

Talbot Bi-Centennial Souvenir Edition Celebrating 200 Years Of The Talbot Settlement



May 2003



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Times-Journal

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Col. Thomas Talbot,
founder of
Southwestern Ontario

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- Museum London



QUEBECOR MEDIA

Talbot's role in developing Ontario not fully appreciated

BY
BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

This settlement's history is a centuries old story of colonialism, conflict and creativity. With the advent of the 200th anniversary in 2003 of the Settlement's founding we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to rediscover the dramatic impact this settlement had on our province's rich cultural heritage, past, present and future.

In May 1803, an ambitious 32-year-old Irishman by the name of Col. Thomas Talbot ceremoniously cut down the first tree in a settlement that eventually stretched 260 kms along the north shore of Lake Erie from Long Point to the Detroit River. Talbot occupied a unique place among the movers and shakers of the Province of Ontario.

An agent of the government entrusted with the duty of locating settlers on Crown lands and of superintending the performance of settlement duties, Talbot granted land to applicants who met with his approval and withheld it from those who did not. When his settlers failed to comply with his regulations as to residence and labour, he took away their land and gave it to others. By these autocratic methods, almost exempt from control of the provincial government, Talbot was instrumental in colonizing 29 townships in southwestern Ontario.

Fresh from the Viceroy's court in Dublin, Talbot first came to Canada in the summer of 1790 to join his regiment at Quebec. From 1791 to 1794 he served as aide to the newly



This cairn in St. Thomas's Pinafore Park was erected 100 years ago as a tribute to the Talbot Settlement. (T-J photo)

appointed Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, John Graves Simcoe. In 1801, after an absence of nearly seven years, Talbot returned as a private citizen, having abandoned his military career and the society of the Old World for the dubious life of a pioneer and backwoodsman in southwestern Ontario.

At the epicentre of the struggle for control of southwestern Ontario during the War of 1812, the Talbot Settlement experienced bitter and often brutal conflicts. A colonel of the Middlesex militia during the War of 1812, Talbot narrowly missed being captured during several raids on his household, which was

plundered and burned along with his mill and outbuildings in 1814.

Staunchly anti-reform during the Rebellion of 1837, Talbot retained many political ideas from a passing age. He fought fiercely any idea or element that hinted at change, and he regarded democratic ideas as insidious enemies of the proper and orderly way of life. He wished to be regarded as a patriarch, the "Father" of his settlement, surrounded by a grateful, respectful and submissive populace. The tragedy of his life was that his "children" grew up and rebelled against that parental discipline and his unsuccessful efforts to force them into obedience.

When he died in 1853, the wilderness to which Talbot had come a half a century before, had been converted into a new county with cultivated fields and comfortable homes. There were numerous villages and towns along the best roads in Canada.

In an era when history is considered irrelevant, the bicentennial committee is making a commitment to harness our region's extant authenticity as a distinct competitive advantage. The story of the Talbot Settlement is uniquely ours. Kingston, Toronto, and Niagara-on-the-Lake have long since celebrated their history as cornerstones of their identities, but our region has never before fully or collectively tapped into the power of its own remarkable story. We can bring the history that has always surrounded us alive at last, and in doing so, create a new legacy, rooted in our story of "Loyal We Remain" to our past, present and our future.



STEVE PETERS, M.P.P. ELGIN-MIDDLESEX-LONDON

It is with great pride that I add my voice in celebration of the Talbot Settlement Bi-Centennial. The seeds that sprouted into our great communities were sown 200 years ago. Let us celebrate our great past and our bright future.

Best Regards,

Steve Peters

CONTACT M.P.P. STEVE PETERS AT:
(519) 631-0666 Fax: (519) 631-9478
Toll Free 1-800-265-7638
www.stevepeters.com



Talbot 200th Anniversary Dinner



1803 Loyal We Remain 2003

*Join us in the heart of the
Talbot Settlement*

St. Peter's Church, Tyrconnell, May 21, 2003

Ten reasons why we should celebrate

BY DIANA PLAYER
BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

So, you have been wondering why you should consider taking part in the Talbot Settlement Bicentennial Events during 2003. We would like to list 10 reasons you should be ready to celebrate with us.

1. In a time when terrorism, the threat of war and a multitude of other negative influences abound in the daily news, it is relaxing to focus on something that is refreshing, non-threatening and will spark your imagination.

2. As Canadians, and particularly as residents of southwestern Ontario, we tend to quietly and almost apologetically acknowledge our own history. Yet this region is filled with dramatic and fascinating stories of heroes, foes, battles and struggles for survival.

3. We also tend to judge our region's history in terms of the Niagara frontier, or Kingston or Toronto. We would like to suggest the area known as the Talbot Settlement has a legacy that matches those regions, story for story. Out of our history comes some of the most delightful and intriguing tales and legends. Not all history is boring.

4. The area we know as southwestern Ontario was at the very front of the fight to maintain British interests in North America during the War of 1812. In our storied past we will find that the early settlers loyal to the British Crown, left their homes and families and formed a "thin red line" which kept the American raiders busy. By no means did those militia volunteers win all the battles but they certainly helped to see the end of the War of 1812. Major General Sir Isaac Brock, Shawnee Chief Tecumseh, General Proctor, captains Ryersee, Bostwick, Burwell, Rapelje, Harris and many others saw major battle actions in the area history refers to as the Talbot Settlement.



Interior of Col. Talbot's home, attributed to Richard Airey (1803-1881). (Courtesy Museum London)

5. The Talbot Settlement is named after Col. Thomas Talbot, and no matter how you read your history, no matter which side you take, there is absolutely no denying what Talbot did. He helped to open this region to settlers and in doing so created one of the best early settlements in Upper Canada, if not North America. In 50 years, Talbot helped to settle more than 50,000 people across 29 townships in southwestern Ontario. That in itself was no small feat.

