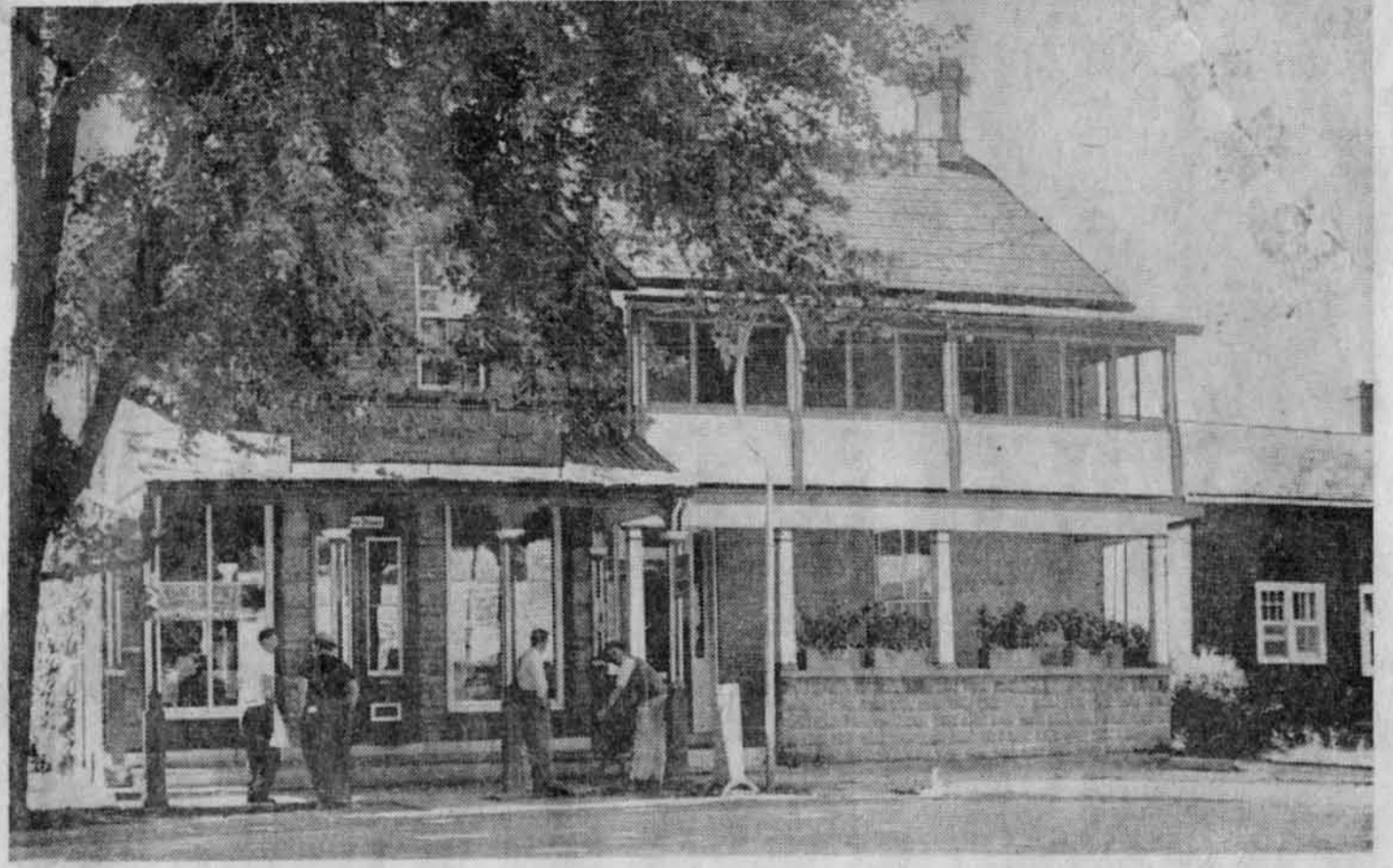




Former Dufferin quarry, now the village swimming pool



The Scott general store, operating for 90 years

Innerkip Intended To Be Named Inverkip

Story and Photos by Bruce Murdoch

Over this week-end the Oxford County Police Village of Innerkip—it is seven miles north-east of Woodstock—is celebrating its centennial. Centre of a prosperous dairying and tobacco growing area, this unspoiled and clean little community has a population of perhaps 300, some of whom are descendants of the pioneers. The celebrations started yesterday and continue until Monday evening.

Surveyed in 1858

The first settlers, history records, took up land in the area in the 1820s, but it was not until 1853 that the village was laid out in a survey by Charles Vincent, great-grandfather of Miss Zella Hotson, who was Innerkip postmistress for 25 years, and who recently published a book entitled, *The Early Days of Innerkip District*.

Miss Hotson who, by the way, has been taking an active part in the centennial preparations, is the fourth generation of her family, on her mother's side, to reside in Innerkip. She is a daughter of the late Dr. Alexander Hotson, who was also born there, and a granddaughter of George Hotson, who came from Scotland in 1849.

A post office was established in 1853, with James Bell as the first postmaster. The office was opened in his home. It was at this time that the community was named Innerkip by the postal department on the suggestion of H. C. Barwick, then postmaster at Woodstock. It is generally believed, historians claim, that he intended the place to be called Inverkip after the birthplace of his wife, in Scotland, but that some person in the postal department mistook his writing of that name. In any event, it has been Innerkip for the last 100 years.

"There has been a decided change in local business establishments during the last 100 years," the historical write-ups point out. "Gone are the mills run by water power, gone are the shoemakers' shop, the tailor shops and the blacksmith and wagon shops. Gone are the two hotels and the greenhouses. With the development of industry many articles are now factory made, and the coming of automobiles and transports made local production of many articles unnecessary."

