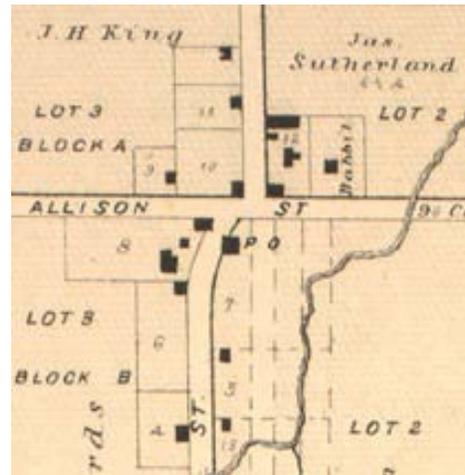


## The Store at Codrington by Dan Buchanan

The most enduring feature in the Village of Codrington has always been “The Store”. When I was growing up on the farm north of the village during the 1950’s and 1960’s the store provided a very convenient place to buy those daily necessities such as milk, bread and of course, candy. It served as a central meeting place where the locals could hear the latest news and engage in the delicious practice of gossip, probably about their neighbours. As you entered the store, the familiar tinkle of the bell over the door was usually accompanied by a friendly greeting from the storekeeper. Many generations of Codrington residents have fond memories about the store.

The store has had many different proprietors over the years. At this writing, Dave has the place chock full of antiques. The building is gradually being restored and it looks great. If we want to understand the history of the Village of Codrington, we must learn something about the history of the store.

A diagram of Codrington from the Beldon County Atlas Map of 1878 shows that the store sits at the north end of Codrington Village Lot 7 which is at the north end of a sliver of land created by Marsh Creek on the east and the highway on the west. This is in the north east corner of Township Lot 3, Concession 8. We should keep in mind that the line between Lots 2 and 3 goes through the rear of The Store. We can see that the letters “P. O.” appear beside the black square that represents the store, meaning that the store was the home of the Post Office at that time.



Codrington Village Lots c. 1878  
(Diagram from the Beldon County Atlas Brighton Twp.)

Land Registry Records for Lot 3, Concession 8 show that the original Crown Patent for all 200 acres of the lot was awarded to Kings College in 1828 as part of the Crown Reserves which were intended to support the establishment of educational institutions in the new Province of Upper Canada. In 1837 Kings College sold the south 100 acres to John McPhail who farmed south of Codrington for many years.

George Strevell obtained the north 100 acres and passed it to his son, George, Jr. in 1841. In 1847 George Strevell sold the north 100 acres to Henry Dunning who then sold it to William Trumpour in 1848. This is the last time we see a reference to the “N ½” or to 100 acres, meaning that some of the land was sold off in small pieces to make Codrington Village Lots.

The first record that refers the property where the store stood is dated 1857 and shows that William Trumpour sold “½ acre in the north east angle” to Patrick O’Neill and David Hyde. These people do not appear to have been residents of the area. There is a David Hyde in the 1861 Census for Brighton Township, located right next to James Ames in Mount Olivet, but there is no information about him in this area thereafter.

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While there are scant records to support it, we can speculate that there was some sort of mercantile enterprise located on this spot as early as 1850. We know that Alison Street was an important artery linking the Town Line and Orser Neighbourhood to the east and The Percy Road to the west. There would have been growing traffic in the early 1850's due to the constant arrival of new settlers and the growth of the farms that had been recently settled. George King divided his land near the four corners and sold village lots along the roads. The Belford's and Orser's were going strong and the Ames family had just arrived to join them in Orser Neighbourhood, these days called Mount Olivet. The Plumptions and Clark's were working their farms north of Codrington; the Dingman's and Turks looked down from Cramahe Hill on the west; the Kemp's were under Cramahe Hill to the south west and the O'Halloran's were farming to the south east of the village. The Moran family was well established to the immediate eastern edge of the village.

We know from the 1850 Census records that there was already a school house on the south side of Marsh Creek on William Trumpour's property. We also see that there was an important hotel, call The Travelers Home, located (as I would translate it) on the Old Wooler Road just east of Number 30 Highway, near Harper Peister's home. Travelers between Belleville and Hastings saw this as the halfway point of their trip and would stay overnight at The Travelers Home before heading on their way. They would come up the Town Line to Allison Street, turn west and probably stop at the store at Codrington for supplies.

