

Bagshaw clock back in Sunderland after 186 years

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Sunderland and District Historical Society president Larry Doble shows off the clock once owned by William Bagshaw, one of the early settlers of old Brock Township. - Scott Howard

An artifact from Brock Township's early days has returned home.

The Sunderland and District Historical Society has received the 'Bagshaw Clock' on loan from the Sharon Temple, a national historic site and museum in East Gwillimbury.

"The clock has come home after 186 years," said Larry Doble, president of the historical society.

The clock was named after its previous owner, William Bagshaw, who was one of the first settlers in old Brock Township -- which covered from Concession 14 south to Concession 1, with Regional Road 23 and Simcoe Street serving as the borders to the west and east, respectively.

Mr. Bagshaw set sail for Canada in 1817 and was eventually joined by his wife and seven children.

They family settled on Concession 9, moving into their first home -- made of materials cut from their property -- on Christmas Day, 1819.

In the following years, eight more children were welcomed to the family, including daughter Rachel who was the first white girl born in the township.

Mr. Bagshaw would later become Brock Township's first postmaster. 'Green Pastures of Old Brock,' a book published by the historical society on the township's beginnings, said Mr. Bagshaw was "renowned for his wisdom and good judgement." He later became a Justice of the Peace, marrying and burying area residents, surveying farms and settling disputes.

Shortly after the family arrived in Canada, Mr. Bagshaw had acquired another farm in the Wilfrid area and began clearing trees.

Although his motivation still isn't clear, he traded the 100-acre parcel for a mantle clock.

While the clock was donated to the Sharon Temple many years ago, it has not been on display for some time. It was loaned to the Sunderland and District Historical Society at the request of Jim Bagshaw, a descendant of William Bagshaw.

The Bagshaw Clock will be on display from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 15 when the Sunderland Museum opens in conjunction with the village's fall fair.

The original land patent for William Bagshaw's initial property -- complete with an Ontario seal made of beeswax -- will also be available for viewing.