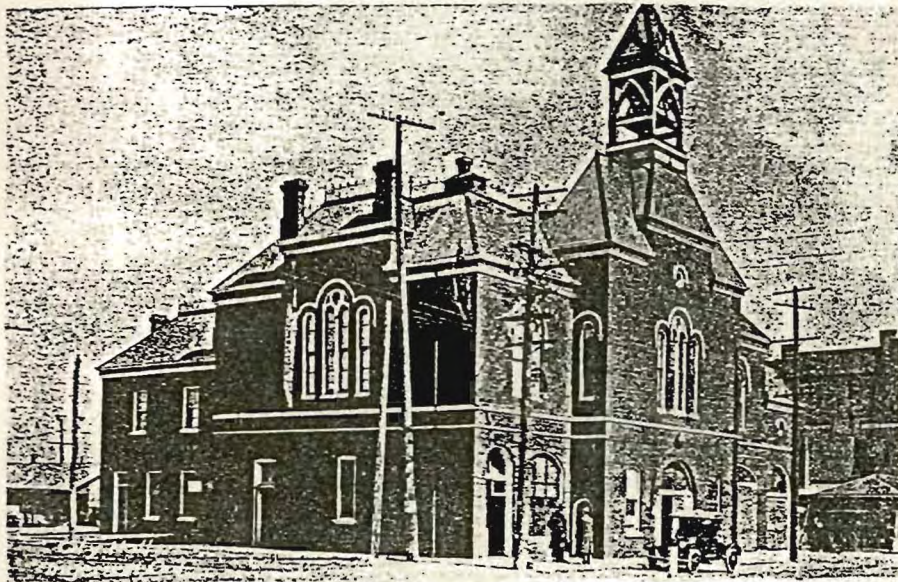


OXFORD STREET
INGERSOLL
Heritage Tour
June 1990



Market Building & Town Hall, 1858-1989

OXFORD STREET

Oxford Street, with its blend of commercial enterprise and gracious residential area, figured prominently in the development of Ingersoll's character and influence. In the mid 1800's when the Old Stage Road passed through Ingersoll along King St. making it the main thoroughfare, Oxford's business importance surpassed that of Thames. In this booklet the reader is introduced to some of the interesting activities and events which are a part of this colourful area.

Much of the information about the original business section is derived from the Ingersoll Chronicle dated Saturday, May 25, 1872, which describes the devastating fire that swept through Ingersoll's core on Friday, May 7 at 8:00 pm. It started at the north end of Oxford Street on the east corner in the stables of the Royal Exchange Hotel. This hotel and barns extended along the south side of Charles St. from Thames to Oxford and were described as old frame buildings which were vacant at the time. Mr. Searie had just leased the hotel and moved in a few belongings. Arson was suspected as large columns of thick black smoke and the smell of fuel were detected at the time that the fire broke out. A north westerly breeze carried the fire through the whole of Ingersoll's business section destroying buildings on both sides of Thames and Oxford Sts. The newspaper account stated that the hotel and barn were thickly surrounded by small frame tenements which rapidly succumbed to the intense heat. C.P. Hall, prominent businessman had extensive holdings along Oxford St. East in the path of the fire and was described as a heavy loser. His losses included a large building near the east corner of Oxford and Charles containing three shops and seven tenements, a cottage where he formerly lived, rented by Miss Doyle who lost all her furniture valued at four hundred dollars, no insurance, also an adjacent barn and wagon shop. The fire continued southward consuming the Bowman Hotel located just north of the present Police Station. This building was valued at twelve thousand dollars and carried no insurance. The open market halted the advancing fire, thus sparing the Town Hall.

On the west side of Oxford, starting at the north end, buildings that were levelled included McDonald's barn with a large amount of coal oil, the old Wesleyan Church, the Chambers Hotel and the Daly House Stables, stopping short of destroying the main structure.

After the great fire, Ingersoll began to rebuild it's business area, using mainly brick construction and the face of Oxford St. changed.



Ashton's Service Station

At the north west corner of Oxford St. a frame barn was erected for stabling horses. This later was demolished and replaced by Ashton's Service Station. Directly south was the blacksmith shop of Murray and Waugh. For many years a large bill board stood directly south of them which Ingersoll merchants could rent to advertise their services. Area farmers visiting town would tether their horses in the space behind the large sign. Joe McManus of London purchased the property and erected Bengal's Gasoline Station. Later Sterling Clark built a cement structure, headquarters for his Gravel & Excavating and

Machine Shop. Bell Telephone purchased this building for use as an office. Continuing south at 115 Oxford was a large brick building owned by Dr. Milne, Veterinary Surgeon, which was his dwelling as well as his office.

The office of the Divisional Court was located here for a short time, with Mrs. Sterling as the Clerk. Later it was moved to 159 Oxford St. George Maitland purchased this property and the bill board property directly north to prevent competition from a second movie theatre. The last business to use the building was Zurbriggs Bakery. It housed their office and the kitchen for baking the cakes.

Oxford St. N., east side



Dr. Milne & Massey Harris buildings

Located between this building and the Police Station was another large brick structure, built in the 1980's by George Fishleigh, who held the Massey Harris Implement Dealership. Other Massey agents using the same premises were Frank Smith,

Joe Barnett, Lloyd and Norman Beckham. A low flat topped section added to the north side was used as a blacksmith shop. In the 1960's the buildings in this area were demolished to make way for a parking lot.

A new market building was built at 123 Oxford St. to replace the cramped quarters in the east end of the Town Hall. The Healy Grocery and McMulkin Butcher Shop were located in the lower level, while vegetables and other produce were sold on the upper floor. Harry McMulkin had his own delivery wagon for servicing his customers.

In 1858 the Ingersoll Market opened, located on the present site, at the north east corner of King and Oxford St. It was considered a first class grain market, drawing merchants from Toronto. Besides a variety of grains and garden produce, some of the items marketed were: eggs, 9¢ per dozen; butter 13¢ per pound; cord wood, \$3.00 per cord; wool 50¢ per pound; tallow and hides. These prices were taken from the 1872 Ingersoll Chronicle.



*Original
Market House
& Town Hall*

The first Town Hall, north east corner of Oxford and King was destroyed by fire in 1856, including all the town records. Amid much controversy as to location and design, construction on the New Town Hall began in 1857 on the same sight. John McNiven, a local architect, designed the Italianate Style structure and George O'Hayra was chosen as the builder. Besides the town office, it also housed the fire department and police station. The Town Hall became the centre of Ingersoll's social and poliitcal life. Many outstanding figures such as John A. Macdonald, Alexander MacKenzie, Wilfred Laurier and others lectured to the citizens of Ingersoll from it's magnificent stage. Travelling troupes and artists performed in the largest autitorium in town. Among these were Christine Nielson, Metropolitan opera star and scores of other noted personages which composed the famous Chautauqua circuits. After the town offices were relocated at 118 Oxford Street, the Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre used the facility for several years. In the basement were the remains of an old lock up. A fire occured in one of the cells when a prisoner died, setting a fire and hanging himself. The charred beams remained visible until the building was demolished in 1989.

