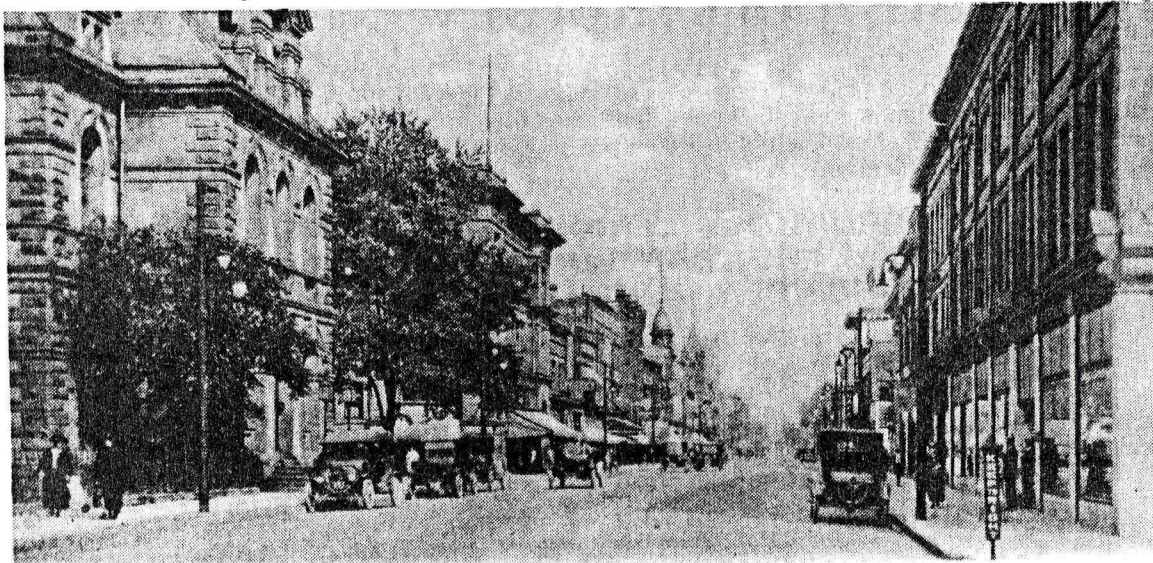


Street Scenes

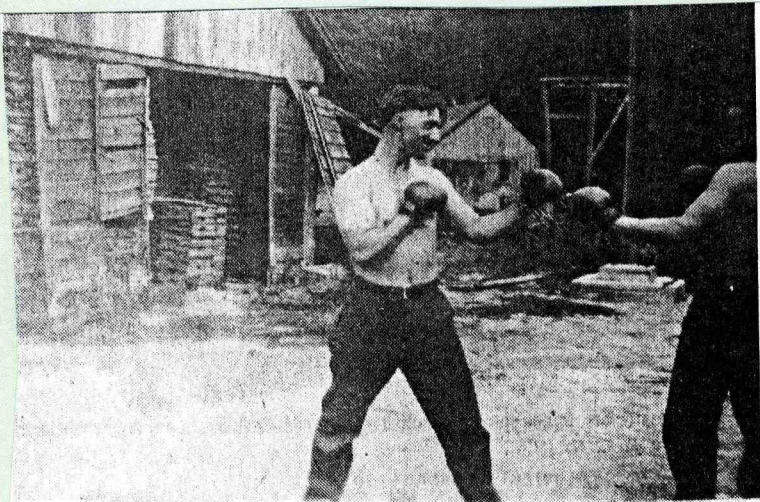


These two ladies took a stroll up Forest Avenue in St. Thomas just after the turn of the century. Photograph contributed by Rowena Ross of St. Thomas.



This photograph of Talbot Street in St. Thomas from the post office would have been taken just after the turn of the century. Postcard contributed by Rowena Ross of St. Thomas.

Aug 15/92.



Charles Chute (left) and Clarence Holland prepare for a little sparring with the Port Talbot Fishery in the background. The photograph was taken in the 1930s and was contributed by Charles Chute of RR 7, St. Thomas.

