

Fun then was spelled Livingstone Park

Livingston Park was the scene of many happy times in the early life of the town of Milton. But let's look back to its earlier beginnings.

In 1822, Jasper Martin Settled in what was then the Township of Trafalgar. In all probability their first habitation was the log cabin. This, however, was evidently soon replaced by three fine houses which have withstood the test of time for well over 100 years. One of them a brick house, the home of Dr. C.A. Martin; another the stone house on the property where the Separate School was built and the third the residence of the late P.L. Robertson, founder of the P.L. Robertson Screw Manufacturing Co.

A gravel driveway a few feet south of the C.P.R. tracks is the entrance to this attractive, early Colonial, three-storey, ivy-covered house, as solid as the day it was built. It is a house of many windows, most of which are plate glass.

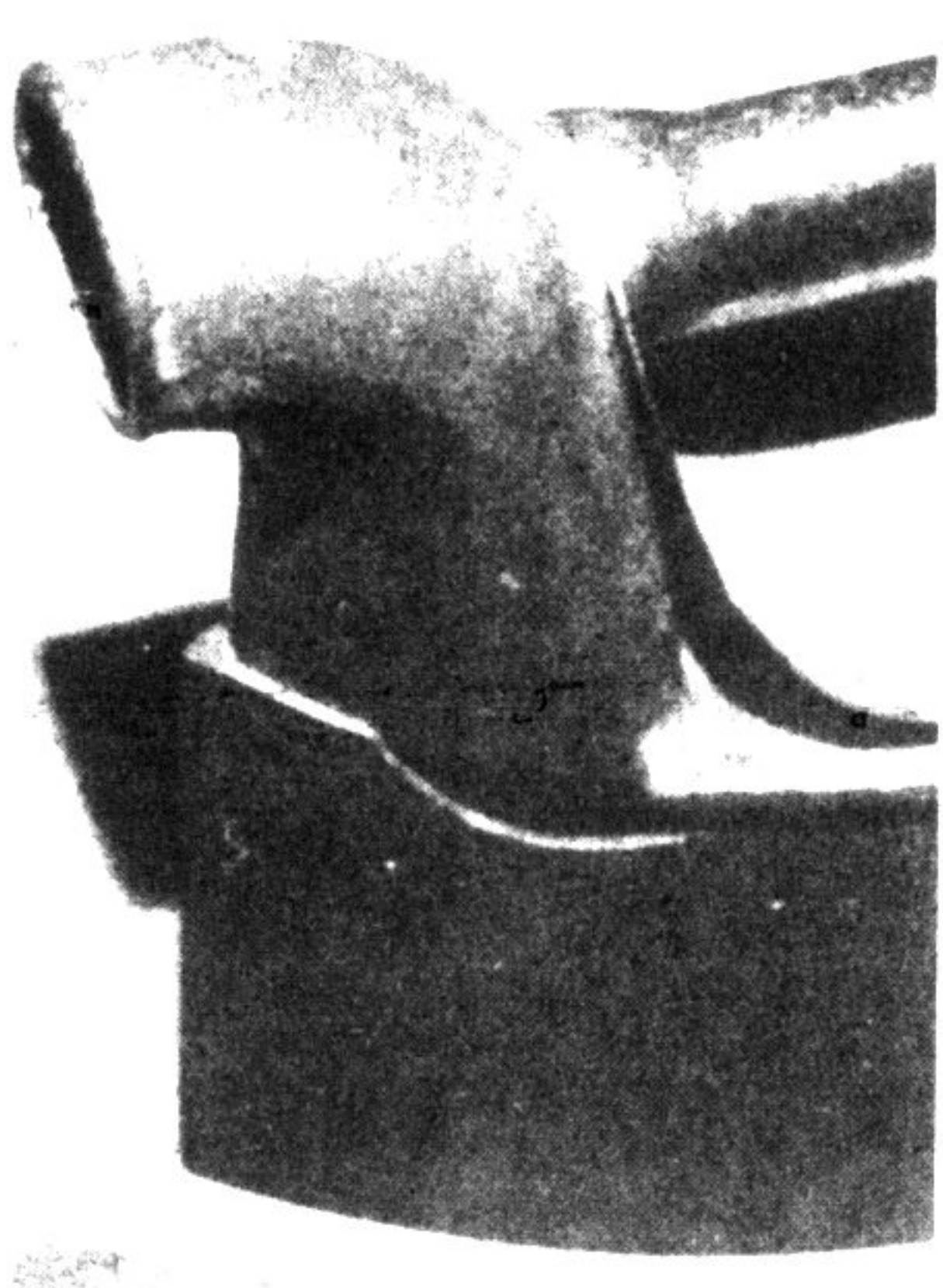
Oak Staircase
The second and third floor rooms have hardwood flooring throughout in a squared parquet design and there is an imposing oak staircase with carved newel posts.

The house is built on a knoll which slopes

January 5, 1871—The election of Mayor took place on Monday. An arrangement was come to, we believe, by which Dr. Freeman, who has filled the office for the past year, was allowed to "walk the course", only 32 votes being cast altogether.

