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A HISTORY OF PALMERSTON, ONTARIO

University of Cincinnati

PH.D.

1980

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A HISTORY OF PALMERSTON, ONTARIO

A dissertation submitted to the

Division of Graduate Studies
of the University of Cincinnati

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department of History
of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

1980

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August 8, 1980

I hereby recommend that the thesis prepared under my supervision by Mary Dolores Smith
entitled A HISTORY OF PALMERSTON, ONTARIO

be accepted as fulfilling this part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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PREFACE

This dissertation is an inquiry into the relationship of a small town in Canada with the province and nation of which it is a part. It was my hope to present a history of a small town so that, in every field and in each period of time, the essence of its composition would be readily apparent. I further hoped that this presentation would offer the reader a definite understanding of the characters of the inhabitants of that town.

The choice of town was determined by the qualifications of size, location, economics, and ethnic background. I felt the best results could be realized by selecting a town with a population around 2000, located away from strong influences such as a large city or the American border. Furthermore I believed this town should not be dominated by any one industry and should reflect primarily the original British settlers in Canada. Palmerston, Ontario, met these qualifications most satisfactorily.

Working within a chronological framework, I have based the treatment of the various phases of Palmerston's history on the town's idiosyncratic development. This has resulted in uneven time spans but emphasizes the importance of specific periods and events. The history of Palmerston can be divided into two parts: the railway years and those years

after the demise of the railway. Because of this sharp division in Palmerston's history, the town is not a typical small Canadian town. Therefore, this dissertation claims only to offer an account of one specific small town in Canada and does not claim to offer a prototype.

Besides the usual accepted historical research methods, I have incorporated into this work the technique of oral interviews. This method adapts itself well, not only to contemporary history but, due to the number of older citizens in Palmerston, to past history as well. Many facts were substantiated or uncovered by these interviews which could not be verified by written records, nor could many of these facts be found in written records.

Many people have graciously given of their time to assist me in the completion of this history. I would like to thank the staffs of the Simcoe and Perth County Museums, of the Provincial Archives in Toronto, of the Dominion Archives in Ottawa, and the Librarians of the Universities of Guelph, Western Ontario, Waterloo, and Toronto for all the help afforded me. I would especially like to thank Miss Cindy Clow of the Wellington County Museum and Mr. J. Norman Lowe, Historical Research Officer of the Canadian National Railway, for unlimited freedom to research their archives. Also my thanks go to the people of Palmerston who freely answered all my questions, with a very special thank you to Mr. Arthur

Carr, who willingly used his influence to open many doors to officialdom which might otherwise have remained closed. A very particular thank you is due to my advisor, Dr. Herbert F. Curry, for his patience and guidance during the writing of this work. Any errors or inconsistencies to be found in it are my responsibility alone. And my last, but by no means least, thank you goes to my children, David, Sean, Tamara, Robin, and Michelle, who never let me forget their pride in my efforts.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Bill, without whose quiet support and encouragement I could not have finished.

WESTERN ONTARIO 1980



Figure 1

ORIGINAL SURVEY LOT 19

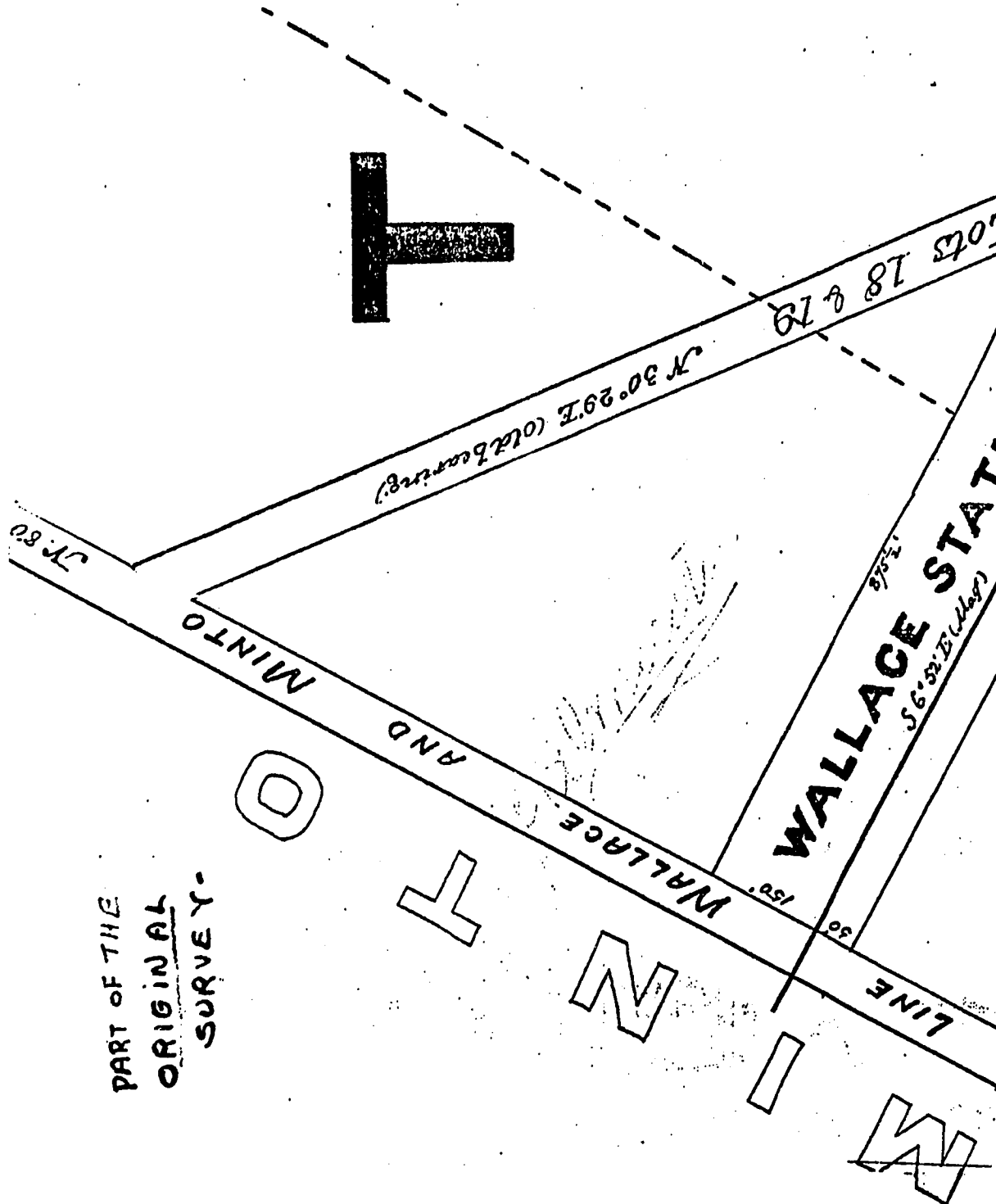


Figure 2
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CHAPTER I

THE OPENING OF WESTERN ONTARIO

Palmerston, Ontario, a small town of some 2043 people, lies in the heart of the rich farmlands of western Ontario. Founded in 1871 as a railway town, Palmerston developed with the expanding railway systems. It survived the transportation changes of the Twentieth Century to evolve into a quiet but viable municipality. This history will trace Palmerston from its Nineteenth Century origins to the present.

The physical configuration of the Dominion of Canada, a sparsely settled tract of land stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, required, for stability and development, a cheap and rapid form of transportation. Where rivers and lakes were the highways transportation was erratic. Ships from Europe and the United States could travel up the Saint Lawrence only as far as Montreal, while those which plied the Great Lakes were bound by the lake shores. Further inland large canoes followed a chain of rivers and lakes to the Far West. For at least five months, however, winter ice brought such transportation to a halt. Furthermore, even with good weather, rapids and waterfalls, paired with poor portage roads, hampered internal transport.

The railways proved the answer, for they were capable of joining the extreme ends of the Dominion in direct and immediate contact with the centers of commerce. By 1830 an

engine had been introduced in England capable of speeds up to twenty-nine and one half miles per hour. It was fueled by wood, an abundant natural resource of Canada. Although the ultimate answer overall, railways presented problems of their own, primarily financial in nature. To survey routes, clear and level land, lay rails, bridge swamps and streams, as well as tunnel through mountains, was expensive. In addition, costs for rolling stock, engines, freight cars and passenger coaches were a factor, increased greatly by the necessity of importing them from England or the United States. Canadians lacked the capital to build railways. Thus, although railway promoters secured a large number of charters from the Governments of Upper and Lower Canada between 1832 and 1840, only fifty-five miles of track existed in all of Canada by 1850.

In order to stimulate the building of railways, the legislature of Upper Canada passed the 1849 Guarantee Act, which empowered the Government to aid any railway, not less than seventy-five miles in length, with guarantees of payment at six percent interest on a sum not to exceed one half the total cost of the road. In 1858 this was extended to include the principal, with governmental advances of up to half the money required for construction.

Unfortunately the 1859 financial crisis so paralyzed Canada that significant railway expansion ceased for over ten years. By 1870 the new Dominion Government, aware of the

absolute necessity of the railways, again sought to stimulate their development with various financial incentives: by issuing debentures, bonds and bonuses; by guaranteeing the bonds and interest thereon of the railway companies; by making land grants; by assuming railway liabilities; and by constructing railways itself. ¹

These governmental policies spurred a second wave of railway building which brought the railways into western Ontario. Railway lines extended from the East via Hamilton, Toronto, Brantford and Ottawa. Connections with scattered town and villages in the western section of Ontario were effected by numerous branch lines emanating from the great trunk lines.

In 1864 the Wellington Grey and Bruce Railway ² had been

¹By 1890 the Dominion Government had built the Inter-colonial Railway for \$20,000,000.

²Under the agreements of 1868, 1870, and 1872, the Wellington Grey and Bruce Railway was leased to the Great Western Railway. When the Great Western was amalgamated with the Grand Trunk Railway in 1882, The Wellington Grey and Bruce became a part of the Grand Trunk system, and remained so until 1923 when the Government-owned Canadian National Railway swallowed the Grand Trunk. Therefore the railway in Palmerston has been known by a variety of names. It was the Wellington Grey and Bruce Railway from 1871 to 1872; from 1872 to 1882 it was a branch of the Great Western Railway. From 1882 to 1923 it was the Grand Trunk Railway, and since 1923 it has been the Canadian National Railway.

incorporated by the Government of Upper Canada. The objective of this incorporation approval lay in the construction of a railway from Guelph to Southhampton, a distance of 101 miles. This section of track was to divert the trade of Wellington and Bruce Counties from Toronto to Hamilton. The rivalry between these two cities during this period prompted the energetic support of the people of Hamilton who supplied a bonus of \$86,000 to the capital stock of \$30,000 of the company.³ The townships and counties, as well as several villages, provided the remaining bonuses to bring the capital for the railway to \$591,000.⁴ With this working capital the railway, based in Hamilton, completed, as required in its charter, the Guelph-Southhampton section by 1872. However, the Railway Board⁵ decided to branch off from this original line to lay

³ J.M. Trout, The Railways of Canada (The Monetary Times: Toronto, 1871), pp. 156-158

⁴ The following townships and villages which expected to profit from the proposed railway are listed with their bonuses: the Villages of Elora and Fergus, \$10,000 each; the townships of Peel and Maryborough, \$40,000 each; Wallace Township, \$25,000; Minto Township, \$70,000; Howick Township, \$20,000; and Bruce County, \$250,000.

⁵ The actual decision was made on the recommendations of its President, Colonel John McGivern, Secretary James Osborne, and Chief Engineer George L. Reid. All three men were Hamiltonians and had been enthusiastic supporters of the original project. McGivern and Osborne, native Canadians, were Hamilton businessmen, while Reid, an Englishman, was brought to Canada by them for his experience in English railways.

a track to Kincardine, a port thirty-eight miles south of Southhampton on Lake Huron. Kincardine was not connected by rail to either Southhampton or Hamilton. Thus both the port and the farmers in the surrounding hinterland were dependent upon cartage for transportation inland. Besides being slow, cartage was undependable and thus economically unsound. The farmers particularly were anxious to have a line to Kincardine. Therefore, a junction-station at some point along the line midway between Southhampton and Kincardine was proposed. The railway surveyors in 1871 pinpointed Lot 19, Concession II, Wallace Township, Perth County, as the site for the new station-junction.⁶

Just why this particular spot was chosen is somewhat obscure. A quick glance at a map shows that Lot 19 is indeed almost midway between the two towns. Nevertheless Lot 19 was just farmland which stood in the midst of a vast tract of similar farmland. Choosing Lot 19 amounted to creating a new town which required time and money. Just down the road, a mile to the west, was the already-established community of Dryden with a population of one hundred.⁷ Within a radius of

⁶Robert McEachern (ed.), Legacy of the Adam Brown (Palmerston, Ontario: Longmac Enterprises, 1975), p. 1

⁷Dryden had a post office, two churches, a saw mill, a potash works, a wagoner, an Inn, a saloon and a blacksmith. It had been established in 1855, and showed signs of becoming a leading village.

eight miles of Lot 19 were the thriving villages of Clifford, Arthur, Listowel and Harriston. Why were not one of these selected?

Accounts are strangely silent on this point except for the speculation by G. Y. Donaldson in his unpublished papers that the choice was due to the failure of the towns or villages under consideration to offer sufficient bonuses. So, he claims, the railway officials went to the farmers directly and succeeded in inducing Thomas McDowell to sell enough of his holdings for a station and yard.⁸

Arthur Carr is in agreement with this explanation. He said:

Most towns grow up from a grist mill set upon a river. We have no rivers. We never had a grist mill. In the early 1800s, when the railways were being pushed through Ontario, the railway planned a terminal at Harriston, six miles north of here. Some speculators got hold of the land the railway wanted and were waiting to clean up. So what did the railway do but send a couple of fellows down on the quiet and they bought two farms. One is in Wallace Township, and one is in Minto Township. That was in 1871. A tent town sprang up. Now by 1875 we had over 1400 people.⁹

⁸G. Y. Donaldson, "My Town," typewritten manuscript on file in Palmerston Public Library. Mr. Donaldson was a bank official, Town Councillor and insurance agent from 1897 to 1949 in Palmerston.

⁹Arthur Carr, private interview held in Palmerston, Ontario, August 18, 1978. Mr. Carr is the former editor of the Palmerston Observer.

These explanations provide a simple answer to the selection of Lot 19 and are probably correct. It should be noted however, that during this period of rail expansion, neither farmers nor towns were usually so reticent about bonuses, quite the contrary, they were constantly thrusting their money at the railways to attract them. One reporter from the Stratford Beacon asserted that if the railway did not come to the town (in this case the town of Listowel) then the town would, of necessity, go to the railway. It is probable that the bonuses Harriston offered were not sufficient to offset the expenditures the railway would be forced to make to procure the land already in the hands of speculators.

Palmerston was founded in 1871, when the Dominion of Canada was only four years old. The province of Ontario was an enormous area of nearly 412,582 square miles,¹⁰ with some 1,500,000 people distributed unevenly within its boundaries. The St. Lawrence lowlands were crowded, the shoreline of Lake Ontario was populated inland for about sixty miles, in the northeast lumbermen and pioneers had converged on the forests of the lower Shield, the Far North and the Far West were virtually untouched, as was the interior of western Ontario. Since a large part of the interior of western Ontario lacked navigable rivers for the transport of farm produce,

¹⁰The actual boundaries to the west and north were not officially settled until the passage of the Ontario Boundaries Acts of 1889 and 1912 by the Legislature at Ottawa.

No. 31. Great Western Railway.
(EXCURSION TO NIAGARA FALLS AND PORT STANLEY.)
SPECIAL TRAIN. NOTICE FOR 25TH JULY, 1882.
Instructions to Stationmasters, Travellers, and Servicemen.
Special Passenger Trains will be run on the following time:—

[illegible]

8

few pioneers settled there. Much of the area remained uncleared, but surveyed and marked for farms. In actuality, crown land, the interior was termed the "Queen's Bush." In 1851, the Saugeen Gravel Road, designed to connect Toronto and Goderich, encouraged settlement, but the area remained sparsely populated throughout the mid-eighteenth century.

The farms of Ontario were, and are, of uniform size and shape. Surveyors, imported from Great Britain by the Government of Upper Canada in the early eighteen hundreds, divided the land into townships. They had been instructed to plot one hundred acre farms as nearly as possible. The system employed allowed a sixty-six feet wide road strip for each concession line road or side road. These were all basically called, and still are considered, King's or Queen's Highways and are owned by the crown as part of the public domain. It was, and still is, the custom to locate a farm in Ontario by the concession line and lot number in the township. The town of Palmerston is in Minto Township, therefore it might be well to use that township to explain concessions.

In Minto Township the concession lines run almost perfectly due east and west, which aligns side roads almost due north and south. In the one and one quarter mile block of land, all sides being equal, five 100 acre rectangles of land could face on a concession line to the south, five more with the backs of the farms, all abutting each other, could face

the concession line on the north. The side roads would run up the sides of the two farms on the west side of the block, and the two farms on the east side of the block. Hence the term side road, for it was indeed at the side of all farms, for none faced these roads. All farms with their rectangular shapes, faced on the concession lines. 11

Minto Township is bordered on the south by Wallace Township and on the north by Normanby Township, a distance of approximately thirteen miles. Farms are numbered consecutively along the concession lines. For instance, the first farm in the southeast corner of Minto Township would, for tax, deed or legal description, be termed Lot 1, Concession I, Minto Township, Wellington County. The farm to the north of this one would be Lot 1, Concession II, and so on to Concession XVIII.

Sideroads in Minto Township run, as has been stated, almost due north and south. Minto Township is bounded on the east by Arthur Township, so the west side of the side road which separates these two townships is Minto Sideroad 1. Then like the concession line roads, these side roads continue,

¹¹The term Concession Road may simply be a part of Land Concession, or it may have come from the fact that the Queen made these concessions to her loyal subjects so they might have access to and egress from their holdings. Both versions can be found in texts, however Palmerstonians prefer the latter version.

with the east side being one number and the west side another number, as, Sideroad 1 and 2. This further identifies farms on deeds. The sideroads continue west until the final road which divides Minto from Howich Township on its western boundary.¹² The distance is thirteen miles from Minto's eastern boundary. Arthur Township to Howick Township on the west. The Saugeen Gravel Road, first road in western Ontario, crosses directly through Minto Township.

All townships are of roughly the same size, since the government instructions to the surveyors specified that a township's size should permit the government of that township, a Reeve ¹³ and four councillors, to travel round trip for meetings at the township seat on the same day via horse-and-buggy transport.

¹²Sideroads were never of great importance for the transport of goods and were usually not well maintained, or even open for service. Left to become overgrown by many farmers, they actually became wildlife sanctuaries.

¹³A reeve, both township and municipal, is primarily concerned with finances of the township or municipality. In a township or village the reeve presides at meetings also. The position of Reeve is still an important office in Canada. Palmerston has had several Reeves who have distinguished themselves in that office as well as in other elected or appointed offices in the town.

Incidentally, part of the fringe benefits afforded a surveyor was the opportunity to name the townships he surveyed. Minto Township was named after Lord John Minto and Wallace Township after the Scottish hero. There is a rather colorful story about the naming of townships as told by Arthur Carr:

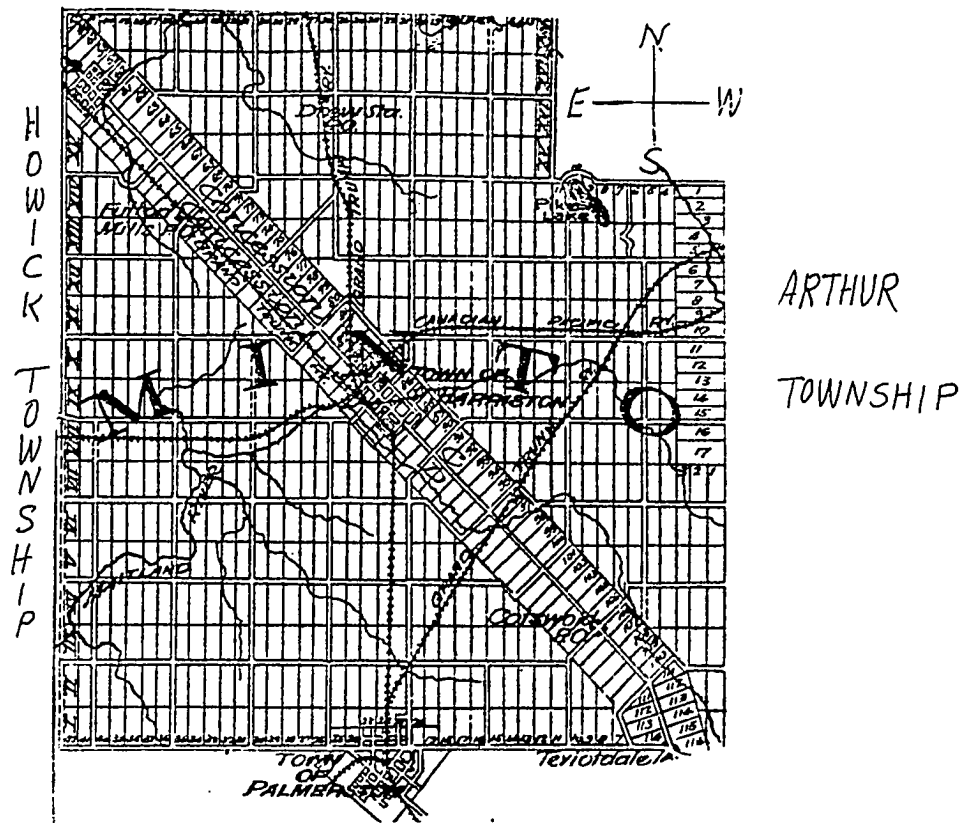
Luther Township, east of Minto, is basically marshland, or swamp, or muskeg, or swale hole, or whatever terminology you have for land which produces bull rushes, bull frogs, and mosquitos with stingers the size of lead pencils. Surveying this township and its vast marsh in the middle of the summer, the mosquitos almost drove the Irish surveyor mad. He cursed the mosquitos day and night with mighty oaths. He condemned the entire land to hell and the devil. This gave rise to an idea. He would name the hapless township after Satan, so he named it Luther Township, as Luther was an Irish name for the devil. But he feared some bright British bloke of a Civil Servant in Queen's Park, Toronto, might twig to the connotation and reject the name. So, he surveyed the next township just to the north and named it Melancthon. You see, the devout old Roman Catholic Irishman knew of that first Protestant rebel, Martin Luther, and his staunch supporter Melancthon. And the Irish surveyor felt he had a line of defense if questioned and a bit of obfuscation. Should anyone question the name of Luther, he would mention Martin and clinch the nail of his argument with Melancthon Township---and it worked. ¹⁴

Since the surveyors of Ontario townships were invariably English, Irish, or Scottish, the names of all the townships commemorate heroes and leaders of those nationalities.

¹⁴ Arthur Carr, private interview, Palmerston, Ontario, February 12, 1979.

MINTO TOWNSHIP

NORMANBY TOWNSHIP



Minto Township showing the Saugeen Gravel Road crossing diagonally from south to north, and the Grand Trunk tracks radiating out of Palmerston.

Figure 4

When Palmerston was founded in 1871 there were a few villages and several small towns scattered in the interior of western Ontario;¹⁵ however, towns of any appreciable size were on Lake Huron or the Georgian Bay. ¹⁶

Ontario provided for the creation of all types of municipalities within her boundaries, from the smallest village to the largest town, establishing the basic powers and responsibilities with one general Municipalities Act. The Province was so empowered by Section 92 of the British North America Act, ¹⁷ which stipulates that the provinces regulate all villages and towns in regard to their political framework. This section, based on the Municipal Act of 1849 of Upper Canada, became the foundation of Ontario's present system of local government. Thus considerable conformity characterizes municipal structures in Ontario.

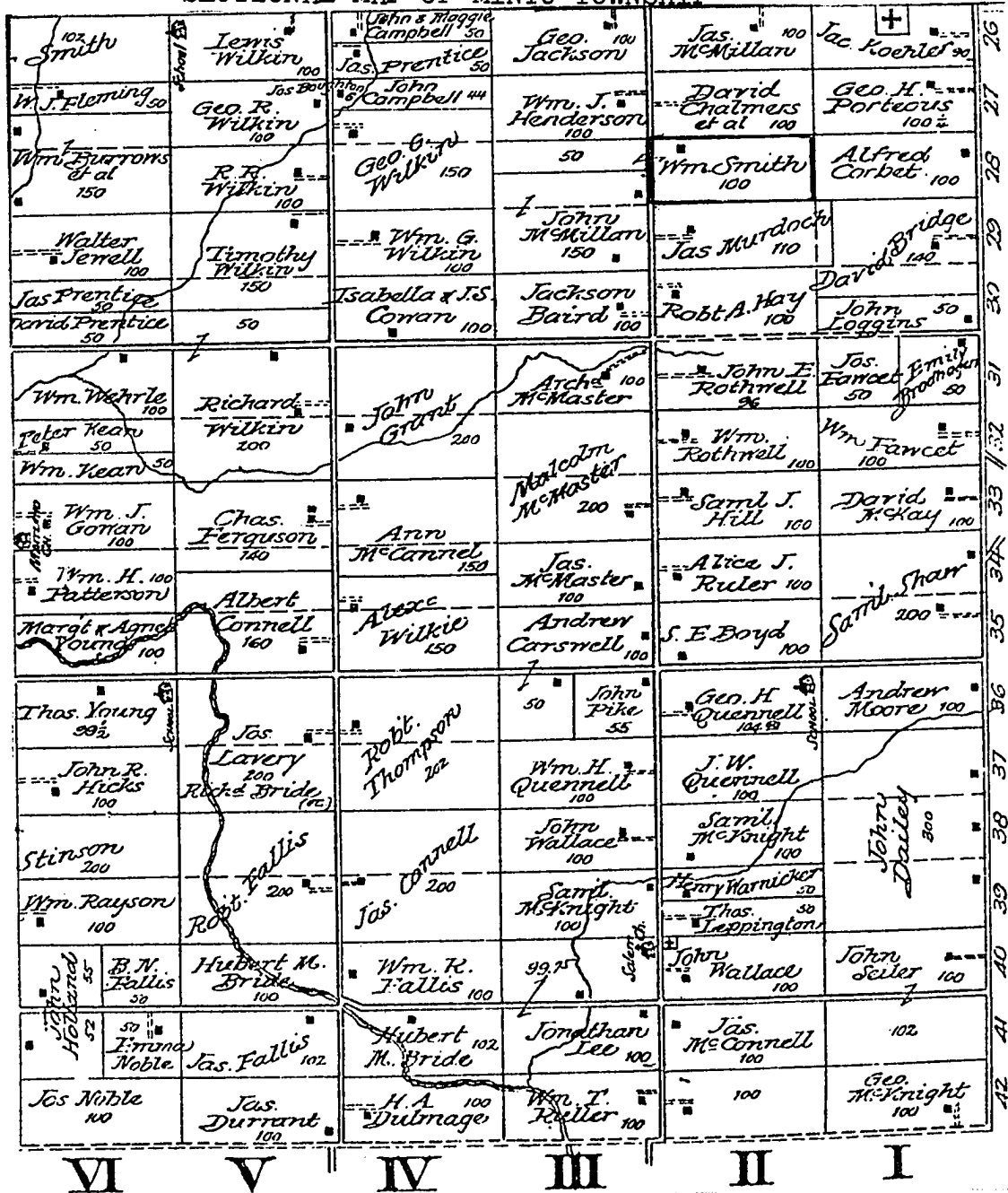
¹⁵By 1871 the area around Palmerston contained only three towns: Harriston, Mount Forest and Listowel. In order to be incorporated by the province as a town there had to be over 1400 citizens. There were also five villages listed. Both Harriston and Listowel are referred to in various records dated the same year as both villages and towns. For example, in records dated 1874, Harriston is named one place as a town and cited as a village in another place, although it was supposedly incorporated as a town on January 1, 1874.

¹⁶Such towns as Kincardine, Goderich, Owen Sound, Wiarton, and Southampton.

¹⁷Specifically it is subsection 8, entitled Municipal Institutions Within the Province. Section 92 contains four more subsections dealing with municipal affairs.

The town of Palmerston was established in a frontier area of a new nation which was just awakening to its potential. Through its railway association, Palmerston developed as a part of that growth pattern. Through the years Palmerston would touch on the fringes of large industrialization by way of the railway, maintain its early and basic connection with the farm community which surrounded it, and yet manage, in the mid-twentieth century, to meet the new challenges that evolved from economic and transportation changes.

SECTIONAL MAP OF MINTO TOWNSHIP



Minto Township, southwest section. Concession lines are numbered in Roman Numerals, and Sideroads are in Arabic. In 1875 William Smith's farm was on Lot 28, Concession II, Minto Township, Wellington County. In 1980 this farm is part of the town of Palmerston.

Figure 4a

CHAPTER II

THE INCORPORATION OF PALMERSTON 1871-1875

Within five years Palmerston had attained the status of a town, outstripping many villages in growth, obliterating others by drawing their citizens to Palmerston, and challenging even established older towns. During those first years which witnessed Palmerston's phenomenal growth, many Palmerstonians felt the town's potential was unlimited. It was predicted by some citizens that Palmerston would become the rival of Hamilton, or even Toronto. Other citizens forecast less grand achievements, but all saw in Palmerston a magnificent future.

