

A
HISTORY
OF
EAST OXFORD
TOWNSHIP



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BOND'S FEDERATED FARM WOMEN'S CLUB

FOREWORD

A history of East Oxford Township should begin from the writings of the explorer Samuel de Champlain. In 1615 he wrote that there were 28 villages of Neutral Indians in this area. By 1650 they were wiped out by the war-like Iroquois. From then on, the Mohawks, a branch of the Iroquois, were the Indians that the early traders and settlers met when they moved into this part of what is now Oxford County.

The main Indian Trail from the Niagara River to the St. Clair River ran almost directly through the centre of what is now East Oxford Township. The Stage Road now follows very closely this Indian Trail.

In 1796 this Indian trail was widened by one hundred Indian workmen under the command of John Graves Simcoe and settlers from what is now the United States soon moved up this road.

The land was all trees. Settlers were offered land cheaply if they were loyal British subjects from the American Revolution. Also many British soldiers were given grants of land here for their service in India. Many of them never came over, but sold these grants to settlers who wanted to come to Canada for trifling amounts - even for a suit of clothes or a pair of shoes.

In 1804 the Indian Trail was widened again to accomodate teams of horses, wagons and Stage Coaches.

During the War of 1812, the Stage Road was used extensively by the British Army and at least one camp ground was established in what is now East Oxford Township. Pieces of old army equipment and even a map showing the location of the hiding place of stolen Army Paymaster gold have been found in fields close to the Stage Road. The Stage Coaches flourished from after the War until the Great Western Railroad was built across the northern part of the Township about 1853. Travellers gradually changed to using the train instead of the Stage Coach because of the relative comfort of them even though early trains only averaged about 6 m. p. h.

The first white settlers in what was then the Township of East Oxford were the family of Zachariah Burtch, who came up from New York State about 1798, making their home at lot 18, concession 1 of East Oxford. There they built the first log house in the township. The son, Archibald Burtch settled on lot 19 beside his father. Neither of these properties are now in East Oxford, but are part of the City of Woodstock and are situated on the south side of Dundas Street at the east end of the city on the property now occupied by the new family YMCA.

Other early settlers were Samuel and Lucy Canfield, United Empire Loyalists from Connecticut, and their two sons, Abraham and Samuel Jr. They were members of a party of 40 settlers who were given a grant of land by Governor Simcoe in 1793. It was known as the "Township of Oxford on the Thames". This was later divided into North, West, and East Oxford townships.

Abraham Canfield was the first settler in what is now East Oxford, and before he died he gave the land for the present cemetery at Oxford Centre.

The Burtch family were Baptists and Archibald Burtch started a branch church of the Free Communion Baptists at his home in June 1825. He also donated the land on which the Woodstock Baptist College was later built, and when they got into financial difficulties during the building of the College, he mortgaged his farm to help them out. The first wife of Archibald Burtch was the daughter of Squire Teeple and when she died in 1824, (leaving him with five small children,) he married Jane Blow who had come from Philadelphia in October of 1820, by covered wagon, with her family. Jane Blow worked for the Luddington's and took her pay in homemade flannel and linen cloth. She also worked for the first Mrs. Burtch and received 2 pounds of maple sugar for each days wages.

Esther Burtch, daughter of Zachariah, and sister of Archibald married Dr. Levi Perry, who was the first doctor in Oxford County. He started to practice medicine in 1816, and was one of the first overseers of highways in East Oxford. His division is described as being "from the west town line to the 'Rising Sun'", which is presumed to have been a tavern.

In the year 1817, the County of Oxford had a population of 530 persons, with three quarters of them living in either East or West Oxford. There were in the whole county: 2 sawmills, one grist mill, no schools, no churches, and no jail, and no book stores west of Dundas.

In 1861 the village of Oxford Centre had one store owned by H. C. Grisword, who also owned the hotel named the "Oxford House", Alexander Robb was the school teacher, William Crawford was the blacksmith, William Moore was a carriage and wagon maker and William Garbutt, who was Reeve of East Oxford in 1871, was the postmaster.

The first meeting of the inhabitants of Oxford East for municipal purposes, of which any record exists, was held at the home of James Dorman, who lived on

the west half of lot 9, concession 4, at or near where Russel Parking now lives. This Meeting was held on January 1st, 1849, and they appointed one Councillor, William Burgess; Henry Peers was appointed Township Clerk; Thomas Holdsworth, assesor; and James McCallum was to be tax collector.

In 1850 the Township of East Oxford was incorporated and the first meeting of the Council was held at the home of Daniel Smith also living on the west half of lot 9, concession 4, at the hour of 10 a. m. on January 21st, 1850.

The first Council was composed of James Scarff, William Burgess, William Peers and Mr. Leake. The members chose William Burgess as a fit and proper person to become Town Reeve; Johnathon Tripp as Clerk-Treasurer; John Hall as Assesor James McCallum as tax collector; and George Curry and William Lemon as auditors.

A tax of 225 pounds sterling was levied the first year to pay for the erection of a township hall, to be built on lot 12, concession 4. Meanwhile the meetings of council were held at Daniel Smiths or James Scarff's house in Woodstock, until the hall was completed in December of 1850. The first meeting in the new hall was held on December 30th, after the Council had passed a by-law to permit the holding of council meetings in the hall. The present hall was built in 1910 at a cost of approximately \$2000.

The first purchase made by the first Council was that of the Official Seal, which is still in use. It was obtained from the Hamilton Watch and Clock Makers, Woodstock, at a cost of 2 pounds.

The amount of the first tax roll was 335 pounds, 6 shillings and 7 pence, or approximately \$1675, another source of revenue in those days was the Clergy Reserve Fund, from this in some years over 500 pounds was received. Tavern licences brought in 28 pounds, 6 shillings and 3 pence, and the Wild Land tax brought in 12 pounds.

Since 1850 the township has had 31 Reeves; the one holding the office longest being John Peers, who was reeve for 11 years, 1880 to 1891, William Peers was also reeve for 11 years, not consecutively, and William Burgess for 10 years, but also not consecutively. Albert T. Walker held office for five years, but not consecutive.

The township has had 6 clerks and 3 treasurers who were not also the clerk. Johnathon Tripp was clerk-treasurer for 1 year, James Scarff, clerk-Treasurer for 18 years, James G. Pettit, clerk-

treasurer for 20 years, John Peers, clerk-treasurer for 10 years, F. G. Jackson, clerk for 46 years and treasurer for 26 years, Walter Schell was treasurer for 12 years, W. O. Ede for 6 years, E. B. Palmer was acting clerk and treasurer during Mr. Jackson's illness in 1946, and N. M. Holdsworth was appointed clerk in 1946.

Some of the tax collectors of the township were, James McCallum, George H. Corbin, Nelson Vroman, Archibald Park, David Watt, Robert Bates, Edward Rinch, W. J. Orth, W. S. Wood, Robert H. Smith, W. J. Fletcher, and C. E. McComb and John A. Walker.

The township has had three road superintendents, John Richardson, M. J. McMahon, Clarence Hart.

The first system of road building and maintenance was carried out by Overseers of Highways, who were appointed yearly by the Council for each concession or townline. Each one had under his jurisdiction about two miles of road. As an example of one beat, it was described as being from the west quarter town line on the 3rd. concession, (Blows School) easterly to the large swamp, and another on the Stage road was from William Meeks east corner to Daly's west corner. In the same year Eliphalet Wood's division was from the Oxford Centre corner to Wm. Meek's west corner.

THE REEVES WERE AS FOLLOWS:

Name

Wm. Burgess	10	George R. McCombs	3
Wm. Peers	10	C. Herbert Longworth	2
Jas. G. Pettit	5	Alex Riach	2
Wm. Lemon	1	Charles W. Schultz	2
Wm. Garbutt	1	W. S. Wood-Died in office	2
George Curry	2	Wm. F. Lampman	3
G. W. Falconer (Dep)	1	Wilford McIntyre	2
John Peers	11	Harvey E. Longworth	3
Wm. Schell	3	Elton Townsend	2
Robert Leake	3	Clair Peers	2
James Virtue	3	John a. Wallace	2
Samuel C. Tuttle	1	George F. Wright	2
John Park	2	Murray Logan	5
Thomas J. Lammiman	5	Fred Scheil	2
Allan Kneal	2	Hilton Virtue	5
Joshua Lawrence	4	Grenfell Lazenby	4
Albert T. Walker	5	Glen Kitchen	Present
Henry Greenley	3		
Alfred Leake	3		

Four of our Reeves have been wardens of the County: Wm Peers, John Peers, Wm. Shell and Wm. F. Lampman

PRESENT COUNCIL PRESENT SCHOOL BOARD CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Glen Kitchen	Frank Scott	Mrs. Jean Porter
John Oppel	William Talbot	Mrs. Grace Hird
John B. Wallace	Earl Start	Gerald Row
Walter Schell	Mrs. Verna Logan	John Atkinson
Ken Peers	Murray Armstrong	N. R. Schell
	N. M. Holdsworth	Murray Armstrong
		Ken Peers

CLERK

ASSESSOR

ROAD SUPERINTENDENT

Montrose Holdsworth John A. Wallace Clarence Hart

The 1967 Centennial Project for the township is the converting of the Oxford Centre School to a township business office & board room. The old school on the north side will be the township library under the sponsorship of the Oxford County Library board.

A plaque commemorating this will be unveiled, and the building dedicated during the townships centennial celebrations in June 1967.

GENERAL HISTORY

A hundred years ago the City of Woodstock was not large and the Township of East Oxford extended west to what is now the site of the new Y.M.C. A. Building. As the city grew parts of the Township were annexed; some later annexations were in 1851-200 acres, 1951-495 acres; 1964-1137 acres; and 1966-451 acres.

Following are some interesting facts and figures taken from old records concerning the township.

Township first surveyed in 1793 by Augustus Jones.

First registered deed in 1802; 200 acres, lot 12 conc. 5 from Sylverton Tiffney to William and James Crooks.

The price of land arose from 55¢ an acre in 1800 to \$3.00 an acre in 1817.

The first Agriculture Society was formed Jan. 20, 1836 with Rear Admiral Vansittart of Eastwood as President. The first Horticultural Society was formed on April 2, 1852.

<u>Population</u>	<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Mill Rate</u>
1800	1854 184,666Pounds	1½p. on the £
2086,	1875 \$1,083,105	18.75 mills
1883	1900 \$1,480,605	4.345 mills
1687	1925 \$1,931,725	20.80 mills
2130	1950 \$2,029,304	28,9 mills
2156	1966 \$2,500,000	77 mills

In 1851 a Farmers Association was formed; President Geo. Alexander, Vice Pres. Henry Peers, Secretary J. C. Teeple Treasurer John Vroman.

Many pages of history have travelled down the Stage Road; the Indians using it for centuries and even in 1830 it is noted that they camped late every autumn in a field at lot 7, conc. 4 just south of the Stage Road. It is recorded that in 1834 these Indians killed 50-60 deer from this camp and took the meat back to Brantford.



FIRST TOWNSHIP HALL

Built in 1850 at a cost of 215 pounds by White & Dixon, Woodstock Contractors.

The British militia used it extensively during the War of 1812-1814 and it was during that campaign that the Paymaster's wagon of General Proctors' army was robbed one night as their guards were in a tavern along the Stage Road. The \$30,000 in coin and the wardrobe of Mrs. Proctor showed up a few years later in the estates of the settlers of the time. There

was much suspicion of the local farmers but no one was ever convicted.

About 1908 2 diamond shaped pieces of slate bound with brass wire, were discovered on what is now the farm of Henry Sage at Vandecar. On them were inscribed in detail the burying place of a large amount of gold & silver coin buried about the time of the war of 1812. This story coincides with the disappearance of a similar amount of money that was being shipped from Montreal to York (Toronto) during the war. As far as it is known this money has never been found. This shipment of money was estimated to weigh almost two tons.

In 1832 a Mr. Jed Jackson carried the mail from Brantford to London along the Stage Road at an average rate of 3 m.p.h. At that time there were 4 stages a day that travelled the road.

Regular Stage service started in 1832 and a notice in the Chatham Journal of 1842 says that Stage passengers could make boat connections in Kingston in four days from Chatham by stage coach. All travel through this area at that time was by horse drawn vehicles and all imports and exports were by the same.

At one time there were 30 taverns in service between London & Brantford. The better stages had four horses and the driver announced his arrival by a horn. During the building of the railroad at Eastwood in 1853, the taverns did a roaring business and quite often the militia had to be called out to restore order.

In March of 1837 it noted that more than 200 teams and wagons of settlers crossed at Lewiston and came up the Stage Road to settle in this part of Ontario.

In 1839, 12 wagon loads of prisoners, chained together went east on the Stage Road, bound for York, where they were sent to Montreal, for shipment by boat to Van Dieman's land (Tasmania). It took a year to make the trip. These were prisoners taken during the Rebellion of Upper Canada. Nearly all the original settlers of East Oxford Township came up this road.

The following is a list of farms in East Oxford that have been in the same family for at least 100 years.

This list is as complete as we have been able to make it- some farms may have passed to a married

daughter with a change of name making it difficult to trace.

Henry L. Sage - Stage Road
Harvey A. Wood - Stage Road
John Percival Bursee - RR 8 3rd Conc.
John G. Schell - RR 8 3rd Conc.
Wm. Edward Lazenby - RR 8 Hy. 53
Carl M. Edwards - Curries
Hillview Farms Ltd. - Stage Road
John P. Slattery - RR 8 3rd Conc.
John F. Pettit - RR 2 Burgessville 8th Conc.
John A. Wallace - RR 8 Woodstock Hy. 53
Cecil Keyes - 2nd Concession
R. Ralph Abbey - Curries
H. Kenneth Peers - Stage Road
Thomas Peat - RR 8 Woodstock Hy. 53
Craig Manson - RR 8 Woodstock Hy. 53
George McLeod - RR 8 Woodstock Hy. 53
William and Clarence Hart - RR 8 Woodstock 3rd Conc.
Frank Losee - RR 2 Burgessville Conc. 8.

Here are some of the census facts taken from Shenstone's Gazateer of 1852 about East Oxford. There were in East Oxford - 7 black smiths, 1 bookseller, 3 butchers, 2 bakers, 1 bailiff, 1 clerk, 13 carpenters, 2 coopers, 1 dentist, 299 farmers, 1 grocer, 4 innkeepers, 1 joiner, 310 labourers, 3 ministers, 1 plaster, 2 peddlers, 7 schoolteachers, 9 shoemakers, 42 servants, 5 lawyers, 1 salesman, 1 stonemason, 2 tailors, 7 teamsters, 1 tollgate keeper, 3 wagon makers, 2 weavers, 1475 no trade. 1300 of the approximately 2200 population were born in Canada West, 328 in England, 217 Ireland, 111 Scotland. Only 1 died of old age in 1852. Also in that same year, Mr. Overholts tavern at Eastwood burnt down.

East Oxford had the highest yield of barley in the County in 1852 - 28 bushels. Other crop yield of that same year were - Wheat-21, Oats 28½, Peas 20, Rye 15, Corn 21½, Buckwheat 18, Potatoes 45 but in 1850 Potatoes yielded 107 bus. per acre. Cows that were brought in from New York State cost \$20. and ones from Lower Canada cost \$15.

