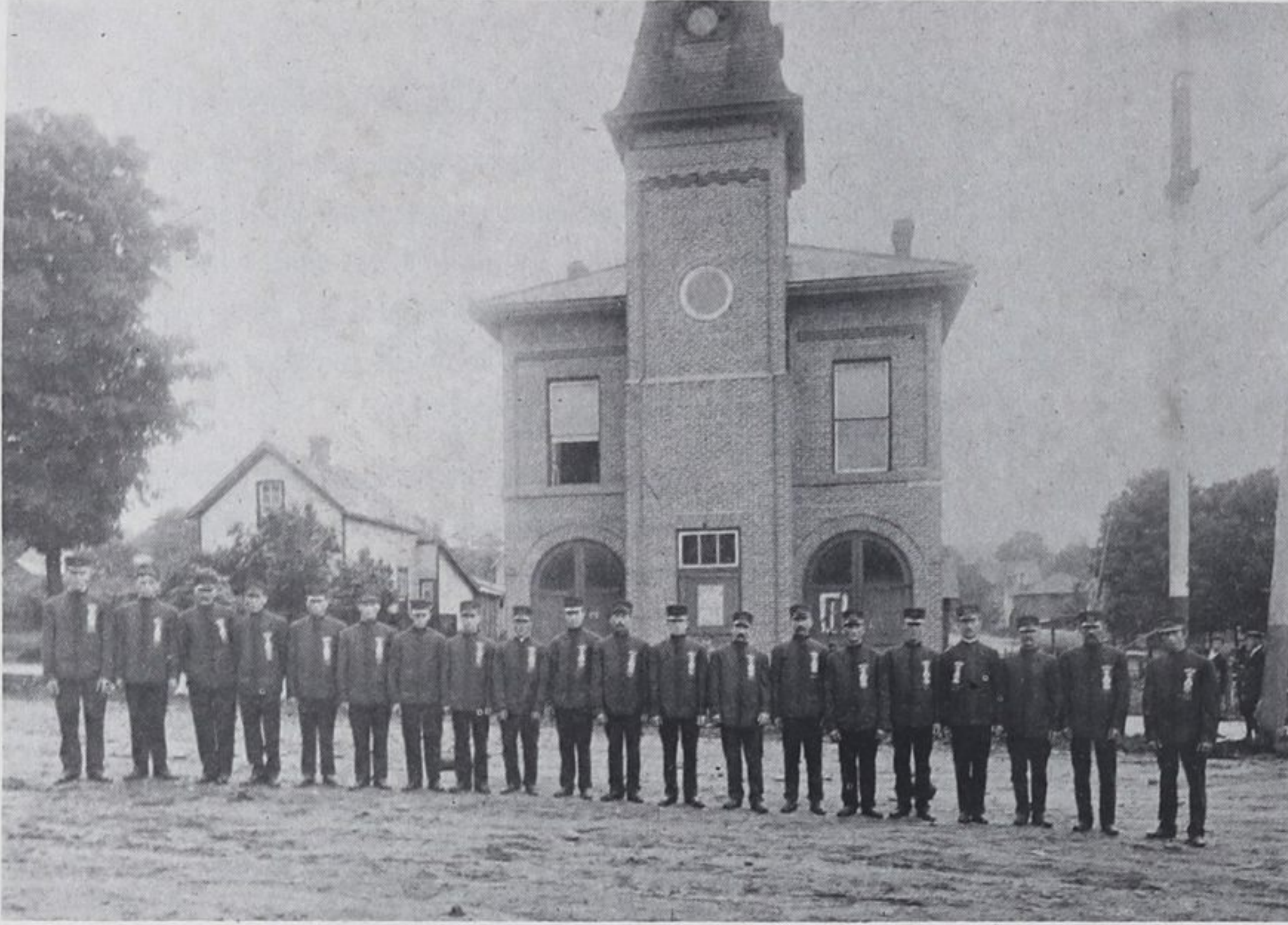


THE HISTORICAL TOWN OF



M I D L A N D

THE OLD FIREHALL

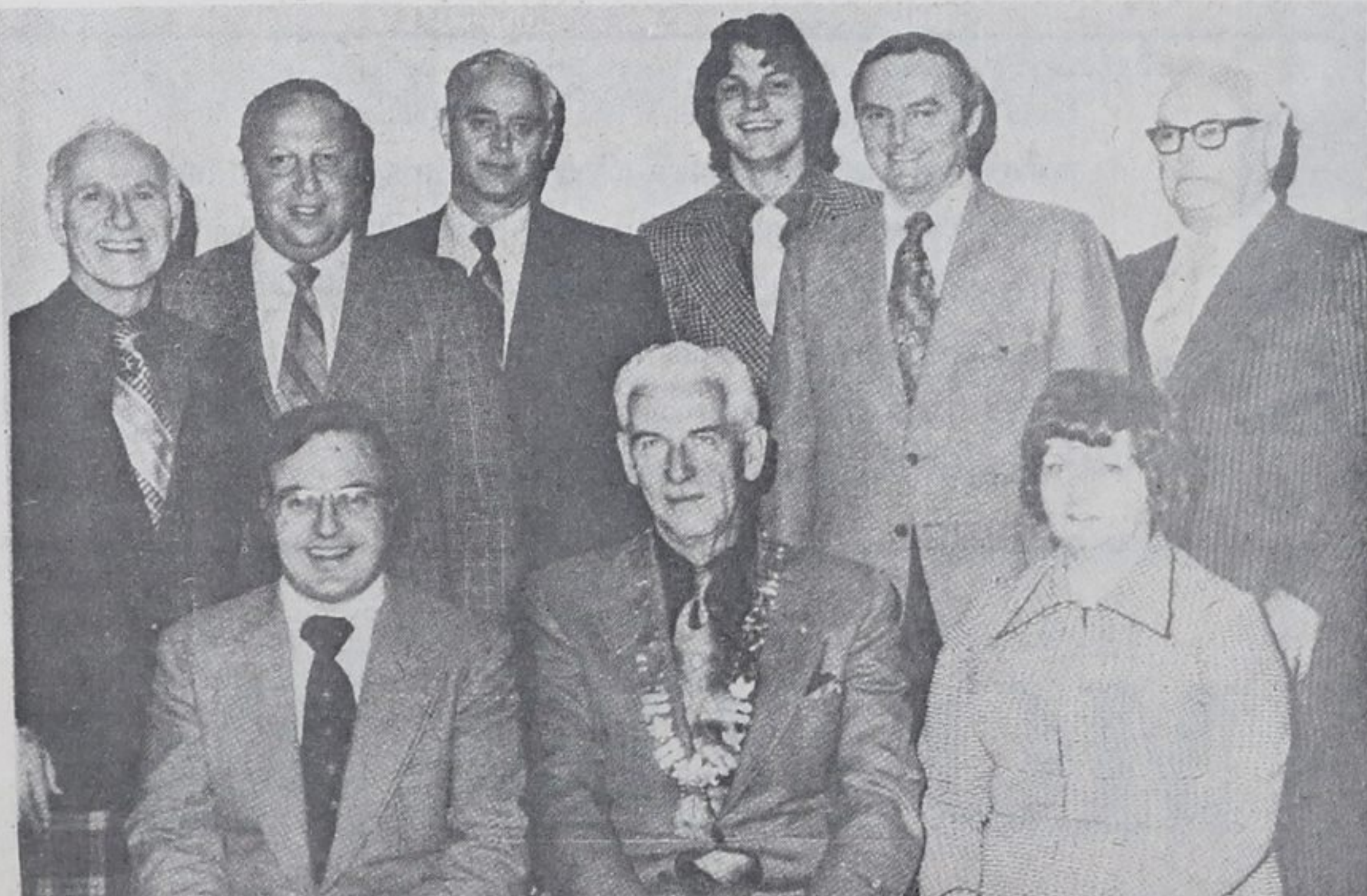


IN THE HISTORICAL PAST



PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

MIDLAND COUNCIL



The 1975 Midland Council and clerks: left to right are, seated Reeve Moreland, Lynn, Mayor Harold Boyd, Deputy-reeve Mrs. C. Dion, standing, Clerk-treasurer W. A. Hack, Aldermen Sam Ancio and Fred Jeffery; assistant-clerk Michael Owen, and Aldermen Miles Blackhurst and William Orr.



CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF MIDLAND

In October 1878, Jordon Cronkrite, census enumerator, determined there were 836 inhabitants over a total of 469 acres, and Midland was incorporated as a village with Samuel Fraser as reeve. During the 12 years Midland was a village, four men were chosen as Reeves: Mr. Fraser, L.

McFarland, John B. Horrell, and W. H. Bennett.

