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Journal



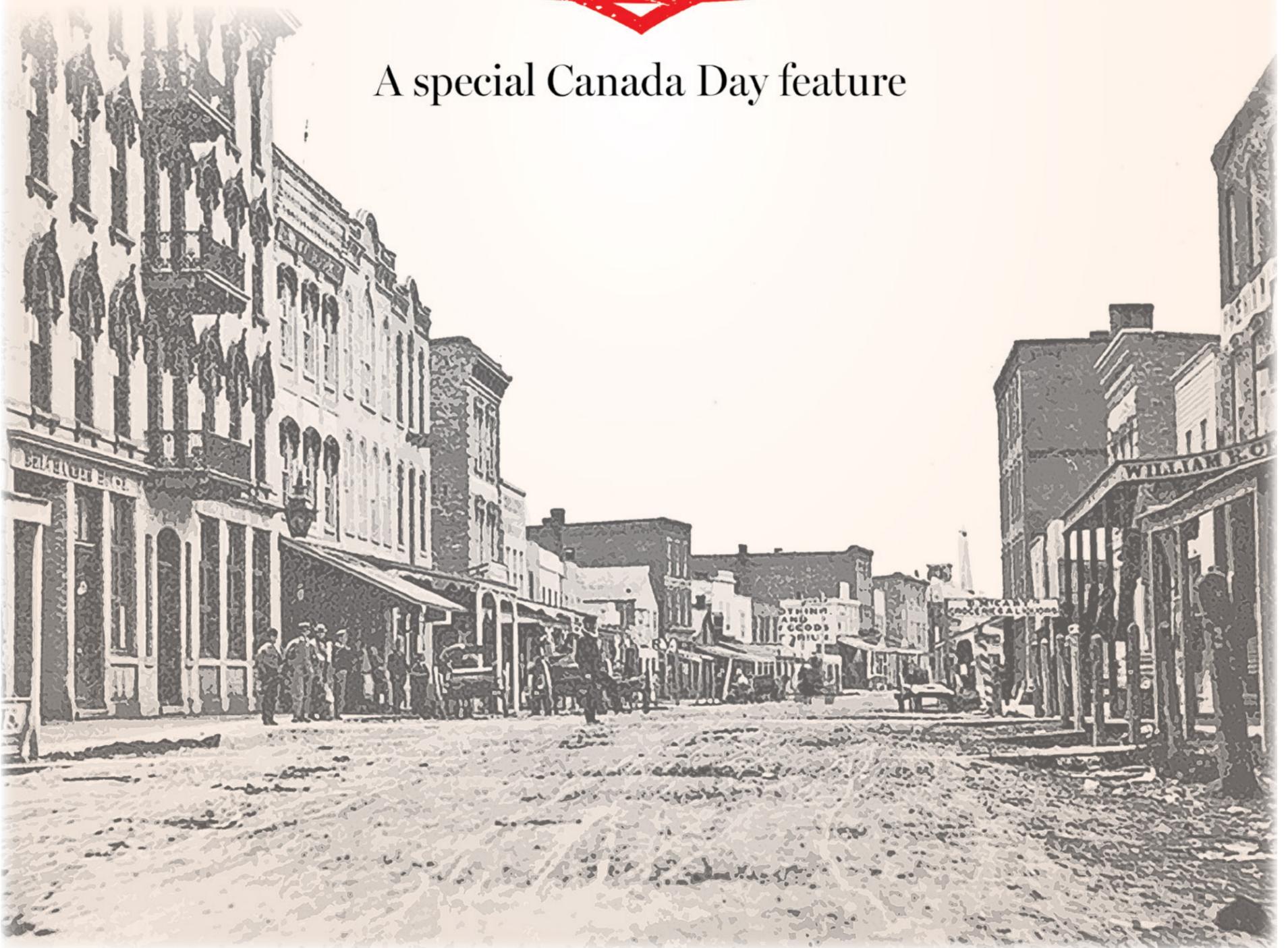
Sarnia 1867 Edition

Free of Charge

Thursday, June 29, 2017



A special Canada Day feature



Sarnia 1867 Edition

A snapshot of our town at the time of Confederation

The sun rose over Sarnia into a clear, blue sky on the morning of July 1, 1867.

It was the day the British North America Act would come into effect, forging Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick into the new Dominion of Canada.

It was the day parishioners would gather on Christina Street to lay down the cornerstone of St. Andrew's Church.

And it was the day — much anticipated by the town's nearly 3,000 residents — to gather downtown and celebrate with the very first Canada Day parade, or Dominion Day parade, as it was then known.

Reaching back 150 years to provide a glimpse of what life was like in Sarnia at the time of Confederation was the motivation behind this special publication.

By that first Canada Day, Sarnia had established itself as an up-and-comer on



the St. Clair River, though smaller than Port Huron, Michigan across the water and dwarfed by the sprawling "Indian Reserve" to its south.

Much of that reserve was being obtained from the Chippewa through a series of shady land transactions to create a home on Native land.

The people of Sarnia on that day were still recovering from two disastrous fires that had destroyed parts of the downtown commercial district.

But they were about to embark on a period of expansion and prosperity, thanks to two recent rail lines, the bustling shipping trade at Ferry Dock Hill and a new oil industry taking root.

To tell the stories in this 32-page special edition



CAPTAIN JIM ROBINSON of the Ferry Sarnia stands on the dock at Ferry Dock Hill conversing with several other ship captains in this photo taken circa 1873. Among the ships anchored in the river are the Sweetheart, the steamer Mary Pringle, and a fleet of schooners including the Golden West, Sunrise, F.W. Gifford, Unidalla, Trinidad, St. Lawrence and Mystic Star. **Photo courtesy, John Rochon collection**

we tapped a group of very talented writers, including The Journal's own Phil Egan and Cathy Dobson and Aamjiwnaang historian David Plain.

For their input, guidance, photographs, corrections and sundry other help, we thank Glen C. Phillips, Pat McLean, Tom St. Amand, Steve Loxton, Wayne

Wager, Ron RealeSmith, Randy Evans, and the kind and patient John Rochon.

Finally, a special thanks to our sales team, graphic artists and paper carriers, and especially to each and every one of our advertisers, without whom this special edition and The Journal itself would not be possible.



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Sarnia 1867 Edition

In 1867 folks drew their drinking water from Sarnia Bay

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

From its very earliest days Sarnia has looked to the cool, clean waters of the St. Clair River for its daily needs.

European settlers would make the short journey to the riverbanks — short, because most villagers lived within walking distance— and dip wooden buckets in and make the journey home with the precious cargo.

It was a daily ritual.

Larger users would fill barrels or tubs, hauling them home on oxen-drawn carts or horse-drawn stone boats.

As late as the 1940s citizens here still could recall watching James Belchamber ride his cart down Front Street and haul his hotel's water up in multiple barrels.

It didn't take long, however, for the daily drudgery of trekking down to the riverbank to result in people turning to less burdensome solutions.

Above and below ground cisterns, and household or neighbourhood wells soon made life easier. Many also captured rainwater to conserve supplies

in wells and cisterns.

Draymen would drive two-wheeled wagons to the foot of George Street, back them into the river, and fill barrels of water to sell around the town.

That was life in Sarnia at the time of Confederation, and right into the 1880s draymen were relied upon to help the people of Sarnia maintain their water supply.

By the 1870s, Sarnia was still a town principally clustered along the waterfront. The business district on Front Street was still mostly constructed of wood.

But Sarnia was looking to the future, and public pressure began to mount for a water system capable of handling the needs of as many as 10,000.

The determination to create a city waterworks system was partially driven by fear. In the years prior to its installation, epidemics of fever, typhoid and malaria had struck the town, causing many deaths.

Public opinion blamed the suspect water system, particularly the discharges from plants and factories fronting Sarnia Bay.

In summer, the household well or cistern would often



BEFORE THE ADVENT of modern water treatment practices, Sarnians consumed their drinking water directly from the St. Clair River. Contamination from ships, drains and animal and industrial waste contributed to periodic outbreaks of illness, including typhoid fever. This image by photographer Louis Pesha shows cows drinking in the river south of Sarnia.

Photo courtesy, Glen C. Phillips, Lambton: An Illustrated History of the County.

run dry, and occasionally this happened in winter as well. Citizens would then find themselves calling upon the two-wheeled platform drays that sold water drawn from the foot

of Lochiel Street. The purity of Sarnia Bay was more than suspect.

In late summer, the townspeople voted 240 to 63 to shoulder a debt of \$70,000 and

build a waterworks system. County Council agreed to back the debentures and work got under way in the late fall of 1875, ushering in a new era for the community.

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Sarnia 1867 Edition

Our first Canada Day parade included “four young virgins”

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

The four Canadian provinces came together to create a new nation on July 1, 1867, and Sarnians were more than ready to celebrate that first “Dominion Day” in style.

Weeks before, notices were posted around town calling for a public meeting to discuss the party plans. The mayor, after taking a chair before a “very respectable gathering” of townspeople, called for a day of music, parading and uniformed marching men. A committee was struck to finalize the plans.

That morning of Sarnia’s first Canada Day dawned sunny and

hot with a blue and cloudless sky. It was a Monday, but all work was cancelled. Flags flew from every public building and from ships moored in the bay. The town’s streets were dressed in bunting.

The celebration was fuelled by grants of \$300 and \$200 from county and town councils respectively,

As the sun rose, a huge crowd began to flood into the downtown from neighbouring regions and Port Huron across the river. Not since the Prince of Wales’ visit seven years earlier had so many people congregated.

At 10:30 a.m., two Moore Infantry Companies and the Sarnia Infantry and Artillery Company assembled at the Town Hall. They

marched to the parade ground under the command of Lt. Col. Davis, and the Sarnia Cornet Band. There, two Grand Trunk Rifle Companies from Point Edward joined them under the command of Major Wily.

Next came a display of military manoeuvres, after which the companies formed into line and the “feu-de-joie” was fired. This celebratory ritual involved each soldier firing into the air in succession. Three cheers went up for the Queen, and three more for the new Dominion.

From the parade ground, the progression headed down Christina Street, up George to Front, down to Francis (later Davis) Street, and then back by Christina to the Market Square.

Leading the procession was the Sarnia Band, followed by the



FRONT STREET, AS it appeared looking south from Lochiel Street in 1869. People had lined up on its wooden sidewalks two summers earlier to take in the very first Canada Day parade, or Dominion Day as it was originally known. One structure still standing today is the Belchamber Hotel, on the left, which then had balconies overhanging the street. Other businesses include a barbershop and clothing and dry good store. In the distance are several horse-drawn carriages and wagons.

Photo courtesy, Lambton County Archives, 9JA-N

Volunteers with banners flying, followed by the town clerk in a carriage bearing the Queen’s Proclamation.

Next came a carriage holding four young virgins dressed in white, each representing one of the four provinces unit-

ing in Confederation.

More carriages followed with dignitaries from Sarnia and Port Huron, including clergy and veterans of the War of 1812, followed by the Port Huron and Sarnia Fire Brigades.

The official ceremo-

nies came to a close with speeches by the mayor and Alexander Mackenzie, Sarnia’s favourite political son.

Some residents then adjourned to local hotels for a liquid celebration.

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HAPPY 150TH CANADA!



CANADA 150



Sarnia 1867 Edition

Toil, drudgery and dependence the lot of the farmer's wife

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

At the time of Confederation fewer than 3,000 people lived in Sarnia, which was a smaller town than the City of Port Huron across the St. Clair River.

And few people here worked as hard or as tirelessly as the wives of the many farmers who lived in and around the town.

A letter to the editor of the Observer in December of 1866 mused on the value of that labour in a column, curiously entitled "Do Farmer's Wives Pay?"

The letter asked the question: "Does a young woman, who comes to her husband with little or no dowry but with willing heart and hands, and a fair share of intelligence, who takes care

of him, of his home and his family as it increases, without hired help – really earn anything more than food and clothing?"

A dowry, for those unfamiliar with the term, was money or property brought to a marriage by the bride. The custom of dowries is an ancient one, not common today in Canada but still traditional in some cultures.

The letter-writer mused on the commercial value of the effort undertaken daily by farm women, and questioned whether that value was appreciated by their husbands.

