

# Selborne Village Lost Industries To Become Absorbed By Pt. Stanley

*Few in the present generation are aware of the fact that a little more than a mile upstream from the present village of Port Stanley there once existed a thriving little community known as Selborne. Practically no traces remain of this settlement which the writer described in a previous instalment. The story, concluded herewith, tells of the gradual decline of this early hamlet.*

By Leslie R. Gray

Thomas Daniels purchased half an acre in 1834 and James Meek bought a slightly larger lot. In 1835 William Mason bought a quarter acre on which to build his woolen-mill. In 1837 Andrew McKenzie bought a small lot next to David Anderson's tavern, but in 1840 sold it to James Turville who kept a general store there. This was near the main corner of the village and was situated at the north-east corner of lot 16, second range north of the lake road, and took in the road allowance between Yarmouth and Southwold Townships, as the road at this point took a different course. In 1837 John Meek also purchased a quarter acre lot in the village.

Others with property in or near Selborne were: Thomas Hutchison, William Meek, William Burgess and his wife Martha, Adolphus Urlin, Hugh Stevens, William H. Allworth, William Burnside, Samuel Farr, and William Forsyth.

The children of the pioneer Captain Joseph Smith all lived in the vicinity. At Joseph's death the lots were divided among his children. William Smith was the only surviving son, but it is believed that another son Charles, who predeceased the father, married Louisa Zavitz, the daughter of Jesse Zavitz and left two children, Charles Joseph Smith, and Mary Josephine Smith. The Captain's daughters were Eliza, who married Robert Thompson; Jane, wife of James Begg; Sarah, Mrs. John W. Winemute; and Mary, wife of Bryce Thompson.

Looking at Kettle Creek today it is difficult to believe that in those early days lake boats threaded their way through its many windings to an extensive dock at Selborne, which served the various industries of the village. The river must surely have been wider and deeper, and the one and a half mile sail from Port Stanley must have been delightful, with low pleasant fields running down to the water's edge, and wooded hills of greasy beauty almost surrounding this fertile valley.

But all was not beauty at Selborne. Where a slight odor of sulphur water is sometimes noticed today, there was a sulphur spring of some extent. The idea of establishing a health spa at Selborne was considered,

to take advantage of the healing powers of these waters. This was never developed. Instead it may be that the unpleasant sulphur odour may have had something to do with the inhabitants of the village moving from this spot.

James Westland was more interested in the business features of Selborne than in its beauty. After striving for about two years to establish a general store in Morpeth he heard of an opportunity in Selborne, no doubt through his wife's relatives the Zavitzes and Minors, whom they frequently visited. Although he does not say so in his diary, he apparently rented a store from James Turville, who at an earlier date was described in land records as a merchant with an acre or so of land near Selborne's main corner.

Westland was closely associated with the Turvilles, and his first diary gives an account of an early tragedy at Selborne. Once again his entries are disappointingly brief, as he says only:

1850—March 21, Fishing to Firth's pond; Turville's child died today, March 23, Turville's child buried; March 26, Vaccinated J.T.W. (his two year old son); March 27, Turville's Richard died. Dr. Moore here, J.T. taken sick. March 28, Attended funeral, very sick, took pills at night; March 29, Rather better; April 2, J.T. died; April 4, J. Turville buried.

What a long two weeks of agony is compressed into those few short words. This plague—the word vaccinated would indicate smallpox—wiped out half of this family of six within these few days. T. G. Turville, a great-grandson of James (the J. Turville mentioned above), who resides a short distance north of old Selborne, says that family tradition blames the plague on one of the lake vessels bringing the disease into port.

Business in Selborne in 1851, as shown by census records in the Canadian Archives, indicates no great prosperity, although the number of industries makes it appear to have been a thriving village. Richard Turville's mill, nearby, valued at £1,000, capable of grinding twenty barrels a day, was recorded as making an annual profit of £125. Samuel Mason's woolen factory of £2,000 value produced only £100 annually. John Waddell's distillery was vacant for want of capital to carry it on.

Port Stanley in the meantime was developing rapidly. Because of the excellent dock facilities at the harbor mouth, the Selborne docks soon fell into disuse. A serious flood in 1855 which changed the course of the river may have affected its navigability

and cut Selborne's shipping trade seriously. That Port Stanley was a major port is shown by its export figure of £50,000 in 1849. About 1850 Capt. Joseph Smith subdivided part of the 2,200-acre tract he had purchased from Mahlon Burwell in 1822, hopefully marking it off into village lots which were divided among his children. Part of this property was in the village of Selborne, but the subdivision was given the name of Port Stanley North. The South part, from the present Warren Street north about two blocks, developed into home sites, but most of the property, on both banks of the river, is still farm land. Port Stanley's natural location was so superior to Selborne's that the business section of the latter soon disappeared completely. The Northern section of Selborne reverted to farm land and the southern part was soon absorbed in growing Port Stanley.

