

Centennial scrapbook Lumbering left its mark

It's hard to imagine the mighty primeval forests that once covered Simcoe County. There were pines and oaks, maples and ironwoods of enormous girth. Cedar and spruce were plentiful too.

But early settlers saw the towering forests as the enemy. They fought the forest to reclaim land for housing and farming.

In the early 1800's the Royal Navy was supplied generously with timber from our forests. Many a straight 80 or 90-foot pine was felled, to see service as a mast on one of Her Majesty's ships.

But it was the growing demand for sawn lumber which finished the early forests. Midland, with its railway and harbour facilities, was one of the biggest lumbering towns on the Bay.

By 1900, Midland had a population of 3,000, most of whom depended in some way on the lumber industry. In that year, the amount of timber that came out of Midland was second only to that of Ottawa.

Lumbering left its geographical mark on Midland. In "Slabtown" there was a sawmill, an office, a boarding house and a dozen houses put up roughly from unplanned timber. A pile of sawdust separated "Slabtown" from "Uptown".

John Dollar built his mill east of Midland in what became known as "Dollartown". He himself lived in what was then considered a better part of town—on Hugel, across from the Presbyterian Church.

The lumber boom affected everyone, making millionaires of many mill owners, and adding to the incomes of local farmers who supplied horses and feed to the lumber camps.

Drummers from Midland jewellers and tailors often made trips into these camps to take orders for watches and rings, chains and new suits of clothes. When the men came out of the bush in the spring, with perhaps \$50 in their pockets after a winter's work, it didn't take long for them to spend it. Often they owed a large part of it to a local jeweller.

And there were other ways of spending money.

Dollartown has been described as "a pretty relaxed place." "The loggers", notes a local historian, "once they got their logs to the mill turned to other things—fiddles, females and firewater." Apparently there was plenty of noise and revelry in the Dollartown streets after the shantymen got home.

Another historian noted ruefully, "Unfortunately many a man loses his whole winter's wage within a few days. The bars were wide open, and once a man was drunk he soon parted with his cash."

Sailors on the lakes had reason to dislike the great log booms that brought timber down from the shore. They were huge and unwieldy obstacles, and sometimes they broke loose in bad weather. Often the shoreline was sprinkled with errant logs, which were scavenged by log pickers.

The James Playfair empire, around which most of Midland's history is spun, was founded in lumber. He came from Scotland when he was 19-years-old, and worked at the Toronto Lumber Company. Some 10-years later, he got a contract to run the British Canadian (formerly Cook's) mill. A year later, he ran a mill at the old Fort, and one at Sturgeon Bay.

Cook's Lumber Mill achieved fame as the first place in Ontario to have electric lights installed in 1881, according to GR Osborne. A technician from Scotland came over to oversee the installation of the plant—a dynamo powered by horses. For a time boatloads of tourists came to Midland to marvel at this twinkling miracle.

In the hey-day of lumbering, nobody ever gave a thought to conservation. The forests seemed so vast, that it was unthinkable that the supply would dwindle.

But dwindle they did. The mills were closed, or burned or abandoned. James Playfair formed a shipbuilding company in 1916 and the new company bought his largest sawmill (which had employed 200 people) tore it down, and erected a shipyard where it had stood.

Another chapter in Midland's history was opening.



Big Sisters meet

The general meeting of the Big Sisters Association of Huronia was held on Monday February 13 at St. Paul's United Church in Midland with President Juanita Rourke in the chair.

Past president Joan Roszmann introduced Ross Spearn and David Brooks, guest speakers from the MHC Community Service team.

Dr. Spearn, a psychiatrist, trained at the Child and Family Centre in Hamilton, has been with the team for four years.

Mr. Brooks, a social worker, has been on the Community Service Team since its inception six years ago. Previously he worked with the Children's Aid and

Mental Health facility in Peterborough.

They told the group about their work in dealing with family, couple or individual therapy. The community Services team also has extensive involvement with Community Agents in the Huronia area.

A question and answer period followed.

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McClements instills fear of flying

If you're fearful of flying, Fred McClement's latest book *Jet Roulette*, won't make you feel any easier, but it will give you some good reasons to take a train or a bus next time you travel.

McClement believes that we are entering the supersonic age before we have solved the problems of the jet age. To support his thesis he re-creates some of the most dramatic and significant disasters in recent air history, analyzes the reasons behind these accidents and suggests what can be done about them in the future.

His purpose is not to frighten you into never leaving the ground again. He happens to think, however that public enlightenment is the only solution to the ever-increasing horror of air disasters. Presumably an alarmed and angry public could demand more safety and fewer expensive frills.