In 1856 there were some important changes. On May 1, 1856 the Codrington Post Office was opened with George King as the Postmaster. The village was named Codrington by George King even though it is referred to in Municipal Records as King's Corner's for some years afterward. The name honours a well-known British General in the Crimean War. We can also find that in Land Registry Records well into the 1860's the road north of the village was called King Street. This name must have fallen into disuse by the 1870's since we do not see it on the County Atlas maps.

Even more important, the Brighton and Seymour Gravel Road was completed all the way from Brighton Harbour north to Mallory's Corners which is the intersection of Highway #30 and County Road #29, what we called The Warkworth Road. From that time forward, the old familiar Alison Street which was the east-west artery, would take a back seat to the new north-south Gravel Road. For many years merchants in Brighton Village and farmers in the back concessions had been agitating for a good road through the middle of the township. Well, here it was, running right through the middle of the little village of Codrington, right at the front stoop of the store. What could be better?

Through the 1860's there are no land records about the store, but the 1870's are a different story. On December 4, 1871, Patrick O'Neill and David Hyde sold ½ acre of Codrington Village Lot 7 to Mary A. Tay. During 1873, James B Tay and Mary A. Tay took two different mortgages on this property and then they took another one in 1876 with Walter Ross. The 1871 Census for Brighton Township shows that James Tay was a Storekeeper, age 52, born in Scotland and his wife's name is Mary. This couple and their three children are living on half an acre in Lot 3 of Concession 8 which is the location of The Store in Codrington. They are shown as tenants in this

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record which makes sense because the census was taken in April 1871 and they became owners in December.

The next transaction for Village Lot 7 was in 1884 when the ½ acre lot was sold to John Moran and son by William J. Turley and Edward F. Turley & wife. One of the mortgages taken out by the Tay's in 1873 was with Patrick Turley so this could mean that financial difficulties resulted in the property resolving to the mortgage holder at some point. The Moran family had settled on the east side of Cramahe Hollow in the 1830's on Lot 35, Concession 6, Murray Township. John's father, Phillip Moran, had come from Westmeath County, Ireland with sons John, Patrick and Michael as well as daughter Mary. Moran descendants have been well known in the Codrington area up to the present time.

Older son John B. Moran purchased Village Lot 7 in Codrington from his father in 1893, one of several Village Lots and properties outside the village that the Moran's were involved in at that time. John B. Moran held the property until 1896 when he sold it to Alciberis Van Blaricom. A later transaction dated December 7, 1896 shows Alciberis Van Blaricom as the Grantor and Alfred D. Richards as the Grantee with the accompanying note: "Exchange & \$1.00, Lot 7, East of Richards Street, ½ acre". These two men had conducted several transactions regarding other small properties near and in the village.

After two years, we see that Alfred D. Richards, a doctor, sold the property to James Terrill from the Hilton area who had married A. D. Richards' sister Maria. He turned around and sold it in 1899 to William John Newman who held the property for 5 years and then sold it in 1904, not long before he died. This Newman family ran the store at the four corners in Morganston, a few miles west of Codrington.

In 1904 the Codrington Store property came into the hands of John A. Robinson and his wife Ellen Ames who were well known in Codrington and area as they lived in the village through the 1880's and 1890's. John carried on business as a carpenter and merchant on Village Lot 11 for a time, on the west side of the road north of the Store. They sold that property to John Dinner in 1897, bought Lot 7 in 1904 and sold it again in 1907. In the 1911 Census we see them living with their youngest son, Eldon R. Robinson in Campbellford where Eldon was a stage driver and John continued his carpentry work. Soon the parents would follow their son to Toronto.

John Albert Robinson was a son of Hugh B. Robison and Abigail Bull who raised a large family in Hillier Township. They moved to Percy Township in the 1840's. Note the difference in the surname spelling; John deliberately changed his name to Robinson in the 1870's. His wife, Ellen Ames, was a daughter of James Ames and Mary Richardson who had moved their family from Waupoos Island in Prince Edward County to Orser Neighbourhood (later called Mount Olivet) in 1850. Ellen's older brother, David Ames, had married George King's eldest daughter, Mary Louisa and they went to live in Michigan. A further family connection is that John and Ellen's daughter Rose married Alciberis Van Blaricom who owned Codrington Village Lot 7 for a time as well.

