

May 24/1978

GENERAL

THE JENVEY FILES

Research from the files of Bryan G. Jenvey

Continued From Last Week

EASTWOOD

Henry Vansittart brought money with him from England and collected more here, for the erection of the Old St. Paul's Anglican Church in Woodstock. This church was built in 1834 on land donated by Colonel Drew in 1832.

Vansittart built a show farm at Eastwood and imported high class Short-horn cattle and fancy horses. His house had everything available at that time. He died there in March 1843 at the age of 65 years and was buried in Old St. Paul's graveyard.

It is supposed that the very early hotel that stood at the corner of Hamilton Road and Stone Road was built by Mr. Vansittart. It was a most popular resort and well patronized.

Whiskey could be purchased for \$1 per gallon. It was on a log and lumber trail. It has been owned by three generations of the Ball family. Henry Ball bought it from Nick Cornish. It was called the Cornish Hotel. The Balls changed the name to Oxford Hotel. It had 20 rooms. J.R. Birchall who murdered Fred Benwell in 1890 occasionally stopped at this hotel. It ended as a temperance house in 1922. It was moved across the road in 1952 and used as a stable.

Eastwood had a very large sawmill, operated by a 35-horse power steam engine and could saw 15,000 feet per day.

The Anglican Church is at the east end of the village and the Methodist church and school are one mile south of the village.

Eastwood was the home of a noted character, the famous Cassie Chadwick. On the pretext that she was the illegitimate daughter of Andrew Carnegie, she secured thousands of dollars from various sources. A signature of Carnegie on a cheque for \$200,000 was a forgery. Finally the hoax exploded and it is said she died in an Ohio jail.

THE VILLAGE OF BANNER

This village is located at the west end of the township of

North Oxford in the County of Oxford. Its first name was Wesley, then Spearman's Corners (1851) after Joseph Spearman who owned the corner farm. It was called Banner for Post Office purposes, in 1893.

The Post Office department deemed 'Spearman's Corners' too long. Mail was delivered by train using the hook and hoop method of pick-up. James Clendinning was the mail man.

Mrs. Clark had a general store started by the "Patrons of Industry." There was a blacksmith shop but never a tavern in Banner.

An early Anglican Church stood on the east bank of the river on a knoll. Reverend H. Revell was minister in 1844. The cemetery was dedicated in 1845.

In 1839 there were the following settlers: John Connor, John Matthews, Jeremiah Minkler, and Joseph Spearman who owned the corner farm. Ten years later, these names appeared: Falconer, Chapman, Armstrong, Oliver, Hyde, Dundas, McFadden, Laughlin and Doty.

The first school was built on the south west corner of the Spearman farm, and was used as a place of worship. The next school in 1873, was a frame building which was moved to the present school site on the north west corner. Land for the frame school was bought from William Laughlin. The third school was erected in 1900. It was located a little to the rear of its predecessor, as the Department of Education desired more play grounds.

In 1854 there was a New Connexion church at the corners. This congregation went in with other groups to form the Methodist Church of Canada in 1883.

The Wesleyan Methodists were a congregation of worshippers as early as 1839 and their religious leaders were the saddlebag preachers of the time.

In 1851 this group was known as Spearman's Branch of the Oxford Circuit. The Methodists erected a church in 1856 and dedicated it on completion in 1857. (Continued Next Week)

INGERSOLL TIMES

May 24, 1978

Banner

By ART WILLIAMS

In what is now termed East, West and North Oxford was originally known as Oxford on the Thames and was one of the first townships surveyed. Augustus Jones accomplished this in 1793 with his band of soldiers and Indians and the concessions and lots were marked by stakes driven into the ground or marks cut upon the trees. The first township meeting for the Oxford was held in March 1800 and it is presumed to have been held at Beachville. Although Horner formed the first settlement in the county in Blenheim two years before the first settlement in the Oxfords, it must be admitted that the settlement at Oxford on the Thames was the most important of the two and became the nucleus around which the county was settled. Of these settlements, Mr. Gourley had this to report — it commenced settling in 1796 and in 1817 had a population of 530 with 76 inhabited houses, one Baptist minister, one grist and two sawmills.

By the Act 33 George III Chapf. 3 it was enacted "that when any township shall contain 30 inhabited householders it shall be lawful for the justices to issue their warrant calling for a township meeting." On January 1st, 1842, North Oxford having the necessary qualifications became a separate township.

GRANTED LOTS

The following in North Oxford were granted lots prior to 1800, Hon D. W. Smith, on July 16, 1799, 500 acres, and the Hon. J. McGill on August 3, 1799, 2,000 acres. The first lot sold was to Calvin Martin on January 23, 1830, at 15s per acre. On the assessment roll of 1825 the following were residents of the section now known as North Oxford, George Karn, John McNames, Horall Fuller, John Creig, John Strong, James Carroll, Ruben Martin, Jacob Carroll, Ira Fuller, Richard Livings, John Johnston, Jerimah Finch, Abel Thornton, Thomas Bedford, Christopher Karn, John Baldwin, Horace Cross and Darius Cross. John McNames, James Carroll and Abel Thornton were the only persons who had taxable houses and they were all made of squared logs.

By 1852 there were three sawmills capable of 800,000 feet per annum and a flour mill worth £250 and capable of grinding 4,000 bu. per annum and a lath mill. In 1852 30 lots were added to the township from the township of North Dorchester and 725 acres of North Oxford were attached to Ingersoll. A portion of the village of St. Andrews now Thamesford was gained in this annexation from North Dorchester.

By 1861 the township contained a population of 1,771 and there were two good gravel roads in the township and the Great Western Railway crossed the length of the township.

RAILROAD

The Great Western Railway was for sometime the most important railroad in Canada. On May 6, 1834, an act was passed by the Canadian Legislature incorporating the London and Gore Railroad Co. Among the incorporators were Allan Napier, George J. Goodhouse, Edward Allan Talbot and 70 or more prominent men of that time. They were given authority to build a single or double track, wooden or iron road, from London to Burlington Bay and also to the navigable waters of the River Thames and Lake Huron, and to employ either the force of steam or the power of animals or any mechanical or other power. The capital was fixed at \$400,000.00 (£100,000) in 8,000 shares at \$50.00 per share and in the event of it being extended to Lake Huron the capital might be doubled. The time for its completion was limited to 12 years. Nothing was done under the powers granted and in 1845 when it was about to lapse the act was revised with amendments, one of them being to change the name to the Great Western Railroad Company. It was decided to build the line to some point on the Niagara River and the time allowed extended to 20 years. The capital was increased to 600,000 shares at \$100.00 a share and of this 550,000 shares were subscribed in England.

The spirit of speculation which prevailed from 1853 - 56 was a source of embarrassment and expense to the railroad but this state of affairs was attributed chiefly to the railroad not only the Great Western, but to the other lines being built at this time. So great was the demand for labor, livestock, timber and material of all kinds by the competition that prices in-

creased as much as 50 percent. Contractors failed one after another and work had to be re-let at advanced figures and original estimates fell far short of the actual costs. It was found in 1854 that an estimate made by the company engineer in 1852 for the main line fell about a million and a half dollars short. A single instance will explain how this could occur. The original cost of land was estimated at \$60,000.00, whereas the amount actually paid was \$700,000.00. The share capital was raised five times by five acts of legislature, until a total of \$25,800,000.00 was reached. The sum of \$3,850,000.00 was advanced by the government at six percent and that three percent was to be set aside as a sinking fund. The Great Western did repay a large part of the Great Western Railway until the Great Western Railway until May 25, 1882, when it amalgamated with the Grand Trunk Railroad which later became known as the Canadian National Railroad.

The section of the Great Western which passes through North Oxford was officially opened December 15, 1853, and the first train, drawn by a small engine with a large stack and an enormous appetite for wood, foared down the track at the thrilling speed of six miles per hour. Every station was decked out in its very best bunting as was the train which had all the officials aboard. Even at this speed it was no pleasure ride and the passengers travelled in fear of their lives, accidents and mishaps were numerous.

With the coming of the railroad came a different type of immigrant to Oxford. They were the Irish laborer immigrant who were induced to come to this country by the recruiting offices of the railroad. The potato famine in Ireland about this time also helped many make up their mind to try their luck working on the railroad in Canada. They were a fairly young type who just lived for payday when they would take out all their grievances on "John Barley Corn" and it was not safe to be anywhere near a tavern if you were not an Irishman who was not good with his fists or feet as both were considered fair in the brawls of the railroad workers. Many of these were of the Roman Catholic faith and settled here abouts and did much to support the Roman Catholic Church at Ingersoll and their families became stalwart members of the community.

BANNER

In the southwest corner of North Oxford on the land that was originally in North Dorchester is situated Banner. In 1800 this land was all owned by a Mr. Baby who was engaged in the lumbering trade and lived at York (Toronto) and in 1822 he sold this land to a Mr. Dunlop of Glasgow, Scotland, a Scottish lumber merchant and in his purchase he secured all the land from Banner west to Dorchester and north to the Governor's

Road. Although the land was open for settlers, very few arrived before 1840 and William Dundas along with J. Connor, John Mathews, Jerimah Minkler and Joseph Spearman were among the first to settle here, most of them of Irish descent. As more settlers came it became necessary to open up roads and trails and the trail that led from Oxford (Ingersoll) to London wound its way through Banner and Putnam and since has been altered some and is now known as the fourth concession of North Oxford. The trail was still visible until recent years and it never went over a hill or across a swamp if it were possible to go around and so followed the path of least resistance.

By 1849 family names such as Falconer, Chapman, Armstrong, Connor, Oliver and Hyde began to appear and by 1851 the community became known as Spearman's Corners. In 1852, with the disposal of Clergy Reserve lands, more settlers arrived, including the Clark, McFadden, Knox, Sutherland, Leslie, Ovens, Loughlin, Doty, Irwin, Holcroft and Morris families.

At that time there were several mills on the north branch of the Thames including one operated by the Grey Bros. but, owing to some difficulties over the mill privileges, it never became a success. A Mr. Luminson also operated a mill on this branch.

WOODYARD

Banner boasted of a wood-yard and a shipping station which was owned by Armon Clark and was situated at the railway tracks just south of the village on a corduroy road which led off from the main road near where the hall now stands. The siding was known as Patton Siding and acted as a station and shipping point for Banner and surrounding district and it was from this point that Banner got its mail after the arrival of the railroad. Prior to that it came from Putnam and Ingersoll. In 1893 Sarah Clark was named postmaster and when it came to deciding a name, J. Spearman thought that Spearman's Corners was too large a name and at a meeting it was suggested by Jerimiah Minkler that the name Banner be used and it was readily accepted. The official post-office remained at Banner from March 1, 1893, until the first of July, 1914, when Sam Gibson took over the rural mail delivery. During the time that it was received off the train, James Clendening had the contract to meet the mail train and place the bag on the hook at the side of the track for the mail crew to hook off while another would throw off the incoming mail. The mail train went through at 2:30 p.m. daily. In conjunction with the post office, Mrs. Clark ran a local store which was originally started by the Patrons of Industry. There was also a blacksmith shop nearby. Banner, unlike most communities near a railroad or on a main road, never boasted of a hotel or tavern.

METHODIST PREACHERS

The first form of religion brought into these parts was by the saddle bag preachers of the Methodist faith and they could have been served by two circuits. A London Circuit started in 1823 while the Oxford Circuit started in 1832. The exact date is not known when services first commenced here, but local names appeared on reports in 1839 at which time there were 12 preaching places on the Oxford circuit. A school was erected on Spearman's farm and was also used for religious services until a church was built in 1857 which is still in use as the Banner United Church. Prior to the building of the new church another form of the Methodist faith sprang up here. It was known as the New Connexion Methodists while the others were known Wesleyan and they built a frame church which stood near the present school. This branch of the Methodist faith was organized in 1829 chiefly an opposition to the right to hold services at the hour convenient to them. This group eventually died out here and later the building was moved to its present site as a hall and was used by the Grange Society, Literary Society and is now used by the Foresters' Lodge.

Along with the Wesleyan Methodist and Anglican church flourished here. It was located east of the community on the knoll on the far bank of the river. Among its ministers was Rev. H. Revell who came out from Ireland in 1844 as part of a missionary effort and had the choice of coming here or going to Cincinnati, Ohio. He later became the second rector of St. James Church, Ingersoll. This church was attended by Anglicans from as far as Thamesford and it is believed that some alternating of places of worship was done between the two communities. Little is known about the church, but in 1845 the cemetery was dedicated and in it rest two of the first councillors of North Oxford, Mr. Mathew and Mr. Armstrong. For many years after the church and congregation had disappeared, the site of the church would be a mass of rose blooms each year. The cemetery still remains, a tribute to the pioneer families of that faith. The pioneer families of the Methodist

faith rest in the Banner Church Cemetery which was given by Mr. and Mrs. David Doty for a consideration of five shillings of lawful money. This charge was made to make the transaction legal in 1856.

FIRST SCHOOL

The first school was built on the Spearman Farm and the next school stood at the road about where the hall is now, but was too close to the road and when the law demanded a playground at each school it was moved to the place where the present school is. The present school was built later. The teachers who taught here since 1871 include J. Cain (1871), Nancy McKellar, Maggie Creighton, Miss A. S. M. Richardson, Miss Mary Rumbell, Charles Elliott, Maggie Hotson, Miss M. A. Dundas, Miss McKay, Dalas Cameron, Mr. Hill, Miss Nora Birie, Mr. Eckhardt, Miss Enpey, Mr. F. Strobridge, Miss Evelyn Augustine, (Mrs. Frank Pirie), J. G. Yelland, Miss Edith J. Wigglesworth, Miss M. Campbell and Miss Annie McMurray (1910).

There were two cheese factories active in this area, the first one known as the Maple Leaf factory which was operated by Thomas Caddey and was located east of the Anglican cemetery and the present Banner factory, located between Banner and Thamesford which began operations about 1907. Near this factory on lot 9, concession 3, Benijah Leslie operated a brickyard which supplied the local residents with bricks for their homes. For many years there was an Indian encampment down at the Cold Springs near the railway and they would make baskets, etc., and sell them throughout the countryside.

Though main highways have taken the place of the trail to London and Banner has settled back to rest, her residents just ask to be allowed to live in a house by the side of the road and be a friend to man.

SENTINEL REVIEW

September 1, 1962

Little Community Retains Its Spirit

By DOUG FERGUSON

"Why don't you write something about Banner? Our community isn't dead, you know." This question was asked in the Ingersoll office of the Sentinel-Review some time ago, by a resident of that little community. So, before conclusion of the series, we are giving Banner the notice it deserves.

Banner may be found by going west on Victoria street for about four miles, but with Banner, as with any rural community, it is rather difficult to determine boundaries and "town limits". In fact they do not exist. The cheese factory is a mile north of the corner on which the school, church and hall are located, and yet it is considered as much a part of Banner as any of these. The same is true for the swimming and fishing areas found along the river. They may be a mile or more away from the "main corner" but they are nevertheless still a part of the community.

Now let us examine Banner less generally and a little more specifically, the first stop being the United church. This church was erected in 1857, and so held its centennial celebrations in 1957, at which time two Sundays were set aside for special services. On these days, the crowds overflowed into the basement and even into the yard. Former pastors were invited back to speak, among whom were Rev. A. E. Moorehouse, who had the church in 1904, the year the basement was added to the church, and Rev. A. J. Love, who preached there in 1925, the year the choir was built. All these facts and many more were compiled into a history of the church, which the members published. This centennial was not so different from the many that are held each year, but we think it is worth noting in this article, as it shows that the intelligent interest found in a smaller community concerning the heritage of a congregation is as great or even greater than that of larger urban groups.

But this series was not intended to deal in history, so let's see what this old church offers to the community today. There is a very active Hi-C group, which is under the direction of Rev. Edgar Gill. The Couples Club, whose members elected Mr. and Mrs. Cliff Bennett to the presidency of the group, is also very active, as is the C.G.I.T. (a church organization for younger teen girls) and the Explorer groups.

WOMEN ARE ACTIVE

The organization of United Church Women in Banner is extremely active. These ladies

sponsor various events during the course of a year, with an annual candy booth at Dorchester fair, and this year a chicken barbecue on August 30. The Junior section of the church choir is also very good, and has won several "firsts at festivals in Tillsonburg, largely due to the efforts of a school teacher whom we will mention later.

Beside and just west of the church stands the C.O.F. hall. The Canadian Order of Foresters have been holding their monthly meetings in this old building for many years, and almost every man in the community is a member of this lodge. Last year the hall was remodelled and a new kitchen was added, as was a stage and a new heating system. The building was even lengthened by 12 feet, mostly by the members' volunteer labour. This group is also in a baseball loop with Foresters from Zenda, Innerkip and Norwich and it is obvious that the members mix pleasure with business in a pleasing manner.

The school at Banner is a one - room brick structure that was erected in 1900. Lately there have been some changes made, and the school is in top shape, with new storm windows, oil heat and water "on tap". The teacher for the last six years has been Miss Mildred Dundas, the lady who was largely responsible for the successes of the junior choir of the United Church. The link is obvious when one remembers that in a community as small as Banner, the youngsters that attend the school would also attend the one church. Through many hours of extra-curricular practice, Miss Dundas helped the group reach their place of high standing in festival circles. In 1956 the school was split, and now the youngsters of grades one to five attend school in Banner, while the pupils of grade six, seven and eight go by bus to Dixon's.

NO CHEESE NOW

Industry is represented in Banner by the cheese factory, owned by Erwin Brown. Mr. Brown has owned the business for about seventeen years, but his father began there in 1920. This factory, like so many others that may be found around Oxford county, no longer makes cheese. The last cheese was made there in 1958, but Mr. Brown still hopes for another day, when the market conditions will be more favorable, when he may again take up his trade.

In the meantime, the factory is used only as a milk station, where the farmers haul their milk for weighing and storage, and from where the factory

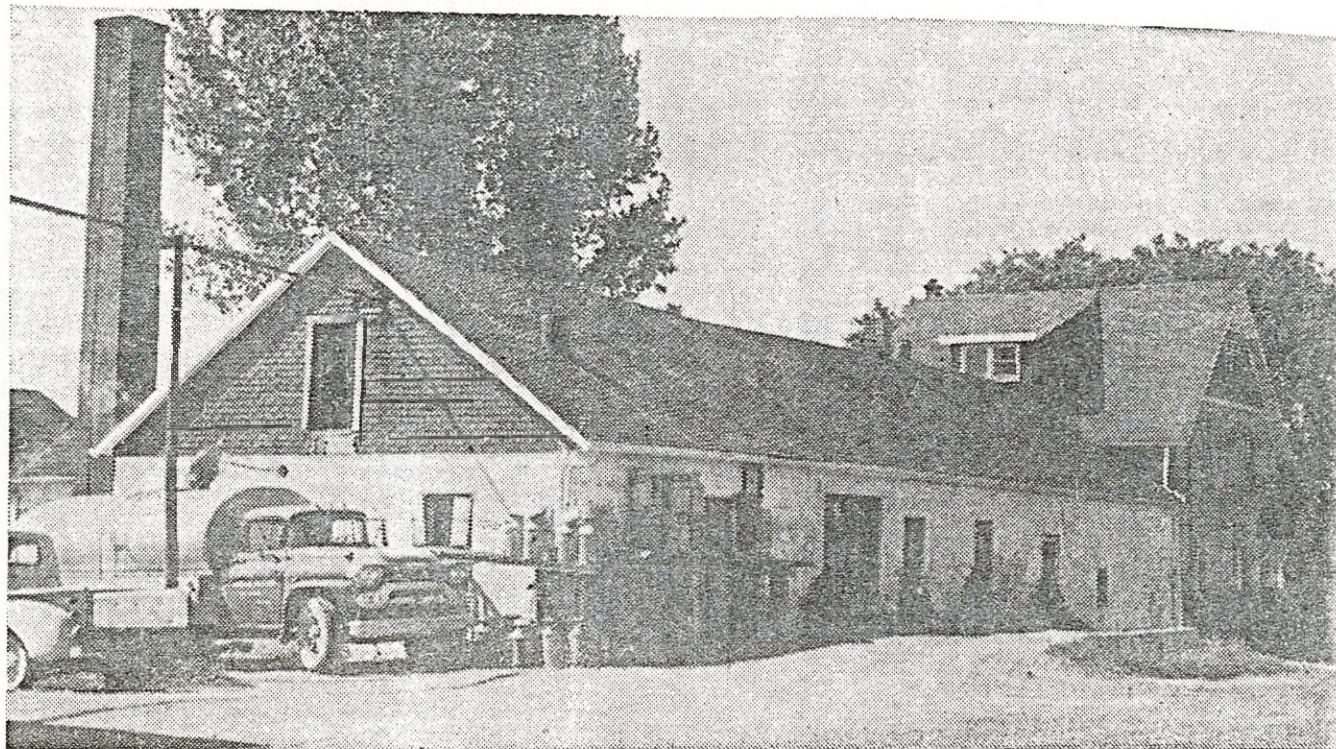
truck hauls it to the Canada Dairy plant in Burgessville.

But if Ingersoll residents do not know Banner for the things mentioned in this article so far, they undoubtedly have a least heard of the fishing that Banner offers. Down at the "iron bridge" as local residents have named the CNR bridge, it is possible to catch some pike of a respectable size. The local youngsters, however, know the river as a cool interlude in an otherwise sweltering summer afternoon, and they regularly frequent the "swimmin' hole" that is located about one mile north west of the heart of the community.

It is by now obvious that Banner is no commercial centre, as it lacks a general store and a garage, indeed anything, except the cheese factory, that is of a commercial nature. It is a community that would even be very easily overlooked by anyone who passed through the main corner of it, especially if one were coming from the direction of Ingersoll, as it stands on the back of a hill, and this fleeting glance would still not convince one that this was a community of any consequence. But what is a community? Does it have to be a giant city, with glass skyscrapers, before it "counts"?

One definition of this word "community" found in our dictionary is "identity of character; fellowship;" and this, above all other commercial considerations, is what counts in a community. If you happen to live in a large city, you have it with your friends; but if you live in a smaller rural area, such as most of those covered by this series, you have it with everyone you come in contact with, or at least it seems so to us.

So it boils down to this — that the spirit of a community, not its size or its "importance" is what makes it last, keep its identity. The purpose of this series has been to point up this fact, and to relate it to the little villages, hamlets and "communities" that make up Ingersoll "and district". We sincerely hope that this is being accomplished.



A FAVORITE haunt of the Banner and area youngsters is this old "swimming hole" **LEFT**, where Ricky Hansford, 13, is trying to entice a rather dubious Lynda Bennett, 14, with the old

cry "Come on in, the water's fine!" A mile to the north of the community itself is the Banner cheese factory **RIGHT**, which is owned by Erwin Brown. Like so many

other of the cheese plants in this part of the province, it no longer produces cheese, but is now a milk receiving station. The last batches of cheese were turned out in 1958. (Staff photos).

THE VILLAGE OF BANNER

This village is located at the west end of the township of North Oxford in the County of Oxford. Its first name was Wesley, then Spearman's Corners (1851) after Joseph Spearman who owned the corner farm. It was called Banner for Post Office purposes, in 1893.

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A centennial was observed in 1957. The land for the church and cemetery was donated by David and Esther Doty.

The New Connexion church was purchased by John Spearman, in 1874, as the members of the New Connexion group were attending the Methodist Church.

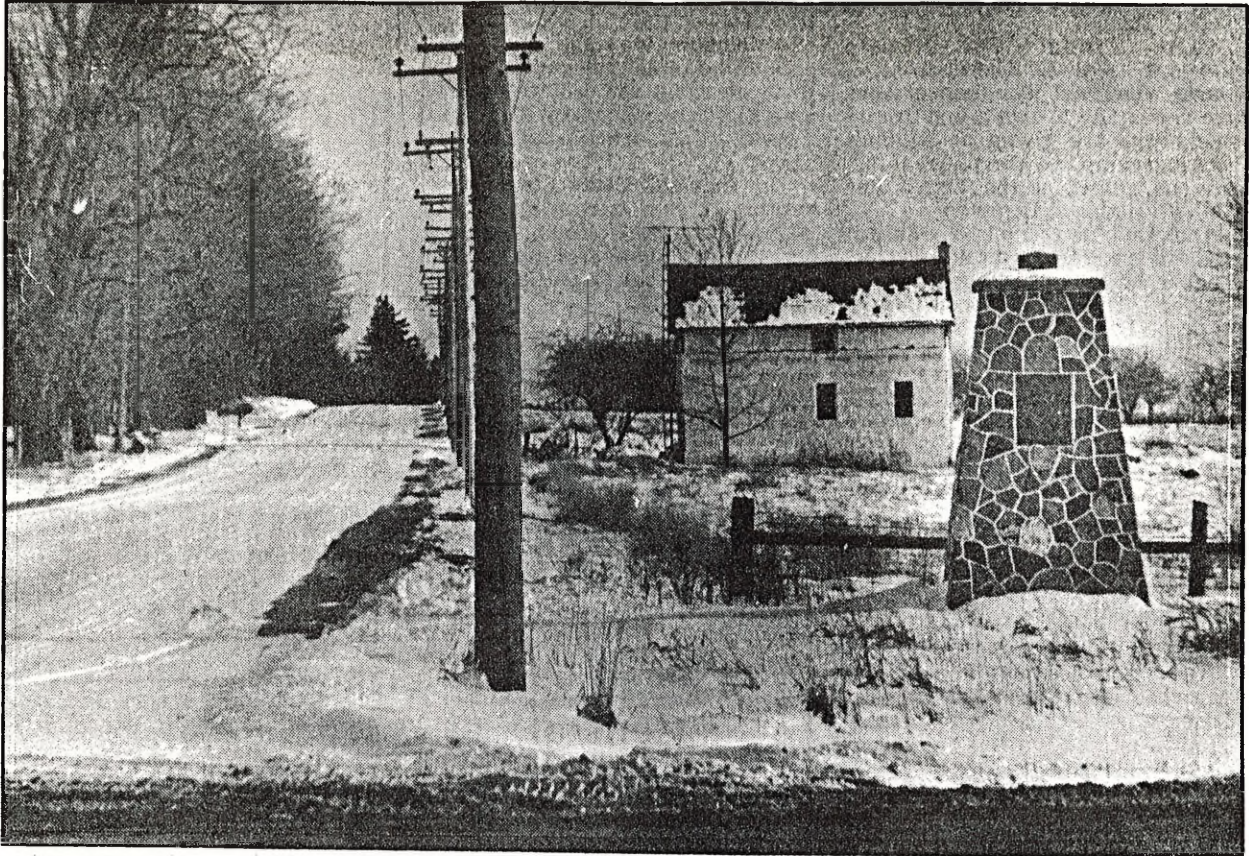
In 1893, Mr. Spearman sold the building to members of Court Banner No. 750 of the Canadian Order of Foresters. A cheese factory, one mile north of the villages indicates that this section of Oxford County is a dairy farm section.

Mr. Baby, a native of York (Toronto) in 1800 owned a large area of land including the area around Banner and extending to Dorchester. He sold this area in 1822 to Mr. Dunlop of Glasgow, Scotland who removed the valuable trees for lumber. London, was a good market for lumber at that time. He then offered the land to the pioneer settlers.



INGERSOLL TIMES

May 24, & 31, 1978.



OXFORD'S GHOST TOWNS

During recent months, as *Sentinel-Review* photographer Ted Town went about his regular assignments, he's been gathering photos of the vanished settlements that are the ghost towns of Oxford County. Another is Cody's Corners: located in West Zorra Township, this

crossroads was named after Elijah and Phila Cody, United Empire Loyalists, who came to the area in 1824. A school was built and demolished in 1966. Today, only a cairn marks the site at the intersection of County Roads 6 and 17.

SENTINEL

REVIEW

May 20, 1988

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 Embros 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 Embros 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.

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

Sutherland's Directory has this to say of Embros. "Embros 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 Embros district. Mr. Ross is the author of "The History of Zorra and Embros" (Embros, 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.

March 30th, 1973

President, Rev. H.E. Wright, acted as chairman, and welcomed 87 members and friends to our meeting.

Moved by Mrs. Chisholm and seconded by Mrs. Servent that the minutes of the last meeting be adopted as circulated. Carried. The Treasurer submitted her report which showed a balance on hand of \$468.10. This was seconded by Mrs. Chisholm. Carried. The correspondence that had been received during the previous month was placed on the table for inspection by the meeting.

Our president referred to the passing of three of our members, Mrs. Len Coles, Miss J.M. Pook and Mrs. A.H. Wilson. They will be sorely missed by all of us. A moment of silence was held in their memory.

Our president brought to our attention the unveiling of the plaques at four historic sites in the City of Woodstock is to take place on May 19th next.

Mrs. W. Williamson introduced Mrs. J.D. Hossack, our speaker of the evening, her subject being "The History of Embro."

Embro is about the centre of West Zorra and its early history is the history of Zorra. Surveyed by Shubail Park in 1820, two years later the municipality of Zorra was organized and in 1845 it was divided into East and West Zorra. The first settlers were United Empire Loyalists who originally came from the British Isles and settled in eastern United States. Searching for new land they pushed westward and meeting hostile bands of Indians they chose instead the Canadian wilderness crossing into Canada at Niagara. The Codys, Coukes, Kents, Youngs, Karns and Burdicks were some of these founding families. From December 1797 until January 1st, 1820- 69,000 acres of the lands of the Zorras were granted to these settlers in parcels of 100 and 200 acres. The first Scottish settler, Mr. McKay, arrived from Sutherlandshire in 1819 and took up farm land. His brother Angus arrived from the U.S. and returned to Scotland to persuade other families to come to Canada. This is the story in part of the beginning of this Highland settlement.

With the arrival of the first boat load of the Sutherlandshire people in 1829 each succeeding year marked the coming of an increasing number of settlers. Many tradesmen came and in the early days there were blacksmiths, distillery operators, tinsmiths, shoemakers, storekeepers, innkeepers, harnessmakers, weavers, flax dressers, sawmill operators and flour millers, cabinet makers, carpenters, stone masons and many more. These chose as the site of the village of Embro the east halves of lots 11 and 12 of the 4th concession and the west halves of lots 11 and 12 of the 5th concession. A quotation from an early Gazeteer is as follows: "The village is situated on a branch of the Thames River which was most desirable in having unsurpassed natural hydraulic power for mill and manufacturing purposes, and being on a rising eminence is surrounded by a fertile and beautiful section of the country." The name Embro is the old Scottish name of Edinburgh, which City is supposed to derive its name from Edwin, a Northumbrian King, during the time of the Heptarchy.

Many of the first buildings were made of mud brick and two of these remain as residences today. Many people down through the years when making extensive renovations to their homes have come across walls of mud brick still in good condition. The Albion Hotel, a three storey white brick building on the main corner of the Village, housed a tavern, dining room, bedrooms for guests, living quarters for the owner and his family and a large hall which served as a Council Chamber, Division Court and a hall for large meetings. In 1854 one of the most modern and massive residences of the day was built on John St. which was purchased for a Presbyterian Manse in 1867. In 1890 D.R. Ross bought land from the Kennedy farm and built a splendid red brick residence on John St. W. This has through the years been a Presbyterian Church and Manse and is now a nursing home. In 1892 when R.A. Duncan was Reeve, land was purchased on the north west corner of Huron and St. Andrews Streets for \$250. and the next year a Town Hall was built. It had an auditorium with stage and gallery and seating capacity of 400. On the ground floor was a Council Room where Council met and Division Court was held and space for a library.

Shenston's Gazeteer of 1852 described Embro as a polite village with a population of 350. Incorporated as a village November 8, 1858, five councillors were elected and they in turn chose John Dent as the first Reeve. The other Councillors were Robert Mann, storekeeper, John Short, miller, John McDonald and Donald Matheson, postmaster. John Fraser was clerk at \$10.00 per year and D.R. McPherson, who was a merchant and had a bootery, was the first treasurer with a salary of \$2.00 per year. Taxes collected the first year were \$140.00 composed of property tax, nonresident tax, shop license, cash from the sale of the clergy reserves, appropriation from the County Treasury \$26.00, fines from the pound-keeper of \$1.50 to \$2.50 each time animals were held. Money was scarce and interest was 9 per cent.

The 4th line was a Toll Road from Embro to Beachville and there was a tollgate at the first sideroad north of the village and one south, just below where the railway now crosses the road. Donald Matheson was a member of the Company which managed the Toll Road. This created an expensive problem for people coming often into the Village with logs, grist and other produce. They soon began coming in by the 3rd and 6th line, making trails across people's property. These soon gave way to "given roads" and they are still streets of the village. Sidewalks were made of planks. An item from the first cash book showed in 1875 John McKay was paid \$50.00 for planting shade trees on the streets of Embro. Many of these trees are still providing shade on the streets.

Churches - The earliest settlers, the United Empire Loyalists, were Wesleyan Methodists and held services in barns, houses or schools. Mr. Nasmyth, a Scottish immigrant of 1832 settled in Embro and formed a Methodist class. They met in the old Temperance Hall, Commissioner and Argyle Streets. In 1854 a Methodist Church was built just to the south of the Village and around it was a cemetery. It served the people until 1875 when it was sold and used as a barn at the Albion Hotel and an up-to-date white brick edifice was built which served the Congregation until they went into Church Union in 1925.

A small Baptist Congregation worshipped in a little frame church built in 1862 just west of Knox United Church. This was not a strong congregation and the people gradually left and went to other churches and the building was then used for a Town Hall until the present one was built.

The Scottish people were deeply religious and in 1832 they decided to build the old Log Church. In April 1834 Rev. Donald McKenzie was ordained by the Presbytery of Dingwall Scotland and arrived in Zorra in August as a missionary. He was a very rugged dedicated strongly Calvinistic preacher with a passion for education as well as religion. With Mr. McKenzie's zeal and industry the log church was soon too small and the Auld Kirk, a frame edifice, was built in Embro the next year. There were two services, one in Gaelic and one in English. It was not long before the Auld Kirk was too small for the large congregations and the cornerstone for a large red brick edifice was laid in 1861. This is now Knox United Church. In 1867 a large red brick house was purchased at the cost of \$1,000.00 in the Village for the McKenzie family. It is the present manse, having been modernized at different times. Mr. McKenzie resigned in 1872 after 37 years as a minister and educator in the Embro community. Through his precept and example many Zorra and Embro lads entered the ministry.

Schools - The first school in Embro stood on the corner of Argyle and St. Andrews Sts. facing east. It was a frame building plastered on the outside. There were two long rows of benches - one for girls and one for boys with the aisle down the centre. The average attendance was 75 to 80 pupils. In 1844 Rev. Donald McKenzie was appointed Superintendent of Education for Zorra at a salary of \$6. per year. In 1861 a new brick building was built next to the old school. In 1876 a two room school was built. Later there were three rooms in this school and fifth class was taught for many years. In 1924 two years of high school were taught. In July of 1925 the Methodist Church Building was purchased and remodelled into a continuation school. In 1947 this school was turned over to be used as a public school and Embro was admitted to the Woodstock High School Area. The old public school building was sold to Oxford County for a maintenance workshop. The school was closed and the pupils bussed to the new Highland Park School north on the 4th line.

Mail Services - The first mail service was 1791 when a man left on horseback each spring with letters and travelled the old Stage Road. A rider met him with letters and picked up incoming mail. In 1842 stages carried the mail and carriers from Embro met the stage. In 1840 Donald Matheson was appointed the first postmaster. Letters not called for were listed by name in the Embro Planet. Mr. Matheson was Postmaster for 42 years when his daughter Miss Mary took over and served for 31 years until Mr. E.J. Cody became postmaster. County of Oxford Gazeteer 1862-3 lists John McKay as a mail contractor for carrying mail from Embro to Beachville. In 1880 a young liveryman, Wm. S. Vannatter, was given the contract. Ten years later a station was built 4 miles south of the Village on the C.P.R. and mails were taken back and forth each day. Mr. Vannatter delivered mail for 58 years.

Railway - As far back as 1879 a charter was secured to build a railway from Woodstock to Lake Huron by way of Embro and St. Marys. A bonus of \$60,000 was voted by St. Marys and \$10,000 from Embro. Too much time devoted to details and time granted by charter expired and project dropped. Not so with another company organized in 1905 to build and operate a road from Ingersoll to St. Marys, Embro's share this time was \$5,000 and in 1909, the year of the Old Boys Reunion, this road was completed. Picture of the Reeve and welcoming committee marching to the station headed by Piper W.A. Ross to welcome the Old Boys and Girls coming in on the train is in existence.

Bowling Club was invited to St. Marys that summer too and the villagers nearly all went on the train to see the tournament. This railway did a flourishing business as children attending high school in Woodstock rode daily from Lakeside, Bennington and Embro. In 1924 the Toronto City Dairy built a modern plant just south of the station and made use of the railway. The train still runs intermittently but passenger service has been discontinued and the City Dairy plant was closed in 1939 and the building torn down. The mail and express come in today by car and truck.

Newspapers- In 1860 Embro had two newspapers - the Review owned by Alex Hay and the Planet owned by George Dawson. In 1880 the Courier was established. It changed ownership several times, Mr. A.A. McKinnon being the last before it closed in 1934.

The Banks - The first bank was a private bank by Robert Murray. It was succeeded by a private bank operated by Col. James Munro. In 1906 this business was sold to the Farmer's Bank which failed three years later. The Traders Bank had a branch in Embro in the nineties until it was absorbed by the Royal. Also there was a branch of the Merchants which merged with the Bank of Montreal. The Royal Bank is the only one servicing the Village now.

Library - Embro has had library services since the Mechanics Institute began in 1882. It moved around to different locations until 1893 when the Town Hall was built and space was allocated for a permanent home for it. This space since renovated and modernized is the present home of the Oxford County Library.

Militia - Early Embro history would not be complete without its participation in the Militia. During the uprising in 1836 Henry Vansittart raised a Company of 200 volunteers from Embro and Zorra and trained them in Critenden's Distillery. The Embro Company, headed by a Piper, marched to Woodstock, dispersing only when word came that the rebels were defeated. In the South African War John Munro Ross volunteered for service and became a Brig. Gen. Embro gave him a great welcome when he arrived home. Many men volunteered for service in the first and second World Wars and the names of those who made the supreme sacrifice are honored each Armistice Day in front of the Cenotaph in Memorial Park.

Fair - Embro has two big days - Fair Day and July 1st. The Fair goes back to 1854 when there was a Farmers Association called the West Zorra Agricultural Society which organized cattle sales in a field west of the Albion Hotel. Later this sale became known as the Fair. In 1885 the Village bought 6½ acres for \$500.00 for a fairgrounds and this was leased to the Fair Board for \$1.00 per year. On the grounds now called Matheson Park a grandstand was erected with funds from the Old Boys' Reunion Celebration in 1909.

Highland Society July 1 - On March 15, 1856 the Embro Highland Society was organized for the purpose of "preserving the language, martial spirit, dress, music, literature, antiquities and games of the Ancient Caledonians." The Annual Gathering took place each year at Embro and then as now, great crowds came to see the Games, the Dancing and hear the music. On March 31, 1937 this Society was reorganized under the name of Zorra Caledonian Society with the aims and purposes patterned on those of

the early organization and plans were begun immediately to hold Highland Games July 1st, Dominion Day. Each year the number of competitions increases and Embro becomes a City for a day. The community has always had an interest in sports. The most historic was Zorra's famous Tug of War Team who in 1893 won world fame when they pulled the Chicago Humbolt Giants and won the Championship of the World in Chicago at the World's Fair. In June 1939 a Cairn was unveiled at the Cemetery Gates in honor of these mighty men.

The following sketch will acquaint you with one of the most outstanding and colourful pioneers of Embro - Dr. Henry Adams. Dr. Adams was an American, who came after the American Civil War to Embro. He was a fearless man, outspoken and dedicated. Through blizzards and drifts along roads almost impassable he came to be a familiar figure day and night. In 1878 during a smallpox epidemic, when many died in the community, he not only ministered to the sick but helped bury the dead. He was a man of many activities. He had a drugstore in front of his residence. He started a newspaper, and was instrumental in having the evaporator built. He was connected with the Karn Organ Co. of this City and owned 400 acres in East Zorra (The Hartley Farm). He was credited with bringing both the Masonic and Oddfellows Lodges to Embro. He was a member of the Village Council and Reeve at one time. He loved a good argument and nomination nights drew large crowds when Dr. Adams was seeking office. He was active in business and sporting activities and took part in many amateur theatricals.

Historical Society

Plaque honors early Embro minister

Free Press Woodstock Bureau

EMBRO — A man who amazed his future neighbors by not saying a word when his horse got stuck belly-deep in a mud hole, Rev. Donald McKenzie, was honored with a special plaque Sunday at the 143rd anniversary of Knox Presbyterian Church.

The church's first minister, Mr. McKenzie served from 1835 to 1872. Helen Brown of Ottawa, a great-granddaughter, unveiled the plaque while great-great-grandson Scott McKenzie of Erie, Pa., read the inscription.

Relatives from Hamilton, Toronto, Seaforth, Stratford, Vancouver — 25 descendants in all — attended.

When Mr. McKenzie's horse got mired in the mud on his first visit, astonished neigh-

bors who assisted in its rescue wondered at the elegantly-dressed gentleman who didn't swear, eventually deciding he was either a saint or too furious to risk talking about it.

Although the church was built in 1832, Mr. McKenzie spent his first year doing missionary work between London and Detroit and wasn't inducted until a year later.

Named pastor of the Zorra congregation in 1835, he remained for 38 years, moving to Ingersoll in 1872 where he died two years later at 86.

Mr. McKenzie married Christina Cameron in 1838, continuing his missionary work in the Lakes Erie and Huron region for years after.

It was because of these widespread travels

that, when an Embro minister conducted a special service in Paisley years later, an elderly gentleman said: "That's the place where all the Christianity in Canada comes from." when he heard the visitor was from the Embro-Zorra area.

Because more than 53 men from Mr. McKenzie's Zorra congregations studied for the ministry — more than any other one church in Canada — the Christianity remark hit close to home.

