THE EARLY HISTORY AND FOUNDING OF BEWDLEY, ONTARIO

Bewdley, Ontario, located on the south west shore of Rice Lake, was first known as Black's Landing. The village has grown from the primitive tavern established c. 1830 by WILLIAM BLACK until it presently occupies the north part of lots 33, 34 and 35 in the eighth concession of Hamilton Township.

For almost a century and a half the highway joining Port Hope and Peterborough passed through Bewdley forming the main street. C. 1975 Highway #28 was rerouted, bypassing the village, and the main street curving around the lakeshore was named Rice Lake Drive. South of Rice Lake Drive the village climbs up the rise formed by the northern edge of the Oak Ridges Moraine, left behind when the last glaciers melted twelve thousand years ago.

THE FIRST INHABITANTS

As the Wisconsin glacier retreated from the Kawartha Lakes region of Ontario, lakes and shallow ponds were left in the depressions. On the dry land vegetation began to appear attracting caribou, elk and deer who were followed by humans. Evidence of ancient hunters, dating back to the Paleo-Indian period 11,000 years ago, has been found on the lands south of Rice Lake, the most southerly of the Kawarthas. Artifacts from this period and from historic times have been discovered on the Rice Lake Plains and along Cold Creek that rises beyond Plainville village, meanders through the Plains and drains the marshes east of Bewdley where it empties into Rice Lake.

No native artifacts, to our knowledge, have been found in the village of Bewdley itself. The Dawson Creek archaeological dig, located in the 10th concession of Hamilton Township and completed a few years ago has yielded evidence, such as pottery, of a very early habitation, preceeding the Serpent Mounds on the north shore. This is significant because most such artifacts are found only in burial mounds and few habitation sites have been identified. For over ten thousand years the native people were hunters and most of the artifacts found are stone spear points, skinning knives etc. About five hundred years ago agriculture was introduced into southern Ontario by the Iroquois, a more advanced nation from south of the Great Lakes, and evidence of the cultivation of corn has been discovered.

When the French explorers arrived in North America looking for furs recorded history began. In 1608 Samuel de Champlain was one of the first white men to enter the area. He travelled with the Hurons from Georgian Bay down through the Kawartha Lakes to do battle with their heriditary enemies, the Iroquois, who were encroaching on their trapping territories on the north side of Lake Ontario. Although Champlain's records of the trip are sketchy it is speculated by some historians that he may have taken a native trail from what they called "Sackville's Creek" (i.e. Cold Creek) at Rice lake to the mouth of the Ganaraska River, now the site of the town of Port Hope.

The Hurons were eventually driven out by the Iroquois, who established a settlement at the mouth of the river. By 1668 a Jesuit mission, Ganaraske, was established there and gave its name to the river

and the trail. Fifty years later the Mississaugas, members of the Ojibwa-Algonquin nation from north of Lake Superior, in their turn drove the Iroquois back across the Great Lakes. The Mississaugas were primarily hunters and followed a more nomadic way of life, burning off the vegetation on the Rice Lake Plains every spring to promote the growth of deer grass. The Mississaugas, ancestors of the native peoples who live around Rice Lake today, supported the French during their wars against the British in the mid-1700s but fought against the invading Americans in the War of 1812.

EARLY LAND GRANTS

Fur traders used the Ganaraska Trail to transport their furs from the Kawarthas to Smith's Creek, the first English name for Port Hope. There were very few white men, other than fur traders, in the Hamilton Township area until after the end of the American Revolution in 1783, when United Empire Loyalists began flooding into the eastern and western sections of Upper Canada. The Iroquois, who had supported the British during the Revolution, suffered retaliation from the Americans and also fled to the Canadas.

By the 1790s loyalists had begun to spread into the centre of Upper Canada and Hamilton Township was surveyed for settlement in 1795-6. Many of the lots along the south shore of Rice Lake were reserved for the Crown and the remainder granted to people of influence with the colonial government. In 1798 15 lots around the Bewdley area were granted to three daughters, Nancy, Elizabeth and Nelly, of Commodore Alexander Grant, each receiving 1000 acres. Their father had been appointed Commodore of the Western Lakes during the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) between France and Britain and became a member of the Executive Council of Upper Canada in 1792. Nelly and Elizabeth Grant received lots 31, 32, 34 and 35 in the eighth concession of Hamilton Townhip. Lot 30 was reserved for King's College, the Anglican university in York (Toronto), and lot 33 designated a clergy reserve.

