

Stansell Reminiscences

mill was a sawmill just below the White bridge on the left side - last mill he saw operated by water. The second was a planing mill - the third was a flour mill across was the barrel factory. The oat mill was first water powered and across was the pea mill by the creek powered by the creek, up the creek was a woollen or carding mill (McFarlane) novelty works. It must have been a wooden flume. The brick tile yard was back of the farm (Annandale). He remembers four phones in Tillsonburg. Tillson block as one story, Barrett Clothing, Jonas & Chas. Graves, grocer Buchner restaurant, J.M. Jerome Jeweler.

Only one on east side - Dicky Williams (site old Dominion store).
Harness shop - Pete Newell & Geo. Carle - liquor store Joe Aspinall
Carle Hobbs Hardware Jack Weston furniture livery stable

Royal Bank was the Queens hotel - Beckers - livery Tabernacle was a wagon shop with Isaac Hogarth across. A.P. Wallers carriage works
Andy Fisher blacksmith Buckburrrough
next to Royal Bank Ed Law paint shop Pete Newell harness shop
carriages

Water from the town pump in front of the Queens hotel.

Tillson put in waterworks.

Barkeys Bros. electric light plant - arc lights for street lights in the 90s. Prior was coal oil light at the corner of each street in box shapes.

He remembers the plank sidewalk changed to cement.

North of town used to be known as the Klondike - the Beech woods area was north of town.

2 drug stores McDonald and Thomson. It was Anderson Bakery where Armstrongs is now. Matt Burns was a butcher.

On the east side Moffat had a butcher shop. Burt's tin shop was where the Metropolitan is now. On London Street other corner was Watts furniture store, the undertakers in the old hotel.

Arby Johnson had a feed store. Waller had a shoe shop and made shoes by hand. Waller also ran a bus that met the trains.

There was no running water or hydrants at the turn of the century.

Children's games played when he was young, anti-over, pullaway, mumbly peg, some baseball, four old cat - a kind of cricket game (60 feet apart with a bat) and one called duck on a rock which the inspector stopped.

Note: Further information on the building of the railroad through Bayham township. Jan. 16, 1975 from Thomas Bowman of Tillsonburg, Geo. Cameron, one of the men building the railroad collected enough money for Teal to buy a new suit of clothes and pay his way to Ottawa - came back with money to complete the railroad - David Kennedy, father of Reg Kennedy, wrote a history of the Teall railroad, Grace Teall, a nurse in Woodstock, died in 1963.

Also: The Fred Chandler story mentions that Rev. S. Cripps was a watchman on the railroad bridge before he came to preach at Eden.

Stilwells of Middleton and Bayham

(The following account of the history of the Stilwell family of Middleton and Bayham Townships was submitted by Ayrest L. Stilwell of Eden, Ontario.)

When George Stilwell of Middleton was called home on Thursday, March 4th, 1954, at the age of 83, the last grandson of that hardy pioneer, David Stilwell, was removed from our midst. However, three sisters of George and granddaughters of the above mentioned are still living.

They are : Mrs. Henry Ball (Sarah) of Aylmer;
Mrs. George Clark (Adeline) of Ingersoll
Mrs. Edgar Zavitz (Rachel) also of Aylmer.

The late George Stilwell spent practically all his life and his father, Isaac, 77 years on the farm that the grandfather, David, carved from the dense hardwood forests of Middleton when he came to Upper Canada from New Brunswick nearly 120 years ago. This farm is situated on the Goshen Road about half a mile east of the town line between the townships of Middleton and Bayham.

The Stilwells of Middleton and Bayham are descendants of a certain soldier, Lieutenant Nicholas Stilwell, who came to America from England in the year 1683 and settled first in Virginia, when he was second in command of the Virginian Army in their war with the Indians. He later removed to Manhattan Island where he became one of the leaders of the Dutch Army under Governor General Peter Stuyvescent.

In 1778, during the American Revolution, John Stilwell, a great great grandson of the above mentioned Nicholas Stilwell, remained loyal to Britian and was ordered to appear before the Rebel Council. This he refused to do, but finally was forced to flee to the mountains, being pursued by the notorious Sons of Liberty.

After some weeks, he escaped and in 1783 with his wife and family he arrived at St. John, New Brunswick in a ship called Aurora. For three years he lived in a crude camp near the present city of St. John, N. B., at the mouth of the St. John river. He then moved up the river to Cumberland Bay Point on Grand Lake, where he died in 1823. While in New Brunswick, he married a second and third time. By his second wife, Sarah Ciblar or Kibler, he had six children, the eldest of whom was David, born in 1790. This David later became the pioneer forefather of the Stilwells of Middleton and Bayham.