Superintendent of Education for Oxford County as well, Mr. McKenzie became annoyed when church elders refused to use the church as a school during the week because it would change a house of prayer into a place for noisy brats, they claimed.

Despite his religious and academic back-

ground, Mr. McKenzie had a sharp sense of humor. When one of his roommates disturbed the others by snoring he commented: "Snoring is the spontaneous escape of malevolent feeling that has not found expression in words during the day."

The day-long ceremony included presentation of a scroll on the province's behalf by Oxford MPP Dr. Harry Parrott.

The original church, called the Old Log Church, was built on Concession 8, West Zorra Township.

The plaque was erected on the site of the second church building in Memorial Park. The minister's church was relocated there, in the village, for convenience shortly after the first log building was completed.

Plaque Honors Embro Native Henry Cody

Tomorrow at 3 p.m., an historical plaque will be unveiled at Embro, birthplace of Canon H. J. Cody, the well-known churchman and educationist. This plaque is one of a series being erected throughout the province by the Department of Tourism and Information, acting on the advice of the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board of Ontario.

The ceremony is being arranged and sponsored by the Embro and West Zorra Women's Institute, whose president, Mrs. J. K. Fleming, will act as program chairman. Others expected to take part in the ceremony are: F. Caddey, Reeve of Embro; G. W. Pittock, MPP (Oxford); W. B. Nesbitt, MP (Oxford); Dr. D. M. Sutherland, a local historian; Leslie R. Gray, a member of the province's Historic Sites Board; and Rev. Samuel Kerr, Minister of Knox United Church, Embro.

Born at Embro, a few miles west of Woodstock, on December 6, 1868, Henry John Cody was sent at the age of 12 to Galt Collegiate Institute, which he attended from 1881 to 1885. He entered University College, Toronto, in 1885, and by the time he received his BA four years later, he had established an outstanding academic record.

Following graduation, Cody accepted the post of classical master at Ridley College, St. Catharines. Though he taught there only three years, his connection with the college continued until the end of his life. He joined its board of governors in 1899 and served as vice-president of the board from 1914 to 1951. While at Ridley he continued his studies extramurally, receiving his MA from the University of Toronto in 1890 and in the same year registering as a student of theology at Wycliffe College. He left Ridley in 1892, and appears to have assumed the position of student assistant at St. Paul's Anglican Church, in Toronto. He completed his theological studies at Wycliffe in 1893 and was ordained a deacon the following month.

In July 1893, the Rev. H. J. Cody was appointed curate of St. Paul's. He was ordained a priest late the following year, and in 1899 became assistant rector. He was actually in full charge of the church, though the incumbent rector did not re-

tire until 1907, when Cody formally became rector.

NAME GREW

During his years at St. Paul's Cody earned a widespread reputation as a preacher. His congregation grew steadily, and not infrequently contained many members of other denominations. Between 1900 and 1904, it twice became necessary to enlarge the church, and in 1909 work was begun on a completely new building, the present one, which was opened in 1913.

In choosing to remain at St. Paul's for nearly 40 years, Cody had to decline many opportunities to serve the church in other parts of the world, including offers of bishoprics in England, Australia and elsewhere in Canada. In 1903 he received the first of many honorary degrees, a DD from Queen's University, and two months later he was appointed a canon of St. Alban's Cathedral, Toronto.

Cody's long and intimate connection with Wycliffe College was undoubtedly one of the reasons for his choosing to remain in Toronto. Immediately after his graduation, in 1893, he was appointed assistant chaplain at the College, and from then until 1906 he served as professor of Old Testament and Ecclesiastical History. In 1895 he was also registrar, and in the following year he became a member of the faculty for 10 more years as professor of Systematic Theology. Save for one year, he was a trustee of the College from 1899 until 1951.

St. Paul's and Wycliffe were by no means Dr. Cody's only interests. About 1893 he became joint editor of the "Evangelical Churchman", a journal published by John Bryant, his one-time principal at Galt. The same year, two institutions were established with which Cody was to be closely associated the rest of his life. One was Havergal Hall (now Havergal College), of which he became chaplain and a member of the board of governors. The school was placed under the pastoral supervision of St. Paul's, and Cody preached the sermon at its annual closing service with scarcely a break for nearly fifty years. The other institution was the Deaconess and Missionary Training House (now the Anglican Women's Training College), whose honorary president he became.

In 1909 the synod of the diocese of Toronto met to choose a successor to the late Archbishop Sweatman. It was the one bishopric which Cody would have been willing to accept. The election, however, became a struggle for power between the "high" and "low" church factions. The resulting deadlock made it necessary to agree upon a compromise candidate, the Ven. J. F. Sweeny, Archdeacon of York. A few months later he appointed Cody his successor as archdeacon.

Throughout his life, Dr. Cody's two main interests were the church and education, and his opportunities were as numerous in the latter field as in the former. In 1903 he declined the presidency of King's College, Windsor, N.S. In 1905-06 he was a member of the Royal Commission appointed by the Whitney administration to enquire into the management of the University of Toronto. Dr. Cody was mentioned as a possible successor to James Loudon, who resigned the presidency of the University in 1906, but was not actually offered the post at that time. In 1910, even before the site of the new University of British Columbia had been chosen, he was suggested as its first president. Two years later he declined the presidency of the University of Manitoba and, in 1913, that of Western University. In 1918 he agreed to join the board of governors of the University of Toronto, and from 1923 to 1932 served as its chairman.

POLITICS

Another educational appointment led Dr. Cody into the field of politics. On May 23, 1918, he was sworn in as minister of education for Ontario in the Hearst administration. To retain the position, it was, of course, necessary for him to secure a seat in the legislature, and that August he was elected member for North-East Toronto. His work as minister of education was recognized even by many who differed from him politically. During his short tenure of office much important educational legislation was passed, including acts for compulsory school attendance and the consolidation of rural schools. He was also instrumental in securing increases in the salaries of teachers, and in improving their pension scheme. In the general election

of October, 1919, the Conservative government was defeated by the United Farmers of Ontario, and Dr. Cody resigned his seat in the legislature the following March.

During the period in which he was minister of education, Dr. Cody continued to act as rector of St. Paul's. He resigned as Archdeacon of York a few days after his appointment as minister, and declined to resume the former post when he relinquished his Cabinet portfolio.

Canon Cody's interests ranged beyond church and school. He was in 1914-15 a member of a Royal Commission on Unemployment. He had a great interest in medical research, and in 1931-32 acted as chairman of the Royal Commission on the use of Radium and X-Rays in the treatment of the sick.

His interest in international affairs was well known, and in 1926 he accepted an invitation to preach a sermon at Geneva in connection with the Seventh Assembly of the League of Nations.

He held the position of president of the general council of the Boy Scouts of Canada, and a few weeks before his death he was invested by the Governor-General with the highest Scout decoration, the Silver Wolf. His last public appearance was at the opening of the new Scout headquarters on Bay Street in Toronto.

Although not a Mason, he was frequently invited to address Masonic groups, and in October, 1937, was given the unusual honor of being made a Mason "at sight" by the Grand Master of Ontario.

It was not until 1932 that Canon Cody at last agreed to leave St. Paul's for another position, and accepted the presidency of the University of Toronto, which he held until 1945. As president of the National Conference of Canadian Universities from 1939 to 1942, he took a prominent part in framing regulations governing students during the war, and legislation providing for postwar education of veterans. The award to Dr. Cody in 1943 of the CMG, the highest Imperial decoration which can be given a Canadian, was in recognition of his work and that of the universities toward the war effort.

Settled By Highlanders

EMBRO WAS DELIBERATELY designed to serve the Township of West Zorra and was created on paper by the municipal Council of Oxford County.

The township was first settled in the 1820's. In 1825 there were only 18 persons assessed on the tax rolls of the municipality, and only three of those had taxable houses. All three of these homes were built of squared logs.

Both East and West Zorra were settled by Highlanders. A survey of the township of West Zorra notes that in 1852 there were 64 McKays, 25 Murrays, 24 Rosses, 18 Sutherlands, 15 McLeods, and 13 McDonalds.

In the same year there were three saw mills in the township as well as two grist mills, a wheat and barley mill, an oat mill, a carding mill and a tannery.

Two Saw Mills

Of those two saw mills and at least one of the grist mills were operating in Embro. The village, described in one early account as the "polite village of Embro," had reached a population of over 300 by 1850. One of the saw mills was situated on the west shore just below where the Thames and Connor's Creek met; the other was on the east shore on the line dividing lots 12 and 13. The grist mill was at the southern end of the village where a small creek flows into the Thames.

During the 1870's Embro was an important commercial centre, on either side of the North Oxford and West Zorra gravel road, tapping the commercial possibilities throughout the section between Woodstock and St. Marys.

During 1909 a railway, a Canadian Pacific line, passed through the village and gave new impetus to its growth.

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Settlement Of Embro Dates Back To Loyalists Of 1776

By ART WILLIAMS

During the American war of Independence in 1776 many loyal subjects of the British Crown decided to forsake their homes in the American colony and come to Canada where they could remain under the British Crown. Among them was a family of Vannatters who left their home in the Catskill Mountains, in New York and were guided by the Hudson's Bay Company across the river and

Some in the early days of settlement there while others made their way through the virgin forests of Ontario into the Brock district and settled in and around Norwichville now Norwich. Later members of these families ventured north and in 1790 seven families took up land on what is now the fourth line of West Zorra. These families were by the names of Day, Coucke, Cody, Youngs, Kent, Vannatter and Wilkenson. These were generally considered to be Pennsylvania Dutch descent and of the Baptist faith.

This was the population and extent of Zorra prior to 1820, when the government took over the selling of lots. The first lot was sold for \$2.00 per acre, being the north half of lot 12, concession 4. It was about this time that the name McKay appears on the census of Zorra. We find William and Angus McKay also coming from the United States, having arrived there from Scotland and finding employment on the Erie Canal before coming to Canada. They remained here and after getting fairly well settled, Angus returned to Scotland and upon hearing of the plight of his relatives persuaded them to come to Canada. The Duke of Sutherland was evicting his tenants to make way for sheep farms

and deer forests. Angus McKay and a boat load of immigrants spent 13 weeks on the Atlantic in a small sailing boat and two more weeks in open boats on the St. Lawrence before they started their long trek through Ontario arriving here in the fall of '29 and settled to the east of what is now Embro in the Braemar area. This was the beginning of a steady flow of Scots immigrants which populated West Zorra in its early days. There were 3,691 residents of West Zorra in 1862 compared to 719 in all of Zorra and East Nissouri in 1820. The flow of immigrants also continued from the United States.

INCORPORATION

In 1838 Embro became a separate municipality and it was incorporated as a village in 1885 by an act of parliament.

At first the stores were to the north of the village in the neighborhood of the present North Embro Mill. The first buildings were distilleries operated by McDonald and Critenden. As the village grew the business moved up to the neighborhood of the present town hall.

John Honeyman operated a flaxmill near the site of the town hall. The Laycock Mills for oatmeal were to the east of the village. The Scotia mills owned by J. N. Ross were to the south of the village. John MacDonald had a carding and cloth factory east of the village. The course of the river was a deciding factor in placing these mills. In the business section one could find a watchmaker, a boot and shoe store, a wagon and carriage maker, cabinet makers, three doctors, an undertaker, a tinsmith, several blacksmiths, carpenters and four general stores along with a pump manufacturer and the usual hotels.

The first council of the village of Embro met on November 8, 1858 at the Albion Hotel as it contained a good meeting hall. John Fraser was clerk and D. R. McPherson was treasurer with the council members being John Dent, Robert S. Mann, John Short, John McDonald and Donald Matheson. The council selected its own reeve, John Dent was the first reeve. In 1892 a lot had been purchased from Walter Ross for \$250 on which to build a new town hall. Messrs Young and Cawsey had the building contract, Andrew Bain the stone mason work; Andrew Chaplin supplied the stone, and the names of John E. (Checky) MacDonald, Malcolm McNeil, Andrew Karn and Thomas Masters appear in the records as some of the men who did the teaming. The new hall was a large red brick building, with auditorium, gallery and stage on the second floor, with a seating capacity of 400. On the ground floor were a council room where Division Court was to be held also, and space for the Library. A gail was built in the basement.

MAIN ROAD

One of the main factors that made Embro the village that it was in 1857 was the fact that it was located on a main road. The North Oxford and West Zorra gravel road linked Embro with Beachville, the Hamilton and London road and the Grand Trunk Western Railway.

It was not until 1879 that the idea of a railroad coming to Embro gained popularity. The first attempt failed and it was

not until 1905 that construction finally got off the paper. By 1909 the railway became a reality. Prior to this in 1890 a station was built four miles south of the village and called Embro Station. It was on the CPR line. B. J. Smith was the agent.

Of course, a village of importance needed newspaper and by 1860 two newspapers were published. The Review by Alex Hay and the Planet by George Dawson. In 1880 the Courier was published. The last Courier was published in August 1934. A. A. McKinnon was the last publisher.

SCHOOLS

Early records show that in 1839, Zorra boasted of three schools. The first log school was on the Squire Gordon Farm. Hugh Matheson was the teacher. Another was at the south west corner of the fourth concession, south of Embro. Louis Hyde was teacher. Hugh Gordon was the teacher of the third school on the eight concession lot 8. By 1862 there were eleven schools. The old Embro Public School was built in 1876 and remained so until 1947 when it was sold to the county for a workshop.

In 1880 the first scholars went from Embro to Woodstock to write their entrance exams.

In 1925 The Methodist church was purchased and remodelled and became the Embro Continuation School. In 1947 when Embro was admitted to the Woodstock High School Board the public school took it over.

The first settlers were not long in getting a church started and we find that the Wesleyan Methodists met at the corner of Commissioner and Argyle streets. Previous to 1824 they had established church services and schools. This was six years before the coming of any Presbyterian minister. The first Presbyterian Church was known as the Old Log Church and was on the 8th concession, lot 9. In 1837 the Auld Kirk was erected in the village at the south side of the present Memorial Park and in 1865 the present United Church was built.

In 1840 the Methodist Congregation purchased the ground south of Embro for a church and burying grounds and in 1854 the first Methodist church was erected. The cemetery still remains. The congregation joined with Knox Church in 1925.

The Ebenezer Congregational Church was formed in 1872 after a visit of Evangelists Russel and Carrol in 1869 and 1870.

The church was built in 1877 and destroyed by fire in 1904. After this the present building occupied by the Presbyterian Church was built. The Ebenezer Church went into union in 1925.

FAIR GROUNDS

The Embro and West Zorra Agricultural Society was inaugurated in 1854 and in 1855 the present grounds were purchased and the Crystal Palace was donated by George Matheson of Sarnia. The grandstand was erected in 1909 for the 'Old Boys' Reunion. The Caledonian Society has made much use of these grounds. In 1948 the society erected the memorial gates at the park entrance.

HIGHLAND RIFLES

The militia is no longer active in the village but ever since its beginning, men have volunteered for service when the need arose. In 1860 a company of volunteers was organized under the name of West Zorra Highland Rifles and in 1863 it became No. 2 Company of the 22nd Battalion of Oxford Rifles. In 1866 they served at Sandwich during the Fenian Raids. It was at this time that the famous saying 'They may tak Montreal, and they may tak Toronto but the'll no tak Zorra' was first heard.

In 1899 Capt J. M. Ross of Embro won second in command of the London District Company of the Canadian Contingent to South Africa. Sons of Zorra also served with distinction in the 1914-18 and 1939-1945 conflicts.

On March 18, 1856 the Embro Highland Society was organized for the purpose of preserving the language, martial spirit, dress, music, literature, antiquities and games of the ancient Caledonians. The first president was John McKay and first secretary was James S. Munro. On September 1, 1856 a charter was obtained.

This organization was re-organized in 1937 and since that time the Highland Games at Embro have gained a reputation second to none in Canada.

TUG-OF-WAR

In the line of sports the rugged Scots of Zorra were more than a match to all they met as was proven when the Zorra tug-of-war team of 1893 won the world championship at the World's Fair in Chicago. A cairn was erected in 1939 to their memory at the gates to the cemetery and to commemorate the day that "Zorra pulled the world."

In more recent years, Bob Hayward captured the Harmsworth Trophy from the United States and successfully defended it more times than any other driver. He was killed in a boat race at Detroit in Sept. 1961.

The Embro Hockey team have been leaders in the Oxford league for the past two years and have won the Tip Top Tailors Trophy in 1961.

The first post office in Embro was located across the street

Harrington ONCE HOME OF RALPH C

By ART WILLIAMS

Looking over the early residents of Zorra we find that in the Harrington area W. C. Brown had established a farm in 1827. He came from another part of Canada, presumably the Niagara district. In 1837 S. F. Rounds, coming from the U.S.A., established a mill. It was on his property the village of Harrington had its beginning although he was not the person responsible for the village being laid out.

W. A. Ross in his history of Zorra states a man by the name of Demerest owned a sawmill where the village of Harrington is now situated. North of the village lived Weston Allen and Ned Fletter. A mile east lived Alexander Ross. South, on the second concession was John B. McKay and his brother William, Robert Munro, Robert Murray, John McKay, Alex Sutherland and Colin Sutherland. It was D. L. Demerest who had the location surveyed by William Smalley in 1856. In the survey most of the streets were to the south of what is now called the Harrington sideroad. This survey contained 20 streets. These included West, Prospect, Cornelia, Elizabeth, Fraser, Victoria, Albert, Adelaide, Caroline, William and East street running north and south, Main street, Charlotte, Maria, Park, Queen and David streets running east and west. Charlotte and Fraser Streets were the only two streets laid out north of Main street. The main part of the village was laid out between the mill pond and the Presbyterian Church. The church was built at the eastern extremity of the village on the north side of the road and is still in the same location. The old mill pond is better known today as the Harrington pond of the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority.

POST OFFICE

This section of Zorra being somewhat hilly was well supplied with creeks as well as the north branch of the Thames River with its many tributaries. Consequently there were several mills scattered throughout the region. With this activity drawing settlers, a post office was established here on April 4, 1854, with David L. Demerest as postmaster. In 1866 Donald Reid took over. He was followed by Hugh McKay, Robert Heron, May Heron (Mrs. Mary White), Robert McCool, Robert Beattie until 1906. Today Harrington is one of the few small post offices still operating. It serves 22 patrons. Since 1906 A. Clark, G. M. Bossemer, R. H. Darling, J. Clark, A. M. Ross, Colin A. Mac Dougall and Norman Ford have been postmasters.

Some of the industries and residents located in the village in 1867 included William Bailey, proprietor of the Harrington hotel; John Campbell, shoemaker; Richard Paige, proprietor of the Harrington Mills; John Harris, carpenter and joiner; Robert Heron, tailor; Levi Johnston, chairmaker; J. MacKay, a blacksmith; James McKay, mason; Hugh McLeod, MD, physician and surgeon; D. McMullen, shoemaker; Rev. W. M. Meldrum, Presbyterian minister; John Pitt, justice of the peace; Donald Reid, postmaster and shoe shop; Duncan Reid, shoemaker; George White, proprietor of the oatmeal mill located on Lot 31, concession 3. The population of the village at this time was approximately 100 people.

The congregation of the Presbyterian Church was established in 1856, when John Fraser, a village merchant, invited Rev. Wm. Meldrum of Puslinch, who was doing missionary work, to come and preach. Mr. Meldrum conducted services in the bush back of where the present church now stands. An understanding was reached that as soon as a building was erected he would be offered the charge.

Mr. Fraser gave the land. Early in 1857 a church was built a few feet to the rear of the present church. It was opened in June, 1857. Mr. Meldrum accepted the call to serve as the first pastor.

The first manse, which was built in 1885, is in use at the present time as the Dickey Store.

Many men served this parish but few left their mark as did Rev. Daniel Gordon who arrived in 1871. He was a man of exceptional ability. In his college days he had been the champion boxer of his year. The manse at this time was located within earshot of the hotel. Harrington was well known for its rowdy parties. It was not unusual for the reverend gentleman to enter the bar-room and straighten the fellows out. His size and physique doing most of the influencing.

RALPH CONNOR

The Gordons had a son whose name is one well remembered for his skill with the pen. C. W. Gordon who took the pen name of Ralph Connor. His boyhood reflects in his books, as he used scenes of happenings in the Harrington area. The barn he often mentions still stands on the third line of Zorra. He took an active part in its raising. The well known binding bee he mentions in his books, actually took place on the Morris farm. Some of Ralph Connor's books include Black Rock, Glengarry School Days, The Sky Pilot. In all, his book sales reached the 65,000 mark.

DOLLAR WHEAT

The older generation remembers Rev. Daniel Gordon for his long sermons. Often when the day was hot the menfolk would drowse. Suddenly the minister would call out in a loud voice "Wheat is selling at a dollar a bushel in Stratford." All heads would jerk up and he would chastise them for sleeping, saying the mere mention of dollar wheat could wake them while he could preach all day about the wheat and tares of life and to this they would slumber. Very few would fall asleep again that day.

It was this same gentleman who described the residents of Harrington better than anyone else ever did before or since. When he and his family arrive from Glengarry he wrote back to a friend, "the people hereabouts were Scots with a few of the lesser breeds mixed in."

A little north of Harrington there was a very strong Irish settlement but the boundary road between Perth and Oxford has been like a high board fence. Very few from one side have gone to the other.

SCHOOLS

While the majority of settlers arrived during the 1840's, it was not until 1850 that David Demerest sold one quarter of land for a shilling for the site of the school. At first, the school site was known as Springfield. The institution was of log construction. This school remained until 1869, when a Mr. Grant of St. Marys was given the contract to build the present stone school. When it opened 112 children attended under N. Meldrum, the teacher. By 1878 it was necessary to build an addition. The brick section was added at a cost of \$725.

Some of the early teachers were Jane Sutherland, James Hill, Mrs. T. McBurney, Hugh Ross and Jean Morgan. For some unknown reason the name Springfield was not acceptable as the village name. Francis Hinks of Woodstock was influential in having the name changed to Harrington in honor of one of his staunch supporters, Squire Harrington, of East Zorra. There being another Harrington, the village became known as Harrington West for postal purposes.

The magnificent stands of rock elm and hard maple in Zorra were among the best to be found along the Great Lakes due to the gravel bottom of the land. Great loads of lumber made their way to the lakeshore for shipment to the shipbuilding centres of the Atlantic coast. Among the biggest timber was a mast 14 inches square at the butt and 70 feet in length which was shipped out by Wilson Bros. of Wood-

stock to Boston. With the mention of timber the name Sam Pearce is recalled. Sam was one of the greatest lumber men in these parts and his descendants are still to be found in the district.

SAWMILL

For some time Harrington had no sawmill. Lampmans of Perth County purchased a sawmill at Bennington. When moving it to the St. Marys district they reached Harrington on a Saturday night. While waiting over Sunday they were persuaded to set up and cut a few logs which they did. As a result the mill never moved to St. Marys, but remained here until the age of sawmills had passed on.

The old Harrington mill had its beginning in the early 1850's. Though this grist mill is on the same site it is the third mill to be so located. Twice it was destroyed by fire. In over a century there have only been three owners who were Messrs. Demerest, Hill and Duncan. The mill is still operated by water power as there is an ample supply of water in the Thames River authority pond alongside the mill.

METHODISTS

There was a Methodist congregation formed in the village about 1840. A frame church was erected. It was never a large church but formed an ideal training ground for many prominent ministers in their student years. Among these were the Parr Brothers and Albert Moore. The present church was moved from Maplewood in 1925 and the salvaged material from the original church was incorporated with the new one to form the present building.

The story of Harrington would not be complete without the mention of some of her sons. Maybe the best known to the outside world is Dr. Gordon P. Murray who was raised among the hills of Harrington. He went on to fame as the blue baby doctor and for his pioneer research on surgery of the heart. Another, Dr. Hugh McLeod, through sheer determination worked his way through medical school, only to come back here and spend his lifetime as the country doctor. No storm ever blew that hard or mud or or snow block the roads bad enough to stop the rig of Dr. McLeod. In the entertainment field Billy Sutherland was called Ontario's Strathspey King for his skillful renditions of Scottish music on the violin.

FAIRVIEW

A little to the northeast of Harrington where the Embro

Road crosses the boundary into Perth is found a community the traveller of today hardly sees, while to the traveller of yesterday it was an important stopping place. Located on the high ground, the community was appropriately called Fairview. The first settlers obtained land here in 1822, but it was not until the 1830's that any took up residence. It was just south of the big gulley that Captain Gordon built a log house on lot 33. This was later to become one of the first schools in Zorra. In 1839 Hugh Matheson taught 20 boys here. Later the school was moved to the corner at the Harrington sideroad and became known as the red brick school (Wadland's school).

Fairview never reached any size, but with the location of a hotel, cider mill and blacksmith shop, it was a welcome spot to the weary traveller. Being a place of call a post office was established in 1854 with John Armstrong as the first postmaster. George Purdy, L. Robinson, F. Seegmiller, R. Forest, Sam Robb and Mrs. C. Thompson carried on until 1912 when the office was closed. Mail arrived from Stratford three times a week. One of the better known couriers was Charles Bell who would make the trip via Stratford, Harmony and Fairview, come rain or shine.

Today as one makes the turn at Fairview, it is readily realized some of the problems that faced the teamsters of those early days. The need for a blacksmith, who was located in the stone building on the corner was frequent after they had drawn their heavy loads over the steep hills to the south, on their way to Stratford.

Harrington In Boom Days of 70's Thriving Oxford Industrial Town

By S. Garrett

HARRINGTON Village nestles among the undulating hills of the northern portion of Oxford County's historic Township of West Zorra and presents a scene of unrivaled beauty which attracts sightseers in ever increasing numbers.

The community is bisected by the north branch of the River Thames, which threads its way between lofty hills and grassy meadows and once furnished power for some of its industries. Broad wooded slopes, level tracts of ground covered with luxuriant growth, stately trees and attractive farmsteads combine to present scenes as attractive as Western Ontario can produce. The village itself is located at the foot of mighty ramparts of hills that stretch towards the south and west.

The village is said to have had at least three names, the first one being Demorestville, in honor of the founder, A. M. Demorest, a United Empire Loyalist, who came to this vicinity in the early 1840's and located on a grant of 200 acres awarded him by the Government. This name soon gave way to Springfield, and was eventually changed to Harrington by Sir Francis Hincks in compliment to his friend, Squire Harrington, of Hickson, East Zorra.

The official name of the community is in reality Harrington West. Quebec Province has a Harrington East and a Harrington Harbor and sometimes the mails become confused, especially if the "West" is omitted when they are being addressed to the Zorra hamlet.

Harrington's boom period seems to have been in the 70's and 80's when it had a population of about 300 and a number of industries and business places. The population is now said to be about one-sixth of what it was then.

Tradition has it that Demorest and his men moved his milling equipment from Ingersoll by ox team and in places they were obliged to cut their way through the dense bush. He had been required to build both a saw and grist mill in return for the grant of land. The old Demorest grist mill has been owned by Robert Duncan in recent years. The sawmill was moved to the north side of the village some time after its erection.

The community soon filled up with people from the highlands of Scotland, although the village, which was surveyed in 1855, soon found itself with a mixed population of Lowland Scots, English, Irish and American Loyalists. The lack of railway facilities was a handicap to commercial expansion and the removal of many young people to the Canadian West was also detrimental.

The original school was a log building at the southern extremity of the hamlet. It was built in 1850 on land donated by David Demorest and at times the attendance is said to have been over 100. A stone school was built in 1869, having Norman Mel-

drum as first teacher and opening with 112 on the roll. A brick addition was erected in 1878.

The old Presbyterian Church was built in 1857 and a frame Methodist Church in the year following. The earliest pioneer Presbyterian minister is said to have been the Rev. William Mel-drum and his successor was Rev. Daniel Gordon, whose son, Rev. Charles William Gordon, was destined to become famous as "Ralph Connor." Two other sons, Andrew and Robert, also were outstanding, the former as a professor associated with Toronto Medical School, and the latter as a civil engineer. The latter, connected with the mining industry in Northern Ontario, is credited with having constructed the large tunnel below Kerr Lake.

Rev. A. G. McLaughlin was another outstanding minister of Harrington's other days, while the sick of the community were attended by Dr. McLéod.

One of the stores and the post office were kept by Mary Heron and John McLeod's hotel drew an expansive patronage. The sawmill owned by Simon Lampman & Sons, located beyond the creek flowing from the mill dam, was a major industrial concern.

In the early 1880's, a stock company was formed to drill for oil in this part of Zorra. After they had drilled down 1,500 feet the project was abandoned. Although a strong stream of mineral water rewarded their efforts this was deemed a poor substitute. To this day the water gushes up with great force and is known as the Flowing Well.

Many of the fine dwellings and barns in this part of Oxford were built by James McKay and his three sons.

William Jordan's tailor shop,

HARRINGTON
and George Forbes woodworking establishment were substantial businesses in the old-time Harrington.

About a mile east of Harrington lies a small valley surrounded by low wooded hills and pasture lands, interspersed by meadows and cultivated fields. In this picturesque spot stands the old wooden mill immortalized by Ralph Connor in his book, "The Doctor." It was erected over 90 years ago by George Ross, whose neighbor, George Sutherland, eventually became his partner in the venture. When Ross moved away, Sutherland became sole owner. His son, William, succeeded him. The latter became widely known for his skill as a violinist. Today the old mill pond and the small streams emptying into it attract many disciples of Izaak Walton.

The old manse in which the Gordons lived has been moved to another site and now houses the general store of C. M. Baker. Not far away, is John H. McKay's blacksmith shop, another link with Harrington's palmy days.

It is recalled that Ralph Connor walked to and from school in St. Marys—a distance of nine miles. He served as moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1921-22. One of his novels, "The Sky Pilot," sold more than 1,000,000 copies.

W. A. Ross, to whom the writer is indebted for many of these facts, was a schoolboy companion of Ralph Connor. The former is well known as the author of "The History of Zorra and Embro." His father, the late Sullivan Ross, one of the Zorra pioneers, was the champion bagpipe player of America in 1876.

Harrington had an old boys' reunion in 1925, hundreds of former residents attending. Special services were held in the churches and on the following day a monster picnic was staged on Hugh Murray's farm. Ralph Connor sent a letter of regret stating that he would be unable to be present.

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Early Pattern Of Harrington Is Typical Of Oxford County

By E. E. BOSSENCE

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, and the early part of this one, there were some interesting and amusing characters, who had lived in, and around, the Village of Harrington, Ontario (Oxford County) including that early period when Ralph Connor's father Rev. Mr. Gordon, was the minister at the Presbyterian Church.

Dr. McLeod, the genial, local physician, was overfond of that which "In the end biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." Meeting Mr. Gordon, one day, and finding it difficult to keep his balance, down he went, right at his minister's feet. Embarrassed, he said "The Reverend Mr. Gordon; The Reverend Mr. Gordon; The laws of gravity; if a man's feet go from under him, he is sure to come to the ground". Mr. Gordon looked down on him in pity and sorrow.

A local scotchman, Mr. Matheson, was fond of an argument, especially on politics. Riding home from town with a mild Dutchman, John Ruthermel, he started in on the Liberals, calling them everything he could think of. Mr. Ruthermel said, "That's right, Mr. Matheson." After awhile he lit into the Conservatives, giving them an equal drubbing. "That's right," said Mr. Ruthermel. Exasperated, the old Scotchman said "Why you no' arger wi' me?" Somebody offered him a drink, telling him that it was ten years old. "It's vera sma' for its age", said he.

Spafford (Spot) Rounds the mayor, on being elected, said that he was like cold pertaters — he was better warmed up. Nearly two centuries ago, someone drilled there to find oil. No oil appeared, but the fountain of youth, a flowing well — the water of health, containing iron, sulphur, etc. rolls up from the bowels of the earth in volume enough to supply the whole village, were it piped to their homes. A suitable park now adorns the site.

Walter Ford was badly retarded. Today he could be treated, but then he was the village fool. He was followed, laughed at, and mocked by the younger boys (and often by much older ones). In summer, Walter wandered around the farms, helping anyone who would give him a meal and a few pennies. He collected so many he decided to go to Michigan and buy a farm. Put wise to his error, after that he insisted on "white" money. In the winter, a shooting-match

was held, when the ice on the mill-pond was heavy; the prizes, turkeys. Walter stood watching. Someone said, "Have a try, Walter". He raised the rifle; bang! The bullet ripped through the surface of the ice, ricocheted into the target — a bull's eye. Walter got his turkey.

Maggie McKenzie, the local, good-natured seamstress, lived with her scotch grandmother. Granny was very much afraid that one of the young men would marry Maggie and so leave her alone. George Lampman used to often call of an evening and, to tease the old lady, they would sit in a corner and whisper. Granny watched them with a suspicious eye. One day, Maggie said to her, "Grandma, I wonder you ever got married, you watch me so much". "Me get married!" replied the old lady. "Eight want me!" "Why then" said Maggie "are you so afraid that one might want me?" "Oh, diffrence," replied Granny, "diffrence in mans in this country and mans in the old country."

At the Methodist Church revival meetings were frequent. Evangelists, Crossly and Hunter, Mrs. Williams, and others found ready audiences and made many converts. A respected member of this church Matthew Morris, was "down on" young men who left the farm. "By sir", he would say, "Another gone to the city to starve". Sometimes he was right. They were glad to return.

Bert Lampman, Harvey's father, was local skating champion. He encouraged the rising generation to learn to skate on the mill-pond. Bert's and George's father was quite a fighter in his youth. He used to go up street with a freak outfit of clothes on, hoping that someone would make fun of him; and so provide a good excuse for a fight. Later in life he repented, and worried much because of his wild youth.

The Campbells, on a farm east of the village, were a mischievous bunch. One morning, when their dad was saying family prayers a young Campbell held a pin behind his father's back. Another youngster pushed his arm, making his father jump. I will not say what happened after that, but you can imagine.

My old-maiden Aunt Julia Bossence had a valuable watch, cost \$50.00 and that was something in those days. Because she prized it highly, when she travelled she wrapped it in rag after rag until as Milton Sal-

vadge said, "If you found it, you would kick it out of the way like a football."

The two-roomed school at the west end of the village, was at first just one stone building. It had its share of two-fisted boys. Harvey Lampman, like his grandfather, was a chip off the same block. He and Jack Kittmer had a fight most every day at recess. They were like a continued-story in the newspapers. Next day they started where they left off the day before. If you got bored watching them behind the schoolhouse you would likely find Ed Hill and Fenwick Duncan, sparring for a knock-out. Short, heavy-set, Harold Wilson and tall thin Jack McComb for fun, used to wrestle. Jack marvelled because short Harold could usually throw him. My dad Henry Bossence, owned the second farm north of the village. In wintry weather, my young brother and I rode our pet horse, old Kate, to school; bareback. He sat behind me his short legs sticking straight out. When we arrived at the school, we turned old Kate around and, with a pat, we sent her home. Harold and Tom Wilson meeting her, rode her back to the school. Again sent her home. This might happen as often as any boys met her.

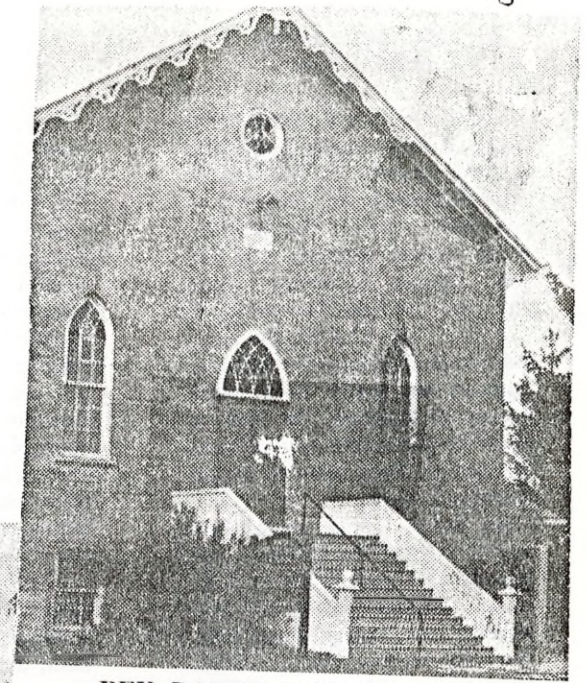
The school inspector Mr. Carlyle, we nicknamed "Coal-oil". He had big feet, and wore

heavy overshoes to keep the cold out, as he drove a slow nag from school to school. His big feet looked to us like pontoons. To test us he would ask what we saw coming to school. When we told him, a tree or a horse, he would say, "Where are they? I don't see them here." One day he sent Harvey Dunnell on an errand telling him to take his horse and buggy. Harvey, to liven-up the old nag, used the whip freely. It was not used to this, and got the "jitters". The old man would wonder what ailed it. Harvey looked innocent, like the cat that had just swallowed the canary.

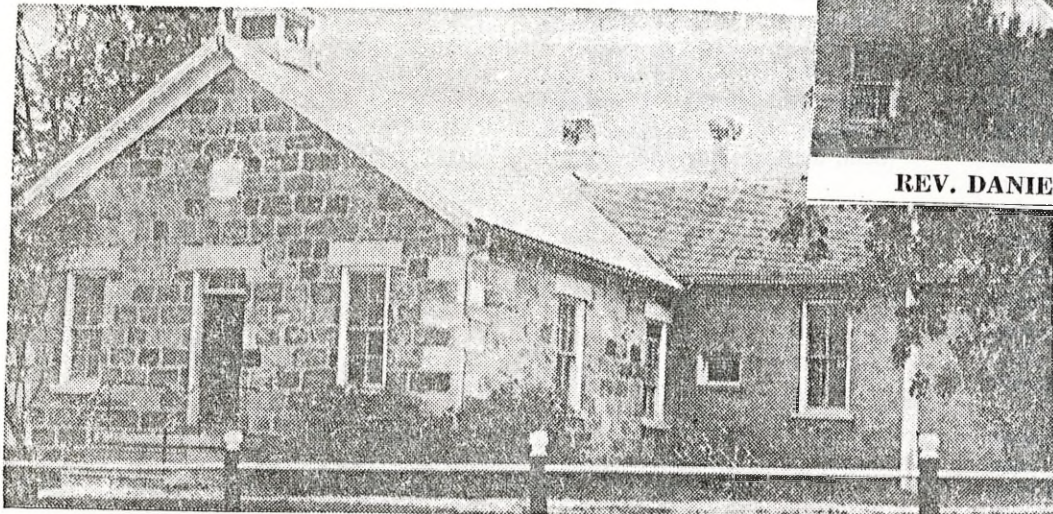
To complete this story, we swam in the river behind the grocery store, in our birthday clothes Jack Morrison pounding the water with his fists closed, dog fashion; all of us yelling like Indians. We waded up the Thames River for duck eggs and frogs. Mother would not cook the frogs' hind legs — made her, you know. So we did it ourselves. Outside of being too salty, they tasted good. We made acorn pipes, with docks for stems, and smoked mullein leaves for tobacco. Elm roots made good cigarettes but soon got hot.

Harrington is much the same today; a haven of peace and rest, in a world that is rushing somewhere, but most of the time is not sure where it is going.

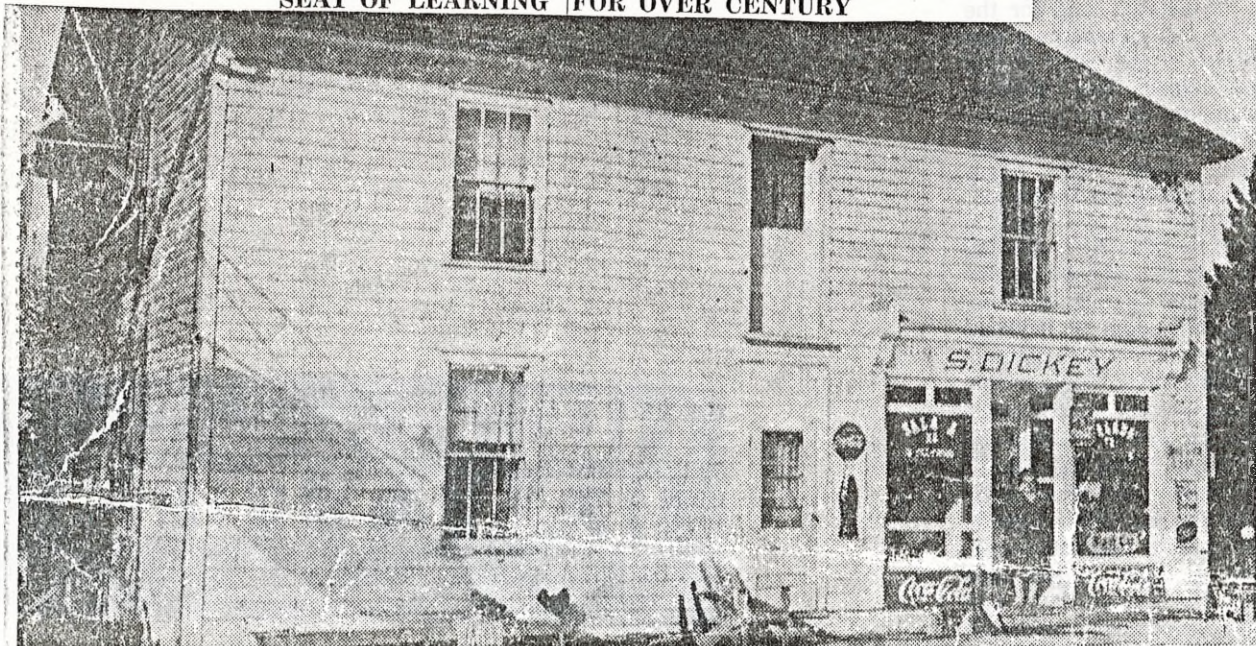
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REV. DANIEL GORDON'S KIRK



SEAT OF LEARNING FOR OVER CENTURY



Upper left photo is the original church, Knox Presbyterian, in which the Reverend Mr. Gordon, Ralph Connor's father preached his three hour sermons. Our historian tells

us that near the end of his preaching days he "sort of went off his nut" and then Mrs. Gordon would take over the pulpit. Upper centre photo is of the old mill. It is still

running but no more grinds grist, it just does chopping. Upper right is the modern remains of the old well which, when drilling for oil, opened

up a gusher — of water. Lower left is the place where Charles Gordon (Ralph Connor) lived for a long time. Now a store operated by Mr. and Mrs. Stan Dickey.

