

Plympton Township, containing 75,907 acres, became Crown property in 1827. Sir John. Colborne named it after a town a few miles from Lady Colborne's early home in Devon, England. Charles Rankin began the survey of it in 1829, and Peter Carrol finished it in 1832. The surveyors numbered the concessions, which run east and west, from Enniskillen north to the lake shore and the lots from Sarnia Township east to the Warwick Plympton Townline. The front concession, along Lake Huron, they laid out in French Canadian style in 51 lots to give as many farms as possible a lakeside location. Once surveyed, much of the Township was granted to the sons and daughters of United Empire Loyalists, most of whom sold their rights.

Settlers began to arrive as soon as the survey was complete. Records of them are to be found in the diary of Henry Jones, who lived in Sarnia Township on the west side of Bright's Grove, and who as a land agent had the selling of much of the land in Plympton. Jones recorded that on July 1, 1832 several people arrived in Sarnia to take up their United Empire Loyalist rights in Plympton. These settlers went to look at the land "but were much disappointed, being unable to find running water in Plympton Township. Settlers with the exception of the Irishmen (engaged to work for us) left. Those who left went to Moore, and the Irishmen, who stayed to work for Jones for another two years before moving into Plympton, were William Maxwell and Joseph Sproule.

Jones made several entries in his diary concerning the Lord Egremont settlers. On July 1, 1833, he noted: "One of Mr. Robinson's letters announces the departure of a party of Lord Egremont's settlers from York [Toronto] on their way to Plympton. Walked up to Ruglen [Errol] to make arrangements with Toulmin about the emigrants". "July 14, 1833, a Mr. Hale, the superintendent of Lord Egremont's settlers came ashore from a schooner at the county seat [now St. Clair, Michigan] and reported their numbers reduced from 160 to 80. Sent them on to the Rapids [Sarnia]. "July 18, 1833, Lord Egremont's settlers in our storehouse at the Rapids, a discontented poor set-a Welsh family named Thomas at our house." [The Thomas family settled in the Camlachie neighbourhood.] "gave tickets of location to two of Lord Egremont's settlers who had determined on leaving-good riddance to bad rubbish."

Jones does not tell that the Egremont settlers had been led to believe that homes were awaiting them as well as employment. In reality they were expected to get along by themselves in dense stretches of bush.

On July 11, 1833 he mentioned that "T. Stevens and Schram [who settled near Errol] are desirous of exchanging lots." The entry for July 16, 1833 reads, " Mr. Hyde and Lieut. Ingles 42nd regiment, Plympton 2 purchases." On the 19th he wrote, "A Mr. Watson from Edinburgh, a decent man, has purchased U.E. rights."

One of the early settlers was Thomas Symington, a native of Scotland. In 1833 he bought a United Empire Loyalist right in Toronto and walked from there carrying a satchel, containing among other things an axe in anticipation of the work before him. At the same time his son, John, and John's wife came in by the water route. From Jones diary it is learned that they arrived at Sarnia on August 10, 1833 on a vessel named "*The Nation's Guest*". John and his wife had a daughter born to them on July 3, 1834. Her birth and baptism are the first in Plympton of which there is record. Rev. John Douce, Methodist missionary to the Sarnia Indians, baptized her on September 2, 1839.

Thomas Symington's wife and other children came out from Scotland in 1834. During the trip, two of their daughters died of the cholera that was so prevalent then and were buried at the quarantine station on Grosse Ile.

In south Plympton an early settler was Alexander Chalmers, who came by ship from Lanark, Ontario, to Sarnia, proceeded on foot to lot two concession two, where he built a log cabin. It was: "far from neighbours, in a section where there were no roads except blazed trails, no bridges over streams, and where their frequent visitors were wolves, bears ... deer." His family did not suffer from lack of food as venison "was easily procured, wild turkey were abundant, and the streams full of fish." Chalmers made his own furniture "principally of basswood". He cut down his timber and "converted it into potash" and sold it to W .B. Clark of Sarnia.

Chalmers' experience and that of his neighbours, the Parks, Donalds, and Climies, was similar to that of all Lambton pioneers except that those who came after 1842 found the game scarce. This was due to the depredations of the Indians on the reservations at Walpole, and Muncey, and also to a very cold winter in 1846 that killed the wild turkeys.

Once settled the pioneers' first task was to clear the land. According to a gazetteer of 1864 "the soil and timber ... are of a very fine quality, the land being generally rich, and the timber the best kind of hardwood." Judging by the maple sugar produced, many of the hardwood trees must have been maples. It is recorded that in 1850 Plympton people made 11,875 pounds of it, more than was made in any other Township. Ten years later, the yield was 17,586 pounds, still more than in any other Township.

Some hardwoods, particularly those along the lake, were sent out by water. In 1859 the Sarnia paper noted that: "the barque, "George *Thurston* ", came down from Plympton with a load of oak timbers for Quebec".

