



Historic Gloucester

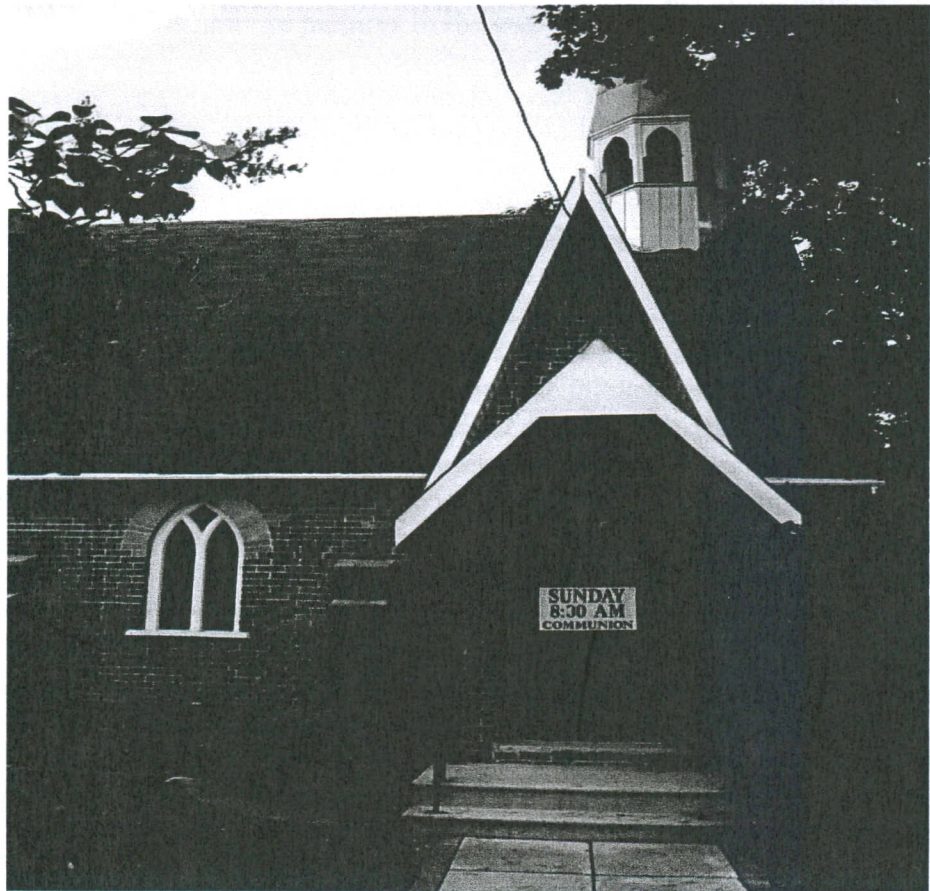
Newsletter of the

**GLOUCESTER HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

[Www.gloucesterhistory.com](http://www.gloucesterhistory.com)

VOLUME 9 NO.2

Summer 2008



St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church

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Cover Photo:

St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church was built in 1878 on an acre of land donated by Richard Dagg on Navan Road. Timber for the church was taken from Thomas Wilson's bush lot. As early as 1960 pioneers were meeting as a congregation of St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church and it continues to have an active congregation today.

Historic Gloucester is published by The Gloucester Historical Society. It is intended as a Newsletter to members of the Society to provide interesting articles on Gloucester's past and to keep them informed of new acquisitions by the Museum, publications available, upcoming events and other items of general interest. Comments and suggestions regarding the Newsletter are always welcome.



Gloucester Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the City of Ottawa.



Editor's Comments

The Annual General Meeting was held on April 27, 2008. Mary Boyd was acclaimed President and the following slate of directors was approved: Mary Boyd, Glenn Clark, Jean-Marc Jossinet, Bob Kemp, Ed Kirk, Aline Mageau, Shirley McCooeye, Mary Patterson, Graham Ritchie, Robert Serré and Joan Scott. Mary Patterson stepped down as Vice-President and she was thanked for her many years of hard work with the Society. She will continue as a Director.

