

# LADIES IN UNIFORM

CANADIAN MILITARY SERVICE

**1. Mabel Stauch**  
Mabel was born in Port Elgin on October 30, 1893. She was raised in Saugeen Township, the 4th of 5 children. She graduated from nursing in 1916 and travelled to England to join the WWI British Nursing Sisters. A year later, she transferred to the Canadian Expeditionary Force and worked in a Canadian Military Hospital in England. In mid-August 1918, she crossed the channel to France and worked in the massive hospital complex in Etaples, caring for the troops along the Western Front. In December 1918, she returned to England and remained there until July 1919, when she came home to Port Elgin.

**2. Elizabeth Nora Campbell**  
Elizabeth was born in Port Elgin in 1884, and after graduating from the local High School, she enlisted in nursing at Toronto General Hospital. In early 1915, she and 38 of her graduating class enlisted as WWI Nursing Sisters in the Canadian Expeditionary Force as the nursing staff for the #4 Canadian General Hospital. Her group was sent to Salonika, Greece, where the war was raging against the Turkish Army. More than a year later, she contracted bacillary dysentery and after an extended illness she was removed to Malta for treatment and then back to England for convalescence. Along the way, she met Dr. John McLeod who was born in Southampton and had practiced in Kincardine before the war. On returning to Canada, they married, worked and lived in Toronto until she passed away from pneumonia following surgery in 1932 at age 48. She is buried in Sanctuary Park Cemetery in Port Elgin.

**3. Doreen Olive Sampson**  
Doreen was born in England in 1923. The family moved to Southampton in 1943, and she soon after enlisted in the RCAF. She was stationed at Rockcliffe Ontario and worked in Supply Depot Administration with the rank of Leading Aircraftwoman. While there she met Cyril Dibnah, and they married at war's end. They lived in Southampton until deciding to move to B.C. where he joined the navy and they raised their six children. She passed away in 2010 at age 87.

**4. Doris Grace Cutsworth**  
Doris was born in Saskatchewan in 1924, and the family moved to Southampton in 1938 following the droughts. In 1943, at age 19, she enlisted in the RCAF. She recalled that the training demanded strict discipline, marching, lectures and continual fitness. Testing showed that she had an aptitude to be a wireless operator. She trained in Montreal and was stationed in Ontario and in New Brunswick, transmitting messages between towers and aircrafts during training flights. She later trained as a teletype operator. After the war, she married her local boyfriend Glen Manley, who had served in the Navy. The family remained in Southampton and she lived until 2016, when she passed away in her 93rd year.

**5. Elaine Matheson**  
Elaine was born in Southampton in 1917, and after high school she enrolled in Nursing in London, Ontario. After graduation, she enlisted in the RCAF and soon found herself in England serving the health needs of Bomber Groups. In July 1944, she was posted to the Canadian Wing of the Queen Victoria Hospital. Here, members of the RCAF that had been seriously wounded and burned were brought for treatment and reconstructive surgeries. There were 176 RCAF members treated here and their stories were told in the book "The Guinea Pig Club". Reformatory surgery was a new treatment, and many operations were experimental in nature and being done for the first time. Elaine returned to her hometown and was part of the original staff in 1947 at the new Saugeen Memorial Hospital. She remained there except for a short time when she was in Toronto. Eventually, she rose to the management team at our hospital and became Director of Nursing. She retired in 1977, and remained in Southampton until her death in 1999.

**6. & 7. Betty and Jean Miller**  
Betty and Jean were born in Saugeen Township in 1918 and 1920. Their father passed away, and the family moved to Owen Sound, where the sisters finished high school and trained to be teachers. They both enlisted in the RCAF and served at bases in Canada. After the war, Jean married an American Military Man and moved to the U. S. Betty never married. Jean passed away in 1981 and Betty in 2000. They are buried in a family plot in the Paisley Cemetery.

**8. Mildred Eleanor Dungey**  
Mildred was born in Southampton in 1922. She joined the Canadian Women's Army Corp and served in an office administration role at the Camp Borden Military Hospital. One of her tasks was to arrange and organize the return of soldiers coming back to Canada, and returning to their homes and families after being wounded in Europe. While serving, she met and later married William Beese and raised their family in Lucknow. When widowed, she returned to Southampton where she passed away in 2006 at age 84.

**19. Helen Mary Smith**  
Helen was born in Shelbourne in 1920. After High School she did 3 years of voice training at the Toronto Conservatory of Music. In 1942, she enlisted in the Canadian Women's Army Corps and trained as a Transportation Driver; she was assigned to the Canadian Small Arms School, just west of Toronto, as a driver for visiting dignitaries and military officers. She also participated as a soloist in camp variety shows. She went to England after administration skills training and served at Canadian Military Headquarters on Cockspur Street in London. During her service she met, and later married, Captain Ernest George Hammond from Port Elgin, an officer in the Canadian Army. After the war, they returned to Port Elgin to raise a family. Helen passed away in 2014 at the age of 94. They are both buried in Sanctuary Park Cemetery in Port Elgin.



1. Mabel Stauch 2. Elizabeth Nora Campbell 3. Doreen Olive Sampson 4. Doris Grace Cutsworth 5. Elaine Matheson 6. Betty Miller 7. Jean Miller 8. Mildred Eleanor Dungey 9. Helen Margaret Root 10. Vera Beatrice Eidt



11. Felicia Cobean 12. Catherine Amelia Subject 13. Dorothy May Longe 14. Kathleen Thelma Sees 16. Hilda Jean Masterson 17. Ruby Katherine Schaefer 18. Vivian Winnifred Sees 19. Helen Mary Smith Ladies taking the oath of service when enlisting

**18. Vivian Winnifred Sees**  
Vivian was born in Port Elgin in 1923, 1 of 5 children of Fred and Ruby Sees. She followed her older sister Kathleen Sees and enlisted in the RCAF. Following Filer Centre Training, she was assigned to the West Coast of Canada. There were 11 Radar Stations along the West Coast and she spent most her service at the Radar Central Control Command Station in Victoria. They monitored all air traffic and plotted their movements on a large tabletop map. The work was of a highly secretive nature and was protected under the Official War Secrets Act until 1991. At war's end, she returned to Port Elgin until moving to London to attend Military Business College, then working in the Transportation Industry. In 1949, she married Ernest Wotton and they had a daughter. Ernest passed away in 1962. As of 2020, while being in her late 90s, she remains living in the family home in London and remembers the events of her WWII service.

## CANADIAN LADIES IN UNIFORM MILITARY SERVICE

### Women were originally only involved in the military as Nursing Sisters.

- 1885 North West Rebellion Force included 7 nurses
- 1898 The Klondike Military Force 4 Victoria Order Nurses.
- 1899 The Boer War Canadian Military Medical Service was formed, and 8 Nurses served in British Hospitals. Canadian soldiers totaled 8,372.

### 1914 - 1918 WWI

When war was declared, Canada had a permanent army of only 3,000 and one base at Val Cartier, Quebec. There were 5 nurses on staff. By the war's end 3,141 Nurses had volunteered and 1,886 had served overseas. They were nicknamed, The Blue Birds, in their Blue dresses and White Veils. Twenty-six died from enemy actions.

### 1939 -1945 WWII Nurses

Nurses served in all branches of the Canadian Military with 4,480 in Europe and throughout the world. One died from enemy action.

### 1939 At the Start of WWII

All 3 arms of the military had no female members other than as nurses.

### Across Canada volunteer groups pressured the government to allow women in non-combat rolls.

- In June 1941 the British Mechanized Transport Corps was given permission to begin recruitment in Canada for women to serve overseas.
- On August 13, 1941 after intense pressure from MANY women across Canada the Canadian Women's Army Corps was officially established.
- Recruits began as drivers, cooks, clerks, typists, stenographers, telephone operators, messengers and quartermasters and was expanded to include truck driving, ambulance drivers, mechanics and radar operators. Total different trades served was 55.
- Many served in England and a few in mainland Europe after the Germans surrendered and they then worked on the task of repatriating the Army and their equipment back to Canada.
- Of the 21,000 CWAC's that served, none died but some were wounded by German air bombing.
- The RCAF formed a Canadian Women's "Auxiliary" Air Force in 1941. Their tasks were like those of the CWAC's plus things like parachute riggers and air photo interpreters. About 17,000 women served in the RCAF.
- About 7,000 women enlisted in the Royal Canadian Navy and served in 39 different trades. They were nicknamed "The Wrens".

### IN WWII CLOSE TO 50,000 LADIES SERVED IN THE CANADIAN MILITARY.

- Requirements of an enlisted woman.
- Between 18 and 41 and medically fit. A minimum of 5 ft. (153 cm.) tall with appropriate weight to their height.
- Minimum of Grade 8 education and able to pass the trade test selected for.
- Be of good character and have never been convicted of an indictable offense.
- They could not be working in any Civil service position and must not have any dependent children; sons under 16 or daughters under 18.
- Base pay was \$0.90 per day in the lowest ranks versus \$1.30 for men. In 1943 it was improved to 80% of men's rates in all ranks.

**17. Ruby Katherine Schaefer**  
Ruby was born in Tavistock in 1914. She spent her summers in Southampton and in later years worked here as a summer nanny. She met her future husband Marme Burrows in Southampton. In late 1941 she enlisted in the Canadian Women's Army Corps and was one of 72 women that were assigned to the Provost Corps with the serious responsibility of dealing with wartime security and confidential information. Stationed in London England, Ruby was injured with a deep cut to her face following a German bombing and was awarded a "War Wound Stripe". At war's end she saw duty in Holland. Upon discharge in 1946, she married Marme and they lived in Southampton. They had twin daughters, and Marme served on Town Council and as Mayor. Ruby died in 2000.

**16. Hilda Jean Masterson**  
Jean was born in Hepworth in 1922 and her family moved to Southampton in the 1930s. In early 1941, she went to Hespeler to work in the woolen mills. In 1943, she enlisted in the RCAF and served as a cook for the duration of the war. She was assigned to the Navigational School out of Guelph, which had two small air bases in the Brantford area where she served. After the war she returned to Southampton and married Howard Gateman, who had served in the Navy. They started their family and sadly, Jean died giving birth to twins in 1954; one child survived. Her other children and grandchildren are still in our community.

**15. Helen Mary Brown**  
Helen was born in Southampton in 1916, and in WWII she enlisted in the Canadian Women's Army Corps. She returned to Southampton after the war and in 1956 married George Hammond, who passed away in 1974. She moved away from the community at that time.

**14. Kathleen Thelma Sees**  
Kathleen was born in Port Elgin in 1921. In 1942, she joined the RCAF and served until 1946 at locations in Canada in stock room administration. During her Air Force service, she met William Storks de Roux. They married at war's end and lived in the Toronto area until his death in 1973, and she moved back to Port Elgin. She passed away in 1988 at age 66.

**13. Dorothy May Longe**  
Dorothy May Longe was born in Southampton in 1922, and was a descendant of a pioneer M tis family. She joined the Canadian Women's Army Corps and rose to the rank of Regimental Sergeant Major. She served in England, France, Belgium and Holland and received her discharge in 1946. In 1952, she married Bertram Smith and farmed in Saugeen Township. In 1956, they moved to Southampton where they raised their family. Bert died in 1969 and Dorothy moved to Port Elgin where she passed away in 1992, at age 69.

**12. Catherine Amelia Subject**  
Catherine was born in Chesley in 1914. She enlisted in the Army Corps and served in Canada and in Europe as an ambulance driver and driving instructor. While in service, she met and later married Fred Longe of Port Elgin. She lived in Port Elgin until her death at age 61 in 1975.

**11. Felicia Cobean**  
Felicia was born in Saugeen Township in 1919. She was 1 of 5 children born to Lewis and Jean Cobean (nee Gowanlock). She joined the RCAF in WWII and trained as an ambulance driver, serving at the airbase in Shilo, Manitoba. In 1942 this base began doing parachute training that had been transferred from the U.S. While in Shilo, she met Lorne Riddell and they married following the war. They lived in Strathroy, where they raised their family. She passed away in Strathroy in 2006, in her 88th year.

For more information on this or other historical documentation contact: [brucemuseum.ca](http://brucemuseum.ca)



# Canadian Ladies in Uniform Military Service



**C**aptain John Spence and his friend William Kennedy came to Southampton, or Saugeen as it was then called, in the year 1848. Together they are credited with playing a key role in the establishment of the community.

Spence was born in 1814 in the Orkney Islands off the coast of Scotland. Apprenticing in boat building, he was recruited to work for the Hudson Bay Company. From 1838 to 1846 he worked for, and supplied, various Hudson Bay Company posts along the Labrador Coast.

In 1848, Spence and Kennedy, determined to seek their fortune in the fishing trade on Lake Huron, travelled from Kingston to Owen Sound. From there they walked the Indian path to the mouth of the Saugeen River. Finding the conditions to their liking, they retraced their steps and returned with a canoe loaded with supplies by portaging across the Bruce Peninsula, via Warton and the Sauble River.

Having bought an exclusive lease from the Niagara Fishing Company of Goderich to fish at the Fishing Islands, 15 miles north of the Saugeen River mouth, their hopes of finding fortune would have been high.

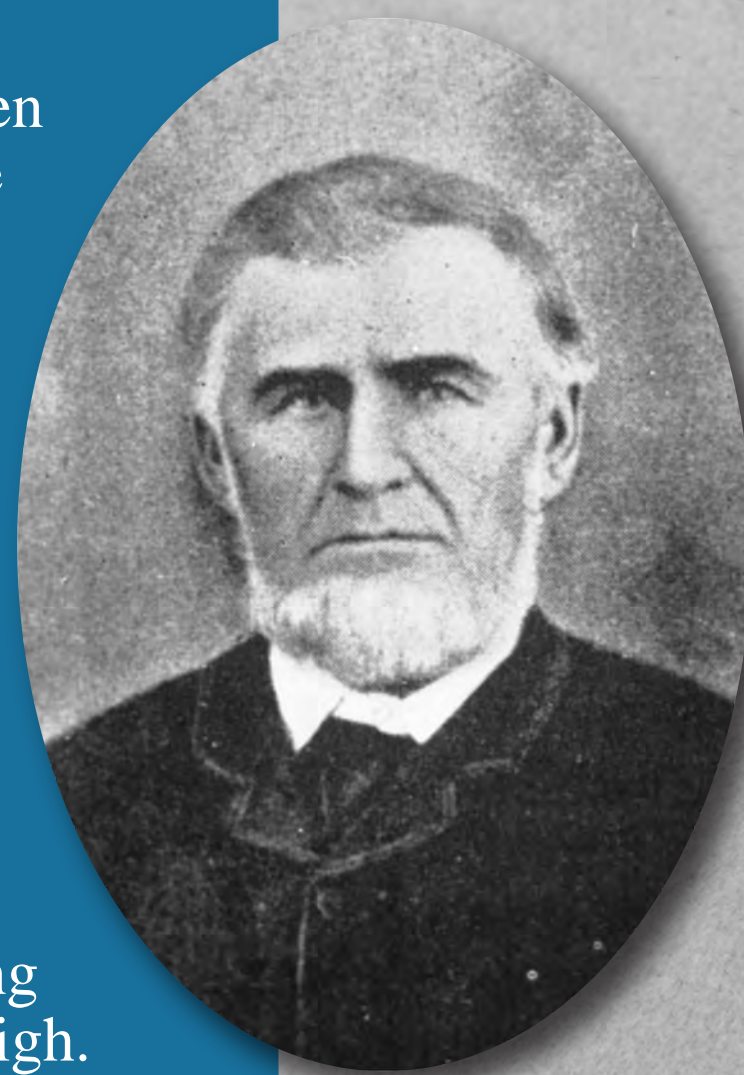
Unfortunately the endeavour was doomed to fail, not due to a shortage of fish in Lake Huron, but in difficulties of getting the catch to market. Then in 1850, Kennedy was recruited to search for the Franklin expedition lost in the Arctic while seeking the Northwest Passage. Spence was left without his partner and deep in debt following three unsuccessful fishing seasons.

Spence then changed his focus and entered the shipping trade moving cedar posts, cordwood and tanning bark from Georgian Bay to Goderich and Detroit. In 1856, one of his vessels, the Forest, hauled limestone from the Inverhuron quarry to the lighthouse being built on Chantry Island. Captain Spence also served as Assistant Lighthouse Keeper for 6 months in 1858.

In 1859 he was listed as being worth \$1,006 based on his property and income; eighth highest on the list.

Tragedy struck in 1895 while travelling as a passenger on a schooner captained by his son, Alexander Spence, known to many as "Cappy". A heavy gale overtook the ship and Alexander and a ship's mate were lost overboard. Captain Spence couldn't bring the schooner around by himself to start a search and the two men's bodies were never recovered.

The Captain never left Southampton and his house still stands at 18 Huron Street North in the town he had helped to found and where he died on October 1st, 1904.



*Captain John Spence*



*Captain John and Jane Spence ca 1900, shown with their five surviving children, from left Harry, Mary, John, Eleanor and Will. The child in the centre is Alexandra, daughter of Alexander 'Cappy' and Mary (Hilditch), born 3 months after her father's death by drowning on the family schooner Wanderer in 1895.*



*Spence house built about 1850*

Captain Spence was at the helm of his schooner Nemesis during a fearsome gale in 1876 when he came across a lifeboat launched following the foundering of the American steamboat New York that had broken apart in the immense waves and snow squalls. The survivors were huddled in their tiny boat, numb from the cold. Captain Spence lost his entire deck load of hemlock bark as he circled the lifeboat a dozen times trying to get a line to the helpless men. Eventually a line was made and all but one of the stricken sailors were saved. For his skill and bravery, President Ulysses S. Grant awarded Captain Spence a \$300 solid gold watch and the village of Southampton presented him with a solid silver tea service.



*The Schooner Wanderer*



*Research and photo credits: Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre*

# Captain John Spence



## THE LAND

The 1857 survey of the Village of Port Elgin labelled this property as Lots 3, 4, 5 in Block 1, a part of the holdings of Henry Hilker, one of the founders.

In 1875 the first Village Council purchased and set aside the land for a Market House beside the soon-to-be-built Town Hall. A completely new council elected the following year decided against the Market House, but went ahead with a two-storey Town Hall.

That building, constructed by Duncan Currie, had an upstairs auditorium, a school room and clerk's office at street level, and a jail and firehall at the south side. As long as teachers held classes there, the village allowed children to play in this open space. The Village also rented out a part of the open area with fruit trees, perhaps the remnants of an early orchard.

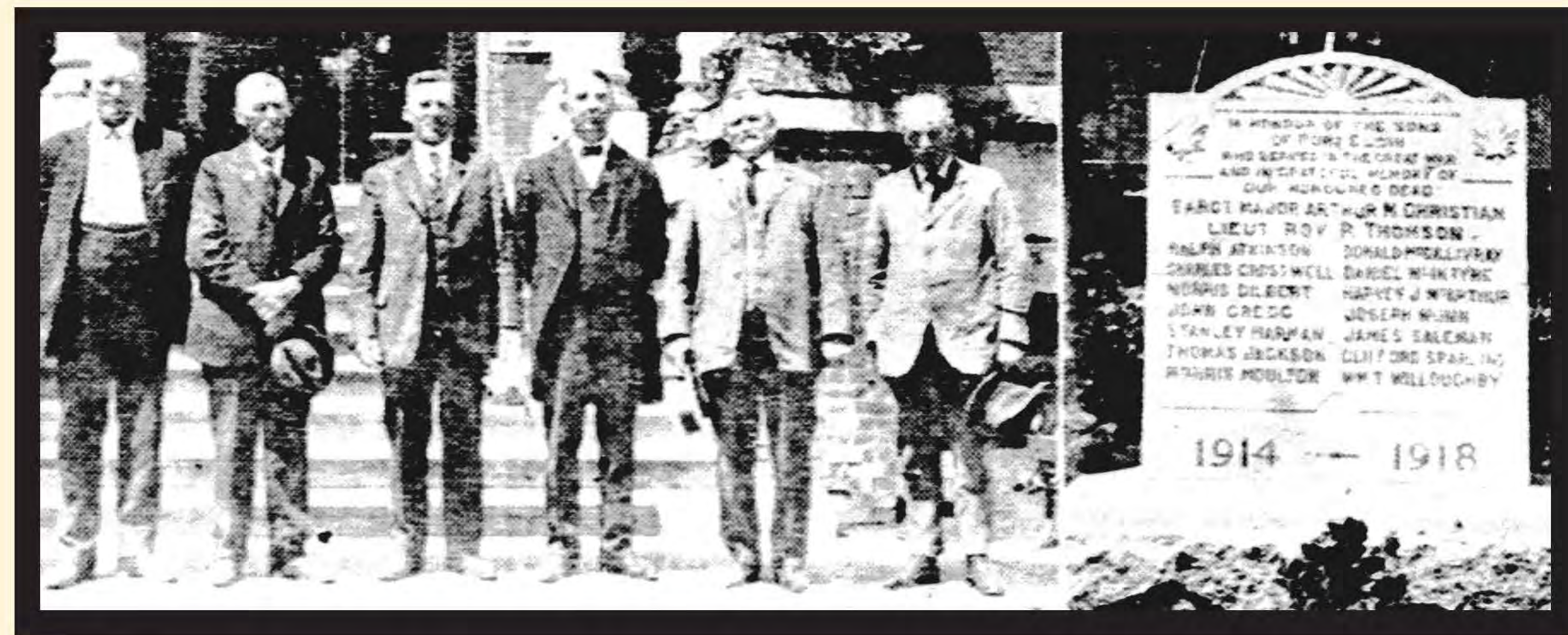
The Canadian government bought Lot 5 in 1963 as the site of the new Post Office.

## THE MONUMENT

August 28, 1903 marked a significant date, the day when the Adjutant-General of Canada came to unveil the monument honouring Trooper Gordon Cummings. The first war memorial in Bruce County, its cost was shared by the County, the Village, and private donors.

A photograph such as this of Gordon Cummings gave the features for the monument made in 1903 by Wm. George & Son. From *Roots & Branches of Saugeen Township*.

After the ceremony, citizens and guests enjoyed an evening of musical and patriotic entertainment at the nearby Roller Rink.

