

This is from the recollections of Samuel McColl, who was the clerk of the fourth Division Court at Dutton and who died in 1914. "Yes, there was genuine fighting between the people, and it wasn't confined to fair time nor to a settlement of the fair question."

He recalled the several brawls the factions plunged into at various times and then he went on, "The leaders were the Nellie family, from Largie, and the Thompsons and everybody joined with one side or the other. The fighting was especially in earnest at the militia camps. I remember one camp was held at Coyne's Corners, where there were two hotels, and the Aldborough men went to one hotel and the Dunwich men went to the other. The Aldborough soldiers had brought a fine silk flag, and it was rolled up and left outside of the hotel. While they were inside drinking, their rivals put [a] cut in it so that when it was unfurled it was in ribbons. Then there was trouble. Challenges were issued and two powerfully built men, Thompson and McKellor, volunteered to sustain the honor of their respective companies. Finally the men joined in the fray and blood would surely have been shed only the losing side mounted their horses and fled.

"There were many such fights, but no one seemed to get killed or hurt very badly. One I remember [was] one of the Nellies—Dugald Nellie—getting in a fight with another big fellow named Black. In the melee Dugald hit his opponent over the head with a rail and for a half an hour the man didn't breathe. They carried [him] to the fence and finally Black recovered much to the relief of Dugald, who was afraid that he had killed him.

"Men in those days had great strength and you would have thought so if you had seen that at a logging bee. In those days they had bees for everything—it was all one big happy family. Well, when the oxen were drawing heavy logs, I have seen those sturdy fellows impatient and, striving hard, they would not wait for the oxen but would pick up a log and carry it themselves."

Like Walter Stansell of Kinglake, Samuel McColl had great respect for oxen and he commented upon their sagaciousness. As soon as they heard the rattle of the chains they were off and knew exactly where a log was to be taken.

Here again Samuel McColl talks about the bees and the whiskey. "In the old days, no bee was successful without plenty of whiskey. And it was good whiskey that was sold for twenty-five cents a gallon. But one day there came a change — temperance societies were being experimented with. Some of the farmers joined and among them was a North Dunwich man who had a raising that summer. He resolved to force his opinion upon his neighbours and the customary liquor was absent. As soon as the men found there was no whiskey, they mutinied. It was too dry work, they said, and they quit.

"My brother, Duncan, was captain of one side and he suggested that they do their half of the work, anyway. Well, the men fell in line for him and then the other side went to work. After that the whiskey [was] cut out of bee after bee until finally nobody wanted it. I didn't know that the whiskey did them any harm because they [worked] so strenuously it offset the effects of the liquor. They all had a good [time] and the women folk joined in the housework and great suppers were prepared and the bee ended with a dance."

McColl, of course, remembered when whiskey was sold on the fairground at Wallacetown, but it caused a lot of trouble, more than at the bees. The most obstreperous were locked up in the Wallacetown town hall.

# General Store Operator Retires After 29 Years <sup>1966</sup>

WALLACETOWN (West Elgin Bureau) — A man who feels that the general store is "one of a dying race", is retiring from the business after 29 years of service in Wallacetown.

A. C. White remembers the days when customers used to sit around the pot - bellied stove he had in the centre of his store and local "gossip - groups" would sit and talk for hours.

He started the store in 1937, occupying only half of what he now has. And it was rented. A few years later he rented the other half of the building, and now he owns it all.

"But the trend today is more to the self - serve store, away from the service stores," Mr. White says. "My general store is among the last of these."

Right now Mr. White is in the middle of a closing sale and on Sept. 30 he plans to close and sell the building. "That's almost an anniversary," he remembers, "We opened on Sept. 27, 1937."

The building itself is close to 100 years old. Basement foundations are about two feet thick. When Mr. White first moved in the upstairs was leased to Masonic and Forester Lodges for meetings. He also found a lease in the safe dated 1887 for the Cameron Lodge.

In one part of the store there are boxes of stock. The other part is the selling side and the shelves are piled high with anything and everything from watches to cornflakes to clothes and baseball mitts. "Its simply an old - fashioned country store."

"It's not an easy store to operate," Mr. White admits. "I had been a meat man all my life, but experience is the best teacher."

Mr. White was born in Glasgow and came to Canada in 1920. He lived and worked in Toronto, Oshawa, and St. Thomas before opening the store in Wallacetown. "Customers still drop in here that knew me when I was in St. Thomas."

What will he and his wife Mona do after closing the store? "I intend to live a day at a time. I'm going to rest and possibly do some travelling, but nothing definite yet."

Business through the years has been steady and good, he says, with excellent support from his neighbors.

