

Third hotel owned by Donald McKellar in 1858 burned in 1874.

First doctor, 1850, Dr. Hensely followed by Dr. Fleck, Dr. Cline (Sr.) 1855-63. Paid Dr. McCallum \$1000 forfiet and practised till death in 1876. Dr. Spencer 1864-1892. Dr. J. B. Campbell 1867-1888 sold to Dr. M. Campbell who sold to Dr. Chas. Cline in 1890 who sold to Dr. Meldrum in 1896, who is still here. Dr. H. E. Arkell began practise in 1897 still here, Dr. Franklin 1890 stayed a short time, Dr. Archie McTavish in 1892-92.

First school in 1845 in the house now owned by W. H. Soole. First school house 1846 on the street between Wm. Dyer and W. T. Nugent, second school on the premises now owned by Hugh McCallum. The present school was built in 1887. First teacher Daniel Gillis, followed by Miss Christena Atkins, Omie Dyer, Solomon Smith, Miss Smith in 1853, D. Danard 1854, D. W. Eckhart 1855, Miss Walker 1856, Joseph Potts, W. W. Campbell, Doug McBrayne, Colin McArther (Sr) Archie McMillan, L. Fleckenstrene, Norman McDonald, Jas. H. Smith, Mr. Steele, J. O. Lewis, Mr. Hopkins, S. Baker, Carlton Luton, John Empey, W. R. Manning, Miss McLean, J. W. McRoberts and E. Wyatt who is there at present assisted by Miss Fanny Webster and Miss Mary McCord.

L. Tibbits opened a wagon shop in 1856 selling to S. Dumaw in 1858 who sold to John Wilson in 1859 and later taken over by Archie McKellar (1864)

First harness shop owned by H. Hemstreet 1855, sold to McPhail Bros. in 1862. Kirby Gregory harness shop 1860-1865. James Campbell harness shop 1867 still in business. Samuel Hull harness shop 1876-78. Alonzo Tibbits harness shop 1857-59. Eli Hungerford Furniture and Cabinet Maker 1850-74. R. J. Fonger blacksmith 1878 still here. Hugh McCallum blacksmith 1890 still in business.

Post office moved from Squire Mannings one mile north of Belmont 1853.

First stage run by John Prowse 1855, 3 trips per week until 1862 when a daily mail started by Lewis Olmstead 1862-1878, followed by George Davidson and Randall Learn 1880-82, John Charles 1882-86, now of the Belmont House followed by Chancey Barrows 1886-90, and again John Charles 1890-97 and then route taken over by Arthur Christie who is still running it.

First flax mill owned by Robert Hughes and John Nicol 1866-71, when it was burned, rebuilt and burned in 1874, rebuilt and sold to D. McKellar and son in 1878-79. Then it was leased to a company D.F. Jelly, Dr. J. B. Campbell, Wm. Dyer and W. H. Odell, burned in 1879, the lessees paying McKellar and Son \$1000. for failing to insure mill. Second Mill by Donald, Archie and John McKellar 1869-72, succeeded by Thomas Harkness and John McKellar 1872-75, then sold to Nicol Bros. who closed the mill.

In 1883 Smith Bros. bought a flax mill in Springfield and moved it to Belmont being in business till 1895 and then leased to a company - W. H. Odell, Secty. Treas. Wm. Dyer, W. H. Fawcett, W. H. Soole and Omie Dyer 1895-97, when the mill closed and was torn down in 1899.

Shoe shop owned by Robert Creamer 1854-66, Joshua Kendree 1866-69, Jas. Creamer 1869-72, Orlando Doan 1890, still in business.

David Hoover owned a bakery 1868-77 succeeded by Daniel Tibbitts 1877-80, James Kindree 1880-82, Lewis Kindree 1882-84, Alex Crawford 1884-86, Arch. McPhail 1886-97, Fred M. Farquhar 1897-99 succeeded by A. D. McCallum who is still in business.

Dr. Cline and R. Tooley owned a cheese factory 1869-74, Samuel Davidson 1874-84, John Evans 1884-98, W. Fitzpatrick 1898 still in business.

From 1858-75 John McNicol was in the grain and hog business, McNicol and Boyd 1875-83, McNicol still in business.

Adam Allison Bank and grain dealer 1885-91.

Credit Valley R.R. with A. Allison agent 1883 succeeded by Cook, Lusby, W. C. Forsythe 1894 to present time.

The first veterinary surgeon was D. R. Deacon 1878-80. Dr. Jas. Campbell 1888-89, King 1889-91, Guest 1893-94, McGuffin 1894-96, Cunningham 1896-98, A. D. McLachlin 1898, still in business.

The first butcher was Richard Wagoner in early seventies - 82, D. R. Dibb 1882-88, John McLary 1888-90, Harry L. Smith, McLary, Geo. W. Falls who still is in business.

THE STORY OF BELMONT

To Mr. Orlo Miller we are indebted for the tale of a strange coincidence which brought together in the founding of Belmont the descendants of two knights who together fought at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. The tale is from a salute to Belmont, broadcast over CFPL London, November 13, 1949, by Mr. Miller on his program "IT SO HAPPENED."

