

Elgin County Cycling History Murals Project



Belmont library, above book drop to right of door, 60 Square feet



Port Bruce – Public Washroom Building at the Harbour North wall and east wall, each 109 square feet



Port Burwell – Fred Bodsworth Public Library, north wall, to the right of the window, 92 square feet.

Mural locations



Dutton - John
Kenneth Galbraith
Library, west end of
north wall, to right
of door.
128 square feet



Shedden – north wall of metal clad picnic shelter next to the
Keystone Complex, includes the metal at the top of each post
226 square feet



Rodney Library, south wall
below window and left of
the book drop, 85 square
feet

Mural locations

Cycling Route Attractions

Amish Country Tour - 37 kms
Amish country, including the Amish Village, is a beautiful area with many attractions. The Amish are known for their traditional lifestyle, including their famous wooden furniture, quilts, and handmade goods. The tour includes a visit to the Amish Village, a walk through the fields, and a chance to see the Amish in their natural habitat.

Aylmer-Port Burwell Tour - 58 kms
Aylmer-Port Burwell is a beautiful area with many attractions. The tour includes a visit to the Amish Village, a walk through the fields, and a chance to see the Amish in their natural habitat.

Sparta Wine Tour - 35 kms
Sparta is a beautiful area with many attractions. The tour includes a visit to the Amish Village, a walk through the fields, and a chance to see the Amish in their natural habitat.

HISTORIC CYCLING ROUTES

The following routes, including historic and related attractions are from the Elgin St. Thomas Cycling Club's Historic Routes.

Thomas Talbot - 30 kms (challenging hills, some gravel)
The Thomas Talbot route is a challenging route with some gravel. It starts in Elgin and ends in St. Thomas, passing through the town of Fingal.

Sparta - 33 kms (smooth ride mostly paved, small hills)
The Sparta route is a smooth ride with mostly paved roads and small hills. It starts in Elgin and ends in St. Thomas, passing through the town of Fingal.

Daylam - Short Trip 12 kms (an easy ride) Long Trip 36 kms (challenging paved flat to center of Dalry)
The Daylam route is a short trip of 12 kms and a long trip of 36 kms. It starts in Elgin and ends in St. Thomas, passing through the town of Fingal.

Western Elgin - 36 kms (flat ride, three small hills, some gravel)
The Western Elgin route is a flat ride with three small hills and some gravel. It starts in Elgin and ends in St. Thomas, passing through the town of Fingal.

Port Stanley - 32 kms (a minor challenge, paved, some hills)
The Port Stanley route is a minor challenge with paved roads and some hills. It starts in Elgin and ends in St. Thomas, passing through the town of Fingal.

Aylmer, Malahide & Port Bruce - 39 kms (flat challenge, one big hill)
The Aylmer, Malahide & Port Bruce route is a flat challenge with one big hill. It starts in Elgin and ends in St. Thomas, passing through the town of Fingal.

Our Amish Neighbours - 34 kms (easy ride)
The Our Amish Neighbours route is an easy ride. It starts in Elgin and ends in St. Thomas, passing through the town of Fingal.

For Additional Resources:

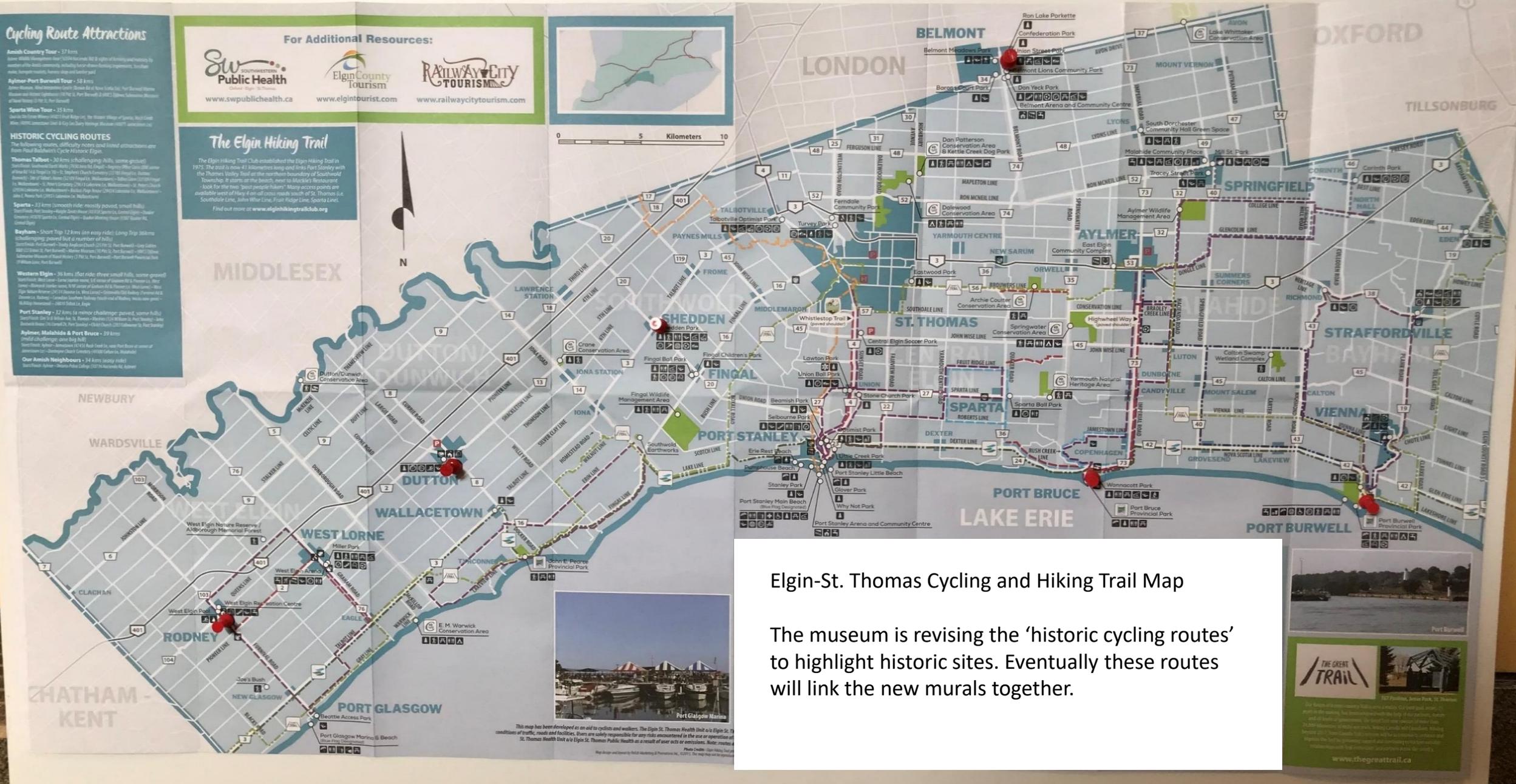


www.swpublichealth.ca www.elgintourist.com www.railwaycitytourism.com

The Elgin Hiking Trail

The Elgin Hiking Trail Club established the Elgin Hiking Trail in 1975. The trail is now 47 kilometres long and links Port Stanley with the Thomas Talbot trail at the northern boundary of Southwold Township. It starts at the beach, near the McDonald's Restaurant. Look for the two "pilot" people figures. Many access points are available every 1/2 km on all roads, roads south of St. Thomas (i.e. Southwold Line, John Wise Line, Fruit Ridge Line, Sparta Line).