The letter might have been a response to a July, 1866 editorial entitled, "The Duties of Canadian Farmers' Wives." The editorial described the daily ritual of waking early to milk the cows, making breakfast for the family, dressing the children, washing

dishes, skimming the milk, churning butter, sweeping the farmhouse, making the beds, preparing lunch and dinner, cleaning up, milking again, washing dishes again and putting the children to bed.

After her husband went to sleep, the article noted, the farmer's wife would sit up to midnight sewing, so as to avoid paying a seamstress.

It was a life of washing, ironing and scrubbing. There was no lunching with girlfriends, golf outings, or winter holidays in the Caribean. But there was the ongoing risk of sickness and disease – her own and her children's.

The letter writer wanted to know whether a farmer appreciated the never-ending toil that was his wife's lot in life.

"When she asks for a few dollars for the purchase of something not strictly necessary – a book, perhaps," the letter writer asked, would the farmer consider that an impertinence and waste of money, or his wife's proper due.

One hundred and fifty years ago the man was the unquestioned master of the house. Women couldn't vote. Sarnia was a much different world then.



THIS PORTRAIT OF an anonymous woman was taken at the Front Street studio of the "Robinson Brothers: Heliographers" of Sarnia, sometime between 1865 to 1867. Photo courtesy, John Rochon collection



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Sarnia city/county councillor

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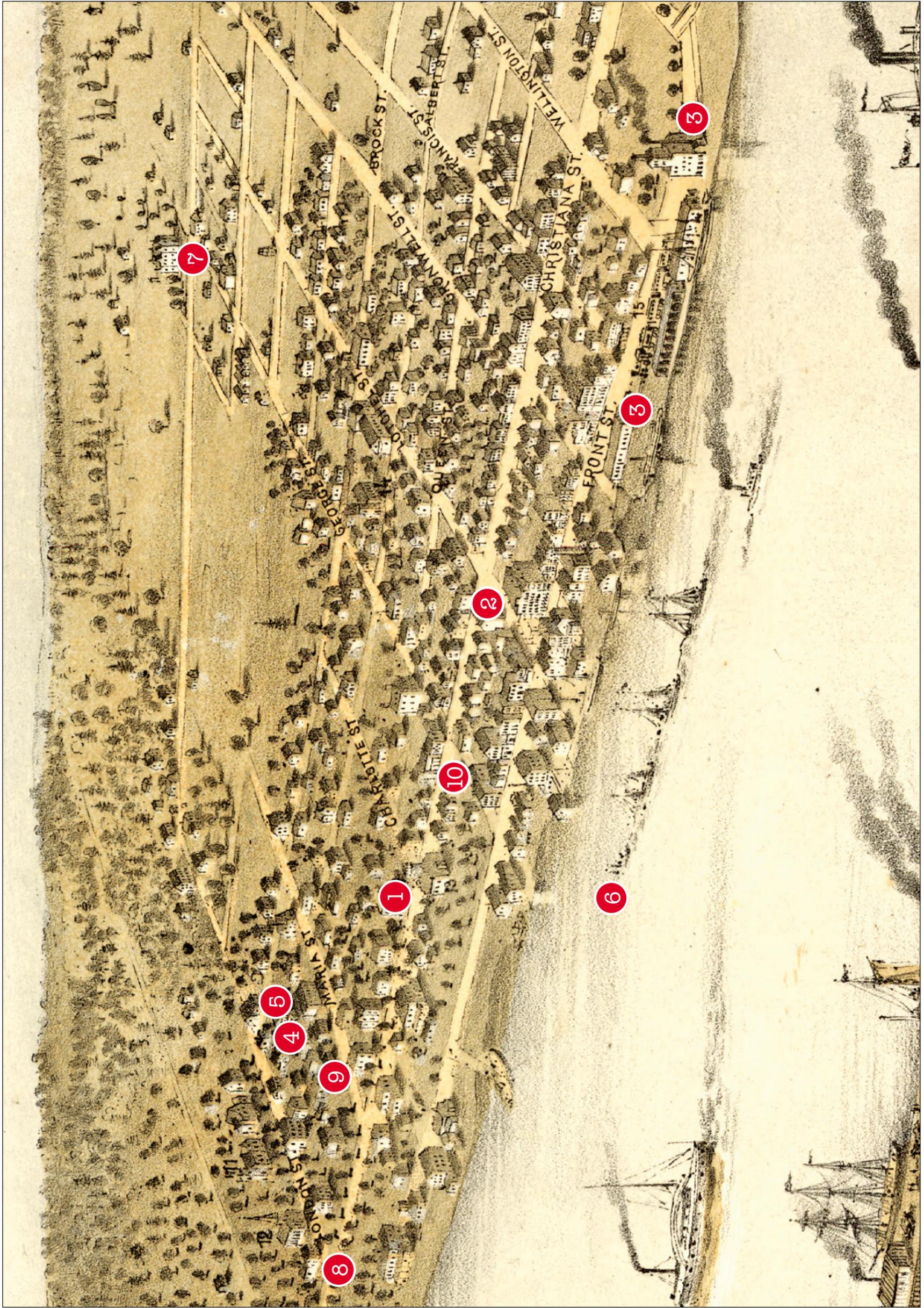
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CANADA 150

Sarnia 1867 Edition



THIS REMARKABLE MAP depicts what Sarnia and the St. Clair River looked like in the year 1867, according to an artist with the Chicago Lithographing Co. What's shown is actually a detail from a much larger "birds-eye view" that encompassed all of Port Huron, Michigan, and even ship traffic into Lake Huron. Like many artist concepts it is not drawn to scale and there are inaccuracies, including misspelled streets. But it offers a rare and compelling overview of the young town's scope and prospects. Landmarks referenced elsewhere in this special edition include: 1 - St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; 2 - The Belchamber Hotel; 3 - Great Western Railway buildings, now gone. On page 34 is a panoramic photo of Sarnia taken a few years later from atop the tall elevator building, lower right; 4 - Skilbeck House, 118 Maria St; 5 - An early boarding house, 112 Maria St; 6 - A tug towing sailing ships through the rapids to Lake Huron; 7 - Union School site on Milton Street, now the Sarnia General Hospital lands; 8 - London Road; 9 - Mayor Henry Glass's home, now the home of The Journal offices; 10 - Old Western and Sarnia Hotel.

Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, Washington, D.C

Sarnia 1867 Edition

The Great Fire of 1866 left gaping hole in downtown

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

Daniel Mackenzie's Dry Goods Store on Front Street was one of the most popular shopping venues in the town in 1866. Just north of Mackenzie's sat a two-storey frame building. It was shared between Mr. Cotter, who operated an Exchange Office, and Mr. R.B. Brown and his wife, who ran a bakery and confectionary shop.

At 11 a.m. on Jan. 8, Mrs. Brown was shocked to discover that the east side of the upper floor was engulfed in fire. She cried out for Mr. Cotter, who raced into the street, sounding the alarm.

A crowd quickly gathered but it became readily apparent the fire had too much headway to be easily extinguished. Men rushed into the burning building and began removing as much furniture and supplies as they could carry and dumping it in the mid-

dle of Front Street.

Immediately north of the fire scene, another wood frame building housed Moses Masuret's Grocery Store. As the crowd watched in shock, flames leaped from the roof of the bakery and exchange office onto Masuret's roof and quickly ignited. With the contents of the first building mainly saved, the task of emptying the grocery store was hurriedly undertaken.

The Phoenix Fire Company arrived, running with a fire engine in tow. They parked the engine on the dock and rushed to pull the leather hose from the river's edge up to Front Street. By now, two buildings were engulfed in flames and sections of Mackenzie's store as well.

As people emptied stock from multiple shops and businesses and carted it to the street, the middle of Front took on the appearance of a bazaar.

And with the crowd distracted, some of the less savoury citizens of the



SARNIA FIRE PERSONEL and equipment from around the time of the Great Fire of 1866.

Image courtesy, Lambton County Archives, 19JA-J

town began to help themselves to the unprotected stock of goods.

As the firemen concentrated their efforts to the south of the original fire, Masuret's Grocery to the north was now totally in

flames. Immediately north of it sat Belchamber's Hotel. The contents of the Belchamber were added to the piles on Front, and soon the hotel was also ablaze. Despite the best efforts of the firemen, the fire

continued to creep north, and eastward.

Flaming embers filled the air and more than an hour had passed since the first cry of "fire!" As horses reared in terror, a livery stable on Lochiel Street was

soon engulfed in flames.

By the time the fire was finally put out, the Front Street block between Lochiel and Cromwell streets and much of Lochiel Street as well was a mass of destruction.

Happy 150th

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Sarnia 1867 Edition

How 300 'Foreign Indians' became part of Aamjiwnaang

DAVID D. PLAIN

In the 1830s, the United States complained bitterly to the Government of Upper Canada about payments it was making to "Indians" living in the U.S. for their service to the British in the War of 1812.

The Americans believed Upper Canada was using the annuities to pay in exchange for loyalty to the Crown, and the idea caused great consternation south of the border.

Finally, the Colonial government acquiesced and changed the rules of eligibility by adding a residency clause. As a result, recipients had to reside in Canada to collect the payment.

At the same time, the U.S. was fully enforcing the 'Indian Removal Act,' leg-

islation whose purpose was to relocate every "Indian" to land west of the Mississippi River.

Between them, the two policies caused a huge influx of people. And although the government extended an invitation to these "American Indians," it made no provisions for accepting them. Nevertheless, between 1836 and 1846, many people moved north of the border to Canada.

One band that lost its reservation but refused to relocate to the western U.S. was in Saginaw, Michigan, about 105 miles (170 kilometres) from what is now the Aamjiwnaang First Nation. The Chippewas of St. Clair, which at the time included Walpole Island and Stony and Kettle Point, held a special meeting to discuss the issue. The band voted to send the U.S. band

a wampum inviting them to relocate here to become permanent members, and share in the treaty annuities.

About 300 individuals accepted, and a tract of land one-half mile wide by four miles deep was allocated for them along the southern edge of the Upper St. Clair reserve.

Over the next two decades, the newcomers intermarried with St. Clair band members and incorporated themselves into the band.

However, tension continued to simmer among some members and in 1870 the schism came to a head.

That year, Joshua Wawanosh, a former chief, and interpreter William N. Fisher of Walpole Island, petitioned the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs to have the newer members removed from the band list, and their portion of the annuities revoked.

They argued these "For-

foreign Indians" had only been allowed to settle on the reserve temporarily, and because the Saginaw band had regained a reservation in the 1860s they should return to it.

That idea was countered by a Memorial instituted by Nicholas Plain, who was both the elected chief and a traditional chief. (He was also my grandfather).

The Memorial was signed

by 50 other traditional chiefs and councillors from the Upper St. Clair, Walpole, Kettle Point and Stony Point reserves. It invited the "Saginaw Indians" to be permanently incorporated into our band, to receive a portion of our annuities, and allotted two square miles of the Upper St. Clair reserve by a Special Act of Council in 1837.

Sworn oaths in the

Memorial characterized Wawanosh as a liar and a scoundrel, and Fisher as a drunk.

The dispute was settled in favour of the Memorial and the "Foreign Indians" have long since been incorporated into Aamjiwnaang.

David D. Plain is an award-winning author and historian from the Aamjiwnaang First Nation



THIS PHOTO FROM 1874 shows Chief Zahshkodawa (On the Plain), also known as Nicholas Plain Sr., back row, third from left, who was the last traditional chief of the Chippewas of St. Clair. From left are, back row, Edward Jacobs, Peter Gray, Zahshkodawa and Silas Waubmung; seated: Sampson Jackson, Antoine Rodd Sr., Ashquagonaby and Daniel Nahmabin.

Photo courtesy, David D. Plain

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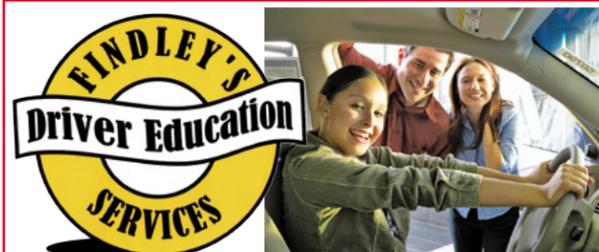
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Fund raisers like Zurich Bean Festival was started by Kinsmen, all kinds of radio thons, "trips of the month" fund raising walks and door-to-door campaigns.