The guest speaker at the AGM was Robert Serré who spoke about Rockcliffe Annex and Manor Park, the subject of his latest book which is available from the GHS.

Also at the meeting, a motion was made and carried that membership fees be raised to \$100.00 for a life membership and \$15.00 for an annual membership.

Glenn Clark's book on St. James Anglican Church, Leitrim, has been updated and is available from the GHS. He has also added more pictures to the web-site.

Plans are underway for two public lectures this fall, and you will be hearing more about this at a later date. As well, Robert Serré's new book on Janeville will be published shortly.

At the AGM it was asked if Board meetings are open to the public. Non-board members are welcome to attend these meeting which are usually held at 9:30 am on the third Saturday of each month , in the Society's office.

If you would like more information on any of the GHS activities, research activities or genealogical studies, please contact Mary Boyd or phone the Gloucester Historical Society Office at 613-822-2076 and your call will be returned. As well, if you are interested in volunteering with the Society or making a donation, we would like to hear from you!

Joan Scott

The Early History of Blackburn Hamlet in Gloucester Township

by Robert Serré

Blackburn Hamlet was formerly known as Green's Creek, Dagg's Settlement, Dagville and Blackburn. Some of the early pioneers were Richard, John and Thomas Dagg, John Kemp, William Purdy and Joshua Bradley. Other settlers who came to the area were William and Thomas Wilson, Alexander Taillefer, Louis Cléroux, John Holden, Robert McArdel, Robert Hurst, John McGrath, John Coughlan and William Price.

To reach Blackburn from Ottawa, early travellers would leave the Montreal road a short distance east of Green's Creek, and follow the Bearbrook road in a southeasterly direction. Beyond Blackburn, the Bearbrook road led to Navan and points further east and south. In 1878, the community of Blackburn agitated for a new road to Ottawa that would run west over Green's Creek and northwest into Cyrville. It took about two years to complete this road, and sections of it were called the Third concession, the Cyrville road, the Navan road, the Bearbrook road, and finally in 1960 Innes Road.

Records show that Anglican pioneers were meeting as a congregation as early as 1860 in the area of Blackburn. In 1878, work started on the construction of St. Mary the Virgin Church on an acre of land donated by Richard Dagg. Timber for the church was taken from Thomas Wilson's bush lot.

Around 1865, a public school section was established for the Blackburn area, and it was identified as P.S.S. #21. The first school

was built of logs in 1865-66 on part of Richard Dagg's farm, Lot 8, Concession 3, Ottawa Front. Early teachers were Miss Molyneux, Miss Cecelia Cameron and Miss Essie Melvin, who married William Henry Coburn. In the early 1880s, Miss Mary Hall and Miss Nellie Christie were teachers. The first school was destroyed by fire in 1915. That same year, another school was built on part of Adam Kemp's farm in the northwest corner of Lot 10, Concession 3.

William B. Bradley of Blackburn went to Ottawa and talked to Robert Blackburn about opening a post office. Blackburn was a mill owner who served as reeve of Gloucester Township in 1864, and as Liberal member for Russell in the House of Commons in 1874-1878. Permission was obtained, and a post office was opened in 1876. It was named Blackburn in honour of the man who had been instrumental in establishing it, and the village itself adopted the same name. John Hudson was the first Postmaster.

The Canadian Pacific Railway line that ran through the Blackburn area was known as the South Shore Line. It extended from St. Eugene to Ottawa. In 1890, the Montreal and Ottawa Railway, owned by Canadian Pacific, was opened between Vaudreuil and Rigaud. By 1897, that line reached Alfred, and two years later it extended into Ottawa itself. There were a total of thirteen stations between Rigaud and Ottawa, namely St. Eugene, Stardale, Vankleek Hill, McAlpines, Caledonia Springs, Alfred, Plantagenet, Pendleton, Bourget, Hammond, Leonard, Navan and Blackburn. The last section, between Navan and Ottawa, was built through the Blackburn area in 1898. A station and train-siding were built about two miles (three kilometres) from the village, which

became known as Blackburn Corners as opposed to Blackburn Station, two parts of a single community, with Mud Creek running between them. There were three trains daily, and the most popular train for years for a quick trip to Ottawa left at 11:20 a.m. returning at 3:40 p.m. In the 1920s, a one-way ticket cost 15 cents; return 25 cents.

