The Stories Behind Street Names

Gloucester, Vanier, Rockcliffe, East and South Ottawa

*Glenn Clark*
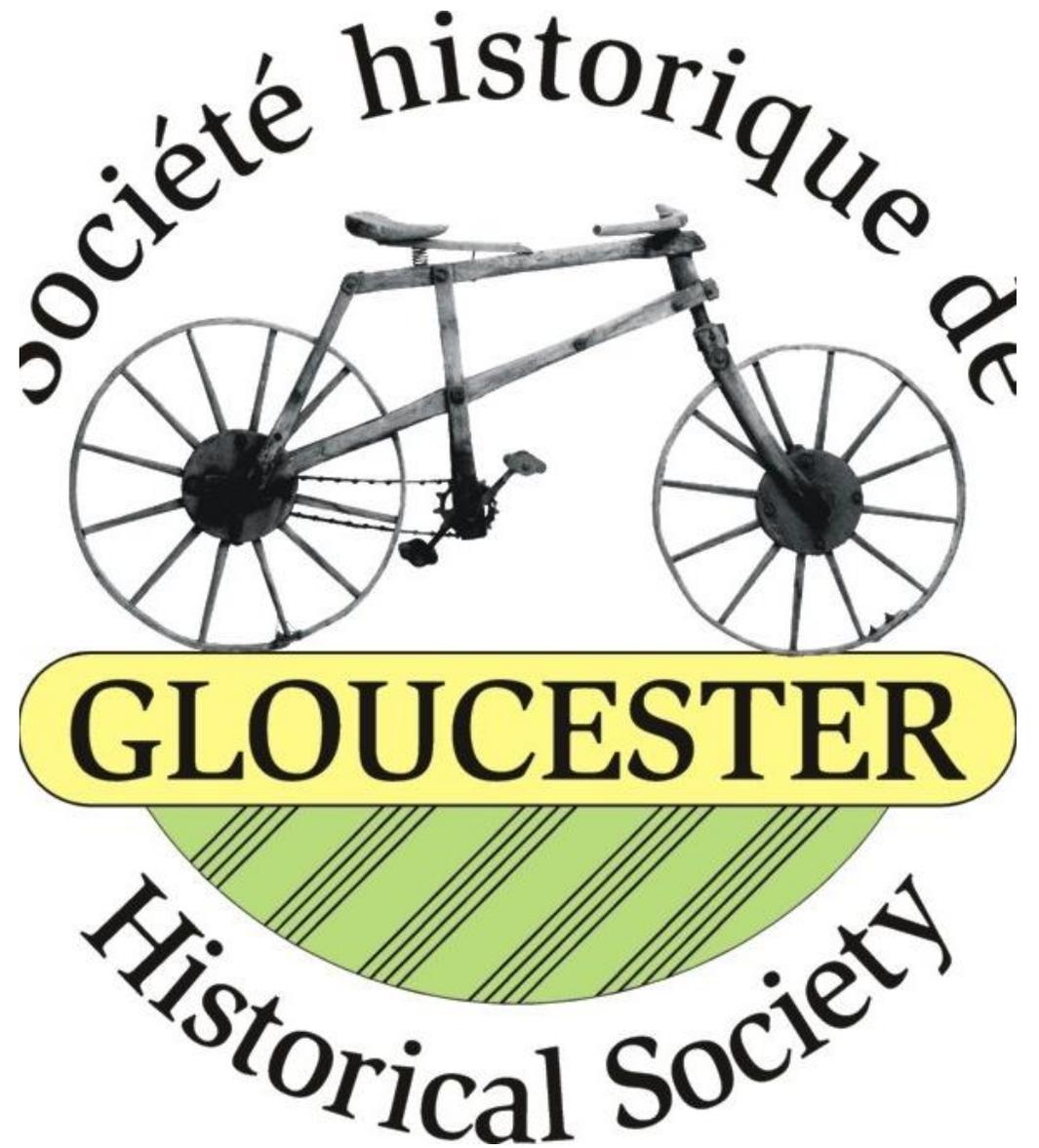
Ottawa Street Name History

- No Comprehensive List of the stories behind Ottawa street names
- SFOPHO has done considerable research into Orléans street names, parks and public buildings
- Vanier Museoparc has researched Vanier Street Names
- Ottawa City Archives has an extensive list of Street name changes
- City of Ottawa now maintains a list of street name commemorations which began after the 2001 amalgamation. Most of the street name changes that took place immediately following amalgamation are not included.
- City of Ottawa now maintains a list of street name changes including rationale starting in 2015.
- There is a list of approved commemorations not yet assigned to streets, parks and public buildings
- Major street name changes took place in 1947-1948 for Vanier, in 1957 for Orléans, in 1950-1951 at the time of the city annexation and following the 2001 amalgamation.
- Our street name history list now appears on our website www.gloucesterhistory.com .
- See our links page for more information on Ottawa street names including links to the City commemoration and street name change lists.

Street Naming and Themes

- Street Names are generally selected by developers, but must be approved by the city
- Duplicate and similar names will not be accepted
- Names that are difficult to pronounce will not be accepted
- New names most often have no historical significance, but there are exceptions
- Gloucester Historical Society has been consulted about street naming
- Street Name Themes in certain neighbourhoods:
    - Blackburn Hamlet – Many street names include 'Park'
    - Hunt Club Park – Many are named for photographers
    - National Research Council Campus – Named for NRC scientists
    - Ottawa Airport – Names are based on local and national aeronautical history
    - Convent Glen North – Many are named for French wines
    - Urbandale Acres near Heron Road – Many are named after American states

DONALD STREET (Overbrook)
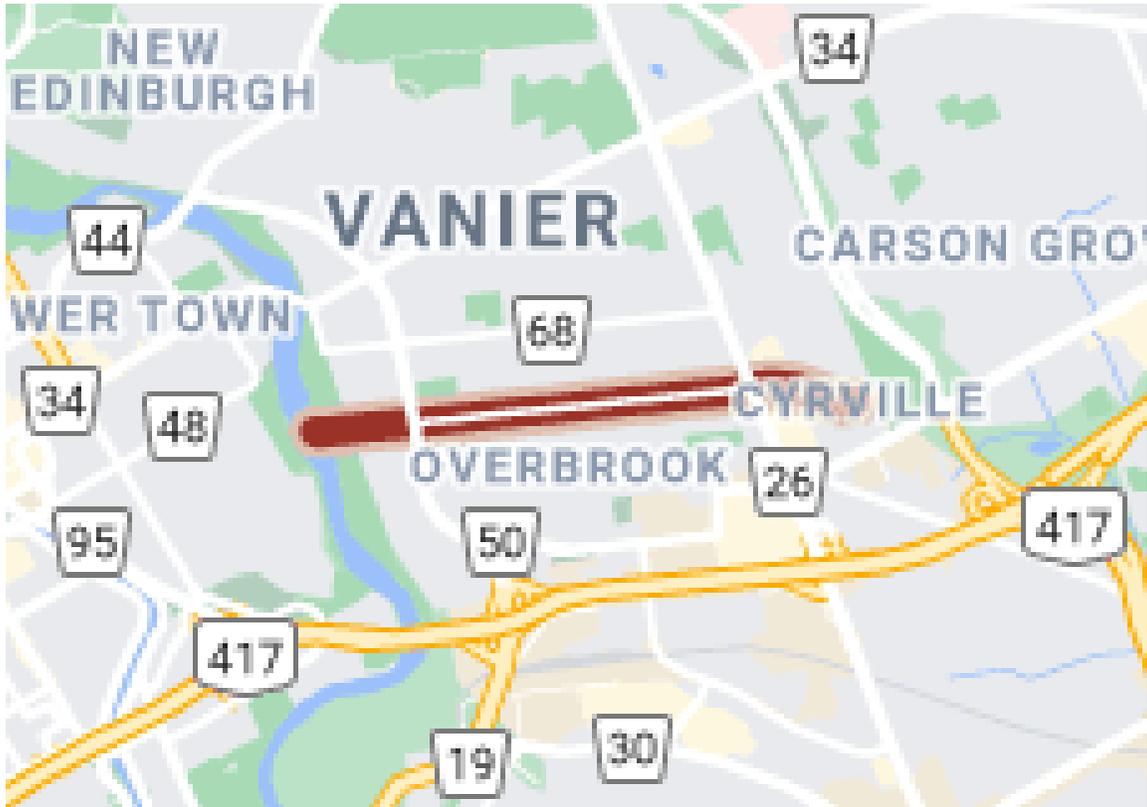
- Start of Project
- Did Donald Street commemorate Don McDiarmid, 1940s tennis star? Donald McArthur, pioneer?
- Street names are not well documented, and some information is being lost
- Origin of Donald Street only known by older local residents.
- Named for John "Donald" MacLeod
- Only son of Mr. & Mrs. J.D. MacLeod, Queen Mary Street, Overbrook
- Attended Overbrook Public School, and Lisgar Collegiate where he was a basketball star
- Enlisted in RCAF in June 1941 immediately following graduation.
- Graduated at Top of Class as an air gunner at Fingal, Ontario Air Training School
- Promoted to Sergeant and Pilot Officer on the same day, February 14, 1942 at age 20

- Arrived in England in March 1942, where he was also head of bombing and gunnery school.
- Lost his life in air operations over Germany on September 16, 1942.
- Burial location – Rheinberg War Cemetery in Germany
- Originally named Somerset Street, an eastern extension of Ottawa's Somerset Street
- Locally known as Wolff Lane as it ran through the Wolff farm
- Donald Street was first used in 1947 and was formally adopted in 1951 following the annexation of Overbrook by the City of Ottawa.

DOUGLAS AVENUE (New Edinburgh)

- Named for Sir James Douglas (1803 – 1877)
- Born in Guyana to a Scottish merchant father and a Creole mother
- Now recognized as part of Black History month
- Douglas family were part of the Scottish business elite.
- James came to Canada in 1819 to work for the Northwest Company and later the Hudson Bay Company
- Married in 1828 to a Métis wife (Amelia Connolly)
- Moved to Fort Vancouver in 1830 (later part of Washington State). The Oregon Treaty of 1846 established the current border.
- First Governor of Vancouver Island from 1851 to 1864
- First Governor of British Columbia from 1858 to 1864
- Considered the father of British Columbia
- In 1864, Queen Victoria promoted him Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath
- Many commemorations in British Columbia

BANFF AVENUE (Alta Vista/Ellwood)
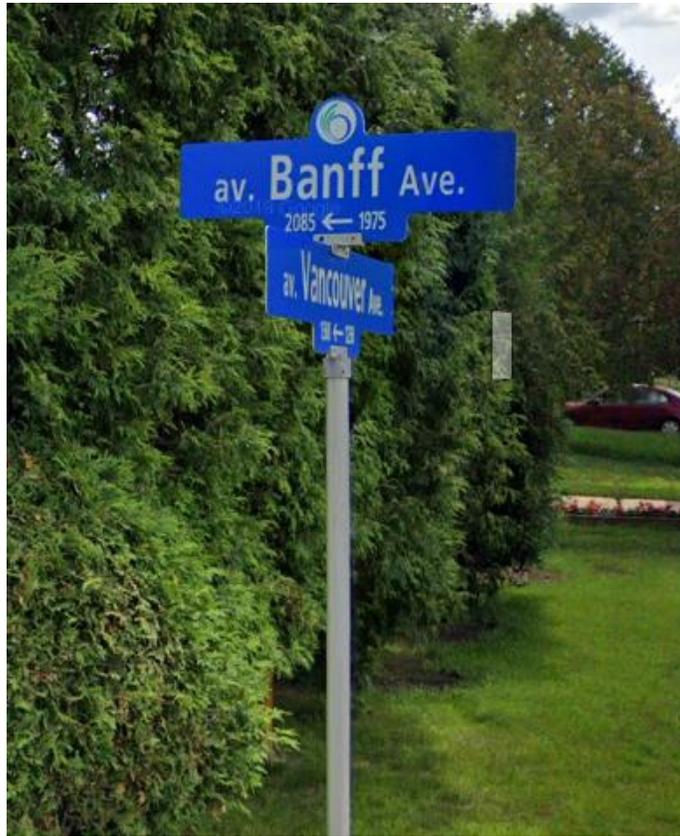
- Named for Banff National Park, Canada's first National Park established in 1885.
- Banff National Park was named by George Stephen, 1st Baron Mount Stephen and first President of the Canadian Pacific Railway for his birthplace of Dufftown in the County of Banff, Scotland.
- Prior to 1951, this was known as Gordon Street.
- Street has some notoriety for the gang, the Ledbury-Banff Crypts.

