

# GENERAL STORES

Reach, Cartwright &  
Neighbouring Townships



BY J. PETER HVIDSTEN



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### Inside Widden's General Store - Port Perry

*Interior view of Thomas J. Widden's general store, circa 1920, shows the variety of products available in his store, located on the northeast corner of Queen and Perry Street, Port Perry. Mr. Widden operated his store from 1891 until 1935, selling groceries, boots, shoes and crockery. The store became known as Widden's Corner.*

## GENERAL STORES OF REACH & CARTWRIGHT

Researched and Published by J. Peter Hvidsten

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# Preface

Researching the history of the general stores of the many small hamlets and Village of Scugog Township and neighbouring townships often proved difficult at times, primarily due to much of the earliest information having never been recorded.

Some of the earliest records of the history of Scugog's smaller communities comes from the local newspapers, but also the records and recollections of community leaders such as Joseph Bigelow, Rev. Franklin G. Weir, Col. John E. Farewell and Samuel Farmer.

The recent digitizing of more than 150 years of Port Perry's newspapers, opened the door to much information that would have been difficult to find, proving invaluable in helping fill in many blanks. In addition to local Port Perry and Scugog area newspapers, neighbouring and national newspapers, provided additional sources of information.

Equally valuable were the records of the Tweedsmuir History and Women's Institute books which are filled with personal memories of their communities activities over the past century, as well as Cartwright Revisited 1983, by Doreen VanCamp.

Every effort has been made to present an "accurate as possible" account of the history of these important shops, which served the residents of the rural areas of the township.

With that said, there is little doubt that more information will come forward after this document is published, from residents of the communities. If new factual information is uncovered, we hope it could be added to a revised document in the future.

Information has been researched through the following:

- Ontario Land Registry documents
- Ontario Observer newspaper
- North Ontario Observer newspaper
- Port Perry Star newspaper
- Toronto Globe newspaper
- Bowmanville Statesman newspaper
- Whitby & Oshawa digitized newspaper
- Tweedsmuir Community history books
- Women's Institute scrapbooks
- Cartwright Revisited book
- Ancestry.ca history records
- Personal memories of local residents

# Acknowledgements

The contents of this book would not have been possible without the support of so many residents of the villages and hamlets chronicled

I am grateful and thankful for all those who provided information, plans, maps and pictures which otherwise may have been misplaced as time goes by. My thanks to everyone who assisted me in this project.

Among the many who assisted with pictures and memories include:

- Trish Holman, Prince Albert store
- Scugog Shores Village & Museum - photographs
- Erin Haward, Scugog Island store photograph
- Robyn Pegg - Assist. Curator, Scugog Shores Museum
- Epsom - Jean Jeffrey, Donald Asling, Angela Ball
- Dianne Carnaghan - North Nestleton
- Marilyn Pearce - postcard photographs
- Ron Brown - Cadmus general store 1930s.
- Gord Gettins, Richard Miller, Caesarea general store
- Jean Jeffrey - Epsom general store
- Eric Donnelly - Manchester general store
- Doreen VanCamp - Cartwright Twp. Revisited
- Heidi Arends - Victoria Corners
- Jo-Anne Hilton - Victoria Corners photos
- Karen Davis, Keith Rodd - Greenbank general store
- Whitby Public Library - Ashburn, Myrtle Station
- Dianne Carnaghan, Yelverton
- Bev Morgan - Yelverton photographs
- Raglan, Columbus - Wendy Duke, photographs
- Larry Doble - Sonya photographs
- George Timms - Saintfield



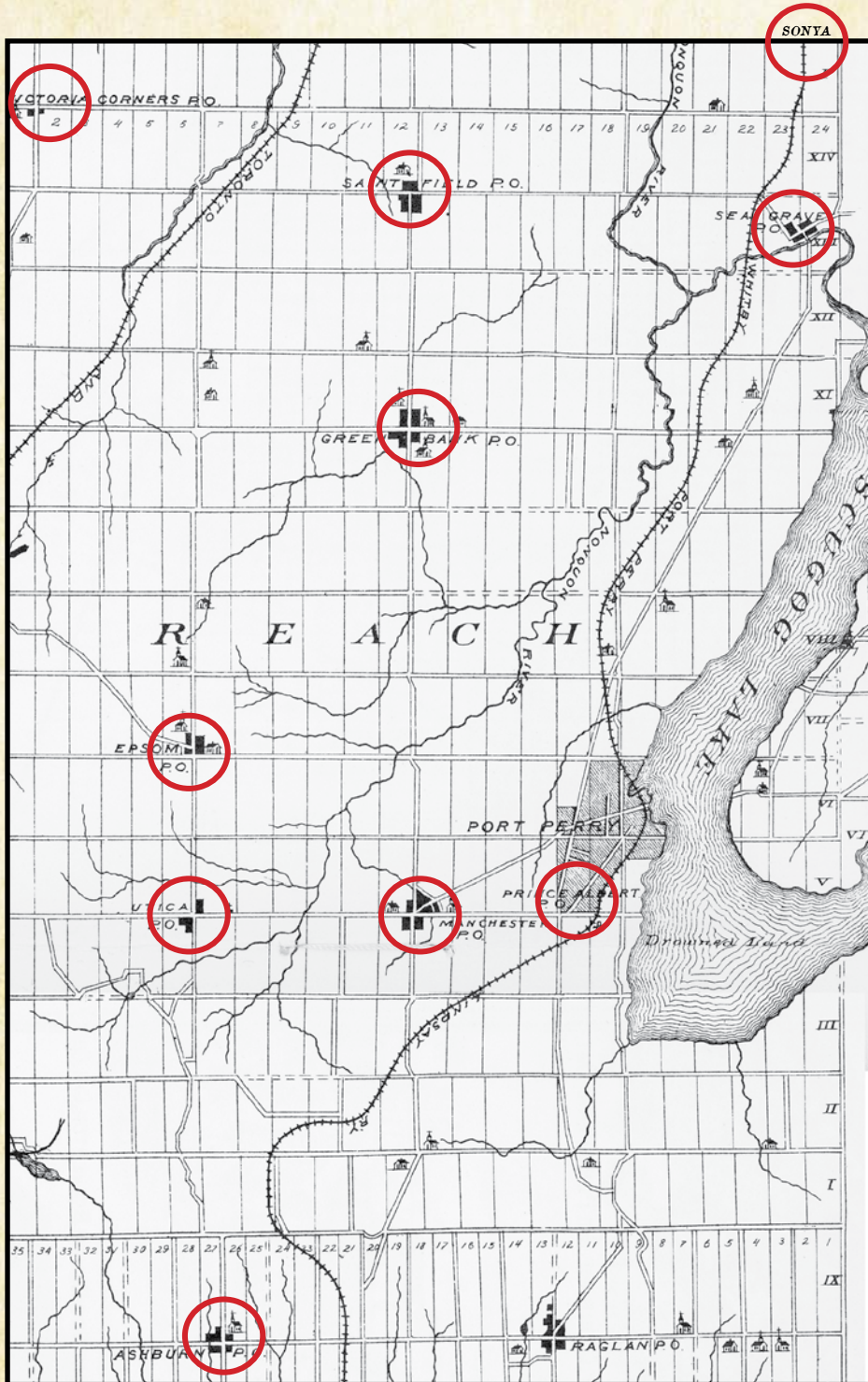
Cover illustration is a postcard photograph of the Cadmus General Store, circa 1910, when owned & operated by James E. Elliott.

# Index

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| ASHBURN .....                 | 8  |
| BLACKSTOCK .....              | 10 |
| BURKETON .....                | 14 |
| CADMUS .....                  | 16 |
| CAESAREA .....                | 18 |
| COLUMBUS .....                | 20 |
| EPSOM .....                   | 22 |
| GREENBANK .....               | 24 |
| JANETVILLE .....              | 28 |
| MANCHESTER .....              | 31 |
| MYRTLE STATION .....          | 35 |
| MYRTLE .....                  | 37 |
| NORTH NESTLETON .....         | 39 |
| NESTLETON STATION .....       | 43 |
| NESTLETON COUNTRY STORE ..... | 45 |
| PRINCE ALBERT .....           | 47 |
| RAGLAN .....                  | 53 |
| SAINTFIELD .....              | 57 |
| SCUGOG ISLAND .....           | 58 |
| SEAGRAVE .....                | 62 |
| SONYA .....                   | 65 |
| UTICA .....                   | 67 |
| VICTORIA CORNERS .....        | 71 |
| YELVERTON .....               | 73 |

# REACH TOWNSHIP

## General Store Locations



### CARTWRIGHT & REACH TWPS.

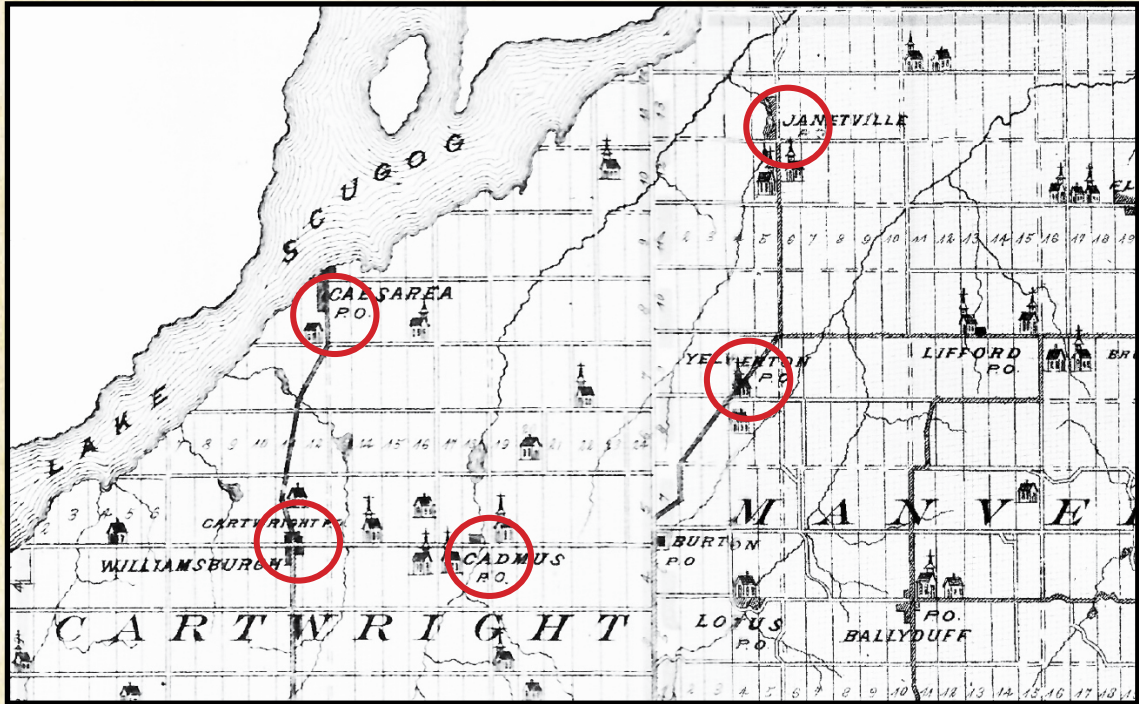
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- MANCHESTER
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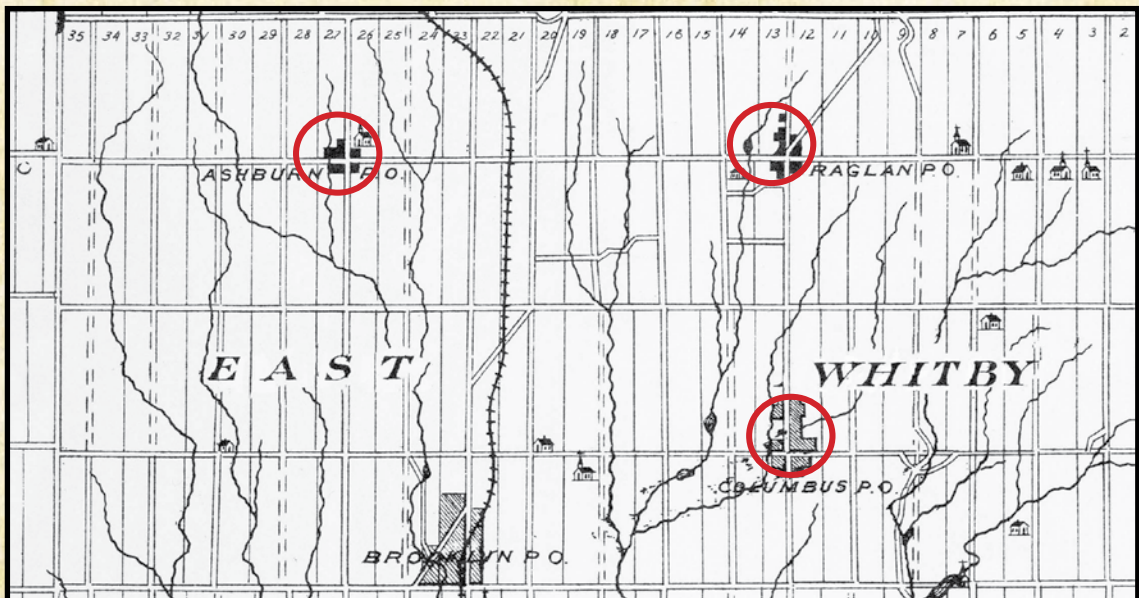
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- COLUMBUS
- JANETVILLE
- MYRTLE STATION
- MYRTLE
- RAGLAN
- SONYA
- YELVERTON



# CARTWRIGHT • MANVERS



# EAST WHITBY



# ASHBURN GENERAL STORE



*Ashburn General Store and post office, circa 1880. Man at left of the picture is believed to be Thomas Allan Fisher. The store is located on the southwest corner of Ashburn Road, at the 9th concession of Whitby Township.*

*Photos courtesy Archives at Whitby Public Library*

**T**HIS SMALL COMMUNITY, just south of Reach Twp., was originally named Butler's Corners after settler Richard Butler in 1832, but about 20 years later its name was changed to Ashburn.

The first store is reported to have opened circa 1850. The earliest merchants for the hamlets general store has yet to be determined, but during the 1870s Thomas A. Fisher and his wife Eliza became the owners and operators of the Ashburn general store.

The Fishers served the community throughout the 1880s, but in July 1889 Mr. Fisher died leaving his wife Eliza to operate the store. It is not known how long she remained as the hamlet's storekeeper but she was still tending to the Ashburn store well into 1891.



*A photo believed to be the interior of the Ashburn General Store.*

The next owner identified is Mr. A.M. Ellis, who owned the store in 1913, and operated for several years, although exactly how long is not known.

There is a large gap in ownership through the early part of the 20th century, but by 1947, Helen and Russel Batten purchased the store and post office. The Battens were very involved in the community and remained as owners of Ashburn general store for 34 years, before retiring and moving to Oshawa in July 1981.

Once again, there is a gap in ownership before Barbara and Paul Allen, of Columbus, purchased the Ashburn General Store in January 1988. The new owners expanded the store's business hours and added new services, including VCR rentals. The Allens entered into a contract to run the postal outlet, with Canada Post installing locked boxes inside the store.

Less than an year after taking over the store, in December 1988, the Allens sold the store and moved to Manchester. Once again the general store was sold, the new owners being Pamela Palmer and Randy Le Feuvre. They operated the store until at least 1996, if not longer.

In 2008, JoAnne DeMerchant purchased the Ashburn general store and converted it from its original use, into a cast store. The opened under the name Ashburn Country Corner Boutique and operated it for more than 11 years before retiring in April 2019.



Ashburn general store, July 1910. Owner at this time has not been determined.

Photos courtesy Archives at Whitby Public Library



Ashburn general store and post office, circa 1915. This would have been at the time Mr. A. M. Ellis, operated the store.

**ASHBURN STORE**

**HOW DO YOU TAKE YOUR TEA?**

We have it in the following :

**Red Rose, pkts. 40c or 30c, black, green or mixed.**

**Salada, pkts. 30c, black, green or mixed.**

**Laverstone, bulk black 30c, worth 40c.**

**Caravan, bulk green 30c, worth 40c.**  
and best of all

**Ben Hur, black, at 50c.**

**Very best Coffee at 40c lb.**

if you would prefer coffee for breakfast.

Everything else in groceries, fresh and up to-date, at prices that will make it to your advantage to buy at the Ashburn Store.

**A. M. ELLIS,** GENERAL MERCHANT  
ASHBURN, ONT.

A.M. Ellis was proprietor of the Ashburn General store, in this April 1913 advertisement



This photo of Ashburn general store was taken during 1994 when its proprietor was Pamela Palmer.

# BLACKSTOCK

## COUNTRY STORES

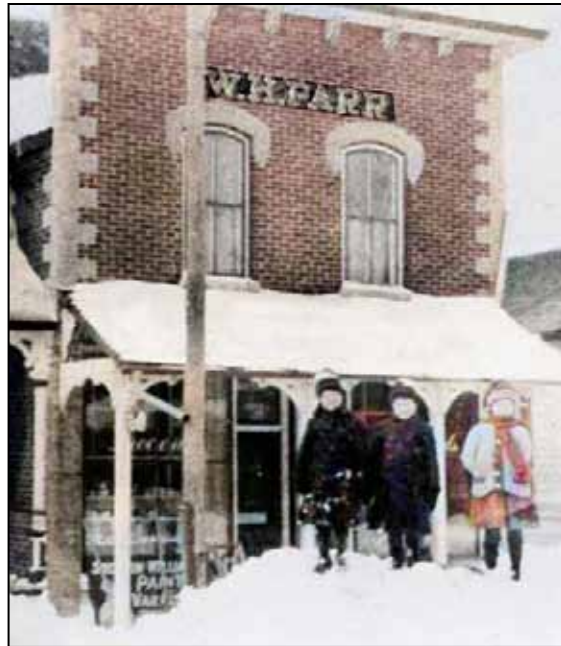
**T**HE EARLIEST RECORD found of a general store being located in the Blackstock, comes in 1851, when the village was known as Tooley's Corners. It was here that a Mr. Hare is said to have built the first frame building on the northeast corner. The building later became a general store with a post office.

The village name was later changed to Williamsburgh, but by 1887 it became Blackstock, to honour George Tait Blackstock.

Blackstock, like many small villages of this time often had more than one general merchandise store. In 1890, records show that Blackstock had three general stores, with the merchants at that time being William Parr, S. Wesley McClung and Son, and William Cowan.

William H. Parr's store was located on the northwest corner of Scugog Rd. and Church Street, just north of the Royal Hotel.

How long Mr. McClung was a storekeeper in Blackstock is not known, but he left the village in late 1893 after purchasing a store in Sonya.



Colourized photo by J. Peter Hvidsten

The red brick general store building of William H. Parr, circa 1900. The same building can be seen in the photo at left.



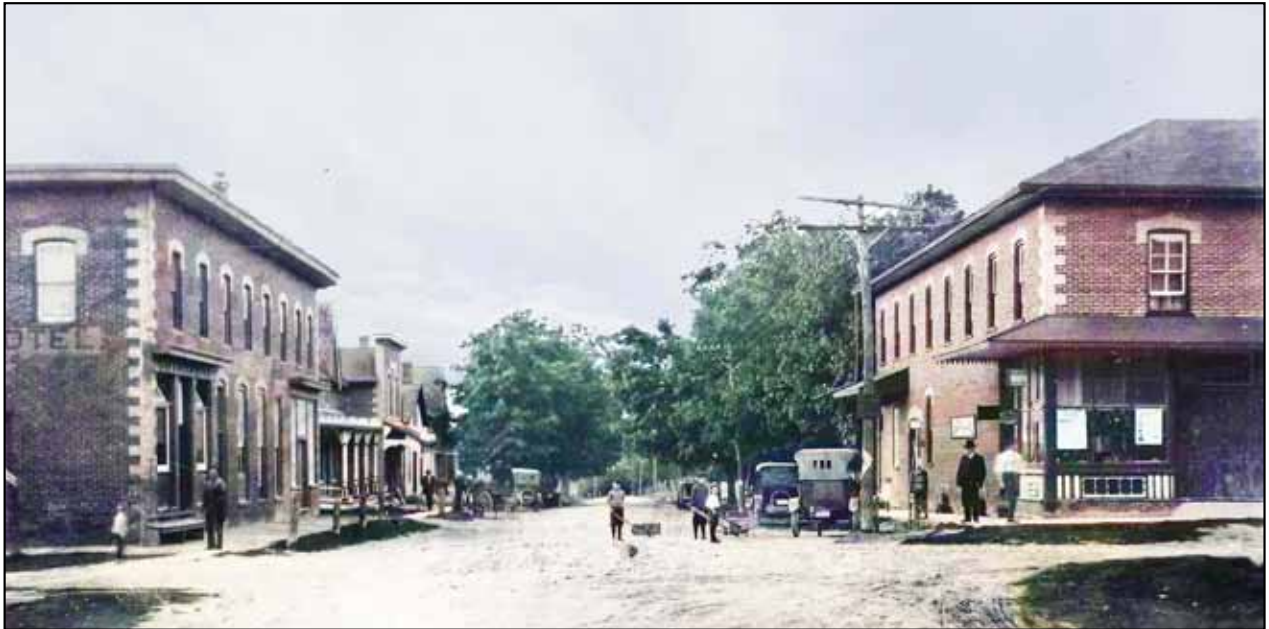
This picture of Blackstocks main street, dated 1910, shows the Royal Hotel on the northwest corner of Church St., and further along the two-storey brick building, with porch at the front, constructed by William Henry Parr, of Blackstock.



