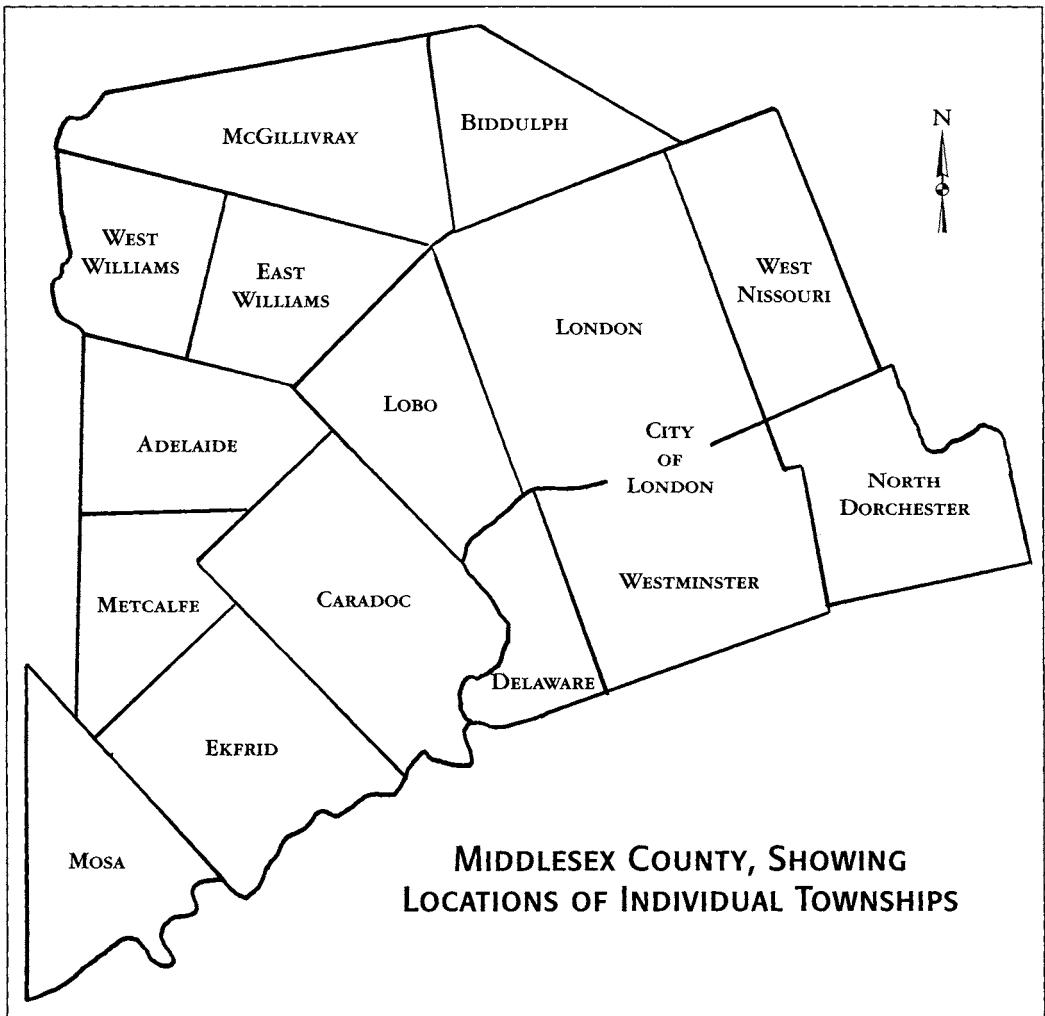




VANISHED VILLAGES OF  
**MIDDLESEX**  
JENNIFER GRAINGER



# **VANISHED VILLAGES OF MIDDLESEX**



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Jennifer Grainger



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*Below right:* Napier General Store today, courtesy of the author.

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But there were many other people who assisted me in writing this book. They are not usually involved in historical research or archival work. Instead, they are the inhabitants, or former inhabitants, of the vanished villages of Middlesex. They were usually quite surprised when a young woman knocked on their door and asked them for the history of their crossroads. On the spur of the moment they were asked to remember events long since over or buildings long since gone. But all of them helped me—and some even gave me the “grand tour” of their village! Their names are listed under Interview Credits in this book. I thank them all. As well, my thanks must go to Steve Harding and Inge Sanmiya for their assistance in finding photos.

While every effort has been made, in this my pursuit of the real stories, to ensure accuracy, the responsibility for any errors rests with me. Any such error brought to the attention of myself or the publisher will be rectified in subsequent editions.

# INTRODUCTION

YOUR FIRST THOUGHT upon picking up this book might be, “Could there really be this many “vanished” villages in Middlesex County?” The question is understandable. After all, Middlesex is, and always has been, one of the most prosperous counties in Ontario, with fertile soil and a fairly gentle climate. But the answer is “Yes!” Though few people realize it, Middlesex County, like much of the province, is liberally sprinkled with remnants of hamlets and villages that supplied goods and services to the pioneers—and then quietly disappeared as their usefulness declined.

Most of these villages included a general store and post office, a blacksmith and a cluster of houses. But often there were other industries, such as a variety of mills, carriage shops, wagon shops and shoemakers, as well as churches and schools. When roads were poor and travel by horse and buggy slow, these villages were located only a few miles apart, usually at crossroads for the convenience of people arriving from all directions. In these villages, local settlers bought supplies, received and sent mail, had a horse shod, worshipped and had their children educated. But perhaps most importantly, these villages were community centres, places where distant neighbours could meet once a week or so, discuss politics and the weather or gossip around the woodstove in the general store.

So why did so many of these bustling hamlets disappear? The fact is that they simply were no longer necessary. A community must be able to adapt to changing times, changing industries and changing human needs.



A man drives his horse and wagon along an unidentified road in London township. Poor conditions such as this rutted road hindered pioneer travel. *London Free Press Collection, The D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.*

If it cannot, it declines. Many mill villages disappeared when the trees were chopped down reducing streams which had once been rushing torrents to mere trickles no longer able to provide the necessary water power. The industrial revolution, which created modern factory systems, destroyed the village craftsman. Some villages declined when the railway failed to go through as hoped and businesses and industries relocated to be near the rail lines. But perhaps the automobile did more to destroy small communities than anything else. Once roads were paved, travel was faster and easier. People had easy access to larger centres, such as London, Strathroy, Parkhill, Glencoe or Lucan for shopping or entertainment. Rural mail delivery, which started about 1913, shut down the rural post offices, which, in many cases, had become the last vestiges of once bustling communities. When the post offices went, many of the general stores which housed them could no longer stay in business. When the general store went, so did the village. Residents moved

away and homes were torn down. By 1920, many of the hamlets and villages of Middlesex County were only memories.

Of course, many large and prosperous communities have decreased in size over the past few years. Young people go to the cities to be educated or find work and businesses tend to be founded in or to move to places where there will be more customers. Sometimes it seems as though there are few communities in Middlesex which have not suffered a decline in recent years. But, although communities such as Parkhill, Lucan and Ailsa Craig may not have maintained their former status, they certainly have not vanished. And many smaller centres, such as Adelaide, Appin, Harrietsville and Corbett, although drastically reduced in population or industry, or both, are still recognizable as communities. Furthermore, some once fading communities, such as Melrose, Kilworth, Birr and Denfield, are starting to take on new life as commuter villages for London. City dwellers of today, searching for peaceful rural surroundings in which to live and raise children, seem to be attracted to such spots.

What then is a definition of a “vanished village?” No hard and fast rule applies. It is not possible to define a vanished or “ghost” village merely in terms of a decline in population. One cannot say, for example, that a ghost village is one which once had about one hundred people and now has fewer than ten. The real situation is much more complex. For one thing, it is often difficult to know precisely what the population of a community would have been at a earlier time. There are too many conflicting reports. Besides, old population estimates seem to include the total number of people who picked up their mail at the post office and this number might include a huge number of farmers in the area surrounding the village. Furthermore, some of the old Middlesex County directories listed businesses under a certain village heading when they were not really there at all, but only nearby, possibly a mile down the road. An example is an 1888–89 directory placing Kendrew’s mill under both Pond Mills and Wilton Grove, no doubt because the communities were so close together.<sup>1</sup> This practice makes it even more difficult to determine a village’s size or limits. Frankly, the decisions regarding what communities to include in this book have often been somewhat arbitrary! Sometimes a hamlet has been included just because it has a “ghostly” feel to it.

## INTRODUCTION

For the readers who might wish for a stricter definition of a “vanished village,” one has been provided. For the purpose of this book, a vanished village is a community which either has disappeared entirely or is a mere shadow of its former self. It might have shrunk dramatically in both population and commercial enterprise, or it might have the same tiny population it always had, but have few or no businesses or industries left. In other words, it is no longer recognizable as the flourishing community it was at one time. Amazingly, there are over seventy such places in Middlesex County!

There were other problems involved in the researching of this book. It should be stated that for an historian researching the history of Middlesex County, there is not a lack of information, but rather a super abundance. It took some time (two years, in fact!) to sort out the huge amount of data collected by other local historians over the years. To add to the complexity, quite often the information is contradictory. One author stipulates one detail, while another says something quite different. Often it is difficult to know which one is right. To make matters worse, twentieth-century sources often contradict the nineteenth-century documents, directories and maps. One occasionally wonders if some of the local historians who published in the first half of this century ever read any primary sources at all! Then, in the conducting of interviews, facts emerged which were completely different from ones I had read. Sometimes good stories have been given precedence over facts. As a result, some readers, especially those who are long-time residents of Middlesex County, may find facts or recorded opinions in this book with which they disagree. All I can say by way of explanation is that I really have tried to be as authentic as possible in the presentation of facts about these little places, using as much primary source material as available to me.

This book includes a section on places which have been annexed by the city of London over the years. Usually these villages did not fail; they merely were “swallowed up.” Yet communities such as Petersville, Pottersburg, Lilley’s Corners, Crumlin, Glendale, Byron and Broughdale are also “vanished villages.” A visitor or newcomer to London would not recognize most of them as former independent communities. Today, these are regarded simply as sections or suburbs of London. And such

## INTRODUCTION

annexation is not a thing of the past, for London continues to expand at the expense of smaller communities and has, as recently as 1993, swallowed most of Westminster township. Lambeth and Glanworth have become two of London's latest "vanished villages."

If you want to see one of these vanished villages as it might have looked in its heyday, visit Fanshawe Pioneer Village, a recreation of a typical crossroads village of the nineteenth century. But don't stop there. Go out and see the real thing, the boarded-up shops, the general stores and schools now converted into private homes, the tiny country churches and the pioneer cemeteries. Take this book along as your companion to the vanished villages of Middlesex County. And try not to feel too sad about the demise of these little places. Had they prospered, they would have been full of modern noise and pavement. Instead they are peaceful and beautiful havens for a modern sojourner to reflect upon the not-so-distant past of our pioneers.

## PART I



# VANISHED VILLAGES OF MIDDLESEX

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## MIDDLESEX COUNTY—EARLY DAYS

UP UNTIL 1793, the territory ultimately identified as the County of Middlesex was an extensive wilderness, the only human habitations being the Native Peoples of the area. In February of 1793, Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe and his men left Navy Hall in Newark (now Niagara-on-the-Lake) to visit Fort Detroit. During this extensive excursion, while exploring the forks of the Thames, Simcoe is recorded as believing this spot to be an ideal location for a capital city, an idea that was not realized. It would be Lieutenant Thomas Talbot, one of Simcoe's party at the time, who would be instrumental in establishing, along with Elgin County, much of the early southern portions of Middlesex.

Delaware Village, where the Springers and Tiffanys settled, is considered to be the first permanent settlement of white families in the County. At this time, the County was part of what was known as the Western District, with headquarters, until 1816, at Turkey Point in Norfolk County.

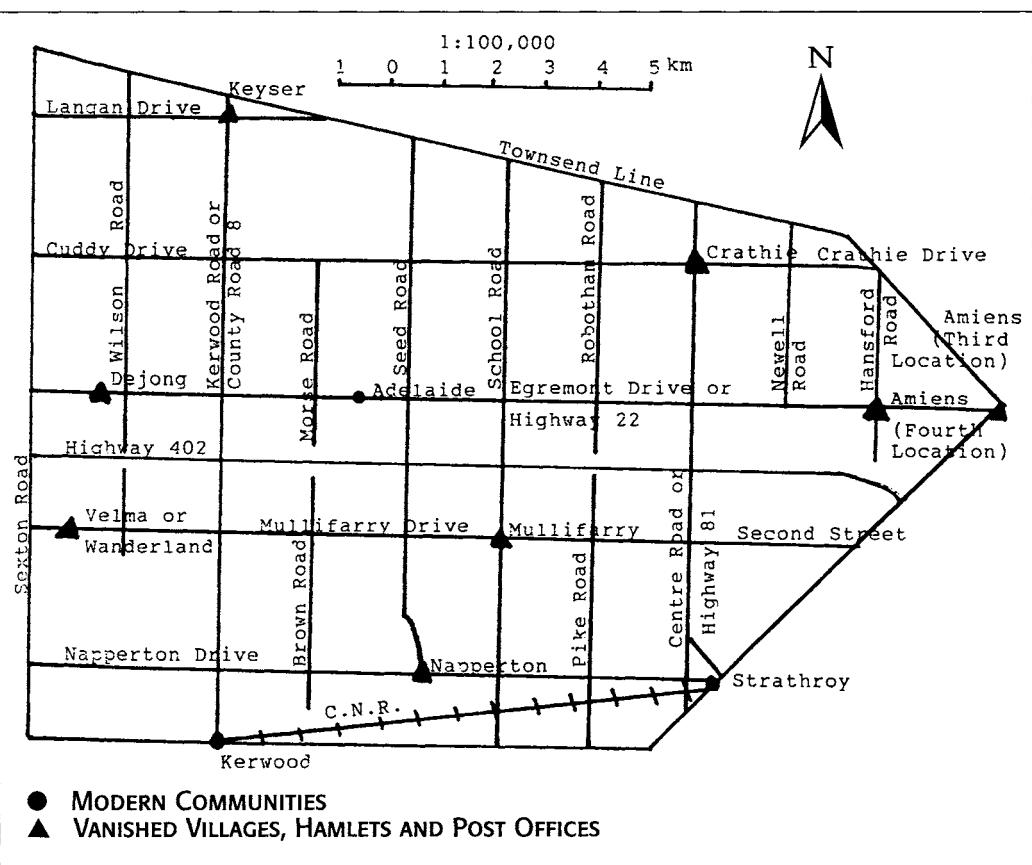
Once colonization roads such as the Egremont and Goderich roads were opened, settlement followed. While the population was still quite sparse at the time of the War of 1812, by the outbreak of the Rebellion of 1837, the southern portion of the County was fairly settled.

By 1865, when the townships of Biddulph and McGillivray were removed from Huron County and added to Middlesex (other townships previously having been moved out of Middlesex to become parts of other counties) the County was defined and, by 1877, was described as being one of the largest in Ontario.

## VANISHED VILLAGES OF MIDDLESEX

This section, Part I, explores the rise and gradual ebbing away of an amazing number of villages and hamlets across the fifteen townships, brought together to form Middlesex County.<sup>1</sup>

# I. TOWNSHIP OF ADELAIDE



## Amiens

Amiens, an important village in early pioneer times, existed as a hamlet for some decades. Within its history is one very interesting peculiarity: the settlement moved three times. One of these moves brought Amiens to the border of Adelaide township at the spot called Hickory Corners. For more detail on this village, see Lobo township.

## Crathie

The hamlet called Crathie was situated where Highway 81 (Centre Road) connects with Concession 2 north of the Egremont Road (Cuddy and Crathie drives). Although always small, the centre did provide a few important services for area farmers.

Crathie post office opened January 1, 1874, on the southwest corner, with James Anderson as postmaster. It was probably named after the village of Crathie in Scotland, which is situated on the River Dee, one kilometre east of Balmoral Castle. The royal family attends church there while staying at Balmoral. There is also a Crathie Point, however—a headland on the north coast of Scotland, four kilometres east of Cullen. Possibly one of these spots may have been Anderson's first home. The post office closed in 1880, only to reopen in 1887. It closed permanently November 29, 1913, with the coming of rural mail delivery. The area is now designated as R.R. 5 Strathroy.

Over the years there were a few other businesses at Crathie, the largest number existing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *Foster's London City and Middlesex County Directory* for 1897–98 lists Margaret Brown as postmaster, Gus Burdick as blacksmith, David Gerry as carpenter and builder, James M. Henderson as magistrate and James McLean as sawmill owner and lumber dealer. The exact locations of these businesses are not known. By 1909–10, *Vernon's Directory* no longer lists a blacksmith, but records J. S. Campbell as butcher.

A school stood on the northwest corner. This was a Union School: S.S. No. 2 Adelaide and S.S. No. 1 East Williams. Closed in 1960, it was torn down in the late '60s. The Crathie Community Centre, built





The Crathie Community Hall as it appears in 2002. Once popular, the building, no longer in use, keeps a lonely vigil on the corner.

in 1923, still stands forlornly on the southeast corner. Now seemingly abandoned, it was once a popular venue for various parties and social events. Over the years, its users found it increasingly difficult to pay for hydro services, and finally the power was cut off.

Crathie's handicap was probably being just too close to Strathroy to permit independent growth. Anyone needing any goods or services could easily go into the larger town to get them. Today, the original post office has been demolished and a modern bungalow stands in its place, just down Cuddy Drive to the west. The school site is also occupied by a newer house. Only the Crathie Community Centre, with its sign over the door, gives any indication that there was once a tiny hamlet by this name.

### **Dejong**

Sometimes this name appears on maps in Adelaide township. Barely a settlement, it was situated on Egremont Drive just west of Side Road 3 (now Wilson Road). The whole of Dejong, however, only consisted of a store operated by a man of that name, about whom little is known.

The business, started this century, was operating some 40 or 50 years ago, but has long since closed.

## Keyser

The remains of the village of Keyser are found at the intersection of County Road 6 (Kerwood Road) and Adelaide Concession 4 (Langan Drive). Within Keyser were most of the necessary pioneer services, including a post office, store, blacksmith, church and school, along with a cheese factory and a brick and tile yard. At its height, Keyser may have had from 30 to 60 inhabitants. The name is pronounced "Kaiser" but, as a *London Free Press* article from the 1930s was quick to point out, it has no connection with the German ruler.<sup>1</sup>

John Keyser took up his farm on the southeast corner of the intersection in the log cabin days of the last century. Of German-American extraction, he had walked there all the way from Pennsylvania. Although he was one of the earliest settlers in the area, it was not long before others followed. Soon there was a number of working farms in the area, with the farmers and their families requiring a variety of services.



The former Keyser general store, now empty, sits on the southwest corner, facing south.

Probably one of the first of these services was the mail delivery. Keyser Post Office opened on August 1, 1864, under Philip H. Keyser, John's son. As his land was just south of his father's, it may be assumed that the first post office was located south of the intersection on the east side of the road. There were several postmasters over the years, but the post office closed for a decade beginning in 1891. On July 1, 1901, it reopened in Hugh Wilson's cheese factory. When a new owner, James Grieve, acquired the factory in 1913, he also assumed the responsibility of the post office.

It is difficult to determine exactly when the first store was built at Keyser. A Richard Bell, tailor, may have kept a small shop at some point, but it is not possible to establish a date. Samuel Cooper seems to have run a store with the post office as early as 1871. It is known that the local Grange,<sup>2</sup> an association of farmers, sold goods of some sort to its members. The Keyser General Store, which stands today, was built in 1909 by Donald Gray, formerly of Bowood in East Williams township. This store was on the southwest corner facing north. When Gray sold to William Parker in 1919, the new owner moved the building around the corner, in 1922, to its present location on the north/south road.

A blacksmith shop, operated by John Smith as early as 1868, stood just west of the store's first location. He also built buggies, cutters and wagons at the shop. In 1881, the wooden building was replaced with one of brick. Eventually the shop was sold to Donald Gray who rented it to a Lorne Davidson.

One of the most important industries at Keyser was its cheese factory, located west of the blacksmith shop. Sometimes called the Keyser Cheese Factory and, at other times the Adelaide Cheese Factory, it was established in 1870 by John Hendric. Immediately successful, in the first year of its existence the factory produced 37 tons of cheese.<sup>3</sup>

The brick and tile yard, in existence from the 1860s, was operated by John Keyser who produced what were known as "Keyser bricks" (the bricks said "Keyser" right across them in large letters). Later, the yard was bought by his son Joseph, but another son, Jacob Keyser, may have operated it for Joseph for a few years. The clay for brick used in much of the surrounding area was dug right on the site. The Methodist Church,



The cement block Order of Foresters hall, now sitting empty just to the east of the intersection of Kerwood Road and Langan Drive.

the school, the John Smith house across the road to the west, and many barn foundations in the surrounding area were all built of Keyser bricks.

One important pioneer industry which did not exist at Keyser was a mill. All milling was done at Hungry Hollow, a few miles to the west.

But Keyser was more than an industrial and commercial centre. For years, settlers had met in one another's homes to conduct religious services. While sometimes a travelling minister would come to preach, people naturally wanted a church of their own. In December 1867, land was bought north of the present school and construction began on Salem Methodist Episcopal Church in 1868. The church, always part of the Arkona Circuit,<sup>4</sup> was more than a house of worship; it was also used for local social events such as picnics, suppers and garden parties.

The first school in the area located just west of Keyser, probably built of logs, consisted of a single room no larger than 20 by 16 feet. The second frame school was set on Lot 7, Concession 4 in 1858, and lasted until 1877 when the state of disrepair was such that it was easier to build a new school. The third and final Keyser School was built on Lot 7, Concession 5, south of the church.

Many organizations met at Keyser. As noted, the Grange met regularly, as well as the Canadian Order of Foresters (COOF),<sup>5</sup> which organized a lodge at Keyser in 1911. Three years later, the COOF bought

land from Joseph Keyser on the northeast corner of Lot 7, Concession 5. There members built a cement block meeting hall. Local women also felt the need to belong to an organization and so founded the Keyser Women's Institute on January 11, 1916. The women made Red Cross supplies during the First World War and sent blankets, socks and clothes to soldiers overseas during the Second World War.

Eventually, the village began to decline. The first building to go was the church. Over the years, attendance had dropped and, by 1912, the congregation could no longer afford to make the needed repairs. It was decided that the church would be sold, with the proceeds to go to the nearby Arkona Methodist Church to build a basement under the sanctuary. Strangely, there is no record of any sale although Salem Church was torn down in 1913. However, it is thought that the bricks from the church were used to build the basement of the church at Arkona. The organ from Salem Church also went to Arkona.

Keyser Post Office closed in October 1913, once the rural mail delivery began. From then on, some of the area's residents received mail from Arkona and some from Kerwood. The blacksmith shop, deemed unnecessary with the arrival of the automobile, became run down and, at some point, simply disappeared. The cheese factory closed sometime in the early twentieth century, but exactly when is not known. Keyser's brick and tile yard seems to have stopped production sometime during WWI. Once the school closed in 1960, students were sent to the new W. A. C. McDonald Central School on Egremont Drive near Adelaide, and the Foresters acquired the school as their meeting place. The store continued operating until 1978, and an insurance office opened in its premises. The Keyser Women's Institute closed in 1985 due to dwindling membership.

Today, Keyser is very quiet. By approaching the intersection from the south, one sees the store, now empty, standing on the west side of the road beside John Smith's old house. Once past the intersection, Joseph Keyser's house can be seen on the northeast corner. Between Kerwood Road and what is called Keyser Road is the old school, now a private home. To the east, on the north side of Langan Drive, is the now-abandoned original Forester's Hall.

## Mullifarry

This post office once stood on the west side of Adelaide Side Road 15 (now School Road) just south of Concession 2, south of the Egremont Road (now Mullifarry Drive). In 1880, it was officially opened with J. McNeice in charge. The origin of the name of the community is not known. Once the office moved to the farmhouse on the northwest corner of the intersection in 1900, it was operated by the Down family. However, on June 1, 1913, the service was closed and the area became R.R. 7 Strathroy, and remains so today. The original building is no longer standing, but Mr. and Mrs. Roy Down call their home on the northwest corner "Mullifarry Farm."

## Napperton

The hamlet called Napperton developed on Concession 4 of Adelaide township (later County Road 39, now Napperton Drive) just west of School Road. Always a tiny place, it offered only a few services to local settlers. Still, it was the first home of one very big man—General Sir Arthur Currie.

The area was first settled in the 1830s by a few English families. Many residents came as part of the Petworth Emigration Scheme, a plan that helped unemployed people in England's southern counties to emigrate.<sup>6</sup>

The first chore of these settlers was the building of primitive log homes for themselves in the wilderness. Once settled, however, a church was soon to follow. A small log chapel, built in the area in 1840, seems to have lasted a long time as the replacement brick church, Mount Zion, did not appear until 1868. This church was built on the south side of Napperton Drive, just east of where a mid-twentieth-century white house stands today.

Soon a small log school was built, also on the south side of the road near the log church, on land taken from the Thomas Evoy farm. This structure was demolished around the same time that the new church was built, and a frame school then erected. At some later point, the

school was moved to the David Rapley property on the north side of the road. Known for some time as the Rapley School, the name ultimately shifted to Napperton School.

The local post office, which opened September 1, 1870, on the south side of the road near the church, also sat on the Evoy property. It has been said that the office was named after its first postmaster, Charles Napper.<sup>7</sup> However, official post office records show that the first postmaster was Thomas Jury.

Napperton was primarily a post office, church and school. But a few other enterprises existed there in the nineteenth century. Thomas Jury, besides being postmaster, was also a piano and organ dealer. *Might's 1892 Middlesex Directory* lists a George Lamotte, grocer, but the location of this store is not known. The 1894 directory adds W.P. Morgan, insurance agent and James Parker, apiarist. Most of the other people in the area probably were farmers.

Arthur Currie was born on his family's farm at Napperton on December 5, 1875. The house, on the west half of Lot 15, Concession 5, is still standing today. He received his schooling at S.S. No. 5 Adelaide, west of Strathroy, then went on to attend Strathroy Collegiate Institute.

At one point, a plaque dedicated to him stood in front of the school. Currie is best known for his activities during World War I when he became leader of the Canadian forces in France. In 1917, Currie became the first Canadian to command the Canadian corps as well as the first Canadian to be promoted to the rank of general. After the war he became Principal and Vice-Chancellor of McGill University and held the position until his death in 1933.

In recent years, Currie has become somewhat of a controversial figure. It is true that he visited his troops at the front and fought to keep Canadian soldiers together in a Canadian division. It was also Currie who planned and carried out the battle of Vimy Ridge, still a source of great pride to Canadians. Some less complimentary facts about Currie's life have become known, however. He has been criticized for leading troops into battle just hours before the 1918 armistice.<sup>8</sup> Several men died, and there are those who say Currie knew about the peace agreement but still sent troops to Mons. Even worse, it is said that he diverted \$11,000 of his regiment's money to cover his personal debts.<sup>9</sup>

NAPPERTON  
NO 42  
101  
ONT.

While it appears that the man had his flaws, still he did play an important role on the stage of Canadian history.

Like many other Middlesex hamlets, Napperton eventually disappeared. A 1996 London *Free Press* article suggests that it faded when the railway arrived.<sup>10</sup> However, this argument does not seem to have much substance. The Sarnia branch of the Great Western Railway, now the CNR, passes just south of Napperton. The proximity to the tracks should have stimulated growth, but it did not. A station might eventually have been built, but Napperton seemingly never became sufficiently important for this to happen.

After Mount Zion Church closed, sometime after 1900, the building was used for concerts and meetings for many years until it was demolished in 1918 by Sir Arthur Currie's brother John in 1918. When rural mail delivery began, the post office closed on May 1, 1915. The school remained open until 1960 when it too closed and students were sent to Adelaide Central School.

In the twentieth century, Napperton was best known for its curio shop, gas station and tourist camp operated by the Parker family on the north side of the road, west of the school. When this enterprise was gone, Napperton was finished as a business centre.

Today, the Parker family still farm the same location at Napperton. One of their tourist cabins is still standing in their side yard. Just to the east of them, a new house has been built on the site of the old Napperton School, its yard surrounded by tall maples. On the opposite side of the road stands the large yellow brick Currie homestead, now somewhat altered since the time it was built, but still occupied. Far to the east, at the outskirts of Strathroy, many of Napperton's early settlers are buried in the tree-shaded 4th Line Cemetery.

### **Velma or Wanderland**

A post office by the name of Velma opened on June 1, 1909, on Concession 2 South (now Mullifarry Drive) in Adelaide township, just east of the county line. According to National Archives records, the first postmaster was Nelson Anderson, but an old postcard shows the signature as Alderson. On January 1, 1913,



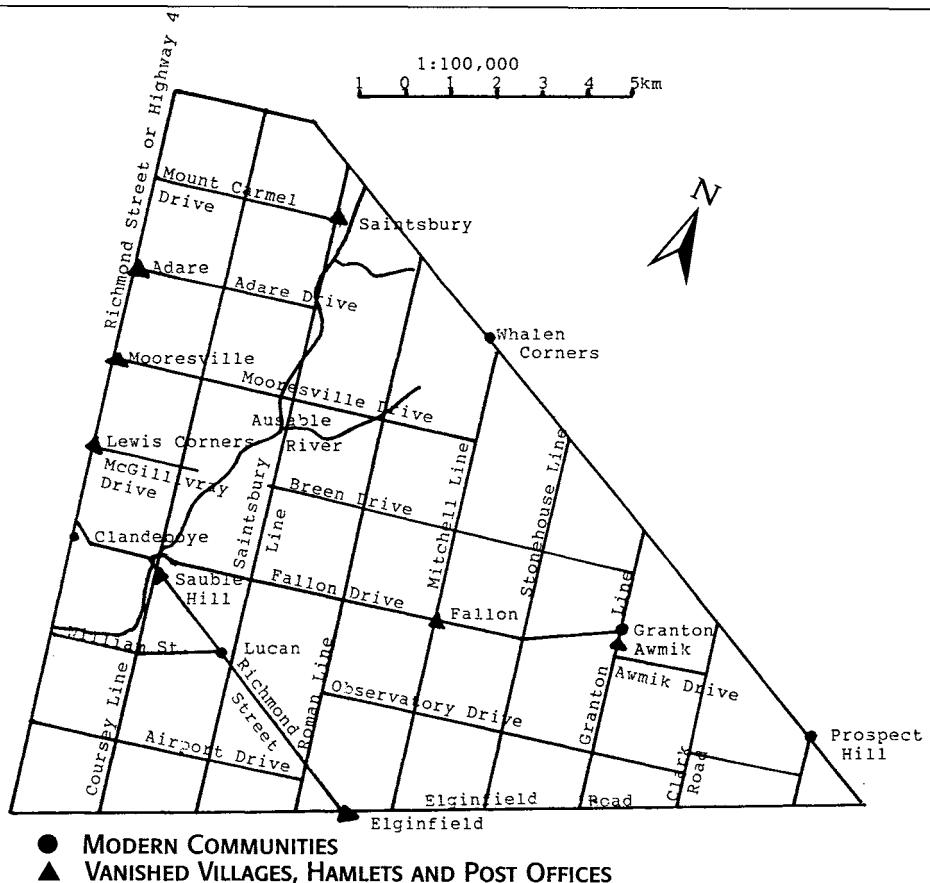
*Township of Adelaide*



A postcard from the early 1900s shows Velma or Wanderland post office, also identified as the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Alderson. *Courtesy of Gordon McDonald.*

the office closed. A 1919 map calls the location Wanderland, but there is no known explanation for this name. The Victoria Cheese Factory was on the north side of the road near this spot years ago. Today, the factory site is now a pond. Nothing remains to indicate that anything of note was ever found here.

## II. TOWNSHIP OF BIDDULPH

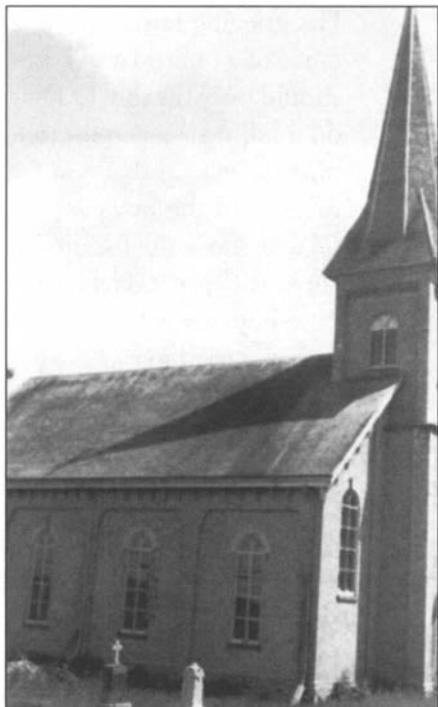


## Adare

One of Middlesex County's best examples of a vanished village is Adare, once existing at the intersection of the Proof Line (Richmond Street) and McGillivray Road 5 (Adare Drive). Cars whiz by the spot today. Seldom do travellers realize they are passing through the sorry remains of what once was one of the most important communities in the northern part of the county.

The first settler in the area is thought to have been a W. Henry, but when he arrived or where he lived is not known. As early as 1833 there may have been a tavern at the Adare intersection. It seems that the innkeeper was a son of George McConnell, an even earlier tavern keeper on the main road at Elginfield.

The cemetery was probably the next to be established. On July 20, 1843, a local child by the name of Patrick Glavin passed away at the age of four.



St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, Adare, built in 1871, was demolished in 1993.

*A. S. Garrett Collection, J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, The D.B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.*



By the mid-1990s, a large bare patch of earth on the south side of the cemetery was all that marked the site of the Church. St. Peter's Cemetery is visible in the background.

His grieving father, John, walked to London soon afterwards (a distance of 24 miles) and asked a priest named Father O'Dwyer where he should bury his son. O'Dwyer is said to have told him to bury the child on a hill near a certain tree and promised to bless the grave the next time he was up that way.<sup>1</sup> Another version of the story states that the priest told the boy's father to choose the grave site himself and that Glavin chose the location that is now St. Peter's Cemetery.<sup>2</sup> Whoever chose the spot, Glavin walked home again the same day and buried his little boy. A small engraved gravestone in St. Peter's Cemetery, visible near the road marks the spot.

Probably the best-known individual to be buried in St. Peter's Cemetery was Patrick Flanagan, founder of Clandeboye (formerly Flanagan's Corners). Flanagan, an innkeeper, was one of early Bid-dulph township's most colourful characters. He became reeve of McGillivray township in 1851 and retained the position for many years. As reeve, he went to county council meetings in Goderich and, on one occasion, he and his fellow councilmen stayed in that community's Bayfield Hotel. One evening he decided to play a practical joke on the other men. At the time, it was the custom for people to leave their long leather boots in the corridor outside their rooms. Flanagan rearranged them all, making sure that no one had the proper boots outside his door. He then cried out, "Fire!" and ducked inside his own room. Panic-stricken guests came rushing out into the hallway from every room and tried to put on their boots. One can picture the general mayhem as the people rushed up and down, searching frantically for their own footwear. It was not until they made it downstairs, only to find "no fire," that they realized the whole thing was a "17th of Ireland" joke, in honour of the next day being St. Patrick's Day. Flanagan was found upstairs in bed, with his boots on, pretending to be asleep. He claimed he "niver heard a thing!"<sup>3</sup> Flanagan died March 3, 1865, aged 63. He was buried in the middle of the north side of the cemetery.

According to official records, a post office was established at this intersection on June 1, 1854, with John Cooney as the first postmaster. The office, known at first as "Biddulph," served McGillivray, Bid-dulph, Stephen and Usborne townships, all of which were located in Huron County at that time. In 1857, the office, and consequently the

community, changed its name to Adare. It is not known who named the settlement, but since Adare is a place in County Limerick, Ireland, and, since the area north of Lucan was settled mainly by Irish, we can be reasonably certain that some homesick pioneer named his new home after his old one. Adare, Limerick, by the way, calls itself “the prettiest town in Ireland.” The name means “ford of the oak grove” and there are still oak trees there by the River Maigue.<sup>4</sup>

In 1850, the first St. Peter’s Roman Catholic Church was built at the cemetery site. There were other churches near Adare but this small frame structure might have been the first. Nursery New Connection Wesleyan Methodist was built in 1861 on the southwest corner of the intersection of today’s Richmond Street and Mooresville Drive. Fraser Presbyterian was on the Coursey Line south of Mt. Carmel Drive, while the Anglicans worshipped in a school and the Baptists in their homes.

By 1857, Lovell’s *Canada Directory* informed its readers that Adare had daily mail delivery and a population of 50. It listed a large business community at the village: Clark and Sons were merchants and William Clark was postmaster; Mrs. Agnes Lavatt (whose name appears as Levat and Levett in later directories) was milliner; James Robinson, tavern keeper; John Sholts, pumpmaker; Norman Graham, blacksmith; George Kinlough, carpenter and undertaker; John Moody, shoemaker; Captain James Maguire, magistrate; and Thomas Hodgins, reeve. Mrs. Lavatt was also the local midwife. By 1863, the year Biddulph and McGillivray townships became part of Middlesex County, the population had doubled to 100 and the business list had risen correspondingly. “This is quite a business place,” the directory states, “and is inhabited by an energetic and thriving community.”

It is now impossible to determine where most of these businesses were located. It is known that a hotel, called the McGillivray Adare, was on the northwest corner of the intersection. But the site of a second hotel called the Farmers’ Rest, cannot be determined. There were some mills at Adare, probably just west of the main intersection on the little stream known as Neil’s Creek.

Anderson’s 1868–69 *City of London and County of Middlesex Directory* lists three schools for Adare, two common or public schools and one Roman Catholic or separate school. The latter was across the Proof



William Wakefield Revington  
(1843–1920), the “Adare” poet.  
*A.S. Garrett Collection, J. J. Talman  
Regional Collection, The D. B.  
Weldon Library, University of  
Western Ontario.*

Line from St. Peter’s Church. One of the other schools was S.S. No. 1 McGillivray or Neil’s School. It is not known when the original log structure was built, but it stood on the south side of Adare Drive in the bushy patch just east of Neil Road. Bill Dixon, who lives nearby, has found old ink bottles on the spot. Before the development of the separate school, all the children of that area, both Catholic and Protestant, went to Neil’s School. In 1882, a new brick Neil’s School was built on the southeast corner of Adare Drive and Neil Road. The other school mentioned by the 1868–69 directory is unknown, but it might have been S.S. No 1 Bid-dulph, Coursey School, the most recent version of which still stands today on the northeast corner of Mt. Carmel Drive and the Coursey Line.

In 1871, a new St. Peter’s Church opened on the same site as the first one, much larger and likely much grander than its predecessor. Father Brennan was the first priest in the new building.

About this time it appears that Adare went into decline. The 1871–72 *Mackintosh Directory* for London and Middlesex lists only hotel keeper P. Kilgallin, blacksmith William Lewis, postmistress Mrs. Levatt and carriage maker James Thompson. The village must have remained a small hamlet for some time after its initial decline but after 1887, the year the post office closed, it was no longer listed in a county directory.

Why did Adare achieve such a high level of prosperity and then slump so quickly? The first question is easier to answer than the second. Its success was probably initiated by all those who made use of the Proof Line road, whether they were travellers or settlers on their way to their new homes. We know there was a tavern at the site in 1833 and, as it was

about half way between Lucan and Exeter, the spot was probably convenient for stage coaches. As an early stage stop, it probably had one of the first blacksmith shops in the area. At Adare, tired travellers could have a drink, dinner and an overnight stay before continuing on their journey. Once some businesses arrived and prospered, more would be attracted to the area. Before long, Adare served not only travellers but the local settlers as well as, becoming a business, educational and religious centre.

So what happened? It is believed that the post office probably shut down because it was only one-and-a-quarter miles from the Mooresville post office, which opened in 1880, and only two-and-a-half miles from the Maguire post office, which opened 1882. The Adare post office was probably no longer profitable. But perhaps Adare could not compete with nearby communities in other ways as well. The general store at Centralia may have offered better goods at a cheaper price. Other Proof Line hotels may have been more comfortable. The exact reason or reasons for the failure of Adare may never be known. Perhaps a large number of the villagers simply decided there would be better opportunities elsewhere.

In the early 1900s, a local poet by the name of William Wakefield Revington helped to keep the name of Adare alive for a short time. His poems appeared in the *Parkhill Gazette* and other western Ontario publications and were generally about local people and places. He never used his real name but always the pseudonym "Adare." Here are the first couple of stanzas from a poem in the August 30, 1905, issue of the *Parkhill Gazette*:

If the big Sauble Bridge were permitted to speak  
And converse with the Bridge on the banks of Mud Creek  
And relate all the deeds of the old Pioneers,  
And the changes they've made in the last fifty years.

It would be a record worth waiting to see,  
And I know it would be of interest to me,  
You'd hear of the men that here led the way,  
And made of this land what we see it today.<sup>5</sup>

Not exactly Wordsworth, but probably better than most of us could do. This Biddulph township farmer, insurance agent and poet, lived in Mooresville, one intersection south of Adare, and died in 1920.

Gradually, Adare's buildings disappeared. After the separate school closed in 1945, the students were sent to Mt. Carmel. When Neil's School closed in September 1950, these students were sent to S. S. No. 4 McGillivray on what is now Clandeboye Drive. Neil's School then became a community centre, but, unfortunately, it was difficult to heat in winter and thus seldom used. Around 1992, Bill Dixon bought the site and tore down the old school, leaving only an empty green space beside his home.

St. Peter's Church closed in 1977, the last priests being Fathers Mooney and Charrette. What was left of its dwindling congregation attended mass at Mt. Carmel or Exeter. The church sat abandoned for ten years, its walls crumbling, its windows smashed or boarded up. Indoors, yellow water stains appeared and statues lost their limbs.

In 1987, it seemed that the old church might be saved. In June of that year some Franciscan friars arrived from New Hampshire and started to renovate the building. Intending to use it as a house of studies, a place of worship and a novitiate, they began to erect a ten-room friary behind the main structure. Unfortunately, the venture was doomed to failure. The friars had a falling out with the Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of London. Seemingly, the problem erupted over a document the Bishop wanted them to sign, giving them status as an Association of the Faithful, the first step in Roman Catholic law to becoming a full-fledged religious order. According to David Prezedwiecki, one of the friars, the document was not the problem. What the friars disliked was all the verbal conditions included, such as a requirement to change their name and, after three years, the diocese would have the option of disbanding them. Furthermore, any friars training for the priesthood had to go to St. Peter's Seminary in London to be under the bishop's jurisdiction. The friars at St. Peter's Church felt these restrictions put their community in jeopardy and they left in May 1990, their addition unfinished. The church sat empty for three more years until it was demolished in early 1993. Prezedwiecki said that it's "very sad the diocese of London doesn't respect its own history."<sup>6</sup>

*Township of Biddulph*

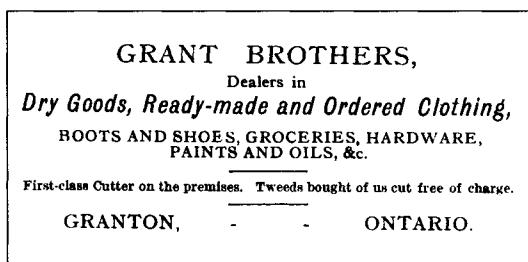
Today, as one passes the abandoned St. Peter's Cemetery with the large gaping space on one side where the church used to stand, one cannot help but echo his sentiments. Adare's last structural landmark is gone; only the cemetery remains.

### Awmik

Awmik was a former name for the south end of the village of Granton in Biddulph township. Not as large as the northern part of Granton, Awmik was only made a separate entity by the Grand Trunk Railway, later the Canadian National. Despite this proximity to another settlement, Awmik was considered to have separate identity.

Granton was founded in 1866 by brothers Alexander and James Grant who owned land on the north side of the railway on Concessions 12 and 13 Biddulph. They petitioned the Grand Trunk Railway and were granted permission to establish a flag station at their spot. In 1867, they had part of their land divided into village lots by the surveyor, Alexander Nevin. This new village was named Granton, presumably by the Grants themselves. At the same time, and using the same land surveyor, William Levitt and George Foreman had land they owned, south of the railway, surveyed. Their portion was named Awmik, a Native word meaning "beaver."<sup>7</sup>

Settlers bought lots on both sides of the railway tracks so that two communities developed adjacent to one another. Naturally, everyone thought the two should merge and choose either one name or the other.



An advertisement for the Grant Brothers enterprise as placed in the 1878 *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Middlesex Atlas*.

Some people, especially those south of the track, wanted the name Awmik; possibly the Grants were perceived as already being too influential and having to live in a village named after them would be annoying. Others argued that the name Granton should be used because Granton was bigger than Awmik, the name sounded better, and there were not many beavers in the area anyway.

Ultimately it was the post office and railway that would make the decision, both wanting the name of the village to be Granton. The story goes that a railway official suggested that the place be called Granton after his Scottish hometown. This was the perfect solution. It appeased the Grants and pleased the aggravated settlers too, since obviously the village was not really named after the Grant family.<sup>8</sup>

## Elginfield

Many travellers will be familiar with Elginfield, the hamlet at the intersection of Highways 4 and 7 (the Proof Line or Richmond Street and the London/Biddulph Townline or Elginfield Road). It is one of the few communities in this collection still to be found on a modern map. But, although it has not entirely vanished, Elginfield was once much larger and more prosperous. Up until the twentieth century, this was one of the most important villages on the Proof Line.

George McConnell, often regarded as the first settler at Elginfield, built his small log cabin at the corner of the 16th concession (now Sixteen Mile Road), one intersection to the south. That was about 1824.



McConnell's cabin provided the first accommodation for travellers in the northern part of London township. The Reverend William Proudfoot, an early pioneer preacher, stayed at McConnell's tavern and, in his diary, praised the "venison and tea for 1s. 6d" (about 32 cents).<sup>9</sup> McConnell is buried in the Birr United Church Cemetery, where his highly unusual gravemarker, an old oak slab, states that he died in 1835.

While it is no longer possible to know what the earliest businesses were at the Elginfield corner, the post office, however, may have been one of them. It was first opened by James Ferguson on August 6, 1849.



The Ryan House, later the Union Hotel, still later the Royal Hotel, once stood on the southeast corner at Elginfield. *A. S. Garrett Collection, J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, The D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.*

Since Lord Elgin was Governor-General of Canada at the time,<sup>10</sup> it may be assumed that the settlement was named after him. A popular man, he is credited with creating responsible government for Canada.

In 1855, William H. Ryan, formerly of Ireland, built the Ryan House Hotel on Elginfield's southeast corner. This hotel was one of the largest in the Ontario countryside<sup>11</sup> and was a local landmark for decades. Upstairs on the north side was a "ballroom," the smooth maple floor perfect for holding dances. All the baking for the hotel was done in a huge brick oven in the yard behind the main building. Often 100 or more meals would be served to travellers in one day; five girls were hired to cook. Stagecoach drivers would change their horses at the hotel stables where the massive barn could hold 75 horses.

There must have been quite a crowd there most of the time, as it is reported that often as much as \$100 a day was taken in when everyone was paying up. Ryan also kept the post office in the hotel for a time,

an additional reason for people to visit. Undoubtedly, the Ryan House was a popular place, its host being part of the reason, for William Ryan was known for his generous hospitality. A large wood-burning stove stood in the centre of the sitting-room and the door was left unlocked at night so travellers could come in and warm themselves. Ryan himself would rise to serve any traveller at any hour of the night. And those who could not pay were treated just as well as those who could.

During the years he operated his hotel, Elginfield became an important village. Its position at the intersection of two main roads meant that its businesses drew settlers from all directions. The Huron Tract to the north of Middlesex was opening up and the Proof Line was a key for incoming settlers. Elginfield also became a stop for teamsters as they hauled huge loads of produce from Huron and Perth counties to markets in London. As already mentioned, it was also a stage stop. One report states that on Saturday evenings there would be 25 or 30 teams tied to hitching posts around Elginfield corners.<sup>12</sup>

As early as 1857, *Lovell's Canada Directory* lists a large number of businesses at Elginfield. Farrell and Smibert were storekeepers; William Frank kept the post office in another store; Claudius Hamilton was another merchant; Dagg and Holloway were blacksmiths, as was James Hawkins. William H. Ryan was tavernkeeper, George Eighenbratt a shoemaker and Andrew Gardener a tailor. The Reverend P. Crinan, Catholic priest, and the Reverend James Scott, New Connection Methodist minister, were also listed. With a population of 50, Elginfield had daily mail delivery. Anderson's *City of London and*



An advertisement for the Union Hotel, formerly the Ryan House. Matthew Glass operated the hotel after Ryan, but before Thomas Creighton. *From the Historical Atlas of Middlesex County, 1878.*

*County of Middlesex General Directory* for 1868–9 lists five churches in the neighbourhood—Catholic, Anglican, Wesleyan Methodist, New Connection Methodist and Primitive Methodist. It also states that one separate and four common schools were nearby, each with an average attendance of 50 pupils.

Elginfield continued to grow throughout the nineteenth century. Might's *London City and Middlesex County Directory* for 1894 has no fewer than 18 business entries for Elginfield. The population is given as 150, but some estimates for Elginfield at its height are as high as 300.<sup>13</sup>

In 1862, Stephen McCormick bought the store run by Farrell and Smibert, which stood on the northwest corner of the intersection. McCormick would often rise at 4:00 in the morning, walk to London, buy goods wholesale and arrange to have them shipped to Elginfield that afternoon.<sup>14</sup> His wife, Ellen, made shirts and pants and sold them in the store. They also bartered farm produce for groceries and supplies.

Another store was operated by the previously mentioned Claudius Hamilton, a man described as being a “cripple.” His red brick store was on the Proof Line across from the McCormick place. Yet another store, located on the same corner as the McCormicks, was kept for a while by Thomas Nangle. What happened to Hamilton is not known, but Nangle eventually moved to Granton.

In 1882, McCormick built a new store near his old one and, three years later, the post office moved in, with Stephen's son Charles as postmaster until the office closed in 1914. When Stephen passed away in 1906, sons Charles and Benjamin carried on the business. It is said that at one time they handled from 600 to 1000 dozen eggs a day. Benjamin drove an egg wagon around parts of London, West Nissouri and McGillivray townships and all of Biddulph township. Customers who sold them eggs were allowed discounts on items purchased from the store. The eggs were collected by J. D. Moore, taken to his warehouse in St. Marys in Oxford County and pickled. They were then sent to England.<sup>15</sup> Benjamin McCormick, incidentally, was popular at house parties because he could sing or step-dance to Hugh Benn's flute or Jack Benn's violin.<sup>16</sup>

At one time three tile yards operated at Elginfield because of the



An early home in the area, built of Elginfield white brick. The house was demolished in 2000.

large quantity of good quality clay to be found on the site. The Benns' brickyard was on the southeast corner, while down the road to the east, just over the bridge near the deserted house, was the Blake brickyard. The yard was on the north side of the road, with a house constructed of bricks made on the spot. About 1894 Ed Phinn opened a tile yard on the west side of the Proof Line across the road from the Benns. Eventually, he moved to London and his nephew, Chester McComb, took over the yard in 1921.

A few other businesses at Elginfield are worthy of mention. James Burtch, cabinet maker, ran his enterprise in a log house west of the McCormick store. An ashery<sup>17</sup> was operated by a Mr. Black and later by a William Scott, just to the east near the bridge; Scott first appears in a directory in 1868 and disappears 1880. In the late 1870s, James

Piper, blacksmith, and Harry Robinson, woodworker, shared a frame building on the Proof Line across the road from the McCormicks. Another smithy stood on the southwest corner. A hotel operated by Andrew Keefe stood somewhere on the northeast corner. The Cedar Vale Cheese Factory was also somewhere to the northeast. At one time what is now Elginfield Road ran about 1500 feet farther north,<sup>18</sup> and many businesses must have been located along that road.

What happened to Elginfield? One suggestion is that the building of the London, Huron and Bruce Railway in 1875 led to less traffic on the Proof Line.<sup>19</sup> As we have seen, however, Elginfield continued to grow after the building of the railroad and reached its height in the late nineteenth century. Another suggestion was that travel on the Proof Line became less popular than it used to be because toll gates were a nuisance, and the road itself was often in a poor state of repair.<sup>20</sup> It is true that most settlers regarded tolls as an annoyance, and most of them knew enough to carried axes with them while travelling to cut away any trees which had fallen across the road. But the Proof Line was still one of the most important thoroughfares in the county and one would expect its surface to have improved over the years. In reality, Elginfield remained an important village until the introduction of motor travel. People then started to drive to larger communities, such as London and Lucan, to do their shopping and find entertainment. Like many of the other villages in Middlesex, Elginfield could not compete with larger communities.

Gradually its buildings disappeared. The Ryan House was torn down about 1925 and the building materials sold. The post office closed February 28, 1914, and the area became R.R. 2 London (it has been R.R. 2 Lucan since the early 1950s). With the demise of the post office, probably fewer people entered the McCormick store. In 1930, the store closed; it simply could no longer compete with larger stores farther away. The McCormick brothers continued to live there until about 1950, at which time the store was torn down by the Department of Highways as part of an "improvement project."

Don and Aleda McComb sold the tile yard in 1949 to take up farming, and Jack Rydall bought the tile yard and operated it until 1970. Across the Proof Line, on the east side, is a service station, currently a Petro Canada. A large motel, the Green Valley, was built just

to the east in 1954. Another extensive highway improvement project took place in 1967, and this time probably did some good. The road was widened and a daylight corner created to give drivers more visibility. Once lights were installed, the number of accidents occurring there were drastically reduced.

Today, Elginfield consists of only a few buildings. On the southwest corner stand K.K. Automotive Repair and Northgate Homes and R.V. Centre. Just to the east is the North Star Restaurant, still doing business beside the site of the Green Valley Motel, demolished in 1998. Farther east, still on the north side of the road, is a business called Elginfield Construction. Don and Aleda McComb, who live on the northeast corner, have found broken pottery while digging their flower beds, probably shards from some long ago pioneer home. Just to the north of their house stands the William Ryan homestead, now owned by the McCombs' son, Brian. This house is the only monument to Elginfield's prosperous past, the last remaining 19th century building.

## Fallon



S. S. No. 4 Biddulph, Fallon's School had long been neglected. Today, it is in use as an implement shed.

The Fallon intersection is in Biddulph township at Highway 23 (Mitchell Line) and County Road 47 (Fallon Drive). The S. S. No. 4 school,<sup>21</sup> built in 1873, was on the southeast corner while the Cedar Vale Cheese Factory once stood on the northwest corner. On July 14, 1910, Fallon post office, named after a Bishop Fallon of London, opened with W.H. Whalen as postmaster. Mail would be dropped off by a noon train on the CNR line just south of the intersection, then picked up by Whalen's daughter and taken back to their house on the northeast corner for sorting. Fallon post office

P.L.C.  
JUL 13 1910  
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closed September 1, 1913. The corner is now deserted except for the school building, which is being used as a storage site. Even the CNR tracks were ripped up about ten years ago.

### Lewis Corners

The corner of Highway 4 (Richmond Street) and County Road 24 (McGillivray Drive) was known as Lewis Corners. The settlement was named after William and Jane Lewis, formerly of Tipperary, Ireland, who owned the land on the northwest corner in the nineteenth century. In July 1848, they donated half an acre at the southeast corner of their lot for a church, school and cemetery. The resulting Anglican Church was used as a union school during the week, serving both McGillivray and Biddulph townships. However, by 1863, the Anglican congregation was meeting at Brinsley instead, but it is not known exactly when the building disappeared. Later the corner was known as Grundy's Corners in recognition of another nearby family. Today's McGillivray Drive was once Grundy's Side Road.

### Mooresville

The community called Mooresville lies north of Lewis Corners on the Biddulph/McGillivray Townline (the Proof Line, Highway 4, or Richmond Street) at Mooresville Sideroad (now Mooresville Drive). Today, many new homes surround this intersection, but most of the historic buildings have disappeared. The large business community that existed here in the nineteenth century and the early years of the last one is also gone. So, although Mooresville has not entirely disappeared, it is very far from its former flourishing existence. Most people would drive through today without recognizing it as a once bustling community.

In 1880, a post office was established on the Biddulph side of the townline. It was named Mooresville in recognition of a local family living just east of the intersection. Sometimes the community name is spelled without the "s" or without the first "e," but Mooresville is designated as the correct spelling. Likely the post office was always associated with a general



store, with the mail being delivered by stagecoach during the early years. Later it was simply tossed from a train on the London, Huron and Bruce Railway, built just to the west of the intersection in 1875, then taken to the store for distribution.

A fairly large business community developed at Mooresville in the late nineteenth century. It seems to have prospered while Adare, to the north, declined. The 1883 directory produced by the London Publishing Company states that Mooresville has a population of only 30 but that it has the following businesses: William J. Clark was general store owner and postmaster; Adam H. Hodgins, blacksmith; M.W. Hodgins, hotel keeper; John Hymer, wagon maker; Andrew McNamee, boot and shoemaker; Robert McNamee, another shoemaker; and Richard Simpson, another blacksmith. The hotel, named the Commercial, was standing in 1876, although it may have been built earlier. Apparently, the Biddulph Township Council met frequently at the Commercial Hotel. A building on the southwest corner, still standing in the mid-twentieth century, was known to have been a hotel. There may also have been a hotel on the northwest corner, torn down long before living memory. Old directories, however, show only one hotel at a time.

In 1899, John Bloomfield built a new frame store on the Biddulph side of the townline, south of Mooresville Drive. Later storeowners were Joe Simpson, a Mr. McVey, Charles Tindall and Wes Callcott. A gas station was associated with the store during much of the twentieth century. To the south was a woodworking shop and blacksmith shop. Another smithy was on the northeast corner very near the road. A sawmill stood somewhere on the east side of the road, north of Mooresville Drive, behind the modern houses standing there today. A brick and tile yard east of the intersection was operated by the Moore family from whom the village took its name.

Two churches were associated with Mooresville. Fraser Presbyterian Church was established in 1870 on the Coursey Line just south of Mount Carmel Drive. Nursery Wesleyan Methodist Church was established in 1861, just to the south of Mooresville on the west side of the townline. A school, S.S. No. 2 Biddulph, known as Atkinson's School, stood just east of the village on Mooresville Drive between the Coursey and Saintsbury lines; this was the one that Mooresville children would

have attended.

One of the important features of early Mooresville was “Fraser’s toll gate” on the Proof Line. During the nineteenth century, the Proof Line was maintained by tolls collected from travellers. The amount collected in excess of the toll keeper’s rent was his profit. The toll gate was eventually removed, probably in 1882, much to the delight of all travellers who considered it a nuisance. The toll gate and house were then sold—for \$1.50.<sup>22</sup>

A fraternal society called the Order of the Maccabees<sup>23</sup> built a meeting hall on the northeast corner. Later it was acquired by the Orange Lodge and served as a recreation centre and dance hall for the community. Local members of the Orange Order actually held their meetings in a building to the east on the northeast corner of the intersection; the Mooresville building was strictly for fun activities.

Mooresville’s most famous son was undoubtedly W. W. Revington—farmer, insurance agent and poet. Although his pen name was “Adare,” taken from the vanished community to the north, he lived just east of Mooresville on Mooresville Drive. More on his story is found in the section on Adare, Township of Biddulph.

Like many others, Mooresville began to decline, bit by bit. Early twentieth-century directories show only the store and the post office, which was destined to close on December 1, 1913. However, the store and gas station continued for many years, as did a car repair shop just to the south on the west side of the road. Kermit and Alice Thompson operated a bakery on the northeast corner from 1938 to 1940. But in the end, Mooresville simply could not compete with larger communities such as Clandeboye and Lucan, particularly after the automobile age allowed people greater mobility. Even Nursery Methodist Church began to lose its membership after 1900. It closed in 1908 and was moved to Clandeboye. Fraser Presbyterian was torn down several years ago.

In 1963, most of the remaining old buildings at Mooresville were removed as part of a widening of the highway project. Four homes and the 1899 store were demolished and the materials used to make some of the houses now on the Biddulph side of the road. It has been said that these acts caused Mooresville to cease being a business centre, but

evidence suggests that its importance had diminished years earlier.

Today there are quite a few modern homes at Mooresville as well as several old ones; the home on the northeast corner is the former Orange Lodge dance hall. The cemetery at the site of Nursery Church is still used. The east/west road is called Mooresville Drive, but the road signs east of the intersection have the name misspelled. A far better commemoration of the village exists on the northwest corner where the Cockwells have erected a "Mooresville" sign on their barn.

### Saintsbury

Saintsbury is the name of an Anglican church, and former store and post office, at the intersection of Biddulph Concessions 4/5 (Saintsbury Line) and Mount Carmel Drive. A log church, built in 1861, was replaced by the present brick St. Patrick's Church in the 1870s. The store at the end of Mount Carmel Drive, now over one hundred years old, was erected by François (Frank) Washburn, who opened a post office there on June 1, 1893. While the post office closed in June 1914, the store continued well into the 1930s. Today it is a home.

SAINTSBURY  
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The former Saintsbury general store and post office is now a home on a quiet back-roads intersection.

## Sauble Hill

Sauble Hill was located on the Proof Line (Richmond Street) where the Ausable River flows by. Once the marker for halfway between Lucan and Clandeboye, it is now just northwest of Lucan. One of the communities to have a more unusual beginning, Sauble Hill was settled and developed by fugitive slaves from the southern States.

Sauble Hill was part of the Wilberforce Settlement, founded about 1830. Funding for the settlement scheme came from Quakers in Oberlin, Ohio, who bought 800 acres of land from the Canada Company. The settlement consisted of 400 acres near Clandeboye, 200 in what is now Lucan and two 100-acre lots southeast of Lucan, opposite St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church. Most of the farms were on both sides of the Proof Line between St. Patrick's and the Ausable River. By 1833, there were 32 families with two schools and a sawmill. Two years later, colonization ended, mainly because the Canada Company preferred to give land to the incoming Irish. Eventually Biddulph township became very Irish, but there were pockets of Black settlers in the area right up to the end of the nineteenth century.

Sauble Hill was no doubt named after the Rivière au Sable (French for "sandy river") or Ausable River, as it is known today. Soon a store developed, followed by a brickyard, two or three hotels, a sawmill and several dwellings. The store was owned by Bernard Stanley, who eventually moved to Lucan after the building of the railroad in the 1850s. The brickyard, on the south side of the road, made the bricks used to build the Odd Fellow's Block in Lucan, taverns at Sauble Hill Corner, local homes and an old brick schoolhouse in the south end of Lucan. Even Thomas Stanley's tavern and hotel, at the intersection of the Proof Line and the Coursey Line, were of red brick. After it burned on October 28, 1882, the Mead family replaced it with a frame hotel on the same site. Another red brick hotel was kept by the Bells, with yet another, an old stone hotel, kept by George Hodgins, rounding out the availability of service.

In the early days, there was a bit of tension in this area. The building of the sawmill at the creek and Centre Sideroad is an example. Only one log was ever cut at this mill. Although it was put up for free by the

entire community, the builders argued about who would be boss. Fac-tions became so antagonistic that the building was abandoned. Years later the mill was torn down and cut up for fuel. Not surprisingly, the Blacks and the whites did not always get along either. Quarrels and fights were so frequent in the early days that Sauble Hill was frequently called “Bunker’s Hill” as a nickname.<sup>24</sup>

The first religious services in this area, for the Quakers, were held in a log house owned by Joseph Taylor. Baptists were also in this early settlement. Between 1862 and 1867, the Blacks worshipped in a yellow frame structure, built by Elijah Turner, which stood on the brow of Sauble Hill. Eventually, this was purchased by Peter Butler II, who donated both the lot and building to the congregation. There the Black families worshipped with the Reverend Benjamin Paul as their pastor. At some point, this church was demolished.

No doubt the most famous resident of this area was Peter Butler, father of the man who donated the lot and building to the Black con-gregation. Peter Butler was a former slave, born in 1797 in Baltimore, Maryland. He settled on Lot 5, north and south of the Proof Line and became treasurer of the Wilberforce colony. Much of what is now Lucan was built on his land. He knew a great deal about simple medicine, frequently using herbal remedies, and was known locally as “Dr. Butler.” It was Butler who built the first log tavern in the Lucan area. Travellers from Exeter and other northern points would stop at the tavern when going to and from London. Eventually, he replaced his log building with a large brick house (the bricks were made at Sauble Hill). Later, a kitchen of white brick from Elginfield was added. Regrettably, this building was demolished and its materials used to build a house on Main Street in Lucan. Butler died in 1872, leaving the remarkable sum of \$22,000, much of this money having been made when the Grand Trunk intersected his land in 1859. His farms were then divided into village lots. Butler Street in Lucan is named for the Butler family.<sup>25</sup>

Sauble Hill Cemetery was established when Peter Butler and several others loaned their claims to lots they had at the hill to local Pres-by-terians. At the time, the burying ground for Blacks was just north of the Presbyterian burial site. The Presbyterians eventually abandoned their end of the land and most of these graves were moved to St. James

*Township of Biddulph*

cemetery, and the land returned to Peter Butler's grandson, Peter Butler III. Members of the Butler family were buried in their own graveyard on the Coursey Line, north of the Proof Line intersection.

By 1943, the only building left standing at Sauble Hill was the old Mead hotel. Now all the buildings are gone and only the Butler graveyard remains. On the northwest corner of Main and William streets, is the Wilberforce Inn Bed and Breakfast, commemorating the name of the former colony. The log building at 192 Frank Street is the Lucan Museum. A plaque, erected by the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board, set in front of the museum, commemorates the Wilberforce Settlement.

### III. TOWNSHIP OF CARADOC

#### Amiens

The shifting community of Amiens at one point in its existence was partly in Caradoc township. For more information, check the section on the Township of Lobo.

#### Burwell Road

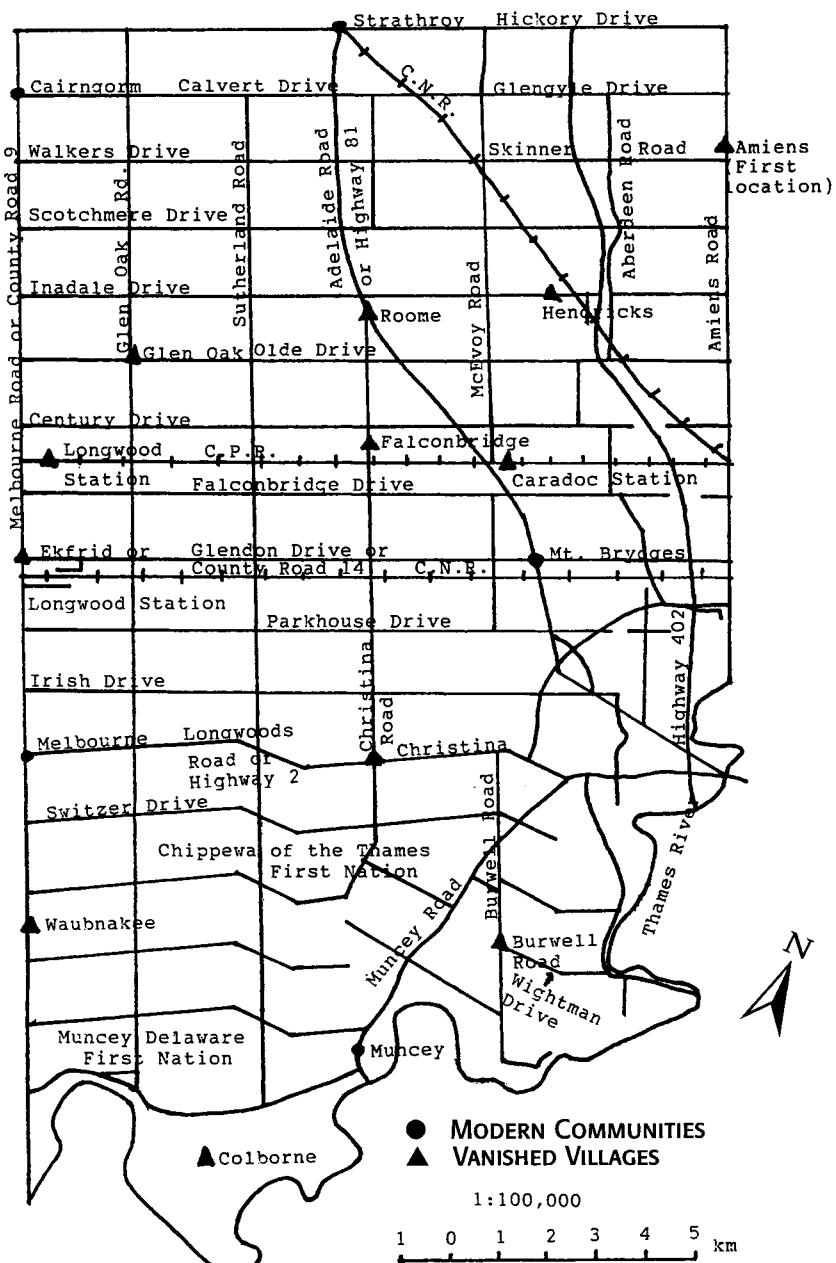


The place called Burwell Road was centred around the former Caradoc Sideroad 16 (Burwell Road), and Range 3 South (now called Wightman Drive). While not really a village, and barely a hamlet, the settlement had a few interesting buildings which have left stories for posterity.

Colonel Mahlon Burwell, son of Adam Burwell, a United Empire Loyalist from New Jersey, surveyed a great deal of what is now called southwestern Ontario, including the town plot for London. As partial payment for his work, he received land grants. In 1822, after surveying the southern part of Caradoc township, he received a thousand or more acres of land overlooking the River Thames. Not long after 1839, Mahlon's son, Isaac Brock Burwell, settled on his father's land and built a large house on Range 5 South, Lot 17. The road leading to this house became known as Burwell Road. At a time when most other early settlers were building log cabins, Burwell built a two-storey frame house with four rooms up, four rooms

*Township of Caradoc*

**TOWNSHIP OF CARADOC**





Isaac Brock Burwell, son of Colonel Mahlon Burwell, was born in 1813. During the 1837 Rebellion he was an ensign in Colonel Talbot's militia.

*Illustrated Historical  
Atlas of the County of  
Middlesex.*

down and a central hall, quite unique for those days. Surrounded by board fences, neat farm buildings and an orchard, this extensive Burwell property was named "Rougham Estate."<sup>1</sup>

The first school in the area was built in 1849, to the west on Muncey Road. In 1861, land was donated by the Burwell family at Lot 17, Range 4 South, and a frame Burwell Road School (S. S. No. 14) soon followed. The builder, Charles Stuart, was paid \$278 for his work. Graduates of this school went on to either Delaware or Mt. Brydges continuation schools to further their education. In addition to being used for education, the school became the centre for dances, literary meetings and debates.

The Burwell family also donated land for a church and a cemetery. There is some conflicting information as to when the white brick Burwell Road Anglican Church was built, but it seems to have been consecrated in the year 1874. Isaac B. Burwell's daughter, Augusta, was the first organist. Inside were two stoves to keep the congregation warm, one at the front and one at the back. As the

church was part of a three-point charge with the communities of Delaware and Mt. Brydges, services were held at 3:00 in the afternoon. Early ministers received garden produce, as well as oats and hay for their horses as part of their salary. The first burial in the surrounding cemetery was recorded in 1866.<sup>2</sup>

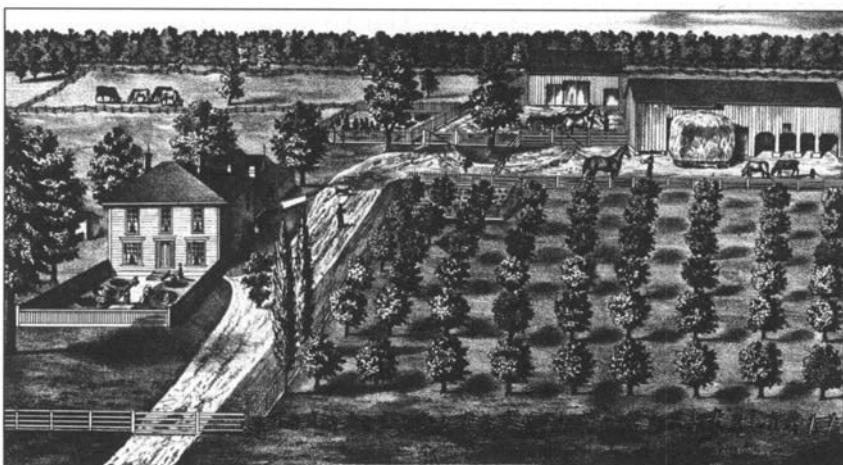
In 1893, the Burwell Road post office opened in the home of Barton Walker. The population of the settlement at this time may have been anywhere from 25 to 60. A later postmaster, Hugh Brodie, described Burwell Road as "only a country post office" in 1905.<sup>3</sup> Again, once rural mail delivery began, the office closed on August 1, 1912. Probably the only other business in the vicinity was the Muncey Road Cheese Factory which, at one time, stood at the corner of Burwell and Muncey roads.

*Township of Caradoc*

In 1930, Burwell Road Anglican Church closed because of a declining congregation and, in 1942, the church was demolished. A stained glass window depicting the Good Shepherd was given to St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Ontario, by the London and Middlesex Historical Society, along with other furnishings from the church. The silver communion service, however, was sent to a church in Saskatchewan where a Burwell was a member. In 1946, yearly memorial services began to take place at the site of the church. A stone monument commemorating this historic place of worship, placed at the site in 1954, was unveiled by Mahlon Burwell of Burnaby, BC, great-grandson of Colonel Mahlon Burwell.

When Burwell Road School closed in 1946, with only five pupils left, these students were bused to S. S. 13 on Muncey Road. In 1959, this school closed as well, and all children in the area were bused to the central school in Mt. Brydges. The Burwell Road School was torn down in 1972.

Today the stone memorial still stands at the site of the church and the Burwell family gravestones remain at the back of the field. There is a modern bungalow on the site of the school, just to the north. The post office home, standing on the west side of the road to the north of



Rougham, the estate of Isaac Brock Burwell, as sketched by G. J. Dyer for the 1878 *Middlesex County Atlas*.



