

endeavour can be found persons who can trace their origin to this community. Three pioneer families - Ranney, Wilson and Kennedy - left their contributions to the development of the area in different and unique ways.

MRS. LYDIA RANNEY

In 1834 Hiram and Lydia Ranney and their two sons and one daughter arrived in Oxford County in a covered wagon. Their arrival was the beginning of Oxford's best known industry, cheddar cheese.

Lydia Chase, born in Massachusetts in 1800, grew up in a cheese and butter-making family. When she married Hiram Ranney in 1819 they purchased twenty-five cows and started a cheese business in Vermont, their market being Boston.

They decided to move to Canada and lived in Lower Canada for three years, then hearing of better prospects in the west, they again packed all they owned in a covered wagon and headed west. Three weeks later they arrived in Oxford County. They stopped to rest a few days at Hagel's Corners and Mr. Hagel, upon learning that Lydia had been a school teacher in Vermont, and recognizing her as a woman of refinement and education, persuaded her to remain at Hagel's Corners and teach the local children.

Lydia rode into St. Thomas alone on horseback to secure her teaching certificate to teach in Canada. She taught in a small log school in the village of Salford from 1834 until 1842 and she was the first school teacher in the area. The school she taught received the first legis-