

HENRY HILKER

Henry Hilker was born near Heidelberg, Germany in 1824. When 10 years of age he went with his father to Jamaica. Their stay there lasted until 1837 when he came to Canada and settled at Preston. In the fall of 1852 Mr. Hilker came to Bruce. After taking up land, part of which is now in Port Elgin, he returned to Waterloo. In the following spring he brought his family with him to his bush farm. From then until his death (which occurred Jan.2/ 1900) Mr. Hilker was constantly engaged in enterprises which helped to make Port Elgin all that it is to-day. As a member of the firm Ruby & Hilker, merchant and grain buyers, his name became widely known throughout the county. The Commercial Block, built by him and in which the firm carried on business, has few to equal it in appearance outside of cities. Mr. Hilker held the reeveship of Saugeen for 3 years and that of the village of Port Elgin for 7 years. For many years he was a member of the United Brethren Church but latterly he united with the Presbyterian Church.

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DILMAN OBERHOLT BRICKER

Dilman Bricker was born in 1840 in County of Waterloo of Pennsylvania Dutch parentage and of Mennonite faith. His father, Samuel Bricker, with his family settled in Port Elgin in March 1854. D.O. Bricker was at an early age engaged in business for himself. His energy and enterprise not only brought him to the front, but the village also. For years he conducted his various business enterprises successfully. He built the Arlington Block which provided the largest premises occupied by any firm in the county. Suffering heavy losses in grain, Mr. Bricker went bankrupt. To retrieve his fortunes, Mr. Bricker went to Winnipeg and was again successful. After 20 years his health gave way and he returned to Port Elgin. His death occurred April 17, 1904.

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MRS. DUNCAN CURRIE

Mrs. Currie, a native of Prince Edward Island, was born of Scottish parentage Dec.23, 1837. Her maiden name was Mary Falconer, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Angus Falconer. She came to Port Elgin with her parents and Elizabeth Raymond (Now Mrs. Angus Currie) 67 years ago and a year later married Duncan Currie who predeceased her in Aug. 1891, 33 years ago. Mrs. Currie possesses a remarkable memory and dearly loves to talk of the early days here. When first she set foot in Port Elgin, then a veritable forest, there were only a handful of white people living here. Mrs. J.C. Kennedy was the first white woman she met here. She is the wonderful mother of 5 sons and 2 daughters. She is often seen in the stores attending to her shopping.

Port Elgin Times July 23, 1924.

MRS. J.C. KENNEDY

Port Elgin's oldest continuous resident was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in October, 1834. Harriet Garrard as she was known in her maidenhood, was married at Guelph to John C. Kennedy in 1851 and three years later came to what is now Port Elgin then practically a dense forest. Goderich and Mill Streets, being the only roads then open, with a blazed trail leading to the lake. Mr. Kennedy cut through the bush and took out enough timber to build himself a shop on Mill St. East, near where the Presbyterian Church now stands, and where he engaged in the wagon and carriage making for many years. Later going into grain buying he built the first warehouse at the railway tracks. Amid hardships and privation, which was the lot of the early pioneers, they raised a fine family of two girls and five boys, four of the boys being alive. Thirteen years ago Mrs. Kennedy was left a widow. Close onto 90 years of age, Mrs. Kennedy is enjoying life at the home of her son James H. Kennedy.

MRS. SAMUEL BRICKER PLAYED PART IN NAMING PORT ELGIN (Port Elgin Times July 23, 1924.)

One woman who watched with pride and interest the unveiling of a historic plaque in Port Elgin in 1974 was Mrs. James de Baker of Harper Woods, Michigan.

Mrs. de Baker attended the ceremony in which 11th Earl of Elgin unveiled a plaque commemorating the founding of Port Elgin.

Samuel Bricker whose name is among those listed was the great grandfather of Mrs. de Baker. He was also the great grandfather of Mrs. Ida (Baker) Crawford who lives in Port Elgin. He donated the land where it is known as Park Place where the plaque was placed. This land had been intended to be used as a market square.

Samuel and Catherine Bricker came to the area in 1854 from Waterloo area bringing along 8 children. They settled in a log cabin which was on a large acreage immediately east of the town limits.

Mr. Bricker was a farmer, grist mill operator and also ran a saw mill.

Legend has it that Mr. Bricker planted many trees and those were the basis for the town of maples.

However, few are aware that Mrs. Bricker played a leading roll in the name game. When the choice of name was being discussed and the change from Normanton made- she is supposed to have said, "This is a busy port and should include port in the name. The suggestion met with favour. Mrs. Bricker came from a Mennonite family and died in 1902 at the age of 89.

Port Elgin Time August, 1974

Samuel Bricker was born in 1813 and died in 1903 at the age of 93. Mr. Bricker also gave the cricket field (515 Goderich St.) to the town.

Port Elgin Times Jan 31, 1967 Page 3