

CAMPBELLFORD HISTORY

News From the West Side of the Trent

By Francis W. Long

Mrs. Borden Copperthwaite has brought me up to date on the “west side story”. She writes: “Back in the early 1900’s Robert Fraser had a shop two doors east of the legion hall. At the front there were two gas pumps and behind a pit where he changed the oil. In the front part of the shop he sold refrigerators from T.J. Cavanagh Peterborough. This firm is still in business today. He stocked these with pop from Horsman’s pop shop. Wringer washing machines, De Laval milking machines, Spartan radios, CCM bicycles, and ice skates were also part of Fraser’s offerings. He also had a catalogue featuring men’s Dack Shoes. He had many customers who purchased these shoes because they offered very narrow widths. Bus Watters, Morley Horsman, and Sid and Cecil Buckles were regular customers. Things became pretty slow in 1930, Mr. Fraser sold out, and moved to Toronto. Jim Jacobs, the tinsmith bought the shop. Still later it was sold to Carol Finch, who had the Minnie Wheel Hair Salon. Rosemary Baker had a sewing and alterations shop at that same location. Today it is the site of the “Stinking Rose” pub.” It is amazing how versatile a shop keeper had to be to make a living in the good old days.

Along Bridge St. West were a number of stately buildings, and important businesses.. They included the United Church, the Legion Hall, Ernie Slogett’s house, now Capers Restaurant, Bob Fraser’s shop mentioned earlier, Beardsmore Jeweler, the barber Chas Atkinson, John Sutherland’s Shoe Repair, Jack Birmingham hardware, Jim Gay’s grocery, Maude Tripp Notions, Jack Bull Pool room, J.E. Diamond harness maker, and Lowery’s ice cream parlour.

Across the street, opposite the legion was Dr. Free’s house, Rowe’s pool room, Henson Shoe Repair, the Clinton tea room, Mae Deke, milliner, plus Frank Garneau and Jack Dunsmore radio stores. Along that same side, old timers will remember McArthurs Meat Market, Sam Clegg’s grocery, and a pharmacy, owned by Ernie Birk.

June Copperthwaite also gave me a copy of the 1984 calendar “Memories of Campbellford” edited by Jean R. Michel for Campbellford Seymour Bicentennial and the Chamber of Commerce. The area was first settled in 1806. Lieutenant Robert Campbell, and Major David Campbell arrived in 1831, and were granted 2200 acres of land surveyed in 1819. In 1840, a wooden bridge was built across the river just south of the ford. A woolen mill was built on the west side of the river, and on the east side, Robert Cockburn built a flour mill. John Dickson had the area’s first machine shop.

The old wooden bridge was replaced by a new iron bridge in 1877, and in 1884 two new arches were added, making the bridge iron from end to end. This bridge stood the test of time, until 1904 when the lift bridge was opened. If you can obtain a copy of the calendar, you will see a picture of the bridge with the rounded arches in the spring of 1883, with a circus elephant leading a circus parade across. In 1890, the first electric lights were turned on in Campbellford, In that same year, C.H. Davidson came to

Campbellford at the age of 17, with just 25 cents in his pocket. He operated a bakeshop for a while, and in 1910, started selling McLaughlin automobiles. We know the rest of the story with that well known local business family. In 1879, the first train engine, #38, huffed and puffed across the Trent, and just a year later Campbellford opened it first train station.

Here are some other key dates in Campbellford history. In 1888, J.M. Ferris was chosen as the police magistrate. In 1884, the Seymour Agricultural Society purchased land for what still serves as the fair grounds. In 1885, the post office was moved to a store in the Ferris Block. In 1888 a full course meal cost 15 cents. Cigarettes cost the same. Having a telephone would cost you \$15.00 per year. In 1876, Campbellford was incorporated as a village in 1876, and became a town in 1906 with a population of 2521, In 2001, the population was 3515. Perhaps the 2006 census will show as 3800? Let us all celebrate the 100th year.