

The Plank Road

A survey of farm effects in Walpole Township made as early as 1794, lists among other things, "a wagon kept for pleasure only." We wonder about that pleasure wagon, who owned it and where he drove it.

By the 1830's the people of Hamilton and Port Dover were tired of detouring through Brantford every time they wanted to visit one another. On December 22, 1832, the Legislative Assembly received the petition of Peter Hunter Hamilton (half-brother of George Hamilton, after whom the city was named), with 109 others, residents of the Gore, London and Niagara Districts, praying that ways and means might be devised for continuing the Glanford road from Crawford's mills, on the Grand River, towards Port Dover, on Lake Erie, until it intersected the main road leading from Niagara through Canboro to the Talbot settlement. (This would be the intersection of No. 3 Highway at Jarvis). They also prayed that means might be taken to procure the sale of a portion of the Indian lands through which the road would pass to actual settlers, in order that they might keep it in repair by statute labour. The law respecting statute labour at that time required that every able-bodied man between the ages of 21 and 50 should do three days' road work a year.

Shortly after 1830 the Government decided, with the consent of the chiefs, to sell all the remaining portions of the reservation in Haldimand, (Canboro, Moulton and Sherbrooke Townships having already been disposed of) except a small portion of Oneida, and invest the proceeds for the benefit of the Indians, paying interest on the investment in guns, blankets, ammunition, etc.

The Act to authorize the construction of a road from

Hamilton to Port Dover was passed on March 6, 1834. The road was to be one chain wide. The first stage in road-making was to blaze a trail through the bush, following an Indian path or taking a line from the survey. A surveyor then traced the route in detail and was followed by men who cut down trees and cleared the way.

In 1835 Dr. Thomas Rolph recounts that he travelled from Dunnville to Caledonia and thence to Hamilton, for there were stage coaches running from Caledonia to Hamilton before the advent of the plank road. Plank roads were coming into fashion all over the continent in the 1830's and the first one in Canada was laid in 1835-6, running east out of Toronto.

We may get an idea of the joys of early travel before the plank road era from Mrs. Anna Jamieson's lively account of a journey near Hamilton in 1837:

"We often sank in mud-holes above the axle-tree; then over trunks of trees laid across swamps, called here corduroy roads. A wheel here and there, or a broken shaft lying by the roadside, told of former wrecks and disasters. In some places they had, in desperation, flung huge boughs of oak into the mud abyss and covered them with clay and sod, the rich green foliage projecting on either side. This sort of contrivance would sometimes give way and we were nearly precipitated in the midst. By the time we arrived at our destination, my hands were swelled and blistered by continually grasping with all my strength an iron bar in front of my vehicle, to prevent myself from being flung out."

But if civilization had extended to the north bank of the Grand, south of the river was still wilderness. On

January 18, 1841, that part of the Township of Oneida through which the road was to run was ceded by the Indians and not until the next summer was the township surveyed by William Walker. When the Cornishman, Thomas Beswetherick, and his family, the first settlers at Hagersville, struck southward from Caledonia, in June, 1842, they followed the blazes which marked the course of the proposed new road and chopped a trail ahead of the wagon.

Indian Line

Zigzagging across the country in a general southeast-northwest direction run the Indian Lines, presumably following the course of the Grand River, six miles out on either side. The northerly Indian Line eventually became the boundary between the counties of Wentworth and Haldimand; the southerly line runs from the Rainham road near Dunnville and ends at the Cockshutt road near Brantford.

At the junction of this road with the Hamilton-Port Dover plank road is situated the village of Hagersville and the old roads are known in the village as King and Main streets.

The area now known as Haldimand County was purchased by treaty from the Indians in 1832 and thrown open for settlement. Still the heavily wooded interior did not grow, lacking roads and drainage. In 1850 it was raised to the status of a county and granted local self-government, with county town at Cayuga. Its ten townships are as follows: Seneca, Oneida, Walpole, Rainham, North and South Cayuga, Canboro, Dunn, Moulton and Sherbrooke.



The Rue brothers have been busy repairing and building in Hagersville lately for businessmen who are redecorating and modernizing their stores for more customer convenience. (Staff Photo)



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WEST HALDIMAND RECORD

Hagersville Police Progressing With The Times

Hagersville police is courteous and things. Roy Holden.

is also the consensus of the residents of Holden says like other police he has his own

special way about doing

The force has a strength of four but each year has laboured under a shortage while one of its police officers is away training at the Police College in Aylmer.

Chief Holden said the department could use five men now to take care of police duties in the village, but we will probably need at least a total of seven if the population climbs in the near future, according to predictions.

He said at present each of his officers work 40 hour weeks with two days off which in effect cuts his strength to two men while the one is at college.

While on duty officers work 12 hour shifts which is another reason we could use another man, he said.

Chief Holden predicts the force could get by with normal equipment even if Hagersville's population doubles in the next few years.

"We would probably need another cruiser as well as radio equipment for it to cover an increased urban area," he said.

Chief Holden thinks all municipal forces will one day be directed from a regional headquarters.

He said under such a system the OPP would probably still be responsible for rural areas while regional police would be responsible for policing urban areas.

He said in summing up his predictions for the future

that most of the urban forces in the area have good departments and will be a good nucleus on which to build bigger units when it becomes necessary.

Governor Haldimand

The territory south of the Grand River was aptly called Haldimand, after Sir Frederick Haldimand, a Swiss soldier of fortune, who was born in 1721 and died in 1791. He took service with the British in the American War of Independence. In 1773 General Haldimand was appointed General Governor in Chief in America and in 1777 he succeeded Sir Guy Carleton (Lord Dorchester), as Governor of Canada.

The Chippawas, or Ojibwas, were the original inhabitants of the area but Sir Frederick Haldimand granted the Grand River lands to the Mohawk Iroquois, by an act passed on October 24, 1784, a grant of 310,391 acres. Mohawk Iroquois, by an act passed on October 24, 1784, a grant of 310,391

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Bond Sales \$34.7 Million

TORONTO - A total of \$34,796,000 in sales of the 1970-71 series of Canada Savings Bonds through the payroll savings plan has been achieved to date by Ontario organizers in the current campaign.

C.S.B. headquarters here reported today that 73,365 applications already have been processed. It also noted that 157 establishments have already exceeded their last year's total purchases by employees by more than \$1,419,000. Of these, 21 are offering Canada Savings Bonds through the payroll savings plan for the first time.

The C.S.B. payroll savings campaign is being conducted in more than 2,500 establishments throughout the province by a 41-man force of organizers

headed by campaign co-directors A. F. Francis of Toronto and D. R. Dattels of Kitchener. This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of Canada Saving Bonds.

Campaign officials are hopeful of an increase in C.S.B. purchases through the payroll savings plan over last year's sales in Ontario which amounted to \$95-million from 215,000 applications.

The 1970-71 series will be sold at par until November 13.

The new series provides an annual average yield of seven and three-quarter percent if held to maturity in 11 years.

Sales to date in the Lincoln and Haldimand counties area totals \$412,000. Organizer for the area is Murray Taylor.

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