

# Thornhill and District News

TELEPHONE AV. 5-2331

"The Liberal" is always pleased to publish items of interest contributed by its readers in the Thornhill area . . . . . Our representative in Thornhill is Mrs. Margaret McLean, who may be reached by phoning AV. 5-2331.

## Elgin St. Thornhill Named After Lord Elgin, Once Hopper's Lane Many Changes Through The Years

(By Doris M. FitzGerald) The Irish potato famine of 1845 had far reaching effects. It brought financial ruin to Benjamin Thorne, for whom the village is named, and it also brought some Irish immigrants to Thornhill. In order to alleviate the terrible distress in Ireland the Corn Laws were repealed in 1846, and grain from all countries allowed to enter the British Isles duty free. Thorne, who for 25 years had been a prosperous merchant, miller and reporter, lost heavily on consignments of flour which remained unsold in the flooded market.

All told, about 300,000 people died from starvation in Ireland, prompting a tremendous exodus from the stricken country. Among those who set sail for Canada in 1847 with high hopes of a better life in a new land, were Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Hopper and their six children. Tragically, during the voyage, both Mr. and Mrs. Hopper succumbed to the prevailing plague, and were buried at sea, and their two sons and four daughters, the oldest in their teens, continued the journey alone.

Landing at Quebec the little party had to transfer to another boat for the trip up the St. Lawrence, and in the confusion, and excitement fifteen year old James became separated from his brother, and sisters and was left behind. The others reached Toronto where adoptive homes were arranged for the two little girls through the Roman Catholic Church. The two older sisters and brother found their way to Pine Orchard, near Newmarket. Meanwhile, James who had been befriended, and educated, by a priest in Quebec, longed for news of his brother, and sisters, and finally his benefactor was able to trace the whereabouts of the older ones through a priest in Toronto. He set out to visit them in 1856, and never returned to Lower Canada.

In 1858 James married Rose Sheridan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Sheridan of Tyrone, Ireland who were living on a miniature farm on Elgin St. The little white clapboard house stood in the middle of six acres on the south side of the street, and was surrounded by an orchard of 20 to 25 young apple trees. Across the road there was an additional two acres of garden land. James and his wife began married life on the 6th Concession, Markham but after the death of James Sheridan they moved to the Elgin St. house. It was owned by the Hopper family until 1947, and for many years Elgin St. was known locally as Hopper's Lane.

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## Nomination Meeting FOR TRUSTEES

POLICE VILLAGE of THORNHILL  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25th  
7.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.  
MASONIC HALL  
THORNHILL

We might never have heard this interesting story if Mrs. A. F. Martindale had not recently telephoned to ask if we knew that the old Hopper house was being torn down. We did not, and hurried over to take a snapshot of the vanishing landmark already stripped of its roof, and some of the red insul brick siding with which it had been covered in the 1940's. Spurred on by her interest in the history of Elgin St. we made some enquiries and were fortunate in being able to get in touch with Mr. W. J. Hopper, Toronto, a great grandson of the original owner. Mr. Hopper was not born in Thornhill but used to spend the summers with his aunt Miss Ellen Hopper on Elgin St. until his parents rented St. Lukes Rectory in 1917. There was no resident priest in Thornhill then, and they stayed until 1927, when they moved to a new house built by his father on the family property, just west of Martindales' house. In 1920 a frame house had also been built on the east side of the original home, and Miss Ellen Hopper alternately lived in, or rented these two houses. W. G. Hopper has many happy memories of Thornhill. Even in 1917 he said the traffic was so light on Yonge St. that farmers used to drive down the radial tracks. "If I ever retire I will have to look north of Barrie for any comparable rural surroundings." However in 1930, he, and his brother and sister persuaded their parents to move back to Toronto.

In 1942 he returned to Thornhill, and what he calls "the old red house," and the following year his Aunt Ellen who was visiting them, died there in her 83rd year. She is buried, as are her parents, and grandparents in St. Lukes R. C. Cemetery.

The old house has changed hands several times since Mr. Hopper sold it in 1947. About two years ago it was bought, and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. L. Sinko, while they built an attractive brick house at the back of the lot, overlooking the pretty ravine. As a child Mr. Hopper often heard about the incident which led to the naming of Elgin St. It seems that Lord Elgin who was Governor General of Canada from 1847-54, had planned to attend a plowing match in Markham township but his coachman mistook the lane for John St., and the big unwieldy carriage came to a mirey stop at the dead end. Once lined with wild cherry, apple and hawthorne trees which presented a breathtaking sight in blossom, Elgin still has many beautiful trees. But the landmark of the whole street according to Mr. Hopper is the maple on the north side under which many a picnic has been held. "My cousin carved her initials on the trunk 60 years ago, and it was a big tree then."