In 1836 David Stilwell, having become dissatisfied with conditions in New Brunswick, and having heard of the wonderful prospects in Upper Canada, decided to try his luck in this new land. With his wife, who was formerly Rebecca Ellsworth, and nine of his eleven children, he started out by boat on the long trip to Upper Canada. After many weeks of hardships and disappointments, during which time his wife Rebecca passed away, he finally landed at or near Port Burwell. Here the remains of his loved one were laid to rest but later were removed to the Ridge Road Cemetary near Eden.

With his nine children, the eldest being William, 19 years of age, and the youngest being Jane, aged 2, David made his way northward along a trail through the bush, now Highway 19. He finally took up land on the Goshen Road, being one of the first, if not the first, to settle on this road. Here he spent the remainder of his life clearing the land of its virgin forest and caring for the family of nine which he brought with him from New Brunswick. The names of the children who came with their father David to Ontario, in order of their ages, were as follows:

William, David, Israel, John, Isaac, Naomi, Benjamin, Sarah, Jane.

The two who remained in New Brunswick were Nicholas and Martha, the eldest members of the family.

Sometime later, Martha, with her husband William MacGregor, also moved to Ontario and for a time they lived on the Goshen Road in a house built by her two brothers, William and Isaac, west of where her father had settled. Later they moved to the Plank Road, now Highway No.19, where they were in charge of a toll-gate between Eden and Straffordville. They had no children. The other brother, Nicholas, who was a sea captain, remained in New Brunswick at or near St. John where he died in 1876.

David Stilwell Sr., ultimately married a second time, the Widow Vincent. In the meantime, as his sons and daughters grew to manhood and womanhood, they married the sons and daughters of other pioneers in the district, and the majority of them took up land, and settled within a radius of a few miles of each other.

William Stilwell married Christianna Ostrander and developed the farm immediately west of his father David's. Their children were Nicholas, Elsie, Rebecca, Sarah, Andrew, Henry, Olive, Elwin and Emmer.

David Stillwell Jr. developed a farm west of Eden. He married Helen Lloyd. Their children

were Mary Anne, David William, Sarah and Anne Eliza.

Israel Stilwell married Sarah Ostrander, a cousin of his brother William's wife, Christianna. He spent some time keeping a hotel situated on Highway 19 just north of the Wabash Railway station. He spent the remainder of his life in or near Eden. Their children were Selkirk and Lewis.

John Stilwell developed the farm just east of his father David's where he spent the rest of his life. He married Mary Buchner, a member of another pioneer family which settled within a half a mile west of the Stilwells. Their children were David, James and Amy Jane.

Isaac Stilwell spent 77 of his 88 years on the farm settled by his father. He was 11 years old when he came to Ontario. He married Jemima Baker. Their children were Anne Jane, Sarah Rebecca, Adeline, Della, Rachel and George who passed away on March 4, 1954.

Naomi Stilwell married John Buchner, a brother of Mary Buchner, wife of John Stilwell. They lived most of their life on a farm in Bayham at the western end of the Goshen Road. They finally retired to Tillsonburg. Their children were Pamella, George, Henry, Sarah, Israel and Jane.

Benjamin Stilwell married Eleanor Vincent, the daughter of his father David's second wife, the Widow Vincent. Their children were Alma, Melvin, Sarah, Maria, Percy, Matty and Alberta. Benjamin settled on a farm situated on Highway No. 19 a mile north of Eden.

Sarah Stilwell married Henry Carter, and yielding to the lure of the west moved to the western States. They had one son, Ira, who is quite likely deceased.

Jane Stilwell, the youngest child in David's family, married Harvey Caswell, who settled on a farm just west of Eden. They had one son, Ira Caswell, who lived all his life on this farm.

All these first and second generation descendants of David and Rebecca Stilwell, the sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters mentioned in the first paragraph above have passed on to their eternal home. There are many people living in Middleton and Bayham who can trace their ancestry back to these early pioneers and hence, back to the first Stilwell in this part of the country, David Stilwell Sr. As one would naturally expect, a great many others have been lured to the West, the South and the North.

When those early pioneers arrived in this part of the country they were faced with the task of building a log cabin of some kind. They had to cut down and burn the trees, dig out the stumps with spades and shovels, and not bulldozers such as we have now. The men had to have strong backs and strong minds in order to gradually clear their land acre by acre.

