

Lindsay in the year 1877

Third in a series of articles
containing extracts from a Directory
of Lindsay published in 1877

Before Lindsay had fairly got a start in the world it had to undergo numerous drawbacks and afflictions. At the time of the erection of the first wooden lock, fever and ague was very prevalent and the water of the lakes and rivers was raised by the erection of a dam at Bobcaygeon. At Lindsay and other places a terrible fever, not unlike the yellow fever became epidemic, and for three years or four in succession nearly every family in the village or its neighborhood was afflicted to a greater or lesser extent. So severe was the visitation that for years afterwards strangers were warned about approaching Lindsay. It was called the sickliest place in Canada. However now, for salubrity, Lindsay is considered one of the foremost localities in the whole Dominion".

"Notwithstanding all the drawbacks and discouraging vicissitudes which occurred time after time to retard the progress of Lindsay, yet by the pluck and perseverance of its inhabitants it gradually made some headway, and its growth though slow for a long period was that of a permanent character".

"By the general census in 1852 it was found that the population was about 450. Ever after this Lindsay was spoken of as the rising place, so much so that its sister town, Peterboro, began to feel a little jealous and offered opposition to

so that its sister town, Peterboro, began to feel a little jealous and offered opposition to projects which it was supposed might benefit Lindsay to the disadvantage of Peterboro".

"When the St. Lawrence and Lake Huron Railway project was first urged the people of Peterboro were most anxious to have Lindsay, Ops, Mariposa and other northern townships cooperate. That road was to pass from Peterboro to Lindsay and the merchants in the former town were of the belief that Peterboro would procure all the northern trade, but as a direct road from Port Hope to Lindsay was spoken of, fearing that Lindsay would get the business which it was imagined legitimately belonged to Peterboro, the principle public men of Peterboro did all in their power to prevent the rate-payers of Lindsay and Ops from voting in favor of the by-law for \$40,000.00 in aid of the Port Hope, Lindsay and Beaverton road. This opposition was however so transparent that even many over cautious farmers who might have otherwise voted down a general public improvement, saw through the interested motives that actuated their advisers from Peterboro, and they therefore supported the bylaw".

"Lindsay was incorporated as a town in 1857. Soon afterwards the railway from Port Hope was completed to Lindsay".

"From this period until the year 1851 the progress of Lindsay was rapid and its population by the census then taken was 1907, more than a quadruple increase in less than ten years. The year 1861 was a remarkable one in the annals of Lindsay. The great fire that took place on the fifth of July laid nearly the whole town in ashes. The estimated loss of property at the time was \$286,000. upon which there was about \$80,000 insurance and the loss of property without any insurance was nearly \$90,000".

"This terrible disaster was severely felt by many and to others it was almost ruinous. In alluding to this fiery visitation an extra of the Victoria Herald of July 5th 1861 said "as there are scarcely any stores left unconsumed, hundreds of the inhabitants have not a roof over them. The few houses left standing are crowded. Many will have to pass the nights in the streets. Several persons from the country, however, acted nobly in rendering assistance. The farmers of Ops and Mariposa brought in provisions which were distributed to the sufferers. Though disaster almost annihilated Lindsay, yet the inhabitants of the town were in a manner compensated to some extent by the vote for the separation of Peterboro and Victoria counties, which took place on the Monday following the fire. Peterboro as usual, was working in opposition to the measure but this opposition only incited with success and Lindsay was established as the chief town of the county of Victoria".

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"To the tourists Lindsay must eventually become a boon to the industry whether for the gratification of its artists tastes or for sporting propensities. Nine miles to the southwest is Scugog Lake, at the head of which is situated the flourishing village of Port Perry, interspersed with islands, with all their pristine decorations of field and forest. About the same distance to the north is Sturgeon Lake which offers to the invalid and the sight-seer both cool and invigorating air and scenery of the sublimest description".

"Beyond to the north are Fenelon Falls and an almost endless chain of lakes and rivers extending to the far northwest. To the eastward is another chain of lakes and the classic Otonabee, sweeping with its rapid current ever onward through a most romantic region, passing settlements and private villas, meandering through the pretty town of Peterboro with a pleasant murmur, until at length, after miles and miles of wandering it is lost in the embrace of Lake Ontario".

"Fish and game are plentiful in their seasons and the means of communication from almost any point are available to rich and poor, to the robust and the weak, without trouble and at reasonable cost".

"Sturgeon Point and Sturgeon Lake, about eleven miles north of Lindsay has of late become a popular rendezvous for pleasure seekers. Here an excellent hotel has been erected and fitted up with modern accommodations. croquet, cricket grounds, pleasure boats, billiard tables, natural and artificial docks, etc. etc. It occupies a prominent position giving an excellent view of the lakes. Connected with it is a park of one hundred acres with handsome avenues through the forest, drives and shady walks. The waters abound with maskinonge, bass and other fish, while ducks and game of all kinds are plentiful".