

# LOWVILLE—1822 TO 1943

A Sketch By Mrs. C. A. Prudham, of Kilbride, Ont.

PRESENTED BY CHARLES E. McCULLOUGH

I DO NOT know who were the first settlers in the Lowville district—called "Lowville" as it was the lowest point on the main road from Guelph to Lake Ontario. It was built on the banks of the Twelve Mile creek, and nestles between our two mountains: Rattlesnake Point and Flamboro Head, the latter being used as a guide for the sailors on the lake.

My great-grandfather, Rev. Daniel Pickett (a saddle-bag preacher), who was sent over from the United States by the Methodist Episcopal Church, to spread the gospel, travelled through this district. He decided he would get a farm here for his family and so settled in 1822 on the 200 acres now owned by Harry King.

I have often heard my grandmother tell how she was sent, as a girl of 14, with her Uncle John and Aunt Hannah Kenney, to help them settle on the farm on the mountain. After their arrival she was sent through the woods to John Thomas' home for a live coal from their fireplace. This she carried back through two sticks and started the fire in the fireplace of their new home. She was born in 1810, so this would occur in 1824. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, therefore, must have been already there.

About 1831 or 1832 the Rev. Daniel Pickett took up the 200 acres across the sideroad from his farm, for his son-in-law, T. E. Pickett, and Peter McNiven. Thinking the main road a better spot on which to live, he divided the farm lengthwise—these were called in consequence "long hundreds."

In later years Daniel Pickett sold farm to Mr. Watkins, father of Thomas C. Watkins (founder of the Right House in Hamilton) and of Dr. Samuel Watkins, of Montclair, N.Y.

The McNiven farm was sold to Mr. Barker. The next owner was William Cust, who passed it on to his eldest son, James. It is now owned by Maurice Readhead. The farm owned by T. E. Pickett passed to his youngest son, William, and is now owned by a granddaughter and her husband—Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Armstrong.

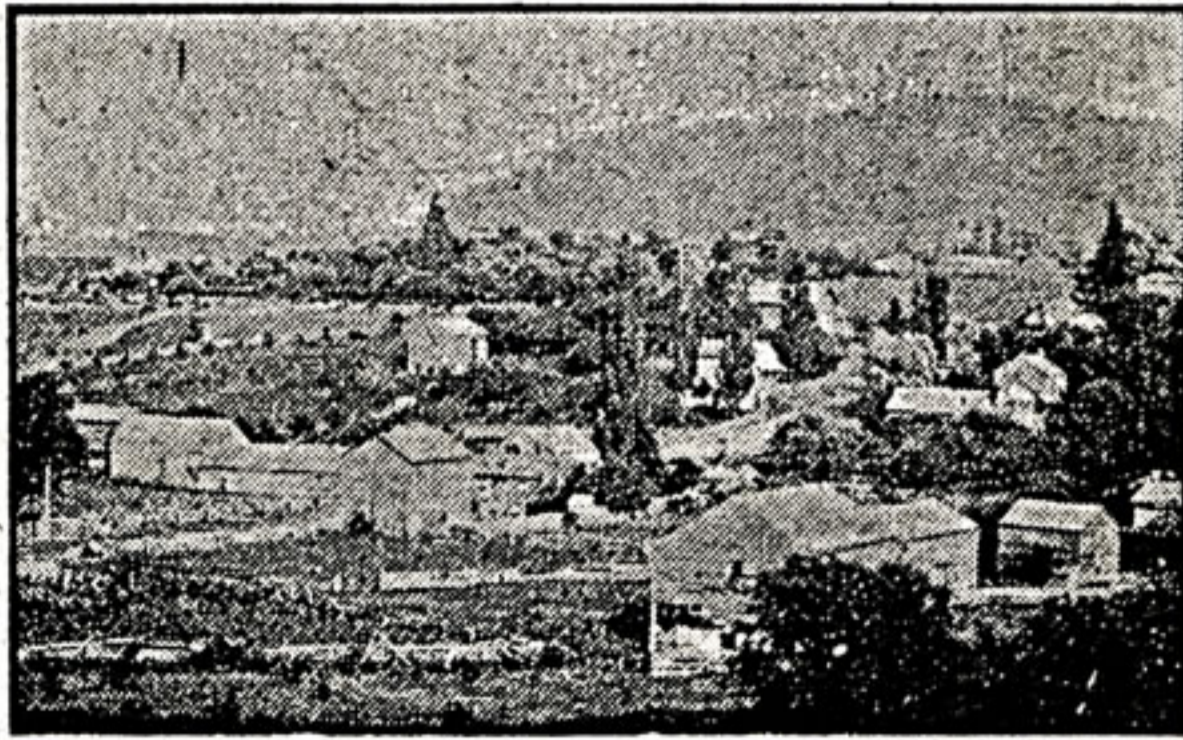
About halfway across this farm there was a sawmill, run by water-power from the Twelve Mile creek. It did a thriving business. These farms were all covered with splendid stands of timber.

