

Henry Warner was born March 17th, 1827, in Weberstadt, Erfort, Germany. Left an orphan when a small child, he decided at the age of 21 to go to Canada and join a brother and two sisters who had preceded him. He was serving a period in the army at the time, but through the co-operation of his superior officers he was allowed to leave the country - they having supplied him with the necessary funds after he promised that the transaction would be kept a secret and the money never repaid.

He set sail from Hamburg to New York, and from there went by river boat up the Hudson to Oswego on the south shore of Lake Ontario and finally reached Hamilton, Ontario. From there he commenced the journey to Stratford and after many trying experiences, one of which was spending a night in a tree lest wild animals attack him, he reached his destination. Stratford at that time was a collection of huts for dwellings, a post office, hotel and general store. Unable to speak a word of English, he could not enquire about the whereabouts of his family. Finally a man who spoke German appeared on the scene and there was a complete change in the situation. He was given accurate directions as to where his brother lived, some four miles north of the city and there was a joyful reunion with his family. He spent some time with them, helping to clear the land as well as assisting them in their trade as coopers, making barrel staves and shingles by hand.

Little is known of him for some time except that he came under the influence of the Evangelical Association and became greatly interested in religious matters. Eventually in the year 1859 he entered the ministry of the Evangelical Association,

Canada Conference. He served in Carrick, Bruce County; New Hamburg; Port Elgin; Wallace, Perth County; St. Jacobs; Tavistock; Sullivan, Grey County, then Aldborough in 1880. After his last appointment at Morriston, on account of failing health, he retired from the ministry and moved to Rodney in 1888. His first wife was Fredericka Dischner, and after her death he married Johanna Eggert and they had ten children, six boys and four girls. He died and was buried on March 19th, 1904.

THE BEGINNING OF RODNEY, ONTARIO
by Ernest G. Lusty (born 1874)

In 1844, William Hoskins, a weaver of silk and silk velvet, left Shepton-Mallet, England, and arrived in Canada. He first settled at New Sarum, township of Yarmouth, Elgin County. Later, in 1854, he moved to central Aldborough, to Lot 6, Gore Concession. The countryside was solid virgin forest at that time. He cleared a piece of ground and built a log house for himself, wife and five children. He then discovered that he had built on Lot 7 instead of on Lot 6. So another site was cleared and another log house, with a bark roof, was built, this time on his own property. Some lumber was used in building and was obtained from a whip-saw mill about one mile north of his own land.

When Mr. Hoskins arrived in Aldborough, he brought seven cows. There was plenty of pasture the first summer, but as there was no fodder for the following winter, except a little hay cut from a beaver dam a mile away, he cut down trees so they could eat the small limbs. The cows died, one by one, until in the spring only one had survived. This one strayed into the swamp, in May, mired and died.

FOREST INN HOTEL

There were very poor roads when Mr. Hoskins arrived, just trails following the high ground as much as possible, and corduroy through the low lands and swamps through the thick forests. His Lot 6 was central between Newbury on the North and Airey (New Glasgow) on the South, which was surveyed in 1850 and named after Colonel Airey, a nephew of Colonel Talbot. Newbury was situated on the Great Western Railroad (later Grand Trunk, now Canadian National Railway) and the stage coach line which went through Wardsville. Port Glasgow, some distance south, was where sailing vessels called, and where many of the early settlers landed. Mr. Hoskins soon decided to build a hotel on

his property to accomodate the many travellers between New Glasgow, and the rail connections at Newbury. It was called Forest Inn.

ALDBOROUGH AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

The Aldborough Agricultural Society was formed at Airey, in 1854. The first meetings were held in the New Glasgow Hotel, or Hall, as it was called, or in the McBride School, corner of Middle Street and the Furnival Road.(now Hwy. 77). As the Directors were scattered over the township, many of the meetings would not have a quorum. At a meeting held in the McBride School, on January 14th 1858, it was moved by Squire George Munroe, seconded by James McKinlay and resolved that if John McKillop could get within ten of as many members north of Concession 7 as there would be south of the same concession, then the business of the Society would be conducted in a central place. Mr. McKillop lived near Suckertown, Con. 1.

CENTREVILLE

Apparently John McKillop succeeded in his canvas for the meeting of the Society, February 9, 1858, was held at a central locality, namely at Hoskins' Forest Inn. The place where the Inn was situated was then very appropriately called Centreville. The Directors continued to hold their meetings at Centreville for many years. Also the Aldborough Township Council held their meetings at the same place.

In 1863, Stoddard and Stewart, of Erieau, purchased from Mr. Hoskins five acres of land just north of the Inn for a mill site, on which they erected a saw and shingle mill. They brought with them, to erect and run the saw-mill, Albert Humphrey, foreman, Luther Carpenter, a store-keeper, also the following blacksmiths and mill men, Neil Sinclair, Henry Newcomb and later William Mapes, Israel Delair and others soon arrived.

The family of Richard Coates, including Richard Jr. and his wife, and their ten children, who had come from Oakville, were living in the Rectory

on the Clergy Reserve at New Glasgow, while their house was being built south of Centreville, now A.E. Purcell & Sons' residence.