CHARLES FOTHERGILL (1782-1840)

The first European to record the Rice Lake area in any detail was Charles Fothergill, a young Yorkshireman. In 1816 he emigrated with his wife and family to Smith's Creek where they operated a general store. The next year Fothergill rode on horseback along the Ganaraska Trail to Rice Lake and crossed on the ice to his grant on the north shore. Being an artist and a naturalist he meticulously recorded his findings in watercolours and diaries, preserved in the collections of the Royal Ontario Museum and Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

Fothergill wrote that after leaving the solitary farm of an Irishman, Goheen, on the 5th or 6th concession, (THOS. GOHEEN, U.E.L., was granted lot 33, con.5, in 1798) the forest was wild and beautiful; that he had gotten lost for an hour as it was difficult to make out a road but finally reached the lake. Fothergill secured a lease to operate a ferry on Rice Lake from clergy reserve lot 27 (now Ley Point) and up the Otonabee River. He never followed through on that plan, however, although he established a grist mill business with Adam Scott, founder of Scott's Mills near Peterborough.

WILLIAM BLACK, The First Settler

By 1820, however, other early pioneers had begun to operate licenced taverns and ferries on the south shore of Rice Lake. The Grant daughters soon disposed of their lots and in 1829 William Black occupied and later purchased the 200 acres of lot 35 on the western edge of the township, part of which is included in present-day Bewdley. A corner of Black's lot almost touched Rice Lake and in 1832 he secured a inn and tavern licence. By 1833 Black's Landing at Bewdley, Claverton (now Gore's Landing) and Sully (now Harwood) were all ferry stopping points on the lake. William Black, a member of the Church of England, died in 1849 and his property was left to his young daughter, whose guardians retained one quarter for her and sold the rest. Miss W. Black is still recorded on this property in the 1861 map of Hamilton Township.

WILLIAM BANCKS, The Founder of Bewdley

In 1831 William Bancks with his wife and family arrived in Cobourg from Bewdley, Worchestershire, where he had owned a brass foundry. He moved to the Rice Lake area the next year in an attempt to found a colony for gentleman farmers. Bancks secured a loan from the Bank of Upper Canada and purchased lot 31 where he erected a water-powered sawmill and a log house on Cold Creek. He also purchased lots 32 and 34. In lot 34 Bancks proceeded to lay out residential plots for a village and named the proposed settlement "Bewdley" for his former home in England.

On Jan.9, 1833, the editor of the Cobourg Star commented when a railroad was proposed between Port Hope and Bewdley: "Bewdley, the beautiful and promising little village founded last summer by William Bancks, who is the proprietor of a very extensive and delightful property in the neighbourhood, which would thus become invaluable." Bancks also founded the Newcastle Banking Company and gave his address as Bewdley Mills.

In 1835 CAPTAIN ROBERT PENGELLEY (1797-1875) moved to the north shore on Rice Lake where he had a large land grant in South Monaghan Township, due to the fact he was a Royal naval officer and his first wife was a niece of Sir Isaac Brock. In Pengelley's diary, kept during his first few years at Rice Lake, he mentioned coming by steamboat to Black's Landing and spending the night with William Bancks, from whom he bought a large quantity of lumber to build his house. By 1836 it is said there was a "fair" road through Bewdley to Peterborough.

In 1842 the Newcastle Banking Company failed and Bancks was forced to default on his mortgages. His properties reverted to the Hon. George Boulton, a Cobourg lawyer and land speculator, from whom he had purchased the lots. On July 23, 1845, the following notice was printed in the Cobourg Star: "Whereas sundry persons did many years ago, when the village of Bewdley, on the Rice Lake, was laid out by William Bancks, Esg., make application to the same William Bancks for lots, and get their names put down for such lots. Now the subscribers, proprietors of said lot 34, 8 Con., Hamilton, on which said village is laid out, being desirous of encouraging settlement and improvement of said village, hereby give notice that any person who may have made application for a Village lot and got his name entered for the same, may receive a deed of such Village lot on paying

the purchase money and interest within six months.   It is expected that those persons desirous of availing themselves of the benefit of this notice should make application and payment of one pound to either of the subscribers within one month of this date.   Signed Z. Burnham, David Smart, Benj. Clark, H. Ruttan, G.S. Boulton".

