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F O R E W O R D

In any age it is the duty which every country owes to itself to preserve the records of the past, and to honour the men and women whose lives and deeds made possible its present, and to-day when the whole civilized world is throbbing to social and political impulses of the greatest significance, to call to mind such lives and deeds and catch if we can inspirations for acting well the part that falls to each of us.

The Middlemarch Women's Institute is using this foreword taken from "Talbot Settlement Centennial Celebration, 1903" because it expresses our wish in writing this book, Middlemarch and District, which is one of Lady Tweedsmuir's Library - a Tweedsmuir Village History. Lady Tweedsmuir, while here in Canada during her husband's term as Governor General, 1935-1940. requested Canadians to preserve their rich history and she appealed to the Women's Institutes of Canada (herself a member of the Institute) to do this work.

By kind permission of the Middlemarch Minister, Rev. McKim, and officers of the Church, this book is to be kept in Middlemarch United Church. The Women's Institute intend meeting there, in a body at service, the last Sunday of each May, beginning in 1944, to place records in this book from time to time.





Here are shown those who received honorary degrees from McGill University: In the front row (left to right) are Bishop Carlisle; His Excellency, Lord Tweedsmuir; Sir Edward Beatty, Chancellor of the University; Her Excel-

lency The Lady Tweedsmuir; Lewis W. Douglas, Principal of the University; Hon. Charles Dunning, Federal Minister of Finance; and W. A. F. Hepburn, who directed the recent inquiry into Protestant education in this province.

In the rear (left to right) are Sir Wilfred Grenfell; F. D. Adams, Emeritus Vice-principal; Baron Robert Silvercruys, Belgian Minister to Canada; and Sir Frederick Banting, co-discoverer of insulin.

Dedicate Honor Roll at Service

Historical W.I. Volume Placed in
Keeping of Middlemarch Church

On Sunday afternoon, Rev. J. A. McKim, members of the session and the congregation of Middlemarch United Church welcomed the Middlemarch Women's Institute and friends to a combined service in the flower-decorated church.

An honor roll was dedicated to those men of the community who served in the King's uniform in 1914-18 and in the present war. Rev. J. McKim read the following names for 1914-18: Firman Tufford, Norman Tufford, Francis Dowler, Victor Cooper, Alfred Manville, William Green, Roy Dubber, Ernest Jackson, Mason Abbott, Ernest Palmer, W. Yates. The supreme price was paid by Roy Dubber, William Green, Ernest Palmer and W. Yates. In the present war the names were Noble Tufford, Earl McCurdy, Nelson Bowlby, Harold Bowlby, Donald Travers, Ernest Carroll, Steven Farris, Harold Butler, Ralph Turnbull, Edward Trimble, Elgin Hall, Leonard Silcox, Kenneth White, Charles Rivers, Glen Rivers, H. E. Rivers, Franklin Begg, Colin O'Brien. Mrs. Rose unveiled the roll of honor, for which Clarence Nott, of Fingal, had kindly made and donated the walnut frame.

Mrs. William Lyle, violinist, accompanied by Mrs. J. R. Fitcher at the organ, played as the congregation gathered for service, at the offertory and at the close of the service. An Institute group consisting of Mrs. S. Curtis, Mrs. R. Tufford, Mrs. T. Stinchcombe, Mrs. T. Begg, Mrs. W. Lyle and Miss A. Tufford assisted with singing and in an anthem.

Mrs. Stanley Lyle as president of the Institute thanked the church officials for the privilege of holding the dedication service and in accepting the care of the Lady Tweedsmuir Library Book. She then read the Scripture lesson, Luke 1, 68-80. Rev. Mr. McKim led in reading the 24th Psalm responsively and in prayer.

