

WESTERN ONTARIO

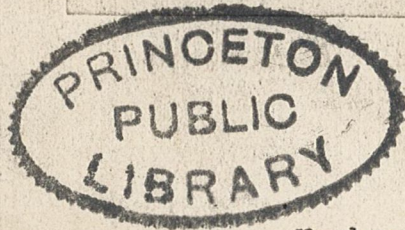
HISTORICAL NOTES

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of local historical research and writing.

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The Woodstock Public Library

Headquarters of the Oxford County Library Association

(Illustration by courtesy of the Woodstock Sentinel-Review.)

AN OXFORD COUNTY HISTORICAL PROJECT

In 1941 the Oxford County Library Association undertook an interesting and constructive project which undoubtedly will prove to be a real contribution to the history of the county, and even the province. Under the auspices of the association, persons closely associated with their communities compiled information on them. The representative to the association from each community was responsible for presenting the material which was gathered often by more than one person. In a few instances the work had already been done for a church anniversary or a school magazine. In this issue of the Western Ontario Historical Notes we present four of the articles compiled and it is hoped that further articles may be available for publication in future numbers.

The Oxford County Library Association is to be congratulated on seeing the possibilities in the project and on their carrying it out. Human memory is short. Scenes change, industries come and go, families become prominent and disappear, and often the record goes too. The Oxford County Library Association has done something constructive and tangible to preserve the record of the past.

The example set shows what is possible when the load is shared. Other county library associations, historical societies, and women's institutes could do the same. If enough work of this kind were undertaken the total would be surprisingly large and future generations would benefit from the labors of those who can uncover the story while it is still available.

This issue of the Western Ontario Historical Notes is devoted to the articles produced by the Oxford County Library Association with a view to drawing attention to the work, putting the findings in a permanent form, and encouraging other groups.

HISTORY OF EMBRO

Mrs. R.J. Sutherland

The history of any community is to a large extent a history of its people. So I could not do better than begin this history of Embro with a quotation from Mrs. F.D. Hemans "Not as the conqueror comes, they, the true hearted came; not with the roll of stirring drums, and the trumpet that sings of fame; not as the flying come, in silence and in fear; they shook the depths of the desert's gloom with their hymns of lofty cheer." Thus she referred to the pioneers.

Among the earliest settlers of Zorra, of which Embro is the chief village, was a colony from the New England States of United Empire Loyalist stock who made their way into Canada after the American Revolution. They settled only the fourth concession which runs north and south through the village. In religion they were Methodists and Baptists and had established church services, Sunday and day schools under the leadership of the Rev. Robert Corson and the Rev. Darius Cross. This was six years before the coming of any Presbyterian minister and ten years before the arrival of the Rev. Donald McKenzie, the first pastor of a Scotch congregation.

Embro is said to be the Gaelic form of Edinburgh. The first lot sold in Embro was the north half of Lot 12 on the 4th concession on January 13, 1832 at \$2.00 per acre. This is part of Embro now. The first buildings were two distilleries owned by McDonald and Crittenden. The Township of West Zorra was first surveyed in 1820 and Embro became a separate municipality in 1858.

Sutherland's Directory has this to say of Embro. "Embro is pleasantly situated on a branch of the river Thames. The site of the village could not be more desirable, having unsurpassed natural hydraulic power for mill and manufacturing purposes and being on a rising eminence and surrounded with a fertile and beautiful

"The earliest settlements of the township of the Zorras" was an article written by W.A. Ross which appeared in the Western Ontario Historical Notes of September 1945. In it will be found the story of the first settlers of the Embro district. Mr. Ross is the author of "The History of Zorra and Embro" (Embro, 1909).

section of country." At first the village stores were situated north of the present village near the North Embro Mills. However, a flax mill owned by John Honeyman was begun on the site of which now stands the ruins of an evaporator, northwest of the Town Hall. The Laycock oatmeal mills, later owned by D.R. Ross were built to the east of the village where the river crosses Commissioner Street and by whose ruins in the river a swimming pool was made in recent years, in about 1936. This was destroyed by spring floods after only two years' use.

So business life moved further south. Another flour and grist mill was built south of the village where the river crosses the 4th line, called Scotia Mills. This mill was owned by Mr. J.M. Ross, father of D.R. and Columbus Ross. He later bought the Laycock Mills and carried on an extensive business. Also in the east end of the village was a carding and cloth factory owned by John McDonald. The following businesses flourished at that time: Watchmaker and jeweler, boots and shoes, 8 blacksmiths, waggon and carriage makers, tinsmith, carpenters, potash manufacturer, 4 general stores, 2 cabinet makers, undertaker, 3 doctors and a pump manufacturer. In 1875, Embro had two newspapers, the "Planet" conducted by Mr. Dawson and the "Review" by Mr. Hay. Later in 1880, the "Embro Courier" under the management of Mr. Stewart then later Mr. Alger and Mr. McKinnon, grew up. It was discontinued in August, 1934.