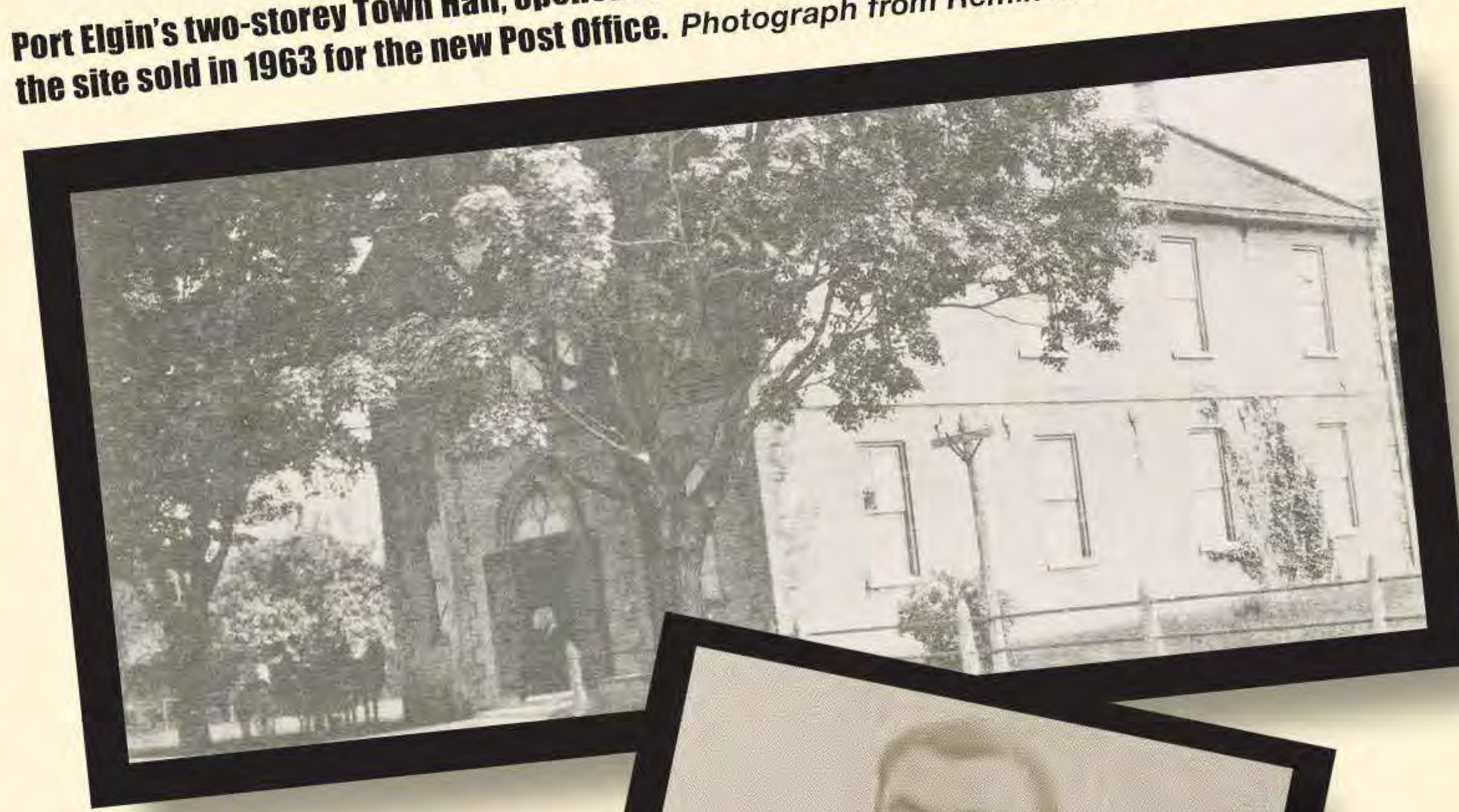


Six speakers at the dedication of the First World War memorials posed on the steps of Port Elgin's Carnegie Library on July 23, 1924. Speakers included Alex McCannel, ex-warden of Bruce County; George Jamieson, Reeve of Saugeen Township; Warden J.W. Sinclair; Major J.C. Tolmie of Southampton; Rev. W.S. Buckberrough. Image courtesy of the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre microfilm collection - *The Port Elgin Times*, July 30, 1924.

Gordon Cummings, son of Patrick and Barbara Cummings, grew up on a farm at Lot 10, Concession 7, Saugeen Township. His father served as Reeve of Saugeen and as Warden of Bruce County. Gordon attended local schools, then trained as a teacher. Before enlisting in Kitchener's Horse, he taught in nearby rural schools and travelled to Northern Ontario.

Gordon Cummings' death in action at Nooitgedacht, South Africa, happened close to his twenty-fifth birthday, December 13, 1900, while he was attempting to secure more ammunition for his group under heavy fire during the Boer War.

Port Elgin's two-storey Town Hall, opened in 1877, stood at the east side of this property on the site sold in 1963 for the new Post Office. Photograph from *Reminiscences: 1874-1974*.



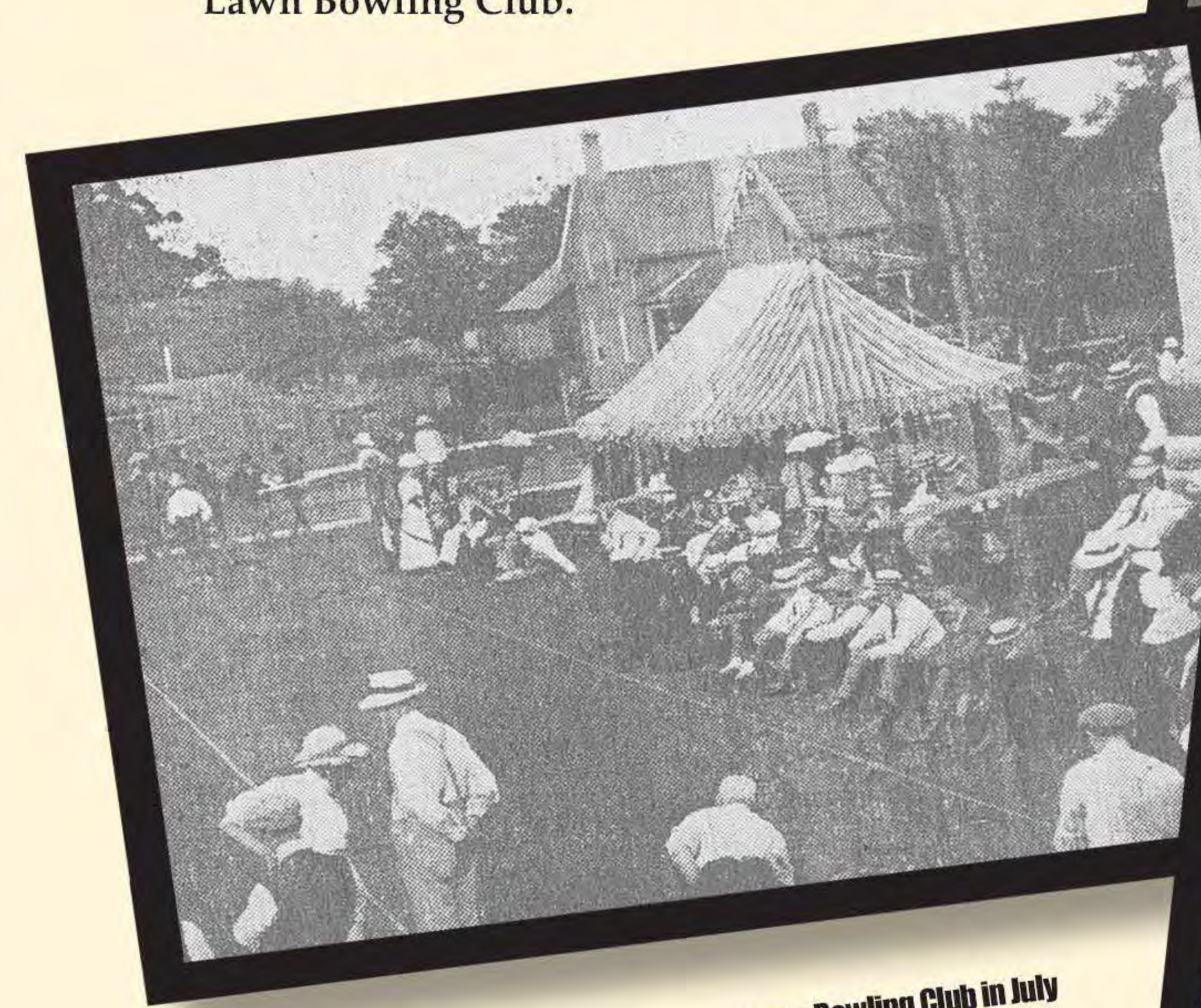
## LAWN BOWLING GREEN

The Port Elgin Lawn Bowling Club formed by 1905. Members "sodded part of the Town Hall park" and held many popular tournaments. The 1915 event shown in the photograph attracted teams from as far away as Stratford to compete for cash prizes and trophies. Men and women of the club enjoyed summer games and tending the property, including the perennial garden at the foot of the monument. Their Club House hosted many a social evening in colder months.

After celebrating its centennial anniversary in 2005, the Club disbanded. Many of the remaining members joined the Southampton Lawn Bowling Club.



Lawn Bowling, usually a summer game, attracted a few hardy souls in the mild weather of January 1933. Left to right: Alf Rueber, John Kepkey (Koepe), (unknown), Richard Henry Fenton. Of note is the pipe fence, possibly the original fence of the Bowling Green. Photograph courtesy of Helen Wuerth.



The first large tournament held by the Port Elgin Lawn Bowling Club in July 1915 attracted bowlers from many towns. Musicians in the tent provided entertainment, and the Village Council donated money for streetlighting for the occasion. Photograph from the *Port Elgin Times*, July 14, 1915.



The Port Elgin Lawn Bowling Green, renovated in 2002, and Club house, expanded in the 1970s with the Trooper Cummings monument as the scene appeared in 2005. Illustration by Ken Thornburn, Northern Flyer Designs, Tara.

## THE CENOTAPHS

In 1924 citizens of Port Elgin and Saugeen Township erected matching cenotaphs in front of Port Elgin's Public Library, the building where both councils met. Here, annual Remembrance Day services have honoured the sacrifice of those who fell in service to Canada. In 1962, the original stones were re-carved to display the names from both World Wars. Additional carving and rededication in 1986 commemorated the Korean Conflict.

The Plan to develop Cenotaph Park brings together three memorials in a space where all can reflect on values of duty, good citizenship, and service.

Members of the Royal Canadian Legion, Port Elgin Branch 340, along with Town of Saugeen Shores staff began planning this park

in 2005 for its official opening in September 2006. The committee who made the project a reality included:

Mike Atkinson, Don Clemmer, Jeff Crawford, Norma Dudgeon, John Kain, Terry Mills, Mike Myatt, Dan Rivett, Mike Smith, Harry Thede, Steve York.

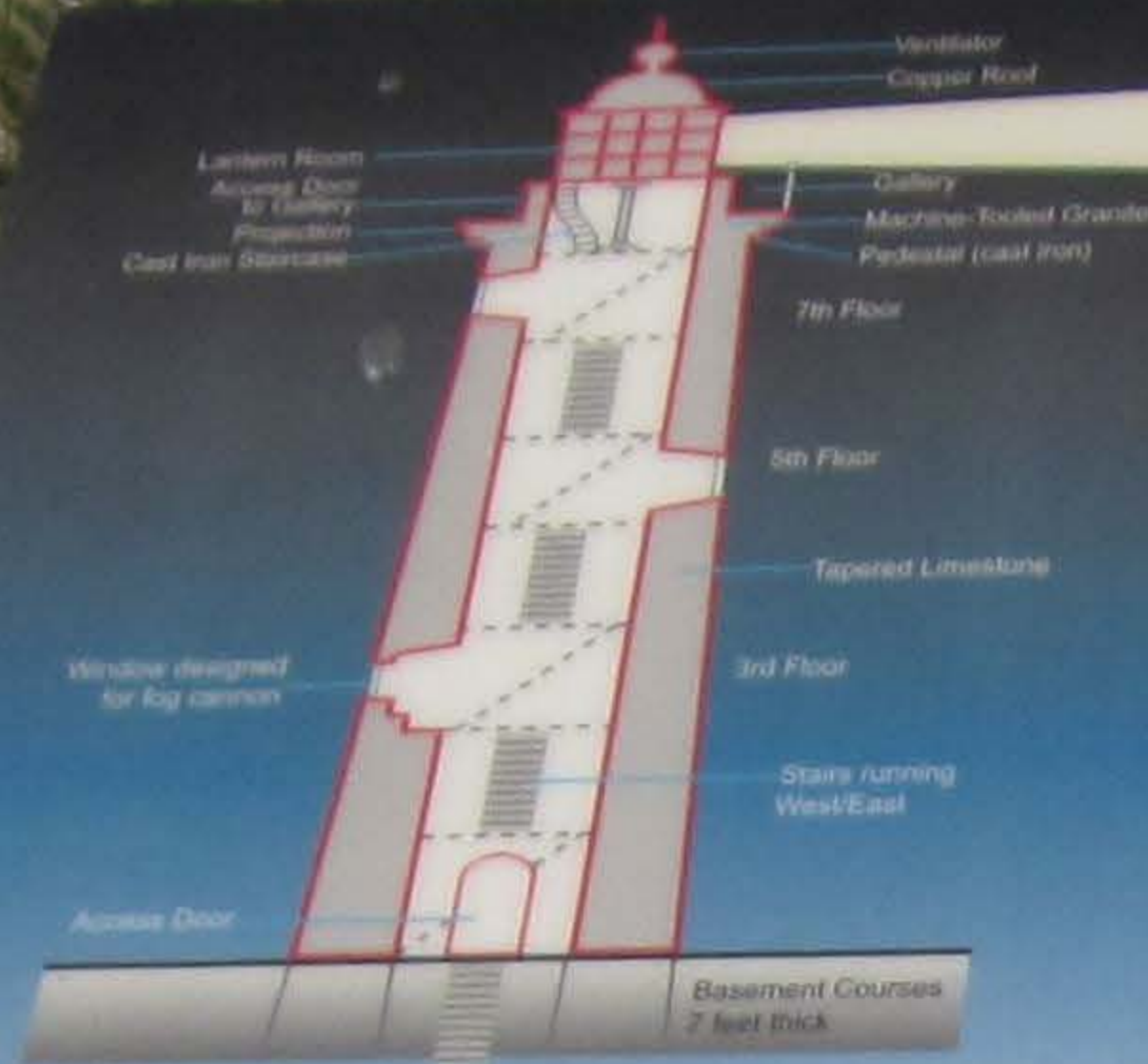
The park project was also supported by staff and students at Saugeen District Secondary School.

For more information on this or other historical documentation contact: [brucemuseum.ca](http://brucemuseum.ca)

# Cenotaph Park



Chantry Island Lighthouse  
 built 1855 - 1859  
 John Brown, Engineer



Chantry Island Lighthouse



Southampton Dock



Sailing through the Gap

For sailors and ships, Chantry Island has always been a death trap. Surrounded by extensive ragged shoals, it had already claimed dozen of sailing vessels when, in 1855, work began on a stone lighthouse. The light on Chantry Island was lit on April 1, 1859.

In spite of this new Imperial Tower, lives were still lost. Fifteen vessels were wrecked on Chantry Shoals in the decade after building the light. Only the lee or east side of the island offered protection. In the 1870s the Department of Public Works designated Chantry Island as an asylum harbour. Two extensive docks radiated out from the shore and the island, leaving a gap of 122m (400 feet) for ships seeking the shelter of a Harbour of Refuge. Still, by the turn of the century, Southampton had witnessed more wrecks than any other single place along the Bruce Coast.

In 1954, Chantry Island's lamp was electrified. With a lightkeeper no longer on the island, the lighthouse grounds were vandalized. A half century later, the Southampton Marine Heritage Society and the Propeller Club brought the ruins of the lightkeepers's house and the island's gardens back to life. Volunteers have spent over 48,000 hours restoring the lightstation on Chantry Island.

In 1957, the Canadian Wildlife Services declared Chantry Island a Federal Migratory Bird Sanctuary. Visits are limited to official Tours offered by the Marine Heritage Society.

Photos: Archives of the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre

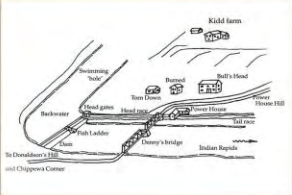


# Chantry Island Lighthouse





BCMSCC, Wm White Contractor, Denny's Bridge, August 18, 1888



BCMSCC, Gordon Kidd, Forgotten Times



BCMSCC, Southampton, Saugeen River power house



BCMSCC, Southampton, Saugeen River Dam

For centuries, rapids on the Saugeen River have challenged those travelling to and from Lake Huron. Surveyor Alexander Vidal recorded difficulty moving up the rapids in the lower Saugeen in his 1851 field notes. Later, these rapids would be utilized as power sources.

Abundance of fish attracted Aboriginal peoples and early settlers to the lower stretches of the Saugeen River. Documents from 1888 mention a "fish ladder". Trapping and selling lamprey eels was a lucrative venture for many years.

Denny's Dam is named after John Denny, who was born in Lower Canada in 1822, married Elizabeth Tett in Montreal and moved to Bruce County in 1856. In 1876, he received Crown Deeds for two lots on the north bank of the river. When selling these lots, Mr. Denny retained a 1-chain strip of the riverbank. He also acquired 16 acres on the south bank known as the "mill site". The 1871 census identified John Denny as a miller with 2 sons and 2 daughters.

An 1857 map shows a dam upstream directing water to a channel to power the sawmill and gristmill on the south bank. Later on the site were a store, hotel, woollen mill, homes and barns. In 1860 John Denny sold the hotel to William Buckley, retaining the other buildings.

During low-water, the river could be forded at a shallow location. From 1859-1865 villagers employed Charles Forrest to operate a ferry to cross the river. Government Engineer David Gibson's road plan included a bridge, which was built from wooden timbers in 1865 by John Denny. It collapsed in 1906 during the spring ice break up. The iron bridge that replaced it, although set on higher abutments, sustained damage in 1912, as did the Southampton Bridge at Victoria Street. Both needed replacing in 1918. Denny's Bridge was later removed.

While water powered the early mill industries, it was electricity production that extended the use of Denny's Dam. In 1897, the Saugeen Electric Light and Power Company (SEPC), financially backed by Henry Cargill of Greenock Township, purchased the mill privilege and properties. A dam which crossed the entire river allowed a larger volume of water to enter the mill race on the south shore to drive a turbine, making electric power available for Southampton. The same year, a Saugeen Township by-law allowed poles to be installed along the Goderich Road, supplying electricity to Port Elgin.

In 1912, a major upgrade of the powerhouse used equipment manufactured by Wm. Kennedy & Son of Owen Sound. A controversial transaction in 1928 saw the SEPC sold to Foshay Utilities Co. of the USA. They fell into financial ruin in 1929, leading to closure of the powerhouse in 1932. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario took over as electricity supplier. The HEPC's review of the long-term feasibility of the facility in 1943 led to the removal of equipment and demolishing of the powerhouse in 1946.

In 1969, the Ministry of Natural Resources began a major project to build a dam to control water levels, a fish ladder to enable fish to get to their spawning grounds, and a trap to remove lamprey eels which were destroying fish populations in the Great Lakes. Upgrades to the dam were also planned for 2018.

This prime fishing spot provides pleasure for all with a wide variety of fish. Canoe enthusiasts also enjoy their time on the mighty Saugeen.

For more information on this or other historical documentation contact: [brucemuseum.ca](http://brucemuseum.ca)



# Denny's Dam





During the Second World War, the Dominion Plywoods Factory, formerly located on Albert and Adelaide Streets, played an important role in supporting the Allied Efforts in Europe.

Prior to the Second World War, the Dominion Plywoods Factory in Southampton produced sheet plywood and wooden components for the manufacturing of home and industrial products.

With the start of hostilities in Europe, Canada became the training ground for commonwealth pilots, many of whom trained along the Lake Huron shoreline. As the production of military equipment consumed most of the available metal, the Anson bomber and Tiger Moth fighter trainer planes were developed using plywood components. They were assembled at the de Havilland factory in Downsview, Ontario. The Dominion Plywoods Factory supplied the windows, doors and wing components.

De Havilland engineers in England then developed a true plywood fighter aircraft, the Mosquito. Due to its much lighter weight, the plane was capable of speeds up to 400 mph, while other fighters of the time could barely reach 300 mph. The Mosquito planes were also assembled in Downsview and Dominion Plywoods once again supplied the doors, window frames, molded items and plywood components for this new and exciting aircraft.

The following is from a marketing brochure produced by the Dominion Plywoods Factory. *“Our entire facilities were immediately placed at the disposal of the Government. Our plant was rehabilitated - more technicians and skilled help was secured - peacetime business was relegated to second place and we produced most of the plywood required for all training planes made in Canada. Later, the more important job of supplying the flat sheets and the moulded parts for the famous Mosquito plane was entrusted to us, and here again we have been recognized as the main source of plywood supply for the World Famous Aircraft”.*

The workers in the Southampton factory included many wives of soldiers enlisted in the Canadian Military from the surrounding area, as well as many men not eligible for military duty. Being part of such an important project made the workers very proud of their contributions to the war effort.

The planes produced in Canada participated in theatres of war in Europe, Africa and in the Far East against Japan. Around the free world they were heralded as one of the most outstanding aircraft of WWII.

One main feature of the Mosquito aircraft was that it carried no defense armament, relying instead on its speed to outrun other aircraft and surprise defenses before they realized that they were being attacked. When flying in support of other squadrons, the Mosquito's role was to run interference and distract German gun installations before the giant and slower Lancasters brought in the heavy bombs.

During the war, the plane had many exceptional accomplishments. In May 1944 two of the planes shattered the transatlantic speed record by flying from Goose Bay Labrador, NL to England in 6 hours and 46 minutes, besting the previous record by two hours and 10 minutes. Pinpoint bombings in The Hague Netherlands and in Copenhagen Denmark, targeted and destroyed the Gestapo Headquarters in these two cities. At Amiens France, the Mosquitos performed a daring raid to bomb the prison walls, freeing 100 French prisoners scheduled for execution. Close to 400 prisoners ran from the prison and more than 250 reached freedom.

The first test flight of a Canadian built Mosquito bomber was over Toronto on September 9, 1942. The last of the 1,134 aircrafts produced in Canada was completed in September 1945.

Today, many children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of the Dominion Plywoods workers still live in the Saugeen Shores area. They can be very proud of the enormous contributions that their ancestors made in producing this wonderful aircraft that played a major part in the success of the Allied Forces in ending the war in 1945.

For more information on this or other historical documentation contact: [brucemuseum.ca](http://brucemuseum.ca)



# Dominion Plywoods Factory and the Mosquito Bomber



Early settlers along the Saugeen River first met for worship at "Cedar Hall", a barn on the Gowanlock homestead. The original log church was built on the Scott farm, Lot 26, Concession 7, Saugeen Township in 1859 by the people of the neighbourhood. It was constructed from cut cedar taken from the banks of the river. According to records, Mr. Archie Pollock was in charge of "building the corner". The original seats were made of split basswood logs with four split and whittled legs. Rev. Peter Scott crafted the present pulpit and pews by hand. Worship services were held continuously from the Church opening until 1968.

Access to the Church was by walking through the fields and crossing the river using canoes in summer and good sleighing in winter. Later a road was built past the Church.

The log structure still remains, but has been covered with board and batten on the outside and plaster on the inside. More recently the outside walls were painted white.

An open shed was erected in 1891 for the accommodation of horses. It was later enclosed on all sides and it no longer exists.

Among the families who joined for worship as early as 1855 were the following: Kennedy, Laurance, Rowand, Stirton, Bell, Gowanlock, Wallace, Bryce, Adams, Schoffield, Pollock, McKechnie, Christie, Richardson, Mrs. Roy Burns, Smith, Murkar, Shill, Fraser, Telfer, Sibbals and Scott.

Dunblane congregation was associated with several adjacent Presbyterian Churches throughout the years. At a congregational meeting at "Cedar Hall" in February 1859, it was decided to negotiate a union with Paisley. This lasted a short time. In 1860, a union with Southampton was formed which lasted until 1873.



# Dunblane Presbyterian Church 1859

**SUNDAY SCHOOL 1:30**  
**CHURCH SERVICE 2:00**  
**ALL WELCOME**

## Ministers

Rev. D. Waters	1861-1863
Rev. D.C. McKay	1873
Rev. James Gourlay	1875-1892
Rev. John Bell	1894-1899
Rev. S.D. Jamieson	1899-1902
Rev. J. Rex Brown	1903-1910
Rev. W.J. Watt	1911-1917
Rev. C.C. Strachan	1917-1925
Rev. Alex Shepherd	1925-1931
Rev. W.A. McWilliam	1931-1936
Rev. K.G. McMillan	1942-1944
Rev. Wm. Quigley	1944-1953
Rev. C.E. Fisher	1954-1962
Rev. Doug Lennox	1964-1967

For several years, when there was no Minister, services were conducted by Mr. John Eckford and elders from the congregation. The next union was with Port Elgin, beginning in 1874. Arrangements were made at a meeting at which Mr. James Muir of Port Elgin acted as secretary and James Rowand and Robert B. Fleming arranged the basis of union. This arrangement lasted until 1892 at which time the congregation formed a union with Burgoyne lasting until the Dunblane congregation was dissolved.

The first mention of a prayer meeting and Sunday school occurs in the records of 1862. The Book of Praise and organ were first used in January 1910. The first organists were Mrs. Donald Lamont, (formerly Florence Webster) and Mrs. James A. Smith (formerly Ethel Christie).

