

# ON THE MAIN STREET

*Mar. 6/68*



While watching a game of curling in the Peel Street rink a short time ago the writer of Main Street was approached by Mrs. Percy Hill of Woodville who remarked: "Why don't you write a story about Woodville? You know your Mother played the organ in the Methodist Church."

The questions opened a flood gate of memories. It was there that I, (pardon the personal pronoun), as a wee lad, broke three toes in a fall from a pile of lumber on the station platform and then walked on a pair of home-made lath crutches. It was in Woodville that I was stunned when I ran smack into an iron apparatus which clamped bags of grain onto a cone shaped grain shoot in the old grist mill, west of the station. It was there that I received a cut on the upper lip when another school boy threw a sharp piece of ice which curved and caused a bloody gash which Dr. McKay sewed up with three stitches. It was at Woodville that I earned my first silver coin when a kind farmer named Anderson gave me a small stick and showed me how to knock pesky potato bugs into a small can and there were hundreds of them.

It was a farmer's son by the name of Herb. Coad, a man whom I admired, who "hired" me to cut down hundreds of yellow flowers he said were bad weeds. They were known as Mustard Weeds.

It was at Woodville that we boys crawled under the platform of long wooden planks in front of the Edward's Hotel to pick up shiny coins which had fallen out of the trouser

pockets of men staggering out through the swing doors and at times it was quite messy under that long wide platform.

It was in Woodville where we had to wear brass toe caps on our horse-hide boots and boys did not like these caps, nor did we fancy short corduroy pants, we well remember the thrill of walking on a pair of stilts, seemingly high in the air and it was necessary to climb up on the garden fence to mount the stilts.

One of the horrible experiences was the day we stood up bravely on the rear steps of the hotel passenger bus as it was pulled along a muddy road from the station to the hotel. We were spattered with a slimy mixture of "horse fruit" mud. What a trimming we received that day!

People went to church and many a cutter or buggy ride was ours as we drove after the Sunday morning service to the Grills' home in the Grand Trunk Station at Argyle, the Greenways south of Woodville, the Coad's at Lorneville, the McIndoo's and Anderson's. Wonderful boyhood days.

Now about historical Woodville, the metropolis of Eldon Township. No one seems to know where it got the name. The once small hamlet was called "Irish Corners", not because there were many of Irish extraction (they were predominately Scot's descent), but after a man named Irish who lived on a corner. At one time the village like "Topsy" in the story book, just grew and grew and had a population of nearly six hundred. There were four hotels plus a Temperance

House. The centre of trade had a planing mill, furniture factory, a potash plant, two blacksmith shops, carriage shop and a grist mill which is still operating. The Methodist and Presbyterian churches had large flocks. The Village Constable, Simon Dumond had many visitors in the little stone jug which was a curiosity for youngsters on the roadside a hundred feet north of the Hotel on the road to Lorneville.

Probably the most widely known and most highly respected business man was Mat J. Stoddard. He was in business as an Undertaker and a casket manufacturer at Cambray before establishing a business in Woodville. He was a devout religious man, a keen man of business, and in all his life portrayed the essence of a gentleman.

The name Stoddard is still prominent in the Village and district.

When the name Smith is mentioned around Woodville just about everyone gets into the conversation. Cecil Smith has been a life-long resident and as one party said: "he has had his finger in practically every pie and everyone has been good." For years he was in business with J. Ruan and J. Campbell in the Mercantile store. He was a good bandsman and at one time the leader, following such leaders at Matt Stoddard. Cecil Smith has contributed a great deal to the Church of his choice as choir soloist and choir leader. This same gentleman has been a member of the Barber Shop group in Lindsay. He played baseball and hockey, a bit of

lacrosse and for years was active as a curler. He is a Past Deputy Grand Master in Masonry.

George Smith of Woodville was an Ontario land surveyor followed by his sons Walter and Oliver and the latter's son Eldon Smith.

People who helped Woodville in days of yore: Dr. Grant, Dan Grant, Bill Grant, Tracey Grant, Frank McPherson, J. G. Eyres, Margaret and Jessie Ferguson, Annie and Jessie Gilchrist, Murray Wilson, the school teacher, Tom Morrow, Russell McLeod, McGowan, J. Staples, R. Sutzel, (shoe shop), E. Gill (Tinsmith), Jessie McSweyn (telephone), Clare Thorndyke, Ferd Long, Ethel Thomas (milliner), Jas. Vanstone (optometrist), S. Cavalery.

Woodville as a community has been blessed with two churches, a Masonic fraternity, baseball and hockey teams and a fine Curling Club friendly hospitality.

Woodville has had its share of prominent men in the municipal arena. These include four Country Wardens in the persons of Adam Staback, A.D. McIntyre, Richard Howlins and John Campbell.