Find out more at www.elginhikingtrailclub.org



Elgin-St. Thomas Cycling and Hiking Trail Map

The museum is revising the 'historic cycling routes' to highlight historic sites. Eventually these routes will link the new murals together.



THE GREAT TRAIL

107 Phillips, New Park, St. Thomas

www.thegreattrail.ca



Port Glasgow Marina

Highlights from Elgin County's Cycling Heritage

This slide show presents a survey of roads and modes of travel in the region from the first Talbot Road to the revival of cycling in recent times.

It also provides a series of images providing a representation of how people travelled historically and what cycling looked like in an earlier time.

These images have been drawn, where possible, from the communities where the murals will be placed.

Many other historic views of these communities can be found on the County's archives database: heritagecollections.elgin.ca

Times-Journal ad, 1920



Remember the Days
when You were a
Boy, Dad?

Remember those exhilarating bicycle rides in the country and the picnics under the trees?—

Those rides to the old fishing holes up the river?—

Those thrilling coasts down the hills?—

You were "bicycle crazy" those days, dad—just as your boy is now.

Remember how you pestered your dad for a bicycle?—just as your boy is doing now.

You can't blame him, dad. It's in the blood.

You might just as well get him a bike now as later.

And while you are about it get him a good one—a bicycle that he will be proud of—not one that the other boys will guy him about.

You wouldn't push a hard-running bike yourself. Don't inflict one on him.

The boy is not as strong as

a grown man. Don't overtax his strength.

Buy him an EASY-running bicycle—a C. C. M.

C. C. M. Bicycles run easily because they are built of the highest grade materials.

All parts are accurately made. They fit together perfectly. The machine runs true.

The bearings are case-hardened and highly polished. They run with utmost smoothness. And they continue to run easily for years. That's the difference between a C. C. M. and an ordinary bicycle.

C. C. M. Bicycles are also equipped, without extra charge, with the new Hercules Positive Drive Brake—the Coaster Brake—without a side arm.

Take your boy to the C.C.M. dealer's. See the different models. There's one—the 18-inch Currier Star Model—that the boy ~~will~~ grow.

C.C.M. Bicycles

PERFECT — MASSEY — RED BIRD
CLEVELAND — COLUMBIA

90% Made in Canada — 100% Value

Canada Cycle & Motor Co., Limited
Montreal, Toronto, WESTON, ONT., Winnipeg, Vancouver

Whenever you go in Canada you will find C.C.M. Service. Look for this sign. Over 1,000 C.C.M. Service Stations in Canada.

This trade mark is on the frame of every C.C.M. Bicycle.

105

“There was an exhilaration in the new method of locomotion that made all the riders enthusiastic devotees of the sport. Everywhere clubs were formed, uniforms were chosen, club rooms were opened, good roads were advocated and farmers’ horses were slowly educated in the knowledge that it was not necessary to jump into adjoining fields in order to escape the shining apparition.”

James S. Brierly, former editor of the St. Thomas Times, recalling his cycling days in Elgin County in the 1880s.

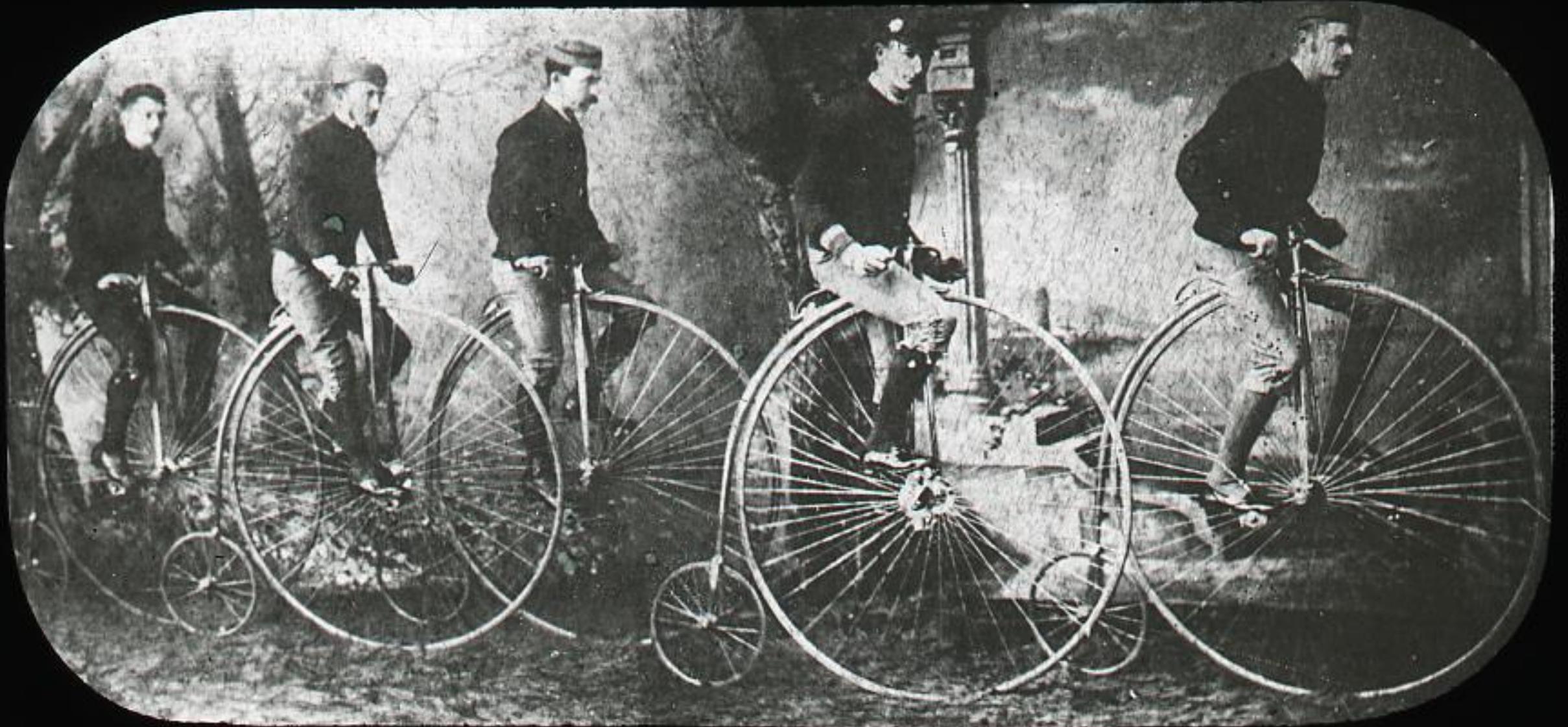


The bicycle craze that swept North America in the 1880s and 1890s initiated a revolution in the way people travelled which continues to be felt down to the present.

St. Thomas Bicycle Club, 1882
Elgin County Archives



It started with the importation from England to North America, in the 1870s, of the high wheel or “Ordinary” which today goes by a name later applied to it – the penny farthing – two English coins of markedly different size representing the size of the two wheels.



The high wheel arrived just as a generation of leisured middle- and upper-class men were reaching maturity. They took to it immediately organizing clubs, outings and races and even creating uniforms.

Two of the high wheel era's leading figures were from Elgin County.

Mr. Perry Doolittle.

It is with much pleasure that we present to our readers in this number of our paper, a portrait of Mr. Perry Doolittle, of Aylmer, one of the most popular wheelmen in Canada.

Mr. Doolittle was born in Aylmer in the year 1860, and is consequently twenty-three years of age, but it was not until five years ago that he commenced bicycle riding.