Mrs. Wm. McNeill (formerly Jennie Hardy), was believed to be the first child baptized in the church. The first wedding recorded as being held in the church was that of Margaret Alice Bryce, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. David W. Bryce, to Mr. T. Edward Dahms on August 21, 1948.

This Plaque is dedicated to the past and present members of the Church from the Saugeen Shores Municipal Heritage Committee, 2009.



*Inside Dunblane Presbyterian Church*

# Dunblane Presbyterian Church





1931 Ladies Southampton Ball Team



1933 Southampton Fishermen



1939 Southampton Esquires

Bruce County Museum



1945 Southampton W.O.A.A. Champs



1946 Southampton Champions



1949 Port Elgin W.O.A.A. Champs

Port Elgin Winners of W.O.A.A. Softball Title

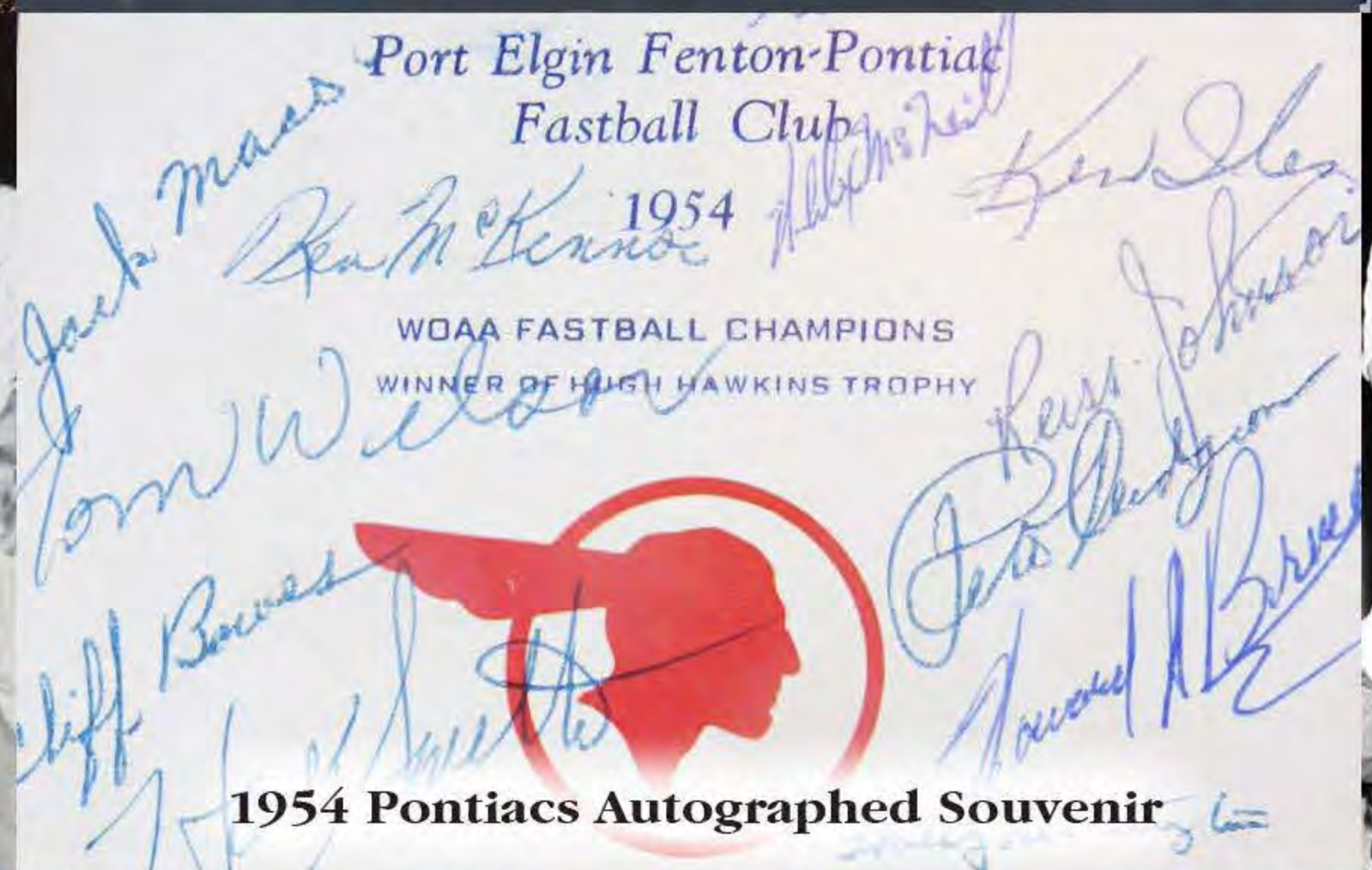


1933 Autographed Baseball  
Southampton Fishermen

Jubille Park 1930s



1953 Port Elgin Pontiacs



1954 Pontiacs Autographed Souvenir



1954 W.O.A.A. Port Elgin Pontiacs



1954 Port Elgin Pontiacs Whoop It Up



1956 Southampton Champs



1959 Lakeside Chevies



1959 Port Elgin McRorie Tournament Champs



1959 Southampton W.O.A.A. Champs



1973 Port Elgin Pontiacs Champs

**P**laying Ball in the Communities of Saugeen Shores has a long history dating back to the 1920s. As early as the 30s local teams were competing regionally and even winning Ontario Provincial Championships.

Port Elgin Teams with names like the Lakesides, the Pontiacs, the Dunlops, the Lakeside Chevies, the Maple Squares and Ralphs all distinguished themselves as champions throughout the region and the province.

In 1932, the Southampton Fishermen won a provincial championship in the Ontario Baseball Amateur Association with a win over the North Bay Pirates. All the players of that team autographed a baseball from the final game which they won 6 to 0. That baseball is on display in our local museum.

In the 1930s there was a Southampton Ladies Team playing in a Regional League. Throughout the following decades, teams with the Fishermen name, as well as the Esquires provided great entertainment and competition throughout the Region and all over Ontario.

Starting in the 1990s, industrial leagues and community house leagues became popular involving folks from our local and surrounding communities and there was less inter-town competition and far fewer travelling teams. Meanwhile there would be four or five local teams competing in town, one or two nights a week. This started to involve more leagues for men and for women. And the sport continued to grow.

The next big transition was to slo-pitch softball which added much more action and involvement. More and more people were attracted to the game and the need for additional facilities to meet this demand occurred. Our parks are now bubbling with nightly action for people of all ages, enjoying this great sport, no matter at what level they compete.

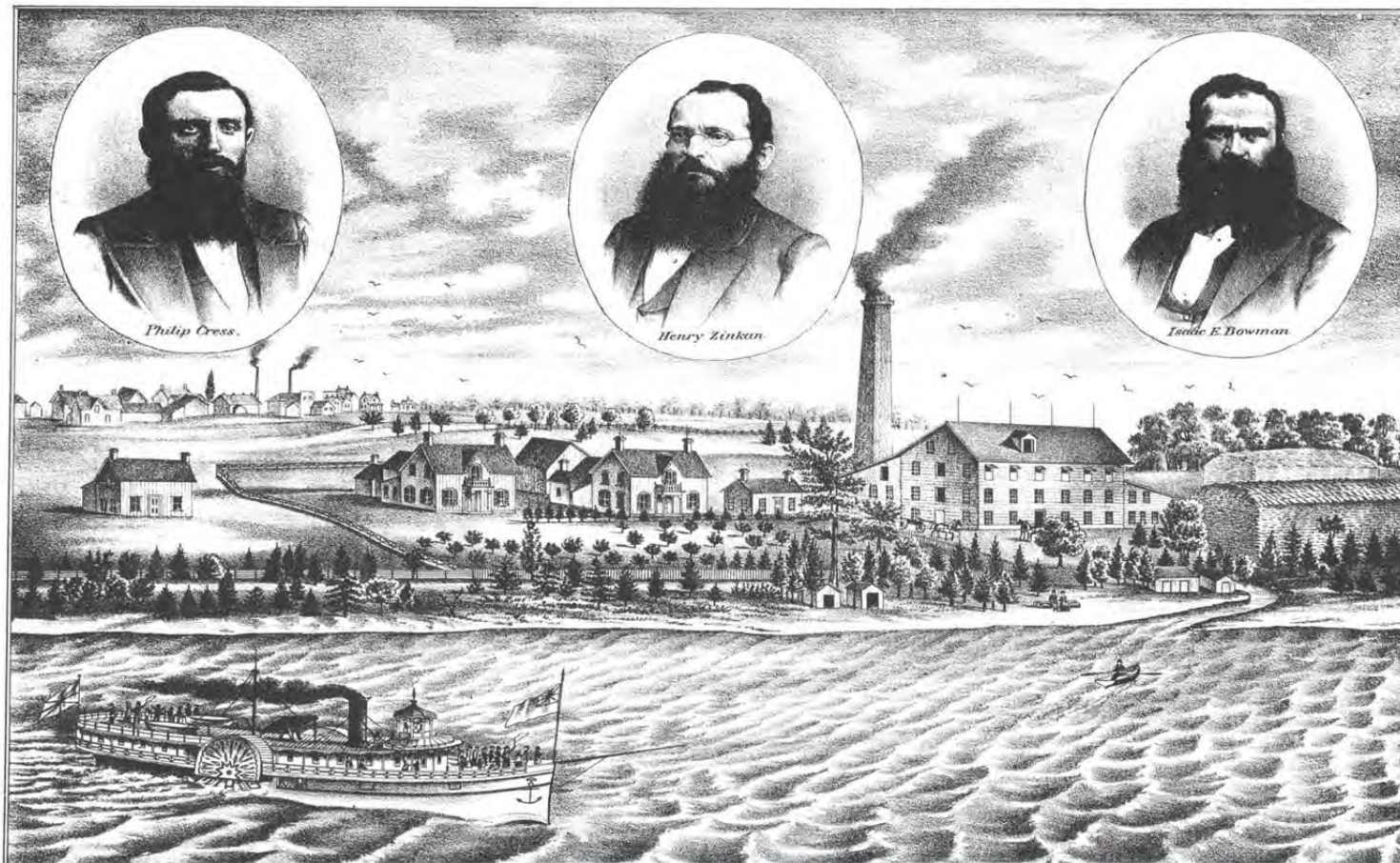
“PLAY BALL”, will continue to be heard throughout Saugeen Shores for decades to come.

For more information on this or other historical documentation contact: [brucemuseum.ca](http://brucemuseum.ca)



# Early Days of Playing Ball in Our Community





Tannery & Residences of Zinkan, Cress & Co., Port Elgin, BCM&CC, Illustrated Historical Atlas of Grey & Bruce, 1880



BCM&CC, Phillips & Winch Publisher, 1908



BCM&CC, The Heliotype Co. Publisher, 1915-1925



BCM&CC, J. E. Evans Publisher

The Port Elgin bay maintained its undisturbed natural appearance until the autumn of 1849 when the first non-native settler arrived. Lauchlan 'Loch Buie' McLean erected a log shanty on land lying just north of Market Street.



Port Elgin Harbour, Grain Elevator on left, BCM&CC

In early January of 1851, two brothers David and William Kennedy drove a horse and sleigh from Guelph to Owen Sound and then to the mouth of the Saugeen River, looking for suitable land to homestead. Near the end of March, they returned along the Saugeen River, using a scow (raft) to carry their belongings, settling just east of Port Elgin.

Many settlers followed, and the Town quickly became the chief shipping centre for the rapidly developing agricultural and business community. Prior to 1857, a scow was rowed out to meet passing ships so passengers and goods could be transferred from ship to shore.

In 1857, improvements were financed through private enterprise, to construct a pier. At about the same time the Government of Canada built a small breakwater creating a harbour. By 1890, over \$80,000 had been spent on extensive improvements to enhance shipping.

New businesses were established along the shore. Fishing provided food for local consumption and was an important trading commodity. Port Elgin was also well known for its grain market. Grain elevators housed grain for shipping, and flour mills were constructed to grind the grain for local use. Paradise Grove Hotel was built on Mill Street to accommodate passengers from the ships and farmers bringing grain to the flour mills.

A brewery and a cooper shop were in operation below the hill on Green Street. Sawmills and ice delivery businesses were also established. There were two tanneries; the Bowman Brothers and Brighttop Tannery; and the Zinkan Cress & Co. The latter was the second largest of its kind in Ontario and a leading industry in Port Elgin, employing a large number of workmen. Hides were shipped in from South America for the manufacture of 'Spanish sole' leather but a shortage of hides forced the closure of the tannery.

Improvements continued at the harbour with dredging and the addition of range lights. Two range lights were placed at the south end of Harbour Street and Izzard Street; one on the main dock near the present light and the other at the north end of the harbour. The break wall was extended 540 feet to accommodate expanding businesses. The Port Elgin Harbour was second to none for safety and refuge.

In 1905 citizens voted to finance a spur line connecting Port Elgin's grand harbour to the Grand Trunk Railway station. For \$7,000.00, William McVicar & Sons agreed to purchase a locomotive, build an engine house, build a sawmill at the harbour, purchase a right-of way, grade the rail bed and supply the railway ties for the extended spur line.

In 1906 the McVicar & Sons saw mill employed 50 men to work in the lumber woods to the north and was turning out 20,000 feet of lumber per day. In 1907 hydro was brought in from the Denny's Dam plant located on the Saugeen River in Southampton, which allowed the saw mill to run double time - night and day.

Lake transport gradually came to an end when farmers and industry found rail and roads a much improved means of shipping their produce to market. As residents and tourists started using the harbour and its sandy beaches for pleasure boating, swimming and other recreational pursuits, a new type of industry, Tourism, was born.

Created in partnership with the Municipal Heritage Committee.  
For more information on this or other historical documentation contact: [brucemuseum.ca](http://brucemuseum.ca)



ARCHIVES • HISTORY • EVENTS

# Early Industries at Port Elgin Harbour





Cutting ice on Fairy Lake, February 1935  
Photo: Doug Hills

Winter played a significant part throughout Fairy Lake's history. It was a source of recreation, with adults and children skating and playing hockey. More importantly, from the early days of Southampton until well into the 20th century, ice blocks or "cakes" were harvested from Fairy Lake and, of course Lake Huron, for use in refrigerating commercial catches of fish.

During the harvest, the large hand-cut 90 kg ice cakes were hauled to ice storage barns or "ice houses" and placed inside in layers, separated by sawdust insulation. Most of the ice houses were built at the harbour; however two were built just north of Fairy Lake on Clarendon Street. The ice was hand-chipped by commercial fishermen to store their catch at the harbour and to put in shipping crates. It was also used by townspeople for refrigeration.



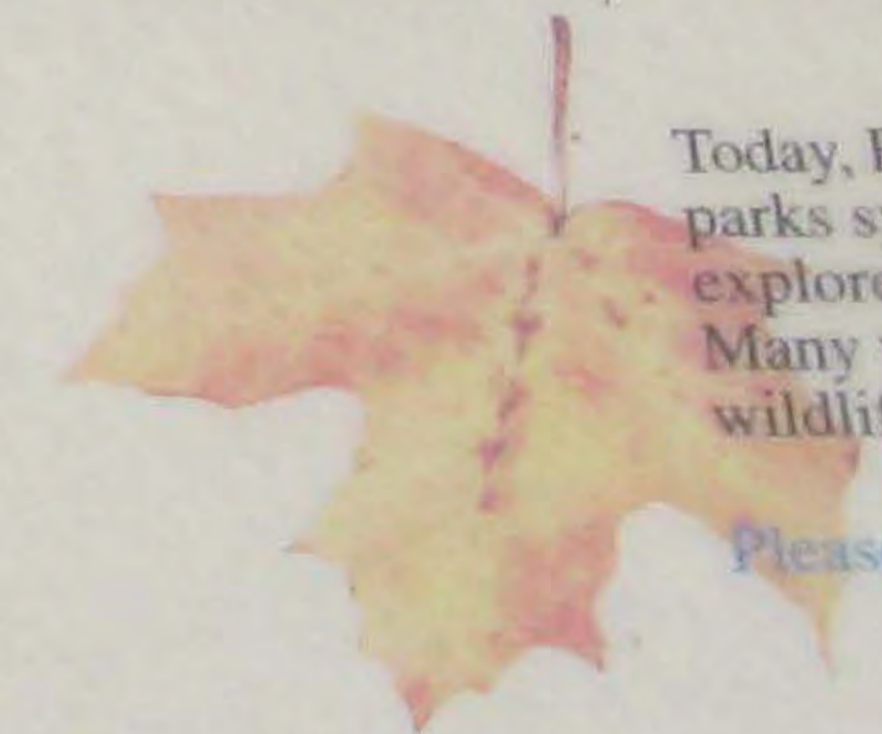
Painting of Bowman-Zinkan Tannery 1890  
Courtesy: Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre

In the late 19th century, by a special Act of Parliament, a 6.5 acre parcel of the Public Reserve was granted to Isaac Bowman and Henry Zinkan for use as a tannery site. The tannery was built in 1880 in the area bounded by Grey, Clarendon, Breadalbane and Lansdowne Streets. The owners were given the right to take and convey water from Fairy Lake.



Bowman-Zinkan Tannery  
Photo courtesy: Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre

Operated by Isaac Bowman's son Charles, the tannery employed 20 to 25 people by 1888. Eventually the business employed over 100 persons, making it Southampton's major employer. Unfortunately, on July 31, 1900, the complex was almost entirely destroyed by an intense fire and was never re-built. During the mid-late 20th century, most of the area was subdivided for house construction. Tanning bark and pieces of burnt leather are still found in that area, and the site continues to be known as "Tannery Hill".



Today, Fairy Lake is a unique part of the community parks system; a quiet, scenic nature area easily explored by a path around the Lake's perimeter. Many varieties of trees and shrubs skirt the trail and wildlife abounds.

Please visit: [www.saugeenshores.ca](http://www.saugeenshores.ca)

*On the 1857 map of Southampton, this lake was identified as "Small Lake". Townspeople frequently referred to it as Little Lake, and from the early part of the 20th century to the present, it also became known as Fairy Lake. Today both names are used interchangeably but their origins remain unclear.*

*The 1857 map shows the Lake within a "Public Reserve" bounded by High, Victoria, Clarendon and Grey streets. The original Public and High schools were built in the Reserve, as was G.C. Huston Public School and the Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre.*



High Street in the early 1900s looking southeast from Fairy Lake  
Photo courtesy: Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre

About 5000 years ago, this location lay beneath up to 5 meters of water. The waters of post-glacial Lake Nipissing lapped against a shoreline formed at the eastern slopes of today's Fairy Lake. Fairy Lake's basin may have been part of a former channel of the Saugeen River where it drained into the post-glacial lake. Geological data indicate the Lake is not a kettle formation, a type of depression formed by the melting of glacial ice blocks.

Generations of children have been told by parents to not play near Fairy Lake

because, the stories went, it was "bottomless", filled with very soft soils that could surprise the unwary. Depth surveys made in 2005 suggest this was sound advice. While the water averages only about 1.7 m deep, the average thickness of the first layer of very soft peat and muck is about 3.5 m. Below this is a more solid layer of sand and gravel.



- 1 Fairy Lake
- 2 Old Lake Nipissing Shoreline
- 3 Fairy Lake Nature Trail
- 4 Outlet from Fairy Lake
- 5 YOU ARE HERE
- 1 Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre
- 2 Saugeen Memorial Hospital
- 3 G.C. Huston Public School
- 4 Zinkan-Bowman Tannery Property
- 5 Ice Houses (now demolished)

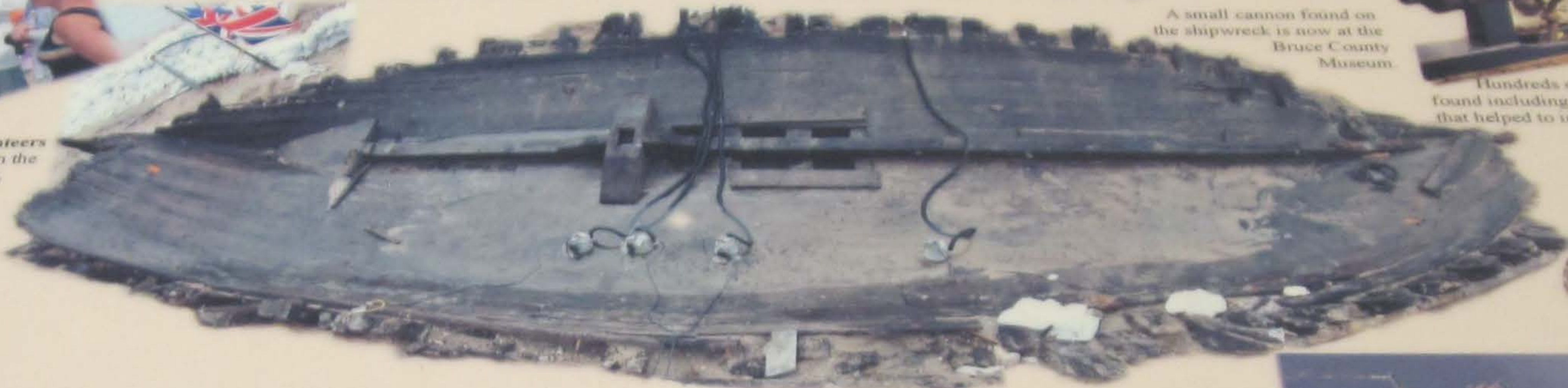
# Fairy Lake Nature Area



The wreck of the British Royal Navy brig *H.M.S. General Hunter* lies buried under the beach sand directly in front of this sign.



Over 200 volunteers were involved in the 2004 excavation.



A small cannon found on the shipwreck is now at the Bruce County Museum.



Hundreds of artifacts were found including military buttons that helped to identify the wreck.



The "*General Hunter*" was built in 1806 in Amherstburg, Ontario and fought in numerous battles in the War of 1812. She was lost to the U.S. in the famous "Battle of Lake Erie" in September of 1813. During a violent storm, sailing as a U.S. transport renamed the "*Hunter*", the ship was driven onto this beach at midnight on August 19th, 1816. All aboard survived. The crew and two young passengers sailed and rowed the ship's boat to Detroit.

The wreck, measuring 16.45 metres long by 5.22 metres wide, was fully uncovered during an archaeological excavation in 2004 and all artifacts were removed. The wreck was again buried to preserve it in the wet sand environment. Many of the artifacts recovered are now on display at the Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre in Southampton. The remainder are being conserved at The Canadian Conservation Institute in Ottawa.