The Wesleyan Methodists were the first religious body to enter Embro, meeting in the old Temperance Hall on the corner of Commissioner and Argyle Streets. Mr. Nasmyth who emigrated from Scotland in 1832, settled in Embro and formed a Methodist class and held meetings at his own house. He later assisted Captain W. McKay in drilling the Zorra volunteers during the Mackenzie rebellion.

The Old Log Church situated on the 7th line, east of Embro, built in 1832, less than three years after the arrival of the first shipload of settlers from Sutherlandshire, Scotland, ministered to the Scotch Presbyterians under the Rev. Donald McKenzie, and at that time the religious centre extending almost twenty-

five square miles. The frame church known as the Auld Kirk was erected in 1836 on the south side of Memorial Park. In communion season, when large crowds gathered, the people went to Dent's woods on the slope of the hill on D.A. McKay's farm. In 1863, the present Knox United Church was built, the site being donated by Donald Mateson. The Rev. Donald McKenzie was the minister for thirty-seven years, at first residing on Gleness Farm where Mr. Peter Smith until recently resided, later moving into the Manse bought in Embro.

The Baptists worshipped in a church built in 1862, just west of Knox United Church and were ministered to by the Rev. Mr. Beardsall. This building was used later as a town hall until the present one was built in 1893, then it was torn down and additional horse sheds built. Now these are gone and a lovely tennis court has been made there.

A Methodist church was built in 1854 and served the community until 1875, when it was sold. It can still be seen standing as a barn at the Albion Hotel. The Methodists built another church in Embro in 1874 and sold it in 1925, when it was made over into a fine modern continuation school and the congregation joined the Knox United congregation before church union.

Ebenezer Congregation Church was formed after a visit in 1869-1870 of Evangelists Russell and Carrol to Knox Church, when differences of opinion became pronounced and many withdrew from the church, worshipping for over four years in the Auld Kirk. But in 1877 Ebenezer Congregational Church was built directly opposite on the south side of St. Andrew's Street. This church went into union in 1925 as did Knox Church. The continuing Presbyterians started worshipping in the town hall and did so for about two years until the beautiful residence of D.R. Ross was bought and converted into a commodious manse and church.

Embro has long been the centre of the West Zorra Agricultural Fair. At first, in 1853, the fair was held on the vacant lots on Elgin Street between Commissioner and John Streets. The officers of the first agricultural society were President

Edward Huggins, Secretary John Fraser, Treasurer D.A. McPherson. In 1885 the agricultural grounds comprising several acres donated by Donald Matheson were opened. Later the Crystal Palace, used as a rink in winter, was donated by George Matheson, Sarnia, and shipped here and rebuilt. This rink has since been enlarged, and a large grandstand has been built. On these grounds, or Matheson Park as it has been named, the famous Caledonian games are held each year as they have been since 1937. They were not held in 1942 owing to the war.

The first Highland society of Embro was organized in March 1856 for the purpose of preserving the language, martial spirit, dress, music, literature, antiquities and games of the ancient Caledonians. Then, as now, great crowds gathered to see the games, the dancing and to hear the music. In those days, John Tait, tinsmith of Embro was one of the best Highland dancers. George Forbes, Angus Kerr, William McLeod, Donald Bain McKay were some of the greatest athletes. On July 1st, 1937, it was estimated that 4,000 people gathered in Embro at Matheson Park and witnessed a program of 120 talented pipers and dancers and five pipe bands massed as one, athletic events of all kinds, and tug-of-war. This final contest revived memories of the famous tug-of-war contest in 1893 at Chicago World's Fair, when the men from Zorra won the championship of America from teams representing Canada, United States, Great Britain, Belgium, France, and Germany. This team was composed of five members and two officers, James Sutherland, M.P., President; E.L. Sutherland, Captain; Robert McIntosh, anchor-man; William Munro, Ira Hummason, Robert McLeod and Alex Clark. They received a cup valued at \$200 and a cairn is built to their memory at the entrance to the North Embro cemetery.

The first school on the site of the present public school was of logs and was the scene of Zorra's polling booth in 1844. In 1858 the village of Embro became a separate municipality and the first Council meeting was held on November 8th. The members were, Reeve--John Dent, Council--Robert Mann, John Short, John McDonald, Donald Matheson; John Fraser--Clerk, D.R. McPherson--Treasurer.

In 1860, a company of volunteers was organized in West Zorra and Embro under the name of Embro and West Zorra Highland Rifle Company. It numbered fifty-five privates. In 1863, this company entered the 22nd Battalion Oxford Rifles No. 2 Company with Captain Loveys and Lieutenant McIntosh as officers. In 1866, when the Fenians were about to cross into Canada, these volunteers were called out under Captain Duncan. They were stationed at Sandwich for frontier service until June, when they returned home. It was at this time that the famous remark was made: "They may tak Montreal and they may tak Toronto, they may tak Woodstock but they'll na' tak Zorra."

The post office was at one time across the street from the Royal Bank building. Later when Mr. Donald Matheson built the present bank building, one-half housed the post office and the other half was used by Mr. Matheson's son, a lawyer. Mr. Matheson was Post Master in 1875 and his daughter, Miss Mary Matheson, was later.