The Tweedsmuir Histories of Codrington contain lines written down during interviews with Mr. Eldon R Robinson, youngest son of John A. Robinson and Ellen Ames. In 1953 he provided

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some recollections about the Village of Codrington for the Women's Institute of Codrington. Here is an interesting piece about "Stores":

*"The first store within Mr. Robinson's memory was owned by a bachelor named Comstock. This was a frame building in the centre of the present store. The north and south sides were built on later and bricked up. Mr. Comstock had a general business there and he sold to David White. Later Mr. Robinson's father, John Robinson bought Mr. White's stock and rented the building for five years. Then John Robinson bought the place south of John Dinner's house and rebuilt it into a store and dwelling. This later burned and he rebuilt on the same foundation. Mr. A. Van Blaricom went into partnership with him at this time.*

*At one time there were three general stores in Codrington. Mr. Wm. McCarthy had one on the corner of the present Frank McGuire place. It was a larger frame building. Then Mr. McCarthy built a small store on the north west corner and the one he moved from was turned into a carriage and paint shop by Tom Martin. Mr. James Sutherland put up a building on the north east corner using the lower part for a general store and a harness making shop upstairs. He also built a large carriage shop just north of the present house and employed several men. This building was later torn down. He also had a blacksmith shop between the carriage shop and the house. Mr. Sutherland sold the stock of the general store to Wm. McCarthy and they moved the McCarthy store to the rear of the Sutherland store and store remained there for many years.*

*But getting back to the present building, Mr. Moran (Will Moran's grandfather) bought this store and his widowed daughter, Mrs. Murphy, lived in the house for several years. She rented the store to different ones. Tom Kemp being one. Then fire again destroyed John Robinson's store and he bought the present store. Later he sold to Rich Newman. Mr. Newman bought the Sutherland store, tore it down and used the lumber to build the back on the present store and this left only one store then in the village. Then John Robinson bought out Newman's, sold to Aaron Clark, who sold to Mowat Austin, etc... Before I leave the store, I think James Sutherland deserves special mention. He was a bachelor and brought his mother and two sisters out from Scotland. One of the sisters married a Stapleton and other a Mr. Babbit."*

The Codrington Store passed to another family that was well known in the area in 1907 when John and Ellen Robinson sold the property to Aaron Clark. His grandfather, Walter Riley Clark, had immigrated from the US with his family in 1845 and purchased the north part of Lot 3, Concession 9, which was north of Codrington, on the west side of the highway, across the road from the north end of the McGee farm. When I lived at Codrington, that was where Dave Goodfellow lived. Several sons farmed there and to the northeast. The County Atlas Map of 1878 shows that Aaron's father, Jacob Wilson Clark, was on the north part of Lot 35, Concession 8, which is north of the Belford farm in Mount Olivet.

Aaron's father had died in 1878 and he was married in 1880 to Emma Victoria Palmer. The 1901 Census finds him south of Wooler as a "Cheese maker" where he remained until he purchased the Codrington Store in November 1907. By this time he had a son and a daughter; his first wife had died and he had married Fannie Matilda Shaw of Hallowell.

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It is from this period that we have several pictures of the store at Codrington, some with Aaron Clark and his family standing out front. The picture following shows, from our right to left, the proprietor, Aaron Clark, his wife, Fannie Matilda (Shaw) Clark, their daughter Eva Clark and their son, Lorne Riley Clark. There is a small child standing beside Eva who is Grace Austin, daughter of David Stanley Austin and Mary S. Shaw. Mary was Fannie's sister and David S. Austin was a brother of Mowat Austin who would take over the store after Aaron Clark. We can estimate that the picture many have been taken in the fall of 1910 since it is cool, there is no snow and Lorne Riley Clark is there. He died of typhoid fever in February of 1910.



Various pictures have appeared in local newspapers over the years, including the one from The Trentonian, April 2, 1980, which shows the front of the Codrington Store, looking south down Richards Street. In the foreground is the village pump with a pail on its side on the pump platform; the water trough is to your left out of the picture. Travelers on the road could stop to water their horses and find fresh cool water readily at hand.

In the newspaper, the caption under the picture said "Next to the store was the VanBlaricom house; and that house with two chimneys still stands." It was Aliciberis Van Blaricom who owned this house south of the store in the 1890's. He had married Rose Robinson and worked with Rose's father, John A. Robinson in the establishments north of Allison Street. The building just south of the Store in this picture was torn down to leave a pleasant lawn for the occupants of

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the Store. In the 1950's and 1960's there was a lilac bush near the road toward the south side of the lawn. South of that there was a deep gully that ran east from the highway to Marsh Creek.

