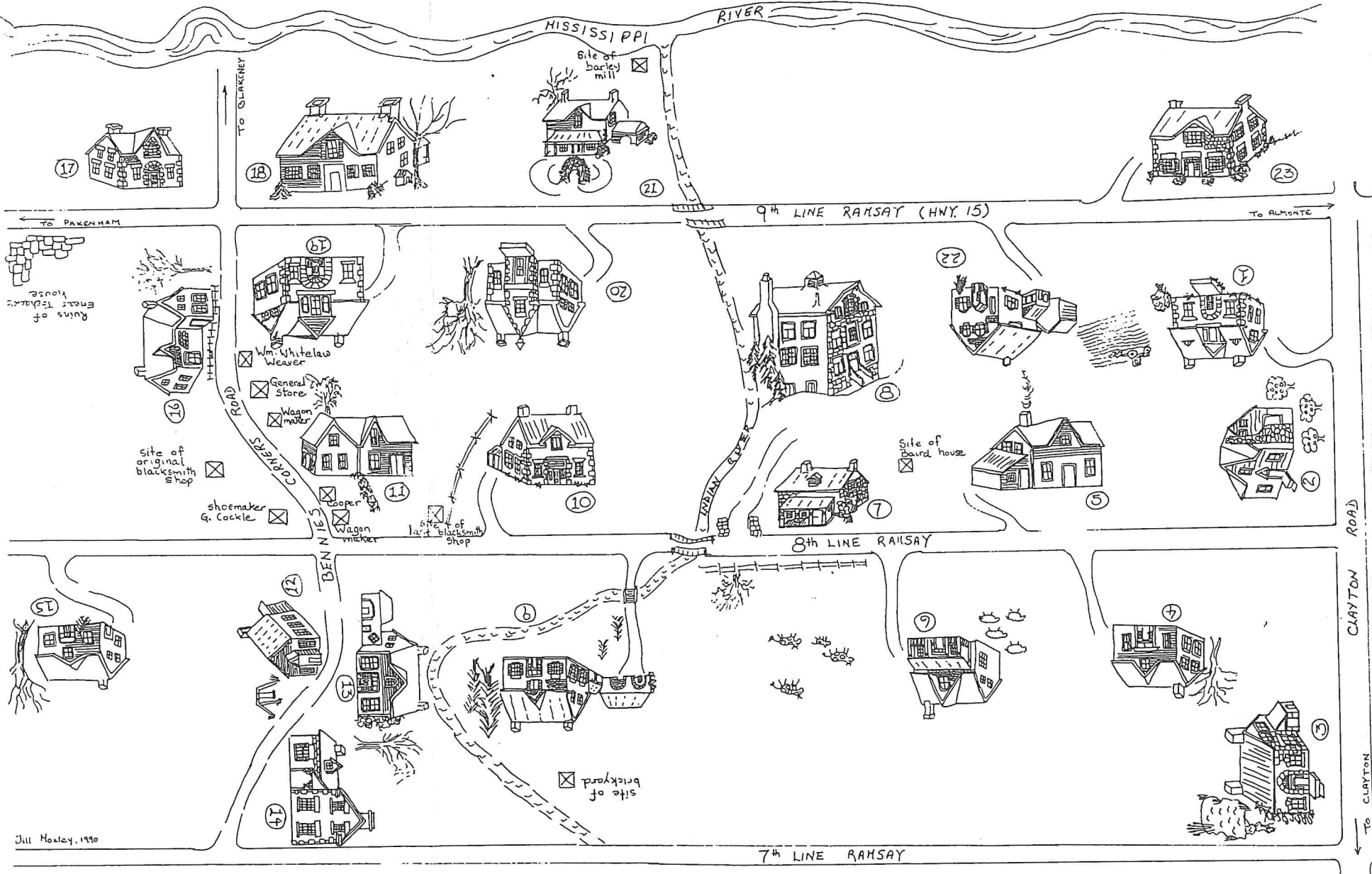
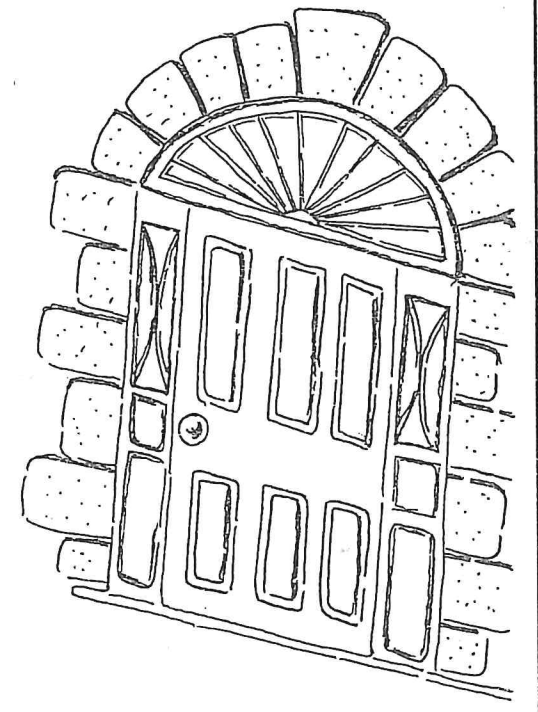


