

POKEY'S CORNERS, HALE'S CORNERS, LYONS

These were original names for Lyons. Pokey's Corners is supposed to have originated when someone living there found a poke (a pouch, or money-bag). For some years, it was known as Hale's Corners because Wm. Hale built a wayside Inn here prior to 1860. Some say it was changed to Lyons when that was the name of a brand of liquor sold at the tavern. A green lion's head was painted on the front of the tavern.

In 1860 Lyons contained a general store, a tavern, a pump factory, a wagon shop, and a blacksmith shop. Later the tavern was converted to a store and postoffice. In 1872 Albert Doan was postmaster; Thomas Wilkinson was the wagon maker; James B. CORSAN was the hotel proprietor; E. Ostrander was a medical doctor and surgeon.

Lyons was the only village wholly within South Dorchester.

It is evident that the village was expected to grow. Road allowances were surveyed and technically still exist. Between the second and third houses north of the corner is a strip of land nobody owns. This probably was to connect with the fairgrounds behind the Putnam home.

An Agricultural Society was formed in 1859 with E. McCredie as president and Geo. Gregory as vice-president. A School Fair was held in later years, with exhibits in the Township Hall and the calves across the road in the churchyard.

There was another road allowance extending east from Highway 73, about where the present Municipal building is, and turning north just east of the school-grounds.

The first Historical Society of Ontario was organized here.

**"For there are villages off the beaten track
Small villages whose history reaches back
To the first coming of the pioneers,
Who braved the hardships of the early years,
And built a nation beautiful and strong,
To which their children's children now belong"**

THE LYONS' STORE

South-west corner

Little is known of the owners of the first store at Lyons, except that the first council met there in 1852. A Mr. Armstrong is credited with operating it, but we have no date to verify it.

Thomas Winder, a carpenter who learned his trade in England and a Mr. Baker built the present store on the southwest corner. T. Winder lived in Lloyd McCallum's house west of Legg's store. His son, Gordon, took over its operation from him and Hazel (Ferguson) McCallum came to work for him in 1920 for \$4.50 a week and her board. In 1926 she and Lorne purchased the store and faithfully served the community for thirty-five years. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Their daughter, Phyllis, followed in her mother's footsteps and she and her husband, Carman Goble, carried on in the store until October 1974, when it was taken over by Jack and Donna Die.

In March 1975 they sold it to Peter Wall who in two years time sold it to George Klein.

Mrs. McCallum, after serving customers for over fifty years, still remembers when bread was selling for five cents a loaf and butter for twenty-eight cents a pound.

After retiring, Lorne and Hazel built a lovely insul-brick house just south of the store on a lot they had purchased from Mary (Cline) Whyte in 1945. Later they built a garage and in 1975 aluminum siding was put on the house. Lorne passed away on Feb. 2, 1963.

Lyons' store showing
the gas pump, and the
house attached to the
store.



LYONS

North-west corner

At an early date the north-west corner of Lyons was owned by a Fullerton family who, for years, lived east of Lyons on the Arn Lindsay farm, now Bill Nesbitts. Fullerton's bought the Hugh McNeil farm, then sold out to Peter Putnam but reserved a lot and built a house on the corner. This house was sold to Nelson Cline. Later it burned down and was never rebuilt.

Gordon and Mabel Legg purchased this corner lot from Giles Martin and his parents who lived in a house just to the north. One condition was written into the contract: "If the two maple trees he planted in 1885 were on the fence line, they would not be removed". They are still there nearly one hundred years later.

The Leggs moved the Darrow house from Kingsmill on to this lot. The house was cut in half with a crosscut saw--one person in the upstairs and another downstairs, together operating the saw. One half at a time was mounted on a frame and loaded on a truck. The whole operation took two weeks.

Moving was not new to the Leggs. Previous to moving to Lyons they had moved a house to where Gordon Pettits now live. That time they used rollers and thirteen teams of horses.

Gordon and Mabel operated their store and gas station until 1960 when Mr. Legg's health failed. He passed away in 1974 and Mrs. Legg sold out to John Peters, and took up residence in Aylmer.



This is the house that was cut in two and moved to this site May 22, 1940. Moving was delayed by a snowstorm May 3.

-Gordon Legg's
gas station
about 1950

submitted by
Mrs. Gordon Legg

LYONS' TAVERN

South-east corner

The home of Neil and
Blanche McCallum



This building on the
southeast corner is probably
the oldest building in Lyons.

It was built as a wayside Inn by Wm. Hale, prior to 1860. Later it became a store and postoffice operated by a Mr. Robinson. Before the days of rural mail, James Meikle of Crossley-Hunter used to drive to Lyons, get the mail for the Maple Leaf community, as Crossley-Hunter was then called, and the neighbours came there to get it. The mail was brought to Lyons by a stage coach that made regulars trips between the towns of Aylmer and Dorchester.

Neil bought the building from a Mr. Philips and moved there from the MacVicar place, lot 13, con. 9, before enlisting in the First World War.

Originally, there was a fairly wide verandah across the front, one set back in, and one at the back. Neil boarded up the large store window and put in two new ones. He also removed a kitchen at the rear, and put on new siding.

In front of the house were two posts with steel pipe between them for customers to tie up their horses.



A board fence once extended along the side road, near which stood the old iron pump where Neil pumped water daily for the house and the horses, cows, and pigs in the barn.



These barns were most likely used as stables in connection with Hales Inn.

A very essential building before the days of indoor plumbing.

