

Squire James Cleaver, a farmer and provincial land surveyor, bought land in Lowville and built a grist mill on the Twelve Mile Creek. The right of way for the road being so steep, he gave land through his property for travellers to use. Squire Cleaver was a strong temperance man and his barn was the first to be raised without whiskey as an incentive. The mill, running 24 hours a day, provided plenty of work.

Like other hamlets on the banks of a stream, Lowville's development was linked with water power. Once the first people had established their farms and a mill was built, a few industries were started and small businesses emerged to meet the needs of the villagers. The village consisted of parts of the farms of T. E. Pickett, Joseph Featherstone, and Squire Cleaver.

When the teaming of grain and lumber was an important means of livelihood, hotels were opened, five in the Lowville area.

The foundry owned by J. McLaren (Son-in-law of J. Cleaver) in the 'forties turned out everything in iron from pots, griddles, muffin tins, and smoothing irons, to stoves and farm implements. Across from the foundry was a tannery.

Mr. Rumple's furniture factory supplied the neighbourhood with fine furniture. Other businesses were a carpenter shop, a dressmaker, and a millinery shop.

Sometime between 1853 and 1858, Andrew Pickett (married to J. Cleaver's niece) built a general store and it is believed the first post office was there. Mr. Pickett also had a cheese factory adjacent to the store before leaving to make his home in the United States. His eldest daughter, Anna born in Lowville, was the mother of Harry Hopkins, advisor to President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In 1868, the telegraph office was installed there, bringing the villagers more in touch with the outside world. About 1875, the store was purchased by Thomas Langton (nephew of J. Cleaver) and again the mail was linked with its proprietor who had the stage and mail route to Hamilton. The mail route to Burlington was discontinued and one was started to Milton.

At Highville, above Lowville, was located a general store, a dressmaker shop and a tailor shop. Across the road was Emerson and McNair's blacksmith and carriage shop and J. Pembroke's shoe shop.

Lowville had a generous share of "smithies" over the years, including Burkholder and Smith, Alex Mitchell and George Ramshaw. The post office was moved to this upper part of the village and was run by S. Nixon who did double duty as a school teacher,

About 1875, through the influence of Robert Coates, the village schoolmaster, plank sidewalks were laid through the village, a new foot-bridge placed across the creek and steps built up the hill to the upper town.

The first school house was built near the present church corner. Later a white frame school was built near the creek, to be replaced about 1888 by a stone school still standing in Lowville Park. The first school was called Barker's School House and was used for the first church services.

A number of young men of that generation became ministers. Rev. James Masson was ordained and preached his first sermon in Barker's School House. From the first real church built on the site of the later parsonage went forth Rev. Joseph Colling, Rev. Thomas Colling, Rev. Solomon Cleaver (son of J. Cleaver) Rev. Joel Pitcher, and Rev. T. Webster Pickett.

After holding services in the school for some time, the Colling family decided to build a Methodist church. It was not long before "Collings Church" opened its doors to worshippers. This church belonged to the Nelson circuit which was formed in 1832. The Christian Guardian of January 19, 1853 reported "The first missionary meeting of Nelson circuit was held Monday evening last in Collings' Church." There were only two circuit missionaries and meetings were held whatever day one of them arrived. In 1855 the old "Collings' Church" was re-named Lowville Methodist Church and made a pastoral charge along with Davidson's. New settlers were coming into the area in greater numbers and by 1871 the church was found too small.