



HOME SCENES IN EDEN  
ANNIE + PERCY SOMERS



Somers )Cont'd)

Martin Kidd came back for a year or so to look after Warren. The second house on the Kidd place was moved from the Allemand farm.

Kennedy's had a threshing machine. Uz Mabee was the first trucker in the area, Joe Parker worked for him. Harvey Kennedy went into trucking and Foster Langohr worked for a time for Harvey and eventually ran the trucking business. Harve's wife, Evie, built the barn on the Kennedy place. (west of # 19 on the north side of the Maple Grove road).

Percy had a table made by Gray's for Eatons 55 years ago. Gray also had a canning mill. Maude Wilson owned the barn and 3 acres and part of what is now school ground and graveyard. Gray bought it from Maude and started the grist mill.

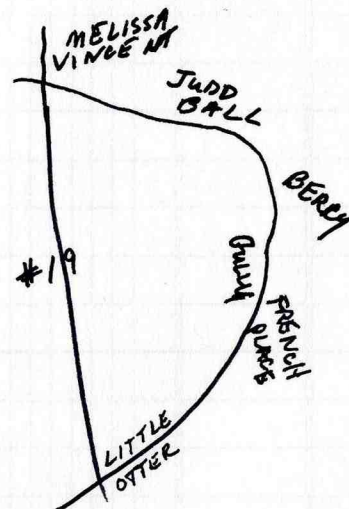
There was a flood in the village in 1937 as there was in many other localities that year when the White bridge went out at Tillsonburg.

Wilfred Nelson had his leg off at Christie Street Hospital; when he first came to Eden, he was in a wheelchair and stayed with Caplings when they lived west of Eden at the top of the hill on the north-east side.

Percy broke ground on the west side of the Highway from the Kidd place; Where later lived Jimmy Coombs, Garrity, Baxter Kennedy, Wards. Percy pastured calves on this land while at Warren Kidds. Glass has Harvey Kennedy's farm. Holcomb - related to Maude. Baxter & sister Bertie related to Carrolls.

Doss Healy, Carm Ball, Cecil Ball, Clara Marshall have lived in the house east of the school. Linda Carroll & Rick live in the house now.  
Preacher - Ellison Allemand place.  
Nurse - Marie Ellison

Julia Cochran was named after Julia Allemand.



## Stansell Reminiscences

Notes were taken from Mr. Walter Stansell's reminiscences on Sept. 17, 1981 and Oct. 1981 meetings of the Bayham Historical Society at Straffordville Public School.

Walter's father was born in the first house built in Bayham Township in old Sandytown built by Mrs. Sam Culp's family. At the time of his birth in 1841, an old Dutchman owned it. In 1854 the first hotel (Hubbard's) the one on the corner burned at Sandytown.

In 1851 the plank road was built, Walsh's store in 1857. It was McNaughton store, later was Agur's blacksmith shop - he shoed oxen as well as horses. Blacksmiths shoed oxen as well as horses in the early days. The ox was put in stocks and the foot clamped to hold it while shoeing. The blacksmith used to drive around to the farms.

Once from McQuiggan's barn, a hay thief was traced when daylight came, by bits of hay dropped from the fork.

The circus used to come to town in horse drawwagons. The elephant s refused to cross the Otter bridge east of Richmond and walked through the creek but spent some time enjoying the water first. Jumbo's circus was using wagons. His folks were at St. Thomas fair the year after Jumbo was killed. There used to be fairs at Walsingham, Langton, Courtland, Aylmer as well as St. Thomas. Straffordville fair was held at the time of the turn of the century heremembers. The Township put county building on the fair ground. Kinglake had a fair before his time. The hamlet of Fair-ground was called little Ireland until 1894.

Hubbard had a saw mill just above where the railroad bridge is now.

