



George James CHAYNAM, ONT

Part of crowd - Centennial Fair - 1960



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## DIVINE SERVICE

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2nd

at 2:30 p.m.

Rev. Finlay Stewart, D.D., assisted by Dunwich  
resident ministers

Page Quartette

Massed choir from Dutton and Dunwich, directed  
by Miss Elaine Keillor

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**REGISTER AT THE PAST PRESIDENTS'  
BOOTH UPON ARRIVAL**

Renew acquaintances, make new friends

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DON'T MISS THE

## ANTIQUE DISPLAY

Centennial Cake and Tea

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**PHOTOGRAPHIC COLORED SLIDE  
COMPETITION**

"Check rules before you shoot."

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**HOME COOKED MEALS** served in Wallacetown  
Community Hall, September 29th and October 1st

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## "Caed Mille Failthe"

(A HUNDRED THOUSAND WELCOMES)

1860 — 1960

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# OFFICIAL PROGRAM West Elgin Agricultural CENTENNIAL FAIR WALLACETOWN September 29 to October 2

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**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29th**

Judging Exhibits in Drill Shed and Jun'or Fair

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**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30th**

11:30 a.m.—Gate Dedication. President, Colin  
Morrison; J. A. Carroll, Rev. R. B.  
Cummings, Rev. Harry Stevenson, A.  
Lee, Past President of O.A.A.S.; Sam  
Pearce, Past President.

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**WELCOME HOME**

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**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30th**

A.M.

Livestock Show

Beef Cattle, Regional Hereford Show

Regional Yorkshire Show, Swine Club

12:30 noon—Grandstand

Lionette Band of Sarnia

Light and Heavy Horse Show

1:00 p.m.—Races

2:00 p.m.—Argyle Pipe Band

Official Opening. **PRIME MINISTER**  
**DIEFENBAKER, J. A. McBain, M.P.;**  
Warden Harvey Liddle

4:30 p.m.—Livestock Parade

Chicken Barbecue

7:30 p.m.—Square Dance Competition

Judo

Boxing

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1st**

A.M.

Championship Berkshire Show

4-H Beef Calf Club

12:30 noon—Grandstand

Lionettes, R.C.A.F., R.C. Reg. Trumpet  
Bands

Friday Night's Square Dance Winners

1:00 p.m.—Centennial Parade

Crowning Queen, John Spence, M.L.A.

Centennial Cake Awards

**PROF. J. KENNETH GALBRAITH**  
F. A. Lashley, A. V. Langton

Go-Kart and Chariot Races

Palomino Show

Wood Chopping Contest

4:00 p.m.—Junior Farmer Pie Eating Contest

8:30 p.m.—Dance. Rancheros

11:00 p.m.—Draw



# 1860 - 100 Years of Wallacetown Fair - 1960

(The following was prepared by John K. Elliott of the editorial staff of The London Free Press from material supplied by entries in the Centennial Essay Contest of 1959. The Society is deeply grateful to Mr. Elliott and the contestants).

Although fairs have been held ever since mankind established settled communities, there is only one fair as far as residents—and former residents—of West Elgin are concerned. It is the Wallacetown Fair, now marking its official centennial.

Like other great institutions its early beginnings are veiled in mystery. It is a bit startling for those of us who thought Wallacetown Fair went back to time immemorial to learn that it was originally held in New Glasgow, core of the first Scottish section of the Talbot Settlement.

Some records indicate that an Elgin County Fair was held there as early as 1853—the year Elgin separated from Middlesex and began its separate existence as a county. Later East and West Elgin branches were established and it appears that the first West Elgin Fair was held at New Glasgow on October 19, 1860, under the sponsorship of the newly formed West Elgin Agricultural Society. James McKinley was president.

The three townships of Southwold, Dunwich and Aldborough formed the West Elgin Agricultural Society. It soon became obvious that New Glasgow was too far west for convenience. After a heated controversy, not unaccompanied by physical violence, it was decided to move the fair to the more central location of Wallacetown.

Sometime in the Sixties the Canadian militia was reorganized to meet the threat of the Fenian Raids. A company was centred at Wallacetown, where a drill shed was built and a parade-ground established on the farm of John Leslie Pearce.

Although there were still a few stumps in the field it was a comparatively clear and level area. The owner of the land and the commander of the company permitted the fair to use these facilities. In 1869, after the peril of the Fenian Raids had passed, the five-acre plot was purchased from John Leslie Pearce. Not until 1900 did a payment of \$5 bring formal title to the drill shed from the federal government.

In 1875, 1904 and 1937 subsequent purchases brought the size of the fair grounds to the present 20.34 acres.

From the beginning and throughout its history the Wallacetown Fair has reflected the activities of the community and combined entertainment with exhibitions of the best currently available in live stock and farm produce as well as the baking and handicrafts of women of the community.

