



Airline Crossing station house when there was passenger service on the Michigan Central Branch line.

A person could come from St. Thomas around 7 A.M. and return to St. Thomas shortly after 10 A.M.----then come out at 2 P.M. and return at 6 P.M. What service!!! Now very few or no trains run.

In later years when this service was discontinued--this building was purchased by the Style Brothers and used for a granary on their farm.



Airline Crossing tower and junction in April 1961 when the branch line was abandoned and the tower sold to Melvin Styles and moved up to his farm buildings for use as a storage unit.



\* Residence of William A. Meek. Built in 1949.



In 1820 Mrs. Sarah Millard Smith (widow of Othmiel Smith) and her three sons, Joseph, Jonathon and Isaac, came from Charlotville Township, Norfolk County and settled near Five Stakes, now known as Talbotville.

In 1825 Joseph Smith, oldest son of Sarah Millard Smith, homesteaded a farm part of which is now owned by Bernie Gilbert and part by Wm. A. Meek. Mrs. Smith's death took place at the homestead in 1849.

The buildings were located near where the present Meek farmhouse stands. Before Joseph's marriage to Sarah Williams on April 28, 1829, he had cleared several acres of land for cultivation. Joseph and Sarah Smith had ten children, four sons and six daughters. Three of the sons and two of the daughters settled in the community. Isaac married Annie Waite and settled across the road on the farm now owned by John Uoms. John married Mary Boughner on Nov. 12, 1872, and Warren married Sarah Veil on Dec. 25, 1883. The homestead was divided between John and Warren, John taking the east half now owned by Bernie Gilbert and Warren taking the west half now owned by Wm. A. Meek. The present Meek laneway was at that time a right-of-way to the property behind the Smith farm which, we understand, was occupied by Thomas Wallis and family and Christy Sutton and family at different times. This later was acquired by Walter Travers at Talbotville. He moved the barn to his farm and rebuilt it. It still stands on the farm which is now owned by Ralph Auckland south of Talbotville on Highway # 4. There are still traces where the buildings stood on the top of the hill and a few apple trees are left growing wild. Mr. Travers leased his two farms to the Huntley family. They drove their cows every day during the summer to pasture on this property. Through misfortune Mr. Travers lost this property. It was put up for auction and Warren Smith purchased it. Gravel was taken from this property out of the creek and used for road work. Warren Smith purchased the farm west of the right-of-way about the time of his marriage. It is not known who owned the land but John Blackman lived in the house near the road. With the purchase of these two properties, Warren Smith's farm



now consisted of 162 acres.

Joseph Smith died August 14, 1881 and his wife Sarah May 12, 1891. interment was made in Talbotville cemetery.

Warren Smith remodelled the present farmhouse and built new barns. the farmhouse is built with a barn frame.

in 1914 Andrew Meek purchased this farm from Warren Smith and early in 1915 moved from Dunwich township with his family.

later his son took it over. Mr. and Mrs. Meek died in 1926 and were buried in Cowal Cemetery, Dunwich Township.

in February 1927 Wm. Meek married Edith O'Dell from Westminster Township. they had one son, Kenneth, who now lives across the road from the farm. Mrs. Meek died in October, 1928.

in September 1932 Wm. Meek married for his second wife Vera Mae Hicks, who is a great great grand daughter of the late Sarah Millard Smith--her mother being a daughter of John Nelson Smith.

Many changes have taken place since the land was first taken from the crown. the barns built by Warren Smith were destroyed by fire on May 23, 1923. Wm. Meek purchased another barn and moved it to the present location. this barn has since been remodelled and other farm buildings added.

A new brick residence was built out near the highway in 1949 and is now occupied by the Meek family--Patsy born July 17, 1941 and Allan born January 20, 1944. the original farmhouse is occupied by the farm manager Mr. Lloyd Chiverton. Mr. Meek carries on a Drover business along with the farming.

Land has been added to the farm purchased by Andrew Meek.

it now consists of 300 acres--43 acres west of the original farm was purchased from John Billington about 1944--this being the back part of the Billington farm over the railroad and in 1959 96 acres were purchased from Reuben Wright west of th Billington property.

Ephraim Lumley of Talbotville owned and operated a slaughter house near the creek close to the original right-of-way.

Vera M. Meek

April 1959

Since Mrs Vera Meek wrote the history of the Meek farm several changes have taken place. In 1971 Mr Wm. Meek passed away. Part of Lots 37, 38 and 39. In 1971 THE FARMS WERE SOLD TO Roy and Clara Smith. Mr Smith later sold the property to a Developing CO (this was the home farm) and the farm that Mr Meek bought from Reuben Wright (part of lot 37 was sold to Mr Reger who now operates a nursery there--mostly shrubs and trees.