The oldest business still operating in the village today is the general store owned by George Scott. It was opened in a small way about 90 years ago by Mrs. Sara Bezz and was subsequently carried on by her son, John A. Bezz; Harry McLean, Bruce Cole and J. W. Sowler.

There is a second general store, owned since 1950 by Orville Dean. Douglas Breckenridge, now living retired in the village, owned it for 20 years before selling out to Mr. Dean. Other owners before that were George Dobson and Harry Gustin.

The grist mill, now owned and operated by Thomas H. Currah, descendant of a pioneer family, was built in 1877 by Robert K. Thomson and Thomas F. Mitchell. Later owners included John Thomson, Charles Press and John E. Hewitt, James A. Gould, James Borland and Norman Currah, father of the present owner.

A butcher business and meat market owned by Ray Hilderley was started by his grandfather,

Robert Hilderley, in 1907. His great-grandparents went to the district over 100 years ago. Other descendants of this pioneer family in business there today are Robert Oswald Hilderley, in the garage and implement business, and Lloyd Hilderley, operating a garage.

Edwin Carter, who had a contracting business employing up to 20 men, is a great-grandson of William Carter who took up land there in 1828. He learned his trade as a mason with his father, Albert Carter.

Another business carried on by members of pioneer families is that of Callan and Long. Norman Callan, whose grandparents founded the Innerkip Lime Works in 1857, purchased the turnip business carried on by Daniel Blackmore in 1906. The following year he started as a coal merchant and later added fertilizers, cement and fences. In 1944, he took as a partner James Long, grandson of Charles Long. The latter has recently taken over all



but the turnip business and this is carried on by the firm in its modern building equipped for waxing.

Other business places in the community include; Henry Zehr, masonry contractor employing from 10 to 20 local men; Henry Caldwell, home decorating and painting; Thomas Curtis, cold storage lockers; Norman Piggott, sawmill and garage; Glen W. Rowe, electrical supplies and service; Roy Murray, plumbing, and Harold L. Harris, general contracting and masonry business.

The old Dufferin stone quarry, once a busy place, is no longer used as a quarry. Instead, it's the village swimming pool, operated by Len McLaughlin. In addition to the deep water of the quarry, he has provided a shallow pool for children.

John Chesney, 83, who served as a member of Blandford Township Council for 20 years—he was reeve for four years—said there had been a great change in the farming around Innerkip. In 1939, he said, farmers went into the tobacco growing business, the light sand land being particularly good for this purpose.



John Chesney

"It takes a lot of money to get started in the tobacco," he said, "but it's a money-maker if everything goes alright. My own old homestead, now run by my nephew, William Chesney, present reeve of Blandford, is all in tobacco now."

Mr. Chesney, who has been farmer and carpenter, also drove one of the rural mail routes out of Innerkip for 30 years.

Henry Kading, 85, and one of the oldest residents, was born just four miles from his present home. We found him picking raspberries in his garden. Until retiring from active work, he said, he had farmed, worked as a stone mason and carpenter, and had been with a section crew on the C.P.R. for 25 years.

He commented that he never drove an automobile and doesn't want to. "They are the ruin of this world and they have killed more people than wars," he claimed.

The community has a volunteer fire department of 20 men with Lloyd Hilderley as chief, and a neat little cement block fire hall.

There are two churches, Presbyterian and United, both of which were built many years ago. The present public school, third in the village history, would do credit to much larger places.

The Horticultural Society is exceptionally active, as is the Women's Institute here.

At the community cemetery—it is a particularly well kept one—it was learned that Charles Riddell, caretaker, followed in the footsteps of his father on the job. The two combined had served for 50 years.

A Masonic Lodge, Oak Branch



George Scott, storekeeper; Jean Walton, left, and Mrs. Scott



New gate at cemetery will mark centennial

No. 261, was constituted in 1871 and is quite active. There is also an Eastern Star Lodge which was organized in 1929.



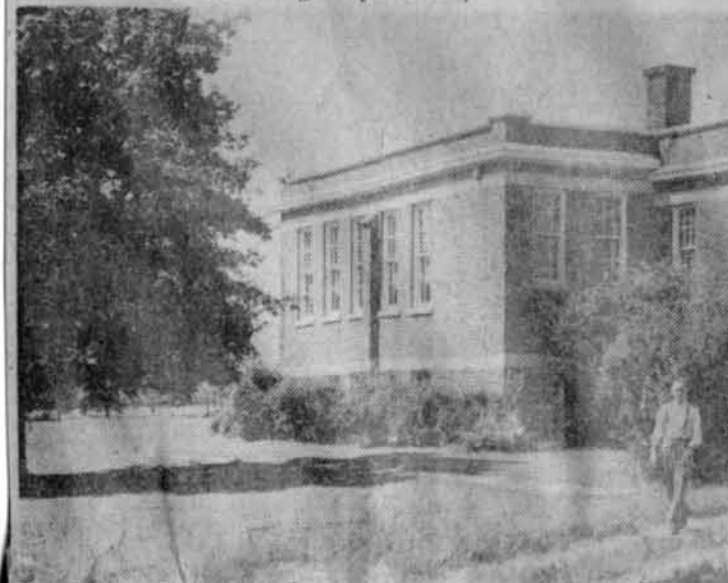
Miss Zella Hotson, former postmistress



Henry Kading, 85, oldest resident



United Church gets painted for centennial



Auto village school



One of Oxford's finest collections of Indian relics was turned over to Oxford County Museum yesterday. Left to right: Robert Chesney, RR 1, Innerkip; Miss E. C. Nesbitt, curator of the museum, and James Hewitt, who presented the collection. (Photo by Free Press Wood-

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