Midland enjoyed a period of expansion. In one year, 150 buildings were put up for the arriving labour force. Grain was shipped from the Sault and Fort William to Midland, the "Chicago of the North." The first grain shipment received in Midland by boat was unloaded from the vessel's hold and passed along in wooden pails to the railway cars for re-distribution and resale in other centres.

In November 1879, the Simcoe County Council directed Midland to hold fall fairs quarterly for the purpose of selling farm stock. They were held on the present fair site at Little Lake Park. The park originally consisted of the present fair grounds on King Street, comprising 9.75 acres, and the bush immediately west down to the shore of Little Lake. An additional 29.61 acres known as Fraser Park provided two small bathing houses and a boathouse.

The eastern section of Midland, up from William Street, which used to be called Dollartown, perpetuates the name of John Dollar who operated the lumber mill known as the Ontario Lumber Co. from 1879 to 1890. Before this he had been employed at Cook's sawmill. Later, in 1872, he established eight lumber camps in the Muskoka District as well as a camp on one of the islands in Georgian Bay. His brothers, Robert and James, established the Dollar Line of steamships on the Pacific Coast.

The pioneer railways used small, wood-burning locomotives, with great flared stacks covered with netting to prevent flying sparks setting off forest fires. After a night in the yards, the wire netting would be clogged with a glue-like combination of dew and soot which meant an extra half hour of cleaning before starting. But often the schedules of these little wood-burning engines compared favourably with those of more recent times. The conductor in those days was a combination of chief dispatcher, ticket agent and, on occasion, assistant brakeman. When the engineer signalled for hand brakes, there would be a general scramble to apply them. These trains were to bring prosperity to Midland, through trade

and transportation, and people arrived daily looking for a place to establish themselves in the busy community.

It was this type of railroad which transported the more than 600 piles which were driven into the bottom of Midland Harbour to form the foundation of the first grain elevator in 1881. It was a tremendous job for those days, and the people were justly proud of their achievement. This wooden elevator had a capacity of 250,000 bushels, which was later doubled. Wooden sailing vessels carrying grain at this time had a capacity of 16,000 to 25,000 bushels. The elevator was struck by lightning and burned down in 1904.

When the first steamboat unloaded a cargo of corn at the old Midland elevator in September 1882, the people of Midland gave a grand ball in honour of the "St. Paul's" arrival in the harbour of Mundy's Bay.

In 1881, after the Cook sawmill became the British Canadian Lumber Company, managed by Andrew Miscampbell, MPP, it was the first building in Ontario to have electricity installed. This innovation was so rare that the railway as well as passenger boats such as the "Minnie Hall," with Capt. David Burke at the helm, brought many visitors to view this lighting marvel, even though it was only the early sputtering carbon variety. It was only in 1885 or 1886 that incandescent lamps were first used in Toronto at the Globe newspaper. Another "first" in Ontario at Midland was the telephone system connecting the sawmill's office and its various plants. This convenience was not in use anywhere else until after the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia in 1876, when it was displayed for the first time.

John and Harry Yates came from Peterborough in 1882 to start a fish business. Bert Yates owned the first and only gasoline launch in the district, brought from Racine, Wis. Messrs. Yates had a fleet of 35 fishing boats capable of handling 25 to 35 tons of fish a week. These were shipped all over Canada and to New York and Buffalo. No doubt, their prowess as fishermen did much to enhance Midland's reputation as a fishing paradise.

At this time, King Street was only a corduroy road, but still an improvement over the 1872 swamp. John Dollar built the first board sidewalk in 1887 from his house at Hugel Avenue and Second Street to Knox Presbyterian Church.

Midland is proud of its past. And, those who live in our town are justifiably optimistic about its future.

With a sound and varied industrial base and a beautiful natural setting — the years ahead hold promise of continued growth.

The municipality has purchased 96 acres of industrial land which constitutes an industrial park, close to transportation and essential services.

Annexation is in progress along Heritage Drive which will provide 500 additional acres of industrial land with provision for parklands.

Our Public Works planners are constantly upgrading the hydro distribution system, and three new wells are

in the exploration and development stage.

Community health care has taken a giant step forward with the establishment of a new modern hospital to serve Midland and the area.

We have a good harbour which currently serves a number of industries and three grain elevators as well as providing a gateway to some of Canada's most beautiful tourist country.

We have a fine crop of young people, who enjoy excellent education and recreational facilities.

Midland has a historic past, an exciting present and a promising future.