Written and drawn by Jill Moxley - June 1990
 Architectural comments by Julian Smith
 Produced by the Ramsay Women's Institute and the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority
 with assistance from the Ontario Historical Society, the Multicultural History Society of Ontario
 and Ministry of Culture and Communications.



Jill Moxley, 1990

A TOUR OF *Bennies Corners*



Located about three miles west of Almonte, Bennies Corners was a small farming community that was at its most prosperous in the early 1860s. Its population was about 150, and many small businesses were in operation ranging from blacksmith, to cooper, to weaver. All the original settlers came from Scotland, primarily the Glasgow and Paisley area, many with the Lanark Emigration Society of 1821. Although most had never farmed, they carved their living out of the bush and prospered, building the fine homes that remain today and leaving a legacy of perseverance and hard work with their descendants, many of whom are still farming in the area.

A TOUR OF BENNIES CORNERS

1. Built in the 1840s by William Moir, an early Lanark Society Settler, this house is typical of the stone houses of the time, featuring an elliptical fanlight and dressed limestone quoins and door surround. There is evidence that the upper gable was added in the 1890s at the same time that the house was covered with a lime stucco.

2. This house was originally built of logs which were later covered in wood siding and is one of the earliest homes in the area. It was the birthplace of Dr. Archibald Albert Metcalfe who practised medicine in Almonte for 65 years, served seven terms as a Mayor of Almonte, and pioneered the development of electrical power there.

3. This 1 1/2 storey farmhouse in Vernacular Georgian style is typical of mid-nineteenth century residential design in the Valley. The house is notable for the fine cut stone used on the quoins and around the front entrance with its elliptical transom. The way the stone projects suggests that the rubble wall portion may originally have had a limestone stucco. This house was built by Walter Black in 1852 and still has the original fireplace with bake oven in the cellar.

4. Built by William Barker in the 1850s this house was originally of logs, later covered in wood siding. It features the typical front gable and formal entry. Note the unusual form of the transom and sidelights.

5. This house, which was in the Bowes family for many years, is a 1 1/2 story design, a common farmhouse style more often found in stone or brick. The symmetrical three-bay front and matching end chimneys are characteristic of mid-nineteenth century design.

6. Built by John Steele Jr. in the 1890s this house, with its traditional 1 1/2 storey form, featuring a front gable and formal entry with sidelights and transom, is more typical of stone houses of the period. The front porch was probably added early in the twentieth century. This farm is still in the Steele family.

7. Gatehouse of the Mill of Kintail Conservation Area. Built about 1830 by John Baird as his store, it was restored and remodelled by Robert Tait McKenzie one hundred years later for use as a guest lodge. Wilbert and Margaret Monette then occupied the house for approximately forty years before it was sold to the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority. The rear addition was added in 1989.

8. Mill of Kintail Museum. Known originally as Woodside Mills, this imposing stone structure was built by John Baird in the 1830s as a grist mill powered by a series of dams on the Indian River. Abandoned by the Bairds in the 1860s, it was purchased by Robert Tait McKenzie in 1930 and transformed into a summer home and studio. In 1952 Major and Mrs. James Leys purchased the mill and founded the museum as a memorial to Robert Tait McKenzie. In 1972 the property was purchased by the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority.

9. Built in 1865 by John Snedden, son of the original settler, this house is of 3-ply brick made on the property from the local clay. It is a good example of the Neoclassical tradition with evidence of the growing interest in picturesque style evidenced by the decorative verge board and the round top sash window. Note the arched elliptical openings on the carriage house - one of the few remaining in Lanark county.

