



The Ilderton centennial parade was an hour late starting Saturday, but was worth the wait. Bands and theme floats were included and the one which drew the most chuckles involved firemen extinguishing an outhouse blaze.

Ilderton's first century goes out with a bang

By DERIK HODGSON
of The Free Press

ILLDERTON — Normally this is a quiet community of about 400 persons.

But this was not a normal weekend, as population mushroomed from Friday to Sunday while Ilderton celebrated its 100th birthday.

A mile-long parade started the celebrations Saturday with four bands and a number of comic and historic floats as an estimated 6,000 people watched.

The Midlanders Drum and Bugle Corps from London had the honor of leading the pa-

rade and inadvertently started a small stampede.

The marching band let out a tremendous blatt with their horns and drums as they passed a group of animals getting ready to join the procession.

A goat, a dog, a horse and two pigs decided they weren't music lovers and headed for the back 40.

The parade was the biggest ever held here and probably one of the best in the area in recent years.

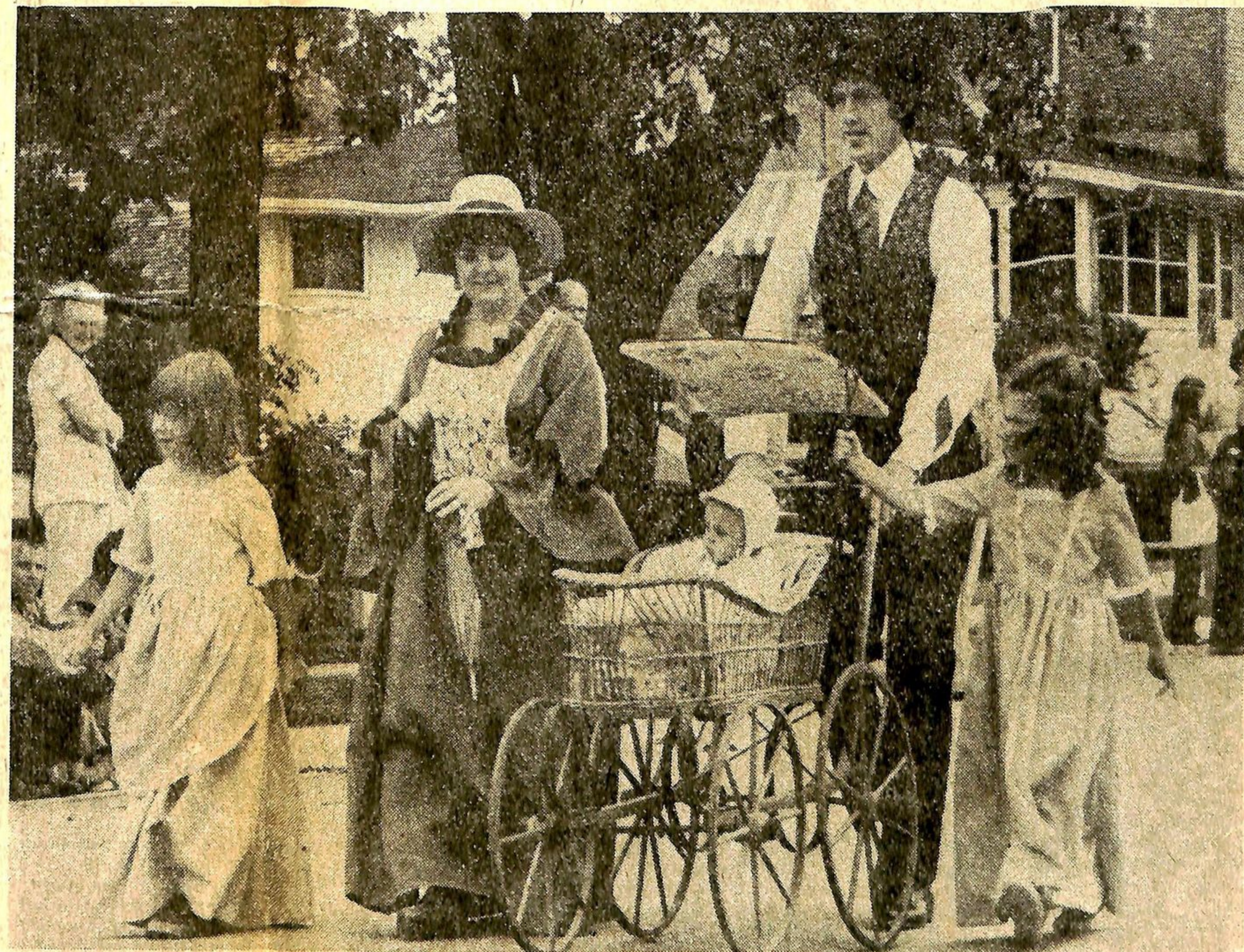
More than 100 units took part, including

Shriners, bands from Goderich and Ingersoll and dozens of antique cars and farm implements.

The Strathroy and Ilderton fire departments turned hoses on each other mid way in the parade and renewed their battles on the tug-of-war field later in the day.

Other events Saturday included log-sawing and pole climbing contests.

The celebration actually marks the start of rail service through the community in 1876. Local historians believe the first settlers started to arrive in the area around 1820.



The Taylor family of RR 1, Ilderton, dressed in the garb of the pioneers, put seven-month-old Adam in an 85-year-old baby buggy and marched proudly in the Ilderton centennial parade Saturday.

Centennial reminiscences puff out of Ilderton's past

By BRIAN CHRISTMAS
of The Free Press

ABOARD THE MOUNTAIN-TYPE STEAM ENGINE 6060 — About 750 people went from Ilderton to Clinton Sunday the way they used to many years ago — by steam locomotive.

The 80-mile return trip was the finale of Ilderton's weekend centennial celebration.

"This is what we had a 100 years ago, so we wanted to do it for the kids," said Tom Robson of the centennial committee.

Many people dressed for the occasion, sporting 19th century attire and some with full growths of "centennial beards."

The engine left an intermittent trail of thick, black smoke as it wormed through wheat and

vegetable fields. Herds of livestock were sent into a frenzy by the unfamiliar sight and sound.

Those who couldn't buy the \$10 adult and \$5 children tickets but wanted to be in on the fun, formed a motorcade in hot pursuit on a road which paralleled the rail line part of the way to Clinton.

Many railway crossings had dozens of picture-taking and tape-recording spectators fascinated by the olive green hulk.

Some of the 13 coaches offered quiet air-conditioned comfort.

A brass band "rolled out the barrel" as people sang and ate from picnic baskets.

At Clinton, bagpipers escorted the travellers to a nearby park where a plaque was presented to Clinton Reeve Harold Lobb.

Clinton was chosen as the train's destination because it has a "Y" track enabling it to turn around. The Ilderton centennial committee paid \$9,000 to charter the train, Mr. Robson said.

Allen Brewer, Norm Nicholls and Roy Hick, all long-time employees of CN, were at the controls of the "iron horse."

The engine, built in Montreal in 1944, serviced western provinces until being retired onto a concrete slab in Jasper, Alta., around 1960.

Public outcry forced its revival in 1973, said Mr. Brewer, a master mechanic at CN.

The 125-ton locomotive still can travel

