

Halton's Pages of the Past

Main Development of Milton Occurred in 1850 To 1870; First Council Meeting Held in 1857

by GWEN CLARKE

From memoirs and records relative to the town of Milton we gather that the town developed most rapidly between the years 1850-70. In fact, according to the late Charles Jones, there was more business there than in 1900.

The first meeting of the town council after Milton had been officially designated as a town, was held on July 4, 1857, when the following officers were installed: Mayor, George Brown; Reeve, John White; Councillors, John Martin, Wm. Smiley, Edward Martin, Joseph Bell, Jas. McGuffin, Wm. Robson and Wm. Hill. Town Clerk, P. M. McKay. The town had been divided in surveys which are still known as the Martin, Tetzell, Foster, Joyce and Harrison surveys.

By that time many of the first settlers had passed away, among them Jasper Martin, Hugh Foster, Henry Willmott, John Holgate, Dr. Cobban and others, leaving the responsibilities of the growing community in the capable hands of their descendants. The old log cabin buildings had been replaced by frame structures, which in turn gave way to brick or stone.

The first school house in Milton was the brick building at the east end of Main, now occupied by Brown, the florist. In addition there were several private schools, one where Mrs. Dewar now lives, was run by Miss Bowes; another on Queen Street, the present home of Mrs. R. Galbraith. There was also a Grammar School—T. G. Matheson was headmaster.

The first church in Milton was known as "the Auld Kirk," near the west end of Main Street and was organized in 1846. It was built in a grove of trees on the site of Mr. Tom Ramshaw's house. Later the building was moved to Mill Street and became the residence of the Austin Tuford family.

In 1852 the Wesleyan Methodist church was built. The foundation stone of the old church is embedded in the basement of the present United church. The old building is now used as a Sunday school.

The first Anglican church, a frame building, was also built in 1852, on land donated by Joseph Martin. It now stands at the back of the present church and is used as a Sunday school and parish hall. The deed for the land was registered in 1860 as being "from Joseph Martin and his wife Jane, to the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto."

In 1854 the Rev. Francis Tremayne was appointed by Bishop Strachan as the first rector of the parishes of Milton and Hornby. In '58 the Mission of Lowville was ad-



THE MILTON INN was known as the McGibbon House when this picture was taken years ago. There used to be large stables for customers' carriages and mounts behind the inn; the arena has been located there since travel became mechanized. The building was first called the Wallace Hotel.



FIRST SCHOOL HOUSE for Milton was the brick building now occupied by Brown, the florist. It is at the east end of Main Street. In Milton's early days there were also several private schools.

ded but later replaced by Christ Church, Omagh, in '61.

Another Church, the Presbyterian Free Church, was built on Martin Street in 1855, in 1831 this building was taken over by the Halton Rifles for use as an Armoury. When repairs were being made, the contractor, Mr. McKenzie, of Georgetown, found a most interesting document in a bottle, enclosed in the church wall.

It said in part as follows: "The congregation of this church was formed July, 1855, on which date a committee of eight was appointed: James Riach, saddler, George Ingles, baker, Thos. Ross, tailor, Wm. Cummings, farmer, Wm. Chisholm, farmer, Chairman, Wm. Kennedy, secretary, John Stewart, Milton."

A petition was drawn up and presented to the Presbytery of Toronto, requesting that Milton be recognized as a station for Gospel Ordinances. The petition was granted. Then, until such time as the church was built, permission was given to allow the Free Presbyterians the use of the Court Room for religious services.

At a meeting of the committee a subscription list was got up for yearly contributions on a quarterly basis. The secretary made it known that "John Martin had offered a town lot on Martin Street on which to build a church." The offer was accepted. Tenders were

let for masonry, plastering and carpenter work to Wm. Adamson and Samuel Morse, totalling \$729.10 shillings, and authority given to proceed with the work.

Says the document—"This they have succeeded in so doing up to the level of where this bottle and its contents are deposited, this 7th day of July, 1856, which day was appointed for the ceremony of laying the foundation stone, performed on which the church stands."

The Roman-Catholic Church built at the east end of town is approximately 100 years old. At one time it was planned to remove the building to the site of where the new Bell-Telephone Exchange now stands. The plan was later abandoned as being impractical.

There was also a New Connection by John Martin, the giver of the church, which stood on Queen Street—a frame building. The pastor was the Rev. Mr. Caswell. The church building was later sold to John Hunter who converted it into a dwelling and occupied it until his death.

The business section of Milton was well supplied with stores, industrial plants and taverns. There were two sawmills—Lindsay's on the corner of Fulton and Pearl, where apple barrels were also manufactured. The other mill was known as the Milton Steam Mill.

A large foundry was built in 1855. This was first owned by Samuel Morse and later by Joseph Brothers. Threshing machines, mowers and reapers were made there; gross returns during peak production was around \$40,000 annually.

Of course there was Martin's Mill and there was also a second grist mill on Commercial Street which was destroyed by fire. A small tannery occupied the site of the present Bank of Nova Scotia and a much larger one was near the creek where the Milton Poultry Products plant now stands.

Other industries included a metal factory on Victoria Street, Waldie's blacksmith shop; at its present location, MacKenzie's blacksmith and carriage works where Mrs. Fred Robinson lives, Ramshaw's "Quality Buggies" on Commercial Street, McLaren's blacksmith shop opposite the Kennedy Hotel, later taken over

by Tom Weir, who did wonderful wrought-iron work, Milton-Saturday and shoe store—Taylor and Whyte.

In 1864 a general store was run by James McGuffin, a grocery by James Hollinrake; grocery and liquor by G. Smith; millinery and dress-making establishment, Misses Christie; Linsmith, J. B. Willmott; druggist, J. Willmott; printing, at the Office of the Canadian Champion, established in 1860.

The population of Milton up to 1871 was 1350 and its citizens were certainly well supplied with local taverns. The Kennedy Hotel was formerly a grist mill. When the mill discontinued business, the building was moved to its present site and changed to an hotel. The Thompson House was a large frame building on the site of the Farmers'

building. Just below it was Hampton's Hotel. Another tavern—"Speed the Plough"—was located on the premises recently vacated by William Dalas. The Milton Inn was successively the Wallace Hotel, the McGibbon House and the Mitchell Inn. It had very large stables where the arena now stands. There was also the Halton House and the Farmer's Inn.

At one time MacNab and Son's furniture store was the Milton Post office. The town hall was built in 1865, the contract for building was let to one Peter Zimmerman. His likeness can be seen cut into the stone work above the keystone of the front door.

(To be continued next week.)
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FOR helping to improve his own and other communities throughout the nation... for benefiting his fellow-citizens in countless ways... this man surely deserves special honour.

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