67 1966



In 1940 these were Wallacetown's business establishments:

|                       |               |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Cameron, John A.      | General store |
| Cusack, Miss E.E.     | Grocer        |
| Davey, S.H.           | Garage        |
| Leeming, E.           | Blacksmith    |
| McIntyre, Mrs. Andrew | Confectionary |
| Turville, George      | Chopping mill |

Forty-two years later, we see the following:

|                              |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Arvebo Meats                 |                     |
| Dietrich Drainage Contractor |                     |
| Wood, Alvin J.               | Elgin Motors        |
| J. & C. Variety              |                     |
| Hrydiw, William              | Service station     |
| Shelley Bros.                | Sawmill             |
| Pfaff, Wallace               | Variety and grocery |
| Wallacetown Small Engines    |                     |

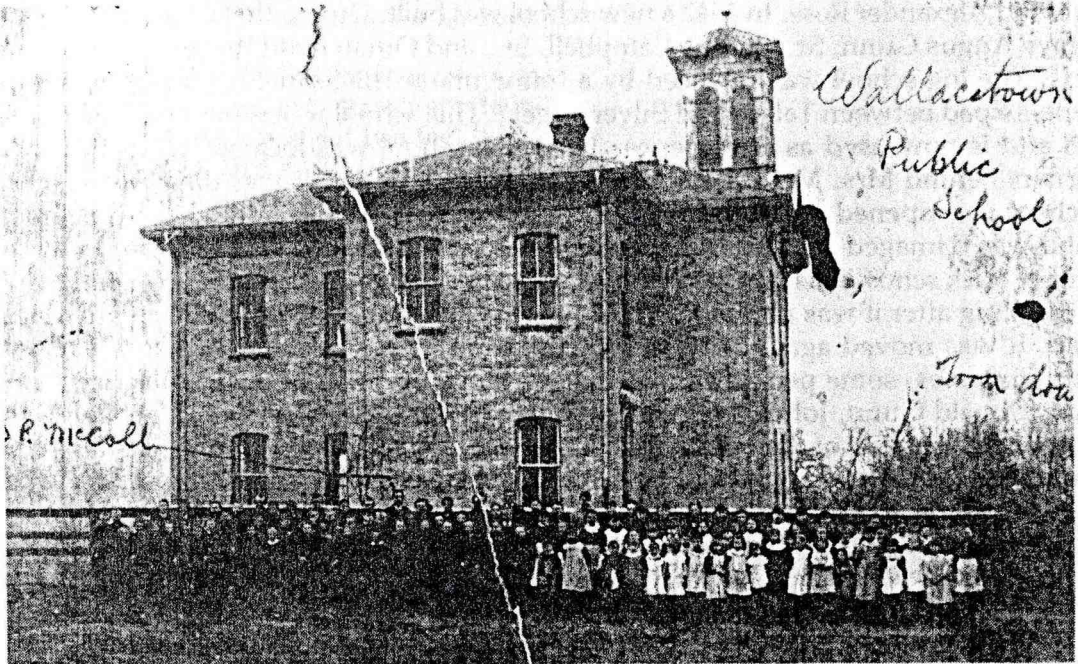
## Schools and Churches

Angus Gunn was interested in the establishment of a school. One was erected near Love's Cemetery, west of Coyne's Corners on the Talbot Road, in 1828. This school was destroyed by fire in its first quarter. The first teacher was Duncan McKillop, father of Duncan McKillop of West Lorne. After the fire classes were held in a log cabin on George Gunn's farm for the balance of the quarter. A log building on Lot 6, Concession 7 on the south side of the Talbot Road was used next as a school. This land was later owned by Henry or Harry Garbutt and the schoolteacher was James Campbell. Campbell had an unusual way of punishing the lads who became unruly by sending them to the nearest creek to bail it out. This log building was used until 1831 when another building on George Gunn's farm was put to use for eleven years. The first teacher in this case was Abraham Lehigh. He was followed by Thomas McColl, Eustace Ladd, Hugh Gunn and George Matheson. During the Rebellion the old school was used by soldiers as a bivouac and on some occasions for religious services by Reverend Alexander Ross. In 1842 a new school was built. During that same year the government gave Angus Gunn, Sr., Angus Campbell, Sr., and Oman Ladd the authority to examine teachers. The log school was replaced by a frame one in 1865. In 1879 it was moved north of Coyne's Road between Talbot and Silver streets. This school was replaced by a brick school in 1898 and is now used as a residence. The brick school was located two blocks north of the corners behind Mrs. McColl's house, east of Currie Road. It was dismantled when the new school was opened south of the corners in 1923. The first frame school was erected in 1850 and was damaged during one of the fires. It was renovated and was used until a new two-storey brick school was erected. The old school was later moved to Dutton and converted into a dwelling after it was placed on what was to be the right-of-way of the Pere Marquette Railroad. It was moved again in 1900. By this time it had become an eyesore and when it went up in flames, some people were satisfied. Some of the teachers in the past were John Graham, Donald Gunn, John McIntyre and Duncan P. McColl. Duncan P. McColl was born on the second farm east of the Baptist Church on No. 3 Highway and became a distinguished athlete before 1893. He obtained his B.A. from the University of Toronto in 1892. He became the superintendent of education for Saskatchewan. He obtained his L.L.D. from the University of Saskatchewan and became the registrar of the University of Saskatchewan in 1907. When he retired he took a law course for his L.L.B. For years Wallacetown was the high school district of West Elgin, which was changed on January 31, 1885.



