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THE GREY, BRUCE, DUFFERIN & SIMCOE POSTAL HISTORY STUDY GROUP

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[REF. 230]

A SOCIO-POSTAL HISTORY of the Municipality of the TOWN of SOUTH BRUCE PENINSULA

James E. Kraemer, FRPSC, FRPSL

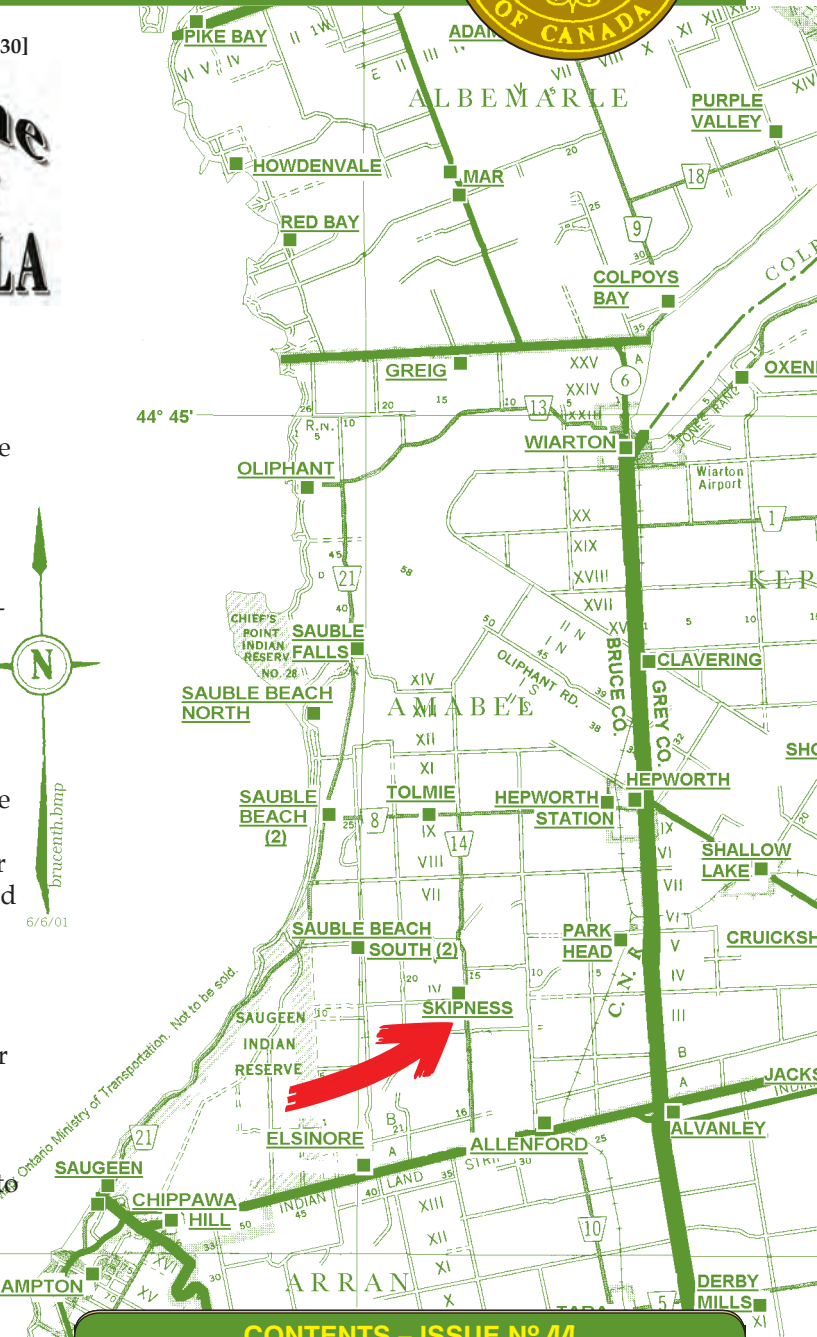
SKIPNESS

Some small communities start to grow with moderate expectations for the future and then falter and fail. Skipness is such a community. Today, except for the cemetery, not a trace of the former hamlet exists. The location of the Skipness community is the Gould Lake area in Amabel Township, associated with the development of particularly the northwest corner of the lake.

Soon after Amabel Township was surveyed and the land offered for sale in 1856-1857, Donald Reid, one of the township's early settlers, purchased Lot 16, Concession 3. Early in 1868 Mr. Reid asked the postal authorities to consider the establishment of a post office in the area. He offered space in his farm house and suggested that the community be named Skipness after Skipness in Argyle, Scotland. The authorities acquiesced and within a few weeks established the Skipness post office on July 1, 1868, with Mr. Reid appointed postmaster. Less than two years later Mr. Reid resigned effective May 4, 1870.

