

NEWTONBROOK CREEK (also known as Wilket Creek) - Doug Wardle's Memories

"Newtonbrook was a thriving village of 200 people by 1870, centred at Yonge and Drewry*. In 1819 its roads extended to the east as far as the Middle Don River where the Cummer Mills were located, and by 1820 to the West Branch of the Don at Dufferin and Steeles where the Fisher Mills were erected and Fisherville developed. The name, Newtonbrook, was derived from the Newton Brook Wesleyan Methodist Church, and until the early twentieth century was spelled as two words."

*1845 Wm. S. Durie owned land Conc.1W Lot 23. For some unknown reason street was called Drewry. From *Pioneering in NORTH YORK*, Patricia W. Hart, Page 179 (out of print).

Note: The NYHS still has some copies. Email: northyorkhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Doug Wardle grew up in Newtonbrook, and remembers a brook, known as *The Creek* running through the community. It ran from the corner of Bathurst and Steeles, in a south-east direction to Bayview and Finch. Along the way it caused major floods in the areas of Moore Park, Goulding, Homewood and Patricia. Houses here were generally built up on cedar posts and only those close to Yonge Street had basements. Even today, this is an area where flooded basements are not uncommon. In the early 1930s, to relieve the flooding, the township built large drainage ditches, 6' wide by 4' deep, on both sides of Goulding, which was the only paved road in Newtonbrook. In winter these ditches as well as some fields froze, providing for community skating. In summer there was very little water in the creek, except when it rained, and then local children would float stick-boats in the ditches and get wet feet in their "wellies". The creek continues to empty into the East Don River off Willowdale Avenue.

Doug remembers that boisterous youngsters (15 year old hockey players) used to sit on the parapet of the old arch bridge at Yonge Street, under which the creek ran. One day someone reported the boys and they were arrested for disturbing the peace! He had to go the police station at Yonge and just north of Elginton to bail out his younger brother.

Doug Wardle (edited)

ST. GEORGE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

5350 Yonge Street (demolished 2010)

In the 1920s, a small frame wooden church was built, followed by a rectory in 1927. With the congregation growing, in 1930 there was a need for a permanent church. These were the depression years so the new church was built slowly – initially there was a temporary basement church. The cornerstone for the upper levels of the new church was laid in 1949 and the building was dedicated in 1950. A new replacement church will soon be built. From *Heritage Toronto Walks: Exploring Rural Willow Dale*, 2009

