



THE Independent

of Petrolia and Central Lambton



VOL. XI ISSUE NO. XVIII

SPECIAL COLLECTORS EDITION

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 2024

Happy New Year Petrolia celebrates Sesquicentennial in 2024

This year, the Town of Petrolia celebrates 150 years of community. Dozens of volunteers have been planning parties – big, small, musical, and family oriented – to celebrate the people who carved this town out of the swampy forests of Enniskillen.

As the planning took shape, Denise Thibault, the chair of the Petrolia 150 Committee, and Laurissa Ellsworth, the town's director of marketing, arts and communication, asked how *The Independent* might be a part of the celebration. A special edition featuring the history of the town, was my first thought. Petrolia, after all, has a great tradition of newspapers and they played an integral role in recording the history of this place.

In my mind's eye, I saw the newspapers of the past – broadsheets of paper with long lines of type and headlines which ran down the columns.

CHRONICLING HISTORY

While I had visions of what was to be, as I visited the Lambton County Archives and talked to those who have been chronicling history in the area, I realized, I likely had bitten off more than I could chew. While I know many of the names of those who shaped this community – the Fairbanks, the Engleharths, the McGarveys, the Kerrs to name a few – their stories are rich and detailed and have been told by people who spent years researching and writing the history of Petrolia.

And as I researched, the photos and post cards also grabbed my attention. A newspaper 150 years ago had few illustrations. Many of the local ads were simply lines of text, no wonder considering how each letter had to be placed on a plates by hand. A few advertisers used photos, but not many. But those historic photos tell such a powerful story all on their own. The image on this page to me, tells the early beginnings of this town in one glance; a sea of three-poled derricks with a small, curious child waiting to be a part of it all.

So, my idea morphed to include photos – even though photos wouldn't be found in a newspaper 150 years ago.

NEWSPAPERS IMPACT

Then, in mid-December, Colleen McLean at the archives brought out the 1874 *Petrolia Advertiser Sentinel* and my vision transformed again. (By mid-1874, the newspaper had dropped *Sentinel* from its masthead and became *The Petrolia Advertiser*.) Newspapers at the time, were something entirely different than what I thought. The front page of *The Advertiser Sentinel* had a long column down the left-hand side listing the local lawyers and professionals. There were short marriage announcements, hints of obituaries and news from abroad. The editor – Richard Herring – spiced up these lines with bad puns and jokes and short teasers about what advertising could be found in the four pages printed every Friday morning.

NEWS AND TALL TALES
Reports from the local council meetings were simply the minutes recorded by the town clerk, which, for a political geek like myself, was a bit disappointing. The only analysis or context to be found was in those long lines of type from the editor when he wrote about the election held at the beginning of the year.

At first, I was a bit mortified with the obvious fiction mixed with facts. But as my idea of what this Special Edition was to be like changed, I saw how this, too, is part of the history of the town. So, some of those items have been included as well.

The Petrolia Advertiser was "the only paper published in the Canadian Oil District" and heralded to advertisers "parties wishing to bring their advertisements before the notice of Oil Producer or Refiners will find the ADVERTISER the best medium for the purpose." And there were lots of ads for oil well equipment.

But there were also listings producers would find helpful; train schedules, oil sales and notices. I've taken some of those and reprinted them directly.

In fact, the more I read, the more I realized I shouldn't be re-inventing the wheel. So many people over the past 150 years have told these stories in interesting ways. So, throughout these pages, you'll find a few original stories about the creation of the Petrolia Water Works, entrepreneur John Noble and George Durand, but you will also read stories directly from the pages of the newspaper of the day.

HISTORIC HELP

And, I've leaned heavily on the research done by many others. The book *Petrolia, Ontario – Canada, 150 Years 1854 – 2004* compiled by Edward Phelps, Charlie Whipp – the former owner of *The Petrolia Advertiser Topic* – and Lee Pethick over a period of three years, has been tremendously helpful in helping distill so much history. It's a wonderful read and I highly recommend it, if this small project peaks your interest in the history of this town.

The people at the Lambton County Archives, Laurie Webb, Meagan Sinclair and Colleen McLean, pointed me to much of it. They also pulled out endless files items that were fascinating but simply couldn't fit into this edition.

Local historians Liz Welsh and Pat McGee were generous with their ideas. Welsh pointed me to the Gleeson collection at the archives which contained so many amazing photos and memories gathered by one of Petrolia's biggest promoters and most beloved columnist, Lew Gleeson and his daughter, Mary-Pat. McGee shared her extensive research of her family – the Fairbanks – and how J.H. Fairbank in particular shaped this community.

Many of the photos found here are from the Petrolia Heritage website - Martin Dillon's labor of love. Thanks to Martin for curating such a treasure for the community.

A HELPING HAND

I've also drawn from the work done by local historian Steve Loxton at the Petrolia 150 site. Loxton's website – petrolia150dotca.wordpress.com – was built in 2016. That was the 150th anniversary of three important moments

in Petrolia's history; the King well, struck on Nov. 23, 1866, the Incorporation of the Village of Petrolia on Dec. 13, 1866 and the opening of Great Western Railway spur, Dec. 17, 1866. Steve did some very interesting work, including trying to find the exact location of the King Well. In doing so, he found some of the first accounts of the major gusher which led to Petrolia's population explosion. You'll find it reprinted on this page.

THE DESIGN

And I would be remiss if I didn't mention the incredible design work of Tyler Viscount. Tyler worked for *The Independent* over the summer months and agreed to help with the ads designed for this edition. That took some research, learning new techniques and plenty of time. Our advertisers were enthusiastic about our concept and embraced the vintage feel of this Special Edition.

And thanks to Erica Wiggins, who took time over the Christmas holidays to proof read the edition. If there are mistakes, so be it. Newspapers 150 years ago also had typos and errors, so consider it authentic.

Congratulations Petrolia on 150 years; may the next 150 years bring health, happiness and prosperity for all those who live in the Town of Petrolia.

Heather Wright
Proprietor, Editor
*The Independent of Petrolia and
Central Lambton*

LOCAL AND GENERAL NEWS From The Petrolia Advertiser

PETROLIA GAS WORKS.— Since our last issue Mr. Bray has been encourage by some of our principal citizens to go into the manufacture of gas from crude upon a larger scale than at present, and purposes taking hold to erect Works in town and give a thorough test to his invention for manufacturing gas from crude oil.

THE ROWDY ELEMENT— Some demonstration has recently been made by a few roughs around Stove-pipe corners. Females must be protected from wreckless parties, who seem to forget they ever had mothers or sisters. Our vigilant officer Ryan has his eye upon certain aspirants for a long ride to a steady lodging.

Pretty Prints and Dress Goods, at JOHN FRASER'S.

RETURNS.— There was registered during the first half of current year 14 marriages, 53 births, and 17 deaths. -No doubt "immigration," etc., accounts for the disproportion of the figures between marriages and births. There is nothing wrong of course with our population, a little reflection reconciles apparent difficulties.

THE NEW HOSE.— Quite a flutter was visible last Friday afternoon among our Firemen; the occasion was the testing of the new hose. The steamer "Andes" was connected and spouted through some 900 feet of India Rubber hose, 1 g nozzle, carrying about 200 feet. The test was pronounced satisfactory, and now there is less nervousness about a fire in Petrolia. Men, engines and hose in good order important service can be rendered, if necessary.

Petrolia's Beginnings Durance, Ennis first settlements

King Well in 1866 led to Boom Town

It is hard to imagine what it was like in Enniskillen Township when the first post office was set up and named Durance in 1855. While Enniskillen was first inhabited in 1820 according to Ed Phelps and Charlie Whipp in the book *Petrolia, Ontario – Canada*, farmers weren't keen to clear the heavily wooded, swampy land. But in the late 1840s, a survey found the gooey gumbeds which led to ambitious men with dreams of fortune to tap deep into the pools of oil – first in Oil Springs in 1857.

By 1860, the area we now call Petrolia, had two small settlements with post offices – Durance and Ennis.

In 1860, the first oil well was brought into production in the area. A small refinery opened.

PETROLIA IN THE NEWS
By 1861, the small settlement started attracting attention from the Bothwell correspondent at *The Toronto Globe* who wrote:

Eight miles north of Oil Springs, and half a mile west of the Wyoming Road is the village of Petrolia. It is somewhat older than its southern neighbor, but by no means so well grown. Oil it possesses in large quantities, but the more prolific region of Black Creek has attracted by far the greater share of attention. Petrolia is comparatively a pretty place.

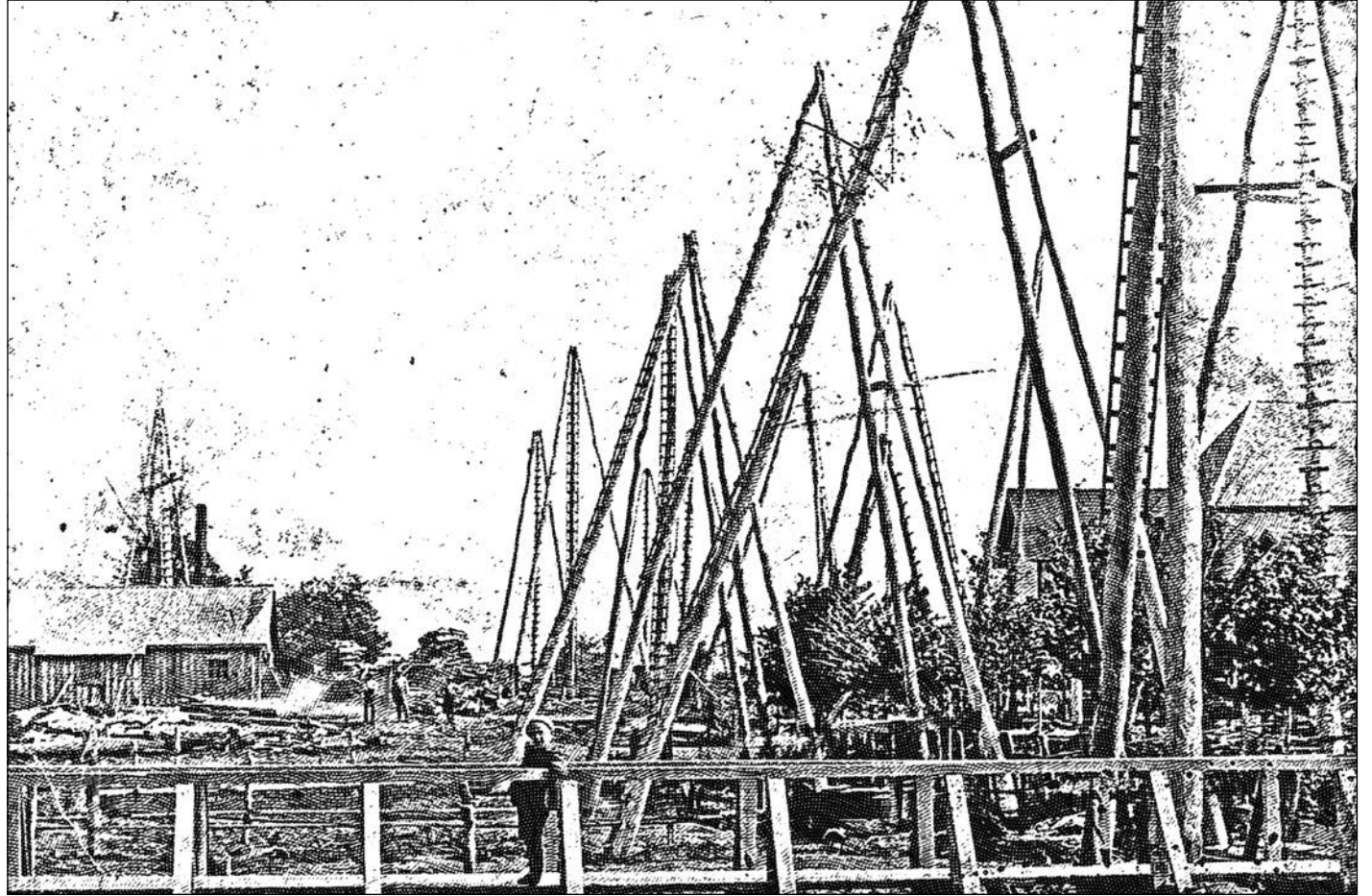
There are extensive clearings about it: farm houses may be seen here and there upon the ridges of the rolling land, and Bear Creek, upon the banks of which the wells are situated, does not smell of oil, and is as clear a stream as Black Creek is a dirty one.

Being eight miles nearer Wyoming than Oil Springs, it possesses an advantage over that place, and upon more than one occasion orders for oil have been filled at Petrolia, when the bad state of the roads prevented it being brought from the more southerly depot. The population of Petrolia is now about five hundred. Upon lot No. 13, in the 11th concession of Enniskillen was a natural oil spring, which led to the discovery of the "territory."

Close by the site of the principal wells, the Petrolia Refining Company has erected a refinery. The company is composed principally of Bostonians, with a capital stock of \$20,000; \$11,000 of which has been spent in the erection of the works. The buildings are of wood and separate from each other. A twenty horse power oscillating steam engine gives motion to the machinery employed.

From a dirty, dark green, with an odious smell, [crude oil] is converted into a light yellow liquid, with a strong, but not altogether unpleasant, odor.

With six stills in operation,



A young boy poses for a photo in the oil fields of Petrolia.

From the Dave Burwell Postcard Collection

the Company will be able to refine 3,600 gallons per day; but, as it is not possible to keep the whole constantly at work, the average will necessarily be somewhat less.

THE KING WELL

In 1865-66, there were a number of oil strikes. In November 1866, Capt. King struck oil on Lot 11 at the 11th Concession, now known as Discovery Line, establishing Petrolia as the major oil producing centre in Canada.

The Petrolia Sentinel reported: On Friday last, at 4 p.m., the largest flowing well yet struck in or near Petrolia commenced to flow, at the rate of about – we think we are safe in saying – 800 barrels per day!

The well is situated on Lot 11, in the 11th Concession of this township, about one mile and a half from this village. [It] is 380 feet from the surface, 290 being in the rock, which is not, by about 100 feet, the depth of the majority of the wells in this vicinity and is owned by the North Eastern Oil Company, of St. Catharines.

When the vein was struck from which the flow proceeds, there was no means at hand to save the precious fluid, and of course a considerable quantity was lost, as it ran all over the ground in the neighborhood, until at last it formed a perfect creek of oil, about one

hundred yards in length by about 12 in width, and from 1½ to 2 feet deep, where, on Sunday last, it still lay, and was inspected by hundreds from our village, who were eager to see this last proof of the oil producing qualities of the Petrolia region.

800 BARRELS A DAY

There has been so much talk of big flowing wells lately, which, on being examined, turned out so much less than at first stated, we had some doubt about the truth of the above until we had seen for ourselves. We have seen, and believed, as the tank which was constructed as soon after the strike as possible, and is a 250 barrel one, was filled in the short space of seven hours, thus giving a flow of over 800 barrels in the twenty-four hours!

To give our readers a proper idea of what the well really is we consider almost impossible, as it is so far beyond anything of the kind ever seen in this neighborhood. The amount of gas that continually pours forth from the well is scarcely conceivable, and the force with which it comes out is prodigious.

To show that such is the fact, we have merely to mention that a set of tools, weighing 1,000 lbs., were lifted completely up and thrown some distance from the pipe by the force with which the gas

comes up!

It has been calculated by those who are experienced in such matters, that the power with which the gas comes out of the pipe is capable of raising, at the very lowest estimate, 75 lbs. to every square inch!

Another fact from which our readers might form some opinion of it is the noise which the gas makes on issuing from the pipe. To compare it, we should say that it has the sound, with which most all are familiar, of one of our large steamers blowing off her steam through the exhaust pipe. It can be distinctly heard by a person standing on the railway track, which is about half a mile distant.

OIL MEN STUNNED

Experienced oil men from Pennsylvania say that they have never seen anything like it before in connection with oil. They also have the opinion that when the gas has exhausted itself, the flow of pure oil will be correspondingly increased, which is a most gratifying anticipation, and one which we hope will be fully realized.

What lends interest to the fact, [is] that the well is situated on what is called outside territory, i.e., outside of the oil producing territory of Petrolia, clearly showing that this is the district where the largest quantity of oil is to be found

in Canada, which has been already so well established.

We congratulate the North Eastern Oil Company on success, and hope the flow may continue, although that is hardly to be expected, notwithstanding predictions to the contrary, when we take into consideration the experience of the past flowing wells; still, there is no doubt that they have, if not the largest, one of the largest wells ever struck in this or any other neighborhood.

Since writing the above, we have been informed, just before going to press, by a gentlemen who had just then came from the well, that it was flowing more than ever this morning, and the lowest estimate now put upon its producing qualities is 1,000 barrels per day!

He also stated that the "roaring" of the gas can be heard quite distinctly at the Railway Station, at a distance of a mile from the well. The first tank being filled in such a short time, the Company are now building another, which is expected to be finished by 3 p.m. today.

THE BOOM TOWN

As news of the massive strike at the King Well spread, the settlement's population soared from about 300 to 2,300 practically overnight. By 1871, the town's population topped 4,300.



A family works in the oil fields of Petrolia.

From the Dave Burwell Postcard Collection

Fire department first act of Petrolia Town Council

Firemen critical in Canada’s most explosive town

When Petrolia officially became a town in 1874, the value of the local fire department was already well known. So, it was not surprising the first bylaw for the Town of Petrolia was establishing the fire department. When the village sprang up in the 1860s, wood was the main source for building. That, and the highly explosive nature of the oil industry at the time, and the men who sprang into action during a fire had already honed their skills. An article in *The Petrolia Advertiser Topic*, as the department prepared to host a fire fighting convention in the 1940s, outlined the department’s storied history. It is reprinted here.

BUCKET BRIGADE
Oil was discovered in Petrolia 1861 (and at Oil Springs in 1858) and the post office in the community, where the oil was found was named Petrolia.

In 1865 the production of oil had increased, the population the growth was of good material -from north, east, south and west. The buildings were wooden, large and small. They burned when they took fire and the neighboring houses were saved by an efficient bucket brigade and water from Bear Creek. Five hotels supplied the stimulant.

On August 3, 1867, Petrolia’s largest fire took place at what was known as the King Well—owned by a gentleman called Captain King. This well flowed thousands of barrels of oil and huge tanks were erected to hold the oil until it could be shipped. Fire broke out and burned furiously for two weeks, or until the earth ran into the well and choked it up.

The King Well was located just west of Eureka Street on the Blind Line.

HOOK AND LADDER
The community was organized as a village in 1886.

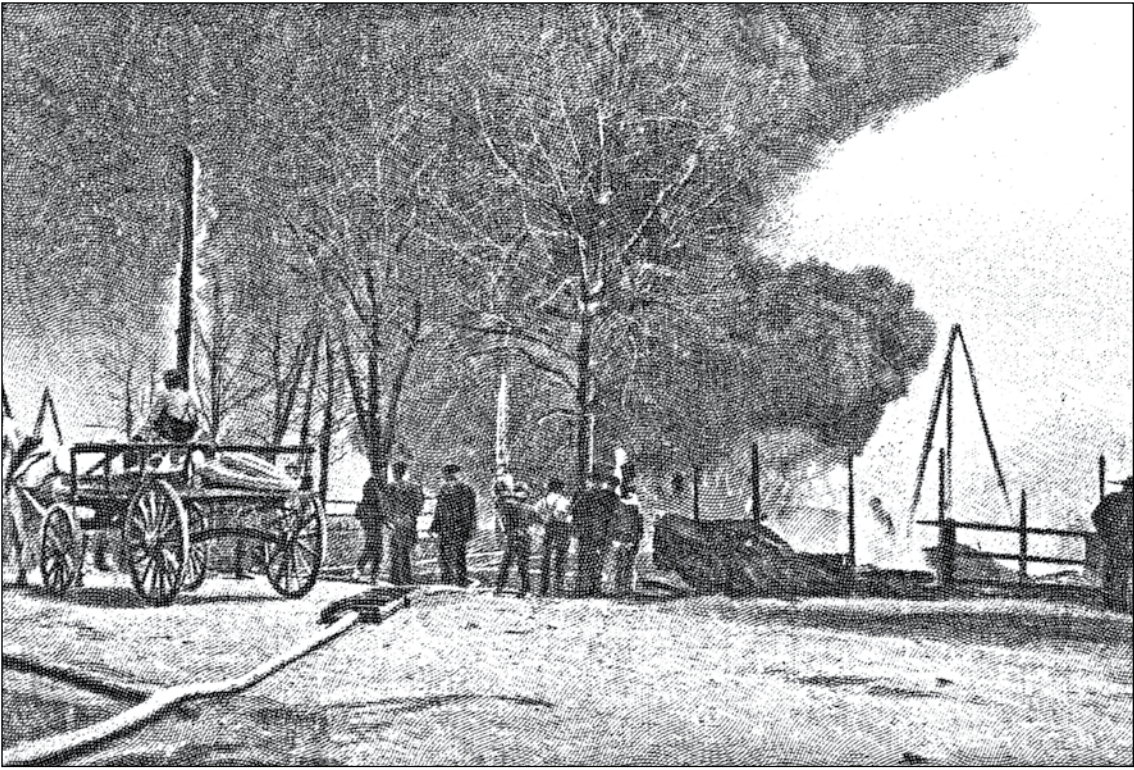
On January 3, 1869, the council ordered a hook and ladder to be made and William Hartery, a wagon maker, was chosen for the job. He made a truck that did good service for many years. It carried ladders, buckets, ropes, hooks and a battering-ram made like a ladder. It was very heavy with a wide 12-inch blade bolted on the end. With any number of husky men on each side to swing it, nothing could stand before it.

The truck cost \$200 and was kept in the old village hall on Pearl Street, east end.

On March 20, 1869, the council passed a bylaw authorizing the organization of a hook and ladder company and appointing a fire warden. On April 6, 1869, O.W. Chamberlain was appointed the first fire warden with H. Smiley, captain, and Joseph Ward, lieutenant. Warden Chamberlain resigned in 1871 and Walter Oliver was chosen in his place. Some 50 citizens were enrolled as members of the first hook and ladder company.

FIRE OF 1872
The most serious refinery fire up to this time occurred on July 30, 1872, when the “Big Still” owned by Parsons and Company exploded and the contents - 2,000 barrels of oil in a flaming mass - ran over the ground burning everything in its path. The loss was heavy. This date, 1872, also found the town building westward owing to the Great Western Railway having built its station and yards there and more fire protection was needed. On May 28, 1872, Ewen McQueen and others petitioned the council to purchase a hand or brake fire engine.

Citizens also waited upon the council and asked that a number of cisterns or underground tanks for a water supply be put down - five at the West End with a capacity of 500 barrels each - also that a steam fire engine be purchased. The tanks were sunk and the steam fire engine was purchased. The cost of the engine made by Shand Mason and Company of London, England, was



The sound of the fire alarm – first a triangle and then a bell at the Pearl Street fire station – could be heard all over Petrolia. Fires, particularly those in the oil fields, always drew a crowd. With the volatile nature of the oil industry, a strong fire department was critical.

Dave Burwell Post Card Collection

\$2,800 plus \$383 duty and gave excellent service for 50 years.

FIRST FIRE HALL
Petrolia’s first fire hall was erected by the council on a lot donated by the Great Western Railway facing Main Street. The fire engine and lock-up were located on the ground floor with the clerk’s office, council chambers and court room upstairs.

At the rear was a 60-foot tower or square derrick used for hanging the hose to dry - also to hold the town bell which was the fire alarm as well. The hand-drawn hose carts were also stored in the lower part. Before this bell was placed in the tower, the fire alarm – a triangle was used – it was placed high up on the front of the fire or village hall and with the steam whistles, which nearly every oil property possessed, the alarm was loud and long. The men going to and from work all hours of the day and night had a wonderful opportunity of discerning outbreaks of fires.

Improvements in the fire department continued. Some 240 feet of “leather hose” was purchased. This consisted of leather rolled in the shape of the present-day hose, but with the joints and seams riveted with copper rivets. It was also manufactured in England, while solid rubber hose came a few years later.

CHIEF JACKSON
On July 4, 1872, Thomas Jackson was appointed as engineer of the steamer, and a short time after was also appointed chief of police. He was a thorough engineer and took a great deal of pride in the fire equipment.

He was chief of police up to the year 1900, when he retired. Chief Jackson, a big man with a grip of iron, was a most capable law enforcement officer at a time when Petrolia, a tough oil town, was growing up.

William Hackett was the first teamster with his team to draw the new fire engine. He received \$2 and the honor as payment. On December 7, 1872, the council provided for the payment of \$8 to the first person taking the engine to a fire and returning it. The fire might, last two days and the team would remain on duty – small pay in many, cases.

On May 18, 1873, Henry Caneff, W. Hartley and George Denham petitioned the council to purchase a hand fire engine at a cost of \$800.

BYLAW PASSED
In June, 1873, a bylaw was passed by the council to organize a Steam Fire Engine Company. This was organized and named the Andes Fire Company, after a fire insurance company whose agent in Petrolia at the time was Theodore Burns and for which honor a fine donation was received. A grant of \$75 was made by the council to purchase uniforms. The officers appointed were Captain James Peat, Lieutenant John Crosbie and Lieutenant William Anderson.

An order was also passed by the council for an underground tank to be placed at the corner of Station and Petrolia Streets to hold 1,000 barrels of water. This was the largest tank the town had ever had. The Great Western Railway, near whose property it was located, donated \$150 towards its construction.

THREE FIRE COMPANIES
On August 18, 1873, the council decided to purchase a hand or break fire engine costing \$800 and authorized the organization of another fire company to manage the new engine. The company was named the Reliable Fire Company after an oil well of the same name. This engine was housed at the fire hall on Pearl Street, and did excellent service.

There then commenced a friendly rivalry between the three fire companies to get first water on a fire. On January 12, 1874, Captain Joseph Ward and William Hartery addressed the council regarding the appointment of a fire warden owing to the resignation of Walter Oliver. The council appointed John H. Fairbank, who continued in this position until 1880.

In 1885 the fire department membership consisted of 75 men in the three companies and the council granted the sum of \$300 to purchase new uniforms for them all. The tailoring department in Lancey’s store secured the contract.

FIRE AT THE REFINERY
Another article from *The Petrolia Advertiser* in the late 1880s shows just how dangerous fires in the oil refineries can be.

Four Men Seriously burnt as the result of an Explosion – Fifty Barrels of Benzine Burn for Five hours

Not of late has the excitement in Petrolia been so marked as was manifest last Saturday afternoon, when a fire broke out at the new refinery. At one o’clock, as a great many were returned to work, the refinery whistle men commenced blowing the fire alarm and, in short order, the fire bell seconded its call for the immediate action of the fire brigade.

The fire was fierce, but the greatest catastrophe was in the fact that four men were horribly burned in an endeavor to put out the flames.

A small batch of benzine was being treated in the tall agitator, which stands near the south entrance to the refinery yards, and at one o’clock, or a very few minutes after, it exploded and took fire.

The roof was blown off the building with the force of the explosion and the fire burned fiercely. No one was near the agitator when the first explosion took place. The refinery hose were immediately brought into action and a number of the employees at the yards ascended the stairs outside the agitator to extinguish the flames which were burning the building. They had hardly reached the top landing when another explosion took place. The hot flames encircled four of the men, burning them terribly about the head and shoulders and arms. Two of the men, John Reardon and James Glass managed to escape down the stair.

The third, Ed. Rolley, jumped, and the fourth, Wm. Nichols, in an endeavor to slide down the hose, was unable to maintain his hold and fell. In the fall he struck the steam pipe, which connects the steam house and the agitator. The pipe was bent almost double, which fact may have saved his life. If the pipe had not given under his weight he would have almost been cut in two.

They were immediately assisted to the offices of the company and the doctors of the town were all summoned to the scene.

Doctors Mulligan and Dunfield were the first to arrive, the other three a few minutes later, owing to the telephone connection not being able to reach them on the moment. The wounded men were suffering the most intense pain and all that medical aid could do was done to relieve their sufferings.

All were burnt about the face. Rolley’s both arms were burned up to above the elbow, and the right arm of Nichols was burned raw nearly to the shoulder.

In the meantime, the small fire engine was the first to arrive and connection was made with the big tank in the yards. The water in this tank was found to be too warm to allow the valves to work, and the engine could not be used there.

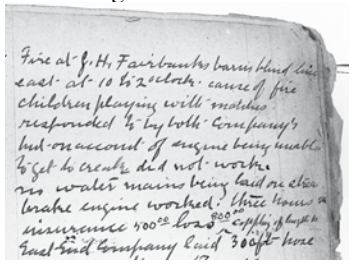
The big engine was then brought, but the same difficulty was experienced with the warm water. The engine was then removed to the hydrant, 700 feet from the fire, and the water turned upon the flames. Three streams were continually plied upon the burning building and fluid. The fire burned from 1:15 p.m. until six in the evening ...