But the first settlers needed land and cash almost at once, and the most expedient way to get both was to cut the timber, burn it, and make potash. The potash had to be taken to Sarnia by ox team, a journey that might take two days, and while a load of maple sugar might have to be taken in trade, potash could be sold for cash.

Once the railway lines were built, the Grand Trunk through the north and the Great Western through the south of the Township, farmers obtained cash for the property that they sold for right-of-way and a market for their timber. Railways required wood for ties, box cars, and to fuel the engines. In winter when snow made cartage easy, farmers took their logs and left them beside the tracks, and a wood train picked them up and took them to a centre for sawing. One centre was at Wyoming, where a crew of negroes worked at sawing and piling the wood.

Enough timber was left by 1880 that there were four steam-powered sawmills in operation. One was on lot 1 concession 7, another on lot 8 concession 6, a third on lot 12 concession 10, and the fourth on lot 25 concession nine. The first of the four was built by William Sproule and Joseph McIntire in the 1860's. Sproules ran it themselves for another 50 or more years producing staves, oak for box cars, and sawn lumber for construction purposes.

Before the trees were cut down and the blazed trails cleared for roadways, the settlers were almost cut off from one another. Some idea of the hardships they underwent from isolation may be imagined by the excerpt that follows, taken from an account of a death in the McConnell family in 1844. "James McConnell did not live to enjoy any benefits of the new life but died after he had resided a few months in Canada having contracted fever and ague and there being no

physician within reach, who might have saved his life, he died at the age of 52 and was buried on the farm as there was no burying ground."

A descendant, Tom McConnell, related that the wife of the dead man "sent two- of the children to the Davidson's the next farm over to get some help. On the way the children met two Indians who, being unable to speak English, thought the children were lost and returned them home."

Within a relatively short time of their arrival, the pioneers built churches. They had one at Errol in 1836, and during the 1840's churches were built at Uttoxeter, Oban, and Camlachie. During the 1850's, many more were built, and school houses were used for services as well. Having churches did not mean they had clergymen. Through the first two decades, they relied on visiting clergy, the services of the itinerant Methodist preacher Rev. Joseph Little, and the Methodist missionaries sent to serve the reservations. It is recorded that in 1844 one of these missionaries, Rev. William Scott, attended a service held in James Chalmers's barn, on the second line, where he engaged in debate with a visiting Mormon, James Borrowman. Borrowman made a number of converts in the county at that time.

Roman Catholics were later in getting clergy than some of the others, but like the rest held services in their homes when one of their priests came among them. One pioneer, Ann O'Brien, wife of James O'Brien, who settled on the sixth line in 1850, recalled in her old age that when she was raising her nine children that she had "on occasion ....in their infant illnesses ... hastened as far as Port Huron in order to have them baptized", for lack of a priest any closer.

The census of 1861 shows that Presbyterians were the most numerous of the denominations followed by Methodists, Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Baptists, Congregationalists, Lutherans and Quakers.

As to racial origin, most pioneer settlers were Scottish. Irish were the next largest racial group followed by English. In 1834, the population of the Township was 203. By 1836 it was 310. Once the London Road was opened, the settlers came in in such numbers the population, by 1851, reached 1811. Over the next decade, the figure rose to 3287 thanks partly to the coming of the two railways. In 1871 a peak of 5259 was reached that was not exceeded until 1979. The decline in numbers was due in part to the incorporation of Forest and Wyoming, in part to migration to the West, and partly to the depression of the 1930's. An influx of Dutch settlers after the Second World War brought the low of 2602 in 1941 to 3595 in 1961. The rise in the late 1970's that brought the population to 5300 by 1981 was a result of suburban expansion from Sarnia. This expansion has resulted in a large portion of the population being located along the lake and in the Camlachie area.

Although it has a number of residential areas, Plympton is an essentially agricultural Township. As early as 1850, it led the county in production of wool and in numbers of cattle. By the 1870's dairying was well enough established that it had four cheese factories. Dairying is still carried on, but the milk is all handled by dairies in London.

Another change is in the size of farms. Modern machinery makes it possible for one man to farm large acreages, for as Tom McConnell of Camlachie told a reporter from Sarnia in 1969, "It took horses and ploughs a month to do what a tractor can do in three days." The cost of this machinery makes it uneconomic to farm the 100 acres that was the usual size of a farm until around 25 years ago.

Modern harvesting machinery, milking machines, hay balers, and other labour-saving equipment have done away with the need for year-around hired men. From pioneer times until the Second World War, many farmers kept hired help on their premises. In recent years help has become so scarce that fruit growers and market gardeners who must have seasonal help hire men from the Caribbean Islands.

Farmers now specialize in one or two aspects of agriculture, but until 50 years ago, the majority carried on with mixed farming with wheat the leading field crop. At present wheat has been replaced as a leader by corn and soybeans. Dairying is still practised but not as extensively as the raising of beef cattle in which the Township leads the county. Plympton poultry men introduced large scale turkey production into Lambton and still raise large flocks.

