1784

John Carroll
Oxford's First Settler

1867

Beachville Muncipal Office
Built 1867

1967

Canada's Centennial

BEACHVILLE

THE

BIRTH PLACE

OF

OXFORD

1984

compliments of the Beachville &
District Historical Society

BEACHVILLE

1784 - 1967

Remains of Burdick's Furniture Factory, destroyed by fire, were roofed and used as a blacksmith shop.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

FENIAN RAIDS

Oxford Rifles on duty, Sarnia, 1867-68.

John Hacker, Beachville, front row, right. Later a partner in the firm of "Hacker and Cole", lime burners. Still later the owner of Hacker's Store — the "Old Beachville" of Centennial year.

(The other men are not known to the owner of this picture. If anyone knows the names of the other men please contact writer.)

PREFACE

The Beachville Centennial Committee proudly presents 'Beachville' the Birthplace of Oxford, by Miss M. E. Cropp.

In celebrating the 100th Anniversary of our Nation, it would seem only fitting that we should give thought to our local history. We are deeply aware of the rich historical background of our Community, of our ties with the United Empire Loyalists, of the contributions the pioneers of the area and their descendants have made to the progress of our community as it has been transformed from the pathless forest to the rich agricultural and industrial complex of to-day. It was to our area that the first known white settlers in Oxford came. A first in religion, it was to our area that the Pione er Circuit Riders came. The first Roman Catholic Mass to be said in Oxford County was said in the village of Beachville.

The first Elections in Oxford County was held in Beachville. Beachville was the first named Post Office in Oxford. The first grist-mill to be in operation was in the Beachville area. Our first in the field of industry, the fore runner of to-days giant limestone enterprises. Surely Beachville can claim to be historically 'The Cradle of Oxford.'

While we acknowledge the efforts of many in the publication of this book, certainly the efforts of the author Miss Marjorie E. Cropp should not go without special recognition. Miss Cropp a descendant of families who settled in the area before Confederation has spent countless hours in the preparation of this book and it's predecessor, Western Ontario Nuggets of History No. 14, having earned for herself the compliments and appreciation of many people who have enjoyed these books, also her writings of history on the press. Through her efforts is our knowledge of history made greater, not only for the interest and enjoyment of the present, but also preserved for future generations.

To the Author of this Book, Miss M. E. Cropp, we pay tribute and offer our sincere thanks for her kindness.

Beachville Centennial Committee.

THE STORY OF BEACHVILLE

Editor's Note: Appendix represents additional information received since original printing.

INTRODUCTION

Beachville is situated five miles below what Governor Simcoe, in his day, called the Upper, or the Little Forks of the Thames. The Upper Forks (now Woodstock) was the highest point of navigation for canoes in the old Indian days, and the western end of the northern portage trail over from the Grand River. The Indians called the Thames the 'Askunesippi' ...the Antlered River. The French called it 'La Tranche.'

The first white man to see the Little Forks was probably the French lad, Etienne Brule in 1615 or 1616. Brule lived for twenty-two years among the Huron Indians of the Georgian Bay District, and explored the Thames as far as Lake Saint Clair. The Lake Erie strip was then the home of the Atiwandaronk Indians, a strong, fierce, tribe who lived in villages and cultivated tracts of land. Among other tribes they were called the Neutrals, because they stood aloof from the fierce warfare carried on by the Iroquois (Six Nations) of New York State, and the Hurons. The Atiwandaronks could remain neutral because they held a monopoly of the flint arrowhead trade, owning as they did certain flint deposits along Lake Erie and Lake Huron. At the great trade fairs held every fall, other tribes were eager to trade for the weapons of war, and the Neutrals did a lucrative business distributing flint spearhead, axe and arrowhead, as judiciously as munition manufacturers of modern times.

In 1626, Daillon, French Recollet Missionary to the Hurons, visited the Neutrals. He got permission to live and teach among them and was even adopted into the tribe but the Hurons, jealous of their position as middlemen between the French and the tribes farther west, spread evil rumours about him, and the Atiwandaronks finally drove him out. In 1640, two Jesuit missionaries from Huronia visited the Atiwandaronks, but their route remains unknown.

The fortune of the Neutrals failed. The British, eager to corner the fur trade, supplied firearms to the Iroquois and they, drunk with arms power, between 1639 and 1649, practically wiped out the Hurons and the Neutrals, driving their miserable remnants forever from the land. What is now known as Southern Ontario, with its rich beaver land and other game, became the winter hunting ground of the Iroquois, since their own territory south of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence had already become depleted of game. When, over a century later, Iroquois and Englishman alike fled before the persecution of the revolting American colonists, the Iroquois were throughly acquainted with the land to which they repaired. Indeed, they acted as unofficial hosts to the English who were their rulers. Joseph Brant himself, guided various parties of whites to fine locations for settlement and arranged guides for others. In many cases, the white settlers would not have survived but for the kindness and generosity of the Indians, who knew how to extract a livelihood from the inhospitable wilderness.

In 1776 came the American Revolution, and by 1777 refugees had begun to arrive at the border forts. They brought little but the clothes on their backs. Most of them stayed under the protection of the forts. Those who ventured afield took with them only a hoe and an axe, a little flour and pork-supplies which could be ill-spared from the regimental stores.

APPENDIX

1937 — The year of the Big Flood. It came roaring down the valley, flooding the flats from track to track and filling the quarries with water. You could row a boat over them and not even know they were there. At Beachville, a C.N.R. passenger train was derailed, thundering off the undermined tracks, killing the engineer, fireman, and a transient riding the rods. An Ingersoll doctor, racing to the scene to help, was drowned when his car plunged into the Thames when the bridge collapsed.

The Upper Thames municipalities formed an authority to harness the river. The first project was a one million dollar improvement to the river channel from Beachville to Ingersoll. It took two years to build, and cost nearly five million. The river now runs a straight course parallel to the C.P.R. track, with a man-made dike on the north side. The villagers on west Main St. had a grandstand seat, and it was a fabulous operation to watch. Gigantic machines transforming the face of the earth, handling boulders of unbelievable size, and turning up fossils from the Ice Age. Unfortunately, also destroying a nature wonderland, habitat of some of Canada's largest birds, where pure white egrets, which stood taller than some of the children who played there, could sometimes be seen.

1793 — Augustus Jones, a Welshman from New York, surveyed most of this area. He came in 1793. Luther Haskin held one end of the chain for him. Mahlon Burwell surveyed in 1825. In 1819 Capt. Marvel White, a British Army officer, was Assessor for Oxford on the Thames. His wife was Dora Brown.

1799 — John Uren left Penzance, Cornwall, England, age sixteen, and came to Oxford. It took 63 days crossing the Atlantic.

1805 — Sykes Tousley (see pg. 15) of Ingersoll, and Benajah Brown, walked to Little York (Toronto) to get the deeds to their land. On the way back, Brown fell through the ice on Burlington Bay and was drowned. He is buried in Ingersoll cemetery. His widow married Solomon Nichols.

1806 — Lot 8, Concession 1, West Oxford, a Methodist Meeting House.

1817 — Lot 13, Concession 1, West Oxford, a log school.

1825 — School Report, West Oxford School, lists the following pupils: Lavina Carroll, Martha McCarthney, Cyrus McCarthney, Justus Reynolds, Abigail E. Foster, Rufus Foster, Wm. Galloway, Zachariah Sage, Horace Foster, James McCarthney, James Sage, Mary Stephens, Lydia Piper, Fanny A. Nichols, Lucy Sage, Charles Hess, Sarah Reynolds, Pheobe Curtis, Daniel Curtis Jr., Ebenezer Galloway, Enoch Sage, Avery Scrambling, Fred Scrambling, Jane McCarthney. Trustees were Willard Sage, Wm. Reynolds and Henry Carroll.
The school was open from May 15th to August 16th.

1827 — Sunday School report for West Oxford Sunday School, which was started by Willard Scott, gives names of pupils and the number of bible verses learned. Lydia Piper, 563; Lucy Jones, 449; Ruby Jones, 392; Isaac Piper, 364; Lobina Wood, 308; H. Laura Jones, 172; E. Laura Jones, 167; Esther Piper, 167; Wm. Galloway, 126; Levi Sage, 124; Solomon Wood, 77; Abigail Jones, 63; Nelson Jones, 61; Allen Sage, 18.
From July 1st to September 1st the scholars had memorized 3,069 bible verses.

1802 — See pg. 13. Those old-time saddle-bag preachers did much to relieve the deadly monotony of backwoods life. Their saddle-bags did not contain their personal belongings. They were full of BOOKS, fiction, science, biography, travel, mathematics, etc., as well as religion. John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, was an early advocate of education for the Masses, as opposed to Private schools for the rich, and his followers brought literature into the Backwoods of Upper Canada, to people starved for entertainment and mental stimulation.

1822 — Abraham Stanley Beach had a store in front of the present mill. In 1831-32 he owned the mill.

1832 — Mail was carried from Brantford to London twice weekly, at a rate of three miles per hour, along the Old Stage Road. Jed Jackson had the contract. By 1844 there was a daily mail.

1836 — Beachville's first official Post Office was established on July 6th, 1836 with Wm. Merrigold as first official Post Master, and James Stewart as his assistant, and James Ingersoll and Peter Carroll as sureties.
In 1840 the office was served six times weekly on the Hamilton to Sandwich route.

1847 — There was a potato famine in Ireland. Thousands of people died. Thousands were loaded on to ships to be sent to the new land. They became known as "Coffin ships", so many people died. One woman kept her three children alive with flesh from her own body. Some Irish settled in this area.

1856
1845 — The Town Hall in Ingersoll burned down, destroying all previous records for West Oxford Township.

1810-1862 — A small son of the Lewis family was kidnapped by the Seneca Indians of the Grand River Reserve. Years later he returned. He was always known as Seneca Lewis, and is buried in West Oxford cemetery.

1868 — Correction — Page 37 — Col. Skinner's home was called "Dunelg", which is Scotch for "Hill of Beauty".

1865 — See page 33 — Teacher, Elizabeth Gilbert, later Mrs. John Hacker, graduated from the Canadian Literary Institute of Woodstock, the only secondary school in Canada at that time which would accept girls as well as boys as pupils.

1899-1902 — Oxford sent recruits to the South African War. The war memorial in front of the Court House in Woodstock was designed by Mr. F. C. Dunbar, a sculptor, of Beachville, who lived in the house now occupied by Mr. Pete Gasparotto.

The model for the bust was C. W. Leonard, whose father owned the farm, and built the well known hexagonal barn, on the Governor's Road, just west of Woodstock.

1837 — As a result of the Rebellion, about one-third of the population of Canada left, and returned to the States.

1835 — Samuel Peters and family stayed over night at the Oxford House.

1900 — Around the turn of the century the Beachville mill was owned by Mr. Archibald, and was used for making oatmeal. The oatmeal was dried on a large piece of iron, like a table top. It had a fire underneath. The men stood around it with long rakes, with which they kept turning the oats. The mill also has a pottery kiln, but no one seems to know when it was used.

1818 — About this time, Abram Carrall, son of Oxford's first settler, together with Gardener Myrick, purchased William Putnam's sawmill at Putnamville in Dorchester Township.

Note — There has been considerable discussion as to the correct way to spell the name "Carrall". I have seen two deeds signed by Abram. I have seen a photograph of Dr. Robert Carrall's office sign—"Carrall". The Oxford Carralls appear to have used the "all" ending.

1837 — Elisha Hall, who built the first brick house in Ingersoll in 1836, fled the country in 1837 because he was suspected of being a supporter of Wm. Lyon Mackenzie's rebellion against the Government (see pg. 22). He was placed under house arrest.

Every evening, as was her wont, his wife took a couple of pails and went over to the neighbour's pump for water. Often she stopped in to chat with the neighbour.

One night, Elisha went for the water, dressed in his wife's clothes. He stopped to chat. When it was dark he slipped out of the house and headed for the lake. He hid in woods, barns, etc. along the way. One day, hidden in the hay, he listened to an officer talking to the farmer about him. He reached the lake and caught a boat going over to the other side. He went to California. Years later he came back, disposed of his property, and returned to the States.

1866 — Malcom McKenzie, of East Zorra, was the only resident of Oxford County to lose his life in the Fenian Raids. This was at the Battle of Ridgeway, a mile north of Fort Erie. On June 2nd, a force of about 800 Fenians crossed into Canada, but were pushed back by a detachment of Canadian volunteers.

Digging the new river canal. 1949.
M. Cropp, Beachville, Ont.

Digging new canal for the Thames, 1949. Bumpety-bump-bump!
Copyright by M. Cropp, Beachville, Ont.

New man-made dike, 1949. In the Spring of 1950 the heavy flow of water tore its way through the new dike back into the old river channel. Repaired.

Red-winged blackbirds' nest in wild raspberry bushes. 100 feet away from the river.

M. E. Cropp, Beachville, Ont.

THE FIRST SETTLER

Fifty-six years elapsed between the arrival of Oxford County's first settler and the publication of Oxford County's first newspaper, the Ingersoll Chronicle. This time lapse is one of the reasons why most of the early history of this isolated pioneer settlement has been lost, but bits and scraps of information which have come to the writer prove that its isolation did not save it from being directly affected by every wind that blew at the border.

The first known white settler to come into Beachville district was thirty-two year old John Carroll, of New Jersey. He arrived in 1784. The Carroll family historian, who has searched the Dominion and Provincial archives and similar sources in the United States, believes that he bought his land from the Indians, proved his claim according to British law, and then went out for his family. He located north of the Thames on what are now lots 23 and 24. This land is within sight of Beachville, and includes the farm recently owned by Elgin Park. John Carroll had two daughters, Nancy and Gertrude, and nine sons-a paying proposition for any pioneer. The sons played a leading part in the development of the area. Two were killed in the War of 1812, Henry in 1813 and John Jr. in 1814. Perhaps pioneering was too hard for their mother. She made them all promise not to marry. However, after she died, they all succumbed to temptation but the youngest, and raised families of their own. The youngest son became a doctor and went to Britixh Columbia where he was elected to parliament. When he was an old man he returned and married the sweetheart of his youth, then a widow, so that he could leave her his property.

John Carroll died in 1854 at the age of 102 and was buried in the family plot on the home-place. Later, the bodies in the plot were removed to the Ingersoll Rural Cemetery near Ingersoll. Obituaries in those days were real biographies. John Carroll's obituary stated that when he returned to the Beachville district in 1789 there was a 'considerable settlement' there. These early settlers must have been sturdy of body and soul. When they left the protection of the forts they were at the mercy of the untamed wilderness. Though the Treaty of Separation, signed in 1783, contained a clause prohibiting reprisals, the Royalists continued to arrive in a destitute state. Neither life nor property had been respected. Almost every family had its tale of atrocity experienced at the hands of the victorious Americans.

Government relief, however, was organized. Besides pork and flour, each family received the following tools and implements:-to every six families, one cross-cut saw; to every family, one hand-saw, one hammer, two gimlets, 90 pounds of nails assorted, one set of door hinges, one axe, one mattock, one spade, one scythe, one sicle, one set of plough irons, one set of harrow irons, one broad axe, two augers, two chisels, one gouge, one drawing knife, one camp kettle. By 1791 there were enough people here to request postal service of the government. The name chosen for the post office was Beachville, in honour of Mr. Beach, who had a grist mill here. Likely the mail was left at the mill. It was the first mill between the head of Lake Ontario and the Detroit settlement. Among the government postal records for that year is a statement which reads:- 'A man on horseback left every Spring (from Quebec) with letters for Montreal, Kingston, York, Lancaster, Brant's Ford, Beachville, Allan's Township (Deleware), Grant's Landing (Chatham), Sandwich and Malden (Amherstburg).

Beachville was no doubt chosen for settlement because of its abundant water power. The village which eventually grew up found itself in a particularly benign location. Just here the high ridges that rim the valley each put forth a tentative toe of dry land upon the valley margins to form a natural approach to the river. Here was a ford--thus business was drawn to the point. There was plenty of room on the flat land for the settlement to grow up around its industries. Beachville, born approximately 180 years ago has amazingly held its own in the face of having a city and a town spring up within five miles of its borders.

Willows arch the road, looking south from village bridge. May Shepherd about 1890.

BEACHVILLE 1790 - 1800

The 1790's were exciting times for the squatters on the Thames. By 1791 the settlement had a name, a mill and a postal depot. The mail was likely left at the mill--the place where everybody eventually turned up. There was no village, of course. The name Beachville was applied generally to the whole district.

★ In February 1793, Governor Simcoe visited Beachville accompanied by several gentlemen with Indian guides and bearers. They rode in sleighs as far as Brant's Ford, and then walked to Detroit. The Governor made himself thoroughly acquainted with the district. He chose a site for a military town at The Forks, and named it 'Oxford' but there was no development there until forty years later, when the town of 'Woodstock' was founded, in 1833.

On Feb. 13th. a short distance west of the Beachville ford, the Simcoe party met the 'annual winter express from Detroit.' On this trip they either met, or were overtaken by four different Expresses. These were Government messengers, or mail carriers. The Express might consist of several men, Indian or White, one of whom was called the Conductor.