His first attempt at riding was on a machine of his own manufacture, composed entirely of wood, and designed from engravings, as he had not, up till this time, seen a real bicycle.

He learned to ride this machine fairly well, having made, on one occasion, from Aylmer to Strathroy (fifty miles) in one day.

He next made an iron bicycle, using the barrel of an old gun for a backbone. On this machine he made the same fifty miles, as before, in six hours.

At present he rides a 54-inch Special British Challenge semi-racer; weight, 36 lbs.

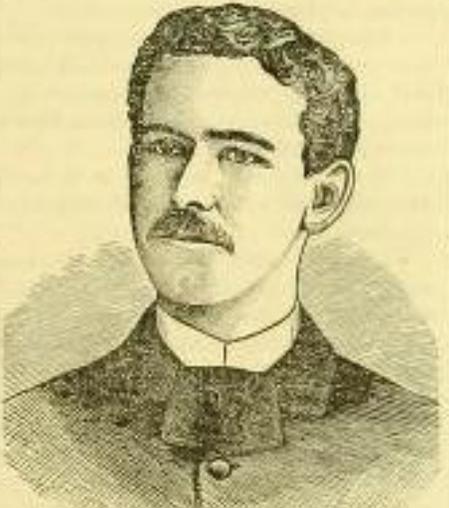
His first prize (a napkin ring) was won at St. Thomas on May 24th 1881, since which time he has won twenty medals beside pieces of plate and other articles.

He has to his credit a road record of 10,000 miles.

Our American friends will remember Mr. Doolittle as their escort through Canada on their late tour.

just as much pleasure out of a quiet ride as most younger riders; E. Holmes, who was the first to introduce "the airy steed" in this locality, has not been able to do any riding whatever for several weeks, owing to illness. E. Holmes Jr., is considered the rider of the place, and as most of his spare moments are spent in the saddle, it would not be much to his credit if he were not an expert in handling "the contrary critter," as some people call a bicycle.

The wet weather this season has been very provoking to riders, but when the roads were dry they were good. But what's the use of saying that; everybody knows that



Mr. James S. Brierley

James H. Brierly was the editor of the Journal – one of St. Thomas’s daily papers. He became the founding Secretary-Treasurer of a national cycling organization – the Canadian Wheelman’s Association (CWA). The first meeting was in St. Thomas on July 1, 1881. The first meet was in London in 1882. Today this organization is known as Cycling Canada.

Early issues of the CWA newsletter can be found here:

<https://library.si.edu/digital-library/author/canadian-wheelmens-association>



The Canadian Wheelman
A JOURNAL OF CYCLING.
The Official Gazette of the Canadian Wheelmen's Association, and of the Cyclists' Touring Club in Canada.
VOL. V. LONDON, CANADA, FEBRUARY, 1888. No. 4.

OVER 700 **WARWICK** SOLD IN CANADA.

Bicycles and Safeties

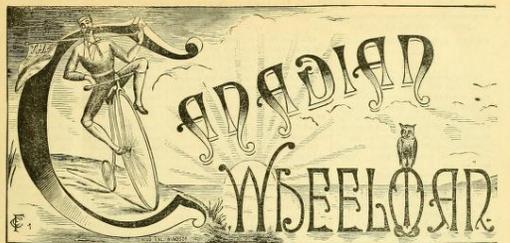
THE NEW WARWICK ROADSTER is the only wheel manufactured expressly for Canadian Roads, and is thoroughly strong and reliable. It contains all the latest improvements of any value known to riders, and is very reasonable in price.

THE NEW WARWICK LIGHT ROADSTER is considered by all Wheelmen to be the acme of Bicycle manufacturing, being the handsomest, easiest-running and most rigid Wheel extant, and contains more important improvements than any other cycle.

The 50-mile Road Race, between the Wanderers' and Toronto Bicycle Clubs, was won by FRED. FOSTER on a WARWICK LIGHT ROADSTER.

DEPOTS
• • • TORONTO—510 Yonge St. • • •
• • • HAMILTON—J. Ferris & Co., St. James St. • • •
• • • MONTREAL—E. C. Monst, 10 Victoria Sq. • • •
OTTAWA—Bramant & McKibbin, 80 Spark St.

GOULD & KNOWLES,
Brantford, Ontario.



ADADAD WHEELMAN

VOL. I. LONDON, OCTOBER, 1882. NO. 2

Mr. Perry Doolittle.

It is with much pleasure that we present to our readers in this number of our paper, a portrait of Mr. Perry Doolittle, of Aylmer, one of the most popular wheelmen in Canada. Mr. Doolittle was born in Aylmer in the year 1859, and is consequently twenty-three years of age, but it was not until five years ago that he commenced bicycle riding.

His first attempt at riding was on a machine of his own manufacture, composed entirely of wood, and designed from conception, as he had not, up till this time, seen a real bicycle.

He learned to ride this machine fairly well, having made, on one occasion, from Aylmer to Strathroy (fifty miles) in one day.

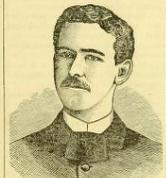
He next made an iron bicycle, using the best of an old gun for a backbone. On this machine he made the same fifty miles, as before, in six hours.

His present machine is a 4 1/2-inch Special British Challenge road-racer, weight, 26 lbs.

His first prize (a cup) was won at St. Thomas on May 24th, 1881, since which time he has won twenty medals besides pieces of plate and other articles.

He has to his credit a road record of 16,000 miles.

Our American friends will remember Mr. Doolittle as their escort through Canada on their late tour.



Clinton.

This town is, we believe, the only one in Ontario that can boast of a Mayor who is a bicyclist. Mr. D. A. Forester, the gentleman who occupies that position, is an enthusiastic rider, and although the last of the crowd to start, can ride along with any of the boys.

The Holmes family has three good riders among its numerous members. Mr. E. Holmes, Sr., who is sixty years of age, takes

just as much pleasure out of a quiet ride as most younger riders. E. Holmes, who was the first to introduce "the airy steed" in this locality, has not been able to do any riding whatever for several weeks, owing to illness. E. Holmes, Jr., is considered the rider of the place, and as most of his spare moments are spent in the saddle, it would not be much to his credit if he were not an expert in handling "the century-critter," as some people call a bicycle.

The wet weather this season has been very prevailing to riders, but when the roads were dry they were good. But what's the use of saying that; everybody knows that.

Some of the boys here have tried as yet to do much in the way of machine-grip, but some of them intend to get the driving pack in shape, and "practice up." After that such men as Ross, Doolittle and Westrook, will be compelled to take a back seat.

Until last week we had two very young cyclists in our midst. They were aged respectively eight and ten years, and were very adept, being able to do considerable long riding. They belong to Cleveland, and have just returned home.

Mr. Chris Dickson, being about to enter the state of matrimony, recently sold his bicycle, perhaps under the impression that one position is incompatible with the other, yet four of our best wheelmen are married men.

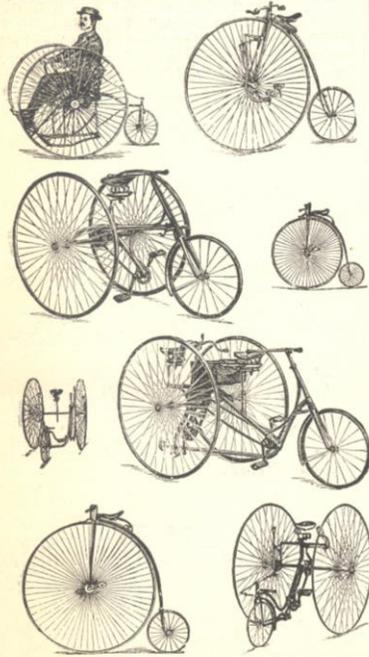
This county has about thirty-five wheelmen, but they are scattered among the different places. It has several times been proposed that a County Association be formed, but the proposition has not yet taken practical shape.

