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Lot 33, Concession 11, East Zorra

In the 1840's, William Carruthers Bell and his brother John Bell left their farm home Middliebie Rigg, Dumfrieshire, Scotland to come to Canada. They spent some years in Galt where they found employment teaming flour from Galt to Dundas and William was the first man to fire the old Ballantyne Lime Kiln on the River Road. On April 6, 1951, the brothers purchased the West ½, lot 33, concession 11, East Zorra. William married Dolena McKay in 1855 in Chalmers Church, Woodstock and John married Annie in 1857. They all lived together until March 25, 1859. As their families grew in number a larger accomodation was required so the 100 acres was divided, William and Dolena and family taking the S¼ and John, Annie and family the N½ giving them each 50 acres.

SW¼ Lot 33, Concession 11, East Zorra.

William and Dolena Bell lived for 43 years on this farm and raised a family of one son and five daughters, Ellen Ross, Mary Turner, Minnie Henderson, Kate Bickle, Alice Ann Bickle and John Alexander Bell. William Bell always showed a concern for his community. He was on the board of McTavish Burying Ground His name is first on the list of subscribers, he was a trustee for many years, the annual meeting often held in the Bell home. The Bells were also involved with the organization of the first Presbyterian church in this area. We think this was known as the "Black Ash Church" , but do not know if there was a church building or if services were held in the homes, but a reference is made in an old journal of William Bells to a meeting concerning members, Quote : " To the membera and adherants of the Free Presb yterian Church of Canada and others. At a meeting held at the home of W & J Bell it was resolved to appoint a committee to see all those who would be in favour" end of quote, unfortunately the next page is missing. William Bell had taken a business course in Scotland and this is probably why he acted as secretery for several groups. The old Journal refered to is one he used in his business course in Scotland and it is signed in beautiful writing, William Bell, Middliebie Rigg, by Eccelfechan, Dumfrieshire, January the 20th 1841, North Britian. It has a hide cover and Mr. Bell wrote along the bottom of one page the beginning of the minutes of the Free Church.

This meeting may refer to the building of Burns Presbyterian Church which was located on lot 30, con. 9 East Zorra. The land was purchased from George Murray the deed drawn up March 13, 1860 for ½ acrea in the N.E. corner of the farm. The Bell brothers were obviou- sly involved with this church as it was built and in thw 1861 census it is described thus: Free Church. 38 x 26, costing \$200.00, frame, accomodating 170 people and no doubt it was full every Sunday.

Education was also important to him. He was a trustee of S.S.#8 school section, where all his children attended school. In a minute book it states that in 1889 library books, especially a dictionary costing \$4.50 (a considerable sum in those days) were purchased on the suggestion of William Bell, showing the intellectual concerns of this man.

The first home would be a log structure according to the 1861 census it was a one story home. They had at this time 30 of the 50 acres under cultivation of which 20 acres were crops, 10 acres pasture and 20 acres of unbroken bush with a value of \$1000.00. By 1881 they had 45 acres cleared, they had 9 cattle, 7 sheep, 1 hog, 2 horses and 1 acre of orchard. My mother remembers how sweet the plums were in her grandpas orchard.

On March 10th, 1894 William Bell sold this farm to his nephew, John Stewart Bell and on March 4, 1916 John S. Bell sold to John Bell Jr. and on the same day he sold it to Wm. Murray Bell. When William Murray Bell died his widow Magdelen (Lena) sold it back to John S. Bell who sold it on March 2, 1925 to David Innes. It had been in the Bell family for 74 years. Robert Innes took over the farm and sold it to Warren Stein and it is now part of Thames Bend Farms Inc. Warren and his family live on this farm lot 33, con, 11, SW¼ east side of the 11th line, East Zorra.

SW¼ lot 33, con. 11, East Zorra

William C. Bell	B&S	March 10, 1894	to	John Stewart Bell	50 acres
John S. Bell	B&S	March 4 , 1916	to	John Bell Jr.	
John Bell Jr.	B&S	March 2 , 1925	to	David Innes	
David Innes	B&S		to	Robert Innes	