The proprietors of lot 34 were all Cobourg and Port Hope land speculators who bought and resold many other lots in Hamilton Township that unsuccessful settlers lost to unpaid mortgages.   Registry Office files record that only one lot was sold by Bancks before his bankruptcy.   Because no proper surveys were done the village lots in Bewdley were left in such confusion that even to this day it is very difficult for lawyers and historians to search titles and confirm land ownership.

CATHARINE PARR TRAILL, the noted pioneer writer who lived on the south shore of Rice Lake during the 1850s, described William Bancks's abandoned home in her book Canadian Crusoes, A Tale of The Rice Lake Plains (1852):   "Sackville's Mill-dike - The place was originally owned by a man of taste, who resided for some time upon the spot, till finding it convenient to return to his native country, the sawmill passed into other hands.   The old log house on the green bank above the millstream is still standing, though deserted, the garden fence, broken and dilapidated, no longer protects the enclosure, where the wild rose mingles with that of Provence- the Canadian creeper with the hop."

Bancks's house overlooking the millpond was eventually purchased by JAMES SACKVILLE JR. (1843-1917) and named Sawlog Hill.   He either demolished the log house and rebuilt or covered the logs over with boards.   The old house with several modern additions can still be seen above the bridge across Cold Creek and shows several eight-over-eight windows and narrow siding in one section reflecting its 19th century origin.

BUSINESS ENTERPRISES IN BEWDLEY
In 1845 there was a meeting between Port Hope and Peterborough merchants, instigated no doubt by the proprietors of Bewdley village, to again petition the government for a railway.   A charter was granted the next year and preliminary surveys were made from Port Hope through Bewdley to Peterborough.   Because of financial difficulties the charter was never taken up.   In 1852, when Cobourg planned its railway across Rice Lake to Peterborough, a similar agitation arose at Port Hope but due to lack of interest from Peterborough the plans were abandoned.

Taverns and Hotels
According to Hamilton Township assessments, by 1850 when the land speculators had taken over, there were just eight residents in Bewdley, three of whom were tavernkeepers.   A storey and a half tavern, built c. 1846 in lot 33, was kept by PHILANDER HANNAH (1822-1874), one of first permanent settlers.   It is said there was another in the village built in the early 1840s by CHARLES ARMSTRONG but he did not secure an inn licence until 1848.   The third tavern on the main street

was the RICE LAKE INN built c. 1849. Its two and a half storeys were constructed of timbered frame by RICHARD AINLEY to accomodate employees of the sawmills.

Stage coaches had always stopped at Bewdley, the halfway point between Port Hope and Peterborough.   When the Port Hope, Beaverton to Lindsay Railway was built in 1857 bypassing the village, Philander Hannah prophesied that it would be the "ruination of the country".   With the coming of the railroad the stage coach days did end and most of the hotels in Bewdley, including Hannah's, closed their doors.   The RICE LAKE INN is the only one of the original hotel buildings to survive and is one of the oldest structures in the village.   It managed to continue as an hotel for 100 years and is now the RICE LAKE VARIETY STORE.

After the first World War, when prohibition became law thus sounding the final death knell for hotels, guests taking advantage of the excellent fishing in Rice Lake were accomodated in unlicenced tourist lodges.   By the late 1960s, however, most of the tourist lodges were also going out of business as summer visitors found it cheaper to rent housekeeping units or to buy their own cottages.   Today, like other lakeshore villages on Rice Lake, Bewdley survives mainly by catering to the tourist industry.

Sawmills

When William Bancks went into bankruptcy in 1842, his sawmill and property on Cold Creek were taken over by JAMES SACKVILLE SR., who had been employed by Bancks as the sawyer.   The sawmill was located at the head of the mill pond on a short stretch of road.   James Sackville with two brothers, George and John, had come from Dumfries, Scotland, in 1831.   James's brothers bought property in lot 34, concession 7, where they farmed.   James Sackville died in 1879 and was buried in the family cemetery of his friends, the Pengelleys, located on their farm in South Monaghan.   The Sackvilles appear to have been the first permanent pioneer family to settle in the area immediately outside Bewdley village.

