

## STRATHCONA CREAMERY:

The Stratheona Creamery was purchased by the late Roy Fraser in 1906. Cliff Wight (Ruth's husband) and my father, Fred Leslie, started work at the Creamery in about 1930. They each took the dairy diploma course at the Ontario Agricultural School (now called the University of Guelph).

In the Creamery's early days, they had several trucks that would go farm-to-farm picking up the cream cans and cases of eggs. A truck covered a different route each day so the farmer would know the approximate time that the cream truck would arrive at the farm. After the cows were milked, the cream was separated and placed in a shot-gun cream can. The cans were usually stored in the basement to keep the cream cool. Each can was tagged at the farm with the farmer's name and the number of cans that he was sending to the Creamery. The truck took all of the cans back to the Creamery where each can was tested and the weight recorded. The cream test is the basis for payment to the farmer. These tests were written in a book and given to Ruth to figure out the amount each farmer would receive in his envelope. The envelope was referred to as the "Cream cheque", although it was always paid in cash. The cans were then dumped into a hopper to take out anything that should not have been in the can. The cream flowed into the separator and was then pasturized to take out any and all impurities. The pasturized cream was then taken into a 1000 to 1500 butter churn. The churn turned over and over for a certain length of time until the end result was butter in the bottom of the churn. The butter was taken out of the churn and packed in 90 pound cases. These cases were usually sold to other manufacturers. The balance of the churn was put on a stand and by wire cutters was cut into pound sizes. These pound sizes were then wrapped into Thistle Brand Butter with a special parchment wrap to help keep the butter fresh. These cases were then sold to grocery stores from St. Thomas to Windsor. Over the years, Strathcona Creamery won many awards for top quality butter.

In the 1960's many farmers, because of the work involved, decided to quit sending cream. Although the Creamery also picked up eggs at the farm, there was not enough business to make it a worthwhile enterprise. In 1968, the Creamery was sold and my father and Cliff retired. They both worked for the Board of Education as Custodians for a few years.

The Creamery was located near the corner of Main Street and <sup>Dutton</sup>Strathcona Drive. The Egg Grading Station was located on Main Street where the Senior's Centre is now located. This Centre was located on the bottom floor of the Alexandra Lodge building.

Ruth Wight and Bob Leslie  
August 11, 2005

*Dutton, Ontario.*



Dec 2005



The Grand Trunk Railway engine that struck Jumbo the elephant on September 15, 1885 and some of the crew and rope that moved him. Note the tin elephant that marked the engine.

Dec 2005



A Southwestern Traction Company railway trolley car at Talbotville. The postcard mailed is looking south from Highway #4 at #3.