THE VILLAGE OF HARRINGTON

Located on Lot 31, Concession No. 2 of West Zorra Township, Oxford County, Harrington is approximately 12 miles north of Ingersoll. Among the settlers were Robert Murray and his wife Esther Gilchrest. They were married at the manse of the first log church by Rev. Donald MacKenzie. Mr. Murray learned his trade as a stone mason in Scotland. In 1858 he built the stone foundation walls for the first flour mills on Scotia Farms, Embro.

He made bricks from mud and straw and dried them in the sun for the farm home of J.M. Ross, Scotia Farms. Mr. Murray also burned local lime stone for mortar. Mr. and Mrs. Murray were charter members of the Harrington Presbyterian Church. Other pioneer settlers

were families by the name of Campbell, McKay, Ross, Sutherland, Baynes, MacKenzie, MacDonald, McIntosh, Morrison, MacRaes, MacCombs and Innes.

A frame Presbyterian church was erected in 1857. John Fraser, a merchant, was very active in getting the church built. He donated land for the site. This church was on a site somewhat to the rear of the present church. Rev. William Meldrum was its first minister.

The first elders were George McLeod, Hugh Ross, John McLeod and William McKenzie. Rev. Daniel Gordon became minister in 1871. Rev. Gordon and his wife reared one daughter and six sons. One of the sons, Charles, who spent his boyhood in Harrington, became famous as "Ralph Connor". He was also a minister of the Presbyterian church. He wrote, "Glengarry School Days", "The Sky Pilot," "The Runner", and other books.

In 1891 the Harrington church was bricked in and renovated. In 1897 a brick manse was erected. On May 26, 1957, this church celebrated its centennial anniversary.

The Methodist church east of the village was also an early church. This congregation purchased land for a cemetery on the opposite side of the road.

A distinguished son of Harrington was piper Sullivan Ross, who came from Scotland. His wife was Margaret Matheson. They took up lot 31, Concession 3, in 1846. W.A. Ross, their youngest son is the author of "History of Zorra and Embro". This was in 1909. Sullivan Ross, the piper, went to the great Caledonian Meet in Lucknow in 1876 and won the championship of America and a gold clasp that was never wrestled from him. He and his wife are buried in the Harrington Presbyterian Cemetery.

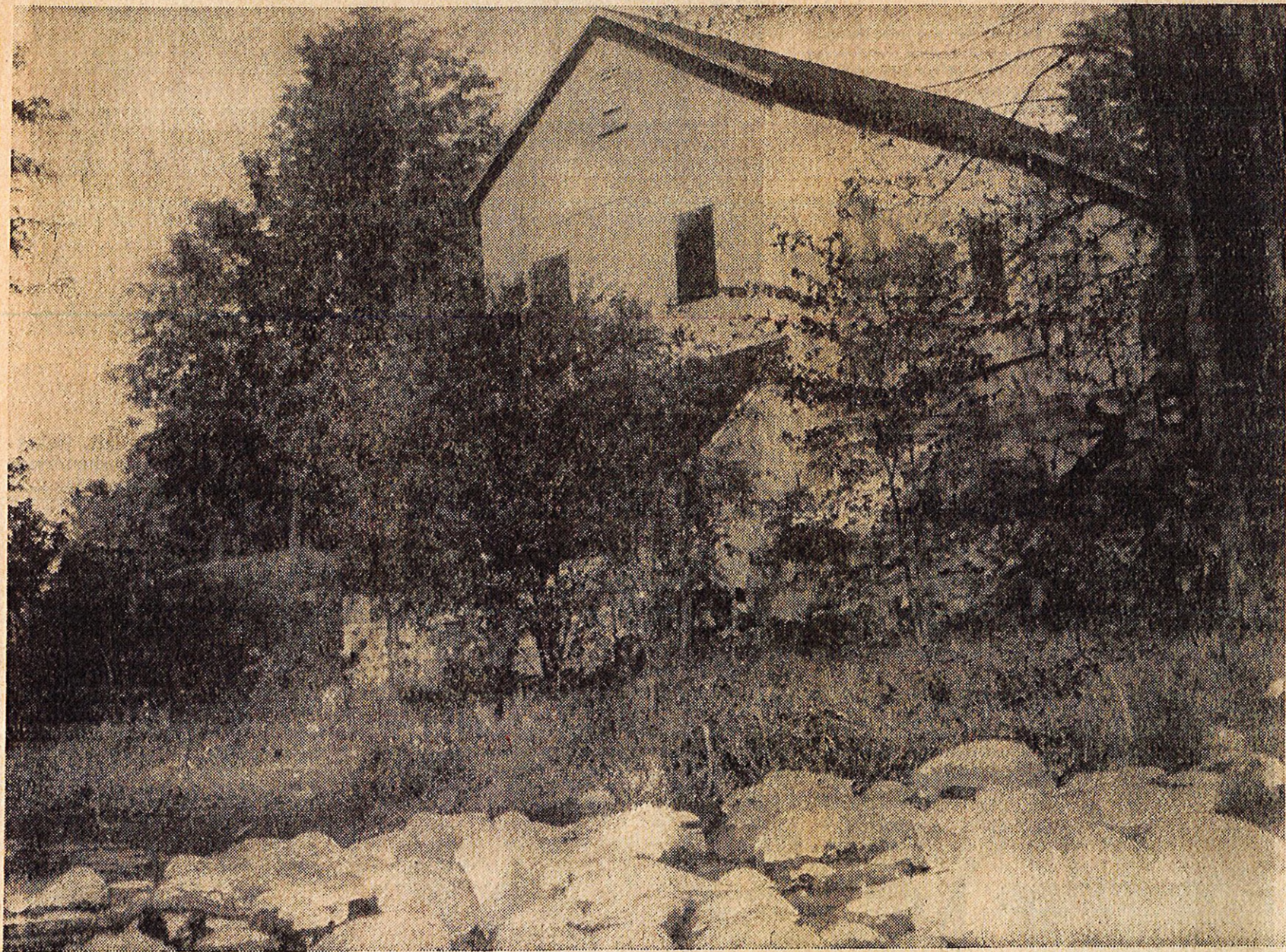
Harrington has had the usual shops and stores of pioneer villages and its progress has been uniform over the years.

THE JENVEY FILES

Research from the files of Byron G. Jenvey

INGERSOLL TIMES

May 17, 1978



Plans revealed will restore this old grist mill at Harrington

Harrington's mill

OCT 16 1972

to be restored soon

HARRINGTON G. W. Kelly, secretary-treasurer of the Upper Thames Valley Conservation Authority, London, announced Friday that a grant of \$5,000 had been received from the provincial government for the improvement of the Harrington Conservation area.

The grant along with an equal amount by the Upper Thames authority will be used to erect change houses and washrooms.

Mr. Kelly also announced that the old Harrington mill, now owned by the authority, will be restored as a point of interest where the early method of grinding can be observed.

The first mill was erected here in 1858 by D. L. Demerest and remained on this site until it burned in 1923.

Robert Duncan, the proprietor at that time, having purchased the mill in 1920 rebuilt the same year on the site and continued to operate the mill until about the time the Upper Thames authority purchased it in 1966.

For over a hundred years this mill served the area farmers, supplying their grist which they brought to the mill and farm feed requirements.

The power for the mill was supplied by a gear driven type of water wheel which was replaced by a diesel engine a few years before the mill closed. The original water wheel and gears are still in place and will be re-activated when the mill is restored and the mill race re-opened.

Mrs. Duncan, in speaking for her 86-year-old husband feels that he will be very pleased to see the old mill restored for future generations.

The hamlet of Harrington has played an important part in the history of Perth and Oxford counties, being strategically located just south of the Oxford-Perth boundary on con. 2 of West Zorra, ten miles southwest of Stratford.

It is about here that Ralph Connor, the famous Canadian author wrote "The Country Doctor" and others of his books, having spent most of his childhood days here when his father, the Rev. Gordon was minister at the Harrington Presbyterian Church.

The hamlet was never a large community and at present has 22 families living here, but through its strategic location, still boasts of three general stores.

A post office was located here until 1969 when the government curtailed service and is now served by RR 3 Embro.

A highlight of the year comes each spring when hundreds of fishermen flock here for the opening of the trout season. The old mill pond is a favourite fishing spot, and cars begin to line the area early in the evening prior to opening day.

The present pond and area were acquired by the Upper

Thames authority in 1952 with the purchase of 12 acres of land. The mill was purchased in 1966 after two years of negotiating.

The conservation area has proven to be a very popular picnic and recreational area since that time with the pond being well known for its cool, invigorating water which rises from 11 springs in the bed of the dam.

It is here each spring that the returning swallows come and while not as spectacular as their return to Capistrano, they do attract a lot of attention as they herald the arrival of fine weather.

Neighbor wants to maintain Harrington mill, says it is now dangerous

Dec 28/77

By Greg Rothwell staff reporter

HARRINGTON — The old Harrington mill presents a potential danger to this community, says a resident living near the mill. And he wants to help residents by maintaining the building. Harrington is about 20 kilometres south of Stratford.

Michael Fletcher bought the property beside the mill three

years ago. A month-and-a-half ago he approached the Upper Thames Conservation Authority in London (which owns the mill) to discuss the situation with them. The board of governors will discuss the matter at a meeting in January.

Mr. Fletcher said Tuesday the mill is deteriorating and the hazards are increasing.

Among the potentially dangerous situations, he cites

the possibility of children getting injured if they play inside or near the power wheel outside. He said there is also the problem of fire by spontaneous combustion that could start in some of the old bits of grain inside.

Vandalism is another problem, said Mr. Fletcher, and there has been some of that because the building is not regularly guarded.

The Upper Thames has owned the mill since 1966 when it was purchased from the proprietor, Robert Duncan. Inspections are done periodically, said Mr. Fletcher, but the mill "is rapidly becoming derelict."

He said he told Russ Powell, of the Upper Thames, that he is "more than willing to put my back into the work," and said many residents in the area have

told him they are willing to help him out.

Mr. Fletcher said the mill "holds little historical interest" but older residents in the area have grown attached to it.

The building itself is only 54 years old, but the site is the same one where the first mill was erected in 1853.

That mill burned down in

1923, but a new one was constructed and maintained by Mr. Duncan for 43 years.

The building continued to serve as a grist mill for area farmers until 1966 when it was purchased by the Upper Thames.

Mr. Fletcher is the second person who has expressed interest in the Harrington mill in recent months.

A London man, Earl Munroe,

has also approached the Upper Thames. He wants to restore the mill as a hobby.

In the past few years there have been a number of discussions about what should be done with the mill, including the possibility of moving it to another location for restoration. But no decision on such suggestions has ever been made by the Upper Thames.

Interest in old mill grows

SEP 4 1977

By Greg Rothwell staff reporter

HARRINGTON — A private citizen has expressed interest in helping preserve the old Harrington Mill.

Russ Powell, of the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) in London (which owns the mill), said Monday that a meeting will be held within the next month between the authority and the unidentified man to discuss the situation.

Mr. Powell said the man approached UTRCA a month ago expressing an interest in restoring the mill. Mr. Powell said his proposal would be to restore it and open it to the public.

He said the man apparently is not seeking funding from the conservation authority. The work would be something of a hobby for the man, Mr. Powell said.

Mr. Powell said provincial grants would not likely be available for a restoration project as the mill would probably not be classified as an historic site.

The first mill was erected in Harrington in 1853 by D. L.

Demerest and remained on the site until it burned in 1923.

Robert Duncan, the proprietor at the time of the fire, rebuilt it and operated a new mill on the site until the UTRCA purchased it in 1966.

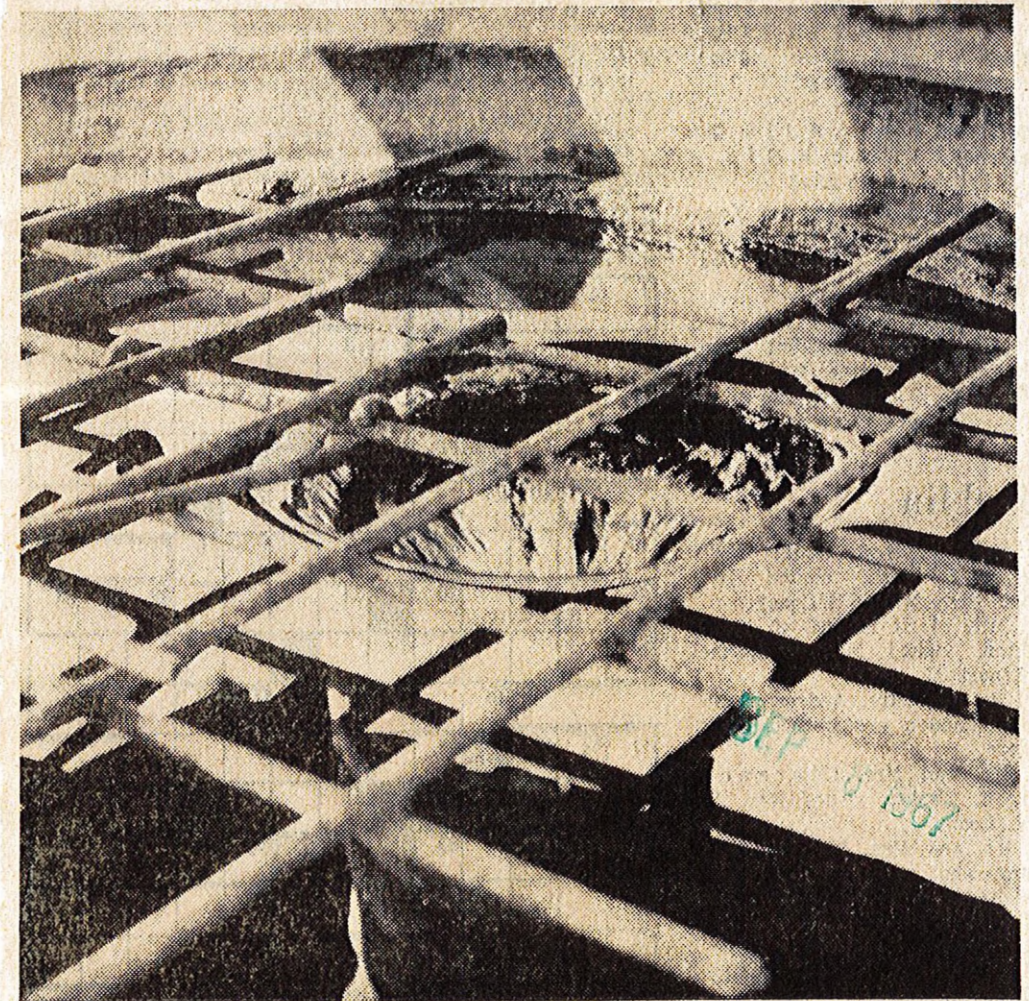
The mill served as a grist mill for area farmers, providing them with their farm feed requirements.

Power for the mill was supplied by a gear-driven water

wheel which was replaced with a diesel engine a few years before the mill closed. The original wheel and gears are still in place.

Discussions in the past few years have included the possibility of moving the mill to another location for restoration purposes. But no decision was ever made by the UTRCA in that respect.

T. J. Murray.



COOL WATER—"The great oil swindle of Harrington was in about 1883, when a stock company was formed to drill for oil," recalls Robert Duncan of Harrington. "I don't know if the land was witched or not to see if oil was there, but they drilled anyway, and struck water. When the money started to run out, they bought kerosene and spilled it around so people could see it floating on the water, and put more money into the company. The water they struck used to be piped and rose 30 feet into the air. When the pipe rusted out, it was never replaced; so now it just comes up and flows away. It's drinkable and is 46 degrees all the year around."

SEP 9 1967



OXFORD'S GHOST TOWNS

During recent months, as *Sentinel-Review* photographer Ted Town went about his regular assignments, he's been gathering photos of the vanished settlements that are the ghost towns of Oxford County. Another is **Holiday**: located on the East Nissouri-West Zorra Town Line, the town received the name of Nissouri in 1853.

The name was changed to Holiday in 1897, when the post office was opened. Only one house remains at the site, although a small cemetery lies a short distance north.

W.J. Wintemberg, reprinted from the Ontario Historical Society's *Papers and Records*, Volume XXII, 1925.

SENTINEL REVIEW
May 16, 1944

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 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 1867.¹

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.

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

Do you remember

Pea Straw Corners?

BY CAROL McKNIGHT

Almost everyone's heard of Dog Patch, Punkidoodle Corners and Frogmore, for these small settlements - too small even to be called villages - have such unique names and characteristics, they're almost unforgettable. But has anyone heard of Pea Straw Corners?

According to three Ing-

ersoll District Collegiate Institute students, Pea Straw Corners was the original name of what is now known as Kintore. At one time the settlement had just about everything one could want, including a cheese factory, a hotel, Post Office, churches and stores. What happened?

That is just one of the questions Valerie McLeod,

Janice Henderson and Pat Weir are trying to find out. The three are presently working under a Young Canada Works grant, sponsored by the Township of Zorra, researching the history of Kintore from 1878 to 1978. Upon completion of their research, a synopsis of the information they have collected will be published in a small

booklet while a detailed account of their research will be compiled and made available to the public at Kintore Library.

The three will be spending a total of six weeks working from their small office, adjacent to the Public Library in Kintore, collecting information.

The idea for the summer project developed shortly after Canada Manpower official Wilma Bolton spoke to a group of students at I.D.C.L. in January, on setting up a summer program and applying for government grants.

30 Interviews

"It appealed to us because we'd be doing it on our own," said Valerie, the project's co-ordinator. "and because the chance to put together a booklet like this, was something we wanted to try."

About 90 per cent of their information has been gathered from interviews said Valerie. She suggested that some information is gained through the Kintore Library but added that most of the research is done by talking to senior citizens who have a living memory of some of the village's history.

"The people of Kintore have been super cooperative," said Valerie. "They have really gone out of their way to give us information." She suggested that between the three of them, the girls have interviewed over 30 persons, many who have retired in nearby towns and villages such as Thames-



Kintore garage owner H. Hepworth has seen numerous changes in the village during his years in business.

INGERSOLL TIMES

August 23, 1978

ford, Ingersoll and St. Marys.

All three of the girls have found the project of great interest. "One reason I got involved in this project was because of the interest. I wanted to see if history was as fun as it sounded," said Janice. "We find something new every time we interview someone," she said.

Cheese factory

Pat agreed, saying "I wish we had the time to interview more people."

Since their project began, the girls have continued to unravel information remembered by many, but not written down anywhere. They have been able to trace the community's past back to days when the small agricultural settlement was pretty much self reliant.

"At one time they had just about everything here," said Pat. "Their own cheese factory, a hotel, churches and three stores".

Although the Cheese factory was at one time the main form of employment in the village it's prominence gradually began slipping. "They didn't hire as many people," said Valerie, "and it (the main business in town) changed to Kintore Box."

According to Valerie, the hotel, owned by the late William Murray, was not actually located in Kintore. She estimated it was located about one half a mile north of Kintore and added that when the Post Office, which was housed in

the hotel, was moved to Kintore, the village name change was made. She noted that the hotel was closed shortly after the Post Office was relocated.

Valerie said that although there were three stores at one time, one soon went out of business.

"There was never a boom period," she said, adding "if there was, it didn't last very long."

The three have uncovered some interesting information during their interviews and reading, including the fact that Kintore at one time had its own telephone system. Janice said that in the early 1940s a village hockey team went all the way to winning a trophy in the Ontario Rural Hockey Association and confessed that baseball teams from the community also fared well in competitions, during that era.

Gradual changes

According to Pat, little theatre was at one time a major community recreation, particularly during the winter months. She said that a Kintore troupe of actors often toured nearby towns staging performances.

Despite some of the older generations retiring to nearby towns and new families settling in, Janice confessed that most people seem to stay once they move into the village.

The three agreed that despite the gradual changes over the years, many of

the community's unique characteristics have remained.

An open house has been planned for August 31, 1978 and the girls are hoping all interested persons will

attend. According to Valerie, collected material will be on display, as well

as a wall mural. She noted the mural will also be permanently housed in the library.

INGERSOLL TIMES

August 23 1978



Valerie McLeod, Janice Henderson and Pat Weir took time from their busy schedule to pose for this picture. The three Ingersoll District Collegiate Institute students are presently employed under a Young Canada Works grant, sponsored by the Township of Zorra, researching Kintore history.

INGERSOLL TIMES

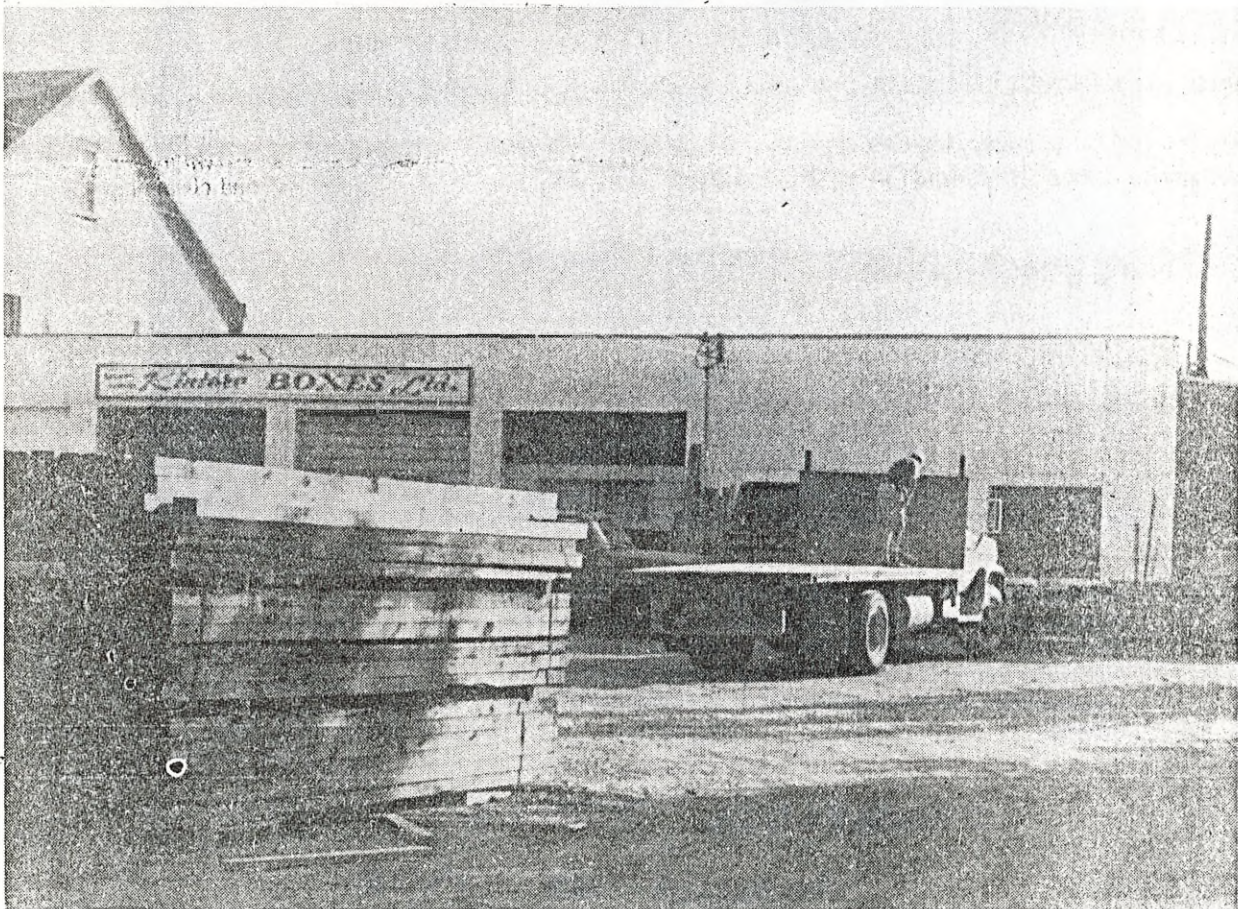
August 23, 1978

Do you remember the straw corners



Pee Straw Corners, as Kintore was formerly known, at one time was fairly self sufficient, housing three stores, a

hotel, Post Office and Cheese Factory.



Kintore Box has now replaced the old Kintore cheese factory as the main business in the small community.

INGERSOLL TIMES

August 23, 1978

Kintore story told by trio

Book is a home-grown best-seller



Woodstock Bureau

Janice Henderson, a co-author of the historical booklet, gets a busy signal on a hand-crank telephone on display at an open house held at the Kintore Masonic hall to herald the publication of the first 100 copies.

KINTORE (Bureau) — Oxford County's latest publishing sensation will probably never make it to the best-seller list.

In fact, chances are it won't be read by many beyond this small village.

But this didn't stop residents from lining up Thursday for their copies of the booklet, a history of the town from 1878 to 1978.

Few people realize it, but Kintore used to supply fresh game for London's orphans and unemployed, said project coordinator Valerie McLeod, 18.

During the 1930s the villagers used to gather each Saturday afternoon to hunt jack rabbits. In one afternoon they would shoot hundreds, load them on to trucks and send them to London. Two London police officers would take charge of the cargo which would be distributed to the orphanages and unemployed, Miss McLeod said.

The booklets were distributed Thursday at an open house sponsored by Miss McLeod, Janice Henderson and Patricia Weir, both 18, who also worked on the project.

The trio had 100 copies published but by early afternoon they had run out and were taking orders for more.

A collection of old photographs and antiques, including a rifle from the Boer War, a hand crank telephone and old-fashioned clothing, were also on display at the open house. Most of the items had been borrowed and have been returned.

The trio has also assembled a photo display of some of the town's historical and important buildings. The display, which also contains brief historical information about each building, will be donated to the library, they said.

LONDON FREE PRESS

September 1, 1978



A Boer War-era rifle makes an appropriately old-fashioned prop for, from left, Janice Henderson, Patricia Weir and

Valerie McLeod, who have published a history of the Oxford County town of Kintore.

LONDON FREE PRESS

September 1, 1978

KINTORE CHAPEL

The God's House that 'Ross' built

Story and photo
by MARILYN SMULDERS
of The Sentinel-Review

KINTORE — The community-minded spirit of a local senior citizen is not going unnoticed by members of this close-knit village.

"He's done so much here. Every day he wakes up with the idea to live the day to the fullest," said Kintore resident Helen Johnson.

"He's well-respected in this community. He'd do anything to help you out," supplied Joyce McPherson, Zorra Township councillor.

Added Rev. Keith Hagerman, a United Church minister: "His work is a labor of love. He does it without looking for remuneration or recognition."

Indeed, the 80-year-old is silent about his own efforts as he goes about his work. Although eager to talk about his community project, he was less inclined to say his name.

Early each morning when it's still cool outdoors, 'Ross' fills his car with tools and drives to a small park on County Road 16, created when coun-

ty crews fixed a jog in the road. It's shady from the limbs of many different kinds of trees and is a popular picnic stop for local people and travellers.

Elderly and "living on borrowed time" because of cancer, Ross takes his time in constructing a small community chapel. Already in six weeks' time, the 10 foot by 10 foot structure with a peaked roof and tiny steeple has taken shape. Along with the assistance of a son-in-law, Andrew Stevens of Thorndale, Ross has now begun fixing up the inside.

Ross, who comes from "old Scotch Presbyterian stock," envisions a quiet place where people of any Christian denomination can come and reflect upon their spirituality. Inside, the chapel will be outfitted with three pews, tapes of hymn singing and a Bible.

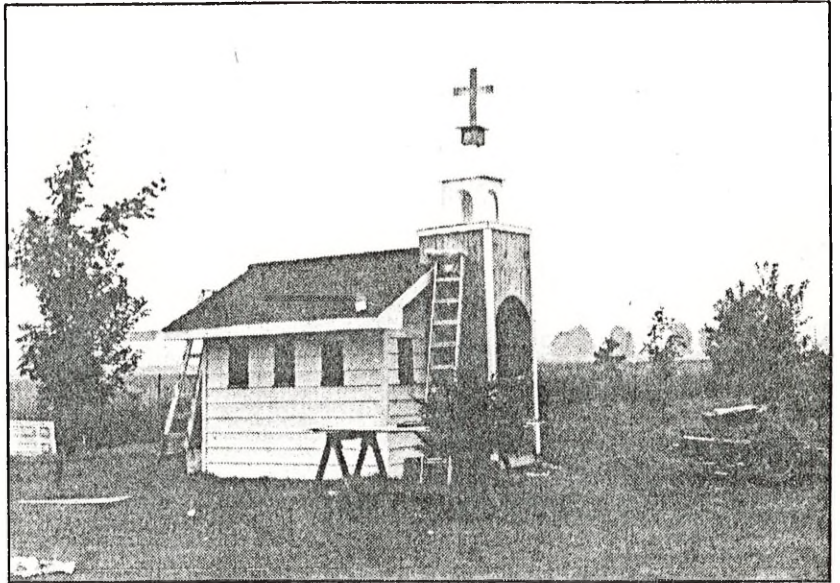
Everything from the shingles on the roof to the yellow-colored glass of the windows has been supplied by Ross. Once completed, he hopes to leave the chapel unlocked for anyone

to use at their convenience. And, he's not worrying about vandalism: "I hope this place will be as well-respected as a church. We'll have to leave it to a higher power than us to protect it, I guess." The chapel has already been reserved for two weddings.

"There's many people who don't go to church each week but do have religious views. They need some place where they can drop in, sit down for a moment and have a word with the master," smiled the longtime Kintore resident.

Rev. Hagerman of Chalmers United Church in Kintore expressed nothing but praise for the ecumenical chapel. "It will give people a common ground on which to worship. Ross has given the community something that will last."

And although aware that Ross doesn't enjoy the limelight, Coun. McPherson is looking into having the park named for him. "We're all behind him 100 per cent," said Johnson.



THE CONSTRUCTION of a chapel in this Kintore park is a labor of love for one of the village's longtime residents.

SENTINEL REVIEW

August 17, 1989

By MACKAY

Tucked away in the north-west corner of Oxford county is the hamlet of Lakeside, or as it was more properly styled in official survey number 61, made in 1855, the Village of Lakeside.

As the name implies, the hamlet is beside a lake, but neither the lake nor what is beside it achieved the place in the sun envisioned by the persons who were responsible for the survey which shows streets and avenues in abundance.

Though falling short of the visionary goal there are things about the place that are almost, if not quite unique -- the hamlet boasts a blacksmith shop and a real live busy blacksmith Arthur Fallowfield -- the lake sits comfortably on the spot having one of the greatest, if not the greatest, elevations in Western Ontario. It is 1275 feet above sea level.

But the 1275 foot level is not by any means the loftiest spot in the immediate vicinity. A few years ago the Bell Telephone Company stuck up a microwave tower which added almost another 200 feet to the potential elevation -- you can get quite high--in Lakeside.

HISTORIAN SEATON

Other than elevation a blacksmith, Lakeside boasts an historian in the person of Donald Seaton who, besides being unofficially the historian is, officially assessor and tax collector for the township of East Nissouri.

As so often happens in similar communities, the saga of a family, or a few families, is the history of the place. So it is here, the history of Mr. Seaton's family is the story of Lakeside.

It all began about the year 1818 when great grandfather Seaton made his way up from the 'deep south' and found himself on what was even at that time, part of the Col. Ingersoll grant, rubbing shoulders with a few United Empire Loyalists; a few Englishmen, Scotsmen and shortly after, Irishmen.

MIXED GROUP

This pattern of a mixture of nationalities is probably more applicable in the settlement of the Lakeside area than in many of the county's communities and as the years went on, the Mitchells, the Germans, the Harris's, Burdicks, Richardsons, McConkeys, Crothens, Towels, Dawes's, Calverts, Kirks, Baker and many others were added to the diverse congregation.

As with most other settlements, the first houses were built of logs and in many cases even the second, and usually larger, family dwelling was also a log structure, but after some years a brick kiln went into operation.

Co-incidental with the build-

ing of the kiln was the building of the first church by adherents of the Church of England and from the kiln came the bricks for it's construction.

Also from the kiln came the bricks to build a flour mill, a grist mill a sawmill and carriage works. The population rose to an all-time high.

CHURCH STILL STANDS

The mills are long gone but the church stands today as it was -- on the same property on which the kiln was built and on the same property from which both the clay and the sand were found to make the bricks. The Reverend J. A. Catling journeys from Thamesford to conduct services and carry on the work at Christ Church.

In the early days of the settlement the mail was drawn by horse from Ingersoll but in comparatively recent times, after the Credit Valley Railway was built in 1886 the mail was delivered once a day from Thamesford -- when the mailman could get there. On July 1, 1908, the first train ran on the then St. Mary's and Western Ontario line between Ingersoll and St. Mary's and Lakeside received it's mail in that manner until a few years ago.

For many years there were two passenger trains each day, both ways, stopping at Lakeside. Now there is no passenger service and the railway is used solely for a comparatively small amount of freight service.

WAGONS TO CELEBRATE

Contrasting the manner in which the pioneers took time out for some sort of celebration, with that of the present, historian Seaton has preserved records telling of the jubilation on July 1, 1867, the day of Confederation, when practically the entire population of Lakeside, except those very old or very young, made their way to Woodstock to take part in the celebrations in lumber wagons.

Present population is comprised of 88 'souls'. There is one general store, the blacksmith shop, the Orange hall, the Masonic Hall, a public library, two churches and the remnants of the hotel.

THE 'ROYAL' HOTEL

Like most small communities, Lakeside had for many years a bustling hostelry, the 'Royal' hotel. Rumour and legend has it that at one time this was an extremely busy spot -- so busy, in fact, that many persons were 'barred' from it -- or 'at' it. But now just the body remains, the soul has departed, not even to be included in the latest Seaton census.

The general store is operated by Al and Mrs. Kennedy and it has preserved tradition to a considerable extent in that there

is just about everything there. All that is, except one important item, the cracker barrel. Though this item is missing, the atmosphere of neighborliness it represented is preserved in the Kennedy courtesy.

MUD NOW CRYSTAL

A sore spot in some places, the official name of the lake is 'Mud' and that is the name appearing on all the maps. More recently a couple of subdividers found this title an almost insurmountable barrier to their particular type of development. Not being quite as earthy as the early settlers, and certainly no more original, they have dubbed it 'Crystal' and 'Sunova', depending on the taste of the prospect for property.

SERIOUS POLITICIANS

As is also true of the period and the people, Mr. Seaton drew attention to the fact that in the early days people took their

politics quite seriously. So seriously, he said, that at one time there was a violent feud developed in the local governing body. It reached fever pitch and one party to the controversy decided to, and did, burn all the township council books. A man of action, he left the country for a year until the incident was forgotten and the council had some new books. Names in this particular case have been omitted out of deference to succeeding, and innocent generations.

Asked if he had gathered, in his collection of the past, any story of deeds of bravery on the part of the pioneers, he said 'yes' there is one incident, though not recorded.

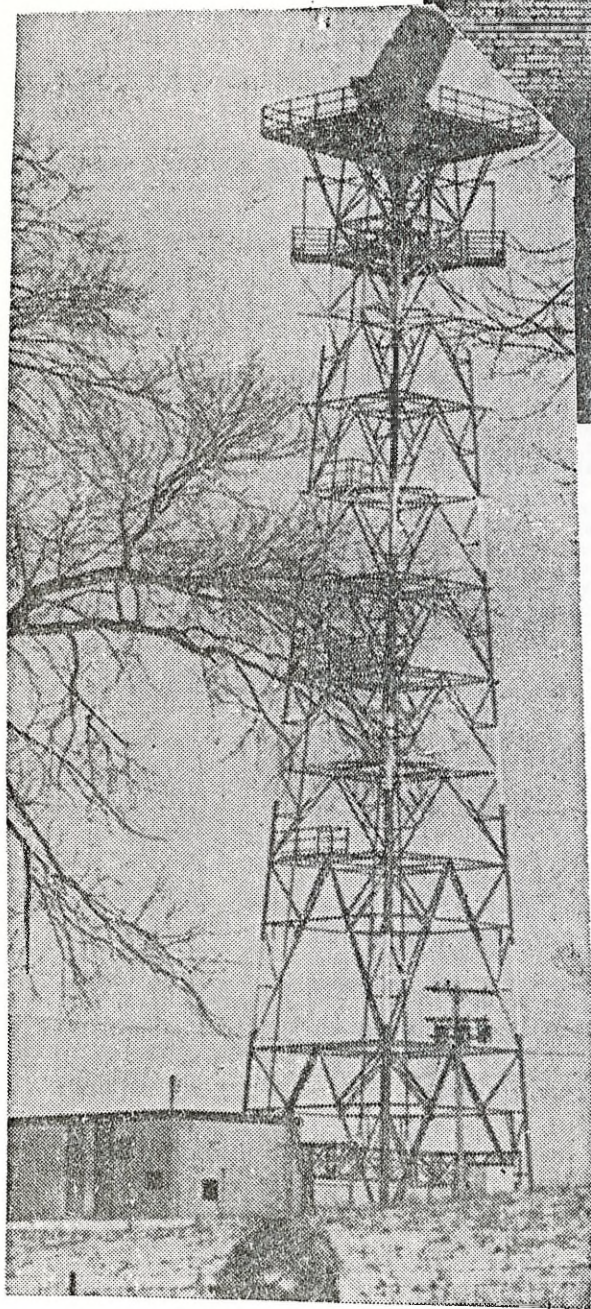
DARING DEEDS

"Through necessity, these people had to spend a great deal of time in the bush." There was one of the settlers working one day in the woods, hewing some timbers for a new barn and using a large augur to make holes for the pins. "In the evening he started for home and saw a pack of wolves coming toward him. "He lit out for a hollow stump and crawled inside for safety while the wolves sat down around the stump waiting. "Wanting to see what was doing, he thought of his augur and bored a large hole. "When he tried to look out" vision was barred by the tail of a wolf so, with great presence of mind, he grabbed the tail and pulled it through the hole and tied a knot in it, securing the wolf. "He repeated this performance on the remaining three of the pack.

"At this juncture, he was able to extricate himself and go home" -- so also, too did this reporter, likewise.



RECTOR CATLING AND HIS CHURCH



MICRO-WAVE TOWER

Flour Mill Built at Lakeside

THE HISTORY OF LAKESIDE is the history of East Nisourl Township, for except for Thamesford on the southern township line, no single village dominates the municipality.

The first township meeting was held in 1821 at the home of James Howard. At this time there were only 83 cleared acres of land in the whole township, and only 51 settlers listed on the assessment rolls. It is also interesting to note that there were only five horses, 40 oxen and 57 cows owned by the 51 farmers assessed.

The total population in 1820 was 97. By 1852 it had risen to over 2,000 and was growing rapidly. At this time Thames-

ford was described as a "small village, situated on a small branch of the Thames." Lakeside did not exist.

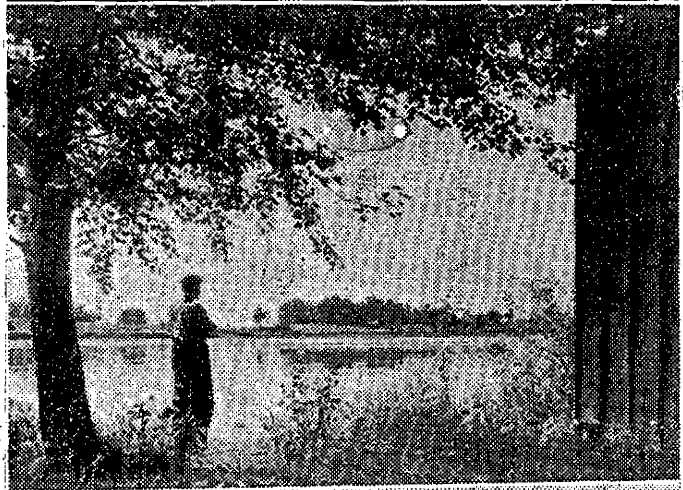
The village of Lakeside was founded about 1837 by Squire Ingersoll, who built a flour mill there. The stone building with walls two feet thick is still standing near the village. Its interior, as well as a near-by saw mill, was gutted by fire in 1908, but it was repaired and continued in operation for many years.

In the 1870's Lakeside had a post office, a steam grist and saw mill, and a church. There were few houses there. In the 1880's the railway connecting Woodstock and St. Marys passed through Lakeside, and the village grew substantially.

LONDON FREE PRESS

June 11, 1949

Western Ontario Lake Has No Visible Outlet; Said 65 Feet Deep



Lakeside is a community of picturesque vistas around a little inland body of water, Crystal Lake. One of the vistas is shown at the top with William Near, a local resident, looking across the lake. Below are two sunbathers, temporarily retired to the shade beside Crystal Lake; they are Miss Edith Holden (left) and Miss Rita Tevlin, both of St. Marys.

BY W. G. TRESTAIN

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LAKESIDE—The Dead Sea is in Palestine and has no visible outlet; it lies approximately 1,300 feet below general sea level and is very salty. Crystal Lake is in Western Ontario and has no visible outlet; it lies approximately 1,300 feet above general sea level and is very fresh.

The lake gave a name to Lakeside which, naturally, is a community beside the lake, southeast of St. Marys. The lake illustrates water apparently running uphill to get into it because the country thereabouts is higher than any surrounding and streams run almost every way from it (somewhat as they do from the great Luther marshes northward).

Crystal Lake is said to be 65 feet deep in places. It covers somewhere about 100 acres and is as picturesque a little body of water as one could wish to find. In some mysterious depths, maybe from a marshy area to the northeast, cool spring water feeds into it. There is no indication of what happens after that. The water level never rises so either there is an invisible overflow or evaporation just equals input.

