

Name of Thomas Clark Way

"Thomas Clark: In 1841, Thomas Clark purchased 200 acres of land, Lot 15, Concession 2 East, on the south side of Sheppard Avenue from Bayview Avenue to Leslie Street, where the street to be renamed is located. His first wife, Elinor Linton, died in 1844, after having seven children. Later he married Nancy Miller, whose family farmed Lot 16, Concession 2 East, on the north side of Sheppard Avenue. After first building a log cabin, in 1855, he built Barberrry House for his growing family, which would eventually include thirteen children. He named the house Barberrry Place after the many barberrry bushes that once grew there. The house is still standing at present-day 9 Barberrry Place, and was designated under Part IV the Ontario Heritage Act by the former City of North York on June 22, 1994. The house is of unusual construction. The fieldstone foundation is eighteen inches thick. The exterior walls are three bricks thick. All the lumber used to build the house is white pine, which was cut on the property. The wall laths are hand-split pine. All the interior trim is handmade, unique to the house. Thomas Clark's land was the site of early schoolhouses in the area. In 1848, a brick schoolhouse, S.S. #11, was built facing Sheppard Avenue on land that had been Thomas Clark's, to replace the log schoolhouse that was reported as early as 1826 by a School Superintendent. In 1874, Thomas Clark sold one-half acre of his land for the construction of a new red brick schoolhouse to replace the 1848 schoolhouse. Located next to the church, the red brick school in School Section #11 stood until 1910, when it was replaced by the Oriole Public School, which was itself demolished in 1966. Thomas Clark was a community leader who held meetings in his log cabin for the Wesleyan Methodists of Oriole, the hamlet at the corner of Leslie Street and Sheppard Avenue. It was from this founding class that the Oriole-York Mills United Church developed. By 1852, Clark's class was mentioned in Methodist records, and by 1853, it was one of twelve preaching points of the Methodist Yonge Street circuit. The group later moved into the brick schoolhouse on Clark's original property, and finally into a church also built on Clark's property in 1873. In 1875, Thomas Clark transferred the 4/10th acre of land where the church was built to the "Trustees of Clark's Congregation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada in connection with the English Conference". They were known as Clark's Congregation of the Wesleyan Methodist Page 3 of 6 Church until around 1878, then as East York. In 1913, the congregation became the Oriole Methodist Church, until it was renamed the Oriole United Church in 1925. In 1959, it became the Oriole-York Mills United Church. In 1962, a new church was dedicated at 2609 Bayview Avenue. The original brick church building was dismantled in 1965. On September 28, 2014, the new church was renamed the Bayview United Church when the Oriole-York Mills United Church and the Centennial-Japanese United Church officially amalgamated. The most important reason to rename the street between Rean Drive and Barberrry Place to commemorate important early settler, Thomas Clark, is that Barberrry Place, the house he built in 1855, at present-day 9 Barberrry Place, is the only structure from the community's pioneer past which still survives in the area. It was designated under Part IV the Ontario Heritage Act by the former City of North York on June 22, 1994. Both a church and a schoolhouse were built in the 1800s on Thomas Clark's land, but they have long been demolished. It would be very fitting for the unassumed street between Barberrry Place and Rean Drive to be renamed to commemorate pioneer, Thomas Clark, who contributed so much to the community at the time, and into the future." [Source: City of Toronto: *Renaming of Karen's Way extending between Barberrry Place and Rean Drive*; April 3, 2019.]