At this time, as Embro had no train connections, Mr. W.S. Vanattar drove to and from Zorra Station, on the C.P.R. mainline, with mail and passengers. In 1905, a company known as the St. Marys and Western Ontario Railway Company was incorporated for the purpose of building and operating a road from Ingersoll to St. Marys, running through Zorra Junction, Embro, Bennington, Lakeside and St. Marys. The officers of the Company were President James Chalmers, Vice-President D.R. Ross, Secretary and Solicitor J.W. Graham, Treasurer H.L. Rice, Board of Directors E.L. Sutherland, T.O. Robson, David Bonis, F.E. Butcher, Archie Baird. The temporary board entered into an agreement with the C.P.R., relative to the construction and operation of the road between Embro and St. Marys. A bonus was received from different municipalities to be served by the railroad, Embro's share was \$5,000. The road was completed in 1909, the year of Embro Old Boys' Reunion.

Mr. E.J. Cody became Post Master when the post office was moved to his own store where Clarence Campbell and the Bell Telephone Office are now. About 1920, at Mr. Cody's death, J.R. Mooney was appointed Post Master. He built the fine

brick building, being residence and post office combined. About 1924, the Toronto City Dairy built a modern plant near the C.P.R. station and for a number of years a great quantity of milk was shipped from the surrounding district. There were two trains a day, north and south, which have now been reduced to one train a day. The City Dairy closed in 1939.

The Embro Public Library first started as a Mechanics Institute in 1882 in a small brick building near where Mrs. J.G. McIntosh's store is. Later the library was moved to a building on the site of the present post office. In one side of the building, Mr. Rutherford mended shoes, and Captain Gordon kept the library on the other side. Later the library was moved across the street to where the printing office now is and Mr. Cody looked after it. Many used to gather there to play checkers. The first supporters were D.R. Ross, G.A. Munro, John Ross (Ensign), Major Wm. Loveys, Geo. Gordon, Hugh Ross (teacher), E.J. Cody, Dr. Jameson, and Miss Mary Matheson. In 1895, it became a public library and two years later when R.A. Duncan was Reeve of Embro, the town hall was built and the library found a permanent resting place. Mr. Duncan, son of Dr. Duncan, and an efficient druggist, was located at that time across the street from the town hall and looked after the library. Ross Campbell and Miss Rutherford were at one time librarians. Mrs. Grace McNeil was librarian for twenty-five years, till her death in 1940. The town hall will seat 400 in the auditorium on the second floor.

Embro has a beautiful memorial park on the grounds where the Auld Kirk stood which is kept in fine condition by the Women's Institute. This organization came into being in January, 1908 when the Farmers' Institute which had been flourishing for a number of years called a special meeting to which the ladies of the community were invited to hear a speaker, Dr. Bacchus of Aylmer. It was her object to form a Women's Institute, which she did with following officers--President, Mrs. E.J. Cody; Vice-President, Mrs. J.E. McKay; Secretary-Treasurer, Mrs. G.A. Sutherland; Directors, Mrs. Columbus Ross, Mrs. Jas. Brand, and Mrs. W.G. Dawes. In 1919, a fitting war memorial for West Zorra and Embro was erected on the grounds of the

Memorial Park, a silent reminder of loyalty, heroism and sacrifice.

Dr. Adams came to Embro when a very young man after the American civil war. He was the doctor for a radius of thirty or forty miles. At the time of the small-pox plague, he buried the dead in addition to all his other duties. He kept a drug store in his office and the building which was his home and office stood between the bake-shop and the bank.

On the north-east corner below Embro stood a warehouse owned by Mr. Archibald where grain was bought and sold, and operated by Doug. McMurphy. This building has since been removed.

In 1889, a private bank was established in Embro, owned and managed by Colonel James Munro also Lieutenant Colonel of the 22nd Battalion of the Oxford Rifles. In 1908, he managed Farmers' Bank which later had to close its doors. In 1906 a branch of the Traders' Bank was established. This was later taken over by the Royal Bank. In 1901, Mr. Munro installed an electric light plant in Boxall's mill run by water power. This served the village for lights until hydro took its place in 1914.

In 1860-61 the following businesses were operating in Embro; E.J. Cody, General Store; John Honeyman, flax mill; Samuel Henderson, veterinary; Reuben Tait, pumpmaker; George Matheson, meat market; N. Vanslyke, Temperance House Proprietor. Population--551.

In 1909, G.H. Boxall had the North Embro roller mills. William Hamilton, Scotia flour mills; Thos. Porter, druggist; W.J. Dillane, dry goods, groceries and millinery; E.J. Cody, general merchant, clerk and treasurer of Embro, 1879-1922; J. Fairbairn, groceries; W.J. Geddes, hardware; Hector Sutherland, furniture and undertaker; W.H. Beaver, merchant tailor; T. Holihan, dry goods and groceries; C.H. Munro, dry goods and groceries; Mr. Slater, boots and shoes; A.M. Riddell, meat market; Wm. Karn, barber; D.M. Sutherland and J.W. Gordon, harness-shop; Graham McKay, Andrew McDonald and Geo. Creighton, blacksmiths; McLellan and Son, jewellers; T. Filmore, baker; two hotels--Albion, Wm. Cherry, Commercial--Mr. McInnes. There were three doctors, Dr. Adams, Dr. Green and Dr. Sutherland who about this time sold out to Dr. Montgomery who served the community faithfully till his death in 1937.