On the corner lot, at 110 Oxford Street, now occupied by the Big V, was a large stucco house owned by Charlie Harris (butcher) with a stable at the rear. Mr. Harris owned a number of properties on King Street, including the large brick structure on King St. East recently vacated by Coyle and Greer Awards.

A large white frame building, situated on the parking lot area, replaced the Wesleyan Methodist Church destroyed in the great fire. It's history proved to be colourful and varied. During the American Civil War, it was used as a stop over for the Underground Railway, which was a secret network of escape routes for negro slaves fleeing from the United States. The fugitives were hidden in the attic of the church. John Brown, the abolitionist, spent some time in Ingersoll and spoke at the church to rally support for his cause. Following it's use as a church, the new building housed a number of businesses. Sutherland's Buggy Works operated by Andrew Sutherland was located on the upper floor. He was considered to be a fine craftsman, making carriages of superior quality. Arthur Day, harness maker and Jim Joyce Sr. with his Motor & Grindstone Shop shared the lower level. Originally the third floor was the minister's apartment. One long time Ingersoll resident recalls living there as a child and exploring the interesting nooks and crannies of the old attic. In 1956 the church was demolished and a car wash was built there but only remained for a short time.



Old Wesleyan Methodist Church



Oxford St. looking north from King.

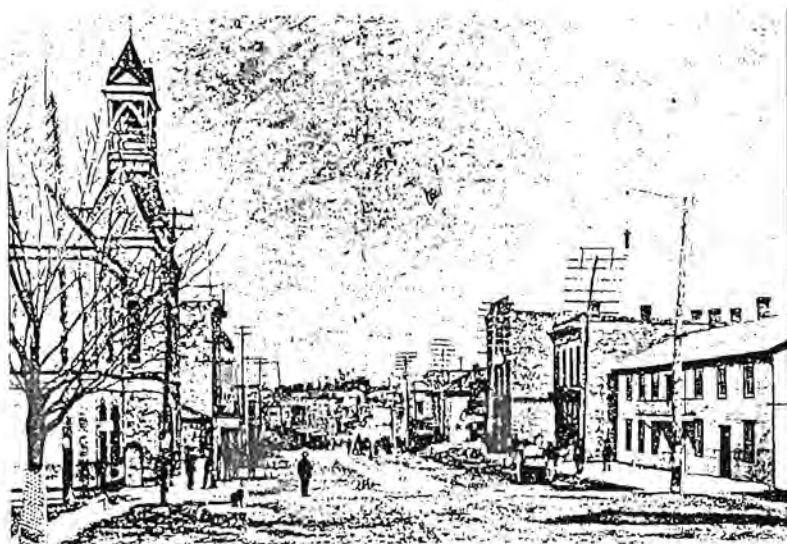
The area south of this and extending to the boundary of the Ingersoll Inn property was purchased by William Kirwin. Circa 1890, the Oxford Inn, sometimes referred to as the Kirwin Hotel, was built at the approximate location of the old Chamber Hotel, 130 Oxford St. It was also called the Farmer's Hotel and was surrounded by stock yards and auction facilities. Directly north of the hotel and separated by a narrow alleyway was the Kirwin barn. The following accounts come from three local residents who witnessed the fire that destroyed the barn. Because of its proximity, Bill Kirwin was very worried about the safety of his hotel. During the fire one fireman was found by the chief looking for some tools in the fire truck. When questioned by the chief, he replied that he was looking for an ax for the purpose of chopping a hole in the south wall so that he could get at the fire with a hose. "Don't touch that wall", demanded the chief, "That wall is the only thing that is saving the hotel". As a result the hotel escaped the fire.

A nearby resident donned his rain coat and hurried to the scene of the fire to assist. He was standing atop one of the adjacent garages helping Duncan Carmichael steady a hose directed at the fire. As the hose had been hooked improperly, it was vibrating badly and Carmichael told the volunteer to straddle it for a better grip. While standing astride the hose, it split beneath the unfortunate assistant, drenching him thoroughly.

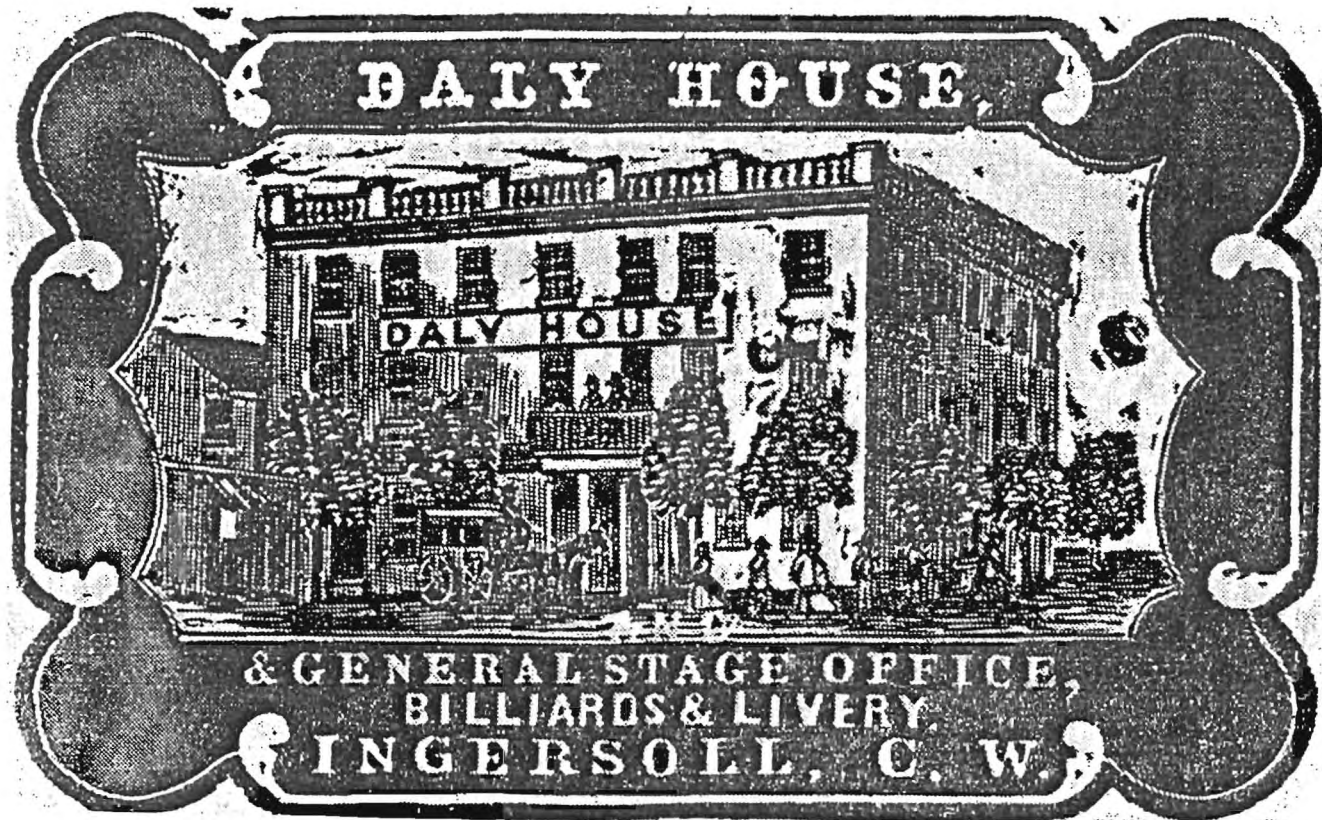
The Woodstock Fire Department was called to assist as windblown sparks were endangering neighbouring buildings. They responded immediately and entered Ingersoll along Charles St. East. Unaware that the street was barricaded due to repair, they came speeding into town, crashed through the barricade and sent it flying.