In the 1960s, a new community was developed in the area. It was called Blackburn Hamlet. In 2001, Gloucester Township was amalgamated into Canada's greatly expanded capital, along with several other townships.

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Railroad Tracks

The U.S. standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches—an exceedingly odd number. But that's the way they built them in England, and English expatriates built the U.S. railroads.

The first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they chose because they used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing.

This wheel spacing was chosen because, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England, where that was the spacing of the wheel ruts. Some of those old rutted roads were built by the Romans for their legions.

Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels. All Roman chariots were alike in the matter of wheel spacing which was based on the width of the rear ends of two war horses.

The two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank on a Space Shuttle are solid rocket boosters, or SRBs, made by Thiokol in Utah. The engineers who designed the SRBs would have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train to the launch site. The railroad line from the factory runs through a tunnel in the mountains, and the SRBs had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is only slightly wider than the track, so the world's most advanced transportation system had to be designed to fit a 2000 years old track width!

Development in Gloucester Over the Years

The immigration of Loyalists from the American colonies led to the alienation of much of Eastern Ontario, including Gloucester, from the Mississauga Indians in 1783. Roughly surveyed in 1792, and probably named after a member of the Royal Family, either the first Duke of Gloucester (William Henry, 1743-1805) or his son, the second Duke of Gloucester (William Frederick 1776-1834), the Township of Gloucester remained without permanent settlers until 1812. That year, an American by the name of Braddish Billings, then working as a lumber jobber on the Rideau River for Philemon Wright, of Hull, squatted on the banks of the river in an area of Gloucester that is today part of Ottawa and known as Billings Bridge.

The growth of the lumber industry, the completion of the Township survey in 1820, and the gradual improvements in transportation on the Ottawa and Rideau rivers between 1823 and 1832 encouraged others to settle in Gloucester. The pattern of settlement in the early years was naturally axed on the river fronts, especially the Rideau. Pioneer communities included Manotick, Long Island Village, Gateville (Billings Bridge), Janeville (Vanier) and New Edinburgh. As roads were pushed inland, villages such as Cyrville, St. Joseph (Orleans) and Cathartic (Carlsbad Springs) took shape.

By Confederation the entire Township was more or less settled, albeit sparsely, except for the 20-square mile Mer Bleue area. Since the Township was all but lumbered out by the late 1820's, agriculture became the main economic pursuit. The population increased slowly, but doubled between 1851 and 1901, to reach 7,778 persons. By then,



J. Major's General Store, Orleans (ca 1910)

39% of the residents were French-speaking, up from only 13% in 1851. Already, however, Gloucester had begun to lose its urban population to Ottawa. New Edinburgh, incorporated as a village in 1867, was annexed in 1887 followed by another 148 acres south of New Edinburgh in 1889.

After the turn of the century and before the 1930's depression, the major focal points of urban development in the Township - Manotick, Rockcliffe Park Village, Overbrook and Orleans - were incorporated as "police villages," thereby giving the residents more control over some municipal services. The population of Gloucester increased only nominally during this period because of the incorporation of the Town of Eastview (Vanier) in 1909 and the Village of Rockcliffe Park in 1925. Despite the impact of the Depression, the population of the Township increased more during the 1930s than during the previous 40 years, due, in part, to the sudden influx of civil servants and military personnel to the Ottawa area as a result of the demands of the Second World War.

After the war, development in the Township was focused on Overbrook, Alta Vista, Rothwell Heights and Manor Park.

