

Zorra Historic Rural Clusters

Browns Corners

Browns Corner came to the township in the early years of settlement. The Brown Family had few neighbours within distance other than the Uren settlement 4 miles away, and Moores Davis; 3 miles away. The Browns built their first shanty in the mid 1820's. They had few vehicles which made it very inconvenient to reach their surroundings, especially their nearest post office in Ingersoll, and nearest sawmill in Putnamville. Due to scarcity of winter feed, keeping animals throughout the winter season proved very difficult, however because of the plentiful wilderness around them, the warm seasons allowed for any quantity of cattle. Sheep however were unable to be kept due to wolves. Throughout the years the Browns and their neighbours built a Methodist Episcopal Church which later became Browns United Church. This church has been maintained and refurbished throughout the years. The Browns Church, the creation of Browns Women's Institute, and Browns School, gave the community events.

Holiday

The Crossroads, now known as Holiday, at the town line between East Nissouri at the former West Zorra Township Road 78, has historically been known by many names. According to W.J Winterberg, the hamlet was known *as* Nissouri since 1853. In 1880, Holiday was known as McBrayne's Corners. The hamlet boasted a school, blacksmith shop, and a general store. The population was 25 individuals, and mail was delivered daily. Mr. McBrayne owned a hotel, and general store on the southwest corner of the farm at Lot 11 Con 1 West Zorra. The hotel was also home to a local post office. Before the CPR was established through Thamesford, mail was delivered via stage from Ingersoll. According to post office records, the town name was officially changed from Nissouri to Holiday in October 1894. By 1902, the population of Holiday had risen to nearly 50 people. There was a spring that carried throughout all of the citizens farms and eventually branched into the Thames River. This spring proved greatly important during the depression, as it allowed families to easily access water, as well as give the children a place to play. The community in Holiday, was very close, and held many events together.

New Eden

New Eden was a small hamlet situated at the corner of the former County Road 28 and the 12th concession of East Nissouri, now known as Road 96 and Zorra Township Line 25. At this corner was a Methodist Church named McKim's Methodist Church which amalgamated with Townline Methodist Church in 1915 to form Lakeside Methodist Church. Also at this crossroad was SS#11 East Nissouri Public School known as McKim's School. The first school was a log structure, later changed into brick in 1871.

Pasadena

Originally the intersection of the 8th Line and the Evelyn Sideroad (now the 13th line and Road 78) was called McMillan Corners in honour of Duncan McMillan who was the owner of three of the four farms at the crossroads. The Galloway family owned the only other corner in Pasadena. In 1901 McMillan built a house, a barn, and a general store on a plot of his land. However, McMillan did not enjoy running a general store, so John Galloway moved the business to his land. In 1909 McMillan Corners was renamed Pasadena. Buildings erected by Mr. McMillan were slowly taken down and the McMillan property was later bought by Russell Alderson in 1928. Neither McMillan Corners, nor Pasadena exist anymore, except in memory of the older generations who once inhabited them.

Youngsville?

Cody's Corner?

Zorra Station?

Cobble Hills?

Dickson Corners

The name "Dickson's Corners" originated from a family of Dickson who emigrated from Scotland and settled in this centrally located part of the municipality where Road 119, Line 25 and Road 64 intersect. The Dickson Family's main business was their blacksmith, farming, and woodworking shop. This community was built around the blacksmith shop. Today there are several new homes and businesses located in Dickson's Corners, and the former school has now been renovated into a home. Crossroads Alliance Church has been rebuilt and added onto several times and is a very popular church for citizens in the area. This church runs a "Bethlehem Walk" every year, which attracts people from all over to participate.

Granthurst

Granthurst was the name given to a smaller community on the corner of 8th Line and Uniondale side road. The first post office was established on July 1st, 1890. Alexander Grant was the owner of the farm where the office was located and named after. Mail was brought from St.

Mary's office until it closed in 1911. Close to Granthurst, near Uniondale were rolling hills known as Lilywhite Hills. These hills were used to extract gravel in the later years. Some say the hills were covered in masses of white lilies, while others say it was named after its early owner named White. His daughter was said to have roamed these hills, and possessed supernatural powers and could cast a curse on anyone who offended her. These hills were passed on throughout the Harris family line. The town was also home to a blacksmith shop, and a sawmill. The mill was built alongside a pond called Beaver Meadows. The original buildings burnt down in the 1890's, however were rebuilt by the Muir Family. In 1908, the mill was sold and moved to Dorchester tile yard.

Oliver

Oliver was located on the township line between East and West Nissouri at Lot 20 Con 8 (Cobble Hills Road and Road 88). The hamlet was named after Thomas Oliver, whom was a member of Parliament for North Oxford in the Canadian Assembly from 1866 until Confederation and then in the House of Commons from 1867 until 1880. Oliver is a large reason as to why the Post office was created in the hamlet in 1878. The Oliver Cheese Factory was also created in the early 1890's, this was a very successful means of living in Oliver.

Rayside

Rayside is at the intersection of Highway #2 (Governors Road) and Road 31. This area was settled before 1830 by families from the British Isles, several of whom were retired British Soldiers. Two family names were Gilchrist and Ross. This community has changed names several times; Dornoch, McKay's Corner, Campbell's Corner, and finally Rayside. When the population of Dornoch reached a population of 100, they then applied for a post office. When this area was known as Campbell's Corners, there was a hotel and a general store. Other businesses included a blacksmith shop, and a post office. The community would hang their outgoing mail on a post beside the Canadian Pacific Railway, and as the train went by, someone with a long hook would reach out and grab the bag of mail. Incoming mail bags were thrown off the train to a ready mailman to deliver.

McConkey

In 1845, Thomas McConkey and his wife Jane came to Canada from Ireland on a ship called the St. George. They bought these 200 acres for \$700, paid in British gold currency. They had 4 children, Charlotte, Robert, John, and Tom Jr. All were born in a log house which was near the side road, now called Road 88. When Charlotte was 10, her parents sent her to New York City

to study at Packer Collegiate Institute in Brooklyn, and later at two private schools. When Charlotte returned to Zorra, she taught her family what she had learned. At 22 she moved to London to study music. The house that is here now was built in 1860, triple bricked and in a style those in Ireland at the time. The original house had 9 bedrooms, all with fireplaces in each.

Dunn's Corners

There are no signs or intersecting crossroads in this community. However, this community has been vibrant for years surrounding the public school situated north and east of Ingersoll. Dated all the way back to this first settler of this area, William Dunn. Dunn founded that North Oxford Cheese Factory on the north half of Lot 13 Con.1. The public school was located on the south-east corner of the north half of Lot 12 Con 2. When it was not being used for teaching, it was often used for community events for the locals. This included Sunday school, card parties, garden parties, picnics, and dances.

Distributed by Doug & Janice Ferguson at the Zorra Heritage Committee meeting on February 7, 2024