Business in Selborne had already started on the down grade by the time Westland opened his store. In 1850, as Spring advanced, sales did not improve as he had expected. He went out looking for customers and on May 9th, recorded, 'Went to harbor, no encouragement there for business.' Much of his time was spent planting vegetables and flowers, or fishing for bass in the nearby creek.

The vacation trade that came to Port Stanley probably passed Selborne by, for on July 6th, when summer business today would be at its height, the diary shows Westland packing to move everything to London. On July 10th he writes, 'Engaged Cattanaach for one load.' July 11th. 'Left Selborne with two loads of goods, scorching hot. Arrived in London before dark.' July 12th. 'Unloaded C's load and left for Selborne again with J. Waddell, Slept at Turvilles'.

London proved to be an inhospitable town, for after he had unpacked his goods, put his new store in order, and was preparing to open for business, his creditors descended on him and forced him into bankruptcy before he had a chance to display his wares.

His last mention of Selborne was in October 1850 when he returned to dig some of the potatoes he had hopefully planted in the Spring. His entries read:

1850—October 3, Stayed at Mrs. Turville's, very kind; Oct. 4, Started home at 4 a.m. Balky horse. Got home about 11; Oct. 5, Went to work at Lawson and Burgess.

So ends James Westland's Selborne venture. No doubt others experienced similar discouragement, for by 1855 the village was practically deserted, and later on, ploughed fields replaced the village streets.

From the "Cleveland Plaindealer."

We have never had so pleasant a Route for travellers bound for Montreal and Quebec, as that offered by our steamer and Railway facilities this season. Cleveland is highly favoured in this respect- We have a daily opportunity to take a good steamer for Port Stanley-The Telegraph-Capt. Barrow, or the iron steamer Downawk-Capt. Hollywood, leaving in the late evening. You reach Port Stanley, after a pleasant night's rest take the L.&P.S.R.R., one of the best built and most safely conducted road in the country-ride 22 miles to London, breakfast, then by Great Western to Hamilton-dinner-thence down the most interesting and charming route to Montreal. The novelty and interest which attends this route to Montreal is an attraction which cannot fail to pay the tourist and business man."

*What paper?*

Oct. 15/57- Two ships laden with iron for the Grand Trunk R.R. are on their way to Port Stanley. The iron will be carried by the L&P.S.R.  
 Aug. 20th. a citizen from London visited Port and reported that the Port stores had a well selected variety of goods especially Mr. Cruthers.

" Suspension bridge was blown away.

Notice " All deeds should be registered.

Jan/57--- -A small gold key found at the "Cotton Ball at Port.

Nov/57 By an Act of Parliament, it was enacted that accounts of any public office or department, render all accounts in dollars and cents after Dec. 31st, 1857.

Nov/57-----The accession of Jno. A. Mac Donald to the Premiership.  
 A meeting here the same night. It does not say of which party, but that goes without saying.  
 Headed-----

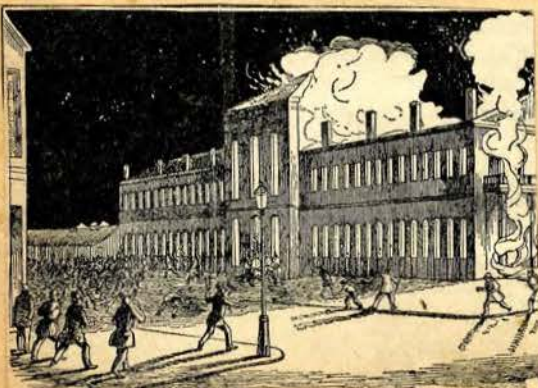
A Triumphant Success- Public Meeting-  
 Mr. Geo. Williams in the Chair. All resolutions unanimously adapted. One motion was moved by Samuel Price Esq. and it was seconded by Jno. H. Davidson Esq.

March/58--- Some one entered and desecrated the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches and also destroyed a grave-stone. Citizens met at Draper's Tavern. Dr. Daniel was in the chair and the audience was addressed by Mr Sam. Price, Rev. Jas. Mockridge and others. A subscription was opened and 130 dollars raised. It was moved by Mr. Jas. Briody and seconded by Robt. Thomson that "The Dispatch" publish the proceedings in its weekly issue.

May 20/58 There was a discussion in Parliament to make Ottawa the seat of Government instead of meeting alternately at Toronto and Quebec.

Here is a list of letters listed, "not called for" -Mr. Sam. Price, Post Master. See if any of your relatives are among them.

