

THE CABOOSE



NEWSLETTER OF THE CUMBERLAND TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY (CTHS)

ISSN 1203-147X

Volume XVI Number 5

May 2004

Editor's ramblings (by Jeannie Smith)

May is a month of hope and renewal. Springtime beckons us back to the land. Earth, fire, air and water instinctively draw us out of a long winter so that we can begin, again, the cycle of life. May meant the beginning of hard work for our ancestors. Many settlers steamed up the St. Lawrence in early spring and were faced with the arduous tasks of clearing bush, tilling land and planting crops. Scourges of mosquitoes and empty promises from colonial governments welcomed them. The dream of land ownership was the lure into an unknown future. Men had to donate a day's work to the Township to fix the roads and clean up the land. Wouldn't it be great if citizens today would do 'spring cleaning' of the land near their homes! With the demise of agriculture, land is now sectioned off into garden plots, soccer fields and ball diamonds. May brings revival to the Cumberland Museum with the good news that it will remain open for this year. As CTHS members, I urge you to 'spring into action' and take ownership of the museum. Visit or volunteer, if you can. Plan a family reunion in the backfield.

Take your grandchildren on a tour 'down memory lane' with the help of the World Wide Web. Return to the land. Plant a garden, clean up your property and play ball!

Our Society

The Cumberland Township Historical Society (CTHS) was founded in 1986. We are a non-profit, volunteer and community-based organization whose goal is to preserve Cumberland Township history.

Our newsletter

The Caboose is published six times each year by the Cumberland Township Historical Society.

Our Executive

- Jean-François Beaulieu, President
- Randall Ash, Vice-president
- Robert Serré, Treasurer
- Jeannie Smith, Secretary and Newsletter Editor
- Verna Cotton, Director
- Dan Brazeau, Director
- Martin Rocque, Director

Our address and local history room

Cumberland Branch
Ottawa Public Library
Local History Room
1599 Tenth Line Road
Ottawa, ON K1E 3E8

Our World Wide Web address

www.cths.ca



Navan Ladies Softball Team – Senior City League (1937)

Back row: Win Lee, Mr. O'Connor, Sydney Cotton, Mae Taylor, Annette Chartrand, Dorothy Walsh, Mavis Smith, Sam Craig, Joe Kennedy, Foster Nelson, Ruth and Shaw Nelson. **Middle row:** Jean Twiname, Effie Twiname, Olive Neate, Mae Quinlan, Laura McMillan, Dorothy Lowe, Muriel Smith. **Front row:** Min Poulin, Merle Irwin, Reta Taylor, Bonnie Bonville

Next meeting of the CTHS

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at 7 pm on Thursday, May 13th at the Cumberland Branch of the Ottawa Public Library (at the Ray Friel Centre). Our guest speaker will be Elizabeth Alexander. Be sure to bring a friend along. Light refreshments, as always, will be served.

By the way, have you renewed your 2004-05 membership yet?

Society calendar

For more information on these and other upcoming 2004 events, please contact a member of the executive committee or visit our website.

May 8 th	Ottawa Regional Heritage Fair at Immaculata High school; Saturday from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.
May 13 th	CTHS Annual General Meeting; 7:00 pm at the Cumberland Branch of the Ottawa Public Library. Our guest speaker will be Elizabeth Alexander.
May 15 th	Cumberland Heritage Village Museum opens for another season.
May 29 th	Cumberland Village Yard Sales on Old Montreal Road
May 29 th & 30 th	Cumberland Museum Heritage Festival
May 29 th & 30 th	160th Anniversary of Lisgar Collegiate Institute.
June 13 th	Annual Memorial Service, Dale's Cemetery, Cumberland Village.
June 15 th	5:30-8:30 pm Riverview PS BBQ and Final Celebrations for Riverview Alumni

Visited our local history room lately?

Have you visited our history room, yet? We have histories of local families including MacMillan, Madden, Marshall, McDonald, McGillivray, McMillan, McVeigh, Menard, Minogue, Nolan, Nowland, Perrier, Prosser, Rathwell, Rothwell and many others. You'll also find information on Cumberland churches, groups, maps, clubs, sports, businesses as well as scrap books, newsletters, newspaper clippings and other historical references.