The annual "Canada Day Parade" will be organized by the local Club.

In Sarnia the walk to "Make Cystic Fibrosis History 2017" was held in May.

The annual "Kinsmen Rib Fest" is returning to Centennial Park this year on July 7-8-9/2017.

Again we are looking forward to bringing Sarnia Lambton's thirty-sixth annual Santa Claus Parade on Saturday, December 6th at 6:00 p.m. through our downtown.



Yearly Santa Claus Parade



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Opening of Kinsmen Centre

The Sarnia Kin Family are currently searching for a MAJOR PROJECT in Sarnia in the year 2020. Any suggestions???



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Sarnia 1867 Edition

Sarnia was gripped by fear of the "Green Menace"

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

As a boy growing up in the 1950s I was acutely aware of the fear known as the Red Menace.

Worries about communist influence as the Cold War grew in the years following the

Second World War were rampant everywhere.

In the U.S., it was the time of loyalty oaths and the House Un-American Activities Committee, and Joseph McCarthy hunting communists in government, the film industry, and even the Boy Scouts.

Sarnia wasn't immune to the fear. I remember

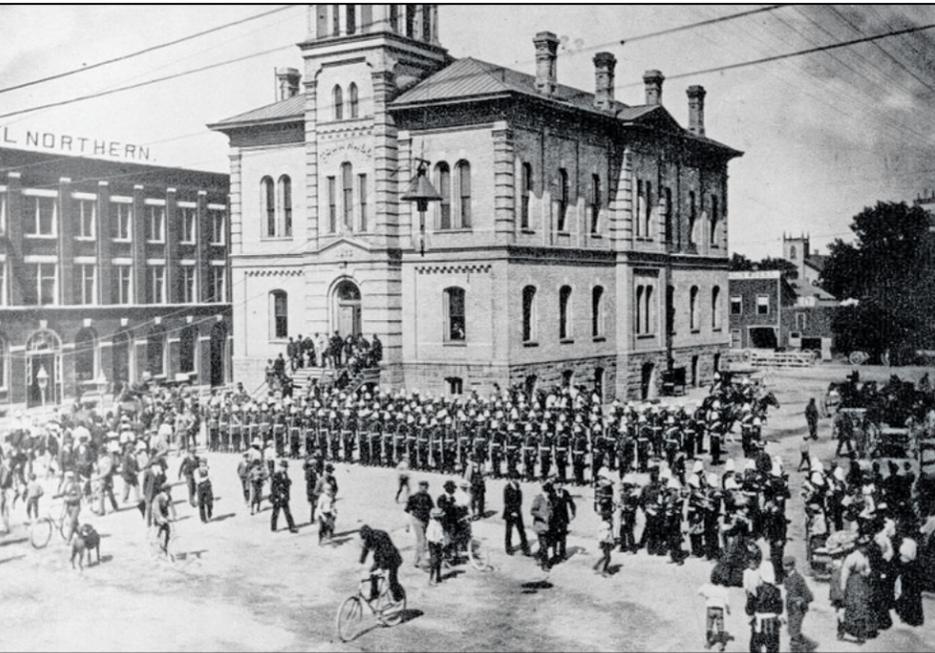
whispered schoolyard tales of communist bombers casing the St. Clair Tunnel, the Blue Water Bridge, and the oil refineries and rubber manufacturing plants of Chemical Valley.

It is easy to imagine, then, the similar fear that stalked the border in the period immediately prior to Confederation, particularly in towns such as Sarnia, Windsor, Niagara and Prescott.

Named for the fierce Fianna Eirionn, the ancient Celtic Warriors of Ireland, the Fenian Brotherhood was a real threat, unlike the Red Menace 90 years later.

Thousands of Irish immigrants served on both the Union and Confederate side in the American Civil War, which ended in 1865, just as the British were crushing the Irish independence movement in the Emerald Isle. Enraged by the British action, U.S. soldiers from both sides of the conflict rushed to enlist with the Fenians. Their plot involved seizing key points in Canada to hold as ransom for Irish freedom.

The colonial government took the threat



THE ST. CLAIR BORDERERS were originally a rag-tag militia formed to watch for a Fenian incursion across the St. Clair River. They had grown into a smart looking military unit by the time this photo was taken in 1898 in front of the old town hall.

Photo courtesy, John Rochon collection

seriously, and, beginning in January of 1866, began mobilizing troops in the threatened areas. Nearby Detroit had become a hotbed of Fenian sentiment, and rumours were everywhere in Sarnia about a St. Patrick's Day plot to invade the town. For months, it was all Sarnians could talk about as the "Green Menace" led to the tramp of marching feet in the town.

In January, troops from the York Rifles, the

Caledonia Rifles and the Brantford Rifles were being garrisoned in the town, at the Alexander House (then situated on the site of the Federal Building), at Hall's Hotel on London Road, and even in private homes. They were reinforcements for the 27th Lambton Battalion of Infantry. A little further south, the St. Clair Borderers were a rag-tag militia formed to watch for an incursion across the St. Clair River.

An invasion never happened in Sarnia, but other border areas were not so fortunate, resulting in a couple of notable battles and a handful of casualties on both sides.

The Green Menace of Fenianism would go down in history as Sarnia's first real military threat. It also provided one more impetus for all Canadians to embrace the security of Confederation the following year.

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CANADA 150

1867 - 2017

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Happy Birthday Canada!

Sarnia 1867 Edition

The grand train station in Point Edward was fit for royalty

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

Its grandeur was captured forever in a sketch by Canadian artist J.C. McArthur.

It depicts a group of 266 Icelandic immigrants leaving Point Edward's impressive Grand Trunk Railway station in 1875 as they prepared to board the steamer, Ontario.

Driven from their homes in Iceland by an erupting volcano, they had been lured to the shores of Lake Winnipeg by Canadian agents – a journey that brought them to the railway terminus in the flourishing company town of Point Edward.

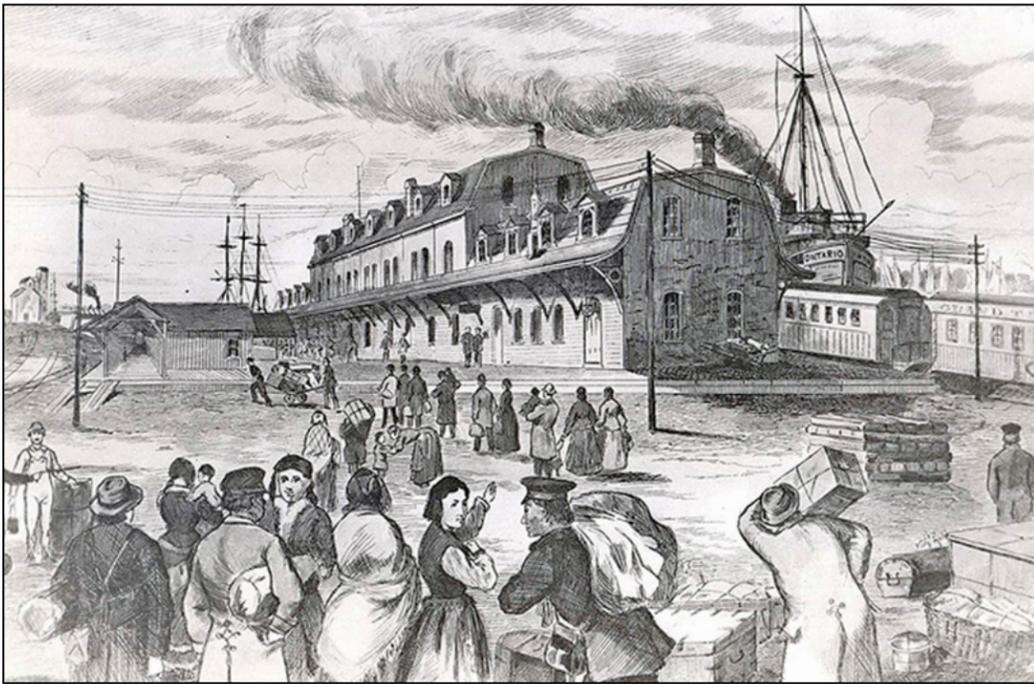
Built in 1859 as the Grand Trunk connected Point Edward to the rest of the fast-growing net-

work in Ontario, the station-hotel was a three-storey, white brick building, 200 feet long and 40 feet high.

It was equipped with first-class and second-class waiting rooms, an excellent restaurant and overnight accommodations. The stationmaster, John McAvoy, had apartments for his family.

The property was beautifully landscaped, with gardens, flowerbeds and a fountain. It was located on the waterfront on land that today is partly beneath the Blue Water Bridge. A west-facing balcony overlooked the St. Clair River and Lake Huron.

In the years immediately following Confederation, a red brick baggage depot and telegraph office was constructed adjoining the station to the south. Livestock sheds to the east sheltered ani-



THE ARRIVAL OF the Grand Trunk railway in 1859 connected Sarnia with Toronto, Montreal and the entire Atlantic seaboard. The terminus was this grand station in Point Edward, which was a jumping off point by ship to Lake Superior and lands to the west. This drawing depicts 262 Icelandic immigrants arriving by train in Point Edward in 1875 to board the steamship Ontario en route to their new home on the shores of Lake Manitoba.

Image courtesy, Lambton County Archives, H104-8



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mals in transit.

On the river side, the GTR built a shed for overseas immigrants and maintained a location on the river where travellers could bathe and wash their clothes as they waited to be ferried across the river to Fort Gratiot to continue their travels.

Over the years, the station hosted a number of notable visitors. When the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, visited Sarnia in 1860 it was a time of momentous celebra-

tion. The Prince was naturally feted at one of the area's finest restaurants — the one at the station — after which a massive ball was held in his honour.

Lord Monck, the governor-general of Canada, was the next celebrity to visit the station. He was passing through Point Edward on a trip to Detroit in August of 1865. Later that year, Ulysses S. Grant and his family were also overnight guests. Touring the U.S. and Canada following the triumph of the

Union armies under his command in the American Civil War, Grant was en route from Buffalo to Detroit when he stopped and visited the area.

A passing train started a fire in 1877 that destroyed the great station. It was replaced with a smaller building, and when the St. Clair Tunnel opened in 1891 rail traffic shifted south to Sarnia.

With it went about two-third's of Point Edward's population.

Continued on 15

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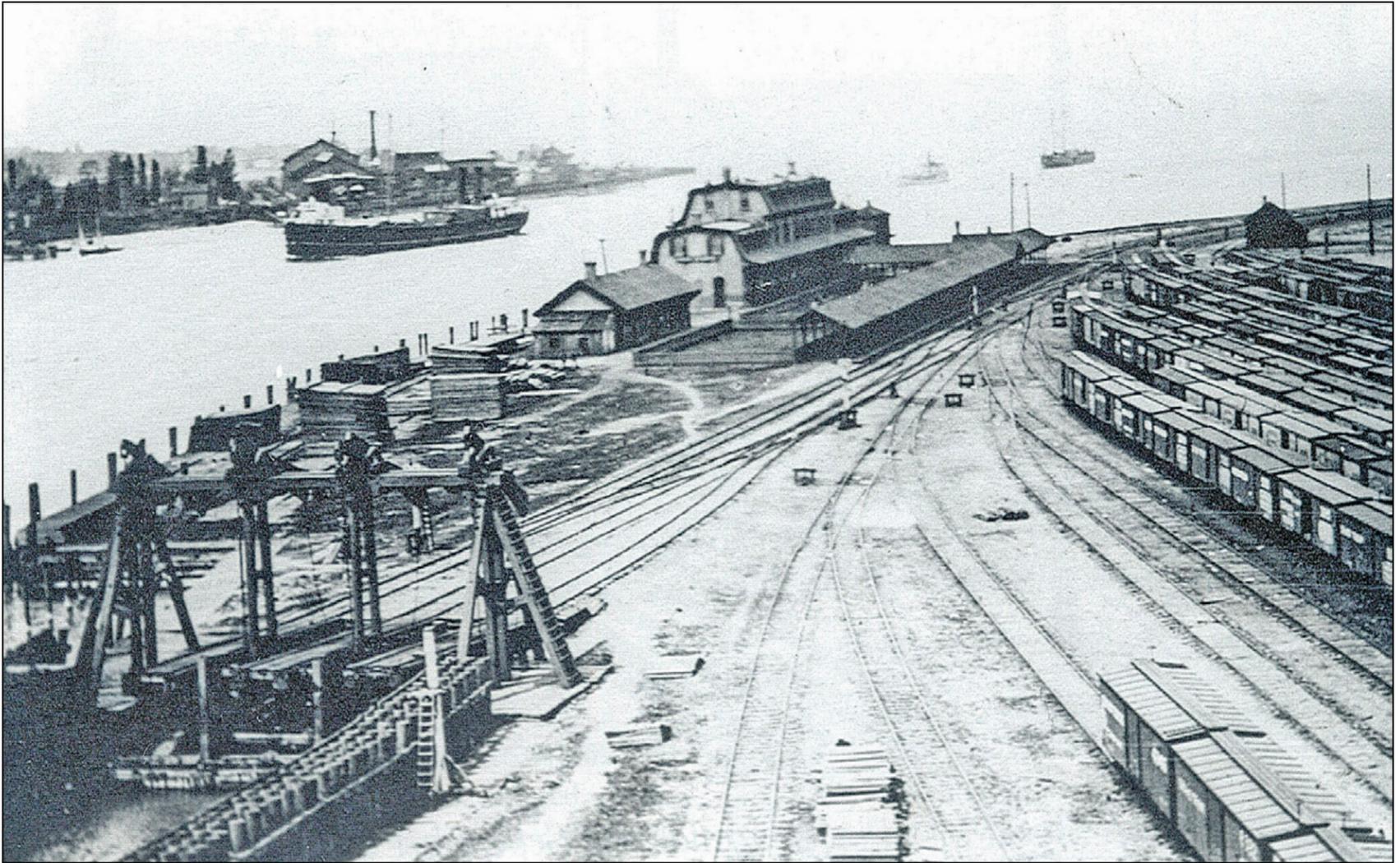
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Sarnia 1867 Edition