How delighted the settlers must have been. Here was no armchair governor. Here was a man genuinely interested in the welfare of the province. Surely now the district would be opened up to settlement. But soon they heard that the very land on which they stood, 6600 acres, comprising the whole district, had been given to a Yankee named Thomas Ingersoll. His land was to form the township of Oxford-on-the-Thames. Another Yankee had been given a township a few miles east of the Town Plot (Woodstock) to be called Blenheim. One can imagine the indignant meetings when hotheads threatened to shoot Ingersoll on sight if he so much as set foot in the territory, and wiser ones reminded them that the man was apparently rich and that he had promised to build a road. How they needed a road! Better wait until after he had built it.

Thomas Ingersoll arrived in the summer of 1793. He seems to have been an ideal colonizer. We hear of no trouble about the land. Instead he encouraged all the settlers to stay. Besides building a road, his contract stated that he was to bring in forty settlers and we read that he brought a good many of them in at his own expense. His own home stood five miles west of Beachville on the site of the present Ingersoll.

Ingersoll's road-building consisted of widening and improving the existing trail. His section was the thirty-mile strip up from Burford. It took him until 1795 to finish the job, and cost him $50,000. To the west the road was built by Elisha Putnam, the owner of Putnam's mill, as far as Allan's Township. Ebenezer Allan took it on to Moraviantown and the Indians built it as far as McGregor's Landing (Chatham). A military road had already been built to Chatham from Fort Malden and Sandwich.

At the same time the Queen's Rangers were cutting a road through from the Head-of-the-Lake (Dundas) to the Town Plot (Woodstock). Meanwhile, Governor Simcoe sent Augustus Jones in to survey the townships of Oxford and Blenheim. No wonder Oxford settlers were jubilant.

In 1793, the Marriage Act was passed. Many of the young people among these early refugee families, had set up homes without benefit of clergy, for the simple reason that there was no clergy. According to law, their children were illegitimate and unable to inherit the property of their parents. This Act made valid the irregular marriages if the contracting parties declared before a magistrate that they were living as man and wife. From this time forward marriages could be performed by magistrates if the principals lived more than eighteen miles from an Anglican clergyman. Among the clergy, only the Anglicans were allowed to perform marriages. This was the doing of Governor Simcoe--he wanted to establish a national church. It was a good many years before full ministerial privileges were granted to the ministers of other denominations.

Magistrates were supposed to post notices as follows:-

'Whereas A and B are desirous of inter-marrying with each other, and there being no parson of the Church of England within eighteen miles of them, all persons who know of any just impediment why they should not be joined in matrimony are to give notice thereof to XY, esquire, of Z, one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the W district.'

In this district marriage was necessarily performed by a magistrate. One magistrate alone, Peter Teeple, performed five hundred marriages. Many of the justices completely ignored the rules and marriage services were often completely lacking in dignity.

In 1793 also, was passed a law forbidding the importation of negro slaves into Canada. Escaped slaves were early located in this district. Fifty years ago in Chatham there lived an old negro who told how his grandfather had escaped by stealing a row boat and crossing Lake Erie. He made his way north to the Thames. Both his son and his grandson were born in Beachville.

Most of the settlers at this period were situated along the river on the Broken Front Concession with Beachville as center, along concessions one and two of West Oxford, and on concessions four and five of East Oxford. Settlement on these concessions extended back from the improved trail which became known as the Ingersoll Road.

In 1794 the following notice appeared in the Upper Canada Gazette -

Notice is hereby given to all persons who have obtained Assessments of Land on Dundas Street, leading from the head of Burlington Bay to the Upper Forks of the Thames River, and on Yonge Street, leading from York to Lake Simcoe, that unless a Dwelling House be built on every Lot under Certificate of Location and the same occupied within one year from the date of their respective assessments, such lots will be forfeited on the said roads.

W. D. Smith
Acting Surveyor General.

Upper Canada, July 15, 1794.

Some settlers applied for deeds for their land in this period. Many did not. When, in 1850, Morris Greene bought the land where Pullin's store now stands, it was discovered that there was no deed. The land still belonged to the crown. There are records as late as 1835 of farmers of long standing in the vicinity being ejected from their land by purchasers from the crown-- upon being paid $5.00 an acre for the land they had cleared, as required by law. The strip of land behind the present Anglican Church is still crown property.

Thomas Dexter, who came into the district about 1787 did not make an application for his land deed until 1797 at Niagara-on-the-Lake where the Executive Council was in session. Proof of his final declaration reads as follows: -

'I do hereby certify that on the 17th day of July, 1797, Thomas Dexter, thirty-one years of age, born in the province of Connecticut, North America, professing Christian religion and by trade farmer, appeared before me, William Kennedy Smith, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for the Home District, and took oath of allegiance and signed the Declaration.

W. K. Smith.

Under Governor Simcoe a different class of settlers began to come in. From Niagara, Simcoe issued invitations wholesale to American citizens, who wanted to be under British rule, to settle in Upper Canada. Such settlers crossed at Niagara by the hundreds, some to be under British rule and many to get free land. One and all swore glib allegiance to George III, but when they reached their destinations many of them boasted to their Canadian neighbours that it would not be long until the Americans took Canada.

So incensed did the true Royalists become at such behavior that in 1796 steps were taken to register all those who had joined the British side before the end of the revolution in 1783. These were allowed to sign the letters 'U.E.L.' after their names. This is how the designation, United Empire Loyalist, came into being. The Loyalists and their children received special benefits in the way of land grants.

In 1798, the Oxford Militia was organized. Governor Simcoe was obsessed with the idea that the Americans were going to attack Canada. He sent Colonel William Claus to Oxford to train the men and boys. He formed one company from the Burford district, one from Blenheim with Thomas Horner as captain, and two from the Beachville district. Evidently most of the settlers, were situated near Beachville. Thomas Ingersoll was appointed captain at Beachville. Everybody was busy home-steading, so drill frequently took place by moonlight. Since fire-arms were none too plentiful, poles or brooms often replaced them on manoeuvres. The drill ground of the militia men is not known. March 22, 1967 was the one hundred and sixty-ninth anniversary of the Oxford Militia. The name was changed to the Oxford Rifles in 1863.

By 1799 Oxford settlers were producing more grain than was needed for their own consumption. The chief buyer of surplus corn and wheat at this time was the North West Fur Company of Montreal. Corn was taken to Fort Detroit, and from there up the lake by Company boats to the Sault. From there it was distributed by canoe and dog team to posts further north and west.

In 1799, Captain Ingersoll left the district never to return. Governor Simcoe had been recalled and the new governor refused to validate the large land grants which he had made to Ingersoll and others. Some of Ingersoll's settlers left with him. In 1799, the Upper Canada Gazette, published at Niagara-on-the-Lake, mentioned Ingersoll's contribution to settlement.

'Oxford has, this year, 1000 bushels of grain more than will be consumed within itself. The settlement in this township was commenced at a period when the early settlers and their followers were under every possible discouragement common to a new country.. the settlers being aware of the value of roads to enhance the value of property..in one year at the expense of Mr. Ingersoll, cut and bridged a road from Burford to La Tranche through wilderness twenty-five or thirty miles.'

Of the new governor's action, Captain Ingersoll himself wrote,

'Some evil-minded person reported to the home government that Governor Simcoe was likely to injure the country by encouraging Americans to settle here as they might hold the land in bulk and prevent the discharged Loyalist soldiers and their political friends from procuring grants.'

The Gazette described the effects of the new Governor's policy: -

'This taking place, for a while checked the rapid growth of population of a province by hardy and well disposed husbandmen who had just learned the value of the country. Mr. Ingersoll, in particular, being already in the district with a numerous family had pursued.... his plan of improving the township by removing thither

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many other families at his own expense and persuading others to remain who had entered it. They were all confirmed by the government in small tracts they had begun on, as well as the actual settlers in other townships.'

Such protests were in vain. Thomas Ingersoll and Thomas Horner in Blenheim township were given 200 acres squatters deeds like everybody else. Thomas Ingersoll refused to stay. He took his family and settled near York where he died in 1812. From 1799 until 1818, there were no Ingersolls in this district. Then James came back to take over his father's farm.

With the withdrawal of Simcoe and Ingersoll, settlers received no aid in improving their roads and Oxford again settled down to wait for something to happen.

Certain families are known to have been in the Beachville district before the year 1800. Burdick, Cook, Crawford, Harris, Nichols, Scott, Mabee, Beach, Brink, Dygert, Dodge, Dexter, Carroll, Karn, Topping, Ingersoll, Canfield, Chonte, Edwards, Sage, Vandicar and Burtch were all familiar names in the district by the end of the eighteenth century. For another twenty years there was no town of Ingersoll and for over thirty years there was no Woodstock. A map of the district for this period shows Beachville, the hub from which a few short blind trails pushed off into the surrounding wilderness

In 1798, by order of Governor Simcoe, the province of Upper Canada was divided into nineteen counties and in 1800 the County of Oxford was formed. An old County minute book dating from the year 1800 has this concise statement: - 'A town meeting was held.' Where was it held? The Beachville district was the most populous. On May 8th, 1800, Surveyor Hambley stayed at an Inn at Beachville.

c⋙⋘ℭ

Lime quarry at Beachville, 1910. Also shows the one-time beauty of the Thames River flats before pollution killed the trees and either destroyed or drove away most of the natural wild life.

In 1802 the Beachville district was visited by a Methodist minister from New York State, the Reverend Nathan Bangs. Meetings were arranged in the cabins of the settlers to which everyone was invited. Mr. Bangs is reported to have introduced himself at these meetings with' the words: 'I am a Methodist preacher and my manner of worship is to stand while singing. kneel while praying, and to stand while preaching to the people who are meanwhile sitting.'

Mr. Bangs' visits resulted in a Methodist class being formed, whose leaders conducted services between the visits of the missionary. In 1804 Nathan Bangs attended a quarterly meeting in this district. This is the first local organization of which records are still kept. A log church was built. As the population grew, the mother congregation gradually divided itself into individual churches all over the district.

These Methodist 'saddle bag' preachers travelled thousands of miles a year on horseback in all weather and the standard salary was eighty dollars if it could be collected. One young preacher reported that 'despite all storms, cold, heat, flies, mosquitoes and other hindrances,' he had not missed an appointment. His remuneration was thirty-two dollars and twenty-three pairs of socks. He must have been particularly handsome. Another received for six months' service one dollar and fifty cents and an order for a pair of overalls. Of course, these circuit riders were lodged by their parishioners free of charge. Few of these travelling preachers had family responsibilities for the church refused to allow them to marry until they had travelled four years as probationers.

The war of 1812 gave Methodism a setback. The missionaries were American and all Americans were looked upon with suspicion. The missionaries found it advisable to leave Canada for a time. One of the last to go met an Indian on the trail, who, after passing an appraising hand over the preacher's shoulders and back, remarked: 'Ugh! you Yankee, you fat, you good to eat.' The preacher took the hint and made haste for the border.

For a while Methodist congregations were prohibited from holding property. Later, however, this privilege was restored to them. Eventually too, Methodist preachers were allowed to perform the marriage service. West Oxford chapel was erected in 1823 and by 1832 a circuit of eleven churches was reported-- Oxford Chapel, Beachville, Ingersoll, Twelfth Concession Zorra, Woodstock, North Oxford, Embro Road, Alymer, Mount Elgin, Dereham and Salford. This circuit was served successively by Reverend John Bailey, Reverend Richard Phelps, Reverend John Atwood, and Reverend James Norris.

In 1809 a group of Baptist people organized themselves to hold meetings. The western district was also visited by early Presbyterian missionaries but no records are available. The first Baptist church was built in 1822 where Chapel Street in Woodstock is located.

About 1790 the family of Samuel Canfield arrived in the district. Part of the Canfield property, fronting on the south bank of the river, has long since been incorporated into the village of Beachville and sold for building lots. The Canfield farm remained in the family until recently. Upon this property Indian arrowheads are still turned up in ploughing season. In 1948 the farm was sold to Mr. Charles Downing of Beachville. Now only his house and a small lot remain to Mr. Fred Canfield. An early Canfield once ran a sawmill by the river across from his house.

In the year 1804 Lord Selkirk travelled across Canada and stopped with the Canfield family. On Friday, June 4, he reached 'Ingersoll's' or 'Oxford', (meaning the township, since the village of Oxford did not exist until 1822) -- having travelled through 'a very unsettled tract of thick woods.' The land was 'extremely fertile but the roads almost impassible.'

There were still 'very few settlers at Ingersoll's, most of these being settled along the river La Tranche.' One settler 'Canfield by name, made a very good cider from maple juice. The maker produced between three hundred and five hundred pounds annually although he found the labour of bringing in the juice pretty expensive.'

At Ingersoll's, Lord Selkirk embarked on the La Tranche,

'---past Putnam's sawmill, in Oxford, five or six miles below Ingersoll's, afterwards Reynolds' in Dorchester, from whence rafts are sent down to Detroit when the waters are much raised in spring. We saw, however, several wrecked rafts. From Putnam's mill I apprehend the obstructions are at present insuperable. But that and a grist-mill above Ingersoll's find employment, I suppose in the settlement of Oxford.'

It is not certain whether or not the grist-mill mentioned by Lord Selkirk is the original Beachville mill. Where Beach's mill stood, no one knows. There is a very ancient mill site on the north creek. Even our oldest inhabitants remember only a broken dam and flume. The north creek is a steep, narrow gully, the sort of spot usually chosen for early mills, where a dam could easily be made, but we can only conjecture.

Sometime in the period before 1812, Mr. Beach fades out of the picture. His name is not given in the census list for that year. He may have died or he may have left the district as happened in so many cases; the earliest names disappeared and did not reappear for twenty or thirty years when descendants of the original settlers returned. In a diary of the year 1833, Beaches are again mentioned in the district. Abraham Stanley Beach was a merchant 'in West Oxford' in 1822. He owned the Beachville mill from 1831-1832 and also a store near the mill.

There was an early grist-mill on Centreville Creek, two and one-half miles west of Beachville. In a registry book for the year 1809, the boundary of a lot in Centreville is described as starting 'at the old grist-mill still standing.' It was apparently not used by that time. James Burdick erected a mill on Centreville Creek at the 1st concession in 1806-7, said to have been a combination grist and sawmill, in a building sixteen feet square.

An important find relating to the story of Beachville is a copy of the diary of Charles Askin, a gay young adventurer, who, in 1806, rode horseback from his home in Sandwich to York. Charles found a settlement in Oxford that stretched for eight miles on either side of the Concession line with settlers 'even to the second and third Concessions, a Methodist meeting house, a small tannery, and a few good houses.' He thought the soil not very valuable, 'being mostly pine woods.'

The Concession Road (Ingersoll Road), Charles found, 'fell off to nothing' if followed straight through, so he turned right after the last farm (Hoskins) and once more was 'on the road to York.' This was well-travelled for, he says, the settlers in these parts were supplied with goods 'which came from the Head-of-the-Lake and which were transported in wagons.' This is interesting because it was said in 1812 that there was no store in Oxford. The section of road described by Askin was the eight-mile stretch east of the present Ingersoll.

By 1812, the population of the whole county consisted of sixty-four householders who owned seventy-eight horses, sixty-six oxen and one hundred and forty-six cows. Early census takers multiplied the number of householders by five to arrive at the approximate total population, which makes it three hundred and twenty men, women and children--the majority of whom were located in the Beachville district. In the township of Oxford on the Thames there was only one taxable house. It was built of squared logs. There is an interesting note for 1812 in an old county book concerning moneys to be spent on the roads. The amount of fifty pounds was to be spent 'from Levi Babbit's in the wilderness west of the River La Tranche.' This was on the governor's road west of the Town Plot (Woodstock).

The Beachville Mill. Also showing is the ramp and Lime Kiln before the turn of the century.

During the War of 1812, Oxford reaped the woe of her citizens' mixed loyalties. Stories of the times have come down to us. Mr. Chris. Karn, living just north of the present village on land still held in the Karn family, hitched up his team and drove a wagonload of recruits to Niagara-on-the-Lake. Few of them returned. Later, a woman of the Beachville district walked to Niagara with socks which she had knitted for her husband. In the Canfield family, all but one piece of a complete set of pewter dishes was melted down for bullets. That one is in possession of Mr. John Canfield.

Sixteen-year-old William Dodge took his father's musket which was almost too heavy for him to lift and went to war in his father's place. The new home in Canada which they had owned for one year was very precious to the Dodges, for they had fled from the United States before a mob of screaming savages, amid a rain of bullets. A neighbourhood boy, Warner Dygert, accompanied him. These two lads fought all through the campaign, and when the army finally disbanded, they found their way home on foot, begging food and lodging from farmer folk along the way. John Canfield and Graham Lowes now have the swords their great-great-grandfathers carried to war in 1812.

As the campaign wore on, however, many men of the militia deserted. This was the case all over the country. The business of planting and reaping, so that the families at home in the wilderness might be fed, was urgent.