HISTORY OF THAMESFORD

Mr. John L. Lawrence

Thamesford is situated on the middle branch of the Thames river half way between Woodstock and London on Highway No. 2, formerly known as the Governor's Road. That portion of the road running through the village is Dundas Street. On the north side of this is East Nissouri Township and the south side North Oxford Township. The village was first called St. Andrews and two streets still bear this name on the old maps. It was re-named Thamesford because of the ford across the river Thames at this point.

In the early years there was a school on Delatre Street to which the children of East Nissouri went, while those across the street living in the township of North Oxford attended a school a mile south of the village on the first concession. About the year 1867 a new two-roomed school was built on Delatre Street. This was a two-storey building of red brick thirty feet by forty feet. The room on the ground floor was used by the pupils of the third and fourth classes while the upper room was used for the younger pupils. About the year 1875 the section No. 1 of North Oxford was joined with No. 5 East Nissouri and all the children in the village attended the same school from that time. This school was used until 1901 when the present Public School was built. Later the continuation school was erected in 1926. Some of the early teachers were Mr. Sutherland, Miss McMillan, J.S. McKay, John McWilliam, F. Kennedy, Bessie McKay, Bella Ross, Tena McMurray, T. Eckardt.

The first mill in Thamesford was built by John Finkle, the father of Judge Finkle of Woodstock. John Johns first manufactured flour and he was followed by Mr. Jos. Cawthorpe. The late Geo. P. Hogg followed the Cawthorpes and Mr. Hogg's sons are the present flour manufacturers.

In the early days a planing mill situated on Washington street was operated by Hazzard Hull and James McMurray. An ashery was an important industry in the village at one time and Mr. Garner was the proprietor.

The Sugden woolen mills at one time employed both men and women. This mill

was situated on the West side of the river on Delatre Street and was later used as a flax mill where sometimes twenty men would be employed. During the summer many boys and girls and men were employed in spreading the flax on the clover fields, then turning and gathering it again. It was taken back to the mill where it was made into tow. This mill was owned and operated by a man familiarly called Flax Brown, and later by Jas. Livingstone of Baden.

The carriage factory of Hull and Kennedy was once a thriving industry where about sixteen men found employment. Later the Gowper Brothers conducted a carriage factory, a blacksmith shop and a lumber mill. The lumber business is now in the hands of Wallace Brothers, and G.G. Hogg has a very flourishing garage and service station where the carriage factory once was.

Before the building of the C.P.R. railway through Thamesford the mail was brought daily by stage from Ingersoll. At one time the mail was delivered three times a week from the Thamesford Post Office to Dornoch (now Rayside), McBrines, Lakeside and Kintore, a mail route of about thirty-five miles.

The coming of the railway to the village changed conditions considerably and the establishment of a branch of the Traders Bank was a great convenience to the citizens.

The library was first a branch of the Sons of Temperance Lodge which had a large membership of young men and women. This lodge was established in 1851 and the library formed the nucleus of the Mechanics' Institute which later was re-organized as a Public Library. Dr. McWilliam donated a room in his drug store to be used as the first public library. The books were later housed in various stores and rooms until our present library was built in 1934.

The medical profession was represented in the early days by Dr. Ogden and Dr. Dawes. About the year 1880 Dr. J. McWilliam located in Thamesford. He had just returned from taking a post-graduate course in Edinborough and soon had a large practice. He built the drug store and the residence now occupied by Dr. Weir. For more than a quarter of a century Dr. McWilliam laboured in the community,

driving long distances with gig or buggy or cutter in all kinds of weather and over all kinds of roads. It was not only as a physician that he took his place in the community but he was interested also in many projects, the manufacture of peat, the growing of nut trees, and the introduction of the telephone system to the village. At one time he ran as Liberal member for the Dominion house.

When he felt that he could no longer stand the labour of a country practice he moved to London where many of his former friends and patients went to consult him when in need of medical attention.

Drs. McGougan and Babb took up the work after Dr. McWilliam left and their services were much appreciated, as are those of the present village physician Dr. Weir.

In making a summary of village life of Thamesford it would be an omission to overlook the paper once edited in the village. It was always associated with the old Embro "Courier" and one of the first editors was James Stewart of Embro. Miss Brock, one of our present library board members, was editor for two years. W.J. Taylor, at that time editor of the "Sentinel Review", later purchased both papers. An old issue of December 1st, 1910, is Vol. VII, No. 37. An interesting side light on library work is found in an article which is in part:-

"For Oxford County the work has been made light by the action of Council of 1910 in making a grant to the different county Library Boards, at a recent meeting of the Library Board it was decided to make a small purchase of books. The amount invested will necessarily be small but care will be taken in selection and subscribers are invited to hand in suggested purchases."