As soon as the men who were injured had their burns attended to, cabs were summoned and all were removed to their respective homes, each one accompanied by a doctor. The latest report is that they are all doing as well as possible, although it will be some considerable time before their wounds will be healed and it is then doubtful if ugly scars will not be left as a reminder of their terrible experience. They all bore their trying ordeal very cheerfully.

The loss to the company has not yet been thoroughly estimated, but it is considerable. The spontaneous combustion which caused the fire is something which cannot be readily accounted for, but it is generally thought to take place oftener during times the damp seasons than at other times.

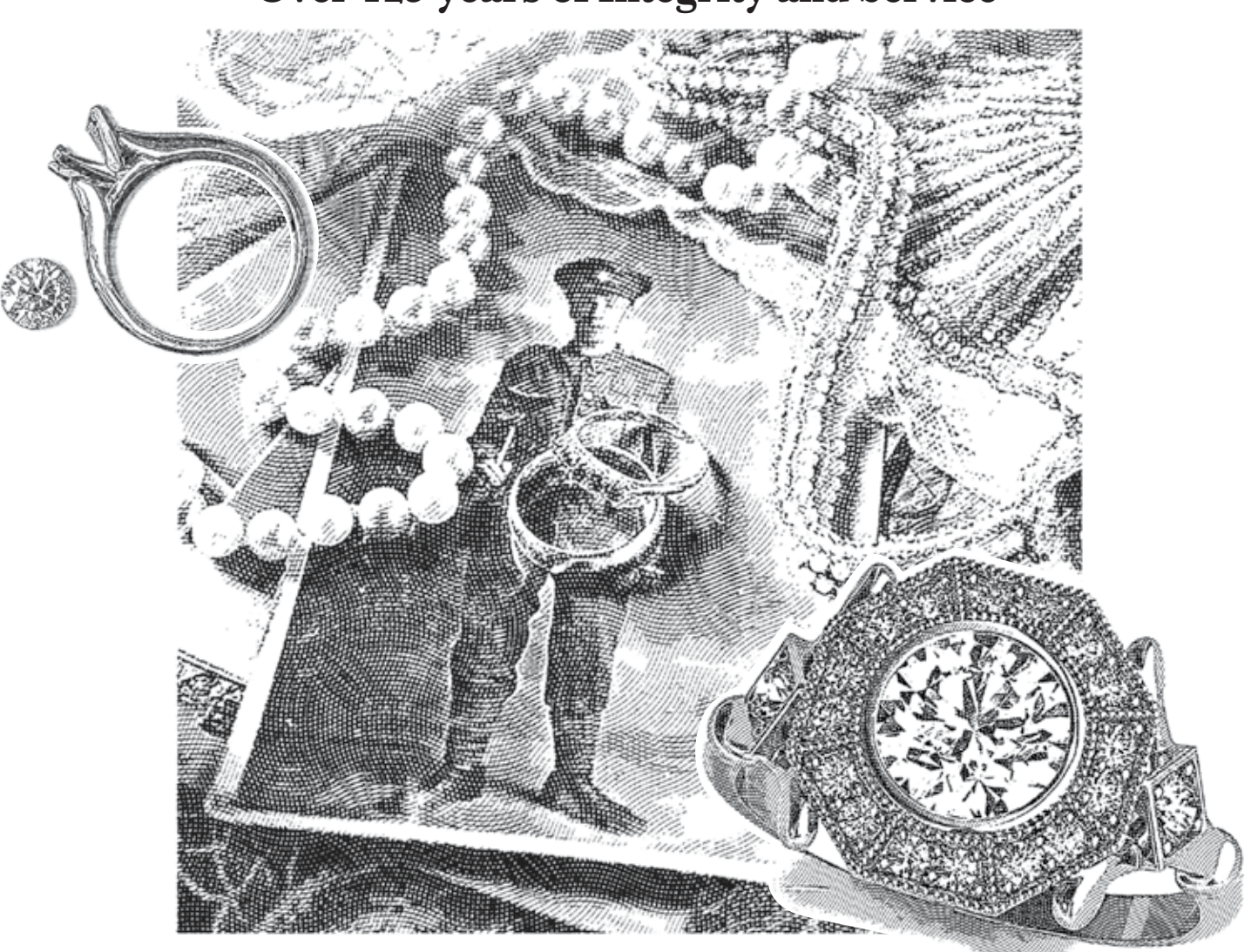
Three of the men hurt were employees of the company, while the fourth, James Glass, was a boilermaker from the Stevenson Works, who was doing some work at the refinery. Great sympathy is felt throughout the town for the unfortunate men and all hope that whatever is done to heal their wounds and relieve their sufferings will have the best effect possible.

MORE THAN JUST OIL
A look at the first fire warden’s journal at the Lambton Archives shows while there were many fires at the refineries and in the oil fields, the brigades handled more mundane calls. On July 8, the warden chronicles a fire at JH Fairbank’s barns on Blind Line. Crews were on the scene four hours since they could not get water from the creek and the water mains had yet to be laid. The warden listed the cause as “children playing with matches” with damage of \$800.



SHOWING APPRECIATION
Then, like today, the community appreciated the work of the volunteer brigades. In 1899, Van Tuyl & Fairbank, drafted a letter – and a cheque for \$25 – to the Petrolia Fire Brigade thanking them for “the prompt action and valuable resources rendered by your brigade at our fire the morning of the twenty fourth of March 1899.”

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Est. 1895

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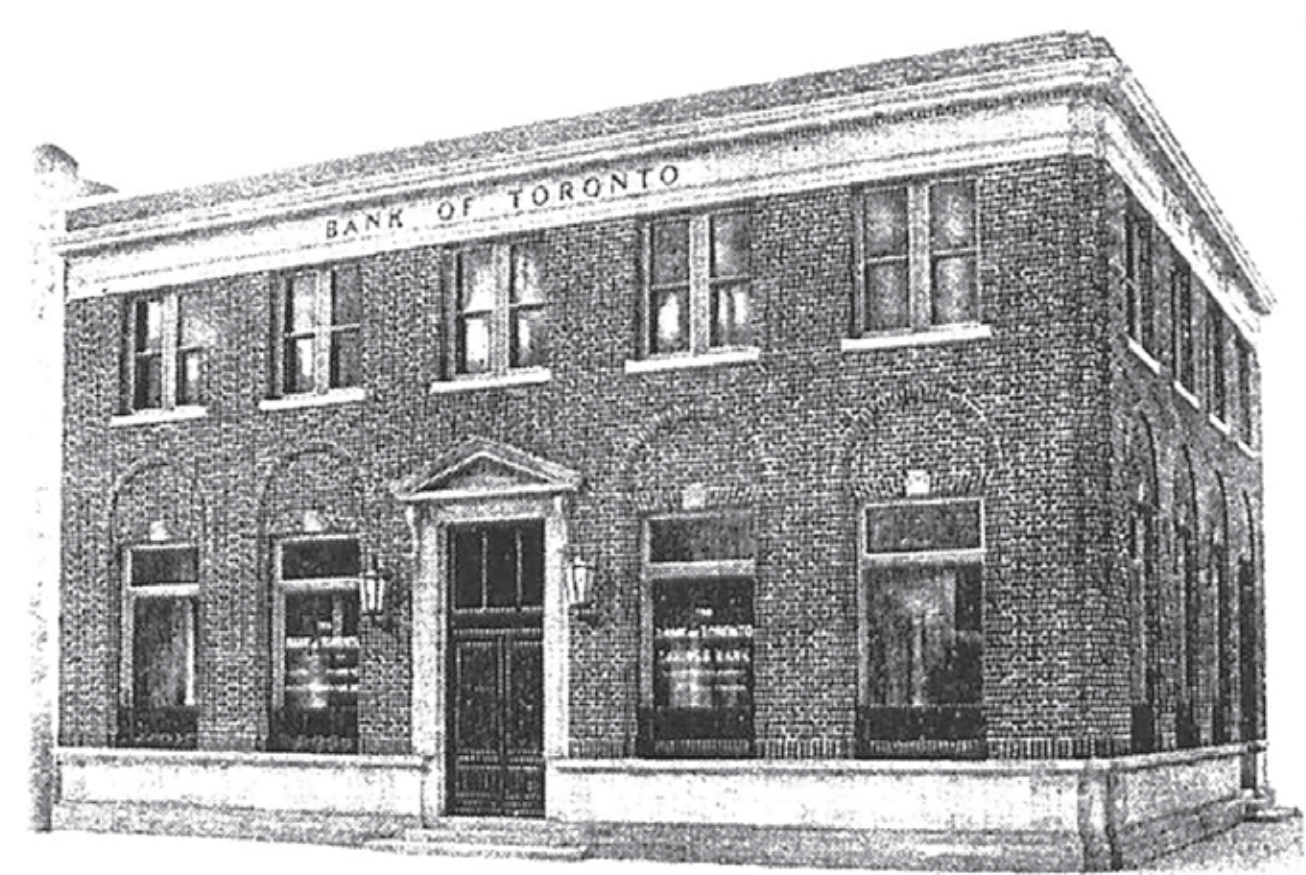
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Necessity: the Mother of Invention

The hard won battle for Petrolia's clean water and sewers

We take for granted the abundant, clean water flowing from our taps whenever we need it, but Petrolia's water supply was not always safe or dependable. As *The Independent's* Kathy Ehman reports, it took the determination of citizens, politicians and creative minds to solve huge water issues, everything from primitive and compromised delivery systems to billing problems.

Providing safe drinking water and maintaining a water supply sufficient for the needs of a boom town with a major oil industry, as well as water to fight fires presented a huge challenge to Petrolia that persisted almost until the end of the 20th century.

A report in the Lambton County Archives written by Charles Whips and Edward Phelps, addressing the 100-year span from 1866-1966, tells how, in 1872, the combined effects of the oil industry and inadequate sewage treatment had polluted Petrolia's wells to the point they could not be reclaimed. Clean water was sold for one cent a bucket, taken from a few remaining pools of potable water.

At the time, political and financial focus remained fixed on creating a water delivery system to serve fire departments, businesses, hospitals and homes.

Dealing with sewage was considered less important than water delivery. Wood box and tile drains, installed with little mapping, drained directly into Bear Creek or any other available waterway.

THE STINK COMMITTEE
The Stink Committee, as the municipal group tasked with the job of solving the sewage problem was dubbed, puzzled over the dilemma, which wasn't just about smell but also recurring epidemics of disease, including Typhoid fever.

But commercial demand for water still trumped the building of sewers. Petrolia's fire brigades operated in an environment dominated by the oil industry, including the volatile production of nitroglycerin. Petrolia faced legitimate fears that there would not be access to enough water to control major fires.

In January, 1896, Petrolia voters approved new waterworks bylaws by a majority of 334-226, and backed by a \$172,000 loan from the Lambton County Council, life was breathed into an ambitious plan to pipe clean water 11 miles north from Bright's Grove.

WATER BY 1897
Plans were to have the water flowing by December that same year.

Petrolia's Wanda Pratt chronicled the story of the massive project 100 years after it began. The feat was accomplished during a time when machines played second fiddle to man and horsepower.

"I just cannot wrap my head around it-and it's because of the times we live in-you would never

get anybody to start digging a hole six feet deep, from Petrolia to the lake (Huron) with a shovel," Pratt says. "The workers probably got paid about 96 cents a day for digging. Even along the way, they had to do something with the dirt, and then fill it back in. All physical labor."

CAST IRON LINE FIRST
William Chipman Engineers completed field work for the line by April 1, 1896, with the route of the cast iron conduit staked out and a 33-foot right of way secured along its path. The intake point from Lake Huron at Bright's Grove was determined.

William Caron and Co., St. Catherine's, secured the contract to lay the 12-inch cast iron pipe from Lake Huron to Petrolia, as well as pipe needed to carry the water in town. By December, 47,882 feet of 10-inch cast iron pipes had been laid in town.

The intake pipe in Bright's Grove, sitting some 15 feet below Lake Huron's surface, had its intake and strainer 106 feet from the shoreline, secured to a lake bed consisting of a mix of silt, sand and clay, known as Brookston clay. The medium was both friend and foe, providing an enduring building material, but its nearly impervious nature was a huge challenge for teams of horses and men dredging the site from the shore.

By December, crews were also dealing with shore ice.

CLAY HAMPERED WORK
Onshore, well diggers building a holding well beneath the Bright's Grove pump house muscled through every inch of that Brookston clay. The hole was lined with 42,000 bricks set in cement. Total cost for the well was \$546 for the bricks and \$70 to dig the hole.

"You couldn't start a machine for \$70, today," Pratt says.

The bricks, cement and Brookston clay have preserved the well to date.

By November of 1896 both the pump house and the engineer's house were complete. Two steam boilers would soon drive the new pumps, capable of delivering 700 gallons of water per minute, an average of one million gallons every 24 hours.

Coal fueled the boilers, with 6,019 pounds needed for every million gallons pumped. Horses, like their drivers, were paid \$.25 a day for workday meals, on top of transportation rates paid to the steady stream of teamsters.

WATER FLOWS JAN. 8
The final connections were made and water began to flow into the system on January 8, 1897, mere days past the promised deadline.

The pumps were converted to electricity by 1922. A mid-point reservoir holding 250,000 gallons of water erected midway on the line ensured strong water pressure into Petrolia for many years.

"I admire the people for their ingenuity and willingness to work," Pratt says.

"People would laugh you off the face of the earth if you tried that today. Dig a hole for 11 miles with shovels.

"Petrolia's history is fascinating. A lot of stuff, technology and tools, are based on what was figured out here.

"It's important to get the stories down. Petrolia's got lots of them."

MONEY PROBLEMS
While Petrolians were happy to have a safe supply of water, the running of the utility was not always smooth sailing.

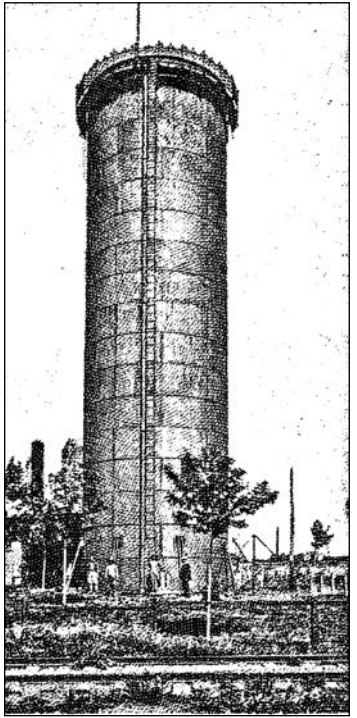
In 1937, Fred O. Kine Accountants and Auditors of London were commissioned to appraise

the books of the Petrolia Water Supply for the years 1930-1933. PWS was losing a great deal of revenue through its accounting department.

LEAKING CASH
The Kine Co. report showed the water company's billing system to be full of holes and leaking revenue at a steady rate, due almost entirely to non-payment of customers' water bills.

The customers could be forgiven in many cases because PWS accounts were a mess: "very erratic," and "haphazard" being two of the descriptors the report applied to a rural billing system that frequently failed to record bills or payments, or even to identify who their customers were.

Corrective measures included an overhaul of the utility's accounting system as well as more accurate customer surveys of taps, toilets and baths.



The original water tower, seen here shortly after it was built, still stands on Center Street.
From the Dave Burwell Post Card Collection

SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT
Today, the original standpipe still towers over Center Street with signs at its foot to mark the significant achievement.

The tower, made of battleship grade steel, stands 85 feet high and is topped with an ornamental balcony.

Petrolia's standpipe represents one of the first municipal water systems in Canada and likely the first to transport water such a great distance.

While the system has been upgraded over the years, the original design of a water pumping station at Brights Grove pushing Lake Huron water through an 11 mile long pipeline to Petrolia, continues to be used to provide safe, clean drinking water to the town.

Unclaimed Letters.
REMAINING in the Petrolia Post Office,
J. Aug 1st, 1874.

Aiken, Robert	Marrow, Joshua
Brown, John	Mills, M.
Burns, Henry (2)	Misell, Wm
Conley, E. S.	O'Brien, L.
Cook, George	O'Brien, S. A. (2)
Davis, Wm	Platt, John
Drader, Wm	Peardon, Wm (2)
Dunbar, A. C.	Revell, John
Elliott, Mrs Mary	Robinson, James
Kilia, Wm	Rosner, John
Fox, Wm	Raymond, Isaac H.
Gill, Mrs	Milner & Robinson
Garrett, Geo	Scott, Mrs Jane
Gray, Thomas	Stewart, James
Kennon, John	Stewart, John
Laursen, A. N.	Spencer, Jas D.
Leath, Wm	Shaw, James
Massey, Arthur	Thomas, Charles
McLennan, C. E.	Wilton, Hastings (2)
Miller, G. d.	Wilcox, Margaret A.
Morley, Joseph	Simpson & Chisholm
Mason, John	Trivian & Edmonson
McDowall, Mrs Helen	

Parties calling for any of the above letters will please say they are advertised.
P. BAROLAY, P. M.

TEACHERS WANTED.
TEACHERS wanted for 1875, by the Enniskillen School Board. Applications will be received by the Secretary up to Saturday, the 6th day of December, 1874. Teachers tendering will please state salary.
GEO. WILSON,
Sec. E. S. B.,
Petrolia Post-office Box 348.

Petrolia, oil and Christ Church grew up together

As the Village of Petrolia formed out of swampy Enniskillen Township, and the oil industry began, people arrived to make their fortunes.

Among the wooden homes, hardware stores, hotels and general stores, there was not a church to be found. But it did not take long for the Anglican Church to set up in the new settlement. As Historian Pat McGee wrote in the book *Wonders of Light*, Christ Church started in a local watering hole.

IN THE BEGINNING
Christ Church had very humble beginnings in 1866. The very first service for this parish was held in bar room of The American Hotel. To make it more tolerable, the line up of liquor bottles was discreetly masked with a curtain.

Its first actual church was built on Railroad Street on land donated by an up and coming oil producer named John Henry Fairbank. The church was slapped together with unpainted wooden planks - just like every other building in this hastily built boom town.

Fairbank's wife, Edna, led the charge to raise money for a new and better church. She even offered up the income from her husband's next three oil wells. Unfortunately, they were all dry holes.

FIRST BRICK CHURCH
It took 10 years but the second church was built in 1882 on this site. It was a stately white brick church, the first brick church in Petrolia. It was here that Canada's largest oil refiner Jacob Englehart wed Charlotte Eleanor Thompson in the most lavish wedding Petrolia had ever seen. Exactly 17 years later, on their wedding anniversary, Charlotte died. Afterwards, Englehart made an extravagant gift to the church. He donated a magnificent chime of 11 bells in her name.

It was here that the funeral was held for John Henry Fairbank who had risen to become Canada's largest oil producer. When Englehart later died, a special train brought his body back to Petrolia and another enormous funeral was held in Christ Church. In this parish, there were a good number of oil families in the congregation. Among the better known ones were Harrison Corey, John D. Noble, Charles Jenkins and F.H. Edward.

The church was a source of strength for the parish...as the oil ceased to flow, through two world wars, and the great depression. But tragedy struck on the night of January 10, 1957.

TRAGEDY IN 1957
Flames from the furnace room quickly engulfed the entire church. By dawn, the church that stood for 75 years was charred

ruble. The only blessing was that the valuable chime of 11 bells was spared. One of the few items salvaged from the debris was the brass plaque from Englehart dedicating the bells to the memory of his wife, Charlotte.

It hangs today at the church entrance for all to see.

The church of today is the third church and it was built on the same site as the former one. Its first service was June 7, 1959. Over the past 144 years, this parish was often homeless for various reasons. Services have been held in eight different locations. This includes a two-year stint at the Fairbank mansion while this current church was being built.

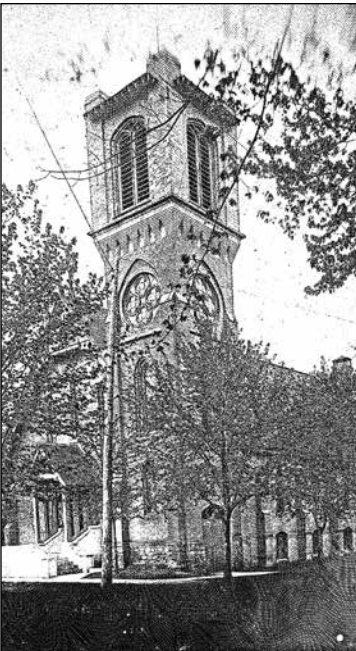
WONDERS OF LIGHT
When this church opened it opened with plain windows. In September that year, a new minister arrived, the Rev. George Menzies. He had an idea. He inspired the parishioners with a vision of nine stained glass windows for the church. He spoke of making the designs contemporary, non-traditional and beautiful. In the fall of 1961 the church contacted a young stained glass artist named Christopher Wallis.

Wallis had only arrived in Canada a few years before from Britain. He set up his studio in London, Ontario. He agreed to create the collection as funds became available. No one knew the entire collection would take 27 years to complete...There grew to be 13 windows in total and they were completed in 1988.

HERITAGE WINDOW
The sanctuary window above the altar was the first to be created in the collection. On the sides of the nave are six windows all based on the Six Rules of Life from the Book of Common Prayer.

The most talked about window is the highly original Memorial Window which was given Ontario Heritage designation in 2005. There is some debate on how the idea originated, with Rev. Menzies or Charles Fairbank Sr.

It can be safely said that this is the only church to ever have a stained glass window incorporating oil history. It is fitting because this church, this town and its oil industry all grew together.



Christ Church Petrolia prior to the 1957 fire.
Lambton County Archives

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

On behalf of the County of Lambton, please join us in celebrating and congratulating the Town of Petrolia on its 150th Anniversary!

— Lambton County Warden
Kevin Marriott



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Water was a precious commodity in the Town of Petrolia. Oil exploration and refining had fouled the ground water. Vendors sold water for a penny a pail. In 1896, backed with a \$172,000 loan from Lambton County, Petrolia built the Petrolia Water Works.

From the Dave Burwell Post Card Collection

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The Father of Petrolia

Inventor of the Jerker Line

Remembering J.H. Fairbank

In a town filled with ambitious entrepreneurs who built their fortunes in the oil industry while building the community of Petrolia, one of the most prominent is John Henry Fairbank.

Fairbank came to Canada from New York state and made his way to the oil fields of Oil Springs in 1861 as a land surveyor. Little did anyone know at the time that the 29 year-old would go from surveying property to becoming the largest oil producer in Canada while building a business empire with 400 employees and serving his community as a politician in Petrolia and eventually in Ottawa as a Member of Parliament.

The Oil Museum of Canada says in its online exhibit, Fairbank arrived in Niagara Falls and married Edna Cryslar in 1855. He was working as a surveyor and was to travel to the oil patch in Lambton county to map land Julia Macklem bought from oil pioneer Charles Nelson Tripp.

Surrounded by hundreds of men all digging for oil, J.H. was soon infected with oil fever, according to his biography on Fairbank Oil's website. In July, he leased a half-acre lot and christened his well Old Fairbank. His wife thought he had taken leave of his senses and begged him to come home.

FAIRBANK AS INNOVATOR

It was Fairbank who devised the idea of using the river to transport his barrels of oil to Lake St. Clair, enabling him to bypass the muddy roads of Enniskillen. The barrels were then loaded on ships for export.

Still in Oil Springs two years later, Fairbank was bothered by the expense of having a steam engine for each well. His solution was to devise the jerker line system – a “jerking” series of wooden rods close to the ground to transfer the power of one engine to multiple wells. It worked so well that this method was adopted throughout the district.

Oil Springs was in the full throes of the oil rush by 1865. But Fairbank noticed his oil production was dropping. He sold his well for a princely sum and headed north to Petrolia where small amounts of oil were being pumped.

He bought a small dry goods store there from S.H. Smallman which later it would become VanTuyt & Fairbank Hardware. Then, with his oil money he purchased a good deal of land at low prices.

In 1865, Fairbank built a white

frame house for his family. Edna and his older son, Henry Addington, joined him there the following May. John and Edna had their last child while in Petrolia – a daughter whom they named May. Their oldest son, Henry, attended the University of Toronto where he was training to become a doctor, until he took his own life. The younger son, Charles, was one of the original 18 cadets to enter the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario.

By November of 1865, aside from building his own home, Fairbank had subdivided lots of property in Petrolia and made a sizable profit. All this was in place one year before the King Well discovery sparked a Petrolia oil boom that would stretch over four decades. And just as Petrolia boomed, the Oil Springs boom ended, almost overnight.

Though the oil business was still in its infancy in 1865, Fairbank was ambitious. He built Fairbank Hall for meetings in 1866.

In 1866, Fairbank organized a group of oil producers to build an eight-kilometer spur line railway from the Great Western depot at Wyoming. This helped the local economy enormously.

In 1869, J.H. and his partner L.B. Vaughn created Petrolia's first bank, which became known as The Little Red Bank. The building was hauled from Oil Springs and today is Petrolia's oldest building.

By the mid 1870s, Fairbank and other oil producers formed their own refinery, Home Oil, to combat the growing power of oil refiners. It refined 3,000 barrels a week with Fairbank as president and general manager for eight years. He also owned the Fairbank, Rogers and Company refinery.

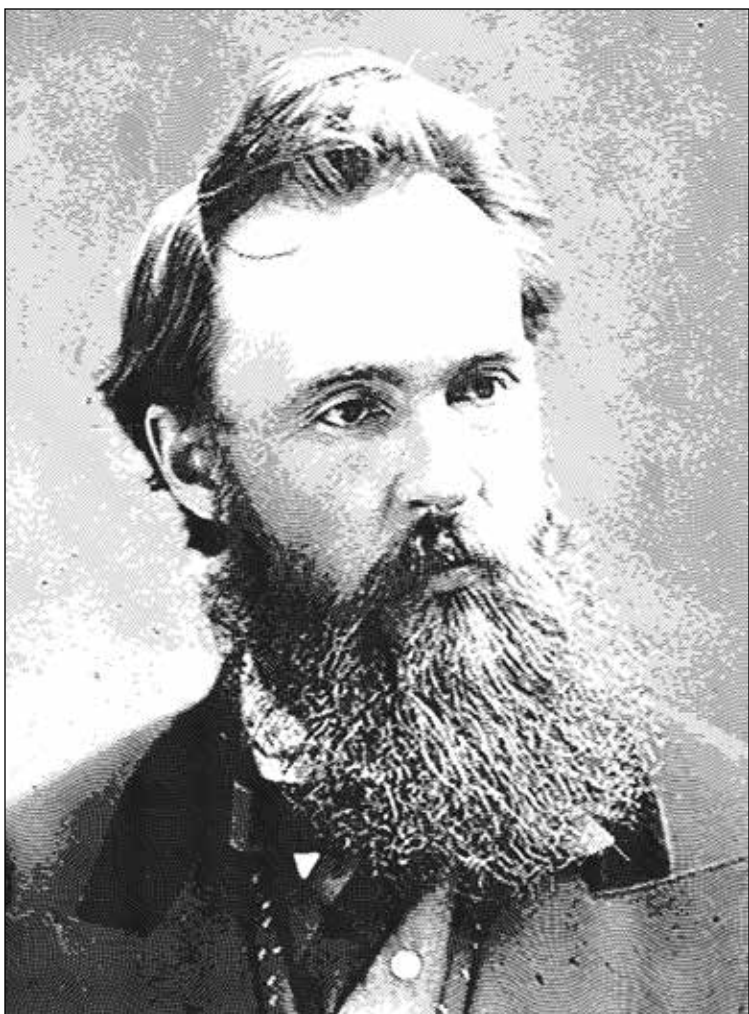
For his rapidly growing store, he took Captain Benjamin VanTuyt as his partner in 1874 and renamed it the VanTuyt and Fairbank Hardware. It became the largest hardware store west of Toronto.

SERVICE TO PETROLIA

As well, J.H. served three terms as chief of the Petrolia Fire Brigade, an important job when the entire town was so flammable and was called the most flammable town in Canada. It was a job he would take pride in for 30 years.

Fairbank's holdings grew to include farmland, forests and real estate. But oil was still his main priority and in 1877, the Mutual Oil Association formed. It would be the first attempt to unite oil producers and regulate prices.

By 1880, J.H. was nearly 50 years of age. There were nine refineries in Petrolia and Jacob Englehart's newly built Silver Star Refinery was the biggest in the world. Hailed as the most sophisticated anywhere, it was processing 75,000 barrels at a time. Englehart had joined a group of London refiners and they formed Imperial Oil in April 1880. Imperial Oil took over the Silver Star Refinery in 1883. Re-



John Henry Fairbank was Canada's largest oil producer in 1900, served on local council and was the Member of Parliament for East Lambton. He also served as the fire warden for Petrolia for 30 years.