The Burwell House today at its new location in Longwoods Road Conservation Area. Although well-preserved, it is not open to the public.



The grass grows long in the Burwell Road Cemetery, site of the demolished Anglican Church. The tall monument in the right foreground is the grave marker for Isaac Brock Burwell.

the Wightman Drive intersection, is still there; the people living there raise horses. Fortunately, the Burwell home has fared better than the church and school. In 1972, when the house was in wretched condition, it was moved to Longwoods Road Conservation Area (Ska-na-Doht), where it has been restored and is now used for public events, storage and staff office space. Unfortunately, it is not open to the public, but one can walk around and peer through the windows. The fine restoration is a monument not only to our early pioneers, but to the heritage-minded citizens of today who work hard to preserve our past for future generations.

## Caradoc Station

If one looks east when crossing the overpass above the CPR, on Adelaide Road north of Mt. Brydges, it is possible to see the site of Caradoc Station. Cattle from the West were delivered to the stock pens erected to the east of the Station. Carloads of local apples were shipped out to Winnipeg. The railroad station, which stood on the south side of the tracks, was removed about 1970 and only the tool shed remains. On the north side of the tracks are the foundations of the section foreman's house. The Fruit Growers' Association, the shipper of the apples, at one time had a building to the east of the foreman's house, but it was destroyed by fire in the late 1970s or early '80s.

## Carradale

This post office opened on November 1, 1910, with W.J. Moore as postmaster, and closed October 7, 1911. It is known to have been located in northwestern Caradoc township, but the precise location appears to be unknown.

CARRADALE  
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## Christina

A hamlet called Christina developed on Highway 2 (Longwoods Road) at the intersection of Caradoc Sideroad 12 (Christina Road). While never very large, it supplied some useful services for the surrounding farmers.

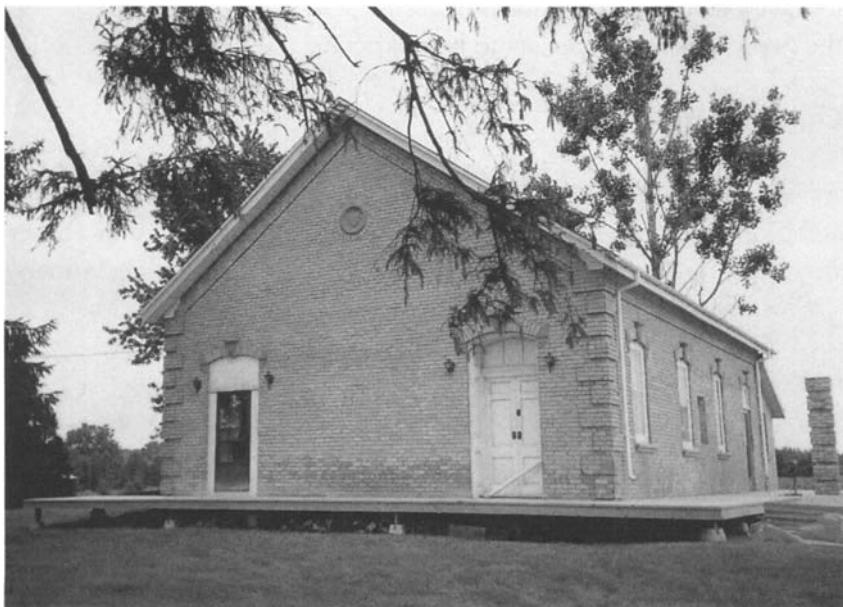
Probably the first significant building at this intersection was the school. In 1856, James Fitzgerald sold about 1,600 square feet of land from his southeast corner lot, to become the site of the first school. In the 1870s, an additional half acre for a playground was acquired from the same man. A new brick school, built in 1876, became known as the Christina School, although officially it was School Section No. 2, Caradoc. In 1915, another half acre was acquired from William Fisher and added to the grounds. It is known that an Anglican church group held services here in 1905, conducted by a minister from Delaware, but whether the school was frequently used as a church cannot be confirmed.

CHRISTINA  
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On May 1, 1875, a post office at the corner, operated by John McKenzie, was opened. However, the source of the name Christina remains elusive; perhaps this was the name of McKenzie's wife or one of his relatives.

*Might's London City and Middlesex County Directory* for 1895 lists several businesses at Christina, with John McKenzie still postmaster and running his store on the northeast corner. Another general store, on the northwest corner, was operated by Charles T. Bateman, while William R. Bateman ran a sawmill on the northwest lot where an apple orchard can be found today. James H. Fisher was wagon maker, John Kain was a builder and contractor, and Robert Smith was the blacksmith further north on the sideroad, near a creek. At the time, the population was recorded as 30 people.

The two stores were there until at least 1904. Bateman's store closed first and for years was a warehouse or storage building. The blacksmith shop has been gone for over 60 years. It is easy to see why Christina faded over the years. The sawmill and blacksmith, essentially pioneer



Christina School is now an attractive home, shown here in 1997 still in the process of being remodelled.

industries, naturally disappeared in the early twentieth century. Two stores were probably not necessary in such a small place, thus only one survived well into this century.

In 1958, two significant events occurred at Christina. One was the closing of the one-room school, requiring students to be bused to Melbourne Central School. Two years later, the school and contents were auctioned off to the highest bidders. It is not known how much was paid for the school, but an ornately carved piano went for \$5.00 and the school bell was sold for \$7.00 on a take-it-down-yourself basis. The other event of 1958 was the moving of the store from the northeast to the southeast corner. Both it and the post office were still being used, a holdover from earlier times. Christina must have been one of the last country store/post office combinations in Middlesex County. Once the post office closed October 31, 1969, the area became R. R. 1 Mt. Brydges. The store, however, continued right into the late 1980s.

Today both the store and school still stand on the southeast corner of the intersection and both are used as residences. The old entrance to the store has been bricked up, but its outline is still visible from Christina Road.

## Colborne

Old maps such as the 1854–55 *Peters Map* and the 1862 *Tremaine Map of Middlesex County* show a place called Colborne on land now belonging to the Muncey Delaware First Nation. It is in a little peninsula surrounded by the River Thames. Floreen Carter, in *Place Names of Ontario*, refers to it as the “Colborne settlement” and states that it appears to be “a very old place.” Actually it never was a village but only surveyed in hopes that it might develop into one. In the early nineteenth century, the Muncey and Chippewa First Nations were separated from one another through unfair land negotiations. Governing authorities eventually realized their mistake and, in 1830, created Colborne, a town where the two peoples could live together. Unfortunately, by that time the two groups had become so used to being separate, they declined to move to the “village.”<sup>4</sup>

## Ekfried, Middleton or Longwood Station

One of the earliest communities in western Middlesex and, at one time, one of the largest, this community developed around the corner of County Roads 14 and 9 (Glendon Drive and Melbourne Road), on the border of Ekfried and Caradoc townships. Later it shifted south-east and was re-established along the Grand Trunk Railway, now the CNR. It was *not*, despite its name, on Longwoods Road (Highway 2). This village is not to be confused with the village of Melbourne, although Melbourne's post office was known as Longwood in the last century. Nor is it to be confused with the other Longwood Station which once existed on the Canadian Pacific Railway, just to the north of this intersection.

The village of Ekfried was founded in 1834 by William Middlemiss, the builder of an extensive mill and stave factory at this site. In 1851, Ekfried Village was one of the most important business centres in either

Ekfried or Caradoc.<sup>5</sup> The Ekfried Exchange Hotel, said to have had a ballroom, was kept by William Jones, while Jonathan Miller ran a dry goods store. There was also a wagonmaker, a blacksmith and two shoemakers. When the railway came through in 1855, James English became the first agent at the station.

The 1854–55 Samuel Peters map shows Ekfried as a cluster of buildings just south of the modern Glendon Drive/Melbourne Road intersection. The word “station” appears just to the east, on what was then called the Great Western Railway.

Early post office information is confusing. There appears to have been an office called Ekfried, which moved to a new location east of the townline in 1857. It may have been at the time of this move that the community of Ekfried changed its name to Middleton. On April 1, 1865, a new post office called Longwood Station opened at the same site, named after Longwoods Road to the south.

The 1864–65 *Directory of Middlesex County* identifies the population of Longwoods Station as 157. While most early population estimates are exaggerated, this one could very well be correct. Longwood Station had a large business community. Thomas Gordon was postmaster and merchant as well as Justice of the Peace, with William Wilkinson



another Justice. There were three shoemakers: James Coulter, George Freele and George McLandy; three blacksmiths: Dougald Galbraith, J. C. Mills and James Richards. Thomas Gowman and Thomas Hearnes were carpenters. J. V. Bryning was a druggist, physician and surgeon, and S. J. Bryning also a physician and surgeon. William Goodwin was a saddle and harness maker. William Jones, a wagon maker, also kept a hotel. Another hotel was kept by John McQuaid. The second wagon-maker was John Scott, while Harriet Vale was a milliner and dressmaker. Two ministers are listed: William Webb, New Connection Methodist, and J. V. Bryning, Congregationalist (it is not clear as to whether this is the same J. V. Bryning who was listed as a druggist).

Strangely, the directory does not mention the mills. But MacKintosh's *Directory of 1871-72* states that there are two mills at Longwood Station. George Middlemiss employed 12 men in sawing lumber, making shingles, flour barrel headings and staves, and in planing and wood turning. C. Homister's sawmill had only three or four employees, but cut half a million feet of lumber annually.

It is odd that Longwood Station declined over the years. One would have expected that a community located on the railroad would have continued to prosper. It may be that the community could not compete with Melbourne to the south. Whatever the reason, a steady decline in the population can be tracked. By 1884, the year the name of the post office was shortened to Longwood, the population was only 60 people. A 1919 directory calls it a "rural post office."<sup>6</sup> By the 1930s,



There is only one home at Longwood Station today. The rest of the village has reverted to fields and only this CN sign reminds us of the former community.

only a store and a post office remained. It is not known when the store closed, nor is it known when the trains no longer stopped or when the station was removed. The post office closed July 31, 1964.

Today, there is absolutely no indication that a sizeable community once existed at Longwood. Two roads, Topping Road and Andrews Drive, still run along the tracks. At one time these roads were connected and buildings were scattered along them. Now both lanes are dead ends, fading away into ruts before finally being cut off by the tracks. Foundations can be found in the grass on the south side of the track. But only a CN sign stands to remind us of the former community and railroad station known as Longwood.

### Falconbridge

This Caradoc township store and post office stood on the west side of Sideroad 12 (now Christina Road), just north of the CPR track. Mail was probably delivered by train. The post office opened April 16, 1900, under James Coleman and closed in September 1913, but the store maintained a presence until the early 1970s. The current owner of the building, Glenn Laughton, believes the old store is really two buildings which were moved to the site and joined together. He has preserved the name "Falconbridge" on a sign posted out front.



### Glen Oak

This small hamlet was situated in Caradoc township at the intersection of Concession 6 (now Olde Drive) and Side Road 4 (now Glen Oak Road). While never large, the settlement did offer a few services for local farmers and had a school and church.

The Glen Oak post office opened July 1, 1875, on the northwest corner of the intersection, the property of Levi J. Hixon. Along with his position as postmaster, Hixon also kept a store. Interestingly, later postmasters of the hamlet do not seem to have done so. In 1892, the post office was taken over by A. J. Stephenson and moved to the Stephenson house on the southwest corner. It remained there until its demise.



Glen Oak United Church, abandoned for quite some time, is now a home.

In addition to the post office and store, there were a few other businesses. The earliest known one is that of Joseph Whitker who made boots and shoes. By 1897-98, *Foster's Directory* shows that the business community had expanded to include Hugh Bolton's blacksmith shop; Etta Connors, dressmaker; W. T. Stevenson, builder; and Ashley Wade, carpet weaver. While the location of these establishments is not indicated, they may have been right at the intersection or a bit down the road.

The first school at Glen Oak was built on the southwest corner in 1856. Of frame construction, it was unique in that both Catholic and Protestant pupils attended together.<sup>7</sup> Later this school would become the kitchen in the Stephenson house. The second S. S. No. 11 was built on the opposite corner. While a school-house is shown at this position in the 1878 *Historical Atlas of Middlesex County*, the present structure, however, dates back to only about 1914.

Although Methodist meetings had been held in the school as far back as the 1880s, it was not until 1914 that a Methodist Church was built. Community members donated both their labour and money to build this place of worship; the total cost was \$2,943.00. With Church Union

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in 1925, Glen Oak Methodist Church, which was part of a circuit that had included Melbourne and North Ekfrid, became Glen Oak United.

As so frequently noted, once rural mail delivery began, the little post office was finished. For Glen Oak, closure was on November 30, 1913. The new address for the area became R.R. 2 Longwood. Later, once mail came from Melbourne, the area became R. R. 2 Strathroy. Both the school and the church closed around 1958. The congregation then began attending North Ekfrid United Church.

Always a fairly quiet place, Glen Oak is even quieter today. The old post office is now a home, the schoolhouse a fine private residence, as is the church. Down the road to the east, Bob and Judy Farr have commemorated the hamlet by naming their property "Glen Oak Farm."

### Hendricks

In 1878, a post office by this name opened just west of the CNR crossing on Concession 7 (Inadale Drive), with Alexander McKellar as postmaster. Here, mail was tossed off a train, then taken to the office to be sorted. Sometimes the name Hendricks is spelled with an "s" and sometimes not. Polk's 1884 *Directory* lists a store at this spot, also operated by McKellar. This office closed May 1, 1913, and today even that building is gone.



### Longwood Station (CPR)



This station was on the CPR line near the Caradoc/Ekfrid Townline (now Melbourne Road). It is not to be confused with the large community also called Longwood Station, which developed to the south on the Grand Trunk or CNR.

### Roome

The hamlet called Roome was centred around the corner of Highway 81 (Adelaide Road) and Caradoc Concession 7 (Inadale Drive). It consisted of a post office and church and, just to the south near Olde Drive, a school.

With Fred Thornton as postmaster, a post office opened on August 1, 1895, just east on Inadale Drive. This office was named after a Doctor Roome, who was in parliament at the time.<sup>8</sup> Formerly a physician in Newbury, in Mosa township, he had been, from 1871 onwards, Chairman of the Board of Education. In 1887, he again stood for election and won but was unseated. He ran again in 1888 and was re-elected. It is likely that Roome used his influence to get a post office for this area, prompting the assigning of his name to the hamlet.

The earliest school for S.S. No. 6 was an old log barn built on Concession 5 in the 1840s. Another log schoolhouse followed ten years later, but this time on the south half of Lot 13, Concession 6, the north corner of Olde Drive and Christina Road. In 1862, a new frame building was erected on this same site and, by 1876, it was estimated that 80 pupils attended this little one-room school. In the winter months, when the older students were there, temporarily not being needed for farmwork, three children occupied one seat. In May 1877, this school burned and a brick school, to become known as the Ferguson School, was set on the same site.

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Work underway to convert the Mt. Carmel United Church to a private residence, 1997.

Mt. Carmel Methodist Church came into being in 1906, with a cemetery set right across the road. So, for a few short years, Roome consisted of a post office, a school and a church. Then, on May 1, 1913, the Roome Post Office closed. The school shut its doors in 1961 and became a home. Its school bell was purchased by Keith Wilton.

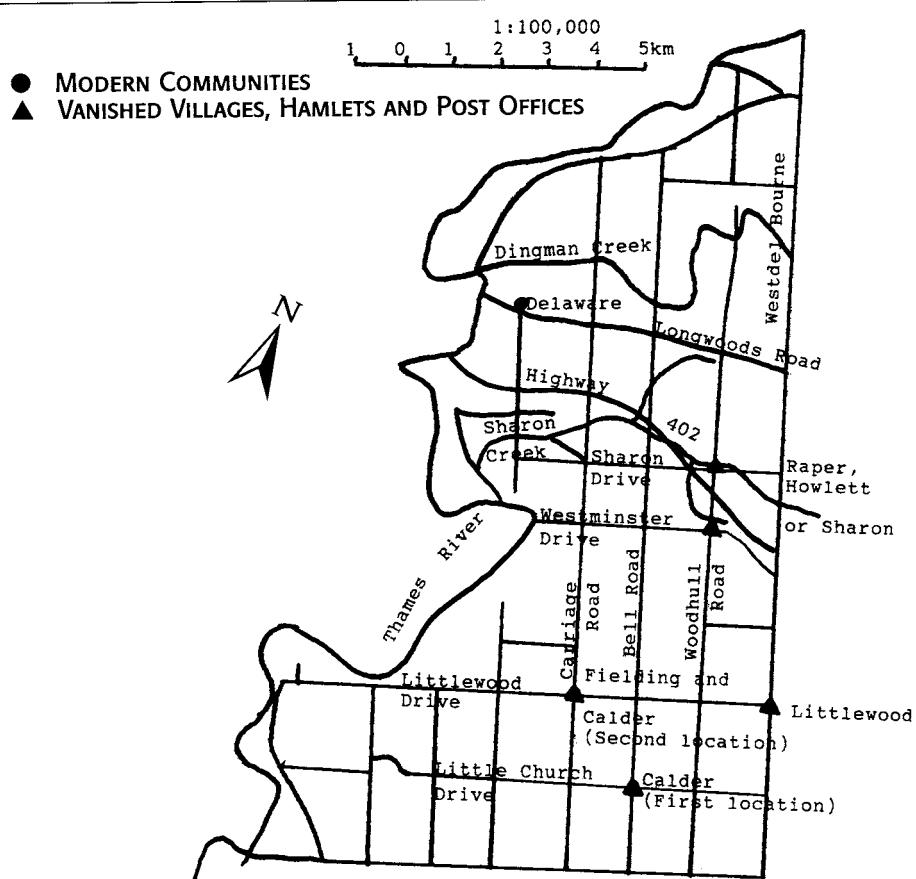
Today, the three main buildings associated with Roome are still standing, and all are private homes. The post office, a one-storey building, is the second house to the east on the south side of Inadale Drive. Mt. Carmel Church is still there but, as a residence, has recently been moved slightly north of its original site. The school, covered in white siding and well-maintained, stands just to the south on Christina Road.

### Waubnakee

WAUBNAKEE  
M.R. 20 m  
94  
ONT.

An S. Clarke became the first postmaster at this settlement in 1893. The office closed twelve years later, on February 1, 1905. Its location may have been on the Ekfrid/Caradoc Townline (Melbourne Road), south of Melbourne. Apparently the name of the hamlet came from a local Native; his other name was Scobie Logan. The word "Waubnakee" is said to mean "people from the east."<sup>9</sup>

## IV. TOWNSHIP OF DELAWARE



## Calder

A post office named Calder existed in Delaware township for forty-

CALDER  
CSP 230  
83  
ONT.

five years, from March 1, 1868, to October 1, 1913. Originally on the southeast corner of the intersection of Bell Road (Concession 3) and Little Church Drive, the office was run by postmaster William Campbell. Sometime later, when John Cowling was postmaster, the office was relocated to the northeast corner and was known to be still operating at this intersection in 1899. The reason for the name Calder remains a mystery, but there are five or six small communities and seven rivers in Britain with Calder as their name or part of their name. The word means "rapid stream" in the Celtic language.<sup>1</sup>

Exactly when the post office was moved again is not known but, by 1910, it is shown at the corner of Carriage Road (Concession 2) and Littlewood Drive (County Road 35). This spot had been the postal code for Fielding from 1876 to 1879. Perhaps the house that still stands on the northeast corner of this intersection may have been the post office.

For some years, a general store was associated with the first location of the Calder post office, and may have been transferred to the second site. The owner of this building was Thomas Hall, the postmaster from 1884 until the post office closed.

## Fielding

The 1878 historical atlas of Middlesex County shows a Fielding Post Office in Delaware township. The location is now the corner of County Roads 15 (Carriage Road) and 35 (Littlewood Drive). The office opened in 1876 under W. Scott, probably on the northeast corner of the intersection. According to the National Archives, the office closed October 1, 1879, when the postmaster "left the place." By 1899, and perhaps earlier, the Calder post office was at this corner.

## Littlewood

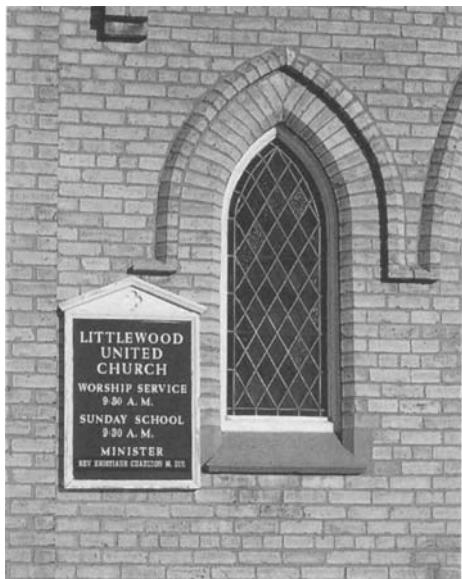
This community developed on the Delaware/Westminster Townline (now Westdel Bourne) at the intersection of County Road 35 (now Littlewood Drive). Although never large, Littlewood did have the usual assortment of pioneer buildings—a post office, a church, a school, a blacksmith, a cheese factory, a store and a cluster of houses. Population estimates from the early twentieth century are as high as 100, although this number may be exaggerated.

While most of the early settlers in the area were Scottish, the name of the village originated in England. In the pioneer times, Thomas Weekes is said to have emigrated from Littlewood, Devonshire, and purchased land on the west side of the townline. It was Weekes who named the new community after the place of his birth. Modern gazetteers do not show a Littlewood in Devonshire—they do, however, show one in Staffordshire.<sup>2</sup> Any number of explanations may account for this. Perhaps Weekes may have really come from the latter county. Or perhaps there is a Littlewood in modern Devon, but it is so small that it has been overlooked by the gazetteer. Littlewood may also have been the name of a farm or a piece of property and not really a village. There is also another intriguing idea—perhaps Littlewood, Devon, is also a vanished village.

The first school, S. S. No. 19, was built about 1850 and, five years later, was reported to have 55 students—all in one room. This school was on the southeast corner of the intersection, in what is now a farmer's field. A new one-room frame school was built in 1879 on the north side of Littlewood Drive just to the east. Later the outside would be stuccoed.

LITTLEWOOD  
JOC 9  
109  
ONT.

Littlewood Methodist Church was erected about the time of Confederation, or possibly a little earlier. Initially known as Baker's Church, its premises provided a home for concerts and tea meetings, as well as being a place of worship. By the late nineteenth century, more space was needed as the congregation wanted an auditorium and rooms for a Sunday School. Just after workmen began to tear down the old building, it was learned that Frank Dores and Jenny Weekes had been planning to get married in that very church within a week or so. The work was



Littlewood United Church still holds regular Sunday services.

factory burned down, but it is not known whether he ever rebuilt. Possibly not, for he had no insurance.

A post office opened at Littlewood in 1885 in a house on the Weekes farm on the west side of the townline. The first postmaster, however, was John Kent. He was also a blacksmith, his smithy located just south of the farmhouse at the end of Littlewood Drive. A tree on the edge of the garden marks the spot.

Later, the post office was associated with the store set on the north-east corner. This store was created in 1905 when Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Branton combined two frame houses from other locations and set them on this corner. One was used as the store and the other became the Branton home; both buildings were bricked by 1912. W.H. Branton was the last postmaster at Littlewood.

A few other businesses existed at Littlewood over the years. Polk's *Middlesex County Directory* for 1890 lists a John McGugan, sawmill owner, and Samuel May, a carpenter and wagonmaker as well as postmaster. John Kent and Philip Schmidt made carriages.

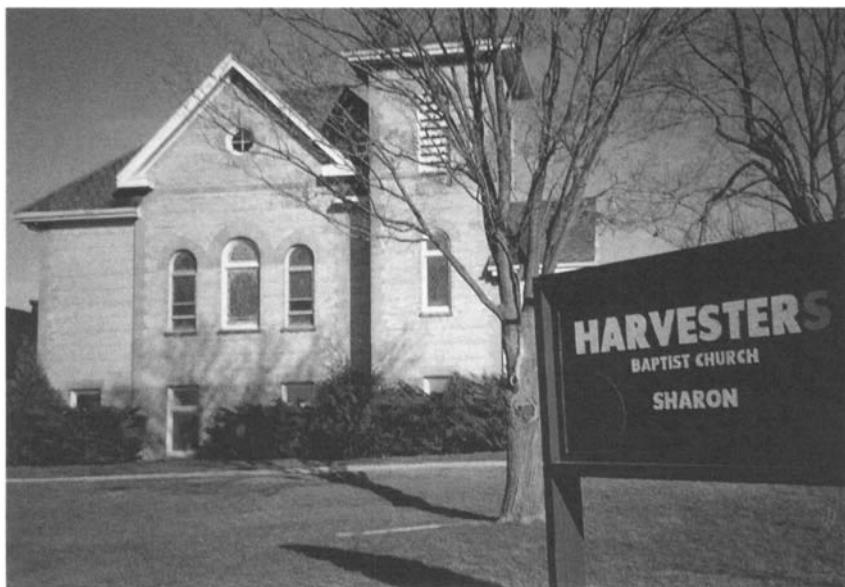
Over the years these businesses disappeared. A *Free Press* article in 1953 states that Littlewood consists of a church, school and store. The post office had closed on February 15, 1913, and the area became R.R. 2 Lambeth. Today the postal address is R.R. 33 London. Although the blacksmith shop had closed years earlier, it was not torn down until 1957. Once the school closed in 1965, pupils were bused to larger schools in Delaware and Lambeth. The store finally ceased business in October 1969.

Quite a few of Littlewood's buildings are still standing. A road sign on Littlewood Drive, just off Colonel Talbot Road still announces Littlewood three kilometres ahead. A little further west is the school, still standing on the north side of the road, but now a private residence. At the end of Littlewood Drive, the home of the first post office can be seen straight ahead. The building on the right is the second post office, also the general store. Both are now private residences. Just to the north of the intersection, on the west side of the road, is Littlewood Farm. To the south, at the intersection of Westdel Bourne and Little Church Drive, is Littlewood United Church, still standing in excellent condition and still used for Sunday services.

### Raper, Howlett or Sharon

This community was gathered around two intersections on Concession 4 (Woodhull Road), with part of the village at Sideroad 12 (Westminster Drive) and part at Sideroad 10 (Sharon Drive). The total population probably never exceeded 60 in total.

Here the most important institution seems to have been the church. The first worship services in the area were conducted by a man named Brenton, formerly an owner of a used clothing store in London, with the initial meetings being held in the settlers' homes. In 1868, a white brick church for the Bible Christian congregation was built on the southwest corner of Woodhull Road and Westminster Drive, just west of the Howlett farmhouse. Officially, it was known as "the Delaware Church," but also called "the Howlett Church" in recognition of Joseph Howlett who had donated the land. In 1897, the name was changed to Sharon Church, a reference to the Plain of Sharon mentioned in the



Sharon Church, now Harvester's Baptist, still stands at the corner of the southern intersection of Sharon.

book of Isaiah.<sup>4</sup> A new building, constructed in 1912, on the northeast corner of the intersection, has an inscription on one of its cornerstones, referring us to Isaiah 28:16:

“This, now, is what the Sovereign Lord says: “I am placing in Zion a foundation that is firm and strong. In it I am putting a solid cornerstone on which are written the words, ‘Faith that is firm is also patient.’ ”<sup>5</sup>

The church became part of the United Church of Canada in 1925.

School Section No. 4 Delaware was nearby. The first log school stood on the southeast corner of Bell Road and Westminster Drive, one intersection west of the church. The second school, set on the northwest corner of Woodhull Road and Westminster Drive, was white brick and faced east, instead of the usual south orientation. The third school, also white brick, was built in 1895 on the same lot but this time faced south, sitting directly across Westminster Drive from the second church.

*Township of Delaware*

In 1878, a post office called Raper was established in the farmhouse on the southwest corner. Joseph Howlett, the postmaster, carried the mail there from Lambeth. While the origin of the name Raper is unknown, it is documented that on March 1, 1897, the office name changed to Howlett. When this office closed March 1, 1916, the community seems to have taken on the name of the church—Sharon.

Another important local institution was the cheese factory. Initially established on Longwoods Road (Highway 2) at an unknown date, it was eventually moved to the northeast corner of Concession 4 and Sideroad 10. Polk's 1890 *Middlesex County Directory* lists the Raper Cheese Manufactory with H. J. Smith as Secretary and treasurer. The factory became the Howlett Cheese Manufactory in 1897 when the post office changed its name. Later known as the Delaware Cheese and Butter Company, at one point it was owned by the Purity Milk Company of Windsor. Two other owners would operate it as a cheese factory until it finally closed in November of 1956. The cheese

RAPER  
JY 5  
78  
ONT



The Sharon Store of the early 1900s has been a home since the 1960s.

manufacturer lived in the house on the southeast corner of this intersection.

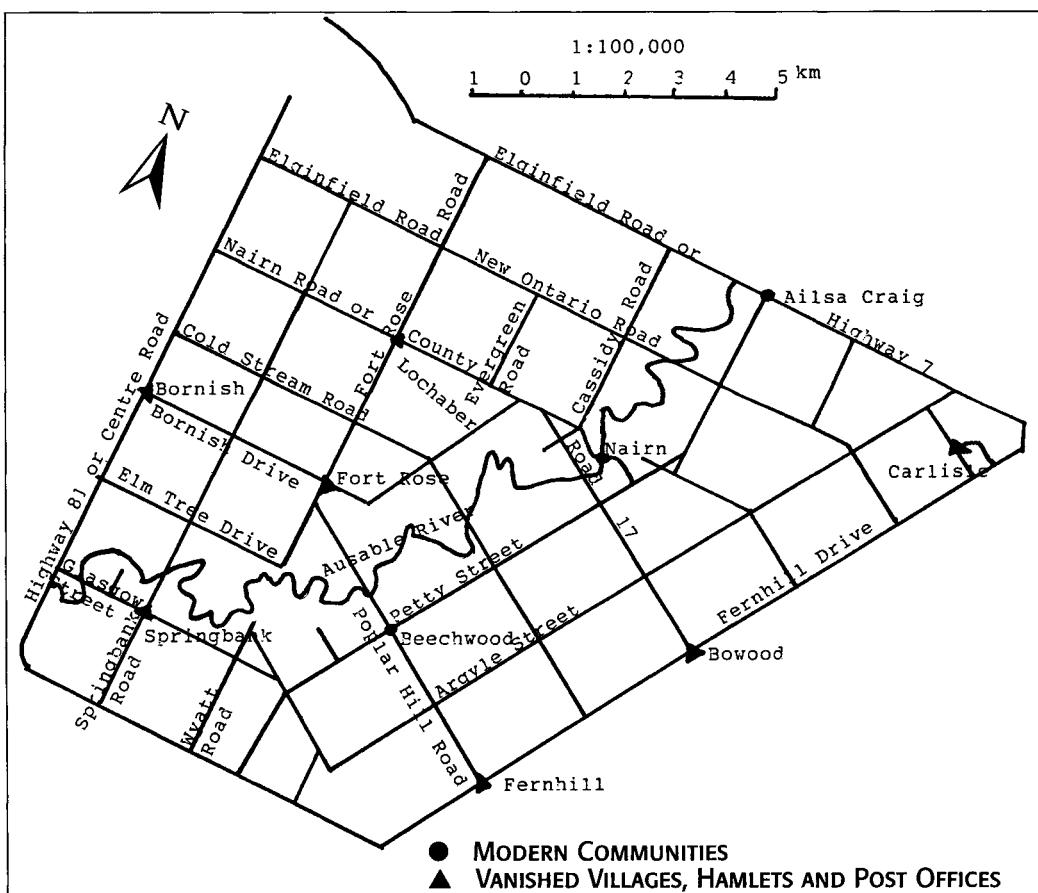
Although George Carey built the Sharon Store about 1908, he never actually operated it himself. Over the years the store was to have many owners and operators. At one time it was possible to buy one's milk on the northeast corner, then cross the road and buy one's groceries on the northwest corner. During the early years a few other businesses were known to have existed in this community. Nineteenth century directories list men such as George Atkins, blacksmith, and John Vanstone, wagonmaker.

In 1956, a group of nuns from Venlo, Holland, bought the farm just east of the cheese factory. They added rooms to the old farmhouse and founded the Bethany Convent. The sisters worked the farm themselves and did much good work in the neighbourhood. During the 1960s, some of them attended the night school for New Canadians being operated in S.S. No. 4. Unfortunately, the local bishop had the convent closed in 1967. It was next acquired by Mennonites who turned it into a nursing home called Bethany Lodge, no longer in operation.

Gradually, many of the old institutions at Sharon disappeared. As previously mentioned, the post office closed in 1916 and the cheese factory in 1956. The school ceased to exist in June 1962, and local children were bused to Delaware Central School. The Sharon store closed during the 1960s when people were able to drive a greater distance to larger stores where more extensive selections of merchandise could be found.

Today, the post office farmhouse still stands on the southwest corner of Woodhull Road and Westminster Drive. Sharon Church, now Harvesters Baptist Church, remains on the northeast corner and a new bungalow can be found on the site of the school. To the north, at Woodhull Road and Sharon Drive, the cheesemakers' house is still on the southeast corner, but on the site of the cheese factory is a modern house. While the Sharon Store still stands on the northwest corner, it is now a private residence.<sup>6</sup> Members of the Howlett family still living provided me with much of the information on their community.

## V. TOWNSHIP OF EAST WILLIAMS



## Bornish

At the intersection of the East Williams/West Williams Townline (now Centre Road) and Concession 12 of East Williams and West Williams townships (Bornish Road) lie the quiet remains of the hamlet of Bornish, a church and cemetery.

Lachlan McDonald (1794–1893) and family emigrated from Bornish, Scotland, in 1849 and obtained Lot 11, Concession 13, Williams township, in 1849. His farm, just to the west of the intersection, eventually became known as Bornish. The McDonalds were part of three shiploads of families, all victims of religious persecution and the “clearances,” who came here from Bornish, on the west shore of the island of South Uist in the Outer Hebrides. Most were crofters and fishermen of the Catholic faith. Their trip had been free from mishaps until they reached Hamilton. Once there cholera struck the immigrants, ravaging dozens of families. The survivors of the expedition arrived in Williams township and settled along the twelfth and fourteenth concessions of what is now West Williams. (Williams township was not divided into west and east sections until 1860).

During the first winter of their arrival, Lachlan McDonald’s wife, Catherine, became sick and did not recover. As the nearest Catholic cemetery was far away, the settlers chose a spot on a hill at Lot 8, Concession 12, and buried her there. From 1850 to 1860, this site was the local cemetery.

A priority of this devout community was the organization of a church. While the congregation came into existence in 1849, it was not until 1853 that the first St. Columba’s Church was erected, the second Catholic church west of London.<sup>1</sup> The first one had been built in Adelaide township in 1851.<sup>2</sup> The small log church sat on the northwest corner of Centre Road and Bornish Road, on land donated by Donald McDonald. Mass was conducted in the church even before it was chinked or plastered, with a table made of basswood serving as an altar. The priest, Father Kerwin, was the only one in Huron, Middlesex, Lambton and part of Kent counties at that time.

Once the church was completed, many settlers decided to bury their dead there. Catherine McDonald’s remains were moved to the new

Bornish church cemetery, but many others were left at the original site. The first person to be buried in the new Bornish cemetery was Malcolm McLeod, a victim of drowning. According to a monument in the cemetery, this first burial was about 1857.

In time, the congregation desired a larger and more attractive church, hence a frame structure was built in 1861. While the first regular pastor was the Reverend Patrick J. O'Shea (1871), the first resident priest was Reverend D. A. McRae who arrived January 1887. The following year, now with a congregation of about 300, the frame building was reconstructed and painted.

It seems that the first area business was L.C. McIntyre's store, located about a half mile west of the intersection on the north side of the road. The 1862 *Tremaine Map of Middlesex County* shows a "Mt. Columbia [sic] store" at this spot, the name probably derived from the fact that it served the parishioners of St. Columba. The business began sometime in the 1850s and continued onward through the 1860s.

By 1853, a separate school, S. S. S. No. 10, opened at Bornish, just north of the church. Both English and Gaelic were taught in the school until no teacher fluent in Gaelic could be found. A new school was built in 1884 and yet another in 1902.

One of the best-known buildings at Bornish might well have been the hotel on the southeast corner. Some time in the 1860s, Joseph Kincaide constructed this two-storey frame tavern advertising several rooms to let. "Kincaide's Hotel" was written across the front. Later the hotel was kept by James Anderson, an auctioneer. Mackintosh's *City of London and County of Middlesex Directory* for 1871-72 lists a "good hotel" at the hamlet.

On January 1, 1874, a post office opened at the intersection. The first postmaster, John Doyle, lived on the northeast corner farm. Originally, the hamlet had been called Dalgetta or Dalgetty, a name which may have been suggested by Kincaide. When the post office opened, however, the name was changed to Bornish to suit the large majority of the settlers who naturally preferred to perpetuate the memory of their former home. In 1877, Archibald McLeod took over the position of postmaster and promptly moved the office to his log house on the southwest corner of the intersection. Mail was delivered by the stage-



St. Columba's Roman Catholic Church, the only building remaining in Bornish, originally served a congregation forced from their home in the Hebrides

coach operating between Strathroy and Parkhill. The post office closed in 1888, then reopened in 1896, with its last location being a house on the west side of Centre Road, north of the school. On October 1, 1901, it closed for the final time.

A blacksmith was known to be at Bornish, possibly on the southwest corner near McLeod's house. As well, Archibald Morrison kept a store in the hotel building for some years around the turn of the century. Still, the population of Bornish in the late nineteenth century may not have exceeded 25 people.

In 1902, the congregation of St. Columba erected the brick church that still is standing today. It is said to be smaller than the earlier frame church. In that case, the frame church must have been huge, for the present St. Columba's Church is a massive structure which can be seen from every direction from far down the road.

On July 29, 1949, the London *Free Press* reported that "All Bornish was alive with activity today as last-minute preparations were made for St. Columba's Parish 100th anniversary."<sup>3</sup> At 10:00 am, Sunday July 30, the congregation celebrated mass and heard an historical overview

of St. Columba's given by Father J. C. Cody, coadjutor (or assistant) Bishop of the London Diocese. A plaque, a small oak square taken from the original cross on the old church, was dedicated to commemorate the special event.

Over the years most of the buildings at Bornish have disappeared. The school continued throughout the 1950s but was closed finally in 1962 due to overcrowding (unusual, because most one-room schoolhouses closed because of *undercrowding*). Students were then bused to Sacred Heart School in Parkhill.

Today there are two farms west of Bornish on Concession 12 that have been named after the community, Dalgetta Farms and Bornish Farms. A monument to the early settlers was erected in 1977 at the site of the first cemetery. But all that remains of the hamlet is St. Columba's Catholic Church and Cemetery where masses are still held in July and August. St. Columba's was probably the first building at Bornish. It is also the last.

### Bowood

The hamlet known as Bowood was situated at the intersection of County Road 17 (Nairn Road) and the Lobo/East Williams Townline (Fernhill Drive). It was important for its post office and general store, but not much else. While its population in the late nineteenth century seems to have been 15, by 1926 the population may only have grown to 26 in total.

Bowood post office opened January 1, 1862, with Archibald Bell as postmaster. The origin of the name Bowood is unknown, although it may have been named after a village in England, since there are places called North Bowood and South Bowood found southwest of Beaminster in Dorset. There is also a stately home called Bowood House in Wiltshire.<sup>4</sup> However, there is no proof of a connection with any of these. Cameron's 1864–65 *Middlesex County Directory* states that the place is "merely a crossroads," but that Bell is postmaster and general agent. The post office was closed from 1870 to 1875 and again from 1885 to 1901. When it was open, mail arrived tri-weekly until its final closure on July 8, 1913.



*Top:* The first Bowood store, shown around the late 1800s/early 1900s. To the extreme right is a glimpse of "Mother Munro's Hotel." *Courtesy of Maxwell McLean.*  
*Bottom:* The "streetscape" of Bowood today. The hamlet's second store is in the foreground left, and the former hotel is the building on the right, just before the barn.

Although Archibald Bell is listed as store operator as well as postmaster in 1864, another tradition states that the first Bowood store was on the north corner, on part of a farm owned by the Gillies family.<sup>5</sup> However, land records show that the Gillies family did not own the land until the 1880s. This early store is said to have been operated by

a Mr. Jones who also worked as a dentist. Unfortunately, when the Gillies farmhouse burned, the family was forced to move into the store, suggesting that for a long time Bowood had no store. The building ultimately disappeared.

At a later date, a man named Donald Gray is documented as having set up a store at the east corner, beside his brother Archie's tailor shop.<sup>6</sup> A later proprietor, W.J. Willis, was owner when it burned in 1926 or 1927. There seems to have been many owners of the replacement building. Often the store was being run by someone on behalf of the owner. By 1967, it closed and became a private residence. Duncan Gray and his family, the last owners, moved to Strathroy. By then it is likely that local residents were driving to larger stores in more distant communities.

Although Bowood was primarily a store and post office, some other enterprises did flourish over the years. A basket factory, located behind the store, was owned and operated by Jack Harris who lived in the farmhouse east of the store, once known as "Mother Munro's Hotel." A man named Harris also is supposed to have run gristmills and sawmills somewhere nearby. In later times Bill Stevenson, one of the many owners of the rebuilt store, had a chopping mill behind the shop.

Today, the two buildings at Bowood corner are both private homes. The old basket factory is being used as a storage shed. To the west, along Fernhill Drive, is East Williams Baptist Church (1865) where some of the area's early settlers rest in the adjacent cemetery.

### **Carlisle or Falkirk**

Carlisle, located in East Williams township just west of the Lobo/East Williams Townline (Fernhill Drive), developed just west of Siddallville. By no means is it a "vanished village" since many people live here today. It is, however, definitely a "ghost town," being dramatically smaller than it was in the mid-nineteenth century.

Founded by George Shipley of Carlisle, England, the village was named after his birthplace. Its little stream, Linn Creek, was named after Blacklinn burn, the small river near the area where he had lived in the old country. Shipley built a dam across the creek and erected a flour and chopping mill. Other businesses were quick to follow.



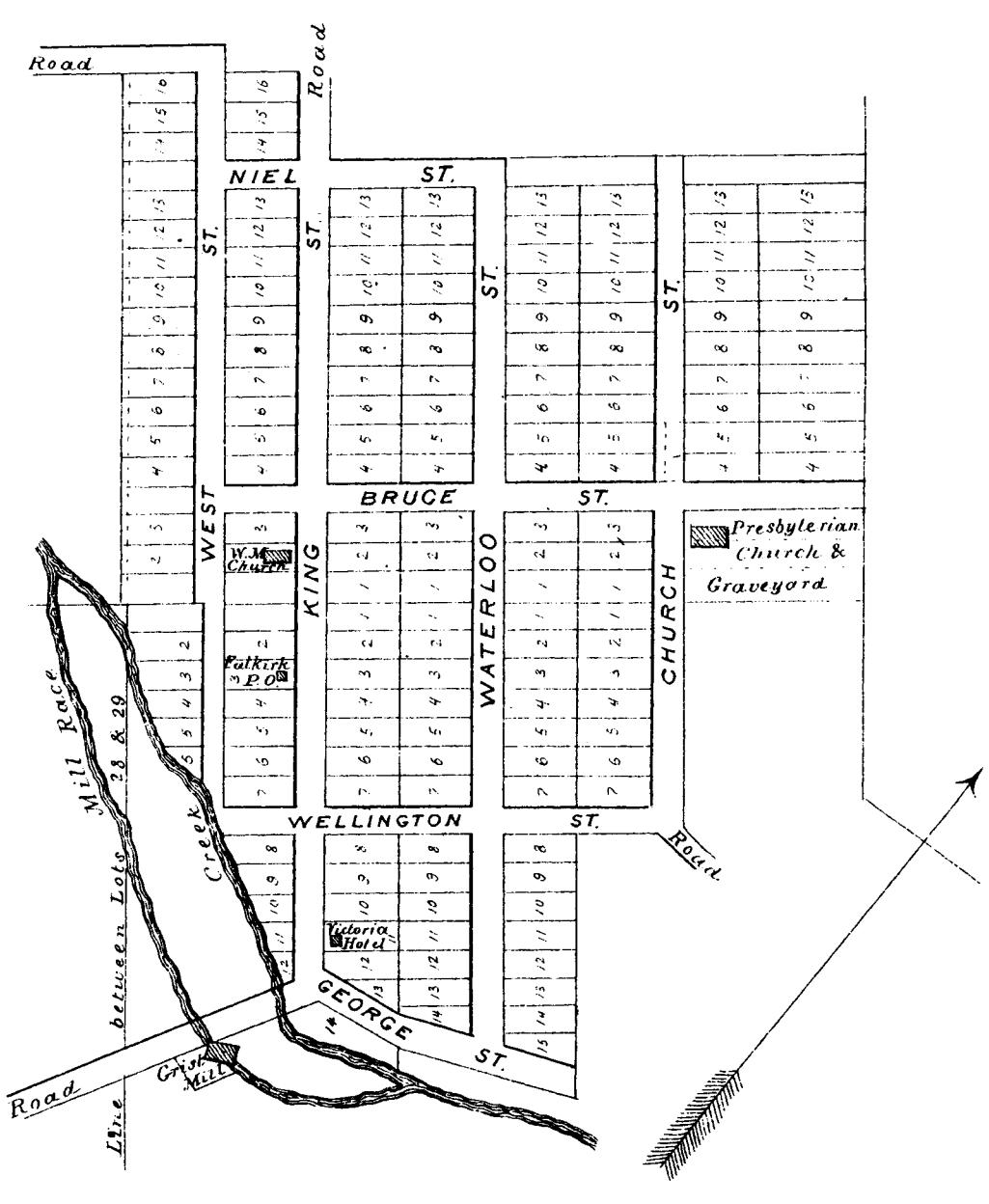
An old postcard shows the Victoria Hotel, Falkirk (Carlisle), as it would have looked circa 1900. The hotel is the building with the verandah in the background, centre right. *Courtesy of Harold Gilbert.*

A post office opened in Carlisle in 1853. Since the name Carlisle was already in use, the office was renamed Falkirk, after the Scottish home town of resident John Stewart. For years, maps and directories called it by either name. The first postmaster was John H. Priestly.

Cameron's 1864-65 *County of Middlesex Gazetteer* describes Falkirk as "a large and flourishing Village" and notes that it is sometimes called Carlisle.<sup>7</sup> It lists Mr. L.G. Shipley as proprietor of a large gristmill, while James Westcott is credited with a sawmill and gristmill and R. Lambert and Sons have a woollen mill. There was also a soap and candle factory, as well as three stores, three doctors, along with four boot- and shoemakers. Altogether, 42 business people were listed. Mail came daily and the population was listed as "about 1,000." This population estimate seems incredibly high. Later directories give the population as 200 and list the same number of businesses so the smaller number seems much more likely.

Carlisle was the home of the Victoria Hotel, operated by the Hasskett family. Originally it may have been called the Carlisle Hotel, the one operated by James L. Nichols, as this is shown on the 1862 *Tremaine map of Middlesex* at about the same location as the Victoria.

*Township of East Williams*



The town plan of Carlisle as prepared by John Rogers for the 1878 *Illustrated Middlesex Atlas*. Most streets still exist today, but many have been shortened.

As the only one in the village, the hotel must always have been one of the more-used buildings. When other businesses failed, the Victoria Hotel remained open. Local resident Bill Siddall remembers his father, Leroy, telling him of visits to the hotel in Carlisle's declining years. Being only a teenager, he was too young to enter the bar. He and a friend would go to the back door, however, with a large pail. The bartender would kindly fill it with beer—for ten cents.<sup>8</sup>

There were several churches in the village. Anderson's 1868–69 *City of London and County of Middlesex General Directory* states that Carlisle has a frame church open to all denominations, but that the Primitive Methodists are starting a church of their own. The 1878 *Historical Atlas of Middlesex* shows a Wesleyan Methodist church on the west side of King Street. We know, then, that there was a Methodist congregation in Carlisle, but there is some confusion as to the type. On the north side of the village is the Presbyterian Church and graveyard. While this congregation was organized in 1858, it would be 1879 before the very imposing church was erected. As well a Baptist congregation was known to exist as the 1862 *Tremaine map of Middlesex County* shows a Thomas Owens, Baptist minister, who seems to have lived on the east corner of Waterloo and Neil streets. Perhaps a Baptist Church stood nearby.

Carlisle once hosted many fairs. The Agricultural Society Show was held twice a year when stock and agricultural implements were put on display and prizes were awarded. There was a bi-monthly cattle fair at one point, as well as an annual fall fair.

This extremely prosperous and, for its time period, large community eventually slipped into decline. Possibly the 1875 building of the London, Huron and Bruce Railway, through Ilderton and Denfield and on to Huron County, missing Carlisle completely, was the cause. The earlier 1855 Grand Trunk had gone through Ailsa Craig instead of Carlisle, but that does not seem to have caused any negative impact. The failure of the LH&B to go through, however, seems really to have struck a blow. Some people began moving away to Denfield and Ilderton; others went to nearby Ailsa Craig, even moving their houses along with them. Polk's *London and Middlesex County Directory* for 1880–81 still identifies Carlisle's population as 200, but by then there are only

half as many business people there. The decline continued over the years and, by 1914, the year the post office closed, Carlisle contained only a general store and post office, a sawmill, a flour mill and a wagonmaker. Its status was reduced to hamlet.

Some 60 years later, a housing boom started at Carlisle as "city people" decided to "get back to nature." New houses sit on the sites of the old Falkirk Post Office and the Methodist Church, both on the west side of King Street. The Victoria Hotel is still standing, in marvellous condition, now a private home where King Street connects with George. The attractive Presbyterian Church remains on Church Street, but many of Carlisle's lots are empty. In spite of the village's very real charm, its quiet streets cannot help but strike one as a bit eerie, particularly when recalling the earlier bustling days when Carlisle was in its prime.

## Fernhill

The village of Fernhill stood on the East Williams/Lobo Townline (now Fernhill Drive) at the former Fernhill or Poplar Hill Sideroad (now Poplar Hill Road). Although old directories never give the population at more than 50, the number of houses and businesses said to have been there suggests many more once lived at Fernhill.

In early pioneer days, the intersection was known as Curtis Corner because of a man by that name who settled there. Seemingly, nothing more is known about him. The spot was also called Sheepskin Corners, for some unknown reason.

In 1859, D. McLellan bought the east corner lot from John Dingman and opened the first store. Later owners include Sylvester Ross, Alex and Thomas Ross, Thomas R. Owen, Eli Owen, Jenkin Owen, David Owen, Roy Owen, Archie Levie, Albert Quelch, Percy Bodaly and Ray Butler. The building standing today is not the original frame structure; it burned in 1904. Roy Owen was in Poplar Hill the night the fire started, restocking supplies. Since there were no telephones at the time, no one was able to reach him. Imagine his shock upon returning home to find his store nothing more than smouldering ashes! A new brick building was

FERNHILL  
DE 37  
101  
ONT.

erected that same year and, in the meantime, business carried on as usual in the Temperance Hall next door.

The Temperance Hall was more than just a meeting place. At one time a debating society met there, as well as a school for singing. The story is that one night at singing school, Eli Owen and Elis Stoner were leafing through a music book and came across a tune called "Fern Hill." They proceeded to name the corner after it.<sup>10</sup>

On April 1, 1864, the post office with Eli Owen as postmaster opened under his chosen name. In early days, the name was spelled as two words—Fern Hill. Although one would expect this post office to have been associated with the store, as was often the case, this may not have been so. The 1878 historical atlas of Middlesex and Scarborough's 1910 map of Middlesex and Elgin both say "P. O." on the south corner. The store, however, was always on the east.

Although there were many other businesses at Fernhill over the years, it is now difficult, if not impossible, to locate them. One blacksmith shop, most recently owned by Jim Drysdale and his son Lorne, was on the south corner. Another smithy was diagonally across from it. Both shops had many owners over the years. Thomas Rosser may have had a shoemaking business on the East Williams side of the townline at some point, although his enterprise may also have adjoined the store which was on the Lobo side. At one time there were both a wagon works and a sawmill. This mill, which stood on the north side of the townline, to the west of the intersection, probably was the one originally owned by Henry Neff. A local distillery made the liquid the Temperance Hall disapproved of and sold it for 25 cents a gallon, and there is also said to have been a hotel. As well, from 1879 to 1950, the Lobo Town Hall was located here, making Fernhill a township centre. In addition, there are said to have been from 20 to 25 houses at Fernhill. Many of them were on the road between the corner and a bridge just to the east.

More is known about S.S. No. 4, Fernhill School, than about any other building associated with the community. The first schoolhouse, built of logs, was on the east corner of Concession 11 (now Charlton Drive) and Poplar Hill Road. Later, a brick school was erected on the east corner of Concession 12 (now Greystead Drive) and Poplar Hill Road and, in 1867, a new, much larger frame school replaced it. Known



The Fernhill ball team, 1913. Back row (l-r): Ed Chapman, Bill Chapman, Herman Sinker, Earl Barnes, Les Hindmarsh, Stanley Sinker and John Currie. Sitting (l-r): Ira Currie, Earl McCallum, Frank Adam, Charlie Barnes, Charlie McCallum, Andy Williams and Warren Daniels. Lyle Chapman, in front, was the mascot. They were champions in the Lobo, London, Caradoc and Williams League that year. *Courtesy of Maxwell McLean.*

as the Lobo Seminary, as many as 100 pupils attended. In 1888, S.S. No. 4 was divided and two new schools emerged. One was at Poplar Hill, while the other was built on the west side of Poplar Hill Road between the 12th and 13th Concession Roads (Greystead and McEwen Drives). The Town Hall up in Fernhill was also used as a school from 1920-26, presumably as a Continuation School, until a more modern one was requisitioned.

Sports were important to Fernhill. A football club was active at the turn of the century, along with a men's baseball team. In the 1920s, a



The Fernhill general store and post office is now divided into apartments.

women's softball team was founded. Local people also played horseshoes at night under electric lights.

From 1905 to 1913, the Thomas family ran a stagecoach line carrying passengers and produce between Fernhill and London. Neil Currie continued his service for a few years longer. Surprisingly, a one-way trip took the short time of just two hours.

Just before the First World War, the land between the south blacksmith shop and the house next door was surveyed for an electric train line from London.<sup>11</sup> However, the rising popularity of the motor car after the war prevented this dream from materializing. Likewise, it was probably the automobile that destroyed Fernhill's business community. Places like Strathroy and Ailsa Craig offered more selection of goods and more things to see and do, luring people away from their home communities.

Although Fernhill post office closed June 1, 1914, the store continued for many years as did the smithy on the south corner, but everything else faded away. The old Neff mill shut down in 1940. For a while, the Town Hall was being used as the township garage, but it too was removed. Finally, the store ceased operating some time in the 1970s

and the old smithy was torn down in 1990, one of the last vestiges of the pioneer community.

Today the Fernhill store still stands but has been converted into apartments. While there are many homes in the neighbourhood, most of them are new. Down the road to the south, a totally renovated S.S. No. 4 still stands, but as a home. Quite a few people live around Fernhill, but its once vital streets are much quieter now than in the last century.

### **Fort Rose**

This post office stood at the southwest corner of Beechwood and Lochaber sideroads (now Poplar Hill and Fort Rose roads). Opened on July 1, 1909, under Alexander G. MacKenzie, it would close on April 1, 1914. No explanation for the name is known. The original building no longer stands.

FORT ROSE  
4 JUL 9M  
109  
ONT.

### **Lochaber**

A Free Presbyterian church and school by this name stood on Concession 16 East Williams township (County Road 17 or Laird Road) at the corner of the Lochaber Sideroad (now Fort Rose Road). The name, pronounced Lo-HAB-ber, has its origins in a remote area of Western Scotland. The church, built in 1884 on the Duncan McMillan farm, closed in 1958 and was moved to Fanshawe Pioneer Village in 1961 where it remains today. The school was demolished.

### **Springbank**

The hamlet of Springbank grew around the corner of Concession 8-9, East Williams (known as Glasgow Street) and Sideroad 13 (now Springbank Road). Although the population was probably quite small, Springbank did possess many of those critical services required by nineteenth-century farmers: a store, post office, blacksmith and school.

SPRINGBANK  
S JU 52X  
1882  
ONT.

In 1839, a family named Cowie sailed to Canada from Glasgow and settled on Concession 9. They named the road Glasgow Street after



School Section No. 7, Springbank School, is still standing in 2002. Although many notable men received their education here, the school may be in danger of demolition.

the city from which they embarked. The first post office, in their home on the north side of the road just to the east of the intersection, was called Springbank after their home village near Glasgow.<sup>12</sup> Another settler, Donald Campbell, used to ride about eight miles to Nairn on horseback to meet a stagecoach, then carry the mail back to Springbank. The post office remained at the Cowie location until 1878 when it was relocated in the local store, established in 1875 on the northwest corner of the intersection by John McNeill. Three years later, when John Campbell bought the enterprise, he continued the post office.

Across the road to the south, possibly behind the house on the southwest corner, was the blacksmith shop. Apparently it was a former school building which had been moved to the site. There, a man with the memorable name of Samson Singular was the late nineteenth century blacksmith.

The most interesting building at Springbank was probably S.S. No. 7, better known as Springbank School.<sup>13</sup> When the section was formed in 1850, the first log building was down the road to the west on Concession 9, Lot 4. A few years later another log school was built just to the east on Lot 5, to be replaced by a new frame building in 1877, set on the northwest corner lot. The original building, as noted, was moved across the road to become the blacksmith shop.

Springbank School provided an early education for some very important people in the history of Ontario. The most prominent of these was Sir George W. Ross (1841–1914), fifth Premier of Ontario during the period 1899 to 1905. Ross promoted the distribution of hydroelectric power in Ontario and a provincial railway for northern Ontario. He went on to the Senate in 1907 and became its Liberal leader in 1911, the same year he was knighted. But, believe it or not, John Waters, a former Ontario MPP, the Reverend J. A. McDonald, a former managing editor of the *Toronto Globe*, John B. McLachlan, a former Deputy Minister of Education for Ontario, and Robert McCubbin, a federal MP for West Middlesex, all attended Springbank School. The village may not have been large, but it produced some very “big” men.

At one time Springbank School had over 100 students but, by 1940, the number had dropped to only twelve. In 1950, when a Centennial Celebration was held at the School, five hundred graduates arrived. Altogether, there were 1,000 visitors in just two days. Since the area had been settled predominantly by Scots, pipe bands were present for the occasion. It must have been the busiest two days in Springbank’s history.

Springbank post office closed in 1912 (the area became R. R. 6 Strathroy) but the store continued until it was destroyed by fire on August 8, 1917. A man named C. Nethercott owned it at the time. In 1923, on the southwest corner, a new store was opened by Alex Paterson—an addition built on the front of the family home. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Paterson operated a grocery store. His customers would phone in their orders and he would deliver them. There were also a gristmill and gas pumps at his site. As well, the West Williams Rural Telephone Association set up a central exchange in Paterson’s house in 1917. When Bell took over the area phone service in 1952, the exchange remained until Bell introduced a dial system in 1961.

Gradually, many of Springbank’s old buildings have disappeared. The blacksmith shop was being used as a garage in 1940; it may have been torn down soon afterwards. The store was also still doing business in 1940, but it is unclear when it closed. For years Alex Paterson’s son, John, had a sign out front that said “Community of Springbank, Glasgow Street, East Williams Township” but it has since been taken down. The school closed in 1952 and students were bused to Nairn.

Today, there are two old buildings at Springbank and two new homes. The storekeeper's house is on the southwest corner, but the actual store addition was removed in 1990. Springbank School still stands on the north side of the road, and over the years there has been little change to the interior. A little stove still stands at the back and the blackboards still hang on the walls. But the building is in very poor condition, having been used as a workshop for many decades.

### Williams

This name appears in East Williams township on an 1863 Canadian Almanac map. It is southwest of Nairn, just south of the Thames River. This was a post office, but little else is known about it, not even its exact location.



## **VI. TOWNSHIP OF EKFRID**

### **Appin Crossing, Appin Junction or North Appin**

This rail station north of Appin was used by local farmers to ship out milk and sugar beets. Appin Crossing was about one mile east of Thames Road (County Road 8) where the Michigan Central Railroad (formerly the Great Southern Railroad) crossed the Canadian Pacific. In 1893, the name was changed to Appin Junction.

A new station, referred to as North Appin Station, was built on the CPR at Thames Road in 1908, on the north corner of the spot where the track crosses the road. The laneway on the east corner of the tracks led to stockyards. This station was pulled down about 1960. A section house also stood at the site but was moved to the east side of the main street of Appin in 1937 and is easily recognizable as the brick house with the rounded roof.

### **Ekfrid, Middleton or Longwood Station**

The description of this settlement is found in the section on Township of Caradoc.

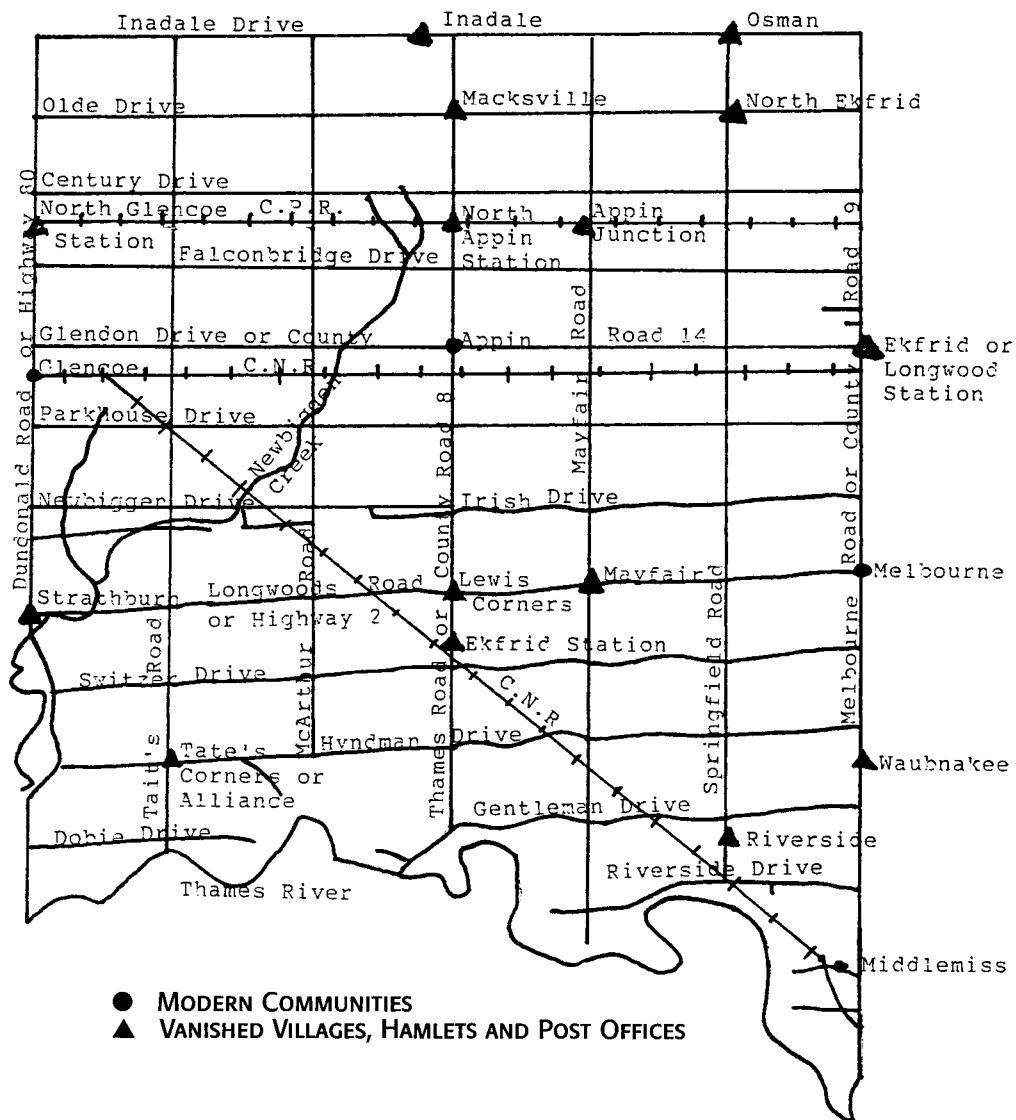
### **Ekfrid Station or South Ekfrid**

This small community was located on Sideroad 12 (now County Road 8 or Thames Road) where the CNR crosses Switzer Drive. Even in its

## TOWNSHIP OF EKFRID



1 : 100,000  
1 0 1 2 3 4 5 km



*Township of Ekfrid*



An early photograph captures a typical scene at Ekfrid Station in the early twentieth century. Note the Grand Trunk boxcar in the centre background. *Courtesy of David Muscott.*

heyday, it was only a hamlet, but it is clear that a few commercial enterprises gathered around the Ekfrid Station railroad stop.

Not much is known about the station other than it came into being when the CNR was still the Grand Trunk. Some maps seem to suggest that it was located on the east side of Thames Road but, as far as is known, it was always on the west side, several hundred feet back. The rest of the community seems to have been built on the sideroad itself. Most, if not all, of the businesses were on the west side. At one point, there were a blacksmith's shop, a gristmill and a store. The store later became a home and the school, just north of the tracks, was converted to a store. A photograph from 1912 shows the buildings close to the road, north of the tracks. If there were any other businesses near Ekfrid Station, their existence has not been recorded. Nor is anything known of the owners or operators. Over the years, the community seems not to have been listed in any directory. It is not even possible to guess the population, but it must have been quite small.

Ekfrid Station was associated with a post office called South Ekfrid, which is no longer standing. Originally it bore the name Adolphe and

was located in a farmhouse just east of the corner of Thames and Longwoods roads, opening on September 1, 1892, with John J. Wrinn as the first postmaster. He vacated the position in 1904 and George W. Smith took over. The Adolphe post office changed its name to Ekfrid on October 1 of that year. At some point, possibly when the name changed, it was moved down to Ekfrid Station. Although officially named Ekfrid, it was commonly known as South Ekfrid, probably to distinguish it from North Ekfrid post office which opened 1907 and closed 1914.

More is known about the school at this community than about any other building. The first S. S. No. 4 Ekfrid was built of logs about 1840, on the northeast corner of Thames and Longwoods roads. The next school, also of log, was set on the southwest corner of the same intersection. At some point the school site was moved south so that it was just north of the railroad track. This is probably the school that became a store. The final location for the school was on the south side of the tracks, north of Switzer Drive. According to one Ekfrid township historian, the move to this site was in 1860,<sup>1</sup> although the 1862 *Tremaine Map of Middlesex* shows that the school was still at the southwest corner of Thames and Longwood drives at that time. The 1878 historical atlas puts it at its third location north of the tracks. The most recent S. S. No. 4 was built in 1901.

The post office closed January 31, 1914, and the station closed around 1950. It is difficult to say when the other businesses disappeared. Today, there is a white house on the site of the school that became a store. The latest version of S. S. No. 4, now an attractive private home, stands at its final location just south of the CNR crossing.

### Inadale

The post office of Inadale stood on the south side of the Ekfrid/Metcalfe Townline (now Inadale Drive) just west of County Road 8 (now Thames Road). With Charles J. Towers as first postmaster, it opened May 1, 1908, and was named after his wife's birthplace in Nebraska.<sup>2</sup> The office closed January 5, 1914, and the house is no longer standing.

INADALE  
MY 9m  
1908  
ONT

## Lewis Corners

The corner of Highway 2 (Longwoods Road) and County Road 8 (Thames Road) is known as Lewis Corners. It was here that Mr. and Mrs. Ben Lewis ran a store on the southwest corner for years. The Eaton family took over in 1958, tore down the old store and built a new one. The current owner, Dave Muscott, has owned the business since 1968.

## Macksville

Macksville was located on County Road 8 (Thames Road) at Olde Drive. Donald E. McAlpine, formerly a tailor in Appin, opened a general store on the northeast corner of this intersection in 1910. Peter McIntyre, a farmer and livestock dealer, lived across the road. With a "Mack" on either side of the road, it seemed appropriate to call the spot Macksville.<sup>3</sup> The hamlet had a ball diamond and three horseshoe courts where local teams competed. The store closed June 28, 1974, after being operated for 64 years by the same family. It still stands—



Macksville store and post office, now in use as a private home.

with some abandoned gas pumps out front. The ball diamond was in the field just to the south and the horseshoe courts were in front of the farmhouse still standing just to the north.

"Macksvilleview Farm" is the name of the farm on the northeast corner today; to the south is the Macksville Construction Company—both keeping the old name alive.

## Mayfair

Never much more than a tiny hamlet, Mayfair was located on the corner of Longwoods Road (Highway 2) and Sideroad 8–9 Ekfrid township (Mayfair Road). Among the usual small assortment of buildings, one of the first was a church. Initially, the local Baptists met in each others' homes, then, in 1833, the congregation supported the building of a log Baptist meeting house on the southwest corner of the intersection. Replaced by a frame meeting house, erected in 1853, that sat south of the cemetery facing the sideroad, in 1901 this one was replaced by a modern brick structure.

The first neighbourhood school was S. S. No. 3 Ekfrid, circa 1834, to be found east of Mayfair on the south side of Longwoods Road. The

first teacher was William Livingston. Some thirty years later, a brick school was built still farther east, but on the north side of the road.

On June 1, 1872, with John Dalton as postmaster, a post office opened just east of the intersection. Mail came from Appin by stagecoach, three times a week. No doubt the office was named after the section of London, England, known as Mayfair.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps this was Dalton's old neighbourhood.



Although no longer used for Sunday services, the Mayfair Church remains on site in 2002.

*Township of Ekfrid*



This large brick home, known as Mayfair Mansion and built by George Elliot in the 1880s, is west of the main intersection, on the north side of Longwoods Road. It is one of the finest Victorian mansions in rural Middlesex.

Mayfair once had a large tavern established by the Millers, as well as two cheese factories (the Mayfair Cheese Manufacturing Company and the Ekfrid Cheese and Butter Factory), a sawmill, a blacksmith, a painter and a tailor, and an insurance agent.

In the 1880s, an imposing red brick house was erected to the west of the intersection on the north side of the road; it came to be known as Mayfair Castle or Mayfair Mansion. George Elliott had the home built for his wife and six children. There is supposed to be more brick in its chimneys than in all the homes within a three kilometre radius and the marble for the fireplaces was imported from Italian. The construction cost was \$7,000 at a time when the average brick house cost \$1,000 to \$1,500 to build.<sup>5</sup>

Mayfair declined in the early twentieth century, businesses faded and disappeared, and ultimately its post office closed on February 1, 1914, after which time mail came from Melbourne. In the 1940s, a restaurant tried to make a go of it, but to no avail. Now only the Baptist Church remains standing at the intersection. But to

MAYFAIR  
FE 6  
93  
ONT.

the west, Mayfair Castle maintains its imposing presence, looking as magnificent as ever.

### North Ekfrid

Situated at the corner of Concession 4, Ekfrid Township (Olde Drive) and Sideroad 4 (Springfield Road), North Ekfrid is barely recognizable. No longer to be found on maps, and with no road sign to announce its existence, people could be forgiven for driving right through and not recognizing it as a community.



*Top:* This very early photo of North Ekfrid, looking east, became a postcard perhaps sold at the general store. Note the condition of the sideroad, now called Olde Drive. The building to the right is the white frame school. *Courtesy of Harold Gilbert.*

*Bottom:* North Ekfrid today. The school is now obscured by trees, but the church is just visible in the left background. This is one of the few backroads of Ekfrid township that has been paved.

### *Township of Ekfrid*

Not a great deal has been written about North Ekfrid over the years and what little information exists is often questionable. No directory seems to have listed it and old maps often show it at the wrong location, one intersection to the south. Fortunately, however, a few facts have come to light.

Likely the home on the east corner was the grocery store operated by Charles R. Mills, probably also the location of the post office, which is known to have opened on March 1, 1907, under E. Coleman, and closed January 2, 1914. North Ekfrid also had a school and church. Originally, the church, built in 1893 on the north corner, was Presbyterian, but became United in 1925. The original S.S. No. 10 was a frame building set on the south corner, to be replaced in 1903 by a brick church which was moved to this site from the Metcalfe/Ekfrid Townline (Inadale Drive) and converted to a school. The new school, used until its closure in 1967, is now a home.

NORTH  
EKFRID  
JAN 20 1909  
ONT.

The North Ekfrid United Church is still used for services, the only early building in the community not converted to a home. Today, the total population of North Ekfrid might be 15 or 20 people; whether the population in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the same, higher or lower is impossible to say. It is clear, however, that the community is much quieter than it used to be.

### **North Glencoe Station**

This station was located on the CPR line north of Glencoe. At one time it was connected to Glencoe by a free bus service.

### **Osman**

(OSMAN JY 5 78 ONT) This post office was on Springfield Road at Inadale Drive. With Charles Laughton as postmaster, it opened May 1, 1878, and closed April 30, 1914. For many years the area was identified as R.R. 1 Walkers. Although Polk's 1884 *Middlesex County Directory* calls it "a country post-office," later directories list businesses such as a blacksmith, carpenter and butcher. It is not known

whether these businesses were located right at the intersection or strung along either side of the roads.

## Riverside

This name appears on a 1910 map of Middlesex and Elgin, near the corner of Springfield Road and Gentleman Drive, just north of the CNR track. An old school, now a home, stands there today, on the east side of the road. The road to the south has been named Riverside Drive.

## Strathburn

Many have passed through the former hamlet of Strathburn at the corner of Highway 2 (Longwoods Road) and the Mosa/Ekfrid Townline (now Highway 80 or Dundonald Road). Only one house remains today, but much earlier in our history many more homes and flourishing industries existed here.

In 1829, Patten Atwood and his wife Hannah arrived in the Strathburn area. Five years later, he built a sawmill and gristmill on Eighteen Mile Creek. Business boomed. During the Rebellion of 1837, Atwood was exempt from military duty because he was a miller. Operating his mill around the clock, he did work for both sides, but suffered from raids by plunder parties all during that period.<sup>6</sup> In 1839, when Atwood departed for Illinois, the Coulthard family took over and built a carding and fulling mill, where cloth was treated to make it shrink and thicken. The original buildings, on the west bank of the creek, were destroyed by fire on January 13, 1874, but were rebuilt. Another mill, the Fleming Flour Mill, operated in the 1870s about half a mile east of Strathburn corner. At first driven by waterpower, the mill was later powered by steam.