Contact us

If you have questions or suggestions regarding any aspect of the Society including The Caboose, our local history room or anything else of interest to you or to the Society, you may contact any member of the executive by phone or by email:

- Jean-François Beaulieu, President (841-0424) jeanf@storm.ca
- Randall Ash, Vice-president (833-3207) randall2620@rogers.com
- Robert Serré, Treasurer (749-0607) belser@magma.ca
- Jeannie Smith, Secretary and Newsletter Editor (833-2877) gsmith2877@rogers.com
- Verna Cotton, Director (835-2490)
- Dan Brazeau, Director (834-8336) danbrazeau@rogers.com
- Martin Rocque, Director ((819)776-3890) martin.rocque@sympatico.ca



What's on at the Heritage Village Museum...



Museum is open for another season!

First and foremost, the Museum is open for business. As you are likely aware, Council voted to continue funding the City's museums for 2004, though discussions throughout the year will focus on how, among other things, the museums can be made to be self-sustaining. More on that later.

In the meantime, we look forward to another fun-filled season at the Museum. And please join us in welcoming the new staff: Elmer Pilon (Museum Administrator), Sarah Ferguson (Educational / Interpretation Officer), and Glenn Charron (Collections Officer). See you at the Museum!

The Museum is open Wednesday through Sunday from May 15 to August 29, 10 am to 5 pm. It's open Saturdays and Sundays from September 4 to October 31, 10 am to 5 pm.

- May 15 Opening Day, 10 am to 5 pm
- May 29, 30 Heritage Festival, 10 am to 5 pm
- June 5, 6 Doors Open Ottawa, 10 am to 5 pm
- June 13 Trains, Planes, and Automobiles, 10 am to 5 pm
- July 18 Fire Fighter Day 10 am to 5 pm
- September 4, 5 Corny Weekend, 10 am to 5 pm
- October 9, 10 Harvestfest 10 am to 5 pm
- December 11, 12, 18, 19 An Old Fashioned Christmas, 11 am to 4 pm

CTHS Public Relations

On Heritage Day in February, Jeannie Smith presented a musical history of Canada to students at Riverview PS in Cumberland, Meadowview PS in Navan and Queenswood PS in Orleans.

Intermediate students of Riverview PS illustrated folders and wrote letters requesting that the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum remain open. Museum Board Chair, Fran Stronach, presented these to Mayor Chiarelli and Council. Many members of the CTHS wrote letters and attended public meetings to urge Council to save the museum. CTHS President, Jean-Francois Beaulieu and VP Randall Ash spoke at Public Consultations as well.

Our new display board, created by Martin Rocque, will promote the CTHS at the Second Annual Ottawa Regional Heritage Fair, Saturday, May 8th at the Immaculata High School located at 140 Main Street. If you can, come and view history projects from grades 4-9 students from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Old memories...

(as told by Harold Tanner, Evans Rickerd and Joseph Chartrand)

In the fall of 1927, on a very foggy morning between 6 and 7 am, a fast train going east suddenly crashed into a coal car of a freight train which was entering the side line in front of the Vars station. On impact, three boxcars were thrown up in the air (like matchboxes) and came crashing down on the opposite side of the station. Luckily Mr. Joe Armstrong, the station agent, was looking through the window when the accident occurred. The engineer and the fireman jumped out just before the collision. Supposedly, the fireman broke a leg while jumping out but none of the passengers were injured.

The worst loss was five cars of damaged goods. One of these cars was loaded with shoes, and people were trying to salvage pairs that matched. There was a boxcar with a certain quantity of hard candies and we heard that people would fill their pockets full. We believe this made the dentist very happy and busy.

CNR Montreal brought in two derricks to remove the locomotive off the other car. It took 10 hours to clear the tracks before the traffic could move again.

Souvenirs...