Once the general site for the new junction had been determined by the Wellington Grey and Bruce Railway, the acquisition of an adequate amount of land for a station and yard followed. The land by necessity had to be situated somewhere in south central Minto Township or the north central part of Wallace Township. Although not extensively settled, much of the farmland in these areas was held privately in the late 1860's.

Exactly how the farmers were approached is not known. Individual solicitation seems most probable if, to minimize costs, secrecy was maintained. Certainly some settler-farmers lived on some of the land in the area. Thomas McDowell

was the first recorded settler in the immediate area, having purchased several tracts of land on Concession II, Wallace Township, in 1854. McDowell built a cabin on Lot 18, next to Lot 19, which he sold to the railway. After the sale of his land, he quit farming, used the sale money to open a stave factory and feed mill, and became the town's first mayor. To the east, William Dalley settled on Lot 21, Concession I, in Minto Township, opening an Inn in 1856, doubtless to accommodate travelers using the Saugeen Gravel Road. Dalley was apparently not successful, as there is no mention of him after he sold the land adjoining his hotel. It is quite possible he sold his hotel to William Thompson, who was a hotel proprietor in Palmerston in 1872. Thompson owned land adjoining McDowell's in Wallace Township. Although there is no record of the transaction, McDowell probably sold one of his tracts of land to Thompson as early as 1862 when Thompson became his son-in-law. Thompson did not live on this land, but in Toronto where he was an assistant manager of a small hotel, the Orion, from 1860 to 1870.

By 1870 several families settled in the general vicinity. John Kearns was one settler-farmer; he left farming to open a flaxmill when Palmerston became a town and was one of the town's first councillors. Adam Ranton was another farmer who settled near Palmerston, around 1858. His great grandson today runs Ranton Place, a motel-physical fitness-dining com-

plex situated on the old Ranton farm. This farm was on Lots 44 and 46, Concession II, Wallace Township.

There were some who owned land in the area, but who do not appear in any records prior to the sale of Lot 19 in 1871.¹ Such names as William Murdock and Hugh McEwing are recorded as land owners but presumably lived elsewhere. Murdock, as a matter of fact, appears only as a party to land transactions in 1871. McEwing surfaces frequently after this time, as factory owner, feed store proprietor, and town official.

When Thomas McDowell agreed to sell part of his land to the Wellington Grey and Bruce Railway, he had this particular tract of 100 acres resurveyed. That portion set aside for the railway and designated as Lot 19 consisted of 4 and 3/5th acres. After this initial sale McDowell continued to subdivide his land into town sites of the standard one chain by

¹ One of the difficulties in the research on the town of Palmerston was the lack of records. This lack is attributable to three facts: frequent fires which destroyed municipal and township files; lack of interest on the part of the railways to keep records at all or to dispose periodically of older documents; and inadequate newspaper or organizational records.

two (approximately 66 x 132 feet).² However, in the three blocks which were to be the business district of Palmerston, the lots were 122 feet in depth with a public service road in the rear constructed on the extra ten feet of the original survey. The ten feet were bought by the new owner and donated to the town.³ Other owners of township lots followed McDowell's example and subdivided into town lots, selling their lands quickly and easily to businessmen seeking to establish themselves in the area. These transactions were accomplished without benefit of a professional real estate agent, each settler acting as his own agent.⁴

The main street of Palmerston was the dividing line

²In Canada there is the township lot which consists of 100 acres, and the town lots--one-fifth of an acre. Since a township may be subdivided into town lots there is frequently a duplicate of lot numbers which gives rise to confusion. Lot 19 sold for the Palmerston station was an unusual acreage.

³There are two original deeds in the private collection of the MacRitchie family in Palmerston. Both deeds show the land to have been held since 1861 by Adam Bostwick who purchased the land from the government. On March 23, he sold one lot to William Nowry in 1873, and the other lot to Marion Wooldridge on June 1, 1873. J. R. Hamilton was the conveyer.

⁴No real estate agent is recorded in Palmerston until the 1989 census.

between Minto and Wallace Townships as well as Wellington and Perth Counties. Palmerston, therefore, sprawled as one unit over two townships and two counties. Both townships and counties for some time considered Palmerston as legally theirs. It required an Act of Parliament to settle the question in 1875.⁵

Once the town-station-junction had been created, it required an official name. The Railway Board members gave the honor of selecting it to John McDermott, a mill owner in Dryden and Reeve of Wallace Township, due to his deep interest in the success of the railway and his very active and influential support of the local bonuses. McDermott choose the name Palmerston in honor of the celebrated English Statesman.⁷

⁵It should be pointed out here that today Palmerston is officially in Minto Township, Wellington County. However, Main Street still physically divides the town, townships and counties. The town area north of Main is in Minto Township, Wellington County, and the town land south of Main is in Wallace Township, Perth County. Palmerston is considered one entity, however, for tax and voting purposes and is legally a part of Minto Township, Wellington County.

⁶Prior to this time the station was referred to as Wallace Station.

⁷Palmerston is pronounced by the people who reside there in two different ways. In general, those who are native born or over thirty years residence say PAMerston, dropping the L sound and employing a flat A. All other residents pronounce it Palmerston, including the L sound and using the Italian A

The railway did not lack sufficient men to lay the tracks. Sources differ on just who these men were, though all agree they were not immigrants imported especially for the work. The Canadian National Railway files ⁸ reveal little with the exception of a vague assumption that the workers were transients, as local residents were fully occupied, usually on farms. However, other sources claim the labor was local or obtained from nearby communities. No railway payrolls exist to substantiate either theory, but the Reverend Mr. George Young ⁹ claims that in discussions with elderly men of Palmerston they remember moving with their parents from nearby communities so that their fathers could lay the track, then they remained in Palmerston. From wherever they came, they lived, for the most part, in tent towns which followed them from one base of operations to another.

⁸When the Canadian National Railway absorbed the Grand Trunk Railway in 1923, it also took all the files of the Grand Trunk. At the same time the Canadian National took over twelve other railways together with their files. Much material had to be reclassified, and valuable historical material was discarded. According to the present historical research officer in Montreal, the reclassifying was done by untrained people and thus the existing files are incomplete and consist primarily of various editions of the official railway magazine, some maps, and bound volumes of railway legislation.

⁹The Reverend George Young was the pastor of Knox Presbyterian Church in Palmerston from 1949 to 1963. He is a railway buff whose private railway library and collection includes many items not available elsewhere. He resides in Sarnia, Ontario.

In the fall of 1871, the first train, pulled by a ceremonial locomotive called the ADAM BROWN, arrived in Palmerston.¹⁰ The station area was already surrounded by an assortment of frame buildings and in the process of becoming a town. This first train carried more equipment and supplies, as well as men eager to become a part of the new community. What met their eyes were sights characteristic of a boom town, which had arisen in just nine months. They saw a tavern-inn owned by Richard Johnston, Henry Cousin's new saw mill, a general store run by Jake Miller, and an official Post Office. Almost immediately upon hearing the news of the opening of the railway station on Lot 19, the Dryden Postmaster, Richard Johnston, had moved the Post Office, together with his Inn, to Palmerston, one mile to the east. He was followed in a mad scramble by the remaining business, so that Dryden, population 100, ceased to exist.¹¹

¹⁰The ADAM BROWN engine, a wood burning locomotive, was used by the Wellington Grey and Bruce Railway to bring the first train into each new station on the line.

¹¹As the years passed, the opportunities in Palmerston drained more than one small cross-roads community. Teviotdale, for instance, three miles to the west, was halted in its growth and remains to this day but a wide spot in the road.

WESTERN ONTARIO 1875



Figure 5

They found, as well, carpenters, blacksmiths, wagoners, and machinists. They were told that soon there would be tailors, bootmakers, doctors, dentists, and barbers. They saw the repair and maintenance sheds of the railway already nearly constructed, and they saw the plans for the station and roundhouse. They were told of the new factories and mills to come which would afford even more employment opportunities.

Palmerston had all the aspects of a thriving community, but it is difficult to ascertain just how many businesses were in operation in 1872 as lists compiled from the LISTOWEL BANNER and the STRATFORD BEACON differ. The discrepancies can, perhaps, be explained by the fact that both newspapers at times combined factories and mills, while at other times enumerated them separately.¹² All of these businesses had been lured to Palmerston by the coming of the railway. When the railway had turned Lot 19 into a divisional headquarters it had built maintenance and repair facilities which created a large number of jobs. Businesses of all kinds were drawn to Palmerston to service the needs of the men who held those jobs. All of this happened very quickly---Palmerston did not just grow; it exploded.

¹² Of the seventeen categories of business and professions listed, the two newspapers agreed on only eight. Thus the number of businesses varies from thirty-four to forty-one.

Another rapid expansion occurred in the population. In April of 1871 one family of five persons lived in close proximity to Lot 19, and three other families lived within a two mile radius, a total of some twenty-three people. A year later 352 persons lived in the area. In 1873 the count stood at 876 persons. By 1874 the population stood at 1693, just double what it had been the year before. ¹³

By 1872 the community of Palmerston had already given rise to a group of recognized leaders. Thomas McDowell and Adam Ranton lived on land close to the new town. McDowell led the political fight for the town's incorporation and was to be Palmerston's first mayor. Adam Ranton refused any public office but was active in many civic affairs. Some of the new leaders, such as Hugh McEwing and William Thompson, owned land but did not reside in Palmerston until the railway station came. McEwing lived, and owned a business in Dryden, and Thompson resided in Toronto. Both were successful businessmen and active in public life after coming to Palmerston. Thompson was first Reeve of the town and later served three terms as councillor, while McEwing became the second mayor and reeve, ending his career as Police Magistrate. Dr. Alexander Stewart came in 1871, fresh from medical school in

¹³ The Stratford Beacon, November 27, 1874, p.8.

Toronto and brought recognition to Palmerston with his vaccine farm. J. R. Hamilton, Palmerston's first Town Clerk, also came in 1871 from Toronto as a surveyor. William Nowry, Richard Johnston and John McDermott moved when the entire town of Dryden settled in Palmerston.

As the town expanded, many of these leading citizens began to think of incorporation as a village. As an unincorporated village the citizens had elected a Reeve, John McComb, farmer, who was sent to the Wallace Township Council in 1873. However, the representation was withdrawn the following year. Just exactly why is not known. The records of both Wallace Township and the relevant newspaper copies of the PALMERSTON PROGRESS are missing. The LISTOWEL BANNER makes mention only of the withdrawal, giving no reason for it, contenting itself with the hope that Palmerston would reconsider. On June 3, 1874, a petition was presented to the Wellington County Council, seeking incorporation as a village in Wellington County. Perhaps the rural orientation of Wallace Township no longer fit the needs of the growing railway center. Perhaps Wellington County appeared to have more in common with Palmerston, since Wellington County had several urban communities. It appears, however, that Wellington County could not quite make up its mind, so Palmerston appealed to Perth County as well. But both at Guelph, the Wellington County seat, and at Stratford, the Perth County seat, the councils leisurely studied the incorp-

oration petitions and argued over the plan with all its complications and ramifications for township and county. The community leaders of Palmerston were impatient and refused to wait submissively for either Guelph or Stratford to make up its collective mind.

On Wednesday, November 18, 1874, in the second session of the Ontario legislature, the leaders of Palmerston presented a petition for the incorporation of Palmerston, no longer as a village but as a town, annexed to Wellington County. This group was composed of Thomas McDowell, William Thompson, Dr. Alexander Stewart, Hugh McEwing, J. R. Hamilton, John McDermott and A. Armour.¹⁴

In less than a month, on December 21, 1874, the legislature at Toronto¹⁵ assented to an Act of Incorporation for the Town of Palmerston within the Township of Minto and the County of Wellington.¹⁶ By this special act of the legislature, sitting as the Private Bill Committee, Palmerston

¹⁴A. Armour was the fiery editor of the conservative Palmerston Progress.

¹⁵The legislature and government at Toronto are referred to, throughout Ontario, as Queen's Park.

¹⁶Ontario, Law, Statutes etc., Act of Incorporation for the Town of Palmerston, 1875, 38 Vic., Jordan's Statutes of the Province of Ontario, VI, 164-166.

skipped from being an unincorporated village to the status of an incorporated town. Aside from this unusual, though not unprecedented move, Palmerston also determined its affiliation with the county of its choice.

The Act which incorporated the town of Palmerston included a section defining the regulations for election of Mayor and Town Council, empowering J. R. Hamilton to act as first town clerk. Hamilton was authorized to post nominations and to hold elections for Mayor, Reeve and Council. In Ontario councils have never been organized along party lines being for the most part too small. Electors also object to having provincial or dominion party politics intrude on local affairs. Councillors are elected on their positions on local matters primarily. Often their opinions on provincial or dominion matters are not even solicited.

After the first elections held early in 1875, the first Town Council convened on January 27. Presiding over Reeve William Thompson and Councillors William Nowry, Josiah Evans, John Kearns, Freeborn Kee, Robert Shields, Matthew Potts, David Stenhaus, Alexander Stewart and John Wade was Mayor Thomas McDowell. J. R. Hamilton was appointed town clerk.¹⁷ In this group there were a variety of occupations but

¹⁷ Historical Atlas of Wellington County, Ontario, 1906.

strangely enough none of the men were railway men. There were four merchants, Potts, Shields, Nowry and Kee. Nowry came from Dryden, Kee from Toronto, and Shields came from Fergus, but from where Potts came is unknown. Evans farmed on the second concession of Wallace, while Kearns had transported his flax mill from Arthur. Both Stenhaus, a baker, and Wade, a tailor, had moved from Listowel. Stewart was, of course, the town's physician and came from Toronto. Reeve Thompson, a former Torontonionian, was the hotel proprietor, and Mayor McDowell, an early settler-farmer, owned several factories and had sold the first land in Palmerston.

According to the Ontario Municipalities Act, councils were restricted in their authority from the time of the Baldwin Act in 1849. Based on the 1849 Act, the later Municipalities Act stipulated that a council might act only as specified by the provincial government. A council's jurisdiction was confined to local problems in a prescribed way, and even in these regulations councils were hampered due to frequent amendments enacted by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs at Queen's Park, whose responsibility it is to interpret the Ontario Municipalities Act. Once established in office, the council wielded its powers and fulfilled its duties in the best interests of the citizens. The By-Laws which the Town Council passed in its two years reflected a determination to keep lawlessness to a minimum and to pro-

mote town development. ¹⁸ No doubt the railway, at least the men in middle management, strongly encouraged this attitude in order to facilitate its own operations. The council appeared to have the full support of the citizens if the local weekly newspapers are accurate. As a source of local feelings small local weeklies are generally reliable, since they are close to the people. They are also inclined to report in detail each event, and according to the LISTOWEL BANNER and PALMERSTON PROGRESS there was remarkably little lawlessness for a community which grew to over 1700 people in just five years.

The By-Laws evidence a concern for making Palmerston a safe, livable and prosperous town. By-Law No. 2, for instance, passed on February 12, 1875, provided seventeen separate regulations for the licensing and operation of taverns and shops. These regulations were both practical and complete. Perhaps Reeve Thompson, an experienced hotel manager, was the guiding force behind them. Or quite possibly the Temperance Movement which was quite strong at this time in Canada, may have influenced the council. Certainly railway management

¹⁸ As prescribed by the Ontario Municipalities Act, councils govern by passing resolutions called By-Laws. By comes from the old Danish BYE, meaning township. A By-Law must have three readings before passage, ordinarily on three separate days.

although not yet represented on council, would have encouraged strict regulations since sobriety was a requisite for its workers. Another factor to be considered is that the more solid citizens of small towns all tended to belong to private clubs and organizations which had clubrooms to which they could go at any time. For instance, the I.O.O.F. had clubrooms over Hugh McEwing's feed store by 1872, and the Masons rented two rooms in Mr. Leopard's Hall, an Inn on Queen Street, after March of 1874. They therefore had no need for saloons and could have decided to control such establishments as firmly as possible, feeling the habitués were either transients or less than responsible citizens. Perhaps special attention was paid to this matter simply because the "boom town" atmosphere needed to be controlled, and council was aware of that need. Whatever the reason, taverns were strictly regulated and the regulations were strictly enforced. These regulations were much the same as other municipalities had, but in Palmerston the inspector who was appointed to enforce them was a citizen of good stable character. Council chose John Duke, who had farmed on Concession III, Minto Township, for several years and who was well respected.

The council made certain that the machinery for the running of Palmerston would be economically sound by pro-

viding in By-Law No. 3, passed April 27, 1875, for the hiring of a Treasurer who was to be paid the sum of \$25.00 for the year. It was the Treasurer's responsibility to collect and distribute all town monies after the Reeve instructed him to do so. The council attempted to assure law and order by the appointment of a Town Constable at the salary of \$25.00 per annum, plus a fee for each service he performed in cases brought before the proper authorities. Again council appointed a worthy man to fulfill the Constable's duties, John Westbridge, a retired policeman from Southhampton.

Finances in Palmerston were provided primarily through taxation on property, license fees and fines. Property taxes were levied at the rate of twenty-three mils on the dollar.¹⁸ There are two factors in the raising of taxes in Canada: a tax base and a tax rate. The tax base is determined by the province and consists of the aggregate of the units upon which the tax rate is levied and is termed tax assessment. The tax base in Ontario municipalities was real property, business property, poll tax and dog tax. The tax rate was up to the municipality to determine.

The hard-headed businessmen who composed the Town

¹⁸ By-Law No. 10, passed September 7, 1875, did not provide for the first nine months of incorporation. Running expenses for those months were provided for by public subscription, deductible when tax assessments were determined.

Council were aware of the value of a progressive town. They were also aware of what this entailed: good roads free of snow drifts and water-filled chuck holes; sidewalks, obviously of wood, which would require frequent repair; and public buildings in which to conduct municipal affairs. All of these enterprises necessitated labor at various sites and the hauling of wood and equipment to these working sites. In order to provide for this and remain solvent, the council turned to the provincial laws governing statute labor. According to the Municipality Institutions Act of Upper Canada, 1849, the Palmerston Town Council had the authority to demand free labor for a fixed amount of days from the citizenry of the town. Since the Municipal Institutions Act was constantly, and still is, being revised at Queen's Park, the council was acting under the last revision concerning statute labor prior to 1876. This revision was in 1873 and can be found in the statutes of the fourth session of the fourth legislature of Ontario. It comes under Division VII, Powers of Councils of Townships, Towns and Incorporated Villages, Article 390, Statute Labour. Thus By-Law No.18, passed in a special session of the Town Council on June 13, 1876, provided for the performance of 793 days of statute labor, determined by population, and the appointment of Pathmasters to implement it. Pathmasters were given specific areas of the town and it was their responsibility to superintend the

expenditure of all statute labor assessed for that area. Many of the Pathmasters were also town officials who considered it a part of their civic duty to act in a double capacity. Such Pathmasters included Mayor McDowell, Reeve Thompson, Councilor Kearns and future Mayor McEwing. A Pathmaster received a remuneration as well as the right to count his days of supervision as statute labor owed.

As in all small towns, the council took very seriously the question of statute labor, upon which it relied for town construction and repair. It was taken equally seriously by the citizens who realized it was a necessity if the town were to be an efficient and safe entity in which to rear a family. Since statute labor took a man from his primary source of income, every possible facet of the requirement was covered and every contingency was enumerated by law. Considering that Palmerston, as a border town, contained an element of drifters, and as a railway town contained a certain number of transients with little town loyalty, it is easy to see why the rules governing statute labor were so specific.

The Town Council passed twelve separate sections of the By-Laws which were to govern the statute labor operations. These sections ranged from setting the exact amount of labor time required to constitute a day's labor, to the penalty affixed if that labor were not fulfilled, to the method of collection if the fine were not paid. These sections defined

the specific duties of the Pathmaster and the penalty he incurred if he failed to fulfill those duties. Finally, these sections provided an alternative if there were a need for labor which was immediate and for which there were no legitimate statute labor owed.²⁰

The choice of Palmerston as a railway junction marked it automatically as a leading farm center as well, for equipment would be unloaded there for the surrounding farms, processing factories would certainly be established there, and the growing population would demand many and varied farm products. Therefore the council quickly passed By-Lay No. 21 on October 7, 1876, which allotted \$1,635.00 for the purchase of land on Main Street between William and Jane, from Thomas McDowell for the building of a Town Market. This market was strictly regulated, with a clerk appointed by the council to enforce the thirty separate sections of the extensive and stringent regulations. They set the days and the times of the market, they set the quality of the products, they provided official scales for correct weights and measures, they devised a system of fines for offenders against the regulations, and they provided the means of collecting those fines. With a final provision that "no meat, grain,

²⁰In Ontario a citizen could also work off the poll tax.

²¹By-Law No. 23, Section 11, December 12, 1876.

vegetables, fruit, fish, hay, straw, fodder, wood, lumber, ahingles, or farm products of any description should be sold in the streets of Palmerston", the founding fathers rigidly confined all market sales so that they could be effectively controlled.

In one respect though, council had difficulty, for the appointed market clerk appears to have been changed at this early period on an average of every two months. The term was to have been for one year, so either the rate of pay was not sufficient and the duties too heavy, or the appointees were unstable. Since the council could have raised the pay scale and appointed assistants but did neither, it is quite possible their appointees were not of the best.

In June, 1876, ten acres of land were purchased from Adam Bostwick for \$750.00 for a cemetery by enactment of By-Law N. 17. This purchase was one of the mistakes the council made for it chose land which would, within two years, be entirely encircled by the town, necessitating an almost immediate move.

Throughout the province there had been changes in the educational field, stretching over the fifties and sixties. Egerton Ryerson ²² was the dominant figure in trying to cope

²²Egerton Ryerson was a Canadian Methodist preacher, journalist and teacher who desired a unified school system in Canada. Superintendent of Ontario schools from 1867 to 1873, his philosophy was that the state should provide education to every child if the parent could not.

with the language barriers, the grammar schools, the separatist schools, and a myriad of other problems. In conformity with the Education Act of 1871,²³ which Ryerson succeeded in getting passed, the council allotted \$450.00 for the immediate purchase from John Kearns in April, 1875, of suitable property and the erection of a public school house. Palmerston was to become a hub for the education of the children of north Wellington County in the twentieth century.

In general, prices in Palmerston were not excessive. There were, naturally, some instances of profiteering but they were kept to a minimum as far as it is possible to tell. The only available record covering this point is the LISTOWEL BANNER which commented in several issues over the years 1870 to 1876 on the fact that the land owners had sold only to those who evidenced a firm intention of permanency, which tended to discourage speculators and to stop inflated prices. Those who did go into business found stringent regulations which prevented inflationary prices. Also the good will of fellow businessmen, coupled with the need to be competitive was a formidable deterrent. The railway, in its own sphere, helped keep prices low. Since the railway was the reason for

²³The Education Act of 1871 provided for expansion of the local taxation compulsory program for all common schools, the age level from seven to twelve years, a Normal school program and a technical institute in Toronto.

the town's existence, Palmerston was anxious not to offend the railway. After all it was the railway payroll which sustained the town. Obviously the railway supported efforts which would maintain undiminished, the purchasing power of its employees. On the other hand, because of these very wages of railway employees, which were somewhat higher and more steady than in other occupations, actual prices on some articles were slightly higher than in many other towns of comparable size in the province. But the physical proximity of several villages and towns helped to prevent those prices from inflating more than five or six cents at most. This price differential did not apply to sixty-three percent of a selected group of articles.²⁴ With viable communities not farther away than three (Teviotdale), six (Harriston), and nine (Listowel) miles, the merchants of Palmerston absolutely had to remain competitive.

Property values were also kept from skyrocketing, and again it was mostly due to the good sense of the founding

²⁴Price information was based on the comparison of prices in advertisements appearing in copies of the Drayton Enterprise, the Palmerston Progress, the Listowel Banner, and the Stratford Beacon during the years 1871 to 1876, and various handbills on file at the Wellington County Museum, the Perth County Museum, and the Simcoe County Museum.

fathers who decided the future lay, not in speculation, but in solid citizenry, and made every attempt to screen out such speculators. The value of land did, naturally, increase somewhat, but the increase was kept to a minimum. Practical proof of the stability of land can be seen in the fact that a lot was purchased on April 27, 1875, at the corner of Queen and Temple Streets, just two blocks from the heart of town, from William Thompson, for \$450.00. Just eighteen months later, on October 17, 1876, four lots were purchased on the block bounded by James and William Streets, from William Murdock, in the very heart of town, for a total of \$1,975.00. This is approximately \$16.00 per lot per annum increase. If the more favorable locations of the second purchase are taken into consideration, the increase is even further diminished.²⁴

The impact of the new ideas of science and Biblical criticism which had created a growing skepticism in regard to the supernatural aspects of Christianity in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century did not affect Canadian churches until the late nineteenth century. Therefore the churches of Palmerston were still very orthodox in doctrine with reform

²⁴ Town Council made both purchases, the first for a school house and the second for a market house.

yet to be felt.

By 1875 Palmerston had four different congregations, but it could boast of only two permanent church buildings. The Methodist Congregations, the Methodist Episcopal and the Wesleyan Methodist, both met in barns on the properties of their members; only the Anglicans and Presbyterians had permanent structures. St. Paul's Anglican Church, built in the same year as the town's incorporation, was constructed of grey stone, mostly by volunteer parishoners, and situated on the southeast corner of John and James Streets, where it stands today. The vicar, William Green, serviced St. Paul's on circuit. He was repalced in 1876 by a permanent vicar, the Reverend Mr. William Clark. A search of the records shows that in the first year of its existence St. Paul's services embraced three of the main religious events of life: a baptism, a marriage, and a funeral.²⁵ St. Paul's had a registered congregation of over 200 persons. Richard Johnston, John McCoomb, John McDermott and John Bridge were some

²⁵In the registry of St. Paul's for the years 1875 to 1879 are recorded the baptisms of four girls and two boys on December 5, 1875. On December 25, 1875, is recorded the marriage of Fred Westgate and Sara Thompson. It is interesting to note that while John signed his name, Sara could only make her mark. On November 25, 1875, George Hager, killed in a railway yards accident, was buried from St. Paul's.

leading citizens of Palmerston who attended services at St. Paul's.

The other permanent church structure was Knox Presbyterian which records first mention by that name in 1873. Prior to this the church was referred to as the Wallace-Minto Church and drew its members from these two townships. Situated, as the Wallace-Minto Church, approximately two miles south of the town, it was moved to Palmerston proper in 1874, with the Reverend Mr. David Anderson as minister. Knox Presbyterian had the largest number of registered parishoners, just under 350. Prominent Palmerstonians among its members were Hugh McEwing, Hugh Hindeman, John Oliver, and Dr. Alexander Stewart.

The Methodists numbered well over 400 persons, but were split into two distinct groups which did not cooperate with each other. Files show some early members to have been John Kearns, J. R. Hamilton, James Best, Thomas McDowell, and William Thompson.

During these early years and until the 1950's these three religions dominated Palmerston. While later years were to bring the Mennonites, the Roman Catholics, the Salvation Army and the Baptists, none were ever to challenge seriously these three leaders in attendance or influence. The more important citizens continued to belong to these groups, and town leaders continued to be selected from their midst.

The citizens of Palmerston drew on several newspapers for information in these very early years. They had access to three weeklies: the STRATFORD BEACON, the LISTOWEL BANNER, and the DRAYTON ENTERPRISE for news centering in western Ontario. For national and world news they had the daily HAMILTON TIMES. To these was added, in 1874, the PALMERSTON PROGRESS, a weekly edited by A. Amour and given to conservative ideals vigorously propounded by the editor in feature and editorial.²⁶

The small town weekly has always seemed to exercise a tremendous amount of influence in Canada. For one thing the editor of a weekly is probably known to all of his subscribers. He is thus more to be trusted in his editorial policy than an unknown writer on an impersonal large paper. Even if he is not trusted, his words will have a negative influence. For another, although a weekly is a forum for purely local matters, it cannot help but influence attitudes toward provincial and dominion affairs as it explores the influence they have on local legislation. The PALMERSTON

²⁶Only a few copies exist today. Due to fires primarily, most copies have disappeared. One copy dated January 7, 1875, is at the Wellington County Museum. One copy dated December 17, 1874 is in the Provincial Archives in Toronto, and one copy dated February 4, 1878, is in the files of the Listowel Banner. There might be other copies in private hands.

PROGRESS as well as its successors, was one of the most important governing influences of the town.

Social life in Palmerston during these formative years was very much like social life in any other similar place in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Much of it was centered around the churches, not only in religious services on Sunday, but in the various meetings held throughout the week. Altar societies, elders' meetings, choir practices, doctrinal instructions, and youth groups all had a strong social orientation. Each week one or another church would sponsor pot-luck dinners which packed the church hall. Committee reports from the Presbyterian files often list over 100 present at such dinners.

In the spring and fall there were semi-monthly dances sponsored by churches and other groups. These were usually abandoned, except during the Christmas holidays, in favor of skating and sledding parties on the nearby farm ponds and hills in the winter season. In the summer, picnics were held, often accompanied by ballgames or swimming. Much social activity was centered around sports. In winter hockey and curling were the center of gatherings. In the spring, summer and fall, ballgames of all kinds served the same purpose. Amateur theatricals were performed on a regular basis during the year and served as entertainment through performances as well as a social get-together during rehearsals.