- |                                     |                       |                      |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Becheur Lawrence                    | Medley T.W.           | Mills Jas.           |
| Mc Pherson Hugh                     | McCallum L.           | Mc Mullen Mr.        |
| Mc Cane Elizabeth                   | Mc Kerr Alex          | Mc Farlane Capt.     |
| Parker Wm. H. (probably at Dexter.) | Perkins Jas.          | Parker Watson        |
| Percival Geo.                       | Robb Miss.            | Ross Wm.             |
| Rosky Emanuel                       | Simpson Irwin         | Reid. Wm.            |
| Steel Mrs. Alex                     |                       | Thair Rev. Sam.      |
| Teetzel David                       | Waite Robt.           | Wilson Jas. Jr.      |
| Vakley Wm.                          | Williams Hiram        | Young David          |
| Anglin Capt Jno.                    | Allen Geo.            | Atkinson Mr.         |
| Braddon Wm.                         | Baker Capt. Geo.      | Crane Joann a        |
| Crane Martha                        | Carey Jno.            | Cattilla Joe         |
| Campbell Joe                        | Deming Prosper        | Dues Peter           |
| Dorn Cathern                        | Davidson Ghas.        | Elmore Henry         |
| Everts Henry                        | Francomb Mrs. Bridget | Fitzgear Mrs Bridgit |
|                                     |                       | Glover Mr.           |



THE BURNING OF THE PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS AT MONTREAL

Places of Business on

Joseph St.-Colborne St. and Bridge St.

Note- use the Map and you will see the numbers corresponding to those given below.

I-Built by E. Ermitinger in 1842-

- a-Jno Price
- b-Wade&Moore
- c-Ralph Philps
- d-Henry Arkell
- e-Jas. Findlay
- f-W.O. Pollock
- g-Jno. McFarlane
- h-Chas. Ead
- i-W.M. Berry
- j- W.Wheaton-- who moved the building across the street.

2-

- a-Boot and Shoe Store-J.A. West
- b-Duncan Cameron
- c-Harness Shop-Geo. Allen

3-

- a-Chas. Ead
- b-T. Golding
- c-Geo. Emery-Baker
- d-Harley Taylor-Baker (Father of Selborne Taylor)
- e-Wherry & Bell (W.M. Bell)

4-

- a-Hope & Hodge
- b-A.E. Hodge
- c-Hon Isaac Buchanan
- d-Jas. Findlay
- e-Wm Page
- f-Wm. Thomas
- g-Walter Mitchell
- h-Joe Burke
- i-Mc Intyre

5- General Store-John Findlay-down--L.O.L. Lodge -up stairs

6-Built in 1852-

- a-Jas. McPherson
- b-Jas. Jackson
- c-Henry Arkell

fire-swept in 1887 -Rebuilt

- a-Moore & May
- b- Wm. Berry
- c Bert Day
- d-Walter Mitchell
- e- F.R. Dale
- f-R. Roush - Wimpy

7-Used as an office for the resident Doctor-burned and rebuilt for Dr. Leach by Andrew Hepburn.  
Locke's

8-

Philip Virgus -Shoemaker and across the street just north of Mrs. L. Moore's was another shoemaker-Jas Fitzgerald.

9-

General Store-

- a-Sam. Price
- b-Jno. Price (now Garded Inn) - DAY

10-Harness Shop-Mathew Berry (First husband of Mrs. Andrew Hepburn)

11-Webb & Doyle- burned-east of Community Hall

12- General Store-Benj. Lloyd- then Richard Byrnes for hotel  
Hotel-Mrs Taylor-called Commercial House-now Mr. Burke's.  
Mr. Lilly was a tailor, also Mr. Hector Ross -then Mr. W. Bell

*Diapers*

TWO BUSINESS SECTIONS IN THE VILLAGE.

Up to 1855, there were two business sections in the village, namely Selborne at the north and south at the foot of Maine St. Some of the places of Business in the latter section were built on piles, over the water.

Now these two sections, which had grown up side by side, through the years, disappeared about the same time, as if by the hand of Fate. The terrible flood of 1855 destroyed much of Selborne and a disastrous fire at the waterfront swept away that portion, about the same time.

Here is a list of the firms doing business and the sort of business carried on:

At the Foot of Maine St.

Dry Goods	- Hope, Hodge & Co.	
Grocery	- Pass Bros.	
British North American Hotel	- first owned & built by	
Fine brick store	- Mr. C. Hamilton	
Drug store	- Mr. McPherson	
*Butcher Shop		
*Slaughter House	- Mr. Jno. Batt	
*Garden		
Warehouse	- Mr Henry Bastwick	
Warehouse	- Mr. Geo. Williams	
Large Warehouse	- Hope, Hodge & Co. 1st--later called The Red Warehouse	
	Robt. Thomson-----2nd. owner	
Warehouse	- Hale & Mc. Queen 1st owner	
	Samuel Shepherd-2nd "	
Hotel	- Mrs Essery	
Hotel	- Alex Mc Bride	
The Exchange Hotel	- The Tomlinson's	
Grocery	- Jno. Cruthers	1st owner
	Mr. Orin	2nd "

At Selborne

In 1817--Mr Jas. Hamilton in partnership with Mr. Jno. Warren.

The Talbot Mills--were built by Hamilton & Warren and helped to give employment and gave good service to the countryside.

Note-- this business was destroyed by the current of Kettle Creek Creek.

Grocery Store--built and managed by Jno Wintermute.

Foundry --also run by Mr wintermute.

Hotel-----Mr. David Anderson

Drug store-----Mr. N. Hussie

Two Distilleries.

