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CANADA

CONTRACT

FOR THE

Conveyance of His Majesty's Mails

THIS AGREEMENT entered into this Seventeenth day of February
in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and thirty between
Nathan H. Gray & George Howey of the Village of Eden
in the County of Elgin in the Province of Ontario,
and Dominion of Canada Lumberman & Gentlemen & hereinafter called the Contractor his Heirs Executors
and Administrators of the one part and the Honourable Peter J. Veniot
Postmaster General of Canada acting for and on behalf of His Majesty His Heirs and Successors of the
other part

1. WITNESSETH that for and in consideration of the sum of money hereinafter mentioned the said
Contractor engages COMMENCING the First day of April, A.D. ~~1929~~
to convey or cause to be conveyed His Majesty's Mails between 1930

Eden Post Office
and

Canadian Pacific Railway Station

18 times per week each way in the manner and under
the stipulations hereinafter set forth serving on each and every trip or journey all the Post Offices now
established or which may be established on the route during the continuance of this contract it being agreed
and understood however that in case the Postmaster General makes any change or changes by way either
of increase or decrease in the services which the Contractor hereby agrees to perform a corresponding
ratable increase or decrease as the case may be shall be made in the amount to be paid to the Contractor
the amount of such increase or decrease to be fixed and finally declared by the Postmaster General.

- The route to be pursued in the conveyance of the Mails to be via the usually travelled road.
- The computed distance which is accepted by the Contractor as the basis of this Contract is 1/5 Mile.
- The Mails to be conveyed in a suitable vehicle.

page 2 Story of Eden as told by Nathan Gray.

changed for a fresh pair and changed again at Tillsonburg, and arrived at Ingersoll about 11:30 a.m. The time of arriving and departing was stated in the contract signed by the Government official and the representative of the company. A clause of the contract stated a tin horn must be carried and sounded on arrival and again on departure of the stage at each post office. Fresh horses began the return trip leaving Ingersoll at 1:00 p.m. Horses were changed on the return trip at Tillsonburg using the horses that had made the morning trip, arriving at Pt. Burwell at 6:00 pm., having accomplished the sixty-four mile trip with all the post office stops, changing of horses and delivery of express, etc., in twelve hours.

After the building of the Lake Erie, Tillsonburg and Pacific railroad, now a branch of the C.P.R., the railroad secured the contract for carrying the mail and the stage ceased to operate. With the coming of the automobile, it was found more economical to carry the mail by auto directly to the post offices and save the expense of an extra person at each station to convey the mail from the train to the post office. Mail delivery to the villages has therefore returned to the original plan except that autos whisk it over concrete paved roads much more rapidly than horses could draw the heavy stage coach over the plank road of earlier days.

The portion of No. 19 Highway from Pt. Burwell to Ingersoll was purchased from the farm owners by the Ingersoll and Pt. Burwell Plank Road Company and covered with four inch pine plank. The price paid for many years was \$4.00 per M.B. feet. As pine became more difficult and price became higher the company gave up their charter and abandoned the road. Gravel from gravel pits along the way was the next material used for hard surfacing but, with the coming of the automobiles and trucks, a better surfacing was found necessary and concrete surfacing has been found more satisfactory. The Company established ten toll gates between Pt. Burwell and Ingersoll from which an inspector collected the receipts every ten days and gave orders to the road caretakers for repairs he found requiring to be done.

The Great Western railroad brought mail, passengers, freight and express from far away points to Ingersoll. Later the Canada Southern railroad, now a branch of the Michigan Central connecting Detroit with Buffalo, and later the Grand Trunk, covering much the same territory, both calling at Tillsonburg brought services much closer to Eden. Goods for the village stores were teamed by horses and wagons from the railroad to their destination, James Ostrander of Tillsonburg being the first and Walter Weeks being the last to operate this service.

