

yesterdays
by mary dawson

Plank roads were smooth with plenty of traction

Plank roads were the first hard surface roads built in York, according to E. A. James, writing in The Liberal in January, 1927.

The great pine forest supplied the raw material and the water powers of many streams supplied the energy to convert this into road surfacing.

Plank roads were good roads, he claimed. They were smooth, yet gave good traction.

About 1850 the Vaughan and King Plank Road Company received a charter to build a plank road commencing in the

City of Toronto at the corner of Yonge Street and Davenport Road.

It followed Davenport west then went north on Bathurst Street to St. Clair and thence by Vaughan Road to Fairbank, north on Concession 3 in Vaughan, then westerly to Concession 4 and north on it to King City.

A contract with George Lynn, dated June 9, 1851, called for the grading, ditching and planking of the Vaughan Road north from the York Townline. The price per rod was six shillings or \$1.50.

Nicholas Cober, owner of a sawmill on Lot 34, Concession 1, Vaughan, received a contract the same year to supply road plank at \$6.25 per thousand feet. Not only did he provide the planks but he hauled them some five miles to the site of construction for this sum.

The contract was for 100,000 feet of three inch plank and inch boards, the plank to be eight feet long and from six to 14 inches wide and the boards 12 inches running measure. The planks were laid across the boards which ran lengthwise on the road surface.

Three years later, in October, 1854, James McKilvery undertook to provide the labor to plank part of Concession 4, Vaughan, to whatever distance the company would supply him with plank at the rate of four shillings and six pence per rod (\$1.12).

He was to be allowed for putting in one culvert and a time limit of about a month was placed on the work.

The plank road was constructed on the westerly half so that it would bear the burden of the heavy wagon loads and the empty wagons, returning from the

market in Toronto, would use the east half of the road.

To pay for the construction and maintenance the company was permitted to erect toll gates and collect tolls.

However, the planks wore out, the holes were filled with gravel and stone, and the company still continued to collect tolls.

It was not until 1896 that the townships involved agreed to purchase the road.

Tolls ceased and the toll gates disappeared, but only when the City of Toronto agreed to abolish market fees.

Plumbing inspectors show large surplus

It was a very good year for York Region's municipal plumbing inspectors.

Activity by plumbing inspectors was at an all-time high in 1978, according to a report to York Region's health and social services committee last week.

Not only that, but the plumbing inspection branch had a surplus of \$150,000 for the year.

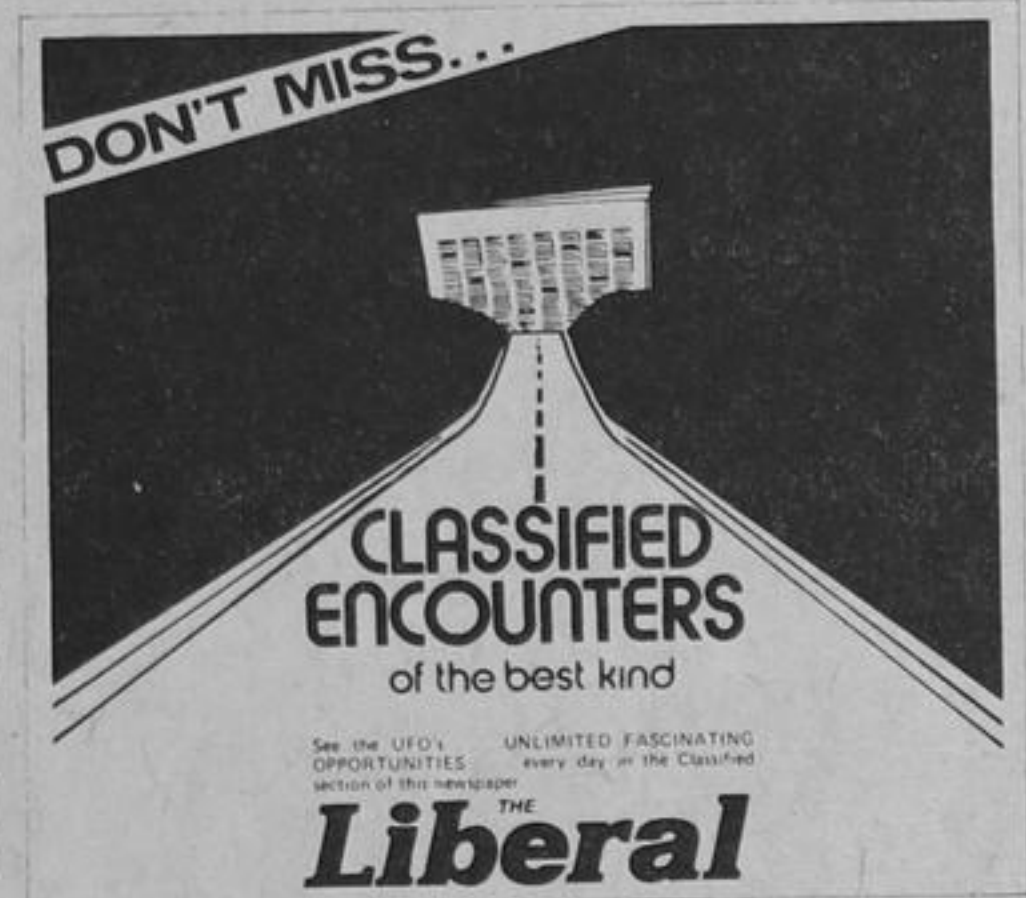
It was a turnaround from the 1977 situation, when plumbing inspection and permit fees were increased part-way through the year to make up for the decline in construction activity in the region.

The higher rates and increased building in 1978 brought nearly \$350,000 into regional coffers. Revenue of only \$201,000

had been forecast in the 1978 budget.

Plumbing and drain permits totalled 8,630, compared with 4,350 for

1977. In the first 11 months of 1978, inspectors travelled 86,608 miles to make 13,842 inspections, according to the report.



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