

# Focus On Harlem

## Early History

Harlem, earlier known as Smith's Mills, was once one of the most prosperous areas of Bastard, boasting of several mills, a cheese factory, tannery, cabinet shop, stores, two blacksmith shops, a hotel, two doctors and a minister.

The Smith Family, as the early name suggests, were the first settlers of the area. They were United Empire Loyalists. On the banks of the creek Timothy Smith erected the first sawmill and later added a grist mill and a carding mill. Behind the present cemetery William and Henry Smith operated a cheese factory. A shingle mill and furniture factory was run by Mr. Rathburn. Silas Smith kept the first store in a building where Frank Dinner's house stands. This store with all its stock was burned. Silas Smith left the area and went to the United States, entering the ministry.

At one time most of the land in and around the village was owned by the Smiths. However, the line died out about fifty years ago. William Smith, the last resident of the Smith name, owned the Brayton Pope farm, now owned by Mr. Albert Poole. Mr. William Smith's daughter, "Tibby", married Hilton Imerson who lived on the farm now owned by Mrs. Morrison.

The area bore the name Smith's Mills until 1880 when the postal authorities asked the villagers to consider a new name because of the many communities bearing the name Smith. Christopher Jansen, both preacher and teacher, an immigrant living east of the village, suggested Harlem from his native village. The people accepted the name but dropped an "a" to make it Harlem.

There were two blacksmith shops in Harlem. One was owned by Tim Barr on the present site of Wilbert Chant's barn; the other shop (still standing) was operated by Bob and John Irwin opposite the bend in the road. Later Mr. John Irwin operated a shop next to the present store until he retired in the 1950's. Mr. Irwin was the father of Gerald, Irene (Mrs. Clifford Chant), and Veita, (Mrs. Sheridan).

Directly across the road from the blacksmith shop was a second store kept by Joe Klyne. This store burned.

John Green owned the Holmes Eyre property (now Mr. Frye's) and his son Loftus Green owned the Townsend farm. Loftus sold out to John Raison and went west.

Along the north side of the road from the John Green property to the bridge were residences of John Gainford, Rev. O'Neil, Dr. Chamberlain, Dr. Emerson and Thomas Jeffrey.

Dr. Chamberlain was born in Vermont but came to Canada before the War of 1812. At the age of sixteen he entered the militia acceding to the rank of major. After studying medicine he practised his profession at Smith's Mills until 1858 when he moved to Farmersville.

Thomas Jeffrey lived in the house now owned by Mrs. Eva Irwin. Mr. Jeffrey was the grandfather of Mrs. Harold Cardiff and Miller Jeffrey, both of Oakleaf.

Not much is known of the other residences except that over the years they have disappeared and new owners have built new homes.

Across the bridge was Lockwood's hotel, the Stevenson residence and the Jansen home. The Stevenson house was later owned by John E. McIntyre. In 1936 it was purchased by Edwin Campbell. Mr. McIntyre was a mill-wright; his wife kept store in part of her home. The home was an open house to the young people of the area as they donned their skates for the winter's recreation on the ice of the pond.

Along the pond was a potash kiln and farther up the creek was the tannery. A grain cradle factory was in operation at Hiram Alford's where Mr. and Mrs. Frank Posovad live. This house for many years was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Holmes Eyre, Sr., and later home of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Aimer.

In addition to making grain cradles the Alford's made scythe anathes, fork handles, wooden barley forks and later their business included the making of cutters and handsleighs. They had a patent on a kind of iron sap spout.

Across the road from the Alford's was the home of Andoneram Copeland. Today this is the residence of Don and Alleda Dunkeld having taken it over from Alleda's father, Andy Gallaway.

At the eastern end of the village was the farm of Thomas Watts. Mr. Watts, a widower, in 1868 made the trip to England to bring John and Mary Chant to Canada. Mary was to be his bride. In later years, after the death of her husband, Mary married Mortimer Emmons. The farm remained Emmons' property until son, George, at his death, bequeathed it to a niece, Mary Caldwell. The farm changed hands earlier this year and is now owned by Mr. R. Myers.

