



History  
of  
Ingersoll  
1783 = 1877

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of  
INGERSOLL  
Ontario  
1783 - 1877

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# Ingersoll

## FIRST OXFORD ROADS WERE INDIAN TRAILS

*Author Unknown*

The first roads in Oxford County were by no means smooth. These were trails used by the Neutral Indians, who inhabited the area around 1615. The present stage road follows one of these trails from a point near Brantford to Ingersoll. The second "original" road ran from about Ingersoll down to the shores of Lake Erie.

Not too much is known about the early roads in the area until about 1783, when Upper Canada was opened for settlement and was populated by United Empire Loyalists.

In 1796 the Indian trail from Ingersoll to Brantford was opened up and improved by Governor John Graves Simcoe. Sections of this road can still be found running south of Woodstock.

### **ORIGINAL:**

The present Highway 2 and Governor's road formed part of the original system of roads joining Toronto and Detroit, built at the same time.

Considerably more improvement was worked on the Stage Road between 1804 and 1812 and the road was considered a significant military importance. Road work at that time was in the form of labour and materials donated by property owners along the way.

### **PUBLIC FUNDS:**

The first record of public money having spent on any road within the county was in 1806 when £1,600 was appropriated for the improvement of the Old Stage Road.

Commissioners were appointed by the Governor of the time to direct the flow of public funds, and it appears not all the commissioners were honest men, as an audit of the accounts for the years 1831 and 1834 turned up that only £71 had been accounted for out of a total of £615 allotted.

With the 1850 establishment of Township Councils, the responsibility of roads was given to the Townships. When Oxford became a County in 1850, came the establishment of the first county roads. These consisted of the roads and bridges forming the boundaries of the local townships.

A total of £370 was allotted for the first county roads, Five shillings a day was pay for Reeves of the local Townships appointed by the county to superintend and layout the work on County Roads.

Inflation did not seem to plague the county roads, as the sum of \$3,000 spent on the system annually did not change between the years 1863 and 1896.



In 1885, the County ran into a row with the private toll road companies. A private company took steps to assume control of and charge tolls on, the road from Woodstock to Sweaburg. A Speedy county bylaw declared the Woodstock and West Oxford Plank and Gravel Road Company could not have control.

## NO RACING

Traffic was a problem. In 1875, County bylaw number 193 forbade racing and the use of blasphemous or indecent language and set out the general rules of the road, like keeping to the right when meeting another vehicle.

At the turn of the century, tired of arguing with private road companies, the county decided that toll roads should be taken over and maintained at the general expense of the county.

A sum of \$35,000 was finally agreed upon in 1904 to purchase the roads from their owners.



## 1830 - 1850 Period - A Development Era

B. Jenvey

In the period from 1830 to 1850, Ingersoll enjoyed a steady development. A large foundry was erected on Charles street by W. A. Rumsey, where articles were made of iron which were in demand at the time. The first steam boiler for power purposes was made in this foundry. (*Steam was beginning to replace water as mill power.*) Dr. Carroll erected a flour mill on the north-west corner of Charles and Carroll Streets. Charles Parkhurst built and operated a carding mill on Charles Street West. Elisha Hall erected two saw mills, one on Canterbury Street, and the other on Thames street which later burned down and a flour mill was built on the old site.

Most of the business institutions established earlier increased in capacity and importance, especially those handling lumber or grain. During this period, Ingersoll was doing a good exporting business in grain, flour, lumber, manufactured goods and small quantities of farm-made Cheddar cheese. There were no railroads at this time, and all goods were hauled to market by horses, with London and Hamilton being the principal markets.

Stage coaches furnished a means of transportation and these increased in number as roads were opened through the virgin forests. In the middle 1840's, six four-horse stage coaches passed each way through Ingersoll enroute from Woodstock to London each day. Horses were changed about every 15 miles.

### 30 TAVERNS

Taverns were plentiful in Ingersoll even prior to 1850. Between London and Brantford—a distance of 70 miles—there were 30 taverns.

In 1852 Ingersoll became an incorporated village and remained so until 1865, when it became a town. Things were rather quiet around this period except in a military way due to a threatened invasion by Fenians from the United States. Ingersoll organized a company of volunteers (*lead by Captain Wonham*) to help repel the invasion, and were called to service in the western section near Windsor. The Fenians came in 1866 and were defeated.

Prosperity again came to Ingersoll, and a steady growth was noted. In 1887, Ingersoll had a boom year when a number of important factories were built in the town.

### BANKS

As business increased, banks began to establish. The Commercial Bank, established in 1863, was taken over by the Merchant's Bank in 1867 and continued to operated in the brick building on Thames Street South until 1907 when a new bank building was erected on the corner of Thames and Charles Streets.

The Trader's Bank was instituted in 1887 by taking over the business of the Bank of London. This bank was located on King Street in the Norsworthy building.

The Imperial Bank, the progenitor of which was the Niagara District Bank, was established in Ingersoll in 1877. It was located on Thames Street South, next to the Merchant's Bank.

The Great Western Railway came in 1853 and the Credit Valley Railway in 1881.

Religious bodies were well established in Ingersoll and many churches had been built.

# STORY OF HISTORICAL SWORD

*S. J. Smith*

In 1866, when the Fenians threatened the invasion of Canada from the United States, the parliament of the province of Canada had to invoke conscription to call on men to defend their homesteads, because of the enormous drain on the youth of the province who were enlisted in the American Civil War to obtain state bounties offered in return for their services. The late Neil McFee, last surviving member of the Civil War in this district, received \$500 to substitute for a Detroit grocerman, and to his dismay, he was mulct fifty percent by the Windsor banks. It was estimated that between 40 to 50 thousand Canadians enlisted in the ranks of the warring factions and that many did not return due to the free land grants in Kansas and Nebraska, given to them as a gratuity. One must remember that Oxford County at that time was mostly forest and it took a lot of work with axe, wedge, and saw to clear an acre of ground, but Kansas and Nebraska offered a flat prairie mostly level, destitute of trees and covered with coarse tall grass.

There was one man in Oxford who foresaw the danger of an unprepared country. This was Captain John S. Henderson of North Oxford township. The county was subdivided into eight battalions and from these eight units, two were chosen to serve in Quebec at a place called Laprairie, to repel any attack from Rouse's point, N.Y., and vicinity. Beachville and North Oxford were the only two detachments from the Oxford militia to serve under the newly formed Canada Rifles. Captain Henderson requested the town council of Ingersoll to loan him the use of the town hall auditorium to drill his company. One councillor objected on the grounds that the North Oxford council should supply the needed space, and the request was refused. This was in 1859, but a new council in 1860 granted Captain Henderson his request.

From time to time, the INGERSOLL CHRONICLE reported on the activities of the Beachville and North Oxford forces along with other items from the Sarnia and Windsor frontiers concerning the Oxford Rifles. Upon the return of the officers and men from the frontiers of Quebec, a gala reception was given to Captain Henderson and his detachment, and the community, wishing to show their appreciation, presented him with a sword suitably engraved on the blade. It was acid etched with:- "J. S. Henderson, Canada Rifles, North Oxford." On the Crest of Canada Rifles is a beaver.

*(Note: It was hoped that the sword would eventually go to the Oxford Historical Society or the Oxford Museum, but it was inadvertently put up in an auction sale and bought by Mr. Wm. Bradfield of London, son of Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Bradfield of Ingersoll, for \$90.)*



## A CENTURY OF PROGRESS

*Author Unknown*

In the early days, before Ingersoll was incorporated as a village in 1852, it was merely a junction, where the Indians had for centuries, passed in their journeying.

The settlement itself, originally known as Oxford-upon-the-Thames, was founded in 1793 by Major Thomas Ingersoll. The home to which Major Ingersoll brought his family from Massachusetts still stand on the outskirts of Ingersoll.

Scarcely two decades after the family had settled here in Upper Canada, the Major's eldest daughter established her name as one of the most famous women in early Canadian history. She was none other than **Laura Ingersoll Secord**, who bluffed the Yankees that she was going to milk a cow, and got away to warn the British commander at Beaver Dam of impending invasion.

Laura's brother, Charles, was also intimately connected with the history of Ingersoll. It was he who gave the town its name in memory of his father, the Major. He also became the postmaster of the town post office, which was the first in the county.

Not only did Ingersoll boast the first post office, but also the first Canadian cheddar cheese, made on a farm just outside the town, by Lydia Chase Ranney. She had come in a covered wagon with her husband and children, from Vermont, to begin dairy farming in the district. Others followed her example, and soon cheesemaking became popular in the neighbourhood. Before her death in 1901 at the grand age of 100, Lydia Ranney saw her modest efforts grow into a county-wide industry, with factories replacing farm methods and a lucrative export trade bringing renown and prosperity to Oxford County.

Before the Civil War, the Americans exported tons of cheese to the British market. This export was curtailed during the war because of depreciated greenbacks and the demands of the union army. Meanwhile, on the outskirts of Ingersoll, a gigantic cheese was being produced in a specially-built factory, because of its size which was enormous. It was three feet high, six feet in diameter and weighed over three tons. This mammoth cheese took first prize for texture and flavour at the Saratoga State fair of 1866, and it was later sent to England where it captured the British market from the Americans. This event, according to reports, marked the beginning of many years of prosperity in the Oxford county town, henceforth known as "Cheese Town", and established Ingersoll as a leading dairy community.

Ingersoll is also recognized as the first organized market for the selling of cheese in Canada. A statement at the bottom of the plaque on the Post Office reads: "The Canadian Dairymen's Association was formed in Ingersoll in 1867."

The year 1867 also saw the building of a factory on the site of the present Ingersoll Cheese Company. This factory, later known as the Ingersoll Packing Company, was in reality, a pork packing factory, with the packing of cheese a minor sideline.

The nature of the business gradually changed from a packing and exporting industry to a processed cheese manufacturing plant selling to the Canadian market. Eventually, the port packing end of the business closed and most of the Company's building were torn down. In 1926, the Company became the Ingersoll Cream Cheese Co., Ltd.

## MILITIA STARTED IN 1798

### OXFORD MEN ALWAYS READY WHEN CALL TO ARMS CAME

*Author Unknown*

The summons to arms had been answered promptly during the time of the Fenian Raids in 1866, when two companies were called out and it is said that within less than one hour, the Woodstock company paraded in full marching order.

The history of the men who became know as "Oxford's Big Black Wall" goes back to the muster roll signed in Burford in 1798, when the groundwork for the militia in Oxford was laid.

In the same year, Col. William Claus was given authority to form a new regiment: the 1st Oxford Militia.

Records of early years are scarce, but in the War of 1812-1814, they took part in the capture of Fort Detroit, and won battle honours in a number of other engagements, such as those in Naticoke Creek, Lundy's Land, Malcom's Mills and Detroit.

*(A history of the Oxford Rifles has ben compiled by Capt. O. T. G. Martin.)*

The militia has a small part in the Rebellion of 1837, but the main difficulty encountered by the men was not so much that of battles, as of hardships.

"Our luggage train had such a hard time, that in one place, we had to build a bridge and hold it down with handspikes while the train went over. We had no rest, and little to eat; no salt at all, and our rations only frozen bread. We would gnaw at it a while, and then lay it aside to rest our jaws.

In 1863, the command was taken by Col. W. S. Light, who served only six months before his sudden death. He was succeeded by Major John B. Taylor. Active service for the militia cam again with the Fenian Raids when the members were called to border duty.

The eight companies which made up the Oxford Rifles were called the Woodstock Warriors; Embro Highlanders; Princeton Zulus; Ingersoll Invincibles; Norwich Cleavers; Strathallan Rangers; Tillsonburg Tigers; and Thamesford Blazers.

The Oxfords had never been without a piper and their band was 24 strong.

In 1868, there occurred the only case in the county history when the militia was called out to quell a civil disturbance. Captain Beard took 20 men to disperse a Woodstock crowd who were threatening two "whisky detectives". This was known as the "whisky riots."

At the outbreak of the South African War, the Oxford Rifles provided a small detachment to the Royal Canadian Regiment for service on the veldt. It was after this war, in 1905, that the Armoury in Woodstock was built as headquarters for the regiment.



A year later the regiment was reorganized as a city corps, with mounted infantry formed in the rural areas. The cavalry unit became well know as the Gray's Horse.

The summer of 1914 saw the Oxford Rifles again ready for active service. The regiment, under Lieut.-Col. W. T. McMullen, paraded in full strength the day after war was declared. Recruiting for overseas service began at the armories and within a few days, the Oxford Rifles quota was filled.

Among special units later formed, were the 71st and the 168th Battalions.

When the war finally ended in 1918, men from Oxford had seen battle at the Somme, Arras, Ypres, Hill 70, Amiens, the Hindenburg Line, and the pursuit to Mons.

Another war, this time in 1939, was the most devastating in the history of civilization, and the Oxford Rifles again took a heavy share of the fighting and returned with battle honours.

When peace came again, a new designation also came to the unit. In September, 1954, the Oxford Rifles and the Fusiliers of London merged, to officially become the London and Oxford Fusiliers, 3rd Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment.

# INGERSOLL

*Author Unknown*

Oxford's first citizens were United Empire Loyalists from the 13 original states of the United States, who fled to Canada when their lands were confiscated and declared forfeited by Act of Congress. They brought with them only the belongings which they could carry. Some came overland by way of New York and others came by boat or ox-cart to Oswego, Niagara and Detroit Rivers, (Which were the landing places for people who were going to settle in Oxford), and then followed the Indian trails which almost always ran along the rivers and creeks.

The river La Tranche (*now called Thames River*) was the most common waterway for the first settlers who came by way of McGregor's (*Chatham*) and Allen's (*Delaware*), and then on to Oxford.

In 1820, a very large boat could easily travel on the Thames, and was the main 'Highway' for travellers.

## HORNERS WERE FIRST SETTLERS OF OXFORD

Mr. Thomas Horner was the first white settler in the County of Oxford, and for many years was its representative. He was born March 17, 1767 at Bordentown, New Jersey, which was then a colony of Great Britain; married in 1801, by Col. James Ingersoll, J.P. <sup>1</sup>; and died in Burford, August 4, 1834, of cholera.

His uncle, Thomas Watson, Esquire, had, during the revolutionary war in the United States, rendered Colonel John G. Simcoe <sup>2</sup> an essential service, after he had been taken prisoner by the Americans. This service was not forgotten, and when Simcoe was appointed as Governor of Upper Canada in 1792, he wrote to Mr. Watson and invited him to come to Canada, and not only urged him to come himself, but "to bring all his friends and relations with him, and promised them a whole township <sup>3</sup> to settle on. The Governor not only wanted to reward him for his past services, but he also wanted to get the Province settled by individuals from the United States.

Mr. Watson, relying on the Governor's promise, sent his son Thomas Watson Jr., and a nephew, Mr. Thomas Horner, in 1793, before the land had even been surveyed. The governor received them well, and at once ordered that the three first concessions be surveyed by Surveyor Jones and his Indian party---*Afterwards named the Township of Blenheim.*)

While they were waiting for the survey to be completed, they selected a site for a mill<sup>4</sup>, then

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<sup>1</sup> *The father of James Ingersoll, Esq., the Registrar of the County.*

<sup>2</sup> *The first Governor of Upper Canada*

<sup>3</sup> *This was a usual practice and not really much of a gift in those days.*

<sup>4</sup> *It was the wish of Governor Simcoe that a mill should be erected to encourage future settlers, and was one of the conditions to entitle them to the township.*



returned home. Mr. Watson decided not to come back, but Mr. Horner had every intention of returning as soon as possible. (*At that time, the nearest white settlement east was on the Grand River near where Brantford stands now, and the nearest one to the west was where Chatham now stands*).

Mr. Horner resided for some time in Newark (Niagara\_ and then moved to the town of Detroit<sup>5</sup> and remained there until 1795, when the town was given up by the British Government---which was then in possession---to the American General Wayne.

Mr. Horner then proceeded to Albany N.Y., to purchase machinery and mechanics to erect a sawmill in Oxford---the first in Oxford County.

The transporting of these goods was done with great difficulty. He packed his goods in two small, roughly-made boats, which he launched on the River Hudson near Albany, proceeded up the Hudson to the river Mohawk and up this river about 100 miles; then they carried the goods and boats across to the Norvel Creek, then down the creek to Lake Oneida, across the Lake to the Oswego river, then into Lake Ontario; along the Southern coast of the Lake to the Burlington Bay beach, drew their boats through a small outlet of the Bay, and then across the Bay and finally landed safely near where Sir Allan McNab's Castle was later to be built (*and which still stands*).

The boats <sup>6</sup> were then stored for future use and the goods were drawn by oxen on roughly-made sledges to their destination in Blenheim. The mill was erected, machinery installed and all ready for work by the latter part of 1796, but before they had a chance to use it, the dam broke away and the mill was burned. Because of the lack of help, it wasn't until 1797 that the dam was repaired and the first lumber cut was used for the Horner homestead.

Mr. Horner also built the first grist mill in the County. This mill was accidently burned down in 1890 and never rebuilt. The place where these mills were erected was near the Governor's Road, just west of Princeton.

With the building of the mills, Mr. Horner met the requirements qualifying him to claim the gift of the Township of Blenheim promised by Governor Simcoe, as he had, at a very great loss, faithfully performed the parts of the contracts. In fact, he was in actual possession of the Township but Governor Simcoe's successor would not acknowledge his claim and he and many others were shamefully cheated out of his Township because it had become saleable at some trifling price, through his work and expense.

On March 22, 1798, he was appointed captain of the Norfolk Militia and on June 16, 1806, he was

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<sup>5</sup> *Now the city of Detroit, It was to be given up in accordance with the treaty of 1783, but was held on the grounds of infraction of the treaty on the part of the United States. By Jay's Treaty", it was formally given up in 1796.*

<sup>6</sup> *There was no road then from where Hamilton now stands, to Niagara; and the usual way to travel to Newark, the seat of Government, and to York, when the Government was moved to that place, was with a boat along the lake shore. These boats were often loaned to neighbours by Mr. Horner for that purpose.*



appointed Deputy-Lieutenant of the County of Oxford, but when the war of 1812 began, he was described to General Isaac Brock as being untrustworthy and not very loyal. Ensign H. Bostwick from the County of Norfolk was appointed as Lieut.-Colonel over the Oxford militia and Mr. Horner left, unemployed.

Mr. Horner's main reason for leaving the United States had been his great loyalty to the British Crown and he watched for his chance to help his country in any way he could. A way was soon found.

Different parties had many many unsuccessful tries to get the Grand River Indians to join General Brock in an attack on Detroit. Colonel Norton, who was the Indian agent, had only been able to get 9 men. Mr. Horner, who was well know and liked by the Indians, went immediately to the Grand River, collect 75 Indian warriors and marched to the scene of action in spite of a warning issued by the American General Hall, that he would spare no white man found fighting beside an Indian.

After only a few short weeks, he was dismissed and sent home, but he and his men had only reached as far as Pike's Creek on Lake St. Clair, when they were hurriedly called bat by General Proctor. He and his men immediately returned to the battle, and stayed until dismissed again. (*The whole cost of this trip was paid for by Mr. Horner and never paid back to him*). The next winter Mr. Horner ranked as a private when General Winchester was trying to re-take Detroit.

A periodical reorganization in 1822 resulted in the appointment of Thomas Horner to command the regiment with the full rank of Colonel. (*His Lieut.-Colonel was Charles Ingersoll*)

Mr. Horner was the first member for the County of Oxford in 1820, when it became entitled to a member by itself, and continued to be one of the members (*with the exception of two years*) until his death on August 4, 18324, from cholera. In the old journals of the House of Assembly, Mr Horner is often mentioned as chairman in the House and to committees.

As a magistrate he was allowed to marry anyone who lived over 18 miles from a Church of England minister and the first persons married by Mr. Horner were the father and mother of the lady of John Carroll, Esquire, land agent of the County of Oxford.

## THE INGERSOLLS

Few families have played as important a role in the history of Oxford as the Ingersoll family. Not only was the 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 the community of St. Marys in Perth County. They were also active in the settlements of the Niagara region, Port Credit and St. Davids.

This undertaking was nothing new for them, as from the time that the first Ingersolls arrived in the New England States, they were active in town planning.

Thomas Ingersoll and his sons, Charles, James and Thomas Jr., were the family members active in Oxford and Perth Counties.

\* \* \* \* \*

This family originated in Bedfordshire, England, where Richard Ingersoll was born in 1600, and John Ingersoll in 1615. In 1629, they left England and went to Salem Massachusetts. From here on, little is known of Richard, but a record was kept of John. It was from his descendants that the Canadian Ingersoll family originate.

John was married three times. After living in Salem, John moved to Hartford, Connecticut, where he was married in 1651. After the death of his first wife, he moved to Northampton, Mass., where his second marriage took place, and later moved to Westfield, Mass., where he was married for the third time. During his 17 years in Westfield, his house became know as the seat of early aristocracy. In its early days, it was used as a fort where the people would gather for safety from the Indians. It was here he died in 1684.

Members of John's family went out to become famous in American history as judges, legislators, ministers, inventors and soldiers. For some unknown reason, the spelling of the name is frequently found as "Ingersole".

### FIFTH GENERATION

The Thomas Ingersoll who settled at the site of the Town of Ingersoll, was a member of the fifth generation. He was born in Westfield, Massachusetts in 1749, and in 1774, his family moved to Great Barrington, Mass., where he met and married his first wife, Elizabeth Dewey. (*Thomas was married three times, and seven members of his family became famous in Canadian History.*)

After his first marriage, he purchased a tract of land and started business for himself, among the first being the Barrington Library. The house is still standing, as is the house on a side street which served him as a shop.

The coming of the revolutionary war three the country into a turmoil. The Ingersolls were Loyalists, and some of the family were imprisoned and suffered hardship at the hands of the revolutionists.

(*Thomas Ingersoll took little active part in the war although he served in the Militia from 1777-1781, and*



*in the troubled times of 1786-87, he saw service with the rank of Major.)*

This aggressive young man was 38 when he turned his eyes to the new lands of Canada. Offers were being made to Americans at that time, who would undertake to develop large tracts of land in Upper Canada and bring in at least 40 families of new settlers. With conditions so unfavourable in the United States, Thomas accepted the challenge, along with Rev. Gideon Bostwick, R. Williams, S. Hamlin, Able Kelsner, and others who applied for the right to take over a township in Canada on the condition that they endeavour to bring in settlers.

IN May, 1785, Thomas Ingersoll was married the second time. This time to Mercy Smith. She died in 1789 childless. She was married and buried by Rev. Gideon Bostwick, one of the co-signers for the Oxford Tract.

On March 23, 1793, Governor Simcoe granted them a township of land of about 64,000 acres, on condition that he would build costly roads and develop the land for new settlers. Mr. Ingersoll, along with Joseph Brant, Chief of the Six Nation Indians, visited what is now Oxford, and decided on the land along the La Tranche (*Thames*) River as the site of their township. This plot was later to become the town of Ingersoll.

He then returned to Great Barrington.

Two years later, Thomas and his family returned to Canada. They stopped off at Queenston where they stayed for another two years before pushing on westward to Oxford-on-the-Thames, and after much hardship reached the spot he and his Indian friends had chosen for their camp, a spot now on Thames Street, Ingersoll. There, he cut down a huge basswood tree and began the foundation for his new home.