With his team of horses, Neil was only one of many local men who were employed at building the foundation of the good roads we now have in this area. Men with teams and wagons hauled seventy freight-car loads of crushed stone from the railway station at Little Aylmer to build the road from the railway tracks to the Springfield road. During Mitchell Hepburn's term of office as Premier of Ontario, this road was paved in 1938-9 and became Highway 73.

At that time, the road east of Lyons was a mud road. Under a road boss one morning, 100 men with shovels, (there were no mechanical loaders in those days), teams and sleighs, and gravelled it from the Springfield road to Lyons. Lorne McCallum drove one of Jas. Mitchell's three teams that took part that day. Neil worked with his team and grader levelling the gravel.

Crushed stone was also hauled from the Little Aylmer station to build the road from the Round Barn, west to Highway 74.

Before this, these roads became axle deep with mud in Spring and fence-high with snow in Winter. Cars used in Summer were replaced by cutters and buggies or sleighs and wagons.

NEIL McCALLUM'S c't'D

In 1927 Neil purchased a Model T Ford Coupe. After driving it ,always spotless and shiny,for nearly forty years,he sold it as an antique to a dealer in Pontiac Michigan.



THE TOWNSHIP HALL

The Township Hall was situated on the north-east corner at Lyons.Originally it was a Union Church on Lot 6, concession 10 of South Dorchester.The Council purchased it and moved it to Lyons.Council met here until the new Township building was built in 1967.

Clarence Willsey bought the Hall and sold it again in 1972 to be used as a family residence.

THE EARL BAGNALL HOME (part of Lot 12, Con. 11)

This home was purchased by Earl Bagnall on March 5, 1931. A street had been surveyed on the east side of this lot and was purchased by a previous owner and added to the lot.

Former owners were James Berdan, Tom Bellmore, Merritt Charlton, Miles Charlton, and George Appleford. A U.S.A. Senator, Claude Blake, one lived there, as did George Putnam, the first superintendent of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario.

James Berdan moved there in the early 1900's. They had three boys and one girl. Mrs. Berdan was a member of the Women's Institute and the Ladies Aid. When anyone in the community needed help, day or night, she was always willing to give assistance. Mr. Berdan worked at the McCredie tile yard and helped build the round barn.

The original house with a cottage roof was burned on May 14th, 1911. The fire started by a spark from an overheated chimney. The present house was bought from John Simpson and moved there. A barn at the rear of the lot burned in the late thirties. As there were no telephones, Earl rang the school bell to summon aid. The volunteers were able to save the cow and chickens by hurling frozen earth into the fire.

In 1961, this home was sold to Joe and Joyce Webber.

The Bagnall's had three children; Kathleen (Mrs. Clarence Bruce), Mary (Mrs. Chris Pearson), and Janet (Mrs. George Wood). Earl was the caretaker of the school and the Municipal Hall for many years. Mrs. Bagnall was active in the local Women's Institute and also at the District and the F.W.I.O. levels.

The Bagnall's also owned 3/5 of an acre of land to the west of the school. This they bought in 1946 from Mrs. W.J. Boyes. About 1950 Gesia Bagnall bought this land, built a house at the west side of it and moved here from Highgate.

RUSSELL MOORE'S HOUSE (next to Putnam's in Lyons)

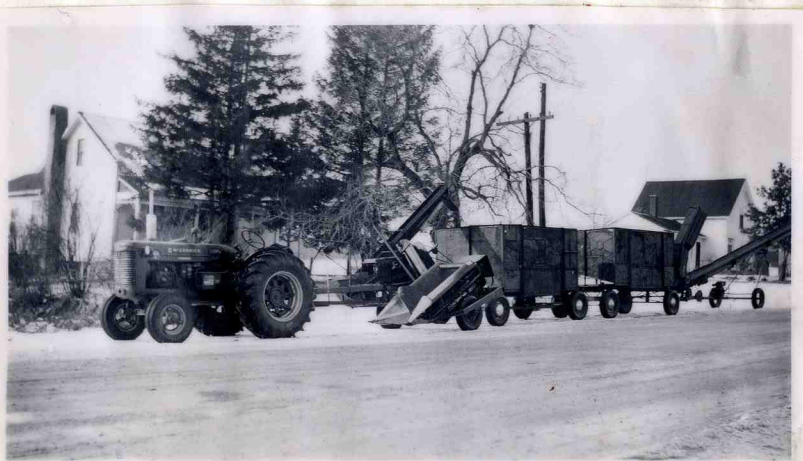


Russell Moore purchased this house in the 1930's. It had been the home of Lorne Martin's grandfather, Peter Putnam, and later of Charles Putnam of Putnam pumps.

Willson McCredie's uncle, Edwin, owned the second farm east of Lyons on the north side of the road, where once stood a red brick house. Lorne Martin, a later owner, built a machine-shed there.

One evening, Lorne Martin approached Russell Moore about trading their two properties. Neither of them knew at the time, that the trade would have been original McCredie property for Putnam property.

When Russell Moore operated the tile yard during the summers, he also operated the grist-mill there in the winter. When the tile yard ceased operation, Russell purchased the grist-mill and moved it to a barn beside his house in Lyons. It was powered by a stationary engine. When his health failed, Rossell traded the grist-mill to Frank Tanner in return for a garage. Mr. Tanner served the farmers of the community for years.



Note the vertical siding on the original house.

The Moore house was later sold to Joe Stevens, who in turn sold it to Neil McCallum's sisters, Eva and Sarah, and George Taylor.

← Russell's corn-wagons, homemade from steel drums.