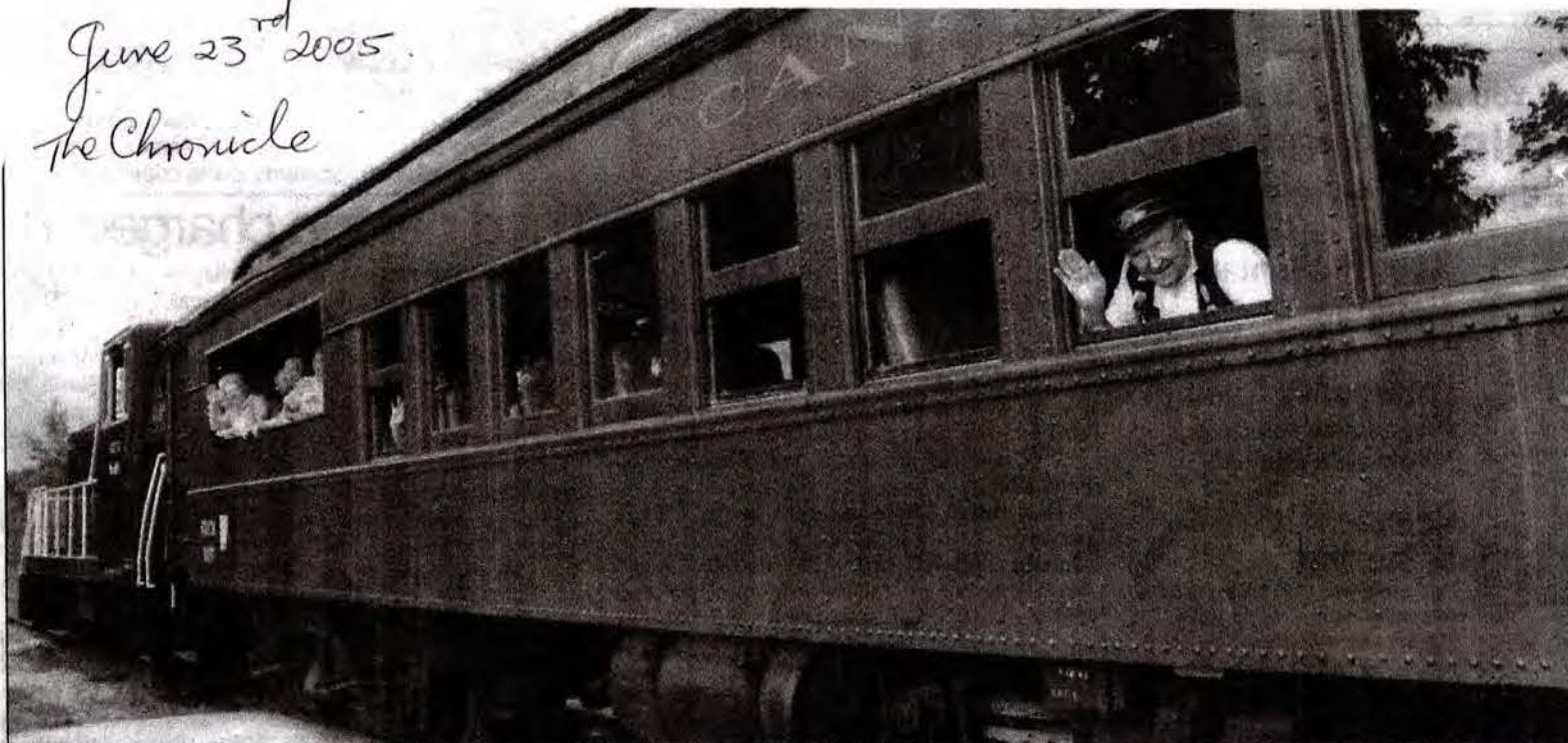
Dec 2005



Kingsmill was established in 1872 with the building of the Canada Southern Railway. Pictured is the section gang who were responsible for track maintenance in 1912.



June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2005  
The Chronicle



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

### Last stop, Dutton

Charlie Beckett, coach conductor, on the symbolic last passenger train to Dutton waves goodbye to onlookers as the South Locomotive Restoration Society operating a diesel locomotive and two passenger cars left Dutton around 6:15 p.m. Saturday. The train travelled from St. Thomas with less than two dozen passengers and stopped at the Main Street crossing as a symbolic last stop in Dutton.

# Last train to Dutton, gone

Jeff Kempenaar  
Staff

As CN plans to abandon the Southern Rail Line, a symbolic last train rolled out of Dutton Saturday.

The last minute event, organized by a St. Thomas historical group caught some onlooker surprised.

Symbolically, the diesel train travelled from St. Thomas Station to the crossing at Main St. at 5:17 p.m., stalling traffic at the crossing for about 30 minutes.

Stopping to greet onlookers and pick up two passengers, Southern Locomotive Restoration Society hastily organized the trip only days before in light of the announcement that CN

Rail would be abandoning the line next year.

Jack Vowel watched as the train rolled away at 25 km/hr from Dutton back to St. Thomas.

"It's too bad she has to go," said Vowel, who for 16-years maintained the tracks.

Vowel's family has a long history with the CASO, or Southern Rail Line stretching from St. Thomas to near Blenheim.

His grandfather D.A. Vowel helped with carpentry work on the Dutton train station which saw three passenger trains a day stop in the village.

Nurses, students, and workers would travel to St. Thomas every day.

"I remember when you could set your clocks to trains passing through every 20 minutes,"

said Vowel.