WorkBees, which were held to aid farmers and businessmen when disaster struck, were endless and were always followed by a supper, again pot-luck. Fairs, flower shows and civic celebrations were liberally sprinkled throughout the year. All of these events were attended by Palmerstonians of all ages, as well as the farmers who lived nearby.

Palmerston had three social clubs for men at this time. The Masons had a lodge as did the Orangemen and the International Order of Odd Fellows.

On March 9, 1874, sixteen Masons met under the leadership of Hugh Hyndeman to organize a lodge in Palmerston. Although the Grand Lodge in Toronto did not grant them a charter officially until July of that year, the new lodge began to accept members immediately and was designated Blair Lodge. By 1875 it had seventy members and was the most influential of the three existing lodges. Every public official, every businessman, every professional man was a Mason of some degree at that time. It was almost obligatory to belong to the Blair Lodge because that was where the power lay. Even the religious leaders felt they must be members.

Palmerstonians could also join, and most did, the Lodge of the International Order of Odd Fellows, which met weekly in rooms over Hugh McEwing's feed store. The I.O.O.F., ninety members strong, met each Thursday and included, like the Masons, the town's most prominent citizens. These included

Dr. Alexander Stewart, J. R. Hamilton, Thomas McDowell, J. R. Brand ²⁷ and William Thompson. The Lodge, Gordon Lodge #84, was active until just after World War II. ²⁸

The last of these three clubs for men was the Orange Lodge, called the True Blues, Lodge #655, which had distinguished members also in these early years, such as William Thompson, Dr. Alexander Stewart, John McDermott, and Hugh McEwing. The Lodge met the first Wednesday after the full moon. Although the True Blues never had more than fifty-seven members it was very active at first, even hosting the Perth County Lodge's Annual Convention in 1874. As reported in the PALMERSTON PROGRESS the event featured a parade of members in full dress regalia, marching to martial music with banners flying. Vigorous throughout the nineteenth century the membership became less distinguished and less active by the second quarter of the twentieth century and completely inactive by 1956, although it still holds a charter in 1980. While Orange Lodges still flourish in western Ontario, the town of Palmerston seemed to have outgrown its philosophy

²⁷ J. R. Brand was a station master in Palmerston.

²⁸ The I.O.O.F. is no longer active. Information concerning meetings came from the Palmerston Progress, other historical facts came from the Britannia Rebekkah Lodge files in Palmerston.

of undisguised anti-Catholicism. 29

The ladies of Palmerston, having no organized social clubs or auxiliaries at that time, had to content themselves with church work, work bees, pot-luck suppers, and an occasional tea at the rectory.

In 1875 the future of Palmerston did, indeed, appear to be unlimited. As the town entered the last quarter of the nineteenth century, it seemed obvious that the coming years would witness extraordinary progress which would impel Palmerston into a position of leadership in western Ontario.

²⁹ Information supplied by D.J.Warden, Secretary for the Loyal Orange Lodges of Western Canada.

PALMERSTON 1875-1880

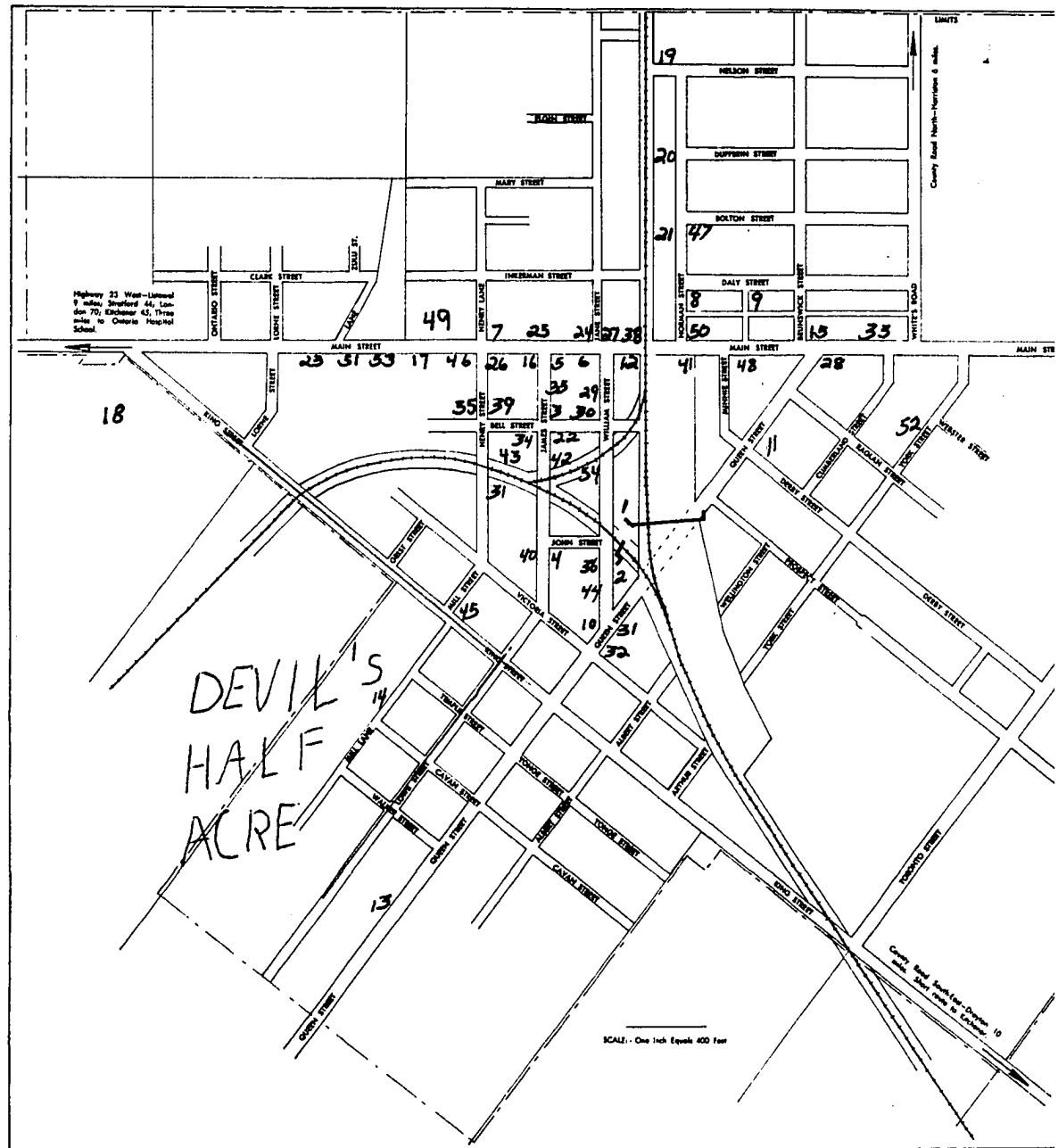


Figure 6

Palmerston 1875-1880

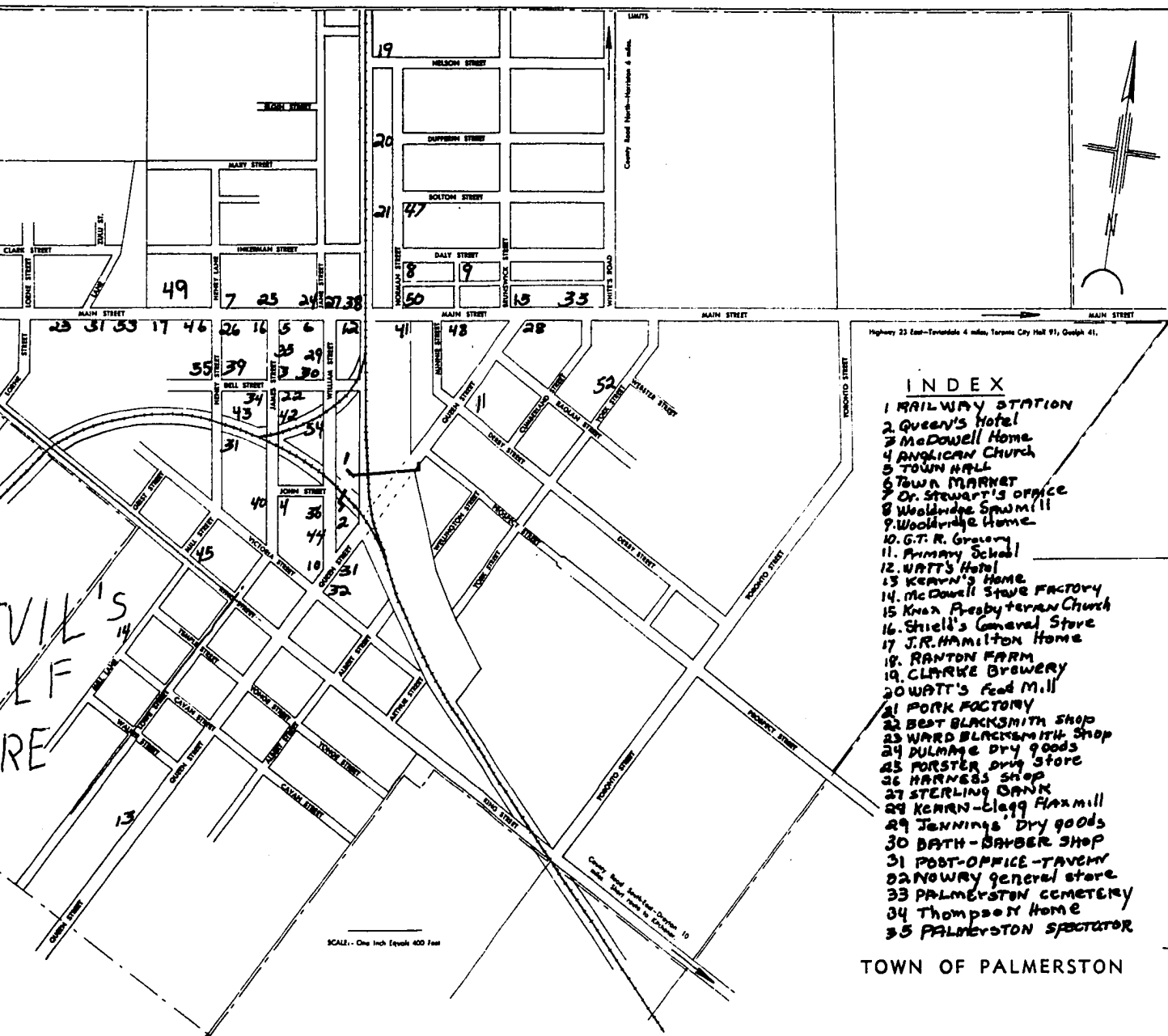


Figure 6

CHAPTER III
THE EARLY YEARS
1875-1906

The development of Palmerston in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was that of Ontario in microcosm. The miles of new track which radiated from the town, the varied new industrial ventures, the increased activity in the surrounding farm area, and the citizen's heightened awareness of a prosperous future paralleled the provincial scene.

At the time of incorporation Palmerston consisted of 540 acres which had been detached from Wallace and Minto Townships. By the Act of Incorporation 650 acres were taken from Wallace Township, Perth County, and 650 acres were detached from Minto Township, Wellington County. Thus Palmerston had the growth potential of up to 1300 acres without further legislation being necessary. As an official part of Wellington County, the town was not liable financially in any way to the county. However, Perth County had to be re-embursed for the loss of revenue attendant with the loss of acreage. An agreement between Palmerston and Perth County was worked out by May 26, 1875. After taking into consideration the available assets and the value of the town, together with the total indebtedness of Palmerston to the County, the parties representing both agreed to set the sum of \$1.750.00 in full compensation of all claims and damages. This sum was to be

paid in seventeen equal installments over a period of ten years. Palmerston hoped for financial help from Wellington County, a hope only partially fulfilled when the Wellington County Council allotted \$1000 to the town for road improvement, thus freeing some Palmerston monies for the payments.

The money allotted by Wellington County could be put to use immediately, for the streets of Palmerston were as yet dirt roads. In the dry season Palmerstonians choked on the dust, and in rainy season foundered in the mud. Even the LISTOWEL BANNER of November 10, 1876, editorialized about the "Mud! Mud! Mud! go where you will there is nothing but mud to annoy." Dirt roads were a condition of any new town of that era, but very early, in December of 1876, the Town Council appropriated \$800.00 in order to gravel Main, King, and Queen Streets, three of the town's major streets.

Although the naming of the principal street as Main Street was prosaic, the other streets are a reflection of the basic British background of the town. Such names as York, Albert, Victoria, Raglan, and Wellington manifest the sixty percent English descent of the citizenry. Another thirty percent were Scottish, with the final ten percent Irish. It was to be well into the twentieth century before any other nationalities were to invade the area in any appreciable numbers.

The streets in Palmerston were laid out in such a way

as to shape the town into almost perfect squares or rectangles.¹ Main Street, which ran east and west bisecting Palmerston, contained the majority of the retail stores, ranging from large general stores to small, one-product stores. In addition Main Street contained the offices of the professional men, the town hall, and several hotels. Off Main Street, and generally on the more important side streets, were the large mills, factories, and warehouses with myriad small businesses squeezed into the small spaces between them. Private homes were built throughout Palmerston with little regard for the niceties of business or residential zones. Homes built by the wealthy and influential nestled between businesses in the same proportion as the homes of the poorer residents.

As in most boom towns, businesses failed and families moved away, but in these formative years someone always utilized the empty buildings for new ventures, and new families moved in to occupy the abandoned homes. Although some of the buildings and homes were destroyed by fire or condemned as unsafe, many are still in use today. One such home is that built by J. R. Hamilton in the early 1870s during his tenure as town clerk. After his death, his widow con-

¹The map of contemporary Palmerston reveals these same shapes, since the town, except for recent street extensions, remains virtually unchanged.

tinued to live there, but her heirs rented it to a succession of Palmerstonians. In 1945 the Arthur Carrs purchased the home, which they sold in 1967 to the present owner, Garth McDowell, of the pioneer McDowell family. Farther east on Main Street was the home of Dr. Alexander Stewart, which he built in 1881. It passed through the hands of four different Palmerstonians, one of whom divided it into apartments. A search of the records shows that at least thirty-five other homes in use constantly since 1871.²

Buildings follow this same pattern, as one business succeeded another in the original structure. Changes were made through the years to accommodate the different types of businesses, but for that and a few cosmetic changes, many are exactly as they were in 1871. One such building is the present Rundle Feed Mill on Norman Street. It was a brewery originally, and when the brewery failed it was used as a carriage factory. Later it was used to manufacture wooden-ware, and still later as a trunk factory. The building became municipal property through default of taxes in 1931 and was leased to a man named Scott, who turned it into a mushroom and rhubarb hot house. In 1956 it was purchased from the town

² Registry files for Palmerston, Registry Office, Wellington District, Arthur, Ontario.

by a local firm which produced livestock food. Since January, 1975, it has been used as a feed mill by J. P. Rundle. Also on Norman Street is Watt's Feed Mill, built in 1875 by Alexander Watt. This building continued to operate as a feed mill for more than a century, which makes it the oldest continuously conducted business in Palmerston.³

The heart of town was, of course, the railway. As a junction-station of the Wellington Grey and Bruce line from Hamilton and Guelph to Kincardine and Southhampton, the railway station was a large operation. On its property the railway contained a station, a round house, repair sheds, storage sheds, a stores shed, and a rip track. This complex was situated on land south of Main Street, between William and Minnie Streets, and extended to Arthur Street. The entire area the railway utilized, some $4 \frac{5}{8}$ acres, formed an outsized rectangle, approximately five blocks long and two blocks in width, with a slight curve near the middle. The station constructed in 1872 was already too small by 1876; in that year a second storey was added, and the offices were moved up while the entire first floor was converted to passenger services. The station became the hub from which radiated railway lines to every town, village, and hamlet in the western

³The Mill did pass for a number of years in the late 1800s to the Moyer family. Alexander Watt sold it to them, but his son, Edwin, repurchased it in 1902. Both families operated it as a feed mill.

peninsula. If tracks did not connect directly to all of these points, they joined with other tracks which did.

Palmerston was connected directly to Guelph, Kincardine, and Southhampton by the Great Western Railway. Through these lines were tapped the trade of Bruce and Wellington Counties, both predominantly agricultural. These lines also served as the conduit for the products shipped to the ports of Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay bound for Toronto, Hamilton and London. Through connections with the Stratford and Huron Railway, Palmerston was linked to Stratford in the south and Wiarton and Owen Sound in the north. Durham was reached by a connection with the Georgian Bay and Wellington Railway. Goderich and London to the southwest were connected through the London, Huron and Bruce Line. In the east Kitchener (Berlin) was connected by the Grand Trunk Railway. All the smaller villages and towns in western Ontario were linked, by spur mostly, to these leading railway lines.⁴

In the beginning the railway locomotives were fueled by wood, thirty-five miles to the cord. Admittedly it was a long cord, trunks and large limbs cut in four foot lengths,

⁴A. W. Currie, The Grand Trunk Railway of Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), pp. 246-260.
J.M.Trout, The Railways of Canada (Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 156-158.

but Ontario was well supplied with that natural resource. The 1870s and 1880s were still pioneering days in western Ontario, and the land was being cleared for farms. Little or no market existed for wood, save that small amount sold to homes and businesses. Therefore, when the railway arrived, the farmer considered wood as a valuable cash crop. All along the lines farmers stacked cords of wood, and the train engineer was able to replenish his stock whenever he needed, leaving a metal token on the cord pile for every cord taken. The farmers used these tokens as legal tender, redeemable at seventy-five cents. So unquestioned in value were these tokens that no merchant would hesitate to honor them.

It must be understood that almost all area trains originated and terminated in Palmerston, so that travelers from any direction had to change at Palmerston before proceeding to their destinations. In other words, no passenger train actually passed through Palmerston. With freight trains the situation was somewhat different. Many freights did originate and terminate in town, but approximately one fourth of the freight traffic was considered through traffic. By this was meant that those trains which carried the products from the ports of Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay to Toronto and the East did not add any cars at Palmerston, although they might stop and take on added cargo.

As the lines were extended and the amount of traffic increased, the number of men employed by the railway to work in Palmerston grew rapidly. There were those men actively engaged in the running of the trains themselves. Depending on the type and size of the train, this number could run as high as twelve and was never fewer than eight men per train.

The station employees proper included the station master, assistant station superintendents, dispatchers, signalmen, sectionmen, yardmen, baggagemen, ticket agents, freight controllers, maintenance-of-way men, and clerks. Counting both day and night shifts these employees could number well over one hundred.

Completing the roster of railway employees were the departmental men, who were considered "backup men". They were employed in the stores department where the materials were kept, the car shops where railway cars were maintained and repaired, the rip track where locomotives were repaired, and the roundhouse where the locomotives were serviced. These departments employed over 500 men.⁵ One employee, listed as a backup man but actually a part of the station staff,

⁵ This information came from the Time Sheets and Work Schedules of the Great Western Railway, 1881, in the Canadian National Archives, 150 Front Street, Montreal, Canada.

was the call boy. He was employed to awaken sleeping railway personnel in time to get to work. He was required to know when each man was due for work and where he was to be found, so that he could run and alert the employee. This was a twenty-four hour service discontinued only when more modern communications systems made the job obsolete.

In the early years the station employees and the backup men were quite likely to live in Palmerston. Those who were actively engaged on the moving trains might or might not have lived there, as it was feasible for them to live at either end of their run.⁶ By 1906 there were over 300 employees, and the train traffic had risen to eighteen trains per day in and out of the station.⁷ The payroll of the Palmerston railway employees proved sufficient to guarantee the continued prosperity of the town, showing a sharp rise

⁶An 1882 directory lists ninety-six railway men living in Palmerston, of which forty-seven were from the trains proper. There were seventeen engineers, ten firemen, nine conductors, six brakemen, two baggagemen, and two porters. The unskilled railway workers, 160 altogether, raised the total to 256 railway workers. This is the earliest Palmerston directory known to be in existence and it is incomplete.

⁷Train schedule and work schedule of the Grand Trunk Railway, 1906. Canadian National Railway Archives, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

through these early years, reaching \$14,000.00 per month by 1906 from a modest beginning in 1876 of \$1,800.00 per month.⁸

In 1883 a charter was granted for the establishment of Chapter #181 of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers. By this time trade unionism in Canada was legal, made so in 1879 through the efforts of John McDonald. He guided through Parliament the Trades Union Act, which legalized unions, and the Criminal Law Amendment, which protected union members in their bargaining efforts. Local #181 was one of the earliest trade unions established in western Ontario and the first in Palmerston.

The Brotherhood's organization was quickly followed by the conductor's union and the trainmen's union, so that by 1888 all the running trades⁹ in Palmerston had local chapters. In the 1890s the railway carmen and switchmen also unionized in Canada, and Chapters #167 and #234 operated in the town. All skilled workers on the railway were unionized by 1900 with local chapters in Palmerston. In these early years each railway skill was organized on the basis of craft into sep-

⁸Wellington County Atlas, 1906

⁹In the railway industry running trades are those skilled workers whose jobs are on the moving trains, concerned with its actual operation. These men were considered among the most important in the industry.

arate unions. The unskilled, for instance, those men who worked in the roundhouse cleaning out engine fire-boxes, scraping soot and scale from the boiler tubes, or lubricating the engine's moveable parts, remained unorganized for the most part. But by about 1902 the American Federation of Labor, which had succeeded in ousting the Canadian Labor Congress as the dominant union force in Canada, gathered the mass of unskilled workers into its fold, railway included. By 1910 the skilled workers were also a part of the A. F. of L., although the railway running trades insisted on a loose affiliation.

In Palmerston the local chapters were concerned primarily with pay scales, leisure time, and overtime pay for work beyond the normal hours. The socialism with which the trade unions in the large cities flirted at this time did not affect Palmerston greatly, if at all. Wage scales varied from town to town and for a laborer in Palmerston in the 1870s averaged around \$1.00 per day, which by the 1890s had risen to \$1.80 per day. Those who were in the running trades were paid by the 100 mile run, which constituted an eight hour day. The trade union chapters of each separate skill negotiated for the rate per 100 miles with the engineers receiving the highest rate, \$2.50, and the conductors the lowest rate, \$2.00. The men in skilled running trade unions, throughout the history of the railways, always received the

best wages.¹⁰

One problem the railway terminals such as Palmerston had was to reverse the direction of locomotives after completing a run. This was solved by railways through the very simple expedient of building a shape similar to a hollow Y into the yard track system. The locomotives could then be maneuvered back and forth on these tracks until it faced the right direction. Palmerston used this system until 1904 when a turntable, which could swing locomotives into position, was installed, producing a savings in time, labor and money.

Rich farmlands surrounded Palmerston, for the most part still the mixed farms of early pioneer days. As yet they were usually fifty to one hundred acres which a man worked for his living and upon which he lived. He worked his farm with the aid of his wife and children when they were old enough to contribute. Before that time he worked it alone or with a hired hand or two. These hired hands were frequently kept on when their services were no longer essential. The majority of farmers still had six or seven cows, several dozen hens, and three or four pigs. The eggs were taken to

¹⁰These figures are averages arrived at by combining figures quoted by retired railway personnel whose fathers had also been railway workers. They were able to testify that their pay scale was about eighteen cents higher than their father's pay scale had been.

town to be sold or bartered, and the remaining livestock provided the food for the farmer's family or could be exchanged for other needed commodities. Few grain crops were cultivated specifically as cash crops; that which was grown, mostly corn, was for fodder.

But more and more there were farmers attempting to specialize. In Wellington and Perth Counties it took the form of hog farms, and beef and dairy farms, due probably to the early introduction from England of Durham cattle and Berkshire hogs by Roland Wingfield in 1833. This imported stock flourished for Wingfield, and the herds slowly spread throughout the two counties. Wingfield also imported South-down sheep, which in the beginning seemed to thrive also, so that sheep farms would take their place beside hog and cattle farms. However, after reaching a peak in the 1860s, sheep farms declined and by 1880 had all but disappeared. It is estimated that one of every seven farms was a hog or cattle farm by the early 1900s.¹¹

Although the railway was the chief industry in Palmerston, other industries did exist to supply the local inhabitants and the surrounding farms with goods and services. This was consistent with other small towns in western Ontario

¹¹Canada, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock in Early Ontario, (Toronto: Government Printing Office, 1976) p.4.

at this time. All had flax mills, flour mills, sawmills, foundries, stave factories and carriage factories, as did Palmerston. Beyond these small mills there were several larger industries.¹²

The largest and most widely-known industry was the Palmerston Pork Factory, established in 1899 along co-operative lines. Farmer's co-operatives had been active in Ontario, supported by the Grange Movement, since 1870. The Patrons of Industry also supported the farmers since they considered farmers as patrons of all industries and entitled to share in its fruits. Both the Grange and the Patrons were strong in these years and gave full backing to farmers who were angry with the combines and middlemen believed to be profiteering at the farmer's expense. Despite the favorable climate in Ontario for co-operatives and despite the \$60,000 expended on equipment, the Palmerston Pork Factory did not prove a success. Possibly the members failed to have sufficient guidelines for the proper management of the plant, or perhaps the prices offered to the non-members were not competitive, and co-operatives needed the patronage of non-members. Whatever the case the plant was taken over by

¹²The standard used to measure an industry's size is the number of employees rather than profit figures, according to the Wellington, Perth, and Waterloo Atlases which were the sources employed for this information.

Joseph O'Mara, who had made it into a prosperous factory by 1906. According to O'Mara the plant employed over sixty men to whom he paid \$30,000 in wages per year. Over 100,000 hogs from the area were processed each year with the overall gross figure of \$750.00 per year. 13

The factory sent hogs and hog products to all markets, domestic and foreign. Labels indicate markets in England, France, Ireland, the United States and Germany. Domestic labels were for Ottawa, Montreal, Hamilton, Quebec, Toronto, and Kingston.¹⁴ Yet the plant closed deep in debt in 1910. Newspaper accounts gave no reason for the failure, but G. Y. Donaldson claims the failure was due to price manipulation by

...a few wealthy manipulators in a certain city,
...having no regard for the welfare of the producer
...combining to control prices and the market, wiping
out our factory...becoming millionaires to the
disgrace of our beloved Canada. 15

This may be the true explanation, for at this time the Davies Pork Company of Toronto bought up a number of pork packing plants in western Ontario and availed itself of a large capital backing to pay highest prices for hogs and to sell the

¹³ The Wellington County Atlas, 1906, p.21.

¹⁴ "The Palmerston Pork Factory," Palmerston Spectator, November 1, 1906, p.8.

¹⁵ G. Y. Donaldson, "My Home Town," (unpublished paper, Palmerston Library, 1942), p.3.

finished products at prices with which Palmerston could not compete.

Another of the larger industries was the Sash and Door Factory and Sawmill owned by Major Wooldridge, who employed between forty and fifty men. Major Wooldridge ¹⁶ was the chief contractor for Palmerston, constructing most of the homes and businesses. Established in 1878, this factory continued well into the twentieth century. The Canada Malting Company, Ltd., employed about twenty-five men in its brewery. The building was destroyed by fire in 1910, and the brewery moved to Harriston. The Palmerston Carriage Company, makers of farm wagons and fine carriages, employed from eighteen to twenty men. This company continued until after World War I, when it experienced financial difficulties and was lured to Mount Forest with the promise of a municipal bonus. Watt's flourmill, established in 1875 and family owned, employed sixteen men.

Palmerston had four large general stores, one of which, The Toronto House, was owned by the Jennings Brothers. Prior to opening the Palmerston store, one of these brothers had owned a similar store in Toronto on Yonge Street which he

¹⁶Major Wooldridge was one of the wealthiest men in Palmerston. His home was considered a mansion. He served two terms on council and was an elder in Knox Presbyterian Church. His heirs left Palmerston for Vancouver after World War I.