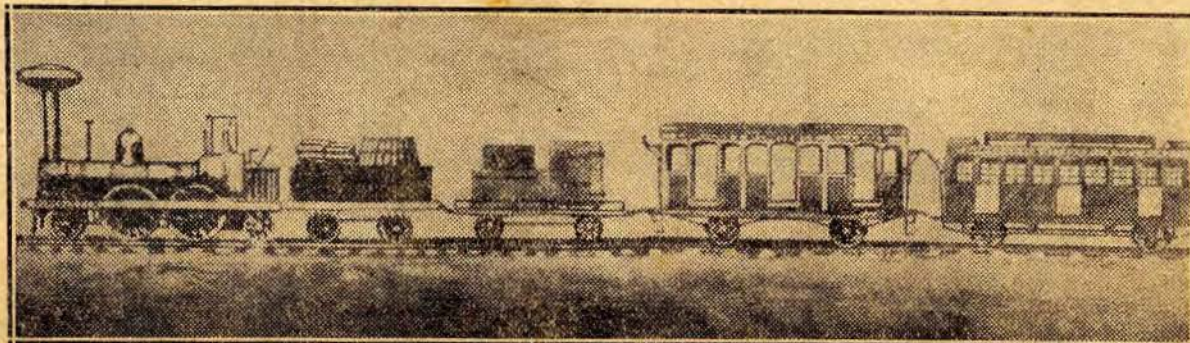
These were the days when the men joked at the hoops instead of the hats the women wore, as this poem will show.

"A lady with a crinoline walked down Fort Stanley street-her feathers fluttered in the air, her hoops stuck out some feet. She walked the earth as if she felt of it no part, and proudly did she step along for pride was in her heart. She did not see a curly dog that walked close by her side, all save the curly tail of which her crinoline did hide. His tail the dog with pleasure shook- it fluttered in the wind and from the lady's crinoline stuck out a foot behind. Some hold held their sides they laughed so hard, and others fairly cried, while many even still confess "they'd like enough to died." But still the lady sailed along in crinoline and pride, And never knew her crinoline had something else inside."

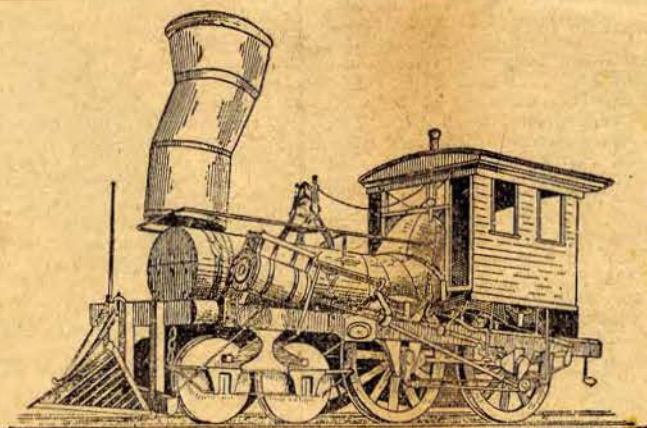


Joy was unconfined in the Victorian era when the L. & P. S. gave London its first iron link to Lake Erie. Picnics were many and well attended and then, as now, the road couldn't always provide enough accommodation. This rare print, the property of Lorne Hartsell, L. & P. S. accountant, depicts a typical day at the lakeside — probably an Irish picnic. The unknown artist has caught the spirit of uninhibited revelry which attended what must have been quite an outing. As can be seen above, folks clambered all over the tops of cars and helped their girl friends in through the windows. Obviously there isn't enough room for everybody, but the revelers on the right don't seem to care. Note the dashing young chap, at upper right, hoisting a magnum of champagne to his lips, while all about mill his companions on pleasure bent. As noted in the accompanying article, picnickers in those days took "baskets of viands" and apparently left cares far behind.

### CANADA'S FIRST TYPE OF RAILWAY TRAIN



THE forerunner of the modern train with its all-steel coaches and luxurious fittings was this primitive means of transportation. Between the engine and the "coaches" were the cars piled high with cordwood and that carrying the two tanks of water.



WHEN railroading on the American continent was in its infancy, wood burners like the "Noah Vibbard" was an early Mohawk & Hudson locomotive, designed and built by David Mathew in 1840. The engine became No. 11 when it was rebuilt at Schenectady in 1853. Rebuilt, it had sixteen by twenty-inch cylinders and sixty-six inch drive wheels and weighed twenty-six and one-half tons. The curious form of smoke stack in slightly altered form was retained on the rebuilt engine.

You can well imagine it was the talk of the town, when in 1853, it was announced that a meeting would be held to discuss the "Building of a Railroad" from London down to the Port.

The meeting was held in Port, on a day you can easily remember, Saint Valentine's Day, 1853. At this meeting a resolution was passed in favour of the project. It was argued that imports and exports could be carried in less time, passengers could be taken in and out with greater comfort, and as wood was becoming scarce and expensive, coal could be brought in from across the lake by a line of steamers. This coal could be used for the making of gas as well as being used for fuel. A cold day in February and the prospect of being carried to London in comfort, would surely give weight to the resolution, Don't you think so?