- George Stephen, 1st Baron Mount Stephen

OXBOW AVENUE (Alta Vista)
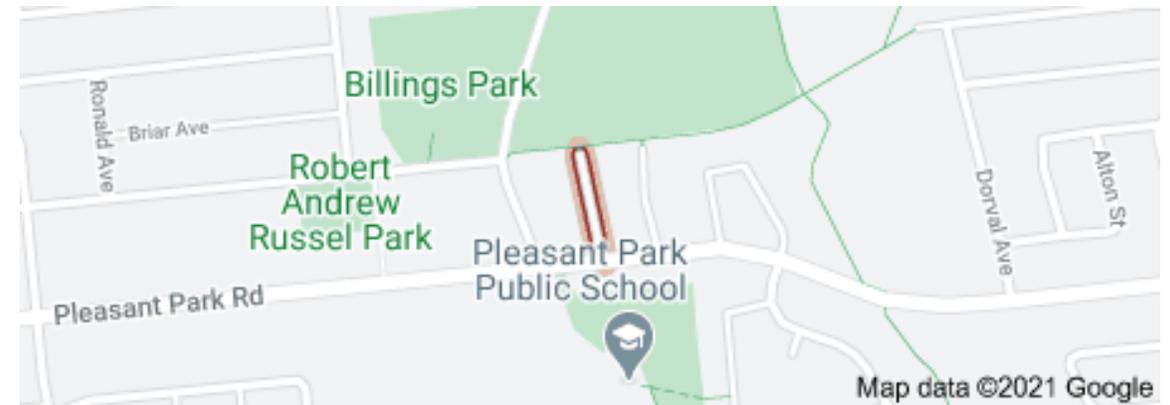
- Named for Oxbow, Saskatchewan.

- Street located on former Russell Farm

- Hometown of Ada Winnifred Pegg, wife of Douglas Russell, and sister-in-law of Robert Andrew Russell, owner of the Russell Farm.

- Named in 1951

RAYMOND LABROSSE STREET (Orléans)

Canada's Second World War undercover agent
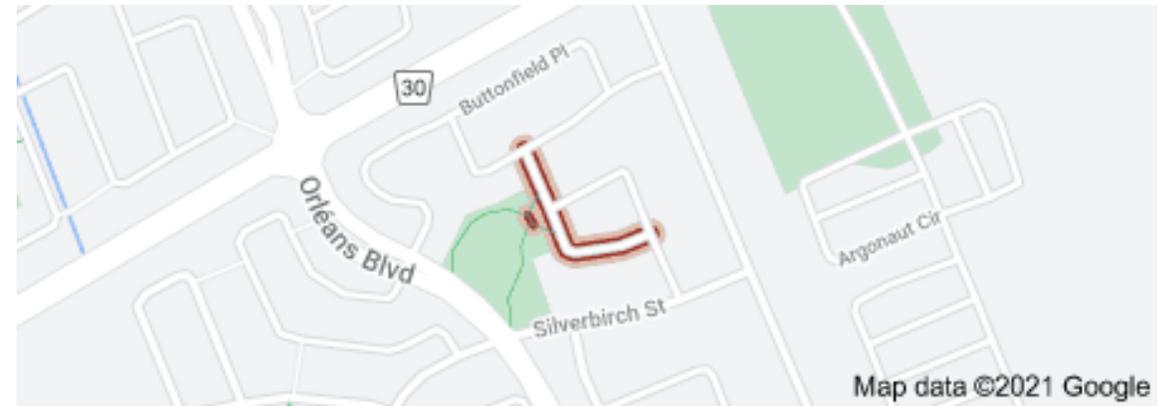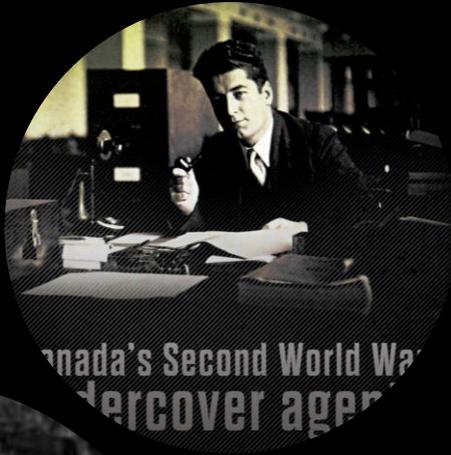
- Located in Chapel Hill South

- Named for Lieutenant-Colonel Raymond Labrosse (1920-1988), an Ottawa native.

- Street named by the City of Gloucester in 1990

- From 1942 to 1944, he worked with British Intelligence to organize the Shelburne Line to create an escape network for downed airmen in France

- Awarded the Military Cross, the American Medal of Freedom, the French Legion of Honour and the Croix de Guerre with palm for his service during World War II

- Served with the Royal 22nd Regiment from 1948 to 1971.

- The 1971 television film titled 'Inside Out' was based on his wartime espionage and featured the only remaining flight worthy Lysander aircraft used in missions to get behind enemy lines.
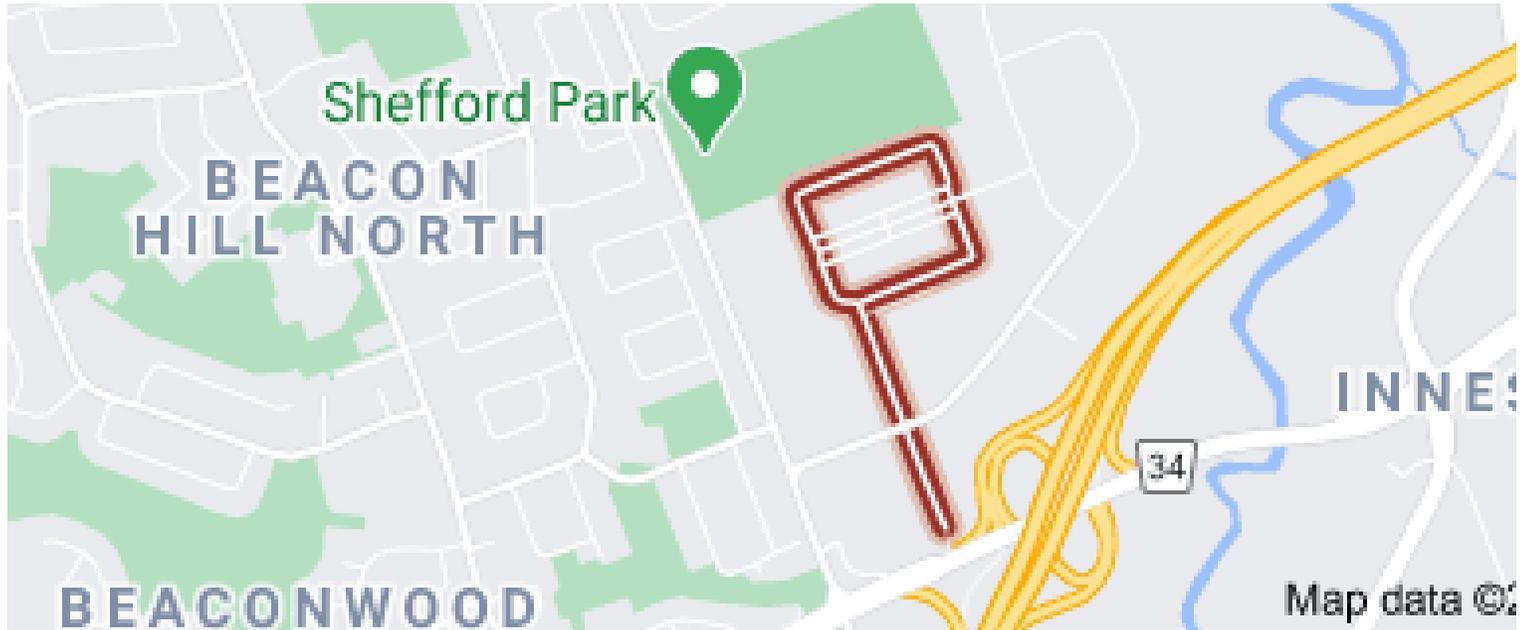
RAINBOW STREET
(Beacon Hill)