ANOTHER VIEW OF the Grand Trunk Railway Station and trainyard, as seen from the south. It handled people and goods shipped by rail that could be loaded directly onto waiting ferries via the dock visible in the lower left.

Photo courtesy, Glen C. Phillips, Lambton: An Illustrated History of the County.

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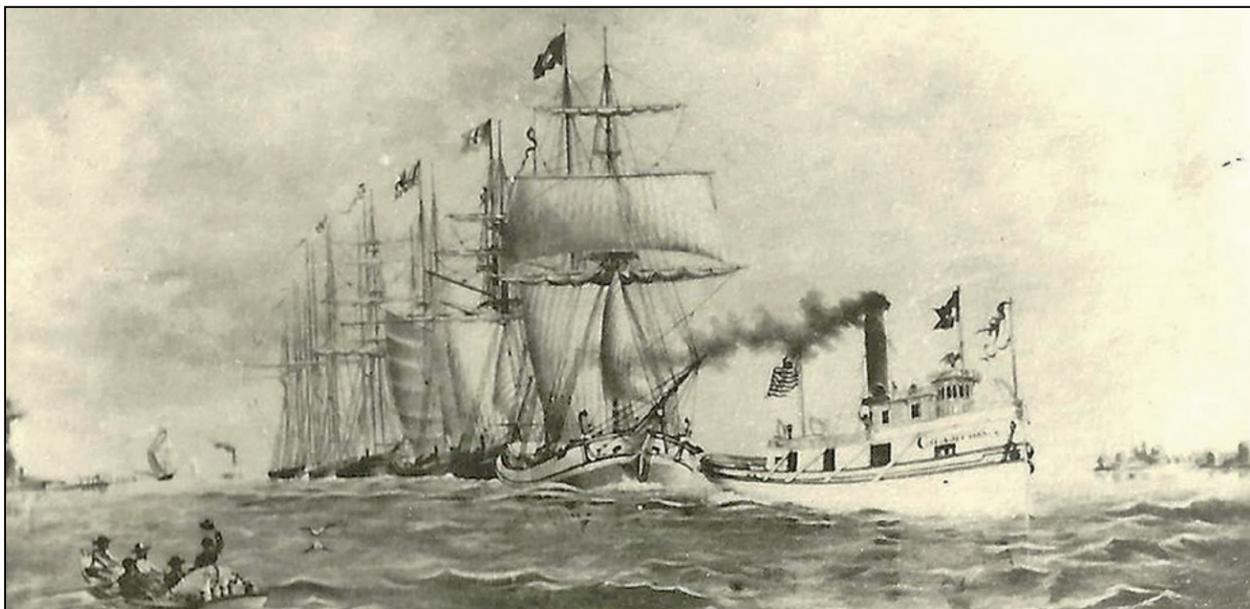
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Sarnia 1867 Edition

Ferry Dock Hill and the era of ship-towing tugs



THE TUG CHAMPION worked between Sarnia and Amherstburg. In this painting by Seth Whipple, she is seen towing eight schooners in the Detroit River.

Image courtesy, Sombra Museum

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

Few areas of Sarnia have changed as much over the past 150 years as Ferry Dock Hill.

Today, it's a relatively tranquil section of the downtown business district and home to one of the city's best-known law firms. For much of its existence, however, it was the busiest place in town.

The postcard collection of Sarnia's Dave Burwell, which was recently featured in The Journal and available on the Sarnia Historical Society website, contains some startling images of

Ferry Dock Hill during this time.

They portray a scene of frenetic activity. A forest of masts rises above the two, three and four-masted schooners waiting to load or unload cargoes of wheat, potash, wooden staves, railway ties, salt, cordwood, shingles, furs, pine and walnut boards, coal or iron ore.

Here was located the Sarnia terminus of the Great Western Railway, where cargoes were loaded for shipment to other towns and cities.

As trade grew, speed and efficiency of schedule became critically more important, but sailing ships were

Continued on 17

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THE SS NORONIC, seen here at Ferry Dock Hill, was a passenger ship destroyed by fire in Toronto Harbour in 1949 with the loss of at least 118 lives. The city borrowed the design of the hill's Victorian light standards for the ones used today.

Dave Burwell Collection, Sarnia Historical Society



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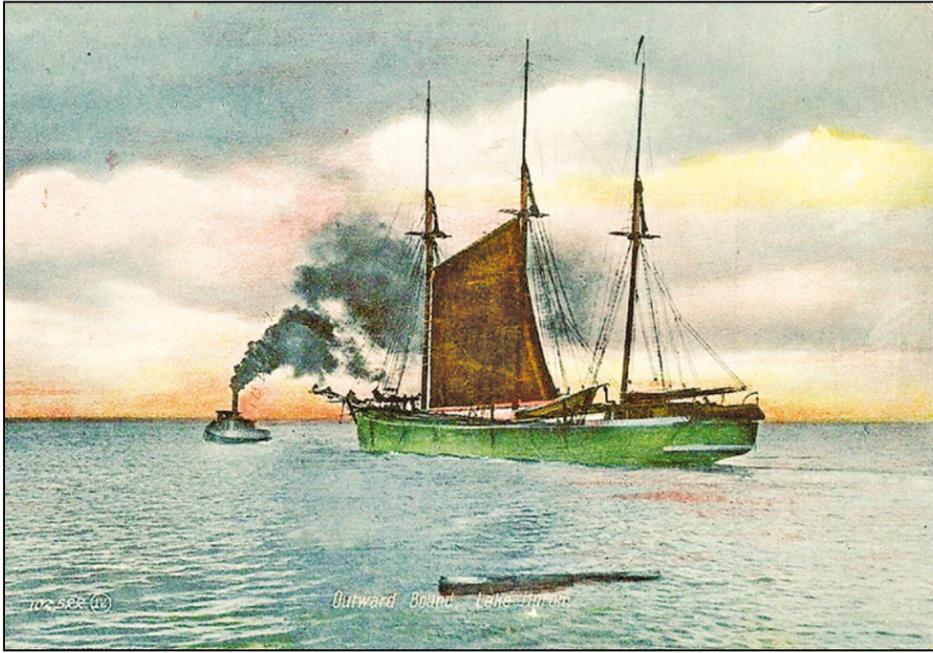
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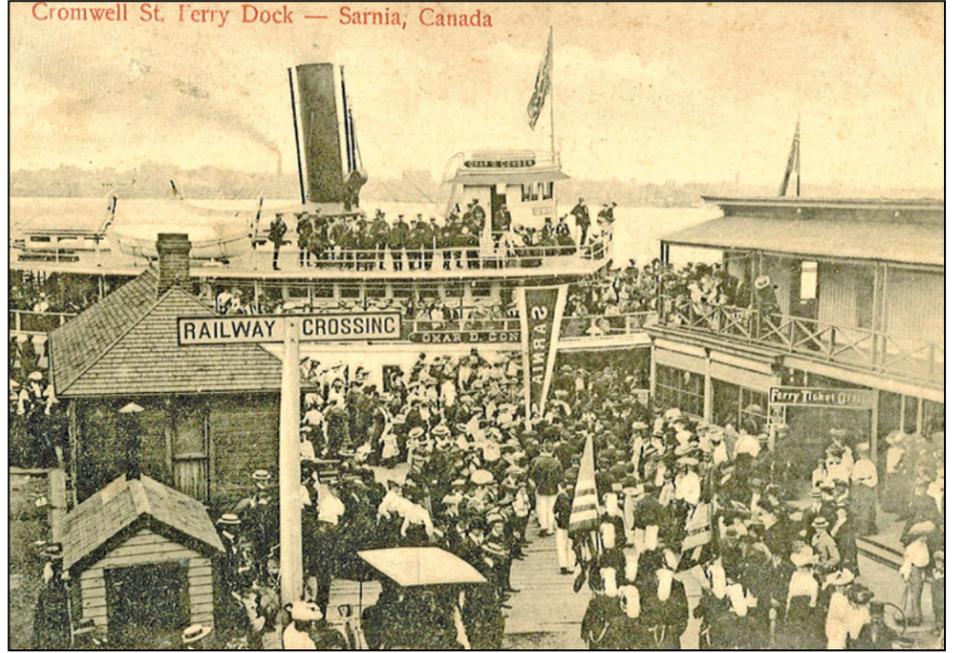
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Sarnia 1867 Edition



THIS POSTCARD DEPICTS a schooner being towed by a tug in Lake Huron. Moore Museum. *Outward Bound, Lake Huron*. Accession No. 986-197-1



AS A CONFLUENCE of road rail and sea, Ferry Dock Hill was a busy place, as illustrated by this photo taken around 1907. Dave Burwell Collection, Sarnia Historical Society

Continued from 16
subject to the vagaries of weather. In the 1860s and 1870s a lack of wind and the rapid current, particularly at the narrow river crossing just below Lake Huron, could result in ships lying at anchor for hours or even days

waiting for conditions to improve. It was a common sight to see ships at anchor in the river waiting for a strong wind to help them navigate into the lake. Lost hours meant lost revenue. Steam-powered tugs provided the solution. They would meet down-bound boats in Lake

Huron, towing the 150-ton to 600-ton vessels all the way to Lake Erie, and then lying in wait for up-bound vessels to make the return trip. It was actually a common sight to see one of these tugs with as many as eight sailing vessels in tow. Competition for

business among the tugs was fierce. Tugs based in both Sarnia and Port Huron would race into Lake Huron, each endeavouring to be the first to get their towlines onto a sailing vessel. On occasion, they would travel as far as the Straits of Mackinac searching for schooners to tow.

Iron freighters began to replace wooden ones in the 1880s, giving rise to the lament that a time of "wooden boats and iron men" had become one of "iron boats and wooden men." The time of tug-towed schooners began to pass, although tugs would endure. They became

increasingly involved in towing industrial barges, disabled ships, and the huge log rafts that were brought down from Northern Ontario for processing in the Cleveland-Sarnia Sawmill Company.



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Sarnia 1867 Edition

400 watched as executioner botched Sarnia's first hanging

Over the past 150 years Sarnia has seen many changes, but perhaps none have been as profound as the changing mores of our justice system.

When I began school at Our Lady of Mercy School on Christina Street in 1953 I was confronted with a constant reminder of crime and punishment. Directly across Durand Street on the northeast corner of Christina sat the massive, three-storey stone jail built by Alexander Mackenzie a century earlier.