A century old map indicates only 3 houses fronting on Elgin. They belonged to W. T. Clay, a cabinet maker, James Sheridan, and Cornelius Mount. The Clay house is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. G. T. Wishart. The only vestige of the Mount house in Mr. Hopper's time was an old well. The remaining lots on both sides of the street were owned by Joshua Reid, John Martin, John Erwin, John Lane, and Joseph Holdsworth. Two or three small houses were built at one time or another on the south side of the street, and have disappeared. The white frame house on the Clarke property seems to have the first on the north side. In 1939 Lady E. M. Winkle bought the John St. house now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Martin Baldwin. The property ran through to Elgin, and extended in L formation west on Elgin. Neither needing nor wanting, so much land she tacked a sign on a fir

### Legal

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Phonings:  
Thornhill AV. 5-3315  
Toronto EM 4-2780

## Long Experience On School Board

Sam Kaiser, well known Kleinburg resident who is a candidate for Vaughan School Trustee in next Monday's election has a long record of service to the community. He has been a school trustee in his home section for eighteen years and secretary-treasurer since 1940. Mr. Kaiser is a painter and decorator, and has two daughters and two sons, one daughter married, one in High School, and two boys aged 6 and 3 years.

### Federation Speaker

"Income tax, Wills and Succession Duties" will be the subject of a talk by George Ashworth of the Co-operators Insurance Association at the annual meeting of the York County Federation of Agriculture next Tuesday. The meeting will be held at Sharon.

## Thornhill Nominations To Be Held Nov. 25th

(By Margaret I. McLean) Wednesday, November 25th was the date set by the Thornhill Board of Trustees for nominations to the 1960 Board. The nominations will take place from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Masonic Hall. If an election is necessary, it will be held at the Thornhill Library on Monday, December 7th, during the hours of 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

All the present trustees, Alan Sumner, Patrick McTaggart-Cowan and James Timmins were present at the meeting held November 5th. The meeting was also attended by Mr. George Stratton and Mr. Ed Windsor, representing the Area Recreation Committee, for the purpose of setting the insurance premium account. A refund cheque was presented to Mr. Windsor and he gave a cheque to the Treasurer in the amount of \$890.54. The Board also took note of the fact that the A. R. C. had voted to take the township water now available.

The tender of Mr. L. W. Reeve of \$429.40 for putting down an asphalt sidewalk on the north side of Centre Street was felt to be a reasonable one and on the motion of Mr. McTaggart-Cowan, it was accepted. The sidewalk is to go from the west end of the present sidewalk to Thornebank Road. Estimates for the repairing of John Street will be ready shortly.

A letter from Markham Township was read dealing with the billboards on the east side of Yonge Street between the Post Office and the I. G. A. store.

### Thornhill Notes

**Thornhill Home and School Association**  
The October 22nd meeting's discussion on Mental Health pointed out that the stigma connected with the term "Mental Health" is quite unwarranted. Many mental illnesses can be treated and need not be too serious.

The November 19th meeting will be addressed by Mr. Arthur V. Pigott, and some of the nominees for the Vaughan Township School Board will be on hand to speak to the meeting also.

Don't forget the Annual Dance which will be held on November 27th. Of interest to all parents whose children attend the new Clarke-Elgin School there will be a meeting to be held at the United Church Auditorium on Thursday, November 26th. The meeting has been called to discuss the formation of a new Home and School Association.

**Thornhill United Church**  
The monthly meeting of the Thornhill United Church Afternoon Women's Mission Association was held on Tuesday, November 10th at the home of Mrs. C. P. Johns' Yonge Street, with Mrs. Whatley, the President, in the chair. The devotional services were taken by Mrs. Davidson and Mrs. Gibson. After the roll call, the minutes of the last meeting were read by Mrs. Michell.

The following officers were selected by the Nomination Committee and approved by the meeting:  
Past President: Mrs. I. Ford.  
President: Mrs. R. W. Whatley.  
President of Young Groups: Mrs. R. Gibson.  
Secretary: Mrs. J. Michell.  
Corresponding Secretary: Mrs. G. I. Stephenson.  
Associate Members Secretary: Mrs. R. Whatley.  
Supply Secretary: Mrs. G. Harper.  
Missionary Monthly Secretary: Mrs. W. Simpson.  
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Christian Citizenship Secretary: Mrs. Condon.

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## New Minister Inducted At Thornhill United

On Friday, November 13th, an impressive induction service was held at Thornhill United Church, and Rev. Hugh Robert MacDonald was installed as the new minister.

The service was conducted by the Toronto Centre Presbytery with Rev. A. W. Jones of Willowdale United Church presiding. The guest preacher was Rev. W. C. Sellars of Newtonbrook United Church. Also taking part in the services was Rev. R. V. Kendall of Epworth United Church and Rev. George Stephenson, a member of the Thornhill United Church congregation.