Fairbank Oil Photo

sisting the clout of Imperial Oil was impossible and not surprisingly, Home Oil and the Fairbank Rogers and Company refineries were sold.

As the Petrolia boom heightened, Fairbank was looking ahead. He saw agriculture, not oil, as the future. In 1882, he opened Crown Savings and Loan to primarily grant mortgages to farmers. He retained the presidency of this bank for 30 years.

Oil production remained his first love and he was keenly interested to learn that Oil Springs had a second oil boom in 1881 thanks to deeper drilling. In 1882, Fairbank bought a two-thirds interest of the Shannon property in Oil Springs, an oil field that had been pumping since 1861 and eventually bought up 160 acres.

Fairbank had long been active in politics in Petrolia, serving three terms on council, as well as serving on the cemetery board, the clean water committee and the committee to build Victoria Hall.

In 1882, Fairbank was elected Liberal Member of Parliament for East Lambton, a post he would keep until the 1887 election.

OIL HIS MAIN PRIORITY

Dividing his time between Ottawa and Petrolia, Fairbank became president of the Petrolia Oil Exchange in 1884. Meeting at the Little Red Bank, oil producers and refiners set the price of oil.

These were heady days in Petrolia. The town of wooden shanties was being transformed with stately brick Victorian buildings that spoke of permanence and prosperity.

In 1891, Fairbank had completed his elegant mansion. It was also the year he bought Stevenson Boiler Works at a sheriff's auction. It was a significant industry, making more than 90 per cent of all the boilers, tanks and stills used in producing and refining oil in Canada. Taking a keen interest in the boiler works, Fairbank had it refitted and it continued as a profitable business.

By 1897, the population of Petrolia had soared to a new peak of almost 5,000. That's when the first major blow hit the town. The American juggernaut, Standard Oil, headed by J.D. Rockefeller, began its takeover of Imperial Oil setting up Sarnia, not Petrolia, as its base. The final deathblow came in the summer of 1898, when Standard Oil took

over the Bushnell refinery in Sarnia and bought out Imperial Oil. All Imperial Oil operations in Petrolia shut down. The headquarters moved to Sarnia. And the town's population plummeted by 1,000 people. At the same time, Petrolia's steady flow of oil began to peter out.

The town was clearly jolted when Imperial Oil left, but within a few years there was renewed optimism. By 1901, Canadian Oil built a refinery in Petrolia. Fairbank continued to invest in oil, installing a new \$14,000 rig in Oil Springs. Petrolia, meantime, was determined to diversify and thrive.

By 1900, Fairbank was the largest oil producer in Canada, pumping 24,000 barrels a year from his oil fields in Oil Springs and Petrolia. His home was the largest mansion in Lambton County. Its lush flower garden, ballroom, spacious rooms and fine furnishings, made an invitation to the Fairbank home an enviable coup.

“Oil magnate, banker, hardware dealer, wagon builder and sometime member of Canadian Parliament, in his own way, he achieved a pre-eminence in the Petrolia area parallel to that of a Carnegie or an Eaton,” wrote historian Edward Phelps.

Fairbank was also a generous man, well known for his philanthropy. Those traits along with his keen business sense, led him to take on businesses other may not have.

The Petrolia Wagon Works opened in 1901 and produced 250 wagons in its first year. Mired with financial problems, Fairbank agreed in 1908 to back its loans. Things did not improve and he desperately tried to sell it. To compound woes for the wagon works, the first automobiles were appearing in the area.

As fate would have it, Fairbank would not live to see the enormous implications of backing the wagon works loan. In 1920, six years after his death, the Wagon Works was bankrupt. The bank called the \$210,000 loan, with interest, and the Fairbank family lost a third of their fortune.

In 1912, with declining health, Fairbank had passed all his business dealings to his 56-year old son, Major Charles Oliver Fairbank.

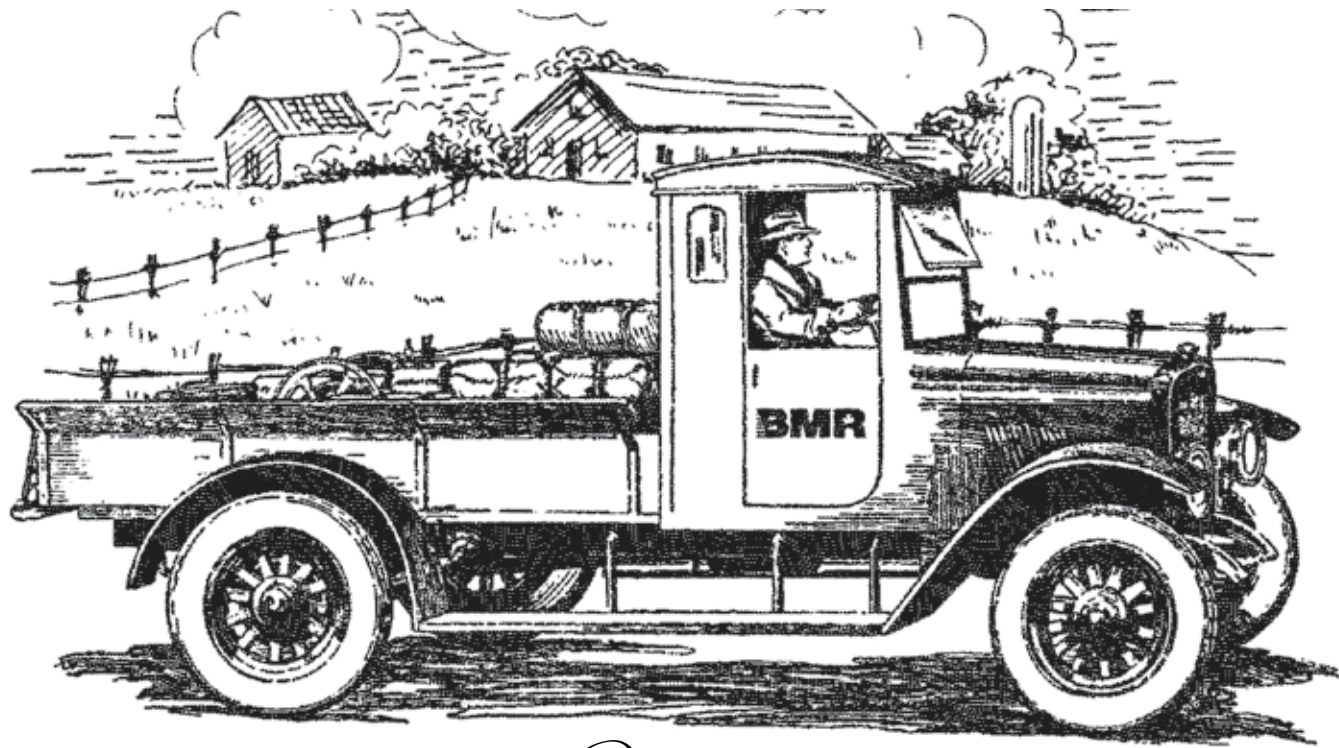
When John Henry Fairbank died in February 1914, Petrolia had the biggest funeral in its history. Newspaper headlines called him the Father of the Town. “On the day of his funeral businesses closed in tribute, and hundreds turned out to pay their respects. Flags were dropped to half-staff, and the town band played the Death March,” writes Gary May in his book, *Hard Oiler!*

Fairbank's legacy remains. His grandson, Charles Fairbank III ran VanTuyt & Fairbank in town until 2019, when the 154 year old business closed its doors. He still maintains Fairbank Oil and with 320 wells on site, about half of which are still run by the jerker system. And he and his spouse Pat McGee continue their efforts to have the district's oil heritage recognized by UNESCO while chronicling the history of the area. And the symbol of Fairbank's prominence and wealth – Sunnyside – still stands on the north side of Petrolia Line, reminding all of the rich history of this town.

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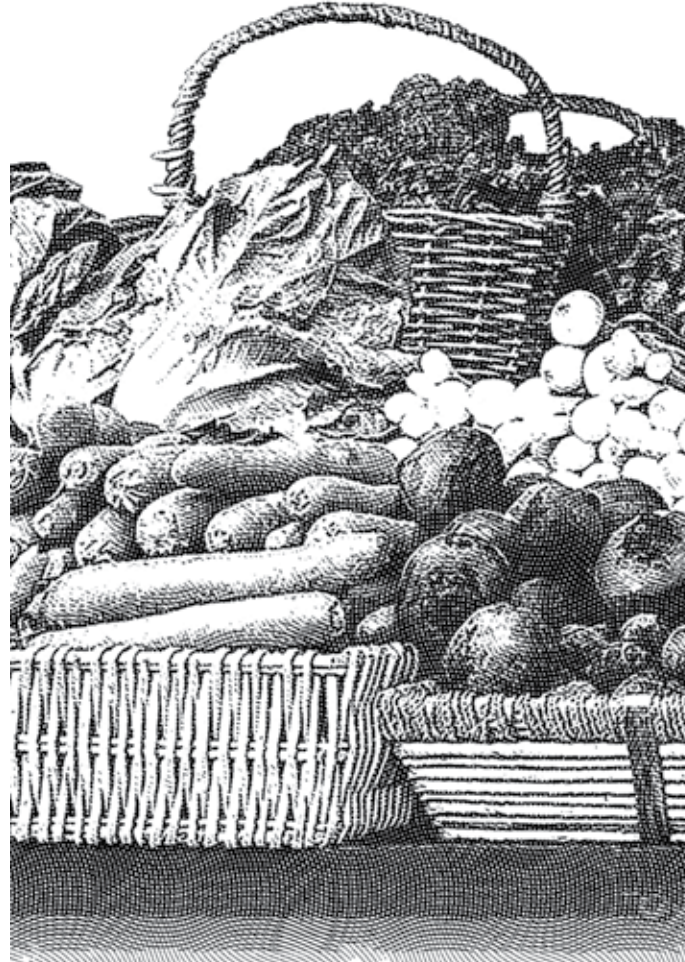
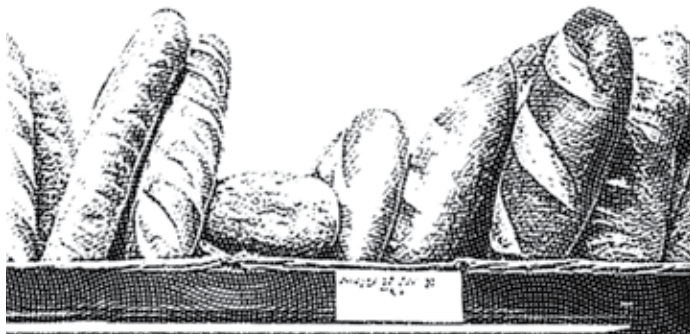
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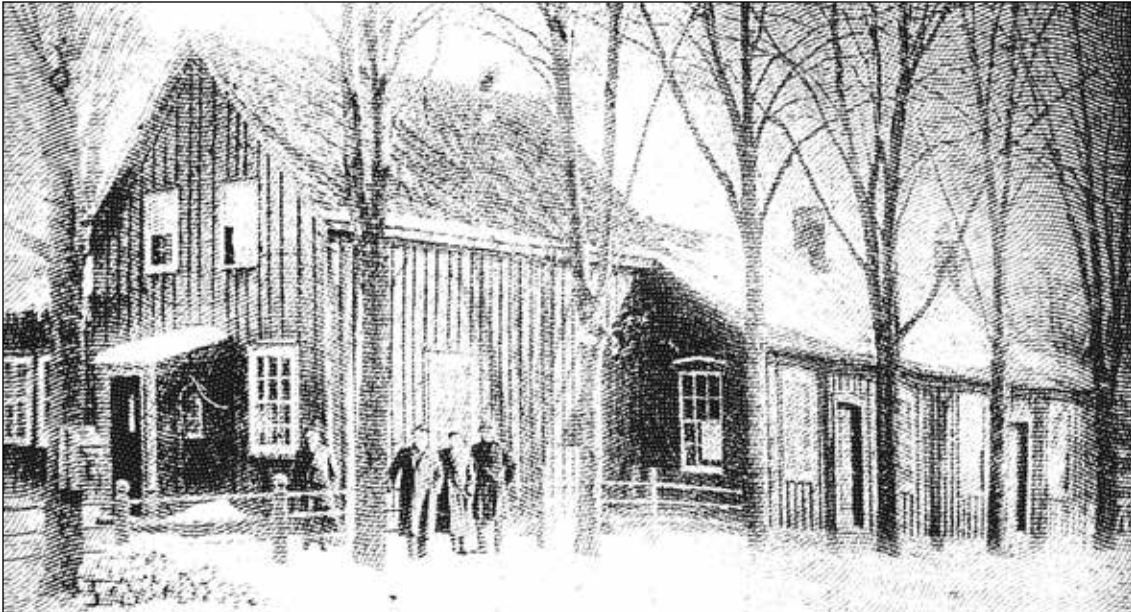
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John Henry Fairbank and his family moved into Sunnyside in 1891.

Petrolia 150/Steve Loxton Photo



John Henry Fairbank and L.B. Vaughn moved the Little Red Bank from Oil Springs to Petrolia, giving the booming village its first bank in 1869. The building still stands today – the oldest in town.

Petrolia Ontario – Canada 150 Years Photo

MP MARILYN GLADU

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR SARNIA-LAMBTON:

My deepest congratulations to the incredible Town of Petrolia on your 150th anniversary!

I was lucky to call Petrolia home for more than 16 wonderful years. Petrolia made an excellent place to raise my family— it is an extremely welcoming community full of generous people and neighbourly spirit. My mother also lived in Petrolia for 10 years, though our family origins were in St. Catharines!

After the initial discovery of petroleum in the area, the oil boom saw Petrolia blossom into a wonderful Victorian town, which continued to grow and now represents a critical part of Sarnia—Lambton. From the Petrolia Market, to the library housed in a historical train station, to the Victoria Playhouse, which has persevered through fire, many have been called to discover the great town of Petrolia, and the beautiful gems it has to offer.

But the most special aspect of Petrolia is by far those who live here— a genuine, hard-working, and exceptional population. Petrolia has thrived because its community has made it so. I want to especially thank the Petrolia Lions Club and the Petrolia Legion, for all their excellent work in building and caring for our community. Likewise the incredible churches of Petrolia, whose generosity knit the community together. But the credit is shared by all who live in and serve beautiful Petrolia.

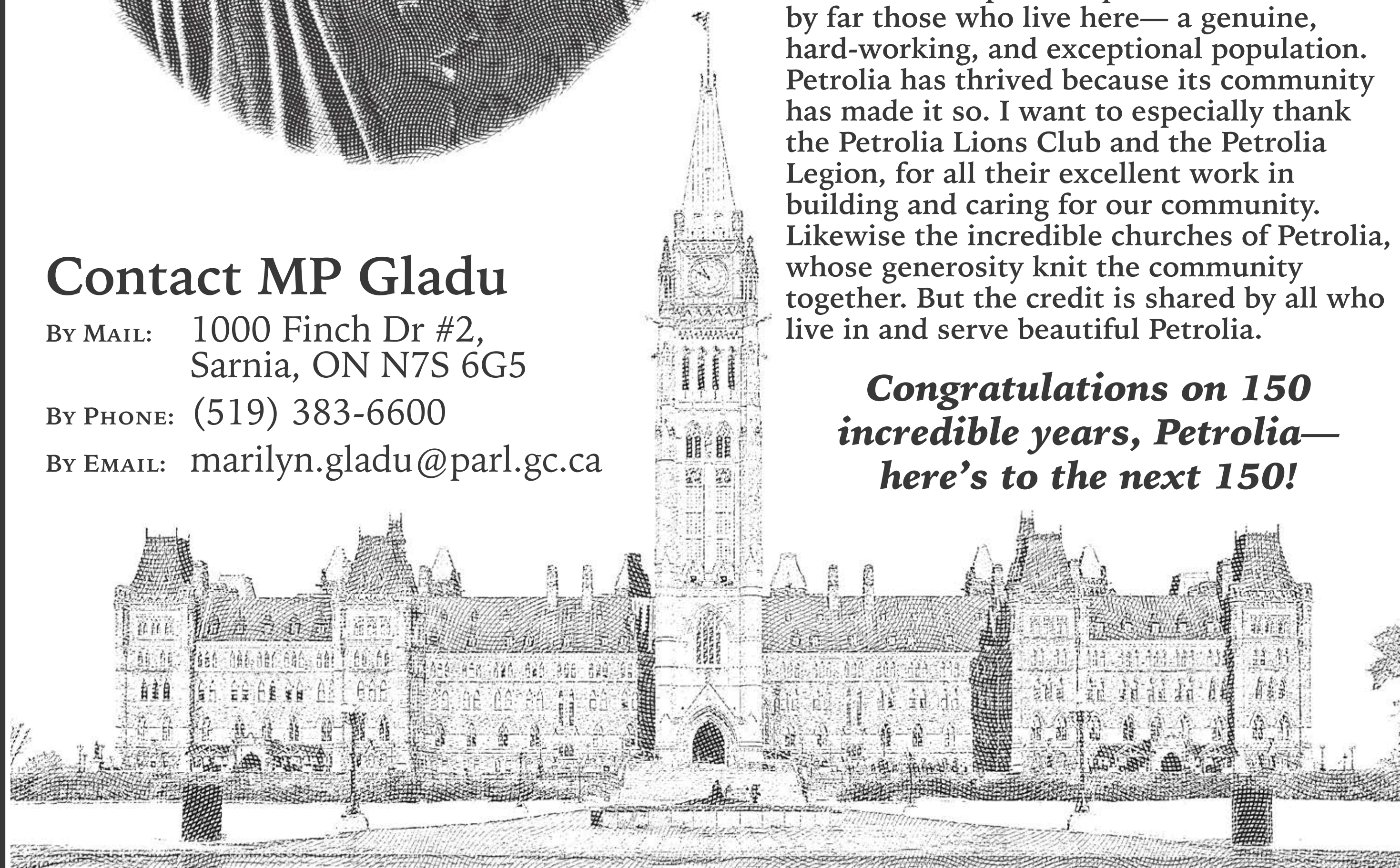
***Congratulations on 150
incredible years, Petrolia—
here's to the next 150!***

Contact MP Gladu

BY MAIL: 1000 Finch Dr #2,
Sarnia, ON N7S 6G5

BY PHONE: (519) 383-6600

BY EMAIL: marilyn.gladu@parl.gc.ca



War, Romance & Mischief on the Petrolia Spur

How the rail line came to Petrolia

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article by Tom Walter, first appeared on the Petrolia 150 website.

The first oil men in Lambton County had a big problem: transportation. It was hard enough to get the oil out of the ground. What to do with it next was just as challenging. The oil fields were remote and if the oil couldn't be moved out of the bush, there could be no business.

A partial answer arrived in 1858, with the building of the Sarnia Branch of the Great Western Railway. The railway brought practical, reliable transportation within reach of the oil fields. Getting the oil to Wyoming, the nearest rail head, was the next challenge due to the terrible road conditions (mud) for most of the year.

When oil was discovered in the Petrolia area in the early 1860's the oil men approached the GWR about building a spur line into the oil patch to bypass the muddy roads. The railway declined, probably fearing that the oil production would dwindle, just as it had in Oil Springs, a few miles south of Petrolia.

With the same stubborn, independent streak that drove them into the swamps to dig for oil in the first place, the oil men, under the leadership of John Henry Fairbank went ahead, raised \$50,000 and built the spur themselves.

The opening of the Petrolia Railway Spur launched a 128 year history of rail service in Petrolia. The initial reluctance of the Great Western Railway to participate in building the spur into Petrolia was rapidly reversed once the British directors realized that their counterparts in Canada were putting their own money into the scheme.

GWR TAKES OVER

Six weeks before the line opened for traffic on Dec. 17, 1866, the Great Western assumed ownership. It was a wise move. The revenue for the first eight months of operation fully covered the construction costs of 10,551 pounds and 14 shillings, prompting historian Ed Phelps to muse that the Great Western Petrolia Spur was perhaps Canada's most profitable branch line.

The history of the spur that followed was not that of a typical, sleepy branch line. Traffic was heavy. The daily oil train out of town eventually averaged 10 cars per day (sometimes reaching as many as 30).

Reading through the old newspapers, one is also struck with the impression that there was an ongoing war between the Great Western and the town. Decrepit buildings, uncomfortable passenger cars and bad timekeeping were only some of the complaints that Petrolia had with the railway.

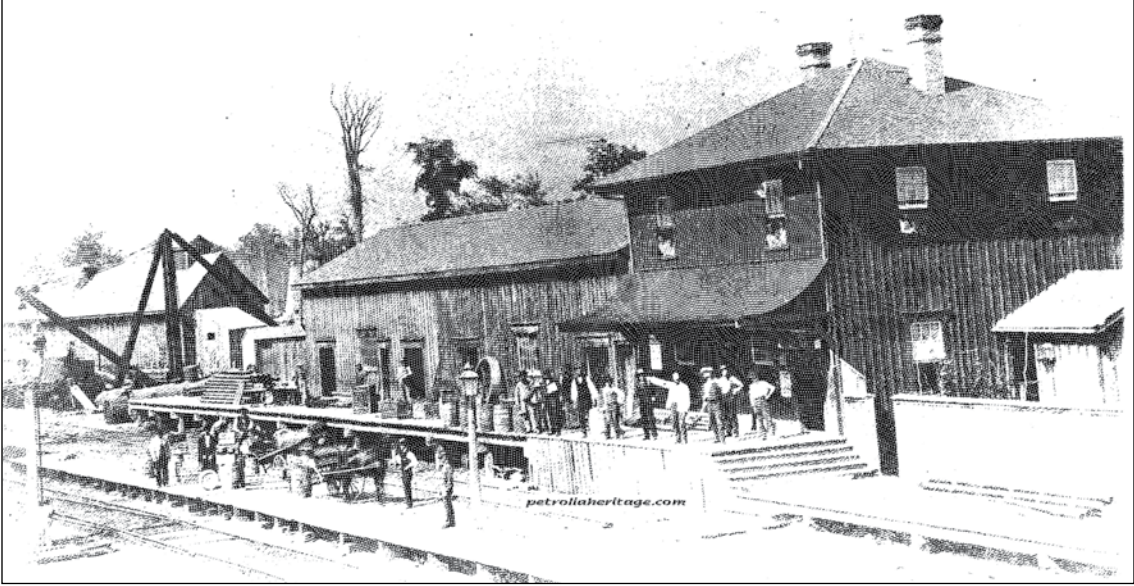
More seriously, discriminatory oil tariffs hampered the growth of the early refining industry in the town.

Things improved in 1878 when the oil men, fed up with the Great Western monopoly, induced



When the oil producers in Petrolia needed a better way to move their oil to market, they put up their own money for the Petrolia Rail Spur. The Great Western Railway took over the spur six weeks before it went into operation. At the top, the GWR train station and the loading docks below. The rail spur provided people the opportunity for day excursions to Lake Huron and the St. Clair River.

Petrolia Heritage & the Dave Burwell Post Card Collection Photos



the Canada Southern to build a competing spur into Petrolia from the south. Unfortunately, for the Canada Southern, the Great Western responded to the competition of a second spur by lowering their rates. Since the GWR routes were more direct than those of the CASO, the Great Western always retained the lion's share of the traffic.

TRAIN POWERS REBIRTH

Following the loss of Imperial Oil to Sarnia in 1898, the Petrolia GTR spur (the Grand Trunk took over the GWR in 1882) provided the transportation muscle that sustained the town's industrial rebirth early in the 20th century.

The GTR also built a new station in 1903, after years of complaints about the old GWR station's condition. It became an iconic building, which serves Petrolia even today as the town library.

The Petrolia Spur had its romantic side, too. When the oil flowed, so did the money. Wealth built up by Petrolia's oil industry ensured that there was enough to spend on leisure in the early years. Both of Petrolia's railway spurs were beneficiaries.

Beginning in the 1870's and lasting into the 1920's, great numbers of day excursions were run from both of Petrolia's railway stations. Petrolia's central location in Lambton County meant there was a wonderful range of possible destinations within easy reach for a day excursion: Port Stanley, Alvinston, Bright's Grove, Lake Huron Park in Sarnia, Pt Edward, Stag Island and Detroit were all on the list.

SUMMER EXCURSIONS

Naturally, the St. Clair River provided many of the most popular destinations. Just imagine walking to the depot and boarding a wooden coach hauled by a steam engine. Then, clanking past the oil wells and refining district to Wyoming and the mainline and on to the river for a boat ride to the picnic grounds.

If you were young and couldn't afford an excursion ticket, the



trains still gave plenty of entertainment in town. The rail yards in Petrolia were always a magnet for kids: loitering, jumping off and on moving trains, stealing rides were issues facing all of the Petrolia station agents, especially in the early years.

In the 1880's, a conviction of "Trespass on the GTR" would land you a \$2.00 fine or five days in jail (your choice). Even as late as the 1970's, they had to put locks on the switches when some kid tampered with one and put an engine 'in the dirt'. Many a youth made sport of climbing around on the gantry crane, sometimes with unhappy results.

HIGH DRAMA

On more than one occasion, the spur line provided a getaway route for thieves operating at night. One time there was a stick-up on the tracks near the pork plant. On another occasion, Chief Ferguson apprehended two suspects in a Port Huron warehouse theft as they were lurking in the Petrolia GTR yards. Runaway cars, fires and collisions all added moments of high drama over the years.

The Petrolia Spur soldiered on through two world wars and the depression. The passenger service ended in 1931, but freight traffic remained healthy. Even into the 1950's, Canadian National Railways (CN absorbed the bankrupt GTR in 1923) still considered Petrolia to be a major shipping point among the non-urban centers between Sarnia and

Toronto. By this time, grain had replaced oil as the principle commodity handled.

Finally, in the 1960's, services on the spur were cut back due to reduced traffic, in the face of truck competition. Business on the Petrolia CNR spur dwindled to the point where only 8 carloads moved on the line during all of 1992.

The last train delivered a load of pipe in 1994. In March of that year, Canadian National applied to the National Transportation Agency to abandon the Petrolia spur. There was no opposition and no buyer could be found.

On the morning of April 24, 1997 track lifting commenced. Three days later the Petrolia Spur was no more.

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Jake and Charlotte; Petrolia’s love story

Englehart built oil refineries, opened Northern Ontario but was remembered for his love for Charlotte and her ‘magnificent gift’ to Petrolia

The story of Jacob Lewis Englehart is one for the ages. Englehart, an American, started his first job in the petroleum industry in the US at the age of 13. Twenty years later he would build the largest oil refinery the world had ever seen in Petrolia - the Silver Star. It would eventually merge with other companies to become Imperial Oil.

But for many people, the story of Jake Englehart can only be told as the story of Jake and Charlotte.

In February 1985, Marlynn Jolliffe at the Petrolia Discovery penned a letter to a friend to give details of Englehart the man and Petrolia’s greatest love story. It is reproduced here.

While the recounting of accurate biographical data is important, I have found their story is best and most easily received by visitors if told as a love story.

Of course the bio material on Jake is easily obtained from Michael Barnes book.

Born: November 2, 1847 in Cleveland, Ohio (an American like most of our pioneers). Left school at 13 to join New York firm involved in petroleum business.

In six years he had moved from clerk to partner. In 1866 moved to London, Ontario and established, with connections in New York, the J. L. Englehart Company, an oil business. Two explosions in April and May of 1869 nearly destroyed his refinery.

1879 - sold London business, bought Hamilton’s Carbon Oil Company (founder: James Miller Williams), and moved refinery to Petrolia when London refused permission to build pipeline from Petrolia to London based refinery.

LARGEST REFINERY

In 1880 - built Silver Star refinery in Petrolia, largest in British Empire, and also acquired several producing properties.

1880 - bankrolled a conglomerate of refineries and became first vice-president of conglomerate - Imperial Oil Limited.

December 1891 - married Charlotte Eleanor (Minnie) Thompson from Adelaide, Ontario. At the age of 10 Charlotte had moved from Adelaide to Petrolia to live with her sister and brother-in-law, George Moncrief, a local lawyer and Petrolia’s first mayor, later an MP for Lambton East. At her marriage, Charlotte was 28.

1898 - J. D. Rockefeller finally forced Jake to sell out to Standard and Jake watched a third of his town and its people move down the Plank Road to Samia.

1905 - Jake appointed as commissioner for the newborn Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway.

December 31, 1908 - Charlotte dies in St. John’s Hospital, Toronto, after a lengthy illness (two years), in St. Michael’s and a two month stay at St. John’s.

April 6, 1921 - Jake dies leaving an estate of over \$3.5 million. He is, single handedly credited with opening Ontario North - not only for colonization, but for trade and finally for the untold mining resource The Ontario Northland Railway divides at the town named in his honor Englehart, Ontario.

Those are the facts - not the story.