In 1836 on Jan 20, the 1st agricultural Society was formed with Rear Admiral Vansittart as President. The following is a list of some of the prize winners at their shows:

Best Bus. of Barley

John Howden in 1848, 49, 50, 51
Jacob Schell in 1852

Best Spring Wheat

Wm. Peers - 1848
John Schell - 1849
D. Smith - 1850
John Clark - 1851
Ralph Lard - 1852

Best Boar

Thomas Hart - 1848
Joseph Hatch - 1849
Robert Tune - 1850
Wm. Harris - 1852

Best Sow

Robt. Tune - 1848, 49, 50
Jacob Schell - 1851

Best Lamb Carcass

Robert King - 1848
Charles Beard - 1849
R. D. Innes - 1850
Robert King - 1851
J. McCallum - 1852

Best Mare & Foal

T. Holdsworth 1852

Best 2yr. old Filly

Sulton Frizille - 1849

Best yearling Steer

R. D. Innes 1848, 49, 50

Best Fall Wheat

Wm. Peers - 1848
John Clark - 1849
Sylvester Keyes - 1852

Best Maple Syrup

B. Lawrence - 1851
Wm. Peers - 1852

Best Bull

Robt. Vandecar - 1849
Joel Canfield - 1850
Joseph Peers - 1851
James Marchant - 1852

Best Yoke of 3 steers

Henry Peers - 1848
Thomas Hart - 1850
T. Schell - 1851

In 1875 the Atlas shows that East Oxford had an assessment of about 1 million dollars, 2,086 people, 2289 cattle, 3,684 sheep, 837 hogs, 1089 horses and 199 dogs.

The following are taken from Town ship meeting minutes of the year 1867.

REEVE - James S. Pettit

CLERK - James Scarff

COUNCILLORS - George Currie, John Leake, Wm. Lemon, Wm. Garbutt.

TREASURER

AUDITORS - William Chambers and Hugh Munroe

ASSESSOR - James Lund

TAX COLLECTOR - Nelson Vroman

TAVERN INSPECTOR - Ralph Lund

FEBRUARY MINUTES

A petition of Peter R. Sherman and thirty others praying the Council to grant a certificate to Nelson Schooley to obtain a licence to keep a tavern at Oxford Centre was handed in and read.

Moved by Garbutt
Seconded by Leake

Resolved that the Reeve be and he is hereby authorized to sign an order on the treasurer in favour of James Scarff for the sum of \$4 for 1 copy of Harrison's Municipal Manual for the use of this council.

May

Moved by Lemon, Seconded by Currie. Resolved that the sum of \$100 be equally divided and placed to the credit of the several councillors of this township to be expended on the road and bridges in their respective divisions.

ADJOURNED FOR JUNE AND JULY

AUGUST

Petition of Enoch Wooley and others praying the council to open the road in front of Lot 1, Conc. 7.

Moved by Lemon and Seconded by Garbutt. Resolved that Wm. Hyde, poundkeeper, be and he is hereby authorized to refund to Henry Wilford \$4 the amount of fine imposed on him for his bull accidentally getting out on the highway on June 18.

Moved by Lemon and seconded by Garbutt. Resolved that the reeve be authorized to sign an order on the treasurer in favour of John Carr for \$6.40 for 800 ft. of plank for bridges on the 8th conc. between East quarter town line and the Burford line.

Moved by Currie and seconded by Leake that the Reeve be authorized to sign an order on the Treasurer in favour of Wm. Garbutt Jr. for \$1 for wood for the town hall.

Moved by Lemon and seconded by Garbutt and resolved that the sum of \$80 be appropriated for opening and improving the road allowance at the rear of lot 7, conc. 7.

Moved by Currie and Seconded by Garbutt and resolved that the Reeve be and he is hereby authorized to sign an order on the treasurer in favour of Robert McWhinnie for the sum of \$9 for painting.

Clerks Salary was \$100.

DECEMBER

Moved by Lemon, and seconded by Garbutt. Resolved that Reeve be authorized to sign a draft on the Treasurer in favour of the clerk for \$8 for stationery and postage for previous year.

Moved by Lemon and seconded by Leak. Resolved that the Reeve be authorized to sign an order on the treasurer in favour of George Scarff for \$2 for posting notice of the place of nomination of candidates for the office of Reeve and Councillors.

BYLAW NO. 111 OF THE TOWNSHIP OF EAST OXFORD

The Corporation of the Township of East Oxford by the Council thereof Enacts as follows:

That the Assessor shall make complete and return the assessment for the present year on or before the first of April next.

BYLAW NO. 113

That so much of by-law 53 of this township as imposes a tax on the owners, possessors or harbourers of dogs be and the same is hereby repealed.

BYLAW NO. 114

Being a bylaw to name Fence Viewers 1st that Peter Ulman, Armour Porter, Thos. Sherred, Phillip Lampman, John Leak, James Lee, Wm. Downey, Jas. Beard, Aaron Green, John Watt, Nelson Vroman, Geo. Rice, Valentine Ficht, John Sherred, Thos. Gayer, Wm. Bertrand, Robt. Vandecar, Stephen Seburn, Andrew Ainslie, Sam Rankin, Phillip Marting. Poundkeepers - John Baigent, Wm. Hyde, James Beard, Jno Hart, Abraham Edwards, Bartholemew Fowler, Geo. Tucker, Alexander David, Geo. Garthwaite, Jno. Sherred, Nathaniel H. McAfee, Ceymour Sage, Daniel Wooley, Henry W. Bates, Daniel Orth.

BYLAW 116

Being a bylaw to levy taxes on real and personal property for paying teachers salaries and school expenses. S.S. #1 \$150; S.S. #3 \$220; S.S. #4 \$275; S.S. #5 \$300; S.S. #6 \$340; S.S. #7 \$325; S.S. #8 \$250. S.S. #2

BYLAW 118

Council received \$2 each for each days attendance.

From Township Road Account Book 1890.
Thos. Scott received \$30 for gravelling the
3rd Concession.

Fred Parkin got \$4 for forty loads of gravel.

1878

Resolved to charge 1.00 to the residents for the use of the town hall for public mtgs.

Resolved to give each Councillor \$100,00 to spend on roads in his district.

1884

Resolved that the sum of \$14.00 be paid for stationary and postage for that year.

1887

Resolved that Wm. Gray be paid \$2.00 for sheep killed by dogs.

1888

Resolved that F. R. Ball be paid \$5.00 for costs in regard to moving a toll gate off the Woodstock & Ingersoll gravel rd.

1888

Resolved that G. L. Whitney be paid \$17.30 for eavestrough for Town Hall.

1890

Resolved that F. J. Elie be paid \$1.50 for townships share of expenses in connection with survey of ditch crossing Old Stage Rd. at Lot 16.

1890

Resolved that Charles E. Thompson be paid \$11.00 for 6½ loads of gravel he put on the middle town line.

1891

Resolved that R. W. Whitelaw be paid \$10.10 for iron for bridge on the 5th Conc.

1859 BYLAW 31

Being a bylaw to regulate height & description of lawful fences.

That all rail or log fences shall be 5ft - high & either stacked & sided or locked. The span between the ground & bottom rail or log and also the space between the rails or logs for the 1st 3 ft. shall not exceed 8 in. & not to exceed 15 in. for the next 2 ft.

And further that all board or picket fences shall be the height of 4 ft. 6 in. The space between the ground & bottom board shall not exceed 2 in. & the 1st space between the boards from the ground 3 in., 2nd space 4½ in., 3rd space 7 in. and the space between the pickets shall not exceed 3 in.

BYLAW 36 1859

Being a bylaw to control noxious weeds. Any property owner or occupier of the land who lets any Canadian Thistle, mustard, red dock, pigeon weed or red root go to seed on his, her or their premises shall be liable for a fine of not more than \$20. or less than \$2.

1878 BYLAW 229

Being a bylaw to restrict the number of tavern licenses in East Oxford to three.

There were 134 sheep killed in 1890 and the owners were awarded \$147.

The County Councils Act of 1896 required Counties to reduce to number of Councillors, so Oxford County was divided into 7 divisions, with only one reeve from each division instead of the original 16 Reeves or County Council.

This continued until 1906 with East Oxford & East Zorra in one division.

During these 10 years, East Oxford Reeves William Schell & James Virtue represented their division during their terms of office.

East Oxford has had some residents gain fame in various ways. On October 20, 1919 Mr. Albert T. Walker who lived on Conc. 9 won the seat for Oxford in Provincial election. He was a member of the U.F.O. Party. He polled 4452 votes winning over V.A. Sinclair, Conservative 3835 votes, and Alexander Rose, Liberal 2888 votes Mr. Erle Kitchen, OBE farmed on the Stage Road and was well known for his years of work in dairy farmers organizations in Ontario and across Canada: He was also a member of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board and for his service to Agriculture was awarded in Order of the British Empire in 1946. Mr. G. R. Row of Curries is a past President of the Holstien Friesian Association of Canada.

School Fairs started about 1916 and carried on into the thirties and were held at Oxford Centre School. The Dept. of Agriculture supplied seeds & eggs with which the children were to start projects. No records can be found of the prize winners, but Clarence Hart has been heard to remark that he trained a colt all one summer, walked it to the school fair, won 1st Prize, a ribbon and thirty cents, and led the colt all the way back home.

Community life centred about the villages, schools and churches. We shall try to recall the highlights of these activities with events, places and peoples names.

Malcolm Schell was first elected as a Liberal M.P. for Oxford South Riding in 1904 with a majority of 495 votes, again in 1908 with a majority of 93 votes but was defeated in the election of 1911 by Dr. Sutherland by 28 votes.

JOE BOYLE

One of only two men who came out of the Klondyke Gold Rush a millionaire, was Joe Boyle. He owned a house in what was then East Oxford Township. It is still standing, a big house directly across No. 2 Hwy. from the statue of the cow. He brought out 13 million in gold from the Yukon. A book called "Brother, here's a man", written by Kim Beattie describes his adventurous life. He had sailed around the world by the time he was 18. He organized a company of machine gunners in the 1st world war. He built railroads in Russia, was decorated by Queen Marie of Romania for service to her country, and he died in poverty in London England in his early fifties.

This municipality had at one time a very infamous woman who lived at Eastwood. Elizabeth Bigley, 'Gold Brick Cassie', had the distinction of obtaining more money, about 1½ million, by fraud & deceit, than any one else in the world up to the time of the Great Train Robbery in England a few years ago. She died in Prison in U. S. and was buried at Woodstock.

In the two recent wars several boys from East Oxford have given their lives and their names are permanently enscribed on Memorials placed at the Township Hall.

The names are as follows;
World War 1. 1914 - 1918

Pte. James A. Langdon
Pte. George E. Yoeman
Pte. Charles I. Cooper
Pte. Albert H. Bond
Sergt. M. Douglas Schell, D.C.M.
Lieut. R.D. Millyard
Pte. Aubrey Holdsworth
Pte. Larry Sanders
Pte. Robert Lobban
Pte. Fred E. Pounds

World War II. 1939 - 1945

Lloyd H. Amos
F. N. Andrew
R. Frain
F. H. Longworth
J. H. Overholt
M. Potts
R. E. Roloson

EAST OXFORD TELEPHONE SYSTEM

The more colorful side of the early telephone is with the rural lines. It is claimed that the pioneer telephone company of East Oxford was perhaps the first rural telephone line in Oxford. This was a family affair. Thomas Preston Hart who lived on lot 16 concession one of East Oxford bought a pair of telephones which allowed him to communicate with his father-in-law William J. Perrets who lived on the same lot but nearer the road. The lines were run along the fence. Insulators were broken bottles. This line went into use in April 1902. On May 30 he installed a telephone for Bert Travers, his wife's brother who lived on lot 16 con. 3. The following December his family came onto the party line with John Hart, a brother of Thomas Hart, living at lot 19, concession 3, having a phone installed.

Members of the township council were not as farsighted as Thomas Hart. When he applied for permission to put poles along the side of the road to string the wire on they refused him permission. Therefore, he built his line across the fields. In April of 1903 Thomas Hart installed a switchboard. Mrs. Hattie Blow on lot 18 concession 3 joined the select few of subscribers. The first poles with cross arms appeared in the Thomas Hart lane in May of that year. Clara Hart, lot 19 concession 3, Henry Hart, lot 19 concession 2 and William Hart lot 17 concession 3 all had telephones installed between June and December of 1903.

This proved to be an ideal setup with a single exception. Subscribers could not call into Woodstock or receive return calls. Thomas Hart was too good a manager to be stopped by a refusal to connect his system to the Woodstock line. James Isbister who lived on lot 19 concession 2 provided him with answer. Mr. Isbister operated an ice business in Woodstock and therefore was entitled to a phone even though he did live beyond the city limits. Mr. Hart approached Mr. Isbister and an arrangement was worked out that the Isbisters would have a phone installed on the Hart line and through this phone they would relay any messages either way. The financial statements of this company are not available but it is known that Thomas Hart and his sons built the lines and Mr. Hart bought all needed supplies. Each new subscriber was required to pay his own expenses.

In May 1905, a telephone Association was formed and became known as the Pioneer Telephone Co. In 1906 service was started with Woodstock. This lasted until 1928 when the Bell Company purchased the Pioneer Company outright.

MUIR

MUIR LOCALITY was formerly Trimble Corners back in the early 1800's. The gravel road now Hwy. 53 was surveyed sometime around 1840, and was laid with planks from west of Brantford to Eastwood in the late 40's. Wm. Kennedy was the Foreman on the gang building this road and Robert Muir was the Contractor. The lot behind the church was bought by Matthew Virtue to keep a Hotel from being built near the Church. Later it was transferred to Henry Virtue with orders to see that such did not happen, and was held by him until his decease in 1935.

Names of some of the families and dates of their arrival are: Bennetts, 1835; Muir, Hutchison, Campbell, Mightons, Virtues, Sommervilles, 1840; Richardson 1863; Baskerville, McConnells 1847; and Peffers & Potters around 1858.

The Church was built in 1862 with a cost of \$600. It was rebuilt in 1910 and celebrated its Centennial in 1962.

The Diamond Cheese Factory was built around 1880. Some of the first cheese makers were, Joe Copeland, Wes Kent. Mr. James McConnell was one of the first secretaries. Cheese sold at 8½¢ per pound.

The Union School with Burford started in 1860. Before that a school on the 3rd Conc. of Burford looked after the pupils on Townline and south of the gravel road.

The Muir Post Office was opened in 1905. Jessie Richardson rented land from Henry Virtue and built the first Blacksmith shop. Later Robert Thompson took over and operated a store, blacksmith shop and Post Office.

Today the church & school remain and there are two service stations with stores attached.

EASTWOOD

A plank road was laid through the township which connected the town of Woodstock, Burford and Brantford and is known today as Highway 53. The main line of the Great Western Railway between London and Toronto had a station in East Oxford at Eastwood.

Prior to the opening of the Town Plot (Woodstock) in 1830 by the followers of the Duke of Marlborough, most of the settlement was done by Ingersoll and his party but when Vansittart arrived at Woodstock and saw the Thames River was only a small stream he moved his family five miles east of the Town Plot and built at the place now known as Eastwood. There are two versions of how Eastwood got its name, one being that he moved to the woods east of the Town Plot and named it Eastwood while the other claims that it was named after his sister, Mrs. East who was his housekeeper.

Henry Vansittart was born at Bishan Abbey in Berkshire, England, a son of George Vansittart. He retired from the Royal Navy as an Admiral and decided for the sake of his children to go to Canada, sailing from England on May 1, 1834 on the Packet Ship Canada arriving in New York on June 1. He was accompanied by Rev. William Betteridge. Another party had proceeded in advance of them to arrange for their accommodation at Woodstock. The wife of Henry Vansittart died at Saratoga on July 2 but was taken to Woodstock for burial. They entered Canada by way of Hamilton and their belongings which included the rigging for a sailing ship which he had hoped to sail on the River Thames were drawn by oxen on sleds from Hamilton.