Mr. J. F. "Tad" Taylor, hawker, is the wealthy rider of our party, and he is just as liberal as wealthy when on a tour. He is truly a "ball fellow well wad." Mr. J. Jackson takes the cake for personal beauty. The claims of all the rest are too numerous to mention.

Next season we anticipate a good addition to our numbers, people becoming convinced that the bicycle is not simply "a thing of beauty and a joy forever," but a practical means of locomotion at a very reasonable cost.

If riders from other places, who purpose touring over the unimproved roads of Huron, would simply drop a card to any of the members of the club here, we would be glad to meet them and extend any courtesies in our power.

WM. PAYNE,
LONDON, ONT.



Bicycles ! Tricycles !

LARGER STOCK THAN EVER.

WATSON & PELTON,
Wholesale and Retail Importers.

YOUNG AMERICA, PIONEER, BRITISH, BRITISH SPECIAL, BRITISH TRICYCLE.

Agents for the Coventry Machinists Co.'s
"SPECIAL CLUB,"
"CLUB SAFETY,"
"CLUB RACER."

LARGE ASSORTMENT OF SUNDRIES

Repairs and Plating promptly executed

SAMPLE ROOMS—53 St. Sulpice St.
WAREROOMS—543 Craig St.
MONTREAL.

Perry Doolittle is thought to be the first person to build and ride a bicycle in Elgin County. Doolittle grew up near Luton (south of Aylmer) in the 1860s and asked a blacksmith in nearby Dunboyne to help build him a bicycle. A famous racer in the 1880s, he served as CWA President in 1895-96. He graduated as an MD in 1885. He became interested in the automobile in the mid-1890s, buying the first used car in Canada in 1899 (a one-cylinder Winton) and founding the Dominion Automobile Association (now CAA) in 1913. As CAA president he promoted improved road conditions, better signage and standardized regulations.

AROUND ST. THOMAS.

THE railway city of south-western Ontario has a name that is immortal, a name that was flashed around the world and that centred the thoughts of all civilized nations upon it, and that so fixed it in the minds of all British subjects that

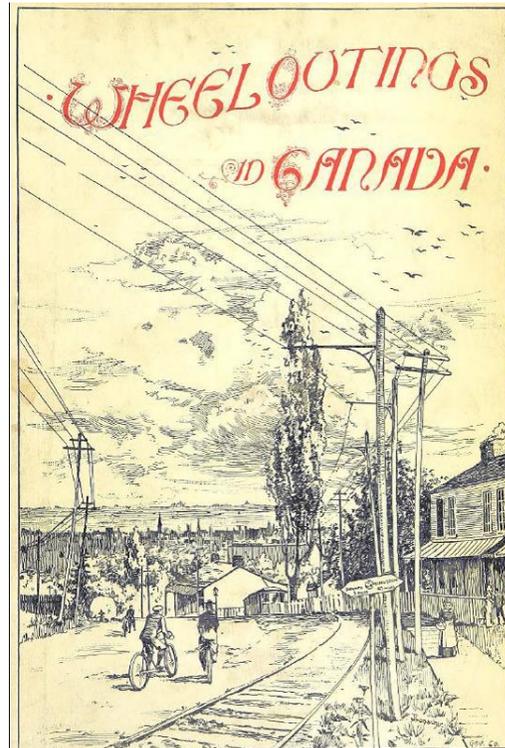
great deal more. It is the centre of one of the finest wheeling districts in the whole of Ontario, and the tourist who wants to leisurely do this country can well afford to make Mr. Donley, of the Grand Central, his host for a few days while he revels in good wheeling.



ST. THOMAS—IN THE RAVINE.

will be evergreen long after "Tribby" has been forgotten, for this was the scene of poor Jumbo's death. It is a pretty little city, sitting on the brow of a hill whose deep valley gave the railway companies the opportunity of building there the largest bridges in the province. But to the cyclist it is a

To the west there is Fingal, Shelden, and so on right up to the Detroit river. To the north there is the London road, seventeen miles of delightful wheeling. To the east there is the Aylmer road, giving a delightful ride of twelve miles, and from the latter point pleasant trips can be taken in every direction, while



The doctor was Canadian high bicycle champ in 1883.

Doolittle compiled and edited at least one of the touring guides the CWA produced in the 1890s.



Today Dr. Doolittle has been honoured with his own cycling route: the Highwheel Way – running up Imperial Road from Port Bruce to Aylmer – through Dunboyne and past nearby Luton where the farm he grew up on was located.





A leading racer in the 1890s was C. H. Hepinstall, a St. Thomas jeweller. He was the first in Canada to ride over 100 miles in one day, following a route from St. Thomas to Fordwich – 11 hours of actual riding - in 1882. The worst section was Mitchell to Listowel where the road, being covered with deep parallel ruts, was “unridable”.

Of course, not everyone could ride a high wheel, but it wasn't long before Englishman John Starley developed the "safety," a bicycle whose name reflected its major attribute when compared to the high wheel.

It took over and suddenly anyone who could ride, did. It was one of the first pastimes in which men and women could participate on an equal basis.

Cycling gave rise to "bloomers," a style of pantaloon that allowed women to ride in comfort.



Rover safety bike 1885
by John Kemp Starley



John Henry Ingram Ellman

Born 1853 in Battle, Sussex, England
to Canada 1876 by ship to Spain, Cuba, and
Texas. After brief stay, overland to
St. Thomas.

Died 1939 in London, Ontario

Mary Elizabeth Swaffield

Born 1864 in Goderich

Died 1954 in London

Their Marriage 1881 in Woodstock

Built large brick house in Union

later to London (1922-33 Elmwood Avenue)

and then later 431 English Street
Members of St. Thomas Bicycle Club





In the mid-1890s William Devine of St. Thomas, was Elgin County's champion road racer. He was sponsored by the Red Bird Bicycle Company of Brantford. His medals, above, are in the museum's collection.

William Devine poses with his Red Bird.

Even in rural areas, cycling became popular and the fact that early cycling on high wheels involved long distance riding meant that a greater focus was placed on the condition of roads than ever before.

Before this time, roads were not a concern for travellers, most of whom relied on the rail network which was quite extensive by 1895, when, in addition to steam trains, electric trains started running on interurban or “radial” lines connecting many places through-out southern Ontario.

As early as 1907, an electric trolley was running between London and Port Stanley.