When the railway went through they had a lot of trouble getting the previously mentioned marshy spot graded. Fill disappeared day after day. Carloads of materials were dumped in and, according to local people, success was achieved only when a large quantity of wool was weighted down with fill. The railway grading was followed by a strange drop of about three feet in lake level, a drop which has never been regained. It is said there has been a gradual falling of water level in recent years.

The community of Lakeside, on the northern lake shore, was founded by Squire Ingersoll in the early 1850's (not mentioned in records of 1852 but apparently quite a place by 1857). He founded a number of industries, including a brick yard from which much district building was done. A flour mill established early operated until 1930 and was only recently demolished.

In company with Ackland J. Baker, an electrical engineer, native of Lakeside, The Free Press roving reporter roamed around Crystal Lake. They inspected the two dance halls, only one of which operates anymore, and the old Dalrymple-park where in the early 1900's there was a race track, gardens, a bath house of peculiar de-

sign and a boat house still standing.

When the Dalrymple park was going strong, in the horse and buggy era, hundreds of visitors came for miles to picnic about Crystal Lake. There was a big bath house with balconies surrounding a central court of water. Dressing rooms opened off the balconies and the bathers simply put on the extremely modest bathing suits of the time, stepped out of the door, leaped a railing and there they were, hob-nobbing with the fish.

Automobiles seemed to destroy the resort spirit there. Crowds dwindled, although on week-ends there are still scores—the number seeming to be on the upgrade again. There are a few waterside cottages occupied each summer.

Indicative of the lake's recession is the old boat house, built on piles which once stood in water. It is all high and dry now, the shore line being 15 feet away. However, there are still boats inside—a number of fine launches go skimming around at times.

There are carp in the lake, fine, big lazy fellows who go about eating up odd bits of this and that, doing their part in giving Crystal Lake its nice, clean sparkle.

In sections there is a sloping shore and a number of youngsters splashed around knee-deep, putting on a water battle and inviting the roving reporter to take their picture. The shore was sprinkled with sun bathers, some of them very attractive. Crystal Lake had about it an air of great remoteness, a quiet always-afternoon-with-no-work-to-do sort of atmosphere. It was very pleasant.

Up at Lakeside they pointed with pride to their library of more than 2,000 volumes which in a community of about 100, and its district, promotes a circulation of 5,000 volumes a year.

In the cemetery there is buried a half-sister of Laura Secord, Mrs. Appylonia Carroll, wife of William Carroll, who died in 1872.

United Empire Loyalists, The Ingersolls The History Of The Village Of Lakeside

By Helen Wollny

An historical account of the little Oxford County village of Lakeside must date back to the autumn of 1830 and the arrival of Jacob German, a United Empire Loyalist and native of Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

Attracted by the luxuriant vegetation of the district and by the placid waters of the little lake bordered by elderberry bushes and willow clumps, the pioneer decided to hew out for himself a home in the Canadian wilderness.

In these dense forests huge black bears

became the mother of the sons who made the Ingersoll name famous in Western Ontario. The oldest son was Charles, he was followed by Charlotte, Appylona, Thomas and Samuel.

James was the youngest son and was the first white child born in Oxford County. All the other members were born in the United States, except the youngest daughter, Sarah, who was born in Etobicoke after the family left Oxford.

In 1817 Charles Ingersoll bought back his father's farm at Oxford and sent his

Blacksmiths

No history of Lakeside would be complete without the history of its blacksmiths. The first blacksmith in Lakeside was Enoch Burdick in 1859. His shop was situated on the south west corner of the property now owned by Mr. Alec Pickering. The blacksmith was Dan Ross, whose shop was to the east of the old one. Arthur Fallowfield bought this shop from Dan Ross and worked there for some years, eventually moving to Queen Street where he operated a blacksmith shop until his death in 1972.

Big Year

The year 1859 was significant in the development of Lakeside. There was a general store, where the United Church now stands, with D.D. Rose as storekeeper and post-master; a blacksmith shop - blacksmith Enoch Burdick; grist and sawmill, operated by Joseph Garner; a brickyard - Thomas and Charles Shrubsole; a school with teacher C. McPherson; a wagon shop run by H. Burdick; the Royal Hotel operated by Samuel Pelton, prop.; and shoe-maker, Charles Stevenson.

The Doctors

On Confederation Day, 1867, the pioneer physician Dr. Thomas Sparks arrived in the village and opened up a practice which he carried on for a period of 25 years, ministering to the sick and suffering, answering calls day and night. Many times

public.

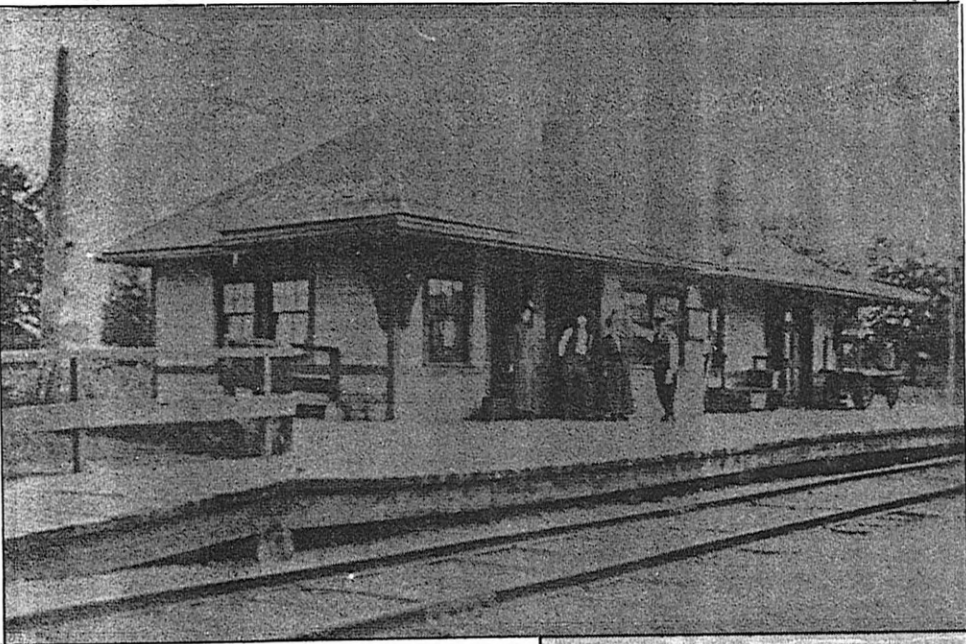
The Township of East Nissouri had to build a road to get to the school which was situated at the south-east end of the lake. So the township purchased land at the west side of the lake from Burley Mitchell and Mortimer Mitchell and at the south end of the Mitchell property built a road across the bog to the 12th concession, south of the lake.

Disappearing Road

When the road was built across the bog, the bed was made by a filling of logs and gravel. After being in use for 10 or 12 years the bog began to sink and the road along with it. The council had more gravel put on but this also gradually sank out of sight and more gravel was applied. It too, disappeared.

When about four feet of water had submerged the road, council decided to make another attempt. The township went to the blacksmith and got iron rods coupled together in 50-foot lengths which were driven down into the sunken road. They went down like spoons in porridge -- with a sort of a gurgle.

Finally, the councillors decided to abandon the rebuilding and, as there was no way for the farmers to get across the lake, or the children to get to school, it was decided to buy more land farther south of the lake. The land was owned by an American who asked what seemed like an enormous sum for it. The council, which had little choice, finally bought the land



C.P.R. STATION, Lakeside.

roamed in reach of berries and honey. The prowling wolves made their nightly visits to the little settlement and immense herds of deer came to the edge of the lake to quench their thirst. Wild turkeys and pigeons were numerous.

So inviting was the spot that other settlers soon came. Reuben Gleason was next, followed shortly by Charles Mitchell, who settled on the north shore of the lake. This farm remained in the Mitchell name, until the death of his grandson, Charles Mitchell, who died in 1980.

First Building

In 1842 the first public building was erected in Lakeside. It was a school. Built of logs, 12 ft. x 12 ft., with only one window in the south end, it stood on the main north east corner of the village where the United Church now stands.

In 1846, the Royal Hotel was built on the corner across from the school. It was a two storey frame structure with livery stable to the east. The first proprietor was Captain Dotey. It became the gathering place for the settlers, who gathered around its huge old fireplace to exchange the news of the day.

The old building has served many uses. It has been the home of many diversified businesses. For a time it was a tinsmith shop, grocery store, pool-room, public library, barber-shop, flea-market, home of a weekly newspaper called "The Lakeside Lark" and residence of its present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Manfred Wollny.

James Ingersoll

Few families have played as important a part in the history of Oxford County as the Ingersoll family. Not only was this family largely responsible for opening the townships of North and West Oxford, but also of Nissouri, and they undertook to help the Canada Company establish a community at Little Falls (St. Marys) in Perth County.

Thomas Ingersoll, in 1793, acquired a tract of land of about 64,000 acres along the Thames River, on the condition that he endeavour to bring in settlers. Unable to fulfill the obligations he left Ingersoll, moved to Toronto and died at Port Credit in 18.

Thomas had been married three times. The first child born to the first Mrs. Ingersoll was Laura, who later became famous as Laura Secord, the Canadian heroine of 1812. She lived only a short time in Oxford as she was married to Capt. Secord soon after his arrival here and then went to live in the Niagara district.

In May 1785 Thomas married Mercy Smith who died childless in 1789. She was married and buried by Rev. Gideon Bestwick who was co-signer for the Oxford Tract.

In Sept. of 1789, Thomas Ingersoll married for the third time. His third wife

younger brother, James, to take possession. On arriving he found the place in ruins. He at once set about making improvements. The first step was a sawmill which he put in operation in 1819.

With the mill in operation he started building a new home which was known down through the years as Ingersoll House. He also laid out a grist mill, store, distillery and an ashery. In 1822 at the age of 21 he began the business of storekeeper and in his new vocation attained a considerable measure of success.

Appointed County Registrar

James was well on his way to becoming a prosperous citizen when he was appointed registrar of Oxford County in 1834.

When his sister, Appylona, married William Carroll, Col. Ingersoll encouraged Carroll to settle at Lakeside. Concerned for her welfare, he saw a need for a brickyard and hired Charles Shrubsole of Buffalo, New York to come and start a brick-yard in 1859. James Ingersoll was also instrumental in building a grist and sawmill in Lakeside, Mr. George Dalrymple being the first owner and miller.

In 1861 he gave an acre of land and timber for floors for the erection of the Anglican Church. Mr. Shrubsole donated 15,000 bricks for the church. Appylona Ingersoll, sister of James, and half-sister to the famed Laura Ingersoll Secord, lies buried beside her husband William Carroll in the little church yard in Lakeside, just to the south of the Anglican Church they helped found.

he travelled miles by horseback to patients in outlying districts.

Dr. Sparks residence, dispensary, office and waiting room was in the home presently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Reg Slater.

In 1892, Dr. Sparks sold his practice to Dr. A. J. Murray and moved to St. Marys to the Milner Harrison home. It was so much larger than their Lakeside house, that Mrs. Sparks dubbed it "the Vatican".

Dr. Murray was a native of Zorra Township. He was born on a farm near Embro, where his father and grandfather were also born. Dr. Murray faithfully discharged his duties for a period of 28 years, rendering splendid services to the community, not only in the medical field, but also assisting in every worthwhile project. He always endeavoured to further the interests of the rural people. Dr. Murray moved to London in 1920 where he continued to practise until his death.

On moving to London, Dr. Murray sold his practice to Dr. H. Allison. Dr. Allison went from Lakeside to Detroit, Mich. and for a short time, Lakeside was without a doctor.

Lakeside's next doctor - and the last to have his practice in the village - was Dr. J. B. Widdis, who remained in Lakeside until his retirement.

Old Sunken Road

The original Lakeside road ran north and south on the eastern shore of Crystal Lake, running through some property owned by Edward Bartley. Following some differences, he forbade the use of the road through his property and closed it to the

and a road was built on solid land.

The old road, however, kept on sinking for about 15 years, until now the lake extends far to the south of what was once the road. Only an approach of a yard or so at each side gives any indication of where the "disappearing road" used to be.

Perhaps a few of the older men of Lakeside knew and remember the story of the old "Sunken Road".

The Railroad

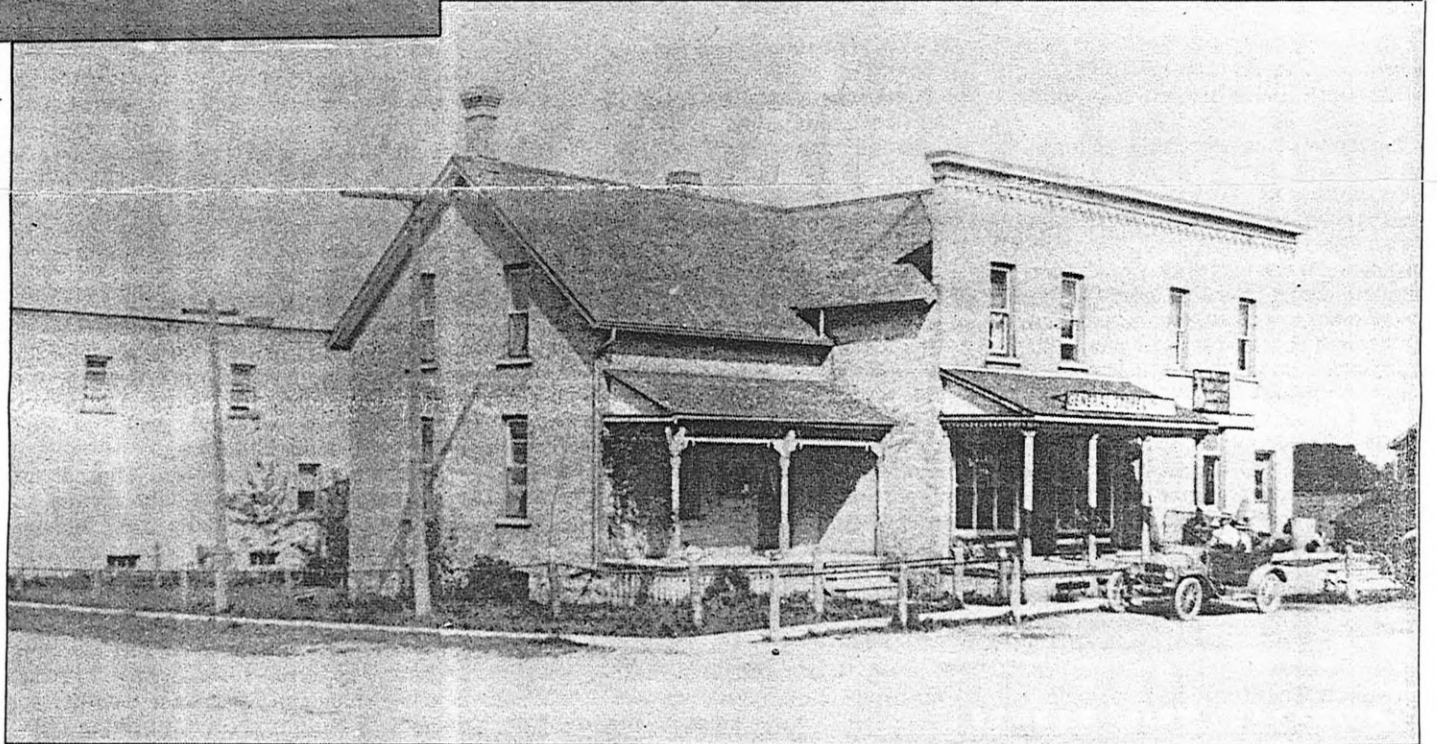
On July 1, 1908 a little boy sat high on a hill overlooking Lakeside. It was a big day for the lad, and remained in his memory for the rest of his life. It was a big day for everyone in the village ... it was the day on which the first regular runs began on the newly laid "St. Marys & Western Railway" and he saw the first train.

There were two trains each way, each day, except Sunday. The first agent was Dan Wilson. The birth of this railway was not an easy one, for there were many difficulties in laying the road bed for the tracks through the marshy area east of the lake. Day after day whole carloads of fill were dumped, only to disappear by the following day. Finally some enterprising soul came up with the idea of using WOOL for fill. This was done -- and it worked!

So it was, that July 1, so many years ago, the station was built, the track laid, and the train came puffing and snorting into Lakeside amidst crowds of cheering, excited people.

The railroad brought many changes to Lakeside. The mail-run from Thamesford ended and the telegraph came in. Much

(Continued On Next Page)



THE OLD GENERAL STORE AT LAKESIDE - the store is presently owned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Lorne Mills.

(From a Post Card)

McConkey



OXFORD'S GHOST TOWNS

During recent months, as *Sentinel-Review* photographer Ted Town went about his regular assignments, he's been gathering photos of the vanished settlements that are the ghost towns of Oxford County. Another is McConkey: located in West Zorra Township, this was the name of a station on the Ingersoll-St. Mary's division of the CPR. It probably received its name from members of the McConkey family, who lived on the road. A post office was established here in 1909. All that remains on the site today is a former school house.

W.J. Wintemberg, reprinted from the Ontario Historical Society's *Papers and Records*, Volume XXII, 1925.

SENTINEL REVIEW
May 5, 1988

First Settlers To Medina Arrived In The Year 1819

By ART WILLIAMS

After the early settlers had started to clear the land the question is what did they raise and how did they make a living? The growing of hemp was strongly advocated. Flax was cultivated by nearly every farmer for domestic use as they were obliged to manufacture nearly all their own clothing, there being scarcely any market for their produce. They were unable to export any of their crops at this period owing to the duties imposed in England and having little or no money to pay for the necessities of life, they were compelled to get along with what they could furnish from their own labors. It is on record that not enough could be obtained from the distillers for a bushel of wheat to pay for the cost of production.

The Hessian Fly was much in evidence and added to the difficulties of the farmers. The orchards produced abundant crops of apples which were sold for 1s 3d per 60 lbs. and when manufactured into cider 10 shillings per barrel of 32 gallons. Ordinary laborers were paid 35 pence per year and if hired for the summer months only three pounds 15 shillings per month, and if just for the harvest 5 shillings per day. The cost of clearing and fencing an acre of wild land was reckoned as 3 pounds 15 shillings, a horse was worth from 15 to 20 pounds, a cow six pounds, an ox 10 pounds, sheep 12 shillings six pence.

MARKET

About 1833 Hamilton became an important market where cash for wheat and other prod-

ucts of the soil was the inducement which caused many Oxford farmers to team his produce to that village. The current prices were for wheat per bushel, seven shillings, flour was three dollars a hundred, oats two shillings six pence, beef, \$5.00 per hundred, pork four to five dollars per hundred, butter, one shilling a pound.

We have not been able to ascertain when the first township meeting in Nissouri was held but after much searching we have found that there was a meeting held on January 7, 1821 at the house of James Howard. The warrant was issued by Peter Teeple and Thomas Horner and addressed to A. Lewis, constable, James O'Brien was elected clerk, John Uren and James O'Brien were the assessors and John Stephens collector. It was moved by E. Withers seconded by James O'Brien and resolved that the next township meeting be held at the house of James Howard lot 13 concession 6 on the first Monday in January 1822. The assessment roll of 1822 contains the following names of people living in what is now East and West Nissouri as the two townships were not separated until 1851. Bowers, Burgess, Uren, Coleman, Smith, Wheaton, Dean, Cunningham, Paul, Logan, Vining, Comstock, Perkins, Saithere, Bailey, Farley, O'Brien, McDonald, Hosman, Allwood, Shielock, Catten, Agar, Stephens, Enor, Moore, Davis, Haywood, Boward, Burdick, Day, Cross, Gra-Cameron, Ramage, McNee, Conon, Titus, Brown, Withers, wan, Kellsall, Shaw and Lewis.

NO MENTION

In the first territorial divi-

ion of the province on July 16, 1792, we found no mention of the township of Nissouri and we find that it was first mentioned by Act 11 George IV, Chapt. 3 (1821) by which Act it is together with the township of Zorra added to the county of Oxford. Previous to that period all the territory of the Nissouri and Zorra townships along with West and North Oxford were assessed together and their united population being 1,719 souls. By 1850 it had increased to 14,914 for the same area. The population of Nissouri in 1820 was 97 souls and in East Nissouri in 1852 there were 2,118 souls.

The area of Nissouri and Zorra was surveyed by Shubal Parke in 1820 and Thaddeus Davis was granted land in Nissouri township on July 6, 1820. By the Act 14 and 15 Victoria Chapt. V (1851) it was enacted that East Nissouri would include and consist of that part of the present township of Nissouri which lies eastward of the line dividing the seventh concession from the eighth. The first lot sold in what is now East Nissouri by the government was the second lot of concession eleven and was sold to John Campbell on July 17, 1834 at 10s 6d per acre. In 1844 21 pounds, six shillings and nine pence was granted for roads and bridges in East Nissouri and in 1851 31 pounds, 15s and 3d. The 1851 grant being for county roads. Since the establishment of township councils in 1850 they were to raise within their respective municipalities any sums they may require for public improvements. Any appropriation made by the

county council since that time has been only to county roads and bridges; that is such that lie between two or more municipalities.

REEVE ELECTED

Jared Vining was elected reeve of Nissouri in 1850 and had served on district council since 1842 being elected warden in 1847 and 1848. Thomas Bailey also served on the district council as a second member for Nissouri from 1845. In 1852 R. McDonald was clerk of the township and tax collector and the total assessed value was 175,487 pounds. The taxes levied were £107 3s 2d, this being the county rate only.

One of the earliest settlers in Nissouri who left his mark in the township was Thomas B. Brown who was a devout Methodist who first settled on or about lot 26 concession eight about 1820.

In his autobiography he tells of the days when whiskey was king and Sunday was just another day of the week. If you had a job to do and required the help of your neighbors the first thing you did was get a supply of local whiskey in and it was quite often a concern of the settler to see that the refreshments lasted a little longer than the job or the job might not be finished. Generally the night was spent in a spree, dancing to the sound of a fiddle and it was not considered good etiquette to leave before all the refreshments were consumed. This applied to all gatherings whether for work or for pleasure. He tells of a marriage in his own family here 12 gallons of whiskey and one gallon of rum were provided. As

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June 30, 1962

had been brought up a devout Methodist he was very much against this type of carrying-on and was active in starting the first temperance society in Oxford.

WEDDING

He recalls the first wedding in the township between Donald McDonald and Sarah Cameron. They were married by Charles Ingersoll UP and it was a genuine scotch wedding with all the highland dances, jigs and reels performed by old and young alike. The first death that he recalls was that of Hugh Davis who was killed by a falling tree and the first sermon which he heard was by a Mr. Jeffries in a barn on lot 13 concession 3 who later turned out to be an imposter. He mentions no dates but he does mention that Elders Mabee and French were two Baptists who came up from Oxford to preach about this time. Baptist records show that they were here in 1827 and on June 17 of that year Jared Vining was baptized into the Baptist faith and that on the fourth Friday of May, 1828 Salmon Vining was ordained in a new barn on his property. At the same time a Methodist preacher by the name of Mathew Whiting of the London circuit visited the homes of John Uren and Francis Bowers in the Cherry Grove area and started a Methodist class. It was at one of these meetings that T. B. Brown became active in 1829 and later preached the first sermon heard in the town of St. Marys at the shanty of Geroge Tracey. Through this work he became better known as "Bishop Brown".

The first school in the area known as Brown's Corners was a co-operative type school with three families joining together Thomas Brown, James Brown, Chauncey Purdy and building a schoolhouse which was located half way between the seventh and eighth concession, one-half mile south of the Medina side-road, this being about equal distance from all three homes. They shared the expenses of the teacher and in obtaining fuel. The exact date is unknown but according to the ages of the students it is presumed to have been about 1840. One of the teachers was Icabod Horsman who taught readin', writin' and 'rithmetic to the tune of a hickory stick which was with him all through the day and he never hesitated to use it. It is not known if it helped persuade her but he did later marry one of the Brown girls.

This school was abandoned and in 1852 Emily Brown was granted a certificate to teach by Mr McDonald who was superintendent of education at Thamesford and started at the age of 15 to teach in the old log house of James Brown who had moved to Michigan. Shortly after this another school was erected near the present school corner in the mid '50's. This school was of logs and faced north. The pupils sat on benches arranged around the side, a slanting board served as a desk and the slates had a red felt cloth around them to reduce the noise. A large box stove supplied the heat and the back wall was adorned with pegs for hats and coat, etc., while a black-board and a map adorned the other walls. This school was later replaced by the present school which was made from bricks made at the Lakeside brickyard. In 1862 Brown's school had an attendance of 86 with an average of 59 attending with Montgomery Walden as the teacher.

Like many other churches in the county, the church at Brown's Corners was built in response to the desires of the people for a place where they could worship as they wished. They felt that it showed signs of progress by having a special building for services rather than meeting in homes, barns and groves as they had done for some years. The first building used was the schoolhouse in the 50's and in 1860 there are records of John McKim, Rev. T. B. Brown, Rev. F. S. Ryerson, Brother Joseph Lince and J. N. McAlmish preaching here. The member formed a branch of the Good Templers Society to promote temperance and by 1863 they had a church building of their own with much aid coming from Rev. T. B. Brown and his five sons. The present church is on the original site which was given by John Uren. One of the things that was rather unusual on the inside was that ranged around and facing the big box stove

were three straight backed pews where people could warm themselves in bad weather before going to their family pews and the departure from them would have gladly been delayed as these stoves never did a first rate job of heating.

NEEDS SUPPLIED

Although this corner supplied the wants of the people with spiritual and educational needs it was necessary to go to Oliver or Medina for the necessities of life.

Oliver is located on the township line between east and west Nissouri at lot 20 and at this corner the government, through the efforts of Thomas Oliver, located a post office at the store of John G. McLeod on April 1, 1878 and it remained here until the 30th of October, 1914 when rural mail took over. The H. Lockrey family also served as storekeepers and postmasters here. Due to the fact that Thomas Oliver had done so much to secure a post office here the local residents felt that it was only right that the place should be named after him. A cheese factory was started here and Mr. Williamson was cheesemaker with John A. McKay serving as secretary for over 25 years. The present factory was built about the turn of the century.

The first settlers at Medina according to Crown deeds were John Bessey (Beasley) and Gleasons, Bessey coming from Niagara Falls in 1819 and the Gleasons coming from Port Covington, New York in 1826. Rueben Gleason located on the south side of the present village. Joseph Gleason later occupied the Bessey farm and the community became known as Gleason Corners. Rueben Gleason gave the land for the first school about 1846. The first school was a little father north than the present school which was built in 1871. Some of the teachers at this school were Annie Donnohoe in 1862. Mr. Hunt, Mr. John Henry, Miss M. Molland and Miss Mary Atkin-

son. They all taught prior to 1900.

NAME GIVEN

The name Medina was given by Joseph Beek, the first postmaster. The name Medina is an important name to Mohammedins ranking next to Mecca in importance. The name "Medinet el Nabi" which means "the city of the great prophet" is the most sacred city of the Moslems as its mosque contains Mohammed's tomb. The post office was established here in 1862 and originally received mail from Thamesford on the route which served Thamesford, Kintore, Medina, Lakeside and Harrington. Later Harrington was dropped and Mr. Harlick, the hotel keeper at Lakeside was courier. Joseph H. Beek was the first postmaster in November 1862. Donald McDonald in 1880 and Alfred Goodbow from 1884 to 1913 when rural mail took over and Red Heem Gleason became the first rural carrier.

In 1867 the community boasted of a fine general store, a blacksmith, a wagon shop as well as a boot and shoe shop. Charles Ingli being the blacksmith and Arthur Blannerhasset being the wagon maker. By 1862 a hotel presumably the Half Way house was operated by David Sturgess and later by John Hurford in 1869. The first store is presumed to have been started by Mr. Braess.

About the turn of the century a telephone system was formed here and the line extended from Kintore to Medina with phones at the Kintore store, Dr. Gar Murray at Lakeside, the Medina store and A. Whelstone. The exchange being at the Medina store in 1905 and it was connected with St. Marys and known as the Medina and St. Marys Telephone Co. There still is an independent exchange at Medina being part of the Blanshard Municipal Telephone System. In 1917 this was the largest rural firm of its kind in Canada. In this system, the subscribers pay their phone bills with their taxes.

SENTINEL REVIEW

June 30, 1962



OXFORD'S GHOST TOWNS

During recent months, as *Sentinel-Review* photographer Ted Town went about his regular assignments, he's been gathering photos of the vanished settlements that are the ghost towns of Oxford County. Another is Oliver: located in East Nissouri Township northwest of Kintore, the place was named after Thomas Oliver, who was responsible for a post office being

established here in 1878. Oliver was a Member of Parliament for North Oxford in the Canadian Assembly from 1866 to the Union of 1867. Only a dilapidated old barn marks the site today.

W.J. Wintemberg, reprinted from the Ontario Historical Society's *Papers and Records*, Volume XXII, 1925.

SENTINEL REVIEW
May 18, 1988

**VILLAGES
 RAYSIDE**

Rayside is a small community situated at the intersection of county road No. 7 and the Governor's Road. It is located three miles north of Ingersoll via Thames Street.

The area was well settled as early as 1830, chiefly by Irish and Scottish people. In the early days of settlement the Scottish people settled on the north side of Governor's Road and the Irish people on the south side.

The Governor's Road was planned by Governor Simcoe after he made his journey through Oxford and Middlesex on the Thames River in 1793.

He called this road the Dundas Road after his friend Lord Dundas, secretary to the colonies in the British Government. The road remains Dundas Street in Woodstock, Thamesford and London, but in the rural districts it's called the Governor's Road after Governor Simcoe.

The community has had four names, the first of which was Dornoch.

It was the rule in those days that when a community had a population of one-hundred it was entitled to a post office. When the residents of Dornoch applied for a post office it became necessary to change the name of their village, because of the existence of another Dornoch on the list.

The name was changed to McKay's Corners.

It was later changed to Campbell's Corners, after John Campbell who helped build up the community with various types of business. Finally the village was given the name Rayside, after Mr. Rayside, who was a member of parliament and who had a relative living at Campbell's Corners.

John Campbell erected a large frame hotel on the north-east corner of the corners. Travellers going between London and Woodstock were accommodated at this hotel. It was also a stopping place for teamsters who were hauling logs or lumber.

A good meal in this hotel was 25 cents. It consisted of roast beef, beef gravy, vegetables and pie or pudding.

If patrons wished to stable their teams for the night and have them fed from the contents of the barn, the charge was another 25 cents. If however, they brought their own hay and grain, there was no charge.

The community had two stores, a blacksmith shop and a post office.

James Campbell, the son of John, operated one of the stores on the southwest corner and a little further south, Peter Garden kept the other one. In those stores pork spare ribs sold at five cents a pound, ham was 12 cents a pound, butter 16 cents and eggs were priced at 10 cents a dozen.

Al Martin operated a blacksmith shop west of Campbell's store.

A member of the Ross family who became sheriff of Oxford County, lived on Lot No. 9 Concession No. 1, in 1829.

The nearest school to the community was a mile-and-a-half east of the corners. It got a small amount of government aid.

The post office occupied a part of James Campbell's grocery store. Mail was delivered three times a week from Thamesford.

When the Canadian Pacific Railway was put through on the north side of the corners the community petitioned for a

daily mail service. This was granted.

The Canadian Pacific Railway took over the delivery of mail and the community mail bag was tossed out from the floor of the baggage car. The out-going mail was removed from a post with an extending arm and was hooked from this arm by another on the baggage car.

In 1897, Campbell's Corners became Rayside and a post office was opened in December of that year.

The post master was John Gunson. His term ended in 1905. The post office was then moved to the hotel operated by Fred Day, who was also the new post master. He served until rural mail delivery started in 1914, the same year the post office was closed.

CULLODEN

This village is in Dereham Township, Oxford County, at the junction of Concession line No. 8 and the west corridor town line, on lots 21 and 22.

One of the first settlers in this area was Andrew Smart and his family, who arrived in 1847. Another well known pioneer was a Mr. Dillion, who came with his wife and young son Richard. This family had only five dollars on arrival to the area.

When Richard was 12-years-old his father, Richard and another pioneer named Jonah Allen, felled a large pine tree and gouged out a coffin for the dead man. They then went several miles and hired a team and a wagon and conveyed the corpse five miles to the grave.

Fred Richards was a pioneer who operated an ashery. He collected ashes and gave soap in exchange. He hauled lye to Brantford and Woodstock for soap making.

Names of some of the other pioneers were: Price, Pellow, Dynes, Smith, Waite, Esseltine, Rockett, Empey, Bigham, Foster, Stansell, Agar, Wilson and Allison.

The farming area turned to dairy farming and the one cheese factory was erected one mile north of the village. The sale of cheese and hogs brought most of the revenue to the farmers.

The cheese factory was sold in 1920.

In 1857 the Presbyterians built a church with a seating capacity for 400. The cost of this church was \$1,200. The Reverend Robert Rogers was the first minister.

In 1861, the Wesleyan Methodists built a church costing \$950. Reverend Reed was the minister.

The population of the village at this time was 200.

In 1887, the followers of the church of England built the third church in the village. It was first called St. Albon's Church but later re-named St. Steven's. The site for this church was donated by Robert Pellow and the lumber by Mr. Price.

In 1855, the Culloden Loyal Orange Association was organized. The officers were: Richard Bolton, Charles Condal, Abraham Harris, and William Lothian.

The Culloden post office was established around 1860.

In 1873, Andrew Smart was Post Master and after his death, his wife took on the position.

In the prosperous days of the village there were two resident doctors; Doctor S. McDonald and Doctor S. Leeder.

THE JENVEY FILES

Research from the files of Byron G. Jenvey

RAYSIDE

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OXFORD'S GHOST TOWNS

During recent months, as *Sentinel-Review* photographer Ted Town went about his regular assignments, he's been gathering photos of the vanished settlements that are the ghost towns of Oxford County. Another is Rayside located on the Governor's Road, the North Oxford-West Zorra Town Line, this place has known a variety of names. Settled in the 1830s, it was originally known as Dornoch. It was then referred to as McKay's Corners, then Campbell's Corners. It then took the name of

Rayside, possibly after James Rayside, member of the Ontario Legislature from 1882-1898. A post office was established here in 1897. In its heyday, Rayside also had a hotel, two stores and a blacksmith. Today, only a diner of the same name stands on the site.

W.J. Wintemberg, reprinted from the Ontario Historical Society's *Papers and Records*, Volume XXII, 1925.

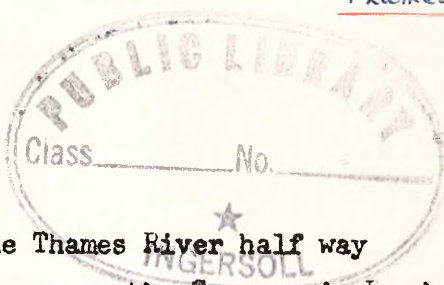
Also from "South of Sodom," published by the South Norwich Historical Society, 1982

SENTINEL REVIEW

May 20, 1988

HISTORY OF (THAMESFORD)

Mrs. J. M. McKay



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 Goe. 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. Now Supertest Service Station.

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 Edinburgh and soon had a large practice. He built the drug store, now R. B. McFarlan Insurance Office and the residence now occupied by R. B. McFarlan. 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. Now Dr. Kosmal.

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 former 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 Revell 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 barn 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. Burns 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 toil-worn 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 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, Walker, 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 proceedings 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 be extended by the public at large to such an institution—which appeared so favourable that a constitution was immediately adopted and the following gentlemen chose 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: Alex MacDonald, James Murdock, Dr. McCarthy, George Chan , David Irving, Isaac Piper, W. A. Rumsey, Dalius Doty, John Patterson, John Barn .

The ostensible object of this association being for the general diffusion 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 situation a solid foundation.

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

Old And New Blending In Thamesford Village

By MACKAY

It would seem that the pattern of human life, in many ways, changes little over the centuries or even as far back as recorded history tells the story, many many centuries ago.

As the valley of the Nile in Egypt and the Tigris-Euphrates in Mesopotamia, are considered the cradle of so-called civilization, so the rivers and streams flowing through Oxford county have cradled its settlement. The history of man is the history of the rivers of the world because man has down through the ages followed the rivers — but not always for the same reason.

There seem to have been three main reasons for this circumstance. First, as in the case of the Nile, the main purpose was for irrigation, water for crops to provide food to sustain human life without which there would have been no "corn in Egypt" and no Egyptian civili-

zation and no pyramids and no Nasser.

Then comes the second reason, transportation. River throughout the world have been ready-made roads without which, through thousands of years, man could not have gotten from one place to another, except probably on the back of a camel or a donkey or a horse or any other convenient animal on whose back man could sit. This has not greatly changed in many places in the world and still applies to the Amazon, the rivers of Indonesia and others. Even here in Canada, as former president Truman said of the St. Lawrence, "it is a fascinating undertaking to penetrate the heart of a continent with a waterway.

But neither of the above reasons was applicable in the case of the Thames river, the many branches of which meander through Oxford county. The area through which these many branches wandered was not in dire need of irrigation and except in a few places was not navigable — at least not commercially and not as a connecting link for the various settlements — The quest was for "power"

Power was needed to grind the grist to feed the pioneers and without it they had to make long trips to places where the power of some river had already been harnessed. It was also needed a bit later to saw the logs to build the houses which supplanted the original log structures and it could be used for a multiplicity of purposes that made life more livable.

This fact seems to have been the "raison d'etre" for most of the hamlets and villages that gradually grew up in Oxford county and along with them was Thamesford, situated, as an early history states, on the middle branch of the Thames river just half-way between Woodstock and Ingersoll.

Studying the history of

Thamesford is like studying the history of many such settlements throughout Oxford county and it is also like reading a cool book in which recipes are given and the ingredients named. First, take a few United Empire Loyalists, let stand for a while, then add a considerable number High and Scotsmen with a dash of English and Irish — season with 'necessity' and — presto — you come up with a typical Oxford county village, hamlet or settlement.

Probably Thamesford, more than many of the smaller places in the county has become a village of contrasts, the old and the new, but it retains, in common quality of decorum and mon quality of decorum and orthodoxy. To even hint that the village might ever harbor a germ of revolutionary thought would be an assertion that partment of understatement.

The contrasts are manifest in that there has become an 'old' village and a 'new' village. Largely on the west has developed a miniature of the city it lies closest to, London, with its acre upon acre of suburbia. On the east is most of the old village. The differences in the people may be hard to select but there is one contrast which manifests itself at once — the suburbia section is treeless and makes the great old maples of the other section that much more noticeable.

Actually Thamesford has been going through the period of what might be termed a 'building boom' and during 1961, permits were issued bringing house building value to almost a half million dollars. Population is still put at the 1,000 mark on highway signs.

Last year the village observed its 100 years as a police village and although a move has been afoot to seek incorporation, the move was delayed last fall on the advice of the municipal board.

Thamesford

By ART WILLIAMS

A post village situated on the middle branch of the River Thames became Thamesford. On the Governor's Road, which passes through in the townships partly of East Nissouri and partly in North Oxford, the village is 14 miles from Woodstock, 14 miles from London and five miles from Ingersoll. It is connected with Ingersoll and London by the Ingersoll and Thamesford Gravel Road and also with St. Marys by the gravel road leading from it to St. Marys. Thamesford was thus described in 1862. Though some of the names of the roads have changed the description still fits today.

Thamesford was first known as St. Andrews. Until 1852 part of the land now occupied by the village was part of North Dorchester township in Middlesex county.

The first settlers in this immediate area included Ebenezer Titus who in 1815 settled on lot 15, concession 10 of Nissouri and built himself a shanty. Another James O'Brien built on lot 6, concession 9 in 1821. The Horseman family arrived in 1823. In 1824 a family of Howards came up from Niagara and were in possession of a plow. When not using the implement themselves they rented it out for a shilling a day. About all that can be recalled about this plow is that it only had one handle.

Most Crown Grants in the district date from 1822 - 24. In the immediate area of the village John Finkle, father of Judge Finkle, and Jake Allen had two of the first houses. They obtained their lots when property was auctioned to form the village. Grants of land were also made to different denominations to allow them to build churches. It was announced at the sale that a hotel would be erected shortly. It was also noted that the village was to be located on the Governor's Road. As this road was not a toll road it would be an asset to the village, the announcement added.

MILLS

In the early 1840's a mill was erected. It measured 35 by 45 feet. From stone basement it rose four storeys in height. Three run of stone were driven by water power. In conjunction with this mill was a sawmill with a capacity of 750,000 feet of lumber annually. In 1847 these mills were owned by John Finkle. They were operated by Joel McCarty until 1859 when they were purchased by John Johns. In 1874 Joseph Cawthorp took them over. Eventually the Hogg family obtained them.

On one occasion Joel McCarty wishing to dry some green lumber in a hurry piled a large amount of green lumber in such a fashion as to form a kiln. He built a fire in the middle to dry the wood. A strong wind came up one night during the drying. The lumber toppled. In the morning all that remained was a pile of ashes.

As the village grew it was found that the name St. Andrew's was already taken in the postal list so the name Thamesford was suggested, the name coming naturally, as the river Thames had a ford at the village. This was accepted as the village name in 1851.

SCHOOLS

One school was located on Delatre Street and served the Nissouri residents. A second school was located a mile south of the village on the first concession of North Oxford for the use of the North Oxford students. About 1867 a two - room school was erected on Delatre street. This was a brick building 30 by 40 feet and two storeys high. The lower room was used by the third and fourth classes. The upper floor was used for the younger pupils. Eight years later No. 1 Section of North Oxford joined with No. 5 Section of Nissouri. All pupils went to the Delatre street school. This institution continued to serve the village until 1901 when a new school was built. This latter is still in use. Some of the early teachers were Mr. Sutherland, Miss McMillan, J. S. McKay, John McWilliam, F. Kennedy, Bessie McKay, Bella Rose, Tena McMurray and T. Eckardt. Some of these names will also be recalled as teachers of other schools.