The following natives of Wallacetown got their start at the Wallacetown school:

Dr. George W. Clay  
Dr. William Crehen, son of a ditcher, William Crehen  
Dr. Neil Gunn, son of Kate and Benjamin Gunn  
Dr. Robert Kelso, son of Reverend D. Kelso  
Dr. Thomas H. McColl, son of Sarah McColl. Born in 1875. Became a schoolteacher and medical doctor and practiced in Tilbury. Died in 1944. His daughter married Dr. F.S. Ruston of Hamilton.  
Dr. Malcom Graham, son of John C. Graham  
Dr. Lorne Graham, son of Moses Graham  
Dr. Amos T. Ripley  
Dr. Daniel G. Revell  
Dr. Duncan Gow, who moved to Grenville in 1866  
Dr. Sydney Lucas  
Dr. William E. Gibson  
Dr. George Ruthven  
Dr. William Backus, son of William H. Backus  
Dr. D. McKillop  
Dr. P.M. Mann, who in 1858 located in Aylmer  
Dr. D.G. Ruthven  
Dr. D.S. McColl  
Dr. G.W. Ling  
Dr. J.W. Crane, London  
Dr. W.H. McFarlane, Calgary  
Reverend Peter McFarlane  
Walter Pearce, engineer  
Dr. Joseph Hooley, Ridgetown  
Dr. Hugh McDonald, Kitchener  
B.B. Gunn, Conservative M.P. for Seaforth  
Irvine Small, Department of Agriculture  
Mr. McIntyre, a Buffalo lawyer  
Sergeant Ellis Sifton, V.C.  
Two Caughill boys who became Presbyterian ministers



Wallacetown Public School



William Coyne recalled the state of education in the early days of Dunwich Township. "Common schools for the children were with difficulty established amongst the early settlers of Dunwich. They had neither school house or teachers, and the want of a school was felt so sharply that when the chance of getting a teacher turned up in the person of Thomas Gardiner, my uncle, who was a man of good education, and was spending the winter with us, Mrs. John Pearce, (or Aunt Fanny, as we called her) vacated her kitchen, a room of some sixteen feet square and the school was taught in it. This was the winter of 1822-23, and it was the first school. I walked three miles, mostly through the woods and only a blazed trail at that, to attend it. Next year my teacher was a silly old Yankee named Abraham Lehigh, and the school room was George Gunn's old log shanty. He had put up a new house and left the old one vacant and it was taken for a school house for the quarter and old Lehigh and his wife utilized it for a dwelling also. Next Thomas McColl taught in the same place, and by the fall of 1825 the settlement had put up a log shanty school house some twenty by twenty-four feet on McGugan's farm, opposite our home, and a Highlander named Campbell taught the school for a quarter. The mode of supporting schools at that time and for many years after was by "rate" per scholar; each one attended being charged \$1.50 per quarter, the teacher collecting his pay from the parents of the children attending or rather the mode was to pass a paper around and have the parents sign for as many as they had or could afford to pay for, until the list was large enough to pay a teacher, and then a teacher was engaged for three months, and when they could afford to run the school six months in the year they felt they were "getting up." The quarter generally began with December and closed with February."

When William Coyne returned to school in 1827-28, he attended for three months and went to school for the same period the next year, which finished his education in his thirteenth year. The gentleman recalled that Dunwich at the time was rather a backward and quiet place. People in the settlement were too poor to pay for newspapers and it was a great occasion when someone who visited St. Thomas brought home the *St. Thomas Weekly Dispatch*, which became thumb-worn very soon. The quiet loneliness was broken only by an occasional itinerant Methodist preacher who sought out Henry Coyne and his family as Coyne had been a preacher in Ireland and was a man of books and reading. The visits of these early pioneer preachers, though "like an angel's visit, few and far between," were highly interesting on both sides, as but few of the settlers knew anything of books or anything else but crops and cattle.

