenile delinquent boys in Ontario. During World War II, the school became know as Camp 30 and was used to house captured German officers, having as many as 800 prisoners at one time. In 1946 the property was again used to house juvenile delinquents and was known as Pine Ridge School. In 1979 the school closed and in 1984 was purchased from the Ontario government and a prep school for foreign students opened (Metroland, June 2008). Various education uses and recreational leagues continued to make use of this site until 2008 (Municipality of Clarington, 2009). Recently, these lands have been included in a residential development proposal and work is underway to identify significant natural and cultural features on these lands.

Port Darlington

Although Kingston Road (Highway #2) was built in 1796, its condition for a good part of the year was impassable, hence boat transportation continued to be the preferred mode of travel. Ships of all sizes anchored off shore with the goods being brought to shore by smaller boats. With growth of the area, a proper harbour was needed and in 1837, the Port Darlington Harbour Company was incorporated and a pier was built. Shipments of wood, coal, barley and other grain passed through this port. Business in the harbour was good for the first 10 years and was able to continue even after the railway was built in 1856. The port eventually boasted 2 piers with a lighthouse, 2 large grain elevators, a large coal storage shed, warehouses, a residence for the harbour master, and a customs house. However, by 1860, the use of the port dropped considerably, but it remained in use until 1920, mostly for the shipment of barley and grain into the United States. After 1920 the harbour continued to be used by recreational boaters.

In 1896, Port Darlington's name changed to Port Bowmanville and it was around this same time that the area became known as a popular summer resort. The first cottage was built in the early 1890's. Before that, campers and boaters often set up camp on the beach. Very quickly, these camp sites converted to small cabins and then eventually to cottages offering summer residences for locals as well as for people from Toronto. Eventually, a dance hall and boarding house were built on the beach. The beach was divided into East Beach and West Beach, split by the outlet of Bowmanville Creek to Lake Ontario, names which still represent the respective areas today (Metroland, 2008). Overtime, this area converted from seasonal to permanent residential dwellings and is commonly referred to as the Port Darlington Community.

Swimmers at Port Bowmanville, Courtesy of Clarington Museum and Archives
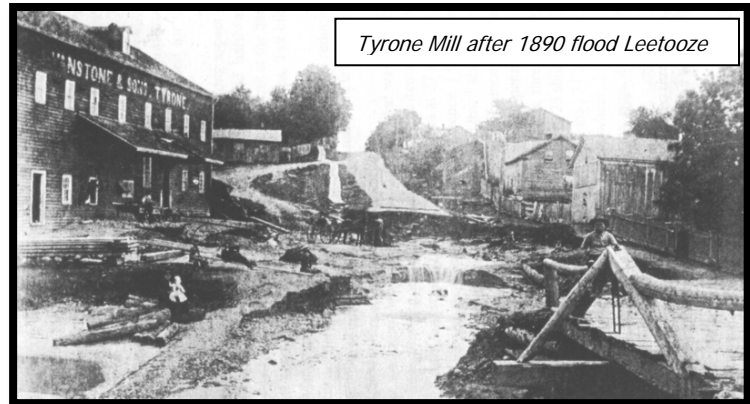
Mills
The establishment and operation of mills, feed by the power of local streams, was an important component in the settlement of this watershed, and as such, warrants more detailed discussion. The variety and type of mills and businesses that used the power of water to conduct business or manufacture goods was plentiful. Around many of these mills small communities developed. Some of these settled areas continue to exist today as hamlets, but other communities have disappeared. For example, James Woodley built a saw mill just west of Haydon in 1870. It didn't take long for a small community to establish around the mill. This village was referred to as Buffalo. Today much of the community is gone and the name no longer exists, yet the saw mill continues to operate.

Other notable mills include the grist and saw mill built by Charles Bates in 1847 in Charlesville (Haydon). This mill remained in operation until at least 1935, and in 1973 it was demolished. Just west of Enniskillen, on Bowmanville Creek, a flour mill was built in the 1840's. This mill was purchased by James Moorey in 1914 and he and his son, William operated the mill. In 1955 Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority purchased the land and the mill was no longer used and eventually dismantled. There were a number of mills in and around Hampton. The one remaining working mill was demolished after the mill pond dam was destroyed by heavy rains in 1988.