It is interesting in this age of automation to learn that a century ago the introduction of farm machinery was inaugurating an agricultural revolution. The 1860 report says: "The great disparity heretofore existing between the price of manual labor and agricultural produce has been a great drawback to all farming operations and improvements; but the introduction, lately, of reaping and mowing machines, and in fact, of all the improved manual labor-saving machines of the present age, on a large scale in this section of the country, has so reduced farm laborers' and mechanics' wages as to render farming an agreeable and profitable undertaking nowadays; and improved farms have consequently increased much in value. Some two years ago, when a good farm hand would, during harvest time command from one dollar and a half to two dollars per diem, a 200-acre lot with house, barn and driving sheds, and say 80 acres of clearance, could have been purchased in a good locality, convenient to markets, in this county for about \$28 an acre; whereas now, when farm hands can be hired for one-half the amount, the same farm would bring at least \$40 an acre."

## Early Exhibition Features

Early exhibitions featured displays of working oxen and for many years prizes were given for the fastest walking teams. It was not until the 1875 addition to the fairgrounds that a quarter-mile track was established and the trotting races, so soon to become an important feature of the fair, started. The 1937 addition made possible a half-mile track, and in 1947 modernization was completed with the introduction of starting gates.

Finances have been a continuing problem. John L. Pearce was long treasurer and as banking facilities were lacking he used to keep the fair money at home. Friends would escort him to and from the fairgrounds.

Admittance and entry fees were never enough to meet expenses. They were supplemented by subscriptions, government grants, and payments from township and county councils and donations from firms and individuals. Occasionally, individuals in the neighborhood would advance money and the names of David Bobier and John McFarlane were connected with various loans. Later the banks took over this part of the financing.

Rain has been a recurrent problem. In 1909 the Ontario Government established a rain insurance policy for local fairs and this saved the Wallacetown show in the particularly bad year of 1912. However, the weather exhausted the fund shortly afterwards.

Once Wallacetown nearly lost its fair for reasons similar to those which brought it from New Glasgow. Building of the Canada Southern Railway in 1873 made Dutton a strong competitor. From that time until 1913 periodic efforts were made to move the fair to Dutton. But the arrival of the motor-car soon shifted the balance back to Wallacetown.

Although Wallacetown Fair has been primarily an agricultural exhibition, aimed at improvement of live-stock and farming methods, entertainment has always been a feature. At the first fair there was a piper and music has been a constant accompaniment.

As early as 1883 there was a bicycle race. Horse races have been increasingly important. Punch and Judy shows and a merry-go-round were the forerunners of the current midways. The year after World War One ended an airplane appeared and took up those who were sufficiently daring and affluent.

Among the special attractions at various times were a tug-o-war in 1901, an auto demonstration in 1912, a plowing match in 1924, a potato race, Shetland pony race, musical chair race, greyhound races and chariot races in later years. One of the most hilarious features was a milking contest.

No mention of Wallacetown Fair would be complete without a reference to John R. Gow, one of the early presidents and long the superintendent of the grounds. As late as 1932 five people attended the

fair who had been there in 1860. Storey Backus and his sister, Mrs. Thomas L. Pearce had never missed a fair in that period. John R. Gow, Mrs. Dama Lumley and a Mr. Clark had missed only one.

Others have a shorter record, but few who have attended Wallacetown Fair ever wish to miss a subsequent show. And the Centennial will be bigger and better than ever.

## Recent Improvements

Considerable work has been done to improve the appearance of the buildings that have stood for many years. In 1952, D. Peter McPherson, former Secretary donated the brick for the Secretary's office and financial help was given by Coyne's Farmers' Club. In 1958 a new judges' stand was erected and this year a new ticket office and Centennial Gates are being built at the entrance of the fair grounds in honour of all past presidents and directors of the fair. A Dedication Service will be held on Friday, September 30th.