6. The legacy left by those efforts to settle the Talbot Settlement is etched across 200 years of history. Along country roads, along our busy highways and on our city streets, the Talbot name is commemorated in businesses, street names and in the names of our communities. In other parts of the world, a man such as Talbot would be honoured as the "Founding Father" and he would be celebrated every year in a "Founders Day" celebration. Let's not forget that point.

7. The 29 townships which formed the Talbot Settlement stretched from Norfolk county to the St. Clair River, along the north shore of Lake Erie and north past the Thames River. Those townships were all

commemorated in a Centennial Cairn at Pinafore Park during an incredible week-long centennial celebration in 1903. The etched names on those 29 stones in the cairn are now all that remains of some of those townships, as municipal government has changed the face of many of the original townships.

8. From those simple concession roads that the settlers were "forced" to construct, (which, incidentally, were some of the best in North America), today southwestern Ontario can boast some of the best and most direct routes from one city to another. Highway 3 is also referred to as the Talbot Trail Route.

9. The vast Talbot settlement was based on agriculture. It was the small farm that sustained most of the settlers. Through that farming base, southwestern Ontario has become one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world.

10. We can proudly boast of our own explorers, pathfinders, political rebels and outstanding leaders. We can, and should brag about our incredible legacy of political, agricultural, industrial, and multicultural successes. Those successes are our history. They are where we have come from. They will influence where we are going. And it does not matter whether you are English, Irish, Welsh, French, First Nations or even Scots, this is our history. And just like the settlers descendants did in 1903, we should stand up and be proud to be a part of the Talbot Settlement Bicentennial Celebrations. That is what we are celebrating! We hope you will join us throughout this incredible year.

Congratulations and best wishes from ...

**ELGIN COUNTY
PIONEER MUSEUM**



449 Talbot St., St. Thomas
631-6537



Take notice . . .

THE BRITISH ARE COMING!
MAY 24 & 25, 2003

To rescue, protect and defend the loyal inhabitants of the **Talbot Settlement** from advancing hostile troops.

Come and be part of a "LIVING HISTORY" event as British Regulars and Militia meet their American adversaries in

"THE RAIDS ON THE TALBOT SETTLEMENT"

A re-enactment of a typical American excursion into the Settlement during 1814, the last year of the war.

Best Wishes
on the
200th Anniversary
of the Talbot Settlement

This year's Bi-Centennial celebrations are a time for reflection and pride in what has been accomplished over the past 200 years. From the days of struggle and hardship in breaking new land and opening new territory to the prosperous and diverse communities we now call home, our ancestors would be proud to know how we have grown.

BELLS MARKED OPENING OF FIVE-DAY CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

The Centennial celebration opened on Thursday, May 21, 1903. The first day's program was under the auspices of the Elgin Historical Society. At 10 a.m., bells of the city were rung to usher in the big event. It was a signal for the decorating of business places and homes to begin. A banquet in the Grand Central Hotel that evening completed the first day's program.

The second day was Empire Day, and was under the auspices of the board of education. The main events were: 10:30 a.m., raising the flag at Balaclava Street School; 11:30 a.m., raising the flag at Wellington Street School; 2 p.m., formal opening of the new Collegiate Institute; 3:30 p.m., grand concert by school children in the Granite Rink, Metcalfe Street; 8 p.m., second grand concert in the rink with presentation of medals to life-saving crew of Port Stanley for the rescue of six sailors from the United States schooner, "Mineral

State." Music was supplied by the old 25th Regiment Band.

The third day was Pioneer Day and Old Boys Reunion. It started on the morning of Saturday, May 23, with a monster pioneer procession, which formed at the old St. Andrew's Market Square. Many novelties representing pioneer life were in the procession. The crew of the Dominion revenue cutter "Petrel" were also in the parade. At 1 p.m. there was a reception of representatives of municipalities comprising the Talbot Settlement at the city hall. Municipal representatives then proceeded to Pinafore Park for the erection of the cairn of field stones, which still stands in the city's recreation grounds. The names of the townships embraced within the original Talbot Settlement are engraved upon the face stones.

Sunday, May 24, 1903, the fourth day of the Centennial celebration, featured a military church parade with special services in all the churches in

the morning and the decoration of graves in pioneer cemeteries in the afternoon.

Monday, May 25, the fifth and closing day of the Centennial, was Military Day. It opened with a march out of the brigade, those in command of units being: Col. Peters, D.O.C.; Lieut.-Col. Stimson, 10th Grenadiers; Lieut.-Col. Rankin, 24th Regiment; Lieut.-Col. McLachlin, 25th Regiment, and Captain Thomas Jones, Collegiate Institute, cadets.

At 3:30 p.m., a program of land and water sports took place, with a baseball game between the West London Greys and the St. Thomas Pastimes at 4 p.m. At 8 p.m. a grand concert was provided at the park by the 10th Grenadiers.

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEES

Capable men and women, representative of every walk of life, had charge of the centennial program. C. F. Maxwell was general chairman, Henry Roe, secretary, and Dr. F. C. Bartlett, treasurer.

The chairmen of the committees were as follows: military, Lieut. Col. MacLachlin; historical, Judge C.O. Ermatinger; educational, Dr. S. Silcox; pioneer, Dr. Frederick Guest; old boys' reunion, county clerk K.W. McKay; subscriptions, J. McKenzie; printing, W.H. Murchink and bands, Fred Doggett; railway and games, J. W. Stewart; decorations, Walter Ross; illu-

mination, S.B. Pocock.

Other members of the general committee were as follows: W.B. Waterbury, L. Ferguson, T. G. Courtenay, F.W. Wright, P.L.M. Egan, Sheriff Brown, R.M. Anderson, E.A. Smith, L.H. Dingman, O. Masterman, Peter Stewart, F. McCormick, Judge Talbot McBeth, London; Dr. James H. Coyne, H. C. Hocken, B.F. Honsinger, Patrick Mee-

han, H. Rudolph, and David H. Price, Aylmer.