March 15, 1871—Mr. D. McGibbon has opened a new law office in the town hall.

Bicentennial Trivia Quiz



What is it?

Answer Page 12

gently down towards Martin's Pond skirted by its six acres of woods.

About the middle of the last century, this particular Martin residence passed into the hands of Thomas Racey, one of Halton's prominent officials. He was the first Registrar for the County of Halton but before settling down to the peaceful pursuits of civilian life, Thomas Racey had fought for the Loyalist cause in the War of 1812 and held the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

Provides Power

The pond in years gone by not only provided water power for Martin's Mill but was also a sanctuary for a great number of wild ducks which were, of course, protected by local game laws. Back in 1871, three prominent young men of the district, well known for their sporting activities, were summoned to court to answer charges laid by Joseph Martin for alleged violation of the game laws by shooting a duck on the pond.

The shooting of the duck was admitted but proof was lacking that it was a wild one. The case was dismissed on the grounds there was not sufficient evidence to establish the identity of the duck. Joseph Martin, "owing to the shock to his feelings" stated that henceforth pleasure-seekers would be barred from walking along the mill-bank and the navigation of the pond forbidden until time and circumstances should produce a change.

The next occupant of the home was apparently T.G. Matheson, barrister and crown attorney for the County of Halton.

Livingston Park

Then came a public spirited gentleman by the name of Livingston. Under his ownership the property became known as "Livingston Park" and was thrown open to the public for recreational purposes. There were swings and slides for the children, tables and benches for the convenience of picnic parties; canoes and pleasure boats on the pond and facilities for sporting events both winter and summer.

The tree shaded pond was used in summer for boating and swimming and provided a good field of ice for winter skating. Sunday school picnics and garden parties were held quite frequently, a band often being engaged to add to the enjoyment. At some time in its history, house parties were a popular feature and dances were held in the ballroom. (The ballroom has since been divided to make a ground-floor dining room, kitchen and breakfast room).

Later Owners

As far as can be determined, the late P.L. Robertson was the next owner of the property. The grounds and the house continued to be maintained in excellent condition although they were no longer open to the public. The property was then purchased by Mr. and Mrs. B.A. Fromow, who have since transferred the property to Mr. and Mrs. Kernigham and one of Milton's newest industries, Beacon Chemicals.

March 15, 1871—A young man named Campbell, for some "irregularities", received a coat of tar and feathers from some of his neighbors in Esquering. It is expected the matter will come up before consideration of a legal tribunal.



This rare photo shows the Sons of Temperance, Hornby Division No. 216 at a meeting held in December 1898.

From Jan. 31, 1935 Champion article

Look back at Miltonians

By Anna C. Ruddy

During the past year or two, I have noted from time to time, through the columns of the Champion, or through letters received, that there is a growing consciousness in Milton of her own past history, a sure sign that her first youth is past.

Much that I have read has come from oldtimers like myself who have been away from Milton for years and whose thoughts, or perhaps longings, go back once in a while to the old town. One exception was Mr. Jones' fine article, in which I was much interested. I hope he will open up some more chapters from his book of memories, and it would be well if a few others would do the same. I should like to name some whose recollections would be well worth while preserving, but I forbear.

Old buildings are interesting only if they have a history, and history is all-mixed up with personalities that count.

Milton in the late sixties and early seventies, which is as far back as I remember, was a little town of approximately one thousand persons. The nearest railway was at Bronte. Street lights were unknown and when it rained, the town was a sea of mud. Sewing machines were an innovation and people were still rejoicing over the great improvements in house lighting, in the coal oil lamps over the tallow candle.

On the farm, the old ways still held. As a small child, I saw Mr. Johnson Harrison sowing his wheat by hand. Even now as I close my eyes and see his tall figure untiringly walking up and down the rows, rhythmically scattering first from one hand, then the other, the grain which was later to

be reaped with a cradle and threshed by horse power, or perhaps by flail. Milton children of that day were in large part the grandchildren or great-grandchildren of the early pioneers and heard, frequently at first hand, tales of the days when the forest was still uncleared and wolves and other wild things roamed the woods. It was no easy life the older people told about.

On a farm adjoining the present town of Milton, somewhere about one hundred and fifteen years ago, the farmer and his sons were hard at work clearing their land of trees and stumps in order to plant as much of it as possible that year. They were working against time, when suddenly the logging chain broke, a major catastrophe, for the nearest blacksmith was in Muddy York (Toronto), 30 miles away through a more or less uncharted wilderness. They had to have the chain, but the men were urgently needed at home.

A 16-year-old daughter of the house promptly wrapped the chain around her body and started out on a long trip, which she successfully accomplished. A 60-mile walk over a rough trail encased in heavy logging chain was an heroic feat, an every day affair ending simply by the chain being mended and the work going on as usual.

Whenever there was a settlement there was the little log school house, and a book might well be written about the schoolmasters of the early day. Undoubtedly some of them were men of learning from the old land, and many of them excellent teachers, but one thing could be said of them in general: they were autocrats who ruled with an iron hand. The strap and the birch rod were the favorite aids to a liberal education.