His son also served 20 years as an engineering technician on the line and his brother was a conductor.

His uncle was in charge of picking up the mail or packages brought on the train and delivering them to residents.

Jack believes the passenger trains stopped coming to Dutton around 1973, less than 10-years after Highway 401 was built.

"The 401 is what ruined it. (Trains) can't compete with trucks there's no way," said Vowel.

CN is selling the property with plans to maintain it until next spring.

Please see Final page 2

## Final ride to Ridgetown planned

from page 1

CN says it plans to rip up the track and sell the rails if no purchasers come forward by July 15.

At the ceremony, Town Crier, Dave Phillips remarked, "long gone are the days of passenger trips on the Southern Rail."

"This is the last stop in Dutton."

He mentioned it was the rail company which named the stop Dutton because at the time when passenger trips were being made,

there were two villages on each side of Currie Road and neither could decide what the entire area should be called.

The symbolic trip to Dutton had been silently in the works in the last month but permission to use the tracks from CN came early in the week.

One more passenger train will pass through western Elgin County in a say goodbye to the CASO line excursion from St. Thomas to Ridgetown and back in July 2.



Dec 2005



Lawrence Station is named after William Lawrence, an early settler. The village was established in 1872 with the opening of the Great Western Railway

## Duff Church celebrates 150 years

Scottish immigrants who settled in North Dunwich in the early 1800s missed their church so much they built their own 150 years ago.

Duff Presbyterian Church in Largie celebrated its 150 year anniversary with a reunion of past ministers, congregants and family at its Sunday services.

With 80 current communicants listed in the church's registry, some of the original families remain tied with the church today.

Paul McWilliam, whose family joined the church in the 1860s from the Church of Scotland, was chair of the anniversary committee.

McWilliam was part of a committee that had sent letters around the world to invite people to this reunion.

While the church has been a part of many family's lives, with so many other interests and organizations vying for its members time, the church is just one part of the local community. "There's pride in our history of the church and that it is a big part of the history of this community," said McWilliam. "In generations past the church was the centre piece of the community. It

still is a centre piece to the community."

In 150 years, the church has had its challenges.

During the 1920s, a majority of the church's members left to join neighbouring United Churches, including some elders.

A shortage of ministers during this time also left the church vacant.

It did not stop though, in 1930 a special service was held to mark the 75 anniversary of the church.

The 150th anniversary featured musical entertainment from choirs from the past and present.

Christian hymns were sung by the 225 people in attendance.

A young group of pipers played outside of the church after the afternoon service.

Elders have been an important part of the church's long history, said McWilliam.

Four elders were given plaques for their long standing.

Bruce McCallum has been with the church 32 years, Stanley Duncanson 35 years, Alan MacDonald 42 years and Norm McWilliam 50 years of service with the church.

Day, June 30, 2005 - page 8

June 30<sup>th</sup> 2005 Chronicle

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M. C. R. Station, Dutton, Ont.



The Canada Southern, later the Michigan Central and New York Central, arrived in Dutton in 1872. Dutton is named after one of the railway's civil engineers.

*March 2005*

# History of Lake Erie fishing told

## **GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWS**

On March 20, the society heard an interesting and informative presentation on commercial fishing in Lake Erie given by Eugene Sutton who fished for many years. The presentation consisted of a history of fishing on the lake which officially began in Port Stanley in 1840 and a description of the equipment which has been used throughout the years. Mr. Sutton showed some miniature replicas of nets and examples of other equipment which he has collected. Also, on display were photo albums of former fisheries in West Elgin as well as publications on the topic.

The business portion of the meeting followed a refreshment break. Minutes of the previous meeting and the treasurer's report were heard. Colin McGugan gave a report on the sales of the publication, *The Early History of Dunwich Township*, which are progressing as expected. The next meeting is scheduled for April 24.



## EASTER REFLECTIONS

Easter brings a wealth of thoughts to mind for me each year:  
New spring clothes, chocolate eggs, a bunny with long ears.  
O, I remember Easter morn', just dashing "round the house,  
Looking here, and over there, and underneath the couch.  
There'd be some sweetened candy eggs that come in Easter colors,  
And chocolate covered marshmallows, and - well, you know all the others.