Meetings had previously been held in St. Thomas and London, and great encouragement had been given to the scheme. St. Thomas passed a by-law to take stock in the venture. It was on May the 21st of the same year, 1853, when the Legislative Assembly meeting in the city of Quebec, gave sanction to the London & Port Stanley Railroad Bill, so you see no time had been lost by the progressive promoters. On the same day, the Stock books were opened at various places in London, in St. Thomas and at the office of D.H. Hale of the Port. The men in charge were authorized to receive subscriptions and to offer ten% on Capital stock.

On June 13th/53, the stock books were again opened and subscriptions solicited, and on Sept. 22nd., the first meeting of the Stockholders was held and Directors appointed. W.D. Hale and Samuel Price were chosen from Port. During the winter of 1854, there were 1850 tons of iron stored in Quebec for shipment in the following Spring, to be used in the new venture. Some of the free stone from Kingston was brought in, also. The contractors were Peerson, Case & Co. and the chief engineer was R.G. Benedict.

In August 1855, the following announcement appeared in the press. "General Annual Meeting of the shareholders of the L.&P.S.R., at the office of the Company, in London, Wed. Sept. 5th. at 12m. -signed- Chas. Monsarret."

note- (This information came from "The St. Thomas Weekly Dispatch", years 1853-54 and 55).

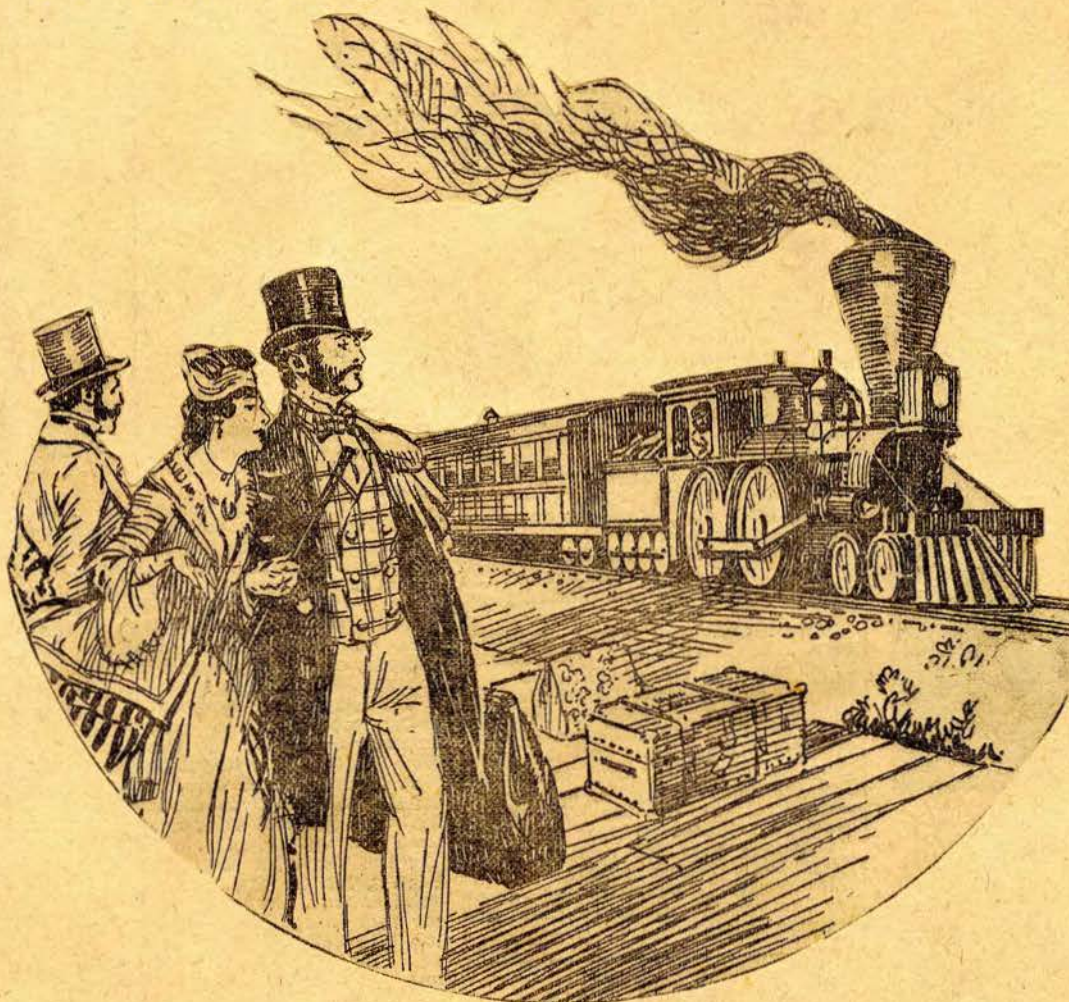
After this meeting, it was reported in the Canadian Free Press under, "Route and State of the Railway" "The track is nearly completed, the heaviest cutting of the route being two miles from the Port, where a powerful steam-shovel capable of dislodging as much earth as 75 men, is working there. A mile from Port, the creek is again spanned with a bridge which has an arch truss of 60 feet. A large quantity of heavy and capable iron rails are now lying at Port. The work must be stopped until a loan of £50,000 is raised to further the work.