The following shows the petition of Thomas Ingersoll for land in Upper Canada:

*(Note:- It was later found that Major Thomas Ingersoll was not an United Empire Loyalist. He enlisted with the Americans in 1776. It was for this reason that the Honorable Peter Russell, President of the Executive Council, cancelled the grant to Major Ingersoll which Governor John G. Simcoe had promised.)*



acres of land or ten miles square of uninclosed farm land.

(line obliterated)

Ephraim Williams, Abel Kelley, Seth Atanklin and the said Thomas Ingersoll by a grant made by the Governor and Council of the province of Upper Canada sometime in the Spring of the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three, said lands lying and being on or at the upper forks of the river heretofore known by the name of River La Trache no called the River Thames in the said Province of Upper Canada, which eight thousand acres of land is to be an average as to quality and situation of the said sixty-four thousand acres or ten miles square of land aforesaid to lie in a body or tract together and the said party of the first part doth further covenant to and with the said parties of the second part, their heirs, and assigns that if by any law, custom or usage of Nations, the said parties of the said second part cannot hold in fee the Lands aforesaid, in that case he the said party of the first part will pay to the said parties of the second part such sum or sums of money as the said eight thousand acres of land shall reasonably be worth on the grounds of the sales of Lands after having their directions for selling the same and the said parties of the second party do here-by covenant to and with the said party of the first part that in case the said party of the first part shall and does within twelve months from the date of these presents well and truly pay to the said parties of the second party the sum of four hundred pounds lawful money with the interest thereon from the date

Ingersoll

The Petition of Thos. Ingersoll

humbly sheweth

That he has been at great charge and expense in clearing, preparing and making the roads passable leading from the G. R. (Governor's Road) to the River Thames; that in order to promote and enlarge the settlement in Oxford on the River Thames I have expended a very considerable part of my own private interest. At present I know of no way in which I may fully (recompensed). I have a numerous family to support and educate which consists of nine children besides my wife, neither of whom have had any grant or appropriation of the Crown Lands. Your petitioners therefore pray you Honour to grant to this said wife Salley and to my children Laura, Betsey, Nancy, Misc, Abigail, Charles, Thomas, Appy, Charlotte, Samuel such quantity of Land as your Honour may deem equitable and just.

This Indenture made this twenty second day of April in the year of our Lord seventeen hundred and ninety-five between Thomas Ingersoll of Great Barrington in the county of Berkshire and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Esquire, of the first part and Silas Toppan and Silas Whiting both of Stockbridge in the same county, Gentlemen of the second part witnesseth that the said party of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of four hundred pounds of lawful moneys worth of merchants goods to him in hand paid by the said parties of the second part the receipt whereof is here acknowledged and of the Covenants hereinafter expressed on the part of the said parties of the said second part to be performed had covenanted and agreed and by these presents do covenant and agree with the said parties of the second part, their associates, heirs or assigns to sell them in fee eight thousand acres of land, part of sixty-four thousand



hereof they the said parties of the second part will receive the same in full discharge of this indenture covenant or agreement and the said parties of the second part do further covenant and agree that in case the said party of the first part, his heirs or assigns shall within one year from the date hereof well and truly pay to the said parties of the second party, their heirs or assigns, the sum of five hundred dollars with the interest thereof from the date of these presents, they will receive the same five hundred dollars and the interest thereof in lieu of three thousand acres of land, part of the eight thousand acres which the said party of the first part does hereby covenant

(line obliterated)

which the said party of the first part has not yet obtained a full title to the land aforesaid the said parties of the second part do further covenant to and with the said party of the first party a reasonable time to obtain a title to the land aforesaid to obtain which the said party of the first part doth hereby covenant to and with the said parties of the second party that he will diligently pursue and follow all legal and laudable methods.

Finally the party of the first and the said parties of the second party respectively do for themselves and their respective heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns faithfully covenant, promise and agree to and with each other, their heirs, administrators, and assigns faithfully covenant, promise and agree to and with each other, their heirs, executors, administrators and assigns that they will faithfully and specifically keep fulfil and perform all and singular the covenants which on the part of the said first party and on the part of the second party is and out to be kept, fulfilled and performed against which there shall be no relief in equity. In testimony thereof the said party of the first party and the said parties of the second part have hereunto interchangeably set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

Att. Cyrus Williams  
Thomas Dipier

(signed)

Silas Teppan  
Silas Whiting  
Thos. Ingersoll



# THOMAS INGERSOLL

## BIG ROAD BUILDER

Efforts of Thomas Ingersoll in developing the present area are described in part in the Upper Canada Gazette of September 13, 1799. The extract reads:-

The settlement from the head of Lake Ontario began about four years ago...excepting the Mohawk Village. In this period, several townships have so far increased in population and cultivation, that there are several neighbourhoods at convenient distances, until we come to the mouth of the river La Tranche or Thames; and supplied with more than sufficiency of produce of their own raising for the residents. Oxford has this year, one thousand bushels of grain more than will be consumed within itself. The settlements in these townships are commenced at a period when the undertakers and their followers were under every possible discouragement common to a new country.

Among these were Mr. Thomas Ingersoll, an enterprising man of considerable property, and who held the minutes of the Executive Council for Oxford as his own; but not until most or all of his property was expended, did he discover, with others, that the business they were engaged in, was in fact, that which was to end in nearly or quite their ruin, by the escheating of the townships...a measure necessary to prevent speculation, and to do which discrimination could not be made. This taking place, for a while checked the rapid population of the province by hardy and well-disposed husbandmen who had just learned the value of the country. Mr. Ingersoll in particular, being already in the country with a numerous family, pursued his plan of improving the township, by removing thither and may other families at his own expense, and persuading others to remain, who had entered in it. They were all confirmed by the government in the small tracts they had begun on, as well as all the actual settlers in the other townships.

These settlers, being aware of the importance of roads in raising the value of property, early set about to open and extend them and notwithstanding the numerous discouragements, and the immediate necessities of their families, cut and bridged a road from Burford to La Trache through a wilderness of 25 to 30 miles. This was done previous to the escheating of the townships. Mr. Elisha Putnam of that township (Oxford) by subscription has since continued the road from thence, 30 miles to Allen's (Delaware) Township.

There is a villa and a church raised and now finished by Mr. E. Allen, after the model of that of the Mohawk Village. The subscriptions, being inadequate to completely finishing the road, it was left in a unfinished state, but passable for sleighs.

He has been by no means discouraged, but issued a subscription to cut a road from Allen's to the Moravian Grant, a further distance of 50 miles, to be ten feet wide, and the logs laying crosswise, to be cut out 12 feet long. Without waiting the issue of the subscription, and relying on the patriotism of his neighbours and gentlemen in other parts of the province who hold lands upon that river, the Thames, he began, and has already opened half the distance, and promises, if the liberality of his friends be equal to it, that he shall immediately complete the whole. The Moravians will extend it seven miles, when it will form a junction with the old road, from whence there will be a good wagon-road 40 miles to the mouth of the river. Thus, we shall have the ensuing winter, a land communication with Detroit, and not a day's ride without settlements. Such is the enterprise of our western inhabitants, that 150 miles of road are made without the least allowance from government.

His own private fortune was being poured into the development, and as the money dwindled, his troubles mounted. His partners had died or left him, and he was resented by the people who had settled there before he had received his grant. The final blow came when Governor Simcoe was removed. His successor rescinded the grant in 1805, and steps were taken to reclaim much of the land held by American settlers.

Major Ingersoll was not able to take his case to the government in England due to the fact that he had put all his money into the development, so he had to accept the ruling of the local authority, and therefore lost this township. He was allowed to keep his farm.

Unable to obtain what he believed was a fair settlement for his labour and investment, broken-hearted Thomas Ingersoll did not remain here long. He left the young community and move to Toronto and took up land at Merrigolds Point in Etobicoke Township. He died at Port Credit in 1812, the year United States and Canada went to war to decide the ownership of Canada, but his sons were to continue the work of pioneering and building a young town.



## Charles was the Oldest Son

Not much is heard of the Ingersoll family until 1817, when Charles, the oldest son, re-purchased the family farm at a sheriff's sale at Oxford where he sent his younger brother James to take possession.

Prior to this, Charles had served in the army and was attached to General Isaac Brock's staff where he, along with William Hamilton Merritt, led a troop of dragoons known as the Provincial Light Dragoons. They saw much action, including the battle at Maumee in which the Americans were defeated. After this, he joined a partnership with Amos McKenny, and opened a business at Twelve Mile Creek. (*St. Catharines*). He remained there until 1821, when he and his family moved to the family farm, which was fast becoming a settlement. (He was married to Gertrude Carroll, daughter of John Carroll.)

On January 6, of that year, he was appointed postmaster and shortly after, as a magistrate. He was also a commissioner of Court of Requests.

In his official capacity, Charles Ingersoll took a leading part in the development of the district. As Commissioner, appointed by the government, he laid out the boundary lines between Oxford and Middlesex Townships. He was a Lieut.-Colonel in the Second Oxford Militia until his death. He was twice returned as member of Parliament (1824-29 & 1830).

In 1832, an epidemic of cholera swept through western Ontario. Charles Ingersoll was stricken and became one of the victims of this dreaded disease. He died August 8, 1832.

In his will, Charles Ingersoll definitely gave the name Ingersoll to the community that was fast materializing around his father's farm. He gave the name of "Ingersollville" in honour of his father.

Years later, by proclamation bearing the date of September 12, 1851, the Village of Ingersoll was officially created, the proclamation to take effect "the following first day of January." Thus, began one of the most historic and most progressive towns of Western Ontario.

### JAMES FIRST OXFORD BORN

James Ingersoll, who was the youngest son in the family, perhaps played the most important part in their role of pioneers of Western Ontario. From the day of his birth, he was destined to fame. He is considered to be the first white child to be born in Oxford. He was also the **only** member of the family to be born here. All the older children had been born in Great Barrington. The youngest daughter, Sarah, was born in Etobicoke after the family had left Oxford.

James was still only a lad when the War of 1812 broke out, but he had a very good understanding of the different Indian dialects, and did honorable service as interpreter and counsellor of the Indians. This friendship lasted all through his lifetime. Members of the Six Nations Tribe were often his guests both at Ingersoll and at Woodstock.



## IMPORTANT ROLE

He was still in his teens when his older brother, Charles, purchased the family farm and sent young James there to look after it. When he arrived there, he found the place in ruins.

He went to work at once to make improvements. The first step was a sawmill, which he put into operation on April 14, 1819. With the mill operating, he began building a new home, to be known down through the years as the Ingersoll House. The following year, he started building a grist mill, which was equipped with one set of milling stones. He also laid out a store, distillery and an ashery.

In 1822, at the age of 21, he began the business of being a store-keeper, a vocation in which he was very successful.

## MANY POSTS

James played an important part in the formation of Ingersoll. He was a postmaster, a magistrate, and for many years, was agent for the Gold Bank. As magistrate, he had to perform marriages, among other functions, and his office was a centre for official duties. He usually acted as returning officer at elections and was strongly involved in many political upheavals. He served as a Major during the rebellion of 1837. Later, he was appointed Lieut.-Colonel of the Militia for the South Riding of Oxford.

James was well on his way to becoming a prosperous citizen, when he was appointed Registrar of Oxford County<sup>7</sup> in 1834. (*A post he held for 52 years*)

This post came as a surprise and under very unusual circumstances. Two of his friends, Col. Askin and John Harris were in Toronto at the time of Co. Horner, the previous registrar's death. While there, they met with Hon. J. B. Robinson, Hon. James Crooks and Hon. William H. Merritt, and Sir James Colbourne. Sir James stated he would like some assistance in the appointing of a new registrar as several of his friends had already approached him for the position, and now he found himself in an embarrassing position. To this request, his colleagues replied that the proper man for the position was James Ingersoll, due to his family's record and his own personal war and business reputation. They were not sure if he would give up his business for the position. Askin was asked to approach him on the subject. After much consideration, Ingersoll accepted, thus saving Sir Colbourne's position with his friends. The office was to be kept in Ingersoll, but in 1848, it was moved to Woodstock.

In 1848, he married Catherine McNab. She died on August 9, 1886.

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<sup>7</sup> The appointment of Jas. A. Ingersoll as registrar for Oxford county was one of the main reasons that 155 Ingersoll and district citizens joined the Mackenzie rebels. Solomon Lossing of Norwich had been promised the position.

## HELPED BEGIN SETTLEMENTS

### LAKESIDE

James Ingersoll was also involved in the formation of Lakeside in East Nissouri. Seeing the potential value of a spot such as this, he purchased 300 acres in 1835. This was his first venture outside e of his native Ingersoll.

It was not until 1842 that a public building was erected at it served as the local school. During the years that followed, the village took shape. Squire Ingersoll sold off some of his land to Charles Mitchell, but did keep the land now occupied by the village. For many years his name continued to appear on the deeds and mortgages of documents.

In 1859, James saw the need of a brick yard, and he brought Charles Shrubsole over from Buffalo. The yard was opened on the site of where the Anglican Church now stands, along with a grist and sawmill. In 1861, he donated this land for the erection of an Anglican Church.

### ST. MARYS

Although not the person to whom the honour goes, James Ingersoll was the member of the Ingersoll family who began the settlement of St. Marys. (*It was then called Little Falls*)

In 1841, the township of Blanshard was surveyed for the Canada Company. In the fall, Thomas Mercer Jones, a Canada Company Commissioner, came from York to attend a land sale, along with L. Cruttenden. At the sale they met James Ingersoll, who bought the land on the east side of the River Thames, and his brother Thomas, who bought the land on the west side. The Canada Land Company gave them a subsidy of \$3,000 to use in building a grist and sawmill. These were built on the east side of the river. The lots purchased were Lots 17 - 18, Concession 17 - 18 of Blanshard Township. This is the area now occupied by the Town of St. Marys.

### THOMAS AND SAMUEL

Thomas Ingersoll was put in charge of the work and he moved some workmen onto the site at once.

In September 1841, Thomas cut down the first tree òn the site and in the township. He made a clearing and built a log cabin. Work progressed rapidly with timber taken out in the fall of 1841 and the sawmill was built and put into use. The grist mill was started the following spring and completed in the spring of 1843.

Thomas' son, John Ingersoll opened the first store at the corner of Water and Queen streets.

Along with the grist and sawmill, Thomas Ingersoll donated land for the Presbyterian and Anglican Churches. It was in his log cabin that a Methodist minister from London, named Evans, conducted the first church service, and preached the first sermon in the town of St. Marys.

Thomas was assisted in his work at St. Marys by a younger brother, Samuel Ingersoll, Thomas died at St. Marys in 1847, and Samuel remained there until his death in 1861.



## HEROINE LAURA SECORD WAS DAUGHTER

Laura Ingersoll was the eldest child of Thomas Ingersoll and Elizabeth Dewey, his first wife. She was born in Massachusetts before he came to Canada. She lived only a short time in Oxford, as she married Captain James Secord, and they went to live in the Niagara district.

They were there during the War of 1812-14. It was she who became a heroine in Canadian History by leading her cow through the American enemy lines to warn the British of a impending attack on Beaver Dam. (*She walked 19½ miles without shoes or stockings in order to give the impression of being simply a farm woman caring for her cow.*)

The advance warning enabled the British to give the Americans the impression that they were fighting a superior army, and the Americans surrendered. The victory was great encouragement to the British.

After the war her husband was given a pension and made collector of customs at Chippewas. The pension stopped when he died in 1841, and Laura was left to get along as best she could for 27 years. It was not learned until much later the brave deed she had done during the war.

In 1860, when the Prince of Wales (Edward VII) visited Canada, he learned of her desperate situation, and presented her with a cheque for 100 pounds. She died on October 17, 1868, at the age of 93 and is buried at Lundy's Lane.

## OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY

Two other daughters, Elizabeth and Myra both died shortly after their marriages and Abigail was raised by an aunt.

A daughter of his third marriage, Appolonia (Appy) was married to a son of John Carroll, who was another of the first settlers in the county.

## SUMMARY

Since those eventful days of the 1800's, many honours have been bestowed on the name of Ingersoll to show the results of their initiative. One member of a family has often excelled in his field, but with the Ingersoll's, all the sons carried on the work which their father had been deprived of doing.

This family can be listed with the names of Talbot, Dunlop, Galt and even Simcoe when it comes to people who made Western Ontario what it is today.



## FIRST RELIGIOUS SERVICE HELD HERE IN 1801

The first religious service held at Oxford, now called Ingersoll, was on August 1, 1801. This first service was sponsored by the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the minister was the Rev. Nathan Bangs.

Mr. Bangs was a rather remarkable man. He came to Canada from United States in 1799. After a very difficult journey from Niagara-on-the-Lake, up the north bank of the river, through the dense forest that covered the heights, Mr. Bangs at last got his first view of that wondrous scene of the turbulent waters of the river rushing down the two or three mile stretch to where they plunged in two great masses into the yawning abyss of mist 170 feet below, and then sweep away in swirling eddies and billows to the mighty whirlpool. The incessant roar and thunder, the solemn grandeur, the indescribable power, beauty and sublimity of the scene so impressed Mr. Bangs, that it made him realize the awe and majesty of his Creator.

He attended a Methodist Episcopal service while at Niagara, and he conceived the idea that he could be of much service to his fellow mankind if he himself should become a travelling preacher and carry religious instruction to the settlers in Canada West.

After a journey from Niagara over the ancient trail, through Ancaster and Burford, the preacher rode into the settlement of Oxford. Many of the settlers who came with the Ingersolls were former members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but since for eight years, they had been in their forest homes without any organized worshipping of any denomination, they welcomed this man, and received him with friendship. The news of his arrival soon spread along the trails and blazed lines of the settlement, and nearly the entire population turned out for this great occasion, and helped to form a religious society for organized worship in Oxford.

### TOLD WHO HE WAS:-

In conduction this first meeting, Mr. Bangs followed his usual procedure. He first satisfied his congregation as to who he was, and what he had come for. He would begin his talk in the following manner: "My name is Nathan Bangs. I was born in Connecticut on May 2nd, 1778. I was born again in this province in May, 1799. I commenced itinerating as a preacher of the Gospel in September, 1800. On the 18th day of June, I left New York for the purpose of visiting you, of whom I had heard of two years ago. After a long, tedious journey, I am here. I am bound for the Heavenly City, and my errand among you is to persuade as many as I can, to go with me. I am a Methodist preacher and my manner of worship is to stand while singing, kneel while praying, and to stand while preaching to the people, who are sitting. As many of you as see fit to join me in this way can do so, and the rest may choose their own way. The result was that when he stood to sing, they all stood; when he knelt to pray, every man, woman and child, both white and Indian, all knelt down; and when he asked them if they would like these service continued at stated intervals, they all stood up.

Rev. Bangs stayed at Oxford until August 9, 1801, when he started on his journey westward over the Thames Valley Trail, past the confluences of the north and south branches and the old fortified camp of the Neutral Indians, near the present site of London, and on the Delaware. At this settlement, he was treated to the luxury of a bundle of straw for a bed, which proved far more

comfortable than sleeping on the ground in the forest. The journey of the missionary over the difficult trail to Detroit and back to Oxford took several months, and was packed full of interesting happenings. Near Wardsville he visited the log cabin of a French Canadian settler, and they were so delighted to have a visitor from the outside, that the good wife, knowing of a neighbour who had hoarded some tea brought from the Old Land, begged some from her to make tea in honour of such a great occasion. Having neither tea cups nor kettle, she scoured the dish pan, brewed the tea, and treated the honoured guest to this refreshing beverage.

On his return, he brought back a rather sad account of the sufferings of many of the settlers because of ague and fever, caused by the miasma from the vast stretches of swamp lands to the west. He, himself, had to spend many nights in the woods, lying on the snow-covered ground trying to sleep amid the howling of the wolves.

So far, all meetings had been held in private homes or in the school house, so Mr. Bangs set out to form the first religious society here for the Methodist Episcopal Church, and they were the first organization to own a church property. In the year 1819, the site of the present West Oxford Church was definitely used for services of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The following information is from a copy of the original deed or transfer of land in West Oxford in 1823, and is one of the treasured possessions of a great grandson of one of the principals mentioned in the transfer. This deed of land reads in part:-

"A memorial to the registrar pursuant to the laws of Upper Canada of our indenture of bargain and the sale bearing date at Oxford in the district of London, in the said province, the twenty-ninth day of November in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-three, and made by and between John Galloway of Oxford, aforesaid yeoman of the one part and Joel Piper, Robert Corson, Jacob Wood of the Township of Oxford district yeoman and Isaac Burdick and Thomas Wait of the Township of Zorra yeoman, trustees for the Methodist Episcopal Church, etc., whereby the consideration of five pounds of lawful money of the said province."

In short, the site of the present West Oxford Church was transferred to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church for 5 pounds and the original deed was registered as Article 984, February 19th, 1824, sworn to by Comfort Sage and Stephen H. Teeple and signed by Thos. Horner, registrar.



## JOHN CARROLL...LIVED TO AGE 102

### BEACHVILLE

When John Carroll of New Jersey followed the Indian trail to the upper reaches of the La Tranche in 1784, and built a cabin on what later became Lots 23 and 24 of North Oxford, he became the first known white settler in Oxford County.

The property lies east of Beachville, and west of the sideroad running from the river road north to the Governor's Road. The last 70 years of his remarkably long life (1753 - 1855) coincided with the first 70 years of white settlement in Upper Canada. He waited 69 years for a railway. He died at the age of 102, and was buried in the family plot on the home place. When the Ingersoll Rural Cemetery was opened about 1863, the bodies were removed to there.

John Carroll brought in his family in 1789, and his obituary states that there was then "a considerable settlement" in the district. It was served by a miller named Beach. His mill was the first between Ancaster and Detroit, and his name was given to the district when Postal Service for the whole area and remained so for 30 years.

Carroll rejoiced when the Governor of Upper Canada visited the district in 1793. Surely development would follow. It did. An American, Thomas Ingersoll, was given a whole township, and settled it with other Americans, and encouraged those who were already there to stay, and ---glory be!---he began to build a road! Surveying started on the south side of the river.

### INVASION FEARED

By 1798, fear of invasion spread even to this isolated settlement. Col. Wm. Clause was sent up from Niagara to train the men for defence, and the Oxford Militia was formed with four companies.

1799 was a good year---the settlement raised enough grain for its own use and some for export. Surveying began north of the river. Surveyor Hambly stayed at an Inn in Beachville.

In 1804, a Methodist preacher held a few meetings. Lord Selkirk went through, looking for a place to locate some settlers, but he reported Oxford was too isolated and backward. In 1805, Carroll applied for his land.

### WAR CAME IN 1812

Carroll had nine sons. Henry went off to Niagara and was killed at the Battle of Stoney Creek, June 16, 1813. Next year, John Jr., (*who was married to Appy Ingersoll*) was captured along with other local men, by the traitor, Westbrook, from Delaware. They were forced to take turns riding Westbrook's horse, which was a well-known pinto.

A rescue party followed them downstream and John Jr., was shot and killed by his best friend, who mistook the rider for Westbrook. He is buried in West Oxford United Church Cemetery.

The oldest son, Abraham, ran the first good hotel in London. Isaac, James, Jacob, Cornelius and



William were farmers. James became sheriff of Oxford, and office he held for more than 20 years. Daniel was very active in business in and around Ingersoll.

John Carroll had two daughters; Nancy, who married James Fuller, blacksmith of Beachville, and Gertrude, who married Charles Ingersoll, who opened the first store there, in 1822, and got permission from the government to open a Post Office called Oxford, which was not changed until 1852.