I've far-off, faint remembrances of a misty Easter morn';  
Of the early smell of coffee; of a kitchen bright and warm;  
Dad whistling, "*The Lord Is Risen Today*"; watching raisin bread turn brown;  
An Easter card by each one's plate, and kisses all around.  
And then we kids would scrub our teeth, our faces and our hands;  
There at the church we'd join the rest,  
You know ... I'd half expect a band!

Now there's a feeling comes to me each year since I was just a child;  
We'd walk in through the big oak doors and I'd peer down the aisle,  
And oh, I'd get a surge of joy, relief, and then delight,  
For there would be, for all to see, the altar draped in white.  
I never liked to see the cross and altar draped in black,  
And every year, Good Friday brought a sinking feeling back,  
As the pastor would remind us of our sins against the Christ,  
And how He suffered all that pain - in love - to set us right.  
When I thought about the nails they drove right through His flesh and bone,  
A strong persistent itching would rise up in my own.

We've been told that we're to blame, like those upon the hill;  
That rebellion dwells within our souls, and that it always will.  
And year by year I see it's true - that what we do is waste,  
Unless I take my plans to God - unless I seek His face.  
Well, here is where I find true joy each blessed Easter morn!  
Why else would Christ have suffered? Why else would He be born?  
The vestments on the altar, the smiles upon each face, the music -  
Say "*He's risen!*" That He really took our place!  
He rose, He rose, our Christ arose; He broke the bonds of death!  
He rose that we might find with Him eternal Joy and rest.  
He rose to cancel out the book that tallies up the score!  
He rose to shut the gates of hell - to open heaven's door.

And this, my friend, is central - each Easter time for me.  
I find true joy in knowing that our Christ has set me free.  
And so I like the chocolate eggs, the cards, and squeals of glee,  
The raisin toast, and sunrise service - they all form a litany  
To say that we have reason to sing and smile and pray;  
For it's true, it's true, I know its true -  
The Christ - my Lord - is risen today!