ANGLICAN CHURCHES

In 1845 the first Anglican service was held in St. Andrew's. The service was conducted in the grist mill which has been just recently built by John Finkle. Canon Betteridge of Woodstock conducted the service. Services were alternated with Spearmans Corners' Anglicans. Canon Betteridge alternated with Rev. H. Revell who officiated at the Spearmans Corners' services along with other rectors from St. James' Church Ingersoll. It is recorded that many of the members from St. Andrew's village were baptized at the Spearmans Corners (Banner) Church.

Prior to 1859 a Miss Vansittart donated land for a church and cemetery. The daughter of John Brock was the first to be interred here being buried under an upturned tree. In 1859, a congregation was formed. Rev. William Bookman was appointed missionary in charge. He served Delaware, Edwardsburg (Dorchester), Lakeside as well as Thamesford. The first service was held in the Methodist Church. Later the barns or offices of Doctor Dawes, E. McCarty, Thomas Owens, John

Tomlinson and Thomas Loughheed served this purpose. Finally the congregation decided to build a stone church. John Forbes, Charles Cobbe and James Keyes were the builders. Material was donated by John Halpin and R. Rutledge. Rev. Samuel Belcher was the second incumbent. This building is still in use and the tower and bell were added at the time of the Queen Victoria Jubilee. The cornerstone for the original part was laid by Archdeacon McLaren in June of 1861.

METHODISTS

Records show that as early as 1857 there was a Methodist church in the village. In fact, all three branches of the Methodist denomination are recorded here and in 1884 they were united as one. In 1866 the frame church was bricked over. Those active in the congregation at that time included Messrs Chenoweth, Cogswell, Bartlett, Story, Sherlock, Judge, Kester, Horseman and Dicky.

PRESBYTERIANS

With a large number of Scots arriving in this area in the 1830's, it is only natural that there would be a Presbyterian Church formed. At first the Scots would walk over to Embro for services. In 1845 steps were taken to form a separate congregation. A site was chosen and purchased from John Finkle for five shillings. About this time Isaac Buchanan, a wholesale merchant of Hamilton offered one hundred dollars to each of the first five churches to be built in the western district. Some of the more energetic men set to work to obtain funds to take advantage of Mr. Buchanan's offer. In 1847 Rev. W. C. Burns of Mission fame in China laid the cornerstone for the 36 by 47 frame building.

It was of the plainest design both inside and out. The seats were pine slabs with pegs inserted on the round side for legs. The seats were without sides or backs. There was no sleeping during the sermon in those days and this church on the hill served until 1875 when the second St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church was built.

In those 23 years there were about 60 member families attending. The first services were conducted in Gaelic. In later years both Gaelic and English were used. In the new church it was common to have two services, one in Gaelic in the basement and the English service was held here at the time of the Jubilee in 1905.

This church was of white brick and possessed a tower. A cemetery was laid out surrounding the church. The last Gaelic services were held here at the time of the Jubilee in 1905.

INDUSTRIES

The village never lacked for industries. Along with the mills there was a planing mill on Washington street operated by Hazzard Hull and James McMurray. An ashery was an important industry. Mr. Garner was its proprietor. In 1883 a cheese factory located on Harris street Ingersoll, was purchased and moved to Thamesford. This plant was operated for 17 years until it was ac-

tioned in 1895 by Charles Jenkins.

One of the more important mills, Sugden Woollen Mills, was located on the west side of the river on Delatre street. This firm gave employment to both men and women. It was later used as a flax mill where 20 men were given employment.

During the summer "Flax" Brown as its owner was called would hire boys and girls to spread flax on the clover fields to dry, turn it as need be, then gather and return it to the mill where it would be made into tow. This mill was later owned by James Livingstone of Baden who developed a large industry in the making of oil cake at Baden.

In keeping up with the times Messrs Hull and Kennedy found employment for some 16 residents in their carriage factory. Later the Gowper Bros. conducted this business. While they operated it they erected a tower and bell which rang daily at eight, 12, one and six, as well as for services on Sunday. This bell was later located at the fire hall.

Not to be outdone by Embro, Thamesford at one time published a local newspaper. One of its first editors was James Stewart of Embro. It was later purchased by W. J. Taylor, publisher of The Sentinel-Review at that time.

SERVICES

Thamesford being located on the round side for Dr. Odgers and Dr. Dawes to settle. For many years they cared for the residents for miles around. In 1880 Dr. J. McWilliam located in the village after returning from Edinburgh where he had taken a post-graduate course. He soon had a large practice. To go along with his practice he opened a drug store where for over a quarter of a century he filled prescriptions. He also ran as Liberal candidate in a Dominion election.

(Thamesford) looks to '69 applies for incorporation

THAMESFORD — Growing pains in this Oxford community on Highways 2 and 19 are illustrated by an application for incorporation, a new post office, fire hall and municipal service improvements.

With close to 1,400 residents, Thamesford has almost doubled its population from 751 a decade ago. Within the next 10 years population is expected to reach 2,100.

Incorporation is sought in preference to the system of three village trustees and general control by two neighboring townships. An Ontario Municipal Board hearing is expected in a few weeks.

The \$32,291 post office was opened late in 1968. It contains 1,200 square feet and was built by Tripod Construction Ltd.

A \$40,000 fire hall to serve

Thamesford, Kintore, sections of North Oxford and East Nisour was erected at the foot of Delatre Street. Purchase of \$20,000 worth of equipment was also approved.

A \$32,000 public works program including water mains on George Street plus reconstruction and paving was completed. Resurfacing and water mains are scheduled this year in other areas. The year-to-year schedule is designed to avoid debenture issues.

Thamesford remains unique in hydro rates with only a modest increase in the past ten years. This has been possible through additional customers and retail sales.

Cold Springs Farm Ltd., the village's main industry employing 200 at peak periods,

installed a private 1,700 foot sewer costing about \$25,000.

Owner W. H. Beaty reported close to 600,000 turkeys are processed annually at Cold Springs.

Progress continues in a subdivision at the end of Stanley Street in the south-west section. Half a dozen homes are completed or under construction. Three others have been built across the river.

In recreation, 200 children were bussed to Ingersoll in the summer for swimming lessons. A similar arrangement is made for the village's hockey youth who go to Ingersoll arena.

A village landmark, the Masonic Hall, was seriously damaged by fire. Plans are underway to build a new temple this year.



Like many another Southwestern Ontario community, Thamesford got a new post office last year.

Opened in late fall, the \$32,000 structure contains 1,200 square feet of floor space.

Fieldstone church stands as community landmark

Thamesford was given its present name because it was founded near a natural ford on the Thames River.

In 1860 Thamesford was widely-known for its wood-working factories, which produced handmade furniture. It was also famous for a water-powered sawmill which ran day and night to serve the needs of the settlers who brought in their logs to be cut.

In 1861 St. John's Anglican Church was completed. The stones which comprise the church were gathered from the fields around Thamesford and the entire building was hand-built by the settlers.

The church, which still stands, was described as "good as new" when centennial celebrations were held there eight years ago. The handiwork of the pioneers continues to be admired by visitors to the old church.

Two prominent settlers were John Galpin, farmer, and John Forbes, stonemason.

Located only 12 miles east of London, the village has developed as a commuter centre in recent years, although it is still a farm service community. It is served by Highways 2 and 19.

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Old Sawmill Kept Busy

A LITTLE GROUP of zealous Anglican churchmen gathered in a partially-constructed grist mill on the bank of the Thames at Thamesford. There, with the smell of fresh lumber about them they molded plans for the erection of a church in which they, their families and members of the thriving community could worship.

The product of their planning and toil, St. John's Anglican Church, stands today beside No. 2 highway, unaltered by the ravages of time or weather.

The stones for the walls were gathered and selected with such painstaking care, hewn with such dexterity and laid with such precision that repairs for the structure have been unnecessary since it was completed about Christmas Day, 1861.

Gathered Stones

The glistening, ageless stones were gathered by men of the congregation from the Oxford County farm of John Galpin, a member of the vestry. Stonemason of the church raising was John Forbes, whose son, Jim, lives on the old homestead near Thamesford.

The small, ivy-covered church has a reputation as the prettiest building between Windsor and Toronto. It has become a welcome landmark to travel-weary travelers who catch in passing by, a little of the timeliness poured into the building by the gnarled hands of workers long since dead.

Along with the pioneer workers have gone many of the industries that once thrived in Thamesford. Wood-working factories were located in the village during the "Fifties" and "Sixties" that produced beautiful handmade furniture. A sawmill, run by water, was often kept running day and night as settlers brought their oak, cherry, ash,

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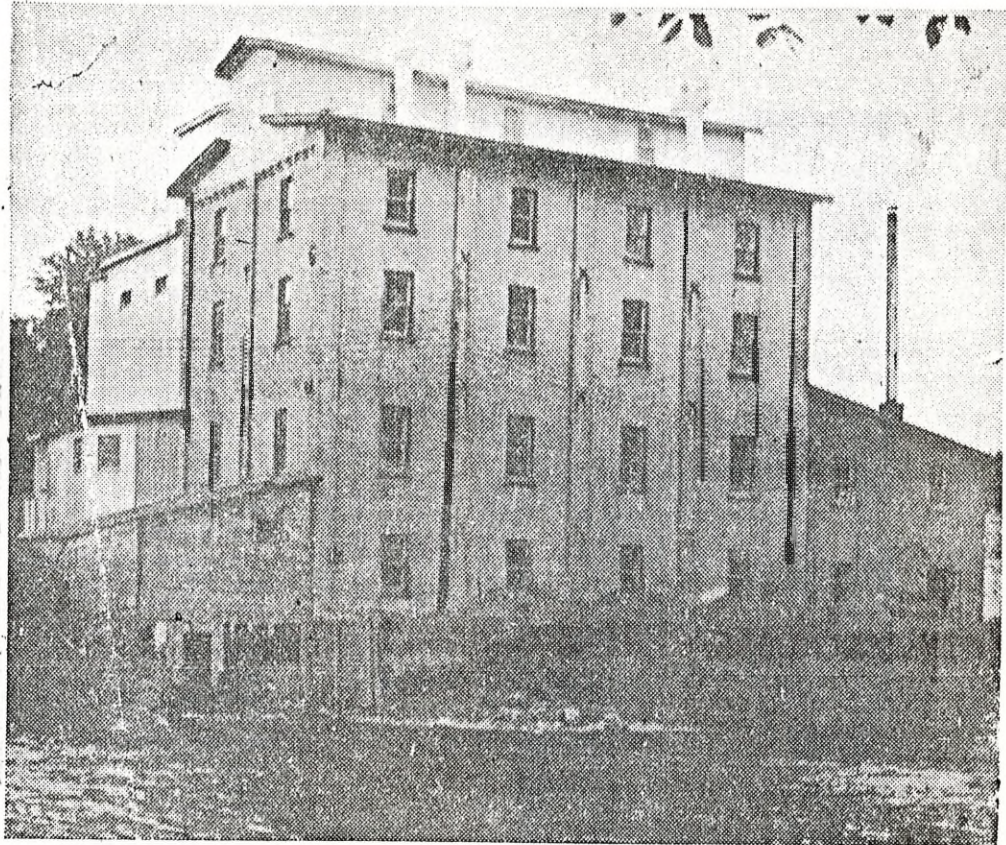
A personal friend, George Mills would often spend long hours with the doctor. With the coming of the telephone they both became interested and decided it would be nice to be able to talk to each other from their homes. So, they erected the first line between their homes but the more the doctor thought of it the more he was convinced that in times of emergency a telephone would be priceless. This belief led to a line extended as far north as Kintore with a small switchboard on the Mills farm. The venture proved to be a success from the first. The Nissouri Telephone association was formed with shares at five dollars each. The line was incorporated in 1897 with a capital of \$1,645. The central switchboard was set up at Kintore. George Mills later formed the Mills Telephone Co. for Thamesford and often the lines for the two companies would extend down the same street with one on either side. The rates for the telephones were \$10.00 for residential and \$12.00 for business phones for a year.

RAILROAD

When the Western Ontario Pacific Railroad was being formed it was supported by such leading merchants of Thamesford as Nelson McCarty, J. Cawthorp, Cris. Brock, Washington Kester and Mathew Cooper. They were able to get by-law 225 passed in the township council in favor of the railroad but resident of the township took the matter to court where the by - law was ruled illegal. As a result when the CPR was built through Thamesford, the village was left without a station. However, the village raised the sum of \$2,500 and for this amount the railroad agreed to put a station in the community.

With the railroad finally erecting a station, Thamesford enjoyed a wave of prosperity. The Trader's Bank saw fit to establish a branch. To cater to the travelling public there were at one time three hotels. While the place thrived it never increased the population at this time. In 1862 Thamesford had a population of 650. In 1888 the population was only 450.

Prior to the coming of the CPR mail was brought to the village by stage from Ingersoll



ONE OF THE FEW mills of its kind still in operation in this area is located at Thamesford. The LOWER photo shows an exterior shot of the mill which is partly run

by water power as a new ultra - modern electric motor has been recently installed. The mill was built in 1844 and is now owned by George Hogg. The TOP photo shows the

source of the mill's water power. A spillway is located just above the dam and the water runs from here to turn the big paddle wheel in the mill. (Staff Photo).

At one time mail was delivered three times a week from Thamesford to Dornoch (Raeside), McBrines, Lakeside, Medina and Kintore with connections to Harrington at Lakeside. In all, 35 miles of mail route were served. The first post office was opened on July 6, 1851, with Rosetta McLellan as postmaster. Later Joel McCarty (1854), Lawrence Whalen (1862), N. C. McCarty (1863-1915) D. Quinn, E. R. Patterson and now Mrs. D. Richardson have all served as Thamesford postmasters.

Thamesford develops as commuter centre, new subdivision opens

THAMESFORD — Eight new homes were built in this east Oxford County community during 1966, somewhat less than the average number built during the past several years.

"During the last 10 years perhaps as many as 20 homes were constructed annually," said Ted Nancekivell, village trustee. "Since the war about 260 new residential units have risen and our population has increased accordingly."

Road signs in Thamesford set its population at 1,000. But Mr. Nancekivell says that according to a census taken early last year the population stood at 1,343 and that by now it must be nearing 1,400.

"We don't want too fast a growth," said Mr. Nancekivell. "It costs a lot of money to provide facilities and we don't want to put the village into deep debt. All our services—hydro, telephone, water—are installed underground so it's important that controlled, gradual growth is maintained."

Two housing subdivisions are now fully developed and another, located in the southern section of the community and known as Andron Estate, is now under development. Eight homes have already been built in the 180-lot development which provides space for a park and future school site. Underground cable for about 20 homes has been laid.

The year's biggest construction project was an addition to Thamesford Public School. Completed this month at a cost of \$345,000, the addition includes 10 classrooms, a kindergarten, library and gymnasium.

The enlarged facilities will serve only the current 400-pupil enrolment however, since two older sections previously used will be torn down.

Plans for a new post office

in Thamesford were postponed last year when the federal government announced a cutback in spending.

However, a new post office may be started this year. Private firms have been asked to submit tenders for the building.

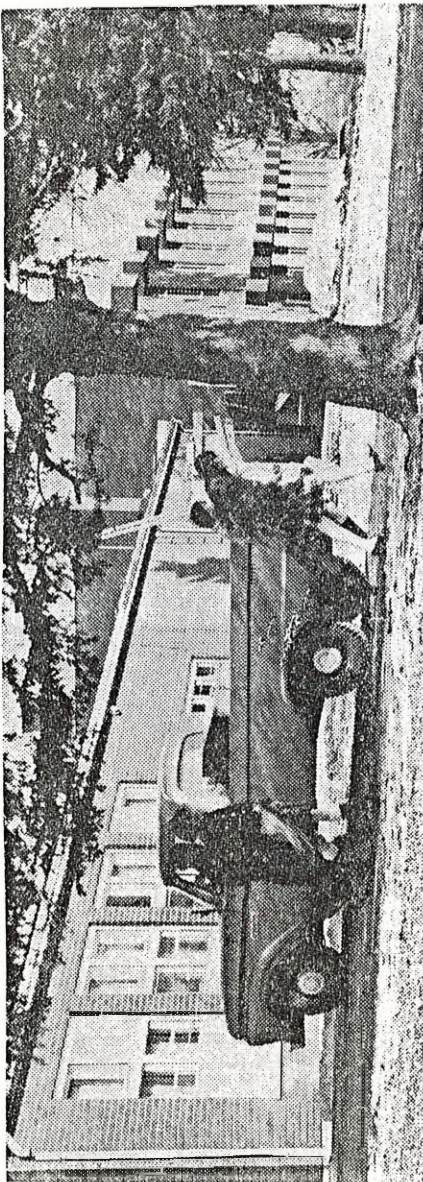
Road work in 1966 included the paving of three blocks of Church Street from Dundas to Byron, 2½ blocks of Byron from Stanley to George, one block of Middleton Street from Elizabeth to Brock, and one block of St. Patrick Street. Estimated cost was \$18,000.

Thamesford's water supply is dependent on three privately owned systems and the village is now planning to link them together as a central supply system.

During the year, the LCBO approved a dining lounge licence for Thamesford's Balmoral Hotel and extensive renovations were made at the hotel to comply with the regulations.

Steady growth and expansion was again recorded by Cold Springs Farm Ltd., Thamesford's largest employer. The company's operation takes in all aspects of poultry raising from hatching to final packaging and freezing. Markets extend throughout Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes.

Newest commercial firm is Thamesford Farm Equipment, located on Highway 19 at the northern outskirts of the community. The dealership is operated by Mac Young and sons, Gerald and Doug and offers service and repairs to all types of farm machinery.



Biggest building job of 1966 in Thamesford was the \$345,000 addition to Thamesford Public School, attended by about 400 pupils. The addition, completed this month, contains 10 classrooms, a kindergarten, library and gymnasium.

(THAMESFORD) May 14th 1969.

Written by Mrs. John M. MacKay

I am going to try to tell you about the village of Thamesford from 1885 when I started to school in the two roomed building on Delatre St. up to perhaps 1900.

The school was on the north side of Delatre St. where houses No. 118 and No. 120 now stand. The school grounds measured about 1 acre of land and reached back to Washington St. and was closed in on 3 sides by a high board fence. It was a red brick structure and the ground floor room was where the pupils in the third and fourth book classes received their instruction. The room upstairs was for the junior pupils and was a far cry from the lovely rooms where the children now study. The ceiling was fairly high in the middle of the room but sloped to perhaps six feet at the sides, the windows being so close to the floor were protected by wooden cross bars. The seats were of wood and stationary. They were graded from the back of the room for the older pupils to the small seats at the front for the younger ones.

This room was reached by a stair that started just inside the frontdoor went west about 7 steps to a platform then north 7 more to another platform then to the east 7 more steps and you were at the door of the class room. There were two small entry rooms where the children left their coats and caps.

The class room downstairs was furnished with newer type of desks with seats that could be turned up. The glimpses that the juniors caught of that room with its better black board, interesting looking maps and a globe made them long for the time when they could reach the standing of 3rd. reader pupils and study in such a fine class room.

I think I had three teachers in that upstairs class room the last one was a Miss Commander - who used to brighten things up by teaching us songs.

Mr. Fred Kennedy was the teacher downstairs. He used to play ball with the big boys. One memorable day the game was so interesting that he forgot that recess only lasted 15 minutes and there was only a brief period before noon. Mr. L. Eckhart was the next principal. He was an older man and a musician and naturally we had quite a bit of singing in the class room.

Mr. Hazard Hull lived with his family in the first house east of the school. He had a turning mill on the back of his lot on Washington St. It was moved over to the Cowper property where the Wallace Bros. now have a Lumber business and is still used by them.

We will leave the school and go east on the gravel walk for pedestrians. The roadway had gravel on it too for it is used a great deal taking loads to and from the Flaxmill which is down beside the river east of where the new fire hall now stands. At this time there were no sidewalks except perhaps a gravel path maybe a board walk on the north side of Dundas between Allen & George Streets. Later on there were board

sidewalks up to St. Andrews Church to the C.P.R. depot and on Allen St. to the railway. This was a time when men and women worked hard and long hours. The 10 hr. work day began at 7 o'clock A.M. to 12 A.M. then 1 P.M. to 6 P.M. Skilled carpenters, blacksmiths, painters etc. worked these long hours for \$10. or \$12. a week. Bread was 5¢ a loaf, milk 5¢ a quart, steak 12¢ a lb. etc. We didn't hear about strikes.

As we walk down Delatre St. past the house occupied by Mr. Hull we see only one more house on that side of the street and that is the house on the corner at Hwy. 19. on the south side of the street No. 115 was there but it has since been improved. I believe that it had been originally the school for the pupils who lived in E. Nissouri Township. The Campbell family lived in that house and there was another small cottage about where 111 would be. This house has long since been discarded. The house on the south side of Delatre on Hwy. 19 was there then and has been much improved.

We will continue our walk along Allen St. The Forester's Hall with houses on the ground floor was there and next to it was the hall where the Loyal Temperance Lodge had had their meetings. At this time that Hall was used as a storage place by the Young & Kester frame store that did business on the north west corner of Dundas and Allen St. Across the street on the S. E. corner was the store of Tommy McCarty. He carried on a General Store a Bake Shop and meat business.

In the 1890's the Young and Kester store burned and J. A. Young built a three storey brick building a general store in the ground floor, a millinery department on the second and the Odd Fellows Hall on the third floor. Later on when the store was occupied by W. F. Thurlow and his family lived on the second floor and the Public Library with the Lodge rooms occupied the third floor this building was burned to the ground. The Odd Fellows built the present corner building.

After the frame store was burned Mr. W. Kester built the building which is the Thamesford Hardware Store. Kester & Son conducted a general store until it was bought by Robt. Oliver and was the Oliver Hardware. The tin shop of George Brock was at 95 Dundas St. and just east of it was the Black Smith shop where David Brock carried on his trade as black smith. Davie was an interesting deaf man wonderful at lip reading which he acquired by his own ingenuity. His shop was an interesting and popular spot for children. As we come west on Dundas St. No. was the home of Hugh Kennedy who owned and operated the Carrige shop beside his home which was on the property now occupied by the I. G. A. store. In this carriage shop horse drawn vehicles were made and some finished with a paint job or upholstery job. There was a bell on this building that rang at 7 A.M., 12 P.M., 1 P.M. and 6 P.M. and also was used as a fire alarm.

The first house west of the carriage was shop where the restaurant now operates. It was owned by Mr. Alfred Sheppard , a harness maker. The front part was used as a

harness shop and the back part as living quarters for the Sheppard family. Mrs. Sheppard's mother Mrs. Nelson lived in the next house which is now a barber shop owned by Jack Shewan.

The brick store which has recently been wrecked was occupied by a General store which was operated by Mr. Christopher Brock and later by Mr. Nelson C. McCarty, Mr. Brock built a house and shop across the street where he started the first furniture and funeral service in Thamesford at 133 Dundas St.

On the land where John Wright's garage is there was a Livery stable and between it and the Brick store was a building that was used as a tailor shop. Later on in this building the first and only newspaper called the Thamesford Record had its headquarters.

As we continue our walk on the north side of Dundas we will walk on a board sidewalk that I think extended from Allen St. to George St. Next to the frame store of Young & Kester was an old house where people lived. The front part was used at different times as barber shop or butcher shop.

At the back of the frame store of Young & Kester was a Tailor shop where a tailor, Archie McTaggart with several women helpers made hand tailored suits for men. There were three prosperous tailor shops in Thamesford. The second one was in a building just west of the brick store next to Wrights Garage. Joel McLeod was the tailor here and he had helpers in his tailor shop also. Joshua Story carried on a business in his home on Washington Street and I believe his father, who lived at what is now 120 Washington St. was a tailor also.

As we walk south on Allen St. and looked east we might see a small building at the river side and perhaps might see animals' hides hung out on racks beside this building. This was where James Filmore carried on his trade as a tanner. I don't think he employed anyone to assist in this work. He and his family lived at 113 Dundas St.

The houses on the West side of Allen St. are much the same as they were then No. 111 was at that time a dwelling with a small jewellery store in the front. No. 107 was the property of a French man Louis LeFaive. He had a butchering business. Later on his daughter Bernice had a millinery shop in the front of the house.

Across the road from Tommy McCarty's General store on the south side of Dundas Street George Brock had a tin shop and he built and lived at Dundas St.

As we continue our walk west on Dundas we see a Blacksmith shop on the lot where the Royal Bank now stands. This shop was operated by Rye Karn, Mr. Joel McCarty who was the father of N. C. and an old man at that time lived in the brick cottage that still stands behind the two new stores that have very recently been erected.

The store now occupied by Varnums Drug store was used as a dwelling at the time of our walk but later served as a butcher shop and at one time housed the Public Library.

The building next, I think was always used as a shop of some kind with living quarters at the back. My first memory of it was when Mrs. Peter McKay had a dress making establishment at the front. At the time of our walk two men, The Gilbert Brothers had a grocery store there. They built a cottage on the back of their lot on Delatre Street.

Coming west on Dundas St. we next pass the Cowper Bros. premises. They were two enterprising Irish men who started a Wagon & Carriage business. Their home was on the corner and their work shops extended east to near the grocery. They employed 8 or 10 men blacksmiths, wood workers, painters and upholsterers. They used to send quite an impressive display of buggies, cutters, sleighs and wagons to the Fall Fairs. Later they had a lumber mill back of the shops and sold building supplies. The Wallace Bros. bought and improved the mill. Gordon G. Hogg bought the shops and carried on an automobile business for years. The Supertest Garage now occupies this space.

On the south side of Dundas St. at this time was the store of John Brock. This was a General Store at the corner of St. Andrews St. It was later taken over by his son, J. W. Brock who at one time had a flourishing fresh meat business. He had several wagons taking meat thru the country in the summer time. He enlarged the store and added the brick living quarters at the back. Mr. Foot now carries on a Hardware Store.

John Shewan was a shoemaker and he carried on a business in his name which was where the old P.O. now stands.

There were two hotels on the south side of Dundas St. The brick one that is still there and a frame one that was on the lot where the Mason's Hall now is. This frame Hotel was carried on by John McCartey. It was burned one day when most of the people were at a picnic at Pt. Stanley. The Masonic Lodge had had their rooms above a shed that was joined to the hotel. People from the country used this shed to shelter their horses when they came to the village.

When the Masonic Lodge was rebuilt they had two dwelling houses below the Lodge room and that is how it is today.

There was Olivers' Hotel on the east side of the river this was at the corner of Dundas and Melton St. and there were two frame houses between the hotel and the river.

The Flour Mill was then owned by Joseph Cawthorpe and he lived in the house where Gordon T. Hogg lives. Later Mr. Cawthorpe built the red brick house where Mr. Wright lives.

At this time many people kept a cow and these cows pastured on the sides of the roads in the summer. Middleton St. was a long narrow pasture field. These cows were brought home to be milked each evening and everyone had to be sure to have his gates closed or some cow would be sure to find it and the garden would be ruined.

THE DOCTORS IN THAMESFORD

Dr. McWilliam came to Thamesford and started a practice in 1880. His family lived on a farm about 7 miles north east of Thamesford and he had taught in the 8th Line School and also at the school in the village before taking his medical training. He soon had a large practise and he built a house and drug store about 1884. They are both now the property of Robert McFarlane who lives in the house and has his office in what was once the drug store. Dr. McWilliam served the community well for over 25 years. He travelled with horse and buggy or cutter for most of the time and it was only in the last two or three years of his practise that he had a car. There was no telephone service at that time but Dr. McWilliam had a line built to the peat bog. The wire was carried along fences and trees etc. There was also a line built to the farm of Donald Sutherland the M.P. for Oxford. Dr. McWilliam moved to London about 1905 where he continued to practise medicine under less strenuous conditions until his death in 1926.

Dr. Babb took over Dr. McWilliam's work and later on continued to practice in partnership with Dr. McGougan who had come to Thamesford a short time before Dr. Babb. Dr. McGougan died about 5 years after his graduation.

Dr. Babb carried on alone for some years after Dr. McGougan's death. He then took a course in New York and went to London where he practised as an Eye, Ear & Nose specialist.

In 1917 Dr. Moffat Weir who had spent his early years on a farm about 3 miles east of Thamesford, took over the house and drug store where Dr. Babb had been and carried on a practise until his death in 1958. He had served this community for 41 years. These three doctors earned the respect and confidence of the community and contributed much to its welfare. After Dr. Weir's death Dr. Flowers was the village doctor for a few years. Dr. Kosmal took over the practise in 19 and he has now built a home in the community and is making a place for himself as a very competent Family Doctor in this village.

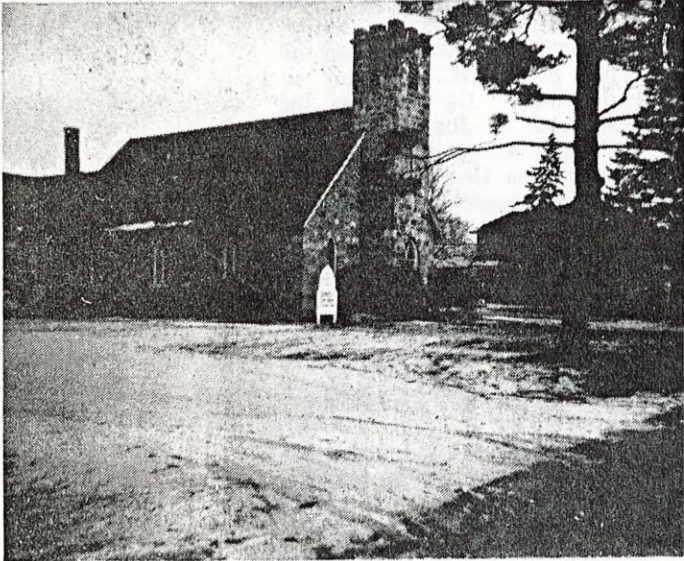
THE FLAX INDUSTRY

At that time flax was grown by farmers in the district. The plant was harvested by pulling it root and all from the ground. Very often wagon loads of Indian men and women came from the Muncey Reserve, lived in tents near fields of flax which they pulled and put in heaves. This was very tiresome work and the payment was usually \$5.00 an acre. This industry was owned and operated by a Mr. Brown who was generally known as Flax Brown. Later on the business was operated by a Mr. Livingston who built the brick house on the corner of Dundas and Church Streets. There was a large barn on Delatre St. at the corner of Church St. where flax and its products used to be stored.

The Flax mill was a very busy place about 20 men were employed. Here the flax was threshed and later the straw was processed into tow. Farmers with their wagons and teams carried the flax to the mill. They drew the straw to pasture fields where groups of perhaps 30 boys and girls spread the straw in rows over the fields. This straw was later gathered up and brought to the mill for further processing.

110th ANIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Many old acquaintances were renewed on Sunday afternoon, November 28, 1971 when friends gathered at St. John's Anglican Church, Thamesford to celebrate the 110th Aniversary of this little stone church on Thamesford's main street. Guests attended from as far away as Miami, Florida for this special occasion and filled the Church to capacity.



The 25th Rector of St. John's, Rev. Reginald Warner, and his family welcomed guests back at the Parish Hall after the service which was conducted by Rev. Ralph Sadleir, Rural Dean of Oxford and Rector of St. Jame's Church, Ingersoll.

Many interesting artifacts depicting the history of the Parish were on display. Among the items was the hammer used by Mr. Wellington Keys, one of the builders of St. John's. The old Church Clock (which still keeps excellent time and now owned by Mr. P. Elgie of Thamesford, many photographs and an old Church lamp a proud possession of the H. Cole family of Thamesford. The display was open to the public on Monday afternoon as there was so much community interest in these historical items.

A memorial window was dedicated at this special service, the gift of Mrs. Vera C. Woods in memory of Mr. Keys, his family and decendants.

On the occasion of St. John's Centenary in 1961, the late Rev. J. A. Catling, Rector at that time, compiled a booklet containing some of the history of the Church, the following are excerpts from this well documented book:-

"In 1859 Bishop Cronyn commissioned Rev. William Brookman as missionary to Thamesford, Delaware and Edwardsburg, (now Dorchester). One year later he became incumbent of Thamesford and Lakeside".

"At a meeting held in 1861 it was decided to build a church and definite plans were made at the initial meeting of the vestry organized by Rev. Brookman".

"The vestry comprised the following names:- Oliver Bailey, John Brock, F. Cogswell, Riley Day, Dr. Dawes, John Henderson, Samuel Henderson, John Halpin, John Johns, Matthew Johnson, Robert Johnson, James Keys, William Kirk, Thomas Lougheed, Thomas MacFarland, Eleazar McCarty, Samuel McMurray, William Miller, Daniel Quinn, James Russell, George Snetsinger, James Tomlinson, James Whitton".

"A building committee was elected at the first meeting comprising of Rev. Brookman, Dr. Dawes and Eleazar McCarty. The decision to use stone in the building was a wise one, for it gave to St. John's that picturesque distinction which has won the admiration of all those who have viewed the Church down through the years".

"Most of the stone for the building was donated by John Halpin, while Robert Rutledge contributed all of the pine timbers".

"On a beautiful June day in 1861 the cornerstone was laid for the Church to be known as St. John's".

"It must have been a most important event in the lives of those pioneer men and women as they witnessed Venerable Archdeacon McLean lay the cornerstone over current coins, copies of the 'Globe' and 'Leader' newspapers and other records which existed at the time."

"Under the capable leadership of Rev. Brookman, the construction of the Church proceeded quite rapidly. An attempt was made to have the Church ready in time for Christmas Day Service, but the work was not completed until the 27th of January, 1862."

"It must have given a great sense of joy to Rev. Brookman and the congregation to see the Church finally completed. Large congregations attended the opening services, happy in the knowledge that they now had their own Church in which to worship."

INGERSOLL TIMES

December 1, 1971

An interesting part of Thamesford's history was revealed last month in the unearthing of an old and yellowed copy of the Thamesford Star, a newspaper which was published in the village at the turn of the century.

Mrs. John R. McDonald and her grand-daughter Christine discovered the four-page newspaper among other old documents in her attic and assumes that it was stored away by her late husband, John R. McDonald, as a graphic account of his father's death is recorded on the front page. Mr. McDonald's father is described as "a prominent resident of East Nissouri" and the account goes on to read "Mr. Dougald McDonald of the 11th concession, East Nissouri passed away in London Hospital on Sunday morning following an operation and lists several members of parliament and representatives of the Western Farmers Weather Insurance Company of which Mr. McDonald was an honored director, as being in attendance at the funeral. Mr. McDonald was in his sixty-first year and the Star is dated August 13, 1908 making the news item exactly 66 years old.

Mrs. McDonald was particularly interested in reports printed in the Star referring to the weather conditions during that time of the century. "Cool weather has followed the scorching heat in the west" is one headline which leads into a discourse on the crop conditions in Manitoba.

"We want harvest hands" begs the report and an advertisement contained on another page of the newspaper speaks of "harvest excursions" on August 19 and September 9 and prospective harvesters and farm labourers are requested to contact M. D. McPhee, agent for the C.P.R., Thamesford for a charge of \$10 going trip" and \$18 return "after at least 30 days work."

In speaking with some of the oldsters around the village, it was discovered that many of the local young men took advantage of these excursion tickets and became part of the 25,000 men who were offered "good wages" for their work in the fields of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Also referring to the weather conditions is a report in the Embro section which notes that a "storm in the vicinity of Tottenham and Orangeville, totally demolished two barns, one barn was literally blown to pieces."

At the time of the publication of the Star in 1908 Charles E. Walker was the editor and manager and a yearly subscription to the weekly was one dollar in advance or \$1.50 at the end of the year.

According to Mrs. L. M. Boyd of Washington Street, the Star office was situated beside what is now the Corner Furniture Store on Dundas Street and Mrs. Boyd recalls the editor as being "a little man with asthma" but does not remember whether this was Mr. Walker or a former editor.

The 1908 paper is marked as Volume V and it is assumed that the Star was first published in 1903 from this method of enumerating. Other reports say that the paper was still in existence in 1910 but soon after that time was bought out by the Sentinel-Review in Woodstock.

Mrs. Boyd, who is affectionately known to many as Aunt Lou, is probably Thamesford's oldest resident and will be ninety-six years old in December. She was delighted to see the copy of the Star and in reading through the local advertising and personals from the village (of which there were many!), she was able to recall and relive many humorous incidences and relate them to the names mentioned in the paper.

For example, 1908 was the year in which she was married to A. H. Dundas who was the co-owner of

one of the five general stores located in the village at the turn of the century. Mr. Dundas ran an ad on the front page of the Star in the name of "Leslie and Dundas" offering "highest prices for butter and eggs" and "a full line of harvest shoes ... Wonderful soap at 6 bars for 25 cents ... Zenoleum at 25 cents a tin." Mrs. Boyd noted that Mr. Leslie (Ben) was married to her sister, so the partners in the store were brothers-in-law.

Kester and Son, another of the general stores who used the front page of the Star for their advertising, also played an important part in Mrs. Boyd's life as she was employed as a sales clerk there. At that time she was 21 years old and recalls many

amusing incidences which occurred during her 8 years with Kester and Son. "Washington Kester" she said "was once in partnership with J. A. Young. They were also brothers-in-law as they were married to Creighton sisters from Embro."

Mr. Young eventually moved from the district and another news item in the Star mentions a letter which Mr. Young wrote to the Hamilton Spectator referring to "The Fernie Disaster." Mr. Young was representing Ford and Featherston in British Columbia and Alberta when the fire broke out, according to the item." He describes the suffering of the women and children as something beyond description. He and a number of others escaped by means of a freight car and reaching the river made their way to a small island, where they remained all day Sunday."

A detailed report of the Fernie incident in the centre pages of the Star describes "The great fire in B. C. total loss of \$5,000,000".

"The City of Fernie and the towns of Hosmer and Michel, all mining camps are in the fire area. The fire is all around Michel but there is no grave

apprehension as to it. Hosmer has escaped with little loss on its mining side, but Fernie has been completely obliterated." The news item goes on to read "There is no rain in sight and the fire continues slowly up the mountainside, but nothing but a very high wind would do much damage as the valley along its lower portions is swept clean of everything combustible."

Tragic incidents of the fire are described in detail when "bodies of a family of four were found in a well" where they had hidden to escape the heat. The man was badly burned while the wife and children died of suffocation.

A more cheerful note was added to the story when the residents of Cranbrook, a neighbouring community, were commended for their part in alleviating the suffering of the Fernie refugees. The article continues to say that a "new Fernie is rising" from the embers of the fire and "tonight, for the first time since the disaster, many will sleep under a roof again."

Thamesford

INGERSOLL TIMES

August 14, 1974

The fire apparently began about the first day of August and was still raging "with no hope of being extinguished unless there is heavy rain soon", when the Star was published on August 13.

One and a half columns of "Local and Personal - The Talk of the Village and Surrounding Country" all but filled the front page! Mrs. Boyd was particularly interested in an item referring to "Master Harold Newton" who is the brother of village trustee, Paul Newton and now lives in Toronto. The item reads: "Master Harold Newton, son of Mr. John Newton, received several bad bruises being trampled on by a cow. The lad was passing through the field and the cow having a calf beside her, attacked him, knocking him down and then trampling on him. When the beast backed up to make another dash, the lad managed to reach a hole in the fence and thus escape. The injuries were painful but not serious." He would be about twelve years old at the time of the described incident. Mrs. Boyd remembers Mr. Newton "When he was wearing diapers".

Two of the other "personal" items mention village residents who are still part of the local scene. "Miss Jessie McKay returned yesterday from Port Dover where she has been holidaying" reads the item. Miss McKay is now Mrs. J. M. McKay, one of the oldest residents of the village and is well known for her interest in local history and for the papers which she has written on the subject.

The second item says "We are very pleased to learn that Miss Berta Storey, Miss Ethel Brown and Miss Grace Paterson have all been successful in the recent examinations for second class certificates."

Although nothing could be traced regarding Miss Storey, it was remembered that Miss Brown was the first school teacher to many of our now Senior Citizens and was the mother of Mrs. Edith McKay. Miss Paterson still resides on Delatre Street and has many interesting experiences to her credit as she was a missionary in India for most of her working career.

Miss Bernice LeFaive who is also mentioned in the personal column was a great friend of Mrs. Boyd and her family. At the time of the publishing of the newspaper Miss LeFaive lived in Hamilton but early in the 1900's she lived with her parents at 107 Allen Street. Her father was

Louis LeFaive, who operated a butchering business and Bernice had a millinery shop at the front of the house. Mrs. Boyd also remembers Bernice's sister Tilly who was crippled.

Also in the personal items "Mr. Knight of Aylmer has taken a position with Leslie and Dundas as Baker." Mrs. Boyd noted that at that time bread was 5 cents a loaf and the baker probably received around \$10 a week for baking it.

A front page advertisement for the Traders Bank of Canada recalled some memories from John Baigent, another local senior citizen. Mr. Baigent remembers the bank manager Sid Hughes and recalls that salaries at that time for the managerial position were around \$1,000 per annum.

Mr. Hughes was described as "a very nice man" and was a good friend of Walter Oliver, the father of Mrs. Mabel Stadelbauer. According to Mr. Baigent who was 12 years old at the time of the paper's publication, he can remember things that happened at that time just as if they happened yesterday.

"In fact, I can remember them better than what happened yesterday" he joked! He said that the Traders Bank amalgamated with the Royal Bank around 1914 and was situated in the building which now houses the East Nissouri Fire insurance Co. until the new Royal Bank was recently built.

In studying some of the other local advertisements, Mr. Baigent recalls the Brock Brothers. John Brock ran a general store at the corner of St. Andrews Street which was taken over by his son J. W. Brock who also ran a flourishing fresh meat business and Mr. Baigent noted that Mr. Brock had a "butcher wagon" on the road at all times. The Brock store is now Thom. Brown Hardware.

Christopher Brock operated a furniture store and advertises "brass and iron beds, couches and wallpapers" and across the road at 133 Dundas Street he started the first funeral service in

the village. George Brock operated a tin shop at 95 Dundas and David Brock was the local blacksmith, according to Mr. Baigent.

On the back page of the newspaper the local Fall Fairs

are listed and it was noted that Embro fair would take place on Oct. 1, and Thamesford fair on Oct. 2. Mr. Baigent explained that one of the prominent farmers of that day was Nelson McCarty owned the old stone house which is now occupied by Barry Rutledge and his family.