Recent low lake levels and a changed beach profile have exposed some of the ship timbers to the destructive waves of Lake Huron. The temporary breakwater in front of the site was installed to help protect the remains of the brig "*H.M.S. General Hunter*" a remarkable, **historically unique and archaeologically invaluable shipwreck.**



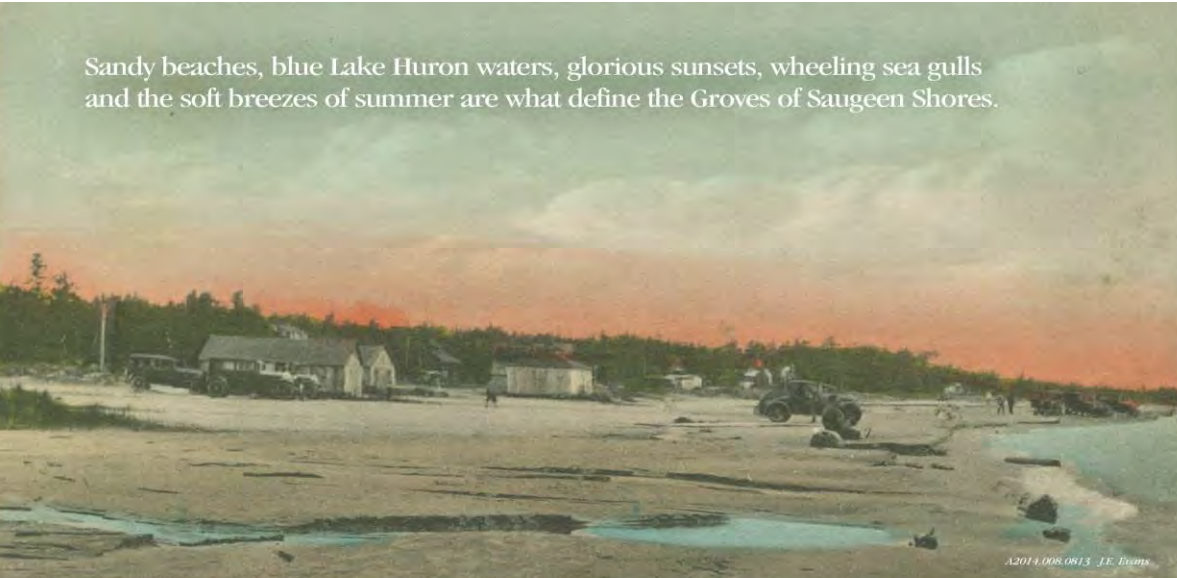
**H.M.S. Hunter in 1812**  
Sailing as a British Navy brig on the Great Lakes  
*Section of a painting by Peter Rindlisbacher*

*Photographs by Larry L'Page*

# H.M.S. General Hunter



Sandy beaches, blue Lake Huron waters, glorious sunsets, wheeling sea gulls and the soft breezes of summer are what define the Groves of Saugeen Shores.



A2014.008.0013 J.E. Evans



A991.028.012



Nelson Grove 1

Around 1850, John and Iden Goble arrived in Saugeen Township from England. An 1851 survey of Saugeen Township shows they chose Lake Range Lots 31 and 32 on the north side of Concession 6 for their homesteads, and the area became known as Gobles' Grove.

Iden Goble, a fisherman, built his fish house close to the shore of Lake Huron. His brother John was a carpenter, who built a home for his wife and two children, which was known as 'Gobleholm', and later became part of the Unifor complex. John's carpentry skills and tools were in great demand as the newly arrived settlers cleared 4 of their 100 acres to plant crops. The 1852 Agricultural Census reports that they harvested:

- 1 Acre Corn - 10 Bushels
- 2 Acres Potatoes - 160 Bushels
- 1 Acre Turnips - 100 Bushels
- 150 lbs. Maple Sugar

The south side of Concession 6, Lot 30, the Crown deeded to John David, who later sold the land to John Ross. Recognizing the potential of attracting visitors to the beautiful area, Mr. Ross developed picnic grounds along the shore in the late 1800s. Originally, this area was known as 'Ross Grove'. Mr. Ross put up swings and the area became popular for Sunday school picnics. He died suddenly around 1916, and Horatio Nelson bought the property. It then became known as 'Nelsons' Grove'.

After WWI, visitors were increasing and locals were regularly helping with their horses to pull out cars that had got stuck in the sand. A concrete slab was installed to allow them to turn around without getting stuck. Seeing an opportunity, Mr. Nelson sold numerous lots off the south and west ends of Lot 30, and many summer homes were built fronting on Lake Huron, some remaining in the same families today.

In the 1930s, the Eidt family, who resided on Lot 27 south of Gobles' and Nelsons' Grove, noticed the area for family and group picnics was disappearing with the growth of cottage construction. The family built picnic tables close to the shore and the tradition of family, church and school picnics resumed. The picnic area was later expanded to allow the Boy Scouts and Wolf Scouts to camp. Girl Guides from Ontario and Michigan also camped there. The Eidt family often joined the campers for song and prayer around the campfire. Over the years, the family saw continued growth in cottages and homes at their Grove. In 1969, memorial pillars were erected in memory of the Eidt Family.

In the early 1920s, a small group of cottagers banded together to form a Cottage Association to organize social activities in the Groves, the forerunner to the present Port Elgin & Saugeen Beachers' Association. Herbert Stevens, president of Stevens-Hepner Brush Factory in Port Elgin, was the association's first President. Other members included a lawyer, a judge, a doctor and a minister, all from different parts of Ontario. The Association's summer beach party was the season highlight.

Another main purpose of the Beachers' Association was overseeing the protection of cottages from winter hazards and snow accumulation on cottage roofs. A local resident was hired to patrol the area and safeguard the cottages from these winter hazards, a service that is still provided 100 years later. As the years progressed, more needs were identified and as the membership grew, different projects were initiated. The Beachers' Association became affiliated with the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association. They also work in partnership with the Town of Saugeen Shores and Public Service Providers. Support and involvement in Shoreline Conservation Groups and Provincial Lobby Groups are also a priority.

Today, the many members of the Beachers' Association are proud to name Gobles' or Eids' Grove in Saugeen Shores as their summer or permanent home.

For more information on this or other historical documentation contact: [brucemuseum.ca](http://brucemuseum.ca)



# History of the Groves in Saugeen Township





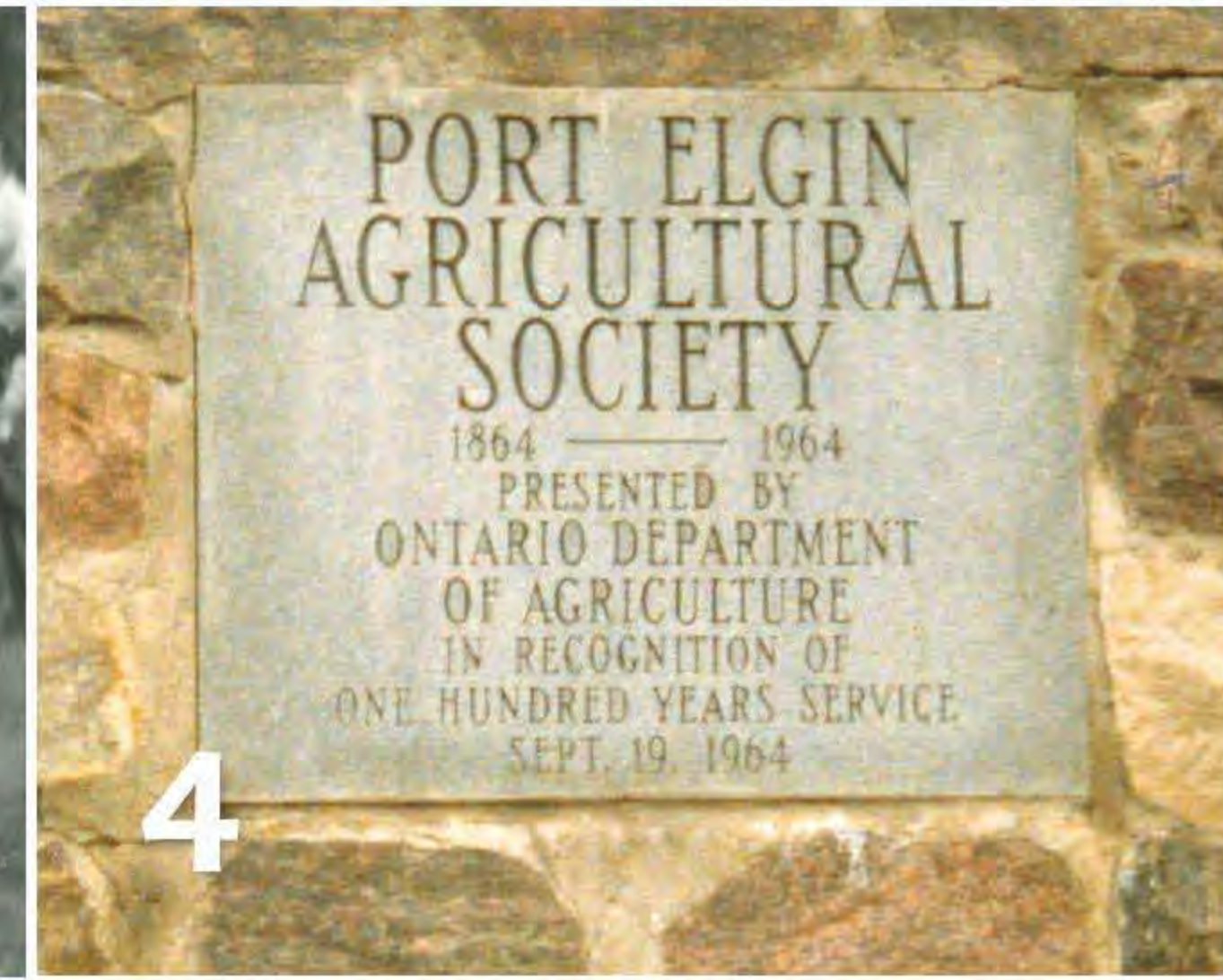
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Images courtesy of Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre

- 1/ Saugeen History Hunters. "Roots and Branches of Saugeen, 1854-1984: a history of Saugeen Township." [Port Elgin, Ont.]: Saugeen History Hunters, 1984. p 163, 1967
- 2/ A2014.003.K-64-05-32, Bruce A. Krug, 1964
- 3/ A2014.049.430, South Saugeen Women's Institute
- 4/ A2014.049.367, Port Elgin Women's Institute
- 5/ A2014.049.367, Port Elgin Women's Institute, 1947
- 6/ A2013.012.04354, J. Lindsay Thornburn, 1958
- 7/ A2013.012.04353, J. Lindsay Thornburn
- 8/ A2013.012.04348, J. Lindsay Thornburn, 1958

The first Port Elgin Fall Fair, sponsored by the newly created North Bruce and Saugeen Agricultural Society, was held Oct. 15, 1857, and until it was discontinued in 1967, the gathering was a regular feature of what is now Saugeen Shores, bringing visitors from all over Bruce County.

Early fairs were held on the land east of the old high school on Mill Street; the land was donated by Henry Hilker, one of the early founders of Port Elgin. In 1869 a sectional tax of \$350 was levied by the Township of Saugeen to defray the expenses of fencing the grounds and to erect suitable buildings within Port Elgin for agricultural and other exhibits. By 1895, the Fair moved to Lakeview Park and an agricultural pavilion, familiarly known as "The Palace", was built there. This Park, with its buildings, racetrack and exhibition grounds, became the new centre of fair-related activity.

Schools from throughout the Saugeen community participated in Fair parades. The Agricultural Society sponsored competitions for farm produce, livestock, tractor and 4-H clubs, baking and preserves, school exhibits, and handicrafts. Horses and carriages of all descriptions were a popular feature of the Fair, and horse races at the Fairground attracted huge crowds.

In 1964, under Roy Howe, President of the newly named Port Elgin Agricultural Society, the Centennial Gates at the entrance to the Fairgrounds were erected. Interest in the Fair in the next few years decreased, and in 1967 members decided to discontinue the project. Society members cited a lack of volunteers as well as increasing costs as reasons for the decision. In 1977, the Palace at Lakeview Park was demolished.

The Fair was resurrected in 1981 with a parade on Goderich Street, many spectators, 823 exhibits and twice as many horses as expected. In July, 1982, the Fair was even bigger, but suffered a financial loss, and sadly, the Fair ended. The legacy of the Port Elgin Fair was continued with the creation of Pumpkinfest in 1988, an annual event which now attracts thousands to Town every October.

For more information on this or other historical documentation contact: [brucemuseum.ca](http://brucemuseum.ca)



# History of the Port Elgin Fair



Taking advantage of the railway, many industries were established thus enabling Port Elgin to grow and thrive. The sites are now home to many businesses and residences.

BCM-CC: A989.003.001, John Thompson, Port Elgin Railway Station



BCM-CC: A2013.012.4315, Lindsay Thornburn, Former United Co-operatives of Ontario, feed mill 1958

In the newly incorporated Village of Port Elgin, the 1874 tax roll identified industries at the harbour, Samuel Bricker's sawmill and the Shantz gristmill near Mill Creek, but few properties in this area boasted buildings. Duncan Campbell's 7 village lots between Elgin and River streets were valued at \$40.00. By contrast, the Wellington, Grey & Bruce Railway Company's "station buildings and grounds" carried a value of \$800.00. Rail service provided the 940 residents with many changes.

In the early 20th century, John & James George had a storage building near the rail line. A grain elevator built by Maurice Chappell, Fred Elliott and Iden Leeder was the forerunner of the feed mill of the Port Elgin Co-operative, one of the earliest farm co-operatives in Ontario. It stood south of the railway station, and later became part of the United Co-operatives of Ontario.

East of the rail line, Helmuth Schlenker operated a small metal-work shop, mainly making pots and pans. Helmuth and his son Douglas also built the original locomotive of the Port Elgin & North Shore Railroad, running as an attraction at the harbour from 1973 until 1978. Its successor, also built by Schlenker, continues to steam at the waterfront.

North of the railway station, stockyards managed by John Coulter accommodated cattle and hogs for shipment to distant markets. Farmers from Saugeen Township and beyond drove cattle up the streets of Port Elgin or brought pigs in wagons or sleighs to the yards.

Several fuel suppliers operated near the tracks, including the Catrill and McLaren coal yards and depots of British American Oil and Imperial Oil who received bulk shipments by rail of fuel oil and gasoline for delivery to local customers.

The major industry was the brush and broom factory that opened west of the station in 1883. John Hepner, with the backing of local citizens, operated the Port Elgin Brush Factory until a severe fire in 1885. The replacement building, funded by businesses and residents, was considered a model plant. After financial setbacks, the business revived in 1896 as Stevens-Hepner Co. Ltd with Herbert H. Stevens, John Hepner, and E. H. Schiedel as partners. Thus began one of Port Elgin's longest-running and largest industries employing over 200 staff. Its premises included the 3-storey brick main building, a steam plant for heat & machinery power, a 100-ft stack, a steel water tank on an 82-ft trestle, and small storage buildings. At times, the streets served as storage for logs brought into town from the area, often on horse-drawn farm sleighs.

Although both Stevens and Hepner held patents for specialized brush-making processes, it was curling brooms that the factory was known for. Under the management of William Campbell, they bought out Curl-Master of Montreal in 1967 and supplied brooms to curlers around the world. The Bissell International Company of the USA bought out the business in 1983 and later closed the Port Elgin plant.



Reminiscences Port Elgin 1874-1974



BCM-CC: A2014.008.0695, J.E. Evans, Port Rowen - Stevens Hepner Co., Ltd., 1920-1945



The Curler Magazine, August 1964

For more information on this or other historical documentation contact: [brucemuseum.ca](http://brucemuseum.ca)



# Industries Near the Port Elgin Railway Station





**T**he story of Jack Stafford is one of a man from humble beginnings to fame. Born July 5, 1894, in a log cabin on Bruce-Saugeen Townline near North Bruce, he was one of seven children. His mother died in childbirth when he was 11. Jack juggled school with helping at home and working on neighbouring farms until he left to work at the Stephens-Hepner, a brush and broom factory in Port Elgin.

Jack saved enough money to attend business school in Owen Sound and took advanced English classes. He moved to Winnipeg, where he worked in a bank and then a slaughterhouse. He met and married his wife Agnes and in 1922, their son John was born. After earning enough to purchase a Model T Ford, he started his career as a salesman for Proctor & Gamble; first in Alberta, and later in British Columbia. During that time, he developed strong relationships with ethnic minorities and Indigenous Canadians. These relationships were important to him during his life.

When his job with Proctor & Gamble ended, Stafford moved to Vancouver where he and his wife started their jam business in their apartment, mixing the jams in their bathtub and cooking on their kitchen stove. The jam business grew and he opened a factory, but lost everything in the early 1930's during the Great Depression.

Stafford moved to Toronto and using what he had learned about food production and distribution, he became a successful food broker. He purchased an old factory and warehouse in Toronto, and it was there that Stafford Foods produced jams and jellies for close to 50 years that were sold in grocery stores across Canada. Syrups for sundaes became another successful product line. He sold the business in 1972.

Jack became President of the Toronto Marlboros hockey team and served as the Executive Director of the Ontario Minor Hockey Association from 1938 until 1943.

After his wife Agnes died, Jack married Florence McInroy, one of his employees. Jack and Florence had two sons named Gordon and Howard. The family spent a lot of their time at their Saugeen Township farm.

Jack never lost his love for his hometown of Port Elgin. During the 1950s, he bought two farms; one on the southwest corner of Concession Road 4 and Highway 21, and the other on Concession Road 6 opposite what is now the Lamont Sports Park. Both farms quickly became thoroughbred racehorse facilities.

The main thoroughbred farm on Concession Road 6 housed broodmares with their foals. After foals were born, the mares were shipped to Kentucky for breeding and then returned to await new births. The second Port Elgin farm housed mares without foals and some racing stock. There were up to 70 horses on the two farms. Yearlings went to another farm in King City near Toronto to start their racing training.

When Stafford retired his horseracing business in 1981, his stables with their red with white stars silks had won 131 Stakes Races, ranking him fourth in history, only behind E. P. Taylors Windfields Farms, Conn Smythe Stables, and the Legendary Seagrams Stable.

In 1982, Jack Stafford was inducted into the Canadian Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame.

His biggest thrill was in 1973 when Queen Elizabeth II presented him with the trophy for winning the Queen's Plate at Toronto's Woodbine track. A year later, the Queen Mother presented him with the winning trophy at Woodbine.

Stafford also dappled in the newspaper business, purchasing the Port Elgin Times, which he owned until his death on June 15, 1981 at age 86. He is remembered on his parents' stone in Sanctuary Park Cemetery in Port Elgin.

Jack was a people person, a Christian, and a Philanthropist. His successes and contributions to our community and country will long be remembered!



Stafford bought his first horse in 1950 for \$310 and by the 1970s, Stafford Farms had become one of the top breeders and owners of thoroughbreds in Canada. Here are some of their major accomplishments:

- 1973 - Queens Plate Winner - Royal Chocolate
- 1974 - Queens Plate Winner - Amber Herod
- 1975 - Leading Money Winning Owner in Canada
- 1977 - Queens Plate Winner - Sound Reason
- 1977 - Leading Money Winning Owner in Canada
- 1978 - Canada's Horse of the Year - Overskate
- 1978 - Leading Money Winning Owner in Canada
- 1979 - Canada's Horse of the Year - Overskate which during its career won 18 Stakes Races in Canada and the U.S.
- 1979 - Leading Money Winning Owner in Canada

- 1.** 1973 Royal Chocolate, 1st Queens Plate winner
- 2.** Jack with a mare and foal
- 3.** 79 year old Jack Stafford with Amber Herod 2nd Queens Plate 1974 winner
- 4.** Royal Chocolate 1974
- 5.** Main farm on Concession 6

For more information on this or other historical documentation contact: [brucemuseum.ca](http://brucemuseum.ca)



# John Howard 'Jack' Stafford



Lamont Sports Park today is 151 acres; in 1851 it was included as part of Lots 10 and 11.

In 1864, 50 acres of the west half of Lot 10 was granted by patent to Elizabeth Clements, wife of Henry Clements.

From 1872, this parcel of land frequently changed hands, and in 1884 it was sold to Thomas Stewart. In 1879, 50 acres of the eastern half of Lot 10 was granted by Crown patent to Dennis Cummings. Six years later he sold the land to his son Patrick Cummings who later became Reeve of the Township. Patrick Cummings' son Gordon was the only local resident of our community that died in the Boer War.

The ownership of Lot 11 was less complicated, as in 1865, the 100 acres was granted to Benjamin Shantz under a Crown patent.

On December 15, 1885, the High Court of Justice of the Chancery of Ontario awarded under a certificate of vesting order, the west half of Lot 10 to Patrick Cummings, following a legal battle involving claims from 14 defendants including William Ruby and members of the Clements and Cummings families.

More turbulence ensued as six neighbours vied for more land to get access to Mill Creek for water for their animals. Eventually, in 1868, Thomas Cummings acquired 51 acres of Lot 11 bordering on Concession Road 6, which he then passed on to his son, Dennis Cummings, who in 1885, gave it to his son Patrick Cummings, making him the sole owner of the 151 acres.

In 1890, Patrick Cummings became Reeve of Saugeen Township and Warden of Bruce County.



Lamont Pit, 17, 01, 2008



Lamont Farm House Family Portrait



Gordon Cummings 1875 - 1900



Lamont Farm House



Irene and Turner Lamont

Joe and Wilmer Lamont



Harold Sutherland Construction

In 1911, Patrick Cummings sold the 151 acres to Walter Walker, who seven years later sold the property to John and Mary Smith. In 1927, Mary Smith, then widowed sold the land to Oliver and Bertha Gingrich who kept the farm until March 1943.

It was then sold to William Turner Lamont and his wife Irene. It became the family home where they operated a mixed farm and raised their family.

In January of 1966, William and Irene sold the property to their sons, Wilmer and Joseph Lamont. Starting in 1969 and through 1972 there were a variety of transactions involving Canadian National Railway to build a short-term spur line along the west side of the property. E. C. King Construction entered into an agreement with the Lamont brothers to remove aggregate from the property to be delivered by CN Rail for construction of the nuclear facility that today is known as Bruce Power.

These agreements ended in 1972. The lands that the spur line was on were sold to the town for a token amount and became part of the rail trail network in our community. The Lamont family continued to operate the pit from 1972 until 1995.

In 1995, Wilmer and Joseph Lamont sold the property to Harold Sutherland who operated the pit until 2019. From 1981 to 2019 more than 1,795,852 tons of gravel and sand removed. This does not include the tons of aggregate removed by E. C. King Contracting in the two years they operated the site in 1971 and 1972, and by the Lamont family up to 1980 for which there are no records of the amount of aggregate removed.

In 2018, Harold Sutherland and the Town of Saugeen Shores negotiated a favorable agreement for the sale of the pit to the town and planning for this wonderful facility began.

Today there are six world-class ball diamonds, walking trails and playgrounds as well as space for future development. The Grand Opening was held on June 24, 2023

For more information on this or other historical documentation contact: [brucemuseum.ca](http://brucemuseum.ca)



# Lamont Sports Park History of the Property



# Lighthouses of the Bruce Coast

Bruce County's extensive coastal waters with their hidden rocks, shoals, deadly storms, shifting sand bars and cliff-bound shore, are among the most treacherous areas of the Great Lakes. Since the first light was lit in 1858, the many lighthouses along the Bruce Coast have offered protection to sailors and ships on the waters of Georgian Bay and Lake Huron. Today, these lighthouses form one of the largest concentrations of navigational aids on the Great Lakes.



Rescue of the Cavalier Crew  
1906 painting by Mrs. William Lambert Bruce County Museum & Archives



William McGregor Lambert Bruce County Museum & Archives

## Lightkeepers to the Rescue

Lighthouses are beacons of safety on stormy seas. They mark shoals and reefs and guide ships into a safe harbour. But with great regularity, schooners and steamers still came to a bad end – even with the friendly beam of a lighthouse in the distance. It was then that the heroic keeper took to his life-saving boat in a desperate effort to bring stranded sailors to shore.

Chantry Island's lightkeeper, William McGregor Lambert, was one of the most decorated of these stalwart men. Keeper of the light on Chantry Island from 1880 to 1907, Lambert personally rescued dozens of people from drowning.

On September 1, 1892, William Lambert battled a full gale for ten hours before he was finally able to rescue the crew of the sinking schooner, *Nettie Woodward*. Clinging to the rigging and masts of the imperiled vessel, the terrified sailors

watched as Lambert rowed through cascading waves to pluck them to safety. For his humane and gallant actions, the Government of Canada awarded him a gold watch.

On August 31, 1906, the schooner *Cavalier* ran onto the north reef of Chantry Island. Once more Lambert took to his boat. This time it was the Royal Canadian Humane Association that recognized his courage, awarding him a bronze medal.

Today, William McGregor Lambert's medals for heroism are on display at the Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre in Southampton.