Some organizations in the early days were Orange Lodge, Patrons of Industry, Chosen Friends, Woodmen of the World, Foresters, Good Templars - Lions Club is more recent. He attended the first lodge meeting at the new building in Tillsonburg, was in charge of the meeting.

In Vienna he remembers 5 hotels - three names were Jenkins Bros., Brashers, Francisco. Lumber was piled as high as you could reach off of the wagon-load - piled around the bend up to the Teall hill -  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile pile.

Schooners were towed up to load. Later when creek was more shallow Jake Smith and Steven Birch used a flat-bottomed scow to load timbers on to tæe down to the lake, from Vienna.

Sailing boats were a sight to see on the lake. They used pond nets for fishing - 1 mile out on shallow water were herring and sturgeon. Catfish were taken from the Otter. Herring and sturgeon were found at Port Burwell and at Clear Creek. One 7 foot sturgeon sold for 50¢ and it weighed 150 lbs. Suckers came up in the spring; there were lots of bass and trout. Whitefish were rare but catfish were plentiful. Smelt were unheard of in his youth. Sunfish and rock bass were in mill ponds. The Welland canal let the eels get in to the lakes.

They could hear the foghorn at Port Burwell 9 miles away, and were sure to get a storm when they could hear sounds from the lake or from town. There is a big difference in the amount of wind now. The bush was very tall timber - 100 ft. in height and it blocked the wind.

Ships on the lake were 3 mast sailing ships - less 100' (ft) in length generally. Most were schooners. The lakers cost less to make. Four generations of his family worked in the same shipyard using the same tools which had been brought to Canada by U.E.L.s. His grandfather was hurt at the shipyard at Burwell - cut his knee with an adze and died a year later. Many, including his family, mortgaged their farms to build the harbour at Burwell and formed the Port Burwell Harbour Commission - and they were mortgaged still many years later as was his father's when he came into it. There was a difference when ships changed from sail to steam - freight rates went up as they needed fuel, had to hire an engineer and new equipment. There were three shipyards at the Port; (his son made the fourth generation to work) He worked on the cabins on the south side of the Otter, when they were built. (two ships were CASPIAN + Erie WAVE)

## Stansell Reminiscences

He was on the Port Burwell Harbour Commission.

Streams in the area used to be quite a bit fuller. Two he mentions dry up in summer but still are there. He tells of one incident where waters rushed through the timbers and brush was used to fill the hole - one fell through a hole in the ice and came up 30 feet away with the axe still in hand - only lost a boot.

On the west side - water came up almost to the bank. The first dock didn't jut out very far like today's. The Harbour kept filling in, and soon required dredging. There was a restaurant at water's edge. The harbour was rebuilt in 1901 - when first load of steel came in (he thinks this came from England - no steel mills yet in Canada). Later the railroad was built - the Tillsonburg & Lake Erie railroad to Ingersoll. He built a model of the first locomotive built in Canada (in 1853). It ran on wooden rails - no steel rails at that time. Coal came in by ship much later.

Teall & Law were instrumental in the Tillsonburg Lake Erie & Pacific Railway. Each township it went through gave a bonus. There was some American money in it. The railroad helped the lumber industry. There were furniture, wagon and sleigh factories. The railroad made quite a difference in life. Some would load a wagon with team - travel in one day 25 or 30 miles a day with a good team. Then hook on with a new team if going further and returning change again.

The train went at 6, 12, 1 and 6 - two whole trips in a day. He remembers the little engine that sat in Eden in 1903.

The stage coach that carried the mail always had 4 horses. The hills near Sandytown were very bad. On short hauls they would travel 4 or 5 in a row, sometimes needed help on the hills. The toll gates cost 1 shilling 1 mile on the plank road. Part of the toll gate just north of Straffordville at what is now the Sunoco station - is in Harry's garage. The C.P.R. got the contract in 1910.

The Airline railroad was built in the 70s he thinks. The Great Western was built through first to Michigan. The railroads used carbide lamps.