Mr. McCarty also owned the land north of this house and the Thamesford Fairgrounds were located south of the railway track running west from George Street, where the ball park is now situated. A race track was also part of the fair grounds facilities in the 1900's.

"If you want a good reliable harness, good material, good workmanship and prices right, go to A. F. Bain." Mr. Baigent remembers taking their farm harnesses in for repair to Alexander Bain who operated his harness shop from a farm building located where the Bowie Hairdressing Salon now stands. Mr. Bain built the red brick home next door to his shop, now occupied by Omar Foisey and his family, and apparently moved out west in 1920 where he lived to the ripe old age of 97 years. Mr. Bain was an uncle of Jack and Lloyd Shewan.

"J. L. Bevins dealer in fresh and salt meats" was once located in the building which now houses Varnums Drug Store, said Mr. Baigent. He remembers that Leon Bevins died young, around 30 and cannot recall what happened to the business after that.

On the centre pages of the Star are single column notices regarding the local church services. Mr. Baigent particularly remembers the friendliness of Rev. J. A. Agnew, pastor of the Methodist church which was at the time situated where the tennis court is now located.

"He was the first minister I can ever remember who rushed to the door to shake your hand when you left the church after a service," Mr. Baigent recalled. Mrs. Boyd also remembers Rev. Agnew as it was he who married her to Mr. Dundas in 1908. At that time Rev. R. J. Murphy was the rector of St. John's Anglican Church and Mr. Baigent remembers Rev. Murphy preaching at the funeral of his Uncle Dave in 1907.

The Presbyterian Church which was located above the river to the east up on the hill had

Rev. T. A. Watson for their pastor. The manse which was built for Rev. Watson's predecessor, Rev. Geo. Smith, is now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. John Oliver on Delatre Street. Mrs. Boyd recalls that Fred Kester was the church organist at that time and has an amusing tale to tell regarding Mr. Kester and Rev. Watson.

Mr. Baigent noted that Rev. Watson must have been a good preacher as the church was always full to the door during both services at 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. on a Sunday.

As the United Church of Canada is celebrating its 50th. anniversary next year, it was interesting to read an article in the 1908 Star regarding church union. The article begins: "The existance of a strong feeling in favor of church union has long been apparent in Canada, though few engaged in the work of ascertaining the drift of public opinion would have thought it so strong as is apparent from a Toronto petition. In a few short weeks no less than 35,000 people in that city have signed a petition in favor of the principles of church union and it is confidently anticipated that the numbers will in the next fews weeks swell to 50,000."

It goes on to say: "The mass of church people are beginning to learn, that in most, if not all, of the essentials they agree and that it is mainly on doctrinal points that they differ."

Mr. Baigent picked out the names of several residents in the personal column whom he remembered, G. B. Thurlow the village barber, C. M. Judge who was the representative for McCormick Farm Machinery and operated a business on the river flats where the park now stands, Jim McMillan makes the news as he was operated on for an appendicitis at his fathers home on the 8th concession. Mr. McMillan was the father of Mrs. Ernie Martin who lives on Allen Street.

The account of a barn raising held the interest of the readers of the paper as it is noted as a typical historical fun day of that era. "Over 200 persons attended the barn raising on the farm of John Dunnof North Oxford" according to the report. T. R. Mayberry and M. T. Buchanan captained the two zealous teams and "Mr. Mayberry's men won a splendid race".

One of the barn raisers, Donald Sutherland, slipped off a beam to the floor sustaining slight injuries to his leg. Mr. Baigent remembers Mr. Mayberry, Mr. Buchanan and particularly Mr. Sutherland who was M. P. P. for south Oxford and eventually became a member of the Senate.

To the local farmers an item on the "Western mode of threshing" would be of interest. The article says that J. E. MacMurray adopted the Western mode of threshing 25 acres of oats on Monday. "The oats were drawn from the shock to the separator which was placed in the field and in less than four hours the work was completed.

"Mr. MacMurray realized nearly 1000 bushels which is considered a very good crop and he speaks very highly of the western way of threshing." Mr. Baigent noted that stook threshing was not general in this area until around 15 years later and then this method continued to be used until combines came into use in the 1950's.

The Star did not only offer its readers news and excitement from the local scene but endeavoured to keep the public abreast of current events by editorials on international situations and topics. An item referring to a bulletin issued by the general staff of the kaiser's army began with the words "Those who imagine that the German emperor and his military chiefs are constantly planning attacks on England or France and thinking of war in the near future will be rather puzzled by the bulletin."

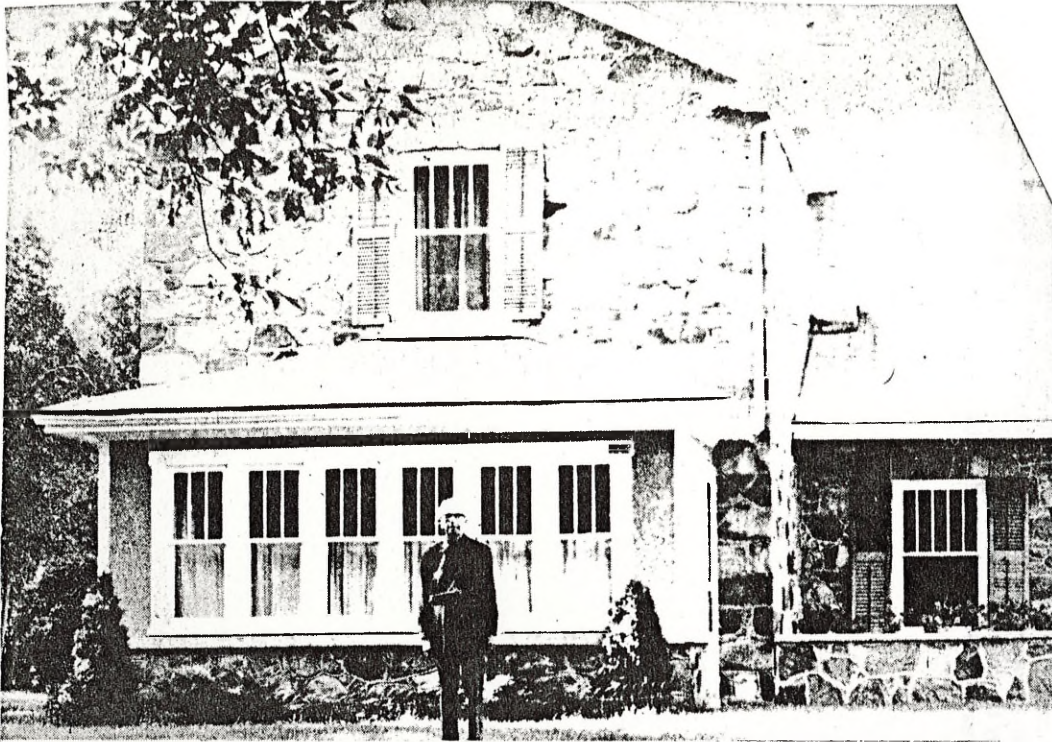
The paragraph continues "The bulletin declares that the next European war would be a veritable orgy of blood; that each of the powers concerned would loose 900,000 men, killed and wounded, if the war lasted as long as the Russo-Japanese conflict." The editorial ends with the statement "What the bulletin sets forth is as true, doubtless, as it is terrible, and the terrible truth should make for sanity, for peace, for care in diplomacy and international dealings." It took six more years for the holocaust in Europe to break loose.

Another of the international items in the paper told the story of the lose of the German Zeppelin airship which was struck by lightening and burned near Stuttgart on its maiden voyage. The items reads: "A thunderstorm arose (as a defect in the airship was being repaired) and to the dismay of the crowd of bystanders the giant airship broke from its moorings, exploded and burst into flames."

The absence of photographs in the Star gave the paper an entirely different appearance to a newspaper of today. Many of the advertisements for specific products contained etched designs and the only photograph in the publication was a poor reproduction of a head and shoulders profile.

INGERSOLL TIMES

August 4, 1974



John Baigent can still recall many of the original stores and their owners in the village. An area resident, Mr. Baigent stands in front of a stone house now owned by Barry Rutledge and at one time the home of Nelson McCarty. Mrs. Baigent's grandmother was married in the house.



Grace Paterson holds a photo taken about the same date as that on the Star edition. In the photo are Lizzie McCorquodale, Miss Paterson and Ethel Brown, of which a latter two are mentioned in the newspaper as having received their teaching certificates.

Thamesford dam may be saved

Thamesford--The people of this village are not accepting without a fight word that the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority is considering removing the land-mark dam from Thamesford. The U.T.R.C.A. has commissioned a study on environmental impact when the dam is removed.

Members of an ad hoc citizens' committee have been busy for the past two weeks drumming up citizens' support for their efforts by speaking at various club meetings in the village, to the senior citizen's group and to the United Church Women.

Members of that committee include Doug Hallard, Bob Fisher, Ted Wallace, Stu MacPherson, John Keasey, Fred Busch and Gerry Parsons. Saturday morning the committee assisted by about 30 other residents, including large representations from both the Lions Club and the Optimist Club, will be carrying on a massive blitz campaign, in an effort to obtain as many signatures as possible from residents for a petition which will go to Dr. Harry Parrott, Oxford MPP, Minister of Environment.

Hallard, acting spokesman for the group, said the purpose of addressing so many meetings was to ensure that they had a broad base of citizen support and commitment to the idea of retaining the dam and developing a green belt area around it. The purpose of the petition, he said, is to convince the U.T.R.C.A. to stop any attempt to remove the dam until the citizens have had a fair opportunity for local input and to learn whether retaining the dam as part of the park is a viable concept.

Hallard described the dam as being in "the sentimental heart of Thamesford". Drivers entering Thamesford from the east are accustomed to seeing it on their right as they drive over the bridge. He pointed out that it was originally the old mill dam and that there has been a dam on

that site for approximately 100 years. The present one was built in 1908 to replace the earlier wooden dam.

Hallard said they learned locally of the U.T.R.C.A. intention to remove the dam three weeks ago when the Authority advised Zorra Township of its plan to remove the dam, citing as the main reason

the fact that they believed the removal of that dam and one known as the Hunt dam in London would increase the pickerel spawning area in the Thames.

It is the committee's contention that the impact on the spawning habits of the pickerel by the removal of the dam would be minimal because the watershed

involved is so extremely small it is in fact almost a creek".

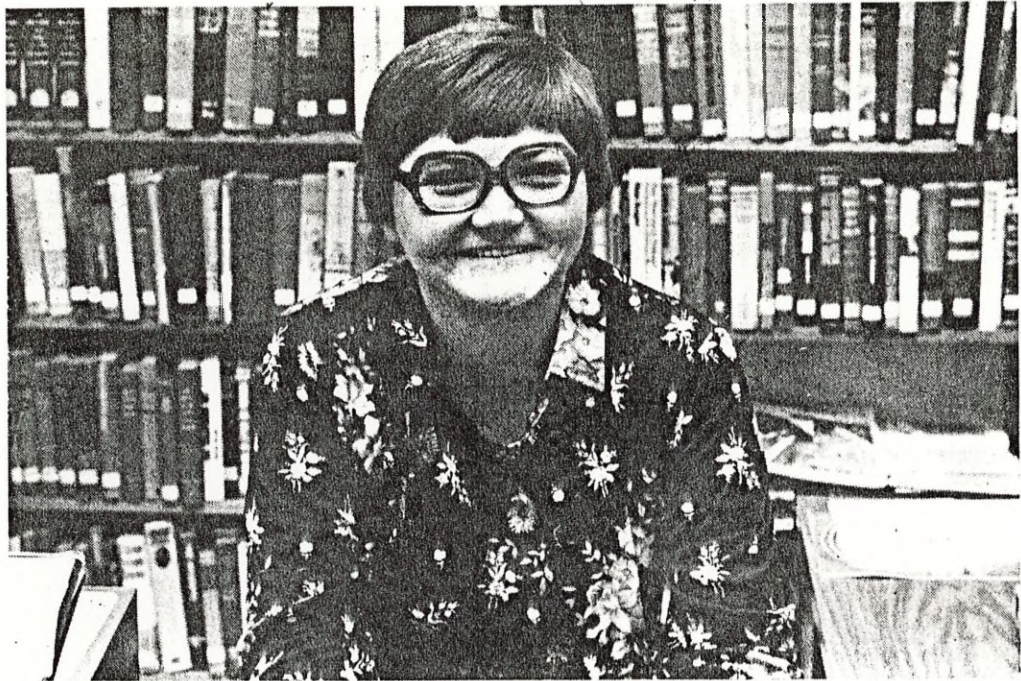
Copies of the petition to Dr. Parrott will also be sent of the U.T.R.C.A. and to Zorra Township Council.

Hallard said that ideally, if they can save the dam, an entire green belt or park area will probably be developed around it.

INGERSOLL

TIMES

April 18, 1979



NANCY VANGHEEL — is the new librarian at Thamesford's public library. The library will be open new hours effective October 2. See ad in this issue. (Staff Photo)

Nancy Van Geel Is New Librarian In Thamesford

Thamesford's public library has a new librarian, new hours and a new pre-school program. The new librarian is Nancy VanGeel, who takes over from the departing Jackie Burroughs. Mrs. Burroughs is moving out of the village.

Nancy will be keeping the library open at slightly different hours (see ad this issue) to accommodate her busy schedule. She's also secretary of the local Legion and president of the Thamesford womens' bowling league.

Yvonne Moore will be starting a pre-school story hour at the library on October 9. It will be held every Tuesday between 10.30 and 11.30 a.m. Mrs. Moore would like to see 10 to 15 children participate. So far only eight have registered, so there's room for more, she says. The program is entirely free.

Mrs. VanGeel, who started working at the library part time last September, has no professional training but has

always spent a lot of time in libraries, she says.

"I read a lot, too much, in fact. Sometimes I think I do nothing else but read."

Her new job mostly entails checking books in and out. The Thamesford library is administered by the Oxford County Library which, in turn, belongs to the Lake Erie Regional library system. All the purchasing is done through Woodstock, Mrs. VanGeel says. Every three months, a bookmobile comes and the whole fiction section is changed.

The story hour program is

being run by Mrs. Moore because she wished last year there was something similar for her own children. The program will include readings from books in the libraries, some finger and counting games and possibly some acting out of stories, she says.

"It's just a fun time for an hour. It's what I already do with my own kids."

If you would like your child to take part in the program, contact the library before October 9.

THAMESFORD TOWN CRIER

September 27, 1979

Rumormill grist says Thamesford should be proud

Story and photo by GREG ROTHWELL of The Sentinel-Review

Mills, the stately reminders of a bygone era, dot the rural landscape of Ontario, and many are still operating a century or so after their original construction.

For Jane Platt the Thamesford mill that dates from the 1840s has a stature all of its own.

"There's a monumentality and stateliness that separates it from the other mills of the area," she told the Oxford Historical Society Wednesday night.

Platt, an English instructor at the Woodstock campus of Fanshawe College, has done extensive research on the old flour mill, which is now a feed

mill operation, and she calls the huge four-storey, yellow-brick, masonry structure "an important part of our industrial heritage."

The regard with which the bright white Thamesford mill, with its picturesque pond and dam, is held by the community's citizenry was pointed out last month at a Zorra township council meeting.

The Thamesford Lions and Optimist clubs have proposed an extensive cleanup along the Thames River to develop riverside parks as well as waterfowl and fishing spots near the village.

Part of the project calls for the installation of floodlights to highlight the mill, the dam and the waterfall.

The architecture of the Thamesford mill is 19th century functional, Platt

said, but it has a number of distinctive characteristics.

Topped by fifth

The four storeys are topped by a fifth, "clear" storey, a narrow structure that houses a series of old wooden wheels and pulleys. Peeking from the front of that top storey is an *oculus*, a round window that apparently was more utilitarian than decorative. Like its Latin root, the *oculus* is like an eye peering over the village, providing a fine lookout for the workers.

The earliest operator of the Thamesford mill was John Finkle, a relative of Judge Finkle of Woodstock. Records show that flour was being manufactured there in 1874. The original structure was struck by lightning in August, 1898 and was rebuilt by October of that year.

"The building has not changed much since then," Platt told the society.

"But it's quite a tall building as mills go in this area."

Unlike many other mills, the heavy wooden beams inside the mill are supported by large wood bolsters. There are also strong floor joists.

Old photos of the village show that the mill was once the centre piece to the community's commercial section, along the Governor's Road to London. Adjoining the mill were a cooperage, or barrel-making shop, stables and grain elevators. There was also a large hotel nearby.

In 1917 the mill was purchased by George Hogg, and the Hogg family carried out a successful, and expansive, flour milling operation there until selling the business in 1970. Turbines were used to power the mill, instead of a water wheel, and locally grown soft wheat was brought in by wagons or sleighs, to be transformed into quality pastry flour. Hard wheat was imported from Manitoba.

Far and wide

The processed flour was distributed far and wide. It was transported to Nova Scotia, but was also exported to such Caribbean islands as Grenada, Trinidad and the Barbados.



JANE PLATT displays a photo of the turn-of-the-century rebuilt Thamesford mill.

SENTINEL
REVIEW

March 31, 1988

THAMESFORD

Thamesford Lions plan

\$1.4 million park project

By MICHELLE MUYLEAERT

The Lions Club are certainly packing a big roar in Thamesford.

The 75-member service club have a massive project underway involv-

ing the clean-up and beautification of the Thames River and its banks through town at an estimated cost of \$1.4 million.

The detailed plan includes major dredging of the river and an adja-

cent pond to eliminate algae build-up and the construction of islands developed from the river bottom to help control erosion.

Trees and shrubs will be planted to encourage wildlife usage and

eliminate the deadwater zone. A manicured fishing zone with interlocking edging will produce a clean break at the water's edge.

Once complete, the project will increase the size of the current park

area three times.

The Lions hope to make the long-stagnant waters usable for boating, fishing and waterfowl development.

"Everybody knows what kind of mess that is," Larry Taylor, Lions Club member and co-ordinator of the project said. "It has been neglected for a long time."

Esthetic features planned include a series of floodlights, spotlights on the dam and waterfall, foot bridges over the pond area, asphalt walkways, the removal of scrub brush to plant evergreens and public water fountains.

Taylor nixed initial reactions that the project was too ambitious for a small town service club. An employee of General Motors in London well-versed in project development procedures, he created a detailed proposal of the plan and began investigating the requirements of all the controlling authorities last November.

Officials, including those from the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, the Ministry of Transportation and various land owners were contacted for their input.

One major stumbling block, however, came at the municipal level. Zorra Township Council shot down a request to have all the involved land put into their name, action necessary to receive any government funding.

According to Taylor, council was concerned about the annual maintenance of the park area following completion. When Taylor calculated the maintenance costs at only \$8,500 annually, the vote was turned around eight to two.

"Their arguments virtually collapsed," he said.

Taylor is currently involved in the complicated process of creating ease agreements in order to transfer the land and acting as mediator bet-

ween the village of Thamesford and Zorra Township. He expects to make his fifth appearance before Zorra council in the near future.

Following this, he will call for consultant engineering studies on some of the more complicated project features.

A lot of responsibility for a man who joined the Lions Club only three years ago.

"I want to do what the people want to do," Taylor said. "This is a Lions Club project."

The first physical work to be done is the dredging of the mill pond adjacent to the Thames. This alone will cost \$300,000 to \$400,000. It is hoped the dredging work, the islands and a bottom draw off could save the pond that is gradually filling in with silt and vegetation.

Without intervention, the pond will become extinct within the next few decades.

Taylor will look toward provincial government funding for this work. He anticipates dredging will begin next August.

"It's anybody's guess," Taylor said of the start-up date. "We had originally hoped to start some minor things this year. We have to clean out the swamp and do other things afterward. It's a natural progression."

Funding will come from the provincial government and ambitious fund-raising projects within the community. Club members will cut costs by doing as much of the work as possible themselves.

Taylor is hoping for substantial support from Thamesford residents and business people whom he believes will be the major beneficiaries.

"A lot of people drive through Thamesford and don't realize it. There is nothing to attract their attention. When this is done it is going to look awful darn good. People will get out and walk around the park and wander into the businesses. It's going to do a lot for this town."

Celebrated Poet Bemoans Lost Chance To Visit Stalwart Scots in Region

By STANLEY J. SMITH

When the celebrated poet and writer, Dr. Charles Mackay (author of the Canadian Boating Song) toured through this district, in 1858, he bemoaned the fact that he, as a staunch Scotsman, did not have the time to visit the two Zorras. . . More commonly known throughout Canada as the roarin' Zorras. In one of his sketches he writes: "It was with regret that I left unvisited those rural districts of Upper Canada where the ultra-Highlanders turned out of their holdings in the north (of Scotland), have founded a new Scotland, and where they unfortunately, in an unwise love of their mother-land, cultivate the Gaelic to the exclusion of the English language, and where, with a more pardonable love of country, they keep up the sports and games, the dress and music of the Gael, and far more Highland in their habits and prejudices than the Highlanders at home."

About the time that Woodstock was being settled by ex-officers of the British army and navy (1834) there was a like movement of Scottish immigrants locating in East and West Zorra. The majority of these sterling Scotch settlers came from Sutherlandshire, Ross-shire and Inverness. Similar to the English settlement, of Woodstock, the sturdy Highlander had also served their king at Corunna, Salamanca and Waterloo. When they commenced to arrive, in the early thirties, the township possessed only a few settlers and squatters. Mostly United Empire Loyalists from the United States. . . The Hodgkinsons, Codys, Youngs, Coukes, Burdicks, Reeds, Gallows, Wilkersons, Rowells, Aldridges, Tafts and Karns. The latter family settled in 1820. One son, James Karn, was a general merchant, in Embro, during the early sixties, and one of our most prized possessions is Mr. Karn's "Day Book" which recorded every financial transaction between he, and the settlers, from 1861 to 1864, (The American Civil War was being fought at this period). The Day Book is probably the most complete history extant today, on the customs, habits and Scotch thrift, of the early Zorras. Little money was in circulation. Mr. Karn bartered dress goods, seeds, groceries, boots, hardware and building supplies, for wheat, oats, eggs, cordwood, hides, tallow, wood ashes and butter. His trade was enormous in the latter because he shipped the butter to Buffalo for cash, probably for the American army.

He opened his Day Book with several notations on the inner fly leaves: "Cow put into Hugh Matheson's Pasture on 20th, June, 1864," then in pencil he scribbled under-

neath, "Cow Calved July 15, 1864"; "Aug. 1864 — Amt. of money on hand belonging to Sabbath School, \$2.38. Amount remitted to treasury \$5.00 Balance owing me \$2.62." The fact that he did a good butter trade is in this item, "Agreed to take from Webster, Mount Elgin, 50 firkins of well dried ash to hold not less than 100 lb. each at 50 cents each. Half cash and half trade."

Apparently, there was no housing shortage in Embro, in 1865, he records, "Mr. Jamieson has rented the little house on Kincardine st. at \$2 per month payable monthly commencing March 1st, 1865." The Day Book also tells how Mr. Karn shipped eggs from the Zorras to Buffalo, "To 10 brls. containing 650 doz. eggs and 800 lbs. of oats. Shipped to J. B. Manning and Company, 72 Main street, Buffalo. Teaming expenses to Paris \$2.64." One will wonder why Mr. Karn did not ship from Woodstock on the Great Western Railway. This was because the GWR and the Buffalo and Goderich railroad had no connections, at Paris. It was cheaper to pay a drayman to haul direct to Paris, than to haul to Woodstock, than pay the CGW to Paris, and then tranship at the latter place, by another drayman, to place the eggs on the Buffalo train. Mr. Karn received cash for the eggs and oats.

How did the settlers pay the stipend of the Reverend Donald Mackenzie? "Paid cash to Rev. Mackenzie — 5 hides at 3 cents per lb — Tot. 350 lbs. — \$10.50; 10 doz. eggs at 7 cents per doz. 70 cents — Total \$11.20." The Reverend Mackenzie was a noted Zorra minister and according to Mr. Karn's book he was a consistent "Swapper" for tea, sugar and oatmeal.

Generally, Mr. Karn paid half cash and half goods for the majority of his sales. In the wintertime, he shipped frozen hogs to Buffalo. He paid 5 cents per pound for pork, but after the Civil War was over the price dropped to 3½ cents per lb. Other prices which he paid the settlers were: Barley 48 cents per bus.; cordwood 62½ cents; butter 14 cents, but after the war, 11 cents; Wheat \$1.56; Beef, hind-quarters, 5½ cents fore-quarters 4½ cents. Mr. Karn only bought beef during the winter months.

To prevent an argument, Mr. Karn always wrote down who ordered the goods and to whom the goods were given. "Mrs. Mulls. Gate. (Delivered or Demanded) son One pair pants, \$2.50," or he would write son, daug. self, aunt or order.

On an order, invariably, it was by some workman who ordered the goods and charged the account to the person having the work performed. One of the most poignant

is this, "Ordered by John Gunn, west end, for Widow Rose, 1½ cut nails, 5 yds. black Orleans, 12 yds. rope, 3 pr. handles, 30 screws, tacks, 4 yds. black cotton, one coffin plate. Cash \$1.00. Bal. \$4.50." In other words, the price of a coffin was \$5.50, plus the carpenter's labor and boards. The rope cost three cents per yard and it must have been used as "piping" or "corded edge" when the five yards of Orleans was cut up to cover the coffin. The word "Orleans" means "New Orleans" where the finest cotton came from. The next day, Widow Ross ordered, "1 black bonnet made and trimmed, \$2.87, weeds, 25 cents."

For out and out Scotch thrift. . . 'Twas the night before Christmas . . . "Dec. 24th, 1863, Angus McKay, one orange, 5 cents Worm-Candy 25 cents!"

If Milady wanted to dye her dress it would cost her 11 cents. "Mrs. James Pelton, Pink root, 5 cents, madder, vitrol, venetian red 6 cents." The Reverend Mr. Graham must have had a trying day without success, "Rev. Graham borrowed 5 cents for tollgate." the following day, "Rev. Graham paid loan. Cr. 5 cents." The smallest item on Mr. Karn's book was this, "Geo. Fowler's daught. 4 hair pins, 1 cent."

The book opens in pounds, shillings, and pence and closes in the decimal system. At this late date it is difficult to ascertain why. The decimal system was adopted in 1837. Mr. Karn did not change until January 2nd, 1865. He made a note, "Entered Jan. 2nd as 31 of Dec. 1864." His last customer in

sterling was, "Alex McPherson, ½ quire paper. S.B. ink 6d. tot. 1s 0d." His first entry under the decimal system, he made an error and the book does not show that he corrected the error, "Donald Ross, Teamster, (misses) 6 yds. S. stripe at 30 cents—\$1.80, 1 yd. factory cotton at 22 cents, Tot. \$2.00." Mr. Karn lost two cents on the transaction.

Next week it will be described how Mr. Karn differentiated between the Rosses, Munroes, Mirrays, McKays, and Mathesons.

ARRIVED ABOUT 1820

**William McKay Led Scots
In Settlement Of Zorra**

The Scottish spirit of self-reliance and industry was personified in William McKay, believed to have been the first Scot settler in Zorra. He arrived in the area in 1820 after working on the Erie Canal in the U.S.A. A captain in the Sutherland and Argyle Regiment, he was one of the few survivors of a bloody battle in the Peninsular War when his regiment was almost wiped out.

No red carpet was laid out for William McKay when he came to Oxford, in fact he was met by a solid wall of maple, almost impregnable to the axe. With Mother Nature for his only neighbour he proceeded to build a shanty for himself.

FOOTHOLD

After gaining a foothold in the new land, he sent word to the United States for his brother Angus to join him. By 1829 Angus returned to Scotland, but only to bring more hardy reinforcements from his native Sutherlandshire. Among them

were his aged parents whom he had tried to persuade to stay in Scotland. His mother had declared with spirit, "Na, na, where my laddies go, I'll gang, too."

The lure of land of their own drew these hard-working people from home Highlands to an even harder life but in Canada they were to be no longer vassals of the Scottish lords of that time. After a harrowing Atlantic crossing, when a ship's biscuit at times was almost a delicacy, the newcomers arrived in the fall of 1829.

HIGHLAND LIFE

The new settlers proceeded to make Zorra a wee bit of the Highlands. In the first year or two they held prayer meetings in the homes or meadows of the neighbours. But by 1832 they decided to build a church of their own. The church, made of logs, was built, with the cemetery still commemorated as the Log Church Cemetery. Mrs.

Isabell McKay, aged mother of William and Angus, was the first to be buried here.

In the early years the church was without pews or heating facilities. Planks laid on blocks made the rough seats for the worshippers. During the frigid winters the settlers reverted to holding services in homes where there was heat.

PLACE OF WORSHIP

In 1833 the Synod of Upper Canada made a grant of 50 pounds sterling to the Presbyterians of Zorra to provide a pulpit, pews and other necessities. The other half was put aside for building another place of worship when the need arose. By August, 1834, the first Presbyterian minister to preach in Oxford conducted the service in this church.

The McKay name was given to the first school, located on lot 8, concession 8, and considered the third school established in the township. By 1862 it was one of 10 schools in Zorra.

SENTINEL REVIEW
June 27, 1967

Zorra Township Mayor Wants To Help People

By DONAL O'CONNOR

Zorra is one of the largest townships in this part of the province.

Roughly square-shaped, it is bounded at its northern extremity by a line running from just south of St. Marys almost to Tavistock. To the south the boundary extends from east of Ingersoll to Woodstock.

The chief elected official of the township since the election of December 1978, has been Wallis Hammond.

Last week at his 550-acre dairy farm, a stone's throw from the township's southwestern boundary, the mayor explained that the township has approximately the same population as Ingersoll - and of its 8,500 residents, about 3,000 are urban or urban-oriented.

"We call it 'mayor' down here...for what it's worth," he quipped.

Mayor Hammond is unequivocal about his principal reason for getting into politics: to help people.

Before he became as actively involved as he is now, he says, he would go to meetings where he found "so many people didn't know of their rights."

"I was very concerned about this," he said. "One of the reasons I became interested in municipal work was to help people who didn't understand municipal law. I found some years ago that a large percentage of the general public knew very little about the operation of the municipality, its laws,

and in fact, their rights as taxpayers."

His interest in politics not withstanding, Wallis Hammond has been a farmer all his life and now manages the farm his father Leslie Hammond purchased in 1924. He manages the farm, he is quick to point out, but his three married sons David, Grant and Steven, "are the ones doing the work."

One thing is certain, he says, "I couldn't run the farm and fulfill the duties of mayor and county councillor without them."

One of the two younger boys, Larry, who is now in grade 13, is hoping to go on to veterinary college at Guelph. Kenneth in grade 11, is the hockey player in the family; and last in line is 15-year-old Carol.

The Hammond farm is something of a landmark on the local scene with its two massive navy-blue silos just off the laneway. The larger of the two (its 50 feet tall) holds about 140 acres of alfalfa hay, says Mayor Hammond. The smaller 60-foot silo, is used to store high-moisture corn.

All the feed produced on the Hammond farm is used on the premises - the Hammonds keep approximately 165 Holstein cows, normally about 140 of them, in milk production at a time. In addition they keep 20 to 30 Holstein steers.

Apart from politics and farming, Wallis Hammond has another major interest -

no less than the study of history. He is especially interested in the development of civilizations "going back to the early Chinese".

He attributes his interest in history to a teacher he had at school (whom he didn't particularly like) who taught a good course in medieval history.

But history is not just something to be read and forgotten. For Wallis Hammond there are lessons to be drawn.

He sees, for example, parallels, between certain trends today and the "moral decadence" which has brought down the great empires of the past. The mayor laments the decline of values in everyday life (and in politics).

"There is a tendency (for people in power) not to listen. There's a need to watch yourself to see that you don't become a little dictator," he notes.

Expressing a political philosophy which echoes 19th century British political philosopher John Stuart Mill, Mayor Hammond noted: "In a democracy the majority rules, but that majority must always be aware of the rights of the minority. His at times becomes very difficult and a compromise is quite often the final solution."

One leaves an interview with Wallis Hammond with a certain sense of assurance - with a feeling that the man is concerned with far more than his own personal interests and even that of Zorra Township.

TOWN CRIER

March 13, 1980

October 26th, 1973

The president, Rev. H.E. Wright, acted as chairman, and welcomed 71 members and friends to our meeting.

Moved by Mrs. Chisolm and seconded by Mrs. Woodall that the minutes of the last meeting be adopted as circulated. Carried. The Treasurer submitted her report which showed a balance on hand of \$827.74. This was seconded by Mrs. Chisholm. She also reported that the "Joe Boyle" night netted a profit of approximately \$170.00. The correspondence that had been received during the previous month was placed on the table for inspection by the meeting.

Mr. E. Bennett reported on the "Joe Boyle" night which proved to be a tremendous success with approximately 400 people attending. This was our first venture of this type and he suggested that we make it an annual event. He also stated a pamphlet was being prepared by Mr. Taylor of his talk.

A discussion followed on our bus trip with the following conclusions reached: To go to Waterloo and visit the MacKenzie King House and other places of historical interest with time for shopping. Date: December 1st and to leave Y.W.C.A. 9 A.M. return, around 4.30.

Mr. MacDonald introduced our speaker of the evening, Mr. Gordon King, his subject being "The History of East Zorra".

When the first settlers began to filter down through Western Ontario and started to carve out homes along the Thames River it was thought the time had come to make territorial divisions for better government - thus it was that first Oxford, then the various townships were formed. Zorra was the designated area extending from Concession 1 in the west to Concession 19 on the east. In 1845 Zorra was finally divided into east and west townships. Tonight we will look at a few of the more interesting bits of East Zorra history.

The Oxford Atlas of 1876 shows only Tavistock, Innerkip, Strathallan and Braemar. Today Braemar is only a memory and Strathallan almost in the same category. In 1874 the Grand Trunk Railway extended its line north from Woodstock to connect up with the Buffalo-Goderich line just north of Tavistock. From 1874 to 1933 two passenger trains north and two south each week day and one freight train each way continued to serve that area. Better roads were built and bigger trucks so the line from Hickson north was discontinued. And where is old Strathallan today? Gone is the carding mill, the two churches, the blacksmith, the doctor, the cheese factory, the school, the carpenter shop, the saw-mill, post-office, the carriage-shop and most of the twenty or so family homes. Even the ever popular hotel run by Mr. Lappin whose many varied enterprises almost made him a complete village in itself.

There are many homes in East Zorra that can be classed as century homes in so far as age is concerned. Our speaker produced the crown deed to his families farm dated 1824 and under great seal of George 4th, and is a land grant to one Denis Wolverton, yeoman. The fourth generation is now on this farm. There are 44 farms in East Zorra that qualify as having been in one family for the full one hundred years.

The Township of East Zorra was first settled on the west by a spill-over of Highland Scotch from West Zorra and Embro area and on the east and north by a spreading out of German, Lutheran and Amish Mennonites from the Wilmot, New Hamburg and Berlin (now Kitchener) area. All these early settlers were with one idea and aim to make themselves a new home, in a new land, keeping thriftiness and a love of church among their highest ambitions. With this in mind, it was never too long before we read of meeting houses of sorts being erected where worship services could be held regularly. Sometimes it was only a log cabin, sometimes one of the settler's homes, but always there must be a service of sorts - people occasionally walking six or seven miles to attend and walking home again, the service lasting almost all day. Today this southern part of the Township has been largely taken over by Dutch farmers, maybe because we have so long labelled Oxford with its many beautiful herds of holstein Freisan dairy cows as the Holland of Canada. They also have brought with them a love of church. At one time there were five Baptist Churches, two Presbyterian, one Lutheran, three Methodist, two Evangelical, one Amish Mennonite, three Anglican and for many years a service was held in a hall in Braemar of a nondenominational type.

Huntingford Anglican Church celebrated its 110 anniversary in 1954

Trinity Anglican Church was built in 1848.

A third Anglican Church was established in Innerkip in 1865.

Black Ash Presbyterian Church built in 1860 on lot 30, 10th line of East Zorra; Innerkip Presbyterian Church. The first Presbyterian Church in Oxford was built in Embro in 1832, and soon after that one in Princeton, then three in Woodstock.

Of the Baptist Churches the position of five former places of worship have been located - one in Strathallan, one on Lot 26, Con. 11, one on Lot 15 West half Con. 16, A Free Will Baptist on Lot 11 East half Con. 16 and the fifth, and the only one in use today on Lot 7 East half Con. 12.

Two United Churches, first known as Methodist Episcopal, were organized by Circuit Riders sponsored by Central Church Woodstock and began about 1846 - the one in Strathallan called itself Bethesda, while the one now known as Hebron held services in two locations, one Balls Chapel and the other Brickmans; St. Matthews Lutheran Church situated on Lot 31, con. 16 was built in 1849 with a seating capacity of 100 and a cost of \$200.00. The two Evangelical Churches, one in Tavistock, the other on Lot 26, con. 17 were for many years both active, but the latter due to internal dissention was forced to close and stood empty for a number of years until in 1936 it was purchased by the Amish Mennonites due to crowding in their existing church. The Tavistock Church was a very forceful and successful body over many years with many dedicated ministers and also many equally dedicated laymen and women. It is only in the past few years that the Evangelical Church has thrown in its lot with the United Church. Of all the denominations in East Zorra the Amish Mennonite Church has the greatest amount of available history. Last year on three successive nights at the Avon theatre in Stratford a full history of their persecution in Europe and immigration to the new world was presented to a full house and a repeat performance to an equally large audience was given on the last Thursday, Friday and Saturdays evenings of September this year.

The first families arrived in Zorra about 1837 and since there were not enough families to form a Church, they walked six miles to a meeting place in Wilmot Township in Perth. Here meetings were held every two weeks. By 1883 meetings were held weekly in Zorra. Sunday School was organized in 1903 and alternated weekly with church services. By 1933 church service and Sunday School have been held weekly.

In Zorra the first school was begun in a building erected for that purpose on the property of Huntingford Church and conducted by the minister simply because he felt something should be done. Before too long the district became more populated and schools were spaced throughout the townships as needs were seen. The first Strathallan school was not really in the village, but half a mile or so farther south, but this gave way to a school right in the village, until in 1885 a new school was opened in Hickson and what was to be known as the McLevin School or Officially No. 16 E.Z. was built on the S.E. corner of Lot 16, Con. 12. The number pretty well signified that there were at least that many public schools in East Zorra as well as the Public and Continuation School in Tavistock. In conjunction with school curriculum for many years a School Fair was held there the pupils were encouraged to show vegetables, supposedly cared for by themselves, as well as fruit chosen from the home orchard and maybe a calf groomed and trained to lead.

Of other educational activities the Literary Societies must not be overlooked. The Excelsior Literary Society centred around the Hickson area and was organized in 1911. It usually held its first meeting of the year on the Monday evening between Christmas and New Year, then on every Monday evening following until just prior to Easter when a gala banquet would wind up the season. Alternating every week would be a debate and prepared speeches with judges, a critic who loved to pick holes in grammar, proper enunciation, deportment and anything else they could think of. Every season it was customary to stage an amateur play which invariably was repeated in three or four neighboring communities. As well as the Hickson group there was the Drury Club, the very name dating its origin. Further to the east there was the 16th Line Society organized in 1924. At an earlier period in the life of Zorra it was customary to have house parties throughout the winter months.

And what of the future? With the prospect of Tavistock, East Zorra and a corner of North Oxford being amalgamated into a new regional area, will East Zorra, as we knew it disappear?

Miss Louise Hill thanked our speaker for a graphic picture of the history of East Zorra.

The meeting adjourned and a social hour followed.

.....
Chairman

.....
Secretary

The Earliest Settlement of the Townships of the
Zorras

W.A. Ross, Embro*

When the first territorial division of the province of Ontario was made in July 1792, the townships of the Zorras were unknown and unsurveyed. The first mention of them by Act of Parliament was in 1821 by which Act they were, together with the township of Nissouri, added to the County of Oxford. The townships were first surveyed by Shubail Park in 1820. From December 1797 until January 1, 1820, 69,000 acres of the lands of the Zorras were granted to persons, in parcels mostly of 100 and 200 acres.

Thomas Merritt and James Kirby were granted one thousand acres each. The people who were granted those 69,000 acres were United Empire Loyalists who left their homes in different parts of the United States to find new ones in the then Canadian wilderness. Ever since their trek into the forests of this district in

*Mr. W.A. Ross is the author of the well-known book History of Zorra and Embro: pioneer sketches of sixty years ago. (Embro, 1909)

1819 and 1820 they have been an important factor in the maintenance of peace, order and good government and have set an example of heroic endurance and indomitable persistence.

Two of the earliest settlers from the Highlands of Scotland were William and Angus McKay who arrived in the Zorras in 1820. William McKay before coming out to Canada was captain of a company of the Sutherland and Argyleshire Highland regiment. In one of the battles of the Peninsular War his company suffered severe loss in killed and wounded, while those who remained were granted their discharge. Some time later William and his brother Angus embarked for America. Upon arriving in Canada they secured work on the Erie Canal and after working there for some time William came to the Zorras. Setting down his trunk containing his few worldly possessions on the farm now owned by his grandson Fred McKay, Ninth Concession, six miles north-west of the city of Woodstock, he went to work with that determination which characterized those early Highland settlers. He built a log shanty and as there was no means of securing any lumber at that time a blanket was improvised for a door. Night after night Captain McKay was awakened from his sleep by wolves pawing at his blanket and bears and other wild animals prowling about his shanty. For weeks he was isolated on that bush farm many miles from his nearest neighbour. After having settled there for some time he sent word to his brother Angus who followed him and settled upon a hundred acres in the same vicinity.

The two brothers must have realized the great possibilities of this country, the opportunities and advantages open to settlers from the British Isles and elsewhere, who could become landowners themselves in time. We find that Angus returned to Scotland in the spring of 1829 and induced many Sutherlandshire families to come out to Zorra, among them his aged father, George McKay, and his mother, Isobel McKay.