The next property belonged to Jerry Sheldon. The farm on the north side of the road was sold to Arza Pattemore; the residence on the opposite side belonged to Fannie Sheldon. He later moved to the west.

The house at the four corners was the home of Sydney Lawson and family. A son, William, now in his nineties, still lives in the area.

## Cheese Factory

The first cheese factory at Smith's Mills was built on the banks of the Harlem Creek below the present cemetery. It was built and operated by William and Henry Smith. This factory was burned.

The factory was re-built along the bend in the road at Harlem and was owned by Mr. James Smith (1891). Other owners have been Charles Smith, Joseph Knapp and W.C. Taylor. During the ownership of W.C. Taylor, the cheese-maker was George W. Owens who later purchased the Forfar Cheese Factory.

It was in 1910 that Ernest Campbell purchased the factory. He and his wife Anna operated the plant until their son Edwin took over in the 1940's.

Edwin and wife Alice assisted by various helpers, continued to make cheese and whey butter until the factory closed in 1958. After which time trucks came in from Ault's and Cow and Gates to pick up the milk.

Since that time the building

continued on page 22

## The Harlem Church

During the nineteenth Century, the Wesleyan Methodists were active in the Harlem area but not until 1872 was the Harlem Church built.

The stone for the building was quarried on the George Johnston's farm, later known as the Burt Chant farm and drawn by horses to the present site of the Church. All this work was volunteer work of members of the newly formed congregation. William Barber was the stone mason. John Ball and Sydney Lawson were the painters. Other skilled workmen on the job were Ed. Purvis and John Percival.

In 1884 all branches of the Methodist Church united. At that time Harlem became an appointment of the Delta Circuit.

The church was built on a rock foundation and because of that, the building was damaged during an earthquake in its early years. However, it was soon repaired and reinforced.

In the 1920's the Chantry Church was considered unsafe, hence was closed. The congregation continued to worship in the Chantry Public School until 1963 when they gave up their service and amalgamated with Harlem. The United congregation became known as "Harlem and Chantry".

In 1961, at an expense of over four thousand dollars, the Harlem Church was renovated. A vestibule was added, a gift from Mr. Asa Pattemore in memory of his wife, Estella Hutchings.

Not long was worship enjoyed in the newly renovated church as it was closed by the Kingston Presbytery in 1968, four years short of the one-hundredth anniversary.

Although the church is closed to Sunday services, it is being kept in good repair. The Harlem and Chantry United Church Women hold special meetings there.

It would be unfair to write of Harlem Church without mentioning that in 1889 the women of the area organized a missionary society. There were twenty-three charter members. The first meeting was held in the home of Mrs. LittleJohn, mother of the late Clifford Freeman.

At the time of church union in 1925 the missionary society became known as the United Church Women (U.C.W.). Today the U.C.W. continues, an organization of more than one charge, more than one faith, but still with the same missionary purpose.

**WHITNEY'S  
GENERAL  
STORE**

—Established 1855—  
"An Authentic Country Store"  
Featuring: Distinctive Leeds County  
Cheddar Cheeses, Gifts & Collectibles

HIGHWAY 15 AT MORTON  
Halfway between Smiths Falls & Kingston

**CHRISTMAS  
WREATHS**

Except for the big red bow  
everything about our hand-  
crafted wreaths is natural.  
Choose from Balsam or Pine.  
For use inside and out.  
Available in three sizes \$10 -  
\$15 - \$20.

Open Mon. - Sat. 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Tel. (613) 387-3300

## A. & J. HENNESSY

INCOME TAX and BOOKKEEPING SERVICE

R.R. #2, PORTLAND, ONTARIO K0G 1V0  
Telephone (613) 283-6728