#### **SAW BEACHVILLE GROW:-**

John Carroll saw the first schools, the first land sales in 1830, the start of stage-coach lines in 1832, the first quarrying on the river flats, the influx of the English in 1833. He was Beachville grow into a thriving place with two "good stores" in 1833, and a variety of other smiths' shops, a brewery, grist and saw mills, and painted houses.

In 1837, John found himself living midway between the leader of the local rebels, and the Commanding Officer of the loyal Militia. This was again a time of terror for the settlement in Oxford. Everybody suspected everybody else. Homes, life and stock were destroyed. The rebel leader, Cunningham, was captured and hanged.

In 1846, Beachville at last got a good, substantial bridge over the Thames, built by A. Carroll for 79 pounds, five shillings.

At last when John Carroll was 101 years old, the first railway line came through Western Ontario, cutting across the foot of John's land.

On December 15, 1852, the first train went through at the spanking pace of six miles an hour, drawn by a tiny, huge-stacked, wood-burning locomotive.

This new service brought long lines of wagons down from the north, drawing grain to be shipped from Beachville, which was now, according to reports, "one of the busiest towns in Oxford."

## ELISHA HALL WAS VICTIM OF REBELLION

### INGERSOLL

In his later life, William Lyon Mackenzie once said that he was sorry for everything he had ever said or done that brought on the Rebellion of 1837 - 1838 in Upper Canada.

It resulted in the hanging or banishment of many of those who supported him, the voluntary removal of others to other countries never to return, and much destruction of property, and it left the infamous Family Compact more firmly in power than ever.

One of those left was Elisha Hall of Ingersoll. He was a staunch reformer, and from the outbreak of the Rebellion, was held a prisoner in his own house, with guards surrounding it night and day.

Every night his wife took two pails and went to the house next door for water. One night Elisha Hall dressed in his wife's clothes, and taking the water pails, walked through the guard and escaped.

Leaving his wife's hoops in the bush, he made his way south to the lake. On one occasion he was hiding in a barn when a search party came along, but the farmer kept them talking and Hall was able to slip out the back way.

We went to California. Years later, he came back, disposed of his property and returned to the United States.

Elisha Hall built the first brick house in Ingersoll in 1836, from bricks made on his own farm. The cellar was paved with square bricks two inches thick which were only removed when a new owner took possession. It is now the home of J. W. Ferguson.

Early photographs show that the veranda was not added until after 1836.



## VILLAGE OF INGERSOLL HAD ONLY 20 FAMILIES IN 1828

In 1823, the Village of Ingersoll contained only about 20 families. The houses were all built of logs, except for about two or three frame houses. Of these frame houses, one was the Ingersoll homestead on Thames Street, and another at the corner of King and Wonham Streets. These homes were considered mansions in those days.

There were two general stores where goods could be purchased in exchange for bushels of wheat, pounds of pork, or Pounds, Shillings and Pence, American or Mexican dollars or Spanish pieces of eight. It was common practice to exchange tea or sugar for gallons of whisky or pounds of candles.

There was a tannery, two saw mills, a grist mill, an ashery, a cooper shop, a distillery, a blacksmith shop, a carding and fulling mill and a log schoolhouse. The only church was in West Oxford on the land granted by Joel Piper in 1819, on the present site of the West Oxford Church.

The following is a list of the male residents living in the Village:

BOYCE, James	INGERSOLL, Thomas	UNDERWOOD, George
BRIGGS, C. J.		UNDERWOOD, Joel
BRONSON, Daniel	KENNEDY, A.	UNDERWOOD, John
BRONSON, George	KENNEDY, Moses	
BRONSON, Seymour	KENNEDY, William	VANEVERY, Charles
BRONSON, W.		VANEVERY, Samuel
BURDICK, Caleb	MARICLE, Mr.	
	MAYNARD, William	WHITING, Gamaliel, Sr.,
CANFIELD, Abram	MAYNARD, Zenas	WHITING, Gamaliel, Jr.,
CANFIELD, David	MILLER, John	WHITING, Horace
CANFIELD, Joel	MERICK, Mr.	WICKWIRE, Mr.
CANFIELD, Samuel		
CANFIELD, Thomas	PARKHURST, Charles	
CARROLL, Daniel		
CARROLL, Reuben	RYAN, Peter	
CHAMBERS, Mr.		
	SCHOFIELD, Henry	
DOTY, Abel	SCHOFIELD, Lyman	
DOTY, Austin	SCHOFIELD, T. B.	
DOTY, Jacob	SHERMAN, J.	
DOTY, Nelson	SHERMAN, William	
	SMITH, Henry	
HALL, Charles	SMITH, Samuel	
HALL, Elisha	STIMSON, C. P.	
HALLAECK, Clark	STIMSON, G. G.	
	STIMSON, J. D.	
INGERSOLL, Charles	SWARTS, James	
INGERSOLL, James, Sr.		
INGERSOLL, James, Jr.	TITUS, Samuel	
INGERSOLL, Samuel		

Elisha Hall's home was at the east end of the Village on the spot later owned and occupied by James Fergusson: the Canfields lived just east of the Hall home; the Carroll home was on the hill, King Street, E., and Samuel Smith's hotel stood opposite the Ingersoll home on Thames Street, (*about where Zurbrigg's bake shop is now*). Samuel Ingersoll's dwelling and tannery were situated on the southwest corner of King and Wellington Streets.

Mr. Bronson was the local Methodist preacher and he and J. Sherman occupied a log dwelling on the west corner of King and Water Streets. (*The west end of what was later known as 'Ark block'*)

Sherman's cooper shop stood near his home. Scoffin's grocery stood on the south side of King Street East, near the dam. The ashery stood on the west side of the creek. The log distillery stood down in the hollow where the jog is in Water Street, just south of the creek.

L. Schofield's blacksmith shop first stood at the northwest corner of King and Water Streets, and was later moved to King Street West.

The Ingersoll store stood on the northeast corner of King and Thames in 1828, and was also used as the post office. The old house in which James Ingersoll was born, was in 1828 occupied by Mr. Miracle and J. Underwood. J. Doty's plank house stood near the southeast corner of Thames and Charles Streets.

The log schoolhouse stood at the north side of the grounds where the Victory Memorial School now occupies. At this time there were only a few homes on King Street, West of Thames, Lyman Schofield lived on King West, and Charles Parkhurst was at the corner of King West and Wonham. There were two log houses, one east and one west of the creek (*known then as Whiting Creek*) on the site of F. Fulton's mill. James Boyce, G. Whiting, James Swarts and Mr. Merick lived further west on Whiting Creek on King Street.

Mr. Ingersoll's saw mill stood on the present site of the dam at Smith's Pond, and Elisha Hall's saw mill was on the site of the old Stuart's pond northeast of Victoria Park. Charles Parkhurst's carding and fulling mill was on Charles Street, near Whiting Creek.

The log dwellings of the village generally had two rooms and a loft. A ladder standing in one corner was used as a stairway to the loft. There were no stoves in those days, so the homes were heated by large brick or stone fireplaces, usually at one end of the building and were built big enough to take logs that would make a bed of coals which would last through the long winter night.

The people of the village were poor and some of them would have suffered severely at times if it had not been for the helping hands of Charles and James Ingersoll.

There were no free schools and every family had to pay \$2 per quarter for each of their children who went to school, besides helping to board the teacher. This was a real burden to a poor man who had several children attending school.



1828....

Books used for schooling in those days were: Murray's Grammar, Woodbridge's Geography, Dabo's Arithmetic, the English Reader, and Webster's Spelling Book. The only qualification to be a teacher, was to be able to teach these subjects and to be a British subject.

The village had no church then, and religious services were held in the log schoolhouse or in private homes, and even sometimes in a barn. Methodist travelling preachers came around on their circuit once in two or three weeks on horseback, and were always welcome and had good congregations.

The village was just a small clearing in the forest, and although the people were poor and without many luxuries, they were never without food. They had only to go into the forest which abounded with game, or fish in the streams which teemed with fish, or barter with the many Indians of whom most were very friendly.

## INGERSOLL ONCE MAJOR LINK ON WESTERN ONTARIO WATER-HIGHWAY

Ingersoll's growth and development to the present-day Town of Ingersoll, Ontario, has been that of a stable community. Towards the end of the last century, as the town was involved in the front line of the dairy industry, its development pressed ahead vigorously. As a link on the Western Ontario water-highway, Ingersoll saw the construction of a river port and the passage of much water traffic.

### INGERSOLL-BURWELL PLANK ROAD WAS BOON TO LUMBER OPERATORS

In earlier days stage-coach connected the towns of Ingersoll, Tillsonburg and Port Burwell.

Port Burwell enjoyed several booms. It was inevitable that the mouth of the Big Otter Creek should attract the eye of those seeking a safe harbour, when roads were almost non-existent and most travel was done by the lake.

The country was a noble hunting ground. The Otter Creek was just what the name implied, a creek full of fine otters. Beech, maple, oak, ash, and stately elms, vast patches of pine, spruce, tamarack and all the evergreens that favour sandy soil, grew profusely. (*The historian Galinee called the region "the terrestrial paradise of Canada."*)

The axes of the United Empire Loyalists broke the silence. Hollowood, Hutchinson and Edison were the first names around Port Burwell and they were settled on the tract by Col. Talbot. Hutchinson and Edison both fought in the War of 1812, but otherwise there was little stir in the new colony until 1830, when Colonel Mahlon Burwell and Colonel Thomas Talbot surveyed the townsite that was later to be called after Col. Burwell. In order to encourage settlers, Col. Burwell made gifts of free lots to those who promised to erect dwellings thereon. Colonel Burwell proved to be a staunch friend and patron of his port, where he built an Episcopal church and endowed it with 600 acres of land. He also developed the harbour and organized a Harbour Company. By 1836, the population at the mouth of the Otter had grown to 200 inhabitants.

Now came the first boom along the Creek, and of course, it had to do with the magnificent timber along its banks. Oak trees fell first for the business of staving. Bayham became one of the busiest townships in the settlement. Shipments to the Quebec market were about 100,000 pipe and 400,000 to 600,00 West India staves in a year. In 1845, the exact number was 109,658 pipe and 624,707 West India staves. Much timber was also cut and floated down the stream and shipped from the port across to busy Lake Erie towns on the American side. Much was sent uncut in rafts as large as two miles long. Millions of feet of the finest grade of lumber could be seen at any time piled high along the banks of the Big Otter Creek. In 1849, there were 29 sawmills in the township.

All this activity in the lumber business necessitated improvements in the roads, especially following the Otter Creek inland to Tillsonburg, sixteen miles north, and an equal distance from there to Ingersoll, which by this time, had become an important point on the Governor's Road, cut through by the first governor's men from the Head of the Lake to the River Thames. Hence, in 1850, the plank road came into existence.



The plank road between Ingersoll and Port Burwell instantly proved to be a great boon to the lumber trade, and the long line of lumber teams was a familiar sight in those days. Not only did the port receive this lumber for export by water, but large quantities were teamed to Ingersoll. It soon became a famous stage route, too, and the four-horse stage was an important factor in the daily lives of the people.

In 1850, the valley of the Otter Creek enjoyed its greatest boom. An American company from Tonawanda commenced the pine lumbering business. They were wealthy and employed a large number of men. They bought the pine, floated it down the Otter, and rafted it across the lake to be manufactured on the other side. The large sums of money they distributed during a period of ten years, gave a great boost to the growth of the villages, but when they retired from business, nearly all the magnificent white pine had disappeared from the banks of the river.

George Tillson, founder of the town of Tillsonburg, cut the road from Onson's Corners (*Courtland*), as his family came along in 1826. He was a road-builder, as most pioneers had to be, and often expressed a desire to live to hear the stage-horn blow on the hill on entering Tillsonburg from Ingersoll. His wish was granted (*but how amazed he would have been if he could have come back forty years later, and seen the railroads, banks, large buildings and extensive facilities for trade.*) The tree under which George Tillson spent his first night in the open in this district has been religiously preserved. It is a conspicuous landmark on the Vienna road; a tall towering fir, overlooking the Big Otter Creek.

The road was constructed of heavy planks cut at the sawmill of E. D. Tillson, son of George Tillson. Toll-gates were established at certain points and it was a very serious offence to run a toll-gate in those days. It was a cheerful, noisy road, with many curves winding among hills, following the Otter's course. The stage barns were destroyed by fire about 1920, and the site was later occupied by the Tillsonburg Gray Iron Foundry.

The stage ran north in the morning and returned in the evening, carrying passengers and mail. The horses travelled over the planks made a deep, resounding noise and residents went to the post-office for the mail when they heard the stage coming, which was an event of great importance in that day.

Taverns located at nearly every cross-road between Port Burwell and Tillsonburg, with as high as sixteen on the old plank road, and six in Tillsonburg.

Though the plank roads were an improvement over the corduroy, they did not last forever. Some planks sank low in the mud and others had a nasty way of sticking straight up on end during the spring break-up. This route became a gravel road, and later a country road.

(The following is from 1852 records, showing the progress from 1849 to 1852)

### INGERSOLL & PORT BURWELL PLANK & GRAVEL ROAD

This Company was formed in September, 1849

President Benjamin VanNorman

Directors Thomas Brown, Ingersoll; Andrew Bodwell, Dereham; Martin Hubbard, Bayham; Mr. Francisco, Vienna.

*(No change in Directors from formation of the Company to 1852)*

Secretary & Treasurer

1849 R. H. Campbell

1850 James R. Ingersoll

1851 " " "

1852 J. M. Chapman

Office In Village of Ingersoll.

The whole distance of the road is 31 miles, of which 16½ miles is within the county of Oxford. The road is completed to Vienna, a distance of 28 miles, and the remaining 3 miles from Vienna to Port Burwell, under contract to be completed this present fall. (1852)

The average cost per mile of that portion of the road which is gravelled, is £275, and of that which is planked, £300 per mile.

The number of toll gates already erected is seven; another one will be erected when the road is completed.

The following statement shows the amount of toll received at each of these gates erected, for the Month of July:

No. 1 £19 15s. 0d.

No. 2 £19 0s. 0d.

No. 3 £16 0s. 0d.

No. 4 £17 5s. 11d.

No. 5 £13 0s. 0d.

No. 6 £22 5s. 0d.

No. 7 £18 0s. 0d.

Making a total of £185 5s. 11d., at this rate, for the 12 months, would be £2,224 11s. 0d., which would pay for the construction of 8 ¾ miles of the road.



## STAGECOACH JAUNT TO INGERSOLL WAS A HAZARDOUS AFFAIR

The Old Stage Road, which is a continuation of Ingersoll's King Street, although now only a secondary country road, was, in the very early 1800's, the main artery for overland travel between Toronto, Brantford and Chatham. Boats and barges plied the Thames and Lake Erie, but were slow and inconvenient, so all passenger travel was by stage-coach on the Stage Road. Even this form of travel was so dangerous, uncomfortable and inconvenient, that only those who absolutely had to travel, were found upon the roads: it was not uncommon for a person to take out life insurance before undertaking a long trip.

All varieties of folk used this risky manner of transportation. There were the Remittance men from England, in foppish and unsuitable clothes, pushed out of the family home to fend for themselves in the colonies; itinerant preachers, bringing the fear for "Hell-fire and Damnation: to their scattered back-woods parishioners; fast-talking salesmen with bags of samples, and often an officer's wife, newly out from England, to join her husband at his garrison post. (*She had likely heard endless tales of life in the Canadian wilds and was terrorized with thoughts of being scalped by Indians, or eaten by bears and wolves.*)

### BUILT FOR STRENGTH

The coaches in use in the early 1800's were built for strength and not for comfort. The coach driver sat on a seat on top of the coach, with the trunks and baggage behind him, and managed his four horses by four reins and a foot brake. The ungraded hills were often so steep that hard and continuous braking of the rear wheels was necessary, sometimes causing the wooden brake-locks to catch on fire from the friction. On some difficult and rough hills, the wheels were chained together and skidded down. The steel springs of later years had not yet come into use, and the coach body itself was suspended over the axles by rawhide straps which allowed it to roll from side to side and pitch up and down. The wheels were of wood with steel rims, and very high to give the axles maximum clearance, for often stumps and stones were left in the centre of the road, in hopes that sooner or later some irate freighter with several span of oxen, would pull out the stumps after smashing a wagon wheel on them once too often.

The army originally cleared the road through to Chatham in order to move troops and supplies, later turning the responsibility for upkeep of the road over to the townships. The townships in turn, made every property owner responsible for the road in front of his property. Some farmers soon found that if they let their road section get in bad enough shape, the heavy freighting-wagons would get stuck. The farmer then turned up with a good team of horses, and pulled the freighter out---for a fee.

It was always a toss-up as to whether summer travel was any more comfortable than winter travel. In Spring, when the frost came out of the ground, the dirt roads became quagmires, and the coaches sank in the holes---even on the main streets of the towns. In the open country, travel sometimes stopped for days because the creeks could not be forded where there were no bridges. In the heat of summer, the dust billowed up behind the horses in huge clouds, and covered the passengers, who were also harassed by flies and great swarms of mosquitoes.

Winter brought drifted roads, and passengers dressed in great buffalo and coonskin coats. Ladies were given footwarmers. These were metal boxes, which were filled with hot coals at every stage stop.

### INNS WERE VERY CRUDE

The coaching inns were spaced out along the road, generally at half-day driving intervals, but short stops were made at every post office for the coach carried the mail, and as the mail was usually all carried in one bag, it had to be dumped out on the floor and sorted over to find the letters for that community. The post office was also the local barroom and inn, and since a good deal of the innkeeper's business came from coaches stopping there, the drivers were always given free drinks in return for the customers they had brought in. In places where the inns and drinks were too close together, the driver was sometimes unable to get up to his high seat on the coach. If one of the passengers could drive, the coach would go on, but if no one volunteered, they had to stop for the night.

The earliest coaching inns were very crude, with log walls and shake roofs. The only thing that made them habitable in the winter was the great abundance of fire wood, stacked in great piles behind the inn, and hauled in three foot lengths, to be burned in huge fireplaces built of stone and clay. Some of the fireplaces had no chimneys and the smoke went out through a hole in the roof, or between the rough, uneven shake shingles. So much smoke stayed in the peak of the roof before escaping, that hams, and sides of bacon were hung there to be smoke-cured, and there was certainly no danger of flies bothering the meat with all that smoke! If the meat was left there too long before being used, it was often found to be as smoke-blackened as charcoal, and as hard as a rock.

All the cooking was done over the fireplace in iron pots, swung on a crane, and, as few inns had more than two rooms, the men passengers generally slept by the fire. In the summer, they slept in the barn or outside. The women passengers had to share a bed with the inn-keeper's wife or her often numerous children.

The Martin Stand Hotel, which stood on the Stage Road south of the village of Beachville, was an elaborate building for those days. It was a log building, with two stories and a stone foundation.

The Hagles built a hotel at the cross-roads, now known as "Hagles Corners, between Ingersoll and Salford. It was built of brick, (*Possibly because of clay pits nearby*) and still stands today. It was known as the "Wiseman House", at one time, and was the noon stop for the Port Burwell stage. The next stop was the Madam Huntly Hotel in Mount Elgin, a two storey frame building. At one time, there was another hotel there also, called the Gould Hotel.



Ingersoll's end of the stage line was the Brady House, where the Imperial Bank is now. The old horse barns, where the stage horses were kept, still stand in the alley behind.

Oxford County's one and only stage-coach robbery occurred between Ingersoll and Woodstock, on the Old Stage Road, in the early 1800's. An army major and his negro batman were travelling by coach to London, with a large quantity of gold for the army payroll. East of Beachville, the coach was stopped and robbed, but there is reason to believe that the major was in cahoots with the robbers, for his negro batman was never seen again. He was probably killed to keep him from talking, and his body buried. The gold was supposed to have been buried near Karns Hill, and for many years, a great amount of digging was done by local people in an attempt to find it. Several men from Centreville got tired of haphazard digging and went to consult a Gypsy fortune teller. She told them exactly where to dig to find the treasure, but warned them not to speak a word while they dug, or they would never find it. They started to dig a big hole and just as they thought they should be reaching the gold, a run-away horse and wagon dashed through the trees. One of the men inadvertently spoke, and they always said afterwards, that was the only reason they were not successful. Another story told is about a old empty barn that was never there, frequently used as a hangout, and a good place to cache a bottle of whisky. One old-timer needed drink, early one morning, and went to the barn to see if he could find a bottle. Somebody had dug up the earth floor during the night, and he could see where they had lifted out a box from the hole, for the prints were still in the dirt. Who they were, or what was in the box, nobody ever found out. Officially, the payroll gold was never found, but strangely enough, not too long after the robbery, the large mortgages on several local farms were paid off in full. In gold!

## THE TOWN OF INGERSOLL

This village was erected under the authority of the 12 Victoria, Chapter 81, Section 58, by Proclamation bearing date 12th September, 1851, to take force and effect on the following 1st day of January. Its limits were defined as follows:-

"Consisting of all that part of this Province, situated partly in the Township of Oxford West, and partly in the Township of Oxford North, in the County of Oxford, and lying within the following limits, that is to say:---commencing on the southerly bank of the river Thames, in the boundary line between lots number 17 and 18 in the broken front concession of the Township of West Oxford; thence along the said boundary line between lots numbers 17 and 18 in the broken front concession, and the boundary line between lots numbers 17 and 18 in the first concession, south-easterly, to the middle of the depth of the said first concession; thence along the middle of the dept of the said first concession, south-westerly to the boundary line between lots numbers 22 and 23; thence along the said boundary line between lots numbers 22 and 23, north-westerly, to the sought easterly bank of the river Thames; thence along the south-easterly bank of the said river with the stream, to a point in prolongation of the boundary line between lots number 8 and 9 in the said concession, and the prolongation thereof northerly, to the northerly limit of the allowance of road between the 3rd and 4 concessions of the said Township of North Oxford; thence along the northerly limit of allowance for road between the 3rd and 4th concessions easterly, to the easterly limit of the allowance for road, between lots number 12 and 13 southerly, to the north-westerly bank of the said river Thames; thence along the said north-westerly bank of the river Thames, up the stream, to a point in prolongation of the aforesaid boundary line between lots numbers 17 and 18 in the broken front of the Township of Oxford; thence across the said river to the place of beginning."

Exact number of acres including the village;---725 acres in North Oxford, and 997 acres in West Oxford, Total--1,722 acres.

Situated about twenty-one miles from London, Ingersoll was a considerable village, containing about 1,000 inhabitants. Most of it was built on the high banks along the east branch of the river Thames, which ran through it, and furnished water which supplied two grist mills and two saw mills, a carding and fulling mill. The village also had a foundry, tannery, distillery, etc., five churches---Episcopal, Free Church, Wesleyan Methodits, Episcopal Methodist, and Roman Catholic---and a daily postal service.