The Oxford Militia was mobilized early in 1812 under Lieut.-Col. Henry Bostwick of Dover Mills and was in active service almost continuously until the the end of the war in 1814. The regiment took part in numerous skirmishes and in five actual battles: The Battle of Detroit, August 16, 1812; the Battle of Fort Erie, November 18, 1812; Nanticoke Creek, November 13, 1813; The Battle of Lundy's Lane, July 25, 1814; and the Battle of Malcolm's Mills, November 6, 1814.

At the beginning of the war, Britain ruled the waves on Lake Erie. Captain Barclay commanding the British fleet on Lake Erie had the American fleet bottled up in Presqu' Ile Harbour. All supplies for the army in the Detroit area under General Procter were transported by wagon train from the head of the lake to Brant's Ford and from thence down to Dover. From there the supplies were carried by boat to Detroit. This route was used for about a year.

But Captain Barclay accepted an invitation to dinner in Dover. His conscience troubled him--give him credit for that--but he accepted the invitation. He even left a bit early, but when he got back, the American fleet had got out of Presqu' Ile Harbour and Captain Barclay had to run for Amherstburg where superior American forces kept him bottled up. Now supplies for Detroit could not travel by Dover. From Brant's Ford wagon teams must carry Procter's supplies over the almost impassable road bordering the Thames.

Charles Askin did not mention Martin's Tavern in 1806, but by 1812 this tavern was established on the Ingersoll road, where it was met by the Beachville side-road. According to rumour it was fitted with secret doors and other conveniences useful in fleecing unsuspecting travellers. Succeeding events certainly placed the loyalties of Mr. Martin in question.

With General Procter at Detroit, begging for food, clothes, ammunition and money for his men, the wagon trains were systematically looted all along the road. One train put up at Martin's Tavern for the night. The story goes that someone got the guards drunk and removed the iron-bound money boxes from the wagons and buried them. Others say that the boxes were filled with rocks and the train went on to its destination unsuspecting. The boxes are said to have contained Spanish coins, gold sovereigns, American twenty-dollar and ten-dollar gold pieces and silver plate. The money was never found, but the prosperity of a local family engendered suspicion among other local citizens. Years later that gentleman died, leaving a box of coins such as were supposed to have been contained in the General's money boxes and interest in the matter was revived. Official search was carried on for a time and for years buried treasure hunts spiced the lives of local village boys--and some of the village elders.

Shortly after, Captain Barclay, having built an extra ship, came out of the harbour to meet the Americans. He was defeated. One historian writes that he was 'defeated but undisgraced.' How strange! Procter's starving, penniless, munitionless army was forced to withdraw from Western Ontario and the peninsula was systematically plundered by the victorious Americans. Perhaps the citizens of Dover regretted the dinner which they had tendered to Barclay when they saw Dover burned to the ground and their food supplies carried off.

The plundering of the Beachville district seems to have been motivated by personal spite. Disquieting rumours had come up river from Allan's Settlement (Deleware) in the middle of 1812. Ebenezer Allan, the founder of the place, and Andrew Westbrook, one of its leading citizens, had, after years of residence in Canada, declared themselves on the side of the invading Yankees. They were seized at the order of General Brock, and their holdings confiscated. Allan died shortly, but Westbrook, a six-foot-two, red-haired giant, escaped. After Procter's defeat, Westbrook led a raiding party of Michigan Rangers up to his old home, grandiloquently burned his buildings and retired with his family and several army officers whom he had captured. Westbrook had purchased the Burdick Mill some time before.

It so happened that one of his old neighbours, Sykes Tousley, had remained loyal and was granted a major's commission in the local militia. He was stationed in Oxford Township. Westbrook swore that he would 'get'

Tousley. In April of 1814 Westbrook entered Tousley's house one night, woke the major and ordered him to come along. He told the terrified Mrs. Tousley that he would kill her husband if she raised the alarm. Tousley was carried off tied to his own horse and Westbrook told Mrs. Tousley that he would soon be back in Oxford leading a party of Indians.

During the spring and summer of 1814 the traitor Westbrook led many raiding parties up the Thames burning property and taking prisoners. In August he returned to the Beachville district with a large party of raiders, burned the mill, and carried off several officers and important citizens. One man, whose buildings were destroyed was George Nichol who lived on the First Concession, just south of Centreville on the farm now owned by J. C. Shuttleworth. Mr. Nichol was a British Scout. He and his family hid in the woods to escape the vindictiveness of the enemy. Among those captured and carried off were three men by the names of Carroll, Hall and Curtis.

Captain John Carroll was the son of the original settler, John Carroll. Westbrook's object was to use the prisoners for exchange purposes later on. Westbrook's horse was a pinto known all over the province, so in case of pursuit he forced his prisoners to ride his horse, taking turn about. The ruse worked in this case. A rescue party followed the raiders down river and Captain Carroll was shot and killed by his best friend who supposed the rider of the pinto to be its owner Westbrook. Captain Carroll is buried in West Oxford United Church Cemetery.

Without its mill the district was plunged into the hardships of its early years. The story is told' in the annals of the Burdick family who settled west of Beachville in 1803: 'Horses were seized and buildings destroyed. Those fortunate enough to have hidden a horse away took their grist to Norwich on horseback. Others had no alternative but to pound their wheat into flour with homemade improvisations.'

Digging new river channel, 1949. Elm trees are now all dead of elm disease.

When young William Dodge went to war in 1812 there was a baby sister at home about one year old. This child grew up and married the Beachville postmaster, Mr. Crittenden. After some years they moved to St. Marys. She loved to tell her grandchildren about pioneer days in Oxford. Especially, she impressed upon them the privations which the children endured for learning. A little log school which was over three miles from home was the first one she attended and that was only in summer time. All of the neighbours' children met at one place, and with the dogs took the path 'over hill, dale, and river.' Someone always went in the evening to fetch the children because the wolves were so numerous. The route which Mrs. Crittenden took to school from the Dodge farm seems to lead to the north side of the river at Beachville.

There is a record of a meeting held in a log school on lot 13, Concession 1, in West Oxford in 1817. It is said that before this there were no schools in the county and by 1822 there were four, the two mentioned and one each in East Oxford and Blenheim. An early historian wrote,

'In the Oxfords the s c h o o l s were kept open pretty regularly during the winter. In B l e n h e i m, not so regularly. West Oxford was fortunate in having a competent school master named McArthur settle among them who worked his farm in summer and taught school in winter, and taught it well. On this account there was an atmosphere of intelligence in West Oxford in advance of the other township------------

'The schools, few as they were and distant from each other, were the only source of literary knowledge to the public. There was no periodical literature. There were no books. There were but three periodicals in the province and I think that not half a dozen copies came to this county. There was no book store west of Dundas. With two or three exceptions the private libraries were small.'

It was not known that Beachville began to grow into a real village. At some time during this early period the cemetery was set aside for burial purposes. The earliest decipherable stone bears the date 1817. The most pressing necessity next to a mill was a blacksmith shop with a shoeing stall for oxen. In 1819 the smith's shop owned by James Fuller stood by the river on the south side west of the road. The village had 'good stores' by 1833. Abraham Stanley Beach was a merchant in West Oxford in 1822. Where?

In 1821 elections for Oxford County were held in Martin's Tavern. Thomas Horner was returned to parliament. In those days at election time there was but one polling place for the whole constituency of Oxford County. This arrangement favoured riotous proceedings and the assemblage of tumultuous crowds. Polls were open for several days. Fraud and violence was the rule rather than the exception. Elections were held in this manner until 1842. A local citizen tells the story of his grandfather's first vote. He had on new shoes. He drove with his father through a sea of mud to the school house north of the village. Each man had to walk up to the desk and shout out the name of the candidate whom he preferred. The father voted first. The son, in his new shoes, voted for the rival and his father made him walk home through the mud.

In 1822 Beachville at last had some competition. In 1818 young James Ingersoll had returned to his father's clearing. In 1821 his brother Charles joined him. By 1822 they had established a grist mill, a store, a distillery and an ashery. The government had granted them a post office which was to be called Oxford. In 1828 this village contained some twenty families in less than a dozen log houses.

In the gore gazette, 1826, George Gurnett tells of a trip he took on horseback through the district. He describes Oxford as 'an old, settled, and fertile country in a wealthy neighbourhood.'

Beachville cemetery.
Earliest stone 1817.

One of the main events of the year during this period was the annual party of the Oxford Militiamen in Burford on the King's birthday, August 12th. The people gathered from all parts of the county on horseback, in lumber wagons drawn by oxen or horses, and on foot. In 1824 the regiment consisted of eight companies. There were 30 officers, 20 non-commissioned officers, 4 drummers and trumpeters and 638 privates. After fall-in and inspection and a march along Burford's mile-long single street behind the musicians, came lunch. The afternoon was devoted to games--sack races, pitching horseshoes, wheelbarrow races with the contestants blindfolded, climbing a greased pole on the top of which was five dollars, catching greased pigs, jumping, and foot-races. The whole district took keen interest in its regiment. In 1824 there were 695 militia men in the county between the ages of sixteen and sixty. In 1829 there were 680 militia men between the ages of nineteen and thirty-nine.

It is interesting to note that until 1830 Crown Land was still free in Oxford County. In North Oxford land was sold to Calvin Martin in January 1830 at fifteen shillings per acre. In West Oxford land along the river was sold to Nicholas Brink in May 1830 at five shillings an acre. In East Oxford land was sold in November, 1832 to John Phelan at ten shillings an acre. In 1830 Acting Surveyor-General Chewett reported that Oxford contained 'the most valuable land in the Province.'

In 1833 the district once more experienced the excitement of mass immigration into its territory. Governor Simcoe's Town Plot, which had lain untouched for forty years, came at last to life. The tract was settled largely by wealthy and influential people from the old land. Admiral Vansittart was Queen Victoria's cousin. Several of the settlers had belonged to the staff of the Duke of Wellington. A visiting English writer, Anna Jamieson, reported in 1836: 'The society in this immediate neighbourhood is particularly good. There are several gentlemen of family, superior education and large capital, among whom are the brother of an English and the son of an Irish peer, a colonel and a major in the army.' Visit Old St. Paul's Church, Woodstock, inside and out, and you will find plaques and stones in memory of these aristocrats.

At this time, some of the settlers who had neglected to obtain deeds for their property were ejected from their farms. There was much unpleasantness. The beautiful locations along the river were coveted by the rich newcomers, as was land adjacent to the town which might soon become valuable. The oldtimers who had wrested their bit of civilization out of the wilderness with great difficulty not surprisingly regarded the palatial new homes and the airs and graces of the aristocracy with a decidedly jaundiced eye. They dubbed them 'codfish settlers' or 'elegant extracts.'

The difference in outlook between the two factions in the district may be indicated by a paragraph from a Woodstock newspaper dated September 18, 1843, the day after the Governor-General, Lord Metcalf, had visited the embryonic city. The Governor-General had been entertained in the home of Mrs. East, a sister of Admiral Vansittart. The account stated:

'We venture on the assertion that during his whole tour His Excellency has not met with a more cordial reception than at Woodstock. It was really delightful to see in this distant land members of two distinguished families and near neighbours at home, as were the Metcalfs and Vansittarts, sustaining the courteous dignity of English gentry and thus giving them the assurance that the democratic, levelling spirit of this continent will not find support among us.'

One can imagine how incensed the old-timers were over the above statement and how they probably chuckled over the way in which the people of Woodstock bungled the reception of the Governor-General. Metcalfe stopped for a rest at Martin's Tavern. Then he drove to town by way of the Ingersoll road instead of by the Governor's road as had been expected. Thus, he missed the escort waiting at the city limits and arrived at the court house unannounced, to find only three people to greet him.

In the year 1833, two well-to-do families settled on the north side of the Thames. Colonel Alexander Light settled a mile and a half east of Beachville, while Captain Philip Graham, R.N., established his family on property to the east of Colonel Light. These two men left between them a diary full of fascinating references to people, places, and events in this district. Excerpts from this diary give an intimate picture of life in the Beachville district in the years between 1833 and 1840:

'October 21, 1833---walked to the village of Beachville, about 1½ miles from Light's and five miles from Hatch's (near Woodstock). Here are grist and sawmills and two whiskey distilleries, with a small tavern and good stores. The road from the bridge at Cedar Creek runs principally along and near the south bank of the Thames and is one of the best roads I have seen in the Province, along which an English carriage may be driven with safety. The country all the way from Hamilton to this part abounds with apples and all kinds of vegetables of the finest quality, also abundance of cherries. Messrs. Deeds and Domett accompanied me in the walk. We saw many wild fowl and shot some. Returned to dinner at 5:30, bringing with us sundry letters from Beachville and five quarts of good Brantford whiskey in a covered tin kettle, being the only capable vessel we could procure-----'

'July 28, 1835---Got the wicker flask full of brandy from Mr. Elliott at Beachville.'

'July 21, 1835---'Tues. Alex Light went to the Ford's Mills, Beachville, to pay for 50 lbs. weight of flour gave him one dollar and a quarter.

'August 10---Got of Mr. Elliott Jr. one gal. port, one gal. Madera, two lbs. of coffee, two loaves of white sugar, two nutmegs, one flask of sweet oil, one bottle of ceyenne (sic) pepper---sent gig to be altered to Lieut. Smith by Alex (his son) for his man.'

'August 14---Alex got the flask of whiskey at Elliotts, (sic) Beachville. Rain in the evening---'

'September 19---William (his son) went to Beachville to get the horses shod.'

'September 29---We got a quarter pound of black pepper and two oz. salt peter from Mr. Elliotts, Beachville.'

In 1833 a young English adventurer spent ten months visiting these parts. He stayed with the family of John Hatch, who operated a mill on Hatch's Creek, now part of Woodstock.

From his diary---'Nov. 16, 1833. We walked to Beachville, five miles from this place. It is as usual a thriving place. On the sides of the road are a few houses--first came one, then another, then two or three more, then another and another after it. So came the houses which constitute Beachville. They are of wood, some neatly painted, yellow and green or dark red with white edgings. There are two whiskey distilleries and a place for making purlash.'

In 1835 Benjamin Wallace Crawford came up from the Maritimes to investigate the Crawford claim north of the river which had been left untended since 1799-1800. He stated in his diary that there were 'very few roads in the district.' 'Many settlers made roads across lands to reach high ground in order to get to Beachville or Ingersoll to do trading or milling.' He noted also that Ingersoll was still 'a small village with only a few houses.'

In 1835 Woodstock got a post office and its first store, but had no tavern until 1837 and no school until 1839. It had no second store until 1845. So Beachville was still the important business center of the district during the 1830's.

In 1835 the first Roman Catholic Mass in Oxford County was celebrated in O'Neil's Blacksmith Shop in Beachville. The shop stood on the third lot east of the present Town Hall, where Wm. Bannister's house now stands. In the fall of the previous year (1834) Father Veriotte was riding his horse east on the trail from London. Where the road passed the spot where the Borden Milk Plant now stands on King St. West in Ingersoll, he came upon John Shehan and John and Nicholas Dunn building a road. The men doffed their hats and greeted him as 'Father.' 'How did you know I was a priest?' he asked. Replied Shehan, 'Did you ever see an Irishman who didn't know a priest when he saw one?' 'They all sat down on a log and had a visit, and Father Veriotte promised to stop on his spring visit in 1835 and celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass if a place was provided for it to be done.

True to his word, he came back in the spring. In O'Neil's blacksmith shop a drygoods box was set up for an alter, linen was donated lovingly from some housewife's prized store, and seven people, two of them children, partook of the sacrament. These were Mrs. James Henderson, her sister Mary Kenny (later Mrs. Geo. Allen), James O'Neil, John and Nicholas Dunn, and the children, John and Andrew Henderson. For several years people of Woodstock and Ingersoll and surrounding areas attended worship in Beachville.

In 1838 Father Burke, who succeeded Father Veriotte, erected a small chapel at Beachville. Other priests who followed were Fathers Mills, Lees, O'Dwyer, and lastly Father Quinlan from Brantford. The chapel was still in use in 1876. It was later burned.

The plot for chapel and burial ground was purchased from R. Martin, on Church St.--now the site of the home of Mr. J. Smith.
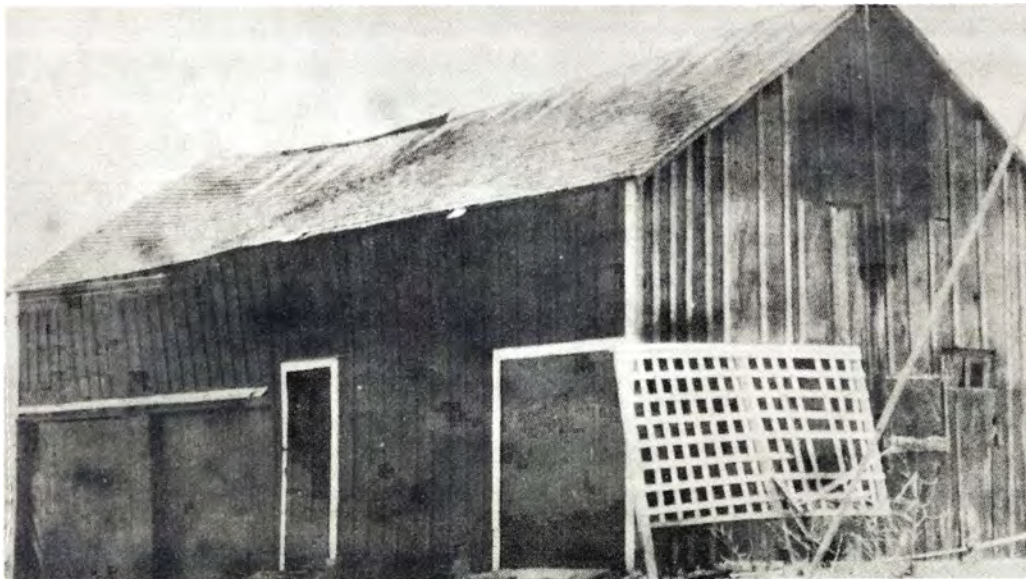
In 1838 a Roman Catholic Church was built by Father Burke in Beachville. Structure shown was at one time used as a temporary chapel.