In 1840, the first log school, known as S. S. No. 1 Mosa, was erected on the north half of Lot 5, on the north side of the road. Likely it was on the next road to the north, now named Trillium Drive. The second school was at the next intersection west of Strathburn on the north-east corner. In 1851, Alexander and Mary Ann Ward donated land to build yet a third school, a frame structure. Their tavern was located



just to the east of it. In October 1872, this school burned to the ground, to be replaced by a brick school the following year.

Prominently located on the southeast corner, Hugh McRae's store and residence, built about 1850, became one of the best-known landmarks on Longwoods Road. Originally frame, the structure was covered over with brick some time later. A huge box stove stood at the rear of the store where travellers used to warm themselves during cold weather. Many stayed the night, as this also served as a hotel. McRae was popular with the local Native people who frequently visited the store; he used to give them a handful of biscuits and some hunks of cheese.<sup>7</sup> In the evenings people would gather at the store to smoke their pipes (women as well as men). A large bowl of pipes was always sitting on one of the counters for customer use.<sup>8</sup> Hugh's son Duncan eventually took over the business and operated it for many decades.

Records show that a post office called Strathburn opened April 6, 1852, under a man named J. B. Strathy, but located within McRae's store. Could the name of the office be derived from a combining of the name Strathy and the word "burn," meaning creek in Gaelic?<sup>9</sup> But it is worth pointing out that there is a Strath Burn in Caithness, Scotland,<sup>10</sup> and the office may have taken its name from it. In 1853, Strathy abandoned his post and Hugh McRae took over as postmaster. His son would be the only other postmaster at Strathburn.

In about 1844 or '45, Knox Presbyterian Church was built on the north side of Longwoods Road somewhere near Sideroad 20 (Tait's Road). At first, this primitive building had no floor and its seats were simply peeled and flattened logs. By 1848, the well-known Reverend William Sutherland had taken over; he had many churches under his care in an area that extended some 20 miles in length and 12 to 15 miles in width. During its forty years of existence, Sutherland was the only minister at this church. After its closure in 1884, the congregation began to attend the Methodist Church at Tait's Corners.

Cameron's 1864-65 *Middlesex County Directory* shows a large business community at Strathburn. The population is listed at 200, no doubt a gross exaggeration, but the number of shops and mills is quite impressive: Andrew Coulthard's flour mill; John Finlayson's shoemaking shop; Robert Ferguson's smithy; William McBean's tailor shop;



An early view of the D. H. M. McRae home, in the foreground. The store to the right formerly was on Strathburn's southeast corner. Note the Union Jack. *Courtesy of Harold Gilbert.*

Norman McKenzie's cooperage; Christopher McRae's sawmill; Hugh McRae's store, hotel and post office; Duncan McRae's weaving business; and Duncan Stewart's brickmaking business are all listed. The brickyard is known to have been on the south side of the road to the west of the intersection; the blacksmith shop on the west side of the townline. In later years, this was owned by Philip McCallum. The Reverend William Sutherland is also listed, as is John McKenzie, schoolteacher. Interestingly, Malcolm Campbell, reeve; Mr. Champion, township clerk; David Dobie, councillor; Mr. Gow, councillor; Thomas Hamilton, councillor; and John McIntyre, councillor, are also present.

Over the years, Strathburn, like so many others, began to deteriorate. Its main competition was Glencoe to the north, which was on the railway and, over time, outgrew its small neighbour. On February 1, 1914, the Strathburn post office closed and the area became R. R. 3 Glencoe. In the 1920s, the one remaining mill, the Fleming mill, ceased

business. In 1930, CJGC radio station was built on the northeast corner, but only operated for a few years. William Siddall continued to run the old smithy for a few years after 1930, but before long the inevitable happened, and the building was replaced by the store and garage owned by Mr. and Mrs. D. A. Munroe. In November 1943, Duncan McRae sold the old McRae Store to a wrecking company to make way for a lunch counter and gas pumps. In time, these too were removed to allow for the widening of the highway and a daylight corner. During the 1940s a meteorological station was located at Strathburn and, in the 1960s, the Department of Highways Garage was located there, neither structure inviting community growth. By 1963, of all the former buildings, only S. S. No. 1 Mosa was still standing, but only a vacant building.

All of these are now gone and a new house on the northwest corner is the only building at Strathburn. Strangely, the road signs are still proclaim Strathburn despite the fact that this once busy crossroads community is now just a memory.

### Tait's Corners or Alliance

This hamlet, located at the corner of Hyndman Drive and Sideroad 20 (Tait's Road), once consisted of two churches, a school and a post office. In May 1849, George and Elizabeth Tait (sometimes spelled Tate) left Glasgow with their three children and sailed to Canada. As early settlers were advised to settle near water because of its usefulness as a means of travel, Tait took this advice and located on the north bank of the Thames, on the west side of Sideroad 20. Soon the intersection to the north became known as Tait's Corners, as the land on the southwest corner was lived on by another Tait, William and Mary. This Tait was a tax collector and went to each landowner's door to collect money. As a result, he was responsible for the safe delivery of the funds. It is said that when he set out, he would ask his wife, "Mary, where is my revolver?" He always took it along to protect himself and the money.<sup>11</sup>

ALLIANCE  
MAY 16<sup>m</sup>  
(78)  
ONT

In 1877, a post office was established at this corner. For some unknown reason, the office name was Alliance. The first postmaster



Still a fine structure, the sign above the door of the former school reads "Tait's Corners Community Centre."

was Mr. Lethbridge who lived on the northeast corner. When Lethbridge died, his widow, Ann, took over as postmistress. This office closed July 20, 1879, but reopened many years later on January 11, 1907, only to finally close permanently on the first of January, 1914.

In either 1887 or 1888, Tait's Corners Presbyterian Church was dedicated at this intersection. It may be regarded as the successor to Knox Church, Ekfrid, located near Strathburn. When Knox closed, most of its congregation started to go the Methodist Church which already existed on the southeast corner of the intersection. When Tait's Corners Presbyterian opened on the northeast corner, the Presbyterians started to attend it instead.

An early log school was south of the intersection on the west side of the road, the first S. S. No. 8 Ekfrid. In 1866, a frame school was built on William and Mary Tait's farm, and the third school was a frame Wesleyan Methodist Church, said to have been moved from its original

location on Lot 21 (on Dobie Drive) in 1891.<sup>12</sup> As part of the conversion, the building was bricked over and the interior brightened with paint.

At one time there were bridges over the Thames just south of Tait's Corners. The latest one, built in 1915, was known (not surprisingly) as Tait's Bridge, in use until 1987 when it was declared unsafe. Reports indicated that the north foundation had shifted and was in danger of falling into the river. As it was beyond the means of the County to replace it, the bridge was closed. By the early 1990s, the crumbling structure was removed and Tait's Road became a dead end, much to the annoyance of many local citizens who now had to find an alternate route over the river.

Today the old Methodist Church, which became a school, still stands on the southwest corner and is now used as the Tait's Corners Community Centre.

### **Waubnakee**

This settlement sits on Melbourne Road, on the boundary between the two townships. For information, see the listing under Township of Caradoc.

## VII. TOWNSHIP OF LOBO

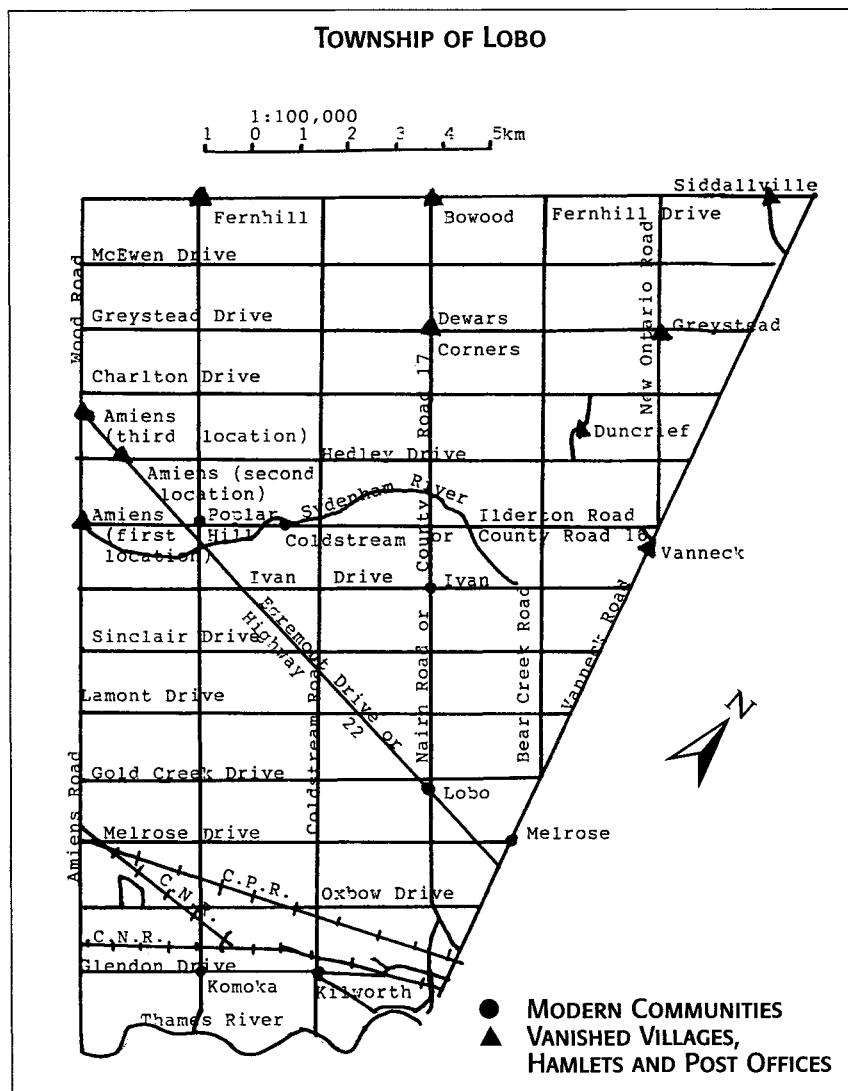
### Amiens



During the 1830s the first settlers at Amiens gathered along the Caradoc-Lobo townline (now Amiens Road) near the corner of Lobo Concession 9 (now County Road 16 or Ilderton Road). Many of these men were veterans of the War of 1812 who had received crown grants as payment for military service. One of them, Captain Marvel White (or Whyte) of the Oxford Rifles is generally considered the founder of the village. He built a tavern, was instrumental in establishing the post office and generally assisted others settle into the community. When some Irish pensioners were allotted land in the area, they stayed for a time at White's Tavern. Since many were not experienced in felling trees or even any basic woodworking, White helped them construct log homes for themselves.

Although early writers have suggested differing founding dates for the Amiens post office, the only certainty that could be established was that it was operating before 1840. The first postmaster was James P. Bellairs and the original office, located in White's Tavern, was the first in Lobo Township.<sup>1</sup> Along with the War of 1812 veterans were many soldiers from the Napoleonic Wars, also recipients of land grants from the British authorities. Possibly they named their community after the 1802 Peace of Amiens, which led to a brief lull in the Napoleonic Wars between Britain and France. It seems a strange name to have chosen, however, for by the 1830s it was well-known that the treaty of Amiens

*Township of Lobo*



brought no lasting peace. Given the times, "Waterloo" might well have been a more natural name for the new community—but a Waterloo post office already existed.

A survey taken in 1837 records a mill, store, post office, blacksmith shop, tavern and shoemaker.<sup>2</sup> About twenty homes, mostly of log, and a population of about 100 people rounded out the community. By 1841, a Dr. John Hyde was practising medicine in the village.

The original Caradoc-Lobo townline went through Lot 24, Concession 9 Caradoc, a little to the west of the modern Amiens Road, since it was easier to ford Bear Creek at that point. It was along this road that the pioneers settled where Lot 24 was divided into three-quarter-acre and one-acre lots for the convenience of incoming settlers. Another road branched off to the existing mill, built on the north half of Lot 23 by William Underwood in 1831. Originally a sawmill, it was later refitted to grind flour.

White's Tavern sat on the northwest corner of Lot 1, Concession 8, at the southeast corner of what is now the intersection of the Caradoc-Lobo townline and the Ilderton Road. A frame building made from lumber sawn at Underwood's mill, it had seven rooms upstairs and seven rooms down, allowing accommodation for the large number of settlers who continued to head farther west along the blazed trails. James McKirdy operated a store across the townline on land also owned by White, the south half of Lot 24 Caradoc. Eventually, the post office, as seemed to be the pattern, moved into the store.

In 1830, a schoolhouse was built on the Caradoc side of the townline, making it probably the first school in Caradoc township and interestingly, the same Marvel White is recorded as being the first teacher. At some point that year, this wooden structure burned and classes were shifted to a blacksmith shop on Lot 1, Concession 6, part of Alexander McKellar's farm. At some point in 1831, the first log schoolhouse in Lobo was established on this same lot, the forerunner of the Union School constructed later on Lot 24, Concession 7, Caradoc.

There is no record of an early church at Amiens but, as previously noted, schools, houses and barns were often used as churches in early days. Eventually, in 1853, a Presbyterian church was built a little to the

west in Caradoc township. But by then it was too late to serve the first village of Amiens; the village had moved.

In 1840, a new road was surveyed north from London along the Goderich Road (Richmond Street) to London township Concession 5 (Fanshawe Park Road), then west to the Lobo-London Townline (Vanneck Road). From there it went through Lobo township and joined the Egremont Road, named for the Earl of Egremont, patron of the Petworth Emigration Scheme, along the border of Adelaide township at a spot called Hickory Corners. This road, completed by 1845 and designed to provide a shorter route from London to Sarnia, was an immediate success. At first Amiens benefited from this work since the surveyors had their headquarters there. But once work was completed, the village was in trouble. Traffic, including stagecoaches, no longer went along the Amiens Road and Amiens lost most of its business virtually overnight.

Perhaps the people of Amiens were more resourceful than the citizens of some other communities in the area. Many of the villagers actually packed up and moved to the new London-Sarnia Road (now Egremont Drive), determined to follow the business opportunities. One such entrepreneur, Charles Woodman, sold his acre at old Amiens in 1844 and moved to the corner where Lobo Concession 10 (Hedley Drive) met the London-Sarnia Road. There, he opened up a store which, according to the 1851 census, included the post office (although official post office records do not show him as postmaster until 1855). This new location may have been where the stagecoaches had started dropping off the mail. Since the postmaster at the former location in Amiens would have had to go a mile to meet the stagecoach, Woodman's place was much more convenient for a post office. The confusion as to where the post office was, or should have been, may explain why there are no post office records for Amiens between 1840 and 1853.

Once the store and post office were settled at the new site, another Amiens began to develop around them. Lots were abandoned at the old location, and properties of one and one-and-a-half acres were sold from Lot 2, on the northwest side of Hedley Drive. By 1855, the Samuel Peters' map shows Amiens at the corner of Hedley and Egremont drives. The village had found a new home.

Meanwhile, the ever-entrepreneurial Marvel White had moved his tavern up the townline to the south side of the Egremont Road at the east corner of Adelaide township, where Hickory Drive and Wood Road meet today. It is also the point at which Adelaide, Caradoc and Lobo townships meet. Instead of "Captain White's Place," the inn now bore the name of "Hickory Tavern." Like its forerunner, it became a magnet for business and settlers. From 1845 to 1863 small village lots were sold at this location, making the second Amiens actually two groups of villagers set about three quarters of a mile apart, with larger landholdings between them. Eventually the post office did move to Hickory Corners, close to the tavern, then moved *back* to the Hedley Drive location, only to once again move to Hickory Corners. Depending on which map being consulted, the location of Amiens during the mid-nineteenth century may be at either of these locations. Page's *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Middlesex* shows it at the eastern location on its map of Lobo township and at the western location on its map of all of Middlesex! Could there have been some rivalry between these two locations?

Cameron's 1864-65 *County of Middlesex Gazetteer* shows a large commercial community at Amiens, described as a "flourishing village." There is a listing of 23 men, including four blacksmiths and three merchants. It appears, however, that the directory included not only the businesses at Amiens, but all those in the surrounding countryside, some of which were miles away and even in other communities! Nevertheless, many were right at Amiens. By then, Duncan McArthur was postmaster and merchant; John Cutler and James Talbot were blacksmiths; Robert Gilchrist owned another smithy, as well as the tavern; M. J. Jestin was a machinist; and William Bell was a wagon maker. The Reverend D. McArthur was a Baptist minister and Thomas Woodward the Justice of the Peace—a fully functioning village.

A toll gate existed on Egremont Drive at Amiens in these early days. The toll was nine pence for more than one horse, four pence for one horse and two pence for the horseman. It was quite common for people to ride out of their way in order to avoid this tax—some things never change. The abolishing of toll gates in 1882 came as a relief to many.



This schoolhouse, S. S. No. 3 Adelaide, was one of the last buildings to exist at the final location of Amiens. For years it stood, forlorn and deteriorating, until being demolished in 2000.

The western part of the village remained prosperous longer than the eastern end, possibly because of the tavern and post office. When holders of the small lots in the eastern section moved away, their land reverted to farmland. The number of village residents in the western part also diminished as people bought larger tracts of land in Adelaide township, and some businessmen moved to Strathroy. As this second Amiens gradually lessened in significance, the tavern's name became better known than that of the village, and the western site began to be called Hickory Corners. Polk's *London City and Middlesex County Directory* for 1884 describes Amiens as "a small place known also as Hickory Corners." By then the population was only 25. Three years later the directory listed just three businessmen: Joshua Lindsay as postmaster, Henry Carroll as hotel keeper and John Cutler as blacksmith.

In 1891, the post office moved to its final location, on the south side of Egremont Drive, west of what is now Hansford Road. The last postmaster, William Ireland, lived in the second house west of the southwest

corner. A schoolhouse and the Bethel Methodist Church were also located near this intersection. A cemetery, and presumably the church, were just west of the Ireland house at what is now the edge of a farm field. Often school children would pick up the mail for their families and neighbours to deliver on their way home. In Vernon's 1909–1910 directory, only William Ireland, postmaster and general store owner, is mentioned at Amiens. The post office closed forever on April 30, 1913, after which the area became R.R. 5 Strathroy. When the County improved the road during the twentieth century, workmen found the Amiens black and yellow signboard and nailed it to a tree across the highway from the school. Years later this tree was cut down when the road was widened.

Today there is very little to remind us of Amiens at any one of its locations. In 1858, the old Caradoc-Lobo Townline was abandoned when the road was straightened. White's Tavern, long gone, was on the southeast corner of Amiens Road and Ilderton Drive where the small evergreens now stand. The old store was on the other side of Amiens Road. Bear Creek, now the Sydenham River, meanders under the road just to the north. Up until the 1970s, the old road was still visible. Even now the millrace still can be traced through the property to the west of the road and the millstone, visible for years, is now buried under sand washed up by spring floods.

At the second location nothing remains to remind us of Amiens. At the third location we find "Hickory Corners Automotive." The old once-popular tavern was moved to Poplar Hill by Charles Wilson and became a home in 1919. At the final location of Amiens, the home of William Ireland is still standing, along with two houses west of Hansford Road on the south side of the road. School Section No. 3 Adelaide remained in a derelict state on the southeast corner for about forty years, before being torn down around 2000.

## Bowood

Located at the intersection of roads now known as Nairn Road and Fernhill Drive, the hamlet of Bowood had a post office in 1862. Archibald Bell was the first postmaster. For more background on Bowood, see the listing under Township of East Williams.

## Dewar's Corners

Dewar's Corners, at the intersection of County Road 17 (Nairn Road) and Concession 12 (Greystead Drive) in Lobo township, seems to have only consisted of a school, S. S. No. 5, known as Dewar's School. This log schoolhouse, built in 1842, probably received its name from the large number of families in the section named Dewar. However, when enrollment reached 124 in 1870, a new school was erected on the same site. Today, this structure still stands on the northwest corner, a private residence in excellent condition.

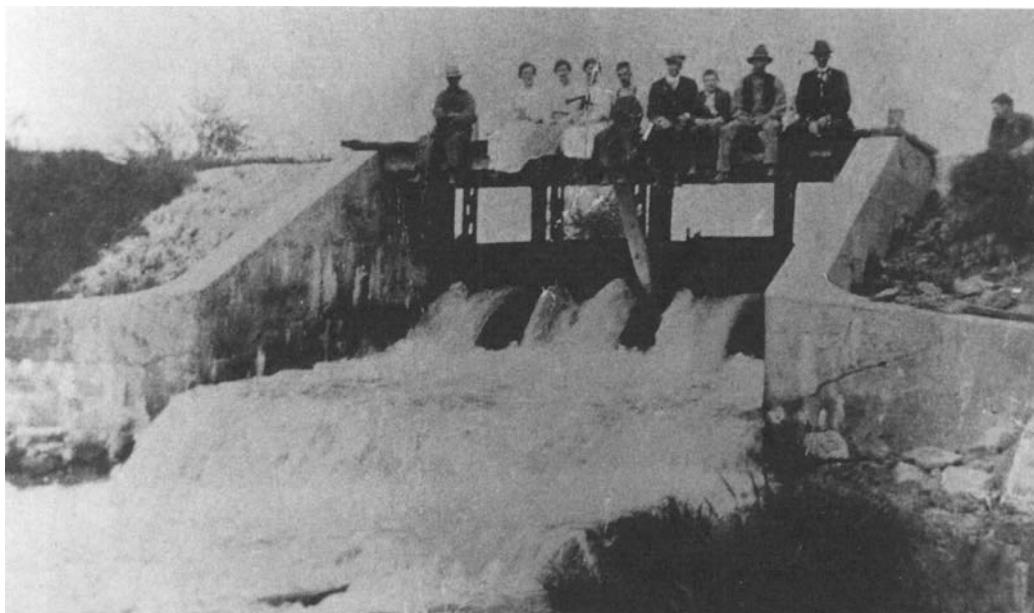
## Duncrief

The remains of Duncrief lie on the former Mill Road (now Duncrief Road) in Lobo township. This village, once the mill centre for north Lobo, developed on Duncrief Creek, a small branch of the Ausable River.



Most of the land at Duncrief first belonged to Joseph and Robert Charlton. In 1835, Jeremiah Robson built a sawmill on the Charlton property, the first such mill in the area. Apparently, an early gristmill also existed nearby at this time since it appears on an assessment roll. By 1840, Joseph Charlton built another such mill on the east side of the stream where the road bends to the east. Once the railway came through, flour was hauled to Ailsa Craig to be shipped out by train. In those days, the miller took part of the wheat as payment for his services. Originally, the grinding was done by stones until 1880 when a roller system was installed. Later, Joseph's sons Thomas and William would operate the mill. In 1886, the Charltons sold the mill to J.C. Shipley and, in 1890, Shipley in turn sold the mill to J. B. Pethram of Napier.<sup>3</sup>

In 1895 the gristmill burned—a great misfortune for the entire community. Since Pethram had no means of rebuilding, his neighbours actually raised the funds for him. The new mill was four storeys high and took ten weeks to build, for a total cost of \$860.00. Once all was completed, a dance was held in the mill, even though the party organizers had not asked Pethram's permission, but as the young men had worked especially hard on the new mill, Pethram could hardly have refused them.<sup>4</sup>



The Duncrief mill dam, an intriguing shot taken in the early 1900s. It would be interesting to know who these people were. *Courtesy of Maxwell McLean.*

The mill was always the most important part of Duncrief. In fact, the 1862 *Tremaine Map of Middlesex County* even calls it "Duncrief Mills." As well, the mill pond was popular for swimming and fishing. But there were other features of Duncrief. The combination store and post office was the second most important enterprise. The community's first merchant, James Barnes, opened the Duncrief post office in his store on June 1, 1862. While the word Duncrief sounds Scottish, gazetteers do not show the name in Scotland, or anywhere else in the British Isles, and the post office name remains a mystery. Over the years, there were several merchant postmasters until closure on July 1, 1913, but the store continued for some time longer. Centrally situated just north of the mill on the east side of the road, the store became the "community centre" where folks gathered and gossiped in the evenings.

Sims Baker was the first blacksmith at Duncrief, followed by William Nixon, then Robert Scott, also a wagon maker. In 1870, Thomas Oliver opened a blacksmith shop at Duncrief, somewhere up the hill from the



All that is left of the milling industry at Duncrief today are the fragments of the mill foundation and a weed-choked stream.

mill, which he operated for some twenty years until 1890, when he moved into Ilderton. Later blacksmiths included Samuel Munce, Duncan McVicar, Austen Smith and, finally, Alton Cornell, who worked as a smithy until it closed in 1909.

Polk's 1880-81 *London and Middlesex County Directory* seems to show Duncrief at its peak of prosperity. According to this publication, at that time James S. Telfer ran the store and post office, Joseph Chalivn (Charlton) was the grocer, Edward Charlton was a drover, and W. and J. Charlton were millers. Included were: J. S. Nichol, shoemaker; Thomas Oliver, blacksmith and E. C. Sevinehouse, wagon maker. The "J" preceding Charlton seems as though it should be a "T" (for Thomas) but perhaps some other member of the Charlton family worked there at that time. The population was given as 40, but one suspects that 70 or 80 might be more accurate, as both earlier and later estimates give these numbers. According to C.R. Charlton, author of *Duncrief, 1835-1920*, Duncrief once had three tailors, but not even one tailor ever appears in a directory.

One of the most imposing buildings at Duncrief was the Methodist Church, just east of the corner of Duncrief Road and Concession 11, Lobo (now Charlton Drive) on the south side of the road, set on one acre of land donated by the Charlton family in 1852. Of white frame construction, the building measured about 30 feet by 70 feet. It remained until about 1890 by which time many of the early settlers had died and the newcomers from nearby communities were continuing to attend churches near their old homes. Ultimately, the church was moved into Ilderton and the last burial in the cemetery was in 1915.<sup>5</sup> It was not until 1957 that a group of local citizens decided to improve the long-neglected cemetery, and descendants and new neighbours alike joined in the task of levelling the ground and placing the gravestones in a memorial wall.

What happened to Duncrief? It must be recalled that its local focus was as a milling centre. When the mill went, so did Duncrief. In 1908, Pethram sold the mill to J. G. Kirby and Sons. Again, source information presents contradictory information. According to one, this is the year the dam washed out and all milling activity ceased.<sup>6</sup> Another source claims the dam washed out in 1910.<sup>7</sup> But C. R. Charlton states that the Kirbys ran the mill for about ten years and when business started to fail, Kirby stopped making flour and carried on a chopping and rolling business instead. Eventually, the mill was bought by John Dixon who continued for two or three more years. Finally, about 1920, the dam washed out for good and the mill was torn down shortly afterwards.

Today Duncrief Road is a quiet, tree-shaded laneway. Goldfinches flit about the remains of the gristmill on the east side of the road at the bend. The Pethram homestead still stands across the road from the mill site and a small local marker has been placed on it. Up the road and around Charlton Drive to the east is the Methodist cemetery where Duncrief's pioneers rest as silently as the village.

### Fernhill

Known as Curtis Corner in the early pioneer settlement days, the village of Fernhill sat on the East Williams/Lobo Townline, the road now named Fernhill Drive. For more information on this earlier settlement see the listing under Township of East Williams.

## Greystead

Both post office and school of this name were situated at Concession 12 Lobo (Greystead Drive) and New Ontario Road, the area originally settled by William and Thomas Shipley and their families, who came from Greystead, Northumberland. Records indicate the presence of a school on the east corner since the 1840s. Fortunately, a detailed history of the school may be obtained in the history project entitled "Lobo Township," compiled by Valleyview Public School.



The post office opened October 1, 1874, with Edward Shipley as postmaster, and closed December 25, 1893. Today only the 1872 schoolhouse remains, now a home. The name is commemorated at Greystead Farms, just east of the intersection.

## Siddallville<sup>8</sup>

Siddallville grew along on what is now called Siddall Road near the Lobo/East Williams Townline (Fernhill Drive). Siddall's Creek, now Nairn Creek, flows by the spot. Dating as far back as the 1830s, Siddallville was one of the earliest villages in Middlesex.

John and Diana Siddall were the founders of the village. When John Siddall came upon an inheritance at some point in the 1820s, the couple left their home in London, England, and moved to New York State. Later, they relocated to Upper Canada and took up farming near London, Ontario. According to the stories, in the spring of 1831, Siddall met some Welshmen living in the northwest corner of London township who told him of a good site for a mill somewhat near their farm. Since their nearest gristmill was at Kilworth, a distance of 12 miles, there was a need for a local one. It appears that Siddall's health was declining; he no longer felt up to the rigorous work of pioneer farming. To mark his career change, he walked up and staked a claim for Lobo Concession 13, Lot 24 and Gore Lot 25. His closest neighbours helped slash a two-mile road through the forest to connect his mill site with the closest farms. That spring of 1832 work began on the dam and gristmill. Two years later, this mill, the first in north Lobo, was in full operation.<sup>9</sup>

Siddall had applied to a Colonel Mount, presumably of the Canada Company, to secure title for his land. Unfortunately, it seems that the Colonel died soon afterwards, and it was not until the mill was completed that Siddall learned that nothing had been done to obtain his title to the land. Early in the summer of 1834 he went to Toronto to check on his legal claim to his property. According to one story, he discovered that he had built on Crown Land;<sup>10</sup> according to another, it was on a Clergy Reserve.<sup>11</sup> Either way, he must have had a few bad moments. Immediately, Siddall petitioned to purchase his land. In his brief, he argued that he had had heavy expenses in building the mill and the road, and that it was not doing as well as he had hoped but that he was certain it would benefit the settlers of the area and thus enhance the value of the Crown Land in the vicinity. The authorities must have believed him as Siddall was finally able to purchase his land on July 2, 1834.

In the course of time, John Siddall and his sons owned three mills—grist- saw- and carding, all drawing customers from five townships—Lobo, London, East Williams, Biddulph and McGillivray. The gristmill was in Lobo township, but the sawmill was just over the border in London township, operated by Daniel, John Siddall's youngest son. Downstream from the gristmill was the carding mill which was run for Siddall by William Lambert.

Since workers were needed to operate the mills, the influx of men and their families meant that many new houses were required for accommodation. In time an inn was built, then a store, a woodworking shop, a blacksmith shop and a wagon shop. Eventually there were three hotels, three or four stores, two smithies, and also that all-important item, a distillery. Siddallville had rapidly become an flourishing commercial centre with many streets—John, Diana, Wellington, Queen and Waterloo. The village became a gateway for settlers heading to East Williams and southwest McGillivray townships. Many tired travellers were said to have stayed at the Siddall home to break their journey before going farther north.

John Siddall, George Shipley and Richard Deacon formed a company to build a toll road along Concession 16 to the Proof Line (Highway 4 or Richmond Street). The toll was seven cents for a horse, eleven for a



The only monument to mark the existence of the village of Siddallville is the Siddall family cemetery, now surrounded by farm fields.

team.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, the group were forced into liquidation—but not before they got the road built! It is now called Sixteen Mile Road.

At some point in the 1860s, Siddallville started to falter. Local historians have always believed that this was because the Grand Trunk did not go through the village as had been hoped. Certainly if the villagers had expected the east-west line of the Grand Trunk that went through Ailsa Craig to have come to Siddallville instead, they must have been greatly disappointed. The village's decline, however, was very swift—much faster than is usual with communities bypassed by railways, such as Carlisle and Napier. However, another factor must be considered: Siddallville was very close—only half a mile downstream—to its neighbour, Carlisle. A younger village, Carlisle had far outstripped its neighbour in both business and population. Even with the railway, Siddallville may have dwindled as it is unlikely that the village could have competed with Carlisle.

Eventually John Siddall's gristmill burned. According to the Siddall family, this was in 1875, although many records state 1867. Siddall, at the age of 85 (somehow his health must have improved!), decided to retire from the milling business. Apparently the fire did not destroy his will to live, for his death did not occur until 1870 at age 88. Diana, his

wife, passed away three years later, aged 82. A new and larger mill was built by Joseph Siddall, another of John's sons, just below the site of the first one. This mill can be found listed in directories for years—under the Carlisle heading. This, the first and the last of Siddallville's businesses, operated until 1907 when a flood took out the dam. During the First World War, the mill was moved to Denfield to become a flax mill.

Today, Siddall Road, the former Queen Street, is very quiet. Siddallville's former streets are now all part of a cornfield. Remains of the dam can still be seen, although not from the road. Bill Siddall, great-great-grandson of John and Diana, still lives on the homestead. The Siddall family cemetery, restored in 1975, stands on the west side of Siddall Road, just to the north of the gristmill site where Siddallville began.

### Vanneck

Vanneck, at the London/Lobo Townline (Vanneck Road) and County Road 16 (Ilderton Road), is chiefly remembered for its church and post office, but early directories show a number of businesses under its listing.

In 1825, a log church, only 32' by 22', also used as a schoolhouse, found on the south half of Lot 29, Concession 9, London township (the north side of Nine Mile Road just west of Denfield Road) served its community well. The forerunner of Vanneck United Church, it was

known as the English Settlement congregation. In April of that

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ONT.* year, William Dorman (sometimes identified as Donnan or Dorran) agreed to teach school four days a week and conduct Presbyterian services on Sundays. He was followed by a long series of ministers. Five years later, in August 1830, a minister named Kendall organized a congregation, but many

of the settlers considered this a premature step as for some time only four families were members. The Reverend William Proudfoot preached in this settlement for the first time on February 17, 1833. During the first two years of his ministry, he conducted services at the English Settlement and Bethel churches only once in a five-week cycle. Later, his route would encompass every two weeks in summer and every four weeks in winter.

A. C. ATTWOOD,  
FARMER, FRUIT GROWER,  
Thoroughbred Fowl Fancier, General Agent, Apriarian,  
Successor to the entire Bee business and territory  
of J. M. Thomas.  
Patentee of "Attwood's Improved Thomas Bee Hive," Importer  
of Italian Queen Bees, Publisher of the "Canadian Bee  
Keeper's Guide," Head Quarters, London City.  
VANNECK P. O., - - - ONTARIO.

An advertisement for A.C. Attwood, general merchant, at Vanneck, Ontario, as it appeared in the 1878 Middlesex atlas. Obviously, bee-keeping was a major part of his enterprise.

In 1857, a new frame church was set on the southwest corner of Lot 28, Concession 9 (a little to the west of the first church), a slightly larger building, being 30' by 40' in dimensions. On July 22, 1840, the Reverend James Skinner replaced William Proudfoot. Records indicate that people would travel from 10 to 15 miles to listen to Skinner preach for two to three hours at a time. While Skinner was the minister, an early library was initiated in the church to supply reading matter to homes. The local teacher, D. Garden, was custodian of the books and other material.

The present brick church was built in 1860 on property donated by William Robson at Lot 20, Concession 8, Lobo township, the southwest corner of what was later known as the Vanneck intersection. This new site, chosen as much of the congregation had expanded to the northwest, opened on January 20, 1861. Originally, there were two entry doors with the pulpit placed in between; anyone coming in late had to face the entire congregation. By the 1880s, when the pulpit was moved to the back, the congregation faced the other way and, in 1958, the two doors were replaced with one. Always known for its fine music, this church was one of the first rural churches in the area to have a modern pipe organ.<sup>12</sup>

On May 1, 1870, a post office, with John W. Robson as postmaster, opened on the southeast corner of the intersection. The local residents requested the name Evergreen Hill, a name they considered highly descriptive of their area. However, some postal authority, it is said,

chose the name Vanneck because it was shorter. In 1905, John Robson's response to a survey of postmasters about their office names was that "Some official likely had a Dutch uncle whom he wished to honour."<sup>13</sup> He went on to say that the residents were English and Scottish and that the name had no relation to any of them.<sup>14</sup> Actually, the office actually takes its name from a Dutch explorer named Van Neck.<sup>15</sup> The post office seems to have kept a list of potential names to apply to new post offices whenever necessary.

Robson told the survey that Vanneck was "a country place."<sup>16</sup> Polk's 1884 directory, however, refers to Vanneck as "a small village." By then, mail was tri-weekly and the population was listed as 50. John W. Robson was Postmaster, Commissioner and Justice of the Peace; Adolphus C. Attwood, an apiarist and constable; the Reverend W. D. Ball, Presbyterian Minister; William A. Caverhill, builder; John McQueen, shoemaker; Bartholomew Robson, tile maker; William T. Robson, physician; and William Wood operated a general store. It is likely that William T. Robson is the Dr. Robson who had the first telephone installed in Ilderton in 1890. He had a line built from J. H. McRae's store in that community so that the residents there could call him at his practice.<sup>17</sup>

Around 1919 there was a wonderful skating rink at Vanneck.<sup>18</sup> Inside was a change house with a ticket booth, warmed by a hot stove. During the week, skating was offered on three days, but on Saturdays people came from miles around. The description suggests a romantic spot, lit by lanterns and surrounded by forest.

As with the others, over time this tiny community decreased in population. The post office closed July 1, 1913, and the area became R. R. 2 Ilderton. By 1947, a London *Free Press* article reported that "Vanneck is not a village church; it is a country church, three miles from the nearest village."<sup>19</sup>

Today Vanneck United Church still stands on the southwest corner. It celebrated its Centenary Service on Sunday, July 3, 1960, and still offers Sunday services.

## VIII. TOWNSHIP OF LONDON

### Devizes

Devizes was located on the London/West Nissouri townline (now Prospect Hill Drive) at the point where that road met the Wellburn Side Road (now Ebenezer Drive) in the Township of West Nissouri. This, at one time, was one of the most important communities in northeastern Middlesex, with several notable businesses and a substantial population. Now there is nothing to indicate that the spot was once a thriving village of about 100 people.

Reuben (1804–1887) and Mary (1807–1892) Bisbee, founders of Devizes, arrived on the London/West Nissouri Townline in 1828. He was born in New Hampshire, she in Connecticut. Their first two children, Ebenezer and James, were born in Vermont.<sup>1</sup>

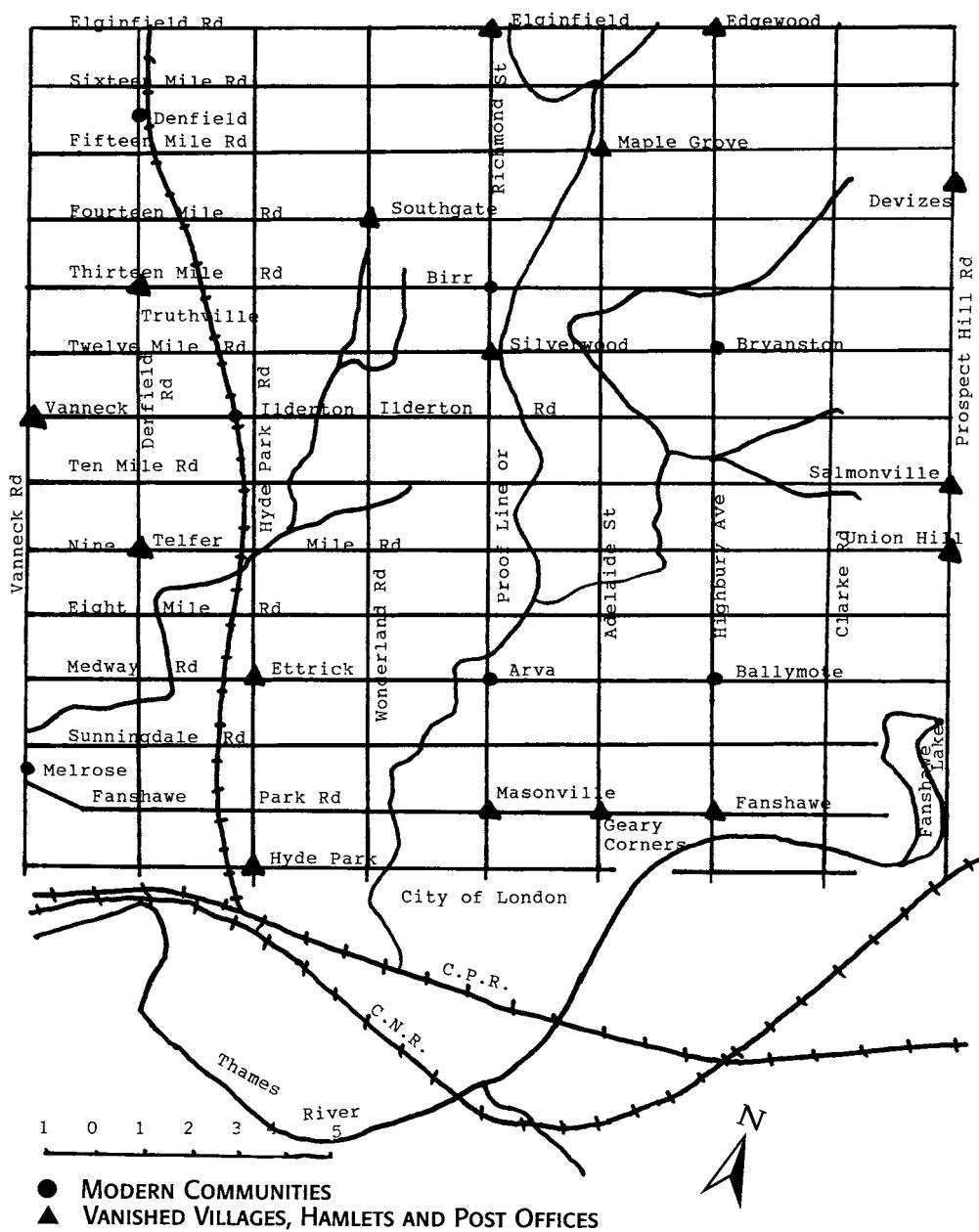
Soon after arriving, Bisbee started a brick yard. With so many new settlers moving into the area, the demand for building products was very great. He then proceeded to build himself a large two-storey brick house just to the south of the brickyard. It is said to have 90,000 bricks.<sup>2</sup> There are two walls in the centre of the house running from the basement to the attic. A large kitchen was at the rear with a huge fireplace for cooking and for heat.

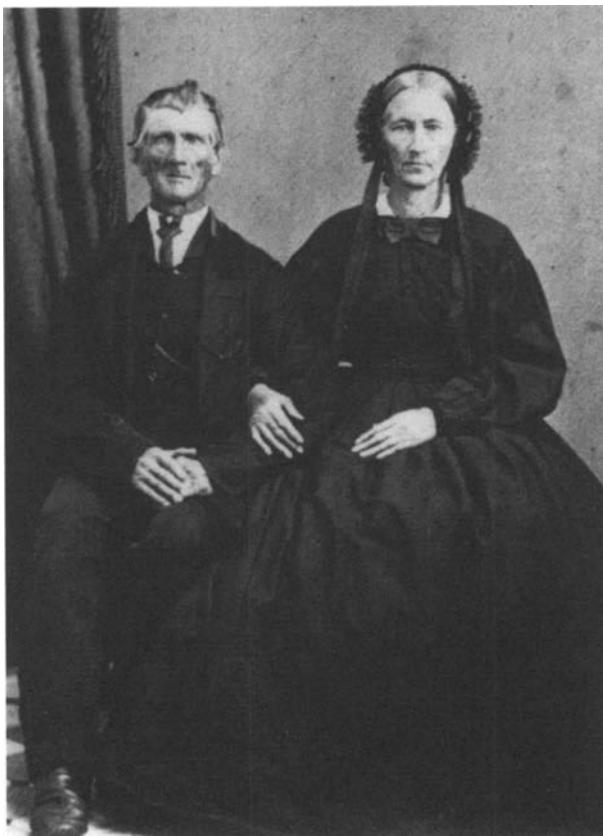
Bisbee had five sons who also helped to develop the area. One of them, James, taught school for several years in a log schoolhouse built on the south half of Lot 1, Concession 14, London township, just south of the family farm. Eventually, he took up farming at Lot 3,

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TOWNSHIP OF LONDON





A formal photograph of Reuben and Mary Bisbee, founders of Devizes, circa 1870. *A. S. Garrett Collection, J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, The D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.*

Concession 13. James, the only Bisbee to remain at Devizes, died about 1910.

Another early school in the Devizes area, on Lot 1, Concession 12, London, built around 1844 was officially known as United School Sections 5, London, and 15, West Nissouri. Locally it was called "Swamp College" because of the large wetland just across the road. Some forty years later, a half-acre was purchased from John Elliott for \$40 and a new Swamp College of frame construction was built to the north of the first one.



The Bisbee homestead as it looks today. The house stands almost alone on a road once active with a range of commercial enterprises.

A well-known local naturalist and poet, Robert Elliott, who was born on Lot 1, Concession 12 on July 9, 1858, was a pupil of Swamp College. Although by profession a farmer, his long walks through the woods and fields near the banks of the nearby Thames inspired him to study nature and to write poetry. He collected a large number of birds and animals—several hundred species, in fact.<sup>3</sup> Elliott died in 1902, when only 44 years of age. After his death, his poems were collected and published by his good friends, Dr. John Dearnness, the educationalist, and Frank Lawson. The collection of his works may be found at the Central Branch of the London Public Library; several of his poems actually mention Swamp College.<sup>4</sup>

Another school that the Devizes area children probably attended was S. S. No. 5 in nearby West Nissouri, better known as Hunt's School. It took its name from Fred Hunt who not only donated the land for the school but also became the first teacher. Although in charge of the school for 23 years, he continued to work his land the whole time. Since there was no clock in the old schoolhouse, Hunt told the time by means of notches he cut into one of the window sills; he knew what time it was

from what notch the sun's shadow was at as it moved across the sill.<sup>5</sup> In 1873, this old S. S. No. 5 was replaced by a large brick building, built slightly to the north of the first school on a site purchased from George Smibert for \$80.00. In the early 1900s, the school had to be replaced when the foundation began to give way because of what has been described by one writer as "the quicksand nature of the soil."<sup>6</sup> Ever economical, the local people used the same materials to build yet another brick school. On May 21, 1953, a tornado demolished this building and, once again, the school was replaced at the same location.

Ebenezer Wesleyan Methodist Church, erected just south of the school site in 1866, was named after Reuben Bisbee's eldest and favourite son, probably at Reuben's own request, in return for his donation of the building bricks. Ebenezer's name was considered appropriate since it had a Biblical reference. Most of this church was also blown down in the tornado of 1953. Fortunately, much of the front wall was left standing, allowing it to be incorporated into the new building, thus preserving part of the old church for future generations.

Another church, near the jog in Ebenezer Drive between the town-line and Valley View Road, the Bethel New Connection Methodist, was constructed of white bricks manufactured at Elginfield. When it closed, at some unknown date, the majority of the congregation started attending Ebenezer. Ultimately this church building was bought and demolished by Joseph Lumsden who used the bricks to build a blacksmith shop at Plover Mills. When the blacksmith shop was no longer needed, it became a barn foundation near Thorndale—an ignominious ending for a former church.

Devizes post office opened March 1, 1859. The first postmaster was Benjamin Armstrong, but it was Reuben Bisbee who named the new community after Devizes, Wiltshire, the original home of the Bisbee family. Incidentally, Devizes, England, is a charming place, famous for its castle, ancient churches and market cross. The name is an Old French word, the plural of "devises," meaning "boundary." The twelfth-century castle sat on the boundary between two "hundreds" or administrative divisions.<sup>7</sup>

Devizes developed a large business community at quite an early date. An 1863 *Canadian Almanac* map shows Devizes, along with other

developing communities such as Thorndale, Arva and Birr. However, what existed commercially at Devizes at that early date is not known. For 1868–69, *Anderson's City of London and County of Middlesex General Directory* lists Henry Baker as general merchant, Reuben Bisbee as farmer and brickmaker, John Costello as general merchant and postmaster, Geary and Harding as millers, Neil McMillen as carpenter, William Nelson as wagon maker, Isabella Robb and Richard Stevens as teachers, and William Young as mail carrier. Mail arrived twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays.

The first merchant at Devizes seems to have been David Weir, but it is not known when he arrived or when his log store was built. He was followed by Henry Rigney who replaced the initial structure with a frame building. The next owner was James Shoebottom who built an addition on the north side and used it as a hotel. For some years the post office was kept in this store until it burned in 1888. According to one source, it was rebuilt; however, two others claim it never was, but that sawmill proprietor William Ross kept store for a while in his house near the mill.<sup>8</sup> Ultimately, however, another store was established to the north of the first one, and the directory indicates that for some time there were two stores in Devizes, located about a quarter of a mile apart, on the west side of the townline. It seems that yet another new store was erected at the northern site about 1899.

At one time, a pioneer shoemaker named Armstrong, had a shoe factory at Devizes that employed as many as five men. Later owners include Robert Blackwell, John Williams and Robert Young. The business was located near "Swamp College."

William Ross built and ran a sawmill, followed in turn by Robert Hobbs and John Sales. The Ross mill was eventually demolished and its materials used to build a barn. A chopping mill run by the Metters brothers must have met a similar fate.

Over the years there were many blacksmiths at Devizes. One shop is known to have been on the West Nissouri side of the townline, just north of Ebenezer Drive, and across the road from the site of the former store.

In 1878, the Devizes Cheese Factory was begun. On November 30 of that same year, a group of farmers in the northeastern part of London township met to discuss forming a co-operative. On March 10 of

the following spring, stockholders signed an agreement to form a joint stock company. The factory was located on the London township side of the townline, just north of the most northerly store. The first cheese-maker, William Brett, was paid 75 cents per 100 pounds of cheese produced. Around 1913, this cheese factory moved to a more central location, on the northeast corner of Highbury Avenue North and Concession 14 (now Fourteen Mile Road).

In 1892, the Foresters Society<sup>9</sup> of Devizes was created and had, at one time, 21 members. For a while, meetings were held in the home of Henry Baker but, in 1893, a hall was built for this fraternal society on land leased from Baker. It is not known when this hall closed. The building was still standing in 1945, but has long since disappeared.

Records indicate that some violent events took place in and around Devizes in the nineteenth century. On June 20, 1872, a woman named Phoebe Campbell was hanged for the murder of her husband, George.<sup>10</sup> In the 1870s, Josiah Bodfield, Devizes blacksmith, died from injuries he received at the hands of his companion while they were walking along the townline together. Who his companion was or whether he was punished is not reported.<sup>11</sup>

On a happier note, Devizes was known as an entertainment centre in the old days. Through the years, many musical and athletic organizations came into being. A well-known brass band existed at the village between 1865 and 1870. (The unfortunate George Campbell was one of its members.) Another brass band, active during the 1890s, performed at a variety of social events such as picnics, garden parties and fairs. A popular football team, as well as hockey and baseball teams, involved a number of the young men in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Over the years, two Devizes baseball teams managed to win silver trophies for winning the championships of their leagues. One of these occasions was in 1932 when the ball team won the silver cup for East Middlesex donated by Frank Boyes, MP. The ball diamond was to the north of the main intersection on the west side of the road.

It has been said that Devizes residents hoped the railway would be built through their community, only to be disappointed when it traversed the countryside eight miles away. However, the London Branch of the Grand Trunk did go through Thorndale, about ten miles to the southeast, when



The Devizes Brass Band in 1895. From left to right: William Metters, Isaac Needham, William Coleman (son of Ed), Charles Westman, Webster Braithwaite, Albert Langford, William Coleman (son of John), Wilf Riddell and Hedley Langford. *A. S. Garrett Collection, J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, The D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.*

it was built in the mid-1850s. The loss of the potential that could come with the railway may explain why Devizes never became larger than it was at its peak as described in the 1868–69 directory. As time went on, most of the village's industries and businesses, such as blacksmithing, milling and shoemaking, became less and less important. Other commercial enterprises, such as the cheese factory, came to realize that Devizes was, if not doomed, certainly not going to amount to anything more than what currently existed. Interestingly, Reuben Bisbee himself seems to have come to this conclusion rather early, although the failure of his brickyard (he ran out of clay) probably encouraged him to leave. In November 1873, he and his wife Mary moved to Kansas and founded another Devizes there.<sup>12</sup> All their sons, except James, moved to the States with them. Devizes, Kansas, still exists in the northwestern part of the state near the banks of Skappa Creek. Reuben and Mary Bisbee were buried in the corner of their Kansas farm—he in 1887, she in 1892.

Gradually, the village of Devizes was reduced to the size of a hamlet. Like so many others, the post office closed May 31, 1913, and the area then became R.R. 1 Thorndale.

Devizes Continuation School, for three years from 1921 to 1924, was actually London S. S. No. 26, built in 1873 on the northwest corner of the 15th Concession and Clark Road. The school was closed due to a lack of students in this age range living in the area.

In 1936, a Devizes Old Boys' Reunion was held. This gathering of all former residents of Devizes was held in July, and people from all over Canada and the United States arrived to visit their former home. At that time there were many people living who could remember the days when Devizes had two churches, two stores, a brickyard, a sawmill, a post office, a cheese factory, a blacksmith, a shoemaker and lots of houses. But by 1936, only the north store and the Foresters' Hall were left.

Today there is little to remind anyone of the village of Devizes, only a few signs remain here and there. While travelling north along the Prospect Hill Road, just before Plover Mills Road (County Road 16), one sees a short dead end with two houses on it. This is Swamp College Road, named after the school that was once just to the north. The actual site of the school was on the other side of Plover Mills Road, near the new split-level house on the London township side. Farther north is the former main intersection of the village at Ebenezer Drive. On the left is the house where the north store was located. A drive along Ebenezer Drive takes one to the newest S.S. No. 5 school, on the southeast corner of Ebenezer Drive and Valley View Road. When it closed in 1965, students went to Plover Mills Central School.

Another victim, Ebenezer Church is no longer standing, having been demolished about 1974. Three houses to the south, on the same side of the road, is the new site of Swamp College. It is at the back of a new house, and cannot be seen from the road. This "college" closed in 1960 and its pupils were bused to the new Prince Andrew Central School. By heading back to the main intersection then turning north, it is possible to see Reuben Bisbee's house, still standing and in excellent condition, on the left side of the road. By continuing north, then turning left onto Fifteen Mile Road, S. S. No. 26 London, the former Devizes Continuation School can be seen. It was used as a regular school after 1924, but closed in 1960. A jaunt west to Highbury Avenue, then turning south, will eventually bring the Devizes Cheese Factory into view.

It is still operating after 119 years. Of all the many building this is all that remains of Devizes—once one of the more active villages in north-eastern Middlesex.

### Edgewood

This hamlet was at the corner of Highway 7 (Elginfield Road) and Highbury Avenue North. At one time, a store was there, with possibly a church and an Orange Hall in the nearby vicinity. Today, a service station occupies this intersection.

### Elginfield

The first settler at the hamlet of Elginfield, located at the intersection of Richmond Street and Elginfield Road, was said to be George McConnell, whose first log home was built about 1824. For more detail on Elginfield, see the listing under Township of Biddulph.

### Ettrick



The settlement of Ettrick was on Concession 7, London (Medway Road) at County Road 20 (Hyde Park Road), just to the east of where the CNR tracks once passed through the township. Never very large, Ettrick's main function was as a railway flag stop and post office.

In 1875, the London, Huron and Bruce Railway, a branch of the Grand Trunk, later the Canadian National, passed through Ilderton, Denfield and the outskirts of Clandeboye, on its way to Goderich. The railway was opened officially on January 10, 1876. Whether there was a stop at Ettrick from earliest times or whether that came later is not known, but this was not an official stop unless requested by the waving a flag from the platform as the train was coming into view. The platform was north of Medway Road, on the west side of the tracks. A siding existed south of the road on the same side.

The post office of Ettrick opened May 1, 1877, with Alexander J. Thompson as postmaster. It appears that the name Ettrick comes from

the Borders Region of the United Kingdom. There, Ettrick is a village on Ettrick Water, where the stream flows through Ettrick Forest, a large area of moorland south of Peebles, much used for sheep grazing. But it is also possible that the post office might have taken its name from a bay named Ettrick on the west coast of Bute, Strathclyde. As well, there is a mountain called Ettrick Pen on the border of the Dumfries and Galloway and Borders regions.<sup>13</sup> The meaning of this commonly used word remains uncertain.

Alexander Thompson was postmaster for decades, until his death in 1917; many would follow. One of them, Caroline Robb, is clearly remembered by nearby resident Tom Butler for, according to him, she read everyone's mail.<sup>14</sup> Ettrick post office is unusual in that, by the time rural mail delivery had become the practice around 1914, residents along the nearby concessions still received their mail at Ettrick. The post office was always located in the house on the southeast corner of the intersection for as far back as anyone can now remember.

There were other businesses at Ettrick. Some blacksmiths and number of mills were in the area over the years. One sawmill was south of the main intersection on the east side of the road; it is marked in the 1878 *Historical Atlas of Middlesex*. Another one, belonging to the Kennedy family, was south of Medway Road, along the railroad tracks. A gristmill was in the same building. In the early years of this century, a general store sat on the northeast corner of Medway and Hyde Park roads. On the southeast corner was a brick and tile yard. Interestingly, Vernon's *Directory* for 1921 lists George Kenney, cheese manufacturer, although the nearest cheese factory, according to present and former residents, was found east of Arva.

On January 2, 1947, Ettrick post office closed at last. For many years the area was R. R. 4 Komoka, but many residents disliked this designation, feeling that Komoka was much too distant. In the early 1970s, the area became R.R. 1 Arva. Ironically, there was a time when Arva did not have a post office and received its mail from Ettrick.

When the railroad siding south of the tracks was ripped up some time in the 1970s, Mr. J. Godwin, who lives next door to the siding, went over and collected the Ettrick railway sign. For years it stood outside his home, but is now in his barn. Over time, fewer and fewer trains

went by the Medway Road crossing, and in the late twentieth century, CN removed the tracks north of Ilderton.

Today, the rail bed, belonging to London township, has been turned into a hiking and biking trail by the Township Council, enabling people to stroll and ride through the remains of Ettrick.

### Fanshawe

Although never large, Fanshawe's history has been more thoroughly recorded than most of its contemporary settlements. Initially, the hamlet developed around the corner of London township Concession 5 (Fanshawe Park Road) and the Graded Asylum Sideroad (now County Road 23 or Highbury Avenue).

Two prominent men are associated with Fanshawe: Hamilton Killaly and George Loveless. They both died in 1874—the first in Toronto, the second at Fanshawe. But their lives were very different.

Hamilton Hartley Killaly was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1800. He studied engineering at Trinity University, Dublin, and arrived in Canada in 1829. From 1834 to 1839, Killaly lived south of the intersection that eventually became known as Fanshawe. He owned 400 acres stretching from south of the Thames to north of the Fifth Concession Road, and from the sideroad west to one of the bends in the river. Near the water, he built a large frame house, known locally as Killaly Castle, which stood for about fifty years. Over time, the course of the river meandered closer to the house until the foundation was so weakened that the house collapsed. No pictures of it are known to exist, but it has been described as being constructed of hand-hewn logs placed vertically into a frame. Below the ground floor was a full cellar, a rarity in early Canada.

Killaly became influential in the colony and, in 1841, he was elected as the member for London in the first parliament of the United Provinces of Canada. As an engineer he assisted in designing the Welland Canal and was responsible for developing the road system of Canada West. His role as Commissioner of Public Works in Lord Sydenham's administration<sup>15</sup> was a critical one for the development of the settlement. In 1859, he was appointed Inspector of Railroads.

FANSHAWE  
LAF 19 M  
S4  
ONT.

Apparently, Killaly was somewhat of a character. According to the Reverend William Agar Adamson, Chaplain to Lord Sydenham, Killaly was “the most expensively and ill-dressed man on the wide continent of North America.”<sup>16</sup> Adamson also thought that “[Killaly’s] temper was quite as uncertain as the wind toward his subordinates, sometimes as familiar as a playfellow, at other times arbitrary and unreasoning.”<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, Nicholas Flood wrote in *The Irishman in Canada* that “Hamilton Killaly enjoyed a joke, made no objection to hard work or coarse diet—and altogether was not a bad companion for an expedition.”<sup>18</sup>

The other well-known personality to settle in this district was George Loveless. His was not a glamorous life; his early years were marked by hardship. Still, it might be argued that he was probably a finer man than Killaly, and was certainly just as interesting. Loveless was one of the Tolpuddle Martyrs.

The Tolpuddle Martyrs were six farm labourers who lived in Tolpuddle, Dorsetshire, in the first half of the nineteenth century. Each worked for seven shillings a week—not sufficient earnings to support themselves and their families. Claiming the right to collective bargaining, they eventually went on strike. George Loveless and his brother James were their leaders. All six were arrested, found guilty and deported to Australia in March 1834. Two years later they were pardoned as a result of British public indignation and allowed to return home. This event is regarded as a turning point in the labour laws and practices of the United Kingdom.<sup>19</sup>

When the “martyrs” returned to England, they found themselves regarded as great heroes. They were never left alone. Their homes were considered tourist attractions and large crowds arrived daily to catch a glimpse of them. Many people felt that the men should continue their work in building trade unions. But, by now, all of the publicity had sickened them and their sole wish was to be left alone.

Accordingly, in 1844, five of the six martyrs moved to Canada. George Loveless, his wife Elizabeth, and their children eventually settled along the Concession Five Road to the west of Fanshawe on Concession 4, Lot 11. There he started a garden and eventually became famous for his begonias. He held Bible classes in his home and preached



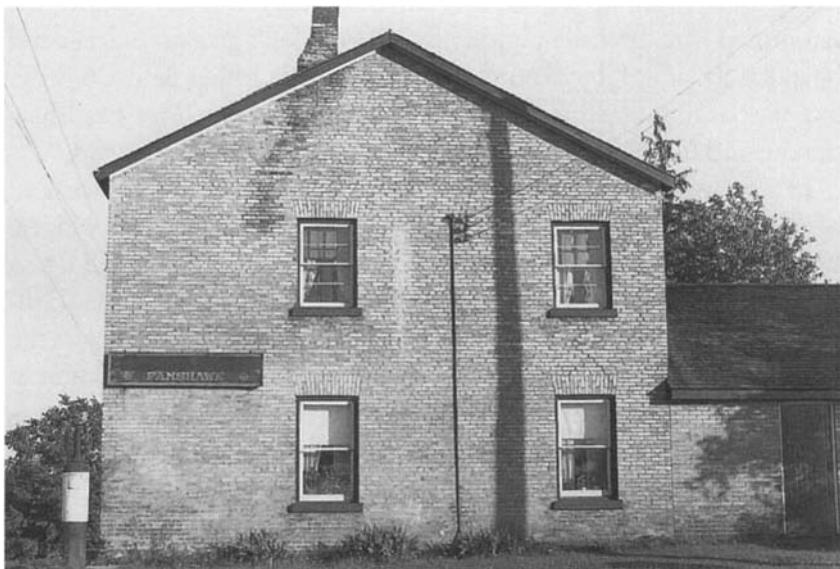
Siloam United Church as it appeared circa 1950. This building has since been torn down and a new Siloam erected further west on Fanshawe Park Road. *A. S. Garrett Collection, J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, The D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.*

in Siloam Methodist Church up to the time of his death in 1874.<sup>20</sup> Loveless was the only person willing to bury a local diphtheria victim; everyone else was too afraid they would catch the dread disease.<sup>21</sup>

He and the other martyrs made a pact not to tell anyone about their unhappy past, not even their younger children. Still, his gravestone at Siloam Cemetery gives passersby a strong hint: "These are they that have come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lord" (Revelation 7:14). Another of the martyrs, Thomas Standfield, is buried nearby. In 1934, earth from Tolpuddle, England, was scattered on their graves.<sup>22</sup> A provincial historical was erected in 1959, in front of Siloam Cemetery, to commemorate the story of the Tolpuddle Martyrs.

Siloam Methodist Church was organized when, on March 9, 1857, a lot was deeded from Joseph O'Brien to the Wesleyan Methodist Church. The first of three successive Methodist churches was then built on the northeast corner at Fanshawe. The original was built of logs, and George Loveless was one of the community volunteers helping to build a later frame one. Unfortunately, this church burned and was replaced in 1892 by an impressive brick building, complete with steeple. A parsonage had been completed in 1888. Some distance to the east of the church is the cemetery, the final resting place of at least two of the martyrs. Both George Loveless and Thomas Standfield have grave markers, but no mention is made of the others.

Another significant brick building at Fanshawe was undoubtedly the hotel, strategically located on the southwest corner in the 1860s. In those days, Fanshawe was a turning point on the road to London. Here, traffic turned west and drove along Concession Five, rather than going through the Thames River hills half a mile to the South. This hotel was a popular stopping point for teamsters when large amounts of farm



A photograph of the former hotel at Fanshawe, taken about 1950. Note the village name on the wall. *A. S. Garrett Collection, J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, The D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.*

produce were carried south along the Graded Sideroad (known colloquially as “the Grade”) and then west along Concession 5. Fanshawe was also the last important stagecoach stop before London.

While the hotel was built by John and James Wilson, for years it was run by Samuel Bradshaw, and later operated by his widow. A two-storey brick structure, it had stone foundations that went down far below the cellar. The interior was largely black walnut, with heavy hand-hewn timbers. Built at the time of the Fenian Raids in the 1860s, the hotel was jokingly considered by local residents to be strong enough for use as a fortress if necessary.<sup>23</sup> More than just an inn and tavern, it did “land-office business.” Every weekday saw large numbers gathered around; often there was not enough room at the inn for all the men or horses.

Poor Mrs. Bradshaw seems to have been the object of many practical jokes and the subject of many local stories. One local character, who happened to have a glass eye, visited the tavern quite frequently. On one occasion he went when he was unusually thirsty and his finances had ebbed completely, he walked into the bar, removed his eye before the astonished Mrs. Bradshaw and cried, “If you don’t give me a drink and be quick about it, I’ll pull out the other one!”<sup>24</sup> Another time, a boy ran into the bar shouting that the hotel sign had fallen down. Mrs. Bradshaw ran out and found her best customer lying face down on the road.<sup>25</sup>

In 1871, a school was built on the south side of Concession Five, east of the intersection, one-room brick with gingerbread trim—S. S. No. 19, London. With a church on one corner, a school on another, and a tavern on a third, a wit called O’Brien named the corners Salvation, Education, Damnation and Starvation.<sup>26</sup> Apparently, as one approached the Siloam Church, it was the custom to shout, “I’m close to salvation at last!”<sup>27</sup> The reference to Starvation is not quite understood, unless it was because there was nothing on the northwest corner at all.

On April 1, 1894, a post office, named Fanshawe, opened in the hotel with Samuel Bradshaw, now postmaster as well. In her book, *Llyndinshire*, Jenny Raycraft Lewis states that Fanshawe was a village in Ireland, the country of Hamilton Killaly’s birth.<sup>28</sup> Although he was born in Dublin, it may be that his family originally came from a village called Fanshawe. However, the 1905 postmaster stated in a survey that

the post office was not named after any person or place, and it may be that the name was simply made up for the occasion.

Other businesses supported Fanshawe over the years. William Sproule is said to have had a blacksmith shop on the southeast corner and later blacksmiths included James Birrell and Fred W. Hodgins. Birrell, also a woodworker, had his shop north of the intersection. In the early years of the twentieth century, William Tales made cement blocks, but exactly where is unknown.

Eventually, the coming of motor transportation destroyed the hotel business and the old inn reverted to a store before the First World War. It is said, however, that for ten years after the bar closed, the earlier purpose of the building could still be detected by the smell. It *reeked* of alcohol.<sup>29</sup>

Like most of the other villages and hamlets described, Fanshawe's importance lessened as the popularity of the automobile increased. The post office closed March 1, 1914, and the area became R. R. 5 London. The blacksmith shops obviously soon went out of business, although James Birrell's smithy north of the intersection was still standing as recently as 1951. The only other buildings still there at that time were the old hotel, which, by then, was a home; the church, which had become a United Church in 1925; the Loveless house, which was a frame cottage covered with stucco; and the Fanshawe School, which was used right up until 1955. That year this last building of old Fanshawe closed and became a community centre. The dilapidated inn was eventually pulled down, as was the Loveless homestead. A new Siloam United Church was built west of the intersection on the north side of the road in 1986 and the old one was sold in 1988. It has since been demolished. The school was in danger of becoming another casualty, and it was only through the efforts of former teachers, students, neighbours and the general public that the building was saved. In 1992, it was moved to Fanshawe Pioneer Village where it is now restored as a "century" one-room school and open to the public.

The Fanshawe area was once subject to the ravages of flooding by the Thames. The worst flood recorded in the history of the Thames was on April 26, 1937, when the water rose fifteen feet in a few hours.

Tremendous destruction and misery were the result. Obviously something would have to be done to prevent another such disaster, but it was not until the 1950s, however, that money could be found for such a project. A dam was built across the Thames northeast of the city in 1952 to regulate flow and act as a deterrent to any more floods. This dam created Fanshawe Lake. Immediately adjacent to the lake, Fanshawe Pioneer Village was founded in 1959, Concession 5 was renamed Fanshawe Park Road, and in 1967 Fanshawe College was opened. All were named after the former hamlet, the site of which is now part of the city. But the settlement of Fanshawe as an identifiable community had long since disappeared before the City of London annexed this section of London township.

### **Geary Corners**

This was the former name of the very early settlement at the intersection of Concession 5, London Township (now Fanshawe Park Road) and Adelaide Street. While the hamlet was named after the Geary family, settlers in the area in 1818, it is not known what businesses or buildings, if any, were established at this juncture. In the early 1960s, the area was developed as a suburb of London and eventually became known as Northdale. Geary Avenue is just to the west of the intersection.

### **Hopedale**

A post office by this name opened in London township on the south-east corner of what is now Riverside Drive and Sunninghill Avenue in London. Established July 1, 1909, under Charles H. Tinsley, it lasted barely more than three years, closing on December 12, 1912. In those days this spot was truly rural, being three miles from Byron and three and a half miles from the centre of London.

The post office was probably named after a farm named Hopedale, owned by Judge William Elliott. Today the post office is still standing, but as a private home within the city.

## Maple Grove

MAPLE GROVE  
T.M.Y. 24  
N. 81  
ONT.

First known as Maple Hill, this community was located on Concession 15 of London township. It developed around Adelaide Sideroad (now Adelaide Street North) but stretched over to County Road 17 (Highbury Avenue).

As in many other communities, one of the first buildings was a school. The first S. S. No. 3, a crude log structure, was built on the north side of the 16th Concession, between Adelaide and Highbury sometime in the 1840s. A later log school was built on the same farm lot, but a bit east of Adelaide Side Road on Concession 15. In 1870, when the subject of building a new school came up, a dispute arose as to the site. Many felt that the school was too far south, when it ideally should be in the centre of the school section. Southern ratepayers did not mind the southern location, and northern ones threatened to join S. S. No. 10 Biddulph. Finally, arbitration determined that the new school would be built a short distance to the north of the old school,<sup>30</sup> and a brick structure went up in 1872. One of the teachers in this school was John W. Eedy, who later went on to publish the *St. Marys Journal*. Considered an excellent teacher by all, his popularity attracted students from Biddulph S. S. No. 10 who just had to have him as an instructor.<sup>31</sup> On the first of January in 1877, these two school sections joined together.

The earliest church services in the area were held in the second log school, known as the "Stewart Meeting Place" as the local Stewart family were zealous Wesleyan Methodists.<sup>32</sup> By the 1860s and 1870s, services were being held in a frame Primitive Methodist Church, which later became a community hall, and ended its years downgraded to a blacksmith shop.

Possibly the site of the first real business at Maple Grove was the log blacksmith shop, located on the southeast corner of Concession 15 and Adelaide Sideroad. During the 1860s Andrew McDonald was the smithy, the shop being set on his father William's farm. Thomas Bunn succeeded him and continued in the same shop for quite some time.

Thomas Bunn is a charismatic figure in the history of Maple Grove. As blacksmith for the surrounding community, he had customers from miles around, and his shop became a popular place on rainy days. In

1872, he abandoned the tight quarters of McDonald's log building and built a frame one on the lot next door. Upstairs, George H. Thomas had a woodworking shop and, following him, a Stephen Hudson Jr. operated a shoemaking business there. A bell attached to this building was rung to mark special occasions.<sup>33</sup> In addition to being a blacksmith, Bunn also made wagons and sleighs—a very busy man!

Eventually, it was Thomas Bunn who acquired the old church and transformed it into yet another smithy and the old frame shop was moved to the back to become a stable. Some time later, when the church was torn down, the original shop is supposed to have been shifted back to its original site. In 1893, Bunn purchased a farm on Concession 14 and used the log material from the church for an addition to his farmhouse. It is said that for some time after Bunn's retirement, Leonard Lambourne, John Wilson and Thomas Edwards were blacksmiths at Maple Grove, all at the same time. Did it take three men to replace Bunn? However, only John Wilson is mentioned in directories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; the others could have been his assistants.

According to legends of the times, Bunn built a cottage west of his blacksmith shop and around it planted a grove of maple trees; this was how the community came to be known as Maple Grove.<sup>34</sup> After Bunn left, presumably for his farmhouse, this cottage became a general store. One of the storekeepers was John C. Robson, who also taught school at S. S. No. 3 in the 1890s. His successor as merchant was Joseph E. Tedford, listed in old county directories from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In the 1870s and 1880s, a Mrs. Jonathan Ashworth is said to have kept a store in her home at the northwest corner of Concession 15 and Highbury Road, with later owner/operators at this location possibly being Thomas Powers followed by Harry Wright. Over the years, other businesses operated at Maple Grove. Alexander Wilkin had a small machine shop on his farm just west of the village. There he invented one of the first potato diggers used in Western Ontario.<sup>35</sup> Samuel Hudson had a carpenter shop and is known to have framed many of the local barns. Albert Shoebottom operated another general store, along with the first post office. The community had its own resident doctor,

*Township of London*



A picturesque shot, used as a postcard, shows an idyllic scene in Maple Grove, circa 1900s. *Courtesy of Gordon McDonald.*

Dr. Arthur Drevar, from 1859 to 1874. Afterwards, it is believed that he moved to Maryland in the United States. His frame cottage, where the front room to the left was his office, still stands on the north side of Concession 15, just west of the Adelaide intersection. A wide chimney heated both the office and the large living room adjoining it. This building is still a home today.