Jake was a Jew in a town where not one other lived. After Charlotte’s death he donated in her name a carillon of bells for her church and “his”, Christ Anglican. In 1959 when that church burned, all that remained standing was the tower of carillon given to the Anglicans by a Jew.

There is, and always has been, a sign at the entrance to Englehart Ontario which was erected by Jake: No man shall pass by here

hungry.

Jake was a millionaire by the time he was 21, yet only lived frugally in small hotel rooms. Never owned a home and only ever once lived in one - the one he gave his wife at their wedding.

When Jake had his refinery in London, he needed feed stock. He personally tramped through every acre of oil property in Petrolia, convincing producers to send their crude to his refinery.

For as long as Jake owned Imperial Oil, workers were assured of medical care, pensions, workmens compensation, industrial safety - none of these programs were legislated or in fact used by employers.

Jake once caught one of his workers smoking in the refinery, told the man if his foreman caught him he’d be fired and to butt out. The young man didn’t, and a week or so later was fired by the foreman. After a couple of weeks, Jake requested the foreman re-hire the young man, feeling he had learned his lesson, and after a trial period the worker was astonished to find his lost pay made up.

When Jake died, he was buried in Petrolia in the sedate, classic mausoleum which was designed for eight coffins. Only three rest there: Charlotte’s mother, Charlotte and Jake. When the funeral cortege passed main street, the mourners stretched from Christ Anglican to the west end and as it passed, people drew their shades “out of respect.”

ENGLEHART GENEROUS

Jake was known as a generous man, but never frivolous with his money. He always lived in a small room, not suite, and initially shared his room in Petrolia with mayor Ed Kerby. But when he fell in love with Charlotte, his entire lifestyle changed.

Their wedding was referred to in *The Advertiser-Topic* as “the most brilliant event in the annals of Petrolia.” Christ Anglican bulged with the guests. Each bridesmaid was given a two carat diamond as a gift. Charlotte’s veil was pinned with a magnificent diamond brooch of Fleur de Lis design, a gift from Jake.

They honeymooned in New York, Charlotte being anxious to hide from the well wishers at the train station, as it was said she was very sensitive about the other gifts Jake had given her, including a sable full length coat. She also asked the gifts not be displayed so as no contrasts could be made between gifts Jake’s employees had given them and others given by wealthy industrialists.

While in Europe, Jake discovered golf and telegraphed home instructions for the installation of his own nine-hole course on the same property of his other little surprise for Charlotte - Glenview. Charlotte busied herself with church work and was for several years president of the Relief Fund for the town.

She annually opened the house and magnificent gardens to employees and general town people. She also traveled north extensively with Jake and until her illness, they were inseparable.

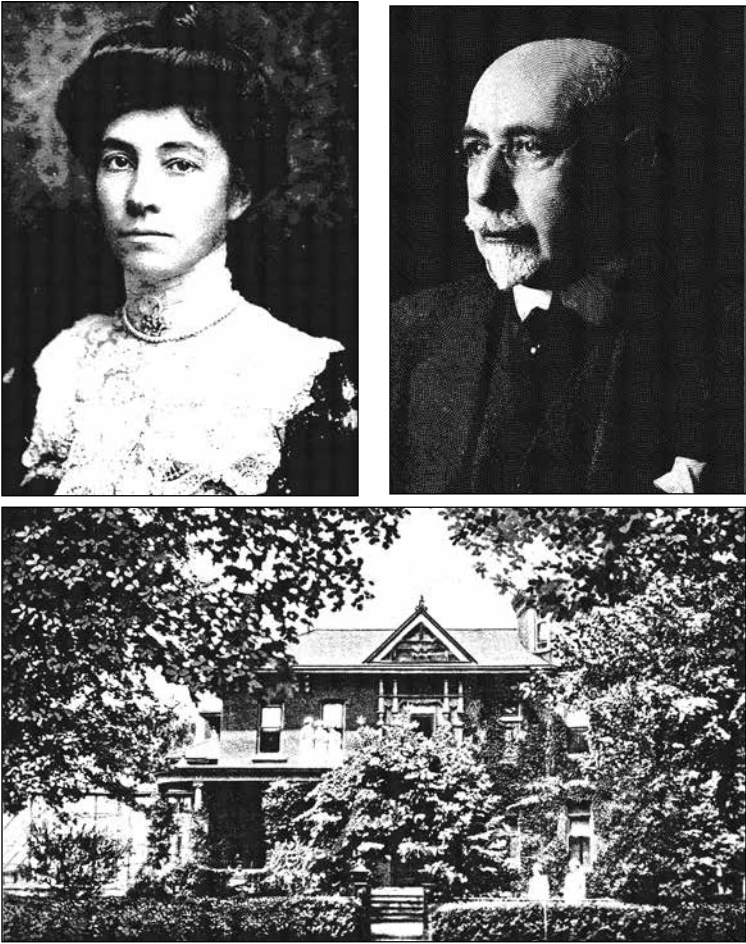
On January 6, 1909 *The Advertiser-Topic* reported her death as a “calamity and one of the community’s greatest losses.” The January 3 funeral was held at Glenview and was the largest to date in Petrolia. She was buried in Hillsdale by Rev. Canon Craig.

Her will pre-dated her death by exactly two months and town folk were astonished to learn when it was probated on March 22, 1909, that Jake had not only given her the home but she in turn had deed it to the town. From the material I have read it would do Jake a great injustice to infer in any way that he deeded her the home and property as a matter of good business. It was clear he intended her to have a home and security and anticipated this should be legally assured because he felt he would certainly predecease her. More importantly, he actively encouraged her independence and regularly encouraged her to sell, trade or buy stocks from the base investments he also gave her as a wedding gift.

The will, by the way, was drawn up in Gravenhurst and witnessed by a Durham woman and a woman from Bobcaygeon.

Her extensive stock holdings, including a large portion of available Crown Savings & Loan of Petrolia, were distributed to her sister, nieces and nephews. The discussion of the stock and its dividends, etc. encompasses about two pages.

In approximately one half page, she directs her executors, Jake, George Moncrief and the London



Charlotte and Jake Englehart and the house he built for his bride. Charlotte willed it to the Town of Petrolia for a hospital. Petrolia Heritage Photo

& Western Trust, to distribute her personal belongings - all jewels, furs, household articles, etc. which were worth in excess of \$200,000 - to those relatives surviving her. The executors were given a free hand and asked only to be as fair as possible.

The length of space given to various aspects of her estate is in many ways representative of her priorities. Next to the home, the largest single element was her personal possessions, yet she easily dismissed them in one paragraph.

The legalese and distribution of her stock takes two pages, ensuring her family is well taken care of. Her pearls, they’re the real mystery.

THE MYSTERY OF PEARLS

She directs they must be sold - not given - sold - but members of her family and Jake’s may bid on the pearls, no bid under \$2,500 to be accepted. They must not be auctioned. Each member of the family is to be notified of their availability. If no family member offers a bid, the executors are directed to sell them privately to a jeweller - and the money given to two nieces. The details of the sale of these pearls occupies one full page in her will. Why were these pearls so special?

Were they a gift from Jake? Were they family heirlooms? No one knows, and no one knows where they are today. They were obviously exquisite pearls and very expensive - remember that’s \$2,500 in 1908 dollars. Look at the picture in C.E.E.’s library. She’s wearing pearls.

And now for “Charlotte’s House” - the name, by the way, used by many nurses in the early days of the hospital. “I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATH the residence occupied by my husband and myself with all the lands, plant, buildings and appurtenances connected, used and enjoyed therewith situate in the Town of Petrolia or adjoining said Town to my dear husband Jacob Lewis Englehart to have hold and fully enjoy as if he were the absolute owner thereof for and during his life.”

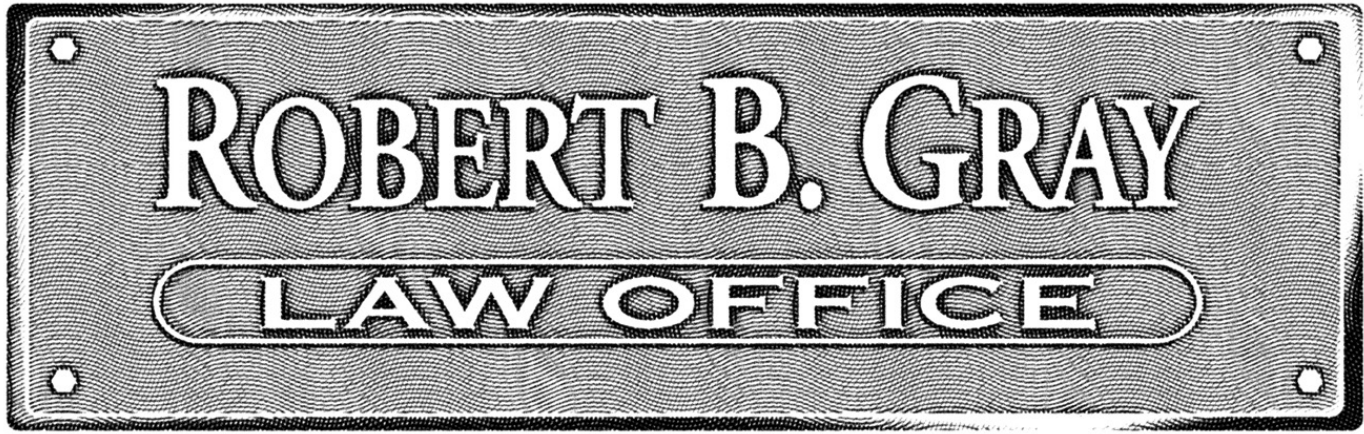
After Jake’s death, the house was to be given to the Town of Petrolia as a “GENERAL HOSPITAL.” The town had to pass a by-law within one year of Jake’s death accepting the house, lands, etc., as a hospital and agree “to equip, properly maintain and operate for all time thereafter a GENERAL HOSPITAL for the said Town in said premises; that the said HOSPITAL shall be called “The Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital.”

C.E.E. HOSPITAL

That by-law being passed, the town also had to agree to a couple of stipulations: it must be non-denominational, patients and clergy of all faiths MUST be accepted and have “equal rights and privileges” - I would suspect that was the wife of the only Jew in town talking.

The town also had to agree to all rules and regulations imposed by the hospital board - the ground rules for which she also set. There shall be a HOSPITAL board and the board councillors, they shall be composed of: the mayor, two police magistrate, and two other persons appointed by George Moncrief. It was clear the hospital was not going to be run by the town elite. She also suggests these positions, some or all, could be filled in the future by a general election of qualified voters - an alternative she favored.

Congratulations Petrolia Celebrating 150 Years!



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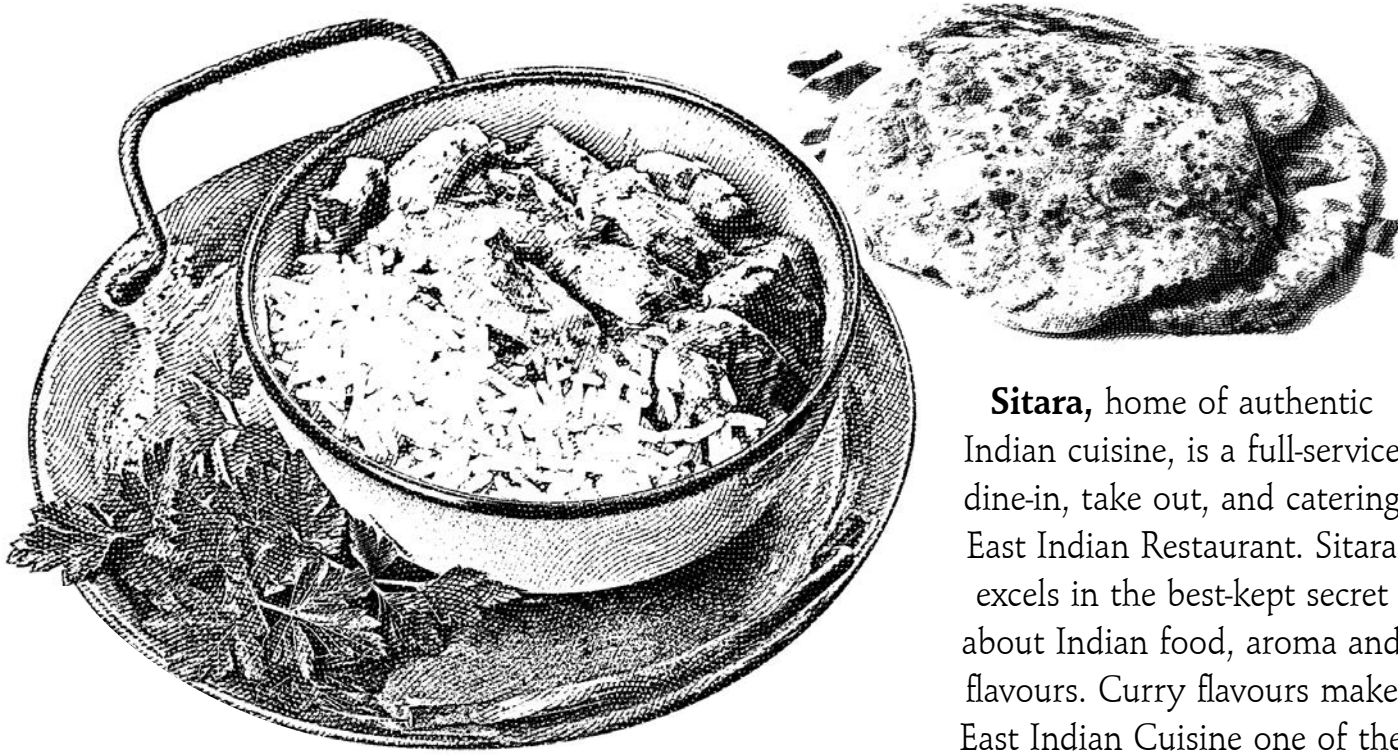
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MPP Bob Bailey

MEMBER OF PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

GREETINGS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR to all the readers of the *The Independent of Petrolia and Central Lambton*. In addition to marking the beginning of the new year, this January 1st marks the kickoff of the 150th anniversary celebration of the founding of the Town of Petrolia!

Following the new rules laid out for municipalities by the Ontario government during just the Second Parliament of Ontario, it was by Proclamation of Sir William Pearce Howland, second Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, that the founding of the Town of Petrolia was made official on January 5, 1874.

A lot has changed in the community since its founding. As a Hard Oiler and longtime resident of the Town of Petrolia, I'm proud of the way our community has continued to honour its historic roots and maintain its small-town appeal, while also welcoming newcomers and building for the future. Residents of Petrolia have always demonstrated a knack for ingenuity, a pioneering spirit, and a sense of service to the community. Over the last 150 years, there have been 12 Petrolia residents who have been chosen to represent the region in the House of Commons, or at the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I'm proud to continue that tradition.

As the Member of Provincial Parliament for Sarnia-Lambton, I want to congratulate the Town of Petrolia on its sesquicentennial anniversary and extend best wishes to all the residents of our great town as we celebrate this historic occasion!



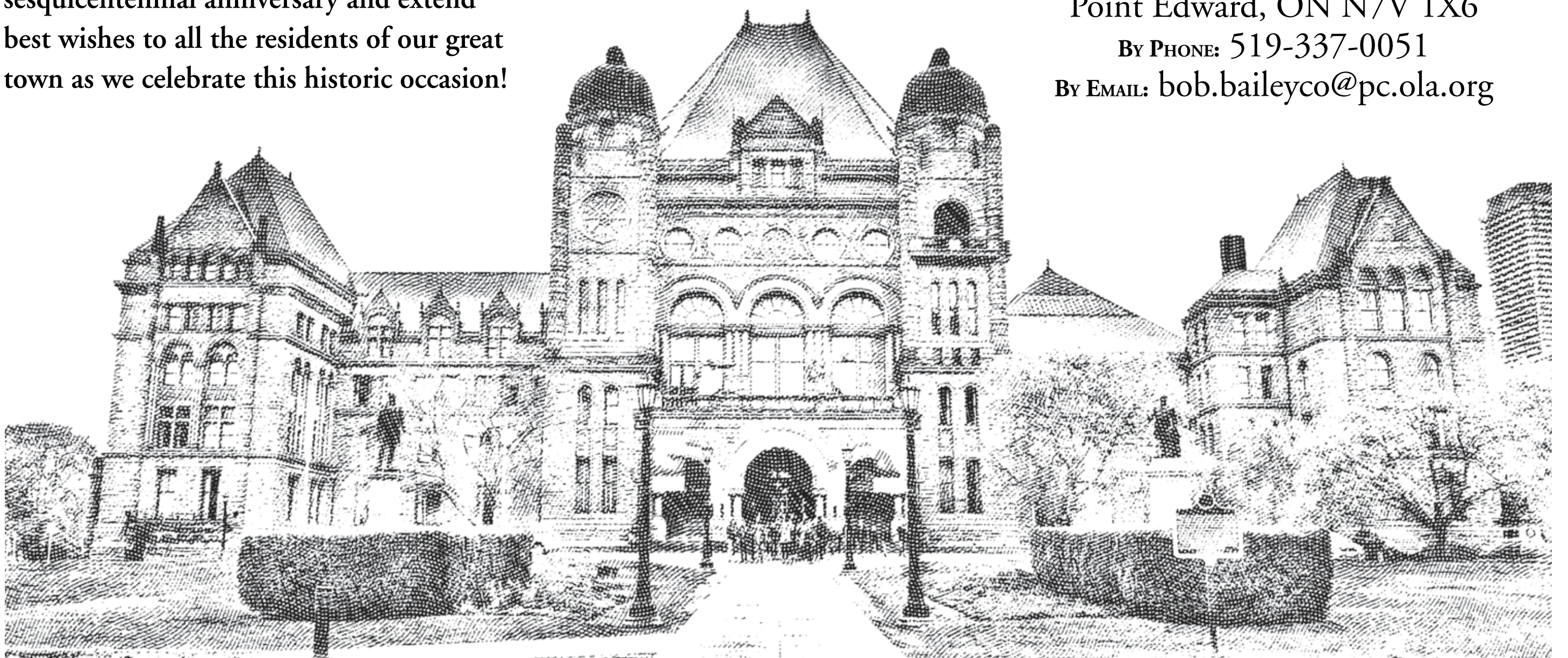
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Sarnia - Lambton

BY MAIL: 805 Christina St. N, Suite 102,
Point Edward, ON N7V 1X6

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How George Durand put his stamp on Petrolia

Four buildings in four years

The 1880s and early 1890s saw many of Petrolia’s grand buildings constructed, and not a few were designed by a London man, George Ferguson Durand, whose architectural stamp can still be found in other prosperous communities across Western Ontario.

In Petrolia, Durand was responsible for the design of the Masonic Temple, Victoria Hall, St. Philip’s Catholic Church and St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church. All were constructed within four incredibly busy years – 1887 to 1890.

It’s little wonder that Durand and his associates were called upon to provide their expertise in Petrolia. In total, Durand was responsible for the design of 22 churches in the London region and beyond, including dozens of private residences, civic structures and commercial buildings. His reputation was such that the Durand operation was a successful bidder for major works in Toronto. Indeed, from 1867 until his death in late 1889, George Durand rendered 341 architectural drawings for various clients.

Durand was born in London in 1850. His father was James Durand, born in Scotland, who in 1854 established a building and contracting business with John Wright.

The Durand and Wright firm eventually became one of the leading contractors in London. Through this activity, the senior Durand became involved in civic affairs as a city councillor. In federal politics he ran unsuccessfully as a Liberal in the 1867 and 1872 elections.

Durand also helped found the Canadian Savings and Loan Company and served as its president in 1887. By then he was too busy to continue in his original business, which had been taken over by a younger son, Andrew.

James Durand encouraged his older son, George, to seek a career in architecture, and in 1864, when George was 14, he was enrolled in a London art school. Roughly two years later, George Durand started training as an architect.

He completed his apprenticeship with an architectural firm established in London by William Robinson (1812-1894). Almost immediately Durand became involved in the design of the New York State capitol building in Albany, NY; he was hired as the clerk of works by Thomas Fuller, who had a previous association with the Robinson firm. Fuller and Augustus Laver, both of whom had previously worked on the Canadian parliament buildings, collaborated with Boston architect Arthur D. Gilman on the original design for the New York Capitol building.

Its development was rife with controversy, partly because its cost was well over \$10 million. Fuller became part of the collateral damage that followed and was fired in 1876. Durand had worked with him from 1870 to 1876 in Albany and was given the highest praise in letters of recommendation by both Fuller and two commissioners of the project. Durand was described by one as “the assistant architect of our new State Capitol for several years.” He was praised for his “ability”, “faithfulness”, “energy” and “strict integrity”.

Durand’s professional fate was somewhat tied to Fuller’s, and when Fuller was named chief architect to the Dominion of Canada in 1881, he remembered the young man’s service, naming him his supervising architect for post offices in Strathroy and Goderich, and for the Infantry School in London, now known as Wolseley Barracks.

Following his departure from Albany, Durand spent some years of uncertainty. He worked for at least a year at a granite works in Maine, and then returned to London to be employed, first by the Global Iron Works, and then, starting in 1878, with the (William) Robinson and (Thomas Henry) Tracy architectural firm.

It was in January 1880 that a newspaper ad listed Tracy and Durand as partners following Robinson’s retirement. The pair worked together until Tracy became city engineer for the City

of London. After that, Durand headed the firm. For the next nine years, he worked at a ferocious pace, rendering designs for dozens upon dozens of public, private and commercial buildings in London and Western Ontario. His reputation was such that in 1888 he was named the architect for the new Upper Canada College and in 1889 for the new Toronto court house.

An illness stalked him for much of 1889 and Durand was frequently away from his London office. He died on Dec. 20 by an illness never publicly defined but his death was believed to be the cause of overwork, at least according to the Canadian Architecture and Builder. George Durand was only 39.

His funeral was immense and included visitors from Detroit, Buffalo, Albany, New York City and Ottawa.

His involvement in Petrolia was with at least five major structures, two of which were churches.



THE MASONIC HALL

The first of several buildings to be designed in Petrolia by George Durand was the Masonic Temple in 1887. Durand’s selection as architect was not surprising, as he was perhaps the most well-known architect in Western Ontario at the time. He was also a well-known and prominent Mason.

In 1986, researchers Nancy Tausky and Lynne DiStefano published a major examination of Durand’s impact in Western Ontario. Entitled Victorian Architecture in London and Southwestern Ontario, it describes some of the major projects Durand and his associates were involved with.

Among them was Petrolia’s Masonic Temple, of which Tausky and DiStefano wrote: “The design for the Masonic Temple combines the dignity of a public building, with the generous window space then fashionable for a commercial building.”

The Temple was mostly a commercial project, because the Masonic rooms were located on the third floor. The rest of the building was designed for office and storage space. The cornerstone for the building was laid in a Masonic ceremony on June 28, 1887. Sadly, a major fire destroyed the third storey in 1985.

Durand used an Italianate design, as evidenced on the third floor, featuring arched windows.

He provided two optional designs for the store and office fronts on the ground floor: one used a Queen Anne theme for the second storey, with small-paned windows, the other employed heavier semi-circular arches. Curiously enough, versions of both options were used.



ST PHILIPS CHURCH

Petrolia’s Catholics built their first church in 1867 on the east side of First Street. They weren’t alone, as there were at least two churches on the east side of Bear Creek. And as with the other congregations, local Catholics decided in the mid-1880s that they needed a larger building in which to worship and that their new church ought to be built on the west side of the creek.

They chose a piece of land on King Street and hired architect Durand to design the new structure, with assistance by John M. Moore, who worked for Durand. The two architects were busy in Petrolia at the time, as they were also designing the Masonic Temple. Indeed, while the new St. Philip’s Catholic Church was being built, the Durand-designed Masonic Temple and Victoria Hall were also being built.

The cornerstone for the new church was laid on July 5, 1887 and Bishop John Walsh presided

over the religious ceremony. It was reported that a time capsule was buried that same day but it has never been located.

Durand designed St. Philip’s as a Gothic Revival structure, which at the time was favored by Catholics in Canada and beyond. As such, he styled the new church to be asymmetrical: there is a large tower built at the south end of the church and two smaller towers are at the north end.

The exterior brick was designed by Durand to include some intricate patterns. They include detailed patterns in the Gothic arch and two crosses on each side of the upper cathedral windows.

A rectory behind the church was added in 1911. Its basement served as a parish hall for many decades until a parish centre was built in 1979 just north of the church.

VICTORIA HALL

As early as 1881, Petrolia’s town council had plans drawn for a multi-purpose building that would serve as a town hall and provide for other public functions. But it didn’t meet with the full approval of the council and was voted down.

Three years later, in 1884, plans were again prepared and submitted to a public referendum but was defeated for several reasons. There were some Petrolians who believed that a new waterworks system should have the priority; others thought the town hall plans should include an opera house.

The issue remained unresolved until a series of events unfolded midway through the decade. In 1886, the town clerk moved out of Petrolia’s old municipal quarters, complaining that the second storey rocked in the wind.

And, on two occasions, the town was unable to provide a building large enough to safely accommodate a large crowd. The first occasion was when Sir John A. Macdonald spoke in Petrolia and when Edward Blake spoke. Macdonald is well-known to most Canadians as Canada’s first prime minister, but Blake is perhaps not as well known. He was Ontario’s second premier, from 1871 to 1872, and was leader of the Liberal Party of Canada from 1880 to 1887. His speaking engagement in Petrolia occurred when he was party leader.



Such speaking engagements were important in the years following the American Civil War and prior to the introduction of moving pictures or movies in the early 20th century. They were a source of information and entertainment for the public, and a source of income for the speakers. Communities like Petrolia found great pride in the accommodations they could provide for both speakers and their audience, but the fact that neither Macdonald’s or Blake’s visits could be properly received became somewhat of a public embarrassment. Town council was convinced in 1887 that something had to be done. New plans were solicited from Durand and within two years a new structure had been built, at a cost of \$35,000. It opened in January 1889 with a capacity crowd seated in the 1,000-seat opera house for opening night festivities.

Still, the construction of Victoria Hall was not without controversy. A local Baptist minister had been very vocal in his opposition because of the inclusion of a “theatre”, and there were other grumblings. The mayor of the day was quite aware of Victoria Hall’s critics, and on opening night told the crowd he hoped “that nothing shall occur here this evening to mar the harmony that should reign within these walls.”

Victoria Hall was designed to accommodate the opera house and most of the town’s municipal services. They included a fire station, jail, division court room, council chambers, and offices for the mayor, town clerk, chief of police and the town engineer.

An early study of the building’s design determined that it was styled to allow for function rather than form. Tausky and DiStefano in 1986 wrote: “There is great variety in the size, shape and grouping of the windows; the



George Durand designed four prominent Petrolia buildings in four years.

Petrolia Heritage and Dave Burwell Post Card Collection Photos

gable of the façade has a parapet while the other gables have decorated barge boards. Each individual section of the façade has a character of its own, reflective of it use.”

They continued: “It is on the clock tower that Durand lavishes most of the building’s detail, as if to stress the fact that towers exist mainly in order to look interesting.”

The two conclude: “The composition of the building is carefully balanced, and the varying elements arranged with the overall effect clearly in mind.”

There were some repairs made to the building over the years. For example, in 1982, Petrolia received \$200,000 in federal funding to repair the clock tower.

Tragedy, however, struck Victoria Hall in late January 1989 (precisely a century after it had been officially opened) as a fire raced through the structure, destroying the interior and leaving a brick shell. The building was carefully restored and remains a magnificent tribute to not only Petrolia’s heritage but to its architect.



ST. ANDREWS CHURCH

Petrolia’s oldest church congregation is St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church. The congregation dates back to December 1858; the congregants built their first church on Pearl Street during the summer of 1866. But by June 1873 that building was sold and Petrolia’s Presbyterians had built a larger church on the south side of Bear Creek flats. As with three other church buildings located in the flats, St. Andrew’s rested on stilts because of periodic flooding.

As the town and the congregants prospered, the Presbyterians looked westward and to higher ground on Queen Street. Property was purchased and the services of George Durand were hired. The structure would be among the last to be designed by Durand, as he died seven months after the plans were accepted by the local Presbyterians.