In the winter Mr. George Wood flooded the cement floor of the barn, left after the fire, and practised his curling.

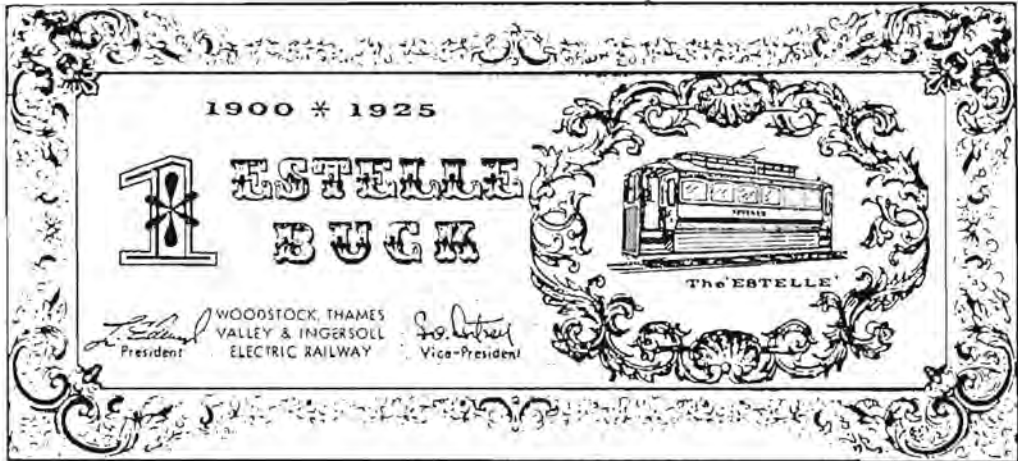
The lot occupied by the barn was purchased by Fred George who operated the Frozen Food Buisness at 116 Oxford St. from 1946 to 1971. He introduced the residents of Ingersoll to the convenience of frozen foods with a variety of items such as vegetables, cherries, frozen eggs, party ice and ice cream. Some of the sheds on the Kirwin property were used in later years as rental storage for cars, boats, etc. In 1967 the hotel building was demolished and replaced by a parking lot and the present cement block building, 118 Oxford St., initially used by the Liquor Control Board.



*King St., looking east from Oxford, Dereham House
bottom right, early 1900's*



Daly House, C.W. (Canada West) indicates pre Confederation



No history of Oxford St. would be complete without mentioning the Woodstock, Thames Valley and Ingersoll Electric Railway which operated from 1900 until 1925 when replaced by a bus service. The tracks started at the Ingersoll Inn, proceeded north to Charles St., then east through Beachville to Woodstock. The first car "Estelle" was named after the daughter of one of the promoters. It featured two rows of wooden benches which could seat as many as twenty four passengers. In the centre of the trolley car was a pot bellied stove, which, according to reports either refused to work or puffed out so much smoke that passengers would be left wheezing. The return fare to Woodstock was \$1.00 and the trip took about one half hour. Later a second open car was added for the summer run. Canvas sides could be rolled down against inclement weather. At the end of the run, the car was reversed by simply unhooking the electrical connection from the overhead line and reattaching it over the opposite end of the car. Pranks against the trolley were common. Sometimes banana peelings were placed on the tracks north of the Ingersoll

Inn making it difficult for the car to navigate the incline. In the winter ice had the same effect. The following two accounts were taken from a newspaper interview with John Watson who worked as a conductor in 1924 and 1925. "We didn't know nothing about electricity in those days. I remember when my dad was working at Skinner's Livery Stable, corner of Charles and Oxford. You know where there's a slight hill. Well in the winter time the tracks would get icy and the trolley couldn't make it because the wheels would slip. So this conductor borrows a pitchfork from my dad to chip off the ice. Couple of good whacks and it was down to the metal. Well sir, he got a real blast of electricity and burned off the end of the fork! My dad was so mad."

"Lots of parties and dances in those days. I would always wait till the dance at the Town Hall was over before heading back to the barn (Woodstock). 'Member sitting there till 3:00 a.m. in the morning sometimes, there on Oxford St. - till the dance was finished."

During recent excavations, sections of the track at the corner of Charles and Oxford Streets were removed and taken to the Ingersoll Cheese Factory Museum.

The building housing the coin laundry at 33 King Street is included in our history as it's length extends along Oxford. No date for it's construction has been found but it is mentioned in the 1872 Chronicle as follows - Messers Holmes & Gillispie's stock of dry goods was worth \$18,000.00. Only \$2,641.00 was saved. Mr. Holmes will resume business shortly in the Turner building, opposite the Daly House.

During the time of the American Civil War, this building housed the printing company owned by Sutherland Brothers, compilers of many County Directories of Canada West. It also printed the Herald, a newspaper published by T.A. McNamara who supported the Southern Army. His pro south paper "The Sicle" was in direct rivalry with the pro north suppliment

published by the Chronicle. Things came to a head when the Herald's printing plant was mysteriously fired one night and partially destroyed. It was rumoured the Chronicle could throw light on the actual arsonists. This spurred an investigation but the verdict was that it was caused by persons unknown.