The Sutherlandshire people arrived in Zorra in the autumn of '29 and settled upon farms in the vicinity and to the east of Embro. They were out only three months when Isobel McKay died. Her remains were the first interred in the old Log Church Cemetery. A visitor upon entering this historic cemetery and turning to the right

will observe a beautiful headstone. On it the inscription reads as follows: "Isobel McKay. Born April 15th, 1746. Died 1829; Aged 84 years." She was born the night before the battle of Culloden Moor. Her father was by trade a blacksmith and was engaged in straightening scythes for swords for the soldiers of Prince Charlie's Army during that ill-fated campaign.

These early settlers were almost compelled from necessity to leave their native land to escape the covetousness and tyranny of the landlords who were rapidly converting the Highlands into sheep farms and deer forests. During the depression following the decisive engagement of Waterloo, many of the crofters found it difficult to make ends meet as there was no market for their produce and those who could not pay their rent were evicted. The then Duke of Sutherland was not what we would call a compassionate man. In some cases the evicted crofters' houses were burned to the ground. On hearing Angus McKay's glowing account of the many advantages of this new country, particularly that of owning one's own land, the Sutherlandshire people were not long in deciding to follow his example and come to Canada.

Like all good Highlanders they were independent and paid their own way, those who were evicted being helped by their neighbours. They not only financed their own passage but brought many articles with them, such as dishes, books, furniture and many of them were able to pay for their crown lands.

It was far from being a pleasure trip across the tempest tossed Atlantic, ocean voyages lasting a period of twelve to fourteen weeks. They landed at Quebec and from there their boat was towed by oxen up the St. Lawrence river. They then entered the vast forests of Ontario, often with only a blazed trail to guide them to their destination, encountering wolves, bears and other wild animals, and finally settling upon their bush farms to face new and harsh conditions.

In Zorra township, a short distance to the east of Embro is the old cemetery with a model in log of the original church. This little church might well indeed be called a national historic site for from it have gone forth many of Canada's religious and educational leaders and distinguished missionaries to other lands. The ministries of the Reverend Donald McKenzie and Doctor Daniel Gordon in Zorra are religious landmarks in Canada's history.



REV. GEORGE L. MACKAY

Missionary From Zorra Founded Formosa College

By MARJORIE E. CROPP

In the city of Tamsui, in far off Formosa, there is a school called Oxford College, founded in 1882 by Dr. George Leslie Mackay of Zorra Township, and named in honor of his beloved home county of Oxford.

Dr. Mackay set sail from San Francisco in October, 1871, for China, the first overseas missionary of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. He stopped over in Formosa and fell in love with the beautiful island. When told by his hosts of the English Mission in the south that there was no Christian missionary of any denomination located in the northern part, he decided to go there.

At first, no one in Tamsui would rent him lodgings. They called him the "black-bearded barbarian".

At last a military officer rented him a building consisting of two rooms, built into the hillside overlooking the harbor. It had been intended for a horse stable. Mackay built a table and some shelves out of his packing boxes. The British Consul gave him a bed, and a Chinese neighbor, a pewter lamp.

He found the language very difficult, but one day he went for a walk over the hill and found some boys herding water-buffalo. At first, they ran, but in a few days they were fast friends. They were fascinated by his watch, and by the buttons used to fasten his clothes. They taught him Chinese.

STUDIED MEDICINE

Mackay had studied medicine for a time. The families of the herd-boys often suffered from malaria and he helped them with quinine. Many suffered from toothache. Mackay sent home for a complete set of dental tools and soon he was carrying his tools wherever he went. Chinese dentists at that time just stuck a sharpened stick under the tooth and pried it out.

The more literate Chinese soon began to come to his house to argue with him about the world in general, and their religions in particular. A fine young scholar became a Christian. His family disowned him. He moved in with Mackay, and the young Oxford man was no longer lonely in the strange land.

Mackay longed to visit the aboriginal people who lived in the mountains. The invading Chinese had driven these people into these almost inaccessible vastnesses, where they took their stand. It was war to the death between them.

No Chinese would take him. At last he met a mountain man who had been kidnapped as a child and brought up in a Chinese home. He agreed to guide Mackay. After several days travel they came to the foot of the mountains with a party of carriers bringing food and gifts to smooth their passage. The guide went ahead to make contact. A hunting party of mountain men finally agreed to lead them to the chief village.

At one point they stopped to listen and watch intently a bird overhead. "If it flies one way, they'll take us on", whispered the guide. "If it flies the other, they'll kill us all."

ORDERED HOME

They were received very coldly by the chief. As they were presenting their gifts, Mackay felt a hand at the back of his neck. Then a voice spoke excitedly, "He is our kin! He doesn't wear the queue. Mountain men never did. So Mackay was accepted, and often visited the people after that.

In 1879 the Church ordered Mackay home to rest and to tell them about his work. They were thrilled by his stories. Oxford County gave him \$6,215 to build a college. A woman in Detroit gave him money for a hospital and the two buildings were put up immediately upon his return to Formosa.

Dr. G. L. Mackay died in June, 1901 and is buried in Tamsui, Formosa. The story of his adventures may be found in "The Black-bearded Barbarian", and in "From Far Formosa." His life in Oxford County is written in "Zorra Boys at Home and Abroad".

Presbyterian and United Church people contribute regularly to the support of Oxford College.



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Middle-aged farmers who became world beaters in the tug-of-war marathons of the 1890s are: front row from left, William Munro, Ebenezer

Sutherland, non-pulling team captain; Robert McIntosh. In rear, Alex Clark, Robert McLeod, Ira Hummason. All were from around Embro.

MIGHTY MEN OF ZORRA

This powerful Ontario group tugged its way to the world championship

By Andy O'Brien
Weekend Magazine

I HAD TROUBLE finding the village of Embro (pop. 610) on the Ontario road map, but the mighty men who put it there 72 years ago this month have been impressively commemorated.

And well they should be. It was in 1893 that a heroic handful travelled 400 dusty miles to the Chicago World's Fair and brought home the tug-of-war championship of the world by out-pulling Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium and the United States.

You don't hear much of the tug-of-war these days, what with heart specialists seeing menace even in something as innocuous as the snow shovel, but the spectacle of strain was once in high favor. Between 1900 and 1920 it was part of six Olympic Games. It is still to be found here and there across Canada but nowhere as enthusiastically and vigorously as during the annual Caledonian Games in the township of Zorra.

The Mighty Men of Zorra took their name from the rural township in which they lived; it's centred around the village of Embro, 10 miles west of Woodstock and about 20 northeast of London.

At the gateway of God's Acre, the Embro cemetery, stands a massive cairn built of stone with a shaft of granite bearing a replica of men at a rope and a Gaelic inscription:

"Sìol na fear fearail."

Translated, it means "men of might who feared the Lord" and marks the graves of the world champs — and a dramatic saga of Canadian sport.

Boiled down, it's the story of five brawny farmers, all over middle age, and who all lived within walking distance of each other, who decided they could out-pull any other five men in the world and did just that. In their

own sport, they proved what the Canadian bobsledders did by winning an Olympic gold medal last year despite the lack of a single bob run in Canada, and what Canadian Doug Rogers did by winning an Olympic silver medal in Japan, the land of judo. There aren't any insurmountable sports peaks for Canadians determined enough to climb.

All five pullers, as well as the team captain, Ebenezer Sutherland, were more than six feet tall. Bob McIntosh, 215-pound anchor man of the team, used to amuse spectators at local fairs by showing that no two horses could pull him from position once he had dug in his cleats. Ira Hummason, 199 pounds, used to carry two 120-pound anvils at arms' length and toss them out on the street. Robert McLeod, also over 200 pounds, used to walk 4½ miles to church on Sundays, seldom laughed and didn't know his own strength. Alex Clark, 206 pounds, started as a farmer and became Embro mail carrier in later life. Billy Munro was the lightest, 188 pounds — a jolly bachelor and wealthy owner of several farms.

It all started as a spot of fun.

There were five men to a team, the end man being known as the anchor. Two teams would face one another, feet dug into pit holes four to six inches deep. At the middle of the rope hung a ribbon. At a given signal the teams would tug (often as long as half an hour) until one team pulled in enough rope to move the rope two feet in their direction.

The two teams were directed by captains, one on either side of the rope and facing their teams. A referee stood at the ribbon.

As the Zorras accumulated fame by victories over all teams within easy reach, an urge was born to test their strength further afield. The team had another Sutherland as president, James, whose wideness of vision had led to his election as Royal Chief of the Order of Scottish Clans of America and was to take him into the Cabinet of Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

President Sutherland heard that tug-of-war teams were drawing a lot of interest in New York State and were aiming at a competition "for the championship of North America" in Buffalo in 1888. But it wasn't easy to talk

the men of Zorra into leaving their farms for the time it then took to make the trip.

One has to understand that life had been a matter of the survival of the fittest for generations among these men of Zorra. They or their fathers had left the highlands of Scotland in an atmosphere of bitterness reflected in a verse from one of their songs, The Canadian Boatman:

"When the bold kindred in time long vanished,
Conquered the soil and fortified the keep,
No seer foretold their children would be banished,
That a degenerate lord might boast his sheep."

The verse is believed to have been directed against the Duke of Sutherland, who evicted the crofters, small landholders, from his estates in Scotland so his sheep could graze uninterrupted. Houses were burned and occupants often had pitched battles with the duke's soldiers. Migration of the poor highlanders followed.

The southwestern Ontario of that period was a harsh land. The pioneers accepted the stern strain on mind and muscle yet, despite intense privation, were determined their children should be educated and had a profound trust in "the kirk."

Despite the innate respect for "scholarship", as they called it, and their church, the influence of the New Canadians' harsh life naturally placed much stress on virility and feats of physical strength. Whisky was cheap and strong; it was consumed in great quantities, and disputes between highland giants often proved the highlights of Saturday night street excitement and Sunday morning scoldings by the "meenesters" who thundered about hell and damnation to men in the throes of hangovers.

Every minute of every working day, from dawn to dark, meant cents building into dollars in the slow, stern climb from destitution. Thus the appeal of president James Sutherland for a team to go to Buffalo had to take the form of a challenge to their manhood.

Finally, it was decided that the Zorras would go to Buffalo. The competition called for them to meet teams from Buffalo and Rochester.

They pulled the Buffalo team out of the contest with little effort. The final competition was the best two of three pulls. Their first pull was so rapid that the Rochester team called "foul."

The Zorras didn't argue; they simply suggested another pull. This time Rochester didn't protest — the team had been hauled right off its feet. The Zorras, in high jubilation, returned to Embro as North American champs with a silver tankard and a well-filled purse.

For two years the Zorras remained out of the limelight but it was said that time was needed to recuperate from the celebration. However, a challenge from the boasting Chicago Highland Association team could no longer be ignored.

The Zorras faced the doughty Chicago team at Elliot Park on Aug. 23, 1890, and lost. But there was a cloud over the result; the home team hadn't permitted the use of anchorman Bob McIntosh's customary belt — a harness circling his hips with two rings in front for threading the rope.

Defeated, the Zorras challenged the Chicago team to pull against them again at the Fall Fair in Embro the same year. The challenge was accepted.

It proved quite a show. Among the 4,000 who came to the village for the event was Sir Oliver Mowat, then Premier of Ontario.

The Zorras lost no time. In the first of the best-of-three pulls, they disposed of the Chicago men inside a minute. But the second was one of those savage tests that kept alarmed wives from watching. For 25 minutes they tugged under the broiling sun, each side allowing no more than an inch one way or the other. Then, from the tense crowd emerged a piper playing *The Campbells Are Coming*.

The Zorras reacted but the ribbon moved only a few inches. The piper, now joined by others, switched to *Cock O' The North* and the ribbon began moving steadily to the one-foot mark, the 18-inch mark and finally, after 35 minutes, the Zorras won. Both teams lay in a state of collapse for several minutes.

When the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 came up and it was announced that teams from Great Britain, France, Germany and the United States had entered, there was no debating in Embro as to whether or not the Zorras should go; now the affair was a



Jan, Jill McLeod, descendants of Zorra men, skip past cairn erected in memory of the team.

matter of world championship.

Reports of the day commented on the "farmer" look of the Canadian team as compared with the nattily-uniformed opposition. But pull they could, dismissing all the teams from overseas without effort. On July 4 a crowd of 5,000 gathered to see them pull for the world's title against the Chicago Humboldts, who outweighed them by an average of 25 pounds.

There was a half-hour wrangle under the sizzling sun about McIntosh's anchor belt. The Zorras in turn refused the Chicago offer of a substitute belt. Finally, with tempers on edge both ways, it was agreed to pull without any anchor belts.

The Zorras won the first pull in six minutes.

The second pull was shifted to the opposite corner of the field on a hard

surface. This gave the heavier Chicago team an edge and it won in two minutes.

The third and final pull, this time on black earth in the shade of the grandstand, is said to have been the greatest in the history of the sport.

The slightest falter on either side cost an inch or two. The captains had to judge periods for steady pull and periods of brief rest while leaning on the ropes and retaining "pull." There is no record of the exact number of minutes in the Zorras' victory pull but wild cheering greeted their win and they chaired their oldest member, Ira Hummason, off the field.

All but Hummason, who died in his 65th year, lived to be 80 or more.

The moment of glory has never been forgotten in Embro although it took 44 years before the Caledonian Society of Embro finally completed the cairn which is so massive its foundation sinks five feet into the ground. It's doubtful whether even the Mighty Men of Zorra could ever budge it an inch. ◀



MIGHTY MEN OF ZORRA TUG OF WAR CHAMPIONS IN 1893

Tug-Of-War Team World Champions

By GEORGE HAYES

A short way north of the village of Embro on the right hand side of the road you will see a cairn. Inscribed on a plaque imbedded in the cairn are the names of six men with their height and weight — Alex Clark, 6' 2" 206 lbs.; Robert McLeod, 6' 2" 197 lbs.; Ira Hummason, 6' 2" 199 lbs.; William R. Munro, 6' 1" 188 lbs.; Robert McIntosh, 6' 2" 215 lbs.; and E. L. Sutherland, captain.

These were the Mighty Men of Zorra, the only team ever to bring the County of Oxford a world championship.

In 1893 they represented Canada at the Chicago World's Fair and won the tug-of-war championship by outpulling Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium and the United States.

This team is a legend and it's hard to believe that they weren't giants of men when you consider their heaviest puller was McIntosh at 215 pounds who was the anchor man.

THE ZORRAS

The Zorras started by winning at Fall Fairs and Scottish meets close to home but after defeating everything in the vicinity, they had to find new fields to conquer and went to Buffalo in 1888 to compete for the championship of North America.

They pulled teams from Buffalo and Rochester and returned home with a beautiful silver trophy and the purse for winning the North America cham-

pionship. The Rochester team protested foul on the first pull so the Zorras suggested they pull over again and won easily.

The Mighty Men pulled every team they met but a team from Chicago Highland Association challenged them and they met on Aug. 3, 1890. They lost to the American team but immediately challenged them to a return contest at the Embro Fall Fair.

The Chicago team accepted the challenge and before 5,000 spectators on a hot September afternoon and with the Premier of Ontario present, Sir Oliver Mowat, they got their revenge as they pulled the Chicago team twice — the first in less than a minute but the second pull took them over 35 minutes.

When the Chicago World's Fair committee announced it was to hold a world championship tug-of-war contest the Zorras accepted the challenge. They were a proud group of men and they wanted to show the world they were the best.

They called them the "Farmer team" in Chicago. But the farmers proved they were the strongest in the world. On July 4, they pulled against the Chicago Humbolts and won two out of three pulls. Now they were recognized as world champions.

These were real men. Every one of them except Hummason who died in his 65th year, lived beyond the age of 80.

Outpulled all comers at '93 world's fair

By Richard Houghton

Farming the rugged land of Oxford County in the 1800's was an occupation which took incredible physical strength, endurance, stamina, and the shrewdness to work with the elements of nature.

Clearing farmland with no more than axe, and bare hands, and plowing land behind a horse were tasks that demanded amazing physical capabilities from those pioneers.

Thus it is not too amazing that pioneers from Zorra township should excel at the most demanding physical sport known to man.

And without a doubt that is what tug-of-war is. Last spring after the football season was over, the two Super Bowl teams were brought together in Hawaii for a re-match at tug-of-war. After grunting and toiling in the sand for almost 20 minutes the Pittsburgh Steelers lay exhausted and defeated, unable to move. When he was finally able to be interviewed, Steeler offensive back, Franco Harris admitted that the tug-of-war was the most physically demanding sport he had ever encountered. He said it left him more physically drained than a professional football game.

This is the sport which became so popular in the days of the pioneers when a farmer had to have a good physique just to survive. And this was the sport the brawny men of Zorra excelled at.

In fact, they did so well that the Zorras tug-of-war team, who took their name from the area they farmed outside of Embro, won the world championship at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893.

All but one of the team were Scots, born in Zorra Township. They began pulling together at local fairs in 1881, were champions of Canada before the 80's were out and won top honors for North America at Buffalo a year or two later.

Most of them were descendents of Highlander families, who were evicted from their homes in Northern Scotland, in order to set up large hunting and sheep raising estates for those higher up in the feudal system there. The hardships endured in the overcrowded glens were enough to kill off any weaklings, and the boatloads who eventually migrated to Canada were a hardy race.

As well as physical fitness, these immigrants endowed their offspring with the fighting spirit of the Highland Scots.

It is said the Zorras were all big quiet men, all around six feet tall, and all around 200 pounds. They all owned that certain self-respect, yet humility and love of God, that comes from taking your living from the land. They also had a traditional Scottish inclination for plain living and hard work.

The team consisted of five men pulling and a captain who kept them organized and pulling in time.

The captain who organized the Zorras was Ebenezer Sutherland, who was over six feet tall, but went by the name of Little Abe, because he had a cousin Ebenezer who was heavier. He was an excellent organizer, who was prominent in municipal affairs and became Warden of Oxford County.

Alex "Sandy" Clark was a mild sort of man, who later became a popular mail carrier around Embro. He was six foot two and at 206 pounds was the fattest man of the team.

Ira Hummason was the only member of team who was not a Scot. He was a son of a United Empire Loyalists who migrated to Bruce County. He left Bruce County as a young man to come and build his home in Zorra.

Hummason was six foot two and weighed 199 pounds. His claim to fame was a feat of taking two anvils, weighing about 120 pounds each, grasping them by the horns with his hands, and

carrying them across the blacksmith shop at arms' length and tossing them out the front door into the street. He was the oldest man on the team at 51 years when they pulled for the world championship.

The smallest man on the team was William Munroe who at six foot one, weighed only 188 pounds. He was a wealthy bachelor, with a quick mind for driving hard bargains in livestock deals. He was a popular man at community barn raisings where his muscles came into their own when pike poles were used to raise the heavy sections which framed older barns.

Robert McLeod was the only member of the team who was a total abstainer. He stood six foot two and weighed a robust 197 pounds. He possessed a strong reverence for the church and observed worship with his family every morning before breakfast. When roads were bad in the spring he would walk four and a half miles down the railway tracks to attend Sunday services at Knox United Church in Embro.

His grandson, Bruce McLeod, still operates a farm on the original homestead just west of Embro.

Robert McIntosh was the strong man and anchor for the team. He had been known to demonstrate at local fairs that two heavy horses couldn't pull him from position once he was set in his cleats. He was six foot one and weighed 215 pounds.

The team was also assisted by having a president to arrange contests for them. James Sutherland filled the role ably. He was a member of the Laurier cabinet from 1892 to 1904, and also a native of Zorra.

The team first attracted attention in the 1880's when a sort of friendly rivalry was established with a team of larger men from Dereham township, who were beaten in a pull in Ingersoll in 1881 and for the next four years in a row.

A number of contests took place in Woodstock, on one occasion with Brantford men, on another with Lucknow, and also with an East Zorra team. On each occasion the Zorra men drew their opponents across the line.

Those mighty men of
Zorra
Times Dec 30 '75

Mr. James Sutherland, president, through his connection with several Highland Associations, became aware of several tug-of-war teams that were causing considerable sensation in New York State, chief among them were a team from Buffalo and one from Rochester.

Jim Sutherland took his team to Buffalo and they succeeded in beating the team from that city and next came up against the Rochester team. The Zorras quickly surprised the Rochester team on two straight pulls and came home with a silver cup and a well filled purse.

For the next few years the Zorras engaged in only a few local pulls, but in 1890 the Chicago Highland Association challenged them to a contest to take place at Elliot Park, near Chicago on August 23. The Zorras took up the challenge and went to Chicago for the pull.

However when they arrived the official ruled that Anchor Bob McIntosh could not wear the leather belt around his waist that he was used to. It was customary for the anchor to wear a leather belt through which he looped the

rope. The official substituted another belt which McIntosh later said cut his hips during the pull. Also the Zorras were not accustomed to the starting system used there and were defeated quickly.

Many Canadians supporters flocked around the Zorra team, urging them to challenge the Chicago team for a square pull, to take place in the County of Oxford at an early date.

This was arranged and it was decided the pull would take place at the West Zorra and Embro Agricultural Society fall fair on October 10, 1890.

On the afternoon of the tenth about 4,000 people had congregated at the Embro fair-grounds for the contest. The Chicago team felt confident of another easy victory, as they had won at home.

When the teams were ready for the pull Colonel Munroe, gave the signal for starting. In less than one minute the Chicago men were pulled over the line. The next part of the contest however was a most remarkable test of strength and endurance. Both teams got fairly set in their pit holes, and for 25 full minutes it was hard to say which team was gaining any advantage.

Suddenly an unknown onlooker had an idea, and a few stray pipers were hustled out of the crowd and were marched up and down the line playing the fighting hymn of the Scottish race. It is said the bagpipes roused the Scottish blood of the Zorra team, and immediately they began to pull on the rope inch by inch, until at the end of the 35 minutes they had gained the required distance to win a record pull.

The next match with the team from Chicago took place in 1893, at the World's Fair, where the Zorras pulled against teams representing Canada, United States, Great Britain, Belgium, France, and Germany. All these teams eventually were beaten and championship of the world came down to a match between the Zorras and the Humboldts of Chicago.

An account in the Stratford Beacon of that year said that compared to the Humboldts the Zorras were decidedly rural in appearance. They appeared to be jaded. The 400 miles of the ride made them feel weary. The thought of ripening grain and making hay while the sun shone added to their discomfort.

Everything was ready for the tug when the captain of the Humboldts objected most vigorously to the belt worn by Bob McIntosh. They had hoped that the same tactics by which they won before would be successful this time, but Captain Sutherland would not agree to discarding the belt for a substitution. The wrangling went on for half an hour before it was mutually decided that the pull would

take place with neither anchor wearing a belt.

In the first tug, Anchor McIntosh secured the needed two feet in just six minutes and the Canadians had drawn first blood.

The second pull was a big disappointment to the Canadians as it took place on the opposite side of the field. The Zorras were placed on hard ground where they could not get footing, and had the sun directly in their eyes.

For the third pull the location was again moved and this time, both teams got good footing. Each team eyed its opponents like cat and mouse. The ribbons moved an inch maybe less. Then another heave, a resting on the rope, a mighty cheer from the stand, and a "pull together boys", from Captain Sutherland, and the tug was over. The cup valued at \$200 was theirs, as also was the world championship.

The Zorra's oldest member, Ira Hummason, was carried from the field.

The five men of Zorra never pulled together again, and after the turn of the century tug-of-war more or less lost its place in the world of sport.

Now a cairn stands in memory of the determination of those five farmers of Zorra on the Embro road north of town in front of the cemetery. The cairn is built of stone with a shaft of granite and bears a replica of men at a rope and the Gaelic Inscription "Siol na fear fearail". Translated "Men of might who feared the Lord."

A suitable tribute to the humble armers who earned it.

Quaker Oats Founded By Immigrant To Zorra

The hunger of good Scotsmen for a feed of fish was a stepping stone in formation of the internationally known Quaker Oats firm. It was John Stuart, a Scottish immigrant to Zorra, who began trading oats for fish and then decided he would need to mill those oats.

John Stuart left his home in Duffton in 1849 and had a stormy trip to Canada, being shipwrecked off the coast of Newfoundland where, with his wife, he was stranded for several months before finally arriving in Zorra.

OATMEAL

With a canny knack for business, he began buying oatmeal from the James Munro mill and taking it to the Goderich area where he traded the grain for fish. Returning to Zorra, John Stuart sold the fish to the local Scots who hankered for a meal of the delicacy not easily available then in Oxford.

The business continued for some time and Stuart took a greater interest in the oatmeal side. Moving to Ingersoll in 1852, he bought a mill on Canterbury Street. Eventually, with his sons, he sold out and ventured into the United States where he built a mill at Cedar Rapids Iowa.

PACKAGING

Operating in partnership with George B. Douglas, the former Zorra resident opened another mill in Chicago. The company expanded, joining forces with two other firms in the late 1880s.

Packaging was an austere matter in those days — just put the product in any ordinary bag and sell it. But eye-catching wrappers began to be a matter for consideration at the turn of the century and a bright new bag was devised for the oatmeal. Then the question arose of a suitable name for the firm

and the product. One of the merged firms was The Quaker Milling Company and this provided the key to a name that would denote sturdy trustworthiness. The famed Quaker Oats Company was born.

The Stuart family had continued to serve the business and the public and a high point in family distinction was reached when R. Douglas Stuart, a grandson of John Stuart, was named United States Ambassador to Canada during the presidential term of Gen. Eisenhower. In 1953 the young Mr. Stuart visited the home town of his grandparents in Canada and opened the Zorra Highland Games.

In looking over the names of the townships of Oxford, most of them have a link with the homeland of the first settlers of the township concerned. But the name Zorra can claim no ties with the English, Scotch, Irish or Americans or even the Germans who were among the first settlers. Some will say that this name comes from the Bible, in Judges XIII - 2 - Zorah, the birthplace of Samson. This might fit very well as Zorra has been the birthplace of at least one tower of strength in Rev. George McKay of Formosa who was born and raised in the Zorra. Others claim that the name Zorra is Spanish.

An early governor of Canada, Sir P. Maitland from 1818-1823 saw service in Spain under Wellington. It is presumed that he would have some say in naming new townships and he may have compared the country to a female fox which is what the name means in Spanish. If this is the case I wonder if the governor ever visited the township as there is nothing in her broad acres that in any way suggested that it was at anytime as deceiving as a female fox. Or was he referring to a Zoril which is an animal of Africa which belongs to the musteline family of mammals which include weasels, badgers, otters, mink and kunk - all of which were undoubtedly seen by the early surveyors. What is your opinion?

'ZORRA HISTORY'

The history of Zorra is not as old as other parts of Oxford as the survey team did not start working until 1820 and in the first assessment when, Zorra, Missouri and West Oxford were still one unit there was one taxable abode in Zorra and that belonged to Alexander McGregor. The first deed recorded was for Lot 12 concession 15 which was owned by Stratten Rowell who had 200 acres. This deed was recorded June 10, 1822. The second deed was recorded June 11, 1822 to Edwin Secord - no doubt some relation to the Secords found in the Lakeside and Mt. Marys area and a relative of the Ingersoll family. He never lived here.

Not much is known of the early settlers who settled away from the communities of Innerkip, and Strathallen but in Shenstone's Gazetteer of 1852 Huntingford is mentioned and at Huntingford we find the "Farmer House" which was at that time considered the best house in the county. This property was obtained from the Crown in 1832 and consisted of 400 acres on lot 14 and 15 concession 12 of Zorra.

It was purchased by Phillip Shadwick who sold it to Arthur Farmer in the early 1850's. The house was built shortly after this. Farmer was a man of wealth and no expense was spared. The main house of brick and some are of the opinion that the bricks were brought up from Hamilton, by team. The roof, which is still on the house,

now known as "Craigowan" is of metal construction and was brought from England. A large hall opened into the sitting room panelled in birdseye maple. The banquet size dining room is one in walnut. The main part of the house is still in its original form while the servant's quarters, the kitchens and laundry along with a large glassed-in veranda have been taken down. Upstairs were six large bedrooms and a dressing room off the master bedroom.

The panelled curved staircase in the old country style extends upward from the main hall. There was a form of communication used to summon the maids and butlers similar to that still found in English mansions. You would pull a cord which would vibrate a spring with a bell on it in the kitchen. Farmer never enjoyed the fruits of his labors for long as he sold out to John Dunlop about 1859, reportedly due to financial difficulties. Dunlop retained it until his death in 1901. He made some improvements but preferred the southern states to this mansion during the winter months.

CHURCH SITE

Prior to the coming of the Farmer family, an English Vicar sent his gardener Joseph Turner out to Canada to purchase land on which to settle his son, Henry Huntingford as a farmer. Turner chose lots 12, 13 and 14 concession 11 of Zorra as his choice and Thomas Huntingford purchased the land on Nov. 18, 1833 - 600 acres in all. Henry Huntingford arrived and a cabin was erected. After three years of pioneering, he returned to England and brought his bride out.

In the early fifties, he also built a fine home later known as the Donaldson home. Thomas Huntingford set aside one acre of lot 14 as a site for a church and with funds raised by himself in England had a frame church built in 1839. Service was conducted here first by Rev. William Betteridge of Woodstock who on alternate Sundays would conduct service at Eastwood. In 1844 the youngest son of Thomas Huntingford, Edward conducted service here and he conducted the first recorded marriage here between Adam Shadwick and Ester Martin on July 1, 1844. He stayed for one and half years tending to his flock of 40 parishioners.

In 1836 Frederick D. Fauquier came to Canada from England and purchased land at lot 16 concession 11. Edward Huntingford on his arrival saw all the qualities of a minister in this lad of 19 and persuaded him to study for the ministry. In October 1845 Bishop Strachan ordained him, appointing him missionary to Zorra. He remained here for 28 years as minister. He did not forsake his farm and in 1852 at the local fair had the prize winning grade cow and the best pen of sheep. He is credited with having the first daffodils and tulips seen in these parts. Besides his parish and his farm he was one of

Zorra

the first school trustees at the Dunlop School. In 1873 he was appointed Bishop of Algoma.

The school now known as Dunlop school or school section 16 East Zorra was originally located at Huntingford churchyard. The log structure was erected of logs in 1844 with 62 on the roll. It also served as a Sunday school and a church hall. This was the only school for 30 years when the new school was built on the site of the present school (1874). The last church meeting was held here in 1885. The first teacher at the log school was Thomas Cross.

A second school opened at Strathallen in 1855 and for some years there was a controversy as to the boundaries for the schools which was finally settled by arbitration. Today the Strathallen school has been replaced at Hickson while the Dunlop school still carries on.

FIRST SCHOOL

In 1847 Abraham Dolson deeded the southwest part of lot six, concession 11 for a school. The first school was frame and due to the fact that there was a toll gate erected at this corner, it became known as the Toll-gate school. The frame school burned and it was replaced by a brick building. A new school was erected in 1905 and in 1906 a wind storm removed the roof of the new school and damaged the building extensively.

In 1835 Mrs. Lillian Rose began a day school and a Sunday school in her home on lot 7, concession 10 and in so doing she became the first woman teacher in Zorra. There being no school here Mrs. Rose undertook to teach her children as she worked in the kitchen. Her neighbors persuaded her to teach theirs also. No one had any money but they sent contribution to her table to make up for that which she did not have time to do. They also made a bee for such chores as the early blanket washing, soap making and wood was always available for her fireplace.

Books, slates and pencils were writing. Mrs. Rose was touched scarce in the 1840's. One day, one little fellow was distressed because he had no slate and no means of getting one. One day he arrived with a large fungus on whose white underside he had neatly made figures and by his earnestness and resourcefulness and allowed him to use the fungus for his slate. This type of slate became popular and when completely utilized they made good fuel in the fireplace.

The Sunday school was more largely attended as the parents and the older members of the family also attended. The Sunday school was in Gaelic, the tongue of their homeland. Most of these settlers in this part of Zorra were from Scotland. The day teaching was done in English as Mrs. Rose claimed that even though Gaelic was the

language here and French was the language in Lower Canada, English would become the national language and therefore discouraged the use of Gaelic in her school room.

In 1843 Squire Harrington gave a frame house for a school on lot 11, concession 10 after the Rose family had moved over to concession 3 and Fraser took over the teaching duties.

In the early days of Zorra one of the most influential men was John Harrington, commonly called Squire Harrington. Squire Harrington came from Vermont, U.S.A. in 1844 and took up land now known as Willow Lake Park. The original grant was for 200 acres. The squire was a very public spirited man and held many political positions including warden of the county in 1860. In local enterprises, a woollen mill was operated on the farm. It was run by an artificial lake supplying the water which was the forerunner of the present lake at the park. At the time that the village of Springfield was looking for a name for its post office, Francis Hincks, the one-time prime minister suggested that the name of Harrington be used in honor of Squire Harrington for the work he had done in the county.

With the coming of the Canada Company and the opening of the Queens Bush country, steps were taken to open a road connecting Woodstock with Stratford and Goderich.

The route through Oxford was laid out along the 12th line of Zorra and was known as the Woodstock and Huron Gravel road in 1849. In order to make the road self-supporting tollgates were erected and a fee was charged to all who used it. There was a toll gate erected at the corner now occupied by the toll gate School. Seven cents was the fee charged for the passage of a buggy drawn by a single horse. With this being the main road it was not long before post office began to appear. The South Zorra post office was opened at Huntingford in 1852 and the Strathallen office was opened in 1865.

AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL

In 1893 steps were taken to form an agricultural school in Zorra. Charles B. Young, an English gentleman conceived the idea of a school of agriculture where young men from England could come to Canada and study farming as it was done in Canada before starting up on their own. In April 1895 Squire Young purchased lot 6, concession 13 of East Zorra and placed Allan Young his cousin as first superintendent. Later an addition was added to the house and up to twenty students could be accommodated. For some time it was a worthwhile endeavor but following the war of 1914-18 interest started to fall

off and it was closed. At present it is owned by Mr. Fay Chong, one of the few Oriental farmers in Oxford.

In 1889 while James Anderson, the reeve of East Zorra was Warden of the county a move was started to purchase a county farm known in those days as a House of Refuge. After much discussion, it was agreed in 1891 to advertise for land. The stipulations were that it was not to be more than two miles from a railroad. Fifty nine offers were received and on the 14th ballot, the farm of J. Virtue was accepted, it being lot 3 concession 10 of Zorra. The price being \$60 per acre for 100 acres including a frame house and barn. Cuthbertson and Fowler were given the contract to prepare plans for a home to accommodate 100 inmates at a cost of \$15,000 and Thomas McClay of Woodstock received the building contract. His tender being the lowest at \$11,997.

There were 21 applications for manager and matron. One applicant had a petition containing 422 names included a member of parliament recommending him for the position. He did not get the job. Mr. and Mrs. Robert McDonald were appointed manager and matron on January 1, 1893. The appointment coming in the 11th ballot of the county council. Mrs. McDonald died on January 27, 1893. The positions were then filled by Mr. and Mrs. Oliver J. Clark in March, 1893.

On March 13, 1893 the home was ready to receive residents and Mr. James Leek was the first to be admitted. The total cost of the undertaking was \$28,500. Since its opening there have been over 1,300 admitted to the Home.

Although the Zorras made many contributions to the defence of Canada, one of her most publicized fetes was that Zorra had the only casualty in Oxford County during the Fenian Raids. Malcolm McKenzie, a resident of East Zorra, was attending the University of Toronto. Here he joined the Canadian Army. With the Raiders invading Canada he was under the command of Lt.Col. Booker who was ordered to engage the enemy and drive them from

Canadian soil. The Fenian Force was reported at 800 strong and were encamped at Ridgway near Fort Erie. The opposing forces met on June 2, 1866. The total casualty list of Canadians numbered in Ridgway with remembered in Ridgway with a plaque which is placed in the Ridgway Memorial Church.

To honor her fallen hero Oxford CoCounty started a fund to raise a memorial for McKenzie and in 1868 a 15 foot memorial was erected in the Presbyterian cemetery at Woodstock in his honor. Steps are being taken to restore this monument and have a historical folder published in order to familiarize the present population of another hero of Oxford of yesterday.

By ART WILLIAMS

The first parliament of Upper Canada was convened on October 15, 1792, at Newark (Niagara) and met under a tree. This parliament lasted until June 5, 1796, and the second parliament was from July 3, 1797, to July 4, 1800. From early records we find no mention of a representative from Oxford, Norfolk and Middlesex due to the lack of number of settlers in the district.

The third parliament convened on July 9, 1801, and was dissolved on March 9, 1804, and in this parliament we find Oxford, Norfolk and Middlesex represented by the Hon. D. W. Smith who was elected at the election held at Averill's Mills (now Waterford) and he was opposed by Richard Cockwell. James Walsh was returning officer. When the parliament met, D. W. Smith was appointed speaker of the house. It was during this parliament that the Representative Act was passed. The fourth parliament was from March 6, 1805, until March 16, 1808. The election of a representative for Oxford, Norfolk and Middlesex was held at Turkey Point with Benjamin Maljory and Samuel Ryerse being the candidates, Mallory being

elected. During this parliament Norfolk was granted a representative of its own, Oxford and Middlesex still being united. This being the first indication of this part of Ontario being settled and there were 119 sitting members in this parliament March 9, 1809, to March 6, 1812, against 116 in the previous.

The fifth parliament was from March 9, 1809, to March 6, 1812, and we have no record of a member for Oxford and Middlesex, but when the sixth parliament met on August 5, 1812, until April 1, 1816, Malon Burwell was the member and was also a member in the seventh parliament from February 8, 1817, to March 9, 1820. It was during this parliament that an act was passed allowing each county with a population of 1,000 or more to a representative of their own and with 4,000 of a population two representatives. Oxford, having a population of 2,425 was entitled to one representative.

REPRESENTATIVE

When the next parliament met on April 14, 1821, to January 19, 1824, Thomas Horner was the representative for Oxford. This election was held at the old "Canfield Place" in East Oxford. Thus after 29 years, Ox-

ford had at last come into its own and was duly represented in parliament by a man with all the interests of Oxford at heart as he was actually the father of Oxford being among the first to settle here.

By the time the ninth parliament met on January 7, 1825, to May 7, 1828, the population of Oxford had increased to such an extent that it was entitled to two members. The election was held at Martin's Tavern, Beachville, and Thomas Horner and Col Charles Ingersoll were elected. Once again the voters showed their respects by choosing another man who had done much for the county.

It was from here on that the voters became aware of their responsibilities and keen interest was shown at all elections and as a result when the next election took place in July, 1828, at Henry Carroll's in West Oxford, Col. Ingersoll was defeated. Thomas Horner and Finley Malcolm were elected but at the following election Thomas Horner was defeated with Col. Ingersoll and Dr. Charles Duncombe being elected. Col. Ingersoll died in 1832 and Horner filled the vacancy until he died in 1834.

Between 1836 and the union of Upper and Lower Canada, Oxford was represented by Dr. Chas. Duncombe and Robert Alway with Dr. Duncombe being expelled in 1838 and R. H. Hunter replacing him. Until this time, no elections were held in Woodstock and only one (the twelfth) was held in Ingersoll. The men elected were all local men which was not the case after the union parliament met in 1841.

SURVEYED

The township of Zorra was first surveyed in 1820 and included the land now forming East and West Zorra and until 1822 was assessed along with Nissouri and North and West Oxford. The population at that time of all this area was 719. By 1822 the township of Zorra had landholders on 8,338 acres of uncultivated land and these same 58 landholders had 145 acres under cultivation and owned 14 horses, 44 oxen and 84 cows and the only taxable house was a log one of Alexander McGregor. By the Act VIII Victoria Chapt. 3 (1845) East Zorra became a separate township and was to consist of all land east of the line dividing the eighth concession from the ninth concession. The first lot sold by the government in this township was lot 2, concession nine to John Strong at 11s, 3d per acre on June 14, 1830.

In 1852 Shenstone reports the following about this township: "The township is settling and improving very fast and the Woodstock and Huron Plank and Gravel Road passes through the township and about four miles from Woodstock. On this road is a church and small settlement called Huntingford. In this neighborhood is located the house of Arthur Farmer which is considered to be the best house in the county."

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LUMBERING ACTIVE

There being a good stand of hardwood in the township, lumbering was fairly active and three sawmills turned out about 148,000 feet per annum in the mid 1800's. There was also active trade in oatmeal and in wool. The output being 9,500 barrels of oatmeal, 7,000 pounds of wool and 1,500 yards of cloth per year at this time.

On April 27, 1852, the East Zorra Agricultural Society was formed and on October 6 held a successful show at Donaldson's Cumberland Inn. The classes included thoroughbred and grade classes for cattle and sheep; oxen were included in the grade cattle. The best cow in the show received £1 in prize money, this being the top prize. The best mare received 15s for top money in the horse class as did the best fall wheat in the produce class. The fair was well attended and drew an exceptionally large number of contestants for the 78 prizes offered. Unfortunately this fair did not continue to thrive and eventually met the fate of many similar fairs in the county. The date of the last known fair has not been recorded.

In 1849 districts were abolished and further amendments were made to the District Council Act which allowed for reeves and deputy - reeves of the township councils to make up the membership of the County Council. In 1850 the following were elected to the council of East Zorra: reeve, John Harrington; council William Wilson, R. H. Campbell, J. Brown, Alex M. McKay. There was not enough population to warrant a deputy-reeve at this time. The assessors were William Fraser and William Rowell and George Forbes was the tax collector with Adam Marshall as clerk and treasurer.

Zorra

By ART WILLIAMS

When the name Zorra is mentioned in the history of Oxford, we usually think of the early Scots settlers who came out from Sutherlandshire in West Zorra or the early English settlers of the Hickson area. To the north of these already settled areas was a large tract of land known as the Huron Tract. Into this area in 1845 came Henry Hayrock. He built a home in what is now Sebastapol just over the county line in Perth County. He was followed by Henry Eckstein who later moved to what is now Tavistock and he became the first German settler in this section of Oxford County.

Henry Eckstein while living at Sebastapol learned that the railroad to Goderich would not touch Sebastapol so decided to move to the railroad location and in 1848 built himself a log building at what is now the corner of Hope and Woodstock streets and later used it for a store. He named the place Freiburg after his home in Germany. Later, during the Crimean War, it was changed to Inkerman.

