

buildings. It is well over one hundred years since the settlement was begun, and the present generation is enjoying the fruits of the tireless pioneers' labours.

In 1858 a post office was established. This was brought about through the influence of Colonel Talbot. The name of the community was changed to "Talbotville Royal", a fine sounding name which it still retains. At present the post office is situated in the general store, and the store-keeper is also the post-master.

Economic Situation and Industries

The only industry of the community is farming. The soil, sandy loam to clay loam, is excellent for the growing of wheat, beans, corn, oats and hay. Dairying, the raising of beef cattle, and the raising of swine are carried out quite extensively throughout the community. There is a ready and steady market for all of these products. Milk and cream are shipped to dairies and milk factories in St. Thomas, Alymer, London and Paynes' Mills. A large number of dairy cattle are shipped to the United States each year from this district. The marketable beef and swine are sold to packing plants in St. Thomas and London, or to drovers who in turn ship the animals to Toronto or Montreal markets.

Nearly all of the farmers of this district own their farms. Most of the farms contain one hundred acres, but there are a few larger farms throughout the district. Produce such as wheat, beans, and oats are sold to the Farmers' Co-operative in St. Thomas. Nearly all of the farmers are members of the Co-operative. They get all of their farm needs from the Co-op. and at the end of the year they receive patronage returns. In three years this co-operative, "The Elgin Co-operative Services", has expanded from a small elevator and chopping mill to a

large concern with two branches. Last year it did one and a half million dollars worth of business.

Churches and Religious Situation

The story of the rural community of Talbotville is very closely connected with the history of the church all down through the years. As early as 1825, services were conducted in private homes. The minister travelled from place to place on horse back because, in some places the roads were almost impassable. Then services were conducted in the log school house, later in the frame school-house. In 1856 a large frame church was built on lot 14, east of the north street. This church was dedicated on August 2nd, 1856.

In 1878, a fine large brick church was built by the Methodists in the village. At the time of church union, ¹⁹²⁶ the church was taken over by the United Church of Canada. This church has been used continuously ever since. The present minister is Rev. A. R. Taylor (1949).

As Talbotville is only three miles from the city of St. Thomas, there is an element of changing or moving population, who work in the city and come out to live in the village for a short period of time. The newcomers who attend the local church are more quickly and easily assimilated into community life than those who stay outside the church, or attend church in the city. At church functions they become better acquainted with the better, more influential members of the community. Many of the newcomers some become prominent workers in the church, and they enjoy their newly made friendships.

A flourishing Sunday School also helps to create a good community spirit. Both the children of the community and their parents attend Sunday School. The Sunday School has an enrolment of approximately

one hundred members. At its classes, held every Sunday morning, the children are told Bible stories, while the oldre members study and discuss passages from the Bible. The Sunday School does an excellent job of distributing religious literature and the better type of reading material throughout the community.

The community contains the usual women's church organizations. There are the Women's Missionary Society, the Women's Association, the Mission Circle, the Mission Band and the Baby Band. The Women's Association act as the "house-keeper" of the church. They hire and pay the janitor of the church, buy the supplies, and every five years they pay for the redecorating of the church. These church organizations have very large memberships, and they are doing very good work throughout the community.

The church choir assists in the regular church service. At present the choir is very small. Notmany years ago, Talbotville had one of the largest and best church choirs in that part of the country. In the last few years, for some unknown reason, interest in the choir has dropped considerably. But in spite of its smallness, the church choir is doing a very fine job.

Talbotville used to have a very large and active Young People's Society. It has not been functioning for the last two years. It is not sure what the reason for this really is, but the long, dry, and uninteresting meetings that were sometimes held, might of had something to do with it. Also there were more exciting places to go to, and more exciting things to do in the near-by city of St. Thomas. It is difficult to say which one of the two was the direct cause, but, as the attendance at the weekly meeting dropped very low, it was decided to discontinue holding the meetings.

For many years, the minister lived in the parsonage beside the church, but two years ago, our church joined a circuit with the Town Line, and Yarmouth centre, and now our minister lives at Yarmouth Centre and drives eight miles to Talbotville to preach to us on Sunday mornings, and to attend any religious meetings.

