

Celebrating Ontario's Bicentennial



Ingersoll's Old Post Office, on Thames St., in the early 1900's. Photo courtesy of Ken Shoults.

The Ingersoll Times
Souvenir Edition

Indian chief helped Ingersoll select town site

BY RENE McKNIGHT

Almost everyone knows how the United States was settled; about the Mayflower and Plymouth Rock; how the Indians befriended the American pioneers and taught them survival in an unknown wilderness. But few know how this town was settled almost two centuries ago, or how Thomas Ingersoll chose the site for his town on the advice of famed Indian Chief Joseph Brant.

In 1793 when Governor Simcoe was offering land for 6d. sterling per acre (12 cents), Thomas Ingersoll decided to venture to Canada. Major Ingersoll was to bring 40 settlers to Canada who would each receive 200 acres of land and he would get a 66,000 tract of land.

Choosing the site, which became known as Oxford-on-the-Thames, was not difficult for the major. Years prior to the move, he and Chief Brant had met in New York where the Indian chief urged him to settle in Canada. When he finally took Chief Brant's advice, the Indian had six of his men choose a site for settlement, an area known as La Tranche, now the Thames.

There is some speculation that Major Ingersoll had been to the region at an earlier time with his daughter, Laura Ingersoll Secord.

Shortly after Thomas Ingersoll had settled the area, Governor Simcoe was removed from office and the land grants he had so graciously given away were reneged by the British, who wanted more money for the property.

Discouraged, Thomas Ingersoll, in 1805, left the community he had helped to settle and moved first to Etobicoke, then to Credit River, where he died. Major Ingersoll did not, however, leave without making his mark. Not only had he settled a community but also fathered the first white child born in this area, two years before he left.

In 1817, when the threat of American invasion had ended, Charles Ingersoll bought back his family farm, which his father had left in disgust. He sent his 17-year-old brother James, to re-establish the family roots in the community.



Squire James Ingersoll, son of the town's founder and the first white man born in the area.

When James arrived in town, he found his family home in shambles. While brother Charles kept himself busy as the county Postmaster, James repaired and rebuilt his birth place.

Charles Ingersoll was well-liked in his community and was the town magistrate, Commissioner of Court of Request, and twice served terms in Parliament. In fact, he was so well liked, that villagers at one time named the community the Village of Charles, in his honor.

Charles Ingersoll died in 1832 when a cholera epidemic swept through the town. It claimed his son's life as well.

In accordance with his will's request, the town was renamed Ingersollville, until September 12, 1851 when it became the Village of Ingersoll.

Following in his brother's footsteps, James assumed the position of magistrate in 1834, at the age of 33. James Ingersoll held the position of Postmaster and managed a store until 1843.

The Ingersoll family originated in England. Brothers John and Richard moved to Massachusetts in the early 1600s, where the family remained until Thomas moved in 1793. Although none of the Ingersoll family descendants living in the nearby cities of

London and Windsor. Joyce Brown (nee: Ingersoll) the great, great, great granddaughter of the settler, lives in Oxford Centre and owns a home on the path Major Ingersoll travelled when looking for this settlement.

Ingersoll's daughter, Laura Secord, chose to leave her father's settlement

BY RENE McKNIGHT

Laura Secord is no doubt best associated with candies and other assorted sweets. Although her likeness graces chocolate boxes found almost everywhere, history students will remember Laura Secord for her heroic efforts at the battle of Beaver Dam, where she aided Canadians in the War of 1812.

According to historian Emma Currie, Laura had visited Oxford-on-the-Thames with her father Thomas Ingersoll, when he was first attempting to settle the area. When Laura Ingersoll and her father returned to Massachusetts to bring the rest of the family to his new found settlement, Laura decided to remain in Queenston.

At the age of 18, she operated a tavern in Queenston called the Ingersoll Tavern. Shortly afterwards, she met and married James Secord, who came from a family of United Empire Loyalists.

Within a few years of their marriage, hostile feelings between the British and Americans turned to war, with United States lashing out at Canada.

Under the command of Sir Isaac Brock, the Empire was quite safe, with Brock winning battles on many occasions. Then came the battle at Queenston Heights, where the domineering Brock was shot and killed by an American sniper, and James Secord, who helped to carry the general off the battle field, was himself wounded.

Billeting soldiers was a common practise of the Americans. Viewing a small loyalist family with an injured father as harmless,

the soldiers chose the Secord home as a rooming place.

One evening the American fighters invited Colonel Boerstler to the Secord home and selected Laura to make the meal. Accustomed to Queenston life, the soldiers talked freely of their battle plans. Overhearing their conversation, Laura knew the outcome of a planned ambush at Beaver Dam depended on her.

Originally she had planned to walk to a town nearby where her brother Charles resided. But Charles was too ill to make the tract to Beaver Dam so Laura continued on her way.

The frail woman had to cross 20 miles of untraced land and unbridged streams, which was held by the Americans, before she reached her destination.

She was greeted by Indians who were aiding General James FitzGibbon, the man Laura was seeking out. Immediately, they took her to the general where Laura relayed the story of the planned attack.

Because of her heroic efforts, the Battle of Beaver Dam was easily won by the Canadian force, which had 50 regulars and 440 Mohawk Indians fighting. The Americans had a band of 542 regulars.

After James died, Laura was left penniless and it wasn't until her 85th year her heroic deeds were recognized.

In 1860, when the Prince of Wales, Edward VII, visited Canada, he heard of her efforts in the war and bestowed her with a gift of 100 pounds of gold.

Laura Secord died in her 93rd year at Chippewa, on October 17, 1868.

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The early days in Cheesetown

BY TOM DURALIA

About 134-years-ago, Hiram and Lydia Ranney first began marketing their cheese successfully.

The couple set up a 50-acre farm in the Salford area in 1834, and as with many pioneer families, had been making small batches of cheese for their own use whenever possible.

On some of the larger farms, where more cheese was made than could be eaten by the family, that surplus was sold.

During the first five years the Ranney's lived in Canada, Mrs. Ranney taught at a local school house, becoming the first documented teacher in the area, while her husband diligently worked at clearing his land and building a cattle herd.

By the 1850s, the Ranney farm had grown from 50 to 700 acres and they had a sizeable herd of cattle from which Mrs. Ranney used her expertise to make cheese.

But though families such as the Ranneys and the Wilsons, who lived about three miles south of Ingersoll, made cheese for others to buy, it wasn't until Harvey Farrington moved to Oxford County that things really started to pick up.

Mr. Farrington was a cheesemaker in Herkimer County, New York. However, he was unhappy with the conditions that existed in the U.S. at the time, and after visiting Canada, found Norwich to be an ideal location to set up shop.

Oxford County was especially attractive to dairy-minded people because of its abundance of streams, its rolling hills and its natural shade.

Mr. Farrington sold his U.S. business and came to Norwich in 1863, where he began to erect a factory for the sole purpose of cheesemaking.

Mr. Farrington's actions were about to revolutionize the cheese industry in Oxford, and before long factories were springing up all over the country.

There have been other claims made as to who actually had the first factory, but by 1867 there were over 40, including branches, in Oxford County.

One of those factories was owned by James Harris, who built his just outside of Ingersoll on Highway 19 in 1865, the undisputed first factory in the Ingersoll section.

Mr. Harris was born in 1824, and during his teenage years often visited the Ranney household where he courted and eventually married their daughter, Julia. Early reports hint that it was these visits that provided him with the vision and insight into starting up the James Harris Factory.

Whereas Mr. Farrington moved the cheese industry with leaps by introducing the factory concept, Mr. Harris further refined that idea with branch factories, also in 1865. With branch factories, every farmer need not make his own finished product, but would bring his cheese to a parent factory for curing and marketing, thus increasing productivity. The first branch cheese factory in Canada took the name of the Canada

Cheese Manufacturing Company.

And in 1867, a prestigious dairyman's convention came to Ingersoll, which resulted in the formation of the Canadian Dairyman's Association.

A plaque located at the post office commemorates Oxford County's achievements in having the first cheese factory in Canada, the first cooperative factory system and the formation of the Association.

Aside from the big names of Harris, Ranney and Farrington, Edwin Casswell,

who settled in Ingersoll in 1850, is attributed with getting Ingersoll known for its fine dairy products. He played an active role in the cheese industry as a buyer and exporter, and in 1865 purchased and prepared for shipment at Ingersoll, the first boxes of Ontario cheese that were exported to England.

For many years he was the representative of the Oxford County cheese industry in Great Britain, and was credited with securing the country's initial success in the

British market at a time when Canada's direct trade with Europe had previously been confined to the selling of wood, fish and furs.

1866 was truly the beginning of the cheese export business, as more and more farmers were becoming involved with cheese, which was proving to be more profitable than grain crops.

Cheese production increased from about 10 tons in 1864, to 110 tons in 1865 and 528 tons in 1866, to 1,366 tons in 1867.



This photo of the Mammoth Cheese was taken just before it was carted to New York State Fair in 1866.

The charm of Ingersoll's Big Cheddar

BY TOM DURALIA

It was a cheese much like other cheeses being manufactured in the mid-1800s by the Harris, Ranney and Galloway factories in and around the Ingersoll area.

It was made with the patience and care of expert cheesemakers and was the highest in quality, as nothing less was acceptable.

But unlike other cheese, this particular round took 35 tons of milk to make (mathematically speaking, that is, the equivalent to the product of a single milking of 7,000 cows), and when finished weighed a hefty 7,300 lbs., was 21 feet around and measured 3 feet high.

It definitely a "big cheese," the biggest, in fact, that had even been made.

It was manufactured in June, 1866, at the factory of James Harris, which was located just east of where the Elm Hurst now sits.

The Big Cheese, or Mammoth Cheese as it was referred to then, was a cooperative

effort between a number of individuals who wanted Ingersoll on the world map as the hub of the dairy industry and home of the world's finest cheese.

The advertising extravaganza captured the imagination of all cheese aficionados of the era, and was primarily because of the efforts of James Harris of Ingersoll, Hiram Ranney of Salford and George Galloway of West Oxford, and those under their command.

The three factories arranged to make cheese on the same day, and once prepared in 60 lb. chunks, all were brought to the Harris factory, where a special area had been set aside for curing and pressing.

The individual chunks were ground into small cubes through a curd mill and salted to ensure its safe keeping and proper curing. Once this was completed, an immense steel hoop press, constructed especially for the purpose by James Noxon of the Noxon Farm Implements Factory, was filled with the curds.

The cover was attached and the entire

cheese put under the pressure of six large screws, that when tightened would exert equal pressure on all areas of the cheese at the same time. Inside the press for curing, the gigantic cheddar was turned twice a week with another special device of Noxon's allowing one man to complete the task.

Once aged and ready for view, the monstrous cheese was ceremoniously loaded onto a cheese cart and hauled into the town's centre by six mighty draught horses.

The Mayor, Adam Oliver, and other officials, sang the glories of the achievement as a large crowd gathered to pay homage to the awesome cheese, a cheese so large that even rats were afraid to approach it.

On August 23, 1866, the cheese started its world tour, visiting the New York State Fair at Saratoga for thousands to view and admire. It was later shipped to England for the British Trade Fair, where Ingersoll's reputation as a cheese centre was firmly established.

The cheese was sold to a Liverpool man, who had it thoroughly tested by cheese experts before purchase. They found it to be, through and through, a very good cheese indeed.

James Harris, who accompanied the massive cheese to Britain, returned to Ingersoll with 500 lbs. of it, which was shared amongst the many who contributed to its being, such as its makers Robert Facey, Miles Harris, Warden Schell and James Crawford.

A plaque which sits on Highway 19, just north of the old factory site, commemorates Ingersoll's successful attempt at getting itself known as a true cheesetown.

Since the Big Cheese, another was made larger still in Perth, Ontario, in 1892. This cheese eclipsed Ingersoll's by weighing 11 tons, standing six feet high and measuring 28 feet in circumference. In 1893 when Perth displayed it at the World's Fair in Chicago, its weight caused it to plummet through the floor it was set upon.

That's what you get for oneupmanship.

Thriving business section in the 1800s

BY RENE McKNIGHT

Ingersoll, by the 1800s, was a well established, thriving village. Businesses were frequently springing up and were quite successful.

The leading industry in town by 1855 was the Ingersoll Packing Co. Established by T.D. Millar. The hog slaughtering operation was sold several times before it landed in the hands of Thomas Boyd who held onto the factory until 1925, when he shut it down.

In 1895 a business dealing with goods ranging from hosiery and dress good to furniture and carpets were formed. It was operated and owned by J.J. Jollinrake.

A century ago Ingersoll was home to many newspapers the first being established in 1853. The Ingersoll Chronicle was owned by J.S. Gurnett.

The Noxon Farm Implement Co. was started in 1856 and within 15 years the industry had 100 workers. However, when the first World War began many of the goods which were shipped overseas were lost and by 1925 James Noxon was forced to close his doors.

Canada's first milk condensing factory was established in Ingersoll in 1899. St. Charles Condensing Co. was located on King Street.

In 1877 Wilson and Robertson started up a hardware business on King Street. A basket factory was established in Ingersoll in 1903. It manufactured crates, boxes and fruit baskets which were in great demand in the Niagara Fruit District.

In 1905 the Canada Glove and Mitten factory opened a branch in town. Due to the great demand of their products, the business expanded only a few years after it opened. Some of Ingersoll's older residents can still recall sitting in the store while the salesperson fitted gloves to their hands.

F.W. Staples began a machinist operation in town in the early 1900's. He repaired automobiles, bicycles and machines with his skilled service.

About the same time Ingersoll had two cigar factories established. One was owned by John Frezell, the other by Andrew Smith.

Most of those businesses are now only memories



Thames Street south from the King Street intersection in the early 1900s.

When larger factories opened in London, the Ingersoll plants closed.

The Gas Light Co. of 1872 first supplied the Noxon Factory on Thames Street. In 1891 it had a small electric light plant which operated out of Centerville.

Dominion Telephone System installed its first phones in Ingersoll, making Ingersoll the first community in Canada to have a telephone exchange installed, which was in 1880.

By the early 1900s Ingersoll had six barber shops and several blacksmith shops as well.

An important industry in the late 1800s was the Ellis Furniture Company owned by A.H. Ellis. It was first known as the Hault Manufacturing Co. but the second year of its establishment Mr. Ellis became a partner.

A four storey building which produced

about 400 pianos annually was built in town in 1887 and was called the Evans Bros. Piano Co. The industry was located where Fleischer and Jewett Car Sales Lot and garage now stands.

There were also several small businesses around town in the early 1900s. F.A. Waters Jewellers was established in 1890. The business which was began by Mr. Waters was operated by his son during its later years.

H.W. Healy began a grocery store in 1899; Manning Bookstore was began in the early 1900's and Brassey's Fruit Stand was also established around this time.

In the 1790s, Thomas Ingersoll planted the seeds that would root and grow to become Ingersoll; a community which today bears little resemblance to the wilderness in which

Mr. Ingersoll first settled. Schools, churches, a hospital, a sports arena, and businesses have all been born since then.

None of the community's first businesses still exist. But, there are or were businesses, established in the 1800s or early 1900s, that certainly made their mark on Ingersoll and will be remembered by many.

INGERSOLL MARKET

In the late 1950s, Ingersoll Market was a beehive of activity with grain, mutton and beef being the main items of trade. Many of Ingersoll's older residents will recall the market as it grew and thrived in the early and mid 1900s.

The market did not remain popular, however, and was eventually closed down. A few years ago a number of local and area residents saw the need for the rebirth of an outdoor market, and set the wheels in motion for a Saturday morning market. This market still operates in the Old Town Hall and in market square.

JOHN MORROW MACHINE AND SCREW

This company, located on the corner of Thames and Catherine Streets, was at one time one of Ingersoll's busiest industries. It was founded in Ingersoll in 1887 and produced bolts and screws. In 1974 the company was purchased by Ivaco Industries and the production of cold heading steel parts was moved to Ingersoll Fasteners in the south part of Ingersoll, where a new plant was built.

Before the Ivaco purchase, the firm expanded to produce hot pressed nuts of various sizes. This production line operated out of a building located near the railroad tracks, east of Thames Street north between Mutual and Bruce Streets.

NOXON IMPLEMENT COMPANY

Owned by James Noxon, the Noxon Farm Implement Company started on a small scale in 1856 but rapidly expanded to become a major employer in the community, and to meet the increasing demand for farm labor saving machinery.

When World War I swept the globe, however, many losses were incurred in the sinking of boats loaded with Noxon Farm Implements going to foreign markets and in 1923 the company ceased operations.

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The Council of the Town of Ingersoll wishes to thank all groups, service clubs and others who have sponsored or planned a Bicentennial event in Ingersoll. Special thanks to Councillor Alice Elliott and her Committee for promoting and encouraging Bicentennial activities during 1984.

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Ingersoll's Old Town Hall

Town hall controversy prolonged construction almost 20 years

BY WES ROCHESTER

The 1856 February fire that blazed most of the town core also marked the beginning of controversy that would surround the building of a new town hall.

The question of where Ingersoll would build its second town hall was only settled by the victory achieved at the election of council in 1857 by those who favored the old King Street site.

Controversy was first stirred anew with the warm weather that May of that year brought. Construction was halted when council heard that the land title was invalid.

However, this rumour, derived from local banker Charles E. Chadwick, proved to be unfounded. Public apology through a village newspaper quailed concerns for the hall's construction for a while, but not for long.

By August a new threat sounded the alarm when a new map of Oxford County reached the shelves of local shops. George Tremaine of Kingston chose to border the map with engravings of important buildings in the county, among these being a view of the new town hall.

Village folk were horrified by what they saw, and quickly dubbed the monstrosity a "slab-sided Dutch barn" the design of which better suited the age of past great-grandfathers.

Council expressed its dissatisfaction with the quality of work completed on the building, feeling that a large part of the brick was unfit for use. Contractor William McLean Long assured council the problem could be rectified but that its design was the fault of architect George Brown.

Brown defended the design by stating that his plans were mis-read by the contractor. To appease the conflict, a new architect from a modern school was hired to re-design the building.

Alterations to the structure required building beyond the property line, costing an estimated \$760. S.S. Pomroy, a London capitalist, who owned the land adjacent to the site, threatened council with an action in chancery if the proposed construction was completed.

Pomroy objected to the encroachments on the King Street road allowance which this new design made. His argument was supported by local inn-keeper Absolom Daly, whose hotel remains today as Marco's Landing, formerly the Ingersoll Inn.

In the light of removing the building part and parcel to another site, Pomroy let the matter drop. Two years after the first was destroyed by fire, its late Norman Period style replacement was finally completed in the spring of 1858.

Attempts to create a second railroad that would reduce freight costs caused one of the town's legal firms to attempt to force council to remove all obstructions on the King Street road allowance. This meant that the front of the hall would have to be removed.

Plans called for shifting the entrance to the auditorium from the middle to the front, calling for a high arched ceiling. As well, the bell tower was shifted from its old position to one closer to the front. In early August, 1876, council was finally informed that the building of the town hall, which actually began in 1857, was completed.

First municipal elections held January 5, 1852

BY WES ROCHESTER

"All yea, all yea, all yea. For the purpose of electing five fit and proper persons to serve as municipal councillors and three fit and proper persons for inspectors of houses of public entertainment, let the people of the village Ingersoll, County Oxford, gather in the Inn of John Patterson on Monday the 5th day of January, 1852, in the fore noon. Signed: Daniel Phelan, Justice of the Peace."

Under warrent issued by the Earl of Elgin, then Governor General of Canada, the town crier announced the election under the proclamation of September 12, 1851. In the months to come, inhabitants would be making decisions that would shape their lives for years to come.