Thomas Blenkin was appointed postmaster, but after serving for 15 months resigned. His successor William Hall was named postmaster on April 1, 1872. Mr. Hall also received the mail contract that specified one trip per week to Allenford, 4 miles away. Mr. Hall decided to give up the post office and the mail courier contract. He resigned on January 6, 1876.

David Morton became the fourth postmaster of Skipness on April 1, 1876. David Morton who had been born in Skipness, moved the post office to his farm house on Lot 16, Concession 4. (In the early 1960s it was noted that the property was owned by Robert and Jean Byers.) David Morton's parents were David and Ann, nee Smith, Morton. Matilda, nee Bannister, the postmaster's wife was named a post office assistant. On May 1, 1877 Mr. Morton was awarded the mail contract



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but lost it to Donald Reid in 1880. Mr. Reid received \$33.00 per annum. In 1884 Mr. Morton became the mail courier on what was known as "The Spring Creek Line". During the 17 years that Mr. Morton was postmaster, Skipness grew in size and stature.

A church used by both the Presbyterians and Methodists was built in 1884. Mr. Morton was one of the three church trustees. He resigned as postmaster on February 17, 1893. On the August 26, 1893, James Davidson Jr. was appointed postmaster. He was the fifth son of James Davidson, Sr. who had been born in Ireland in 1800 and came to Canada with his wife and two children in 1826. They lived in Cheltenham, Ontario where Mr. Davidson died in May, 1870.

James Davidson Jr., moved to Skipness in March 1870 from Brampton, Ontario. He later married Jane McKane who came from Ireland in 1843. They purchased the J. T. Conaway farm, Lot 15, Concession 3. The post office moved to this location in 1893 with James Davidson Jr. as postmaster. Mr. Davidson died suddenly of pneumonia leaving a wife and five children. (Another child, a daughter Mary Jane, was born after her father's death.) The oldest was a 12 year old son, James Davidson III.

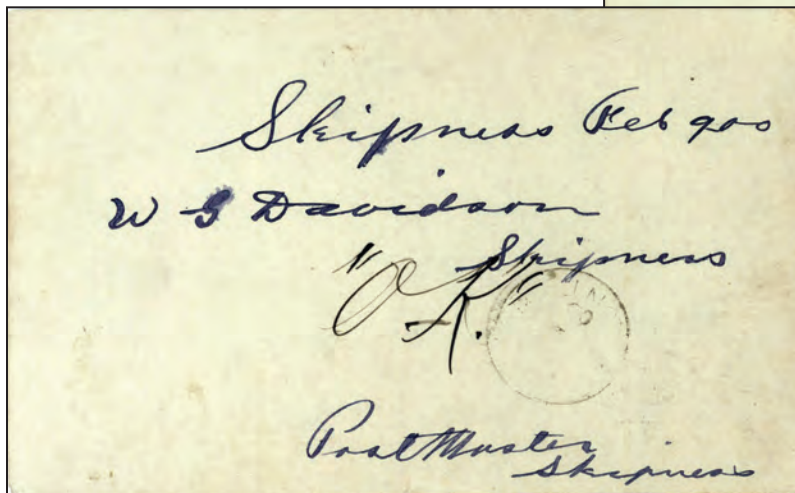
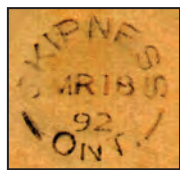
In 1900 James Davidson III purchased Lot 16, Conc. 3 from Donald Reid, the first Skipness postmaster. It was also in 1900 that he married Elizabeth Johnson. They moved the post office across the road from the Davidson homestead to its earlier location when Donald Reid was postmaster. Mr. Davidson became well-known in the area. He was a tax assessor, served a term on the Amabel Township Council and was Secretary-Treasurer of the school board. James and Elizabeth had two sons, James Alpine and Melvin. Postal regulations seemed quite



Skipness Church – Built in 1884, the church was used by both the Presbyterians and the Methodists. It closed permanently in 1934. For years it was used to store ice, hay and boats. It was demolished in 1974. Photo c.1972.

flexible since many Davidson family members unofficially assisted in serving post office patrons. The Davidson's decided to give up the post office. James Davidson offered his resignation which was accepted on February 27, 1902. Since 1870 to this date (2006) the name Davidson has been prominent in the Skipness area.

Richard Webster, his wife Jane, nee James, and their family came to Amabel Township from Leeds County, Ontario in 1880. They purchased Lot 16, Concession 4, from the Crown for \$275.00. Mr. Webster was appointed postmaster on March 1, 1903 and moved the post office into his farm house. He resigned due to ill health on February 2, 1906 and died in 1908.