- Originally the access road to the Odeon Queensway Drive-In
- Queensway Drive-In opened on August 28, 1963 and closed in 1986.
- Named for the famous song 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' sung by Judy Garland from the 'Wizard of Oz' and symbolizing the magic of the cinema.
- Nearby Canotek Road was originally named Odeon Road, also for the Drive-in.
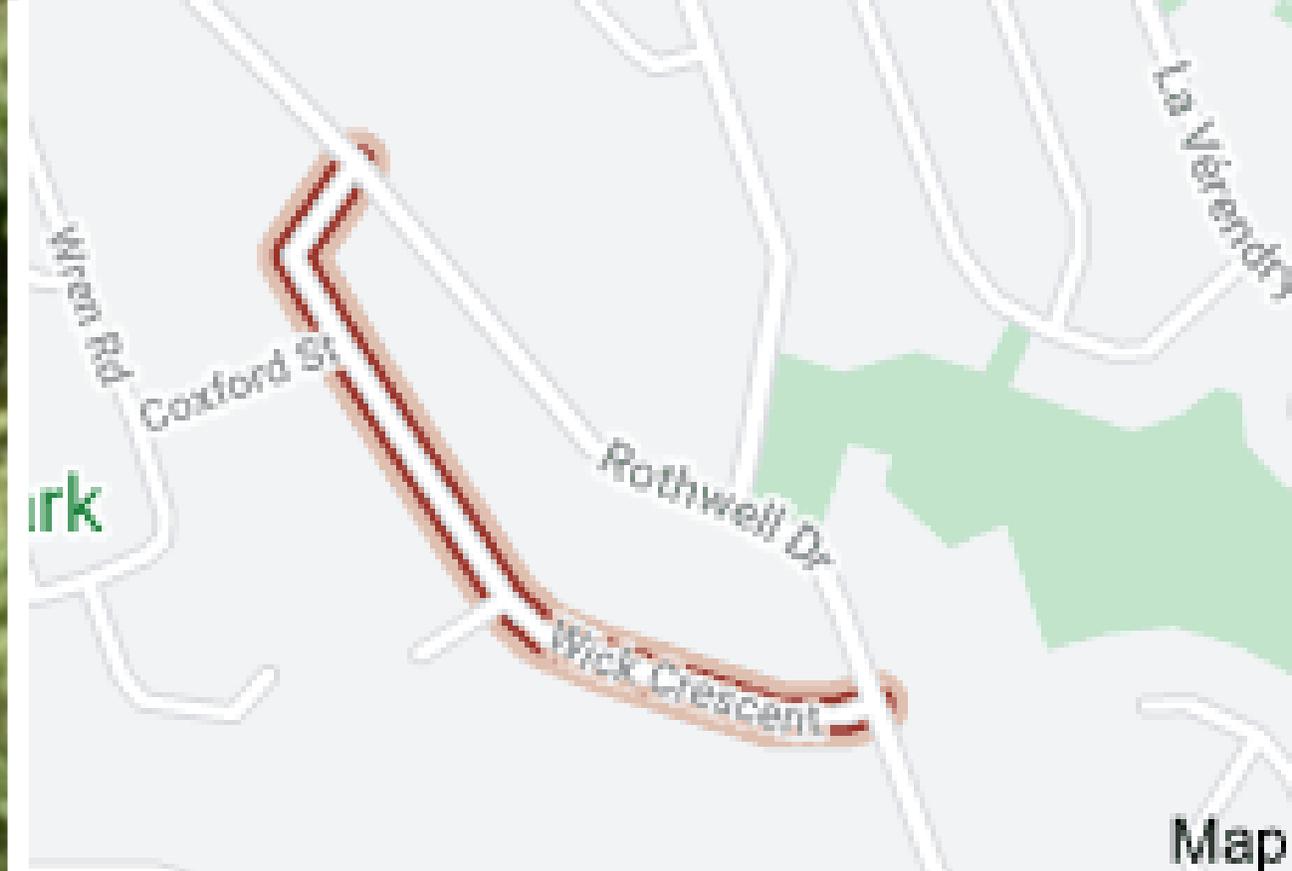
WICK CRESCENT (Rothwell Heights)

- Named for Wick Brothers of Canada Ltd., specialist builder of ranch style bungalows
- Brothers were Halfoan A. and Meinerth Aage Wick.
- Meinerth Wick had been a lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Navy.
- Partnered with Benjamin Rothwell in developing Rothwell Heights between 1953 and 1956.
- The business was auctioned in 1977 and dissolved in 1984.
- The Wick family was originally from Norway.

Wick Brothers
of
CANADA LTD.

Have now under construction several ranch style bungalows on lots of

140' x 150' and up
at reasonable prices

Situated on Beautiful
"Rothwell Heights"
Montreal Road

Half mile east of National Research Council

TELEPHONE SH6-0955

DOLMAN RIDGE ROAD (Blackburn)

- Named for the family of John Dolman, who purchased 50 acres at the corner of Dolman Ridge Road and Anderson Road in 1912 but the family were tenants as early as 1888.
- John Dolman was born in 1854 in Somerset England and died in Gloucester in 1935. His wife was Eliza Henrietta Price (1859-1920). John was a Court Constable and a sanitary inspector for Gloucester.
- Son George (1897-1974) was the Gloucester Township Constable and Building Inspector for many years. He was wounded in World War I on March 27, 1916.
- Son Thomas (1895-1960) was also a Private in during World War I.
- Jack (John) Dolman Jr. (1893-1970) is pictured in 1925 with his Producers Dairy Milk Wagon.
- Dolman Ridge Road was home to many market gardeners but following the Greenbelt expropriation, the road was entirely depopulated and is now closed beyond a parking lot used by hikers etc.
- The cross at Anderson Road intersection denoted the former site of a Roman Catholic School.

BÉDARD AVENUE (Vanier)
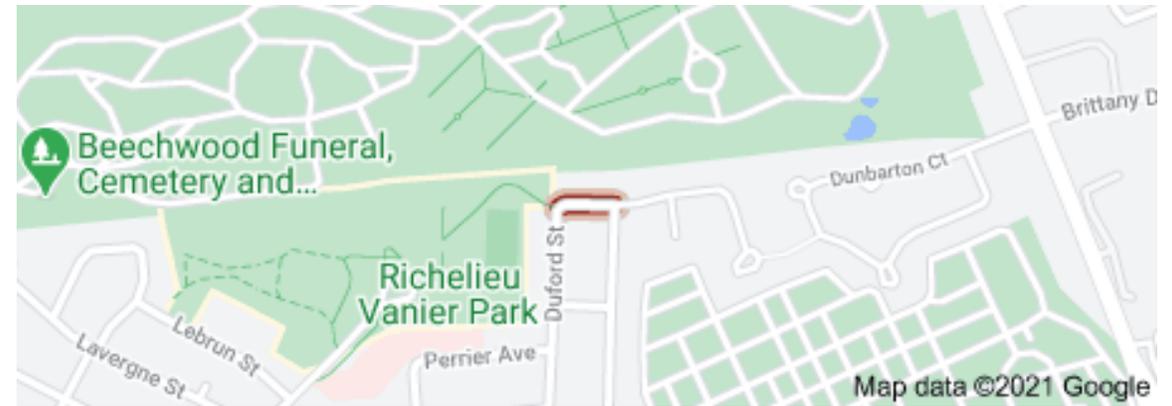
Named for Flavien Bédard (1860-1896), a native of Rigaud, Quebec. He was recorded as a shantyman and raftsman. He died of cancer.

They lived on Catherine Street in Clarkstown, now Barrette Street.

Marie Rose was adopted by Orphila and Emiliana Lavigne and she married Moaise Cyprian Marion on July 14, 1913 in Cache Bay, Ontario. They later moved to Sudbury, Ontario

1889

1895–1974

1860–1896

now

14 July 1913

Married in 1889 to Azilda (Exilda) Latour (1869-1899). She died of complications from influenza.

They had one daughter, Marie Rose Délina Bédard (1895-1974) who was left as an orphan.

NEWTON LANE (National Research Council)
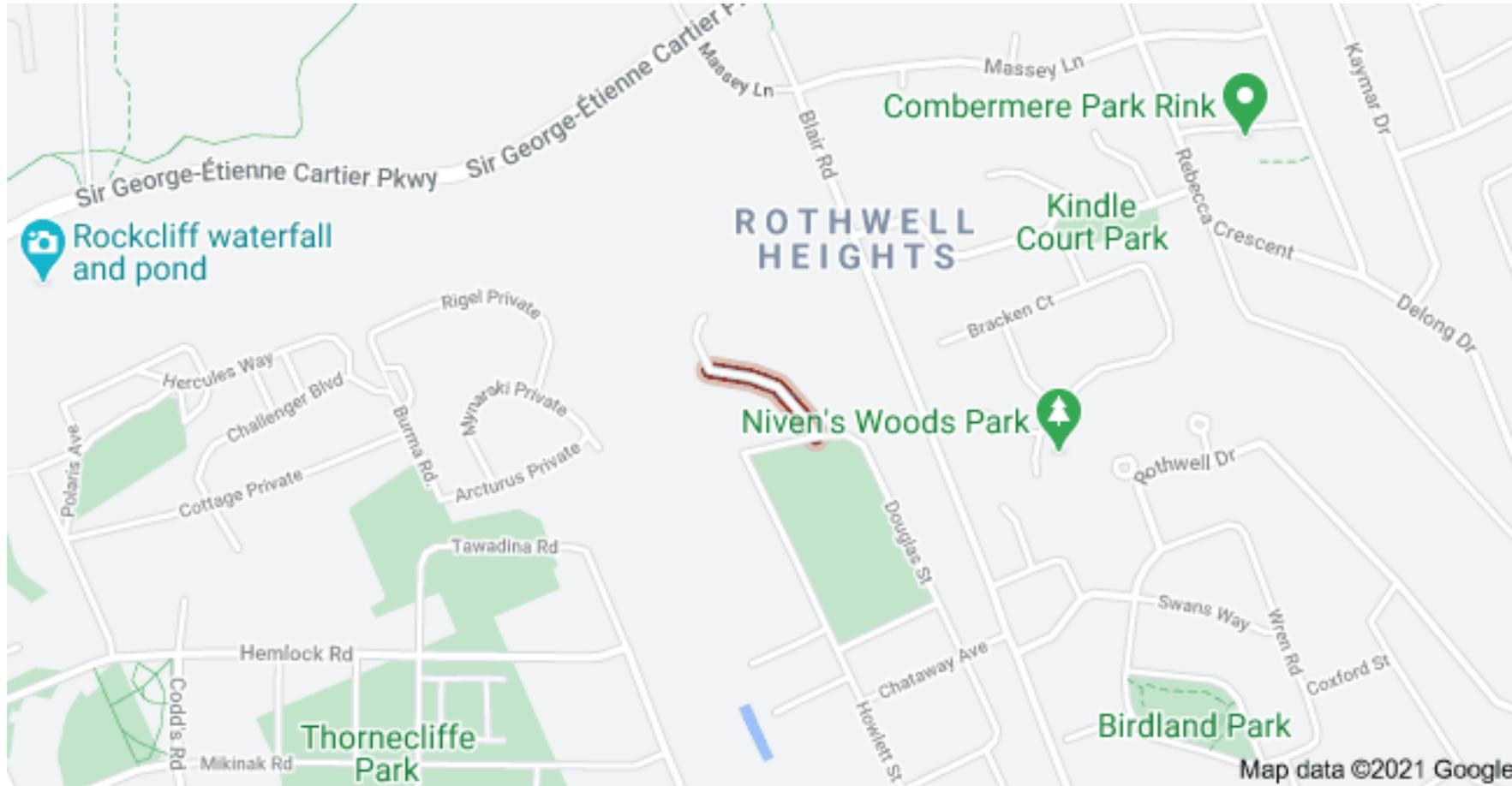
- Named for Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1726 or 1727), who was) who was a British mathematician, physicist, astronomer, theologian and author. He was best known for his theory of gravity after watching an apple falling from a tree.
- The apple tree is an extremely rare variety 'Flower of Kent' which was first mentioned in the fifteenth century.
- A descendant, planted from cuttings (or scions), was presented to the National Reasearch Council in 1961 by the National Physical Laboratory, Teddington, England. The tree is located in front of Building M-36.
- A plaque reads as follows:

  "This tree is a descendant of one that stood in the garden of Woolsthorpe Manor near Grantham, Lincolnshire, England at the time when Newton is said to have had his fabled inspiration on gravitation.

