

# Won't find Cairo, Giza in this Egypt

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You probably won't think you're suddenly in Cairo or Giza but when you see the pyramid by the road, you'll definitely know you're in Egypt.

Last month I drove around York Region, trying to dig up history about communities with intriguing names.

With little more than a few farms and a church, it was difficult finding information about the Georgina community, aside from a note in the archives about an apparently-Biblical origin.

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That may be, but a return trip to meet with the locals revealed even long-time residents have no idea how their community got its name.

It goes back at least 150 years and while even the old timers are at a loss to explain it, the Biblical story certainly rings true for Pastor Doug Neufeld of the Church of the Nazarene. Nearby locations such as Frog Street, Little Jerusalem and Devil's Elbow also suggest a familiarity with the Good Book.

He and his wife, Jeannie, moved to the area — with its population of "eighteen, with four cats and three dogs" — from Manitoba in 1978 and

haven't looked back.

"We just got here and absolutely loved the place," he says.

"We work together as a good community," says lifelong resident Linda Hitchens.

Asked what he likes best about Egypt, farmer Gordon Sedore simply says, "being here."

Then he adds, "All the things that go on around us, we seem to be missing a lot of it."

He moved to Egypt when he was six and says a surprising amount has changed in the small, rural community.

Apple orchards have been replaced by fields and the community hall stands near the spot where a schoolhouse, church and dance hall once stood.

In the old days, Mr. Neufeld says, people talked about how salvation, damnation and education could all be found on the same corner.

Despite its small size, Egypt has produced notable public figures including former OPP Commissioner Gwen Boniface and humourist Stephen Leacock.

The writer described the area to which he emigrated from England as "a windy knoll," Mr. Neufeld points out.

An orange, eight-foot pyramid erected on Smith Boulevard is graced with the words, 'Welcome to Egypt'.

Residents say they are used to people driving through, stopping to ask questions and, occasionally, stealing the "Egypt" signs along the road.

Each of the past three Julys, the Great Camel Race has brought the community together in a ball field beside the community hall.

However, they don't import real camels.

But they do sit on top of barrels held by their neighbours and bring a little imagination and a lot of fun to the event.

Carol Cole, who has lived here with her husband, John, since the early 1970s says many people simply find it hard to believe the place



STAFF PHOTO/SUSIE KOCKERSCHIEDT

Locals have embraced their town's name with a small roadside pyramid and 'camel' races every July.

even exists.

"One time we had an auditor here and he was going home to Egypt and we said, 'you know, you're in Egypt now.'"

The bona fide Egyptian expressed disbelief until escorted to the nearby road signs. Then he had his picture taken to bring home for his family.

"It's the friendliest place in the world," Mr. Cole adds.

"You can't even get a new lawn mower 'round here without somebody noticing."

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