Bewdley in 1861

According to the 1861 Canada Census there were three hotels in the village, a qualified physician, two Methodist clergymen, a blacksmith with a vulcan forge and a butcher.   Bewdley had become a thriving lumbering centre with ROBERT WRIGHT'S steam sawmill, built c. 1848, operating on the main street at the lakeshore.   MILL POINT APARTMENTS, said to have once been a boarding house for mill workers, now stand near that location.   JAMES SACKVILLE'S sawmill was still cutting the white pine from the surrounding hills and across the mill pond on Cold Creek was a steam shingle mill operated by GEORGE WILLCOX.   It is said the last sawmill in the area burned in 1917.

JOHN SIDEY, Pioneer Storekeeper

John Sidey (1819-1892) came to Bewdley c. 1840.   His brother, James, located in Cobourg at the same time where he operated a store.   John's birthplace is given as the United States but it is said

their Sidey forebears emigrated c. 1820 from Scotland to Thorold, Ontario, where they were employed as stonemasons on the Welland Canal.

According to family members John Sidey first squatted on the Rice Lake shore and is listed as fisherman in early Hamilton Township assessments. Shortly after his arrival he married Agnes (1820-1912), a daughter of GEORGE SACKVILLE, and they had a large family.

By 1860 John Sidey had a store and post office in Bewdley and also acted as telegrapher. He practised as a herbalist doctor as well, having learned the effectiveness of herbs from the Rice Lake natives. Although John Sidey never graduated as a doctor of medicine he had written qualifying examinations in Toronto.   He also extracted teeth and performed amputations using only alcohol as a anaesthetic and acted as veterinarian on occasion. Some of his instruments are preserved in a museum in Dundas, Ontario. For over 100 years descendants of John Sidey kept a store near the present government dock in Bewdley. The store burned down a few years ago. Agnes and John Sidey are buried at the Bewdley Union Cemetery.   The Sideys could probably be considered the founding family of Bewdley village.

JOSEPH MEDLICOTT SCRIVEN (1819-1886)

Joseph Scriven, writer of one of the most beloved of Christian hymns, "What A Friend We Have In Jesus", was associated with the Bewdley area for over thirty years. Born near Seapatrick, County Down, Ireland, he was the third son of Captain John and Jane (Medlicott) Scriven of Ballymoney Lodge.   Joseph spent four years in Addiscombe Military college, Surrey, England, but left for health reasons, entered Trinity College, Dublin, and graduated with a B.A. at the age of 23. He was engaged to be married but on the eve of their wedding his fiancee was thrown from her horse into water where she drowned.   The horrified Joseph saw the accident but was unable to rescue her as he could not swim and as a result sank into a depression from which he suffered intermittently all his life.   He was deeply religious and may have at this time been converted from Congregationalism to the Plymouth Brethern whose tenets he followed until his death.

In 1845 Scriven emigrated to Canada but became ill and returned in a few months.   Two years later he again emigrated to Canada where he was a tutor at the homes of Plymouth Brethern friends in Woodstock and Brantford, Ontario.   C. 1850 he was employed as tutor to Theodore, only son of Captain Robert Pengelley, Rice Lake, a position he retained for some years.   Pengelley's second wife, Lydia, daughter of Commodore John Roche, was also a member of the Plymouth Brethern. Around this time Scriven was baptized by James Sackville Jr., a lay preacher and another member of the Plymouth Brethern.   Sackville had to break the ice in Rice Lake to get through to the water because total immersion was one of their practices.

Joseph Scriven became engaged to Mrs. Pengelley's niece, Eliza Catherine Roche, but she contracted a chronic respiratory condition after Scriven baptized her in April in the lake and was bed-ridden for months.   He tried every kind of medical aid but Eliza died August 6, 1860, at the age of 23 and was

buried in the Pengelley cemetery.   It is thought by some that her death inspired Joseph Scriven to write   "Pray Without Ceasing" a poem that became the hymn "What A Friend We Have in Jesus". There are conflicting stories about why, when and where the poem was written and both Port Hope and Bewdley have made claims that theirs was the location.

