

WE'VE COME A LONG LONG WAY IN 150 YEARS

A lot of people have asked, "Why another book about Stirling?"

The answer is quite simple. So much has happened in the village and district, the committee in charge of the 150th anniversary celebrations thought the idea had merit. Add to that the wealth of "new" history that has come to light in the intervening 25 years between *The Heritage Years* 1983 and the new publication. There was a definite sharing of the opinion that Stirling's history should be fleshed out. Little known aspects of village life appear in this volume.

Most of the families whose biographies are included in *The Heritage Years* 1983 have experienced dramatic changes. Many families did not submit their histories for book one and the committee wished to give them equal opportunity. Add to that several topics which weren't covered in *The Heritage Years* 1983 and the reasons for another book are pretty clear.

When *The Heritage Years* was published in 1983-1984 we were just entering the computer age; 25 years later this entire book was laid out on one machine—an iMac—in my home office; all the photos were scanned there as well—a total of almost 1,200 individual images (unfortunately we couldn't use all of them). The pages were all proofread before they went to the printer. Changes which had to be made were accomplished with little effort expended.

The intervening 25 years also saw a vast change in the way people viewed their own family histories. Genealogy has seen a surge in popularity as information becomes readily available without leaving the comfort of your home. Genealogy enjoys Internet use unmatched by any other legitimate subject. Books about ancestry, papers and original records long the domain only of those with the connections and the time to travel out of town or to other countries are now available and can be accessed from a home computer at a reasonable price. Many documents have been transformed to readable, "downloadable" files that add immeasurably to a family history. The immense holdings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City, Utah, are a genealogist's delight and can be accessed easily through your home computer.

Amalgamation happened a little more than halfway through the last 25 years. After almost a century and a half as separate entities, the village, Stirling, and the township, Rawdon, were reunited on January 1, 1998. The rejoining was met with some apprehension but not nearly the amount of invective that was apparent in 1858 when Stirling became a village in its own right.

A petition to County Council October 20, 1859, states "*We the undersigned inhabitants of the village of Stirling, humbly sheweth that your honourable body*

passed a Bye Law (sic) to incorporate the village of Stirling.

"Your petitioners are of the opinion that it will be a serious injury to the said village and the Township of Rawdon at large to have the said village incorporated." The petition was signed by 47 very well-known persons in Stirling's history including Nicholas Lake (first reeve of the village), William Judd (Stirling postmaster from 1853 to 1872) and Samuel Horton (one of the first men to settle in Stirling). Oddly, an earlier petition from Stirling's citizenry started the wheels in motion for Stirling's incorporation. Even more strange is the fact some people's signatures appear on both documents. No doubt there was tension between family members for some names appear on one petition while a relative appears on the other.

A century and a half in the life of a village (probably closer to 200 years) has passed. What we have learned in the past 25 years must be added to our collective knowledge and it is to be hoped that when the village reaches its next milestone, its 175th in 2033, like-minded people will once again take up the cause and add another chapter to our story.

I'd like to express my sincere thanks to the book committee members who contributed many hours putting together this volume.

Lewis Zandbergen, Chairman,
Stirling 150th Book Committee

Note: The editor has assumed the responsibility of setting certain parameters in an attempt to provide consistency in this book. For the most part, family stories have been left the way the writers wrote them. In some instances clarifications have been made, grammar and punctuation have been added or deleted and syntax has been spruced up. All dates are written thus Monday, January 10, 1840; the hamlet of Spring Brook is styled as two words; immigrate and emigrate are not synonyms: immigrate means to arrive in a new land, emigrate means to leave the old land; corrections have been made where necessary. Person's names have been spelled as per the manuscript. The index contains only persons named in the book. Family histories were written and submitted by the author named at the beginning of each piece; not all authors sought credit for their contribution. Every attempt has been made to ascertain the identity of newspapers from which some articles were gleaned; where they are known, newspapers have been given credit. The response to a request for material was overwhelming. Unfortunately there wasn't room to include every photograph. In some cases only representative photos have been used.