## THE POST OFFICE

The Post office in Ingersoll was the first one established in the County, and was known by the name of the "Oxford Post Office. It was established January 6, 1821, and CHARLES INGERSOLL, Esq., was appointed as the first Post-master; JAMES INGERSOLL, Esq., in 1834; and Daniel Phelan, Esq., in 1847. The amount of postages received in 1832 was £74 7s, 5d,; in 1833, £112 )s. 9d.; in 1834, £173 15s., and for 1850 and 1851 as follows:-

### Final Year Under Old Rate

Quarter	July 4, 1850	£71	10s	10d
Quarter	Oct. 5, 1850	£71	14s	1d
Quarter	Jan. 5, 1851	£68	10s	6d
Quarter	Apr. 5, 1851	£81	0s	3½d
		£292	15s	8½d

### First Year Under New Rate

Quarter	July 4, 1850	£56	1s	1d
Quarter	Oct. 5, 1850	£55	10s	6d
Quarter	Jan. 5, 1851	£55	11s	7d
Quarter	Apr. 5, 1851	£67	8s	10d
		£232	12s	0d

## THE VILLAGE COUNCIL

The first election was held on Monday, 5th January, 1852, at the Royal Exchange Hotel. James McDonald, Esq., was Returning Officer, at which election the following gentlemen were elected by the following votes:

John Galliford	82 Votes
W. A. Ramsay	97 Votes
Thomas Brown	72 Votes
Charles Parkherst	68 Votes
James Murdock	57 Votes

Edward Dotty was appointed Treasurer by the Council, and James Barrie as village Clerk.

## INGERSOLL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

This society was formed in 1847, and Ingersoll's first fair was held on October 20, 1847. The subscription for prizes amounted to £27 5s. 6d. C. E. Chadwick was the first president and Elisha Hall the first secretary. The fair was held on the river flats, between North Wonham and McKeand Streets.

The following shows the Society's officers, etc., from its formation in 1847 until 1852:-

YEAR	PRESIDENT	SECRETARY & TREASURER	DATE OF SHOW	SUB- SCRIPTIONS	GOVERN- MENT GRANTS
1847	C. E. Chadwick	Elisha Hall	Oct 20	£27 5s 6d	-- -- --
1848	C. E. Chadwick	Daniel Phelan	Oct 12	£40 15s	-- -- --
1849	Thomas Brown	Daniel Phelan	Oct 10	£39 10s	£110
1850	Elisha Hall	Daniel Phelan	Oct 10	£52 20s	£150
1851	Thomas Brown	Daniel Phelan	Oct 9	£50	£88
1852	John Mathews	Daniel Phelan	----	£77 13s	-- -- --

This Society was re-organized under the new Act, and the following Gentlemen were appointed as officers:-

President	John Mathews
Vice-President	C. E. Chadwick
Treasurer	Daniel Phelan
Secretary	John M. Chapman
Directors	Thomas Brown
	Adolphus Milne
	James Henderson
	Jacob Choat
	W. B. Maybee
	Copeland Stinson
	George Walker
	James Bodwell
	Robert Cameron



## "Schools"--FIRST TRUSTEE BOARD ELECTED IN 1852

### TOTAL OF 150 STUDENTS IN FIRST SCHOOL

The first Board of School Trustees were elected on Tuesday, the 6th day of January, 1852, as follows:-

William Barker	Chairman
David Paine	Secretary
John Buchanan	
Edward Morris	
Henry Schofield	
Adam Oliver	

There were only one school at that time at it had 150 pupils. The charge per quarter was 2s 6d currency. (*two shillings, six pence*). The teacher was James Izzard, with F. Reynolds as his assistant.

Authentic records for 1862-3 contain the following:-

There were several schools in the Village of Ingersoll in connection with the different denominations. The principal and public one, styled the Union School, being the common and grammar school united, is an excellent institution. It is a handsome two-story brick with ample playgrounds, well fenced. Average attendance 180. John Wells, head teacher; F. Atkins, second teacher, Samuel Schell, third teacher, and Sarah Hovendon, fourth teacher

The date of the establishment of the high school was not definite, but an old newspaper of 1873, announced that "the semi-annual examination of the high school will take place on Friday, 12th instant and in the evening the head master will deliver his lecture on Culloden in the town hall."

An interesting phase of a meeting of the school board in January, 1874, was urging by Mr. Buchanaan that bookkeeping should be taught in the high school. He instanced that he had taken his own son out of school to assist on his books and that "he did not know a journal from a ledger."

At a meeting of the school board in February, it is recorded that "Dr. Williams read a letter from T. M. McIntyre, headmaster of the high school, stating bookkeeping had been taught since the autumn term of 1872; that the subject was optional with students taking a classic course and compulsory with those taking an English course."

The following statistics were also given in connection with the meeting:- Number on register passed by the high school inspector 40; number on register previously admitted by the board of examiners 13; number who have not passed 12; number of pupils passed and previously passed for the month of January, 40.

The movement for the erection in ward one of a new school, now known as the Collegiate Institute, began in 1874. From a report of a meeting in April, 1874, of the school board, it was stated: "The second report of the building committee was submitted.: Further information in this connections showed that the estimated cost of the new building and grounds was \$8,000 with \$2,000 then being available.

The proposal to erect a new school grew into a controversy between the school board and council and was entered into by some citizens who openly charged the board with being extravagant.

They contended the cost of the proposed school would impose a hardship on the taxpayers.

The matter of a new school continued to be a growing issue. At a meeting of council in May, 1874, it is recorded that "the union board of school trustees present herewith to your honorable body, the estimates for a new school building to be erected in ward one, within the present year, 1874, and requests your honorable body to provide the sum of \$6,000 to be paid on or before the first of September next, the said sum to be raised by debenture payable in from 10 to 20 years."

From that time on, progress was made with the new school project. At a meeting of the school board in September, 1874, it is recorded, "a motion was adopted that the expenses of laying the corner-stone of the new school house and the reception to the Governor-General be paid."

In an article published a short time later in the Weekly Chronicle on the town's prosperity, a list of the buildings being erected was said to total \$144,000. The list included "the handsome, new brick school house, 2½ storeys, cost about \$9,000. Contractor, Christopher Bros."

This was Ingersoll's most forward step in early days for better education facilities, and it is interesting to note that the school erected at that time, with additions since, has long been known as the Collegiate Institute.

Other schools erected since that time are Princess Elizabeth Public School, also in ward one and near the Collegiate, and Victory Memorial Public School, centrally located. Princess Elizabeth was built largely through the influence of Fred A. Ackert, member of the board of education and a resident of ward one, who realized the growing need of better school accommodation for the children of that district.

Victory Memorial School was erected soon after the close of the First World War. It is a many-roomed structure and at the time of erection was strictly modern. Its name was suggested by Mr. R. B. Hutt, a member of the board of education and the building committee. It is a most imposing structure, located on Thames Street, south, only half a block from the business section and has well-equipped manual training and home economics departments.



## FIRST VOTE IN INGERSOLL

The first municipal election in the Village of Ingersoll was held on January 5, 1852. To be able to vote, the citizens of Ingersoll had to be: "A subject of Her Majesty the Queen, or one who had signed an oath of allegiance to the Crown, or be in possession of property worth 50 Pounds or more." The populations at that time was 1,190, including Negroes and children.

Below are the names and occupations of the principle citizens of the Village of Ingersoll in 1852, who voted at this first election. This is not a complete list because many would not vote and others could not vote because they didn't meet the qualifications. Returning Officer for this election was James McDonald.

Adams, Arthur, labourer  
Adair, David, merchant  
Archer, John, mechanic  
Allen, G. W., mechanic

Barnes, Laurie, yeoman  
Bower, John, labourer  
Beattie, Wm., merchant  
Barker, Wm., shoemaker  
Barker, Edward, shoemaker  
Brady, John, labourer  
Berry, Thomas, harness-maker  
Brown, Thomas, tanner  
Barker, Joseph, merchant  
Browett, Joseph, merchant  
Brown, James, baker  
Bunker, Wm., yeoman  
Buchanan, John, tinsmith  
Babcock, George, millwright  
Bowers, John, clerk  
Burke, Joseph, merchant

Carnegie, William, yeoman  
Connaught, Charles, bootmaker  
Crotty, Richard, yeoman  
Carroll, D., miller  
Canfield, Homer, mechanic  
Comstock, H. P., yeoman  
Chapman, J. B., druggist  
Carnegie, John, farmer  
Course, George, labourer

Dundas, Edward, shoemaker  
Donaldson, Jacob, wagonmaker  
Doty, David, blacksmith  
Doty, Edward, livery stable keeper  
Dunn, William, founder  
Delaney, Patrick, currier  
Daly, M., innkeeper  
Dunn, J., shoemaker

Evans, Daniel, labourer

Eastwood, Willard, merchant  
Elliott, Thomas, yeoman  
Evans, William, plasterer

Fursman, John, wagonmaker  
Fanner, Hugh, labourer  
Featherstone, William, joiner  
Fowler, James, carpenter  
Fawcett, Thos., labourer  
Fish, John, carpenter  
Farley, James, labourer  
Faulkner, Robert, labourer  
Forbes, George, labourer  
Fowler, William, labourer

Girham, Evan, sawyer  
Giolbert, C. W., minister  
Greig, James, miller  
Gordon, A., tailor  
Goble, John, teamster  
Galliford, Esq., John, bootmaker  
Gunes, James, bricklayer  
Gilchrist, Angus, labourer

Haining, Robert, tinsmith  
Holland, John, fiddler  
Harwood, E., painter  
Henderson, John, shoemaker  
Hill, R. P., teamster  
Hill, David, carpenter  
Holmes, Alex., carpenter  
Hall, C. P., merchant  
Haywod, William, painter  
Hall, Elisha, yeoman  
Houghton, Steven, labourer  
Hopkins, H. P., saddler  
Hewett, John, plasterer  
Harrington, George, bricklayer  
Hill Sylvester, yeoman  
Harris, Leonard, shoemaker

Izzard, James, teacher

Ingersoll, James A., yeoman

Jessup, Richard, labourer

Jarvis, G. T., distiller

Johns, Solomon, cooper

Jackson, J.R., merchant

James, John, cooper

Knott, wm., miller

Kelley, Robt., shoemaker

Kennedy, Peter, teamster

Linireau, Henry, teamster

Lawrence, M., carpenter

Lanson, J. W., blacksmith

Larkworth, William, carpenter

Lind, Edward, shoemaker

Leonard, John, tanner

Lawrence, John, joiner

Miller, Stephen, labourer

Mulleron, Alex., blacksmith

Morrison, John, tailor

Moore, Robt., labourer

Mais, Peter, Miller

Mais, Joseph, labourer

Mahoney, Patrick, weaver

Murdock, James, wagonmaker

Macklin, John, merchant

Mollison, John, mechanic

Moore, John, moulder

Murray, James, blacksmith

Mavor, Edward, carpenter

McDowel, William, labourer

McKenzie, John, tailor

McDonald, James, labourer

McDonald, John, merchant

McDonald, James, J.P., merchant

McNab, John, merchant

McKenzie, J. I., merchant

McMulkein, Christ., yeoman

McCarthy, James, physician

McDonald, Robert, merchant

McKay, Marshall, carpenter

O'Brien, Henry, tailor

Oliver, Adam, carpenter

Pickard, Hiram, teamster

Poole, Robert, yeoman

Peacock, Thomas, yeoman

Pillton, William D., shoemaker

Poole, H., teamster

Powell, J., labourer

Parker, C. P., yeoman

Parkhurst, Chas., clothier

Poole, Sam., tailor

Phelan, Daniel, J. P., merchant

Patterson, John, innkeeper

Paine, David, tailor

Phillip, Uriah, blacksmith

Quigley, Edward, lumberer

Robinson, Ephraim, chairmaker

Rumsey, R. H., founder

Shanley, Patrick, labourer

Sheedy, Robert, labourer

Sheedy, John, carpenter

Spur, G. A., innkeeper

Smith, William, wagonmaker

Schell, Daniel, carpenter

Snelgrove, A., mechanic

Steele, Aaron, mechanic

Schofield, Henry, blacksmith

Smith, L. F., minister

Taylor, John, carpenter

Tripp, Moses, bailiff

Urwin, John, yeoman

Venton, Stephen, labourer

Vanatter, James, labourer

Warwick, John, cabinetmaker

Walker, John, Cooper

Walsh, John, lawyer

Wilson, David, druggist

Webster, G. H. cabinetmaker

Weigh, Richard, mechanic

Wellfare, Edward, teamster

Walker, James, butcher

Webster, George, joiner

Wail, John, yeoman

Ward, Thomas, labourer

Wallace, Robert, minister



Of the names listed, the oldest residents were: Henry Schofield, J. A. Ingersoll, Patrick Shanley, Elisha Hall, John Goble, Daniel Phelan, Hiram Pickard, Thomas Brown, Richard Crotty, the Doty brothers, the Barkers, the Carrolls, D. Canfield, and J. M. Chapman.

Edward Doty was born in Ingersoll in 1799 and J. A. Ingersoll in 1801.

Other citizens living in the town at the time and who did much for this early development were:

Washington Bevans, (coloured)  
George Bartlett, (coloured)  
T. H. Barraclough  
Max Bixel, Brewer  
Leonard Bixel, Brewer  
James Brady  
Edwin Casswell  
Edward Comiskey  
George E. S. Crawford  
Henry Crotty  
William Cuthbert, candle and soap maker  
Rulley Deuel, and his daughter  
    Miss Caroline Deuel, who was Ingersoll's first lady teacher.  
N. McFee  
Wm. Frizelle  
Richard Fitzmorris  
Issac Greenaway  
James Greenaway  
Charity Harper, (coloured)  
Erastus T. Judd  
David Lockey  
Robert Kneeshaw  
John Boles  
Mrs. Ellen McCaskill  
William McDowel, (Ingersoll's first market clerk)  
James McIntrye, (the cheese poet)  
Hope MacNivan, auctioneer  
Edward Merrigold  
Mark Ollerenshaw (Ingersoll's first bandmaster)  
Elias Pickard  
James Pickard  
Thomas H. Rawlings  
John Roddy  
George Ross, coal and wood  
G. G. Stomson &  
J. D. Stimson, gorcers, (arrived at Ingersoll in 1827)  
Joseph Thirkell  
A. T. Tuttle  
Robert Vance  
James Vine, notary public  
G. W. Walley  
George Waters, horse farrier  
David White, drygoods  
William Wilford  
Ralph A Woodstock, bookseller  
W. G. Wonham, surveyor  
Miss Susan Young, private school teacher

# VILLAGE OF INGERSOLL DIRECTORY -- 1852

## NAMES & OCCUPATIONS

Adams, Arthur, Labourer  
Adair, David, merchant  
Archer, John, mechanic  
Allen, G. W., mechanic

Barnes, Laurie, yeoman  
Bower, Joh, labourer  
Beattie, Wm., merchant  
Barker, Wm., shoemaker  
Barker, Edward, shoemaker  
Brady, John, labourer  
Barry, Wm., tailor  
Byrne, Thomas, harness-maker  
Brown, Thomas, tanner  
Barker, Joseph, merchant  
Browett, Joseph, merchant  
Brown, James, baker  
Bunker, W., yeoman  
Buchanan, John tinsmith  
Babcock, George, millwright  
Bowers, Joh, clerk  
Brown & Bryan, saddlers  
Burke, Joseph, merchant

Cronk, W., labourer  
Carnegie, John, yeoman  
Cartnagie, William, yeoman  
Connought, Charles, bootmaker  
Crotty, Richard, yeoman  
Carroll, R. H. yeoman  
Carroll, D., miller  
Canfield, D., J. P. & Clerk, D.C.  
Campbell, Homer, mechanic  
Comstock, H. P., yeoman  
Chapman, J. M. druggist  
Carnegie, John, farmer  
Course, George, labourer  
Cerrey, Mrs., accoucheur

Dundas, Edward, shoemaker  
Donaldson, Jacob, wagonmaker  
Doty David, blacksmith  
Doty, Edward, livery stable keeper  
Dunn, William, founder  
Delaney, Patrick, carrier  
Daly, M., innkeeper  
Dunn, J., shoemaker

Evans, D., labourer  
Eastwood, Willard, merchant  
Elliott, Thomas, yeoman

Evans, William, plasterer  
Eastwood, Willard, merchant  
Elliott, Thomas, yeoman  
Evans, William, plasterer

Fursman, John, wagonmaker  
Fannor, Hugh, labourer  
Fish, John, carpenter  
Farley, James, labourer  
Faulkner, Robert, labourer  
Forbes, George, labourer  
Featherstone, William, joiner  
Fowler, James, carpenter  
Fawcett, Thomas, labourer  
Fowler, William, labourer

Girham, Evan, sawyer  
Gilbert, C. W., minister  
Greig, James, miller  
Gorden, A., tailor  
Goble, John, teamster  
Galliford, Esq., John, bootmaker  
Gunes, James, bricklayer  
Gilchrist, Angus, labourer

Haining, Robert, tinsmith  
Holland, John, fiddler  
Haywood, E., painter  
Henderson, John, shoemaker  
Hill, R. P., teamster  
Hill, David, carpenter  
Holmes, Alex., carpenter  
Hall, C. P., merchant  
Haywood, William, painter  
Hall, Elisha, yeoman  
Houghton, Stephen, labourer  
Hopkins, H. P., saddler  
Hewett, John, plasterer  
Harrington, George, bricklayer  
Hill, Sylvester, yeoman  
Harris, Leonard, shoemaker

Izzard, James, teacher  
Ingersoll, James A., yeoman

Jessup, Richard, labourer  
Jarvis, G. T., distiller  
Johns, Solomon, cooper  
Jackson, J.R., merchant  
James, John, cooper



Knott, Wm., miller  
Kelley, Robt., shoemaker  
Kennedy, Peter, teamster

Linireaux, Henry, teamster  
Lawrence, M., carpenter  
Lanson, J. W., blacksmith  
Larkworth, William, carpenter  
Lind, Edward, shoemaker  
Leonard, Joh, tanner  
Lawrence, John, joiner

Miller, Stephen, labourer  
Mulleron, Alex., blacksmith  
Merycold, Mrs.  
Morrison, John, tailor  
Moore, Robt., labourer  
Mais, Peter, Miller  
Mais, Joseph, labourer  
Mahoney, Patrick, weaver  
Murdock, James, wagonmaker  
Macklin, John, merchant  
Mollison, John, mechanic  
Moore, John, moulder  
Murray, James, blacksmith  
Mavor, Edward, carpenter

McKenzie, George, Blacksmith  
McDowel, William, labourer  
McKenzie, John, tailor  
McDonald, James, labourer  
McDonald, John, merchant  
McDonald, James, J.P., merchant  
McNab, John, merchant  
McKenzie, J. I., merchant  
McMulkein, Christ., yeoman  
McCarthy, James, physician  
McDonald, Robert, merchant  
McKay, Marshall, carpenter

O'Brien, Henry, tailor  
Ovington, Mrs.  
Oliver, Adam, carpenter

Phelan & Adair, merchants  
Pickard, Hiram, teamster  
Poole, Robert, yeoman  
Peacock, Thomas, yeoman  
Pillton, William D., shoemaker  
Poole, H., teamster  
Powell, J., labourer  
Parker, C. P., yeoman  
Parkhurst, Chas., clothier  
Poole, Sam., tailor  
Phelan, Daniel, J. P., merchant  
Patterson, John, innkeeper

Paine, David, tailor  
Phillip, Uriah, blacksmith

Quigley, Edward, lumberer

Robinson, Ephraim, chairmaker  
Rumsey, R. H., founder

Shanley, Patrick, labourer  
Sheady, Robert, labourer  
Sheady, John, carpenter  
Spur, G. A., innkeeper  
Smith, William, wagonmaker  
Schell, Daniel, carpenter  
Sneigrove, A., mechanic  
Steele, Aaron, mechanic  
Schofield, Henry, blacksmith  
Smith, L. F., minister

Taylor, John, carpenter  
Tripp, Moses, bailiff

Urwin, John, yeoman

Venton, Stephen, labourer  
Vanatter, James, labourer

Warwick, John, cabinetmaker  
Walker, John, Cooper  
Walsh, John, lawyer  
Wilson, David, druggist  
Webster, G. H. cabinetmaker  
Weigh, Richard, mechanic  
Wellfare, Edward, teamster  
Walker, James, butcher  
Webster, George, joiner  
Wail, John, yeoman  
Ward, Thomas, labourer  
Wallace, Robert, minister

## STREET NAMES HONOUR PIONEERS OF AREA

In spite of much suffering from fires, floods, and woods, Ingersoll has always rallied and moved forward. It has been the practice of landowners to remember those who made the town possible, by naming streets after them and their families, and in many casts, if it were not for the street names, many would have been forgotten.

Originally know as Oxford, the settlement was later named Ingersoll in honour of its founder, Major Thomas Ingersoll. Also in his honour are **Thomas and Ingersoll Streets**. The family was remembered with **Charles, James and Frank Streets**.

**James Street** was the part of Wellington street between Canterbury and King Streets, name after James Ingersoll, who was the first white child born in Ingersoll.

**Whiting Street** is named for Sarah Whiting who was Ingersoll's third wife.

**Merritt Street** is for Anna Maria Merritt, who married Charles Ingersoll.

*(The most famous of the Ingersoll family, Laura Ingersoll Secord, eldest daughter of Thomas Ingersoll and his first wife, appears not to have a street named for her.)*

**Benson Street** honours the Hon. James Rea Benson, and his son's name was given to Frederick street.

**Bond Street** is named for the relationship between the Merritt and Ingersoll families.

### LAID OUT TOWN

Colonel Wonham was the surveyor who laid out the town, and is honoured by **Wonham Street**. His family is remembered by **Francis, Ann and Albert streets**.

**Militia street** is named for a well-liked citizen Miss Militia Beakly, a step-daughter of M. McCaughty, a local lawyer.

**Duke Street** originally extended from Charles Street to Ann, but later the south end was changed to Earl. There is no record to show why.

**Church Street** was named because three churches were close together. The church of England was on the south side of King Street. The methodist was on the north side, and the Presbyterian Church was on Charles Street.

**Boles Street** is short, running north from Charles, east of Albert and was named after John Boles, an early merchant. **King Street** was named after the King family who were millers. It runs from the east to the west of the town, but at one time the part from Carroll Street eastward was called Commissioners Road.



**Concession Street** marks the front of the first concession, and when it was surveyed, it ran right through to Thames Street.

**Hall Street** is named for Elisha Hall, who built the first brick house in Ingersoll. His son was active in the Rebellion of '37, and was known as "Rebel" hall. Mrs. C. P. Hall, wife of another of Elisha's sons gave her name to **Martha Street**.

**Noxon Street** was name after James Noxon, founder of the implement works and one time Mayor of Ingersoll. His home was located on the grounds no occupied by Alexander Hospital.

**Holcroft Street** is named for Colonel Holcroft who was in charge of an Imperial regiment in 1812, and lived in Ingersoll for a time at the Tucker House, which he built.

#### VISIT RECALLED

The visit of Lord and Lady Dufferin in 1874 is recalled by **Dufferin Street**. Before that, it had been **Catherine Street** after Mrs. C. E. Chadwick, the wife of the mayor of the town.

In the southeast section, there are names of more historical people. **David Street** after David Canfield, whose father came from Pennsylvania and settled at Centreville; **Carroll** and **Daniel Streets** named for David Carroll; **McCarthy Street** named for Dr. McCarthy, son-in-law of Mr. Carroll; **Harris Street** honours the Harris family and the Harris Street settlement, while **Taylor street** is named for a Mr. Taylor who owned a large tract of land at one time.

John Carnage, son of a Scottish laird, who came to Canada about 1834, held 158 acres of land north of the river and when it was divided he chose names of Scottish families and battles. The street where his home stood was called **Carnegie street**, and his wife, formerly Isabella Thompson, of Edinborough, was remembered with **Bell Street, Catherine, Victoria, Helen, William, John and George Streets** were name for his children.