[sunsets.com](http://sunsets.com)

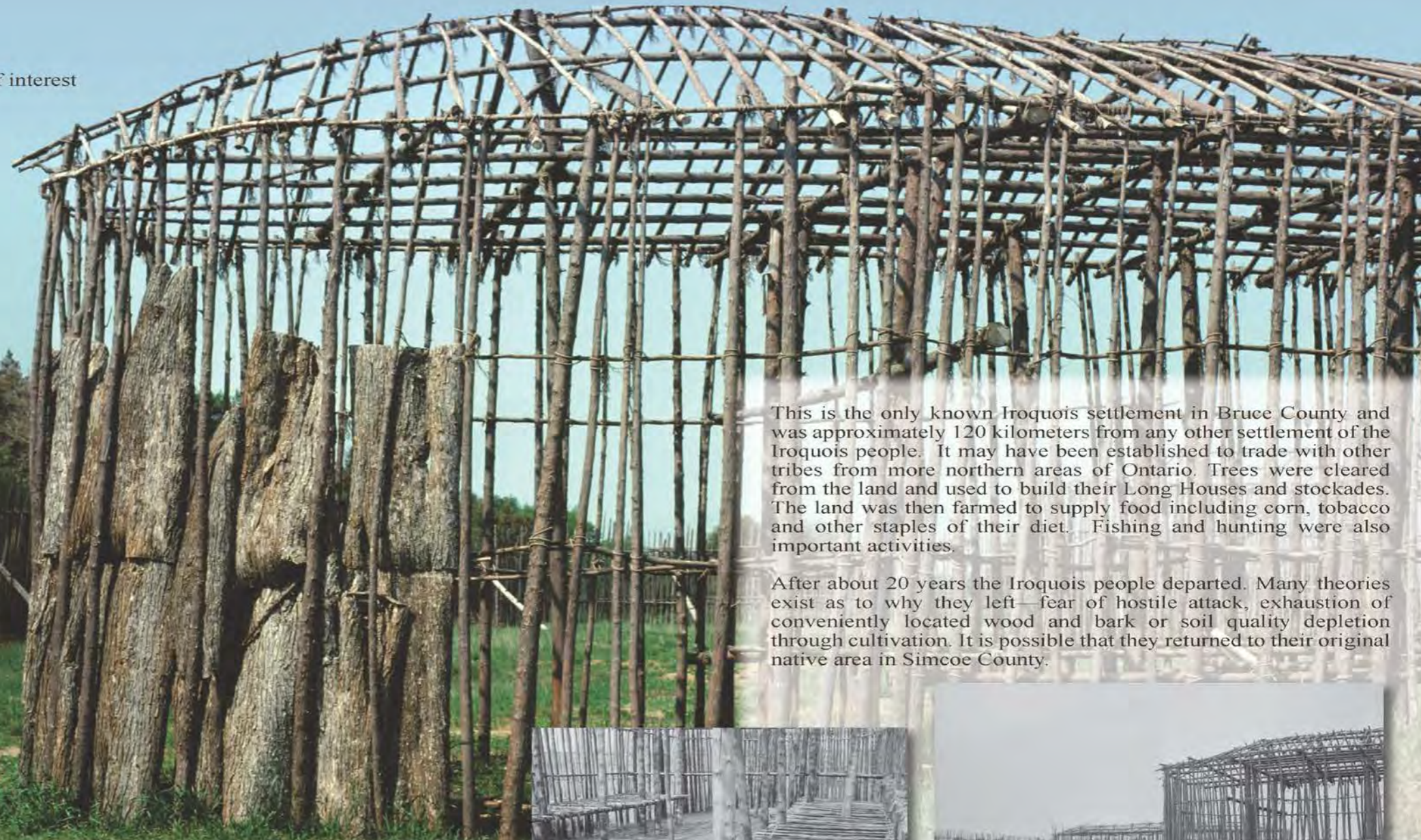


For more information on the lighthouses of the Bruce Coast, visit the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre in Southampton.

visit our website [www.brucecoastlighthouses.com](http://www.brucecoastlighthouses.com)

The archeological significance of this historic site has been of interest dating back to the early 1900s.

It was while owned by Richard Nodwell in the 1950's that the site first underwent archeological investigation which continued throughout the next two decades. It was determined that the site was the location of an Iroquois village whose inhabitants had arrived in the early 1300's from the east, possibly an area close to Lake Simcoe. The village consisted of twelve Long Houses surrounded by a double stockade. The Long Houses measured up to 43 meters in length and were constructed of a bark-covered pole frame. The village could accommodate approximately 500 people in its two to three acre site.



This is the only known Iroquois settlement in Bruce County and was approximately 120 kilometers from any other settlement of the Iroquois people. It may have been established to trade with other tribes from more northern areas of Ontario. Trees were cleared from the land and used to build their Long Houses and stockades. The land was then farmed to supply food including corn, tobacco and other staples of their diet. Fishing and hunting were also important activities.

After about 20 years the Iroquois people departed. Many theories exist as to why they left—fear of hostile attack, exhaustion of conveniently located wood and bark or soil quality depletion through cultivation. It is possible that they returned to their original native area in Simcoe County.



In the early 1970's Century Homes acquired the land. During preparation for development, artifacts were uncovered. Concerns were raised about developing the site and an exchange with the Town of Port Elgin was arranged to make the area a park.

A full archeological dig began and uncovered fragments of pottery for cooking, smoking pipes, arrowheads, adzes, awls and netting needles. Weapons and tools of the Iroquois people were mostly made of stone and bone. Under the direction of Dr. James Wright of the National Museum of Man, the site was restored in the mid 1970's with the stockade and some Long Houses being erected. A few years later however, all were disassembled due to economic and safety concerns. In 1980 the local Kinsmen Club turned the site into a Participation park. In 1993 it became a designated historical site and, in 1994, became the park and historical site that remains today.



Photo credits: Victor Last, Lindsay Thornburn  
Newspaper clipping courtesy: Kitchener Waterloo Record

# Nodwell Iroquois Village



## EARLY DAYS

In 1851, Alexander Vidal's survey created the farms in the Lake Range of Saugeen Township, leaving a 1 chain [66-foot/ 20-metre] allowance along the shore for public access. His sketch shows small clearings on the ridge inland, and his notes describe the tree cover both along the shore and above the slope. As today, the Huron Fringe was greened with cedar, while hardwoods such as maple, elm, and beech grow on the upland. Vidal's drawing shows a line which may be a trail; other early text refers walking between the settlements at Port Elgin and Southampton 'along the shore'. One can imagine early Native peoples using such a path when winter prevented water travel.

Some of the patents [Crown Deeds] for these farms, Lots 43 to 50, were held by founders of Port Elgin and some by other early settlers. The Saugeen/Goderich Road, laid out by David Gibson, and opened in the 1860s, followed the inland boundary of these lots.

Alexander Vidal's Survey courtesy: Bruce County Archives



In this view north from the bottom of Lime Kiln Hill, storm-driven waves continue to batter the shoreline. (photo: Vickie & Bob Hendry)



In the low-water years, some cottagers had channels dug to bring their boats closer to shore (photo courtesy of Gary Moon)

## COTTAGERS & RESIDENTS

The first lakeside residents were cottagers, reaching their holiday homes by a seasonal lane that began at the harbour and extended north on relatively level land. In the 1930s, properties at the other end had access only from Concession 10. By 1950, the two parts connected with a narrow, rough road. In summer, Bolander's Bakery in Port Elgin used "the front road" to deliver fresh bread to cottagers. Blocks of ice arrived by the same route for those with ice-boxes; some kept food cool in wire baskets placed in the nearby creek. As cottages were converted to year-round use, and full-time residents built homes, the Township added services such as snowplowing and garbage collection. The record-setting snowfall of 1977-78 forced temporary closure of the road. By that time, snowmobiles were common, allowing residents access to their homes.

## STORM & WATER DAMAGE

Great Lakes water levels peaked in 1986 after several cycles of low and high water. The Township's erosion control project was set to begin October 1, 1986. An intense storm hit the coast on Sunday night, October 5, 1986, washing out the road in two places. Fallen trees blocked the higher portion. Planned erosion control measures turned into a reconstruction effort, with tons/tonnes of armour stone, yards/metres of landscape fabric and the moving of power lines.

## ROAD & TRAIL

North Shore Road is one of the few stretches on the coast where one can travel at actual waterside. It has long been popular with walkers, cyclists, in-line skaters and families strolling with children and dogs. Road races and fund-raising runs have also followed this route. This section of trail connecting Port Elgin, Saugeen Township and Southampton officially opened in 2011, under the new name North Shore Trail. The Road and the Trail provide a window on Lake Huron's awe-inspiring sunsets and dramatic skies with Chantry Island and its Imperial Tower lighthouse in the distance.



The morning after the storm of October 5, 1986, a view to the south shows damage to trees and North Shore Road. (photo: Vickie & Bob Hendry)



An aerial view from 2010 shows the low level of Lake Huron, the shoreline trail and the road along side the autumn colours of the Lake Huron Fringe. (photo: Brad Pryde)

# North Shore Road

SaugeenShores

In April 1851, Mr. A. Vidal arrived at the mouth of the Saugeen River with instructions to survey the area, "Commencing at the northwest corner of the Township of Brant to carry the Elora Road as originally projected to somewhere close to the mouth of the Saugeen River and to then, survey into farm lots".

This area became Bruce and Saugeen Townships. Saugeen Township consisted of more than 30,000 acres. Concession roads were surveyed in a west to east direction through significantly forested area. Good quality farmland was widespread in both Townships. The spine of the Township of Saugeen was known as Goderich Road and became a reality a few years later.

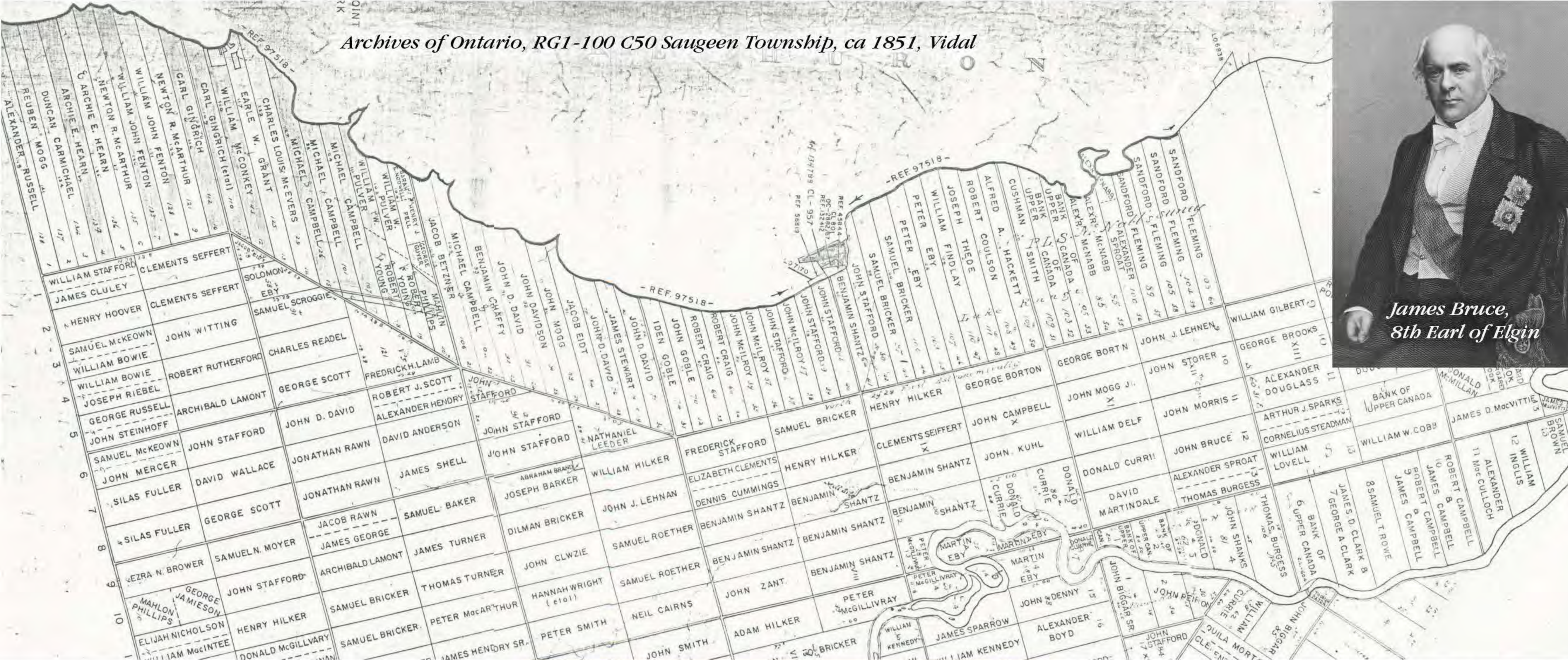
Early Settlers began to arrive before the survey was complete and one of these, George Butchart, built a dam on Mill Creek where he erected a sawmill. By 1853 he had been joined by Henry Hilker, Samuel Bricker, Clement Sieffert, Ben Schantz, Martin Hoover and Jack Stafford. These families settled on farm lots after the survey and quickly had their land subdivided into town lots, beginning a new community.

The earliest corner developed was at Mill and Goderich Streets. Jack Stafford opened a tavern on the northeast corner and became known as Stafford Corners. In 1854, Alex Kennedy had a store on the southeast corner; he was instrumental in securing a postal terminal and became the first Postmaster. The Post Office named the settlement "Mormanton", later changed the spelling to "Normanton" which was to the displeasure of the residents. This name remained until the Village was incorporated.

A small frame school was built on Victoria Street (now Highland Street) in 1854. In 1875 a large brick school was built around the corner on Mill Street. In the decades that followed expansions, additions and new structures were built to meet the educational needs of the growing community.

The population grew steadily over the next 20 years and by 1874 the downtown had become a thriving business area, home to many businesses including the Merchant Bank, Lowery's Barbershop, Hutton's Harness Shop, Daughtery's Drug Store, Burgess Law Office, William George Monumental Works, Eaton's Butcher and Bowes Bakery.

Goderich Street 1909



Archives of Ontario, RG1-100 C50 Saugeen Township, ca 1851, Vidal

James Bruce, 8th Earl of Elgin

In 1860 Barthlon Smith opened a brick factory, producing distinctive yellow bricks that can still be seen today adorning many buildings. Local clay was of the highest quality and these bricks were also in high demand in the surrounding communities.

Several factories were built to serve the community. These included Schantz's Grist Mill, Buschling's Rake Factory, McLaughlin's Foundry, Buschling's Pump Factory, also a woolen mill and a button factory operated by several entrepreneurs. By the 1900's, the Stevens-Hepner Broom and Brush Factory dominated the industrial landscape of the town.

The first established churches in the community were Methodist, United Brethren and Presbyterian. These were quickly followed by other congregations. A number of these churches are still active.

This small community was committed to providing services and meeting the needs of the residents. Regular train service began in 1872 providing convenient transportation for local citizens, businesses and tourists, as it had become a tourist destination during the summer months.

The population increased reaching a required number to separate from Saugeen Township. County Council passed a By-law on June 7, 1873 incorporating the Village of Port Elgin, in honor of James Bruce, the 8th Earl of Elgin and Governor General of Canada from 1847- 1854. An election was held the following January; Henry Hilker was elected Reeve.

Today, evidence remains along Goderich Street going back to these bygone days. The Hilker Block built by Henry Hilker in 1878, still stands on the southwest corner of Goderich and Mill Streets. Over the years it has housed a wide variety of retail and commercial businesses.

The Arlington Block was built by D. O. Bricker in the 1870's south of Green Street on the east side of Goderich Street, being a hotel for many years as well as retail-commercial and later apartments. Today modern businesses make the downtown a vibrant and popular place to spend time shopping and it is still a great spot to meet friends, just as it was in the 1850s.

First Dominion Day Celebration 1867



First Post Office



Procession of Pioneers 1900



For more information on this or other historical documentation contact: [brucemuseum.ca](http://brucemuseum.ca)



# Port Elgin Downtown in the Early Years



*"A library contains any value our thing a community can do to benefit its people  
it is a never-fading spring in the desert." - Helen Clegg*

### 1840s-1850s A Great Western Reading

Port Elgin was one of the first communities in the western United States to have a library. In 1848, the first library was established in the town.



The library was a place where people could come to read and learn. It was a place where people could find books and other materials that they needed for their work and their lives.



Portrait of a man, likely a historical figure associated with the library's early history.

### 1850s-1860s Support for the Great West

The library continued to grow and expand its collection. It became a place where people could find books and other materials that they needed for their work and their lives.



### A Century Later

The library has continued to serve the community for over a century. It has grown from a small room to a large building with a wide collection of books and other materials.

# Port Elgin Library



# *this Fine Gandy Beach*

as described in the 1820 hydrographic survey of Lake Huron, offered easy landing for Indigenous peoples and immigrant settlers. Upon European settlement, waterfront uses became commercial: shipping, fishing, sawmills, tanneries and feed mills.

The development of resorts and building of family cottages near the beach followed. Popular in the 1880s was the mineral spring on the property known as the Paradise Grove Hotel. Visitors and locals enjoyed the waterfront activities of the era which included mineral baths and the “bracing breezes that blew off Lake Huron”. The hotel had many name changes over the years: Lakeview Inn, Royal Princess Lodge, Edelweiss Motel and Paradise Inn. It hosted the Toronto Maple Leafs training camp of 1928-29.



Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre - A2014.008.0790, The Band Concert, Port Elgin Beach



Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre - A2014.008.0826



Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre - A2014.008.0831

A major increase in cottage development came after James Cameron, Grand Trunk Railway Station Agent and eventually Reeve, convinced Town Council that trains would easily bring many tourists. He instigated the transformation of a working harbour to one of Ontario’s finest summer recreational beaches. City folk escaped the heat to swim in beautiful clean water of Lake Huron and feel the cool lake breezes. The local newspaper printed who was staying where.

A Bandstand was built and a summertime tradition on Sunday evenings featured local musicians or visiting bands to be enjoyed by all. A larger bandshell replaced the original in 1967. A gazebo called the Emmett McGrath Pavilion was designed to mimic the original bandshell. It was constructed to follow the Sunday night music tradition.

The Cedar Crescent Casino dance hall opened in 1924 and featured dancing to Big Band music. Teen dances with Rock & Roll bands were a highlight of many youths’ summer holidays. Destroyed by fire in August 1970, the Lion’s Club Casino rose from its ashes. It was home to parties and community events including the Port Elgin Tourist Association’s Flea Market. It was closed in 1989 and torn down in Spring of 1990.

The Town Booth and privately owned Tuck Shop (Beachside Cafe) served refreshments and treats on the beach. The Bluewater Tea Room (Harbourlite Restaurant) and Sunset Lodge (Edinburgh Hotel) served full meals.

Beach activities used to include real grass mini golf, swimming lessons, tennis; and more recently beach volleyball and the Saugeen Shores Lifesaving Club training, pleasure boating, jet skiing, paddle boarding, kayaking and canoeing.

Iconic attractions have included tour boats and trains. The Restless I & II tour boats, carried passengers along the Lake Huron shore to admire the scenery & sunsets. The Port Elgin & North Shore Railroad, fondly known as “The Train” operated two locally built steam locomotives. The 1st operated 1973-1978 within Northshore Park. The second, on a mile looped track from The Station on the main beach through Northshore Park, ran until 2017.



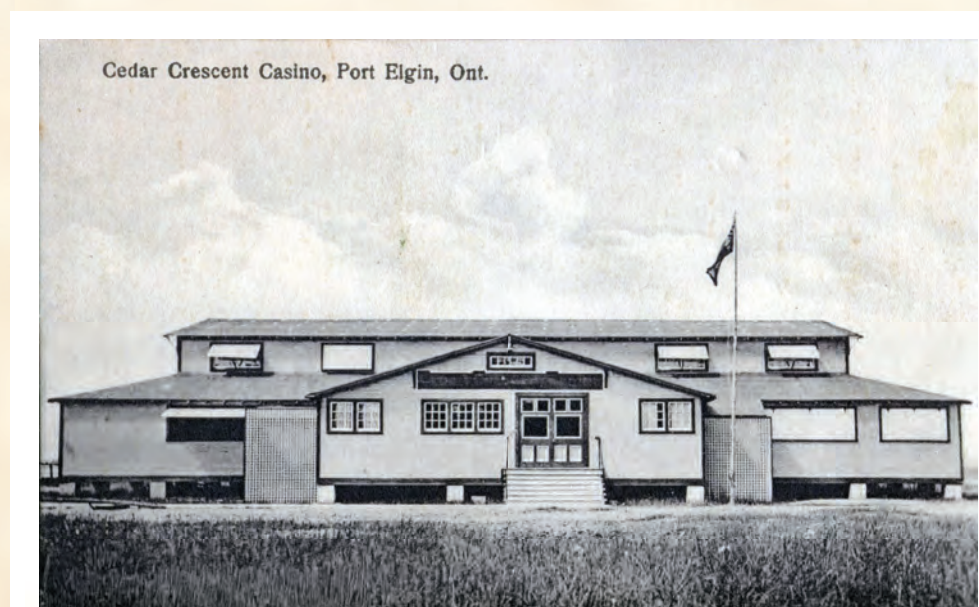
Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre - A2013.012.16446

# *Summer*

Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre - A2018.025.003, Beach Carnival

For many teens, beach activities provides summer jobs: swimming instruction, lifeguarding, restaurant positions, marina assistance and town maintenance. Many community service groups benefitted from fund-raising at the Beach Carnivals, offering games of skill or chance, on summer evenings.

Residents and visitors enjoy leisurely strolls along the waterfront trail system, eat meals or treats at the beach, watch the more adventurous activities and witness beautiful sunsets. Even in winter, people come to the beach to witness Mother Nature’s power.



Cedar Crescent Casino, Port Elgin, Ont.