The first services of the Church of England were held in the grist mill built by John Finkle about the year 1845. Canon Bettridge of Woodstock was the preacher at these occasional services. The people sometimes travelled to Spearman's Corner (now Banner) where the Reverend Revel and other rectors of St. James Church, Ingersoll, preached. Many of the older members of the church were baptized there.

The grounds for a church and a cemetery were given by Miss Vansittart, and a daughter of the late John Brock was the first to be buried there under the roots of an upturned tree.

In 1859 a congregation was formed and Reverend William Bookman was appointed missionary in charge of Delaware, Edwardsburg (now Dorchester), Thamesford and Lakeside. The first services were held in the Methodist Church and later in barns loaned by Joel McCarty and Thomas Lougheed, some too took place in the office of Dr. Dawes, Eleazer McCarty, Thomas Ovens and John Tomlinson. It was finally decided to build a stone church and this building is the one now in use. John Forbes, Chas. Cobbeand, James Keyes were the builders and the material was donated by John Halpin and R. Rutledge. Reverend Samuel Belcher was the second incumbent.

In the time of the Reverend Rolf Seaborn the stone tower and bell were added in commemoration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. The congregation has carried on through the years and in June of 1941 celebrated its eightieth anniversary.

HISTORY OF THE UNITED CHURCH AT THAMESFORD

In the year 1830 a large number of immigrants from the northern part of Scotland settled in the Townships of West Zorra and East Nissouri. Although the struggle for homes and livelihood was strenuous they planned and worked to build schools and churches.

These Scottish people around Thamesford, at that time called St. Andrews, at first attended services at the log church at Embro but the wish of these people to have regular services in their own locality never abated and in 1845 steps were taken to form a congregation. Land for a site was obtained from John Finkle, miller and merchant, for the sum of 5 shillings. About this time, Isaac Buchanan, a wholesale merchant of Hamilton, offered \$100 to each of the first five churches that should be built in this western district and some of the more energetic men set to work to obtain subscriptions in order to take advantage of Mr. Buchanan's offer.

In 1847 the corner stone of the first Presbyterian church in St. Andrews was laid by the Reverend W.C. Furns who was afterwards a missionary to China.

This church was a plain frame building thirty-six feet by forty-seven feet without ornamentation of any kind. The seats were of pine slabs with pegs inserted in the round sides, and were without sides or backs. This first church could perhaps lay little claim to beauty--a plain frame church crowning a hill, the forest stretching behind it and the quiet Thames rippling on its way below the hill; beautiful in situation, and to those toilworn men and women, clothed with the beauty of holiness, and majestic with the presence of Him whose glory filled its walls. Here the congregation which at that time numbered sixty families and sixty-one members worshipped until 1875 when the second St. Andrew's church was built. At this time the congregation was mostly Highland and spoke the Gaelic but later they were joined by many English-speaking folk.

It was a Sabbath day in early June in the year 1852 when a small boy of six attended church for the first time. He was seated before his father on horseback (in later years the whole family attended church riding in a lumber wagon) and they had travelled six miles over rough road to the church in the village of St. Andrews. As they drew near to their destination they fell in with many others going their way, some on horseback and many on foot, these last carrying their shoes. They stopped at Gordon's Creek to wash their feet and put on their shoes before coming to the church.

The crowd of people was so large that there was not room for all in the church so those who could understand English held their service seated on the hillside, shaded from the noonday sun by the thick canopy of the forest overhead and fanned by the cooling breeze which was laden with the freshness of spring. There, with nature rejoicing around them they listened to the story of Nature's God as told to them by one of His servants.

The little boy was interested in this new environment and although the minister's sermon was long, lasting nearly two hours, he listened and was able to tell his mother the text which was, "And I if I be lifted up, will draw all men to me." He remembered that experience all his life.

It is June again, 1892, and what changes since that June day forty years before! The white brick church with tower and basement has been up for seventeen years. A little boy again came to the church, this time ⁱⁿ the family carriage over roads that are in much better condition than those of 1852. The new St. Andrew's church was built on the site of the old church but the forest that surrounded the old church has been cleared away and in the cemetery that surrounds the church many of the older generation are sleeping.

It was nearing the time when many of the old customs were to change but as yet the service was carried on in much the same manner as it was in the old church. It was Communion Sunday and two elders stood at the door to welcome the people and to give the tokens to those who did not receive them at the preparatory service on Saturday. The collection plate stood on the table in the vestibule of the church. On ordinary days the families sit together in the family pews but on Communion Sunday the centre seats were reserved for the communicants and a white cotton cloth covered the back of each seat.

Mr. Cameron, the pastor, preached in Gaelic in the basement and Mr. Currie of Belmont in English in the body of the church. There were no hymns at this service, only Psalms and paraphrases are sung, and they were led by the precentor. The people sat for the service of song but stood for the prayer service. The bread at the Communion service was cut in slices and a slice handed to the person sitting at the end of the pew. He passed it to his neighbour after breaking off a small portion. The wine was passed in the same way, each one taking a sip from the cup as it is passed along the pew.