The Crimean and Peninsula War were commemorated by **Alma, Inkerman and Waterloo Streets**, while the distinguished soldiers were remembered by **Raglan, Cambridge and Cathcart Streets**. **Union Street** marks the union of the Crotty and Carnage properties. The eastern limit of the Carnage survey was **Mutual street**, the line being fixed by the mutual consent of Carnage and Carroll.<sup>8</sup>

#### MILL PROSPERED

Mutual Street does not meet Charles Street exactly at Carroll, and for this, there is a reason. It seems that Mr. Carroll owned a mill at what is now the north-west corner of Charles and mutual,

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<sup>8</sup> A Boundary dispute between Carroll vs Carnage brought this name. It was originally called **North Street**, but it was never registered on any official surveys. The Judge, trying the case advised the two men to settle it out of court. This was done and the judge asked if they were "mutual" in their agreement. When they both replied "Yes", the judge struck of 'North Street' and wrote in 'Mutual'.

which got a good deal of the business passing along Charles Street, but Peter Stuart also owned a mill out on Canterbury Street, near the end of Hall and Carroll Streets, and it was feared that farmers would miss the Carroll mill when they came in from the north and would proceed on to the Stuart Mill. therefore, Mutual Street was laid out slightly to the west, and the mill prospered.

Mr. Carroll wished to remember the names of three kings by calling the streets in his survey **Bruce, King Solomon, and King Hiram**. Also he wanted to honour an ex-governor of Canada and named a street **Metcalfe Street**.

## **STREET NAMES**

That part of **Sky Street** running east of Wonham was originally called **Henry Street**, after Squire Crotty, but the name was dropped and it became Skye for its entire length.

Squire Crotty's wife is still remembered with **Margaret Street**, and **Percy Street** is named for his son.

**McKeand Street** and **Haines Street** are named after George McKeand and Thomas Augustus Haines, both of Hamilton, who owned a large tract of land here.

There are other streets whose names cannot be accounted for, but **Jura** and **Skye** are good Scotch names, **Caskel** and **Ossiman** are Irish.



## INGERSOLL'S FUTURE ATTRACTED RUMSEY

Another of Ingersoll's old landmarks recently made way for modern progress. Believed to have been built in the 1840's, it served for almost 50 years as part of the Sacred Heart Separate School, and before that as a private residence for eight decades.

The large, two-storey brick edifice was first built as a residence of W. A. Rumsey, a prosperous Ingersoll businessman, who made his fortune in the foundry business in the early days of Upper Canada.

William Ashley Rumsey was born in Stafford, Genesee County, New York, on October 18, 1805. He grew up in this industrial area, and in a local foundry learned the fundamentals of the trade. On June 23, 1836, William married Frances Harriet Hempstead of New London, Connecticut. Land was purchased in nearby Clarkson, and on May 25, 1837, their first son, William Wignall was born.

While on a long journey by stage, a fellow passenger told of the prosperous area developing in Southwestern Ontario. He mentioned particularly the village of Ingersoll, with its many new industries and neighbouring farms.

Mr. Rumsey realized there would be a unrivalled market for the manufacture of machinery for both lumber mills and agricultural works, and he decided to move to his area to start his foundry business. The rumsey's land in Clarkson was sold on May 31, 1837 (*only one week after their son was born*) and in the summer of 1837, they moved to Ingersoll. Their first home here was a frame house made of lumber sawn in one of the two Ingersoll saw mills.

Mr. Rumsey's foundry was opened shortly after, in the fall of 1837. It was built near the northeast corner of Thames and Charles Streets, and grew rapidly. William's brother Joseph Ellicott Rumsey was in partnership with him for the first few years of the business.

By the mid-1840's, Mr. Rumsey's family and increased to five children and he felt there old frame house was far too small for them, so in the late 1840's, construction of the new Rumsey home was commenced, and by 1850, they were living in what was then considered a 'palace'.

Mr. Rumsey continued to prosper and on the completion of the Great Western Railway (*now CNR*) in the Winter of 1853-54, sales rose with the great increase in population.

In 1855, a writer of the International Journal, Paul Pry Jr., made a tour of Southwestern Ontario on the newly-completed railroad, and passed through Ingersoll. He later wrote; "the first establishment on crossing the Thames Street bridge is the Foundry and Machine Shop of W. A. Rumsey. It employs 20 men, runs a 10 horse engine, and manufactures agricultural work, such as reapers, mowers, threshing mills, stray cutters, cultivators, etc., together with stoves and other work.

In 1856, Mr. Rumsey retired from the foundry business,, selling out his establishment to W. Eastwood.

When the Prince of Whales toured Canada in 1860, the Ingersoll Town Council invited the Prince to pass through Ingersoll. Mr. Rumsey was one of the members appointed to a general committee

"to make the necessary arrangement for the reception of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, in the event of his honouring Ingersoll with his presence" (as it was reported in the *Ingersoll Chronicle*).

The final arrangements were that the Prince should stay overnight in the Rumsey place, and then proceed to London the next day, but a change in plans resulted in the cancellation of the visit to Ingersoll.

On February 2, 1891, the town mourned the loss of one of their most prominent citizens, Mr. W. A. Rumsey, at the age of 85. He was buried in the Ingersoll Rural Cemetery. His family remained in possession of the home for many years until in 1920, it was purchased by the Sacred Heart Parish and converted into a school. Additions were completed in 1954, 1963, and 1965.

A new addition which will house a library, health unit and change room is being built at a cost of \$139,289, and will be erected on the site of the old Rumsey homestead.



## EARLY STORES, BUSINESSES, ETC.

In 1862, Sutherland's Oxford Gazette described the village of Ingersoll as follows:-

"During the last decade the progressive advancement of the village has been remarkable, equally as regards population, commercial importance, and the extension of its occupied area. By the census returns for 1861, it is shown that it has outnumbered double its population for 1851 by about 200---having increased from 1,190 in the latter year to 2,756 in the return for 1861."

"Its general aspect has greatly improved in the same period by the erection of a very superior class of public and private buildings, and other improvements which have been going on steadily within the municipal boundary. Consequently, its growth and prosperity in the various branches of industry and commerce has been considerably enhanced."

### FINE BUILDINGS

Ingersoll has now a handsome and commodious Town Hall and Market House surmounted by a neat belfry and spire, substantially built of brick. There are also several fine, large edifices of two and three storey, of brick for business purposes, on the principal streets, which would be a credit to places of greater pretensions, and large first-class hotels.

"The law and medical professions are well represented in the village. There is a weekly newspaper, the oldest in the county, published in it---principles, Reform---issued on Tuesdays, of which Mr. J. S. Gournett is the editor, proprietor, and publisher. The London and Hamilton road passes through the village, and it is reached in all directions by other good plank and gravel roads. It has an excellent market for the sale of produce, etc., which is largely attended. From its eligible situation, its easy accessibility both by rail and road, and the facilities thereby afforded for the transportation of goods, Ingersoll bids fair to become the most important mart of business and commerce in the county.

The staple business and industrial trade of the village and neighbourhood is in wheat and sawn lumber. It is well supplied with manufacturing facilities, having unlimited water power in the immediate vicinity, which at present gives power to two grist and tow flouring mills, one of each belonging to R. H. Carroll and J. R. Benson, by whom an extensive business is done in the manufacture of flour for the Montreal and export markets, and an oatmeal mill named the "North Start Mill", carried on by J. Stewart.

Besides these there is a large flouring mill impelled by steam, belonging to the "Oxford Steam Flour Company". It also contains a steam sawmill, fanning mill manufactory, with two planing and one flooring machine, belonging to Adam Oliver, Esq., who carries on a large general business as a builder, lumber merchant, mill and factory owner, employed 24 men and having a 30 horsepower engine in operation.

## OTHER INDUSTRIES

Ingersoll also has another sash door and blind factory, with two planing and one flooring machines for which Messrs. John Christopher and Brothers are proprietors, who have also a very extensive business in building and lumber, with 18 men employed, working a 16 horsepower engine.

There are two foundries, one carried on by W. Eastwood, in which he manufactures threshing, reaping and mowing machines, agricultural implements, etc., employing 30 hands, and having a 12 horsepower engine in active operation. Mr. Eastwood's establishment turns out work to the annual value of \$25,000.

The other foundry is that of J. And S. Noxon, who do a large business as founders and machinists, and manufacture all kinds of machinery in iron and woodwork, grain separators, reapers and mowers, to the value of \$12,000 yearly.

There are also several carriage and wagon factories, furniture, pail and tub steam factories, and extensive tannery carried on by Thomas Brown, blacksmith, carpenter, cabinet maker and painters' shops, and a brewery. Besides these, it has numerous excellent stores, comprising dry goods, grocery, hardware, crockery, drug, stationery and boot and shoe stores.

## BANKS, CHURCHES, SCHOOLS

There are two banks, agencies of the Commercial Bank of Canada, and the Niagara District Bank, with several insurance agencies.

There are eight churches, one Church of England, two Presbyterian, one Roman Catholic, two Methodists and two Baptist.<sup>9</sup>

Two mails daily from the west and three from the east. Present population is about 3,000 and increasing rapidly. Its municipal government is administered by a village council, presided over by a reeve. The fifth division courts are held in the town hall.

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<sup>9</sup> Of the eight Ingersoll churches listed for 1862, only two remain---the Wesleyan Methodist Church building on Oxford Street, which is used for storage, and the first Roman Catholic Church building on John Street, behind the present Catholic property. Originally, it stood with the end toward the street, and had a small spire.

The others were a Regular Baptist, on Albert Street, off King; a Church of England (*the first church in the village*), on King Street, West; Erskine (*Presbyterian*); a British Methodist Episcopal, coloured; a Methodist Episcopal on Charles Street; and Knox Presbyterian on St. Andrew's Street. Later, Knox and Erskine united to build the present St. Paul's and Knox was bought by M. T. Buchanan and made into a hay-fork factory



In 1862, Ingersoll had a public library with about 1,000 books. There were also several schools of different denominations. The main public one was the common and grammar schools together, and was styled after the Union School. It was described as "an excellent institution. It is a handsome, two story brick, with ample play-grounds, well fenced. Average attendance 180. John Wells, head teacher, other teachers, F. Atkin, Samuel Shell, Sarah Hovendon."

### POST OFFICE

In 1862, the post office stood on the southeast corner of King and Thames Streets, with Joseph Thurkell as postmaster.

### LODGES AND SOCIETIES

There are lodges of the Masonic Order, Independent Order of Oddfellows, and the Loyal Orange Association. There were two musical societies, organized in 1862; the 'Ingersoll Philharmonic Society'. "composed of ladies and gentlemen of good musical taste and talent", and the 'Ingersoll Musical Association', composed exclusively of instrumental performers. There was also a Temperance Lodge.

### NINE HOTELS

There were nine hotels listed for 1862. Three of them still remain and are used as apartment houses. Those now in use are Carroll's Hotel, the Daly House, and the Royal. The Royal was very classy. It had a theatre, and advertised free bus service to and from the railway station. It was later known as the Atlantic Hotel.

Other hotels listed were the Anglo American, Carroll and Queen (now Charles) Streets--this hotel was locally known as 'Bummer's Roost'; the Royal Exchange; the Mansion House, King and Thames; the Great Western Railway Hotel, Thames and Victoria; Adair's Hotel on north Thames; and the Commercial.

## INGERSOLL ONCE BUSY PORT AS CARGOES SHIPPED ON THAMES

As the stage coach and the broken stone roads of toll gate days were a vast improvement over the oxcart and saddle bags of the old Thames Valley Trail, so the coming of the Great Western Railroad in 1854 gave Ingersoll a wonderful advance in trade with the outside world. The products of the surrounding farms and forest could now find easy access to world markets from the village that once had seen cargoes shipped by water down the Thames from the port of Oxford. Wood now could be sold, wheat was worth more, and the art of cheese-making was already in practice.

The American Civil War broke out in 1860, and in spite of Northern States were fighting to abolish slavery, England found herself lined up with the Confederate States. The result was that after some unpleasant events at sea, trade between England and the Northern States was broken off, and at once the demand for Canadian wheat, dairy products, etc., advanced almost overnight. The need for cleared land to raise wheat and fodder for dairy herds became so important that trees were cut day and night throughout the country in the winter months, with the result that the tall lines of trees were rapidly receded to the back of the holdings.

All this of course, meant more trade for Ingersoll. The merchant business increased in number and volume and the tradesmen were very busy. The population had kept pace with the expansion of trade and in the year 1864, Ingersoll was found to have outgrown the Village stage, and would be incorporated as a Town at the end of the year. The American Civil War ended in 1864, but now the Fenian scare was beginning to be felt. The Fathers of Confederation were already talking about the possibility of the union of all Canadian provinces into a Dominion, also the plans for the big cheese had been laid.

Possibly the inauguration of our advanced status was now celebrated as such events often are, for at this time, because of the Fenian raids, the young men from Ingersoll were called out with the Oxford Rifles and travelled to the Niagara Peninsula. These raids no doubt hastened the consummation of Confederation of the Provinces into the Dominion of Canada.

The last Village Council was:- John Galliford, Reeve; Dr. D.M. Robertson, Deputy Reeve; and James Noxon, R. McDonald, Arthur O'Connor, Councillors; with R. A. Woodcock, Clerk; and Ed. Doty, Treasurer.

There was much rivalry among the leading citizens as to who should have the honour of representing the new town in the first Municipal Council. The result of the election gave as in 1865: Adam Oliver, Mayor; James McCaughey, Reeve; and Edward Barker, Deputy Reeve; with James Bell, Aaron Christopher, James Noxon, R. H. Carroll, Edward Barker, C.P. Hall, Councillors; the clerk and treasurer same as in 1864.

Thus, Ingersoll as a town is older than the Dominion of Canada. The town has slowly and surely advanced in many ways until today, it is one of the most progressive towns in Western Ontario.



## Big Cheese Put Oxford on the Map

Imaginative promotions to boost export trade were not confined to recent years; an original idea that involved a heavy gamble resulted in the Big Cheese, a spectacular production from the cheese factories of Oxford that gave the British cheese markets to Canada.

The Big Cheese weighted 7,300 pounds and measured 21 feet in diameter. It was produced in 1866 when cheese factories were primitive and special facilities were very few.

## CHEESE AND WINE GOURMET FOOD IN EARLY OXFORD

It is said that the flavour of an aged cheese is the only food with which to appreciate good wine. Therefore, they should always be served with each other.

That is probably why Wright Sudworth, a grape culturist of Ingersoll, entered into an agreement with the cheese industry of Oxford County and began growing grapes, eventually starting his own winery on Tunis Street in Ingersoll in 1865. Before that time, he had run a sawmill in the mid 1850's in Sweaburg, later claiming that he had named Sweaburg from a Russian fort called Svenborg, which had put up a magnificent defence during the Crimea War. Moreover, he claimed, he was Sweaburg's first postmaster.

After closing down the sawmill, Mr. Sudworth went to Cincinnati, Ohio (*where the famous Colonel Nicholas Longworth had the largest vineyards and wineries in the United States, and who held the record for many years until he met stiff competition from the California grape growers*), and remained there for a number of years. His knowledge of grape culture was recognized by Colonel Longworth who tried to get him to stay, but he refused because of a great attachment to Canada West and returned to Ingersoll in 1859. He planted 10 acres of grapes on the back part of the Elisha Hall farm and hired a large number of ex-slaves to supervise the picking and processing of the fruit into wine.

Just as a cheesemaker gains fame by the excellent flavour of his product, so it is somewhat the same in the winemaking industry. Both rely on the fermentation and knowing of when to stop. Sudworth featured a popular type of European wine made from the Myatt grape and the demand was so great, that he went into partnership with John. H. Walsh and they opened up the "Grape Wine Store" on the premises of the Edwin Casswell cheese market in the business section of Ingersoll.

IN all of the Ingersoll cheese history, **there has been only one cheese factory in the town.** The others were only cheese processors. The one cheese factory was run by Thomas Dippe Millar, who made cream cheese at his factory at the corner of Cashel and Henry Streets, (*Henry Street is now known as Skye Street*) and he trained the Macleren brothers and Jacob Kraft, who, after learning the secret of creamed cheese, went on to form their own companies.

The Maclerens marketed a brand known as "Imperial" in Toronto, and Kraft took the Millar secret to Milwaukee to begin his famous cheese firm.

Today, cream cheese is a million-dollar industry, but in 1877, Thomas Millar knew the secret of attracting customers. An item in the Oxford Tribune states: "Our enterprising citizen, T. D. Millar, is now in England for the purpose of placing an order for crockery jars totalling over one hundred thousand pieces to hold his famous cheese."

In 1881, Mr. Millar went again to England. He knew the value of advertising because he ran a printed ad on his ironstone containers which could not be washed off or worn off with age.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The ad ran as follows:

Millar's Canadian (Ingersoll) Paragon cheese. Finest article in the Market.



## FARSIGHTED

Cheese making was just beginning in Oxford, but a few farsighted producers say a possible opportunity for the future if the superiority of the local product could be established.

The early producers included Hiram Ranney, James Harris, and George Galloway, who began to form the big scheme almost a year before it could reach fulfilment.

Timing their efforts, they all arrange to make cheese on the same day in the summer of 1866. This cheese was put into the press in each factory in 60 pound units, and was pressed for 48 hours. All the cheese was then taken to the Harris factory near the corner of the second concession and what is now Highway 19 in West Oxford.

## CURD MILL

Here it was put through the curd mill under the watchful eye of Robert Facey, the head cheesemaker, who had learned the trade with Mr. Ranney. His assistant was Miles Harris. The cheese was cut in small cubes to be salted for proper curing. It was then put in a large metal hoop and put under the pressure of six large screws with equal pressure on all points of the hoop. The cheese was kept under pressure for eight days and turned twice a week by a special mechanical device.

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Put up in Jars, hermetically sealed; excellent in quality. This process combines and improves the flavour that is most delicious to the taste. So palatable, the oldest invalid can use it without any inconvenience, and the way it is put up keeps the flavour always fresh and perfect. By keeping it covered up after using, this superior article of cheese will recommend itself to the general public for shooting, fishing and picnic parties. Nothing can compare with it, and, instead of buying a few pounds of cheese over the counter, which becomes dry and hard in a few days, this method retains its freshness until the jar is empty.

This is the greatest achievement ever accomplished for the taste of the connoisseur. As there is no possible waste, every particle in the jar being eatable and free from all impurities, retaining all the finest flavours of pure full cream cheese until all is used, it will be found cheaper than ordinary cut cheese.

None genuine without this signature,

T. D. Millar,  
Colonial and Amsterdam medallist."

There is no record of the suspense of this period or of the jubilation when the enormous cheese was removed and judged to be a fine example of the cheesemaking science. It was hauled to Ingersoll on a special lumber wagon as no ordinary wagon could carry this load. The huge round was shipped from Ingersoll on August 23, 1866, to the New York State Fair at Saratoga.

## WIDE ATTENTION

Here it received wide attention and was subsequently loaded aboard a ship at New York and transported to England for display at the British Trade Fair. Eventually it was sold to a Liverpool cheese merchant.

The cheese appeared to reach its goal of stimulating interest in the Canadian product because within a few years, Canada was shipping over 300,000 boxes of cheese to England yearly.

An even larger cheese was made in the town of Perth in 1893. This weighed 26,000 and went to the Chicago World's Fair. However, the "Big Cheese" of nearly 30 years earlier had broken ground in a novel manner, and a historical plaque to mark the achievement was erected near the site of the Harris factory.

Mr. Millar exhibited his cheese at two trade fairs---the International Agricultural held in Amsterdam in 1884, and the Colonial and India Exhibition in London, England, in 1886. Upon the reverse side of his crockery jar he reproduced replicas of the medals, along with a picture depicting his display of cheeses as exhibited with this sign:

"T. D. Millar, Ingersoll, Ontario, Canada"

His registered trademark was an elongated diamond-shaped form containing the three initials "T.D.M."

On January 14, 1894, the largest banquet ever held in the Ingersoll Town Hall (*it had no cooking facilities*) was catered to by David W. Gibson and he had to use the kitchens of the two hotels opposite the town hall, namely the Daly House (*now called the Ingersoll Inn*) and the Dereham House.

Mr. Gibson served 175 dinners to the invited guests and an old account claims that some of Ingersoll's fairest maidens sat on the elevated stage which was gaily decorated by flags and bunting and the ladies flanked the pyramid of T. D. Millar's stone jars exactly as he exhibited at the Chicago World's Fair.



## INGERSOLL HAD NUMEROUS FINE HOTELS

Visitors to Ingersoll had their choice of many fine hotels, and while most of the hostelries catered to the general demands of the public, there was a distinction. Some were widely known for the special accommodation they gave to the farming communities. There was special stabling facilities for horses, with an attendant to give them feed and water if required. It was common in those days for country people to leave home early in the morning and plan to spend the entire day in town.

Marketing in those years was one of the big occasions for many of the country families, and almost regularly in the winter, products from the farm and loads of hay and wood were seen on the market square, while loads of logs went through the main streets every day, bound for the local saw mills. Some of these were custom cut for lumber that would be later hauled away to go into new houses or barns in the various neighbouring districts, and some of the logs were merely stored in the mill yard for later sawing.

Considerable grain was also marketed in those days and local milers paid regular trips to the market each morning to make their bids on the per bushel basis for wheat and oats especially, both of which were processed here.

### 25 CENT MEALS

All the hotels had the reputation of providing large, varied and well-served meals at the popular price of 25 cents, and this included pies, cakes, and other varieties of delicacies.

There were several hotels that catered especially to the commercial trade. They emphasized the quality of their meals, as well as the accommodation for travellers. There were reading and writing rooms, also sample rooms, where the miscellaneous articles from their trunks were displayed and from which prospective buyers were invited in to view and make their selections.

### COMPETITION

There were buses or cabs in connection with these hotels which met all the incoming passenger trains. There was a distinct rivalry on the part of the drivers of these vehicles. As the passengers alighted, they shouted the names of the hotels they represented.

Most of the travellers lost no time in making their choice as the hotel they wished to patronize and when the last one had been picked up, they were quickly whisked away with the cracking of a whip and a stiff tug on the reins.

In those days, there was also cartage service independent of the hotels and it was almost a daily sight to see these small vehicles hauled by a single horse, carrying a capacity load of the heavy trunks containing the travellers' samples which required both muscle and manouevring to handle before they were placed in the sample rooms.

There were hotels in earlier years that apparently have been forgotten for in a early publication about Ingersoll's history, is the following advertisement:

Anglo American Hotel, south-west  
corner Carroll and Queen Streets,  
Ingersoll

This House is pleasantly situated and  
convenient to the business part of the  
village. Every attention will be paid to  
guests stopping at the house. Charges  
moderate and good stabling.  
William Douglas, Prop.

#### FORMER HOTELS

Following are some of the hotels of earlier years:

Carroll Hotel	corner of King and Hall Streets
Mansion House	Corner of Thames and King Streets
Dereham House	Corner King and Oxford Streets
Thompson House	King Street West
Daly House	corner of King and Oxford Streets
Oxford House	Oxford Street
McMurray House	Corner of Thames and Charles Streets
Keating Hotel	Thames Street
Atlantic House	Thames Street
McCarty House	Thames Street, North



# DALY, ROYAL HOTELS ONCE RIVAL SPY HEADQUARTERS

## LINK WITH 'LAKE ERIE PIRATES'

The old Daly House in Ingersoll, now known as the Ingersoll Inn, can boast of a historic past which probably cannot be matched by any other hotel existing today between the Niagara and Detroit Rivers.

The Inn has survived fire, political strife, plots of insurrection, and meetings of anti-slavery factions prior to the outbreak of the American Civil War.