TWO EARLY PALMERSTON FACTORIES

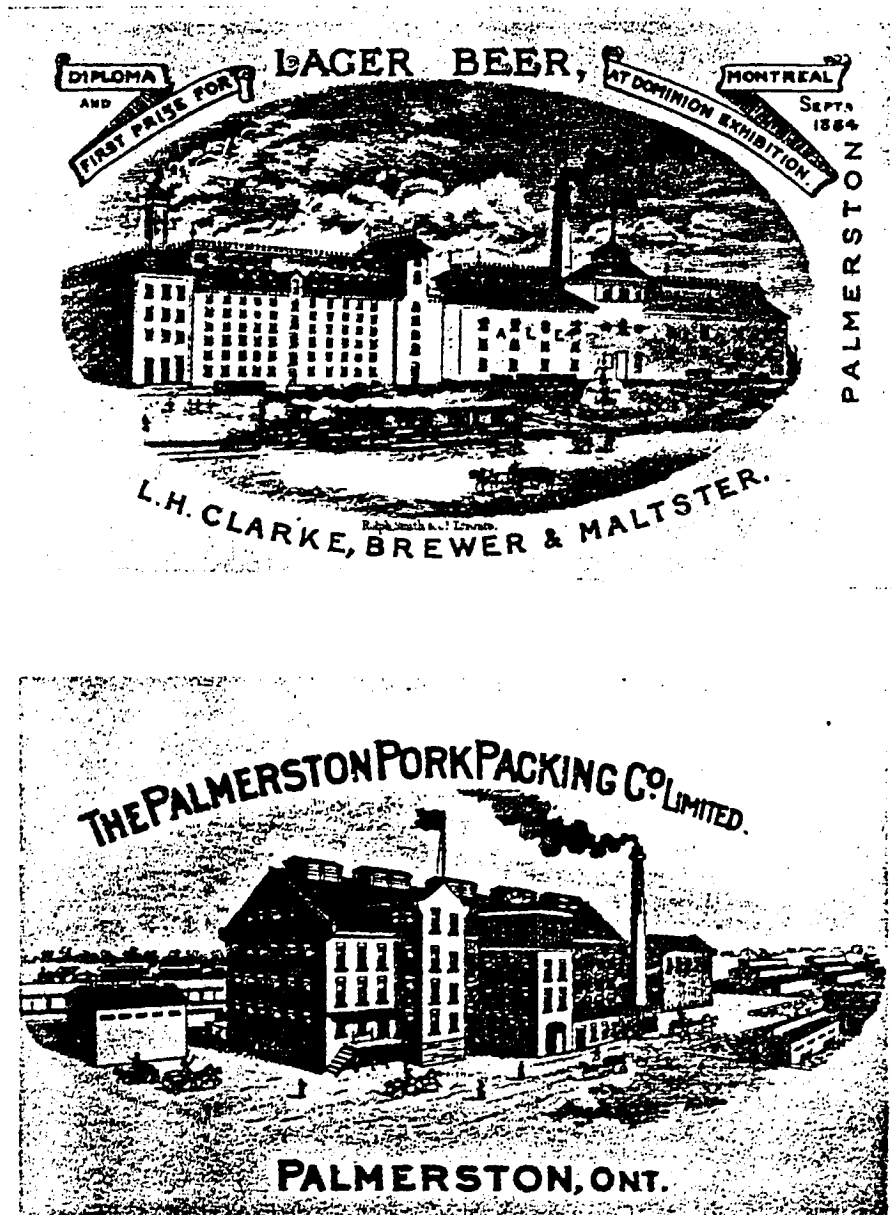


Figure 7

sold to Timothy Eaton in 1869. Eaton's store later became part of the largest department store chain in Ontario. Palmerston also had over twenty stores each of which specialized in one product. One of these, a butcher shop located on Main Street east, is still in operation today, although it has changed hands several times.

There were four physicians and two pharmacists in Palmerston during a time when many small towns were begging for just one.

The PALMERSTON PROGRESS had been joined by another weekly, the PALMERSTON SPECTATOR published by Will Schiefle. This paper was liberal in editorial policy, sponsoring the cause of co-operatives and unions, which on the surface would seem to have wide appeal for the railway workers who were struggling to establish better conditions through their unions, and for the farmers who were organizing to break the monopolies and combines which they felt oppressed them. This restless agitation was happening throughout Canada, and the tempo of the times should have guaranteed a liberal paper success. However, this was not true in Palmerston, and the SPECTATOR was not published after the turn of the century.

Palmerston had a variety of hotels and boarding houses which catered to the needs of many railway workers and passengers. At one time Palmerston had as many as nine hotels, such as Queen's Hotel directly across from the station on

Queen Street, the Royal, the Albion, Hesse House, and the Alglan on Main Street, and the largest and most lavish, The Imperial, on William Street. The Imperial was a four-storey Victorian ediface, worthy of any dignitary's visit. Built of grey stone with high-ceilinged rooms and a graceful center staircase, it offered in its thirty-five rooms, "first class accommodations to commercial trade and guests at reasonable prices." ¹⁷

The boarding houses in Palmerston were less finely appointed, but on the other hand were more home-like and less expensive, attracting most of the railway workers as permanent residents. Mrs. Ellis', Mrs. Johnston's, and Mrs. Shephard's boarding houses were three of the most popular ones. According to a descendent of Mrs. Shephard:

...we marveled that she could break even financially let alone make a profit, from the boarders to whom she was so dedicated. She would heap with food huge wicker lunch baskets...cold meats, roasts, salads, vegetables, loaves of bread, pounds of butter, whole pies and homemade cakes, and her charge of \$5.00 per week, at the most \$6.00...including a warm friendly room and hot meals when off duty...was a real bargain.¹⁸

Two banks were located in Palmerston. J. W. Scott and

¹⁷ Advertisement, Palmerston Spectator, December 8, 1888.

¹⁸ R. S. Syminds, "Hub of the North," Palmerston Observer, July 7, 1975. p.50-56.

Sons was managed by G. Y. Donaldson after 1897 until its close, and a branch of the Bank of Hamilton was managed for some years by Adam Besweatherick. Both banks were closed in the 1920s, and a branch of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce replace them.

New names were appearing on the Town Council by the early 1880s. Some of the merchants who so strongly dominated the very early councils were replaced by other businessmen. Hugh McEwing, for instance, gave way to Matthew Donnelly, who, after serving as a councillor for a term, became mayor in 1882. On the 1882 Town Council there were three railway men. Two of them, John Wade and A. B. Muson, have their occupations in the Palmerston Directory listed as "G.W.R.," or Great Western Railway. Such a listing denoted administrative positions. Charles Robinson, the third railway councillor, was a machinist. Also new to council in 1882 was Hugh Hyndeman, blacksmith and first Worshipful Master of Blair Masonic Lodge.

The council had continued its progressive policy during the last quarter of the century. In 1877 it had erected a Town Hall which cost \$3,445, a substantial sum for that time. ¹⁹ The council purchased new land, this time outside

¹⁹ By-Lay No. 77, June 12, 1877.

the town limits to the west, for a cemetery which is still in use. This was to replace the small one on Prospect Street which no longer was adequate and inconveniently placed. In the old cemetery many persons had been buried in logs rather than the more customary boxes. This was no doubt due to the plethora of trees large enough to accommodate a body, once they were hollowed out. One such burial was that of W. Bridge, whose eighty-four year old grandson told the story:

My Grandfather came up here with horse and wagon. Died shortly after he came, back in the 1800s...I'm only telling you what my daddy told me...he was buried in a hollow log. The night he died, about two miles from here straight up Main Street, his brothers-in-law were used to lumbering and such...well they went out and cut an oak log and adzed it out and put him in that and buried him in that oak log. Som'ers about 1890 or so, before my time, they raised him up and took him up there to the new cemetery, and he's there yet. ²⁰

Many of Palmerston's pioneers were buried in this cemetery, such as Hugh Hyndeman, Alexander Stewart, Hugh McEwing, Major Wooldridge, J. R. Hamilton and Adam Ranton, but others were interred elsewhere apparently. There are no graves for Thomas McDowell, William Thompson, Richard Johnston, or John Kearns.

As was mentioned above the town council allotted \$800 for graveling several important streets in 1876. To keep

²⁰ George Bridge, interview held at Palmerston, Ontario, August 17, 1978

pace with this improvement they allotted \$1000 in order to lay down sidewalks on Main, King, and Queen Streets. ²¹

A later Town Council tried to keep down the cost of running Palmerston by utilizing the gravel from the old cemetery for the improvement of the streets of the town. In 1885 they declared it legal to remove the gravel from the old cemetery, charging five cents per yard if the gravel were put on Palmerston streets. If, however, the gravel were used on roads outside the town limits, the charge was ninety-nine cents per yard. ²² Council evidently decided to make a profit from the county roads while paving Palmerston streets cheaply.

In order to encourage industry, the Town Council gave tax exemptions and bonuses, permitted under provincial law, to new businesses or to faltering, existing ones. One such exemption, given three separate times, was to Clarke's Brewery and Malt House. The original exemption came in 1880 and was renewed in 1882 and 1889. ²³ The council credited the Brewery with helping to create a large barley market in town,

²¹ By-Law No. 17, June 7, 1876.

²² By-Law No. 96, July 6, 1885.

²³ By-Law No. 47, January 6, 1880; By-Law No. 62, July 4, 1882; By-Law No. 121, July 5, 1889.

MAIN STREET PALMERSTON 1895



Figure 8

and might have granted exemptions indefinitely had the Brewery not failed when the Malt House burned to the ground in 1893. A bonus of \$1000 was given to the Gamble and McBain Flour Company for improving its machinery, and \$800 was given in bonuses to aid the local flaxmill, tannery and foundry.²⁴

The council continued its concern during these years for the education of the children of Palmerston. A one-room school had been in existence since the early 1860s for the farm children of Minto and Wallace Townships. This school was located approximately two miles beyond the town to the west. Palmerston children attended until 1878 when a school was built on Prospect Street. Drawing children also from the nearby farms, the school had an attendance of 308, with ages ranging from five to sixteen years. In 1878 there was but one teacher for all eight grades, a Mr. William McLellan, who was paid \$370 for one year of instruction. As was the custom at this time, McLellan was aided by his own pupils, the older helping instruct the young. Attendance varied greatly from month to month. The farm boys' attendance was dictated by the crops, since they could not be spared during sowing and harvesting time. Also many of the larger town boys were frequently absent, earning money by helping clear the land. Many

²⁴ These bonuses, granted in 1888, are noted in a report of the council in that year. The By-Laws are missing.

of the girls attended sporadically as they were needed at home to help care for their smaller sisters and brothers, or to care for the sick, or to earn a little extra money with a skilled needle. This one-room school had a commitment to the basic skill of "reading, writing and ciphering" only, so one teacher could handle it quite easily. By 1906 the school, known as School Section #3, had 380 registered pupils and was still being taught by one teacher, Miss Edna Bushfield, at a salary of \$370.²⁵

The Ministry of Education, which was organized in 1884 in Ontario, encouraged all towns to take the responsibility of enlarging their Mechanics Institutes into libraries if possible. Despite some opposition, the town accepted a \$1000 grant from Andrew Carnegie and built a public library on the corner of James and Bell Streets. A seven-man Library Board was appointed with G. Y. Donaldson as Chairman, to administer the \$1000 per year allotted by council for the maintenance of the library, as agreed to by the town on acceptance of the Carnegie Grant. The library had 2002 volumes, valued at \$1667, when it opened in 1903.²⁶ A full time librarian,

²⁵ Canada, Ministry of Education, Education in Ontario, (Toronto: Government Printing Office, 1977), pp. 14-18.

²⁶ A breakdown of these 2002 volumes shows: History 202, Biography 53, Voyages 245, Science 137, Poetry and Drama 40, Religious 123, Fiction 391, General Literature 791, Self Help 20.

Mrs. Addie Kopp, was hired at a salary of \$150 per year. She was responsible for the room set aside for checkers in addition to her main duties in the library proper.

The Library Board drew up a set of rules which included the fees to be paid by organizations wishing to use the 400-seat auditorium. These fees ranged from six dollars for civic or political events to sixteen dollars for visiting entertainers. The Library Board, a very active body, augmented the town allotment with projects of its own in order to raise money. One such project was a comic opera entitled Scenes at a Union Depot, which netted \$156.67.

In 1905 the town laid sewer lines the length of Main Street, a pioneer project in this field among small towns in western Ontario. The sewage treatment plant which was to culminate this project was not completed until later. The sewer lines collected raw sewage and dumped it untreated into an open ditch, which ran into a tributary of the Maitland River to the west. At first reasonably small amounts of the sewage were funneled into the Maitland, but by 1932, when the amount had grown so that it posed a serious health problem, the sewage treatment plant opened.

By 1906 the Town Council and town officials were completely new except for John Westgate, who had served as constable since the 1880s. In the thirty years since the town's incorporation, death had removed or age had incapac-

itated many of the early leaders. J. H. Shields, son of the 1875 Councillor Robert Shields, and Hugh Hyndeman, Jr., son of Councillor Hugh Hyndeman of the 1882 Council, remained the sole representatives of those early families who shaped Palmerston. While this was still a period of large families, many of the sons of those early leaders left Palmerston for further education and did not return. This was due partly to the typical lack of opportunity in Palmerston to utilize a university or technical degree. It was partly due also to the attraction of the newly-opened western provinces which afforded almost limitless opportunities for professional men. This was true also for those less well educated but ambitious younger sons who found the farms and new towns of Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia more prosperous. Those young men who remained and whose fathers had been leaders, for the most part, appeared content with leading private lives only and permitted the reins of leadership to fall into new hands. Men like Walter White, superintendent of the Palmerston railway terminal, became a councillor and mayor, and G. Y. Donaldson, banker, served on the council, the Library Board and the Public Utilities Board, and Scott Cowan, live stock agent, became a two-term councillor.

In 1882 a Provincial Board of Health was established at Queen's Park to provide greater control over recurrent outbreaks of smallpox. Compulsory vaccination was introduced,

but the Board faced the problems of providing sufficient uncontaminated vaccine and proper inoculation methods. Although bovine vaccine was being used in other countries and farm-stations had been established for the production of vaccines from calves elsewhere, Ontario had not progressed so far. The actual initiative for the establishment of the first such farm-station in Ontario was taken by Dr. Alexander Stewart, one of Palmerston's early physicians. Dr. Stewart established the first vaccine farm in Ontario, which originally consisted of one white-washed stall built behind his home on Main Street West in 1885. Operating under the regulations of the Board of Health, the farm by 1906 had grown to several buildings with a combined operating room and laboratory, with stalls for more animals. The farm was transferred to the Antitoxin Laboratories of the University of Toronto in 1916. ²⁷

George Bridge gives a picture of the vaccine farm as he remembered it as a boy:

...oh yes, I can remember driving calves to Dr. Stewart's from my daddy's farm...on my way to school it was. Dr. Stewart always gave me a quarter for doin' it too! One day in 1898 or 1900, I can't re-

²⁷ Canada, Ministry of Culture and Recreation, Heritage Administration Branch, The Ontario Vaccine Farm, (Toronto: Government Printing Office, 1975), pp.7-9.

member just which, there was a lot of smallpox around and Mrs. Stewart, she took me then and there that morning out to the barn and scraped my arm...it hurt too...and put on some of that vaccine from a spot on the cow's back leg, I never got smallpox neither. 28

Not only was Palmerston connected by rail to the outside world, it was also connected as early as 1888 by telephone. In 1879 the Palmerston Brewery contracted for two telephones from the father of Alexander Graham Bell in nearby Brantford. Although these first telephones connected only to the local telegraph office, by 1885 the first telephone exchange was built in Palmerston. In the following year twelve telephones were in operation and a local telephone directory was in use. Just two years later Bell Canada had strung lines to connect Palmerston to Listowel and Harriston. They in turn had been connected to Walkerton, Arthur, and Fergus, which were connected to Guelph, the county seat. From Guelph to the rest of the world was easy. By 1899 the telephones in Palmerston were identified by numbers, a system installed only for thirty subscribers.

The early Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist congregations were joined before 1900 by the Roman Catholic which was opened as a mission church in 1894, the Bible Christian

28 George Bridge, interview held at Palmerston, Ontario, September 12, 1979.

Church which opened in 1894, and the Salvation Army Corps which opened a Citadel in 1884 under Captain Annie Teagle and Cadet Ian Hunter. Of these three only the Roman Catholic remained in 1980. Several itinerant preachers of other denominations established churches during these years, but they remained only a brief time. Palmerstonians were earnest church attenders but tended to remain with, or join, the Methodist, Presbyterian or Anglican parishes. "Churches were the center of Sunday activity, all of them having two services a day, and afternoon Sunday School." 29

Leisure time continued to be spent in much the same way as it had since 1875 with a few innovations. Mock weddings were very popular at this time in Palmerston, complete in every detail from invitations to a tea and cake reception. By the 1880s the town also had its own hockey team, but it was unable to produce a championship pennant until 1910. In the winter months Palmerstonians spent much of their time in ice skating, in sleighing, in dances and in social suppers. Curling was introduced in 1884 and found enthusiastic support. So despite distances and bad weather Palmerstonians both hosted and attended several Bonspiels each year. A

²⁹ Bertha Bride, "Private Reminiscences," personal letter to the Palmerston Observer, 1975.

Bonspiel consisted of an entire day of curling by various teams from nearby towns. The Bonspiel awards a trophy but was more of a social event than a competitive one. As the day progressed competition was regarded less seriously as the competitors imbibed more seriously. ³⁰

Spring officially ushered in the outdoor ballgames, the fairs, the dances, to be followed by summer picnics and trips to nearby farms to swim in the farm ponds. The fall was filled with more fairs, work bees, harvest bees and mending bees. With the majority of the activities little equipment was required and that was simple and inexpensive.

A new club was formed in 1897, the Palmerston and North Wellington Agricultural Society. Chartered by the Ministry of Agriculture, it was devoted to the dissemination of agricultural information, with the secondary aim of encouraging

³⁰ In curling parties slide large smoothe stones, circular in form and furnished with handles, along the ice from one mark to another, called the tee. The chief object of each player is to hurl his stone toward the tee with proper strength and precision. The interest of the game depends upon the skill displayed by the players in placing their own stones in favorable positions or in driving rival stones out of such positions. To aid the progress of the stone players use air currents which they create by employing stubby brooms weilded with a sweeping motion over the ice. Of Scottish origin, curling stands equal in popularity to lawn bowling in Palmerston.

horticulture. The society held annual fairs on its grounds on the southeast corner of town. The fall fair grew to be one of the largest in Ontario.

Palmerston did, of course, have visiting entertainers, musicians, lecturers, and dramatic companies who played frequently to standing room only. However, since these performances were rare, two or three times on an average each year, it is not surprising they were sold out. Palmerstonians felt the heights had been reached when in 1905 the Bijou Theatre opened and five pennies admitted them into the world of silent motion pictures.

For thirty years Palmerston had been growing at a rapid pace, the railway station saw increasing activity, new buildings were being constructed constantly, and continually the town limits were being extended. By 1906 there were signs that the pace of development was lessening, but the position of leadership Palmerston had assumed still appeared unassailable.

MAIN STREET PALMERSTON 1930



Figure 9
81

CHAPTER IV
THE RAILWAY HUB OF WESTERN ONTARIO
1906-1940

With track streaming outward in all directions, Palmerston was the center of railway activity in western Ontario by the start of the twentieth century. So entwined with the railway was the existence of the town that the future of the railway was Palmerston's own. Palmerstonians recognized this in a vague way only, for so far railway procedures had proven advantageous, but they were to learn that even the railway was vulnerable.

Palmerston was dominated by the railway as evidenced by the grit and soot which covered the town, the grey denim overalls and peaked caps of the railway workers, and the constant sound emanating from the railway yards. Further evidence of this all prevading influence could be observed in the growing number of railwaymen holding public office, in the civic improvements financed by railway contributions, and in the extremely low unemployment rate.

Every object in Palmerston was caked with soot from the engines in the railway yards. Picket fences painted white, greyed within a month, and washing dried out more grey than white. One older Palmerstonian claims that as a boy he did not know snow was white until he visited a school friend

who lived on a farm outside town.¹ In Palmerston grey was a way of life.

By 1907 the population of Palmerston had increased to 2700; seventy-three percent of the total were railway men and their families. Of the remaining twenty-seven percent most were engaged in professions or providing services for the railway workers as well as the outlying farmers. While the railway dominated the town, Palmerston was centered in an agricultural area and thus served as a critical link between industrial and agricultural economies. Therefore there was a need for wagon-makers, mill owners, feed and grain storekeepers, and farm implement agents.

In the period of railway domination Palmerston's citizens separated into four classes based primarily on occupation: railway men, merchants, farmers, and professionals. Of these four the merchants, farmers and professionals were each homogeneous, while the railway men were a more mixed grouping, ranging from administration to skilled workers to unskilled hands. The latter group, which constituted about sixty-seven percent of the railway payroll, were never involved actively in directing the affairs of the town. They did not serve in public office, on civic committees, nor

¹Larry Woodman, private interview held September 22, 1979, Palmerston, Ontario.

generally participate in any other way. This lack of involvement may have been due to a feeling of inadequacy because of a deficiency of education under which most unskilled railway workers labored. It was perhaps caused by the long hours of work which left little time for any activities. Or it may simply have been a result of a lack of interest on their part. It was certainly not due to any efforts on the part of the other citizens of Palmerston to keep them out of the local government. That the unskilled held no animosity toward the town can be seen in the large financial contributions they made toward the building of the town's skating arena in 1904.

Those railway men who comprised middle management, as well as some engineers and conductors, involved themselves actively in town government and civic projects. This difference in attitude toward municipal affairs can in no way be said to constitute class division; all three levels of railway men considered themselves simply that--railway men.

Perhaps the most important and influential of the railway men was Walter White, a station superintendent, who served several times on council and two terms as mayor. White acted as the driving force behind the 1904 skating arena, the acquisition of land for a new horticultural building, and the construction of a recreational area featuring tennis courts, lawns for bowling, and a club house. His con-

tributions to the betterment of Palmerston were memorialized by the naming of a road in his honor.

Other railway men active in Palmerston's affairs were R. G. Barton, an express agent, James Auld, a conductor, William Neil, a clerk, and Jake Hunt, a conductor, all of whom served as Mayors of Palmerston. Some Councillors included Lawrence Nobble (clerk), W. A. Lambert (engineer), Charles Chapman (agent), and David Wilson (engineer).

Some friction occasionally developed between the railway men and the merchants of Palmerston. The merchants claimed the railway men used their rail passes to shop outside the town, failing to support the local businesses. The merchants further claimed the steady higher salaries received by the railway workers forced up prices for everyone. Therefore potential buyers traveled to other small towns to shop where prices were lower. The railway workers in turn claimed that Palmerston stores did not stock the variety offered by other towns. A vicious circle of accusations and recriminations created bitterness between the two, with the farmers and professional men siding with the merchants.

However, this friction did not extend to the point of separating the classes in the residential areas. Quite generally the living pattern could be described as a blend, with small homes on single lots intermixed with more pretentious homes on several lots. To this there was but one

exception. In the southwest corner of Palmerston the lowest strata of society tended to congregate. This section, "The Devil's Half Acre," lay directly south of King Street and west of Lowe. Here lived most of the unskilled laborers of the railway, particularly the men who worked in the round-house, the riptrack, and the stores department. Men employed in these departments clustered together due to a commonality of job type and income, much the same as those of the more educated higher salaried strata. Much of their leisure hours were spent drinking in the local pubs. As a result their homes were in disrepair, their gardens and lawns untended. The women in these families were usually slatternly and their children undisciplined and uneducated.² Although the area extended beyond the original half acre, the name remained.

The various classes in Palmerston were not separated socially as the churches and fraternal organizations, to which many belonged, promoted social mingling, at the very least during services and meetings. This is particularly true of the Masons, the I.O.O.F. and the Methodist Church, and would include nearly seventy-two percent of the town.

²The information regarding The Devil's Half Acre came from the Listowel Salvation Army records, editorials in the Palmerston Observer, and interviews with older Palmerstonians.

The major exception to this social intermingling were the inhabitants of The Devil's Half Acre.

Passengers on the trains of the Grand Trunk Railway, which had absorbed the Wellington Grey and Bruce Railway in 1893, had a choice of some nine hotels. None remain in present day Palmerston, although the site of the old Hesse House was occupied in 1980 by the rehabilitated Palmer Hotel. Few records remain from these hotels save one old record book, a guest register from the Imperial Hotel dated 1908. Although incomplete and in bad repair, the register does offer a glimpse of that year in Palmerston and is probably representative of its time.

The Imperial Hotel was operated by George Daum from 1901 to 1929, when it was made into apartments. According to this 1908 register, about ninety-eight percent of the guests were Canadians with the majority from Ontario, the province served by the Grand Trunk Railway. The remaining two percent of the guests came from the United States.³ Roughly 3,285 people stayed at the Imperial in 1908, an average of nine guests per night, offering some idea of the large flow of passenger traffic through the town, housed at just one of the local hotels.

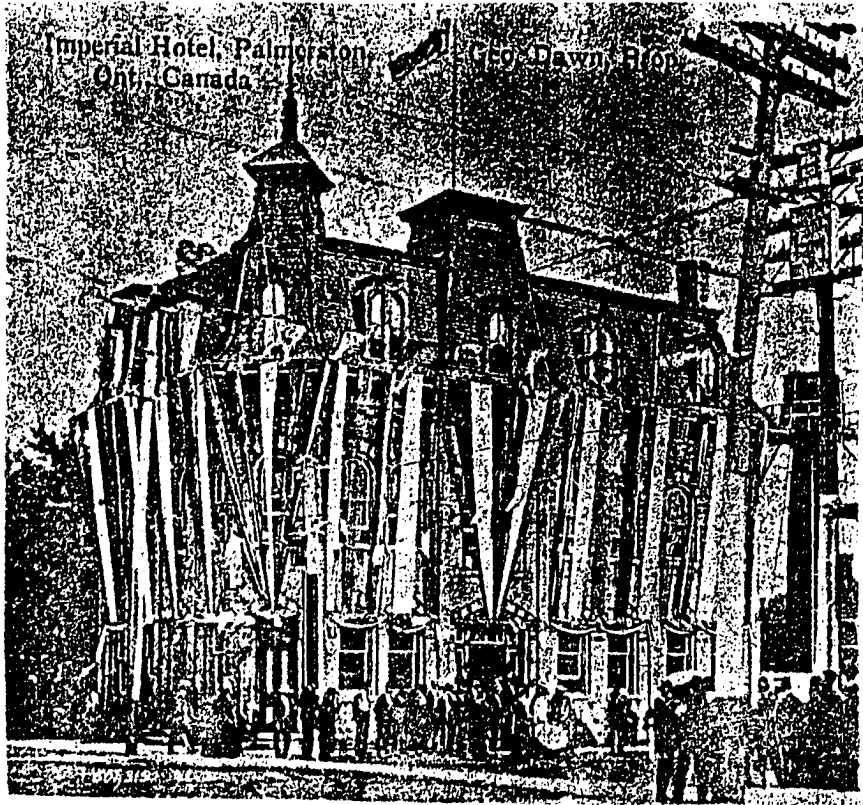
³ Three guests came from Buffalo, two from Detroit, two from Cleveland, and one each from Boston, Chicago, and Zanesville, Ohio.

Although the register reveals nothing concerning occupations, one individual, C.E. Grosskurtle, who spent one night every two months in Palmerston, might have been a salesman on his normal route. Seventeen other names appeared more than once, with ten of these registered twice within a three week period, indicating a visit and return trip from some Ontario town. Groups also stopped at the Imperial Hotel: ten members of the Croker Horse Show Company on the connection layover registered the night of January 27; two sports teams--the Drayton Curlers and the Wingham Tigers Hockey Club, who gave battle to Palmerston teams signed in on March 24; and on the final night of the year the Seven Vitas Orchestra from London played for the New Year's Eve dance given by the local Brotherhood of Engineers and Firemen.⁴

Relations between railway management and the town of Palmerston were, until the phasing out of the station in the 1960s, on the whole amicable. Some disagreements of a minor nature occurred but were settled quickly with no residual

⁴This register is a fascinating book. It does not show the room rates but does give the times for guests to be called, and the number of days over one night's lodging, the time of arrival and the room number. The signatures range from beautiful old world script to almost illegible scrawls. Opposite each register page was a thick blotter containing advertisements from local merchants. This register, now in private hands, was discovered in 1969 in a trunk in the basement of an abandoned house.

PALMERSTON, ONTARIO



The Imperial Hotel, on the corner of William and Main Streets, decorated for "Old Boy's Week". 1929

Figure 10

tension. One such disagreement centered over the large amount of water being used by the engineers from the supply in the water tower on the second of Minto. A settlement resulted in the railway agreeing to spread its water intake over several more concessions.

Another situation which caused the relationship to become somewhat strained for a while was the Queen Street controversy. When the railway complex was built in Palmerston, it formed a large rectangle running south from Main Street. All streets running east and west, therefore, stopped at the station. Queen Street, a major road which intersected the southern part of the town, was to have been the sole passage across the complex tracks. However Queen Street was cut into two sections leaving citizens without a means of transversing one section of the street to the other, as well as preventing safe movement from the east side of town to the west side, south of Main. At considerable danger, citizens continued to cross the busy tracks and by 1910 the situation intensified as ever-increasing numbers of school children crossed the tracks rather than opting for the long detour up William Street to Main Street. Despite constant pressure from the town, the company continued to ignore the whole problem until 1910, when railway officials agreed to construct an iron foot-bridge to connect the two sections of Queen Street. The bridge provided both a safe passage over the

tracks as well as a panoramic view of the railway yards. ⁵

The years from 1880 to 1930 were the golden years of the railway with continued expansion across Canada. During these years Palmerston handled an average of fifty trains per day. At harvest time grain shipments increased the traffic, frequently to over seventy trains per day. ⁶ The activity of Palmerston station was not confined to the passage of these trains alone, for as a junction it had an extensive shuttle system which operated almost continuously.

Usually railway men made runs of two days' length out of Palmerston, which necessitated carrying food for that period of time. One railway wife, the eighty-six year old widow of James Hodgins, recalls

My, yes, I remember the lunch pails I packed for Jim, they were like a big box. Let's see now, I'd put in sandwiches, three or four for his lunch on the outbound run. Then I'd put in, oh, meat and potatoes and vegetables...to cook you see...and pie for his supper. He'd cook it all at the bunkhouse at the other end of the run. They all did you know. And I'd have in it bacon and eggs to make for breakfast. And a few more sandwiches for lunch on his way home, and, oh yes, a thermos of tea too. My Jimmy loved to eat, but he weren't not different than the

⁵This bridge is still in existence, in good repair, and although little used is considered a tourist attraction by the people of Palmerston.