## Past Presidents

1860 — James McKinley	1923 — R. A. Kerr
1886 — Stephen Backus	*1924 — S. A. Brown
1887 — A. D. McGugan	*1925 — M. N. McNeil
1888 — D. McAlpine	1926 — H. C. McKillop
1889 — L. W. McIntyre	*1927 — S. M. Pearce
1890 — A. McColl	*1928 — F. Silcox
1891 — D. McColl	1929 — M. A. McAlpine
1892 — Joseph Pearce	*1930 — Geo. Silcox
1893 — A. McKillop	*1931 — D. E. Carroll
1894 — M. McNabb	*1932 — C. C. Small
1895 — John R. Gow	*1933 — Dave McPherson
1896 — Thos. Havens	1934 — J. H. Miller
1897 — D. Brown	1935 — A. Crawford
1898 — Alex Crane	1936 — A. A. Crawford
1899 — Arch. McKillop	*1937 — John E. Pearce
1900 — E. Silcox	*1938 — D. J. McKillop
1901 — R. J. Hine	*1939 — Clarence Blue
1902 — A. D. McGugan	1940 — M. W. Small
1903 — L. J. Else	1941 — John A. McCallum
1904 — Ed. McKellar	*1942 — Robert Campbell
1905 — A. J. Gillies	*1943 — Morley Page
1906 — D. Brown	*1944 — Peter Love
1907 — John R. Gow	*1945 — Edward Shipley
1908 — Arch. McKillop	*1946 — Ernest Ford
1909 — M. McNabb	*1947 — Stewart Duncanson
1910 — J. Dromgole	*1948 — Stewart McWilliam
1911 — R. Kerr	*1949 — Wm. S. McKillop
1912 — Edgar Silcox	*1950 — John W. Bobier
1913 — P. J. McCallum	*1951 — Neil A. McKellar
1914 — Peter Stalker	*1952 — Humphrey Campbell, Roy Jewell
1915 — Sam Pearce	*1953 — Walter Robson
1916 — John R. Gow	*1954 — Grant Cameron
1917 — Flem. Shipley	*1955 — Erie Trothen
1918 — D. Brown	*1956 — Norman McWilliam
1919 — W. A. Galbraith	*1957 — Earl Shipley
1920 — Archie McKillop	*1958 — Hugh Carroll
1921 — M. McNabb	*1959 — Finlay McPherson
1922 — H. Dromgole	

\* Denotes presidents still living



### Past Secretaries and Treasurers

Mr. John L. Pearce was Treasurer and Banker from 1860 to 1911. Mr. George Giddy was Treasurer from 1912 to 1920; and after that date the office of Secretary and Treasurer was combined. Mr. Donald Campbell was the first Secretary until Mr. Alex McCallum was appointed. No record is obtainable of the year but Mr. Alex McCallum was the secretary in 1897.

#### Secretary

1898-1899 — Daniel McCallum      1902-1916 — William Patton  
1900-1901 — E. J. Clark          1919-1920 — S. S. Turville

#### Secretary-Treasurer

1921-1929 — S. S. Turville      1940-1948 — D. Peter McPherson  
1930-1935 — M. Blue          1949-1951 — J. Stuart McWilliam  
1936-1939 — A. Bruce Thomson   1952-1957 — Humphrey Campbell

#### Secretary

1958 — Humphrey Campbell

#### Treasurer

1958 — Mrs. Victor C. McMillan

#### Secretary-Treasurer

1959-1960 — Mrs. Victor C. McMillan

### Wallacetown Fair Marks 100 Years

Only the weatherman's co-operation is now necessary to make the centennial observance of Wallacetown Fair one of the red letter events in the history of this district.

A faithful and dedicated group of men and women have put in many hours preparing for this event. They have had little to guide them except the experience of other agricultural societies who have marked 100 years. Despite this, a most interesting program, extending over four days, has been arranged. It has just about everything needed to fittingly mark such an occasion.

The appearance of Prime Minister and Mrs. Diefenbaker should be a real drawing card. The Prime Minister has not made a visit to Elgin that we recall since assuming the premiership and this immediate area is fortunate indeed to be the first in the county accorded the honor of receiving him.

Some 1,000 invitations have been sent to former residents of the area now

scattered far and wide. We join with members of the Agricultural Society in expressing the hope that as many as possible will accept the invitation to visit once again what many affectionately knew as "The World's Fair."

Incidentally, we wonder if the 100th anniversary wouldn't be a good time to change the name of the local organization. "West Elgin Agricultural Society" really doesn't give a true picture, because Shedden and Rodney fairs likewise are situated in the western part of the county. "Wallacetown" or "Dunwich Agricultural Society" would be more specific.

Be that as it may, we do hope you will do all in your power to make the centennial observance "a REALLY big show." Your co-operation will be an acknowledgment not only of the many hours the centennial executive have put in but also of those who founded the society and those who have guided its affairs for 100 years.

# Centennial Fair



**RT. HON. JOHN DIEFENBAKER**  
Who will officially open the Fair at 2 p.m. Friday



**MRS. DIEFENBAKER**  
Will accompany her husband to the Centennial observance

## P.M. Leaving U.N. For Friday's Show

Months of planning will culminate this week-end in the 100th anniversary of Wallacetown Fair. The directors are busy with last-minute details for what should be the best show ever presented by the local Society.

Thursday will be confined mostly to the placing of exhibits as in former years. But Friday things really begin to roll. At 11:30 a.m., J. A. Carroll of Brampton, an old Dunwich boy, will officiate at the dedication of the new centennial gates.

At 2 p.m. Prime Minister J. Diefenbaker is expected to officially open the fair and from then on there will be a variety of interesting items

on the program. Included will be a chicken barbecue from 4 to 8 p.m.