In 1835 there was no Belmont. The site was part of Joshua Odell's farmyard--lot 1, concession 7, Westminster. In the early 1840's Joshua broke up his farm into building lots and Belmont had been born. By 1850 Belmont was becoming an important community. A wealthy farmer arrived from Eastern Ontario--Thomas Nugent. He bought the farm adjoining Plymouth, extending from concession 6 to 7 in N.D. (McBride's). As Belmont expanded he broke up part of his farm into building lots. Mr. Nugent was a generous man. He gave from his farm, land for all three churches and money as well.

When Joshua Odell and Tom Nugent shook hands for the first time in 1851 on the main street of Belmont it was as total strangers. How history must have smiled to see, nearly eight centuries after the Battle of Hastings, the descendants of two of William's knights meet and together found the Ontario village of Belmont.

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Belmont was surveyed in 1851 and the Post Office was established April 1, 1853, with Squire Manning as Postmaster. Belmont thrived and almost every need could be supplied through its stores and industries. A carding mill to dye, card and manufacture wool, stood on the creek bank. There were three flax mills whose owners rented hundreds of acres from the farmers to grow flax, and hired as many as 500 Indians and squaws to do the work. There were saw mills, grist mills, cider mill, cheese factory, carriage works, harness shops, etc., etc. In 1875 Belmont, with a population of nearly 500 "was an extremely prosperous village considering its lack of railway facilities, but a good gravel road had been finished connecting it with Nilestown on the Commissioner's Road.

In 1880 the Credit Valley R.R. was built. Return fare to St. Thomas was 25¢. Trains were crowded as people took their produce to the city and spent their money there. Belmont business was being ruined and the cheap fares were ended. The C.V.R. became the C.P.R. and passenger service after 77 years will be withdrawn September 9, 1957.

As years passed, roads were opened up and business diminished until now the grist mill and Borden's are its sole industries. Today it is a village of commuters.

For a century or more Belmont continued to be part of Middlesex. As time went on the village expanded into Elgin. This caused little comment until Middlesex County Council were informed that Belmont wished to secede to Elgin. Final approval was given to annexation by South Dorchester, April 6, 1948.

Time has wrought its changes. With Village Waterworks presently being installed, Belmont appears to be again on the verge of expansion. It may again become a great Industrial Centre. Who knows?

We salute the Pioneers who came, cleared the forest, blazed the first trails, built the first homes, schools and churches, who sowed and reaped, and as they prospered formed their Societies and Fairs that they might improve their Agricultural Status.

*From: A History of The Yarmouth and Belmont Agricultural Societies
- Written On The Occasion of Their Centennial 1853-1957
By: E. Nelson L. Moore*

There were 3 or 4 taverns in Belmont seventy-five years ago. One was owned by Mr. Prouse, another, the house now run by Mr. Cloes was erected by Mr. John Gill Odell, and on the site where Miss Connety's (McKens) and Miss McKellar's (Cornishes) houses are, was a large combined store and tavern run by Mr. McKellar. The name McKellar seems to be associated with almost every enterprise in the early history of the village.

Almost every need of the community was supplied through the industries of Belmont. If one required clothing, one of the two tailor shops was visited, one being on the corner of where Mr. J.J. Campbell's lawn now is. (Wilton's house). Here, measurements were taken and all kinds of clothing made to order. Or if one's requirements called for shoes, one went to one of the shoe shops where a specialty was made of fine high-top kid boots which were in high favor with the young gentlemen. A general store, worthy of mention, was that run by Mr. Fawcett where Mr. Church (Mr. MacIntyre) now conducts his business. There was even a photograph gallery which did a flourishing business in tin-types.

One must not forget the Cattle Fairs which contributed so largely to the prosperity of the community. These were held every third Wednesday during April, June, September, and November. Drovers of livestock were taken in by the farmers of the surrounding district; buyers came and in this way many head of cattle, horses and sheep changed hands. Incidentally the taverns did a big business the same day both over the bar and with their excellent twenty-five cent dinners.

If you walk along the creek you will probably see a large stone lying in the water somewhere below the school, which is all that remains of a busy mill which was burned down eighty years ago. Another saw and grist mill was run by Mr. McCrea and did a large business. For many years Mr. Horace Jones was valued as main sawyer in this mill. The cheese factory which most of you remember was located where the bowling green is. It was built by Dr. Cline and Mr. Tooley, later sold to Mr. Davidson, then to Mr. Evans who sold to Mr. Fitzpatrick who conducted it until he sold it to the C.M.P. who tore down the building.

Perhaps the greatest industry was the flax mill. There were two at one time--one where the school is and one behind Mrs. Bowey's house (behind McNabs). One run by Mr. McKellar was taken down and moved to Springfield. The other was destroyed by fire. The mill owners rented the land from the farmers and grew flax on it. Indians and squaws were employed to do the work, as many as 500 being here at one time. Hundreds of acres of land were devoted to flax raising, one drawback being the land became infested with mustard.

A public-spirited man was Mr. Nugent, who lived where Mr. H.J. Barons now resides (McBrides). He gave from his farm enough land for all three churches and also the little graveyard on the east side of the village. Only a few broken stones remain to tell where some of the pioneers lay in this cemetery.

The first Methodist church was held in the building now used as Mr. Baker's store (Wilton's store) and always there was a minister and an assitant. The present Anglican church was dedicated 65 years ago and the first Presbyterian church, 75 years ago on its present site. Sunday School was held only in the summer in these churches, all the children going barefooted.