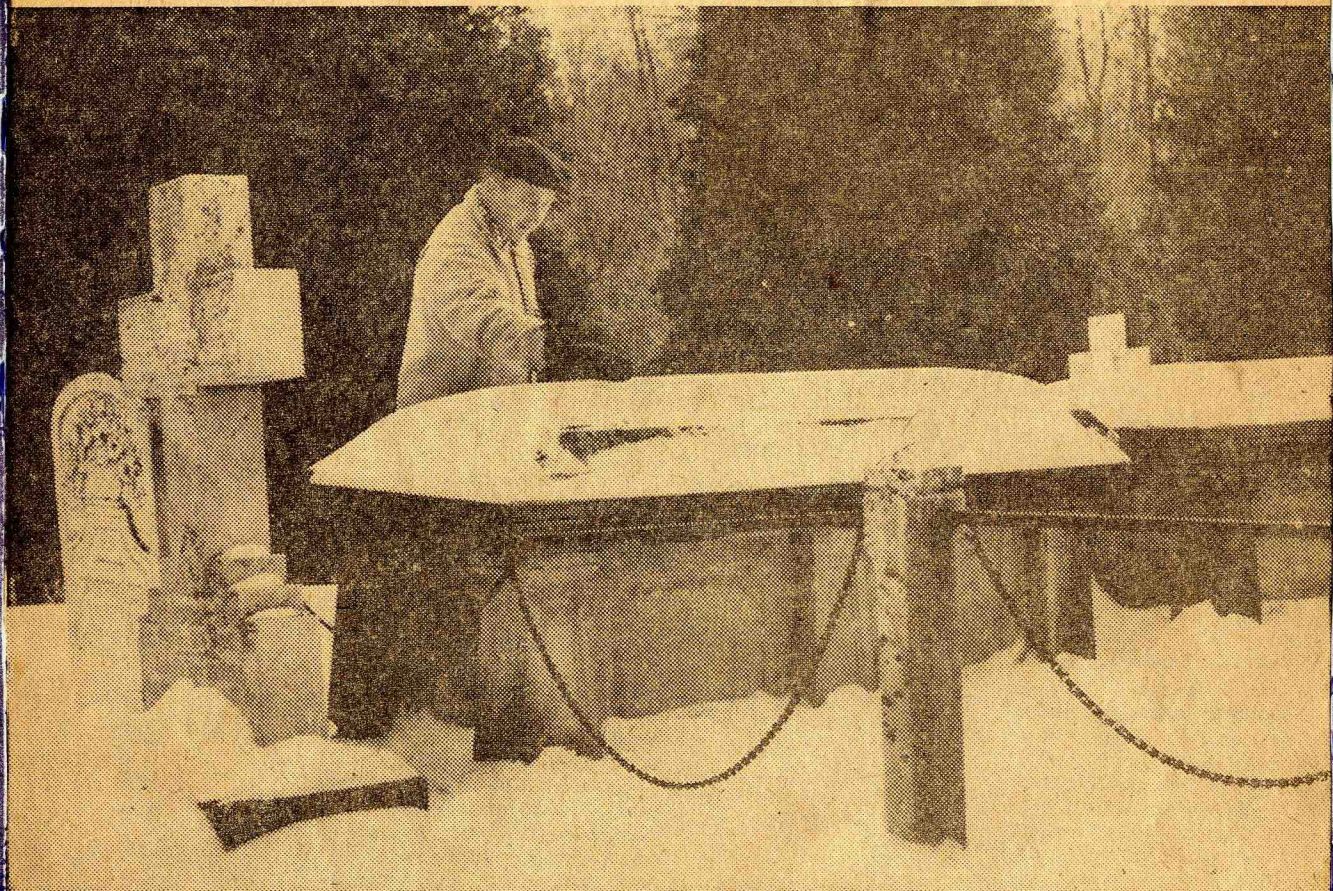


February 7, 1959

## May Make Col. Talbot Grave Elgin County Site



Almost 105 years have passed since Col. Thomas Talbot, Western Ontario's pioneer settler, was buried in the well-kept cemetery at Tyrconnel, high above the blue waters of Lake Erie in Dunwich Township. Recently, Elgin County Council, at its

January session, appointed a committee to study possibility of making the grave a county memorial site. Col. Talbot was buried here on a cold, wintry day, Feb. 9, 1853.



