

The Village of Jarvis by Keith Lysch

The early history of the village of Jarvis, seems to be somewhat lacking in records, that I have been privileged to examine.

In the early 1830's, a pioneer settled by the side of an Indian trail, that connected Hamilton and Port Dover and erected a cabin and Blacksmith Shop, and it is from this man, Wm. Jarvis, that the village took it's name. This shop was located where the Fish Hardware now stands. A short time later a man by the name of Shearman, erected a hotel or inn on the opposite side of the trail, and this was to become known as Shearman House, occupying about the same location as the present Imperial Oil Station. Records conflict as to whether Jarvis, or Shearman settled here first, but we may assume from the fact that the name Jarvis was retained, that Wm. Jarvis was the first resident. It is believed that Shearman later bought out Jarvis and carried on the Blacksmithing in conjunction with his inn.

The surrounding district at that time was entirely bush. The Township of Walpole was established, but the survey marking the concessions were not complete until 1840. Work on the Plank Road had begun, and the terrific task of building a road of plank, from the city of Hamilton to Port Dover took many years, and in the late forties the road was completed, and a toll gate was erected at Jarvis. This gate was operated by W. C. Shannon. The toll which was paid in English currency was approximately ten cents. The Shannons became a well known and respected family in the community.

Settlers had commenced to move into the Township, and the Jones family had established a homestead on what is now the George Reynolds farm. As the area became more populated, the need of a church was realized, and Mr. Jones donated a piece of his property for this purpose, and the first church in the area was erected in the year 1846. This old church is the present Parish Hall of St. Paul's Anglican Church. Previous to it's erection services were held in Mr. Jones's home whenever the Rev. Bold Cudmore Hill of York, visited the area.

With the completion of the Plank Road, travel was much easier, and Jarvis located as it was at the junction of the Plank Road, and Talbot Street, soon established itself, as a convenient stopover point. This no doubt accounts for the fact that one hotel advertised Rye Whiskey at 3 cents a glass or two for 5 cents.

As the village grew the need for a new school was felt. This was built on the property now occupied by the Lundy, and Henderson Garage. The earliest records of the Jarvis Public School board are dated 1857. Pictures, and records show that in 1865 Jarvis was a busy little village. The first store had been opened by Mr. John Gowan, and located on the present site of the Bank of Commerce.

The story is that way back there in 1909 a population count was taken in the Village of Jarvis on Fall Fair Day and so and behold the count was sufficient for Jarvis to seek Municipal Status. And ever since that year Jarvis has elected its own municipal Council and has been numbered among the municipalities of the County of Haldimand.

It is doubtful, even yet, if the population of the Village has exceeded the population figure the Assessment Commissioner came up with away back in 1910. There was a surge of new faces in the community during the war years when many Servicemen and their wives found accommodations in the Village while they were training at No. 1 Bombing and Gunnery School and No. 6 Service Training and Flying School. For two decades thereafter, however, Jarvis retained that comfortable small Village status that, despite opinions to the contrary, has something to be said for it.

Life is progress and must be measured in those terms. That is why, when the opportunity presented itself to obtain a water supply for the Village, there were people who were anxious to grasp for that valuable asset. And attain it they did. Along with the water supply from Lake Erie was even the more progressive move to provide the Village with a sewage system. This was achieved

Everyone concerned with these matters should stop and carefully analyse all aspects of the matter. The Province is thinking in bigger terms than the local municipalities. This does not necessarily mean they are right and the local planners are wrong. It is, however, a fact that our Provincial authorities are thinking only in regional terms and it seems inevitable that their decisions will take priority in our future.

While we should never arbitrarily submit to a judgement

that we disagree with, it is important that we do not selfishly or narrow minded seek for our own advantage to the detriment of others. Planning for this area calls for the wisdom of a Solomon and it seems to us that Solomon has not yet appeared.

at a cost that would have made a metropolitan area, like Toronto, shudder. Jarvis came through, however, and these facilities are now a fact.

That is basically why those responsible for this improvement in our living status wants the surge to continue. That is why municipal officials want to see the Village expand — to broaden its tax base and to go on to bigger and better things.

The fact that Ontario Hydro and the Steel Co. of Canada have come in to the area, only whets the appetite of those who see bigger and better things ahead. Why shouldn't they? There can be no doubt that the whole area — not only Jarvis — but for miles around is going to see drastic changes in the years ahead. Jarvis, naturally, and the Township of Walpole, want to be a part of this great development, and indeed they will be.

Both municipalities have spent time and money trying to plan such a development that will be in the best interests of both. Their plans to this point are nullified by the lack of approval of higher authority — the Provincial Government. This is a bitter pill to adjust to on the part of those who envision great things in the local municipalities.