Also located here was the Morrison Carriage Works. One Ingersoll resident remembers the occasion when his father purchased a brand new buggy there in 1916. Also is housed the Watterworth Import & Export Business. Other businesses located here were a furniture store owned by Sam Shelton, an Automotive Supply store, a Radio Shop and a Laundromat run by Ken Graydon. The section of the building identified as 160 Oxford St. was an Auto Body Repair Shop originally run by Bert Thompson and later taken over by Zip Cole. In the 1935 Telephone Directory, 158-162 is listed with James Ruddick, Cockshutt, Frost & Wood, farm implements.

On the vacant lot to the south of this building was a Blacksmith Shop owned by James Livens and later by Frank Jackson. The shop was demolished in 1952.

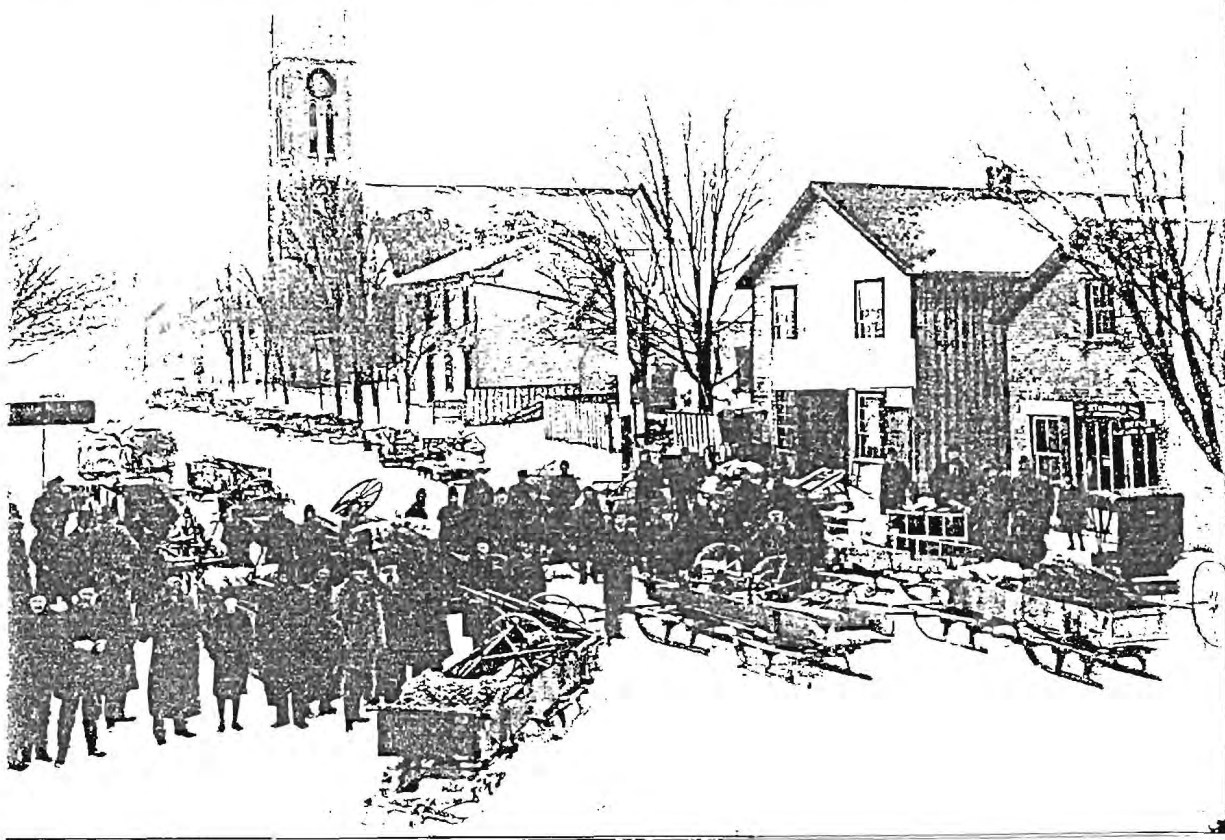
The two properties at 164 and 168 Oxford St. were owned by Walter Law who ran a livery stable. He also operated four delivery wagons, used to bring groceries and meat from the local shops to the residents of Ingersoll. A round trip to Salford with horse and cutter cost \$1.00. At one time the red brick building housed the Dingman Repair & Bicycle Shop and later became the temporary home of the Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre.

The Anglican Church Parking Lot was the location of the Hide House, forerunner of Stones Fertilizer Company. Area butchers, farmers and trappers brought animal skins and hides here to be sold. Many of the hides were tied into bundles and resold to tanneries. Skins such as muskrat, fox, etc. were brought in already dried and stretched on frames. Some of these were made into wearing apparel at the shop.

Oxford St., looking south from King, late 1800's

3

(Standard Sewing Machines Office A.J. Clark & Sons - bottom right)



David Stone recalls as a young boy watching Miss Dodds fashioning hats from some of the furs. She was a spinsterlady whose perennial costume was a black wool dress, black wool stockings and black leather boots.

In 1932 this building became the headquarters of the Y.M., Y.W.C.A. The club initiated many athletic activities in Ingersoll, including basketball, baseball, weight lifting, badminton and table tennis. It was equipped with a driving net in the attic for those who wished to practice their golf. The Y is also responsible for organizing a physical education programme in the Anglican Church gym for grades seven and eight public school students as well as a swimming programme for Ingersoll and area youngsters. Ingersoll's proficiency in swimming competitions earned us the name of "Swim Town". During the depression, a "Drop In" programme was organized for the unemployed.

The Department of Health maintained an office in this building. One night in 1961 the building caught fire, awakening the adjacent home owner to a sound which resembled hail rattling against his house only to find that it was the noise of windows shattering from the heat. The vacant lot has since become a parking area.

The original house at 180 was a large brown frame double dwelling set close to the street. In 1955 it was demolished and replaced by the present home.