In 1837 Anna Jamieson, an English writer and traveller, drove through the Beachville district. She stayed at 'The Poplars', the home of Lord De Blaquier, near Woodstock. She wrote: 'I--also passed Beachville a small but beautiful village round which the soil is reckoned very fine and fertile. A number of most respectable settlers have recently bought land and erected houses here.' Mrs. Jamieson also noted that people were 'burning trees everywhere.' This area was once covered with magnificent forests--oak, ash, elm, beech, maple, hickory, butternut, linden, cherry, walnut, hemlock and pine with trunks eight feet and more in diameter--trees such as will never be seen here again. Yet this district was one of the earliest to be completely denuded of its trees. First there was the necessity of clearing for cultivation. Since the limestone deposits in the neighbourhood were almost at the surface of the ground they were early put to use. The fuel used in burning the lime was provided from the local forest. Sometimes a heap of stone was covered with a pile of limbs and brush and when the fire burned down the stone would be converted to lime which was used to make plaster to chink the spaces between the logs of a cabin.

In his diary, Captain Graham stated that lime was being burned on his property in 1833 for Old St. Paul's church. Just when the lime business was begun here is not known but there had been well-built houses in the district for years prior to the mid thirties. Small privately-owned kilns stretched along both sides of the river. They were built into the side bank so that the teams could drive up at the back to unload stone at the top and also down in front where the lime was drawn off. One little girl who sometimes watched her father drawing lime at night said that the black figures of the men dancing about in front of the open kiln doors, handling the fiery lime, always made her think of hell. They had no asbestos suits in those days.

There was one man (given a fictitious name here) who put out an inferior product. Neighbours said that frogs in the pond nearby used to chant:

"Bill	Doan
Bill	Doan
Burn	Lime
Burn	Lime
All	Stone
All	Stone.'

In those days wild fowl were very plentiful around the river. Tame fowl also were turned out in the summer to fend for themselves. Kilns had to be tended night and day when lime was being burned and kept at an even temperature. Sometimes the man on duty would sneak quietly into a flock of birds, catch one, wring its neck and then roast it wrapped in mud under the coals--as the Indians did. One local citizen caught himself a treat one night and when he got back to the fire, he found that he had wrung the neck of his mother's pet gander.

Remains of some of the old kilns may be seen along the valley today. There are traces of one just west of Winlaw's mill. These were the Archibald kilns.


An old kiln showing portal for removing lime. Many of these kilns were in existence 75 - 100 years.

At first the stone was picked up in summer out of the river bed. One location where this was done lay just west of the village bridge. Then the surface soil was cleared from certain areas on the flats but only shallow pits could be excavated because of seepage. Even with the help of the back-breaking old log pumps it was impossible to keep water out of the holes. So someone made water wheels which were turned by the river night and day as they loudly shrieked their protest. But even then the business of quarrying no more than scratched the surface of the mighty wedge-shaped rock formation which is now being worked extensively at a depth of eighty to ninety feet after approximately a century and a quarter.

The teams which drew stone in the summer drew logs for the kilns in the winter. Camps were set up in the woods and many a farmer lad went lumbering as did some of the Indians. Into the fiery maws of the kilns went much of the wonderful timber of the Beachville district.

About 1838 John Downing, quarryman of Clovelly, England, emigrated to Canada, and started quarrying at Beachville. The family remained in the business until 1945. The Beachville quarries are the largest open faced quarries in Canada.
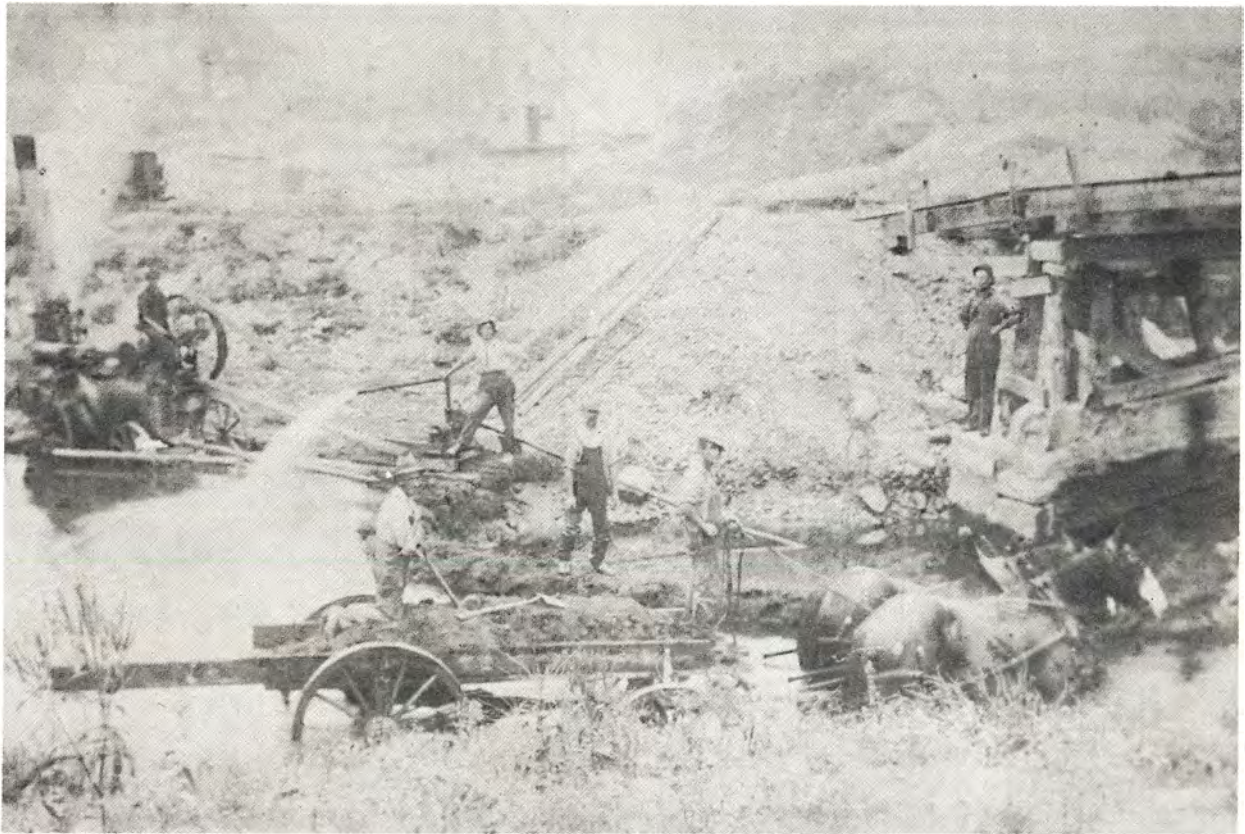
Quarry Scene 1907

Quarry Scene 1910.

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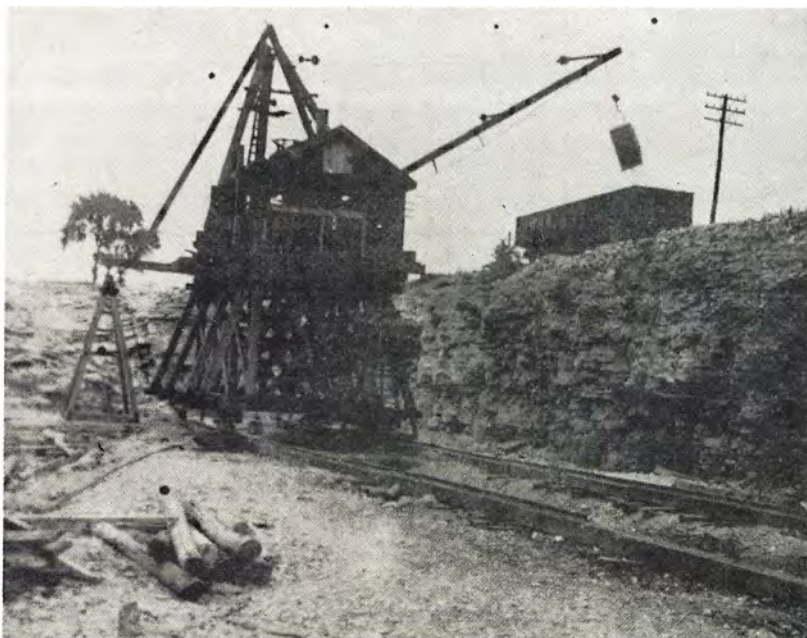
THE REBELLION OF 1837

In 1837 the discontent among the settlers of Upper Canada flamed into open rebellion. Within a mile and a half of each other at Beachville lived fifty-six-year-old Colonel A. W. Light and thirty-year-old Colonel Cornelius Cunningham, a wagon maker of Beachville. When hostilities broke out, Light was immediately put in command of the Oxford militia and Cunningham was the secret leader of the local rebels--or, as some said, patriots. Nomenclature depended upon the politics of the speaker. Cornelius Cunningham had plied his trade in Beachville for several years but had come originally from Vermont. He is described as 'a shrewd and active man.' Feeling ran high and terror reigned in Oxford County. Property was destroyed and lives were threatened. George Nichol, whose home was burned in the war of 1812, again saw his buildings go up in flames.

With defeat of the rebels at Montgomery's tavern, the patriots took to the woods. The local militia spent a cold and comfortless winter tracking them down with only frozen bread for rations. Frequently the militiamen slept in the open with their sodden blankets frozen about them.

A few extracts from local military dispatches throw light on the activities and feelings of the time. The following statement was sworn to on December 10, 1837, by John Beard, before Captain Philip Graham, who was second in command of the Oxford Militia during the rebellion:

'---on Thursday last--this Deponent met fifteen or twenty men who told him that they were going to meet at a tavern in Sodom, that in conversation this Deponent heard several of them, who were strangers to him, say that they were determined to overthrow the British government and that they had no doubt that they were able to do it, asserting as their reason that the taxes had been raised and that the governor wanted to put tythes upon them as they did in the Old Country. This was at the house of Henry Chase, yeoman, who this Deponent believes is not inclined to join either party. They said that they wanted to pull everyone down to their own level. Chase afterwards said to this Deponent that he wished the leaders of the disaffected were every one of them hung. On Saturday morning this Deponent saw groups of men amounting to a large number going to a training, all armed with rifles--. Yesterday morning Deponent was in Chase's house when five or six men went in there, one of whom pulled from his pocket about as many as thirty rifle balls--this man had a rifle and the others said they were going to bring their arms. This Deponent heard from these people that their numbers were about 500 men under arms.--The man aforesaid who pulled out the balls said he had stacks of them and that he wished every one of them were (sic) lodged in the hearts of the Tories (meaning the Conservatives) or words to that effect---.'

On December 23, 1837, Captain Andrew Drew of Woodstock wrote Hamilton to the magistrates of Woodstock, 'I write to beg you will have the goodness to forward without delay all the pikes you have--do not leave one behind.'

On June 28, 1838, R. Riddle, J. P., wrote to the Constables of the London district,

'You are hereby required to summon and warn Seymour Sage to be and appear before me or any of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace at the Woodstock Hotel in the Town of Woodstock at the hour of eleven o'clock to give evidence in the case of outrage committed in East Oxford by persons rescuing prisoner from Cyrus Sumner and Philo Burnette, Constables for the London District. Herein fail not.'

In June 1838 Colonel Light informed Captain Gibson by letter that,

'We of Woodstock, Ingersoll and Zorra are coming to you as soon as we muster our men--you may expect us at Sodom--the Lieutenant Governor at Niagara has taken nearly all the rascals who attacked the Lancers and I trust we shall do so with the scamps near Zorra--sent expresses to Toronto for more arms.'

On December 12, 1838, the ever-humane Colonel Light wrote again:

'Please--turn out by drafting twenty men of the Township of Blandford and ten from Woodstock to serve in Lieut.-Col. Hunter's corps at Woodstock--report to me the names of those who join and those that do not, that they may be fined £20 and imprisoned. Pray choose those men who may be the least inconvenienced.'

At least two companies of Oxford men were in the field against the rebels. Soldiers camped on the hills both north and south of the village of Beachville but were not allowed to enter it. One camp was near the present site of Charles Swartz's barn where there was a spring. Woodstock men organized the capture of Mackenzie's vessel 'The Caroline' and sent her in flames over the falls. Captain Drew was the ringleader and Wm. Light was one of the party. He was seventeen.

This does not mean that the Loyalists were solidly in sympathy with the existing government. They were not. In a letter to his brother dated August 28, 1838, Colonel Light wrote:

'---Since Captain Beale has been to Toronto and had much converse with various influential old settlers, military men, merchants and, in fact, all descriptions of persons, he and they have come to the conclusion that unless something momentous is immediately done for the great improvement of this Colony, and a means to greatly increase a respectable immigration, the probability will be that not only the Canadian public will join the United States, to save their bacon, but a great many of the truly loyal will be found to add to this list.'

This from the commanding officer of the Oxford Militia, than whom there was no more sincere loyalist!

Then came the battle of Windsor. On December 4, 1838, escaped rebels, aided by some Yankee ruffians, tried once more to take Canada. They were easily dispersed. The rebel camp was discovered in the woods nearby and its inmates were taken prisoner. Among them Colonel Cornelius Cunningham, badly wounded and

begging to be put out of his misery. The journey to London in lumber wagons must have been painful indeed for the wounded prisoners.

Forty-four prisoners were taken to London jail for trail. Forty-three sentenced to death, six were eventually hung, and the rest transported to Van Dieman's Land. Among those who were hung was Cornelius Cunningham of Beachville. He paid the supreme penalty on February 4, 1839. The hangings all took place within a short space of time. There was no rope in London to do the job, so Deputy-Sheriff Warren went to Woodstock and Brantford to purchase some. There was none in either place. He then went to St. Thomas and found what he wanted.

The London Gazette, of February 9, 1839, tells of the hangings:

'--On Monday morning, the 4th instant, Cornelius Cunningham, a colonel among the brigands, was placed upon the scaffold for execution. He is a citizen of the United States, a wagon-maker by trade and conducted his business for several years at Beachville, in this district. He joined himself with a certain political party in this province who cloaked their treason under the delusive name of Reform, until step after step it resulted, as we frequently foretold it would, in the ruin of its victims. After service was performed, he shook hands with the clergyman and resigned himself to fate--exhibiting proof that his mind was highly agitated at his awful doom. So great was his excitement that he could not stand erect. His head leaned upon his breast. But the body soon falling relieved him of all earthly cares and after a struggle of a few minutes, in death. The Sheriff permitted his friends to take his body, which we believe was conveyed to Beachville for interment.'

If Cornelius Cunningham, Patriot, is buried in the Beachville cemetery, his grave is not marked.

The property of the rebels was confiscated by the government

Robert Alway, who lived north east of the village, and Dr. Charles Duncomb, were representatives in the Legislature from Oxford at the time of the Rebellion. Duncomb escaped to the States by crossing the Detroit River on the ice dressed as an old woman. Robert Alway, though he took no active part in the Rebellion, was suspected. He was arrested, taken to Hamilton, tried for treason and acquitted.

One-time Beachville Post Office. E. S. McClelland, post master. Now part of Jack Smith's Store.

BEACHVILLE 1838 - 1860

As early as 1832, the Beachville district had regular stage service to the outside world--although the roads were execrable. The route ran from Queenston to Chatham and connected with regular lake and river services at either end. At first, the stage followed the Ingersoll Road from Martin's Tavern, missing Woodstock, to the immense chagrin of its citizens, then turned down to Beachville, and thence proceeded westward.

A notice in the Chatham Journal of 1842, announced that the steamboat 'Brothers' made connection with the daily stages running between Chatham and Queenston. By stage and the steamers plying Lake Ontario, one could reach Kingston 4 days after leaving Chatham. From Detroit through Canada to Oswego, the trip to New York took 4½ days. The stage route passed through 'the flourishing towns of Chatham, Louisville, London, Moraviantown, Wardsville, Deleware, Ingersoll, Beachville, Hamilton.' By 1844, one section of the plank road had reached Woodstock so the route was changed to pass through the town.