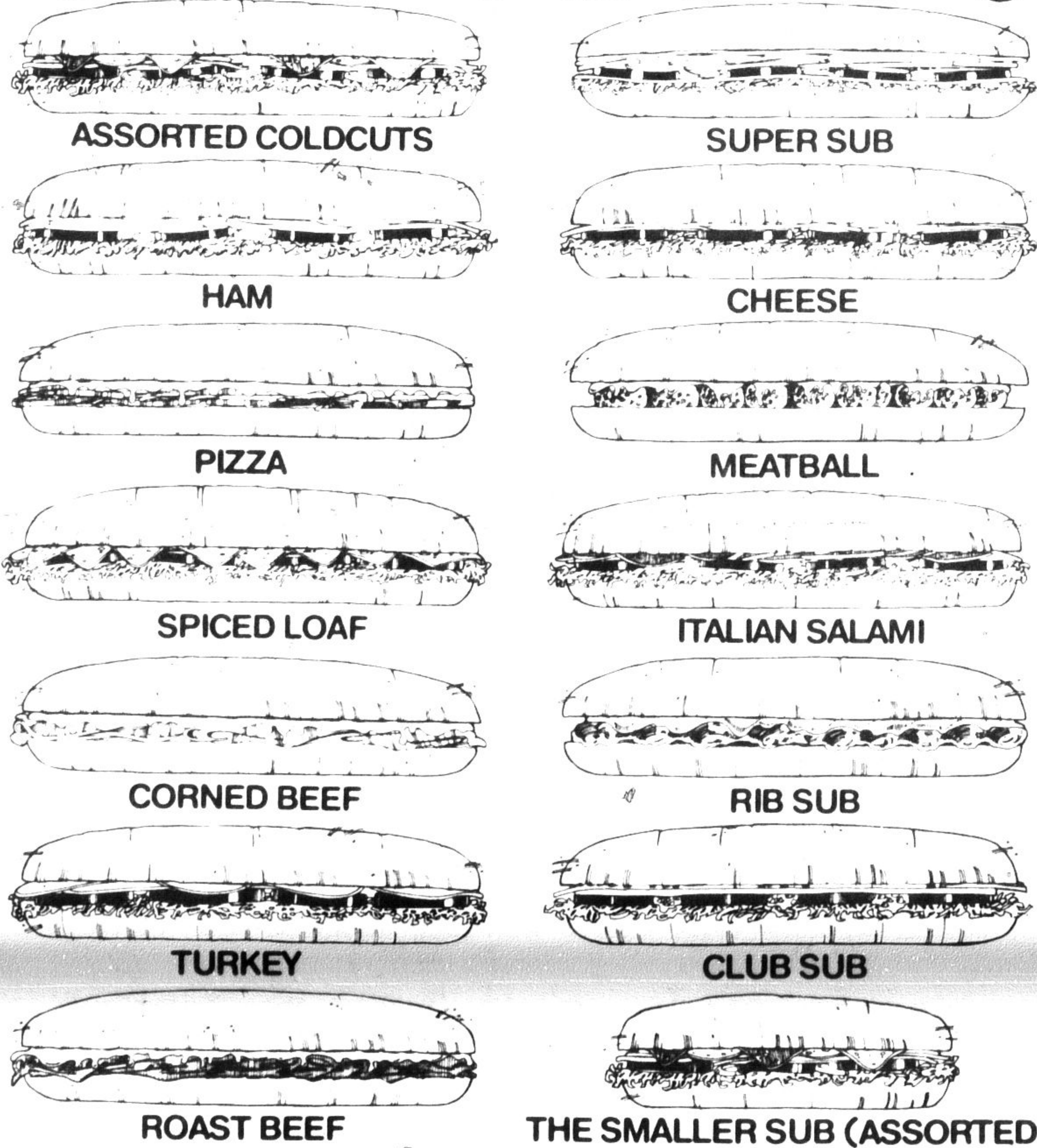
Sometimes the big boys rebelled and then there would be a free-for-all with the teacher not always coming out on top.

In what is known as the Ash school in Nelson some 90-odd years ago, there was said to be a widely known teacher named Dr. Fell, who was especially ingenious in the matter of punishment. A fence rail with the sharp edge up lay on the floor for pupils who did not know their lessons to kneel on while they studied. Running barefoot in the snow was also one of his favorite forms of punishment.

Books in the homes of the pioneers were few, but thoroughly read and digested. 87 years ago my grandmother was a widow with four small children on a half-cleared farm. She was ill in bed for three years and every day she spent a certain time reading to her little brood. What did she read - Mother Goose? Fairy tales? Not a bit of it. From cover to cover, in its entirety, she read to them Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire". She was Highland Scotch.

In the early seventies, Milton had six churches and five hotels. We called them taverns in those days. In 1872, the annual conference of the Methodist New Connexion church met in Milton and I think it was at that conference that the decision was made to unite with the Wesleyan and two other Methodist bodies. The New Connexion church building on Queen St. was bought by the late John Hunter and transformed into a dwelling in which he lived until his death. The congregation moved in with the Wesleyans in the older part of what is now called the United church.

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