Previous to this time (1798-1851) the people of this area were governed by the Townships of North and West Oxford. Meeting in a log school house on the property of Will Sage, lot 13 on the Stage Road, south and east of Centerville, Ingersoll had little power to control its fate.

Even when the meetings were moved closer to its inhabitants in 1830, meeting in a school that was located on the property where the Victory Memorial School now stands, the affairs of Ingersoll were still

being controlled by those outside its circle.

There were 175 names on the village directory when the call for election rang out, but not all had the right to vote, as this privilege was held for freeholders only at that time. If you were a subject of Her Majesty the Queen, or one who has signed an oath of allegiance to the Crown, or a person being in possession of property worth 50 English pounds, then you were able to cast a ballot.

Qualifications to hold public office were similar with one notable exception. Again you had to be a subject of Her Majesty. But, as well, you had to be in possession of 300 English pounds freehold - free from all encumbrances.

It was the day of head to head platform speeches, open voting, and no secret ballots. Topical issues were hotly debated. Many a public forum erupted into hand to hand combat; peace and order only being gained when exhaustion took its toll.

Twelve days after Ingersoll's incorporation as a village, the first council met. Comprised of John Galliford, W.A. Ramsay, Thomas Brown, Charles Parkhurst and James Murdock, their first duty was to choose Galliford as Reeve, appoint Edward Doty as treasurer, and hire James Berry as town clerk.

Old and new businesses are part of town's history

NEW IDEA FURNACES LTD.

This company was established in Ingersoll in 1924 and for many years operated from a building formerly known as Waterworth Woolen Mills. New Idea Furnaces were shipped across the nation until it ceased operations in the late 1950s or early 1960s.

A number of Ingersoll businesses have been operating for years and years, as have a number of Ingersoll industries. Here are just a few of them.

ZURBRIGG'S BAKERY

One of the oldest businesses in town, still in existence, is Zurbrigg's Bakery, located on the west side of Thames Street. The business opened its doors in 1894, and over the decades, has managed to continue to please many a sweet-tooth.

The business was started by Neil Molcolin. Several owners followed, but on December 11, 1908, Samuel G. Zurbrigg took over the business. A partnership was formed in May of 1939 and Zurbrigg's Bakery Limited Company came into being from then until May 8, 1943.

Zurbrigg's Bakery was originally located in the McLeod and McBain Grocery, which is now the location of Fernalea Flowers. In 1936 it relocated to its present home.

In 1955, Zurbrigg's sold its nine bread routes. Since 1894, however, they've still be able to produce breads, cookies, cakes, pies, tarts . . . and almost anything else that is worth every calorie it contains.

INGERSOLL MACHINE AND TOOL CO.

According to the book, 'Ingersoll Our Heritage,' "In 1913 a small factory was erected on the site of the present factory on King Street West, at the town's limits. This small plant was erected by a company for the manufacture of a brand of soap called "Fun to Wash" soap. This company did not exist long and brooms were then made in the building before the plant was purchased by Messrs. E.A. Wilson and Charles Shortt in 1914. In 1915, a company was formed and named Ingersoll Machine and Tool.

The size of the factory was extended to have a floor space of 8,000 square feet. This

was a two storey building of solid white brick walls with steel. The plant, at various times, made additions until it reached a floor capacity of over 80,000 square feet. Nagle and Mill, Ingersoll contractors, were the early builders of a large part of the factory.

"Starting with 30 employees, the business of this company steadily increased until the employees numbered 350. This company enjoys an international wide trade. It specializes in the manufacture of steering gear assemblies for many makes of automobiles and boats.

"At various times it specialized in car starters, steering gears, millimetre shells, truck axel parts, house trailer parts and machine parts. Mr. Shortt did not remain long with the company but Mr. Wilson continued as president until 1952."

When Mr. Wilson retired, his son Harold took over the reigns, and when he retired, his son Ernest became president.

The company is still a major employer in the community.

FLEISCHER AND JEWETT

Following a World War I wartime friendship between P.T. Fleischer and Abe Jewett, the two decided to set up a business on King Street West, in 1920, to deal in battery service. They named it Ingersoll Auto Electric.

The business quickly expanded and in 1923, they moved to the present site on Thames Street South. The business now includes complete auto servicing as well as being agents for General Motors.

Ted Fleischer and Bob Jewett purchased the business upon the deaths of their fathers, and continue to operate it.

First car owners

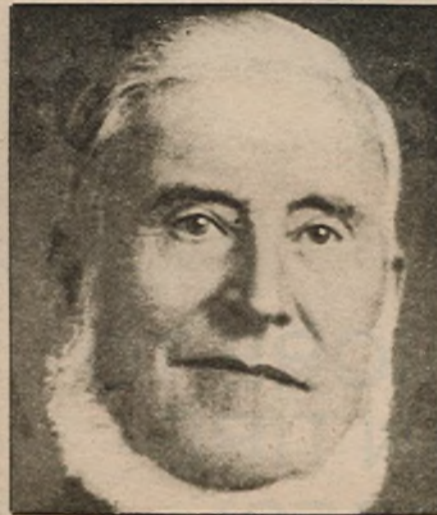
Harry Leigh and M.T. Buchanan were Ingersoll residence who each owned one of the first cars in town. By 1907 Ingersoll had five cars. Mr. Leigh also owned one of the first radio's.

The first television in town was owned by Mr. Alcock.



Horse driven buggies parked right beside the 'horseless carriages' that could be seen on Thames Street South in earlier days.

Stone family business marked 85 years



William Stone, founder of William Stone Sons Limited.

In 1870, William Stone established one of the most essential farm businesses in western Ontario. Starting with a hide and wool business in Woodstock, in 1880, Arthur W. Stone became associated with his father and in 1907, J. Fred Stone joined the

company as manager of the then new Ingersoll branch.

The company was incorporated under the name William Stone Sons Ltd. in 1911 and a fertilizer and rendering plant was built here in town. R.A. Stone became the manager of operations.

Six years later, the company extended the original plant and by 1926 the company had established its head office in Ingersoll.

It was the headquarters for commercial fertilizer which sold under the name of National Fertilizers.

By 1937 the plant had extended to make concentrate feeds known as National Quality Mix and it was during this time, the company opened a packing department for meat to be supplied to mink and fox ranchers.

In 1948 the rebuilding and extension of the plant made it one of the most modern in Canada, and one year later, in 1949, the company marked its 80th anniversary.

In 1955, Canadian Industries Limited took over the business, restricting it to fertilizers only, but last year, the company closed its Ingersoll plant, moving to its London office.

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Pork factory once a major employeer

BY RENE McKNIGHT

When Ingersoll and the surrounding area was settled nearly 200-years-ago, less than 100 people populated the town. Now, the year of Ontario's Bicentennial, the population has swelled to 8,500. To look at Ingersoll today, it is hard to believe that only 59-years-ago people feared the town might disappear when the town's leading employer shut its doors.

In the mid 1800's Ingersoll Packing Co. was established by T.D. Millar who owned and operated the hog slaughter house. The building, which is located where Ingersoll Cheese now stands, was then sold to James L. Grant and Co.

The new owners saw the need to increase business as the area's cheese industry grew. Farmers in the area fed their hogs wney which resulted in fair-sized hogs. Overseas business was also on the rise.

In 1877 the business was sold to Thomas L. Boyd, an English man who exported the majority of his product to Liverpool and London, England. By this time Ingersoll Packing Co. had become Canada's largest hog-related industry.

In 1925, Mr. Boyd unexpectedly ceased production at Ingersoll Packing Co. There was much speculation that the town would die since a large number of the townspeople were employed there.

When operating in full capacity the industry could kill as many as 5,000 hogs per week. The four storey hog pen located on Wonham Street was capable of holding 6,000 live hogs.

Slaughtering the pigs was a daily task with the exception of Sundays. The animals, after being driven into a pen, were hoisted a few feet in the air by a chain which held a hind leg, then the animals fatally stabbed. Following this, the carcass was passed along an iron track which was situated above a scalding water tank into which the hogs were placed.

The next step in the process was the scraping machine, which removed the majority of the animal's hair. The remaining hair was removed by hand by the

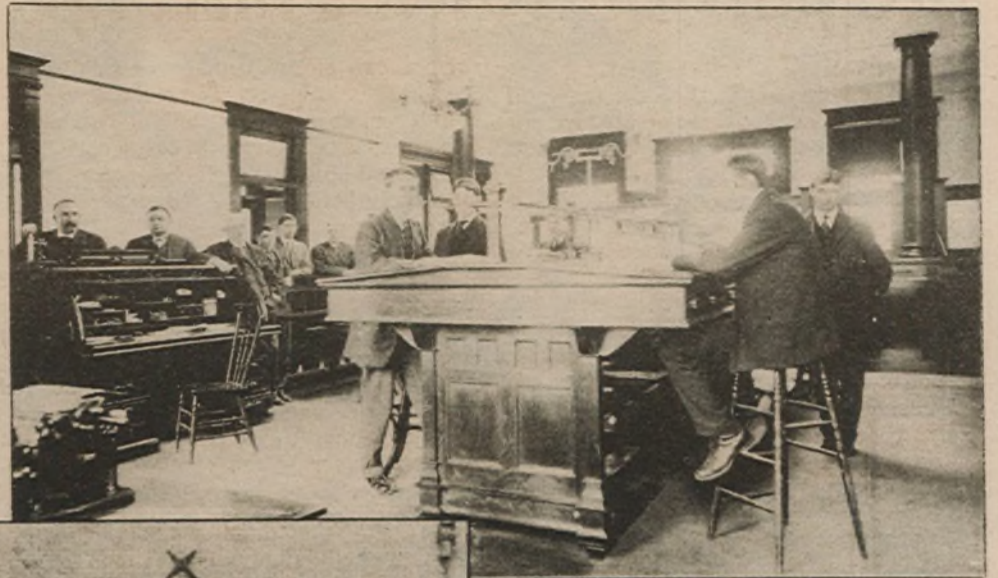
workers. Next, the carcasses were placed in a burning furnace which singed them and left them smoked and brown. The only remaining steps were the cleaning, cutting and the packaging of the pork.

Although there was a sewage system with a catch basin the offal would end up in the river. It was not unusual for those swimming in the Thames to spot the animal waste in the river.

Much of the pork from the Packing Co. was sent to England, with cheaper cuts being sold in town.

When farmers from a 30-mile radius brought hogs to the slaughter factory, the animals were weighed and farmers were given a weight ticket. Hogs brought in as much as 25 cents per pound in the early 1900's.

In the late 1890's a refrigeration system



The top photo shows the interior of the pork factory and some of its employees. It was taken around 1900 and includes: C.H. Sumner, Dip Hook, C.C.L. Wilson, W.E. Cragg, Mac Wallace and R.I. Smith. The lower photo shows the outside of the factory. (Photos courtesy of Gord Henry)



was installed at the factory. Ingersoll Packing Co. used ice to store its pork and to keep it fresh while shipping it to Montreal and St. John.

Mr. Boyd was quick to see the profits which were available in the cheese industry and brought cheddar making to the warehouses, which were located on the south side of Victoria Street West and at the intersection of Wonham Street, where Ingersoll Cheese Company is now located. At the outbreak of World War I the industry thrived because both cheese and pork were sent to allied forces.

While Mr. Boyd owned the Ingersoll Packing Co., it was run by C.C.L. Wilson and C.H. Sumner. The cheese exporting section of the business was headed by V.H. Thomas.

By 1925 Ingersoll appeared to be in a desperate situation when the packing industry closed, but the following year Ingersoll Cream Cheese Company began production in the same building.



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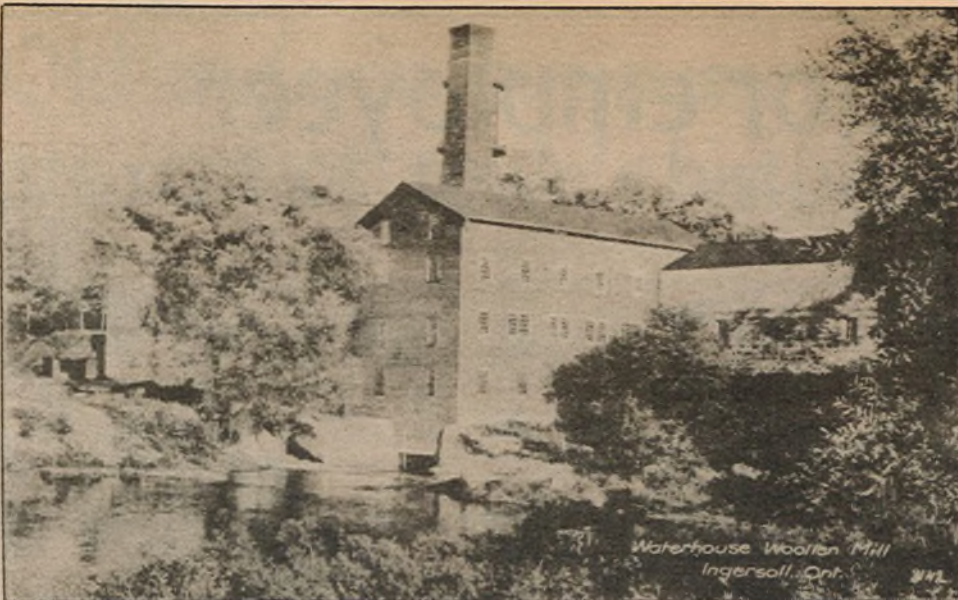
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Street names honor founder's family

Where do street names come from?

Here are just a few of the street names in town, and how the streets came to possess those names.

Charles Street is named after Charles Ingersoll.

Whiting Street was named after Sarah Whiting, who was Thomas Ingersoll's third wife.

Noxon Street is named after James Noxon who founded an implement works, which closed shortly after World War I. Mr. Noxon's home was also the first Alexandra Hospital.

Elisha Hall built the first brick house in Ingersoll and owned much of the property around the street now called Hall Street.

Colonel Wonham, a surveyor who laid out the town, had his name given to a street. Wonham Street Streets were also named after three of his children, Francis, Ann and Albert.

Martha Tunis, the wife of Icabod Hall and the mother of Elisha Hall, saw Martha Street named after her. The Hall family once owned the land Martha Street is now situated on.

Merrit Street commemorates Charles Ingersoll's wife, Anna Maria Merritt. Bond Street was named so to signify the relationship between the Merritt and Ingersoll families.

Holcroft Street is named for Colonel Holcroft who came to Canada during the War of 1812 and was in charge of an Imperial regiment.

Dufferin Street commemorates the visit of Lord and Lady Dufferin in 1874. Prior to that visit, the street was called Catherine Street in honor of Catherine Chadwick, who was the wife of C.E. Chadwick, an early mayor of Ingersoll.

Church Street was named so because it ran near three churches, the Methodist, Anglican and Presbyterian.

Harris Street was named after J.H. Harris, an early and prestigious cheese-maker.



In the early part of the 1890s, F.W. Waters opened Ingersoll's first jewellery store on the main street. In the photo from left to right are: F.W. Waters, Hubert Hut, Florence Spencer (nee: Waters), Richard Rogerson and Frank Dundas. (Photo courtesy the Waters family)

Town gained cement sidewalks in 1891

1852 marked the year Ingersoll had its first village council.

Fifty-five miles of sidewalk was poured in town in 1891. The new sidewalks, made of stone, gravel and cement, were the first of their kind in Canada and was similar to those found in England.

Ingersoll's first blacksmith shop came into being in 1802. It was owned and operated by John Uren.

Stillwell Samuel Smith was the first to open an Inn in town.

October 24, 1874 was the date of the first fair held in Ingersoll. It was held at the river flats between North Wonham and McKeand Streets.

James Ingersoll was the first white child born in Ingersoll. He was born in 1801.

The first gas produced in Ingersoll was at the Noxon Factory in 1872.



Bill Burnett
F.I.I.C.



Duncan Craigie
A.I.I.C.



Ron Kulchyski



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St. Charles Hotel, left, stood on the corner of Charles and Thames Streets.

Ingersoll at one time, was the home of as many as 15 hotels. It was a booming community, with the Old Stage Road, now King Street, being a busy and well travelled path.

The Oxford Inn is thought to have been the first hotel built in the community. It was located at the corner of King and Mill Streets and was supposed to have been built in the 1790s.

The Royal Exchange Hotel, located on the south west corner of Charles and Thames Streets was opened in 1852. It was here the first election for village council was held.

The Prince of Wales Hotel was located on the west side of Thames Street, in the

vicinity between Carr's Book and China Shop and Zurbrigg's Bakery. It opened in 1828.

Twenty-odd years later, the Keating House, built in 1844, opened. It was located just south of where the Presbyterian Church now stands. It was first named the Commercial Hotel and later became known as the Red Onion, because all of its owners were readheaded with hot Irish tempers.

The Kirwin Hotel, first known as the Chamber Hotel then the Oxford House, was built in 1891-92 on the west side of Oxford Street, opposite Ingersoll's present police station. It served the community until 1967

Ingersoll once housed 15 hotels

when it was torn down.

The Adair Hotel, the Atlantic House and the Carroll House, along with the Royal Hotel, the McMurray Hotel, the Harmony Hall or Bummer's Roost, and the Queens Hotel, were other hotels that once operated in this community. The Thompson House, the Lee Hotel or Dereham House, the Mansion House, or the Brandy Hotel, the Walker House, the McCarty House and the Trick's Hotel, also existed.

Today, only Marco's Landing (originally the Daly House) remains.

Daly House

The Daly House, built early in 1838 on the site now occupied by Marco's Landing, formerly the Ingersoll Inn, was visited by many colorful characters of the last century.

Before a wandering spark from a burning trash heap found its way to the hotel in 1855, the log building built by Absolem Daly was a friendly meeting place, a place for Indians to come and trade their goods, and a welcoming abode for those wearied from journey on the Old Stage Road, which ran right past its front doors.

But as was said, in 1855 a spark jumped from across the road, ignited a vulnerable

curtain, and most of the hotel was destroyed.

In 1857, at the same time as the Olde Town Hall was being erected, the Ingersoll Inn was constructed on the site of the Daly House.

Here, in the yellow brick building, the historic figures of such persons as Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, showman P.T. Barnum and Thomas D'Arcy McGee made appearances. Along with these were countless personalities from the Chautauqua travelling shows and in the years prior to and during the American Civil War (1861-1865), many a plot and scheme was discussed among patrons of the Inn.

Many of these meetings were said to have involved members of the anti-slavery faction from the United States, such as Abolitionist John Brown, who championed the cause until his death by hanging in 1859, in Charlestown, Virginia. He had been found guilty of treason, conspiracy with slaves to rebel and first degree murder.

The location of the Ingersoll Inn, half-way between Detroit and Niagara Falls, made it an ideal stopover point and meeting place.

Now Marco's Landing for the past few years, the building still retains its original look.




Restaurant Guide

To Ingersoll & Area



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Three R's taught 200 years ago in Ingersoll schools



Princess Anne School has undergone a facelift, with more classrooms and a staff lounge, along with storage facilities, added. The town's Catholic Separate School, also received a facelift in 1969.

Westfield Public School was built in 1964.

Discipline in the early days created problems at times. With only one teacher for an entire community school, it is easy to understand the difficulties these teachers might have faced. Attendance could not be enforced. During the summer months the older children would stay home to help out on farms.

In early records of school days in the 1800s, it was said the older children would create additional holidays for themselves sometimes. When the teacher wasn't looking, older students would sneak out of the building and jam the chimney so the school room would fill with smoke and school would have to be dismissed for the day.

Progress and technology have had a great impact on schooling. Instead of slates, the children use computers and have plenty of texts. The length of the school day has increased but the fundamentals taught at schools have remained the same for more than 100 years.

BY RENE MCKNIGHT

In the early 1800s, when Ingersoll had only 20 families, school lessons were conducted in two Thames Street homes for a few hours each afternoon. The three R's, reading, writing, and arithmetic, were the main subjects of the school years.

