

Newton Robinson

Canadian Directory 1871

Newton Robinson, a small village on the leading road from Cookstown, and on the boundary line between the townships of W. Gwillimbury and Tecumseth, south riding of the county of Simcoe. Distant from Bradford, a station on the Northern Railway, 9 miles, fare $37\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ from Toronto 44 miles, mail daily; population about 150.

NEWTON ROBINSON

Contributed by Marguerite Ramsay and Mrs. Gladys Houghton Bell.

Newton Robinson was first called Latimer's Corners. At that time William Chantler kept a general store and Latimer kept a tavern. Samuel Gowan, blacksmith, and John Hudson also kept hotel.

Sometime in the 1840's or early '50's a postoffice was established here. The choosing of an appropriate name for the place caused considerable interest in the community. Several names were suggested such as Springville, New Town, Stewartown, Newton Butler, and finally it was decided to call the place after, and in honor of W. B. Robinson who represented Simcoe District in the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada, and as most of the settlers were from the north of Ireland and were determined to have the New Town as part of the name, hence New Town Robinson was established as the name of the village.

As time went on and more settlers came to the district, the little village became an active industrial centre. W. C. Towns built a woollen mill on the hollow on the 10th line, built a dam and created quite a large pond from which power was applied to operate the mill. He continued in business here until 1881 or '82. About a mile farther west on the 10th line there was a grist mill and a brick yards in the village. John Merrick Sr. had a planing factory. Some years later his son, John Jr. built a saw mill in connection with the factory and for many years carried on a good business.

J. G. Chantler took over the general store from his father and continued in business for many years. George Ogilvie had a tailor shop; Jas. Corrigan a shoe shop; George Carr a harness shop; Andrew McLelland a blacksmith, and there was also a wagon-maker here for a short time.

A number of farmers, along with some of the villagers, formed a Stock Company and built a cheese factory which was operated for some time with a fair amount of success, but the greatest difficulty was in disposing of the cheese on the market in Toronto.

Two carloads were shipped to Toronto and the cheesemaker was sent to sell this consignment, which he did, but unfortunately for the stock holders he failed to return and so far as was known skipped to the United States. This of course was a heavy loss. The business was carried on for a few seasons but eventually had to close down and part of the building was rented to Carter Bros. of Bond Head who opened a general store and carried on a moderate business for about two years when a fire consumed the stock and building.

The school prior to 1884 was a one-roomed school and did not accommodate the number of pupils who attended. In 1884 a second room was built. Mr. W. G. Riely was teacher of the senior room and his sister taught the junior room for one year. Mr. Riely resigned in September 1885 to study for the ministry. His wife remained in Newton and taught the junior room and a Mr. Atkinson filled in as principal to the end of 1885. J. C. Morrison was principal for 1886. A. C. Batton taught for the next three years, then Jas. E. Holt. From then on the circumstances of the school are quite well known to many of the present day residents.

In the winter of 1887 the old Methodist Church was moved across the road from where the present church

now stands. The building of the new church was completed and it was opened in the fall of the same year. The history of this church being so well known to the present generation makes it unnecessary of further comment.

It might be of interest to mention the names and places of residence of the early settlers in the neighbourhood, so far as the writer of this rambling and disjointed sketch goes, Tecumseth: John Dickey, William Chantler, W. C. Towns, William Gilroy, John Rogers, William Mayor, Stanley Spillet, Richard Callaghan, Cyrus Long, Jas. McFadden, William Law, Francis Averall, George McLean, John and Thos. Robinson, James Law, John Gilheeny. (all located on lots 21, 22, 23 and 24 on concessions 9, 10 and 11)

In West Gwillimbury, on concessions 9, 10 and 11, lots 1, 2, 3 and 4: Thos. and Chas. Banting, George Rogers, John Coborn, Jas. Downey, Robt. Downey, Ralph Wardman, John Coborn, Richard Bell, Thos. Matchett, Jas. Hill, Wm. Law, John Averall, Richard Feildsend, Henry Lee.

