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# Department of the Interior

## OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHER

Ottawa, SEP 25 1905

DEAR SIR,

I wish to obtain information respecting the derivation of the place-names of Canada—of the names of the villages, towns, cities and of the natural features, such as rivers, lakes, capes, bays, mountains, etc.—and shall be much obliged if you will give me any information that you may possess or can procure, respecting the below-mentioned name and also respecting the names of any other features in the vicinity of your residence concerning which you have knowledge.

In many localities, the older generation is passing, or has passed away, and unless steps are taken to collect this information, it will, in many instances, be too late. In most communities there are persons who take an interest in things of this nature or that have been connected with the early settlement of the locality. If there are any such in your neighbourhood, will you kindly submit this to them.

Below I have indicated the lines along which I desire information and also the commoner derivatives of place-names in Canada :—

(1.) Whether named after a village, town, or city, or natural feature in any other province or country ; if so, the name of province or country in which the original locality is situated.

(2.) Whether named after a person ; if so, the person's name, occupation, spelling of name as rendered by the person and any details of interest respecting him (or her) such as (a) Whether alive or, if dead, approximate year of death ; (b) Whether at any time a resident of the locality and, if so, whether still living there.

(3.) Whether named after a natural feature ; if so, any details respecting the origin of the name as applied to the feature and the geographical position of the latter.

(4.) Whether the town, village or city ever had any other name or names ; if so, at what dates, approximately, and the origin of these obsolete names.

Any information bearing on the above will be deemed a courtesy.

Yours truly,

JAMES WHITE,  
*Geographer.*

Kindly write your reply on the attached sheet.

To ensure free transmission of your reply I enclose herewith an addressed envelope which will come free of postage.

*Tilsonburg  
Oxford Co. Ont*



The Town of Tillsonburg received its name from its founder George Tillson who moved to this place about the year 1831 taking up about six hundred acres of land which forms the larger part of the Town of Tillsonburg. He had been engaged in the foundry business at Normandale, in Charlotteville County in the County of Norfolk from about the year 1825 until he moved to this locality which was then entirely unsettled and covered with forest. He built a forge and saw mill. The first name of the place was called Dereham Forge being situated in the Township of Dereham and being named after the forge established by Mr. Tillson. Mr. George Tillson resided here from the year 1831 until his death in 1864 and spent a great deal of time in the improvement of the roads leading into the Village which he had established his idea being to make as many roads centre in the place as was possible even cutting roads across farm lands to make them centre in this place. After his death the work was taken up by his son Edwin D. Tillson who continued to reside here until his death in 1902. The name was changed to Tillsonburg before the death of George Tillson and was known as the Village of Tillsonburgh, but the name was so long that it was shortened to Tilsonburg and it was not until the death of Edwin D. Tillson that the spelling of the name again followed the name of the family and a special Act was passed for the purpose of correcting the spelling and having the name spelled Tillsonburg, the Act being Chapter 64 of the Statutes of Ontario for 1902. The Tillson family have always been largely interested in the affairs of the Town and are the largest property holders in the Town and a large portion of the original property belonging to George Tillson is still in the family

*Alfred E. Reynolds, Town Clerk.*