THE present house on the Pickett homestead was built about 85 years ago by the two eldest sons, Andrew and Daniel Pickett. All the woodwork and floors were cut from one tree which grew on the farm. The next farm was taken by Joseph Featherston. It is now owned by a grandson, William Featherston.

The road at one time went through the gully on this farm, as the "road-allowance" was too steep for traffic. In later years it was built through Squire Cleaver's property, past the grist-mill. The next farm was taken by George Mackay, later was sold to Mr. Naisbitt and then to J. F. Richardson. It is now the property of Leonard Coulson.

Squire Cleaver was the first owner of the 200 acres now owned by George Agnew. The squire was a strong temperance man, and the barn on his farm was the first one in the community to be raised without the stimulus of whisky.

Now we'll cross the road and go on to the village: The farm on this corner belonged to the Butts family, who served well and long in the community. Their farm also passed in due course into other hands. It is now the property of Featherston Colling. Next comes the farm of Henry Richardson—still in the family name. The adjoining block was taken by Squire Cleaver. The next 50 acres, fronting on the main road, were taken by Jacob Smith, who, when a young man, lost a leg, but who nevertheless cleared his farm and



LOWVILLE 70 YEARS AGO

of him that he would walk with the other farmers all the way to Muddy York (Toronto), every year to pay his taxes. They usually made the journey in three days. His farm passed to his son, Isaac. It is now the property of E. B. Coulson. The next 50 acres, extending to the crossroad, belonged to Gideon Buck. Later on this property passed to Thomas Colling. It is now owned by E. B. Coulson. Adjoining this, going southwest on the sideroad, was the farm of Mrs. Foster. She emigrated to Canada from Ireland in 1832. Her husband died on shipboard, and was buried at sea. She landed on the shores of this new world with a family of eight sons and two daughters. The widow had little means, and, among strangers, began the battle of life alone. To remark that the task was a difficult one would be a mild expression. With a brave heart and strong faith in God, however, she brought up her family honourably and successfully. She located land at first near where the City Hall and market now stand in Hamilton, but some land agents persuaded her that the "seaport" was no place to bring up such a family of boys, and so she came to good old Lowville. It is said that she would take her basket of butter on her head and walk all the way to Hamilton and there exchange it for groceries which she carried home in the same way. Many of her descendants still live in the community. The Foster farm was later owned in succession by A. DeLong, Charles Butts and T. Grice. It is now in other hands.

THE farm, on which stands the present church, was taken by John Colling. His son, Featherston Colling, lived there for many years. It was afterwards sold to John Readhead. It is now owned by Fred Harbottle, a grandson of John Colling.

The village was taken off from the farms of T. E. Pickett, Joseph Featherston and Squire Cleaver. The first of these built the large grist-mill with a run of three stones. It did a big trade in custom and shipping business for many years. David Plewis took what was called a "long lease" of the mill. Then he sub-leased it to Mr. Warkup. He was followed by James Harvey, who later went to the Dakota Mills. J. Kemp and Jabez Nicholson were subsequent lessees of the grist-mill. The mill was run 24 hours a day. In consequence, there was lots of work for the teamsters between the village and Hamilton on the one hand and Guelph on the other. I have often heard my father (William Pickett) tell of the winter of 1869, when he went six days a week for 19 weeks at a stretch down to Brown's wharf (Burlington bay) and across the ice to Hamilton. "Some" winter! But there were no less than nine hotels between Burlington and Campbellville, in those distant days, so the teamsters were well-cared-for.

Hotel, which stood at the foot of the hill, across from the general store. There was another tavern in Highville, as we called the part on the other hill, a third where the Henry house now stands, a fourth on the George Coulson farm and a fifth on the property now owned by J. Dunn.

LOWVILLE can boast of several other industries in bygone days. On part of the property now owned by George Bradt, was the foundry that turned out everything in iron from dinner-pots, griddles, muffin-pans, smoothing irons to stoves and all kinds of farm implements. I am still using a griddle, dinner-pot and frying-pan made there. The foundry was owned and operated at first by J. McLaren. This was in the forties of a century ago. Later the establishment was run by J. Johnson. The McLaren home was built on the side-hill. In the upper part facing the road Miss Marsh, of Dundas, carried on a dressmaking and millinery shop. In later years this shop became the harness shop of George Bradt.

Back of the foundry (the main building being due northwest of Armstrong's barn on the banks of the "Twelve" and the finishing and salesroom nearer the road) was the furniture factory of the Rumpels. Rumpel's factory supplied the wants of the neighbourhood with all kinds of lovely furniture, prized samples of which may still be seen in many homes hereabout to-day. Mr. Rumpel was a native of Prussia.

