

AN OCTOGENARIAN

Mr. William Joyce, of North Fredericksburgh, now in the eighty-fourth year of his age, though not a native of this county, has spent so many years as one of its active residents that he may well be classed among our pioneers. He was born in County Aragh, (sic) Ireland, on the 11th of June 1814. His father, George Joyce, owned a valuable farm and was among the well know farmers of his native country. He patriotically served his King in the Yoenanry (sic) during the rebellion in Ireland in 1798, under Col. Bleaker, of Carick Bleaker. The command was 300 strong.

1240 POINT BLANCHT GREAT FAMILIE 1845-51  
The family emigrated to Canada in 1842. Crossing the Atlantic over half a century ago was a very different matter from doing so do day (sic) They sailed from Belfast on the 19th of May and experienced a tedious and boisterous voyage of seven weeks and three days, attended with the many privations and discomforts of a sailing voyage of those times. Among the members of their company were the parents, William, the subject of this sketch, his brother George Joyce, now of Richmond Township, four sisters, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Bell, now old and well residents of Tyendinaga, the parents of Thomas and Lewis Bell, now well known residents of North Fredericksburgh, and Mrs. M. Nolan

The survivors of that company have still reason for a vivid remembrance of some of their experiences in connection with that trip. When off the Banks of Newfoundland they encountered a very severe storm which lasted 24 hours, during which their ship appeared at times to lie helpless amidst the mountain-like waves. The captain ordered all the passengers, 213 in number, down below for safety and there they remained the long hours not knowing which one might be their last. At Quebec they all changed for a steamer to Montreal, and the change seemed an agreeable one indeed. They left Montreal in a canal boat, in tow of the steam tug "Shamrock" and just here they escaped as very serious danger indeed which appeared specially providential. The tug had a canal boat lashed to each side and the vessel in which they were in was towed behind. Just after starting the Captain sighted Captain Neilson coming up stream with a steamboat for Kingston, and ordered on all steam so as to get ahead. In the sudden start the cable broke and left the canal boat quite in the rear. Before the Shamrock had gone very far a loud report was heard and a cry of terror went up. The steam boiler has burst destroying the vessel so that it sank on end in a few minutes. All the passengers on the tug and the two accompanying boats were either killed or badly scalded, and the three boats sank together. Capt. Neilson hurried to the rescue, to help those who were now trying to help themselves, but most of the unfortunates sank with the boats. Capt. Neilson took the remaining boat in tow and brought them on to Kingston. The party soon found their way to North Fredericksburgh, where Valentine Joyce, the oldest brother, 1841 was well known for many years in the township; he died February 7th 1893, an old man, and several members of the family still reside in that locality.