The first German settlers came to Canada in 1820 from Hesson Darmstadt and Hesson Nassau on the banks of the Rhine in West Germany. They were persuaded to settle in Canada by Christian Naffziger of Munich. On hearing that many German settlers were very prosperous in America he sailed for America from Le Harve, France and landed at New Orleans. He worked his way north to the German settlements in Pennsylvania only to find that if his people wanted cheap land they would have to go to Canada. Aided by the Mennonites of Pennsylvania he was able to make his way up into Waterloo county which was being settled by the Mennonites aided by capital raised by the Mennonites of Pennsylvania. They advised him to take up the immigration question with the government and they offered 50 acres for each German family adding that more land could be purchased on easy terms.

AMISH SETTLERS

Naffziger returned to Europe and had the agreement ratified by the British Government and in 1824 the first settlers arrived. They were chiefly Amish. About 1825 a mass migration began from Germany and lasted for some 25 years. These people were Lutherans and Roman Catholics who came to avoid conscription into the army. Most of them came to New York and made their way on into Canada. From New York they made their way to Buffalo either on foot or by boat and crossed into Canada by ferry at Black Rock. As Mennonites were still migrating to new

land in Canada and were moving all their belongings with them, it was not hard for these European Germans to take up with these Pennsylvania Dutch and get transportation and employment up to Waterloo County, and eventually strike out on their own.

A group of these arrived in the Sebastapol - Tavistock area and by 1861 the census showed 500 people born in the German-speaking countries living in the South Easthope area and in 1864 English and German were both being taught in the schools of this area.

These people came out to this country to avoid compulsory service in the army and we find that they kept little or no record of their activities. It is known that they organized a church at Sebastapol in the early 1830's with Rev. W. Horn conducting the first service. In 1856 a church was erected which was from this centre that many purchased land settled by the Scots in Zorra. By the late

1840's in the Maplewood area we find names such as Schaefer, Kalbfleisch, Krug, Bloom, Youngbluts, Heinbuck, Wilkers, Snyders, Hormans and Metz. They never erected a church at Maplewood but kept contact with the home church at Sebastapol. Many of the German settlers changed from Lutheran to Methodist due to the fact that there were very few Lutheran ministers in Canada. The Methodist circuit rider who put into practice the old John Wesley Dictum "the world is my parish" soon found that his regular visits were specially suited to pioneer conditions.

CHURCH AT MAPLEWOOD

A Methodist church was organized at Maplewood and was later moved to Harrington where it now serves as the United Church. The Presbyterians who remained in the area erected a log structure on lot 30 tenth line of East Zorra and formed the Burns Presbyterian Church. The present Burns Church has title deeds dated November 21, 1874. Their first minister was Rev. Robert Scott who conducted services at Burns and Brooksdale. In 1920 Burns Church was connected with Tavistock and in 1930 Burns and Harrington were made a joint charge. At present it is connected with Shakespeare.

It seemed strange that the Scottish and English settlers did not prefer to remain in this part of the township but if one studies the ways of the German farmer and the British farmer we find that the latter preferred gravel bottom farms as are found in the south part of Zorra while the Germans were more used to the heavy fertile soil of the Rhine Valley, much like the land found in the Tavistock area and the neighboring turnip - growing townships.

To these German settlers the farmers of this part of Ontario owe much as they brought with them many ideas from the old land that still may be seen today. The English of East Oxford prefer large homes but these German settlers preferred a good barn before a spacious home and consequently we find them introducing large bank barns; they had stone stables beneath the frame structure for their stock and a forebay extending out over the stable entrance which acted as a granary and also as protection from the weather for the stable openings. The stable opening was usually at the south with a ramp on the north side leading to the threshing floor. Today this type of barn is found over a large part of Ontario as it proved to be the best for our type of farming, although the modern trend is away from this type of barn.

FINE COOKS

The German women soon established a reputation for being excellent cooks and many of their dishes such as sauerkraut, cole slaw, smearcase (cottage cheese), chicken pot pie, doughnuts, waffles and apple butter are all products of the German kitchen.

In the Maplewood area we find a school started prior to 1880 and in 1880 Alex Stewart was the teacher. He later left and became a Presbyterian minister and served as moderator of the Presbyterian Church. In 1872 we find a Mr. McKenzie as blacksmith and in 1890 David Braby was a well-known thrasher and William McDonald operated a wagon and carriage shop. A post office was established in 1874 with Christopher Bean as postmaster, Samuel McKay and Donald McIntosh followed until 1916 when the office was closed. The mail was brought to Maplewood from Enbro by Mr. Vannatter twice weekly. From 1900-1910 saw migration of many young from this area to the west.

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The ABOVE picture is the school at Maplewood around the year 1880. Some of the students shown here are still living. The man in the centre is William Armstrong, the teacher while the local blacksmith, James Hornsby is at the right.

By ART WILLIAMS
The early pioneers did not take a very active interest in politics. Their arduous toil in grappling with the giants of the forest from sunrise to sunset through the heat of summer and the cold of winter did not give them time for political controversies. True, at town meetings in the Brock District crowds would assemble annually at the local meeting hall or hotel. Quite often the meeting would get all heated up, but as a rule the same district commissioners would be nominated and re-elected year after year until it became almost a matter of form. Obviously they were content to leave the affairs of the district in the hands of older and experienced men who no doubt served the people faithfully and acceptably.

On Dominion election days things were different. The candidates would often send out conveyances of various kinds to bring in the voters and it seems that the voters would make the day of it and so spirits ran high both from the bottle and on the political views with many a good fight thrown in for good measure. When the election was over, all would return home and life returned to normal. Some of the older residents can still recall the shenanigans of election day in the 1800's. One of the earliest polling booths in Oxford was held at Martin's Hotel, Beachville, in 1880. This being the only one in the county at that time.

ZORRA TOWNSHIP

The township of Zorra was first organized in 1822. Previous to this North Oxford, Nissouri and Zorra were all assessed together and the population at this time was 719 for the whole area. Zorra was organized under a warrant issued by Charles Ingersoll and Peter Teeple and the first township officers were Joseph Fitch, clerk, and Fitch and Henry Laire, assessors with Alpheus raft, collector.

In 1882 the following names were listed on the assessment roll as householders and landowners — Alanson Harris, Ira Day, Daniel Cook, Peter Vannatter, Israel Reed, Abraham Vannatter, Levi Lewis, Alpheus Tau, Leonard Kari, Barnabus Ford, Elizah Harris, Theron Hallock, Robert Ford, Peter Al-yea, Isaac Burdick. Of these Israel Reid had 1,000 acres, Isaac Burdick had 400 and the remainder had one and two hundred acres each. The land owned by Israel Reid was located in the area now occupied by the Zorra Highland Park School extending north to include the present community of Brookdale and west beyond the third concession.

In 1850 the municipality of rural mail. Youngsville was a West Zorra elected its first sep-regular stop on the mail route arate council, before that time covered by Mr. Vannatter, who East and West Zorra elected a is credited with covering more joint council. The members of miles of Zorra delivering mail the West Zorra Council includ- than any other man.
ed Donald Matheson, reeve, Angus Munro, Benson Pelton, J. M. Ross, Alex Clark, council-treasurer, Allcock, assessor. One lora; Alexander Ross, collector, Alexander Wood, clerk and of the first motions passed by this council was to purchase a dozen tallow candles for use at the council meetings. One of the first by-laws passed at this council meeting was a by-law prohibiting the sheep of the township from running ar large and they were to be kept in a confined area the year around. From this it is assumed that sheep were allowed to roam after the crops were taken off.

In later minutes of the township meetings there is considerable mention of payment being made to farmers for sheep being destroyed by dogs. In 1882 there were over 6,000 sheep in the township and only 3,000 pigs, a great change from what it is today, as sheep are fast joining the horse in becoming a rarity on local farms. The council held their meetings in the Great Western Hotel at Youngsville until 1911. There was a room reserved for them for council meetings as there was no township hall.

In the settlement of the township north and west of the village of Embro, Scottish settlers came and the names Archibald McCaul and Hugh McCorquodale appearing having purchased land on lot 14 and 15, concession one. They came from Argyleshire, Scotland, and worked on the Welland Canal. Archibald McCaul purchased his farm from Mrs. Elizabeth Force of the Niagara District in 1822 and the transfer was made to McCaul in 1825 for £100. The following years saw more settlers arriving from the old country and from the United States and we find the names Munro, McPherson, McArthur, Ross, Pelton, Duncan, Hall, Matheson, Innes and Youngs. Gabriel Youngs purchased 1,000 acres of land in the area now known as Youngsville. In the area owned by Gabriel Youngs and Israel Reed there sprung up three communities, Youngsville, Brookdale and Bennington.

YOUNGSVILLE

Gabriel Youngs purchased 1,000 acres now known as Youngsville after he arrived here from New York State. By 1874 there was enough activity on this corner with a hotel being operated here along with a carriage works and a blacksmith shop that a post office was opened here and Edward Youngs was the first postmaster, Joseph Brown, Hugh Flanley, William McDonald, Alonzo Youngs and James Pagson also served as postmasters here until the office was closed on May 17, 1902, on the inauguration of rural mail. It being one of the first post offices affected by the

The hotel here was a welcome rest for weary travellers, travelling north from Beachville on the gravel road that traversed the township from Beachville to Fairview where it connected with the Stratford road. This road was commonly called the Embro Road. Originally this road was supervised by John McKay who lived at Embro. In the Youngsville area there was a tollgate located halfway between Youngsville and Embro and this corner is still referred to as the Tollgate Corner and Sideroad. John Wilkerson was one of the tollgate keepers prior to 1908. The toll charge was five and 10 cents according to the number of horses used. There were two teams hired to keep this road in shape and were hired by a company of which Squire Dent and Donald Matheson were chief shareholders.

There were several innkeepers at the Great Western Hotel at Youngsville but the one who was most popular was Walter Ross. Today many an elderly man can recall stopping for a cool drink with a high collar and plenty of bang on the road home or for a jug for a threshing or a special occasion. Robert Evans was the last operator when the temperance act came into force.

The first school at Youngsville was located on the third line and originally known as the Pelton school and was built in 1831. James Jool was the teacher here in 1862 and other teachers included Robert McDonald, L. Cummings, J. Munro and W. McKay. Later the Youngs family donated land for the present school.

The first cheese factory was located at the springs which are located just south of the Youngsville corner on the third concession on the farm of A. Matheson in 1867 and there was a sawmill operated by the McBurneys about a half mile east of the fourth line corner.

There was no church or store located here presumably because it was fairly close to the village of Embro and many of its residents are buried in the old cemetery south of Embro where the early Methodist Church was located. Others went to the Town Line Church or to the Old Log Church (later the old kirk).

BENNINGTON

Bennington is located off the main road but was a thriving community. As it grew in importance, Mr. Hall, the great grandfather of Frank Cowan, named it after his native town of Bennington, Vermont. The cheese factory was moved from

"Zorra"

the third line to its present location. A cheese and butter company was formed with the executive consisting of J. Pelton, R. Ross, D. McCorquodale, Robert Youngs, Ira Humpason and W. J. McKay with James Baffin as cheesemaker. J. A. Thomson made cheese here from 1898 to 1931.

When schools were an individual's responsibility instead of a township affair there were classes held in the upstairs of the homes now occupied by James Strickler. The first regular school was built on the northwest corner of the first concession across from the present school.

The Farmers' Hall was erected about 1890 and is the home of the Bennington Union Farmers. Bennington also boasted of a flax mill which was located south of the cheese factory and a steam sawmill which was operated by William Ross and always remained in the family name. Later the McBurney steam sawmill was purchased and operated here until it blew its boiler. Roy Ross was the operator at that time.

The store which also served as the post office was originally located north of the Methodist Church on the town line. It collapsed on being moved but was rebuilt which replaced the original store which had burned while operated by the Heron family. Robert Heron was the first postmaster from the first of May 1874 until 1885. Peter W. Murray served from 1885 until the office closed in 1914. Very seldom is the name Bennington mentioned that Peter Murray's name will not come into the conversation.

One of Bennington's best known products were the pumps built by Peter Pelton who in an ad in the Embro Courier on Wednesday, June 3, 1874, made the following statement: "Peter Pelton begs respectfully to acquaint the farmers of West Zorra and adjoining townships, that he has commenced the manufacture of pumps on a principal believed to be equal to any in use in this province. The sucker and valve are removable from the top log together at any time when repair is necessary which is a great convenience saving time, trouble and expense.

Cistern pumps furnished at moderate prices warranted equal to any in use."

Although Bennington is not located on a main road it did become a stop on Ingersoll and St. Marys railroad and was served by two stations. In 1879 a charter was secured to build a railroad from Woodstock to Lake Huron by way of St. Marys. A bonus of \$60,000 was voted by St. Marys and \$10,000 by Embro. There was a time limit placed on the charter. Much time was lost with trifling affairs and the charter expired. The project dropped not to be taken up until 25 years later when an agreement with the CPR was reached to construct a railroad from Ingersoll to St. Marys with stops at Zorra Station, Embro, McConkey, Bennington, Lakeside, Un-

iondale and St. Marys. This road was completed in 1909. The Bennington Station was located south of Bennington while the McConkey Station was located west of the village opposite the

present school. This was a big asset to the village as it gave a year round outlet for their factory and farm and allowed their children to go on to higher education at the high schools of Ingersoll, Woodstock or St. Marys or Embro at a cost with in reason which was a great privilege at that time. Originally two trains a day travelled the route but was later dropped to one. Both stations at Bennington have been removed but the spirit of Bennington lives on, being centred around the activities of the Junior Farmers and the community hall.

BROOKSDALE

The land on which Brooksdale now stands was given by Israel Reid to his son George Washington Reid, named after the American president for whom Israel had great admiration, Israel Reid coming from Bedford, Mass., and often told of the burning of that town by the British during the American Revolution. He left and moved to Niagara in 1800 and in 1807 moved to Norwich and in 1821 he arrived in Zorra. Today he lies at rest in the land he once worked in the vicinity of the Highland Park School, passing on in 1841.

Of the three communities, Brooksdale is considered to be the oldest as it received its first post office on May 1, 1859. John Innes was the postmaster at that time. Other postmasters included S. N. Bannerman, John Bagrie, Thomas Heron, Edward Shirr, R. B. Gill, John S. Youngs, Annie Youngs, now Mrs. Annie Matheson of Woodstock, helped her father here when the post office closed in 1914.

As early as 1830 the Scots settlers started to hold meetings of religious nature at the home of Squire Gordon, north of here. Later when the session of the Log Church refused to allow the church to be used for a school for the reason that it bordered on blasphemy, this log building became a schoolhouse and served until the frame school was built on the northwest corner of the village prior to 1840 and remained until No. 7 school was built in 1858. In the frame school services were held prior to the building of a church in 1883. There was also a Methodist Church here from 1823 to 1914, being part of the Embro Town Line and Brooksdale circuit, all of which are no longer in existence.

The name was given by Dr. Hugh McLeod who was a teacher at the school and who went on to fame as a family doctor who served the township faithfully for years.

There was also a cider mill, blacksmith shop and two stores located here and John Bagrie, the blacksmith was the man of the village as he acted as advisor to all who sought advice and served as secretary - treasurer of the church and also made the pulpit which is still in use here and long it will remain as a fitting memorial to his name.

One of the unique things about Brooksdale is that it contains a farm that is still known as a Clergy Reserve Farm and is still owned by the local church. The 200 acres of this clergy reserve were first granted to the Presbyterian Church in un 3, 1839, and the grant was made to John Fraser in trust.

By ART WILLIAMS

In the history of Zorra, credit is given to those stalwart pioneers from the Catskill Mountains of the New England States, the Pennsylvania Dutch of Pennsylvania the Germans from Hesse Nassau, the English from the Midlands and rugged Irish along with those who had previously settled elsewhere in Canada but there also settled in Zorra a group of people who proved to be so outstanding that other immigrants picked up their ways and in a few years it was so hard to tell who were the original Scottish settlers and who were not.

SCOTS MADE

The first of these hardy Scots to arrive here was William McKay who was followed by his brother Angus. William arrived in Zorra in 1820 after working on the Erie Canal in U.S.A. He had been a captain in the 93rd Regiment of the Sutherland and Argyle Regiment. He was one of the few survivors of a bloody battle in Peninsular War when his regiment was almost wiped out.

When he arrived in Zorra he settled on the ninth line on or around lot 12. With Mother Nature for his only neighbor he proceeded to build a shanty for himself. When Captain William was settled he sent word to the United States for Angus to join him.

We do not hear of William returning to Scotland but in 1829 Angus returned to Scotland. When he returned he brought with him his aged parents whom he had tried to persuade to stay in Scotland. His mother saying "Na, na, where my laddies go, I'll gang too". Such was the spirit of the McKays.

BROUGHT OTHERS

Along with his parents he persuaded many families from his native Sutherlandshire whose names are common to all today to stop fighting with the lords of the Highlands and come to this great country where they could get land for themselves. In Canada he told them they would not be mere assals but instead men and women equal to their neighbor. These people arrived in the fall of '29 after a harrowing crossing where a ship's biscuit at times was almost a delicacy. Three months after their arrival, the mother of Angus and William, Mrs. Isabell Mc Kay died.

Within the space of a few years these people had taken root. They proceeded to make Zorra a wee bit of the Highlands. In 1830-31 they were holding prayer meetings in the homes or meadows of the neighbors. By 1832 they decided to build a church. The church and cemetery still commemorated as the Log Church Cemetery were located on lot 9 concession 7. Mrs. Isabell McKay was the first one buried here. Undoubtedly this spot had been selected as a suitable site sometime before it was decided to build a church on it.

ROUGH BUILDING

The church was made of logs and was 30 by 48 feet. It was completed in the summer of 1833. Monthly prayer meetings were held here for the rest of the summer. Come winter they had to revert back to meetings in the homes as there was no means of heating the church. The logs were smoothly hewn inside and out chinked with plaster and lime. There was a gallery with access by an outside stair. There were no towers or spire. For almost two years the edifice was without a pulpit as pews. The seating consisted of planks laid on blocks to accommodate about 400

In 1833 the Synod of Upper Canada made a grant of £50 to the Presbyterians of Zorra to provide a place of worship. One half of this sum was used to procure a pulpit, pews and other necessities for the church. The other was put aside for the building of an additional place of worship when the need arose. By the middle of August 1834 the first Presbyterian minister to preach in Oxford took their service. In June 1835 Rev. Donald McKenzie returned to be inducted as their first minister.

MCKAY SCHOOL

The date of the building of the first school is not known. The McKay School, located on lot 8 concession 8 was considered to be the third school to be established in the township. Hugh Gordon was one of its first teachers. In 1862 it was one of 10 schools in Zorra. Catherine Ross its teacher had an average of 22 pupils in attendance.

On January 21, 1867 one quarter of an acre of land was sold to the school trustees of S.S. No. 8 and the school was moved from lot 8 to lot 5 to fit into the school section plan of the township. Later more land was purchased but the original school on this site still stands. Students living to the south of what is now Golspie might have attended a school known as the Corner School which was located at the corner of the tenth line and the Governor's Road where James Robertson taught in 1857.

James Robertson was born in 1839 in the Tay Valley at the village of Dull in Scotland. In 1855 his family immigrated to Canada and settled in East Oxford Township. By the time he was 18 he was teaching school at the Corner School. From here he went to Innerkip and from there to Princeton, New Jersey where he graduated to become a Presbyterian minister. On Nov. 18, 1869 Mr. Robertson was ordained and inducted into the charge of Norwich which included South East Oxford and Windham Centre. He received a call from here to the west at Winnipeg. While there he became known as the "Giant of the west". It was claimed he did more for the Home Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church than any other man. His

actions stirred Ralph Connor to such an extent that in 1908 he wrote the life story of James Robertson.

With the building of the school on lot 5 the community took on the name of Elmsdale from a good stand of trees. Within a mile of the school Murrays had a sawmill. In January 1893 H. J. Smith of Hensall erected a store on this corner. On Nov. 1, 1895 the Elmsdale post office was opened. The name did not suit the people of Scotland. They wished to remember their country town. On the suggestion of the Sutherland family the name was changed to Golspie after an attractive red sand village which was the seat of the Duke of Sutherland at Dunrobin Castle. On May 18, 1896 Mrs. Robert Murray was the postmaster until it closed in 1914. Outside of the store was a blacksmith shop operated by Mr. Iredale. The nearest cheese factory was the Spring Creek Factory (Willow Lake) or the West Zorra factory at Embro.

CODY'S CORNERS

Among the first to take up land in West Zorra south of the present village of Embro was Elijah Cody who came up from Marcellus, New York. He first settled in West Oxford in 1820 where he kept a tavern. In May 1821 he purchased 200 acres of land in Zorra on the corner of what is now the fourth line and Cody's Sideroad at a cost of \$1 per acre and moved there in May 1824. Others who settled in this area included Burdicks, Ayeas, Tafts, Harris, Cairns, Cooks, Days, Hallocks, Fords and Galloways. These settlers were mostly of British descent coming up from the United States in the early thirties. They were of either the Baptist or Methodist faith.

Shortly after the arrival of these settlers a school was built on the farm of Elijah north of the buildings. It remained until 1848 when a frame school was built on the southeast corner. Up until this time the local residents went to Beachville for their worship. With the building of this school both the Baptists and the Methodists held services here. Some of the teachers were A. McDonald in 1818, Clark Rose, H. C. Ross, J. Fraser, and B. Blair. Rev. Donald McKenzie of Embro was the school inspector. The present school was erected in 1870.

Between the corner and the village of Embro several industries started up including a brick yard operated by the Sharpe family. In 1866 Sam Elliott operated a cheese factory. In 1846 the Scotia Mills were erected by J. M. Ross. Mr. Ross arrived in Zorra in 1842 and purchased 500 acres south of the village at \$2 per acre. At one time Governor-General Lloyd Byng and Lieutenant-Governor H. Cockshutt were guests on the Scotia Farm. Later A. Hamilton and James Thompson operated the Scotia Mills. The Archibald Milling Co. of Beachville had a storehouse

on the northeast corner of the sideroad south of Embro. The West Zorra cheese factory was located one mile east of this corner. A. Mr. Nasmyth arrived from Scotland in 1832 and started a Methodist class in the village of Embro in his own home. In 1854 a Methodist Church was built on the fourth line at the sideroad south of the village along with a cemetery. The cemetery still remains but in 1875 the church was sold and moved into the village.

WALKER'S

To the west of Cody's Corners the junction of the first concession of West Zorra commonly called the Ingersoll Road is known as Walker's. The place derives its name from the fact that A. Walker arrived from Bucks County, New York in May 1832 by way of York, Aurora and Newmarket. Upon arrival he stayed with the Munro family on the second concession. One of their first moves was to start a school which was held in the Walker barn at the top of the hill. Later a log school was built at the corner where the present school now stands. In the early days of these corners George Harris, who was a lay preacher, conducted Methodist services in the school. He donated land for a church and cemetery north of the corner. The cemetery became a reality but a church was never built.

One of the outstanding features of this corner was the splendid growth of black walnut on the low land. North of the cemetery on the far side of the river Sam Elliott started a cheese factory which was the first of two begun under his initiative. John Adams who also settled at Walkers went over to the 12th concession of Nissouri to start the Adams Cheese Factory. He later moved to Toronto where he started a milk-receiving station and is considered to be the first to sell bottled milk in Canada.

ZORRA STATION

While this area was never on a railway line a station was operated on the main line of the CPR for service to these parts. When the line was first constructed the station was known as Code Junction after Walter Code who was the roadmaster in charge of the construction. Three years later a line was built from Zorra to Ingersoll the name was changed to Ingersoll Junction and finally changed to Zorra. Prior to 1908 there was a station on the main line known as Embro. In 1908 it was moved one mile west to the location of the present Zorra Station. The Embro Station was erected in 1890. It was used as a mail and passenger stop for this area. A stage coach operated between the station and Embro meeting all trains. It was driven by W. S. Vannatter. B. J. Smith was the station agent.

His son Oswald J. Smith later became the well known minister of the People's Church, Toronto. In 1862 John McKay operated this stage line between Beahville and Embro and maintained the Toll Road. A toll gate was operated at lot eight south of Embro and the toll being 5 cents for a single horse and 10 cents for a team.

HOLLIDAY

East of Walker's on the town line between Zorra and Nissouri a group of Scots from Argyle-shire came taking up land that had been granted to British soldiers for services rendered. Among these soldiers was a Capt. Clark who was granted 600 acres here in 1804. His daughter Mrs. Force of Niagara sold 200 acres of it to Archibald McCaul in 1823 for £100. McCaul arrived in Canada in 1820. He spent some years working on the Welland Canal and in the Niagara district spending part of his time in Zorra each year clearing his farm. He was accompanied by Hugh McCorquodale who took up land north of McCauls. Until 1834 it was necessary to go to Ingersoll for most things even to getting married. At that time there was no minister of the Church of England within 18 miles and James Ingersoll JP was allowed to perform marriages.

About this time a spot was located on the high ground near the creek for a cemetery. On its tombstones are found the names of many early settlers including McCauls, McArthurs, McPhersons, Munros, McCorquodales and Sutherlands. Neither church nor school were located here but as time progressed a store was opened. In 1853 a post office was started to be known as Nissouri post office until it closed in 1889. The place was also known as McBrayne's Corners due to the fact that Archibald McBrayne had a hotel and post office there from 1873 to 1884. Henry Straitch also operated a store and post office from 1886 to 1889 when the post office closed. In 1892 it was re-opened with N. R. McKenzie the local blacksmith being postmaster. The office was finally closed in 1913 in favor of rural mail delivery. For many years Bob McDonald operated sawmill. During the harvest season he operated a threshing outfit. There was also a tannery located at the place.

It was just a few miles east of these corners that the Nissouri Fall Fair was held on the Thornton farm. For many years this was one of the better fall fairs in the county. On the same site were held camp meetings which would attract believers from all over the county. At these meetings it is told, the local boys would wait outside the tent until the meeting reached a fever pitch then they would release the ropes supporting the tent and thereby break up the gathering.



ONE OF THE EARLY school in Zorra was the one located at Golspie. Those included in this class of 1883 are Miss Gerrie who was the teacher, Georgina Campbell, Mary Campbell, Libbie Marshall, Jannie Marshall, Elsie Murray, Bob Murray, Billy

Murray (Angus), Alex McDonald, Neil Murray, Dave Ross, John McKay, Benie Heaney, Nellie Murray, Toot McKay, Ellen Heaney, Nell Marshall, Bessie Murray, Maggie D. Murray, Maggie Murray, Alice McLeod, Anna Bell Marshall, Charles Douglas, John Ross, Will McKay,

Johnny Campbell, Ken McLeod, Johnny Murray, (Angus), Belle Ross, Elsie McKay, Willena Murray, Benie Murray, Johnny Murray (Jim), Will Langdon, Peter McDonald, Charlie Langdon, Johnny L. Murray, Ed Marshall and Ralph Langdon.

TO SET ASIDE WILL

Action Brought by Hugh Campbell Against His Brother Angus,

From Yesterday's Second Edition.

The will case of Campbell vs. Campbell is being tried today in the surrogate court by a jury, with Judge Finkle presiding. Following the custom in the surrogate court, the real plaintiff in the case is made the defendant and the defendant the plaintiff; so that the action is slated as Angus Campbell of West Zorra against Hugh Campbell of Woodstock.

Arranging the parties so that their relative positions will be intelligible, the case is an action brought by Hugh Campbell of Woodstock against Angus Campbell, West Zorra, his brother and executor of the estate of the late William Campbell of Embro, to set aside the will of the late Wm. Campbell upon the grounds that he was of unsound mind when the will was made, and that Angus Campbell, his wife Sarah Campbell, John McLeod, a witness to the will, and others unknown, exerted under influence in inducing the deceased to make the will.

The will which was dated Jan. 25th, 1901, left \$200 to Mrs. Alexander Clark, \$100 to Jessie Sutherland, \$50 to Mrs. Wm. Smith, \$200 to Helen Campbell, \$25 per annum each to Hugh Campbell and Helen Campbell, and undivided use of a dwelling house to the latter; and his farm of 50 acres, situated in West Zorra, to Alexander and Wm. Campbell, nephews and sons of Angus Campbell, who was named executor. The total estate involved was worth between \$3500 and \$4000.

Wm. Campbell died on February 9th, 1901, from cancer, and the will was probated on Feb. 21st. He had made another will a few days previous to this, making a different division of his property, and Hugh Campbell is endeavoring to have the estate administered according to the terms of the first will. S. G. McKay for Hugh Campbell and J. Soper Mackay for Angus Campbell.

The case was begun late yesterday afternoon, but it was not until 10 o'clock this morning that the first witness, John McLeod, was called. He was a witness to the will when it was executed and he admitted under cross-examination that the whole of the will was not read in his presence to Wm. Campbell, but only part of it.

Robert McDonald, another witness to the will, stated that Wm. Campbell had given as his reason for changing the previous will, a desire to leave \$200 more to Helen Campbell, who by the first will would have got only \$25 per annum.

"You're a bachelor, aren't you?" asked Mr. McKay during his cross-examination. "and consequently a happy man?"

"It's a pretty hard state, isn't it McDonald?" asked the Judge.

The witness smiled a mournful assent behind his hand.

PRIZE WINNERS

In the Surrogate Court Case of Campbell vs. Campbell.

The will case of Campbell vs. Campbell in the Surrogate Court is still in progress and the jury retired about 11.30 to answer nine questions put to them by the judge. They were still out at 12.30.

"THEY'LL NO TAK EMBRO OR ZORRA"

Vancouver Embro and Zorra Old Boys and Girls, Over a Hundred Strong, Had Enjoyable Picnic and Reunion at Stanley Park.

"They may tak' Toronto; they may tak' Hamilton; but they'll no tak' Zorra."

So said an aged Scotch lady, of Embro, many years ago when the Fenians took a notion into their heads that they would capture British America.

Whether or not any of the descendants of this patriot were present at the pic-nic held in Stanley Park on Coronation Day by the Old Boys and Girls of Embro and West Zorra, is hard to say. At any rate there were 120 other Zorra people there. It was a grand re-union.

Zorra—Zorra is one of the most famous sections in Canada. It is situated down in Western Ontario in the County of Oxford. Books have been written on Zorra. The district was settled away back in the early part of the last century by Highlanders mostly from Sutherlandshire.

Sons of Zorra are living and thriving in all the countries of the world. Zorra is in the same class as Bruce County and Glengarry. The people of Bruce and the good Scotsmen of Zorra, in the early days, broke sacrament together.

In Vancouver hundreds of Zorra men and women are making their homes. Among those who attended the picnic on Coronation Day were the following:

Mr. and Mrs. J. R. McKay and family, Chilliwack; Mr. John Munro; Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Campbell and family (Seattle); Mr. Geo. Blair Langley, Mr. Wm. Crogin Langley, Mr. and Mrs. A. Thompson Langley, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Plowright and family (Victoria), Mr. and Mrs. Frank Couke and family (Victoria), Mr. Gladstone Murray, Mr. Paul Murray (Peachland), Dr. Fred. Brodie, Miss Minnie Aiken, Miss Annie Patterson (St. Mary's), Mr. Morris, Mr. Pearson, Mr. Robert Shaw, Mr. James Shaw, Mr. and Mrs. Churchland and family (Port Haney), Mr. and Mrs. H. L. M. Stewart and family, Mr. and Mrs. J. Knight and family; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Abernethy and family (Port Moody), Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Abernethy and family (Port Haney), Mr. and Mrs. Sam. Abernethy and family, Mr. and Mrs. James and family, Mr. G. M. Murray, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Marshal and family, Mr. and Mrs. Irvine Houston and family, Mrs. James Clubb, Mr. and Mrs. P. D. Roe and family (Port Moody), Mrs. R. Abernethy Sr., Mr. and Mrs. C. G. Cody and family, Miss Fraser, Miss Esther Murray, Miss Marion Murray, Mr. John Clark, Mr. John Murray (Langley), Mr. Wm. Murray (Langley), Mr. and Mrs. Angus McKay and family (Kamloops), Mr. and Mrs. George Ward (Ashcroft), Mr. and Mrs. Rosenberg (Ashcroft), Mr. and Mrs. Henry Case and family (Victoria), Mr. D. Sutherland, Mr. T. M. Stewart (New York), Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Stewart and family, Mr. and Mrs. John E. Flemming and family, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Innes Patterson and family, Mr. and Mrs. R. Beattie and family, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Fraser and family, Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Luno and family, Miss Helen McDonald, Mrs. C. McDonald, Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Flemming and family, Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Page, Mr. and Mrs. L. P. Clement, Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Stoddard, Mr. W. C. McKenzie, Miss Ester Adair, Mr. and Mrs. D. Geddes and family (Port Moody), Mr. Gordon Campbell, Mr. and Mrs. Dr. Geo. Sutherland and family (Westminster Junction), Mr. and Mrs. Wm. McKenzie and family (Steveston), Mr. and Mrs. Thos. McKay and family, Mr. Kenneth Murray, Mr. and Mrs. P. J. McKay, Miss Ross McKay, Miss Lillian McKay, Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Blair (New Liskeard, Ont.), Miss M. Bayne (Seattle), A. E. Campbell, Mr. and Mrs. John W. Abernethy and family (Eburne), Rev. J. S. and Mrs. Mackay (India), Mr. and Mrs. P. Mitchell (Seattle), Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Ross and family, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Stewart and family, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. McQueen and family, Mr. and Mrs. J. Sandick (New Westminster), Mr. R. McKay (Alaska), A. D. Sutherland.

It was decided to make the event an annual affair and a Zorra Old Boys' Association was formed with the following officers: President, W. H. P. Clubb; first vice-president, Robert Abernethy; second vice-president, William Stewart; third vice-president, John Abernethy; treasurer, A. M. Stewart; secretary, H. L. M. Stewart; correspondent, George M. Murray.

During the day a program of speeches was carried out over which "Billy" Stewart presided. Among those who spoke were: A. E. Campbell, George Stewart, Robert Abernethy, A. D. Sutherland, W. J. Blair, Angus Stewart, Mr. Murray and Mr. Morris, the last named, an old gentleman who has the distinction of having built Harrington, Zorra, Ralph Connor's old home.

The Pioneers of 1899

By
AN
OLD
ZORRA
BOY.

ZORRA.

Zorra is 90 square miles in extent. It has a population of about 3,000. Yet this little district has given to the Presbyterian Church no less than 40 clergymen, and it has produced 21 physicians, a considerable number of lawyers and a great host of public school teachers. This district stands to-day second to none in the Province for its well-tilled farms, its comfortable



MRS. CATHARINE MACKAY, AGED 89.

homes and the industry and intelligence of its people. Zorra has been called "The Drumtochty of Canada"; and certainly among the old pioneers there were not a few whose trials and triumphs are worthy of the pen of the author of "The Bonnie Briar Bush." There was a hard lot, but bravely they faced the difficulties, and nobly overcame them.

It required true courage and a firm reliance on the power of God to enable these men and women to leave the hills



MRS. MARION MACKAY, AGED 87.

and homes they loved so dearly to face an ocean voyage of twelve weeks in an old emigrant ship, to endure all the hardships of a two-weeks' journey up the St. Lawrence in open boats towed by oxen, to penetrate the unbroken fastnesses of our forest, and, driving back bears and wolves, construct for themselves little log cabins, where to-day we see thriving villages, populous towns, rich fields, comfortable homes, commodious school houses and handsome churches.

Few things characterized these pioneers more than the intensity of their devotion. Hard work prevented them becoming religious dreamers. But, industrious as they were, the world was never permitted to interfere with the discharge of their religious duties, domestic and public. Every day was begun and closed with family worship, and men who, for six days in the week, labored hard from dawn till dark, clearing the forest or threshing with

the hail, or ploughing among the stumps, were glad to travel three, four, five and some of them eight or ten miles to attend the church on the Sabbath. Sometimes their religion was ex-



MISS MARGARET MACKAY, AGED 72

pressed in ways that may appear to the present generation strict, puritanical or even grotesque.

A good story is told of a worthy old elder. One Sabbath morning on the way to the church he discovered two of his neighbor's boys besporting themselves in the woods. It may be said that one of these boys was not overburdened with intellect, and was indeed regarded as being "a little daft." When the elder came up this one was holding watch over a hole into which a groundhog had just entered, while the brother was at a little distance off fishing. After lecturing the simple boy on his duty the good man reminded him that it was the devil who was leading him in this work. "Na, na! it's no the deevil, it's a ground-hog; I saw him going in mysel'," was the innocent reply. "But do you know what day it is?" said the good man. "Tom! (pronounced Tome), come here!" cried the boy to his brother, who was fishing. "Come here! Here's a fellow doesna ken what day it is."

At the present time there seems to be a disposition to disregard the sanctity of the Sabbath, but the strict observance of this day developed in the Zorra pioneers a vigorous Christian manhood and womanhood, and made them strong physically, mentally and morally. France, with her infidelity, and her reckless desecration of the Sabbath, stands to-day face to face with the solemn problem of national extinction. When the Parisian Sabbath has produced better men and women than the Puritan Sabbath has done, it will be time enough to sneer at the fathers and their devout observance of the day.

"Praise and thanks for an honest man!
Glory to God for the Puritan."

With this communication I send to The Globe the portraits of a family of six Zorra pioneers—three brothers, and their three sisters, who are to-day hale and hearty, at the average age of eighty-three. It would not be difficult



in many districts to find six who had reached this age, but else can such wonderful longevity be found in one family? One of assured the writer that for seven years she had not been half a day in bed through sickness. I may say that this family comes of a long-lived ancestry, the father and mother living till they were considerably over ninety, and the grandmother till one hundred and five. It may be added that the home where these six were reared was a typical Highland home. The family settled in Zorra in 1836, and many a weary wayfarer in early days enjoyed its hospitality; especially on the old communion occasions were the doors thrown open to all from far and near. From Brucefield, Williams and Gwillimbury would friends come to the



MR. JAMES MACKAY, AGED 83.

communion, and many of them found a comfortable resting-place in this pioneer home. Never was the worship of God neglected; never was the Sabbath allowed to be desecrated; it was a happy home. It had no rare picture on the wall, nor rich carpets on the floor, and the furniture was of the rudest kind, but the fear of God was there, and sympathy and kindness characterized the members in their intercourse with one another, and with all around them. The members of this home were not widely read, but they were deeply read. Every one of them thoroughly knew the Bible and the Shorter Catechism. Besides, in that old home library could be found a well-thumbed Gaelic version of "Boston's Fourfold Estate," Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," Edwards' "On the Affections," Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted," Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Re-



MR. DONALD MACKAY, AGED 82.

ligion in the Soul," and a number of songs or Gaelic poems by such Highland ministers and laymen as Macdonald, Kennedy, Aird, Peter Grant and Dugald Buchanan. All these were read and re-read, over and over again. To a healthy ancestry, cheerful disposition, strong social qualities, religious feeling, temperate habits, plain living and plenty of outdoor exercise, we attribute the happy, vigorous old age of this family of Zorra MacKays.

One of the sisters exhibited in this picture has heard five of her sons preach the Gospel as ministers of the Presbyterian Church. But enough. The memory of the just is held in everlasting remembrance.

NOTHING BUT NAMES:
An Inquiry into the Origins of the Names of the Counties and Townships of Ontario
by Herbert Fairbairn Gardiner, M.A., Hamilton, Canada
Toronto: George N. Morang & Company, 1899

p. 305-306

ZORRA TOWNSHIP, EAST AND WEST (1819)

We come, thy friends and neighbors not unknown,
From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale.

— Samson Agonistes.

ZORRA is the Spanish word for a female fox; a strumpet; a sly, crafty person. Some prefer to derive this name from Zorah, the birthplace of Samson, mentioned in Judges xiii. 2. But it probably got its name from Sir Peregrine Maitland, in the same way as Lobo in Middlesex.

NISSOURI TOWNSHIP, EAST (1820)

Nissouri is probably Indian, akin to Missouri, which means "mud river," or river of the big canoe tribe.

The *Embro Courier* is responsible for the following: We venture to say that there are few people who know how the township of Nissouri got its name. An old man, whose people now live in the eastern part of Ontario and who in the very early history of Nissouri lived in the northern part of that township, gave the writer a history of how the township was named, which seemed reasonable, and is likely true. Long ago, when this county and other adjoining counties were known as the 'District of Brock,' Scotch settlers named a section (known now as West and East Zorra) after the birthplace of Samson. Some Yankees settled in the west, and in speaking of the section of the county in which they lived, described it as being 'nigh Zorra,' or near Zorra. There are letters yet in the possession of Nissouri people addressed 'nigh Zorra,' but for near half a century the township has been known as Nissouri."

Mr. R. W. Sawtell, of Woodstock, writes: "Many believe the 'nigh Zorra' statement of origin, but Mr. Brown says he knows that is not correct. He says it is an Indian name, probably meaning gurgling or struggling waters, as there is, or was, a place in the river which would warrant such a name. The first public reference made to the township is in Act 2nd, Geo. IV., ch. 3 (1821). Previous to that it was assessed with Zorra and the two Oxfords. Nissouri was surveyed by Shubael Park, in 1820. Mr. Cameron, born in East Nissouri in 1828, says that, when a boy, he tried to find out, from his father and others, the origin of the name, but did not succeed."

pp, 239-240

MONO TOWNSHIP (1821) THIS name may have been given by Sir Peregrine Maitland, Mono being the Spanish word meaning monkey, just as he named Oso, the bear, Zorra, the she fox, and Lobo, the wolf. The residents apparently prefer to derive it from Mona, a daughter of Tecumseth. There is another, and newer township in Ontario called Mona, which is the Roman name for the Island of Anglesea, Wales. If Drake is correct, and Tecumseth never had a daughter (see Adjala township), the Spanish derivation must stand, unless the reader prefers to derive Mono from the Indian word Mah-noo, meaning "let it be so," or from Monon, the "Little Iron Wood Tree," a squaw concerning whom Schoolcraft tells an interesting story.