In the course of time stumping machines made their appearance. Their farm implements were crude affairs, indeed. They used a scythe instead of a mower; a cradle in place of a binder. They used a hand rake to rake their hay and grain. Their chief source of power was a yoke of oxen whose names were probably Buck and Bright. A flail was used to thresh the grain and when they wanted some flour they would place a bag of wheat on their shoulder and start off to the nearest grist mill, 10 or 15 miles away.

Some wove their own cloth; made their own boots and shoes, and most of them spun their own wool. Every woman knew how to knit and usually had plenty of it to do, when she wasn't helping out of doors, making or mending clothes, churning the butter or baking bread. They had no mail delivery, no telephones, automobiles, radios, television, and other luxuries as we have today. But they did have a courage and a determination to surmount the difficulties with which they were faced and were always ready to lend a helping hand to any neighbour who had sickness in his family or was in need of any of the necessities of life.

This is the brief history of the early pioneer Stilwells. Their's is a story of hardship, of achievement and failure, of hope and despair, of joy and sorrow. Their's is a story of dreams which were realized because they had a faith in the land of their choice, a faith in their fellow men, and what is vastly more important, a faith in their God.

CHANGE OF TIME

COMPOSED BY SARAH M. O'NEIL, DAUGHTER OF WILLIAM STILWELL

I sit me down to muse awhile,
On happy days of yore,
When I, a girl, with parents lived,
On Canada's loved shore.

Just seven years ago, to-day,
Since I became a bride,
And left my home, with husband dear,
In Michigan to abide.

Not long before a bright-eyed boy
Into our home did steal;
The joy and pride of our forest home,
Was Elwin James William O'Neil.

Not quite two years had passed away,
When a little, merry girl
Came next to brighten up our home,
We call her Olive Pearl.

And now another little boy --
Carl Harper is his name --
A father's care, a mother's love,
Our little one doth claim.

Although by family ties I'm bound,
With strangers hereto stay,
How oft my mind still wanders back,
To childhood's happy days.

Across the road, upon the ridge,
Where we in all our childish glee
Would romp and roam from place to place,
Or sit beneath the old oak tree.

The much-loved church and Sabbath school
Where we our voices raised
Up to the throne of God above,
With mingled love and praise.

But time has changed our dear old home,
Where we in childhood played;
Our parents' steps, once light and free,
Are tottering now with age.

The old frame house where we were born
(Although a brick one is in its place),
The joys and sorrows there we passed,
Time from our minds can ne'er erase.

Fourteen long years have passed away,
Since Henry left this earthly sphere;
His form lies mouldering in the tomb,
Yet still we hold his memory dear.

Oh, how we miss his cheerful voice,
No mortal tongue could tell;
His merry laugh, his little jests,
We loved to hear so well.

Again we're called to say farewell,
Death came with resistless hand;
We could not, dare not, bid him stay --
He took the eldest of our band.

No more we'll see his much-loved face,
With us on earth to roam;
He's joined the blood-washed throng above,
The Saviour called him home.

'Tis hard to bear the solemn truth;
Their spirits home have fled;
They no more here with us shall meet;
They're numbered with the dead.

Oh, parents, brothers, sisters dear,
Weep not for those who've gone before;
Soon we must leave this weary life,
To join them on the heavenly shore.

Acacia, January 1st, 1883.

At the Inman-Stilwell wedding on Sept 29th guests were present from Ingersoll, Port Burwell, Courtland, Dutton, New York, St. Louis, and Tillsburg.

The bride received a large quantity of cut glass and silver, also a number of substantial cheques.

The Baptist Church and choir, of which Miss Stilwell was a member, presented her with a beautiful mantel clock with chimies. The Young Ladies' class gave her a lovely cut glass water set, and the Milling Workers' class Pyrex baking dishes.

Stilwell - Died in Hamilton, October 23rd, Nicholas Stilwell
aged 39 Years and ten months.

Deceased was the eldest son of Deacon William and Christiana Stilwell and was born Dec. 23rd, 1841, in the Township of Middleton County of Norfolk, on the homestead where his parents still reside. Early in life he gave evidence of peculiar fitness for that calling to which he devoted his life, that of teaching, especially in the art of penmanship. In January 5th, 1867, he was united in marriage by the late Rev. R. B. Smith to Miss Sarah Ann Ford his now bereaved widow. In May 1871, while attending the Normal School in Toronto, whither he had gone to better fit himself for his professional duties, under the instruction of Rev. Wm. (now Dr.) Stewart, then pastor of Bond Street Church, who according to Department Regulations was employed to give Religious Instruction to the students, he was brought to a knowledge of the truth. Returning home in June, he like many others thought to live a secret Christian, but in October following a series of special meetings held by Pastor R. B. Smith he openly confessed the Lord and with a number of others was baptized, October 26th, 1871. So great was his relief from the secret burden he had been carrying that he joyfully sang while going down into the water and returning, the first verse of the hymn commencing: "how happy are they, who their Saviour obey."

