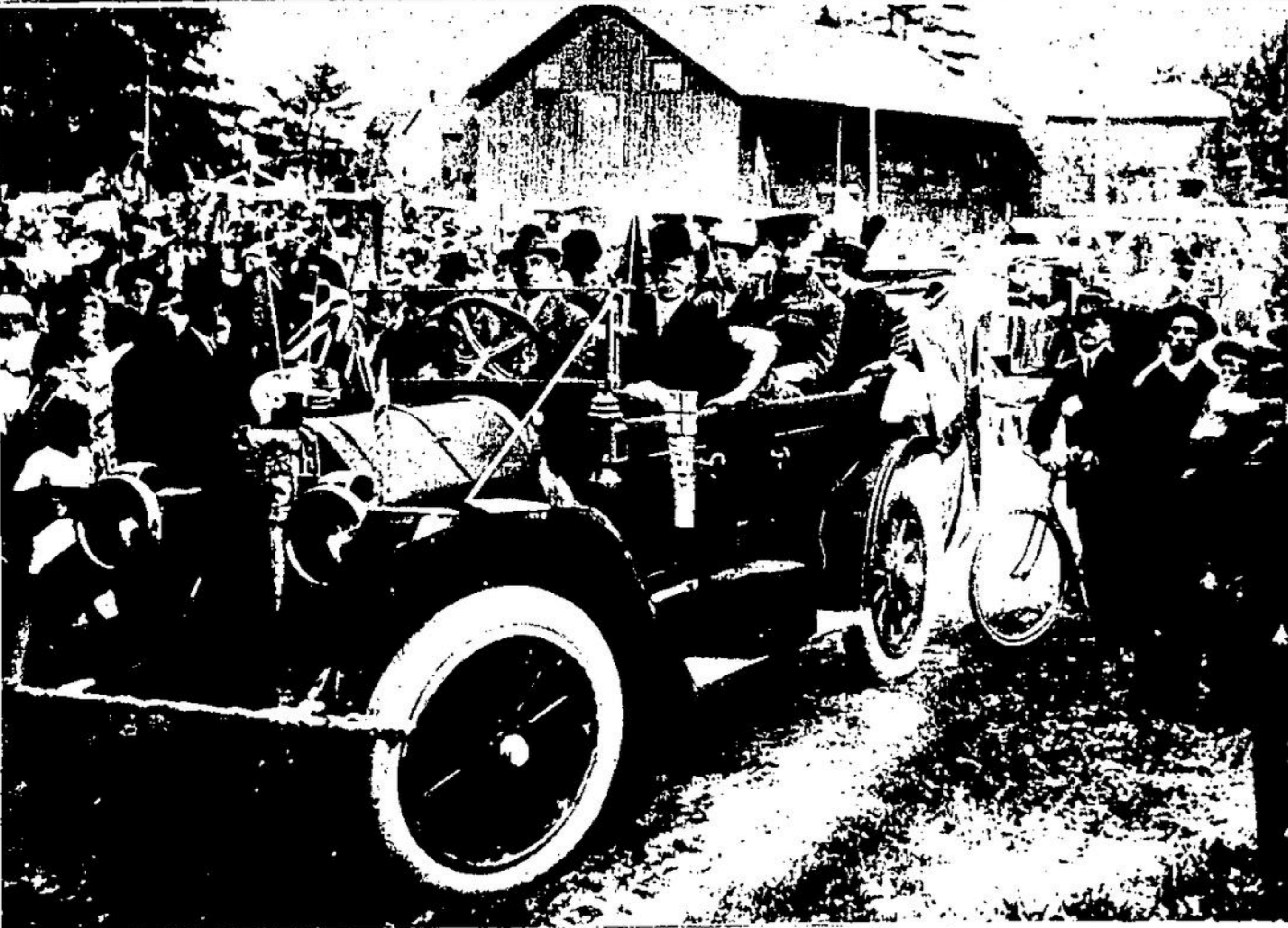




PIONEER DAYS DOWNTOWN GEORGETOWN



Col. James Ballantine returns home from the Great War in 1915 and is seen here entering the Georgetown Fairgrounds as hundreds come out to greet him. In the background is the building which is now the armoury used for training by C Company, Lorne Scots Regiment.



A photo of the Georgetown Citizens Band, the date during the 1920s of which is unknown. It is believed the photo was taken

Bootleg whiskey made 'good' medicine

Dr. C.V. Williams arrived in Georgetown in 1922 fresh out of medical school in Toronto and full of zeal.

He's 81 now and able to laugh at how shocked he was by the less than hospital standards of cleanliness he sometimes encountered.

Still he can list an impressive number of health improvements that came to Georgetown while he was practising here.