⁶Figures compiled from time tables of the Grand Trunk Railway, Records Bureau, Canadian National Railway, Ottawa, Canada.

rest...my but they all did love to eat. ⁷

The bunkhouse to which Mrs. Hodgins refers was one of the benefits won for the railway men by the Brotherhood of Engineers and Firemen in 1901.

Since the trains ran daily and the employees worked on shift patterns, a holiday to them was often like every other day. Christmas, for instance, was celebrated when a railway father was at home, which could be any day from December 24 to December 26.

All the railway workers received a pay scale determined by them through their local unions and the railway negotiators. In Palmerston in the years up to 1920 engineers, for instance, were paid \$3.00 per hundred miles, conductors \$2.10 per hundred miles, while unskilled laborers received fifteen to twenty-eight cents per hour. By the 1930s the rates had risen to \$4.65 per hundred miles for an engineer and \$3.92 for a conductor, with laborers getting up to thirty-eight cents per hour. ⁸

⁷Mrs. James Hodgins, private interview, August 26, 1978, Palmerston, Ontario.

⁸These figures are based on interviews with former railway men Larry Woodman, Norman Bowes, Robert Cherry, George Cherry and John Nicol. The Canadian National Railway gave figures somewhat higher but they were "only a guess" by J. Norman Lowe, Historical Research Officer of the Canadian National Archives in Montreal. No official figures from Palmerston are available.

According to Palmerston newspapers injury and sudden death were a very real fact of life for every railway family or town. ⁹ Accounts attesting to railway dangers include: engineers scalded by the boilers; yardmen crushed between cars; trainmen losing fingers and hands, especially when the old link and couplings had to be worked by hand; firemen killed in overturned engines; and switchmen caught between onrushing trains. While such accidents were deplored, in general railway officials were slow to take corrective action. Maimed or killed employees could easily be replaced, and improvements cost money. So there were many days when over the din of the railway yards Palmerstonians heard the quiet that followed in the wake of a railway death.

The railway made farm machinery more readily available to the farmers of the area. Each spring the agricultural-industrial tie was celebrated when the farmers gathered in Palmerston to collect their plows, harrows, and hayers ordered from Hamilton, Brantford and Toronto factories the previous fall. To welcome inhabitants from Minto and Wallace

⁹ The Listowel Banner, the Drayton Enterprise, the Palmerston Spectator, and the Palmerston Observer all have many such stories. Mrs. Harold J. Cox of Palmerston has in her possession a copy of the Palmerston Spectator of February 24, 1921, which details the death and funeral of an ancestor of hers crushed between two cars in the Grand Trunk Yards.

Townships, the town displayed merchandise, provided food, and occasionally hired a brass band to entertain the farmers.

By the early 1900s telephone companies, other than Bell Canada, appeared throughout Ontario. Close neighbors Drayton and Harriston had small telephone companies to which the surrounding farmers subscribed. Generally, farmers shopped in those towns where their telephones were connected. This tendency was observed by Palmerstonian Scott Cowan. Since Cowan wished to reverse the business potential for Palmerston, reduced by such relationships, he promoted a telephone company for Palmerston in conjunction with other Palmerstonians. Cowan organized the Hawthorne Hill Telephone Company of Palmerston. Hawthorne Hill began with \$10,000 capital, over sixty miles of poles and 120 miles of wire. Over 300 subscribers had service with each other, with Bell subscribers, and with other rural lines connecting with Bell Canada anywhere in Ontario.¹⁰ Hawthorne Hill continued service despite small capital and heavy expenses until 1963 when it was purchased by Bell Canada.¹¹

¹⁰ Relay records, Bell Canada Office, Stratford, Ontario Branch.

¹¹ By 1910 service hours were 8 A.M. to 9 P. M. weekdays, Sundays 2 P.M. to 4 P.M., Holidays 10 A.M. to 12 P. M., and 2 P. M. to 4 P.M. Summer hours were 7 A.M. to 9 P.M. every day.

The year 1909 proved an exciting one for Palmerston, for in August the town celebrated "Old Boys' Week" with an elaborately planned program. Old Palmerstonians returned to watch sports contests, view professional entertainers, listen to military band concerts played by the Forth-eighth Highlanders, attend several banquets, and visit with old friends. ¹²

In 1909 a private hospital was opened in Palmerston. Doctors in the vicinity depended upon the skilled nursing services of Carrie and Maggie McGee. ¹³ Carrie possessed a nursing degree and Maggie had been trained by her sister. With financial help from the medical men and other citizens, these sisters purchased a large brick home on the corner of Main and Brunswick, which they converted into a hospital for Palmerston and the surrounding area. The sisters continued to operate the hospital until 1927 when financial difficulties beset the institution. The Citizens of Palmerston voted to provide funds from municipal tax dollars for its upkeep. When the By-Law was passed, it, in effect, empowered the town to operate its own hospital, which according to pro-

¹² Information compiled from program notes in the personal collection of Palmerston Memorabilia of Mrs. Flora Donaldson, Palmerston, Ontario.

¹³ The McGee sisters were nieces of J. R. Hamilton, first town clerk of Palmerston.

vincial law a municipality could not do. This required the legislature at Queen's Park to pass a special Act to permit the town to operate its own hospital. ¹⁴ Thus Palmerston became one of only two towns in Ontario to own its own hospital. ¹⁵

In the fall of 1909 the athletes of Palmerston brought the baseball championship of Western Ontario to the town. This was a much coveted award, and as the PALMERSTON SPECTATOR said in its final editorial of the year, rounded out 1909 in triumph.

During the last part of the nineteenth century, greater numbers of Roman Catholics moved into or around Palmerston, prompting the need for a circuit Mass to be said in a private home. By 1910 St. Mary Immaculate Church, constructed on Main Street East, replaced the Dopfer home on Norman Street for Masses. St. Mary Immaculate remains to the present day a mission church with its home parish at Drayton. The parish register of 1909 shows such names as Tucker, O'Brien, Kenneally, Finley and Connolly which were not on the 1896 circuit register at Drayton. These names also ap-

¹⁴ Ontario, Statutes, The Municipalities, Health and Hospital Private Act, 1927

¹⁵ The other town is Chesley.

THE PALMERSTON HOSPITAL



Palmerston Hospital as it appeared in the early 1900s. The Town of Palmerston was one of only two municipalities to own and operate a hospital in Ontario.

Figure 11

pear on the 1898 Palmerston Directory as railway workers. Presumably then, the new members were Irishmen employed by the Grand Trunk Railway.

During these pre-war years, the desire for an official skating rink, undercover to preserve the ice in good condition, resulted in the formation of the Palmerston Skating Rink Company. Walter White served as president and motivating force, first influencing the railway to cede a strip of land between its tracks and William Street, and then persuading merchants, farmers, and fellow railway workers to donate the money for construction. With this new rink Palmerston athletes could practice enough to produce championship hockey teams.

With Canada at war in 1914 the pace of activity in Palmerston quickened considerably. New organizations associated with the war effort developed. One woman's club dedicated itself to such war support work as knitting sweaters and sewing bandages. This group continued to carry on its work after the war, became affiliated with the Federated Women's Institute of Ontario, and as a result became known officially as The Carry On Girls. The Ladies Patriotic Society, also born of the war, catered for the needs of the men training in Palmerston, with snacks, lunch, and hot and cold beverages. The Palmerston Women's Institute concerned itself primarily with the needs of the men in the trenches, preparing small

kit bags filled with personal items such as soap, toothpaste and cigarettes. ¹⁶

The men of the surrounding countryside trained in Palmerston since the town was a rail center and it was possible for the boys from the small towns and farms within a twenty-five mile radius to come by train and return home the same day. These various groups were all welded into a newly created 153rd Battalion which served in Europe from 1915 until the end of the war.

In 1919 the town set aside a rectangle of land adjacent to the public library and erected a cenotaph in memory of its twenty-seven war dead.

The transportation of soldiers and equipment increased the flow of railway traffic through Palmerston. The train crews and yard workers were frequently forced to double-shift, while the maintenance-of-way men worked almost around the clock. As the war years went on, it became even more difficult for them as men left to join the services or were con-

¹⁶ All of these groups belonged after 1921 to the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, a body corporate under the Agricultural Associates Act, through an Order-in-Council of the Government of Ontario enacted May 11, 1921. This Institute gathered all branches of women's clubs in the province and had as its object, to help women deal with the economic and social problems ensuing from harmonizing home and community life. Geared originally to farm women it is now province-wide and includes both farm and urban women's clubs.

scripted and there was no one to replace them.

The Wooldridge Woodworking Plant made a significant contribution to the war effort, for it made the shell boxes, by the hundreds of thousands, in which were safely crated the munitions flowing out of Hamilton and Toronto factories. The Wooldridge Plant was the only industry to be directly involved in war work although the Thorne and Derry Planning Mill put on an extra shift to turn out vast numbers of boards which found their way to the Carriage factories at Mt. Forest and Listowel, both of which were engaged in war work.

The people of Palmerston endured their heatless days and their meatless days to help ensure victory, as well as contributing to the various war funds on a slightly higher basis than the provincial average of \$18.00 per person, and buying Victory Bonds. Since ninety percent of Palmerstonians were of English or Scottish descent, most had strong ties to the mother country and proved enthusiastic in their support of the war. Some criticism came from the farmers who felt they were being pressured to produce more and more food but were not getting sufficient help from the government in the way of manpower. They requested the Town Council to help them at least retain the farm help that they had as of the summer of 1916.¹⁷

¹⁷ Minutes of the Town Council, September, 1916.

Prior to the war the federal and provincial governments had not had time for the extensive planning necessary to co-ordinate and control the war effort nationwide. Thus many of the war programs and agencies frequently were less effective than they should have been. The frustration felt by many Canadians because of this did not invade Palmerston, where the chief war contribution came in the form of increased railway operations, one of the better-handled problems. The remainder of the war contributions of Palmerston were controlled from a central point, but were volunteer efforts rather than governmental, such as the Women's Institutes and the churches.

Since the turn of the century and more particularly during and following World War I, Canada had been changing from an agricultural to an industrialized country. In 1871 about eighty percent of the population was rural, but by 1921 the population was equally divided between rural and urban. However, this change was not reflected in the area surrounding Palmerston. The same amount of acreage was under cultivation in 1921 as had been farmed in 1890, with the exception of 200 acres which were not being farmed due to the deaths in the war of the families' sons. This acreage consisted of one farm of 100 acres and two farms of fifty acres each.

The farmers in the area of Palmerston had been gradually turning to livestock as their farms' chief commodity. As it

developed in the twenties, hog farms predominated, with beef and dairy farms a close second. As yet farms were not large, most of them still consisting of fifty to one hundred acre old family farms. The descendants of Adam Ranton still farmed on Concession II of Wallace. The Bridge farm, just to the northeast of town, was now being run by George Bridge, who would pass it on to his son, Norman. And Josiah Evan's son still farmed the second concession of Minto. The mechanization which allowed farmers to cultivate hundreds of acres was not yet developed.

The prosperity which Canada enjoyed in the twenties raised the standard of living throughout the country, but not as much so in Palmerston as other areas. Palmerston never had the kind of unemployment other towns did due to the presence of the railway, and the steady wages of the railway workers ensured the prosperity of the town despite the fact that some of those workers made many purchases in other towns.

Perhaps it was this very prosperity which lulled the Town Council into a state of inactivity, for in the decade of the twenties only twenty-four By-Laws were passed. Or perhaps the council's inertia was due to bewilderment on their part caused by provincial aggressiveness in encroaching on municipal rights as the province restricted more and more, despite repeated and justifiable complaints, the field

of municipal activity. ¹⁸ Whatever the cause, the Town Councillors exercised their authority on an average of but twice a year. ¹⁹

The council did authorize a four page pamphlet extolling the virtues of Palmerston. Published in 1925, The Logical Place to Live...Palmerston, suggested the town's location and railway connections had advantages no other locale in the area possessed, and served as an open invitation to industry, retired persons and professionals.

The Grand Trunk Railway, as well as several others, began experiencing financial difficulties in the early years of the 1900s. To ensure the continuance of these railways, the federal government, by an Act of Parliament in 1919, created the Canadian National Railway, which assumed governmental ownership of these faltering lines. In 1923 the Grand Trunk was absorbed by this government owned line. Palmerston was not affected by this change-over in any fundamental way. All the railway workers knew the Canadian National would

¹⁸The problem of provincial-municipal relationship will be discussed later in this work. It was not until after World War II that the process of provincial encroachment, begun in the twenties, reached significant proportions, as the provincial government reacted to political and economic change.

¹⁹In the decade prior to the twenties the Palmerston Town council passed an average of eight By-Laws, and in the thirties they passed an average of twelve By-Laws per year.

continue to employ them, the unions would continue to represent them, and their pensions were safe. One minor conflict did arise at the time; the question of seniority . No one lost his job, but some skilled workers of the Grand Trunk lost seniority to skilled workers who had been a part of the Canadian National System longer, particularly those in the running trades.

Perhaps foreshadowing the times to come, the Old Bijou Theatre closed in 1929, a victim of the prohibitive costs of the transition from silent films to "talkies," which left Palmerston without a theater until 1947.

As business and trade generally declined elsewhere in the depression era, railway traffic decreased as well. The need for numerous freight trains to handle the traffic soon dwindled, and passenger trains were sidelined as people ceased traveling. The policy of the Canadian National during the depression, as expressed in the official CNR magazine, guaranteed employment to as many as possible but a reduced work week to share available work, while promising to rehire as quickly as possible. ²⁰

In Palmerston this policy resulted in a seventy-six to eighty percent layoff or reduced work week for the 800 employ-

²⁰ Editorial, "The CN Speaks," The Canadian National Magazine, XI (November, 1930), 12

ed at the railway yards. Trainmen made one, possibly two, runs per week; repairmen were employed only for the most essential repairs on trains or tracks. Even the most senior railway workers lost their jobs, not for just weeks or months, but for a period of years. One such worker was James Scott, whose widow recalls that:

...although Jimmy had a lot of seniority he was off for a long time...I just don't remember how long...but he went out and dug ditches for the town for 75¢ a day, and that was for an eight hour day. It sure wasn't much but at least we didn't starve.....

21

Some of the workers were placed in other areas, especially the engineers and firemen, many of whom worked on the spare board during these years. That is, they were called out when needed. Some Palmerstonians on the railway went to Stratford, Hamilton or Toronto, but the limited number of jobs led to many layoffs.

The Canadian National had offered for many years a simple retirement plan which paid its retirees twenty-five dollars per month, plus an additional dollar for each five years of service. It was suggested at one point by the various railway unions that an early retirement of older workers under this plan would create a few more jobs for heads of families, but the plan was never put into effect.

²¹ Mrs. James Scott, private interview August 27, 1978, Palmerston, Ontario.

Wages for those who did have work in Palmerston were low. Some railway workers received \$1.20 to \$1.60 per day depending on the job involved, but most worked only a few days per week. Some workers were paid the average of seventy cents per hour but worked only two or three hours at a time. In comparison Bell Canada operators were paid \$4.00 for a five day week and PALMERSTON OBSERVER employees received around \$5.00 per week.

Many of Palmerston's employed were paid partly in specie and partly in kind, especially on farms and in local businesses. The farmers gave three meals a day to a hired hand in the summer, adding a chance to sleep in the warm barn in winter.

The unemployed or part-time worker often had to depend on direct relief. This relief was provided by federal law and administered in the towns and villages through the issuing of vouchers redeemable at any local store. The weekly vouchers for food were worth \$4.22 in 1931, and clothing vouchers were issued as the need dictated, within established limits. By 1938 the vouchers were issued for food and clothing monthly and were worth \$16.00 per family. Guidelines required that vouchers be issued only to the head of a household, gainfully employed, and only in the town of his residency. Residency requirements were six months, and gainfully employed meant employed on a private basis or assigned to a

government project. In Palmerston the municipal government assigned unemployed citizens to road repair, reforestation, digging drainage ditches, or clearing land. For this they received a minimal amount but could be counted among the gainfully employed. Those not physically able for these jobs were excused.

Palmerston, as did every other town, had a special commission called the Relief Committee to administer the details. The municipality contributed fifty percent of the funding of this relief, with the province and dominion contributing twenty-five percent each. 22

The depression years reveal many stories of pleasant and unusual events growing out of the very bleakness of the time. Palmerston and Sturgeon Falls combined for one of those events. Sturgeon Falls, on the north shore of Lake Nipissing, sixty miles east of Sudbury, was dependent on the Abitibi paper mills. To earn extra money the citizens cut cord wood into four-foot lengths, which were loaded on flat cars on the Canadian National and railed to Palmerston among other towns. Here the cars of wood were put on a siding and the men of Palmerston would reduce these four-foot logs to one foot and pile them in four-by-eight foot stacks. For

²²Joseph Schull, Ontario Since 1867 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), pp. 191-194.

every three cords they cut they received one cord free to augment their relief vouchers. The extra cords went to widows, the elderly, or invalids who could not cut the wood for themselves.

In Ontario the Workmen's Compensation Act passed in 1882 put the province well ahead of the rest of Canada in the field of labor, yet the Act was far from satisfactory. By 1914 a new act was enacted to broaden its scope and strengthen its enforcement. The legislation included more and more types of labor as the years passed. By 1935 Palmerston covered its municipal workers with an insurance policy under this act. This included all street workers, the street cleaner, the garbage collector, and the Police Chief, a total of five employees. Since municipal workers had only been covered by this act in 1934, Palmerston could be said to have acted with considerable speed.

During the depression years young women tended to marry quite early. Since there was very little money available, most young women were not able to get an advanced education. The Palmerston school provided education only to the eighth²³

²³Up until the mid-thirties the schools of Palmerston, as in most of Ontario, were not designated by grade. Instead they were designated by book, as Junior Primer, Senior Primer, First Book, Second Book and so forth. Thus, for example, Junior Primer would be grades one and two, First Book would be grade five, and Fourth Book would be grade eight.

grade, and was free. By this time the high schools were free also, but Palmerston did not have one, so if a student wished further schooling he had to travel to Harriston or Listowel and back by train each day or board away from home. This was expensive; therefore the majority of young girls left school after grade eight. Any money available for education was spent on the boys of the family. By the 1930s approximately two boys out of a class of twenty would go to high school. ²⁴ Thus there was little for a girl beyond grade eight except work and marriage, and work was very difficult to find.

Some of the smaller towns could not afford the upkeep of a high school, nor did they always have sufficient pupils for one. They did, however, add a staff member or two to the local grade school, who would instruct the students, whose parents could afford it, up to the level of grade ten. These students then continued their education for two years beyond grade eight, hence these two years were termed "continuation school." After this phase was completed, a student had to commute to a large town which had a secondary school with grades eleven, twelve, and thirteen. Only those students who planned to go to the University took grade thirteen, otherwise education ended after completion of grade twelve.

²⁴ Statistics are from a report from Norwell and District High School, Palmerston, Ontario.

In 1939 Palmerston laid the cornerstone for a high school of its own. The cost was \$59,000, to be paid for by public bonds and a provincial grant.²⁵ Once the high school opened in 1940, the continuation school automatically ceased.

It has been already noted that Palmerston instituted trunk sewer lines as early as 1905, with plans to open a sewage plant some time later. By 1932 the town put into operation the areated sludge sewage plant begun in 1929. This plant was located on land beyond the outskirts of the southwestern part of town on the far edge of the Devil's Half Acre.²⁶ The plant assured constant aeration, at the ratio of one part to six, of raw sewage deposited there. Such constant aeration in turn assured that only clear water would run off into the tributaries of the Maitland River. Palmerston would neither pollute the Maitland nor create a health hazard through its sewage. This plant served as a model for other towns. In 1935 Winnipeg and in 1936 Kitchener-Waterloo installed similar systems after inspecting the Palmerston plant. The town was

²⁵The Ministry of Education had been making such grants to primary and secondary schools since 1867. The Ministry based this policy on the recommendations of Egerton Ryerson laid down in 1854.

²⁶Bonds were issued by the town in 1929 to cover the cost of the plant. Palmerston could issue these bonds by the authority given them by the provincial government acting under Section 92, subsection 16 of the British North America Act. Refuse disposal and sewage was considered purely a local matter in the 1920s with only broad guidelines set down by the province.

a pioneer in healthful sewage disposal for towns of its size in Ontario.

The final years of the decade saw three events worth recording concerning Palmerston. Aware of the seriousness of events in Europe, Palmerston once again displayed its loyalty to the Empire with the message, "Palmerston is yours," sent to King George VI on the occasion of his visit to Canada. This telegram received the reply; "His Majesty is most grateful," which, framed, hangs in the municipal hall.

Palmerston, also had several hectic days during the King's visit, as the railway station handled over 10,000 visitors on their way from all parts of western Ontario to Toronto to see the King and Queen.

Finally, just before the grim realities of World War II, Palmerston was given a moment of lightness. Two young Englishmen came to town and made a movie. It was purported to be part of a master plan to capture the entire spirit of Canada, in this case, life in a small town. This segment was to be grafted onto life in the rest of Canada, and the whole film shown in England, in order to let Englishmen become familiar with the Dominion. After several weeks of filming, with the wholehearted co-operation of all Palmerston, it was completed. Arrangements were made to show the film several times at the Library Auditorium so that everyone could enjoy "Our Home Town." There had been some strange editing by the

producers, however, and instead of a serious documentary, Palmerstonians saw a blend of more or less authentic travelogue and jerky Chaplinesque antics on the part of the inhabitants. Both film and producers vanished abruptly, and a stunned Palmerston, which had been ready to bask in the heady atmosphere of fame, was forced to content itself with somewhat rueful laughter.

After enjoying years of affluence, when the railway made it a key town in industrial-agricultural activities, Palmerston was shocked by the economic depression of the thirties. The town survived the disaster in somewhat better condition than other small towns, but it retained an uneasiness which underlay the vitality of the next several decades.

PALMERSTON 1930

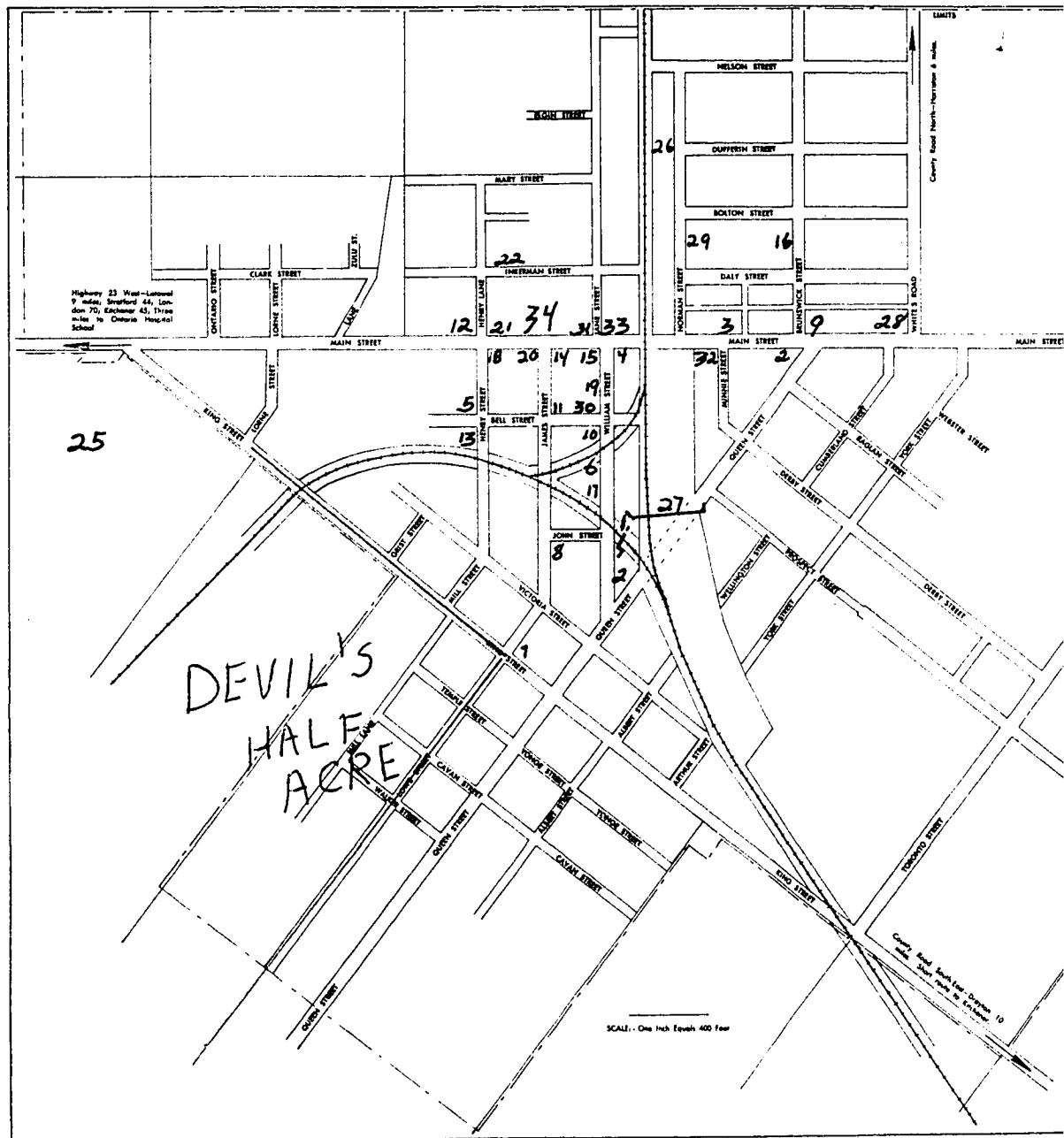


Figure 12
113

PALMERSTON 1930

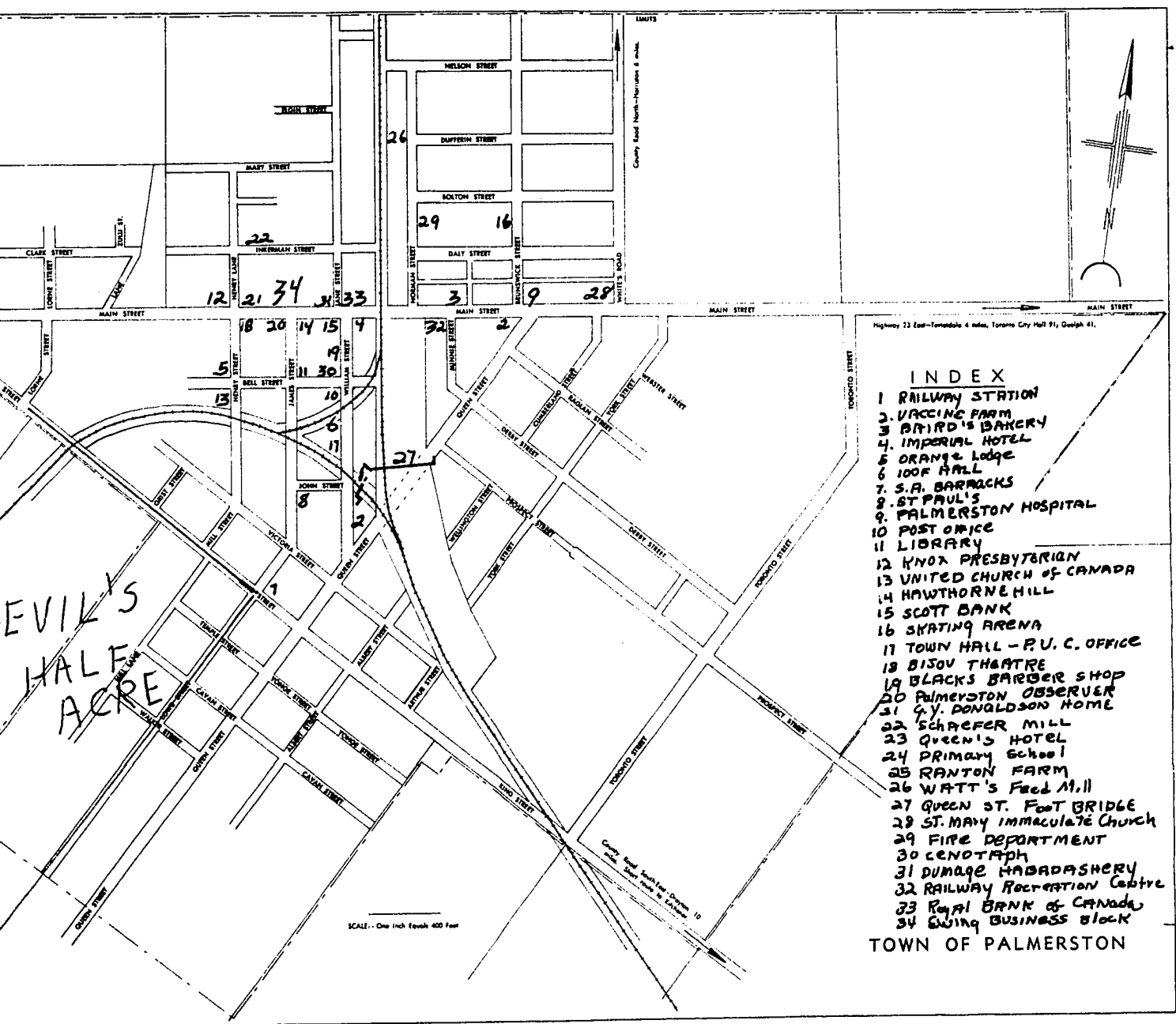


Figure 12

CHAPTER V
THE YEARS OF ILLUSION
1940-1960

World War II lifted Palmerston from a desperate holding pattern into bustling activity. The railway, an essential element in the Canadian war effort for the movement of men and materiel, seemed revitalized as it met the demands of the war. This apparent revitalization, gave the appearance of lasting forever, but even as Palmerstonians of the fifties thought once more in terms of prosperity and unlimited growth, the railway had begun to decline.