SKIPNESS / ONT. / FE 9 / 00

This type A1 broken circle (19.5mm, arcs 3.5, 4.0) is the only known postmark for Skipness. Earliest recorded use is April 6, 1886. Since the post office was established in 1868 there may very well be other types of postmarks yet to be discovered.

David Morton was again appointed postmaster and moved the post office to his farm home. Five-and-a-half years later Mr. Morton reached retirement age and offered his resignation. He retired on November 9, 1911. James Davidson III, who previously served as postmaster, became the ninth and last postmaster of Skipness when he received his appointment on January 17, 1912. It is of interest to note that the post office moved to the farm house, Lot 16, Concession 3, the original site when the post office was established in 1868. Revenue per annum for Skipness post office seldom reached \$12.00. For the fiscal year 1906-1907 revenue reached \$14.00. It was \$23.00 in 1909-1910 and \$30.25 for 1912-1913. Over the same period, 1906-1913 the postmaster's salary increased from \$25.00 to \$35.00 per annum. Postal authorities notified the postmaster and the post office patrons that Rural Mail Delivery would begin on January 1, 1915 and the post office would close on December 31, 1914.

Once noted for its sawmills, Skipness today can only boast about its farming community. The school that was built in 1872 was closed in 1965. Skipness has disappeared. ☒

THE POSTMASTERS OF SKIPNESS AND THEIR PERIODS OF SERVICE

<i>Post office established:</i> July 1, 1868	
Donald Reid	July 1, 1868 until May 4, 1870 RESIGNATION
Thomas Blenkin	Aug. 1, 1870 until Jan. 29, 1872 RESIGNATION
William Hall	Apr. 1, 1872 until Jan. 6, 1876 RESIGNATION
David Morton	Apr. 1, 1876 until Feb. 17, 1893 RESIGNATION
James Davidson Jr,	Aug. 26, 1893 until 1900 DEATH
James Davidson III	1900 until Feb. 27, 1902 RESIGNATION
Richard Webster	Mar. 1, 1903 until Feb. 2, 1906 RESIGNATION
David Morton	Apr. 1, 1906 until Nov. 9, 1911 RESIGNATION
James Davidson III	Jan. 17, 1912 until Dec. 31, 1914 RESIGNATION
<i>Post office closed:</i>	December 31, 1914 – R.M.D. started

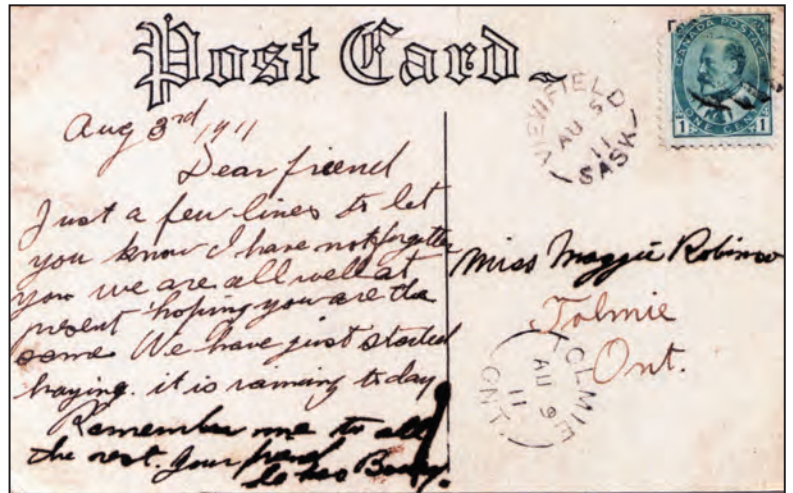
[REF. 231]

TOLMIE Revisited . . .

[The original article on "Tolmie" appeared in the October 1998 issue of the Newsletter of the Grey, Bruce, Dufferin and Simcoe Postal History Study Group].

James E. Kraemer, FRPSC, FRPSL

At the time that the above referenced article appeared, no cover or postcard from Tolmie could be located. Illustrated herewith is a postcard from the author's postal history collection. The postcard was mailed from Viewfield, Saskatchewan, on August 5, 1911. It was received and delivered at Tolmie on August 9, 1911, three months before the Tolmie post office closed on November 13, 1911.



TOLMIE / ONT. / AU 9 / 11 – This postcard from Viewfield, Sask. was received in Tolmie by Miss Maggie Robinson.