Mrs. A. Lyle brought forward the Lady Tweedsmuir Library Book compiled and donated by the historical committee of the Institute. Mrs. A. Lyle, Mrs. William Lyle and Mrs. Frank Curtis. The book is a well-bound blue-covered loose leaf volume, which can be added to annually when the Institute hope to meet in the church the last Sunday of each May. The first chapter written by Mrs. W. G. Lyle deals with Indians and early settlers. The second chapter by Mrs. A. Lyle is entitled "Early Records to 1872." Mrs. A. Lyle read both chapters. Mr. McKim accepted the book to be placed in the keeping of the church.

Special guests present were friends and relatives of the men on the roll of honor as well as descendants of pioneer families. Some of the latter were Mr. and Mrs. John Pearce, of Wallace-town, who had given much data on the Col. Thomas Talbot regime; Mr. and Mrs. F. Tufford, St. Thomas; Mrs. J. D. Curtis, St. Thomas; Miss Carolyn Curtis, of St. Thomas, who had designed the cover; and Miss Norah Curtis, who had typed the historical record.



A FARMERS' ORGANIZATION WHICH INCLUDES BOTH MEN AND WOMEN IN ITS MEMBERSHIP

A factor that goes far to explain the failure of many farmers' clubs and similar organizations to make a permanent place for themselves in their respective communities, is that their meetings lack the helpful and inspiring presence of the women folk. The Dominion Grange is the oldest farmers' organization of the kind in Canada. It includes in its membership all of the members of the family, and thus recognizes the important part that women play in our agricultural economy. Not only are women admitted to the membership, but they also hold office in every grange—local, county and provincial. In our illustration may be seen the officers of the Essex County Grange, recently organized. It is composed of representatives from the local granges.

—For names see page 15.

Back row, left to right: W. Brad-
don, Asst. Steward; Frank Bainard,
Steward; James N. Futcher, Over-
seer; Mrs. Jas. N. Futcher, Ceres.

Middle row, left to right: Miss H.
Robinson, Sec.-Treas.; Charles Say-
well, Chaplain; Frank Hunt, Lectur-
er; Walter Wardell, Acting Master;
John Curtis, Member of Executive.

Lower row, left to right: Miss
Carrie Futcher, Stewardess; Gordon
Tufford, Gatekeeper; Miss Mary Bell
McBane, Pomona.

APRIL 17

1913

THE NAME * MIDDLEMARCH*

The village of Middlemarch is situated about three miles west of St. Thomas on the Talbot Road. In the early days this was an Indian Trail, then in 1827 became a corduroy road connecting Colonel Talbot's home with St. Thomas and in 1941 became a paved County Road #16.

Middlemarch has been so called since the opening of the Post Office about 1875. The late Jabel Robinson was instrumental in establishing the post office and the village was to be called Hatherley, after the first Post Master, Thomas Hatherley, instead of Smoke's Corners. There was an Atherley, Ontario, so Parliament asked for another name. At that time Mr. Robinson was reading the book Middlemarch by George Eliot, and thought it a suitable name. This name was accepted.

Recently, Miss Margaret Coyne, St. Thomas, daughter of the late Dr. James Coyne, explained that Jabel Robinson considered the name Middlemarch especially appropriate since George Elliot Casey was Liberal Member in the Dominion House for this part of Elgin at that time, and George Eliot was the author of Middlemarch.

Jabel Robinson, my grandfather, was elected as Independent Member to the Dominion House for West Elgin in 1900.

"Jessie Lyle"

Note: George Eliot was Mary Ann Evans, afterwards, Mrs. George Henry Leines. In the earlier days of the reign of Queen Victoria and before, women who wrote books were apt to conceal their identity by using a man's name. The most notable instance in English literature was of George Eliot. Other books by the same author were Adam Bide and The Mill on the Floss.

