



the STREAMS of Balla-Musselman

A recent Council report about watercourse naming spiked my wander-just curiosity. The streams of Whitchurch terminate either to the north or south, depending which side of Bloomington Road you are on, which is roughly the water divide of the Oak Ridges Moraine. Water flows downhill from this east-west glacially dumped gravel pile to either the north or south. Those to the south flow into the Rouge River (Bruce, Ratcliffe, Willowgrove, or Little Rouge Creeks) or into Duffins Creek (Stouffville and West Reesor Creeks), but that's another story.

This story is the story about the streams that are born in Ballantrae/Musselman's Lake area. These are no small fries on the importance scale. The Balla-Musselman Plateau marks the highest elevations atop the moraine in Whitchurch-Stouffville, ranging from 340-370 metres above sea level. From there it is a steady descent to either Vandorf (292 m.), Cedar Valley (275 m.), Mount Albert (257 m.) and Siloam (286 m.).

Three major river watersheds that flow into Lake Simcoe are born on the Balla-Musselman Plateau: East Holland River, Black River and Pefferlaw River. The East Holland flows out of Musselman's Lake to the west, and is probably the most impactful locally. It and its tributaries cross Vandorf Sideroad no less than eight times; no wonder that the Vandorf Sideroad environs sometimes looks more liquid than solid.

After passing the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum and through Vandorf Park, the East Holland River forms major greenways along a north-south axis through Aurora, Newmarket and Holland Landing. Finally, the brown sediment-laden brown water of East Holland River just before emptying into Cook's Bay of lower Lake Simcoe.

The Black River is born in two areas of north Ballantrae. The main branch flows out of a subdivision along Ballantrae Rd., and then through the Hall Tract of the York Regional Forest, and the centre of Cedar Valley. Vivian Creek forms the east branch of Black River, flowing past Taber Farms and Dynamic Greens Wheatgrass near St. Johns Sideroad on its way through Vivian and Mount Albert. The two branches come together in farm

fields south of Brown Hill. The Black River flows over the Baldwin Dam within sight of Highway 48 and then meanders through Sutton and Briars Golf Club before dumping into Lake Simcoe just east of Jackson's Point.

The origin of the Pefferlaw River is more the result of field run-off on the east side of Ballantrae Golf Club, across Ninth Line and circumventing Lake Woods Drive. Once on the other side of York Durham Line, the Pefferlaw

becomes more organized and cuts across Mill Run Golf Club, Siloam, Grangeways RV Park, Udora, and Pefferlaw on its way to Lake Simcoe, approximately 10 kilometers east of where the Black River terminates. The Pefferlaw River accommodates much motorized boat navigation below the dam in Pefferlaw.

Without the waters generated by the Balla-Musselman Plateau atop the Moraine, perhaps Lake Simcoe would be far shallower. (1)

