

2ND DECADE OF WEST LORNE

At the close of the first decade of its history, the Main Street of West Lorne lined up very differently from what it does today. There are few if any of the old land marks left. The Argyle House still bears the same name that it started its career with, though vastly altered internally and externally from what it was when "Auntie" McMillan kept it as one of the best eating and lodging houses along the C. S. Line. The other buildings on each side of Graham Street were mostly combination buildings of shops and dwellings. Where Lee's Barber Shop now is was the Harness Shop of the late Walter Paris, who was one of the first young men to start business in the New Town. There was a large Blacksmith and Carriage Shop built by John McRae where the telephone office and Thomson's store now stand. McColl's Blacksmith Shop occupied the site of the present Bank of Montreal Building, while on the opposite side of Graham Street where Root's store now stands was a vacant lot. Right north of Monroe St. east, on the east side of Graham and north of where the P. M. ^{R.R.} now runs, was the large department store of the late Duncan McPherson, who had one of the best retail mercantile stores between St. Thomas and Ridgetown. Across the track was the popular "Commercial Hotel" then operated by that genial Boniface Joseph Wilton, whom many of the older inhabitants still remember well. Farther north was the D. Monroe Blacksmith Shop and a small hardware store kept by Wm. Potts. Although much clearing and logging had been done by the new inhabitants, West Lorne still was a Woodland town. As an illustration, the house owned by Mrs. John Haviland on the south side of Chestnut Street was cleared out of Forest Land by Mr. D. M. Ash, who built it and who owned it prior to his departure to the far West.

There were not many rabbits in those days but quail were abundant

with now and then a partridge or pheasant. As a further instance of the splendid woodland surrounding West Lorne, one might travel along the center lines of the Township from the East End of the Ashery acre on Main Street through solid woods until the traveller or hunter reached the Kerr Road or he might start in woods at about 30 rods east of John Rose's barn and travel through deep, dark, dense woods until he came out at the Town Line East. Wild turkeys inhabited the woods but the gun of the hunter was rapidly depleting the flocks. Just a year before the beginning of the decade which we are considering, down near the east town line two youthful nimrods, Hiram Mulholland and Peter Skinner shot a splendid specimen of this Banquet Bird and sold it to a West Lorne merchant for \$2.25, an almost unheard-of price for a Christmas Turkey at that time. That same day, when Mr. J. Wilton's Annual Shooting Match for live turkeys was being held it was found necessary to walk up to the southwest corner of the Otto Schleihauf farm in order to get a clear range for rifle shooting. The Bird was placed 90 rods away on the snow on the Axford Farm, and the condition of the contest was that whoever drew first blood from the Turkey would get it as a prize. The entry fee was ten cents. The contest started a little before 2 o'clock and went along till nearly four, and no one struck the living target. They demurred to shoot longer and Mr. Wilton picked up his own gun, adjusted the sights, and drew blood the first shot. As the hour was then getting too late for shooting they adjourned with the turkeys to the Commercial Barn where the rest of the turkeys were raffled off; those being, as some think, the good old days before this gambling pastime was restricted.

But the early 80's were to see a great change. The tamarac swamp at the south side of the Town had been cleared, Back Streets were logged and cleaned up. The lumber and stave industry was going strong. The Schleihauf-Morden Mill, at the north side of the Village, that had been burnt, was re-

built by the young Schleihauf Brothers, while on the M. C. R. property a mill, built by Robert McFate, was being operated, as was Waugh Bros Stave Mill. Mr. McFate was one of the founders of the West Lorne Public Library. One of the outstanding lumbermen at this time was Mr. J. H. Greer who came from London and who built a fine home on Main St. West, later owned by the late Duncan McPherson. Mr. Greer afterward moved to Arkansas, where he carried on extensive lumbering operations for many years. He had a large family and three of them became leading citizens of Vancouver, being engaged in the Shipping Business there. Mr. A. McKillop, father of the present firm of McKillop Brothers, who had been operating a mill at New Glasgow in addition to his Brock Creek Steam Mill at McKillop's Corners, decided to combine them and built a new mill alongside the Michigan Central Railway where the P. M. Coal and Stock yards now are. In connection with it they had a planing mill also. It continued in operation until the Pere Marquette came through and requisitioned the land. Messrs. Montague and Monro about this time built their Bending Factory where the iron clad Elevator of the Flour Mills now stands. Mr. Duncan McKillop, who then operated the Floor Mills, first supplied them with power. Mr. Monro shortly afterwards withdrew from the partnership and operated a private banking business in town for many years. He afterwards moved out to Winnipeg and is probably the only one of the aforementioned residents still living. He was a great baseball enthusiast, and like J. J. Stalker was a staunch supporter of the West Lorne Ball team. Mr. Montague was a very successful business man. He was of an inventive turn of mind and while here he invented a bending machine which entirely revolutionized the bending of shafts for buggies and cutters. By his new machine, instead of bending 1 pair of shafts he bent 12 pairs at a time. He afterwards built the West Lorne Public School where it now stands and later was a prime

mover in the organization of the West Lorne Canning Company. It was a great loss to West Lorne when he decided to close out his interests here and move to Galt to educate his boys and to carry out his work on new patents he was preparing. His son Tom, well known in West Lorne, holds a position as Consulting Engineer with a large Montreal Firm. His Bending business was purchased and carried on by A. McKillop & Sons for many years later. In 1886, on the corner where Root's Store is, A. McKillop & Sons built a four-storey building with mansard roof, the ground floor being fitted out for offices, shops and stores, second floor, double apartments, and upper floor, Public Hall and Private Lodge Hall. Unfortunately it was destroyed in the fire that swept the east side of Main Street in 1900. Mr. F. J. Lindenman about the same time built the Elgin House on the site where McColl's Blacksmith Shop was. In addition to the McPherson Store aforementioned, McColl and McCallum kept a large store in the McKillop Block, afterwards taken over and well operated by Lindenman and Sons of Eagle. E. R. Mogg had a Grocery and Bakery where the Lemon Store is, and Peter McGregor was carrying on a general store in what is now known as "The Cafeteria". E. C. Harvey had a drug store on the corner of Graham and Monro Streets, and Fred Me^{tt}am was carrying on an up-to-date Hardware Store where L. Brown's store is at present. John McRae had been carrying on a General Carriage and Blacksmith business, employing 5 or 6 hands all the time. He decided to strike west and went to Lethbridge. Mr. E. Cahill of Back Street took over the business and proved a great asset to the Town. He was in the business for many years but later hearkened to the alluring call from the West and yielded to the Siren call.

