

Third Largest In Huron County

Grey Township Celebrates Its 100th Birthday

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Grey Township, in Huron County, recently celebrated its centennial. In the following article Mrs. D. Wardlaw outlines some of the early history of the township.

By Mrs. D. Wardlaw

In size, Grey Township is the third largest township in Huron County, consisting of nearly 65,000 acres. In the eyes of its residents, however, it stands second to none!

A soil map shows almost every type of soil, with the better types predominating. Soil that was considered too low and wet by the early settlers, has since been drained and proved to be extremely productive.

First Settler

The first known white settler was a man by the name of Beauchamp who lived at the present location of Henfryn. The exact date of settlement is unknown. However, it was considerably before the year 1850, as by that date several other settlers had located in the township.

Mr. Beauchamp later moved to a location, west of Cranbrook at which time he was the only settler in the area.

In 1852 John Mitchell located at the present site of the Village of Molesworth. He later became deputy reeve of the township and prominent in public affairs.

About the same year—1852—several families moved into the Brussels area, among them John and Duncan Ferguson, Robert and

Ronald McNaughton, Peter McDonald, Hyslop family, Thomas Blackie, William Douglas and family, J. J. Ford, Sellers family, McFadzean brothers, John Stewart, John Blair, Donald Allen and three families of Lamonts.

The writer's maternal grandfather, John Jones, had settled on lot 9, con. 10, and by 1859, five children had been born. His father, George Bateman, was born on lot 18, con. 7, in August, 1855, and the family by that time had considerable land cleared.

Pearson Family

It was at about this time that the Pearson family came in from Goderich to their location on the fourth concession. At the present time, John Pearson is the only descendant of that family still living on the original grant.

The township was organized as a separate municipality, with the first council meeting being held on lot 10, concession 11, January 21, 1856. The council elected was Peter McDonald as reeve, John Stewart, township clerk; Peter Ferguson, Robert Leckie, John Robertson and Thomas Strachan.

By the year 1862 the township became entitled to a deputy reeve and John Mitchell, whom we have mentioned before, was the first to be elected to that office. It would appear that the progress of settlement was quite rapid at this time, as by 1878, 27,814 acres were cleared. The population was given as 3,942, and the animal population was 1,484 horses, 4,660 cattle, 4,163 sheep and 1,536 hogs.

The total assessed value was given as \$142,300. Official reports show taxes collected for that year as \$12,740. Total receipts from all sources \$18,113 and total expenditures \$17,806.

Debentures Issued

It is also interesting to note that \$35,000 debentures were issued as a bonus to the railroad for having two stations, Ethel and Henfryn in the township.

It is also noteworthy that when the survey was made, Cranbrook was expected to be a town, Ethel a village of from 700 to 1,000 population and Henfryn a village. What changes the rural population decline have brought!

The villages of the township have declined rather than advanced with the possible exception of Molesworth which is situated on the north boundary and partly in Wallace Township.

Cranbrook at one time boasted of the only "public house" in the township built by James Tuck. At a later date there were three from Ethel to Brussels "Gravel Road" on the 7th and 8th concession.

At one time there were also several "post villages" in the township, a post office being established in Cranbrook in 1855. William Spence was first postmaster in Ethel, commencing about 1853. Only the post office at Ethel survives with George Dunbar as postmaster. Rural mail routes which now service the township were started about 1913.

A startling commentary on the decline of rural industry is shown by the following businesses which once flourished but now are gone from Ethel village — saw mill, flour mill, carriage plant, operated by Cober & Sons; carpet weaving, by Sam Chambers; a pottery, operated by William Spence; also the manufacture of brooms.

There is now neither a resident doctor, clergyman, or practicing veterinary, although Dr. Wardlaw, who came to Ethel in 1909, has practiced continuously until forced by ill health about a year ago to discontinue active duty.

Two blacksmith shops have disappeared, one being torn down and the other turning to the repair of farm machines and motor vehicles.

Religious Organizations

In 1878 a warrant was issued for the formation of Loyal Orange Lodge No. 631 in the country of Huron North.

This organization, while it has suffered the same decline as the churches is still in active operation.

The present United Church, Ethel, descended from the Wesleyan Methodist and Presbyterian churches. The first meeting was held in a log building on the present school grounds which served both as school and church. A large frame building was erected later on the farm of Lawrence Dobson, at the western end of the village, beside which the township hall was later erected, and on the site of which

the township garage now stands.

In 1915 a fire in the main part of the village made the present site available and the church was moved bodily down the street on rollers. Extensive additions were made including the bricking of the structure, which was again opened for service in November, 1917. Present minister is the Rev. Andrew Lane, who is resident minister in Brussels.