In 1812, West Oxford County had its first school house built. It was on the Old Stage Road and children walked as far as four miles to attend.

Ingersoll's first school house opened in 1852 and had 150 area children attending. The two storey Union School House was opened 10-years-later. There were, at that time, several denominational schools.

With a black board made of smooth lumber painted black, and a few text books, teachers taught pupils whose parents could afford to send their children to school. Those attending sat on wooden benches, with a slate and pencil as their only learning tools. Before ink was available in stores, local people would make it and sell it to those needing it.

On the corner of Alma Street a small building was erected. Three of the rooms in this structure were used for high school purposes while the other served as a public school. The town had this four room grammar and public school erected in 1874 at a cost of \$8,000.

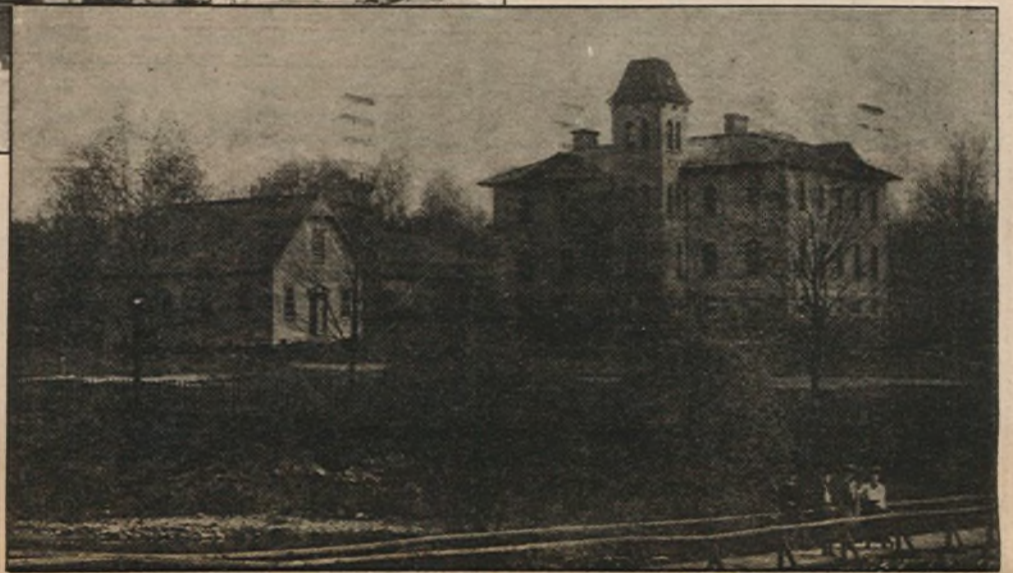
This school was unofficially known as the Ward School and remained in the same building until 1910 when a new building was erected on the same site. In 1938 the school received royal permission to be renamed Princess Elizabeth School.

In 1880 Ingersoll's high school had an

attendance of 45, but within 10 years, that figure doubled and in 1886, the school was large enough to be considered a collegiate.

At a cost of \$2,000, St. Joseph's School was built in 1867. Five years later, the yellow brick house, Central Public School, was constructed. It stood there until 1920 when Victory Memorial School was built in its place, following World War I.

A four room school, which included a kindergarten, was established in 1955 and was named Princess Anne. This past year



Top photo: Central Public School, now Victory Memorial School.

Middle photo: Ingersoll District Collegiate around 1910.

Lower photo: An early Ingersoll Public School classroom.



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Town Library cost \$400 to build in 1880

In 1880 a public meeting was held in the Council Chambers and another library began. James Noxon was elected president. A grant of \$400 was received from the province on the understanding that they would provide a public library, reading room, evening classes and a scientific museum. The municipality contributed some funds and subscribers paid \$1.00 per annum.

Rooms were secured at a rental of \$50 and the librarian, Mr. Adkins was paid \$50 a year.

The struggles of the committee over the next few years to keep the venture going are recorded in the minutes. To raise funds the committee sponsored concerts and excursions. A trip to Toronto on Civic Holiday, 1882, brought a profit of \$70; a concert by the Jubilee Singers, \$30; but a concert of local talent brought a loss of \$3.99.

In 1880 under the chairmanship of G.W. McDiarmid, the board bowed to the request of the W.C.T.U. to set up a free reading room and recreation room and even entertained the thought of a gymnasium. A piano was installed and rules drawn up for its use. The amusement committee purchased three sets of checkers, two of "pig in clover", one of dominoes, one of authors, one "go bang", one parlour croquet and board, one air gun, etc.

In 1890 the Mechanics Institute became a Free Public Library. The Municipality contributed \$454 to this venture. Several pages of minutes were filled with regulations as to the use of the library.

In 1898 the library was located in the Royal Bank Building and in 1899 moved to the Miller building on Thames Street. A crisis over fuel in 1903 resulted in closing the reading room part of the week and in 1907 the library was closed on account of small



These men are preparing to put down Ingersoll's new road --- a brick one. This photo was taken in the early 1900s.

pox.

The Library Board applied for a Carnegie grant and in 1910 the present library building on Charles Street was opened. The lot was purchased from the Merchants Bank for \$1, and the library building was built and furnished for \$9,000.

Mrs. Court was the librarian for 15 years followed by Janet McKellar in 1908. Irene Cole of Guelph, succeeded her in 1931, and Betty Crawford followed Miss Cole. Since the retirement of Miss Crawford in 1971 the Librarians have been David Hall (1972-73), Linda Birtwell (1973-75), and Bonnie Gray (1975-78). Gail Jeffrey succeeded Miss Gray in 1978.

In 1967 Ingersoll Public Library completed major changes in a renovation program

sparked by the Centennial activity. The interior of the library was opened out into a single floor space and area for reading or reference. The color scheme is of white and light "colery" walls with a soft green carpet and drapes, comfortable chairs in tangerine, yellow and red make spots of color. Mrs. Ross Kilgour, S. Underwood, Dr. J.A. Paterson and Madeleine Hamilton were the board members at this time.

In 1960 under the chairmanship of Percy J. Smith, a children's library was established in the basement. Extensive renovations were carried out in 1976 to the children's section to make it more bright and cheerful. The walls were covered in panelling, the ceiling lowered, new light fixtures put in and carpeting.

Library resources have increased with the expansion of the Oxford County Library system and the Lake Erie Regional system.

In 1969 the Library became a branch of the Oxford County Library.

The circulation has risen to well over 60,000 books. The library continues to provide a place for meetings of the Sketch Club and the Book Club. Before the basement was used as a Children's Library, it was the home of such groups as the Photography Club, Naturalists, Little Theatre and many others.

For a number of years travelling exhibitions of art were hung in the library and several times a year, exhibitions of local art were displayed.

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INGERSOLL

Mail services in Ingersoll since 1821

BY RENE McKNIGHT

In the early 1800s, families were scattered across the country. The Ingersoll family was stretched from Massachusetts to the Niagara Frontier, to Oxford County. Visits from family and friends were few and far between, and letters were the main means of communication for the earliest settlers.

In 1821, four years after brothers Charles and James decided to return to the village which their father had established, the first Post Office in the county was set up. It was called Oxford Post.

The Ingersoll brothers operated this small mail service in one section of their general store, which was located on the corners of King and Thames Streets. Until 1843, James Ingersoll was the county Postmaster.

The year was 1837 and the Mackenzie rebellion was in full swing with many Ingersoll residents taking an active part in it. It also marked the year James Ingersoll moved the post office to the corner of King and Market Streets. Following the rebellion, it was moved once again, this time to where the Royal Bank now stands.

Oxford Post came under the hands of a new Postmaster in 1847, when Daniel Phelan took over the position.

When Mr. Phelan retired, Charles Eli Chadwich assumed the position, only to be removed by the government in 1857.

Under the care of the new Postmaster, Joseph Thickle, Ingersoll had a new Post Office established where McNiven Insurance now stands. Mr. Thickle served as Ingersoll Postmaster for 25 years, until his

death in 1882. He was succeeded by Joseph Gibson.

A new Post Office was built at the corner of Thames and Charles Streets in 1898-99, the spot now the location of the Bank of Montreal. It was opened in 1899, the same year Samuel Gibson succeeded his father to the position of Postmaster.

Rural mail delivery began on December 13, 1911, while Samuel Gibson was in charge. Samuel Gibson was Postmaster for 50 years.



This is the former Post Office. It was located on the site now occupied by the Bank of Montreal, at the corner of Thames and Charles Streets. This building was officially opened in 1899. In 1961 the Post Office moved to its present location on Charles Street West.

Robert Wark was next to take on the job and under his rule the Post Office building, which is used today, was built in 1960-61. The Charles Street office was officially opened in October 1961.

With the retirement of Mr. Wark, Herbert Egly was appointed Postmaster in 1964. Within a few months of his appointment, he introduced Ingersoll to letter carrier delivery.

Because the Post Office was closed Saturdays, a Sub-post Office was created in 1969. Alf Boniface was appointed the Sub-Postmaster and carried out business

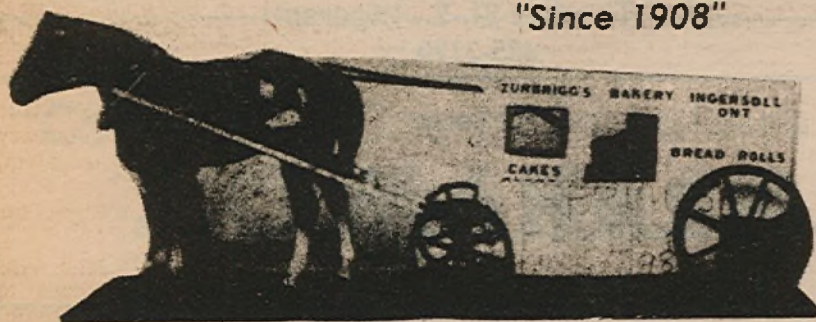
from his Thames Street store. When Mr. Boniface died in 1980, Myrna Ledgley took over the post.

In February of 1978, when Mr. Egly retired from the position as Postmaster, Morley Palen filled the spot. In the latter part of 1979, he left the job and Don McNiven was appointed Postmaster, a position which he still holds.

The Post Office is an operation which increased steadily as Ingersoll grew in population. 115-years-ago, in 1832, the Post Office's revenue was L27, S7 and 5d, which today is the equivalent of \$55.82. By 1982 that figure had increased to \$368,926.

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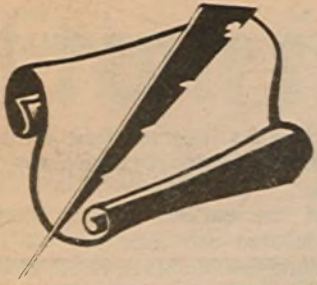
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Business Section, early 1900's





Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church in the early 1900s.

History of town churches

Since Thomas Ingersoll first settled the Ingersoll area, there have been many, many churches.

One of the earliest was a Methodist Church located one mile east of Harris Street, along the Old Stage Road, now King Street, a third and a mile south.

The King Street Wesleyan Methodist Church was built in 1865 and was situated on the north west corner of King and Church Streets. It later joined another church and took on the name Trinity United Church.

In 1857 an Episcopal Methodist Church, known as the Charles Street Church was built. It was located on the north side of Charles Street. It was later demolished.

A British Methodist Episcopal Church was on the south side of Catherine Street and was built in 1858 by the 350 Negro residents of the town.

In 1904, following the death of the church's minister, Rev. Hale, the church was no longer used, and in 1932 it was sold

The New Connection Church was a branch of Methodism. In 1875 there were five of these churches located in the Ingersoll area. In 1925 the Methodist congregation and some Presbyterians united to form the United Church of Canada.

The John Street Methodist Church was constructed in 1870. Today the building is used as a home.

A Baptist church was erected in the Harris Street Cemetery, west of the archway, in 1932. Another Baptist church was built on Albert Street in 1857. In 1864 the present Baptist Church, at the corner of Canterbury and Thames Streets was built.

In 1838 a small Catholic church was built on Church Street. In 1847 another one was built on the west side of John Street, between Bell and Victoria Streets. In 1879 a brick church was built, today's Sacred Heart Church.

Knox Presbyterian Church was built in 1847. In 1889 the Knox congregation joined with St. Andrew's Church.

The Erskine Presbyterian congregation was organized in 1852 and a church was built in 1855. The congregation joined the Knox Church in 1883.

St. Andrew's Church was built in 1872. In 1889 the Knox congregation joined with St. Andrew's and the new church was called St. Paul's.

In 1982 St. Paul's Presbyterian Church marked its 135th anniversary.

In 1835 the First Anglican Church was built by the Charles Ingersoll family. A new brick church was built in 1868 on Oxford Street and is now known as St. James' Anglican Church.

The Salvation Army in 1982 marked its 100th anniversary, although it came to Ingersoll in 1885.

The Christian Reformed Church in 1955 established a church just outside of Ingersoll on King Street West. In 1976 a new church was built on the same location.

In 1935 the Pentecostal congregation bought the former Evan's Piano Co. office to use as a church. In 1973 a new church was built on Highway 2, about two miles east of Ingersoll.

In 1942 the congregation of the Revival Centre Church bought the former gym of IDCI, and moved it to its present 242 Kensington Street location.

Major changes in police department

BY RENE MCKNIGHT

With the cruiser parked on the Oxford Street hill and a uniformed man waiting to respond, a call for help could be answered immediately by Ingersoll police, as long as a few officers were on hand to give the 1955 Plymouth police cruiser a push down the hill to get it started.

When Ingersoll got its own town police force in 1955, a chief, four constables and a bylaw officer were the only staff. Before the year was finished, a new member was added to the force, former police chief Ron James. Previously, the town was policed by the Ontario Provincial Police, said Mr. James.

It was in the first year of its operation that the police force obtained its first car.

The cruiser, a 1955 Plymouth, was bought for about \$2,000. The car was fairly inexpensive, Mr. James recalled, as it had been damaged when it fell off the back of a transport. The force nevertheless, was more than happy with the cruiser because town councillors had suggested the officers use a taxi to answer calls, before approving purchase of the car.

It was the following year that Ingersoll police ran into trouble with their bargain-priced car. In April, 1956, a two-way radio was purchased for the cruiser. Because the car battery was so small, if the radio was put to use it would drain the battery, resulting in the vehicle failing to start.

Ingersoll police did find a way around this though, thanks to Bell telephone operators.

When calls came in and police were not in the station, which at one time occupied the old town hall, a red light situated on the corner of Thames and King Streets would light up, letting police know a call was waiting to be answered. Another method was to leave the light on in the chief's office.

Twenty-years-ago Ingersoll police station was opened on a 24-hour basis. At that time, three dispatchers were added to the force.

When the Ingersoll force began in 1955,

joining it was like signing your life away, Mr. James recalled. Officers were only paid \$42 per week, which was rather low for the time, he said.

Mr. James said Ingersoll has been a relatively quiet town over the years. To his recollection, there have not been any armed robberies, nor have there been any murders. However, he admitted he was stabbed once, and said the police station has been shot at.

Before the town force was established in 1955, it was policed by the OPP. Before that time, however, it had had a police force of its own.

Mr. Skirving was the first chief of the force, which began in the 1890s. Alec Edmonds was growing up in Ingersoll when its original force was still in existence, and remembered days when the three-man force made all of their calls on foot. If an officer owned a bicycle, he used that also.

When Mr. Skirving left his position as police chief, Allen Wright filled the spot, followed by Mr. Cooke, Walter Holmes, and finally Mr. Gilling.

Following nine years of being policed by the OPP, Ingersoll decided to revert back to its old way and adopted a town force once again.

The first chief of this force was Leslie Pengelly. When Mr. Pengelly left, the spot was temporarily filled by Mr. James, who was appointed acting chief until 1963 when Art Mahony took over the job.

After only a 17 month stay, Chief Mahony was replaced by Art McCart, who stayed with the Ingersoll police department until

Adam Oliver first mayor

Ingersoll's first Reeve was John Galliford, named to the post in 1852. The town's first mayor was Adam Oliver, elected in 1859. In 1977 the town's present mayor, Doug Harris, was elected.

In 1763 the area now known as Oxford County was assigned to Quebec by the English at the Treaty of Paris.

In 1851 Ingersoll became a village.

1974 when Mr. James again took over, this time as chief.

When Chief James retired in 1983, Bruce Richards was appointed the new chief, a position he still holds.

Ingersoll police force has kept up with the times and now has a staff consisting of a chief, 11 officers, and a civilian staff. The police of Ingersoll also have two cruisers now, neither of which has to be pushed down a hill to be started.

Since its birth 29-years-ago, Ingersoll police force has experienced a lot. The computer age has brought many changes to the station.

"You have to be advanced and well trained to keep up with modern criminals," Mr. James said.

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From farm girl to famous evangelist

BY MIKE WALSH

Aimee Semple McPherson created a sensation wherever she went

One of the world's most noted female evangelists came from the Ingersoll area, she was Aimee Semple McPherson.

Born October 9, 1890 on a dairy farm located about a mile and a half west of Salford, Aimee Elizabeth Kennedy was the only daughter of James Morgan Kennedy and Minnie Peirce. Brought up with a strong religious background, Aimee, in her autobiography, "The Personal Testimony", recalled her early childhood as being "associated with good, old fashion hymns and Bible stories. Daniel in the lions' den, the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, and other Bible stories were so interwoven in my life that by the time I was five years of age, I could have repeated them word for word as they had been told to me."

Ingersoll in those days had a population of about 1,000 and had seven churches with the largest and most prominent being the Methodist church. Aimee's father attended this church but her mother, known to everyone as "Happy Minnie" was brought up by a Salvation Army couple. Therefore, she continued to follow this denomination. Records don't indicate what church Aimee attended.

Bibliography accounts indicate Aimee as being imaginative and outgoing in Public School and credits her wit and courage for allowing her to make friends at the Ingersoll High School. In fact, she was so well liked, she was the winner of a popularity contest.

She's described as being athletic, intelligent, beautiful, and well-liked, although her aggressive behaviors and high ambition set her apart from other girls.

At one stage in her life Aimee had desires of becoming an actress but this changed when she was 17. One evening, prior to taking Aimee to her play practise, Mr. Kennedy and Aimee went to listen to a travelling evangelist.

Robert Semple's subject matter, "Repent", spoke to Aimee in such a way that she began skipping classes to attend his services. What resulted from attending these revival service? "Aimee's old life was over." She was "born again" and "in love," as written in a bibliography by Alvyn Austin.

The evangelist and Aimee became close and even though he moved on to preach, they corresponded. However, he did return shortly afterwards, this time, taking Aimee with him. They were married and on their way to China to work as missionaries.

Even before he began to learn the Chinese language, Mr. Semple was struck with a

her head for silent prayer. Without opening her eyes she was aware that a large crowd was gathering. At just the right moment Aimee raised her head and shouted "Follow Me!" then tore down the street to the chapel.

"When everyone had gathered inside, she ordered the doors to be locked until she had finished. After that, her meetings were filled to overflowing. The church that she started continues to this present day."

Encouraged by her reception in Ontario, Aimee left with her two children and mother for California. In Los Angeles, she rented a large hall and eventually the 3,500 seat auditorium was filled to overflowing. Her abilities to travel without a man and to undertake plans which would be ambitious "even for a male preacher", was remarkable in the audiences eyes.

Many people were being healed at Aimee's services. One bibliography said during a service in San Diego, "a crippled woman rose from her wheelchair and walked to the platform, followed by hundreds of other invalids who were miraculously "cured." Said Aimee, "I am not a healer. Jesus is the healer, I am only the little office girl who opens the door and says come in."