With Joseph Lanin as postmaster, the official Maple Grove Post Office was opened on April 1, 1881. It was at this time that the community adopted the name of Maple Grove. Shortly, Thomas Bunn would temporarily take over the role of postmaster. Such a career shift raises the question of why. Possibly some serious injury, not uncommon in the life of a smithy, or maybe just the "right" opportunity presented itself to this gregarious man. Or did he maintain the two roles simultaneously? We will probably never know. This first post office, in a building located at the foot of the hill, was later moved to become part of someone's house.

The settlement of Maple Grove was probably at its height in 1888 when Polk's *Middlesex County Directory* identifies the population as 75. By then, Thomas Langford was postmaster, Mrs. Ashworth kept a general store, Thomas Bunn was still blacksmith and John Armstrong was a grain dealer. Joseph Cook was a contractor, as were John Hof-farth, Benjamin McKay and P.B. McRitchie. Robert Currie had a woollen mill, John Goode operated a hotel, Thomas J. Jenkins was another blacksmith in the area and John Rowell sold livestock.

Like other places of its size, Maple Grove ultimately became redundant. The shops folded and, when the post office closed on June 1, 1913, the address became R. R. 2 Denfield. By 1937, Bunn's frame blacksmith shop was still standing, being used as a stable, still with a faded sign on the north end. However, this shop was eventually torn down, as were most of the other early buildings.

Today Medway Creek still meanders through the intersection of Fifteen Mile Road and Adelaide Street North. Ahead on the east side of the road is S. S. No. 3. It has not been used as a schoolhouse since the small schools east of Richmond Street were replaced by Prince Andrew Central School, but is now a fine private home. Interestingly, a drive east along Fifteen Mile Road reveals a large number of homes, and it is possible that there are more people living at Maple Grove now than there were in its "heyday."

## Masonville

To mention the name Masonville today is to conjure up the huge shopping plaza of that name. Very few realize that a small village called Masonville once existed at the corner of London township Concession 5 (Highway 22 or Fanshawe Park Road) and the Proof Line (Highway 4 or Richmond Street).

Actually, this village was one of London township's earliest manufacturing centres.

However, one of the first buildings there was not a factory, but rather a school. According to some references, a log school stood on the northwest corner of the intersection by 1847; the building was bricked over in 1857. Religious services were held there, as well as a Union Sabbath



Masonville School once stood on the southwest corner of today's Fanshawe Park Road and Richmond Street. Neither this nor any other nineteenth-century structure remain to remind us of the heritage of this now-busy intersection. *London Free Press Collection, The D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.*

School, sponsored by the Church of England. A July 3, 1865, London *Free Press* article stated that Masonville had the only brick schoolhouse on the Proof Line "for upwards of 25 miles." In 1872, the school was replaced with another brick school, but this time on the southwest corner. Records show 110 children at S. S. No. 18, Masonville School—all in one room taught by one teacher.

The 1854–55 Samuel Peters' map indicates two taverns in the area—McMartin's and Rudd's. Both were south of the intersection known then as McMartin's Corners, the first on the west side, the second on the east. A later tavern, built 1858, was the Mason House, from which the community eventually took its name. Altogether, there are supposed to have been three hotels at Masonville. Farmers from northern stretches would set out on their journey to London on Friday afternoons and spend the

night at the Masonville hotels, the Proof Line being the main artery to the London markets before the London, Huron and Bruce Railway came along in 1875. At one time, 75 to 100 yoke of oxen could be seen travelling along the Proof Line.<sup>36</sup>

On December 1, 1874, the Masonville Post Office opened in Robert Mason's hotel and mail was delivered there by the London-Lucan stagecoach. In 1881, Mason sold his hotel, probably because the McMartin House, a much larger one, was right across the road. The post office remained in his hotel for many years, however, before moving to one of the others. Later postmasters included A. E. Panton, George Robson, John Orr, Crowell Swartz, Angus Mahon, Henry Lance, Hugh Young and Patrick Breen.

At least three factories opened in this vicinity. One, the Bryan Brush and Broom Factory, the only one of its kind west of Hamilton at the time, was established by Thomas Bryan south of the intersection, near the "V" formed by Richmond Street and Western Road. While its actual opening date is not known, it was probably operating when the 1875 school was built, employing 10 to 12 people at that time. Bryan also had another large factory producing cradles, scythes, fork handles and "wood turning of all kinds."<sup>37</sup> Bryan operated his machinery by using horsepower to turn a wooden wheel. When the brush factory was destroyed by fire, probably before 1880, Bryan moved to London where he founded the London Brush Company on Dundas Street.

Another productive manufacturer was John Hewings, who made boots and shoes with the help of four or five assistants. When he retired, John Bell took over but, by that time, machine-made footwear was replacing handmade ones. The business gradually declined until the factory finally closed its doors.

Directories mention Thomas Heighway, a carpenter and wagon maker, from 1890 to 1894. A few years after the brush factory burned, Heighway and Ashman built a plant for the making of woollen articles beside the Mason House. This, like the brush factory, also burned—twice. Heighway then set up a third building on the northeast corner of the Masonville intersection, where he made farm implements such as rollers, drags, wagons and even fancy gates, all production powered by horses. When Heighway died, all manufacturing ended at

Masonville. Ashman moved on to Rebecca, West Nissouri, at an early date, probably after the second fire; he first appears in a directory under Rebecca in 1887, as operator of a sawmill there.<sup>38</sup>

Other shops did business at Masonville over the years. There were dressmakers and milliners, and at least two stores. Robert Mason kept a general store in the Mason House, and Mrs. Gavin Hamilton ran another nearby. In her shop window were large glass jars which contained red and white candy sticks. The girls from Hellmuth College, founded 1869 (described in more detail in the Broughdale section in the City of London) frequently went and bought up the whole supply. James Tancock opened a blacksmith shop across from the Mason House in the 1880s. John Hewings, once retired from the shoemaking business, became a fishmonger. He lived in a little house on the east side of the Proof Line. Hewings would go by horse and wagon to Grand Bend on Lake Huron, buy a load of fresh fish and make door-to-door calls selling the fish on his return trip. His cries of "Fish ... salmon fish!" echoing throughout the village at all hours of the day would greatly amuse the children in school.<sup>39</sup> A Dr. Charles B. Rudd, veterinarian, with an office at the Mason House, treated horses at the stables as well as making farm calls. Eventually Rudd moved to London.

At the "V" where Richmond Street and Western Road meet was a toll gate; the tollkeeper's house stood on the west side of the road. In the early twentieth century, as many as four stagecoaches, two from Exeter and two from Lucan, made the trip to London and back each day. Over time, however, horses were replaced by motorized vehicles, and in 1912, buses were introduced. J. C. "Cap" Howard drove a very early bus on a route from Lucan to London. His vehicle sounds picturesque with its tin roof, roll-down side curtains and leather-covered seats—and the rubber tires—a most comfortable vehicle for that time, especially following the bone-jarring stagecoaches!

Like everywhere else, the impact of these motor vehicles was faster and easier transportation. Hardly anyone paced their journey with a stop at Masonville anymore; they just went straight on to London and, as a result, Masonville declined like every other vanished village in Middlesex. Once the post office closed on March 31, 1914, mail was delivered from London.

In the late 1920s and early '30s, the Masonville intersection started to gain a very negative reputation—leading to its being labelled Calamity Corners. A bizarre story is said to account for this. A well-to-do farmer ordered a local blacksmith to construct a wrought-iron garden chair for his ailing wife, a present for her birthday. The day before her birthday, as he was heading home with the chair in his buggy, a bolt of lightning struck the chair and the farmer was killed. The blacksmith, in sympathy, built another chair, but died of a heart attack just as he finished. Even the farmer's wife died before the chair could be delivered.<sup>40</sup>

If these happenings are true, they certainly do represent a series of calamities, but probably do not account for the nickname. The name Calamity Corners is more likely to have come about because of some disastrous car accidents at the corner in the early years of motor travel. Several of these involved American tourists heading east on Fanshawe Park Road, as well as Canadian vacationers heading north on Richmond Street. A number of deaths did occur. A September 28, 1935, article in the London *Free Press* calls Calamity Corners "the deadliest spot in Western Ontario." The article states that problems arose because motorists often would not make a full stop, but also because visibility was considered to be a problem.<sup>41</sup> Fortunately, in 1959, the roads were widened and resurfaced, trees were removed and new turning lanes were added. The resulting improved view is believed to have reduced the number of accidents.

In 1947, the schoolhouse of 1872 was replaced with a new two-room building. The old school was dismantled the following year and sold for \$700; its bell went to a church in Hyde Park.<sup>42</sup> Over the years, more rooms were added, for a total of five. The 100th anniversary of the Masonville School section was celebrated in 1957 and, in January three years later, a \$60,000 four-room addition was opened.

In the late 1950s, Masonville was much quieter than it had been a hundred years earlier. Cars whizzed by but seldom stopped. The north side of the road was a vacant area. The southwest corner had a service station on it, beside the school. On the southeast corner was a restaurant, and to the south were several homes. Where the factories and stores had been were only fields. The village was no more.

This was about to change. London was growing quickly in all directions, including north. For some time, residents of London had been attracted by the beauty of the hills in the Masonville area. Wealthy families like the Iveys and Labatts had built houses in the district and the spectacular homes along Richmond Street north of Windermere were most appealing. These people enjoyed the convenience of being close to the city while enjoying a country environment, and lower taxes. But all was about to change; the former village was on the brink of being developed as a modern suburb of London. Over the next few decades, the number of homes and shops mushroomed in the area and, by 1961, Masonville was annexed by the city.

Today Masonville is one of London's wealthiest suburbs. The large Masonville Plaza, built on the southeast corner in 1985, services the large numbers of people living in the area. The Masonville intersection is now very *very* busy and new condominiums and plazas are being built on the north side of Fanshawe Park Road. There is literally nothing to remind us of the quieter Masonville of yesteryear.

### Muir

This post office was located in a store on the southeast corner of Hamilton Road and Adelaide Street in east London. It opened in 1874 with William Mills as postmaster and closed October 31, 1878. Hamilton Road Methodist Church once stood on the southwest corner. It is not known if there were any other buildings. Accurate information is difficult to find as there is some confusion with the Muir Post Office of Oxford County.

### Salmonville

Located on the corner of the London/West Nissouri Townline (Prospect Hill Road) and London Concession 10 (Ten Mile Road), on the east side of the townline, the Salmonville post office opened on August 1, 1907, the first postmaster being W. H. Salmon, followed by Levi Salmon. Mail was delivered here by cart from Thorndale; St. Ives in West Nissouri and Devizes were on the same delivery route. On February 1, 1914, the office closed.

SALMONVILLE  
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## Silverwood

The village called Silverwood was in London township on the gentle “S” curve at Highway 4 and Concession 12 (Richmond Street and Twelve Mile Road). During the 1840s and ’50s Silverwood was prosperous, but, like many villages on the Proof Line, it could not compete with its larger neighbours.

In 1818, Charles and Ann Goulding, Irish emigrants, arrived at the site of the future village and took up 150 acres near Medway Creek. Their tract of land, at the time, was the northernmost point of settlement. Here he built a log house and a small shop to house his forge. Goulding was not a blacksmith, but a whitesmith or steel-worker. He proceeded to make hunting traps, plowshares, along with cart and wagon wheels, all very useful for a pioneer settlement.

Other settlers also stopped at this location and, for a while, Silverwood, named after a stand of silver poplars growing nearby, extended over a large area around the intersection. There was a tailor, shoemaker, blacksmith and weaver, a gristmill powered by the Medway, a temperance hall and, to the probable disgust of the temperance people, three distilleries. In the early days, grain was often exchanged for whiskey at the mill, money being a very scarce commodity.<sup>43</sup> The shoemaker was a John Rowell and the tailor was a Mr. Stanfield.

There were three hotels at Silverwood—the Nighthawk, the White Pigeon and the Bluejay, the first two on the west side of the Proof Line, the other on the northeast corner. Often settlers would gather for dances at the hotels where a local fiddler would play for them. Hunters would provide “game” for the event and fowl birds would be cooked on huge spits in the fireplace.<sup>44</sup>

No doubt there was plenty of game to be found in those days. Goulding himself was a noted bear hunter. Once, when a local minister ran into the Bluejay and reported the sighting of a bear right on his path near the 11th Concession, a group of hunters were brought together, including Goulding. The bear was followed for seven miles to the Thames River before it was finally “treed.” Goulding simply fired one shot and the bear plummetted to the ground with a resounding crash—but not before many of the other “hunters” had climbed trees themselves.<sup>45</sup>

In the 1840s and '50s, a man named Anthony Hughes tried to develop a place he called "Hughesville," on the west side of Richmond Street at Silverwood.<sup>46</sup> He had the front of his farm surveyed into village lots to encourage settlers. But, for some reason, lots on the east side of the road seemed to be more popular. The two hotels on the west side of the road were on his property and, for many years, there was competition between his "birds" and the Bluejay on the east. Word has it that the Bluejay, however, emerged as the most popular.

In time, Silverwood as a settlement began to fail. It may seem strange to us now that almost every intersection on Richmond Street had a village or hamlet developing around it. Why the need for so many villages? The fact is that, in pioneering times, there was such a need. Roads were very bad, often dangerous, and it was impossible to go any great distance very quickly. Small centres providing services were much needed. Hotels stood at almost every intersection on Richmond Street in early pioneer times as it was the main road north to the new lands just being opened. The large number of settlers heading in that direction in search of opportunities to build a new life, needed lots of places to acquire a meal and rest for the night.

In time, however, as lands became settled, there were fewer people moving north along Richmond Street, reducing the need for hotels. Eventually, as roads were improved, it became possible to travel further for groceries or to buy farm equipment. Villages had to adjust and to try to present some attraction not available elsewhere. Unfortunately for Silverwood, the village of Birr, only one intersection to the north at Thirteen Mile Road, had two such attractions which Silverwood did not. These were a general store and a post office.

Eventually, all the land on which Silverwood was located became farmland once again. The Bluejay lingered for some time after the other hotels disappeared, until about 1900 when swifter travel and better roads led to the ultimate downfall of the business. Its last owner was Sam Berryhill. Charles Goulding's farm remained in the family until 1938. As late as 1967 there were still silver poplars on the northeast corner, outlining the site of the Bluejay Inn, the only historic building

remaining, standing near one modern house at the corner. Cars whiz north to Birr and south towards Arva without their drivers even imagining they're driving through the former village of Silverwood.

### **Southgate**

This little community developed around the former Cameron Sideroad (now Wonderland Road North) and Concession 14 of London township (now Fourteen Mile Road). While never large, the few important services here have been documented quite intensively.

The first settlers in this area were the O'Neil family of Tipperary, Ireland. William arrived in 1818 and his father Henry the following year, along with nine other family members. According to one story, William picked out land for the family on the 14th Concession. According to another story, Henry O'Neil bought his own land from Thomas Talbot; it may be that William "picked" it, but seemingly it was up to Henry to secure the lot. According to the story, when Henry O'Neil went to buy land from Colonel Talbot, the Colonel yelled through his wicket "What's your name and what do you want?" O'Neil yelled back "O'Neil from Tipperary and land!" The Colonel was deaf and only caught "Neil and Tipperary!" He then berated O'Neil for leaving the "O" off his name as many Irishmen did in those times. "Never yet heard of an Irishman by the name of Neil—and I won't have an Irishman by that name on my land either!" O'Neil quickly assured Talbot that his name did start with an "O" and proceeded to purchase 1,100 acres from him.<sup>47</sup> Some members of the family, however, did drop the "O" from their name at a later date.

In the early days of this community, a piece of land from "Hollow Bob O'Neil's" farm was set aside for use as a cemetery, on northwest corner of the intersection. The earliest grave was that of the previously mentioned William O'Neil, killed by a falling tree on February 9, 1833, just 37 years of age. Another early tragedy was that of George Hodgins who in an accident near the corner of the Proof Line (Richmond Street) and Western Road on January 5, 1835. Apparently a pin fell out of the tongue of his wagon.<sup>48</sup>

In 1847, a school built in the area, officially identified as S. S. No. 2, became known locally as O'Neil's School. This log building was north of the intersection of Concession 15 (Fifteen Mile Road) and the sideroad, on the east side of the road. Desks in this early school were made of slanting boards, fastened to the walls on three sides of the room. Not surprisingly, on the early school rolls, most of the students were O'Neils.

A decision to build a new school, in 1871, led to a new brick building, in 1872, on Henry O'Neil's farm to the south of the old site, but on the west side of the road. Ralph O'Neil acquired the old building for fourteen dollars. By this time, there were about 100 pupils, but many of them were older boys who only attended in winter; the rest of the year they were needed on the farm. In 1947, when the 75th anniversary of the school was celebrated, teacher Jean McIntyre and her pupils planted four spruce trees on the school grounds.

In the 1860s, an Orange Lodge, built of brick, sat on the northeast corner lot at the 14th Concession; the local Foresters Lodge also held meetings there. The Lodge itself, with about 50 members at its peak, hosted social functions, including the annual "Fifth of November Supper" to celebrate Guy Fawkes Day. On the twelfth of July every year, Lodge members and their families participated in the "Orange Walk" held in some nearby larger centre. In 1906, their building was moved to the southwest corner of the intersection.

In 1863, John R. Hodgins established a blacksmith shop on the southwest corner. He had learned his trade at Johnson's shop in Clandebaye at 16 years of age. During his apprenticeship he would stay at Johnson's for six days, then walk home the six miles to visit his family on Saturday nights. After establishing his own business, Hodgins had three assistants with three hearths in operation. New shoes for horses cost 25 cents each in the 1860s, and shoes were replaced for 10 cents.<sup>49</sup> Hodgins worked his smithy for ten years and, in 1873, sold to John Stewart of Plover Mills. Two years later it was sold to a Mr. Mitchell, and after 1880 the blacksmith business dwindled considerably. By that time larger villages like Ilderton, with more stores and mills, were attracting much business and the local blacksmith trade faded away.

Both a cheese factory and a sawmill were at this intersection at some time, but apparently neither lasted long. The cheese factory was built

on the Shoebottom farm, just east of the corner and was operated by "Black John Shoebottom." Another Shoebottom, George, built the sawmill, its power coming from the water of nearby Springer's Creek.

It was not until July 1, 1894, that the post office opened. Since the corner had been called "Springhill" because of a spring on Hollow Bob O'Neil's farm, the name had to be changed. "Springhill" Post Office already existed somewhere in Ontario. Out of the several possible names suggested, Southgate was the one chosen. The name probably came from "the old country" as there are many Southgates in England and in Wales.

The first postmaster was W. C. Hodgins, but it was Henry O'Neil, however, who collected the mail from Birr on Tuesday and Saturday mornings, for several years. Later, the mail would arrive three times a week. The post office was in a small room off the kitchen in the Hodgins home on the northeast corner of the intersection. Children often dropped off letters at this office as they made their way north to Southgate School.

Southgate used to hold an annual sports events on Victoria Day. Horse racing was very popular, particularly Ralph Deacon's whiskey booth that awaited contestants as they finished their race. Crowds would also arrive to see the "Calithumpian Parade,"<sup>50</sup> a popular small-town event in Ontario at the turn of the century. While the word is an American import which seems to mean any discordant or boisterous



The sign on Southgate Cemetery commemorates the name of the former hamlet.

assembly, in Ontario it usually meant a parade. At Southgate there were clowns and actors doing stunts on wagons or on the ground. All these events were finally came to an end when disputes arose around some of the race results became too problematic.

In 1924, all those interested in improving the cemetery grounds were invited to a meeting. The Honourable Ray Lawson, former Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario and great-grandson of the unfortunate George Hodgins, offered to donate a fence and gate if the people of the community would level the grounds and re-set the markers. The community responded. Old stones were arranged in neat rows and broken ones repaired. Lawson donated the fence which now bears his name.<sup>51</sup>

Gradually the community of Southgate became more and more quiet. The post office closed July 1, 1913, and by 1949 the Orange Lodge was no longer used except for a few social evenings. In 1953, the building was sold and later became a home, but not before May 21. On that date, a tornado completely destroyed the Southgate School. Only a few books and the piano were salvaged. In order to complete the school year, classes were held in the Orange Lodge. A new prefabricated school was built on the same site in time for classes to begin in September. This school closed in 1960 when Oxbow Central School was built in Ilderton.

Today Southgate is a quiet intersection. The cemetery is on the northwest corner. The Orange Lodge sits on the southwest corner; it is the building with the green roof but only the brick part is original. North of the intersection on the east side of the road is the old post office once owned by the Hodgins family; the part at the back was the post office. Still farther north on the left is the 1953 Southgate School. A second storey has been added, as well as a basement, all part of its becoming a private home.

### Telfer

Located on the ninth concession of London Township (Nine Mile Road) where it meets the Denfield Sideroad (County Road 22 or Denfield Road), Telfer was never large, but did offer a few essential services required by the early settlers.



In 1819, a family named Telfer left their home in Northumberland, near the Scottish border, and set sail for Canada. All would settle in Middlesex County on Concession 9 of London township, Thomas on the west corner of the intersection, and his brother Adam just to the west of him. Their sister Margaret and her husband Thomas Batie took up homesteading on the north side of the road just to the east of the intersection, while their sister Isobel and her husband Thomas White were still farther east, but on the south side of the road. Originally this area was known as the "English settlement," but it is easy to see why the name "Telfer" took over.

Not many years after their arrival, the area settlers built a combination school and Presbyterian Church on the south half of Thomas Telfer's property, just west of the intersection. Within this log building, only 22 feet by 30 feet, a man named William Dorman (Donnan or Dorran depending which record one reads) was the first teacher and the minister as well. As this was one of the first schools in London township, some children attended from as far away as three or four miles. In August of 1830, the church congregation was organized and, in June 1833, the Reverend William Proudfoot became minister.

In time, there were arm-sized holes in the walls where the clay between the logs had fallen out, and it is said that snakes often peeked up at the children from between the floor boards.<sup>52</sup> By 1837, the settlers had decided on a better church; hence on September 6, a frame building measuring 30' by 40' opened on the other side of the intersection, beside the cemetery. It is assumed that this building was also used as a school, since a new brick school did not appear until 1852. A larger church, built in 1859 on the Lobo side of the townline at Ilderton Road, became known as Vanneck Presbyterian Church. Still standing today, it is described in the section on Vanneck in Township of Lobo. The frame church continued to be used; however, it is long since gone.

Eventually, the brick school of 1852 burned. Its replacement is shown in the 1862 *Tremaine Map of Middlesex County* on the west corner of the intersection on land belonging to Thomas Telfer. A new frame one-room school, built on the same site in 1870, was called S. S. No. 7 or Telfer School.



Telfer Cemetery today. The two large grave markers are memorials to the pioneering Telfer family, emigrants from Northumberland.

It was the first day of September in 1857 when Telfer Post Office opened on the west corner, near the school, with Adam Telfer as postmaster. He was later followed by John Telfer, Henry Scott and W. O. Telfer. Mail arrived twice a week, brought from Ilderton by William Charlton. Adam Telfer also ran a store, as may be seen in an advertisement found in *Anderson's 1868-69 County Directory*.

A few other shops did business at Telfer over the years. *Cameron's 1864-65 County Directory* refers to Telfer as "a small post village" and lists Samuel Lumsden and John McQueen, both shoemakers, as well as postmaster Adam Telfer and the Reverend John B. Wilson. But, by the end of the decade there was only one shoemaker, Joshua Nichol; then he too left. Directories in the late nineteenth century list a William Calvert as an "agent."

Gradually Telfer changed. The frame church is said to have been bought by a Doctor Ross and moved to Hyde Park to be used as a community hall.<sup>53</sup> The post office closed on July 1, 1913, and the area became R. R. 1 Ilderton. In September of 1960, Oxbow Central School opened and replaced all small schools west of Highway 4. Telfer School, now

closed, was sold by auction for \$1,750, to a London resident, its ultimate fate to become a home. In 1994, a booklet was put together for the Telfer School Reunion, tracing the history of the school and the hamlet.

There are still a few Telfers in this area today. Telfer School still stands on the west corner of the intersection as a private residence. Telfer Cemetery, where the pioneer Telfers are buried, on the northeast corner of the intersection, bears testament to those who created this pioneer community.

### The Gore

A hamlet called The Gore consisting of a church, a school, a post office and possibly a few homes, was centred around Side Road 5 (Clarke Side Road) and London Concession B (Gore Road), south of the CNR tracks.

In 1865, once a Methodist congregation was established, a church was erected on land secured from T. S. Webb, west of the main intersection on the south side of the road. Originally, this place of worship was part of the Nilestown Methodist circuit but later became part of Hale Street Methodist charge.<sup>54</sup> Eventually the congregation decided to join the Church Union and become part of the United Church of Canada.

Peter Ackland was postmaster at the first post office, opened on the first of July, 1886. Located on the northeast corner of Gore Road and Clark Side Road, the office was probably named after the gore, or triangular piece of property, still visible on modern maps of London just to the south of the intersection. It is surrounded by Gore, Clarke Side and Hamilton roads.

School Section No. 22 consisted of two schools: Gore School on Gore Road and Fairmont School on Hamilton Road. Although Gore School is gone, Fairmont still stands at 1040 Hamilton Road and is now a school under the jurisdiction of the Thames Valley District School Board.

Once the post office closed in February 1913, the area became R. R. 1 London; however, the church and school remained in use for many years. Although the church closed in 1959, the Sunday School continued at least into the 1960s and annual memorial services were held at Gore Cemetery beginning about 1967. On January 1, 1961, The Gore was annexed into the City of London.

Today The Gore is still marked on a map of the City of London. The old buildings are gone and new houses have been built throughout the area. The old church has been replaced by the modern Bethel Christian Reformed Church. There is not even any trace of the cemetery. It is assumed that the interred bodies were moved, but to date no information has been forthcoming.<sup>55</sup>

### The Grove

A tiny community called The Grove, not to be confused with The Gore, was centred around the corner of Concession 3, London township (now Huron Street) and Sideroad 5 (Clarke Side Road). Originally settled by Americans of Irish descent from New York State, the hamlet included the Percivals, one of the earliest families to arrive. In 1826, Joseph Percival donated land on Concession 3 to be used as a cemetery, on the condition that a log church and school would be built right there or nearby. That same year, the first burial took place. This site became the Webster, later Grove, Cemetery. The Reverend George Savage, first minister attached to this early Methodist mission, was a circuit rider who came on horseback once a month. He was paid by a free-will offering. The first schoolmaster, John Colborne, was paid in fruit, vegetables and meat.

Years later another church and school were built one-and-a-half miles to the east at Concession 3 and Sideroad 5. Later known as The Grove Church, the congregation of this Methodist church organized themselves in 1862 and in March of that year John and Elizabeth Tackabury sold the southwest corner of their property for 1 shilling. The Grove Church was erected that fall. At some unknown point, John Tackabury donated 1/4 acre of land north of the Grove Church so that a school might be built—the white brick Grove School or S. S. No. 27.

During those arduous days of settlement, a singing school was organized at The Grove, largely by the Tackabury family. In fact, John Tackabury and his daughters assisted with musical services and programs in various places in Western Ontario. For decades, he and members of his family sang in The Grove Church Choir.



By the 1880s, the church was too cramped and a replacement Grove Methodist Church was built on the same site in 1883, by William Wakeling for \$4,000. This new larger church could now accommodate the growing congregation.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, some women from this district would walk four miles to the city of London for the day, and walk home again at night. Some worked there, where they could earn 25 cents a day in a tailor's or some other kind of shop. Older women marketed butter and eggs in the city. Apples from local orchards would be taken to London markets and stores. Wood, hay and grain were also hauled to the city in the 1860s. Obviously, it was a benefit to be farming so close to town. Young people went into the city for higher education or to attend concerts or generally for entertainment.

On July 1, 1880, a post office called The Grove was established a little east of this intersection, the first postmaster being Thomas A. Robinson. Once The Grove acquired its own post office, county directories began to list The Grove as a community, usually claiming the population over the years to be about 40.

For many years, The Grove was associated with a railroad stop, Fairfield Station, east of the intersection on the Grand Trunk, now the Canadian National. The station would have been about where Huron Street meets County Road 10 or Robin's Hill Road. A very early railroad stop, it is not known when it was removed.

Although The Grove Post Office closed October 1, 1912, and the area became R.R. 8 London, the church and school continued to function in the community. With Union in 1925, the church became The Grove United Church. About the same time, a new one-room red brick school replaced the old, badly neglected schoolhouse. Two years later The Grove Cemetery was restored by volunteers, and decoration services were held that year, and for many years afterwards.

The city started to encroach on this intersection in the mid-twentieth century and, in 1960, the old Grove School had a farewell reunion. On January 1, 1967, the area was annexed by the city and the school section became administered by the London Board of Education. Students in the area were then required to attend Huron Heights School at 1245 Michael Street, southwest of the Grove Cemetery.

Grove United Church celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1962. In 1964, this church closed and amalgamated with the then new Emmanuel United Church in the Huron Heights area. The local congregation built a new church, Gethsemene United, which stands on the south side of Huron Street between The Grove Cemetery and the Clarke Road intersection. In 1965, the former Grove Church and School were sold to Philathea College, a nondenominational theology school. The church became Philathea College Chapel, with the school providing the college residence. In the 1970s, the buildings were torn down after Philathea abandoned the site.

Today The Grove is on the very edge of the city, the area to the west of Clarke Road being full of new houses and townhomes while the area to the east still looks rural. A modern building stands on the site of the former Grove United Church. Farther to the west, on the other side of Sandford Street, The Grove Cemetery still exists on the south side of the road. Within the northwest corner of the cemetery, a gravestone marks the remains of John and Elizabeth Tackabury.

### **Truthville**

This tiniest of hamlets, located at Concession 13 London (13 Mile Road) and the Denfield Sideroad, is said to have had at least seven houses at one time, with over 20 residents. Legend has it that the name could be attributed to the tall tales told around the stove in the little store. A school once stood on the southwest corner, and within the settlement were a blacksmith shop run by Tweddle and son, a store, a hotel and a shoemaker named Parker.

In 1876, Truthville was bypassed by the London, Huron and Bruce Railway. It simply faded away, and other villages located along the tracks, such as Denfield to the north, grew in size. Truthville simply disappeared.

### **Union Hill**

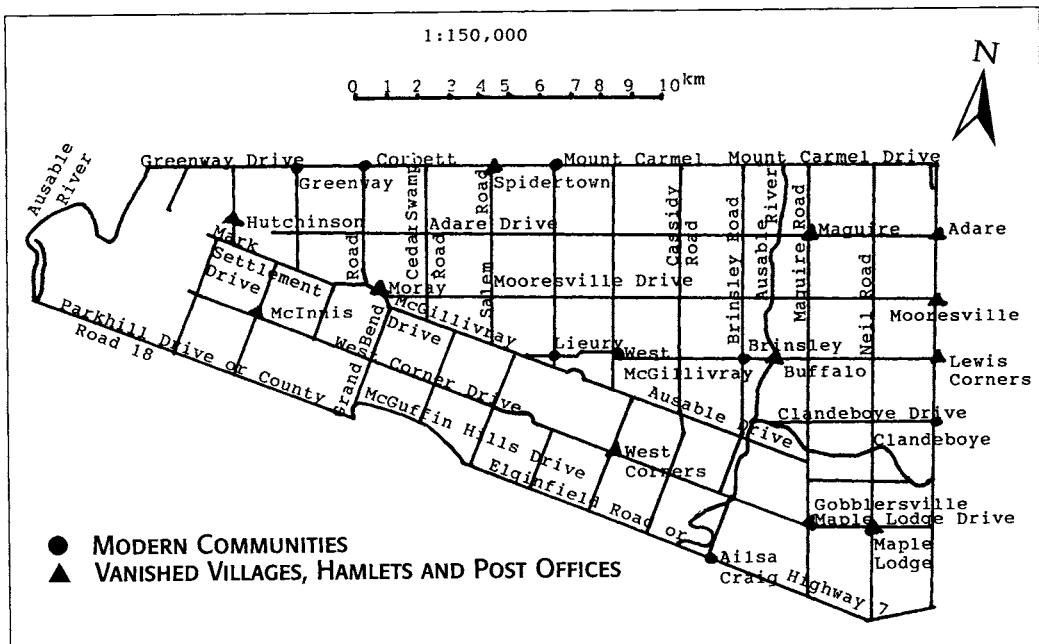
At the intersection of the London/West Nissouri Townline (Prospect Hill Road), where it meets Concession 9, London township (Nine Mile Road), a post office by this name opened under John McGuffin on September

1, 1870. It closed nine years later. A Union School, School Sections 4 and 5, which existed at this spot, may be the reason for the name. The school, closed in 1967, is now a well-maintained home on the southwest corner.

### **Vanneck**

This village, with its log church and schoolhouse both functioning in 1825, developed along the London/Lobo Townline. For more information, see the listing under the Township of Lobo.

## IX. TOWNSHIP OF MCGILLIVRAY



## Adare

Adare was once one of the most important communities in northern Middlesex. The first building at its intersection was a tavern, as early as 1833. For more information see the listing under the Township of Biddulph.

## Buffalo

All that remains of Buffalo, and it is not much, lies where County Road 24 (McGillivray Drive) passes over the Ausable River just east of Brinsley. Early directories tend to lump these two communities together under the heading of Brinsley, making it difficult to determine which businesses were in which place. At one time these two communities were rivals. Brinsley had a general store, post office, school and two churches, while Buffalo had a blacksmith shop, two mills and two hotels. In the end, Buffalo probably could not compete with Brinsley and, while the hamlet of Brinsley still exists, only one derelict building remains at Buffalo.

No buffalo ever lived in this part of the country. The name Buffalo is a corruption of the French *boeuf a l'eau* or “cattle to water.”<sup>1</sup> Possibly an early settler of French origin must have named the spot.

In the earliest of pioneer times, rivers were more important as a means of transportation, than roads. Since boats moved settlers and goods along the Ausable, this was probably the route bringing the first settlers to Buffalo. It was not until much later that roads were surveyed, and much later still before road travel was fast or comfortable.

In March 1855, the minutes of McGillivray township meetings show that tenders were called for the construction of a bridge over the Ausable (or *aux Sables* as it was spelled in those days) near Slack's Mill on the “cut out road.” A demand<sup>2</sup> was sent to George Slack to build a bridge over his millrace next to the east riverbank. Early bridges at this spot known as “Slack's Bridge,” were to be maintained by Slack himself. The most memorable was the one with the high wooden sides. The sensation created when crossing was described as being rather like driving down an narrow alley. The sounds of horses' feet and buggy wheels on the



This old ruin stood behind the trees on the south side of the road at Buffalo until 2001. Local people say it was once a hotel.

planks echoed off the sides and the noise was so loud that it was impossible to talk. Children liked it but the sound often spooked horses and cattle. Once a steam traction engine broke through the floor and hung partially suspended until it was raised by placing cribbing in the river below.<sup>3</sup> This bridge was replaced in the twentieth century, first by a steel bridge, then by the concrete one found there today.

Abraham Brewer, a blacksmith who set up a log smithy on the riverbank in 1834, was the first to settle at Buffalo. He may even have been the first blacksmith in the township. Over the years, this log smithy was changed, enlarged or made smaller as required by the times. Brewer was still listed the blacksmith in Buffalo in the late 1860s, but several others were also there over the years. In 1895, William Weir bought Brewer's blacksmith shop. Himself a smithy of distinction, Weir won many prizes for his horseshoes, and today his prize ribbons are on display at Fanshawe Pioneer Village. His shop and house were on the north side of the road, east of the river. By the 1950s, the blacksmith shop was gone, demolished when the road was straightened and widened.

George Slack, the builder of bridges, also had a gristmill, south of the road and east of the river, run by water power from his nearby dam which is said to have flooded the road on many occasions. Since the mill was some distance from the road, a laneway led to both it and the Slack house. Slack also owned a steam sawmill, moved there from Ilderton and located just to the east of the other mill but a little closer to the road. The Slacks continued to run the mill business well into the twentieth century, and the property is still owned by descendants of the family.

Local folklore says there were two hotels at Buffalo.<sup>4</sup> One of them was probably the old ruin once visible on the south side of the road, east of the river. The other may have been on the north side of the road, west of the river. There is some confusion as to the identity of the owners of these hotels. Possibly, Edward Morgan ran the Buffalo Hotel on Lot 16, Concession 9, likely the ruin that could be seen up until 2002. But it is also suggested that he may have operated the Brinsley Hotel, once on Brinsley's northeast corner. Did Morgan own two hotels? Or did he move from one site to another?<sup>5</sup> Other hotel owners at Buffalo are known to be Leonard Shouldice and John Hodgins. Shouldice's hotel was the popular gathering place for the neighbourhood, as well as providing accommodation for large numbers of prospective settlers and teamsters.

It is practically impossible to determine the population of Buffalo. Nineteenth century estimates of the population of the village seem to hover at about 100, but it is a reasonable assumption that this number included the population of nearby Brinsley.

Through the years, Buffalo could claim a few productive ventures. Abbott Shouldice ran a cabinet, casket and wagon shop in the nineteenth century, William Weir made carriages in his blacksmith shop and, during the last century, Roy Schenk kept a portable sawmill on the north side of the road near the blacksmith shop.

Why did Buffalo fail as a community centre? As noted, it probably it could not compete with Brinsley. Remember, Brinsley consisted of a store, churches and a school, all of which remained useful and important long into the twentieth century, while Buffalo consisted of pioneer mills, small rural hotels and a blacksmith shop—all institutions which soon became outmoded. Simply put, Buffalo became obsolete.

### *Township of McGillivray*

Today, Lois Brewer (no relation to the earlier Abraham Brewer) runs Buffalo Antiques on the site of the old blacksmith shop. The smithy was close to the road, where her front garden grows. The old millrace can be seen on the east side of the river, on both sides of the bridge. A few foundations, to be found in the woods on the south side of the road, are all that remains of the Slack mills. The final traces of the old hotel were demolished in 2002, thus removing the last visible trace of Buffalo.

### **Gobblersville**

For some unknown reason, the intersection of Concessions 4 and 7 in McGillivray township (Maple Lodge Drive and Maguire Road) was known as Gobblersville. Could it be that many people at the corner raised turkeys there and the spot was therefore named after the gobbler or male turkey?—as has been suggested.<sup>6</sup> The Grand Trunk or CNR passed right through this intersection, at one time as many as seven or eight trains a day.

Andy Lusk is remembered as sectionman;<sup>7</sup> his little house once stood on the east side of Maguire Road, but no more. Even the CN tracks were ripped up about fifteen years ago. A baseball diamond once stood at the southeast corner of Concession 4; local teams would play other county teams, such as Clandeboye, Maple Lodge and West Corners. There are still a few farms in this area today, but no longer any sign of the tracks—or the turkeys!

### **Hutchinson**

This tiny hamlet with a post office sat in the northwest corner of McGillivray, on what is now Hutchinson Road. The office opened in the home of one James Rock in 1896 and remained there until 1910 when he died, then it was moved to the home of Robert and Sarah Hutchinson on the east side of the road. In 1913, the name changed to Willis West, but was barely recognized as the office closed later that year. The original Hutchinson house is no longer standing and nothing remains to mark this spot today.

HUTCHINSON  
I.O.C. 1907  
ONT

## Lewis Corners

Named after William and Jane Lewis of Tipperary, Ireland, this intersection of Richmond Street and McGillivray Drive was known as Lewis Corners. For more information, see the listing under Township of Biddulph.

## Maguire

The little hamlet called Maguire, located two intersections west of Adare where McGillivray Road 5 (Adare Drive) meets Concession 4-9 (Maguire Road), was named after William Maguire, a cobbler who emigrated from Enniskillen, Ireland, with his wife Elizabeth. They settled on land south of and including the Maguire intersection and raised a large family at the spot.

Alexander Todd was appointed postmaster for the opening of the post office in April 1882. He would walk or drive about two miles east, along Road 5, to the designated spot by the London, Huron and Bruce Railway where mail would be tossed out from the train. The bag of outgoing mail would be hung on a steel arm by the track; a trainman would slip his arm through the loop and grab the bag as the train went by slowly.<sup>8</sup>

In 1884, this same Todd opened a store on the southeast corner of the intersection. Groceries were kept on one side, while dry goods, hardware, nails and wire were displayed on the other. Vinegar, coal oil, salt and fish were stored in barrels at the back of his general emporium. Todd's house, immediately to the south, was connected to the store by a hallway.

Another nineteenth century enterprise at Maguire was John Ryan's blacksmith shop. Although the exact location has not been determined, it is known to have existed during the 1880s. It has also been said that a log house or hotel once stood on the northeast corner.<sup>9</sup>

Todd's store operated until 1912 when he sold it to John Strange, who also ran a sawmill and possibly a gristmill or a chopping mill. One mill may have been behind the store. Strange's son, incidentally, was Cyril (Cy) Strange, who had a successful singing and broadcasting career. He is best remembered as an announcer on CBC's *Fresh Air* program heard on Saturday and Sunday mornings and is still on the air. Cy Strange was

MACUIRE  
JU 25  
8?  
ONT.

also a narrator for CBC television show, *The Nature of Things* and announcer for the much-celebrated radio personality, Kate Aiken.<sup>10</sup>

On December 1, 1913, Maguire post office closed and the area became R.R. 2 Ailsa Craig. When the general store shut its doors in 1920, it became a chopping mill until torn down in 1944. Its material was recycled and used to build an implement shed elsewhere.

In the 1940s and '50s, John Hotson had a blacksmith shop and machinery repair shop on the west side of the road, just across from the store. He lived in the little house to the south of the store, formerly the residence of Alexander Todd. In the early 1950s, Hotson's shop burned but was rebuilt. A portable sawmill, next to this machine shop, was powered, in 1952, by one of the last remaining steam traction engines in the county.

Today, a small plaque, erected on the site of the store's steps by descendants of the Maguire family, marks the site of Maguire store and post office. The home of Alexander Todd, later home to John Hotson, still stands to the south. The building across the road is not Hotson's shop, but a former drive shed from a church at Crediton, moved to this site and now used as a barn. Farther south, at Ebenezer Cemetery, Maguire's first settlers, including William and Elizabeth Maguire and Alexander Todd, are at rest.



A memorial to the Maguire hamlet, donated by descendants of the founding Maguire family stands on the southeast corner of the intersection, by the site of the former store.

## Maple Lodge

The corner of McGillivray Concession 2-3 (Neil Road) and Sideroad 29/30 (Maple Lodge Drive) was known as Maple Lodge. Here a



Maple Lodge School stands abandoned. The two little privies out behind—one for boys, one of girls—are a poignant reminder of the days when the school and its grounds echoed with sounds of girls and boys, at work and at play.

church, a school and a post office were once active, as well as a few factories, but the population was very small—probably between 25 and 50 people.

James Sinclair Smith came from Scotland in 1854 and bought Lot 28 on Concession 2. He and his son Alexander Wilson Smith were well-known farmers and livestock breeders, being particularly recognized for their high quality Shorthorn cattle, Leicester sheep and Clydesdale horses.<sup>11</sup> In 1856, the Grand Trunk passed through their farm property but—only stopped when the Smiths had cattle or horses to be loaded or unloaded. Both men entered politics successfully. James Smith became an MPP, while Alexander Smith was a Liberal MP serving his constituency from 1908 to 1911.

The Smith home bore the name of Maple Lodge, and in 1874, a post office opened in the house, and was known by the same name. Alexander Smith was the first and only postmaster. However, before 1900, it was John Andrews who carried the mail to Maple Lodge from Lucan Crossing, just to the northeast on the McGillivray/Biddulph

Townline. A catch pole stood by the tracks from which outgoing mail was hung and incoming mail was simply thrown off the train.

In 1870, Zion Primitive Methodist Church opened on the southwest corner of the intersection. The building is believed to have been originally at Carlisle but moved to the Maple Lodge location after Carlisle faded into obscurity.<sup>12</sup> Ultimately, the building was moved again in 1885, this time to become a drive shed on the farm of Harvey Ovens.

A school, S.S. No. 3, the first brick school for the township, was built on the northeast corner in 1878. Larger than its replacement of 1895, this schoolhouse sat much closer to the Concession Road. While the new building was in the process of being constructed (it opened in 1896 as Barber's School), the children attended classes in the Sutton home on the west side of Neil Road.

At one time the Maple Lodge area had a creamery, a doll factory and a chocolate factory. While the exact locations of the latter two are unknown, the creamery was on Stuart Ovens' farm.

Although always a quiet spot, some fun events did take place at Maple Lodge over the years. From 1936 to 1938 school picnics, attracting about 100 people, were major social events. Maple Lodge had a ball team which is known to have played against one from Gobblersville, just to the north along the Concession Road.

Like other small places, Maple Lodge declined in importance over the years. When the post office closed December 1, 1913, and the area became R.R. 1 Clandeboye. In 1959, when the local school closed and children were sent to McGillivray Central School, the building became a community centre used for parties and meetings as well as a polling booth at election time. On July 15 and 16, 1978, a School Home Coming weekend attracted 680 people.<sup>13</sup> More recently it has become a furniture refinishing shop while the old church, being used as a drive shed, was torn down in 1973.

Today, the school remains on the northeast corner although not in the best of condition. Two little privies still stand out back. Maple Lodge, the original home of the Smiths, is still standing two houses to the north but is almost completely obscured with trees. It is owned by Bob Armstrong who retained the name of the homestead. The CNR

M A P L E   L O D G E  
JAN '30  
O.Y.  
ONT!

tracks which formerly crossed the Concession Road have now been ripped up and no evidence of the rail bed exists. Across the road is the tiny Sutton Cemetery, the resting place of the early settlers.

### **McInnis**

This post office, located in McGillivray township on the northeast corner of McInnes Road and West Corner Drive (Concession 7, Lot 15), was named after its only postmaster, Thomas McInnis. He maintained his role from August 1, 1896, until December 1, 1913. The school, built 1863 as S. S. No. 12, was just down the road to the east on the north side. Known as the Taylor School, it was replaced in 1874 and moved just to the west, across McInnis Road. Both the school and the post office are long gone.

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### **Mooresville**

In 1880, the community of Mooresville on the Biddulph/McGillivray Townline had a post office. Although there are many new homes at the intersection of Richmond Street and Mooresville Drive, the site of this once thriving business centre, most of the old buildings have now disappeared. For more information see the listing under the Township of Biddulph.

### **Moray**

A large village in pioneer days, Moray was situated on Concession 8 (now Highway 81 or Grand Bend Road) north of Parkhill. It is hard to pin the community down to one intersection as it seems to have straggled along this road for some distance, but the nucleus may have been around County Road 24 (McGillivray Drive) or farther west at what is now Mark Settlement Drive. In its heyday, in the late nineteenth century, Moray may have had a population as high as 125 people.

Originally, the settlement was named Hagerman's Corners after Henry Hagerman, proprietor of a general store on the south side of Concession 8, probably where modern Highway 81 swings south to

Parkhill. Within this store, in 1864, he established a post office called Moray, probably named after Moray Firth in the Highlands of Scotland, an arm of the North Sea. The word means “sea settlement” in Celtic.<sup>14</sup> Moray, in Middlesex, was nowhere near the sea, but it was on Moray Creek, which meandered along just south of the 8th Concession.

In 1877, Alexander Todd acquired the store and Hagerman moved to Parkhill to become a merchant there. Perhaps Hagerman knew even then that Parkhill had a future and Moray did not; after all, Parkhill was on the railroad. In time, Todd sold the store to George Long. After Todd left, David Poulter, another merchant, kept the post office in his own store on the northeast corner of the west intersection (where Grand Bend Road meets Mark Settlement Drive). Mail came daily from Parkhill by stagecoach. In 1909, the post office was moved back to its former home where T. Fred Durr was postmaster until the official closure.

The large number of hotels at Moray are a testament to its popularity as a stagecoach stop where travellers got out to rest. One such stage to stop was run by Jack Ravelle and the Grattons. Their service covered Port Blake, Grand Bend and Parkhill, with stops at Greenway, Corbett and Moray. Actually, their “stagecoach” was a covered wagon used to deliver passengers along with parcels and mail.

There seems to have been three hotels at Moray but specific details are difficult to verify. It seems that James Maguire applied for a licence for the Queen’s Hotel in 1871. Another hotel was operated by a Mr. R. Birnes or Burns. A hotel called the Free Trade Inn stood on the northwest corner of Mark Settlement Drive and Grand Bend Road; it was owned by John Macey and then by William Atmore. The hotels did, of course, change owners. Eventually, all three met the same fate—destroyed by fire. Afterwards, Robert Sceli built another hotel on the site of the Free Trade. To the east, on the northeast corner of McGillivray Drive and Cedar Swamp Road, was “Mrs. Gracie’s Hotel,” operated by Thomas and Gracie Smith. Although this intersection was known as Brazil’s Corners, many local historians have described the Smith hotel under the heading of Moray. Situated across the road from them was a Primitive Methodist Church, likely the nearest church to Moray.<sup>15</sup>

MORAY  
F.E. 6  
78  
ONT

## THOMSON'S MILLS.

**R. W. THOMSON,**

PROPRIETOR.

Custom Sawing a Specialty

Con. 23, Lot 9, McGillivray Township,

MORAY P. O., - - - ONTARIO.

Thomson's Mills, located west of Moray, advertised in the new *Illustrated Atlas of Middlesex*, published in 1878. Thomson's ad would have been viewed by thousands.<sup>16</sup>

Two sawmills operated to the west of the village on Concession 8, this section now Mark Settlement Drive. One was operated by R.W. Thompson, while another, farther west, was run by the Douker brothers. The Douker mill was later operated by Thomas Jennings, the local preacher. His wife conducted Sunday School in their home and later in an Orange Hall at Moray until a church was built at Greenway, a village a few miles away. According to another source, a Mr. Hastings built the Jennings mill; it was sold first to a Mr. Marsden and later, about 1874, was sold to Jennings.<sup>17</sup> At first the mill workers lived in shanties but later they lived in a large boarding house in Moray, run by a Mrs. Mack.

Other shops contributed to the area. Birnes operated a smithy, along with his hotel, and Poulter had his blacksmith shop in addition to his general store. Jeremiah Larkin, shoemaker, had a shop to the north of the Free Trade Inn, and William A. Fike sold agricultural implements.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these hotels, mills and stores just gradually faded away. After the land was cleared, the sawmills were no longer as necessary. The Jennings mill was sold in 1892 and, according to one story, was shipped to British Columbia, either for use as another building or as a museum.<sup>18</sup> This, however, seems strange, but it does make a good story.

Once the post office closed on December 1, 1913, the building was moved to become part of a house near the Durr farm. The new post office address was R. R. 8 Parkhill. Nothing remains today to remind one of the former village. Only a nearby unpaved lane called Moray Drive survives to commemorate this once rather substantial village.

## Spidertown

This unusually named hamlet was found one and a quarter miles west of Mount Carmel at the intersection of Concessions 18-19 McGillivray (Salem Road) and the Middlesex/Huron County Line (Greenway Drive). Almost nothing is known about this little settlement. It doesn't appear on any maps nor did it have a post office. At one point, it was also known as Slabtown, but the source of that name is equally unknown.

Spidertown has been described as just a cluster of houses, but it was probably just as large as some of the other tiny hamlets in Middlesex. For a short time, Alexander Todd ran a general store on the corner. It is not known whether this is the same Alexander Todd who had a store at Maguire and Moray. Todd would probably have brought his supplies in from Lucan. At one time a Doctor Flaherty had an office in a corner house, but later moved to Mount Carmel. Altogether there are supposed to have been two taverns and four houses at Spidertown.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps Spidertown could not compete with Mount Carmel. Two small villages were probably not needed so close together; people were probably more attracted to the larger one. This may account for Dr. Flaherty's move. At any rate, Spidertown had virtually disappeared by the First World War. And nothing of built heritage exists at this intersection now but fields.

## West Corners

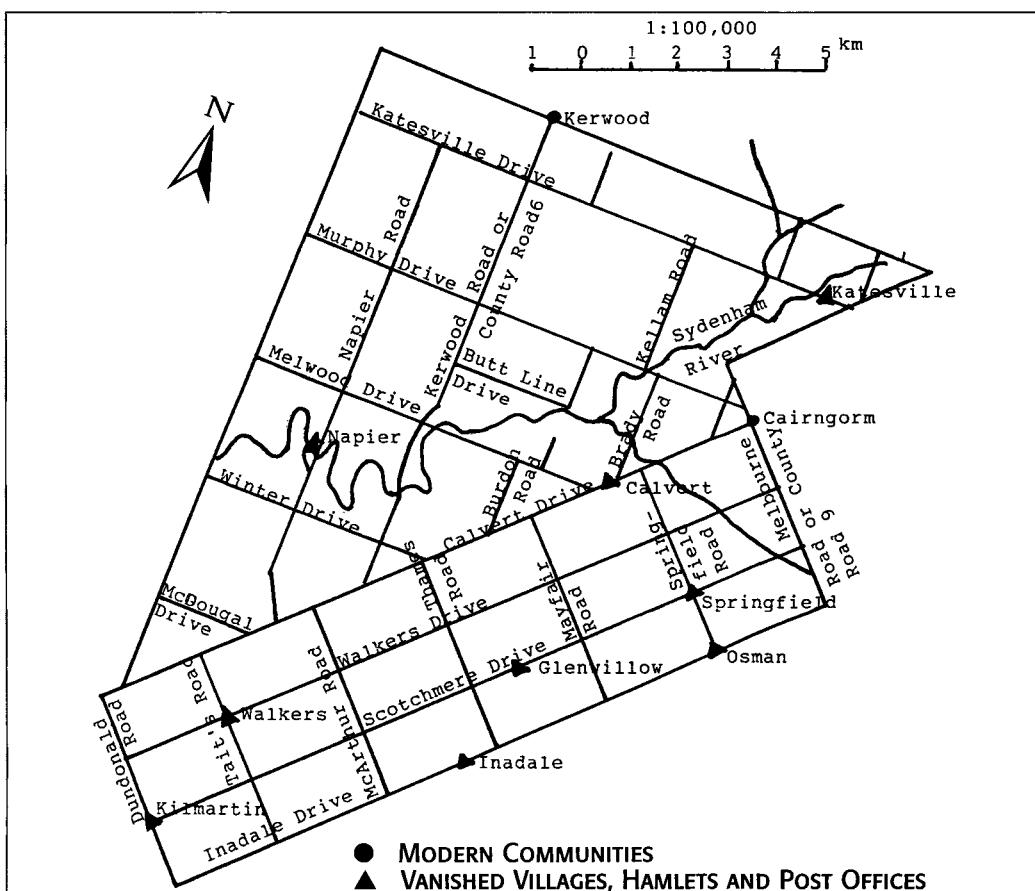
In 1858, Samuel West, owner of the southwest corner of West Corner Drive and McLean Road, donated land for the building of a large Methodist Church, along with land for a cemetery. This first church was a log structure, and in 1876, a brick church was built on the northeast corner, but closed around 1910. A school was opened in 1865 on the same corner just south of the church.



The cemetery at West Corners has a large sign commemorating the name of the intersection.

It became known as West School, but officially was listed as S.S. No. 8. At one time 107 children attended this one-room schoolhouse. On Good Friday in 1913, the entire building was destroyed by a severe windstorm, but a new one was built immediately. By the end of the 1950s, it was closed, to ultimately become a home which still stands, a reminder of the past.

## X. TOWNSHIP OF METCALFE



## Calvert

The Calvert post office was in Metcalfe township at the corner of County Road 2 (Calvert Drive) and Currie Road (Melwood Drive), located just west of the old schoolhouse still standing there today. Opened on February 2, 1901, with William Burdon as postmaster, it was named after W.S. Calvert.

CALVERT  
JUL 18  
07  
ONT.

According to the correspondence of one of the early postmasters, some men petitioned Calvert, their local federal politician, for a post office. He granted it and is supposed to have given it his own name.<sup>1</sup> The office would close on April 30, 1910. S. S. No. 7 Metcalfe, built in 1900, was always known as Calvert School and County Road 2 also took the Calvert name.

## Glenwillow

Located on Scotchmere Drive, between Thames and Mayfair roads, Glenwillow is described in old directories as having many shops, including a store and barbershop in 1894. An unidentified editor is identified as being part of the community in 1906. Interestingly, most older people who remember hearing the name think it consisted only of the post office that had opened April 1, 1875, with Archibald Moore as postmaster. When the area became R. R. 1 Walkers in 1914, this service closed. The other businesses were probably spread out over the surrounding area.

GLEN-WILLOW  
MR 2E  
10  
ONT.

## Inadale

The post office of the tiny hamlet of Inadale on the Ekfrid/Metcalfe Townline opened in 1908. The building has long since disappeared. For more information see the listing under Township of Ekfrid.

## Katesville

The village of Katesville developed at the point where the Sydenham River crosses the road once called Concession 1-2 (now Katesville

Drive) in Metcalfe township. One of the first villages in western Middlesex, it was once a large, significant community, supporting its surrounding countryside. Katesville is now one of the county's best examples of a vanished village.

Settlement began in the 1830s, during the period when the area was part of Adelaide township since Metcalfe would not be created until 1847. It was in these early times that the village's most famous son was born. Katesville was the first home of Edward Blake (1833–1912) who, in 1871, became the second Premier of Ontario.<sup>2</sup> After resigning his position the following year, Blake went on to become Justice Minister in Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie's cabinet and to be recognized as an authority on constitutional law. In 1892, he moved his household to Britain and spent fifteen years as an Irish Nationalist MP.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, he retired from politics due to ill health and returned to Canada in 1907, but by that time his hometown was long gone.

There were many shops at Katesville. One of the earliest was that of Richard Brennan (or Branan) who opened a frame store with solid walnut counters, on his lot near the river. Eventually, when the post office opened on February 6, 1831, he became postmaster. He went on to become a magistrate and later the first reeve of Metcalfe. When W.H. Smith, the geographer,<sup>4</sup> travelled around Ontario in the 1840s, he visited Katesville. In his 1846 directory he reported that Katesville had 30 people and one store; the store presumably was Brennan's.<sup>5</sup> Eleven years later, in 1857, Lovell's *Canada Directory* reports that Katesville had a population of 150 people. Mr. R.W. Brennan was still there, but now joined by more merchants: William McClatchey, Robert Bentley and the business operated by Kent and Long. By this time, William McClatchey was postmaster; he also sold insurance. There were three innkeepers: James Shepherd, Francis Kells and James Killbride. Thomas Duncan and William Fulton were shoemakers; William Clarke, a carriage maker; Alfred Sessions, a smithy and wagon maker; George Murphy, a painter; James Miller, a builder; and James Kells, the cooper. And finally, Patrick Finaughty ran a tailor shop. All these businesses lined Concession 1-2 at the Sydenham River crossing.

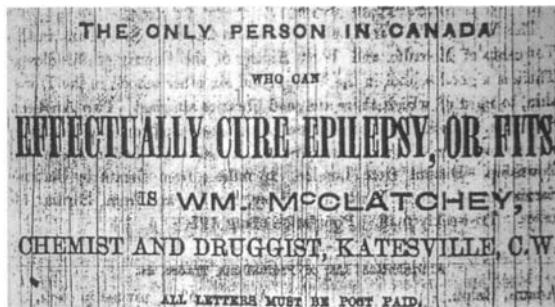


Even before Katesville became a sizeable village, the settlers felt they needed a school. In the 1840s, a log one, called the Fitzgerald School after the family on whose property the schoolhouse was built, seems to have been on the north side of the road near the church. Eventually, fire claimed the building and children had their classes in the church for a while. A new school is believed to have been built in 1856; but it too was destroyed by fire. In the 1870s, the second replacement was completed, still on the north side of the road, but farther to the west, beyond what is now called School Road.

The Anglican Church of St. Catherine's was another early building, having been erected about 1841 on the north side of the road, just east of the river. It is said that the name of the village "Katesville" comes from the name of the church, St. Catherine's.<sup>6</sup> In actual fact, the church was founded in 1841, and the post office, called Katesville much earlier in 1837. It is possible that the office was named after Brennan's wife.

There seems always to have been competition between Katesville and neighbouring Strathroy. At the beginning, it looked as though Katesville would be able to keep up with its neighbour. Samuel Peters' map of 1854–55 shows a Katesville almost as big as Strathroy. When Strathroy petitioned for a post office, the request had to be sent by mail—through Katesville. Somehow, the petition was lost in the mail, and it has been suggested that it was never forwarded by Katesville's postmaster, Mr. Brennan.<sup>7</sup> Strathroy finally got their post office, but this time achieved their goal by applying through Delaware in Delaware Township. It is said that when Brown (the postmaster after Brennan) found out that Strathroy finally had a post office, he was so annoyed, he resigned.<sup>8</sup>

It is generally acknowledged that Katesville was dealt its death blow when the railway went through Strathroy in 1858. General assumptions suggest that more and more commercial enterprises were attracted to Strathroy once the rail line was complete, while Katesville gradually dwindled until its stores and hotels were empty. This may be true but, if so, it did not happen immediately. It is true that the 1862 *Tremaine Map of Middlesex* shows that Strathroy is much larger than Katesville and the 1864–65 *Directory of Middlesex* published by John Cameron shows fewer businesses than Lovell's did



An advertisement for William McClatchey, Katesville druggist, appeared in Cameron's *Middlesex Gazetteer* in 1864.

in 1857; however, in comparison to other villages, the business community was still sizeable at that time. James Bennett ran the Katesville Hotel and Hugh Eccles ran the Farmers' Hotel. William McClatchey was postmaster, and now also listed as a druggist and land agent. As well, A. Sessions was both a blacksmith and a constable, W. L. Clark was the carriage maker and James Hull the wagon maker. Patrick Finaughty still ran his tailor shop, while William Murphy was shoemaker, William Patterson a carpenter, John Richardson a potter, and Christopher Murphy a notary.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the passing of the village by the railway, there were, perhaps, a couple of other reasons why Katesville could not compete with Strathroy. One would think the Sydenham River would have provided excellent water power for running mills, but no directory ever lists one. There may have been a sawmill which was overlooked and which has now been forgotten, but apparently it was Buchanan's Mill in Strathroy that supplied flour to Katesville.<sup>10</sup> In this way, Katesville may have become dependent on Strathroy. There may also have been some other shopping advantages that are hard to pin down after so much passage of time. Hiram Dell, who opened the first store in Strathroy in 1840, used to brag "I sold cheaper than Mr. Brennan did at Katesville."<sup>11</sup> Perhaps Katesville housewives were delighted with a trip to Strathroy to visit what they considered better stores.

On May 30, 1869, the Katesville post office closed, no doubt because the village had shrunk considerably. But it may have been this closing

of the post office that struck the final blow to the village. In 1871, the *Mackintosh Directory* lists only James Elliott's store, Sessions' Smith Shop, Matthew Wilson and Robert Whitley's hoop factory, along with a carpenter, a tailor and a carriage maker. Everyone else had either shut down for good or moved to Strathroy. Eventually the village disappeared completely and most of the land reverted to farmland.

One interesting event occurred in the former village in November 1876. Melvin Yeager, Angus McDougall and William Near were arrested and charged with counterfeiting coins. One of their three "factories" was at Katesville. There they turned babbitt metal, old watch-cases and medals into coins in moulds of plaster of Paris.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps they chose the former village for some of their operations because of its being such an out-of-the-way place where they would be less likely to be discovered.

One of the last buildings standing at Katesville was the church. Eventually it too closed because of a dwindling congregation. Children were known to play inside it after it was abandoned. However, it was not until the youngsters started playing cards on the communion table that people became really shocked, and one woman removed the table from the church.<sup>13</sup> St. Catherine's was demolished sometime after 1892. What was left of its congregation attended St. John's Anglican in Strathroy. It seems that St. John's was supposed to take on the duty of maintaining the Katesville Cemetery but, over time, this duty seems to have been neglected and old monuments started to fall down. In time, the tombstones were moved to a Strathroy cemetery.

The last building to remind anyone of old Katesville was the school, which closed in 1963, leaving its students to attend the new Metcalfe Central School. For years, the old schoolhouse sat empty. Its owners finally decided that the building had deteriorated to the point that it could no longer be saved, and after learning that the township had no use for it either, they burned the neglected school in 1995.

So the last reminder of Katesville is gone. But the village has been commemorated in several ways. A sign has been placed on the site of St. Catherine's church and cemetery on the north side of Katesville Road, east of the Sydenham River. Across the road is a business called Katesville Woodcraft. And farther west, on the other side of School

Road, is Katesville Airport, owned by George Bennett. In a physical sense, Katesville is gone, but it lives on in the minds of its modern inhabitants.

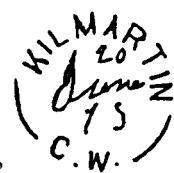
### Kilmartin

A community called Kilmartin once stretched along Highway 80 (Dundonald Road), all the way from the Metcalfe-Ekfrid Townline (Inadale Drive) to Walkers Drive. Here, at one time, was a large business community as well as the traditional church, cemetery and school.

The area was first settled by Scottish Highlanders in about 1826, following their dispersal from Argyllshire, the result of the Scottish clearances. No doubt their first years in Upper Canada were spent clearing land and building log homes but, after about a decade of hard work, their thoughts turned towards building the place of worship which was always to be an important part of the community of Kilmartin.

About 1835 a site was chosen for a Presbyterian Church and a cemetery—the spot where Kilmartin Cemetery is today, and one acre of land was acquired from Alexander McIntyre. Work began on the church but stopped when settlers disagreed on whether or not the chosen location was the most suitable. Throughout one winter, services were conducted in the unfinished building.<sup>14</sup> There was no roof, no windows and no floor! It must have been most unpleasant to sit perfectly still outdoors for so long a time in winter conditions, but these settlers were stoic. There were no pews; everyone sat on the exposed sleepers. That spring, the intended church was abandoned and services were conducted in a centrally located barn for many years. The site, however, continued in use as a cemetery.

In the early 1840s, another log church was built in Mosa township, just east of the present church, on a site donated by Donald McNichol. In later years this building was referred to as “the Old Log Church,” but it was a much more sophisticated building than those usually built of logs. Galleries were positioned along two sides and one end of the building was reached by a stairway outside the church. A large box stove heated the church, but rather than being a comfort, that stove

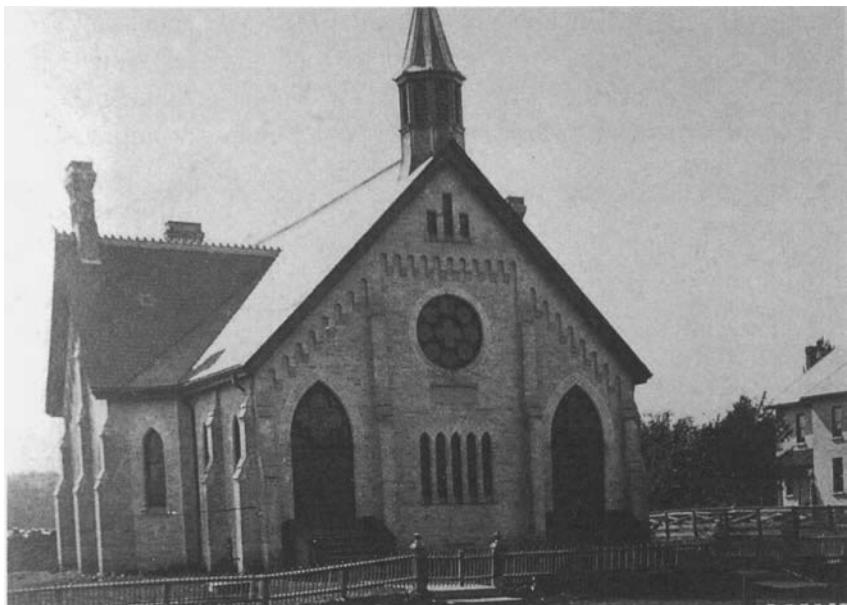


was the cause of much annoyance. Those sitting at the back near the stove were always too hot, while those sitting near the front felt very little of the warmth and shivered throughout the services. In those days, people usually sat in the same pew week after week, only to endure consistent discomfort in winter. To make matters worse, every Sunday when the people at the back were heated through, one man would get up and close off the damper. One elderly member of the congregation who sat at the front decided he could no longer stand this performance. One Sunday morning, upon entering the church, he took the damper off and carried it up to the front of the church with him. From that week on, the front of the church always had *some* heat.<sup>15</sup>

At this time, the church was still without a full-time minister. The Reverend Alexander Ross came once a month—all he could manage since he had to administer a territory from Lake Erie to Lake Huron. People would walk 15 miles to hear him preach. It was not until 1861 that Kilmartin Church became a separate, self-sustaining charge with Archibald Stewart as the first full-time minister. A manse was finally built in 1864 and, by 1872, two long rows of stables were on the opposite side of the road. Services were so lengthy that horses had to be unhitched and fed. After church, the men would gather about the stables and chat while preparing the horses for the drive home, while the women and children had their weekly visit by the front door of the church. The decaying stables were replaced in 1903–04 by three rows of sheds large enough to accommodate 60 driving outfits. The congregation was so large in those times that, on some Sundays, there was insufficient room for all the teams of horses.

In 1867, a brick church was erected and Anderson's 1868–69 *County Directory* says that Kilmartin "contains one of the handsomest churches in the county, built of brick."<sup>16</sup> The first service was held by Dr. Robert Burns, professor emeritus of church history at Knox College, Toronto. The congregation must have been very impressed with Dr. Burns because they immediately named the church in his honour. The church has been Burns Presbyterian ever since.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, this fine old church had structural defects and was condemned in 1891. A new brick structure was started that same year. A large picnic was held on the opposite side of the road in A. L. Munroe's



This old postcard shows the most recent Burns Presbyterian Church, with its manse to the right. The photograph was taken from the vantage point of the cemetery across the road. Both buildings are in use today, are in good condition. *Courtesy of Gordon McDonald.*

shady grove on September 1, the day the cornerstone was laid. The "Kilmartin Picnic" was announced by public posters displayed throughout other communities. The picnic was so successful that it became an annual event for years. A brass or pipe band would often play, and entertainment was hired from places as far away as Detroit or Toronto.<sup>18</sup>

When the new church was dedicated in January 1892, the dedication service was delivered first in Gaelic by Reverend Lachlan Cameron of Thamesville. An English service was held afterwards for the large percentage of the congregation, mainly young folk, who did not understand the language. Gaelic was dropped by the church in 1909. Although the church may be regarded as the most significant building at Kilmartin, there were others worthy of note.

John Smith was postmaster for the post office that opened on June 1, 1861. The name of Kilmartin came from the town in Argyllshire, now

Strathclyde, the former home of Alexander McIntyre. Kilmartin, Scotland, took its name partly from St. Martin of Tours and partly from "Kill," the Celtic word for church—in other words, St. Martin's Church.<sup>19</sup>

Cameron's 1864–65 *Directory* lists a large number of businesses at Kilmartin. Hugh Ferguson was blacksmith; Dougald McAlpin, physician; Mr. McCallum, carpenter; and D. McIntyre both Justice of the Peace and hotel keeper. Dougald McKellar was assistant postmaster, John Smith was postmaster, and the Reverend Archibald Stewart was the Presbyterian minister. A population of 25 was listed at the time. Kilmartin also could boast of a brick kiln, a woollen mill, a cabinet shop, a shoemaker and a sawmill at one time or another. According to local tales, D. McIntyre, tavern keeper, is said to have weighed an astonishing 300 pounds, but he is also said to have had a warm heart to correspond with the size of his body.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps he was as generous to poor customers as he was to those who could pay.

It is difficult to pinpoint the location of any of these shops with precision. The post office was on the east corner of Dundonald Road and Scotchmere Drive. A smithy and the inn where the stagecoach stopped are said to have been at the intersection just south of the church.

Like other villages of Middlesex, Kilmartin gradually diminished in importance. In this case, the failure of the Michigan Central Railroad to build a new line through the community, as the villagers had hoped, is given as the key cause. The railway passed through nearby Walkers instead. As interest in development at Kilmartin generally declined, the village gradually faded away, the closing of the post office on August 1, 1911, signalling the end.

Today, an old school still stands on the south side of Dundonald Road, east of Argyll Drive. It has been the "Kilmartin Centre" since 1963. To the west, on the Mosa township side of the highway, is Kilmartin Farm, operated by the McIntyre family. Still farther west is Kilmartin Cemetery, on the north side of the road right across from the impressive Burns Presbyterian Church. This is all that remain of the former flourishing village of Kilmartin.

## Napier

Located on Napier Road in Metcalfe township, Napier is a beautiful spot, nestled in the woods by the Sydenham River. Technically, it is not a vanished village, for many of its heritage buildings are still standing and, in recent years, many new houses have been built there. Today, Napier is larger than some of the places described here were, even in their heyday. But Napier is still very far from being what it once was—one of the most important communities in western Middlesex. Perhaps Napier could be considered Middlesex County's most interesting and romantic-looking "somewhat" ghost town.



The area is described as first settled about 1829, by an unidentified disbanded military unit. Initially, the community probably had a very military atmosphere. At one time, it was necessary to walk 20 miles to Kilworth for the services of a gristmill, 30 miles to London to a market and even farther to Port Stanley for tools and implements. No wonder the people desired a community of their own.

Among the most important of these early settlers was Captain Christopher Beer who previously had spent 14 years in the Royal Navy. In 1830, he received 800 acres of land in what is now the Napier area along the Sydenham River. He returned to England to get his family, brought them back, and built his two-storey log house near the intersection of Kerwood Road, where the Metcalfe township office is now. The first Anglican services in the area were held in his house.<sup>21</sup> He held the rank of captain and was allowed to perform church services and funerals. Later, he became a magistrate and could also officiate at weddings.

Captain Beer built a huge barn in 1835; the barn-raising was talked about for years to come. In fact, local people referred to 1835 as "the year Captain Beer's big barn was raised."<sup>22</sup> It was the first barn in the area and apparently all the able-bodied men in western Middlesex helped with its construction. It is said that a six-month ship ration of food and grog was required to feed them all.