Opposite the foundry was a tannery which I think was burned, and afterwards the house now owned by Mrs. C. Gunby. A carpenter shop was built on this property by Nicholas Dent. A tailor shop stood near Miss Mary Bell's house, where James Foster looked after the needs of the young men.

TO CLOSE this week's chapter let me add a few lines from the Khan's Pioneer's Anthem by way of tribute to the forefathers of this community who so long ago carved out of the wilderness so goodly a possession for themselves and so rich a heritage for their children and children's children: "We came to build, and building, a mighty structure grew, And ever as we builded, builded better than we knew; And through the darkening wilderness, lo! we were led in night, Our log-heaps made a smoke by day, a pillared flame by night. Now, when across a continent we've seen our task expand, To our children's children and their children we bequeath this land! Our country, O our country, the triumph of our toil! Unto her God we give our souls, our bodies to her soil. Standing by our graveside, this is our last command: For our children's children and their children thou shalt keep this land!" (Continued next Saturday)

## Reflects Life

By Clifford Walte, M.A., B.D.  
The first person to be buried in the new Methodist cemetery was a young man by the name of Jackson who died of a rare ailment called hlp disease. Some young medical students wanted the body for study but boy friends of the deceased were unwilling and guarded the grave day and night for a week. Finally they decided to make it burglar proof. Some of them dug out the grave, while others went to a nearby neighbor for his oxen and wagon with they

pastor. It was during Mr. Cookman's pastorate that the homecoming of the ministers who went out from this church took place. Special services were held for two Sundays when six ministers whose birthplace was in the Lowville area took part in the services: Rev. S. J. Mason, Webster Pickett, Joel Pitcher, Joseph Colling, Thomas Colling and Dr. Solomon Cleaver. Sidney Kenny was another local preacher of this time famed for his

filled the grave with large boulders, covered it over with earth and went home satisfied that no one would molest the body of their friend. Today that grave has no marker although for years a rose bush grew above it. It is the first grave inside the cemetery to the right of the west driveway.

for dramatic power. He lived in the farm house now owned by Stan Coulson.

By 1876 the Lowville and Kilbride Circuit consisted of seven appointments, paying salary to the Rev. J. R. McKay and assistant Rev. Fallis as follows: Lowville \$450., Kilbride \$192., Salem \$180., Bethesda \$185., Mountain \$90., Nassagaweya \$35., and Davidson's \$50. At this time the parsonage was at Kilbride and did not move to Lowville until 1878 when Rev. John Taylor occupied the house now lived in by Orval Peen.

Rev. E. S. Moyer was pastor that fateful Saturday night in 1907 when flames consumed the barn. Next day a collection was made and a new barn erected in its place. In 1909 Rev. W. R. Archer became pastor and during his time the telephone was first installed by the Nelson Telephone Company which had its head office in Lowville. In

Thomas Colling gave the land for the old parsonage on the 5 sideroad with the understanding that the parsonage would be set back sufficiently that he could have an unobstructed view of the front steps of the church from his front window. The board approved of this gift and arrangements were made to build a handsome red brick structure of ten rooms after the design of a house owned by George Allison in Waterdown. So in 1884 after much volunteer work, hauling of sand and stone, and with the Davidson church building as a barn, the parsonage was opened and an admission fee solicited from all who came to see it opened, one of the handsomest parsonages in the district.

the year 1910 Elmer S. Sinclair and Charles Jay were licensed as local preachers. Both of these men are still in the ministry today. Rev. Jay has two boys who are also United Church ministers, one of which, Douglas, is professor of Christian Ethics and Psychology of Religion at Emmanuel College, Toronto. Victor Butts received his local preacher's license the same year and left for China.

In the Niagara Conference minutes of 1887, a motion reads "that Kilbride at present an appointment on the Lowville Circuit, be joined to Carleton and that Zimmerman appointment on the present Zimmerman Circuit be united to Lowville; that the Mountain appointment on the Zimmerman Circuit go to Milton and the Middle Road (Appleby Church) go to Burlington and Plains Circuit."

Rev. E. J. Clarke became minister in 1889 and in the following year the new church at Zimmerman was built on land donated by George Gordon Crawford. At this time three services were held, 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. in Lowville and 2:30 p.m. at Zimmerman. In those days three seated wagons, democrats and buggies crowded the churchyard and side seats were needed to accommodate the capacity crowds who attended the evening service.

In 1896 Hamilton Bennett, uncle to the late Miss Sybil Bennett, M.P., was licensed as a local preacher on the charge and for over 50 years preached sermons appreciated by all who heard them. The Rev. J. E. Russ was minister at the time when the stipend was over \$700. a year. In 1899 a ruling was made in the Methodist Church that a preacher was permitted to stay longer than three years and the Rev. Jabez Wass remained for four years. In 1903 Rev. C. Cookman