## THE BALLAD OF THOMAS TALBOT

Thomas Talbot set forth one day,  
It was the beautiful month of May;  
On a fine spring morning he sailed away  
On an eventful journey.

Westward over the white sails bore,  
Near Lake Erie's tree-lined shore;  
Land of promise and hope he saw  
Ever unfold before him.

There were leagues of forest and virgin land  
Which Talbot viewed on his starboard hand;  
They brought the ship to the pebbly sand  
At the place of Talbot's choosing.

He strode ashore near a crystal stream  
Whose banks were clothed in verdant green,  
And at his feet spring flowers were seen  
Growing in wild profusion.

He climbed the hill to the grassy plain  
And after him his comrades came;  
He said "this place shall bear my name,  
Here will I build my castle."

"If we would reap we first must sow,  
In this rich earth all good things grow,  
'Tis Heaven if man will make it so,  
It only lacks for people."

"My hope it is that years from now  
We may subdue the forest bough,  
The land submit to horse and plough  
To husbandry and farming."

"From distant shores will people come  
To make this country great and strong  
And build them here a cherished home  
Deep in the land of Huron."

So Talbot then to England went  
And sought brave men of his descent  
To found the Talbot settlement  
On the distant shores of Erie.

And we who gather here today  
Remember Talbot grave and gay  
And all the settlers who did stay  
With gallant Thomas Talbot.

Words and music composed at Port Talbot for the celebration  
of the one hundred and sixtieth anniversary of the  
founding of the Talbot Settlement.  
by Walter Bazley.

## TYRCONNELL

By John Simms, Tyrconnell

The wide sand streets, with sprinkled grass  
Between the wheel-tracks three abreast;  
Where goldenrod grows all amass,  
    'Neath lilac bush and robin's nest.

The cows a-rubbing on the hedge,  
Or loitering 'neath the maple shade;  
And birds a-twittering on the ledge  
    Of nests, that they have never made.

Children play games all around,  
No fences bar their progress here;  
Good nature, friendship all abound  
    They have not yet learned what to fear.

The houses cosy, quaint and low,  
    Enfolding us with loving care;  
They seem to want us not to go  
    And leave them lonely, standing there.

Sometimes in quiet eventide  
    I hear them whisper to the trees.  
And sure, methinks, they must have lied,  
    Enchanted with the evening breeze.

They tell of how in days gone by,  
    This was a place to proudly own;  
How men brought wood and grain and ties,  
    And how the place was widely known.

But now it stands serene and quiet,  
    A gem amidst all the busy world;  
No shock of strike or strife or riot  
    No martial flag is here unfurled.

And so we keep our vigils here,  
    With old sand road and trees and grass;  
And to the march of time we say  
    "Hold thou: This way thou shalt not pass."

## TYRCONNELL BAY

By John Simms, Tyrconnell

'Tween guarding sentinels of clay,  
Deep, recessed in the northern shore,  
Old Erie has her fairest bay,  
Secure from tempest's violent roar.

Impatience spent, the wavelets come,  
With tenderness, to find their rest,  
Like fairy fingers, mutely dumb,  
Caressing what they love the best.

The rugged banks, their secrets keep,  
Strong, steadfast amid the years,  
The last long home of those that sleep,  
For whom the future holds no fears.

Here we, a humble people bide,  
It's murmur ever in our ears,  
Reminding us of endless life,  
And claming all our little fears.

The silence of the rugged height,  
Breeds faith in things we cannot see;  
Helps us to understand aright,  
And worship Nature's Majesty.