A couple of other stories are known about Christopher Beer. He is supposed to have offered a daughter and 50 acres to any man who could cut down a certain large walnut tree in a day. The tree turned

out to be hollow and was easily removed, but whether his offer was accepted or not is unknown. He was also a veteran of the 1837 Rebellion; it has been claimed that it was Beer who cut the rope that sent the rebel supply ship *Carolina* over Niagara Falls.<sup>23</sup>

Another important early settler was Captain Robert Johnston who arrived with his family in 1832. Their log cabin sat across from the present Presbyterian Church. Johnston, aged 72, was an old soldier who had served at Waterloo. He had received land for military service like most of the other early settlers, but Johnston was not the average Canadian pioneer. He arrived in the wilderness with some bagpipes, a piano, 30 complete sets of military arms and £2000.<sup>24</sup> Johnston built himself a large brick house, 50' by 50', with six chimneys, on the east side of the future village site. The clay was prepared for moulding by being tramped on by oxen.<sup>25</sup> Soon Anglican church services were shifted to this large home. During the Rebellion of 1837, Johnston's 30 sets of arms came in handy. He taught the local women how to shoot so that they could defend themselves against attack while their husbands were away fighting in support of the colonial administration.<sup>26</sup>

One of the first public buildings constructed by the settlers was St. Mary's Anglican Church. The land for the church, on a hill just northeast of the future village, was donated by Charles Preston. The funds for the building project are said to have come from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.<sup>27</sup> The exact date of the building is not known, but it was about 1840. Whatever the date, St. Mary's still stands, the oldest surviving church in Middlesex County.<sup>28</sup> Records indicate that the church took no more than a week to build. The interior, panelled with black walnut, has changed little over the years. In 1844, a gallery was added, but was removed in 1895 when declared unsafe.

A cemetery surrounds the church. When Captain Christopher Beer died in 1871, at the age of 80, he was buried in the southeast corner. His stone says "Anchored in the harbour of eternal rest." In the northwest corner are the graves of Joe and Mary Wrinkle. Joe was a fugitive slave from the United States. An employee of Beer, he lived in a cabin on his estate. Mary, his wife, was white, the former Mary McPhail of St. Thomas. When asked why she married Wrinkle, she replied, "His gracious manners and kindly ways took my fancy. The colour of his skin

doesn't matter."<sup>29</sup> Mrs. Wrinkle is buried beside her husband but only her name appears on the stone. Legend also has it that a great uncle of Gordon Lightfoot is buried in this cemetery;<sup>30</sup> certainly the name Lightfoot appears among the gravestones.

One of the other early buildings was the school. Sometime in 1833 or 1834 the first school was built on the southwest corner of what is now the intersection of Napier Road and Melwood Drive. The first teacher was a Miss Tier (or Teer). The schoolhouse sat directly across from the Emerick Hotel. Since mothers objected to their children being exposed to rough language and fights, a new school was built on what is now St. Mary's Churchyard. A pile of brick and stone found in a heap in the farthest southwest corner of the cemetery around the 1950s was said to have been the school fireplace. Apparently there was also a high school or academy which taught advanced subjects like trigonometry, physics, ancient history, advanced mathematics and religion; many of the military families had teenage sons who, they felt, should have some sort of higher education. It is not known how long this lasted. In 1866, a two-room school was built just east of the present building on Mary Street. It once had 200 pupils. The current S. S. No. 3 Metcalfe came into being in 1900.



One of the mills of Napier, along the Sydenham, circa late 1890s. *J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, The D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.*

By the time the school was established, an active village had developed. Robert Johnston built a store and gristmill in 1838, even importing two millstones from Scotland. Four feet across and nine inches thick, they required 25 yoke of oxen to transport them from Port Stanley,<sup>31</sup> a distance of about 35 miles. Johnston also had a sawmill erected to harvest the many black walnut trees in the neighbourhood and then proceeded to build a large woollen mill. Not surprisingly, the village was first known as Johnston's Mills. Later it was known as Puffing Town because of the noise made by the steam engine at one of Johnston's mills. This must have been one of the first steam engines in Western Ontario. Johnston's gristmill, was four storeys high and constructed of black walnut. The mill stood on the river behind the general store which stands today. People would walk to the mill from as far away as Sarnia, with bags of wheat on their backs. Others arrived by river to do their milling.

Later, after the Township of Metcalfe was created in 1840, the village became known as Metcalfe. It was not until a post office opened on November 6, 1851, that the village was named Napier, possibly after Sir Charles Napier (1782–1853), the British General, or his brother Sir William Napier (1785–1860), also a general and historian of the Peninsular War.<sup>32</sup> The first postmaster was James Keefer. He, along with Colonel John Arthur, had set up a store as well as saw-and gristmills. At first mail came weekly, then every day, delivered by stagecoach.

In 1857, J. G. Sutherland moved into the area, acquired the gristmills and sawmills from Johnston, and built a brand new woollen mill. Robert Johnston would live for three more years, dying in 1861 at the age of 98. Sutherland's company dominated the community for many years; he also dabbled in real estate. An advertisement Sutherland placed in the *Strathroy Age* in 1870 reads "To the farmers of Middlesex: Gentlemen, good wheat, wool and saw logs are in good demand at the Napier Mills for cash or goods etc." It also says he has "several good lots of land for sale cheap for cash or on terms."<sup>33</sup> It was Sutherland who built the store known as Napier House in 1872; the post office would move into this building and a library was located there for quite some time. The second owner of this store was Sutherland's son-in-law, W.S. Calvert, who eventually became a federal MP. More on his story can be found in the story of the Village of Calvert, Township of Metcalfe.

*Township of Metcalfe*



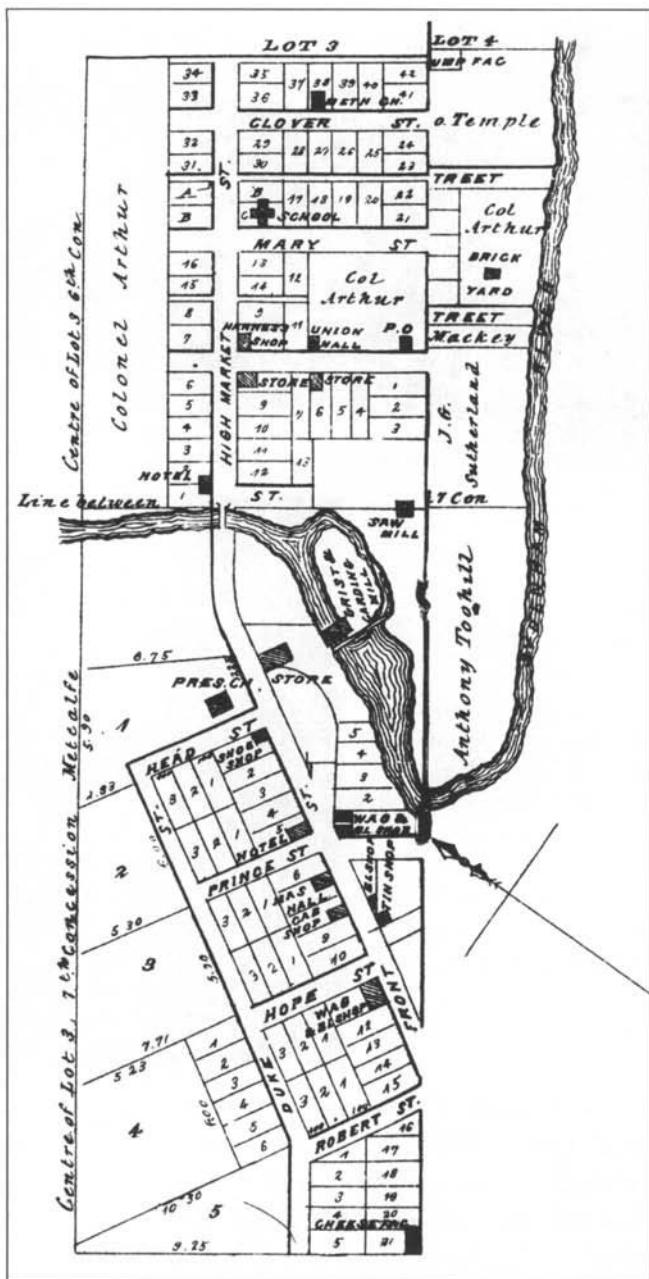
*Top:* The Napier House general store in Napier, Ontario, as it looked in the first half of the twentieth century when it was operated by A. E. Field. *J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, The D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.*

*Right:* The Napier store—once a classic example of a village general store and post office—stands in ruins today.



In 1857, the population of Napier was documented at 150. According to *Lovell's Canada Directory*, Colonel John Arthur was a merchant, as were Edward Gouldrick and the partnership of Munro and Bingham. George Emerick was innkeeper and James Ball was a saloon keeper. Abraham Frelick, Charles Knapton and Donald McKellar all ran blacksmith shops. Thomas Boyd was a shoemaker; David Bowers, a carpenter and joiner; and Thomas McKinley, a wagon and carriage maker. John

## VANISHED VILLAGES OF MIDDLESEX



An 1878 map of Napier depicts the village in its “heyday.” *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Middlesex*.

Munro was postmaster. Henry Sifton was owner of a steam gristmill and sawmill. J. Sutherland and Co. were grist-, saw- and woollen mill owners, and two men identified as Arthur and Clarke were agents for the Provincial Insurance Company. Later directories show even more extensive lists of businesses. By 1864, the population had reached 250 and there were as many as 50 homes on ten streets. There were two inns—the Napier Inn and the Sydenham House—both always busy!

Along with St. Mary's Anglican, other churches emerged in the community. A frame Methodist Church was built in 1860 on land donated by John Arthur. On the 1878 historical atlas map of Napier, this church is shown on Clover Street, north of Mary Street. The first Presbyterian Church was built about 1864 and the second, in 1887, was set on a hill in the southwest part of the village, from which there was a marvellous view of all of Napier. When an organ was installed in this church, many older Presbyterians were horrified. One old man, who always slept through the sermon, said he never had the same feeling of sanctity when sleeping in church after the organ appeared. Another claimed that "it would not be long before the devil would have a fiddle in there too." Sure enough, years later, a fiddle accompanied the choir.<sup>34</sup>

There were many opportunities for amusement at Napier during the nineteenth century. In the mid-1870s and 1880s, cricket was popular. Both Christmas Day 1875 and New Year's Day 1876 were warm, dry and sunny and many turned out to play cricket on those days. For the sports-minded, the local people were very proud of the thoroughbred stock they raised and raced at a nearby track. For others in the community, by the 1890s, a 40-piece string orchestra existed, and the young Guy Lombardo is supposed to have once performed in Napier.<sup>35</sup>

In 1880, the township council started holding regular meetings in the new Napier Town Hall, located beside the Masonic Lodge. It seems that the building of the Town Hall was possible because of excess money from dog taxes.<sup>36</sup> (Those were the days—when government had money to spare!) Definitively, Napier was the "capital" of Metcalfe and a model flourishing village.

Traditionally, historians blame Napier's fall on the railway. Both branches of the Great Western Railway, later the Grand Trunk (still later the CNR), bypassed Napier. The northern branch passed through

Kerwood and the southern branch went through Glencoe. Regrettably, Napier was also bypassed by the CPR and the Michigan Central. Although the people of Napier had expected to build a station on the hill south of Napier House, there was never any need. Much business was lost over the years as men moved to employment points along the railway.

It has also been suggested that once the walnut trees were largely depleted, the village became less important for the simple reason that there was less work for the sawmills.<sup>37</sup> There may be some merit to this argument.

Whatever the reason for Napier's decline, it must be emphasized that it did not "go bust" overnight. Napier faded slowly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1890, the gristmill burned and was never rebuilt. By 1900, all of Sutherland's mills and many small shopkeepers were gone. The post office closed June 1, 1915, and the area became R. R. 3 Strathroy. On January 29, 1920, the last regular service was held at St. Mary's Anglican church but, in 1931, the church began holding services once a year. However, by 1939, the church was in a



Built about 1840, St. Mary's Anglican Church is the oldest standing church in Middlesex County. The provincial plaque, erected in 1963, can be seen to the left foreground.

shocking state of repair. Two turrets had fallen off its tower, windows were broken and the graveyard overrun with grass and weeds. It has since been restored and, in 1963, a great-grandson of Captain Beer unveiled a historic provincial plaque on its lawn. S. S. No. 3 closed in 1962 and students were bused to Metcalfe Central School. And by 1970, even the Napier House store had closed. The last couple to operate the store, Mr. and Mrs. Melville Clothier, decided that costs were too high and profits were too low. Towards the end only a few farmers still gathered in the store on Saturday night to buy groceries and visit.

Napier is well worth a visit since many of its heritage landmarks remain. From the south, the first building is the Masonic Temple built in 1955, replacing the former building. On its lawn is the millstone that came from Sutherland's gristmill. Next door is St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church and across the road is the Napier House, Sutherland's old store, regrettably in poor condition. On the other side of the river, is Arthur Street. On the left side of this road, by the bend, is a ruin which may be the old post office. Back on the other side of Napier Road, on Mary Street, is the old school, now a Women's Institute. North along Napier Road is Melwood Drive. A right turn will lead to St. Mary's Anglican Church on the north side of the road. This, one of Napier's first buildings, is also one of its last.

### **Osman**

In 1878, a post office opened by the intersection of Springfield Road and Inadale Drive. This was the nucleus of Osman. For more detail see the listing of under the Township of Ekfrid.

### **Springfield**

Springfield was located at the intersection of Springfield Road and Scotchmere Drive in Metcalfe township. It consisted of a church and school. The latter, S. S. No. 6, generally known as Victoria School, was built in 1872 on the southwest corner. On the diagonal corner was a Methodist church which was torn down over fifty years ago. Today the school still stands, but as a private residence.

## Walkers

The village of Walkers developed in Metcalfe township at the corner of Sideroad 20 (Tait's Road) and Walkers Drive. An important village at one time, Walkers still has many houses. All the shops, however, are gone and the intersection is much quieter than it used to be.

Walkers takes its name from the Walker family, early Metcalfe township pioneers. James Walker left Argyllshire with his wife, children, mother and brother Neil, in 1831, to settle along Concession 13, Metcalfe. The number of Walker families increased over the years so that by 1916 there were nine families all named Walker receiving their mail from Walkers Post Office.

Probably one of the early buildings at the village was the log school. The first S. S. No. 4, known as Walkers School, was built in 1855, on the south side of the road east of the intersection, just across from the old store building. The second was set on the east corner, just west of the old site. This was an unusual school—a cottage with a verandah around it. A group, calling themselves the Temperance Lyceum,<sup>38</sup> began in this school in 1866; later its monthly meetings were held in the new school. By 1876 the presence of 120 students in one room signalled the need for another school. The new building, located on the west corner of the intersection, was larger and fancier—it even had a stage! It became home for the Sunday School class held from May to November.

In 1871, the Canadian Southern Railway built its St. Thomas to Courtright line right through this intersection. It may be that the oil boom in Petrolia was instrumental in bringing through this spur line. The surveyor, was Mr. Milton Courtright, and his crew boarded at one of the Walker farms for a year. The town of Courtright was named after this man. The people at the fledgling community of Walkers, excited by the prospect of the railway, took up a subscription to buy three acres of land for a railroad station and a switch to be built. And built it was, on the east corner just beyond the school.

In the late nineteenth century, the railroad was bought out by the Michigan Central Railway. By 1900 there was a large stockyard and grain elevator beside the station. Baled hay and sugar beets, cattle,



lambs and pigs—all were loaded on railway cars at this stop. The biggest livestock drover in the area was a man named McLaughlin who bought and shipped ten carloads a week. About this time the railway help were paid nine cents per hour, or 90 cents a day. Even at the beginning of the 20th century, these were not considered good wages. As a story goes, one day a pig wandered onto the railroad property and John Preece, the section foreman, asked a boy to get it out. The boy started going over, but at a modest pace. Preece shouted "Run!" but the young workman informed him, "I'm not getting running wages!"<sup>39</sup>

It was the railway that gave Walkers its start as a commercial centre. The old school became the first general store. Later the building was sold and became a house where the railway hands often lived. Another store, built near the railway by James Grieve, included the post office which was established in 1879 and named Glen Walker, after the Walker family. Mail arrived daily by train. In 1885, the office name was changed to Walkers because Glen Walker could be too easily confused with another post office called Glenwaters near Thunder Bay in northern Ontario.

Later, another general store opened the north corner, just east of the intersection. This was the J.D. McBride store. Thereafter, for many years, there were two stores at Walkers. Grieve eventually sold out to J. Turner, in 1908, but when that store burned shortly afterward, Turner then bought McBride's store and the post office was moved there. The Klem brothers, twins named Ed and Grant, also ran a general store at Walkers, from 1920 to 1923. They had moved a cottage on the south corner to Walkers from nearby Mosa township. Unfortunately, the Klems lost a great deal of money when the Home Bank collapsed<sup>40</sup> and they were forced out of business.

The Home Bank rented one room of the building which had been the Turner store in 1915. Two bankers would come by train from Melbourne three days a week to conduct business. As noted, this bank failed in 1923 and the building became a house again until it was torn down. But the bank episode was unusual for a place the size of Walkers. Very few small communities in Middlesex ever aspired to having their own bank.

Over the years, a few other businesses existed at Walkers. There was once a blacksmith shop on the south corner. Although the building was owned by the McIntyre family, the shop was run by a "jolly Irishman"



The main street of Walkers as it looked in 1907. No doubt the plank sidewalks were appreciated by pedestrians. *Courtesy of Gordon McDonald.*

named Bolton.<sup>41</sup> There was also a steam-powered sawmill run by the Richardson family, noted for their good business sense. Their lumber was loaded onto the nearby freight cars.

Life at Walkers was not all work. The school was used for school fairs, Christmas concerts and dances. Both men's and women's ball teams were active. A famous local personality was Dan Mitchell, well-known as a songwriter. Of great local interest was a piece he wrote about the happenings at the school which included all the teachers. He also toured the countryside with his tuning fork and sang for people in their homes; some referred to him as a minstrel. Mitchell is said to have driven about the countryside with a desk in his wagon. When he had an idea, he would stop and write it down.<sup>42</sup>

Gradually, the community of Walkers began to diminish. The sawmill burned in 1910, but apparently was never rebuilt. The blacksmith shop was a victim of the automobile age. The increased use of trucks ended the need for the railroad and, before long, it came to the point where it was more convenient for area farmers to ship their goods by truck than by rail. The cost was about the same, but trucks reached a greater variety of markets. Gradually the use of the rail line declined. When the old station burned in 1908, a smaller one replaced it. The last train pulled out of the station about 1952 and the Michigan Central Railroad pulled up its tracks about ten years later. In the 1960s, the

*Township of Metcalfe*



An old store that once served the community of Walker is now a home.

schoolhouse was moved to Newbury so a bus company could use it as a place for maintenance work.

The post office at Walkers remained open until April 1967. By that time, no one actually went to the post office to get their mail as there had been two rural routes operating out of Walkers since 1914. People were pleased with the service the Walkers post office provided and were not pleased at its closure. But close it did, and the area became R. R. 2 Glencoe. The store owners, the Goughs, struggled on until December when they too finally shut up the old store—the last business at Walkers. It had been a pleasant little place, full of convivial smoke, conversation and laughter. Most of the business was conducted from 6:00 in the evening until midnight when neighbours would drop in to listen to a hockey game on the radio, drink pop and argue about politics. Old-timers still bought as much as they could at the little store, but most people were lured by the big supermarket in Glencoe, just six miles to the southwest.

Today, there are probably more people at Walkers than there were in the old days. A lot of new houses have been built, most of them just twenty to thirty years ago. Some of the old buildings still stand, however. The McBride store, last operated by the Goughs, is currently being renovated as a home on the north side of the road, east of the intersection. The site of the school, on the west corner, is now occupied by a bungalow, as is the site of the first school on the east corner. Across the road, on the south corner, is the cottage in which the Klem brothers operated their ill-fated store. Beside it is the house once lived in by the railway section master. Where the tracks and station once were are fields. A great deal has changed here over the years. But Walkers still live in the neighbourhood.

## XI. TOWNSHIP OF MOSA

### Cashmere

One November day in the early 1880s, Corporal Smythe of the Salvation Army came to preach at the village of Cashmere. He was not far into his sermon, however, before a group of angry villagers interrupted him. Whether it was his delivery style or the nature of his message is not known, but somehow Smythe made himself unpopular. The fact that he was of African ancestry probably did not endear him to some of the more narrow-minded souls of the nineteenth century. Smythe was given twenty-four hours to leave, but being persistent in his faith, he passed the word that he was arranging an open-air meeting for the very next night. The following evening a crowd did come to meet the Corporal, but only to dump him in the nearby River Thames. Soaking wet and shivering with cold, Smythe wandered from house to house, searching desperately for a kind family who would help him. The occupants of one white frame house finally did so, but it was too late. Smythe was very ill and died a few weeks later. Before he passed on, however, he spoke the following words: "I came but they would receive me not. Like Sodom and Gomorrah of old, this place shall fade from the face of God's earth until no brick or board shall rest upon another. Even the mighty dam, the pride of the place, will be swept away, and the wood thrush and robin will build their nests and rear their young unmolested and unseen. And over the place the harrow and the plow will pass to and fro and corn will grow where a city might

CASHMERE  
OFF 6TH  
78  
ONT.

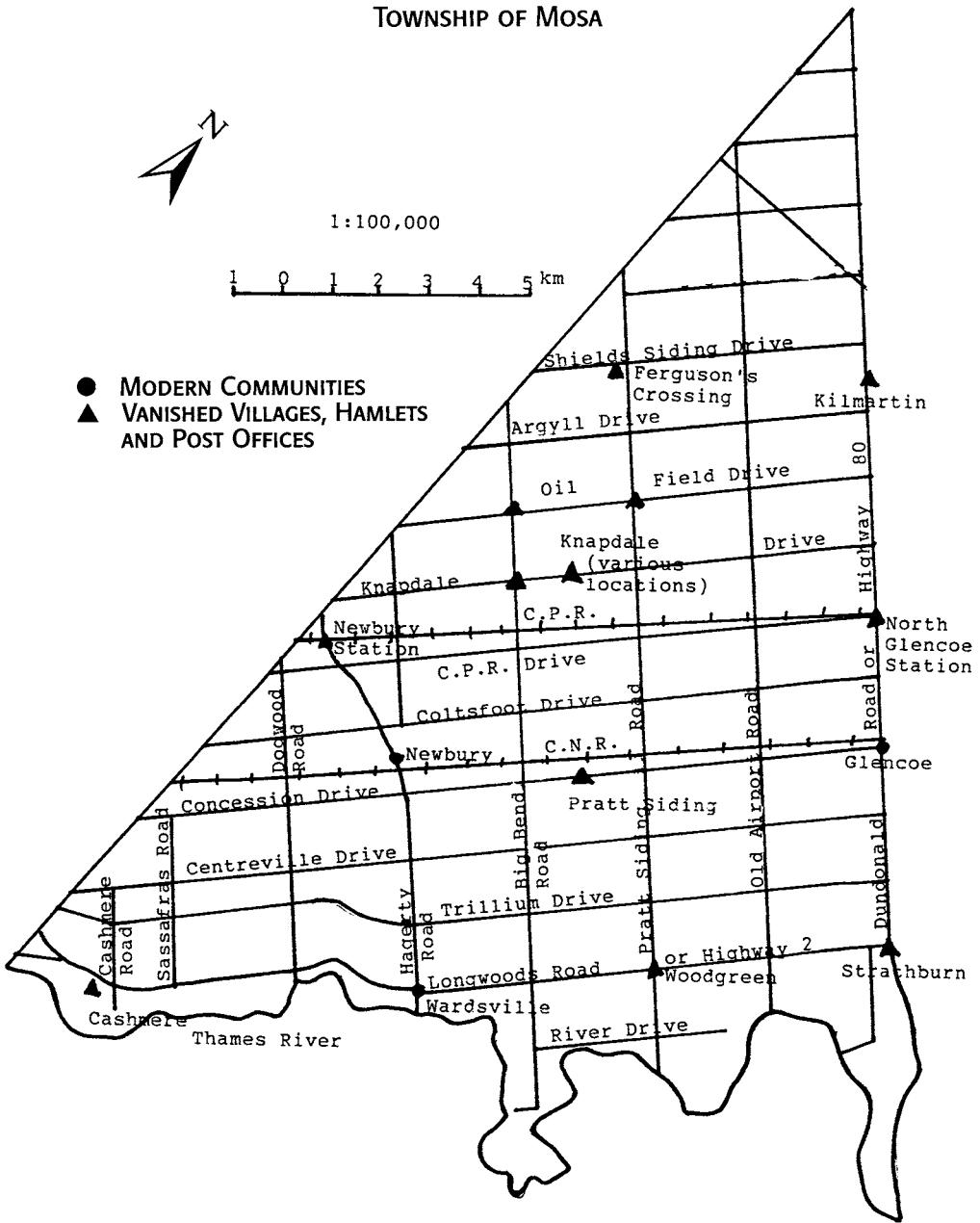
## VANISHED VILLAGES OF MIDDLESEX

## TOWNSHIP OF MOSA



1:100,000

- MODERN COMMUNITIES  
▲ VANISHED VILLAGES, HAMLETS  
AND POST OFFICES



have flourished. And the place shall be known no more, save this house which in the years to come shall stand sentinel over these solitudes."<sup>1</sup> Corporal Smythe's curse came true. Nothing remains of Cashmere today except the white frame house.

Cashmere is one of Middlesex County's best example of a vanished village. No other village or hamlet of Middlesex is so much a ghost of its former self. Once an important milling centre with a population of 150, it has vanished completely. The only remains are the above mentioned white frame house, although no longer in its original location, the ruins of the dam and an abandoned cemetery.

Cashmere, situated in the southwesternmost corner of Middlesex County, in Mosa township, consisted of buildings clustered along the Thames River about half a mile south of Longwoods Road, just east of the Kent County line. As noted, many early pioneer settlements were founded near rivers, the source of transportation wherever roads were few and poor. Singleton Gardiner, arriving in this vicinity in about 1824, built a gristmill and a sawmill on the east half of lot 28. To accomplish this, it was necessary to construct what may have been the first dam to cross the Thames. Gardiner's gristmill was one of the first in western Ontario. Eventually, he occupied several hundred acres in the area and the village of Canton, later known as Cashmere, developed on his land.

A bizarre story from years gone by attempts to explain the name "Canton." It is said that an old sailor named "Fo'as'le Hawkins" spent much of his time in a certain tavern where the fights reminded him of scenes he had witnessed in Canton, China. Others seemingly accepted Hawkins' stories, and the place became known as Canton. In actual fact, Canton was the village in Armagh, Ireland, where Singleton Gardiner was born. When, in October 1856, Singleton's son William hired C. Brady to survey and lay out a village on the flats where the mills were, the place was known as Canton.<sup>2</sup> But the post office opened on January 1, 1857, with Edward N. Heal as postmaster, was named Cashmere. It seems that the name had to be changed because of a Canton post office already in existence somewhere in eastern Ontario. Apparently the post office authorities suggested the name Cashmere, but no one knows why. Could it be named after the Vale of Kashmir in India? In 1869, a man named James Coyne and his cousins took a stroll about

Cashmere, Ontario. "We walked down to Cashmere," Coyne wrote later, "where we spent half an hour in viewing the surrounding scenery from a hill near the river. It will hardly bear comparison with the other vale of Cashmere in the Far East."<sup>3</sup>

Cashmere, however, was a prosperous place. Lovell's 1857-58 *Canada Directory* lists a large business community. George Fleming owned a sawmill, James Gardiner owned carding and gristmills, William Gardiner owned another sawmill and Singleton Gibb yet a third such mill. L.V. Davis was also a millwright. Both Gardiner and Gibb owned blacksmith shops, the third village blacksmith being John Meloche. Charles Bennett had a sash factory, Charles Hawkins a cabinet shop and G. G. Ward a general store. Edward Heal was postmaster, while Daniel Campbell worked as a carpenter and joiner, and Christopher Hendershott and Henry Fleming both owned taverns. *Directory* identifies the population as about 100 and the mail bi-weekly. In the 1850s, Cashmere had half a dozen streets and by the 1860s, many more lots were sold in the village. A log school had 40 pupils by the end of that decade, a population of 150 and mail came tri-weekly.

The early 1860s, brought an "oil boom" initiated by a Mr. Leick who, in March 1862, bored "the Cashmere well." At a depth of 62 feet, the auger reached the oil bed and the "black gold" rushed out with a great roar. Unfortunately, excitement was short-lived as the well produced hardly any oil, but workers drilling in the area lodged at Cashmere and helped boost the community's economy.

A local legend involves a so-called "haunted house." Over the years, a place known as the Sutton house gained a reputation for having a ghost. The originating story may date to very early times when Cashmere was prosperous. Some rivermen staying there decided to play a trick on one of their fellow workers, a man named Blackwell. Blackwell had been so unwise as to assert to the others that he feared neither God nor Devil. During one night his friends rigged up a "ghost" operated by wires leading from either end of the room. Someone, either Blackwell or one of his cronies, threw a boot at it. The makeshift ghost was hastily withdrawn and stuffed under a bed. The ghost-makers simply laughed when the others told their story. Over the years, this story was forgotten, but the haunted reputation of the house remained.<sup>4</sup> This

building was still standing, in ruins, in the 1920s, looking very haunted indeed, but no trace remains today.

In the 1870s, Cashmere began to lose its prosperity. Two key reasons for this (and neither one concerns a curse) are likely the routing of the railway and, later, a flood. In the 1850s, when the Great Western Railway went through three miles to the northwest, thus missing Cashmere, commerce shifted to the communities located along the tracks. As places such as Newbury and Glencoe expanded, older riverfront communities like Cashmere could not compete. The decline was a gradual one.

The other problem was flooding. In February 1876, the “deluge of Cashmere” took place.<sup>5</sup> An ice jam at Moraviantown, five miles west, caused the river to rise 27 feet above low water level, causing the village to be flooded to a depth of three to five feet. A series of floods after this year forced many residents to leave. Farmers engaged in extensive clearing of forests caused swamps to drain into the Thames, leading to more flood activity as the century progressed.

In 1880, a local artist known as Professor Blot (his real name was W. L. Judson)<sup>6</sup> took a trip down the River Thames in a small boat and wrote a book about his experiences. He noted that Cashmere “seemed a most completely dead and dried-up relic of Canada’s ante railway times. There are people living who remember it as a brisk and promising little town, its mill site and ford lending it an importance which can scarcely be realized in these days of steam and bridges. Two old mills still make a ghostly show of business on the river front. Its principal street is still dignified by a phantom store, which bears on its fore-front the ancient legend ‘Post Office’ in shadowy letters. But alas! It is many a day since a disgusted postmaster put up his shutters and turned his key for the last time. So long that its shutters are tumbling from its windows, and the last vestiges of blue and yellow labels announcing the virtues of Bungye’s Ointment and Electric Pills are fluttering in the dejected breeze which still visits the place. Whoever mounts its deserted stair or treads its regular platform does so at peril of life and limb. The pretty village is in ruins....”<sup>7</sup> The mill dam was broken at one end and water rushed through so quickly that Blot and his companions did not take their boats through. Instead they found a rough steep bank on the other side and lifted their boats over.

I include Blot's description of Cashmere because it is quite simply the best description of a vanished village that I have ever encountered. One wonders, however, if it has not been exaggerated a bit, perhaps to make the story more interesting. Polk's 1880-81 *London and Middlesex County Directory* still lists George Mansfield as Cashmere postmaster. If this is correct, then either Blot was mistaken about the post office and general store being abandoned, or else Mansfield had moved his business to some other building, perhaps nearer Longwoods Road. The directory for this year also lists Philip Anker as hotel keeper and a Davis and Piveringham as fishermen.

Cashmere seems to have returned to more prosperity in the late nineteenth century. A stave factory built around 1894 boosted the economy for about ten years. Foster's *London City and Middlesex County Directory* for 1898-99 lists Joseph Atkinson as stave manufacturer and sawmill owner. Michael Dixon owned a gristmill. One suspects that Blot is correct in stating that the mills were still operating in 1880 and Polk's directory for some reason neglected to mention them. Abraham Moyer ran a cider mill, Adoram Everingham was a fish dealer and John Schrumm ran the general store. William Bassett was listed as a boot- and shoemaker, Martin McCollum as a sewing machine agent and Mrs. P. Mansfield as a sewing machine agent as well as postmistress. The population was said to be 95, although that may have included settlers in the surrounding area.

The main industry at Cashmere in these later days is said to have been fishing, particularly for suckers in the spring, so much so it was often referred to as Suckertown. As far back as 1880, Blot stated that the village had "literally gone afishing. What they do in the intervals, when fish are not in season, does not appear on the surface...."<sup>8</sup> He continued: "Evidences of the fishing industry were lying around in the most unprofessional carelessness, in the shape of ropes, nets, and boats, indicating that at least a portion of the fishermen follow the calling en amateur."<sup>9</sup>

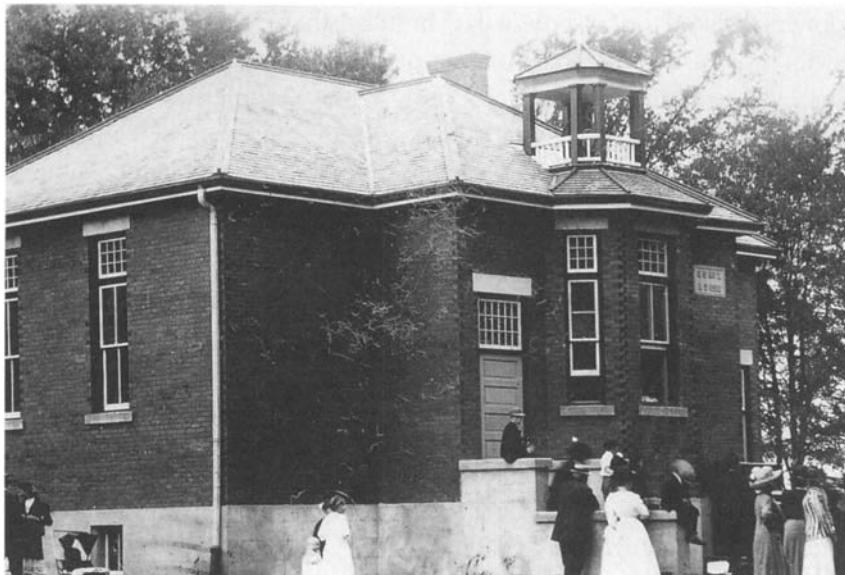
Whether or not fish were the reason for Cashmere's continued, if less impressive, prosperity is hard to determine, although the directories for this period show that there were still a few other businesses around. What is certainly true is that the people *themselves* considered fishing to be an essential part of their local economy, as demonstrated by their determination to keep their dam, which others wanted to destroy. Lon-

doners disliked the Cashmere dam because, they claimed, fish could not swim upstream past the obstruction. Many tried to have the dam removed to allow more fish in London. The “Cashmerites” were felt to be monopolizing the fishing industry and some sort of clique was rumoured to be in control. But Cashmere defended its dam, claiming it provided its people with industry, in particular the remaining mills. Besides, they claimed that their dam *did not* prevent fish from returning to their spawning grounds, that a leap of eight or nine feet was no problem for a fish and that “proper fishways” had been provided.<sup>10</sup> This argument continued for years. Blot, in 1880, seemed to agree with the people of Cashmere, stating that their assertions were “probably all true from a theoretic standpoint.”<sup>11</sup> An attempt was made to blow up the Cashmere dam, but failed when the burning fuse was discovered in time. Finally, about 1900, the Ontario government stepped in, bought the dam and removed it, presumably to let the fish go by. The process took days, the dam being so well-built that it had to be dynamited.<sup>12</sup>

One might say that Cashmere both began and ended with the dam, for after the turn of the century, the village faded away forever. Directories continue to list the gristmill, operated by Michael Dixon, until 1908. Either this is an error, or else Dixon found some other way to operate the mills after the dam was destroyed.

At some point, possibly about 1904, the post office was moved up to Longwoods Road, where it remained until rural mail delivery began. Once it closed, on January 31, 1914, the area became R. R. 3 Newbury. The office was on the south side of the road, in a building that was just west of the modern pioneer memorial, in front of the grey barn. This building was moved to Rondeau Park to become a summer cottage some fifty or so years ago.

The last Cashmere school stood on the east side of the post office, on the same side of the road. This location was also the site of a cemetery and is marked today by a monument to the area’s pioneers, erected by the Cemetery Board of Mosa township. Burials took place there from 1832 to 1915. The school’s pump still stands out front, but the school, which closed in 1968, has been moved up to Newbury to become the Royal Canadian Legion Hall. Although the building is hardly recognizable as a school anymore, the bell is on display in front of it.



Cashmere Methodist, later United, Church. This unusual and attractive building, once on the north side of Longwoods Road, was demolished years ago. *Courtesy of Gordon McDonald.*

Cashmere United Church, formerly Methodist, stood to the front of the Huckle property on the north side of the road, just to the west of the school and post office locations. It was demolished before 1950.

What was once Cashmere is now Cashmere Farms, owned by Ross Patterson and family. The Pattersons have problems with people strolling about their property, looking for remains of Cashmere. Please respect their "No Trespassing" signs! Little remains to be seen today, except the remnants of Singleton Gibb's dam, which stretch across the river at this point. Nothing else of village days linger, except the white frame building on the north side of the road, across from Cashmere Farms. This is the house where Corporal Smythe spent his final days.

### Ferguson's Crossing or Shield's Siding

This hamlet, in Mosa township on the Grand Trunk or CNR, was also known as Shield's Siding. There is a Shield's Siding Road there today.

## Kilmartin

First settled by Scottish Highlanders, around 1826, along the stretch that became the Metcalfe-Ekfrid Townline, Kilmartin became an active business community. For more information, see the listing under Township of Metcalfe.

## Knapdale

With Hector McLean as postmaster, a post office named Knapdale opened in November 1871 on the west corner of Concession 5/6 and Sideroad 12/13 (Oil Field Drive and Big Bend Road) in Mosa township. The lone house standing there today may be old enough to have been this office, named, no doubt, after the Knapdale in Strathclyde, Scotland, a moor scattered with many small lochs. The Scottish Knapdale is just north of the village of Kilmartin. The fact that Knapdale and Kilmartin are as geographically close together in Ontario as they are in Scotland is not surprising since this part of Ontario was settled by Scots from that area, formerly known as Argyllshire.

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ONT.

Later the Knapdale post office was shifted to the west corner of Oil Field Drive and Pratt Siding Road, somewhere near the deserted house, and eventually moved to a building on the north side of Knapdale Drive. According to old maps it was in between Big Bend and Pratt Siding roads. Neither the second or third offices are still standing. Once the post office closed on the first of January, 1915, the area became R. R. 2 Newbury.

Although old directories often list a variety of shops under the heading of Knapdale, the community was probably most important as a post office. The other businesses may have been nearby but more likely were scattered around the surrounding countryside. No one in the area today seems to know much about Knapdale, which suggests that it cannot have been much more than a hamlet, and possibly only a post office. The only business for which a location can be confirmed is that of Duncan and Neil Mitchell's sawmill. In the late nineteenth century, this mill stood just north of the Oil Field Drive and Pratt Siding Road intersection.

## Newbury Station or North Newbury

This station on the CPR line was north of Newbury, near the Mosa/Euphemia Townline. Today there are three houses here, located near the tracks.

## North Glencoe Station

At one time the CPR station was connected to Glencoe. See the listing under the Township of Ekfrid.

## Pratt Siding

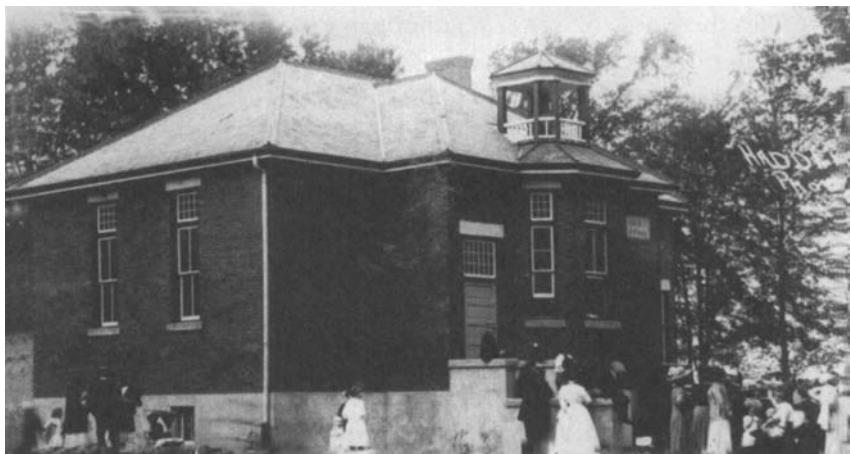
This short-lived railway fuelling point developed on County Road 14 (Concession Drive) south of the CNR tracks between Sideroads 12/13 and 8/9 (Big Bend and Pratt Siding roads) in Mosa township.

In 1854, the Great Western Railway was built through this area. It is said that when the first train came, workmen clambered on board for a ride. Such excitement—they must have been travelling at least six miles per hour as the train travelled along, chugging and puffing and snorting. Some women of the district, who had never seen a locomotive before, took one look at it as it came towards them and ran for their lives.<sup>13</sup>

In those days, with trains still using wood-burning engines, it was necessary to create fueling points. Fuel depots were always set up in well-wooded spots, and Pratt Siding was such a place in those days. A huge woodyard was maintained at the spot, with hundreds of cords of wood, mainly oak, piled in it. A man named William Haggerty was in charge of this yard.

Pratt Siding owes its name to the foreman of the construction gang, consisting mainly of Irish immigrants, who built the line through this section.<sup>14</sup> A number of shanties and two section houses were hastily erected to shelter workers. The section boss, Alexander Grey, lived in one of the houses. Mrs. Jane Curry, who is said to have boarded 28 men “in the neighbourhood,”<sup>15</sup> bought the provisions for her boarders at the Glencoe store.

PRATT SIDING  
NO 9 M  
1859  
ONT.



The opening of this fine new brick school at Pratt Siding in 1912 was a social event for the neighbourhood. *Courtesy of Harold Gilbert.*

The first school at this site, S. S. No. 2, was built sometime in the 1850s or '60s. According to one source, there was an earlier log school. According to another, there was never a log or even a frame school at the site and the 1850s school was constructed of bricks.<sup>16</sup> The second building, also brick, was erected in 1912.

By the 1860s, what there was of Pratt Siding had disappeared. The growth of Glencoe to the east, and Newbury to the west, ended the any plans for the future of the little place set between them. With such large centres nearby, Pratt Siding was no longer necessary. As well, with the disappearance of wood-burning locomotives, refuelling spots like Pratt Siding became obsolete. Besides, by now, most of the trees were harvested and the area transformed into farmland. Pratt Siding has not been listed in a Railway guide since 1915.

Nevertheless, in spite of the hamlet's disappearance, a post office named Pratt Siding opened November 9, 1909, under James Watson. The school was used as the post office and mail was dropped off by train. This post office closed about three years later, the same year the new school was built. In August 1962, Pratt Siding School, as it had become known, celebrated its 50th anniversary. That year construction began on a new four-room school across the road. Once S. S. No. 2 was unified with Sections 1, 3 and 5, a larger building became a must.

Today, there are still signs to announce Pratt Siding. There are several modern homes built at the spot. It looks very different from the busy days when the railroad was being built and this part of Ontario was covered with forest.

### Woodgreen

Woodgreen, sometimes spelled as two words, was at the corner of Highway 2 (Longwoods Road) and Pratt Siding Road. A post office by this name opened in August 1894 under Edwin Weeks and closed February 1914. For many years, a general store, the Woodgreen Variety, stood on the southwest corner remains today, an empty storefront.

WOOD GREEN  
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94  
ONT.!

## XII. TOWNSHIP OF NORTH DORCHESTER

### Derwent

The community called Derwent lay on the Westminster/North Dorchester townline (now Highway 74 or Westchester Bourne) where the road connects with Concession 4 Westminster (Dingman Drive). While never very large, the village contained a few important early businesses.

Similar to many early settlements, one of Derwent's first buildings was a school. Known as the "Town Line School," it was built about 1850 on the Westminster side of the townline, just a bit to the north of the main intersection. An article in the *Farmer's Advocate* for December 8, 1927, describes this school, but not in glowing terms:

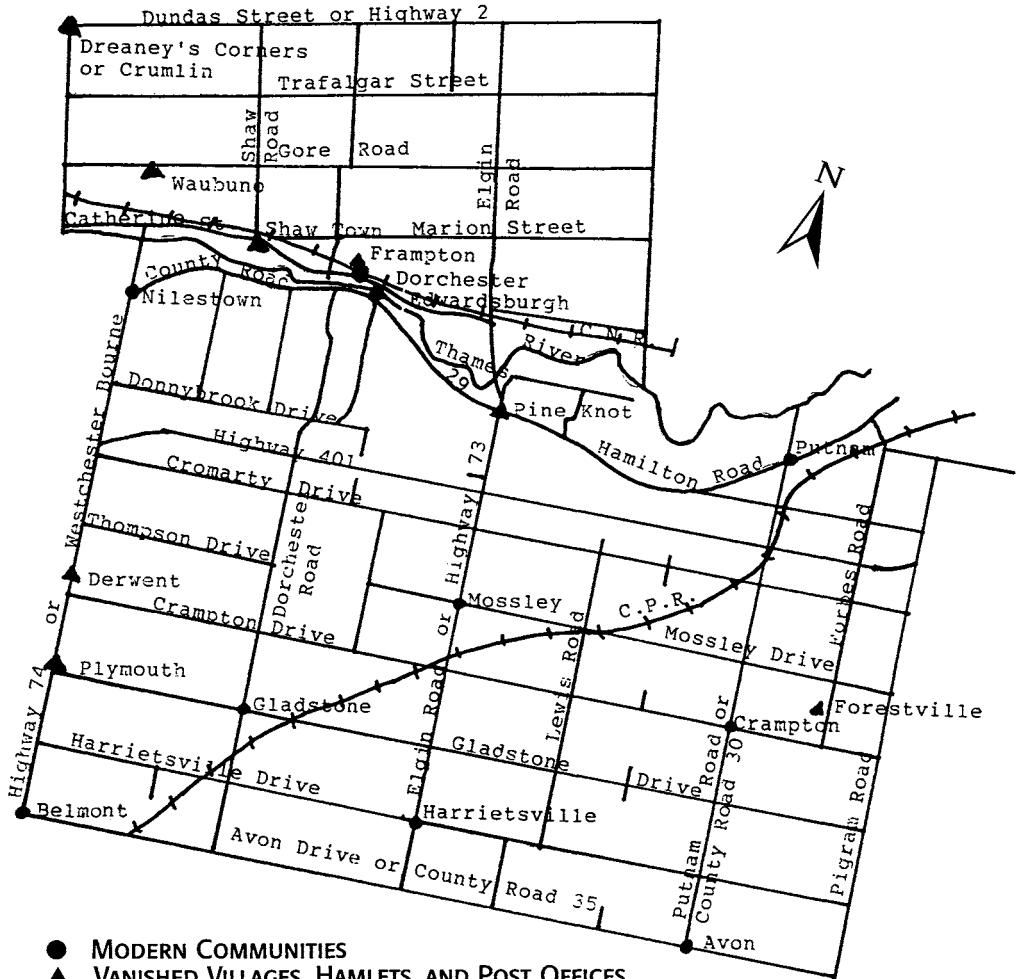
"Devoid of fads, frills or paint, the seat of learning was of slip-slap boards on a lasting timber frame, growing grey and rusty with the passing of the years. Youngsters were not diverted by pictures or prints on the smoky, cob-webbed walls ....

The old windows were set high, that scholars might not waste their time watching the passing of cordwoods and grain by the hundred loads. Heavy wooden shutters propped with rails, protected the windows after school hours."<sup>1</sup> It had about 40 pupils, from little ones to teenagers. Some early church services were held in this school by Dr. William Savage, a pioneer "saddle-bag" Wesleyan Methodist minister who preached throughout a large district in the London area.

DERWENT  
NO27  
88  
ONT

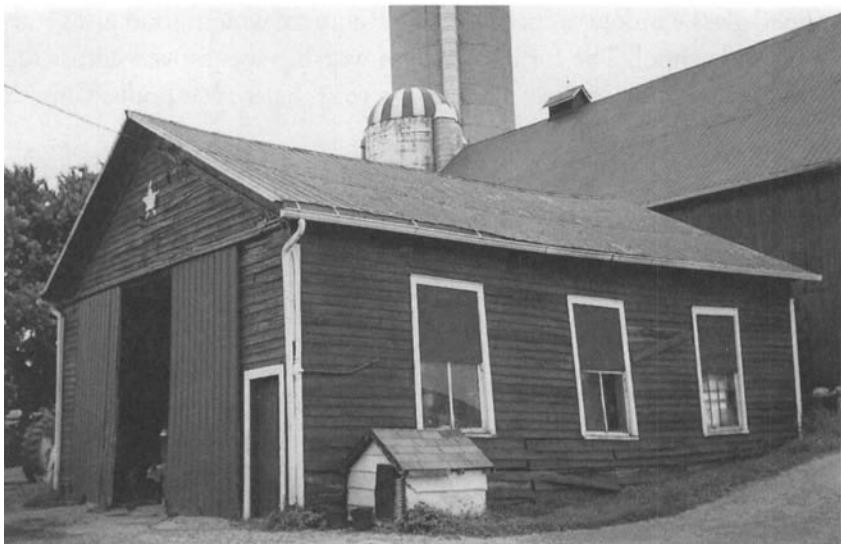
## TOWNSHIP OF NORTH DORCHESTER

1 0 1 2 3 4 5 km



● MODERN COMMUNITIES  
▲ VANISHED VILLAGES, HAMLETS AND POST OFFICES

*Township of North Dorchester*



The first Salem Methodist Church built in Derwent is now an implement shed on the Harry and Anna Marie Sleeger property.

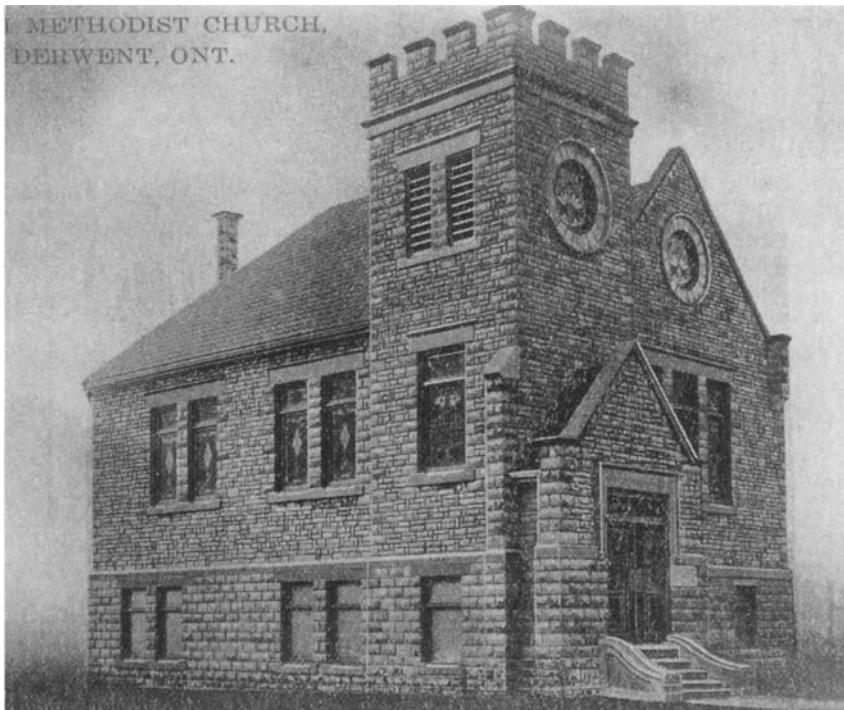
In 1872, this school was condemned, and replaced. The new school was built one intersection to the north on the northwest corner. The *Farmer's Advocate* stated: "The new brick seems a palace of art contrasted with its predecessor."<sup>2</sup> This new Derwent Public School was officially United School Sections, No. 18 North Dorchester and No. 21 Westminster.

Eventually, the settlers grew frustrated at having to use the schoolhouse for religious services, and ultimately, the first Salem Wesleyan Methodist Church was built near the first schoolhouse, on the Westminster side of the townline, on land donated by Leonard Tibbits. Fortunately, he was a carpenter and it seems logical to assume he also donated his skills. The timber was donated from the forest lots of congregation members. Once completed, his frame church became part of a large Methodist circuit.

In 1908, this church was replaced by what one local historian called a "fine concrete block building."<sup>3</sup> Again, volunteer labour played a large role in the construction, blocks were made for free, and the interior was finished in oak selected from local timber stands. Beautiful memorial

stained glass windows adorned the new church, which stood just south of the old school. The former place of worship was moved across the road to become an implement shed. In 1925, Salem Methodist Church became Salem United Church.

A map of provincial communications in Canada West made by Baron Von Rottenburg, assistant quartermaster general, shows a "Post Office" on the northeast corner of Lot 1, Concession 4, Westminster, on property owned by Emmanuel Manning. This would be the southwest corner of Westchester Bourne and Dingman Drive. While it may have been a spot where mail was collected periodically, it was not an official post office. Prior to the opening of the "proper" one, the area was known as the "Tibbets Settlement" since Leonard and George Tibbits were the first people to own the land along the townline between the third and fourth concessions of Westminster township.



An old postcard depicts the second Salem Methodist Church, built in 1908 and demolished in 1947. *Courtesy of the Wilton Grove Women's Institute Tweedsmuir History.*

On November 1, 1866, according to records, a post office opened under Lewis G. Willsie. Since the 1862 *Tremaine Map of Middlesex County* shows an L. G. Willsie on the southwest corner, this might be the location of the first real post office. In later times, however, this office was definitely across the road in one room of a frame house on the northwest corner. Derwent, by the way, is the name given to four rivers in Britain. The name means “river abounding in oaks” in the Celtic language.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps Willsie or some other early settler once lived along the shore of one of these rivers.

An amusing story is recorded about one of the later deputy-postmasters, a Mr. Dodds. Around the turn of the century, the Dodds family had one of the first “horseless carriages” in the district. It was a huge “EMF” a nickname for “every mile a fix” and sometimes “every mechanic’s friend.” Fortunately, the Dodds boys were mechanically-minded themselves and managed to keep the vehicle going. One day, Mr. McCallum, the Derwent postmaster of the time, was unable to deliver the mail so Mr. Dodds, as deputy-postmaster, carried out the job with his car and managed to do so in record time. His deed, however, got him into trouble for using a car to deliver the mail. Apparently the law at the time specifically stated that “mail must not be delivered along with any explosive.”<sup>5</sup>

Usually, descriptions of Derwent include a small business community. A general store was operated with the post office. A blacksmith shop was run by Alonso Tibbits on the southwest corner before 1870, later there would be two blacksmiths on this corner. Art Greenwood, owner of the property at the time of research, has found lots of blacksmith equipment and horseshoes.<sup>6</sup> Another blacksmith shop was across the townline on the North Dorchester side. A sawmill may have been operated, to the north, near the church and school. Derwent was probably at its height of productivity around 1883 when the *City of London and County of Middlesex Directory* listed the following: Mitchell Dibbs as postmaster and storekeeper, G.R. Allen as fruit dealer, George Jeffery as carpenter, William Kernohan as drover, Hugh McCallum as blacksmith, Emanuel Manning as butcher, G. W. Manning as carriage maker, and David Walker as carriage painter. Since Edward Waterland appears in earlier and later directories as a blacksmith in

Derwent, probably with Hugh McCallum, he was likely missed in this edition for some reason or other. The population, probably somewhat exaggerated, is said to be 100 at that time.

As with other villages, the beginning of rural mail delivery led to the closing of Derwent's post office. After June 1, 1914, the area then became R. R. 2 Belmont. The frame building which had housed the post office for those years burned down in 1923. A slaughter house run by George Smith, and later by his son, stood on that corner for many years afterwards.

The congregation of Salem United Church gradually lessened in number and, in 1947, the church closed. A number of its memorial windows, along with a pulpit, chairs and communion table, went to Belmont United. The church was then demolished. Derwent Public School closed around 1965 when the new Westminster Central School was opened on Concession 5, now Westminster Drive.

On the first day of the new year in 1993, the City of London annexed most of Westminster township. Thin strips on each side became either part of Delaware or North Dorchester townships. What was once Derwent is now entirely in North Dorchester township.

Today there are still quite a few houses along Westchester Bourne in the area of Dingman Drive. A large lilac bush marks the site of the first Derwent school up the road on the west. Across the road, on what is now the Harry and Anna Marie Sleeger farm, stands the first Salem Methodist Church, in front of the large barn. The items removed from the second church can still be seen at Belmont United Church. Although not in the best of shape, the second school is still standing, farther up the road at the intersection of Wilton Grove Road. Although most people would drive through the area without recognizing it as a once independent community, certainly Derwent has not entirely disappeared.

### Dreaney's Corners or Crumlin

This small village developed around the intersection of the Governor's Road (now Highway 2 or Dundas Street) and the London/West Nissouri/North Dorchester Townline that became known as Crumlin Sideroad (now Crumlin Road). Never a great size itself, the settlement

was best known for a quite substantial hotel called the Dreaney House.

Robert Dreaney, born in Armagh, Ireland, in April 1821, came to Canada in 1841. After living in Cobourg for a year, learning the blacksmithing trade, he took up residence in Toronto for four years, before moving with his family, in 1846, to the quiet intersection which later bore his name. There, on the southwest corner, he built a hotel which became known as the Dreaney House; attached to it was a smithy. The hotel became a popular gathering place for the other settlers. There they would assemble on cold winter evenings, bringing news from various neighbourhoods and telling tales of their experiences in the forests of the new country. The hotel also became an important teaming stop for stage-coaches between London and Woodstock. In the early years, it was not uncommon for between 150 to 200 teams of horses to pass through Dreaney's intersection in a single day. Duncan McMillan drove a stage from London on Tuesdays, Thursday and Saturdays; its first stop after leaving the city was Dreaney's Corners.

In 1853, Dreaney replaced his original hotel with a brick one that appears on Samuel Peters' 1854-55 map of Middlesex County as "Dreany's Tavern." But Dreaney did not remain a hotel keeper and blacksmith forever. He went on to become a magistrate, and remained in this role for decades. In 1857, he was on North Dorchester Township Council from 1857 to 1875, was township reeve from 1859 to 1873, as well as being the township assessor. In 1867, the year of Confederation, he became warden of Middlesex. Around 1880 Robert Dreaney achieved the position of County Master of the Order of Orangemen. Sometime the following year, he retired from the hotel business and bought a farm in London township; his son Henry took over the hotel. Politics seemed to stay with him for, in 1883, Dreaney became reeve of London township. Henry followed his father's footsteps in politics and was elected to London City Council in 1887.

There were other hotels at Crumlin. In 1850, David Young built the Nissouri House on the northeast corner. Young's hotel had a large meeting hall on the second floor, making it also a community gathering place. Eventually his son Peter took over and the hotel continued to be operated by the Young family well into the twentieth century. But

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Harrison's 1881-82 *Middlesex County Directory* says there are three hotels: Dreaney's, Young's and John Henderson's, the latter one seemingly not receiving much attention in the records. Later, this third hotel was run by Noble Cass, but, by 1884 it was gone; perhaps it could not compete with the more established inns.

In 1850, an Orange Lodge was organized with Robert Dreaney as master. For years people came to this lodge from North Dorchester, West Nissouri and London townships, for sporting events, dinners and dances in the evening. A meeting house was built about 1861 on the south side of Governor's Road just east of the intersection.

When Robert Dreaney opened a post office in the Dreaney House on June 1, 1869, the name assigned to the office was Crumlin. From that point onward, the community took that name, which seems to have its roots in Ireland. There are several places called Crumlin in Ireland; the word means "winding valley" in the Irish.<sup>7</sup>

Charles Trump Priddis opened the first general store at Crumlin, on the southeast corner of the intersection. A frame addition came later. In time, Priddis became one of the most important merchants in London, selling dry goods, house furnishings and carpets from his shop on Dundas Street. In 1882, A. B. Campbell opened another store on the northwest corner of the intersection, and the post office was moved to his location. Turner Bailey, purchaser of the property in 1892, also ran a blacksmith shop just to the east of his store.

Polk's 1880-81 *County of Middlesex Directory* lists Crumlin as "quite an enterprising village," five miles from London. The population of the time was said to be 100, although this may be an exaggeration. The businesses included Robert Dreaney, who was postmaster, hotel and storekeeper; W. Bavens, a gardener; Henry Dreaney, a wagon maker; Mrs. Maria Wood, a weaver; Peter Young, a hotel keeper; and Seth Young, a blacksmith.

One of the earliest buildings in the Crumlin district was the school, at first an unpainted clapboard structure, built in about 1845. Often referred to as the Townline School, it was actually west of the Townline about half way between Gore Road and Trafalgar Street. Later schools were located on the southeast corner of the main intersection. When the Crumlin Road School was built in the 1940s, it had two

*Township of North Dorchester*



Crumlin intersection as shown in March 1941. The cars belonged to workmen employed at the new Crumlin airfield, now London Airport. *London Free Press Collection, The D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.*

grades in each room. On January 10, 1954, this school burned and, the following year, a new \$60,000 Crumlin Public School opened. When, almost twenty years later, this school was closed in 1973, the 125 students were transferred to Leesboro Public School in West Nissouri township and Northdale Public School in Dorchester.

Crumlin had a number of churches. A Presbyterian Church was in the vicinity as early as 1848. Its manse, built 1857, was to the south of the main intersection. In 1879, Crumlin and Dorchester Presbyterian churches united and the Crumlin manse was sold. A new church was erected in 1884 to the east of the intersection on the north side of the Governor's Road.

Bailey's Methodist Church, dated 1854, was also on the Governor's Road near Crumlin. This church was named after two ministers, brothers named Bailey. In 1925, Crumlin Presbyterian and Bailey's Methodist joined to form Crumlin United Church. As the Presbyterian Church became the site to be used for worship, Bailey's was torn down. In 1927 Crumlin and Dorchester United churches amalgamated and once again the Crumlin Church was used.

There was also an Anglican congregation at Crumlin. In 1888, a Mrs. Mary Eyre opened a Sunday School in her home, on the north side of Governor's Road, which she would continue for five years. Ultimately,

the local Anglicans applied for a preacher so that a church could be organized and their children's training would not be lost. The Reverend T. H. Farr conducted the first Anglican services in the Orange Hall in 1893. Up until 1905 there were only itinerant ministers from London for the sacraments and students from Huron College for services. It was not until 1906 that the Anglicans gained a sanctuary. An old Methodist Church was brought to a site on the east side of Crumlin Sideroad, south of the intersection, and was renamed St. Luke's Anglican Church. A new sanctuary was built in the late 1920s.

When Crumlin Post Office closed on February 1, 1914, the address became R. R. 1 London Junction. Over the years, most of the old buildings disappeared, including Dreaney's large hotel. Young's Hotel burned in 1937 and the Orange Lodge disappeared in the first half of this century. But some new buildings were erected in their place. Ben Scragg had a service station and gas pumps on the northwest corner back in the 1920s and a Supertest Station was located on the southeast corner from 1955 to 1975. In 1941, Crumlin Variety was built by Mr. and Mrs. Stan Fredin as a dance hall and tearoom on the site of the former Dreaney House.

During the war, airmen stationed at the Crumlin Airfield,<sup>8</sup> now London Airport, liked to come to the dances when off duty. Mrs. Fredin was said to be "like a second mother" to them.<sup>9</sup> After the war, the Fredin place became a grocery store. In 1945, it was purchased by Ken and Dorothy Benn. In 1950, a huge truck barrelled into the store, leaving the place in absolute ruins. Soon afterwards, the road was widened and a new store was built even farther back from the traffic.

Today, Crumlin's few streets are lined with modern houses. But St. Luke's Church still stands on the east side of the road, south of the intersection. Crumlin Variety may still be found on the southwest corner of the main intersection. Far to the east, on the north side of the highway, is Crumlin United Church, still used for services. In 1968, this church unveiled a stained glass window dedicated to the memory of the pioneers of the church and the community of Crumlin. Today, the west side of the intersection is part of the City of London, while the east side is in the newly created Municipality of Thames Centre.

## **Forestville**

In the late 1840s, a man named Enoch Pixley had a village surveyed on a part of Lot 1, Concession 3, North Dorchester. Evidence of his initiative comes from the surveyor's map, still preserved at the J. J. Tallman Region Collection, Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario. The map shows streets named Water, Main, King, Mill and Brock, but does not indicate what part of lot 1 they are on. Nothing else is known about Forestville and it may be that this map only represents Pixley's *intention* to build a village.

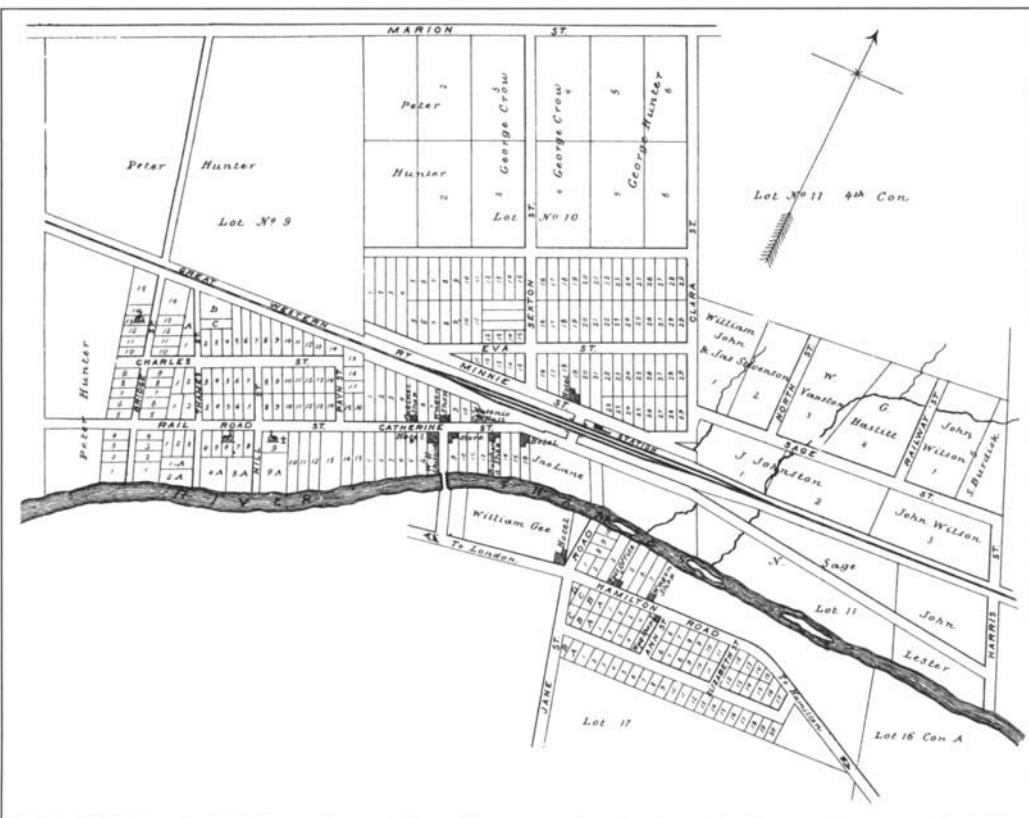
## **Edwardsburg and Frampton (Dorchester)**

The community of Dorchester was once two separate villages. In the nineteenth century, Frampton lay on the north side of the Thames River and Edwardsburg lay on the south side. With two communities developing so close together, it is hardly surprising that they eventually joined.

The first building erected in what is now Dorchester sat to the south of the river. In 1844, James B. Lane built a blacksmith shop at the east end of the village on the Hamilton Road. It is said that Lane carried 30 pounds of nails on his back, all the way from London in order to assemble his shop. A hotel called the "Piggot House," later known as The McFarlane House and later still as the Huffman Hotel, was across the road. A number of sawmills were found in the area. A Mr. McCann operated one mill east of the developing village, half way to the more southerly settlement of Pine Knot. Later, he opened a mill in Frampton on the north side of the river.

These represent only a few of the early industries at Edwardsburg and Frampton. Up until the building of the Great Western Railway, built along the north bank of the Thames in 1854, most of the development took place south of the river. Afterwards, many businesses gathered on the north side, nearer the railroad. An 1854 map of Middlesex by Samuel Peters shows Frampton between the river and the railway and Edwardsburg to the southeast on the south side of the river. At this time, they were still some distance apart but, with the coming of the rail line, they both began to prosper.

VANISHED VILLAGES OF MIDDLESEX



The villages of Edwardsburg and Frampton, now Dorchester, as sketched by J. S. Randall for the 1878 atlas. *Illustrated Atlas of the County of Middlesex*.

Although there is no indication of how Frampton got its name, Edwardsburg was named after an Edward Matthews. A London contractor, he laid out a residential area in the vicinity during the railway boom of the early 1850s.

Although the railway station was set in east Frampton, the Great Western called the station Dorchester since it served North Dorchester township. However, in November 1855, the Dorchester Station Post Office opened in Edwardsburg. This situation may have led to some confusion over the years and certainly makes life interesting for the historian. The community on the north side of the river had one name, the south side had another, and the railway station and post office had yet a third. Map-

makers used whatever names they chose. The 1862 *Tremaine Map of Middlesex* shows Frampton on the north, Edwardsburg on the south and Dorchester Station P. O. in Edwardsburg. A map in the 1863 *Canadian Almanac* calls the whole area Dorchester Station. Apparently, residents of Edwardsburg were quite comfortable with the idea of referring to their village by two names at once. A poster advertising an Edwardsburg land auction in September 1855, is a case in point. It calls the village Edwardsburg and states "This Town will hereafter be known by the above name." It then explains that Edwardsburg is "adjoining and forming what is better known as Dorchester Station."<sup>10</sup>

This poster gives us a detailed description of the services available in or near Edwardsburg in 1855. It is said to be in a good central position with the advantage of good water power, with lots of building stone, pine, oak and other valuable building timber nearby. The writer felt that in a short time Edwardsburg would be "a place of considerable importance." Already there was a large steam sawmill employing a number of men. Here threshing machines, ploughs and other farming implements were made, along with the sawing of lumber for houses. There were other sawmills, a new gristmill, blacksmiths, hotels, merchants, shops, carriage and wagon makers, butchers and carpenters. A new church was nearly completed, while land for an additional church, market house and schoolhouse had been selected and a post office was expected to be established immediately. (It was, within two months.) The railway depot was described as being near the centre of town. With London only nine miles away, the ride took only 15 minutes and cost one shilling, three pence.

Over time, the name Frampton was abandoned. It is no longer mentioned in Lovell's 1857 *Canada Directory*, but Edwardsburg is included with its Dorchester Station Post Office. The population is given as 300 and 27 business people are listed. The name Edwardsburg would be next to fall into disuse. The *Canada Directory* of 1864–65 refers to the community as Dorchester Station. When the 1878 historical atlas of Middlesex provides a map of the villages of Frampton and Edwardsburg, one suspects that it was being a bit out of date. Interestingly, the Township Council minute books do not indicate any official name change, nor do township bylaws. The name just seems to have evolved over the years to its final form—Dorchester.

Dorchester, of course, is not a ghost town. Full of attractive homes on pleasant, tree-lined street, the village now has a population of over 2,000 and many businesses. Part of its prosperity stems from the fact that it is within easy commuting distance of London. At the junction of Catherine and Bridge streets is the main intersection where quite a few heritage buildings can be found, a couple with false fronts. Just to the east, across from Dorchester Pet and Farm Supplies, is the nineteenth-century Donnybrook Hotel, now made into apartments. To the west are the attractive United and Anglican churches and, on Richmond Street, a lovely Presbyterian house of worship. On the south side of the river, the first post office still stands, at 4062 Hamilton Road, today a private residence.

Just remember that a drive through Dorchester is also a drive through Edwardsburg and Frampton.

### Pine Knot

The hamlet, in North Dorchester township at the intersection of County Road 29 (Hamilton Road) and Highway 73 (Elgin Road), originally consisted of a tavern, school, church, tile yard and probably a few houses. Today, the area is quite built up and certainly more people live there now than in times past. But most of the original buildings are gone, replaced by new ones. Gone also is the sense of community so essential to the survival of the original pioneer settlements.

It is believed that the tavern was built on the southwest corner in



Only the sign at Pine Knot Golf and Country Club serves to remind us of the former hamlet of Pine Knot.

1849. Known as the Snider House, it was opened by Peter Snider when he and his family moved there from Thorold. It soon became a stagecoach stop where horses would be switched on the route between London and Hamilton.

From a very early time, a school sat on the northeast corner. The first structure was log, the second one frame, to be followed by a brick school built in the final years of the nineteenth century, all erected on the same property. Officially, the schoolhouse was S. S. No. 8 North Dorchester, but was usually known as Pine Knot School.

A frame church stood a short distance to the east of the school, on the north side of the road. Early church records refer to it as "Hamilton Road Church" and record it as being in the same circuit as Longfield (now Crampton), Putnam and Spearman's Corner (later Banner). A Mrs. Joseph Fulkerson (known to everyone in the district as "Aunt Mary Ann") walked from her home near the Dorchester Fairgrounds to this church, every Sunday for many years, and then taught Sunday School.<sup>11</sup> A toll gate once stood near this church on Hamilton Road.

On the northwest corner was a brick and tile yard owned by the Jervis family. Many houses and public buildings in the surrounding area were built with bricks from this yard.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Pine Knot is its name. Two stories have been brought forward to explain it. One says that children on their way to school would put a stick of pine on a stump as a sign to their companions that they were not waiting for them, but had gone on. The other suggestion is that there was a pine tree near the intersection with a knot hole in it and anyone living in the area coming from the nearest post office would leave the neighbour's mail in the hole.<sup>12</sup> Either or both stories may be true. Older residents of the area do remember many pine trees standing about the intersection.