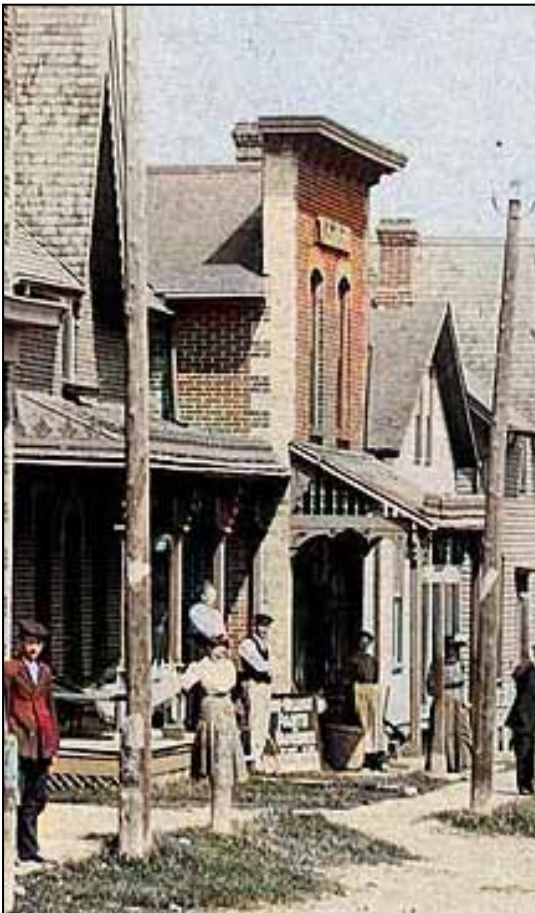
During the 1890s this building was the grocery and general store of store of Samuel Wesley McClung. Other owners after Mr. McClung include - Mr. John Quinn, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Kinsman, Robert J. McNally.

About 1929 the former general store was purchased by Wallace Marlow who started a grist mill and became an agent for Shur-Gain products.

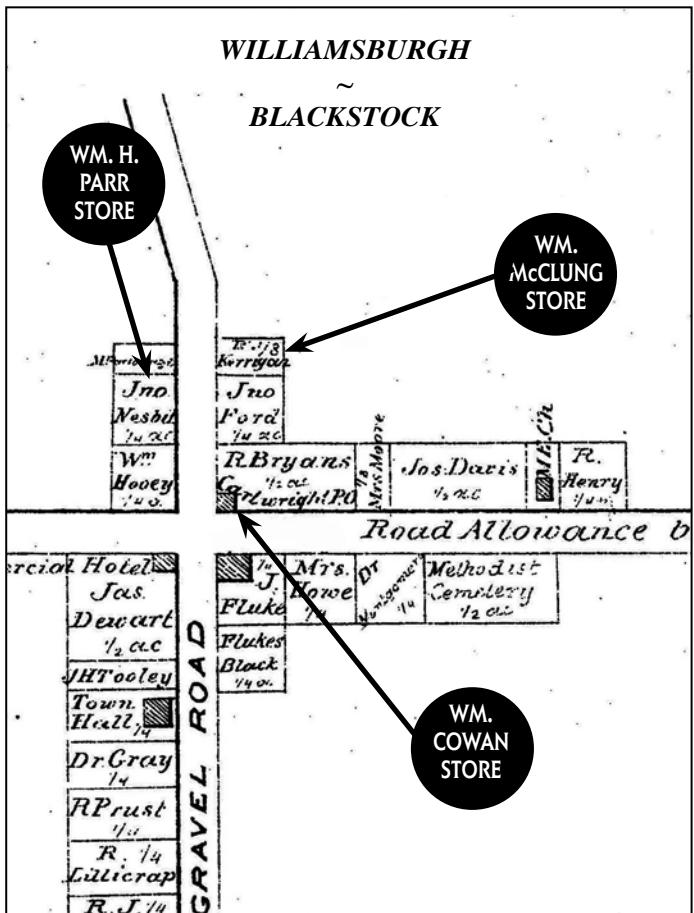
Photo and information courtesy  
Doreen Van Camp.  
Cartwright Revisted 1983



This postcard picture, looking north on Scugog Rd., shows on left, the Royal Hotel and William H. Parr's store farther north on the street (see enlargement below). The building at right, located at the corner of Scugog Rd. and Church St, is believed to have been the store operated by the McClung & Son, and later by William Cowan.



William Parr's general store, Blackstock, seen here with people gathered around the entrance, circa 1900.



Approximate location of general stores in Blackstock.



The Blackstock general store, when it was operated under the banner "Red & White" store during 1950s, when operated by the Blythes.



Harold and Dora Martyn purchased Blythe's store in 1956 and took on the "Lucky Dollar" food store name.

Photos courtesy Doreen Van Camp, and Tweedsmuir History Books."

It is believed that McClung, and Cowan both operated from a corner store at different times. The store was located on the northeast side of Scugog Rd., and Church St.

It should be noted here that Blackstock was initially called "Tooley's Corners", and later Williamsburgh, before the name was changed to Blackstock in 1887, to honour George Tait Blackstock.

For this story we are going to deal only with William Parr's store, which set up shop in Blackstock about 1890. This store is the only one that has continually operated as a general store to this day.

Details of those early days are sparse, and we will start with information found in the Blackstock Tweedsmuir Book and information from Doreen Van Camps book "Cartwright Revisited".

Mr. Parr, who in Canada census records lists him as a farmer, apparently constructed his store along the main road of the village about 1890. It is not known if he actually operated the store, although his name is atop the building. By November 1892, Moore Bros. appear to have taken over Mr. Parr's general store.

~

Owners of the general store following the Moore Bros., include – William Patton, Wallace Marlow, Norman McNally, Alex Gilbert, Howard Saywell, Nesbitt Bros., and George & Sophie Blythe who also owned the general store in Caesarea.



Dora & Harold Martyn

Harold and Dora Martyn assumed ownership of Blythe's Red & White in 1956, and closed the store for a short time. They re-opened in August that year operating under the name Martyn's Lucky Dollar Store. During their time as shopkeepers they became one of the longest proprietors of Blackstock's general store.



Harold and Dora Martyn purchased Blythe's store in 1956 and took on the "Lucky Dollar" food store name.



*Penny's Mini-Mart, in the centre of Blackstock as it looked in 2013.*

When the Martyns retired in 1976 they invited friends and patrons of the store to what they billed as their "Last Hurrah!" At this time they also took the opportunity to introduce the new store-keepers, Bill and Sandra Thompson to the community.

The Thompson's took over the store in August 1976 and operated it under the name Thompsons' Village Market. Exactly 10 years after purchasing the general store, they sold the thriving business to Don and Ginny Masterson, who took over in August 1986 and changed the name to Blackstock "Country Convenience Store".

The Masterson's completely renovated the 1,400 sq. ft. store, taking great pains to maintain the old-fashioned flavour of the store. They re-equipped the stores with new colors and shelving, and completely stripped and refinished the original wood floors.

Ginny, Don along with their children Timmy and Sherri moved into the living area at the rear of the store, which allowed them to keep the doors open seven days a week. In 1992 Canada Post closed the village post office and the Masterson's Country Convenience store was chosen to become the new postal outlet



**Ginny & Don Masterson**

for local residents.

The Masterson's operated the store for about 12 years before listing it for sale for \$400,000 in September 1998, but it took more than a year to dispose of their business.

The next owners of the popular village store were Regan and Faye Wilson who opened the store in July 2000. Once again the store name changed, this time becoming Penny's Mini Mart.

Today this important business for the residents of Blackstock and area has evolved. Now more than just groceries, the mart has become an agent store for the LCBO, and a centre for lottery tickets. To this day, the store is still known as Penny's Mini Mart.

Although the four corners of Blackstock was the traditional business district for the village, Frank Hoskin began construction of a new home and general store in the north end of the village in during the fall of 1950.

The store was completed by May 1951 and it opened under the banner of Hoskin's Carload Groceteria, and sported a bright red and white

aluminum awning across the front of the building. In addition to groceries, the store also carried a full line of hardware and appliances.

Mr. Hoskin operated the store successfully until about 1970, when he sold his business to the Beacock family who operated it under the name Beacock Hardware until the building was destroyed by fire in May 1984.



*Construction on Frank Hoskin's store began in October 1950.*



*Hoskins' store opened with the name Carload Groceteria.*

*Photos courtesy Doreen Van Camp, and Tweedsmuir History Books.?*

# BURKETON

## GENERAL STORE



*Horse and buggy in front of the Burketon general store and post office, circa 1900. Railway crossing just north of the store.*

*Photo courtesy Manvers Historical Society*

Burketon was first settled during the 1870s, in what was described as “little more than a wilderness.” It was about a decade before the hamlet was finally recognized by being listed in an 1886 provincial directory.

The hamlet was described as being home to about 100 people and by this time the growing community had two churches, a school, hotel, blacksmith and general store with a post office.

When the Ontario & Quebec Railway established a line through the hamlet in 1884, it became known as Burketon Station. By then a large grain elevator had been constructed with a capacity of 100,000 bushels

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The first general store is thought to have been established in the mid-1870s, but it isn't until the 1886 directory was published that we learn M. E. Quigley was the local storekeeper and postmaster.

Two years later, Daniel C. Echlin, had taken over the duties of postmaster and general store owner. Seven years later, 1895, the general store and post office changed hands once again with William Cowan the new proprietor. Mr. Quigley returned again to operate the store by 1898 to finish out the century.

By 1900, the Burketon store changed hands, this time T.J. Ryan being the proprietor. Other owners of the property and store, or possibly tenants and operators, during the early part of the 20th century included Herb McLaughlin 1930s; Thomas G. Breck, 1936-1940; and Harold G. Gill, 1940-1949. Arthur E. Ribey became the next owner of the store in December 1949. He and his wife announced in December 1959 they were closing their general store business and thanked the community for their support during their time there.

A decade went by before we learn that a Mrs.

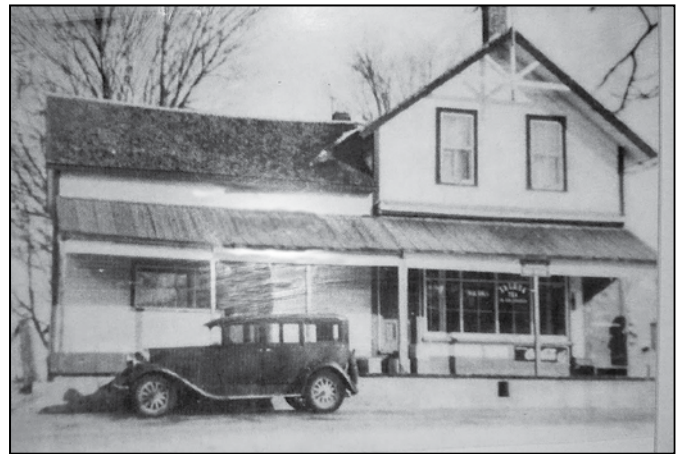




*Burketon, circa 1900, looking along the main street towards the tracks. The furthest building along the street, is the Burketon General Store.*

Hambly was operating the hamlet's general store. But by October 1974 there was another change of tenants. Pauline and Jack Littley arrived in Burketon and took over as storekeeper and postmaster. Not long after the death of their 20 year old son, the advertised the store for sale. It appears they were unable to sell, so two years later, in October 1979 the re-opened the general store, offering seven-day-a-week service.

Little information is available in later years, although by 1987 the former general store was being referred to as the Burketon Country Variety Store, and by 1992 it was listed in a newspaper as the Burketon general store.



**Burketon General Store, circa 1940.**



*Burketon Station was built in 1884 by the Ontario & Quebec Railway in what was then little more than wilderness on the east side of Old Scugog Road. It was operated by the Canadian Pacific until 1968 when it was demolished.*

*Photo courtesy Toronto Railway Historical Association*

# CADMUS GENERAL STORE



Colorized photo by J. Peter Hvidsten

Colorized postcard picture of James E. Elliott's general merchant store, Cadmus, Ontario, circa 1910.

**T**HE EARLIEST RECORD of a general store being located in Cadmus comes from an 1884 *Ontario Directory and Gazetteer* which lists Thomas W. Robertson as the storekeeper and the postmaster. It was at this time the village of Cadmus had a population of about 100 residents, and despite its small size the village had two flour mills, a blacksmith shop, two churches, a Methodist and Presbyterian and a public school.

Mr. Robertson appears to have given up the general store about 1887, although he continued to serve as the local postmaster. The next proprietor of the Cadmus general store was William Watson who operated it until 1894.

J.S. Sharpe became the next keeper of the general store, taking over from Mr. William Watson.

An article in the *Port Perry Star*, under the Cadmus news, on August 1894 reported, "Our new merchant, Mr. Sharpe is without a doubt, the right man in the right place. He has already largely increased, by fresh arrival of new goods, the largest stock purchased from Mr. Watson, and is rushing off desirable goods a prices regardless of cost." Mr. Sharpe retired in 1905, selling the local general store to James. E. Elliott.

Mr. Elliott was described as one of the small communities most highly respected citizens, and he and his family operated the store for 14 years. He took a keen interest in his community, serving on Cartwright council, a strong member of the Orange Lodge, board of education and his church.



James Elliott on deliver in his horse-drawn buggy.



*Cadmus General Store, circa 1930.*

*Photo courtesy Ross Brown*

In 1919 the Elliots sold their store and moved to Bowmanville.

Detailed ownership of the Cadmus general store over the next two decades has been difficult to find. The store did sit vacant for a time after the Elliots left, this verified in December 1932 when Mr. Isaac Whitfield, the owner at that time, was refunded his business tax for the time the store was not occupied.

Just how long Mr. Whitfield owned the building is not known, but for a short time the store had been operated by a Mr. H. Muckle. It's not known if Mr. Muckle owned or leased the premises, but he closed and vacated the store during 1937.

In December 1937, after living in Bowmanville for 18 years, James and Edith Elliott returned to Cadmus to assume ownership over their former general store. Trag-

edy struck two years later, January 1940, when he was killed in an auto accident while returning home from a meeting in Blackstock. Following his death, his wife Edith, continued to operated the Cadmus store for another five years.

Longtime residents of Cartwright Township, Richard and Annie Wall became the next storekeepers. They purchased the Cadmus store from Mrs. Elliot in October 1944. The Wall family served the residents of the village faithfully until August 1949, when they sold the general store to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Shemilt, who were new residents to the community.

Henry and Jessie Shemilt are believed to have been the last owners of the Cadmus general store. They operated it for about five years before selling it during the 1960s. It has since been turned into a private residence.



*Postcard photograph of Cadmus general store, circa 1925.*

# CAESAREA

## GENERAL STORES



*The Caesarea Superior Store and White Rose station, circa 1930.*

**R**USSELL HARRAN was the son of one of Caesarea's leading businessmen, Andrew Harran. Growing up in the community, and no doubt working for his father at the Lakeview House and Kenosha House, its understandable he would enter into business.

Russel and Rose Harron built and opened a general store in Caesarea on the northwest side of Cedar Grove and Pier Street in 1928. The store was operated under the name Superior Store.

After opening their store, the post office was moved to their new store. For seven years prior, the post office had been operated by his cousin Albert and his wife Thomasina (Minnie) on Pier St. near the lakefront. "Russel and Rose" were popular figures in Caesarea and they operated the local general store for 20 years before selling it in 1949.

Charles and Caroline Millers along with George and Sophie Blyth became the new proprietors of the store, as well as becoming the new postmasters for the village of Caesarea. In 1966 the Superior Store became a Dollar Store, but it was known locally as "Blyth and Millers" for many years.

The Caesarea general store was later owned and operated by



*Russell and Rose Harran, with the dog Vic.*

*Photo courtesy S. Gettins.*



Charles and Caroline Miller.

*Photo courtesy Richard Miller*

Charles and Caroline Miller (left) and George and Sophie Blyth operated the Superior Store (below) from 1949 until 1960.



Superior Store, Caesarea, 1928

*Photo courtesy Pattie Elizabeth*

Gordon and Marilyn Cooledge and it became known as Gordon's Market. They also took on the role of postmaster for the village.

Their store, along with a garage and gas, was located on the northeast corner of Cedar Grove and Pier Streets, facing onto Pier Street.



Gorden's Mareket, Caesarea's general store 1973, owned by Gordon Cooledge.

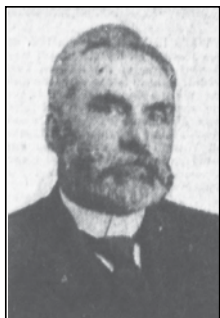
# COLUMBUS GENERAL STORE



*Murison's General Store, on the southwest corner of Columbus. Looking west. The small child Stewart Murison holding the hand of his father Andrew Murison.*

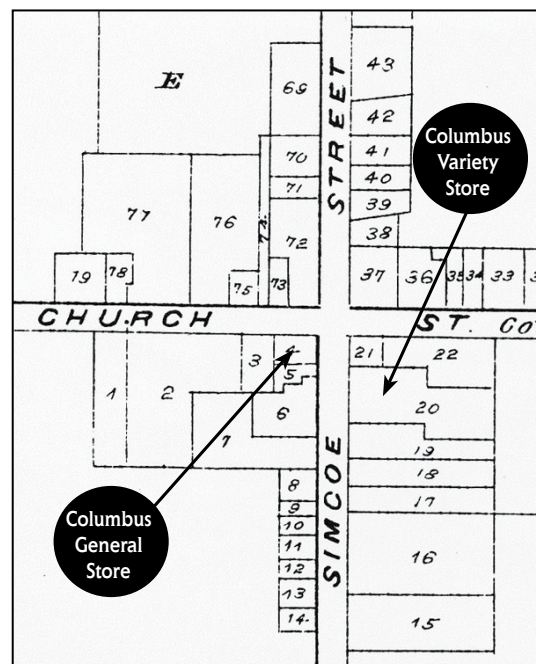
**T**HIS SMALL HAMLET, known as Columbus today, was known as English Corners. prior to 1850 . It was this year that the first post office was established and John Black became the postmaster of this growing settlement, located just north of Oshawa.

Columbus of 1851 had a population of about 270 people with a thriving business community. Among its shops were two hotels, blacksmiths, wagon makers, shoemakers, cabinet makers and three general merchant stores which were operated by Robert Skirving, who died in 1854 when he was only 45 years old; Thomas Dow and William H. Gibbs, who was a both a businessman and politician.



**Robert Ashton**

By the year 1858, Robert Ashton had entered into the general store business and became the next postmaster. Thomas Clark and John Rowes were the shopkeepers of the other two stores.



*Village plan for Columbus with lot numbers, 1877.*

As was not uncommon in these rural communities, ownership of local general stores changed owners frequently, but there was one family which settled in for generations serving their customers. This was the Robert Ashton family, who operated Ashton's General Store and the post office in Columbus for almost 30 years.

Mr. Ashton sold his business to Robert E. Hodgson about 1885, with Hodgson becoming the next postmaster. Mr. Hodgson held that position, as well as operated his general store until June 1895, at which time he retired, but appears he may have retained ownership of the property.

Andrew Murison was the next owner of Hodgson's general store, purchasing it in 1904 after having rented it for two years. He did not take on the position of postmaster.

The post office was transferred to Charles J. Stabback's general store, and he became the next postmaster. Mr. Stabback had been tending his store for about a decade before becoming the postmaster.

There were three general stores still serving Columbus residents by 1910, the other two being operated by David Ashton and Andrew Murison.

Following the death of Andrew Murison in 1938, his son Stewart took over the family's general store. He and his wife Jean operated the hamlet's store for the next 40 years before retiring.

No records can be found of what happened over the next decade, but in January 1975, the Murison's advertised the Columbus General Store for sale, stating it was located on a busy corner, suitable for retail business. It also contained a 10 room living quarters, work shop, attached garage. Full price \$75,000.

In June 1985 Dave and Joanne Fox took over and renovated the long-time general store, removing front facade and the covered porch, which had endured for almost a century. The new owners rebranded the store as Foxy's Ice Cream and Pastry.



*Murison general store was renovated in 1985 and became Foxy's Ice Cream & Pastry store (above).*



*Murison general store as it looked in 1904.*

Since that time this historic old building has seen a number of tenants.

On the other side of Simcoe St., was another general or variety store.

By 1986 the business had changed hands again and it became known as the Columbus Variety store.

Three years later, in February 1989, new owners were announced and it was rebranded again, this time as Columbus Variety & Gas Bar. The new owner, not yet identified, expanded their line of products and services to include video rentals, hardware and lottery tickets.

In 1994 Terry and Lesley West became the new owners and operators of the store, which they renamed Columbus Country Emporium.