The small children could not help but be impressed by the devotion and reverence of the people who worshipped here. The north doors of the church were open, letting in the fresh summer breeze laden with the perfume of the flowers and the song of the bobolinks as they flew over the clover fields near by. A lovely view of swaying trees and waving grain lay without. Occasionally a swallow flew in at one of the open windows and darted distractedly among the beams above. At times,

the Gaelic singing was to be heard from below, perhaps the plaintive notes of Coleshill, or Martyrdom, or Dundee. Before the serving of the tables the Gaelic congregation joined those in the auditorium. The last Gaelic service was held in the Church at the time of the Jubilee in 1905.

In 1925, the Presbyterian and Methodist churches of Canada were united. St. Andrew's church in Thamesford voted that their church enter the union and so the church became St. Andrew's United. Some of those families who opposed the union severed their connection with the congregation at this time and the diminished congregation carried on for two years before they united with the Methodist church in the village in 1927. When they entered this union the people sacrificed much that tradition and custom had made dear to them but they did it gladly, feeling that the work of God's Kingdom would be advanced if His followers worked together.

Records do not give any account of the early days of Methodism in Thamesford. Those who first established this church have long since passed to their reward. Through the changing years their names and works have been forgotten but their influence remains. The house of God founded by the followers of one of the greatest religious teachers of all time, remains as a monument to the pioneer Methodists of the old village of St. Andrews.

An ardent church historian of London is in the possession of church records that prove that as early as 1857 a Methodist church had been established in St. Andrews. In fact, there appears to have been three branches of Methodist denominations and, in 1884, all branches of the Methodist church united to form the great Methodist church of Canada.

About the year 1868, the old frame Methodist church was bricked over and some of the officials and more prominent workers of the church at this time were Messrs. Shenoath, Cogswell, Bartlett, Storey, Sherlock, Judge, Walkerk Kester, Horseman and Dickey.

In 1915, during the pastorate of Rev. A.G. Harris, the church was entirely renovated, hydro installed and a basement put in. The interior was redecorated

and new pews, pulpit and organ installed.

The united congregation carried on for more than ten years holding services alternately in the two churches. In 1938, they decided to build a new church which would be centrally located.

The Methodist church was sold and the St. Andrew's church was wrecked. The material was largely used to build the new church. This church is called Westminster United. It is forty feet by seventy feet and is built of red brick with the tower to one side. There is a stained glass memorial window in the chancel and the windows at the side are the windows from the old church.

The people of this new church feel that they have a great heritage to which they look back with joy and thanksgiving as they cherish the memory of the church of their fathers. Yet it is in fulfilment of their aims, their struggle and their examples that the people today go forward--a new church in a new day remembering with loving gratitude those who

"--have gone out unforgotten
Leaving to us as their part
Monuments of a labour
Burned on their country's heart."

Union Library Association, 1848

Sir:

For the information of the farming community around Ingersoll, may I solicit, through the medium of your Journal, to give publicity to the following proceeding of a meeting held in this village on Tuesday, the 8th instant, for the organization of a Union Library Association.

David Canfield, Esq., being called to the chair in accordance with the resolution of a previous meeting, the Secretary pro tem reported the success of the Committee on obtaining subscribers to the Association, and the patronage likely to be extended by the public at large to such an institution--which appeared so favorable that a constitution was immediately adopted and the following gentlemen chosen to conduct the affairs of the Association for the first year: David Canfield, president; John MacDonald, D.C., vice-president; John I. McKenzie, secretary-treasurer. Directors: Alix MacDonald, James Murdock, Dr. McCarthy, George Chambers, David Irving, Isaac Piper, W.A. Rumsey, Dalius Doty, John Patterson, John Barnett.

The ostensible object of this association being for the general diffusion of sound literary information through the medium of a well-situated library, it is to be hoped that all within reach will avail themselves of the opportunity thus afforded them by coming forward immediately and subscribing so as to give the Institution a solid foundation.

Ingersoll, February 10, 1848.
Oxford Star, February 18, 1848.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF KINTORE

Mr. A.F. Thornton

In the year 1826, Mr. Benjamin Swayzie came from the Niagara district and purchased 2,000 acres in the township of East Nissouri.

To his eldest daughter, Lydia, who married Henry Campbell, he gave 100 acres, and it was on this farm, now occupied by Charles Phillips, that some of the finest buildings in this vicinity were erected. The first school house was erected on this farm just west of the creek in 1835, and was built of logs.

An important meeting was held in this building about the year 1837, to determine what action the residents of the township would take in regard to the rebellion then in progress. The early meetings of the township council were also held in this school house. The old Methodist cemetery is located on this same property.

A son of Henry and Lydia Campbell was buried here in 1836, and the pioneer, Mr. Benjamin Swayzie, in 1850. In 1861, Mr. and Mrs. Campbell deeded the cemetery to the Methodist Episcopal Church which was erected just east of the cemetery, about the year 1872, after the farm had become the property of Mr. John Phillips.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church was built about the year 1860, and was situated a short distance to the east of the four corners, on the Groves Farm, now occupied by George Sims. In 1871, the Presbyterians built a church one mile east of Kintore near the corner of the 11th Concession line.

Wm. Murray was the first post master and the post office was located in a hotel about a half a mile north of the corner on the farm now occupied by Don Calder.

