

# **Chapter Thirteen Jack's Lake**

## **Community**

### **The Community of Jack's Lake**

Covering about 300 acres, when the river is not flooded, is a shallow murky lake known as Jack's Lake. Marsh and swamp extend beyond the lake creating a haven for wildlife. Jack's Lake is one of the few natural conservation areas in the township. This lake is a remnant of a larger inland lake which covered parts of Flos and Sunnidale Townships centuries ago..<sup>1</sup>

The lake originally was named after an old Indian known as John Jacques, whom the settlers were quite fond of. Since he had a home at the edge of the lake, the water and surrounding area came to bear his name, originally 'Jacques Lake'. Over the years the French name was translated to the present English spelling..<sup>2</sup>

Inhabitants of Jack's Lake were agriculturalists. Unfortunately what one farm produced in abundance another lacked, hence necessitating a trading system. Bob Briggs owned and operated a general store in New Flos, near Sage's Bridge. He did a thriving business as the store was also a general meeting place for friends and neighbours. Many settlers left their homes at 5 a.m. for the weekly trip to the store. Some would bring their excess eggs to sell to those who did not have chickens and non-dairy farmers purchased milk. Groceries and dry goods were also stocked by Briggs. A beef ring was formed in the community as well..<sup>3</sup>

Snowy Saturday mornings brought with them the incentive to venture into the endless white. There were no high speed snowmobiles, gliding noisily over the crisp layers of snow, but good times were by no means scarce.

Mac and Elwood McGauley often hitched a dog up to one sled and a lamb pulled the other sleigh. To add to the amusing scene, Lloyd and George Hendry joined the parade with their pet calves. The lambs and calves, not really suited to this kind of work, tired easily and would lie down for a rest. A new line would be formed, "first the dog, second the lamb and third the trained calves."<sup>4</sup>

The people of Sunnidale enjoyed life in those times, when money was scarce, but good neighbours were plentiful. Time was valued and every good farmer knew the importance of a balance between work and play. A diversity existed in the types of farms that were tilled and ploughed and supplied the township with the fruits of the land. In the beginning was the horsedrawn plough. The changes that occurred in the agricultural area are too vast to begin to describe, but one farmer in the area who kept up with the times was Willard Sage who constructed a hydraulic ram which fed a stream across the road to supply his cattle with fresh water.<sup>5</sup> This type of ram pumps water up the other side of the road, increasing the height of water pumped by so many feet for every inch of fall of the pump.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Interview: *Herb Culham*, 1980.

2. Women's Institute, *Jack's Lake*.

3. Interview: *Edgar Carruthers*, 1980.

4. Interview: *Mrs. Ida Grant*, 1980.

5. Women's Institute, *Jack's Lake*.

6. Interview: *Edgar Carruthers*, 1980.

### Jack's Lake Post Office

Before the telephone, the only means of communication with those who lived at a distance was by mail. Communications between the early inhabitants was further hindered as travel was treacherous and time consuming. When mail service was initiated it was slow, letters taking several weeks to reach a village. The early mail was delivered to settlements by a courier on horseback.

The community of Jack's Lake informally voted on the location of the first post office in 1891. The front room of J.B. Coulson's home became the site of the new post office. Susannah Coulson functioned as the postmistress from the opening until she resigned in 1896. George Garred assumed mail delivery from his home on the Power's sideroad (Klondike Park Road) for one year. There is no record of postmasters from 1897-1902.

In 1902 the mail was delivered by horse and buggy to the Pickering Home on the 12th line. Mail was usually delivered during the day, but it was

not uncommon for the mail to be delivered at all hours as long as a light burned in the house.<sup>1</sup>

The delivery of the mail originated from Stayner, to Sunnidale Corners, Strongville and finally arriving at Jack's Lake. When the mail did arrive the Pickering Family, everyone helping, sometimes spent several hours sorting the mail. Local residents picked their mail up at the office until about 1926, when rural mail delivery was introduced.<sup>2</sup> After rural delivery began, only registered letters and parcels were collected at the post office by residents.

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1. Interview: *Pickering Family*, 1980.

*Post Offices of Simcoe County*, Simcoe County Archives.

2. Williams, David, *The Origin and Names of*.

## Education

### S.S. #10 White's School



*White's School S.S. #10.*

In 1879, land on the north side of the 12th line, west of Ebenezer Church was purchased from Dave Miler for \$400 and designated for the new school section. In the fall of 1883 the little white schoolhouse was officially opened. Prior to this students went to Crow's Corners schoolhouse. The first trustees included: John Smith, Alex McLivor and William Pickering. Miss White was one of the many teachers over the years.