John Nethercott, an English shoe cobbler, being the first postmaster at Eden that I remember, I never heard of one before him. Mr. Nethercott had received a fair education as well as learning his trade before leaving England. He was an active member of the

Methodist church, the church building standing about a mile south of Eden (present site) at the corner of the Ridge Road and the Plank Road, on the farm now owned and operated by Offa Davis. Other families prominent in connection with the Methodist church were the Howays, Ostrandors and Buchners. Another prominent family were the L'Allemands. Soon after coming to this country they dropped the "L" and became plain Allemand. This family were quite musical leading the singing at the church services and were often invited to sing at both local and other community centres as they sang quite as well in Parisian French as in English, as that was their native language, English being acquired with an accent after coming to this country.

At a later date the Methodists erected a fine brick church building on north Main street in the village of Eden. This building was erected about the year 1885. After the union the Methodist church ceased to exist as an independent organization and the United Church decided to close the Eden Church. The once prosperous organization came to an end and the solid brick building, built at great sacrifice, was sold for the paltry sum of \$150.00, and changing ownership at a much higher price was converted into a service station where ice cream, hot dogs, sandwiches as well as gas, oil, tires and other accessories may be purchased.

In November, 1848, a Baptist Church was organized in the first public building in the neighbourhood, a log school house (about where Goodsell Wilson's garage now stands) near the first community cemetery. This was known as the Beals' school. Before organizing preaching services were conducted in Abram Havens barn, a mission preacher riding on horse back through the woods, moccasin telegraph conveying the news that the preacher would be present for services at a certain date. At the organization Abram Havens was first named deacon and Mr. Beals was the only other deacon. Elijah Phelps was the first church clerk. Soon after organization members of the numerous Leach families became prominent and later the Stilwells were leaders in this Baptist church. A few years after the organization, a frame building was erected and dedicated as a place of worship about where Mrs. Wm. Roloson's house now stands. A few years later Edwin Gray offered to give the church sufficient land at the western approach to the village for the church building, a parsonage and a cemetery, and to move the building at his own expense.

After much discussion and some disagreement, his offer was accepted and the church building and two horse sheds were moved to the present location. A couple of years later a parsonage was built and through the influence of Courtland Gray the church building was decorated within and painted without, by the young people of the community. Some years later bees were organized among the members, the siding was stripped off the frame, the building then raised and a contractor built a brick Sunday School room basement and veneered the superstructure with brick, roofed the roof with slates, installed furnaces and

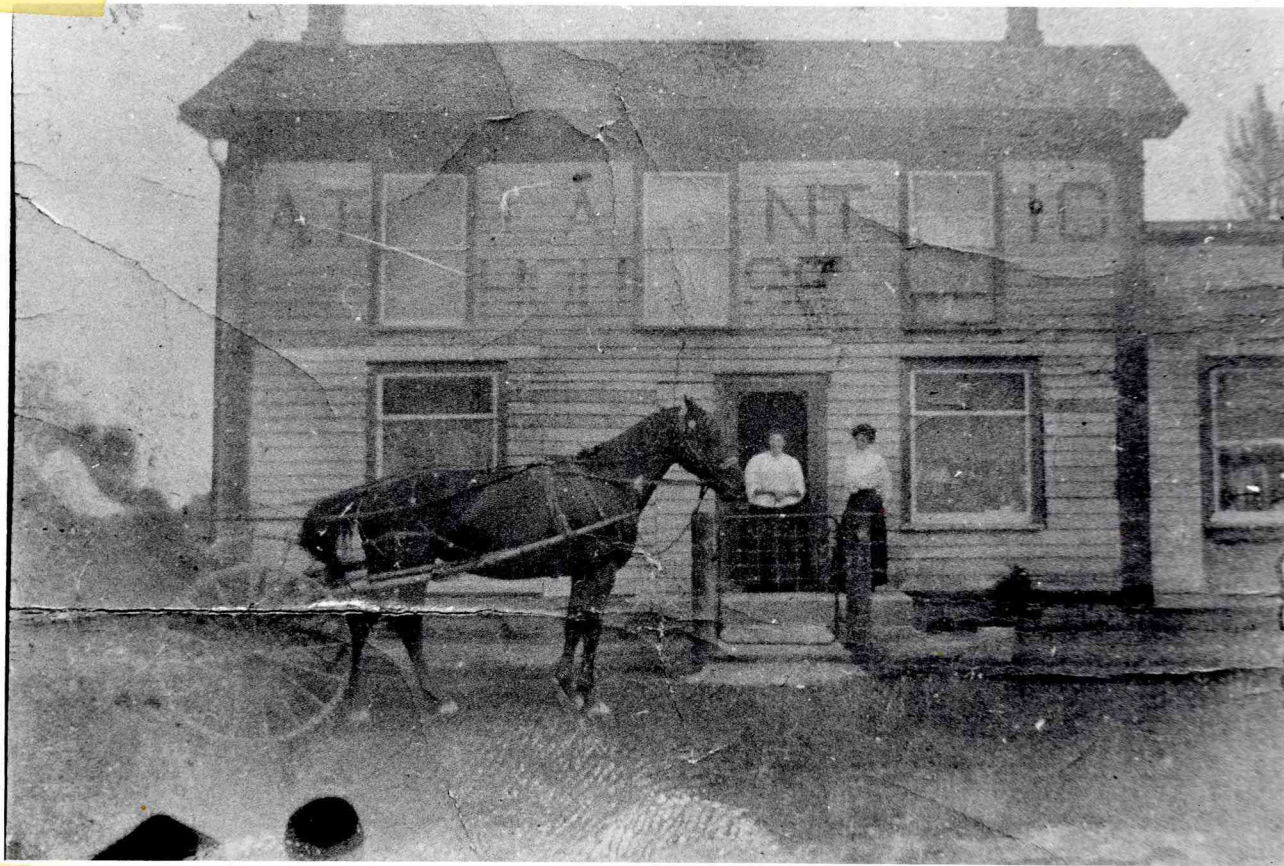
generally improved the building. This building still stands and the organization effected in 1848 is still active, descendants of the original founders together with others still carry on.