More money was finally raised and on Sat. July 6th/56, a trial trip was made. The Directors, the Mayor of London and some guests made up the party. The train was made up of a wood-burning locomotive, (The Murray Anderson), named after the first Mayor of London who had been so instrumental in the building of the road, and ten cars. The cars were of the open type and were trimmed with evergreen boughs to make them more festive. The first car carried the Phoenix Band. They arrived in St. Thomas about 10 a.m., where speeches were made by Mr. E. Ermitinger, the Reeve of St. Thomas and others. Later, the train with 500 passengers arrived at the Kettle Creek bridge (at Selborne) taking one hour for the journey, so that guests might see the beauty of the countryside.

On the return trip, a picnic was held in a field midway between St. Thomas and Port Stanley where all made ready to enjoy themselves. Toasts were given to -The Queen, -The Sheriff of the County, -The Contractors (Messrs Kenny & Phelps) who had worked with such rapidity and skill, - and to Mr. Barnard, -the resident engineer.

- // / THE DREAM COMES TRUE // -

The London and Port Stanley Railroad was completed and an advertisement appeared in "The St. Thomas Dispatch"



LONDON & PORT STANLEY RAILWAY

To Merchants & Forwarders

NEW ROUTE OPENED

For convenience of freight to and from London.

L&P.S.R.--will on the 25th. day of Sept, inst, commence carrying passengers and freight.

A line of steamers from Montreal, touching at Ogdensburgh & Oswego for American freight, will be placed upon the L. & P.S.R. Route.

Also, arrangement for connecting by steamer with Buffalo & Cleveland.

signed W. Bowman  
Supertendent.

THE  
LONDON & PORT STANLEY  
RAILWAY-

Express matter received and dispatched  
to all parts of U.S.A.  
and Canada E and W.  
St. Thomas Agent-Jno. Talbot.  
Connection with Steamer Mowhawk.

- TIME TABLE

After Thurs. Sept. 25th. and until further notice.  
Trains run by London time.

Going SOUTH  
LONDON--Depart

6		London	9.00
6	6	Mc Dougall's	9.24
3	9	Sweeney's	9.40
3	12	McTroup's	9.50
3	15	St. Thomas	ar. 10.06
			de. 10.11
4	19	Hart's	10.21
2	21	Union	10.31
3	24	Port Stanley	10.45
		Port Stanley	de. 3.00
3	3	Union	3.12
2	5	Hart's	3.22
4	9	St. Thomas	ar. 3.37
		St. Thomas	de. 3.45
3	12	Mc Troup's	3.57
3	15	Sweeney's	4.07
3	18	McDougall's	4.19
3	24	London	4.45

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In an advertisement in "The St. Thomas Dispatch", it was stated that Mr. Edgar, the conductor, was a man of pleasing address and a judicial public servant. Of Mr. Hale, the station master, that he was prompt, energetic and a most suitable man for the position.

In April, 1857, it was reported to the press, that the L.&P.S.R. had done a good deal of business. However, there was inability to meet the capital obligations of the Company, as the road had cost 400,000 dollars in excess of the estimated cost. The stock subscribed amounted to 220,000 dollars by the city of London, Middlesex 80,000, Elgin 80,000, St. Thomas 8,500-private stock 27,000.

In 1860, the rolling stock of the company comprised 2 locomotives, 3 passenger cars and 2 baggage cars, the freight cars being of 16,000 pounds capacity. But the continued disability of the company to meet its obligations, gave rise to an agitation to reorganize. The outcome was, that the road was leased to the Great Western R.R. for 20 years, starting Mar. 24th. 1874. This new management changed the tracks from 5 1-2 feet to 4 feet 8 1-2 standards.

During these years, Port Stanley was an important terminal for the Northern Navigation Co. as well as many other boats.

In 1882, the Great Western came under the management of the Grand Trunk R.R. Shipping to and from Port Stanley became practically a thing of the past. The boats of the Northern Navigation Co. were sold or withdrawn from the route.