  Presented by the National Physical Laboratory, Teddington, England"
- A DNA test casts some doubt about the authenticity of the tree.
- The streets on the National Research Council campus otherwise commemorate NRC scientists.
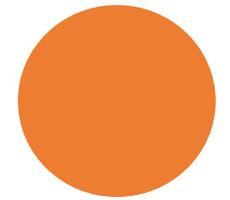
MITCH OWENS ROAD (South Gloucester)

- Named for Mitch Owens (1921-2016).
- Born in Hazelridge, Manitoba
- 'Road the Rails' during the Great Depression and took odd jobs.
- Joined the RCMP in 1942 and spent 3 years at Pond Inlet, Nunavut
- Settled in Gloucester in 1963 and became involved in Real Estate including a trailer park located next to his historic farm-house.
- Mayor of Gloucester in 1984 and 1985.
- Gloucester Councillor and Deputy Reeve from 1966 to 1991
- Street was named in his honour in 1992.
- His birth name was Mikhail Onsowitch
- Previously known as Regional Road 8

KINZUA ROAD (Rockcliffe)

- Named for the Kinzua Viaduct, McKean County, Pennsylvania
- The word for 'fish on a spear' in the Seneca Iroquois language.
- Built in May 1882 and considered an engineering wonder, the eighth wonder of the world.
- Likely chosen because of Warren Soper's prominence in Rockcliffe and his career in engineering.
- The highest and longest railway bridge in the world at the time, 301 feet high and 2053 feet long.
- Rebuilt of steel in 1900
- Freight service using the bridge ended on June 21, 1959.
- It became the centrepiece of Kinzua Bridge State Park in 1963.
- Excursion trains crossed the bridge from 1977 to 2002 when it was determined that the bridge was vulnerable to strong cross-winds.
- Restoration began in February 2003
- A tornado hit the bridge on July 21, 2003. Eleven of the twenty bridge piers collapsed.
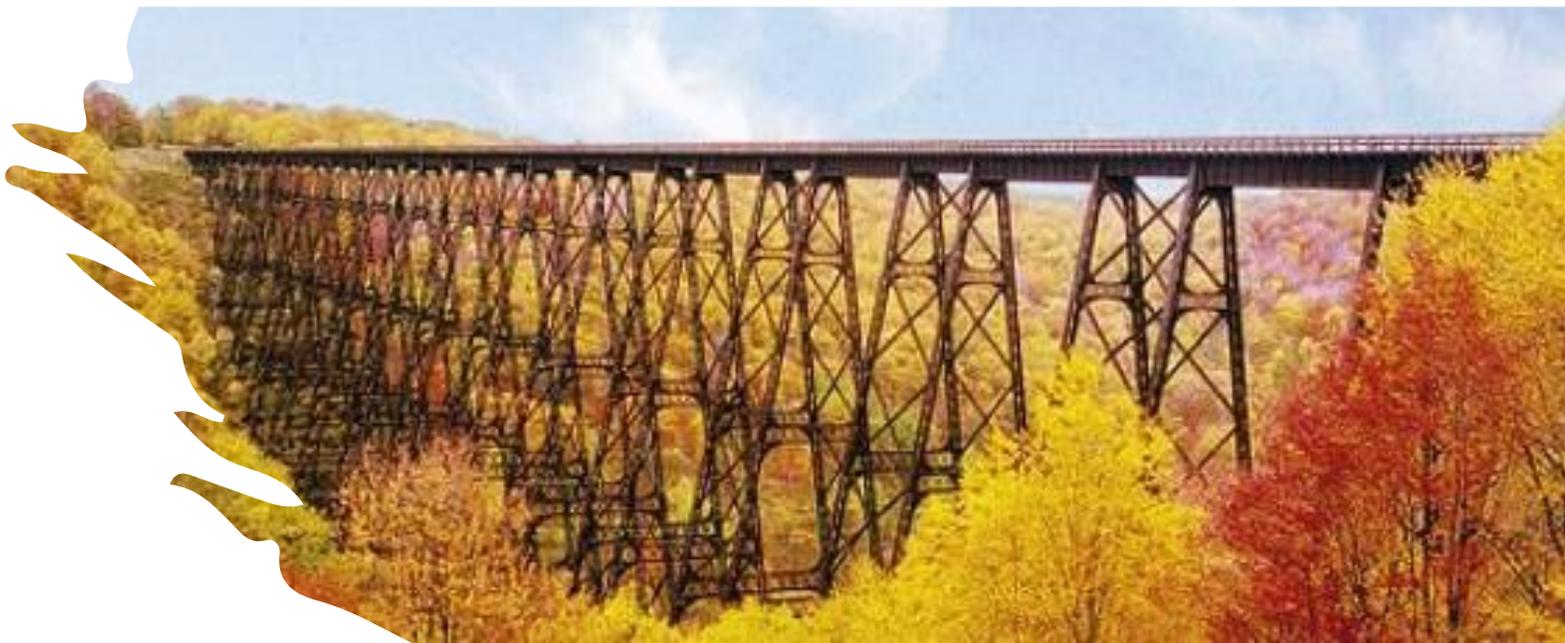
RICHARD NICHOLSON PRIVATE (Manor Park)
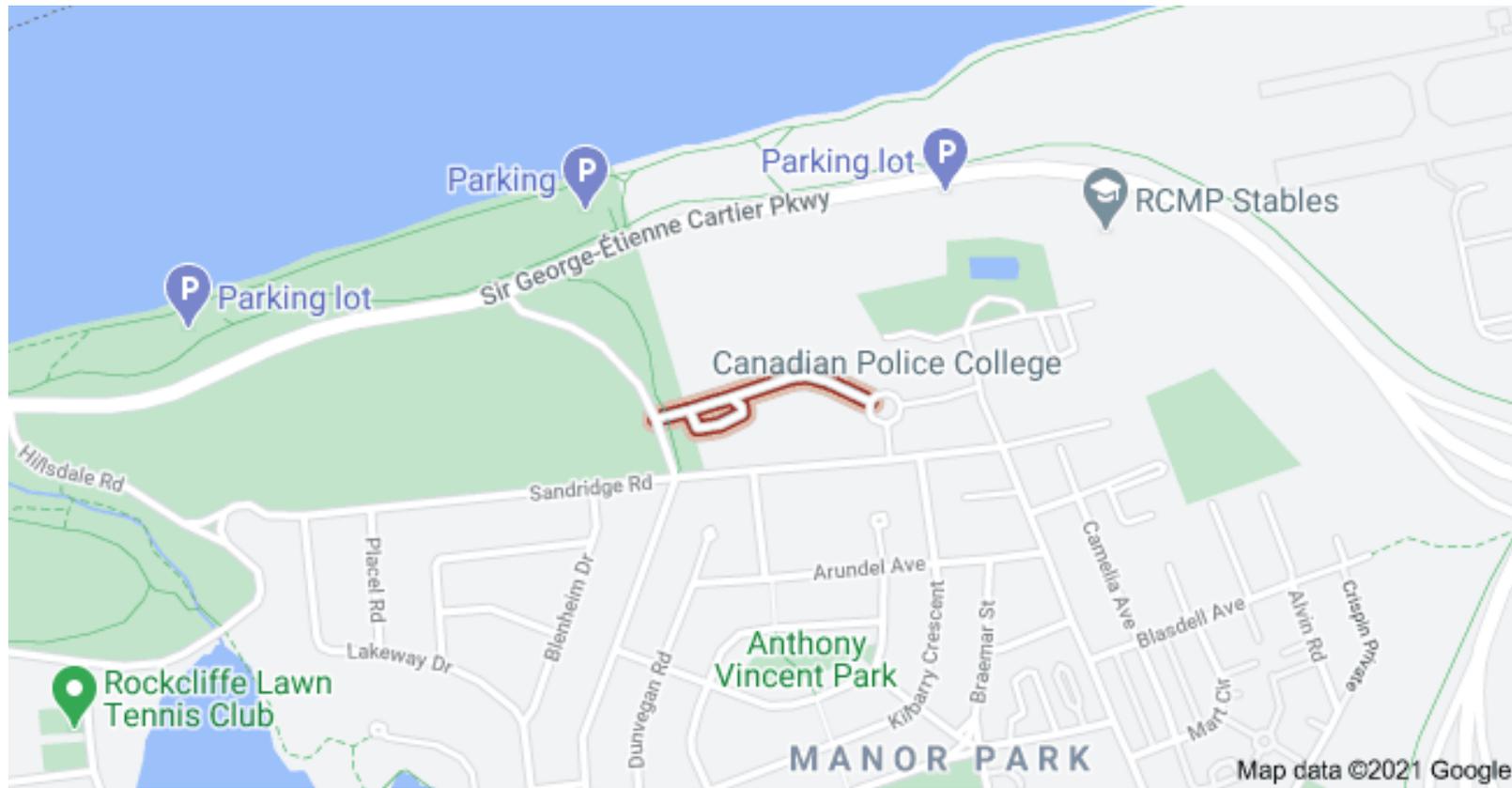
- Named in memory of Sergeant Richard Henry Nicholson (1894-1928).
- Born in Westport, County Mayo, Ireland
- Father James was a member of the Royal Irish Constabulary
- Emigrated to Canada in March 1913 and travelled to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan to meet up with siblings who previously came to Canada.
- Joined the Northwest Mounted Police on June 17, 1913 with duties in Regina and Dawson City
- Volunteered for duty in the Great War in 1918 and arrived in France on October 7, 1918
- Promoted to Sergeant on November 1, 1919 and became NCO at Brandon, Manitoba.
- On December 31, 1928, involved with Constable John Watson in investigating illicit alcohol production at the farm of William Eppinger, near Molson, Manitoba. When caught by surprise, there was a struggle and Sergeant Nicholson was shot and died later that afternoon.
- He received a full military funeral and was buried in the Depot Division Cemetery in Regina.
- Streets on the campus of the Canadian Police College and RCMP Stables honour RCMP offices who lost their lives while on duty.

Photograph of Corporal Richard Nicholson shortly being promoted (Source of photo – Kendall De Menech)

Photograph of the grave marker for Sergeant Richard Henry Nicholson located at the "Depot" Division cemetery (Source of photo – Joe Healy: National RCMP Gravesite database)

SLATTERY'S FIELD STREET (Leitrim)
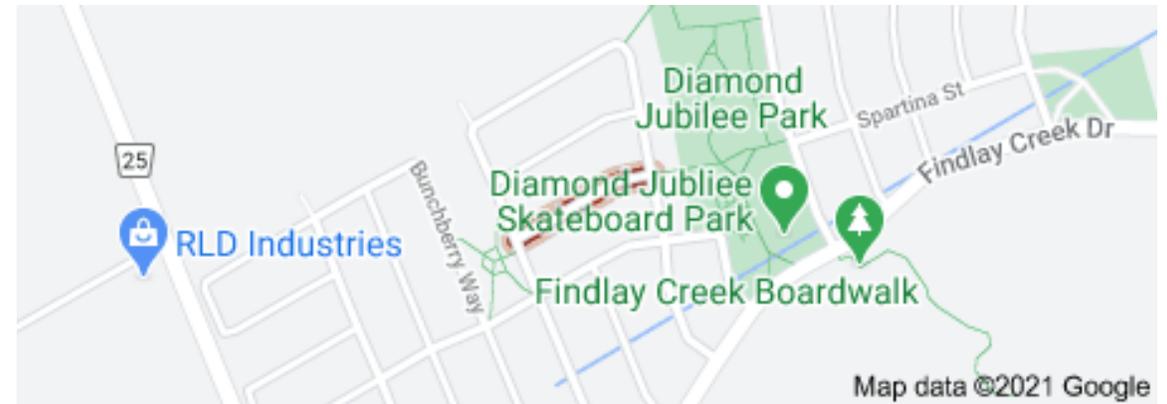
SLATTERY'S FIELD

IN THIS AREA, ONCE A COW PASTURE, THE FIRST AEROPLANE FLIGHTS OCCURRED IN THE OTTAWA REGION. BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 11TH AND 14TH 1911, LEE HAMMOND, FLYING A BIPLANE, PERFORMED BEFORE CROWDS ATTENDING THE CENTRAL CANADA EXHIBITION. ON OCTOBER 8TH 1913, WILLIAM C. ROBINSON LANDED AT SLATTERY'S FIELD AFTER FLYING FROM MONTREAL, THE FIRST FLIGHT BETWEEN TWO CANADIAN CITIES. BOTH PILOTS HAD TO CONTEND WITH COWS AND HORSES WHICH SHARED THIS CRUDE AIRFIELD.

