

THAMESVILLE.



Thamesville is a flourishing village situated on the London Road in the Township of Camden, a half mile from the River Thames and sixteen miles east of Chatham. It is an important station on the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific Railways. The Town was first laid out by David Sherman in 1854, owing its existence to the construction of the Great Western Railway which opened that year. Incorporated in 1874, it has now a population of 1000.

The original village lay west of the present—on what is now the Mayhew Farm, London Road north and had somewhat of an early history. It originated through the location of Cornwall's primitive saw mill, which stood on the Ferguson farm, directly opposite. The mill was first erected about 1805—a mill by the way, which under war exigencies, was burned by the British under General Proctor, in the Thames retreat of 1813, and for which Joshua, then member of Parliament for Kent, obtained \$1,600, as compensation. A store attached to the new mill, followed; then a series of tavern on the Mayhew farm, commencing in 1818, and known as Grangers' in 1834; Aubrey's in 1837 and Mayhew's in 1846. In a new store addition built thereto, Messrs. Hall, John E. Brooke, H. F. Cumming and J. C. Collier occupied, as General Merchants, in turn. Jos. Cornwall, Jun., also carried on store on his own place opposite for a short time. Here, in 1832, was established a post office—one of the first six in the county. Here, too, lived Joshua Cornwall, M. P. 1816, also his son Matthew, who represented the county jointly with Wm. McCrae, of Raleigh, in 1830-4. The present site of Thamesville is historical. A military despatch of 1813 says of events preceding the Moravian battle (which had place 3 miles east): "About 8 o'clock Capt. Muir's company (British Regulars) was halted at Richardson's (Wallace farm) six miles from Moraviantown, and the Grenadier company was left with it to support in the event of an attack; the remainder proceeded on the advance being at a house called "Shearman's," one mile from Richardson's. At day break next morning (5th Oct.) the rear guard and grenadier company moved to Shearman's where the whole regiment (41st) collected. At this place, after having halted some time, a few head of cattle were shot, but before the meat could be divided the enemy were reported to be close at hand, and were ordered to march.

Present Thamesville, as we have said, dates from 1854. The first settlers were: Joshua Cornwall, who prior to the village survey, erected a shanty on the now G. T. station ground, and subsequently a second on what is now Mayhew's hotel garden; H. F. Cummin, who removed the same year—1855, to the building now occupied by Mr. Sayer; William Watts, who followed immediately, erecting the present hotel; James Duncan, who built and opened store (at Newcombs) directly opposite and William Mayhew, who erected an hotel on the present site. Messrs. Ferguson—the M. P.'s family—arrived in 1857 and completed the half finished saw mill of Sherman.

Thamesville is the centre of a fine farming section of country to which fact is owing much of its prosperity. It is an excellent market for farm and other products and ships largely of grain, flour, live stock, lumber, railway ties, &c. It contains several fine brick business blocks—particularly the Ferguson block—a building creditable to the owners; some good hotels and many residences—notably the villas of Messrs. J. and R. Ferguson, Fred. Mayhew and J. N. Harmer. There are two public halls—one with 300 seating capacity; Presbyterian, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Episcopalian and Baptist churches, and a large, handsome brick graded school—an honor to the place. There is a fire brigade. The industrial concerns consist of: a large roller flouring mill, saw mill, planing mill, two carriage shops, cheese factory, cider factory, and the usual compliment of blacksmith, carpenter and builders shops. The business firms cover all the staple lines—several establishments having considerable pretensions. Here are located the buildings and fair grounds of the East Kent Agricultural Association. There is a daily mail; express, telegraph and telephone offices, stage connection with Ridgetown; two private banks and a weekly newspaper, "The Herald." The assessment value is about \$170,000.