In 1844, the advertisement of the 'Canada Mail Road' appearing in the Chatham Journal offered 'the cheapest and most direct route through Canada West by the new fast-sailing steamboat 'Brothers,' Walter Eberts, master. The 'Brothers' left Chatham Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8 a.m. for Windsor and Detroit, thence going to Malden and made return trips on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The 'Brothers' according to the advertisement,

'runs in connection with the daily line of stages established between Chatham and Queenston--running through flourishing towns of Chatham, Louisville, Moraviantown, Wardsville, Delawre, London, Ingersoll, Beachville, Woodstock, Paris, Brantford, and Hamilton, Passengers can leave Hamilton by steamboat for Toronto, Rochester, Oswego, Kingston, or any of the intermediate ports of Lake Ontario. Gentlemen from all parts of the States will find this route very agreeable during the summer and winter as it passes through the most flourishing parts of Canada West. From Detroit through Canada, on this route to Oswego or Rochester, the journey to the city of New York can be accomplished in 4½ days.'

In the 30's and 40's the main part of the village developed on the south side of the river. Taverns and stores and business of all kinds thrived. A son of one of the tavern keepers told the writer that his father's meat storage room was like a butcher shop.---whole carcasses of beef, pork, mutton, sometimes deer, with fowl of all kinds hung from the rafters. Ice had to be cut in the winter to store for the summer.

All good hotels had well-tended stables. All travel at this period was by horse-drawn vehicles. All export and import was by wagon train. Often there were six stages a day passing through the town. At one time, thirty taverns gave service from London to Brantford. Tom Taylor, a boy at the time, says 'There was great excitement up at the corner when the stage came in.' The better stages were drawn by four and sometimes six horses and their arrival was an event. To the music of horn and the flourish of whip the equippage came jolting and careening in on its leather supports. Inn fires were built up and hospitality set forth. Horses were changed every fifteen miles. The roads were kept up by toll paid at toll gates set every few miles along the roads.

The winter of 1843 was very cold and the snow is said to have been twelve feet deep on the level. Upon one occasion it was pink. This unusual phenomenon is remembered in connection with the birth of a certain child. In that winter the yarded deer were helpless before attack. All that a man had to do to procure meat was to approach a yard, wave a rag to frighten the animals into leaping into the snow where they floundered helplessly, and then cut their throats.

In 1846 Beachville obtained a new bridge. In Colonel Light's diary was entered an

'Account of district monies expended by W. Light, District Counsellor for North Oxford, 1846--

Entered into contract with A. Carroll, West Oxford to build good substantial bridge at Beachville for L79.5-, Mr. Scott's District-Counsellor to pay in ratio to monies received by each township.

Paid to A. Carroll on November 5, 1846	₤15	- -
Paid to A. Carroll on December 19, 1846	5	- 10
₤3 of which money was given to W. Zorra	₤20	- 10'

This entry was made by William Light, son of Colonel Alexander Light. William is mentioned repeatedly in his father's diary. William was a lieutenant in the Oxford Militia during the rebellion. He rose gradually in the military ranks until in 1863 he became Commanding Officer of the Oxford Rifles.

The old road down to the ford still parallels the road to the bridge. Here baptism services were held for many years by people of the Baptist denominations, and the ford was often used within the memory of many people still living. Many a driver went through the river to soak a rattling wheel. Before there was a solid bridge, of course, it was used of necessity. The story is told of a certain Mr. Carroll who attempted to drive through the river when the water was higher than he thought. He was nearly swept away.

'I thought I was going to drown, Mrs. H.' he said later. 'I thought I was going to drown for sure! So I just said 'God Save the King' over and over as fast as I could. It was the best thing I could think of to say.' There was a law at that time forbidding the trotting of horses over bridges. It wasn't always the young blades who got caught either.

In 1847 a terrible disease called ship's fever was brought into the country on the Irish immigrant ship. Immigrants died by the hundreds on the way to their new homes scattered over the province. There were a few cases in Beachville. In 1851 a severe epidemic of diphteria carried off infant and adult alike. Families here died by threes and fours, often with none to care for them. The doctors turned grave diggers and buried them when they died.

In 1853 the section of the Great Western Railway (now the C.N.R.) was built from Hamilton to London. The workers on the railway were a rough, lawless lot, mostly transient Irish. Taverns did a roaring business and respectable folk stayed at home after dark. In some sections, the militia had to be called out to keep order.

Beachville suffered the building of three railroads, two directly through the town and one to the north of the village. It was during the last operation that two young men from Ingersoll, all dressed up as young men were in those days, brought their Beachville girls home one day on the train. As they were on their way back to the station, one of the young men accidentally bumped against a drunken navvy outside the hotel. Immediately the man seized him and demanded loudly whether he meant to insult the honour of an Irishman.

Almost before they could blink the two young dandies were surrounded by a howling mob of railway workers. They ducked and ran into the shoe shop and Post Office owned by Thomas Taylor. The mob followed. Shoes flew in all directions. The two lads escaped out a back door and headed west toward home. The mob, howling and shrieking gained on them. Some of the navvies headed up the tracks to stop them. Finally, winded, they burst into the house now owned by Mr. John Corbett--then by John Hacker. 'It's murder, missus,' they screamed. 'It's murder! Lock your doors.' The mistress of the house hurriedly did so. The mob prowled about the house, glaring in at the windows and shouting, 'Send 'em out! Open the door, missus, or we'll tear the house down!'

Mrs. Hacker let the men down through a trap door into the cellar. Then she dispatched a small daughter through a small half-door at the back of the woodshed to go and get her father. Her father meantime was at the Post Office helping Mr. Taylor pick up and sort shoes. Someone came running in to tell him to go home quickly. The mob was at his place.

When he got home he crawled in through the small door and talked to the men at the front of the house from an upstairs window. Mrs. Hacker let the two terrified lads out the back door. They made for the corn patch and thence to the ditch along the C.P.R. Railway track. Then they literally ran for their lives up the track toward Ingersoll and home. The good old days!

The Great Western Railway (now the C.N.R.) was officially opened on December 15, 1853, and the first train, drawn by its tiny, huge stacked, wood-burning locomotive went gaily through the town decked with flags and bunting at the spanking pace of six miles an hour. Everybody was at the station to see it go through. A week later the train going east was wrecked at Cope-town and the fireman fearfully injured. Two days later, coming west, it broke down at Grimsby. Passengers rode in those days with fear and trembling.

Beachville was at this time, to quote Mrs. Crittenden (see above) 'one of the busiest towns in Oxford.' People who, in earlier days, had come of necessity to shop, still came for things not to be found in the stores of Woodstock and Ingersoll. Now Beachville station became the shipping point for the Embro district and each day saw long lines of teams bringing grain and other export products down from the north. There was not, however, room on the Beachville flats for extensive railway yards and Woodstock at last really began to grow.

For many years a watchman was hired to watch the crossing at Beachville. He lived in the small house south of the track on the east side. In storm or calm, day or night, he went out with flag or lantern to regulate traffic for every train that passed. Mrs. Mason, Mr. William Lightheart and Mrs. Harm Cook were watchmen at this crossing.

In the 'forties and 'fifties the main roads of the province were paved with three-inch planks. This took enormous quantity of timber. Local saw-mills along the route of the roads did a big business. In 1852 there were six saw-mills in West Oxford and two in North Oxford. One stood on what is now C.N.R. station property. Local citizens welcomed the opportunity to make ready cash by teaming or working on the roads.

During this period also the export of timber boomed. Oak staves were required for the Quebec market. White pine was rafted across Lake Erie for Manufacture in United States. Great rafts of uncut logs two miles in length were a common sight on the Lake. Long lines of teams carried out timber for export to the nearest ports.

Then the railways went through and timber was shipped to Canadian markets. The engine themselves were wood-burning and great piles of cordwood had to be kept replenished at regular intervals along the route.

In 1872 the _Canadian Farmer_ published an article setting forth the calamities resultant upon the destruction of the forests of Southern Ontario:

'Our forests have been mercilessly hewn down,' said the _Farmer_, 'and although it may be pleaded that the demands of commerce justify this destruction, it cannot be denied that a great part of our timber is annually wasted through sheer carelessness. In fact, we have the authority of one of the foremost scientific men in the Province for saying that every year there is more timber wasted, either by being left to rot on the ground or by being burned, than there is cut down for commercial purposes. This state of things is discreditable in the highest degree and at the same time is fraught with serious danger to the future prosperity of the country.'

'The effect,' continued the _Farmer_, 'is to shrink up our rivers and streams, producing severe drought in summer and sudden destructive freshets in spring.'

The editor also called attention to the conditions in the older settled districts along the St. Lawrence, pointing out that beautiful and productive orchards that once lined the south shore between Montreal and Quebec had disappeared. Unprotected by forests they had been winter killed or burned by the hot summer suns. In the same section the lack of trees had killed the wheat culture by allowing the moisture to be drawn out of the soil. Ontario farmers were urged to learn a lesson from these conditions in Lower Canada and to institute a system of reforestation to sustain the value of their land. Reforestation---shades of our ancestors! But how much richer we would have been today if they had done it.

Centreville! Oxford! Woodstock! In 1856 another village, Wrightsville was born, to be at Beachville's elbow. Mr. Wright Farnsworth surveyed and registered the village at the junction of the Beachville road, at the north and the Governor's road. He sold a dozen or so lots and their owners immediately hastened to resell them. That was the end of Beachville's new rival.

And now comes the story of Mr. William Somerville Boulton, a forward-looking citizen. He apparently believed that the building of a railway through Beachville meant a bright future for the village. He bought a section of land on the north side of the river, 'On condition that the flow of water from the creek be not interrupted during the daytime, in accordance with the right granted Messrs. Thompson, Muirhead and Co., Machinists.' This plot had already been laid out as a village sub-division by J. E. Thompson, Esquire, owner since 1856.

The land extended up to the Gore and was divided into four hundred and twenty-six lots of varying size. Boulton then had a map prepared, which in one corner bore the following legend:

'Map of Beachville June 1856'

'The great demand for lots in this flourishing village has induced the Proprietors to subdivide and offer for sale this valuable property.'

'Beachville has always been celebrated for its healthiness

while the beauty of the situation and extensive view from almost every part of this property render it one of the most desirable places of residence in Canada, and the proximity to the Great Western Railway Station makes it easily accessible to all parts of the Province.'
As a place of business it offers great inducement to merchants and mechanics, and the properties would particularly invite the attention of the former to those building lots fronting on the side tract of the railway, which elevation of ground above the rails renders it admirably suited for the storage of wheat and other grain.'

'The surrounding country is one of the richest agricultural districts in the province and a large business is now doing; and much more may be done in the purchase and forwarding of Produce.'

'There are at present in the village three churches, a post office, one foundry, one grist and flouring mill, eight shops, one stove factory, one barrel factory, a lumber yard and planing mill, two tanneries and three hotels besides a large number of merchants in different branches of industry.'

'There are also, at present, in course of erection, a new store, and several substantial dwelling houses, an extensive Foundry and a wollen factory, both of which, will employ a large number of hands.'

'The population numbers about eight hundred, and is rapidly increasing. It will be seen from the plan that, besides the building lots, there are several villa lots from one to ten acres each, well suited to Gentlemen's Residences, or for Market Gardeners, and on three of these good dwelling houses are erected.'

'The gravel road direct from Stratford and Embro passes through this property, thus concentrating a great amount of trade and travel at the Railway Station situated upon it.'
'Full particulars of plans may be obtained at Beachville from Mr. Moors, Merchant, or from Mr. Wallace, Station Master.'

Having completed his plans, Mr. Boulton started home to the Old Country to acquire funds to promote his scheme. On the way back he was drowned in Halifax Harbour. Foul play was suspected. Few of the lots were sold. In 1858, the widow, Francis Boulton, sold lots number 317 and 318 to the trustees of School Section Number 2 of North Oxford. It is remembered that this school stood near the point of the Gore.

On September 20th, 1860, the Prince of Wales--afterwards King Edward VII--rode through Beachville on the Great Western Railway--presumably at the afore-mentioned rate of six miles per hour. There was a scheduled stop at Woodstock and the Committee in charge borrowed Colonel Light's drawing room rug to lay on the station platform. All those who could go went to town to take part in the celebration, those who could not, lined the home station platform in hopes of catching a glimpse of the Royal Gentleman. All the railways vied with each other in providing sumptuous travelling accommodations for the Prince but the coach of the Great Western was acknowledged to be the most elaborate. It was lit with the new coal oil lamps which had been used in Canada for but a few years.

Sutherland's Gazetter for the years 1862-3 (a copy of which may be seen at the Oxford County Museum) has this to say about Beachville.

'This village is prettily situated on the banks of the River Thames, five miles west of Woodstock, and on the line of the Great Western Railway, of which it is a station. It is in the midst of a rich agricultural district, being surrounded by splendidly cultivated farms. There is ample water power in this vicinity for mills and factory purposes. The London and Hamilton macadamized road passes through the village. It has a daily mail, and contains two churches--Episcopal and Presbyterian--other denominations use the school house. It also contains a flouring and grist mill, two saw mills, foundry and machine shop, two blacksmith shops, a wagon and carriage factory, fanning mill factory, vinegar factory and tannery, four hotels, six general stores, tin shop and cabinet shop, besides other representations of the various mechanical trades. During the last summer this village suffered a serious loss by fire of a large and extensive barrel factory where a number of operatives were kept employed. The proprietors designed its re-erection. Population 400.'

The Gazetter listed the heads of families with their occupations and it is very interesting to note that nearly every man had a skill of some kind. The list was as follows.

six general store keepers	three millers
four hotel keepers	two millwrights
one clock maker	one sawyer
two shingle makers	two tanners
one stove merchant	one vinegar maker
two wagon makers	two iron founders
one tinsmith	four carpenters
one fanning mill maker	two plasterers
one butcher	one coffin maker
one baker	one mason
four tailors	one toll keeper
seven shoe makers	one night porter on the Great
one pedlar	Western Railway
one weaver	two doctors
four blacksmiths	one postmaster
one wheat merchant	one justice of the peace
one lime dealer	one clerk
thirteen farmers	one teamster
thirteen labourers	five gentlemen.

Of the two churches mentioned above one has disappeared and the other for a time housed the Public Library. In 1844 a small frame church stood just west of the home of Mr. Charles Lillywhite and presently occupied by Joseph Lillywhite. When it was built is not known. This was the first Presbyterian church. In 1849 Rev. Robert Wallace was inducted first Presbyterian minister of Ingersoll and Beachville.

Taken from a painting of the Presbyterian Church, Beachville.

About 1852 the Presbyterians erected a new brick church on the hill behind Mr. Newell Fordon's home. Later this church was closed and the bricks were sold to Colonel Skinner (who had built the Phelps home on No. 2 highway). Colonel Skinner erected a wing to enclose a museum of curios which he had collected from all over the world. Paintings of this brick church may be found in the village. When the brick church was built the old frame building was sold to the Episcopal Methodists. They moved it to the recent library site, east of the home of M. Bremner. The original worshippers sat on planks raised on wooden blocks. Before acquiring this building (recently the Library) the Methodist congregation had met for a time in the school, in the Baptist church, and in a disused woollen mill standing nearly on the line of the C.P.R. track about on a line with Mr. Charles Buchanan's house. At one time this mill also served as barracks for the 22nd Regiment of Oxford Militia then at Beachville. The building was approximately 40 feet by 100 feet with two floors and a large smoke stack. It finally was declared unsafe, was sold and taken down. When the frame church, turned library, was taken down, the library was moved to a room in the Town Hall.

Wesleyan Methodist Church - 1867 - later used as library.

The original Baptist church was a frame building. This was followed by a brick building which burned down in 1943. In 1948 a chapel from the Army Training Grounds in Woodstock was moved to Beachville and became the new Baptist church. It was opened in the spring of 1949.

In 1891 the Methodists built what is now the United Church. On the Monday evening after the opening of the church, a tea meeting was held which was attended by 500 people. It was the custom then to invite all the school children to come to a dinner the day after a church supper to eat up what was left. The two small sons of the President of the Ladies' Aid, Eddie and Gibbie Hacker were afraid something might happen to the food so they begged their mother to be allowed to stand guard all night in the church. She gave her consent. The younger boy who later became a minister of the United Church admitted that it was the longest night that he had ever spent in his life--he was nearly scared to death.

Baptist Church - burned 1943. Erected in 1866.

The old church was used by the Royal Templars Society for sometime and became the Public Library in 1901. The building was not deeded to the village, however, until 1921 with the proviso that it be used for a public library. Librarians since 1901 have been: Dr. Beasley with James Dickie as assistant, Glover Cropp, William Lucy, Herbert Wilton, Percy Karn, Wallace Turner, William Abbott, Mrs. Henry Edwards and Mrs. Newell Fordon, Miss E. Hacker, Mrs. Wm. Brooker with assistant Mrs. J. Wright.

There has been an Anglican Church in Beachville for over 100 years but the original building has been bricked over. It stood originally on top of a hill back of its present location.