PLAQUE ERECTED BY THE CANADIAN
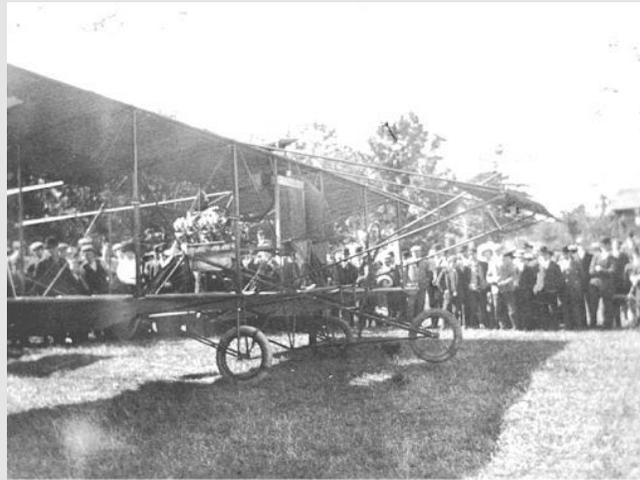
First inter-city mail flight landed at Slattery's Field south of Clegg St. Oct 9 1913

- Named for Ottawa's first air field, that was located near the Hydro building on Riverdale Avenue where a plaque has been placed.
- It also honours Bernard Slattery who owned the farm at the site of the airfield and who was a meat merchant at the ByWard market since 1868 until his death in 1922. His home was at 40 Riverdale Avenue but was destroyed by fire in 1996.
- The airfield was first used for demonstration flights for the Central Canada Exhibition on September 11th and 12th, 1911. The pilot was Lee Hammond.
- A hot air balloon ascended from Lansdowne Park and operated by Professor Hutchinson on September 10, 1912 also landed near Slattery Field.
- On September 9, 1913, 19 year old Cecil Peoli successfully landed in front of the grandstand at Lansdowne Park after departing from Slattery Field.
- On October 8, 1913, aviator William Robinson of Chicago, made the first intercity flight in Canada between Montreal and Ottawa, landing at Slattery Field when a scattered crowd at Lansdowne Park did not permit safe landing there. This was first air delivery of newspapers in Canada, The newspaper was The Montreal Daily Mail.

BORGA CRESCENT (Hunt Club)
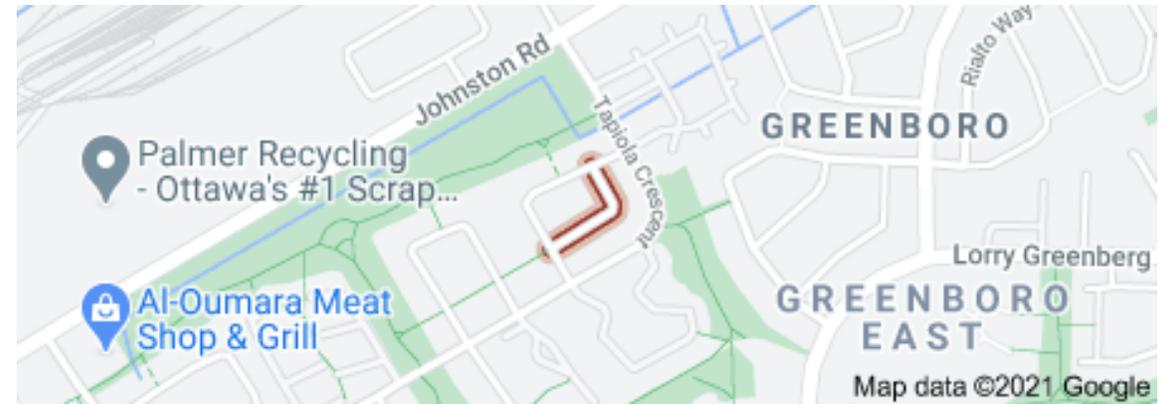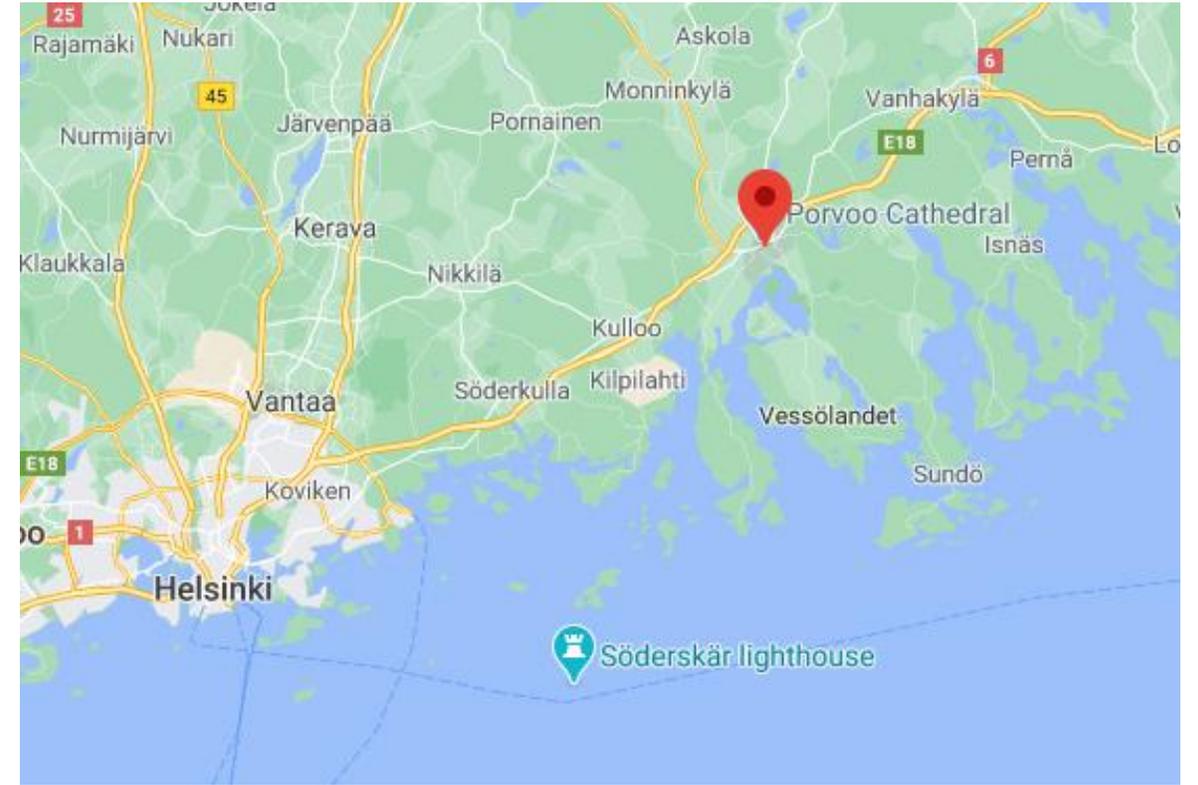
- The design of Greenboro was inspired by Tapiola, Finland
- A number of the streets adjacent to Tapiola Crescent were named after Finnish communities.
- Named for Porvoo, Finland, which is considered one of the most beautiful towns in Finland.
- 35 km east of Helsinki
- In Swedish, the name is Borga.

INNES ROAD (Cyrville, Blackburn, Orléans)
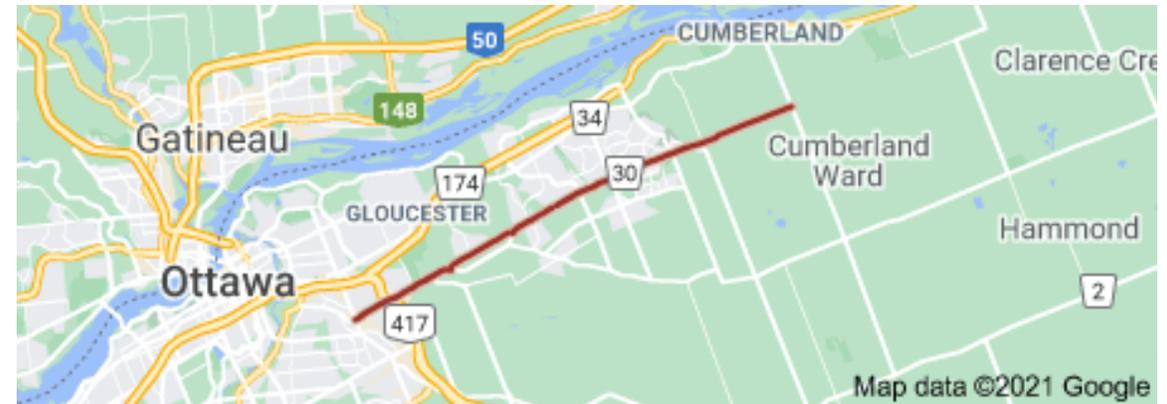
- Named for John Innes (1877-1939) and the Innes family
- Elected Deputy Reeve of Gloucester Township in 1927 and Reeve from 1931 to 1939
- A cairn was erected by the Gloucester Horticultural Society in 1940 (but never completed) at the corner of Russell Road and Walkley Road
- A new monument was installed at the old Gloucester Township Hall at Leitrim in 2013.
- The family dairy and mixed farm was located at today's intersection of Innes Road and Bantree Street.
- Originally, the family lived on the site of Beechwood Cemetery and then operated the toll gate at Hurdman's Bridge and later on at Russell Road near St. Laurent Boulevard. John's parents were Alexander Innes and Margaret Martin. His wife was Margaret Little Moxley, daughter of John Moxley and Sarah Ada Little.
- Prior to 1970, the road had various names including Third Line, Blackburn Road, Bearbrook Road, Cyrville-Navan Road and Navan-Cyrville Road.