The house with the two chimneys is said to be still standing in 1980 when the picture was published. In fact, that house stood until it burned down in 2004 and was replaced by a modern home. While I lived in Codrington this was the home of two daughters of Alciberis Van Blaricom, Wilda and Edith, who ran the Post Office for many years. My grandparent's house was right across the road.



Codrington Store looking south toward Marsh Creek. Pump provided water for horses and riders. In 1930 the road was straightened and the pump removed.

The 1911 Census shows that Aaron Clark is a Merchant and Post Master at Codrington. In February of that year his son, Lorne Riley Clark, died of typhoid fever at the age of 29. In June Aaron Clark sold the Codrington Store to Mowat Austin who had farmed near Hilton after living for a time with his father, Lewis Thorpe Austin who owned land on the east side of Mount Olivet, including The Island.

Mowat Austin owned and operated the Codrington Store and Post Office for 13 years, one of the longest proprietorships in the history of the building. He sold it in 1924 to Eric Foster who turned it over to James Maines in 1927 and in the next year it was sold to Johnnie Hough. Johnnie

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Arthur Hough owned and operated the Codrington Store from 1927 until 1940, another relatively long period of time. He was born in Thurlow Township in 1891 where his father, Andrew Washington Hough, farmed until moving to Hillier Township after 1895. Johnnie A., as he signed himself, was living in Smithfield when he married Gladys Chase in 1915. Their son, Clinton Andrew Hough, married Helen Goodfellow, a daughter of Cecil Goodfellow and Edna Skinkle of Mount Olivet.

A comment with the marriage announcement of Clinton Hough and Helen Goodfellow said "Three sons of store-keepers married local girls: Clinton Hough married Helen Goodfellow; Millard Walmsley married June Wright; William Lelliott married Ada Goodfellow."

A newspaper clipping at the time of Johnnie & Helen Hough's Diamond Anniversary is available in The Tweedsmuir Histories: "Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Hough; Diamond Anniversary Observed by Couple; Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Hough of 507 Howden Ave., Peterborough, celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary on Sunday, Jun 22. Mr. Hough was born in Hastings County and Mrs. Hough is a native of Prince Edward County. She is the former Gladys Blanche Chase. Both Mr. and Mrs. Hough are descendants of United Empire Loyalists. They were married at the home of the bride in Melville, Prince Edward County by the Rev. E. Harston. Both remained in the county and farmed in the Burr settlement until 1928 when ill health of Mr. Hough prevented him from continuing farming. The couple then bought a general store in Codrington where they remained for 12 years, before coming to Peterborough. Mr. and Mrs. Hough have two sons, Clinton of Peterborough and Elwood of San Francisco. The couple also have five grandchildren, two residing in Peterborough, one in Niagara Falls and two in San Francisco, also two great-grandchildren in Niagara Falls."

One of the most significant changes to occur in the immediate vicinity of the Store was in 1930 when the road was moved to provide smooth travel through the village. This was part of a larger program of improvement which saw the province take responsibility for many roads and use public funds to straighten and improve the roads which was demanded by the increasing number of people driving those new-fangled automobiles. Since this was the Depression, it was also a program that put some men to work for a daily wage, something that became really scarce in those years.