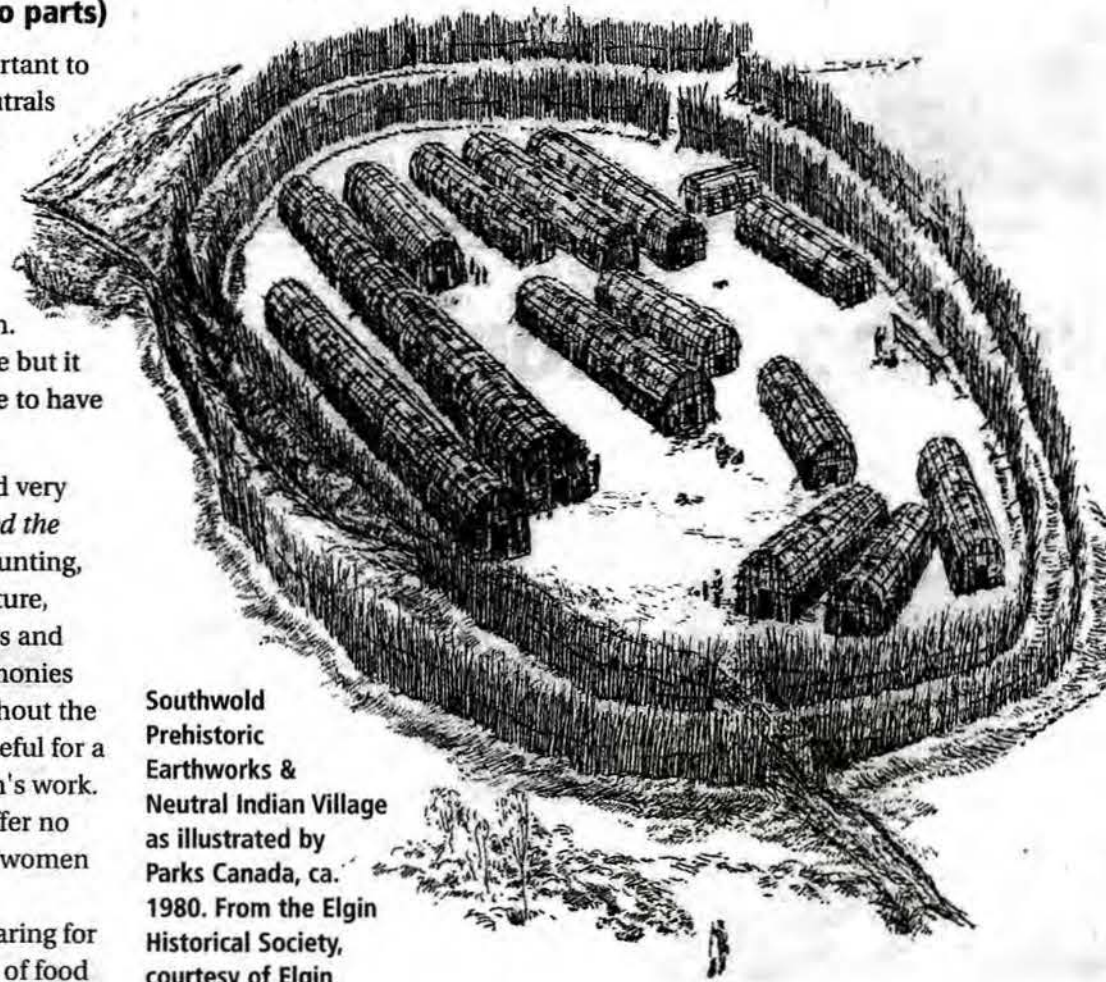


# The Neutral Indians of Southwold

by Al Kirk (Part 2 of two parts)

**Southwold:** Family was important to the Neutral Indians. The Neutrals married for life, although the missionaries said that monogamy was practiced fairly loosely. Divorce sometimes occurred but rarely if a couple had children. Premarital sex was acceptable but it was considered inappropriate to have children outside of wedlock.

Both men and women had very separate tasks. The men *ruled the roost* and were in charge of hunting, war, clearing land for agriculture, building the village's defenses and conducting the various ceremonies that would take place throughout the year. Apparently, it was shameful for a man to be seen doing women's work. The men, therefore, would offer no assistance whatsoever to the women of the village. Women were responsible for agriculture, caring for children and the preparation of food and clothing. The older men of the



Southwold Prehistoric Earthworks & Neutral Indian Village as illustrated by Parks Canada, ca. 1980. From the Elgin Historical Society, courtesy of Elgin County Archives

village were primarily responsible for educating the boys.

Boys would spend their time at sports, exercise and learning how to hunt. The girls would immediately be given small household chores to do as soon as they were old enough to walk. Missionaries describe Neutral children as being very bright, naked and dishevelled. They were good mimics and often mischievous.

Sadly, that is about all we know about the daily lives of the Neutral Indians. Yet a bigger mystery exists. The Neutrals faded from history quickly and violently.

The first calamity to strike the Neutrals was various diseases, unknown to the natives until contact with Europeans. War was the next scourge. In 1640, the Dutch, who controlled what would become the New York city area, began supplying the Iroquois with an unlimited amount of guns. The firearms were meant to make fur trapping easier but

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## The Neutral Indians of Southwold

*Continued From Page 3*

*the* Iroquois apparently had other *idea* *dec*imate its traditional rivals the Huron, Huron refugees fled into the territory of the Neutrals. The Iroquois followed and practically destroyed the Neutral nation as well.

In 1650, a missionary's letter to France mentions the ongoing carnage of the Neutrals. Another letter dated 1653 mentions that a group of 800 Neutrals had been spotted near what is now the Windsor/Detroit area. After that, the Neutrals disappear from history.

There are unconfirmed reports that some Neutrals may have fled across Lake Erie and found refuge with native peoples living in the Sandusky area. Other reports place fragments of the Neutral nation as far apart as upstate New York and Green Bay, Wisconsin. The most probable explanation about what happened to the Neutrals is that those who were



ABOVE: Displays tell the story of the Prehistoric Earthworks near Iona. Linda Hibbert and grandson Zachary Halwa enjoy a sunny afternoon exploring the site.

