

It is interesting to recall the days when R. J. (Rollie) O'Leary was quite active in reportorial happenings. When interviewed some time ago he had this to say regarding old days in Lindsay:

"My last visit to Lindsay proved to me how much the old town had changed since my newspaper days there 1927 to 1934, as reporter and later editor of the Lindsay Post. The new housing developments, new factories, increased population and strange names on store fronts and in the rosters of community organizations are some indication of the changes of the past few decades. The general air of prosperity is very pleasant to see. Not so pleasant, however, is that one can walk up and down Kent street a dozen times without seeing a familiar face.

"Chief places of entertainment in Lindsay in the 20's and 30's were the two theatres — the Academy operated by genial Hi Meehan and The Kent. They provided a total of four movies weekly. Occasionally, outside shows like the famed Dumbells and the Mae Edwards productions were featured at the Academy; amateur stage shows by civic groups provided "entertainment" of widely varied calibre. Miss Hatie Bates, Guy Mills and Ted Hick were among some of the names I remember as stars.

Several pool halls were constantly busy including Williams, still operating under the same name and in the same location as well as Brooks which was located in the Tangney block. Spice to local life was added periodically by the Lindsay Central Exhibition, the visit of district Orange lodges at five-year intervals, political rallies, excursions on the Lintonia and Thurstonia and the occasional "Medicine Man" who set up his equipment in the shadow of the Town Hall.

"Radio favorites at the time were the Gospel Singers and the Amos and Andy show. The dulcet tones of the former could be heard from a hundred radios along Kent Street on a summer morning while everyone rushed home to supper or delayed going out on dates to hear the latest adventure of Amos and Andy.

“Canoeing was popular at the time and Hildenbrand’s on Ridout St. ran a thriving boat livery business. Swimming was considered to be good at the locks, the CNR bridge and the “White Bridge” south of town. Downriver the water was “murky” to say the least.

“For good, clean inexpen-

sive fun the political conventions and civic elections were tops. They provided real down-to-earth, tub-thumping oratory that would be hard to beat. That was where I learned (from people under heavy fire) that "a shining mark makes the best target" and that "the most sticks are found under the best apple tree."

"The late Richard Kylie, who probably did more than anyone else to give Lindsay good paved streets was quite huffed one evening when someone charged: He'd pave the darn river if we'd let him.' Mr. Kylie, as mayor of the town made a very graceful speech in welcoming about 10,000 members of Orange Lodges to town. Concluding he referred to the fact that he was a Catholic, and then drew the heartiest applause of the day with the suggestion: 'And now, if the local constabulary will escort me to the safety of my home, the festivities may commence.'

"Another night to remember was in the provincial elections in 1934. Local Liberal candidate William Newman had prepared a short little speech to welcome provincial leaders to a mass rally in the armouries. But the big wigs were delayed by car trouble, and Mr. Newman talked on and on — for two solid hours. He was hoarse at the end, and had repeated himself occasionally, but the Liberals won a sweeping victory that year — 65 of the 90 legislative seats — under Mitch Hepburn. It's intriguing to think that Mr. Newman's oratorical marathon may have turned the tide. Even Mr. L. M. Frost went down to one of the few personal defeats he has ever suffered. He was one of the first to shake Mr. Newman's hand in congratulation.

"One interesting news story of the early 30's concerned kindly, gentlemanly George A. Jordan, who had sentenced four men to the County Jail shortly before Christmas. But they were given a good Christmas dinner, a goose being provided by Magistrate Jordan, plum pudding by Sherrif R. J. Patterson and oranges etc., by jailer Harry Stone.

"In depression days relief quarters were set up in the Armouries with Allan Blewett in charge. Railroad men with 20 year's service could not find a fun; farmers could not pay sufficient wages to coax men off the relief roles; hoboes set up an impressive "jungle" near the CNR bridge.

In 1932 fewer people could afford a haircut, so local barbers started a price war which reduced the cost of a haircut from 40 cents to 15 cents.

"Many residents will remember some big fires of the 1931 period. Up in flames went Beal's Tannery at the Wellington St. bridge, the Lindsay skating rink on Lindsay St. S., the Gull River Lumber Company in the Sylvester block and the Carew Lumber Mill.

"Some spectacular court duels in those days were carried out by the late J. E. Anderson, Crown Attorney, and two of Ontario's best defence lawyers at that time — L.M. Frost and his brother the late Cecil G. Frost. Their verbal duels always attracted large