Mr. Murray came from Kintore, Scotland, thus the post office officials chose this name for the new post office. I have been unable to find just when this took place but Mr. Murray died and was buried in the Methodist cemetery in 1867.*

*The name Kintore is first shown in a list of post offices dated October 1, 1862, given in the Canadian Almanac for 1863.--Ed.

About this time, Mr. Wm. Easson, a pensioner of the Crimean War, put up a building on the corner of the Phillips farm and was appointed post master while his wife kept a small store in the same building.

In 1870, Mr. Robert Eldon built a store at the northeast corner of Kintore, on the Pearson farm, and on the death of Mr. Easson became post master.

The first cheese factory was built by Mr. George Furse, in 1874, or 1875, on the north side of the road. The present cheese factory is situated on the same property.

Ed Flynn was the first blacksmith and he sold out to Andrew Murray. His shop was west of the corner on the north side of the road and Mr. George Weston started a blacksmith-shop a short distance south of the corner on the east side of the road.

Mr. Wm. Straitch, who came from West Nissouri, built a store near the corner on the same side of the road.

In later years, at a date which cannot be established, there was a shoemaker, Mr. Dunster; a flour and chopping mill conducted by Mr. Cade; and a saw mill built by John Grant.

"Frederick Beyer, Professor of Music, begs to inform the Ladies and Gentlemen of Woodstock and the surrounding neighbourhood that he will give lessons on the Clarinet, Guitar with Singing, Violin, Vlute, or any Instrument used in Military Bands.

"Mr. Beyer, having closed an engagement with the Woodstock Amateur Band, for the purpose of instructing them in the science of music, begs to say that he will also devote a great portion of his time in giving lessons privately on any of the above instruments to individuals who may require them. Terms moderate."

Oxford Star,
December 22, 1848.

THOMAS HORNOR - OXFORD PIONEER

Mr. H.L. Kipp

Thomas Hornor, eldest son of Isaac and Mary Hornor, was born near Bordertown, New Jersey, on March 17, 1767. He was the great grandson of John and Mary Hornor who came from England in November 1683. The Hornors appear to have been the first who became convinced of the doctrines taught by George Fox and to have been fellow-sufferers with him in prison.

Isaac Hornor, grandfather of Thomas Hornor was a man of considerable means. He was a man of strong character and firm in his convictions. The unlawfulness of slavery was not questioned in those days. However, Isaac Hornor became convinced that it was wrong and accordingly, about the year 1744, he set all his slaves free. He was said to be the first person in the State of New Jersey who set his slaves free.

John Hornor, as son of Isaac, actively aided in the founding of the college of New Jersey, erected in Elizabethtown in 1745 and later moved to Princeton, New Jersey.

During the American Revolution, John Graves Simcoe went with the British troops into New England. He was given assistance at that time by a man named Watson, an uncle of Thomas Hornor. Later, when Simcoe became the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, he invited Thomas Hornor and his uncle Watson to come to Canada and settle in Blenheim Township, promising them the whole township if they would build a sawmill and a grist mill there.

In the year 1793, Thomas Hornor and his cousin Thomas Watson came to the County of Oxford. They were probably the first or among the first white persons to tread the soil of this county. Simcoe had the first three concessions of Blenheim surveyed and Hornor and Watson selected the site for their mill, which was just west of the present village of Princeton and on what is now known as Hornor's creek. At the time of their first visit in 1793 the nearest white settler to the east was where the city of Brantford now stands, and the nearest

one west was at Chatham.

Hornor and Watson then returned to their homes in New Jersey and in 1794 proceeded to Albany, New York, to purchase materials and engage mechanics to erect the mill. There is no record that Watson returned to Canada, at this time. Thomas Hornor and the men he engaged packed their goods in two small, roughly made boats, which they launched on the river Hudson near Albany, proceeded up the Hudson to the Mohawk river, then up the Mohawk for about 100 miles. They carried their goods and boats across to the Norvel Creek, then down Norvel Creek into Lake Oneida, across the Lake to the Oswego river, thence into Lake Ontario. They then travelled along the southern coast to Burlington Bay where they landed all safe. The boats were made fast and left for future use. The goods were drawn by oxen on roughly made sledges, through the trackless bush to their destination in Blenheim Township. They erected the mill and had it in running order in the latter part of 1795. However, before it had been run the dam gave way, and because of the scarcity of help, was not rebuilt until two years later. Hornor also built a grist mill which was burned down in 1809 and never rebuilt.

When these two mills were erected, Hornor was in a position to claim the Township of Blenheim, he having at a very great loss faithfully performed his part of the contract, but Simcoe's successor would not acknowledge his claim.

In March, 1801, Thomas Hornor was married to Olive Baker at Burford by Col. James Ingersoll, J.P.

In June, 1806, he was appointed Deputy-Lieutenant of the County of Oxford. Previous to this, I believe in 1798, he had been appointed captain of the Norfolk Militia. However, during the war of 1812, he shouldered his musket and took his place in the ranks as a private and so remained until duly discharged.