Earlier it was the usual practice to exchange work at harvest time and to form bees for barn raisings, but while that is no longer done, Plympton farmers still have a tendency to band together for mutual benefit. Back in 1890 they formed the "Farmers' Association of Plympton" under the leadership of Thomas Ewart, a veterinary surgeon, who lived on the second line. Since 1924, many have been members of "Wanstead Farmers Co-operative", and more recently of United Breeders Incorporated", an association formed in Plympton in 1949 and expanded in 1967 to include much of southwestern Ontario.

Frontage on farmlands along Lake Huron has been divided into residential lots with little access to the beaches left for the public. To remedy this, the Township created two lakeside parks, Plympton Park, north and east of the eighth line, and Highland Glen at the north end of the Wyoming Sideroad. Plympton park came under the management of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority in 1975 and Highland Glen in 1977.

In addition to Forest and Wyoming, the Township has or has had 12 other named centres. An account of each follows.

**ERROL** - Errol, on Lake Huron at the west end of the Egremont Road, was the first part of Plympton to be settled. As early as 1832, Henry Jones refers to it in his diary. It was called Ruglen at that time, and among its inhabitants, Jones mentions, Toulmin, Baird, Stevens, and the Young family, who, he said, moved there on July 12, 1832. A few days later he wrote that a Pole had taken possession of a lot. The Pole was likely a man named Klaiskey who kept a tavern at Errol for about 20 years.

Peter Carrol surveyed the townsite in 1833. At its centre was King's Square named in deference to King William IV. Of the streets, one was named Colborne for the lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada, and one Francis and another James for his sons. Maitland was named for Colborne's predecessor; Clarence honoured William IV. Victoria and Queen were likely named following Victoria's ascension in 1837. Dalrymple was for a Scottish nobleman and Errol itself for a town in Perthshire, Scotland.

Counting on its connection with London by way of the Egremont Road, Sir John Colborne planned it to be a border defence point. As far as defence went, Colborne's fears were never realized, and the place was soon superseded by Sarnia, which had the advantage of a harbour at a time when it was expedient to travel by ship.

A writer who signed himself "Old Times" wrote about what Errol was like in . 1835 in an issue of the Sarnia paper published in 1857. "The Village of Errol was laid out by Government, and, of course, was considered the Village that would become a great city! The Commissioners' Court for the trial of small cases was held there, and we, the dwellers at "The Rapids" had thus to travel fourteen miles, often to receive "Jeddart Justice". Law had little to do with the decisions, and I fear the Commissioners were not always guided by common sense. Some of the settlers about Errol were continually at law. The court was held in a log tavern; and the scenes we witnessed, and which, as a matter of course were mainly attributable to the inspiration of John Barleycorn, were frequently rather amusing.

"There was an old man who kept a tavern there, named Klaiskey, who seemed to be at law with somebody or other at every court; the cause of this being probably owing in a great measure to his primitive method of keeping accounts. On one occasion, he brought the door of his hotel into Court to prove an account which he had chalked upon the back of it.

"The land about Errol was principally settled by Gentlemen from Ireland, usually known as "the Lake Shore Gentry" -as jolly a set as ever lived. There was a Parson Hume among them who used to hold forth on Sundays. One Sunday after the service was concluded, he desired them to wait as he had something of importance to communicate. This was to inform them that he had a job of chopping to give out, which they could come up and see during the week .....

The church was a log one built in 1836, the first in Plympton. In the following year, one of Lambton's first four post offices opened at Errol with Alfred Toulmin the postmaster. In 1845 a water-powered sawmill was built, the first one in Plympton.

By the time the sawmill opened, Errol had suffered a setback. Sarnia interests, headed by Malcom Cameron, had succeeded in getting a road built between Sarnia and Warwick Village. This meant that persons going between London and Sarnia no longer had to follow the Egremont Road through Errol. Seeing their town by-passed aroused the anger of Errol people.

In 1842 George McKee made a protest on their behalf when he published six issues of the "Samiel", a political tract sometimes referred to as Lambton's first newspaper. He advocated that the money for the new road be used to build a harbour at Errol and to repair the Egremont Road. He claimed that the lack of these works was making Errol a ghost town.

From time to time it seemed that McKee's prediction was correct. The Presbyterian congregation formed in the early days of settlement moved to Camlachie in 1846. Then the sawmill closed. The population dwindled. But in the 1850's the Village took on a new lease of life and had a population of 100 and six businesses. T.B. Leigh opened a new store on Maitland Street in 1855.

A gazetteer of 1864 states that the place still had 100 inhabitants, that T. B. Leigh was still in business, and that there were two tailors, a blacksmith, and a wagon maker carrying on their trades.