Aimee was often referred to as the Jazz Age Preacher, because of her showbiz approach to preaching the Gospel. She drew thousands of followers. In fact, with their donations and support, the Angelus Temple was built in 1923.

The 5,000 seat building was always filled with an audience who came to hear Aimee speak, "not of the old gospel of fear, but rather what she called her "Four Square Gospel" based on being born again, divine healing, the Second Coming of Christ and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit."

During the depression, Aimee and her Four Square Gospel were highly respected for serving the needy by supplying food to the hungry and unemployed. Also during this time, missions were established all over the world.

The booklet, Outstanding Women of Oxford County, says that Aimee had a very dramatic life, and outlines one account that still remains a mystery. "Because Aimee lived in an age where scandals and sensational stories filled the newspaper, it is hard to try to find the truth about the events and people that surrounded her. Unfortun-



Aimee Semple McPherson, one of the most noted female evangelists, was called from a milk pail, as she illustrated in the lower left photo, on her farm near Salford, to preaching the Gospel from a world pulpit, top photo. Aimee began "preaching the Gospel of Christ," with her first husband, Robert Semple, bottom right, when she was 17. Mr. Semple died of malaria a few years after their marriage, while they were serving as missionaries in China.



severe case of malaria which resulted in his death. Two months later Aimee gave birth to a daughter, Roberta Star Semple. Frightened about living alone and supporting her child in a foreign country, Aimee moved back to Ingersoll.

Shortly thereafter, she married a grocery clerk, Harold McPherson. They had one son Rolf. Aimee, being a very active type of person, would be gone for a day, week and even longer to preach. Even though he promised her before they were married that he would not stand in the way of her work, Mr. McPherson could not take her being away all the time, and divorced Aimee in 1921.

Aimee's first meeting was in Berlin, now known as Kitchener. She was not invited to preach, therefore she did everything else she could to be helpful. She did the dishes, cooked food and played the piano at the meetings.

The first meeting she conducted was in Mount Forest. Aimee was faced with a challenge because the people of this town, weren't interested in her message. She overcame this when, "she stood on a chair at the main intersection of town and bowed

ately, Aimee was a victim of this "sensationalist" publicity, and today there are mixed feelings about her. In 1926, Aimee was at a beach, swimming, and suddenly disappeared! Where she had gone was a great mystery. When she returned 32 days later, she claimed to have been kidnapped, and the newspapers picked up the story. There are fascinating but complicated accounts of Aimee's mysterious disappearance but no one knows the real truth," according to the book.

In 1931 Aimee married an Angelus Temple baritone, David Hutton. That same year she divorced him for mental cruelty.

Aimee died September 26, 1944. She was 53. An autopsy revealed the cause of death was an overdose of sleeping pills but a jury later ruled it was not suicide, that she had taken the overdose accidentally.

The International Church of the Four Square Gospel is still in existence. Aimee's son, Rolf, took over the organization after her death and remains as its president. The denomination has several churches throughout the United States and Canada and supports hundreds of missionaries sent to many countries in the world.



Ingersoll's Oxford Street bares little resemblance to the way it looked in the late 1800s. This photo was taken from the Old Town Hall, looking south, toward Charles Street. The area directly behind the Old Town Hall was used as a market area. Today the police station is located there. Behind each of the buildings are wood piles, used for heating.

Pond 'monster' hoax drew 10,000 spectators

BY RENE McKNIGHT

Keeping up with the Jones's is an almost timeless tradition and one May 24 holiday Ingersoll residents, not wanting to be outdone by Scotland's Lockness monster, came up with a creature which would attract 10,000 curious visitors to the village.

It all began in the early months of 1857 (some historians say 1862) when turbulence was noted on Partlo's Pond by several citizens. In a matter of time the frothing pond set free the imaginations of the townspeople and was thought to be inhabited by a fearsome creature.

It was only a matter of time before the press picked up on the issue and added more fuel to the fire. Soon historians, professors and museum experts were in on the monster talks. Rumours spread like wildfire; a prehistoric turtle lurked in the still waters of Partlo Pond, or perhaps an alligator dropped by some travelling menagerie. Whatever this monster was, it was gaining

notoriety and townspeople were demanding it be caught and removed; dead or alive.

May 24 was chosen as the date that the fearsome creature would be caught. This issue was no longer just the concern of a little Ontario town but of the whole nation. On the holiday weekend, the pond was to be drained and the monster disclosed.

Despite the fact Ingersoll had prepared for a crowd of curious onlookers to visit, it was not prepared for the 10,000 visitors that came. Barn lofts were rented at premium rates for those seeking shelter.

One of the strangers who had loafed into town was a noteworthy professor from the United States, who was anonymously signed in at the Royal Exchange Hotel. With him he brought dozens of literary pamphlets dealing with prehistoric creatures.

As the great moment drew near, excitement ascended on the crowd of people surrounding Partlo's Pond. Although the gates were not to open until 4 p.m., 10,000 people had gathered along the shores of the

alleged sea serpent's home long before that time.

Men armed with shot guns were also at the site, prepared to shoot the monster should it attack. The American professor who had supposedly sighted the monster through his binoculars, was credited with saying "It's a hairy creature."

After the dam had been released and the waters of the pond began to recede, a raft carrying two men was sent out onto the pond. If possible they were going to lasso the denizen of the pond.

Suddenly turbulence was noted and the raftsmen quickly made their way to this sign. Catching sight of the monster, they plunged a spear pike into its' side twice. One man aboard the raft lost his balance and slipped into the water but was quick to clammer onto the raft's deck. Those on shore suspected the monster had bumped the raft, causing the man to fall in.

Suddenly the creature surfaced and the crowds roared with laughter. An Irishman

among them cried, "'Tis a hoax, be heavens, 'tis a hoax.'" The hide of a two-year-old streer stuffed with straw and bricks to keep it under the water was towed ashore.

The American professor, however, found little humor in the joke. "It is more than a hoax" he bellowed, "it is an outrage on the people of half the American continent." He then demanded an apology. Instead a councillor who had witnessed the whole event ordered him out of town. "If you don't get on the first train out of town, I'll have you thrown in jail," he declared.

The explanation for the pond's frothing was simple. John Stuart made oatmeal at his mill. Waste from the mill, including oat hulls, were emptied into a river which lead into Partlo's Pond. When the waste fermented, bubbles resulted, which first stirred the imaginations of Ingersoll residents. Once the imaginations of a few people were put to work, a few practical jokers went to work creating the legendary pond monster.



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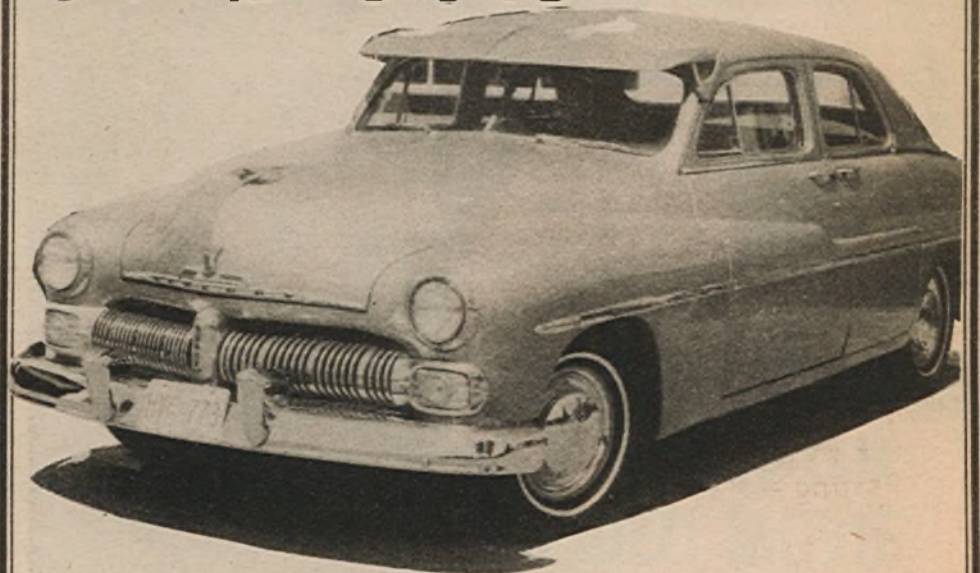
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Thames River bridges unite town's north and south

BY MARJORIE FLEMING

Little information exists on some aspects of Ingersoll's past, and unfortunately a rich and interesting profile on old town bridges is one part of Ingersoll's heritage that seems to be missing from the history files.

Research netted little, except a photograph and vague mentions of several bridges spanning the Thames. But an Ingersoll native shed some light on the subject when approached.

Edgar Dunlop, a barber in town for many years, recalled some of the old town bridges, and was particularly helpful with regard to the old Wonham Street Bridge that was washed out in a flood in 1937. Said Mr. Dunlop, "I remember that bridge well. It was in fairly constant use until a man was killed on the road leading to the pork factory, on the north side of the river. After the fellow was killed, the road was closed, so traffic across the bridge was much lighter."

Mr. Dunlop doesn't remember the exact date, but sometime soon after the flood in 1937 wiped out the Wonham Street bridge, a swing bridge was constructed across the river to enable the residents of the town easier access to work.

"The swing bridge was essentially a foot bridge, but I can remember some carts going back and forth," Mr. Dunlop said. "The bridge was sturdy, with heavy sides on it, unlike the one put up down at the end of Whiting Street."

There is no exact date known for the creation of the swing bridge at the bottom of Whiting Street, but Mr. Dunlop recalled that it was a foot bridge constructed by some workmen at the Borden plant, so they could get back and forth to work.

"The Whiting Street foot bridge was considerably narrower than the Wonham bridge, and I would have to say that it was also less sturdy and more of a challenge to cross."

Mr. Dunlop dug back in his memory and came out with some interesting tidbits on other bridges in town.

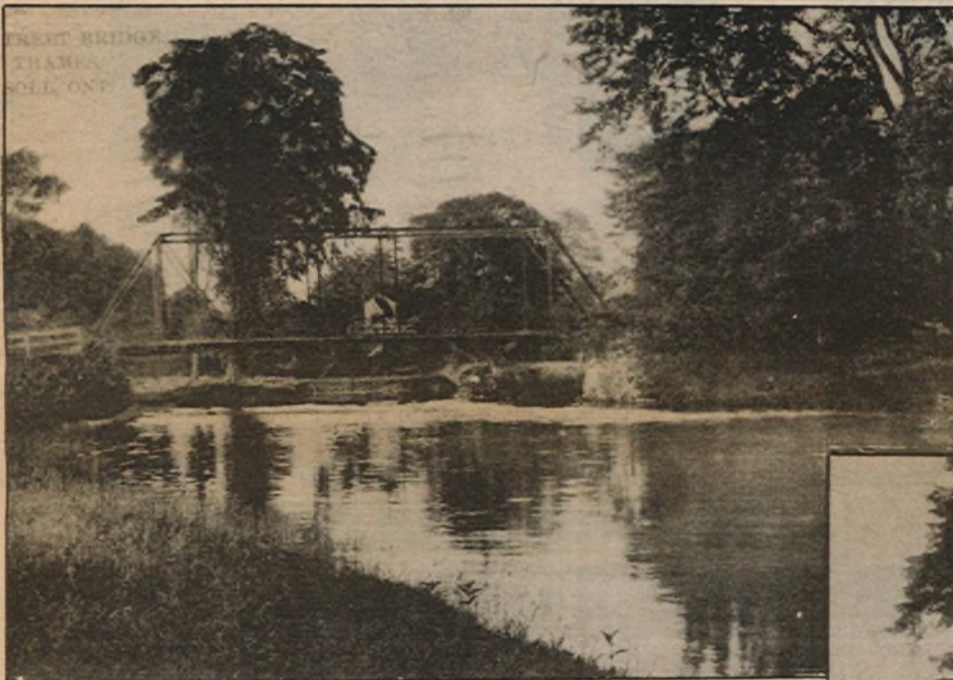
He remembered the old Pemberton Street bridge, with its iron and steel sides, and said, "We rarely referred to that bridge by its name - to us it was the 'Iron Duke.'"

Edgar Dunlop also recalled a small bridge, located south of the Mutual Street bridge. There was a woolen mill located in the vicinity, a small dam, and a small bridge that spanned two ponds near the dam. He remembers it well because, "It was a really pretty walk down that way; it's all changed now of course, but back then the woolen mill used the small dam as a power source."

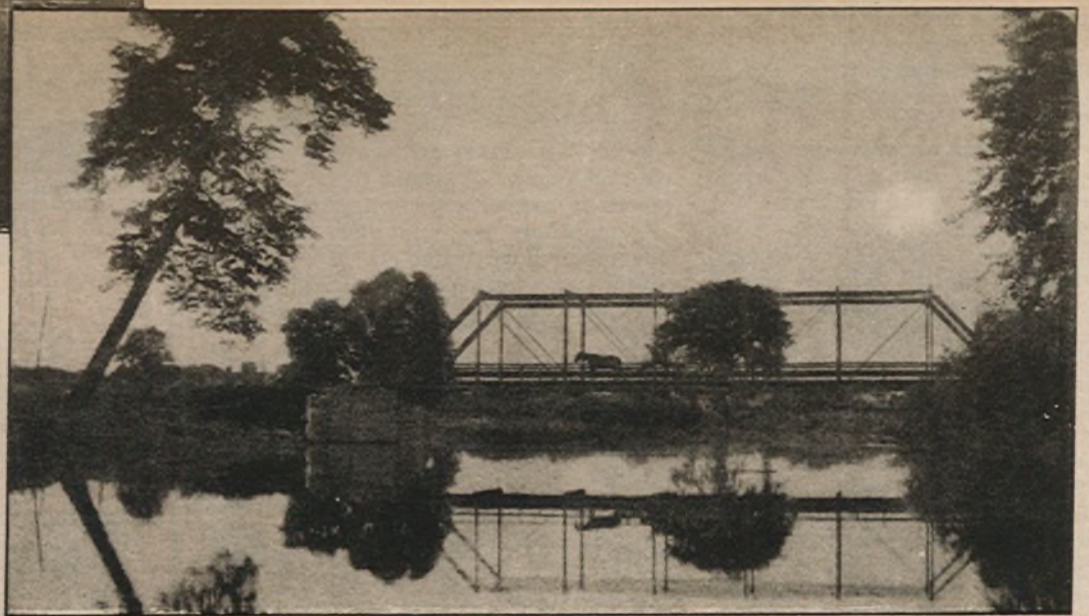
Unfortunately very little written data exists about Ingersoll's old bridges, but as long as residents like Mr. Dunlop give some of their time to reminiscing, pieces of Ingersoll's heritage will remain alive and interesting.



Mayor Thomas J. Morrison, right, and one of the town's oldest residents, carried out ribbon cutting ceremonies at the official opening of the Thames Street bridge in 1966-67.



The Carroll Street Bridge as it was years ago. Today the bridge is called the Mutual Street bridge and has, of course, been replaced. On the right is the former Wonham Street bridge, which was destroyed in the great flood of 1937.



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Lime industry operating since 1800s



Lime quarry workers at the turn of the century.

BY WES ROCHESTER

It has been said that necessity fuels man's desires into action. While it cannot be proven that the wheel was invented when an ancestor tossed an unwanted rock down a hillside, such accidents have resulted in the discovery of many a necessity.

Along the shores of the Thames River the first settlers found limestone rocks. Not finding much use for the stone that so easily crumbles, they simply threw the rocks aside with the rest of the unwanted brush and brick-a-brack. Either by an act of nature or by need, eventually these piles were set ablaze and it was discovered, when heat was put to this stone it would turn into a fine powder known as lime.

Early farmers found when they mixed this greyish white powder with a little water, it made an excellent plaster to fill the spaces between the logs of their cabins. From this wee spark grew Canada's limestone industry.

From calcium carbonate deposits that were formed on a shallow ocean floor during the devonian age, came two types of limestone. In the 1800s both grey and white lime were produced but white proved to be in more demand. Fields of white lime ran west of Beachville towards Ingersoll, while grey deposits were found east of Beachville, towards Woodstock.

The first permanent set kilns were large grey stone structures lined with fire brick and burned three foot cord wood for fuel. An opening at the top allowed for access, with some kilns built into the hillside with wooden ramps leading to the top, so horse drawn wagons could carry the stone up and dump it into the hollow centre. When the kiln was filled, fireplaces on each side were lit. In a week's time, heat and smoke would slowly burn the stone to lime. Two hundred to 300 bushels of lime for mortar and white wash was considered a good week's work.

Set kilns were followed by draw kilns, steel structures which burned five cords of wood a day. They were drawn twice a day and produced nine tons of lime per day. With a market of cord wood in a rapidly

growing industry, the district was first to be cleared for agriculture. Teams that drew rock from the river beds in summer, hauled logs all winter.

The deposits were almost at ground level. Pick, crow bar and sledge hammer could easily remove the rock but only shallow pits could be excavated. Even with the back-breaking job of working old log pumps, it was impossible to keep the seeping water out. Water wheels were developed to work through the night.

In 1907 the Beachville Lime Company began to sell to a Niagara Falls Company, Cyanamid, which had opened its own quarry in the early 1900s. In 1929 the two lime companies merged, under the name of Cyanamid. In 1934 the plant became North American Cyanamid Ltd. - Beachville Plant, with facilities on the 150 acre site two miles west of Beachville and at Niagara Falls, where most of the production was shipped to during the 1930s and 1940s.

In the early 1950s additional markets appeared for limestone products. Limestone has a number of uses: in blast furnaces producing steel, in glass and paper industries, in the making of cement and fertilizer, in various other chemical compounds, and it is required to neutralize acid waste.

1956-58 saw a complete modernization of the Beachville plant. Mobile shovels replaced railway shovels; the quarry railway gave way to diesel trucks and conveyor belts; a modern crusher replaced the old, and a screening facility was constructed.

A completely new lime plant, a rotary lime kiln with pulverized coal as a heating medium, was installed at the north end of the existing plant. Total production doubled in 1957.

The rock contains 97 per cent pure lime. It takes two million tons of lime, the lost weight being given off as gas.

As markets expanded, so did the plant. In the lime kiln department two additional silos for storage were built; a fine lime grinder plant was added, and a lime pulverizer was installed. In 1967 a new three tons per day calcimatic kiln was built with bunker crude oil as the heating medium for

all kilns. In 1970-71 the entire department was modernized in a major program to expand production. In the same years, due to corporate changes in policy at Cyanamid of Canada Ltd., the Beachville plant entered a period of non-growth. The rotary and lime kiln was taken out of production and production was cut back.

In April 1973, Dominion Foundaries and Steel Ltd. - Dofasco - purchased the plant. This new organization is known as Beachvi-

Lime Ltd. and is run as a subsidiary of Dofasco. The rotary lime kiln was reactivated. Improvements and additions were made to the mobile equipment. The plant opened a new quarry north of the existing one and it connects with an underground tunnel. Hence, for many years, this business has continued to expand.

These Beachville quarries are noted as the largest open pit quarry in Canada, with three active producers - Stelco, Beachville-Lime and Domtar.

Streetlights installed in early 1900s

The first streetlights in Ingersoll were erected in 1906.

Ingersoll was the chosen site for the first telephone exchange in Canada. It was established in April, 1880 and there were 13 phones at that time.

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Days of fighting fire with water buckets long gone

BY RENE McKNIGHT

When the bell that adorned the Old Town Hall sounded, the Ingersoll fire brigade was quick to respond. With water pails in hand, the team, consisting of 13 volunteers and one chief, would rush to extinguish a fire and stop it from spreading to other buildings.

In 1863 Ingersoll's first fire brigade was formed with R.H. Carroll acting as chief.

The bell which summoned fire fighters to work, was rung on a code system. Ingersoll had three different wards, each containing fire fighting equipment. Depending which ward the fire was located in, the bell would sound a specific number of times.