The Women's Historical Society played an important part.

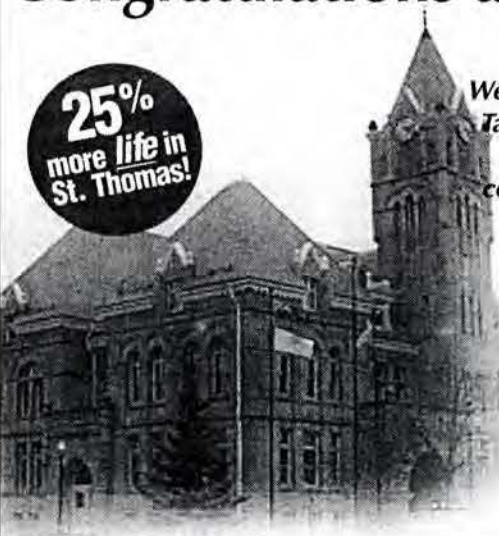
The men in control of the railway interests in St. Thomas in 1903 were: superintendent Ferritor of the G.T.R. and Wabash, superintendent Morford of the Michigan Central, and superintendent Robins of the Wabash.

- Edited by Wayne Paddon

Congratulations and best wishes

from The City of St. Thomas.





We are proud to be part of the original Talbot Settlement and look forward to the festivities planned during the celebrations of the 200th Anniversary.

Our hope is that all residents of St. Thomas will take part in the Talbot Bicentennial Celebrations and enjoy the great history our community has helped to create.

CITY HALL 631-1680
www.city.st-thomas.on.ca

Elgin County Archives rich with Talbot history

By BRIAN MASSCHAELE
ELGIN COUNTY ARCHIVES

The Elgin County Archives (ECA) has a number of resources to assist those interested in learning more about the establishment and evolution of the Talbot Settlement as it pertains to modern-day Elgin county.

Col. Thomas Talbot's achievements in settling a huge tract of land extending from Long Point to Amherstburg and north along the Thames River are well chronicled. Researchers must nevertheless keep in mind that much of the primary material pertaining to Col.



This is the cover of a 1903 program for the Talbot Centennial celebration. (Elgin County Archives)


Talbot and his contemporaries was long ago acquired by institutions such as the Archives of Ontario and the National Archives of Canada, only natural given the provincial and national significance of these records. This includes the famous series of "Talbot Maps" on which he recorded (or erased as the case may be) the names of settlers throughout southwestern Ontario.

The strength of ECA's collections rests on documenting the actual settlers and their descendants, including the devel-

opment of the parcel of property on which they lived. Our microform collection, recently transferred from the St. Thomas Public Library, contains a number of sources to study the pattern of settlement in the area, helping to complement numerous primary sources already housed in the archives. This includes records such as the Upper Canada Land Petitions, census returns, tax assessment rolls, directories and historic maps and atlases.

ECA also has records pertaining to the various celebrations and Talbot dinners that have taken place over the years.

Particularly well documented are the centennial celebrations that took place in 1903 involving numerous events on a grand scale with thousands of participants. Branches of the Elgin County Library also have a number of publications pertaining to Colonel Talbot and his settlement, including Edward Ermatinger's Life of Colonel Talbot (1859), C.O. Ermatinger's The Talbot Regime (1904) and Fred Coyne Hamil's Lake Erie Baron (1955).



COLONEL THOMAS TALBOT BICENTENNIAL

EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

Thomas Talbot: Man and Myth

St. Thomas Elgin Public Art Centre
301 Talbot Street, St. Thomas, Ontario
May 17 - August 30
Open: Tuesday to Saturday 12 noon to 5:00 pm
Thursday 12 noon to 9:00 pm
Closed Sunday and Monday

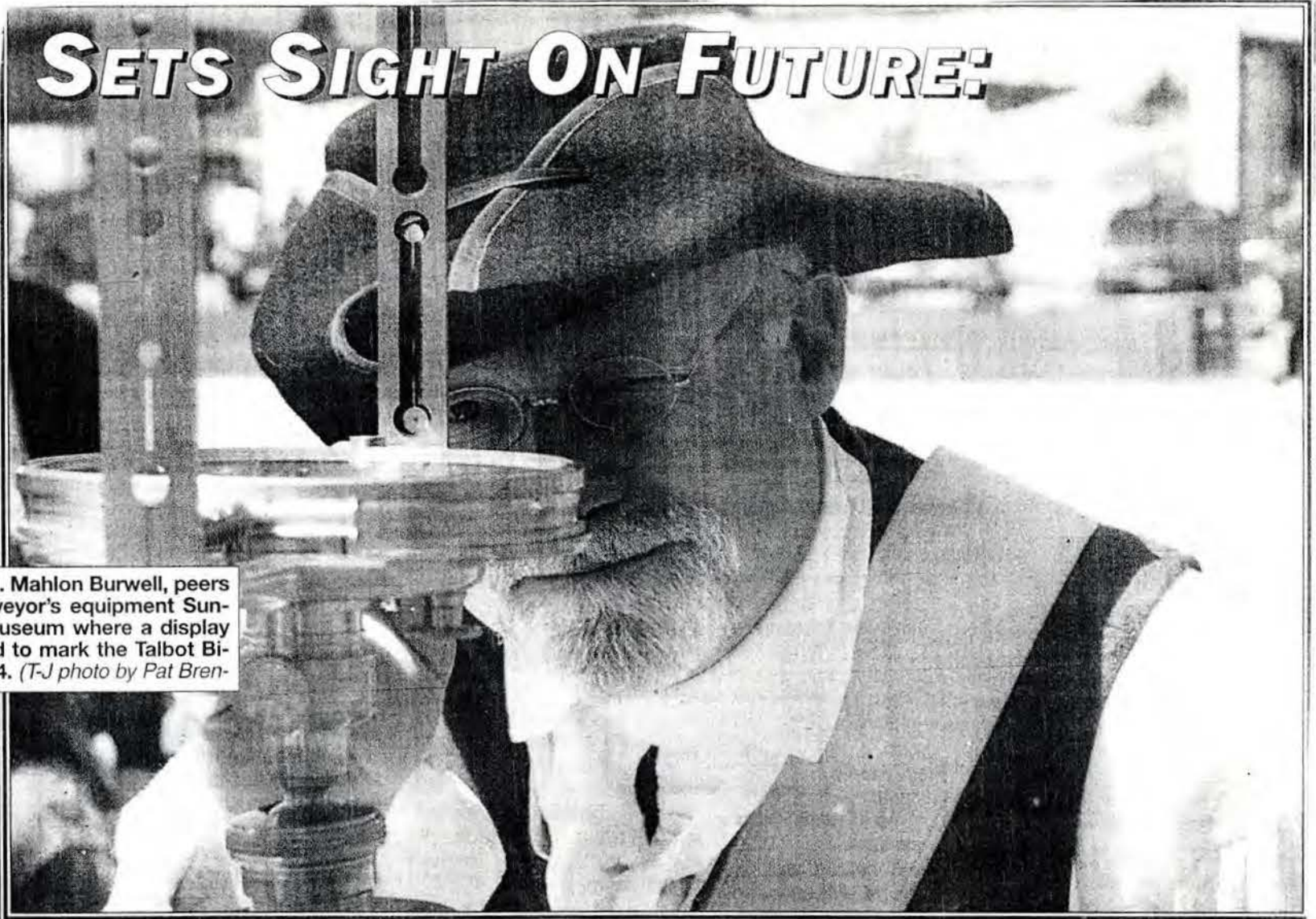
Dutton Branch, Elgin County Library
236 Shackleton Street, Dutton, Ontario
September 6 - October 3
Open: Monday and Tuesday 10:00 am - 8:30 pm
Thursday 1:00 pm - 8:30 pm
Friday and Saturday 10:00 am - 5:00 pm
Closed Wednesday and Sunday