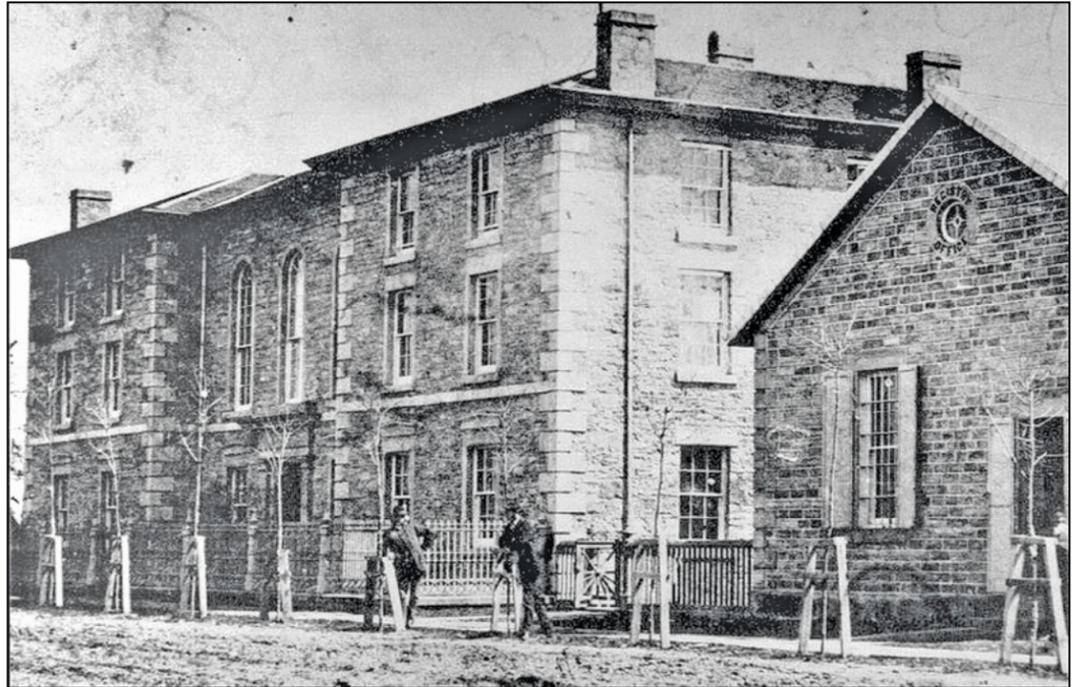
My grandfather was a guard at the Hamilton Jail, and I knew there had been executions at his jail. I wondered if any had taken place across the road from my school.



Thomas Cleary, an Irish Catholic, was the first prisoner ever executed at the old jail, which is now the site of a popular restaurant and motel. It happened on Dec. 5, 1862.

Justice was speedy in those days. Cleary's murder of Edward Burke had taken place less than nine months earlier following a barhopping spree on St. Patrick's Day.

There's an old Irish saying that God invented whiskey to keep the Irish from ruling the world,



THE FORMER LAMBTON County courthouse and jail, circa 1870, stood at the corner of Christina and Durand streets. The jailyard was behind and on the right is the Registry Office building.

Photo courtesy, John Rochon collection

and whiskey was indeed the downfall of Thomas Cleary that day. Not a normally violent man, he blamed the death of his co-worker on intoxication.

Quickly convicted of murder and sentenced to die, Cleary was confined in a cell until his execution date. Few things can be as mentally unHINGING as knowing the certain date of your death and watching it rapidly approach. Cleary resorted to prayer and the comforting presence of two priests.

Shortly before 9 a.m. the cell door opened and he was led, bound and with a white cap on his head, into the jail yard where a scaffold had been erected close to the top of the wall.

Praying aloud as he mounted the stairs unassisted, Cleary begged God for forgiveness as 400 spectators looked on. A masked executioner, using a thick rope and a ten-foot drop, then proceeded to botch Sarnia's first execution. Cleary's neck was only partly dislocat-

ed and he struggled at the end of the noose for several minutes before expiring.

Two more executions would follow at Sarnia Jail before capital punishment was banned.

In 1962, Ronald Turpin and Arthur Lucas became the last two prisoners executed in Canada at Toronto's Don Jail. That was another horribly botched execution.

In today's legal system, Thomas Cleary might have only been convicted of manslaughter.



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Sarnia 1867 Edition

Stag Island was traded even up for a 400-acre sugar bush

DAVID D. PLAIN

In 1818, the British colonial government of Upper Canada approached the Chippewa Nation living in the St. Clair region with an offer to purchase the Huron Tract.

This was a tract of land that stretched from Sarnia to Goderich, to the head of the Thames River, to London, to the St. Clair River and back to Sarnia. It contained 2.2 million acres.

The transfer was negotiated by Treaty 29 in July of 1827 and created four reserves: the Lower St. Clair, the Upper St. Clair, Kettle Point and Stony Point. The treaty ceded land to the “waters’ edge” which meant the Chippewa retained the islands in the river, including Stag Island.

Needless to say, this created the need for a rather abrupt change of lifestyle. The traditional lifestyle was one of hunting and gathering, and

the Huron Tract was part of our original hunting territory.

During the next decade or so the Chippewa began to learn how to become an agrarian society, and learn the art of farming. We began building permanent houses, first log and then framed, and learned the business of production, buying and selling. We were drawn into the world of profit.

In 1843, the Lower St. Clair reserve was ceded because it wasn’t being utilized and the proceeds were deposited in the bands’ account. By this time, businesses had built up selling agricultural products to the people living in villages that sprang up around the reserves.

We developed a thriving commercial fish business and a small cottage industry selling handicraft. However, another skill wasn’t being used, and that was the production of sugar products.

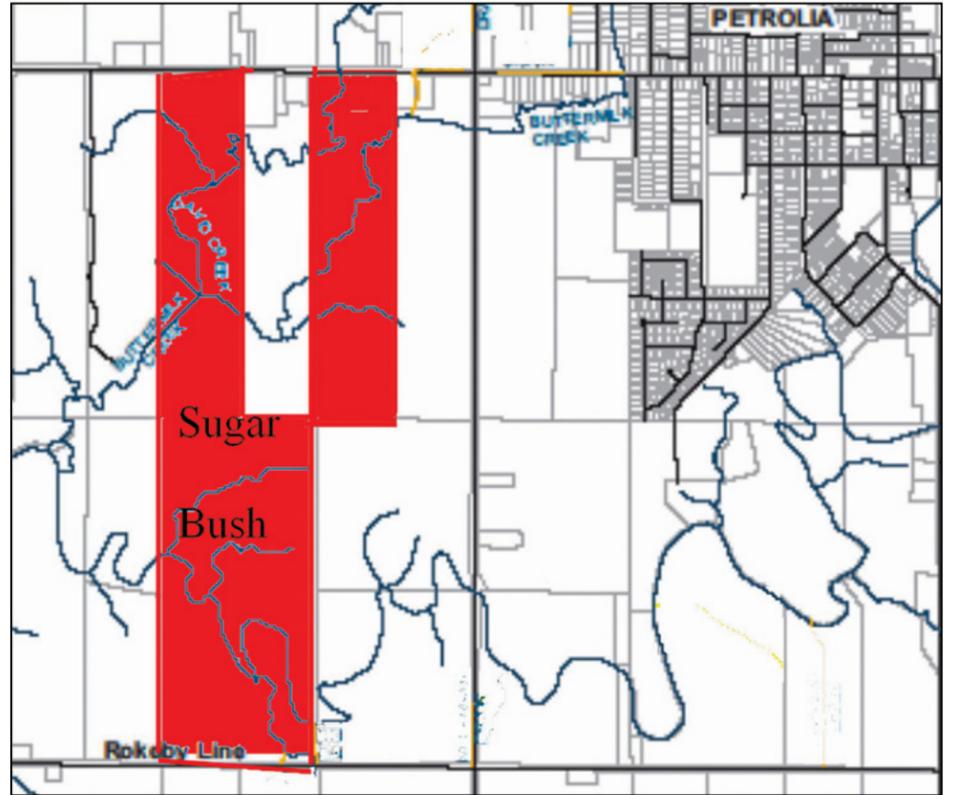
In the days before the treaty, maple sugar and syrup were made in a sugar maple bush covering about 400 acres in Enniskillen Township, near what’s now Petrolia.

The band had lost that property in 1827 and needed to get it back, so it offered to trade Stag Island for the sugar bush. By then, 100 acres of it was owned by Louis Rendt and 300 acres by David McColl, both of Moore Township.

The Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) purchased the land from the two men and traded it to the Chippewa of the St. Clair River for Stag Island.

The band was now in the sugar business, and business was good for the next couple of decades — at least until the oil boom arrived in Enniskillen Township.

Just prior to Confederation, in 1866, the DIA began selling off pieces of the sugar bush property, without valid surrender of title, to oil



THIS MAP SHOWS the location of a 400-acre sugar bush near present day Petrolia that the Chippewas of the St. Clair required in exchange for Stag Island.

speculators. The next thing you know, we were out of the sugar business.

This injustice was rectified with the settlement

of a land claim that was submitted in 1978. Negotiations began in 1983 and the claim was finally settled in 2000.

David D. Plain is an award-winning author and historian from the Aamjiwnaang First Nation

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Sarnia 1867 Edition

As old as Canada – Sarnia’s 150-year-old buildings



2896 LAKESHORE RD., St. John in the Wilderness Church, built in 1856.



316 CHRISTINA ST., built in 1861 by Alexander Mackenzie, Canada’s second prime minister, master builder and mason.



112 MARIA ST. known as the Skillbeck cottage and first lending institution built in 1844.



CATHY DOBSON

architecturally significant, while others are lost within siding, additions and alterations, shrouding the secrets they bring from the past.

That’s true of the house at 103 Samuel Street, believed to be the oldest in Sarnia.

French settlers named the Cazelets built it in 1810 near what are now Front and George streets. It was a simple log cabin and, by the time of Confederation, had likely been moved to Johnston Street. Later, it was moved again to the corner of Confederation and Samuel where it stands today, its history hidden from view.

The early European settlers in Sarnia lived clustered near the St. Clair River.

Rochon says the town’s geography is revealed in a panoramic map dated 1867 that shows a wide “birds-

eye” view of Port Huron, Sarnia and Point Edward. (See page 8)

“It appears Sarnia stretched from the St. Clair to Mitton Street, just past Davis Street to the south and nearly to Exmouth Street to the north,” Rochon said.

“At Confederation, it was still pretty small, maybe 3,000 people or so, but it was a bustling place, a shipping centre with the railway already here and a lot of lumber and agricultural activity.”

Shops and hotels lined both sides of Front Street. The road was mud and the sidewalks wooden. Bridges spanned small creeks that interrupted the roadway.

Powering a sawmill on the waterfront was “Durand’s Ditch,” which ran beside George Street and carried water the river.

“A lot of people at that

Continued on 23

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Sarnia 1867 Edition



118 MARIA ST., Sarnia's first multiple unit dwelling built in 1860.



310 CHRISTINA ST., built in 1856 and most recently a flower store.

BELOW: 199 CROMWELL ST., the Whiffen house built in 1864.



Continued from 22

time came here in the summer to get the cooling breezes off the water," explained Rochon. Consequently, a large number of hotels dotted Front and Christina Street in the 1860s.

The Belchamber Hotel at 178 Front Street N. was built to replace the Exchange Hotel, which was destroyed in the Great Fire of January 1866, which levelled parts of the downtown.

Eleven months later, James Belchamber opened the new four-storey hotel featuring white brick and a stone foundation. It loomed over other the downtown buildings, few of which rose above two stories.

Twenty years later, in 1887, the Belchamber underwent renovations that included Sarnia's first elevator. That elevator is long

gone and the Belchamber building today, minus its original iron balconies, is used as apartments and retail space.

Another former hotel that still exists is at the corner of Front and George. The Sarnia Hotel was built in the 1850s and was long a popular watering hole. It survives today as retail and residential space.

Settlers who didn't live near the water had farmhouses a few blocks away on tracts of land they worked.

One early home that has survived was that of Froome Talfourd, a prominent Indian agent. Built around 1855, it was located on Front near Derby Lane and originally featured a widow's walk. It was moved twice to make way for the extension of Front, once in 1875 and again in 1945 to 378 East St.