# *Beach*

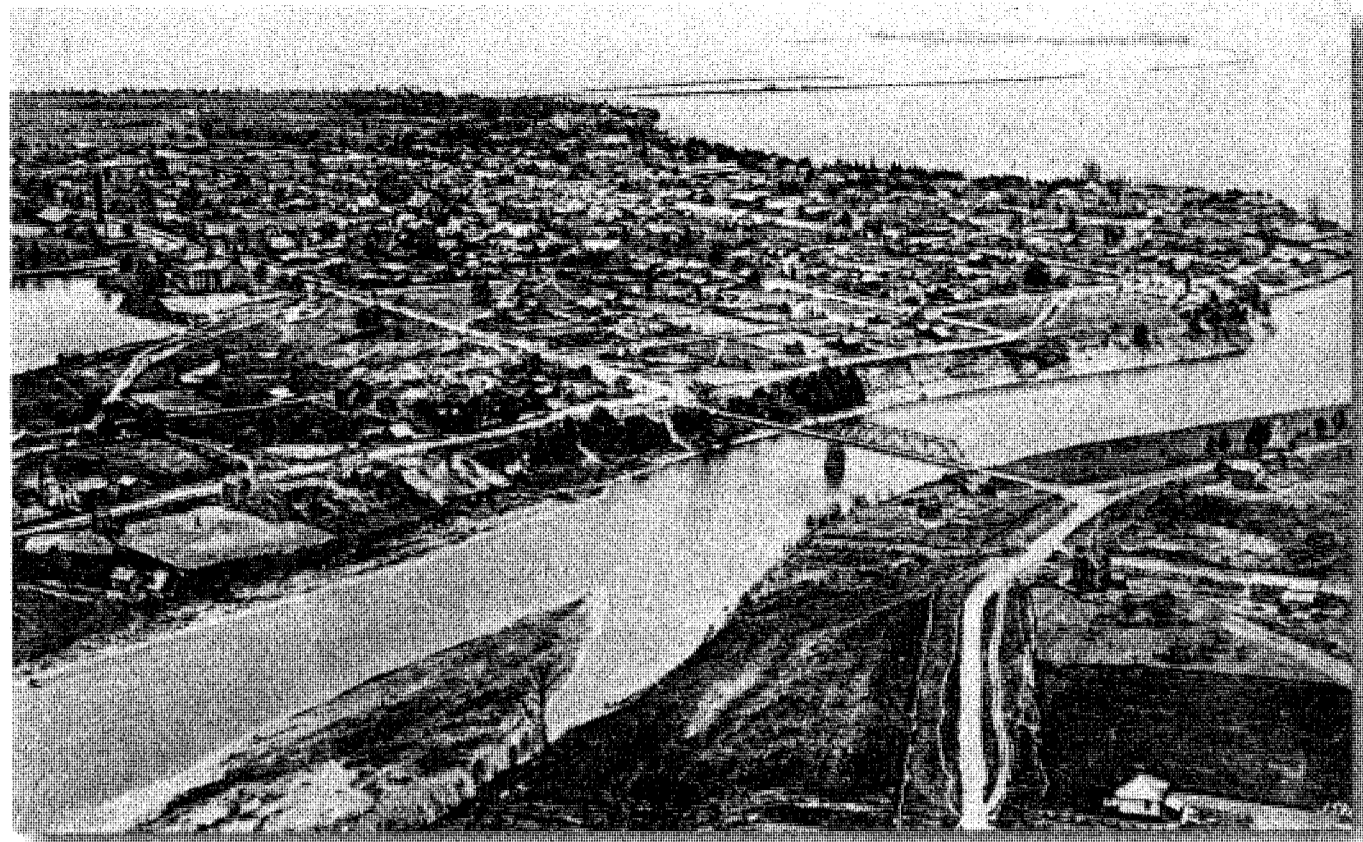


A2013.012.16446 Beach Crew 1972



— RECREATION AT THE PORT ELGIN BEACH —





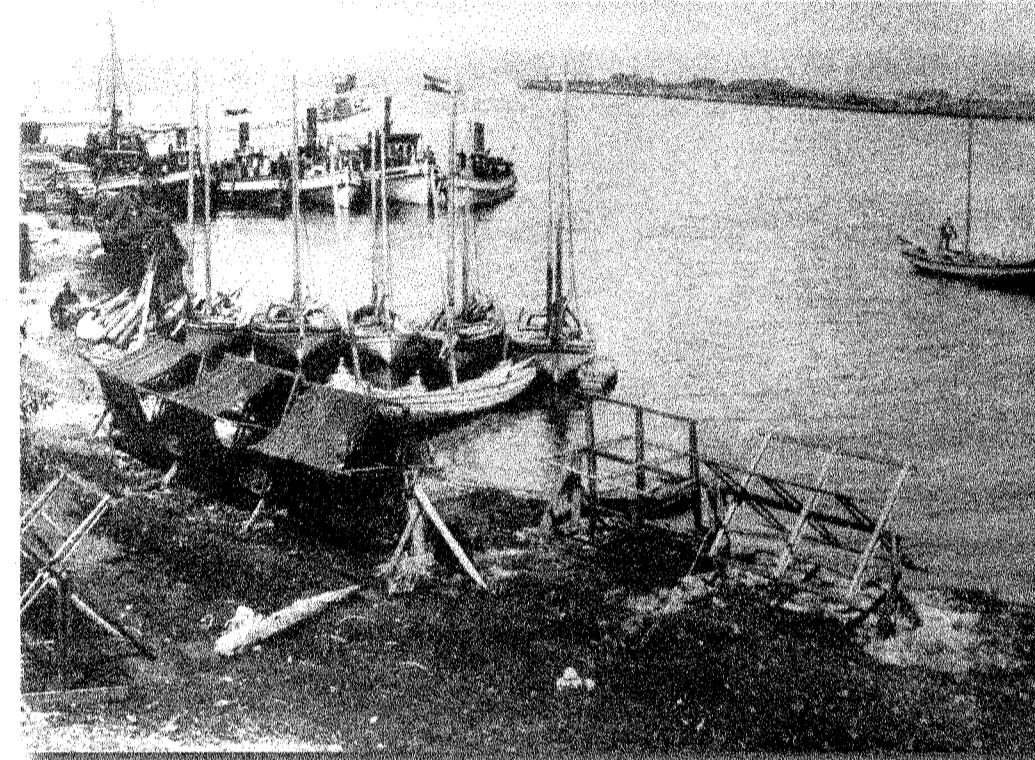
View of harbour with Chantry Island in the background

Southampton was founded in 1848 when Capt. John Spence and Capt. William Kennedy built a cabin at the mouth of the Saugeen River, on the south side. From here the town grew, the river provided a refuge for sailors and a harbour for fishermen.

For many years, a long sandbar stretched across the river mouth, forcing boats to sail around it or be wrecked. In 1858, the government built a breakwater on the north bank to stop the sandbar forming, as well as building a pier on the south side. By 1897, dredging at the river mouth had cleared a path 22 feet wide and 13 feet deep through the obstructions.



Tending the gill nets



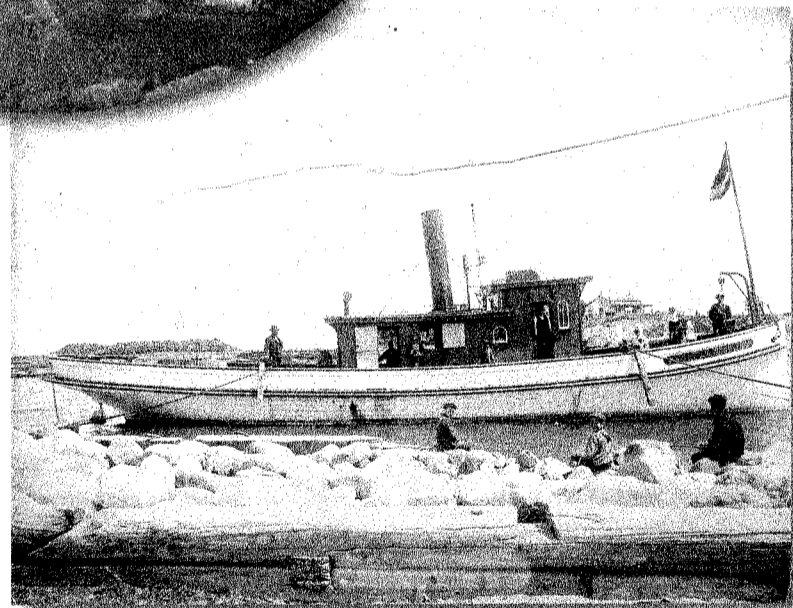
Fishing fleet in river harbour in the early 1900s

In 1883 a lantern, fixed to a mast on a crib on the north breakwater, guided fishing boats into the river. In 1903, two small wooden towers, known as range lights, were built; the front range light was built at the end of the north pier and the back range light was first built on the hill near where the Scubby's Point sign stands.

The back range light was moved further inland in 1906, to a position behind the present Highway 21 Bridge. Sailors lined up the two lights to enter the harbour safely.



The crew of the Frank G. MacAulay are shown pulling in nets filled with trout, whitefish and herring.



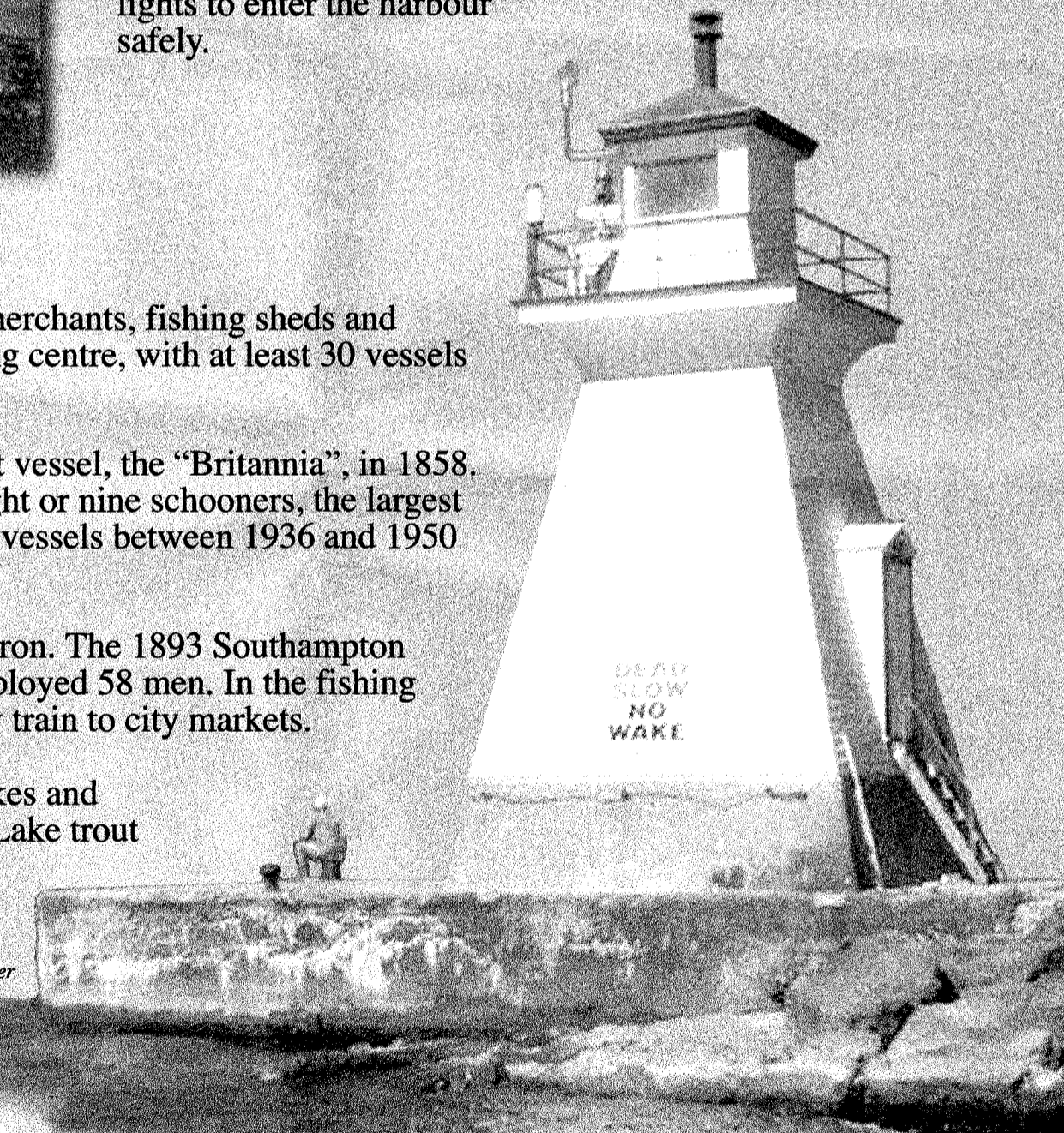
The Frank G. MacAulay fishing tug in Southampton

The south pier became a busy place lined with warehouses of grain merchants, fishing sheds and drying reels for the gill nets. The harbour was also a busy shipbuilding centre, with at least 30 vessels launched from its yards.

Capt. Alfred A. Hackett was the first builder and he launched his first vessel, the "Britannia", in 1858. It was a schooner of 39 tons. By 1897 his shipyard had turned out eight or nine schooners, the largest being 138 tons. Nathan Doran's "Saugeen Boat Works" produced ten vessels between 1936 and 1950 - fishing tugs, cabin cruisers and skiffs.

In the 19th century trout, whitefish and herring abounded in Lake Huron. The 1893 Southampton fishing fleet included 13 sailing vessels and three steam tugs that employed 58 men. In the fishing sheds workers packed 60-pound boxes of fish in ice and sent them by train to city markets.

Sadly, in the 1940s and 1950s, the sea lamprey invaded the Great Lakes and preyed on native fish, dealing a serious blow to the fishing industry. Lake trout simply disappeared.



Range light on north breakwater



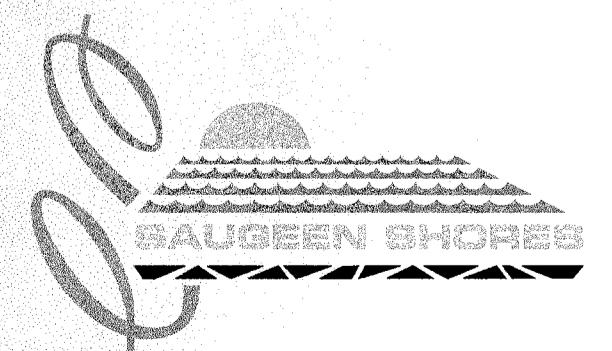
Canadian Heritage

Patrimoine canadien

Canada



# Saugeen River Harbour





The Southampton Art School was built in 1887 by James Howe as a subscription library operated by the local Mechanics Institute.

Historically, Mechanics Institutes were educational establishments that provided evening classes and lectures to encourage the technical education of working-class men.

Membership in the library was \$1 and Howe, as librarian, was the only one permitted to handle the books. Members purchased a 10-cent catalogue to choose from the collection of 710 volumes. Two weeks was the maximum time for keeping a book, and there was a penalty of 50 cents for members lending a book.

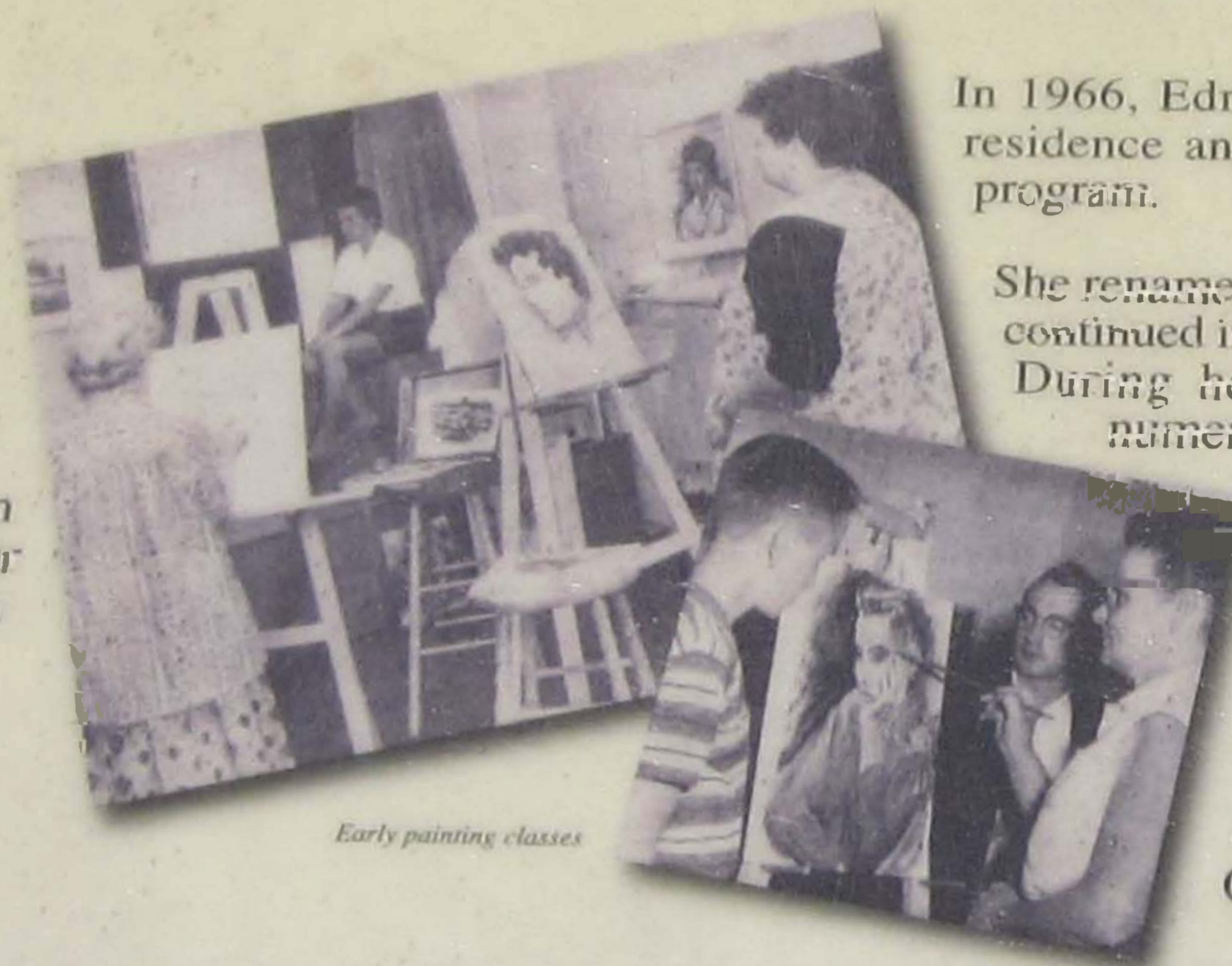
In 1896, the Mechanics Institute was converted to a public library under the Department of Education. In 1912, James Howe donated the building to the town of Southampton on condition that it be used for cultural and educational purposes only. The Southampton Library continued at this location until 1955.

*The bigger it grows as a centre of the arts, the greater and more widespread will be the name and prosperity of Southampton.*

*Bert Henderson, 1957*

Bert Henderson, an Owen Sound artist, founded the Southampton School of Fine Art on June 15, 1957. Renowned Canadian artists A.Y. Jackson, Lawren Harris, Arthur Lismer and Alex Colville lent their support by serving as the School's initial advisory board.

The \$40 fee for one week included tuition, accommodation and meals.



Early painting classes

In 1966, Edna Johnson was appointed artist in residence and Director of the School's summer program.

She renamed it the Southampton Art School, and continued in this role until her retirement in 1992. During her 26-year tenure, Edna received numerous honours for her contribution to the arts, which helped attract many new students and notable artist-instructors.

In 1979, the Local Architectural Conservation Committee (LACAC) secured a Heritage Building designation for the School under the Ontario Heritage Act.



Watercolor by Jane Champagne

Since its establishment, the School has enriched the skills and lives of thousands of emerging and accomplished artists, some of whom became professional artists and instructors. It also served as a base for expanding the arts locally by supporting other arts organizations, including the Southampton Arts Society and the Shoreline Artists.

## Southampton Arts Society

The Southampton Arts Society was formed in 1986 when Town Councillor William Bowden Sr. realized the considerable economic benefits the School was bringing to the community. He approached artist and Southampton resident Ellen Park to help develop an organized group from the community to form the Society and support the School. As a result, a registered charity was formed to:

- Develop and encourage artistic, cultural expression and appreciation of the arts;
- Develop a forum for the community of artists;
- Ensure the continuation of the Art School.

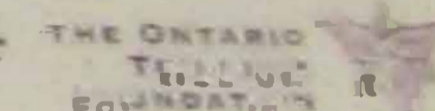


Catalogues and brochures for the Southampton Art School

The School has expanded to more than 900 students in 2007 from a dozen in 1957, and to 100 classes in a variety of mediums held in several different locations, including landscape and architecture painting on location. Now it attracts students across the land.



The Southampton Art School has become the important regional arts centre first envisioned by its founders. To commemorate the School's 50th anniversary in 2007, the Southampton Arts Society, the Town of Saugeen Shores and the Ontario Trillium Foundation embarked on a project to restore this historic building, home to one of Ontario's finest art institutions.



# Southampton Art School

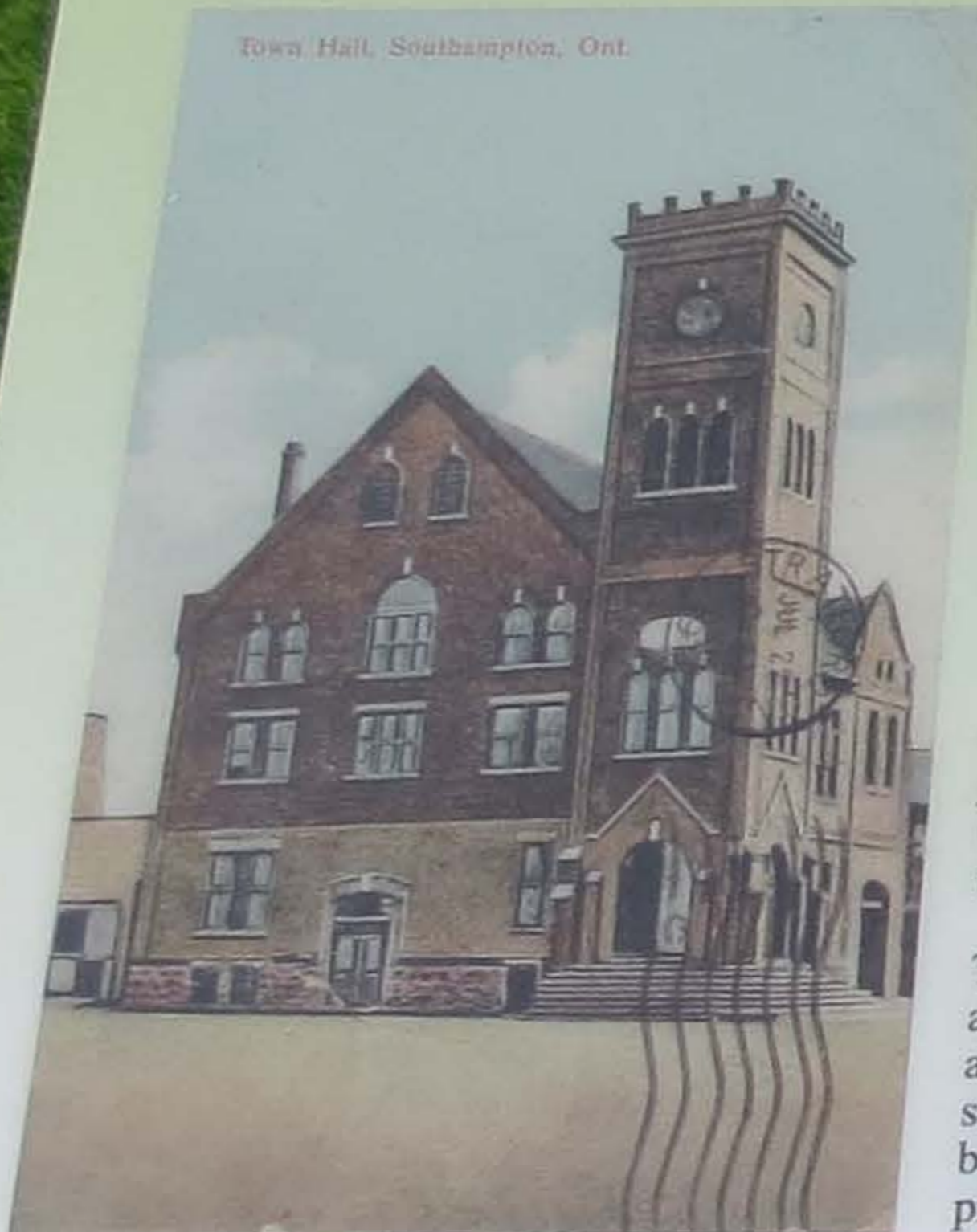


Early plans of Southampton designate this parcel of land as a Market Square. In 1862, citizens raised funds to build a drill shed here, where troops practised for a decade.

The village's first Town Hall was built on Albert Street North. Council met in the upper storey, while the street level provided schoolrooms. When the village took over the drill hall, they renovated the building and held a grand concert and ball to mark its opening in December 1873. The Public School Board became owners of the original Town Hall, which the Board sold in 1879 to the St. Lawrence Masonic Lodge.

When Southampton gained town status in 1904, a new municipal building became a goal. Ratepayers agreed in 1908 to debenture the cost, but it was 1910—with a change of Council and new plans—before the project went ahead.

The dignified building would become a landmark with red brick, arched windows, a church-like entrance, and bell tower. In May 1910, Mayor William McGregor and Council accepted the only tender, from Peter Knechtel, owner of the Chippewa Lumber Company to build the new Town Hall at an agreed price of \$10,947.00.



Postcard showing Southampton Town Hall. July 1913  
Photo credit: Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre

Town Hall as a building of architectural and historical interest. This move preserves the heritage elements, while allowing interior changes and improvements. One major enhancement, the lift, was installed in 1985.