#### Flying to London

Word was received by the Fair Board secretary, Mrs. Victor McMillan on Wednesday morning that the Prime Minister and his party, comprising ten in all, will arrive in London from New York at 12:30 noon Standard Time on Friday. They no doubt will motor here immediately afterwards. Mr. Diefenbaker addressed a meeting of the United Nations on Monday and returned again Thursday to hear Prime Minister McMillan of Great Britain speak.

Special emphasis will be placed on the centennial on Saturday with Prof. Kenneth Galbraith, another former Dunwichite, being the speaker. The centennial parade will form at Wallacetown school at 12 noon, where judging will be done and the parade will enter the fair grounds at 1 p.m. Crowning of the Centennial Queen, go-cart and chariot races, pie eating contest, palomino show, etc., are also on the program that day. In the evening, there will be a dance and a draw for valuable prizes.

#### Service on Sunday

A fitting wind-up to the centennial observance will be a divine service at the fair grounds on Sunday at 2:30 p.m. Still another former Dunwich resident, Rev. Dr. Finlay Stewart, will be the speaker. Miss Elaine Keillor will direct a massed choir and the Page Quartette will offer special numbers.

The secretary reports that the response to request for billets for the Lionettes Band has been very gratifying. Those preparing the antique display are still looking for an unpainted hand-made pine kitchen table.

The wives of the past presidents under the convenership of Mrs. P. Love and Mrs. C. Blue are busy making final arrangements for the tea room in the antique building where Mrs. Diefenbaker, Mrs. J. A. McBain and many others will be pouring tea from 3 to 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday afternoons.

**MEN**—remember on Saturday to bring your axe (not too grind), but to participate in the wood chopping bee to be held in front of the grandstand during the afternoon.

The Royal Air Force Band from Aylmer and the Royal Canadian Army Band from London have been added to Saturday's attractions to take part in the parade.

*MR. DIEFENBAKER SPEECH [BELOW] CARRIED OVER FROM OPPOSITE PAGE*

#### FOOD VITAL FACTOR

And Mr. Diefenbaker had a word of encouragement for the farmers of Elgin County when he said food was a vital factor in "the conflict for peace." Agriculture has played, and will continue to play a major part in that conflict.

Wallacetown fair, the prime minister noted, presented the best in what he was offering to the world.

"Agriculture has played, and will continue to play,—and I mean a major part—in the effort to attain world peace. It must continue to be the purpose of all of you here," he said, "to ensure, among other things, that the farmer will continue to have a fair share of the national income."

"It's a never-ending responsibility," Mr. Diefenbaker said.

He made this observation from his own experience when he said:

"I have been in contact with the representatives of less fortunate countries than Canada. And I believe that food will play an ever important part in the conflict for peace."

Mr. Diefenbaker said, in effect, that he had unlimited confidence in the future of Canada's farmers. He said "go ahead, produce. We will win."

#### DID THE FAIR

And then the prime minister of Canada "did the fair." While Mrs. Diefenbaker poured tea for an almost impossible flow of well-wishers, Mr. Diefenbaker started to enjoy the fair. He did everything every normal fairgoer would do, plus the dozens and dozens of greetings and handshakes that were exchanged on the grounds. He was accompanied by James A. McBain, M. P. for Elgin and Colin Morrison, president of Wallacetown Fair.

A hundred years is a long time in the history of any agriculture society. The anniversary is something special again, Mr. Diefenbaker enjoyed that anniversary. It was something of a contrast to the galaxy he left earlier that morning.

The prime minister was introduced by James McBain, MP for Elgin County. On the official platform were representatives from all sections of Elgin, including Warden Harvey Liddle, who presented to Mr. Diefenbaker a book entitled "The Talbot Lands."

To trace his ancestors, no doubt.

Also on the platform during the fair's opening ceremony were Frank Silcox, past president of the fair and vice-president of Western Fair, and Mrs. Silcox; Stuart McWilliam, a past president, and Mrs. McWilliam; Mrs. Victor McMillan, secretary-treasurer; Earl Shipley, a past president and Mrs. Shipley; Hugh Carroll, a past president; Finlay

McPherson, a past president, and Mrs. McPherson, and Rev. and Mrs. John Graham.

Others were Mrs. McBain; G. Ernest Halpenny, MP for London; Harry White, MP—Middlesex East; W. H. A. Thomas, MP—Middlesex West; Harold Danforth, MP—Kent; Harvey Liddle, warden of Elgin County; Ron McNeil, MPP—Elgin; John Spence, MPP—East Kent; Clare Blue, reeve of Dunwich Township; Vincent A. Barrie, mayor of St. Thomas; George Mitches, of London; and Reeve Bert Downie, of the Village of Dutton.