It is not known when the old tavern disappeared. Certainly it had been gone for some time before the current restaurant was built in 1949. For some time a gas station was run in conjunction with the eatery. In January 1957, Pine Knot School closed and its 19 remaining pupils were bused into Dorchester. The church building was moved to Gladstone in about 1930, and placed just north of the CPR track on the west side of Dorchester Road, to become a store, still in use.

Today, the brick school, now covered with white siding, is a home on the northeast corner. The North Dorchester Township Garage is on the northwest corner, along with a house and a strip plaza. The restaurant is still operating on the southwest.

## Plymouth

This community, the forerunner to Belmont, was on the North Dorchester/Westminster Townline (now Highway 74 or Westchester Bourne). Much of it was found close to Westminster Concession 5 (Westminster Drive).

The founder of Plymouth, Jacob J. Manning, was a United Empire Loyalist from the colony of New York who escaped to Lower Canada after the American Revolution. In 1830, Manning, his family, and a large number of other settlers came to southeastern Westminster thus establishing the Manning Settlement. The man, usually referred to as "Squire Manning," became captain of the local militia and also a magistrate. His home, long gone now, sat on the corner of the townline and Concession 6 North Dorchester (now Harrietsville Drive) and was the centre of all activity in the area.



Rows of gravestones are all that remain of the Plymouth settlement. The cemetery is actually on the Westminster side of West Bourne.

The village that developed around Manning's home became known as Plymouth, and extended half a mile north to a harness maker's shop. Closer was a cooper whose specialty was making sap buckets, a blacksmith shop and a hotel. In 1851, the census described Plymouth as a village with a tavern, store, blacksmith and carpenter shop, grocery, grist-and sawmill. It went on to say that the mills were frequently idle in summer for want of water. In 1853, the village was described as being one mile north of Belmont.

At an unknown date a school was built near the modern North Ratepayers Hall. A frame building, 20' by 20' and covered with lap siding, it stood on posts so that spring freshets could run underneath. In 1873, a new school site was selected on the south half of Lot 24, Concession 4, North Dorchester, for the soon-to-be-built red brick Union S. S. Nos. 19 & 9, North Dorchester and Westminster, better known as the North School.

A post office named Plymouth opened in Squire Manning's home on April 1, 1853. Mail was carried there from London by a Mr. Prowse and it was he who named the office after his home town in England.<sup>13</sup> Later, a Mr. Olmstead took the mail by stagecoach. Eventually, the nearby developing village of Belmont took over this post office. At first the people of Belmont requested that Plymouth be renamed Belmont. Later they sent a petition to the Post Office Department asking that the office named Belmont be moved to Belmont.<sup>14</sup> While there is some controversy as to when this move took place, it is believed to have occurred in the mid-nineteenth century.

A church, Plymouth Episcopal Methodist Church, or the Manning Chapel as it was sometimes known, stood just to the north of the school. This church closed after 1883 and was torn down 1898. Across the road to the south was the Fifth Concession Burial Ground. The first interment was that of Matilda Palen who died in 1840. The last burial was in 1950. This cemetery was restored by the Women's Institutes of Belmont and Wilton Grove, as a Centennial Project, in 1966.

In the end, Plymouth could not compete with Belmont. Since the settlers had to go into Belmont to post and receive their mail, they eventually began to use the other services and stores at Belmont. Plymouth began to languish even from the mid-nineteenth century. Finally, only the school and church were left. The school disappeared in 1940 when

it was moved to become a farm implement shed. Now all that remains of Plymouth is the Fifth Concession Burial Ground where many early settlers, including the Mannings, are interred.

### **Shaw Town**

A hamlet called Shaw Town once existed where Shaw's Sideroad (now Shaw Road) joined River Road (Catherine Street West) in North Dorchester township. Truly tiny, it had only one business—a mattress factory, owned by the Shaw family.

The mattresses were made of felt and imported grasses. The factory also upholstered couches, chairs and stools and probably employed nine or ten men. During the 1880s, the business was thriving and it was common to see hayracks piled with mattresses being driven along Catherine Street to Dorchester Station to be shipped out by train. Shaw and Sons mattress factory is listed under Dorchester Station in old county directories; Shaw Town was probably not considered a real community by the compilers. Nevertheless, there was definitely a cluster of houses at the spot—maybe five or six. Most of them were owned by the Shaw family.

In 1967, the old board and batten factory was still standing but had been moved to become part of a nearby barn. In past years, during the summer time, the stone foundation could still be seen near the road, but time has taken its toll. This area is now part of the village of Dorchester. Today, only the Shaw Road commemorates the memory of Shaw Town.

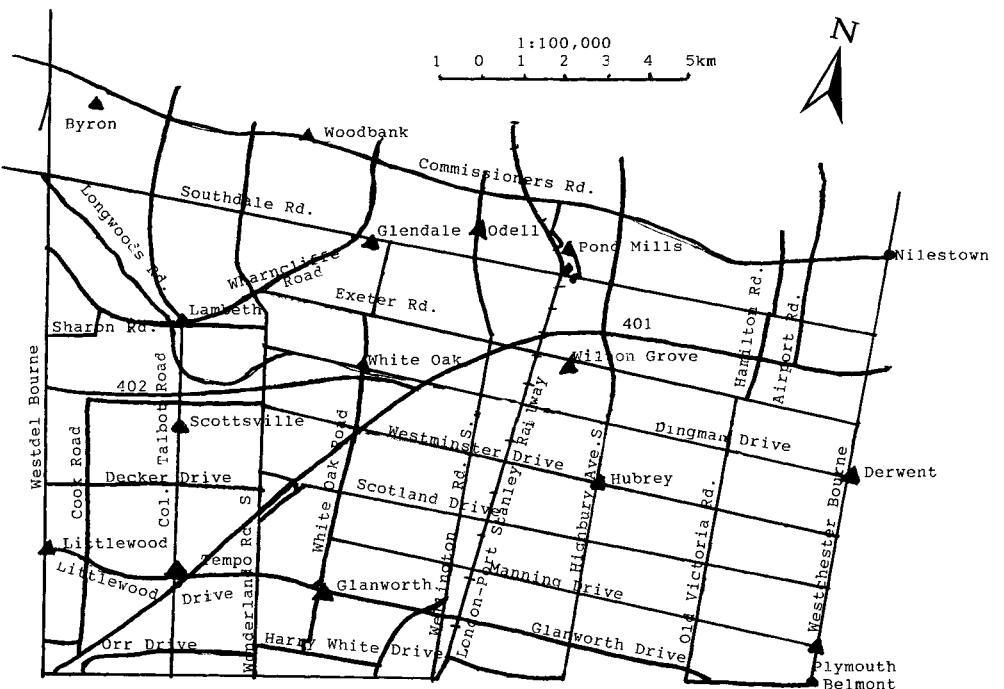
### **Waubuno**

Waubuno was meant to develop on Concession 3, North Dorchester township, on Lots 2 and 3, north of the river. This is now the corner of Catherine Street and Westchester Bourne. Waubuno is not so much a vanished community but rather a community that never developed. Thomas Ridout, Surveyor General of Upper Canada (the man after whom Ridout Street in London is named) envisioned a town here. An 1855 map shows 397 lots laid out, but only eight were sold in that year. The survey indicates a well-planned site, modelled on an old English

town with a market in the centre. The Great Western Railway went through in 1854 but even that presence did not make the spot blossom. The enterprise known to have been in the area is a gristmill, once on Waubuno Creek. Its original owner was J. Abray.

On July 1, 1867, a community picnic was held at Waubuno and other picnics and fairs were held here over the years. The peculiar name, incidentally, is said to mean "black magic" in Algonquin<sup>16</sup> or, according to another source, it is the name of an Indian killed in a fight in Thameville in about 1860.<sup>17</sup> There are still signs to announce the hamlet.

## XIII. TOWNSHIP OF WESTMINSTER



● MODERN COMMUNITIES  
▲ ANNEXED AND VANISHED VILLAGES

## **Derwent**

A school, built about 1850, was an early building at Derwent, the community at the intersection of the now Westchester Bourne and Dingman Drive. For more information see the listing under the Township of North Dorchester.

## **Glendale**

A little village called Glendale once existed near the corner of Westminster Concession 2 (Southdale Road) and Sideroad 15 (Wharncliffe Road) in London. The school and church sat at the next intersection to the east and probably many buildings were strung along the road in between the two intersections. Although never a great size, Glendale had most of the usual pioneer businesses.



The village took its name from the Dale family, early pioneer settlers in the area. Jacob Dale came to Canada from Pennsylvania in 1811 and first settled in Upper Canada around Dundas near Hamilton. Seven years later, he walked to Westminster township, purchased 200 acres and established a homestead. This accomplished, he went back to Dundas, blazing a trail as he went to mark his route. In March 1819, he set out for his new home with a lumber wagon loaded with provisions and household goods, and hauled by oxen. Over the years he and his descendants prospered. Old maps show that a large number of the farms in the area were owned by Dales. As late as 1937, much of the surrounding land was still in the possession of the Dale family.<sup>1</sup>

The land for the first school was donated by the Dales and, while the schoolhouse officially was S. S. No. 8, everyone called it Dale's School. In time, four schools were built, all on the same site, the northwest corner of Southdale and Homeview/White Oaks roads. The first school was a log building, erected in 1844. The next was a frame structure, insulated with sawdust. Eventually the sawdust absorbed so much moisture that the building rotted. The final two schools were brick, built in 1865 and in 1948 respectively. Many of the early teachers were young men trying to save enough money for medical school.<sup>2</sup>

In early times Methodist services were held in the schoolhouse but, seemingly, some of the first preachers left much to be desired. An elderly minister, Reverend McDonald, who used to drive out from London with his horse and buggy, always had a meal at "Grandpa Dale's" before returning. It was observed that his sermons were noted more for their length than for their depth.<sup>3</sup> At another time the congregation had a minister named Davis, but he only came once a month and the other Sundays would be taken by lay preachers. Finally, a church, the Glendale Methodist, was built in 1901 on the former site of a blacksmith shop, the southwest corner of Southdale and White Oak Road. This church became part of the United Church of Canada in 1925.

For years this area was called Dale's Corners. That is, until a school-teacher named Mr. Copeland learned that local people wanted a daily newspaper, rather than weekly, in order to be more informed on politics. He circulated a petition for a post office to make this possible. As a result, Glendale Post Office opened in Andrew Baughart's hotel at Southdale Road and Sideroad 15 (Wharncliffe Road) on April 1, 1882. Daily mail could now be delivered from London by stagecoach.

By 1884, Polk's *Middlesex County Directory* could report that Glendale's business community consisted of Andrew Baughart's post office and hotel, John Eagan's hotel, L. Howard's butcher shop and C. Perkins' blacksmith shop. By 1887, J. D. Cleveland's pump-making business and William Murray's carpentry shop were established and John Nixon was Justice of the Peace. Three years later, there were 16 names listed in the business directory under Glendale and the population was listed as 200. Even if the number was exaggerated, the business community could be considered quite impressive.

Eventually, these all disappeared. A 1901 directory lists only J. Eagan, postmaster and L. Howard, butcher. The post office closed March 30, 1912, and the area became R. R. 1 London. Glendale was annexed by the city of London on January 1, 1961. At that time there were some houses in the area, as well as the school and the church, but not much else. The school came under the wing of the then London Board of Education, now the Thames Valley District School Board, and new houses were built on new streets. The area became a thriving suburb of London.

Glendale of today is far from being the tranquil, sleepy village of yesteryear. The intersection of Southdale and Wharncliffe is one of the busiest in the city and the junction of Southdale and White Oak Road/Homeview Road is not much quieter. The former Glendale United Church still stands on the southwest corner of Southdale and White Oak, but is now the Westminster Baptist Chapel. A close look reveals a cornerstone on the bottom left at the front; it reads "Glendale Methodist Church." The only other reminder of the former community is Glendale Avenue, which runs parallel to Southdale Road just north of the Southale/Wharncliffe intersection.

### **Grand Junction**

These words appear on the Peters map of 1854–55 with a scattering of buildings, but the words have not appeared on any other map since. It is likely that the name referred to the corner of Hamilton Road and the first concession of Westminster, now Commissioners Road.

### **Hubrey**

The hamlet known as Hubrey was located on Hubrey Sideroad (later County Road 34, now Highbury Avenue South) where it meets Concession 5 Westminster (now Westminster Drive). While never more than a tiny cluster of buildings, it must be remembered that little places like Hubrey, with a church, school, tavern and post office, were of critical importance to early settlers.

The school at this spot, S. S. No. 10, said to date back as far as 1835, was built on the northeast corner of the intersection, as were all later schools. The earliest authentic record shows that it was a subscription school,<sup>4</sup> only about 20' by 25' and probably made of logs. Older students sat on benches and little ones sat around a big stove in the middle of the room. The door was in the centre of the wall on the east side. A story states that one winter day the students held a "hoe-down" at noon when the teacher was away for his lunch. A lookout was kept and, when the teacher returned, he found everything and everyone in order, and never knew.<sup>5</sup> The first

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teacher whose name is recorded was John Laird; he taught for a year starting in 1848.

The first brick school, built in 1860 for \$500, was replaced by another brick structure in 1882. In 1955, an extra room was added, making it a two-room school. The most famous teacher at these schools was Flora McColl, a true career woman back in the days when most female school-teachers eventually left to get married. For 20 years she taught at Hubrey School, from 1875 to 1880 and from 1889 to 1904. The largest number of pupils to appear on her roll was 79, when she had pupils of all ages, right up to Fifth Form or the first year of high school in 1879. Miss McColl was considered an outstanding teacher. In 1893, at the World's Columbia Exposition in Chicago, Hubrey School won the bronze medal for their collection of freehand drawing and penmanship.<sup>6</sup> She was the teacher under whom this prize was won. For years she corresponded with former pupils who, by then, were living all over the world.

Originally Hubrey was known as The Hub, and two stories exist to explain this name. One states that the Honorable George W. Ross, fifth premier of Ontario, was giving a lecture at the school to a literary society and, among his remarks, he described the corner as "the Hub of Ontario." Afterwards, everyone called the spot The Hub.<sup>7</sup> The other story, far more likely, simply states that the corner was called The Hub because it was in the centre of the township.<sup>8</sup> At any rate, The Hub as a name for a post office was the request on the 1890 petition. Officials decided that this name simply would not do, the reason given that it would conflict with "the Hub of New York."<sup>9</sup> This is also hard to believe, since it's difficult to imagine how anyone could ever confuse the Hubrey intersection with New York. The outcome? On April 1, 1890, a post office named Hubrey opened, with R. S. Nichol as postmaster. The origin of the word Hubrey is unknown, but it may have been chosen for its resemblance to the word Hub. Mail was delivered there from Westminster Station at Wilton Grove, about two miles to the northwest.

At some point in the 19th century, the First Free Church was built on the northwest corner of the intersection, across from the school. It appears on the 1878 historical atlas. Across from it, on the southwest

corner, was Jock Cochrane's tavern. Although it's not certain when this tavern first opened, the 1862 Westminster Township Agricultural Society Fall Show was held at Cochrane's tavern. The structure, still standing about 1871, was eventually demolished.

A few other shops must have existed in the Hubrey area over the years, although whether they were located at the intersection or somewhere in the surrounding area is hard to say. A 1900 London *Free Press* article refers to Lachlin McAllum as "a popular and successful blacksmith of Hubrey."<sup>10</sup> By 1901, a list of businesses there included R. S. Nichol's post office, J. Elliott's sawmill, William Fitzpatrick's cheese factory, and a doctor named William Nichol. In 1905, Hubrey was described by R. S. Nichol as "a rural post office" with "no village or town attached."<sup>11</sup> But it is known that at least a school, church and tavern existed there.

Hubrey Post Office closed January 15, 1913. At some later point the church closed its doors and was moved to Glanworth. The school continued until 1965, when Westminster Central School opened on Westminster Drive, then sold to the highest bidder. The closing of the school was not a popular act in the neighbourhood, and one former teacher complained that schools were not built for kids anymore, but only for teachers and school boards. She complained that there no longer any firm parent-teacher-child relationships; teachers did not know a pupil's background nor got to know a child or its parents.<sup>12</sup> But, for better or worse, Hubrey School closed.

Today, the modern addition to the school still stands on the north-east corner, home of the Croatian Sports Centre, but the older, more attractive part has been demolished. This intersection, like most of Westminster township, became part of the city of London on January 1, 1993. Highbury Avenue South is now a very busy road and dozens of cars a minute speed past what is left of Hubrey.

## **Littlewood**

This community developed at the corner of what is now Westdel Bourne and Littlewood Drive. In the early twentieth century it is estimated that as many as 100 people may have lived in this community,

largely settled by Scottish immigrants. For more information see the listing under the Township of Delaware.

## Odell

A hamlet called Odell once existed at the corner of Commissioners and Wellington roads, now in London. It was founded long before the city stretched so far south. As Odell as a settlement was never very sizeable, more has been written about the originating family than about the place itself.

The Odell family is said to have arrived in British America, in what is now the United States, some centuries ago. The name is not Irish, as might be supposed. Possibly it is an Anglicization of Vadail, a

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Dutch name.<sup>13</sup> John Odell, founder of the Westminster township branch of the Odell family, was born in the Colony of New York in 1758. He fought with the revolutionary troops during the War of Independence but apparently never

received the grant of land due to him for army service. He must have been disillusioned with the American cause, for he promptly turned Loyalist and moved to Lower Canada in 1785. There he and his wife Enor raised ten children and founded a community called Odelltown to the south of Montreal.

All their children except the youngest, a girl named Loop, moved to Westminster township in the early nineteenth century. It is not clear which of the children arrived first, but Albert, John and Joshua were among the earliest. The story goes that John and Albert Odell built the first log cabin in Westminster township, in the fall of 1811, on Lot 23, on the south side of Concession 1 (Commissioners Road), east of the main intersection. According to the story, their oxen barely survived the winter, saved only by eating the green tips of treetops which broke through the snow;<sup>14</sup> this, however, may be a tall tale.

Over the years, the number of Odells in the area multiplied. For some reason, John and Enor's eldest son, William, did not arrive until late 1836 or '37 but when he did, with him came 12 children. In time, many of the Odells moved on to other locations. By 1831, Joshua Odell had moved to London where he kept a tavern on Dundas Street.

Three years later, he moved to Belmont and became one of the founders of that community. A street is named for him—Odell Street. William Odell eventually sold his farm and moved to London, and later to Putnam.

As early as 1817, a subscription school existed at the Odell settlement, one of only two schools in the township in those days. By the 1820s, boards of education were formed and grants made for schoolhouses. A leading citizen of his community, John Odell fenced off a piece of his property for a schoolhouse. With dimensions of only 20' by 16', the first S. S. No. 3 or Odell School was probably built of logs. A frame structure would follow and, in 1867, a brick schoolhouse was set on the south side of Commissioners, west of the intersection. When this school burned, sometime around the 1880s, only the bell was saved. The fact that it burned on the first day of summer holidays was the real tragedy as far as the children were concerned; they felt it should have happened while school was in session.<sup>15</sup> To the children's disappointment, a new school was built that same year. An east wing was added to this building in 1899 and a west wing in 1920. A reunion held in 1937 celebrated the 120th anniversary of the first classes held in the district.

One of the earliest businesses at Odell was the blacksmithing trade. Fred and William L. Odell were among the earliest such craftsmen in this part of Upper Canada. Since they lived near the current location of the Canadian Blood Services Building, presumably their shop was there too. Directories consistently show a blacksmith at Odell, right up to the early twentieth century. The most recent likely was south of the intersection on the east side of Wellington Road, in the patch of woods across from today's Red Lobster.

In 1856, William L. Odell, the blacksmith, built the Warrior Hotel on the northwest corner of Commissioners and Wellington. Set on such a busy crossroads, the hotel was an immediate success, by day and night. A popular community meeting place in the evenings, people came to have a drink and chat with a neighbour about the weather, the crops, or the politics of the day. No doubt the pros and cons of Confederation were loudly debated in its taproom. A post office called Odell opened in the Warrior Hotel on February 1, 1882, with William L. Odell as postmaster. Mail arrived daily.

A few other shops existed at Odell over the years. At the turn of the century, the Walker Brothers operated a carriage-making business and later there were two butchers in the area, Jonathan Leathorn and Harry Parsons.

A 1908 topographical map shows a large number of buildings at Odell. A cluster of five buildings, one of them a blacksmith shop, stood south of the intersection. There were four or five more farther north and half a dozen at the crossroads. The school was west of the intersection, as previously stated. Yet in the early part of the twentieth century, the little community disappeared. It is not known when the Warrior Hotel was torn down nor when the blacksmith shop ceased. The post office came to an end on February 8, 1913, once rural mail delivery began and the area became R. R. 8 London. In the 1940s, the school was closed and Mountsfield Public School came into being. By that time the area had become one of the City of London's fastest growing residential suburbs. There were too many children for the little old school. The building was bought for use as a mission by a Baptist group, but later was demolished.

The hamlet of Odell is unique in this collection. It is the only one to have been excavated by archaeologists. A London archaeology club performed a "dig" on the east side of Wellington Road in 1973. Their artifacts were not analyzed until 1993, when I was fortunate enough to have the chance to study them at the London Regional Art and Historical Museum, now Museum London. The club found a large amount of broken pottery, bottle and window glass and old iron, including horseshoes and blacksmith equipment. While not making any earth-shattering discoveries, the amateur archaeologists had a worthwhile experience and certainly contributed much to the knowledge of local history.

Today the corner of Commissioners and Wellington is an exceptionally busy intersection, the area being part of the built up "Wellington strip." Nothing is visible from the road to remind anyone of the former community of Odell. However, in the woods on the east side of Wellington Road, just across from the Red Lobster and the Darlene Motel, foundations of old buildings still exist. And the graves of many members of the Odell family may be seen at the Old Methodist Episcopal Cemetery on Commissioners Road, a short distance west of Wharncliffe.

## Plymouth

This community on the North Dorchester/Westminster Townline (now Westchester Bourne) was founded by Jacob J. Manning, a United Empire Loyalist. For more detail see the history under Township of North Dorchester.

## Pond Mills

This section of southeast London west of Highbury Avenue was, in pioneer days, a separate village that existed well before the first log cabin was built in London. Throughout the nineteenth century it was a flourishing community, only to fade away in the early twentieth century.

The ponds are “kettle lakes” created by glaciers some 14,000 years ago which, legend says, are bottomless. Actually they are about 75 feet deep in places. Originally there were three but, over time, two flowed together to make one. The ponds have been the playground of generations of children who learned to swim, fish, sail boats and skate on them.

The ponds were first mentioned by John Graves Simcoe when he camped at the spot on February 4, 1793.<sup>16</sup> A large influx of settlers came to the spot after 1812, from Scotland, New Brunswick and the United States. The first to settle, in 1815, were the Sumners and Elliotts, who initially survived on products from the forest and fish caught from the pond.

One of the first buildings was the school, likely founded in 1823, but only documented from 1825. That year, William Donnan (Dorman or Dorran), a Presbyterian minister, who also served the English Settlement or Vanneck, taught in a school located on the site of the current cemetery. In 1844, this was replaced by a new frame schoolhouse and, in 1860, a more substantial building was erected on lots 8 and 9, Pond Survey, on land donated by Robert Fleming. This was S. S. No. 7 Westminster, a school by day and the centre for parties and dances on some weekends. Starting in the nineteenth century, the school took an annual picnic excursion to Port Stanley; travel was made easier once the station opened on the London and Port Stanley Railway, built in 1856. In 1867, lots 6 and 7 were added for a school playground. In 1901, another school was built which remained in use until 1956 when it, in turn, was



The teacher and students of Pond Mills School, circa 1888. The school is now part of Fanshawe Pioneer Village. *London Free Press Collection, The D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.*

replaced by a new two-room school. The original schoolhouse became a community centre.

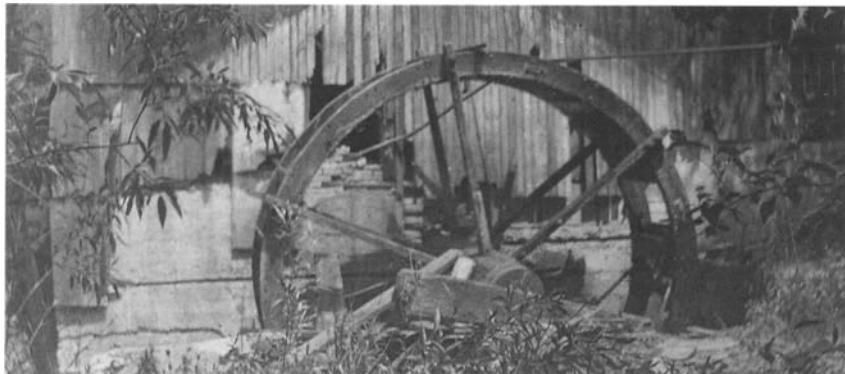
Presbyterian Scots held services in the school as early as 1825. Troubles seemed to come right away. The Reverend James Ferguson, who claimed to be a minister of the Church of Scotland, took over in 1826 and stayed for over a year, until information was received that he had been suspended for drunkenness. Ferguson was forced to leave and, for a while, it was difficult to get anyone to take charge.<sup>17</sup> It was decided to hold fellowship meetings during which some member of the congregation would read a printed sermon. In 1832, a formal congregation was organized, a trustee board was elected and money gathered to pay any "supply" who could be found. Six years later the congregation had a log church on Concession 3, near the site of the present First Westminster United Church. In 1855, a new frame church was built exactly on the site of today's United Church.

The early school/church, on the west bank of the north pond, was surrounded by a cemetery. Early grave markers show that the settlers were predominantly Scottish. The first interment to take place in Pond Mills Cemetery (May 12, 1825) was that of Jennet Grieve. Her coffin of wooden slabs was made by her husband, Elliott; there was no minister or undertaker.<sup>18</sup>

Another early building was the gristmill built in the 1820s. According to one source, its builder was a Mr. Lumeree and, according to another, it was a Mr. Kirkpatrick. Located in a ravine west of the North Pond at a lower level than the ponds themselves, the mill formed the nucleus of social as well as commercial life at the ponds. It was the deep ponds with the mill that gave the place its name. Since the ponds supplied water to the mill by means of a man-made canal, the gristmill was known as "pond's mill." Eventually, the settlement adopted the name. Around 1830, the mill was bought by Thomas Baty, a man long remembered for his kindness to the other settlers. During 1857, a year of early frosts and crop failures, Baty sold flour to the people on credit while sending those who could pay to another mill.<sup>19</sup> Years later this mill was bought by Edward Kendrew, whose name appears in late nineteenth century county directories. In 1895, a new mill was replaced the original which had burned. When Kendrew died in 1917, the mill was sold to James H. Thompson.

In 1876, the Pond Mills Cheese Factory was founded at Lot 13, Concession 2. William Jackson, who owned the property, donated the southeast corner of his farm for the site and farmers bought shares in the company. William Agur was the first cheese manufacturer. By the time it closed, the factory had been destroyed by fire three times.

In 1826, one year before Peter McGregor chopped down the first tree at the forks of the Thames, Pond Mills was a flourishing community. There was a log school and church, a gristmill and, according to one account, a blacksmith. Pond Mills was at its height in the late nineteenth century. In 1884, Polk's *Middlesex County Directory* called it "a country post office," six miles from London (the office had opened in 1882 under William Agur). Might's *Middlesex County Directory* for 1894, however, says Pond Mills has a population of 70. Twelve names are listed beneath, including Edward Kendrew's flour mill and the



The wooden overshot waterwheel which powered the mill at Pond Mills, as shown in the early twentieth century. By this time, the mill was long out of service and rapidly deteriorating. *J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, The D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.*

Pond Mills Cheese Factory. Probably these businesses had existed all along but were fairly scattered, rather than concentrated in one place.

Pond Mills post office closed January 15, 1913, and the area became R.R. 1 Glanworth. It is uncertain when the cheese factory ceased operating, although it was still open in 1926. Gradually Pond Mills dwindled to a gristmill and school, as well as a few houses. In the early twentieth century, this mill was recognized as being one of the oldest in Western Ontario. It was still using its original wooden overshot wheel. Some time in the 1920s or 30s when it needed so many repairs that it was uneconomical to continue, the mill ceased operating.

At some point, officials in London hoped the ponds could be used as a source of water for the city. While tests were being conducted, water was run off, dropping the level six or eight feet. The small pond, now the west bay of the north pond, was most affected. The drop in water exposed the roots of several small trees and the vegetation died. For a number of years a "floating" island was between the two ponds, but it was gradually absorbed and the two north ponds today are all one. Because of slow filling and impure water, the project was abandoned.<sup>20</sup>

As late as 1958, Pond Mills still had a gravel road which made a horseshoe curve around the ponds. The area to the north of the ponds was a woodlot, from which deer and other wildlife still slipped down

to the pond's edge for a drink. But development was encroaching; a hydro station had already been located in the vicinity. Soon London was to take over the entire area.

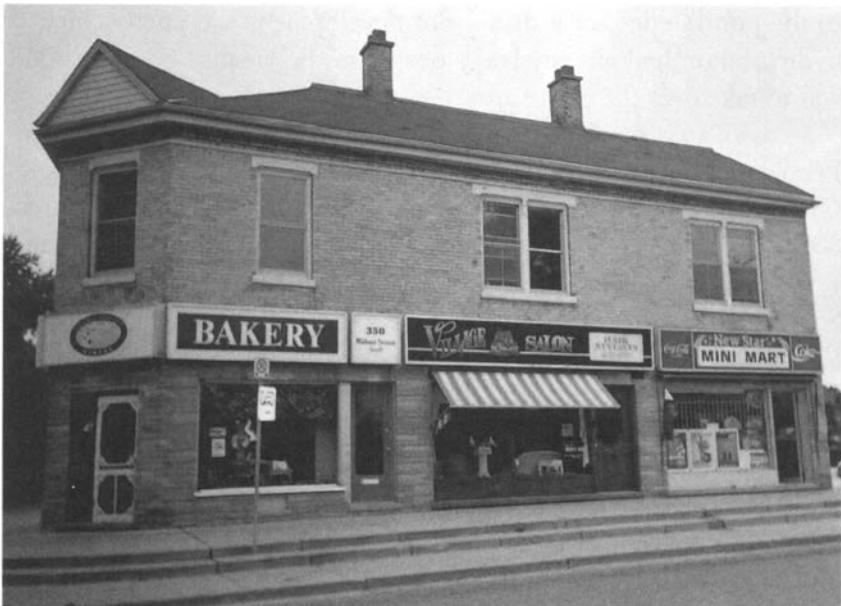
In 1970, a movement started to save the ponds from development. People were alarmed by the subdivision being created by Matthews Group Ltd., designed to house 11,000 people in the Pond Mills area. Some 213 single and semi-detached homes, 690 multi-family units and 1,080 apartment units (some in 22-storey structures) were to be built. Shopping centres and schools were also proposed. Fortunately, a plan to develop the Pond Mills Conservation Area was approved and the provincial government of the day paid for half of the land purchase. Today, Pond Mills is a subdivision of London, and there are no interesting old buildings to be seen other than the modern successor to the Pond Mills church, First Westminster United Church at 805 Shelborne. The Pond Mills schoolhouse built 1901 is at Fanshawe Pioneer Village. Today the Westminster Ponds/Pond Mills Conservation Area, managed by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, is one of the largest natural areas in London, encompassing some 300 hectares. The Henderson Trail, a nature walk, circles the south pond.

### **Tambling's Corners**

Tambling's Corners consisted of a store block and post office, formerly found in Westminster township, but now at Ridout and Chester streets in the City of London. The name comes from Thomas Tambling, original purchaser of land south of the intersection in 1872. The building still visible today was erected in 1880, when Chester Street was the boundary between London and Westminster township. A post office, dating from 1896, was established there by W.J. Braithwaite. Interestingly, it closed the same year but reopened 1903. In these early times, Tambling's Corners was a stagecoach stop.

For years, the building was owned by the Jupp family, who ran both the post office and a store. On December 9, 1943, Tambling's Corners Post Office became London Sub Post Office Number 14. During the 1950s and '60s, the intersection was called Pugsley's Corners as the store was then run by the Jupps' daughter and her husband, a Mr. Pugsley.





Tambling's Corner, now in London's Old South neighbourhood, as it appears today. The words Tambling's Corners can still be read over the corner door. The building is rumoured to be haunted.

Believe it or not, the building is said to be haunted. A former shopkeeper, who seemingly often stayed in the basement, claimed he saw a door close by itself and said that things were often moved around by unseen hands. Determined to find out more, he researched the history of the building to discover that someone was once murdered there when the site was a stagecoach stop.<sup>21</sup>

Tambling's Corners still stands and is remarkably unspoiled. The name "Tambling's Corners" is still visible above the front door, but the structure is now known as the Ridout Street Plaza. The 1880 structure is one of the most interesting buildings in the Old South—ghost or no ghost.

### Tempo

The site of Tempo, at Highway 4 (Colonel Talbot Road) crosses just north of Highway 401 in the former Westminster township, has many buildings, but the village is no longer recognizable.

*Township of Westminster*

“Orr School,” officially S. S. No. 15 and dating from 1830, was one of the early buildings on the southwest corner of the intersection. The schoolhouse was named after the nearby Orr family who probably donated the land. Replaced by a brick school sometime in the 1840s, it was known to have had 68 students in its one room by 1855. It stood for over a hundred years, only to be demolished in the mid-twentieth century.

In June 1864, A. Rommey was appointed postmaster when the Tempo Post Office opened. The name was given by Thomas Weldon who came from Tempo, Fermanagh, Ireland. The word, said to mean “the right-hand turn” in Irish, may refer to a ritual in ancient pagan sun worship in which a clockwise turn was made towards the sun.<sup>22</sup> Tempo Post Office was on Concession 8, Lot 51, according to Anderson’s *County Directory* for 1868–69, today the corner of Colonel Talbot Road and Orr Drive. Later, the post office operated from the general store just to the north of this intersection.

Besides Rommey and the Post Office, Anderson’s 1868–69 *Directory* also lists shoemaker Malcolm McBride, blacksmith George Swift and Justice of the Peace William Pennock. There were two Methodist Churches in the neighbourhood—Episcopal and New Connection. One of these may have been the Methodist Church, later United, which once stood on the west side of the road at Scottsville. There seems to have been a toll gate just to the south of Tempo in the nineteenth century, but when it was established or removed is not known.

In 1885, North Street Presbyterian Church was constructed in between Littlewood and Orr drives. At one time, a shed for buggies or sleighs sat to the west of it. In 1902, the church was extensively renovated.

Tempo was at its zenith in the late nineteenth century. Might’s 1894 *County Directory* lists a large number of shops and claims that the village has a population of 200. No doubt this is a great exaggeration and probably represents the total number of people who picked up their mail at Tempo Post Office. Nevertheless, the number of businesses is impressive. Hector Bannattyn was blacksmith, Frank Bennett was apiarist, Samuel Dangerfield was carpenter, Eli L. Davis was Justice of the Peace, James F. Davis kept livestock, James Ingle was butcher, James McGregor was painter, J. E. Orr was florist, as was Charles Shaver, Miss

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VANISHED VILLAGES OF MIDDLESEX



*Top:* Serle's general store, Tempo, sits board up and awaiting demolition in January 1956. At this time, Highway 401 was being built through the village, and most of Tempo's remaining buildings were also demolished. *London Free Press Collection, J. J. Tallman Collection, University of Western Ontario.*

*Bottom:* Tempo School awaits demolition in October, 1956. The photographer snatches one last shot as the bulldozer is at the ready. *London Free Press Collection, J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, University of Western Ontario.*

H. Swindle was dressmaker, Alexander Taylor was postmaster and general store keeper, and A. J. Taylor was a barber who also sold cigars.

In the early years of this century, Tempo began to lose its vibrancy. On January 15, 1913, the post office closed, the area becoming R. R. 3 Lambeth. By 1947, only the general store, school and Tempo Presbyterian Church were left, along with some homes. The store was where the overpass now is, between the church and the school.

Much of what remained at Tempo was torn down in the mid-1950s to make way for the construction of Highway 401. The Department of Highways expropriated about 40 acres in the area. Early in 1956, practically all that was left of the hamlet was for sale. In spring of that year, Tempo School was torn down to allow for the cloverleaf ramp formation. This was an unfortunate loss, as S. S. No. 15 was probably one of the oldest schools in Westminster, if not in Middlesex.<sup>23</sup> At the time it was to be closed, Mrs. Robert McLaren was still teaching 26 pupils there. While another school was built at a new location to the east of the village, on what is now Tempo Road, the students attended classes at the church Sunday School Room.



One building that does remain in the former village. Tempo Presbyterian Church is still used for Sunday services in the twenty-first century.

Today quite a few buildings can be found at Tempo. Travellers driving south on Colonel Talbot Road will notice the new hotel, Stoneridge Inn, on the west side. Tempo Presbyterian Church stands between this building and the highway. Still used for weekly services, it also serves as a local community centre. Both the church and the manse beside it look a bit out of place beside all the newer buildings. Still, the older ones are infinitely more attractive. The laneway running between the church and the inn is the old road that existed before the 401 and the overpass arrived. The only other reminder of the village of Tempo is the road on the other side of the highway, now called Tempo Road.

### White Oak

The core of this hamlet was found at the corner of White Oak Sideroad or County Road 43 (now White Oak Road) and Concession 4 Westminster (now Dingman Drive). Other buildings, such as the school and church, were scattered along White Oak Road to the south.

The first White Oak School of either log or frame structure was built in the 1850s at the corner of Concession 5 (Westminster Drive) and White Oak Road, with W.R. Nichol as the first teacher. Later, a brick schoolhouse, built at the same site, stood until 1952 when it too was demolished to make way for a more modern one-room building.

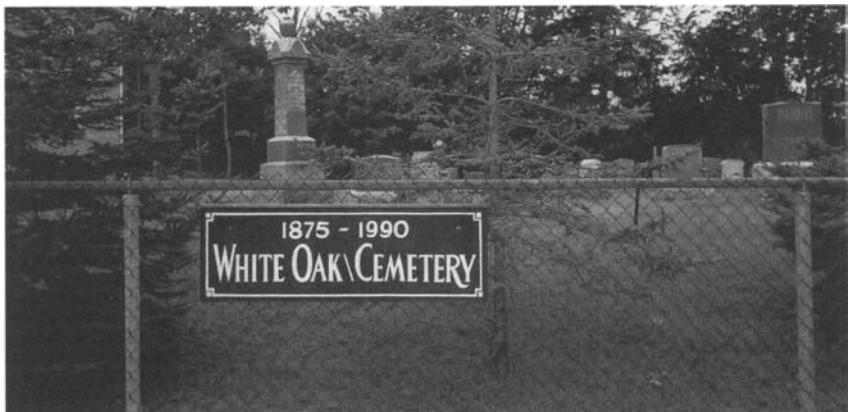
In 1875, a frame building, erected still farther south of the intersection, became a Union Bible Christian Church for the area; land



for a cemetery was acquired at the same time. Later, in 1884, the congregation joined with the Methodist Church of Canada. Known as White Oak Church, it was part of the Westminster Methodist Circuit, along with Baker's (Littlewood), North Street, Delaware (Sharon), Byron and The Gore. The adjoining graveyard became known as White Oak Cemetery. In 1914, the building was bricked over and, with the Church Union in 1925, became part of the United Church of Canada.

The post office opened with John Archer, postmaster, in 1879. It is said that the office was named after the white oak trees very common to the area. Initially, the post office separated from the store, but in later times they functioned from the same building on the northwest

*Township of Westminster*



The church (right) and cemetery (above) at White Oak still bear the name of the former hamlet, but the United Church is boarded up and no longer used for services.



corner of the main intersection. A blacksmith shop was just to the west. A cheese factory, opened on the southwest corner in 1883, became known as the White Oak Cheese Company.

White Oak probably was at its peak about 1895 when Micht's *Middlesex County Directory* lists John Archer as blacksmith, James Clark as builder, J. W. Crinklaw as cheese manufacturer, Miss Louisa Flawn as music teacher, Mrs. Harriet Milson as postmaster, Matthew Moat as

contractor, Jesse Shaver as general store owner, the Shore Brothers as livestock and poultry raisers, William Shore as timber dealer, and Gideon Vanderlinder as fruit dealer. The given population of 100, as with some of the others, could be misleading. At this time, White Oak was an independent village still five miles south of the City of London.

By the beginning of the 20th century, businesses were disappearing. The post office closed January 15, 1913, although the store continued for many years. In 1965, local students began attending the new Westminster Central School on the Fifth Concession, now Westminster Drive. In 1969, the White Oak United Church congregation joined First Westminster United Church.

Today the old buildings at the main intersection are gone. A white house on the southwest corner stands on the site of the cheese factory; it was moved there after the cheese factory was torn down. Farther south, however, on the other side of the 402, the 1952 school may still be found. Now belonging to a transport firm, it has trucks parked in front of it. The White Oak Waterworks (1959) is across the road. Farther south still is White Oak United Church and Cemetery. The church is unused, boarded up and deteriorating. The cemetery, however, is well maintained. The village of White Oak is gone, and only a few buildings remain to remind us of its past.

## Wilton Grove

Wilton Grove was an unusual community in that its location is hard to pinpoint. Over the years, a very large area has been referred to as Wilton Grove. It seems to have ranged over half of Westminster township, from Lambeth to Belmont, from Wilton Grove Road to Scotland

Drive. Having said this, there is one spot which can be called the nucleus of Wilton Grove. This was Concession 3 (now Wilton Grove Road) at Pond Mills Road, near the London Port Stanley Railway crossing.

A log church was built near this spot in 1838, not far from where Wilton Grove United Church would be in later days. In 1854, John Elliott and Arthur Baty each gave half an acre of land for the building of a Presbyterian Church. A year later, a frame structure

was erected and, in 1880, a new church was dedicated. At the time of Union, the congregation chose to become Wilton Grove United.

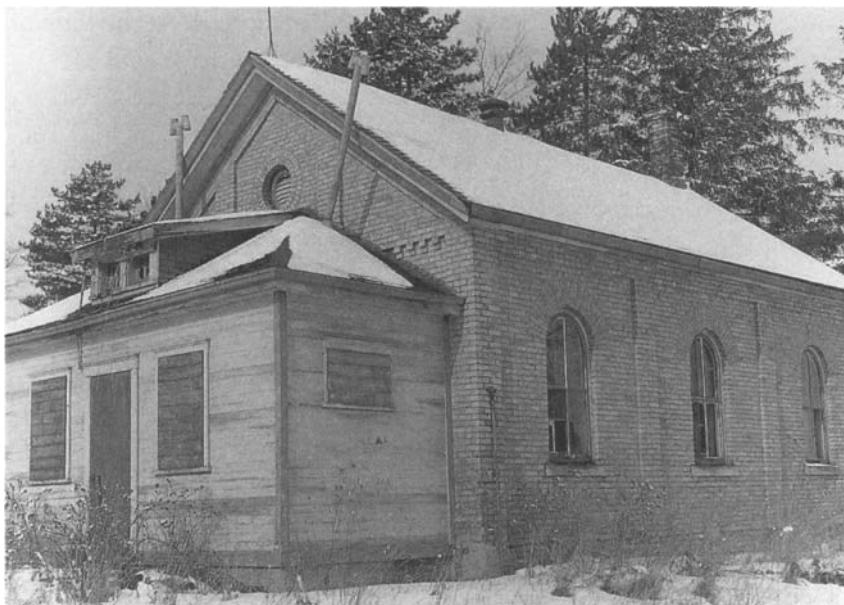
Another Wilton Grove institution was its school, the first S.S. No. 23 being built about 1840. Known as Frank School, the one-room log structure faced the third concession of Westminster (now Exeter Road) and was at the corner of what is now Holiday Avenue. After thirty plus years of providing education for the community's children, it was replaced by a one-room brick schoolhouse set just to the east of the old site. When, in 1951, a new four-room ranch-style school was built on five acres of land on the north side of Wilton Grove Road just east of Wellington Road, the old brick building became a community centre until May 1956.

By 1856 Westminster Station could be found on the north side of Concession 3, west of the tracks where the London and Port Stanley Railway crossed. This station became the first home of the Wilton Grove Post Office when it opened November 1, 1873, with Thomas Hogg as postmaster. Obviously, mail was dropped off the trains for delivery by horse and buggy to Hubrey and Pond Mills.

On the first of July 1879 when Peter Murray took over as postmaster, he moved the post office to his home, east of the tracks on the south side of Concession 3. His son Andrew took the mail to Hubrey and Pond Mills. In 1912, rural mail delivery began but, surprisingly, the Wilton Grove Post Office did not shut down. Mail arrived at the station at 5:40 am, Murray would take it home, and he and his wife would sort it. The mail was then delivered along two rural routes by two employees. The returning mail went to the station for noon pick-up.

On September 25, 1918, Peter Murray's son William took over the post office and would remain in this role until October 30, 1957, when his wife, Mabel, assumed his position. On June 2, 1953, William Murray received the coronation medal from Buckingham Palace for his long-standing services.<sup>24</sup>

There were many other people involved in a variety of commercial operations in the Wilton Grove area, but it is now difficult to say where they were. The fact that the words "Wilton Grove" refer to such a large area makes it difficult. Old directories do not help much. Polk's 1884 *Middlesex County Directory* lists Peter Murray as postmaster, William Agur as cheese manufacturer, Reverend Francis Ballantyne as



Wilton Grove School, S. S. No. 23 Westminster, stands empty in the mid-twentieth century. It has long since vanished, along with every trace of the village atmosphere that Wilton Grove once possessed. *A. S. Garrett Collection, J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, The D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.*

Presbyterian minister, the Elliott Brothers as sawmill owners, Edward Kendrew as flour mill owner, John Muxworthy as blacksmith, L. Odle as hotel keeper, L. Skelton as hotel keeper, and James Walker as blacksmith. Kendrew and Agur are also mentioned under Pond Mills so it may be that they were somewhere in between the two communities. The Elliott Brothers, James and John, were just east of the post office, near Highbury Avenue. The locations of the others, especially the hotel owners, are a mystery.

The 1884 directory states that Wilton Grove is a village five miles south of London. As London developed throughout the twentieth century, however, urban development crept closer and closer to Wilton Grove. The inevitable annexation occurred in 1961. With no longer a need for a separate post office, the Wilton Grove Post Office closed on January 31, 1962. The 83-year-old Murray family business, a holdover from another time as one of the last farmhouse post offices in Ontario, was gone.

S. S. No. 23 also became a relic of the past. Some of the area's students attended school in the city. Others went to Westminster Central School on Concession 5 (Westminster Drive), built in 1965. In March of 1970, the old Wilton Grove School became an annex of Sir George Ross Secondary in northeast London. Renamed the Forest City School, it became a school for special students, only to be closed in 1996.<sup>25</sup> In September of 1973 the new Wilton Grove Senior Public School opened at 626 Osgoode Drive. It still exists today.

Other buildings associated with Wilton Grove have disappeared. There is no longer a Wilton Grove United Church, nor is there a Westminster Station, although the tracks still run through the area. Today, the name Wilton Grove still appears on a modern map of London but it is an industrial section, full of warehouses and factories, a far cry from the idyllic setting of yesteryear.

## Woodbank

A post office by this name once existed in Westminster township on Commissioners Road between Wonderland and Wharncliffe. Established in 1892 by Amos Askey, the office closed October 1, 1909. At that time Woodbank Post Office would have been in a totally rural area between London and Byron.

WOODBANK  
NOE 2  
1992  
ONT.

## XIV. TOWNSHIP OF WEST NISSOURI

### Belton

Belton developed around the CNR crossing on Concession 5, West Nissouri (also known as County Road 27 or Wellburn Road). One of the few communities that still has road signs to announce it, Belton at first may not seem like a vanished village. It has about the same population it always had, if not more. Its commercial core, however, is gone, and many of its heritage buildings have disappeared or been moved elsewhere.

Belton was most important as a railroad stop. The date of the first station cannot be traced, but likely was there in the very early days of the railway, when the CNR was still the Grand Trunk. Originally called

Morden's Crossing, the stop later became known as Kelly's Station,

in recognition of a Mr. Kelly, the original owner of the land for the station site. It is said that Kelly donated a few loads of wood to the railway in exchange for having the station named after himself. The original building, a mere shanty, may have been on the west side of Wellburn Road. Between it and the

road were two houses built as accommodation for the section foreman and other railroad workers.

The chopping of blocks of wood for fuel for the train became an important industry in the area. Thousands of cords of wood were supplied to the railroad annually. Eventually, the surrounding forests were depleted and the wood supply exhausted. But the station remained



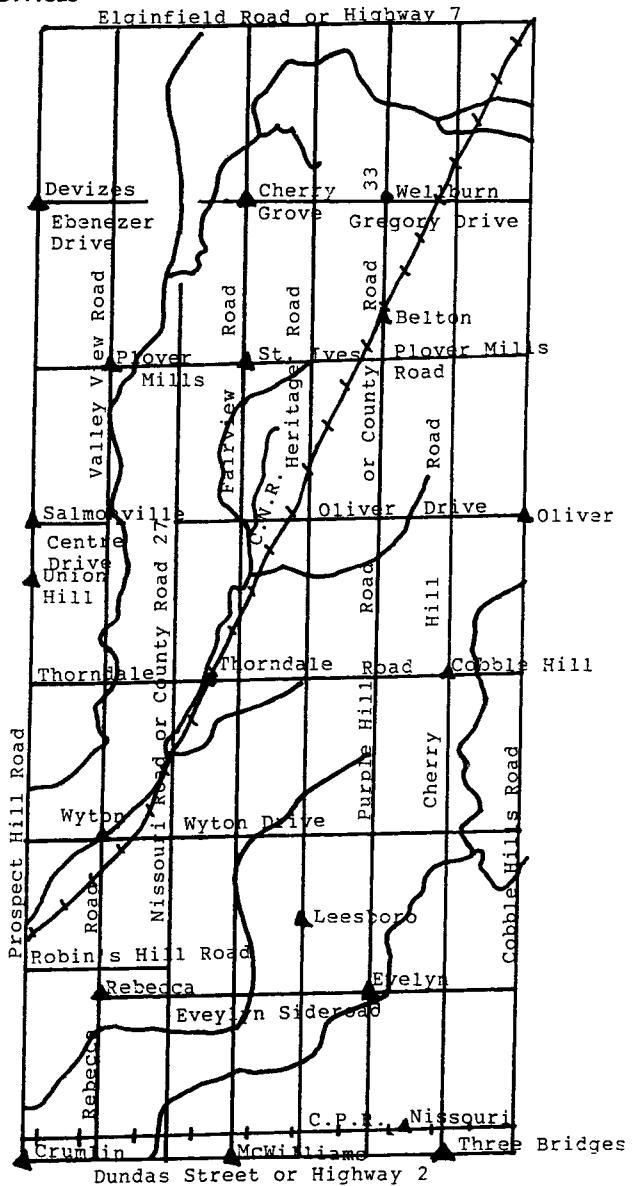
*Township of West Nissouri*

**TOWNSHIP OF WEST NISSOURI**

- MODERN COMMUNITIES
- ▲ VANISHED VILLAGES,  
HAMLETS AND POST OFFICES

1:100,000

1 0 1 2 3 4 5km



busy since local farmers used it to ship grain, sugar beets and hay. Some time before 1900, a grain elevator was constructed beside the station, the grain being elevated by horsepower. The stockyards beside the elevator emphasized the agricultural base of the local economy.

Eventually this station fell into disrepair. A description of the station by an anonymous writer was printed in the London *Free Press* November 8, 1886. He describes it as "...a dilapidated, weather-beaten depot, with half the plank flooring removed, the windows knocked out and the door in; the walls bare and neglecte.... If ever a passenger depot on the GTR required renovating and fumigating and repairing and better and closer attention, that depot is Kelly's Siding...."<sup>1</sup> Eventually, a new station replaced the original; the final station, now a home, likely dates from the 1920s. Its second storey had rooms for the section foreman.

On April 1, 1877, a post office named Belton was established on the Belton Sideroad (now Plover Mills Road) somewhere near the CNR crossing. Mail was delivered daily by the railway. According to some, the community was named after the first postmistress, a Miss Belton,<sup>2</sup> but, according to official post office records, the first postmaster was John Morden.

John Gibson is recorded as the first storekeeper at Belton, probably in the early 1880s. Originally the store was on the Plover Hills Road location, but Gibson moved it to the west side of Wellburn Road, south of the railroad track. The general store, along with the post office, continued at this second location for many years. An important gathering spot for the community, it became a place where neighbours could meet and catch up on the latest news.

Following the railroad station and the general store/post office, the next important structure at Belton was School Section 12, West Nissouri. Evidence suggests that the original log school, built in 1857, was located south of Belton on what is now Purple Hill Road. Mr. Dewitt Smith was the first teacher. In 1867, this school was replaced by a frame building set on Concession 6 Road, Lot 24. The original log school became a pig pen. A third replacement, this one of brick, was erected in February of 1885.

Belton seems to have reached the height of its success about 1890 when John Gibson was postmaster; James Burns, general storekeeper; John German, blacksmith and carriage maker; Peter Smith, carpenter;



The sign from the original Belton School now hangs on a shed in Bill and Verna Switzer's property.

and a Mr. McAinch was nurseryman. The entire population of the hamlet may have been about twenty. After this point, business life started to disappear. However, *Vernon's City of London Directory* does list the Home Bank of Canada. Housed on the north side of Belton's general store/post office building, the bank was open only a few days every week. Since the main branch was at Thorndale, money had to be carried to Belton. How long the bank remained at Belton is no longer remembered, but, according to the last postmistress, Olive Fedyk, the safe remained in the store years after the bank was gone.<sup>3</sup>

Eventually, railway executives decided it was no longer viable for trains to stop at Belton. In June 1959, Kelly's Station was moved from its site on the west side of Concession 5 just south of the tracks to a new location on Concession 6, a site just south of the Belton School on Cherry Hill Road. The small house already on the site was demolished and the railway station converted into a home for Bill and Verna Switzer. Initially, they rented the "station" until it was sold to Brian Hounsell in 1972. Since then, a new addition has been built on the north side, but the original, with its deep overhanging roof, still looks like a traditional railway station.

In 1965, Belton School closed and pupils went to the newly opened Plover Mills Central School. The school sold for \$2,040 and for some time was used as an implement shed. Today, Bill and Verna Switzer use the school as a workshop. They have preserved its original sign on a small shed at the front of their property.

The post office closed December 30, 1968, after having been operated by the same family since the early years of the century. Olive Fedyk, who took over from her father, James Box, had been postmaster since 1947. In August of 1969, Mrs. Fedyk closed the store as well. The building has since been torn down.

Today there are eight houses at Belton. The only business is Hutton Farm Supplies, on the northwest corner of Plover Mills and Purple Hill Roads. As noted, the former school and railroad station still stand on Cherry Hill Road. Although Belton has not entirely disappeared, its sense of community is much diminished.

### Cherry Grove

*CHERRY GROVE SP 17 77 m ONT*

The small village called Cherry Grove grew around the intersection of Concession 3 West Nissouri and Wellburn Sideroad (now Fairview Road and Gregory Drive). During the nineteenth century it was a brisk business, religious and educational centre, competing with Plover Mills and St. Ives for the district trade. While population estimates vary, probably somewhere between fifty and a hundred people were living and working there by the 1860s.

The first settlers included Nicholas Smith who, with four of his sons, walked from the Niagara Peninsula to the third concession of West Nissouri in 1820. There they took up land grants as rewards for army service. Another early settler was John Uren who came to the area from Cornwall, England, that same year. Decades later the intersection was known as Barr's Corners, named after another early pioneer family.

Cherry Grove was the site of one of the first schools in West Nissouri. At an early, but unknown, date a small log schoolhouse was built on a farm belonging to the Barr family. Often referred to as "the Barr section," it was south of the corner, probably on the west side of the road.

The school was built by T. B. Brown, his brother James, and Chauncey Purdy, all of whom agreed to the construction work, with each to bear one third of the cost of boarding a teacher and providing firewood for the school. A Mr. Sturgeon (either Ralph or Raphael) was the first schoolteacher in this section. James Page, a veteran of the Battle of Waterloo, taught Sunday school in this building.

Eventually a second Barr School with a slab roof was erected, also of logs but more substantial than its predecessor, also on the Allen Barr farm. Until 1864 all the pupils from Cherry Grove and St. Ives were part of this school section. About sixty pupils sat on log benches, all taught by one teacher. Possibly it was this school that had an unusual proverb written on the blackboard across one end of the building: "Honor is an empty vessel—empty vessels make the most noise."<sup>4</sup> When a school reunion was held in early July 1938, some of those present could still remember this log school.

The present School Section No. 10 was built of brick in 1873 after the log school needed a few too many repairs. This new school site was north of the intersection on the west side of the road.

Sometime around the 1840s, a sawmill was constructed on the bank of Gregory Creek, on the east side of Fairview Road. It would have stood about 200 yards from the road, between North Nissouri United Church and the barn just to the south of it. The builders, John and



The site of the Crone Mill, once an active sawmill on Gregory Creek, Cherry Grove. Nothing is left to commemorate this early industry.

Samuel Crone of Ireland, proceeded to produce nearly all the building materials needed for the area.

In 1854, the Crones helped construct the next important building for the area—North Nissouri Presbyterian Church. Before its appearance, the log schoolhouse may have been used for religious services by a variety of religious sects. Asaph Stewart was responsible for the building work. The heavy oak timbers were sawn next door at the Crone mill. The addition of arched windows made the church architecturally unique for its time period. Bricks were added in 1880, the masonry work being done for free by John Thompson, and a porch added. In 1925, North Nissouri Presbyterian became North Nissouri United. Over a two-year period in the early 1970s, the church was renovated, given a new roof and a coat of paint on its outside trim and redecorated inside.

North Nissouri Church Cemetery was established in April 1844, when Hannah Horton died at the age of 67. It was she who donated the land for the cemetery and became the first person buried in it. In order to enlarge the cemetery, an extra half-acre was bought from John Gumb in 1885. A grant from West Nissouri township council in 1920 was used for restoration work and, at this time, trees and scrub were cleared, plots levelled, fallen stones straightened and an ornamental fence erected.

Meanwhile, back at the main intersection, an Episcopal Methodist Church had been built on the southwest corner. Although the property had been acquired in 1861, it was not until about 1865 that the brick building was completed. Eventually known as Cherry Grove Church, its first pastor was the Reverend Dr. W. H. Hinks. A cook-house and some horse sheds stood at the rear of the property. After the union of Canadian Methodists, the church closed around 1884 and was sold to Edward and Maria Hobbs for their personal use. In 1906, after being purchased by James Smibert, the structure was torn down and the bricks used to build the foundation of a barn.

James Stirret was named postmaster when, on August 1, 1877, a post office opened, taking the name of Cherry Grove in recognition of the black cherry trees found in the nearby churchyard.<sup>5</sup> In the early days, mail was delivered from Belton, then known as Kelly's Siding. By the 1880s, mail was arriving weekly.

Other businesses gathered around this intersection, including James Thompson's general store, a blacksmith shop and a wagon and carriagemaking shop operated by Robert Parker and J. Warrell. In the years before 1900, a cotton gin stood on the west side of the road, north of the intersection.

Around 1911, an attempt was made to drill for oil near the home of Ed Nagle.<sup>6</sup> A stock company was formed, but the well was capped and a mystery surrounded the disappearance of a good deal of cash. Seemingly, unsuspecting farmers were tricked out of their money; not many would have much knowledge of the oil business. It seems that no great amount of oil was ever found at Cherry Grove.

About the same time that some residents were drilling for oil, others were entertaining other wild hopes. There was talk of an electric railway being built which would connect Cherry Grove to London.<sup>7</sup> A route was actually surveyed from London, going along Concession 3, crossing the Thames, and heading up to Granton. But World War I dashed all hopes of this transportation link. As other priorities dominated the scene and as car and truck travel became more popular, the idea of an electric railway was abandoned. One historian, writing in the St. Marys *Journal-Argus* on June 30, 1938, was delighted that it had never happened. He felt that Cherry Grove might have turned into a summer resort for Londoners and that summer cottages might have clustered for a mile along the Thames. He thought Cherry Grove was better off without neon signs and huge signboards.<sup>8</sup>

What did happen to Cherry Grove? The same thing that happened to dozens of other small villages in Middlesex County over the years: it became obsolete. The post office closed October 31, 1912, and the area became R. R. 3 Thorndale, which it still is today. The sawmill was no longer needed after most of the trees in the area had been cut down; the mill was eventually razed and the materials used to build a barn. The remains of its dam could still be seen some 60 years ago, but today the millrace is just barely visible looking east from the bridge. The blacksmith and wagon shop may have been victims of the automobile age—or possibly given up much earlier. Neither is it known when the general store disappeared. County directories never refer to Cherry Grove as anything more than a post office so it may be that some or

most of the businesses passed away quite early. The 1938 *Journal-Argus* contributor suggested some unusual reasons for the demise of Cherry Grove; he claimed that "the invention of labour-saving machinery, the union of the various Methodist sects about 1896, and the opening of the Canadian West, changed the community absolutely. Distant pastures looked green to so many impulsive or restless farmers...."<sup>9</sup> The date of Methodist Union was actually twelve years earlier, in 1884, but the other factors may have some merit.

Cherry Grove School closed in 1965 when Plover Mills Public School was built to the south of the hamlet, then was sold for \$590.00. The building is still standing today as a private residence. The current owners recently added a second storey. North Nissouri Church remains on its same site; both it and the cemetery are kept in very good condition.

The Cherry Grove area with its rolling hills, pleasant gullies, tall trees and the winding Gregory Creek contains some of the most attractive scenery in Middlesex County. Although very little remains of the commercially ambitious village of the nineteenth century, the place is still well worth visiting. However, do not look for the cherry grove. The trees were cut down in 1910 to prevent their interference with new hydro lines.

### Cobble Hill

This little post office was located on the southwest corner of West Nissouri Concession 6 (Cherry Hill Road) and County Road 28 (Thorndale Road). The 1878 *Historical Atlas of Middlesex* shows a store there but a post office did not open until October 1, 1882, with Samuel J. Henderson as the first postmaster. It is said that the name came from the cobble hills of very small stones, just southeast of this intersection; these hills were used for winter sports and motorcycle races years ago.

When the post office closed on November 11, 1912, the store remained open for a number of years until it probably was demolished. The area is now R. R. 3 Thorndale. Cobble Hill School, now a home, still stands a quarter of a mile to the south on the east side of the road, so altered it is hard to recognize. Cobble Hill Cemetery, just south of

COBBLE HILL  
CODE 91  
82  
ONT.

this school, consists of only two tombstones, one of which is broken. Cobble Hills Golf and Ski Club is on Cobble Hills Road, south of Thorndale Road.

### Evelyn or Henshaw Corners

The village called Evelyn was located on Evelyn Sideroad (now Evelyn Drive) in West Nissouri township. Maps usually show it in between Concessions 5 and 6 (Purple Hill and Cherry Hill Roads) or right at the corner of Concession 5. In fact, the village probably stretched from west of the fifth concession all the way over to the east side of the sixth. It is difficult to determine its exact population as nineteenth-century population estimates for Evelyn at its peak range from 22 to 150!



Henshaw Corners was another earlier name for this corner since the Henshaw family owned much of the land. In fact, George Henshaw was the first postmaster when the Evelyn Post Office opened on March 3, 1867. No one seems to know the source of the name Evelyn; perhaps it was the name of Henshaw's wife or daughter.

By 1880 a combination store and post office stood on the north side of the road, between the 5th and 6th concessions at the site of the white bungalow belonging to Herb and Gail Ivins. A blacksmith shop sat just to the west on the edge of their property. The post office was also a stagecoach stop in the days when mail was delivered by stage. In 1883, postal delivery was also tri-weekly but changed to a daily service the following year. The stagecoach left London, stopped at Crumlin, went on to Rebecca, stopped at the corner of Concession 4 (Heritage Road) and Evelyn Sideroad to hand mail to the Leesboro postmaster, and from there to Evelyn. Next stop would be Pasadena in Oxford County.

The 1884 directory probably shows Evelyn at the height of its development. The business community included Henry Bray, general store owner; James Annett, general store owner; the Cherry Hill Cheese Company; George Hopkins, cheese manufacturer; George Henshaw, blacksmith; William Huston, hotel keeper; John Lackey, blacksmith; M. N. Wright, market gardener; and the Nissouri Cheese Company. George Hopkins may have been associated with one of the local cheese



The former Evelyn Cheese Factory, today, setting behind a modern house, is used for storage.

companies, but sources do not specify. Nor is the location of the hotel known; it is no longer listed by 1887. The Nissouri Cheese Company was at the northeast corner of Concession 4 (Heritage Road) and Wyton Sideroad (Wyton Drive). The Cherry Hill Cheese Company, later the Evelyn Cheese Company, was east of Concession 6 on the north side of the road. A sawmill, listed in the 1891 directory, operated for many years. Its proprietor, R. Crosby, also made bricks and tiles.

Besides the above, there were several public buildings at Evelyn. One of these was Grace Anglican Church, located just south of the intersection of Concession 5 and Evelyn Sideroad on the west side. Erected in 1861, this frame structure was the first Church of England in West Nissouri. In 1909, the church was enlarged and bricked and, in 1964, a parish hall was built at the site. The Evelyn baseball team used to play near the church.

Another important building was S. S. No. 6, Evelyn School. The first was built on the east half of Lot 4, Concession 7, in 1860. Its replacement (1863) was shifted on the west half of Lot 5, Concession 7. When this school burned, in 1912, a new red brick building was erected on the same site.

On February 27, 1857, the Purple Hill Orange Lodge was organized at the home of Samuel Taylor, on the west side of the Concession 5 road

between Evelyn and Wyton sideroads. Five years later, a log Orange Lodge, measuring 30' by 20', was built on the Taylor farm. This lodge, L.O.L. 817, held a supper and dance every year on Guy Fawkes Day. This was replaced by a frame lodge in 1926, always the social centre for the community where dances were held every two weeks during the winter months. Their Purple Hill Fife and Drum Band won top honours at many July 12 celebrations and, at one time, was considered the best fife and drum band in Western Ontario.

Amazingly, Evelyn once had its own newspaper—the *Nissouri Nudger*. Only two newspapers have ever been printed in West Nissouri; the other was the *Thorndale Spy* which lasted only for a few months in 1885.<sup>10</sup> The editor of the *Nudger*, Richard Matthews, formerly had been active in London's municipal and newspaper affairs. A London alderman in 1903, he had been editor of the *London Echo*. In 1910, Matthew purchased the store at Evelyn and began to run his newspaper from there.

A unique publication, the *Nudger* was only published once a month, free to anyone living in West Nissouri. Those elsewhere had to subscribe 50 cents in advance. Matthews had a bright, juicy style of writing which was very popular. An extract from the introductory issue, in July 1910, reads as follows: "The *Nudger* is not very big but it is big enough. If any bigger we would have to pad it up with uninteresting matter like the big dailies. We intend that every line in The *Nudger* shall be read eagerly."<sup>11</sup> Matthews also made jokes at the expense of some of the larger communities in the area: "There is a cracking good opening in Evelyn for two such places as Thamesford and Thorndale, and if they promise to be good, we will take them in. It invites the two aforementioned sleepy places to strike the webs from their eyes and come over in a body before the young men from these parts annex all that is desirable in other places."<sup>12</sup>

In 1914, Matthews was forced to stop his newspaper because of paper shortages resulting from the outbreak of the First World War. He continued to keep the store, however, until he was quite elderly. An article in the *London Free Press* by S. Garrett that appeared on February 7, 1942, states that R. F. Matthews is still running the Evelyn General Store, but nothing was found regarding his retirement.

Like so many other communities, Evelyn disappeared during the first half of the twentieth century. The post office closed on the first of February, 1914, and the area became R. R. 4 Thamesford. In 1942, the Purple Hill Orange Lodge disbanded and its members transferred to the Thorndale Lodge. Some time later, in 1958, the Lodge building would become part of Fanshawe Pioneer Village. The Evelyn store continued until about 1950, when it closed and became a private home. Ten years later the Evelyn School would close and students sent to the new Leesboro Central School, just to the west on Evelyn Sideroad. The Evelyn Cheese Company closed about the same time. And a dwindling congregation led to the closure of Grace Anglican Church; the building was demolished in 1973.

Today, there are still a few reminders of Evelyn's past. A trip east along Evelyn Drive to the intersection at Purple Hill Road (or County Road 33) will lead to the Evelyn store, now a private residence on the northeast corner. Just to the south, on the west side of the road, is a sign erected in 1986 to commemorate Grace Anglican Church. Farther east, at the corner of Evelyn Drive and Cherry Hill Road, Evelyn School, also now a home, still stands on the southeast corner. Farther along Evelyn Drive, on the north side of the road, the old Evelyn Cheese Factory can be found to the west of an older home. A number of people live along this stretch; it is only the early shops and public buildings of the village that have disappeared.

## Leesboro

This West Nissouri post office stood on the east side of Concession 4 (Heritage Road) between Evelyn Sideroad (Evelyn Drive) and Wyton Sideroad (Wyton Drive). Named after the pioneering Lee family of the area, the office first opened in 1890 under C. Mullett. Postmasters would meet a stagecoach as it passed on Evelyn Sideroad and pick up the mail. One such individual,

Arthur Heath, was somewhat of a character but very dedicated to his job. In winter, when Concession 4 could only be travelled by sleigh, he walked in a rut left by the runners at all times. If he met one while going for the mail, it was the sleigh that had to move out of the

way—never him. “Make way for Her Majesty’s mail!” he would cry.<sup>13</sup> Leesboro post office closed on October 11, 1913, but Leesboro Central School was built in 1960 just to the east on Evelyn Drive.

### **McWilliams**

A post office by the name of McWilliams opened June 1, 1906, under William Judge, and closed December 13, 1913. Located at the corner of Highway 2 and Concession 3 West Nissouri (Fairview Road), the place was locally known as Judge’s Post Office. Mail arrived by simply being thrown off a train travelling on the nearby CPR tracks. The name recognized Dr. McWilliams of Thamesford, a long-time area doctor who had assisted in having the post office established.<sup>14</sup>

### **Nissouri**

This railway siding known as Nissouri is marked on old maps along the CNR line in West Nissouri township, just north of Dundas Street, between Concessions 5 and 6 (Purple Hill and Cherry Hill Roads).

### **Oliver**

The hamlet of Oliver was primarily a store and post office on the Middlesex/Oxford County line (now Cobble Hills Road) and Oliver Drive. The post office opened in 1879 in a house on the Oxford County side. John G. McLeod, the first postmaster, named the office after an Oxford County MP. Later it was moved to the store on the west side of the road, placing it within the boundaries of Middlesex County. The post office would close on October 11, 1914.

At one time a cheese factory existed at the site of the second house to the east. A mill built by Captain John Tay was down the road to the south, but records do not reveal any details. The Oliver store still stands, now a private home on the northwest corner.

OLIVER  
MY 16  
78  
ONT

## Plover Mills

A small but busy community developed on the Thames River near the juncture where Concession 1 West Nissouri (Valleyview Road) crosses County Road 16 (Plover Mills Road). It has the distinction of being the only place in this collection commemorated in poetry. In the late nineteenth century, Robert Elliott, a local naturalist and poet, was inspired to write the following words:

A winding road around a hill  
 Will lead you to an inlet still  
 Where willows nodding o'er the stream  
 Scarce dare disturb the lily's dream.  
 A wooden bridge afar is seen  
 Amid a mist of summer green,  
 While 'neath the cedars, clear and cool,  
 Comes bubbling up the drinking pool;<sup>15</sup>



A collection of Elliott's poetry, compiled after his death in 1902, may be found in the London Room at the Central Branch of the London Public Library.

The most significant aspect of the history of Plover Mills is the mills themselves. Yet this, unfortunately is also the most difficult part to describe. At least one sawmill and one gristmill operated here in

Robert Elliott (1858–1902) West Nissouri's famous naturalist, also had an artistic side —he commemorated the beauty of Plover Mills in poetry. *A. S. Garrett Collection, J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, University of Western Ontario.*

PLOVER MILLS  
JUL 17 1889  
ON

the second half of the nineteenth century but exactly when they were built, where they stood, who operated them or when they disappeared is very difficult to establish. This is not because of a shortage of information about them. In fact, many newspaper articles have been written about Plover Mills over the years and the village has been described in several local histories. The problem, however, is that most of the information is contradictory. It is difficult to determine the truth.

What can be said, however, is that the mills were very active. The yard at the sawmill, for instance, was always piled high with logs and lumber and almost daily there would be multiple teams of horses hitched about the place, their teamsters engaged in their ongoing business. Not only humans gathered there. Settlers bringing bags of wheat to the gristmill often noticed a large herd of deer grazing at the water's edge. The dam, built of logs and filled with stones, was about forty yards north of where the bridge is today. At one time there was no bridge across the river and a man named John Stewart would row people across in his rowboat. One man who asked him to do this very often was one day rowed right over the dam—on purpose. Stewart, who must have been an excellent oarsman, managed this task without capsizing, but he probably succeeded in frightening his companion.<sup>16</sup> Eventually J. M. Barnard, owner of one of the mills, took up a subscription of money and material and a wooden bridge was built; the settlers were so delighted at the prospect of a bridge at last that the labour was granted for free.

But there were other businesses at Plover Mills in addition to the mills. The first blacksmith was the above-mentioned oarsman, John Stewart. His shop was on the north side of the road near the west end of the bridge. Thomas Campbell and William Heughan would succeed him. A general store was operated in the 1870s by William, and later Charles, Perrin. Another was owned by William Smith. A dual blacksmith and carriage shop was operated by Joseph Lumsden and Edward Dunn, also a woodworker. A man named William Lumsden is said to have had a carpentry and smithy. Plover Mills lays claim to a shoemaker, but his name is unknown. As well, there were three homes near the west end of the bridge. In later years, Joseph Lumsden built a new smithy for himself, out of the bricks from the old Bethel Church east of Devizes.

In July 1884, a post office was established as Plover Mills with Charles N. Perrin as postmaster. The name was suggested by the local poet, Robert Elliott.<sup>17</sup> He was no doubt inspired by the thousands of plover that used to frequent the spot. Prior to this formal naming, the hamlet was called Poplar Mills and sometimes Perrinvile. This office would close on September 4, 1896.