*The Columbus Variety & Gas Bar, as it looked in 1994.*

# EPSOM GENERAL STORE



Colourized photo by J. Peter Hvidsten

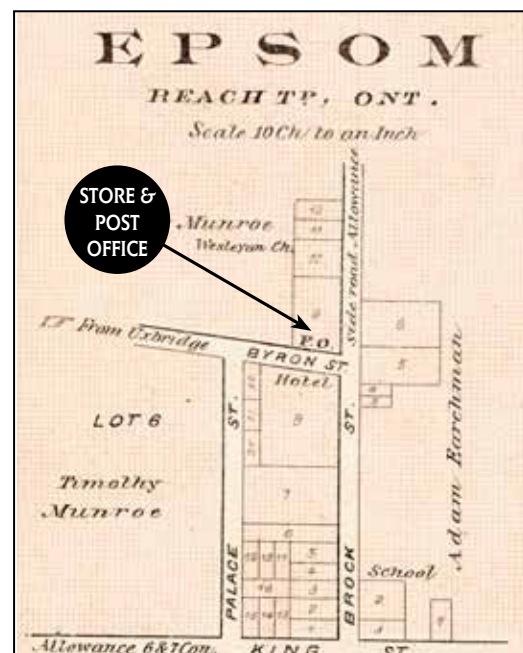
*The Epsom General Store, circa 1910, with Mrs. Mary Sager and Mr. Wm. Ackney near the front door.  
This is the only known photograph of the Epsom store - Photo courtesy of Mrs. Jean Jeffrey.*

**T**HROUGHOUT THE developing years in Epsom, the local general store was a focal point in the community. It not only provided early settlers with food, hardware and dry goods, but it was also the centre of activity in the village.

In Epsom, like many small general stores dotted around the township, the general store was also the location of the post office. Mail was the settlers' contact with news from outside their community and it was delivered once every week or two, by stagecoach.

As the central fixture in the village, the general store was also often the location for neighbors to gather and visit with their friends, and to hold important meetings to discuss community issues.

The history of the Epsom general stores goes back to the late 1840s, when there were two stores in the village. One of them was owned by Anson Button. A second store, at an unknown location in the village, was operated by John McDermid and Gilbert Ferguson.







*This building, which is now a residence, located on the north west corner of Marsh Hill Rd. and Bryon St., is believed to have been the former Epsom general store. 2019.*



**Chester Asling**



**Jean Jeffrey**

Anson Button arrived in Canada, from the USA, settling in Reach Township, and opening what may have been the first general store in Epsom and in 1852 became the first postmaster. He was only stayed in Epsom for a short time before moving to Uxbridge where he spent the rest of his life.

After Mr. Button left Epsom, it appears there may have been a number of storekeepers, including Timothy Munro. Mr. Munro also served as postmaster for a short time before it was purchased by Joseph H. Huckins in May 1868.



**Anson T. Button**

Mr. Huckins became the hamlet's new storekeeper and postmaster. After he retired in March 1875, he leased the store to Robert Brown for a short time before selling the property to Richard Bray.

About four years after taking over the store, Mr. Bray died unexpectedly, leaving his wife Susan to continue operating the store. She sold it her daughter Mary Quant and her husband Henry in 1878.

The Quants became the new store keepers and also became the postmasters for the next 13 years, selling it in 1887 to Chester Asling.

The Aslings operated the store until 1935 and were the last family to provide general store and postal services to the community.

The Aslings sold the store to Catherine Coates, who sold it to Gordon and Jean Jeffrey in November 1949.

Mrs. Jeffrey was the granddaughter of Chester Asling, and she recalled later that her grandfather purchased the building for \$450.00. In 1949 when the Jeffrey's purchased the building it was converted into a home and Mrs. Jeffrey lived there for the remainder of her life.

**STORE,  
DWELLING, & C.  
TO LEASE OR SELL.  
An Excellent Opening**

THE Subscriber offers to lease or sell his  
Store in the Village of

**EPSOM.**

The Store is in good condition is well established and has long commanded a good business has a general country Store. There is a Post Office in connection with the Store. Adjoining the Store there is a good Storehouse 40x80. There is a comfortable Dwelling House attached and an acre of Garden with an excellent young Orchard.

The location is one of the most healthful and pleasant anywhere to be found.

Parties wishing to enter on a comfortable paying country business will do well to embrace this opportunity.

**TERMS EASY!**

For particulars apply to the subscriber.—  
If by letter pre-paid to Epsom P. O.  
**J. C. PILKEY.**

Epsom, Sept. 17, 1873. 39

# GREENBANK GENERAL STORE



Photo courtesy Scugog Shores Museum & Archives

Greenbank store and post office, dated 1914. At a later date the store added a one-storey entrance, with large windows. See picture next page. Visible at far left, behind the buggy is Sam Dusty, the mail carrier who carried mail between Greenbank and Blackwater.

**A**LMOST TWO CENTURY'S AGO, the tiny hamlet of Greenbank was located at the junction of the old Brock Road and the 11th Concession of Reach Township, near the Presbyterian cemetery. At this time, circa 1850, the hamlet mainly consisted of a church, store, blacksmith shop and a few farms.

When the old road was closed and the new "Centre Road" opened, the village moved to its present site at the intersection of Cragg Road and Hwy. #12.

Edward Bassingthwaite is the first recorded merchant for the village. He is believed to have opened his general store, an Inn and blacksmith shop, circa 1857 and remained the only merchant for several years.

The exact location of the first general store has yet to be confirmed, but during the 1860s the storekeeper was Andrew McGirr (McGerr). The store was located on the property of John Phoenix, who in September 1868 advertised his store for rent. Mr. Phoenix's property was located on the west side of Hwy.# 12, just north of Cragg Road, leading to the belief the store was on a piece of his large property.

Whether the store sat empty for a time can't be confirmed but an entry in the 1871 Ontario Directory shows Mr. McGirr as storekeeper as late as that date.

Over the next 30 years, a number of people operated Greenbank's two general stores. The best known proprietors throughout the 1880s were Robert





This photograph, taken August 2, 1927, shows the Greenbank general store and post office behind the stores proprietor, Marshall O'Neill, left, and James Innis. Unlike the picture on the opposite page, by this time the general store had a covered entrance with large display windows, and a gas bowser near the road.

Harrington and David Perkins. During 1890s there were at least three men listed as having general stores, John Burke, Edward Brooks and Trevin Larkins. William Wallace is another man listed as a storekeeper. Mr. Wallace and his wife Elsie operated a general store in Greenbank for at least 10 years before moving to Toronto in 1911.

Twelve years pass before anything surfaces about the Greenbank store. Then on November 23, 1922, the Ontario Observer newspaper reported that John Stone's garage had erupted in fire and the fire spread to the rear Marshall O'Neill's store. Fortunately the fire was put out before any serious damage was done to his store.

Mr. O'Neill retired from business in 1928 and sold his residence, from which his general store was operated. He and his wife Mary celebrated their 50th anniversary two years later.

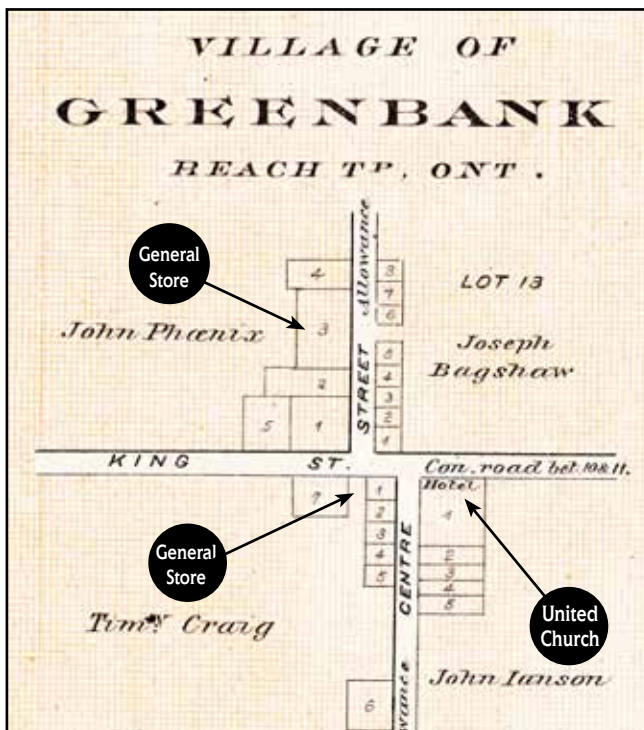
Another decade passed with no information who might have operated a store in Greenbank.

In August 1938, Harry Phoenix stepped into the general store business, moving into his new home and store. This new store was located on the southwest corner of Hwy. 12 and Cragg Road. Harry and his wife Arvella served the community for 27 years, before retiring.

The Phoenix's sold their store to Donald A. Ferguson in July 1965. When leaving, Harry



Harry Phoenix



Approximate locations of Greenbank general stores.



*Greenbank postcard picture, 1911, of the west side of Hwy. #12, showing the old blacksmith shop and the centre building which is believed to have been the local general store. Exact location not known.*

expressed his thanks to the Greenbank community and encouraged the residents to continue to patronize the new owners. The Ferguson's operated the general store and post office for 13 years before it changed hands once again.

Present day residents of the village who recall when the Phoenix and Ferguson families operated the store provided these memories:

The store had a divided aisle with groceries on both sides. A basic cooler kept sandwich and cheese cold. A meat slicer beside it. The post office was

located on the south side, next to the stairs going to living quarters above.

During Phoenix ownership, it had a post office, gas pumps and sold a small amount of hardware.

~

In June 1978 Joseld "Zelda" and Earl Jeronimo arrived in Greenbank to assume ownership. The Jeronimo family, including their two daughters all worked at the store. After her husband retired, Zelda continued operating the store and post office until her health began to fail.



*This picture shows the Greenbank store, circa 1965, when owned by the Phoenix family. The two-storey building was located on the west side of Hwy. 12, and barely visible are the gas pumps and signs on the north side of the building. At far right is the former St. Agnes Anglican Church, now the Greenbank Community Centre.*

After eleven years in the community, the Jeronimo family sold the store in April 1989 to Jinny and Young Chang.

The new owners arrived in Greenbank with their son Paul, from Toronto, with plans to continued operating the general store and post office in the tradition of the Jeronimos. In addition to operating the general store they opened a restaurant in the building, serving traditional Korean and Japanese dinners.

Almost 20 years after taking over the Greenbank store, they expanded the restaurant to include 30 seats. Jinny and her brother Miky Kwon, who owned a restaurant in Korea manage Greenbank Restaurant, while also working in the store.

After eleven years operating the store, Jinny and Young decided to dedicate their time to the Greenbank Restaurant, and take care of the gas bar in September 1997. They sold the Greenbank store business to Steve and Shrom Lang, who came from Seoul Korea.

~

In addition to the best known general stores of Greenbank over the past century, there is evidence other smaller stores were located in the community.

As noted above, during the 1880s there were two general stores, and in the 1890s there were at least three general



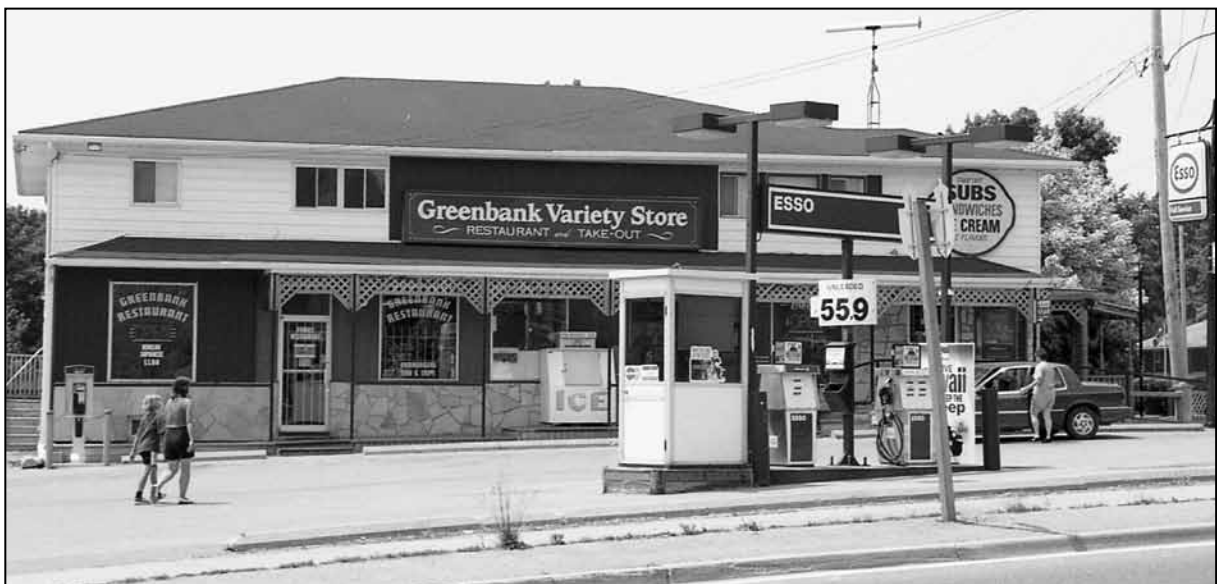
*Greenbank General Store and post office changed hands in April 1989. Zelda Jeronimo, who is retiring after 11 years is seen welcoming the new owners, left, Young Chang, and right, Jinny Chang.*

stores. The locations of these stores have not been located.

More recently, information from long-time residents of the community recall there was a gas station with a small store on the west side of Hwy. 12, south of Couves Lane.

It's not know how long this store with gas station was located there, but as early as 1937 Charles and Anne Partridge ran a gas station at this location. They retired in October 1946 and sold the business to a Mr. and Mrs. Smith from Toronto.

Another resident recalls it was operating as Madill's Supertest gas station during the 1950s, but it's believed the building was destroyed by fire about 1957.



*Greenbank store, post office and restaurant, 1999, when operated by Jinny and Joung Chang.*

# JANETVILLE

## GENERAL STORE



Janetville general store, left, looking north in 1911. Pictured from left, Robert Burns, Rev. Snowden, Tom and George Howe.

*Photos courtesy Manvers Historical Society*

**A**MONG THE FIRST settlers of Janetville was John Burns and his family. When John was about 30 years old, he settled in Manvers where he established an extensive lumbering operation. He built a sawmill and a gristmill to support the growing community operated it for a number of years before moving to Janetville.

After he and his wife Margaret moved to Raglan he built a modest wooden structure which served as a general store and post office. The exact date is not known, although both 1862 and 1875 have been recorded as possible dates.

As the story goes, when the post office was opened the Brown's daughter Janet became the first postmaster. She was known for her kindness and generosity, and thus, the postal station was named in her honour.

There is limited information about the Burn's store during the earliest years, but competition came to the village in 1898 when George Hawkins opened a general store, adding to the business section of the growing community.



Picture of Janetville general store and post office, circa 1910. The sign at top, between the two windows is advertising Sherwin-Williams paints.



The Janetville store, circa 1930, with a gas bowers and sign noted them as an Imperial Oil dealer in the community.

Photo courtesy Manvers Historical Society

It has been reported that Mr. Hawkins small store was doing a larger business than any other store for miles around. Mr. Hawkins was said to make regular trips to factories in Toronto to buy silk and it became a mecca for women of the district, including Lindsay and Peterborough.

The opening of Mr. Hawkins store may have been what spurred Mr. Burns to freshen his store and improve its appearance. Less than one week after Hawkins opened, it was reported that Mr. Burns had repainted and papered his store "presenting quite a new appearance".

There is no doubt the Burns family were held in high regard and their store flourished for generations. From its meagre beginnings in the mid-1860s to the present day, the family have carried on the tradition of operating Janetville's local general store.

As with any long time business, the Burns store has undergone changes. After operating as a corner grocery store for decades, in April



Section of Manvers Twp. map, showing Janetville village, circa 1878.



*Robert Burns and his wife Dorothy, left, and owner-manager John Burns following the re-opening of Janetville Food town grocery store in 1984.*

*Photo courtesy Port Perry Star*

1984 the family officially re-opened their renovated and expanded Janetville Food Town grocery store. At this time it was being operated by John Burns, son Robert and wife Dorothy.

In June 1989 the store name was changed to Janetville IGA, and it became the first store in southern Ontario to become an agency store for LCBO.

This truly is a family general and grocery store that has operated from well past a century. The store has been in the Burns family for close to 150 years and during that time, it was operated by descendants of the first John Brown. Since then all the male family members have been named "Robert John" or "John Robert".

Today the store is known as Janetville Cantina and Convenience.



*Janetville Independent Grocer, formerly Burns General Store , 293 Pigeon Creek Rd., as it looked about 2011.*

*Photo from Google Earth*



# MANCHESTER

## GENERAL STORES

Coloured photo by J. Peter Hvidsten



*The S.H. Christian store was constructed during the 1860s, and is seen in this colorized picture, circa 1910. The store was located on the southwest corner of Hwy. 12 and Reg. Rd. 21, and served as the local general store under a variety of owners until the mid-1930s.*

**T**HE HISTORY OF general stores in Manchester, is more complex to trace than some of the other small villages and hamlets throughout the district. Over time there have been at least three different locations for these small mercantile outlets within the village.

The first record of a general store in Manchester appears in January 1863, when George Armstrong opens a new store in Manchester opposite McClue's Hotel. Some of the products he sold were groceries, dry goods, hardware, clothing and liquors.

Whether Mr. Armstrong sold his business is not known, but in March 1867 a Whitby company, R.&J. Campbell, opened a branch business in Manchester selling a full line of merchandise, hardware and groceries.

Adam Gordon was another successful merchant during at this time, and although largely involved in the grain trade by he also operated a first-class general store which he operated from a large two-story building in the centre of the community. He leased his building in April



**Adam Gordon**



Samuel Christian

1873 to John Taylor who re-opened the store with a new stock of dry goods and groceries. Six months later Mr. Taylor purchased the store and premises of Mr. Gordon, advertising that he supplied "choice and fresh groceries at such low prices as cannot fail to satisfy his customers."

One of the best known general merchants of the time was Samuel H. Christian who started his career in partnership with John H. Brown about 1866. The two men operated in Manchester under the name Brown and Christian. Their general store was well stocked with not only food, but clothing and hardware and all products required by the local citizens.

With the arrival of the railway to Port Perry in 1873, the two men dissolved their partnership and Mr. Brown moved to that town to continue his business career. Mr. Christian continued in Manchester, working from the building he had partnered with Brown. Here he took on the dual duties as a shopkeeper and postmaster. The building was located on the southwest side of what is today Hyw. 12.

One Manchester old-timer, writing under the name "Uncle Ebenezer," reminisced that Christian's store had a big verandah across the front of the store. Here he said, young and old would sit every night to gossip.

Ebenezer went on to explain the layout of the inside of the store. He said, along the right side were groceries, and the post office was in a little room behind the groceries. At the northwest corner and all along the back were boots and shoes. Dry goods, pots and pans could be found along the

**GOODS!**

VIZ:

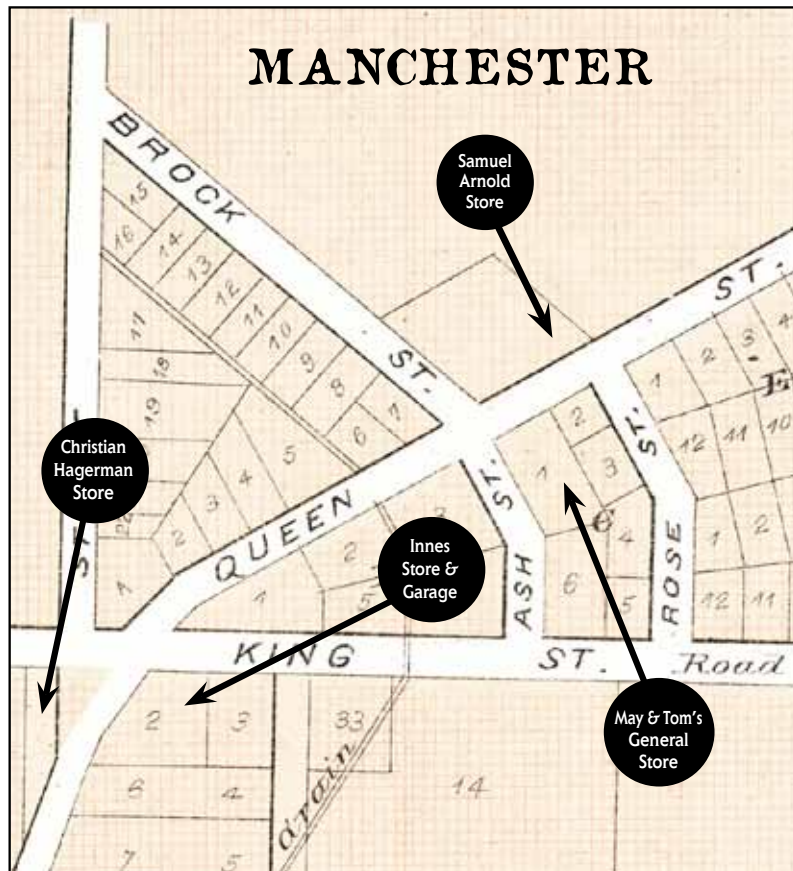
|                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Prints,          | Dress Goods,      |
| Grey Cottons,    | Mantles,          |
| White Cottons,   | Shawls,           |
| Red Flannels,    | Ribbons,          |
| White Flannels,  | Flowers,          |
| Blankets,        | Plumes,           |
| Cotton Warp, &c. | Boots, Shoes, &c. |

With a complete assortment of **Groceries, Hardware, Crockery, &c.**

**Brown & Christian.**

MANCHESTER, Oct. 3, 1866.