The Daly House was built by Absalom Daly, an outspoken Englishman, who took his military discharge in Ingersoll after the defeat of the rebels in the Mackenzie Rebellion in 1837. Daly's original aim was to build an all-brick hotel, but due to the lack of bricks, he had to settle for a brick front, facing the Old Stage Road, (King Street), and a frame structure in the rear. This was in 1838.

In 1854, a spark from a trash heap behind Ingersoll's Market Building on the opposite side of the street, blew into a bedroom window and ignited the curtains, with the result the hotel was partially destroyed.

Daly made temporary repairs until the O'Dell brickyard could make enough bricks to make it a solid brick structure.

In 1842, Daly advertised in the Christian Guardian, mentioning that he had the finest hotel "in the western province" and had a livery stable with good horses and rigs for hire, attached to the premises. To save the cost of another advertisement he added, "WANTED--two mart boys to learn the hotel business."

In 1840, he began a stageline to Port Burwell to connect with boats sailing Lake Erie to Cleveland, Sandusky, and Toledo. After the completion of the Canada Great Western Railway in 1853<sup>11</sup>, he advertised that those using the Talbot Road to get to their destination, could detrain at Ingersoll and make connections at Tillsonburg for St. Thomas, Port Stanley, Simcoe and Port Dover by using his stages.

Edwin Doty was the stage driver and he later went into business for himself when he received an express agency.

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<sup>11</sup> The first train through Ingersoll was operated by the Canada Great Western, on December 13, 1853.

Daly became interested in education, and for many years he was secretary for the school board. Through his influence, the old log school<sup>12</sup> was torn down and a new model school erected, which served Ingersoll until 1919, when the Victory Memorial School was built in its place.

In 1856, the Market Building mysteriously caught fire and a campaign began to build the new Town Hall near the tracks of the CGW Railway. Daly became incensed and publicly stated that the promoters of this new location were land speculators and they could probably throw some light as to whom the arsonists were who started the fire at the Market Building.

Now Absolom Daly was a Royalist and the inhabitants of Ingersoll were mainly Reformists. There existed two cliques...one called "the post-office gang", or the dying members of the "Family Compact" government; and the other favoured George Brown of the Toronto Globe in forming the Clear Grit party. When Daly made his remarks about the arsonist he invoke the anger of the editor of the Chronicle...a reform newspaper in opposition to the Oxford Herald...and under the Caption of "A Nuisance in Ingersoll...A way to Rid Ourselves of it!" the editor took Mr. Daly to task.

A person who lives and owns a little property not a great distance from where the old market stood and who has made himself obnoxious to almost every respectable man and woman in this place...the reader knows very well whom we mean...stated to a member of the council unless the proposed market was erected on the old site, 'he would leave the village in disgust'. Even when the council was considering the kind of bridge which is best be erected on King Street, this everlasting interferer was foremost in his selfish suggestions. "Now, as a good way to rid the village of this selfish, meddling, disappointed cur, would it not be well to build the market and town hall in some part of the village where this man does not want it, provided he will promise...No, not promise...but bind himself to leave this place? If we can rid ourselves of an intolerable nuisance by doing so, we would consider it very cheaply done.

Daly went before the town council and admitted that he was the one that was referred to in the newspaper, and asked the councilman if he ever attempted to say their decision and received a negative answer, he promptly sued the Chronicle, but was non-suited when he could not prove that it was the editor of the paper who had printed the copy which Daly held in his hand as Exhibit "A" in his trial for defamation of character.

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<sup>12</sup> The log schoolhouse stood at the north side of the grounds which the Victory Memorial School now occupies.



It would be difficult to pick out the most famous guest who registered at the Daly House. Before the coming of the railway, many weary travellers stopped for the night to rest after a rough ride from Hamilton or Sandwich.

Every famous person who lectured in Ingersoll, registered at the Daly. Robert Baldwin, MP, spoke in Ingersoll after the formation of the government to unit Upper and Lower Canada. John A. Macdonald, Alexander Mackenzie, Wilfrid Laurier, and countless other politicians also stopped there.

The Daly House, being directly across from the new Town Hall (*which had the largest auditorium in town*) it was natural for the travelling troupes and artists using the town hall to stay at the Daly. Christine Nielson, Metropolitan Opera star, and scores of other noted persons of the famous Chautauqua circuits, which travelled throughout Ontario giving lectures, on religious subjects, or having scientific and philosophical discussions, usually stayed at this hotel.

There historical persons who met a violent end, were either guests or visitors at the Daly. John Brown (*who was an Abolitionist leader from Kansas*); John Yates Beall, a Confederate spy; and Canada's famous speech-maker, D'Arcy McGee.

John Brown was supposed to meet the noted conductor of the 'Underground Railway' (*a system used to smuggle slaves from the United States into Canada and freedom*), Harriet Tubman, at the Daly. When she didn't appear, he sent a letter to St. Cathrines seeking her whereabouts, and while waiting in Ingersoll, he received a message telling the names of five prospects for his army of liberation, who were staying at "Batchelor's Hall" which at one time was a hotel named the River House. Apparently Brown knew of the Ingersoll set-up, for he was instructed to report at "Patterson's Hotel to find out the location of Batchelor's Hall, but about ten weeks earlier, John Patterson had given up the Royal Exchange Hotel to take over the Daly House, and this is now Brown happened to come to the Daly.

*(In 1859, at Harper's Ferry, on the borders of Virginia, he tried to start a revolt to free the slaves. He called on the Negroes to rebel against their masters. However, Brown's "fort" was soon taken by American soldiers, and Brown was hanged at Charles Town, West Virginia.)*

With his raid a complete failure, Brown's belongings were looted and his papers and letters scattered. Somehow, Governor Henry A. Wise of Virginia found out about Brown's visit to Ingersoll and Chatham, and sent agents to the town to see if there were another conspiracy in the making after Brown's execution. Governor Wise stated that he would hang the inhabitants to the trees!

It is easy to see that Wise's spies reported the Ingersoll lay-out because when the Civil War broke out, the agents of both sides set up headquarters in Ingersoll. Both were "purchasing agents" for their respective sides, but the Union (or Northern) army were the more favoured. The Daly was the place selected for the Union agents and the Royal became the spy centre for the Confederacy.

*(In 1861, the Union forces opened a recruiting office at the Keating hotel. The town at the time, had a large coloured population and many enlisted to fight on the side of the North. Mr. Keating's town sons...Robert and Thomas enlisted, along with Neil McFee. All three were posted to a Michigan regiment and they saw service in several of the states.)*



John Yates Beall was born on the outskirts of the town where John Brown was hanged...Charles Town. He enlisted early in the war on the Confederate side and was badly wounded. After his wounds healed, he went to the American west, then into Canada to London, and finally stayed at Riley's hotel in Dundas.

He kept a diary, but did not mention Ingersoll in his travels, but it is known that he was connected with the "Lake Erie Pirates", and that they held meetings at the Royal Hotel in Ingersoll.

The Confederate cavalry left Canada to raid St. Alban's Vermont, while John Yates Beall, along with Bennett Burley, and others, left with a plan to seize the USS Michigan, patrolling Lake Erie, and free more than 3,000 Confederate soldiers being held as prisoners-of-war on Johnson's Island, near Sandusky, Ohio. (*They had a series of plots to involve Great Britain and United States in a war which would relieve some of Abraham Lincoln's pressure on the southern front.*)

Beall and Burley boarded the steamer 'Philo Parsons'. Burley went aboard in Detroit and arranged for the steamer to stop at Sandwich to pick up Beall. This done, the 'Philo Parsons' sailed on the Amherstburg, where about a dozen rough-looking passengers came on, and as the steamer started, a heavy trunk was placed on the deck.

W. O. Ashley, purser and part owner of the steam, was told that the men would like to stop at Kelly's Island, Ohio. This was done, and after getting two miles out, Burley and three others approached the purser with pistols and told him he would be shot if he offered resistance to their plan. The other toughs broke open the trunk and took out revolvers and axes. The crew was herded down below and the ship steered for Bland, where another steamer, the 'Island Queen', was seized and its passengers brought aboard the 'Parsons'. The 'Island Queen' was then scuttled and set adrift.

A disloyal member of the Confederate forces tipped off the commander of the Michigan military district and he in turn, alerted the USS Michigan's captain, J. C. Carter. Sandusky was also warned, and forces were ordered from Cincinnati to go to Johnson's Island to ward off the invaders. As the plot was foiled, (*after having got no signal for the 'Michigan' that it was in rebel hands*) the 'Philo Parsons' was turned around and headed back to Amherstburg, putting the original crew on Fighting Island in the Detroit River. The ship then proceeded to Sandwich, where the rest of the pirates abandoned her and tried to sink the ship.

Beall and Burley managed to get to Toronto, and Beall often made trips over the Suspension Bridge, but one evening while trying to return a young lad to the American side, he was picked up by the U. S. authorities and brought to trial as being a spy and violating all rules of warfare. Beall was found guilty and sentenced to hang at Governor's Island, New York.

Bennett Burley was arrested in Toronto and the United States demanded his extradition. The Confederate government however, brought out a copy of a commission issued to Burley which stated that he was a commissioned officer of the Confederate Navy, and was legally a prisoner-of-war and not a pirate, robber, or spy. This attempt to save him failed, but after he was taken to Detroit, his lawyers advised them that the law for piracy only existed on the high seas and not on the Great Lakes!



Burley was then taken to Ohio and tried for robbery on Lake Erie. The jury could not agree, so he was remanded in jail for another trial, but southern sympathizers helped him to escape and he fled home to Scotland.

The Daly House has had a long list of proprietors. Although Absalom Daly owned the structure, he leased it out to different parties. It was not until prohibition in 1913, that it was noted the frequency of change in management.

From 1853 to 1857, Daly ran the hotel, but after his squabble with the villagers, he leased it out to John Paterson, Ingersoll's first village treasurer and lessee of the Royal Exchange Hotel. The royal Exchange was also known as the "Patterson" (*the same one John Brown had been directed to, and then told that John Patterson had taken over the Daly.*)

Patterson resigned his treasurership with the village, and ran the Daly until 1862, when he took over Henry Hearn's "Royal Hotel". Daly again took over his hotel until 1880, when he sold out to Harry Blewett, and built a new hotel closer to the railway station, calling it the "Queen Victoria", but he was told he would have to get royal consent to use Her Majesty's name, so he dropped the 'Victoria' and simply called it "The Queen's".

Upon Blewett's death, the hotel was taken over by Peter Kennedy in 1885, who ran it for about ten years. It was then run by George L. Thompson until 1905, when M. J. Kennedy took it over. Kennedy sold out to J. C. Hyde in 1910. When the local option came into force, it was run by Oliver Scott in 1913. In 1914, J. Anderson Coultar & Associates became interested in the old hotel. In 1929, it became the property of William Revell, and on his death, his widow ran the inn as a rooming house, but with no dining room facilities, until 1942, when it was sold to the present owner Vincent Barrie, of St. Thomas. (*It was completely renovated and is now named The Ingersoll Inn.*)

## GREAT FIRE OF 1872 WIPED OUT HISTORIC OLD HOTEL

Time-worn newspapers and other sources of authentic records, show that there are many interesting events in the early history of Ingersoll.

One of the most disastrous occurrences was in May, 1872, when both sides of Thames Street from Charles Street on the east side to the Caledonia Block, and on the west side about the same distance, were demolished by fire with the loss of two lives.

Records show that the great fire in 1872 began in the barn of the hotel "Royal Exchange", a large frame building, two storeys high, with a pitched roof which continued over the verandah and extended the full length of the front, with the upper floor protected by a balustrade which was chest-high and decorated with turned pillars. The swell of these pillars widened to about four feet in diameter, capped with a rail about six inches by four inches and rounded top.

The huge posts which supported the roof as well as the verandah, were about one foot square and tapered slightly. The pillars formed the Balustrade where always painted white no matter what the other parts of the building were painted. The swinging sign erected on a solid post just off the sidewalk was the regulation type of that time, decorated with the pictures of Queen Victoria on one side and Prince Albert on the other. Beneath the pictures was the wording "Royal Exchange" in gold letters.

The description continued as follows: "This was a stage calling place and a rival of the Carroll Hotel on King Street, East. It did its trade principally with the people from the north and was well patronized. It occupied the site of the post office and was the scene of many public gatherings. There, the speaker would address the public. It was on such occasions as this that the people cut loose. The bar in this ancient hostelry was a large room and would accommodate a great number of persons. It was heated in winter by an immense fireplace on the north end of the building which was frequently supplied with a backlog of about two feet in diameter and with the fire well fed in front of it, it gave both heat and light to the apartment.

"The rule at the bar in those days was a 'crowd could be treated for a York shilling', 12½ cents, and as many as you like for a quarter, 25 cents."

### LOST POPULATION

"The old house, as years passed, lost its standing and was finally referred to as the "Bummer's Roost". It was in connection with the building that the Great Fire originated. The town's fire extinguisher apparatus was the old hand engine, of which there were two, with which it was impossible to cope with the situation. London and Woodstock responded nobly and were the means of saving what was left of Thames Street."

In 1872, Ingersoll's business section stretched along King Street from Oxford Street, to Hall Street, and along Charles Street from King to just north of the old wooden bridge over the Thames River. There were many three-storey brick buildings on Thames Street and a very imposing hotel of which the town was very proud, but for the most part, the stores and other businesses were old wooden



structures, many just one-room shacks. There were also scattered in between, vacant spaces and several residences on both streets.

IN those days, the streets were gravel. A broken stone with a plank sidewalk on either side raised six or eight inches above the gutters. The streets were lined with hitching posts with iron rings or holes for hitching horses. Some of the posts were fancy iron rods topped with horse heads, and in some instances, rails were provided for tying up horses or teams. The main streets were lit by gas lamps on iron standards and the lamp-lighter made his rounds at dusk and daylight.

The Royal Exchange Hotel, an old wooden building, stood at the corner of Thames and Charles Streets, and the stables were at the rear on the corner of Oxford and Charles. These buildings were owned by John Walsh, and the land was part of his original holding.

South of this on Thames Street, was the residence of C. P. Hall, and William Gallagher's "Prince of Wales" hotel, along with other small frame buildings on both Thames and Oxford Streets. On the west side of Oxford Street, north of Charles, were the Daly House stables, Chambers' Hotel, the old Wesleyan Church building, R. McDonald's barn, and Badder & Delaney's carriage and wagon factory.

On Thames street there were several new buildings, such as Vance's bakery, (*the second storey of which was used as the Masonic Hall*), George Perkins' store, Browett & Barker hardware, the Niagara District Bank, J. & H. Little Groceries, Alex, Gordon, tailor, G. W. Walley, crockery and glassware, McCaughey & Walsh, barristers, the Chronicle office, a new building owned by J. S. Gurnette, J. F. Moore's cabinet show rooms, Byrne & McGolrick, saddlers, Mrs. Curtis, milliner, Mr. Miller, grocer, Miss Webster, dressmaker, F. G. Lewis, photographer, Mr. Curtis, shoemaker, and a building occupied by Holcroft's grocery.

On the east side of Thames Street were H. Vogt, jeweller, T. F. Fawks, jeweller, G. J. Shrappnel, grocer, J. Hugill, photographer, Miss Patterson, dressmaker, S. W. McFarlane, dry goods, J. N. Elliott, grocer, Alex. Reid, dry goods, J. G. Chowan & Co., hardware, F. A. Baker, photographer, T. H. Barraclough, boots and shoes, Holmes & Gillespie, dry goods, M. Tripp, drugs, Alex, McKenzie, residence, James McNiven, dry goods, H. McNiven, residence, James McDonald, hats and caps, Alex, Macauley, dry goods, R. F. Hunter, residence, John Gayfer, drugs, D. White & Co., dry goods, O. B. Caldwell, drugs, Allen McLean, book shop and James McDonald, barrister.

On King Street, was Mr. McIntyre's furniture factory, together with a large number of stores and residences, mostly of wood and built close together, extending east on both sides of the street up to Hall and Carrol Streets.

The fire began about 8 o'clock on the evening of May 7, 1872, in the stables of the Royal Exchange Hotel, corner of Oxford and Charles. At the time, the buildings were supposed to be empty, and the cause of the fire was never discovered. The wind blew to the south and east, and so rapidly did the fire travel through the old frame buildings, that when it had burned itself out, nearly all of both sides of Thames Street between Charles and King were gone except one, which was a large two-storey brick building (*which helped stop the progress of the fire*), and most of Oxford Street up to the market square, where Bowman's Hotel was the last to go.



King Street East was saved only by the magnificent efforts of McIntyre's men, and the aid of the London Fire Company.

There were at that time, three fire companies; one by the Thames Street crossing of the CNR; one at the market building and a third in a building at the rear of Old King's Mill on King Street West. (*the present site of F. Fulton's mill*). Each company was supplied with a hand pumper, a reel of hose and a club room where they met for instruction and social evenings.

Some of the names of the fire company at King's Mills were; John Frizell, Robert Leighton, Robert Monroe, John Lahey, Henry Smale, Phillip Mudge, John Bower, James McDonald, Edward Dixon. These men pumped and carried water all night during the fire in relays until they were exhausted, and their hands and arms so stiff in the morning that they could not remove their own coats.

The fire travelled so fast and furious that panic and confusion seemed to hold everyone. Goods were moved across the streets, only to be moved again. Goods were damaged in moving, and some were taken by thieves. Two men lost their lives while endeavouring to salvage goods. Mr. Paine lost his life while trying to save stock in R. H. Young's saddlery shop, and John Omand was trapped by a falling wall in Fawk's jewellery store.

The fire wiped out the homes or places of business of over 80 people or firms.

The minutes of the King Hiram No. 37 Lodge, meeting in lodge of emergency on the 28th of May, 1872, to hear the report of the committee appointed to find new quarters for the lodge, they having had the Masonic Hall destroyed by fire, have been saved. These minutes were begun in June, 1803.

By 1851, a thriving centre had become established, and a report in Smith's Gazetteer for that year, gives a description of Ingersoll as follows: "In entering the County of Oxford from London, the first place you reach is Ingersoll, which is twenty-one miles from London; it is a considerable village, containing about 1,000 inhabitants. It is well situated, the greater part of it being built on the sides and summit of the high gravelly banks of the east branch of the River Thames, which flows through it, and furnishes water to supply two grist-mills, and two saw-mills, a carding machine and fulling mill. This village also contains a foundry, a tannery, distillery, etc., and five churches---Episcopal, Free Church, Wesleyan Methodist, Episcopal Methodist, and Roman Catholic; and has a daily post."

The community petitioned, and received, from the government, a proclamation dated September 12, 1851, which stated that Ingersoll was to be an incorporated village, with legislation to take effect on January 1, 1852.

The first election was held at the Royal Exchange Hotel, on Monday, January 5, and John Galliford, W. A. Ramsey, Thomas Brown, Charles Parkherst and James Murdock were elected as Ingersoll's first council, and they appointed Edward Doty as Treasurer and James Barrie as village clerk.

Shortly after the incorporation, plans were presented for building a town hall, or as it was locally called, a market building. Land was acquired in a central location, and it is believed that the first municipal office building was completed in 1853.



## DISASTER STRIKES

Diaster struck the proud new community, and the sad event was fully reported in the February 8, 1856 edition of the "Ingersoll Chronicle", which stated:-

The Town Hall of this place was totally destroyed by fire on Friday morning last, about one o'clock shortly after our edition had been worked off. The belfry attached together with the new bell, which and been recently erected, were also destroyed. The fire is supposed, and very justly too, we think, to be the work of an incendiary as the Clerk, Captain Barrie, informs us that there had been no fire in the building after five o'clock the previous night. This fact, taken in connection with the fact that the fire originated in the part of the building where no fire is ever required, leaves no other alternative than to believe that the premises were fired by someone.

The official records and papers of Municipalities of Ingersoll and W. Oxford Township were destroyed, together with many valuable documents belonging to the Clerk. The building was insured in the 'Equitable Insurance Company' for only 200 Pounds, which will, of course, cover but a very small portion of the loss.

The destruction of this building was a blow for Ingersoll, but plans were immediately started for a new Town Hall. Additional property was conveyed to the municipality since it was found that the old site would not be sufficient for the larger building which was to be built. A new bell was ordered from the Troy Foundry, Troy, N.Y.,<sup>13</sup> and the council awarded the overall contract to William M. Long of Ingersoll. George O'Hayra was chosen as the builder, and the structure was designed by the architect John McNiven.

## CRITICIZE ARCHITECTURE

The style of Mr. McNiven's architecture brought some criticism in the community. and one rate-payer called it a "slab-sided Dutch barn". The clerk, Charles E. Chadwick, remarked that "the style of architecture was one better suited to the age of our great-grandfathers than the present; and as we could not have many public buildings in town, it behooves us to consult the style of architecture prevailing in our age, rather than go back a few generations." The result of these public arguments was that the plans were changed and the building was designed in the Italianate style so popular at that time.

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<sup>13</sup> The town Hall bell weighs 700 pounds. It was cast in 1855 by the Troy Bell Company, Troy, N. Y.

The new Town Hall was completed in December, 1857, and it contained a large public meeting hall capable of holding about 500 persons. The hall became a centre for large and tempestuous gatherings at municipal nomination meetings, political meetings, parliamentary campaigns and other various activities.

In 1858, the famous American abolitionist, John Brown, held a public meeting while on a recruiting trip to Canada, and spoke on the evils of slavery, and 'border ruffians' in Kansas. Outstanding statesmen and politicians who spoke from its platform included Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first Prime Minister; Thomas D'Arcy McGee and George Brown, Fathers of Confederation; Alexander Mackenzie, Sir Francis Hincks and the radical reformer, Robert Gourlay.

Many musical concerts were held in the Town Hall, together with amateur performances of a varied nature, and one evening the local inhabitants were entertained by a stage performance given by General Tom Thumb and Company. Travelling stock companies also presented their shows---always to a full auditorium---and gave the townspeople something new about which to gossip, especially some of the burlesque varieties!

For a long time the Town Hall has been the quarters of the volunteer fire department, housing the men and the equipment, just as it did in earlier years when a fire team was maintained with their stalls having overhanging harness above each of the spirited animals who pulled the old fire wagon.

It also has held the municipal offices almost since its construction, and for more than sixty years, the office of the town's police force as well as that of the town magistrates were in the building.

There was also for many of the earlier years, an indoor market in the building with entrance on the west side off Oxford street, and medicine men for years stood in the market square and spied about their wares (*and often did a thriving trade*).

There were also many interesting sports events held here, including boxing, wrestling, weight lifting, acrobatic feats and exhibitions with Indian clubs and dumb-bells.

The old building has looked down on many of the most exciting and strange scenes in the history of the town.

Runaway horses in earlier years raced up and down King street and also flanked the building on either side, frequently driverless, and with vehicles overturned and finally broken.

There were times, following hockey games in the old King Street arena, there would be near riots almost at the entrance of the building; and when there were several hotels operating nearby, an inebriated one would walk jerkily past the window of the police office, casting furtive glances in that direction, while the local constabulary (*sometimes*) turned his head the other way obligingly.

Year in and year out, the old building looked down on Monday mornings to the parade of offenders who entered to face the magistrate in connection with Saturday night indiscretions.



There were other kinds of parades too, which formed up and moved off from the market square, passing the old Town Hall in honour of its age and respect. These were held in connection with holidays and festivities of the town, special activities and guests, etc., but always passing the Town Hall to show its esteem.