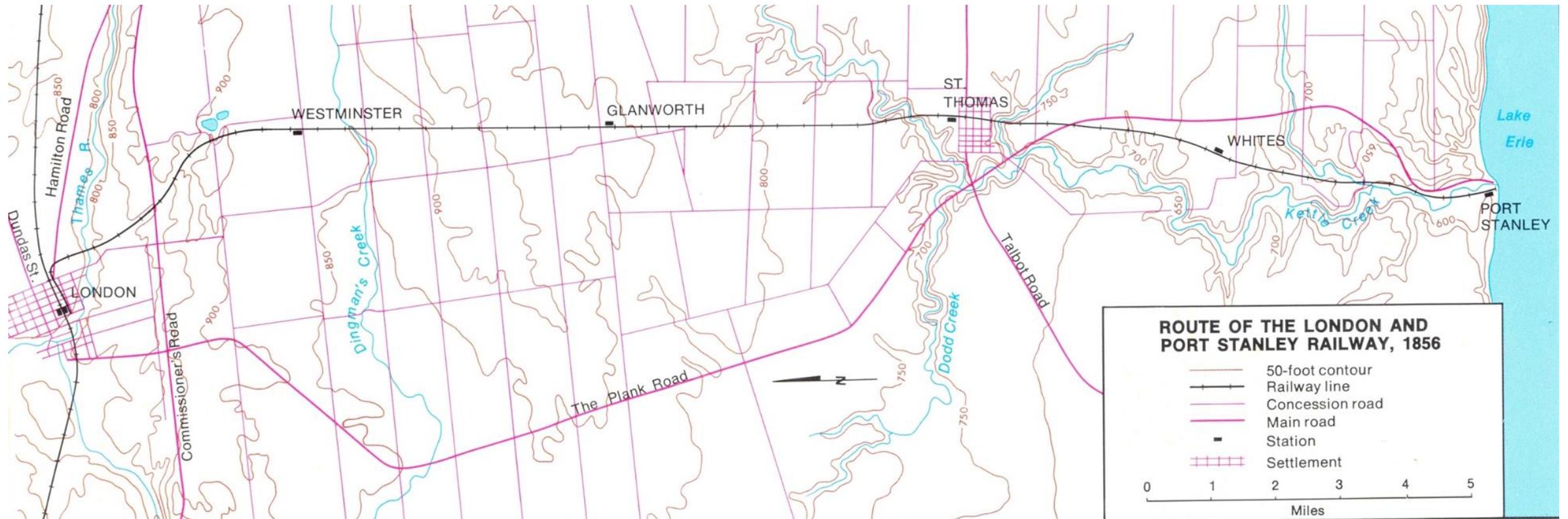


Trolley cars on Colborne St. on opposite corners of Bridge Street, c. 1910

Before this, the better roads were ones that ran directly from town to town and to the lake ports to facilitate the movement of Elgin's two main exports - wheat and wood.

By the 1850s the promise of the railways was attracting a great deal of investment including much public money. Roads to ports such as Port Stanley, Port Burwell and Port Bruce were privatized and became toll roads.

These roads were planked which meant surfaced with a construction of wood planks or gravelled which meant - as it does today - surfaced with crushed stone.



TOLLS TO LET!

AYLMER & PORT BRUCE
Gravel Road Company,

NOTICE is hereby given, that the Tolls collectable
at the several Toll Gates on the above Road, will be disposed of for the term of

ONE YEAR!

as follows:

Toll Gate No. 1, near Port Bruce, from 1st Oct. next
2, 1 mile south of Aylmer, Do.
3, 1 mile North of Aylmer, from 8 Do.

SEALED TENDERS

For each of these Gates addressed to A. Lewis Secretary, Aylmer, and marked Tender for Toll Gate, will be received by him at his Hotel, Aylmer, until Monday 21st Sept. Noon. The Company are not bound to accept the highest or any tender unless otherwise Satisfactory.

Conditions of Sale - Rates of Toll and all other necessary information Can be obtained on application to A. Lewis, Secretary, By order of the Company

COLIN MONROE Pre's

A. LEWIS Sec'y

Aylmer Sept 1868.

Printed, at A. Price's, Job Office, Aylmer, Ontario.

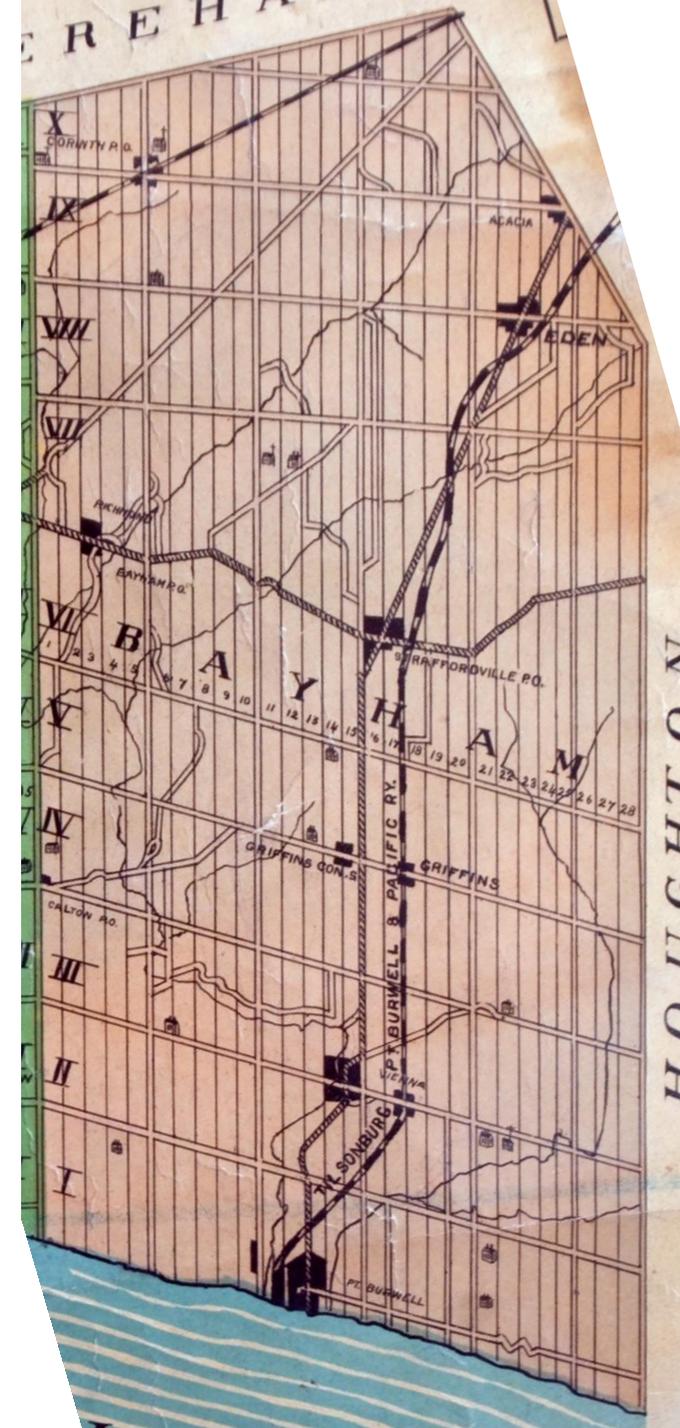
Toll Roads

Many of the improved roads were maintained by private companies who were given the right to charge tolls from travellers for their upkeep. The era of the toll roads lasted from about 1850 to 1900.

One such private road is still known as "Plank Road" running from Port Burwell to Tillsonburg and onto Ingersoll. A stage coach followed this route in the 1850s, driven by a key figure in the Underground Railroad - abolitionist Harvey C. Jackson - who brought many formerly enslaved people to Ingersoll where they found jobs building the Great Western Railroad.

On the map at right from 1896, Plank Road and the original Talbot Road are shown with a cross hatch pattern denoting their improved surface.

Tolls to Let! poster, 1868 Elgin County Archives





Part of the road between London and Port Stanley – later Highway 4 and now Sunset Drive - was leased to the Hepburns who placed at least three toll booths on it, including this one at Sandy Mount, just northwest of St. Thomas.