The residents of Talbotville feel that their church is a real community center and is doing a splendid job.

Schools and Educational Organizations

Talbotville has a one-roomed rural public school, with one teacher and a board of three rural school trustees. The enrolment is about thirty-five pupils.

Talbotville had one of the first schools in this district. About 1827, the first school was conducted in the little log school house by a teacher named Solomon Savarine. This did not continue for long. About 1829 the settlers decided to build a new log school house at the northeast corner of the cross-roads, where the Greyhound Wayside Inn now stands. At this time the settlement extended three or four miles east and west, and south to Kettle Creek, and two miles north of the cross-roads. The building had a fire-place, slab desks and seats and a birch rod -- the old theory, "Spare the rod and spoil the child", was kept well in mind. The first teacher was a Mr. Price, and the subjects taught in this school were spelling (from Cobb's Speller), arithmetic and reading (generally out of the Old Testament).

An article of agreement was drawn up between the school-master and the settlers. The school-master received two dollars per quarter per pupil, and was boarded among the settlers free of charge.

In 1844, a new frame school-house was built about one quarter of a mile north of the cross-roads, where the present school-house now

stands. This building served its purpose for thirty years. Then in 1847, a new brick structure was erected on the same site. This one-roomed school is still in use. It has been kept in very good repair over these seventy-four years, and at present, has electric lighting and all modern equipment and conveniences. The present teacher is Miss Gwendolyn Goff, who receives a salary of seventeen hundred dollars per annum.

Besides the regular subjects of reading, writing and arithmetic, the pupils receive vocal and musical instruction each week from a visiting teacher. A very fine spirit of co-operation exists between the day school and the Sunday School. At Christmas time the two schools combine to put on the annual school Christmas concert in the church. The main reason for doing this is because most of the public school pupils are also members of the United Church Sunday School.

As pupils pass the High School Entrance examinations, they proceed to St. Thomas to continue their education at the Collegiate Institute or Vocational School. A new bus system, paid for by the rate payers of the district provides free transportation for any students wishing to attend high school.

Students may obtain further education at the St. Thomas Business College or Alma (Ladies) College in St. Thomas. A number of the young people of the community have received further education by attending the numerous universities throughout the province of Ontario.

Many of the boys and girls have gone out from the little one-roomed school to occupy important positions, while others have remained at home to carry on in their own community.

Communication vs. Isolation

Talbotville is well supplied with means of communication. It has two of Ontario's main highways running through it. It is a main stop for all Greyhound buses, because at Talbotville there is a large bus depot. This community is serviced by a rural telephone system which is connected with the Bell Telephone System at St. Thomas. The residents receive daily newspapers from London and St. Thomas. Mail is delivered to the Talbotville post office twice daily, and the surrounding district is serviced by rural route number seven.

As it is only three miles to St. Thomas, many people go to the city for their amusement, such as movies, concerts and dances. They also go to St. Thomas and London to do their shopping. The nearness of the city may not be a good thing for this small community, as communication with the city by bus, private car, phone and mail is so convenient. People prefer to go to the city where diversion is easily obtained without effort on their part.

The local Women's Institute and United Church organizations help to counteract this by providing local entertainment, such as card parties, concerts, bazaars, teas, Sunday evening "fire-side" services and other forms of amusement. Most of this entertainment is put on to raise funds for worthy causes. These help to get the people better acquainted and teach them how to work together for a common cause.

At present there appears to be a move, on the part of the residents of St. Thomas, to buy building lots outside of the city. Many lots have been bought and new homes are going up very rapidly. In a very short time the district between Talbotville and St. Thomas will be all built up and Talbotville will become a suburb of the city of St. Thomas.

What effect this will have on the community life of Talbotville - no one knows.

Population

Talbotville is a rural hamlet. It consists of an incorporated village and a surrounding farming district.

It has an estimated population of about 300 - 350 people. The inhabitants consist of four groups:

1. The more permanent farming people who have resided in this district all their lives.

2. The people who go to St. Thomas to work every day, in shops and factories, offices, etc. and return to their village homes for the night. Many of these people rent homes, and move out to live in the village for a short time, and so constitute a "moving" or "changing" population.