FIRST INHABITANTS AND INDIANS OF THIS DISTRICT

The springs of Canadian Civilization lie revealed in the light of History. When men from other countries discovered America they found people who were independent and self-supporting and living in a land of forest and fresh water. Herds of deer and flocks of wild turkey roamed the forest, bears enjoyed the berries, the industrious beaver felled trees and built dams and pigeons were in abundance while ducks covered the bays and rivers whose depths teemed with all kinds of fresh water fish. Remains of Mound Builders were found in this part of Ontario. Distinct traces were located on Walpole Island in the west end of Lake Erie and in the Eastern part of Elgin County. Traces of other peoples have been before the Indian Races and then Champlain, in 1615 found an Indian Race, the Neutrals, in southwest Ontario, west of Niagara and east of Detroit along the north shore of Lake Erie. They had been called "Neutrals" from their neutrality between the Hurons and Iroquois but this did not save them from destruction. These Indians had solved their problem of housing by using tools of Stone and erecting shelters of Wood. They had solved their problem of clothing for they skinned the animals and they had solved their problem of transportation both by land and water. The birch bark canoe is still used in the North where canoe and contents must be carried on the shoulders of men. The main village of these Indians between Niagara and Detroit was "Alexis", situated a few miles west of a stream that flowed into Lake Erie, presumably Kettle Creek. This village of Alexis of which the Southwold Earth Work is a memorial and here stone gate posts have been placed by the Elgin Historical Society, is a few fields from old Talbot Road at Burwell's Corners. The head chief of the village managed the affairs of other smaller villages in the District. The remains of one of these smaller villages have been found on the farms of Harry Palmer, Sherman Campbell and the McIntosh farm, now owned by F. Vicary, south of Talbot Road and where it has been claimed to be the last stand of the Neutrals, the ground being covered with flint, tomahawks and other weapons of war. The remains of all old Indian Trails can still be seen

*This stone is now in the garden 7
at the Elgin County Pioneer Museum*

on the Campbell farm and a large stone used for pounding grain was found on the old Black farm, now owned by Frank Curtis, was removed by Dr. C.C. Lumley to his home in St. Thomas and later taken to the Tourist Cabins at Piasore Park. The chief who governed Alexis and the smaller villages was called Tsohahassen. In the winter of 1640-41 the Jesuit Missionaries Brebeuf and Chaumonot traversed this country of the Neutrals and came to this village and they gave it the name of "Alexis". Brebeuf described the land to be the most beautiful and fruitful they had discovered. The Indians called the missionary Brebeuf, "Echon" and called Port Stanley, "Skittywaaba". The old village at Burwell's Corners had still a tree showing 242 rings of annual growth at the time the Historical Society bought it for preservation.

But the Neutrals, who have been described as numerous and fierce in war, cultivated fields of maize, pumpkins and tobacco. They were naked and superstitious and easily influenced by other nations and finally fell before the conquering Iroquois. After the Neutrals the Iroquois came and the only remains of these Indians were paths that lead from Huntley's farm in Southwold to the mouth of Kettle Creek through the old Thomas Futchter and Frank Hunt places - now J. McNiven farm.

At this time the country reposed in desolation. Solitude and silence reigned, broken only by the twittering of birds and the noise of the animals, until the French arrived in Canada led by Joliet. He was sent by Talon to investigate the copper mines of Lake Superior. Joliet returned to Quebec in 1669 by way of the Lower Lakes. At the mouth of Kettle Creek he hid his canoe.

In 1759 the British occupation occurred and Pontiac was the chief of the Indians on the north shore of Lake Erie. There are two Indian villages near us - Oneida and Muncey - and there an Indian School called Mount Elgin is situated. It was first built on the Chamber farm by an Ojibway chief, the Reverend Peter Jones in 1829. Rev. S. Rice was the first supervisor of the Institute and he was succeeded by Rev. S. Rose and several others, among the later ones Rev. S.R. McVitty.

At this Institute a 1000 acre farm is managed, 120 boys and girls are educated yearly and the career of each of these Indian children is followed. A great number of the boys is serving overseas at the present time.

We here in Southwold read and know of the evolution of the white people from the settler who cleared the land, the farmers who lived off the land and burned their own fuel and the age now of the agriculturist who lives by scientifically working his land and as Pauline Johnson, the Canadian Indian Poetess, has said: - "We've yet to make our money, we've yet to make our fame.