In 2011, the Town of Saugeen Shores celebrated the centennial of Southampton's Town Hall. Facade improvements and interior upgrades continue as the building's second century unfolds.



Peter and Wilhelmina Knechtel,  
with their children Clayton and Emma.  
Photo Credit: Art and Betty Knechtel

The old building was sold and moved to High Street near Grosvenor, serving as an entertainment hall until a fire destroyed it. During the summer of 1910, the new municipal building rose on this site. With horses to pull the ropes, a system of pulleys lifted materials. By September, construction slowed because of delays in rail shipments of bricks and questions about the strength of iron girders. In November, a group of citizens asked for an extra twelve feet of tower to accommodate a future town clock and bell. W.J. George, a Port Elgin monument maker, supplied the date stone for \$19.00.

Council set rental rates for such community events as dances, socials, church meetings, and moving picture shows. By July 1911, Council was ready to accept the keys, and the Town celebrated the official opening in August. The contractor received final payment in 1912, although it fell short of covering his actual costs.

Through the years, Southampton Town Hall was the scene of many social and civic events from dances to nomination meetings. Musicians and actors, both local and professional, performed on its stage. Police cells and courtroom occupied the basement. Townsfolk remember when the present-day Art Gallery was Southampton's municipal office.

In 1979, the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee worked to designate the



Youth Military Drills. c1881.  
Photo credit: Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre

### The Clock

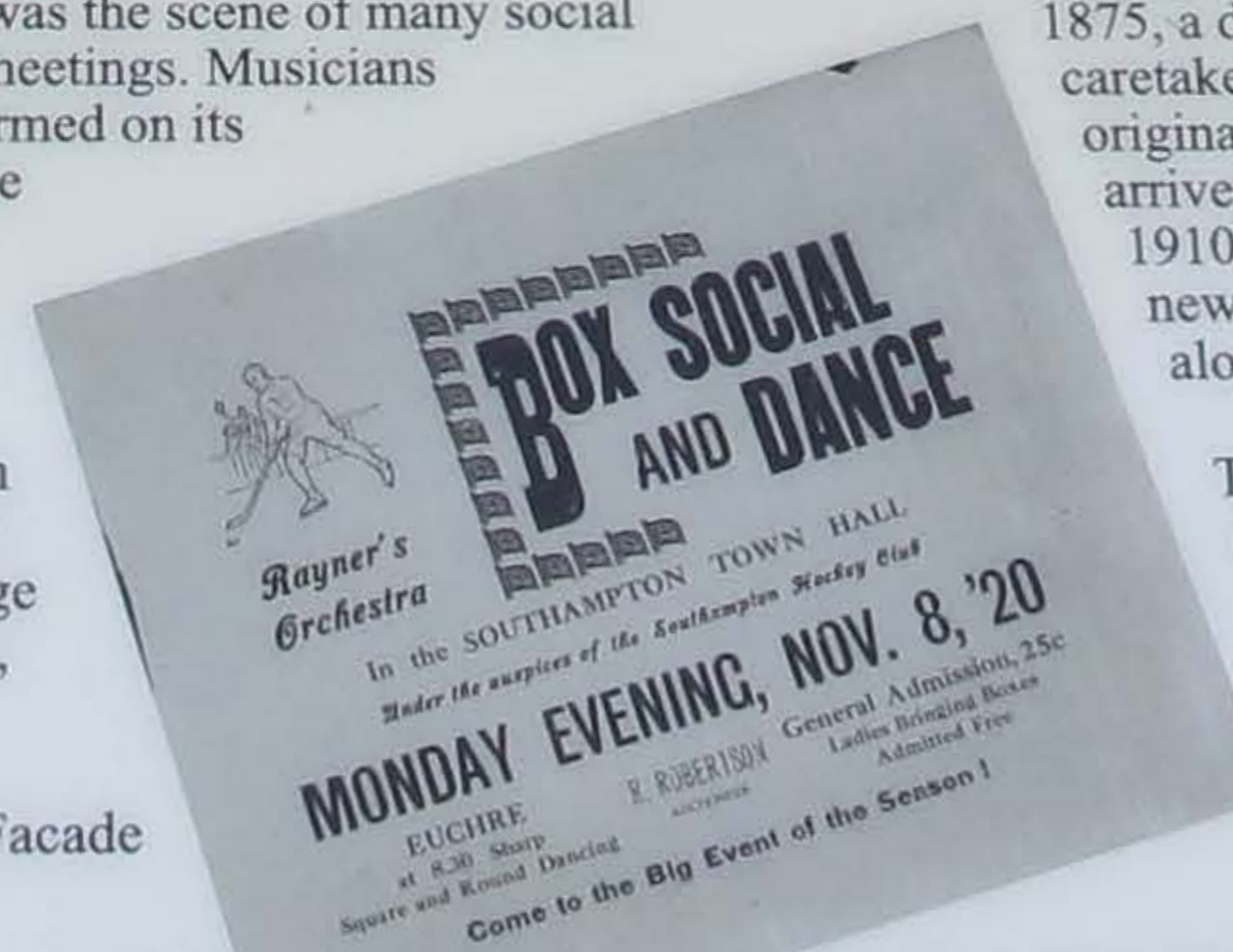
Members of the Great War Veterans Association met in the Town Hall for many years. Recognition for the sacrifice of their comrades took the form of a memorial clock, installed in 1922. The unveiling ceremony included dedication of the clock with electro-magnetic works, and a tablet naming the soldiers from Southampton and the Saugeen Reserve who 'fought and died in the Great War'.

Since 1972, watchmaker Walter Mackowski has cared for the clock. After a silent period, it was refurbished in 2000 and still keeps accurate time.

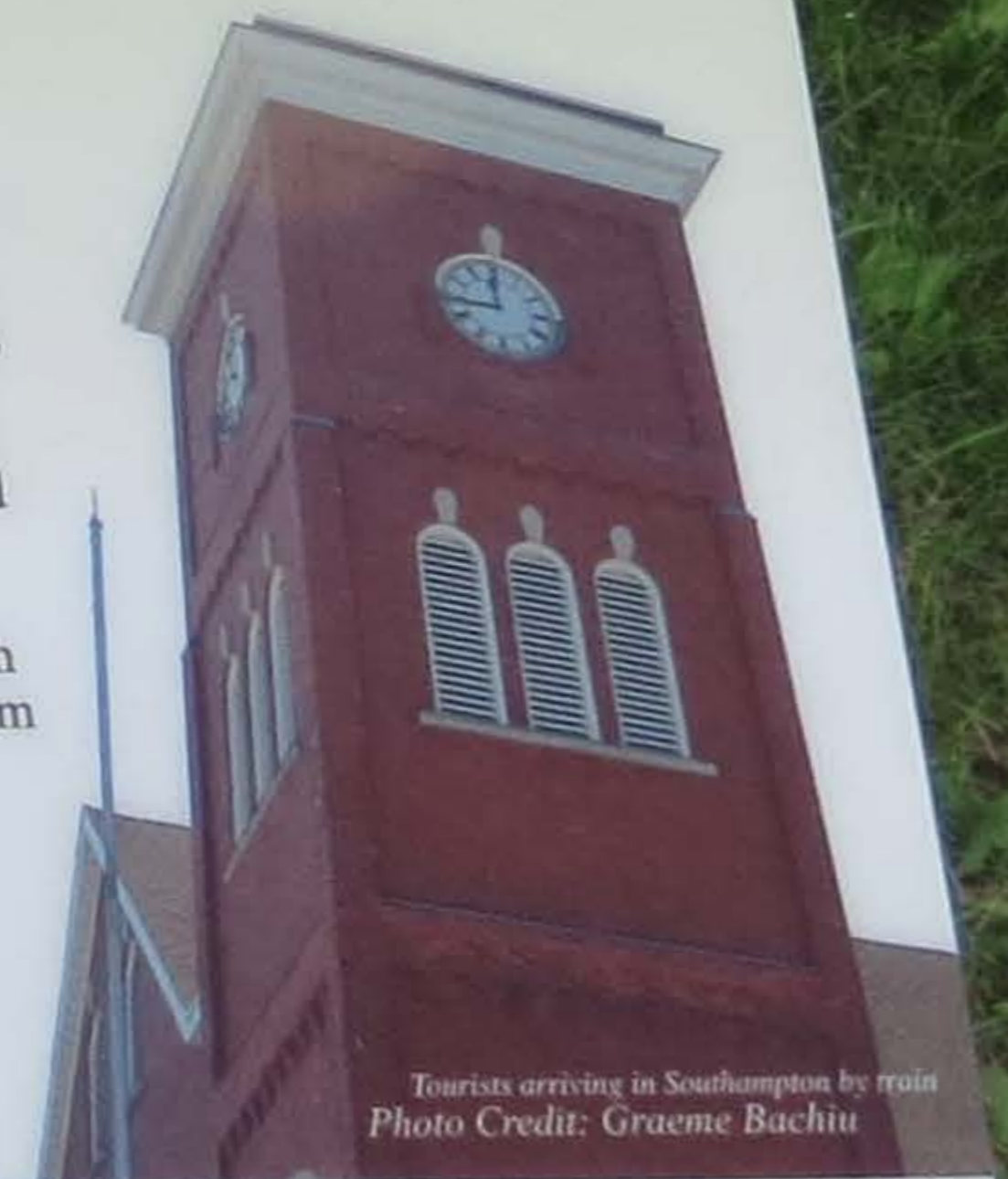
### The Bell

Ringling of a Town bell began in 1875, a duty of the Town Hall caretaker. A replacement for the original bell, which had cracked, arrived in 1895. Removed in 1910, it was re-installed in the new Town Hall and dedicated along with the clock.

The Fire Hall, on the south end, served the Town from 1923 to 1974.



Poster for 1920 Social Event Photo credit: Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre



Tourists arriving in Southampton by train  
Photo Credit: Graeme Bachiu



# Southampton Town Hall





Above: The engine lies on its side after derailing  
 Right: Crews gathered to watch the crane lift the train back on the tracks  
 Below: The bell from ill-fated Engine #1319



Thanks to:  
 Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre  
 for pictures. The bell of Train #179 is on  
 display at the museum.  
 Research and writing: Jeff Hamming

Hurricane Hazel began its path of destruction October 5, 1954 in the Caribbean Ocean and continued up the east coast of North America before moving inland reaching Ontario on October 16 to be downgraded from its hurricane status. The heavy rains and strong winds persisted causing major flooding and damage with loss of life in the province.

For the crew of mixed Train #179 and engine #1319, on schedule to depart Palmerston, on October 16, 1954 for Southampton on its nightly run, everything seemed to be in order except fireman Stewart Nicholson was unexplainably uneasy. He hesitated in leaving his expectant wife at home but duty called. When the train pulled out of the station bound for Southampton he twice looked back at his home.

As Train #179 approached its terminus at Southampton around 11:30 p.m., tragedy struck. When crossing a culvert, flooded by the heavy rains from Hurricane Hazel, the track gave way causing the engine to derail. The remaining cars drove into the back of the derailed engine causing it to fill up with sand and dirt and the steam pipes

to burst filling the cab with live steam. Engineer Gordon McCallum was buried up to his neck in sand while fireman Nicholson was pinned by the twisted metal of the wreck.

The remaining crew, who were unhurt, rushed to the aid of the two trapped men, and with supreme effort freed McCallum from the pile of sand. Nicholson, who was still conscious, was removed after being cut free of the twisted metal that entrapped him. Both men were taken to the Southampton hospital where they succumbed shortly thereafter to their injuries. Dr. Murray Flock attended at the scene.

The crew who accompanied McCallum and Nicholson on this ill fated trip were Conductor Arthur Sherlock of Southampton, Baggage Man Raymond Darragh of Southampton; Brakeman Cecil Christmann of Port Elgin and Mail Clerks George Hills and Doug Sharman. Two passengers on the train were Mrs. W. Whittaker who suffered shoulder injuries and Kenneth Diebel, both of Southampton.

Gordon McCallum, age 58, was a 35 year employee who had recently moved from Parry Sound, Ontario to Palmerston. He is survived by wife Joan and daughter Margaret. Gordon was interred in Parry Sound.

Stewart Nicholson age 33 was employed as a fireman with the CNR. He was born in Minto Township and resided in Palmerston for the past 10 years. He was married to Betty Hastings of Southampton and has two sons David and Paul Stewart Nicholson. Stewart was interred in the Harriston cemetery.

Special Thanks: Co-Sponsor "Grosvenors's of Southampton" in the "Old Station" at the end of the Rail Trail



### The Night Train for Southampton

1. The Night Train for Southampton  
 Sounds parting at the station  
 Waiting for connections  
 From the east and the west  
 The wind and the rain  
 Beat hard against the windows  
 And the coal in the tender  
 Was all soaking wet.
2. The engine looked at his watch  
 And said, "It's time to go!"  
 The fireman grabbed the shovel  
 And shoveled in the coal  
 The conductor gave the signal  
 That all were aboard  
 And the train pulled out of Palmerston  
 For Lake Huron shores.
3. The headlight on the engine  
 Cut a pathway through the night  
 And the city lights of Palmerston  
 Faded out of sight  
 With hands on the throttle  
 And a full head of steam  
 Water overflowed the banks  
 Of the rivers and the streams.
4. Now the lights of Southampton  
 Glimmer in the murky night  
 As the city of Port Elgin  
 Faded out of sight  
 With one more mile to go  
 The whistle it did sound  
 But the water in the ditches  
 Had washed away the ground.
5. Now the Night Train for Southampton  
 Lays over on its side  
 And the engine and fireman  
 They are trapped inside  
 They are trapped inside  
 The hot steam from the boiler  
 Filled the engine cab  
 And the night was full of sadness  
 As they lay there on her side.
6. With one more mile to go  
 The whistle it did sound  
 But the water in the ditches  
 Had washed away the ground  
 Had washed away the rain  
 And the wind and the rain  
 Beat hard against the windows  
 And the lights of Southampton  
 Faded out of sight.

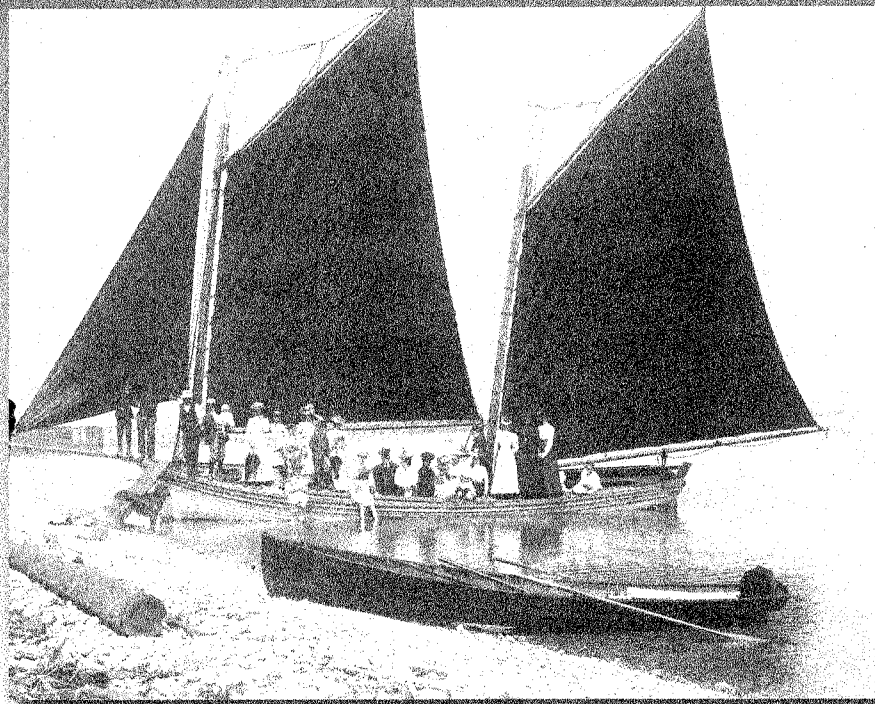
Above: The song "The Night Train For Southampton" (Words and music by PETER C. BART (1926-2004)) describes the October 15, 1954 train wreck in Southampton and is in memory of Bart's colleagues, Engineer Gordon McCallum and Fireman Stewart Nicholson who both died as a result of injuries sustained in the accident.

Below: Setting derailed cars back on the rail tracks



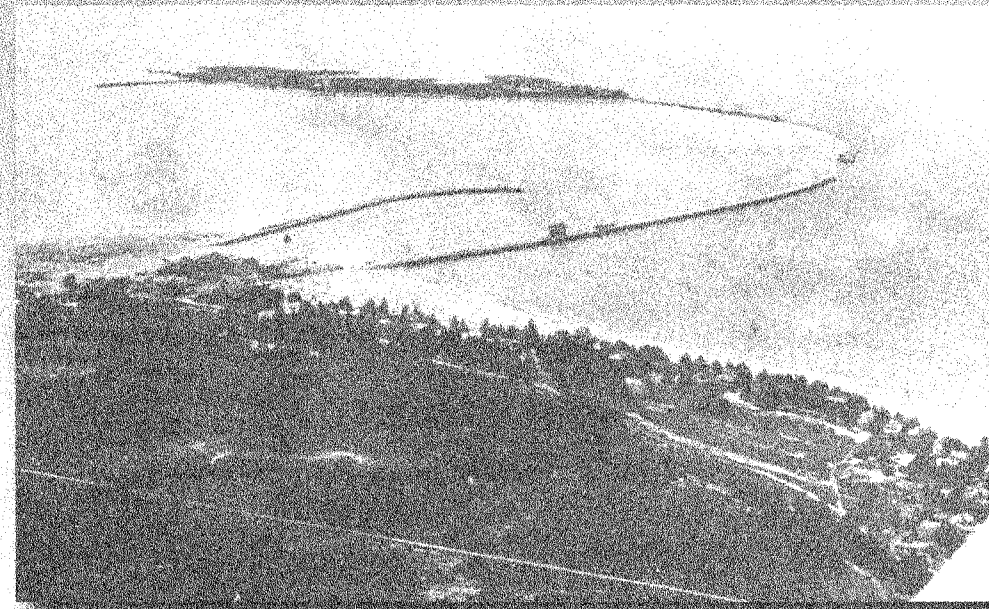
# Southampton Train Wreck



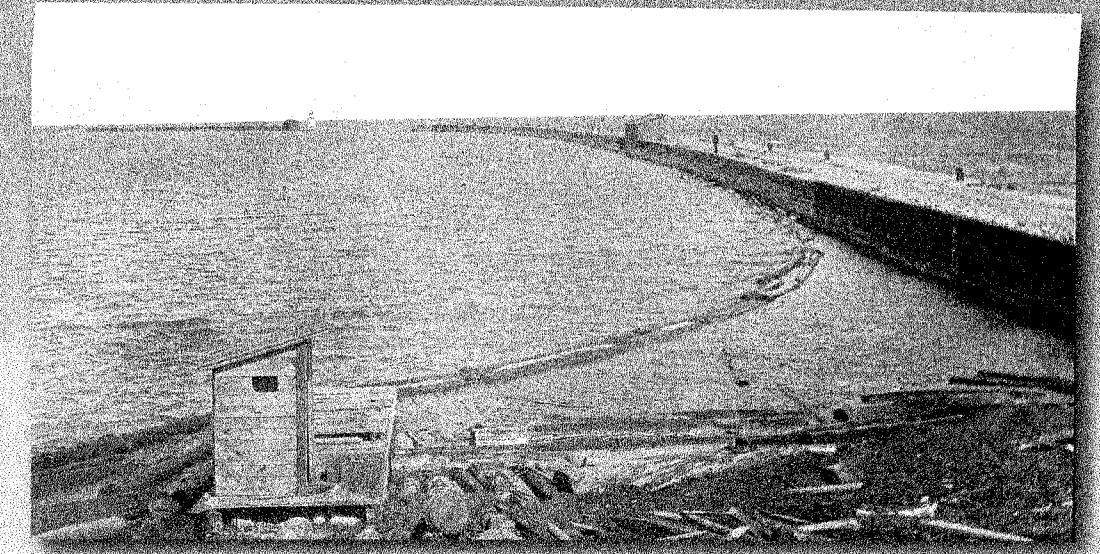


Murdoch Matheson's sailboat with picnickers

Steamboats and sailing ships sailed the Great Lakes from the pioneering and settlement days of the 1800s into the early 1900s for a variety of purposes—the transport of people to explore, immigrate and settle, then for fishing, fur trading and lumbering and later for pleasure.



View of Chantry Island and the Harbour of Refuge



Long Dock in 1911 showing the gap and the range light - photo courtesy of John and Jim Uhrig



Life saving station with lifeboat and crew

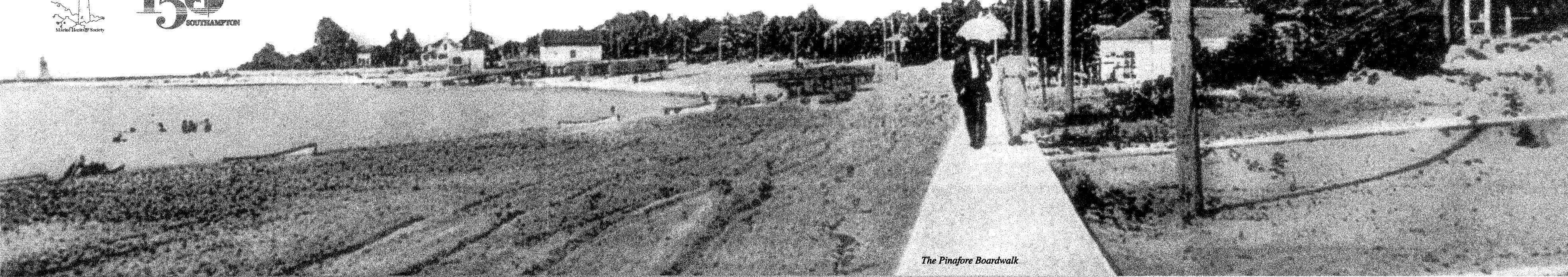
A government life-saving station was constructed in 1908 on the beach near the foot of Palmerston Street complete with a long ramp enabling the lifeboat to be quickly launched. In 1918, however, it was moved onto the Long Dock due to problems launching during storms. The station continued operations until 1937 when the building was moved ashore and converted to a summer cottage on Beach Road.

The shoreline is unique for its historic boardwalk. In 1895, a group of community-minded locals and tourists put on an amateur production of the famous opera, "HMS Pinafore". Their goal was to put a wooden walkway on the beach. After the opera was a roaring success, they were able to build a true 'board' walk named The Pinafore, from the foot of High Street to the Park Hotel and cottages on Knowles Lane. In 1906, the promenade was replaced with cement and extended to the Long Dock at the end of present day Beach Road.

The Oldest Port on the Bruce Coast had several docks. When the Chantry Island Lighthouse was built in the late 1850s, a 540-foot long breakwater was built out from the northeast point of the island toward the mainland. On shore, the Steamboat Wharf, known locally as the Bogus Dock, was built at the foot of Palmerston Street. Then in the 1870s, one of the largest construction projects on Lake Huron shore took place. In a \$300,000 program that was completed in stages over seven years, the Long Dock, an extensive breakwater, was constructed between the mainland and Chantry Island with a 'gap' for ships to sail through. The project was meant to provide a Harbour of Refuge for vessels caught in storms along the coast.

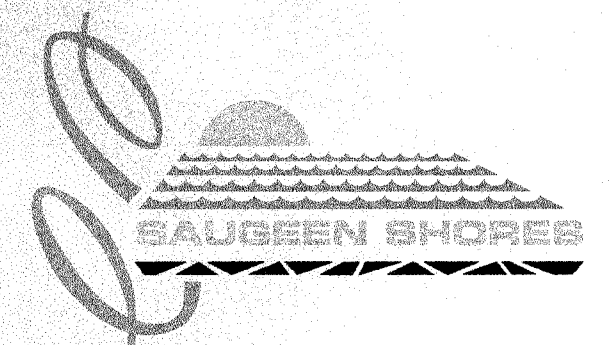
With the arrival of train service in 1872, the Short Dock was built 450 feet south of the Long Dock and a railway line extended onto the landing pier so that both ships and trains could unload cargo and passengers.