The toll booth at Sandy Mount, c. 1900
Elgin County Archives

SCHEDULE OF TOLLS.

To be paid at every Gate on each time of passing, except when checking each other.

For every vehicle drawn by one horse,	£0 0 2
For every vehicle drawn by two horses, and not more than 2,000lbs weight, including weight of vehicle,	0 0 3
Every additional 1000 lbs. up to 5000 lbs. including weight of vehicle, and the fractional part of 1000 lbs. as 1000 lbs. 1d.	0 0 1
And for every additional 100lbs and the fractional part of 100 lbs. as 100lbs. over and above 5000lbs. including weight of vehicle, the sum of one half penny.	0 0 0½
For every additional Horse or beast of draught attached to each vehicle, or for a saddle horse and rider, one penny,	0 0 1
For every score of Sheep or Swine, at the rate of two pence half penny per score.	0 0 2½
For every head of Cattle one half penny	0 0 0½

Waggons having five inch tires to pass by paying half the above rates of Toll.

Freeman Ellison to be allowed to pass and repass Gate No. 2 free of Toll, when going to and from his Saw Mill.
Samuel Ferrin and his employees to pass and repass Check Gate No. 3, going to and from his Brick Kiln, for half Toll.

All persons passing through either of the check gates shall be allowed until noon of the following day to repass with their tickets, the other check-gate. Also, all persons living within one mile of the north side of Gate No. 4, on the Gravel Road, or persons coming to the road within that distance, and living within two miles east and west, shall pass said Gate No. 4, for half toll, provided they register their names at the Gate.

By order of the Board of Road Directors,

WILLIAM McKAY, County Clerk.

County Clerk's Office, St. Thomas, November, 27, 1854.

Printed at the Dispatch Office, St. Thomas.

As the rail network grew, travel involving any appreciable distance was more often made by train. Stations appeared along a route north of the old Talbot Road and settlement and business moved to those towns. Three are on the mural route -Dutton, Shedden and Rodney – each of which is located on the Canada Southern Railway, built in the early 1870s. Around 1900 another line – the Lake Erie and Detroit River RR was built along the same route and a second station appeared in each town.



Michigan Central Railway stations at Shedden (c. 1910) and Rodney (c. 1920) Elgin County Archives

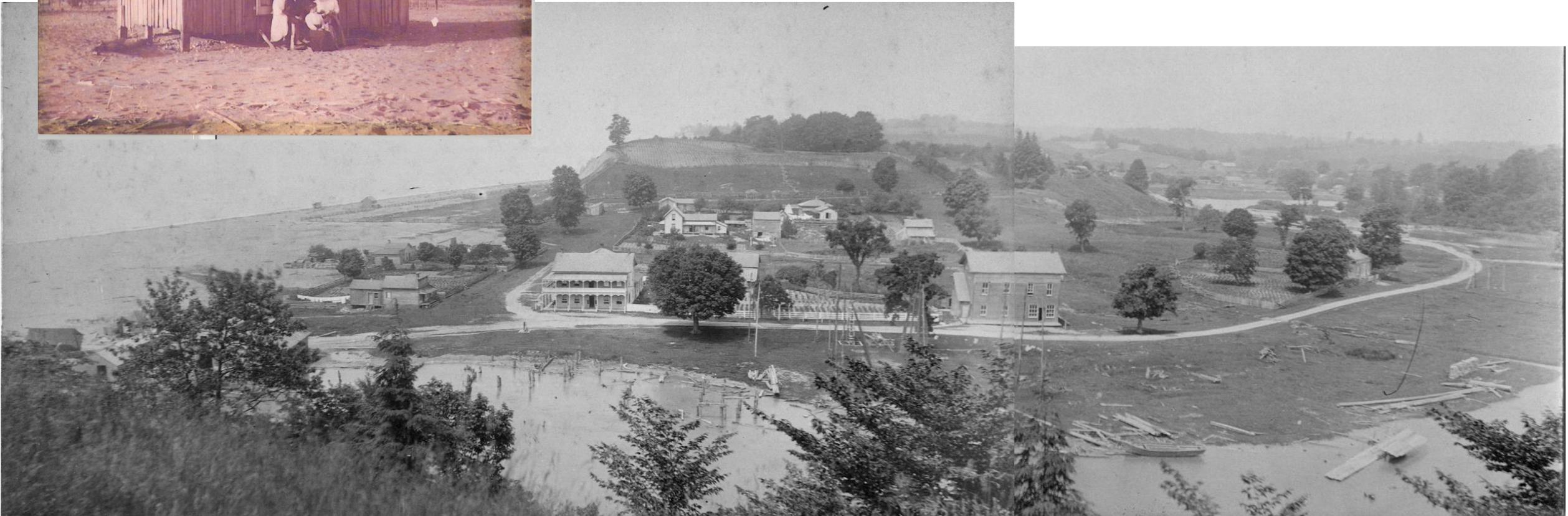
The ports were sidelined by the railways as far as shipping goods but their beaches began to attract those whose jobs allowed them some time off, as well as church and company picnics, and the first summer cottages.



Port Bruce, 1890s.

Below: Catfish Creek with the Rocabore Inn towards the left with its two-storey verandah at what is now the corner of Colin and Hale Streets. Elgin County Archives

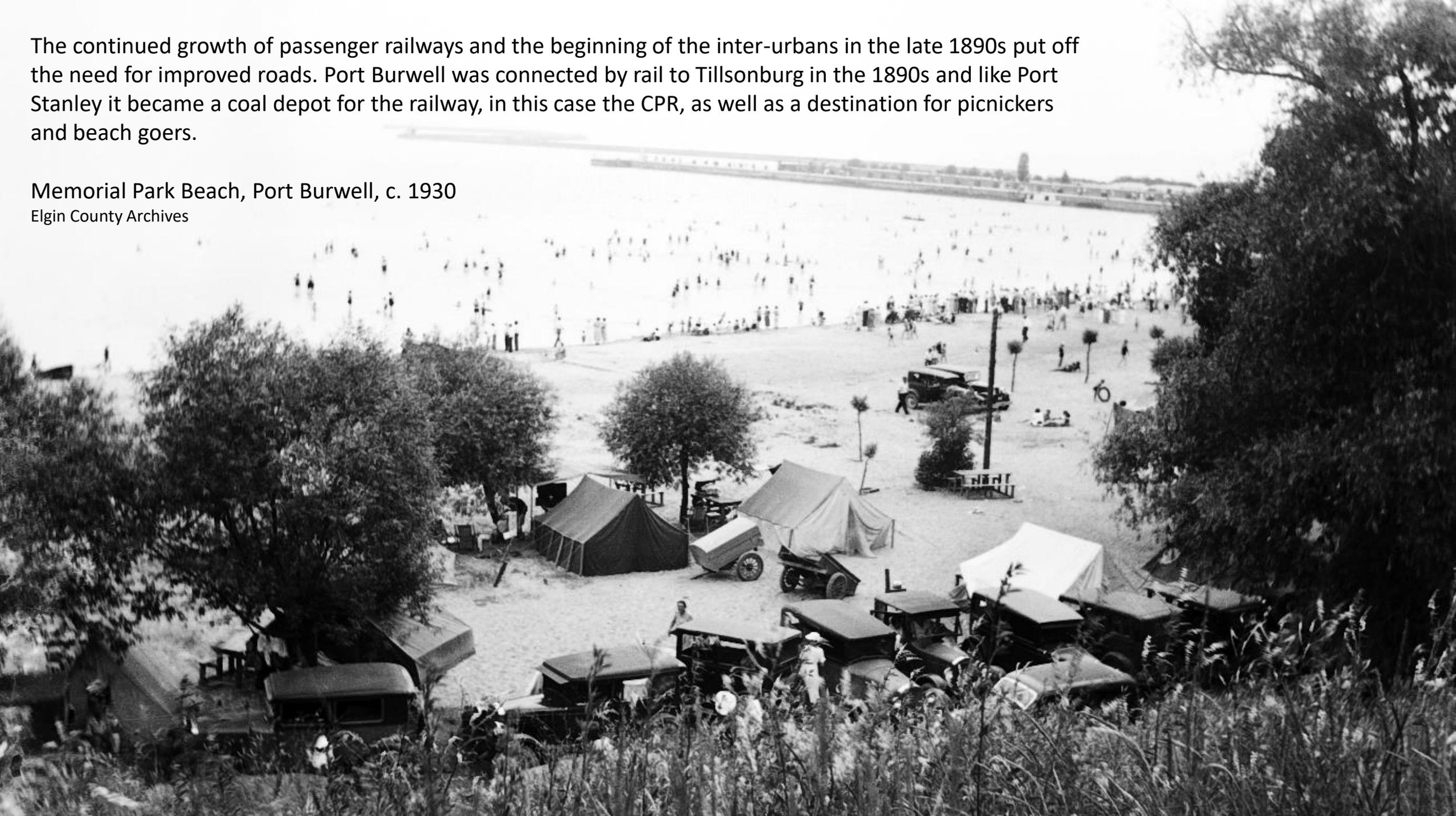
Left: one of the first cottages in Port Bruce.