Mr. A Tennant was awarded the mail contract for the postal route Tolmie-Hepworth. Hepworth was four miles east of Tolmie. Mr. Tennant's contract specified that he was to make 3 trips per week and would be paid at the rate of \$124.00 per annum. The contract was terminated when the post office was closed. The postmaster, John Robinson, received a remuneration of \$35.00 per annum. ☒



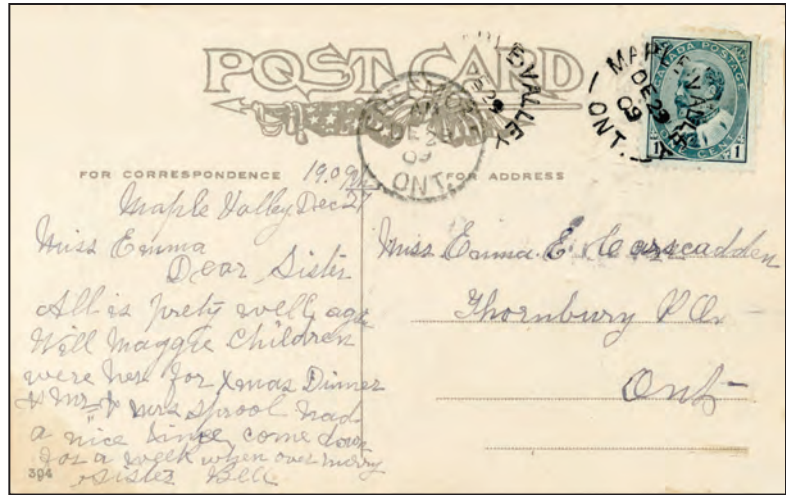
Mailed from her home village of Tolmie, Miss Margaret J. Robinson was living in Strasburg, Ont. (Waterloo County) when this card was mailed October 7, 1910.

[REF. 232]

Maple Valley's Name

It is always interesting to learn how places were named, for instance, "Maple Valley". This name could hardly be said to be descriptive of the community because it is on the height of land reached after ascending the range of hills from the valley at Dune-din and Creemore. In this issue is published an obituary story of a former Maple Valley woman, whose father, the late James Dick, is said to have secured the first post office and selected the name for the community. "Maple" was after his former home community down near Toronto, and the word "Valley" was just added to make it distinctive. The post office was established in the late sixties of the nineteenth century and was closed following the establishing of Rural Mail Delivery No. 4 from Creemore in 1926.

– originally published in the *Creemore Star*, reprinted July 4, 1939 in the *Shelburne Free Press*.
[submitted by Don Stewart]



This Christmas card was mailed by Bell to her sister, Emma Carscadden, living in Thornbury. The card was routed most likely via Creemore, then to Collingwood by railway, at which point it would have caught the next train to Thornbury on its way to Meaford. At maple Valley it was postmarked with the second type A1 postmarking device.

The reader is referred to *GBD&S Newsletter* 19, March 2001, p. 178, for a more complete story on Maple Valley.

Mansfield

Dufferin County

[REF. 233]

George Power

Mansfield on Airport Road in Dufferin County has had quite a checkered past in the years since the corporate post office (333433) closed on April 8, 1988. A Shelburne sub office (405523) was the replacement, operating from April 8, 1988 until March 6, 1989. This obviously was a downsizing from revenue status to that of a sub office.

Canada Post at this point in history was experimenting with various types of franchises and Mansfield was not surprisingly a candidate. The sub office operating out of the Mansfield General Store was converted to a franchised retail outlet (409316) which lasted until early 1999 at which time it was reorganized and thus received a new number (267678) which was in effect until November 9, 2010. At that point the Mansfield General Store lost the franchise to the Hasty Market operating out of the Esso gas bar at 936653 Airport Road which is just across the highway from the Mansfield General Store. This franchise (103940) opened November 8, 2010,

with Charanjit Khaird as the franchisee and "post-master". What is really interesting is that the new datestamp supplied by Canada Post still carries the old number even though it is a totally new franchise. Since franchisees have to pay for all equipment it is obvious that neither the new owner nor Canada Post really put much value on that number which in effect is the account number for that business.

Presently the business is again for sale which will lead to more postal changes in this community. ☒

MANSFIELD RO 103040 and its current datestamp still in use in September 2011.