Local writer Char-

lotte Vidal Nisbet said the "prettiest cottage in the town" caused quite a sensation when it became stuck for several days as it was moved along Exmouth Street.

No official list of 1867 buildings in Sarnia exists, and the roster featured here was compiled with the assistance of some our community's most active – and helpful – historians.

In addition to those featured in photos, surviving Confederation buildings include:

- * 261 Christina St. North, cornerstone laid July 1, 1867 for St. Andrew's Church;
- * 2618 Hamilton Rd., now Bright's Grove library built in 1855;
- * 103 Samuel St., earliest log cabin known to still exist, built in 1810;
- * 166 Brock St. North, hewn-log farmhouse built in 1867.

Sarnia 1867 Edition



LEFT: 178 FRONT ST. North, Belchamber Hotel built in 1866.

RIGHT: 378 EAST ST. North, the cottage of Froome Talfourd, originally located Front Street in 1855.



269 LONDON RD., gothic revival style home built in 1860.



262 VIDAL ST., built in 1866 and now attached to St. George's Church.



2618 HAMILTON RD., now Bright's Grove Library and Gallery in the Grove art gallery, built in 1855.

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Sarnia 1867 Edition



322 CHRISTINA ST., built in the mid 1850s and home to Sarnia's third mayor, Henry Glass.

RIGHT: 197 LONDON RD., known as Mulberry House and built by Alexander Mackenzie in 1867.



LEFT: 361 LONDON RD., a stately home built in 1860, now between two high rises.



BOTTOM: 301 FRONT ST. North, built in 1862 as a brewery, later Silverwood's Dairy.



LEFT: 234 FRONT ST. North, Old Western and Sarnia Hotel built in 1850.

PHOTOS BY TROY SHANTZ
THE JOURNAL

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Sarnia 1867 Edition

Sarnia known early for “drunkenness and wickedness”

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

The early inhabitants of Sarnia had an up and down affair with alcohol. Up and down – but mainly down.

In a letter by the Reverend John Douce to his missionary predecessor, James Evans, dated ‘Port Sarnia, March 1, 1839,

Douce wrote, “The swearing, drunkenness, and wickedness on the river, and especially in Sarnia village, frequently presses down my mind.”

Local Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian churchgoers saw liquor as a predatory evil, luring men to squander their paycheques and jeopardize their families’ welfare. Temperance advocates — and there

were many of them — were active proponents of ridding the village entirely of intoxicating liquors.

Early founders of Sarnia including the Vidal family and Malcolm Cameron believed they were making headway in the constant battle against liquor. Testifying to the splendid work underway, Cameron wrote in a letter dated Port Sarnia, Dec. 18, 1840 – “Our temperance society has progressed wonderfully, and we have driven intemperance almost from us.”

Well, not quite. Decades would pass before Sarnia’s first experiment with self-imposed prohibition. It would come partly at the hand of Sarnia’s favourite son, Alexander Mackenzie.

Born on Jan. 28, 1822, in Logierait, Perthshire, Scotland, Mackenzie immigrated to Canada 20 years later, joining his six brothers in Sarnia. He quickly gained fame as a stonemason and building contractor. By nature, he was a pragmatic reformer, but he viewed drunkenness and overindulgence in liquor as both a sin and a waste of time and productivity. Piety and self-discipline were key components of his personality.

Upon his arrival in Sarnia, Mackenzie became active in the temperance movement, joining the Port Sarnia Temperance Society and, in 1854, su-



SOME OF THE city’s leading citizens were strong temperance advocates, but alcohol was readily available at the time of Confederation, as this photo circa 1869 reveals. Beside the famed Belchamber Hotel on the left stood Masuret’s store, which offered groceries, wines and liquors.

Photo courtesy, John Rochon

pervising the construction of its first temperance hall. In politics, Mackenzie won a seat in the provincial legislature in 1861. With Confederation in 1867, Mackenzie successfully made the transition to the federal parliament, becoming Liberal leader and eventually, prime minister.

With Mackenzie’s ascension to the ultimate position of power in the land, the temperance advocates, aware they had

a philosophical brother in Mackenzie, pushed strongly for national prohibition. Among those who pressed hard was fellow Sarnian Alexander Vidal, who was the first president of the Dominion Alliance for the Total Suppression of the Liquor Traffic.

A compromise was reached in 1878 by the passage of the Canada Temperance Act. This new law permitted local communities to make their

own decisions with respect to the issue of liquor laws.

Following a county plebiscite, Lambton adopted prohibition and forbid the sale of liquor in taverns beginning on May 1, 1886. Temperance advocates were delighted. Tavern owners were demoralized.

It would be 40 years before Ontario would begin to relax its liquor laws with the creation of the LCBO in 1927.

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Sarnia 1867 Edition

Outbreak of smallpox added to rampant fears in 1866

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

The year 1866 not only brought the threat of a Fenian invasion to Sarnia, it brought smallpox. Soldiers of Irish origin had fought on both sides in the recently ended U.S. Civil War. In 1865, many of these men united under 'Fighting Tom' Sweeney and the Fenian Brotherhood, an organization determined to invade Canada and hold the country ransom for Ireland's freedom. The fear was palpable in Sarnia and 4,000 troops were sent to defend the town against an invasion that was rumoured to begin on St. Patrick's Day, 1866. The soldiers, who outnumbered the town's residents, were billeted in hotels, barracks and private homes, and they brought with them disease. On June 1, 1866, The Observer carried a report on the sanitary conditions of the seven companies of troops garrisoned in Sarnia and Point Edward. In April, the dreaded disease of smallpox was diagnosed at a boarding house where the Wardsville Volunteers were billeted. A military hospital was quickly established and

ultimately cared for six of the soldiers from the afflicted boarding house. But the disease continued to spread, and at one point 17 soldiers were confined to the military hospital and alarm spread of a pending epidemic. Fortunately, the disease had proven a "mild case" and by June the newspaper reported all of the patients had recovered. The Observer was optimistic and told its readers "the disease has been eradicated, and not a single case of it exists." Medicated baths and "proper remedies" were credited with conquering the outbreak. Of the 4,000 soldiers stationed in Sarnia to protect the border only two died, and none of smallpox. One succumbed to "congestion of the lungs" - possibly tuberculosis - and the other died of typhoid fever. The town's medical superintendent had ordered the uniforms and clothing of the smallpox patients to be destroyed by burning. As a result, the Commanding Officer of the Volunteers reported difficulty in securing new uniforms and clothing for the recovered men. Smallpox continued to be a scourge, however. An outbreak in 1885 killed 3,000 people in Montreal, and a 1924 epidemic in

Windsor — 57 years after Confederation — infected 67 people with 32 deaths. Smallpox was finally eradicated in 1979.



AN EARLY PHOTOGRAPH of military activity in Sarnia. Courtesy, Lambton County Archives, Wyoming. Photograph Collection, Oversized 9JA-G.

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Sarnia 1867 Edition

Town played hardball on firemen's first wage demands

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

In August of 1859 the sounds of hammers and saws created a din as the new fire and town hall began to rise on George Street.

This was an edifice built to last. The project cost council \$3,500 and the builder was determined to see the town got its money's worth.

But all was not tranquil among Sarnia's firefighters. That August, feeling exasperated and unappreciated, Captain Ireland and 32 men of the Rough and Ready Hook and Ladder

Company tendered their resignations from the Sarnia Fire Department.

The issue was a \$4 per man stipend.

Sarnia's fire service was approaching its 19th birthday, and throughout the years since 1840 the men involved had been expected to participate as a civic duty, and because the challenge of fighting fires appealed to their sense of masculinity and adventure. It had begun as a volunteer force, and so it remained almost two decades later.

Firefighters had also been expected to pay their own way. They bought their own uni-

forms, caps and belts. With regular parades now part of their lives on both sides of the border, they were finding that keeping up appearances was costly.

And they enjoyed exhibiting their skills. Regular competitions of firefighting displays and drills with Port Huron's Torrent Company, and with other firefighting teams in the county, had added travel to the expense of being a firefighter.

Feeling the town owed them a little consideration, the firemen asked for \$4 per man, and for the town to purchase the company new uniforms.



THE FIRE HALL on George Street was built in 1859 and was the city's only hall until the East Street station opened in 1965.

Image courtesy, Lambton County Archives, 19JA-J

Council frowned at the request, irritated by an apparent lack of gratitude on the part of the firemen. The previous summer, the town had invested a substantial amount of money in purchasing a new fire engine for them, including hooks and ladders and a ladder wagon. And the brand new combined town and firehall was preparing to open on George Street – another substantial investment in land and construction costs.

Sarnia's overburdened ratepayers deserved a little relief, councillors believed.

So they refused the request and the resignations followed.

Compounding the hard feelings was a rumour that suggested town council had denied the request anticipating the effect the refusal would have. According to the rumour, councillors were unhappy with the composition of the fire company. They wanted to reorganize it

and draw representatives from the ranks of the "aristocracy" of the town – the more notable families who, among other things, were more able to fund their own enthusiasm for fighting fires.

As noted earlier, Sarnia's commercial core was badly damaged by fires in 1866 and again in 1867, the year of Confederation.

And in both cases the community was forced to rely on a fire brigade

Continued on 29



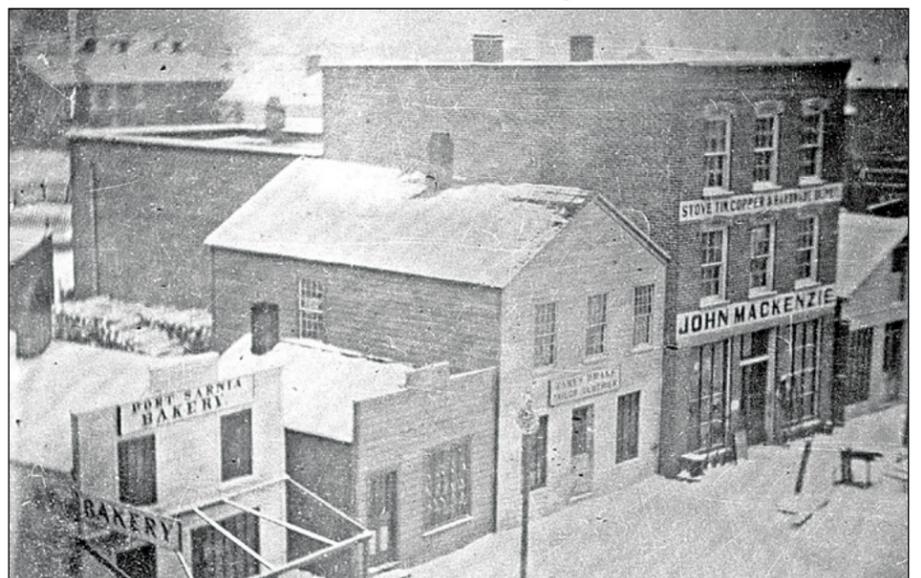
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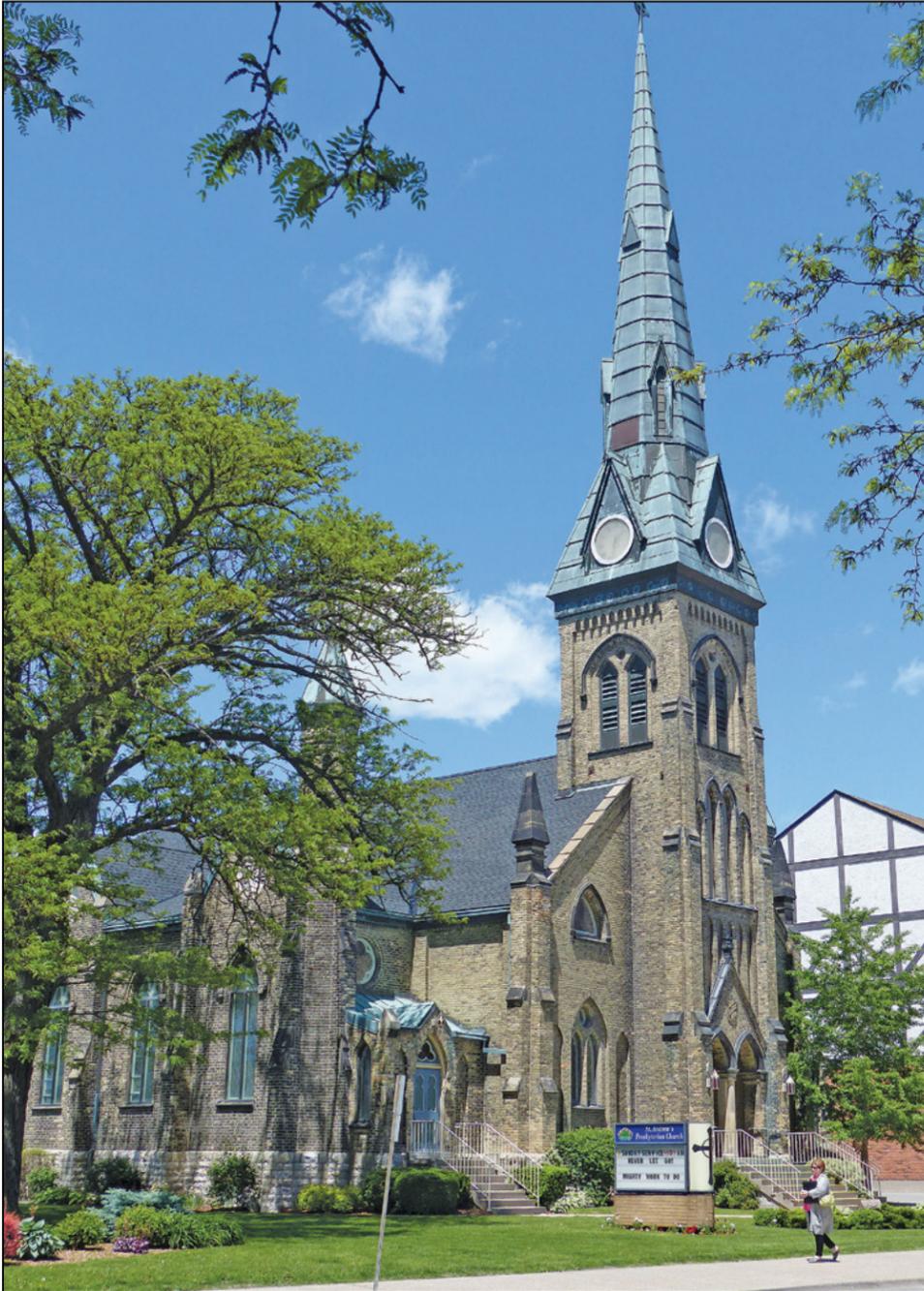
Sarnia's oldest surviving business