Thus, over the years, the Ingersoll Town Hall has played its part in the growth of Ingersoll. It has been host to a variety of individuals prominent in the history of Canada and the United States, and it stands as a characteristic example of the province's early municipal buildings.

## VICE-REGAL TOUR IN 1872 ELABORATE ARCHES FEATURED PRODUCTS OF THE AREA

Lord Dufferin, the third governor-general of the Dominion of Canada, made a visit to the western portion of Ontario in 1872, and returned to it two years later. During the latter tour, he visited London and a number of smaller towns, among them INGERSOLL.

Every place got into full-dress uniform to receive the guest of honour. Reeves and mayors wrote up speeches of welcome. Local merchants and manufacturers displayed the products of their regions.

Of the western towns, the first one at which the vice-regal train of the Great Western Railway stopped was in Ingersoll, on August 26, 1874. It was reported that "the town was alive with people and the streets, Thames Street especially, were grandly tricked out in gala dress".

The citizens were very proud of three arches which had been erected on the streets. F. M. Bell-Smith---noted in the 19th century for his magazine and newspaper illustrations---accompanied the party and made a pictorial record of the tour. One of the Ingersoll arches was composed of agricultural implements---reapers, ploughs, rakes and threshing machines, while another consisted of McIntyre furniture and was set up in a curve across the street, where chairs, cupboards, and what-nots showed on the skyline. Its exhibitors not only sold furniture, but made it at their shop.

As Ingersoll was the centre of Ontario's cheese industry at that time, it was only natural to have an arch depicting Ingersoll's dairy interest. Mr. Casswell was responsible for creating this feature of the celebration.

The arch was constructed of twenty-eight hundred cheese boxes, providing the main bulk and form. In addition, its builder had used flitches of bacon, hams, cuts of cheese, flowers, flags and portraits of members of the royal family.

Lord Dufferin and his party were so impressed by this unique edifice, that the governor-general called a halt to the procession until he had taken notice of all its varied products.



## INGERSOLL'S OWN 'CIVIL WAR' IN THE LATE 1800'S

The battle between the North and the South to the average Canadian meant the Civil War of 1861 - 1865, but to the natives of "Cheesetown", it meant the north and south side of the Thames Street Bridge. During the '80s, and up to the turn of the present century, club and brick-bat warfare was common among the two sides and they would gather nightly on both sides of the bridge and defy each other to cross the 90-foot span.

With all of the historical research of early Ingersoll, no one has ever found a clue to what originally created the high feeling which existed at the time. It has been claimed that it was caused by derision and idle banter among groups that formed into gangs during lunch hours, at the Morrow Co., and the old Port Factory. During meal times, the workmen would good-naturedly banter with the north side groups and the southsiders until someone would cast a slur against their own particular locality and a first-fight settled the matter. Unkind, cutting remarks would be hurled and a challenge would be offered to cross either the Wonham or Thames Street Bridges that night.

This high feeling mostly hurt the innocent, but the Village swains suffered the most! At the height of a brick-bat battle, a young bank clerk who boarded on Francis Street, was escorting a popular young maiden to her home on Victoria Street, and when crossing the bridge, the battle stopped. The southerners demanded to know from the clerk if he couldn't find a girl on his own side of the river. Likewise the northerners cornd the girl after she had crossed the bridge and popped the same question. The couple ignored the groups and went on their way, but when the young man was returning home, he was stopped by one of the northsiders and threatened with a beating-up if he did not stop courting the northern gal. The clerk soothed them down and invited the leader over to McCarty's Hotel and bought him a keg of beer and told him to divide it up with his pals. The leader patted him on the back and called him a "regular sport" and told him that he could come over the river at any time with anybody! Moreover, if the southside squirts made any objection, they would see that he was granted full protection.

The clerk then crossed the river and contacted the leader of the rival gang, who settled for a bottle of gin at the "Red Onion" Hotel.

One fight broke out in Noxon's plant when an argument started over the merits of the north and south side of Ingersoll. At that time---1886---the Morrow Company was located on a small place beside a lumber company, and they were surrounded by tree-stumps, thus the nickname "Stumptown" was given to that area. This name was accepted by the sparsely inhabited district as being very appropriate, but what started the fight at Noxon's was caused by a southsider stating that the only thing that the northside could boast about was that they had "a nigger church" and two cemeteries!

It seems that the only time that the rival gangs could agree was the time when they joined---in battle array---at the east end of Charles Street, to inspect all the rigs and buggies coming from Woodstock in the hopes that they would catch a "courting chap", from Woodstock, on his way to an Ingersoll girl's home.

Naturally, one wonders why didn't the law step in! They did---after the fracas was over! Ingersoll only had one night constable on duty, and he invariably was missing when the bats and bottles were flying. IN the early '80s, his duties included inspecting doors, lighting the gas lamps in the business

district, impounding all stray hogs, sheep and dogs, seeing that the bars of the 29 taverns and dram shops were tightly closed from midnight to 4 a.m. and also he had to brush-broom the gutters to keep him awake. Naturally, when wanted---and when found---he gave some devised alibi that he was busy elsewhere!

After the "Battle of the Bridge" was over, he would travel down Thames Street with his broom and wheel-barrow and gather up an odd assortment of bottles, bricks, stones, iron slag, and occasionally a couple of cats who had fallen victim to Ingersoll's strife.

Fortunately, at the turn of the century, this feeling began to die down. The rival cliques became more friendly and they would journey together as brothers-in-arms, to Woodstock to cheer the "Cheesers" on to victory at a hockey match. All one had to do to get a black eye was to sit in the Woodstock section and cheer when Ingersoll scored a point. This was a signal to start a general melee with whisky flasks, hockey sticks, gin bottles and anything not heavier than 50 pounds. Everything went flying across the arena and the officials would call a halt to the game until the ice was swept clear of glass.

They call them "The Good Old Days" and many would agree that all in all, they were good old days.



## PAYROLL MONEY STOLEN ON KING STREET AS ARMY SLEEPS

During the early years of Ingersoll and vicinity, money as a means of exchange was very scarce, and trade was carried on mostly by barter or the exchange of goods. as a result, when money was available, British, United States, and Mexican gold and silver, as well as Spanish money, were all legal tender in the village of Oxford.

There lived during this time in our community, two men who were trying to get through life with as little effort as possible and were not too concerned whether their debts were ever paid or not. As usual, they had much sympathy for each other, and did not blame themselves for the destitute condition of their families, but rather blamed the world at large for its unfairness to them, and the government for not seeing that they get along with the least possible effort.

Finally, after much mental deliberation, one conceived a brilliant idea whereby they might both be in possession of considerable wealth without much effort and without injury to anybody.

Was it not a well-known fact that from time to time details of soldiers passed over the Thames Valley Road with relief details and supplies for the garrison to the West? And was it not also well-known that at regular intervals the paymaster marched with them with his keg of silver to pay the troops? It was not wrong to take from the government, as the soldiers would not lose their pay but only have to wait a little longer till the government replaced it. Men smuggled goods into the country at every opportunity, and an informer was considered to be the lowest type of citizen.

The chance soon came for these two clever citizens to put their plan into operation, for a company of militia were camped on the hill on King Street East, for the night. Now was their chance! They went to the blacksmith shop at midnight with a couple of sacks and gathered up enough old iron and ox shoes to fill a keg and then made their way to the vicinity of the camp. They were fortunate as the sentry seemed to have a desire to get a little sleep and moved very little, so they quietly made their way to the stores tent. Keeping out of sight, they managed to lift the edge of the canvas, locate the keg of dollars and roll it out to a safe distance. By removing the top hoop and head, they were able to transfer the Mexican dollars to a bag, and, replacing the head and hoop, they just as carefully returned the keg to the tent, leaving everything just as they had found it.

So, their very clever and well-laid plan had worked. No suspicion would be directed to them because the soldiers might be several marches away before the theft was discovered and by then they would not know where to start their investigation.

They hid the money and went about as usual (*until they could be sure it would be safe*) but one of them took very sick. The neighbours, who were very skilful in concocting remedies in those days, could do nothing for him and Dr. Duncombe was sent for, but it was no use. Feeling he was at the end, the ill one worried because he did not want to pass on with the crime of theft to answer for, so he confessed, and the money was restored to the proper authorities.

The following news items were taken from an 1897 edition of The Ingersoll Chronicle which was published in Ingersoll from 1853 to 1919, and which carried detailed accounts of suicides, pub brawls and serial-type stories of town residents who were ill. Complete lists were carried on each front page of persons registered at the town's hotels.

While the Chronicle ran help wanted columns, no wages were mentioned, but a court story reported that a construction worker sued his employer for non-payment of wages---to the tune of \$6 per day. A meeting of town council approved hiring an auditor at the rate of \$8 per day.

The inaugural meeting of town council in 1893 saw council approve that "the balance of King Street be completed as soon as weather permits," and that "none but residents of Ingersoll be employed for the work, and that the contractor be compelled to pay the usual rate of wages".

## EDUCATION

Education was a minor problem for the taxpayer. Estimates of the board of education submitted to town council stated the cost for the year of operating public schools would be \$6,196, including salaries. A similar estimate for operating the town's collegiate institute was \$4,041.

There were 166 names on Ingersoll's voter's list. Walter Mills was returned to town council as mayor by acclamation and all of West Oxford council was returned by acclamation.

The town had its own customs building in that era. A report states: "The amount of dutial goods passing through Ingersoll customs in December was \$16,592."

An editor's note at the bottom of the article stated:- "Ingersoll is eminently entitled to an independent port of entry, and we trust are long to see this desideratum an accomplished fact."

Town residents were up in arms over freight trains passing through the town or stopping to refuel. "This morning, the blockade of freight trains on Thames Street lasted half an hour," one article says.

The old newspaper was full of one-paragraph stores relating who was visiting who, who had bought or moved into a rented house, who was in hospital, and who was laid up at home.

One item reads: "Albert and Amos Sacridier have bought Charles Hughes' farm at Folden's Corners for \$4,900."



## DIVORCE

Whether or not the town residents got their divorces out-of-town to avoid publicity or if they did it because of restricted divorce grounds here, is not known.

One story states that Maggie Karn was granted a divorce from Edward Karn in Detroit in 1897. They were from Ingersoll and had been married for seven years.

"Her husband made her hoe corn, dig potatoes, and harvest hay beside caring for her baby," the report says. "Her husband lying in bed in the meantime, or going to the village occasionally to get a keg of beer and some companions to assist him in a carouse." The divorce was granted on cruelty grounds.

Ingersoll, like other communities in those days, seems to have had its share of itinerants searching the country for work. One court storey read: "Thomas Ryan, a weary traveller, appeared before the magistrate this morning charged with being a vagrant. He pleaded guilty and was let off on a suspended sentence on consenting to leave town. He left on the run."

Ingersoll at the turn of the century was a robust town, according to the old newspaper. Stories told of men having their ears bitten off in pub brawls, but it appears too, that some of the town's women were savory characters, as another court story states: "Mary Baird was charged this morning at the police court with being a prostitute." She spent a month in Woodstock jail as the penalty.

## ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertisements in the paper also give some insight of what the town was like to live in and what it had to offer.

A jeweller who advertised wedding rings also advertised for patrons to buy their wedding licences in his store.

A town barbershop advertised "A first class easy shave, a hair cut in the latest style, hair singed, alcohol sea foam and Egyptian egg shampoo." As an afterthought, the ad continued: "Ladies' bangs cut and curled in the latest fashion." (*Apparently, women were expected to look after their own hair and beauty needs.*)

Quack medicines were advertised on most pages. One ad didn't mention the name of the product but gave an address for "a free trial to any honest man." The medicine assured "happy marriage, good temper and long life."

And, there were medications for cyclists. (*Penny-farthing bicycles and tricycles were the most modern means of getting around town in those days, unless one preferred to hire a horse from one of the town's four liveries.*)

An ad read: "The Bicyclist's Best Friend is a familiar name for Trask's Magnetic Ointment, always ready for emergencies. While specific for piles, it also instantly relieves and cures cuts, bruises, salt rheup eczema and oil affections of the skin, 25 cents."

If wages were low, artists apparently were at the bottom of the wage scale, according to another ad. It read: "We would be pleased to show you our large stock of framed oil and water colour paintings, framed complete for 35 cents."

## CLOTHING AND YARD GOODS

A local tailor offered custom-made tailored men's wool suits from \$2.50 to \$4.50.

Off the rack, men's clothing was cheap. One ad listed men's wool overcoats, \$2; pea jackets, \$1.25; Persian, beaver or otter caps, \$3; lambs wool undershirts and drawers, 50¢; fancy shirts, 75¢, while dress shirts ran from 50¢ to \$1.

A January white sale of women's clothing advertised: "Gowns from 39¢ to \$2; skirts, 39¢ to \$2; drawers 19¢ and corset covers from 10¢ to 75¢.

Yard goods were offered at \$1 for 34 yards of flannelette; 36 inch gingham at 6 cents per yard; sheeting at 13 cents per yard, and 54 inch serge at 75 cents per yard.

Lace curtains were 15¢ per pair and carpeting cost 29¢ per yard.

## MARKETING

A Saturday market report from the town stated that butter "was much in evidence and sold at 15 to 16 cents per pound. Eggs, which were still very scarce, sold readily at the excessive price of 17 - 19 cents per dozen.

Raisins cost 25 cents for five pounds; tea was 19 cents per pound and coffee, 25 cents per pound.

A farmer's market listed prices per bushel at:- Wheat, 32 cents; barley, 25 cents; oats, 22 cents; live hog per cwt., \$4.50; a quarter of beef, \$5; lamb by the carcass, 10 cents; mutton, 6 cents; 100 pound of flour \$2; ducks per pair, 50 cents; turkey, 10 cents per pound.



## INGERSOLL'S 'MONSTER'

Ingersoll once had its own great 'monster' mystery. Strange disturbances had been reported from Benson's Mill Pond, located in the central part of the town. (*now Memorial Park*) At frequent intervals, the calm surface of the water would be thrown into violent commotion as if some unseen force had suddenly exerted itself to the surface and then disappeared. For a short time all would be still, only to happen again in some other part of the pond, giving the impression of some amphibious creature, sporting itself without revealing its character.

Of course, these 'Mysterious manifestations' could not go on long without arousing the superstitious nature among our residents. Conjecture and imagination began as to the cause of this exhibition and for days and nights men could be seen---some with shotguns---waiting and watching for the monster, ready to give it a 'proper reception'.

The press became interested and reports of the wonderful and unaccountable phenomenon was told far and wide with the usual result that the more it was discussed, the more the people became interested, until nightly groups of people could be seen viewing the spectacle.

Some could actually describe the monster, and the Ingersoll Chronicle reported it in the early part of May:

"Many of our townspeople during the past week, have become greatly excited by the appearance of Benson's Mill Pond of a large animal---whether a 'whale, a sea serpent, an alligator, or an overgrown turtle, does not yet seem quite clear---which has made its appearance occasionally on the surface of the water. It is described by some persons as being about 20 feet long, and eight or 10 feet broad; throws no water, mud, etc., after the manner of a whale, and does many other extraordinary things..."

The various experiences of those who had claimed to have seen it were eagerly believed. Some said a travelling menagerie had a sick alligator on their hands, and, on the apparent death, had been thrown into the pond, where it was supposed to have regained its health, and was now the interesting source of observation. Some even said it was a prehistoric creature which had been in suspended animation and come back to life!

Increasing public interest made it evident that the mystery had to be solved, and as the 24th of May was approaching, it was decided that the pond would be drained by opening the flood gates on that day, thus adding to the excitement of the day, so the public should be able to witness the capture or destruction of this source of wonder.

The usual preparations were made for the day and duly advertised in the Ingersoll Chronicle, but the event which was most looked forward to with the greatest of interest, was the capture of this strange animal. The Chronicle's account of the day's events gave full particulars of the capture of the 'alligator'.

**TOWN OF INGERSOLL  
CELEBRATION OF THE  
QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY!**

The committee of arrangement have much  
pleasure in announcing that Her Majesty's Birthday,  
Saturday, 24th May,

will be celebrated in Ingersoll in the usual loyal  
and appropriate manner. The day will be observed as a  
General Holiday!

And the Artillery will fire  
Royal Salutes During the day.

It is expected that the Free and Accepted, Honorable and Ancient,  
Illustrious and Inimitable, Pragmatic and Prismatic, Hydrostatic and  
Ecstatic body of

**CALLITHUMPIANS**

Or Sons of Momus will parade during the day, commencing at one  
o'clock, p.m., on the ground in the vicinity of the English Church,  
when the prizes will be award for the following:

Putting the heavy stone,  
Hop, Step and Leap,  
Running High Leap,  
Sack Race  
Hurdle Race  
Wheelbarrow Race

Competitors to pay an entrance fee. Wheelbarrow and Sack Race  
Free. A scrub Race will be run, open to all horses, the hindmost  
horse to win; no person to ride his own animal, and entrance fee  
must be paid. Winners of prizes will please apply to the treasurer on  
the ground immediately after winning.

At 4 o'clock p.m., immediately after the games are concluded, the  
water will be drawn off Benson's Mill Pond, and search begin for

**THE ALLIGATOR**

**Fireworks in the Evening**

Persons desirous of erecting booths on the ground must make  
applications to the treasurer. As the Committee have secured the  
ground from the Proprietors, a fee of One Dollar will in all cases be  
charged for permission to erect Booths.

JOHN McDONALD, Chairman

T. A. McNamara, Secretary

C. P. Hall, Treasurer

Ingersoll, May 20, 1862



During the week, strangers had been arriving in Ingersoll and long before the 24th all the hotels were booked. Among these unfamiliar faces were representatives of several museums, and a man who was described as "a prominent individual" and known as the professor, from a scientific institution in the United States, and who came prepared with literature and sketches of all known prehistoric creatures. *(During the capture of the mysterious beast, the actions of the professor and the representatives of the press were to be the centre of attention.)*

Early in the day more crowds began to pour into the town, and by noon it was estimated that more than 3,000 people were gathered here to join in the celebration. Hotel keepers had even decorated their premises with flags, banners, and evergreens. Even while enjoying the Callithumpian parade and sports, eyes were ever watching the time until the magic hour of 4 o'clock when the big mystery was to be solved. The crowds gathered and by the time 4 o'clock rolled around the people were worked up to a fever pitch.

A heavy raft had been prepared which was equipped with ropes, pike poles and other instruments, thought suitable to such a dangerous task. It was already on the water and was manned by two fearless lads. At about five o'clock, Mr. Keith, who was the proprietor of the Commercial Mills, ordered the gates to be opened. The crowd waited tensely as the water slowly went down, and telescopes and binoculars were trained over the scene. At length an object came into view, and the men on the raft were cheered on, as they steered their awkward craft towards it. The "professor" spotted it, and declared it to be a 'haired' creature.

As the two boys on the raft were trying to get a noose on it, one of them caught his foot in a coil of the rope and fell in the water, but he quickly scrambled back onto the raft again, amid fearful gasps from those on shore *(who had attributed his falling off, to the death throes of the doomed creature, hitting the raft)*. The gates were closed *(with much difficulty and with a great deal of labour)* and the boys succeeded in landing the creature on the raft. After a short delay, the raft was towed to shore, while the crowd pressed nearer to its landing point. The "professor" took one look at the carcass and then turned deadly pale as an Irishman cried out. "'Tis a hoax! By heavens, 'tis a hoax!"

The strange creature which had caused so much excitement and mystery, was not a crocodile, a turtle, a young whale, or an alligator. It was merely a calf skin, stuffed with hay and loaded with bricks to keep it under water!

Upon hearing this, a great lot of shouting, cursing, singing, yelling and roars of laughter rose from the gathering and all came even closer to get a good view of the object. Later, the skin was dragged through the streets by several little boys, to the evident satisfaction of an admiring crowd.

The question now was, what had caused the disturbances in the water? This was attributed to a certain amount of offal, such as oat hulls, etc., which had been allowed to pass into the creek leading to the pond. Here, it fermented, and the gases that formed had caused the bubbling and commotion on the surface.

## REEVE GALLIFORD'S 5 A.M. CANNON BLAST

For many years, "The Queen's Birthday" was the only spring and summer holiday in Upper Canada, later Ontario. Falling on the 24th of May---Victoria Day first was observed in the larger centres and by military organizations. Gradually, the smaller centres joined in the fun making.

The first 'official' celebration did not take place until 1852, the year Ingersoll became a village. The late James Crawford, a resident of Ingersoll at the time, later wrote of the occasion:

"On the 24th of May, at five o'clock in the morning, John Galliford, Reeve of the village, who in his younger days had served in the Royal Artillery and still feeling a streak of military blood in his veins, thinking it a fit and proper way to introduce the day to the sleeping inhabitants, he, with his small cannon of two inch calibre, gave them the Queen's Royal Salute of 21 guns, which stirred up their royal feelings for the grand old flag, the Union Jack..."

"After breakfast, about 9 o'clock, Mr. Mark Ollerinshaw, who had been a bandsman in the regular regimental service, who had a band of eight well-trained young men of the village, appeared on the streets and gave a number of fine selections of military music...At 10 o'clock, about 30 young men, volunteers of the Callithumpian brigade, appeared on the streets in full Callithumpian dress which made a fine outfit for the occasion. After dinner, a good crowd of village folks and people from the surrounding settlement gathered and took part in the many sports of the day..."

Such were the characteristics of celebrations in Ingersoll for the greater part of the 1850's. Prior to the day, a public meeting was held in the Town Hall, during which committees were appointed to make preparations, and Council granted funds to cover any costs.

If not entertained by the Ingersoll Brass Band in the morning, the crowd witnessed a demonstration of the skills of the Ingersoll Fire Companies, who practised water throwing and other skills near the Thames Street bridge. The town cannon, whose thunderous roar awoke the inhabitants at dawn, was fired at frequent intervals throughout the day, startling the unaware.

After dinner, all again assembled on the grounds of the English church to either watch or complete in the "many sports of the day." Prizes ranged from \$3 for first prize in the standing high jump to \$2 for first prize in the sack race, and one can easily imagine the scene as young and old competed for the honours as the onlookers cheered enthusiastically. These competitions took the greater part of the afternoon, and soon everyone was ready for the evening meal. The day ended with a torchlight procession down the main street after dusk, and a display of fireworks in front of the Town Hall.

A feature of every celebration marking the Queen's birthday up until the 1920's, was the "world-



renowned band of 'Ingersoll Callithumpians'," (as J. S. Gurnett, Editor of the *Ingersoll Chronicle* characterized them). On one occasion, Editor Gurnett depicted their appearance:

"...Shortly before the procession arrived on the grounds (*prior to the sports of the day*), they were joined by a motley crew calling themselves 'Callithumpians'! about 12 or 14 in number, mounted on horses of almost every conceivable colour, size, age and shape. One of them was mounted on a live unicorn, the horn apparently being composed of a portion of a barber's pole. The appearance of this company was certainly most grotesque---some riders wearing hats something less than 12 feet in length, others wearing tin spurs of the greatest magnitude, and others again in coats of the most ludicrous cut and buttons of mammoth dimensions, and all wearing masks."

Much to the dismay of residents of Ingersoll and area, no celebration of any kind was held in the village in 1858. "The day in Ingersoll, was indeed a dull one. No music, no games, no processions, and no fun for the youngsters," went the report in the *Chronicle*---"not, to our knowledge, so much as a firecracker."

The criticism had the proper effect, and the 1859 celebration was one of the largest in Ingersoll up to that time. In later years, when public interest was found to lag, the *Chronicle's* timely remarks produced the same results.