In 1875 a small church was erected on the corner of Gordon and Argyle streets to answer the demands of a growing congregation, which up to that time had been using the town hall as a place of worship. To tell the story of the Methodist Church of the area one has to bring in the story of the Wesleyan and Episcopal denominations. Early Methodist services were held in Henry Coyne's home at Coyne's Corners, Peter Crane's house, and the homes of Job Curtis and Jonas Page. The services were conducted by saddlebag missionaries such as Reverend John Ryerson, Reverend Ephriam Evans and Reverend Ashel Hurlburt. Wallacetown was considered a mission until the establishment of a regular church. The Wesleyan Methodists of Tyrconnell decided to have a place of worship and so in 1855 a church was erected by Anthony Conn and Robert Barr. It was officially dedicated in the month of February 1856. Prior to this they held their services in the school on the Backus farm with the first missionary being Reverend Ferguson. This was a mission until 1836, when it became part of the St. Thomas circuit. In 1854 Fingal was set off and Tyrconnell became part of that circuit. Later the church was set off again and became part of the Bismarck (West Lorne) circuit. In a few years the church became independent and joined Dutton, with one of the pastors being Reverend E. Teskey. The ministers then moved from Tyrconnell to Wallacetown, where Reverend J. G. Follis preached. The parsonage was then moved to Dutton and became the head of the circuit. The Wesleyan Methodist Church closed in 1926 and the congregation moved to



Wallacetown and became part of the United Church of Canada in 1925. Early religious services were held in the town hall in Wallacetown. In 1875 the Methodist congregation had a church erected on the corner of Gordon and Argyle streets on land donated for that purpose by Colin Henry, a hotel proprietor. In 1956 the church was renovated and enlarged with a Sunday school annex, and a new porch and entrance hall. After the renovation the church was rededicated in 1960. The building committee was under the chairmanship of Jack Campbell with Stewart West as secretary. The other members were Norman Sutton, Jack Ripley and Victor Betts. Half of the money was raised by a committee under the chairmanship of A.C. White with Norman Welsh as secretary and Morley Page as treasurer. This committee consisted of William S. McKillop, Earl Shipley and Lloyd Wigle. At the dedication the choir was led by Mrs. Norman (Margaret) Welsh. Ken Welsh, son of Norman and Margaret Welsh, also assisted in the renovation. Amasa Wood and George E. Casey gave donations of money at the original erection and the first organist was Cecelia Luton, who later became Mrs. John Blackwood.

Owen Hooley in the spring of 1982 recalled his early days of attending the old St. Colomkille Church that was located southeast of Wallacetown on Lot 17, Concession 9 of Dunwich Township. It was a Roman Catholic church erected on land donated by Mr. Hooley's grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Hooley, in 1869. The first celebration of the mass in Dunwich Township was conducted in Colonel Talbot's log house by Reverend Alexander McDonnell, Bishop of Kingston, in 1827. Mass was said in parishioners' homes until 1869, when St. Colomkille was erected. The resident pastor was Reverend Patrick Quinlan, who came from Strafford. In 1902 the present church, St. Helen's, was built in Wallacetown. The first marriage to be performed in St. Helen's was that of Terrance Lynch and Mary McCaffery on June 28, 1904. The first baptism was of James Lynch on April 19, 1903. He was the son of James and Catherine (Garett) Lynch. Father McMaster, now deceased, was pastor from June 27, 1959, to June of 1965. He was the first priest at St. Helen's to say the liturgy in English.

The origin of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church goes back to 1852. Before that time early devotional services were held in the outdoors under the direction of Reverend John Fraser of St. Thomas. Angus McKay was made an elder of his church in 1830 and served in that capacity for forty years. After Reverend Alexander Ross, the Presbyterian services were carried on by Reverend John Talmon, who held services in the little log school. The first settled ministers were Elders D. McMillan, D. McKillop, D. McArthur, Reverend Neil McDermid, Reverend J.A. McDonald, Reverend D. Stewart, and Reverend Donald Kelso. It was under the pastorate of Reverend Kelso that the church was rebuilt in 1902. The good pastor passed away in 1916.

### **Coyne's Corners**

In telling the story of Wallacetown, we must bring in the story of Coyne's Corners, which was just down the road. In the early years of the area, there were no grist or flour mills and many of the settlers had to take their grain to the mills on Beaver Creek in south Yarmouth Township. In one case Angus Gunn took his grain to Beaver Creek to be ground. He found such a backlog of customers waiting that he went out and earned his keep by flailing grain, which lasted for some weeks. At its peak Coyne's Corners had three hotels and two blacksmith shops. Two of the hotel buildings are still standing and are used as dwellings. The first hotel was erected by Henry Coyne in 1845. Another was erected on the north-west corner by John McGugan. Donald G. Gunn also operated a hotel west of the corners on the south side of the Talbot Road. Coyne's Corners, in the days before Tyrconnell declined, was important as there was a tremendous amount of traffic on the roads. Two blacksmith shops were located on the corners. One of them was operated by a Mr. Ritchie and the other