IT'S SOMEHOW FITTING that the Mackenzie brothers' store, the oldest surviving business in Sarnia and now known as Mackenzie Milne, is captured in this, the oldest known photographic image of the city. Taken circa 1855, it shows a commercial block on Front Street between Lochiel and Cromwell.

Image courtesy Lambton County Archives, 9JA-N

Sarnia 1867 Edition



SHORTLY AFTER CONFEDERATION a bell was installed in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church with a special fire alarm attached that was used to alert firefighters in an emergency. **Journal photo**

The townspeople of Sarnia had witnessed its effectiveness multiple times after the American firefighters had come to their rescue.

Bonds were issued to cover the \$4,000 (U.S.) cost and an Engine House was built on the river at the foot of George Street.

Permanent water tanks were placed at London Road and what's now Brock Street, with a third located in the South Ward.

And in the newly constructed St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church on Christina Street, a bell was installed with a special fire alarm attached. The church's fire bell became the key signal for alerting firefighters

in an emergency.

The steam engine arrived in March and was taken to the Market Square with great fanfare for a test. The goal was to see the engine cast a stream of water a distance of 230 feet through a 1-1/4 inch nozzle, with 100 feet of hose.

It didn't work.

The steam fire engine, it appeared, was a little trickier to operate than the older hand-brake engines. The fire brigade tried again the following Monday and this time had more success.

But another test lay ahead. Sarnia's 'Blazing '60s' weren't over yet.

The old Methodist Chapel, built in 1837 under the supervision of Rev. James Evans, had been moved from its original location

to Lochiel and Brock streets, where it was used as a juvenile school and meeting place for the Dialectic Society and the fraternal lodge of the Good Templars.

The Methodists didn't like ornamentation in their churches. Sarnia's was made of white brick with no steeple and no organ, which church members believed were ostentatious.

On April 14, 1868 a fire broke out that destroyed the old Methodist Chapel. While its architectural value wasn't high, the chapel represented one of the town's most historically significant structures.

It was a loss even the town's new steam fire engine couldn't save.

Continued from 28
from across the river in Port Huron to help

extinguish the flames. So, in January of 1868, town council agreed to invest in a steam fire en-

gine – the same Clapp & Jones engine manufactured in New York and used in Port Huron.

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Sarnia 1867 Edition

All the bestsellers were found at McMaster's Book Store

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

Every age has its great writers, and the love of books was universal in Sarnia 150 years ago.

Taking a stroll through the town's commercial core in the time of Confederation, you'd pass Daniel Mackenzie's Dry Goods store, Moses Masuret's grocery, and the Belchamber Hotel. Close to Pottinger's Grocery and Chalmer's Hardware Store near Lochiel Street stood David McMaster's Book Store.

If you had strolled into the store in Confederation Days and asked the proprietor to recommend a good book, he might have suggested some of the bestsellers of the time.

Written in 1859 and an Anglophile's delight, Beeton's Book of Household Management might have seemed a little out of touch with life in a small Ontario town, but the three-inch thick compendium of recipes and household tips had sold two million copies by 1868.

"I have always thought that there is no more fruitful source of fam-

ily discontent than a housewife's badly cooked dinners and untidy ways," Mrs. Beeton warned. Also known as Mrs. Beeton's Cookery Book, it made Isabella Beeton the Delia Smith or Nigella Lawson of the 1860s.

Susanna Moodie's, *Roughing it in the Bush*, by contrast, was more down-to-earth. It was written in 1852 to describe the experiences of an immigrant living in Canada West. Moodie settled in the 1830s in the wild bush country of today's Peterborough.

Continued on 31

Ordinary Folk



A PORTRAIT OF an anonymous couple taken at Robinson's Art Place in Sarnia, sometime between 1865 and 1867.

Photo courtesy, John Rochon collection

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Sarnia 1867 Edition

Ordinary Folk



PORTRAIT OF AN anonymous family, 1865 to 1867, taken by "Robinson" a photographer in Sarnia. For a time, at least, his "heliography" studio was located on Front Street.
Photo courtesy, John Rochon collection

Book store:

Continued from 30

The book was part of a trilogy looking satirically of the life of early Canadian settlers.

The American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne's book, *The Scarlet Letter*, was published in 1850 and became one of the first mass-produced books in America. It studied scandal in the 17th century Massachusetts Bay Colony, but its themes of sin and forgiveness found a universal audience.

Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* would also have been available at McMaster's Book Shop. Also known as simply, *The Whale*, the 1851 masterpiece has been called "the greatest novel in American literature." The story of Captain Ahab and the white whale had

thrilled both readers and movie fans for over 150 years.

Some 150 years after its initial publication, *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman would become a gift given to Monica Lewinsky by President Bill Clinton. Whitman worked on revisions to the 1850 book all his life as it grew from 12 poems to over 400. Whitman would visit Sarnia in 1880, but there is no record of him taking the time to drop into McMaster's for a book signing.

Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* was published in two volumes in 1868 and 1869, and would also become popular for over a century. Her *Little Men*, or *Life at Plumfield with Jo's Boys*, would follow in 1871.

Whatever book met your needs, you'd find it at McMaster's.

Sarnia 1867 Edition

Recruiter jailed for luring Canadian to U.S. Civil War

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

The Charlottetown Conference was still three months away in 1864 when a peculiar case was heard at the County Courthouse in Sarnia.

The U.S. Civil War was still raging and things weren't looking good for the Union side. The first encounter between Robert E. Lee and Ulysses Grant had taken place at the Battle of the Wilder-

ness the previous month, and the result was 28,000 casualties.

The war was going so badly for the North that the re-election of Abraham Lincoln that year was in doubt. The Union Army needed new recruits.

The court case in Sarnia was directly related to Civil War casualties and stemmed from an incident that took place at Cassady's Tavern in Wyoming. The accused, John Key, described as "an appar-

ently respectable young man," was sitting in the tavern having a drink when a soldier in militia uniform walked in. Key invited him for a drink, the newcomer, Corporal Anicke, accepted, and the pair removed themselves to a nearby sitting room.

At some point in conversation the young Corporal said he would like to visit the United States.

"I'm your man," Key replied. "Come with me and I'll give you \$50

down, and when we get to Port Huron I'll give you an officer's commission."

Key told Anicke he was exactly the type of man the Union Army needed, because "you know something about drilling."

Key failed to mention the staggering casualties suffered five days earlier at Cold Harbor, one of the war's bloodiest, in which the Union Army had attempted a frontal assault against entrenched Confederate

forces.

Key told Corporal Anicke that, in total, he would earn \$3,000 by enlisting in the U.S. Army.

But there was a problem. What Key was doing was enticing the Corporal to desert the British forces.

Arrested and brought to Sarnia for trial, Key had no one to speak for him and he was a long way from home. Another soldier who had overheard the enticement to desert testified for the prosecution.

John Key told the court he very much regretted his "hasty conduct," and that he had no conscious intent to persuade Anicke to desert his country. The court, however, had no alternative but to sentence Key to four months in jail for the offence.

In an editorial following the trial, the London Free Press applauded the court's decision, deploring the common U.S. practice of enticing Canadian soldiers to desert.

Death of little Kate Shibley was a case of justice denied

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

The brutal death of a child is newsworthy in any age. In the autumn of 1866, the trial of the "cal-

lous-hearted wretch" Kate Davis, as she was described in the newspaper, was on everyone's mind.

Three-year old Kate Shibley was the daughter of Schuyler Shibley and Kate Davis. Though they were no longer living

together each found time to beat the little girl.

Kate Davis was living with a woman named Kate Castle on the night of Sept. 4, 1866, when she was ordered to say her prayers. When she failed to do so, her mother took a piece of rawhide and beat her child for an hour while Kate Castle looked on.

Her body was already cut and bruised from a savage beating administered by her father 10 days earlier.

Leaving the child to sleep on the sofa, the two women retired for the night to the upstairs bedroom, where her moaning could be heard through

the night.

At three o'clock in the morning, Kate Castle roused Kate Davis and urged her to have a look at the child. They found her dead on the sofa. An autopsy revealed signs of continuous abuse, including severe internal injuries. Another doctor theorized the cause of death was "apoplexy caused by a blow to the neck."

Kate Davis was indicted for first-degree murder in a case that was fully expected to conclude with the death penalty. The unrepentant mother pleaded Not Guilty, even though her first words on finding Kate dead had been, "Is it possible that I have killed

my own child?"

Kate Castle testified that Kate Davis had not administered the beating in the heat of passion, but rather, had seemed quite cool about it. The child had cried for 10 minutes after the beating.

Mr. Becker, the defence attorney, addressed the jury at great length, commenting on the differing nature of the medical testimony.

In his charge to the jury, the judge made it clear to the jury that he found the mother to be at fault, and had little sympathy for the defence argument. He told jury members they should consider conviction unless they were convinced the

child would have ultimately died from her father's beating 10 days earlier.

Two hours later, when the jury returned a verdict of Not Guilty, the judge was surprised and displeased, but the prisoner was released.

A newspaper editorial lamented the lack of a conviction, saying "no person who heard the evidence could for a moment doubt that the child's death was directly attributable to the barbarous whipping which it received the night before its death, from its own cold, cruel, heartless mother."

It appeared to be a clear case of justice denied.