LEFT: Southwold Prehistoric Earthworks just south of Iona on County Road 14.

FAR LEFT: The entrance sign at the walkway leading to the Earthworks.

not killed were adopted into the tribes that had defeated them.

Years later, when Col. Thomas Talbot was considering where to place his settlement, he must have remembered that large empty tract of land north of Lake Erie that he had seen while traveling with Governor Simcoe years before. He was probably totally unaware of the sad history of the area's first inhabitants.

*(Al Kirk is a freelance writer and columnist. He resides in the Hamlet of*



# Western Elgin LOOKING BACK

The Chronicle Jan 25<sup>th</sup> 2007



Argyle House 1870s-1961, West Lorne

— Photo courtesy of Harley Lashbrook Mercury-Sun Publications

## Hotels welcomed travellers to area

### West Lorne

Hotels were an important part of early life. They were found every few miles along the main roads of travel. Hotels provided meals and lodging to the travelling salesmen, and to the locals a place to socialize.

The Wilton House hotel was built prior to the year 1870, the third storey was erected in 1888. In 1912 a fire resulted in its loss. The hotel contained three full floors, a bar and a kitchen. October 21st 1899 a fire occurred in the stables.

The second hotel to be built in the village was the Argyle House, built before 1870 as

well. In 1961 it was torn down to make way for the new Bank of Montreal. This was the only hotel in the village that didn't burn down, it was over 100 years old.

Roome's Hotel was built in the early 1870's by Samuel Mogg. It caught fire in 1912 and burned to the ground. The story of the burning goes as follows: a shoe repair shop beside the hotel was in financial stress so the man who owned it set fire to his own shop and boarded a train to Detroit. With only four feet between the two buildings, the hotel caught fire and burned completely.

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### Dutton Moments

**November 19th, 1947** - Edward Bobier passed away and gave his retirement home to the village of Dutton and the township of Dunwich. It became the Bobier Convalescent Home and is now privately owned as the Victorian Manor.

**1956** - Fire claimed the bowling alley at 187 Main Street. This site was purchased by F.E. Fraser and H.B. Hockin and given to the Masons.

**1965-1985** - Pat Bolger from Dutton became an Olympic athlete and was recognized as Canada's most outstanding junior male athlete, and was also inducted into the Canadian Amateur Wrestling Hall of Fame.

**July 1st 1969** - Dutton swimming pool opened and it was debt free. January of 1969, \$25,800 had been received in donations.

**1977** - Dutton Community Centre Opened.

**1985** - New head quarters for the Dutton and Dunwich fire department was built at the north entrance to town. Firemen themselves raised \$28,000 for the building.

**1988** - Ambulance service commenced operation from the hall.

## INTERESTING FACTS: DUTTON

### Street Meanings

**Currie Street** (Currie Road in the Township) This township road was named in honour of John Currie who took up land in 1819 on Lot #12 Conc. 7.

**Main Street** (Currie Road and what later became the Old Currie Road in the Township) A.J. Leitch named this "Main Street" in his 1871 survey of Lisgar.

**Center Street** This was the central N.S. Street of the original Lisgar survey in 1871.

**Queen Street - King Street** Many Ontario towns established during the Victorian Era or before have both King or Queen Streets. These names are to pay homage to the monarchy.

**Erie Street** Named in honour of Lake Erie.  
**Leitch Street** This was named in honour of the Leitch family in general which played such a prominent role in the early life of the village.

**Patterson Street** The street was named in honour of the Patterson family who owned all of Lot 12, Conc. A.

**Jordan Street** was named after Robert Jordan who operated the Britannia House.

**Shackleton Street** John Shackleton was an early settler to this area. He was instrumental in having the Township of Dunwich establish School Section #7 in 1851.

**Nancy Street** Was the central north/south street in the original Bennettville Survey of 1871. George Bennett named this street in honour of his wife.

**Ridge Street** One can take a guess that there is a slight Ridge or elevation of land that runs generally east to west.