Memorial Plaque,

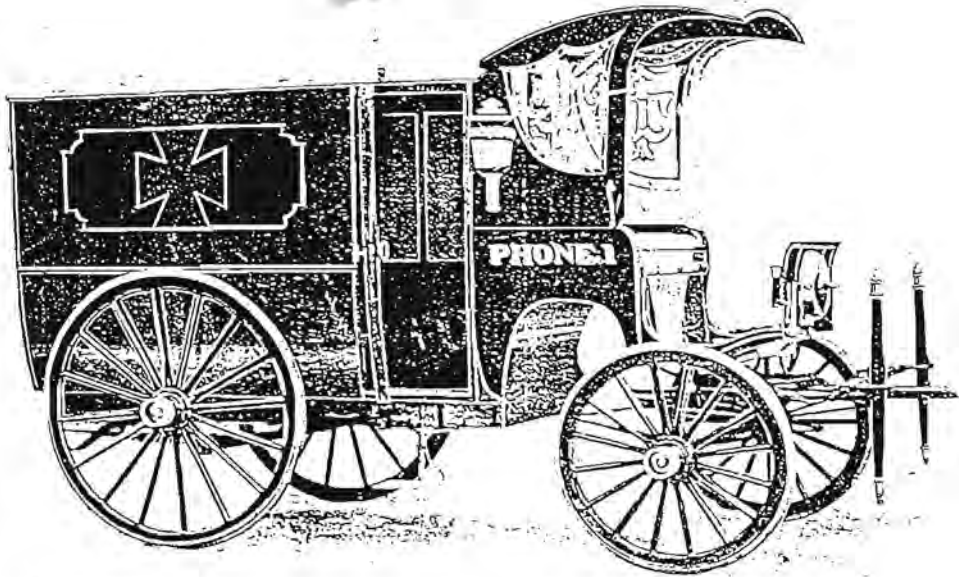
St. James

Anglican Church

In 1830 Charles Ingersoll provided five acres of his property for the purpose of erecting an Anglican Church. This property was contained within the boundaries of King St. W., Albert, Frances and Oxford Streets. The original frame church was built at 114 Frances St. with cemetery located adjacent to it. When the present St. James Anglican Church was built in 1868, the old structure was moved to King St. W. and converted to a double dwelling. Locally produced brick from Hagel's Corners were used to construct the new Gothic style church. The bodies were reinterred in the Ingersoll Rural Cemetery, including Charles Ingersoll, his son Thomas and his mother, all of whom died in the Cholera epidemic of 1832.

Directing our attention to the south east corner of King and Oxford Streets, we find the location of the Lee Hotel, named after the first owner. Later it became known as the Dereham Hotel. Circa 1912, the building housed the farm machinery dealership of Manzier & Thomas. The property was purchased by George Mason, who planned to open a movie theatre there but located it further east on King St. He sold it to Mr. J. Clear who built a garage on the site. Other car dealerships to use the building were Harley Copeland (Buick) and McVittie & Shelton (Ford). A hydraulic elevator, utilizing water, raised the automobiles to the second storey for repair. A second building, 159 Oxford, was erected at the rear where the original blacksmith shop of Murray & Waugh was located. The two buildings were separated by a narrow alleyway but were connected at the upper level by an enclosed ramp which could accommodate motor vehicles. For a short time the corner building was occupied by the Canadian Tire Corporation.

A portion of the upper floor, 165 Oxford St., was rented by Fred Wurker from 1947 to 1975 for his Sign Painting business. Over the years he has painted many signs throughout Ingersoll and area, e.g. Morrows, Bordens, Laytons, Fletcher & Jewett, Ingersoll Cream Cheese and many more. Some, such as Zurbriggs, are still being used. He is also responsible for painting the attractive "Ingersoll" signs which greet visitors on their arrival.



Ambulance, manufactured by Mitchell & Co. Ingersoll Ont.

In 1897 Mitchell & Company opened a business at 159 Oxford. They turned out a superior class of funeral cars, casket wagons and ambulances, supplying customers in various parts of Canada from the Maritimes to the Pacific coast.

During the 1920's, Lorne Tractors was located here. This company is responsible for outfitting Ingersoll's first fire truck. Work began in 1926 and many local menfolk watched the progress with interest until it's completion in 1927.

Ford & Barret Motor Sales was also housed at this address in the 1930's. Frank Witty purchased the building in 1945 as headquarters for his trucking business. He hauled such things as steering gears for the Ingersoll Machine Co. during the war, and

cheese and margarine for the Ingersoll Cheese Company. In 1954, he acquired the school bus franchise. In 1980 he relocated his business on Whiting St. and the building was demolished a few years later.

The property at 169 was once owned by James Joyce who ran a Machine Shop in a small barn which was located at the rear of the lot.

OXFORD STREET HOMES

177: Dr. G.L. Murray graduated from Veterinary College in 1905 and started his practice in Lakeside. Two years he opened an office at 177 Oxford St. The original brown frame house on the property served as a dwelling as well as an office and treatment centre. In his early years as a Veterinary Surgeon antibiotics were not available so consequently all medications had to be prepared by the doctor. In 1939 the old building was town down and replaced by the present home.



181: This cement block house was built for R.A. Skinner who owned and operated Skinner's Livery on the north side of Charles St. at the Oxford corner. The single storey bandshell or Queen Ann veranda was removed by a former owner but the beautiful oak interior woodwork has been preserved. Two fireplaces with decorative handcarved oak mantles and trim were added by a Mr. Long, no relation to the present owner. The sections of the living room mantle are fastened together with wooden pegs which allowed for easy disassembly during refinishing. Several large windows topped with crescent shaped stained glass panels plus the tall french doors from the hall to the living room give the rooms a bright spacious appearance. This home was the scene of many elaborate house parties, the form of entertainment that made up the fabric of social life in times past. The Skinner Livery, sometimes referred to as the Bon Ton Livery maintained vehicles for pleasure driving, business trips, weddings, funerals, etc.

185: This one storey cottage is over one hundred years old. Originally it had had six rooms and a summer kitchen at the rear belying it's small appearance. Its most attractive features are the front porch with the decorative fascia board, molded brackets and interesting railing construction and the two crescent shaped stained glass panels in the front windows. This house was built for his sister by F. Richardson, lumber dealer and owner of a planing mill, forerunner of the present business at 31 Thames St. S. He became involved in the lumber business around 1885 and erected or supplied lumber for numerous buildings in the area. This home has no fireplace and when purchased by a local family in 1927, a furnace was installed as the cookstove in the kitchen had been the only source of heat.

189: This large birch building, one of the older homes in this section of Oxford St. was erected by the Christopher Brothers and occupied by Aaron Christopher for a number of years before moving into a new house at 276 Oxford. The broad bracketed eave of the Italianate style was common in Ontario around

1860. The white marble fireplace in the living room is similar to the one in the Christopher house at 276. The Christopher Brothers were well known Ingersoll Contractors, who built many structures, still in use in the Town e.g. Daly House and the Anglican Church, previously mentioned, as well as many quality homes.

The Bible Christian Church and parsonage were located on a lot on Oxford St. which is now part of the Victory Memorial School property. Both buildings have been removed. The frame church was relocated at 88 King St. West and became the home of Squire Peter Kennedy. Squire Kennedy was well respected in Ingersoll having been a man of many vocations. These included carpenter and builder, grocer, hotel keeper at the Dereham House, seven years as market clerk and the buyer of hides, wool, etc. Later the building was renovated to accommodate the Walker Funeral Home and residence.