The prosperity of these mills declined with the changing economy. As the forests were cleared and the timber resources reduced significantly, the demand for saw mills diminished. As agriculture changed from cash crop to livestock, the viability of grist mills was reduced. With the improvement in manufacturing, transportation and distribution, the need for local feed mills disappeared. Of the many mills that once existed, four remain, and only two are operating as mills (Tyrone Mill and Woodley Mill). The other two mills have been converted to other uses (Vanstone Mill and Cream of Barley Mill).

Tyrone Mill

The 1846 Tyrone Mill is one of Canada's oldest water powered grist mills. Originally constructed as a flour mill, by the end of the 19th century, the mill was sold and converted to a feed mill. By 1957, the mill had a new owner and was expanded to include a saw mill. Eventually the mill was sold and the latest owner has adapted the mill to include a cider press and has re-established the flour mill. The saw mill continues to operate. Today, this

Tyrone Mill after 1890 flood Leetooze

mill presses apples for apple cider (in season), produces specialty flour products and lumber products.

Woodley Mill

In the 1870's James Woodley built a saw mill and started a chair factory east of Haydon. The Woodley's used to hire a crew to go out by sleigh and using cross cut saws, would fell their own timber. They no longer do this; instead they purchase wood from suppliers. The original mill was built on lands just north of the existing mill site. However, not long after the establishment of the first mill, it was moved to its present location. This mill continues to be owned by the Woodley family and is still in operation today as a saw mill. This business has continued to

Woodley Mill and Pond

survive and as reported in 1984, not much has changed since the mill was first built. In fact, in 1984 the mill continued to run only on water power and electricity had yet to be installed (Canadian Statesman, 1984).

Vanstone Mill

John Burk arrived on the banks of Barber Creek (Bowmanville Creek) in 1798 and commenced building a grist mill, a saw mill and a store. The existing Vanstone Mill was built in the late 1840's by John Burk and John Simpson. At this time, the mill was commonly referred to as the "Big Mill". In 1886 the mill and business was sold to the Vanstone Family who owned the mill until the 1980's when the business was shut down, the machinery sold, and the building left empty. Since then, a number of businesses have occupied the building, including a feed store.

Vanstone Mill and Pond, after 1980 flood waters damaged the Dam, Ford
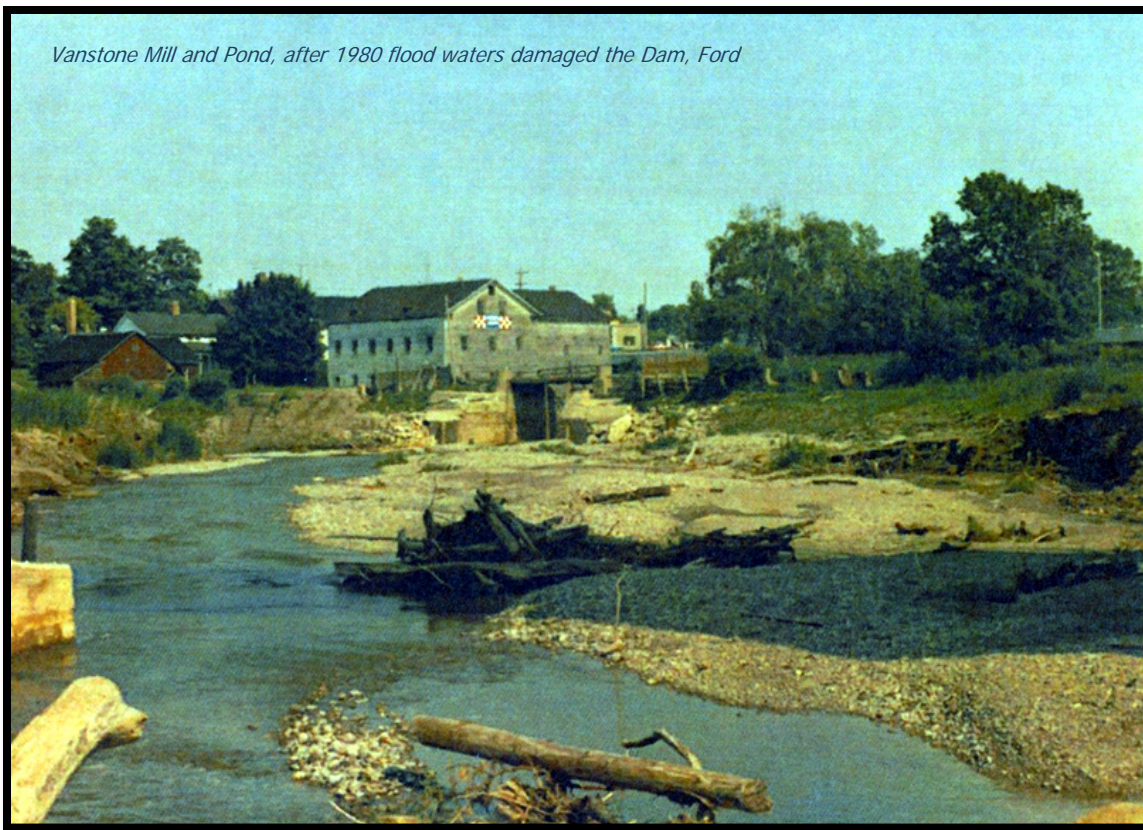
Cream of Barley Mill

