

How many residents of Victoria County, close to home or far afield, ever heard of a settlement known 94 years ago as the "City of Peace"? In 1892, the now village of Victoria Road was practically a forest and close by was a section of beautiful Balsam Lake.

In 1894 the settlement became a village and the late T. and N. Railroad built a small station, part of which still remains. It is recorded that the settlement was first called "The Road" after a colony road and that for some unknown reason the burg was named "The City of Peace".

Perhaps the Indians had something to do with the idea as many Indians paddled over the placid waters and roamed through the wooded land. One of the largest and most valuable collections of Indian relics at Toronto was donated to the province by George Laidlaw, the founder of the old fort on Balsam Lake, south of Victoria Road.

It was around 1879, that the village began to grow and became a village of over 200 people. As time went on peat bogs were developed and tons of this type of fuel was transported by the railroad. The village enjoyed a boom and hotels, churches, stores, grist and lumber mills sprang into being.

Further "up the road", a four corner settlement became known as the North Star and Uphill village. This road was travelled by hundreds of people from various parts of the country bent on picking huckleberries, now known as blueberries. These luscious berries, were picked by the bucketful and also filled milk pails and milk cans. Even today, berry pickers take delight in ferreting out these leaf hidden berries.

At one time the village was a hub of mercantile activity and a number of prominent businessmen lived there. One was a Mr. Shields who started at Victoria Road, with the family name still carrying on today at Coboconk and Bobcaygeon. Chirpaugh owned and operated a good hotel and also took an active interest in municipal matters and represented the village on Victoria County Council.

Thompson ran four mills where the grist was ground by huge stone grinders. John Magwood had a general store and also became the first manager of the Victoria Trust and Loan Company in Lindsay. A young and progressive storekeeper was R. A. Anderson who went to the Canadian West to seek his fortune. He located in Saskatoon and developed a large mercantile business in Moose Jaw.

W. J. Neall was another fine storekeeper and his son, a former Reeve, is at present a businessman in Victoria Road.

A businessman who took an active part in the church and other community matters was G. Clarke Staples, who was the son of a farmer at Long Point but at an early age became a school teacher. He was for several years the owner and operator of a store and later was in the hardware business at Kirkfield.

Today Mr. Staples resides at Oshawa and is enjoying excellent health. Blacksmith shops were as necessary in these early days as garages and service attendants are today, and the popular and industrious "smithy" was a gentleman named David Ryckman. The name and family is well known in Lindsay, Norland and Coboconk still today.

The busy medical practitioner was Dr. Jack Grant, and the postmaster A. C. Graham was also a storekeeper and

many a person gathered at this store to receive mail and pass the time of day.

It will be remembered by many former residents of the village that the children had good training under good ministers and first class schooling under excellent teachers.

“The Peace City” was for many years in the dim and distant past a lovely place in which to live and today is the home of many fine families.