

“Backward, turn backward, oh time in thy flight”, as the second bridge across the Scugog River is being dismantled and removed, we’re referring to the bascule bridge on Wellington Street.

Strange to relate, in the days of yore when Lindsay was an important and strategic cog in the lumbering business with saw mills and shingle mills dotted all over the town and district, there was considerable industrial hurry and flurry on both sides of Wellington Street from Cambridge to Lindsay Streets. In fact, if the same places of business were in operation today, the word “phenominal” might well be used.

The George Inglis Planing mill was at the corner of Cambridge and Wellington Streets where Mayor George Ingle was in charge. Later it became the first home of the Northern Casket Company, and today the Brinton Carpet Company.

On the south west corner of Wellington and William Sts. stood the old Methodist Church, and immediately west of this building stood the small frame clergy house. The church on the corner was

later turned into a carriage shop by William Skitch. It was a beautiful old frame structure with tall windows rounded at the top much the same as those pictured in the chamber occupied by The Fathers of Cofederation at Charlestown. The Church was high with an arched roof. At the west end was the pulpit on a raised platform and a couple of benches for the choir. The choirmaster in those days used an old fashioned tuning fork. For a time a couple of old high-backed wooden seats could be noticed in this old sanctuary, according to one informant.

On the opposite corner to the north stood two small roughcast homes and the J. C. Makins machine shop, where the McCrae Foundry and Machine Shop now stands.

On the corner which now houses the Lindsay Hydro Electric offices and garage, was located the Lindsay Gas Plant, from which emanated a flow of gas for street lighting purposes. At the rear, close to McDonnell Park, was located a huge gas reservoir on top of which was a large gasometer, a sort of pumping machine.

One of the oldest dance halls in the early days was located on William Street across from the Hydro Office location, where the Skitch terrace now stands. It was known as Victoria Hall and apparently ran north and south along the street.

It is understood that the present location of Manley's Garage was occupied by small painted frame homes, the last two of which were recently removed to make room for a car lot. Immediately to the north on William Street was a frame tumble-down shack on the river bank where a man named Elias Powell was said to be working on a perpetual motion machine.

The present Manley Garage was erected by John Carew for Madison and his son Charles Williams where they did a land-office business as agents for the Model T Ford. Later Fred Martin carried on a Chrysler dealership from that

location. George Langdon operated a butcher shop in the north half of the building for some time.

One of the most important of industries in these early days was that of tanning leather, and Thomas Robson operated a large tannery directly south of the west end of the Wellington Street bridge. The tannery plant and business was later purchased by R. M. Beal, who will be remembered by many as one of the most colourful and capable Lindsay mayors. He was a smart business man and a fine tradesman and for several years his two sons Stanley and Arthur were associated with their father in running the busy tannery.

Under the Beal management the tannery became a factory for the manufacture of leather larrigans, harness, and other produce relating to the leather trade.

When the Beal building was destroyed, a new and larger building was erected on Logie Street which later became the Knitters factory.

Interesting developments took place through the years at the east end of the bridge, on the south side, which is now park land owned by Queen Street United Church. One of the original owners was a man named Brummell who ran a mill. It was also the location of a cooperage factory where all kinds of barrels and staves were made. This building gave way to a firm known as the Fitzsimmons Auto Body Works, a pioneer industry in this part of Ont. The Fitzsimmons brothers turned out hearse bodies which called for fine hand-made carved designs.

When the Cole Brothers Brass Manufacturing Company first came to Lindsay, in the days when R. M. Beal was active in municipal matters, he persuaded the firm to locate in the old Grammar School located east of the L.C.I. As business grew the firm moved to the Fitzsimmons factory. In later years fire visited the plant and the firm folded. The Cole Brass Manufacturing firm for several years enjoyed

a big business in Ontario.

The building was next occupied by the Babee-Tenda firm and following a disastrous fire the remains of the structure became the property of Queen Street United Church. Church members worked faithfully to clean up the area and develop the present tidy parking area.

Few people remember the days of the Robt. Kennedy co-operative and shingle mill on north side of the bridge near the river, and the Kennedy-Davis sawmill. The Devitt mill was also located to the north on the east side of the river and the Parkin mill was farther north.

Also located just to the east of the bridge on the north side was another agent of the

Model T Ford known as Race Motors.

Vast changes have taken place and with the advent of the new bridge on Wellington Street, who knows what the future has in store for the properties in the immediate vicinity?