Presbyterian Church

In September, 1875, a plot of ground was purchased from John Cober at the east end of the village upon which a frame church was erected by the Presbyterians. By 1926 this church was also in need of repairs and the present brick structure erected with the official reopening held December 18, 1927. This church is also ministered to by a non-resident minister, Rev. C. L. Thompson, who comes from Cranbrook each Sunday.

In passing we note, with regret, the loss of another custom — that of having "local preachers." Robert McKay and George Bateman served in that capacity for many years. Mr. Bateman was almost drowned in crossing the swollen Maitland River on horseback during the summer flood of 1881 while on his way to preach at a church on the 6th concession.

Other Churches

Other churches in the township are the Anglican Church, at Henfryn; Union United Church, on the 12th concession; United Church, Moncrieff; Presbyterian Church, Cranbrook, and United Church, Walton.

Among those that have vanished are a church called Union on the 6th concession; the Methodist Church, at Cranbrook, and Rois United Church, on the 4th concession.

To Be Unveiled Today Nellie McClung Memorial WI Project in Chatsworth

OWEN SOUND, Ont. — (CP) — A memorial to Nellie McClung, noted feminist and author, will be unveiled June 8 on the farm near here where she was born in 1873. The memorial has been erected by the Women's Institute of Grey County.

Her journalist granddaughter, Nellie Lillian McClung of Edmonton, will officiate at the unveiling.

A leader in the fight for women's suffrage and a tough battler against the liquor traffic, Mrs. McClung wove herself into the pattern of life in the Canadian West for 60 of her 77 years. She died in 1951.

Irish Descent

Youngest of six children of Irish-born John Mooney and his Scottish wife, she was born in a log house at Chatsworth. The family moved to Western Canada when she was seven.

It was at Manitou, Man., that she became interested in the suffrage question and after her marriage to Robert McClung moved to Winnipeg where she helped to form the Political Equality League.

Mrs. McClung was a leader in the campaign for prohibition, one of the issues that brought about the defeat of Sir Rodmond Roblin's Conservative Government in Manitoba in 1914. Two years later Hon. T. C. Norris' Liberal Government granted Manitoba women the vote, four years before passage of the Dominion Franchise Act establishing uniform suffrage in Federal elections for men and women.

Newspapers frequently referred to Mrs. McClung as "Mrs. Western Canada." At the height of her fight against liquor the old Winnipeg Telegram dubbed her "Callamity Nell."

In 1921, Mrs. McClung was elected to the Alberta Legislature as a Liberal and held the seat until 1926.

Her name was among those of five women inscribed on a plaque at the entrance to the Senate Chamber in Ottawa, unveiled in 1938 by the late Prime Minister Mackenzie King in honor of women who had fought for women's suffrage.

Important Posts

Mrs. McClung became the first woman to be named to the CBC Board of Governors and was Canada's only woman representative to the League of Nations in 1928. Sir Robert Borden appointed her to the Dominion War Council in 1918 and she represented Canadian Methodism at the Ecumenical Conference in London in 1921. As a mother of five children,

she declared "woman's duty lies not only in rearing children but it also lies in the world into which these children must someday enter."

The memorial to be unveiled by her granddaughter is made of native stone. Its bronze plaque is the gift of the Canadian Government through the Historic Sites and Monuments Board. It bears the inscription "Nellie Mooney McClung — lecturer, teacher and writer — ardent advocate of women's rights in Canada — author of Sowing Seeds in Danny and other works — born at Chatsworth 20th October, 1873 — died in Victoria, B.C. 1st September, 1951.

REV. CALEB HARRIS

Prominent Baptist preacher, Rev. Caleb Harris, died on Friday at his home in Toronto, of a coronary thrombosis. Aged 70 years, he was retired from active pastorate work, but had kept preaching on a supply basis.

Mr. Harris was born in Elderslie Township, and after receiving his early education in the home school section and Port Elgin high school, attended McMaster University. He was ordained as a Baptist minister 44 years ago, later serving churches at Goodwood, Uxbridge, Dundas, Hanover, Hamilton, and finally Indian Road Church, Toronto.

Mr. Harris was a member of the directors of the Christian Social Council of Canada, the executive of the Ontario Temperance Federation and the executive of the Lord's Day Alliance. He was also secretary of the Board of Social Service and Evangelism for the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec. He was at present a member of St. Clair Avenue Baptist Church and the hospital visiting chaplain for the Baptist Churches of Toronto.

He is survived by his wife, one daughter and two sons. There are also two sisters, Mrs. S. Handy and Mrs. J. S. Marshall of Toronto; and three brothers, James, Toronto; Ebenezer and William, Chesley.