213: This dwelling, commonly referred to as the Gray House, was built in three sections. The angled window frame on the south side is typical of the architectural style of the 1850's and 60's. It was purchased by Benjamin Gray in 1895 for \$450.00 from John Hugill, well known Ingersoll Photogrpaher. At one time Benjamin Gray was the market clerk at the Town Hall and he also collected the rental fee, sometimes as low as \$1.00, for the use of the auditorium.

A two hundred acre farm bordering on King St. and extending southward, encorporating Oxford was the original parcel of land deeded to the Ingersoll family from the Crown in 1802. A short time later Thomas Ingersoll sold his land and moved to Port Credit. The price of the land at that time was fifty barrels of merchantable salmon and 88.57 (ENGLISH POUNDS). In 1818 his sons Charles and James returned and claimed the family farm at a Sheriff's Sale. It was divided into building lots of 1/6 acre in 1856 and houses were erected shortly afterward. Some of the homes in the section of Oxford between Fraces and Ann are among the oldest on the street as

building initially took place close to the core area.

206: This attractive white frame home has been in the same family for three generations. Although the exact building date is not known it is well over one hundred years old. Decorative spoolwork and bracket accents can be found on Ontario verandas dating back to the 1830's. Verandas were introduced into Ontario in 1925 by retired British officers who had served in India and along the Mediterranean where this feature was an integral part of the house. They supposedly originated in Portugal. The gable end of this particular veranda suggests Greek Revival design.

212: The unusual clustering of the slender, fluted columns gives this red brick house a distinctively dignified air. It was purchased by the George family in the late 1800's and later sold to Mr. F.H. Adams, an engineer who worked for a diamond mine in South Africa. He recounted many tales of the cruel treatment of the black African workers.



218 Oxford St.

218: This beautiful red brick home was built in 1896 for Henry G. Boyse. He owned and operated a farm near Verschoyle where he was born. Later he moved to Ingersoll and opened a flour and feed store at 70 Thames St. N. (Edit's). The roofing is the original Welsh Slate as is the iron work around the roof top and porch railing. The original wrap around veranda has been replaced by one of fieldstone. The scalloped cornice adds a distinctive and delicate touch. The interior woodwork, including the beautiful upper bannister carved by F.P. Leake has been restored. The work of Mr. Leake, an outstanding Ingersoll wood and furniture carver appears in many of Ingersoll's finer older homes. At one time the house was divided. A study for the Anglican Church Organist was located in the apartment on the upper floor while the main floor became headquarters for the "Big Eight Club".

220: One of the oldest homes in this section is the fram building, 220 Oxford St. erected in 1858. It shows evidence as originally being constructed as a duplex.

224: T.D. Maitland, owner of this property, was a well known Ingersoll business man. In 1921 he pruchased the Mason Theatre on King Street West and opened the era of the talkies in Ingersoll. The theatre was sold in 1965, making way for an appliance outlet.

244: This white frame Victorian style house was built by Justus Miller in 1895. In the 1880's he and his brother became successful contractors for the Dominion Government, constructing such large public works as canal locks, docks, etc. After moving to Mount Elgin, he became engaged in the lumber business. The mass production of thin studs and joists replaced the massive timbers needed to frame a house. These homes were termed "Stick Style". However style was irrelevant as they comprised of many separate elements. This house incorporated a whimsical tower, bay windows, interesting roof angles and a veranda with softly curved arches and fancy woodwork. The interior carvings were done by Frank Leake.

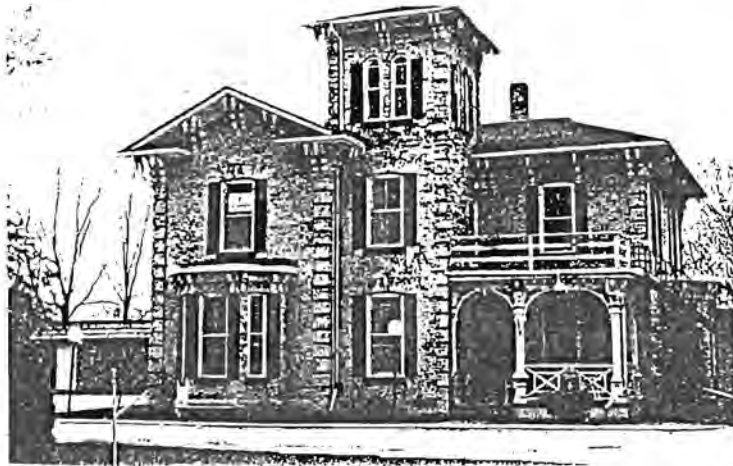


244 Oxford St.

250: Decorative bargeboard (gingerbread), taken from designs found in windows of medieval churches, became a popular addition to houses in the 1860's. It was cut from three inch thick pine boards. The earliest bargeboard was more board than space but later took on a lacy look, indicating that this dwelling was built circa 1880 - 1890. The gables of this Victoria home are further emphasized by the addition of the finials. The original yellow brick has been painted. Before being converted to a triplex, the house had seven bedrooms and three fireplaces of which one remains. The apartment complex at 256, built about twenty-six years ago, replaces a dwelling of similar style.

270: The corner stone of this red brick Victorian home built in 1897 was discovered during renovations and bears the name "Buchanan". The property was purchased in the early 1900's by Mr. & Mrs. G. Bartlett, clothing merchants in Ingersoll for many years. The home with it's eleven foot ceilings has four bedrooms, the original "maids" staircase and an elegant winding cherry staircase in the front hall. Also many of the other

features have been preserved such as the pine woodwork, the fretwork design paneling and the bevelled glass in the front door and in a number of upstairs windows. The beautifully carved woodwork was created by Mr. Leake. Edna Bartlett was a pupil of his and carved many fine pieces herself. A more recent addition is the solarium. The original lilac and fruit trees still flourish on the one acre lot at 270 Oxford St.



Christopher House, 276 Oxford St.

276: This large yellow brick Italianate Villa style home was built circa 1880 by the Christopher Brothers and was the residence of Aaron Christopher. The design was introduced in England at the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign as a model suburban housing for the rising merchantile class. Its main feature is the central Tuscan Tower with its tall rounded Italianate style windows and eaves. Although this building has been changed to accomodate a retirement home, some of the original interior features have been retained. These include the white marble fireplace in the living room, the oversized mirror, with its intricately carved wooden frame and the low marble topped table in the front entranceway. The tall archway to the hall is flanked with two

red stained glass panels resembling side lights. As was the custom, a lady would designate one day of the month as her "Calling Day" at which time she would be at home to receive guests. Fashionable women would leave their calling card as evidence of their visit. One former Ingersoll resident recalls, as a child, donning her white gloves and with her mother paying a visit to the Christopher home. This house with its large double living room was the scene of many memorable parties.