The first log school house was succeeded by a frame building erected in the village of Eden. This frame building which served its day as a school house is now serving as a town hall. A new brick two-roomed building on a new site in the western portion of the village is the present day school house. Edwin Gray was awarded the contract to erect this building, his tender being lowest on the condition that neighbourhood bees place the brick on the ground, which was done with sleighs. The plan for this building was adopted from the Vienna High school, the roof to be dome shaped, but the mason contractor secured the consent of the trustees to change to a gable roof for a financial consideration. As the gables were about finished a wind blew the west gable down and the mason claimed because of the extra labour, he lost money on the job.

In early days teachers boarded around at the homes of pupils. The first teacher I remember was Isaiah Daugherty, who being a married man had his own home and continued teaching until he formed a partnership with Haus Caulfield and purchased the general store from Edwin Gray, who had recently purchased it from Israel Stilwell. Nicholas Stilwell, son of William Stilwell, succeeded Mr. Daugherty as teacher and was the last to teach in the old frame building and the first to teach in the new brick building, having as his assistant Miss Chute, the daughter of the brick mason, builder of the new building. Any person having completed the public school course could obtain a third class teacher's certificate after attending a Model school for three months.

At the beginning of school after one summer holiday, Mr. Stilwell announced that Eden school had passed more teachers than Vienna high school and Tillsonburg public school combined. Tillsonburg did not have a high school for some years after this. Many pupils of Eden public school have qualified for teachers since those days. A fifth class continued to be taught at Eden public school long after surrounding schools had ceased this work. Pupils came from five surrounding schools to get their fifth class work at the Eden school.

A successful general store has been conducted at Eden since before I can remember. As nearly as I can remember John Chapman sold to Israel Stilwell, he to Edwin Gray and he to Caulfield & Daugherty. Caulfield and Daugherty each added a new house to Eden, Caulfield the one owned and occupied by Claude Wilson and Daugherty the one owned and occupied by Carmon Ball. Two other merchants each added a new house, Byron Madill, the one occupied by Emory Harvey and N.O. Stilwell present owner of the general store, the new house in which he now lives. There are more comparatively new houses than older houses in the village.



THE ATLANTIC HOUSE ON NORTH-EAST CORNER AT EDEN