He remembers a child's funeral at GlenMeyer where the undertaker got \$3.00 for building casket and conducting the service.

Nearly every community had a cheese factory. The building of Borden's plants put many out of business. They got 55¢ a hundred for milk.

He remembers taking a sleigh load of dressed pork to the Michigan Central spur line for 3½¢ a lb. In 1910? or 8¢ per lb. could buy a quarter. Bill Burn was a butcher who went around buying up meat. On the 10th Concession there was a little village called Campbelltown on the corner.

The first old store in old Frogmore was Beaverton Mills, then Groveland now Frogmore (but slightly new location). There they sat on blocks of wood and planks for church services, framework of poles in the wood was the chapel. He remembers the first mill at Kinglake was Skinners. There was a blacksmith and a grocer. He remembers whiskey at 20¢ a gallon. One old lady traded off the meat in the house, a ham and the last meat to get a horn to call the men to meals with.

When he was four years old an itinerant preacher asked who wanted to get to heaven - nearly everyone stood. One old lady didn't stand - she didn't want to go right away.

## Stansell Reminiscences

His teachers were \_\_\_\_\_, Lucy Saunders, \_\_\_\_\_ Malcolm, Frank Smith, Phen-  
ie Taylor, Clarence Collins, Minnie Gunn, Annie Clark, George Priddle and  
Nora Boyd. He finished schooling, at 14 with engineer's papers.

There were approximately forty students in the room and all good teachers  
which he had (except two). In Bayham there were 16 school sections.  
Now there are fewer, with 800 students at Straffordville and 32 teachers.  
The Smuck school was S.S. # 12, and was south and west of Straffordville  
and is now a residence.

He remembers doing cement work on the Milt Inman house in Eden and Walt  
McDowell did his first work there too. Harry Dean was the carpenter. He  
remembers Obie Craven, who was killed in France in the first war. When  
he worked on the Inman farm, the Bentleys lived across, next to the cem-  
etery and now one of Alex Bentley's family does his homemaking.  
He worked on 5 homes in Straffordville, 25 or 30 barns and 25 houses all  
told. He also worked on Ho Johnson's house and one barn in Muskoka and  
one in Saskatchewan. Houses in Straffordville he worked on were his sons,  
a ranch style this side, inside of Croft Garnham's, Harry Grant's that was  
moved away and the Wolfes on the next corner.

He lived the first part of his life on his father's farm. He had no  
boughten toys. He remembers working at his uncle's sawmill when 4 years  
old. He had a fear of steam. He studied to overcome the fear and at 14  
years of age got his engineer's papers. He wanted to be a machinist but  
did mostly woodworking instead, boats, barn framing and house building  
mostly. He has a model of a blacksmith shop, steam engine built by West  
& Beechey at Simcoe. One was used in Delhi a good many years - trestle  
expansion - marine engine - simplified and unique in the world, water tank  
and wagon to haul water to threshing machine - thresher - Goodson in  
Sarnia, grain separator made in Fingal vibrator - 1860s. He made models  
without plans - of old water saw mill (1842) like his fathers - displayed  
his models in store, fall fairs, and at the Science Centre in Toronto.  
He made most parts of the models himself which is a great gift to be able  
to do this. He says he always wanted to complete what he started. His  
models are the only collection of handmade models in Canada.

He feels it is too bad that there isn't a better plan of apprenticeship  
to save all the old skills and craftsmanship but wonders if the young of  
today resent the amount of regimentation which is required to become  
truly skilled and gifted craftsmen.

Most sawmills were water powered but Alvin Griffin and Safford had steam  
powered mills. Other mills were Forsyth, Davis; Godby had a shingle mill,  
Tweedle and one at St. Williams Forest station. Truman and Tillson both  
had water powered mills.

His father used horses on threshing machines in the 60s & 70s - he never  
saw it. The first he remembers was steam engine loaded on wagons to go  
from one to the next farm. Once on the Lake Road near Port Burwell they  
saw three waterspouts on the lake that day. After supper when moving the  
machine they found live fish on the Lake Road where the storm had dropped  
them.