(translated by Paul Guertin)

À l'automne de 1927 par un matin très brumeux entre 6 et 7 heures un train rapide en direction Est a soudainement heurté un wagon de charbon du train de marchandises qui entrait sur la voie ferrée latérale en avant de la gare de Vars. Sur le coup trois wagons de marchandises ont été projetés dans les airs comme s'il s'agissait de boîtes d'allumettes, et se sont écrasés sur le côté opposé de la gare. Heureusement pour M. Joseph Armstrong qui était le chef de gare et qui regardait par la fenêtre au moment de la collision. L'ingénieur et le chauffeur ont sauté juste avant la collision. Supposément, le chauffeur s'est fracturé une jambe en sautant, mais les

passagers du train rapide s'en sont sortis sains et saufs.

Pour ce qui est des dommages matériels, cinq wagons de marchandises ont été détruits. Un wagon était chargé de souliers, et le monde essayait de trouver la paire. Il y avait un wagon avec une



Vars Train Station – from the collection of Verna Kinsella. The station originally belonged to the Grand Trunk Railway and was built in 1908.

certain quantité de bonbons durs, et les gens remplissaient leur poches. C'est à ce moment-là que le dentiste est devenu heureux et occupé.

Deux derricks du CNF de Montréal ont été amenés pour enlever la locomotive de dessus l'autre wagon. Il a fallu dix heures pour dégager la voie ferrée afin que le trafic ferroviaire circule de nouveau.



Vars Train Station – today at the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum

Come to the garden

By Jeannie Smith

My Grandmother, Nettie (Helmer) Ferguson, always waited until after May 24th to plant her garden at Chestnut Cottage. The colours and scents of the fruit and flowers instilled in me, a love of gardening. I remember sneaking up the back kitchen stairs of my Grandparent's house to raid the closets for dress-up apparel. Hobbling in satin heels, adorned in veiled hats, my dress dragging royally, I'd venture out onto the lawn to inspect the garden.

Tall ferns fringed the verandah and provided backdrop for peonies and tiger lilies. Houseplants were set out on a tiered table by the kitchen door with special care given to Grandma's prize Christmas cactus. Red Pelagorum and pink Oxalis were planted in the rich composted soil in the front beds. Lily of the Valley and wild violets crept close to the white picket fence. Pale pink roses that enticed wasps grew



Doug and James Ferguson with sister Bessie at her nurse's graduation 1921.

profusely wild. Prized deep purple Oriental lilacs and pink Flowering Almonds ornamented the lot. Bridal Wreath bushes shed their 'confetti' as I brushed past. Pansies bowed low before wild phlox, and Black-eyed Susans blinked in the sunshine. Delphinium and Hollyhock graced the borders.

My early math skills were enhanced as I picked the strawberries, blackberries, raspberries and red currants – one for the box, two for me! "Pick 3 boxes before you can go swimming," ordered Mother.

The green velvet lawns, interspersed with white clover and purple Creeping Charlie, were kept manicured by Uncle Fred. In order to investigate the patch, I had to descend an earthen step to view the array of vegetables. Carrots, onions, beets, beans, tomatoes and even celery were kept weed free. Potatoes and corn grew easily in the sandy loam on the hill by the



Jeannie and Margaret Ferguson and Father Doug Ferguson sitting by the garden with cousin Llewellyn Counsell and neighbour Robert Serré (1958)

river. Grandpa Ferguson supervised the workers comprised of his family and neighboring children – Barnetts, Watsons, Andersons, Thibodeaults and more Barnetts! Apple trees that blossomed at the northern periphery hinted of Grandma's delicious apple pies. Weeping willows, tall majestic pines and heavily laden Chestnut trees guarded the premises.

I came to the garden alone, while the dew was still on the roses, and left with its memory ingrained in my soul. My garden lies a few hundred metres north of Grandma's, but now I dress down in old clothes and kneel before the soil to work among my flowers.



If you want to be happy for an hour ... Get drunk.

If you want to be happy for 3 days ... Get married.

If you want to be happy for 8 days ... Kill your pig and eat it.

If you want to be happy forever ... Make a garden.