The original forest home of Vansittart reminded an early visitor of both an African Village and a man-of-war when she had a chance to visit it in 1837. It was located a couple of miles off the main road in the middle of the forest and at the first glance looked as if several cabins had come together and remained. It is presumed that the Admiral erected the first cabin and as the need arose another was added, all of different shapes and sizes and connected with all sorts of corridors, galleys and closets.

The drawing room occupied a whole building and was really a noble room with a fireplace in which they could pile 20 logs at a time. Around this room was a gallery, well lighted with windows where circulated a constant flow of air keeping it cool in the summer and warm in winter. The Admiral had so many ingenious and inexplicable contrivances for warming and airing the house that no insurance company would insure it. Although it was a strange picturesque sort of dwelling, it boasted of luxury and comfort such as were seldom found inland. This house was destroyed by fire about 1843 and Vansittart immediately rebuilt, this time of brick and masonry.

This new home was a typical home built by the English aristocracy of that time only more elaborate. One of the unusual things of this house was that in one corner of the kitchen, 10 steps led up to a little platform sort of a place behind which was an alcove opened cupboard set in the wall. This was a pulpit from which the Admiral used to read the lesson to his staff of servants every Sunday morning.

There was a broad stairway leading up to the second floor sitting room which had a great skylight in the ceiling. In the basement were to be found the wine cellars, laundry and the vault. The vault was the exact replica of the family vault in the Old St. Paul's churchyard in Woodstock only smaller and as it was on the same site as the original house it is presumed that maybe Mrs. Vansittart was entombed here waiting the completion of a fitting vault at the family plot. His estate was surrounded by a stone wall and made it a little bit of England in Canada.

Admiral Vansittart died due to a fall when a horse threw him. The horse was shot the day after the Admiral died and was buried beneath a large chestnut tree in front of the house and a brass plaque was placed upon the tree stating why the horse had been shot and that this was his final resting-place. At the Admiral's funeral four clergymen were present and conducted the service.

At Eastwood, Vansittart built a sawmill which was considered to be the best in the country. It was run by a 35 horsepower engine and had three upright and six circular saws, two turning lathes and a planing machine. In one year they sold 500,000 feet of lumber and the mill was capable of sawing 50,000 feet in a 12 hour shift and was valued at £ 1,500.

Logs were brought to the mill by a homemade railroad. A ridge of ground formed the right-of-way and on it wooden tracks were laid. Flat cars which were pulled by oxen drew logs from the holdings of Vansittart in Blandford township to the mill at Eastwood. Along with this mill was a gristmill capable of grinding 30 bushels per hour and valued at £ 400.

In 1861 the village of Eastwood had a population of 150 people. It still had a sawmill owned by R. W. Burrows Co., while Peter Belton and John Robinson were the blacksmiths, John T. Jack and George Arkell were storekeepers, Daniel Phelan was the innkeeper, William Nunn was the schoolteacher, John Shaw, the shoemaker, Rev. Stephen B. Kellogg was the rector of the Church of England and Michael Overholt was the justice of the peace.

About the year 1836 Eastwood had a very prosperous brick yard which was operated by Joseph Clark and the first brick house built in Woodstock, which was situated immediately west of the rectory, was built from bricks from this yard.

From the very beginning Eastwood was a crossroads for transportation in Oxford and in 1853 the Great Western Railway placed enough importance on Eastwood that it opened a station there. The reason for this importance was in no small way due to the fact that it was the junction of the Governor's Road and the Great Plank Road.

The plank Road was constructed because the freighters who hauled commerce between Hamilton and London preferred any road than the road through Paris and its long steep hill.

In 1842 operations commenced on the Plank Road under the direction of the Provincial Board of Works. Colonel Gzowski the famous Polish Refugee, was Engineer-in-Chief. His deputies were authorized to provide for a first class roadway, graded up to a width of 32 feet. Material to grade the road-bed, where it ran through level country, was taken from the sides, leaving shallow ditches eight feet wide and two feet in depth and for the high grades across the low spots, the heavy cuttings furnished an abundant supply of soil and gravel.

Robert C. Muir received the contract for constructing the road through Burford and across Oxford to its intersection with Dundas Street.

After the grading was completed preparations were made to cover the centre of the road bed to a width of 16 feet with three inch Pine plank, resting on six 3 x 8 pine sleepers, which were imbedded in the earth to a depth of six inches. Heavy wrought iron six and seven inch spikes of the very best quality, were used to secure the planks to the sleepers.

The driving of the last spike opened to traffic, what was probably the finest piece of road ever constructed in Canada. Immediately there was an enormous increase in travel. The first railway between Hamilton and London, was yet 10 years away and all the trade, commerce and traffic between the two cities flowed backwards and forward through the centre of the township, adding much to the growth and general prosperity of the village in particular and the township in general and to the satisfaction of the 12 innkeepers located along the line.

Two of the most prominent teamsters were Foote and Rowland, who transported large quantities of merchandise over the new road. The wear and tear caused by the immense loads continually passing up and down, soon made it necessary to effect repairs and in the course of a couple of years it became evident to the government, that as a permanent road-bed, wood was a failure.

It was then found necessary to commence removing the plank and replace them by a heavy coat of gravel and broken stone, extending when passing through the villages, to the full width of roadway. In some spots both sleepers and the partly worn planks were covered over, and up to a recent period some of these were visible a short distance west of Cathcart, still in good state of preservation.

A telegraph line had been erected adding to the importance of the "Stone Road" as it was later called and Burford village had become a prosperous place, with an energetic and progressive community. Prosperity continued until the opening of the Great Western Railway in 1853 when traffic almost entirely ceased and travel gradually fell off.

The Gazateer of 1862-63 lists the following occupations in and around Eastwood: George Arkell - Merchant, Peter Belton - Blacksmith, R.W. Burrows & Company - saw mill, Wm. Danbrook, farmer, John Fisher - shoemaker, Henry Hale - shoemaker, John Jack - merchant, Rev. S. B. Kellog - Church of England, James McDougall - engineer, Wm. Nunn -

Teacher, R. R. Stamp - overseer, Henry Palmer - Carpenter and Daniel Phelan - innkeeper. About 150 residents in all. In later years the Shelby family kept a general store for many years.

Today Eastwood still remains the crossroads of Oxford County as three highways converge at this point being No. 2, 53 and 401 and the main occupation of the residents is unending task of catering to the travelling public.

In 1857 there was born in Eastwood a girl by the name of Elizabeth Bigley who was to become notoriously famous as a swindler known as Gold Brick Cassie. Before she left home she had obtained in the neighborhood of \$1,000 from neighbors and then went on to commit several forgeries and was ruled insane. She later married a doctor Chadwick and went to Cleveland to live. While living in Cleveland she forged the signature of Andrew Carnegie and obtained \$250,000. When questioned at the bank, she claimed that she was his daughter. In all, she swindled one and a half million dollars from unsuspecting people. She died in jail in 1907 and was buried at Woodstock,

ORIEL

During the 1880's there were two well attended churches at Oriel. The Episcopal Methodist held services in a white frame church one half mile east of the main corner in the seventh concession. (Wm. Talbots farm now.) The Wesleyan Methodist held services in the white brick church on the north-west corner of the main corner. (Now Harold Shaws Farm.) The two churches joined and services were held in the brick church. The white frame building was sold and moved to the eighth concession a mile south. Oriel church was part of a five charge circuit consisting of Vandecar, Bethel, Oxford Centre, Curries and Oriel with two ministers, one living at Oxford Centre, and one at Curries. In 1910 Vandecar and Bethel withdrew. Social events consisted of strawberry festivals, oyster suppers, box socials and garden parties with program being hired from Toronto usually. In 1939 Oriel withdrew. In May 1943 the brick church was sold.

Thomas Clement operated a general store and was in charge of the post office on the north-east corner of the main corner in the 1870's. Mr. Sommerville later bought the store and operated the post office until rural mail delivery was started about 1909.

A blacksmith shop, where they made carriages and wagons, was operated on the south-west corner for many years.

OXFORD CENTRE

The first Township hall was built here in 1850 at a cost of £, and the present one built here early in 1900. Tom Jeffrey was a carriage maker there and Tom Sears and Charlie Lawson were blacksmiths. Jim and Tom Chambers set up shop in the village. There has always been a store on the corner and many of the earlier owners had a horse and buggy produce route around through the township. Some of the earlier store keepers were Nelson Schooley, Jim Elliott, Henry Greenly, Armstrong and others down to the present store keeper, George Calligan. A post office was always connected to the store. The Anglican and United Churches continue there with strong congregations. Many ball games and hockey games have been played in the community grounds. An outdoor ice rink was maintained here for several years. Countless months of presentations, fowl suppers & dances have been held in the village.

On the farm of Harvey & Charles Wood east of the village a sawmill was built in 1898. It burnt down in 1900 but was rebuilt that same year. In 1904 86 loads of logs came in one day to the mill. This sawmill is still operating. On the same farm in 1893 a custom grain chopping mill was started and many farmers in the area brought their grain in to be ground.

Many grain mills and cheese factories have operated in the township - notably a mill at Hodges Pond, a cheese factory at the corner on the stage road and Hwy. 59, and a cheese factory at the corner of the 5th conc. and County road 14. The last cheese-maker there was Mr. Buckborough.

The 1862 Gazateer has this to say about Oxford Centre - it is a post office station, situated on the 12th lot conc. 4 East Oxford, on the Old Stage Road, and on the Woodstock & Norwichville mail route. There is a tri - weekly mail route. The town hall, erected by the Township council is here located. It contains one store, a Wesleyan Methodist Church and a good school. The professions & trades were listed thusly - N. M. Crawford - blacksmith, Wm. Garbutt - postmaster & farmer, H. C. Griswold - merchant & proprietor of the Oxford House, Wm. Munroe - wagon & carriage maker, Jacob Noyes - farmer & Alexander Robb - teacher.

VANDECAR

Vandecar holds the honour of having the first registered subdivision in East Oxford. Seymour Sage laid out this subdivision in 1857 calling it Sageville. Streets carried the names, Matilda, Edwin and Vandecar. It was located on the corner of the Old Stage Road and the Vandecar side road.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church was built in 1856 and was in use until after 1900 when it was sold to E.M. Sage by the trustees.

Vandecar had a post office established in 1836 and lasted until 1913 when Rural Mail delivery was started.

In 1862 Vandecar had a mill owned by Israel D. Vandecar, Hector Ross was a miller; E. Burdick and Edward Rutledge were blacksmiths; Wm. G. David was a painter; George Kate was a plasterer; Thomas Arnell was a carpenter, Francis Feurth was a mason; and Eliza Clement was a weaver. Three residents of Vandecar (George Daly, Peter Bertrand and Zackariah Sage) had pleasure carriages in 1853 which were valued at 5 to 20 pounds.

The last surviving member of the Vandecar family was Miles Vandecar who died about 1890. There was a Boat shop and a match factory (operated on what is now the front yard of Peter Reynolds' house.)

For many years there was a store & Post Office beside the school and some of the store keepers were Wm. 'Major' Danby, McCubbins & George Arnold. The Gazetteer of 1862 also lists the following trades and professions in Vandecar at that time: Thomas Arnold - general merchant, A. Clark - shoemaker, Solomon Dean - engineer, Dr. David M. Dibble - physician & surgeon, Mr. Galbraith - saw & gristmill, Sam Pierce - a miller and Miss Martha Tidey - a teacher.

CURRIES

In the area of Curries among the early families, we find the names Start, Watt, Pearce, Lund, Gracey and Rice. There was an attempt at settling this area in the early 1800's but there does not seem to have been any permanent settlers until the 1840's when these families took up land.

On lot 16, concession 6, the family of Herman Dodge attempted to set up a farm on a very large scale, including an oversize house complete with a horse barn and carriage house. The cost of the buildings were more than Dodge could afford and he was forced to sell to an aristocrat English family by the name of Pickthall. This family became acquainted with Lord Somerset (Birchall of the Birchall-Benwell murder trial) and it was not unusual to see these aristocrats riding with the hounds to a fox chase. They were real playboys of their day.

After the trial Dodge became alarmed, signed his property over to his wife and left for Mexico. The house has now been removed from the landscape when it mysteriously burned and the sight of the Pickthall family and their four horse carriage is only a memory.

The year that the first school was erected is not known but in 1863 a new school was built and W.D. Smith purchased the old building and moved it a mile south to his lot where he operated a blacksmith shop. Here he raised it on a wall and used it as a paint and woodworking shop.

In the early 1870's a move got underway to link the Queen's Bush Counties with the lake by means of a railroad. Oxford County Council in 1873 passed a Bylaw No. 177 - being a Bylaw to raise \$25,000.00 by debenture, and the residents of East Oxford were to pay it back over 20 years by a special mill rate of 1½ mills. This money was given as a gift or bonus to the Port Dover & Lake Huron Railroad to help it build its' railroad through East Oxford Township. The section of the line running from Port Dover to Stratford passed through East Oxford and crossed the Norwich road at what was then the Curry farm. Because of this crossing, the name of the community changed from Zion to Curries Crossing. Curries was not a regular stop but it was always possible to board the train by raising the arm of the semaphore signal.

Mail was delivered by the train as a catch post stop with W. D. Smith, the postmaster. He served in this capacity from 1878 to 1920. Along with the post office and blacksmith shop, a series of freight sheds and an apple evaporator was erected and dried apples were exported to all parts of the world.

On the west side of the road and at the main corner inside the gate of the Rice property the Patrons of Industry had a small store where they sold sugar, coal oil and a few of the other necessities of life in a rural area. The Patrons of Industry later became known as the Grange Society.

After the store ceased to function, Mr. Rice desired to keep the building but others thought it would serve a better purpose down at the railroad and moved it there. Rice moved it back, as he had paid off a lien against the building. Not to be outdone, the men at Smith's Blacksmith shop took up a collection and obtained the building, which was once more taken to the railroad with the sign "Curries Resurrected" painted on the side. It later became a tool shed on the Smith property. Later W. D. Smith purchased a frame house and moved it to the crossing where one portion of the living room was partitioned off for a waiting room.

The last signs of the railroad disappeared in 1936 when the tracks were removed. Since there was no more railway crossing the name of the community became officially known to the postal authorities as Curries.

Another active group here in the late 1800's was known as the Ancient order of United Workmen. When it was decided to build a new church building in 1891 they purchased the old one and converted it into a hall that they located just east of the church. The building of the new church was a major event in the life of the community as it has continued to be ever since. The life of the township centered around the Oxford Centre Circuit which was formed in 1874. Prior to that from 1855-67 Zion (Curried) was served from Woodstock and from 1868-74 was on the Oxford Circuit. In 1874 Zion (Curries), Salem (Oxford Centre), Wesley (Vandecar), Bethel (Blandford) and Oriel were made a two man circuit with the superintendent living at Oxford Centre and the junior minister living at Curries.

CURRIES UNITED CHURCH

Curries United Church was founded in 1855. On March the 24th of that year, the Trustees of the East Oxford Congregation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada in connection with the English Conference purchased from Mr. and Mrs. John Watt, a lot, situated on the West side of the present Cemetery, on which to build a Church.

The trustees names on this deed are: Robert Pearson, Ralph Lund, William Garbutt, Robert Gracey and James Rice.

Purchase was 7 ½ 10's.

A burying ground adjoining the Church property was purchased from Mr. and Mrs. Watt, June 13th, 1861.

On this deed the name, Zion Church appears for the first time, with the names of Ralph Lund, Robert Gracey, Wm. Garbutt, John Rice, James Lund, James Rice and David Watt, as trustees.