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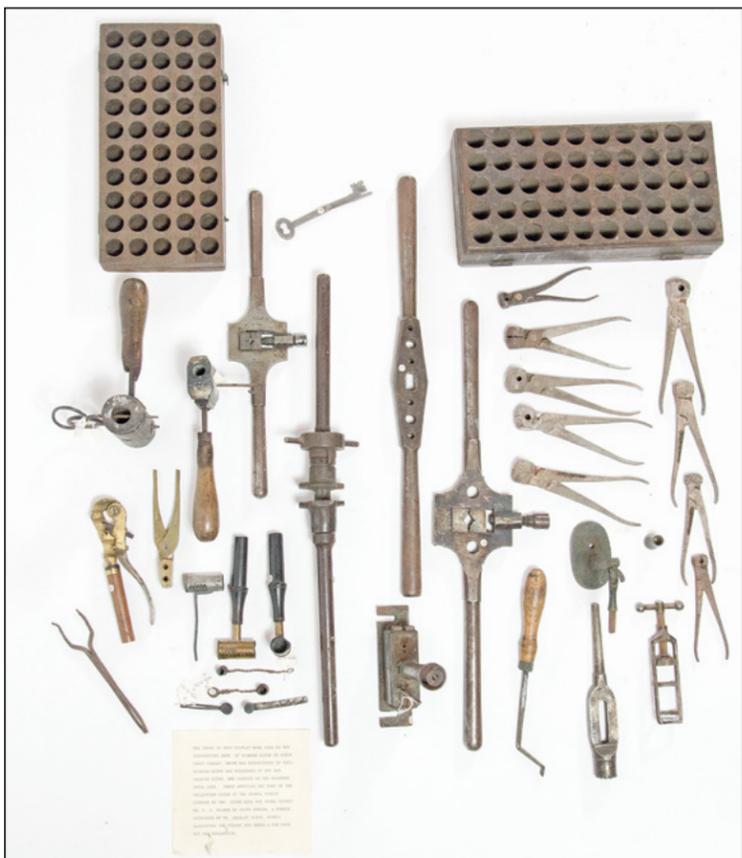
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Sarnia 1867 Edition

In the days of Port Sarnia every home had a gun



TOOLS IN THIS display at the Lambton Heritage Museum came from the gunsmithing shop of Richard Glynn, which opened on Front Street in 1865.

Photo courtesy, Lambton Heritage Museum

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

Looking back through time, we know one thing for certain about Richard Glynn.

He could run. During our Port Sarnia days, Glynn was a volunteer firefighter. This was a time before horse-drawn fire engines and ladder trucks. The firemen had to run with their

equipment to the scene of a fire.

Glynn was better known, however, for his iconic gun shop in Trongate Street, as Front Street was known then. Glynn had opened his shop on the southwest corner of Front and George streets in 1859.

This was a time when every home in Sarnia had a gun, and every man and boy knew how to use one, both for hunting and for sport. In those days migrating wild pigeons would

fill the skies in such numbers that even a poorly aimed shot into the heavens would bring at least one down. There were so many that their flight was said to have sounded like rumbling thunder.

Roasted or stewed pigeon was a common and popular meal for Sarnians, together with partridge, quail, wild turkey, duck and geese.

There was said to be no better marksman in town than Richard Glynn, who was also an expert rifle-maker and locksmith.

So recognized was his knowledge of weaponry that he was often called as an expert witness in criminal trials. When King Edward VII visited Canada and the U.S. as Prince of Wales in 1860, Richard Glynn received a commission from the city of London to manufacture a rifle to be presented to the royal visitor.

Glynn also did a lot of business with the Hudson Bay Company, converting

flintlock rifles to cap action weapons that were, in turn, traded to indigenous people for furs. Natives found the flintlock rifles cumbersome to operate.

In 1878, Glynn moved his gun shop to a new brick structure at 216 North Front Street. When he died in 1926, the long-established business was taken over by his son and business partner, Charles. In later years, Charles Glynn told people that guns his father

had made 75 years earlier were still in excellent working order.

Glynn's Gun Shop was widely known for its eclectic range of items. Charles Glynn was said to have owned a crossbow that would shoot a steel arrow with such force it could have knocked an armour-clad knight off his horse at 100 yards. The crossbow was reputed to have been used at the Battle of Hastings.

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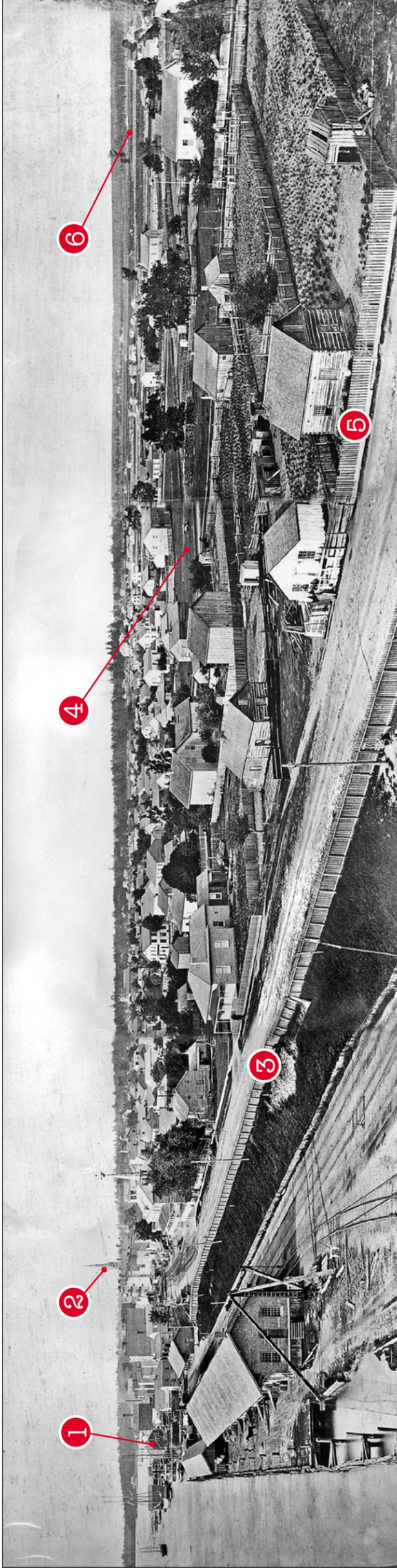
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Sarnia 1867 Edition



PHOTOGRAPHER JOHN BARRON climbed to the top of a grain elevator that stood on the shoreline of the St. Clair River in 1871 and took three photographs, which, assembled here, provide a panoramic view of Sarnia. Points of interest include: 1 - Ferry Dock Hill, long the nexus for people and goods arriving by water; 2 - The spire of St. Andrew's Church, which dominated the skyline but did not yet have its clock; 3 - The Front Street boardwalk. Though now made of concrete, it's still a great place from which to watch passing ships; 4 - Veterans Park. Long associated with the military, the park was a parade ground for thousands of soldiers stationed here during the Fenian scare a few years earlier. The old cannon "Big Tom," recently returned to its original resting place, stands alone in the treeless park; 5 - One of the last log cabins in Sarnia was located about where the Residence on the St. Clair stands today; 6 - East Street was the town boundary, and beyond it can be seen vast tracts of still uncut forest.

Photo courtesy, John Rochon collection

Following Confederation, the future of Sarnia looked bright

PHIL EGAN
THE JOURNAL

By 1873, Sarnia had bounced back from two disastrous downtown fires and was again making substantial progress.

The flourish of activity was especially noticeable on Front Street, as a writer noted in a letter to the editor that year.

Brick buildings were replacing the frame structures that had left Sarnia's business district so exposed to flames, the writer noted.

It had been a brick structure fire wall in 1867 that had allowed the Sarnia and Port Huron fire brigades, working as a team, to finally bring the conflagration under control.

"Unsuspectedly" in the street left by the fires were being filled with

brick buildings, and existing wooden structures were being replaced with brick. Published in late April, the writer expressed confidence more brick buildings would appear over the coming summer.

"The line of steamers between this port and Lake Superior" was another sign of progress described by the letter writer.

In her brilliant history of Lambton County, Upper Canada's Last Frontier, Jean Turnbull Elford describes how a new era in shipping had arrived the previous year, in 1872. That's when the Canadian government subsidized Sarnia's Beatty Transportation Company to carry mail between Sarnia and the Lakehead of Lake Superior, a move that further opened trade to Western Canada.

The letter writer applauded the connection of the Great Western Railway to the West by means of the Port Huron and Michigan Railway, and was anticipating even greater improvement once the "road between Flint and Lansing is completed."

Also mentioned was the "erection of the Dominion Oil Works," but progress here as "problematical," possibly due to "the squabble" among its partners.

One year earlier, with great flourish, the Sarnia Street Railway had been announced. The writer was hopeful it would still happen, although at that time it appeared to be "dead as a door nail."

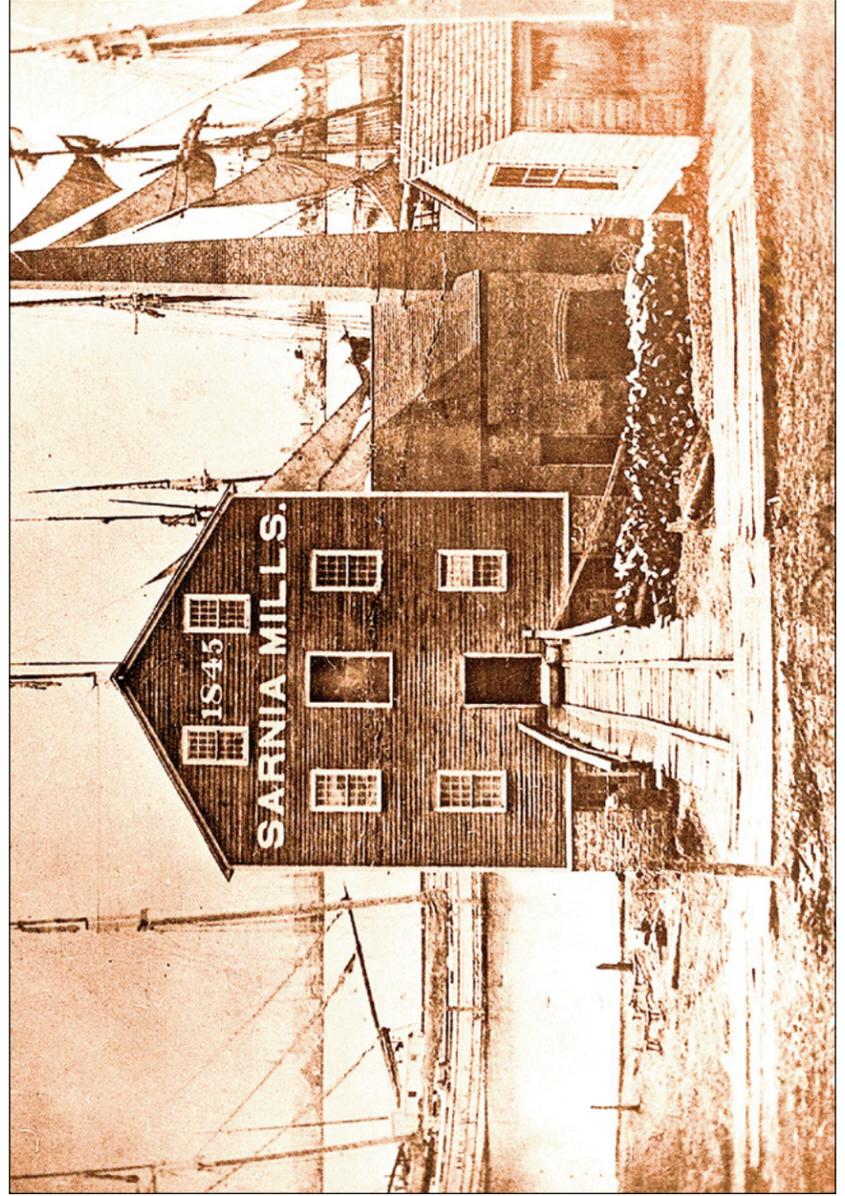
Nevertheless, the first horse-drawn trolleys started carrying passengers and mail between Front Street and Point Edward in just two years

later in 1875.

Many people, the letter writer noted, had noted Sarnia had the potential to be a great centre of shipbuilding. "Those who had the will to do something in that way had not the means, while those who had the means felt more disposed to invest them in Yankee stocks, rather than any project which might possibly benefit their fellow townspeople."

That same year, Sarnian Robert Steed had a shipbuilding project underway, with the construction of the sailing ship Wawanosh.

Much as the letter writer had hoped, more shipbuilding projects would follow over the ensuing 133 years, from the Ida Walker in 1880 to the Abbott Boat Works of the 21st century.



SARNIA MILLS on Sarnia Bay, seen here circa 1870, was started by Malcolm Cameron, one of Sarnia's early commercial leaders. Photo courtesy, John Rochon collection

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