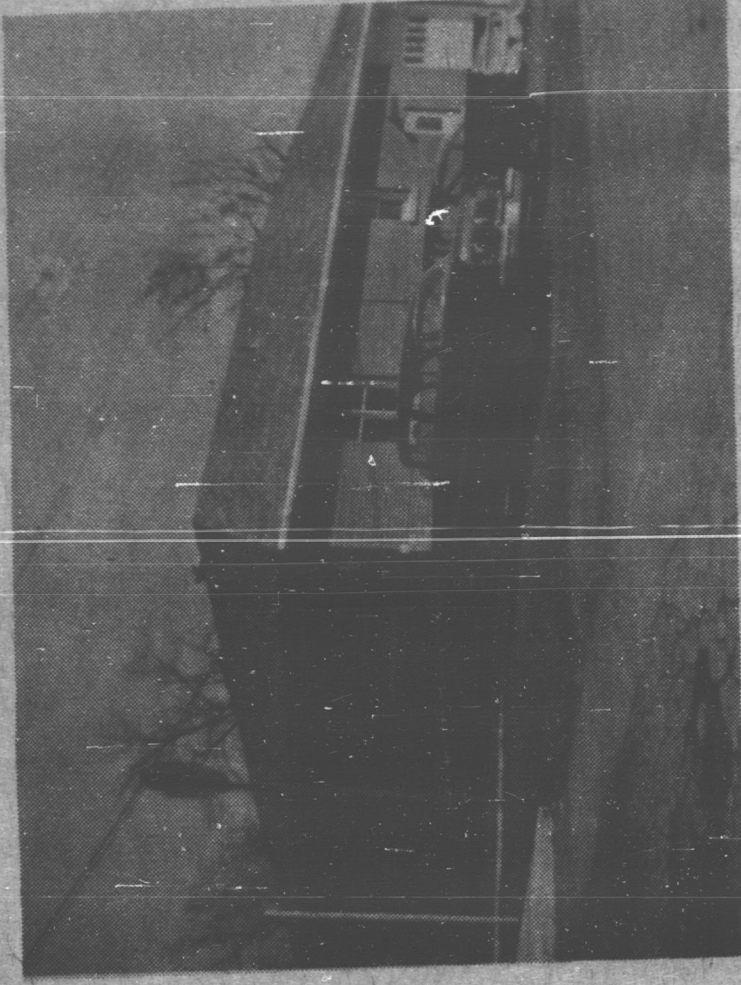
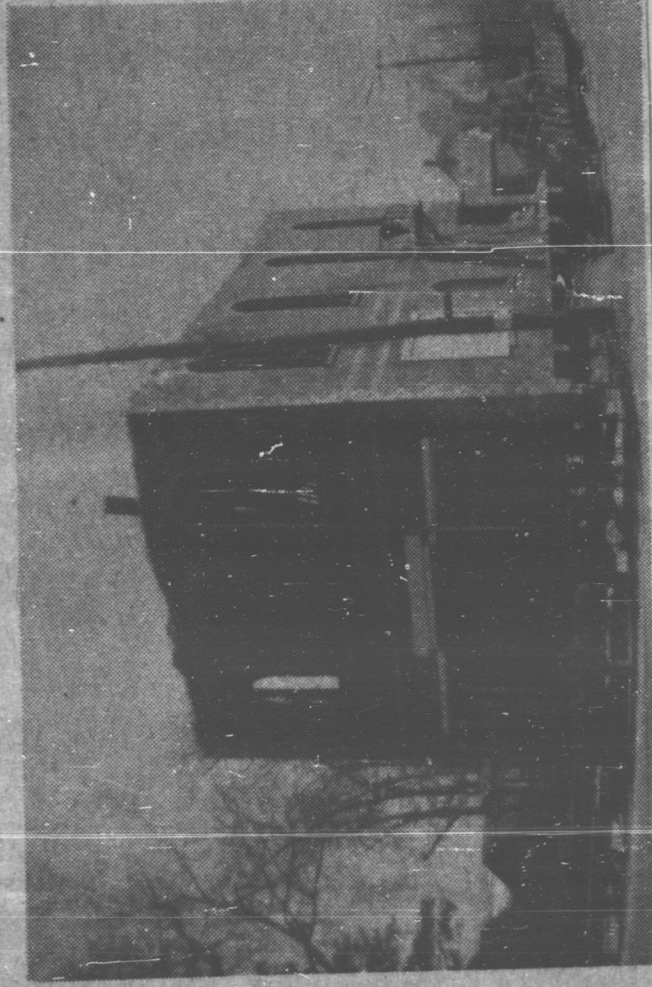


Chambers Hall To Municipal Building



by Jessie Miller
Chambers Hall was a large and handsome brick structure, three storeys' high on the corner of Talbot and Park Streets. It was built by William Chambers after the Great Fire of 1873. These were the 'Horse and buggy days' and a fine equipage was the status symbol as the motor car is today.

Mr. Chambers went into the carriage business with his brother-in-law, Mr. Sowter and their building housed the carriage and harness business on the ground floor. The display room was at first on the second floor, which later housed the village council where at most every event of public interest was carried out. Travelling shows, public meetings, dances, concerts, to say nothing of election speakers and other types of entertainment.

I remember "Uncle Tom's Cabin" live in 1915, when Eliza escaped into Canada by jumping from ice cake to ice cake. My oldest child aged 3 years, not understanding the serious implications though the jumping over the ice was a comic act and that it was up to him to show appreciation to the act. The third floor was the Oddfellows Hall and fitted up in pomp and circumstance. In later years, the scouts also used the Oddfellows room.

To go back to the carriage business, Mr. Chambers dissolved partnership with Mr. Sowter about 1880. Mr. Sowter went into "Buggies" with Mr. Dan Steele - grandfather of Mrs. Winnifred Eadie. The Chambers firm dealt in better class equipment. Maybe Steel & Sowter did too. Sleighs carriages and wagons were resplendent and not only light harness, but fine high collars, resplendent with tasselled collars and rosettes were worn by Clydes-

dales and Percherons, while tails and manes were braided and feathered and ankles groomed to a finish.

A true story is told of a spoiled young man on the Nanticoke road who went into Chambers Hall and ordered a set of silver mounted harness and cutter deluxe for Christmas. The carriage maker went to the father and asked if he wished to pay for such expensive gear. The father answered quite haughtily "Haven't I always paid you for

everything my family bought?" Yes said the carriage maker, "Then have it ready for him for Christmas." Spoiled boys date back many

generations.

As all things rise and wane, the carriage trade is a thing of the past. Gordon and Andrew Miller had a general store, "Miller Bros."

in the once proud hall. They handled everything from hats to shoes wallpaper and groceries. Then, in no time, they were beyond working and passed away. Twice I remember the elections being held in the emmiv store. The gaol was in the back, also the library books in storage.

Peter Banks, blacksmith, locked up the unemployed, fed them their supper and breakfast. He was one of the favourites who was liked by the cold and hungry. There then came a time when the town fathers decided that Chambers Hall had outlived its time. The present, neat, attractive and efficient hall, built on the old site, with offices for Walpole and Jarvis Councils, a basement room for Scouts, Cubs, etc., as well as public meetings and housing for fire fighting equipment, fire alarm and town business in general was built.

Constable on Duty 1936

Commencing the first of the year, Constable Banks assumed his duties in the Village. He patrols the street approximately seven hours each night throughout the winter months and is at the call of the council at any time throughout the twenty-four hours of the day. In view of the danger of fire, alone, it is a feeling of contentment to know that someone is on the lookout through the winter months.