

## We've come of age

This town has finally come of age. It doesn't have to take a back seat to any municipality in the province.

That's the message which centennial committee chairman Doug Dubeau carried to Penetanguishene's town council on Monday night. He reminded the council there was a time when many people in this town took a defeatist attitude. And it wasn't long ago.

In the late 1950's two major department stores; Eatons and Simpsons moved their business out of town. The overall economic situation looked poor. Many people were ready to give up on this area as a place to live and work and to raise a family in.

Things started to change for the better when the late Jerome Gignac took over as mayor of Penetanguishene in the late 1950's. It was under Gignac that Penetanguishene took steps to acquire a sewage treatment plant and first began a serious program of servicing all areas of town. Today 90 per cent of that program is completed and Penetanguishene is constructing a second sewage treatment facility.

Gignac's leadership abilities were carried on by his successors: Mary Rogers, Gil Robillard and our present mayor, Vince Moreau.

Today instead of disparaging over the future of Penetanguishene people talk about its assets and the very real and progressive developments in this town.

Developments like our Waterfront Park

where the town is actively engaged in reclaiming valuable beach property for the recreational purposes of its citizens. Why we've even gone as far as to build a man made peninsula along our waterfront.

Future plans call for three baseball diamonds, a new arena, tennis courts and a playground area at the Waterfront Community Park.

Now instead of looking to larger municipalities for leadership, we find they're looking to us as examples of what a progressive town can do. Our developing waterfront park is part of the reason. A modern industrial court which features the best aspects of textbook planning is another. An ambitious servicing program which has seen the completion of 90 per cent of the servicing requirements of this town explains part of why we're leaders. The ability of our municipal officials to attract huge sums of federal and provincial grant money, by proposing and submitting detailed plans of major projects, is still another reason we're looked up to by municipalities across Simcoe County.

Finally there's the fantastic community spirit of the people of Penetanguishene. We're small but we're mighty. We won't say anything more about our spirit, except to add that if you doubt it, come out to our "Old Home Week" celebrations - anytime. Then you'll see what community spirit is all about.

Happy birthday Penetanguishene. You're not getting older, you're getting better.

## Sugar and Spice

In defense of Yanks

by Bill Smiley

As regular readers of this column are aware, there are a great many things that bother me. On the whole, I'm glad of it. May I never become one of those people who are never bothered about anything, or if they are, don't have enough guts to say or do anything about it.

The list is endless: Celsius temperatures; those silly organs at hockey games; strident Women's Libbers; stupid male chauvinists; gutless politicians; lawless unions; greedy big business; chicken bureaucrats; tire-squealing adolescents of any age; mindless beer ads; town engineers who want to cut down trees; snotty hotel desk clerks; religious fanatics; ripoff artists in the social services; the Receiver-General of Canada; most administrators; most people who make more money than I do. I could fill a column.

This should make me a very disturbed young man. I use the term advisedly. How come everyone is getting old but you and me? Fortunately, this has not happened. There are so many things I like that I am usually in a state of happy balance, like a fat lady going on a diet of ice cream sundaes.

However, there is one thing in this country that grates me thoroughly. It's a nasty thing, spreading like a cancer, as difficult to fight, and just as fatal to the people infected. That thing is the steady growth in this country, fostered by a small, often vicious, but vociferous minority, of Anti-Americanism.

I don't think it has yet grown to uncontrollable proportions in the corpus Canadiensis, and I hope it can be cut out with some rigorous surgery in the right places.

It's a creepy, crawling business, and the healthy mind can be smeared with it subtly, without even noticing its existence. It's hard to pin down. You can find it among educators, in the press, among politicians, and in varying degrees of shrillness throughout the media.

Many honest nationalists are taken in, and eventually find that their pride in things Canadian has been warped into Anti-Americanism. Let there be no mistake. There is no real connection. The former is healthy. The latter is sick.

This has always been a country loaded with prejudice, whatever you may think. A couple of generations back, the Anglo-Saxons of this fine free country of ours looked down their noses, even though their own background was an English slum, a Scottish croft or an Irish shanty.