There are many ancient buildings in the village with massive cellar beams and floor boards two inches thick but in this day of face-lifting with stucco and insul-bricks they are being changed out of all recognition with the past. Until recently two buildings which retained their original appearance stood on the north side of the river. One was known as the Old Stone House. It was owned by Mrs. Pook of Woodstock. It was of native lime stone. At the rear was a frame addition supposed to be older than the big house. There stands also the stone smoke house of early days. This property was once one of the town's show places. The house was built by the wagon and carriage maker, Enoch Burdick. Across the road is the building known locally as 'The Old Blacksmith Shop.' It is what is left of Bur-

dick's Carriage Factory. In the beginning it was four or five times its present size and two storeys high and the building is probably older than the Stone House. After a part of the original building had been destroyed the remainder was turned into a black-smith shop. The Canadian Legion Hall now stands on the site of 'the old stone house.'

Many of the establishments mentioned in Sutherland's Gazetteer for 1862 were still in existence in the seventies and eighties which brings them within memory of our present octogenarians. A map of the village is inserted with as many of these by-gone places of business and industry marked as possible.

The stores were very much up-to-date with verandahs out over the sidewalks in the approved manner of the day. They had fine stocks of merchandise. All importing from the Old Country was done by large firms in Montreal that dealt in turn with the stores farther west.

The dates in the key to the map are those in which it is known that the places existed and not necessarily the date of their establishment. Many of them are given in Sutherland's Gazetteer. Beachville's heyday was prior to the arrival of the railway so many of these places must have existed then. Shops have a habit of remaining shops so it is not impossible that one or two might have been the 'good stores' mentioned in 1833.

1. Merchant-Mrs. Elsey (1862). Located on Jack Smith's present stand.

2. General Merchant-James Fairbain (1862). Located where Bank of Montreal now stands. Burned.

3. General Merchant-Elijah Nelles (1862). The old stand of E. J. Hacker. Elijah Nelles also owned No. 5 once used as a residence by Mr. C. Culliford (now removed). No. 5 was used by Mr. Nelles as a paint shop.

General Store in 1862, owned by Elijah Nelles, later by Mrs. Burton who made rugs

4. General Merchant-John McDonald (1862). Not marked on map.

5. General Merchant-Alexander Hart (1862). Not marked on map. Mr. Hart had an advertisement in the Gazetteer of 1862, stating that he was in the 'New Drygoods Store owned by W. Henry, near the Railway Station.' The store known to be owned by W. Henry is No. 11, now the residence of Mr. R. Pearson. However, the nearest store to the Railway Station is No. 3. Whether W. Henry ever owned that building is not known.

6. General Merchant-George Ross (1862). Located in P. Paul's store (No. 12). Now A. Lightheart's Barber Shop.

7. Butcher Shop-(1890). In two storey frame house beside bridge on south side of river once owned by Mrs. Fields. Burned.

8. Store-Now the residence of L. C. Blackmore.

9. General Store-(1846). Warren Henry, shoe-maker. Later a general store owned by John Hacker. Later a shoe repair shop operated by Mr. Green.

10. Store-(1880). Owned by Mr. Johnson. Later operated by S. Thorndyke. Still later by John Hacker. (1899). Now the residence of Mr. Morton Todd.

11. Store-(1856). Once owned by Warren Henry, shoe-maker. Lived where Arthur Pearson now lives. Later had butcher shop in front. Now residence of Robert Pearson. Had original store verandah until recently when it was glassed in.
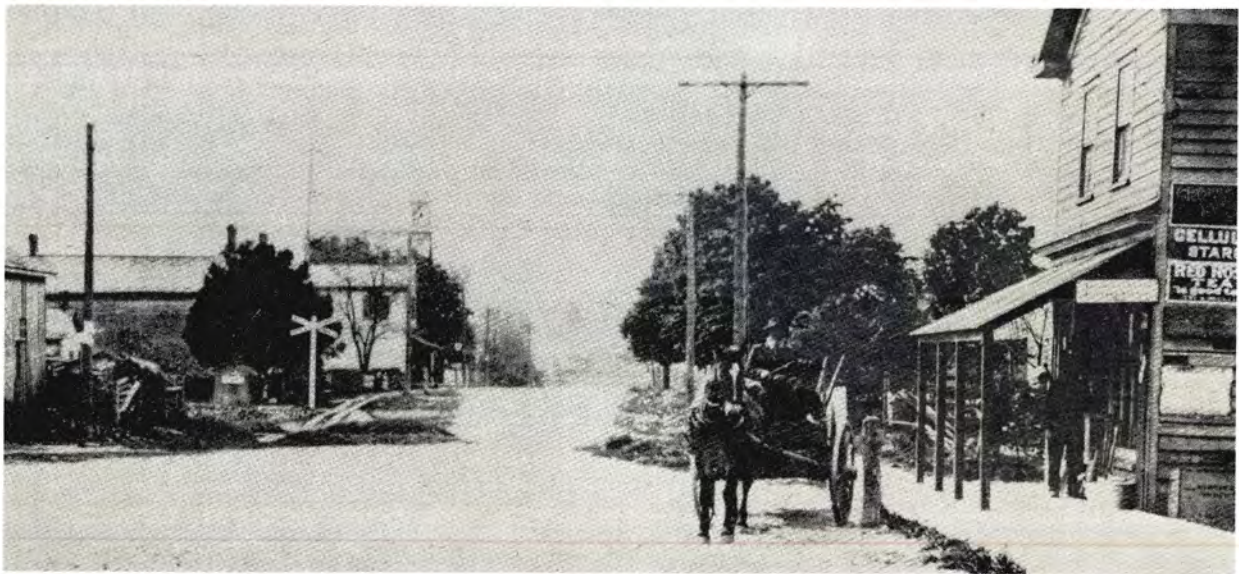
Looking north from the corner 1895. Frame store on right was a fine shoe store in 1847 owned by Warren Henry.

12. Store and Post Office-Once owned by Thomas Taylor---later Beachville Bakery owned by Peter Paul. Barber shop run by Arthur Lightheart.

13. Tin Shop-John Reid (1863)-located on the site of Mrs. Newell Fordon's residence.

14. Store-Enos Ames (1863). Maker and repairer of clocks. Located on site of present United Church.

15. Stove Merchant-Joseph Davis (1862). Next to Oxford House---place disappeared.

16. Wagon Maker-James Dickie (1863). Located where Howard Cook's house now stands. Later Mr. Dickie moved south to where Beachville Garage now stands. (No. 78). He is remembered as having made miles of rulers for the school children, rulers with a beautiful spring, ideal for shooting spit balls.

17. Fanning Mill Factory-J. D. Gilchrist (1863). Not marked.

18. 19. Baker-William Harper. Butcher-James Lovering (1862). This building is now the residence of Joe Murray. At one time it had a butcher shop in the front and a bake shop in the rear.

20. Drug Shop-Robert Beath (1863). Located east of the present premises of Mr. D. Morris. Disappeared. Mr. Beath had a large van drawn by a fat white horse. He peddled tinware and drugs.

21. Oxford House-Hotel-James Collier, Proprietor, (1856). Now the residence of Mrs. Byron Downing. Following hotel days, it became a Temperance House, and was used as such, within the memory of many present-day citizens. The house at the back, now owned by Mrs. J. Martin, was once a wing of the Oxford House. Also known as the 'Wheelhouse Inn' at one time. Also 'The Swan.' This was the stage-coach inn from very early days. The foundation is of logs with the bark still on.

22. Railway Hotel-James Karn, Proprietor (1856). On the south side of the Great Western Railway track beside the Royal Exchange. White frame building, later used as a factory. Disappeared.

23. Royal Exchange - Hotel - Samuel Pelton, Proprietor (1863). Later owned by Mr. Bennett. Now made into a duplex on the north side of the C.N.R. The name may still be seen on the side of the building.

Famous Stage-Coach Inn. The Oxford House, Beachville. Now the home of Mrs. B. Downing. Wing at back now the home of A. Anderson.

The Royal Exchange Hotel built by Samuel Pelton in 1862.

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24. Cricketer's Hotel-Joseph Platts, Proprietor, (1863). Not marked on map.

25. Hotel-now the residence of Mr. George Dunn. It is known that this building was a hotel but whether it was the Cricketer's Hotel is not known.

26. Cabinet Shop-in 1850 the building now used as Pullin's store was built by Mr. M. Green for a furniture shop. Before that a dilapidated building stood there of which no one knows the history. The furniture shop was later a tin shop, and at some time a bake shop, for, when J. Bremner bought it, there were old bake ovens in the back which he removed. Bought by H. Adkin and then Mr. Pullin.

27. Iron Foundry-Robert Thompson (1856). Owned by Mr. Whitelaw who later moved to Woodstock.

28. Thompson, Muirhead and Company-Machinists (1856).

29. Creamery-James Ireland (1885). For years the farmers of this district sold their products to Galloway's Creamery in West Oxford. This creamery made and shipped cheese to the Old Country and the farmers often waited months until their money came back. About 1885, James Ireland built the Beachville Creamery. This creamery sold its products in Toronto and other home markets which was much more satisfactory to local dairy men. Later owned by the Hunsleys.

30. Carriage Factory-Enoch Burdick (1885). Two storey, four times present size. Burned. Later used as Blacksmith Shop.

31. Blacksmith Shop-William McDonald. Opposite Baptist Church. Earlier operated by Dave Karn.

32. Butcher Shop-(1890). On site of tennis court. Disappeared.

33. Blacksmith Shop-(1880). This building was originally a school. The blacksmith had a bowling alley in the rear of his shop. It was burned. The owner built a frame shop on the site of the present A. Vanderkooi stand (No. 77).

34. Blacksmith Shop-once owned by Mr. Meadows-later by Mr. Nott. Disappeared.

35. Slaughterhouse-James Lovering (1863).

36. Tannery-Warren Henry (1856). The tanbark, usually hemlock, was torn into shreds between stones turned by a blind horse driven in a circle. The square vats were sunk in the ground and fed by a stream from the creek. The hides were soaked with the bark and then scraped by hand. The men wore leather aprons and held a slab against themselves--washboard effect--upon which the skins were pulled out of the vats and scraped with a dull knife to remove the hair. They stank vigorously. With the tannery and the slaughter-house, Water Street must have been a particularly odorous place in those days.

37. Vinegar Factory-Uriah Phelps (1863). Across from blacksmith shop (No. 77).

38. Barrel Factory-(1855).

39. Woollen Mill-(1856). Later was used to hold church services of Wesleyan Methodists. Still later was the barracks of the 22nd regiment.

40. Match Factory-(1860?0. A three-storey building with a huge iron stove on the ground floor. As small boys, the oldest inhabitants rolled boulders up to the top floor to drop down on the old stove to break it up for scrap iron. This they traded to Mr. Vickery for nuts.

41. Sawmill-James Grey, Proprietor (1862). This mill stood by the south creek opposite the home of Mr. Ipsen.

42. Flax Mill-Mr. 'Flax' Brown, Proprietor (1870). This mill is of a later date than Sutherland's Gazetteer. Our oldest inhabitants can remember when it was burned about 1885. Later, its hugh chimney fell across the road. It stood on the south side of the road straddling the south creek. Underneath was a small dam forming a pool from which water was pumped up to fill the boilers. Sawdust was used for fuel and sawdust sifted down through the cracks in the floor and covered the pool. Small boys loved to sit at the pool and fish through the sawdust.

Each year, Mr. Brown rented fields from the local farmers and planted flax. At the proper time, the village young people were hired to pull flax by hand, at five dollars, and bind it into small sheaves. These would be brought into the mill and the seeds switched out. The straw was then taken to the field and spread by the boys and girls. At intervals, the straw had to be turned and the young men lined up at the edge of the field with fishing poles--about twenty men to a twenty-acre field--and raced to see who could finish his swath first. When the straw was rotted, it was once more brought to the mill and the outside removed leaving the hemp which was taken down to the rope works to be made into twine and rope. Here, a considerable number of people were employed.

The farmers believed that mustard was introduced into the district in the imported flax seed.

43. Rope Walk - 'Flax' Brown (1870). Disappeared. The machinery of the rope walk was evidently run by water power. The walk was six feet wide and 300 feet long. At one time a mill-race which started behind Mr. Wybenga's residence ran west through the flats to a pond at the western end. This pond is also supposed to have supplied power for the Canfield Sawmill of an earlier date.

44. Shoe Store - George Burton (1862). This two-storey building had three additional one-storey apartments attached. Mr. Burton also had his own tannery (No. 53) and a lime kiln (B). His residence was west of the mill dam (Z).

45. Hotel - Near residence of J. Lilliwhite. Disappeared

46. Sorghum Mill - Approximate location. Some people think that the foundry (27) was used after Whitelaw moved to Woodstock. This was operated by Samson Nellis.

47. School (1850). Now the residence of Mr. Laurie Murray. Until 1886 Beachville had two public schools, one on the north side of the river and one on the south. These buildings were in use a century ago and no one knows how much longer. The teacher of this school, seventy-five years ago is well remembered as 'Long-legged Smith.' In the day when most schools favoured silent study 'Long-legged Smith' still had his classes study aloud. Then too, chalk came in balls instead of sticks and he had a habit of letting them fly at the head of any offending pupil.

48. School (1850). Now the residence of Mrs. D. Scapinello. This building was the school for the district south of the river. Stories told by old-timers lead one to believe that the building was not kept in very good repair. There was a large hole in the centre of the floor through which the boys occasionally disappeared when the teacher's back was turned. Then they crawled through a gap in the foundation and legged it for the river. Miss Elizabeth Gilbert, Miss Canfield and Mr. Topping were among the teachers who taught in this school.

Home of Mrs. D. Scapinello, was originally a school.
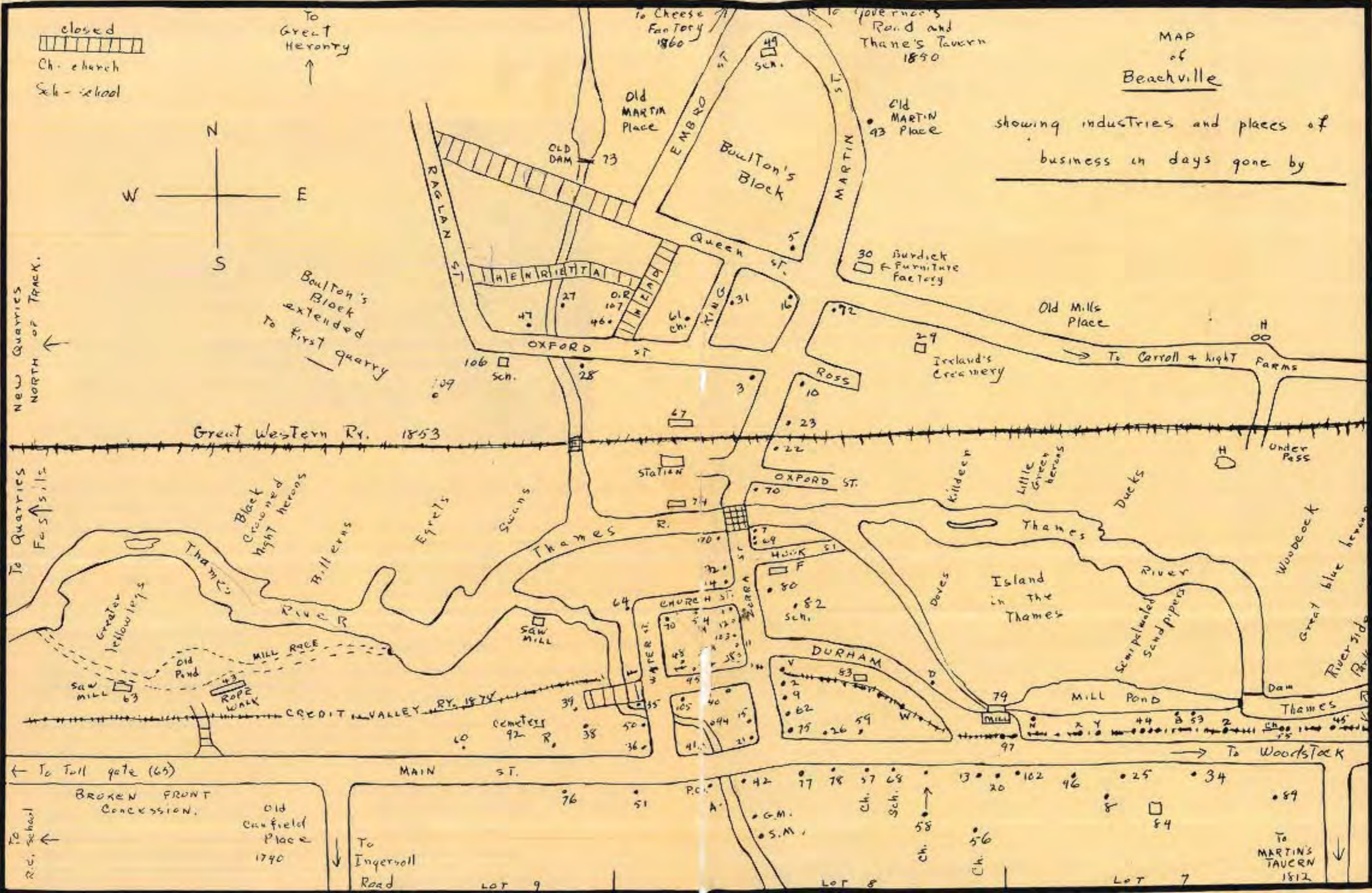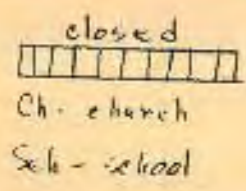
Previous to union.