In the midst of its recovery Errol had another setback: the Grand Trunk Railway's line by-passed it to the south. For the next 100 years the place languished. The post office closed in 1884, Front Street fell into Lake Huron, and the

townsite· reverted to farm land. Only the cemetery remained. In 1939 Plympton council voted to close the streets, but even then a spark of life still existed, for a petition was sent to the council in 1940 opposing the closure.

But Errol has a fine location, and in the 1970's some streets were re-opened, the farmland sold and subdivided for building plots, and new houses erected. A residential community developed on the site Sir John Colborne had set aside for a city port with the cemetery the only remnant from the past. Among the gravestones in this cemetery is that of George Hyde R.N. The inscription on the stone reads: "Born at Yougal, Ireland 14th July, 1793. Died at Plympton, Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 1868 .... A loyal servant to his country".

Hyde received lot number 19 in the front concession for his services in the Royal Navy. He was a district councillor and active in getting Lambton established as a separate county. He was also the first reeve of Plympton.

**CAMLACHIE** - Camlachie, located at the junction of Egremont Road and Camlachie sideroad, is the largest unincorporated Village in the Township. It was originally called Truslers Corners after its first settler, John Trusler, who came from Sussex, England, in 1833, under the patronage of Lord Egremont.

The place was quite small and isolated until the Grand Trunk Railway line went through. A report of an accident that occurred there during construction was the first mention made of it in the Sarnia paper. "September 16, 1858. In the Trusler Settlement near Errol they are sinking a well to get water for a depot supply on the Grand Trunk line. A man named Bridges formed a loop on the end of a windlass rope, got his foot into it, and holding on to the rope with one hand and holding a lantern in the other was lowered to see how far the water had risen in the well. When down, the gases became ignited by the candle and a report heard two miles off, took place. The poor man kept his hold and was drawn up but later died. "

According to a Gazetteer of 1864, "the Village was started by Duncan McDonald in 1863" and "timber and cordwood [were] shipped in considerable quantities from this point." When the Gazetteer was issued, the Village bore its present name. It is believed that McDonald named it for the section of Glasgow where he was born. The gazetteer lists the following residents: Alonzo Randal, shoemaker; F. Bartle, section foreman, G.T.R.R.; Bailie and George Arkle, wood contractors for G.T.R.R. Duncan McDonald is listed as being a dealer in "dry goods, groceries, hardware, crockery, etc." In an accompanying advertisement, Alexander Sutherland was named as manager of McDonald's store where "all kinds of Farm Produce [were] taken in exchange."

In 1864 Camlachie was only a flag station, but the post office opened that year, and from then on trains stopped regularly with mail for the Village and for Omegah and Hillsborough as well. The office opened in McDonald's store with McDonald the first postmaster.

After the railway went through, Camlachie thrived and became the shopping and business centre for the area. It continued to have three stores until the 1970's. One of these was started by Joseph Cairns, who bought out Thomas Houston in 1876. After Cairns died in 1905 his daughter and a son-in-law carried on the business and ran the post office



until 1932. At that time Neil Minielly took over the store. Joseph Gilbert, who followed Minielly as proprietor, closed the business in the late 1970's.

A contemporary of Cairns, Henry Thomas, ran a second store, which was started by Twithen King. This store, which changed hands a number of times, came into the possession of Fred Carrothers about 1932 when he became postmaster. The office was moved to his store and remained there until a new office opened across the street. With the post office gone, the store, then in the possession of the Ashworth family, was closed and made into a residence.

The last of the three stores to close was one started by a descendant of John Trusler, the first settler. The business was several years old when a new building was erected in 1910. This store had a travelling store in connection with it, a large box-like structure mounted on a wagon and driven from house to house in the farming district. The business changed hands from Trusler to Bridges, from Bridges to Cheney, from Cheney to Kennedy, and from Kennedy to Stirrett. In 1925 A.H. Sheppard took it over and resumed the travelling store service, which had lapsed some years earlier. Sheppard sold to George Dingle in 1938. Dingle kept the store open until 1979. Then it went into use as a craft shop.

In the last century and earlier in this one, Camlachie had a number of establishments that mass production, chain merchandising, and easy transportation have eliminated. Among early businessmen were J. Edminston and John Stirrett, who kept general stores; John McConnell, a man named Ford, and Charles Jay, who were butchers.

John Askew did tailoring, and John Muldoon and a man named Swartz made shoes. Harry Smith was a baker. Hotel proprietors were: James Robinson, who opened the first hotel before 1869; B.F. Schram; and at a later date James Needham. He was assisted by his wife, who was well known for her ability to keep order in the bar room. Donald F. Smith and John Stirrett ran a sawmill from 1872 until 1896 when Stirrett gave it up leaving Smith to carry on. Smith sold out to Edward Baechler who ran it for some years.

