

Maple Hill

The early settlers of Brant Township who came in from the east by way of the Durham Road crossed the Saugeen River near the Bruce-Grey County boundary. As they travelled westward they entered a large stand of maple trees growing on a rise of ground almost halfway between Breck's Crossing and Brant (Walkerton). It wasn't long until the area became known as Maple Hill. Maple Hill was the name given to the homestead of Captain and Mrs. John J. James, a very fashionable English couple who created quite a stir in the district.

In the early 1860's business began to crop up in the area and a hamlet was in the making.

The first settlers of Maple Hill were all from the British Isles. An English gentleman, William Ashdown taught the children in the first little school. Robert Good owned the first hotel and tavern; it was known from Durham to Kincardine as "Good's Hotel". It was also the longest stop-over for the Stage Coach between the two places. William Hall built a race and saw mill and later on a flour and grist mill. R. B. Clement owned a very successful general store, but after ten years of store keeping he went back to farming and eventually bought the Wm. Hall mill at Maple Hill and turned it into a chopping mill. Mr. Clement also operated the Post Office when he owned the store.

Later on the Post Office was operated from Mr. John Goode's store and at one time was run by Isabelle Goode.

By 1896 Maple Hill had a population of 70 residents, a hotel, the mill, a blacksmith shop, and Mr. Solomon Knechtel was the cabinet maker.

The mill at Maple Hill outlasted the other businesses. Road conditions improved and Hanover, and Walkerton grew to be progressive towns. There was no need for a village or even a hamlet between the two.

Maple Hill residents still cherish the old stories of their English heritage, of the river floods, the bridge washouts and the old Maple Hill mill.

Maple Hill is just a name today. There is no mill, no clock tower, no stage coach in front of a popular hotel and tavern. It still has its quiet atmosphere, some of its grand maples and of course the famous Blue Spring.