The white stucco house at 282 Oxford as well as the next two homes to the south were built by Justus Miller.

286: The red brick house at 286 Oxford was used for many years as the parsonage for the Baptist Church.

298: This yellow brick house was built in 1875 for a prominent Ingersoll furniture proprietor. Its five marble fireplaces could be used for burning wood or coal. The original stain glass window above the front door was broken and replaced in 1878. The layout is based on the central hall plan and was originally a sixteen room house. The attractive brick coach house at the rear is now used as a private home. The Alderson family owned it for about fifty years. Because of the spacious thirty foot double drawing room, it was the scene of many elaborate parties and became known as the "Party House". Before Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians became internationally famous, they played here for parties while still working out of London. In the 1930's the main house was divided into a two family dwelling.

304: This red brick house was built in 1903 for James Kerr, a partner in the business of Smith and Kerr, men's clothing store, Thames St.. George Smith opened the store in Ingersoll in the late 1870's and was joined by Mr. Kerr around 1907. The two storey board and batten carriage house at the back and a large pasture extending to Wonham St. accommodated his horses. Three of the interior walls in the home are wide enough to accommodate sliding wooden door panels. A veranda

at the back of the home has been enclosed for an office.



Gayfer House, 310 Oxford St.

310: This Neo-Gothic style home referred to as the "Gayfer House" was built in 1863 by Noxon, the same builder as the James Harris home (Elm Hurst). Much of the interior trim is similar in the two buildings. The property was increased to almost five acres in 1881 encompassing the lot at 304 Oxford, making the aforementioned carriage house part of the Gayfer holdings. Except for the removal of a wrought iron fence bordering the street, the house from the front appears as it did when first built. In the early 1900's the rear wing was demolished and a sun room, pantry and rear vestibule were erected using the original brick. The three chimneys are in fact chimney flues and ventilation chimneys. The original roofing was slate. Guy Lombardo played in this house for the "Coming Out" party of Dorothy Gayfer with over two hundred invited guests. What was the tower used for? According to a granddaughter of John Gayfer, it was used for learning to smoke! The land and premises were purchased by Louise and

John Gayfer (a well known Ingersoll druggist) in 1881 and remained in the Gayfer family until the 1960's.

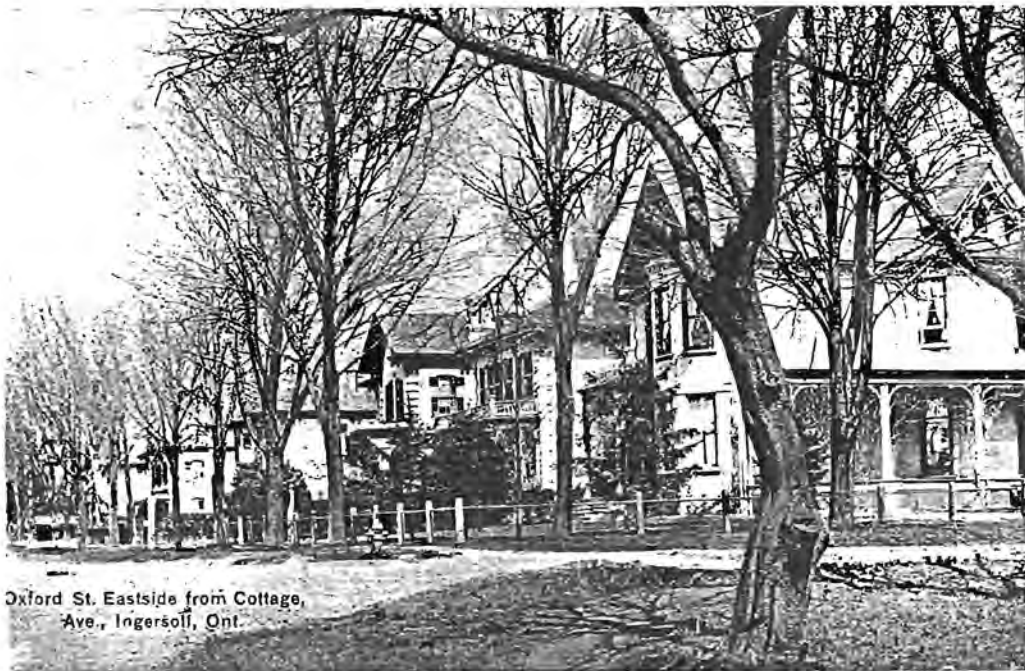
316: Many of the features of a Tudor style house have been incorporated in this home, including the patterned brick work, interesting chimney treatment, groups of rectangular windows, and complex roof line with many gables. Straight clean lines and design are typical. The wood paneling in the den and the wainscotting in several of the rooms are other examples of the Tudor influence. The home was built in 1937 and given to Harold and Lorna Wilson by his father E.A. Wilson as a wedding present. The Wilson family owned the Ingersoll Machine & Tool Company and were also involved in speed boat racing. In 1939 Harold won the President's Cup with his craft "Miss Canada", making the first time in U.S. boat racing history that the cup was won by a foreigner. Harold is included in the Canada's Sports Hall of Fame.

320: This red brick house was built for William Thompson circa 1890. Later he added the section at the rear enlarging the house to accommodate six bedrooms. The two large crescent shaped stain glass windows and the two storey veranda have been removed. In 1905 the house was purchased by D.G. Cuthbertson Insurance Agent, whose office was located in the east half of the Norsworthy Building, Thames St., later occupied by Dunlop's Barber Shop.



329 Oxford St.

329: The front section of this house was built in 1835, making it one of the oldest brick homes in Ingersoll. The solid brick walls are constructed from a locally hand made soft brick. The back brick veneer section was added in 1890 by Bill McKay. The veranda is highlighted by the decoratively carved fascia board. The house sits on a parcel of land that was part of the original Ingersoll survey.



319: This house was built in 1888 for Stephen Noxon, treasurer of Noxon Brothers Agricultural Works. The company started in 1856 at the present location of the Canada Trust Company before being moved further north to obtain the transportation advantages of the railroad. He was a great supporter of the hospital project, naming a ward in Alexandra Hospital after his wife Jessie as well as furnishing a ward in memory of his daughter, Louise, who died very young. Originally this home had front and side verandas and at the rear was an archway to accommodate a horse and carriage. The extended gable at the front protects the bay window section from inclement weather. Soldiers returning from World War I duty were entertained in the large living room. A dance floor was improvised by stretching linen tightly over the rug and fastening it securely along the walls.

