

Goshen's railway station once served many area travellers

1—The Mercury, Renfrew, Ontario—Aug 7, 1985

by Wanda Blimkie
Mercury reporter

“With grateful memories to all its members, past and present, as well as much gratitude to a once thriving farming community of Goshen which revolved around a country store with a post office named Carswell, a Goshen hall serving church affairs and social demands, a Goshen railway station on the CNR Ottawa to Parry Sound, two schools called the Russell School in Horton Township and Goshen School in McNab Township.

This cairn, constructed on a corner property is donated by Barkley and Maudie Stewart, son of Andrew and Jean Stewart, store owner and in loving memory of Ruby and John E Miller, pivots of much community inspiration and guidance from the former store home.

Goshen Women's Institute commends our sturdy pioneers for this cairn of their citizenry within the Goshen community.”

The Goshen Women's Institute unveiled and dedicated a plaque on a cairn with the above inscription on Saturday, July 27 as their tribute to the pioneers who settled in Goshen Corners in the 1800's and to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the

institute not long after the turn of the century.

The dedication ceremony culminated over a year's planning and countless hours of research and work for three members of the institute, Edna Dewar, Mary Seeley and Amelia Yantha.

A member of the Goshen

WI since 1940, Dewar talked about this once thriving little community, its pioneers and the early days of the institute at her Renfrew residence last week.

“In the early 1860's Goshen Corners consisted of four dwellings, including houses, a blacksmith shop and a hall which was built by the Sons of Temperance, an active lodge for many years,” Dewar said.

Dewar explained the land for the hall was donated by John McGregor, who owned a farm, but in order to obtain a deed for the property a small sum of money had to be paid. David Carswell, owner of property across the road on the east side, paid the sum of twenty-five cents.

The Goshen Hall became the centre for community activities and was used for meetings, a Sunday School, prayer meetings and met all social demands. It later became the heart of institute activities for many years.

“In 1914 the Goshen Women's Institute was organized. In 1924 these women bought the famous hall for forty dollars and it again became the hub of community life,” Dewar stated.

But that's getting ahead of her story. In the very early

days of Goshen Corners a log home in the community, owned by David Carswell Sr, was the centre of activity as it housed a small grocery store and post office called ‘Carswell’ with mail delivered once a week. This mail had to be put off at the Mayhew Station on the CPR Railway and transported by horse and sleigh in winter and horse and buggy in summer.

“The mail was carried by the postmaster when the roads were impassable,” she said.

However, the mail system changed when a well known Ottawa lumber king, JR Booth, built a railway in 1890 to his timber limit in Algonquin Park. This line was known as the Arnprior and Parry Sound Railway.

When Goshen Station was built it had two local trains stopping each day, one going east and one west, as well as freight trains with a Goshen ticket agent in the office.

Part of Grand Trunk System

The Arnprior and Parry Sound Railway was later linked to the Canada Atlantic Railway and became part of the Grand Trunk System in 1914, which in 1932 became

From page B-1

the Canadian National Railway (CNR). This system ended in the 1950's, bringing to an end the era of local train travel in the community.

Another famous landmark for many years at Goshen Corners was a little square log house owned by a Mr Nesbitt who was a weaver by trade. In this little building many yards of wool goods and woollen blankets were turned out to meet the needs of the thriving community.

In the early 1920's rural mail came into being with a mail box at the end of each lane. Carswell Post Office disappeared and a rural mail carrier brought the mail in from Renfrew around by Burnstown and Goshen became Renfrew RR 1. The Carswell Post office building became known as the “post office home.”

Very important in every community, Goshen Corners also had its own blacksmith shop which was operated by James Campbell.

“History tells us the blacksmith made a big lock and a very large key for the post office home,” Dewar noted.

See page B-4