The following quote is taken from What A Friend We Have In Jesus, a book written and published in 1981 by the late Foster Russell, editor and publisher of the Cobourg Sentinel Star: "According to George F. Henderson, assistant archivist, Queen's University, Kingston, there is varying conjecture: Hymnologists and historians do not know the actual background of the inspiration for "What A Friend We Have In Jesus".   Some state the hymn was created in 1855, others agree the date was 1857 and that Scriven sent the hymn to his mother who was seriously ill in Dublin.   The proof exists that the composition was publicly but not widely known in 1865, but the author was not disclosed.   Further research has revealed that a copy of the hymn was given to John Charles Benet in Brantford, the date about 1850.   Scriven did not indicate when the hymn was composed.   The Irish version, of course, was that the first draft was made on the road to Damascus, circa 1846 {when Scriven made a pilgrimage to the Middle East}.   The possibility remains that the hymn was published first in an Irish newspaper, if and when Scriven sent a copy to his mother.   The anonymity is plausible because Scriven considered the creation a very personal one.   This fact was revealed when Scriven did not include "What a Friend We have In Jesus" in a booklet of hymns and verses which he produced in 1869, printed in Peterborough."

According to numerous speculative articles written since Scriven's death in attempts to reconstruct the life of the hymn writer, Scriven often gave copies of his writings to friends.   One of those was George Wilson, publisher of the Port Hope Evening Guide.   Wilson was impressed with "Pray Without Ceasing" and published the poem anonymously in his newspaper in 1865.   Five years later it was reprinted in a New York newpaper where it came to the attention of Charles Crozat Converse, an American musician and composer, who set the poem to music.   The hymn was then included in the repertoire of Ira Sankey, an American singing evangelist associated with Dwight L. Moody, and became one of his most popular requests.   It was not until 1887, the year after Scriven's death, that Ira Sankey discovered the authorship of the hymn and accredited Joseph Scriven in Sankey's own published book of gospel hymns.

It is said that Joseph Scriven established and managed a diary in Port Hope for twenty years to support a destitute widow and was noted for charitable work among the poor.   Although he was very poor himself he shared with others any money sent from his mother in Ireland.   He gathered a small group of Plymouth Brethern in a chapel at the Pengelley property on Rice Lake and preached on the docks and in the market place of Port Hope but was often mocked, pelted with mud, and considered to be an eccentric.   It was said that the only time he lost his otherwise smooth temper was when his beliefs were questioned.

Scriven lived in a very modest frame cottage in Port Hope and in the last twenty years of his life he

boarded with a Mrs. Gibson.   He also often stayed with the widowed Mrs. James Sackville Sr. in her brick house on the Cavan Road near Cold Creek.   Mrs. Sackville had a handwritten copy of the poem "Pray without Ceasing" that she valued highly.

In his later years Scriven became blind and despondent over his evangelism work and feared being a burden on his friends.   It was in the Sackville home, Sawlog Hill on the high bank overlooking Cold Creek, that Joseph Scriven lay ill while his friend, James Sackville Jr., watched over him.   On hearing of Scriven's depressed state Sackville had brought the sick man from Port Hope to his home for the night and sat up in an adjoining room reading.   In Sackville's own words, " We left him about midnight....until five o'clock in the morning.   You can imagine my surprise and dismay, when, on visiting his room I found it empty".   Scriven was found at noon the next day drowned in a deep pool in the millpond below the house, leading to much speculation on the reason for his having left his sickbed.   There was no inquest.   It was known he suffered from chronic melancholia and some hinted his drowning might have been suicide.   Others said that he had been fond of a drink of fresh, cold water from the spring and that in his fever he might have become confused and fallen into the sluice. There were also rumours that he had been murdered.   James Sackville was reported as saying, "A veil of mystery hangs over the death of my beloved brother".   The funeral was held at the home of James Sackville and his Plymouth brethern laid Joseph Scriven to rest in the Pengelley cemetery. As he had requested of his old pupil, Theodore Pengelley, he was buried so that his feet were opposite those of his lost love, Eliza Catherine Roche, that upon their glorious resurrection they might arise facing one another.

DAVID KIDD-BYRNE (1868-1934)

In 1919 two monuments were erected to Scriven's memory by the eccentric evangelist and self-styled tea merchant of Montreal, David Kidd-Byrne.   One was located near the Town Hall in Port Hope and the other at the north east corner of the road where old Highway #28 crosses County Road #9. Salvation Army Bands from Peterborough and Cobourg took part in the dedication ceremony and the memorials were unveiled by Professor McLaughlin of Victoria University, Toronto.