But we have gold and glory in our clean colonial name;
And every man's a millionaire if only he can brag
That he was born in Canada beneath the British Flag."

"Rhea G. Lyle"

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All the past we leave behind,
We debouch upon a newer, mightier
world, varied world.
Fresh and strong the world we seize,
world of labour and the march.
Pioneers; O Pioneers;

Walter Whitman:

Chapter 2

EARLY RECORDS OF THE DISTRICT

The Chapter will be early records of Middlemarch and our District, and though the first chapter has taken us far back into the past, today it is difficult to picture our district as it was about 150 years ago. However I will strive to tell something of the life of Colonel Talbot, the founder of the Talbot Settlement of which this district is a part; then of St. Thomas which as a village was named for the founder of the district; telling some of the changes of St. Thomas to 1872; and briefly telling of the near lying places, and lastly something of our own particular part of the settlement, S.S. #14 Southwold up to that date.

From the book "St. Peter's Church, Tryconnell, 1827-1928," compiled by Anna F. Docker and John Pearce, is a concise account of Colonel Talbot.

At, Castle Malahide, Ireland on the 19th of July 1771, was born Thomas Talbot, one of a family of seven sons and five daughters. The Talbot De Malahide was one of the nine great houses which survived the war of the Roses. Thomas Talbot received a comission in the Army at the early age of eleven years, and was at once retired on half pay to complete his education. In 1787 and 1788 he was aide-de camp to the Marquis of Buckingham. Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, his brother aide being Arthur Wellesley afterwards Duke of Wellington. In 1790 Talbot joined the 24th Regiment at Quebec, and upon the arrival of Governor Simcoe in 1791 became his private and conficential secretary, and proceeded with him to Upper Canada.

On February 4, 1793 Governor Simcoe and his party, which included Lieutenant Talbot left Newark, and proceeded along Lake Erie. This was Talbot's first view of his future home, and apparently it must have been a pleasant one, or he would not have turned his back on military and court life as he did a few years later. He returned

to England the following year. Colonel Talbot returned to Canada in 1801. On May 21, 1803 he landed at the mouth of a creek in Dunwich, and there, on the brow of a hill overlooking lake and valley took up his abode for the remainder of his life. As an officer he obtained a large grant of land some 5000 acres in the southern part of the township, and was to receive an additional grant for every settler he induced to locate on the lands over which his jurisdiction extended. His district extended from Long Point to the Detroit River. With Thomas Talbot came George Crane, a discharged soldier of the British Army, settling later in Dunwich as the first settler. This Notice was taken from the original copy, owned by Mrs. George King and depicts the character of Colonel Talbot. He was a true Br. Subject.

NOTICE

Having seen the proceedings of different meetings held in the Talbot Settlement, on the subject of imagined grievances, and finding that it is now necessary to ascertain the real sentiments of the Inhabitants so as at once to put down the fever (by a few only) manifested, to encourage disaffection to the British Government, I give this notice, recommending a general meeting of my Settlers on St. George's Day, the 23rd of April next, at the King's Arms at St. Thomas, at noon, when I shall attend.

Thomas Talbot,
Father of Talbot Settlement.

Port Talbot, March 19, 1832

Col. Talbot was buried in St. Peter's Cemetary, Tryconnell 1853, one of the most beautiful spots in the county. To the south is the Lake Erie and a short distance away is St. Peter's Church, built in 1827. One of the oldest churches in constant use. There worship still many descendants of the pioneer families. In this church is a memorial window to Elgin's Victory Cross hero, in the first Great War, Ellis Sifton. Connected with the name of Colonel Talbot are those of Colonel Mahlon Burwell a surveyor who came from New Jersey in 1809. For his serviced as surveyor he came into possession of large tracts of land in different parts of the country, Port Burwell is named for him. Both he and his wife are buried in Burwell Park Cemetary. He was the great grandfather of Mrs. E. V. Heal, wife of the organist of Knox

Church St. Thomas.