The brick house on the home farm was severed off. Mrs Meek still resides there. At present we don't know who owns the home farm. The land is rented out for cash crops.

AMr F.E. Campbell and family live in the farm home and rent out the barn and the pasture surrounding the buildings.

Mrs Vera Meek.



Residence of Kenneth Meek on Highway # 3. Taken in 1957.



## THE LEWIS HOUSE

Few of us new comers to Paynes Mills realize the changes that have taken place over the years in this community.

In the year 1888 when Mr. Ira Case Lewis and his bride of a year, Ruth Graham, came to Paynes they bought a half acre lot--number thirty three--on a country dirt road, little resembling the first class cement highway we have to-day and certainly minus the traffic.

Mr. and Mrs. Lewis bought their property from Mr. Colin Walker of Fingal who, at that time, owned considerable property on this side of the road including the grist mill and saw mill which were situated about opposite the present Cheese Factory on the creek. The present side road was not there and the road to the Mills ran down the east bank of the creek.

The Lewis house was started in 1888 and completed the following year. The house was built by a man by the name of Weldon from St. Thomas. The structure was of white brick veneer--a six room house and well built as most houses were in those days.

In 1907 an event of interest to the community took place when Mrs. Lewis was appointed Post Mistress. Up until then the people had to go to Talbotville or Frome for their mail and there were no automobiles.

Mr. Henry Berdan--Mrs. Milton Heidt's father--was the first mail carrier. His duty was to pick up the mail, take it to the railroad crossing on the main road, and bring the mail to the Lewis house. When Mr. Berdan who lived where Mr. and Mrs. Wilsie now live, left the community the man to succeed him was Mr. Neil Sells. Mr. Sells who was then Master Neil can well remember being taken to Mr. Frank Bennett--Justice of the Peace--to be sworn in to carry "His Majesty's Mail". Master Sells was allowed out of school at three o'clock to deliver the mail on time for Mrs. Lewis to be ready for the children when they came at four to carry the mail to their homes.

In 1913 the Dominion Gas Company started the gas line and gas was installed for heating and lighting to be followed in 1927 by electricity.

That year Mr. Harry Graham Lewis had remodeled the house adding a bath room, sun room, and garages and recovered all with stucco.

At present the second and third generations of the Lewis family are occupying the house.

Mrs. H. G. Lewis---Oct., 1947



SOUTH EAST PART LOT 36, S.N.B.T.R.

Lot 36, Southwold, S. N. B. T. R. was originally 200 acres. This was owned and operated by Jacob and Rachel Berdan and family. In the year 1843 a group of Mennonites came to the district and held camp meetings in the bush on the Berdan farm. These Mennonites held very impressive meetings which were well attended. They believed and preached that the end of the world was at hand. This belief was so instilled in the minds of the Berdans they ceased all work--planted no potatoes or seed of any kind. As a result, when the mellenium did not materialize, they had no food neither for themselves or for their stock, neither had they any grain or feed that they might sell to obtain a bit of money on which to live until another harvest. This necessitated the selling of a portion of their land in order that they might exist until the following season. They sold the south portion of the farm which became known as the South East Part, Lot 36, Southwold, S.N. B.T.R. This consisted of 97 acres, the 200 acres not being divided evenly due to the fact the line fence would have necessarily been in the creek. This transaction was made in £s and the lot was sold for 150£ to Robert Henry Nelles. The deed of this sale reads "Township of Southwold, County of Middlesex, Province of Upper Canada, 1843" In the year 1847, February 26, Mr. Nelles sold to one James Mellor who in turn sold to Henry Payne in the year 1855. Henry Payne did not operate the farm himself but rented it to a William Down who came from England in the year 1846 by sailboat. The voyage took 6 weeks. Mr. Down did not stay here long but moved with his family to the Exeter district. The next tenant on this farm was a James Silcox who rented the farm until June, 1873. Until this time there was only a log cabin but during the time Mr. Silcox lived there Mr. Payne erected a very small frame house, around which has been built the home of the present day, occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Gordon A. Lyle and family.

Now at this time -1873- there was working in Aylmer for a Mr. Solar, one John Lyle--a Scotchman. In the "Times"--the paper being published in St. Thomas at that time--the said land, Lot 36, S.N.B.T.R. was advertised for sale. Mr. Lyle sent this to his home in Scotland and his brother, Alexander Lyle Jr. sent word back for him to buy the farm. Although Mr. Lyle came in June the deed of land is dated September 22, 1873.

The Lyles in Scotland had heard of this part of the country from a Mr. McDiarmid who had returned to Scotland from the Fingal district. They were at that time working in a foundry