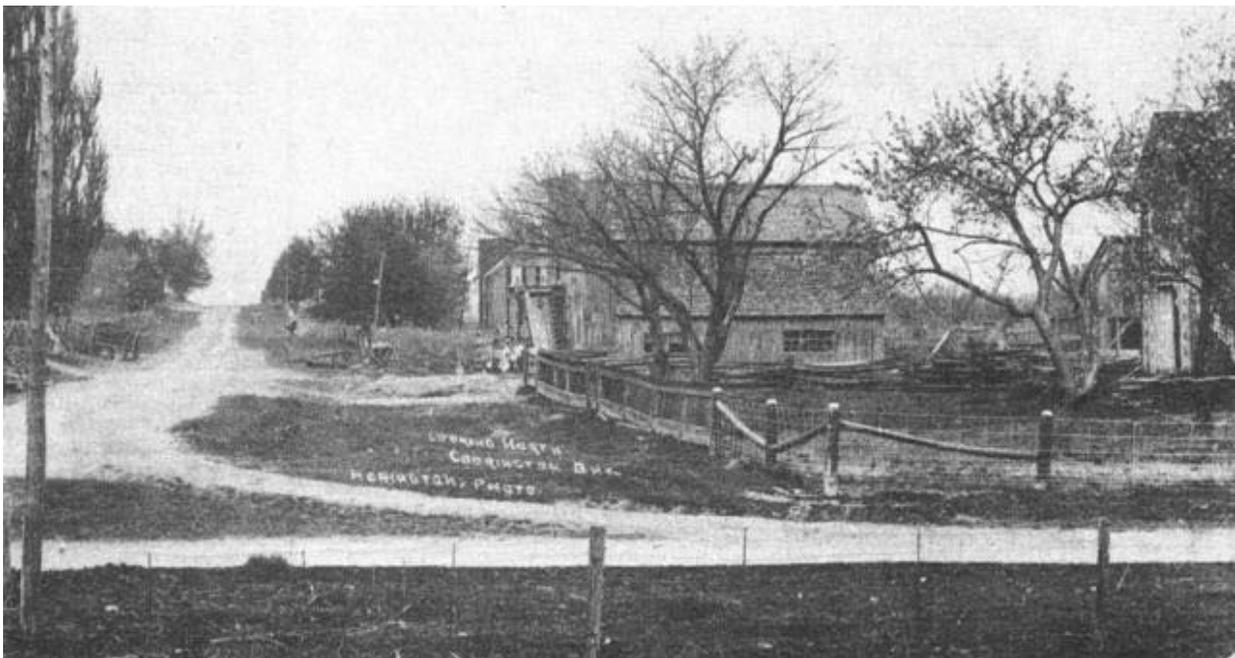
The picture below shows the Codrington intersection around 1912, looking east from the spot where the water pump stood; you can see the corner of the well platform in the lower right of the picture. The barn on the right sat just to the north of the store and it would be removed "... by Mr. Dickson, who used it to enlarge his barn on the Caleb Cole property near McPhail's Cemetery on the Old Wooler Road." The house on the left was the home of James Sutherland and would later be the home of Art Ames. The house just east of there has long ago lost the lookout on its peak. That plot of land had been sold by James Sutherland to his son-in-law Stephen Babbit. They built the house and Stephen and Mary Babbitt lived there for a time until Frank Pearson obtained it and then his wife Hannah Platt became the owner in 1901.

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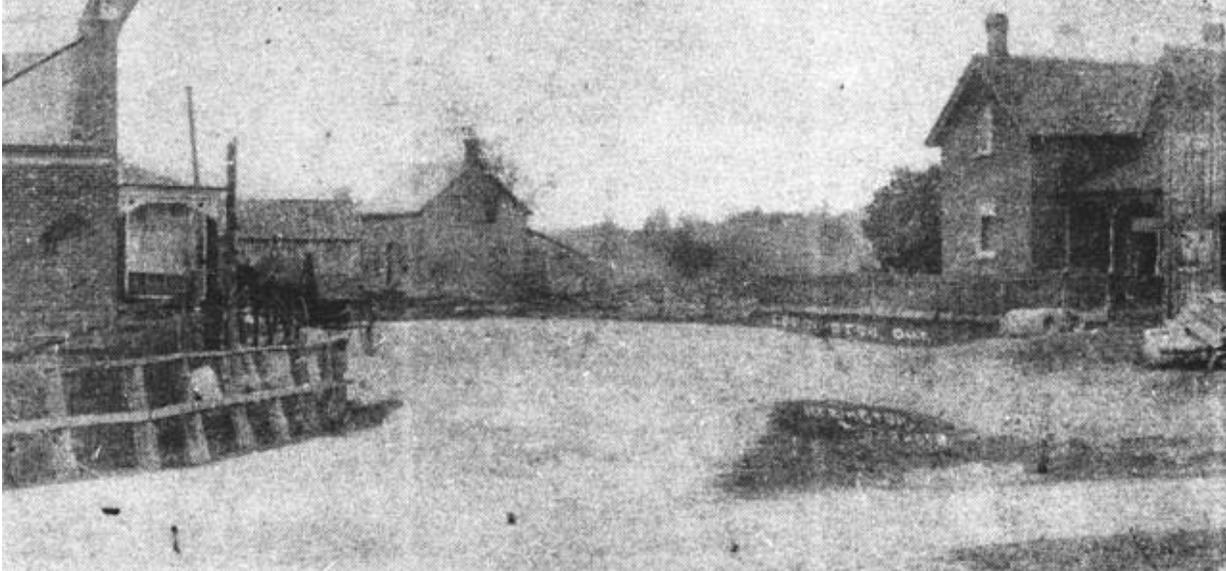
Farther down Allison Street to the east we can just barely see the house of David Christopher Stuart and his wife Abbie Kaziah Valleau. Dave Stuart was the youngest of the Stuart family and his older sister, Elizabeth, had married John Buchanan who was my great-grandfather. Another sister had married Thomas Busby Wragg, Jr. and then one of Dave's daughters, Mary Ann Stuart, married Harry Pearson, a son of Frank and Hannah Pearson who lived next door.

