

North Halton villages have interesting past

Esquering resident Ben Case, who is keenly interested in local history, recently detailed the historical background of some of the villages in North Halton:

HORNBY
Hornby in 1876 is described in the Atlas as follows: "Hornby is situated on the base line between Trafalgar and Esquering, five miles from Milton and six from Georgetown, and contains about 150 inhabitants. The village is divided into two parts, called respectively East and West Hornby, the Post Office being located in the Eastern part. The commercial business is done by Mr. John McMillan and Mr. Charles McClelland, who have very creditable establishments and do a large trade. The former also is Postmaster. Mr. David Lindsay keeps a good hotel, and there are two temperance houses, kept by Samuel Armstrong, and F. Smith. The schoolhouse is a very handsome one, built of brick and is one of the finest in the county. There are four churches, namely: Church of England, Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist. The village also possesses an Orange Hall, Drill Shed and brass band. Among the earliest settlers in this place were James and David Lindsay. There are no manufactures in the village, but several very close to it. At Farlton, about half a mile from Hornby, Mr. Irwin has a steam saw and shingle mill which is capable of turning out about 18,000 feet of lumber per day, and which generally is run to its full capacity. Mr. George Brain also has a lumber and shingle mill near the village. Messrs. Brain Brothers have the only brewery in the county, on the 8th line, about one mile east of Hornby. This business was established in 1845 by Mr. John Brain, the father of the present proprietors, John and Edwin Brain. The first building was built of logs, but the present is brick and frame. The first year the quantity of barley consumed was 300 bushels, which has now increased to 10,000 bushels, besides about 8,000 lbs. of hops, 40 tons of coal and 300 cords of wood. They employ about 10 men and 40 horses, and the machinery is run by steam. They produce from four to five thousand barrels of beer annually."

At the present day little remains of the once flourishing village except the store, Anglican Church and Orange Hall and a few houses. The one-time Methodist Church has joined with Ashgrove congregation to build a handsome new edifice, Hillcrest United Church, at the 7th Line and No. 5 Sideroad.

MILTON HEIGHTS
Milton Heights is a flourishing hamlet which straddles the town line between Esquering and Nassagaweya and extending almost to No. 5 sideroad from the Base Line. It owes its prosperity to the nearby brick works and contains a store and a Roman Catholic Church, the latter a comparatively new building built after a number of Italian immigrants settled in the village.

The well known brick plants situated at the extreme south west corner of the township are the Milton Brick company and the International Brick company and their products are shipped throughout the province. At one time there was another plant known as the Toronto Pressed Company, partly owned by the Lewis Brothers but after a fire in 1906 it ceased operations.

STEWARTTOWN
Stewarttown is one more community that owes its start to the presence of a stream to provide water power, the only available means in those days of running a mill. In 1820 we find two Scots, John and Duncan Stewart procuring the Crown Deed for the East half of Lot 16 Conc. 7 of Esquering. It was from them that Stewarttown took its name. This property takes in the land on the west side of the 7th line from the Anglican church to half way up the north hill and it extends back to beyond the mill pond. On the east side of the road the 100 acres was owned by William Applebe.

The Stewart property was divided more or less in two by the Acton tributary of the West Branch of the Credit and here the brothers built a dam and erected a saw mill and grist mill, the products of both mills being much in demand by early settlers for building purposes and making flour. About 1847 the mill property, bounded by the road on the north side of the mill pond, was bought by James Young, a Georgetown merchant. In 1872 Joseph Tweddle bought the property from an Alfred Hood and on Nov. 30, 1876 it was sold to Henry P. and David Lawson who had the saw mill in the Scotch block. The property remained in the Lawson family till 1962 when it was sold to the Toronto Elevators. Henry P. Lawson remained a lumberman but David who ran the flour mill died a comparatively young man and his son Walter Sr. took over, succeeded by Walter and his sons Robert and Donald.

By 1850 Stewarttown was a busy thriving village. It

contained three hotels, Cross's Tannery (later the Lawson barn north side of the pond), Edward Nixon's harness shop, J. Fit, saddler, Jones and Nevine, cabinet makers, two good stores

besides the lumber and flour mill and a blacksmith shop. Tremaine's map shows the red brick hall, the ground floor occupied by the stores of William Applebe and James Young with a

hall room on the second floor and a banquet hall on the 3rd. (In 1948 this hall was renovated, being cut down to a floor occupied by the Council chambers and a spacious meeting and dance

hall.) With the coming of the railway to Georgetown in 1856, the village began to remain more or less at a standstill, but business kept fairly constant until the early part of the century

when, like other villages, a decline set in for various reasons until today only the feed mill remains of its one time prosperity. The first Post Office in the

township was called Esquering and was situated on the 7th line on lot 9 Conc. 7 (just below Ashgrove) and Henry Fyfe was Postmaster. It was moved about 1840 to Stewarttown but was still known as Esquering. The Atlas (1876) continues, the village contains a large two-storey brick schoolhouse; has two churches - Church of England and Wesleyan

Methodist; a Drill Shed the headquarters of No. 2 Company, 20th Battalion under command of Captain Applebe. Here also is situated a Grangers Lodge and Orange Lodge, also a Lodge of Good Templars."

PERU
Peru was a once thriving Continued on Page 12

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