Ebenezer, the neighbouring church, shared it's well with the school. Many changes took place at the White's school, as in other schools in the county. Hydro was introduced in August, 1947 for \$204. In December a radio was purchased as an educational tool for the children.

White's School joined the Sunnidale School Board in January 1948, continuing to serve the Jack's Lake community until 1962.

Although somewhat altered in appearance with a few additions, the white schoolhouse still stands, now converted to a home.

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1. *The Story of Sunnidale, 1860-1960*, pg. 27.

## Place of Worship

### Ebenezer Church

Ebenezer translated means 'Hiterto hath the Lord helped us'. Around 1881 a brick church was built by pioneers who felt a place to worship was needed for the scattered settlers of every faith. It was an interdenominational church. Some of the people instrumental in the erection of the building were John Powers, John Smith, Levi Troyer, John and James Harvey, John J. Dewsbury among others.

Among the many 'men of cloth' who trudged through all kinds of stormy weather, either on foot or in a creaky cart pulled by horses, was the first minister, Rev. Henry Goudie who came weekly from Stayner to preach. In time a parsonage was built and Rev. Ebenezer Anthony was the first resident minister. John Powers was a deacon for 43 years and a class leader for 44 years at Ebenezer.

Before it was built, families and friends gathered at the Hemlock Temple on the 10th line. Although built for all faiths, Ebenezer eventually became a Mennonite Church and finally a United Missionary.

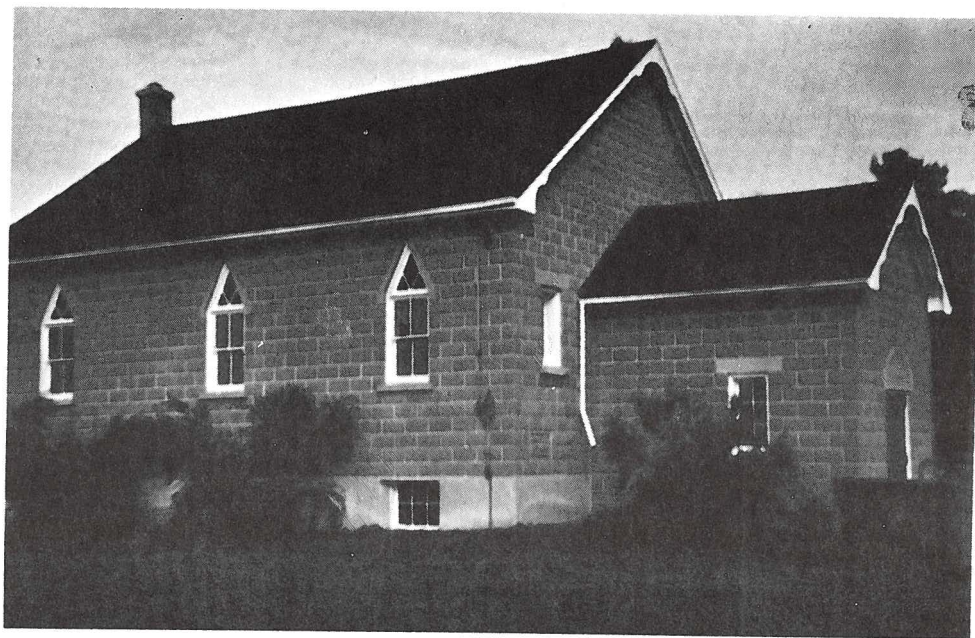
A pioneer church, Ebenezer celebrated the last supper annually with footwashing while prayers were offered as everyone knelt on the wooden floor. Musical instruments were not introduced in the church until after 1916.

One Sunday morning, February 29, 1948, as Rev. Earl Prosser lit the woodstove in preparation for the service, the church caught fire and was burned to the ground.<sup>1</sup> All records prior to this time were lost. Warm-hearted Christianity resulted with lots of volunteer labour from every denomination in the area and Ebenezer was again filled with song and prayer by August of the same year.

This little church flourished until October 1955 when it discontinued its weekly services. Its spirit lives on in an annual service in memory of those buried in Ebenezer cemetery. At the service given by a minister in the church, all offerings are used for perpetual care of the cemetery.

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1. *Creemore Star*, March 4, 1948, pg. 1.



*Ebenezer Church.*