While the Vanstone Mill occupied the Bowmanville Creek, the Cream of Barley Mill (Soper Mill) used the power of the Soper Creek to run the gears and stones of this mill. Originally built as a saw mill in the early 1800's, a second mill (a grist mill) was added by Timothy Soper eleven years later. Not long after, the grist mill focused on grinding barley to create the world famous Cream of Barley cereal. In 1904 there was a fire and the mill burned. The following year John MacKay built a 4 storey brick and stone structure which is one of a few brick mills remaining in Ontario. Production continued until the end of the 1940's. The building and lands came to the Municipality in the early 1970's and this building is now the home of the Visual Arts Centre, a centre for contemporary art teaching and art exhibits.

In the early 1920's, Mr. Morden, Vice President and General Manager of the mill was enthralled with the wildlife he noticed around the mill pond and stream. In 1924 he established an informal bird sanctuary and in 1925 a 'motor-tourist camp' which eventually expanded to include an amusement park, zoo and small recreational resort having a swimming pool, tennis courts, petting zoo and rental cottages. In 1964, it was renamed The Bowmanville Zoo and is the oldest private zoo in North America. This zoo is visited annually by many local school children and families. It also has gained a reputation as a supplier of animal talent for the entertainment industry (television and screen).

Flooding and Ice Jams
Damages due to flooding, dam breaches and ice jams has impacted many mills within the lower reaches of the watershed, exhibiting the power and destructive force that these creeks possess. The first reported major flood occurred on June 5, 1890 and the destruction was substantial. In the early spring of 1897 a severe rainstorm event in Soper Creek carried large ice chunks downstream which gathered in the Cream of Barley Mill pond and eventually broke through the

dam leaving a gaping hole. Today the lower reaches of both the Bowmanville and Soper Creeks regularly experience ice jams, resulting in localized flooding of the valleylands and occasionally closure of Baseline Road.

During the summer of 1986, a storm resulted in water levels rising in the Bowmanville Creek and the Vanstone Mill Dam was blown out resulting in considerable downstream damage including erosion and sedimentation. Not just the mills in the lower reaches of the watershed were susceptible to this type of damage. During a significant rain event in 1988, the integrity of the Hampton Mill pond dam was compromised and the dam burst, washing out Mill Street. This resulted in the closure of Mill Street and eventual reconstruction of the road. The mill was demolished shortly after the breach. While a flood control structure was installed in place of the old dam, the old mill pond was not restored; instead a wetland feature has been created in a portion of the footprint of the original mill pond.

5.0   CONCLUSION

The Bowmanville and Soper Creeks played a dominant role in the settlement of the watershed. At first, providing a wealth of resources in the abundance of fish and mammals that it supported, these resources being important to both the Natives and the early settlers as a food source. The Bowmanville and Soper Creeks also provided energy to power numerous mills and industries, playing a role in the economic development and settlement of the area. Flooding and ice jams in this watershed have been a destructive force in the past, damaging bridges, mills and small structures.

WHAT WE DO ON THE LAND IS MIRRORED IN THE WATER

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