BLOHM DRIVE
(Hunt Club)
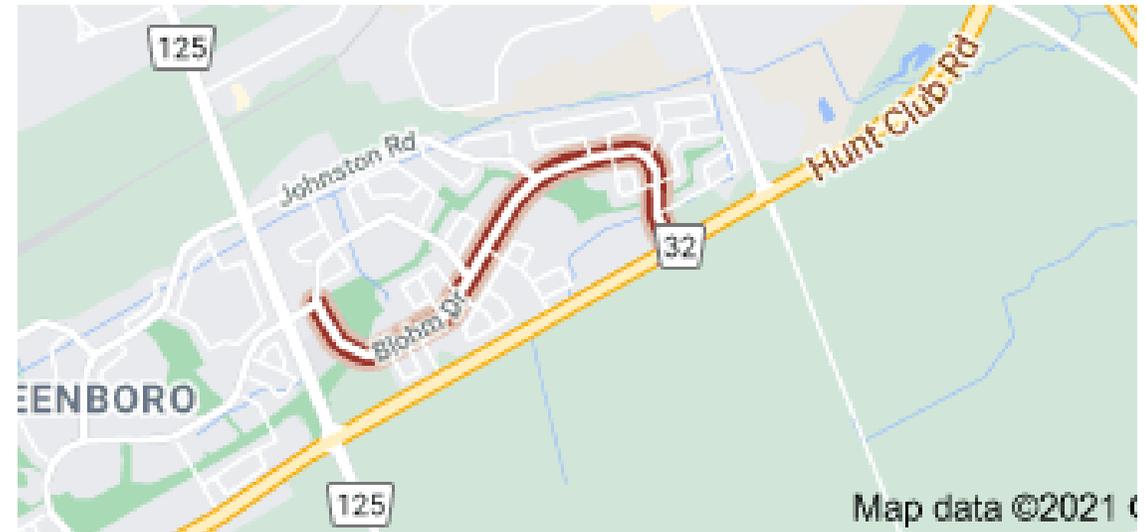
- Named for Hans-Ludwig Blohm, photographer and author
- Born in 1927 in Rendsburg, Germany
- He served in the German army as an anti-aircraft gunner in the latter years of the war, guarded Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz in the final days of the Third Reich, and then assisted in the country's reconstruction.
- Came to Canada in 1956 to bring a friend back to Germany but instead married her and settled in Ottawa.
- Starting in 1977, he made numerous journeys to the Canadian North where he documented landscapes and the Native populations.
- He donated over 180,000 photographs to Library and Archives Canada
- He designed 23 Canadian postage stamps and published 17 books.

STAR TOP ROAD (Cyrville)
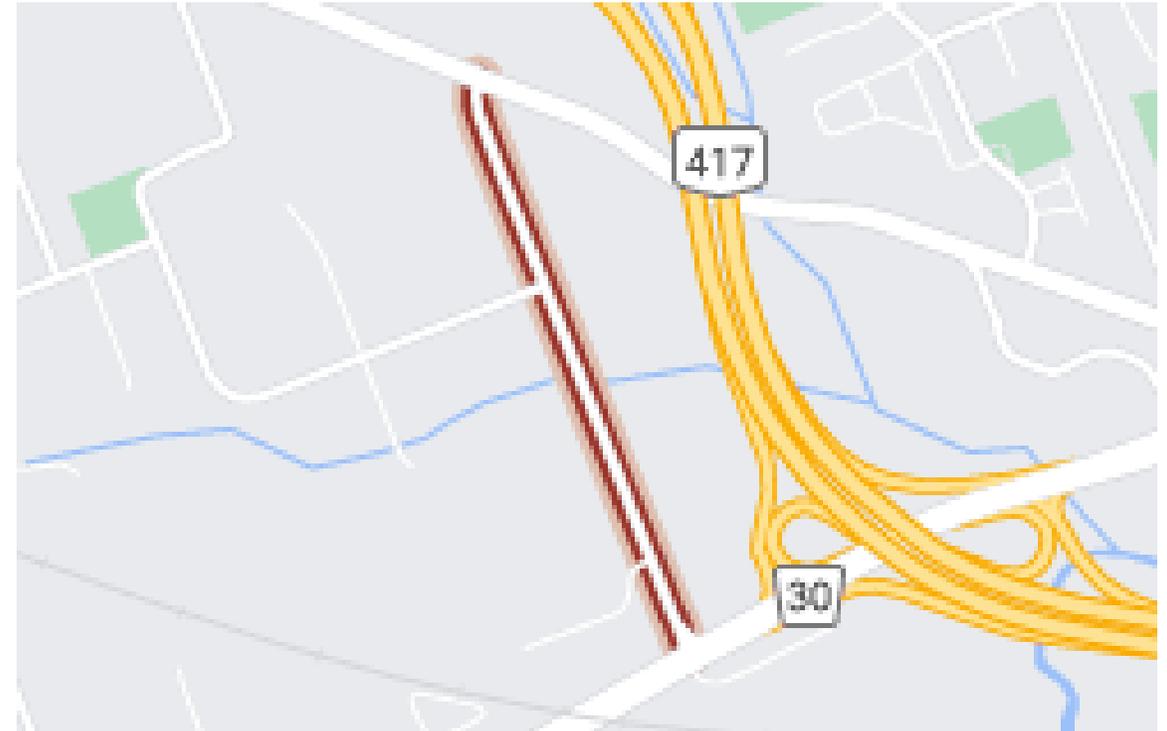
- Named for the Star Top Drive-In
- Opened .August 30, 1951 and closed in 1974
- Owned by Frank C. Patterson
- Operated as People's Auto Mart in 1974
- Redeveloped by Merkburn Holdings Ltd. in 1975

SIEVERIGHT AVENUE (Blossom Park)
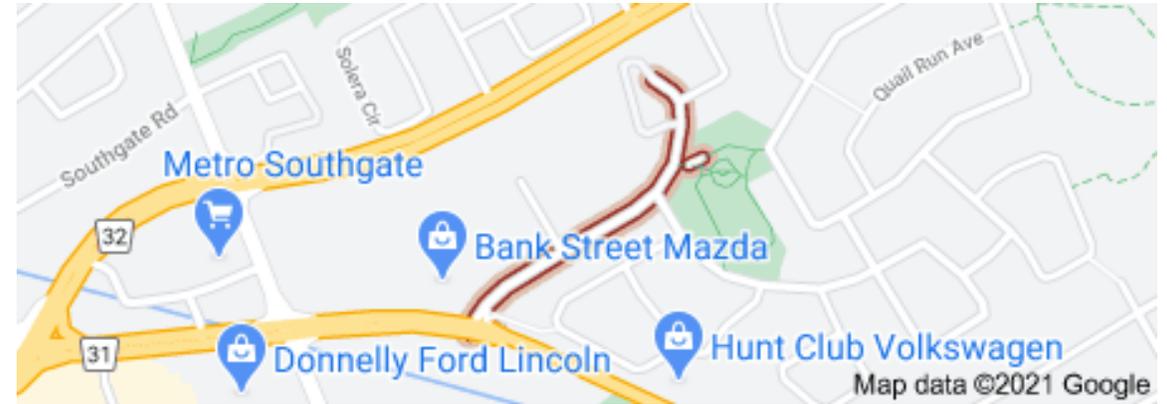
- Named for James Sieveright (1804-1890), who became the first Reeve of Gloucester Township in 1850.
- His farm was located on Bank Street just to the west of Sieveright Road
- It was named Mountain View for its distant view of the Eardley escarpment (Gatineau Park)
- Mr. Sieveright left no heirs, and the farm was subdivided into 5 acre lots in 1893
- Part later became a sand pit and now the Upper Hunt Club subdivision.
- He was born in Aberdeen Scotland to George (1774-1862) and Elizabeth Smith (1779-1850) and he accompanied his parents to Canada in 1834.
- He is buried in Beechwood Cemetery
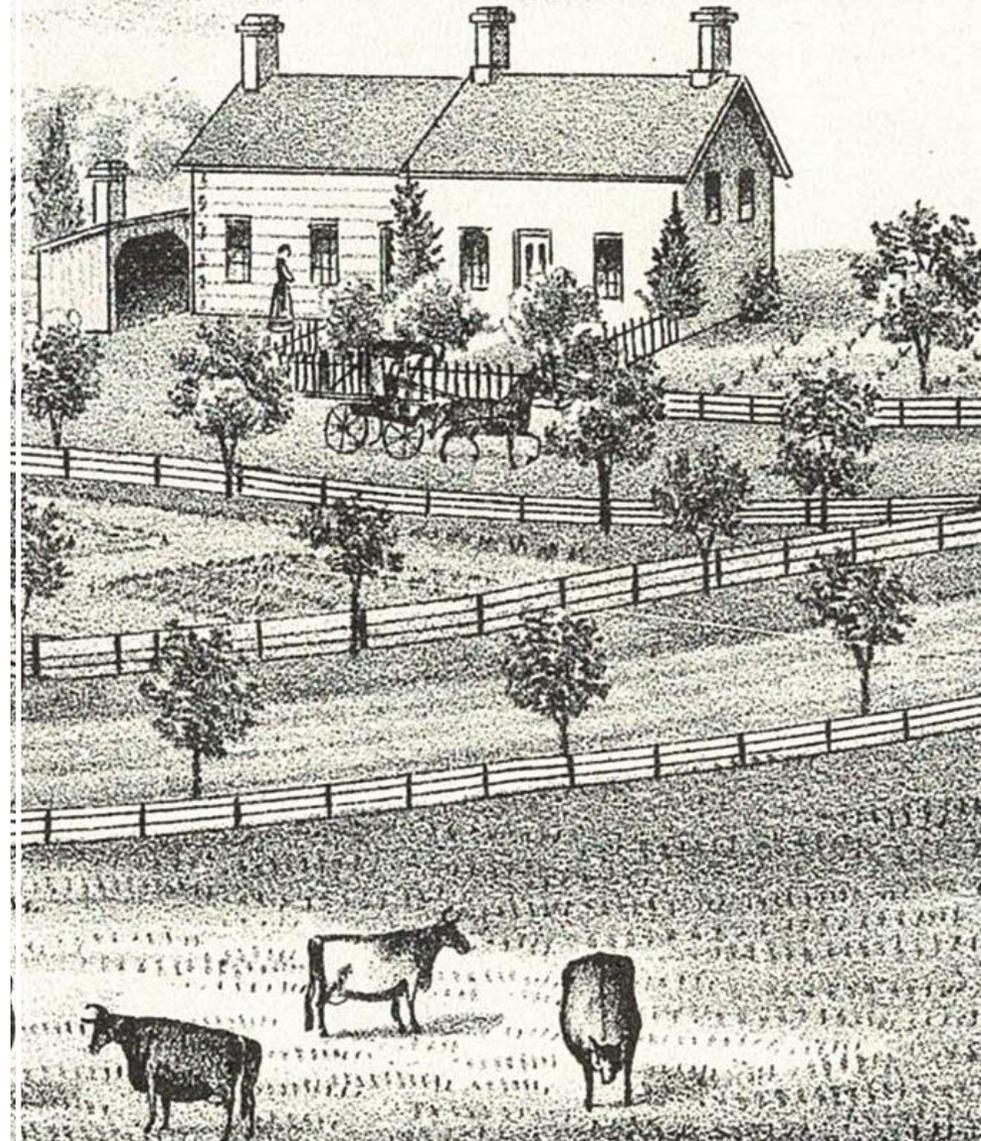
HIAWATHA PARK ROAD (Orléans)

- First appeared on the 1879 Belden Map of Gloucester

- Became Besserer's Grove picnic area, when a wharf was built on the Ottawa River around 1887 allowing steamer service.

- Owned by Andrew Donald Besserer, son of Louis-Théodore Besserer of Sandy Hill, for whom, Besserer Street was named.

- The property was subdivided in 1897 by the Metropolitan Loan and Savings Company and the access road from Montreal Road (now St. Joseph Boulevard) was named Metropolitan Avenue. The Jubilee House Hotel was also built, honouring Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

- The hotel and resort was renamed Hiawatha Park in 1910 by Hiawatha Company Limited and was named for the poem 'The Song of Hiawatha' by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

- The resort quickly declined following World War I and the hotel probably didn't survive beyond 1930 and the picnic area closed in the latter 1930s.