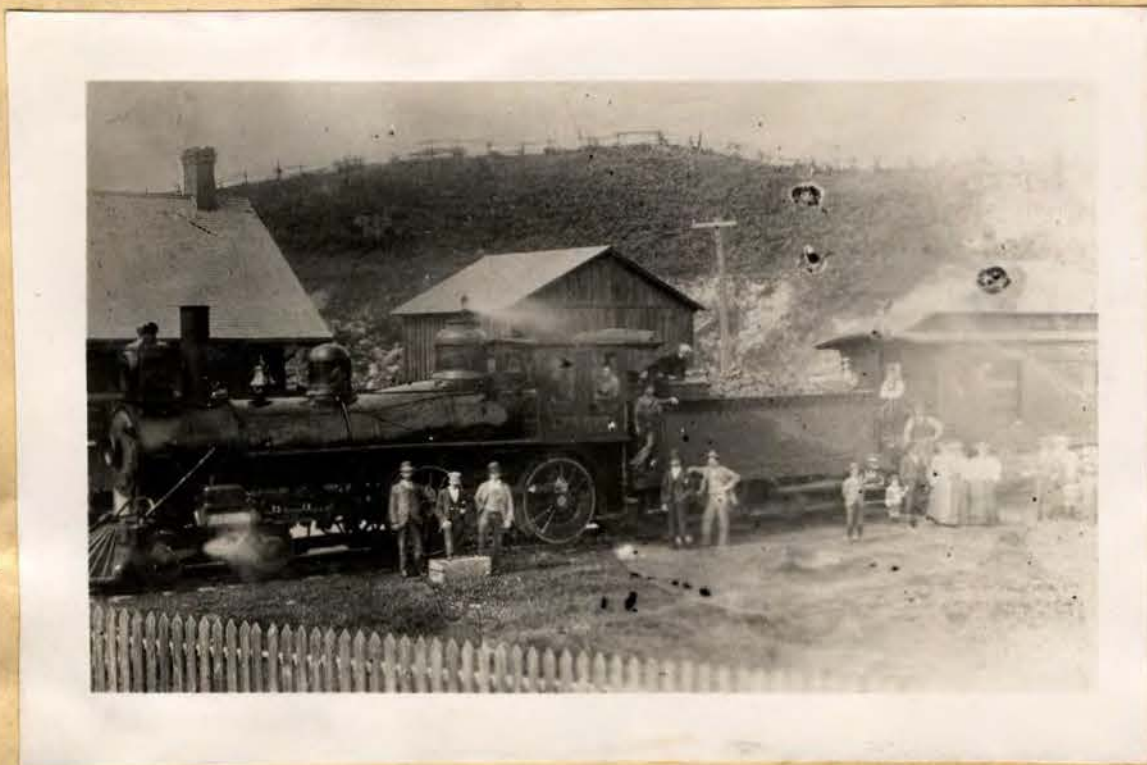
The G.T.R. tried to force the City of London to sell the road but the city refused and then the Millar Syndicate, representing a large American Coal Co., became interested and put up \$25,000, intending to manage the road but later decided it was a bad bargain and forfeited the money paid.

On Dec. 1st. 1893, the L.&P.S.R. came under the control of the Lake Erie & Detroit River R.R., with a lease for 20 years. The "London News", in June 1906, had this to say, "The excellent accommodation the Lake Erie & Detroit River R.R. are giving their patrons, allows Londoners and St. Thomasites, during the heated season, to travel to Port, every night and back next morning.



LONDON and Pt. STANLEY RAILWAY  
(continued)

Last year, the Company extended their tracks to the point of the beach, where the bath houses are located and they refitted the Incline Railway with cars capable of holding 50 persons. It is now the work of a few men to transport a train load of excursionists to the top of the Fraser Hill with little or no trouble on their part.



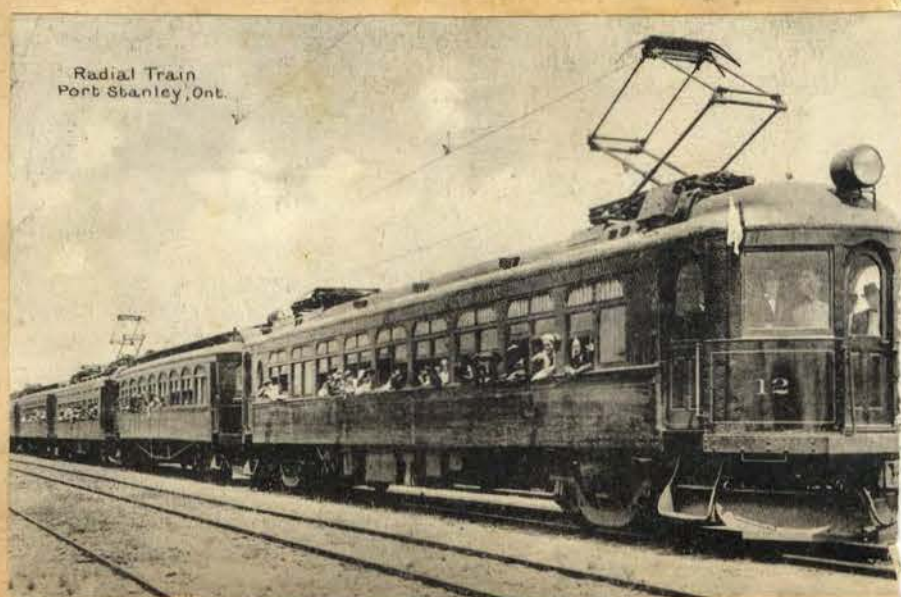
Note-(Picture of station about 1900. The Engine is No.4 of the Lake Erie & Detroit River R.R.)

