

# on the MAIN STREET



"Cab, Sir?" Half of Lindsay's population never heard this one time greeting used by drivers of a cab years ago. The Workman's had the best cabs and the service was good and manners were never forgotten.

At first the fare was a small dime and later on a quarter to any place in town, but the drive to and from the hotels to the railway depot was the most familiar.

Antique dealers would like to get their hands on the beautiful large brass lamps that stood out prominently on the cab dash boards.

Day and night the cabbies were on hand, in fair and foul weather. In the winter months, which were longer and colder years ago, the cab driver was always at the railway depot and many times he lacked passengers. None of them got rich but they raised large families and did very well.

It was a cold job in winter and every cabby appeared to have a coon coat and warm gauntlets. In fact coon coats and grizzly bear coats were "quite the thing" and the richer folk were able to afford beaver coats. Many of the knee robes were actually buffalo skins, so the youngsters were told.

Some of the cabbies adorned their upper lips with a small or a large bit of shrubbery called a moustache, and "believe it or not" as Ripley would say, in cold weather some moustaches were coated with ice in the "good old days".

Horses had to be tough but on the whole they were co-operative, jogged on the good stretches of road and slowed down to a walk going through pitch holes. For the "green horns" it should be explained that pitch holes in the winter time were caused when snow drifted on the roads causing banks or heaps of snow to gather in spots. There were no modern snow plows and at times, especially on country roads, the snow drifts were unsurmountable when horses sank to their bellies and had to tug with all their strength to pull cutters and sleighs through and over drifts of snow.

These were the days when busy travellers and others travelled by train to Lindsay and if they had to do business with storekeepers in the villages they hired a livery horse and conveyance.

One of the most familiar cabbies was a gentleman named "Friday" Madison. He was polite and he sat on this top front seat as straight as a rod. He was a bachelor and lived in a small shack south of the Grand Trunk Station. Sad to relate, Friday met a tragic death in his shack when the over-heated stove pipes caused a blaze. His special customer with his cab was Judge McMillan who never walked from his residence on Mill Street to his office in the Court House.

Among the few cab drivers today are the ones found in the City of Quebec who make a living driving tourists on sight-seeing trips.