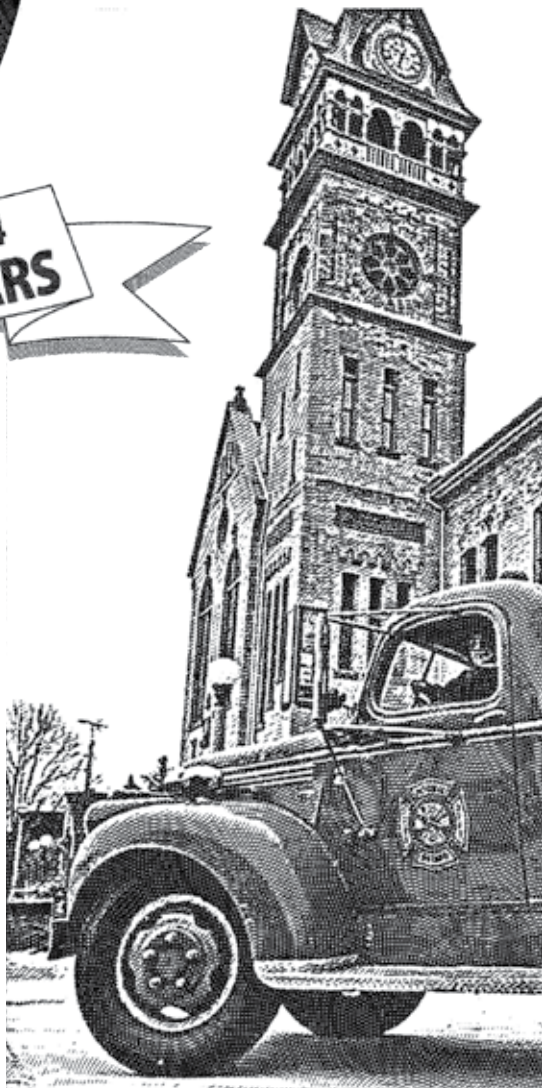
It was left to a Durand associate, Fred Henry, to complete the building. The new St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church officially opened on Dec. 28, 1890, about a year after Durand’s death in London.

The building is built in the style of Gothic Revival, and is not symmetrical, as one large tower is at the north of the church and a smaller one at the south.

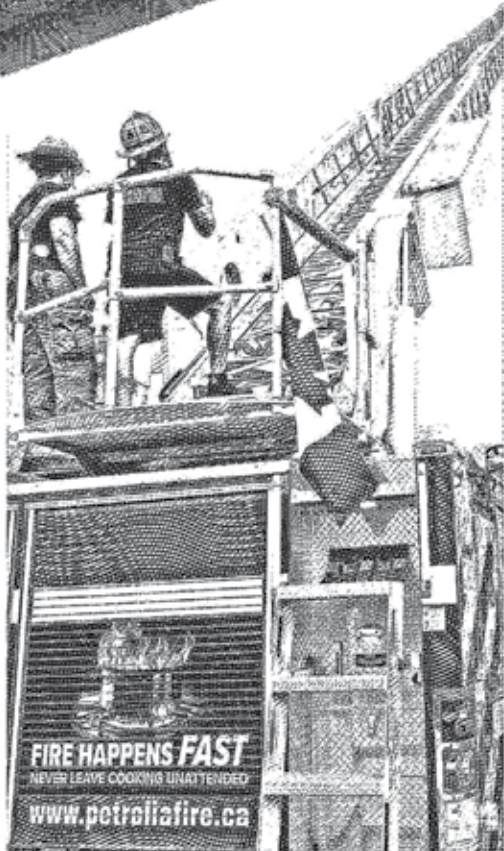
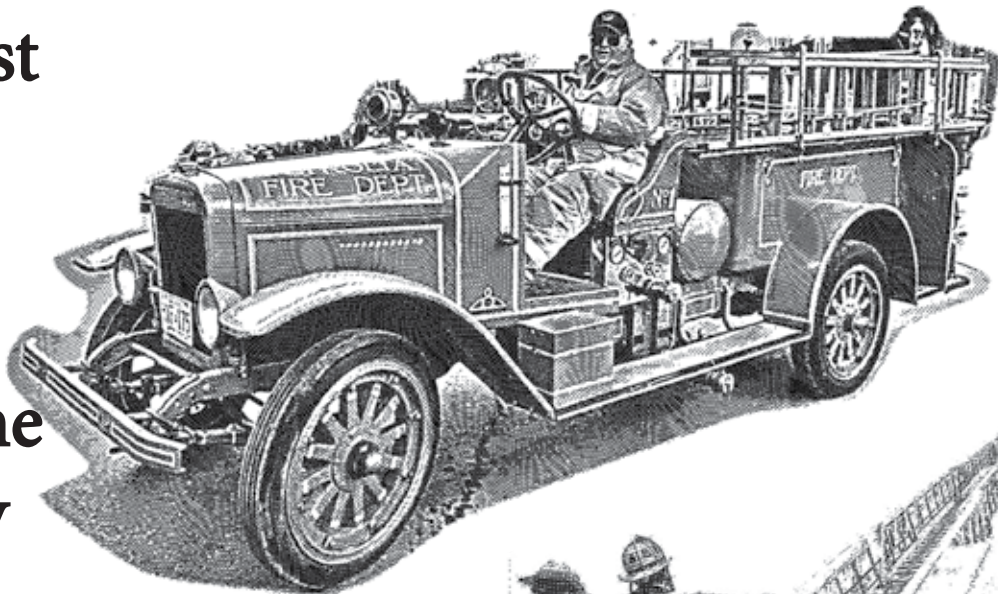
Durand’s plans share some themes with both St. Philip’s Catholic Church, which had opened three years earlier, and with Victoria Hall, which opened in January 1889. Both churches feature carved support trusses that are as attractive as they are functional.

Tausky and DiStefano in 1986 noted in their books about Durand that St. Andrew’s shares with Victoria Hall numerous arches; the church has 15 arched windows facing Queen Street.

The biographers wrote that Durand designed St. Andrew’s so it would have excellent acoustics. Indeed, pews in the church’s sanctuary were purposely arched around the space left for a pipe organ; an organ, built by the well-known Casavant Frères of Montreal, was installed in December 1903.



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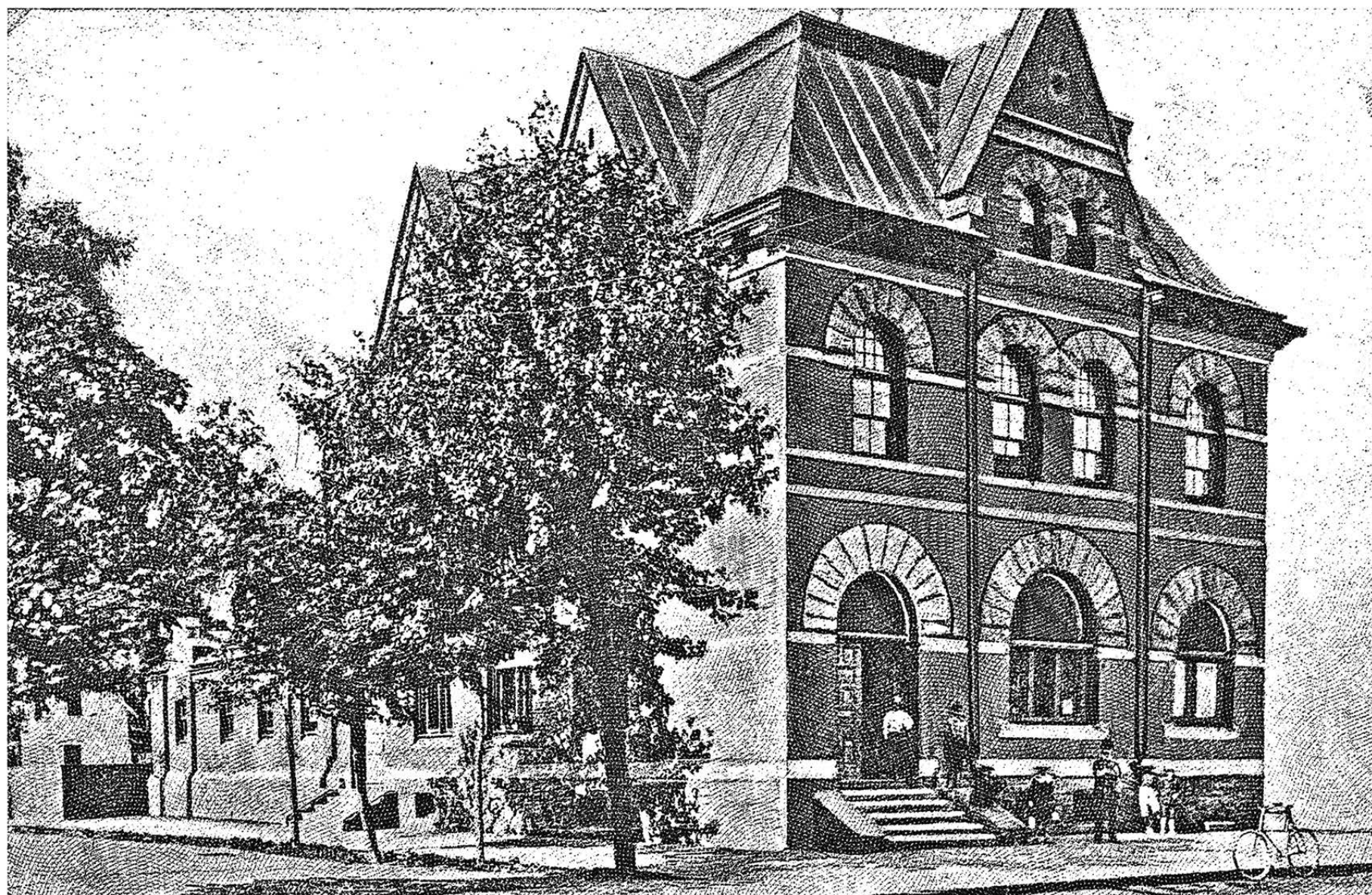


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Petrolia oilman led a life of incredible adventure

Noble invented underground oil storage

The catalogue of impressive people who were attracted to Petrolia's oil and its wealth and opportunity in the 19th century is as wide as it is deep.

Among them was John D'Oyly Noble (1835-1922), who served as Petrolia's mayor from 1906 to 1908 but whose greatest accomplishments were etched into history decades earlier.

Noble was an entrepreneur of the first order, seizing opportunity from all quarters. He was first lured to the United States from his Irish home, then to a Missouri lead mine, then to a shipping company in Kingston, and finally to Petrolia where his success in the oil industry was such that he was invited to present a paper at the first Petroleum Congress, held in France in 1900.

When he died on March 2, 1922, Noble was mourned by Petrolia. Its citizens were grateful for his civic contributions but doubly amazed with the remarkable life he had led.

BORN IN IRELAND

Although Noble lost at least two fortunes during his lifetime, his origins were anything but modest. He was born on Nov. 17, 1835 in Athboy, County Meath to parents Rev. Robert Noble and the former Catherine Burrows. The couple was financially secure and young John wanted for little, as the Nobles were part of the Protestant Ascendancy that dominated wealth, government and society in Ireland during the 18th and 19th centuries.

His ancestors were of some prominence: Catherine Burrows' grandfather had been Bishop William Newcome, the Irish Primate for the Church of England. John Noble's unusual middle name, D'Oyly, originated from his maternal great-grandmother, Maria D'Oyly, who was the primate's second wife. The D'Oyly name was Norman in origin and helped confer an elevated social status to those so-named.

Yet no matter that John Noble and his family were part of Ireland's ruling class, he was made an apprentice at age 17 to a linen manufacturer in Northern Ireland.

When that professional hurdle was completed after three years, he was sent to the U.S. to work with John Gihon and Company, the New York wholesale agents that had a business arrangement with Noble's former employer in Ireland. It may be that Noble's new employment was engineered to afford him an education in linen wholesaling, which would be to his advantage upon return to Ireland. But that wasn't to be.

ARRIVES IN IRELAND

If the timeline is accurate, Noble's arrival in New York City occurred in 1855, although some records suggest he was hired earlier. No matter, a financial panic quickly bankrupted the Gihon firm and left Noble without work. The young Irishman wasn't alone; such panics were frequent obstacles to the often wild and aggressive nature of the growing American economy. The financial disaster that befell Gihon likely followed the Panic of 1854 when the city's Knickerbocker Savings Bank failed, sparking a run on the other savings banks in New York.

If Noble's ultimate plan was to become a linen manufacturer in Ireland, he quickly abandoned that idea. For the first time independent from family and other obligations, the unemployed young man looked westward to

seek a fortune. He found it in Missouri – in lead mining.

Even today, Missouri is known for its lead deposits. The mineral was first detected in 1700, and 20 years later a French priest led an exploratory mission that ultimately produced the region's first mine. Lead mining activity declined for the rest of the 18th century, but was revived with newer technology by the time Missouri was admitted as a state in 1820. Today, a region of southeast Missouri is still called the Lead Belt, producing roughly 70 per cent of America's lead and significant amounts of zinc.

Noble instinctively understood the value of lead in America's growing industrial economy and decided to stake a claim. He rented land from a railroad company and returned to Ireland to find the necessary capital. He knew very well where such money could be found, as he drew approximately \$30,000 (roughly \$1.1 million today) from his promised inheritance.



John D'Oyly Noble - the mayor of Petrolia from 1906 to 1908 led a life of adventure.

This was a great deal of money in 1855 and 1856 and provides an illustration of his Irish family's wealth. More intriguing is the idea that the Noble family held such sums of cash just a short time after the infamous Irish famine had caused the death of at least one million people and prompted the immigration of another 2.1 million. Perhaps that was part of the reason why young John Noble decided to chart his future elsewhere.

With that then-considerable sum of money in his pocket, Noble returned to New York, purchased mining equipment, and travelled by vessel to New Orleans. He and the equipment were then barged north on the Mississippi River, and then to the Missouri River to Jefferson City. Noble then had the gear hauled by ox-drawn wagons to his mining claim, over 200 miles away.

He and his partners established a lead mining and smelting operation, and their claim eventually contained 300 miner's shacks. Noble eventually acquired his partners' shares and brought his brother Edwin into the business. They were on their way to fortune in 1861 when the Civil War started.

FORTUNE WIPED OUT

Missouri was at the very cross-hairs of hostilities. The state's admittance to the Union 31 years earlier had been part of a political solution to the divide that inflamed both pro-slavers and anti-slavery advocates. The Missouri Compromise permitted slavery within its borders, but Maine, also admitted in 1820, would be a 'free' state. The compromise did little to resolve tension in America and during the Civil War Missouri became a bloodied battleground.

The Nobles' mining operation was set fire to the Noble smelter and to the miners' community. But it was worse than that: John Noble was accused of having sympathies with Union forces. He was arrested and imprisoned. His property was seized.

When Noble's obituary was published on the front page of the March 9, 1922 issue of *The Advertiser-Topic*, the newspaper had few details about his detainment, except to say it had been a difficult experience. Had he been detained in a Confederate



John D. Noble's first refinery was destroyed by a monstrous fire which turned Bear Creek into a river of fire. At the time, oil was stored above ground. Noble invented circular underground tanks, like the one found at the Fairbank Oil Fields. These circular tanks, usually 30 feet in diameter, were dug 60 feet below surface above the top rock. After workmen dug the tank, they trimmed the clay walls with spades, then starting at the bottom they would ring the walls with pine lumber cut in the form of the segment of a circle. They shaped the timber to fit the circular wall of the tank. Each segment was from three to four-feet long, five inches wide and one-inch thick.

Petrolia Heritage and Fairbank Oil Photos

prison of war camp (the Petrolia newspaper wouldn't elaborate), his chances of survival would have been grim. Overcrowding, disease and malnutrition were hallmarks of the prison camps operated by both sides of the war. Those Union soldiers who survived the Andersonville camp in Georgia counted themselves as fortunate, as 13,000 of the 45,000 prisoners admitted over a period of 14 months died. It was no better in the North; those captured Confederate soldiers who survived a camp at Elmira, NY would forever call it "Hellmira".

NOBLE MOVES TO CANADA

John Noble survived his ordeal but lost his investment and when released he was destitute. He subsequently travelled north to Canada to join two uncles who lived in Kingston. Noble sued the U.S. government for his financial losses but never found satisfaction. From his \$30,000 investment, he was reportedly left with just over \$24.

It was at Kingston that he became involved in the business of shipping lumber on the Great Lakes. It was a lucrative trade, but one day he became angered when one of the schooners returned to Kingston, its hull covered in black oil.

It's been surmised that the vessel had travelled to Lake St. Clair, and then northeast on the Sydenham River to Dresden, which was then the center of a booming timber trade.

What had happened to Noble's vessel is easily explained. Oil had been discovered 20 miles north at Oil Springs, and the oil that wasn't contained or captured was permitted to flow into the creeks and streams that were part of the watershed. The watershed drained into Lake St. Clair.

TO PETROLIA IN 1866

Noble wasted little time in getting out of the lumber trade and into the oil business. He was in Petrolia by 1866 and his first well was said to be yielding 266 barrels a day. He became wealthy (again), but disaster struck in 1867.

The possibility of fire and the potential for immense destruction, loss of life and business income was always on the minds of early Petrolia oilmen. Yet the industry was still in its infancy and a reliable solution had not yet been found.

That changed in the summer of 1867. On July 25, a fire broke out in one of the full oil tanks. Although workers rushed to drain the tank, they were too late. The wooden tank collapsed, sending burning oil towards other tanks. It was catastrophic.

Another disastrous fire followed within a week.

John Noble recorded what happened: "The great heat melted steel tanks. These steel or wooden tanks as they caught fire, burst and sent oil along a ditch into a tributary to Bear Creek; the crest of this rushing wave of burning oil gave the creek the appearance of a fiery dragon winding along the valley."

Noble estimated losses at \$100,000, even while the fire

continued to rage for two more weeks. A total of 12 acres of oilfields were destroyed.

He thought of a possible solution, perhaps one he had pondered since his arrival only a year earlier. Why not store the oil beneath the ground in the thick clay soil that is unique to region? Noble reasoned that the clay would provide the perfect material for storing oil.

TANK COMPANY STARTS

What followed was the start of the Petrolia Crude Oil Tanking Company. The enterprise would oversee the establishment of many underground storage pits in Petrolia and Oil Springs. In most circumstances, a clay pit was dug 60 feet into the ground, with a diameter of 30 feet. Such a pit or tank could hold 8,000 barrels of oil.

Once a depth of 20 feet was achieved, wooden sheathing was built around the inside of the tank to ensure the clay walls didn't collapse.

There were some immediate advantages. The clay held the oil tightly and without leaks. The stored oil was maintained at a consistent temperature. And a wooden cover prevented lightning –always a concern in Petrolia's oilfields – from striking the stored petroleum.

Noble's solution, much admired in the years to come by the international petroleum industry, would remain unique to Lambton County because of the region's peculiar soil composition.

A relative newcomer to Petrolia, Noble's impact to the community and to its oilfields had been almost immediate and was universally appreciated. During the rest of his career, it is said that he helped drill and equip an estimated 500 wells. By 1900, he was considered a leader in the industry and was invited to present a paper at the first Petroleum Congress, held in France.

Meanwhile, Noble had come to Petrolia in 1866 as a bachelor, but had married Helen Mary Anne Kirkpatrick in Peterborough in August 1869. It's very possible that he was acquainted with Helen while he was still living in Kingston.

SERVED AS MAYOR

They would have four sons but only one would remain in the region: Ernest, who lived in Sarnia. The others were James, who eventually settled in Vancouver; Stafford, who lived in Elmira, NY; and Robert, who lived in Baltimore. Helen Noble died in 1924, two years after her husband. Both rest at Petrolia's Hillsdale Cemetery.

Noble was a member of the town council in Petrolia and served as mayor from 1906 to 1908.

At the time of his death he was one of the few Petrolia oil pioneers still living, and was understandably held in high regard.

The Advertiser-Topic, in its front-page obituary, had this to say: "Few men have lived a more interesting and spectacular life than John D. Noble, nor have few men had so many successes and reverses."

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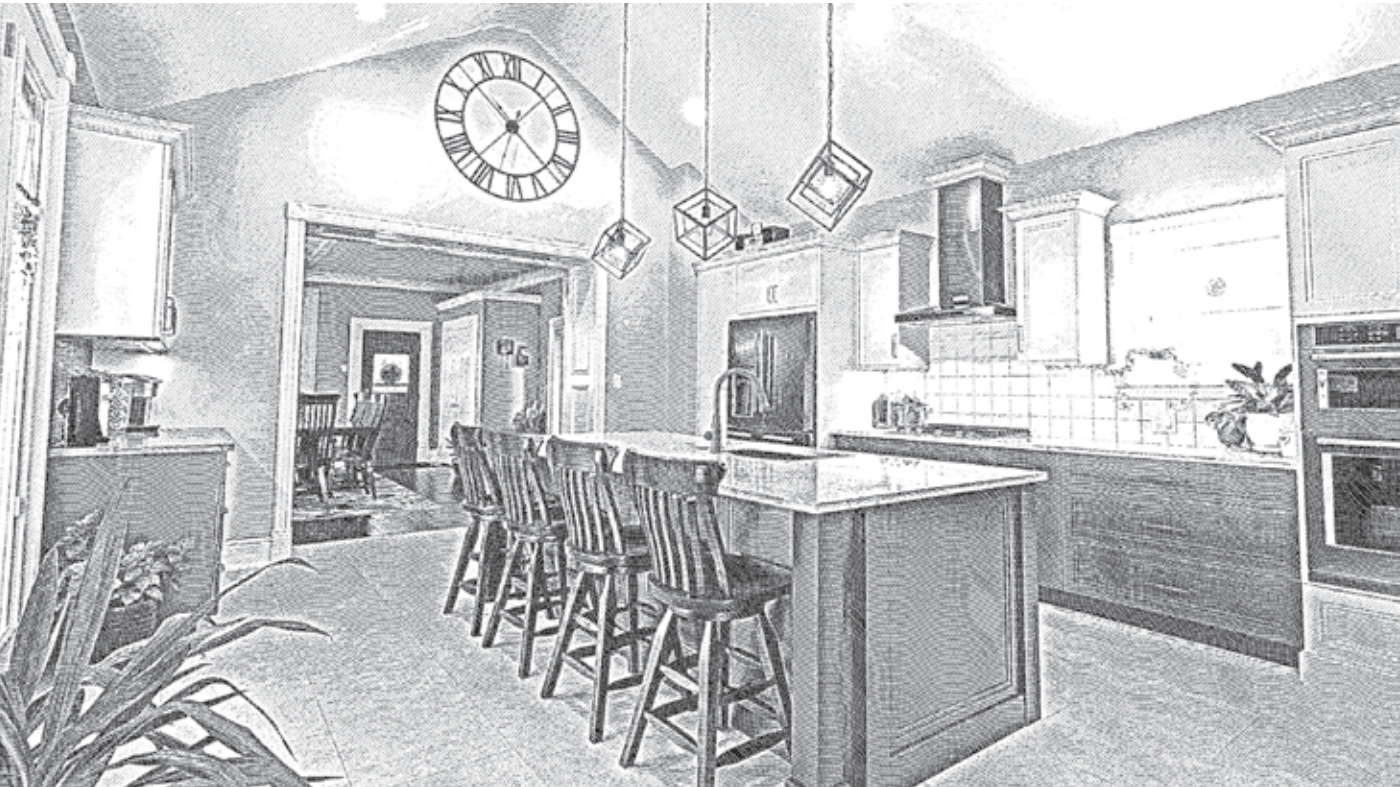


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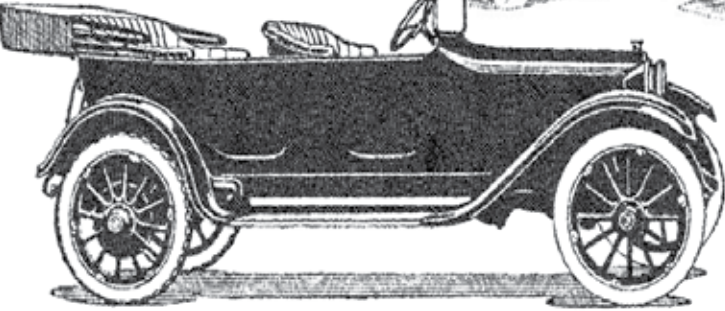
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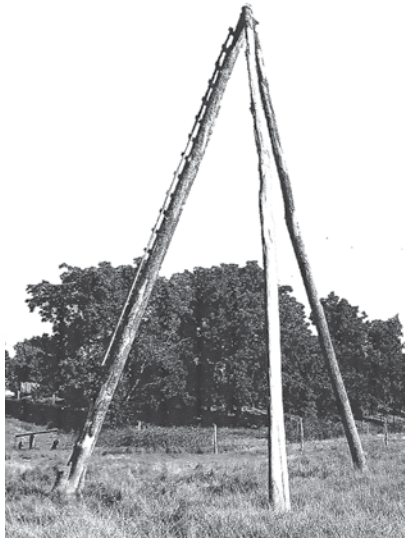
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PETROLIA

Happy 150th Anniversary



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GROUP OF COMPANIES



THE Independent

of Petrolia and Central Lambton



VOL. XI ISSUE NO. XVIII

SECTION TWO – SPECIAL COLLECTORS EDITION

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 2024

Victoria Hall: Byproduct of Prosperity

Victoria Hall is one of the most recognizable symbols of Petrolia. It's clock tower is part of the new logo and graces signs at the entrance to the town on Petrolia Line.

As we sifted through documents at the Lambton County Archive we found this description of Victoria Hall, a taste of the controversy which surrounded it and a description of the opening night.

One byproduct of Petrolia's revised prosperity during the 1880's was the feeling among some citizens that the town should have an imposing town hall. The town council had plans drawn up for a multi-purpose building in 1881, but council turned the plan down. Three years later plans the town had a referendum and the hall plans were defeated.

Some voters said the waterworks system should have priority; others felt that the public building should be more elaborate, incorporating an opera house.

The issue became both more ardent and more contentious over the next few years. But by 1887, the council sought out new plans from Durand, and by January 1889, a capacity crowd was seated in the elegant 1,000 seat opera house in the new \$35,000 town hall to witness the opening night festivities.

VOCAL OPPOSITION

The mayor's speech that night betrayed his nervousness about the still vocal opposition: "It is impossible for me to conjecture what your thoughts and feelings are as you sit here and view with complacency, perhaps, the commodiousness, the comfort, and the architectural beauties of this building, but I trust they are only those of contentment and gratification, and that nothing shall occur here this evening to mar the harmony that should reign within these walls." He was referring, in part, to the local Baptist minister's fulminations against the theatre on moral grounds, and other potential disrupters of the peace had rejected the hall, theatre included, for economic reasons.

The critics were strong enough to warrant mention in *The Petrolia Advertiser's* story on the opening: saying those who "have...been croaking about the lavish expenditures feel like crawling into a hole and pulling the hose in after them."

Like the Strathroy Public Building designed many years before, and most urban town halls built during the intervening period, Victoria Hall was designed to accommodate, together with an auditorium, most of the town's municipal services: fire station, jail, division court room, council chambers, and offices for the mayor, the town clerk, the chief of police, and the engineer.

While the multiple functions of the Strathroy building were ingeniously fitted into a rectangular shape reminiscent of a Greek temple, Durand's design for Petrolia is an interesting exploration of the theory that form follows function. Victoria Hall gives the impression of being built around it's various roles, as if the fire engines had been parked and the mayor seated before the walls began to rise. Durand is nowhere bound by considerations of symmetry or consistency; there is great variety in the size, shape, and grouping of the windows; the gable of the facade has a parapet while the other gables have decorated barge-boards. Each individual section of the facade has a character of its own, reflective of its use. Large double doors



Victoria Hall opened in 1889. It included a much-debated opera house, town hall, a court room, and was the home of both the police and fire departments over time.

Petrolia Heritage Photo

designate the fire station. The windows of the tower follow the line of the stairway it envelops. The entrance hall leading to the courtroom and the opera house is dignified by the parapeted gable bay.

In general, decoration is meted out as befits each section's role, so that the front gable wing and the towers are adorned with the most noteworthy features. The former boasts striking forms of ornamentation such as the decorated brickwork at the apex and the official plaques, with their representative oil scene and symbolic beehive, near the door.

LAVISH CLOCK TOWER

An almost blind window even makes this part of the facade symmetrical. But it is on the clock tower that Durand lavishes most of the building's decorative detail, as if to stress the fact that towers exist mainly in order to look interesting. At its top is a belvedere, with a bell-shaped roof and elaborately turned, pierced, and reeded posts, railings, and spandrels. The stage below, originally meant to hold the clock faces, matches the ornate woodwork above with equally elaborate brickwork. The individuality of the building's various parts is aptly epitomized by the hose-drying tower, a miniature house in itself, complete with it's own decorated gable, finial, and chimney.

To say that Durand has emphasized the parts of the Petrolia town hall does not imply that he has forgotten the whole. The composition of the building is carefully designed, and the varying elements arranged with the overall effect clearly in mind. For example, the broad arches that are strung along the ground floor appear to provide a heavy base for the structure. These arched windows are carefully integrated with the small-paned windows above by the use in the semicircle portions of a design based on geometrical shapes. The iron stair railing and balcony at the rear of the building rely on the same stark geometry and, in fact, use the motif of a circle held between two vertical bars that is found in the round-headed windows. This interest in basic geometrical shapes is also evident in interior features such as the very dramatic opera box, rather blatantly placed to let its occupants be seen rather than to allow them a view of the stage.