Brown & Christian advertisement, Oct. 1866.



An 1877 plan for the Village of Manchester shows the approximate locations of village general stores.

**MANCHESTER WAREHOUSE.**

THE Subscriber requests the attention of the public to the arrival of a large lot of Ladies' and Gents' **BOOTS & SHOES!** Which having been bought at a considerable reduction from former prices, and now offered **AT A GREAT REDUCTION** on former prices. In addition, a large lot of prime **BUFFALO ROBES!!!** Ladies Furs, in Muffs, Boas, Victorines, Cuffs of latest styles, also Gent's Caps and Hats in great variety. A fine lot of Ladies' Clouds in new colors and patterns from 2s. each. Present price of Butter 9d per lb. Eggs 7½ per Doz. Pork \$4.50c. to \$5.25c. per 100 lbs. Wheat, Oats, Peas and Barley wanted in large quantities.

ADAM GORDON.  
Manchester, Dec. 5, 1867. 17

Adam Gordon's store, Dec. 1867

**TAYLOR'S, MANCHESTER.**

The Subscriber would take this opportunity of informing the inhabitants of Manchester and surrounding country that having leased the Store lately occupied by A. Gordon, Esq., he is now getting on a carefully selected Stock of **Dry Goods, Groceries,** &c., &c., purchased at the best markets and on the most advantageous terms. Latest styles and superior quality in **Dry Goods. Choice, Fresh Groceries.** Go to all New and Reliable, and sold at such prices for Cash, as will secure speedy sales and quick returns to make up for small profits.

JOHN TAYLOR.  
Manchester, April 7, 1873.

John Taylor assumed ownership of Adam Gordon's general store in 1873.

left side of the building.

Samuel Christian operated the store until about 1883, when the building was vacated. It sat empty for a short time before Deforest F. Hagerman arrived from Zephyr and purchased the building in 1884. Mr. Hagerman re-opened the general store and assumed the roll of postmaster. During his time in business he also served as the municipal treasurer for the Township of Reach, using the small post office room for his office. During his time in Manchester his store was often the location for public auctions of property and farms in the surrounding area.

After almost 20 years as a shop-keeper, postmaster and treasurer, Deforest Hagerman and his family held an auction of their household goods, before moving to London.

The next known owner of the store was Arthur Ferguson. He purchased the store from the Hagerman's in October 1908 and it was during his stay that the Clerk's Office was moved. Very little is known of Mr. Ferguson. He operated the store for about four years before returning to farming.

Mr. and Mrs. Francis Crosier moved to Manchester in 1919 and purchased the general store from Mr. Ferguson. Frank, as he was known made the store smaller by erecting a partition across the back of the store. They operated the post office and store until August 1926.



*The location of this Manchester general store has yet to be confirmed, but is believed to be the Earl & Elsie Innes store on Hwy. 12 near the corner of 7A.*



*The former S.H. Christian and Deforest Hagerman store as it looked during circa 1918.*



**Francis Corzier**

Arthur "Art" Crosier became the next store owner, but only remained about five years before selling to Fred Rabey, of Manilla in 1931. Mr. Raby reorganized the inside of the building, turning the left side into an ice cream stand where he also sold tobacco and pop. Behind the stand he set up some small tables and served hot or cold lunches.

In February 1932, Mr. Raby's store caught fire and might have been burned to the ground had it not been for someone noticing the fire and woke them up. Following the fire, the old verandah was torn down and the store given a new coat of paint, and a gasoline bowser was installed beside the building.

Two years later, Mr. Raby's sister, Agnes Seward, took over operation of the store and it was at this time the post office was removed from the store to the residence of Arthur Crosier. It's believed that after the removal of the post office the store closed for an undetermined length of time. Then in September 1935, the newspaper reported that Mr. Raby had moved his store back from the highway and was working on getting it ready to re-open.

Mr. Wm. Earl and Elsie Innes rented the store from Mr. Raby and opened for business in February 1938. At the time, it was noted that Mr. Innes was a good mechanic. The Innes purchased

the building from Raby in December 1941 and Earl opened Innes Motor Sales as a Chrysler Dealer. It's believed they continued to provide some general store services at the garage.

In September 1956, the old landmark building on the west side of Hwy. 12, which for many years housed Manchester's general store and post office, and later became Innes Motor Sales, was purchased by the Ontario Department of Highways. Innes Motors moved its business across Hwy. 12, to what was known as the Supertest property, on the southeast corner of Hwy. 7A.

As early as 1946, Charles and Olive K. Coombe arrived in Manchester and are believed to have opened a general store. This store was located in central Manchester on north side of Hwy. 7A, just east of Brook St., across from the Manchester Hall.

The first hint that the Coombe's operated a general store, is found in a December 1950 advertisement which announced that Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hedges were reopening the grocery store formally operated by the Charles Coombe family.

Samuel Arnold purchased the store and property of Frank Hedges in June 1953, with plans to continue the grocery business. The Arnolds had been owners of the Scugog Island store since 1946, before relocating to Manchester.

Three years later the Arnolds sold their furnishings by auction and returned to the Island. Land records show that the property was sold in August 1956 to Superior Discount Ltd., leaving the village without a general store.



*Arnold's advertisement, April 1955.*



**Tom and May Donnelly**



*May and Tom Donnelly opened their small general store about 1959, in the heart of Manchester. May Donnelly is pictured behind the counter in the store, below.*

### MAY & TOM'S GENERAL STORE

Not long after the closure of the village store, Tom and May Donnelly, relatively newcomers to the village recognized the need for a general store for the local residents. About 1959 they constructed a small building next to their two-storey brick house. The store faced onto the highway and was located on the south side of Hwy. 7A, one door west of the former Manchester Hall

The Donnelly's opened their quaint little shop, which they called "May and Tom's Place" and operated it until the mid-1960s.

This was the last general store to provide general store services to the community.



*Donnelly photos courtesy Eric Donnelly.*

# MYRTLE STATION

## GENERAL STORE



Postcard photo of the Myrtle Station general store and post office, circa 1920.

Photo courtesy Archives at Whitby Public Library

**T**WO MEN by the names of David A Brown and David L. Briggs are believed to have opened the first small general store and post office north of Whitby in 1873. Conflicting information as to whether their store was in Myrtle, or at Myrtle Station, confuses the facts, and has yet to be fully determined.

The building in which the store operated, was on the north-west corner of the Hyw.12, near the intersection. It was destroyed by fire about 1889.

By the 1880s, Myrtle Station had three stores, Billy Armour's with post office, facing north on the station road, and another store operated by George Holliday and Earle Beadle, was near the present site of the United Church.

A third store, facing south on the northeast side of the railway line was owned by operated by Mr. Wm. Ledingham in the late 1890s. Mr. Ledingham is said to have been killed by a train while crossing the track. This store was next operated by

### GREAT JANUARY SALE

FOR 18 DAYS

**J. E. BEACOCK & SON, Myrtle Station**  
will offer all their well assorted stock of  
**DRY GOODS, GROCERIES, BOOTS, SHOES, RUBBERS, CHINAWARE AND HARDWARE**  
 at Greatly Reduced Prices for Three Weeks.  
**FROM JANUARY 12TH TO JANUARY 31ST, 1914**

**WE** must clear everything to make room. Below are some of the bargain prices. Everything in the store at nearly cost, especially boots, shoes and rubbers. All boots and shoes reduced 25 per cent, rubbers 20 per cent. Come and get a copy of our home trade catalogue, the cheapest way of buying, direct from the manufacturer to customer. This way has all mail order houses beaten for price and quality. All dry goods reduced greatly. All men's mitts and gloves reduced 25 per cent. All men's caps reduced 25 per cent. Large stock overalls, regular \$1.25 for \$1.00. Coal oil, best American, 5 gallons for \$1.

**Produce taken same as cash.**

We are sole agents for House of Hobberlin, tailors, Toronto. We are agents for Columbia gramophones and records. Hear the latest records played on the Columbia. Don't leave your shopping till the last week. Remember these prices are only good for three weeks, and we must reduce our stock.

**LOOK AT THIS**—Best Granulated Sugar, 22 lbs. for \$1.00; Best Yellow Sugar, 24 lbs. for \$1.00.

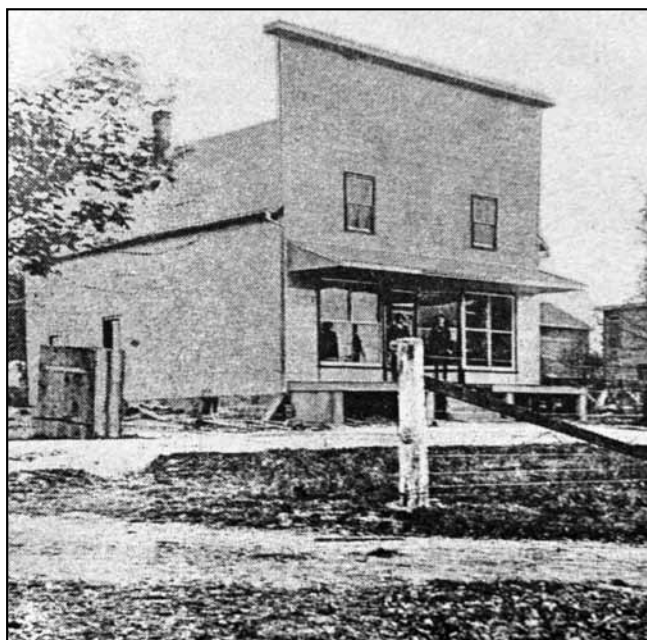
### J. E. BEACOCK & SON

MYRTLE STATION, ONT.

James E. Beacock advertisement, January 22, 1914.



James E. Beacock operated this store and post office at Myrtle Station from 1906 to 1936. The store, was located in the east side of Hwy. 12, north of the CPR tracks and was destroyed by fire in 1909.



Myrtle Station general store, circa 1890.

**BUSINESS SOLD**  
Having sold my business to MR. MURRAY MASON, of Agincourt, I wish to thank the people of Myrtle Station and surrounding district for their patronage during the past twelve years and trust the same may be extended to Mr. Mason.  
**ALBERT E. RAMSEY,**

Albert E. Ramsey notice of business sold, April 3, 1947.

W. L. Martin in 1904.

James E. Beacock purchased the Myrtle Station store and post office in 1906 and became the local storekeeper for the next 30 years. During his ownership the original building was destroyed by fire in 1909. He rebuilt a larger two-storey frame structure, on the same property, facing south, but fire once again struck in 1933 or 1936, and Mr. Beacock's general store was destroyed.

In addition to Mr. Beacock's store during the 1930s, there were two grocery stores in the village. One was operated by Mr. and Mrs. Jewell, and another Earle Beadle, later leased to Robert and Wallace Armstrong.

Albert E. Ramsay purchased the former Beacock property and in August 1939 began construction on the former site. His new general store was opened in November the same year. Eight years later, in April 1947, Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey retired from business and moved to Little Britain.

From 1947 to July 1953 the store was owned and operated by Murray Mason. Mason sold the store and Leo Amell became the new owner. Mr. Amell provided general store services to the community for just over ten years, before selling it to Mr. Alex VanHorn in September 1964.

Mr. VanHorn appears to have been the last

owner of the Myrtle Station general store. Since then it has gone through various ownership with it becoming home of the Iron Horse Trading Post in 1982. The store, operated by Tom Tims and Bob Carpenter lasted only two years before filing bankruptcy in April 1984.

Carole Bib became the next owner of the variety store at Myrtle Station in March 1987. Formerly known as Cook's Variety Store opened her new venture under the name Hy-Hope Farm Market. Ms. Bibb also owned Hy-Hope Bakery on Durham Rd. 23.

In January 1968, the H.H. Goode feed mill, the CPR railway station and three coaches were destroyed by fire. The station was located on the south side of the railway tracks, not far from the old general store building, on the north.

*Please Note: Information pertaining to the origins of the Myrtle Station general store has been researched from Whitby and Port Perry newspaper articles, Tweedsmuir history books, and the archives of the Whitby Public Library. Every effort has been made to be as accurate as possible with the information available.*

# MYRTLE GENERAL STORE

**T**HE FIRST GENERAL STORE for the hamlet of Myrtle is believed to have been opened in 1873 by David A Brown and David L. Briggs. Mr. Briggs left the partnership in 1884.

As mentioned in the previous story, there is some confusion as to which hamlet this store was located, Myrtle Station, or Myrtle, but available information leads to it having been Myrtle.

The store was described as being on the north-west corner of the intersection and was destroyed by fire about 1889. The photograph below is believed to have been that store.

Following the fire a new store was built on the north-east corner of Baldwin St. (Hwy 12) and Myrtle Road. Thomas W. Brookes purchased the general store about 1903 and became the hamlet's postmaster.



*View of the Myrtle General Store and Post office, circa 1885. This building was destroyed by fire about 1889.*

*Photos courtesy Archives at Whitby Public Library*



*T.W. Brookes on the porch of his General Store and Post Office, at Myrtle, 1910.*

Mr. Brookes was said to be a colourful man in the area, and it is rumoured he was the centre of many a controversy while in charge of the post office.

A progressive man, during the summer of 1915, he installed gasoline pumps with a 200 gallon tank, to provide convenient fuel for motorists. Three years later, Mr. Brookes and his family moved to Oshawa where he operated a grocery store.

In April 1919 the Myrtle general store was described as being 30'x16' in size, along with a

seven room house, good stable and drive house on a quarter acre of land. The entire property was advertised for sale for \$1,500.

There were a number of other men named as having been owners or proprietors of the Myrtle general store after Mr. Brookes left. One of these was Mr. R.S. Nottingham who appears to have been the owner from approximately 1940 until a date sometime after 1953.

After close to a century providing a general store outlet for the hamlet's residents, the building was demolished in 1967.



*T.W. Brookes General Store and Post Office, Myrtle, 1910.*

Photos courtesy Archives at Whitby Public Library



# North Nestleton

## GENERAL STORE

Colourized photo by J. Peter Hvidsten



Colourized postcard photograph of Veale's General Store, North Nestleton, about 1910.

**B**EFORE IT BECAME known as Nestleton, or North Nestleton, this small Cartwright Township settlement was known as Salem. The hamlet was later renamed "Nestleton," due to its mail getting mixed with another village called Salem located in the south-west of the province.

The name change is believed to have taken place during the mid-1880s. Prior to this mail addressed to Salem (Nestleton) residents was delivered to Caesarea. This required residents having to walk to Caesarea to pick-up their mail - a five mile return trip.

Available records show that it was Alfred H. Veale who built the first store in the fledgling settlement about 1900. The small building was described as an 8'x15' lean-to, joined to his blacksmith shop.

From his first store, due to its small size, Mr. Veale was only able to stock groceries. It has been written – *"that it was so small that if two customers entered, the last one had to back out to let the next one in!"*

In 1902 he constructed his second general store building, which became home to the Nestleton post office and of which Mr. Veale took on the duties of postmaster

The new 22'x20' building provided room to expand his stock of supplies and to open the Nestleton Post Office, of which he became the local postmaster.

From his store he began peddling his wares and service. He paid the



Alfred "Fred" Veale

township \$100 for a peddling license and drove his team of horses and light wagon throughout the area taking orders. It is said, he worked five days a week and averaged 40 calls a day. It was said that he had such a remarkable memory he did not need to write down his orders.

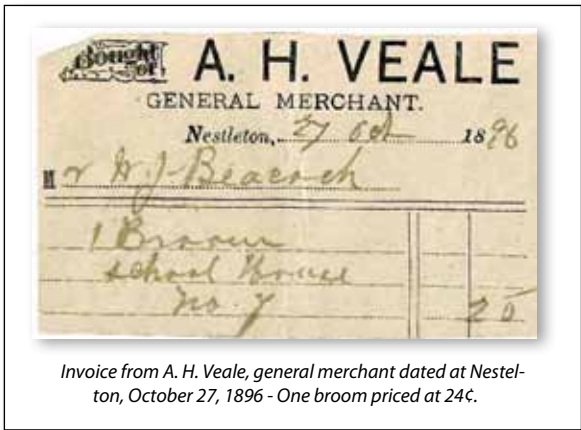
In 1907 Mr. Veale built his third store and residence. It was an impressive two-storey building with the Veale residence attached to the rear. The building featured a covered veranda which stretched the full length of the storefront, and the second storey featured four large windows facing west onto the Nestleton Rd.

Alfred's parents, John and Emma Veale, his wife Eleanor; son Cecil and daughter Ivy, all worked in this enlarged place of business.

In 1921 Mr. Veale sold his popular general store to Harold and Rhoda Porteous who with their three daughters Clara, Dorothy and Nora carried on a large business including a summer booth at Scugog Point and considerable tourist trade.

In 1946 Alan and Margaret Wilson purchased the general store and lake business, enlarged the store to include self service and with the help of their daughter Glenda operated successfully until April 1961, when they sold to Mr. and Mrs. Norman Mairs.

Mr. Mairs had been the storekeeper for less than a year when an early morning fire in November 1961 totally destroyed his



Invoice from A. H. Veale, general merchant dated at Nestleton, October 27, 1896 - One broom priced at 24c.



Alfred H. Veale's first store was little more than a lean-to attached to his shop.

Photo courtesy Doreen Van Camp, "Cartwright Revisited".



Photo of the interior of Veale's third general store, opened in 1907. Pictured from left, Mrs. Eleanor Veale, Mrs. John Veale, Ivy Veale and Alfred H. Veale.

Photo courtesy Doreen Van Camp, "Cartwright Revisited".



*Looking south along Nestleton Rd. with Veale's General Store, North Nestleton, about 1910, at left.*

North Nestleton store and residence. Mr. Mairs and his family escaped with little clothing, and all of their furnishings were lost.

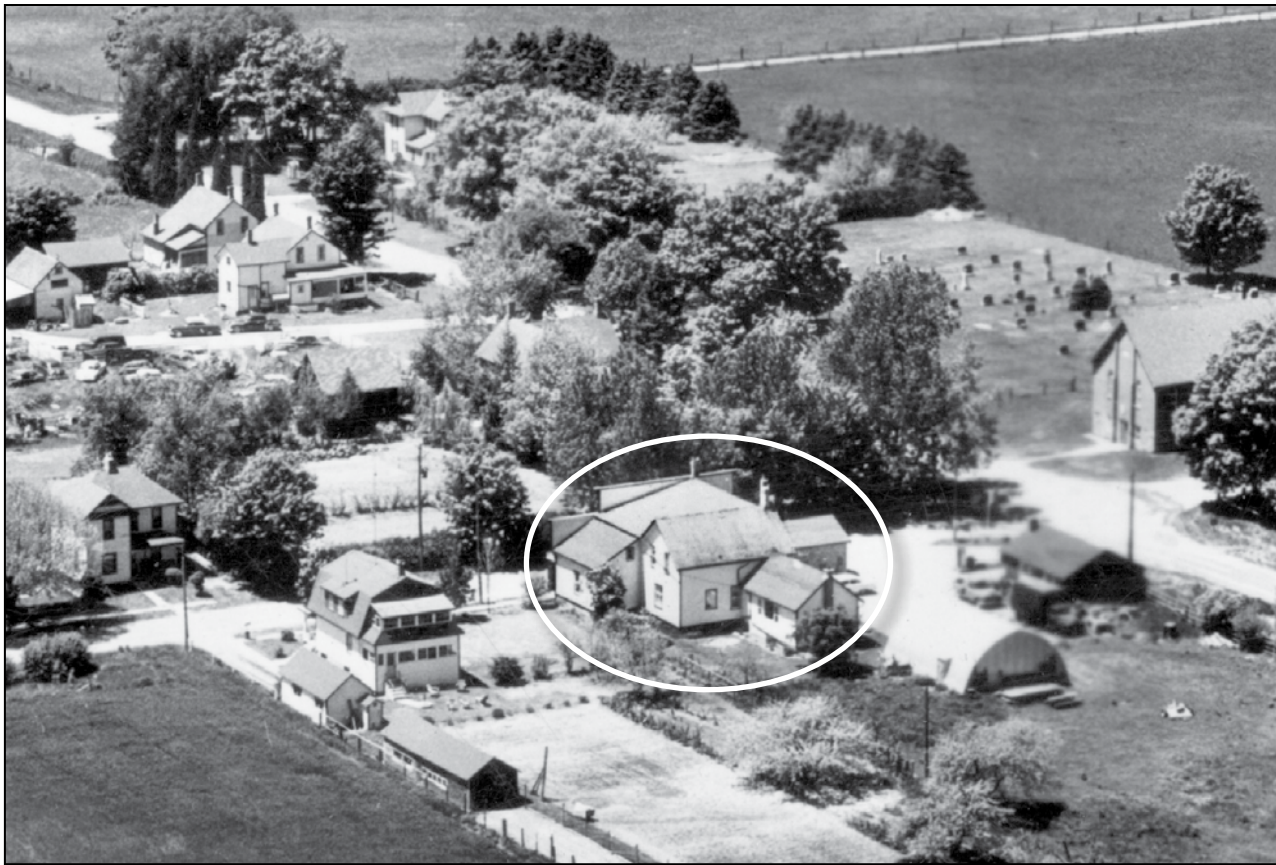
The community was shocked at the loss by fire of the large General Store at North Nestleton at 3 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 22nd. Mr. and Mrs. Norman Mairs wakened to smell smoke and hearing crackling noises, aroused their three children Allen, Diane and Robbie and escaped, still in their night attire, with what they could grab on the way out.