Colonel Bostwick, in 1912 was one of the first settlers of Port Stanley. He died at Port Stanley in 1849. Port Stanley was named for Lord Stanley who visited Colonel Talbot.

ST. THOMAS

St. Thomas was named for the founder of the Talbot Settlement. 1810 was the earliest date of settlement when a few families took up land, among them Rapelje, Mandeville, Drake, and Curtis, erected their homes on the crest of the western hill near Pleasant Street. According to Miss Lewis the name of Stirling was at one time given to the settlement at the foot of Talbot Hill. In 1812 the hamlet of St. Thomas was occupied by General McArthur and a force of American soldiers numbering 1000, who made raids upon the live stock and devastated crops and buildings of the settlers. Until 1817 there was no store in the Talbot Settlement. In that year James, brother of Hon. John Hamilton landed a quantity of goods at Port Stanley and kept a store in connection with Mr. John Warren, for many years. This general store was at the foot of the hill on the London Rd.

In 1824 the Old English Church was built on land donated in 1821 by Daniel Rapelje, said to be the oldest church between the Grand and Detroit rivers. It was made of bricks, made in the valley below and coated with rough cast mortar. Service is held here once a year, and many visit both the church and churchyard where many of the pioneer families of this district rest. A very interesting book on "The Story of Old St. Thomas Church" by the late C. O. Ermatinger, belongs to Mrs. Frnak Tufford, St. Thomas. There is a list of 46 owners and renters of pews, among them are some familiar names: Col. Talbot, Col. Burwell, Edward Ermatinger, Thomas Fatcher, Doctor Duncombe, Richard B. Nicols, David Parish, Col. Bostwick, Henry Payne, Mrs. Mandeville, John Coyne, Thomas Lindop and Charles Row.

In 1824 on a stone erected as were many by the Elgin Historical Society are these words;

Near Site of
The Talbot Seminary
First School
of Secondary Education
In Talbot Settlement
1824
Erected by
Elgin Historical Society
1924

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I read these words standing at the corner of Stanley St. and Walnut St., a few days ago and the stone is on the Dingman Property. Perhaps some of the large trees that still shade the attractive lawn were about that early school. There was voluntary subscriptions of village and farmers to this school, first teachers were, Rev. Alec McIntosh and Mr. Stephens.

In, 1837 Mrs. Jameson, and English Authoress visited the Talbot Settlement and afterwards published her impressions in "Sketches In Canada". Her description of St. Thomas is very interesting. She was delighted with it's beautiful situation, there were 700 people, and Col. Talbot called it his capital, she saw there three churches, three taverns and two newspapers.

In the early stages of the revolution of 1837 the Government, so a story tells questioned a St. Thomas magistrate, regarding the report that the Scotch of North Yarmouth were disaffected and likely to join the rebels. The reply was: "The Scotch are all right, all they need is a minister." So in 1837 the year in which Queen Victoria ascended the throne a Presbyterian Congregation was organized.

One of the early ministers Rev. J. Fraser was master also of the St. Thomas Grammar School. He also served the Pres. Congregation at Fingal. We can realize something of the courageous spirit of this man who because of his education and calling did so much to help the early settlers.

In 1851 Township of Yarmouth built the old Township Hall. David Parish was the first Reeve.

In 1852 St. Thomas became incorporated. Population was 1300. At this time a portion of the County of Middlesex was set apart as new county and out of compliment to the Earl of Elgin, Governor-General 1847-1854, was Elgin, St. Thomas it's capital.

In 1852 Court House was built, this was partially destroyed by fire in 1898.

In 1860 population of St. Thomas was 1,750. The first railroad, London & Port Stanley was built in 1856. In 1870 population was 1800 but rapidly increased in the years to follow.

Now about some early records in this district. In 1815 David Gilbert was the first settler of the North Branch of Talbot Rd. his log home burned down and for sometime he existed on hickory nuts and corn.