When he saw the first grain binder and cornbinder of Squire Wm. Kelly it  
was such an occasion that they had a band out for it. This was before the  
turn of the century.

The first steam car he remembers was Tommy Dickout's - was pushed up sand  
hills and had inflated tires.

He remembers an auto (buggy with a chain drive on wheels) - made in  
Orillia by Tudhope and Anderson and which had a tiller to steer it instead  
of a steering wheel. The first gas car was a Model C belonging to Dr.  
Lancaster which he saw first in 1907. It had no doors and no top. He  
remembers bikes at \$100.00 and \$30.00 secondhand at the turn of the century.

## Stansell Reminiscences

Trees that were plentiful but are now gone or very scarce are the chestnut, basswood and elm. They would pick chestnuts and sell to pay the taxes, buy clothes and a few necessary groceries. His grandfather grafted good apple twigs onto wild apple trees with some success.

He remembers 3 sows which fed in the woods from spring till fall. A load of hogs were sold for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  a hundred dressed pork in Tillsonburg.

When he was 12 years old he drew plank to a lumber show at Vienna. 40" wide 8" thick and 16' long - the next log up not the butt log. The tree grew east of Glen Meyer. The butt was so large they blew it up with gunpowder and made shingles out of it - shave singles.

The cooperage (Allwood) made barrels to hold salt - apples - flour. The barrels were so tight they could hold liquids.

When the land was cleared the scrub was burned off - grubs would then kill the grass which came - the skunks would get the grubs and also stir the ground up to get them. Then strawberries would come and raspberries. They would pick raspberries and the odd patch of huckleberries. Millet would be grown as a crop when the hay crop was a poor catch. He remembers a buckwheat field of 2 bushels basket. He does not remember any wolves or bears in his time. He remembers four families camped south of Glen Meyer where they had a dog boiling in the pot. He remembers the time a fawn got in the open thumb latch where they had a ton of maple sugar stored and he'd nibbled the edges of the cakes. Another time a doe came down on the ice and they drove it into the barn - where it died from over-eating the hay. They bought a substance called muscavada which was a kind of syrupy sugar that could be crumbly or stirred. Mostly maple sugar was used as a sweetener.

They shot partridge, grouse, rabbits, ducks, and an occasional wild turkey. His mother told of the wild pigeons which would darken the sun they were so numerous. They liked to roost in hemlock.

John Henry Williams had oxen.

A wild cat or lynx was heard but not seen.

Mrs. House was said to have killed a bear with a screw out of a door latch when no bullet was found with which to kill him. (Fred House - sister Mrs. Bloor).

At Christmas the churches usually had a concert. Christmas meal was usually turkey or tame goose - occasionally ducks with pudding, cake and mince pie. The sawbill duck was not good to eat.

A tin peddler came around and traded for rags, bones, bottles, etc. They had a set of tin dipper, milk pails, dish and pan which were made in Tillsonburg. Previously they had wood pails, tubs and barrels and churn as part of their dairy equipment.

The first Post office in Sandytown was in the old hotel (Loders). Hunsberger built it and it was the first building in Bayham township. The horse stable was built next. Some Straffordville trade people were Hogg? Hoick? Jones who moved to Tillsonburg. Harry Brady partner to John McQuiggan who used tokens as trade. Tokens were in use at the turn of the century. M. Mrs. Chute) Chas. Walsh place was built in 1857 - the hotel across in 1854. Thomas Mabee was the post master in 1935. The first machine shop building date is unknown. There was a foundry and cutting boxes at Vienna (Sells).

Tillson and Van Norman were first smelters at Normandale. The bog ore played out with Tillson going to Tillsonburg (was first called Dereham Forge and VanNorman moved to Houghton just north of Hemlock. The first