Jan 27/93



This truck load of fish was ready to go to market in New York from Port Talbot in the 1930s. Standing by the cab of the truck was Earl Stevenson. Standing at the back corner was the truck driver, Art Leverton and behind the truck was Charles Chute, of RR 7 St. Thomas, who contributed with photograph.

Jan 28/93

Cabin was cornerstone of education

Sometimes settlers provided a school in their homes until a permanent building could be constructed. One of the first settlers in Dunwich, James Pearce, near Tyrconnell, used his home for a school as early as 1822. In 1824 the Tyrconnell area had a school built on land donated by Stephen Backus. Thereafter, little log or frame houses sprang up throughout the Talbot Settlement.

These first elementary schools were one-room schools with one or two teachers and these remained the cornerstone of rural elementary education in Southwestern Ontario until well into the Twentieth Century. Watson's Corners was typical of the first one-room schools in the district. It was built by local settlers on a lot donated by James Watson. The pioneers cut the logs and built a cabin roughly eighteen by twenty feet.

Most of the schools had a large open fireplace which was later replaced by an iron stove on one side of the building's interior. Long "board" or "slab" desks for the students were built along two sides of the room and the teacher's desk and chair was on the other side. Usually the schools had three or four small windows. The walls

Local History

SCRAPBOOK

By WAYNE PADDON

ST THOMAS PAPER
Oct 15/92.

were unplastered and sometimes there was only a dirt floor.

For many years parents of the students paid the teacher's salary, maintained the school and kept a good supply of firewood on hand. It was not unusual for the teacher, particularly if he were married, to be allowed to live in the school. Otherwise the teacher was provided room and board in a local home.

Only the three "R's" were taught in the first schools except where some of the teacher's wives taught "home economics" to the girl students. Quill pens and ink, which was made from bark, was used. Good penmanship was a goal of the curriculum and many pioneers had a much more legible and finer "hand" than people today. The students worked hard

and always had homework. Often this was done in a cabin by candlelight.

Private schools existed which operated on the model of the British "public schools". Some of the private schools were church sponsored but non-denominational in enrolment.

In the 1830's there were severe critics of the quality of Upper Canada's teachers, particularly those in the "backwoods" areas, although the St. Thomas area had some very outstanding teachers. Consequently changes were made to correct some of the earlier weaknesses of the system. After 1840, for example, education was decentralized in the province and in 1846 the cost of education born by assessment of all taxpayers.

The curriculum of the schools was somewhat expanded but all subjects were based upon the "middle-class" philosophy of useful knowledge linked to Christian morality and the "Puritan ethic".

Ryerson was against the idea of separate schools because he felt the students would have a greater experience if they attended a common school with children in their neighbourhood.

In the Twentieth Century larger elementary schools in towns and cities appeared, but the old one or two-room rural schools continued well into the 1960's, where one or two teachers were hired by a local board of trustees to teach several grades in one room. The curriculum had been expanded to include social studies and science, but limitations on the teacher's time meant that usually only the senior students received training in these subjects and at irregular intervals. Itinerant music and art teachers also were a new addition to enrich the curriculum but basically there was a concentration on reading, writing and arithmetic, with many new workbooks and methods available.

One-room schools continued to have spelling bees, Christmas concerts and school picnics.

A strong relationship between trustees, parents and teacher in most cases provided a strong support system and encouraged students to do their best.

Perhaps the greatest feature of the one-room school was that it taught co-operation and caring among students. Often the older students not only watched over their younger confrears, but acted as assistants to the teacher.

WALLACETOWN.

W. I.

COMMUNITY.

ACTIVITIES.

The St. Thomas Times-Journal

SEC

ST. THOMAS, ONTARIO, SATURDAY, JUNE 12, 1926.

THRE

Nearly Two Hundred Women Attend West Elgin Women's Institutes at Iona



—Photo by Cantelon, Dutton.

REPRESENTATIVES of ten branches of the Women's Institutes of West Elgin attended the eighteenth annual district convention, which was held in Iona hall recently, with Mrs. J. H. Sells, the district president, in the chair. The interesting addresses