Windsor's Community Museum
254 Pitt Street West, Windsor, Ontario
October 9 - December 20
Open: Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 am - 5:00 pm
Closed Sunday and Monday

SETS SIGHT ON FUTURE

May 20 2003

Will Bartlett, playing Col. Mahlon Burwell, peers through the sights of surveyor's equipment Sunday at the Port Burwell Museum where a display about Burwell was opened to mark the Talbot Bicentennial. More on page 4. (T-J photo by Pat Bren-



LOCAL

Museum honours Talbot's surveyor

BY TIMES-JOURNAL STAFF

PORT BURWELL — If the roads in Bayham seem to take a wandering path, as opposed to staying straight, blame it on the colonel.

Guests at the opening of the Col. Mahlon Burwell display Sunday at the Port Burwell Marine Museum, remarked on the road layout the colonel left after he completed his work.

Elgin county Warden John Wilson noted there were a lot of winding roads in Bayham. Col. Burwell was commissioned by Col. Thomas Talbot to assist in surveying land for the Talbot Settlement.

But, he added, people from outside Elgin don't have an apprecia-

tion for the impact that Talbot and Burwell had on the area.

Dennis Blais, president of the Ontario Land Surveyors Association, noted his peers are judged "by how we can re-trace our work."

Col. Thomas Talbot, played by Nick Wells, added some historical perspective.

"It's not my day today, it's Col. Burwell's. He laid out the parameters for my settlement. If he hadn't laid them out, we'd be at a loss today."

Col. Burwell, played by William Bartlett, set the record straight on the winding roads.

"Col. Talbot instructed me to follow the ridges to build the least ex-

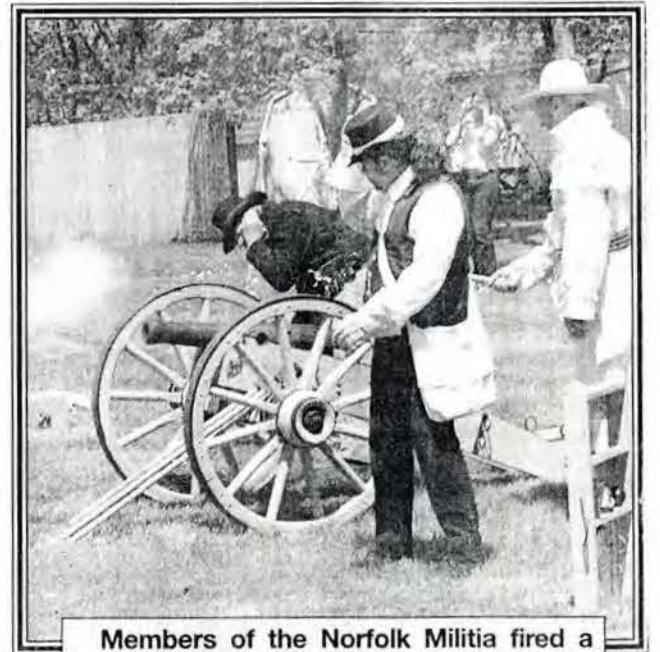
pensive road," he said.

"It is a testament to Col. Talbot to bring civilization to the wilderness."

One of the highlights of the brief ceremony was a canon salute to the Queen from canons brought to the event by members of the Norfolk Militia.

Inside the museum, the display featured surveying equipment used by Burwell and original sketches which laid out the street and road grids for the area.

The display, organized in conjunction with the Talbot Settlement Bicentennial is at the museum until Sept. 1.



Members of the Norfolk Militia fired a canon twice as a King's Salute at the opening of the Col. Mahlon Burwell display at the Port Burwell Marine Museum Sunday. (T-J photo)

LOCAL

Talbot Anniversary dates to 1817

BY WAYNE PADDON
FOR THE TIMES-JOURNAL

The Talbot Anniversary Dinner has been a significant aspect of local history since 1817.