At no time from the 1860's through to the late 1950's did Camlachie lack a blacksmith. Among those following that trade were: Bert Russel, W.J. Fulcher, Andrew Cairns, William Scott, James Draper, and William Phelps, who sold out to John Holmes. One blacksmith, John Collinson, served the community for 50 years before he retired in 1957.

Another business in connection with horses was a wagon shop opened by Holmes and Wellington in 1889. Also there was the harness shop run by G.W. Hannak and another one opened by James Wilson in 1906.

George Phillips started a furniture factory in 1879 and established an undertaking business in 1882. His advertisement during the latter year reads: "George L. Phillips, cabinet maker and undertaker, Camlachie, Ont., has constantly on hand or made to order, a fine stock of superior handmade furniture, which he sells cheaply for cash. Extension tables a specialty, Bedsteads, Bureaus, Tables, Couches, etc. Picture framing, Repairing, Varnishing etc., done with neatness and dispatch. Funerals furnished on the shortest notice and at reasonable rates. A first class Hearse to hire. A call solicited." Phillips moved his undertaking business to Sarnia within a few years, and he and his sons after him stayed in business until about 1949.

Camlachie has had a grist mill since 1872 when A.C. Hill began to run one. Among mill proprietors since his day were the Cairns brothers, whose mill burned in 1888. More recent millers were Lehamn Dennis, Myron Cole, and Clayton

Lowrie. In 1957 when Lowrie was in business, the mill burned down. It was rebuilt and under the name of "Camlachie Grain and Feed" is now managed by Al Casier.

Residents of the Village have had advantages often denied small places. For instance, the Village has been headquarters for the Plympton Township Library since as early as 1910. A report for 1924 showed that John Anderson, the librarian, kept the library open on Saturdays and that it had a stock of 1848 books. Now it is a branch of the Lambton County Library System and has been housed since 1979 in the Township's community centre on Broadway Street.

The Village also had a resident doctor for many years. Dr. Peter McGregor Brown started his practice there in 1894 and remained there until he died in 1949.

In addition the Village has the benefit of three churches, the Presbyterian since 1846, the Methodist, now United, since 1889, and the Anglican since 1877. These churches made a link between the former residents and the new ones who came in the 1960's and 1970's. Thanks to the newcomers, the population had grown to over 200, almost double what it was 20 years ago.

An unusual feature of Camlachie is the number of early buildings left sprinkled among the modern homes of the newcomers. Still standing are Cairns store built in 1889, the Masonic Hall built in 1881, and the 100F Hall, the former apple evaporator, of similar age. In addition there are two old churches, the Anglican built in 1877 and the Presbyterian, new in 1874.

Among modern improvements are a waterworks system installed in 1961 using the Petrolia line and updated in 1969. The post office, on the site of the former Needham Hotel, opened in 1978, and a fire hall was built the same year. The community hall under the auspices of the local Optimist Club opened the next year. New too are the restaurant, garage, and variety store on Lakeshore Road just outside the Village.

**HILLSBORO** - Hillsboro, on lot 48 in the front concession of Plympton is named for its first postmaster, Thomas Hill, who

took office in 1853. When it opened and for two years afterwards, the name of the office was spelled "Hillsborough". The community it served had developed in the 1840's around a grist mill. Smith in his gazetteer of 1846, in describing Plympton, refers to it when he wrote: "A water grist mill has recently been erected at the northeastern extremity of the Township on the lake shore."

A well known member of the Hillsboro community was a retired officer of the Royal Navy, Thomas Ledlie Crooke. Smith mentions him in his book, "*Canada: Past, Present and Future*", published in 1850, in connection with an account of a man going from Sarnia in search of Port Franks. "After a walk of nearly twenty miles, without passing a tavern where he could obtain any refreshment, he began to feel weary. The sun was sinking below the horizon, the mosquitoes were biting, and he began to despair of finding a friendly roof to shelter him ... The fates however befriended him, and on stating his perplexities, he found a hearty welcome at "Number 49, Plympton", the residence of an eccentric, but hospitable naval officer. "The next morning, having with difficulty escaped from his kind entertainer (who considered himself almost insulted if a guest left him under a week), ... he resumed his journey."



Crookes died in 1864 and was buried in Hillsboro cemetery, a plot of ground on which St. George's Anglican Church once stood. This church was built in 1852, and its rector for a number of years was Rev. S. Phillips. In 1889 the building was moved to Forest to be used as a parish hall for the Anglican Church there.

Forest took more than the church. The growth of Forest after the coming of the Grand Trunk Railway saw a corresponding decline in the commercial enterprise of Hillsboro. But it was a gradual decline. In 1864, five years after the railway began to operate, Hillsboro still had a number of business places.

Robert Adams ran one cabinet shop and Thomas Owens another. Andrew Anderson was a wagon maker; S. Brooks, a shipbuilder; and Samuel' Jones, a shoemaker. John and Thomas Hill ran one store, and another Thomas Hill ran a second. Allan McPherson ran a saw and grist mill, Robert Smith was the blacksmith, and Thomas Woods was the hotel keeper.