They spoke bluntly and disparagingly of lesser breeds. Germans and Scandinavians were Squareheads. Italians were Wops or Dagoes. French were neither Canadian nor

Canadien. They were Frogs or Peasoupers. Everybody from Eastern Europe to the Ukraine was a Hunkie. A black person was a Nigger. And a Jew? Well, a Jew certainly wasn't Jewish. He was "just a Jew". The only thing lower than any of these categories was a woman.

Think I'm romancing? It sounds pretty ugly, doesn't it? But I was there, gentle reader, and so were many of you.

With education, enlightenment, and a fine performance by most of those lowly immigrants, came a change in atmosphere. It became fashionable to be "tolerant", a word that has always made me squirm.

But not before the private schools, and the law societies and the medical schools and the golf clubs had had their Wasps-only barricades knocked down. It was ugly in this country.

The grandchildren of those earlier prejudiced people showed a remarkable lack of that narrowness. Canada was becoming an oasis of freedom for the individual. People were leaning over backward to prove they were liberal and "tolerant".

And now all that narrowness and secret hatred seems to be channeling itself into Anti-Americanism.

People in this country talked endlessly about Watergate, as though such a sewer of

corruption were peculiar to Americans. They sniggered about the antics of American leaders.

There was a particularly nasty type of something near gloating when the Americans pulled out of Vietnam.

There was and is a proliferating of popular articles about the Americans owning Canadian industry, buying up Canadian property.

Let's put an end to this slimy business. Let's look at our own dredging scandals and lawless unions.

Let's stop secretly cheering when the Yanks get a bloody nose somewhere.

It's not their fault that they're rich and powerful. They didn't seize our industry. We sold it to them.

France and Britain virtually ignored Canada when this country was abuilding. We owe them nothing.

We could have a lot worse neighbours than the Americans; in fact almost anyone I can think of.

Anti-Americanism is chiefly petty envy, and is found only among those who are petty and envious. We're too big for that.

## How we almost forgot our 100th birthday

Penetanguishene's municipal centennial is shaping up to be one of the most memorable events in this town's history. And that makes it kind of ironic because we almost forgot 1975 was our municipal centennial.

Does that seem hard to believe? If you think so, then you've got a short memory.

The following article appeared in the January 8 issue of the Penetanguishene Citizen under the headline - "Town officials ask Barrie for correct date of our centenary."

### The report that started it all

"Penetanguishene's 100th anniversary as an organized municipality has caught town officials if not completely by surprise, at least less than fully prepared for the event."

Mayor Vince Moreau recently said that he just realized within the past two weeks 1975 was Penetanguishene's centenary. On Monday a town official admitted that the exact date in 1875 on which Penetanguishene was incorporated as a village is not yet known. However, the official said a call had been put in to the Barrie Historical Department which may have a copy of bylaw incorporating Penetanguishene as a village.

Penetanguishene became a town on February 22, 1882 but 1875 was the year in which it first became an organized municipal body.

When Penetanguishene was incorporated as a village in 1875, Spohn became its first reeve. The councillors were: F.W. Jeffers, A. Charlebois, H. Marchildon, and M.J. Mundy; and the clerk, W.L. Keating.

In 1875 Penetanguishene's population hovered around the 1,200 mark, exclusive of the Boys Reformatory, now the Mental Health Centre.

According to the 1881 Simcoe County

Atlas, Penetanguishene at that time contained "about 20 stores of all lines, and several hotels, one of which cost over \$20,000" (quite a considerable sum in those days). The town was important then as a station on the Northern Railway and for its port of entry from which lumber was exported.

That concludes a brief outline of Penetanguishene in 1875. The essential facts are there, minus the incorporation date. For that piece of information history buffs will have to do what one member of the town office advised - wait for the folks from Barrie (specifically their historical department) to tell us.

Nothing like knowing your own history.....!"

### Six more years until our next centennial

Probably one of the reasons most people failed to realize that 1975 was our municipal centennial is because the history of this area goes back over 350 years. The Tercentenary Celebrations of 1921 celebrated our historical roots by re-enacting Samuel de Champlain's landing along the shores of Penetanguishene Bay back in 1615. Most people are aware of the history of the early French explorers, the Iroquois, the Hurons and the Jesuits, couldn't at first understand how we could be only 100 years old. But as an organized municipality we are. In 1875 this tiny settlement on the shores of Penetanguishene became a municipality by organizing into a village. Six years later the village of Penetanguishene was incorporated into a town.