Coming back to the village, Saturday evenings were looked forward to by the boys and young men for an hour or two would be spent in a game of baseball during the summer months, and in winter, to lively skating parties on the old mill pond. For quite a number of years much pride and interest were taken in the ball teams and sports, which at all times characterized social companionship in the lives of the people of this grand old community.

Newton Robinson History

Newton Robinson history as copied from a clipping from the Newton Robinson Hustler, published by Milton G. Chantler, Newton Robinson, in the 1890's:

Newton Robinson is a thriving little village of about 100 inhabitants, situated in the County of Simcoe, eight miles northwest of Bradford, on the town-line between Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury. It was named Newton Robinson in 1851 after W. N. Robinson, a member of Parliament, it being called Latimer's Corners previous to this. In 1841 there were only four log buildings, viz: a store, a church, a school house and an hotel. The store stood on the south-west corner of the cross roads; the church which was built by the Methodist denomination, where the tailor shop now stands; the school house on the north-east corner, and the hotel, which was owned by Mr. Latimer, where J. Jones' residence now is. A few years after this a log dwelling and frame store and post office were built by William Chantler, who was postmaster. In the course of time a blacksmith shop was built by Mr. Gordon in the lower end of the town and a tailor shop was erected north of the post office and was occupied by William Falkner. This building was afterwards refitted for a hotel and was occupied by John Hudson. There was another store built in the hollow by Mr. Hunt, which was afterwards managed by Mr. Carley. In 1843 Messrs. John Merrick, Sr., and Isaac Merrick, Sr., built the woollen mills. At this time the country was still new and many difficulties were experienced in conveying all goods to and fro from Toronto by wagons, but in spite of all obstacles the place grew and prospered, especially the mill, under the able management of W. C. Towns, who afterwards became a partner, and in later years owner of the mill. After running it for a number of years, he finally quit and sold the machinery to Mr. Walker who removed it to Alliston. The mill was afterwards turned into an ashery, and later was burned down. About the time the mill was built another industry was added to the place, that of a tannery, built by Messrs. Gordon and Hunt, near where Mr. McLelland's blacksmith shop now stands. John Bowles, now of West Toronto Junction soon became owner and operated the plant with success and profit for several years, but he afterwards removed it to Bradford. At that time Samuel Gowan was blacksmith and Mr. Mc-

Master was shoemaker; the shoe shop stood on the corner of Geo. Rodger's property. In 1849 the old log church was replaced by a good frame one, which stood where the present brick one now is, this one being built in 1887.

In 1867, John Merrick, Sr., commenced the building business and built a planing factory, which stood on the property now occupied by J. Nixon. This factory was afterwards removed to its present location beside the sawmill. The Orange Hall was built in 1857 on the east side of the south hill. It was afterwards removed to its present position west of the church. In 1880 the cheese factory was built and stood a little south of W. J. Coburn's blacksmith shop. It was run for a few years, but eventually failed, and in 1888 was fitted up for a store, which was occupied by E. J. Carter and Co. of Bond Head, as a second establishment, but got burned down on May 24, 1889. In the fall of 1882 John Merrick, Jr., built the sawmill, which is still doing a good business. The present blacksmiths are Messrs. A. McLelland and W. J. Coburn, who attend the wants of their numerous patrons with neatness and dispatch. J. Corrigan carries on a shoe and harness-making establishment, where neat and satisfactory work is done. The firm of S. and M. McConnell started business in 1890, and are noted for dressmaking and general merchandise. The firm of M. G. Chantler was started by William in 1839 at Biglow's Mills. He removed here in 1841 and remained until 1865. J. P. Hipwell bought out W. Chantler and did a good trade until 1874, when J. G. Chantler became proprietor and continued the business until 1893, when M. G. Chantler took charge and carries on an up-to-date general store.

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