The City of Ottawa, with an area of only 6,109 acres and desirous of housing its growing population, began discussions with Gloucester to annex the 500-acre Village of Overbrook. Subsequent studies by the Ottawa Planning Area Board and the National Capital Planning Committee, created respectively, by the City of Ottawa and the Federal District Commission, eventually led to the annexation of a much larger area. Despite some opposition, the annexation of 14,605 acres went ahead on January 1, 1950. The Township lost 60% of its assessed value, about half of its population, its townhall (eventually) and, the estate of its founding family, "the Billings." With this and a concurrent annexation in Nepean, the City of Ottawa more than quintupled its area, and embraced most of the populated areas in Gloucester west of St. Laurent Boulevard.

The massive annexation of 1950 temporarily reduced Gloucester to a rural township with only 6,473 inhabitants. Growth in the National Capital Area, however, exceeded all expectations and by the mid-1950s, the chief preoccupation of the Township was to service and control development in Cardinal Heights and Blossom Park. By the end of the decade, the population of Gloucester had nearly tripled, to reach 18,301 residents.

During the 1950s, Gloucester resisted further attempts at annexation by the City of Ottawa and a development-minded Council also vigorously protested the controls imposed by the Federal District Commission on development in the Greenbelt. The creation in 1969 of a regional district, the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, finally provided an acceptable means for local municipalities to co-operate on infrastructure development without resorting to annexations.

The mid-1960s ushered in the era of the big residential developers, beginning with Campeau, Costain and Minto. The first Official Plan for the Township was approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs in 1963 and covered 620 acres in Blackburn Hamlet. Major subdivision plans followed for Beacon Hill and Blackburn Hamlet. By 1971, the population of the Township had increased to 37,145 persons, six-fold over the 6,473 census figure for 1951.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, residential development extended to Carson Grove, Windsor Park Village, Convent Glen, Pineview and Cyrville. By mid 1975, virtually all of the Township's industrial-zoned lots in South Gloucester and Albion Road had also been sold. Although the combination of rising costs of construction, high interest rates and inflation had some impact on construction, the population of the Township nonetheless nearly doubled during the 1970s to reach 72,859 residents by 1981.

In 1981, the township became a city, in part, to secure additional government grants and to attract more industries to Gloucester. The 1980s also saw further residential development, especially in Orleans. Council endorsed a City Centre development concept for the Blair Road/Ogilvie Road area in 1984. In 1987, Gloucester became the satellite capital of Canada through the relocation of Telesat Canada's headquarters, including the control tower, in Gloucester's City Centre. The prestigious headquarters of Canada's National Sport and Fitness Administration Centre also moved to the Gloucester City Centre in 1987. In 1988, the 360,000 square foot Gloucester Centre opened while construction began on the \$120-million expansion to Place d'Orleans.

From: *City of Gloucester - 1991, Gilles Sequin*

Publications Available From the Gloucester Historical Society: (Postage, if mailed, in brackets)

- Blackburn—Glen Ogilvie—Centennial History 1887-1967*** **5.00**
Compiled and Edited by Mrs. Anna Elliott (3.00)
An informative story history of that area of Gloucester.
- Bowesville: A Place to Remember*** **20.00**
By Grace Johnston (12.00)
Tells the story of Bowesville and area up until the time
Bowesville disappeared when expropriated to build the airport.
- Famillies pionnieres des Carrieres de Gloucester dans l'Est de
l'Ontario*** **10.00**
By Robert Serré (3.00)
- Famillies pionnieres de Cyrville (Canton de Gloucester)*** **8.00**
By Robert Serré (3.00)
- Gloucester Memories*** **5.00**
By Mel Rowat (3.00)
Some memories of Gloucester Township.
- Gloucester Roots*** **20.00**
Compiled and edited by Lois Kemp (5.00)
Articles that appeared in the "Roots" column of the
Gloucester Leader.
- Memories of the Lock Stations*** **5.00**
Compiled and Edited by Grace Johnston (3.00)
Stories of Long Island, Black Rapids, Hog's Back and
Hartwell's Locks, by Mel Rowat, Camilla (Balcombe)
Forbes, Aletha (Dale) Davidson and Palmer Slack.
- Milk/Cream Producers—Distributors in
Gloucester 1892-1975*** **15.00**
Compiled and edited by Grace Johnston (5.00)
This book is about the dairy industry in Gloucester.