OPENING NIGHT TAME

Possibly out of fear of the Baptist minister's admonitions, the opening night program at Victoria Hall featured mainly local talent in a variety of inno-

cent performances. The evening began with a double quartet warbling 'Merrily, merrily goes the bark,' which, according to *The Petrolia Advertiser*, 'gave a foretaste of the intellectual feast in store for the audience.' The high point of the evening was Mr. H. Corey's poetic account of local events:

*Out of the old town hall,
Moved up into the new;
All the spouting and the shouting
Is just as good as through!
...Fare you well, old hall,
You ain't worth a cent,
We're going to a better house,
Where we won't pay any rent.*

The better house had more glorious days ahead, when it would play host to operatic performances, grand balls, and some of the continent's best touring companies. But the confidence in progress that had finally led to the erection of the town hall proved ill-founded.

The departure of the Imperial Oil refineries in 1898 plunged the town into a second and more lasting economic depression, and the building gradually fell into disrepair. In 1960, part of the first floor was renovated to accommodate the town offices once more. The opera house was ultimately rescued by Victoria Playhouse Petrolia, an organization formed to restore the building and to revive the theatre. It has succeeded admirably on both counts, and Victoria Hall again serves as a multi-purpose building, though with some new purposes replacing some of the old.

The building continued to be used as the cultural and political center of the town. But change was in the wind. The police department moved out in the early 1970s. Fire trucks continued to roar out of the building until 1977. Victoria Hall became a National Historic Site in 1979. In the 1980s, a glass foyer was added and the clock tower was temporarily removed for repairs. Suddenly, on January 25, 1989, fire gutted the building leaving only its massive brick walls. After much debate, Victoria Hall was rebuilt for \$6.5 million – \$750,000 was donated the town's 4,500 citizens.

LOCAL & GENERAL NEWS

From The Petrolia Advertiser Sentinel, 1874

A FREE SHOW.—One of our Petrolia "gals" visited the vicinity of Marthaville last Tuesday upon a berry-picking excursion and catching a white horse upon the commons jumped aboard masculine fashion and put the nag through. While turning Hartigan's corners she lost her equilibrium and slid off, when a zealous youth soon hoofed her up again, and away she went with flying colors amidst the cheers of "an admiring public," who always favor "free shows." No Hood-winking about this.

PATENT FLY TRAPS at Van Tuyl & Fairbank's hardware store. They are very cheap, as well as useful and ornamental. Go and see them.

REFINERS' MEETING.—The London Refiners sent out circulars inviting a meeting of Refiners, to be held at Oil Exchange, Petrolia, on Thursday; while we go to press the deliberations are going on with closed doors. The coming together of the Refiners again in an organized body, will wake up the Producers to the necessity of consort of action, if they expect a fair return for investment and labor.

THUNDER STORM.—During Saturday night and Sunday morning we were visited by one of the most severe storms of thunder, lightening and rain that has ever been known in these parts. The thunder was fearfully heavy, sharp and continuous, the lightening extremely vivid and in every imaginable form, while the rain poured down in torrents. We have not, as yet, heard of any serious damage being occasioned by it either in our town or vicinity, but not so elsewhere. At Sarnia, we hear, the lightening struck the Presbyterian Church, and destroyed three fine stained glass windows in it. Several private residences were also struck by the electric fluid, and considerable damage done.

A large number of English sparrows have made their appearance in Strathroy.

QUADRILLE clubs are the fashionable organizations just now, everywhere except Petrolia.

ARKONA has recently purchased three fire extinguishers, purchased by subscription.

A STRANGER would think that this was one of the deerest places in Canada, from seeing the large number of splendid bucks, ewes and fawns, around the Station and offered for sale throughout the town, ... The woods are in good order for the hunt, and game is abundant.

We would direct the attention of our hotel-keepers and others to the advertisement of K. S. Murray, of London, Ont., who is one of the oldest firms in Ontario, and has the largest warehouse in the Dominion.

A FARMER was in town yesterday trying to sell some turnips which he claimed were so large that they had to be pulled out of the ground one by one, by a yoke of oxen. The only way to account for the man's story is that he slightly meandered from the truth

The Advertiser and Sentinel
IS PUBLISHED
EVERY FRIDAY MORNING,
BY THE PROPRIETOR,
RICHARD HERRING,
the Office, Old Post Office Building, opposite J. H. Fairbank's Store, Main Street,
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ad Being a newspaper published in the Canadian Oil District, parties wishing to bring their advertisements before the notice of Oil Producers or Refiners will find the Advertiser the best medium for the purpose.
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Beginning with the next issue we purpose publishing our paper on time, and in order to do so we must adhere firmly and positively to the following rules viz:—all changes of standing advertisements must be received at this office by noon of Tuesday in each week.
All new display advertisements must reach us at noon on Wednesday. Local notices on Wednesdays before 6 p. m. Transient, legal and other advertisements must be in by noon on Thursday, and upon no consideration will any advertisements, local, news items or other matter for the paper be received after 12 o'clock (noon) on Thursday.
We lay down these rules in the interests of both advertisers and subscribers.
R. HERRING, editor and proprietor.

A CROWN OF GLORY.—Natures dowry to all her children is a fine head of hair. Kings cannot give, nor wealth purchase this inestimable gift. Take care of it, lest you lose it. BEARING is a healthful invigorating Dressing.

Shipments of oil.

Shipments of oil from Petrolia Station for the week ending Thursday, 16th inst.:

DATE.	CRUDE.	REF.	DIS.
July 10	1,190	..	..
11	600	112	..
12	734	..	..
13	899	..	..
14	680	..	210
15	..	..	..
16	..	..	..
Totals...	4,038	112	210

Total Shipments from July 1st to date Crude, 7,966; refined, 112; distillate 210.

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Christ Church, Petrolia



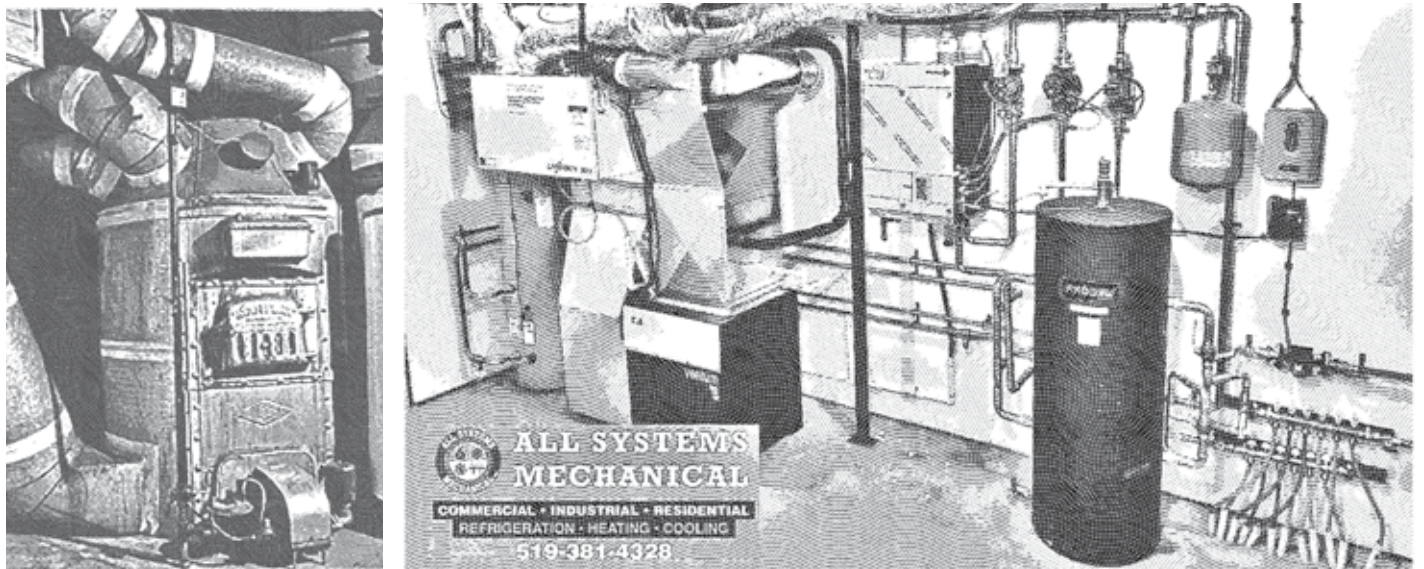
Founded in 1866, the year the King Well ignited an oil boom that catapulted Petrolia into the limelight as the Oil Capital of Canada.

The Church of England first met at the bar room of the American Hotel on the East End Hill. It was an unsuitable place, but the only to be found in a time where building a church was financially impossible. John Henry Fairbank offered the upstairs of Fairbank Hall to the church, likely in the upstairs of his store Fairbank & Bennett. In 1872 a church was built on Railroad Street on land donated by Fairbank. It was the first church to be erected in the village.

Today, Christ Church still serves the community with services each Sunday at 10 am and many community events.

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Petrolia’s early history as told by J.H. Fairbank

In 2015, during the 150th anniversary of VanTuyl & Fairbank Hardware, Charlie Fairbank shared some of his earliest memories of the sprawling complex in the heart of Petrolia’s downtown.

His great grandfather, John Henry Fairbank, first opened the business as John’t General Store in 1865 and it morphed into largest hardware store west of Toronto. It was no wonder, Fairbank was one of the people behind the push to get a rail spur to Petrolia to ship oil to the world. That spur line came right to VanTuyl & Fairbank’s door.

While the business of the day took place, Charlie recalled how the business of the town also was contemplated. His grandfather and men from the town would discuss the problems of the day at the hardware store, something Charlie remembered well.

As I talked with Charlie, you could almost imagine “the Father of the Town” talking. He, after all not only knew the history of Petrolia – arriving just before the King Well sparked the town’s oil success – he was the history of the town.

In 1909, ‘Petrolia’s Department Store’ The R. Stirrett Co. produced a souvenir calendar at Christmas to “wish you and yours the Compliments of the Season and to emphasize three facts: first, the advantages of Petrolia for residence or for manufacturing, second the advantages that this store offers to the buyers of the County of Lambton and third, that we are anxious to do more business with you.”

But it was more than a calendar, the 64-page book was an abbreviated history of the Town of Petrolia. And it was narrated by J.H. Fairbank. His retelling of Petrolia’s story is not flowery – at least not often. There is an economy of words as he chronicles who came here and what they did. And there is humour in the lines as well.

As you read, you can imagine sitting by the pot-bellied stove and listening to Fairbank remember the good old days.

Here is much of the early history of Petrolia as told by J.H. Fairbank.

PETROLIA SLEPT

During the years 1862-63-64, the infant Petrolia slept, while Oil Springs budded, blossomed, bloomed and faded. Its “rock poured forth rivers of oil,” and the oil rand down the “river.”

In those days there was no railway, no highway, no pipe line. From Wyoming, by Petrolia, to Oil Springs was only one mud hole. It was twelve miles long, and of uncertain depth.

Oil men met -- met frequently -- and passed resolutions. Andrew Elliot built a plank road.

The last half of the year 1865 arrived. Lee and Johnson had surrendered. The American civil war was ended. Crude oil had touched \$10.00, gold. The thing was inviting. Americans, ballasted with greenbacks, invaded Petrolia. Hotels were quickly built, and quickly filled: William Boyce, at the Great Western; Lombard & Simpson, at the United States; Fletcher & Boswell, at the American; also the Saginaw and New York, all in action. The “Boom” was on.

EARLY ARRIVALS

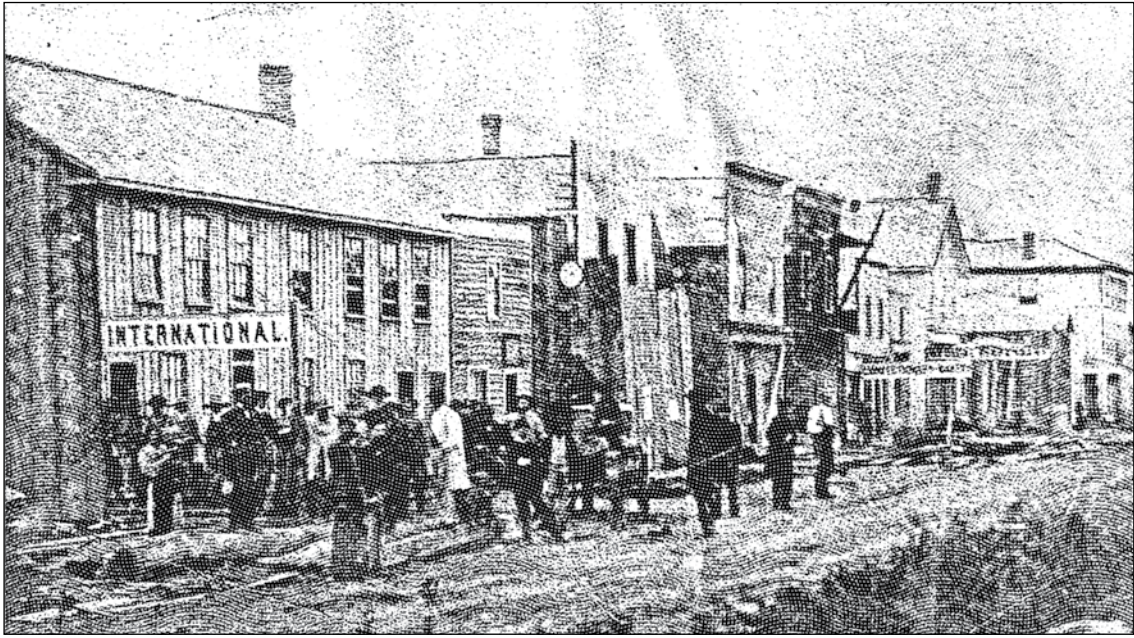
Amongst the arrivals were Col. Thompson, Dow Elwood, Col. Shoemaker, Frank Smith, Col. Parsons, Dr. Underwood, Horace Blackmore, Major VanTuyl, H.W. Lancey, Judge Avery.

There also came John D. Noble, John McMillan, J.H. Fairbank, Edwin D. Kerby, John Brake, and many others.

Amongst the early builders were Walter Oliver, Robert Paul, John Sinclair, Malcolm Scott. A little later came John Crosbie (the hunter), J. & J. Kerr, Robert Jackson, and others.

Of the early storekeepers were Thompson, McQuien, Bennett, McGarvey, McKenzie & Cary, Chris. McKenzie, and Father Bishop, a little later.

In those days the anvil of George Sanson, “Petrolia’s Blacksmith,” rang to the forging of drilling tools that, with Petrolia men who learned to use them, have carried the name of



One of the earliest photographs of Petrolia from 1886 and below, the main street as it would have looked when J.H. Fairbank penned his history for The R. Stirrett Co. Souvenir Calendar. Dave Burwell Post Card Collection Photos



Petrolia to the ends of the earth. Tronson Draper’s, and Hector McKenzie’s machine shops finished up these tools. Later the mantle of these modern Tubal Cain’s fell upon James Joyce, the sons of Hector McKenzie, McKee & Marwick, Mike Gorman, and others.

CAPT’N OF TRANSPORTATION

Peter Taylor was captain of transportation. With is 56 horses he moved anything that had two ends to it.

In those days Petrolia “took its medicine” from Dr. Buckham, supplied by Druggist W. H. Dale.

In the spring of 1866 there were four frame dwellings west of the bridge, Wheelwright, Col Thompson, Bennett, Fairbank.

June first, 1866, the fool Fenian raid occurred. It was a cooling bath to Petrolia. Late in the year the “King” well was struck, and Petrolia had “oil to burn,” and a year later burned it. On the 17th of December, 1866, the Great Western Railway branch, Wyoming to Petrolia, was opened. Eleven years later came the Canadian Southern Railway.

FIRST NEWSPAPERS

In September, 1866, came the first newspaper, “The Valuator and Petrolia Reporter,” T. Galbraith, editor. It demised young. “The Weekly News-Letter and Petrolia Advertiser,” came 30th of September, 1870. J. B. Dale, proprietor and editor. July 5th, 1872, R. Herring became proprietor and editor of “Petrolia Advertiser and Sentinel.” March 20th, 1879, came the “Petrolia Topic,” Lowery Bros., proprietors and editors.

In 1867 came the first election for Legislative Assembly. T. B. Pardee and Robert Rae, candidates for Lambton. There was something to an election in those days – one polling place in all Enniskillen -- two days polling. Booths convenient to poll -- “lashins” of refreshments perfectly free to all. Here the “Free and Independent” openly recorded their choice.

John McDonald built stills for John McMillan. A year or so later William Stevenson and Arthur Kavanaugh built Parson & Co.’s 2,000-bbl. still.

By 1868, oil refineries were numerous here and elsewhere. At times they worked together, at times they did not. There was a surplus of crude. To aid export, A crude Oil Association was formed, Dow Elwood, president; J. H. Fairbank, manager; John Brake, Alex. Craise, directors. Heavy sales for export only, at 60 cents, moved the surplus.

BUSINESS BLOCKS

The first really permanent business building was The Vaughn Block, 1879. Lancey Block was built in 1881; Town Hall was built in 1887; Masonic Temple was built in 1887; Iroquois Hotel was built by John Kerr in 1896; big fire at Imperial, 22nd of April, 1896; Petrolia Waterworks was built in 1896; Methodist Church was built in 1898....

If not here just then, they (new Petrolians) were coming. The churches kept step with the procession. Three of them build on England Avenue, East End:

Methodist -- Rev. G. W. Frazee, first minister. Presbyterian -- Rev. J. W. Chestnut, first minister. Catholic -- Rev. Henry Japes, first priest. In the “trek” westward the Methodists and Presbyterians camped for a time on the Flats. Here, too, the Baptists (Rev. T.S. Johnston, first minister), first built. Rev. John McRobie came in 1874 -- Here is here yet. (in 1908)

The Church of England first held service in Fletcher & Boswell’s barroom. Congregation seated with back to the curtained bar, listened to Rev. Wm. Brookman, the sailor preacher.

In the spring of 1869 came Charles Jenkins. Some years later, he with John D. Noble, R. D. Noble and others organized, built and operated the P. C. O & T. Co., with its tanks, pipe lines and warehouse receipts.

BANKING BEGINS

Also later in the year 1869 came L. B. Vaughn and opened a banking office -- it is open yet. Shot bags of silver was the currency in these days. Some years later came A. C. Edward; George Denham came, when he got ready, and sold drugs; also as newspaper correspondent gave spicy items from “Quality Hill.” George also built a brass band. Hardly on schedule time arrived J. L. Englehart and Harrison Corey, but after they came they “stuck to their job.”

On the 30th of November, 1871, the bagpipes announced the birth of Petrolia’s St. Andrew. As a child it was healthy, as a youth it was strong, in its manhood irresistible.

The last Crude Oil Association, “The Financial,” was formed in 1886. Its prime object was to improve quality of Canadian burning oil. It did it. Fairbank, Smith, McMillan (James), Woodward & Bradley, directors. Woodward, Kittridge, Kerr (James), and The Imperial Oil Company did good work in this regard.

PROMINENT VISITORS

Among the prominent public men, who have visited Petrolia, are -- Prince Arthur, Governors General, Earl Dufferin and Lord Stanley, Dominion Premiers, Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald, Hon. Alexander MacKenzie, Hon. Sir John Thompson, Hon. Sir Mackenzie Bowell, Hon. Sir Charles Tupper, and Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Hon. Sir Henri and Lady Joly also spent several days here, guests of John and Mrs. Fraser. (who was East Lambton’s MP)

On the 8th of December, 1896, came Finance Minster Feilding, and Minister of Customs Paterson, two members of the Tariff Commission. They fully inspected the oil wells, how they were built and worked. When they left they understood the oil question as they could not have done without a personal inspection. This was good day’s work for Petrolia. Not a word was said concerning tariff. That was done later on at Ottawa.

MANLY MEN

Petrolia has always been and orderly, law-abiding, Sunday-observing, church-going place. It has representatives in every land

who look back with pride and pleasure to the “Old Town.” At home and abroad, its men have been manly men, its women, womanly women, and it babies, perfectly lovely and numerous -- at times, two on a stem. The baby carriage always has the right-of-way in Petrolia.

PETROLIA IN 1909

Fairbank also takes customers of The R. Stirrett Company on a walk through the Industrial and Commercial areas of his beloved Petrolia. He paints a word picture of what you would find in Petrolia in 1908.

RAILWAYS

The Grand Trunk and Michigan Central Railways reach here from the north and south. There are ten passenger trams daily, making the best possible connections for the travelling public in all directions. In addition to the above lines, the Canadian Pacific Railway is likely to build a line through here, in reaching for the required outlet toward Chicago. The freight handling facilities and rates are very advantageous. The rate grouping places Petrolia in the same position as London and Hamilton. The effect of these advantages are shown in the large tonnage in all classes, especially in live stock and farm products. The freight handled in 1907 being 4,000 cars, carrying 100,000 tons. The passenger earnings during the same time being \$40,000.00.

WATER SUPPLY

No factor has greater importance in every connection than the water supply, and Petrolia can boast of having a water supply unsurpassed on this continent. It is owned and operated by the town.

Source of supply -- Lake Huron. Standpipe capacity -- 250,000 gallons. Pumping capacity-2,000,000 gallons per day. Average pressure in mains -- 30 pounds. Length of mains -- 25 miles. Number of hydrants -- 100.

These insure ample fire protection, and low rates of insurance.

SEWERAGE

Petrolia enjoys the proud distinction of being one of the healthiest towns in the Dominion. This is due in a large measure to the purity of the water supply, and the perfect system of sewerage. There are no slums here.

STREETS AND SIDEWALKS

There are ten miles of granolithic sidewalks. The main street is being paved with vitrified brick.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Our Town Hall, with its complete suite of municipal offices, splendidly equipped Fire Hall, and commodious Opera House, with a seating capacity of 800, and clock tower, is one of the most imposing buildings to be found anywhere.

POST OFFICE AND CUSTOM HOUSE

This is a handsome building, located on the corner of Petrolia and Wingfield streets, opposite Victoria Park.

Congratulations Petrolia on 150 Years!



collision repair & auto body

We look forward to continue helping all of Lambton County keep its roads safer and friendlier for everybody.

B & B Collision
4286 Oil Heritage Rd.
519-882-1934



LEISURE LANE

Mister B's

SITEK & Company

(519)882-2311

(519)882-3111

(519)882-0706

Purveyors of Quality Fashion since 1969

Offering exceptional customer service

4223-4229 Petrolia Line
Downtown Petrolia

Fairbank details all the amenities of Petrolia in 1909

Stirrett Calendar meant to draw new business to town

CONTINUED FROM PG 14 EDUCATIONAL

Petrolia's Educational facilities are among the best. The High School, with three teachers besides the principal,

J. J. Bell, B. A., has a Collegiate Institute standing in educational centres throughout the Province. Four Public Schools, all of which are brick structures, and practically new, are situated at various points throughout the Town.

Fourteen teachers, with R. J. Campbell as principal, are engaged, and the facilities offered are the best obtainable.

CHURCHES

The leading denominations are represented, and have commodious edifices, which compare favorably with city churches, both as to architecture and interior appointments. They are centrally located and comprise, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Salvation Army. Their seating capacity range from 450 to 1,000.

In addition to which they have well-equipped Sunday School departments and Lecture Rooms.

LODGES

About twenty-five lodges, representing all the leading societies, with commodious lodge rooms, well-equipped in every way. They all have a large membership, and are in a flourishing condition.

HOTELS

Petrolia offers exceptionally good accommodation to the travelling public, with its five first-class hotels; four of them being substantial brick structures, with all modern improvements.

FAIR GROUNDS AND DRIVING PARK

These grounds contain about 30 acres, with up-to-date buildings and appointments. The half-mile track is one of the best in Western Ontario.

SPORTS AND PASTIMES

The golf links, comprising some twenty-three acres, intersected by the Bear Creek, is beautifully situated for this fascinating game.

Baseball is represented by a three-club Town League and a good game can be seen almost any evening.

Lacrosse, Football and a flourishing Gun Club all have an enthusiastic membership. An up-to-date Roller rink was opened this season. The beautiful grounds of the Tennis Club are situated in Crescent Park. The Petrolia Lawn Bowling Greens are favorably known throughout the Western Peninsula.

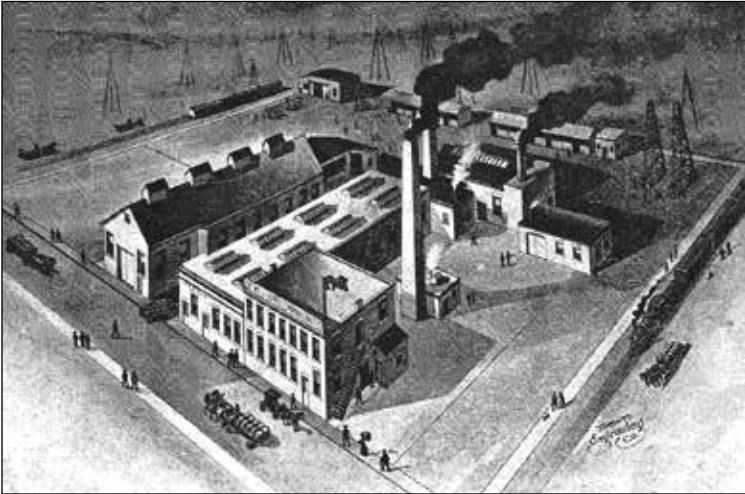
LOCATIONS FOR INDUSTRIES—

The two lines of railway run parallel through an important section of the Town, and lands between these lines are available and specially suitable for manufacturing plants. The Board of Trade of the Town is prepared to offer liberal inducements to new industries.

CANADIAN OIL COMPANY

As Petrolia has been the centre of the Crude Petroleum production of Canada for upwards of forty years, so has this section been the chief centre of the refining industry for almost as long a time. The one refining plant located within our borders, and known as The Canadian Oil Refining Co., is owned and operated by the above company, and has been in steady and successful operation for over seven years.

The plant is a model one, extending over fifteen acres, and all products of the crude are manufactured, from the lightest to the heaviest, embracing all products of the crude oil in every detail. A large number of men are constantly employed; and the excellency of its products are



known throughout the Dominion, and are distributed from coast to coast by its own sub-stations. The works here are under the immediate supervision of Mr. Bruce Dunlop, who has been favorably known in the refining business for over twenty years.

CANADIAN TRANSIT CO.

This company formed during the summer of 1906, was exclusively organized by parties interested in the Canadian Oil Co., Limited, to handle its products. At the St. Clair River it has its pumping plant, to which its oils are delivered by the iron barge, W. S. Calvert, and the oils are forced through its own pipe line, a distance of some sixteen miles. The low cost of such a means of transportation must be at once apparent, and besides placing the Canadian Oil Co., Limited, in a very advantageous position as regards its raw material and products, it also demonstrates clearly the great advantages also possessed by this Town, as a suitable place for the refining of petroleum oils. Edward E. Grant is manager of transportation, at Petrolia.

OIL PRODUCING INDUSTRY

There are about 6,000 wells in operation, which gives employment to 500 men, and represents a capital of \$3,000,000. A large number of our population are actively engaged in different parts of the world in drilling and prospecting for oil and gas, also in sinking artesian wells.

PETROLIA WAGON COMPANY

This is one of our leading industries. It was established in 1902. The buildings are plain but substantial, and planned to meet the requirements of a growing trade. The machinery throughout is of the latest and best design.

They employ over 100 men, with an output of 4,000 wagons and 2,000 sleighs per year. A sample of the quality of their work can be seen in the Petrolia ambulance. Wm. English is manager.

STEVENSON BOILER AND ENGINE WORKS

This industry was established in 1869 by Wm. Stevenson, and acquired by the present proprietor, J. H. Fairbank, in 1891. The manager is Arthur Kavanaugh. They manufacture boilers and engines, and iron and steel work of every description, and keep about 30 men constantly employed.

THE STEMPEL MANUFACTURING COMPANY

The Stempel fire extinguisher is known as an efficient fire fighter

all over Canada. Their factory is in connection with the Stevenson Boiler Works.

THE PETROLIA BRIDGE COMPANY

They manufacture bridges and reinforced concrete work of all kinds. This company has erected a number of bridges in the Western Peninsula, which have given full satisfaction. Thos. Johnstone, manager

J. & J. KERR COMPANY

Established in 1803. This company is in the lumber and coal business. They have a large planing mill and factory in which all kinds of woodenware are manufactured. The firm employs some 40 hands and is very progressive.

John Kerr, president.

THE LAMBTON CREAMERY COMPANY

This industry has grown very rapidly. The amount of cash paid out is a great factor with the merchants. G.M. Cary, manager.