**Alan & Margaret Wilson**



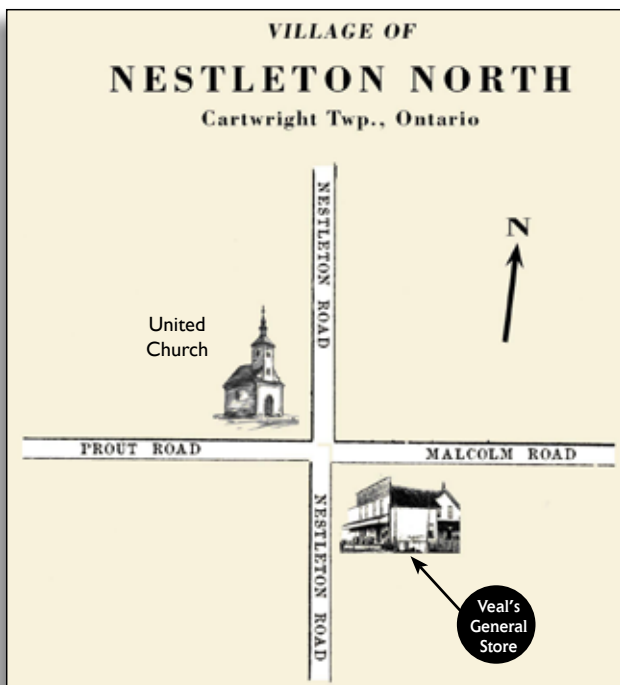
*Alan Wilson working in the North Nestleton general store, circa 1945.*



This aerial photo of North Nestleton, circa 1955, shows the rear of Veale's General Store (circled) on Nestleton Rd., across from the United Church and cemetery, (upper right).



**Norman Mairs**



Caesarea and Port Perry Fire Brigades arrived, also John Nesbitt with his large water tank but all had to concentrate on saving nearby buildings. Fortunately, there was little or no wind, and though Charlie Fallis' house was charred, no other buildings fell prey to flames.

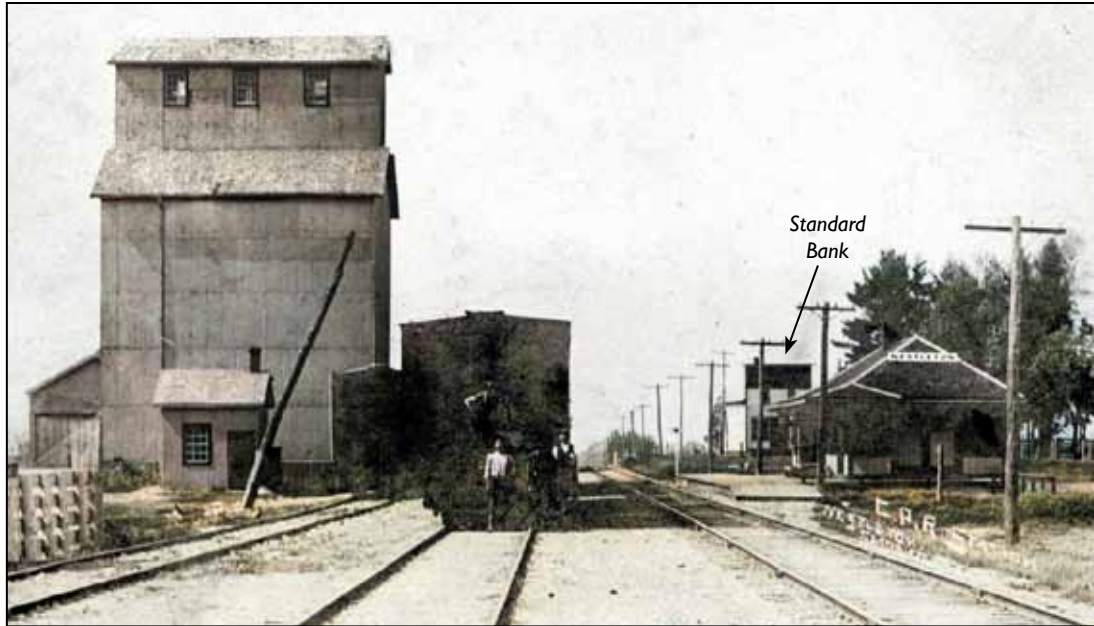
The family was taken in by neighbours and Norman's parents Mr. and Mrs. Eli Mairs.

A community collection was made and a benefit dance sponsored in Blackstock Hall to take care of immediate needs. They moved into the furnished half of Bert Gibson's.

Following the firm, another general store never was established in the small community of North Nestleton.

# Nestleton STATION

## GENERAL STORE



*In this picture of the Nestleton Railway Station and grain elevator, the bank building can be seen behind the railway station building. This is believed to have been the original general store constructed by William Porteus about 1907.*

**T**HE VILLAGE OF Nestleton Station, located on Hwy. 7A on the 7th concession of Cartwright Twp., was created after Canadian Pacific Railway built a branch line from Burketon to Bobcaygeon in 1904.

The first general store was built by William Porteus about 1907 on the north corner of the fledgling village. His new general mercantile store was 22'x 60' and it was also the location of the Nestleton the post office for a short time until it was relocated to the John J. Bruce store at Nestleton Station.

About a year after opening his store, Mr. Porteus sold the property to J. J. (John) Bruce. Mr. Bruce erected a new, large brick store and residence, from which he served the public as general merchant. During his ownership the store was the location for the post office until 1914 when Robert Dickey was appointed postmaster and the post office was moved from Mr. Bruce's store to Mr. Dickey's residence.

Foster Ferguson became the next owner of J. J. Bruce's general store. Exactly when Mr. Ferguson purchased the



*The store building and house built by William Porteus about 1907. The bank (above) was originally the home of Mr. Porteus' first general store at Nestleton Station and was later sold to Mr. J.J. Bruce, before being occupied by the Farmer's Bank and eventually the Standard Bank.*



A corner of the verandah of the J.J. Bruce Store, far right, can be seen in the picture of Nestleton Station, circa 1908. This building was destroyed by fire when owned and operated by Norman Mairs in 1961. Far left is the original general store, later used as a bank.

store is not known, but there is evidence he was the storekeeper as late as 1926.

The next owner is believed to have been Percy Edgerton. Once again there are no records of he purchased the store, but in December 1932 he advertised his general store business for sale. Just when, or whom, he sold the general store to is not known.

Names of other owners included a Mr. H. Bowin and Mr. M.J. Gray, who was the identified as the owner in 1947.

By the 1950s, the popular Nestleton general store was owned by Percy and Ada Leal. Tragedy struck in November that year when fire erupted in the store and the Leal residence.

The fire started just after midnight and in less than an hour the store had been completely destroyed by fire, despite the efforts of residents who formed bucket brigades until the Port Perry fire truck arrived to prevent the spread to nearby homes.

Everything in the store and residence was a total loss, including store inventory, furniture and personal possessions. Thankfully Ada Leal and her daughter Mrs. Ila Howe escaped uninjured. Mr. Leal was away at the time of the fire.



The former Country Store operated by J.J. Bruce, far right of photo, before it was destroyed by fire on the night of November 7, 1950.

# Nestleton STATION

## COUNTRY STORE



*Andrew James Marlow's hardware store at Nestleton Station, circa 1935.*

**F**OR A SHORT TIME it appears as if Nestleton Station was the location of two general stores. One of these was destroyed by fire in November 1950 (see *previous page*).

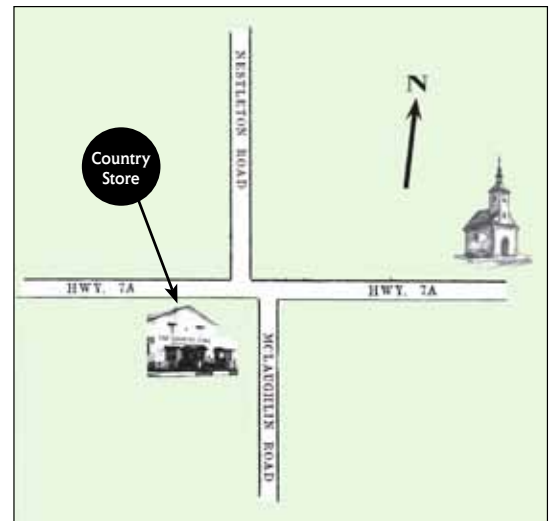
Records show that the local hardware store, built and operated by John Andrew Marlow later was converted into the Nestleton Country Store.

About a year after the death of Mr. Marlow, in January 1938, the building was sold to J.G. (Grant) Thompson who renovated the building and opened it as a general store. In addition to the store, Mr. Thompson also provided a cold storage plant, and served as the postmaster for Nestleton Post Office.

Five years later, in December 1944, Mr. Thompson decided to retire as a storekeeper and offered his 24'x45' brick store and an eight-room brick attached house for sale, for the sum of \$75,000. But it wasn't until March 1949 a sale was finalized.

Richard Davison and his wife Winnifred (Gist) moved to Nestleton in 1949 and bought the general store from Mr. and Mrs. Thompson. Here he formed a partnership with Mr. and Mrs. Charles Gist and operated the store under the business name of Davison & Gist until 1963.

The store changed hands again later that decade with Jim and Helen Lawrence taking over the village general store in December 1963. Until this time, the Lawrence's were the longest owners of the Nestleton store, spending more than 10 years



*Marylou and Peter Fitton took over the Country Store in June 1985.*

serving the local residents.

The next family to take over possession of the Nestleton Country Store and post office was Norman and Peg Johnstone in August 1973. They were followed by Peter and Marylou Fitton in 1985.

In September 1987, Mr. Fitton, who was negotiating a new contract with Canada Post, announced the future of the Nestleton Post Office was in doubt. He turned down what he felt was an unfair offer to operate the post office, which resulted the postal facility being moved to the front of Mark and Kathy Malcolm's Petro-Can gas station.



*Nestleton Country Store and post office, 1973.*

*Photo courtesy Doreen Van Camp, "Cartwright Revisited".*



*Nestleton Country Store, August 1994.*



# PRINCE ALBERT

## GENERAL STORE



*Prince Albert General Store and Post Office, circa 1910 when it was owned by James and Mary Holman. This is believed to be the original store erected by David Williams during the 1870s..*

*Photo courtesy Trish Holman*

**P**RINCE ALBERT was one of the first areas to be settled and transformed into a commercial hub for the northern part of the County of Ontario. The earliest known record of a general store being established comes in 1833, when it was reported that Prosper A. Hurd, opened a general store to supply residents with their needs.

By 1851 a census shows that not only was Mr. Hurd operating a general store, but there were two others in this small village of 200 people, run by Andrew Lang, an Oshawa merchant, and George Currie a local grain dealer.

Six years later in 1871, the census shows three general stores, with only one of the original owners, George Currie, still in business. Rice E. Eddy and



*James Gersham Holman*

Thomas C. Forman also operated general stores.

With the arrival of the railway to Port Perry in 1873, many of Prince Albert's businesses moved to the new commercial hub of the area, leaving the village with one general store.

The store (above) is reported to have been built by David L. Williams, a local resident who was both the circuit minister and superintendent of the local Sunday school.

It is believed that it was this building which became Prince Albert's general store and post office, although there is no record of him having ever become the storekeeper.

Mr. Williams leased his building to Charles Fallis about 1887. Three years later, while Mr. Fallis was operating the store, James G. Holman became the new owner of the property, but not the general store business.

Charles Fallis operated the business until he retired in October 1905, at which time Mr. Holman became the new storekeeper and postmaster for Prince Albert.

Mr. Holman and his wife Mary operated the general



*George Patterson, a Prince Albert resident who made his living as a painter, is seen here in his wagon in front of the Prince Albert store.*



*Young woman in front of the Prince Albert general store. She is believed to be Flora E. Holman, daughter of Gersham and Flora Holman.*



*An unidentified woman in a horse-drawn wagon sitting in front of the Prince Albert general store.*

*Photos courtesy Trish Holman*

Colourized photo by J. Peter Hvidsten



Prince Albert General Store, circa 1950 when it was owned by James and Leta Doupe. This is the same building as seen in older photographs on the opposite page.

store and the post office jointly from 1905 until his death in Feb. 1921. Following his death, Mary continued as the storekeeper and postmaster until 1923 before retiring.

Edward Williams, son of David Williams, the man who had erected the small building during the mid-1880s became the next owner of the store. He was appointed the new postmaster after purchasing the property and business from Mrs. Holman in 1923.

Mr. Williams was in business for about 20 years. He retired selling the property and business to Albert S. Harper in 1940. Ten years later, in March 1950, Mr. Harper sold the property to Laurine Beatrice Wilson. Ms. Wilson operated it for two years.

James and Leta Doupe were the next owners of the general store, purchasing it on July 25, 1952. After working eight years in the small facility, the Doupes constructed a new one storey building on an adjoining lot, just west of the original general store. James and Letta officially opened their new general store on August 25, 1960 under the business name of Carload Food Markets.

The Doupes operated the store until September 1966 when they turned the business over to their daughter Margaret Sweetman and her husband Ross. Under their ownership the business continued as a Carload Food Market, although locally it was best known as Sweetman's General Store.

The Prince Albert general store changed hands again



James and Leta Doupe, right, sold their Carload Food Market to their daughter Margaret, centre, and her husband Ross in September 1966. They operated the store jointly until it was purchased by the Tran family in 1973.



Wendy and Don Tran purchased and operated Trans General Store from June 1973 until Feb. 1976.



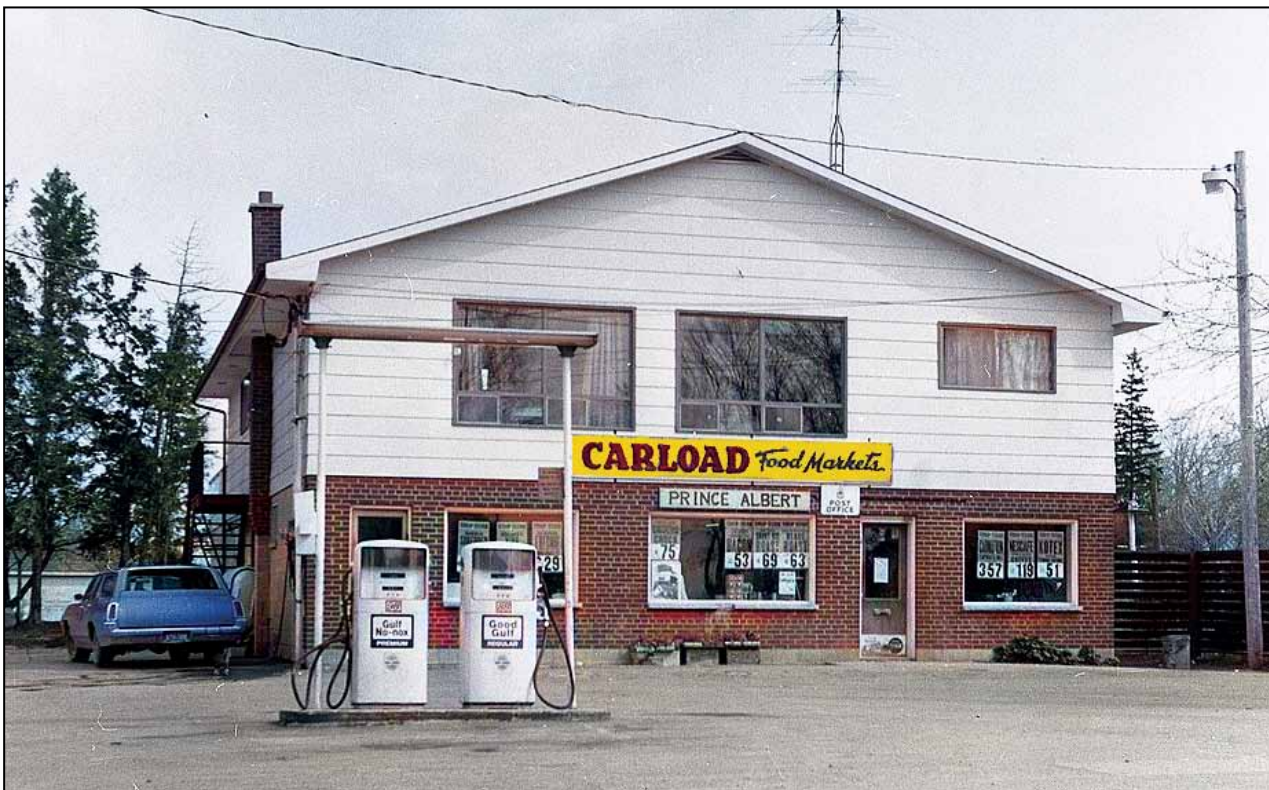
James and Leta Doupe's newly constructed Prince Albert "Shopping Centre" which officially opened on August 25, 1960 at the corner of Old Simcoe Rd. and King St. under the name Carload Food Market.

Photos courtesy the Port Perry Star.

**GRAND OPENING**

**CARLOAD**  
*Food Markets*

JAMES DOUPE, PRINCE ALBERT, ONTARIO, THURSDAY, AUGUST 25th. at 10 a.m.



Prince Albert General Store, post office, served Gulf gasoline. Seen here with a second floor apartment, circa 1975.

in June 1973, after being operated by the same family for 23 years. The new owners were Donald and Wendy Tran. This ownership only lasted 2 1/2 years before the Trans sold the business in February 1976 to Ed and Eileen Apsega and Herman and Carol Meijerink.

The Prince Albert store and post office has operated under a number of different owners until 2018 when Canada Post installed “super mailboxes” for the community. It wasn't long after the store lost the post office, it closed – ending more than a century as the village's only retail store.



Prince Albert General Store, post office, with a covered entrance, 2015.

## PRINCE ALBERT'S EARLIEST GENERAL STORE

Long before the best known Prince Albert general store was constructed, during the late 1870s, there were a number of well stocked general merchandise stores serving the public in this active and thriving village.

As mentioned earlier, Prince Albert was one of the first areas to be settled in the northern part of the County of Ontario. The first general store was established by Prosper Hurd about 1833.

Following Mr. Hurd a few years later, as Prince Albert began to emerge as an important grain centre, came Andrew Lang, George Currie, R.E. Eddy, Ross & Currie. All of these and more were important businesses in this growing community - that is, until the railway arrived in Port Perry in 1873.

Following are brief stories about the “general merchandise stores” that provided the dry goods, groceries, hardware and yes, even liquor to the growing population of Prince Albert.

### GEORGE CURRIE

In 1844, at 23-years of age, George Currie moved to Prince Albert from Oshawa to open a grain buying business. At the same time, he and his brother Mark opened a general merchandising business selling drygoods, liquors, wines and children's wear in the village. The two brothers dissolved their partnership as General Merchants in September 1861 with George continuing the business.

Later, George formed another partnership with Aaron Ross becoming one of the largest grain companies in the county, as well as respected clothing, hardware and grocery merchants.

During the early 1870s, business began to trickle out of Prince Albert, he cut his ties with the village and moved to Port Perry where he purchased a property on the north-east corner of Queen & Perry St. In 1872, he constructed an attractive two-storey brick building into which he moved general merchandise business.

### THOMAS FORMAN

Thomas Forman began his career in Canada as a teenager working for James Laing, one of Oshawa's most successful businessmen. Mr. Laing was so impressed with the young Forman's work ethic that he sent him to Prince Albert to open and operate the first grain merchant's store in 1845. During the 1850s and 1860s Mr. Forman became one of the larg-

**G. & M. CURRIE**  
OFFER TO THE PUBLIC A MAGNIFICENT  
ASSORTMENT OF GOODS,  
FOR THE YEAR 1897,  
SUITABLE TO THE SEASON,  
AT THEIR USUAL LOW PRICES!

**THE ASSORTMENT WAS NEVER MORE COMPLETE, AND PRICES ARE ADAPTED TO THE TIMES, MANY ARTICLES BEING LESS THAN TORONTO WHOLESALE RATES!**  
And in all cases as LOW as any in the County of Ontario.

