

From Brussels Post Morris Township 125th Anniversary edition 1981 THE VILLAGES OF MORRIS TOWNSHIP

Sunshine

Sunshine – an optimistic name for a place in Morris Township which never lived up to its promise.

Now, the only real tangible proof of its existence is the cemetery on top of the hill on the sideroad off the fifth concession.

Mrs. Russel Bone of Wingham was born in Sunshine and said they had told her at one time there was a chair factory there, but it wasn't there any longer in her time. She said there was a chair in her parents' home, though, that was made in the chair factory in Sunshine.

When Mrs. Bone was in Sunshine, the post office was there with Milton Watson as the postmaster until he moved away in 1910. Mr. Watson later returned to Sunshine and was postmaster until the mail from there was switched to Belgrave.

Sunshine at one time also apparently had a sawmill erected by Paddy Brown who later sold to Isaac Rogerson who in turn operated it in conjunction with the chair factory. The lumber was teamed to the railroads at Brussels and Belgrave by Tom Hawthorn, Mossie Clark and Morris McCCasey.

Sunshine also had a blacksmith shop, a combined general store and post office.

There were two churches – Bethel which was built around 1855-56 and Sunshine Methodist which was first erected as a loghouse church and then in 1875 a frame church was built and later bricked.

Bethel closed in 1883 and its members were transferred to the churches at Sunshine and Belgrave.

At Sunshine church, they used to have officials from the church go to the people's homes every three months to get a collection. There was also a collection of loose change held in the church.

The opening of the church was attended by the Brussels Methodist Choir. Later the church had its own Sunshine Choir.

The sawmill in Sunshine closed for want of logs and gradually people left the community taking the congregation of the church also. In 1927 the church and shed were sold. The church sold for \$160 and the shed for \$250.

The Sunshine Church lasted from 1875-1927.

At one time, there was also a Johnston's church on the first concession of Morris and when that

closed, people went to the church in Bluevale.

## BROWNTOWN

And then there was Browntown, with the church on one corner and the school on the other. While they were building a new school, the children studied in the church. That first winter they had to keep the school heated so the pipes wouldn't freeze, so they held church in the new school. That's also where Mrs. Bone's son Keith was baptized on Christmas Sunday in 1947.

At Browntown church, they used to have a garden party every summer in the horse shed. Sometimes the young people from Belgrave would put on a play.

Browntown church was built in 1866 and closed in 1949, according to information obtained from Mr and Mrs. Charles Bosman.

Browntown church used to be located on their property. One of the first thoughts of Mrs. Bosman's grandparents Mr. and Mrs. Edward Bosman when they moved onto that farm was the building a church.

Mrs. Bosman described the building as a one-storey brick building with a little porch on the front, heated with a wood stove inside and there were oil lamps on the wall. There was a pump organ in the little church and some of the first people to play it were Mrs. Henry Mathers and Mrs. Elmer Hastings.

Material in the church other than the brick was donated free and built with free labour. Across the road from the church was a cemetery with land donated by William Jewitt.

## MORRISDALE

Although Morrisdale was one of the early crossroads post offices established in Morris Township, it never became a settlement of any proportion.

According to James Scott's book, the Settlement of Huron County, its first Postmaster Donald Scott took over in 1854.

## BUSHFIELD

Only a cemetery now remains to remind people that there used to be a place called Bushfield in Morris on Lot 11, Concession 7 of the township.

However, it once contained Thomas Holland's hotel and James Newcombe's combined general store and post office. Robert Newcombe carried the mail on foot from Belgrave to Sunshine, then to Bushfield, a distance of six miles.

## JAMESTOWN

Jamestown, which is part of Morris and part of Grey got its name from James Aitcheson, a news correspondent for The Huron Expositor around 1855-1860.

There were also a number of other men named James who probably helped to contribute to that name, such as James Holland and James Lynn who were both postmasters as well as James Strachan, James Simpson, James Forrest and James Moses.

A general store with Duncan McDonald as owner was built around 1905. Other places in Jamestown were a shoe shop, an apiary, wagon shop and a hotel.

Victoria Hall was built in Jamestown in 1906 to accommodate a large Sunday School and concerts and public meetings were also held there.

## WALTON

According to an excerpt from The Brussels Post 1885, the village of Walton contained post and telegraph offices, two hotels, two stores, a steam sawmill and all kinds of minor manufacturing. It also had a daily mail route, both ways, from Brussels and Seaforth by stage.

In 1885 Jamestown and Morrisbank were simply post offices although Jamestown, which was situated at the crossing of the middle of the Maitland, looked as if it had chances of springing up as a village in a way of a store, hotel and blacksmith shop.

## BELGRAVE

Belgrave was once a beehive of industry with a sawmill, two busy blacksmith shops, a general store and a hardware store as well as the former Queen's Hotel (which in 1981 was an apartment building).

In 1876, Belgrave also had a railway station on the fourth line of Morris with the line running from London to Wingham.

## BLUEVALE

On the northern boundary at the junctions of Highway 86 and 87 is Bluevale, which in the 1956 History of Morris Township book was noted for its chopping mill, supplied with power from the Maitland River mill dam, three stores, a butter factory, a public school and two churches. Some of these buildings are no longer in existence.

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