In Palmerston a spirit of quiet confidence prevailed as Canada went to war in September 1939. Palmerstonians' patriotism was high, as Arthur Carr recalled:

I was proud to be a Canadian...and I'll tell you what, I don't know one man, woman or child in Palmerston who didn't feel the same way...of course that was before patriotism went out of style. 1

Western Ontario had always been among the most loyal supporters of the monarchy as well. There was never any doubt that when England was at war, Canada should be also. This loyalty to the monarchy had been strengthened by the visit of King George VI earlier in the year. Palmerstonians were

¹Arthur Carr, private interview, September 12, 1979, Palmerston, Ontario.

aware the war was going to be a hard battle. They were also afraid it would be lengthy, but they felt confidence in Canada's ultimate victory. There were few moments of despair during the war years, although there were periods of great anxiety. Work and sacrifice were accepted, with grumbling at times, but never with bitterness. But above all Palmerstonians were tired. ²

The railway at Palmerston quickly sprang into new life. The repair sheds and the roundhouse were utilized more than previously as the larger workshops in other towns were converted to munitions factories, and the smaller shops, like those in Palmerston, assumed the entire load. During the depression the railways neglected maintenance, and the railway found itself faced with a shortage of operable equipment. Old box cars, locomotives, and passenger cars were rehabilitated. So the Palmerston shops had a double task to fulfill.

Every available, unemployed railway worker was hired in Palmerston as well as new additions of extra workers. Soon they were working double shifts, a schedule that continued throughout the war.

²As part of a survey the questions "What were your feelings upon the declaration of W.W.II?" and "What is most memorable to you concerning the war years?" were put to Palmerstonians. One hundred responded, forty women and sixty men between the ages of fifty-five and eighty. The above is a composite of their answers.

Traffic doubled, then tripled as equipment, supplies, and men passed through Palmerston on the way to the east coast. All traffic originating from the Bruce Peninsula, and all the area in between, passed through Palmerston. From Owen Sound came propellers and marine engines; from Wiarton wooden storage barrels and the famous Mosquito Fighter-Bomber; and from Kincardine tank treads and huge crates of machine gears. The northern part of western Ontario in peace time produced furniture, during the war the wood was directed to combat needs, all of which passed through Palmerston. Many of the war supplies from the western provinces were shipped to a port on Lake Huron and then railed through Palmerston to the East. This was also true of troops who had trained at camps in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

World War II saw better planning than had the Great War. The provincial governments had yielded, albeit reluctantly at times, many of their powers to the federal government.³ Recruiting, training, arming, planning, policy and finance were all in the hands of an expanded Dominion Government.

To finance the war effort the Canadian Government sponsored Victory Loan drives. All areas, cities, towns and villages were allotted quotas based on population. Palmerston

³ Mitchell Hepburn, Liberal Premier of Ontario in 1941, declared Ontario, as a result of such power transfer, had reached the status of a county council.

placed its loan drives in the hands of a volunteer committee of townsmen. According to the method Canada employed, a percentage of the loan raised was given to the organization or committee which promoted it. The Palmerston Committee turned this percentage over to the Red Cross or the Salvation Army for further use in the war effort. Palmerston was the only municipality of western Ontario to meet the quotas each year, and in 1942, for the third Victory Loan, Palmerston actually exceeded the allotted sum of \$88.000.

Seven members sat on the committee responsible for this success: J. Fred Edwards, Archie McGugan, Arthur Carr, Harold Jennings, William Brown, Charles Chapman and Louis Renwick, Jr. All had been, or would be, members of the town council. Edwards and McGugan were members of the Public Utilities Committee, Carr was the local editor, Jennings owned a men's store, Brown was an insurance agent, Chapman was the station agent, and Renwick managed the Palmerston branch of the Canadian Bank of Commerce.

Palmerston gave not only to the Victory Loans but directed its energies to other patriotic projects. The Carry-On Girls turned again to knitting sweaters and socks and making bandages, in conjunction with the Red Cross program, directed by the newly established Palmerston chapter. A branch of the navy league in Canada which made and filled DITTY BAGS, twill drawstring bags made to contain toilet articles and

small personal effects, was very active. And the churches, especially the Salvation Army, organized for war work, while continuing their religious efforts.

The PALMERSTON OBSERVER carried news of each home town boy, often printing letters from them so the entire area could participate in their experiences. Over 145 young men from the Palmerston area were in military service, and the OBSERVER was mailed to each one every week free of charge. Several letters from those service men attest to the great morale booster this mailing was.

The farmers around Palmerston complained, as did every Canadian farmer, that they could not do all the work necessary to produce what was required of them. The war had been stripping the farms of the young men, especially after home conscription was enacted in the summer of 1940. The farmers could usually manage to do the day-to-day chores, but the extra work entailed at planting, growing and harvesting time was beyond their capacities. Therefore the Lions Club of Palmerston, itself in existence as a service club for only five years, organized a labor pool of older men not in service, to help at these times. Called the Farm Commando Brigade, the members gave one or two days a week to helping the farmers. The Brigade cut corn and put it into the silos, harvested the grain crops and loaded them for shipment. They hoed the fields and the more experienced ones even took over

care of the livestock. In the Brigade were all seven of the Victory Loan Committee with Mayor Robert Barton and Councillors John Nicoll and Charles Donnelly.⁴ The Brigade was active from 1942 until 1946 when the return of service men relieved the shortage.

During the war years the government at Ottawa assumed more control of provincial affairs although it was understood, at the time, to be only for the duration. In turn the provinces tightened their regulations for municipalities. As a result Palmerston felt constrained in attending to many civic affairs. Also limited by lack of materials and labor, the Council directed its efforts to the more vital matters, some of which were addressed before the war. In 1941 Palmerston High School, the cornerstone of which was laid in 1939, was completed.⁵ It opened its doors to five teachers

⁴ Mayor Barton was an express agent with the railway, Councillor Nicoll was a railway accountant and Councillor Donnelly managed an insurance agency.

⁵ There is an interesting story about the building of the high school. Palmerston children went to Harriston for high school, but when the Harriston school burned, it appears that the Harriston Reeve, authorized to rebuild by the province, was too parsimonious to rebuild it properly, and it would not pass government inspection. Palmerston Mayor William Johnston and Councillor George Bridge apparently pulled a few strings in Toronto and therefore the high school was re-located in Palmerston. This story came from Mr. Bridge, himself.

and two hundred students.

In 1942 Palmerston opened an addition to the original hospital which provided twenty-two more beds for the community. This addition was effected by connecting the existing structure to a renovated home on an adjoining lot. In the same year, a wading pool was added to Lawrence Park, a playground for the very young, situated on Brunswick Street. Constructed by volunteer labor, the pool was not a drain on the war effort.

Burial in the Palmerston area has been a difficult procedure in the winter months due both to the quantity of snowfall and the frozen ground. In 1943 the town constructed a mausoleum in the cemetery which would store the caskets below ground during the winter months. After the spring thaw they would be transferred to the family plots.

When the war was ended Palmerston had eight names to add to the cenotaph in the park five infantrymen and three pilots of the Royal Canadian Air Force. Grateful to its returning service men and women, Palmerston organized a town celebration for them complete with banquet and awards. The question of more concrete appreciation did not take the form of attempting to find jobs for veterans because many of the workers and farm laborers had only worked as part of the war effort. Once the war was concluded these workers relinquished

their jobs for the returned service men. However Palmerston, in co-operation with federal and provincial governments, built thirty homes costing \$3000 each for rental to the returned veteran. These homes had no basements, were made of pre-cut lumber and came in three basic floor plans. The municipality provided the lots, the standard one chain by two, and the cost of construction was shared fifty percent by the town, and twenty-five percent each by the federal and provincial governments. These houses were not in a housing development but were scattered throughout the town since Palmerston used tax defaulted lots or lots already purchased earlier by the town. The rent paid by the veterans could be applied to the purchase of the home and the taxes were very low. In 1949 Palmerston was the first municipality to obtain permission from Toronto and Ottawa to reduce taxes on standard homes bought by veterans.

Canadian thoughts on the function of government experienced a change from the early 1900s. The attitude toward the greater extension of government on the federal level became more acceptable; the theory that the least government was best was giving way to the idea of the welfare state. The wars, where government regimentation was a way of life for many, and the depression, when many people looked to the government for aid, had been instrumental in this changed

thinking. The government ceased to be regarded as an institution primarily concerned with protective and regulatory functions, and at the local level to provide essential physical services. The government came to be regarded as an institution which ought to be concerned with positive programs for the citizens' benefit, to give them protection against social and economic pitfalls, to compensate them for personal and economic woes, and to assure them a reasonable standard of living. As a result all levels of government greatly enlarged their fields of social services. As an active policy this was an ongoing program beginning after World War II and continuing to the present. Conflicts have arisen between dominion and province, province and town.

Palmerston found itself outside the law many times, as provincial regulations and restrictions became more stringent. Permitted to do only that which the Ontario Municipal Act stated it might do, the Town Council found that the financial estimates did not provide funds either for the above mentioned mausoleum or the veterans' party. To spend outside the projected budget for the year was illegal. In reality if a citizen had made a complaint to Queen's Park, Town Council would have been compelled to pay for both. ⁶

⁶ Both matters were concerned with several thousands of dollars of tax money.

No one did file a complaint and older Palmerstonians gleefully recount these times their town outwitted the provincial bureaucrats. ⁷

In 1946 Palmerston once again had a chance for nationwide recognition as "Ontario Panarama," a radio show which featured small towns, originated from Library Hall. Heard throughout Ontario, and rebroadcast in other areas of Canada, the radio show gave Palmerston the opportunity to make itself known. The mayor and leading citizens told the rest of the province some of their history and accomplishments, about some of their important citizens both past and present, and about some of their town's peculiarities. This program was not the fiasco the 1939 movie had been. ⁸

Since the closing of the Bijou in 1929, Palmerston had been without a theater, although on occasion Library Hall had been used. In 1947 George Norgan, who had left town to seek his fortune on the west coast of Canada, was induced

⁷It is interesting to note that J. Fred Edwards, MPP from Perth County, gave the awards at the banquet.

⁸ Some things peculiar to Palmerston are: Palmerstonians locate a house, not by number and street, but by who lived in it twenty years in the past; they insist on nightly lighting the theater marquee even though it is only open on the week-end; all businesses close on Monday; and their favorite expression is "not to worry."

into giving the town a theater as a memorial to his family.⁹ Palmerston supplied the land and Norgan, or Noddy as he was known to his friends, paid for the rest.¹⁰ The theater, called the Norgan, was a wonder of its time, with red plush seats and red velvet curtains. The admission price was thirty-five cents for adults and ten cents for children. The town celebrated the August opening with a holiday. The newspaper put out a special sixty-five page edition which told in minute detail the whole Norgan story. Every merchant in town had an advertisement in it which included "Thanks, George" somewhere. All the merchants refused to accept payment that day for anything they sold. Of course no one seriously contemplated shopping that day either. Food and drink were free also although most customers left something for what they consumed. All of Palmerston rejoiced in their new theater,

⁹ George Norgan left Palmerston in 1910 and settled in Vancouver. Beginning in the hotel business he branched out into breweries and distilleries. By 1947 he owned many hotels and firms, and had a controlling interest in many others. Running foul of the U.S. tax laws he had his California based distillery confiscated. Under American management it lost money so he sued the government for illegal seizure plus a large amount to cover the loss of profits. He won his case and received full remuneration. He died a multi-millionaire in 1965 in Vancouver.

¹⁰ The cost to Norgan was \$63,000, this included fees for the architect, building materials, interior furnishings and labor.

especially since none of the nearby towns, Listowel, Drayton, or Harriston had anything like it. ¹¹

The big blizzard also came in the year 1947. According to the records there was never a greater amount of snow in the area. ¹² Homes were buried in the drifts with the occupants forced to enter or exit by the second storey windows, and only after those had been freed from snow. Trains were stalled for days on the surrounding tracks, and those that were in the yards were completely covered. All activity stopped, schools closed, businesses shut down and every available man was pressed into service to free the railway lines which radiated from the town.

In order to open the tracks, men cleared enough track with shovels for a locomotive-plow to get a slight run. The locomotive would plow into the snow drifts with as much force as the engineer ¹³ could manage safely. The object was to

¹¹ Listowel had a theater built over a river which caused it to have a musty odor; Harriston showed its movies in the library auditorium; and Drayton had nothing at all.

¹² Meteorological records at Mount Forest list the 1947 blizzard as the worst with an average of twenty feet, followed by the 1912 and the 1927 blizzard.

¹³ Most of the engineers used on the locomotive-plows were those on the spare board, and so free to do rescue work as well as experienced at such work.

smash through the drift by sheer power and slear a passage. More often than not the plow became wedged fast in the drift, then the shovels were again put to work to free the engine to make another head long plunge. By this alternating method of man power and steam power the lines were opened eventually, although it was not for five days that Palmerston yards were cleared and eight or nine days before all lines were cleared. ¹⁴

Canada encouraged immigration during the forties. The war had caused her industries to expand rapidly and her farms under cultivation to grow. In Palmerston and the surrounding farm area Dutch immigrants settled. They were primarily farmers who bought the land from older Canadian farmers with no one to inherit, or who had been unable to make the farms prosper in the post-war world. There are three possible explanations as to why the Dutch settled in Palmerston and the surrounding countryside. One is that Canadian soldiers were particularly prominent in the liberation of Holland and they familiarized the Dutch with the farm areas of western Ontario. Another is that the farmlands of

¹⁴ In similar blizzards in 1912 and 1927 the storms were not as severe, however, the plows were not as strong at that time and several were damaged in these earlier storms. None were damaged in 1947, although four turned over and three slipped the track.

of Ontario are the first rich farmlands the immigrant encounters as he comes west. Third, before the war there had been several Dutch farmers who had been sponsored by the Dutch Reformed Church at Kitchener and had settled in the Palmerston area. It is possible that they were instrumental in guiding other Dutch farmers to the area.¹⁵

The provincial government had authorized in 1906 the world's first publicly owned power system, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario. This commission was to supply cheap power to the municipalities. The government was to build the transmission lines and set the rates of supply, thereby controlling private syndicates already established.¹⁶ Originally centered in the Niagara area, by 1940 the transmission towers covered all of Ontario. But this Hydro was no longer able to maintain a surplus of power, and western

¹⁵ In Palmerston proper the most important of the Dutch Immigrants might have been Conrad Pinkse of Rotterdam, who opened a bake shop and became a leading citizen of the town.

¹⁶ In 1917 the Toronto government authorized the Chip-pawa Project, the world's largest generating station, which was to be built at the gorge near Queenston at Niagara. By the end of the Great War the Commission was generating, transmitting and distributing much of its own power. Hydro had built and bought plants as it spread across Ontario. The private companies which remained from the hydro-electric syndicates of the turn of the century existed only on sufferance. The Hydro-Electric Power Commission is commonly called Hydro.

Ontario was threatened by a power shortage as early as 1946. Toward the end of the war Hydro had sent a survey to businessmen asking for an estimate of future power demands. Replies indicated there would be little more demand than existed prior to the war. Replies from municipalities indicated no major increase in demands either. However the survey did not take into consideration the new electrical devices which proliferated after the war: television sets, washers, dryers, heaters, refrigerators, dishwashers in the homes and businesses; milking machines, brooders, warmers, and feeders on farms. Therefore when a subnormal rainfall occurred in 1947, the Hydro was not able to accommodate all the demands made upon it, and quotas had to be put into effect in October of 1948. Palmerston was without electricity each day for four separate periods: cuts were from 9 to 9:30 and 11 to 11:30 each morning and 5 to 5:30 and 7 to 7:30 each evening. Fortunately precipitation in the early months of 1949 was unusually high and enabled Hydro to return to a normal schedule the following spring.

The telephone system in Palmerston expanded so that by 1948 over 400 telephones were in service. Bell Canada began instituting a new system to the switchboards, and by 1948 the change reached Palmerston; a switch from magneto to common battery. With the new system a light would alert the operators to a call. This replaced a system of small doors which

would drop and had formerly alerted operators, and which was one more step toward an all-dial telephone system which would eliminate personal contact between operator and caller. In a small town this personal contact was very important, and the operator was very involved in the life of the community. In Palmerston these operators frequently handled emergencies by calling doctors, police, firemen and relatives after being alerted. They also took messages which they delivered when they knew the intended recipient was home. They were entrusted with awakening railway men, but perhaps the most demanding of their extra services was baby-sitting. When parents could not be at home with small sleeping children, they would leave the receiver off the hook and notify the operator. She would listen in from time to time on the open line, and if she felt it necessary would notify the parents wherever they were, usually at work, and warn them to return home.

The forties saw a change in the farms around Palmerston. The smaller mixed farms of the thirties were in decline and the larger specialized ones emerging. Young men had left the farms during the war and those remaining lacked a sufficient labor force. As a result farmers turned to labor-saving machinery wherever possible, such as the tractor and combine, and to electrification of as many farm processes as possible. Mechanization enabled one farm worker to farm 200, 300, or

even 400 acres. Those who successfully weathered the war years were able to buy up the farms of those who had not, As a result, fifty acre farms became almost non existent, while those of 600, 700, and even 1000 acres evolved. Mixed farms which had been losing ground since the thirties were replaced by specialization in hogs, beef and dairy cattle. Consequently the farm population decreased, but the acreage remained constant as the smaller farms were consolidated.¹⁷

Since the turn of the century there had been emanating from the theologiaal colleges, the universities, and the large city pulpits, attacks on traditional religious beliefs. These assaults of atheistic thinking and secular humanism finally reached western Ontario small towns in the forties.¹⁸ As happened everywhere else in Canada, church attendance declined in Palmerston, but so slowly with the established religions, as to be almost imperceptible with the exception of the Salvation Army. Palmerston had been considered a good

¹⁷ The introduction of the snowmobile into farmwork has been of great value, for it enables a farmer to visit his farms if the acreage is scattered during even the worst weather of winter.

¹⁸ By 1949 Palmerston's religious affiliations were: United Church of Canada 50%, Presbyterians 31%, Anglicans 9%, and others 4%.

19
Army town in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

But by 1949 the Barracks closed permanently, although the corps did hold services each week with officers from Listowel until 1952. Army personnel account for this failure by the trend away from organized religion. However, the Army had a reputation for conducting spirited services and being fundamentalist in doctrine. Perhaps they were too spirited and too fundamentalist for the casual secularism of the forties and fifties.

The early fifties in Palmerston appeared to mark a return to the golden years for the railway. The war years revived Canada's economy and this was reflected in railway traffic. From 1947 to 1953 the station at Palmerston handled nearly as much traffic as it had in the twenties. The employees were again counted in the hundreds as sixty-five percent of Palmerston worked for the Canadian National. Profits from the smallest branch lines were estimated as running between \$35,000 and \$40,000.²⁰

¹⁹ Strength is based on the number of War Crys sold. The War Cry is the official magazine of the Army. In 1885 two hundred were sold, in 1906 one hundred forty-six, in 1920 ninety-eight, in 1930 forty-two and by 1945 only ten. Salvation Army records, 256 Main Street, Listowel, Ontario.

²⁰ Statistics from a speech by J. Fred Edwards, MPP from Perth County, on the railway debate, second session, Legislative Assembly, February 12, 1963, Toronto, Ontario.

However, apparently this flourishing situation, almost as it began, was starting to fade. Many factors entered into the decline of the railways in Canada. Inroads had been made into freight traffic by the advent of the motorized truck which was cheaper and, in many cases, more convenient. The development of bulk motorized transportation was furthered by the war, and so the railways which had exhausted themselves in the war effort, were severely challenged by this new force. Equipment had to be replaced, a long costly procedure due to scarcity of materials and an upward surge of prices once wartime controls were removed.

Since 1928 the railway had been aware that steam locomotives were much more costly to operate than diesel engines, yet it was impossible to obtain new diesels at this time. Replacing worn-out steam locomotives with new steam locomotives was impractical, so, limping along on deteriorating equipment, the railways failed to meet schedules and subsequently lost business. Passenger traffic diminished too as good highways and improved automobiles lured people away from the trains. Railway management did little to encourage passenger service, as it did not give the high returns that freight gave. Where formerly Palmerstonians rode the train for the day to Goderich, Stratford, or Owen Sound, now they went by car. Airplanes also began to attract those who wished to arrive quickly at their destination. All of

these developments cut into the railway traffic.

The railway workers themselves contributed to this decline, perhaps, through their union demands. At the particular time in which union contracts were being negotiated upward after the freeze of the war years, the railway was least able to absorb them.²¹ All of these factors strained the resources of the railway.

Thus Palmerston in the early fifties actually was beginning its slide into oblivion as a railway center. By the mid-fifties there were only thirty-five trains per day passing through Palmerston, down from the average fifty-five to sixty of the twenties, and the number of employees declined to around 500 from the high of over 800. In 1954 sixty men were furloughed in the car department, as fewer passenger trains operated. The same year saw 125 men from the shops laid off, as the new diesels, although still used only in limited numbers, required less maintenance than steam. And it was only the strong opposition of the union which preserved in 1956 the firemen's jobs from being eliminated before they could qualify as engineers.²² In 1959 the freight

²¹ It is the claim of the railway that their profits were declining steadily, which is true. Yet they refused to renew the government mail contract which would have provided sufficient profit to off-set the passenger deficit.

²² This was termed "featherbedding" and was fought against vigorously by the railway.

sheds were closed by the railway, freight sheds which had been the transfer point for cargo for much of western Ontario for over sixty years. Now transfers were to be made at the larger town of Stratford according to a Canadian National directive. With this closing seventy-five men lost their jobs. All of these layoffs accounted for nearly forty-five percent of Palmerston's rail employees. The remaining fifty-five percent, who would be gradually laid off within a few years, represented about thirty percent of the remaining employed population of Palmerston. The loss of revenue from these former railway employees was critical, since the town depended so heavily on them, and the future promised only more railway dismissals. The problem became the chief concern of the Town Council.

The population of Palmerston was not greatly affected by the railway lay-offs. As a matter of fact the population rose from its 1940 figure of 1570 to 1614 by 1960. The feared exodus never took place due to the facts that many railway employees took early retirement and remained in Palmerston rather than accept dismissal and seek work elsewhere, and those railway employees who were transferred to other places when the various Palmerston sheds closed, preferred to commute rather than to move. The greatest change in population figures in Palmerston occurred in the thirties when the population, which had stood at 2793, at the begin-

ning of the decade, fell to 1570 by the end of the decade.

The membership of the Town Council during the forties and fifties did not change complexion. It was composed, as in the past, of businessmen and a few railway men. The names changed somewhat, but throughout the two decades some men served over and over again. William Irwin, funeral director, served on council in the fifties and as mayor in the sixties. George Wright, shoe store owner, served over fifteen years as councillor and mayor. George Bridge, dairy equipment salesman, served twelve years, and Samuel Wald, produce grocer, was on council over ten years. Howard Latch, poultry farmer, together with John Nicoll, railway employee, put in ten years. Arthur Carr, journalist, also served many scattered terms. These were the most active in council and were responsible for guiding Palmerston during the difficult years when the railway was declining and the future of the town seemed bleak. ²³ Their goal throughout the entire period was to keep the town vital without encouraging large in-

²³ These leaders represented a composite of the Palmerston male of these decades. All were members of the two leading organizations in town, the Masons and Lions, with the exception of Carr who rejected joining organizations in order to preserve his journalistic objectivity. Only Bridge and Wright were life-long residents; the remainder had moved to Palmerston in the thirties and forties. All belonged to the leading churches--Presbyterian, Anglican, or United Methodist. Women were not to be on council until 1968 when Louella Logan, homemaker, was elected.

dustry. They wanted, with the citizens' approval, to keep Palmerston a small town. To do this they sought small industries or small government projects which could locate in the Palmerston area.

About three miles west of town, between the sixth and eighth concession of Wallace, the first motel, portent of things to come, was built. With twenty-two units, at a cost of \$120,000, it was the first of several motels which would shelter travelers to Palmerston, who would come, more and more, by automobile as passenger trains became permanently sidelined.

Encouraged by the Ministry of Education to provide proper library facilities in small towns, Palmerston renovated its existing building and enlarged its volume count to 8339²⁴. The Library Board brightened the main library room by adding eight large windows and refurbishing the whole in bright shades of lemon yellow, green, and rose. Circulation averaged seven percent of the population per week. The whole improvement of the library was financed by municipal funds and a provincial grant.

Another cooperative financial project was the enlargement of the Palmerston Hospital, also still municipally

²⁴ This count included: fiction 6050, non-fiction 2289, both juvenile and adult volumes. This was a 100% increase since 1900, according to the records in the library files.

owned. In 1951 twenty-two beds were added in an annex, and in 1955 a nearby house was converted and connected to the hospital, enlarging the bed capacity to forty-four. This served Palmerston and the area until 1967.

In 1958 the Province of Ontario added a new wing to the existing Palmerston High School for the teaching of agricultural technology. This was in keeping with the provincial policy of tailoring the secondary schools to the needs of the community, and Palmerston stood in the center of a vast agricultural area, thus the children needed technical training. With the grant to the high school for the new wing, and in keeping with the Ministry's policy to strengthen and tighten education throughout the province, Ontario took over the high school from the town. It had been partially subsidized as were all schools in Ontario since 1939, and continuing its trend toward centralization in education, the Ministry, using the financial grant as its justification, exercised its authority to take over the school.²⁵ It was renamed Norwell District Secondary School and took students from Palmerston and the northern part of Wellington County, hence Norwell, the first letters of North Wellington. Two more additions

²⁵ Norwell was under a municipal school board until 1969 when the province abolished all municipal boards and created county school boards. Many of the citizens of Palmerston have served on this county board.

were made in the late fifties, making Norwell one of the largest district schools in Ontario. Norwell's faculty of seventeen offered an academic program, a full commercial program, vocational training, and a two year occupational program to approximately 600 students at this time. Night classes in basic English were started for immigrants, and shop training was begun.

Sports have always played a large part in Canadian small town life and Palmerston was no exception. In 1952 Palmerston High School won the football championship of western Ontario. The same year the Lions Club purchased a railway building, no longer in use, for \$25,000, renovated it with volunteer help and opened a skating arena which served the community until the late 1970s. This arena was the home of ice skating, ice hockey, and curling in the winter and roller skating in the summer. All through these years Palmerston fielded softball, football, hockey, and hardball teams for children of all ages and coached by the men of Palmerston. As yet sports were, though organized, not centralized by the Ministry of Recreation. This was not to come until 1974.

Palmerston was saddened by the death of King George VI in 1952 but rejoiced the following year on the coronation of his daughter, Queen Elizabeth II. The ties to monarchy were still very strong, and the new republicanism, spawned by

World War II, which had been invading the larger towns of Canada, got short shrift in Palmerston.²⁶

As viewed through the forties and fifties Palmerston reflected still the image of a small town. Palmerstonians were aware of the provincial and federal scene; indeed they are kept abreast of such events by town meetings with their MPP in Toronto and through regional meetings with their MP from Ottawa. But it was the purely local happening which caused intense reactions, which filled the pages of the newspaper, which was the subject of street discussions, or which caused town meetings to be called. This is not to say that Palmerstonians were not knowledgeable about provincial or dominion policies. It was simply that they preferred to vote for the man without exceptional consideration of party labels. They voted for what the candidate said he would do rather than what the party platform promised. Naturally the candidate stood for his party's policies, but the voters chose the candidate for his stand, not that of his party. This is clearly demonstrated by the return to Toronto of a liberal representative during the fifties when Ontario was

²⁶ Special religious and civic memorial services for King George VI had almost 100% attendance according to the Observer of February 10, 1952. A letter of congratulations and loyalty to Queen Elizabeth received a reply which, now framed, hangs in the municipal hall.

governed by a conservative majority.

In the mid-fifties one event occurred on the political scene which rocked Palmerston considerably, when Mayor and Council demanded the resignation of the Chief of Police on the charge of bribery. Refusing to resign, Chief Albert Cowan elicited sympathy from some Palmerstonians who harassed Mayor Wald, while others defended him. The matter was settled by the provincial police but Palmerstonians never forgot the unpleasantness the incident generated.

One of the best insights into a town can be obtained through its newspapers. Palmerston had been reading a succession of newspapers since 1871, but the PALMERSTON OBSERVER, founded in 1931, was the only town paper during this time. The success of this paper under Editor Arthur Carr may have been due to his philosophy concerning small town weeklies. He believed that weekly newspapers should report in detail everything concerning the area the paper covered. As he put it "every social event, all meetings and contests, all vital statistics...it should be flooded with pictures...and above all filled with names." Carr feels it should be left to the metropolitan dailies to present world news, finances, and editorials on provincial matters. Apparently his readers agreed with him because the circulation of the paper rose from 200 to 900 after he took over.