In 1871 the fire department had 12 wooden pails and two jiggers. When the blaze of 1872 swept through town, this was the only equipment Ingersoll had to combat it.

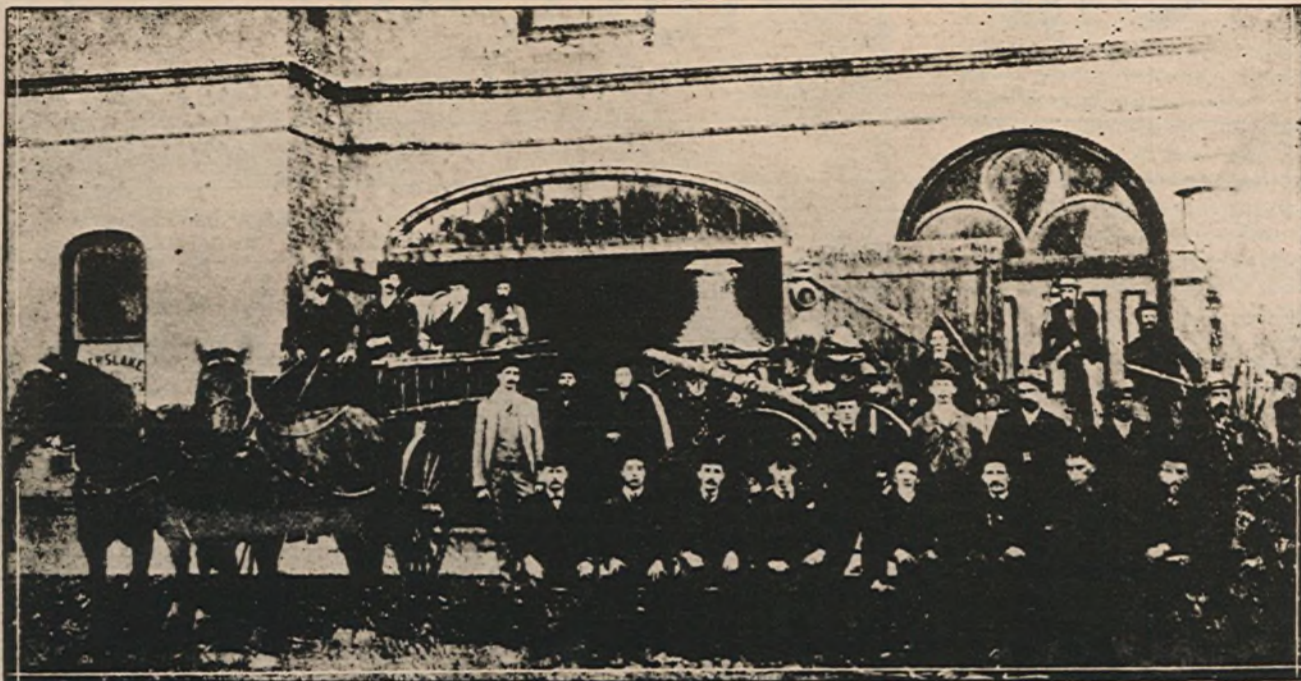
When the Ingersoll fire brigade came into being, most of the buildings in town were made of wood, and fires were a common occurrence. Because of the risks involved with fire fighting, and the regularity of fires, volunteers were paid 50 cents a month.

A modernized apparatus added to the Ingersoll fire brigade in 1873 was a steam engine that cost the town \$4,750. That year also marked the introduction of horses to the department and the man-powered jiggers were no longer needed.

When emergencies occurred, everyone was expected to help. Any male between the ages of 16 and 60, according to the law, had to assist in extinguishing fires when asked by a brigade member. Those violating the law faced a stiff fine, with a maximum penalty of either \$20 or 20 days in jail.

The fire brigade discontinued the use of the bell for summoning volunteers in 1927, one year after it got its first motorized equipment. Telephones were then the method used for contacting volunteer fire fighters.

In the mid 1960s a radio system was developed and the telephone system was



Since its formation in 1867 Ingersoll Fire Department has seen what technology can do. In 1878 the town fire brigade had a steam engine as well as horse-drawn apparatuses.

eliminated.

The Old Town Hall served as the first fire station for the Ingersoll brigade and until just a few years ago, the department

continued to operate from this building. It is now located on Mutual Street.

Ingersoll's fire department has seen many changes since its formation 121-years-ago.

especially in methods of transportation. Since its beginning, the staff has increased to include three full-time employees and 16 volunteers.

Major fires in Ingersoll's history

BY MIKE WALSH

In bold letters, on the front page of the May 10, 1872 edition of the London Free Press, read the following headlines.

Great fire in Ingersoll
Two Lives Lost
Immense Loss
The Business Part of the town in Ashes.
Full particulars

On May 7, 1872, the Town of Ingersoll suffered its most disastrous fire. It

destroyed 80 businesses on the west side of Thames Street South and claimed two lives.

The fire, termed one of the most destructive disasters anywhere in Canada, broke out in a stable located behind the Royal Exchange Hotel. Because the buildings in those days were constructed out of wood, it didn't take long for the blaze to spread. Within minutes, buildings on the east side of Oxford Street, between Thames and King, were invaded by the fire.

Newspaper reports indicated the fire went as far as the market square and despite the mild north easterly winds that evening, the heat was so intense that the flames flew over the buildings directly across the street.

Ingersoll fire department arrived at the scene around 8 p.m. that evening but were not capable of controlling the fire. Their equipment included a two face pump of manual rocker type, water buckets, wet blankets and carpets.

Shortly after their arrival, Chief Engineer Brady wired for assistance from the London and Woodstock fire departments. The London Phoenix Company (fire dept.) arrived just in time to stop a fire in a large three storey building owned by Mayor John McDonald, from spreading. The house was saved.

Water was fetched from cisterns between King and Charles Streets and from a creek located on the east side of Thames Street. Woodstock fire department was late to arrive because the train they were transported on was tardy, said the 1872 report.

Hundreds of families in the vicinity, fearing the fire would spread to the residential zone, packed up their belongings and moved them to places of safety. Many

townsfolk braved the hot flames to remove goods from the main business core. Two people died as a result.

C.C. Paine, a pumpmaker in Ingersoll, was trapped in R.H. Young's store when he spent too long in there trying to save some of the store goods. People outside of the building, aware of Mr. Paine's fate, were unable to help him.

A wall at Fawke's Jewelry store fell on top of John Omand while he was also trying to save the store goods.

Although the exact cause of the fire is not known, there was speculation it was the work of an arsonist. The fire was caused by coal oil or some other flammable substance many people felt, because a large volume of black smoke had dispersed from the empty stable hay loft.

The fires raged for eight hours and caused an estimated \$30,000 damage. Eighty-years-later, in the September 13, 1952 edition of The London Free Press, a story listed the monetary damage to each of the buildings affected by the fire. Many of the buildings were either insured or partially insured, but many were not insured at all. Also, many of the buildings were new.

Most of the buildings were replaced by solid brick ones, many of which are still standing today.

Another disastrous fire in Ingersoll occurred in 1856, destroying the main business block which at that time was King Street East. This fire destroyed all records pertaining to the history of Ingersoll.

On July 20, 1894, a fire started at the Nationalist Printing Office, located on the south side of King Street East, ruined 30 buildings. Damage was estimated at \$30,000.

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Newspapers traced community's growth

BY MIKE WALSH

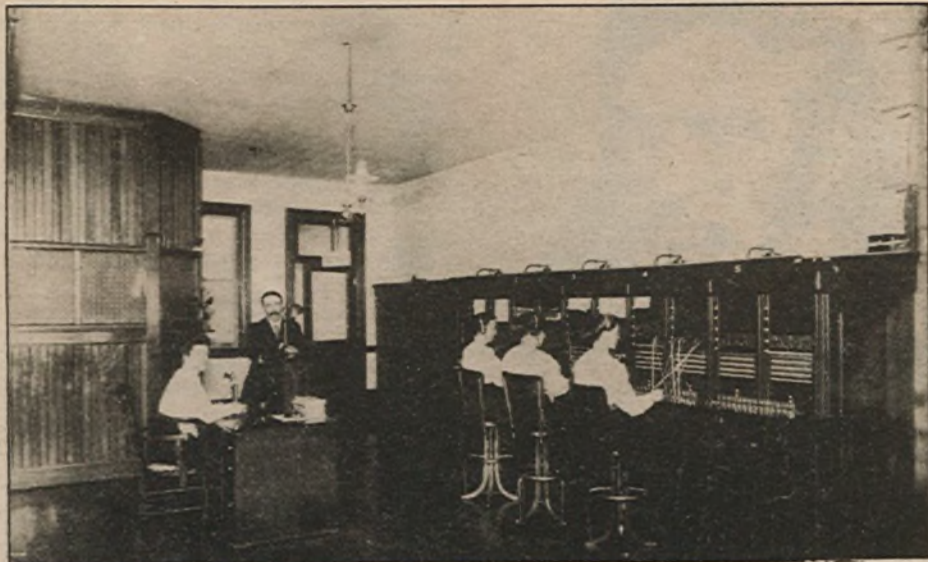
Prior to the turn of the century, Ingersoll had approximately five newspapers. Today, none of those papers exist.

Attempts were made by Jessie Robins and partner Allan Houghton to purchase The Tribune's name in 1969, but they were unsuccessful. Mrs. Robins, an Ingersoll resident, said their intent was to incorporate the name with the weekly newspaper they established in July of 1969, The Ingersoll Times, still in operation today.

Papers were drawn up she said, for the purchase of the name, but The Tribune pulled out of the deal with no apparent reason. Within six months after The Times was established, The Tribune, founded in 1873, closed its doors.

"We tried very hard to buy the paper," she said, because they didn't want to see one of Ingersoll's first weekly newspapers die. They had planned to call it The Times-Tribune.

The first paper in this town was the Ingersoll Chronicle. It was founded in 1853 by the late J.S. Gurnett. It was later passed onto his son, G.F. Gurnett, and after his death, Messrs. Patience and Agwe purchased it. A few months later, they sold it to E. R. Elliot. He later turned it over to his son W.J. Elliot. The paper eventually turned daily,



The Bell telephone company operated out of the building that now houses The Ingersoll Times. (Photo courtesy of Bell Canada)

however, Ingersoll was not capable of supporting a daily paper and it eventually folded.

The Tribune, formerly known as The Oxford Tribune, and Daily Reporter, was founded in 1873 by Harry Rowland. It was sold over to E.L. Smith and son in 1905. During this time, the paper was noted for having a well equipped printing depart-

ment. Prior to The Tribune, the weekly newspaper, The Nationalist, was established. Although little information is available about this paper, it is known that a Mr. Constable and a Mr. Harris were the editors in 1864. Also, that the paper was also called the "News."

In 1881, C.R. Patience established The Ingersoll Sun. It was purchased in 1887 by

P.A. Belamy of Orangeville. The paper, an independent liberal in politics, is said to have offered a reliable, comprehensive and concise local news service.

In 1882, a publishing company, The Union Publishing Co., was founded by J.F. Morrey. It specialized in printing farmer's directories, provincial directories and city, town and village directories. Prior to this business, Mr. Morrey, a prominent Odd-fellow, assisted his father in the business.

The Sentinel Review, the only surviving newspaper in Woodstock, opened an Ingersoll bureau in the early 1900's. The paper was first established in 1870. Ten years later, the daily paper, known at the time as The Sentinel, amalgamated with Woodstock Review on September 11, 1880. During that time frame, Woodstock had a dozen newspapers and five dailies in the city and county.

In those days, a bread rig from Woodstock delivered the papers to the Ingersoll paper carriers who waited on unpaved Charles Street.

The only weekly paper in Ingersoll today is The Ingersoll Times which was established in 1969 by Mrs. Robins and Mr. Houghton. In May of 1971, Chuck McKnight and W.J. Pratt, who owned the Tillsonburg newspaper, purchased it. They still own the paper but under the name of Otter Publishing Ltd.

In years gone by

Many hoaxes initiated by reporters

BY MIKE WALSH

Years ago, when three newspapers in Oxford County, including the Ingersoll Chronicle, didn't have enough copy to fill their papers, they created some stories of their own.

"From its inception," wrote historian Stanley J. Smith, "Oxford County has been the breeding spot of the tallest tales of imagination, more than any other settlement in Canada. Being buried deep into the wilderness and far, far away from the usual channels of information, the editors of the

Princeton Review; Woodstock Sentinel and the Ingersoll Chronicle, had to make news to fill their journal's columns! Regardless of the truth, these three newspapers out-vied each other with tall tales."

A lot of these tales, he said, were picked up by the larger metropolitan dailies and published as being "authentic."

In 1855, the Woodstock Sentinel carried a story which said an earthquake had occurred in Derham Township. It went into detail describing how the settlers had ran onto the streets as everything around them was toppling. The Ingersoll readers were shocked to find that The Chronicle, printed the following day, had only carried 12 lines of type mentioning the Woodstock paper had carried a story regarding the earthquake.

This was no doubt a hoax, said Mr. Smith, "probably with connivance of both newspapers, because very friendly relations existed between the Sentinel and the Chronicle... It was sort of 'you be the first to print the news and I will be the first to deny it' proposition!"

The Chronicle had many inquiries regarding the exact number of casualties and damage, even though the incident supposedly took place five miles away.

The Sentinel story was carried in The Hamilton Spectator and Toronto Globe, both indicating the story came "from our own

correspondent." The story eventually ended up in many papers including Kingston, Montreal and Halifax and as Mr. Smith wrote, "every editor added a little bit more... probably they were also starved for 'news' and wanted to fill their columns."

Shortly after all this publicity, Chronicle editor J.S. Gurnett wrote an editorial and in it he published the Sentinel's version and demanded the Hamilton Spectator and Toronto Globe disclose their correspondent. He downgraded them for "pilfering news" and not giving the story credit to the Woodstock paper.

Over the years, the papers came out with many hoaxes. Some of the others as mentioned by Mr. Smith include "Major Thomas Ingersoll spending \$50,000 to construct a bridge; that General Procter buried a military chest containing gold in the hills abounding Beachville; that General McCarthy in 1814, led thousands and thousands of American soldiers through Oxford, via the Old Stage Road, with glittering bayonets shining in the early morning sun"; that in 1848 brothers came to Princeton to locate a box of gold coins which had been buried on their grandfather's farm in Burford Township; that in 1859, an enormous sea serpent had been seen in an Ingersoll mill-pond; that Cassie Chadwick, of Eastwood was Andrew Carnegie's daughter."

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Underground slave railway stopped here

BY TOM DURALIA

The parking lot just south of Big V Pharmacy on Oxford Street doesn't look overly exciting on first glimpse.

But were you to close your eyes and bring your thoughts back to the 1850s, you might feel somewhat different about that patch of concrete.

Envision a bustling Ingersoll of 2,000 persons, an old church, a mysterious Underground Railroad and a fiery-tongued orator plotting to overthrow the American government.

And think of the period. The American Civil War was less than a decade away, there were growing tensions between the north and the south, and the Fugitive Slave Act, passed in 1850, meant that blacks were not safe from extradition even in free states.

In 1854, at a cost of \$2,500, the Wesleyan Methodist Church was built where cars unceremoniously park today.

And between 1854 and the outbreak of the civil war in 1861, fugitive slaves in the black of night were whisked into that church's attic, the most northerly terminus of the Underground Railroad.

During the 1850s, Ingersoll was host to between 400 and 500 blacks, the second highest black concentration in Canada behind Chatham. And many of the slaves that made it to Ingersoll via the Underground Railway were from as far away as New Orleans.

According to an abolitionist newspaper, "The Voice of the Fugitive," in the early 1850s a large concentration of blacks worked on the railroad, and Ingersoll attracted a number once the line was open to Windsor, because wood for the locomotives was cut and stored here.

The Underground Railroad of the time was a source of considerable mystery to the slavers of the U.S., however, it seems they were the only ones who didn't know what it was by the late 1850s, and in some northern states, the routes were actually published in anti-slavery newspapers.

The Underground Railroad was not a railroad at all, but rather a mutual agreement between the friends of the



Abolitionist John Brown

slaves, predominantly the Quakers, to aid fugitives on their way to Canada. The slaves were taken from one friend to another, only at night, until they reached Canada's safety.

According to the late Rev. W.M. Mitchell in his book, *The Underground Railroad*, the term Underground Railroad originated after a master lost his expensive slave, following a long chase.

"Being disappointed and the loser of \$10,000, and having no object in which to vent his dirty spleen, he turned upon the poor Abolitionists, and said, 'The damned Abolitionists must have a railroad under the ground by which they run off Niggers!'"

When Mr. Mitchell wrote his book in 1860, he commented that annually, 1,200 slaves were being conveyed to Canada via the Underground Railroad.

One of the greatest proponents of the anti-slavery faction and the Underground Railroad was John Brown, also known as Captain John Brown and Old John Brown.

Born in 1800 in Connecticut, opinions vary on this man from calling him a madman to a martyr, and his direct approach to freeing slaves by force, if necessary, often lost the respect of the other Abolitionists, who

ideally dreamed of a peaceful emancipation for the black slaves.

Brown reportedly first came to Canada in April of 1858, where he spent much of his time in travel, gathering support for a planned guerilla-style strike on the U.S. Federal arsenal in Virginia, Harper's Ferry.

Some of that time was spent in Ingersoll, where he met with others at the Daly House, now Marco's Landing, to discuss a plan of attack. He is also said to have spoken at the Wesleyan Church to rally support against slavers in the U.S.

During the mid-1850's, Brown is said to have conducted numerous raids on pro-slavery plantations, killing the slavers and enlisting the services of the freed blacks in his guerilla army.

On October 16 to 18, 1859, Brown and 21 men made their attempt to capture the

Virginia arsenal, but failed miserably. Of the men involved, 10 were killed, including two of Brown's sons, six escaped and five were hanged, including Brown.

Brown was tried for treason, conspiracy and murder on October 31 of the same year, found guilty, and hanged in Charlestown, Va., 32 days after trial.

Once the Civil War began, which some believe was sparked by the Harper's Ferry incident, northern troops and civilians sang the folk song "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave - But his soul is marching on."

The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Oxford Street was demolished in 1956 to make way for a carwash, which in turn gave way to the parking lot.

But when you walk by that lot and close your eyes, that parking lot can be pretty exciting.

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People Come First at IGA

Town's first hospital opened in 1898

BY TOM DURALIA

For most of us, Alexandra Hospital may seem like it has existed since the dawn of time.

There are those who remember the palatial Noxon home, the precursor to the present institution, that was demolished in 1951 to make way for Alexandra. But what about before 1909? Where did the sick seek assistance before Alexandra Hospital?

According to historical records, travelling country doctors were what was available through most of the 1800s, and it wasn't until 1889 that a movement was initiated to establish a hospital facility in Ingersoll. However, a petition circulated for support of the idea attracted little interest from residents and as time wore hard and money tight, the project was dropped.

In 1898 Dr. J.M. Rogers opened a private hospital for his patients at 106 Francis Street in the front rooms. The hospital was staffed by the doctor and a lone nurse. There is no indication as to how well the hospital did, other than that it spurred a few others to crop up.

In the same year, Dr. Angus McKay set up a hospital in a house at the corner of Victoria and McKeand Streets, where he left a nurse in charge while he made his rounds.

Two years later, the William Waterworth house on the west side of Oxford Avenue, became the first public hospital and was a collective effort from the town's doctors.



The former James Noxon home was the first Alexandra Hospital. A parking lot, and a portion of the present hospital are located where the house once stood.

This hospital had sufficient space to accommodate the needs of the people at the time and with the latest in equipment installed, several more serious operations were performed. Also, for the first time in Ingersoll's history, babies were delivered in a hospital rather than a home.