The continued growth of passenger railways and the beginning of the inter-urbans in the late 1890s put off the need for improved roads. Port Burwell was connected by rail to Tillsonburg in the 1890s and like Port Stanley it became a coal depot for the railway, in this case the CPR, as well as a destination for picnickers and beach goers.

Memorial Park Beach, Port Burwell, c. 1930

Elgin County Archives



Old Currie road, north of Dutton, c. 1900
Elgin County Archives



However, the cycling clubs needed better roads than they found while on their tours and they organized campaigns to encourage municipalities to improve their roads and streets and to lobby senior government to take on the responsibility for highways.

Initially, they were met with resistance, before the provincial government passed the Highway Improvement Act in 1901, which provided a subsidy for the construction of county roads, followed by the Ontario Highways Act in 1915.

Some of the CWA's members went into politics where they were able to carry out some of their aims. Andrew Pattullo, a newspaper editor from Woodstock and the town's member in the Ontario Legislature led the Road Improvements Committee of the CWA until 1894 when he founded the Ontario Good Roads Association which is still in operation.



Andrew Pattullo

These efforts towards the improvement of roads made the transition to automobiles easier, as did some of the technology that had been developed for the bicycle such as chain-driven wheels and inflated tires. Many of the early automobile inventors had been bicycle riders or mechanics including Henry Ford whose first car was his 1896 Quadricycle.



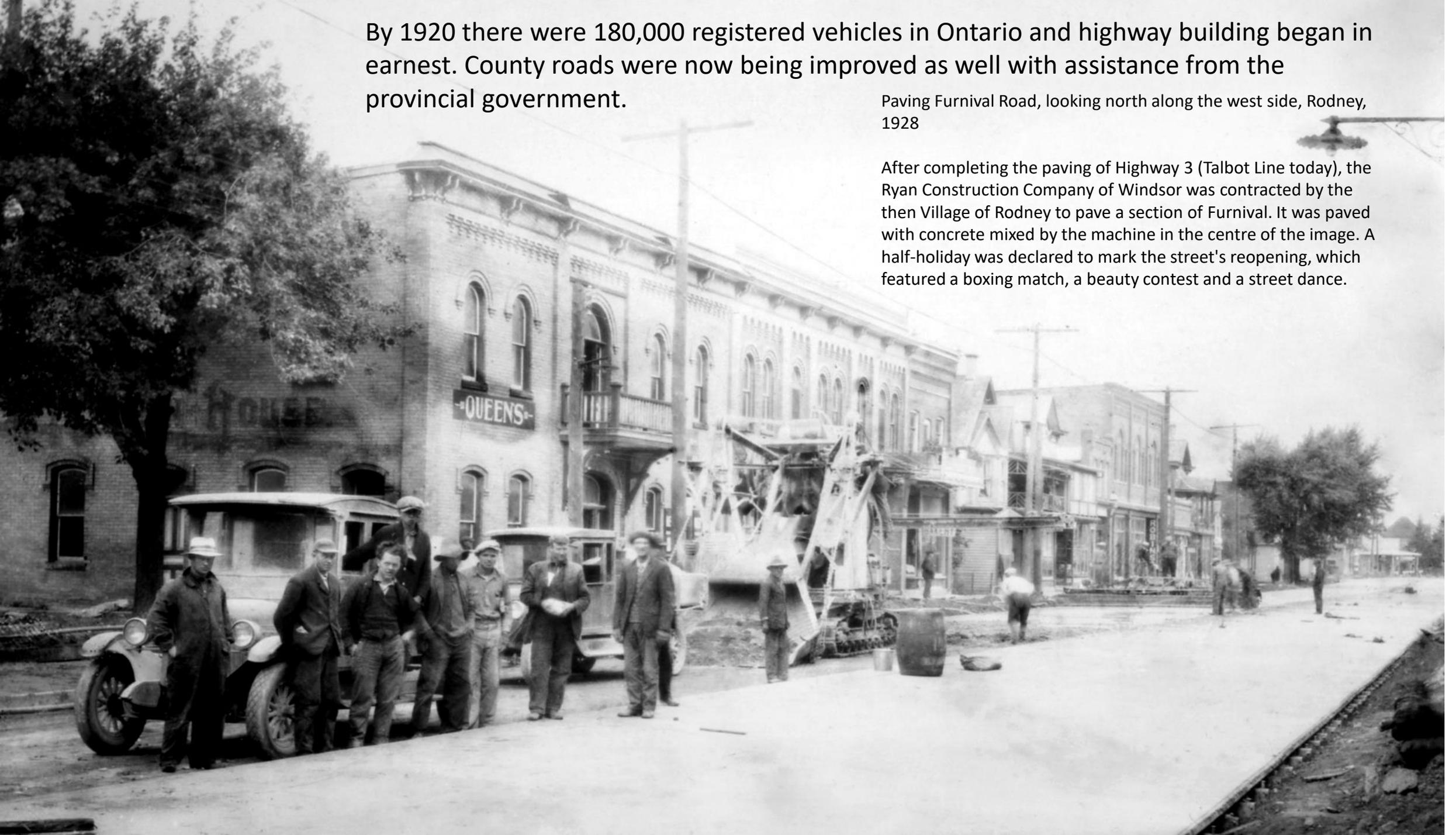
Pneumatic tires, for instance, had been perfected by Scottish inventor John Boyd Dunlop in 1887 for use in bicycle racing. These made it possible for cars to be simultaneously fast and comfortable. Meanwhile, the Benz Patent-Motorwagen — built in 1886 and generally considered to be the first car — used spoked tricycle wheels, a bicycle chain, and a differential gear made by British bicycle creator James Starley. In a very real sense, the Benz (which would lead to the Mercedes-Benz company) was a tricycle with a motor attached.



By 1920 there were 180,000 registered vehicles in Ontario and highway building began in earnest. County roads were now being improved as well with assistance from the provincial government.