The next move came in 1885, when the trustees, Herman Dodge, John Rice, James Rice, Edward Rinch, George Start, James Innes, Malcolm Schell, James Curry, W.D. Smith, Edward Gracey and Henry Tabor, secured the parcel of ground on which the present Church now stands from Mr. David Watt, for \$75.00.

At a meeting of the Trustee Board, held May 12th, 1890, "Brother John Lammiman moved, seconded by Bro. Smith that steps be taken towards the erection of a new "Church". Carried.

Members present: Brothers Smith, Rice, Curry, Lammiman and Rinch.

A subscription list was started at this meeting. the above named six persons subscribed \$850.00. These, and all other subscriptions to be paid, one-third, when the material was on the ground, one-third when the roof was on the other on the completion of the building.

Building the Church began the next year. The Corner Stone being laid in the early summer of 1891, and the fine brick Church that you may see today, opened and dedicated to the worship of God in November 1891. A. D.

Rev. David Hunt, resident minister, 1855-68 connected with Woodstock, Wm. McCullough, Asahel Julburt, John Bredin, Stephen Bond, Wm. Stephenson, W. S. Griffin and John Hunt.

1868-74 Oxford Circuit: Wm. C. Watson and Shem Blanchard.

Recordings of the years preceeding and immediately following the building of the new Church are lost, hence no sure data in regard to the laying of the corner stone.

Mr. Merrill of Norwich had the contract so much cash and the old church. Much of the material in the old was used in the new. The seats in the gallery and those along the walls in the basement, are from the old Church.

During the building of the church the congregation worshipped in a hall owned and used by the A.O.U.W.

Excerpt from the Curries Crossing news in the Sentinel Review of October 19th 1891: "The New Church will probably be opened on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 12th. Dedication sermon to be preached by Rev. Dr. Johnston, of Toronto. A grand Tea meeting in the evening. On the following Sunday, Rev. Dr. Burns of Hamilton will preach at the morning and evening services, and Rev. J. S. Ross, of Woodstock, in the afternoon".

Choir Leader-Mr. W. D. Smith - Organist - Mrs. W. D. Smith
Superintendent Minister.....Rev. D. Hunt
Junior Minister.....Rev. W. F. Swinnerton

Oxford Centre Circuit was formed in 1874.

From 1855 to 1868, Zion (Curries), was an appointment served from Woodstock, and from 1868 to 1874, an appointment on the Oxford Circuit.

In 1874, Zion (Curries), Salem (Oxford Centre), Wesley (Vandecar), Bethel (Blanford) with Oriel were made a two man circuit, with Rev. T. W. Jackson, Superintendent living at Oxford Centre and Rev. J. E. Ford, junior minister, living at Curries.

Two ministers, assisted by local preachers served this circuit, giving Zion and Salem morning and evening services each Sunday.

Local preachers favorable and kindly remembered by the oldest residents of Curries are Mark Jackson, James Lund, Wm. Garbutt, John Will and Joseph Rippon.

Later Bethel was removed and Burgessville added to this circuit. This arrangement continued until June 1907. Burgessville at this time became the head of a new circuit.

In 1910 Vandecar withdrew leaving three appointments, making a one man charge.

This continued until July 1939 when Oriel withdrawing, New Durham was added.

In 1899 Individual Communion Cups were introduced.

Name of Church changed from Zion to Curries in 1903.

Parsonage built at Curries in 1906.

Mr. Irvin Brown and Miss Lila Kelly were the first couple married in the Church.

The first Church (Zion), built in 1855 was of the Wesleyan (Methodist Faith), and served from Woodstock.

Land for a cemetery was purchased in 1861. This cemetery took the name of the Church (Zion). In 1899 the name was changed from Zion to Pleasant View.

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

This was the aim of the pioneers of the Presbyterian faith who penetrated the wilderness of Upper Canada in the forties. With them they brought the faith of their forebears and looked forward to the day when they should have a suitable place in which to worship. But for nearly twenty years the people who settled in East Oxford and Burford were shepherded by neighbouring ministers located in Blenheim, Burford, Norwich and Woodstock. Baptismal records and wedding certificates show that Rev. George Murray of Blenheim and, later, Rev. John Gillespie had the spiritual oversight of several in this area.

This year we celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the erection of the church building, but the congregation actually had its beginning ten years previous to that time and services were held in neighbouring school houses.

In November, 1852 a service was held in the Block School house in Burford Township. An election of elders was held and the session consisted of James Farrington, John Fish and William Kennedy, with Rev. George Murray as moderator. They advised all members south of the plank road to attend Norwich church and all those on the north side to go to Princeton.

After that we have no complete record until 1861 when a petition signed by sixty members and adherents was presented to Paris presbytery, "praying to be organized into a congregation."

This petition was granted and Rev. Mr. Inglis of Woodstock and Rev. John Gillespie of Blenheim were to organize the station. The organization meeting was held in School Section 23, East Oxford and Burford. Rev. Mr. Inglis preached and Rev. John Gillespie presided. The congregation was named St. Andrew's Church, East Oxford and was a congregation of the Canada Presbyterian Church.

In 1875 the Canada Presbyterian Church combined with other Presbyterian churches into the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

A site for the erection of the church had been purchased in Cathcart but this was found unsuitable and the present site was purchased. The first site was sold to the Episcopal church in Burford.

A copy of the deed which is in the county Registrar's office, Woodstock, is held by members of the congregation. This deed states that on December 21, 1861 the Trustees of Saint Andrew's Church, East Oxford, namely, Thomas Somerville, Andrew Smith, Robert Baird and Matthew Virtue purchased from William and Elizabeth Clark for the sum of twenty-five dollars, one quarter acre of land "to have and to hold, the said granted premises, their heirs and assigns, to, and for them and their sole and only use forever."

The building of our church was begun in 1861 and completed in 1862. It was a frame building facing east toward the town line to the rear of the present site. The total cost of building materials amounted to \$638.45. The labour of construction was voluntary under the direction of Mr. John Virtue. The pulpit furnishings were given by the ladies of the congregation. The pulpit which is still in use was made by Mr. John Virtue.

An open shed along the north and west sides of the churchyard was built for the accommodation of horses. This building served until 1925 when a covered shed was built at the northern boundary of the lot. With the passing of horse and buggy days the shed was disposed of by auction in 1947. The following year the men of the congregation held a bee to level the ground and a parking lot was made.

The church was dedicated on November 16, 1862 with special services. Rev. John Gillespie preached at the morning service and Rev. Dr. Burns officiated in the evening.

In 1910, the old church building was considered inadequate for the needs of the congregation and it was decided to provide a basement for the use of the Sabbath School. To accomplish this a basement was excavated to the south of the church and the building was moved to its new foundation facing south. Porches were added to the front and rear and the whole structure was bricked. From time to time necessary additions and improvements have been made.

The re-opening of the church was marked by special services. Rev. R. B. Cochrane of Woodstock was the guest preacher for the day.

A banquet was held the following Monday evening in the basement. On this occasion a memorial to

Dr. James Robertson was placed in the church. This was suggested by Mr. John Muir of Brantford who had read the book entitled, "The Life of James Robertson." The inscription on the tablet was prepared by Mr. Adam Armstrong, Sr., who also unveiled the tablet.

In 1912, the fiftieth anniversary of the congregation was celebrated. Jubilee services were held at which Rev. George Weir, a former member of the church officiated.

The seventy-fifth anniversary was held in 1937 when special services were conducted by Rev. M. P. Smith and Rev. J. Walker. The following Monday evening a supper was served in the church. During the program which followed the history of the church was reviewed by Mr. Adam Kennedy.

The ninetieth anniversary was held in 1952. Visiting ministers occupying the pulpit were Rev. W. A. Burbidge and Rev. B. Oaten.

In the year 1925 the union of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational churches was consummated and St. Andrew's Church became a congregation of the United Church of Canada.

1901 - A large Bible for use in the pulpit was presented by Mrs. Peter Gregor.

1910 - A tablet in memory of Dr. James Robertson was donated by John Muir of Brantford and some members of the congregation.

1910 - Mrs. Robert Robinson, a former member of the church, presented an individual communion service

1910 - Mrs. Peter Gregor presented a silver baptismal bowl.

1940 - A new Bible for pulpit use was presented by the Young People's Society.

1948 - Mr. Kenneth Dymont and family donated a Hymn Board.

1948 - A hymnary for use in the pulpit was presented by the Woman's Association.

1962 - A copy of the Hymnary for each member of the choir was presented by Mrs. James E. Davis of Ann Arbor, Michigan, in memory of her husband, Professor James E. Davis, M. A., M. D.

The following families with their descendants have been represented in St. Andrew's Church for the entire century:

Baird (Mr. George Peffers)

Burns and Lockhart (Mrs. John A. Wallace)

Kennedy

Peffers

Potter (Mr. Allan Virtue)

Virtue Wilson (Mr. Thomas Needham)

The Centenary was celebrated in 1962. Church officers during this year were as follows:

Elders - Alex Riach, Kenneth Dymont, Donald Hartley, James Stevenson, Russell Oliver, George Simkin.

Stewards - Alex Kennedy, John B. Wallace A. B. Ransome, Russell Oliver, James Kitchen, George Simkin.

Rep. of U. C. Women - Mrs. C. W. Dew.

Church Trustees - Alex Riach, Stanley Wallace Alex Kennedy.

S. S. Supt. - Donald Hartley

Pres. U. C. Women - Mrs. James Kitchen

Church Treas. - William Brooks

Missionary & Maintenance Treas. - Max Riach.

EASTWOOD UNITED CHURCH

For two years after their withdrawal from the parent church in 1864, the young Eastwood Methodist Episcopal congregation, which was then known as the Lazenby congregation, met in various buildings. But on the eighth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-six, an agreement was signed between Thomas Lazenby, Reuben Kipp, Elifalet Woods, John Schell and Robert Leake, all and each yeomen of the township of East Oxford and county of Oxford, and all of the first part and W. J. Powers and J. W. Powers, parties of the second part, in which the party of the second part agrees to build, erect and finish a church for the parties of the first part on such site as they may direct and in accordance with and agreeably to certain specifications and to do all work in a workmanlike manner and to finish all material with the exception of heavy framing timbers, sand and stones for the sum of six hundred and twenty-five dollars, one half of which was to be paid on completion of the building on the last day of November next and the balance one year later, without interest.

And the party of the first part to supply heavy framing material, sand and stones to the site free of charge and at such time as they may be required and to have the right to appoint such competent persons as they may see fit to look over the same.

Witness	W. J. Powers
	J. W. Powers
William Lazenby	Thomas Lazenby
	John Schell
David Schell	Reuben Kipp
	Robert Leake

On the twenty-third day of October, 1866, under a statute of the Province of Upper Canada, enacted in the ninth year of the reign of King George the Fourth, chapter two intitled and act for the relief of religious societies herein mentioned: Presbyterians, Lutherans, Calvinists, Methodists, Congregationalists, Independents, Antibaptists, Quakers, Menonites, Tunkers or Moravians and such amendments as were passed in the third and twelfth years of the reign of Queen Victoria. "It shall be lawful for them to purchase land for the site of church, chapel, meeting house or burying ground and to appoint trustees and their successors in Perpetuity."

An Indenture was signed between Reuben Kipp in the township of East Oxford, county of Oxford, party of the first part, and his wife Eliza Jane Kipp, party of the second part, and Thomas Lazenby, John Schell, James Farley, Elifalet Woods and Robert Leake, trustees of the third part, by which in consideration of the sum of ten dollars, lawful money of Canada, the parties of the first and second part transfers to the trustees by the names aforesaid of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada, a tract or parcel of land containing by admeasurement thirty square rods, be the same more or less, between the first concession of East Oxford and the stone road.

Two conditions were attached; that it be used for church purposes only and that the trustees be five in number.

It was redecorated in 1881 with the reopening church service held on November 13, of the same year with Mr. Morten speaking in the morning and Mr. Bentil in the evening. Further improvements were made in 1886-1887.

Apparently it was redecorated again in 1905 as the records show the following paragraph from a pastoral letter of August 7, 1905.

The Eastwood church has been beautifully painted and renovated at a cost of \$350. and is now ready to be reopened. I have met with the Trustees Board and Committees in connection with the above work.

With hope in God and large expectations for the future,

I am yours in Christ Jesus,

B. L. Cohoe, Pastor.

In the fall of 1925, the Eastwood Church was badly in need of repair and remodelling and two organized classes, "The Crusaders Boys' Class" and "The Sunshine Girls' Class" under the direction of Mrs. G. Town and Mrs. I. Schell sponsored a play entitled "Valley Farm" for the purpose of starting a fund for remodelling the church and building a shed.

On March 2, 1926, a congregational meeting was called for the purpose of carrying out these plans. The various motions were lost, however, as members felt we couldn't afford the expense. Later, at an

unofficial meeting called by the Rev. G. T. Shields, of which there is no record, \$975 of the required \$1300 was pledged and on May 3, 1926, a congregational meeting resinded the first motions cancelling the church repairs and decided to proceed with the new shed, to raise the church, build a basement beneath it and add other improvements.

Owing to the shape and smallness of the church lot it was found difficult to build the new shed without crowding the church and a strip of land approximately twenty feet in width across the west end of the lot was kindly donated by Mr. Ed. Kipp.

According to church records, the church was redecorated again in 1937 and in 1950, when the siding was put on the outside.

Other improvements have been added during the years that followed, including automatic heating and in June, 1963, an electric organ was presented by Mr. Carl Shelby in memory of his father.

In 1965 the interior of the church was completely remodelled with new pews, choir loft and centre aisle, in preparation for its one hundredth anniversary in 1966 at a cost of about 3100. 00. and was dedicated on February 6, 1966 by the pastor, Rev. Wells Robinson.

On December 23, 1866 on a wet day, the Eastwood Episcopal Methodist Church was dedicated with Mr. Benson preaching the inaugural sermon and on May of the following year a Sunday School known as the Eastwood Branch of the Howard Sunday Schools was organized with Mr. Robert Leake as first superintendent. It was known as the Howard Sabbath School until 1888.

During the early years of Sunday School work great emphasis was placed on memorizing Bible verses and in 1884, with an average attendance of 45, a total of 1,394 verses were memorized during a six month period with Ed. Kipp leading the school with a credit of 209.

(Rev. P. McKellar-Thesis' on Rural Church in a Changing World.)

By 1883 Eastwood membership had grown to 86 members, one lay preacher, James Harley, 3 class leaders, R. Leake, T. Lazenby and G. Cromwell. During this time Eastwood along with Sydenham (Cathcart), Bethel, Salem, Princeton and Force's

Congregation was a mission church and was known as the Blenheim Circuit. With the union of Wesleyan and Episcopal Methodist churches, a complete circuit re-organization was made and the Eastwood Circuit, consisting of Eastwood, Bethel, Innerkip and Centenary came into being. The first minister, Rev. J. F. Fairchild, was engaged at a salary of \$650, exclusive of rent, to be divided as follows: Eastwood - \$210, Bethel - \$125, Innerkip - \$15. The balance was paid by the missionary society.

On Feb. 18, 1885, two Eastwood members, Mr. W. Lampman and Mr. B. Swayzie, were appointed to the Innerkip trustee board to assist them in strengthening their church.

On Nov. 10, it was decided that all future Quarterly Board Meetings be held at Bethel, the centre of the circuit.

For a period of years it seems that all class leaders and lay preachers for the circuit were appointed by the Quarterly Official Meetings of the whole circuit.

The Episcopal Methodist Church parsonage at Princeton was sold and in a meeting of July 26, 1886, the Eastwood Circuit made a request to the superintendent of the district to arrange for a transfer of \$400 of the sale price to assist in providing accommodation for their pastor.