In 1822, Absolem Shade built a warehouse at the lake, and placed it under the care of Mr. Hewitt, who added a store to his business, which he kept in part of the warehouse. This was the first store in the neighborhood. In 1825 Hewitt built an ashery and pearl oven where he bought black salts and made potash and Pearl-ash. In 1826 Arch. McIntyre built a distillery. In 1827 the second store in No. 9 was built by Mr. McColl, just below the mill, and in 1830 Hamilton and Warren built a store where they bought grain, black salts and pork, and kept a general store. The first tannery was built in 1832 by Mr. Fox. It was bought in 1835 by Sam. Ladd, who got Timothy Moore, father of N.W. Moore jailor of St. Thomas to run it, He ran it a few years, when he went to St. Thomas, where he erected one of his own. In 1833 Mr. Growndike bought out Hamilton and Warren, and kept store for about two years then he sold it to Ladd Brothers, who sold it to James Coyne in 1836. Jas. Coyne and his brother Thomas built a warehouse also at the same time, and carried on a general business.

In 1840 Fowler and Wood built a warehouse, where they bought all kinds of grain, and shipped it by boat as there were no railroads.

In 1856 Jas. Blackwood built a warehouse where he bought grain and shipped it by boat. All the grain, etc., that was shipped in or out of the country at No. 9 had to be scowed in from or out to the boat, as there was not yet a pier built. But on April 18, 1861, a company called the Dunwich Pier Company was formed, and they decided to build a pier. In that year a pier was constructed, the capital stock of the company being \$2,000. The directors were John McKillop, Merdith Conn, John Pearce, Peter Gow and Jas. Black. It was well as well built, well completed pier, and was kept up by the company. The earnings varied from \$200 to \$600 a year. The amount of grain bought and shipped over it varied from 25,000 to 75,000 bushels per year, mostly shipped by Mr. Conn. It was well kept up, and business was done over it until 1890, when it became unsafe. By this time business had turned to the railroads.

In 1855 Jas. Blackwood started a general store and did a large business for some time. He also purchased the land on which Tyrconnell is built, from George McBeth in 1852. He surveyed the land into town lots and called it his property Tyrconnell, which had been given to it by a brother of Col Tabbot some years before, the place had gone by the name of No. 9 till this time. He sold by public auction, at various times, \$16,000 worth of town lots, and expended about \$10,000 in building a fine dwelling house and beautifying his grounds. But owing to debts contracted before he came to No. 9, he was unable to release the mortgage from the property, and consequently could not give a clear title to the town lots he sold, and as a consequence the lots fell back into the hands of the original owner, Geo McBeth. After being in chancery for ten years, the lands were sold to M. Conn, the present proprietor.



Some of those who have kept store since are Gilmour, Stuart, J. Scott, M. Conn, Ed. Osborn and A. Conn. In 1865 Mt. Stuart built the fifth warehouse in Tyrconnel. The last warehouse was built in 1872 by the Dunwich Pier Company. The late grist-mill was built in 1852 by Mr. Mitchell who built a pulling and carding mill a few years later.

The Post Office was first established in the section in 1837, and was kept by Col. Patterson. Before this back to about 1820, the settlers had to go to Col. Burwells' for their mail. The mail was brought up to Col. Patterson's on horse-back once a week, and later twice, and then thrice a week. It was first brought up the lake road, and followed it up as the mail was carried to Amherstburg, but it afterwards was sent up back street, and a branch run from Wallacetown to No.9. Those who since have kept the office are Thos. Coyne, in 1852, Mr. Mitchell in 1858, Mr. Scott, M. Cameron, Mr. Stuart, Mr. Conn, Mr. Osborn, M. Conn, Mr. Harris ( while the latter kept it the telegraph line was run to Tyrconnel). Mr. Obrien and Mr. A. Conn.

On the east side of the hill there was a Blacksmith and carriage shop. There was also a cabinet makers shop, and Mr. Mitchell, the owner made hand made furniture. There was also a cobbler's shop and sorgum mill. Later Mr. M.F. Moore put down vats for a tannery. Owing to Colenel Talbot's refusal to grant title deeds to business men there was difficulty getting men to carry on.



TYRCONNELL, LOST CAPITAL of LITTLE IRELAND,  
NAMED For COL. TALBOT'S FAMILY

Early Settlers Planned to Make Community Busiest Shipping Centre Along Lake Erie; Had the Best Natural Harbor.

Little Ireland was a place in his settlement that held special interest for Colonel Thomas Talbot. It was there, along the north shore of Lake Erie, just west of his own "roosting place" that the master of Malahide Castle located some of his first settlers, and it is a matter of significance that many of them were of Irish descent.