N.S. Lusty (father of the writer), Richard Lusty, Milton Lusty, and Theodore Lusty, brothers, all came from Oakville to visit their Coates relatives and they were all experienced mill and timber men, and finding preparations for the mill here, they decided to stay, in 1863. Other early Centreville settlers were Hector Purcell, C.B. Sheldon, Alex Long, J.H. Barnes and many others. A good steam saw and shingle mill was soon erected, also store, blacksmith shop, boarding house, stables and other buildings.

In 1864 the hamlet had outgrown the Forest Inn and Mr. Hoskins engaged N.S. Lusty, (then his son-in-law, as Mr. Lusty had married Mary Hoskins) to build a much larger Inn. This new Inn was built at the corner of the 7th Concession and the Furnival Road near the old Inn.

As logs were very plentiful and close at hand, the mill was kept running steadily fourteen hours each day,- two hours before breakfast and two after supper. Each man worked the full fourteen hours. The lumber had to be drawn seven miles by teams of horses, over very poor roads, to Port Glasgow and loaded on vessels. The teams would make two trips a day.

RODNEY

On January 10, 1865, along with other travellers there arrived a stranger at the Forest Inn, revealing himself to be the Post Master General of Upper and Lower Canada. He was impressed with the activity at Centreville, and as there was no post office nearer than Wardsville or New Glasgow, he decided to establish one at Centreville. But that name apparently was suitable only for a meeting place of an Agricultural Society, but not for His Majesty's Post Office. It was not romantic enough. Some one had apparently been reading of the exploits of Admiral Rodney during the Seven Years' War, as the name of that distinguished baronet was adopted to replace Centreville as the name of the new Post Office. Shortly afterwards one of

the residents, in the person of Joseph Barnes, went over to Newbury after some freight. While there the station agent asked Mr. Barnes, if he knew where he could locate Albert Humphrey, Rodney, as there were boxes there awaiting an owner. Mr. Barnes knew who Albert Humphrey was, but the name of Rodney puzzled him. The mysterious boxes of freight were the supplies for the new Post Office of Rodney. Mr. Humphrey was appointed the first Post Master at the salary of \$30.00 per year. The Post Office was housed in Humphrey's boarding house, upstairs, over Carpenter's store. The Office consisted of a big desk on which reposed a box of pigeon holes and stood in one corner of the dining room.

In 1865, the Agricultural Society moved their Fair from New Glasgow to Rodney. The stock was shown in a ring on the saw dust pile in the mill yard and the upstairs of the mill served as the Crystal Palace. The races were held on the Furnival road in front of the mill. At the first Fair, a large ox strayed off the saw dust pile into the swamp and was mired, and all the men at the Fair couldn't get it out. Finally some one suggested that he be allowed to use his dog. When the dog was called in for duty the ox soon found strength to emerge.

With the new Post Office, Rodney became a busy center and a new hotel was needed. Stoddard and Stewart bought an extra quarter of an acre from Mr. Hoskins and on it erected a fine new hotel in 1867. This new hotel was called Rodney House and is still in use in Rodney, it being moved nearer the railroad and is being used to-day by D.A. Scott & Son as a show room for Ford cars, with dwelling quarters upstairs. The first manager of the new hotel was O.B. Sheldon, in 1867. He was followed by John Hoskins, son of William Hoskins, in 1869, J.H. Barnes in 1871, Alex Long in 1874, and later Anderson and Hiram Baker, Milton Lusty and others.

By 1871 Stoddard and Stewart had sold their mill to Dan McLaren and John McArthur. The mill burned June 2, 1877, but a new one was built



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and continued running for some time.

The Coates men in addition to being good mill men were good horse men as well and had some of the finest trotting and running horses that were ever found in Aldborough Township.

There was no school house nearer than one and a half miles west of the Furnival Road on the 4th Concession or than the McBride School on Middle Street and the Furnival. It was impossible for small children to travel so far through dense forests infested with bears, wolves and even rattlesnakes. A private school was opened by Bella and Clara Coates, daughters of Richard Coates Jr. It was held in their home, (the Purcell house of to-day), half way between the 7th and the 8th Concessions on the east side of the Furnival. At that time the house was considered a very fine one as it was the first house in Aldborough built with a gothic roof. It is now owned by Mr. A.E. Purcell, a son of Hector Purcell, one of the early settlers.

NEW RODNEY

The Canada Southern Railroad was laid through Aldborough in 1872, though rails were not laid through Rodney until 1873. It passed about a mile and a half south of Centreville or Old Rodney. The Furnival had not been chopped out between the 7th and 8th concessions (the 8th now Queen Street). The road being used at that time was opposite the Alley some distance west of the Furnival. Prior to the building of the Canada Southern (now M.C.R.R. or N.Y.C.) there were few buildings on the present site of Rodney. In 1860, Janet McTaggart had a small log hotel, the Greenock House, on the corner of the 8th, and an alley west of the Furnival. This site would be behind the present Thomas Apartments. Duncan McCallum owned a farm with a small house at Queen and Furnival (where Fordham's Garage now stands). This property, about this time, passed to the owner-