(old Chinese proverb)



The Ferguson Family on the lawn of Chestnut Cottage 1934.

Sarsfield Nursing Home

by / par Rolande Leduc

Rolande (Lavergne) Leduc is one of Sarsfield's special ladies. She began her life in Masson, Quebec, in 1917, but sadly her father died of pneumonia and her mother, who was a sister of Mrs. G.G. Dunning, was ill with TB, so at the age of 6, Rolande went to live with another Aunt in Cumberland Mme. Ranger. Etienne Ranger was herdsman for Norman Wilson, thus, Rolande came to live in the large Wilson stone house. She attended school in Cumberland with Hilda (MacMillan) Kearns, Florence (MacEachern) Hill, and Phil Morin. Unfortunately, Rolande's mother died and her aunt became ill. Rolande was taken under the wing of Father Adélarde Laflamme who was the priest at Sarsfield, and she was raised by the nuns who ran the convent. Rolande has made a tremendous contribution to the community of Sarsfield. She and her husband Joe Leduc had three children and now, a widow, she enjoys her grandchildren and volunteers at the nursing home. She is a wonderful role model who displays warmth, dignity and compassion.

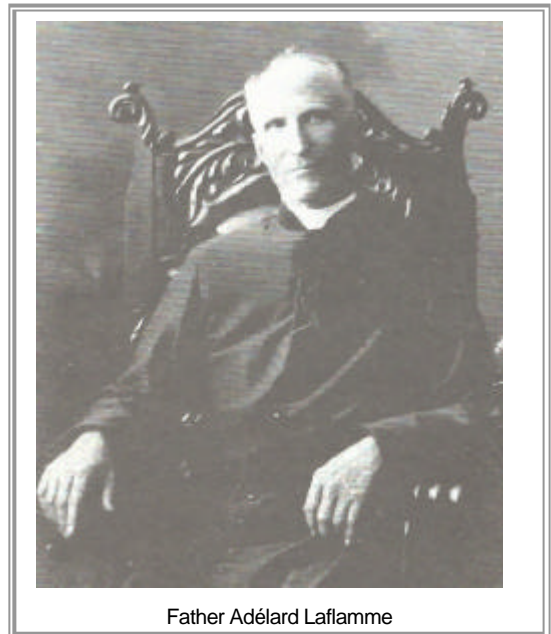
Here is her history of Sarsfield Nursing Home.

D'hier à aujourd'hui

Le propre de la vie est de naître, de vivre et de mourir, mais il arrive qu'on puisse abriter la mort sous toutes ses formes et pas en mourir. C'est bien ce qu'a tenté de faire la maison des soins de longue durée, chemin Colonial à Sarsfield.

En 1916 elle est née, non sans douleur, celle qui devait prouver que sa fondation devait tenir le coup aux intempéries échelonnées au cours des années. Le « maître d'œuvre » n'est nul autre que l'abbé Adélarde Laflamme nommé curé de la paroisse Saint-Hugues de Sarsfield en 1910. De plus en plus, la lutte contre le Règlement XVII s'accroît laissant prévoir des issues fâcheuses pour les Canadiens français. Il fallait se mettre à l'œuvre pour contrer ses effets néfastes. L'abbé Laflamme fit donc bâtir, à ses frais, un couvent qui serait sous la direction d'une communauté religieuse, pour assurer l'indépendance de l'école en abritant tous les écoliers pour assurer le fait français. En prévision de ce projet, il achète un lopin de terre de Camille Dessaint et il entreprend la construction, avec Adélarde Desjardins et « Jos » Dionne, d'un édifice à quatre étages incluant le soubassement. Construit avec des matériaux modestes, on se demande aujourd'hui comment il a pu tenir le coup. Recouvert de carrés d'amiante il faisait bonne figure et les nombreuses marches en ciment conduisant au deuxième étage lui conféraient une apparence de force qui le prédestinait à sa future mission.