The Stock consists of the usual Assortment of—  
**DRY-GOODS, READY-MADE CLOTHING,**  
MANTLES, SHAWLS,  
LADIES' FURS,  
FUR CAPS & GAINFLETS,  
BUCK MITTS & GLOVES, &c., in large quantities;  
RAISINS, CURRANTS, RICE,  
COFFEE, TEA, SUGAR, TOBACCO,  
CODFISH, HERRINGS, &c.;  
OIL, PAINTS, VARNISH,  
NAILS, GLASS,  
SHELF HARDWARE,  
CROCKERY, &c., &c.

Together with a general assortment of  
**LIQUORS, WINES, &c., &c.**  
—ALSO—  
LADIES' AND GENTS' RUBBER OVER-SHOES; LADIES' CLOTH, PRUNELLA AND ENAMELLED GAITERS; CHILDREN'S SHOES—MOROCCO AND CALF.

Prince Albert, December 10th, 1897.

Currie Bros. advertisement December 1957.

**NOT ONLY NEW GOODS!**

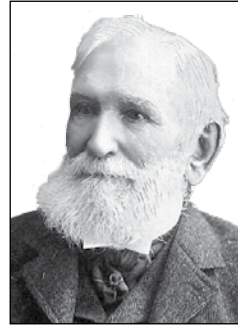
**New Goods, but Cheap Goods!**  
**TRA THE CHEAPEST GOODS,**  
AND THE  
BIGGEST LOT OF THEM. BY ALL ODDS.  
**DRY GOODS, GROCERIES,**  
**Crockery,**  **Hardware,**  
SALT, IRON, STEEL, &c., &c.,  
**CASH PAID FOR WHEAT,**  
*Oats, Peas, &c., &c.*  
THOMAS C. FORMAN.

Prince Albert, May, 1859.

Thomas C. Forman's advertisement, May, 1859.

est grain buyers in the area.

T.C Forman, as he became known, sold his merchandise and his store in Prince Albert in 1874 and moved his business to Port Perry where he opened one of the largest dry goods, grocery and hardware stores in the town.



THOMAS FORMAN

**ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR**

Archibald Sinclair was about 40 years old when he arrived in Reach Township, settling in Prince Albert and opening a store about 1861. His store, known as The Union, and he provided teas, coffees, seafoods, crockery and sold bottled wines, brandies, and ales "for medical use". Mr. Sinclair and his wife moved to Cannington during the 1870s, after only a short time in Prince Albert.

**WILLIAM WILLCOX**

William M. Willcox lived about 30 years in Reach Township, first in Prince Albert and later in Port Perry. Mr. Willcox opened "The Union" drug, grocery and liquor store during the mid-1860s and operated it successfully until April 1873 when a fire broke out in the entire block of stores on the north-east corner of Simcoe and King Street. Following the fire, and with most Prince Albert businesses moving to Port Perry, he decided not to rebuild and moved his business to Port Perry in October 1873. He later became an auctioneer.

**WILLIAM WIGHTMAN**

William Wightman entered the dry goods business of J. & W. Cowan in Toronto during the 1860s., and later opened a branch store in Prince Albert, appointing the young Wightman as manager. William became a respected merchant in the village, and in March 1868 he took over ownership of the Prince Albert store. Mr. Wightman continued to serve the residents of the village and Reach Township at his Prince Albert store until January 1873, when fire destroyed his place of business, along with four adjoining stores. He later moved to Port Perry to continue his business.

**TEAS THAT ARE TEAS**  
AT  
**A. SINCLAIR'S.**

The Subscriber has just received his Fall Stock of  
**Teas, Coffees, Currants, Almonds, Raisins, Codfish, Herrings, White Fish, Oysters, Lobsters, Sardines, Crockery, Table Cutlery, Coal Oil, and Lamp.**  
**WINES AND SPIRITS, &c.,**  
which he will Sell Cheap for Cash. ☞ Bottled Wines, Brandies, Ale and Porter for Medical use, kept constantly on hand.  
Prince Albert, Nov. 13, 1861. (48-1f) ARCH. SINCLAIR.

Archibald Sinclair advertisement, Nov. 1861.

**THE UNION**  
**DRUG, GROCERY!**  
AND  
**Liquor Store!**

**W. M. WILLCOX,**  
Sign of the Pestle and Mortar—opposite Scott's Hotel.  
**PRINCE ALBERT!**

Invites the special attention of the public to their extensive newly imported Stock of the BEST BRANDS of PURE LIQUORS, consisting of Brandy,—Gin, Holland and Old Tom—Wines, Port, Sherry, &c.—Rum—Whisky, Malt and Old Eye—John Bull Bitters, &c.

A large and well selected Stock of Fresh Groceries of superior quality. ☞ Our Teas can't be beat! Try them! We guarantee that for excellence in quality, and moderation in price they cannot be beat in North Ontario.

A choice lot of Tobaccos, Spices, Pickles, Sauces, &c.

PURE DRUGS, wholesale and retail. Also the best qualities of Chemicals, Dye Stuffs, Paints, Oils and Varnishes. Thoroughly reliable Patent Medicines.

☞ Books and Stationery.

Liquors for medicinal purposes carefully selected.

Everything in Stock is of superior quality and will be sold at the lowest remunerative Prices.

Remember the place opposite Scott's Hotel, Prince Albert.  
W. M. WILLCOX.  
Prince Albert, Dec. 30, 1869. 36

William Willcox advertisement, Dec. 1869.

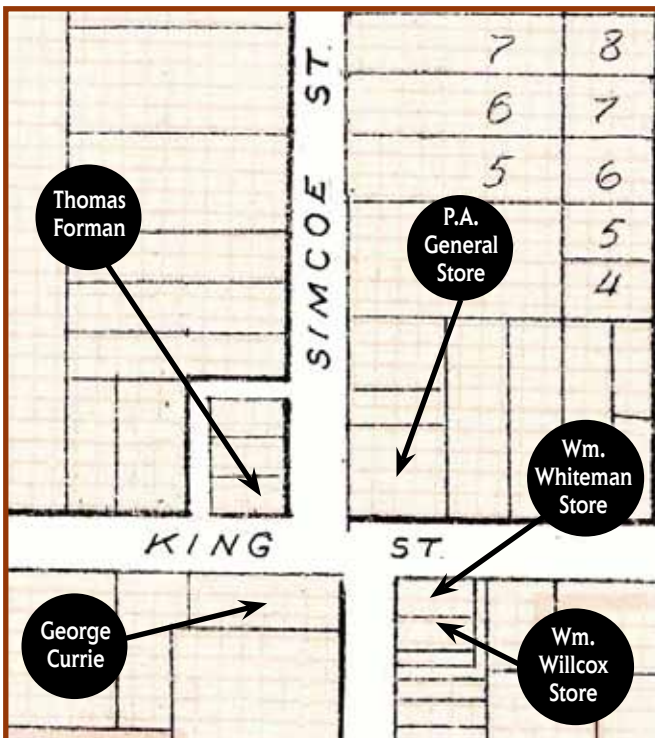
**GOOD LIQUORS!!**  
AT  
**W. M. Wightman's,**  
**PRINCE ALBERT.**

The inhabitants of Reach and surrounding townships are respectfully informed that the Subscriber has added a

**Choice Stock of Liquors**  
to his Dry Goods and Grocery Store, where purchasers will find the very best Brands at the lowest possible rates.

Don't forget  
**W. M. WIGHTMAN'S**  
New Store,  
Prince Albert.  
PRINCE ALBERT, June 24, 1873.

Wm. Wightman, advertisement, July 1873



Approximate locations of general store in Prince Albert, 1860s, 1870s

# RAGLAN

## GENERAL STORE



Ross General Store was located on the northwest side of Simcoe at Alma St. (Raglan Rd.), circa 1890.

Photo courtesy of Wendy Duke

**D**URING THE MID-1850s the pioneer village of Raglan boasted two hotels, carriage maker, blacksmith shop, dry goods store and a flouring mill. The village, though small, also supported two general stores - one operated by Thomas Hodgson, and a second Philip Ranous.

Mr. Ranous was 41 years old when he and his wife Sarah arrived in Raglan where he purchased a one-third acre of land in August 1855. Here he built a crude building and opened a small general store, where he became the first storekeeper and postmaster for the hamlet.

About the same time, another young man, 22 year-old Thomas Hodgson, had grown tired of working on a farm and opened a second store in Raglan. Mr. Thomas was ambitious and he built an extensive business selling groceries, hardwares and dry goods, as well venturing into the liquor trade.

The two men worked side-by-side competing for business from the village's small population of about 100 residents for more than a decade before tragically Thos. Hodgson passed away in November 1869. He was only 34 years of age.



Portrait of Philip Ranous as an older man.



Looking south on Main Street, with Raglan's two general stores on the west side of the street.

Less than two years later, about 1871 Mr. Ranous and his family closed his store in Raglan and moved to Oshawa. Thus ending the reign of Raglan's two pioneer storekeepers.

Less than a decade later records show Raglan had grown to a community of more than 100 people, and it had three general stores. Thomas Cooper, Thomas Hodgson, and Loren Foster, who was the postmaster.

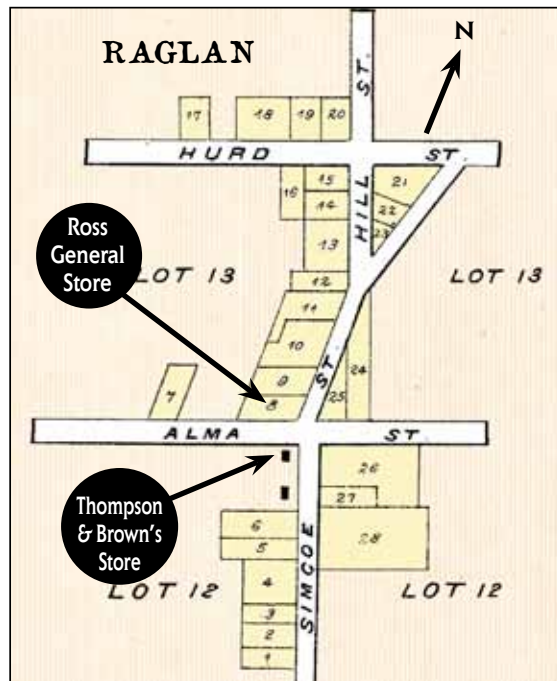
By 1885 Raglan had a population estimated at 150 people, of which Thomas Cooper and William Willard were the proprietors of the local general stores. Ten years later, ownership of the two general stores had changed hands, with Thomas Dawson proprietor of one store, and Mr. Ross and Mr. E. Welbourne who served the village until the mid-1890s.

Ownership continued to take place, and during the early 1900s, it was David Thompson who operated a general store, and served as postmaster. He sold his business in August 1922 to Edward Lyle but just a few years later, Mr. Thompson returned and resumed ownership of his Raglan store.

In addition to Thompson's business, there was a second general store in the village during the 1920s operated by William Kellington. It's not known how long he was in business, but he sold his store, located on the southwest corner of Simcoe St., in the centre of the village to Henry S. Cool in December 1930.

Mr. Cool had been in business for just a little over a year, when in January 1931 his general store, its contents and his residence were all destroyed by fire. Devastated by the loss, Mr. Cool decided not to rebuild.

Meanwhile David Thompson, now with the only gen-



Looking north along Simcoe St., Raglan, circa 1900, with the two general stores on the left.





*D. Thompson General Merchant store was located on the southwest corner of Simcoe at Alma St. (Raglan Rd.), circa 1890.*

*Photo courtesy of Wendy Duke*



*Looking north on Simcoe St., Raglan, circa 1900. First building on left was D. Thompson's store (1920s) and Roy Brown's store during the 1950s. The building further along the road was operated by William Kellington (1920s), but was later destroyed by fire.*



*Roy Brown's General Store as it looked circa 1960. The store was located on the southwest corner of Simcoe at Alma St. and it was formerly occupied by David Thompson until 1946.*

*Photo courtesy of Mable Wray-Mantel*

eral store in the village, continued to provide service to his community, and expanded his business in 1932 by installing a "City Service" gas tank in front of his general store.

David Thompson passed away in September 1946, but the family continued to operate the store after his death until September 1949 when Mr. L. Willison, of Oshawa purchased the Raglan store.

It appears Mr. Willison's venture lasted only a couple of years before Roy Brown became the owner. Mr. Brown assumed ownership of the general store in March 1951 and it became known locally as Roy Brown's General Store.

Roy and his wife Katharine operated Raglan's only general store until his death in October 1978

In October 1987 Les Brown and Lorraine Bray opened Raglan Variety store. Les grew up in Raglan and their variety store was located on the opposite corner of Roy Brown's former general store. It has not been determined how long this store was in business.

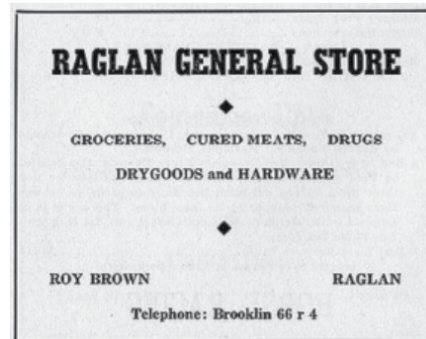


*Lorraine Bray and Les Brown opened the Raglan Variety Store in October 1987.*

Since 1988 this small village has been serviced by the Shillings family of Raglan, who opened White Feather Farms country store in March 1988. The country store is owned and operated by Liz Shillings.

The Shillings family are not strangers to the community, having operated their White Feather chicken farm for many years.

The Shilling's White Feather country store has continuously served Raglan's residents and neighbouring communities for the past 35 years.



*Raglan Genral Store ad 1952.*



*Members of the Schillings family, Karen, Liz and Maria, at the opening of White Feather Farms country store in March 1988.*

# SAINTFIELD

## GENERAL STORE

**S**AINTFIELD WAS SETTLED about 1860, and was described as being 23 miles north of Whitby and three miles south of Wick, on the Midland Division of the Grand Trunk Railway, which was the village's nearest railway station. The nearest bank to the village was nine miles south in Port Perry.

As early as 1869, this primarily farming district, had grown to a community of more than 125 persons, with a variety of commercial enterprises. The village boasted a hotel, blacksmith, butcher, general store, shingle maker, and even a shoemaker.

Donald McKay appears to have been one of the first men to operate a general store in this small hamlet. Records show him being a merchant by 1869, as well as the local postmaster.

Mr. McKay took a keen interest in his community, operating his store and post office until 1890, when he was appointed treasurer of the County of Ontario, and moved to Whitby, Ontario.

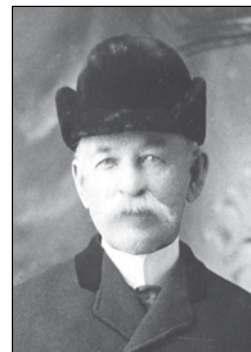
William McCracken, an experienced and respected merchant in Sonya, jumped at the opportunity to rent Donald McKay's general store. He moved into his Saintfield store in June 1890 and assumed the position of postmaster, but less than a year after moving to the village, he resigned as postmaster and returned to Sonya.

Samuel Baird, a shoemaker by trade, purchased Donald McKay's property in 1895, later expanding it into a general store. He became Saintfield's new postmaster, but continued his craft of making and repairing shoes. He served the community for 18 years as a merchant and postmaster, before retiring in December 1910.

Robert Braden became the next owner of Mr. Baird's store, purchasing it in November 1911. Mr. Braden was appointed the postmaster for the village in and served in that capacity until 1914 when the post office was removed from his establishment.

Despite no longer having the post office, Mr. Braden continued to operate his general store until a devastating fire in November 1922 destroyed his building, its contents, an adjacent garage and his car. The location of this store has not been determined.

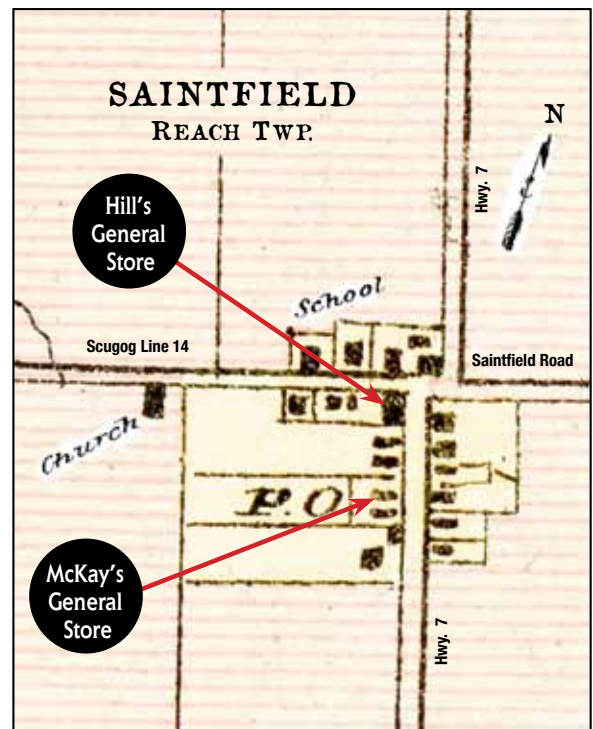
Following the fire Mr. Braden decided not to rebuild, and moved to Haliburton where he entered the lumber business.



Donald McKay



Samuel Baird



Map of the Village of Saintfield shows the number of buildings located there in 1877. Arrows points to locations of the village general stores. P.O. is the post office at McKay's store.

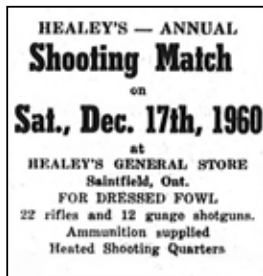


The Saintfield General Store, 2021, after it had been closed for many years. It was located at the corner of Hwy. 12 and Scugog Line 14. The last owners of the store were Bill and Jackie Hill who closed it in 1984.

No record of a Saintfield general store can be found between 1922 and 1926, at which time Garnet Ross and Irene Healey arrived and became the next storekeepers. It's unclear whether the Healeys built a new building to house the store, or if they purchased an existing building. In addition to her duties at their store, Mrs. Healey, who was a nurse, provided in-home nursing care to the sick and elderly throughout the district.

Healey's store also became the location to cast votes during municipal elections, and an annual Shooting Match, which was held in the Healey's heated shooting quarters.

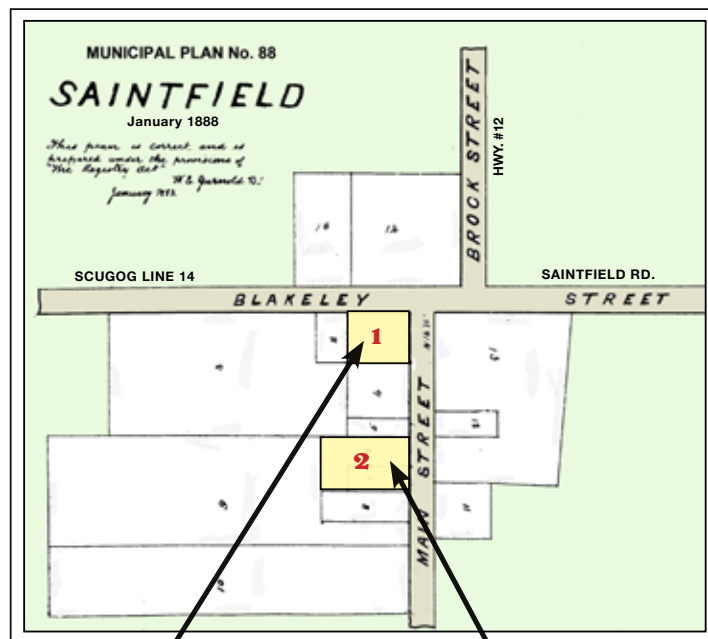
The Healey's served the community jointly for 32 years, until the death of Mr. Healey in July 1958. Following his death, Irene continued for another five years, but with failing health she retired and sold the store in October 1963.



Bill and Jackie Hill became the next owners of the store which became known locally as Hill's General Store. Residents recall that the store became the hub of the community, a place where local residents would gather and socialize.

The Hill's operated the Saintfield store for almost 20 years, before retiring from business and closing the doors in 1984, leaving the hamlet without a general store.

After years of neglect, the building became dangerous and in December 2023 the former Saintfield general store was demolished.



**Notable Owners  
General Store #1**

~

- Ross & Irene Healey  
1926-1963
- Bill & Jackie Hill  
1963-1984

**Notable Owners  
General Store #2**

~

- Donald McKay  
1869-1890
- Samuel Baird  
1895-1910
- Robert Braden  
1911-1922

# SCUGOG ISLAND

## GENERAL STORE

Colourized by J. Peter Hvidsten

Photo courtesy Erin Hayward



Date of this picture of the Scugog Island general store is not known, but estimated to be circa 1900 when operated by John Jackson. The store was located on the left side of the building and their residence on the right.

**AS CAN BE SEEN** on the illustration below, the earliest record of the 200 acre property on which a small section later became the location of the Scugog Island general store, was owned by Benjamin French. The large property changed hands a number of times until it was purchased by Isaac Orchard about 1855.

