

“There is a tavern in the Town”. Remember the old song? It was sung with gusto and vociferously in many hotels in Victoria County, according to the information at hand.

In Lindsay, away back there were some baker's dozen hotels in Lindsay. Today there are only five, the Grand Union, Maunder's or Central Hotel, the Kent Hotel, the Royal and the Benson Hotel.

Sixty to seventy year ago there were myriads of taverns or hotels in Victoria County. In fact it appears that every hamlet, every main four corners in every township boasted a hotel.

Eldon Township had its share and Bidy Young's hotel near Bolsover was one of the most hilarious. It is reported that Bidy could swing a mean right arm and that she ruled "the home on the road" with an iron hand. It is said that one of the girls that lived on an adjoining farm was the woman who became Lady Mackenzie, wife of the one time famous railway magnate Sir William Mackenzie.

In time the pretty village of Kirkfield had one of the finest old English style Inns to be found in the province. It was built and operated by the Mackenzie people. The beautiful building was destroyed by fire.

The village of Argyle had a large hotel. In fact the sign "Royal Hotel" is still painted over the front door of the building that is now a residence.

Argyle was a busy spot, especially in the summer and fall months when long queues of grain wagons could be seen hauling grain to the mill which was located near the railway track. The old Grand Trunk station at Argyle was looked after by a big dark haired man named William Grills, whose son, the late Art Grills, rail-roaded out of Lindsay. Clayton Grills of Lindsay is a son of the late Art Grills.

A man named Smith was the village "smithy" with a frame structure on the north-west corner of the main four corners. The store at Argyle is almost a legend. A man named Hawkins was among the first owners well over half a century ago and this merchant handled almost everything needed by farm wives at the time. In fact the store was often visited by Lindsay people who found among the conglomeration of merchandise the articles they could not find in Lindsay stores.

As time went by a gentleman named Thomas F. Myers became the owner. He was by birth a tiller of the soil and for some time ran a productive farm at Long Point, Balsam Lake. He gave up the occupation of a farmer, when his health was not too good.

Myers was a thoroughly conscientious storekeeper and did well. Then came the day of the Flemming take over and under his ownership the store has become widely known (and is today), especially in the war days and during this period auto tires could be purchased no place but at Argyle.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Dan McQuarrie, well and widely known Lindsay resident for years, and now residing in

a lovely home on the old Oakwood Road, hails from Argyle. He spent several years on the old homestead, then became a teacher in the district and later in Western Canada and he finally became Registrar of Victoria County.

### **BUTLER HOUSE**

There were two hotels in Lorneville, one on the main street and the other known as the Railway Hotel, because it was located immediately north of the railway station. For a time it was operated by a man named Butler, who later took over ownership of the Butler House in Lindsay, which was situated where Fee Motors stands today. Dick Butler ran the hostelry for many years.

The hostelry for many years. The largest village in Eldon Woodville, had three hotels and all three did a "land office" business. One was located where the McIntyre Service Station is now located, one was on the present site of the community hall and the third was located just east of the present bank building.

Coboconk has had the "Pattie House" for many years, and one of the owners of longest standing was Ed. Jackson and his wife. The hotel was noted for its excellent meals and fine hospitality.

There were two hotels in Victoria Road in the days when the village was a lovely mercantile centre with a number of stores and two churches.

One of the most popular hotels was at Glenarm, and the village was at the time complete with a blacksmith shop, a large Presbyterian Church and manse and a very busy general store, a store which still serves the area well.

### **SIMPSON HOUSE**

Still in Victoria County, the village of Kinmount had two hotels with the old Simpson House being the one where the most fights took place. It was the centre of attraction for lumberjacks and they usually had plenty of money to spend.

The Cataract Village (Fenelon Falls) so named because of the tremendous flow of water over the dam and through the locks, boasted three good hotels, The Twomey, the Aldous, and the Brook's Hotel. Fenelon Falls was a very busy place, especially in summer. There was also an hotel in Fenelon Township at Cambray.

Many years ago the summer resort at Sturgeon Point had a hostelry known as the Simpson House, operated by the same gentleman who ran the Simpson Hotel in Lindsay. It was never rebuilt following a disastrous fire. At the time

Sturgeon Point was recognized and advertised as one of the finest resorts in Ontario. It is today a beautiful resort with many fine summer homes. At one time Sturgeon Point boasted of having more fishermen than any resort in the area, or on the Kawartha Lakes. Sandy Flack was a champion fisherman and had a record of hauling in two hundred fish in one season.

Another summer resident at the Point, who was a smart fisherman, was the late Sir Joseph Flavelle. Fishermen were surprised one fine summer morning, bright and early, when they spied Sir Joseph sitting in a swivel chair in his boat casting on all sides. To keep the strong rays of the sun from penetrating too deeply, Sir Joseph had a large umbrella rigged up over his swivel chair.

Not to be outdone, Bobcaygeon had the well known Rockland House and the Genosha. The former was known as the home of hospitality; the haven of American fishermen, the hotel with the best home cooked meals. Some of the well known proprietors were Davis, Kellett, Potts and Hicks.

Moving into Mariposa Township, Oakwood had a large brick hotel which is still standing at the four corners of the village, several stores, and the Hogg and Lytle grain elevators a mile south.

The name can still be seen above the front door of the old hotel at Cresswell, a place which for many years was operated by a man named Keslick. This gentleman had two sons, Harry and Howard, who turned out to be first class baseball players. The hotel was known as the Lattimor House. There were also two hotels at Manilla where farmers stayed over night when drawing grain by wagon to Port Perry or Port Bolster.

Just across the county line Dixon Jewett operated a large hotel in Cannington, and there was also Brock Hotel in Sunderland, even in more recent years a mecca for Sunday evening diners.

In the distant past the Township of Ops had one of the oldest hotels in southern and eastern Ontario. It was a fine stone hotel located a short distance south of Reaboro on the Peterboro road. The history of the tavern, at one time known as the Half-Way House, dates back to the time of the Connolly family and the operator was a great-great grandfather of Gerard Connolly of Lindsay.

It is understood there was a tavern on the roadside near the village of Dunsford in Verulam Township, and also an hotel in Downeyville.

Omemee village was the centre for many gatherings at

what was at the time a large brick hotel, which building still stands on the main street.

Old timers record the fact that many hotels in the area were well conducted, offered fine meals, good accommodation for man or beast, and with well operated bars. Other hotels were known as "drinking holes" where there was generally a real brawl or two. Horses were faithful. I have seen many inebriated farmers climb into the seat of their wagon or buggy, tie the harness lines around the dashboard, start the horses for home, and while he slumped down and had a good sleep, the faithful steed took him home and he never woke up until the horses stopped at the barn door", one old timer added.