Under Carr's management the PALMERSTON OBSERVER was the first newspaper in Ontario to adopt the printing process known as offset lithography, the third newspaper in Canada to do so, and the eighth in the world. This process enabled the paper to give better picture coverage by cutting the cost. It also improved copy and layouts for advertising, editorial and pictorial features. With offset the paper was able to update its coverage so that all community activities could be reported accompanied by a host of pictures.

The OBSERVER won all possible awards for a weekly of its size, with the exception of sports pictures. It received the major awards of Best Editorial Page, General Excellence of Paper, and Best Use of Pictures. This latter award would seem to have justified the switch to offset lithography which enabled Carr to carry out his philosophy that a weekly should use pictures and more pictures. Considered objectively, the OBSERVER under Carr was a folksey, at times whimsical, at times fiery, paper chock full of local names, pictures, and news, aimed solely at reporting the events of Palmerston for Palmerstonians.

Whatever plans for its viability the town of Palmerston entertained as the decade of the fifties came to an end, it knew that the railway was not to be the dominant force any longer. But beneath this certain knowledge still lingered the hope that the railway would not collapse completely. That

prospect was too final to contemplate. At the same time the town knew it must reassess the situation and strive to find new ways to exist.

CHAPTER VI
THE STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE
1960-1979

Once the railway began its retreat and Palmerstonians accepted the fact that the railway withdrawal would be complete, the town began to seek the means of escape from extinction. Some were afraid Palmerston would become a modern ghost town, while others were certain it would overcome its problems and continue as before, although no one knew just how it would be accomplished. For the next twenty years, though Palmerston's survival was never really in doubt, the direction it would follow was uncertain.

Since Palmerston had for so many years lived for the railway, and railway roots were so deep in the town, in 1960 the Town Council initiated a move to have a steam engine enshrined as a civic monument. The Canadian National Railway responded by giving to Palmerston a coal burning engine built in 1910 for the Grand Trunk Railway. By 1952 this engine had been retired from trunk line service and brought to Palmerston for the branch lines. At that time the engine had been re-christened "Old 81". Retired in 1959 from even branch line work, "Old 81" was installed the following year on a specially constructed piece of track within sight of the Palmerston station.

Special ceremonies marked the unveiling of "Old 81."

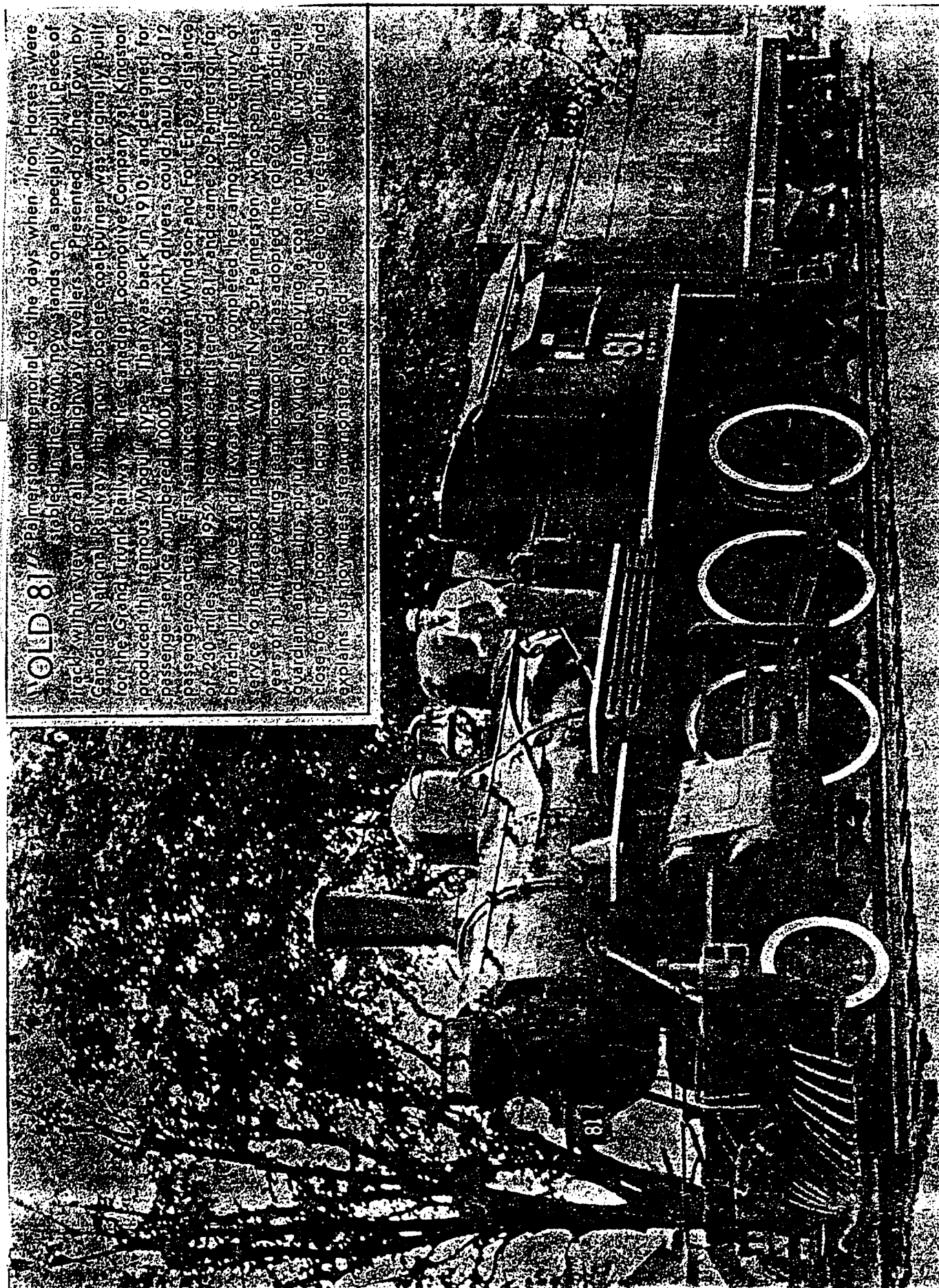
and E. P. Burns, Divisional Engineer for the Canadian National Railway at Stratford, in his address summed up Palmerston and the railway at that time:

Today we are marking the end of an era. There she stands, "Old 81," a proud symbol of an era in which steam was Queen of the rails. May she be a reminder¹ of Palmerston's link with rail transportation.

These links which Palmerston had with the railway were breaking rapidly. The fifties had already seen men laid off in three departments. In the sixties the first complete department was closed, the car department, where passenger cars were repaired and refurbished. With passenger service drastically reduced, it was found that all the needed work could be done in fewer car departments in larger cities. The closure put thirty-nine men out of work in Palmerston. Next came the closing of the freight sheds in 1962, closely followed by the shutting down of the roundhouse in 1963. This was a loss to Palmerston of over seventy jobs. This pattern of closing paralleled the national railway pattern, where passenger traffic fell off rapidly. In tandem with passenger decline came, although more slowly, a decline in freight traffic.² The final cut at Palmerston was the dis-

¹E.P. Burns, speech delivered June 12, 1960, at dedication of "Old 81," Palmerston, Ontario. The engine was manufactured at Kingston, and designed to haul twelve coaches.

²Statistics from Canadian National, official publication of the CNR, 1958-1965.



WOLD 81 Palmerston memorial to the days when "Iron Horses" were stabled in the town now stands on a specially built piece of track within view of all and highway travellers presented to the town by Canadian National Railway. This now obsolete coal-burner was originally built for the Grand Trunk Railway. The Canadian Locomotive Company at Kingston produced this famous "Waggon" type. She was built in 1910 and designed for passenger service numbered 1000. Her 63 inch drivers could haul 10,000 lbs. passenger coaches. Her service was between Windsor and Fort Erie, a distance of 260 miles. In 1952 she was re-engineered and came to Palmerston for branch line service. And it was here she completed her almost half-century of service to the transport industry. Walter Nye of Palmerston who ran the best years of this service in the locomotive has adopted the role of her unofficial guardian and in this plaque is proudly applying a coat of paint. "Living quite close to the locomotive location" he says as guide to interested parties and explains just how the steam monster operated.

missal of the various railway clerks and agents who had been responsible for the smoothe running of the station. This staff was trimmed to a minimum of sixteen men. By 1963 fewer than fifty employees on the railway were stationed at Palmerston, which had in the late forties employed over 500 men, and even in the late fifties employed around 230 men.

Only one passenger train per day went through the town from Owen Sound to Toronto, and four freight trains made the run from the Georgian Bay area to eastern Ontario. In the late forties the trains had numbered fifty per day, and even in the mid-fifties there had been about thirty-five trains per day. Passenger trains were completely eliminated in 1968 and freight trains reduced to one or two trains per week by 1971.

The tracks had to be kept in repair even for a few trains, and so Palmerston still had railway workers throughout the sixties. However, their number dwindled so quickly that by 1971 there were just eleven employees at the station. These included seven maintenance-of-way men, one signalman, one transportation agent, one freight agent, and one telecommunications clerk. This represented a loss of about 220 employees during the decade of the sixties. During the fifties, forty-five percent of the Palmerston railway employees were dismissed and another fifty-one percent followed in the sixties. Thus Palmerston lost over ninety percent of its

railway employees by 1963 and another eight percent by 1971.

By the sixties ninety percent of all Ontarians were engaged in some form of industry. This industry was contained for the most part in the southern belt extending from Quebec Province to Windsor along the St. Lawrence River, Lake Erie, and Lake Ontario. This industrial belt then turned northward along Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay through Sudbury and Lake Nipissing and back east to the Quebec border. It was a horse-shoe pattern with the open end facing east toward Ottawa. Tucked into the closed end of the horse-shoe, in the richest farmland of Canada, were the remaining ten percent of Ontario citizens, living on farms and in small towns.

These small towns in general had small industries and businesses geared to agricultural needs. Palmerston was an example of this provincial development with the exception of having had the railway as its chief industry. Now with the closing of the junction Palmerston faced the possibility of its own closing. The question became not how well would Palmerston manage, but would it survive at all.

Industry in Palmerston had a history of fragile durability from the very beginning. This was partly due to its distance from available markets, the same problem which faced other towns of the area. Another factor was that the industrial belt which surrounded the area discouraged industry. By their very smallness, industries in small towns

could never compete with the larger industries of the industrial horse-shoe. An example of this was the failure of the Palmerston Pork Factory in the early 1900s, or the Perry and Thorne Woodenware Plant which, despite its production of the highly desired Flexible Flyer Sled, failed in the twenties. Only a branch factory backed by a large plant industry could hope to succeed. But probably for Palmerston, the most important factor was its small labor pool, for the railway paid higher wages than any small industry could afford, and labor went where wages were highest. Large industries would not establish a branch in Palmerston, where railway wages would force up their own.

Clearly then, something new would have to take up the slack of the unemployed. These unemployed Palmerstonians would be forced to move if no jobs were forthcoming, and the small businesses which depended upon their patronage might well fail as a result. Understandably a silent panic gripped the town as its major industry closed.

As it turned out most railway men either retired at this time and remained in Palmerston or, kept their residences in town and commuted to the site of their new assignment.³ Eighty-five percent of the railway employees fell into these two categories. Another eight percent left the railway and

³ John Nicoll commuted to Stratford until retirement, Larry Woodman commuted to Toronto, and Norman Bowes commuted to Kincardine.

with their savings opened businesses in Palmerston.⁴ It was a mere seven percent of the railway employees who moved from Palmerston at this time. There were 1614 Palmerstonians in 1960 and by 1970 the figure had risen to 1855.

As early as the fifties the Town Council turned its energies toward attracting new businesses which, though small could employ Palmerstonians and add to the town's revenue. One such small industry was the Palmerston Plywood Plant, opened in 1961 by Kenneth Riggs, which employed twenty men. Another business was the Pleasant Villa Nursing Home, opened by Sakir Jaman in the old Palmerston Hospital, which had a permanent staff of twenty-four. Texaco was induced to open a storage plant on Main Street West, which added to the town revenue, but being fully automated, required only five men.

One Palmerstonian, J. Fred Edwards, a local druggist and MPP for Perth County,⁵ was instrumental in having the province build the Midwest Regional Centre just two miles west of the town in 1966. Midwest would soon employ 260 people and draw a large part of those employees from Palmerston. The Centre was a resident school and training center for

⁴ Two such railway men were Robert Cherry, who opened a grocery on William Street, and Mayor Askett, who opened an appliance store. Both businesses were successful.

⁵ Since Mr. Edwards lived south of Main Street, he resided in Perth County and was eligible therefore, to serve as its representative to Queen's Park even though Palmerston is legally a part of Wellington County.

developmentally handicapped children---those whose chief problem was not psychiatric. The Palmerston and District Hospital, now under provincial control since the town could not support it financially, opened in 1967 and had a personnel of over one hundred. It was Mr. Edwards who was responsible for having convinced the province of Ontario to take over the beleaguered town hospital, expand it, and relocate it on the edge of town.

Norwell District Secondary School, expanded four times by the provincial authorities, employed more and more teachers who made their homes in Palmerston, adding to the revenue of the town. By 1965 thirty-five teachers were at Norwell, by 1970 their number increased to forty-five, and nine years later there were fifty-five. Student enrollment rose to 950 and then remained stable through 1979.

The proximity of Palmerston to several larger towns made the industries in those towns available for employment. Many Palmerstonians, for instance, commuted to the Campbell Soup Plant and the Spinrite Yarn and Dyers Factory in Listowel, both branch factories. The Fergus Mills employed Palmerstonians, as did the Harriston Carriage Factory, the Mount Forest Furniture Factory and the Elora gravel pits. Thus the closing of the railway junction was not the end of the town, but rather the beginning of a new orientation toward health and education, and possibly toward becoming

a dormitory-retirement community.

As the thrust of political philosophy during the middle decades of the twentieth century turned more and more toward centralization and government control from Toronto and from Ottawa, municipalities had less and less freedom of action. The Ontario Municipal Board constantly expanded its field of regulations in order to meet the demands of the citizens for greater economic and social benefits. This led to new encroachments on municipal autonomy which the municipalities fiercely resented, at the same time, being aware of its inevitability and its justification. The province had been forced to give greater financial assistance to the municipalities in order to ensure the implementation of provincial policies, especially in expanded social services. These provincial grants were often the only way a town council could put into effect a specific required program. On the other hand, the province had been known to use these grants, or the refusal of them, to force municipalities into compliance.

Supposedly a wide range of services were to be exclusively of local concern, such as street lighting, fire protection, parks, tree trimming, snow removal, refuse disposal, recreation programs, and building inspection. Yet the provincial government has encroached on many of these areas despite local protests. Palmerston has had occasion to exper-

ience periods of strained relations with the provincial authorities as a result of such encroachments.

One minor sphere of action the Town Council found left to it, free of provincial regulations, was street identification and lighting. The streets of Palmerston were given names when the town was laid out. However, somehow through the years the need to have street signs was forgotten. Homes and businesses were identified by the original owners. If, for instance, directions were asked to the newspaper office, the answer would place it in the old G.Y. Donaldson home on Main Street. Or the home of J. Fred Edwards would be identified as being Thomas McDowell's old home. One might or might not be told it was on Raglan Street. Of course the telephone directory would list homes and businesses by street and number, or if that failed the voter's lists were available to be consulted.

By 1960 the Town Council allotted the monies, through By-Lay No. 892, to have street signs erected at all intersections of Main Street. Other street signs for lesser intersections came several years later. The new signs helped a stranger to locate someone by using the telephone directory or voter's lists, except for the instances when citizens failed to mark the numbers on their houses. And Palmerstonians continued to ignore the signs and to locate everything by the old land marks.

The following year the streets were lighted by new fluorescent lights. Twenty-two new lights were installed and seventy-seven globe type lights were replaced by the new fluorescent tubes.⁶

The fall of 1961 saw the opening of the new primary school on Prospect Street. Financed by municipal and provincial funds, the school served Palmerston and the surrounding area, as did most small town schools in Ontario. The only difference here was that Palmerston Primary served two townships, Minto and Wallace, rather than just one.

As part of the program designed to ease the strain between the French and English Canadian peoples, the Dominion Government had urged the provinces to introduce bi-lingualism. In October the Ministry of Education inaugurated its French Immersion Project as a partial commitment to bi-lingualism. Instituted in 1975, this project allowed a child to choose to be instructed in French from Kindergarten through eighth grade. Palmerston Primary was one of those chosen as a pilot school for the project.

The choice of Palmerston Primary as a French Immersion school was due to several factors. The school itself had a large enrollment for a small town school, some 450 pupils, so there would be sufficient enrollment for the project. The

⁶ By-Law No. 902, January 12, 1961

teachers at the school were, with the exception of two, graduates of Universities which had prepared them for bi-lingual instruction, and these teachers petitioned the Ministry of Education to become a pilot school. Also there were no other schools near Palmerston which were under consideration for the project. Furthermore, Norwell District School, to which the Palmerston Primary pupils would go after graduation, had a reputation of having a good French program as well as sending four-fifths of its academic students to the university.

The townspeople took little active part as a group in bringing these classes to Palmerston. As a matter of fact, many in town resented the entire French issue: the cost of printing in two languages, the demand for the French language as well as English in government and law courts, and the proposed bi-lingual instruction. Palmerstonians as a whole stood aloof from the project, although once it was instituted thirty-seven percent of the incoming Kindergarten children were registered for the program.

More provincial encroachment on municipal authority came with the sports legislation enacted in 1970, which required all coaches to have professional training if their teams were to be allowed to participate in league play, the ultimate goal of any team. The government agreed to provide much of each team's equipment. This requirement eliminated many of Palmerston's coaches and caused considerable criti-

cism by the town's citizens.

Ontario, prompted by the increasing amount of heavy transpot, issued a directive to widen all primary and secondary highways in 1960. Highway 23, which cuts through Palmerston as Main Street, was a part of this directive. The Town Council complied ⁷ with reluctance, for it required the cutting down of age-old trees which had shaded the center of town, and Main Street would now lose its charm. Palmerstonians lamented the loss while accepting the necessity.

Fire is one of the most dreaded hazards of small towns, for they must rely on a volunteer fire department and insufficient water supplies. In January of 1964 an entire business block was destroyed in Palmerston, including five stores with second floor apartments and five individual homes. It was a disaster which the town was determined would never be repeated. The council authorized the purchase of a second fire truck, ⁸ and accepted the responsibility of paying for training for firemen and began appointing younger firemen. Since these new regulations were adopted Palmerston has had only one major fire.

In 1964 Palmerston was divided by the death of one of

⁷ By-Law No. 914, April 22, 1962

⁸ By-Law No. 961, March 12, 1964

her citizens, Mrs. Ina Noer, after a routine appendectomy. An autopsy revealed a clamp had been left in her abdomen by the surgeon, Dr. Robert Graham. An inquest straddled the issue, returned a verdict of negligence against the doctor, but at the same time denied that the negligence was a cause of death. A public meeting polarized the townspeople and gave rise to physical violence. Traces of the bitterness engendered at that time can still be found in the refusal of some citizens to use the facilities of the Palmerston and District Hospital or the services of certain Palmerston physicians.

Perhaps another indication of the continuous loss of local control over local affairs can be seen in the purchase by Bell Canada of tiny Hawthorne Hill Telephone Company. Always on the brink of financial disaster, it could not compete with Bell Canada by 1964. Only a few years later dial phones were introduced into Palmerston at an estimated \$1,000,000 which would have bankrupt Hawthorne Hill at any rate. An editorial in the OBSERVER on February 10, admitted it was progress but mourned the demise of the locally owned and operated Hawthorne Hill.

As needless violence engulfed much of North America in the sixties, Palmerston felt the shock of having its own violence, if on a smaller scale. The town cemetery, just west of town, was vandalized in early August of 1965. Palmerston's reaction, as exemplified in letters to the editor,

was to wonder if the same mentality which perpetrated race riots in America could be invading Palmerston and to suggest remedies ranging from stricter parental supervision to the use of a cat o' nine tails on the culprits.⁹

By the late sixties Palmerston appeared to have adjusted to a new life without the commanding figure of the railway to dominate it. Lead stories in the OBSERVER, which for so many years had been devoted to the railway, were now treating such homey topics as the birth of Frank Symons, the first child born in the new hospital, the Barn Bee for Carl Ballard when his barn burned to the ground, and a detailed account of the hundredth anniversary of the Palmerston United Church of Canada.¹⁰

By the seventies, the population had risen to about 1855. The increase arose out of several circumstances: the influx of new teachers at the expanded district high school, the appearance of new medical and social workers at Midwestern Centre and the district hospital, the return to town of many newly retired railway workers, and the new, large commuter population.

⁹Palmerston Observer, August 19, 27, 1965 and September 3, 1965.

¹⁰Palmerston Observer, 1967, 1968, 1969.

As the early seventies progressed the town council was thinking somewhat in terms of Palmerston becoming a retirement community, at least in part. Approximately thirty-two percent of the population at this time was over sixty-five years of age.¹¹ This high percentage of retirees may have prompted the council to discuss frequently, as shown in the minutes from 1970 to 1973, the problems of older citizens, and what the town could do about them, with about twenty percent of this discussion concerned with attracting more retirees.

Using provincial funds from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the council erected a twelve-unit apartment complex for single retirees and a low-cost housing apartment complex for couples. With a grant from Horizons¹² the council succeeded in converting the old Canadian National clubhouse into a senior center. The council instituted meals-on-wheels to provide one hot meal a day for the elderly, it provided new card tables for the Drop-in Centre, it compiled a list of drivers who would transport the elderly

¹¹ Census Tract, Ontario, 1972, Wellington County Museum Archives.

¹² Horizons is a division of the Ministry of Health, created to fund old age projects in small communities. It is one of the few provincial organizations to fund a project completely and then relinquish all control upon assurance that the town will provide for its upkeep.

MAIN STREET PALMERSTON 1975

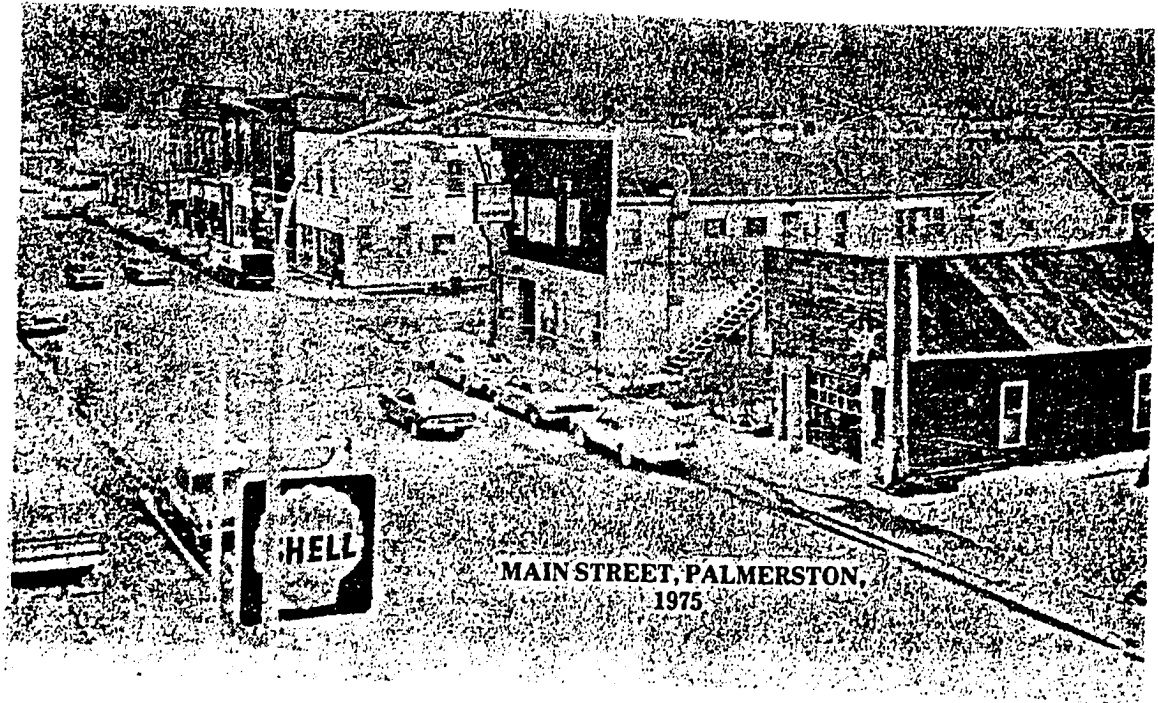


Figure 14

to medical appointments and religious services, and it appointed a special committee of the elderly charged with bringing to the council's attention all problems concerning older citizens.

Since the turn of the century the churches in Canada had been affected by two developments, ecumenism and service orientation. In the early seventies the retreat from rigidly organized religion, which was world wide, was reflected in the decline in attendance at churches in Palmerston. The Anglican Church of St. Paul was forced to amalgamate with Christ Church in Listowel, with the Vicar residing in the latter town. The vicarage was sold in 1974, an indication that for the present Anglicanism was not prospering. Always a mission church, St. Mary Immaculate Roman Catholic Church found its declining membership required it to be open only on Saturday evening for all its liturgical services. Knox Presbyterian recorded a decline in parishoners especially in the younger age groups, of some thirty percent. Palmerston United Church of Canada, a Presbyterian-Congregationalist amalgam of 1925, recorded a drop in attendance amounting to twenty-three percent. This may be a misleading figure since it is based on a combination of Church service and Sunday School figures. Only the Palmerston Missionary Church ¹³

¹³The Missionary Church is an amalgamation of German Mennonite sects and includes the towns of Paisley, Listowel and Hanover.

showed any signs of real vitality as its membership grew from sixty-two members to 183 professed born-again Christians during the seventies. It draws its membership primarily from the farm area, with only twenty-seven percent from Palmerston proper.

Through its Ministry of Recreation and Culture the Province of Ontario encourages its cities, towns and villages to celebrate their centennials. In this the Ministry hopes to preserve Canada's past. In the smaller towns especially, little encouragement is needed, for home town affection is strong. As their centennial year of 1975 approached, Palmerston began a series of meetings, formed committees on every possible aspect of the town's past, and instituted civic projects for completion in the centennial year.

Palmerston persuaded the Heritage Foundation of the Ministry of Recreation and Culture to declare the Vaccine Farm of Dr. Alexander Stewart an historical site, and in June 1975 a plaque of commemoration was unveiled. On July 21, another plaque, erected in a small park on William Street, commemorating the founding of Palmerston was unveiled. The Ministry of Health was persuaded to institute a new ambulance service, long planned for the surrounding area, and base it in Palmerston with the opening scheduled for the July celebrations.

The town made every effort to appear at its best for

this one hundred year gala. Through posters and signs the town encouraged the citizens to paint, repair and decorate. Civic rejuvenation was accomplished for the most part by volunteers who put in hundreds of man-hours clearing vacant lots, repainting town buildings and sprucing up "Old 81." One town building which needed no renovating was the year-old municipal complex on the corner of Norman and Daly. This complex, for the first time, gathered under one roof all town officialdom which included the mayor's office, council chambers, the town clerk's office, police and fire departments, and the recreation office. Monies for the various projects were allotted by the council. Although sufficient funds had not been included in the projected budget, the council exceeded its powers and assigned monies as the need arose.

From April through September Palmerston celebrated. It opened its theater, the Norgan, although traditionally the Norgan closed in the summer. It instituted three days of sidewalk sales and entertainment called Pioneer Days. Special contests and fairs were sponsored by every organization in town. The OBSERVER published a special one hundred-page edition in July, replete with stories and pictures of the town and its citizens, at \$5.00 a copy.

One resident, Robert McEachern,¹⁴ edited and published

¹⁴ McEachern is a social science teacher at Norwell

at his own expense, a railway pamphlet entitled, Legacy of the Adam Brown. Other private citizens contributed old documents, pictures and artifacts to temporary displays in the library and municipal hall.

Banquets were held by the leading organizations and each banquet had out-of-town celebrities honoring Palmerston. Blair Lodge Masonic banquet was attended by the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Ontario. ¹⁵ St. Paul's also celebrating one hundred years in Palmerston, had Bishop Alvin Robinson of Hamilton as speaker at its July 20 banquet.

Both the primary and secondary schools put on historical pageants, and were honored by the presence of Robert McKessock MPP and Perrin Beaty MP. It would, in fact, be difficult to find a Palmerstonian, or anyone remotely connected with Palmerston, who did not participate at some point in the centennial celebrations.