10. Built by William Toshack in about 1860 in typical Georgian Vernacular style. Note the dressed stone quoins and door and window surrounds, as well as the symmetrical end chimneys.

11. Home of Robert Philip, son of the original blacksmith at Bennies Corners. Built in 1868, this simple frame house of three-bay design and side gable form is typical of early Ontario houses.

12. Schoolhouse, S.S. #10 Bennies Corners - The first schoolhouse on this site was built of logs. The school was started in 1825 by John Bennie whose first wife and two infant children are believed to be buried here. The frame structure that replaced it in 1869 has the gable front design and large symmetrical windows typical of schoolhouses of the period.

13. Built by William Anderson, the original settler on this farm, this house is the original log structure which has been overlaid with wood siding. The symmetry and the rectangular transom are typical of simple Classical Revival homes of log and stone. The front gable with the Gothic Revival window may have been added at a later date. The pressed metal roof probably dates from the 1930s.

14. This lovely stone home, now called "Stanehive", was built in 1856 by Peter Young and his brother Robert. The quality of stonework here is very high with cut and dressed stone laid in regular courses. A decorative effect is achieved with contrasting stone used for the quoins and the massive lintels and door

surround. The large two-panelled front door is very handsome and the transom above has the uneven divisions typical of the area.

15. The Gardner farm was settled in 1821 and this house, originally of board and batten, was built in 1867 by Walter Gardner. It is a fine example of the Classical Revival style and features interesting patterning in the transom and sidelights.

16. Built by William Philip, the original blacksmith at Bennies Corners, this L-shaped home is typical of late nineteenth century farmhouses more commonly found in central and southern Ontario. The high-pitched roof and one small gable probably originally carried fancy vergeboards of the Gothic Revival style. The round arched windows are examples of the more decorative woodwork of the late nineteenth century.

17. Built by Abial Marshall in the 1860s of local brick made on John Snedden's farm, this house is an early example of the evolution from Neoclassical to Gothic Revival style. Note the Gothic window in gable at front and the unusual use of cut stone trim at corners and around the window and front door.

18. Known as "Snedden's Stopping Place" this substantial five-bay structure was built in 1844 to replace the original log building that burned down in 1840. The Inn served the teamsters travelling up and down the Ottawa Valley and had stabling for 14 teams of horses. It ceased operation in the late 1860s, but the farm has remained in the Snedden family and is now the home of Mississippi Holsteins.

19. Built in 1840 by John Toshack, one of the first settlers at Bennies Corners, this house is a fine example of Lanark County Vernacular. Note the elliptical fanlight and the regular coursed stonework of the front facade highlighted by cut and dressed limestone quoins and door surround. The upper gable is probably a later addition.

20. This house was also built in the 1840s by John Toshack Jr. The unusual design features a projecting centre bay and high quality stonework. In the 1860s a very large stone addition was added to the back of the house but has since been removed.

21. Known as "Otter Glen" this house was built by Stephen Young in 1858. It is close to the site of his barley mill, the area's first stone building, constructed prior to 1830. The mill later became a woolen factory.

22. This brick house was built in 1885 and the window detail and overall style are typical of late nineteenth

century design. Its present owners are the third generation of the Naismith family to live there.

23. Built in 1855 by Robert Young, a skilled stonemason (see also #14), the house is a fine example of Vernacular Classic Revival architecture. It is known as Naismith House since it was the home of James Naismith, the inventor of basketball. Naismith's parents both died in 1870 and their three children were raised by their uncle and grandmother on this farm.

From the Almonte Gazette

June 1870

While drilling a well on the farm of Mr. Peter Young, 7th line Ramsay, Mr. Chas. Tweedy struck a vein of rock bearing gold. He thinks it is there in paying quantities and a former California gold man says the stuff is pure metal. Now the people of the vicinity have room to think that this district will prove to be the Canadian El Dorado.

January 10, 1890

Bennies Corners people are greatly inconvenienced just now owing to the fact that they have no post office. Mr. Robt. Philip resigned the position of post-master some time ago, and two or three weeks since the office plant was sent in to Ottawa. We hope our M.P. will poke up the proper Government official, in order to have the P.O. re-establish as early as possible.

February 28, 1890

Society in the Bennies Corners neighborhood is all torn up at present over half-a-dozen marriages that are to take place there shortly.