Rev. Calvin Chambers of Thornhill Presbyterian Church attended the service, representing the local Ministerial Association. Mr. MacDonald is a native of Ottawa where he received his elementary and secondary school education and graduated from Carleton University. He took his Theological degree at McGill. While attending McGill, he served the United Church in western Canada and in suburban Montreal during the summer seasons. While at McGill he also assisted in charge of young people's activities.

Since his ordination, Mr. MacDonald has been at Minden Ontario in the Lindsay presbytery. His wife, the former Mary Wight, is also a native of Ottawa and a graduate of Carleton University. They have two small daughters, Janet, two years and Eleanor, eight months. For his first sermon, on Sunday morning, Rev. MacDonald had as his theme "A Minister's Prayer" and expressed the hope that both the entire congregation and the Minister would be enabled to conduct themselves in a truly Christian way. He also commented on the induction service which was so well attended by the congregation, and likened it to the marriage ceremony in that both the new minister and the church took each other for better or worse, in sickness and in health, although not necessarily until death.

Rev. MacDonald is a young man who has taken on very large responsibilities in which his youthful courage and enthusiasm should stand him in good stead. The members of the community at large as well as the members of his congregation wish him well and are glad to welcome him and his family to Thornhill.

### Thoughts and Theories

by Elizabeth Kelson  
It is generally accepted today that education continuing through life is necessary to our happiness, and perhaps to our survival. The public library seems to supply the solution for continuing education. Canadian libraries are on the upgrade today because our people have come to recognize them as key institutions in our cultural life.

To understand what is going on in the world today requires knowledge that can only be found in books and it is good to have the right background with which to judge current events. The public library gives us, who are within reach of it, and who have the will to learn, ample opportunity to pursue a wider education which is the culture of the mind and spirit. What capacities we develop by use of the library: what practical help we obtain in our jobs and in getting to understand human nature, and what opportunities we uncover to enrich our lives: these are ours to take without the expense of building our own shelves of books.

No public library in the world could afford to buy every book, but the selection of those that are chosen requires caution and skill. It calls for a special competency and alertness to the needs of the community with courage and willingness to be responsible for decisions. The librarians are important figures in the community. They are classed with the minister and the school teacher as community leaders and public servants. While the principal business of a library is to make books available to the public by circulation or for reference within the library, many other services are attached to municipal and city libraries. If the library is large enough, it has a meeting room where many important decisions regarding the community are made.

Most libraries have children's sections. Good books with an interest equaling that of the comics are made available under the guidance of an understanding librarian. Another service is provided when their bulletin boards attract attention to new books, and where reading lists suitable for public and high school children are found. Public libraries have become a necessity to our way of life. The books it contains are the true levelers of civilization. They give to all who use them, the society of the greatest and best of our race.

## Christmas Carousel At Holy Trinity Anglican

While there wasn't any actual "carousing" everyone at the Holy Trinity Anglican Church "Christmas Carousel" last Friday and Saturday, November 13th and 14th, obviously enjoyed themselves, purchased just about everything in sight and enabled the hard working ladies of the Parish Guild to more than fulfill their objective of raising \$1,000 for the Church Building Fund.

The bazaar convener Mrs. C. Devey had a host of faithful workers. Mrs. D. Balls table of Christmas decorations was probably the most colorful booth. Her committee had designed and constructed an assortment of hand-made table centrepieces based on blocks of styrofoam which sold readily. Another attractive and useful item offered at this booth was a long felt Christmas card holder with Santa's head at one end and his feet at the other, with a row of pockets in between for the insertion of the cards. Equally attractive were the Christmas tree skirts made of red or green felt with colorful appliques and designed to cover up your Christmas tree holder.

Those "kissing ornaments" mentioned in last week's paper turned out to be little men constructed with heads of styrofoam and bodies of liver leaves, all garlanded with mistletoe and ready to hang in your doorway. The various hand made candles were particularly beautiful, especially the bottle candles made from ornamental bottles covered with colored wax, sprinkled with glitter and tied with ribbon corsages.

Mrs. G. St. John's booth was constantly surrounded by excited little girls admiring the dolls and the doll clothes offered. A series of story-book dolls—Little Bo-Peep, Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary, Jack and Jill, Cinderella—excited much comment (and emptied many purses). The booth also had a wide assortment of stuffed felt animals and some charming felt hand puppets.

Mrs. H. Garland was in charge of the knitted goods and her knitted socks, mitts and baby outfits, but some charming and practical children's "Granny" nightgowns and sturdy flannelette pajamas. At the children's gift stall, Mrs.

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**ANNUAL MEETING**  
Thornhill Area Recreation Committee  
TO BE HELD  
Tuesday, November 24, 8 p.m.  
AT  
Thornhill Public Library  
ANNUAL REPORTS AND ELECTION  
Thornhill Area Recreation Committee

**VAUGHAN TOWNSHIP ELECTORS**  
**VOTE FOR**  
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