

## Vernonville

In 1860, the hamlet of Vernonville was named after Charles H. Vernon. A portion of his 100-acre farm became sixty newly surveyed lots that primarily became homesteads, but also a Church, general store, post office, blacksmith shop, various other shops, and two halls.

The very picturesque Church, built in 1862 and originally Presbyterian, but later United, still stands in a lovely treed setting in the heart of the village. The site was purchased for 10 pounds in 1861 from Vernon's Estate. While regular services are no longer held, the Church is opened annually every second Sunday in June for a memorial service. "Back in the day", annual ice cream socials were understandably popular. Homemade ice cream waited safely in one of four large Church freezers.

Vernonville's first school, S.S. #9, dates back to 1814, and served families along the newly opened road between Vernonville Road and Shelter Valley Road. Later, S.S. #14 began as a log school in 1846, and evolved into a brick building, which today is the town's community hall. The school continued to 1966. In 1852, a world map was purchased for 17 shillings and 6 pence, and a map of Canada for 7 shillings and 6 pence. Annual Arbour Day celebrations in May saw schoolchildren tidying the school and schoolyard, and making up flower beds, before enjoying a nice picnic lunch.

The presence of a sawmill is paramount, and Vernonville's Gillespie Mill busily produced flour, oatmeal and barley to the tune of 100 barrels per day. It was the *only* mill west of Montreal that produced oatmeal and barley. Customers from as far off as Kingston took these grains back home with them. Complementing the mill's importance in the area were

four saw mills and a lathe factory, the latter sending its furniture as far afield as the U.S.

The General Store and post office operated from the late 1880's to the 1940's. Storekeepers in the early 1900's wore many hats: making out wills and leases, using 25-cent forms the customer would purchase, and providing haircuts and tooth extractions as needed.



### Vernonville United: Church be

By Barry King

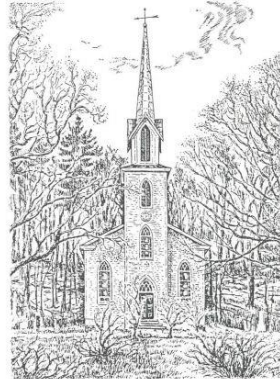
In its heyday, the village of Vernonville was a thriving community with a school, the "Blacklock" carriage shop, three hotels, a Sons of Temperance Hall and, strikingly set against a heavily treed slope, the white steepled church.

The origins of the Haldimand Township village can be traced to 1860, when the land was first surveyed and subdivided into 60 lots of one-quarter acre each. Two one-acre lots were also planned, but one eventually returned to farmland. The other belonged to Charles H. Vernon and was sold to the Presbyterian Church in 1861 for the sum of 10 pounds.

In 1853, Charles had purchased his farm in the third concession, now the site of Vernonville, from the University of Toronto. An early settler and farmer, he later became a magistrate and a member of the county's council.

Vernonville's prosperity coincided with the development of more than 25 mills that were mostly located along nearby Shelter Valley Creek. Two of these were the Broomfield Sawmill, three miles north, and the Gillespie Flour Mill, one mile west, whose operations began as early as the 1830s.

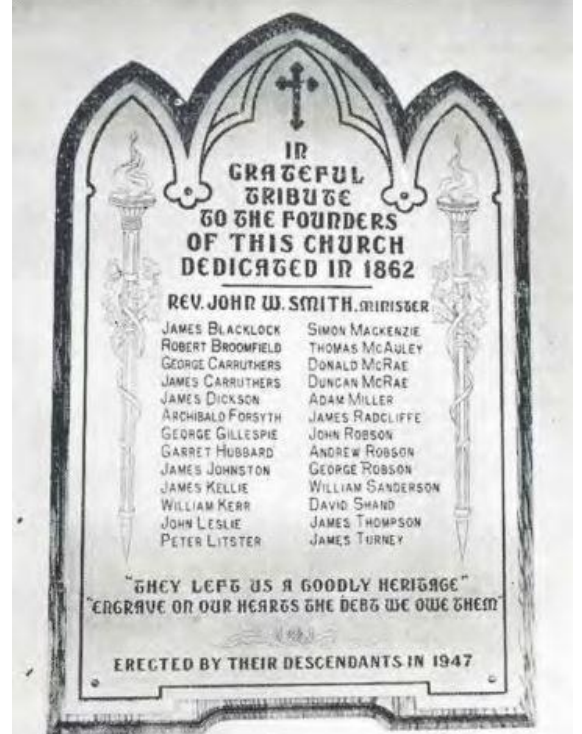
When the time came to build the church, the pattern of the old kirk of St. Andrew's in Campbellford was decided on. Plans were drawn by James Kille who, along with George Robson, was sent by the villagers to study the Campbellford church. It has been



PARISH OF PERRYTOWN - Anglican  
Father Jeffrey Kennedy (Rector)

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES  
CHORAL EUCHARIST

9:00 a.m. St. George's, Gores Landing  
11:00 a.m. St. Paul's, Perrytown  
2:00 p.m. St. Anne's, Bewdley



## **Local Resources:**

- Township Tales – The Intangible Heritage of Alnwick/Haldimand Township.  
REF 971.357 Tow LH (+ circulating copy)
- The History of South Haldimand Township and Wait (Waite) Family History 1775-1980. REF 971.357  
Wai LH
- Vernonville S.S. 14 1862-2002, Compiled by Donna Smith. \*\*\*  
REF 372.97135 Smi LH (+ circulating copy)
- Haldimand Township archival folder (source of the booklet for the image of the plaque, and the Post  
article with the image above)

\*\*\* This resource has a b+w photo of 1931 Arbor Day showing children outside the school and holding their work tools. It also has Barry's sketches of Old Vernonville School, Church and Store, which would look great in the article. I could not find these in our scanned photos though.

**Online Resources available at:** Cobourg and District Images - [Results: Cobourg Images \(ourontario.ca\)](#)