Rev. Frank G. Weir's book "Scugog And Its Environs" suggests that during the 1860s there were about four of buildings on the corner (see map opposite page). On the very corner stood a building that was spoken of as a hotel/tavern operated by John Dwyer. Next to it there was a residential home, then a blacksmith shop owned by Joe Tyrrel and then James Gordon's store

Mr. Orser purchased the corner property with the intention of opening a bar in the building referred to as the Scugog Hotel, but the township council refused to grant him a license.

About 1861 Isaac Orser sold a 3/4 acre parcel of land with the building to James Gordon, after which it became known as Gordon's corner. There was a large room over the hotel, often referred to as Gordon's Hall, which was used for Scugog council meetings and court sessions for several years.

The property changed hands again in 1864, this time being purchased by William Farewell. Three years later, Mr. Farewell sold the property to Isaac Finley and it quickly became known as Finley's Hall (see ad opposite page).

**NOTICE**  
**I** HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE FIRST  
 Meeting of the  
**COURT OF REVISION,**  
 For the purpose of Revising the Assessment Roll of the Township of Scugog, will be held on  
**SATURDAY, MAY 30, 1863,**  
 AT  
**Mr. Gordon's Hall!**  
 At the hour of ten o'clock, a. m.  
**JOHN FOY,**  
 Township Clerk.  
 Scugog, April 28, 1863. 20-3w

Gordon's Hall, Scugog Island 1863.



**NOTICE!**  
 It is hereby given that the first sitting of the Court of Revision to revise the Assessment Roll for the Township of Scugog, For the year 1868, will sit at **MR. I. FINLEY'S HALL, SCUGOG,** ON **SATURDAY, THE 23rd DAY OF MAY,** At one o'clock p. m., of which all persons interested are hereby required to take notice and govern themselves accordingly.  
**JOHN FOY,**  
 Township Clerk.  
 Scugog, April 22, 1868. 16-td

*Finley's Hall, Scugog Island 1868.*

*This 1877 map of Scugog Island shows the locations (circled) of the Scugog Island general store, a hotel, blacksmith and home on Island Road.*

It was Mr. Finley who recognized a need for a general store on the Island and in August 1872 he established a store which provided groceries and dry goods for Island residents. Finley also became the first postmaster for the Island. Mr. Finley sold his business to local auctioneer J.C. Pilkey two years later but retained ownership of the property.

In 1876, nine years after purchasing the property, Isaac Finlay sold the property and business to James Sweetman and John Burke. The two men carried on the business for about 10 years with Mr. Sweetman becoming the postmaster, while Mr. Burke attended to the general store business.

**J. C. PILKEY,**  
**Licensed Auctioneer**  
 FOR THE  
**TOWNSHIPS OF REACH AND BROCK.**

*J.C. Pilkey advertisement, 1867.*

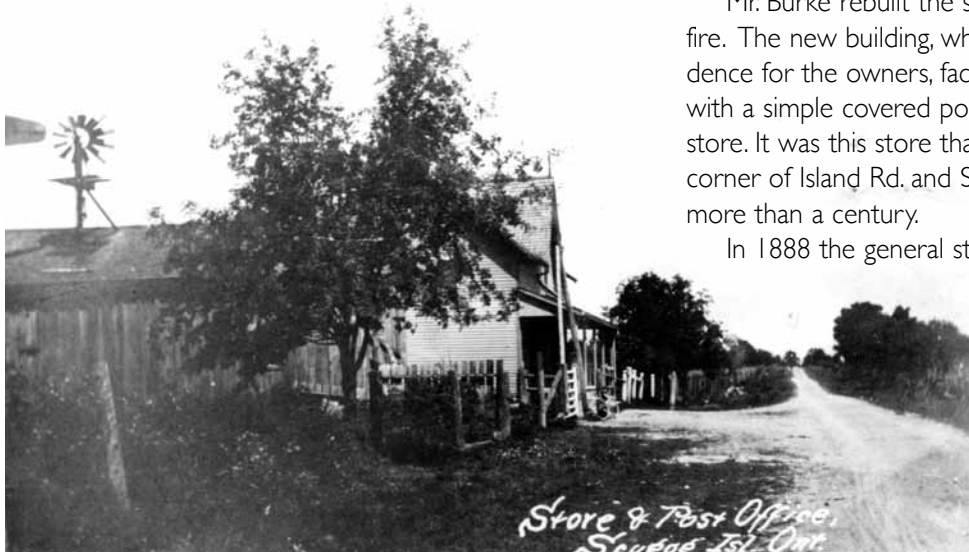
With every change of ownership, the meeting hall above the store became known by the new owners name. Under this ownership it became Sweetman's Hall.

John Burke became the sole owner of the store, but tragedy struck in the fall of 1886 when the building was destroyed by fire.

Mr. Burke rebuilt the store immediately after the fire. The new building, which also served as a residence for the owners, faced onto Scugog Island Rd., with a simple covered porch as the entrance to the store. It was this store that stood on the northwest corner of Island Rd. and Seven Mile Island Rd. for more than a century.

In 1888 the general store changed hands again.

John Burke sold the property and store to Alex and Mary Jane Earle who operated it until 1891 when they sold to John Jackson.



*Circa 1910 picture looking north, of Scugog Island store, facing out onto Island Road*



**John L. Sweetman**



*John L. Sweetman in front of his delivery truck, circa 1945.*

Mr. Jackson became one of the longest owners of the general store and the post office, operating it successfully for 20 years. After deciding to move to Greenbank, Mr. Jackson sold the property in February 1912 to John Joblin, a well respected retired pastor of the Methodist church on Scugog Island. Mr. Joblin and his family were popular on the Island and they served the local residents for more than 20 years.

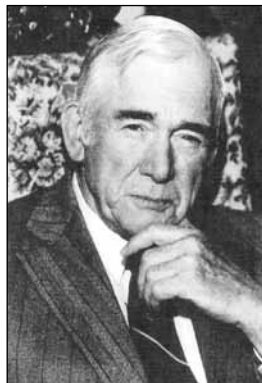
John L. Sweetman and his wife Mabel were the next operators of the store, purchasing it about 1937. They made a good living selling food and operating the post office for about eight years.

While under their ownership of the store was operated under the "Red & White" banner and they also became the Island's postmasters. In addition to the general store, they also took on the local agency for Imperial gas and oil products.

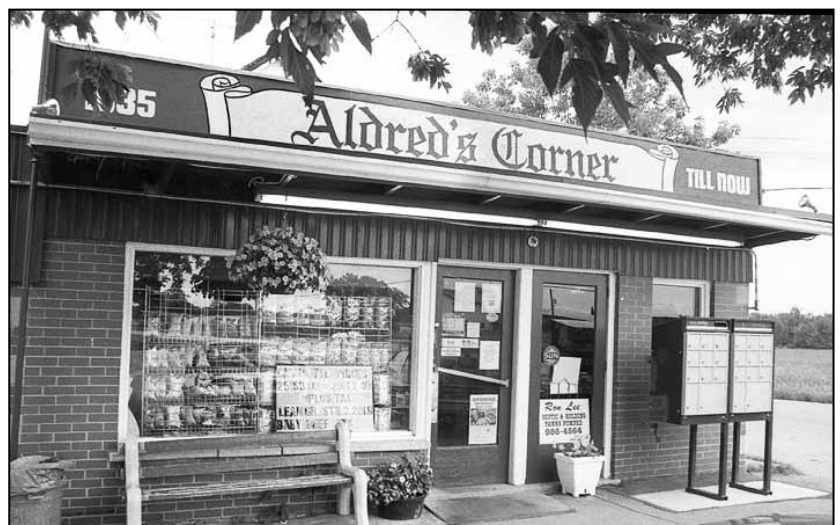
Throughout the next half century their



*Harold Archer's snow plough stops at the Red & White general store on Scugog Island about 1939, when it was owned by the Sweetmans. Pictured with the truck are Ross Prentice, left, and Don Anderson.*



**Joel Aldred**



*Aldred's Corner store, Scugog Island about 1994.*



*After Aldred's Corner was sold to Bon-Hyung and Jung-He YU in 1998, the name of the store was changed to "Scugog Island General Store".*

were multiple owner of this important Scugog Island store. Samuel Arnold purchased the store from the Sweetman's for \$5,000 in 1945. Seven years later Alfred and Muriel Eden became the next owner, purchasing it in 1952 for \$8,200. "Alf" as he was best known, and his wife operated the store and post office until 1973.

After more than a century of being owned by independents, the Island's only store was sold to a large corporation. Mac's Milk Ltd. Co. Mac's Milk operated a chain of convenience stores across Canada, but only operated the Scugog Island store for about a year before selling to long-time Island resident Joel W. Aldred.

About a year after taking over the store, Mr. Aldred undertook a complete renovation of the store and re-opened the store in July 1976 under the name

"Aldred's Corner". After almost 25 years as owner of the property, Mr. Aldred retired from business July 1998 and sold the store to Bon-Hyung and Jung-He Yu.

The Scugog Island store's final owner was Jeff Gotthelf who operated under "Jeff's Centre Island Store". The century-old general store was purchased by the Mississaugas of Scugog Island January 2017 and after more than a century serving the residents of the Island, its doors were closed.

The new owners opened the Minisi Convenience/ Arts & Craft store a short distance north of the old general store, across from the Great Blue Heron Casino in August 2017, and after receiving permission from the township, the former Scugog Island store was removed.



*Jeff's Centre Island Store as it looked until 2017, when it was purchased by the Mississaugas of Scugog Island and later removed from the site.*



# SEAGRAVE GENERAL STORE



*A wagon pulls up in front of the Seagrave General Store, in this circa 1885 post card photograph.*

**A FEW MILES** north of Port Perry, nestled in a picturesque valley beside the Nonquon river, is the community of Seagrave.

Records show that before being named Seagrave, the village was known as Sonya, but this changed in 1861 when the post office and the “village name” was moved a mile north to the present day Sonya.

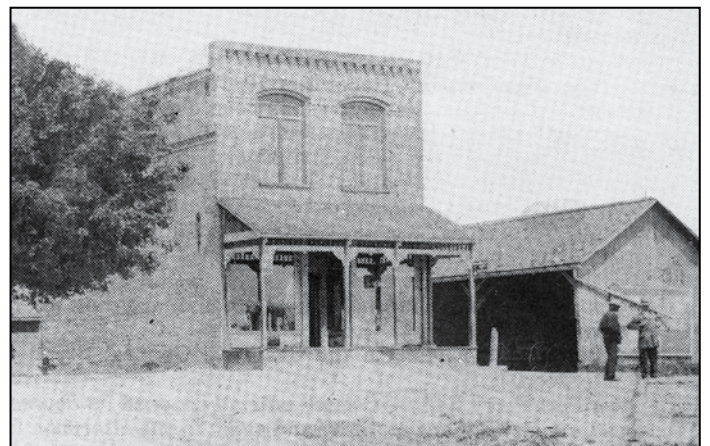
The earliest known record shows that in 1873 a post office was re-opened under the name Seagrave. Abraham O’Coryell (Coryell) became the first postmaster and served in that post until 1877.

Most often post offices were operated from a general store, although this cannot be verified due to the earliest census for the village was not published until 1882. At this time, Robert Thompson was listed as the proprietor of a general store in the village of Seagrave. A second general store was being operated by a Mr. John Allin.

Robert Thompson and his family arrived in

Seagrave about 1880, and he began his career as a general store merchant working from a small frame building which also served as their residence on the upper floor. He is said to have fitted up a room on the ground floor about 10’ x 12’ for his store, and used the upper floor for living apartment. From that small beginning he built up a successful business.

About 1902 he constructed a new two-store brick building on the same site and his business grew to be one of



*Post card photograph of the Seagrave store, 1913.*

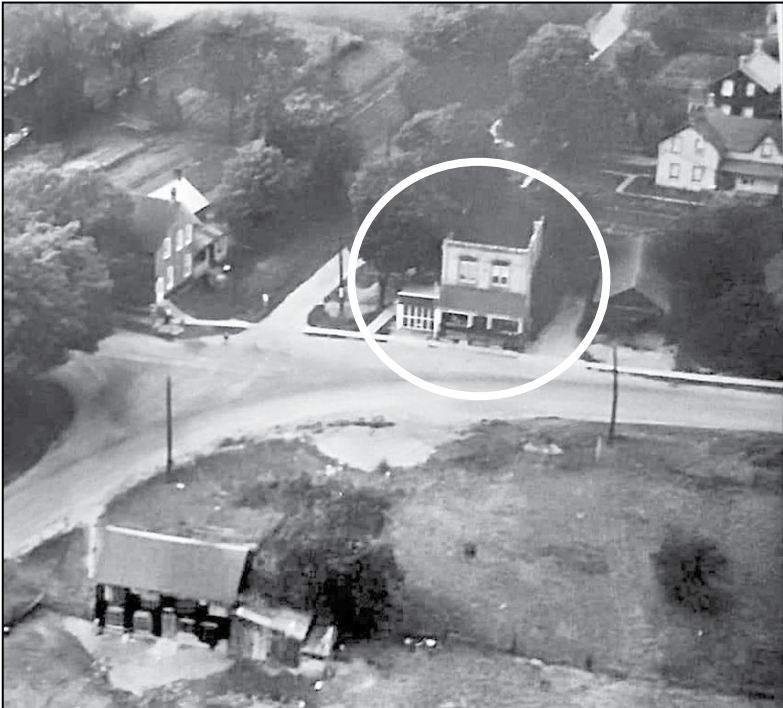
the best general stores in that part of the country. The building is still on the site today.

Thompson's general store also served as the post office, and Robert became the longest serving postmaster in the area, serving the position 21 years, from 1887 to 1908 when he resigned.

Mrs. Milton Stone, a long time resident of Seagrave recalled during an interview in 1975, that other early owners of the store included Fred Hawkins, Wes Crozier, a Mr. Wooldridge and Orville J. Boe.

When Orville Boe purchased the business in 1944, he served the community of Seagrave area for 14 years before he sold it to Mr. Jerry Barnes, a Toronto man, who only spent three years in the village.

Long-time Seagrave residents Bert and Gertrude Wanamaker took over in 1961,



View of the village of Seagrave from this aerial photograph taken about 1950. The Seagrave General Store can be seen (circled) near the intersection of the road, in the centre of the village.



Map of the Village of Seagrave, 1877.



Bert and Gertrude Wanamaker, left, are seen handing over the keys to the Seagrave store in July 1975. The new owners were Mrs. Dorothy Massel and her nephew George Giles.



Right - Wayne and Pam Wanamaker are seen here not long after taking ownership of the Seagrave General Store. Wayne is a grandson of Bert and Gertrude Wanamaker. After taking over they reinstated the name "Wanamaker's General Store" in a large sign on the front of the building.

and through diligent work and the best possible service, they created a good reputation among their many customers and friends. The popular owners of the Seagrave store made the decision to retire in July 1975 after serving their community for 14 years.

Dorothy Massel and her nephew George Giles, relatively newcomers to the village, were the next to assume ownership of this important store in the village of Seagrave.



**Gertrude and Bert Wanamaker.**

Mrs. Massel lived above the store, and Mr. Giles and his family resided in a home in Mariposa Estates. Mrs. Massel later operated the store with Gloria Wallace. Due to poor health the store was sold to Robert Bruce in September 1983.

The family of Robert Bruce were long-time Seagrave area residents, and he owned the store for about six years before selling it to Martin Fisher in 1989. Mr. Fisher became very interested in the history of Seagrave during his ownership, and collected dozens of pictures, which he enlarged and kept in an album at the store.

In December 1997, the general store changed hands again, this time returning to a member of the Wanamaker family. Wayne



*Bert & Gertrude, July 1975, in front of Wanamaker's General Store, when they retired after 14 years as owners of the store.*

Wanamaker, who purchased the store, was a grandson of Bert and Gertrude Wanamaker owners of the store for many years during the 1960s and 1970s.

Wayne and his wife Pam assumed ownership of the store, and moved into the large apartment above the business with their three children. Wayne admitted he never dreamed of owning the store, and recalled working for his grandparent when he was a young man.

Unfortunately the Wanamakers were unable to make a success of the business, and were forced to close the store in 2001.

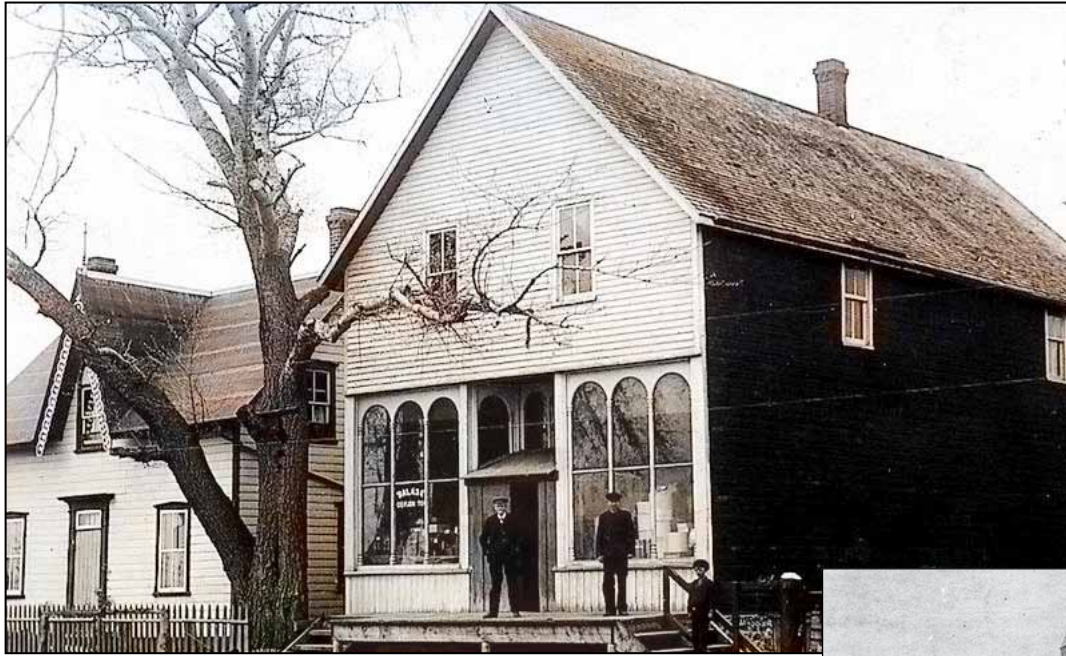
The store did open temporarily under at least one other ownership, but has sat vacant for the past number of years.



*Wanamaker's General Store, Seagrave, in 1999, when owned and operated by Wayne and Pam Wanamaker*

# SONYA

## GENERAL STORE



*The Sonya General Store, and residence about 1920. It was located beside the Sonya Presbyterian Church (right). The store and home were destroyed by fire in 1959.*



**S**ONYA WAS A SMALL HAMLET of only 80 people in 1864, but it was a bustling little settlement with a Presbyterian Church, two taverns, two saw mills, a wagon and carriage manufacturer, two blacksmiths and a flour and grist mill.

Lewis Harper arrived in Sonya, when he was only 30 years old, but before long he became one of the most successful men in the hamlet. This enterprising young man constructed a large frame building in the centre of the village which became his hotel, general store and post office. Here he served as postmaster, chief storekeeper, and hotel proprietor.

Among the other men to serve as a general store owners, between 1871 and 1893 were, William McCracken and Samuel Wesley McClung.

Wm. McCracken began as a school teacher in 1871, but entered into the mercantile business about 1875. He became keeper of the Sonya general store. Two years after opening his store, he began an expansion of his place of business, constructing a new storehouse, to the east side of the store.

Mr. McCracken, carried on the general store business successful for more than two decades, and became a very successful and respected merchant in the district. In fact one resident praised him as being one of the most reliable and successful businessmen in the County of Ontario.

Quite suddenly after 20 years in Sonya, Mr. McCracken was offered an opportunity to take over the business of Donald McKay at Saintfield. It was a quick decision and he didn't hesitate. In June 1890 he purchased the business and moved to the village of Saintfield

S. Wesley McClung, a merchant from Blackstock, Ont., purchased the Sonya store in November 1893, with plans to move to the community in January the following year.



*The Sonya general store, partially hidden behind the tree, with a group of well dress residents gathered in front.*

Mr. McClung became a valued member of the village, and operated his general store until his death in January 1914. Following his death his business and residence was offered for sale.

No record has been located of the Sonya general store being sold, nor the ownership of the building for the next 30 years.

Finally in early 1950, the first hint of a new owner is revealed. Harry Muckle is believed to have arrived in Sonya in the early 1950s, after serving as the postmaster in Bethany for a number of years.

After taking over the business in 1953, he took on the franchise of Star Sales Stations to provide petro for local owners of cars. (*This could have been the Red Star Gasoline Station*).

Mr. Muckle stayed only a few years before selling his general store to Mr. and Mrs. Day. Unfortunately for the Day family, a day before Christmas in 1959 the general store and adjoining residence were destroyed by fire, leaving the family of five children homeless.

Fire departments arrived from Little Britain, Sunderland and Port Perry, and were able to save the entire hamlet of 15 houses from going up in smoke.