OIL WELL SUPPLY COMPANY

This company has been in business in Petrolia for more than 40 years. They manufacture well-boring tools, and supplies of various sizes and kinds, employing about 30 skilled mechanics. Their machinery can be found in Russia, East Indies, West Indies, Austria and Australia, and many other countries. James Joyce, president; John A. McKenzie, manager.

BRICK AND TILE

Two well-equipped plants, the Amalgamated Brick and Tile Co., and the Howlett Brick and Tile Co., manufacture a vast number of both brick and tile. The product is first class in every way, and the supply of raw material is unlimited.

PEERLESS ROLLER MILLS AND ELEVATOR

This has recently been rebuilt by A. Paling. It is doing a large and profitable business.

BANKS AND LOAN COMPANY

Bank of Toronto, W. F. Cooper, manager.

Metropolitan Bank, A. E. Mellish, manager.

Vaughn and Fairbank's Bank (private).

Crown Loan and Savings Company, Wm. English, manager.

PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO

Almost all the photographs, from which the cuts used to illustrate this publication, are from the studio of G. B. Robson, Archer Block, an up-to-date photographer.

BUSINESS PLACES

There are about 70 stores

representing all classes of business to be found in a progressive, flourishing town.

THE LEARNED PROFESSIONS

Doctors, Lawyers, and Dentists are represented by skillful, experienced men.

BORLAND CARRIAGE WORKS

This was formerly the Ryder Carriage Company, and was established in 1882. It turns out all kinds of the finest buggies and carriages to be found in Canada. R. Borland, manager.

ENTERPRISE STEAM LAUNDRY

An up-to-date laundry is in operation, under the management of Gorman Brothers.

PETROLIA ELECTRIC LIGHT AND GAS COMPANY

The Town is splendidly lighted by 39 arc lights on the streets and an unlimited supply of incandescent lamps for indoor use. The gas is principally used for domestic purposes. J. J. Ashworth, president.

LOCAL & GENERAL NEWS

From The Petrolia Advertiser Sentinel, 1874

In making up our subscription accounts we find quite a number of our subscribers in arrears, some for two years. The individual sums are very small it is true, but in the aggregate they amount to over \$900. Also, all those indebted to this office, either for advertising or job printing, will confer a favor by settling the same without further delay. Like most of printers we hope a large number of small accounts due us, which if paid would go a long way towards dispelling our anxieties in times like the present, when money is scarce. We hope our friends will not delay further in calling at the office, or sending by mail, the amount they owe us. Everyone can ascertain their indebtedness for subscriptions by reference to the address on their paper. All registered letters at our risk.

R. Herring

You can't eat enough in a week to last you a year, and you can't advertise on that plan either.

The value of the leather product of the United States is said to be greater than that of the iron product.

Five thousand yards of new cottons, extra value, at W.E. Paine's, (late Scott & Paine).

In Chicago a notorious vagabond has been sentenced, it is said, to the Common Council for two years.

The *Petrolia Advertiser* for sale at Archer & Odell's bookstore, and at this office. Price five cents.

The Annual Exhibition of the Enniskillen Agricultural Society will be held in this Town, on Thursday, the 8th of October.

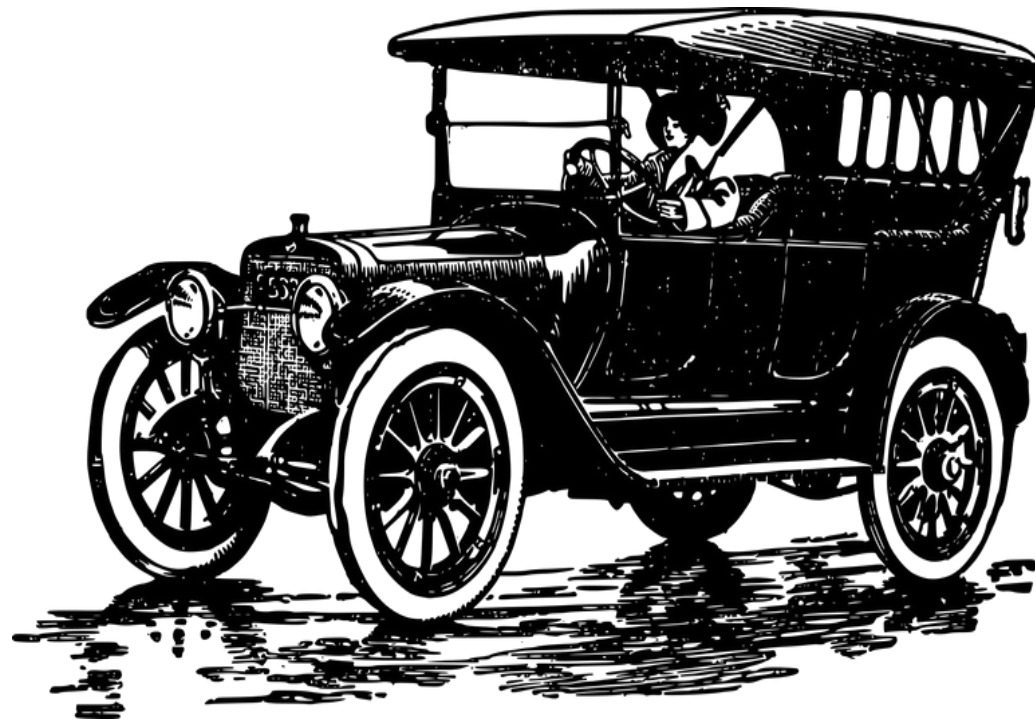
FIRE BRIGADE ATTENTION!

— The Fire Brigade, to a man, are requested to be on hand for practice on Monday afternoon next, at two o'clock, p.m.

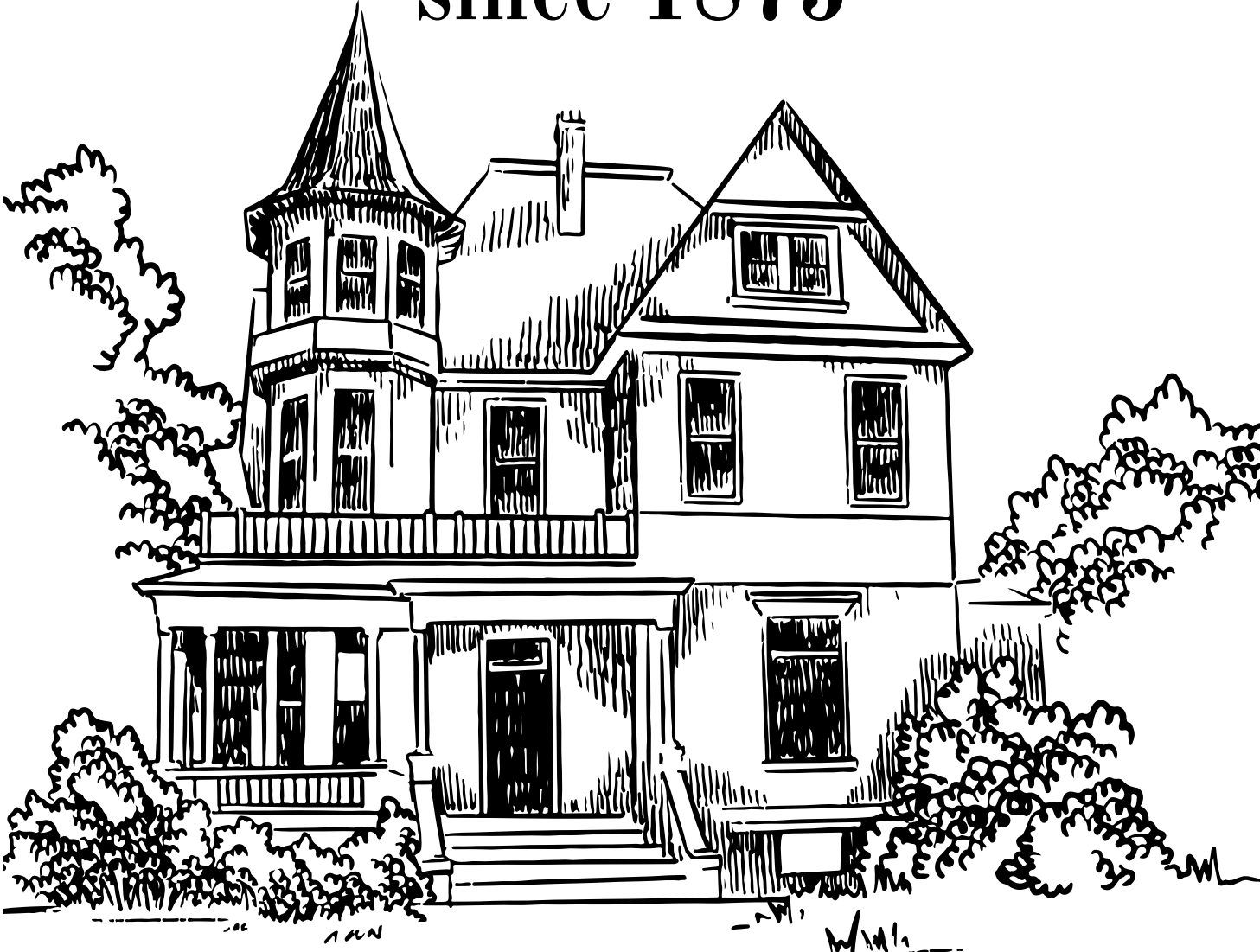
Happy 150th Petrolia

from the directors & staff of the

LAMBTON MUTUAL
INSURANCE COMPANY



Lambton Mutual Insurance Company since 1875



Community-based insurance for your
home, auto, farm and business
where trusted personal service is paramount

From Petrolia to Austria, McGarvey influenced the world

Mayor of Petrolia at 24, McGarvey considered one of the world’s greatest petroleum technologists



Canadian William McGarvey came to Petrolia as a young man and made his mark on the community. But it was his work opening up the oil fields of Austria which would gain him international acclaim.

McGarvey was born in Huntington, Quebec in 1843. His family moved to Wyoming when William was 12, just before James Miller Williams struck oil in nearby Oil Springs. McGarvey proved early that he had a head for business, opening his own business, The Mammoth Store, in Petrolia in 1860.

When Petrolia formed a village council in 1867, McGarvey was chosen to be its first reeve at 24 years old, although he resigned shortly after. McGarvey met Helena Jane Weslowski, originally from Michigan. They married on July 10, 1867. Within a year, the couple had eighteen producing oil wells aside from The Mammoth Store.

William and Helena had three children, between 1869 and 1876. In 1875, Petrolia was a new Town, McGarvey was asked to be the mayor. He served as either the mayor or reeve of Petrolia until the end of 1879.

But fate, and the arrival of a British engineer to Petrolia would lead McGarvey to greater things.

EXPLORING EUROPE
The British engineer, John Simeon Berghem, arrived in Petrolia in the 1880s, looking for men willing to drill in Europe. McGarvey and Berghem soon became close friends, as well as business partners. They went to Oelheim, Germany in search of oil. After almost a year, McGarvey and Berghem were unsuccessful; so they travelled further east to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Galicia.

They soon discovered they needed new drilling methods to tap into Galicia’s resources, so they brought in Petrolians, known around the world as experts in the pole-toolt drilling method. It was these Hard Oilers who succeeded in bringing in McGarvey’s first big well, as well as constructing and operating the first Berghem & McGarvey refinery at Marynopol, Galicia.

After hearing of his successes, many other Petrolians joined McGarvey in Europe. In 1882 William sent for his wife and children to live with him in Austria. Soon the McGarveys would own a residence in Vienna, as well as a castle in Galicia, and their children would attend the best schools in Germany and Austria.

QUICK EXPANSION
Business expanded quickly and on November 13, 1885, Berghem & McGarvey advertised in Petrolia for more rig builders and drillers. McGarvey sent his brother Albert to recruit new workers. Moreover, McGarvey’s daughter Mamie, married Count Ebert von Zepplin of Austria, on November 12, 1895. McGarvey now had ties to royalty.

He had become so wealthy that his wedding gift to his daughter was a seven-hundred-acre estate and castle, valued at close to \$70,000 – almost \$1 million dollars today. McGarvey came to be known as one of the world’s greatest petroleum technologists. At one point he was honored at

a special ceremony, by the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph, for introducing the Canadian drilling system to Galicia.

Trouble was brewing in Europe and early in 1911 McGarvey received news that his younger brother James, had been brutally murdered. Armed robbers, carrying short Cossack swords, had broken into his home while he was having dinner. They murdered James, his servant, a friend named Talbot Barnard, and a guard. Barnard managed to carry Mrs. James McGarvey to safety before he himself was murdered. Mrs. McGarvey was taken to hospital in Vladikavka, which was nearby, and then home to Britain to be with her daughter.

THE WAR
Although heartbroken by his brother’s death, McGarvey was excited by the invention of the internal combustion engine and the horseless carriage. He knew that these inventions would require fuel, something he was processing at close to two million tons a year. McGarvey’s future looked very promising. Great Britain was interested in converting its navy ships from coal to oil. He was called upon by Winston Churchill, First Lord of the British Admiralty, to consult with British Navy officials on the feasibility of converting their ships to oil. After hearing from McGarvey, England redesigned four battleships to use oil as early as 1913. Some say that McGarvey was the man responsible for Britain’s victory during the war.

REFINERIES LOST
The demand for oil lessened with Thomas Edison’s new invention, the incandescent electric light bulb. The years before the First World War were still very profitable for McGarvey, but once the war broke out, his fortune suffered. His European refineries were blown to pieces, and his oil fields set on fire. Many of the Canadian workers who did not leave at the start of the war were shot or taken prisoner. “By the time November [1914] rolled around, McGarvey was like a dying monarch, his crown toppling, his kingdom in ruins,” writes Hope Morrith in Rivers of Oil.

“At the end of his life, McGarvey had become a tragic figure, watching helplessly as his great company neared the brink of ruin, crushed between two warring armies,” added Gary May in his book Hard Oiler!

McGarvey was now watched with suspicion and no longer trusted by the Austrian authorities. He had a stroke and died on his 71st birthday, a heartbroken man. He was buried in Vienna.

PETROLIA SHOCKED
News of his death was detailed in an obituary in *The Petrolia Advertiser* which reads in part; Prominent Canadian Capitalist in Austria Died Suddenly in Vienna. The older citizens of Petrolia were shocked last week when a brief cable from England announced the sudden death in Vienna of William H. McGarvey a former Petrolian and the foremost oil man of the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary.

Since the outbreak of the war communication between Mr. McGarvey and his Petrolia friends has been discontinued but little apprehension was felt that he was in a dangerous condition of health. No details of the illness that led to his death are available at the present time. That he felt the strain of war which involved his native as well as his adopted country there can be little doubt and it is regarded as a certainty that worry over his affairs of business which are located in that troubled country are no doubt responsible for his sudden demise...

(McGarvey’s) efforts in this new field of endeavor were crowned with success, and he became the principal owner of the oil wells of Galicia. He established other industries, which employed more than 2,000 men, and brought about the growth of two or three communities... Many Canadians were taken to Austria in connection with his industries, and became prominent in the public life of that country.

Speaking of his death, Mr. John Sinclair, one of Petrolia’s oldest citizens said: “In the death of William H. McGarvey the world lost a good citizen. He was the first man that I met when I came to Petrolia many years ago and since that time we have been great friends. I have heard from him frequently since he went to Austria but not since the outbreak of the war. I must say that I was greatly shocked and grieved to hear of his death.”

A large portion of this story is reprinted from the *Oil Museum of Canada website*.

Moncrieff Petrolia’s first mayor

Also served as East Lambton Conservative MP



George Moncrieff was born in Musselburgh, Scotland, in 1812, son of Rev. William Glen Moncrieff, a Presbyterian clergyman and graduate of a Scottish university whose father had filled a chair in the same institution.

Educated at Professor McCauley’s school, he studied law in London and Hamilton, and was called and admitted in Michaelmas Term – 1864.

He started practice in London, and, through the fact that the city was an active refining centre, became interested in the new oil industry. In 1866 he moved to Petrolia, where, in addition to his law practice, he engaged in oil operations.

MAKES AN IMPRESSION
Moncrieff seems from the very first to have made a deep impression the life of the new community. After Petrolia became a village, he became reeve.

When the town status was secured in 1874, he was the first mayor. From 1875 til his death he was town solicitor.

In 1889 he was created O.C. by Lord Stanley of Preston, then Governor General.

His abilities and his activity in the Conservative party, marked him as the logical candidate for East Lambton in 1887. Though his candidacy was regarded in many quarters as a forlorn hope, he was elected by 142 majority.

FORLORN HOPE
In 1881 this was increased to 566, an amazing achievement in a riding where the great Alexander Mackenzie had been a sort of uncrowned king.

In 1896 the situation was different. The Conservative government’s Remedial Bill, which sought to restore separate schools in Manitoba, was unpopular in Lambton. Moncrieff loyally championed the government policy.

In the election of June 23, John Fraser, the Liberal candidate, nosed him out by the narrow margin of 14 votes.

Moncrieff was offered the candidacy in 1900, but declined. He died at Petrolia on May 28, 1901, after a life in which he had been closely associated with practically every enterprise for the benefit of the community.

Moncrieff had done more than win the seat twice; he had been the instrument which aided by the interest of the oil operators in tariff protection had transformed the political complexion of East Lambton. Under Mackenzie, it had been basically Liberal; after Moncrieff it was basically conservative.

LOCAL & GENERAL NEWS

From The Petrolia Advertiser Sentinel, 1874

A WAIF. —On the night of Monday last, about 12 o’clock, a fine male boy, apparently about two weeks old, was deposited on the doorstep of Mr. David Aitken, on lot 11, 8th Con., Enniskillen. Mr. A. has no idea whom it belongs to, and takes this means of trying to find out the owners of it. Any further information concerning it can be obtained by calling on Mr. Aitken at once, as it will remain in his possession until the next meeting of the Township Council.

SERIOUS ACCIDENT.—An accident of a serious nature occurred at Marthaville, on Friday of last week. A young man named Tomlinson while edging at Mr. Barker’s Mill, incautiously allowed his left hand to come in contact with the saw, completely severing three fingers and the thumb. Drs. Loughheed and Mearns were at once sent for and dressed the wound. He will

be able to be removed home in a few days.
The wounded man is a son of Mr. Tomlin-Bon, of Goderich, the inventor of the hoop machine.

PERSONAL — Mr. Wm. Crawford has visited Manitoba and returned, after taking up land. He likes the country and purposes moving his family there next season.

Mr. Elias Durham, and Mr. Elijah Burnham were the representatives to the Grand Encampment and to the Grand Lodge of Odd Fellows, held in Kingston during the past week.

The Oil City Derrick is a new visitor to our table. It is a lively, spicy little sheet, and should judge that the oil interest in Oil City and vicinity was perfectly safe in its care. We heartily greet you brother Derrick.

A gentleman who believes in advertising paid a bill of \$78,000 the other day for a year’s work, but it was money well spent, for the earnings resulting from that advertisement, which were divided among four persons, footed up \$650,000.

The holidays are nearly over, as next will see them done, and “young Canada,” who have of late run riot, will have to pore over the, to many, detested books again. School term commences for our public schools, on Monday next, the 17th August.

Mr. Richard Steinhoff, of the Township of Camden, near London has struck a salt well on his farm, which from experiments already made, promises to be a valuable one. From seven pailfuls of brine which he boiled down, he obtained a solid quart of pure, white salt.

SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNTY COUNCIL. — The Council met at Samia Tuesday last. The object being to pass provisionally a By-Law for the Huron & Erie Railroad, and prepare a reception Address to the Governor General, who is expected Thursday afternoon. Mr. A. Elliott, of Oil Springs, and Mr. Jas. Kerr, of Petrolia, presented petitions in favor of the Road; also addressed the Council in support of the petitions. The Council adjourned at 4 o’clock, till 7 p.m., when the Railroad By-law will be under consideration.

HO! FOR THE HOLIDAY!!—Friday, 21st August, having been proclaimed a Civic Holiday we issue our paper one day in advance, this week, to free our “staff” from servile labor, and let the “devil” loose, for one-day only.

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, and we hope a general good time will be had by one and all, great and small.

The Holiday comes but once a year, then let all be of good and cheer and participate in the pleasures provided by rail and water.

The Petrolia Brass Band will be on hand to discourse delightful music, and a good time generally is expected. Charge for the round trip only 75 cts.

Come old gents, bring along your ladies, and young men and maidens let the echo be “A fig for the favors of fortune, we’ll drive dull cares away,” for one day at least.

Fresh air and outdoors exercise are essential to good health, and now is “a golden opportunity” for both.

The Committee of management will spare no pains to make the Excursion both safe and pleasant.

THE FESTIVE DANCE
The assembly held between Xmas and New Year’s is usually the best of the series.

The second assembly of the season was held in the Victoria Hall on Tuesday evening last, and may be favorably compared with those of any previous years. A large number of visitors from a distance joined the festive gathering.

The hall was appropriately decorated with long strips of bunting, which were festooned from the centre of the ceiling to the walls, and large flags of the Stars and Stripes, Union Jacks, and British ensigns, which gave a pretty effect to the scene. Guests from St. Louis, Miss.; Detroit, Mich; Galecia, Austria; London, Hamilton, Brantford, St. Thomas, Chatham, Ingersoll, Samia, Aylmer, etc., were included in the gathering, and taken altogether the management have good reason to congratulate themselves on the success of their efforts.

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Elections in new Town much different than today

Would-be leaders nominated to serve

For many, the idea of sitting at a town council meeting is akin to torture. However, in the early years of Petrolia's development, the men who served first on the Village and then the Town Council were responsible for the key aspects of the development of the town.

Minutes of Town Council printed – often on the front page – of *The Petrolia Advertiser* – tell of council members debating on how much gravel to buy for roads and who would build the wooden sidewalks in the community which struggled mightily with the muddy clay.

Firefighting was also the responsibility of Town Council. It decided how many fire halls were needed to serve the community. It also chose the Fire Warden – today, he would be called the chief.

When the oil industry fouled the local ground water, a committee of council was formed. In less than a year, the committee found a solution and built the Water Works and pipe line which brought clean water to Petrolia in 1897.

When sewage flowed into the local waterways, it was up to council to set the wheels in motion for the first sewage system.

It was Town Council which approved the plans for Victoria Hall in 1886, complete with the controversial opera house.

And when Charlotte Eleanor Englehart left her home to be used as a hospital, it was town council charged with the responsibility – along with a hand-picked board of trustees.

Town Council today deals with many of the same issues.

The process of electing people to serve the town was however, far different that the electronic voting Petrolians now take part in.

In 1909, J.H. Fairbank included the names of the first council of the town in 1874. George Moncrieff served as the town's first mayor. He had also been reeve when Petrolia was incorporated as a Village in 1866. Council consisted of Perkins, Dunlop, Cooley, Garner, Coryell, Chamberlin, Draper, Brake McDonald, Mearns and noble. Fairbank himself served as the fire warden.

The next year, *The Petrolia Advertiser* Local and General News

column was crowded out by the account of Nomination Day at the beginning of the 1875.

READER! Happy New Year!
A number of articles crowded out.

NOMINATION DAY. Monday last presented a lively time among the aspirants for honors and their friends. At an early hour hurrying to and fro was visible all over town, and by 10 a.m. quite a gathering had taken possession of the Town Hall, East End. Mr. Geo. E. Murphey, Clerk, opened the meeting for nominations for Mayor and Reeve for the ensuing year. It was evident some sport was to be indulged in, and perhaps it is advisable to give the nominations as made in regular order, from which it will be seen some of our most distinguished citizens were brought prominently before the public, no doubt in some cases without consulting the parties attempted to be forced into a candidature. However, fidelity to the record makes it incumbent upon us to present the facts; and the following are the nominations:

The Petrolia Advertiser lists the names all of those who were nominated along with the two people who nominated them. In all in 1875, 14 people were nominated for the job of mayor but 10 withdrew their names, including J.H. Fairbank, J.D. Nobel and the George Moncrieff.

Moncrieff also turned down a nomination for the position of reeve. Twelve people were nominated for that role with only four staying on the ballot.

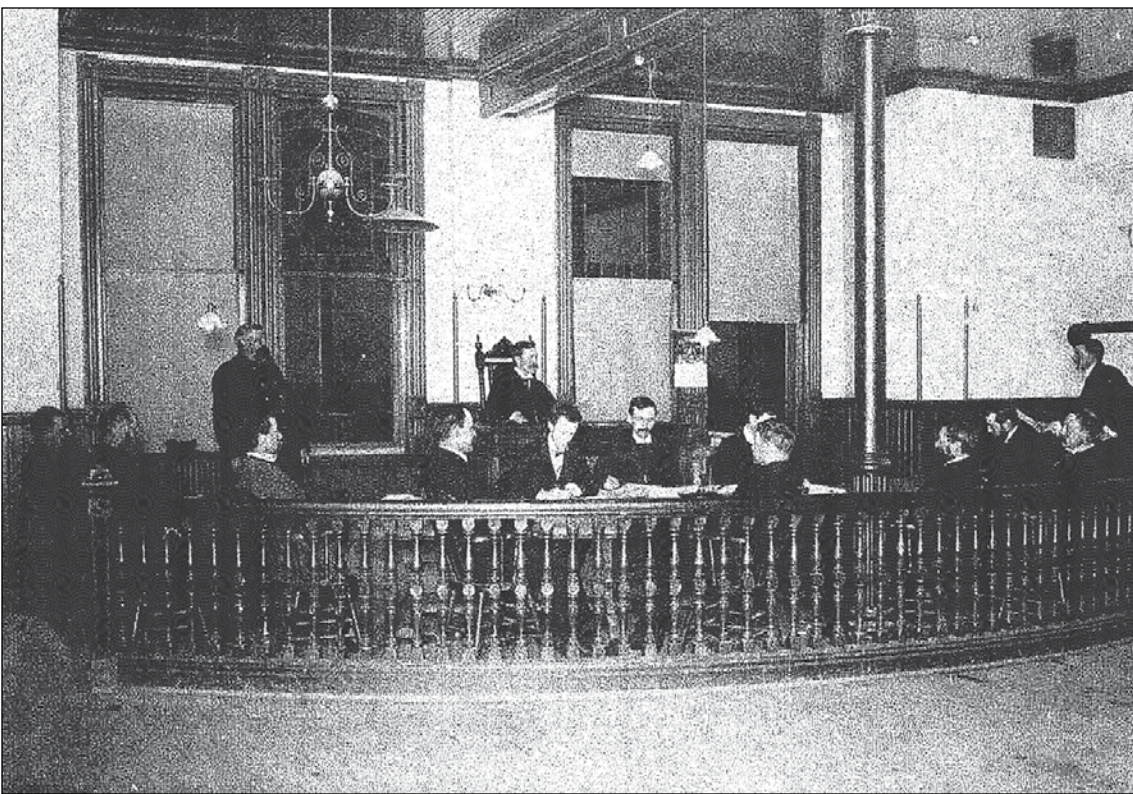
Those who stood for election, *The Petrolia Advertiser* recounted, had an opportunity to say a few words. We pick up *The Advertiser's* story from there.

ADDRESSES

At the close of the nominations Mr. Moncrieff addressed the audience, giving an intelligent account of his stewardship as Mayor for the past year. It was evident the honorable gentleman was earnest in his remarks, and repeated applause was given during his address. Even the questions proposed by Mr. Denham were promptly and frankly met, and gave general satisfaction. Speeches were also made by Messrs. Hammond, McGarvey, Fairbank, Shields etc., who displayed considerable tact and ability in presenting their respective claims to their candidatures. Messrs. Kerby, Dr. Mearns and a few other parties put in nomination, were not present, and, of course, could not announce their intention of standing or declining the honors conferred by their nomination.

LATER. -Recent information would have it that the contest for the Mayorship lays between Mr. Hammond and Mr. McGarvey, and for Reeve between Messrs. Kerr and Shields. It is for the electors to decide who shall represent them, and next Monday will throw light upon the subject.

Quite a sharp contest is going on for seats in the new Council, and we believe, the selection will be made from the following gentlemen, the only ones willing to go to the polls out of the large number brought forward:



This undated photo from Petrolia Heritage shows council hard at work. While the photo doesn't have an exact date, we can surmise the meeting took place after 1889 in the new Victoria Hall.
Petrolia Heritage Photo

WARD No. 1.— Messrs. J. D. Noble, R. D. Noble, D. Manning, John Kerr, W. Stevenson, E. H. Coryell, and Dr. Mearns.

WARD No. 2.— Messrs. Henry Bishop, T. Draper, Geo. Sanson, Chas. Jenkins and H. McKenzie.

WARD No. 3.—Messrs. H. Chamberlain, John Brake and S. J. Lancaster.