This year the anniversary dinner will be fittingly held at St. Peter's Anglican Church at Tyrconnel. It will go under the protection of a huge tent on the west lawn on May 21 with a reception at 5 p.m. followed by a beef dinner. It is hoped that 200-plus people will gather there as a tribute to Col. Thomas Talbot and to the success of the Talbot Settlement Bicentennial celebration.

There will be lots of socializing and the formal proceedings and entertainment will include a great variety of toasts by most of the elected officials of the settlement. A plaque for Talbot will be placed in St. Peter's Cemetery.

The Talbot anniversary began in 1817 when John Rolph, a famous local doctor and lawyer, who lived briefly in St. Thomas suggested it was time to honour the founder of the settlement and his settlers in a formal way.

Rolph was very bright and popular and later became a famous reformer in the rebellion movement. He was also a founder of the University of Toronto Medical School. In 1813 Rolph's family settled in Malahide on a lot given them by Talbot. But Dr. Rolph later moved to the Talbot Road and lived just a few miles west of St. Thomas.

On Rolph's urging and under his leadership the St. Thomas and local area pioneers planned a special dinner and dance to honour the founder. Thus, in early March, 1817 Col. Talbot received a note signed by the secretary of the local pioneer organization expressing the unanimous consent of district settlers that a special address be sent to the Colonel, "regarding you as its Founder, its Patron and its Friend, we most respectfully beg leave to associate your name with our infant institution. To your first arrival at Port Talbot we refer, as the auspicious hour, which gave birth to the happiness and

the independence we all enjoy, and this day commemorate ... under your friendly patronage and Patriarchal care, we have unanimously appointed the 21st May for the Talbot Anniversary."

Rolph delivered the note and address to Col. Talbot and returned with the welcome news that the colonel had graciously accepted the proposal for the anniversary.

Col. Talbot's letter sincerely thanked the settlers for their awareness of his efforts expressing much satisfaction at their loyalty and respect, "... and you may be assured that there shall not be any want of attention on my part to promote as far as lies in my power, your general interest."

Talbot rarely missed the anniversaries and invariably led off the first dance, "even at the advanced age of three score and ten years."

"The ample board greened under such substantial fare as the settlement could afford, and after the cloth was removed, a hundred rustic voices responded to the King's health."

After thunderous cheers and applause including table thumping, the honored guest, Col. Talbot, returned thanks in a neat, short speech, always concluding in the most affectionate and emphatic manner, 'God bless you all.' After the dinner and all the loyal toasts were over the ball commenced.

BURWELL

For some reason Mahlon Burwell, Talbot's right-hand man and long-time friend, objected to the first anniversary dinner and was condemned publicly in his absence from the first celebration.

Nonetheless, on May 21, 1817, the pioneers instituted the first of the many annual Talbot Anniversaries which took place every year until the 1840s. Even Col. Burwell's opposition faded in the light of the friendly spirit and good times that became the highlight of social life in the Talbot Settlement, Col. Burwell, himself, became one of the chief personalities present on subsequent



In costume at the 1986 Talbot Anniversary Dinner are the late George Thorman, left, as Col. Thomas Talbot, Yvonne Harris as Amelia Harris, Wayne Paddon as Col. Mahlon Burwell, and Mary Futcher as Anna Jamieson. (Contributed)

celebrations.

The first anniversary was held in a hotel just a few miles outside of St. Thomas but after that in a hotel within the city except for one year when it was held in London. Scottish settlers from Dunwich and Aldborough never attended. The Plum Point settlers given land in Dunwich were usually present.

In later years the British garrison arrived in St. Thomas and brightly dressed officers and ladies in gorgeous gowns attended the celebration. Unfortunately, this aspect probably led to the decline in attendance of local men and women in regular period attire.

The anniversary declined after the rebellion years for a variety of reasons.

Even when Talbot was not in the settlement, the anniversary dinner was held. In 1828 the Talbot Anniversary was held in St. Thomas with excellent attendance at the Spades Hotel with exhibits of foliage and flowers and a "sumptuous dinner." The dinner was followed by the usual toasts and a gala ball that lasted until daylight.

The president that year was John Harris, an important resident of London and several noted lo-

cal people such as John Bostwick, John Mathews and James Givings led the proceedings at the head table where Col. Talbot's chair held a place of honour.

GENTLEMEN

The anniversary was different in 1843.

"A number of gentlemen met to dine at the St. Thomas Hotel in honour of the occasion. They sat down to a dinner at six o'clock. God Save the Queen was sung."

All of the toasts that followed were accompanied by a song. As the evening progressed other short addresses were given by a various people. Songs were sung and there was good feeling to the end of the evening. But no women are mentioned as actually being present and there was no evidence of a dance. Certainly much of the conviviality of earlier anniversaries when pioneer couples were present was not there that evening.

After a long period of time, a very large Talbot Anniversary dinner was held in 1903 to celebrate the first centennial of the Talbot Settlement.

Then in the mid-1960s, the Talbot Anniversary was revived by the St. Thomas and Elgin Historical Society. Dr. Fred Coyne Hamil, a native of west Elgin and an American university professor who wrote *Lake Erie Baron*, spoke at the Grand Central Hotel about Talbot.

The night was entertaining and educational. The centre table had Talbot (George Thorman), Lord Maitland (John Ker) and a host of others who performed as prominent citizens and early settlers. Some excellent pioneer music and a special song by Sybil Hagerman added to the fun.

In 1967, Canada's Centennial, saw also a Talbot Anniversary held at St. Thomas Golf and Country Club. Again Talbot (Thorman) with dignitaries and pioneers were present with John Rolph (Dr. Robert O. Farley) riding a large stallion up the hill to the clubhouse. There was a fine dinner, a

keynote speech and lots of good fun.