- Officially renamed Hiawatha Park Road in 1971.

- When Highway 174 was twinned and the Convent Glen neighbourhood was built in the 1970s, Hiawatha Park Road was truncated and no longer ran as far south as St. Joseph Boulevard.

GRAVELLE CRESCENT (Blackburn Hamlet)
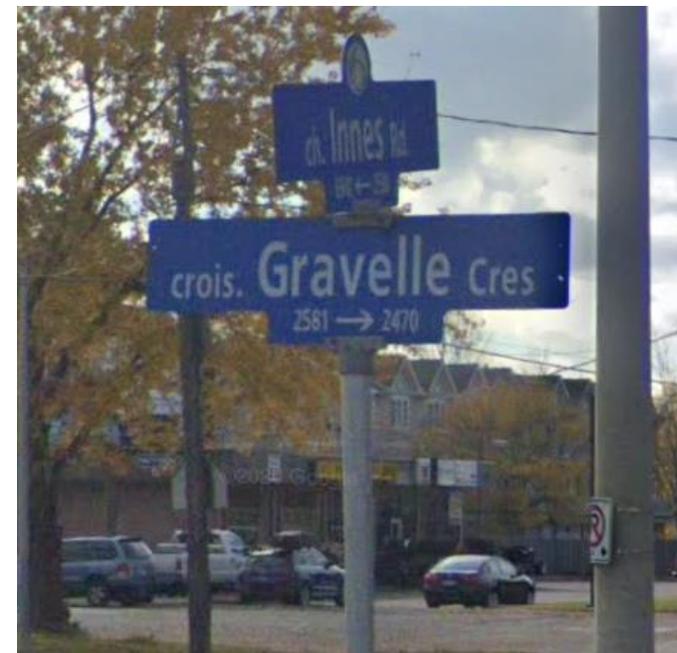
- Named for the family of Edmond Gravelle (1914-1984), Gloucester Fire Chief from 1959 to 1973.
- On his retirement, he was asked to found the Gloucester Fire Prevention Bureau.
- His wife was Yvette Gravelle (1917-1980).
- Both are buried in Notre Dame Cemetery.
- Edmond's parents, Seraphin (1888-1974) and Marie Louise (Rocque) (1887-1946) originally moved to Blackburn in 1945.

- Nearby Pagé Road was also named for Gloucester firefighter, Jean-Lucien Pagé who was a first responder at the Villa St. Louis Convent plane crash in 1956.
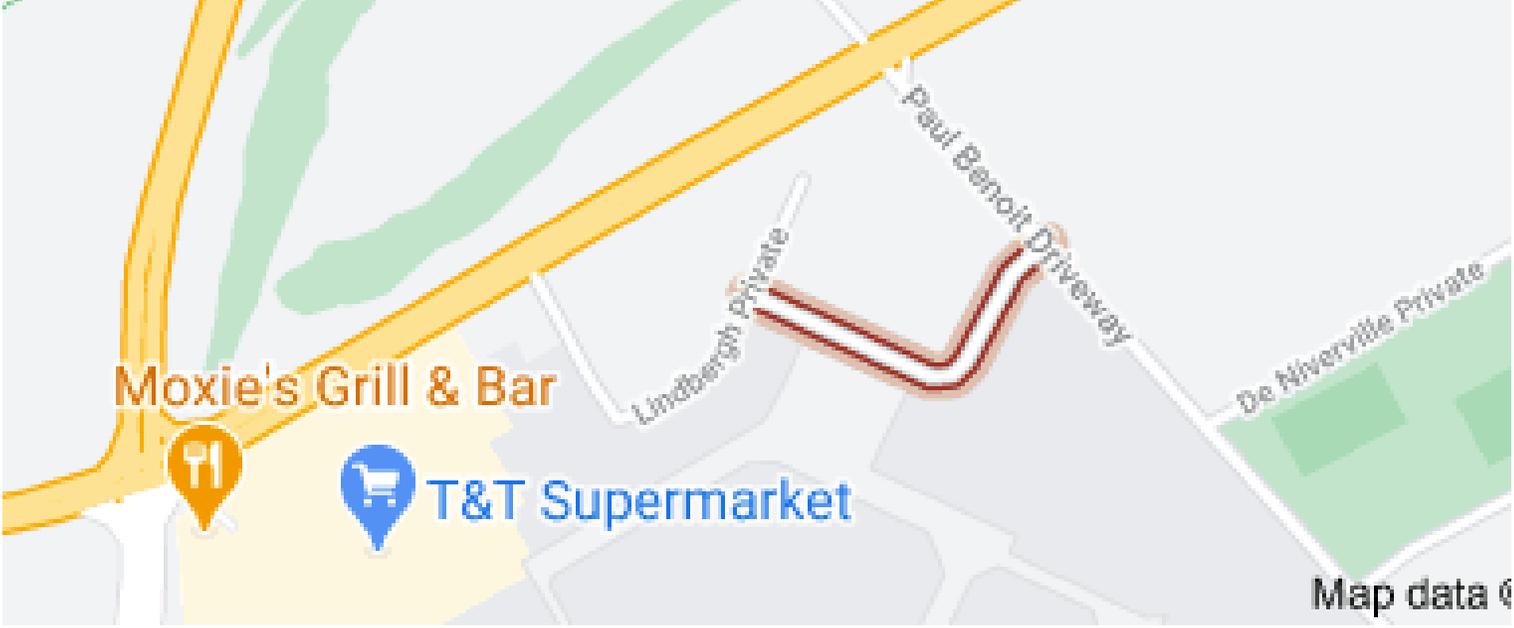
AVRO JETLINER PRIVATE
(Ottawa Airport)

- 1945 – Trans Canada Airlines started investigating new aircraft.

- Avro Canada saw the possibilities of using Rolls Royce turbojet engines in a new mid-range aircraft design.

- 1947 – Cabinet minister C.D. Howe invests Canadian government money in the project.

- August 10, 1949 – Avro C102 jetliner took its first flight, only 13 days after the De Havilland Comet, the first passenger jetliner to fly.

- April 1950 – First jetliner to carry airmail between Toronto and New York.

- October 1952 – Potential date to enter airline service, six years in advance of the Boeing 707

- December 1951 – Project cancelled by Canadian government to focus on jet fighter development.

- 1952 - Howard Hughes wanted to order 30 aircraft for TWA but this did not happen because of the Korean War crisis.

- December 13, 1956 – Prototype was declared surplus and only the nose and cockpit survive at the Canada Aviation and Space Museum

DUN SKIPPER DRIVE (Leitrim)
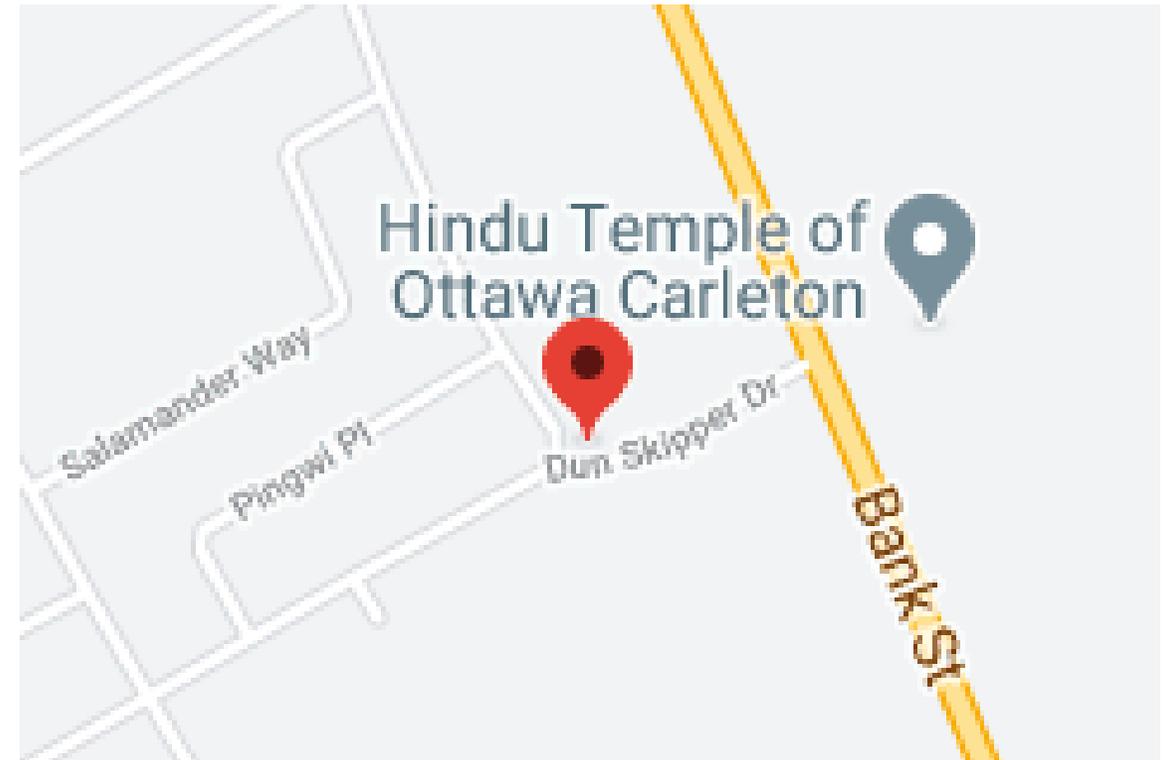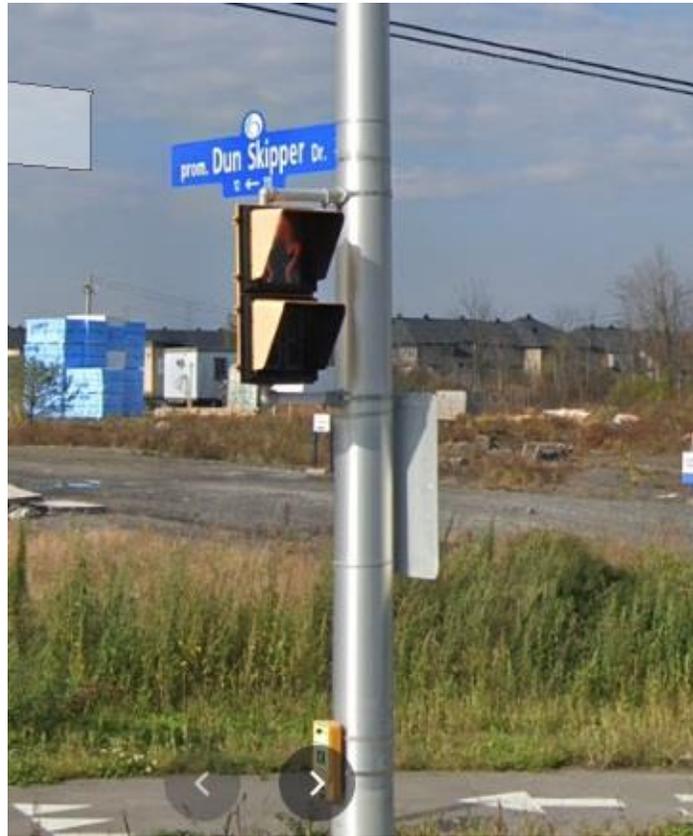
- Named for the butterfly Euphyes vestris
- Native to much of Southern Canada from Alberta to Nova Scotia and south to Texas and Florida
- Emerge beginning July each year
- Feed on nectar of white, pink and purple flowers
- Larvae feed on various sedges.