**Lutton Street** On the survey of September 24, 1874, the spelling of this street appears as "Luton" This is keeping with the common spelling of the Luton family.

**Wesley Street** Wesley was the name given to the son of Thomas Luton.

**Peter Street** A good guess is that it might have been named after Peter Duncanson who owned most of Bennettville (east part of town) by 1874.

**McArthur Street** This Street was named in honour of Duncan J. McArthur who along with Fred Humpidge, opened the street for settlement in 1885.



# Western Elgin LOOKING BACK

Jan 25<sup>th</sup> 2007



**Main Street Dutton 1963**

— Photo courtesy of Terry Heeney

## Hotels lost to fire

Continued from pg. 10

Mr. Linderman built West Lorne's fourth hotel in 1886. This was called the Elgin House. The general store operated on the right hand half of the building, which was then burned down in 1911 due to a faulty chimney. The Elgin House was a three storey hotel with rooms being filled almost every night, the top floor was only used for storage.

Bennett Hotel in Dutton was located on the North West corner of the old Currie Road.

The Dutton Hotel was located just South of the C.S.R. line on the North West of (Shackleton) Concession & Main Street Commercial Hotel in 1887 stood at the South West corner of Mary & Main Streets.

The McIntyre Hotel was built in 1857 and was sold in 1888 to J.H. McIntyre who changed its name to The McIntyre Hotel.

There were 26 bedrooms, many sample rooms for travelling salesmen, a dining room and a stable in the back.

In July of 2004 the McIntyre burned to the ground after a fire started in the laundry room of the hotel. Firefighters from Dutton Dunwich, Southwold, and West Lorne worked all afternoon trying to contain the blaze that destroyed the historic McIntyre Hotel.



**Fire destroys McIntyre Hotel 2004**

— The Chronicle

## Railways remembered

Continued from pg. 9

The mid 19th century ushered the railway era into South Western Ontario. Previous to the coming of the rail, produce had been shipped out and goods brought in by boat. Dunwich Township's designated port was Tyngsboro. A large pier had been constructed for the export of lumber and grain.

In May of 1870 a railway convention was held in St. Thomas to promote cause of a railway from Niagara River to Detroit River.

In September of 1870 grading had been started between Niagara and the Grand River and in May and June of 1871 the C.S.R. purchased the right of way through lots 12 and 13 Con. A, of Dunwich which later became the Village of Dutton.

The first train that passed through the village was from Amherstburg which went through Currie Road Crossing, (Dutton) on December 19, 1872.

Flowers, staves, and lumber were the principal products shipped by rail, by 1883 sheep, cattle and hogs were added to that list.

In the fall of 1890 a notice was placed in advance that they had abandoned the pier as it was unsafe for use. The shipping era in Dunwich came to an end and the era of the rail was in full swing.

In 2005 CN and CP Rail put the entire stretch of railway from the Blenheim area to St. Thomas up for sale. In 2006 it was torn up.



**Fire destroys multiple buildings in Rodney 1986.**  
photo (courtesy of Alice Paterson)

## Information

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by Terry Heeney.

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West Lorne, 90  
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Robert King.



The Chronicle Jan 25<sup>th</sup> 2007

# Post masters deliver mail across area connecting villages



**Duncan McKillop**  
**First Post Master**  
**of West Lorne**

— Photo courtesy of Harley Lashbrook Mercury-Sun Publications

## West Lorne —

Citizens of West Lorne did not begin to receive mail on a daily basis until 1872. The post office was operated by Duncan McKillop who remained post master until 1919. In 1980 the office moved to Gangle's Insurance building on the north side of Main Street where it still is today. In the early years of Canada postal service there was a lot of confusion getting mail to the correct destination, because of the similarities and actual duplications of Lorne. A "Lorne" post office had opened in Bruce County north of Kincardine, in 1871. And there was another "Lorne" in Pictou County Nova Scotia. On July 1st 1873, the name West Lorne was chosen to assure correct mail delivery.