The closest church to Plover Mills was Bethesda Methodist, half a mile east at Concession 2 (Nissouri Road). A red brick structure built in 1867, it sat on the northeast corner on land donated by Richard Hobbs. This church joined the United Church of Canada in 1925. It is said that, at some point, a cheese factory operated across the road.<sup>18</sup>

The children of the area probably attended "Swamp College" or S. S. Nos. 5 and 15, London and West Nissouri, located on the London/West Nissouri Townline to the south of Plover Mills Road.

At its height, then, Plover Mills probably consisted of two stores, a flour mill, a sawmill, a cheese factory, a church, a shoemaker, a blacksmith, a carriage shop and, some distance away, a school. The post office may have been a later addition.

Traditionally, Plover Mills is said to have begun its downward spiral after July 10, 1883, when the dam burst in a great flood. The mill businesses are then supposed to have moved to St. Marys and Thorndale. Once the mills were gone, the other businesses collapsed. It is also claimed that business at the Plover Mills had dwindled after rolling mills<sup>19</sup> were installed at St. Marys. Finer flour was made there and, as business lagged at Plover Mills, the overhead exceeded income and the gristmill fell into disrepair.<sup>20</sup> Either of these explanations, or perhaps both may account for the demise of Plover Mills. In spite of the date given for the rupture of the dam, however, it is not possible to say exactly when the mills shut down. If they closed in 1883 then it is strange that the post office, which opened the following year, was named Plover Mills. Why name an office after mills which no longer exist? Furthermore, old directories show mills at the site right up to the end of the century, even after the post office closed. It is possible that the mills were operated for some years by steam engines if the dam could not be rebuilt—or the directories may be fraught with errors.



This miniature replica of Bethesda United Church, found to the east of the former Plover Mills, was erected after the church was torn down in 1974.

Whatever date one chooses for the end of the milling business, it is certain that Plover Mills disappeared completely. Not one single building remains. Even Bethesda Church closed in 1974 and was demolished. Driving east on Plover Mills Road today, brings one to the idyllic valley which inspired Elliott's poem. On the south side of the modern bridge over the River Thames may be seen the remains of an older one. By looking very carefully, it is possible to see the deep gully which was the millrace. Farther east is the site of Bethesda United Church. There, today is a tiny model of the church serving as a monument to times past. The little replica is rather eerie, almost as though the original church had somehow been shrunk. Still farther east, between Concessions 3 and 4, is Plover Mills Public School on the north side of the road. This school opened November 1, 1965. At the opening ceremony, Agriculture Minister William Stewart praised the selection of the school's name because it preserved part of West Nissouri township's pioneer heritage.

## Rebecca

While never a large community, Rebecca had a few of the services essential for early settlers; its store even existed well into the twentieth century. The settlement developed around the corner of Concession 1, West Nissouri (formerly Wyton Road, now Rebecca Road) and Sideroad 5/6 (once Rebecca Sideroad, now Evelyn Drive).

Early settlers in this area were mainly Irish. In 1834, James Brown left County Tyrone and settled on the northeast corner of Concession 1 and what is now Robin's Hill Road. His daughter, Rebecca

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Brown, was a very popular young lady and the hamlet was apparently named after her,<sup>21</sup> although the post office named Rebecca did not open until 1880 and, by that time, she had left the neighbourhood. Miss Brown married a man named either Moses or Morgan Wilson and moved to the north part of the township in 1856. In the late 1870s, they moved to Camden township, Kent County, but would retire to Thamesville in 1901. Rebecca lived well into her 90s.

One of the earliest buildings in the neighbourhood was probably a school, and over the years there were many. The earliest school in the area may have been built down on the Governor's Road (now Dundas Street) and it is said that Rebecca Brown received her education there. But a log school was built on the north side of the Rebecca Sideroad, west of the Concession 1 Road in September 1834. One would think Rebecca would have attended here as it was closer to her home. Sometime about 1845, this log school was replaced by a brick building which was close to the London/West Nissouri Townline. In 1867, this brick building was sold to Mark Ashman and used as a woodworking shop.

A new school, S. S. No. 1, known as the Rosemond School, was built on the west half of Lot 5, Concession 2. This would be the east side of the Concession 1 road, south of the Rebecca Sideroad. During the winter months 60 to 70 pupils would attend, with about 50 for the remainder of the year. The first teacher was Charles Hardy, owner the land on which it was built. In 1886, a stone foundation was placed under this school and it was veneered in red brick. The school was also used

for prayer meetings and dances, and a polling booth was set up there during elections. In 1943, a decision from the Ontario Department of Transport declared the school to be too close to the airport for the children's safety. Consequently, a new brick building was erected south of the old one, which subsequently was demolished.

In 1862, a toll booth was placed on the northwest corner of the Rebecca intersection. The first toll keeper was a Mr. Fletcher. It cost 5 cents for a horse and buggy to go through and 10 cents if one had a team of horses. Later, a Mrs. Mary Jane Hueston bought the booth and built an addition on the side as a general store. Over the years there were many owners. When James Laurie bought it in 1906, he moved the structure to the southwest corner of the intersection, bricked it over and insulated the walls with sawdust from the nearby mill. In 1926, this same building became the headquarters for a travelling library. The Rebecca Public Library was established by the Crumlin Women's Institute and was the forerunner of the Crumlin Public Library.<sup>22</sup> A gas station was added to the store in 1926. By the 1930s it was remodelled with hydro and a bathroom installed.

According to one report, it was about 1868 that a hotel was built on the northeast corner of the intersection by one Sam Hueston.<sup>23</sup> According to another report,<sup>24</sup> Sam and his wife Mary Jane were not the builders, but owned it later. This hotel was remembered as "Seaton's Hotel" after an owner of the 1880s, Jacob Seaton. An old London *Free Press* article claims that this hotel later became the store, but most reports state that it was the toll booth that the widowed Mrs. Hueston turned into a store. Besides, old directories list a store and hotel separately, with different proprietors, which would be unlikely if the hotel had become a store. The hotel is no longer listed in directories after 1905.

West of Rebecca near the townline was the Tamblin farm. Here stood a Temperance Hall in which James Robertson held Sunday School classes for about 40 young people. Also on the Tamblin farm was the old school building turned into a woodworking shop by Mark Ashman. Ashman was a former partner in the Ashman-Heighway shop in Masonville. His was one of the most important businesses in the neighbourhood of Rebecca. Here he made cradles, rakes, scythe handles, forks, wiffletrees, neck yokes and many more implements for the

farmers. Orders were taken from as far as Ingersoll and Woodstock. It was easy to fill all the orders; Ashman had four sons to assist him.

Once binders and other more advanced farm machinery were introduced, there was no longer a demand for cradles and certain wooden implements. In 1887, Ashman purchased the farm of Samuel Hueston at the southwest corner of the Rebecca intersection and erected a sawmill. Ashman also owned a threshing machine and for decades he, and later his sons Frank and William, travelled from farm to farm during the harvest in North Dorchester, West Nissouri and London townships.

Before a post office opened, it was necessary to go to Crumlin to get one's mail. But, in 1880, with John Henderson as postmaster, the Rebecca Post Office was established. A Duncan McMillan drove a stage from London on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. After stopping at Crumlin, he went to Rebecca and dropped off the mail.

Although Polk's 1884 *Middlesex County Directory* says Rebecca is only a "country post-office," later directories list many businesses at Rebecca. Polk's 1887 directory, for example, lists Mark Ashman and Son's sawmill, D. H. Flanagan's butcher shop, John Henderson's post office, Mrs. Mary Hueston's general store, and Jacob Seaton's hotel. As well, Thomas Duffin sold insurance. This list changes over the years, but the number of enterprises basically remain the same. In 1894, the North Branch Cheese Manufacturing Company is added. The population is always given as over 100 but as with others, this may be an exaggeration.

Over the years, Rebecca dwindled as did all places its size. On February 1, 1914, the post office closed and the area became R. R. 1 London Junction. However, what happened to Rebecca is slightly different than with other hamlets. Rebecca was gradually taken over by the London Airport. In 1956, the store was purchased by the Department of Transport so that the airport runways could be extended. By the 1960s, the store was demolished. The school was closed in 1960 and students then attended Leesboro Central School. Today, the west and south sides of the intersection are part of London Airport. Concession 1 is now Rebecca Road, the only reminder of this once active hamlet.

## Salmonville

Witti Salmon was the first postmaster at this hamlet on the London/West Nissouri Townline and London Concession 10. For more information see the listing under Township of London.

## Union Hill

At the intersection of the London/West Nissouri Townline and Concession 9 of London township, a post office name Union Hill opened in 1870. For more information see the listing under Township of London.

## Wyton

Located around Concession 1, West Nissouri (Rebecca Road) and Sideroad 10/11 (Wyton Drive), it was one of the earliest and most important industrial centres in Middlesex. The community was founded by the Scatcherd brothers, John and Thomas, who came from Wyton, Yorkshire, now Humberside. Their father, Thomas Scatcherd, owned a mercantile business in nearby Hull and eventually became an alderman in that city. The word Wyton is Old English and may have meant “homestead” or “near a village.”<sup>25</sup>

When John Scatcherd arrived in West Nissouri about 1820, he acquired a large tract of land—350 acres—on Concessions 1 and 2, and named his estate Wyton. His younger brother Thomas arrived about two years later. On August 1 of that year, 1822, John married a neighbour, Anne Farley. Their son Thomas was born the following year. On February 5, 1824, brother Thomas married Anne’s sister Jane. Their first child was named John. Both families took up farming.<sup>26</sup>

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Eventually, the brothers initiated some of West Nissouri’s earliest industries. John founded a woollen mill and a tannery. He hired mainly Irish employees, a great kindness in the days when many “Help Wanted” signs added, “No Irish need apply.” Scatcherd may have literally prevented some new Irish immigrants from starving. The Irish workers cleared the land and built the head race, dam and tailrace for

the lumber mill and gristmill on Tom's land. The Scatcherds also gave land to these Irish families on which they could build homes.

Soon the Scatcherds could afford to construct large permanent homes for themselves. They needed them; John and Anne had 12 children and Tom and Jane had 17. Tom's home, Terrace Banks, completed about 1830, was located north of the intersection and Wye Creek, on the east side of the road. The house was unusual in that it was constructed entirely of cobblestones with two storeys containing ten rooms. In the late 1830s, John built The Pines on the west side of Concession 1, south of his brother. This house, also large, was of brick.

Other industries came to Wyton. A man named Simmons made wagons and sleighs. A Mr. Hatten had a woodworking shop. There was also a shoemaker and a tailor. Industries attracted customers and salesmen so a Mr. Hodge erected a hotel on the curve in the sideroad to serve this growing need. People doing business at the mills would go in for a drink while they were waiting. Just north of the hotel was a store, so farmers could get supplies without having to go all the way to London.

At first there was no school. John Scatcherd moved to London in 1831 and opened the third store to exist in London at 18 Dundas Street, so that his older children could attend classes in this bustling village of 200 people. His farm was left to be run by Tom. John did not return to Wyton until 1836. By then his children were able to walk the two and a quarter miles to the school built at Rebecca in 1835. Eventually, a frame school, S. S. No. 3, was built at Wyton on the northwest corner of Lot 10, concession 2—John's land. This was the south side of the Wyton Sideroad, east of the main intersection. His wife, Anne, taught Sunday School in this building. In 1870, when a new white brick school was erected farther down this road at the east end of the village, the first school became a woodworking shop.

A church took longer to organize. Early circuit riders held services in Tom's house, Terrace Banks. Following this, services were held on alternate Sundays at the first school from about 1851 until a frame church came into being just west of the school. Methodist preachers would conduct services there occasionally. Later, a white brick church would be built on Tom's property on the north side of the road, across from the site of the frame church.

Mail was always taken to the Scatcherd home long before an official post office was founded. When the Wyton post office opened on January 6, 1853, John Scatcherd was the postmaster. Later postmasters were Peter Van Every, followed by John's son George Scatcherd.

It should be noted that John Scatcherd was one of the most important men in mid-nineteenth century Middlesex. His positions included first warden of Middlesex in 1845, warden of Oxford, Superintendent of Education, Township Councillor, County Councillor, and Member of the Legislature for West Middlesex (Reform) in 1854. He was still a member when he died on June 15, 1858. He is buried with his wife, Anne, at Robin's Hill Cemetery, just east of the intersection of Concession 1 (Rebecca Road) and Robin's Hill Road. Their son Tom, incidentally, followed in his father's political footsteps as a Reformer, and was elected to the Dominion House of Commons on September 20, 1867, with a huge majority. In 1876 he became the federal Speaker of the House, but died on April 15 of that same year.<sup>27</sup>

Seemingly, Tom Scatcherd was not as overtly ambitious as his brother and nephew. In the 1960s a great-niece described him as a "gentleman farmer."<sup>28</sup> But he is said to have helped the other early settlers and imported purebred sheep from England which were noted for their fleece. He is thought to have been an invalid throughout much of his life, yet he died in 1901 at Terrace Banks when he was almost 100.

In 1855, the London-Stratford branch of the Grand Trunk Railroad came through West Nissouri. Railroad officials visited Wyton with the intention of building a station, but the Scatcherd family refused to accept their offers, either because they expected that the amount of money offered would increase or because they did not want the noise and dirt in their village that the railway would bring. Either way, it was a mistake. The officials went three miles north and bought land for a railroad station and freight sheds at the site of Thorndale. From that time on, Thorndale started to grow—and Wyton was in trouble. Eventually, a station was built south of the Wyton intersection, to become known as Wyton Station. But it was too late and growth had already slowed at Wyton.

But Wyton did not crumble immediately. Lovell's *Canada Directory for 1857* lists the population of Wyton as 75. John Bidner was innkeeper, as was Christopher Goodman. Robert Gurney was tailor, Thomas Scatcherd ran a gristmill and tannery, Charles Scott was shoemaker, Sims and Sons operated a woollen factory, John Talbot Sr. was a storekeeper and John Talbot Jr. was a blacksmith. Richard Talbot was a carpenter, William Talbot a wagon maker and Peter Van Every was then postmaster. It is thought that in the 1870s, Wyton's size exceeded that of Thorndale.

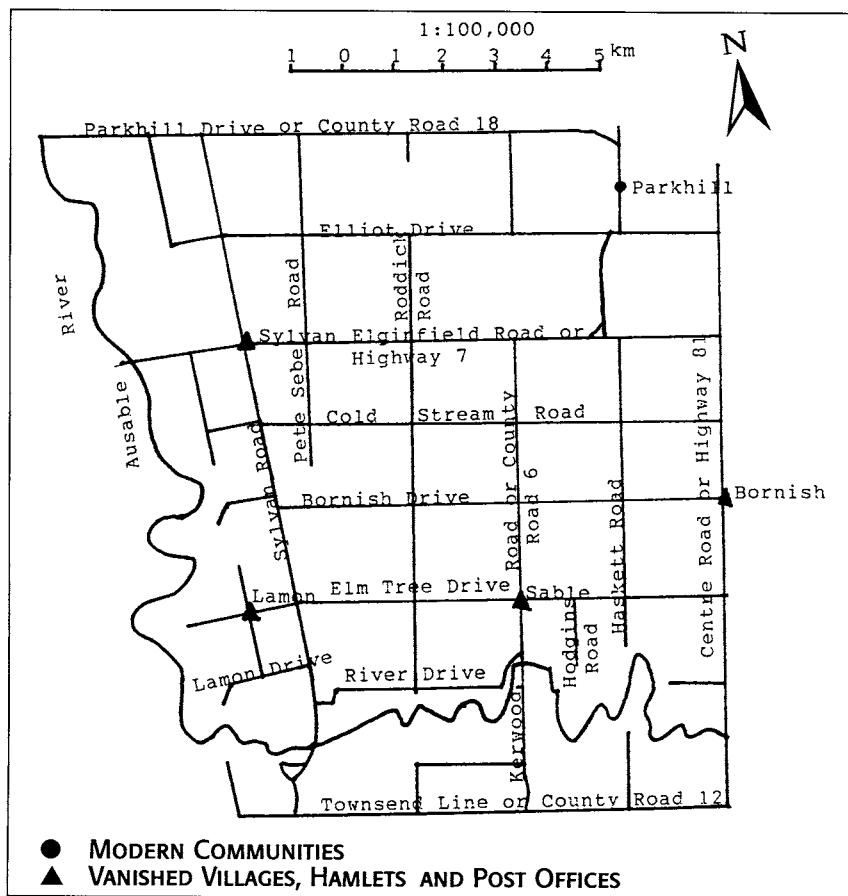
But, on June 1, 1858, the post office closed, signalling the community's decline. On January 12, 1885, the Wyton Station Post Office opened under George Scatcherd but, in 1890, the population at Wyton Station was only 20. At that time, George Scatcherd was postmaster and John Talbot was wagon maker but the only other business listed was the Wyton Stock Breeders Association. This group consisted of James R., George, William and Edwin Scatcherd. It was James R. Scatcherd who introduced black and white Holstein Friesian cattle to the district.<sup>29</sup> These cattle, from Syracuse, New York, helped to make dairying an important Canadian industry. With most impressive production records, these dairy cattle's offspring were made available to other dairy farmers in Ontario.

Gradually, Wyton faded away. The second post office closed October 31, 1912, and the area became R. R. 2 Thorndale. During the First World War, the spot was temporarily redeveloped when a sawmill was built and shanties, stables and sheds were set up with W. Cameron in charge. It did not last, however. In 1939, the Wyton Station building was moved to a nearby property to become a garage. A London woman bought the Wyton School for \$1,300 in 1960. Its bricks were used to build a bungalow just along Wyton Drive to the east. From then on, students were sent to Leesboro Central School. The church was also torn down and, by 1976, practically all that remained of Wyton were the homes of John and Thomas Scatcherd, The Pines and Terrace Banks. Today, Terrace Banks has also disappeared and its site is now a green lot beside a gravel pit. The Pines still stands, however, and has been renovated. The Wyton Station post office is the white house just down the road to the south

*Township of West Nissouri*

and the carpenter's shop is still visible on the north side of Wyton Drive behind the older white house—these the only reminders of the community that was Wyton.

## XV. TOWNSHIP OF WEST WILLIAMS



## Bornish

Lachlan McDonald and his family emigrated from Bornish, on the island of South Uist in the Outer Hebrides, to begin a life of farming in Canada West. For more information on Bornish, see the listing under Township of East Williams.

## Lamon

The 21st Concession of West Williams township (now Sylvan Road) was once the site of a hamlet called Lamon that scattered both north and south of Concession 10 (now Elm Tree Drive). Essentially a school, a church and a post office, the settlement may have had other buildings in early days.

S. S. No. 13 West Williams or Lamon School was a one-room frame building heated by a wood stove, standing on the east side of Concession 21, just north of Concession 9 (Lamon Road). Farther up this Concession, on the west side, was the Lamon Church, also a frame structure. Originally Presbyterian, this church was built in 1870 and, like the school, consisted of one large room heated by a wood-burning stove. In 1925, the congregation chose to join the United Church of Canada.

Still farther north was Lamon Post Office, which opened June 1, 1879, under Archibald McLachlan. As McLachlan is known to have lived on the southwest corner of the intersection of Concessions 10 and 21, it is quite likely that the post office was once at that site. Later, however, the office was shifted north of Concession 10 on the west side of the road. The official name, Lamon, was the maiden name of Archibald McLachlan's mother, who lived in Argyllshire, Scotland; she never actually came to Canada.<sup>1</sup> The office closed in 1883 but was reopened in 1899.

It has been suggested that other businesses once existed at Lamon. According to a 1955 article in the London *Free Press*, an Allen McDougall operated a store and hotel in the area 80 years earlier, in 1875. It also claimed that a Farley McGinnis ran a blacksmith shop. Both businesses were supposed to be at the intersection of Concessions 10 and 21. The article also stated that local settlers industriously made potash out of the ashes from the burning of logs.<sup>2</sup>

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It is not known when these shops disappeared. But when the Lamon Post Office closed on October 1, 1913, the area became R. R. 2, Parkhill. Lamon United Church held its last service in the early 1960s and, in 1965, the church was moved about a mile north of its original site to become a horse barn. The school probably ceased functioning in the 1960s when most of the one-room schoolhouses closed. It did become a house but, unfortunately, burned in the early 1970s. A white bungalow is now standing on the site.

Now there is nothing left to remind us of the vanished community of Lamon, except Concession 9 to the south, now called Lamon Road.

### Sable

The area generally known as Sable stretched along Concession 10, West Williams township (Elm Tree Drive). For certain it was not a village, and even the word hamlet might be an exaggeration. Still, there was a post office by this name, and a couple of other buildings—along with a tree—which are usually associated with Sable.

In 1860, Sable post office opened at Lot 7 on the north side of the road, just east of where Hodgins Road is today. It took its name from the Ausable River (once spelled “Rivière aux Sable”) which flows by just to the south.<sup>3</sup> The postmaster, Allen Macdonald, used to go by horseback to meet the Parkhill-Strathroy stage at Centre Road (now Highway 81) and collect mail on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.



Just to the west of the post office was the first school, S. S. No. 12, on the southwest corner of Concession 10 and County Road 6 (Kerwood Road). In time, a new school, known as Lake School, would be built on the north side of Concession 10, not far from the post office. Far to the west of Sable Post Office, on the other side of Roddick Road, was a store. This area was settled by Edward Teeple when he and his wife came from Yarmouth, England, about 1852. They had nine children and, not surprisingly, the area became known as “Teepletown.” In the 1860s or ’70s, George Teeple (possibly a son) opened a store on the north side of the road where a yellow brick bungalow stands today. Over the years there would be about fifteen storekeepers until H. A. Wilcocks



The famous elm tree at Sable, cut down in 1959.  
This view looks west along the former Concession  
10, now Elm Tree Drive. *A. S. Garrett Collection,*  
*J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, The D. B. Wel-*  
*don Library, University of Western Ontario.*

took over. In the 1930s, he closed this store and opened a new enterprise, likely another store, on the southwest corner of Elm Tree Drive and Kerwood Road, the site of the old school. After it became the victim of fire, an old house from Centre Road was moved there.

However, the most interesting landmark in the area was not a building—it was a tree. For years, a tall stately elm tree stood in the middle of the intersection formed by Kerwood Road and Elm Tree Drive, an important and cherished part of the community. At one time religious services were generally held in the old school, but one minister, Cyrus Jackson, had the pleasantly unorthodox idea of holding summertime

religious services outdoors under the tree.<sup>4</sup> This tradition was carried on for many years. Once, at a peace celebration, Durham Teeple is said to have climbed to the top of the tree and hoisted a Union Jack.<sup>5</sup> Local militia are said to have rammed a flag into a slit in this elm and trained under it during the days of the Fenian Raids.<sup>6</sup>

Over the years, there were many attempts by serious-minded authorities to remove the elm tree. Apparently it was thought that a road should not have a tree positioned in the middle of it. But the local people always mustered petitions to prevent the tree's removal and because of their efforts, the elm stood tall, well into the middle of the twentieth century. Unfortunately, it was finally removed in 1959 when the road was paved. According to a 1970 London *Free Press* article, the poor tree was "a victim of the theory that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line."<sup>7</sup>

Sable Post Office closed February 4, 1911, and mail for the area was afterwards delivered from Parkhill. The store on the corner to the west closed in the 1960s. S. S. No. 12 closed around the same time and was torn down; today a red brick bungalow stands on its site. The original Sable store was still standing in 1970 and was pictured in the *Free Press* in a dilapidated condition. The caption read, "The hamlets just seem to fade away until they are sometimes little more than memories marked by their own tombstones—like the hulk of the once-rustic little general store at Sable."<sup>8</sup>

The second store is still standing on the southwest corner of Kerwood Road and Elm Tree Drive. And the farm on the northwest corner is named Elm Tree Farm in commemoration of West Williams township's most famous tree.

## Sylvan



Travellers who use Highway 7 (Elginfield Road) as a route to Lake Huron will be familiar with the hamlet called Sylvan. There is still a road sign to identify the cluster of houses around the intersection of West Williams Concessions 14 (Elginfield Road) and 21 (Sylvan Road). What most do not realize is that Sylvan was once one of the most important communities in Middlesex County.

*Township of West Williams*



*Top:* The northwest corner of Sylvan as it looked in the late nineteenth century. The first store can be seen to the left. The words "Diamond Square" refer to the marks made by carriages as they turned corners. *Courtesy of Bob Lewis.*

*Bottom:* The same view today. The brick house, just barely visible in the 1890s photo, remains, but first store is long gone. The wooden building burned in the early 1900s.

Industry began in this spot when Robert Burns and Sanford Eastman built a sawmill west of the intersection on the Ausable River in 1852. The mill was erected to process the exceptional pine trees of the area, the size and quality of which were seldom excelled anywhere in

Canada. The wood was without a blemish, perfectly clear, and it was often possible to cut boards three feet wide. The largest pine ever cut was an incredible 7' 4" in diameter; three of its branches yielded 3,000 feet of lumber each.<sup>9</sup>

Sanford Eastman eventually sold his share of the mill to Reuben Proctor. By 1862, Burns and Proctor owned most of the land on the west side of the intersection. Eventually, another lumber mill appeared, north of the original one, owned by a man named Elliott. A thriving village soon developed around these mills.

In 1854, a post office named Burns' Mills opened with Robert Burns in charge. He eventually also opened a store, although the first one at Sylvan was built by John A. Scoon in 1855. (Scoon's shop was actually the first general store in West Williams.)<sup>10</sup> The name was changed to Sylvan in 1855. This word means "abounding in trees" or "woody" and no better name could have been chosen for this community.

A reporter writing for the London *Free Press* in 1939 stated that Sylvan was once "almost metropolitan."<sup>11</sup> This is definitely an exaggeration, but Cameron's 1864-65 *Directory* does list an astonishing 46 businesses under the heading of Sylvan, "a flourishing village." These included three doctors (one of whom was also a jeweller), five carpenters, three blacksmiths, three weavers, three shingle makers, three women who were both milliners and dressmakers, another milliner, a cabinet maker, a mason, a cooper, a butcher and a brickmaking partnership. There was also a hotel operated by Wilson Blanshard and a boarding house run by William Channer. The population was listed as 150.

The first church services at Sylvan were held in an old log schoolhouse on the corner of Concessions 14 and 21 in the early 1850s; services were for Baptist and Methodist congregations. In 1863, a Wesleyan Methodist Church was built on the east side of the road south of the intersection at the site of the cemetery. There were also Primitive and Episcopal Methodist Churches in the area but they closed about 1884, at the time of Methodist Union. A new Methodist church was constructed in 1914, on the west side of the road, directly across from the old church. Services were held in the nearby MacAbee Hall, at the bottom of cemetery hill, while the new church was being built. This church became United in 1925.

The first Baptist Church, also on the east side of the road, must have been a very early structure. Later, the site was purchased by the school board and a school built there in 1862. The Baptists must have relocated elsewhere since directories list a Baptist minister throughout the 1860s.

The first S. S. No. 7 appeared in 1853. It had 24 pupils of all ages, taught by Miss Agnes Burns. The school was only 26' by 20'. As previously mentioned, a new school was built in 1862 and by the school year of 1868-69 the number of pupils had grown to 47.

What happened to this large and prosperous community? Descriptions suggest it should have been one of Middlesex County's ongoing success stories. But Sylvan's main industry consisted of exploiting a non-renewable resource—lumber—and no doubt the surrounding forest was eventually depleted. When that happened, there was not enough work for the mills. When the mills closed, so did the other businesses. But Sylvan was also bypassed by the Grand Trunk Railway, which passed through Parkhill and Thedford instead. Those communities boomed and Sylvan declined. By 1890, the population of Sylvan was less than half what it had been 25 years earlier. Some businesses did remain into the twentieth century, but then came the automobile and with it the opportunity to drive to communities such as Parkhill and Thedford for groceries or entertainment. Gradually, Sylvan's remaining commercial community disappeared. The post office closed May 1, 1914. The last enterprise still functioning was the store on the southwest corner, open until quite recently. But now it too is closed. In 1990, the Sylvan Publishing Company began publishing *The Winnower*, a weekly newspaper, but this did not last and now not one business can be found at Sylvan.

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## PART II



# VANISHED VILLAGES IN THE CITY OF LONDON

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## CITY OF LONDON—EARLY DAYS

OVER THE YEARS, the City of London has grown dramatically. While the founding is attributed to John Graves Simcoe in 1791, it actually was not settled until Peter McGregor (1794–1846) built the first log cabin along the Thames in 1826, at today's corner of King and Ridout streets. From that time on London has never looked back. It became a town in 1847 and a city in 1854. The building of the railway over 1853 and 1854, connecting London with Toronto and communities all along the line, greatly stimulated its growth. As the city's population grew and spread outward, the urban centre swallowed up the surrounding villages. The suburbs of London East, South and West were annexed in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

London continued to grow and other nearby communities such as Pottersburg, Broughdale and Byron were incorporated into the city over the twentieth century. People living in the 1880s and 1890s would probably never have believed that London could stretch out as far as Lambeth, let alone Glanworth. But it does! Westminster township made a valiant attempt to stop this encroachment into the townships in 1988 when it organized itself as the Town of Westminster. But the action was futile. Most of Westminster township was annexed by London on January 1, 1993, and today Lambeth, Scottsville and Glanworth are all part of the City of London.

All of the above communities are included in this section, “Vanished Villages in London.” Many are still recognizably distinct, such as Lambeth. Others, such as Broughdale, are no longer recognizable

as separate entities. Still others, such as London East, have been part of London for so long that even people who have lived in London for years have never even heard of them.

The urban sprawl is probably not over, and communities such as Arva and Kilworth may eventually become a part of London, willingly or unwillingly. On January 1, 1998, the Townships of London, Lobo and Delaware joined together to form the Township of Middlesex Centre, and on January 1, 2001, West Nissouri and North Dorchester Townships amalgamated to form the Township of Thames Centre. Perhaps these large townships will be better able to oppose future potential annexations. Time will tell.

## XVI. CITY OF LONDON

### Broughdale

The area of London north of Huron Street, and south and east of the University of Western Ontario, was once a separate village known as Broughdale, in the Township of London. Today it is an attractive part of the City of London.

Broughdale takes its name from the Reverend Charles C. Brough, the Anglican Archdeacon of London who settled just north of the River Thames in 1854, on the east side of the Proof Line (now Richmond Street). In the early days, the nearby bridge over the river became known as "Brough's Bridge." It was in the early 1860s when Brough and his family moved south of the river and built the old house on what is now the northeast corner of Richmond Street and Broughdale Avenue. At that time, as Huron Street was the north boundary of London, their home was quite isolated.

The Brough family's closest neighbour was probably William Turville. Having rented twenty acres of clergy reserve land, he built a gristmill on it in 1860. His home was on what is now Parkdale Avenue, northwest of the Brough house. Turville's millrace diverted water from the Thames along the north side of what is now Mayfair Drive. In 1869, when the Church Society of the Diocese of Huron offered clergy reserve land for sale, several small farms were established nearby. At this time, Turville acquired the land on which his mill was standing.

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VANISHED VILLAGES OF MIDDLESEX

CITY OF LONDON



1:150,000



▲ VANISHED AND ANNEXED VILLAGES, HAMLETS AND POST OFFICES

Throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, more small holdings and a street or two were developed. The Hellmuth Ladies College<sup>1</sup> opened north of the river, east of the Proof Line on September 23, 1869. Dr. Isaac Hellmuth had purchased Brough's old house and established the college nearby. Over 100 students attended, some from as far as the northeastern U.S.A. The school prospered for 30 years but closed in 1899 when it was purchased by the Sisters of St. Joseph and became Mount St. Joseph Orphanage. Isaac Hellmuth died in 1901.

To the south, Ebworth Avenue and Brough Street (now Epworth and Broughdale avenues) developed as a means of avoiding the toll gate at Huron Street and the Proof Line. By 1899, there were about 25 families living in the area but there were no shops, no church and no name for the fledgling community—not even a school since the area was considered part of S. S. 18, Masonville.

During the early years of the twentieth century, many changes occurred at Broughdale. A housing boom occurred when the London Street Railway was extended north of the city in 1901. The subdivision of St. Joseph's Park, built around Bernard and Raymond streets, enticed a large influx of new settlers, many from Britain. Soon there



Students gather on the lawn of Hellmuth Ladies College, circa late 1890s. The well-known school was established Broughdale in 1869. *J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, The D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.*

were teamsters, cigar makers, builders, soldiers, a clerk, a printer, a barber, a bookkeeper, a bank manager, gardeners, a butter maker, a miller, a telephone linesman, carpenters, laborers, and linesmen for the emerging Hydro-Electric Power Company. Most of these new residents worked in London and went to their jobs by streetcar.

On July 1, 1904, a post office opened with Charles Walters as postmaster. This office, named Brough after the former Archdeacon, was located the corner of Richmond and Broughdale. On April 1, 1906, the name of the office, and therefore the community, changed to Broughdale. As the story goes, Archdeacon James Richardson, first rector of St. Luke's Church, was driving to the city one evening and was impressed with the beauty of the spot called Brough. He suddenly lamented the place's harsh, abrupt sounding name and circulated a petition to have it changed to the more euphonious Broughdale.<sup>2</sup> Their wish was granted by the postal authorities. When the post office closed on October 1, 1916, just ten years later, the villagers had to go to a London post office to obtain their mail.

In 1906, St. Luke's Anglican Church opened on the east side of Richmond Street. The site was donated by William Bernard, the man for whom Bernard Street is named. Broughdale acquired its first store in 1918 when W. C. Southen opened one on the northwest corner of Richmond Street and Broughdale Avenue. This intersection became Broughdale's commercial centre. Later butchers, gas stations and cafes would developed at this corner. When Broughdale School opened on Epworth Avenue in 1920, its two rooms held 92 pupils.

The establishment of the University of Western Ontario in this area in 1924 had a profound effect on the village, now home to a range of university employees, including professors, secretaries and administrative heads. It also became home to hundreds of students. Over the years, many of the older houses have become student housing. This period after the late 1920s was when Broughdale really become more urbanized and less like a village.

But, interestingly, Broughdale was not even organized as a village until 1930. That year, the community petitioned to secede from Township of London and become an incorporated village so it would have more control in the collection and spending of its own taxes.

The only major disaster in the history of Broughdale was the flood of 1937. On April 26 of that year, the Thames overflowed its banks in the worst flood ever recorded in this area. Water was running on both sides of the bridge to a depth of more than 18 inches. A great deal of property damage resulted. Afterwards, the old millrace was blocked at its east end—some say with old cars!<sup>3</sup> In 1952, Fanshawe Dam was built to prevent another disastrous flood.

Following the end of the Second World War, another suburban housing boom took place at Broughdale and, by 1954, St. Luke's Church required an extension to its sanctuary to allow for the larger congregation. In the 1960s, a number of old houses were replaced with tall apartment buildings, making the former village look more even more urban. In 1961, Broughdale became part of the expanding City of London. In 1977, Broughdale School closed and its students attended Ryerson Public School on the corner of Waterloo and Victoria streets. Even the village name was losing ground.

A drive north along Richmond Street today would reveal many reminders of the former village of Broughdale. On the northwest corner of Huron and Richmond, at number 1110 Richmond Street, is the home of Archdeacon James Richardson. The Brough House itself is still located on the northeast corner of Richmond and Broughdale. A typical one-and-a-half storey white brick home with a centre gable, the house has a new north wing, a 1950s addition designed in keeping with the style of the original home. Across Richmond Street is the site of the first Broughdale store, now a Becker's store. Just to the north, still on the west side of the street, is 1148 Richmond, one of Broughdale's oldest houses. Farther north, across from the University gate, is 1160 Richmond Street, once known as "Schovaloff Villa." No longer much like a villa, it is only half its original size. It was built by a Mr. C. Dicker-son whose sister-in-law in England taught drawing to the children of the Russian ambassador, Count Schovaloff.<sup>4</sup>

To the east on Epworth Avenue is the Broughdale School, now the Hebrew Day School. Farther north along Richmond is Parkdale Avenue. Along this street, at the corner with Parkdale Crescent, was the site of Turville's mill, which burned in 1916. The millrace is marked by a line of mature trees and a dip in the ground just to the west of this spot. Back

on Richmond Street, St. Luke's Church is on the east side of the road. Still farther north on the east side is Broughdale Park, named after the former village. On the other side of the bridge, on the east side of the road, is the Mt. St. Joseph Motherhouse,<sup>5</sup> standing on the site of Brough's first home and the Hellmuth Ladies' College.<sup>6</sup> There is nothing village-like about the area today, set as it is well within the city boundaries.

## Byron

Most Londoners of today think of Byron as that pleasant, tree-shaded suburb located in the southwest part of the city. Many are not aware of the fact that Byron was once an independent village, located miles from London. Actually, Byron was founded years before the first log cabin went up at the forks of the Thames. And it remained one of the largest and most prosperous villages in the county, right up until annexation.

Among the first settlers in what is now Byron were John Wells (of Partridgefield, Massachusetts), David Reynolds, Nathaniel Fairchild and Archibald McMillan, all of whom were there before the War of

1812. McMillan built a tavern on the northwest corner of Boler

and Commissioners roads in 1810. At this time, the fledgling  
community was known as Westminster, after the township.

Other early settlers were the Lawrason family, who estab-  
lished a store and distillery in about 1822. At that time, the

only other shop in the county was in Delaware. Another early set-  
tler near Byron was Peter McGregor, tavern keeper. He eventually sold  
his establishment, located across the river from the present waterworks  
at Springbank Park, and became the very first settler at the forks of the  
Thames in London.

Byron's most important pioneering family, however, were the Halls, who, without a doubt, contributed the most to the founding of the vil-  
lage. There is some confusion as to whether Cyrenius (or Charles?) Hall  
built the first mill or whether he bought it from Burleigh Hunt, but this  
mill, a gristmill, appeared in 1827. The grinding stones were freighted  
in from Halifax by sail and overland by oxen, a trip that took two  
months. Wheat was brought from as far away as Exeter (a distance of 25  
miles), often carried in sacks on a farmer's back. The miller was usually

paid with a percentage of the flour. As time went on, the mill was renovated as required. In 1880, the grinding stones were removed and a rolling-mill installed; a turbine replaced the original waterwheel in 1901. Later known as the Ross mill, it was demolished, with much difficulty, in 1936. The work crew were amazed at the toughness of the oak timbers and the discovery that the whole structure had been built without nails, only oak dowels.

In addition to the mill, the Hall family built a distillery and a tannery, bought out the carding and fulling mill and several other businesses, including the post office. Small wonder then, that the community soon became known as Hall's Mills.

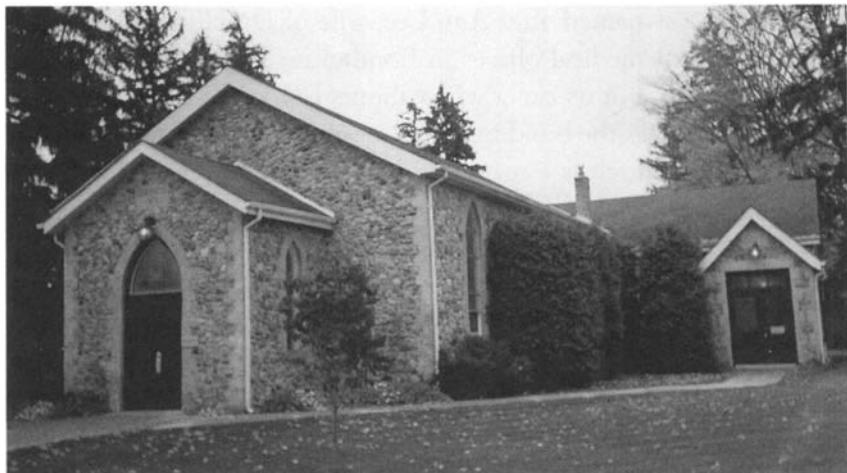
It is questionable as to whether most Londoners know that a War of 1812 skirmish occurred in their city. But the Battle of Hungerford Hill, the area now known as Reservoir Hill, took place in Byron in October 1813. General Proctor and his men were retreating eastward towards Burlington Heights, having just lost the Battle of the Thames at Moraviantown. This is the battle in which the great Native ally and warrior Tecumseh<sup>7</sup> was killed. The men marched along Longwoods Road and the newly-built Commissioners Road, constructed to carry troops and supplies as part of the war effort and named after the government commissioners who built it. Wounded men, prisoners and baggage from the last battle were being transported in wagons, escorted by Captain Carroll and a band of volunteer cavalry and militia from Oxford County. While General Proctor was accommodated for the night at McMillan's Tavern, the rest of his troops camped on nearby Hungerford Hill. There they were attacked by an advance guard of General Harrison's Kentucky Mounted Riflemen. Since the British troops could not make a hasty retreat with wounded men and wagons, the only choice was to make a defence of their position. The British and Canadians made a stand around their wagons, protecting their wounded in what a 1949 London *Free Press* article referred to as "the proudest moment in the history of one of Middlesex County's first settlements."<sup>8</sup> The American invaders (who greatly outnumbered the British) tried to charge up the hill, but failed. This time Harrison and his men were forced to retreat. This skirmish was re-enacted on the same spot 100 years later, in 1913, by a group of cadets. Will it be staged again in 2013?

Interestingly, the greatest hero of this battle was a woman. Her name was Mrs. Phoebe McNames and she lived on a nearby farm. Rather than hiding in her house, Phoebe courageously worked at the battle site, handing ammunition to the troops and carrying water for them to drink while under fire.<sup>9</sup> Little has been written about this intrepid pioneer, long since buried in obscurity beside her husband in Brick Street Cemetery.

Another story of the Battle of Hungerford Hill concerns a General Cameron. Seemingly, Cameron went on a solo patrol to the west during the night to scout out the enemy. He returned by a different path and his men, thinking he was an enemy approaching and having been given orders to shoot, killed their own leader.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout the nineteenth century, Hall's Mills prospered. Smith's *Canada Gazetteer* for 1846 says it has a gristmill, post office, distillery, carding machine and cloth factory, tannery, store, tavern, blacksmith, fanning mill, wagonmaker and shoemaker. By 1871, MacKintosh's *Middlesex County Directory* could list it as a village with a population of 150 and a large business community, including schoolteacher Jeremiah Beattie; Charles Coombs' flour and woollen mill; Justice of the Peace E. T. Dufton; J. and J. Dufton and Company's woollen mill; J. Glover's Byron Hotel; the Griffith Brothers' woollen mill; F. H. Kinny's gristmill; William Martin's boot and shoemaking shop; A. Redpath's blacksmith shop; Robert Sadler's store and post office; J. R. and S. Sissons' hame factory; Robert Summers' gristmill and J. B. Wells' blacksmith shop. A hame, by the way, is an item which no longer familiar: it is the curved piece originally of wood and later of metal, that fits in the neck collar of a horse harness. One end of the harness traces are fastened to the hames, the other end to the whiffletree of the implement being pulled.

The first public school in the village was organized about 1834, in a home on Centre Street, a street that no longer exists, leading from Commissioners Road north to the river just west of modern Hall's Mills Road. A private school also existed, operated in the home of Dr. John Lee and his wife, at what is now 249 Hall's Mills Road. In 1852, a cobblestone school was built on the present site of Byron Northview Public School by a fisherman-turned-mason named John Flint. This man erected the cobblestone buildings which are peculiar to Byron, including St. Anne's



The stone St. Anne's Anglican Church is one of the oldest remaining structures on Byron's main street, now called Commissioners Road West.

Church and the Flint Cottage in Springbank Park. It was the volunteer labour of the local residents that produced the initial S. S. No. 5. Inside were benches for seats and slanted boards for desks. A big box stove stood in the middle of the room and the first boy who arrived had to light the fire. In 1869, a new brick school was built for \$400.00 on the site of the old cobblestone building. An addition was added in 1896 and a second teacher hired, a necessity in order to cope with the larger number of children in the expanding community. By 1935, a third room was added for the primary class. Just two years later the old structure was demolished and Northview School erected on the same site, at the south-east corner of Commissioners and Stephen. In 1854, Southwood School opened on Lola Street and there is now a third school in Byron, Somerset P. S. on Whisperwood Avenue.

Cy, William and Henry Hall were the moving spirits behind the building of St. Anne's Church on the west side of the school. Their father, Charles, however, was witness to the original land sale for the site when, in 1853, one-eighth of an acre was bought from Thomas McMillan for eight pounds, fifteen shillings. Two years later the cobblestone church was completed for use by many faiths until about 1875 when it became the place of worship for the Anglican congregation.

The church was named after Ann Lee, wife of Dr. Hiram Davis Lee, the government medical officer in London in 1832.<sup>11</sup> The Lees also owned a tavern, but its exact whereabouts cannot be determined for certain. Seemingly, the building was also sometimes used as a hospital.

Within the church is a memorial window to Dr. Henry Hall. His medical practice in Hall's Mills began in 1856 and the man was long and fondly remembered in the community. Stories about his work abound. When Dr. Hall cured a Mrs. Hull who had been blind for two years, her husband was so grateful he paid Hall \$100. A man named Nathan Griffith is said to have given Hall \$250 for curing his mother of some ailment.<sup>12</sup> Whether the doctor charged these prices or whether the money was given voluntarily is not clear. Hall died in Peru in 1869 when only 33 years of age. He left a sum of \$200 to St. Anne's Church; this money, after accumulating interest for twenty years, allowed the church to make some much needed repairs.

A post office was established in very early times. Originally named Westminster and later Hall's Mills, the community had a name change again in 1857, this time to Byron, apparently in honour of the English poet George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788–1824).<sup>13</sup>

Springbank Park, originally a recreational park, opened in 1878 after the land was purchased from farmers. London's goal was to find a source of water for the city and the waterworks established in the Park date from this early time period. On May 25, 1896, the London Street Railway began running streetcars into Springbank and it became possible to escape to Byron for an idyllic day with a picnic basket, far from the hustle of the city. Many would say that Springbank Park has been one of Byron's greatest assets from the time of its opening. Even today, it remains the biggest and best park in London.

Times, however, were not always good at Byron. Floods created the worst problems. Both the hame factory and the bridge over the Thames were destroyed in 1883. But this flood was nothing compared to the flood of 1937. This one, the worst flooding of the Thames in history, virtually ruined Byron. Several buildings, including one of the old mills, were swept away. It was the building of Fanshawe Dam in 1952 that finally regulated the flow of the Thames to ensure an end to such disasters.



One of the last nineteenth-century buildings left on Byron's main street. In spite of its heritage connections, Byron House may be in danger of demolition.

Byron continued to grow into the twentieth century. Its industries disappeared but the village became very popular as a place to live. By 1945 the population was 452. Then came the post-war building boom. New streets and homes appeared every week, prompting one writer to describe it as "the fastest growing village in Ontario."<sup>14</sup> Records show that, by 1951, the population of Byron had tripled to 1,200 and, by 1958, only seven years later, the population had mushroomed to 4,230.

But unfortunately for Byron, London was also growing at a rapid rate. In 1928, a bus line began operating between Byron and London. By 1961, city buses themselves were going as far as Byron. Once set a whole six miles from the city, Byron was now on the very edge, poised, if somewhat reluctantly, for the ultimate annexation by the City of London, an act which is formally recorded as occurring on January 1, 1961.

Today, the corner of Commissioners Road West and Boler Road is still regarded as the main intersection of Byron. The southwest corner, once the site of Merriam's blacksmith shop, is now occupied by a Bank of Montreal building. The site of McMillan's Tavern, later the Fortner



Flint Cottage, in Springbank Park, is an example of the unique cobblestone architecture once built in Byron and the surrounding area.

Hotel, is now Byron Automotive. Just northwest of this main intersection is the part of Byron which most resembles the early community. A group of old houses are to be found on Hall's Mill Road, Hall's Mill Place and Old Bridge Road. A charming example is the circa 1835 white clapboard cottage at 249 Hall's Mills Road, once the Lee School. The board and batten barn at 247 Hall's Mill's Road was once a coach house, barn and warehouse for William Griffith's woollen mill. A mill-stone from an early mill is close by, behind the Byron Branch Library where a plaque erected by the Historic Sites Committee of the London Library Board can be found.

West of the intersection is Byron's "main street," now Commissioners Road West. On the south side of the road is St. Anne's Church, and next door to it is Northview Public School. The original bell of S. S. No. 5 is mounted on a cement pad in the front lawn of the school.

East of the main intersection is the long stretch of Commissioners Road that runs parallel to Springbank Park. Inside the Park are two cobblestone cottages built by John Flint, as well as the old waterworks. Farther east is Hungerford Hill, now renamed Reservoir Hill after the Springbank Reservoir built in 1920. This lovely park is peaceful today and there are no plaques or other reminders of the gallant 1813 battle. But another type of battle is developing. There is a danger of a high-rise

being constructed on this site in the near future. Local heritage and environmental groups are working to preserve the heritage of the site.

### **Chelsea Green**

This Westminster township suburb was developed in the early twentieth century and named after that part of London, England, named Chelsea. The area is now east of Wellington Road, just south of the Thames. Chelsea Green had its own post office, which opened January 1, 1906, with Charles Coates, as postmaster. The suburb was formally annexed in 1912.

### **Ealing**

Ealing was a former residential suburb of London, the area south of Trafalgar Street, west of Highbury Avenue and north of the Thames. On June 1, 1880, a post office named Ealing opened with Walter Andrew as postmaster, at the corner of Trafalgar Street and Hamilton Road. Later it was moved further east to Hamilton Road and East Street. Today, near this intersection, Ealing Public School, Ealing Shoe Repair and Ealing Pharmacy commemorate the name. Never an industrial or commercial centre, Ealing developed mainly as a residential community.<sup>15</sup>

### **Glanworth**

Glanworth is a substantial village found at the junction of Concession 8, Westminster township (Glanworth Drive) and Wellington Road South. As a village, Glanworth never disappeared, but its inclusion within the City of London since the annexation of the Township of Westminster on January 1, 1993, has meant a loss of village independence.

One of the earliest buildings at the future village was Christ Church Glanworth (Anglican). Of frame construction, it was probably founded 1844. Land was donated by Mary Watson who deeded 12 acres on the southeast corner of her farm on Concession 8 to the Right



The inscription on the steeple of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Glanworth, reads "Jehovah Jireh" which means "The Lord will provide."

likely is "The Lord will provide." Abraham gave this name to the place where God provided a ram for him to sacrifice instead of his son Isaac.

In 1847, land for the first S. S. 14, donated by Duncan Macpherson, led to a frame school being erected two intersections west of Glanworth, on the southeast corner. Probably children west of Wellington Road attended there as well. Two boys from this school went on to become members of parliament—Charles Cox was Liberal MPP for Port Arthur and a member of cabinet without portfolio for the Hepburn Administration from 1934 to 1942. The Conservative Henry O. White

Reverend John Strachan, Bishop of Toronto. In 1887, a new brick building was erected to commemorate the fiftieth year of the reign of Queen Victoria. During its centennial year, 1944, the church interior was remodelled.

The other significant place of worship in this area is First St. Andrew's Presbyterian, actually one-and-three-quarter miles east of the centre of the village. The original church was built in 1855-56 on the southwest corner of the present site but facing east. Constructed of brick, the church cost \$3,200 to build. Members of the congregation paid rent for their pews and for stalls in the stables. In 1888, a new building, designed to face south by architect Mr. Durand of London, was built by W. F. Fawcett for the expensive sum of \$7,000. The east side of the tower says "Jehovah Jireh" in raised letters, a quotation is from Genesis 22:14. While it has been interpreted in many ways, the most



A postcard showing the London and Port Stanley Railway Station at Glanworth, probably around the very early 1900s. From here, passengers could ride north to London to shop or do business—or head south to Port Stanley for a day at the beach. *Courtesy of Gordon McDonald.*

became a member of parliament for Middlesex East in the Federal House of Commons in Ottawa during the 1950s. Another school, S. S. No. 13, was one intersection to the east on the northeast corner. Probably children living east of Wellington went there. A Catholic School, the Regan School, was on the southeast corner, one intersection to the north, at Wellington Road and Manning Drive. Some Protestants attended there as it was closer.

In 1856, when the London and Port Stanley Railway line was pushed through this area, Minchin Jackson was instrumental in securing a railroad station at Glanworth. A curious crowd assembled to see the first train and cheered when it arrived in 1856. At this time, the community was known as Sweeney's Corners and the railway's first timetable lists a place called Sweeney as one of the stops.

On June 1, 1857, with R. J. Webb as postmaster, a post office opened and the community was renamed Glanworth, after the town in County Cork, Ireland. The name is described as being a corruption of Glan-or, “the golden glen.”<sup>16</sup> The castle ruins in this Irish town are large and



Workmen tear down the old Glanworth School in March 1964. A newer school stands in the background. *London Free Press Collection, The D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.*

extensive. Once a Dominican monastery called the Abbey of Glanore existed there. Originally from Ireland, Minchin Jackson is said to have given the new community its name. For some time, this post office was in the train station but in later times was relocated to the general store.

The community blossomed. Cameron's 1864-65 *Middlesex County Directory* describes Glanworth as a small post village on the London and Port Stanley Railway, located eight and a half miles from London, with daily mail and a population of 40. The business community included Alexander Begg's wagonmaking shop, Alexander Murdock's tailor shop, John Reid's smithy and John Sweeney's shoemaking business. The Reverend Caulfield was Anglican minister; William Fortune was painter, carpenter and builder; and George Rome was a mason. Vicar Fisher and Minchin Jackson were both Justices of the Peace, and Richard J. Webb was an agricultural implement maker, as well as being the postmaster. Glanworth continued to expand over the years and, by the late nineteenth century, had a population of 160. At that time, the

Glanworth Cheese Company was one of the most important businesses in the village. In these early days, the factory was largely owned by the surrounding farmers, but its founding date is uncertain although first mention of its existence in a directory occurs in 1884. A new factory was built in 1903 and again in 1927. It was later owned by Canadian Milk Products and then by Bordens. Under the latter ownership, processing ceased and the building was torn down.

Many clubs and organizations developed at Glanworth. On March 4, 1874, the Westminster Grange was founded. This organization included women as well as men as members. While the Grange was a rarity in Canada in those days, there were 12,000 in the United States but only nine in Quebec and one other in Ontario. A Grange Hall was completed in 1879. A community hall, known as the Glanworth Mutual Benefit Hall or GMB, was completed in 1889. Various lodges rented upstairs rooms and the hall was eventually bought by the Odd-fellows, and enlarged in 1946. The Glanworth Public Library had opened in 1912, and the St. Andrew's Women's Institute, Glanworth, was founded in 1935. This was an active, civic-minded community.

Over the years, London not only grew bigger, but closer. And Glanworth, despite its substantial population, saw most of its businesses shut down, largely because of its proximity to London. In 1957, the London and Port Stanley Railway discontinued its passenger service, which once had numbered a million people a year. The station has since been torn down. A 1972 community planner predicted that Glanworth's population would continue to rise in the years to come and set guidelines in Westminster township's "official plan" of that year, encouraging development in the area.<sup>17</sup> However, the anticipated development and population increase did not occur and Glanworth remained a small village although considerably larger than most of the hamlets described in this book.

Christ Church Anglican still stands on Glanworth Drive to the west of the village and St. Andrew's Church to the east. In the village itself only a few businesses remain, while many homes dominate the area. Officially, Glanworth is part of the City of London, but it maintains a pleasant, village atmosphere which, it is hoped, will not be destroyed by future development.

## Hyde Park

Known until 1963 as Hyde Park Corner, this community developed around the intersection of Gainsborough Road (the former Concession 4 London) and Hyde Park Road. Although this area was settled prior to London itself, it was too close to the city to ever become to anything more than a village.

Settlers arrived in Hyde Park Corner around 1818, about eight years before the first log cabin that marked the beginning of London appeared beside the Thames. That year Thomas Routledge, his wife Margaret, and their nine children arrived from Cumberland, England. They named their new home Hyde Park. One reference says the Routledges named their farm after “their home town” in England.<sup>18</sup> But as Hyde Park is *not* a town in Cumberland but rather a famous green space in London, the reason for the choice of name remains a mystery.

Another pioneer was Duncan MacKenzie of Ruthven, Inverness, who arrived around the same time and settled the northeast corner, directly across from the Routledges on the northwest corner. There he built his home, Dalmagarry Cottage, in 1836.

Other early settlers were Truman Hull, who settled the southeast corner, and John Barclay, who built a home on the southwest. All these people found it necessary to do their trading in St. Thomas, about 15 miles away, as there was no London yet. The area where the village is today was, at that time, largely swamp, a great place for the children to play on rafts in summer and ice skate in winter. In early times the road to the north was corduroy for at least half a mile as this was the only safe way to create a route through the wet land, which in time was drained to create farmland.

As in many other communities, one of the earliest buildings was a school. Hyde Park School was erected on the southwest corner, on land donated by John Barclay in 1839. Two more schools would follow on this same lot. The fourth S. S. 17 was a frame building set on the west side of Hyde Park Road in 1854, halfway between Gainsborough Road and the United Church. Yet another school, this time of brick, was built in 1867 for \$1,500. Originally, it had two rooms but later, when student enrolment dwindled, one was removed.

HYDE PARK CORNER  
1839  
ONT

As early as 1845, Methodist preachers had been conducting occasional services in the schoolhouse, a practice that would continue for thirty years. On May 26, 1870, Edward Attrill donated a site for a church to the east of the intersection on the north side of the road. Then, in 1875, a local merchant, William Lamely died and left in his will a large portion of his estate to build a Wesleyan Methodist Church within three years after the death of his wife, should she outlive him. He died January 28 and his wife died four days later. In September of the next year, the Lamely Memorial Methodist Church opened on the designated site, at a cost of \$1,023.

Presbyterian services were also held in the schoolhouse but Gaelic services were held in the home of the Widow Ross. In the winter of 1875–76, plans and materials were gathered for the planned-for Hyde Park Presbyterian. Building began after John Barclay donated a land site on his lot south of the school and, on the first day of November 1876, Hyde Park Presbyterian opened. The first minister, Alexander Henderson, received a free manse and an annual salary of \$400. The schoolhouse also hosted Anglican services until land for a church was donated by R. Shaw-Wood in 1888. The Church of the Hosannas opened in December of that year.

The first cemetery at Hyde Park was located on the southwest corner near the school. In 1857, a new cemetery, St. George's, was opened to the west of the intersection on the south side of the road.

Hyde Park was a quiet intersection until the coming of the railway. In 1854, the tracks for the Great Western Railway (later the Grand Trunk and still later the CNR) were laid within a mile to the south of the hamlet. The arrival of the railway brought land speculation and many of the farms were subdivided into village lots. In 1875, the London, Huron and Bruce Railway line passed to the east of the village. And, in 1888, the CPR went by, running parallel to the CNR; at Hyde Park, the tracks are only a few feet apart. A CNR station was built south of the intersection where the tracks passed over Hyde Park Road. This new status as a railway shipping point and passenger depot transformed Hyde Park into a business centre.

In 1855, Alexander Forsythe built a hotel on the northwest corner. The Hyde Park House, as it was called, had a public hall over its horse

sheds that was used for dances. Later, Charles Woods established another hotel on the southwest corner; it became known as the Old Countryman's Inn. The first merchant at Hyde Park was the aforementioned William Lamely. He was followed by Elijah Lampard, and later by John Reeve. The first blacksmith at Hyde Park was a Mr. Murch, Samuel Sanders being another. Men would gather at the blacksmith shops and discuss everything from politics to farming while waiting for their horses to be shod. It is recorded that a man named George Tremeer had a carriage shop. Also, at that time, a dressmaker went from house to house, earning 25 cents a day sewing.<sup>19</sup>

Before there was a post office at Hyde Park, settlers had to go to Hall's Mills (Byron) or Kilworth for their mail. But, in the first day of the year in 1859, a post office was finally established for the community.

Hyde Park Corner's neighbourhood doctor was Henry Hanson. In the early days, two young men named John Bray and Walter Hoare studied under Hanson since there were no medical schools for them to attend. Mrs. George Parkins is identified as a practical nurse at the time. A story is recorded that has Mrs. Parkins and Dr. Hanson being called in the middle of the night by a man with a lantern, to attend a case on the 5th Concession (now Fanshawe Park Road). The man was in such a hurry to return to his house that he left them far behind, lost in the dark. They could not get their bearings until they stumbled into a den of foxes. Knowing that a den of foxes was on a certain sandy bank on Concession 5, they managed to find the way to their patient.<sup>20</sup> It was easy to get lost in the woods in those days. One member of the Routledge family was lost in the woods for three days until he finally thought of climbing a tall tree to see get his bearings. In that way he managed to find a familiar landmark and make his way home. He had slept in a hollow log that night to keep dry.<sup>21</sup>

Many clubs and social groups were organized at Hyde Park in the last century and in the early years of the 20th century. A temperance society called the Royal Oak Lodge started in 1859 with 21 members. In 1891, a fraternal society called the Woodmen of the World<sup>22</sup> was organized by William Fuller with Peter McNames as "Council Commander." The Woodmen are said to have financed the building of a Town Hall for Hyde Park in 1906. The building made a wonderful dance hall since it had no pillars or supports on its ground floor. A



*Top:* An early view of Hyde Park looking east along what was once called the Sarnia Gravel Road. Note the store to centre left. *Courtesy of Harold Gilbert.*

*Bottom:* Today, the street now called Gainsborough Road looks radically different, as does Hyde Park. The only remaining familiar landmark is the store, still on the northeast corner.

Farmer's Club was founded in 1907 and a Women's Institute Branch opened in 1909. When an enormous fire engulfed the Hyde Park House in 1911, it and all its outbuildings were destroyed. Although the nearby home of William Routledge was also totally consumed by flame, the members of the Women's Institute, meeting in another house nearby, managed to salvage nearly everything in it.<sup>23</sup>

Over the years there were many changes at Hyde Park Corner. By the turn of the century, the Old Countryman's Inn was converted into a home by R. E. Morris, who also built a garage beside it. In 1923, Hydro was welcomed in the village and, two years later, the roads were paved. That same year, 1925, the Presbyterian and Methodist Congregations joined to form Hyde Park United Church. The Presbyterian Church became home to the dual congregations while Lamely Methodist was closed and converted into a house. In 1948, the old Hyde Park School was abandoned and the cornerstone of a new one was laid west of the intersection on the south side of the road. The new school opened in 1949. On February 1, 1963, the word "Corner" was dropped from the name of the community, ostensibly to make it shorter. The old school, which had been relegated to life as a storage shed, burned to the ground in 1974, another building of the past gone.

Today, Hyde Park is part of the City of London. But the place has retained its own sign and a feeling for days gone by. An approach from the south, over the railroad tracks shows that the tracks are still in use, but the station is gone. Next is the Anglican Church of the Hosannas, still active on the east side of the road. Across the street, just to the north, is Hyde Park United, formerly Presbyterian, also still providing worship services. At the main corner, a strip mall stands on the site of the old schools and the Old Countryman's Inn. Peter Noble Motors is located on the site of the old Hyde Park House. To the north, on the west side of Hyde Park Road, is Routledge Street, built on the former Routledge farm. East of the main intersection, at 1019 Gainsborough Road, is the former Lamely Methodist Church, still a home and in good condition. To the west of the intersection is the newest Hyde Park School and farther west still is St. George's Cemetery where many of Hyde Park's nineteenth century inhabitants were buried.

### Lambeth

Lambeth, which developed around the intersection of Highways 4 and 2 (Colonel Talbot and Longwoods roads), is one of the largest communities ever annexed by London. Swallowed with most of Westminster

township on January 1, 1993, Lambeth still seems more like a country village than the suburb of a large city. One of the most interesting aspects of the community is the astonishing number of names and nicknames it has had over the years; the names Wahoo, The Junction, Slab Town, Westminster, St. Andrews, Saint's Rest, Village of Churches and Village of Lights all refer to Lambeth.



Long before European settlement, two Indian trails met at this spot. One trail that became an important north-south route for settlement was known as the North Talbot Road. The other became the important east-west route and was known as Longwoods Road or Main Street. Later they would become Highways 4 and 2 and today are called Colonel Talbot Road and Longwoods Road.

One of the earliest settlers at Lambeth was John Dingman, who gave his name to Dingman Creek in the west end of the village. Other pioneers were Jeremiah Schram and Abraham Patrick. The latter built the first house in Lambeth on the northeast corner lot, east of Dingman Creek, in 1809,<sup>24</sup> while Schram occupied the southwest corner about one year later.

An early name for the community was Wahoo. According to legend, Wahoo was the name of an Indian girl, the daughter of a chief. Supposedly, she met a tragic death nearby and was buried on the north shore of Dingman Creek. Later the community became known as The Junction, after the junction of the Longwoods and North Talbot Roads. It was also known as Slab Town, possibly because the North Talbot Road, which stretched from London to Port Stanley, had been planked in 1842.<sup>25</sup> However, prior to the planking, on February 6, 1840, a post office named Westminster had opened with David McPherson as postmaster. (It was on the north side of Highway 2, about 300 feet west of Highway 4.) It would seem that the official name must have been Westminster. An old letter written in 1852 has the postmark "Westminster, C. W." stamped on it.<sup>26</sup> But Westminster township Plan No. 27, dated June 18, 1853, shows the community as "St. Andrews"! Finally, in 1857, the name was finalized as Lambeth by John Chalmers, the postmaster at that time. He named it after his home in England, the part of London known as Lambeth. The name means "landing place for lambs" in Old English.<sup>27</sup>

During the 1840s, The Junction had two hotels, a general store operated by David Rymal, a shoemaker and the post office. The 1850s were a period of expansion and growth and Lovell's *Canada Directory* for 1857-58 states the population as about 250. John Chalmers was postmaster and clerk of the Division Court; W. H. Lancaster was bailiff of the Division Court; George Kelly, William McCracken and Charles Laird were merchants. Charles Laird was also a boot and shoemaker as was J. Lackie. Both W. Croker and William Sanagan were tailors; William Eagleton and James Reynolds were innkeepers; while J. Douglas was a blacksmith. W. and J. Halls were builders; James McConnell was a cooper, and A. Ferguson was a maker of cabinets. Lambeth was well on its way to becoming one of Middlesex's most significant communities.

A subscription school had existed here as far back as 1816, and Calvin Burch was probably the first schoolteacher. The log schoolhouse, set somewhere on the west side of the North Talbot Road north of the village, was the first S. S. 17. Other schoolhouses were built over the years, the one still standing there now dates from 1891.

Many congregations worshipped at Lambeth over the years, but the Methodists and Anglicans had the largest number of adherents in the early days. There were so many churches that the village was sometimes known as the "Village of Churches."

The first Wesleyan Methodist congregation met in the log schoolhouse in 1818. By 1872, the Bible Christian Church, a branch of the Methodist Church, was established with the Reverend T. Greene as pastor. This was on the south side of Main Street, east of the main intersection. The Wesleyan Methodist Church was on the east side of the road, just north of the main intersection, and an Episcopal Methodist Church was just across the road from it.

In 1884, when the Methodist Union took place, services were held in the former Episcopal building and the Wesleyan building was used as a church hall. The former Bible Christian church, transformed into a bakery by George and Sam Harris, was torn down in 1907. In 1899, the Methodists decided to build a new church. Consequently, the Wesleyan church building was moved to a nearby farm to become a cider mill and the Episcopal Church was torn down. This new Methodist Church, erected in 1900, cost \$10,000 to build and was fully paid for

*City of London*



An early postcard shows the multiple Longwood enterprises, once on the northeast corner of Lambeth's main intersection, now Longwood's and Colonel Talbot roads.  
*Courtesy of Gordon McDonald.*

with a surplus of \$1,000 on the day it was dedicated. The remarkable fact is that the congregation was still \$3,000 in debt at the beginning of the first morning service. At the end of the evening service, they had acquired the \$1,000 surplus—a remarkable fundraising feat. An article in the London *Free Press* said that “The church is probably the finest country church in Western Ontario, and the people of Lambeth have every reason to be proud of their new edifice.”<sup>28</sup>

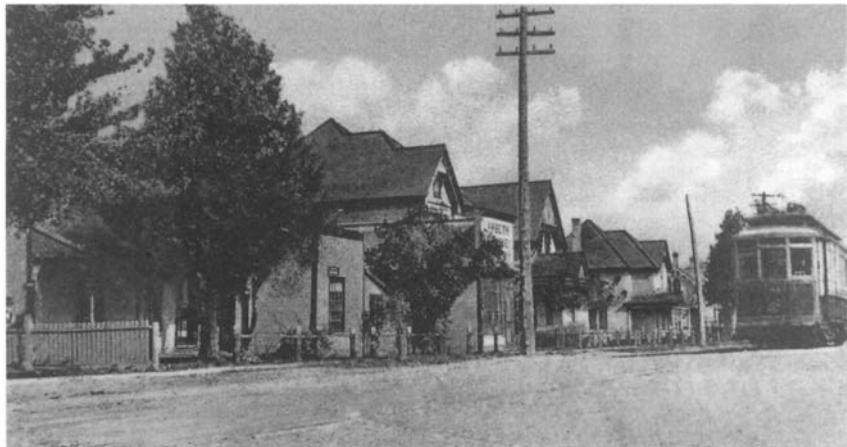
This church joined the United Church of Canada in 1925 but, unfortunately, it was levelled by a fire in January 1952. And the second fundraising miracle in the history of the congregation took place when enough money was gathered to begin rebuilding that very same year. When the minister, Reverend A. Duffield, asked the Anglican minister if it would be possible to borrow their parish hall for services, the Reverend R. Joselyn is reputed to have replied “Why the hall? You can use our church.” The Anglicans also helped with fundraising activities. And on the same day as the fire had occurred, Duffield went home and found the very first donation for rebuilding—a Catholic boy had left three dollars. Apparently the spirit of ecumenism was alive and well in the Village of Churches.<sup>29</sup>

Trinity Anglican Church, on the southwest corner of the main intersection, has a less complicated history, although not as much is known about it. Jeremiah Schram left the northeast corner of his property to be used for a burying ground and place of worship when he died in 1826. The date on the current white brick Trinity Church is 1863, but the actual building date is unknown. Legend has it that it was designed and built by a journeyman builder of pioneer churches. The characteristic features of his style are the inverted heart sanctuary arch, the absence of a centre aisle and the reading desk high on a dais. The cemetery is now closed, but it was restored and rededicated in 1973.

Some of Lambeth's most important businesses over the years included George Kelly's store, the many hotels and the Hamlyn mill. George Kelly, known as "Pop," bought the property on the northwest corner of the crossroads in the mid-nineteenth century and built a store and adjoining house. From 1865 to 1900, he was also the local postmaster. Interestingly, the 1878 *Historical Atlas* map appears to show the post office in a separate building from the store, however at this time the office may have been in Kelly's home instead of his place of business. When he put up a new building in 1889, the post office was set in one corner. This store would burn completely in 1957.

Lambeth's best known inn was the Junction Hotel, also known as the Queen's Hotel, and later as the Longwoods Inn. It stood on the northeast corner of the main intersection. Probably the hotel marked on the southeast corner on the 1878 *Historical Atlas* was the Lambeth House. Its fate is not clear, although it may have burned in 1888. In the mid-twentieth century, the Longwoods Inn was demolished to make way for a Sunoco Station.

It is said that Lambeth's first gristmill was built by William Arthur in the east end of the village in 1877. He had opened a sawmill a couple of years earlier and may have had an even earlier mill, assuming that the slabs for the road were actually sawn at "Slab Town." There is no proof of this, however. In 1889, Henry Hamlyn assumed the gristmill, renovated it and enlarged the flour milling capacity. Eventually his son Thomas took over and produced two brands of flour—Strongbow and Heart's Delight. During the early 1900s, the mill business boomed and flour was hauled by horse-drawn wagons to bakeries in London, and later transported by



At one time, streetcars connected Lambeth to London. Plans to expand the railway service were scrapped when the automobile surged to popularity in the early twentieth century. *Courtesy of Harold Gilbert.*

the electric railway. In the early twentieth century, larger more efficient mills ruined the business of smaller operators. Ultimately, Hamlyn's milling machinery was sold to a firm in St. Thomas.

The lumber business also waned as woods were cleared, and eventually the sawmill also closed. Sometime around 1931, the frame part of this mill was taken down by Ralph Hamlyn. The other portion was remodelled into a rolling and chopping mill powered by electricity in the engine room. As well, this same Hamlyn built a lunchroom west of the mill and also operated a service station. In 1946, the physical structure was sold to Lewis Hayes who opened a restaurant in one end while a garage run by Don Young operated out of the other part.

The senior Hamlyn had built a large house east of his mill in 1896 and, in 1928, his home would become the McFarlane Funeral Home, established by Henry's son-in-law, Albert Alexander McFarlane. In 1961, the business was sold to David Roberts and became the McFarlane and Roberts Funeral Home.

Mention should be made of Lambeth's fall fair which dates back to about 1850. The first fairgrounds were along the present Beattie Street but were later moved to a farm area across from present-day J. B. McEachren Public School. The fair, held one day in October, was sponsored by the

Westminster Agricultural Society. A dance always ended the event. The whole community participated, but the best part for most fairgoers was seeing everyone they knew for miles around all gathered together. The last fall fair was held about 1939, just before the Second World War.

In 1906, a traction line opened which connected London to Port Stanley via Lambeth and St. Thomas. It is hard to imagine now, but the line travelled right down Talbot Street. A spur line from the electric railway went alongside the mill, allowing wheat to be taken in and flour and lumber out. High school students used to take the tram into London since no high school existed in Lambeth. If a student was late, the train would blow its whistle and wait!<sup>30</sup>

Eventually the popularity of the electric railway diminished. The London and Port Stanley Railway, built 1853, had been steam-powered until July 1915, when it too became electric and gave the trolley some competition. However, one of the key reasons for the disappearance of the street railway was the ongoing legal battle with St. Thomas over running rights, plus the fact that cars were emerging as the more popular choice of travel. Eventually, high school classes were taught right in Lambeth, in the Masonic Hall, and a continuation school was built in 1925 on the east side of Talbot Street, south of the intersection—no more students and tramcars.

