

"For Sale". This well known sign was displayed a few days ago in front of the plant of the Sylvester Manufacturing Company at Kent and Victoria Avenue, and thereby hangs a story of one of Lindsay's pioneer business men, a gentleman who was endowed with great talents, an inventor, and a pioneer in the manufacturing of farm machinery. His name was Richard Sylvester, and he built one of the finest industries Lindsay ever had.

It is interesting to note that the block bounded by Kent, Sussex, Russell, and Victoria Avenue was the original site of the Lindsay Agricultural Fall Fair. There was a small race track and also a long shed, which was at one time occupied as a drill shed by early army volunteers.

Richard Sylvester was a business man, and he was a great genius. At one time the Sylvester plow and the Sylvester reaper were recognized as leaders in Ontario.

The business grew to the point where upwards of one hundred men were employed in moulding, assembling, painting and selling. Agents were dispatched in many directions, catalogues were mailed to hundreds of farmers, and Sylvester products were very popular. The business expanded and the factory enlarged.

Richard Sylvester invented and manufactured one of the first combines in Canada. Thousands of dollars were expended on manufacturing and demonstrating, especially around Winnipeg and in the western provinces. A combine was set up and demonstrations of the

big machine were carried out in many wheat fields. Farmers in the west were not quick to recognize the benefits of the combine, and the coffers of the Company were drained to the limit.

In later years combines became recognized as the farmer's best friend, and soon the wheat fields of the prairies were swarming with competitors combines.

Hemmed in temporarily by finances Richard Sylvester returned from the west, and with the skillful aid of his sons Milburn and Karl, a new field was explored, the firm devoted its major effort to manufacturing the Sylvester lorry, a hand-car used extensively by railway companies.

The Sylvester product was good and new business was created in Canada and the United States, and in more recent years under the management of a new owner, K. G. MacDuffie, the business has continued to expand in other countries.

Richard Sylvester was the architect and builder of a fine white brick house at the corner of Peel and Victoria Avenue. This mansion was for years, a landmark in Lindsay. It was well built. It was fitted with walnut, pine, and oak, and it contained water basins and other details which were new at the time in this part of Ontario.

The house was commodious and well furnished. The grounds were landscaped, and looked after by a gardener. There was a running fountain on the lawn, and the house and large barn were surrounded by an expensive iron fence.

For many years, a number of employees lived in small houses on the present Victoria Park, and later Richard Sylvester, who owned the greatest acreage in the park, had the houses removed and the park turned over to the town. It actually should be called Sylvester Park.

Richard Sylvester was a benefactor in other ways. For many years the firm sponsored the Sylvester Brass Band, which became known far and wide as one of the finest instrumental organizations in Eastern Ontario. Many men were given employment in the plant because they were good bandmen. The late W. H. Roenigk was brought to head the band as bandmaster. He later became the owner of a music store and of the Academy Theatre. The band was the pride and joy of Lindsay.

The Sylvester plant was outstanding with a tall corner tower from which was unfurled a large Union Jack.

In the early days of the industry, Robert Sylvester, a brother, was associated with the firm, and he was quite active in military circles. He later rose to the office of Colonel.

Two sons of Richard Sylvester, Milburn and Karl, carried on the business for many years, the latter having served on the Lindsay town council, was president of the Curling Club, and was engaged in other fields of local activity. Mrs. C. M. Squires of 8 Mill Street, is a daughter of the late Richard Sylvester, as is Mrs. E. R. Michie of Toronto.

In closing let the orchids be for the late Richard Sylvester

an inventive genius, a pioneer business man and a public benefactor.

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Fraternal Societies were more numerous in Lindsay than today and these societies were well attended. People had more time to visit each other and to attend secret societies. The gasoline buggy was not known, and although men folk were not too lonely, yet there seemed to be a craving for a special kind of fraternalism.

There were lodges known as "Sons of Ireland", "Sons of England", "Sons of Scotland", "Knights of Pythias", "Woodmen of the World", "Black Knights" etc.

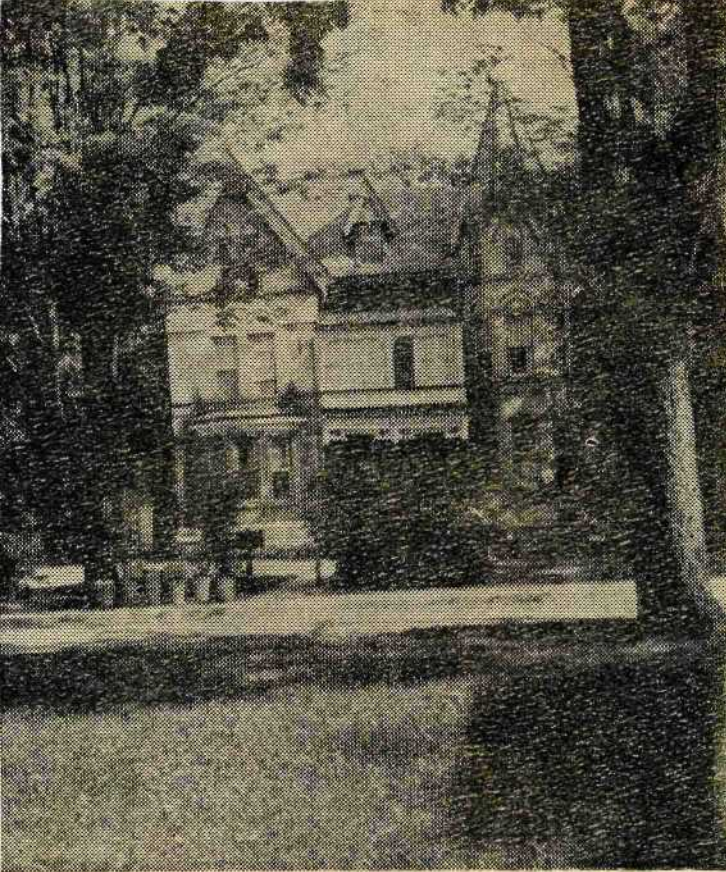
Now that the Victoria County Historical Society is soliciting financial support, to erect a larger building to house the museum, it came to light recently that among the most recent articles to reach the museum was a nicely framed Charter of the first "Sons of England Benevolent Society" organized in Lindsay.

The document was dated March 1st. 1889, and the names appearing on the Charter included: L. H. Lloyd, J. Cummings, W. J. H. Rogers, J. Higgs, J. H. Wallace, F. Barr, J. Robinson, W. Rogers, Thomas McConnell, W. Woods, P. Palmer Burrows, D. Lloyd, and J. L. Dunsford.

Some of the names are still familiar to the senior citizens in Lindsay. P. Palmer was a medical doctor who was wont to write letters to the papers, and he always signed his name, a courtesy many of the writers of today seem afraid to do.

The name of Dunsford recalls the days when this gentleman was County Registrar, and his distant relatives include the Edwards family on Russell Street; J. W. Wallace, who was known as Captain Wallace, and his son, Harold is a well to do resident of Vancouver, B. C.

A Lindsay business man who was prominently connected with the Sons of England for many years was James Boxall. One who was active with the Sons of Scotland was James Keith, a seed dealer, and Dan Cinnamon, a hardware merchant who was head of the "Woodmen of the World" for years.



Pictured is the fine white brick house at the corner of Peel and Victoria Avenue in Lindsay known as the Sylvester mansion. For many years a landmark in town, the story of this interesting mansion appeared in Wednesday's "Post" in the "On the Main Street" column.

—"Post" staff photo