WARD No. 4.—Messrs. Jas. McGill, Jos. Garner, B. F. VanTuyt, R. Lawyer, John Highman and W. E. Reynolds.

the Lancy farm. Mr. Hayden is drilling for Mr. Geo. McCormick on his property on Tank Street.

BUT- Of all uncertain kind of biz An oilman's most uncertain is; Today perhaps his anguished soul Laments because of a dry hole; He tries again, and who can tell But he may strike a flowing well? Or near a gusher he may bore And turn out poorer than before.

Bishop of the Diocese, in view of the near approach of Christmas, has issued the following notification to all the Church Wardens and congregations within his jurisdiction. The generosity of the congregation of Christ Church, so substantially manifested at this auspicious season in past years, will doubtlessly be again as munificent as the pressure of the times will permit:

CHRISTMAS OFFERTORY.

To the Wardens and Vestries of the Churches within the Diocese of Huron:

MY DEAR BRETHREN,-It has been our custom in this Diocese for several years past that the Offertory collection on Christmas Day should be presented to the Clergy by their different congregations as a token of their affection and regard, as well as of their appreciation of their faithful ministrations on their behalf. It is well known that the stipends of our clergy are, in most instances, far from being adequate to their wants. I would therefore affectionately urge you to notify your respective congregations, in any way you may deem most suitable, of this our annual practice; and I trust that the response will be marked by a generosity as acceptable in the sight of God as it is becoming on the part of His professed people.

Praying that God may have you in His holy keeping, and visit you and your families at this blessed season with all temporal benefits and spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, I am, My Dear Brethren, Your affectionate Friend and

Bishop.
I. HURON.
Chapter House, London.

Notice To Advertisers.

Beginning with the next issue we purpose publishing our paper ON TIME and in order to do so we MUST adhere firmly and positively to the following rules: —all changes of standing advertisements must be received at this office by noon of Tuesday in each week.

All new display advertisements must reach us at noon on Wednesday. Local notices on Wednesdays before 6 p.m. Transient, legal and other advertisements must be in by noon on Thursday, and upon no consideration will any advertisements, locals, news items or other matter for the paper be received after 12 o'clock (noon) on Thursdays. We lay down these rules in the interests of both advertisers and subscribers.

R. HERRING, editor and proprietor.

PETROLIA MARKETS.

Flour per cwt.....	\$ 2 75 a	\$ 3 00
Barley per cwt.....	1 46 a	1 56
Oats per bu.....	30 a	32
Peas per bu.....	50 a	60
Corn per bu.....	1 00 a	1 02
Potatoes per bu.....	0 50 a	0 76
Apples per bu.....	0 50 a	0 60
Butter per lb.....	0 05 a	0 06
Eggs per dozen.....	0 18 a	0 20
Pork per 100 lbs.....	6 00 a	7 50
Beef per 100 lbs.....	5 00 a	5 50
Butter per lb.....	0 25 a	0 32
Wool per cord.....	1 50 a	2 50
Sheepskins each.....	0 30 a	0 60
Hay per ton, new.....	14 00 a	17 00
Hides per lb.....	0 05 a	0 06



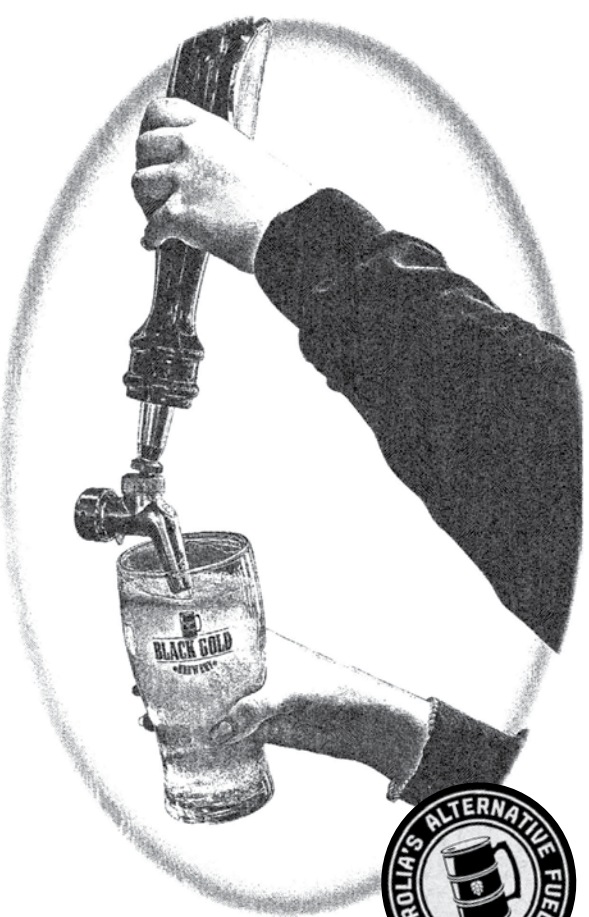
Miscellaneous. NOTICE.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT any person or persons cutting,stealing or removing timber from that portion of Lot No. 12, in the 10th con. of Enniskillen, in the Village of Petrolia, the property of W. Quimby, Waterloo, New York, and others will be prosecuted to the utmost rigor of the law.

JAS. PERKINS, Agent.

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McKEE & MARWICK would notify Oil-men, and the Public that they have opened a Machine Shop on Eureka Street, near Pithole Switch, and close to the Carbon Co.'s Big Still. They manufacture and deal in Oil Well Fixings, Engineers' Brass Work, Heads and Stuffing Boxes, (see Fixings), Drilling Tools, Castings etc. Repairing attended to promptly. A large stock of Well Supplies of all descriptions always kept on hand. A specialty made of outside repairing.—**McKEE & MARWICK.**
Petrolia, Nov. 11, 1912.



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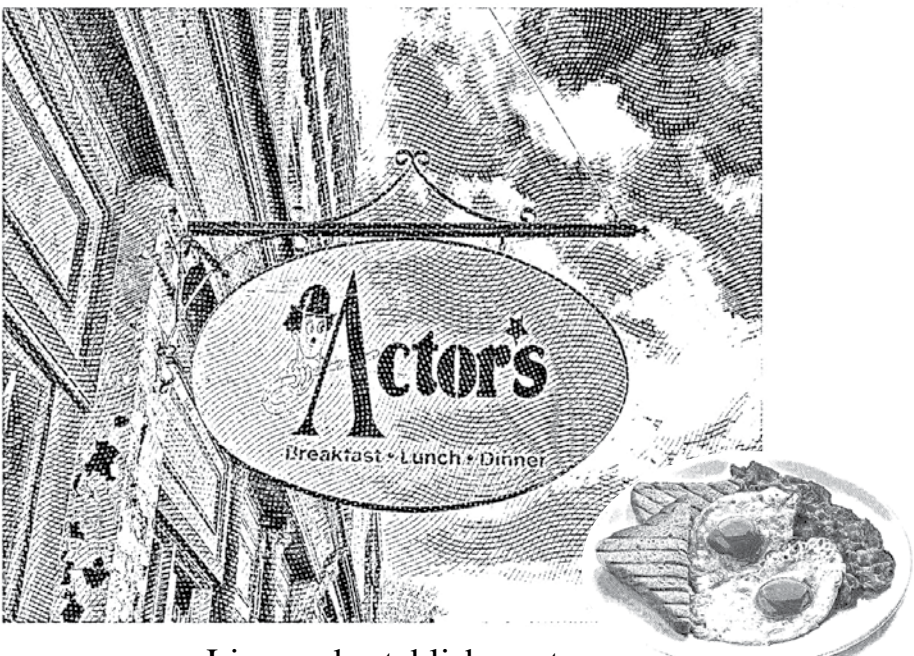
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How Hard Oil became a sports rallying cry

Even if you have just moved to Petrolia – a Johnny-come-Lately as a Hard Oil would say – it’s clear sports is a very serious business here. As the town developed, so did sports leagues with football, rugby and baseball the early favorites. There is still a nod to those early sportsmen in the name of Petrolia’s hockey teams – the Oilers.

For decades, teams from Petrolia were dubbed “Hard Oil.” While the use of “oil” makes sense, there was great debate about why they were called “Hard Oil.”

Lew Gleeson – who played on some of the earliest championship football teams – wrote a sports column for *The Petrolia Advertiser Topic*. In the 1940s, he and Sarnia Observer Sports Columnist Oscar “Red” Wilson engaged in friendly banter about the name and the grit of those teams. That lead to newspaper articles and a mention in Gary May’s book, *Hard Oil!*

Here’s what May found out about the origins of the term Hard Oil.

“Hard Oiler is a name that is still worn proudly in central Lambton County by descendants of the pioneers of the regions oil industry. One version of its origins has it that in the heyday of the foreign drillers, Petrolia and Oil Springs men would saunter into a saloon in far-away locales such as London, England , which was known for a time as the oil men’s Gateway to the Foreign Fields. The visitors would shout “Hard Oiler!” at the top of his lungs. More often than not, there would be a like reply and, having thus identified themselves, two or more Canadian oil men would sit down to hoist a couple of brews, swap tales of their adventures in foreign lands and pass along the latest news from home.

True or not, it’s a good story... Others contend the phrase originated at a football game in the early 1900s. “We’re going to beat them to a hard oil finish,” was the way long time Petrolia resident Bertha Gleeson says her late husband, sports columnist Lew Gleeson, recounted it to her. After that Gleeson and other area residents took up the cause and applied the term Hard Oil to everything related to petroleum. “When the foreign drillers went away that’s the way they’d identify themselves,” says Bertha Gleeson. “Everything was Hard Oil. If you were born here, you were Hard Oil. If you came her from away, you were a Johnny-come-Lately.”

Purists will still tell you the term applies only to Petrolians and not to those from Oil Springs. But for the most part, those from central Lambton are all recognized as Hard Oilers.”

Gleeson vigorously explained not only how the term came into use, but gave a flavor of what the

sports battlefield was like. “As periods of time go, the Hard Oil gridiron saga lasted long. Football was a major sport in the oil rich town when Petrolia street, the main stem, was a quagmire of mud in the rainy season and inches deep in billowing dust in the long hot summer times. The gridiron sport was paramount. A man’s worth was measured more by his ability to out slug and outlast the Sassenach from upstart Communities,” Gleeson wrote in the 1940s in an expansive article on the Hard Oil origins story. “We hope the said version will serve a threefold purpose (1) Give the old timers who figure in it a lift. (2) Give the present crop of Hard Oil juniors something to strive for. (3) Enlighten some of “those who arrived late” and give them something to talk about other than the things they don’t like about Petrolia and the things that Petrolia should and should not do.”

The London Free Press, in an article Aug. 24, 1946, summarized:

“Lew Gleeson’s theory is that the expression Hard Oil originated in 1910 when an enthusiast by the name of J.J. “Jack” Fisher brought forward a fancy water pail for the season’s rugby team. The outside of the pail was trimmed with green and white traditional Petrolia colors and had the names of the players painted on the outside of the receptacle.

On the inside of the pail was written in bold letters which were bound to inspire the tired players who sought to quench his thirst:Hard Oil Finish.

Lew recalls that “Jack” was a sign painter at the Petrolia Wagon Works which was flourishing at the time. He does not have an explanation for the painters having chosen that particular slogan.”

But what does the term Hard Oil actually mean. *The London Free Press* delved into that side of the story as well:

“Earl A Smith, superintendent of the Petrolia refinery of the Canadian Oil Companies Ltd. and one-time chief chemist there has brought forward an explanation for Hard Oil which is sound. Mr. Smith points out that in the early days of the oil boom in America there were only two fields taken into consideration, the Pennsylvania field and that in Western Ontario which was known then as the Canadian field.

He explains that these two fields produced oil of different bases and that the American product was referred to as a soft oil because it required little or no refining aside from distillation for the use in oil lamps – the major use of the product at that time.

Petrolia’s crude petroleum was chemically composed of a heavier base and was harder to refine than the other variety.

Petrolia and East Lima Grade of oil were known as Hard oils. Mr. Smith says because they were difficult to refine. Petrolia crude oil was discovered before East Lima crude and thus was the first to be known as Hard oil.

He also recalled that the poi-



While oil is the reason people came to Petrolia, for many who lived here, sports was their passion. The Town, to this day, has very competitive teams but in the early years of Petrolia, football and baseball were the most talked about including this 1905 championship football team and the 1906 Petrolia baseball league champions from the Petrolia Wagon Works.

Lambton County Archives Photos



soners to the district had faced all the hardships possible in those early days and that a new comer to the community had asked a dour Scot what kind of town it was He was told that “it is a hard town.”

While Oiler remains in the name, when Gleeson wrote about the origin of the term, Norm Hibbert of *The Petrolia Advertiser Topic*, in a prologue to the column said Gleeson wrote as if those heroes of the gridiron lived on. “Their spirits continue to urge those less worthy to strive to give of their time and energy to the improve of the younger generation of the present day and provide them with the advantages in sport that once made this town famous through the Dominion and gave that Hard Oil Finish a meaning that brought feat to some of the illustrious teams of football in the past.

Surely it is not too much to hope that some of the present day youths may qualify for the name of Hard Oil and put this town where it belongs in the matter of sports.”

Lew Gleeson was more than a raconteur of sports. Aside from

playing on those championship football teams, we found a football manual with the basics of football, the rules and the plays which he wrote in the Lambton archives. Here’s a taste of his style - Gleeson’s rules for players.

1. Keep the fingernails short.
2. Wear clean underwear. Change at least every three days. Beware of boils and skin rashes.
3. Wear clean socks. Change every day. Beware of athletes foot.
4. Don’t use any other persons towels, jock straps or underwear.
5. Wash your jock straps every couple of days. Beware of jock itch.
6. Know all your equipment.
7. If you must smoke, don’t smoke in the dressing room and wait until you are away from the field before lighting a cigarette.
8. No horse play in dressing room or showers.
9. Use the trainers as human beings not work horses.
10. Always hang your clothes up and keep them off the floor.
11. Excessive rub-downs are harmful.
12. Don’t spit on the floor or chew tobacco in the dressing

- room.
13. Keep the dressing room clean.
14. Your body is your best friend. Don’t abuse it. Live cleanly. Keep good hours. Don’t smoke and remember to eat well. Good solid food even if it is only bread and butter it is better than cake and pie.
15. An athlete needs plenty of sleep to replenish burnt up energy.
16. Cleanliness is next to Godliness. Bath often and always take a shower after games and practices.
17. Keep your hair cut so that it won’t fall or get in your eyes.
18. Don’t wear rings, bracelets, or any other accessories as there is a very grave danger of doing yourself injury.
19. If you have a bridge or a plate for your teeth, take it out. It is liable to come loose and choke you.
20. Refer to your Parents as “Mother” and “Dad”. A guy who says “The Old Lady” or “The Old Man” is a Louse.
21. Don’t swear – Let the Coaching Staff and Management do the Cussing.

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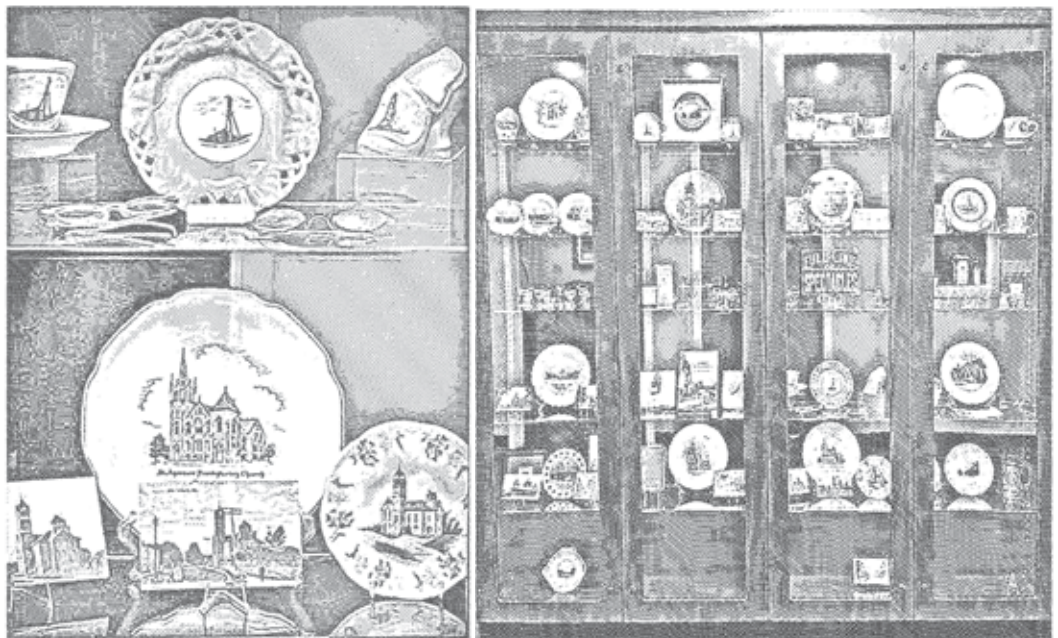
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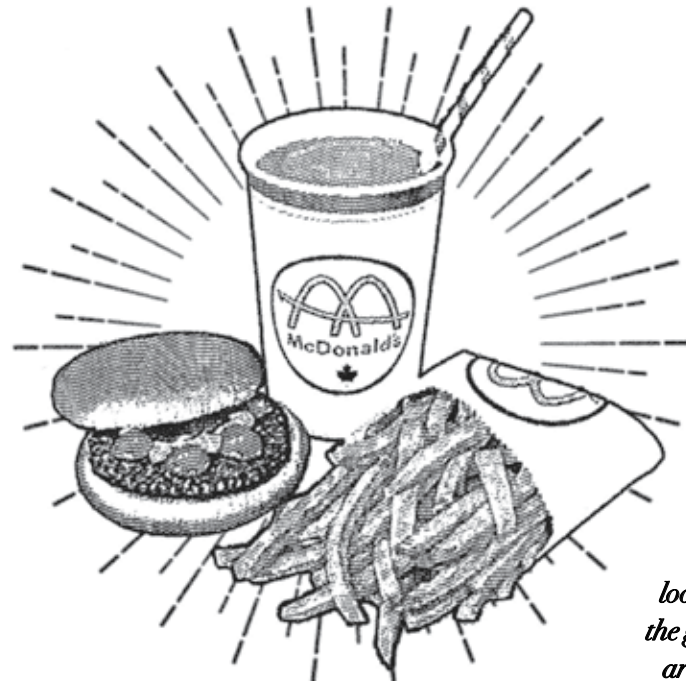
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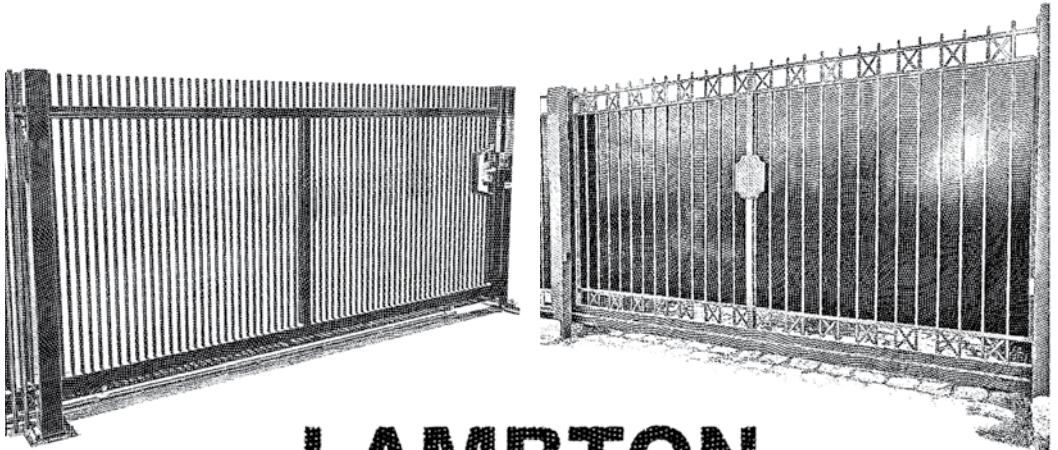


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The Legend of the Iroquois Hotel

Hard Oils told their tales at the ‘best hotel in town’

While Victoria Hall and the grand old homes of Petrolia remain as monuments to this town’s wealthy beginnings, the Iroquois Hotel also paints a picture of the tremendous wealth generated in the early oil industry.

The intersection of what is now Petrolia Line and Centre Street – where Hogan’s Pharmacy now sits – was the home of the hotel where legends were born. The Iroquois Hotel was built in 1896 of white brick and contained fifty rooms. Owner J.A. Johnson built it near the Michigan Central train tracks and it quickly became the best hotel in town.

The hotel was built to replace the Johnson House which was located in the present day Victoria Park.

The contract was let out to J&J Kerr and when complete it was three stories high and with 20 rooms on the second floor, and 30 rooms on the third floor. In addition to the hotel rooms, there were luxury suites that housed Petrolia’s elite including suites for Mr. and Mrs. Harrison Corey, Mr. and Mrs. Bloss Corey, proprietors of H.E. Corey Crude Petroleum Products and makers of explosives to shoot wells, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Herring, the owner of *The Petrolia Advertiser*, Mrs. Counce, and also a fine suite for the proprietor J.A. Johnson.

Over Christmas, the Iroquois was a hot spot for oilmen returning from foreign lands such as Saudi Arabia and Burma. They would spend much of their vacation at the Iroquois swapping stories about their adventures.

J.A. Johnson eventually sold The Iroquois to the Newton Brothers. Roy Newton became the sole owner carrying on the lavish traditions. Each special occasion would warrant a new menu complete with a cover. Inside, guest found foods not seen on the average table in Petrolia. A New Years Day menu boasts oyster soup, celery, gherkins, queen olives, boiled halibut, sugar cured ham with champagne sauce, pineapple fritters and maple syrup, beefsteak pie, roast turkey, cranberry jelly, prime sirloin of beef, Yorkshire pudding, roast goose and apple sauce, Waldorf salad, tomato salad, creamed potatoes, French peas, Hubbard squash, Christmas pudding with brandy sauce, apple and mince pie, raspberry tart, vanilla ice cream, assorted cake, strawberry jelly, layer raisins, oranges, apples, bananas and of course, tea, coffee or milk.

But, that lavish style came with a cost. With huge bills to pay – one year of coal to heat the hotel from the Kerr Company was \$3,000 – Newton had a tough time of it. Letters from the early 1900s in the Lambton Archives show Newton contacting lawyers who would act as real estate brokers to sell his hotel. The search for a new owner went on for years with several brokers actively looking for someone to take over the grand old lady.

In 1912, Newton had a buyer. Mrs Burgess according to a memo of the sale drawn up by lawyers. Burgess offered to pay \$7,000, plus another 50 cents on the dollar for the stock on hand – \$540 in total. It appears Burgess began paying for the hotel in July 1912 with the deal finalized at the end of that year. Once Newton’s bills had been paid out, including a \$4,000 mortgage to the Kerrs, and when Burgess’ payments were tallied up, Newton received the final payment at the end of the year - \$850 and the contents of Room 20 at The Iroquois Hotel.

By 1918, Burgess had sold the hotel to W.J. Balls. He bought the property, turning it into living quarters and a garage according to *The Watford Guide Advocate*. The Port Huron Times reported it was to be a movie theatre.

The Iroquois was destroyed by fire in 1929.



Glancing through the bills from the Iroquois Hotel at the Lambton County Archives gives a real flavour of what this hotel was like. Each special event – Christmas, New Years, St. Andrew’s Day – required a special menu. The foods were exotic and wouldn’t be found in today’s establishments in Petrolia. And it was also clear the people of Petrolia enjoyed a pour or two or three. Of the bills preserved by the archives, liquor bills are by far the most numerous.

From the Lambton County Archives



Dinner		
Oyster Cocktail Commence a la Royal		
Colony	Baked Fillet of Lake Trout, Meringue	Queen Olives
Boiled Sugar Ham, Champagne Sauce	Boiled Philadelphia Capon, Rice Sauce	Prime Roast of Beef, Devil Glaze
Flake Potatoes	Roast Young Turkey, Cranberry Sauce	French Peas
Small Portion of Chicken, Hanger Sauce	Spanish Puff, Crystal Sauce	Fruit Salad
Mexican Salad	Buttered Parsnip	Stewed Tomato
Steamed Fruit Pudding, Brandy Sauce	Apple Pie	Corned Pie
Tutti Frutti Ice Cream	Strawberry Jelly	Assorted Cakes
Layer Raisins	Fruit	Mixed Nuts
Miller’s Paragon Cheese	Tea	Coffee

Corey: hotelier, nitro producer, patron of the arts

According to Archives Canada, Harrison “Tip” Corey was born on June 28, 1840 in New York. He arrived in Petrolia in 1872 during the oil boom. He immediately built the “Corey House” hotel which he operated three years.

Harrison became involved in a many business ventures; as a merchant, a food packer, and a horse breeder. He later got into the oil business and became one of the largest producers in Petrolia.

H.C. Corey and Son was a partnership that Harrison formed in 1894 with his son, Bloss Parsons Corey. This new business venture specialized in the manufacturing and sale of explosives, including nitroglycerin, and this is where Corey made his name. He had nitro plants in Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Harrison was also a patron of

Mr. Roy Newton, Petrolia, Ont.		ST. THOMAS, ONT., May 10th. 1912.	
BOUGHT OF		E. J. BUTLER	
Importers and Wholesale Dealer in		Wines and Liquors	
TERMS CASH	Usual,	ORDERED PER	C.S.B.-
		CONVEYANCE	
		M.C.R.P.	
1 c/s. Jno. deKuyper Gin, RED,	at \$11.75	11.75	
2 c/s. Black & White, 12 s,	* 10.75	21.50	
1 c/s. London Dry Gin, Ser.,	* 7.50	7.50	
1 c/s. La Grande Brandy, 12's,	* 8.50	8.50	
1 c/s. Usher's Black Label,	* 12.00	12.00	
1 c/s. Special Reserve,	* 9.50	9.50	
1 c/s. Seagram's Flasks, 30's,	* 8.25	8.25	
1 c/s. Rose's Sloe Gin,	* 10.25	10.25	
8 Dozen Pts. Guinness' Stout,	* 1.75	14.00	\$103.25 ✓

Andrew Wilson & Co.		Wholesale Tobacconists, Importers and Cigar Manufacturers.	
Order No. 4120		44-45 Yonge St. Toronto, June 29th. 1912	
Sold to		Mr. R. Newton	
Terms July 1st Nett 30/60 Days		Conveyance	
2500 Bachelor	Cigars	50.	125.00

NORTH CALIF.		120 KING STREET	
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Town of **PETROLIA**



Don't miss the celebration's Main Event:

HARD OIL MUSIC FESTIVAL

TICKETS ON SALE AT:

Greenwood Park, Petrolia

Thursday - Sunday,

AUGUST 15, 16, 17 & 18

[HTTP://WWW.TICKETSCENE.CA/SERIES/1166](http://www.ticketscene.ca/series/1166)
*Resident pre-sale code has a ticket limit of 6 passes or singles.



Resident Pre-Sale Tickets on sale Dec. 15

Resident Weekend Pass - \$150

Resident Single Ticket - \$75

Regular On-Sale Feb. 1, 2024

Regular Weekend Pass - \$225

Regular Single Ticket - \$90

Petrolia Residents find the pre-sale Codes in your Petrolia 150 calendars

Petrolia 150 Events & Signature Town Events:

JANUARY

Monday - 1

Petrolia 150 Gala 7:30-10:30pm

FEBRUARY

Fri-Mon 16, 17, 18, & 19

Family Fun Days Weekend

MAY

Tuesday - 7

"Oil Rush - The History Making Musical"

at the VPP.



THE HISTORY MAKING MUSICAL
by Robert More & Jacqueline Sadler

Saturday - 25

Farmers' Market Grand Opening

JUNE

Saturday - 1

Town - Pizzafest

JUNE

Fri-Sat 15 & 16

Special Event in Greenwood Park to be announced soon!

Fri-Sun 15, 16 & 17

Petrolia 150 Town Crier Contest

JULY

Monday - 1

Town - Canada Day Celebrations

Fri & Sat 12 & 13

Art in the Park

Saturday - 13

Town - Barn Dance

AUGUST

Saturday - 17

Petrolia 150 Parade

Sunday - 18 (Kid's Day)

Nonsectarian Church Service in Greenwood Park - 11am

SEPTEMBER

Saturday - 14

Harvestfest - Farmers' Market

DECEMBER

Friday - 6

Town Christmas in the Park,

Chili Cook Off

Saturday - 7

Town - Christmas Market,

10am-3pm

Saturday - 7

Town - Santa Claus Parade - 2pm

"Celebrating Petrolia 150"

Tuesday - 31

Petrolia 150 Closing Event at Greenwood Recreation Centre

Make sure to visit



*Petrolia's
Premium
Craft Brewer*



Visit: petrolia150.com for event details, and more!