There was another less sentimental reason for Colonel Talbot's interest in this part of his settlement. Little Ireland possessed the best natural harbor along the aforementioned north shore.

And so with some of "God's chosen people," as the first settlers and with such excellent harbor facilities, it was logical that a settlement would spring up at the mouth of what was known to those pioneers as No. 9 creek. And in the logical sequence of nomenclature it was to be expected that the settlement would be given the name associated with Irish history and the Talbots of Malahide. The settlement was named Tyrconnell, probably both for Richard Talbot, the Earl of Tyrconnell, who served under King James II of England and also for the ancient Kingdom of Tyrconnell (Tir-Conaill) in what is now the county of Donegal in northwest Ulster.

The Tyrconnell in Colonel Talbot's Little Ireland was destined for greatness. It was surveyed and laid out for a large town just about a century ago, but due to a concatenation of events and circumstances, Colonel that King Canaill Gubbon, almost as extinct as the Tyrconnell that King Conall Gubbon, son of Niall of the Nine Hostages, founded in the middle of the fifth century.

#### A THRIVING COMMUNITY

As early in 1830, Tyrconnell had a wharf and at least one warehouse and was doing quite an extensive Great Lakes trading business, and by 1865 the thriving community had two hotels, three general stores, various other businesses and industrial enterprises and was shipping out large quantities of grain, square timbers from virgin oak, rock elm and whitewood; ship's staves, cordwood and luxuriated wood ashes, or what the early settlers called balck salts - evaporation turned the solution black.

What brought about Tyrconnell's decline and disappearance? The building of the railways more than anything else. Trade slowly deserted the communities that were not on the rail lines.

There no doubt were other reasons. After Colonel Mahlon Burwell and his instrument men surveyed Tyrconnell, between 1850 and 1860, an auction sale of town lots was held; but James Blackwood, who built a grain warehouse in



## TYRCONNELL, LOST CAPITAL of LITTLE IRELAND, (cont'd)

Tyrconnell in 1856, suffered business reverses and was unable to give deeds of sale. Blackwood was in the nature of a pioneer business tycoon. He was in business in St. Thomas, at Fingal and also at Wallacetown as well as in Tyrconnell.

Blackwood's inability to provide deeds for Tyrconnell's town lots did not prevent a group of business men from forming the Pier Company in 1861. A long wooden pier was built and it continued in general use until about 1890. In fact older people no doubt remember the pier, which was used largely for small pleasure and fishing craft until 1895 or 1896.

When Tyrconnell Harbor was at its peak, schooners carried out upward of 75,000 bushels of grain annually - and that was a lot of grain for those early days.

### THE FIRST MILLS

Colby's sawmill, built at the mouth of No. 9 Creek in 1820, was probably the start of industrial life in Tyrconnell. Twelve years previously, mills had been built to the east for Colonel Talbot at Port Talbot, but invading American forces burned Talbot's mills in 1813. Until a mill was built at Tyrconnell and other mills were established in the area, settlers often had to go to Long Point or even to Buffalo for grists and flour.

A year after Colby's mill appeared, George Henry built the first grist mill on No. 9 Creek and added a sawmill later. Absalem Slade built the first warehouse at Tyrconnell and he also operated a trading post. Hewitt's was the first ashery or pearl oven to be built in Tyrconnell; McCall's store was established in 1827; Hamilton and Warren's store and grain buying business in 1830; Fox's tannery sprang up in 1832 and was sold to Sam Ladd in 1835. James and Thomas Coyne began their store and warehouse in 1836; Fowler and Wood built a large grain warehouse in 1840, and Archie McIntyre pioneered in the distillery business in 1826, to be followed by Steele's distillery in 1830.

The flocks of the early settlers having increased over the years and home spinning not being widely practised, Mitchell's woolen and carding mill was built on No 9 Creek in 1855 and did a big business for a number of years.

### FIRST POST OFFICE

Tyrconnell's first post office was in Colonel Leslie Patterson's big house from 1837 until 1852 when Thomas Coyne became the postmaster. The first mails were brought in and carried out once a week by couriers on horseback. Later, Tyrconnell people were elated