SMYTH ROAD (Alta Vista/Elmvale Acres)
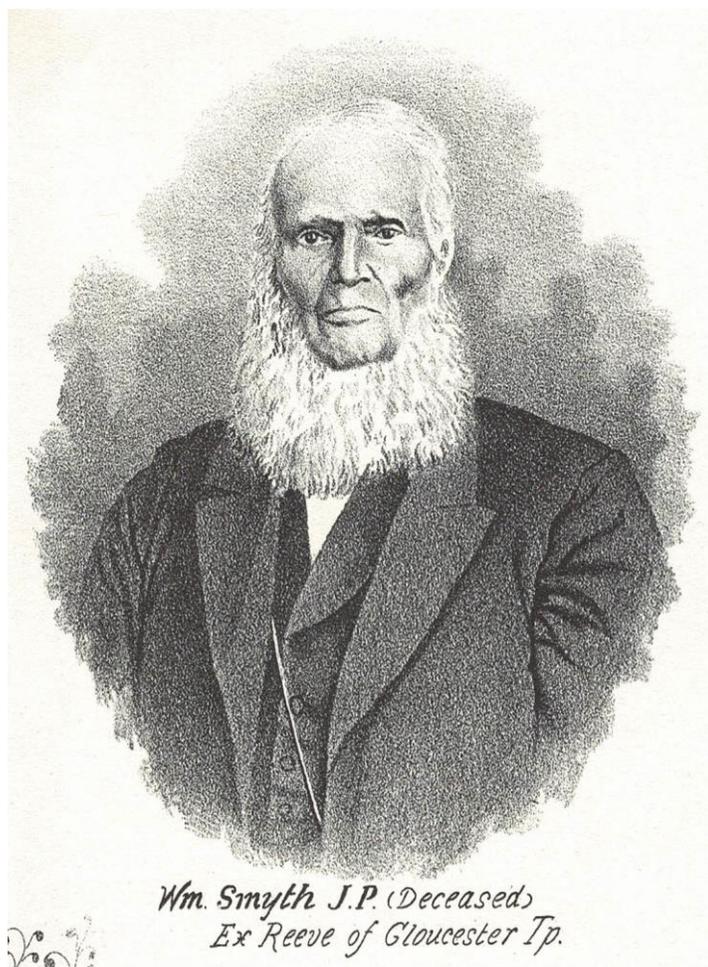
Lieutenant Colonel William Smyth 1794-1877
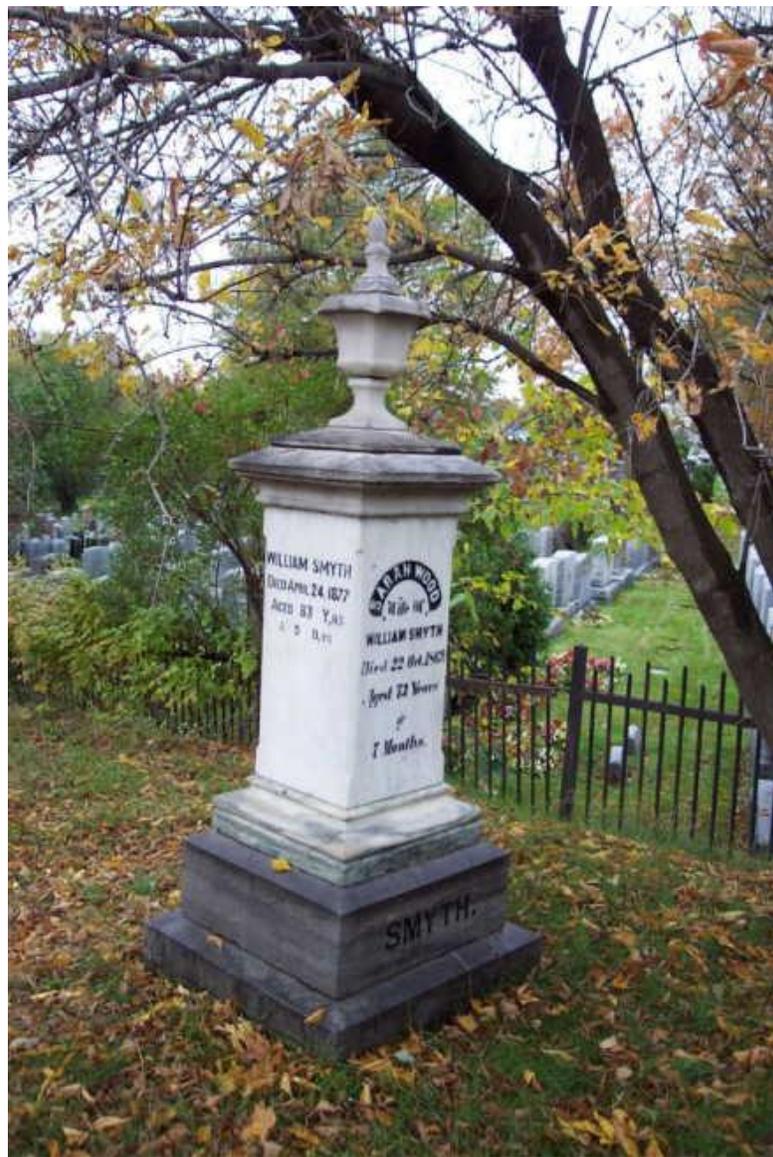
Wood's Cemetery
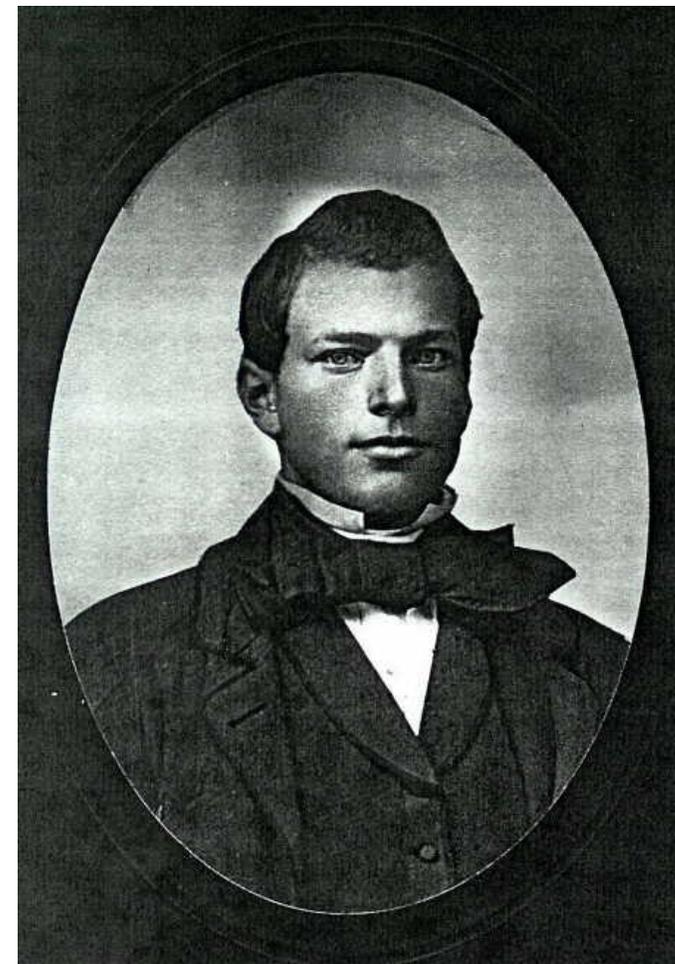
John Jeremiah Smyth 1831-1925

Two Families Lose Property In $7,000 Fire

Possessions of two newly arrived Dutch families were destroyed late Wednesday afternoon, when a fire swept through the 75-foot-long workmen's quarters of the T. R. Dempsey Hilltop Farm, Hurdmans Bridge.

The farm is situated on the Russell Road, about a quarter of a mile south of the John Smith Road.

Occupying the quarters razed by the flames were Mr. and Mrs. Johann Herwier, and Mr. and Mrs. Simon Cortegg, with three children. They will take up residence in the Dempsey farmhouse until quarters are rebuilt.

Mr. Dempsey told The Evening Citizen that damage to the building would amount to at least $5,000. It is estimated that the loss of personal effects would total another $2,000.

Cause Unknown

The fire may have been caused by a defective oil space heater, firemen said later.

The flames were first discovered by Mrs. Herwier, who advised her employer. Help from the Ottawa Fire Department was sought within minutes after the blaze was first discovered.

Rigs from No. 3 station along with three additional tankers were dispatched to the scene of the fire. Firemen were able to confine the blaze to the one building.

Deputy Chief Armand Page and District Chief Alex McFadden were in charge of the firefighters.

Ottawa Citizen April 10, 1953

FOR THE RECORD

It's 'Smith' Road Not Sm-eye-th!

By ROSS SMITH
of The Journal.

Smyth Road is pronounced "Smith", "i" as in "if" and not Sm-eye-th.

So says Alderman Alex Roger. The road was named after his great-grandfather Colonel William Smyth.

Col. Smyth settled in the Billings Bridge area in 1822, and became Gloucester Township's first Reeve in 1842.

Smyth (as in Smith) Road was originally a township road. It runs southeast from Riverside Drive, crossing Alta Vista into Elmvale Acres. It became a city street upon annexation of that portion of Gloucester into Ottawa in 1950.

26 Smyths.

Smyths, with an "e" on the end, would it is generally conceded, be pronounced Sm-eye-the. But Smyth Road lacks that extra "e". Hence, it's Smith when speaking about it.

There are 26 Smyths in the Ottawa 'phone book' (we didn't count the Smiths). A couple of phone calls established that pronunciations vary. Of those who insist on the pronunciation "Smith", all agree that it's so often mispronounced that they answer to either.

One Mrs. Smyth reported that she used to 'phone her husband's office and ask for Mr. Smyth, pronounced Smith. They told her so often that no such person worked there, that she gave in. Now she asks for "Mr. Sm-eye-the".

Ottawa Journal, May 14, 1957

- Correctly pronounced as Smith
- Known as John Smith Road or Smith Road prior to 1950 annexation
- Named for John Smyth and his father Lieutenant Colonel William Smyth, which was originally spelt as Smith in the 19th century.
- William was a native of New Haven, Connecticut. His father was originally British and it became necessary to smuggle the family to Canada following the Revolutionary War.
- William Smyth was one of the first settlers of Gloucester Township in 1822 and his wife, Sarah Wood was a United Empire Loyalist.
- William served as District Councillor, Reeve (prior to the 1849 Municipal Act) and Treasurer for Gloucester and Justice of the Peace for Carleton County. He also served in the War of 1812 and struck up a militia during the 1837 rebellion.
- John Smyth was a major benefactor of Trinity Anglican Church and donated land on Bank Street at Erie Avenue for a new church but following his death in 1925, it became the new St. Thomas the Apostle Church instead.
- The Smyth estate later became the site of the Rideau Veteran's Home and then CHEO and the General Hospital.

THANK YOU

Questions
and
Answers