Paving Furnival Road, looking north along the west side, Rodney, 1928

After completing the paving of Highway 3 (Talbot Line today), the Ryan Construction Company of Windsor was contracted by the then Village of Rodney to pave a section of Furnival. It was paved with concrete mixed by the machine in the centre of the image. A half-holiday was declared to mark the street's reopening, which featured a boxing match, a beauty contest and a street dance.



As cars became somewhat less expensive and easier to operate, beginning about 1910, auto touring took over from bicycling – which would return to its former popularity only in the later years in the 20th century.

In the meantime, municipalities jockeyed to get onto one of the newly designated King's highways. In the 1930s, Premier Hepburn, Elgin County's member of the provincial legislature, opened three new highways running north from the Talbot Road (Highway 3) to respectively Rodney, West Lorne and Dutton.

Below: Hepburn cuts the ribbon opening Highway 77 (Furnival Road) to Rodney.



Orchard's Garage,
Shedden, c. 1935
Once location on Union
road, just north of Talbot,
now an empty lot behind
the Medical Centre
Elgin County Archives



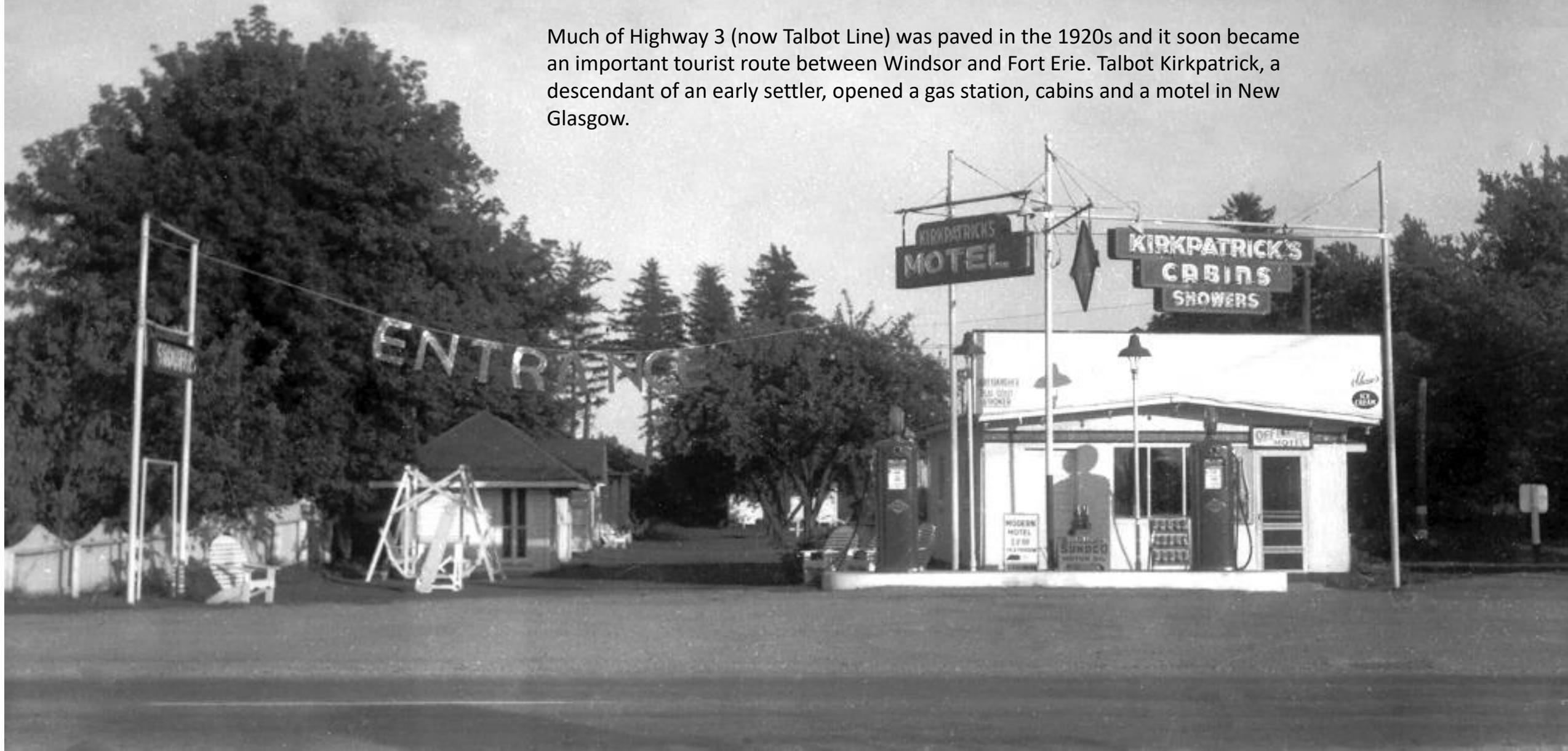
Highway 3 took over most of the old Talbot Road, but followed Talbot Street North through Shedden rather than the original route through Fingal. This section had also been laid out by Col. Burwell. Running from Iona to Talbotville, it was once known as Back Street. Gas stations, motels and even car dealers began to appear on highways even in small villages like Shedden

Shedden, looking east on Talbot Line from Francis Street,
c. 1925. At left is Brad's Garage. Elgin County Archives



Kirkpatrick's Sunoco station and cabins, southeast corner of Talbot Line and Furnival Road, New Glasgow, c. 1950

Much of Highway 3 (now Talbot Line) was paved in the 1920s and it soon became an important tourist route between Windsor and Fort Erie. Talbot Kirkpatrick, a descendant of an early settler, opened a gas station, cabins and a motel in New Glasgow.



THE BICYCLE.

(Toronto Mail and Empire.)

The street car strike in Toronto will serve one good purpose if it re-creates interest in the bicycle. There are few workingmen who cannot afford a bicycle, and they would be healthier and happier if instead of using street cars they would ride to and from their work in those months of the year when wheeling is possible. What they would thus save in fares and doctors' bills in a year would pay the cost of a good wheel. Of course, wheeling in conditions that exist today is not as safe on account of the thousands of motor cars on the street, but a man on a bicycle is probably as safe as a man on foot, and motor car drivers would soon become accustomed to bicycle traffic if it were to assume large dimensions.

The bicycle soon lost the road to the car. This Toronto newspaper article suggests it wasn't safe then (1920) to ride on the streets.

A revival was led by increased bicycle production in Canada in the post-war period followed by the importation of "10 speed's" from abroad beginning in the 1970s.

Beginning in the 1970s, there was a renewed interest in cycling as a hobby and a more environmentally-friendly method of transportation. In Elgin County, bicycle rodeos became popular as a way to teach cycling safety to children. Bicycle fundraisers like races and distance rides were also widespread.

Times-Journal, April 21, 1973

Uphill Drive for Cancer - The Ladies Great Ride For Cancer

Mrs. Norienne Macdonald, vice-president of the Elgin Unit and Mrs. Ruby Campbell, a director, try out a tricycle and high wheel from the Elgin County Museum Collection to promote the ride.



Times-Journal, June 19, 1969

Safety Check - Members of the St. Thomas Optimist Club are conducting a week-long bicycle safety check in co-operation with city police and St. Thomas public schools. (left to right) Optimists Jack Damphouse, Tom Kuglin and Alfred Austin.

Times-Journal, June 29, 1974

The Bolt family, of 30 Thompson Avenue all enjoy cycling. From left, Kenda Sue, 6; Rick, 8; Mrs. Joanne Bolt, Ken Bolt and Mike, 4.