C'est à ce moment que les Sœurs du Sacré-Cœur d'Ottawa Est sont venues habiter cette maison, qu'on appelait couvent, en 1924. En septembre, elles dirigent deux classes surchargées d'élèves. Une troisième religieuse s'impose; elle enseigne dans une classe au couvent, donne des leçons de chant et de musique. Ce qui donne un nouveau souffle à Sarsfield. En 1925 les religieuses acceptent de jeunes filles pensionnaires d'Ottawa, Saint-Albert, Sarsfield, jusqu'en 1932. Par la suite, la conversion du pensionnat en juvénat s'effectue afin de préparer de jeunes filles à la vie religieuse.



Father Adélarde Laflamme

En novembre 1963 Marcel Paquette achète le couvent pour le convertir en une maison de soins de longue durée, « Sarsfield Colonial Home », qui se dresse fièrement à l'entrée du village. Sa carcasse est plus solide que jamais. « Si tu savais où tu me mènes » aurait pu dire ce grand philosophe Adélarde Laflamme qui toute sa vie a aimé les gens et s'est toujours engagé à améliorer leur sort.

D'années en années, de main en main, de vocation.

School's out for the summer

Last September The Caboose featured an article on Cumberland Township schools. Verna Kinsella was able to fill in the blanks and sent this information on S.S. #2 Vars Public School.

The following letter was written to Mrs. Frank H. Tanner by 89 year old Dr. Calvin Morrow who taught at SS#2 in 1880. His son, Dr. C.E.L Morrow was a doctor in Metcalfe.

Dear Mrs. Tanner:

Thank you for your recent letter. I have much pleasure in telling of old times. July 1st, 1867 was the first Dominion Day. Your section then was a Union Section. It was called McVeys Section. Hendersons, Sparks and others went to this school. But one night the Union school went up in smoke.



Typical classroom
(S.S. #1 – French Hill School House)

The school was then built (now Robt. Webb property) some distance west of the present school. Later, land was obtained from William Shaw and the school moved to the present site (close to the East gate). It was built of rude flat logs. In the centre was a large box stove and on each side, two long rows of pine benches. (This building was later used as a wood shed, then sold to Russell Hitsman.)

The teacher that preceded me was William Little, and Edmund Pillar was my successor. James Ross was before Mr. Little and a lame man named Minions also taught there. I received the sum of \$225 per annum.

Rev. Thomas Garrett was Inspector of schools. The boys and girls that came to my school were Wilbert Ronan and another Ronan boy, sons of William James Ronan, Frank Tanner, William Henry Olmstead, a boy by the name of Walsh. In my best class was Miss Lowrie, Miss Theresa Ronan, Annie Tanner and Ann Jane Becket, an Olmstead girl and a Morrison girl were in a lower class. Maggie McCotters and Robbie Nelson and William and another boy. I forgot Lauchlin McVey and Charlie and Mollie, Annie Shaw and Lottie Shaw, Miss Amelia Marshall and George.

It was that year that John Morrison was shot. I boarded at Robert Morrison's. Mary Ann Armstrong was a great friend of Mrs. Morrison's. Alfred Lowrie

used to call for me to go to church. He wanted to Christianize me! I locked three boys in the shed and forgot about it until dark. I went back but they had escaped. After the children got acquainted with me, I had no more use for the rod; they were good.

(signed) Calvin Morrow

S.S. #2 Minute Book

December 30, 1885 – Annual Meeting Chairman George James, Secretary Alfred Lowrie, J. Buckingham, R.W. Morrison, John Griffith, J. Morrison, George Marshall, W. Buckingham. Trustees moved to hold the school site on the presentland title.

1886 – Secretary Alfred Lowrie and newly elected Chairman William Shaw and John McVey.

August 3, 1887 – At a meeting where only 2 trustees were present it was agreed to ask Township Council to levy and collect the sum of \$225 to pay current expenses.

October 27, 1887 – Trustees decided to re-engage R.P McLaughlin with annual salary of \$300 and as teacher, he must kindle the fires for the year.

July 24, 1888 – Trustees present, Wm. Shaw, J. Morrison, A. Lowrie decided to write Miss S.E. Chamberlin asking her to accept a teaching position for the balance of the year and 1889 at \$250 per annum.