1909 was a big year as Dr. Angus McKay's residence, the Noxon home, was purchased for use as a hospital, at a modest price of \$6,250, which included a fair-sized plot of surrounding land.

This hospital boasted 16 rooms with accommodations for 25 patients, and during the first year admitted 120 people with various afflictions.

As the years passed though, even the magnanimous Noxon home couldn't keep up with Ingersoll's growing population.

In 1949, the cornerstone was laid for a new hospital to be constructed at a cost of \$565,000 and in 1950, the building was officially opened.

The following year, the original building was sold to wreckers for \$1,500 and demolished to provide added parking facilities for the new building.

In 1960, a third storey was added to Alexandra and a new portion at the north end. Another addition in 1970 updated facilities even further.

Today, Alexandra Hospital operates with 72 beds, last year delivering 116 babies, receiving 10,277 emergency visits, and attending to 805 surgical cases.

Ingersoll was once home for Dr. Norman Bethune

One of the most famous and admired men in the world, Dr. Henry Norman Bethune, once lived and worked in the Town of Ingersoll.

Though little of his brief tenure in Ingersoll has been recorded, Bethune apparently filled in for a vacationing Dr. Ralph Williams between 1919 and 1920.

As written in Roderick Stewart's Bethune biography:

"To the quiet people of Ingersoll, Bethune was very unconventional. Always in a hurry, he drove Dr. Williams' Model T Ford around town at top speed. He gave parties for the neighborhood children. On one occasion he was called to attend a sick farmer and found the tearful wife more concerned about her inability to milk the cows than about her husband's condition. "Give me the pail," said Bethune, and



Dr. Henry Norman Bethune

promptly milked the cows after examining the farmer."

Bethune, who won international fame as a thoracic surgeon, has also been described as being, in varying degrees, a painter, poet, soldier, critic, teacher, lecturer, inventor, medical writer and theorist.

Born in Gravenhurst, Ontario, Bethune is known as a legend to millions of Chinese as an amazing Canadian doctor who gave his life for their revolution.

After receiving his education largely in Canada, and through service in World War I and post-graduate work in Europe, Bethune established his own practice in Detroit. Shortly after this he contracted tuberculosis and entered the Trudeau Sanatorium in New York, but was given poor chances for recovery.

Bethune had always been a fighter though, and if the Sanatorium couldn't do anything for him, he would just have to treat himself.

He began to read everything he could get his hands on concerning thoracic medicine and thoroughly researched a new treatment he thought his case would respond to. His efforts were eventually successful.

From there, he made thoracic medicine his specialty and became world famous for his technique and modifications of surgical instruments. He set himself up in Montreal, holding several private and public consultative posts, and by 1936, was apparently one of the highest paid men in his profession.

Money meant little to Bethune, other than something to buy books with, and throughout the 1930s, he was also becoming increasingly interested in the cause of social injustice. Through his involvement with medicine, he was particularly aware of the inadequacies of the state of medical care, and became an ardent supporter of socialized medicine.

In 1936, Bethune left Canada to offer his services in the Spanish Civil War, a fight against Fascism.

He arrived in Madrid late in the year, and organized the first mobile blood transfusion unit to be used anywhere.

In 1937 he became a member of the Community Party of Canada, and in 1938 went to China and assisted both medically and philosophically in the revolution.

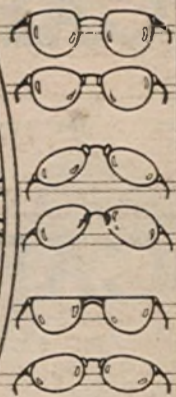
Numerous monuments have been erected in Bethune's honor in China, as well as an 800 bed hospital named in his memory.

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A street car named 'Estelle'

Once carried Ingersoll residents to and from Woodstock

BY RENE MCKNIGHT

Ingersoll was no doubt filled with excitement July 3, 1900 when the first tracks for the Woodstock-Thames Valley-Ingersoll Electric Railway were laid. Less than a year later, in June of 1901, the tracks supported daily runs of a trolley car, which were to bring much pleasure to Ingersoll residents for many years.

Shortly after the tracks were in place, an order was made for the 'Estelle,' a Toonerville Trolley type of car, which began its daily escapades in 1901. The trolley was the brainchild of Dr. S. Ritter Ickes and J. Armstrong, who had both been influential in promoting the electric railways in south western Ontario.

The trolley, named Estelle after Dr. Ickes' daughter Estelle, featured two rows of wooden benches which could seat as many as 24 passengers. In the centre of the trolley car was a pot bellied stove, which according to reports, either refused to work in the winter or puffed out so much smoke its passengers would leave weasing.

Electricity for the trolley was supplied by an overhead power line which propelled the car along the tracks. The conductor could operate the car from either end of the Estelle.

According to the book, 'Ingersoll Our Heritage,' "The original line started at Wellington Street, down Dundas Street to Mill. Later the line extended east to Huron



The Estelle and conductor, early 1900s.

Street. The line then took in Mill Street south to Park Row, and out to the Ingersoll road and Fairmont Park, Beachville and on to Ingersoll. The track and car came in from the east, crossed the road at the outskirts of Ingersoll, to the north side of the road, passed the Ingersoll Public Library, across the main corner on Charles Street, turned up on Oxford Street, on the west side to the Ingersoll Inn," now Marco's Landing.

It was at this point the electric rod was turned to the other end of the car, and the conductor would drive the vehicle back to Woodstock.

The trolley's route included stops in Beachville, Ingersoll and the eastern limits of Woodstock, and according to reports, would pick up passengers anywhere along the way.

The Estelle became a friend to all of its users. When the car first arrived in town, it had a rustic scene painted on its sides and was decorated with small colored glass windows.

A second car was added to the line later, to accommodate more passengers on the Woodstock, Beachville, Ingersoll line. This car was named 'The City of Woodstock,' and was an open-type car which offered a greater seating capacity. This vehicle operated in the summer months only.

In 1925 the Estelle was retired, along with its summer sidekick, 'City of Woodstock.' Both were replaced by larger box cars which were used for freight.

The trolley cars' disappearance marked the end of an era, and before long, automobiles travelled the routes which the Estelle had.

First royal visit in 1848

The first royal visit to town was 1872 when Lord and Lady Dufferin came to Ingersoll. Mathew Bixel built one of Canada's first breweries in Ingersoll in 1848.

Louis St. Laurent marked the first time a Prime Minister would visit Ingersoll with his May 12, 1949 visit.

In the early 1800s Ingersoll had its first jewelery store established. The store was Fawkes Jewelery.

Gigi's was the first to introduce Ingersoll to pizza, which was in 1970.

The Ingersoll Chronicle was the town's first newspaper and was formed by J.S. Gurnett in 1853.

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Stately homes have graced town for years

BY WES ROCHESTER

Architecture in the early days of Ingersoll suited the times. The earlier the home, the plainer. When people come to a new area they bring different customs and tastes and are obliged to either change or modify them to suit the new. Log cabins, usually of two rooms below a plank chamber floor, were replaced as soon as money became available to build better. Stone houses can still be found along the north country. Scottish stone masons built homes out of field stone during the 1840 to 1870 period.

Loyalists and American settlers built the first homes in Ingersoll, followed by wealthy British families who built homesteads out of brick in the fashion of neo-classic styles. Large, square homes with gothic details, the style of the middle-ages, took over from the Adamesque style after 1835. This was a simpler design than previous homes with features of a single pointed gable roof atop rectangle-framed houses.

As time went on, other features were added to this gable look. A front door appeared directly under the peak with a window being placed closer to the roof, above the door. The roofs became steeper and decorated with fancy wood work. The development of the band-saw gave southern Ontario a distinctive appeal. Yellow-colored brick, made locally, gave the region a distinctive Oxford look. In the 1880s a red trim brick work around doors, windows, and corners added a special look to the appearances of Ingersoll homes - a feature only common in counties around Oxford.

After the 1850s, houses were built in the Italian style. These were characteristically larger homes of sturdy brick, often with an observatory platform on the roof that was surrounded by an iron railing. They were usually two storey with a bay window on the ground floor.

Victorian-type homes developed at the turn of the century. As more and more building ideas were used, the homes became more elaborate. Architects tried to put all of their marbles in one bag. The result was rambling homes with spires, turrets, balconies, gables, and lots of fancy trim.

Store fronts and commercial buildings had characteristic styles of their own. Yellow and red brick, they had three stories with a roof that sloped backwards. Windows were high, narrow, and usually rounded at the top. Also the mark of the builder in the form of either a name or year of construction could be found below the eaves.

Many of the styles mentioned still remain in the Town of Ingersoll. It would be impossible to mention the homes of many of the town's famous residents, however, a select group that display the characteristics of the period can be enjoyed by all today.

The home of Adam Oliver, controversial



These are just a sample of the beautiful homes that once graced Ingersoll. Many of these homes have been preserved and are still used as homes, while others have been converted to nursing homes, the Royal Canadian Legion, and businesses.

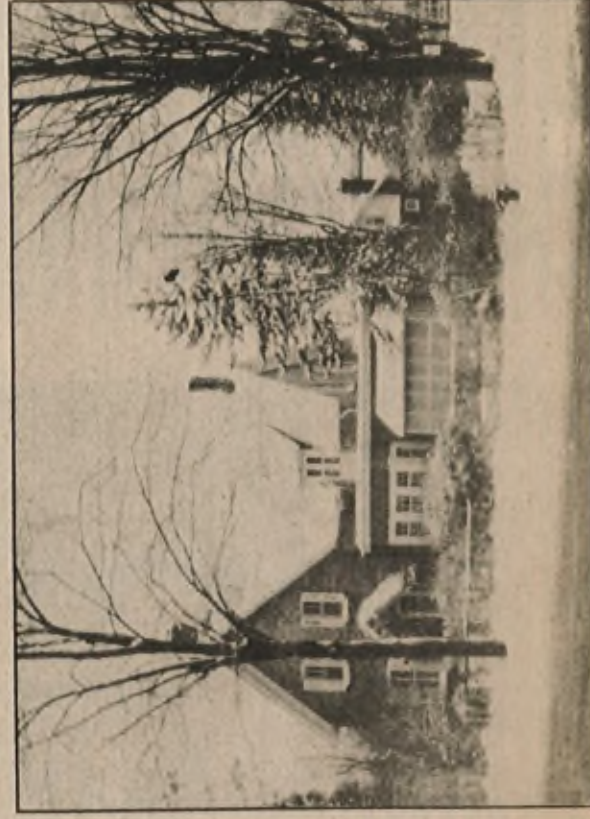
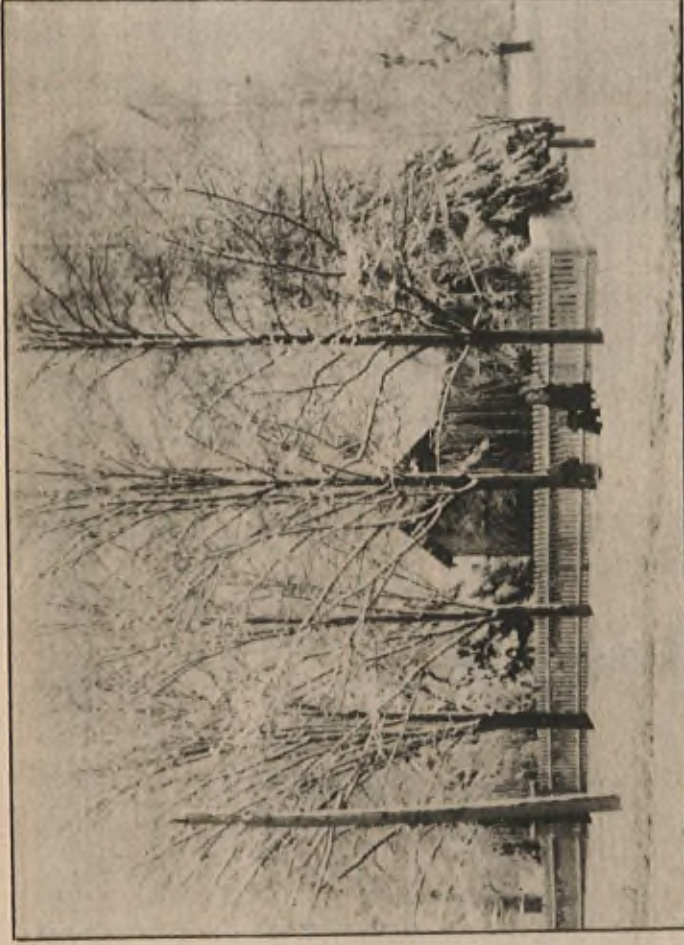
first Mayor of Ingersoll, graces the north side of Victoria Street. A simple square Ontario gothic style home of solid red brick, it has been extended on two sides since first erected. The love of Victorian decoration is evident in the heavy scalloped berge board of tear-drop design, located at each corner and pinnacle at the apex of the gable roof. Its upper windows are pointed gothic, but the front side ones are curiously curved, representing the Romanesque style.

There is a little confusion as to the exact building date of the home. However, there is evidence that the first mortgage was granted to Oliver in 1856 but the land itself was deeded to John Carnegie to the Bishop de Charbournel in 1852. Mayor Oliver purchased it in 1877 from the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of the Diocese of London, Ontario.

At 250 King Street East stands the 'haunted' Norsworthy home. Originally made of yellow brick, it was given a unique red glaze at a later date. Built in the early 1850s the house is an example of the Queen Ann style. Turrets, bays, a chimney of cut-brick, multicolored brick work, slate roof and stained glass windows are characteristics of this style.

An irregular shaped home of three stories, 21 rooms, a cellar and furnace room, it was the first natural air conditioned home in Ingersoll. Vents in the basement walls drew air from outside to all around the house. It was at one time the only one in town that had running water in all the rooms. A gravity force cistern was built five feet above the house with pipes going through the kitchen roof connecting to the taps in each room. As the water level dropped, more was added from the well.

The house shelters other secrets. The ghost of Norsworthy's first wife, Mary Jane, is said to have haunted the house. Owners have attested to hearing and being aware of a presence in the home for many years. It is believed that Mary Jane, who died suddenly of dyptheria in 1891 while nursing her sick children, roams the mansion in search of her daughter.

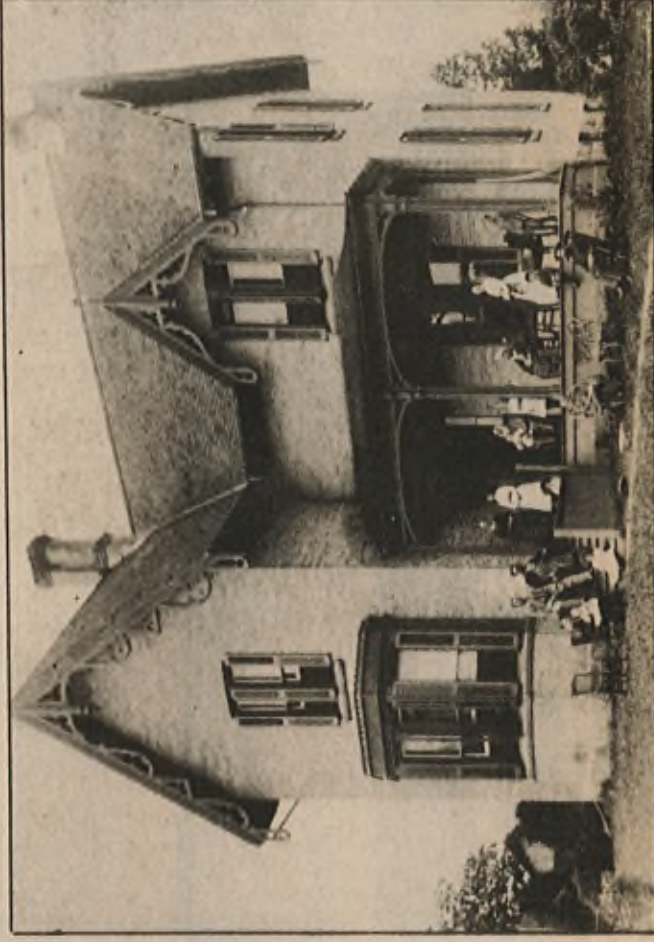


The home now owned by Dr. John Lawson is shown above in the early 1900s, and left, as it is now.

The grounds of the first bowling green in Ingersoll can be found at 168 King Street West, where an early Romanesque home stands. Originally built for the C.C.L. Wilson family in 1890, it has had several owners, but is largely known as the Carr Home. Around the top of the home is fancy carved barge board accompanied with stained glass windows in the upper and lower bays. Engraved in the brick work at the front is an ornate carving of wood with the inscription "Melrose". The story of this name comes from a small town in England which means a serene, quiet, resting place. Several homes in the area have adopted the name as their owners are of English descent.

Located on the east side of Highway 19 and 401, the James H. Harris family home was built in 1871. A unique feature of this home is the tower directly above the front door. At the top of the tower is a door leading to a landing. The purpose of this structure was to make repairs to the home, for in the past, the roofs were too high pitched and dangerous to be reached by ladders. On this tower's landing, Woodstock can be seen. It was also used as a sunbathing deck by the family.

The former Noxon home was used as a hospital until it was demolished in 1951 to provide space for parking at the present



Alexandra Hospital. The old hospital, as the Noxon house was known, in 1909 had 16 beds and hospitalized a total of 120 patients annually.

Located on the corner of Francis and Albert Streets, stands the three-ply, white brick home of George Mason, which was built in the early 1860s. Set on a hill, the beautifully kept grounds provide a stately setting for this home. A large garage at the back was used as a stable and carriage house. It's original partitioned still stand today.

Passing through the stained out-glass entrance way you immediately see a walnut spiral staircase that leads to six bedrooms. The living room downstairs is 37 feet long with 12 foot high ceilings. Two fireplaces create a warm friendly atmosphere. The windows are the most unique feature of the house. They are French in style, rising from the floor to the ceiling. The sills are made of walnut and were brought from the southern states by the original owner and builder, Thomas Seldon.

The dining room leads into two separate kitchens, one for summer and one for winter use. The winter kitchen has been up dated, but the summer one is strictly used in the summer months and is the original kitchen to this stately home. It's natural setting has been preserved. Numerous high cupboards surround all four walls with side sitting benches on the walls. An original pine drop-leaf table and matching chairs are in the middle of the room. This room also holds the original stove and icebox. A bathroom is adjacent to this room.

Set well back for the stage coach highway is the green frame house of Dr. John A. Patterson. The property was purchased in 1815 by John Carroll, one of Oxford's earliest known white settlers. Research indicates that the land was once an Indian camping ground. Library files record coins found in the orchard dating back to the 1830s when military soldiers sheltered their horses there.

The cemetery in the south east corner does not exist anymore, long since giving way to roving cattle. According to the late Byron Jenvey, who used to walk past the old graveyard on his way to school, the head stones were removed to be used as flooring for a basement in a nearby home as well as for several walkways.

Ingersoll's had its share of floods

BY WES ROCHESTER

Some would call it just plain bad luck. Others claimed that Mr. Wright had it coming because he had become too greedy in his affairs. And those of a religious had pronounced His judgement on the south side and east side of Whiting Creek industrial revolution.

But whatever was said, hardly a person in Ingersoll missed the events on that spring morning in April 1887.

It was in 1846 that W.H. King built his flour mill. Located on King Street West on the south side and east side of Whiting Creek, Mr. King utilized the creek that flowed from a 15 acre pond which lay south-east of the mill. But the job of grinding grain became too much for the elder resident, and soon he sold the business to a younger more adventuresum man, Carl Wright.

The first thing that Mr. Wright did when he took over operation of the mill was to forego the ancient method of grinding by water-wheel in favor of modern machinery. He installed the most modern of steam engines that money could buy to power his mill, believing he could make up the cost in no time flat. Years went by and business was good. The dam that once powered the mill was allowed to deteriorate.

