

STREET AND PLACE NAMES AND EARLY RENIMISCENCES
OF BRIDGEBURG.

by GEORGE TAIT.
(Written about 1927)

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.

PHIPPS STREET - Named after W. R. Phipps, the first clerk of the Forestry Dept. for the Province of Ontario. The first report made by him on the original forests of Ontario and its destruction by fires and the early settlers was probably one of the most elaborate reports of its kind published in America.

JESSIE STREET - A short street running north from Phipps Street to Emrick Avenue, named after Jessie Riselay now Mrs, Jessie Bond, a resident of the town.

NIAGARA STREET - A modified form of the Niagara River Road and since its improvement the Niagara Boulevard.

DUFFERIN STREET - After Lord Dufferin, a former Governor-General of the Dominion of Canada.

JARVIS STREET - After Stephen Maule Jarvis of Toronto, a former owner of the land. He sub-divided the land and put village lots on the Market.

COURTWRIGHT STREET - Probably a misspelt name. Should it not be Cartwright, after some member of the Cartwright family? *(Courtwright of Canada Southern Railway)*

KLAUCK STREET - After John W. Klauck of Buffalo who gave half the land to widen the lane into a street, and who was one of the first to build several houses in the village. He died in Buffalo about five years ago.

ROBINSON STREET - After Judge Robinson, a judge of the High Court of Ontario.

CROOKS STREET - After Adam Crooks, the first Minister of Education for Ontario. He succeeded and took over the duties of Egerton Ryerson who had been instrumental in forming the school system of the province. Crooks street is really the road allowance between the first and second concessions. When the bridge was being built and the railways were looking for yard room the township council was induced to sell this road allowance which had never been opened up for traffic. It is because this road allowance was disposed of to the railways that there is now no street running north and south between the river and Thompson Road Subway.

CZOWSKI STREET - Named after Sir Casimir Czowski, one of the contractors who built the International Bridge and also the first chairman of the Queen Victoria Niagara Falls Park Commission and probably the originator of the idea of building the boulevard road along the Niagara River from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario.

PATTISON STREET - After Clayton Pattison who owned the land on which the new St. Mary's Episcopal Parish Hall is erected. He was the father of F. W. Pattison, now collector of Customs at this port. These two streets, Czowski and Pattison, were some years ago changed into what is now Central Avenue.

When S. M. Jarvis laid out the survey of the property formerly known as Victoria, named after Queen Victoria, he apparently remembered his Toronto friends and acquaintances, such as Phipps, Crooks, Robinson, Cartwright, Czowski and Dufferin, when applying names to

to his new sub-division or plan. Victoria was the name of the first post office, located in what is now Butler's barber shop and pool room, with George Graham as postmaster and David Hardison as Deputy Postmaster, but owing to a confusion with so many Victorias in the country it was shortly afterwards changed to International Bridge Post Office, which name it retained until the village was incorporated, Victoria Yard on the M.C. R. R. is a relic of the name. The G. T. R. station was also designated Victoria for some time after incorporation and the M.C. R.R. depot retained the name Fort Erie on it for several years after incorporation.

BRIDGE STREET - Is the road allowance between Lots 6 and 7 in the Township. It was never opened up for travel east of Frenchman's Creek. The east end in former days was locally known as the "Green Lane." A large part of it was sold by the Township Council to the railways for yard room.

Bridge Street was probably so called on account of its proximity to the bridge.

BRYDGES STREET - This was a projected street running from the south end of Robinson Street to the south end of Central Avenue. It was named after C. J. Brydges, a former managing director of the Grand Trunk Railway Company. It was never opened up and is now all included in railway lands and also covered with railway tracks.

LEWIS STREET - Named after the late George Lewis, in former times Postmaster and Express Agent at Fort Erie and father of Henry Lewis, village coal merchant.

WINTEMUTE STREET - Named after John Wintemute, a former owner of the farm, the grandfather of Miss Amelia Warren now a resident of the town, and of the late Thomas Warren, town auditor for several years, also grandfather of the late Mrs. George Lewis, mother of Miss Mary Lewis who resides in this town.

WARREN STREET and WARREN STREET EAST - Named after the Warren family.

