

County of Middlesex had never paid the \$22,000 owing the Government but had accepted the \$8,200 paid to them by Elgin County. The matter was brought up in the Ontario Legislature and Elgin County engaged a lawyer to look after the County's interest. The Elgin County Council was assured by the Government that no payment would be demanded from Elgin County by the Province.

The money for maintenance of this road both by Middlesex and Elgin was raised by collection of tolls, and there were five toll-gates between Port Stanley and London. The first stood at the Middlesex-Elgin line; the next was just north of the west entrance to St.Thomas; the third was just south of the intersection of Elm Street with the road; the fourth was at the west side near Johnson's farm and the fifth stood on the west side where Warren Street joins the present route at Port

Stanley. At night the gates were closed and those driving at that time were kept waiting until the toll-keeper raised the gates. Even on a fine Summer evening the delay was annoying enough if the driver did not have the correct toll charge, and had to wait for change. But in bitter winter weather the wait was a real tribulation.

Various tolls were charged. A traveller going from Port Stanley to St.Thomas paid at the second gate and if he turned on Warren Street, he paid at the first gate. Different tolls were charged for buggies or heavy wagons, for one horse or a span, for threshing machines, which moved so often for threshing

bees. *

The Old Road comes under Private Ownership

Shipping at Port Stanley Harbour declined and the London and Port Stanley Railroad was now in use and these changes may have hurt the amount of tolls collected, for in 1857 the Elgin County Council decided to lease the road. It was leased to Mr. Robert Hepburn for 199 years on February 6th, 1857 for \$16,000 payable in twenty years. The last payment was made on February 23rd, 1876.

On January 10th, 1859, a handbill * was put out stating the amount of toll to be charged at each gate and bears the names of Robert Hepburn and his neighbour, Randolph Johnston. The 'London and Port Stanley Gravel Road' was now in private hands.

Confederation Brings a New Era

A new era had opened up for Canadians. Ontario, along with Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had formed a Confederation to be known as the 'Dominion of Canada', and the hope was that the Dominion of Canada would reach from sea to sea. This dream has since been realized.

The year was 1867 and the date was July 1st, when the country celebrated its National Birthday. The toll-gates along the old road hummed with activity as some went north in the morning to watch the manoeuvres of the Home Guards, and south in the afternoon. All who had fast horses and good turnouts were no doubt on the road. Then came farm horses and democrats, top buggies or phaetons, hitched behind one horse or a span, while the little

* Cuts of some of the toll-gates and the keepers' houses, and an early handbill accompany this article.

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Canadian in the front seat received the full lash of the horse's tail as the toll-keeper called out in a sonorous voice, "Halt! but your toll please," Of the afternoon, the Canadian Home Journal of St. Thomas reported, "The picnic grounds at Port Stanley were covered with human beings, and the lake was liberally patronized by bathers. Others danced in the large shed on the grounds whilst some enjoyed the swings, cricket and other diversions". How tired the old toll-keepers must have been at the end of the great day, especially as some of the celebrants went home quite tipsy.

The Old Road becomes a County Road.

All this time the road belonged to private interests. The Caughell family, who now had financial interests in the road, were obliged to raise money by mortgage for its maintenance and repairs. The engineer from the Department of Public Works, after looking over the condition of bridges, etc., announced that unless the road was put in shape it would have to be turned over to the County. Then Mr. Antoine Roberts, a financier from Montreal who held the mortgage, fore closed and the road was put up for sale. With the permission of the Government, Elgin County took over the road in 1906, at a total cost, including the price of ownership and expenditures for repairs, of \$40,543.63. So, to the satisfaction of all who used the road, ended the tolls toll-gates and toll-keepers.

Good Roads-Link to Better Living..

Ontario got its first Highway Act in 1901, when there were only 200 cars in the Province, and in 1906 the Department of Highways was formed. But it was not until 1917 that Elgin County gave up Statute Labour and joined the Good Roads system (King's Highway).

Hydro..

Perhaps the greatest thing that ever happened along the 'Old Road', was the advent of electricity in 1911-12. It changed the whole pattern of life. Tasks were speeded and burdens lightened and by the press of a button the house or barn was flooded by light as if magic.

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Under this system roads are placed in three categories, viz.-

(1) Provincial Highway or Trunk Lines ; (2) County Roads or Feeders; (3) Township Roads. Under this road system the cost of maintenance is borne by the Province, the County, Towns and Townships, according to their classification. Each Township has a superintendent, and over all, a County Superintendent and a County Engineer. This makes for fine co-operation.

This road has seen many changes in type, ownership and surveys, as well as in improvements for efficiency. One great improvement was the building of the vertical lift-bridge over Kettle Creek at Port Stanley. This was built through the influence of Ontario Provincial Premier, the Hon. M.F. Hepburn, one of Yarmouth's own sons. It was erected in 1939, at a cost of \$300,000 and permits the opening up of the Inner Harbour at Kettle Creek.*

This extension of No.4 Highway which now goes to ^{Singhampton} ~~Owen Sound~~ ^{south of Collingwood} is a link in a wonderful highway system. The Trans-Canada Highway (continental) when finished, will run from coast to coast. The Ontario portion of it is now finished. Not only in Ontario, but in each of the ten provinces, you may travel over Trans-Canada Highway. The Province of Ontario, according to Government statistics is fast becoming a province on wheels and two-thirds of our communities are served by motor transport.

Traffic over this three-lane highway to Port Stanley to-day, consists of cars, trucks, buses and motor-cycles, often going bumper to bumper, as close as the wagon-trains were that carried the precious grain for shipment in the old sailing-vessels. To-day, however, we

* See p.6, 4th paragraph - "In 1846,

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arrive at Port Stanley, now a port along the great St. Lawrence Seaway, and find berthed in the harbour great oil-tankers, coal-carriers or ocean-going ships. These latter ships carry soya beans and grain to countries of Europe and unload merchandise from foreign countries.