Then the Pere Marquette R.R. took over the Lake Erie & Detroit R.R. and with it the lease of the L&P.S.R., and under the agreement the M.C.R. was given running rights between St. Thomas and London.

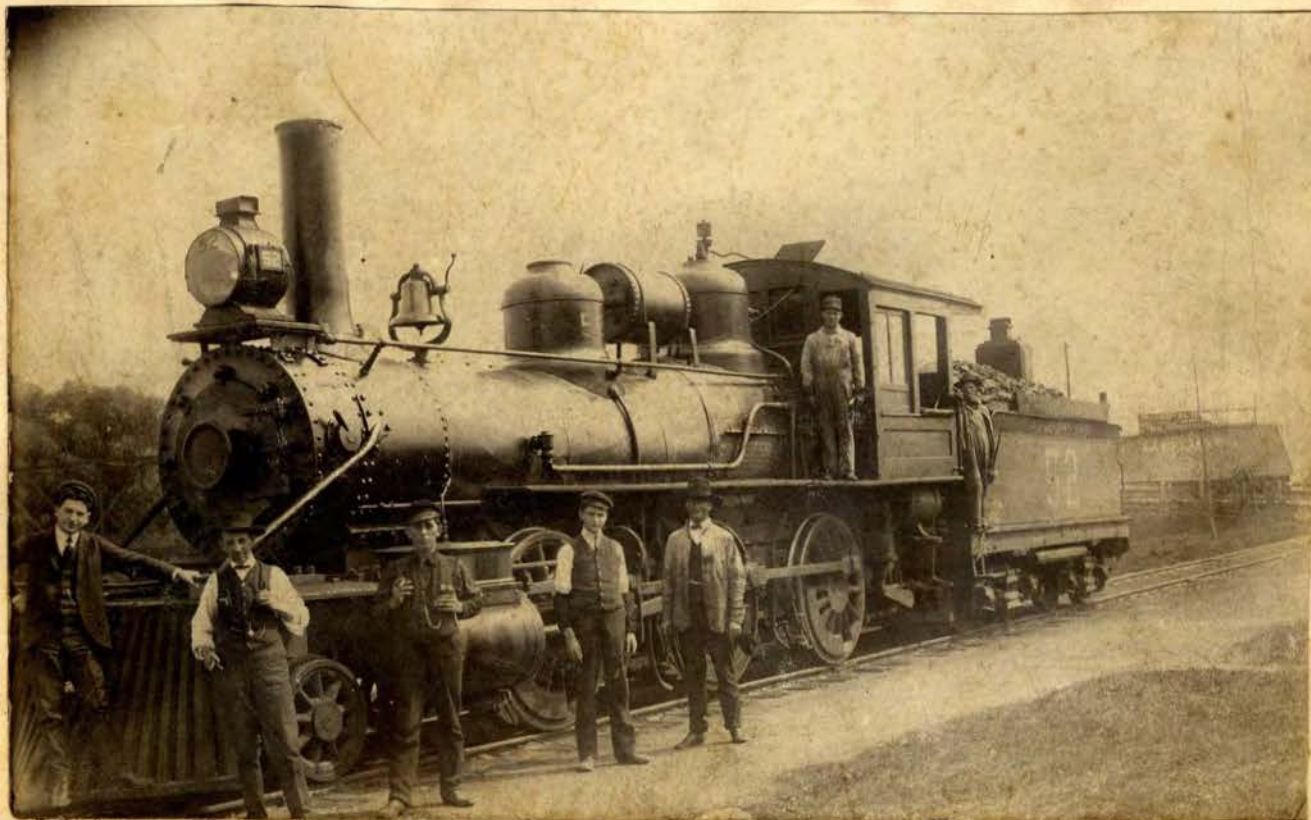
In 1913, the time of lease expired, and by act of Parliament, the City of London was given the power to set up a Commission to manage and control the road either by steam or electricity. Adam Beck, then Mayor of London, was instrumental in bringing about the campaign for Municipal ownership and the operation under the Public Utilities. The Commission was composed of Sir Adam Beck M.L.A., Philip Pocock, Wm. Spittal, M.D. Fraser K.C., and Mayor Graham.

In 1915, there was a complete rehabilitation of the tracks as the L&P.S.R. began a new era as an electric railroad. The grounds and parks of the Company at Port Stanley were made most attractive, the incline was overhauled, a bath house was erected, and later the large ballroom, known as "The Pavilion-Shelter", was built for the convenience of the travelling public. An attractive station was also built on the site of the old depot.

note- (The L&P.S.R. is still running under its original Charter.)



The London & Port Stanley Railway.



On the ground  
Chas. Finlay, Wm. Woollat, Oddie Oatman,  
Harry McDonald, Frank Brown.  
On the Engine  
Luke Berry and Ben. Nicholas.