Publications (continued)

- Pioneer Families of Cyrville (Gloucester Township)*** **10.00**
By Robert Serré (3.00)
About the pioneer families of Cyrville.
- Pioneer Families of Glen Ogilvie (Gloucester Township)*** **10.00**
By Robert Serré (3.00)
About the early families of Glen Ogilvie.
- Pioneer Families of the Gloucester Quarries*** **10.00**
By Robert Serré (3.00)
A history of the Gloucester Quarries and the pioneer families that settled in that area.
- Pioneer Families of Hurdman's Bridge (Gloucester Township)*** **10.00**
By Robert Serré (3.00)
A brief history of the area and the pioneer families that settled there.
- Pioneer Families of New Edinburgh, Volume One: 1830-1870*** **10.00**
By Robert Serré (3.00)
About the history and pioneer families of the New Edinburgh area.
- Pioneer Families of Rockcliffe Annex and Manor Park in Gloucester Township*** **10.00**
By Robert Serré (3.00)
A brief history of the area and the pioneer families that settled there.
- The Story of the First English Church of Gloucester Township*** **50.00**
By Glenn Clark (20.00)
The history of St. James Anglican Church, Leitrim, 150 years in God's hands - 1853-2003.

Publications (continued)

1879 Belden Map of Gloucester Township

From 1879 Belden Atlas of Carleton County

The map shows who owned each lot in 1879 as well as the location of roads, churches, schools and interesting features of the township during that early time.

10.00

(5.00)

Note: Copies of publications may be ordered through: Robert Serré, Secretary of the GHS, 1057 Riviera Drive, Ottawa K1K 0N7, e-mail: belser@magma.ca. A shipping charge as shown for each publication will be added to mail orders.

Grandma's Apron

The principle use of grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath, but along with that, it served as a holder for removing hot pans from the oven. It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and, on occasion, was even used for cleaning out dirty ears.

From the chicken-coop the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven.

When company came those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids. And, when the weather was cold, grandma wrapped it around her arms.

Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow when bent over the hot wood stove. Wood chips and kindling were brought into the kitchen in that apron.

From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls. In the fall, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds.

When dinner was ready, Grandma walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men in

the fields knew it was time to come in for a great big old fashioned dinner.

Grandma, in her apron, used to set her hot baked apple pies on the window sill to cool. Now her granddaughters set their's out to thaw! Everyone knew what was baking because of the luscious aroma. Sometimes an old WWII favourite, a tomato soup spice cake or fragrant gingerbread cake could be found cooling on the ledge.

The old aprons often had a bib on the top part. Pins and needles were placed there when the mending basket was put aside for a few moments so that grandma could tend to other important tasks. The apron was also used to hold and sort old buttons and then served as a sort of funnel when putting them back into the jar.

The apron helped hands open tight jars and carried ears of corn or carrots and tomatoes from the fruit and vegetable vendor that came by twice a week.

Hands were quickly wiped and dried on that apron when rushing to answer the door. It was also used to wipe down condensation on windows and mirrors, often caused by the slow cooking of pot roasts, chutneys, relishes and ketchups and from steaming plum puddings and baking pot pies and tourtières.

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that "old-time apron" that served so many purposes!

Gloucester Historical Society - Phone/Fax 613 822-2076**Board of Directors:**

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IF YOU HAVE NOT YET RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP, OR IF YOU WISH TO BECOME A NEW MEMBER, PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW AND SEND IT IN WITH YOUR CHEQUE. THE COST IS ONLY \$15.00 PER YEAR OR \$100.00 FOR A LIFE MEMBERSHIP!

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Membership Form—Gloucester Historical Society/Société historique de Gloucester

Membership/Adhésion 2008—\$15.00 for one year..... \$100.00 for life membership.....

NAME: _____

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