3. The business people of the village who conduct a general store, a butcher shop, a mill, a post office, three garages and service stations, and the Greyhound Wayside Inn (a bus terminal and restaurant).

The early inhabitants were mostly of English origin, many settlers being of United Empire Loyalist stock. Although many changes in population have taken place, their descendants still live in the community. In later years, farms have continually been sold, and new people have come into the community. There is no doubt that the next few years will see more changes in ownership of land, as a few of the younger generation are staying on the farms, or taking over farms as older farmers retire.

Informal Groups

The main "loafing" place of the community is the corner service station. This is more evident in the winter when the farmers of the surrounding district have nothing more to do than to stand around and talk. There is always a euchre or knock rummy game in progress at a small, improvised table in the corner of the service station. During the summer, the farmers gather at the corner store and service station on Saturday evenings to discuss topics of agriculture and community gossip.

Recreational Situation

The main recreation for the younger members of the community in the summer is playing softball. The Talbotville softball team plays in a township league. For the last six years they have been champions of this league. At present there is a lack of players. This has happened before. For a number of years there is a great interest in softball, then, for no apparent reason at all, there is a lull - no one is interested in playing the game at all. Then a group of fellows come along and revive the sport. A number of the better players of the community play on the more popular and faster teams in the city of St. Thomas.

The softball team has a very good softball diamond on the John R. Auckland farm. Two or three games are played there every week during the summer months. On Labour Day the ball club holds their annual softball tournament in which six teams, from the surrounding district compete for a prize of fifty dollars. It is an important holiday for the people of the surrounding country. They come there to see the fast games of softball and to visit with their friends.

Talbotville has an atheletic club formed six years ago by the members of the ball team. It has done good work in sending comforts to the sick and giving aid to unfortunate members of the community. It also buys equipment for the softball team and the hockey team. The club was started by donations from the merchants of the community and is called The Merchants Atheletic Club. Now it is self-supporting, getting most of its money from the receipts of the annual tournament held on Labour Day.

During the war the local Red Cross held weekly euchre parties and dances. These are still held occasionally. Other forms of entertainment within the community are plays, held in the school hall, social evenings, the annual fowl supper and the annual Christmas Concert.

The younger members of the community go to the neighboring city of St. Thomas to attend shows and dances. In the summer they frequent the summer resort of Port Stanley for swimming, boating and dancing at one of Canada's largest open air ballrooms.

The community contains two roadhouses. One is situated right in the village, the other is just south of the village. They are frequented mostly by residents of St. Thomas and London. Recently both of these roadhouses received licences to hold cocktail parties. This is a trend back to the old days when there were three hotels in Talbotville. For the last ninety ^{years} years, Talbotville has been strictly dry. Now a movement is on foot to make it just the opposite, although there will be definitely no support for this from the older and more temperant members of the community.

Health

There are no doctors residing in Talbotville, but there are eight or nine registered nurses living in the community. The health of the community is generally good. The health of the public school children is checked each month by a nurse and doctor, sent to the school by the county council. All students attending secondary school in St. Thomas are compelled to have a regular medical examination by their family doctor. Nearly every family in the community has group health insurance, which protects them financially in case of a serious sickness or accident.

Social Welfare

There is very little unemployment in this district. Those who do not wish to work at agriculture obtain employment in the nearby city of St. Thomas. Many of the farmers on small farms, take part-time employment in St. Thomas. This is more evident in the winter months when there is very little to do on the average farm.

There are very few families on relief in this community. It is only accepted through necessity. This type of charity is looked after by the township council. All members of the community are always ready and willing to help out any one who is in need. A few years ago when a farmer of the community was in the hospital at seeding time, a number of his neighbors put in his entire crop for him. Four years ago, when one of the leading dairy men of that district had the misfortune of having his barns burn, his neighbors held numerous bees to rebuild his barns. This is the way it has always been in this community, every one is ready to help some one less fortunate. I believe it will always remain that way.