

Below is another picture of the Willson Mills. At that time there was a road leading up to the home of Solomon V. Willson (now owned by Isaac Willson). Years later, Robert Bailey bought the Woollen Mill from Solomon Willson and moved the building to his farm on the north side of Sparta Road, about three miles east of Union, where he conducted a milling business for several years.



N.B.

November, 1972.

The property mentioned above as owned by Isaac Willson--the house and lot is the home of Mr. Robert Davis, Local Registrar of Deeds, and the farm lands are now known as Oakview Estates, a modern residential area.

Geo. Doolittle built and operated the cement grist mill now standing, Geo. Ponsford of St.Thomas being the contractor. Joseph. O. King purchased this mill from Mr. Doolittle about the year 1914 and operated it for several years, until his retirement.

LIST OF DAMS AND MILLS ON THE BEAVER CREEK

(Contributed by the late Arthur Graham)

"Beaver Creek rises on the 5th Concession of Yarmouth and near the source was a saw mill operated by Jardin Minor and further down, a grist and chopping mill, by Robert Bailey. Dadson's saw mill was located back from the side road running north from the Plains Baptist Church (on the west side of the road) the picture below being the dam at Dadson's pond, the small boys fishing being Gerald Matheson and a friend. The Dadson place is now the property of Mr. Richard Sanders, Barrister, a former Mayor of St.Thomas.



"There is the remnant of an old dam at the foot of the old Graham farm, now owned by Mr.M.F.Hepburn. There were the Haight & Willson Woollen Mills and grist mill and further west the Woollen Mills of Thomas and

"Benjamin Green. Further along were the Fawcett, Zavitz and Turville mills, the waters of the Beaver Creek then emptying into the Kettle Creek and thence to Lake Erie."

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N.B. The Fawcett, Zavitz and Turville mills having been located in Southwold Township, were not included in the histories of the mills around Union, which commences on page 17.

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The first general store to be conducted in Union was in the building now occupied by Mr. N. J. McCallum, James Haight being in business there as early as the year 1850. His grand-daughter, Mrs. Russel Zavitz has his ledger for the year 1850 and succeeding years, the prices of some commodities being listed as follows:-

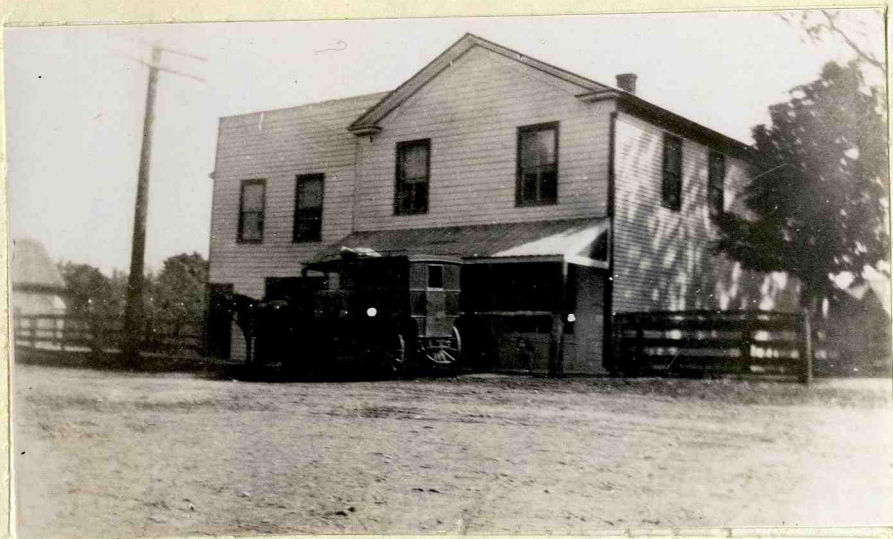
I bushel of potatoes	sold for	2 shillings	(25¢)
I " apples	" "	2 "	"
Mutton	sold for	4¢	a pound
Beef	" "	3¢	"
Cheese	" "	8¢	"
Coffee	" "	19¢	"
Butter	" "	1 shilling	a pound
Lard	" "	8¢	a pound
I gallon of soft soap	sold for	8¢	
I cord of 4 ft. hardwood	(delivered)	brought	8 shillings (\$1.00)

This old store was the Mecca for all the surrounding country, when trading instead of modern shopping, was the custom- when the farmers' wives exchanged butter and eggs for necessary supplies, perhaps material for a new dress, when thread, hooks and eyes or buttons were 'thrown in' by the store-keeper to complete the bargain.

James Haight founded several industries in South Yarmouth. During a visit he and his mother made to their old home in Westchester County, New York State, he learned the hatter's trade, brought a journeyman hatter back with him and they built a log hat shop in Sparta in 1824 on the corner of his father's farm. Built on the edge of a veritable wilderness, it was rather inaccessible to the general public, so they moved their business to the Village of St. Thomas where it prospered, a few years later

Mr. Haight purchasing the farm (now the property of Warren Anderson on Highway No. 4). He erected a log hat shop at the end of his laneway at the side of the old plank road, where he still conducted business.