Sunnidale Station

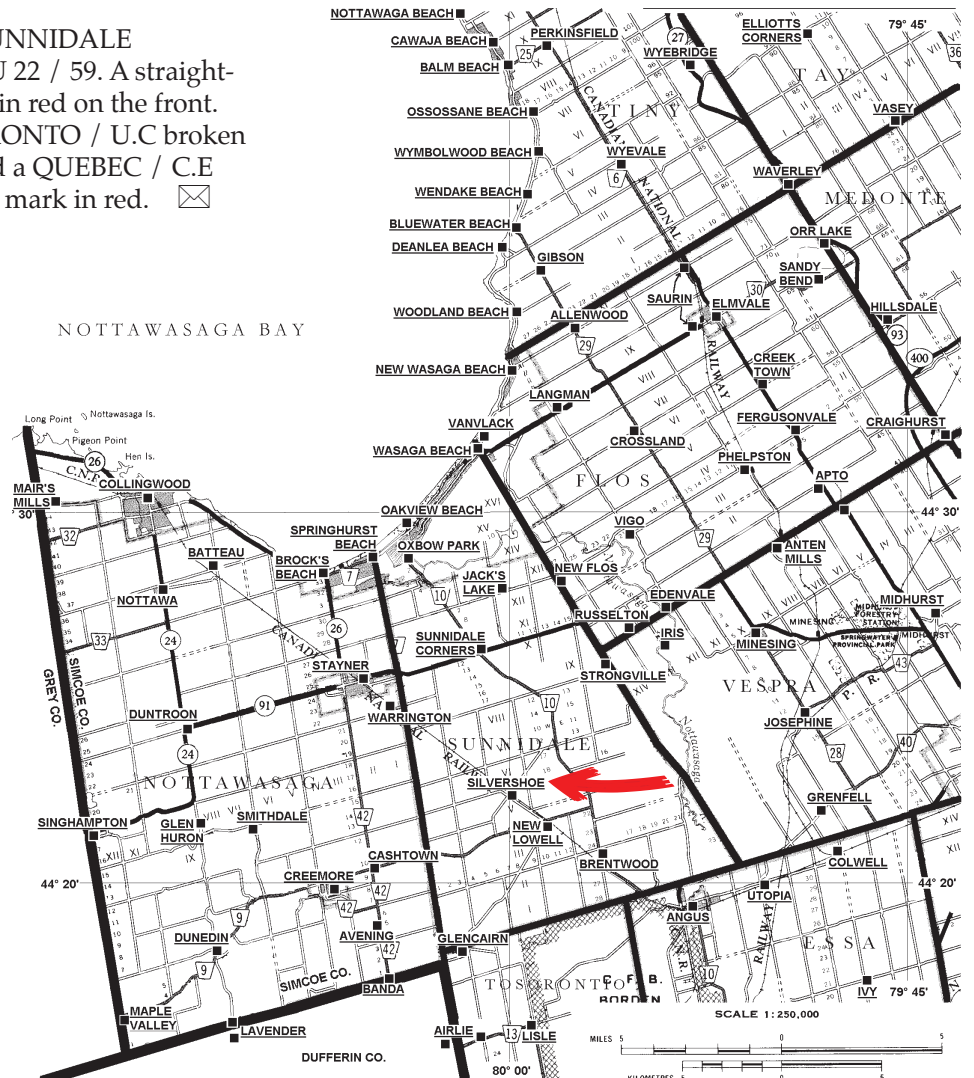
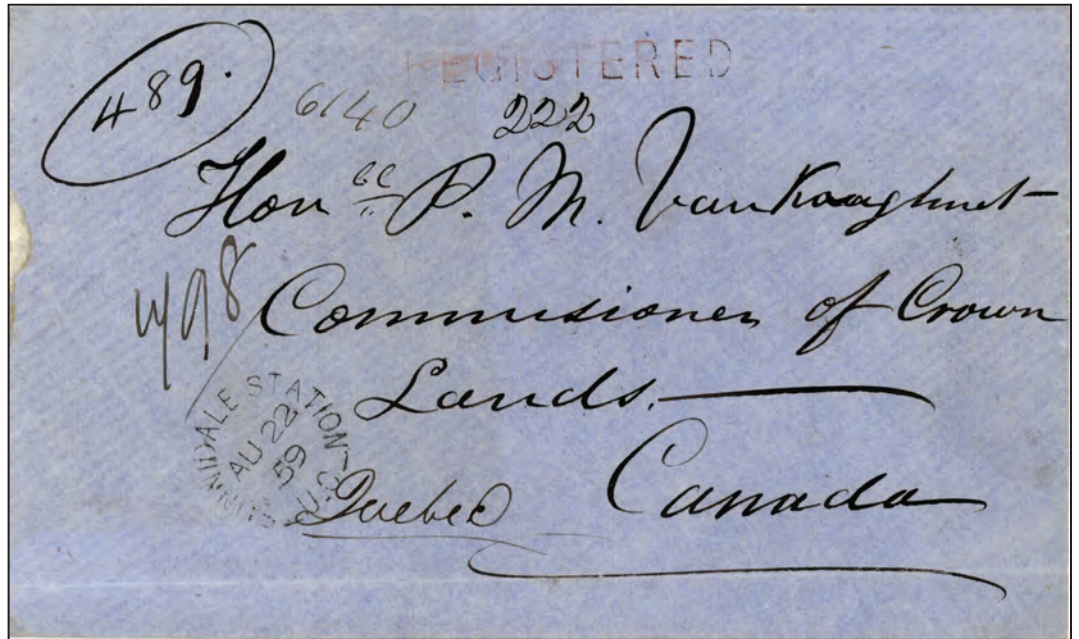
Simcoe County

Robt. C. Smith

Sunnidale Station (2) was established in Simcoe's Sunnidale Township on April 1, 1858, the same day that Sunnidale Station (1) became New Lowell. The name of the office was changed to Silvershoe on October 1, 1862; it was closed August 29, 1868. John Ross was the first postmaster; he remained in office until 1863.