Over the years these enterprises disappeared, but the post office stayed open until 1901. Because of its attractive location on Lake Huron, its cedar grove, and fine beach, Hillsboro became a summer resort. Starting in 1897 the Jones family operated the resort for the public. Since 1948 it has been reserved for private use.

**OMEGAH** - Omegah, Indian word for Chief, was applied to the post office that opened in 1877 in the home of its first postmaster, Thomas R.K. Scott, on lot 32 in the front concession. The postmaster, a Plympton pioneer of 1834, was also clerk of the Township for 35 years, clerk of the Division Court for 38, and issuer of marriage licenses for 40. During the rebellion of 1837-38, he served as a captain of militia. The name 'Omegah' moved from Scott's home to that of his successor, George Symington, and later to that of John Evans where the office closed in 1902.

**UTTOXETER** - Uttoxeter is situated on a gravel ridge at the corner of the eighth line of Plympton and the Wanstead sideroad. When a post office opened there in 1863, Thomas Doherty named it after the town of Uttoxeter in Staffordshire, England. The office opened in the store of Simpson Shepherd, who came there in 1834, and who became the first postmaster. The office stayed open until 1903, closed until 1907, and closed finally in 1913.

Enough people were living in the community in the 1840's that Rev. Joseph Little, while stationed at Warwick, helped to form a Methodist Church known as the Ridge Church. The first church building, which was made of logs, may have been erected as early as 1844. A Congregational Church is known to have been there in the mid-nineteenth century, and from 1894 until 1914 a Baptist congregation had a church there. The Baptist building was torn down, the original Methodist was replaced with a frame one in 1857 and it in turn was replaced with the present brick one in 1875.

Uttoxeter had several pioneer establishments. The store started by Simpson Shepherd continued to serve the community until the Second World War. James Graham had a stave and hoop factory and a cooper shop, when barrels were the favoured containers. Andrew Shepherd ran a saw and grist mill, first powered by water and later by steam. The framing for the present United Church was cut in this mill, which burned around the turn of the century. Two men had cheese factories in the vicinity, one was William Symington and the other Elbridge Tennant. William Bullick opened a blacksmith shop in the late 1880's and kept it running for over 30 years.

The area is still prosperous. Gravel is sold from the ridge, local farms are large and well stock, and one in the Village itself is devoted to large scale poultry production. Unlike many communities started in pioneer times, Uttoxeter still has descendants of its earliest settlers living in it. It also has a number of its early buildings. The church built in 1875 is used by a United Church congregation. The church shed, while converted for other use, is still standing and in good repair. William Bullick's blacksmith shop and the Village store and post office are now farm buildings. The Orange Lodge, a former school, which the local Orangemen moved into the Village about 1894, has been renovated and is now headquarters for the Women's Institute of Uttoxeter.

**ABERARDER** - The settlement at Aberarder, on lot 18 in the tenth concession of Plympton, was formed largely by Scottish colonists. After the Grand Trunk Railway line went through it, it was named for Aberarder in Inverness Shire, Scotland. It is said to have been laid out by Alexander Hamilton in 1863. That year a post office, which existed until 1914, opened in Duncan McBean's store, and he became the first postmaster.

A directory published in 1869 shows that McBean was still in business and that the place had 50 inhabitants. Succeeding merchants of that period were Joseph Cairns, who went to Camlachie in 1874, and Henry Dier. In the 1870's and '80's, the place had a carriage-making shop run by Wellington Kerr.

In 1885, Presbyterians in the community built St. John's Church and established a Sunday School. At about the same time as the church opened, the local school teacher, D.N. Sinclair, who was also the postmaster, founded a library, which served the community until well on in this century.

Sinclair also ran the local store, which he had taken over from Henry Dier. He was succeeded by A.F. Frayne, and Frayne by Alfred Sheppard. Sheppard, who ran a travelling store in connection with it, had the Aberarder store from 1912 to 1920, when he sold out to Walker McKellar. Following McKellar were Olenor Gare and then Earl Ridley. Ridley, who had the store during the second World War, opened a freezer-locker service and an egg grading station. Ridley's successors were Grant Cates and his partner Russel Tuer, Gordon Keys, Clayton Foster and lastly Steve Bellyk.

With modern transportation and a smaller population, due to larger farms run with fewer people thanks to modern machinery, the community services were discontinued.

St. John's Church closed in 1966, the store in 1977, and the railway line has not been used in years. Only a consolidated school remains to keep alive the name of Aberarder.