James Haight's son, Jas. W. Haight and his partner, Solomon V. Willson, succeeded Jas. Haight as proprietors of the general store. In the year 1873 James Mc.Kenzie purchased the business and conducted it for many years, his brother Angus being associated with him in this enterprise until moving to St.Thomas where he operated a grocery store for a great many years. Mr. James Mc.Kenzie was a man of exceptional business ability, his name being closely associated with Union's industrial growth in it's early days. He and his family lived in the house, now the home of Miss. Emma Matheson, until his retirement in the year 1912.(Francis Jones was a business partner of Jas.Mc.Kenzie for some years, the firm name being 'Mc.Kenzie & Jones').



Picture of the N. J. McCallum General Store, taken when the mail was carried on the old Sparta stage- note the hitching rail in front of store.

(This was taken between
60 and 70 years ago)

Since Jas. Haight was operating the general store in the year 1851 when John Ellison was appointed Postmaster, the first Post-office must have been located in Mr. Ellison's house, often the custom in the early days. Mr. Ellison was a carpenter and besides building the old brick hotel on the north-west corner at Union, he built the home of Mr. Gonzella A. Hannon (opposite the Womens' Institute Hall) and the Isaac Haight house, the property of Schneckenburger Bros. Mr. Ellison later made his home in Port Stanley where he was a boat builder. His first wife was Miss. Charity Simons, they being buried in the Plains Baptist Church cemetery on Sparta Road.



From left to right- Major John Ellison, Wm. Mandeville, Nelson Mc. Call, seated. (Man at right not known) Picture contributed by Mrs. C. Campbell, daughter of Nelson Mc. Coll.



This was the old Sparta stage in which residents of Sparta went to St. Thomas and return on it's daily trips. The mail was also carried daily between these points. This picture was taken at the south end of the former bridge over Union pond.

The Post-office in Union was established in the year 1851, Major John Ellison being the first Postmaster. The Post-office Department at Ottawa has supplied us with a list of the various Postmasters with the period of their service, as follows:-

UNION, ONT.

Established - 6th October, 1851.
 Postmaster - John Ellison.

POSTMASTER

PERIOD OF SERVICE

John Ellison (records not available between 1851 and 1864)	-	6-10-1851	-	
James Haight	-		-	26-4-1864
W. Mandeville	-	1-10-1864	-	26-5-1865
Solomon V. Willson	-	1-7-1865	-	8-5-1867
E. J. Steele	-	1-7-1867	-	28-3-1870
Francis G. Jones	-	1-6-1870	-	7-4-1873
James Mc.Kenzie	-	1-5-1873	-	2-1-1912
R. H. Millen	-	1-3-1912	-	18-1-1913
H. W. Steels	-	10-2-1913	-	29-5-1914
Thos. H. Mc.Comb	-	30-6-1914	-	8-8-1935
John Hiram Moffatt	-	8-10-1935	-	6-9-1938
Geo. H. Cross	-	11-10-1938	-	21-9-1945
Norman J. Mc.Callum	-	30-10-1945	-	still in charge.

On the corner, south of the present N. J. Mc.Callum store, there was a general store for many years. Isaac Haight who built and occupied the large white frame house directly to the east and facing Sparta Road, purchased a building in Sparta and had it moved to this corner and remodelled it as a store which he rented, a Mr. Allan, a cabinet-maker having a shop there for some time. Later when Mr. Haight's son, Jas. was married to Miss. Annie Mc.Tavish, he conducted a general store for many years, he and his wife having living quarters up-stairs. When Mr. Jas. Haight retired, Ralph Steele continued this business, his wife being the former Miss. Mandy Haight (daughter of Dr. Wm. Haight, one of Union's earliest practitioners). This building was vacant for some time, Mr. Chas. Randall purchasing it and also a small shop next to it, built by the Haight's which was used through the years, mostly as a dress-making shop, or butcher shop, Sub-branch of The Imperial Bank, etc. These buildings were moved to the property of Chas. Randall and remodelled by him, being the present home of Mr. and Mrs. S. Heidt, the small shop being ~~their~~ garage.

*on Chas Randall's own
property*



A group of old friends in front of James Haight's store-
Left to right: David Whyte, Geo. Francis, H. E. Johnson, Geo.
Doolittle, Geo. Colley and G.A. Hannon. (small
child in front of Mr. Hannon)
(Picture taken about 1915)

The Albert Hoskin's Carriage Works was one of Union's earliest industries- Mr. John Gliddon later carried on a most successful Carriage Works for many years, his large shop being torn down just a few years ago. Others who were engaged in the Blacksmithing business in the early days of this Village were Wm. Mandeville, John Calbeck, A. C. Combs, Thomas Peacock, Richard Mills, Geo. Doolittle and Frank Mc.Phail, at present having Union's only Blacksmith shop.

Matthew Young (familiarily known as 'Mattie Young') lived in the house now owned by Mr. Jos. Pearce. He was a Cooper, his shop being the building on the back of the lot, at the south end, which used to stand beside the house right at the road. He also made furniture, Mrs. Eliza Mills having a table which he made for her mother many years ago.

Isaac Hannon and wife, who was a Miss. Steele from Port Colborne, settled in Union about the year 1850 and built and resided in the house south of the Union pond on the east side of the road. He established a harness making business which was in the shop later converted into a dwelling by Michael Collins and now the home of the Clarence Willsons and Mrs. W. P. Willson. Many years ago there was a foot bridge leading to the harness shop across the ravine, the bridge starting from the north side of the general store (now Mc.Callum's). G. A. Hannon worked with his father, in later years conducting his business across the street in the building directly north of the old hotel (now Bennett's store).