November 29, 1888 – Charles Brisson moved and Wm. Shaw seconded a motion to erect a new frame building on the present site. Two motions were made and lost to build a brick school on the southeast corner lot 25, 7th concession at BearBrook Station.

December 26, 1888 – Annual Meeting Chairman S.G. Chency, Secretary William A. Lang, Auditor James Nelson. Receipts \$335. Expenses \$285. Balance \$50. Trustees were instructed to apply to the Municipal Council to issue debentures for sufficient money to build a new school house. Robert Rickerd is mentioned in the minutes. Teacher Miss S.E. Chamberlin given a \$25 raise to make her salary \$275 per annum.

February 16, 1889 – Six tenders ranging from \$891 to \$1400 with the lowest from Ross & Pillar accepted, security for contract John Helder Pillar, Solomon Pillar of Russell and Sarah Ross of Ottawa. Alex Stuart was appointed overseer. \$400 was borrowed on a note from J.G. Shaw of Navan at 8% interest and \$1000 was borrowed by debentures, payable in ten annual payments of \$100 at 7% from Wm. Shaw of Navan. It was agreed to buy 24 seats and desks, one teacher's desk from Bennett Furnishing Co. London, at catalogue prices and a levy of \$480 was put on the school section for the present year.

July, 1889 – Miss Nellie Bradley was hired to teach for the balance of the year for \$100.

August, 1889 – Trustees passed a motion that the Treasurer draw \$160 to pay for painting the school and that contents be insured for \$800 with the Royal Ins. Co.

November, 1889 – J. M. Bell was appointed auditor and Miss Bradley engaged as teacher for 1890.

December 25, 1889 – Annual Meeting. J.M. Bell Auditor. Alex Stuart was to be paid \$5 to oversee the school construction contract and to put a lock on the door. Martin Shaw was to be paid \$3.25 to light fires for the first half of the year. Chairman Joseph Morrison Secretary A. Lowrie. Robert Forgie was mentioned.

December 31, 1890 – Annual Meeting - Chairman George Marshall, Secretary A. Lowrie. Irvine Devine seconded a motion that R. Buckingham be appointed auditor.

November, 1891 – Trustees voted to pay Mrs. Bellevue \$300 and to re-engage Miss Bradley for \$275. Martin Shaw was to be paid \$44 to sweep, supply kindling wood and heat the school from Nov. 1 1889 to Dec. 23 1891. I. Devine was appointed auditor.

S. S. # 2 Log Book

(loaned by Mr. Fisher March 25, 1946)

The first school was on the property of Robert Webb, some distance west of the present one. Later the land was obtained from William Shaw and the school was moved to the present site. Its position was somewhere near where the east gate is now. It was built of rude flat logs and had a small porch made of rough lumber. The interior was the ordinary type of country school in those days. In the centre was a large box stove, and on each side two long rows of pine benches. This building was later used for a wood shed for a time and then sold for use as a horse stable. (Russell Hitsman bought it later to use as a pig house.) The new school was the southern half of the present building. A box containing the names of the sixty pupils, teacher, trustees and school history was placed in the foundation at the south west corner. Much later, the northern half was added, when owing to the large attendance, it became necessary to have two teachers.

On the night of October 1, 1913, the whole building was almost lost by fire, but by hard fighting, the fire was prevented from doing very serious damage.

On April 22, 1941, the school was inspected by Dr. M. Easson, Chief Inspector of Public Schools and Mr. Westwater, Inspector, Chairman L. Anderson and D.J. McRae, Secretary-Treasurer.

In the year 1939, the school united with other schools in the township to form the Cumberland Township School Area. At the ratepayers annual meeting at the

close of 1941, the following officers were elected- Morris Bradley, Navan as Chairman and D.J. McRae, Leonard as Secretary.



S.S. #2 – French Hill School House

Editor's note: Ecole St. Hugues in Sarsfield closed in June 2003. French Catholic students attend school in Orleans. In June, 2004, Riverview PS in Cumberland will officially close but will accommodate its students and those from Meadowview PS in Navan, while Meadowview is torn down and a new building is erected on that site during 2004/05.

