

were taller, stronger and better formed. These Indians had solved their problem of housing by using tools of stone and erecting shelters of wood. Their clothing, when they wore any, were of skins of animals and their travelling mostly done on water by the use of the birch bark canoe.

The chief village, of these Indians, between Detroit and Niagara was "Alexis" site of the Southwold Earthworks near Burwell's <sup>4</sup> Corners. The name "Alexis" was selected by the Jesuit priests due to the beauty and fruitfulness of this land. The head chief managed the affairs of other smaller villages in the district.

Although they were fierce and warlike, the Neutrals fell before the conquering Iroquois and for generations this north shore of Lake Erie remained uninhabited but was still known for its abundant game and was described as the "Iroquois Beaver Ground".

French forts were maintained at Detroit, Niagara and Toronto to intercept the fur traffic and many trails led through the forest to the mouth of Kettle Creek and other rivers flowing into Lake Erie.

History makes no reference to this part of Canada until Joliet, sent by Talon, to investigate the copper mines about Lake Superior, returned to Quebec in 1669, by way of the Lower Lakes and hid his canoe at the mouth of Kettle Creek.

With the coming of the British in 1759, Pontiac was the chief of the Indians on the north shore of Lake Erie.

Oneida and Muncey Reserves have an Indian school called the Mount Elgin Institute. It was first built by an Indian chief of the "Ojibway" tribe in 1829. There are 1000 acres under cultivation and 120 boys and girls are schooled each year.

After the Revolutionary War in the country south of here, many United Empire Loyalists and disbanded British soldiers came and settled in this country and many of our present families are descendants of these brave people. From them and succeeding generations we have learned of the progress of the white people, from settlers, who cleared the lands, farmers who lived off the land and cut their own fuel from the primeval forest and now to the age of the agriculturist, who lives by scientifically tilling the land and as Pauline Johnson, the Canadian Indian Poetess has said:

"But we have gold and glory in our clean colonial name  
And every man's a millionaire, if only he can brag  
That he was born in Canada, beneath the British Flag."

AREA omit

THE VILLAGE OF UNION AND IT'S EARLY INDUSTRIES

(This chapter written in  
March, 1951)

Motorists travelling through the village of Union on midsummer days, must, I am sure, be impressed by the restful beauty of the Union mill pond, with it's green wooded banks and charming vistas- a quiet, secluded spot, to linger in one's memory. Driving down the tree shaded street, one sees comfortable, homelike dwellings with well kept lawns and flower gardens, gay with color and at the busy crossroads, the up to date general stores of N. J. Mc.Callum and F. Bennett, the modern garages and service stations of D. H. Hindley and of Schnekenburger Bros., R. W. Chute's welding shop and further south the one remaining black-smith shop of Frank Mc.Phail- these places of business serving the community and surrounding country.

A short distance down the Sparta Road, can be seen the fine new three roomed school, soon to be occupied by the pupils of S.S. No.9. The village extends on up the long sloping hill to the south and at it's crest, stands the new Union United Church, an imposing stone structure, with it's many beautiful stained glass windows and furnishings, the gifts of members of the congregation, some of whose forebears formed the nucleus of the first Methodist Church at Union at a small gathering held in the year 1820 in the log house of David Burgess on the second concession of Yarmouth. The three beautiful stained windows in the front of the church, were placed as a memorial to those in the congregation who served in two World Wars, some making the supreme sacrifice. The centre window, depicting 'The Good Shepherd' was the gift of the Edwards Glass Co. of London, Robert Edwards being a former member of the Union church and serving with the 91st Battalion in the first World War, the two windows flanking the centre one, being

financed by a community effort.

After the loss by fire of the old church erected in 1876-77, the people of the congregation immediately undertook the rebuilding of their church, which, by united effort, they accomplished under the splendid leadership of their minister, the Rev. J. V. Clark. Much credit is also due Henry Parker of the Parker Construction Company who built the fine new edifice which now serves the people of Union as their place of worship.

Over the brow of the hill, one has a magnificent view of the country-side with it's rolling hills and valleys. On the hilltop to the west, stands the spacious club house of The Elgin Golf and Country Club, which course is considered one of the finest in Ontario and attracts many visitors. Off to the south and east, one sees large green-houses, pack barns and rows of kilns on the farms of the tobacco growers, South Yarmouth having become one of the largest flue-cured tobacco areas in Southern Ontario.

A short distance down the highway on the west side, is the well kept Union cemetery where sleep the pioneer settlers- the brave men and women who suffered many hardships and privations, but through sheer strength of character and sacrifice, cleared the virgin forest and built homes, schools and places in which to worship- may we be proud of the heritage which is ours.

Two or three miles south of Union, lies the picturesque village of Port Stanley, a thriving, busy lake port, rich in historical interest and long recognized as being the most beautiful and popular summer resort on Lake Erie's north shore.

There are many extensive fruit farms and fine orchards in the district, mainly on the fourth Concession, known as the 'Fruit Ridge Road' which is a favorite with many, when enjoying a leisurely drive, it's hills and wooded ravines, each having the charm of the unexpected and from it's highest point, known to be the highest ridge in Elgin County, one has a panoramic view of the fine farms below, with their fields of ripening grain, growing crops, dairy and beef herds, grazing in the lush pasture lands. Through the tree tops, can be seen the chimneys of some of Sparta's quaint old homes- dwellings erected by the Quaker pioneers of Sparta's earlier days, an era, rich in tradition.

South Yarmouth is a highly productive and progressive agricultural district- a community of well equipped farms and fine, modern homes, some of it's residents operating the farms which were acquired from the Crown, by their ancestors, the pioneer settlers of well over a century ago.

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The distinguished French traveller, Charlevoix, who passed through Lake Erie in the year 1721 on his way up the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi to New Orleans, spoke in glowing terms of the country he saw along the north shore of Lake Erie, particularly that part now embraced within the confines of Elgin County. He considered it the most beautiful country he had seen on his trip. Small wonder that Colonel Thomas Talbot who had visions of establishing a settlement in the new colony, was influenced by the writings of Charlevoix. As one of the staff of Governor Simcoe, Talbot accompanied him in the year 1793 on a journey to the western part of the province, to the district lying between Lake Erie and the Thames River, Colonel Talbot being very favorably impressed with this part of the country. He was recalled to England in 1794 and spent

the next six years as one of England's soldiers, later selling his commission and withdrawing from the army and in the year 1803 returned to Canada. He had decided that he would establish his settlement in the southern portion of Yarmouth Township, but found that in his absence, 5,000 acres in this locality had been turned over to the Bab<sup>^</sup>y family in the year 1799, for their services to the Crown. Dunwich Township was finally chosen for his domain, he receiving a grant from the Crown for 5,000 acres in one solid block in Dunwich where in the year 1803, he felled the first tree. The many hardships and bitter discouragements borne by Colonel Talbot in his arduous task of establishing his realm in the new colony, are now a matter of history. With his varied colonization projects carried out, he died in the year 1853, the vast Talbot Settlement comprising twenty-nine Townships.

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*Early distribution of Township Lands*