

The peaceful village of Woodville is one of the prettiest in the County of Victoria.

Strange to relate, although the populaion is predominantly of Scottish descent there must have been a number of active Irishmen in the village at the time the settlers began to "pitch their tents" in the new metropolis of Eldon Township, for the place was once known as "Irish Corners".

Forty or fifty years ago the thriving village had a population of 600 but according to a sign at the entrance to the village, the count has lowered to 450, despite the fact that there are at least 50 more homes in the village than when the census was recorded at the higher figure.

With a citizenship of thrifty people, it has been said that they are also in many instances lovers of horticulture, and the grounds of the popular reeve John Campbell is one of the many flower bedecked premises.

Woodville has had for many years two of the largest and best churches (United and Presbyterian) to be found within the bounds of the county and for miles beyond. An interesting aspect of the changing thinking of the times has been evidenced in the fact that three fair-sized hotels and a jail have long ago disappeared. A number of stores are no longer in existence, but nevertheless the village can still boast a number of good places of business.

The village smithy under the spreading chestnut tree is no more, and the carriage shop has vanished, but there is a good library, a large community hall with gallery, good merchantile stores, and the old grist mill and railway station still among the landmarks.

The brass band which was a good organization is no more, but citizens still manifest a keen interest in sports with a recently built arena and a new curling rink adds to the popularity of the village.

The writer can recall the large congregations at Sunday services in the churches, especially in the former Methodist Church where Christmas concerts were a special feature, and a treat to old and young.

A large wooden platform was carefully built over the pulpit loft, and boys and girls took their seats on a tier of seats. Tthis alone was quite exciting and thrilling.

A recent stroll around the railway station brought back fond memories for the writer, the days when there were several daily trains, when a bus transported commercial travelers and other passengers to and from the station. The driver was a kind man who allowed boys to stand on the high platform at the rear of the bus.

The old station has not been painted for several years and it is weatherbeaten, but the black train board is still in place. The typed bulletin was in place announcing the depot opening hours from 8 o'clock in the morning until 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

The station is still furnished although it is many months since the seats in the station house have been used by train passengers. These trains have been discontinued, but a few freight trains still travel and the track glistens in the sun.

An old time bench with iron arm rests is still in place on the platform, but it is paintless and worn in ridges by the noon day sun and the blasts of winter.

The freight shed to the north is down, but a portion of the once long platform still remains. This brought back to mind the day when three boys played around a large pile of lumber, and boards which protruded out farther than others were used as a spring-board. When one of these boards sipped out of the pile one of the scallywags fell three or four feet to the ground and broke three toes. Dear mother managed to make a crutch out of several laths and sewed a cushioned pad on top to go under the arm pits. There was also the time when boys climbed on top of board fences in order to mount their stilts. Walking through gardens and over fences was an accomplishment. The old grist mill near the station is still in operation, the young owner being Jan Bucking who hails from Clairmont. He disclosed that an electric motor used to run the mill dated back to 1905. The writer pointed to one of the long cone-shaped chutes that funnels the grain from the second floor to the ground floor. At the bottom of the chute was attached an iron bracket with a sharp peg to hang the bags on, while being filled from the floor above.

One of those iron hooks caused an accident years ago. A small boy was playing in the mill at the time, and he ran into the chute, the small end of the iron clamp making a real dent in his forehead and caused a temporary black-out. That was the end of escapades in the old mill.

"How old is this mill?" was the question asked of an old timer who was basking in the sun talking to the miller. "Must be nearly a hundred years" was the reply. "This district must be over one hundred years old — the other day I was in the cemetery east of Woodville and I saw one tombstone which was dated 1840."

The Gaelic speaking folk have passed on but their memory is revered by Woodville pioneers today, and the little old grandmothers who smoked peacefully at an old clay pipe are still remembered for their saintly ways and modest living.

The long brass footrails in the three hotels and the brass cuspidors are no more but there are some who still remember those "good old days".

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School inspector Harry Reazin, and Grandpa Knight and school principal Murray Wilson are still entrenched in the memory of many Woodville people.