Why did Kidd-Byrne erect those monuments?   David's parents, ARTHUR KIDD (1824-1885) and ELIZABETH WOOD (1831-1904) were married in 1858 and lived in Bewdley in a log house where David had been born.   David was crippled and dragged himself along on crutches and there were different versions of how this disability had occurred.   Some Bewdley people averred that Kidd-Byrne was crippled from birth; he himself claimed he had had his feet frozen when he fell from a wagon and lay there until he was rescued, cared for and converted by Joseph Scriven.   Foster Russell speculated in his book What A Friend We Have In Jesus that Scriven was actually murdered by the crippled evangelist.

On May 24, 1920, another monument to Joseph Scriven was unveiled by the premier of Ontario, the Hon. E.C. Drury, in an impressive ceremony at the Pengelley Cemetery.   The funds for this memorial were contributed by people from all over Canada and Governor-General Victor Cavendish,

Duke of Devonshire, was one of the sponsors.   Kidd-Byrne had offered to collect the money for this memorial but was turned down by the memorial committee.

BEWDLEY CEMETERIES

Bewdley Union Cemetery is non-denominational.   The oldest part of the cemetery is located on the Cavan Street road allowance in Bewdley.   Burials there date back to the early 1850s and are of Scottish and northern Irish settlers with Presbyterian and Congregationalist backgrounds.   The cemetery part of the road allowance was officially closed by the Township of Hamilton in 1958.

The Union Cemetery was later enlarged and now stretches down the hill to Lake Street but records are confused regarding the original ownership of that part of the burial grounds.   In 1960 three great-grandsons of John Sidey, Wordsworth, Norman Donald and Bruce Sidey, secured a number of village plots in the vicinity of the old cemetery from the daughter of Thomas Chalk, Mary A. Dodd of Port Hope, and sold them to the Bewdley Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion three years later. Fred Ridge and others also sold adjacent land to the Legion for a hall and grounds.   For some years Legion members have maintained the Union Cemetery and the Bewdley Legion Cemetery adjoining it on the west side.

The deteriorating tombstones of early Bewdley settlers including Bensons, Sackvilles, Kidds, Sideys and Hannahs can be found in the old part of the cemetery and also two fascinating and strange monuments with lengthy historical inscriptions erected by David Kidd-Byrne; one to himself and the other to Agnes Cousineau, a family friend and nurse.

On June 7, 1925, Kidd-Byrne, his blind wife, Agnes Cousineau, and other local notables led a procession headed by Bryne's maroon Durant sedan through bunting-draped Bewdley to the $1400.00 granite shaft in the cemetery.   This monument, located in the Kidd plot and originally intended to be dedicated to Joseph Scriven, was unveiled by J.D. Bradford, a barrister from Toronto.   An outdoor luncheon was provided by ladies from a church in Toronto.   The ostentatious Kidd-Byrne monument records the reason for his change of name: David Kidd claimed to have rescued the daughter of a wealthy American stockbroker, William Byrne, from a life of prostitution and that in gratitude Byrne left Kidd an interest in his estate provided Kidd added Byrne to his name.   The inscription also records the deaths at sea of members of the Byrne family.

In 1930 Kidd-Byrne was arrested for forgery in Montreal but never brought to trial as he was judged to be mentally incompetent.   He died four years later and the truth of this strange man's life will be forever "shrouded in mystery" as was the reason for Joseph Scriven's death.

BEWDLEY CHURCHES

There were no churches in the Bewdley area until the turn of the century and in the first days of settlement itinerant preachers held services in the schoolhouse.   When churches were established in

neighbouring villages in the 1850s, Baptists worshiped in Baileboro, Anglicans in Gore's Landing, Bible Christians and Wesleyan Methodists in Plainville.

A BAPTIST CHURCH was built in 1897 on Sackville land at Bensons' Corners, the point at the intersection of the Cavan Road and present County Road #9. The trustees were GEORGE BELLAMY, JOHN BENSON JR. and WILLIAM BENSON JR. The Baptist Church was closed c. 1940 and is now a private home.

The Bensons were also among the early Bewdley area pioneers. JOHN BENSON SR. (1826-1908) emigrated with his brothers and sisters, JAMES (1827-1907), GEORGE (1830-1900), SAMUEL, ROBERT, MARY and JANE, from Cavan, Ireland, around 1845 and they first located in lot 29 on the 7th concession. John Benson's first wife was Bethsheba Perrin, and his second was Agnes Sackville, daughter of James Sackville Sr. It is said the Cavan Road was named by the Benson family.