This unrated registered cover addressed to Philip Michael Vankoughnet, Commissiner of Crown Lands, Quebec, Canada,

was postmarked with the 20-mm SUNNIDALE STATION / U.C broken circle on AU 22 / 59. A straight-line REGISTERED mark was struck in red on the front. On the reverse we have a black TORONTO / U.C broken circle transit mark of AU 23 / 59 and a QUEBEC / C.E 33-mm circular datestamp receiving mark in red. ☐



courtesy – Robt. C. Smith collection

Who was in Charge of the Post Office

at **BANDA,** a pioneer community on the Simcoe-Dufferin County Line



[REF. 235]

Gus Knierim

Banda was located on the Township line between Simcoe's Nottawasaga Township and Dufferin County's Mulmur Township, but that happened only after January 24, 1881, at which time the County of Dufferin was officially proclaimed. Before that time, Mulmur Township, incorporated January 1, 1851, was part of the newly-created Simcoe County.

The settlement at Banda was founded in 1845 and by 1860 it was a thriving community of 50 people, a hotel, blacksmith, stores, wagon shop, shoemaker, school, Orange lodge, and 2 churches. A post office was established June 1, 1860 when a local farmer, John Cleminger, was appointed postmaster. The post office was kept at his residence on Lot 32, Conc. 6, Mulmur Township. Mr. Cleminger resigned September 21, 1877.

His successor was a local storekeeper, Joseph Hood, who was Banda's second postmaster until he resigned July 10, 1883, at which time he sold his store to Mr. J. D. Carveth.

The "Postmaster and Post Office" files at Library and Archives Canada tell us that Tilden Banner became the third postmaster serving from October 1, 1883 until September 8, 1885. Next came James Linwood who held the office from February 1, 1886 until June 23, 1893, followed by William Bell on September 1, 1893. He served until September 20, 1910 equaling John Cleminger's tenure. Banda's last postmaster was John Millsap who began his appointment October 25, 1910. On October 1, 1915, the post office closed and was replaced with Rural Mail Delivery.



Letter posted at **BANDA / ONT. / OC 2 / 72** for Mr. M. A. James, Esq., and Enfield, Ont. (Darlington Twp., Durham County). Postmarked with the earliest known strike of the first type A1 device (21mm, arcs 13.5 and 12.5 mm). This postmark was in use until well after 1895, and was preceded by a type A2x marking. COURTESY – George Power.

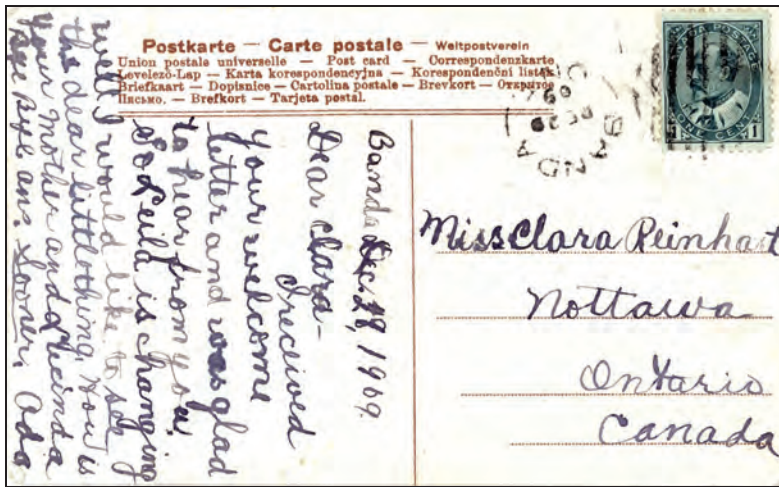
That could be the end of the story, except to say that *Mulmur – The Story of a Township*, published in 1951, paints a very different situation. According to this source "in 1868 Joseph Hood kept the store and post office ... In the 1880s Mr. Hood sold his store to Mr. Carveth. Mr. Gallagher, a Presbyterian minister, had the store and post office for a time. . . The next storekeeper was Mr. Alfred Allen. He rented the store to Benjamin Beatty. The postmaster was Mr. W. Irwin. Mr. Beatty kept the store until 1903. From then on there was no store, but the post office continued until 1913."

