

Bigham, the Mover Limited

By Dianne Denby

Bigham the Mover Ltd. is truly a company with reat history. The company was founded in 1920 by Fred Bigham when he purchased a 1916 Model "T" Ford truck. As luck would have it - his luck anyway - a major ice storm hit Oxford County shortly thereafter. Fred

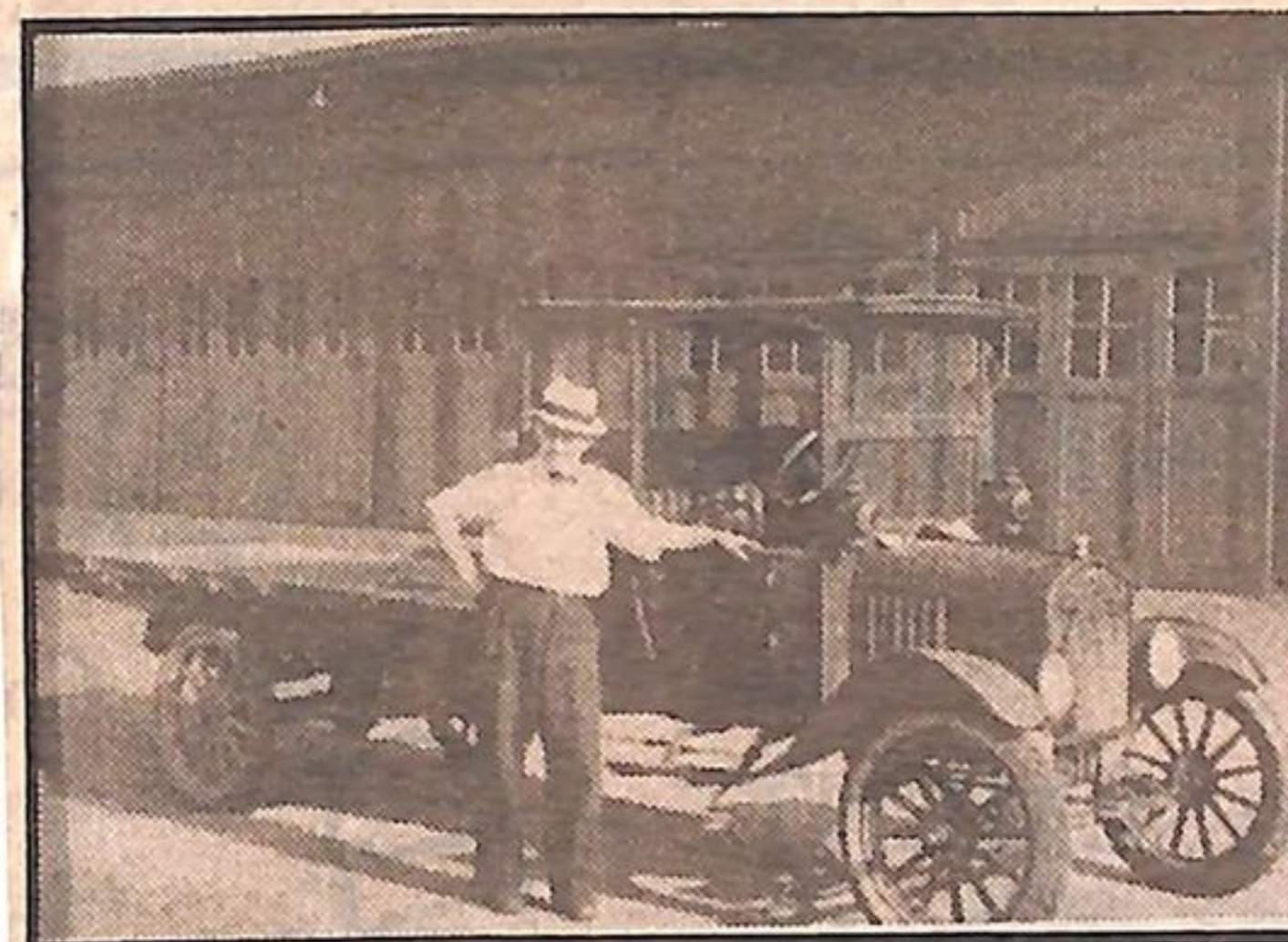
and his truck were hired by Bell Canada to transport their men and equipment to repair downed lines. This job lasted several months and from that point on Fred simply used his truck to move whatever people had to move. Gradually his business evolved to specializing in the household goods area.

In 1960 Fred passed away, but the business was, by that time, being managed by his son, Gordon.

Although the company has primarily focused on the business of moving households, they have also never shut the door

to opportunities down different avenues. During the war they hauled shell forgings from Holman Machines to Hamilton to be welded, returned them to Woodstock to be assembled and boxed, and then transported them to Ajax where they were shipped overseas.

After the war, they again found the largest amount of their business to be private moves and eventually became a member of Allied Van Lines. In the 1950's road transportation across the country became viable and since that time they have, as members of Allied, moved families across the country.