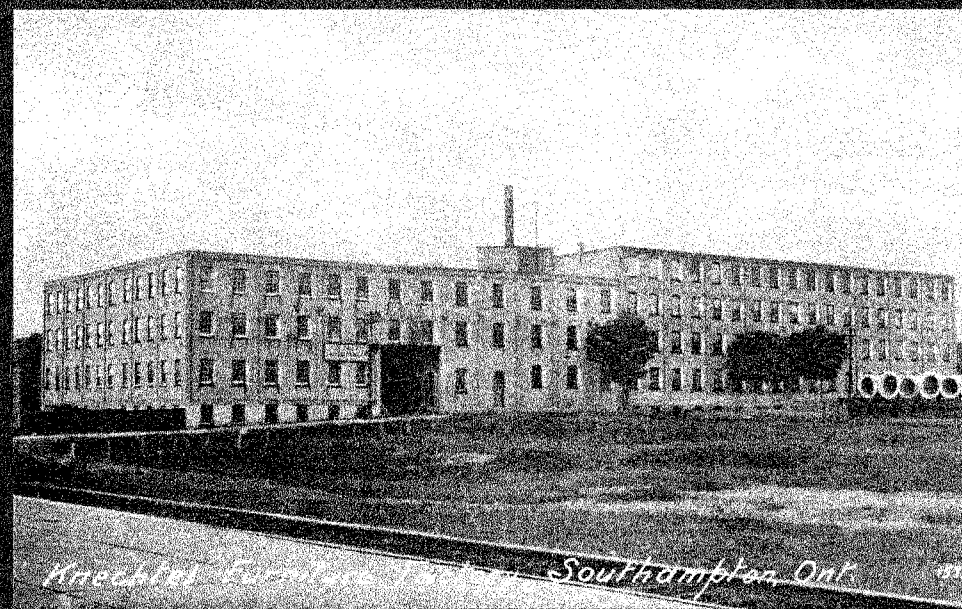
By the early 1950s, the docks had succumbed to storms but remnants of the massive cribwork can still be seen beneath the surface. Thereafter, the landing pier built on the south side of the Saugeen River, became the main docking area for the town.



The Pinafore Boardwalk

# Southampton's Waterfront



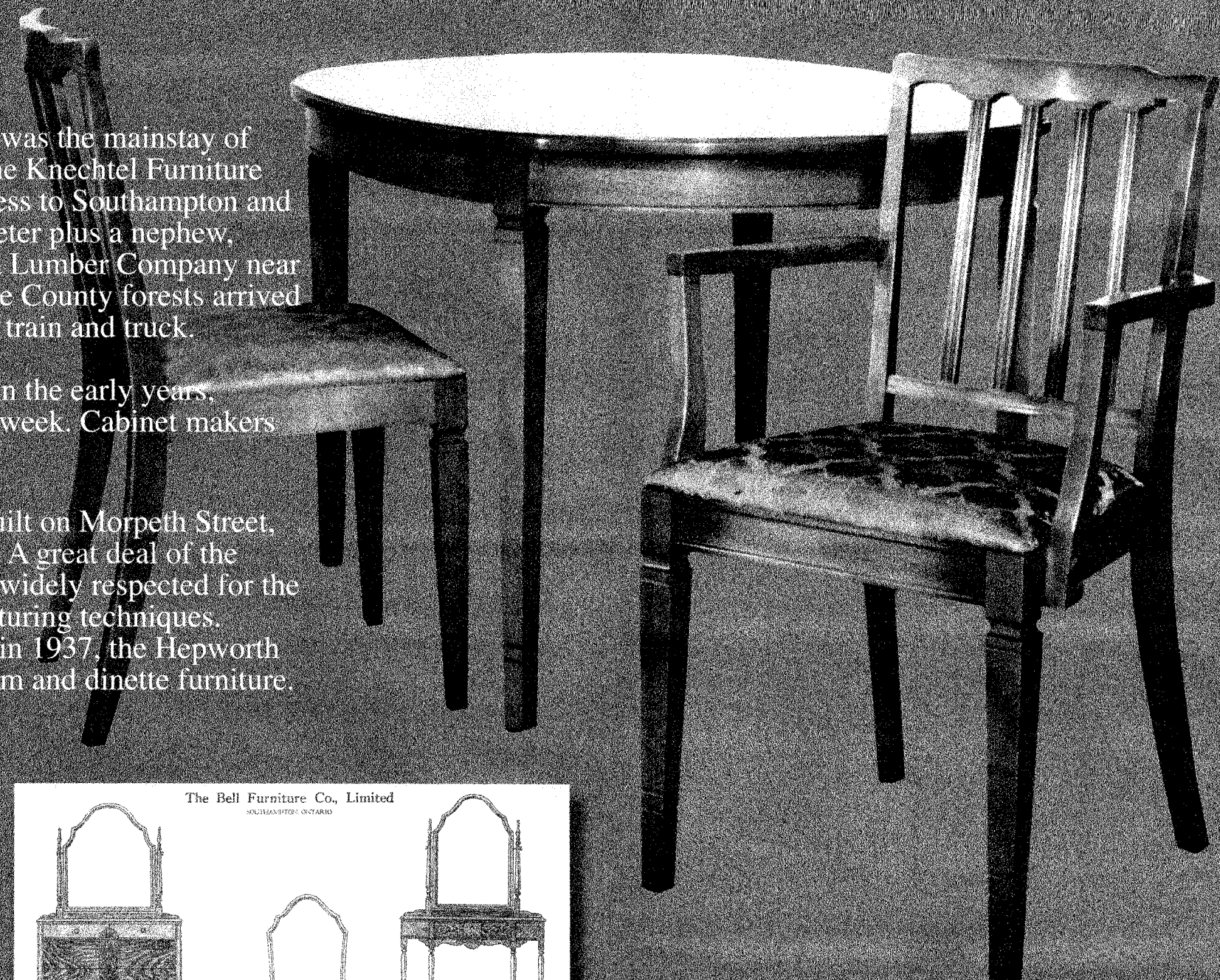


Knechtel Furniture Factory

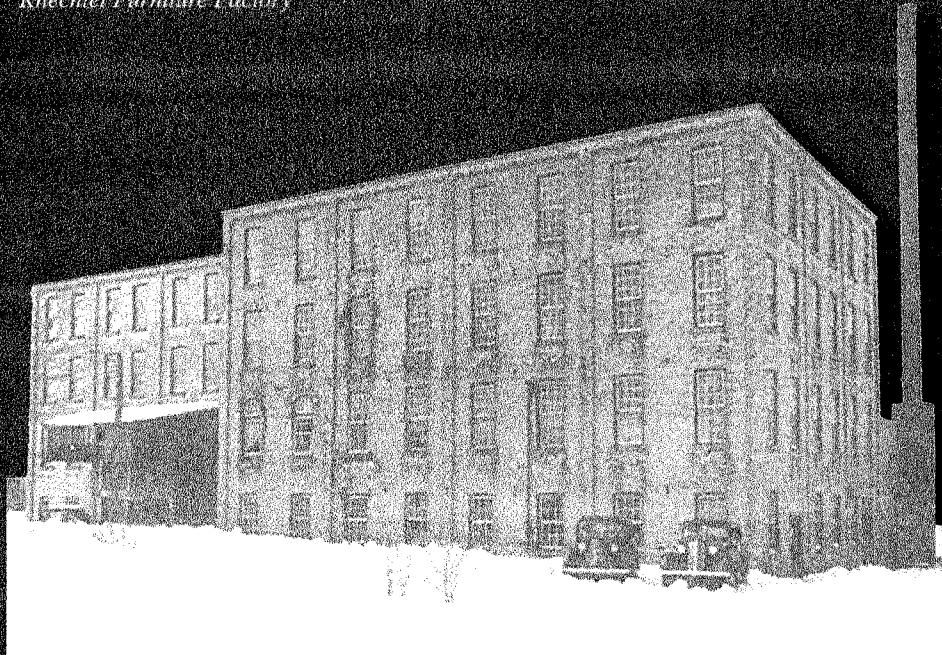
For more than seventy years, the woodworking industry was the mainstay of Southampton's economy. Daniel Knechtel, who started the Knechtel Furniture Company in Hanover in 1871, expanded the family business to Southampton and Walkerton in the late 1890s. His brothers, Solomon and Peter plus a nephew, Samuel, were also involved. Peter managed the Chippewa Lumber Company near the mouth of the Saugeen River where logs from the Bruce County forests arrived by raft or steamer. In later years, lumber was delivered by train and truck.

The factory whistles were a familiar sound around town. In the early years, employees made 12 cents an hour and worked 55 hours a week. Cabinet makers and machinists apprenticed for 3 years.

About 1895, the Knechtel Furniture Company Ltd. was built on Morpeth Street, west of Albert Street, and started producing oak furniture. A great deal of the furniture was shipped out west by rail. The company was widely respected for the craftsmanship of the employees and its furniture-manufacturing techniques. During the Great Depression, the factory was closed and, in 1937, the Hepworth Furniture Company took over. They specialized in bedroom and dinette furniture.

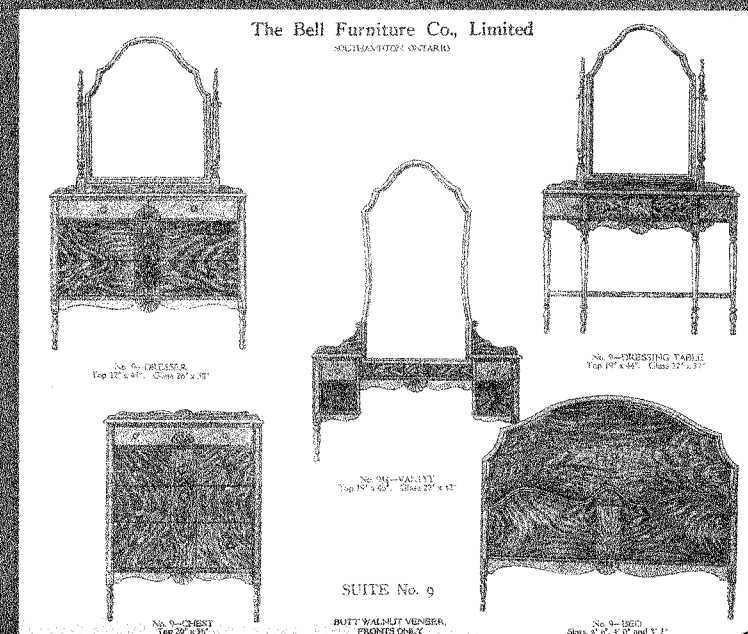


Above: A dinette set made by the Hepworth Furniture Company  
Left: Bell Furniture Company product catalogue



The S.M. Knechtel Chair Company building

In 1901, Samuel Knechtel, Peter's son, built the S.M. Knechtel Chair Company on Grosvenor Street, north of Wellington Street (the present day Chantry View Drive). The company manufactured chairs of all kinds. Then the Southampton Furniture Co. Ltd took over in 1906, followed by the Bell Furniture Co. in 1908. Harry G. Eagles took over in 1937 and produced unfinished furniture until 1946 when the Southampton Furniture Co. Ltd took over. A fire in 1949 destroyed the top two floors. Various other enterprises operated out of the plant until it was torn down in 1985.

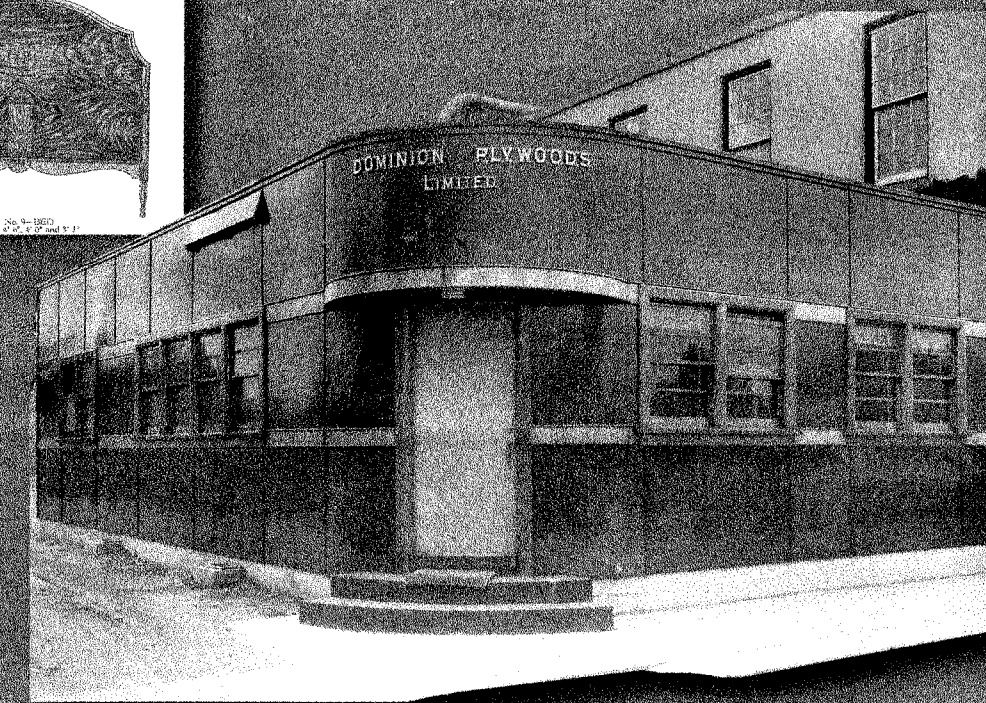


Below: Dominion Plywoods Limited

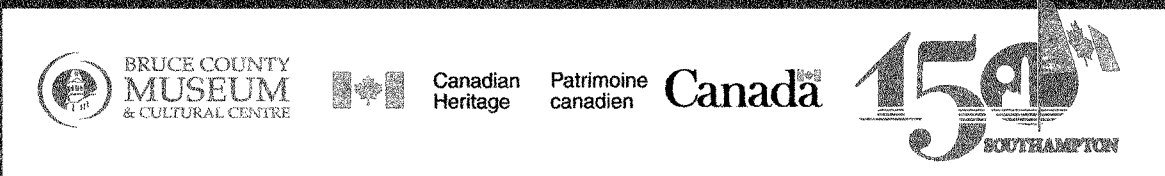


Employees of the Fitton-Parker Furniture Company pose for a photograph in 1953

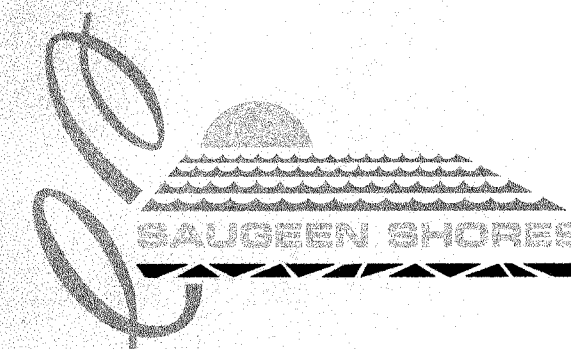
In 1901, the Solomon Knechtel Wood Turning and Furniture Company was built on Albert Street, north of Wellington Street (presently known as Spence), and began manufacturing moldings and spindles. The Bell Furniture Company took over in 1907 and the building was expanded. They specialized in quality bedroom and living room furniture and eventually dining room suites. Subsequently, Fitton-Parker Furniture Company purchased the factory in 1937 and manufactured furniture until Sklar-Peppler Ltd. took over the factory in 1969. The building later became the present day Southampton Market.



In 1906, Solomon Knechtel started a foundry on Albert Street, south of Adelaide Street and invented machines to produce wood turnings. Southampton Plywood bought the property in 1922 and began manufacturing wood panels. In 1940, Dominion Plywoods Ltd took over the business and during the war they manufactured plywood parts for aircraft, such as the Mosquito bomber, Anson and Tiger Moth. A very versatile factory, the workers later produced furniture parts, stacking chair seats and backs, bowling alley gutters, parts for TV and Hi-Fi cabinets and piano parts.



# The Furniture Making Era





In 1851 the government of Upper Canada sent Surveyors to Saugeen Township to divide 35,000 acres of bushland into 100 acre farm lots, Alex Wallace and his wife Mary-Ann arrived as the first settlers in Saugeen Township, building a log house on Concession 1.

BCMCC, Map of Saugeen Township



BCMCC, Early farmer cutting a log into

Early in 1852, Mr. Wallace and two friends walked 2 yokes of oxen and 4 cows from Guelph up the Garafraxa Road, past Chatsworth and crossed on a trail through what today would be Tara and Burgoyne. Alexander McNabb, the Crown Land Agent, opened his office at the mouth of the Saugeen River and began the sale of farm plots for 2 shillings (about \$2) per acre. Sales went quickly and in January 1854 the population had grown and the Township was granted municipal standing. A five-member council was elected with McNabb being the first Reeve.

Trails became roads enabling farmers to sell their farm products to the growing villages of Southampton and Port Elgin. By 1856 overland mail was delivered on trails that developed into the Elora Road and Goderich Road. By the 1860's daily ship service from Goderich allowed the sale of farm products and lumber beyond the local community, greatly enhancing the local economy.

In 1873 with the arrival of the railway, farmers cleared more land to increase livestock production in order to satisfy the demands of the rapidly growing cities in Southern Ontario. Stockyards opened in Turners and Port Elgin as farmers increased livestock shipments.

Volume of land worked was initially dependent on the ability of horses, oxen and basic farm equipment but by the early 1900's the steam and gas-powered equipment revolution significantly increased productivity.

Following WWII, it became known that the land in Saugeen Township was suitable for growing tobacco. By 1948 there were two farms growing the high value crop and very rapidly other farms converted to tobacco. The industry flourished generating seasonal work. By 1972 there were 27 tobacco farms identified with over 1,000 acres growing the crop in Saugeen and just over the River in Amabel and Arran. The crop value exceeded \$1,000,000 making it a major part of the local economy. The end came just as quickly and by the late 70's the farms had been converted to other crops. The Tobacco Era Had Ended!

In the 50's and 60's government regulations and quotas for dairy and fowl pressured the existence of the small family farm. Some farmers chose to expand, rotating between cash crops of corn, beans and wheat, while others started working at places such as Ontario Hydro to supplement their declining farm incomes. The era of the 100-acre family farm in Saugeen Township was ending.

Today the majority of land is used for cash crops while a handful of large beef operations remain with a few dairy, pig, sheep and chicken operations.

Farming remains a big part of the economy of our community, but it has changed remarkably since its beginnings in the 1850's.



BCMCC, Stump removed



BCMCC, Standing with farm machinery



BCMCC, Cutting and binding the grain



BCMCC, Sparto farm



BCMCC, Adamsville barn raising



BCMCC, Pulling hay in barn



BCMCC, Taking in hay



BCMCC, Jacob Schwies farm

For more information on this or other historical documentation contact: [brucemuseum.ca](http://brucemuseum.ca)



# The History of Agriculture in Saugeen Township





The Knowles Family, 1910

Southampton's father of tourism was William F. Knowles, born in Palmerston in 1860. As a baggageman on the Grand Trunk Railway, he stopped often in Southampton, admired the beauty of the beach and dreamed of a summer resort with hotel and other attractions.

He bought the "Knowles Block"; the lakefront land bounded by Morpeth, Huron and Chantry View (formerly Wellington) and, in 1888, opened the Park Hotel. It eventually grew from six rooms to 38 and was also known as the Lakeside Inn, Lakeview and finally The Breakers.

William and Eliza Knowles had three sons: Albert, William ("Biscuit") and Russell, and four daughters, Lydia, Irene, Lulu and Maude. The Park was always busy thanks to Mrs. Knowles' wonderful whitefish dinners, tea biscuits and pies.

Knowles set about building cottages on his land—a dozen by 1910. Lumber lay near at hand: he would get his young sons up at the crack of dawn to salvage wood washed ashore after falling off boats from the lumber mill opposite Chantry Island.

Families came by train and quickly filled the Knowles' cottages. In 1921 rent was \$25 for the season.

Knowles named some cottages after his daughters: Lydia, Maude and Irene & Lulu, a double cottage. When Knowles died of a heart attack in 1918, Eliza, Irene and Lulu continued to run the hotel with the help of Russell.

The Knowles built a Dance Pavilion and brought in well-known orchestras such as the Guy Lombardo. The pavilion opened around 1922 with the music of the Southampton Rayner Dance Band. When Ferde Mowry played—1935 to 1942—they changed the name to Embassy Pavilion, after Mowry's dance hall in Toronto.

By 1938 Mrs. Knowles could no longer manage the hotel, so Biscuit and his wife Irene took over.

With the big band era fading, Biscuit decided to close the pavilion in 1942 and converted it to guest rooms.

When Mrs. Knowles died in 1948, each of the Knowles' children inherited the cottages: one on the beach and one on Knowles Lane. As a result, the Irene & Lulu was divided into two, by simply removing two feet down the centre. The hotel was also sold to Larry and Elsie Smith, who in turn sold it in 1970 to Robert and Marnie Cammidge. It was closed in 1991 and the 103-year-old hotel was torn down.

As of 2008, Biscuit's daughter, Arlene, still lives in the cottage named Killarney and her grandchildren are the fifth generation to have lived there.



Dance Pavilion



Maude



Lydia



Unidentified man in front of the Dance Pavilion



Killarney



Irene & Lulu



The Park Hotel



Canadian Heritage

Patrimoine canadien

Canada



BRUCE COUNTY MUSEUM & CULTURAL CENTRE



# The Knowles Block



Back of the red brick station building

An attractive red brick building with multiple-hip roof and central gable, the old train station in Southampton was built in 1906. This was the northern terminus of the Wellington, Grey and Bruce line from Guelph to Lake Huron. Railway companies raced each other to lay track to the lake ports, to capture the trade in lumber, cattle and grain. The Southampton terminus had two spur lines. One took freight cars across the beach and onto the Short Dock. A second ran to the Hepworth Furniture factory. The line to Southampton became part of the Grand Trunk Railway in 1893, and Canadian National Railway in 1923.

The start of train service in 1872 injected new life into the town. Mail started arriving daily. Families discovered the delights of this lakeside resort town and arrived in packed coaches for their summer holiday at a cottage or small hotel. Southampton resident Margaret Large remembers that "when we arrived in 1921 we walked from the railway station to the cottage. We always stopped at the Park Hotel for a visit with Mrs. Knowles and a piece of pie and paid our rent of \$25.00 for the season." When the famous Brock McAulay rink arrived on the late train from the International Bonspiel in Winnipeg in 1912, they were met at the station by a torchlight procession.

Train travel could be arduous, however. A travelling salesman complained in 1907 of the tedium of leaving Toronto at 4 p.m. and not seeing Southampton station before 1 a.m.

Southampton's flourishing fishing industry depended on the train. Wooden boxes full of whitefish and herring packed in ice had to be delivered to the station in time for a 6 a.m. departure. Furniture factories benefited too, bringing in lumber by rail, and shipping out dining room and bedroom furniture.

As cars and trucks took over the railway's role, branch lines fell into decline. The last mail delivery was in 1956 and CN ended passenger service in 1970. Then all operations from Port Elgin to Southampton were suspended in 1980 because of "unsafe track conditions" and the track abandoned in 1983. The old railroad station became a restaurant in 1984. In 1995 the building became the popular Grosvenor's Restaurant, before converting the old railroad station into a residential property. To this date, the old station remains a private residence.

The train has gone but the right-of-way lives on as the Rail Trail. Officially opened on July 15, 2006, it is now used for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.



On the Train Station steps



Steam engine crossing the Saugeen River at Pinery bridge in Southampton



Steam engine crossing the Saugeen River at Pinery bridge in Southampton



Tourists arriving in Southampton by train

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# The Old Train Station