He had Dr. McAllister and Dr. Ross for competition when he arrived so it took time to get a practise worked up.

"I guess I had about 100 families in my practise after the first year," he says.

He used a Model T Ford most of the time, but occasionally he rented a horse for country calls if the roads were impassible.

He was married a month after he arrived in Georgetown and set up housekeeping with his bride in a house on Main Street.

"We nearly froze there," he laughs, "and we had frogs in our basement."

Before long they rented a house on Queen Street for \$30 a month.

"When they raised the rent to \$35 we thought that was too much and we bought our own house on Main Street," he recalls.

That house is now the Thompson-McCauley Building although "they have changed the inside of it all around now, of course." Dr. and Mrs. Williams lived in the house and he turned the front room into an office.

Georgetown residents requiring hospital treatment had to go to Guelph or Toronto in the early days. Since there were no ambulances they travelled by train. If patients were on a stretcher they were put in a freight car and the doctor went with them to see that they didn't suffer fresh injuries on the trip.

Brampton Hospital, when it first opened, was in a three-story private residence. Patients had to be carried up and down the stairs on stretchers. "I suppose there was an orderly around to help sometimes," Dr. Williams says, "but the doctors and nurses grabbed an end and helped carry patients most of the time."

The population of Georgetown was approximately 2,000 when Dr. Williams arrived. He became Medical Officer of Health in 1924, or thereabouts and received the grand sum of \$100 a year for the job.

He proudly says that 95 per cent of the parents in Georgetown were "willing and anxious" to have their children vaccinated for smallpox and inoculated for diphtheria when free clinics were set up in the public school offering the service.

"This wasn't a backward community, you know," he says.

He is also proud of the "very enlightened council" the town had in 1937, or so, because it passed a bylaw forcing local dairies to pasteurize milk for sale in Georgetown.

"A young child in the area died of tubercular meningitis

and we traced it to contaminated milk," he says. "We were the first municipality outside of Toronto to have a pasteurized milk bylaw. The province didn't pass that kind of legislation for quite a few years after we had it."

He also remembers visiting Cedarvale when it was a home for pre-delinquent girls. The United Church Department of Evangelism supported the place and a Miss Oliver ran it.

There were 20 girls there at a time, he says, and they stayed two to five years depending on their maturity. They ranged in age from five or six to twelve or so.

So far as he knows, none of the girls had ever been in problems that landed them in court, they just came from such bad homes that they had to be taken out of the situations before they became delinquents.

They would stay at Cedarvale until they were able to get jobs to support themselves. None of them were adopted and none of them got into any troubles he heard about after they left Cedarvale.

When his practise was firmly established Dr. Williams had patients from Scotch Block, to Ashgrove, Ballinlad and Terra Cotta and all over Georgetown.

He worked seven days a week and every night. Saturday was his big night.

"People came to town to see the show on Saturday and when it was over they'd stop around to see me about their ailments. There was no such thing as an appointment so I was often busy until 11 o'clock on a Saturday night," he says.

Since there was no such thing as an answering service or a day off he used to take a month at the cottage with his family every summer "just to get to know them again," he

jokes. Babies arrived at home when Dr. Williams first came to town. He tried to persuade mothers to come for prenatal care but a lot of people though it was unnecessary, "especially the husbands" he grins.

He charged \$15 for prenatal care, delivery and the check ups that followed the birth. He had practical nurses to assist at a home delivery but they were untrained and used to appeal him in the beginning with their primitive ideas of sterility. He got used to it though, and discovered that babies were harder than textbooks and medical instructors would lead you to believe.

Although some doctors performed minor surgery in their own offices with a practical nurse to administer the chloroform or ether, Dr. Williams did not.

Asked whether he had much business in the line of wife or child beatings, illegitimate babies, or the sort of medical problems we read about in the daily papers, he grins.

"Nope. We were a grand WASP community and too pure to get into any of those things."

He sobers and admits that there were a few drunks, of course, but life was much simpler and the pressures were a lot less than fifty years ago.

Crime was virtually unknown in town, "smug as that may sound," but people could get jobs if they really wanted them and therefore they didn't have the problems we face now.

He remembers the time of prohibition when only doctors and bootleggers could get your whiskey. He admits that there were bootleggers not far from Georgetown, but he had a lot of customers with colds and flu bugs that couldn't be shaken,

especially around Christmas. "Whiskey was the medicine we prescribed for those ailments in those days," he chuckles, "but I don't know how much fun they'd get out of Christmas on a two ounce shot. That was all we prescribed."

There were doctors in large

centres who were known for selling whiskey prescriptions at \$2 each. Their customers came daily for their prescription and may even have gone to several doctors to get a daily supply. These men were really frowned on by their colleagues, he says.



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