In 1892, the circuit became fully self-supporting for the first time and in 1901 the parsonage seems to have been completed and the pastor moved to Innerkip. Prior to this time he had lived in a rented house at Eastwood. It was the custom of the Methodist Church to build the parsonage at whatever point on the charge held the evening service, so the minister could close his Sunday ministry at home. Eastwood wanted a morning service and as Innerkip had the evening service they obtained the parsonage and with it the advantages of the resident minister.

During the horse and buggy days, before the car, when the pastor spoke at Eastwood in the morning, Bethel in the afternoon and Innerkip in the evening, It was Eastwood's custom to take turns extending noon hospitality to the pastor before he drove on to Bethel. This enabled him to become well acquainted with the Eastwood families and promoted a very successful working arrangement between pastor and people which greatly strengthened the Eastwood Church.

The Young People's Organization was known as "The Epworth League" and its first official notice in the church records was in 1897 when its president Miss Lampman - later Mrs. T. Lazenby - was included as a member of the official board.

(Rev. P. McKellar - Thesis on Rural Church in a Changing World).

During this period of its history, Eastwood Church was outstanding for both its missionary and temperance zeal and a resolution on the latter makes interesting reading.

Bethel, Nov. 3, 1902.

Moved by Mr. J. H. Schell, seconded by Mr. B. Warren Resolved that we, the members of the official board of the Eastwood Methodist circuit, do, hereby pledge ourselves and respectfully urge the members of our church and this circuit to vote and pray and do all we can to secure a large vote on December 4, that the licensed bar, the greatest source of evil and danger to our community, be prohibited by law.

S. E. Couch - Pastor
W. W. Lazenby - Recording Steward.

The earliest record of missionary giving was in 1864, when it was listed as the Lazenby Congregation and in 1867, when it was listed as Eastwood.

By 1913 Bethel had declined until it was almost closed and its Sunday School disbanded. A number of members went over from Eastwood, reorganized the Sunday School, taught Bible Class, built up the choir and started the church back to recovery.

In 1925 the Union of the Presbyterian, Methodist and congregational churches became fact and the United Church of Canada came into being. Although unnoticed at the time, this union completely changed the balance of the circuit. Innerkip had a very strong Presbyterian church which had been expected to enter Union but voted to remain out. A large minority of Presbyterians left their home church to join the Innerkip United, making this the strongest point on the charge. In 1927, at a meeting held at Bethel, the name was changed from Eastwood to Innerkip Charge.

The first annual meeting of the Eastwood United Church was held Feb. 11, 1926 at Mr. Norman Lazenby's home with the Rev. G. T. Shields in the chair. The organization was as follows:

Elders - Messers John Warren, John Schell, R. Pearson, Israel Schell, A. Clayton, Wm. Shelby.

Managers - Messers G. Town, R. Schell, E. R. Shelby, C. Kelly, N. Lazenby, T. Lazenby, F. C. Swayzie.

Official Board - Messers B. E. Swayzie, J. Overholt, Elton Townsend, Geo. Leake, Fred Schell, Harry Phillips.

One week later, on Feb, 18, 1926, the Young Peoples Society was organized in its present form with Cecil Kelly as its first president.

At the time of Union Windfall, which had been closed, was added to the circuit making it a four point charge. Innerkip assumed two services and a student minister was engaged. Mr. Dymond, a student assistant, later discontinued his theological studies for medicine and is now, I believe, minister of health in Mr. Robart's government.

During the first half of this century, Eastwood Sunday School stood at the highest level of strength in its history. It had many organized classes and annual Father and Son banquets were held and midweek meetings were a regular part of Sunday School work. But eventually these classes lost their appeal and began to decline.

During the thirties it was found impossible to finance five services and two ministers and we became a straight four point charge with one man responsible for all services. As it became difficult to obtain a minister under these circumstances, Bethel discontinued services. On Nov. 11 1941, Bethel notified the Official Board of their decision to discontinue services. By arrangements with Presbytery and at the request of Bethel, the proceeds from the sale of Bethel property were divided evenly between Eastwood and Innerkip. A few years later, all remaining points on the charge adopted morning services. Eastwood service was at first at eleven-thirty, but was later changed to twelve o'clock.

During its hundred years of history, Eastwood church has been blessed in the quality of its singing, both by congregation and choir. The choir has had many devoted organists, leaders and members during its life and had led in worship services not only in its own church but in neighbouring churches as well. Perhaps its greatest period of service

was during those years when Mr. Lorne Lynch of Woodstock devoted his time and talent in training and leading the choir when it gave a number of concerts in Eastwood church and other local churches.

Among those who served as organists in the Eastwood Church were:

Mrs. John Schell
Mrs. Thomas Lazenby
Miss Mary Swayzie
Miss Elma Townsend (Mrs. Earl Hughson)
Miss Marie Lazenby (Mrs. Will Meikle)
Miss Elsie Town (Mrs. George Pinney)
Miss Dorothy Overholt (Mrs. T. Peat)
Miss Jean Schell (Mrs. Bernard Porter)
Miss Dorothy Swayzie
Miss Eileen Shelby (Mrs. William Hayward)
Miss Elsie Schell (Mrs. Harold Scriver)

OXFORD CENTRE UNITED CHURCH

Crowning a height of rising land just a few rods south of the Historic Old Stage Road on the middle townline of East Oxford Township, stands the Oxford Centre United Church. The beautiful farm homes surrounding it present quite a different picture to that of one hundred years ago; the cars passing by so different to the means of travel in those far-off days.

Though everything else has changed the Church remains the same a silent reminder that we need God as much to-day as our forefathers did a century ago. It stands as a visible link with the past reminding us of the faith, courage and perseverance of the men and women who first settled here.

In 1793, just two years after the death of Wesley, Samuel and Lucy Canfield and their sons came with a party of 40 settlers from Connecticut. They were all United Empire Loyalists and settled in what was then known as the "Township of Oxford on the Thames". This land was later divided into North, West and East Oxford Townships. The Canfields were the first white settlers of what is now East Oxford.

The land at that time was a dense forest with the winding Indian Trail its best means of travel. It was on the north side of this Trail, now known as the Old Stage Road, on the farm presently owned by George Parkin, that they cleared the land and built their log cabin home.

Their home became one of the regular stops for the coach as it passed through the country from Vandecar to Beachville. Many tales are told of events that took place there and of the howling of the wild animals in the bush. No doubt John Graves Simcoe, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, stopped there as he travelled from the head of Lake Ontario to London.

When Samuel and Lucy Canfield died around 1803 or 1804 they were buried in a plot on a hillside near the log cabin they had built. Their graves were surrounded by a high picket fence and marked by a wooden slab on which were their names in painted letters, with a brief history.

Years later workmen digging gravel inadvertently undermined the old graves. A grandson, Earl Canfield who at that time lived across the road, had the remains buried in what was then called the Old Methodist Cemetery (now the Pioneer Cemetery), Abraham Canfield gave the land for this cemetery before he died.

The wooden slab with the names was lost but Mrs. Carrie Canfield Ede, a great great granddaughter remembers peering through the picket fence at the ancient graves, and remembers vividly the appearance of the wooden slab.

In 1954 over a century and a half later the descendants of this heroic couple placed a plaque on one of the fine stone pillars forming the gateway to the cemetery. The plaque reads as follows:

In Memory of
Samuel and Lucy Canfield
United Empire Loyalists
the first white settlers in
East Oxford
1793

They hewed and built their
log cabin home on the Indian
Trail, later known as
"The Old Stage Road"
To the east of these
Memorial Gates
Erected by their descendants

The descendants of Samuel and Lucy Canfield through several generations have continued to remember this community and the Oxford Centre Church.

Walter Clendenan, Grandfather of J. W. Blow, moved from St. Catharines to the Old Stage Road west of the church with his young wife in 1831 and soon after this the district had many other settlers.

Many of the settlers who came brought with them a strong religious faith, whether they came from the Old Land or the United States.

We are told very little of where they worshipped prior to the building of the church. Some say in a small frame structure on the site of the present building. We know that in those pioneer days people walked long distances through the bush to attend a religious service. Possibly some of the primitive pioneers attended the services conducted by the Rev. Nathan Bangs, from Connecticut, in the

year 1801. He travelled through swamp and muskeg, sunshine and storm to found the work of God in the district known at that time as the "Township of Oxford on the Thames". Twenty-eight years earlier these settlers had left Connecticut and settled in this new land. He returned twice in 1804.

Tales of pioneer hardship and deprivation have been told many times. Yet still we remember in wonder, that people accomplished so much with so little; that men and women with simple tools, their bare hands, and their own inventiveness cleared the land, drained the swamps, made their own clothing and provided their own food. Through all these difficulties God was with them and they wanted their children educated intellectually and spiritually.

It was not until 1860, nearly sixty years after the death of the first white settlers that the original part of the present Oxford Centre Church was erected. It was formerly known as Wesleyan Methodist and in the earliest years was spoken of as Salem Chapel.

We have in our possession a book over a century old. In this book is recorded every expense in connection with the building of the church. According to these itemized accounts the site for the Chapel was bought from Mr. McLeod of Woodstock for which they paid \$20. on March 5, 1860.

The contract was let to Gregory and Davey. Apparently the Building Committee purchased the various materials and the contract was for labour only. It is most intriguing to read the list - 4900 ft. common lumber from Mr. McDowell of Norwich \$19.60; 190 ft. of 4x4 scantling 76¢; 1000 ft. plank \$4.00; 2000 white brick \$12.00 etc.

While there was no Building named, we glean from the different transactions in connection with the building of the church that some of the most prominent men were: Wm. Garbutt, Earl Canfield, David Ede, Walter Clendenan and John Vroman.

The following is a list of the names of the men and boys who drew the bricks for the church: Wm. and Charles Garbutt, Nelson and Wm. Vroman, James Biggins, W. and C. Clendenan, and Sanford Daniel, George and John Ede, Sanford Canfield, Solomon Schell, James Lund, John Mabee, Charles Brown, John Whitehead, John and Samuel Frizelle and James Parkes.

OXFORD COUNTY LIBRARY

From these names we learn who some of the residents of this community were one hundred years ago and find that there are still descendants of these families living in and around this district. Perhaps some of the older members living now will remember them.

On May 16th the actual building of the church was started. July 15th they commenced to lay the brick and by October 3rd it was ready for lathing and plastering.

These people, who must have felt God very near during their difficult pioneering days now had a place in which to worship Him.

This church was a brick structure 30 ft. by 40 ft. with a 16 ft. ceiling. It was heated by a box stove near the entrance and the choir occupied the south west corner at the minister's right. So thoroughly did the carpenters and masons perform their work that the walls still stand as they were erected one hundred years ago.

When all the expenses were added together they found that the chapel itself, the site, the fence and the furniture cost a total of \$1,247.81½.

For twenty-five years the church remained as first erected, but during the pastorate of the Rev. R. W. Wright, in 1885 it was repaired and enlarged.

The following persons were appointed as building committee: John Ede, Wm. Schell, Ralph Lund, Austin Canfield, Valentine Canfield, Solomon Garbutt and Wm. Vroman with Rev. R. W. Wright as Chairman of the Committee. The contract was given to Freeman Schofield.

A choir loft and annex at the back and an entry porch and belfry at the front were added. A new floor and seats were put in, a new roof put on, and a furnace installed.

Before the work was started the Ladies Aid requested that they be allowed to furnish pulpit chairs, orchestra chairs, collection plates, carpets, Bible, hymn book and lights. An excerpt from the Minutes of a meeting held March 30, 1885 reads as follows:

"Moved by A. Canfield, seconded by George Green, that the request of the Ladies Aid be granted. (Carried.)"

The work was completed and the re-opening of the church held September 7, 1885. The subscription list on the opening day amounted to over \$400.

Since that time records of meetings held by the various church organizations show how faithfully the members have attended to matters of redecoration and repairs, all through the history of the church.

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH - EASTWOOD

Presenting a very admirable appearance St. John's church is of red brick structure. At the rear is a well-kept cemetery and in front a hedge of small trees divides the ground from the highway. The men's club in 1932 made a crescent gravel drive and the Ladies' Guild that year were responsible for a pretty flower bed outside the crescent. In 1921 hydro was installed in the church.

The interior of the church was newly decorated last summer in anticipation of the centenary event this year and with its walls in shades of gray, freshly finished furniture and painted floor it holds second place to none. The final touches were received when Thomas Perry presented a beautiful chancel window of leaded glass in memory of his parents, the late Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Perry. Very fitting is this remembrance as Mr. Thomas Perry, Sr., was among the first wardens of the church and his descendants have carried on the work of St. John's extensively.

James Robinson at the same time donated fine heavy oaken doors which improved the entrance to the church considerably. Mr. Robinson is the oldest surviving member of the church and his father, the late Richard Robinson, was much interested in the early affairs of the church and the name "Robinson" is read through many of the pages of the church history.

Divine service was held in Woodstock twice on Sundays and once on a week day, but soon the individual wants of the neighborhood forced themselves on the rector's attention and in 1836 he commenced Sunday services at Eastwood and Beachville.

The services at Eastwood were held in a little rough-cast building on the east side of the gate of the present site. The families arrived each Sunday in oxen-driven wagons and the crowds were very large. The congregations at Beachville increased so a meeting was held to consider building a small church. This accommodated 250 was finished and services held regularly in it every Sunday afternoon. The same steps were taken at Eastwood and by autumn 1839, the church was sufficiently advanced to admit divine service alternate Sunday mornings at 9:45.

Another service was held at Huntingford on the alternate Sunday morning at the same hour in a neat frame church which had been erected and endowed with 200 acres of land adjoining at the sole expense of Rev. Thomas Huntingford.

The land for St. John's church, Eastwood, was donated by Henry Vansittart, who had been deeded the land and whose home, "Eastwood Park", was one of the centres of Oxford County early history. Also in the Synod office is the record of deed of land for the rectory given by Henry Vansittart and Emily Louisa to the church society. The signatures were witnessed by Robert Jones and Thomas Perry.

Some of the interesting notes in the rector's books give us an idea of the size of congregations, etc. It was noted in 1883 (Rev. B. Hamilton, rector) that Eastwood had very large congregations. The rector in his book states that at the service taken at Innerkip church a certain Sunday afternoon there was a very, very small attendance. But at Eastwood on the same evening there were between 250 and 300 in the congregation.

In 1882 a note in the minister's book mentioned that a five-dollar gold piece was placed on the plate as an offering.

The winter of 1884 was very stormy, which interfered with the services held at the church in that sometimes no service was held. Notes made contained the information that roads were bad, people late, snow deep, and roads almost impassable for two Sundays after Easter which was April 5th.

Some of the interesting early events recorded are:

First baptism - Elizabeth Ann Thompson, Nov. 9, 1856.
Second baptism - Alice Emily Vansittart, Nov. 9, 1856.
First marriage - Thos. Hawkins and Mary Kearnes, Feb. 8, 1857.
Second marriage - John Rice and Mary Ann Chambers, April 14, 1857.
Third marriage - Thomas Perry and Maria Robinson, Feb. 2, 1859.
First burial - Jos. Greenwood, Oct. 10, 1856.
First confirmation class - 1858 Thos. Lusted, Henry Robinson, Frederic Hayward, Samuel Frizelle, Samuel MacElheran, George Walker, Wm. Cooper, Chas. McGhee, Archibald Lampman, Wm. Hopkins, Henry Frizelle, Samuel Robinson, George MacElheran, Robinson Smiley, Wm. Watkins, Lycurgus Martin, Ann Hutton, Charlotte Walker, Mary Jane Hayball, Mary Hewitt, Maria

Hopkins, Anne Jane Robinson, Martha Sibley, Margaret MacElheran, Catherine Robinson, Priscilla Hooper, Anne Shaw Martha Jane Moore, Anne Rachel Nunn, Elizabeth Hewitt, Adelaide Balls, Theresa Quirk, Dinah Lothan, Mary Anne French and Jane Lothan.