In 1986, when an attempt was made to raise money to buy the Talbot Estate, a very entertaining and successful Talbot Anniversary dinner was held at the St. Thomas Armoury. Again, Talbot, Rolph, Burwell, British nobility and pioneers (same imitators generally) were present and the main speech was an outstanding one, made by the late Charles Lynch. The dinner was successful but raising money for the estate was not and the estate was sold to private interests.

The Talbot Anniversary, nonetheless, remains a way to bring together all of the people of southwestern Ontario who consider themselves Talbot settlers, and it holds and probably always will hold a very special meaning and provide good feelings and entertainment for many years to come.

Tickets for this year's dinner are available through Dean Paddon (631-9438), Diana Player (631-9194) or Wayne Paddon (631-7832).

May 22 / 2003

Reasons to celebrate Bicentennial

by Diana Player

Bicentennial Committee

So, you have been wondering why you should consider taking part in the Talbot Settlement Bicentennial Events during 2003. We would like to list seven reasons you should be ready to celebrate with us.

1. The area we know as southwestern Ontario was a very front of the fight of maintain British interests in North America during the War of 1812. In our storied past we will find that the early settlers loyal to the British crown, left their homes and families and formed a "thin red line" which kept the American raiders busy. By no means did those militia volunteers win all the battles, but they certainly helped to see the end of the War of 1812. Major General Sir Isaac Brock, Shawnee Chief Tecumseh, General Proctor, captains Ryerse, Bostwick, Burwell, Rapelje, Harris and many others saw major battle

actions in the area history refers to as the Talbot Settlement.

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3. The legacy left by those efforts to settle the Talbot Settlement is etched across 200 years of history. Along country roads, along our busy highways and on our city streets, the Talbot name is commemorated in businesses, street names and in the names of our communities.

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5. From those simple concession roads that the settlers were "forced" to construct, (which, incidentally, were some of the best in North America), today southwestern Ontario can boast some of the best and most direct routes from one city to another. Highway 3 is also referred to as the Talbot Trail Route.

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settlement was based on agriculture. It was the small farm that sustained most of the settlers. Through that farming base, southwestern Ontario, has become one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world.

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Talbot settlement's history a colonial story

This settlement's history is a centuries old story of colonialism, conflict and creativity. With the advent of the 200th anniversary in 2003 of the Settlement's founding we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to rediscover the dramatic impact this settlement had on our province's rich cultural heritage, past, present and future.

In May 1802, an ambitious 32-year-old Irishman by the name of Col. Thomas Talbot ceremoniously cut down the first tree in a settlement that eventually stretched 260 kms along the north shore of Lake Erie from Long Point to the Detroit river. Talbot occupied a unique place among the movers and shakers of the Province of Ontario.

An agent of the government entrusted with the duty of locating settlers on crown lands and of superintending the performance of settlement duties, Talbot granted land to applicants who met with his approval and withheld it from those who did not. when his settlers failed to comply with his regulations as to residence and labour, he took away their land and gave it to others. by these autocratic methods, almost exempt from control of the provincial government, Talbot was instrumental in colonizing 29 townships in southwestern Ontario.

Fresh from the viceroy's court in Dublin, Talbot first came to Canada in the summer of 1790 to join his regiment at Quebec. From 1791 to 1794 he served as

aide to the newly appointed Lieutenant governor of Upper Canada, John Graves Simcoe. In 1801, after an absence of nearly seven years, Talbot returned as a private citizen, having abandoned his military career and the society of the Old World for the dubious life of a pioneer and backwoodsman in southwestern Ontario.

At the epicenter of the struggle for control of southwestern Ontario

during the War of 1812, the Talbot Settlement experience bitter and often brutal conflicts. A colonel of the Middlesex militia during the War of 1812, Talbot narrowly missed being captured during several raids on his household, which was plundered and burned along with his mill and outbuildings in 1814.

Staunchly anti-reform during the Rebellion of 1827, Talbot retained many political ideas from a passing age. He fought

fiercely any idea or element that hinted at change, and he regarded democratic ideas as insidious enemies of the proper and orderly way of life. He wished to be regarded as a patriarch, the "Father" of his settlement, surrounded by a grateful, respectful and submissive populace. The tragedy of his life was that his "children" grew up and rebelled against the parental discipline and his unsuccessful efforts to force them into obedience.

When he died in 1853, the wilderness to which Talbot had come a half a century before, had been converted into a new county with cultivated fields and comfortable homes. There were numerous villages and towns along the best roads in Canada.

In an era when history is considered irrelevant, the bicentennial committee is making a commitment to harness our region's extant authenticity as a distinct competitive advantage. The story of the Talbot Settlement is uniquely ours. Kingston, Toronto, and Niagara-on-the-Lake have long since celebrated their history as cornerstones of their identities, but our region has never before fully or collectively tapped into the power of its own remarkable story. We can bring the history that has always surrounded us alive at last, and in doing so, create a new legacy, rooted in our story of "Loyal We remain" to our past, present and future.

Backus-Page House hosts major bicentennial event this weekend

Talbot bicentennial events

Until August 31 - Early Sail on the Great Lakes, historic marine art by Peter Rindlisbacher, Museum London.

Until Sept. 1 - Col. Mahlon Burwell, Surveyor, 200 years of surveying, Port Burwell Marine Museum, Port Burwell.

May 24-25 - Grand 1812-14 encampment, Backus-Page House, Tyrconnell. Mock raids on Port Stanley, Port Talbot, St. Thomas, period ships, military reenactments.

June 15-Sept. 28: Thomas Talbot: Man and Myth, Elgin county Pioneer Museum, St. Thomas.

July 1: Military muster re-enactment. Eldon House, London, 10am to 2pm.

July 20: Talbot's Birthday Party, Pinafore Park, St. Thomas, 2pm.

August 2-3: Brock's landing re-enactment, Rondeau Provincial Park, Chatham-Kent.