Vars Public School Reunion

On September 26th, they will all turn out
To reminisce, talk and let out a shout
About an era when times were worry free
Now I'll try to refresh your memory.

The construction of a school in 1889 came alive
Outside the Village of Vars on lot twenty-five
This two room school house built on the Shaw farm
Was used seventy-seven years until the students moved on.

It was back in fifty-five or fifty-six I was told
They had a new teacher, every week or so
In three months ten teachers had come and gone
There was lots of shenanigans going on.

The rusty pail and the dipper the students drank from
Was like the hooks they didn't have, to hang their coats on.
The Trustee's were persuaded to get these things, it's no
doubt
But it took a good teacher to straighten it out.

It took Teacher Audrey Hamilton to lay down the rules
These shenanigans continued, but she was no fool,
She gave them an ultimatum or she was out the door
They settled down and studied, but oh what a bore.

On Devine Rd. at Frank Kenny, if you would like to check
The school house stands converted to an apartment complex
Let your mind wander back to those times that were great
With good memories and emotions as you celebrate.

Written by Jean Hamilton (Sept. 26, 1998)

St. Mary's Anglican Church, Navan

by Ross Bradley

The first St. Mary's Anglican Church was built in Navan in 1867 on land donated by Navan storekeeper Captain Visser. The church building was a small frame structure on exactly the same piece of land where the present St. Mary's stands. A quotation from the deed of land found in the Russell County Land Registry Office states "The Anglican Church property was deeded by Herman D. Visser, to the Synod of the Diocese of Ontario, August 21, 1865.

Originally St. Mary's was a part of the Parish of Bearbrook and it remained within that Parish until it was divided in 1888 when a new parish became the Parish of Navan which also included St. Mary the Virgin in Blackburn and St. Mark's in Cumberland. In 1898 a new church was built and the original St. Mary's was sold to the Canadian Independent Order of Forresters. It was moved to a location just west of where J.T. Bradley's store stands today, where it would be used as a community hall. St. Mary's repurchased the Forresters Hall shortly after World War 2 and renovated it extensively. It was destroyed by fire on August 28, 1948, which also destroyed the Bradley store and home. This land was sold in October 1948 to Morris Bradley.

St. Mary's Anglican Church as we know it today was built on the original site, the north east corner of Lot 11, Concession 9, Township of Cumberland, today known as the southwest corner of Trim and Smith Roads. Thomas Pridmore, a stone mason, quarried the stone from Robert Shaw's quarry just east of Navan on land, which is presently owned by the Rivington family at the north east corner of Frank Kenny and Colonial Roads. The stone was hauled by farmers to the church site and construction took place during 1898. St. Mary's featured many fine examples of Gothic revival architecture. The construction was completed in the fall of 1898 and was officially opened December 27, 1898 by Right Reverend Charles Hamilton, Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa. The pews from the original St. Mary's were used in the new church and still are, and the bell, which was placed in the tower in the very early 1900s, is still in use. The

stone structure dominates the street with its steeply sloped gable roof and its offset square entrance with turret and bell tower.

St. Mary's of course like everything else has changed dramatically over the years. Major construction occurred in 1950 when a new rectory was built directly south of the church and a new hall constructed just west of the church. A hall extension took place in 1996 to accommodate the ever increasing demand. St. Mary's Hall today is the centre for numerous church events and indeed many events for the entire community.

But time does take its toll on buildings. St. Mary's today faces a huge challenge not unlike the challenge that faced its parishioners back in 1898 when the church was built. Engineers have discovered several structural cracks in the church bell tower and the exterior masonry of the church walls. These problems in all likelihood have been caused by past earthquakes, heavy truck traffic and even army tank traffic during training exercises in the early 1940s, and the inevitable freeze/thaw cycles that happen. Congregational meetings have been held as well as community meetings early in the year 2003 and the general consensus has been that St. Mary's must be saved to preserve Navan's heritage at the centre of the entire community.



Artist: L. Bray