## Dutton —

Established on October 1st 1874 under the official name of

"Dutton Station" the first post master was Archibald John Leitch. On January 1st 1887 the name "station" was officially dropped. A.J. Leitch built a modest wooden store on the west side of Main Street, just north of the Canadian Southern Railway, called the "post office" store. Although the post office was located in various places in the village, this building stood often unoccupied, until July of 1909 when it was finally razed. By June 1910 rural mail was established at Dutton & Crinan. The people had their own mail boxes and received mail three times a week.

## Rodney —

Duncan McIntyre, who was also a tailor, became Rodney's first postmaster. The mail was brought from Wardsville once a week, sometimes on foot, however it was mostly on horseback

## WARDSVILLE AND NEWBURY

- Newbury was incorporated as a village in 1872.
- In 1930 the county paved Hagerty Street, and continued it out # 2 highway at Wardsville.
- February of 1967 Four Counties Hospital was opened with a tiling ceremony. The hospital had 48 beds at the time.
- George Ward was the founder of Wardsville in 1810. He was persuaded by the government to establish an inn on the Long Wood Trail where the travellers could rest. He was promised 400 acres land.
- W.M. Mimna (Sr.) had a tailor shop here prior to 1900
- One of the first cars in Canada (1893) was built here by W. Mimna (Jr.)
- The car was called Shamrock. It is displayed at the South western Ontario Heritage Village Transportation Museum, in Harrow.



**Back of Mimna Bros Granite & Mable Works Wardsville**  
— Photo courtesy of Ken Willis Wardsville Museum

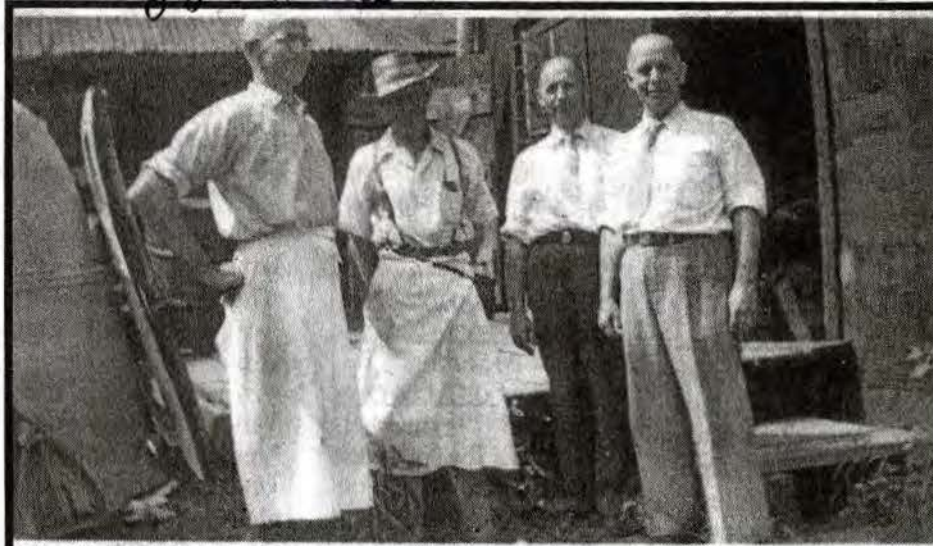


**First bridge (wooden) over the Thames River 1855 at Wardsville**  
— Photo courtesy of Ken Willis Wardsville Museum





*her-story - "Photo A" - Pictured above:* The three 'girls' and the man at back of Crawford's were Garfield Ross, one of the grocers; standing Christine Ford; middle - Marie (nee McPhail), (Leitch) Randall; and Ruth Ford ( who later married Ed Davis) is on the right. The ladies aren't sure of the male workers in the background (circa 1970 photo of Ruth Wright.)



*her-story - "Photo B" - Pictured above:* The four men standing out back of Crawford's are from left to right - Garfield Ross (who lived across from Dutton Foodland where the Horse Trader now has its offices); Robert McMillan wearing the hat, was the delivery man. Robert was also father of Janet McMillan and Betty (Ray) Hull; the two brothers, Chester, second from the end and Arnold on the end. (circa 1970 photo courtesy of Ruth Wight)