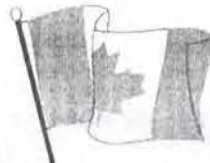
August 30-Sept. 1: Fairfield Comes Alive, 1812 re-enactment, Fairfield Museum, Longwoods Road east of Thamesville.

Sept. 27: Talbot Settlement Ghost Walk, St. Thomas Anglican Church, St. Thomas. Performances depict historic figures, 2pm to 7pm.

Oct. 3-5: Heritage days 1812 re-enactment, Thamesgrove conservation Area, Chatham.

Complete list, with admission prices where charged, <http://home.golden.net/~talbot2003/events.htm>.

St. Thomas Times-Journal



Mainly sunny, 16

Thursday, May 22, 2003

75¢ (incl. GST)

Talbot takes his seat

BY PATRICK BRENNAN
TIMES-JOURNAL STAFF

TYRCONNELL — For years, it was a tradition at the Talbot anniversary dinner to have an empty place at the table, reserved for Col. Thomas Talbot.

This year, that wasn't necessary.

Nick Wells portrayed Col. Talbot Wednesday as 200 people sat down to the Talbot anniversary dinner here.

Tradition frames the annual event. It's held May 21 every year and within walking distance of the Backus-Page historical home, one of the sites for an historical re-enactment this weekend, all part of the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Talbot Settlement.

Down the road is Port Talbot, where Col. Talbot landed to begin exploring what became the Talbot Settlement.

Wednesday's dinner was an occasion for guests to show up in period costume and toast many of the historical icons who played a role in Talbot Settlement history.

In keeping with the historical theme, place cards at the dinner tables bore the names of the early townships in the settlement, most of which have been renamed.

Thirteen head table guests gave toasts.

Elgin Warden John Wilson toasted Lt.

Gov. John Graves Simcoe.

"We owe much to Simcoe," Wilson said, noting the lieutenant governor had commissioned many of the surveys of the Talbot Settlement.

Other toasts paid tribute to the grit of the early residents who came here and forged homes out of wilderness.

"Be proud of this settle-

Col. Thomas Talbot, played by Nick Wells of St. Thomas, speaks at the Talbot anniversary dinner Wednesday at Tyrconnell. (T-J photo*)

ment," said Henry Dryfout, president of the Tyrconnell Heritage Society. "It is held up as a model settlement."

Dutton/Dunwich Mayor Rien Van Brenk, welcomed the visitors to his

home turf.

"This is the heart of Talbot country," he proclaimed. His toast honoured Lance Sgt. Ellis Wellwood Sifton, recipient of the Victoria Cross.

"We enjoyed the privileges of life largely because of those who served in the Canadian Armed Forces," he said.

Steve Peters, Liberal MPP for Elgin-Middlesex-London, toasted all politicians past and present who served the Talbot Settlement.

"This is a settlement you be proud of," he said, noting the Liberals, Progressive Conservatives

SEE NOT JUST, PAGE 3



Helena VAN BREUK: standing outside the Tent for the Talbot anniversary dinner on May 21st 2003 in Tyrconnell.



People
Colonel Talbot himself
officiated at the big
Talbot Bicentennial
Page 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8

The Dutton Summer



John McIntyre
16 Jordan St., Box 362
Dutton, Ontario N0L 1J0
Expiry Date: Week 4, June 2004

\$1.00

(93¢ + GST)
PAP Registration #10599

5-day forecast

	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
High	21°C	21°C	21°C	17°C	16°C
Low	8°C	8°C	8°C	11°C	14°C

Wednesday, May 28th, 2003 Phone/Fax: 762-6307 "Your Western Elgin County Community News Source!" e-mail: dutton@banner.on.ca Vol.1, No.8

Mad Cow scare worries cattlemen

by Angela Csiki

ELGIN - Tracking down the cattle from the Alberta farmer proved easy with all of the safe guard requirements the government has set up, but still with the frozen market, the cattle and beef economy is already suffering severely.

Unfortunately after a week of border closures, farmers are getting antsy because they are feeding cattle that are ready to be sold. Truck drivers who solely transport cattle are being laid off, and meat packer outlets, feed suppliers, dealers, and auction markets are all suffering, said Ian McKillop, vice president of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association.

He farms cattle himself and is one of the few fortunate farmers who have cattle not quite ready for the market,

but they may be ready before the market is re-opened.

He has around 100 head and is a recipient of the Elgin County Environmental Stewardship Award in 2003.

"This is the third major thing that has hit the beef industry," said McKillop.

He said the raising of the Canadian dollar has taken a negative toll on the market and in 2001 and 2002 the market was depressed.

"We need a strong beef industry economy," said McKillop.

Like everything else, the beef economy affects rural livelihood, and the ripple effect just grows from there. Beef production in Canada is a \$26-billion industry. In Elgin County alone,
SEE MAD COW / 6

Over 1,200 enjoy a day of learning

by Tami Sabo

TYRCONNELL - On Friday the long-awaited Education Day at Backus-Page House to celebrate the Talbot Settlement's Bicentennial was finally underway.

There were 1,214 students from all over the area. Some were from as close by as West Lorne and Dutton, while others came from as far away as Aylmer, London, St. Thomas, Delaware, and Strathroy.

Upon their arrival the students were greeted by the volunteer guides dressed in

period costume. They were then taken throughout the area to attend the different stations, revealing to them what life at that time was like.

There were 27 stations set up for the children to attend as well as 20 vendors set up on Sutler Row where the children could buy candy and souvenirs of their trip. The items for sale, even the candy, fit into the theme of the 1800s.

The group I was with, as a parent with the school, travelled through time to the
SEE BLACKSMITH / 4



Col. Talbot (portrayed here by Nick Wells) giving the welcome to diners at the 200th Annual Talbot Settlement Dinner held out at Tyrconnell this week, doubtless the longest continuously running annual event in Elgin County.



200 people sat down to the Talbot anniversary dinner.