ST. ANNE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, located on Pine Street in Bewdley, has no connection with the cemetery that lies to the south of it. According to the late BOB HANCOCK, once a lay reader at St. Anne's, the building was originally a chicken barn that had been moved from a farm south of Bewdley around the turn of the century. It was renovated with donated materials into a church building by volunteer labour and a stone fixed in the gable which still reads; Bewdley Church /Open to all Protestant denominations/1901.

Thomas B. Chalk, a wealthy and prominent resident and mayor for several terms at Port Hope, owned a great deal of property in the Bewdley area. He allowed the Bewdley residents to erect the church on two of his lots. Ministers of various Protestant denominations took turns holding services there until the early 1920s when it remained vacant for several years.

During the incumbency of the Rev. J. M. Crissal, rector from 1925-28 at St. George's Anglican Church, Gore's Landing, the Bewdley church building was acquired by the Anglican Synod and named St. Anne's. The Synod purchased the land from Chalk for the sum of $1.00 with the provision that it would return to the Chalk family if there ever ceased to be a church on the property. St. Anne's Anglican Church was designated a historic building in 1988 by the Heritage Branch of the Ontario Government on the recommendation of Hamilton Township L.A.C.A.C., and continues to hold weekly services.

BEWDLEY SCHOOLS

When William Bancks laid out the village of Bewdley a school was built on lot 35, concession 8, on "the old Road south of Black's tavern", according to the Cobourg Star Oct.18, 1848, and probably refers to present Main Street between lots 34 and 35. Captain Pengelley, a member of the Church of England, mentions attending church in the schoolhouse in 1838.

In 1842 tenders for new schools were published in the Cobourg Star and in 1848 the old Bewdley

school building was sold by auction. It was originally intended that the new school be built in the same place in Bewdley but the location was changed. A frame school, S.S.#15, was built instead on Sackville land on the Cavan Road near Cold Creek. Sometime in the 1870s it was replaced by another frame school built near the county road allowance at Bensons' Corners and it, too, was known as "Sackville's School". After World War 11 there was a sudden influx of residents into the village of Bewdley and the school became overcrowded. A room for lower grades was prepared in the basement of St. Anne's Church.

In 1950 a two-room cement-block school was constructed south of the old school at Bensons' Corners. Shortly afterwards County Road #9 was extended from the Cavan Road intersection to old Highway #28. The dry bed of the old mill pond, which once covered the roadway, can still be discerned on both sides. Property for a school in Bewdley village was purchased in the late 1960s but it was sold in 1975 to the township for the Vincent Massey Memorial Arena located west of Main Street. Shortly afterward S.S.#15 was closed and the children are now bused to Plainville Public School.

CHARLES CLAY (1906-1980), Bewdley writer and publisher

Charles Clay was one of the more recent literary figures attracted to the Rice lake area. He was born in Landis, Saskatchewan, and graduated with a B.A. from the University of Manitoba. He became a Fellow of both the American and Canadian Geographical Societies and worked as reporter and literary editor for the Winnipeg Free Press. Clay also wrote and published several works of fiction, a book about his experiences living for three years among the Cree Indians of northern Manitoba, three juvenile novels about the fur trade and an adult novel based on the theme of conservation. When Clay moved to Ottawa he worked as a journalist and press consultant to prominent members of parliament.

Clay was advised by his doctor to leave that hectic career and seek a healthier lifestyle in the outdoors. He made a complete career change by moving in 1957 to the peaceful village of Bewdley on Rice Lake where he and his wife, Cecile, became involved in various village enterprises. The Clays purchased a house built in 1914 by a wealthy Great Gatsby-type from Toronto and converted it into the Pine Ridge Tourist Lodge.

In Bewdley Charles Clay again became involved in the publishing business. Perhaps his best known publication is the Rice Lake Tourist Guide, first published in 1957 and still carried on by his daughter, Charlotte Clay-Ireland. At one time Clay's publications for the fur industry had 4,000 subscribers in such widely scattered countries as Guatemala, Mozambique and Zambia. Durng his years at Bewdley he also collected and preserved an extensive file of newspaper clippings concerning local history. Much of the material on Joseph Scriven was taken from Charles Clay's collection.

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