During the course of the twentieth century, it was the trend to live in Lambeth and commute to London to work. New subdivisions were built and the population of the village increased dramatically. In 1914, the slogan “Live in Lovely Lambeth” was coined by developer J. K. McDermid, who was anxious to lure Londoners to his new subdivision on Broadway Avenue.<sup>31</sup> By 1918, the community could boast a population of 400 people. After 1945, the post-war boom ushered in new subdivisions with ranch-style homes. By 1967, the population had soared to 2,800 and, by 1980, it was 3,056.

In 1927, one of Canada’s earliest airports was built at Lambeth by a group of London businessmen. The site had soft soil, which was good because planes in those days had hard pressure tires that were prone to breakage should a plane land on a solid-surface runway. The airport was just northwest of what is now the corner of Longwoods and Wonderland roads.<sup>32</sup>

Lambeth became a naval listening post in 1942, during the Second World War. Because the soil around Lambeth has very little mineral content as the site is really a dried lake bed, listeners could detect communications from German U-boats in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Lambeth was one of only four listening posts around the world. The others were in Western Canada, New Zealand and the Falkland Islands. But the Germans soon realized their messages were being intercepted and developed a system of staying on the air only three or four seconds at a time.<sup>33</sup>

In the twentieth century, Lambeth acquired new nicknames. During the 1920s, it was known as Saint's Rest because of the seven retired ministers living there. In the mid-twentieth century, the village became the "Village of Lights." Mr. and Mrs. T. Bacon saw a large Christmas light display in the United States and told their friends and neighbours about it. The consequence was that Lambeth decided to have a light display of its own.<sup>34</sup> In 1954, David Street was decorated with lights and Christmas symbols. The following year all of Lambeth was festooned with nativities, snowmen, spotlights and Christmas lights of every colour. People came from all around to see them; at one point in 1956, around 1,300 cars were recorded and the London *Free Press* printed a map of Lambeth streets with lots of one-way arrows.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Lambeth was six miles from London. But over the decades the expansion of London brought the city closer and closer to Lambeth. By the 1980s, the threat of annexation appeared, not just for Lambeth, but for all of Westminster. On September 1, 1988, the Town of Westminster was created to fight amalgamation by London, but to no avail. On January 1, 1993, Westminster township ceased to exist and Lambeth became part of London. Most of the population of the former community greatly resented the loss of their identity. They felt that its cosy village atmosphere would be disappear. One man put up a sign on his lawn that said "Welcome to Lambeth, Population 4." When questioned, he stated that "If I had wanted to be in London I would have moved there." He also mused, "I'm kind of running out of room here. Maybe tomorrow I'll annex London."<sup>35</sup>

The main intersection today is considerably different from the way it was years ago. While busier than ever, it has lost its key buildings. The

northwest corner, once the site of Kelley's store and post office, is now a modern plaza. The northeast corner, former site of the Longwoods Inn, is now a Pioneer Gas Station. The hotel on the southeast corner is long since gone and a Royal Bank building stands there. Only Trinity Church remains on the southwest corner; its cemetery contains some of the oldest pioneer graves in the county, including that of Abraham Patrick.

A drive north on Colonel Talbot Road goes past Lambeth United Church, still standing on the east side. Both it and Trinity are still used for Sunday services. Beattie Street, site of the first Lambeth fair, is the next street to the north. Farther out is a new subdivision called South Winds; on the northwest corner of Colonel Talbot and Kilbourne roads is the 1891 S. S. No. 17, now the Roes Stair Company.

South from the main intersection is Broadway Avenue, an early twentieth-century subdivision. David Street, where the light displays began, lies parallel to it but does not connect with the main road. Farther south is the former continuation school, now J. B. McEachren Public School. Across the road was the second site of the Lambeth Fair. Next is Outer Drive, and just off of Outer Drive is Patrick Street, named after Abraham Patrick.

East of the main intersection is the modern post office, on the south side of the road. Farther along is the McFarlane and Roberts Funeral Home, still being operated out of the house Henry Hamlyn built, but with an addition across the front. This is one of the oldest businesses in Lambeth. A nearby street commemorates the Hamlyn family name.

West of the main intersection is Dingman Creek, named after early pioneer John Dingman. Once over the creek, one is outside of Lambeth—but still in London.

### Lilley's Corners or London East

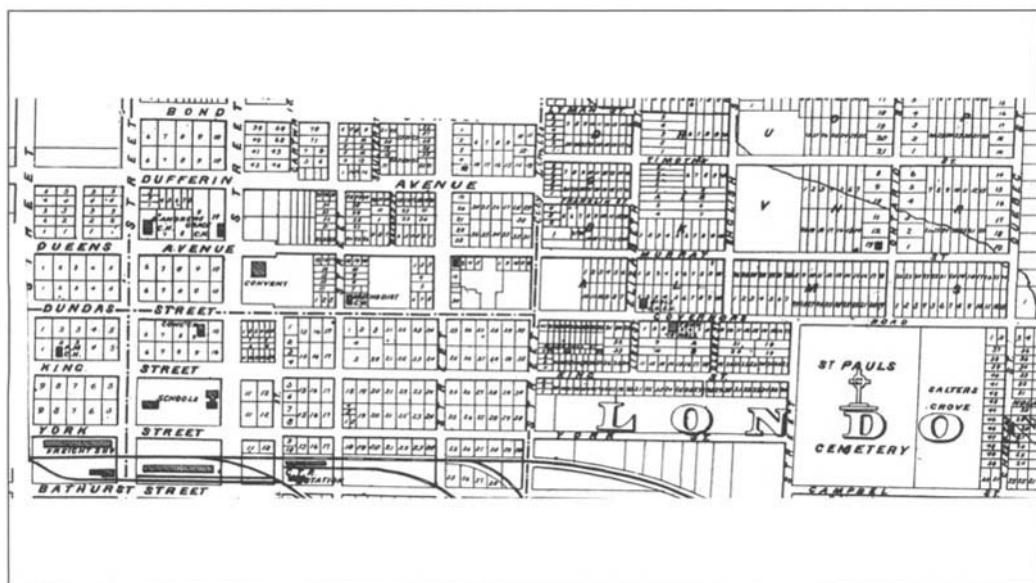
Few are aware that the east end of London was once a separate community, first known as Lilley's Corners and later as London East. This large town east of Adelaide Street became the first community to be annexed by London in 1885. At that time this community had a large population, made prosperous by the oil refining industry.

Charles Lilley (1833–1927) arrived at what is now the corner of Dundas and Adelaide streets in 1854. Lilley was the founder and most

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noteworthy citizen of London East. Involved as reeve, councillor and member of the school board, he served as Mayor of London East the year before it was annexed by London. In 1867, he opened a grocery store on the southeast corner of Dundas and Adelaide, and on the first of July 1872, a post office called Lilley's Corners opened in his store. The name of the post office was changed to London East on January 1, 1887. Even after the name changed, Lilley used his initial "L" in several cork postal cancellations which he created and used beside the London East date stamp.<sup>36</sup>

In 1855, the year after Lilley arrived, there were a few homesteaders in the vicinity but no businesses. The following year, J. Leonard opened the first hotel in the area and in that same year Murray Anderson built a large frame foundry on the west side of Adelaide Street. Anderson also erected a block of buildings with five stores, known as



This section of an 1878 map of London East clearly depicts the three railway lines. Governor's Road, now called Dundas Street, was the road initiated by Lt. Gov. John Graves Simcoe to connect York (Toronto) and London. Note that St. Paul's Cemetery is now the western fairgrounds; the graves were moved to Woodland and Mt. Pleasant cemeteries. *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Middlesex, 1878.*

VANISHED VILLAGES OF MIDDLESEX



*Top:* The former London East City Hall, now the Aeolian Hall, is used for concerts.  
*Bottom:* At Lilley's Corners (Dundas and Adelaide streets), looking east in 2002. The main block on the corner was built by Charles Lilley in 1867, and still bears the name Lilley's Corners over the main doorway.

the Anderson block. For many years he employed about ten men in his foundry, but later sold it to a Mr. Crawford who rebuilt the structure in brick. Later, the building housed the Globe Casket Works. Interestingly, this building was always looked upon as part of East London although it was actually west of Adelaide.

The real impetus for Lilley's Corners began to develop with the 1857 discovery of oil in the Petrolia and Oil Springs areas. London was chosen to become a refining centre as it was on the rail line, and soon many refineries were built in the vicinity of Lilley's Corners. By 1866, nearly 50 acres of land were covered with refineries; among the more prominent were Bailey, Duffield and Company, Spencer and Waterman, Stedwell and Company, L. C. Leonard, and Burns and Company.

After the oil refineries came other large businesses. The Ontario Car Works (the producer of railway cars) had between 300 and 400 employees, as did the Great Western Gas Works. The London Street Railway also had its headquarters there. With all the workers needed for these large factories, the population of the area grew very quickly; between the years 1866 and 1872 the population doubled from 1,000 to 2,000. Many smaller businesses, as well as schools and churches, followed, all needed to service this large population. Harrison's 1881-82 *Directory* lists no fewer than fifteen hotels.

In 1872, the inhabitants of Lilley's Corners and environs were still very scattered in the geographic sense. Their taxes were low and there was no talk of extending their status. But, in 1874, a meeting was held in an Adelaide Street schoolhouse which led to incorporation as a village on June 5 of that year. On December 23, four years later, the name was changed to London East. When the population reached 3,800 in 1881, London East became a town. Charles Lilley became the town's mayor in 1884 and that same year the London East Town Hall was built. It would serve as the centre of political and social life in the town for many decades. But, the very next year, London East was annexed by the City of London. This was inevitable, as there was really no need for a separate town so close to the city.

Today there are a few buildings which remind us of London East's past. Charles Lilley's store still stands on the southeast corner of Dundas and Adelaide Streets; it says "Lilley's Corners 1867" above the

door, although it is now a Money Mart. Farther east, on the southwest corner of Dundas and Rectory, is the former London East Town Hall, dated June, 1884. Since 1967, it has been the Aeolian Hall.<sup>37</sup> While not in a good state of repair, it is still a magnificent building.

## London South

The area known today as London South is almost in the downtown core of the city. It seems strange to think that it was once considered a suburb of London. But it was—and a posh suburb at that! Different sections of London South had different names over the years and, while these were never officially consolidated into one village, for purposes of description it is convenient to consider them together.

In the 1860s and '70s, Londoners began to build new homes south of the river in Westminster township. This new area of the city south of the Thames was originally referred to as Westminster, and MacKintosh's *County of Middlesex Directory* for 1871–72 refers to Westminster's "beautiful situation" and "large handsome dwellings." Population estimates for the suburb in 1875 range from 600 to well over 1,000.

At some point a post office called Westminster was founded in the building at the northeast corner of Stanley Street and Wharncliffe Road. Later this office would change its name to St. James' Park. Across the street from the office was the patch of land once known as St. James' Park. This little parcel was deeded to the city by Colonel Mahlon Burwell. First a potato field, then a pasture, but never really a park, it was the piece of ground between the CNR track on the south, Stanley Street on the north, Wharncliffe Road on the west and Wortley Road on the east. There is a row of houses—and not new ones—standing on it today. Polk's 1880–81 *Directory* refers to St. James' Park as "a charming suburb of the City of London."

Askin Post Office was established in 1876 on the southeast corner of Craig Street and Wortley Road, and for many years George Shaw was the postmaster. At the time, this spot was a mile south of London. Polk's *Directory* for 1884 calls Askin "a village forming part of London South."

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*Top:* A postcard from "yesterday" shows the London South Post Office, operated by George Shaw. This view, looking south, shows us an old streetcar and tree-lined streets. *Courtesy of Gordon McDonald.*

*Bottom:* The same view today, at the corner of Wortley Road and Askin Street. Shaw's store has been replaced by Tuckey's Home Hardware.

This area was once the estate of John B. Askin (1788–1869), Clerk of the Peace for the old London District and later for Middlesex County. In 1901, the name of this post office was changed to London South. At some point, the area seems to have been known by the name New Brighton.

At first London South was almost entirely residential. Some of the finest homes in the county were built there by wealthy Londoners. A surviving example is Waverley, the home of Charles Goodhue, built in

1877 on Maple Street, now 10 Grand Avenue. Just to the east of it, at 36 Grand Avenue, is Idlewyld, built in 1876 for London businessman Charles Hyman. Fifty-five McClary Avenue was built in 1864 for John McClary, founder of the McClary stove manufacturing company. But there were also more humble dwellings built in London South, lived in by artisans and tradesmen. Many people who worked in London actually lived in London South.

Over time the suburb became less exclusively residential as businesses began to develop. The St. James' Park Nurseries located on Wharncliffe Road near Stanley Street, and a number of grocery stores were scattered about London South, including those of George Shaw (in which was located Askin Post Office), Ensley Sulton, George B. Deacon, Samuel S. Armitage, Benjamin Burton and George Trebilcock. His store was located at the corner of Bruce Street and Wortley Road; above it was a large hall used by fraternal lodges for their meetings, and also used for religious services and political meetings. Two bakeries operated in London South at one time—one owned by William West on Craig Street and the other owned by Ed Parnell on Bruce Street. William Gerry had a planing mill behind his home on Craig Street, John S. Moore manufactured meters at 328 Wortley Road, and there were several doctors and a dentist in the area. Over the years there were many hotels, two of which were The Cove Inn on Wharncliffe and The Ivy Green on Stanley Street.

Many churches flourished across London South. In most cases the original buildings have been replaced by much larger ones. As well, there were at least two schools in the area—Askin Street and Westminster on Grand Avenue. Both have been gone for years.

William Hunter's livery on Teresa Street was one of the most valued institutions in the community. For many years Hunter ran a bus service "up to town," leaving the corner of Bruce Street and Wortley Road at regular intervals. This was long before the London Street Railway extended into London South in 1906.

Annexation of London South by the City of London occurred in 1890, when its population was about 3,000. Today the area is known as the "Old South" and the part of Wortley Road, near Craig and Bruce streets, is referred to as "Wortley Village." The old Askin Post Office

no longer stands, instead Tuckey's Home Hardware, a new building, stands on the southeast corner of Wortley and Craig today. Farther north, at the corner of Wharncliffe and Stanley, the building which once housed the St. James' Park Post Office is still standing. Today it's home to Irene's Bridal Shoppe. On Grand Avenue, east of Ridout Street South, stands Waverley, now the Waverley Mansion Retirement Residence. Idlewyld, now an inn, stands to the east. A drive east to High Street and a right turn takes one to the former McClary House on the southwest corner of High and McClary. All the streets of London South are lined with magnificent tall trees and this area is still one of London's most desirable residential neighbourhoods.

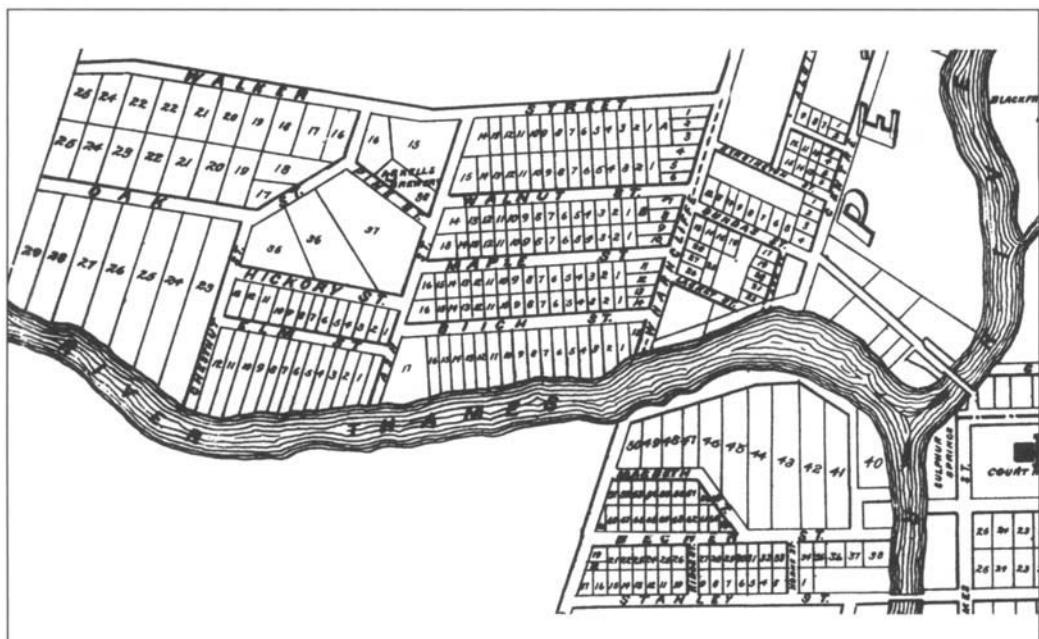
### **London West (Kensington and Petersville)**

Two villages named Kensington and Petersville once existed west of downtown London, across the Thames River from what is now Harris Park. Petersville was closest to the river and stretched from Western Road on the north to the river on the south, from Wharncliffe Road on the west to the Thames on the east. Kensington was west of Wharncliffe Road, north and south of what is now Riverside Drive.

One of the first structures to appear in this area was not a building, but a bridge. In 1831, the first to be built on the site of modern Blackfriars Bridge was a wooden one. The iron Blackfriar's Bridge, built in 1875, was created by the Canton Wrought Iron Bridge Company with the then unique feature of an unsupported span of 212 feet.

In 1853, a man named Samuel Peters built Grosvenor Lodge on Western Road and became the founder of Petersville. One of London's early surveyors, Peters subdivided the area into lots in 1854, and called the area "Bridge Town," in reference to the iron bridge. Petersville, named after its founder, soon became a desirable place to locate one's home. Mackintosh's 1871-72 *County of Middlesex Directory* lists 26 businesses under the heading of Petersville, along with four labourers. The Petersville Hotel, said to be first class, was operated by Richard C. McDonald. There was one church, two grocery stores, a school, and the North Branch Flour Mills of Hilliard and Saunby where 100 barrels of flour were dressed daily.





A map of the villages of Kensington and Petersville, later London West, in 1878. Street names and even street layouts have changed considerably in this neighbourhood. The Forks of the Thames dominates the map.<sup>38</sup> *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Middlesex County, 1878.*

William Lowgrey was the postmaster when, in 1872, Petersville Post Office opened. The post office was on Blackfriars Street, west of Centre Street (now Wilson Avenue), and later moved to the corner of Wharncliffe and Oxford.

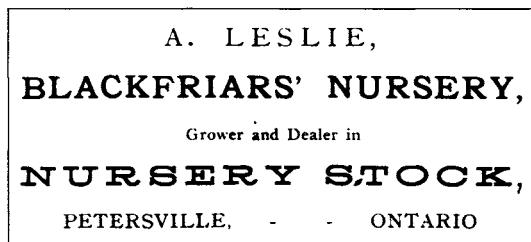
Incorporated as a village in 1875, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Petersville was a working-class neighbourhood with people working in nearby cement, broom, shoe and steel factories, as well as at the nearby brewery, mill, laundry and courthouse. Many small but charming cottages were built.

The 1878 *Historical Atlas of Middlesex County* shows the smaller village of Kensington west of Petersville, on the other side of Wharncliffe Road. The name was no doubt taken from the part of London, England named Kensington. The name means “farm of Cynesige’s people” in Old English.<sup>39</sup> The street pattern in the 1878 *Atlas* is completely different from the

one today, as are the street names. The streets, mainly named after trees, seem to have been formed around a lopsided pentagon in the centre which was divided into only three lots. Various maps show the street plan gradually changing to the one existing now. Kensington's post office opened November 1, 1880, under Robert A. James. Located on Wharncliffe Road, in the Burns Brothers' store, opposite what is now Kensington Avenue, the post office closed after a fire in January 1901. It never reopened.

Proximity to the Thames River meant the potential of flooding. In March 1883, the banks of the river overflowed to the degree that boats had to be used to rescue many of the inhabitants of Kensington. On July 10 and 11 of that same year came an even worse flood. During an exceptionally severe storm a "wall of water" came down from the north, swept houses away and carried them downstream. People were drowned in their homes. One young child was killed by flying fragments while being handed to its mother who had taken refuge up a tree. Eighteen people died that night and many lost all their possessions. More bad floods occurred in 1898, 1904, 1909 and 1929, with the worst one on record being that of 1937 when hundreds had to be evacuated. The creation of Fanshawe Dam in 1952 brought an end to these terrible threats. There was, however, one good side effect of the flooding: it gave the area very fertile soil. Many market gardeners lived in the area and many became prosperous. The house at 81 Wilson Avenue was built around 1866 or '67 by Alexander Leslie, a market gardener. For years an acre of gardens existed behind the home.

On March 4, 1881, Petersville and Kensington combined to form the village of London West. The impetus came from the people of Petersville, no longer wishing to have their village named after Peters.



An advertisement for A. Leslie's Nursery Stock located in Petersville.<sup>40</sup>

The man had never fulfilled his promise to build a town hall and school in exchange for naming the village after him and, over the years, he had become much less popular. For some unknown reason, however, the two post offices maintained their original names for some years. It would be July 1888 before the Petersville Post Office was renamed London West Sub Post Office, but Kensington always remained Kensington. All of London West was annexed by the City of London in 1897 when the population was just slightly less than 2,000.

The subdivision of Kensington Heights was laid out in 1884 by C. A. Jones for the developers William and Samuel Glass. North of Kensington, this area consisted of Upper Avenue, Prospect Avenue (now Foster Avenue), Victoria Avenue (now Britannia Avenue) and Woodward Avenue. All were north of Walker Street (now Riverside Drive). A new post office named Kensington Heights opened on September 1, 1917, with Josiah S. Motz as postmaster. *Vernon's Directory* lists the businesses at Kensington Heights existing at that time: Luke Jeffries was postmaster, William J. Marsh and James Perkins ran butcher shops, C. R. Smith had a stationery shop and the Tozer family—Chester, Gordon, Henry and H. R. K.—were contractors. (Modern Tozer Avenue, nonexistent in the 1884 survey map, was named after this family.) William Ward was identified as builder. On September 1, 1932, Kensington Heights Post Office became a Sub Post Office of London.

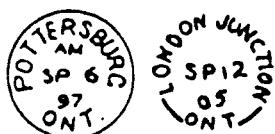
Today the former London West is very busy. For those who like looking at older homes, this is an excellent place to do so—especially in the Petersville area. Empress Avenue Public School, formerly Petersville School or London West School, mounted its old bell on its lawn in 1967 as a memorial to Canada's Centennial. Today, downtown London is connected to the west side of the river by the Kensington Bridge and by the still-functioning Blackfriars Bridge, the oldest metal bridge on the continent<sup>41</sup> still open to traffic—an important tribute to nineteenth-century engineering and ironwork. The area surrounding it is now referred to as Blackfriars. Far to the north, on Western Road, Peters' home, Grosvenor Lodge, has become the London Regional Resource Centre for Heritage and the Environment.

## Pottersburg or London Junction

This former village developed east of Highbury Avenue around the corner of Dundas and Hale streets. While never as large as London East or Byron, the community spawned quite a few businesses over the years. The area was annexed in 1912.

The original name was Pottersburg. A post office by this name opened on March 1, 1887, in D. F. Buchanan's grocery store, located on the southwest corner of what is now Dundas and Hale. The name of this office changed to London Junction on January 1, 1899, probably in recognition of the point just to the northeast where the CNR and CPR cross, just west of First Street.

Might's *Middlesex County Directory* for 1892 lists a large number of businesses at this location. William Barnes and W. J. McDonald ran hotels, Mrs. A. Buchanan was a grocer, George Cairncross was a florist and William Ellis and John Snow were the two butchers. W. S. Goforth was postmaster, the Glass Brothers operated the London Crockery Manufacturing Company and John White was carpenter. The community was on a stage route from London to Crumlin and Evelyn; the fare was 30 cents. At the time, the population was listed as 50 people.



Around 1906, a new store was built on the southwest corner of Dundas and Hale for Robert A. B. McKenzie and William J. A. Duffin. The second storey was used as a residence. On the southeast corner was Thomas H. Lashbrook's boot and shoe store, which opened about 1904. Barnes' Hotel was the next building to the east of Lashbrook's, still on the south side of the road.

The community was one-and-a-half miles from London in the 1890s, but by 1912 the city had crept up on its boundary. It was annexed by London that year. On September 8, 1923, London Junction Post Office became Sub Post-Office No. 10 of London.

This area today is part of the suburban sprawl of east London. The only original building still standing is the circa 1906 store, still on the southwest corner but looking very different from the time it was built. It is now the site of Lois McCracken, realtor, and Judy D.'s Hair Design. Modern maps show Pottersburg far to the east of this spot,

near Clarke Road; this residential neighbourhood was developed in the second half of the twentieth century. Modern London Junction refers to an area northeast of the old village, between Dundas and Oxford streets.

### Scottsville

Scottsville is located on Colonel Talbot Road just south of Highway 402. Not a ghost town in the traditional sense, it is probably as large now as it ever was, if not larger. But, as a result of the annexation of Westminster township, Scottsville is now part of London. In Scottsville Cemetery, one of the earliest cemeteries in the county, is the final resting place of Peter McGregor, the first settler in London.

Scottsville was named after the Scott family. Mungo Scott was one of the first settlers in the area, having arrived 1834. In time there were a large number of Scotts in the district, all his descendants.

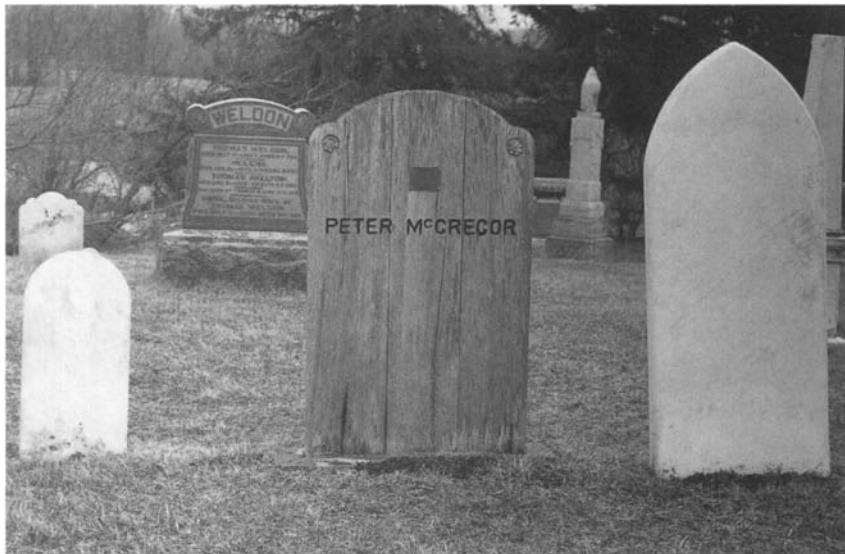
Another early settler at Scottsville was Peter McGregor, who is usually associated with the beginning of London. Born near Inverness, Scotland, in 1793, he arrived in Canada about 1823. A man of many

talents, his "career" description included tavern keeper, tailor, jailer and chain bearer or surveyor for Colonel Mahlon Burwell. Initially, he had a tavern near Byron, then went on to erect the first log cabin at the Forks of the Thames, now downtown London. Later he operated a hotel on the North Talbot Road

(now Colonel Talbot Road), or North Street as it was usually known, near Scottsville. He died on January 13, 1846, one month after acquiring the licence on January 13, 1846.

In about 1850, S. S. No. 16 Westminster, the Scott School, was built on the east side of the road, south of the cemetery. Five years later, it had 55 pupils in its one room. Much more is known about the nearest church. In 1820, the frame Methodist church was built on the west side of the road and became part of the Westminster Circuit established from 1818 to 1819. At one time, North Street, as it was known, White Oak and Littlewood churches were all part of the Canada Methodist Westminster Circuit. The parsonage was at Lambeth. In 1864, a new church was dedicated on the same site and, in 1925, the congregation

SCOTTSVILLE  
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This wooden grave marker at Scottsville Cemetery is a rare leftover from the past. It commemorates Peter McGregor, the first settler at the Forks of the Thames, the settlement later known as London.<sup>42</sup>

chose to join the United Church of Canada. Soon afterwards, it was decided to put a basement under the building. Excavation was nearly complete when one corner gave way and the building collapsed. A new church opened in 1926.

A cheese factory, Thornecroft's Cheese Factory, was operating in the neighbourhood of Scottsville in 1867. Later there are source references to the North Street Cheese and Butter Factory, but it is difficult to determine whether this is the same company with a different name or a completely different factory. A cheese factory is marked on a 1910 map, just south of a blacksmith shop, across the road from the school.

Scottsville Post Office opened May 1, 1895, with Habkirk Scott as postmaster. By 1910 the post office seemed to be just south of the site of the school. This post office closed March 8, 1913, and sometime later the Scott School closed and was torn down. A dwindling congregation led to the closing of the church in 1966. Its organ, communion set and offering plates were given to White Oak United and the building was demolished. In 1968 a cairn was made to hold the cemetery stones.

Today Colonel Talbot Road south of Lambeth is very built up and Scottsville is only slightly more so. Signs still announce the hamlet. Scottsville Cemetery is on the east side of the road and contains many very old gravestones of pioneer settlers, including that of Peter McGregor, the first settler of London. Farther south on the west side, just south of the site of North Street United Church, is the Methodist Church cairn. Scottsville still maintains the image of a small village, while very much part of the City of London.

## EPILOGUE

THIS BOOK HAS demonstrated the great change in Middlesex County's—and all of Ontario's—demography over the past century. We used to have many small communities. Now we have a small number of large ones. Nor is this process completed, for the small places seem to grow smaller still and the large places, like London, continue to grow.

This volume should make obvious the need for heritage conservation. It seems astonishing that where some small communities used to stand, there are now nothing but farmer's fields. But this is the case at many of the locations described in this book. The small number of buildings which do remain could be preserved in some manner, preferably at their original locations. Old schools and churches, for example, make excellent homes for singles or couples, or even small families. Old stores could once again be businesses or restaurants. When buildings cannot be preserved at their original locations, the best and most interesting could be preserved at Fanshawe Pioneer Village.

On a more positive note, the pioneer cemeteries of this county have been very well-preserved over the years. And several monuments have been built, such as the ones at Bornish, Maguire, Katesville and Cashmere, in memory of the settlers. A few more such monuments would be helpful, if we are to preserve the memory of these little communities. All are a vital part of Middlesex County's history.

# NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

1. *The London City and Middlesex County Directory* (R. L. Polk & Co., 1888–9) 322, 356.

### PART ONE: VANISHED VILLAGES OF MIDDLESEX

#### I. TOWNSHIP OF ADELAIDE

1. “Old Community Post Office And Church Gone,” London *Free Press*, 9 Sept. 1939, 20.
2. The Grange, an association of farmers, had its origin in Minnesota, USA, in 1867. The founder, Oliver Hudson Kelley believed farmers needed a national organization to represent them, much as unions did industrial workers. Otherwise, he felt farmers were at the mercy of unscrupulous farm supply merchants, railroads and warehouses. The Grange also championed education for rural areas and tried to improve country schools. Grange halls were community centres used for dances, potlucks and political rallies. The organization continues to exist, primarily in the United States, representing the views of rural residents and the farming community. Information taken from [www.grange.org](http://www.grange.org).
3. Lorraine E. Hodgins, *Keyser Kith and Kin: The Ancestors and Descendants of John Philip Keyser*, 102.
4. The Arkona Methodist Church in nearby Arkona, Ontario, lent its minister to rural churches that were close by. The minister’s route was known as the Arkona Circuit.
5. The Independent Order of Foresters (IOF) (in this country the Canadian Order of Foresters) claims to have originated in medieval times in England’s royal forests. Apparently they did not begin admitting men of other professions until 1840. They were established in Canada in 1874 as a fraternal benefit society. Most instrumental in establishing the IOF in Canada was a Mohawk from Desoronto, Ontario. Oronhyatekha, also known by his English name of Peter Martin

## NOTES

(1841–1907), who combined a medical practice with oratorical skills and humanistic concerns founded the IOF and served as its president for 26 years, travelling and spreading the message of fraternalism. Oronhyatekha lived in London for 14 years in 1870s and 1880s. His house, built around 1883, is at 172 Central Avenue (from London *Free Press*, April 21, 2002. By the 1890s, he had built the IOF into North America's leading fraternal benefit society and his statue still stands in the lobby of the IOF headquarters in Toronto.

The society now has over a million members in Canada, the United States and Britain. Today, the organization is primarily an insurance company but also a fraternity that supports programs to prevent child abuse.

This information was obtained from [www.phoenixmasonry.com](http://www.phoenixmasonry.com) and from [www.iof.com](http://www.iof.com) and *A Guide to Provincial Plaques in Ontario* (Toronto: Natural Heritage, 1989) 96.

6. In the 1830s, over 1800 people were sent from the south of England, mainly Sussex to Upper Canada through the Petworth emigration scheme. The project was initiated by the Rev. Thomas Sackett, Rector of Petworth and two Petworth businessmen. Their patron was George Wyndham, 3rd Earl of Egremont and resident landlord of Petworth. The first group went to Canada in 1832 and sent back favourable reports of Adelaide township. All migrants were outfitted with clothing, bedding, tools and cooking utensils. The Egremont Road in Western Middlesex was named after the Earl.

From Wendy Cameron "Petworth Emigrants in Adelaide Township: The Cost of Assisted Emigration in 1832," in *London and Middlesex Historian*, Autumn 1991, 18–29. Published by the London & Middlesex Historical Society.

7. "Many trials of first Napperton settlers revealed as its cemetery is restored," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 1, 60. Compiled by London Public Library and Art Museum, Microfilm at London Public Library, central branch.
8. "Napperton: Home of a famous general," London *Free Press*, 5 Oct. 1996, B1.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*

## II. TOWNSHIP OF BIDDULPH

1. Jennie Raycraft Lewis, *Sure An' This is Biddulph* (Lucan: Biddulph Township Council, 1965) 131.
2. McGillivray Township History Group, *McGillivray Township Remembers 1842–1992* (Ailsa Craig: McGillivray Township History Group, 1992) 32.
3. Lewis, *Sure An' This is Biddulph*, 39.
4. Adrian Room, *A Dictionary of Irish Place Names* (Belfast: Appletree Press, 1982) 13.
5. *McGillivray Township Remembers*, v.
6. "Franciscans once called church home," London *Free Press*, 5 Feb. 1993, B5.
7. "Granton-Awmik Were Twin Rival Towns," London *Free Press*, 22 May 1937, 18.
8. Edward Phelps, ed., *Middlesex: Two Centuries* (Middlesex County, 1989) 46.
9. Jennie Raycraft Lewis, *Llyndinshire: London Township* (publisher not known, 1967), 46.

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10. G. H. Armstrong, *The Origin and Meaning of Place Names in Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1930) 94.
11. Lewis, *Llyndinshire: London Township*, 41.
12. "Elginfield of Earlier Days With Great Hotel Recalled," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 2, 21.
13. *From Stone ... To Steel* (Hyde Park: Middlesex Board of Education, 1979) 50.
14. Lewis, *Llyndinshire: London Township*, 47.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. An ashery is a place where potash was made.
18. Personal interview with Aleda McComb, 16 July 1997.
19. "New Light Thrown On Elginfield's Flourishing Days of Barter, Building and Travel," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 2, 7.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Years before the post office opened, S. S. No. 4 was the site of one of the most notorious events in Middlesex history. It was the meeting place of the Biddulph vigilance committee who massacred five members of the Donnelly family, February 4, 1880. Taken from Orlo Miller, *The Donnellys Must Die* (Prospero Books, 2001) 147. (Formerly published by Macmillan in 1962.)
22. Lewis, *Sure An' This is Biddulph*, 65.
23. Founded in London, Ontario, in 1878, the Knights of the Maccabees were a fraternal benefit society, at first providing life insurance to families of deceased members, but later other forms of insurance. The name comes from the biblical military leader Judas Maccabeus, who seems to have been one of the first generals in history to order his soldiers to reserve part of their spoils for the widows and orphans of their fallen colleagues. By 1896, their membership was 209,831 and they were becoming influential in the United States. They converted to a life insurance company in 1962, becoming the Maccabees Mutual Life Insurance Company. Taken from [www.phoenixmasonry.com](http://www.phoenixmasonry.com).
24. "Few Traces Left of Clandeboye Settlement Where Busy Centre Established Along River," *London Free Press*, 7 March 1942, 31.
25. Guy St. Denis, ed., "Peter Butler: A Pioneer of Biddulph" in *London and Middlesex Historian*, Autumn 1990, 40.

### III. TOWNSHIP OF CARADOC

1. Information on the Burwell family from *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Middlesex County* (Offset Edition) (Sarnia: Edwards Phelps, 1972) 28.
2. Sources: *London Free Press*, Sept. 2, 1950, 2; Frances Kilbourne, Burwell Memorial Church Section in *South Caradoc Tales and Trails* (1980) 1.
3. Photocopies of postmasters' replies to James White's geographical place name survey, Burwell Road (1905) in J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.
4. Personal communication by phone with Mark Peters, the Muncey Delaware Chief, 23 August 1997.

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5. *History of the County of Middlesex, Canada* (Toronto: W. A. and C. L. Goodspeed, 1889) (first edition) 497–8. Facsimile edition in 1972 by Mika Studio of Belleville, Ontario.
6. *Vernon's City of London Street, Alphabetical, Business and Miscellaneous Directory for the Year 1919* (Hamilton: Henry Vernon, 1919) 806.
7. Mt. Brydges Women's Institute, *Tweedsmuir History*.
8. Floreen Carter, *Place Names of Ontario* (London: Phelps Publishing, 1985) 1010.
9. Personal communication with Mark Peters, 23 August 1997.

## IV. TOWNSHIP OF DELAWARE

1. Kenneth Cameron, *English Place Names* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1977) 38.
2. *Bartholomew Gazetteer of Britain* (Edinburgh: John Dee & Son Ltd., 1970) 429.
3. *Westminster (West) United Church*, 3, in the J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, University of Western Ontario.
4. Sharon was the most fertile plain in Palestine and its name is synonymous with all that is good, pure and holy. The reference comes from the Book of Isaiah.
5. *Good News Bible* (Toronto: Canadian Bible Society, 1976) 769.
6. Much of the information on Raper, Hawlett or Sharon came from Mr. Cam Howlett, personal interview, Aug. 1, 1997.

## V. TOWNSHIP OF EAST WILLIAMS

1. "Settlers Who Turned Swamps of West Williams Into Farms Fled Persecution In Scotland," *Middlesex County Scrapbook* Vol. 6, 63.
2. "Bornish Community Has Its Centennial on Sunday," *Middlesex County Scrapbook* Vol. 8, 81.
3. Ibid.
4. *Bartholomew Gazetteer*, 85.
5. Valleyview Graduating Class, *Memoirs of Our Community* (1967) 74.
6. Ibid, 75.
7. *County of Middlesex Gazetteer and General and Business Directory for 1864–5* (London: John Cameron, 1866) 180.
8. Personal interview with Bill Siddall, August 1, 1997.
9. Map of Carlisle, *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Middlesex County*, Offset Edition (Sarnia: Edward Phelps, 1972) 47.
10. Lobo, North Salem (West Grey) Women's Institute, *Tweedsmuir History*, 137.
11. *Memoirs of Our Community*, 74.
12. Beechwood Women's Institute, *Tweedsmuir History*.
13. "W. Middlesex M.P. Elected to Township Council When 21," *London Free Press*, 14 May 1940, 12.

## VI. TOWNSHIP OF EKFRID

1. H. F. Bardwell, *History of Ekfrid Township*. Unpublished manuscript at Appin Museum.

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2. Interview with Gordon McDonald, postcard collector in London, 4 August 1998.
3. "Pioneer Neighbors Gave Name to Macksville," London *Free Press*, 1 July 1950, 7.
4. The area of London, England, known today as Mayfair, was open land until the end of the seventeenth century. During the reign of Charles II (1660-1685) an annual fair came to be held there during the first week of May. The fair was abolished in 1760 and the area is now built up, but it still maintains the name. Adrian Room, *A Concise Dictionary of Modern Place Names in Great Britain and Ireland* (Oxford University Press, 1983) 70.
5. Mosa Women's Institute # 9, *Tweedsmuir History Reel* 2.
6. *Ibid.*
7. "Strathburn Loses Century-Old Building, Last Landmark," London *Free Press*, 20 Nov. 1943, 32.
8. *Ibid.*
9. John Nicolaisen, *Scottish Place Names: Their Study and Significance* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1976) 59.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Mosa Women's Institute # 9, *Tweedsmuir History Reel* 2.
12. H. F. Bardwell, *History of Ekfrid Township*.

## VII. TOWNSHIP OF LOBO

1. Anna Bycraft Ward, *Amiens: Village and Post Office* (self-published, 1985) 17.
2. *Ibid.*, 6.
3. Ron Brown, *Ghost Towns of Ontario*, Vol. I (Toronto: Canon Books, 1978) 88.
4. C. R. Charlton, "Duncrief 1835-1920," self-published pamphlet, 1970, housed in the Ilderton Public Library.
5. Valleyview School Graduating Class, *Memoirs of Our Community* (1967) 66.
6. Ron Brown, *Ghost Towns of Ontario*, 88.
7. Maxwell W. McLean, *175th Anniversary of Lobo Township 1820-1995: Guide to Historic Sites* (Ilderton: 1995), 9.
8. Although today the name is usually spelled Siddallsville, an early map in the possession of the Siddall family spells it without the "s" so this is the version adopted by the author.
9. *From Stone... To Steel*, 92.
10. "Founded 'Ghost Village' of Siddallsville," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 4, 68.
11. Siddall family papers, courtesy of Bill Siddall.
12. "Vanneck United Church Maintains Fine Musical Tradition Of Over Half A Century By Installing Modern Pipe Organ," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 4, 68.
13. Photocopies of postmasters' replies, Vanneck.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Personal communication with John Robson of London township, 9 Sept. 1999.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Lewis, *Llyndinshire*, 75.
18. *Telfer School Memories 1825-1960*, S. S. No. 7 (London Township, 1994) 11.
19. "Vanneck United Church Maintains Fine Musical Tradition Of Over Half A Century by Installing Modern Pipe Organ," London *Free Press*, 24 May 1847, 18.

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### VIII. TOWNSHIP OF LONDON

1. "Families Past and Present" in *London Township: A Rich Heritage*, Vol. II, (London Township History Book Committee, 2001) 30.
2. Lewis, *Llyndinshire*, 32.
3. *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 1, 13-14.
4. For more about this pioneer poet, Robert Elliot, see the section on Plover Mills under Township of West Nissouri.
5. Logan, *Through The Years in West Nissouri*, 78.
6. Little's Corners, Thorndale Women's Institute *Tweedsmuir History*, 73.
7. Kenneth Cameron, *English Place Names*, 88.
8. Lewis, *Llyndinshire*, 33, says store rebuilt; "Enterprising Settler" by A. S. Garrett, St. Mary's Argus, July 23, 1936, *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 1, 13, and Mrs. Warner Hudson, Free Press, August 11, 1945, *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 5, 7 "Bisbee Family Set Devizes On Way to Prosperity."
9. For information of the Independent Order of Foresters, see Notes, Chapter 1 (Adelaide) Note #5.
10. Phoebe Campbell, the only woman ever hanged in Middlesex County, may not have been guilty. More information will be presented on the topic in the new "History of West Nissouri," which is being developed as this book goes to print. The Campbell murder is being researched by John Leverton, editor for this project.
11. "Devizes Given Name by Early Settler for English Birthplace," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 7, 48.
12. "History of Devizes," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 1, 13-14.
13. *Bartholomew Gazetteer of Britain* (Edinburgh: John D. and Son Ltd., 1977), 249.
14. Personal interview with Tom Butler, July 17, 1997.
15. Charles Poulett-Thompson, Lord Sydenham (1799-1841) reunited the two Canadas, Upper and Lower, following the Durham Report of 1841. He became the first Governor-General of the new Province of Canada. Information from [www.gmilne.demon.co.uk](http://www.gmilne.demon.co.uk).
16. Lewis, *Llyndinshire*, 99.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Lewis, *Llyndinshire*, 92.
20. "'Tolpuddle Martyrs,' All But One, Are Buried in London and St. Marys," London *Free Press*, 24 July 1926, 8.
21. Clarke E. Leverette, *Our Fourth Concession: A Nineteenth Century History of Lots Nine to Twelve of the Fourth Concession London Township, Ontario* (Northbridge-Stoneybrook Community Association, 1969) 35.
22. "Propose To Scatter Earth From Tolpuddle on Grave of Martyrs," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 6, 12.
23. "Teaming Days Kept Fanshawe Business Brisk," London *Free Press*, 6 Feb. 1937, 21.
24. Leverette, *Our Fourth Concession*, 18.
25. Ibid, 17.
26. Ibid, 18.

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27. Leverette, *Our Fourth Concession*, 18.
28. Lewis, *Llyndinshire*, 32.
29. Leverette, *Our Fourth Concession*, 17.
30. "Story of S. S. Nos 3 & 10 Dates Back A Century," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 1, 15.
31. Jennie Raycraft Lewis, *Birr and Beyond* (Birr Women's Institute, 1958) 137.
32. *Ibid.*, 136.
33. Lewis, *Llyndinshire*, 34.
34. *Ibid.*, 140.
35. *Ibid.*, 34.
36. Lewis, *Llyndinshire*, 43.
37. *Ibid.*, 55.
38. *London City and Middlesex County Directory* (London R. L. Polk, 1887) 324.
39. "Masonville in Early Days Was Thriving Centre," *London Free Press*, 6 Dec. 1930, 8.
40. "Driving Hazards Cut By Traffic Islands," *London Free Press*, 10 July 1959, 6.
41. "Agonized Deaths of Motorists May Not Have Been in Vain," *London Free Press*, 28 Sept. 1935, 2.
42. "Hunt Old Masonville Schoolhouse," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 5, 32.
43. Jennie Raycraft Lewis, *Birr and Beyond* (London: Middlesex Printing Co., 1958) 52.
44. *Ibid.*, 52.
45. *Ibid.*.
46. *Ibid.*, 53.
47. "O'Neil Family from Tipperary Took up Much London Township Land," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 5, 8.
48. Lewis, *Llyndinshire*, 36.
49. *Ibid.*.
50. *Ibid.*.
51. *Ibid.*, 37.
52. *Telfer School Memories 1825–1960*, S. S. No. 7 (London Township, 1994) not paginated.
53. Lewis, *Llyndinshire*, 124.
54. A minister would come from Nilestown, North Dorchester township, a distance of about 6 kilometres, to deliver a sermon. Hale Street was closer, being not far to the west of the Gore location. Information from Lewis, *Llyndinshire*, 41.
55. The Bethel Christian Reformed Church was contacted for information about the former cemetery.

## IX. TOWNSHIP OF MCGILLIVRAY

1. Personal communication with Doug Thompson, 15 Feb., 2000.
2. Here a demand would refer to an order from the Township Council.
3. McGillivray Township History Group, *McGillivray Township Remembers* (Ailsa Craig: 1992) 58–59.

## NOTES

4. "Early Middlesex Directories United Brinsley and Buffalo," *Middlesex County Scrapbook* Vol. 5, 109.
5. *McGillivray Township Remembers*, 57–58.
6. Personal communication with Jack Dorman, 23 July 1997.
7. Memories of Andy Rusk were recorded by the McGillivray Township History Committee.
8. *McGillivray Township Remembers*, 65.
9. *Ibid*, 66.
10. *Ibid*. Incidentally, the publisher of this book researched and wrote shows for *The Nature of Things* and did commentaries for *Fresh Air*. He knew Cy Strange well—a very fine broadcaster. He was also a fine musician and singer.
11. *McGillivray Township Remembers*, 66.
12. *Ibid*, 32.
13. *Ibid*, 66.
14. Field, *Place Names*, 120.
15. *McGillivray Township Remembers*, 67–68.
16. Taken from the *Illustrated Atlas of Middlesex*, 1878, 71.
17. First story is taken from *Middlesex County Scrapbook* Vol. 6, 25. "Moray Rests in Quiet Calm After Busy Pioneer History."
18. *McGillivray Township Remembers*, 95.
19. *Ibid*, 69.

## X. TOWNSHIP OF METCALFE

1. Photocopies of postmasters' replies, Calvert.
2. *From Stone... To Steel*, 65.
3. Edward Blake was elected M.P. for South Longford in 1892, representing the Irish Home Rule Party. From: Joseph Schull, *Edward Blake: Leader and Exile 1881–1912* (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1976) 190.
4. Brown, *Ghost Towns of Ontario* Vol. 1, 85.
5. *Ibid*, 95.
6. Jane Laughton, "Counterfeitors Caught At Katesville," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 7, 28.
7. Brown, *Ghost Towns*, 95.
8. *Ibid*, 95.
9. *County of Middlesex Gazatteer and General and Business Directory for 1864–5*. (London: John Cameron, 1866) 183.
10. Phelps, *Middlesex*, 45.
11. *History of the County of Middlesex*, 414.
12. "Counterfeitors Caught At Katesville," 28.
13. *Ibid*.
14. "Sturdy Scottish Settlers Braved Winter in Church Without Roof or Windows," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 7, 8.
15. *History of Burn's Church, Mosa 1835–1941* (Alvinston: Alvinston Free Press, 1941), 28.

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16. *City of London and County of Middlesex General Directory for 1868–9.* (Toronto: C. E. Anderson & Co.) 335.
17. “Sturdy Scottish Settlers,” *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 7, 8.
18. *History of Burn’s Church*, 27.
19. W. F. H. Nicolaisen, *Scottish Place Names: Their Study and Significance* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1976) 144.
20. “No Tippling On The Sabbath In Good Old Days,” *London Free Press*, 6 Feb. 1932, 8.
21. “Napier Grist, Woolen [sic] Mills Aided Growth of Community,” *London Free Press*, 21 May 1949, 31.
22. “Scorched Lodge Goat Mystery To Masons of Township of Metcalfe,” *London Free Press*, 30 Jan. 1932, 8.
23. Ruth Merrick, *Napier Remembered: Memories of Metcalfe Township’s Pioneer Community* (Arva: The Medway Valley News, 1991), not paginated.
24. “Napier Grist, Woollen Mills,” *London Free Press*, 8.
25. “Napier Became Ghost Town When Missed by Railroads,” *London Free Press*, 17 Sept. 1960, 22.
26. *Napier Remembered*.
27. Founded in 1701, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel still exists as a missionary society of the Church of England. Their goal was to “minister to Her Majesty’s subjects in plantations, colonies and factories beyond the seas. Information taken from [www.uspg.org.uk](http://www.uspg.org.uk).
28. *Napier Remembered*.
29. *Ibid.*
30. “Church Built To Last,” *London Free Press*, 15 Jan. 1976, 11.
31. *Napier Remembered*.
32. Sir Charles Napier (1782–1853), British General, served with distinction in the Napoleonic Wars, as did his brother Sir William (1785–1860). Years later, Sir William wrote *Battles of the Peninsula War* in which he described the battles he and his brother fought. Perhaps some of Napier’s military settlers had fought under one or both of the brothers. From Sir William Napier, *Battles of the Peninsula War*. London: Henry Frowde Hodder & Stoughton, not dated.
33. Brown, *Ghost Towns*, 92.
34. “Scorched Lodge Goat,” *London Free Press*, 1932, 8.
35. *Napier Remembered*.
36. *Ibid.*
37. “Napier’s Walnut Forest Gave Boom to Village; Bear Creek Harnessed,” *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 3, 23.
38. The first temperance society in Canada was formed in Brockfield, Ontario, in 1828. Initially, this group advocated moderation, not total abstinence from alcohol. In 1839, a total abstinence pledge succeeded the old moderation one among most societies, as it seemed the moderation approach had proved a failure. There was little connection between groups until the Sons of Temperance established their first branch in 1847. In 1874, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union started up, giving the movement its strongest impetus. The word lyceum is used here instead of hall or society. Information taken from [www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org).

## NOTES

39. Mosa No. 9 Women's Institute, *Tweedsmuir History Reel 2*.
40. Canada's last bank failure occurred in 1923 when the Home Bank collapsed. Incorporated in 1903, the bank had, by the time of its failure, a total of 70 branches, mainly in urban areas. The bank directors were charged with falsifying the bank's accounts to cover up losses from bad loans. As a result of civil actions, they were required to pay damages. Information from www.ch.net, www.hku.hx and www.fortsteele.bc.ca.
41. *Tweedsmuir History Reel 2*.
42. Ibid.

## XI. TOWNSHIP OF MOSA

1. "Cashmere Thriving Village On Thames In Early Eighties," London *Free Press*, 7 Nov. 1925, 8.
2. "Busy Cashmere Missed Railway, Faded," London *Free Press*, 7 Aug. 1937, 13.
3. "Mills, Houses, Streets of Cashmere Settlement Have Vanished," *Middlesex County Scrapbook* Vol. 7, 20.
4. "Almost Forgotten Village of Cashmere Once Played Host To Ghostly Spectre," London *Free Press*, 19 Nov. 1927, 8.
5. *History of the County of Middlesex, Canada* (Toronto: W. A. & C. L. Goodspeed, 1889) 536.
6. Personal communication with William W. Judd, 2 September 1998.
7. Professor Blot, *A Tour of the Thames* (London: London Advertiser, 1881), 90–91.
8. Ibid, 91.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. "Cashmere Thriving Village," London *Free Press* 7 Nov. 1925, 8.
13. "Pratt Siding Thrived As Centre in Building of Great Western," London *Free Press*, 23 Dec. 1944, 34.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. First source is the Listowel Mosa Women's Institute *Tweedsmuir Book*: Second source is the *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, "Reunion" August 20, 1962, Vol. 7, 24.

## XII. TOWNSHIP OF NORTH DORCHESTER

1. Mrs. Harold H. Ross, ed., *North Dorchester: A Century Past To Present* (North Dorchester Historical Committee, 1967), 68.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid, 67.
4. John Field, *Place Names of Great Britain and Ireland* (Newton Abbott: David and Charles, 1980), 60.
5. Ross, *North Dorchester: A Century Past to Present*, 69.

## NOTES

6. Personal communication with Art Greenwood, July 8, 1997.
7. Field, *Place Names of Great Britain and Ireland*, 57.
8. London Airport, once the Crumlin Airfield, was created just the northeast of the intersection during 1937 to 1939. It was opened on July 27, 1940. During the war, many RCAF men were trained here. The fuselages for Mosquito bombers were also made here by Central Aircraft as part of the war effort of the 1940s. From Wm. E. Cornfield, *Wings Over London: Our Aviation Heritage*. (Webco, 1982) 38–60. (Booklet at J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario).
9. Crumlin Women's Institute, *Tweedsmuir History*, 93.
10. A poster advertising an 1855 land auction, now part of the J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.
11. *North Dorchester: A Century Past to Present*, 124.
12. Ibid, 24.
13. Evelyn L. Moore, *History of Belmont 1815–1971* (Belmont, Belmont Lions Club of Ontario, 1971), 55.
14. Carter, *Place Names of Ontario*, 607.
15. Barbara Chisholm, ed., *Ghosts of the Bay: A Guide to the History of Georgian Bay* (Toronto: Lynx Images, 1994), 86.
16. Photocopies of postmasters' replies, Waubuno.

## XIII. TOWNSHIP OF WESTMINSTER

1. "U.E.L. Settlers Among First in Westminster, With Scotch, Irish and English Soon In Line," *London Free Press*, 6 Mar. 1937, 14.
2. Wilton Grove Women's Institute, *Tweedsmuir History*.
3. Ibid, Vol. 4, 2, Glendale Church Section.
4. A subscription school was one where parents paid a fee for their children to attend. Free government-funded elementary education began in the 1820s.
5. Raymond K. Crinklaw, Olga B. Bishop and George P. Rickard, *Glanworth, Westminster Township: One hundred years of yesterday's news, today's history* (Lambeth: Crinklaw Press, 1987) 216.
6. Ibid, 217.
7. Wilton Grove Women's Institute, *Tweedsmuir History*, Vol. 2, 2, Hubrey School Section.
8. Carter, *Place Names of Ontario*, 1181.
9. Photocopies of postmasters' replies, Hubrey.
10. Crinklaw, *Glanworth, Westminster Township*, 58.
11. Photocopies of postmasters' replies, Hubrey.
12. "Hubrey School farewell had all shades of Irish wake," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 8, 52.
13. "A Pioneer Dutch Family of Westminster Township," *London Free Press*, 9 Dec. 1933, 10.
14. "Old Homestead Becomes Military Hospital Site," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 8, 18 Aug. 1945, 33.

## NOTES

15. "Historic Odell School To Be Baptist Mission," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 8, 6.
16. Information from [www.thamesriver.org](http://www.thamesriver.org).
17. Francis Ballantyne, "Historical Sketches of the Congregations in the London Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Canada," *Western Ontario Historical Notes*, Vol. XX, No. 2, Sept. 1964, 31.
18. Wilton Grove Women's Institute, *Tweedsmuir Book*, Vol. 2. Pond Mills Cemetery Section, 1.
19. *History of the County of Middlesex*, 579–80.
20. "Pond Mills...London's Forefather," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 8, 35.
21. Tambling's Corners, *Old South Advocate*, June 1995.
22. Room, *A Dictionary of Irish Place Names*, 119.
23. "Historic School to Fall For Cloverleaf at Tempo," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 8, 27.
24. "83-Year Tradition Dies at Wilton Grove," *Middlesex County Scrapbook* Vol. 8, 43.
25. The 91 students were moved to classes at Central Secondary School as part of a program to "integrate challenged youths" into regular schools as it was felt they would benefit from interaction with other students. They, however, went into separate programs and classrooms. From Norman De Bono, "Learning disabled to be integrated at Central High," London *Free Press*, October 4, 1996.

## XIV. TOWNSHIP OF WEST NISSOURI

1. Wellburn Women's Institute, *Tweedsmuir History* Vol. 6, 325.
2. Ibid, Vols. 2–3, 103.
3. Personal interview with Olive Fedyk, 6 May 1997.
4. "North Nissouri Church Marks 90th Year," London *Free Press*, 9 Oct. 1948, 8.
5. Carter, *Place Names of Ontario*, 224.
6. "Cherry Grove Old Boys and Girls Will Foregather Sunday and Monday," St. Mary's *Journal-Argus*, 30 June 1938, 4.
7. "Valley of Cherry Grove All Quiet, Though Tram To London Once Mooted," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 6, 48.
8. "Cherry Grove," *Journal-Argus*, 4.
9. Ibid.
10. "Spy and Nudger Gave Home News," London *Free Press*, 7 Feb. 1942, 34.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Personal communication with Doris Strawhorn, 18 July 1997.
14. Crumlin Women's Institute, *Tweedsmuir History*.
15. "Poet Robert Elliott, Native of London Township, Inspired by Nature," London *Free Press*, 24 Apr. 1948, 22.
16. "Plover Mills Once Thriving Town on Thames, Disappears Without Trace of Early Industry," *Middlesex County Scrapbook* Vol. 1, 36.

## NOTES

17. For more on Robert Elliot see the community of Devizes under the Township of London. His complete poem on Plover Mills is shown here:

A winding road around a hill  
Will lead you to an inlet still  
Where willows nodding o'er the stream  
Scarce dare disturb the lily's dream.  
A wooden bridge afar is seen  
Amid a mist of summer green,  
While 'neath the cedars, clear and cool,  
Comes bubbling up the drinking pool;  
And when the twilight breezes blow  
Athwart the tree-tops, downward go  
Along the path, the quiet cows,  
To drink below the scented boughs.  
Red-cherry with her yellow thorns,  
Breaks thro' a hedge of scattered thorns;  
While Daisy follows Brindle down  
O'er tangled roots the beech leaves brown.  
The unseen hand of Time casts o'er  
The mellow sky a starry shower;  
And heralded by Eurus bold,  
And crowned with beauties manifold,  
Queen Dian mounts her skyey throne;  
The bee across the mead has flown;  
The halcyon has found his cave,  
The eglantine forgets to crave  
Apollo's kisses, and the bats  
Reel in the shadows o'er the flats  
Like withered leaves from smitten oaks;  
Sweet Day in Night's endusked cloak  
Enwrapped, implores the silent queen.  
For glowing smile and opal sheen,  
And all the blessings of the dawn  
Once more to be around her drawn.  
While ceaselessly between the steeps,  
The river to its far rest creeps.

Logan, "Through The Years." In Robert Elliot, *Poems*, The Baconian Club, London, 1904.

18. "St. Ives, Ontario and Area Comprehensive Survey," Pamphlet on file at the J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, University of Western Ontario, 27.
19. In the later 1870s, mills expanded from millstones to rollers which speeded up the process of milling, also producing a finer flour than stone-ground flour. Rollers separated the kernel rather than smashing it. By 1890, most Canadian mills had converted to rollers. From Carol Priano, *Mills of Canada*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1976.

## NOTES

20. St. Ives, Ontario and Area (Comprehensive Survey), 21.
21. Logan, *Through The Years*, 61.
22. Crumlin Women's Institute, *Tweedsmuir Book*.
23. *History of the County of Middlesex*, 565.
24. Crumlin's Women's Institute, *Tweedsmuir Book*.
25. Cameron, *English Place Names*, 145.
26. Doris Strawhorn, *Wyton: A Ghost Town and The Scatcherds*, 2, 4. (A pamphlet in the J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, University of Western Ontario).
27. *From Stone... To Steel*, 103.
28. "Scatcherd House Recalls A Dream," *Middlesex County Scrapbook* Vol. 7, 58.
29. Doris Strawhorn, "The Scatcherds of Wyton: A Pioneer Saga." Unpublished leaflet at J. J. Tallman Regional Collection, D. B. Weldon Library, University of Western Ontario.

## XV. TOWNSHIP OF WEST WILLIAMS

1. Photocopies of postmasters' replies, Lamon.
2. "Descendants of Pioneer Settlers Still Inhabit Old Lamon Community," London *Free Press*, 15 Jan. 1955, 13.
3. Photocopies of postmasters' replies, Sable.
4. "Old Tree Is Sable Landmark," *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 8, 85.
5. *Ibid.*
6. "Where Have All the Hamlets Gone?" *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 7, 26.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. "Sylvan Village Had Busy Days Before Side-Tracking By Railway," London *Free Press*, 20 Sept. 1944, 29.
10. \_\_\_, *Parkhill and District Centennial 1860–1960*, Parkhill Centennial Committee, 17.
11. "Pine of Sylvan Was Rated High in Forest Days," London *Free Press*, 18 March 1939, 18.

## PART TWO: VANISHED VILLAGES OF LONDON

## XVI. CITY OF LONDON

1. Hellmuth Ladies College was opened September 1869, founded by Reverend (later Bishop) Isaac Hellmuth (1820–1901). It complemented Hellmuth Boys College, established 1864. Founder Isaac Hellmuth became the University of Western Ontario's first chancellor (1878–1885). He had initiated Huron College along with Bishop Benjamin Cronyn in 1863. The University of Western Ontario still gives out Hellmuth prizes to distinguished faculty members. He later became the second bishop of Huron (1871–1883) after Bishop Cronyn. Isaac Hellmuth ultimately retired to England. Taken from londonhistory.org, publish.uwo.ca and www.diohuron.org.

## NOTES

2. A. J. Shawyer, *Broughdale: Looking For Its Past* (London: Broughdale Community Association, 1981) 98.
3. *Broughdale: Gateway to the North Booklet for 23rd Annual Geranium Walk* (London: Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, 1996) 21.
4. *Ibid.*, 18.
5. Mt. St. Joseph Motherhouse is a Roman Catholic convent.
6. Those wanting a more detailed account of the history of Broughdale should consult *Broughdale: Looking For Its Past* by A. J. Shawyer.
7. Tecumseh (1768–1813) was leader of the Shawnee First Nation. He lead Native troops in support of the British during the War of 1812, believing that if the British won they would reward his people by returning their lands to them. Tecumseh was killed at the Battle of the Thames. Information from Glenn Tucker, *Tecumseh: Vision of Glory* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1956).
8. “Byron Scene of Battle in War of 1812,” *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 8, 6.
9. “Battle on the Hill,” *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 8, 2.
10. “The Battle of Byron,” *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 8, 3.
11. “Consecrated in 1878,” *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 8, 24.
12. *History of the County of Middlesex*, 578.
13. William B. Hamilton, *MacMillan Book of Canadian Place Names* (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1978) 164.
14. “History of Byron,” *Middlesex County Scrapbook*, Vol. 8, 1.
15. For more information on Ealing, see *A Collection From the Hamilton Road Area* by Carrie Kirkwood.
16. Crinklaw, *Glanworth*, Frontspiece.
17. St. Andrew’s Women’s Institute, *Glanworth, Tweedsmuir History*.
18. Lewis, *Llyndinshire*, 67.
19. *Ibid.*, 70.
20. *Ibid.*, 67.
21. *Ibid.*.
22. The Woodmen were a fraternal benefit society founded in Omaha, Nebraska, on June 6, 1890, by Joseph Cullen Root. It may have taken its name from Root’s hometown of Lyons, Iowa, where lumber was the principle industry. It might also be from a speech he heard about woodmen clearing forests to provide shelter for their families. The society was essentially an insurance company and still exists today as Woodmen of the World Life Insurance Company of Omaha. In 1998, they had 845,000 members. Taken from [www.woodmen.com](http://www.woodmen.com).
23. Lewis, *Llyndinshire*, 71.
24. Dorothy M. Dedels, “Village at the Crossroads: A History of Lambeth, 1967, from inside cover of this pamphlet.
25. *Reflections of Westminster Township*, Westminster Township Historical Society, 14.
26. Dedels, *Village at the Crossroads*, 15.
27. Cameron, *English Place Names*, 167.
28. Dedels, *Village at the Crossroads*, 19.
29. *Ibid.*, 46.
30. *Reflections of Westminster Township*, 35.

## NOTES

31. "Goodbye Westminster, hello London," *London Free Press*, 31 Dec. 1992, B1.
32. Dedels, *Village at the Crossroads*, 41.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*, 43.
35. "Village Man Opt For Independence," *London Free Press*, 4 Jan. 1993, B1.
36. Stan Shantz and Don Demaray, *Post Offices and Postmarks of London, Ontario* (Toronto: Unitrade Press, 1983), not paginated.
37. The word "Aeolian" refers to Aeolius, the Greek God of the wind. It also refers to music produced by, or sounding as if produced by, the wind. It is a romantic Victorian name for a concert hall.
38. Map taken from the *Illustrated Historical Atlas* of 1878 on page 56.
39. W. F. H. Nicolaisen, ed., *The names of Towns and Cities in Britain* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1970) 208.
40. Advertisement taken from the *Illustrated Atlas* of 1878 on page 69.
41. Daniel J. Brock, *Best Wishes from London: Our Golden Age of Postcards 1903-1914* (Gatherick Press, 1992) 59.
42. The grave marker shown is not the original. The one there now is a reproduction erected in the 1980s by the London and Middlesex Historical Society. The original marker is in Museum London.

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- Adare (May 2, 1997)  
Bill Dixon.
- Amiens (May 12, 1997)  
George Skinner, Maurice Skinner,  
Angela Janssen.
- Awmik (Sept. 22, 1997)  
Austin Hodgins.
- Belton (June 5, 1997)  
Olive Fedyk, Marianne Housell, Bill  
& Verna Switzer.
- Bornish (June 6, 1997)  
Kathy Hendrikx.
- Bornish (June 10, 1997)  
Sister M. Teresita.
- Bowood (June 8, 1997)  
Mary MacBean.
- Buffalo (June 9, 1997)  
Lois Brewer, Charles Corbett, Andy  
Dixon, George & Marilyn Lee.
- Buffalo (Feb. 15, 2000)  
Doug Thompson
- Burwell Road (June 10, 1997)  
Heidi Feltzer.
- Calder (June 11–15, 1997)  
Mervin & Nancy Bruce, Jack Janes,  
Bruce McIntyre.
- Calvert (June 16, 1997)  
Jim & Effie Bryant.
- Caradoc Station (June 12, 1997)  
Thelma Perry, Jim Scott, Jerry Veale.
- Carlisle (July 29, 1997)  
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Siddall.
- Cashmere (June 16, 1997)  
Ross Patterson.
- Cashmere (Aug. 1, 1998)  
William W. Judd.
- Cherry Grove (June 18, 1997)  
Ray & Barb Smith, Dave & Betty  
Versteegh.
- Christina (June 19, 1997)  
Leonard Carruthers, June Timmer-  
mans.
- Cobble Hill (June 20, 1997)  
Bob Irvine, T. Robert Sansom.
- Colborne (Aug. 23, 1997)  
Mark Peters.
- Crathie (June 13, 1997)  
Jack Elliott.
- DeJong (July 7, 1998)  
Arnold Watson.
- Derwent (July 8, 1997)  
Art & Gladys Greenwood, Harry &  
Anna Marie Sleeger, Bob & Eliza-  
beth Thompson.
- Devizes (July 9, 1997)  
Alex Jeffery, Silvia Austin.
- Duncrief (July 10, 1997)  
Elgin Charlton, Mr. & Mrs. Les  
Charlton.

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- Ealing (Summer 1997)  
Barbara Brennan, Jim Semchism.
- Edgewood (March 1998)  
Bertha McGregor.
- Ekfrid Station (July 13, 1997)  
Kay Gillies, Don Muscott, Len Van Der Hooft.
- Ekfrid Communities (Aug. 1, 1998)  
Joanne Galbraith.
- Elginfield (July 16, 1997)  
Don & Aleda McComb.
- Ettrick (July 17, 1997)  
Tom & Fern Butler, Mary Godwin,  
Ross Kennedy.
- Evelyn (July 18, 1997)  
David Baskerville, Herb & Gail Ivins, Myrtle Shaddock, Doris Strawhorn.
- Fanshawe (Nov. 11, 1997)  
Richard W. Hawley.
- Falconbridge (July 21, 1997)  
Glen Laughton.
- Fallon (July 22-27, 1997)  
Loretta Blake, Bernice Walzack, Joe McIlhargey.
- Fernhill (July 23, 1997)  
John Charlton.
- Glen Oak (July 21, 1997)  
Bob Farr, Jean Hill.
- Glen Willow (July 22, 1997)  
Mabel Reilly.
- Gobblersville (July 23, 1997)  
Cam Dorman, Jack Dorman.
- Hendricks (July 29 & Aug. 17, 1997)  
Barb Bolton, Elizabeth Bolton, Tony Gabriel, Keith Wilton.
- Howlett (Aug. 1, 1997)  
Cam Howlett.
- Hutchinson (Aug. 14, 1997)  
Jean Hutchinson.
- Katesville (Aug. 6, 1997)  
George Bennett, Julien Siroyt, Keith Wilson.
- Katesville (Jan. 22, 2000)  
Vaughn McPherson.
- Keyser (Aug. 7, 1997)  
Lorraine Hodgins, Joseph Minten.
- Kilmartin (Aug. 6, 1997)  
Bill Campbell.
- Knapdale (Aug. 9, 1997)  
Sarah McLean.
- Lamon (Aug. 10, 1997)  
Phyllis Richter, John Sutherland,  
Mary Sutherland.
- Lewis Corners (July 13, 1997)  
Don Muscott.
- Littlewood (Aug. 11, 1997)  
Evelyn Delancey, Wilda Weldrick.
- Longwood Station (Aug. 31, 1997)  
James Murray.
- Macksville (Aug. 12, 1997)  
Marie Gough, Rita Johnson.
- Maguire (Sept. 1997)  
Kelly O'Connor.
- Maple Grove (Oct. 3, 1997)  
Ken Parkinson.
- Maple Lodge (Sept. 26, 1997)  
Bob Armstrong.
- Masonville (Aug. 14, 1997)  
L. Gianelli.
- McInnis (Aug. 14, 1997)  
Jean Hutchinson.
- Mooresville (Aug. 13, 1997)  
Clarence Carter, Michelle Cockwell,  
Earl Greenlee, Leonie Pera, Alice Thompson, Bernice Thompson.
- Moray (Sept. 26, 1997)  
Kevin Eagleson.
- Napier (Aug. 28, 1997)  
Victor & Louise Parrack.
- Napperton (Aug. 29, 1997)  
Bill & Bette Parker.
- North Appin (July 13, 1997)  
John & Catherine May.
- Oliver (Aug. 29, 1997)  
Mr. & Mrs. Wes Jones.
- Pine Knot (July 18 & Aug. 27, 1997)  
Mary Jervis, Vic Rowse, Myrtle Shaddock.

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- Plover Mills (Aug. 29, 1997)  
E. Davidson.
- Pottersburg (Aug. 18, 1998)  
Marion Warren.
- Roome (Aug. 17, 1997)  
Wayne Baxter, Mr. & Mrs. R. Grant,  
Keith Wilton.
- Sable (Aug. 18, 1997)  
Clarence Campbell, John Sutherland,  
Mary Sutherland.
- Saintsbury (Aug. 19, 1997)  
Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Carroll.
- Sauble Hill (Sept. 22 & Oct. 26, 1997)  
Austin Hodgins.
- Shields Siding (Aug. 6, 1997)  
Bill Campbell.
- Southgate (Sept. 26, 1997)  
Mr. F. Monk.
- Springbank (Aug. 14-16, 1997)  
Mack Stacey, Irene McLean.
- Springfield (Aug. 25, 1997)  
Louise Garrett, Jim Howe, Morley  
Howe, Tracy Nywening.
- Strathburn (May 9, 1997)  
J. Leeson.
- Sylvan (Aug. 21, 1997)  
Josephine Buckle.
- Tempo (Sept. 14, 1997)  
Kenneth & Gertrude Burtwistle.
- The Grove (Aug. 18, 1997)  
David Elliott.
- Truthville (March 1998)  
Bertha McGregor.
- Vanneck (Sept. 1999)  
John Robson
- Velma/Wanderland (Oct. 3, 1997)  
Melvin & Doris Dowding, Elly Verhoeven.
- Walkers (Oct. 4, 1997)  
Ray Walker.
- White Oak (Oct. 11, 1997)  
Raymond Crinklaw.
- Wyton (Aug. 16 & Oct. 12, 1997)  
Bill & Madeleine Hill, Ollie &  
Audrey Hiemstra.

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