Mr. Hornor was the first member for the county of Oxford when it became entitled to a member in 1820, and continued to be a member with the exception of two years, till the time of his death, by cholera, August 4, 1834. In the old journals of the House of Assembly, we find the name of Mr. Hornor often as chair-

man in the house, or of committees. He was evidently a working member.

In connection with his parliamentary conduct, there is one little incident we might mention. Just before the passage of the 'Alien Act', which caused much intense excitement throughout the province, Hornor called a meeting of his constituents, and addressed them as follows: "Gentlemen, I wish to know how you desire me to vote on this bill, and I will vote just as I am instructed by you; but mind, if you say I shall support the bill, I will do so, because there is not time for you to elect another member before the vote is taken should I resign, but I never will come to the County of Oxford again. I shall give my vote as you direct, leave the House, and the country, send for my family, and never return again". He was directed to oppose the bill.

The creek on which Mr. Hornor built the first sawmill in the county bears his name. In the year 1935, a petition was presented to the Provincial Parliament by the Chamber of Commerce of Princeton to set aside 2,400 acres of land in the township of Blenheim, to be known as the "Hornor Crown Game Preserve". A part of this land is drained by Hornor Creek. Surely this is a very fitting reminder for generations to come of the name of that pioneer, Thomas Hornor, the first white man to reside in the County of Oxford.

"Ingersoll Agricultural Society.

The second Exhibition of this Society was held at Ingersoll on Thursday, the 12th instant. A lengthy list of prizes follows under the headings: cattle, sheep, swine, grain, dairy produce, domestic manufactures (maple sugar, 5 yards flannel, fullered cloth), vegetables. Officers elected for 1848-49:

Thomas Brown,	President
W. B. Mabie,)	Vice-presidents
John Mathews,)	
Daniel Philan,	Secretary and Treasurer."

Oxford Star,
October 20, 1848.

OXFORD COUNTY ITEMS

The Oxford Star and Woodstock Advertiser was a short-lived newspaper published in Woodstock during the year 1848. The proprietors were Alex Hay and James Egan. The editor was John Allan. It was a "Reform Journal" and is of particular interest in this year when Francis (later Sir Francis) Hincks was elected by the County of Oxford as a representative to the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada. In the second number, on February 4, is a letter from Hincks to Jared Vining, District Councillor of Nissouri and Warden of Brock District, Wm. Carroll, Esq., District Councillor of Norwich, Angus Campbell, Esq., of East Zorra, and other Reform Electors of the County of Oxford, in which he thanks them for his election, excuses himself for his unavoidable absence during the late elections and outlines his views and policies with regard to political affairs of the time.

The necessity of holding a new election, however, brought Hincks, as Inspector General, and his lady to Woodstock on April 20. "Mr. Hincks will immediately visit his friends in the various localities of the County", announced the Star. "Tomorrow, he intends being in Norwich, on Monday, he will meet the electors of Zorra at Embro. We understand that a procession will form at Gordon Charles, Beachville, at 11 o'clock to attend the nomination on Tuesday." Hincks' speeches, on this occasion, are dutifully recorded in full in the Star.

As well as following vigorously the affairs of the Canadian Government the Star gave much space to local Government in every respect. Descriptions of the meetings of the district council appear at length. By-laws are printed in full. Complete reports from the Rev. W.H. Landon, county superintendent of education for the District of Brock are reprinted. Correspondence and editorial comment abound on subjects of local interest.

The Star was a strong temperance journal but they report the return of licenses issued by John G. Vansittart, inspector of license for Brock, during

the year ending January 31, 1848. Fifty taverns and ten shops were located in the district with three shops where only beer and ale were sold. Five of these taverns were located in Woodstock, one in Ingersoll.

The building of roads is noted. On June 26, for instance, a public meeting is reported to "study" the propriety of petitioning the Legislative Assembly to pass an Act incorporating a company for constructing a plank or macadamized road, from Woodstock to the town of Stratford." On other dates, lists appear of new roads in the district, and roads under repair.

Court proceedings during the Court of Quarter Sessions and Assizes are described with the schedule of the return of convictions.

New church buildings are announced and church meetings, usually "Tea Meetings". Societies--Agricultural, literary, Gaelic and Oddfellows' Lodges, announce their meetings and the Star could be counted on not only to record faithfully the business of the meeting but to add whatever personal reflections had come to the mind or the attention of the editor during the procedure.

In short, in the pages of the Oxford Star one lives again in early Woodstock and its neighbourhood. Feelings ran high and a hearty boisterousness is reflected in the bold black uneven type which does not creep into our efficiently produced journals of today. The only file known to exist is in the possession of the Toronto Public Library.

No Market in 1848

"Whose business is it in Woodstock to look after the institute, a weekly market for all sorts of produce? Grain, flour, hay, straw, butter, eggs, cheese, etc."

Oxford Star, February 25, 1848.

First Oddfellows Lodge

"On Monday last a Lodge was opened at Woodstock by the assistance of the Brethren from London and Brantford, and denominated 'The Loyal Brock Lodge'. After the inauguration, the Brethren and friends, numbering about 100, dined at Frank's Royal Pavilion."

Oxford Star, April 19, 1848.