



Rear-view Mirror



Small Is Beautiful

By Maurice Smith

The Town of Whitchurch Stouffville encompasses a scattering of small hamlets and settlements. Some are little more than intersections but are still called home by offspring of their original settlers.

On Jan. 1, 1971, Whitchurch Township and the Village of Stouffville merged to form the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, and many residents thought their hamlets would simply become a footnote at the bottom of someone's Rear-View Mirror column. But Margo Marshall, a member of the first Whitchurch-Stouffville council, championed a project to preserve them by erecting signs.

While most Stouffvillites know where Preston Lake, Gormley, Lemonville or Ballantrae are, the signs commemorate less populated areas such as Baker Hill, Hartman Corners and Shrubmount. One of my personal favourites is the hamlet of Pine Orchard at Vivian Road and Warden Avenue.

Isaac Phillips and Samuel Lundy left Pennsylvania and New Jersey for Upper Canada in 1802 to escape lawlessness and oppressive taxation. They established new homesteads here when the lieutenant governor provided them with a land grant of 200 acres each. In exchange, the settlers had to clear at least 10 acres for farming, build a log or framed structure, and clear

frontage for use as a public road.

Over the next few years many others arriving from Pennsylvania took advantage of the government's generous offer. In 1814 Samuel Lundy donated a few of his acres facing Vivian Road to use as a burying ground. In 1850 local Quakers built a meeting house beside the property. Although it was renovated in 1944, the original structure is still in use.

For the first hundred years the cemetery was an open field where the deceased were laid to rest. In 1915 the land was levelled again and the Pine Orchard Friends' Cemetery sign and an iron fence were erected.

In 1850 a parcel of land south of the crossroads was purchased and the first community school was built. The log structure burned down in 1880 and was replaced by a small brick building. In 1924, that building was replaced by a larger structure known as Pine Orchard School, S. S. #4, which is now a private residence.

In the great room of the building, where students from grades 1 to 10 were taught, nail holes in the original maple floor show where five rows of desks were placed. Up a few steps and over the front foyer is a room which was used as the principal's office and detention centre for errant students.

East of the intersection and further along Vivian Road is Pine Orchard Camp, founded in 1946 and affiliated

with the Free Methodist Church of Canada. The 10 acre lot was originally part of a farm owned by Charlie Rose, and Ross and Maimey Thompson bought the land and built cabins with the help of other parishioners. The camp dining hall was originally built in Holland Landing. After its purchase by the church it was cut in half and trucked to the campsite. The original building is still used today.

Many locals, such as Evelyn Varney of Newmarket, still call this place their summer home. Others, now senior citizens, remember the days when hours drifted by as they played baseball and other sports or completed bible studies and crafts during their two week stay at the camp. As many as 300 people still attend their annual gathering.



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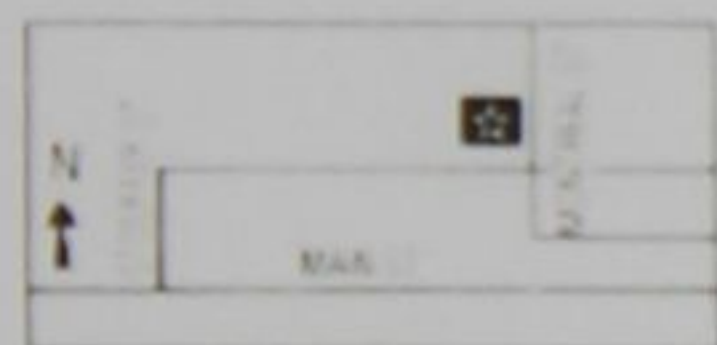
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Friday, October 15 / 8pm

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