

LONDON REGION

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), JAMES REANEY (EVENINGS) 679-0230

December 31, 1992

ANNEXATION

Goodbye Westminster, hello London

The town is no more as of tonight, but it has a humdinger of a history.

By Chip Martin
The London Free Press

Today marks the end of Westminster's 175 years of municipal history.

The township-turned-town ceases to exist at the stroke of midnight as revelers celebrate the arrival of 1993.

London's near tripling in size means nearly all the town is absorbed into the city, with smaller sections hived off to Westminster's neighbors to the east and west.

The community of about 6,500 will be

taken into a city of 300,000, so a certain loss of identity is to be expected. Town council and the Westminster PUC are abolished.

Westminster is expected to play a large role in the future development of London and city residents are about to learn how important their new municipal partner will be. It straddles Highways 401 and 402 and the city's focus is expected to shift toward those major arteries of industry and commerce.

While its political structure and boundary may vanish, the *community*

of Westminster will, of course, remain. The strength of any community is its people. And they take pride in Westminster's history and its contributions. Westminster has already made a significant mark on London which has been gradually nibbling away at it for years.

Herewith we present some snapshots selected from Westminster's thick scrapbook. You may find some tidbits you either forgot or never knew.

BIRTH

Westminster was created as a township in 1798 at the second session of the Second Provincial Parliament of Upper Canada. It was a constituent part of the county of Middlesex which at that time

also consisted of the townships of London, Dorchester, Yarmouth, Southwold, Dunwich, Aldborough and Delaware.

SETTLING IN

In 1809, Abraham Patrick of Niagara Falls became the first official settler, building a log house along Dingman Creek near Lambeth.

Before him, many squatters had already established homes in Westminster, the earliest recorded being a native of New York state, Peter Hagerman, who built a place in 1801 along what was later to become Commissioners Road.

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