



William Vary's Dwelling  
where meeting was held  
to name Sparta  
in 1834.



Sparta Post Office  
since 1851.



## VILLAGE NOTICE

Sparta named in 1834.

Whereas a meeting was held at South Yarmouth Corners for the purpose of establishing a village there and to give a new name to the place, and as said meeting was composed partly of boys and partly of persons not owning any land in the place, it therefore appears that said meeting was illegal and that a large majority of the land-owners in the vicinity of the place are dissatisfied with the proceedings of said meeting, it is therefore earnestly requested that another meeting be called on Tuesday, the 9th day of December inst. at 6 o'clock in the evening to be composed of none except land owners within two miles square - the above mentioned corners being in the center. Said meeting will be held at William Vary's dwelling house at the corners. Dec. 1st, 1834.

At this meeting a committee was appointed of either three or five members for the purpose of naming the village. Two appointed on this committee were Henry Yarwood and John McDowell.

They chose Sparta as the name of the South Yarmouth Corners.

## SPARTA POST OFFICE

Established in  
1841

Post Master Duncan Wilson  
appointed July 1841

Records incomplete until 1851.

Post Master John Eakins  
1851 to Dec. 1900

Post Master Edwy O. Eakins  
Feb. 1901 to Dec. 1922

Post Master Eric O. Oille  
March 1923 to Mar. 1950  
Post Master Norman H. Oille  
1950 to -

Since 1851 the Post Office has been in the Eakins' - Oille Store.





'The Abbey' and Hardware.



Bank at right  
Built as the A.J. Wood Store.





Yarwood      Eakins      Store  
 1838      1846  
 Oille 1922.



Moedinger Store



Smith-  
 1846



## FIRST SPARTA STORES

William Haight, born in 1818, and his nephew Henry H. Powell, kept store in a small frame building that stood where the Smith, brick store was later built in 1846.

Henry Yarwood came from little York (Toronto) in 1821 and after clerking for a time in a store on Lot 22, Concession 6 (Earl Burton's farm) he purchased a lot from Hiram Kipp in 1838. This was the southeast section on the main corner in Sparta. Here he built a small store and set up business of his own. This is now used as the store-room of the Eakins-Oille store built in 1846.

## EAKINS' STORE

John A. Eakins built the front large part of the substantial brick store at Sparta's main corner. This was built on to the smaller store erected by Henry Yarwood in 1838. Thick double brick walls show where these buildings joined.

The age of the present building is recorded on a stone marker under the front fan windows; "John A. Eakins, July 1846".

The Sparta Post Office has been in this building since 1851. John Eakins and son Edwy served as Postmasters for seventy years. In early days Mr. Eakins had two boats operating out of Port Burwell and brought goods from there, also from Hamilton, on wagons, through the bush. This was a busy place. Mr. Eakins had a staff of eight people in his store. He had two enormous structures across the road on the steep embankment built upon heavy 18 foot poles. In one of these he manufactured women's hats, in another part was the hardware, implements, leather goods, salt, lime and other needs of a farming community. Masonic Hall was on the second floor and Mr. Fred Lotus had a photograph gallery. Farther east was a shop where he kept bar iron to be sold to blacksmiths.

At John Eakins' death in 1900 his son Edwy managed the store and was appointed Postmaster. His brother-in-law, Charles Chase was an assistant in the store for a number of years. Edwy Eakins and his wife, Helena Chase Eakins, died in the same year - 1922. It was then that Eric O. Oille purchased the store and property and was appointed Postmaster, which position he still holds in 1948. His son, Norman Oille, took over the management of the store in 1946. Groceries and dry goods are still sold over the walnut counters installed over one hundred years ago. The Public Library was accommodated here from 1924 until 1942.



### SMITHS' STORE

Mr. Hiram Burley Smith was born on the Bay of Quinte in 1811. He left home at eleven years of age, coming to live with Mr. Saxon in Vienna. He came to Sparta when a young man with nothing but his tailor's kit. Mr. Smith's tailoring business must have been very profitable as in 1846 he built the present brick store at the corner of Main and Smith Streets in Sparta. He moved the small building in which he had his tailor shop, in behind the brick store. He drove to Hamilton with a democrat and team of horses to bring home dry goods. Everything that came into the store was packed in wooden boxes or wooden pails. In exchange for groceries he took anything the farmers produced. He had a large warehouse across the road where he stored grain, pork and lots of pine lumber. The latter was worth \$5.00 per 1000 delivered. There were no gas, hydro, or telephones. At Mr. Smith's death in 1874, his son Hiram B. Jr. took over the business. He married Alice Gunn and they lived in the house just west of the store. He operated this business until his brother Edgar A. Smith took it over.

Others who have managed this store successfully are Mr. Arthur Clark (about 1904), Mr. Banghart and his son-in-law Mr. Harry Marshall, Mr. Jules Labourie and Mr. Morley Gorvett who owns it in 1948. The addition of a Beauty Parlor in 1947 and the Public Library in 1942, make it an interesting center.

### WOOD'S STORE

On the south-west corner of the main intersection of Sparta was a building in which Mr. A. J. Wood carried on a thriving business in dry-goods and millinery - about 1875. After some years, it passed into the hands of Mr. McArthur, who conducted a grocery store, then to Mr. Ernest Burgess, who opened a drug store, which was later conducted by Dr. Shannon. This was a building of various businesses as the Stirling Bank, next, started a Branch here. After closing out, it was torn down and a modern brick building was erected on same site by the Imperial Bank. Later, the business was taken to St. Thomas and the building converted into a residence. On the south half of this lot was the residence and blacksmith-shop of Mr. Andrew Murray. Such shops were busy places. In those days Sparta could boast of no less than five. Linking this with the present generation, Mr. William Smith conducted three blacksmith shops.



## THE HILBORN AND MOEDINGER STORE

The "Sparta House" built by David Mills as a Hotel was later purchased by Ira Hilborn to be used for a general store. He carried on a thriving business, opening at six a.m. to accommodate the farmers as they took milk to the Sparta cheese factory. Mr. Hilborn had a helper, with a two-horse conveyance, who had a license to sell as well as deliver all over East Elgin. After the death of Ira Hilborn, Smith and Silcox conducted the business for a time followed by Isaac Millman who owned this general store for a few years. Later Mr. Abraham, then Mrs. Hilborn, widow of the former owner Ira Hilborn, and Miss Etta Fishleigh conducted the store for a number of years.

Louis Moedinger Sr. came about 1859 and started the undertaking and furniture business in "The Abbey"; his son Lewis Jr. learned the business and purchased the west end of the Hilborn Store for an undertaking and hardware establishment. Later Lewis Moedinger Jr. secured the entire building where he did business until his death.

This was a typical country store with the large stove in the center and the circle of wooden boxes and nail kegs around it where men of the neighborhood gathered on a wintry afternoon or evening to discuss community affairs and world events. Lanterns, horse-collars and tin pails hung from the ceiling. One could buy a pail of paint, a pair of plowshares, a length of pipe, a cardigan jacket, a hockey stick and puck, an alarm clock or a piece of fancy china in his place of business. After Mr. Moedinger's death in 1940 he was succeeded by his daughter and son-in-law Robert Harvey. In place of the big stove is an oil burner and electric lights have replaced kerosene and gasolene lamps. It was made into an up-to-date hardware serving Sparta and district.

At the death of Miss Amelia Moedinger in 1945, "The Abbey", where the family had lived so long, was moved west, on the same lot, and made into a duplex and the Harveys erected a modern warehouse between it and their store for the storage of farm implements and machinery, the sale of which is part of their business.