Beachville School - Elizabeth Gilbert, Principal. Now home of Mr. Laurie Murray. This school was believed built in 1858 north of the village where the hydro office is located. Later moved to its present site where it was used until 1885.

49. School (1858). In this year Francis Boulton sold two lots for a school to the Trustees of School Section No. 2, North Oxford. This building was later moved into the village and used as a blacksmith shop. Burned. Elizabeth Gilbert taught here 1867-1870.

50. Vickery's Warehouse (1862). Mr. Vickery lived where Mr. Ipsen now resides. He dealt in furs, bone, horn, nuts and scrap iron.

51. Coffin Maker - (1850). Zina Downs had a shop on the site of Georgina Fairbank's home.

52. Wagon Maker - William Hill (1862). Not marked.

53. Tannery - George Burons (1862).

54. Roman Catholic Church and Cemetery (1838). Burned. On site of J. Smith's property.

55. First Presbyterian Church (1844). Free Kirk. First minister of Ingersoll and Beachville, Rev. Robert Wallace, inducted in January 1849.

56. Presbyterian Church 1852). Brick church followed old frame church (No. 55). Bricks were sold to Col. Skinner, when the church was closed, to build a museum.

57. Wesleyan Methodist Church (1867). Previously Presbyterian Church (No. 55). Wes moved to site of Mr. Vanderkooi's house. About 1855 a bake shop stood on this site, owned by Mr. Smith.

58. Anglican Church (about 1840). Set on hill back of present location.

59. O'Neil's Blacksmith Shop (1835). On the site of Wm. Bannister's residence. The first Roman Catholic Mass to be read in Oxford County was read here in 1835.

60. Wicker Furniture Shop - R. Cropp. Now home of Mr. Miotto.

61. Baptist Church (1855). At first frame, later brick. Burned in 1943. A new church was built in 1949. First parsonage now home of Ross Edwards. New parsonage built in 1956.

62. Post Office - Building once situated north of Town Hall. Mr. Mason, the postmaster, lived where Mrs. C. Todd lived.

63. Canfield's Sawmill (early 1800). Approximate location.

64. Stickey Fly Pad Factory - recently closed. Now used as residence. For many years owned by the Smith Family.

65. Toll Gate - Alec Bremner (1863). Located on first quarry road, west end of Beachville.

66. Lime Kilns - B - Burton   C - Nott
                   D - Archibald   E - Alex Bremner
                   F - Bremner barn   G - Weeks
                   (where teams   (later Hacker)
                   where housed)
                   H - Hacker and Cole   K - John Downing
                                         (west end)
                   M - Roger and Alf   N - Adam Bremner
                   Cropp (west end)

67. Wheat Merchant - Thomas Miller (1863). Sheds along the Great Western Railway track, in the middle of the 1800's the Crimean War created an unlimited demand for wheat. The soil was so impoverished during this period that dairying was introduced to save the farmer from ruin.

68. First Union School in Beachville (1886). Now duplex owned by George Sandham.

69. Houses on Stilts by River, stood in a row across front of Mrs. Phyllis Cousins' property at the bridge

70. Tailor Shop - John Henry (1863). Known as 'Tailor Henry.' Family lived in part of the house.

71. Old Stone House, built of native limestone by Enoch Burdick who owned the carriage factory across the road (now called the old blacksmith shop.) House built about 1860. One of Beachville's show places. Burned. Now site of Legion Hall.

72. Grist Mill - Very old site.

73. Saw Mill (1840). On site of present C.N.R. station owned by Calvin Martin, abandoned and in disrepair by 1848.

74. Town Hall (1867). Site of unknown building.

75. Blacksmith - Uriah Phelps (1863). House and shop on property now owned by Mrs. Wilbert Thompson. Owned vinegar factory opposite, part of Buchanan house.

76. Blacksmith shop - At present occupied by Mr. Vanderkooi.

77. Nellis' Garage - Site of present garage. The second site of James Dickie's Wagon Works.

MAP
of
Beachville

showing industries and places of
business in days gone by

closed
Ch. church
Sch. school

79 Grist Mill - 1831 to present. Mills have stood on this site ever since 1831. In 1834 the mill belonged to David Lewis Ford. Later was owned by Wm. Hook, Sr. About 1870 Benjamin Thornton built the main part of the present building. In the time of Mr. Archibald it was famous as an oatmeal mill. Following him was the team of Morgan and Baird and about the turn of the century Charles Gibson. This was later owned by Walter Winlaw. At one time it housed both grist and saw mill.
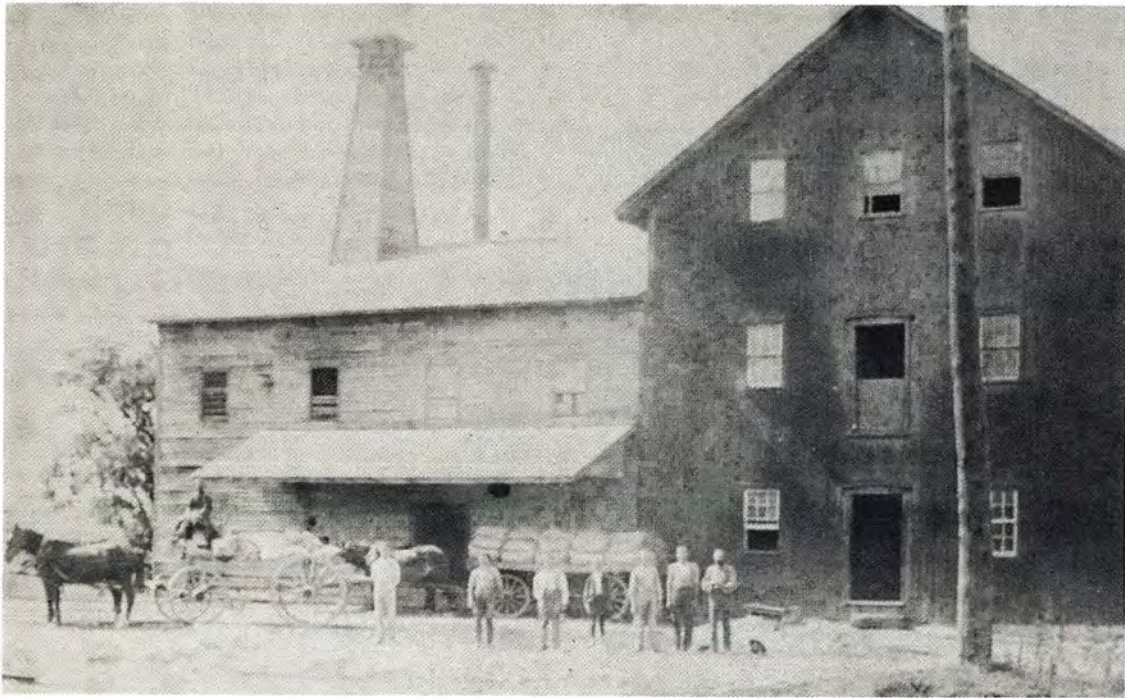
Beachville Mill - after 1878 - Mills are known to have operated on this site since 1831.

80. Store - Billy Hill (1900). On the site of William Moggach Sr.'s home.

81. Store - Mr. Boule (1850?). Not marked.

82. Present School - (1913).

83. Neilson's Creamery - (1914).

84. Residence of Harry Martin (1863). This was another of the village show places, a beautiful cobblestone house with cobblestone stables and well destroyed by fire. Harry Martin was one of Beachville's five 'Gentlemen' in 1863. Class distinction was very marked in those days. Mr. Martin brought a mason from the Old Country to build his home.

85. Baker - Roger Cropp. Not marked

86. Wagon Maker - William McPherson (1878). Not marked.

87. Stove Factory (1856). Not marked.

88. Wagon Maker - Cornelius Cunningham (1836). Not marked.

89. Brewery - Approx. 1890. There were two distilleries in 1835, and a small tavern owned by a Mr. Elliot.

90. Blacksmith shop - Jas. Fuller (1819). South of Thames on west side of bridge.

91. Old Barns - stood behind J. Smith's store, moved there about 1900, were once the stables of the Railway Hotel, which stood just north of the C.N.R. tracks, east of the road. They were used to stable the horses used on construction of the railway in 1852. Horses were looked after by R. Bowie, who lived in the old teacher's house by the present school. (Mr. Dykstra's property)

92. Beachville Cemetery, stones dating from 1817.

93. Old Martin House - built 1854 - burned 1949.

94. Glove Factory - approx. 1850.

95. Chain Factory - approx. 1850.

96. General store - Mr. Beach (1831). Near present mill. Also owned mill (79) 1831-1834.

97. Hardware and Storage warehouses - Wm. Hook, who also owned the grist and saw mill in 1860.

98. Tinsmith - John Buchanin.

99. Coffin Maker - Mr. Gould.

100. Blacksmith - Finlay McLeod - 1862.

101. Shoeshop - Tom Taylor, near 70, (1866). Soon moved to store of Geo. Ross now owned by P. Paul.

102. General Store - Wm. Hook 1860.

103. Residence of E. S. McClelland (now owned by J. S. Davies) first residence on Zorra Street, built in 1848 by Warren Henry for Jas. Taylor, master shoemaker brought from Hamilton. Then one storey only.

104. Methodist Episcopal Church 1832 (not marked). Still open in 1862. Union of all Methodists in 1884.

105. Implement Factory in Larry Scapinello's house on Durham Street.

106. School marked on 1876 map of Beachville but no one knows anything about it.

107. Marked O.R. on 1876 map.

108. 'Inn at Beachville' (1800). On May 8th, 1800 Wm. Hambly, Government Surveyor stayed at inns at Eastwood, Beachville, Ingersoll, and Thamesford--location unknown.

109. Rifle Range.

FURTHER BUSINESS - NOT MARKED

In 1822 there was an Abraham Stanley Beach 'a merchant in West Oxford.' Where? His wife was Eleanor Stirling of Ancaster. He was born in 1801 and died in 1835.

Elliott's Store - (1833)

Ford's Mills - (1835). Site of Winlaws Mill (No. 79) approximately.

Grist and Saw Mills - Behind Wilf Vale's house (1852).

Mr. McDonald, the blacksmith, used two of the old millstones to pound wagon rims into shape. He had them set up behind the blacksmith shop (1910).

Roger Cropp - wicker furniture (1875) after he retired from the Bakery business. Workshop now home of Mr. Miotto.

Mr. Moore - merchant (1856).

Mr. Wallace - Station Master (1856).

Mr. Mason - Post Master (1862) lived in house recently owned by C. Todd.

Wm. Hill - opened fruit and confectionary store in 1882.

Wm. Hill - Shop (1865).

Mr. Athkoe - Methodist Minister (1886).

C.P.R. Station - Now closed, houses the Industrial Identification Company's workshop and office operated by Mrs. Mushlian.

Cheese Factory (1860) on country road just north of Beachville on farm presently owned by K. Murdoch.

Thane's Tavern - at junction of Beachville and Governor's roads.

Henry Finkle - pre Woodstock, 'unpretentious business place in Beachville.'

Saw Mill on flats near mouth of creek back of Buchanan's.

Post Office - once west side of creek on property now owned by Ipsens.

Brick Works - in village. There were clay pits on hills near the creek behind Fred Lowes' home.

Rev. Robert Wallace was inducted the first Presbyterian Minister of Ingersoll and Beachville - 1849. followed by Rev. John Straith -- 1860.

Built by James Ireland. Cheese Factory. 1885.

BEACHVILLE 1863 - 1948

In 1863, the Oxford Militia was reorganized. Henceforth it was called the 42nd Battalion Volunteer Rifles or the Oxford Rifles. This Battalion was composed of six companies. Number 3 company came from Beachville and contained between sixty and seventy men. Beachville and Woodstock were called out as a border guard at the close of the American Civil War. It was feared that a force of Fenians would attempt to enter Canada. The men were stationed at La Prairie, Quebec. A few spies were captured. Later a company which included some Beachville men was sent to Sarnia. Still later there came an emergency call from the Niagara Peninsula---the Oxford troups arrived just too late to take part in the fighting there.

Pictures of Canadian volunteers, at this period of the Battalion's history, show a very natty uniform. At the close of the Fenian raids volunteers were given a medal (some families still have them) and 150 to 200 acres of land in northern Ontario--provided they did settlement duty as required by law. Some of the men took advantage of this opportunity, although the northern country was very wild at that time and most of them left when they could.

On July 4th, 1867, a train quietly slipped through Beachville from London and the west bearing quiet-faced British Regulars on their way to Montreal and England. Henceforth the defence of Canada was up to her own citizens. The year of Confederation should be easily remembered by Beachville's children for that was the year our town hall was built and the date engraved above the door for all to see.

The ladies of the United Church of Beachville will be particularly interested in the following account of a gala day at the home of Col. Skinner of 'Glenelg.' 'Glenelg' is now the home of Mr. Mervin Phelps, and for years the United Church ladies have been entertained there every summer at a picnic. One of the reporters of the Woodstock Times wrote on August 21st, 1868:--

'Every Canadian and every Englishman, except Mr. Russell of the Times, in describing Canada points with more than ordinary emphasis to that portion of the Thames lying between Woodstock and Ingersoll, as well for the evidence of wealth that are seen here and there through the rich foliage on our modest maples, as for the grandeur of scenery and agriculture thrift. It was our good fortune years ago to pass one Indian summer evening over the section indicated, when the mellow notes of a key-bugle, at the residence of the late Capt. Graham, were echoed back by the harp of the guitar from another of the many hills that give effect to the landscape. Then it was that the road to Beachville was, perhaps, more noticeable than at present--not that all that contributes to improve the appearance of a prospect has not been done here, but that patient industry and wealth have rendered other spots charming. But, if ever drive was interesting along the Thames, it was particularly so on the occasion of the festivities of the Thirteenth Battalion of Hamilton, at the residence of its gallant commander, Lieut. Col. Skinner at 'Dunelg' on Friday last. Although

the men and officers with a large party of the beauty and wealth of Hamilton, had reached the grounds by rail, still, from the prodigality of the officers of the Thirteenth in the matter of invitations the roadway was choked with vehicles bearing wealth and beauty to the rendezvous. The sports had been arranged, and competition was at the point of greatest excitement when we entered the grounds. There were stalwart men throwing the hammer, athletes running races and clubs at the stirring game of baseball while, for the first time, the people of this section were treated to the introduction of the game of Lacrosse. The music of the exquisite band of the Thirteenth stirred the valley with sweet notes, while the shrill note of the pibroch sounded far up amid the shrubbery at the handsome residence of the worthy entertainer. For half a mile in a circle, groups were found enjoying the scene, the pleasures of company, and the good things of life; while from the festive board of Col. Skinner rang the mirthfulness of maiden innocence, or issued the hearty basso laugh of a grim son of Mars. There were missionaries of peace, grave counsellors learned in the law and merchant princes--men at other times frigid in official consequence but for the occasion, warmed into congeniality by the happy influence that enveloped all; and the neighbouring community had brought to their door a mirthfulness and a sight never dreamed of in the back woods of Canada.'

This account is taken from an Atlas of Oxford County for 1876. Colonel Skinner lists himself as 'of Woodstock and Beachville.'

In 1876 the publishers of the Oxford Atlas were inclined to write off Beachville: -

'This is one of the oldest villages in the western portion of the County. At one time it was the post-office for the entire neighbourhood, including Woodstock. The improvement of the County by railway facilities crushed Beachville's prospects entirely. Still, it is a clean, neat settlement with churches, stores, etc. and a daily mail east and west and to Embro.'

This Atlas shows five churches and two schools in operation in the village and a church and school just north-west of the village limits.

If Beachville had been an ordinary village degeneration would probably have set in at this point of having a sleepy store and post office combined, with fly-specked windows and a gas pump, but Beachville was not an ordinary village. It had its quarries. As the years passed and improved methods enabled the workings to go deeper and deeper, more men were employed, and the population was held. The village is larger to-day than it was in 1863 when there were far more industries in the village then there are to-day.

The stone which can be taken out in the valley is nearing exhaustion. Workings have already been started north of the C.N.R. tracks and in time will extend as far as Governor's Road. The industry is fascinating and deserves a complete study in itself.

Quarry Scene 1907

In 1878 the second railway was built through the village. It was called the Credit Valley Railway--now the Canadian Pacific. The workers this time were mostly Italian. Mr. George Collier was Pay Master for this district. The line obligingly took a slight detour beginning at the mill. Otherwise it would overrun the north side of Main Street. As it was, buildings marked on the map--V, W, X, Y, Z and No. 44 had to be moved or torn down. W was a beautiful residence with well-kept grounds. The railway company bought it, moved it forward and used it as a combined station and residence for the Station Master. Mr. Sheppard was moved to Beachville from Ingersoll to become the first Station Master. Upon his death his daughter, Miss May Shepard, carried on. At her death in 1947, the station was closed.