On April 4, 1887 at 7 a.m. the dam gave way. In the first hour the water washed away a portion of the old mill and part of the new engine house. The high smoke stack that signalled the mill's business for miles around, toppled, crashing through the roof. A large wooden-frame apartment house, purchased by the miller as a place to store 500 cords of four-foot wood, sat beside the stream. When the surging waters hit the stock pile, the catapulting explosion hurled wood through the house, totally destroying it.

Occupying the apartments were Mr. and Mrs. John Bowman, their three children, Mr. Bowman's father, John McLean and his 18-year-old son, Alec Laid, his wife and child. Mrs. Bowman and her youngest child clung atop a bureau that floated down

stream. In the process of being saved, Mrs. Bowman lost grip of her child's arm and Mrs. Bowman drowned, never to be seen again. Mr. Bowman, who was ill in bed, floated down to the river and was pulled to safety. The other members of the Bowman family escaped.

The dam was never rebuilt, but when the waters receded, a small pond remained and was used for skating. By 1901 the waters had dried sufficiently to allow the Tillsonburg Lake Erie and Pennsylvania Railroad to build a line on the pond bottom.

HARRIS CREEK

In May of 1894, there was a sudden



melting of snow accompanied by a warm rain. The Harris Creek, which flowed through central Ingersoll, became greatly flooded and three dams on this stream gave way. When the flood waters washed out the foundation of the building adjoining the stream the brick wall fell into the water, causing the floors to slope towards the stream. The building was occupied by James McIntyre "the poet", who conducted a furniture and undertaking business at the time. Coffins, rough boxes and much



The 1937 flood was the worst recorded. On the left are gas tanks that rose out of the ground. That service station is now the home of Borland's Esso.

The worst flood on record occurred on April 26, 1937. Warm rains and melting snow combined to cause a rush of water to the Thames River by all streams leading to it. The dam at Smith's pond overflowed. Memorial Park was flooded so deep that the Doctor Carroll memorial cairn was submerged to within a foot from the top.

The Thames Street main bridge was washed away. The Health Board ordered that all drinking water be boiled until further notice. Flood waters almost reached the Presbyterian Church.

At a service station on Thames Street, gasoline tanks rose out of the ground. Flood conditions rose to a high level at Munroe's Crossing, east of Ingersoll.

A short distance east of the crossing the waters undermined a small bridge. This caused a CNR passenger train - the flyer - to become derailed. It fell into the flooded valley, resulting in the deaths of two men. They were Malcom Isbister, the engineer, and Norm Aiken of Sarnia.

It was while trying to reach the scene of the accident that Doctor MacDonald, M.O. H., lost his life due to the swiftly flowing water which carried his auto downstream.

furniture fell into the rampant waters and were seen carried to the Thames.

Young men, who had tied their boats to trees because the water was high above the shore, took off after the floating goods. Much of the furniture was pulled to shore at Pator's Sighting, three miles west of Ingersoll. However, upholstered chairs were seen as far west as Dorchester. Waters that crossed over King and Water Streets were reported to be one foot in depth.

1937 FLOOD

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DOWNTOWN INGERSOLL

145 Thames St. S. Ingersoll 485-3270

Smith Pond dam break created havoc for businesses, home-owners

BY WES ROCHESTER

Judging actions on the basis of past events may not be a fair method of evaluation but the fact remains, it is done. Historians advocate that if we do not learn from our past mistakes we are doomed to repeat them. A student seeking employment is subject to close scrutiny based on his past record, either on the basis of education or practical experience. The same can be said for any of us in any situation.

This is a story of an event that took place in Ingersoll's past. An event that began with disaster and ended in disaster; one that might have been different if the actions taken had been different.

Flooding along the bottom lands during the last 20 years prompted the Smith family to construct a dam in 1921. The resulting dam provided an ice supply during the winter months for local industry, as well as recreation for skaters. But as modern refrigerators replaced the need for ice, and artificial ice-surfaces dominated the skating scene, the need to keep the dam in good repair fell.

The plight of Smith's dam was left unnoticed until Town Council took up its interest in the early 1970's. Council was concerned that the state of the old dam presented a problem because it was situated in the heart of the community. If it ever collapsed many homes and businesses would be flooded.

It was the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority who advised the town of the dam's poor condition, and reported that for a cost of \$200,000 the dam could be rebuilt. The mayor of the town, Gordon Henry, negotiated for years with the property's owner, Irene Smith. Mayor Henry offered Mrs. Smith the sum of \$1 for the 10.5 acres of land surrounding the dam, which had an estimated value of \$525,000, saying with the land under its control, the town would assume any and all liability that occurred if the dam ever broke. Mrs. Smith countered the offer by requesting \$160,000 for her piece of property. The town was not willing to negotiate. Council decided to send one more letter to the owner of Smith's Pond, inviting her to give the property up or face expropriation. They never received an answer nor carried out their threat.

In what can be considered an attempt to force the issue, a request by town officials brought the Ministry of the Environment in



A swimmer in Smith Pond. In the background is Alexandra Hospital.

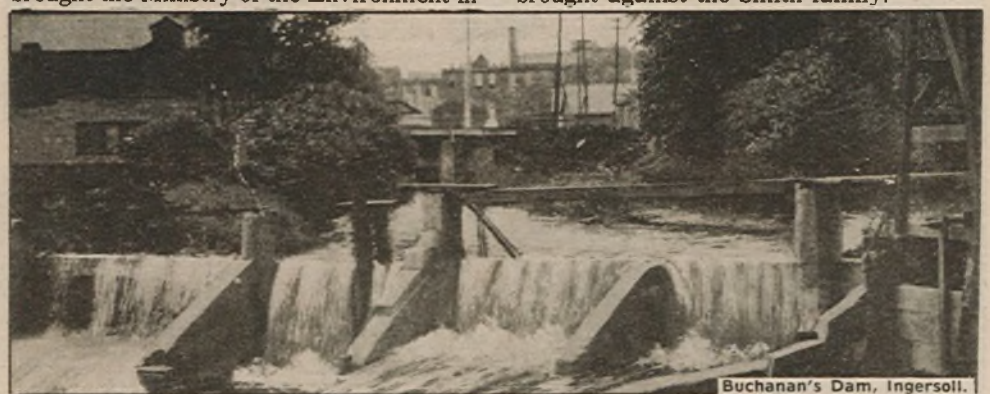
to check the pollution level of the pond. Evidence indicated there was little fecal material found, but there were traces of industrial pollution that could be considered dangerous to the town's health. Orders were sent to clean up the area.

Mrs. Smith answered this order by accusing town maintenance men of dumping garbage and fill into the pond, suggesting that the town was therefore responsible as 'no trespassing' signs had been removed as well.

On the evening of March 5, 1975, 24 hours after council's last attempt to buy the site, the dam gave way, flooding King Street businesses and swamping Memorial Park. Damage estimates were set between \$70,000 and \$100,000 by then Police Chief Ron James. Lawsuits were pending.

George Beck's wholesale tobacco warehouse was the hardest hit by the flooding waters, and he consulted with the head office in Toronto to decide what action was to be taken. Owners contended they were not responsible for the flood damage as no liability covers an act of either God or nature. Besides, high winds and heavy currents uprooted a support-tree, weakening the dike next to the dam.

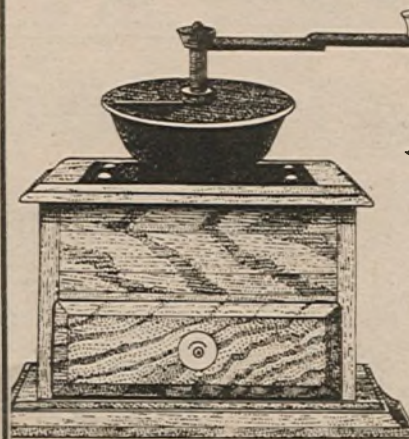
Repairs to downtown businesses were estimated at \$150,000, yet there is little evidence to indicate that lawsuits were brought against the Smith family.



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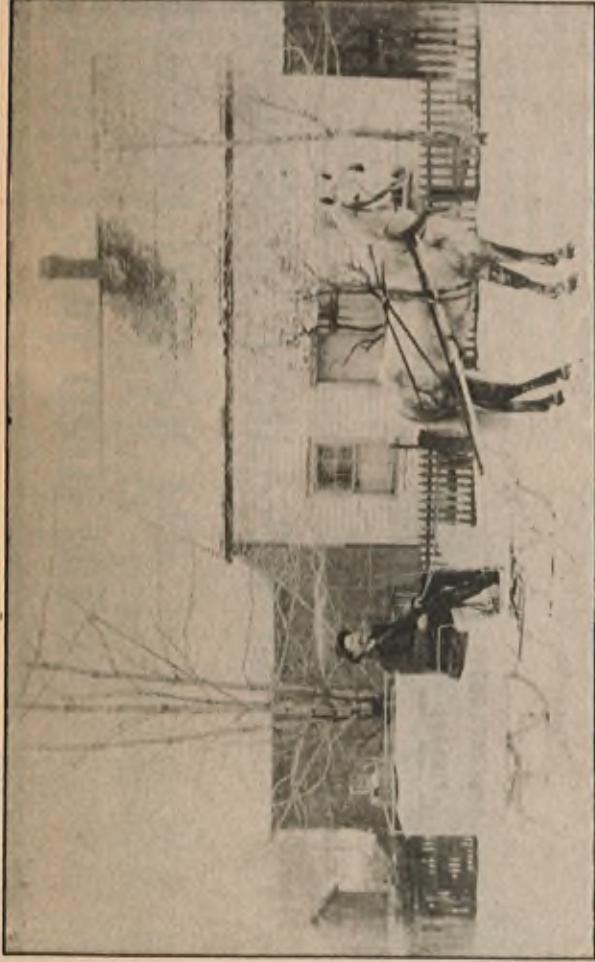
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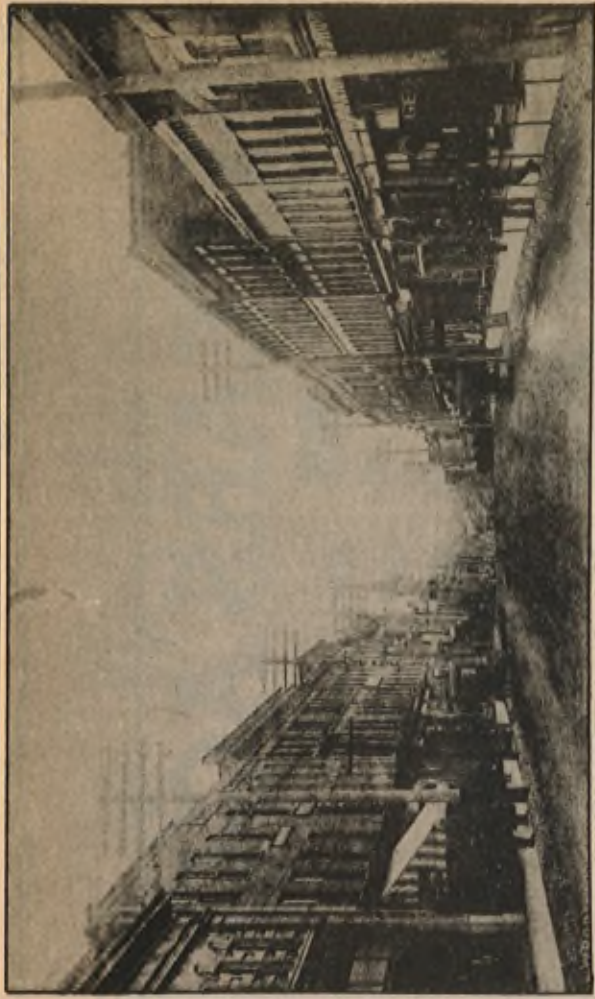
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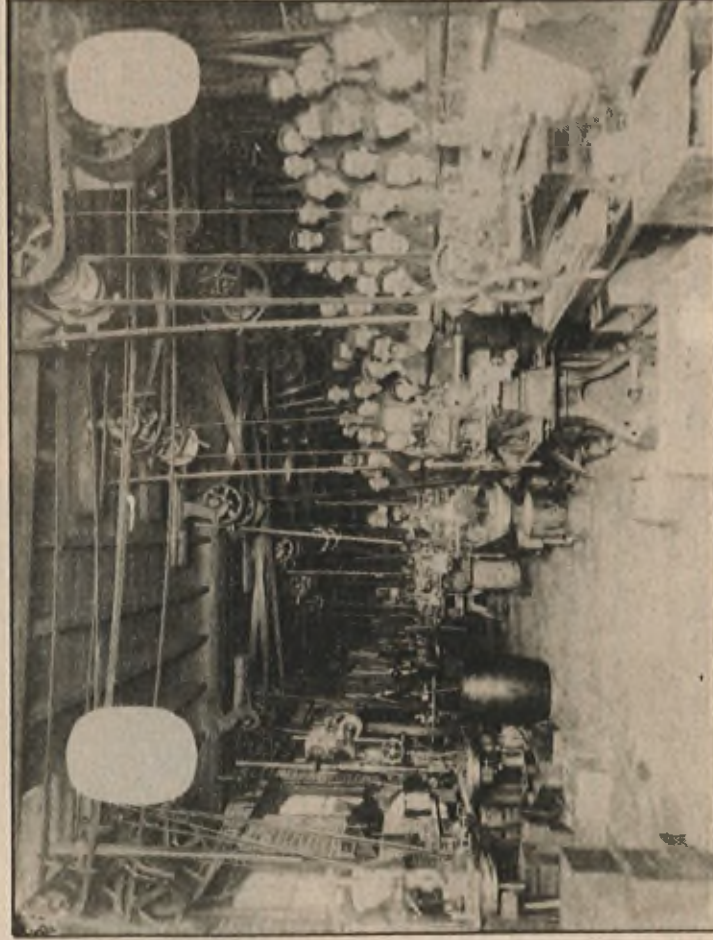
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The Gibson pure salt bread delivery carriage. Photo from the late 1800s or early 1900s.



Thames Street South, looking north, in 1904.



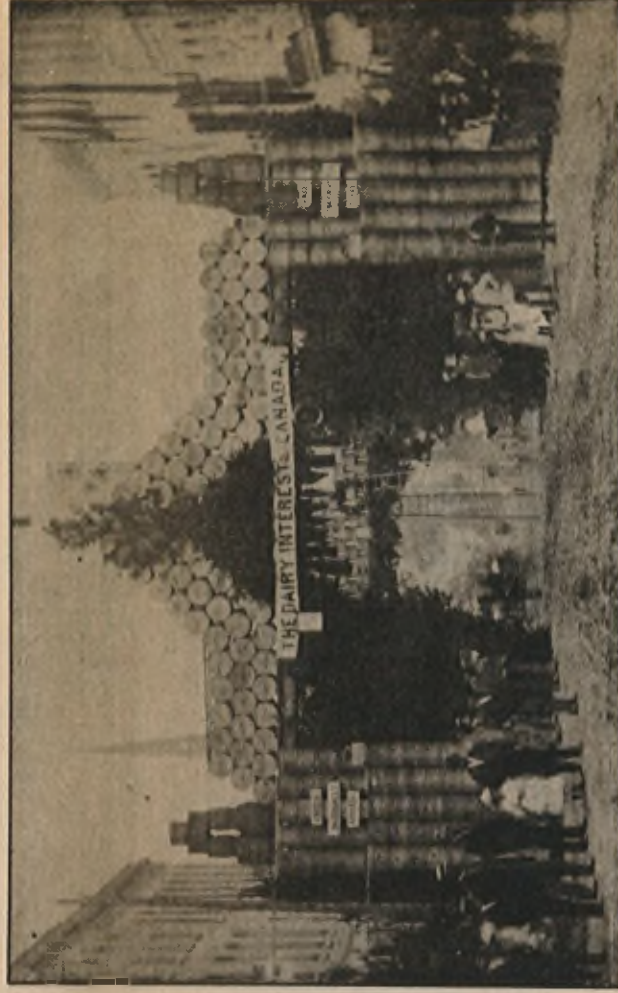
Employees from the John Morrow Nut and Screw Factory posed for this picture



An ice cream parlour once occupied the space Diana Restaurant is now located in. Photo from the early 1900s.



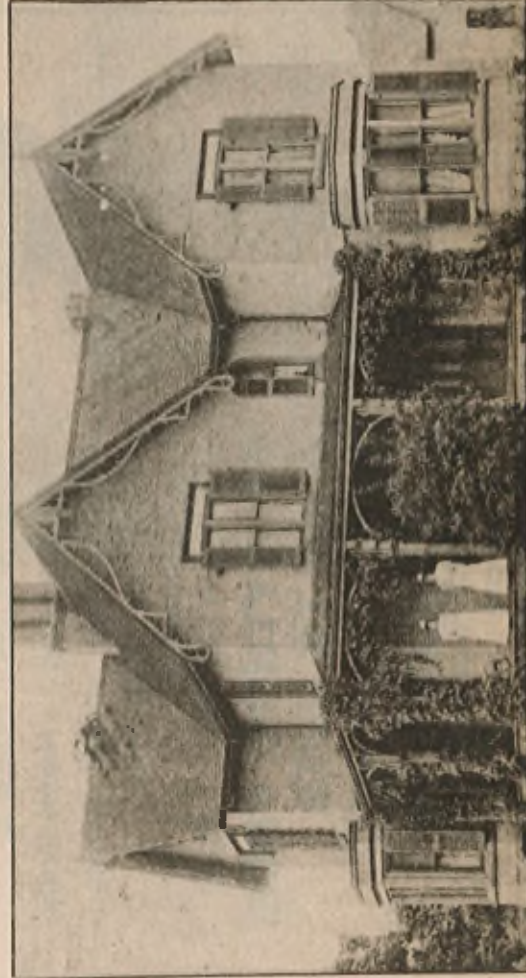
Layton's Meats on King Street West, was once the home of another meat marketing business in the early 1900s.



King George VI and his queen, Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, were greeted by an enthusiastic crowd at the Ingersoll train station during their Canadian tour.



King Street West, looking east from Oxford Street.



Ingersoll Sanatarium - late 1800s.

The Times would like to extend a thank you to Kent Shoultz, owner of Shoultz' Antique Lighting and Brass, Ingersoll, for allowing us to reprint so many old photographs from his collection. Thanks also to Walter Appleby, Gordon Henry, the Waters family and Mrs. Joyce Brown, for the use of old photos from their collections.

Theatre, music and art all part of town's heritage

BY RENE McKNIGHT

MUSIC

Ingersoll is a community which boasts plenty of culture for those seeking it and has been that way since the 1800s. From live theatre to the Shakespeare Club to a crafts centre, it's all available in Ingersoll.

Three music clubs have existed since the 1800s in Ingersoll, the first being the Ingersoll Philharmonic Society which was formed in 1862 and met on a weekly basis. The Ingersoll Music Association was quick to follow, forming in the latter part of the same year.

In 1911 the Ingersoll Music Club was formed and has been meeting on a monthly basis since that time. The group is mainly made up of singers, pianists and violinists, who fill their nights listening to music.

SHAKESPEARE CLUB

In 1905 three Ingersoll women decided to expand their cultural awareness. They decided it would be best to meet on a weekly basis and have readings from books which the members have enjoyed. Miss Neeland was the first president when the group began.

At the first meeting for the group, which has a limited membership of 20, 'Comedy of Errors' was chosen to be read and from then on it was decided only Shakespeare plays would be read.

Since the formation nearly 80-years-ago, members have met on a regular basis with the exception of the years during the first World War. This Shakespearean club is one of the oldest in Canada and has enriched the culture of each of its members.