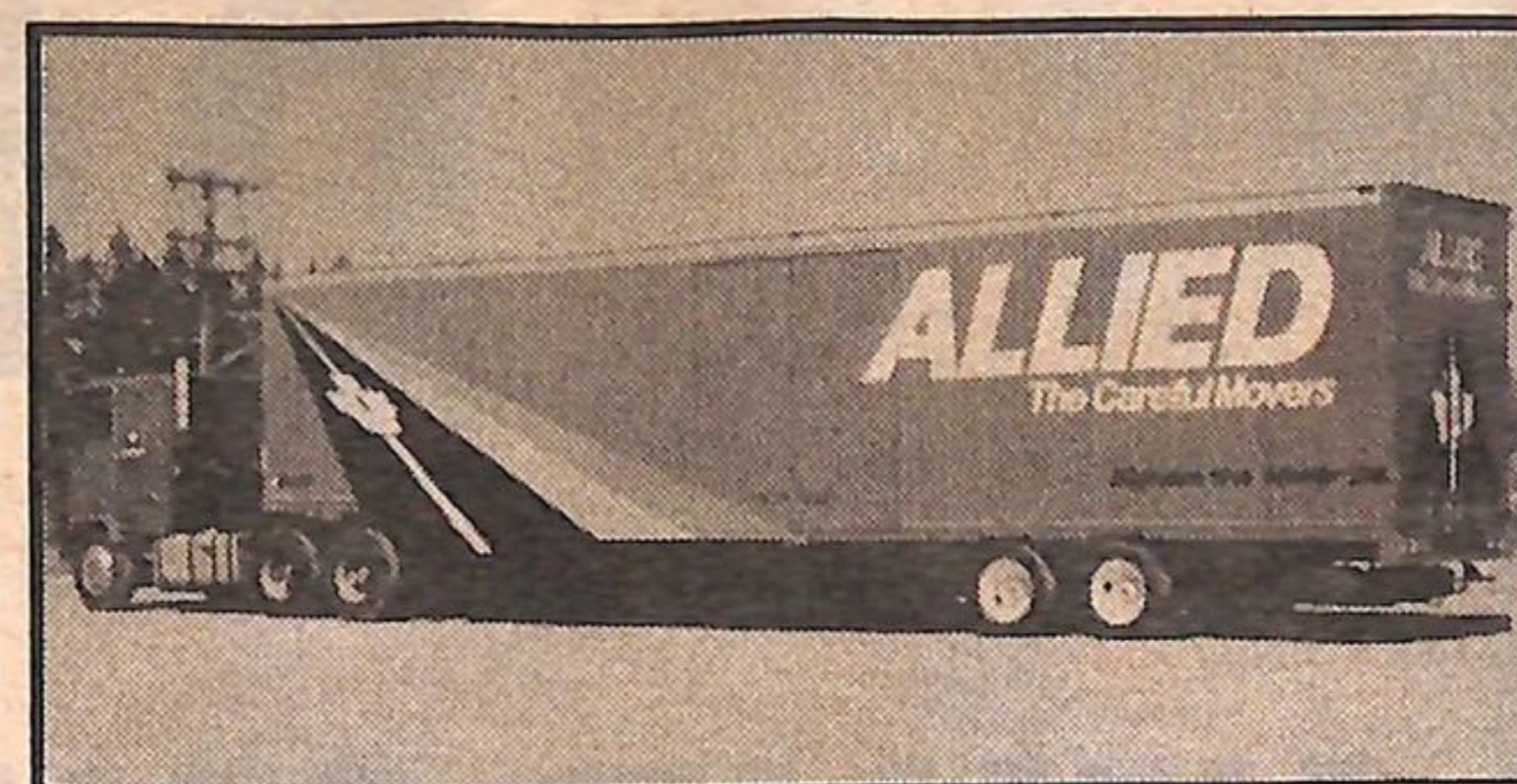
Fred G. Bigham with his first truck, a 1916 Ford Model "T", which has made trips as far as Toronto and Barrie at a maximum speed of 15 miles per hour. This vehicle is still in their fleet of trucks.

The company, which started with just one employee 73 years ago, has grown to employ 8 full-time plus additional part-time staff as the need requires. Bigham's also has additional qualified staff they can call on during their peak moving season from May to September.

As a service oriented company, Bigham, has had to adapt themselves to meet the particular needs of their customers. For instnace, the requirements of an elderly customer selling a home to move to an apartment, are different than those of a young couple moving into their first home.

Moving can mean anything from transporting one valuable item to moving all of your possessions locally or cross-country. It can also be as varied as purchasing packaging paper and doing your own packing and box moving, leaving major appliances and furniture to be moved by the movers. To the scenario I'm sure we would all rather have, walking out of your home as the movers are walking in to do all of your moving, including packing.

One of the company's most humorous moments came a few years back when they were delivering a customers goods to Montreal. In the neighbourhood there lived a very curious cat who decided to have a look around the inside of the truck. After Bigham's left, the neighbour suspecting that the missing cat may have been inside and called the Woodstock



The truck of the 90's

office. The truck which was headed for the east coast, luckily made a stop at an Allied agent before leaving Montreal, and the hitchhiking cat was able to be promptly returned to his anxious owner. Howard hastily added that they don't normally move pets.

Although Gordon, who is now 82 years of age, is still active in the company, the reins were taken over in 1977 by his son Howard.

Howard, a business graduate of the University of Western Ontario, has continued to expand on the service Bigham the Mover is known for, but has also increased the business to include other aspects such as furniture storage.

Their on-premise storage area is fully heated in the winter and is insulated to prevent wide temperature fluctuations in the summer. Upholstered items are plastic wrapped and stored on individual racks. Other furniture is padded, and together with boxed items, is stored in large wooden containers. Storage charges are based on the cubic space used.

Plans for the future of Bigham the Mover Ltd. may include a fourth generation Bigham at the wheel. Howard's 12 year old son Daniel has shown an interest in the company, but Dad says he'll wait to see how his interests unfold before making any predictions.



Staff, Of Bigham The Mover Ltd.

For the present, Howard's philosophy is to earn a living by providing quality service, and in the future the focus on quality can only increase as customers rightly expect work to be done right the first time."

That sounds like a good philosophy to me!