It was a high day for the church and the vast congregation was moved. He remained consistent and an active member in the Eden Church till his death except about a year and a half while residing in London as a teacher and Professor of Penmanship in London Commercial College.

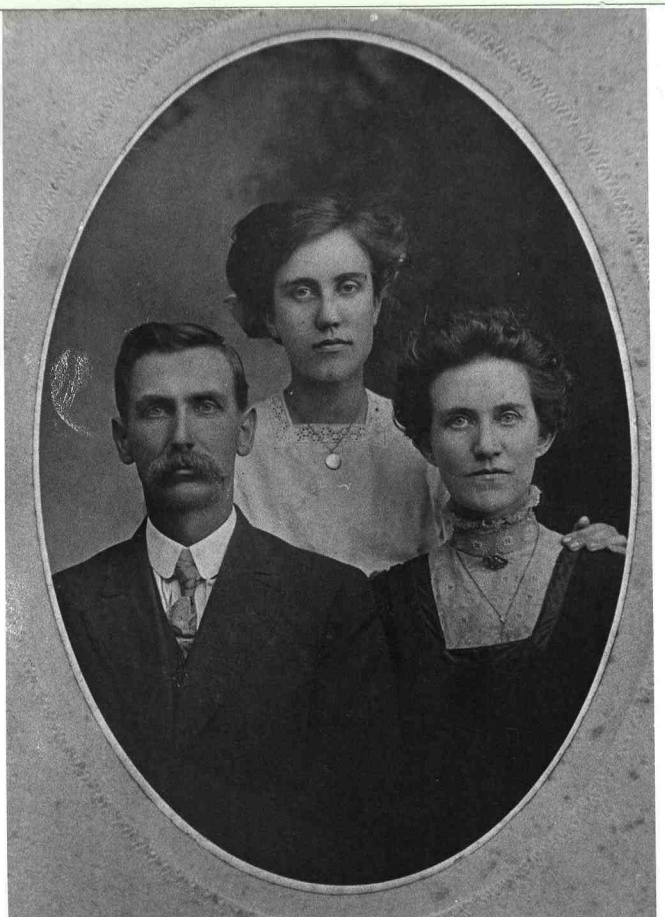
In 1879 wishing to still better qualify himself for his duties and aiming at reaching the highest place in his chosen profession he resigned the head mastership of Eden public school and removed to Hamilton to attend the Collegiate Institute there with a view to qualify himself for a first class certificate, no small undertaking under the new regulations. But before accomplishing his purpose the seeds of disease fastened themselves in his system, and on Sunday evening, Oct. 23rd, he passed away calm and composed and resting on the finished work of his dear Redeemer. His last words being "all is well". By his own request his remains were interred in the new cemetery at Eden, a very large congregation of friends and relatives assembled to pay their last respects. Pastor Herrington conducted the services, and Pastor J. B. Moore of Tillsonburg, preached a practical and instructive sermon from Rom. 8:18, "For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Bro. Stilwell was a warm friend, a most loving husband and an indulgent parent. The large number of young people whom he had under his training for the 5½ years of his labours in Eden public school, as well as in other places, will not soon forget the excellent moral and religious tone of the lessons he imparted and the Christian example he set them. He was an earnest Sabbath school worker and much of the success of the Eden Sabbath school during the past is due to his valuable assistance, especially in the musical department. He was an ardent advocate of the Temperance cause ever ready to advance its interests when he could. But our loss is his infinite gain. His widow and family have the sympathy of the whole community and of a large circle of friends in their sad bereavement.



IRA STILWELL

On Monday evening of last week, Mrs. J. H. Alton and Mrs. Lorne Alton opened their cozy homes to the young people of the neighbourhood, when they gave a miscellaneous shower to Miss Eva Stilwell in honour of her approaching marriage to Mr. J. C. Inman of Windsor. A most enjoyable evening was spent by all present. Miss Stilwell received a number of beautiful and useful presents. A dainty lunch was served late in the evening. The gathering dispersed, wishing the "bride-to-be all happiness."



IRA EVA ANNETTE
STILWELL



ROBERT SCHWEIZER J. C. INMAN EVA STILWELL INMAN