During the decade under consideration the Catholic Church was built in the East End. Rev. Fr. Gnam was the first Priest. He was followed by Father Cummings and Quinlan, both of whom took a lively interest in all mat-

ters that were beneficial to the little town.

Rev. John Milloy, the well beloved Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, still watched over his flock with a careful eye, while at the Methodist Church the advent of this decade saw Rev. Mr. Fallis ministering to the spiritual needs of that flock. His team of French Canadian cream ponies, with which he covered his extensive field of labour, was the admiration of all who saw them. The younger Carey ably filled the pulpit of the new Baptist Church as successor to Rev. Peter Carey, the first minister and prime mover in the building of the New Church.

The Anglican Church at the west end had as its spiritual leader Rev. D. Schulte, a name commemorated in the historical annals of this part of Western Ontario. He was a scholar of high attainments as well as a brilliant Theologian. Dr. L. L. Fowler, of International fame as a preacher and Educational worker, had charge of the Rodney and Eagle congregations of the Disciples and lived in West Lorne. This was his first field of labour. The Disciples did not have a church in West Lorne till 1887, when it was organized and held its regular services in McKillop's Hall until that building was destroyed by fire. One of the ministers of the Methodist Church during the latter part of the period we are considering was Rev. Chas. L. Scott, who afterwards rose to become one of the leading lights of that great denomination. Nearly all if not all of these grand men have crossed over to the land of the "Sweet Bye and Bye".

The day of the strong-arm teacher had nearly passed. The new School Building had been found to be much too small, even in the middle 70's. An extension had been built to the west end. A splendid all-round teacher, Mr. W. Coulter, had been secured as Principal with Miss L. Mulholland as assistant. Mr. Coulter's arrival brought in a new relationship between teacher and pupil, that to some extent had been lacking. Shortly after his ar-

rival he entered whole-heartedly into the social and educational life of the community--bought a lot and erected a home on it--I think it was the house now owned by our Town Treasurer. His stay as Principal was all too short, but a business opening in St. Thomas lured him away and his place was taken by Mr. C. M. Sinclair, whose success as a teacher had already been proven in other places. His influence on the young lads of the community was good, and many a successful young man in remote parts of Canada and the States remembers with gratitude the years spent under his tuition. He left West Lorne to accept a position in the Government Service. While here he formed the first West Lorne Baseball Club--that was undefeated while he held the position of Captain. He became a staff writer on the St. Thomas papers, and his productions were always readable, helpful and instructive. Other teachers who held the position of principal during the period we are considering were N. Shaw, Edward Higley and John A. McKillop, two of whom afterwards entered the ministry; Mr. Neil Shaw in the Presbyterian Church and Mr. Higley in the Anglican. Among the trustees who took a warm interest in the progress of the school in this period were J. H. Greer, Squire McColl, Wm. Rose and Dr. Brock, who, if they did not always see eye to eye and differed in their view point on some important issues, nevertheless gave unselfish and whole-hearted service for the cause of education in this community.

During these years a co-operative Cheese Factory was started on Mill Street at McKillop's Corners; which carried on for many years, chiefly under the management of John McDiarmid, Pres., and John F. Taylor, Sec.-Trea.

During this decade the town made steady and healthful progress, and was a busy little hive of friendly and contented citizens.

Written in June, 1936,

by

Mr. and Mrs. John A. McKillop,

West Lorne, Ont.

"THE GAY NINETIES"

At the close of the second decade of West Lorne's history, it was still prominently noted for its wood products. At that time the Michigan Central was the only Railway. In the winter season thousands of cords of the finest Beech and Maple wood were piled in the M. C. R. yards for shipment to Detroit. The McPherson Bros. (Duncan and Dougald) were the greatest buyers in the wood market and when the wood got well seasoned they kept two men and a dray all summer long loading the wood, and although many cars were shipped daily from the yards here, it would not all be lifted till late in the fall. When drawing in the wood in the winter, great rivalry tests would arise among the teamsters to see who would bring in the largest load. The late Kenneth McLennan, father of our Town Treasurer, as usual in all trials and feats of heavy horsemanship easily carried off the Palm, as he astonished the citizens of the town one forenoon by bringing in a load of seven cords of cordwood on his sleigh. As to how far he drew it "deponent saith not" but as old Kaspar said in the old Reader "it was a famous Victory".

The mills also were running full time and capacity, but again the Lumbermen's enemy FIRE took heavy toll and the splendid mill of the Schleihauß Brothers at the north end of the town was destroyed by fire and the young lumbermen left to seek new fields of Industry. Their departure was a loss in many ways as they were energetic and optimistic young men. The elder brother, Chris, died some years ago but Louis still lives in Mississippi where he has achieved success in the lumbering business, and his sons, I understand, are engaged in the Wholesale lumber trade in Pittsburg. It was not long after that loss that the McFate Mill was burned also and for a while it seemed as if the north side of the town would be destroyed from