Admiral Vansittart presented the church with a melodeon. (This melodeon is still in the community in the possession of Thomas Perry). For many years Mrs. Vansittart and Miss Annie Shaw played this instrument in the church. Later the melodeon was replaced by an organ and some of the early organists included Miss Newman (governess in the T. C. Patterson family) Alice Hayward, Mary Hayball, Amelia Wilson, Mattie Robinson.

Taken from the vestry book, in 1858, the list of persons entitled to vote at the election of lay representative to the synod included: Henry Vansittart A. S. McElheran, Richard Robinson, Thos. Scott, Sr., Geo. Arkell, John Hayward, Wm. Hayward, Harry Hall, John Robinson, Jonah Hayball. The wardens at this time were John Frizelle and Thomas Perry. The lay of delegate elected to attend the synod for many years was Henry Vansittart.

Following his death, Richard Robinson seemed to be the choice for years. (The first records of St. John's Church that have been kept separately date in 1856. Earlier records seem to have been either mixed with other church records or have been destroyed.)

The church when built was of white frame structure but in 1893 the building was formed into a red brick one and during this operation, services were held in the village hall. On Oct. 25, 1893, the church was re-opened, with Bishop Baldwin as the special speaker.

Noted among its aristocratic members were the Admiral Vansittarts, the T. C. Pattersons, the Wm. Broughtons and the Dunn family. A veteran of the church remarked recently that when the Vansittarts entered the church, he remembered that the rustle of their silks could be heard all over the church. This is apart from the spiritual side of the church but in olden times the entrance of the wealthy was always a sign of focused attention.

The Chancel Guild was not formed until 1908 and its first officers included, President Miss Amelia Perry; vice-president, Miss Cassie Balls;

secretary Miss Beck Readhead; treasurer, Miss Elsie Pronger. This society gave way in 1913 in honour of the Ladies' Guild with its first officers: President, Mrs. Jos. Tully; vice president, Mrs. Wm. Shelby; secretary, Mrs. W. H. Nesbitt; treasurer, Mrs. J. Hayward.

EAST OXFORD BAPTIST CHURCH

About the year 1824 or 1825, Hiram Sprague with his wife and family migrated from New York State and came to the then Upper Canada. They were given a crown deed of land, of what later became the township of East Oxford. This tract of land, then dense forest became known as the Sprague settlement.

Mr. Sprague was a truly religious man and in his younger days walked through the bush to attend a Baptist Church near Foldens Corners. The Spragues had a large family consisting of five sons and eight daughters, and as more families moved into the area a log school house was built on the North East corner of Lot 4, and for a number of years divine service was held in this school with Hiram Sprague the lay minister. Other settlers that had come into the district included the Smiths, Dormans, Vandicars, Wooleys, Halls, Butlers, Hartsells, Howays and Hammers, all of which attended the services in the log school.

About the year 1857 the settlers thought about building a place of worship. Hiram Sprague donated an acre of ground, and in the late fall of 1858 the work commenced. Timber was donated and hewn lumber was prepared and in the spring of 1859, a dedicatory and recognition service was held, with George Mott, Moderator and Samuel S. Burtis, Clerk. Delegates came from other churches and Elder William Haviland preached the introductory sermon and gave the charge and hand of fellowship to the newly organized church, consisting of 59 charter members. Rev. Haviland became the first pastor, being at the same time pastor of the mother church at Burgessville. These two churches have co-operated ever since that time, except for a few years from 1884 to 1888 when the mother church very graciously gave the East Oxford church permission to co-operate with the Church at Creditville.

For years the church was known as the "Sprague Church" but on August 29, 1876, the land and church building was deeded by Mr. Sprague to the first trustees of the church, namely, John T. Muir, John Hall, David Wooley, James Buckerell and became officially known as "The East Oxford Regular Baptist Church." The church doors have been kept open during the years although there have been some low periods. Changes have taken place in the community with a number of members moving away, and others coming in of different faiths.

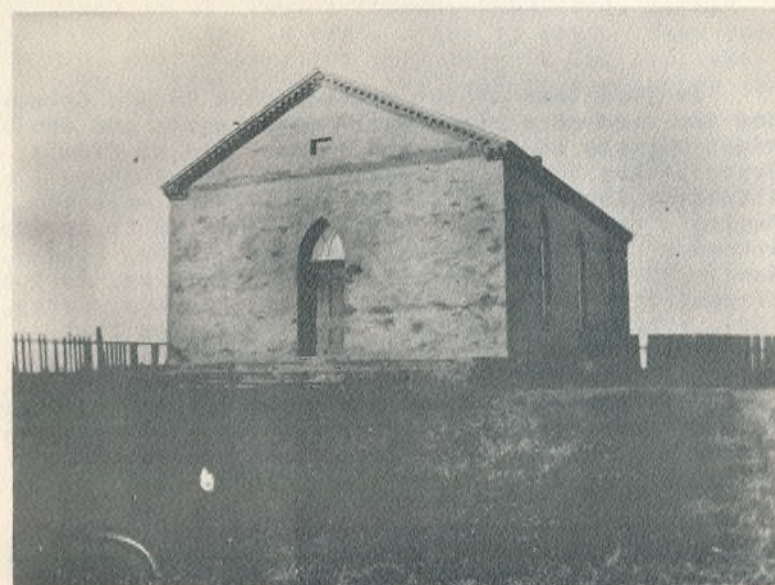
While the building is essentially the same, changes have also taken place in it through the years. In 1933 a cyclone ripped off the roof and the present roof was built on to replace it. In 1951 work commenced on the raising of the church and putting a basement under it. This was eventually completed adding much to the usefulness of the church building.

EAST OXFORD CATHOLIC MISSION

In 1854 the Catholic Church built a Mission on the 3rd Concession down near what is now Hy. 53 on Pat Kearney's farm. In the years preceeding this, there developed a strong Catholic community just south of Eastwood, and so under the direction of Father Carryon this Mission was built for these people. It was opened in 1854 and was known as the East Oxford Mission. This was in the Parish of Ingersoll and in 1874 Woodstock was made a Parish with Norwich and East Oxford as missions. The mission flourished here until the late 1800's and was then transferred to Princeton. The mission building is now part of the farm home of Fred Eringa at the same location on Lot 5 Concession 3.

The records of St. Mary's Church in Woodstock state that Father Breboeuf came up the Indian Trail (Stage Road) in 1640 in the winter, and because of the deep snow camped for a while near what is now Woodstock. He then proceeded on to the Mission near Midland where he later died at the hands of the Indians.

VANDECAR CHURCH



The Wesleyan Methodist Church was built in 1856 and was in use until after 1900. The Board of Trustees who sold the land to E. M. Sage were: Wm. Canfield, Chas. V. Canfield, Pemberton Ede, Edward Gracey and George Green at the time it was closed.

A photo taken of choir members about 1895 included the following: Minnie McKubbin, Jenny Robinson, Allan Kneale, Annie Knaggs, Frank Cross, Nettie Bertrand, Maggie Weir, Stanley Cross, Flossie Sage, Rev. A. C. Eddy, Grace Sage, Charles Goff (school teacher), Mary Kneale, Stella Cross, Becky Machin (organist), and Lily Goodwin.

BLOW'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

In 1886 some of the residents at Blow's Corners saw the need of a place where boys, girls and adults might worship and study the Bible. And so Blow's Union Sunday School was organized. Among those attending the meeting at the Sewell home were the Newtons, and Chambers. Other surnames of those who attended the Sunday School included: Blow, Schell, Hart, Browne, Meir, Hodges, Cuddie, Bartley, Parsons, Kirkpatrick, Perrett, Frost, Sales, Shelton, Curry, Cody, Brandow and Hopkins. It is believed that Tom Newton was the first superintendent (and Herb Cody was in charge when it closed in 1913). How energetic the early group was. They bought an organ, built a shed, purchased a library and held wonderful concerts. However in 1913 the Sunday School was closed.

In 1931 it was re-organized under the capable guidance of Rev. J. C. McPherson, a retired Baptist clergyman living in the district. (Mr. Herb Cody who had been superintendent when it closed, was again in charge and continued until shortly before his passing in 1955.) He taught the adult class until his death in 1943 at the age of eighty-nine years.

Families who assisted in the Sunday School work included: Cody, Copp, Hart, Hammond, Goodwin, Griffin, Greenly, Hamill, Longworth, Stantow, and Chambers. When the public school closed in June 1966 the Sunday School was discontinued. At that time Mr. John Longworth was superintendent and teachers included Mrs. Longworth, Vi Travers and Mrs. E. Greenly.

CHRIST CHURCH - OXFORD CENTRE

In the early days of the settlement of this district, some of the pioneer settlers attended services in St. Paul's Church, Woodstock, either walking or going in sleds drawn by oxen. Then for several years, services were held in the old Township Hall which stood on the land east of where the Oxford Centre Hall now stands.

There were in the fifties, quite a number of families who claimed the Church of England as their home church, and these people felt the need of a church in which to worship. There is a record of a meeting held at the home of Mr. Peter Lampman on Easter Monday, April 13, 1857 for the purpose of electing the church wardens. At this meeting it was proposed by T. Elliott and seconded by James Allan that Peter Lampman, Samuel Frizelle, Mr. Van Duser, and Bartholomew Fowler be appointed as a committee to take into consideration the preliminaries respecting the building of an Anglican Church in East Oxford, such as the selection of a site etc.

It was proposed by the committee to secure a portion of Mr. Peter Lampman's farm (now owned by Orland Kelner) but for some reason it was not carried out. Registry Office records show that on June 14, 1864 the present site for the church grounds and burying grounds were purchased from Hartwell C. Griswold and wife, and registered on December 7, 1867, by the Church Society of the Diocese of Huron. The total estimated cost for building the church was \$1,100.65.

For a few years the church was called St. Luke's but by 1878 it had been named Christ Church. For a time the church was closed but was restored in 1895.

The first recorded baptisms were: Eucena and Mary Alice Green and Sarah Louisa Chambers on Sept. 21, 1873. The first burial recorded was John Green (brother of Amos and Henry) in 1870, followed by Sylvester Keyes, May 7, 1873. The first marriage recorded was Charles W. Howden and Isabella Margaret Lampman, Feb. 10, 1877 or before; followed by George Humphrey and Ellen Gray, Feb 19, 1877 or before.

The first rector of the church was T. Robarts 1856, the great grandfather of the present Prime Minister of Ontario - The Hon. John P. Robarts.

In June 1967, Christ Church, Oxford Centre proudly celebrates its' one hundredth anniversary. Many special services and activities have been planned during this month to help commemorate the foundation of the Church of England at Oxford Centre, Ontario. All are welcome to attend.

CURRIES SCHOOL - S. S. NO. 7

The first school was a whitewashed, frame building located on the present school site, on land purchased in 1846 from Robt. Campbell. This transaction was registered in 1855, in the names of Robt. Pearson, Robt. Gracey and William Ross. In 1873 the building underwent major repairs and renovations.

On Jan. 13, 1892 at a special meeting of the ratepayers, a motion was passed that a new school house be built for SS7. It was then decided that the trustees proceed to build the school house with payment to extend over five years. The trustees also were given the authority to purchase any additional land necessary. After some disputing, ten feet on the east and 50 feet on the north were purchased from Mr. E. W. Chambers for \$120. The East Oxford Council was asked to raise by debenture the sum of \$2700. for building the school, enlarging the site, and other necessary expenses. Mr Vickert was given the contract for building for \$2100. He also built the church at Curries. The new school was opened in September 1892 and was the most modern school in the county at the time. Two apple trees were secured with the additional land and were occasionally sold. The old school was purchased by W. D. Smith and moved opposite to the church where it was used as a second story to his blacksmith shop. It was sold in 1927 to Mr. Thomas Harvey who used the lumber to build an implement shed where it is still being used by Robt. Stephenson on the same farm. Reliable information indicates that some burials at one time took place in the south east corner of the present school grounds.

The Gordon family served the school from the house across the road. The earliest record is of payment of \$2.50 to A. Gordon for furnishing and planting trees in May 1872. The last record of payment to any of the family was made in 1941.

The progress of the years is shown by the following purchases: 1867 - wash dish, fire shovel, tin cups, looking glass, towels and comb - \$1.60; 1917 - flag pole purchased from Jas Bastedo - \$2.00; 1923 - Graphanola; 1929 a musical instrument was discussed; 1932 a stove and dishes for hot lunches; 1923 the turnstiles; hydro was installed in April 1936 by M. H. Hart for \$90; first hydro bill was \$6.65; in 1942 the area around the school was reforestrated in a township school project.

Although discussed in the annual meeting in 1925, it was not until Jan. 1945 that township school boards were founded. After nearly 100 years of directions by a ratepayer appointed board of directors, SS7 became the responsibility of the Township School Board. A short time later the pupils of the four senior grades were moved to what is now referred to as the "North School".

Names of early pioneers in this school section who took an active part in the development of educational facilities up to 1900 are:

Robt. Gracey	Edward Rinch
Wm. Ross	Orlando Sackrider
Robt. Pierson	Alfred Rice
George Curie	Wm. Chambers
(Currie's Crossing)	
Robert Chambers	Wm. Werry
Herman Dodge	Thos. J. Lammiman
Wm. Burgess	Ezra Gracey
John Lammiman	Edward Chambers
George Rice	Amos Pullen
Archibald Park	Joseph Kelly
James Rice	Mr. Gordon
Nelson Vroman	Fred Start
John Watt	Robt. Barnett
Douglas Chambers	Fred Thornton
John Rice	James Scott
George Start	Albert Atcheson
Archibald Lampman	Wilford W. Smith
W. D. Smith	Chas. Kelly
George Edwards	George Stephenson

TRUSTEES

From 1900-45 the following have served as trustees: A. J. Rice, G. Stephenson, Wm. Chambers, Charles Siple, W. D. Smith, Robt. Tabor, Charles Kelly, Peter Chambers, Roderick Barron, F. Start, F. Row, Bert Siple, A. Edwards, M. D. Stephenson, L. M. Gardner, Frank pike, S. Fiddy, I. Pike, Glen Tabor, Clarence Schooley, Douglas Start; C. E. McComb, G. R. Row, G. Gracey, R. Kerr.

Since 1945 the following have served on the Township School Board: Elton Townsend, Edward Kennedy, John Longworth, Frank Manson, Russell Kerr, Elmer Hall, Stanley Schultz, John Pike, Cecil Richardson, Harold Shaw, Cyril Depper, Francis Taylor, Mrs. Rhoda Parkin, Mrs. Eileen Moyer, W. E. Talbot, Frank Scott, Murray Armstrong, Mrs. Verna Logan, Earl Start.

The consolidated township school replaced the school in 1966.

Did you know.....

- ...That in 1864 the school board purchased 12 cords of wood at .87¢ per cord?
- ...That in 1866 (100 years ago) the total expenses of S. S. No. 7 were \$399.77½, and the Teacher's salary was \$330?
- ...That in 1868 the Teacher was paid an additional \$5.00 for doing the janitor work?
- ...That in 1882 Mr. Codvill charged the board the sum of 5¢ for the mending of the door lock?
- ...That in 1884 Andy Gordon built new outside houses and removed the old ones for \$3.00?
- ...That in 1890 the board purchased 33 cedar posts from Wm. Parsons for \$4.00?
- ...That in the 1800's the ink was bought by the gallon?
- ...That in 1895 pupils from outside the section attended the school and paid \$8.25 in fees?
- ...That half cent coins were used in the 1860's and 1870's?
- ...That in 1929 a vote of thanks was extended to the ladies who attended the annual meeting?
- ...That in 1890 the insurance premium on the school house was \$1.00?