**MANDAUMIN** - Mandaumin was first named Radcliffe. Malcom Cameron named it for a clergyman who worked in the Sarnia area from time to time in the early days of settlement. Residents of Radcliffe did not like the name. At a public meeting at which Cameron was present, they resolved to change it. Cameron's political opponents called him "the old coon" as they said he was just like a coon sitting up in a tree watching to see on which side to jump. Cameron gloried in his nickname, and at the meeting, he said, "We will give the coon something to eat, we will give the name "Mandaumin" . Mandaumin is the Indian word for corn.

Expecting a Village to grow up around a station the Great Western Railway was to build at Mandaumin, Robert Hill had a site surveyed north of the track in the northwest corner of lot one concession two. The lots, 65 of them, 50'x100' were put up for sale in 1857 at \$30 each.

A gazetteer for 1864 states that the Village, partly in the Township of Sarnia and partly in Plympton, was laid out in 1862 and that it contained "one store, one shoe shop, one blacksmith shop, one wagon shop ... a Presbyterian Church built in 1858 at a cost of \$1200 with a capacity to seat 600". Those listed in professions and trades were: "Rev. J.W. Chesnut, Presbyterian; James Dunlop, postmaster and general merchant; George Graham, blacksmith; Robert Dunlop, American Express Agent; George Hayes, boot and shoe maker; Rev. E. Watson, Baptist."

The post office opened in 1862 in the store of James Dunlop, who became the first postmaster. The store burned in 1911 but was replaced and used as a post office until rural delivery took over in 1931.

In 1928 Francis Shaw and William Ruddick built a grist mill on the east side of the Townline. King Milling Company bought it later and then Stan Sheffer. Sheffer sold it to Clarence Park. In 1978 business did not warrant operating it, and in 1981 the mill was torn down. On the opposite side of the road, Park also had a grain elevator. He sold this to the present owners, Maple Leaf Milling Company, in 1981. This elevator handles corn, wheat, and soya beans for the district's farmers.

Unlike many early communities, Mandaumin has neither declined nor grown. It still has its church. A Presbyterian congregation, organized in 1855, built the present United Church in 1881. It also has a store on the Sarnia Township side of the Townline and a library on the Plympton side.

**WANSTEAD** - Wanstead, on lot 25 of the second concession of Plympton, was named for a city-suburb of London, England. The lot, the property of Henry Beecher, was surveyed by E.R. Jones in 1858, the year the Great Western Railway line went through. The following year Mrs. Theodosia Hall became the first postmaster when the office opened in the general store. At about the same time, two hotels were erected to accommodate those travelling by train.

According to an 1869 directory, John Dewar ran the store, and there were three hotel keepers, W. Carson, J. Johnston, and H.W. Wynne. In 1870 Carson sold his hotel, and in the meantime a man named Finlayson had acquired one and was offering it for sale. In 1872 the community petitioned the Great Western Railway to build a station. In answer to this request a railway official replied: "In reference to your request of the 3rd March I have now given orders for a small station to be built at Wanstead. The company can ill afford to spend money on new works just now, but I am so desirous of cultivating the local trade of the country, that in cases of this kind I feel like straining a point to accomplish what is desired." signed J. Broughton.

For three years starting in 1873, the Lawrence Lumber Company had a sawmill, and lumber business located near the tracks.

By 1880 Wanstead had a population of 100, one hotel, two general stores, several small shops, one being James Johnston's blacksmith. In 1885 William Butters opened another one.

The Village has had three church buildings. A directory of 1869 states that Rev. R. Scott was the Presbyterian Clergyman indicating a church of that denomination. A Methodist congregation built one in 1884 and Anglicans another in 1886. In this century one of the church buildings was used by a Gospel Hall congregation.

Train service was the mainstay Of the Village. Mail came and went daily not only for Wanstead but for Kertch and Uttoxeter as well. Area farmers used the rail facilities to ship cattle. The station burned in 1922 but was used enough that the railway built a new one. By 1925 the Village still had one store, the Anglican Church, and a population of 100. The main business of present-day Wanstead, the Wanstead Farmers' Co-operative, was founded in 1924. It combines stock yards, elevators, and all requisites for handling grain and fertilizers as well as a feed mill. The mill burned in 1954 but was replaced and up-to-date machinery installed in 1958.

In recent years the co-operative had relied more and more on trucking rather than rail service, particularly for shipping livestock. Corn, soybeans, and wheat are shipped as well as hogs and cattle. The amount of business handled by the co-operative in a year is in the neighbourhood of nine million dollars.

While this business has flourished, the Village has been reduced to a few houses. After passenger service was cut off in 1960, the co-operative bought the station and moved it to a new site for an office. The Anglican Church closed in 1952. In 1969 the post office department closed the office that postmaster, Ralph Annett, had in his store since 1948. With the loss of the office, which had been open for 110 years, the store no longer drew enough customers, and it closed too. The last public building, the community centre, formerly the school, closed in 1981 after being used for 18 years.