COLLEGE AVENUE - When the late Mrs. George (Helen) Lewis was about to lay out the sub-division now covered by Plan No. 29, the School Board was looking for a site for a new school in the South Ward and when the terms were agreed on and the two acre plot secured by the Board, the name College Avenue was applied to the Avenue east of the school site in the compliment to the place of learning.

GLENNY AVENUE - After Charles N. Glenny, who was chairman of the School Board at the time of the negotiations for the new school site.

BOWDEN STREET - After Henry Bowden Warren, father of Miss Amelia Warren and the former owner of the land.

CATHARINE STREET - A short street leading to the race track, named after Catharine Lewis, mother of the late George Lewis and grandmother of Henry Lewis. The street is a continuation of a Fort Erie Street of the same name.

SMITH STREET - After William Smith, a former owner of the land, grandfather of Mrs. John Shaw and Mrs. Mary Mannering, both now residents of the town. Henrietta Street, in Fort Erie, was named after Henrietta Daly, an aunt of Mrs. Shaw and Mrs. Mannering.

ERIE STREET - Forms the boundary line between the Bridgeburg "wart" and Fort Erie, running south from Gilmore Road. It appears on some maps of both village and town and is really the line between the First and Second Concessions N.R. of the township. It would appear that there are two streets in Fort Erie of that name. This street is now known as Concession Road.

ERIE LANE - Is a short lane running south from Bridge Street. The name is probably taken from Lake Erie.

RUSSEL STREET - Named after William Russel, father of Miss Jean Russel, Fort Erie, who owned and sub-divided the land.

JENNETT STREET - After the wife of the late William Russel.

WILLIAM STREET - After William, the late brother of Miss Jean Russel.

JOHN STREET - After another brother of Miss Russel.

HELEN STREET - After a sister of Miss Russel.

MARGARET STREET - After another sister of Miss Russel.

DUNLOP AND WOOD STREET - These two streets on the Thornhill survey west of Amigari station are probably so called after some friends or relatives of the late Miss Sophia Thornhill who laid out the plan. The writer has never heard the reason of the streets being so named. There is in the registry office at Welland a very old plan showing the land from the river west to the Second Concession being divided into ten acre plots all the way along the north side of the Gilmore Road.

GILMORE ROAD - This is the road allowance between Lots 3 and 4 and forms the boundary line between Bridgeburg and Fort Erie. It derived the name from a farmer named Gilmore who owned or occupied the narrow strip of land on the south side of the road extending from the river away back beyond the race track.

The name Gilmore has been applied to this road for many years (probably between eighty or ninety) and extends under the name from the river to "Dirty Corners" in Bertie Township beyond which place it is still unopened.

AMAGARI - After the late Christopher Bunting was elected Member of Parliament in September, 1878, his faithful supporters from that section approached him for a post office to serve the people living in that locality. Various names for the office were suggested among which was "Omega." However, after due consideration, it was decided to call it "Amigan," after the birthplace in Ireland of the newly elected member. The name was sent in, but the handwriting was not very legible, and when it came out it was "Amagari," the letter "n" having been interpreted "ri". Now that is the origin of Amagari. The post office was duly established under the name Amagari with Mr. William Anderson, father of Mrs. John Shaw and Mrs. Mary Mannering, as the first postmaster. The new office was located at the corner of Dunlop Street in a store building then run by a man named William Magwood, but who soon sold out to A. B. Hurrell and went to the North-West. Mr. Anderson gave the post office up and was succeeded by the late Robert Moore, who in later years served in the village and county councils. Deputy A. B. Hurrell succeeded Robert Moore. When Mr. Hurrell retired from business, W. T. Malkin, the present Police Magistrate, was made Postmaster, and when Mr. Malkin gave it up a few years ago, the office was moved from the building it had been in from the day of its inception, to a new location on the east side of the railway yards at the corner of Gilmore Road and Erie Streets, within the limits of Fort Erie. The G. T. R. station went by the name of Fort Erie until a few years ago when it was changed to Amagari. When the bridge was first opened up all the stations were named Fort Erie. The old G. W. R. north yard still retains the name Fort Erie and is the last vestige of that name within the limits of the town.

*On 11/11/1878
I named it after George Bunting who was Secretary
of the Board of Commissioners for the High School
in 1878*

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.)