OXFORD CENTRE S. S. NO. 5

The first Oxford Centre School of which we have a record, was built about 1844 or 1845. At that time Oxford County constituted the District of Brock which held council meetings in Woodstock. In an 1844 report of the District Council meeting it states that a grant of 50 pounds was given for the erection of a school house in S. S. #5 East Oxford. In due time a frame building 24 feet by 30 feet was erected on the southwest portion of the Pioneer Cemetery land which had been donated for the cemetery by Abraham Canfield, one of the first settlers of East Oxford.

In the report of George Alexander, local Superintendent, the school was given first class rating. In 1851 it had a library of 120 volumes which had increased to 215 in 1852. The annual salary ranged from 62 pounds in 1850 to \$350. in 1872. Pupil enrolment fluctuated from 62 to as high as 106.

This first school was used occasionally for church meetings and other social functions there being no church at Oxford Centre before 1860. Some of the older residents can recall stories told of them by their parents about the pupils playing in the cemetery and around the materials used in the building of the Anglican Church.

When the ratepayers decided to build a new school, there was some controversy as to where it should be located. Those from the north wanted it to be at Oxford Centre, while those from the south wanted it where it now stands, as this would divide the distance more evenly. When it was put to a vote the result was a tie. Mr. N. Schooley, the local storekeeper, was called upon to decide the deciding ballot.

On April 9, 1872, an acre of land was bought from Earl and Charlotte Canfield for the sum of \$120. Mr. Adams was given the contract to build the school. Many of the old records are missing but we would presume that the cost would be approximately \$1500. in comparison with other buildings at that time. Double seats to accomodate about one hundred students were installed, and portions of the wall were painted black to be used for blackboards. The new school was ready for use at Christmas time and the opening took the form of a social evening.

The old school was moved north of Oxford Centre to the property now owned by Harold Armstrong. For many years it stood just east of the blacksmith shop and was used as a paint shop. In 1937 it was moved to its present location on the same property and has been used as a storage shed since that time.

For many years the East Oxford School Fair was held on these school grounds. Many have pleasant memories of these fairs, carried on under the direction of the late Mr. G. R. Green, Agriculture Representative.

After 1872 the enrolment continued to be quite high until about 1910. Then for many years it varied from 20 to 40. In the 1940's the enrolment started to rise again and at times due to crowded conditions, it became necessary to take some of the pupils to other schools in the township. During the years 1948-1950 they were taken by bus to Curries and from 1953-55 they were taken to Eastwood. In 1955 an addition to the school was built by Wallace Brothers of Embro. Besides a new classroom, this addition provided washrooms, kitchen and a furnace room. Since that time Oxford Centre had two teachers.

Since the time of the first school, few of the old timers remain, but for a number of years there have been enrolled here, pupils who represent the fourth generation of their families; namely: Linda, Philip and Jimmie Parking, whose father Aubrey, grandfather Russell and great-grandfather Philip Parking were former pupils; Blair and Susan Kelner, whose father Orland, grandmother Mrs. Julia Kelner, and great-grandfather Wm. Chambers attended school here; the last two mentioned together with Mrs. Kelner's daughter, Mrs. Ruby Jeffery and grand-daughter Carolyn form a third group.

The township Consolidated school was opened in Sept. 1966 - and the Oxford Centre School converted into a Township Municipal office and Library as a Centennial project.

UNION SCHOOL

S.S. #10 East Oxford and S. S. #10 Burford

The school was first thought about in 1902. Previous to this the pupils went to five other sections; Oriel, Vandecar, Cathcart, Beaconsfield, and Mount Zion, the corner of the school yard being the dividing line. As all had about three or three and a half miles to go, it was decided to build a new school.

The first meeting regarding it, was held at the home of Mr. T. Potter on December 26, 1901. The present site was chosen, ratepayers being agreeable, it was purchased from Mrs. H. Hall, who owned the farm south of the school at that time. It was bought on Jan. 18, 1902 at Woodstock for the sum of One Hundred Dollars. Wm. Waldron of Woodstock was engaged to draw up plans for the frame school. John Sund had contract for building house, fences and furnishing necessities for which he was to receive three hundred and eleven dollars. J. Rich supplied gravel for foundation, ratepayers drew materials, and lumber was bought from E. H. Thomas & Co.

On Jan 18, 1902 the Board of Trustees borrowed five hundred dollars from Johnston Bros. on note, which was paid on December 12, 1902. The first maps, blackboards, globe, bell and desks were ordered from E. N. Moyer & Co. Seven hundred dollars were borrowed from Johnston Bros. on Aug. 8, 1902 which was paid on Jan. 1904. On Aug 28, 1904 a woodshed was built by Mr. C. McIntyre. In April 1905 evergreen trees were purchased at twenty-five cents each from Mr. M. McKenzie. The windows were screened in 1903 and screens put on hinges in 1936 to avoid fire trap. The Waterbury System of heating was installed in August 1914 for \$150. During the period from 1902-1938 the school received three coats of paint and lightning rods were erected.

The teaching of Agriculture was begun in 1933 by Mrs. Hainer; Music in the same year by Leila Carroll of Norwich. Music was discontinued the next year and resumed in 1937 by Miss P. Shield, Otterville.

In Feb. 1938, Hydro was installed by Mr. Hart of Oxford Centre at a cost of \$90. Also in 1938 Sewing and Manual Training were begun to be taught.

The school was discontinued in 1966 and replaced by E. Oxford Consolidated School.

ORIEL S. S. NO.8

The present school was built in 1873; a wood shed being built at the same time. Previous to this, school was held in a log school house on the corner of the orchard of the Howell farm in the seventh concession of West Oxford on the north and south side road, next to the cemetery.

In 1896 the trustees were Will Howell, David Martin and Frank Ficht; Mr. Ficht was the secretary-treasurer.

Oscar Templer and Clifford L. Brenton became trustees in 1904 replacing Dave Martin and F. Ficht. Clifford L. Brenton became secretary-treasurer. In 1905 William T. Manson and T. A. Brown became trustees. In 1906 Frank Markle became a trustee. In 1908 William T. Manson became secretary-treasurer. In 1909 Arthur Bertrand, Frank Markle and William T. Manson were the trustees. In 1910 Wallace Tuttle replaced Frank Markle as trustee. In 1918 Murray Gray became a trustee. In 1918 William Shaw became secretary-treasurer until 1927. Frank Manson was secretary-treasurer from 1927 to 1945 when the school section was taken into the area.

In 1896 Mr. Charles Hendershot was hired as teacher at a salary of \$400.00 per year. Wood was used for fuel at \$1.50 per cord; 10 cords were bought in 1897. W. B. Sommerville received \$25.00 for lighting fires and cleaning school. In 1896 the school was white-washed and walls strengthened by iron rods being put through.

In 1900 the total expenses for the school were \$348.60. Thomas Dadson was the teacher; his salary was \$300.00 for the year.

In 1902 there were 67 children attending school.

In 1904 a cistern well was dug at the west side of the school; water was pumped into it by a windmill from the farm of William T. Manson next west of the school. In 1910 a well was drilled and the old well filled in.

A box stove with wood was used for heat until 1927 when a new wood furnace was installed. In 1954 an oil burning furnace was installed.

In 1908 slate blackboards were installed. In 1912 double seats were replaced by new single seats. In 1914 a new fence was built and a new gate bought. In 1917 a flag and flag pole were purchased.

The school library was begun in 1910 when the Bible and \$7.65 worth of books were purchased. The first books to offer graded reading were probably the Golden Rule books.

By 1917 the salary of the teacher's had advanced to \$625.00 per year.

In 1917 Oriel entered into the first East Oxford school fair which was held on Oxford Centre school grounds every year except one when it was held at Curries.

In 1933 a school garden was started. In 1933 wash basins and linen towels came into use for the pupils but in 1937 the use of paper towels replaced the linen ones. Electricity was installed in 1937. In 1946 toilets were installed in the new addition built on the front of the school.

In 1936 supervised music was added to the curriculum and Miss Priscilla Shields A.T.C.M. of Otterville was the music teacher. A piano was purchased by the board in 1938.

From 1896 to 1965 thirty-seven teachers have taught at Oriel school and there have been eight different school inspectors.

BLOW'S SCHOOL

School-days began in this section in 1840 when a frame school was built on Lot 18, Concession 3, East Oxford, at the top of the hill. (South junction Hwy. 59 & 401). It was given the name Blow's School from the name of the family, John Blow, who came to this farm in 1831.

This family came originally from Boston in Lincolnshire, England and reached Oxford in 1819. John Blow married and settled on this farm at the age of twenty. His uncle, Deacon Archibald Burtch (son of Oxford's first settler) had to go to Niagara Falls to get the deed for the land. All that time there was only a trail from Woodstock out to this farm and tales are told of Mrs. Burtch walking out along the trail knitting as she walked.

A little later there came from Gloucestershire, England, the Hart family. Their history is bound up with the history of Old St. Paul's Church which was built in 1834. Thomas Hart settled on the farm just east of the Blow farm and the baptism of his son John was one of the first recorded baptisms at Old St. Paul's Church in 1836. The Hart family has had much to do with Blow's School, Mr. T. P. Hart being secretary-treasurer for thirty-one years. He also served the community by installing the original telephones in East Oxford and some in East Zorra.

Another family that contributed much to this school was the Peers' family who came from Cheshire, England. They settled on the farm east of "The Firs." Their son, John, born in 1835 and also one of the first baptized in Old St. Paul's Church was trustee and secretary-treasurer for thirty-six years (until 1897.) His uncle Wm. Peers, owned land on the third concession (the farm west of Mr. Cody now "Overland Express".) Both of these men were wardens of Oxford County.

Another prominent man was Mr. Young who lived on the farm later owned by Wm. Parsons and now owned by the Thames Valley Bible College.

John Howden owned the property where Walter Alyea now lives and has now become part of the city. He was the one who went to Zorra in the early days where lived Christie Sutherland. He went twice to see her and then brought her home his wife. Mr. Howden was grandfather of Mrs. T. P. Hart and Mrs. B. H. Travers.

Little is known about the early school. One story is told of Elizabeth Clifford, later Mrs. John Travers, who lived on the Hilton Virtue farm. Her father marked the trees so that she would not get lost travelling through the dense woods to this school.

Several in our day recall hearing Mrs. T. P. Hart, then Ellen Perrett, recall the day they the pupils moved their books from the frame school to the new brick school at the bottom of the hill. It happened one noon hour about 1876. They ran down the hill but lined up properly outside the door to follow their teacher, Miss Powell, into the school. Another teacher she remembered was Miss Lewis. The trustees were John Peers, Oliver Clark and Ed Topping. Among her classmates were the children of John Hart, Clara, Nellie and Thomas (later her husband.)

William Blow, son of John Blow, renovated the old school and it became the home for him and his bride, Ruth Peach. The oldest child of their five, Olive, Mrs. Henry Greenly, later lived on this farm again with their family. The son, Ernest Greenly, farmed there for 45 years. In 1944 the old school burned.

Other names mentioned in the early history of the brick school include James Bartley, R. W. Newton, Joseph Ditchburn, Wm. Hodgers, Wm. Parsons, James Frost, Wm. Hart and Thos. Newton.

Following Mr. Peers and Mr. Hart as secretary-treasurer was Frank Shelton. He held the office for six years. He retired after serving twenty-one years as trustee. Sylvester Keyes was the other trustee who worked with Mr. Hart and Mr. Shelton for 11 years. Included among the early trustees were G. Midgley, T. A. Newton, R. W. Newton, F. Kneal, T Hopkins and J. A. Blow.

Ernest Greenly became secretary-treasurer after F. Shelton and continued until the school area board was appointed. Trustees who worked with him included: W. H. Hammond, H. Cody, E. Stanton, J. Longworth, George Innes and L. Gould. John Longworth represented this corner when the school area board first started.

Miss Bessie Brown was the earliest teacher named in the present records. In 1897 she taught for \$360. in 4 payments. Miss Clara Earl looked after the school for 20.50. In 1898 Mr. Andrew Bartley and Wm. Hodges were auditors. At the annual meeting in 1900, ratepayers present were J. W. Blow,

R. Cuddy, T. Burse, Joseph Blow, Geo. Midgley, T. A. Newton, T. P. Hart, James Frost, Wm. Parsons and J. N. Chambers, In 1907 the sec.-treas. started to receive \$10. as salary. Mrs. Tonn cared for the school for \$22.50 in 1908. A furnace was installed in 1909 for \$112.17. Value of school site \$100, Building \$1500, furniture \$100, equipment \$50. In 1911-12 the two front windows of the school were filled in and a porch and cloak-rooms built on. (Since Buchanan Farm Equipment purchased the school, a repair shop has been built on the south side and the girls' cloak room is now a private office.) About this time the woodshed was disposed of. It was used for many years as a granary by Thos. B. Hart, later Bert Travers and now Howard Alyea. The driveshed south of the school was sold in 1914. It had proved an ideal spot for the children to play on rainy days. In 1917 Mr. Marshall had a school fair for this section and the trustees granted \$5. for prizes. By 1920 \$64. was paid for sweeping and cleaning school. A new floor was laid in 1925 - for \$237.10. Hydro was installed by Mr. Yeoman in 1929 for \$107.90. Mr. Ede was engaged as music teacher in 1930. Mrs. Ormsby received \$100 for sweeping the school in 1933 extra for special cleaning. Trustees started to hold regular monthly meetings in 1935. Hot lunches were served in 1937. A new well was drilled and a pressure system installed in 1938.

Three Woodstock Mayors were given at least part of their early education at Blow's School, namely Mrs. Bernadette Smith and the late J. W. Sales and Ben Parker. M. S. Schell was a member of Parliament for South Oxford. Douglas Schell was killed in action in the First World War but won a D. S. O. Others who gave their lives in this war were: Herbert Barnes, Herb Izzard, and Percy Veale.

In 1955 the 80-year old school closed its doors to make way for the highway clover-leaf. The new two-roomed school was built on land purchased from E. Greenly on the South west corner of the farm. The principal for ten years was Wm. Hart, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. T. P. Hart, pupils of the old school. The following year another room was added. At the time of closing in 1966, Mr. Bent was principal, with Miss Strickland and Mrs. Axford the other teachers and Mrs. Mitchell, Sr. assistant.

The teachers included:

1875 Emily Lewis
1894-1902 Miss Bessie Brown
1903 Miss Elsie Magee

1903 Miss J. B. Minns
1904-7 Miss E. Jean Grieve
1907 Miss Pearl Morden
1908 Miss Enid McGregor
1908 Mr. A. L. Coyne
1909 Dr. W. T. Costairi
1910 Miss Rose Brandow (Mrs. Lee of Holbrook)
1911 Miss A. J. Clendennan
1912-14 Miss G. M. Richardson (Mrs. Wm. Riach) Wdstk.
1914-17 Mrs. H. C. Marshall
1917 Miss B. Coulthard
1918-21 Miss Janie Reed
1921-23 Miss Violet Goodwill
1923-25 Miss Bernice Travers (Mrs. E. Greenly) Blow's
1925-26 Miss Vera Bratt
1926-28 Miss J. Davidson
1928-29 Miss Ruby Manson
1929-30 Miss Sadie Mullins
1930 Miss Emma Treffry
1930-35 Miss Catherine Marshall
1935-39 Miss Sadie Johnson
1937-39 Miss Marguerite Hill
1939-41 Miss Coyla Cody and Miss Faith Green
1941-43 Miss Helen Plyley 1942-46 Miss Jessie Kennedy
1943 Mrs. Culbert 1946 Miss Winnifred Knox.
1947 Miss Winnifred Knox and Mrs. Bentley,
Mrs. Mary Hollett, Mrs. Easton, Mrs. Simmons, Wm.
B. Hart and Mrs. Simmons, Wm. B. Hart, Don J. Smith
and Mrs. Simmons, Wm. B. Hart Mrs. Masson and Mrs.
Simmons, Wm. Hart and Mrs. Phippen.
Donald Bent, Mrs. Axford and Miss Strickland.