Warden John Wilson gave a Toast.



Dutton/Sunwich Mayor Rien Van Breuk gave a Toast.

St. Thomas Times-Journal



Scattered showers, 16

Friday, May 23, 2003

75¢ (incl. GST)

14 SPARTA ST. - \$124,900



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REALTY LTD. BROKER

Bringing colour downtown

By TIMES-JOURNAL STAFF

Downtown St. Thomas will soon be awash in vibrant colours thanks to the Downtown Development Board, the St. Thomas-Elgin Tourist Association and the St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre.

Beginning the second week of June, 80 banners will be hung from light posts stretching from Stanley Street at the east end of Talbot Street, all the way west to First Avenue.

The banners were all designed by area residents, some well-known artists, oth-

**Banners
unveiled**

ers who just paint as a hobby, and even some elementary school classes. The banners feature designs such as Alma College, St. Thomas's Church, Lake Erie, Jumbo and tributes to the Talbot Settlement bicentennial.

Many of the designs were on display Thursday at the art centre.

"This is great," said Mayor Peter Ostojic. "It's a great idea and a great way of promoting our community."

The banners are available to be
SEE BANNERS, PAGE 2

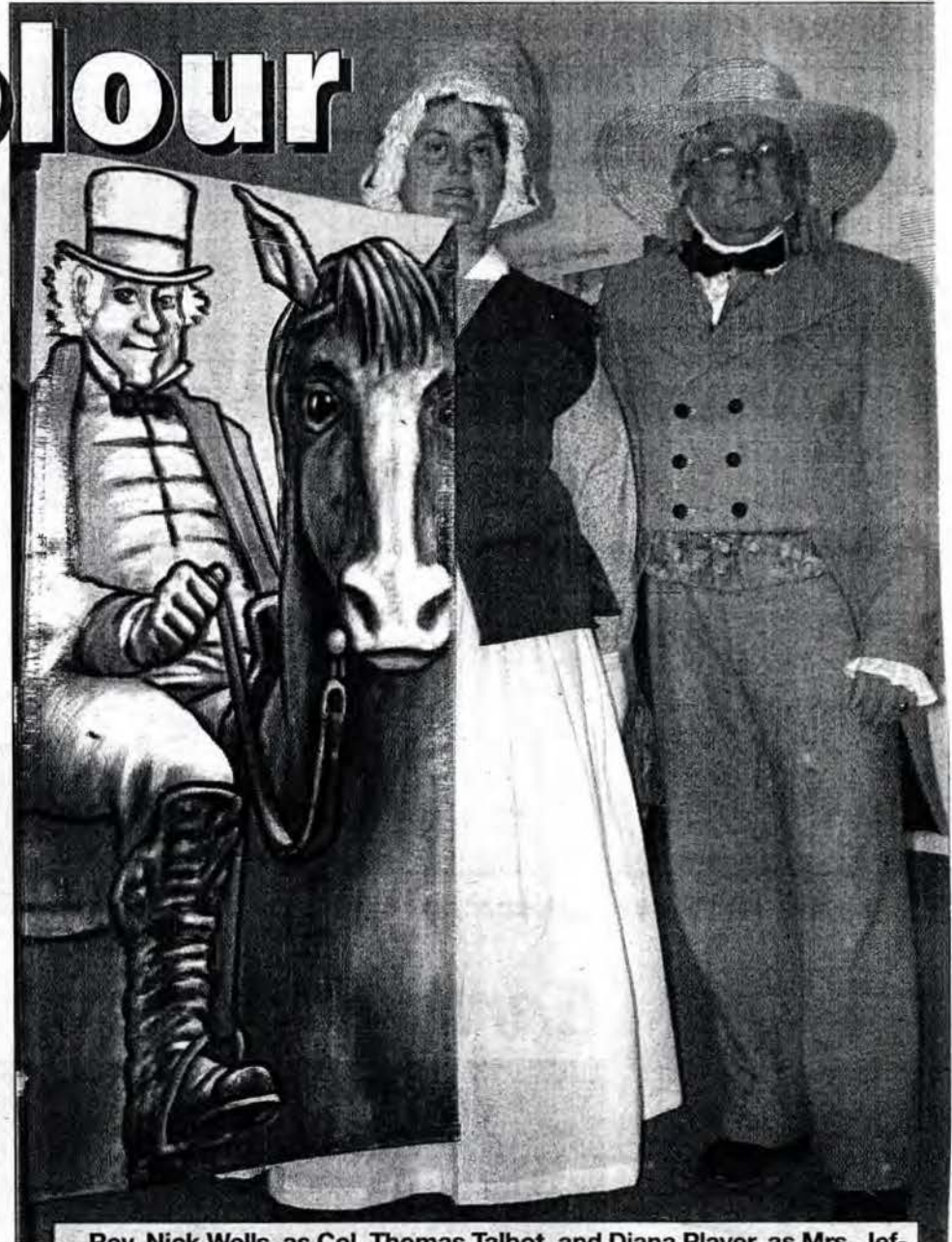
Three-vehicle crash closes Sunset Road

By TIMES-JOURNAL STAFF

The ride to work took a detour Thursday morning for commuters coming into St. Thomas from Port Stanley after Sunset Road was closed following a three-vehicle, chain-reaction crash south of Fruit Ridge Line at 7:40 a.m.

OPP say a southbound Ford F150 truck driven by Michael Wolfe, 35, of Malahide, was rear-ended by a transport, and ran into a northbound Ford Taurus, which hit a utility pole.

Central Elgin firefighters extricated
SEE DRIVER, PAGE 5



Rev. Nick Wells, as Col. Thomas Talbot, and Diana Player, as Mrs. Jeffrey Hunter, a servant of Talbot's for 25 years, check out one of the banners that will be on display along Talbot Street from June to August. The banners, on display Thursday at the St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre, were all designed by area residents. (T-J photo*)