That all adds up to the fact that we can have another centennial celebration six years from now in honour of our 100th birthday as a town. Let's not forget that, come 1981.

## Looking back

In the June 26, 1974 issue of the Citizen: Glendon College students were to formally launch a summer theatre program with two evenings of French plays in Penetanguishene and Lafontaine on the weekend.

Decor strikers at Decor Plant 3 ended a strike when they accepted a 65 cent per hour increase. That raised the starting wage to \$2.85 per hour.

Keith Spicer, Federal Commissioner of Official Languages, announced he was coming to Penetanguishene to learn something of the languages and cultural patterns in the area.

The Penetanguishene town council decided to purchase the old Dominion Store on Robert Street West for \$58,000. The store was to be used as the new site for the town office or the police station or a combination of both.

In the June 27, 1973 issue of the Citizen: Penetanguishene council leased the town docks from the federal government. It was decided total French classes would

not be offered in Orillia in September.

About 300 workers walked off their jobs at the Midland RCA plant.

Town council voted itself a raise. Councillors then received \$1200 and the Mayor \$3500.

Separate school teachers got a three to five per cent raise.

Eighteen local men were picked up by a provincial police cruiser about five hours after their 30-foot guide boat sank off Quarry Island.

In the June 28, 1972 issue of the Citizen: Miss Canada, Donna Sawicky, visited this area.

Penetanguishene was chosen as one of 28 Ontario communities to be studied in a national nutrition survey sponsored by the Health Protection Branch of Health and Welfare Canada.

Taxes for Penetanguishene property owners who support public schools were slightly lower than the year before.



Alfred Andrew Thompson, Penetanguishene's first mayor



The Thompson home at 14 Water Street



Andrew Thompson, Burkevale Separate School student

## The House I Live In

If he were alive today Alfred Andrew Thompson, the first mayor of Penetanguishene, would have been proud of his great grandson 11-year-old Andrew Thompson.

After all it's not every man that has a story written about the times he lived in by a boy in elementary school. Two weeks ago Andrew, who is a student in Burkevale Separate School, entered the following story in the town's Centennial Contest. The contest is open to any form of expression on places, people or events in Penetanguishene. Posters, stories, poems or photographs are examples of possible entries. They can deal with the Penetanguishene of the past, the present, or what you would like to see it become in the future.

Andrew Thompson chose to write about "The House I Live In" on 14 Water Street - the same one his great

grandfather lived in back in 1881 when he became Penetanguishene's first mayor.

The following is Andrew's story.

My great grandfather, Alfred Andrew Thompson, arrived at the "place of the White Rolling Sands" in 1830, a boy of 17. He worked in a lumber yard at the end of Navy land (Fox Street) as an apprentice clerk. Alfred Andrew was one of nine children of Colonel William Thompson, a staunch United Empire Loyalist who fought at the battle of Queenston Heights.

Alfred started working at Andrew Mitchell's store which was then located at the corner of Water and Owen Streets.

He then opened his own fur trading and lumbering business. He built his store on the corner of Water and Main

Streets where Jasons is now situated. It was well known as the "Green Block". The "Green Block" flourished and the fur business attracted buyers annually from Montreal, London, Paris, Berlin, New York, even as far away as Australia.

Buyers paid up to \$20,000 for the furs which was a great deal of money in those days.

These were the days of the Dukis Chief of the Nipissing tribe. Every year hundreds of Indians came to trade their furs - they arrived in their long canoes, some having paddled from as far away as Fort William (now called Thunder Bay). They trusted and respected my great grandfather and made him an honorary chief.

Many slept wrapped in their blankets on the kitchen floor of the trader's home as was the custom. I live in this home

(14 Water Street), now, and wish I could creep down the back stairs at night to see the Indians sleeping on the floor as my great-grandfather did as a boy.

Alfred Andrew was in charge of clearing the original road from the Naval and Military Establishments to St. James-on-the-Lines Church.

In 1881 he was elected Penetanguishene's first Mayor. He was 68. He died at the age of 72. As a final tribute to their honorary chief, many Indians came to his funeral. I think one of the finest moments in the "House I Live In" occurred when my great grandfather was laid out in our living room, two Indians arrived in their baskin clothes and silently placed beside him a pipe, a small leather pouch of tobacco and another of wheat.



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