315: This brick dwelling was once owned by John Banbury, former Minister of Agriculture. At the rear of the property was a small barn used to stable his horse. To reach this building, he used, as a driveway, the road allowance which ran from Dufferin St. northward between the properties on Oxford and Thames Streets to Cottage St. Farmers also used this lane when making deliveries of vegetables, meat, eggs, milk, etc. This street was once used frequently by home owners in this section, however, is now a right-of-way in name only.

309: The original house was built circa 1877. John Turner and Harley Copeland were two of the former owners. It was the St. James Anglican Manse for a number of years before being destroyed by fire. In 1928 Jack Eidt rebuilt the present house. The rafters and the stain glass window in the rear sunroom came from the Ebenezer Church located one mile north of Verschoyle. The removable oak panels protecting the front entrance during the winter were originally the front doors of the same church. The hand cut stone window sills were made by Pounder Plumbing & Planing Mill, Stratford, using stone from the St. Mary's Quarry. Many of the beveled glass windows are further highlighted with a cut glass cornflower design. On the wall above the mantle, is a mural of an old English castle scene which was created by a Dutch painter using paint tinted with marble dust to help reserve the rich colours. The upper part of the garage at the rear of the property was used as a chicken and brooder house in connection with his feed business located at 70 Thames St. North.



Seldon House, 305 Oxford St.

305: This yellow brick Victorian home, built circa 1865, features a two storey detached barn where the original occupants stabled their horses and carriages. Mr. Richard Seldon and his daughter, Annie, who lived here from 1894 to 1967, served as Clerks for the Township of North Oxford. Between 1918 and 1967 residents came to the house to pay their taxes in what is now the formal dining room. High ceilings, elaborate moldings, wide baseboards and pine floors grace each of the formal rooms in the main part of the house. The brass chandeliers in the dining room and lower hall are original, as is the fireplace in the parlour. Molded cherubs decorate one of the two curved archways upstairs. The servants quarters were located in the rear portion of the house along with the summer kitchen which retains its original painted tin ceiling. The Seldon House with its triple brick exterior walls was built to last.

293: This fine old home was built around 1880 and illustrates the typical broad bracketed eaves of the Italianate style, popular in the mid to late 1800's. Fred J. Stone was one of

the earliest occupants of this yellow brick house. He joined Wm. Stones Sons Ltd. in 1907 as manager of the Ingersoll branch. The operation started as a hide and wool business but soon developed into a fertilizer plant, later expanding to make livestock feed concentrates. In the 1920's it passed into the possession of W.A.C. Forman, a family relative. At this time the house was divided to accommodate two units. His father owned the "FAIR", a store at 126 Thames St. South which sold dry goods and household furnishings and utensils. When the store came under the management of Mr. Forman Jr., it became known as "Forman's 5¢ - \$1.00".



Hutt House, 269 Oxford St.

269: The present home erected in 1926 replaces the original red brick house built before the turn of the century. The first dwelling was located behind the present one leaving a large spacious lawn facing Oxford St. which was used for a bowling green. Much of Ingersoll could be viewed from the cupola and during a fire the occupants would scurry aloft for a ring side seat. Originally the home was owned by Sheriff Brady and later purchased by Reverend Hutt, first minister of Saint Pauls Presbyterian Church, Ingersoll. He was an avid gardener and after removing the old structure, used the basement foundation to establish a beautiful sunken garden. The garage presently located on the property was originally the office of the Ingersoll Machine Company, King St. W. and old company records were recently discovered in the attic by the owner's children.

261: This house built circa 1882 was one of the first to be constructed of the smooth red brick which became available at this time. The exterior walls were double bricked. Brick was also used for some of the interior wall construction, a fact which became apparent when a former owner removed two of the walls to enlarge a room. On the south side was a Conservatory and green house which was replaced by a sun room. A dumb waiter, with several shelves and sliding glass doors, allowed food to be raised to the kitchen from the basement which was used as a cold storage. Originally the house had five fireplaces. Beautifully carved woodwork adorns the remaining mantles as well as the banister railing. In the front hallway a colourful stain glass window with a bird motif greets visitors. In the men's smoking room, now the living room, a likeness of William Shakespeare is incorporated in the stain glass panel over the window. Along the front and north side of the property was a low stone wall. Four cement urns, filled with flowers, were placed at the ends of the two sidewalks leading to the front door. Mr. Spencer Freeman was the original owner. Later C.W. Riley, a local cheese maker bought the property. He was the nephew of C.W. Riley Sr. "Cheese King of Western Ontario" and took over the ownership of Slawson's Cheese Company, Ingersoll from his

uncle.

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257: Originally this house was a frame dwelling located in the centre of a larger lot. Later it was moved a short distance to the south and bricked. Subsequently the lot was divided and the house at 253 was built.

253: This home, built by Foster Wilson, a prominent Ingersoll builder, is similar in style to the one at 114 Frances St. by the same contractor. Chestnut, which was becoming popular, is used extensively throughout the house.

249: The brick cottage at 249 was built in 1871, a date that was confirmed by newspapers found in the foundation during renovations. One well known and respected Ingersoll resident to occupy the house was James Stevens, mayor from 1891-1893. He moved to Ingersoll from near Oshawa when he was fourteen years old and soon afterwards became a public school teacher. For twenty one years he kept a general store in Mount Elgin. Upon retiring in 1881, he became Clerk of Fifth Division Court at Ingersoll, a position which he held for twenty one years. Mr. Stevens acted as Police Magistrate for a short time when a death left the position temporarily vacant. Later it was owned by Mrs. F.W. Staples, a widow, whose husband a respected businessman, was one of Canada's earliest Ford Dealers. His garage was located at 22 Charles St. E. This house and the one at 218 Albert St. were built by the same contractor and were almost identical. The front porch has since been enclosed. Much of the wide pine trim around the interior windows and doorways remains. The old fireplace was replaced, utilizing a beam from the old Skinner building located at the north end of Oxford St. The bathroom had a old water closet toilet with a tank mounted high on the wall, activated by a pull cord mechanism. A system of small pipes running through the attic joists indicated that there was gas lighting at one time. The house had a automatic oil fired hot water heating system plus a locomotive washing machine that had its own hot water heater. Both inovations were considered rare at that time.

In the beginning of Ingersoll's history, Oxford Street was considered to be the residential section for the prominent and the elite. Certainly it reflected a lifestyle of stability and quiet dignity which prompted one former Oxford St. resident to reflect "It was a good street to grow up on".

The Heritage Committee hopes that you have found this brief history of Oxford Street both interesting and informative. The story, however, is far from complete and we welcome additional information.

The Committee expresses sincere appreciation to all of those whose willingness to share their information and photographs has made the compiling of this history possible, also thanks to Shoults' Lighting & Brass for the photographs of Oxford Street scenes and to Millcreek Printing for the donation of paper.