Part One is called *Air Traffic chaos*, and recreates two air disasters—one of which is painfully clear in the memories of local high school students who travelled to the Canary Islands during winter break 1977. They were present in the airport

when a terrorist bomb exploded. They got home safely, but the rerouting of traffic caused the ground collision of two 747s at Tenerife later in the day.

McClement discusses the problems surrounding air traffic control in our crowded skies, and he warns that the situation can only get worse.

Part Two of *Jet Roulette*, *Birthpangs of the DC-10*, describes the problems that have haunted the McDonnell-Douglas jumbo, including the case of the faulty cargo door. As the author states, "If ever an airplane should have been grounded for bad performance, the DC-10 was it."

He criticises the American Federal Aeronautics Administration for failing to do more than the minimum.

Part Three is called *The Sinister Envelope of Air*, and explores the many risks posed by weather conditions and atmospheric irregularities, and explains why pilots often fail to avoid trouble even then they should have been alerted

Book review

to the situation. One of the most dramatic problems is wind shear a particular danger during landings. Another is hail, which can play havoc with the modern jet engine.

Part Four discusses pilot error and other human factors affecting airline safety.

Part Five, *Air Safety*, affects everyone,

discusses some of the environmental problems of the jet age, including the depletion of the ozone layer.

In the final chapter, *In Quest of Safety*, he makes his own recommendations as to what can be done to improve the safety of the skies.

Altogether, McClement pulls no punches as he attacks the system that

spends millions of dollars on advertising, champagne flights first-run movies, stereo sound, and then fails to fire-proof cabins, ignores fire retardant sprinkler systems, dares bad weather on a daily basis, fails to use spill-proof fuel tanks, and much more.

McClement is a Toronto journalist who has written extensively about the air industry. Apparently his own investigations haven't kept him earthbound. He has flown more than two million miles on every

kind of airplane. The 192 page book, *Jet Roulette* carries 17 black and white photos, and is due for general distribution on March 10. *Jet Roulette* by Fred McClement. Doubleday pub. \$8.95.

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Midland YMCA offers winter break programs

For the fourth straight year, Midland YMCA will be offering area children a full program of outings and activities during the school March winter break.

This year programs have been devised for youngsters in both age groups six to nine years of age and 10 to 14 during the March 20 to 23 period.

This division of the age groups should make planning easier for specific programs geared to both groups.

Some of the planned activities will include a pool party, films, skating, a trip to the sugar bush, hikes, a tour of Blue Mountain Pottery and a trip to the Ontario Science

Centre in Toronto. Parent supervision is needed for the program and those registering their child will be asked to help with one or more of the activities if possible.

There is limited registration and those interested are urged to contact the Y as soon as possible.

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A message about those who think they can cheat UI:

"We're not really dishonest."

Unfortunately that's not true. It seems that some people like you think there's nothing wrong with ripping off Canada's Unemployment Insurance program.

"All we did was fail to report a little extra income while getting UI."

With that sort of behaviour you could be charged with a criminal offence. Isn't it just like shoplifting or theft?

Cheating on Unemployment Insurance is stealing from your neighbours, friends, fellow employees, employers, and the Government of Canada, all at the same time. And not being available for work when you're getting UI is abuse, pure and simple.

"How did you ever find out?"

Unemployment Insurance has almost 500 full-time trained claims investigators on staff. And, like any modern organization, we're using new data-handling techniques to their best advantage. We match up Records of

Employment with claim records. The claims investigator may be alerted by an agent at the Unemployment Insurance office, or by our central fact-finding computer system.

If there's evidence of abuse or fraud, the investigators will make a recommendation for action to either the UI agent or legal counsel.

"Well, what are you going to do with us?"

Depending on the seriousness of your offence, you may have to pay an administrative

penalty. Or, you could be charged in a court of law under the Unemployment Insurance Act or the Criminal Code of Canada. Conviction means a criminal record. And benefits wrongly obtained must be paid back in full.

In any case, it's not very pleasant. We're not in business to prosecute people. Avoid this by dealing with us as fairly as we try to deal with you.

The people of Canada should not be cheated by an irresponsible few.

For your sake, please play it straight with us.

The Unemployment Insurance Commission and the Department of Manpower and Immigration have become the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission. For a time, you'll still see our local offices identified as Unemployment Insurance offices or Canada Manpower Centres. When they're together in one location, they'll be called Canada Employment Centres.

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Bud Cullen, Minister

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