VANDECAR S. S. NO. 4

On the 11th day of November 1843 Michael Tripp and wife sold a small piece of land, 66' x 132' for a Common School to the Common School Commission for the Township of East Oxford (members were Rev. Newton Bosworth, Johnathan Tripp, James Guile, Thomas Scott and James Watt). This was Vandecar's first school building located on the north-west corner or angle of lot 4, concession 5, on the corner of the Old Stage Road and the Vandecar side road. Prior to this a District Common School was operated as early as 1827, but no land was purchased for a school site until 1843.

In this early school enrollment was large, especially during the winter months, and at one time, about 1870, there were 89 students attending the one room school. Some must have come from other parts of the township, as minutes of a Trustee meeting in 1878 state "All non resident pupils are required to pay 25¢ per month per pupil, in advance, and the teacher is to collect the same."

Public examinations were held several times each year when the School Superintendent, the Trustees, and many others attended (36 additional attended in 1871). Mr. John Hunt was the earliest Superintendent of Education mentioned and Mr. W. Carlyle, the first County Inspector in 1872.

According to Township records the first tax levy in support of Vandecar SS#4 was in 1860 for \$141.45. Before this time the school must have been supported by ratepayers paying their children's tuition. Also in 1860, \$42.27 was received from the Clergy Reserve Fund (this was the last year that the Clergy Reserve Grant was made to school sections.) The above monies were paid to Joseph Truman, 19 years old, who had a taxable income of \$200 and was expected to perform 2 days statute labour on the roads.

School visiting was part of the duties of Trustees in the early days, and they were allowed to question the students and report on their progress. Favourable comments on the quality of learning of the students is entered in the visitor's book by J. Mighton on December 21, 1876. Besides Trustees visitors included students learning to be teachers, College Students, Ministers, Teachers of other schools, and many parents.

The present school was built in the year 1875 on a site purchased from Thomas and Diana Kneal for

\$200. The old school site and school building were sold to E.M. Sage in 1876 for \$135. The building has been moved twice since then, first to a spot near Kiney Creek where it became a sheep pen. It is now on the farm of Henry Sage (the grandson of the original owner) and is used, appropriately, as a school bus storage shed.

Trees around the school were planted in 1885; slate black-boards purchased in 1903; a teacher's desk purchased in 1910 from Shedden Furniture; school library mentioned and books purchased in 1910; basement was put under part of school around 1915 and furnace installed; about the same time single desks replaced the old "double desks"; Hydro installed in 1929 and rangette purchased; piano purchased in 1937 and in 1940 an addition built to accomodate inside toilets. Music was first taught in 1936 by Miss Priscilla Shields. Education films were shown once each week.

In 1944 the old school section was dissolved and a School Area was formed and came into force January 1st, 1945.

The following persons have served as Trustees for the Vandecar School Section since the year 1861, the earliest year for which records still exist; William Bertrand, Israel Vandecar, George Cate, John Holdsworth, Robert Vancecar, Frederick Daly, James Mighton, Daniel Bertrand, Thomas Kneal, Abram Branchflower, Thomas Knaggs, James Weir, Edwin Sage, Daniel Wooley, Joel Canfield, Henry Peers, Wm. Richardson, Joseph Mighton, N. P. Holdsworth, Wm. Sage, Charles V. Canfield, George Olmstead, M. J. McMahon, George A. Leake, Herbert Bertrand W.G. Mighton, M.M.Kneale, Erle Kitchen, John Simmons, Clair Peers, Earl Corman, Harold Sage, George Robinson, Ernest Sumsion, N.M. Holdsworth and Gordon Olmstead, and for the years following the formation of a School Area; Elton Townsend, E.V. Kennedy, John Longworth, Frank Manson, Russell Kerr, Elmer Hall, Stanley Schultz, Cecil Richardson, Harold Shaw, John Pike, Cyril Depper, Francis Taylor, Mrs. Eileen Moyer, Mrs. Rhoda Parkin, Mrs. Verna Logan, W.E. Talbot, Murray Armstrong, Earl Start and Frank Scott.

EASTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOL

The first school was log building built in 1848 on the northeast corner of the farm formerly owned by Fred Schell, now owned by Mr. & Mrs. Carl Payne (Mary Schell), near the creek. Cost of the school was 37 pounds, 10 shillings. William Nunn was the school teacher at this time. Long benches placed in rows were used for seats. The subjects taught were reading, writing arithmetic and spelling, using the Bible for the text-book.

At a special meeting of the Ratepayers held on December 11th 1871, the site for a new school was discussed. A motion was made that the school be built on the end of Lot 6 on the second concession immediately east of the gravel or stone road. In May 1872, \$75. was paid to John and Matilda Toohey for this land. It was not until 1873 that plans for the new school were made. The trustees visited Oxford Centre School and decided that Eastwood School be the same style and finish but six feet longer. In 1873, plans and specifications were drawn up for the new school at a cost of \$10. The new school was built of white brick and located near the present school. It contained five rows of double seats. A partition about seven feet high was erected to divide the room in two but the pupils took advantage of this and paper balls, etc. were tossed from one side to the other causing much noise and confusion. In 1910-11, it was remodelled and another room added.

At a special school meeting called on May 29th, 1873, it was moved by Reuben Kipp, seconded by Thomas Lazenby, "That the trustees be authorized to borrow \$1000 for 18 months through the Council and collect \$1800 from the rateable in the Section this year." Carried. William Nelmes, Chairman and Robert Leake, Secretary. Some names mentioned at the school meeting of 1872 were Patrick Collins, Robert Leake, William Nelmes, John Scott, John Ulman, Reuben Kipp, John Slattery, John Leak. At the 1873 school meeting, names mentioned in addition to those above were Paul N. Oke, Thomas Stamp, Phillip Lampman, Allan Virtue, Thomas Lazenby and John Shaw.

In 1876, some ratepayers attending the annual school meeting were John Hyde, Joseph Lazenby, Reuben Kipp, J. Slattery, John Harrison, and Allan Virtue. In 1879, Francis Jordan, Adam Peffers,

James Overholt, Roland Beatty, Joseph Edmonds, David Schell, James Davis, Gates Ferguson, Patrick Haney, Patrick Karney, James Fowler and Armour Potter attended the school meeting. A township board of trustees was discussed at this meeting in 1879. A motion opposing the establishment of such a board is recorded in the minutes of December 31st, 1879. At the December 31st meeting in 1880, the following names were mentioned: William Lazenby, David Schell, J. McMahon, Nelson Lampman, R. Kipp being elected Trustee.

As the years went on, other names appeared at the annual meetings. These will be interesting to some; they are listed with the year following in brackets:

Wesley Lazenby (1881), Mr. Perry (1881), Mr. Cromwell (1884), Stewart Mighton (1886), Phillip Slattery, Chairman (1888), Peter Ulman (1887), Emerson Lazenby, Secretary (1889), William Lampman, Chairman (1890), Patrick Slattery, Auditor (1891), From 1894 on, not previously listed, Henry Nesbitt, Israel Schell, Secretary (1894), John Schell, Norman Lazenby, William Parker, Malon Lounsbury, A. E. Rose, Mr. Hedges (1904), Robert Gibb, John Muir, Thomas Lazenby, William Shelby, J. N. Holdsworth, P. Haney, I. Kennedy (1908), H. W. Greenly, Andrew Baird, George Town (1910), B. E. Swayzie (1911), William Haney, E. Kipp, T. J. Jacobs, John Burbank, Adam Blandford, George Kelly, M. E. Carbin (1915), Hugh Kennedy, Nelson Franklin (1920), Stanley Muir (1922), John Overholt (1923), Roy Mighton, Ray Schell, J. Haylow (1927), George Leake, Thomas Perry, John Slattery, P. Jacobs, W. G. Lockhart, Guy Balls (1928), Fred Schell (1931), Frank Littell (1931), J. Morley (1932), Jason Belcher (1933), Edwon Schell (1933), E. Scott, Francis Swayzie, George Overholt, David Baird, W. F. Patterson, Elton Townsend, Cecil Kelly and William Appleton.

The school burnt down January 6th, 1912 and the present school was built. For about ten years after the new school was built two teachers were engaged. At one time there were approximately 100 attending the school. An interesting note at the bottom of the page of 1888 states: "No children between 5 and 21 residing in the section December 31st, 1882" and no salary was shown paid for 1882 and the first part of 1883. There was only one teacher from 1922 to 1946, then the junior room was reopened and two teachers hired.

About 1875, W. H. (Henry or Darkey) Robinson, a well-known and respected blacksmith did repairs and made pokers, shovels etc. for the school. His shop stood on the corner of the sideroad and the Governor's Road (now No. 2 Highway) where Eastwood Exchange for the Oxford Telephone Company now stands. Around 1914-15 his grandson from Omaha stayed with them and attended school. Little Joe Dorsey was a favourite with everybody and there was never a dull moment when he was around. He has become a successful doctor in New York City.

The question of installing hydro was discussed in 1932, 1933, 1934 and was finally installed by J. E. Forest for the sum of \$144.60.

In 1942 a new furnace and new desks were installed, and during the summer the interior redecorated. Religious instruction was begun in 1942. It was taken over by the Christian Service Centre of Lambeth in 1954.

In 1945, a pressure system with drinking fountain and sink was installed. In 1946 when the junior room was re-opened, a bus brought children not belonging to the area but residing on the eastern limits of Woodstock, to the Eastwood School. A new furnace was installed and wash rooms and flush toilets placed in the basement. Fluorescent lighting was installed in the junior room and the room redecorated in 1947. In September 1947 Grades 7 and 8 began attending classes in Home Economics and Industrial Arts at Woodstock Fair Grounds in the Rural Shop Building. Audio Visual Education with films shown monthly was begun in 1947 and continued for approximately three years. Since 1963, Grade VII and Grade VIII have been taken by bus to other area schools.

A bus trip each year was arranged to places of interest including Casa Loma in Toronto, Niagara Falls, the Welland Canal, the Detroit Zoo and Ford Museum, the Pioneer Village at Doon, CKCO-TV in Kitchener, Fanshawe Dam, Story Book Gardens and Woodstock Museum.

During the visit of Edward, Prince of Wales, to Woodstock the pupils were given a holiday and well armed with flags, were all lined up in Victoria Park to wait his arrival. He later became King and abdicated the throne.

In 1917, many watched anxiously as the Balls family arrived at school via dog sled, pulled by

a Collie, the lead dog, and four huskies and driven by Uncle Will Smith. Mr. Smith had been in the Klondike at Dawson City during the gold rush and had brought back with him from the Yukon his faithful dogs and sled. He made his home, with his half brother, Henry Balls and nephew, Guy Balls, and was a familiar sight on the roads. To many who had never been farther than Woodstock, he epitomized the spirit of adventure.

In 1917, Ralph Gordon visited the school. His real name was Fred Utley and he was an old time entertainer who was born at Eastwood. He drew pictures on the blackboards and each student was to draw these pictures and send them to him. The best in the Senior and Junior rooms would receive a prize. Some did not send theirs in, thinking them not good enough. One day a big box arrived - with a prize for everyone who had submitted a drawing to him. On the flyleaf of each book was written, "Presented by Ralph Gordon (F.B. Utley) to-----, Eastwood School - A prize for Drawing Toronto, Oct 1, 1917."

On September 13th, 1917 - "The school was closed for the teachers to go to the School Fair at Innerkip" - Monday, September 17th, "We all went to the School Fair" - From the diary of my mother, Mrs. Israel Schell. This is believed to be the first school fair in East Oxford Township. They were held in September at the Oxford Centre School, under the sponsorship of G. R. Green, Agricultural Representative for the County. Pupils exhibited art work, essays, writing, baking, sewing, darning, knitting, hand-crafts, fruits and vegetables and livestock, to name only a few. (It has been suggested that many more than the pupils' gardens were dug to find the best potatoes). Prize ribbons and cash prizes were given. The first prize on composition etc. was 30¢. Contests for the boys in the judging of cattle, first aid contests for the girls, sock darning contests, singing competitions and school yells were some of the activities of the day. There was a parade around the grounds of all the schools in the township, one of the older boys of each school heading his section and carrying the school banner. A prize was given for the best school in marching and appearance. This was a coveted award and was kept in the school until the next school fair. One of the exciting moments of the day was when the big tent of exhibits was opened, following the judging. Everyone rushed in to see if they had been lucky enough to receive a prize. Prizes were also given for the greatest number of points in each school. For some it was a day of exultation, for others disappointment, but with it a determination to try harder next year.

Every year on Arbour Day it was the pupils' task to clean up the school yard. After lunch, the teachers took the boys and girls to the bush to gather wild flowers and study nature.

In 1940 and 41, during World War II years, the pupils had school gardens, each tending his own little plot. During the summer months, Mr. John Muir looked after these gardens.

Every pupil remembers the Christmas concerts in which he or she took part. Before the time of permanents, the girls had their hair done up in rags and paper curlers to be ready for the big night. Everyone wore their Sunday best clothes. We all have our memories of our first recitation, of singing the Christmas choruses, of drills and dialogues in which we took part, of stage fright, of the excitement of our first present and then sometimes a present from the one boy or girl of our school days.

Some former pupils may be interested in a newspaper account of the 1935 Christmas Concert at the school. Recitations were given by John Schell, "It looks like Pa," Eddie McFarland, "A Christmas Tree Farm", Marjorie Jacobs, "Bright Stockings," Jean Sriver, "Family Troubles," And Keith Scott, "If Santa Was Pa." In a dialogue "Santa Gets the Blues," Santa was Reg. Molyneaux, Mrs. Santa, Ella Overholt, the son, Arthur Atkinson, the daughter, Margaret Potter and Junior was Alvin Sriver. "A Peep at Santa" was given by Leslie Hird, Tommy Scott and Bruce Shelby. A number, "The Model T. Ford" was given by the boys, forming up like a car, complete with spare tire. As the curtain was being drawn the car backfired.

The present school was closed at the end of June 1966 and the pupils will attend the new twelve-room consolidated school being built on the Stage Road, two miles east of Oxford Centre.

The School Reunion of former pupils, teachers and trustees was held August 7th at the school grounds with a buffet style lunch served at 12:30 pm.

In 1945 a school area was formed of all the school sections with the township and five trustees were elected to administer all the schools in the twp. The first chairman was Edward Kennedy of Oxford Centre.

The small schools continued in use until 1966 when a new central school was built at the Corner of the Stage Rd. and County Rd. 14, at a cost of \$4000,000.00.

Wm. Hamblen is the 1st principal with 400 students and 13 teachers.

The township schools were fortunate to have had music supervisors & Religious Education Instructors provided. These included:

Music:

Mr A.G. Ede.
Miss Priscilla Shields
Mr. Karl Wittig
Mrs. Phinn
Mr. John Inch.

Religious Education Instructors:

Rev. L. D. Griffith
Mr. D. Gorrie
Rev. A. Thrower
Mr. T. Watson
Miss Marguerite Hill