Sonya lost its only general store that day in 1959 and there has never been another store opened in the hamlet.

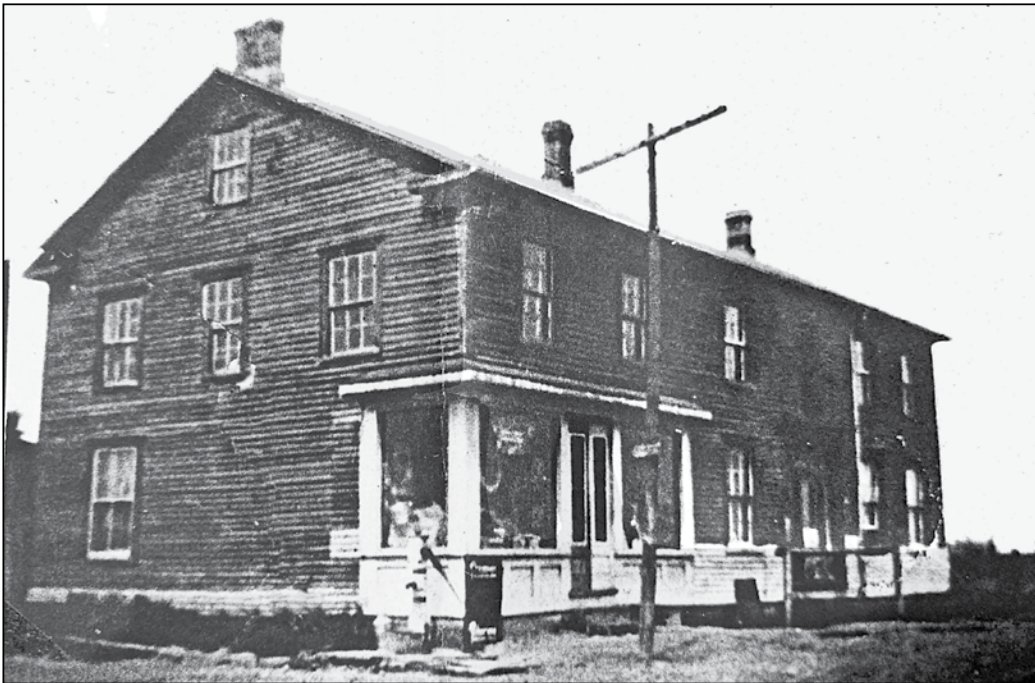


*The Sonya general store, centre, partially hidden behind the tree, with a group of well dress residents. The Presbyterian Church can be seen at far right, and a quaint white home with white picket fence to the left*

*Photo courtesy Larry Doble, Curator Sunderland Museum*

# UTICA

## GENERAL STORE



*The earliest known photograph of the Dafoe House, Utica's hotel and general store, circa 1900.*

*Photo courtesy Scugog Shores Museum Village & Archives*

**T**HE DAFOE HOUSE, Utica was a busy and popular place throughout the mid to late 1800s, catering to the travelling public as well as providing a gathering place in the village for special occasions, political meetings and events.

The hotel is believed to have been built about 1855, possibly by Joseph Cloughton, who was listed as a hotel keeper in the village as early as 1857. The hotel, located centrally in the village on a corner property, was owned by John S. Sproul, a Cannington businessman as early as 1862.

Jacob Dafoe was 24 years old in 1864 when he and his wife Jane arrived in Reach Twp. Before settling in Utica, he had worked as a farm labourer, in Markham. Jacob married Jane Berry in Stouffville when he was 22 years old, and the couple moved to Reach, where he accepted a job at the local hotel.

Two years later, Jacob was given an opportunity to purchase the business and become the hotelkeeper. He accepted the offer and renamed the hotel the Dafoe House. After managing the hotel for a year, John Sproul sold the hotel and property to the young man for £500, the equivalent of about \$766.



*A similar view of the Utica Hotel & General Store (above) and how the historical old building looked more an a century later, in July 2022.*

Jacob and Jane operated the hotel for the next six years and in that time established the hotel as one of the best in the township. Surprisingly, in August 1873, at the age of 35 years, Jacob decided to retire from the hotel business and advertised his hotel, store and comfortable dwelling for sale.

He described the hotel as being a profitable business, comfortable and commodious, and country store adjoining the hotel was well established and included the hamlet's post office. The sale also included all of the property's outbuildings, driving sheds, stables and barns. A few years earlier there had been two small hotels near the village, but Jacob proclaimed at the time of the sale that there was no other stores or hotels in the village.

The Dafoes were unsuccessful in selling his property, so he and his wife settled into the community and continued to operate the hotel, store and post office. Their general store was packed with products for the residents of the surrounding area. Some of the many products they carried included dry goods, groceries, dairy products boots, shoes, clothes, materials and hardware.

The *Ontario Observer* reported in 1880 - "Jacob Dafoe, post-master and general merchant is doing a comfortable and thriving business. In no way cramped for funds, he is enabled to offer his customers such bargains as cannot be surpassed for quality and prices. The Dafoe House continues to be run on the reliable principle of the first class country hotel and is a credit to the village of Utica."

Despite their popularity in the community, the Dafoes attempted to retire again in September 1884, offering for sale by auction their property, including Dafoe hotel, general store and residence. Once again they were unsuccessful, and four years later Jacob gave notice to creditors of an assignment of his stock and book debts.



James Buck

After the assignment it appears as if Jacob took on a number of jobs. He became a cattle breeder, auctioneer and pound keeper for the village of Utica. Jane Dafoe continued to operate the general store.

Finally, after providing services to the community for 45 years, the Dafoe's property was sold. They left their longtime home in Utica shortly after selling and moved to Toronto to join family members.

The *Observer* newspaper, on learning of the sale reported, "When the lumber trade was booming this pleasant hotel kept by Mr. Dafoe did a thriving trade. It was known far and wide as a good place to stop and Dafoe and Utica seemed inseparable."

In October 1909 ownership of the property and buildings was transferred from the Dafoes to James E. Buck. The Buck family took over the Utica hotel and general store and operated it successfully for a decade. It's believed it was during Mr. Buck's ownership that



This section of an 1860 map of Reach Township shows the location of the Dafoe House hotel.

**DAFOE HOUSE,  
UTICA.**

**G**OOD accommodations. Careful attention to the requirements of travelers and guests. The bar supplied with the best wines, liquors and cigars. Good stabling.

J. DAFOE, Proprietor.

September 20, 1866



Tavern License issued to William Flewell, who was the hotel keeper for Dafoe's "Utica Hotel" during 1884-85.

**HOTEL, STORE,  
and Dwelling  
For Sale!**

A Capital Chance for entering upon a  
Comfortable and Profitable Country  
Business.

**T**HE Subscriber having made up his mind to retire from business, offers for sale his Hotel, Store, a comfortable Dwelling House and an acre of Land in the

**VILLAGE OF UTICA!  
TOWNSHIP OF REACH.**

The hotel is comfortable and commodious, in good order and does a regular and profitable business. There is a good supply of outbuildings such as Driving Sheds, Stables, Barns, &c.

The Store adjoins the Hotel, is well established, and is doing a paying business as a general country store. The Post Office is connected with the store. There is no other store or hotel in the village.

The Dwelling House is convenient to the store and is in good order.

There is a thrifty young orchard of capital fruit on the premises and abundance of good water.

N. B. The stock may be purchased with the store on advantageous terms. The stock consists of Dry Goods, Groceries, Hardware &c., such as are found in a good general country store.

For parties wishing a comfortable paying country business there could scarcely be a better opening or more profitable investment.

The location is one of the most healthful and pleasant in the Province.

For particulars apply to the subscriber on the premises—if by letter prepaid, to Utica P. O.  
JACOB DAFOE.

**NOTICE.**

All parties indebted to the Subscriber by Note or Book Account are required to settle the same on or before the first day of November next.

JACOB DAFOE.

Utica, August 13, 1873. 35

the hotel was closed and that section of the building was converted in to living quarters.

In October 1919 Mr. Buck sold the property to his grandson Wilmer McKay, who had been living in Toronto. Mr. McKay moved to Utica to take over the business but only remained for a year, before selling the property for \$1,500 to John Moore.

During ownership by Mr. Moore, a thunderstorm rolled though the area and the Utica general store was struck by lightning, totally destroying the store, but the hotel was saved. Once again, ownership of the property was brief, with Mr. Moore selling the property to Charles W. Lackey one year later in April 1922. Mr. Lackey later formed a partnership with his nephew Frank MacGregor.

At the front of the building was a verandah and some large trees, but these were removed when gas pumps were installed in front of the entrance to the store. The pumps were moved to the east of the property when the road was paved, and eventually removed.

Longtime residents of the area remember Frank taking orders over the telephone which were then delivered to area homes. Some also remember a small petting zoo behind the store with peacocks and a monkey.

Fire was always a threat for century old building and in May 1961 fire caused considerable damage to the store. Fortunately the building was saved.

Forty seven years after purchasing the store, on December 31, 1970, the Lakey family decided to retire. They held a big sale of general merchandise from their upstairs storerooms weeks before the property and buildings were listed for sale.

The next ownership of the popular Utica store were Mr. and Mrs. A. McKenzie who reopened the store on January, 5, 1971. They surprised the community four months later when they announced the sale of the store and property.

William and Christina Ruesink became the next owners of Utica's general store and they remained for about three years before selling the store in August 1974 to Charlie and Bertha M. Cottyn. The Cottyn family operated the store for about 10 years, retiring and selling the property in July 1983.

**Note:** Every effort has been made to present an accurate account of the history of the Utica hotel and general store. This article is based on extensive research and information from land registry records, historical documents, and memories from longtime residents of the Utica area. My sincere thanks to those who contributed information.



*A family gathering in front of Dafeo's hotel circa 1910.*

Since that time, the property has experienced a number of ownership changes. Don and Sein Kim purchased the store August 1988 and were the last couple to operated the business as a general store. Twenty years after taking over Utica's general store, in 2008, the Kim family retired.

The historic Dafeo House property was sold a year later to Jeffrey Reid, who formerly owned Reid's Independent grocery store in Port Perry. He rented space to tenants for a number of years. One of these was an antique and collectables dealer with a store named "Remember the Time".

Mr. Reid sold the building in 2013 to Laura Grey who opened the "Coach House Studio", where she opened an Artisan's Marketplace, providing space for local artisans to sell their work. Mrs. Grey operated the store until 2017 before closing and selling the Utica landmark.

Today, this former landmark structure no longer houses a hotel or general store.

As of 2022 the building has been divided into five apartments. Fortunately, its mere presence in the heart of Utica provides fond memories and a window into its important historic past.



*The girls of the Utica Bluebird Club are seen in this picture standing in front of Lakey's Utica 'Red & White' general store during the summer of 1937.*





*Utica General Store, 1999, was operated by Don and Sein Kim for 20 years.*



*The former Utica General Store was known as "Remember The Time" an antique and collectables store when this picture was taken during the spring of 2013.*



*The former Utica General Store was operating as the Coach House Studio in this 2017 picture.*

# VICTORIA CORNERS

## GENERAL STORE

VICTORIA CORNERS



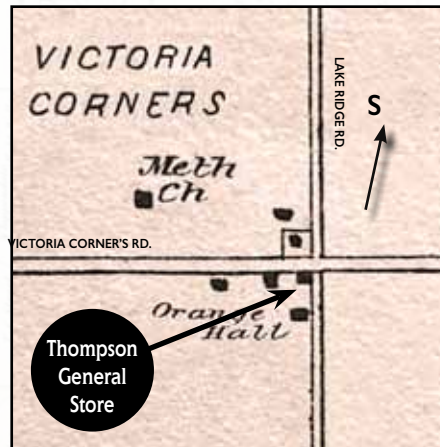
This 1938 photo shows the front of the Victoria Corners general store, and home of the owner at back.

**VICTORIA CORNERS**, in 1871, was described as being country post office in Reach Twp., Ontario, 22 miles north of Whitby, the Ontario County seat, six miles northeast of Uxbridge and 14 miles northwest of Port Perry, which is the largest commercial centre in Reach Twp. Population 80.

Exactly when the first general store was opened in Victoria Corners has not been determined, but by 1860 a young man by the name of Thomas Hill settled in the small hamlet. Census records for 1869 show that Mr. Hill served as both a merchant, and a hotelkeeper.

It is believed that Mr. Hill operated both his small general store and hotel, known as Hill's Hotel, from a single building which may have also serve his residence.

Community post offices were most often located in the local general store, but in the case of Victoria Corners, evidence points to another early settler by the name of Henry Madill, was the postmaster at this time.



Photos of Thompson's store courtesy Jo-Anne Hilton



Photos of Thompson's store courtesy Jo-Anne Hilton

*Jean and Earl Thompson, proprietors of the Victoria Corners general store are seen in this picture on the porch in front of the store taken in May 1944.*

Mr. Madill assumed ownership of Hill's general store about 1871 and operated the store and post office from that location for a number of years. Exactly when he sold the store is not known, but the next owner appears to have been Adam St. John, son of George St. John who owned a large parcel of land abutting the village.

Disaster struck the community in September 1879 and a newspaper reported that, "Adam St. John's store, dwelling and stable at Victoria Corners, Reach was destroyed by fire".

There is a large gap between the fire in 1879 and the 1930s where no mention can be found of a general store in the hamlet.

In August 1931, Earl Thompson married Jean Christie, and not long after their marriage, the young couple became the owners of the community's general store.

The Thompson's were well respected residents of the community and operated the hamlet's store for almost 40 years. They retired in June 1975 and sold the contents of the store by auction.

After the general store was closed, the building was converted into residential home and since that time has had multiple owners.

Originally the old general store building was located very close to the road, convenient for their customers to drive up to get gas and groceries.

After it became the residence of the Dillon family, the front of the building was removed and the house lifted and moved away from highway. The building remains today as a residential home.



*Two children at the gas bowser in front of the Victoria Corners general store, circa 1940.*



*The former Victoria Corners general store as it looks in 2023. It has been moved back from the highway, and the front removed.*

# YELVERTON

## GENERAL STORE



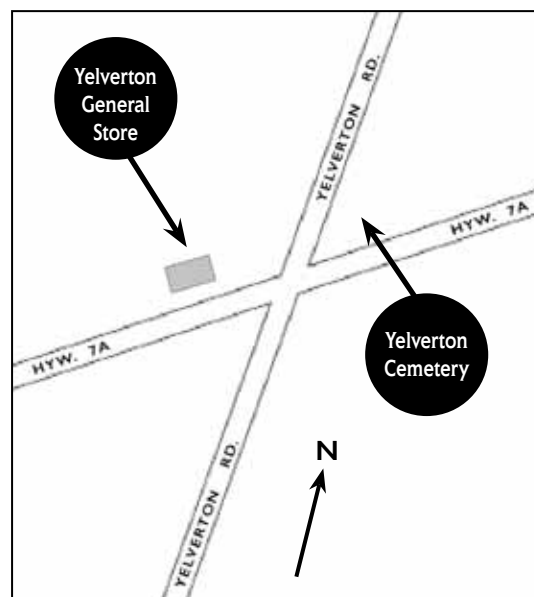
*Yelverton General Store, circa 1910. Originally located at the foot of Yelverton Hill. It was later moved to near the Yelverton Cemetery at the top of the hill. It was owned at this time by Frank and Elisha Porter.*

**A** **SMALL PLACE** in Manvers Twp. which receives mail delivery three times weekly by stage, is the way the hamlet of Yelverton was described in 1884. With a population of only 30 people, it was primarily a farming community, with no commercial or industrial enterprises taking place at this time.

Fast forward to 1892, the community was described as having a population of about 40 residents, with a Methodist Church, common school, blacksmith, and a saw & planing mill operated by George Ridge. Mr. Ridge also served as the community's postmaster.

Three years later the post office had been moved to David Milligan's blacksmith shop, but there was still no mention of a general store.

The Yelverton store is believed to have constructed circa 1900, by William Evans at the foot of what



was known as the Yelverton Hill. It was simple frame, one storey building, estimated to be 28'x 12' in size. It featured two doors and three windows on the face of the building, with a boardwalk along the front. The left third of the building housed the general store and post office, while the right side provided living quarter for the owner

No record has been found that Mr. Evans ever lived in the building or operated a store.

By 1910, Francis "Frank" Porter was the owner of the property and here he operated a general store and also served as the local post master. Sometime later, Mr. Porter had the building moved to the top of the hill. The lot was located on the north-west corner of Yelverton Rd. and Hwy. 7A, directly west of the cemetery.

After the death of Frank Porter, in May 1930, the property was sold to George Ridge, a long-time resident of Yelverton. Mr. Ridge continued to operate the post office and general store for a short

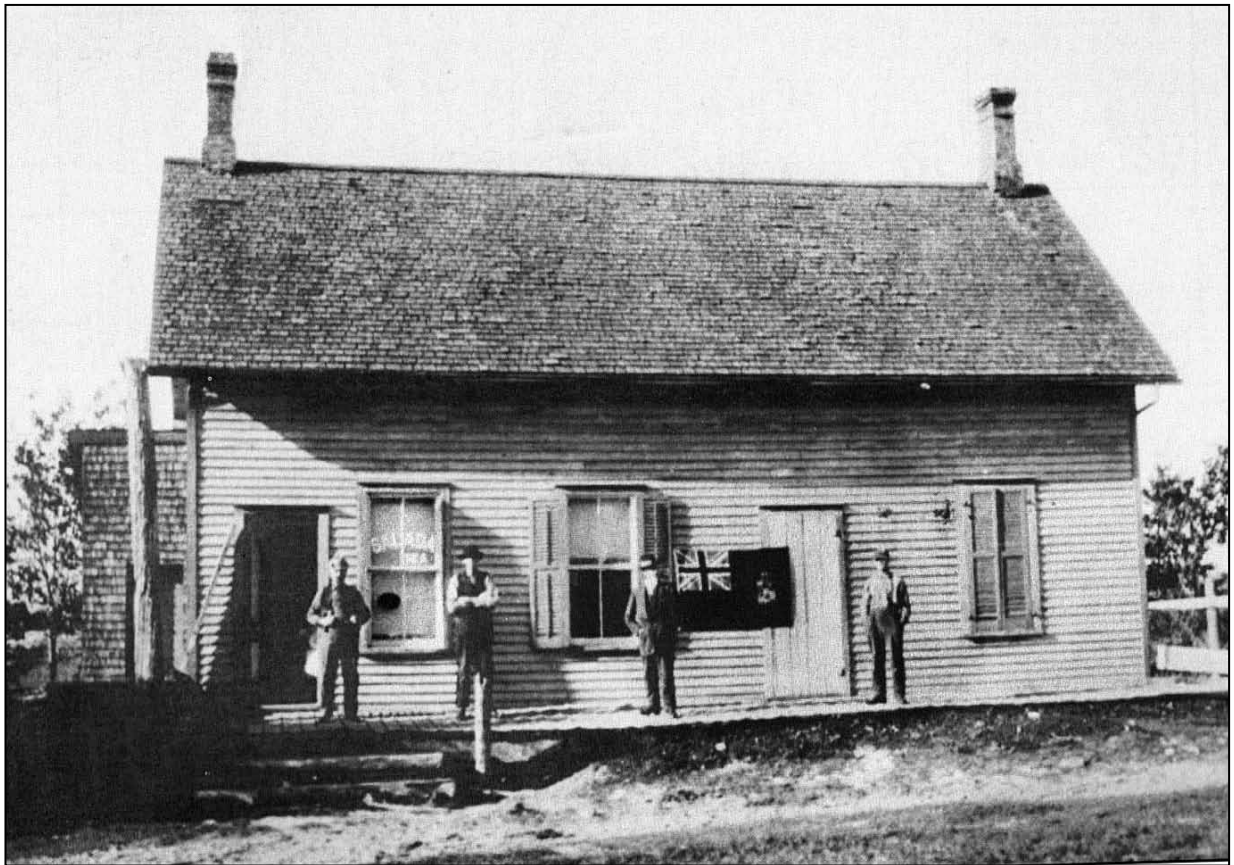
time. During his ownership the store was described as being "the white house on the four corners."

Harry Henders and his wife Edith, who had lived in Yelverton for a number of years, became the next owners of the building. They closed the store and expanded the living space to create a larger residence.

Following the death of her husband, Edith remained in the house for many years. Living across from the schoolhouse, she became known as "Aunt Edee" to the children attending the school. Finally, in 1958, after turning 90 years of age, Edith left her home in Yelverton and moved to Lindsay.

Others reported to have owned the building include Joseph Porter and Samuel "Sam" Hepburn.

Although the structure looks different today, having been renovated, and a second floor added, the former old Yelverton general store building continues to be occupied as a family home.



*Four unidentified man standing along the front of the Yelverton General Store, circa 1910,*



Coloured photo by J. Peter Hvidsten

### **Inside Purdy's General Store - Port Perry**

*Interior view of Edward H. Purdy's store, located at 178 Queen St., Port Perry. Mr. Purdy, is the man behind the counter with the beard. His general store stocked groceries, produce and hardware. Photo circa 1915.*

# GENERAL STORES

BY J. PETER HVIDSTEN