**OBAN** - Nothing is left of Oban but a graveyard, on lot three on the south side of London Road, with a cairn in it showing where a church once stood. A record of the opening of this church is to be found in the diary of William McGregor, who lived in Sarnia Township on London Road west of the Waterwork's Sideroad. He wrote: "Thursday Jan. 18, 1844 Went to the Congregational Canada Missionary Society ... meeting was addressed by Rev'd Mr. John Roap of Toronto –Rev'd Thomas Machin of Whitby & Rev'd James Nail of Plympton. Subscribed 2 (pounds) & 4 (pounds) annually".

McGregor also records the beginnings of the cemetery: "September 3rd-1844 Came to attend James' (Morrison) funeral with Mr. Nall-upwards of 100 at it..... Strange circumstances connected with this young man's death. He gave y, acre of land for church and burying ground, and he was the first to fill it. It was a melancholy death ..".

Though many of the local settlers including the Morrison family were Presbyterians, they supported the Congregational Church until about 1868 when a Methodist Congregation took it over. Methodist services were held until 1925 when the congregation joined the United Church of Canada. The congregation grew smaller, and in 1961 the brick church, built in 1890, was torn down.

The post office which had opened in 1851 with Peter McGregor, postmaster, had closed in 1886. When it opened it bore the name of Plympton, but five years later it was renamed Oban after a town in Scotland.

**KERTCH** - Kertch was a community on the London Road that had three names. The first was Donnelley's Corners, named for an early settler. When the post office opened in 1853 with James Oxenham, postmaster, it was renamed South

Plympton. In 1857 the name was changed, again, to Kertch, the name of a city and strait in southern USSR where the British and their allies had recently met with success in the Crimean War.

Located at the corner of London Road and Wanstead Sideroad, Kertch was a stage stop, where horses were changed and where passengers could get meals and accommodations. This business was adversely affected when the Great Western Railway line passed through to the south in 1858, but a directory for 1869 states that Kertch still had a hotel run by Jack Rogers and that the place had 75 inhabitants. Another known to be a hotel proprietor there was Ephraim Jones.

Nathan Kerr Nesbitt, a school teacher, began a general store at Kertch in 1873. Five years later he was appointed postmaster, an office he held for over 30 years. He was succeeded by his son, who was postmaster when the office closed in 1913. The store continued to serve the community for some time and was only torn down when the London Road was widened in 1956.

Many of the early Kertch settlers attended the South Plympton Presbyterian Church built in 1870 to the west of the community. The church joined the United Church of Canada in 1925 and closed in 1963. The cemetery across from it on on 21 sideroad about half a mile south of London Road is about all that remains of the community.

**REECE'S CORNERS** - Reece's Corners is situated at the intersection of highways 21 and 7, or Wyoming Sideroad and London Road to give them their local names. It derived its name from Samuel Reece, who obtained a crown grant of 200 acres on the southeast corner in 1837. The Corners became a stage stop when the road between Sarnia and London was completed in 1845. Catering to the stagecoach traffic, on the northeast corner opposite to Reece was Ree's tavern.

W.M. Steers, a civil engineer, made mention of it in his report on the condition of the London Road in 1854. He wrote, "From Ree's Tavern to the county line is all in low swales and very much out of repair".

The tavern lost 'customers when the Great Western Railway built a line from London to Sarnia in 1858, but the building stood until early in this century. Its modern counterpart, a tourist home and cabins run by Earl Shea were opened on the site in the 1940's. In 1955 the Township built its new hall on the northwest corner to replace one built in 1868 at the intersection of Wyoming sideroad and Egremont Road. In 1980 the new hall had to be enlarged, and at the same time some commercial outlets were established across the highway beside a service station. Among them were a bank and a liquor store. The fourth corner, part of the Reece grant, is partially occupied by another service station and a motorcycle outlet.

Traffic through the Corners has been reduced since the 402 opened in 1978 and so has the number of traffic accidents. Reece's Corners was notorious for them in the previous two decades.

The community is growing and has more commercial outlets than it ever had. The land in the area with its gravelly sub-soil is suited to fruit growing and market gardening. Producers sell their fruit and vegetables at roadside stalls along the highway. Yet in spite of all changes, Reece's Corners exists primarily because it caters to the travelling public, just as it did in stagecoach days, with restaurants, motels, and service stations corresponding to fresh horses and Ree's Tavern.

**MATLOCK** - Matlock, named for a Town in Derbyshire, England, is located north of Reece's Corners at the intersection of Wyoming Sideroad and the sixth line of Plympton. Its post office, which served the community between 1870 and 1881, had as its first postmaster, John P. Jarman. Maps of 1873 and 1880 show that the community had a church on lot 16 on the northeast corner of the intersection.

J. Joshua Cronkite and his wife, Ellen, deeded the land for this church to "the trustees of the Matlock Union Church" in July 1873. The deed stated that the church was for the Protestant inhabitants of the locality and was "to be used by members and adherents of the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian Churches of Canada for Divine Service."