In 1878, the Light Diary once more has an entry for Beachville. The Lights had moved to Woodstock years before, renting Lyte's Carie. The diary is believed to have been included, possibly accidentally, in a job-lot of the books at the sale. It turned up in the hands of a Beachville wagon maker and all his entries are in light brown ink:

William   MacPherson   Orders

Feb. 6, 1878---Wm. Banghart's order for Peddeling Waggon, ½ springs, 1-½ arm box, 10'6'' long. Pole--no shafts--to be finished one month from date.

Feb. 12, 1878--John Vail's order for lumber waggon with box.

Feb. 12, 1878--Wm. Hacker's order for lumber waggon no box.

Feb. 21, 1878--Wm. Branton's order for lumber waggon without box.

Feb. 20, 1878--G. W. Glennie's order for Platform Democrat.

Mar. 12, 1878--John Munce's order for lumber waggon no box.

Mar. 29, 1878--John Gould's order for open buggy.

Mar. 20, 1878--John Weld's order for waggon--heavy.

Apr. 9, 1878--Simon • Cornell's order for democrat--3 springs.

Apr. 10, 1878--D. McLaud's order for democrat--3 springs

Note: James Vanstone $64.---Feb. 9/77. 15 months at 10%

William Hacker, mentioned above, rescued the diary and his daughter-in-law eventually sent it to the Archives in Ottawa.

For years all news was transmitted by telegraph through the railway stations.

In 1883, the first telephone poles marched through the village along the road from Ingersoll to Woodstock. For some years there were two telephone lines in the area, the Ingersoll Independent Line and the Bell which eventually won out. Very few people had a telephone at first.

In 1885, Mrs. Harum Greene bought three tons of coal for $15. The Greenes were also the first people to have a base burner coal stove in the vicinity and people came the next morning to see if they were still alive.

For municipal purposes, Beachville has always been cut in two by the river, half of it in North Oxford and half in West Oxford. The two public schools have been mentioned. The writer has seen a certificate from the Canadian Literary Institute (later Woodstock College) dated 1860, granting Miss Canfield, teacher, of Beachville, the privilege of awarding a $200. scholarship each year to some pupil in her school. Names for three successive years are listed on the back. Another form grants Mr. Stewart Canfield of Beachville, for the sum of eighty dollars, the right to award a four years' tuition scholarship to a pupil of his choice. Three names are listed on the back are - Miss Sage, Miss Phedora Canfield and Mr. Valentine Canfield.

The academy was a great boon to district and province alike. It was opened July 1st, 1860.

In 1885, however, Beachville built its first Union School (No. 57). The land was given by Mr. Ben Thornton. The trees growing on the property now were planted after the school was built. The sections united were Nos. 3 and 4, West and North Oxford. There is in possession of Miss Bessie Hacker of Beachville a notice, which was probably put up on the store at that time owned by her father but now owned by J. C. Smith, of the first Union School Ratepayers' meeting to be held in the town hall on October 13, 1885. It was signed by Charles Mason.

Union School 1886 - 1913

Mr. White and Mr. Archibald are two of the splendid teachers remembered in this school by our older generation. They also have vivid recollections, along with the rest of the County, of Inspector William Carlyle, nephew of the English novelist Thomas Carlyle, himself a passionate scholar. His teachers were expected to teach any subject he might mention at the drop of a hat, and how he loved to entangle the unfortunate pupil in the maze of his befuddled mental wanderings! But the pupil who stood up to him made his eyes sparkle with enjoyment. He was an awe-inspiring figure with his head fairly well obscured in a bushy mass of grey hair, eyebrows, moustache and beard. For many years he drove an old grey horse. The boys called him 'Old Coal Oil.' One of his sons became one of the world's great mining engineers, and his daughter a world renowed artist.

In 1889, a little boy, Manny Fairbairn, was drowned at the village bridge. It was in the spring and the children were dropping stones on the ice cakes as they were borne on the current under the upper side of the bridge and then running across to see them on the other side. The child slipped and fell and his momentum carried him on the icy bridge right under the railing. Mr. Wallace the Grand Trunk station master, waded into the river in an attempt to save Mannie but had to desist because of an acute attack of asthma. After that, scantlings were fitted in the gap between floor and railing.

In 1895 electricity was introduced in the section-- along with bicycles. This period is remembered by our older citizens. A good many of the village young people worked in either Woodstock or Ingersoll. Often the families in turn drove a load of them into town in the morning and went for them at night. There were still toll gates on the roads. One was located where the old streetcar barn stands. Working folk could not afford to pay toll every day so on dry days the young folk walked uptown and down again at night from the toll gate. On wet days they drove all the way in. The toll was seven or eight cents for one horse and buggy.

The toll gate mentioned above was at one time looked after by a Mrs. Ross. Upon a certain occasion, a young man in a smart rig who lived about seven miles away followed another rig through the gate, whipped up his horse and drove for home without paying the toll. Mrs. Ross put on her bonnet and walked the seven miles to the young man's home and told his father. Then she turned around and walked home again. The father of the young man gave Mrs. Ross a good start and then made his son walk back after her, back to the gate, and pay his money.

The Thames at Riverside Park

The Street Railway Company developed a park at the east end of the village - Fair Mount, where Farr's Motel now stands, with a merry-go-round and pavilion where live shows and dances were held. Across from Fair Mount was Riverside, where Mr. Webster had boathouses with canoes and row-boats for rent. The flats then were shaded by beautiful elm trees. Both parks had booths selling hot dogs and cold drinks.

In 1900, a streetcar line was run from Woodstock to Beachville, and the first car made its trip carrying a gay party of dignitaries. The car was named 'The Estelle' and gallopped along in true 'Toonerville Trolley' style. In the summer the cars were open and travellers had a hard time to keep from being blown into the fields! The line was soon extended to Ingersoll.

Beachville, 1900. Town Hall built 1867. Store built 1850. Woodstock, Thames Valley **and Ingersoll Railway** 1900 - 1928.

Sometimes the gypsies camped by the river. One day a balloon was sent up with a man hanging by the handle. A Calithumpian parade was held regularly, larger than to-day's Victoria Day parade, and was very beautiful. They knew how to make whoopee in those days!

The Beachville Band about 1906 at Fairmount Park.

Land for the 'Woodstock, Thames Valley and Ingersoll Railway' line, as it was called, was purchased from the farmers along the route, and as a bonus the families got five years free rides.

In 1912 hydro electric power came into use in the village. In 1913 the present public school, with four rooms, was built (No. 82). It now has six.

In 1913, when the Duke of Connaught toured Canada with his daughter, Princess Patricia, the official train stayed over night on the Beachville siding. In the morning some small boys playing on the town hall steps wandered who the tall stranger was who stopped to chat with them. A few hours later, when the whole school marched to the station to take part in the official reception, they recognized him as their distinguished visitor. The youngest pupil, Mary Bremner, now the village Post Mistress, presented a bouquet to Princess Pat.

In 1914 Neilson's Creamery was built (No. 83) and still gives employment to a considerable number of men.

In 1923 the highway was laid through Beachville, and the old school was used as quarters for the men. In 1928 the street-car line was taken up.

In 1949-50 a new river channel was constructed from Beachville to Ingersoll, to make of the Thames a respectable law abiding stream. Local residents watched with regret the destruction of the lovely, winding curves of the river whose beauty has been sung ever since the white man first settled the upper reaches of the Askunesippi.

Since that time a new bridge has been built at Beachville. The Fire Department was organized and a fire engine purchased in 1952. In 1959 Saint Anthony's Roman Catholic school was built and now has three rooms. The village became incorporated in 1961, with Mr. J. Smith the first reeve. The Loweville subdivision has been added to the village.

In 1967, Centennial year, Beachville has a population of 936, two general stores, one grocery and service station, three churches, two elementary schools, a grist mill, a blacksmith and woodworking shop, two garages, bank and Post Office, Farr's Motel, Neilson's Creamery, Industrial Identification Company workshop, one barbershop, a Dry Cleaning establishment, Legion Hall, Rural Hydro Office and a village hall built one hundred years ago (1867-1967) housing the Municipal Office and the Public Library. At the western boundary of the village lie the quarries, which are sometimes called 'Beachville's' Million Dollar Business.'

The building of the Gordon Pittock Dam at Woodstock in 1966, will henceforth ensure an even flow of water down stream. As of November 1966 the Thames Valley Authority have given Beachville permission to develop a park just south west of the village bridge. This is the centennial project of the men of the Beachville Fire Department.

Centennial Year,
Beachville, 1967.

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ASSESSMENT 1812

UPON THE THAMES RIVER

Names	Uncultivated acres	Cultivated acres	Horses	Oxen	Cows
Peter McNames	47	3	0	0	1
John McNames	38	14	2	0	1
Silas Williams	48	2	1	0	2
John Carroll	150	50	3	2	1
James Carroll	80	20	3	0	3
Ed Topping	200	0	2	0	0
Alex. Graham	26	4	1	0	1
Delight Haskins	43	22	2	2	3
George Nichols	30	10	0	0	1
Freeman Burdick	45	5	1	2	0
Wm. Cook	48	12	0	0	4
Thos. Dowling	40	10	2	3	2
Sam Sage	40	10	3	4	3
Ichabod Hall	325	75	3	4	3
Sam Canfield	585	15	1	2	3
Chris Karn	660	40	3	2	3
David Lick	90	10	2	0	4
Jonathon Wright	180	20	1	2	2
Henry Wolsey	50	0	0	0	1
Nicholas Brink	480	20	2	0	5
Wm. Reynolds	89	15	2	0	2
Enoch Burdick	50	20	1	0	2
James Janes	0	0	0	0	2
Joel Piper	92	8	1	2	4
Peter Taylor	48	12	1	2	1
Caleb Burdick	50	8	1	2	3
Levi Luddington	180	20	1	2	4
Eleazar Scott	90	20	1	2	5
Willard Sage	155	20	1	2	3
Allen Sage	90	10	1	0	4
Wm. Scott	40	4	0	0	2
Jacob Carroll	40	10	1	0	2
Issac Burdick	51	9	0	3	2
Daniel Dodge	79	16	2	0	3
Luther Hoskins	350	50	2	0	3
John Youngs	284	15	1	2	3
Sykes Tousley	150	50	3	2	7
Dalour Taylor	44	6	0	2	3
Verman Matthews	188	12	2	2	2
Robert Clark	182	18	1	0	2
J. B. Tree	100	0	1	0	1
Archibald Burtch	94	6	1	0	2
Levi Babbitt	85	15	1	0	1
Ben Loomis	84	16	0	0	4
James Graham	84	16	2	0	2
Heman Janes	90	10	0	0	1
Jonathon Sprague	190	10	0	2	1
Hiram Sales	88	12	2	0	0
Calvin Martin	116	1	1	2	1
Eli Harris	60	60	0	4	6
Sylvester Dygert	80	20	2	0	1

Names	Uncultivated acres	Cultivated acres	Horses	Oxen	Cows
Daniel Harris	36	4	2	0	0
James Harris	39	11	1	0	2
Elijah Harris	41	9	0	0	1
Gilbert Harris	92	8	0	0	0
Peter Teeple	77	3	2	0	2
Wm. Hill	6	8	0	0	0
Duty Underwood	47	3	1	2	3
Abrham Canfield	580	20	2	2	3
Matthew Choat	37	9	1	0	0
Jacob Choat	194	6	0	2	0
Jacob Harris	195	5	1	0	3
David Curtis	120	30	1	2	2
Z. Burtch	170	30	1	2	4

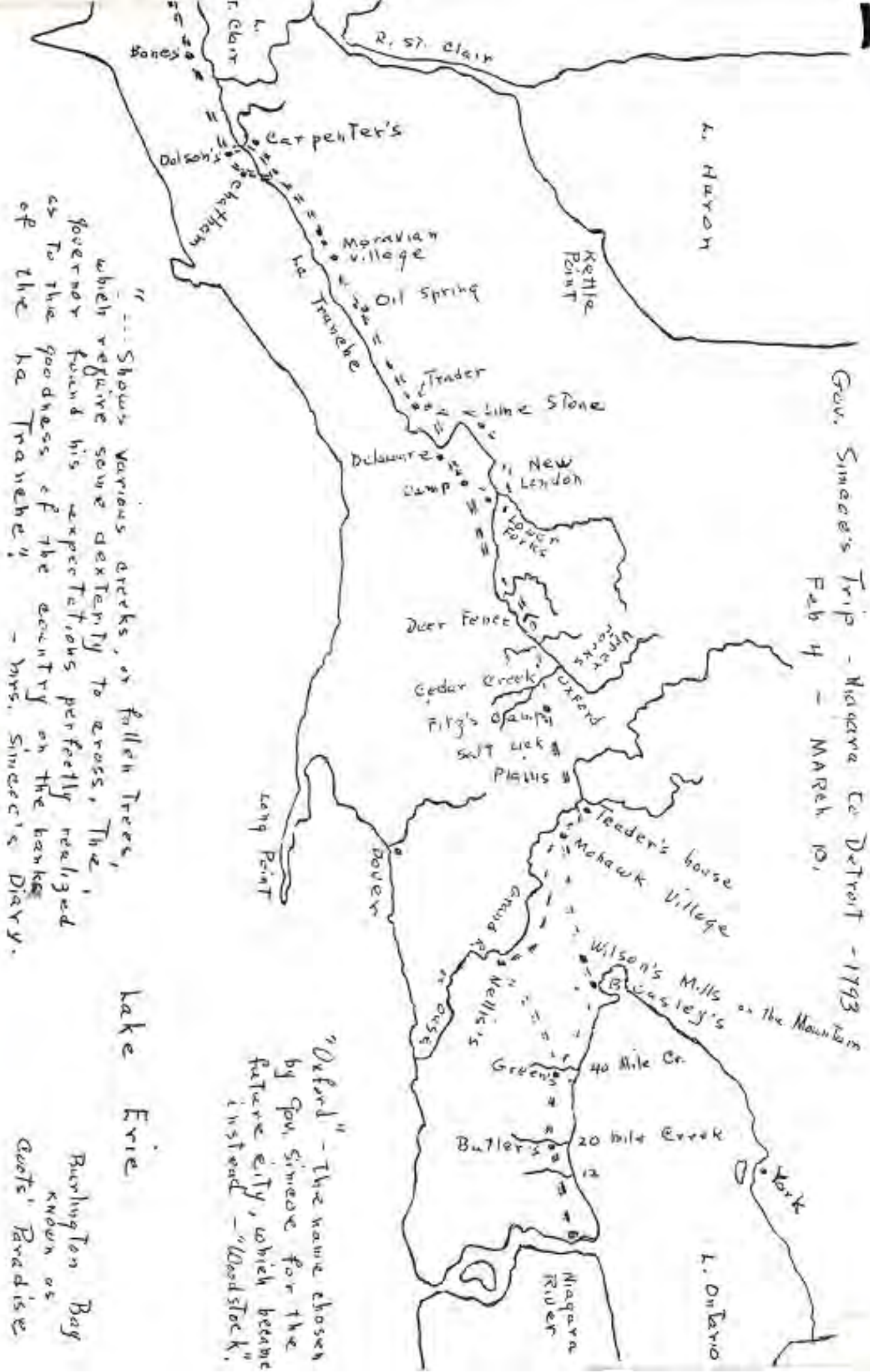Assessors - Eli Harris
David Curtis

Note - Assessors at this period multiplied the number of householders by five to arrive at the approximate total population - namely three hundred and twenty men, women and children in the whole of the County of Oxford, most of them settled in the Beachville District, as it was called, because of being the Postal Stop for the whole area. The townships were not separated until much later - North Oxford in 1822 and West Oxford in 1842.

The 'uncultivated acres' were primeval forest.

Building the dike, 1949, to re-route the Thames
River between Beachville and Ingersoll.

Map labels:

R. St. Clair

L. Huron

L. St. Clair

Bones

Carpenter's

Dolson's

Moravian Village

Oil Spring

Kettle Point

La Tranche

Trader

Lime Stone

Delaware

Camp

New London

Lower Forks

Deer Fence

Upper Forks

Oxford

Cedar Creek

Fitz's Camp

Salt Lick

Plains

Long Point

Dover

Trader's house

Mohawk Village

Wilson's Mills on the Mountain

B. Vasley's

Green's

40 Mile Cr.

Butler's

20 Mile Creek

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York

L. Ontario

Niagara River

Nelli's

Grand R.

lake Erie

Burlington Bay known as Coote's Paradise

" ... Shows various creeks, or fallen trees, which require some dexterity to cross. The governor found his expectations perfectly realized as to the goodness of the country on the banks of the La Tranche." — Mrs. Simcoe's Diary.

"Oxford" — The name chosen by Gov. Simcoe for the future city, which became instead — "Woodstock".