Two sources of information and such a difference in what is being reported. Local histories are often based on what people remember and not necessarily facts. In this instance the postal records were probably not available to those folks that wrote the *Mulmur* story. The following information from the *1915 Report of the Postmaster General* certainly supports the information in the post office files at L.A.C.

According to the *Report of the Postmaster General* for the year ending March 31, 1915, Banda was classified as a non-accounting office reporting revenue of just \$47.00.



A registered letter posted at **BANDA / ONT. / AU 22 / 95** and mailed to The Christian Herald in New York City. COURTESY – George Power.



Miss Clara Reinhart, Nottawa, Ontario, received this card from her friend, Ada. The card was mailed at **BANDA / ONT. / DE 29 / 09**, and postmarked with the second type A1 broken circle (20mm, arcs 5.0).

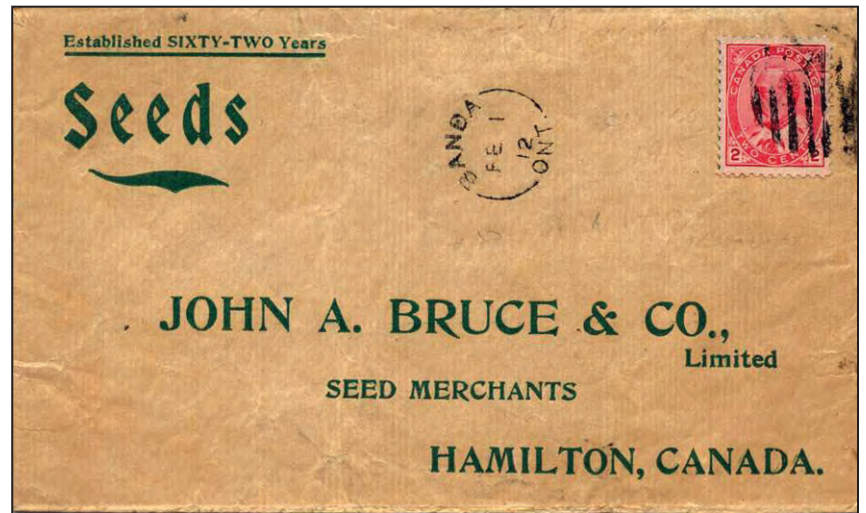
The most likely routing of this card would be Banda to Glencairn to Collingwood (via Grand Trunk Rwy.) and then south to Nottawa, again by GTR.

The floral image used in the heading of this article comes from the front side of this postcard.

The ever-present John A. Bruce & Co. seed cover publicizing 62 years of service. Postmarked at **BANDA / ONT. / FE 1 / 12** with the fourth type A1 broken circle (19mm, arcs 11.0 and 12.0 mm). This device was proofed April 29, 1911. COURTESY - George Power.

The postmaster, J. Millsap, was paid \$50.00 for the year which appears to be the minimum base salary. Mail was routed via the Grand Trunk Rwy. and dropped off at Glencairn station from whence it was carried six times per week by J. Millsap. The route was 2½ miles in length. His remuneration for these duties amounted to \$16.72 (to May 11, 1914 - 1 month, 11 days) in addition to his salary as postmaster.