The 'Old Kettle Creek Road' has grown with the years. Now it leads us down a main artery of the King's Highway. But it also leads us down the 'path of history', for with its history is linked the vicissitudes in the lives of all the generations in this changing world since our forefathers settled in Yarmouth and Southwold, back in those Pioneer Days of 1822.

Agnes M. Hepburn
October, 1960.

March, 1949.

THE HISTORY OF THE DEXTER CHURCH

About 1865 Stephen Griffin and William Taylor of Sparta were active in preaching a Free-will Baptist doctrine in South Yarmouth. They formed churches in several localities, one of these being Dexter.

One of the most ardent supporters at Dexter was Lyman Lewis, who donated half of the funds for the Community Church, and it was built in 1865.

The land was donated by Benjamin Fisher, Lot I4, 1st Con. Yarmouth. The framework of this early church has merely been improved into the present day church on the same location,

The Baptists held services for about 25 years then the congregation dwindled and an unorganized congregation of Presbyterians and Anglicans held services until 1891 or 1892. Then Mr. Bloodsworth (Presbyterian) decided to give up going to Dexter.

Some of the preachers during these years were Elder Mills (Baptist), Rev. Strong, Rev. English, Rev. Mc.Connechy (Pres.) Rev. Mr. Bloodsworth (Pres.)

It was the year 1875 that the Methodists decided they wanted a church so Mr. William Armstrong gave a lot for the "Providence Church". The church was built that year as a Methodist Church on Lot II, 1st Con. Yarmouth.

Rev. A. G. Harris was the Methodist minister in Pt. Stanley Circuit at the time of building. He had charge of the services in the church during the years 1875, 76, 77. Following Mr. Harris the ministers were :

1878-80 -- James Whiting
1881-82 James Gray
1883-85 W. J. Ford

1886-87 J.W. Freeman
 1888-90 R.C. Parsons
 1891-93 R.D. Hamilton with L.W. Reid as assistant in 1892-3

In 1892 a request was made by the Presbyterians of the Dexter Church to have Rev. Hamilton conduct services for them, Mr. Hamilton considered the request favorably and brought the matter before his board.

The result being that they secured a deed for the property of the Dexter Church, sold the Providence Church building to Thomas Glidden of Sparta road and the lot reverted to the Armstrong farm.

The congregation from the Providence Church went to the Dexter Church as a unit and the Presbyterians, Anglicans, Baptists all joined together as the Dexter Methodist Church, under the pastoral care of R. D. Hamilton. Dexter was then a part of the Port Stanley circuit (which had been formed in 1854) making it a 4 point charge with Lake Road and Union.

For a few years the charge had a senior and junior pastor. The Dexter people were supposed to go to Union or Port Stanley for their communion services.

The following is a list of the ministers from 1893 -- 1949 along with the junior pastors:

1894	J.B. Aylesworth	and C. H. Clark
1895	" "	" A. J. Langford
1896	" "	" J. E. Millyard
1897-99	A. H. Going	
1900-01	J. G. Fallis	
1902	J. W. Holmes	" Robert Hicks
1903-05	E. G. Powell	" C. W. Coulter
1904	" "	" N. Mc.Donald
1905	" "	" K. T. Beaton
1906	A. E. Lloyd	" W. G. Connolly, Rev. Talbot
1907	" "	" A.R. Johnson
1908	" "	" J.M. Keyes.
1909	" "	" W. M. Kately
1910	H. W. McTavish &	A.J. Heywood
1911	" "	A. M. Stewart
1912	" "	Rev. Moore
1913	" "	Rev. Poulter
1914-15	Rev. J. J. Durant (Pt. Stanley)	
	Rev. F.F. Kingham (Sparta)	Junior Pastor

Rev. Kingham (The Junior Pastor) for the year 1915 enlisted early in 1916 and his year was completed by Mr. W. James.

In July 1917 Mr. Kingham was killed in action in France.

In 1916 Rev. J. N. Gould was appointed to the Sparta circuit and Dexter was moved from the Port Stanley Circuit to the Sparta Circuit 1917 --21 J. N. Gould.

In 1920 the church was modernized, the framed building was raised, a full-sized basement put in and the outside finished with brick and stucco, at an estimated cost of \$4500.00

1921-- Rev. Mr. Brown

1922- 24 Dr. Hussar

1925 -- W. H. Moss "M.A. B.D.

During this year, the Union of the three denominations was effected and Dexter became a part of the United Church of Canada.

In July 1926 the circuit boundaries committee of Presbytery rearranged the Sparta and Port Stanley circuits placing Dexter in the Port Stanley charge and placed Union with Sparta.

At the same time the Port Stanley charge having issued a call to Rev. C. A. Malcolm, M.A.

1926 --28 Rev. C. A. Malcolm

1929--36 Rev. A. D. Boa

1936--38 " J. M. Haith

1939 --47 " G. S. Hammond

Rev. Hammond died on 13th June 1947 and the rest of his term was filled out by A. E. Lloyd. There were other supply ministers until Rev. A. J. McKaye came 7th Sept. -47.-49.

signed Mrs. H. Lanning.

*Include other
ministers after
A. J. McKaye
next story
omit
ministers*

Names of ministers to DATE

1950 C. A. Malcolm

1952 Morley G. Clarke

1956 W. C. Smith

1960 A. D. Boa

1962 W. Smethman

1968 E. Gill

1972 Karl Seivert

*The other Dexter church
history here*