

STREET AND PLACE NAMES AND EARLY RENIMISCENCES
OF BRIDGEBURG.

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(Written about 1927)

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When the international bridge was being built, Stephen Maule Jarvis of Toronto came into possession of the farm at the west end of it, and registered a plan of the land under the name of "Victoria" after Queen Victoria who then reigned. That was about 1872 or 1873.

As the community grew, stations were erected, the G. T. R. station being named "Victoria" and the Canada Southern "Fort Erie." These station names continued long after the incorporation of the village.

At the time of the incorporation various names were suggested among which "Riverton" became somewhat popular. All the petitions to the County Council asked for the incorporation of the village of International Bridge, or after then then name of the post office, and By-Law no. 623 was passed by the County Council at the June, 1894, session creating the village of International Bridge.

As considerable opposition was offered by the railways and the Amagari people the matter was taken to the Ontario Legislature and in the Bill introduced by Mr. W. M. German that name was retained.

During the progress of the bill through the legislature the name was considered too long and unweildy for a village, and some one suggested "Bridgeburg" but who ir was the writer has never been able to learn.

The name means the burg at the end of the bridge.

The word "burg, boro or borough," being old terma for a collection of houses or a village.

BOWEN ROAD(North of Highland) - This road is the dividing line between Township Lots 8 and 9 and now forms the northern boundary of the town west of Crooks Street. Away back in the forties and fifties when a ferry boat ran across the river from the foot of this street to Black Rock, New York, this road was commonly called the Ferry Road, but after the discontinuance of the Ferry the name "Ferry Road" became misleading, being confused with the roads leading to the Fort Erie ferry and gradually died away. As there were living on farms on a road a short distance west of the town three brothers, William, Robert and Henry Bowen, the road gradually acquired among the farmers of the surrounding district the name "Bowen Road," under which name it has been commonly known for the past sixty or seventy years, and is now applied from the river to the Humberstone Town.Line.

Crossing the Bowen Road and within the limits of the town is Frenchman's Creek, the name has evidently been applied to the stream since the first settlement in the district. It is frequently mentioned during the war of 1812. In former times before the forest was cleared up it must have been a much larger stream than it is today as there are remains of two embankment dams between the town and the

River and others farther up the creek in the neighbourhood of the Erie Downs Golf Club lands. Presumably the stream would drive saw mills in the spring of the year. Just why the name Frenchman's Creek was applied to this stream is a conundrum which has not yet been solved. The writer asked Col. Cruikshank a few years ago as to the origin of the name and he said it was a puzzle.

About the years 1851 and 1852 the late James Haggart started a ferry between Fréberry's dock at the foot of Bowen Road and Hertel Avenue on the Black Rock Side of the river. The fine little side-wheel steamer "Cygnet" under Captain Dick Taylor was placed on the route. She was a summer ferry only. After a trial of two or possibly three seasons the service was discontinued probably for want of sufficient patronage. Another James Haggart, who at one time was Captain of the Fort Erie ferry boat and afterwards conductor of the "dummy" over the Bridge, said he also ran the old ferry for one season. Clustered around the foot of Bowen Road during the forties, fifties and early sixties was a grain warehouse, blacksmith shop, shoe shop, dance hall, and two hotels. One of the hotels was kept by a man named Fréberry, and following him a man named Stevens and the last was Joseph Lanigan who had a license in 1875. A considerable business was done in ferrying people and goods over the river and back in small boats or yawls. There was a customs officer stationed there, and on the docks was a customs office and Messrs. Stockdale and Tait's shingle mill. It was at this dock that the Fenians landed one fine June morning in 1866. The shingle mill was torn down after the Fenian Raid. All the old buildings have vanished but the remains of the old dock may still be seen. It was at this point that the first submarine telegraph cable was laid across the river by the old Western Union Telegraph Co. The telegraph cable was abandoned when the International Bridge was completed and the wires passed over it.

About twenty years ago, the Federal Telephone Co. of Buffalo placed a cable across the river at this point to connect with the Welland County Telephone Co. when it was formed and in operation. Anchor ice played havoc with it. At certain times during the winter it rolled up on top of the water and eventually was torn away. This discontinued the service until repairs were made. It was more or less in use until the Welland County Telephone Co. bought out the local Bell plant and connected with that company.

HIGHLAND AVENUE - This is just a fancy name given at the time Messrs. Rano and Newbigging filed the plan covering part of the Forsyth farm.

EMRICK AVENUE - Named after Henry Emrick, former postmaster and first village clerk, who owned and sub-divided the land and filed the plan. He died a couple of years ago. During his latter years he took a very active interest in playing on the bowling green. His widow is now a resident of this community.

BROCK STREET - Named after Brock Forsyth, a former owner of the land and brother of Mrs. Patrick Everett who is now a resident of the town.

There is on the south side of Bowen Road a narrow strip of land shown on Plan No. 25, covered with some very nice trees and shrubs called "Burd-Seisser" Park. When Mr. Seisser purchased the land he sub-divided it into lots, in 1905. At the time of the purchase it was presumed that George B. Burd, a state senator and former judge and now a practicing attorney in Buffalo, would be a partner in the ownership of the land. When the plan was prepared it was still presumed that Mr. Burd would be interested in the deal. However, the plan was filed and other arrangements made leaving him out. It is the name of these two men that accounts for the park being named "Burd-Seisser Park." The land in the park has nearly all been sold into lots and some houses erected thereon so there is really no park there at all.

The so-called park where the baseball games are played on the north side of Bowen Road and the west side of Niagara street, is land purchased by the town at the time sewers were put in, for a septic tank and sewer disposal area.

(The writer of these reminiscences has been a continuous resident of this community since 1873 and desires to say that from the late Thomas Warren came all the references in this paper that relate to incidents prior to that date.)