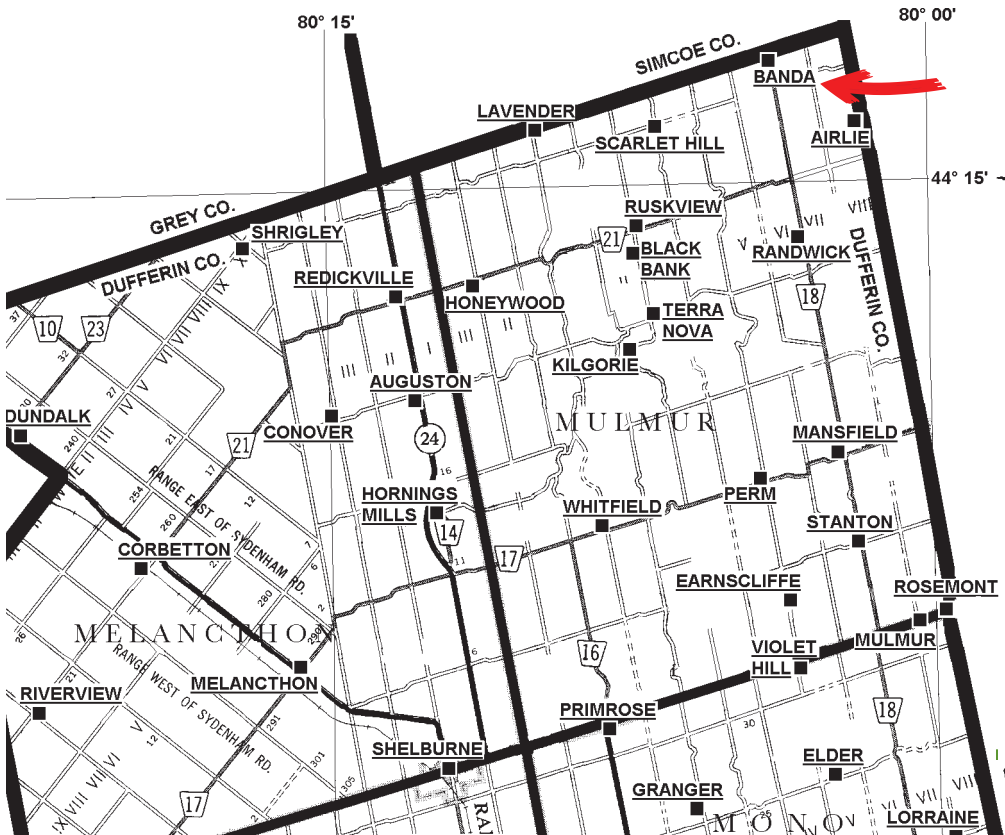
In the fall of 1915 Rural Mail Delivery began on a route originating at Glencairn. The first mail carrier was Mr. Sam Hare. The route went west from Glencairn to the 4th line of Mulmur, up the 5th line, down the 6th line and up the 7th line. The second mail carrier was Robert Dennison, who reversed the route from the original plan because he felt it was easier travelled. Other rural route carriers that have served over the years have been Alex Stephenson, Fred



Breedon, James Johnston, and C. McGillivray.

Presently Banda has a few homes and farms, but not much remains from the original pioneer settlement. Most

traffic will be along County Road 18 (Airport Road) carrying vacationing traffic from the Toronto region to the Georgian Bay resort area. ☒



✿ Many thanks to George Power for the encouragement to once again move ahead with The Georgian Courier, and for much of the information in this article.

Editor's Word

The Georgian Courier has been on a prolonged holiday while yours truly took on the editorship of the *PHSC Journal*. This has now changed and the time has come to bring this publication back to life.

This current issue will go out to all for whom I have addresses. Our mailing list may not be that accurate, since I am sure that some folks will have moved, or may not even be interested in this area of postal history. Please confirm that you have received this issue and that you wish to continue to receive it. A quick word by email is sufficient. If I do not hear from you, then I will not be mailing a future issue of *The Georgian Courier* to you.

Our plan is to continue to publish four times per year as long as you, members of this Study Group, are willing to submit material to publish. What we need are articles, anecdotes pertaining to local post offices, mini-stories, a favourite postcard or cover. As a matter of fact our definition of postal history is quite broad. Presently we

are limiting ourselves to 8 pages, but if the demand and material is there, then we will add pages.

Most of you are aware that all (43) previous issues of the *GBD&S Newsletter*, as well as *The Georgian Courier*, are available on line at the PHSC website,

www.postalhistorycanada.net

Currently our area includes the Counties of Grey, Bruce, Dufferin and Simcoe. We have been asked in the past by a few whether we would consider including more of Georgian Bay. That would include the eastern shoreline as far north as Killarney. Our members will decide and this decision would be based on whether we receive material to publish for an expanded area. We are open to suggestions from *all* of you.

In the meantime I hope that you will enjoy this present effort. Keep in touch ... we looking forward to hearing from you.

Thanks,

Gus Knierim, editor,
knierim@bmts.com

GBD&S NEWSLETTER THE GEORGIAN COURIER

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Periodically there is an interest in back issues. We should point out that all issues are available at \$2.50 each. We also have available white D-ring display binders with appropriate inserts for the front cover and the spine, title pages, and index separators for each volume. Binder 1 will hold all issues from 1-34 inclusive (Vol. 1-6); Binder 2 will hold issues starting at 35 with room to expand for the coming years. The binders, including inserts, index separators with tabs, cost \$6.00 each plus shipping.

Presently a complete set of back issues (1-44) with binders costs \$85.00, shipping included. Available from the editor (see address below).

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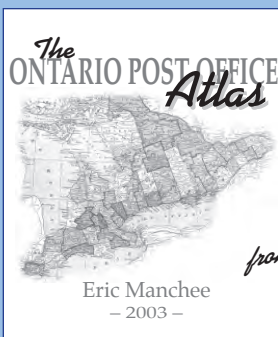
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Membership costs \$12 per year (4 issues). Cheques should be made payable to the editor J. (Gus) Knierim. We can also accept PayPal using the email address. Please add \$1.00 to defray PayPal charges. Thank you!

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