BOOK CLUB

In 1945 another literary club was started in Ingersoll, the book club. This group has met once a month since its formation and each meeting a member gives a brief summary on a book which has been read. The group also discusses current events at times.

CAC

In 1972 a group of artists began meeting on a regular basis at the town library. At the conclusion of each meeting all the art

equipment had to be put away which resulted in club members looking for a spot they could meet and leave equipment out until they met again.

When a King Street east home was vacated, members of the club applied for, and got, use of it. That was the beginning of the Creative Arts Centre (CAC) in 1975.

Each year the CAC improved its program, and membership has continued to grow. There are now about 200 members.

In 1978, when the town offices were moved to their present location, the CAC moved in to the Old Town Hall where it has been ever since.

ITOPA

In 1977 Ingersoll experienced the re-birth of live theatre when ITOPA did its first performance 'Ready-Steady Go' in December of that year. Prior to this Ingersoll had a Little Theatre group in the 1950s, but waning interest saw it fold.

When ITOPA began, it only held two plays



Ingersoll was introduced to live theatre in 1950 when Ingersoll Little Theatre was formed. In the lower left photo is a scene from Ingersoll Theatre of Performing Arts production of 'Ladies in Retirement.' ITOPA was formed eight-years-ago and reintroduced live theatre to the town. Squire James Ingersoll, son of the town's founder and the first white man born in the area.



a year which ran two nights each. This year the group is planning to hold four plays which will each run seven nights.

In the beginning years of ITOPA, the theatre group did plenty of travelling as they did not have a place to work out of. The stages varied from schools, church basements and the CAC. Sets for the plays were also a problem. They were built and stored in numerous spots such as Macnabs garage and Coyle and Greer Awards.

The performances, which vary from comedy to thrillers to musicals, have won several awards for the quality acting Ingersoll residents have given.

Culture has always been available to Ingersoll residents and by the look of the success of these clubs, it will continue to flourish in the future.

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Above is a program from the Maitland Theatre, once located where Powell TV and Appliance now stands, formerly J.T. Warden's TV and Appliances.

The Maple Leaf Literary and Library Club was a popular organization in West Oxford, in its day. The photo was taken in 1897.



Maple Leaf Literary & Library Club
Prouse's Corner West Oxford
1897

Two cigar factories once located in Ingersoll

In the early 1900s Ingersoll had two cigar factories. One was operated by John Frezell and the other by Andrew Smith. One was located at the rear of the Keating Hotel, while the other was on Charles Street.

On October 18, 1897, the Marquis of Lorne, who was the Governor General of Canada, and his wife, Princess Louise, visited Ingersoll. They arrived by train and were met by a huge crowd.

In 1946, when Standard Brands of Canada took over ownership of Ingersoll Cheese Company, they introduced the town to the margarine producing business. At one time, Ingersoll was Canada's leading exporter of margarine.

Ingersoll's Upper Dam Sluice could be lowered or raised to keep the water in Carroll's Pond at a proper level for powering a turbine for the woollen mills at the south west corner of the pond. The mill was a mile and a half down stream from this dam, and the water ran through eastern dykes on each side to the head of the pond.

In 1818 a grist mill was built on Mill Street, and the mill was driven by water power. The pond which supplied this power to the water wheel was known as Partlo's Pond and is now Memorial Park.



Tennis was a popular sport at the turn of the century. The building behind the players now houses Jackie's Hair Fashions, while on the right, is Windale Feeds, at one time a skating arena.

Sporting activities traced to early 1900s

BY WES ROCHESTER

Since the dawn of man there has been a need to express a creative force between athletic competition. The Romans saw the Games as a means of releasing animal drives that inhibited man's search for inner solitude, peace and harmony. Ingersoll's athletic heritage began with a pair of shoes and space to manoeuvre in, and has developed into world wide fame. Little remains of the road races between Woodstock, Putnam and Ingersoll, but the thrill that sporting events such as those provided, is still alive and well.

The big programs in early times were sponsored by the Ingersoll Amateur Athletic Association. Lacrosse and soccer were two popular forms of sport, both of which sparked the interest in sprinting as well as in long distance running. Bicycle road races were also a big attraction. People would line King and Thames Streets to witness marathon races to Woodstock. In these events there was a strong inter-community rivalry between Ingersoll and Woodstock, occasionally contributing to a dark horse.

Runners would work out at the race track at Victoria Park, the scene of soccer and lacrosse games. The passing of some of these events in town seemed to sound a death knell for sprinting, cycling and long distance running, but not until a number of local sprinters had more than a fair degree of success.

Over a period of many years, Ingersoll achieved fame and was widely recognized as a sports centre of Western Ontario. Sam Wade, in his first long distance run, cut the

old 10 mile record between Woodstock's Graham Park and a point east of Beachville, by two minutes, with a time of 56.1.5, beating out Woodstock favorite Peter Isaacs. Wade went on to win again in 1910 and 1911, which gave him permanent possession of the Alby Robinson trophy.

Previously, Ingersoll's Leslie Daniel had won it in the first year of its competition, in 1906, with a winning time of 59.24. In 1907 Garnet Elliott of Ingersoll took the coveted trophy. Will Law of Tillsonburg won in 1908 before the honors were Ingersoll's to keep.

And who could forget the events surrounding the 1936 Olympics when Ingersoll's own Betty (Elizabeth) Taylor took on the world's best in the high hurdles? The photo finish recorded a three way tie but officials said that Miss Taylor would be awarded the bronze, third place, because her previous trial runs had not equalled the time on that historic day.

Ingersoll teams have always done well. In 1868 the "Ingersoll Victorias" baseball team won the Canadian championship. Three Ontario championships were won between 1961 and 1964.

In hockey, the Ingersoll Reems were victorious at the OHA Junior Championships in 1955, and the Intermediate Marlards reached the Ontario finals in 1960.

Softball was popular in the 1930s and 40s. An Ingersoll lacrosse team, the Dufferins, won fame in the 1880s but enthusiasm for the sport had died down by the 1920s.

In 1966 the IDCI junior football team won the Tri-county eastern division conference.

A good swimming team has also been formed since the Maude Wilson Memorial

Pool was opened in the late 1950s.

Today, facilities also exist for golf, curling, lawn bowling and figure skating.

Individuals have also done well in the sports world. George Law, a welterweight boxer in the 1930s, was in the Olympic trials in 1936.

Harold Wilson, in his Miss Canada speedboats, won the world championship in the "225" class in 1934, and the President's Cup in 1939. In 1949 he broke the world speed boat record at Picton with a speed of 142.8 miles per hour. Although this was not officially recognized as a world record, it was established as a new North American record.

Noteworthy is the name of 'Lefty' Judd, whose pitching arm lead the Ingersoll team to the Ontario Championships for the first time on October 4, 1930. Mr. Judd had a terrific year, averaging 16 strikeouts per game. In 1932 he pitched for the Guelph seniors to the OBA championships. 1937 saw him turn Pro with the Chicago Cubs. Mr. Judd pitched eight years for the Boston Red Sox and the Philadelphia Phillies. In his career, he pitched two no-hit games. The first was the second game of the inter-county finals on August 18, 1929 in Galt, and the second was on June 14, 1948 pitching for Toronto of the international league in Syracuse, blanking the Chiefs 7-0.

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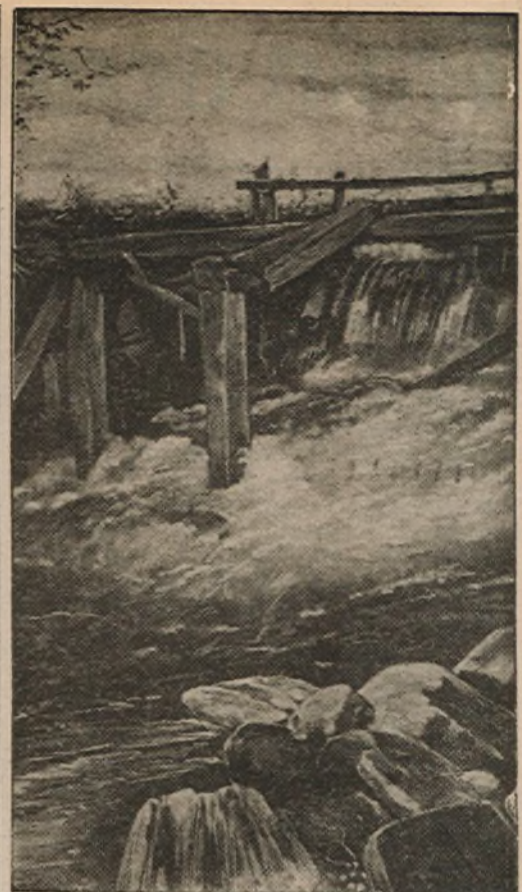
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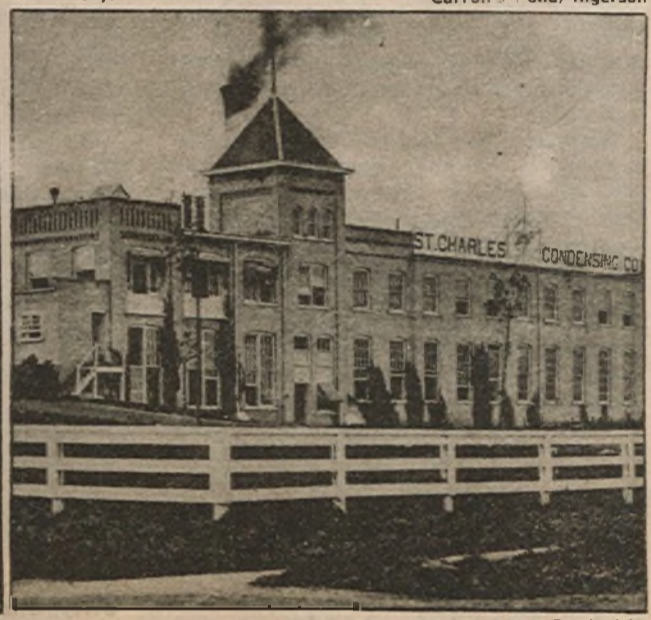
This photo, lent to the Times by J.C. Herbert, shows Ingersoll's business section before the turn of the century.



Carrol's Pond, Ingersoll



First Christian Church, Ingersoll congregation.



St. Charles Condensing Co. (Now Borden's)

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THE Ingersoll Times

Train derailments part of town history

BY MIKE WALSH

When it comes to train derailments, Ingersoll has been the site of miracles. In the past 10 years, this town has been the site of two passenger train accidents. The good news is, no lives were taken as a result of them.

On May 30, 1974, a Canadian National (CN), passenger train westbound from Toronto to Windsor smashed into a CN freight train. More than 250 yards of track were ripped apart as the 22-car freight train and six-car Tempo train collided. A diesel electric locomotive, standing nearby and not occupied, was also struck. The accident, which occurred directly in front of the present VIA rail station, was later blamed on a sudden shift in the track.

Minor injuries were suffered by 61 passengers, five crew members and three stewards of the passenger train. Also, two crew members from the freight train and two yard workers were injured. The most seriously injured was a woman who was struck by flying debris as she was standing on the station's platform.

Within 20 minutes after the accident had occurred, most of the passengers had been removed. A majority of them were taken to Alexandra Hospital, Ingersoll, and the more seriously were transported by ambulances to London.

The whole town offered assistance after the accident. The police department tightly secured the scene while members of the Public Utilities Commission, Public Works Department, the local St. John's Ambulance and private citizens rendered their services in any way.

Within hours of the crash, about 100 CN personnel were at the site and worked around the clock to clean the wreckage, which was spread all over the station yard. In a few days, the lines were being used again by trains. Damage was estimated at

'Miss Canada' speedboats brought fame to town

BY MARJORIE FLEMING

Over the years, Ingersoll has produced many fine athletes and sportsmen. The passing of those years have dulled a few memories of Ingersoll's finest but when files are searched and memories jogged, a flood of information and verbal reminiscing surfaces.

"I remember when" and "I'll never forget" bring back the heroes of yesteryear and provide us with a glimpse of those who earned themselves a place in sports history.

Harold Wilson of Ingersoll is one sportsman who will not soon be forgotten. His career in speed boat racing won world wide attention and captured the hearts and imagination of the people in his hometown.

Harold Wilson's racing career began when he was only 16. It was in the late 1920's, and he was racing mostly inboards, runabouts and outboard hydroplanes in Barrie, Picton and Gravenhurst. These racing events netted him close to 75 trophies which gained him enough experience and skill to advance into a larger class of boats.

In 1933, Harold and his father, E.A. Wilson, a local industrialist in Ingersoll and an enthusiastic sportsman, built the 'Miss Canada 1st', and it was the beginning of the 225 cu. in. class of racing craft.

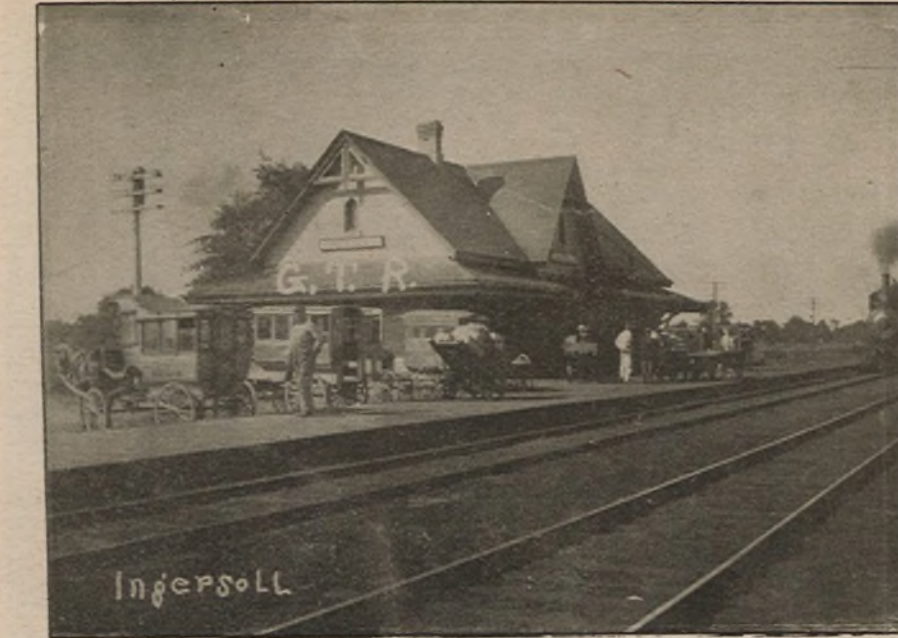
Father and son entered their new craft in the international event which took place at the C.N.E. and in 1934, Harold Wilson captured first prize at the C.N.E. by winning three races in three days for the best total score.

With their first world championship race won, the Wilsons decided to build Miss Canada II and III, which were 732 cu. in. power boats, and they entered them in the unlimited Gold Cup Class.

The boats, which were powered with specially built 100 h.p. engines, were tested at the Machine and Tool Co. in Ingersoll then entered in both the Gold and Silver Cup races.

Miss Canada gave a beautiful performance in the competition for the Silver Cup and resulted in Harold Wilson winning the championship. Miss Canada defeated Miss Pepsi, a well-known speed boat at the time.

One of the biggest thrills of Harold Wilson's speed boat career was winning The



Carriages wait for a train to arrive in the early 1900s at the CNR station

\$1 million.

A year later, a Canadian Transport Commission investigating the accident revealed "the Canadian National Railway (CNR) freight involved, braked on unstable track and 14 coaches and a caboose slewed off the line." When the rails expand, the report said, "there is a danger of track distortion. The freight braked causing the track to shift as much as 22 inches and the coaches to fishtail." It said a 500 pound coupling from one of the box cars had hurled nearly 500 yards and wheels of box cars were ripped off and some rails were snapped off.

Some of the cuts and abrasions passengers suffered resulted from the metal ceiling panels. It recommended railways use "plastic material in designing ceiling panels and they be securely fastened."

August 10, 1982, a VIA rail passenger train was enroute to Toronto from Sarnia when it collided head-on with a CN freight train. The passenger train was not on the same track as the CN locomotive when it left London, it had permission to transfer onto a westbound lane to avoid construction in Dorchester. The train was supposed to switch back to the right track, but never did.

Shortly after the accident, 12 ambulances from Kitchener, Waterloo, St. Thomas, Tillsonburg, Woodstock and London were on the scene. Approximately 65 people were treated and later released from Ingersoll hospital. Nine people were transferred to London. The injuries ranged from cuts and abrasions to shock and sprained limbs. Amongst the hurt were the CN conductor and engineer.

Again the community came in full force to help with the disaster. Off duty nurses, doctors and police officers volunteered their services as well as many townspeople.

The track was reopened within 18 hours of the accident.

President's Cup in 1939, with Miss Canada. It was the first time in the history of U.S. boat racing that the Cup was captured by a foreigner, and Wilson was personally presented the Cup by President Roosevelt at the White House.

At the president's concert, Wilson was allowed to bring the Cup to Canada for one year. It was the first time the Cup had ever left U.S. soil.

World War II interrupted most sporting events, so it was 1945 before the Wilsons were really back into boat racing full steam. Rumours abounded that the Wilsons might challenge for the Harmsworth, which was considered the greatest prize in boat racing. If the Wilsons were to challenge, they would need a larger and faster boat. So a decision was made to equip Miss Canada III with two Rolls Royce Merlin engines, the result of which garnered Wilson the Silver and Gold

Cup Championship.

In 1948 and 49, Harold and his father built Miss Canada IV and installed Rolls Royce Griffin engines, and it was with this boat they were ready to challenge for the Harmsworth.

Harold Wilson made two unsuccessful attempts to win the Harmsworth, but he did manage to set an unofficial record of 142.292 m.p.h. at Picton, Ontario. This record surpassed Sir Malcolm Campbell's mark of 141 m.p.h., which had been set 10-years-previous. The record was not officially recognized due to technicalities set up by the racing commission. The craft had to have a two way run to qualify, and Wilson completed just one leg of the course.

Harold Wilson eventually gave up boat racing and took up car racing. He became president of the Canadian Automobile Sports Club and went on to become a director at the Mosport Race Track in Bowmanville.

In 1975, Wilson was one of five Canadian sportsmen inducted to Canada's Sports Hall of Fame, after a long and illustrious career.

Harold Wilson will long be remembered for his contributions to the sports world, and his speed boat racing career will be discussed and reviewed fondly for many more years to come.

A few days after the incident, John Reoach, then CN's general superintendent of transportation in the Great Lakes Region said "there was a breakdown somewhere in the process of issuing the orders and following the orders." A month later five CN employees were discharged because of a "violation of train order requirements and operating rules."

On Tuesday, February 14, 1984, a 24-car west bound CNR freight train derailed near Beachville. None of the four employees on the train were injured. The single vehicle accident, which resulted in a half a mile of track being ripped up, was blamed on erosion of a railbed.

Trains servicing town over 100 years

For over 100 years, Ingersoll has been served by railways.

The first railway to come through Oxford County was in 1853. The Ingersoll Great Western Railroad station was located on the west side of Thames Street and was built by local contractors, the Christopher Brothers.

According to the book, Ingersoll Our Heritage, "From 1878 to 1881, the Credit Valley Railroad was extended from St. Thomas to Woodstock, giving Ingersoll connection with the Michigan Central Rail Road. This was secured through the efforts of James Noxon, the president of Noxon Farm Implement Mfg. This company used to haul the manufactured machinery by horses to Tillsonburg, to be shipped via the Michigan Central Railroad to the United States."

The CPR bought the Credit Valley Railroad in 1884, and tracks were laid just south of the Great Western Railroad, running parallel to it.

The Tillsonburg Lake Erie and Pacific Railroad was completed from Tillsonburg to Ingersoll in 1901.

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