Another picture from the 1912 era looks directly north from the barn beside the Store. Allison Street runs left to right at the bottom of the picture and we can see King Street, or Number 30 Highway as I knew it, climbing the long hill to the north. On the far right we can see the side of James Sutherland's house and in the middle, to the north of the house, we can see the blacksmith shop and carriage works that were run by James Sutherland. The brick house north of that is where John A. Robinson and wife Helen Ames lived.



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The farm where I grew up is not visible here except for the large trees on the west side of the road on up the hill. The King/Ames/Buchanan farm enjoyed the protection of two large sentinels at the road in front of the house. A chestnut tree and a maple tree were planted in the 1850's by George King. In the summer of 2009 the maple is long gone but the majestic old chestnut tree commands the yard as never before. It is a sight for sore eyes.



The picture above provides the opposite viewpoint, looking south west across Allison Street showing the Store on the left and Ben Dusenbury's house on the right. Note the rolls of fence wire in front of the Dusenbury house, showing that he sold farm and building materials. Immediately to the south there is no house where the Maurice Harvey and later Lorne Cole house would be, but we do see a smaller frame house on the front of the lot where Maurice Ames would build a larger house. My grandparents, Lloyd and Louise Ames, would live there after their daughter, Mary, was married to Charles Buchanan and they took up residence at the farm.

Johnnie Arthur Hough sold the Codrington Store property to Earl and Florence Tomlinson in 1940 and they sold it the next year to Karl Walmsley. The Walmsley's held it until after the War and sold it to Hurcel D. Babcock in 1946 who sold it to William and Doris Lelliott in 1949. The Lelliott's held it only until 1954 when they sold it to Ethel Blakely. The next year, William and Doris Lelliott purchased parts of Codrington Village Lots 2 and 3, south of Marsh Creek on the east side of the road. They built a lovely modern home which featured lush gardens to the south of the house.

The Lelliott family is connected to my Goodfellow cousins because Bill Lelliott, Jr., the son of William Lelliott and Doris Shelfer, married Ada Louise Goodfellow of Mount Olivet, the eldest daughter of Cecil Goodfellow and Edna Stickle. The Junior Bill Lelliott was a very interesting fellow. He was in the Navy for five years before his marriage to Ada and then he carried on various businesses related to radio electronics. His favourite hobby was sailing which tragically led to his demise. Along with two companions, he had left Annapolis, Maryland on January 22, 1975 aboard his new 41 foot catamaran. After January 28<sup>th</sup>, the boat and crew were not heard from again.

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In 1959 Ethel Blakely sold the Store to Jim and Viola Handy and in 1968 they passed it on to their son Don and his wife Marjorie. The Handy's are the storekeepers that I remember most at "The Cod Store" as we called it. During my teen years the store was a regular stopping place on the way to almost everything - picking up the mail at the Post Office next door, visiting my grandparents across the road or going to school and certainly when coming back from school. The bell continued to tinkle when the door opened and the floor continued to squeak underfoot and always there was a friendly face behind the counter.

In 1971 Don Handy sold the store to Richard and Gwendolyn Dingman who ran the Store until 1986 when they sold it to Victoria Gerow. In 1982 Richard and Gwen had purchased Codrington Village Lot 3 from the Codrington Women's Institute. This was the location of the Codrington United Church, on the west side of the highway just south of Marsh Creek. The Church had been torn down in 1970 and the Women's Institute had made a park on the land. The Dingman's built a house on the property. They also operated the local Post Office out of their house for some years.

The store at Codrington has passed through several hands in recent years but the building looks as good as ever, partly due to the efforts of Dave, the current owner, who is intent on restoring the place. He has an antiques business in the main store space which is very different from the functions of the past but some things have not changed. When visitors push the door open they will still be welcomed by the familiar tinkle of the bell. Then, stepping inside, the nostalgic squeak of the floor boards will welcome you, as so many customers and friends have been welcomed over many decades as the Village of Codrington grew and changed outside the door.