The civil strife which was rampant in the United States during the 1860's was responsible for the elaborate festivities staged in Ingersoll all through that decade.

In a patriotic mood, Editor Gurnett wrote:-

"...In the mother country the event does not call forth any unusual popular demonstrations...But in the colonies, and especially in Canada, it is different...and as loyal subjects of Her Majesty, we rejoice as each year brings with it the 24th of May, to honour the birthday of that estimable lady who sways the sceptre and wields the destinies of the British Empire.

Under her rule, we have all the blessings which liberty confers on a people; peace and plenty enjoyed, and that assistance which she gave us in the past would not be found wanting in the future in sustaining us against the aggressions of foes from without. When we see the republics of the new world, from the greatest to the smallest, frequently engaged in strife with one another, and when not so occupied, torn in pieces by internal dissensions, the work of designed demagogues---the "powers to be" failing to govern alike the masses---we should be the more thankful that we live under a government which combines wisdom, stability and strength, and which has grown better and more durable a century after century rolled past."

A special attraction was planned apart from the other elaborate preparations of each celebration in the 1860's. ON many occasions, it was the "series of amusing, interesting and instructive experiments in chemistry" given by R. Kneeshaw, (*for many years a druggist in Ingersoll*) which included the explosion of gases, the burning of substances under water, the phenomenon of spontaneous combustion and the firing of a pistol with ice. At other times it was the precise drill of the Volunteers dressed in their handsome uniforms.

In 1867, a large crowd gathered to witness a daring performance. "...Prof. Bond, the celebrated rope-walker, performed several times on a wire stretched from Leonard's Hotel to Bailey's Wagon Shop. He is certainly the most daring rope-walker that ever visited Ingersoll." The young boys were awestruck at the professor's skill as he crossed the wire, and in later years, still another event was added to the athletics program---walking on a pole over water.

The next 20 years were, for the most part, very quiet ones on the 24th of May. During the day little went on beside the firing of the cannon and the letting off of firecrackers. Although somewhat of a novelty up until the end of the 1860's, these playthings became more and more common, with the gradual drop in price. Besides startling the residents, they sometimes resulted in serious damage, an instance of which occurred in 1877. This time, the matter was brought to the attention of the people by Harry Rowland, Editor of the Oxford Tribune, (*Published in Ingersoll since 1873.*)

"That intolerable nuisance the fire cracker is still allowed on our streets, notwithstanding the mischief that has already been wrought by it. Friday last, some mischievous boys threw a number of these senseless torments under a young horse hitched to a harrow in a field in the eastern part of the town. The animal of course pranced about and finally broke its leg, and its owner, Col. Cowan, was obliged to kill it to put it out of misery. This wanton piece of tom-foolery should be a warning, and as we have a bylaw prohibiting the use of these dangerous playthings within the town limits, it is time a stop was put to such a nuisance..."



## Index

A. T. Tuttle .....	44
Adair, David, merchant .....	42, 45
Adams, Arthur, Labourer .....	42, 45
Advertisements .....	78
Allen, G. W., mechanic .....	42, 45
Alligator .....	80-82
Alma .....	48
Americans .....	6, 10, 14, 19, 22, 25
Archer, John, mechanic .....	42, 45
Babcock, George, millwright .....	42, 45
Baldwin .....	64
Bank	
Commercial .....	53
Commercial Bank .....	3
Gold .....	20
Imperial .....	36
Imperial Bank .....	4
Merchant's Bank .....	3, 4
Niagara District .....	53, 68
Niagara District Bank .....	4
Trader's Bank .....	3
Banks .....	3, 5, 31, 32, 37, 53, 69, 53
Baptist .....	53
Barker, Edward, shoemaker .....	42, 45
Barker, Joseph, merchant .....	42, 45
Barker, Wm., shoemaker .....	42, 45
Barnes, Laurie, yeoman .....	42, 45
Barry, Wm., tailor .....	45
Battle of the Bridge .....	75
Beachville .....	5, 25, 26, 35, 36
Beard	
Captain .....	8
Beattie, Wm., merchant .....	42, 45
Bell .....	48, 55, 70, 73
Benson Street .....	47
Berry, Thomas, harness-maker .....	42
Big Cheese .....	55, 56, 59
Boles Street .....	47
Bond Street .....	47
Bower, John, labourer .....	42
Bowers, John, clerk .....	42
Boyce	
James .....	28, 29
Brady, John, labourer .....	42, 45
Brantford .....	1, 3, 11, 34

Briggs	
C. J.	28
British	6, 11, 12, 22, 30, 53, 56, 59, 76, 84
Bronson	28, 29
Browett, Joseph, merchant	42, 45
Brown	
John	33, 38, 39, 42, 44, 45, 53, 63-66, 69, 71
Brown & Bryan, saddlers	45
Brown, James, baker	42, 45
Brown, Thomas, tanner	42, 45
Buchanan, John tinsmith	45
Bunker, W., yeoman	45
Bunker, Wm., yeoman	42
Burke, Joseph, merchant	42, 45
Businesses	52, 67
Byrne, Thomas, harness-maker	45
Callithumpians	81, 84
Cambridge	48
Campbell, Homer, mechanic	45
Canfield	28, 42, 44, 45, 48
Canfield, D., J. P. & Clerk, D.C.	45
Cannon Blast	83
Canterbury	3, 47, 49
Carnegie, John, farmer	42, 45
Carnegie, John, yeoman	45
Carnegie, William, yeoman	42
Carnegie Street	48
Carroll	3, 12, 19, 22, 25, 26, 28, 29, 42, 45, 47-49, 52, 54, 55, 61, 67
Carroll, D., miller	42, 45
Carroll, R. H. yeoman	45
Cartnagie, William, yeoman	45
Cathcart	48
Catherine	20, 48
Catherine Street	48
Cerrey, Mrs., accoucheur	45
Chadwick	39, 48, 70
Chapman, J. B., druggist	42
Chapman, J. M. druggist	45
Charity Harper, (coloured)	44
Charles Street	3, 29, 47-49, 53, 67, 74
cheese	3, 6, 7, 44, 55-58, 57-59, 73
Cheese and Wine	57
Chronicle	5, 41, 51, 63, 68, 70, 77, 80, 84
Church	12, 18, 21, 23-25, 28, 30, 31, 37, 47, 53, 68, 69, 74, 81, 83
Church of England	12, 47, 53
Church Street	47
Churches	4, 21, 37, 47, 53, 69



Civil War	5, 55, 62, 64, 74
Clothing and Yard Goods	79
Collegiate	41, 77
Commercial Bank	3, 53
Commissioners	1, 47
Competition	57, 60
Comstock, H. P., yeoman	42, 45
Concession Street	48
Connaught, Charles, bootmaker	42
Course, George, labourer	42, 45
Credit Valley Railway	4
Criticize Architecture	70
Cronk, W., labourer	45
Crotty, Richard, yeoman	42, 45
Curd Mill	58
dairy	6, 31, 55, 73
Daly House	54, 59, 61, 62, 64, 66, 68
Daly, M., innkeeper	42, 45
David Lockey	44
David Street	48
David White, drygoods	44
Delaney, Patrick, currier	42, 45
Detroit	1, 5, 8, 10-12, 18, 24, 25, 62, 65, 78
Development	3, 18, 19, 25, 31, 44
Directory	45
Disaster Strikes	70
Divorce	78
Donaldson, Jacob, wagonmaker	42, 45
Doty	28, 29, 42, 44, 45, 55, 62, 69
Doty David, blacksmith	45
Doty, David, blacksmith	42
Doty, Edward, livery stable keeper	42, 45
Dufferin Street	48
Duke Street	47
Duncombe	
Dr.	76
Dundas, Edward, shoemaker	42, 45
Dunn, J., shoemaker	42, 45
Dunn, William, founder	42, 45
Early Stores	52
Eastwood, Willard, merchant	42, 45
Education	41, 63, 77
Edward Comiskey	44
Edward Merrigold	44
Edwin Casswell	44, 57
Elias Pickard	44
Elliott, Thomas, yeoman	42, 45

Erastus T. Judd . . . . .	44
Evans, D., labourer . . . . .	45
Evans, Daniel, labourer . . . . .	42
Evans, William, plasterer . . . . .	42, 45
export trade . . . . .	6, 56
Fanner, Hugh, labourer . . . . .	42
Farley, James, labourer . . . . .	42, 45
Faulkner, Robert, labourer . . . . .	42, 45
Fawcett, Thomas, labourer . . . . .	45
Featherstone, William, joiner . . . . .	42, 45
Fenians . . . . .	3, 5
Fish, John, carpenter . . . . .	42, 45
Forbes, George, labourer . . . . .	42, 45
Fort Detroit . . . . .	8
Fowler, James, carpenter . . . . .	42, 45
Fowler, William, labourer . . . . .	42, 45
Fursman, John, wagonmaker . . . . .	42, 45
Fusiliers . . . . .	9
G. G. Stomson & . . . . .	44
G. W. Walley . . . . .	44, 68
Galliford Reeve . . . . .	38, 42, 45, 55, 69, 83
Galliford, Esq., John, bootmaker . . . . .	42, 45
George . . . . .	28, 32, 39, 42-46, 48, 49, 58, 63, 66, 68, 70, 71
George Bartlett, (coloured) . . . . .	44
George E. S. Crawford . . . . .	44
George Ross, coal and wood . . . . .	44
George Waters, horse farrier . . . . .	44
Gibson . . . . .	59
Gilbert, C. W., minister . . . . .	45
Gilchrist, Angus, labourer . . . . .	42, 45
Giolbert, C. W., minister . . . . .	42
Girham, Evan, sawyer . . . . .	42, 45
Goble, John, teamster . . . . .	42, 45
Gold . . . . .	20, 36, 67, 76
Gordon, A., tailor . . . . .	42
Governor . . . . .	1, 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 25, 31, 41, 49, 64, 65, 73
Governor John Graves Simcoe . . . . .	1
Great Fire . . . . .	67
Great Western Railway . . . . .	4, 50, 54, 62, 73
Greig, James, miller . . . . .	42, 45
Gunes, James, bricklayer . . . . .	42, 45
Haining, Robert, tinsmith . . . . .	42, 45
Hall . . . . .	3, 5, 12, 27-29, 39, 40, 42, 44, 45, 48, 49, 52, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 64, 67-72, 81, 83
Hall Street . . . . .	48, 67
Hall, C. P., merchant . . . . .	42, 45
Hall, Elisha, yeoman . . . . .	42, 45



Hallaeck .....	28
Clark .....	5, 64, 71
Harper's Ferry .....	64
Harrington, George, bricklayer .....	42
Harris Street .....	48
Harris, Leonard, shoemaker .....	45
Hartford .....	13
Harwood, E., painter .....	42
Haywod, William, painter .....	42
Helen .....	48
Henderson .....	5, 39, 42, 45
Henderson, John, shoemaker .....	42, 45
Henry Crotty .....	44
Hewett, John, plasterer .....	42, 45
Highway .....	1, 10, 31, 58
Hill Sylvester, yeoman .....	42
Hill, David, carpenter .....	42, 45
Hill, R. P., teamster .....	42, 45
Holcroft Street .....	48
Holland, John, fiddler .....	42, 45
Holmes, Alex., carpenter .....	42, 45
Hope MacNivan, auctioneer .....	44
Hopkins, H. P., saddler .....	42, 45
Horner	
Thomas .....	10-12, 20, 24
Hotels .....	52, 54, 59-62, 71, 77, 82
Houghton, Stephen, labourer .....	45
Houghton, Steven, labourer .....	42
Imperial Bank .....	4, 36
Indian trails .....	1, 10
Industries .....	50, 53
Ingersole .....	13
Ingersoll .....	1, 3-8, 10, 12-23, 25-29, 31-45, 47, 48, 50-55, 57, 59-67, 69, 70, 72-78, 80-85
Ingersoll Cheese Company .....	7
Ingersoll Cream Cheese Co., Ltd. ....	7
Ingersoll Packing Company .....	7
Ingersoll, James A., yeoman .....	43, 45
Inkerman .....	48
Inn .....	25, 35, 59, 62, 66
Issac Greenaway .....	44
Izzard, James, teacher .....	42, 45
J. D. Stimson, gorgers, (arrived at Ingersoll in 1827) .....	44
Jackson, J.R., merchant .....	43, 45
James Brady .....	44
James Greenaway .....	44
James McIntrye, (the cheese poet) .....	44
James Pickard .....	44

James Street	47
James Vine, notary public	44
James, John, cooper	43, 45
Jarvis, G. T., distiller	43, 45
Jessup, Richard, labourer	43, 45
John	1, 5, 8, 10, 12-14, 19-22, 24-26, 28, 38-40, 42-48, 53-55, 57, 64-66, 68-71, 81, 83
John Boles	44, 47
John Roddy	44
Johns, Solomon, cooper	43, 45
Joseph Thirkell	44
Kelley, Robt., shoemaker	43, 46
Kennedy	28, 43, 46, 66
Kennedy, Peter, teamster	43, 46
King Solomon	49
King Street	3, 29, 34, 47, 53, 61-63, 67-69, 71, 76, 77
Knott, Wm., miller	43, 46
Kraft	57
La Tranche	10, 14, 17, 25
Lake Erie	1, 31, 34, 62, 65, 66
Lakeside	21
Lanson, J. W., blacksmith	43, 46
Larkworth, William, carpenter	43, 46
Laurier	64
Lawrence, John, joiner	43, 46
Lawrence, M., carpenter	43, 46
Leonard Bixel, Brewer	44
Leonard, John, tanner	43
Lind, Edward, shoemaker	43, 46
Linireau, Henry, teamster	43
Linireaux, Henry, teamster	46
Lodges	54
Lord Dufferin	73
Lost Population	67
Lundy's Lane	22
Macdonald	64, 71
Mackenzie	
William Lyon	20, 27, 62, 64, 71
Macklin, John, merchant	43, 46
Mahoney, Patrick, weaver	43, 46
Mais, Joseph, labourer	43, 46
Mais, Peter, Miller	43, 46
Malcom's Mills	8
Maricle	
Mr.	28
Mark Ollerenshaw (Ingersoll's first bandmaster)	44
Marketing	60, 79
Martha Street	48



Mavor, Edward, carpenter	43, 46
Max Bixel, Brewer	44
Maynard	
William	28
Zenas	28
McCarthy Street	48
McCarthy, James, physician	43, 46
McDonald, James, J.P., merchant	43, 46
McDonald, James, labourer	43, 46
McDonald, John, merchant	43, 46
McDonald, Robert, merchant	43, 46
McDowel, William, labourer	43, 46
McKay, Marshall, carpenter	43, 46
McKenzie, George, Blacksmith	46
McKenzie, J. I., merchant	43, 46
McKenzie, John, tailor	43, 46
McMulkein, Christ., yeoman	43, 46
McNab, John, merchant	43, 46
McNiven	68, 70
Meals	60
Merchant's Bank	3, 4
Merritt Street	47
Merycold, Mrs.	46
Metcalf	49
Methodist	21, 23-25, 29, 30, 37, 47, 53, 69
Mexican	28, 76
Militia	5, 8, 11-13, 19, 20, 25, 26, 47, 76
Militia Street	47
Millar	
T.D.	57, 58, 57-59
Miller	
John	25, 28, 42, 43, 45, 46, 68
Miller, Stephen, labourer	43, 46
Miss Susan Young, private school teacher	44
Mollison, John, mechanic	43, 46
money	1, 15, 18, 24, 32, 76
Monster	80
Moore, John, moulder	43, 46
Moore, Robt., labourer	43, 46
Morrison, John, tailor	43, 46
Mrs. Ellen McCaskill	44
Mulleron, Alex., blacksmith	43, 46
Murdock, James, wagonmaker	43, 46
Murray, James, blacksmith	43, 46
Mutual	48, 49
N. McFee	44
Nebraska	5

Neutral Indians . . . . .	1, 23
Niagara District Bank . . . . .	4, 53, 68
Norsworthy . . . . .	3
North Oxford . . . . .	5, 25, 37
Northampton . . . . .	13
Noxon Street . . . . .	48
O'Brien, Henry, tailor . . . . .	43, 46
Old Stage Road . . . . .	1, 34, 36, 62
Oliver, Adam, carpenter . . . . .	43, 46
Ovington, Mrs. . . . . .	46
Oxford . 1, 2, 5, 6, 8-15, 17, 19, 20, 22-26, 28, 33, 36-38, 47, 52, 53, 55-58, 61, 63, 67-71, 76, 77, 85	
Oxford Rifles . . . . .	5, 8, 9, 55
Oxford-upon-the-Thames . . . . .	6
Paine, David, tailor . . . . .	43, 46
Parker, C. P., yeoman . . . . .	43, 46
Parkhurst	
Charles . . . . .	3, 28, 29, 43, 46
Parkhurst, Chas., clothier . . . . .	43, 46
Patterson, John, innkeeper . . . . .	43, 46
Payroll . . . . .	36, 76
Peacock, Thomas, yeoman . . . . .	43, 46
Petition . . . . .	14, 15
Phelan & Adair, merchants . . . . .	46
Phelan, Daniel, J. P., merchant . . . . .	43, 46
Phillip, Uriah, blacksmith . . . . .	43, 46
Pickard, Hiram, teamster . . . . .	43, 46
Pillton, William D., shoemaker . . . . .	43, 46
Poole, H., teamster . . . . .	43, 46
Poole, Robert, yeoman . . . . .	43, 46
Poole, Sam., tailor . . . . .	43, 46
Port Burwell . . . . .	31-33, 35, 62
Post Office . . . . .	6, 26, 29, 35, 38, 54, 67
Powell, J., labourer . . . . .	43, 46
Presbyterian . . . . .	21, 47, 53
Princeton	
Zulus . . . . .	8, 11
Progress . . . . .	6, 33, 41, 50, 68
Public Funds . . . . .	1
Quigley, Edward, lumberer . . . . .	43, 46
Raglan . . . . .	48
Ralph A Woodstock, bookseller . . . . .	44
Ranney . . . . .	6, 58
Rebellion . . . . .	8, 20, 27, 48, 62
Reeve . . . . .	53, 55, 83
Richard Fitzmorris . . . . .	44
Road Builder . . . . .	17
Roads . . . . .	1-3, 14, 15, 17, 31, 32, 34, 35, 52, 55



Robert Kneeshaw	44
Robert Vance	44
Robinson, Ephraim, chairmaker	43, 46
Roman Catholic	37, 53, 69
Royal Canadian Regiment	8, 9
Rulley Deuel, and his daughter	44
Rumsey	3, 43, 46, 50, 51
Rumsey, R. H., founder	43, 46
Ryan	
Peter	28, 78
Schell, Daniel, carpenter	43, 46
Schofield	28, 29, 40, 43, 44, 46
Schofield, Henry, blacksmith	43, 46
Schools	26, 29, 40, 41, 53, 54, 77
Secord	
Laura	6, 22, 47
Shanley, Patrick, labourer	43, 46
Sheady, John, carpenter	46
Sheady, Robert, labourer	46
Sheedy, John, carpenter	43
Sherman	
J.	28, 29
William	28, 29
Silver	76
Smith	5, 14, 28, 29, 43, 46, 69, 73
Smith, L. F., minister	43, 46
Smith, William, wagonmaker	43, 46
Snelgrove, A., mechanic	43, 46
South African War	8
Spanish	28, 76
Spur, G. A., innkeeper	43, 46
St. Marys	13, 21
Stage coach	36, 55
Stage Road	1, 34-36, 62
Steele, Aaron, mechanic	43, 46
Stimson	28, 44
T. H. Barraclough	44, 68
Taverns	3, 32, 75
Taylor, John, carpenter	43, 46
Thames	3, 4, 6, 10, 14, 15, 17, 18, 21, 23, 26, 28, 29, 31, 34, 37, 41, 48, 50, 54, 55, 61, 67-69, 73-77, 83
The Canadian Dairymen's Association	6
Thomas H. Rawlings	44
Tillson	32
Titus	
Samuel	28
Toronto	1, 18, 20, 34, 57, 63, 65

Town Hall	5, 40, 52, 53, 59, 63, 64, 69-72, 83
Township	1, 5, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 21, 24, 25, 31, 37, 70
Trader's Bank	3
Traffic	2, 31
Underwood	28, 29
Union	6, 40, 41, 48, 54, 55, 64, 83
United Empire Loyalists	1, 10, 31
Upper Canada	1, 6, 10, 14, 15, 17, 24, 25, 27, 50, 83
Urwin, John, yeoman	43, 46
Vanatter, James, labourer	43, 46
Vanevery	28
VanNorman	33
Venton, Stephen, labourer	43, 46
Vermont	6, 65
Vice-Regal Tour	73
Victoria	29, 37, 48, 54, 66, 67, 74, 83, 85
Victoria Day	83, 85
Vienna	32, 33
W. G. Wonham, surveyor	44
Wail, john, yeoman	43, 46
Walker, James, butcher	43, 46
Walker, John, Cooper	43, 46
Wallace, Robert, minister	43, 46
Walsh, John, lawyer	43, 46
Ward, Thomas, labourer	43, 46
Warwick, John, cabinetmaker	43, 46
Washington Bevans, (coloured)	44
Waterloo	48
Watson	10, 11
Webster, G. H. cabinetmaker	43, 46
Webster, George, joiner	43, 46
Weigh, Richard, mechanic	43, 46
Welfare, Edward, teamster	43, 46
West Oxford Plank	2
Westfield	13
Whiting	15, 16, 28, 29, 47
Whiting Street	47
Wickwire	28
William	8, 19, 20, 26-28, 40, 42-46, 48, 50, 61, 66, 68, 70
William Cuthbert, candle and soap maker	44
William McDowel, (Ingersoll's first market clerk)	44
William Wilford	44
Wilson, David, druggist	43, 46
Windsor	3, 5
Wm. Frizelle	44
Woodstock	1-3, 8, 19, 20, 36, 44, 67, 74, 75, 78



INDEX OF CONTENTS

<u>PAGE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
1	First Oxford Roads were Indian Trails
3	1830-1850 Period---A development era
5	A Story of Historical Sword
6	A Century of Progress
8	Militia started in 1798
10	INGERSOLL
13	The Ingersolls
17	Thomas Ingersoll
23	First Religious service here in 1801
25	John Carroll--lived to age 102
27	Elisha Hall--a victim of the rebellion
28	Village had only 20 families in 1828
31	Ingersoll major link on Western Ontario water highway
34	Stagecoach jaunt to Ingersoll was a hazardous affair
37	The Town of Ingersoll
39	Ingersoll Agricultural Society
40	Schools--First trustee board elected in 1852
42	First Vote in Ingersoll in 1852
45	Village Directory of 1852
47	Streets named after pioneers of area
50	Ingersoll's future attracted Rumsey
52	Early stores, businesses, etc.
55	Ingersoll once busy port as cargoes shipped on Thames
56	Big cheese put Oxford on the map
57	Cheese and wine--Gourmet food in early Oxford
60	Ingersoll had numerous fine hotels
62	Daly, Royal hotels--once rival spy headquarters
67	Great fire of 1872 wiped out historic old hotel
73	Vice-regal tour of 1872 & 1874
74	Ingersolls own civil war in the 1800's
76	Payroll money stolen on King St. as army sleeps
77	Ingersoll---1897
80	Ingersolls monster
83	Reeve Gallifords 5 a.m. cannon blast
86-95	Alphabetical index