Early in the seventies Palmerston found itself harried by several ministries and engaged in a more or less running feud with the Provincial Government at large. The Ministry of Environment directed Palmerston to institute a lagoon system

¹⁵ The piper for this banquet was Ivan Birk who made headline in the fifties throughout Canada by using his wife's vacuum cleaner to supply the power to his bagpipes when he practiced.

for its sewage.¹⁶ Palmerston, since 1928, had operated an aerated sludge plant for sewage, considered by many as better than a lagoon for from it flowed only clear water. The Ministry threatened to withhold future building permits which would limit Palmerston's growth, if the lagoon were not provided. Despite farmers' objections, the failure of lagoons at Arthur and Monckton, and the town's residents' displeasure, the council felt compelled to option two farms at \$40,000 for a lagoon. At this point the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, designed to protect small towns from disaster, flatly rescinded the order to build a lagoon, declaring all Palmerston needed was its aerated sludge plant, a tractor, and a manure spreader capable of dumping fifteen tons of sewage per day onto adjacent land. By 1974 both Ministries reached an agreement to use the former town dump for the overflow sewage, but were defeated by a new department, the Misnistry of Health, which declared the arrangement was a health hazard. Thus in the latter part of the seventies the people were angry with the provincial ministries and the council for the

¹⁶ A lagoon system consists of a vast tract of land into which sewage is directed, where it is held temporarily before being allowed to run into a river. The land becomes swampy as the raw sewage pours in. The sluice gates are opened, usually twice a year, to permit the overflow to run off into the streams and rivers.

loss of \$40,000 suffered when the options ran out, the council was angry with the ministries for issuing conflicting directives, and the various provincial ministries were angry with Palmerston and each other. As a result nothing was done and Palmerston is still using the same sludge plant, said to be efficient if overloaded, and in need of renovation not replacement. ¹⁷

In 1973 the Ministry of Labour, which was responsible for the running of town arenas, informed Palmerston its fifty-five year old facility must be renovated or closed. Since renovation was not feasible, the town was faced with building a new arena or eliminating its organized sports program. Without a sports program, a town had no future, so Palmerston agreed to build a sports complex. The town was to provide a fifth of the total cost and the province would supply the remainder according to Ministry regulations. Palmerston's recreation committee ¹⁸ began a massive campaign

¹⁷The information regarding the provincial pressure given in an interview, September, 1979. The interviewee refused to be identified other than as a town official.

¹⁸This committee was headed by James Moore, recreation director in Palmerston, with Councillor Erica Churchill, Editor LaVerne Long, Norwell teacher Bob McEachern, Real Estate Agent Gerry Balal, and hotel operator Lloyd Norman as members. It raised over \$180,000.

to raise \$150,000 publicizing their efforts through the slogan "150 would be nifty." The Agricultural Society of Palmerston¹⁹ donated four acres of land southeast of town and on June 17, 1978, a \$1,000,000 sports complex was dedicated. It included a swimming pool, two tennis courts, a ball diamond, a hockey arena, a curling court, badminton courts, shuffle board and paddle board courts, and was considered the finest facility of its kind in Ontario.²⁰

In November of 1978 Palmerston elected a new mayor and council which would carry the town into the eighties. Municipal elections are conducted without party affiliations for the candidates, therefore it is difficult to determine the council's composition. On the 1978 Council were four incumbents and four new members. Mayor Kieth Askett was new to the mayor's office but had served on the former council along with Reeve Lester Roloson, Deputy Reeve Jack Cronenberg and Lloyd Metzger. New members were Robert Marquardt, Erica Churchill, John Dyer and Norman Bridge. The composi-

¹⁹ The Agricultural Society, founded in 1878, disseminated agricultural and horticultural knowledge throughout the area. Since the provincial government expanded its agricultural informational material in the forties, the Society had turned its efforts toward fairs and horse shows.

²⁰ Ontario Minor Sports Leagues, pamphlet, Ministry of Recreation and Culture, Toronto, 1978

tion of this council was much the same as in the past, businessmen, railway men, farmers and retired citizens. The council also had the addition of another woman and a member of the teaching profession.²¹

It might be worth noting here that no candidate was chosen who pledged specific action of elected. All defeated candidates, moreover, were not specific in their promises. This may indicate Palmerstonians were uninterested in any specific issue at that time, as it might suggest they felt less determined, more compromising, leaders were better suited to handle town-provincial relations. It is quite possible special interests determined the successful candidates. A case in point might be Mayor Askett. His opponent, Arthur Carr, as editor of the OBSERVER had each year editorially taken to task: the teachers for their yearly wage demands; the trade unions of Midwestern Centre for seeking yearly

²¹Mayor Askett owns an appliance store, Marquardt is a local high school teacher, John Dyer is a retired army officer, Norman Bridge is a retired farmer, Lester Roloson is a retired railway worker, Cronesberry is a cosmetic salesman, Metzger is retired from operating the Palmer Hotel, and Erica Churchill is a housewife. Of these councillors four are native Palmerstonians whose families have lived in Palmerston for over four generations: Bridge, Askett, Metzger and Dyer. The remaining four have come to town within the past twenty years.

increased benefits; and the medical workers of Palmerston and District Hospital for their salary demands. The combined voting strength of these three groups numbers about 130 which could have provided the 104 votes by which Askett defeated Carr.

Another such possibility might be John Nicoll, defeated in his bid for councilman. Nicoll had written frequently in opposition to these same groups in his column in the OBSERVER.²²

All of this is, of course, theoretical, but it is a fact that both Carr and Nicoll had served several terms on council before the existence of the three groups cited.

That Palmerston survived the decline of them and prospered appears to have been the result of the opportunistic actions on the part of a few rather than the fruition of any long-term plans. Thus the town was still faced in the closing years of the seventies with the need to inaugurate a definite plan for the future.

²² John Nicoll, "What Do You Think," PALMERSTON OBSERVER, 1968-1979.

PALMERSTON 1980

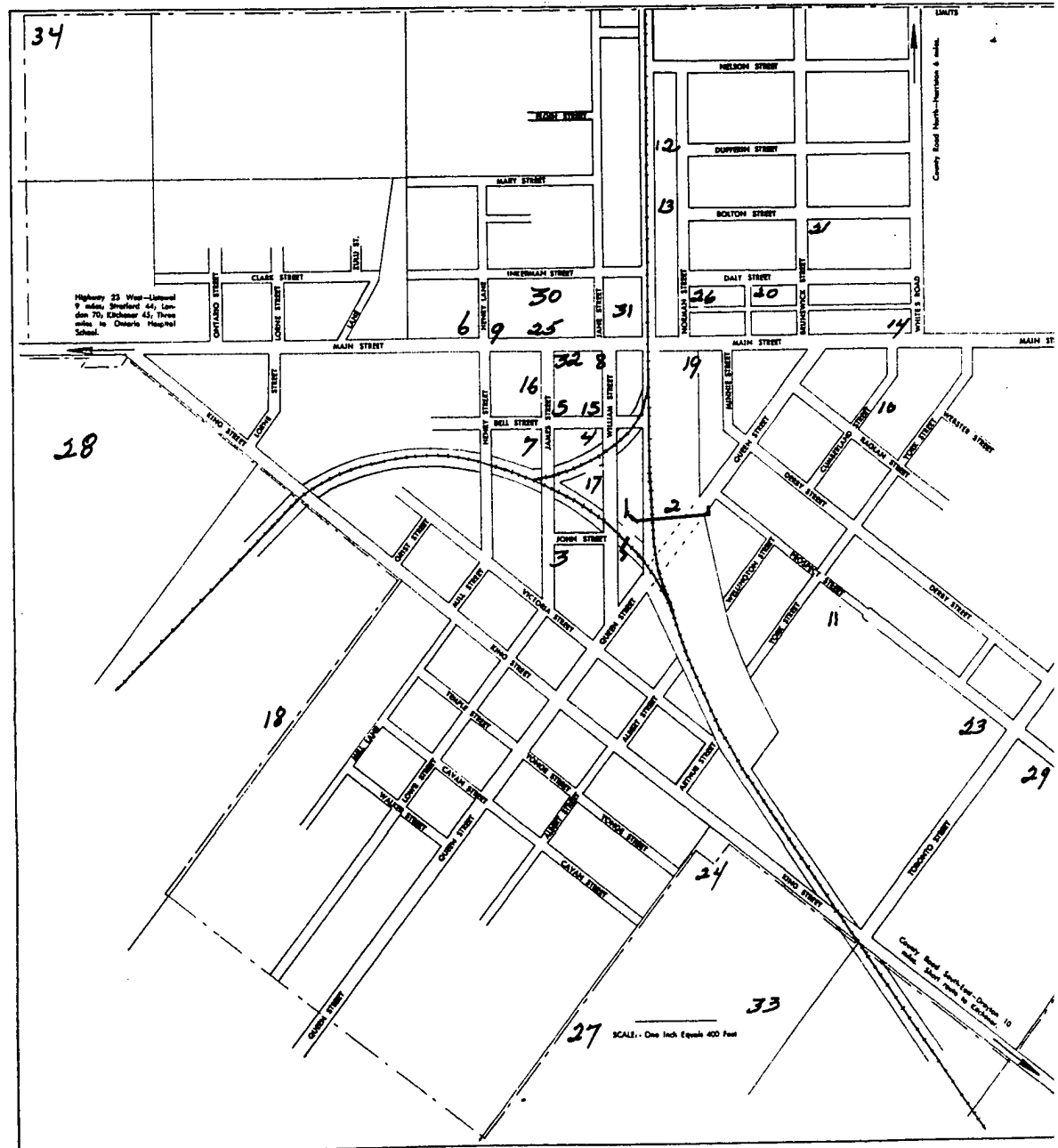


Figure 15

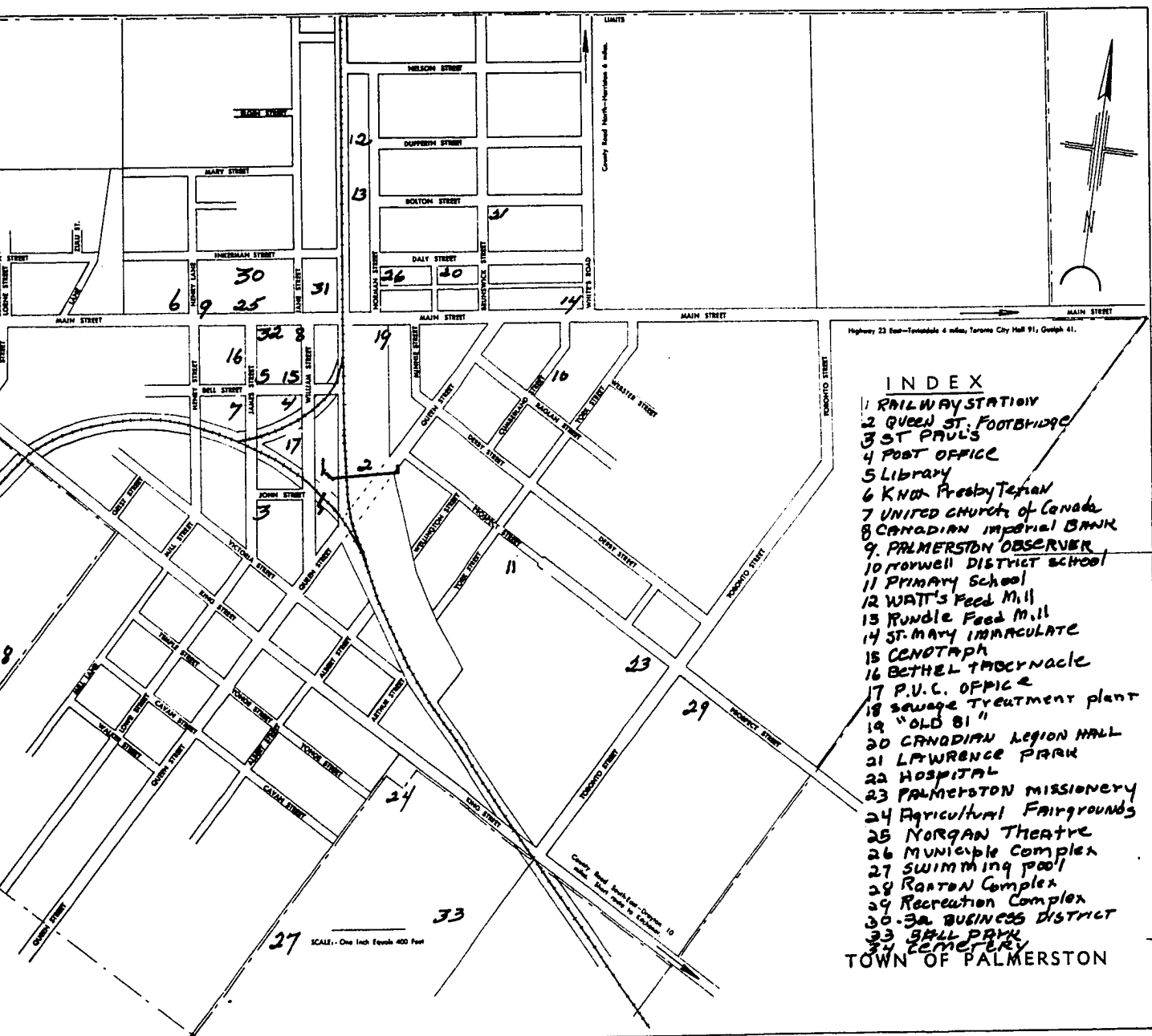


Figure 15

CHAPTER VII
THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE
1980

Highway twenty-three, a secondary road in Ontario, maintains a generally northward direction, roughly connecting the town of London with the Georgian Bay area. Near its northern limits, where it veers sharply toward the East, lies the town of Palmerston. This approach to Palmerston is through mildly rolling land given over to farms. Occasionally the highway passes through a village or town- Winchelsea, Woodhan, Monkton - all small and all quiet. A motel on the right, the town cemetery on the left, and then a few scattered houses herald the nearness of Palmerston. As the highway markers change to Main Street signs, and the municipal signboard "Palmerston, Population 1855" appears, the town can be seen on either side of the road.

Main street is a paved sixty foot-wide street running through the heart of Palmerston which spreads north of it into Minto Township and south into Wallace Township covering some 1,132.8 acres. Over a mile in length, Main Street has homes and businesses lining both sides. They are mixed through out with the business district primarily within the two squares between Henry and Norman Streets.¹

¹Page 169 has a scaled map of Palmerston on which can be located all the buildings and areas discussed on the following pages.

On the northwest corner of Henry and Main is Knox Presbyterian Church and rectory built in 1976. This fieldstone, glass, and redwood contemporary structure is the fourth church to house the Presbyterians of Palmerston. In 1980 Knox is an active parish consisting of some 205 members from 124 households.

The Reverend Minister, Edward Dowdles, became pastor of Knox Presbyterian in 1976. He is a young man, athletically built, with a pleasant personality and an inclination toward full clerical dress. A graduate of Toronto Seminary, he is married with two children, and in his first full pastorate. Mr. Dowdles leans toward traditional doctrines, and stresses traditional services in the church, although much of his present ministry is in counseling and youth work.

According to records approximately fifty percent of the parish is over forty-five years of age. This would seem not to auger well for the future of Knox. However, Mr. Dowdles claims a strong future for his church. In the three years since his coming, the membership of Knox has risen close to seventeen percent, and of that seventeen percent, three quarters at least are young adults. After high school young people tend to drift away and are lost to the church and it is on this group that Mr. Dowdles has concentrated and claims their return will ensure

Knox's future.²

The architecture for the next two squares, on either side of the street is completely undistinguished. Although most of the structures house businesses, there are seven homes mixed at intervals, three of which have been owned by the residents' families since they were constructed in the 1870s.³ The commercial buildings are of brick, grey on red, uniformly square in shape, and two or three storeys in height. Most of these buildings present much the same appearance in 1980 as they did when constructed, although a few have been remodeled. One such is the PALMERSTON OBSERVER building, on the north side just beyond Henry Street. Once a home owned by G.Y. Donalson, it has housed the OBSERVER since 1953. The newspaper uses the first floor, while the second floor is an apartment. Longmac Enterprises, owned by LaVerne Long, publishes the newspaper and does most of the printing for the Palmerston area. It is the printing which is the more lucrative of the two, although Mr. Long feels the newspaper is more rewarding in every other way. Long, a native Palmerstonian, is vitally interested in bringing small

²The Reverend Edward Dowdles private interview, September 14, 1979, Palmerston, Ontario.

³These are the Robinson, Young, and McEachern homes.

industry to his town and in revitalizing and rehabilitating the business district.⁴ A former apprentice on the newspaper he now owns, long returned three years ago to Palmerston, after many years in journalism elsewhere. He is "fiercely determined to rejuvenate the downtown area."⁵ The newspaper office of eight employees is busiest on Tuesday just prior to publication. It is of the few businesses open on Monday.

At present undergoing renovation, both outside and in, is the municipally owned Norgan Theatre. The cost is being underwritten by the Lions Club through its profits from the Great Palmerston Lottery,⁶ According to the manager of the Norgan, with an improved facility the movie distributors have agreed to place the theater in a higher category permitting them to obtain more first-run movies and to obtain them earlier in the distribution process.

⁴Soft spoken and slow to commit himself, Long appears to hide strong determination behind his easy going facade.

⁵LaVerne Long, private interview, September 17, 1978, Palmerston, Ontario.

⁶This lottery, held annually, is just for the purpose of funding civic projects. A fifty-two dollar ticket entitles the holder to a chance on a weekly prize of five hundred dollars. In 1979 a profit of \$3200 was realized, and \$2600 profit is anticipated for 1980.

THE PALMERSTON OBSERVER OFFICE

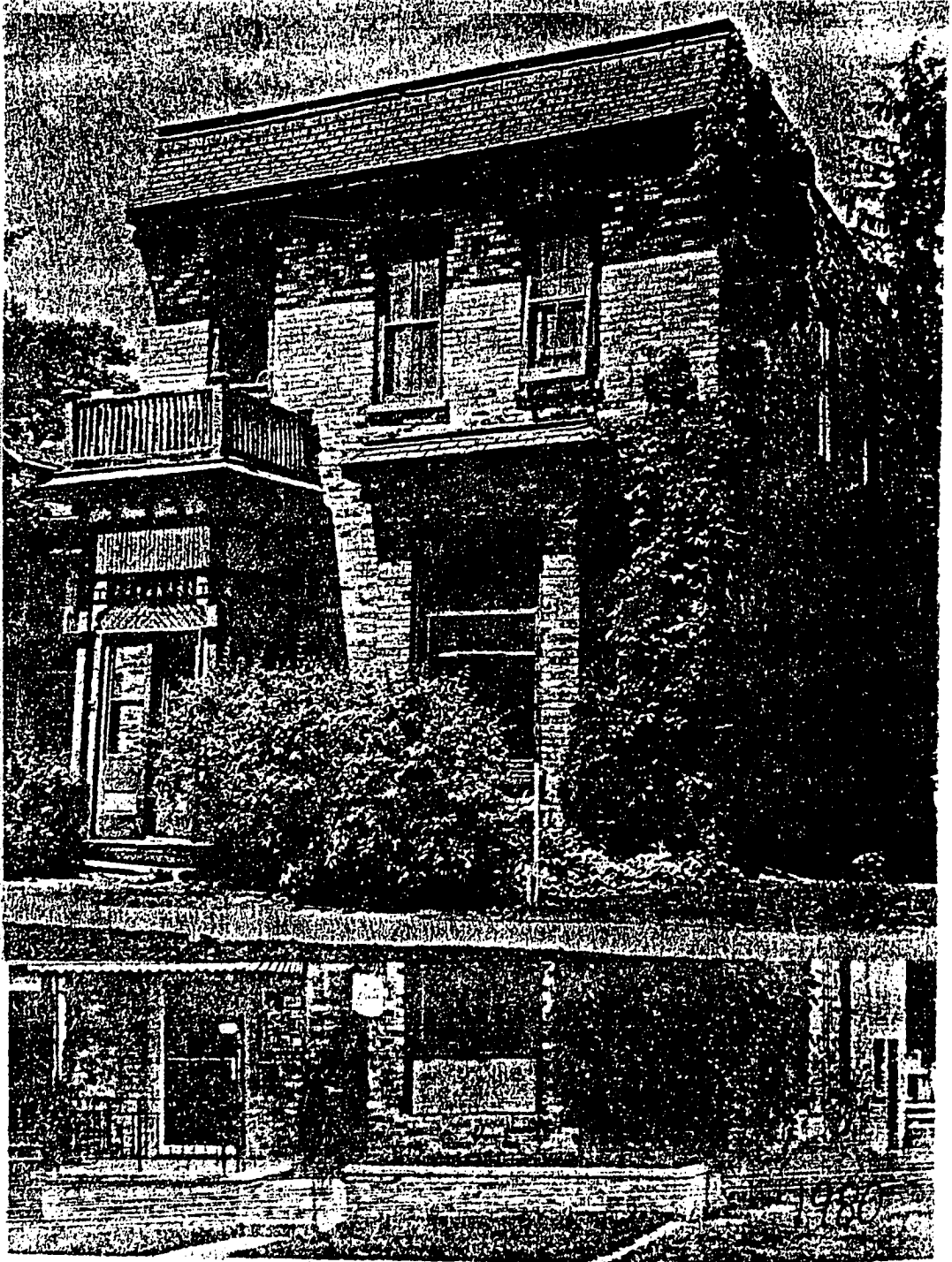


Figure 16

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Farther along on the north side of Main Street, between two private homes, is probably one of the last relics of frontier conditions, Hugh McAuley's Furniture Store and Funeral Service. Just as his ancestors did, McAuley makes furniture in one side of his double-fronted building, and arranges funeral services in the other.

At the end of the business district, just before the railway tracks bisect Main, is McLaughlin's Meat Market. There has been a meat market at this location since 1871. This is one of four businesses which have been in existence for over one hundred years at the same location. The others are: Watt's Feed Mill on Norman Street; The Palmer Hotel on Main; and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce on the southwest corner of Main and Williams. Only the feed mill is in the hands of the original owner's family.

On the southeast corner of Norman and Daley Streets is the Palmerston Municipal Complex, built in 1974. This red brick contemporary structure houses all the town officialdom and is considered one of Palmerston's more important sights to be pointed out to visitors.

The fire department, housed in the complex, is all volunteer with nineteen active firefighters under the leadership of Chief Jack Toner. As there is no formal training, firefighters learn through their practice, as well as from

other firefighters, pamphlets put out by the provincial government, and on-the-job-training. The company under Toner, practices twice monthly and firefighters are encouraged to attend the classes provided by the provincial fire marshal.⁷ The department has three fine trucks, all pumpers, and the maximum fire fighting equipment recommended by the province. The 1979 budget for the department was \$44,000, which included upkeep of equipment, a \$1400 salary for the chief, and payment for the firefighters.⁸ According to Chief Toner the Palmerston fire department has been rated by the provincial inspectors as ninety-seven percent efficient, based on equipment and performance. "From the moment the alarm sounds to the point of fire, takes five to eight minutes, which is very good," claims Chief Toner.⁹

Palmerston, however, has never relied on a volunteer

⁷Toner, a short wirey man, is employed by the town as a garbage collector. He joined the firefighters after witnessing the incompetence of the force when his own home burned. He is young and has decided opinions which he expresses forcefully.

⁸Firefighters receive \$3.25 for each practice point and \$3.75 per point for fires. Each firefighter can gain three points per practice and three points for each fire call he attends.

⁹Chief Jack Toner, Private interview, August 10, 1978, Palmerston, Ontario.

police force. From the first paid constable in 1871, the police force has grown to three full time policemen and four special constables. The full-time police, one of which is always on duty, are all trained at the Ontario Police College, while the constables learn through job training. The special constables are used when the regular police are on holidays and on week-end nights to double protection. The department has been under the direction of Chief Roy Warboys since 1972. A twelve year veteran of the Bay City Police Force, Warboys is a calm deliberate man who is often discribed by Palmerstonians as "unflappable."

The police department has one police car, fully equiped according to provincial standards. It is also responsible for two jail cells, used for the most part, on every second Monday of the month when the Provincial Court meets at Palmerston, to hold prisioners after sentencing until their transfer to a provincial prison.

Chief Warboys writes a weekly column in the OBSERVER, in crder to give "information to the citizens before they need it, and to answer their most frequent questions."⁹

⁹Chief Roy Warboys, private interview, August 12, 1978, Palmerston, Ontario.

The office of the Town Clerk, also part of the complex has one full-time and one part-time employee. The present clerk is Ross Saunders, who has held the office since 1976. A middle-aged, rotund man, Saunders is distinguished for his beard grown for the centennial celebration in 1975 and still remaining, and for his vast and thorough knowledge of municipal-provincial regulations.

Council Chambers serve both for council meetings and for the Provincial Court when it convenes in Palmerston. Roughly forty feet by seventy feet, the Council Chamber has two brick walls, one wall carpeted in rust as is the floor, and a wall of biege draped windows. From a dais the Mayor presides over the Council members rauged at tables on either side. This area is separated from the spectator benches by rail, in the center of which is a podium for citizens to address council. The sole decoration is a spotlighted portrait of Queen Elizabeth above the dais.

Directly across from Norman Street on the south side of Main is a small park adjacent to the railway tracks where "Old 81" is enshrined behind a small white picket fence.¹⁰ Across these tracks is the railway station

¹⁰ So much a part of Palmerston is "Old 81" that the men's minor league hockey team for the area is called "The 81s"

the only remaining structure of the great railway junction of earlier years. A wooden structure with imitation red brick exterior badly in need of paint, it is a Victorian relic of large bay windows and many turrets. The interior, however, is intact with random-width plank floors, dark wooden benches and iron grilled ticket windows. Vestiges of the abandoned railway activity are scattered around: an empty baggage truck with rusting iron wheels; two rusty lanterns; and a weather-beaten boarding platform. The whole projects an impression of dejection as if both town and railway company want only to forget as quickly as possible.

Ending at the station is John Street which runs west into James. On the northeast corner is St. Paul's Anglican Church, now a mission church, with the Reverend Master Douglas Fuller of Listowel, as vicar. The congregation is small, consisting of fifty active families and about forty fringe families. Around sixty people attend services each Sunday, an increase of twenty percent in the past year. Mr. Fuller feels that the church's role is spiritual first and that depth of faith is the most important thing. As a result he feels the physical structure of St. Paul's may be forced to close in twenty-five or thirty years, but that the church will go on in other areas with the

present young people who worship at St. Paul's today.¹¹

A former army chaplain, Mr. Fuller's mild, almost gentle, manner is deceptive, for his attitude toward spiritual matters is aggressive and practical. Stockily built, this middle-aged cleric radiates in his words and actions the joy of the ministry he serves.¹²

Where James and Bell Streets meet is another old and active church of Palmerston, the United Church of Canada. Perhaps the most influential church today, this buff-brick, gothic structure has 330 registered families of which thirty-five percent attend weekly services. As do the other churches of Palmerston, the United Church has an aging congregation with nearly one half of it over fifty-five years of age. The Reverend Mister John Shearman, a minister new to Palmerston, indicated he would prefer a more spiritual emphasis for his congregation. His plan was to lessen the social thrust and direct the congregations activities, first, toward more traditional

¹¹The Reverend Mister Douglas Fuller, private interview, August 21, 1978, Lestowel, Ontario.

¹²In interviews the parishioners of St. Paul's reflected Mr. Fuller's leadership, stressing the spiritual aspect of their church more than other denominations did. According to them Mr. Fuller is an ideal spiritual leader.

services of worship. Without lessening the parish's commitment to helping its fellowman, Mr. Shearman hoped, through his sermons to lead his parish, as he described it, "on a definite theological path so they may better make their moral judgments."¹³ Mr. Shearman, the father of four, has a special interest in the young. A former football player he is equally at ease in the pulpit and in a social setting.

Squarely across James Street is the library, again a large red brick, Victorian building, formerly municipally owned but now part of the Wellington County library system. Open six days each week, six hours each day, the library has a full-time librarian, Mrs. Evelyn Turner, and one part-time assistant. The library has over 300 permanent volumes and 1000 revolving volumes, one third of which are replaced every six weeks. There are 1200 active card holders in Palmerston, an eighty-three percent of the eligible population.

Next to the library is a small well kept park, measuring about 50 by 150 feet, in which is located the Cenotaph, dedicated to the war dead of Palmerston. In

¹³The Reverend Mister John Shearman, private interview, September 18, 1979, Palmerston, Ontario.

the center of this grassy tree-lined rectangle is a six foot column bordered by flowers, which supports the statue of a soldier at ease. Chiseled on the column are the names of those men who died in two World Wars. Both a provincial and a dominion flag fly each day over the park.¹⁴

At the corner of William and Bell is the Post Office which, under Postmaster J. Fred Mallett, who is only the fifth in Palmerston history, employs three full-time and two part-time workers. Built in 1914, the Post Office, which resembles a fortress, has announced from its bell tower every new hour, night and day, for over sixty-five years. Palmerstonians receive their mail through general delivery or by private box, and persons outside the town receive daily delivery.

South of King Street and west of Lowe, on the edge of town, is the site of the controversial sewage plant, and part of the Devel's Half Acre of earlier years. On the other extreme end of town in the southeastern area is the arena Complex. To the west beyond the town limits is Midwestern Regional Centre which employs so many Palmerstonians

¹⁴A poll of one hundred Palmerstonians, conducted in September, 1979, revealed that eighty-seven percent have attended one or more Remembrance Day services, (November 11), at the Cenotaph. Forty-two men and fifty-eight women were interviewed.

Financed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services at Toronto, Midwestern, a modern brick building designed as a resident school for several counties' handicapped, is situated on 250 acres. George McArthur is Administrator with a staff of over 260, and a projected 1979-80 budget of between two and four million.

The Palmerston and District Hospital is just inside the northeastern town limits on White's Road. A modern, one-floor structure, the sixty-six bed hospital is part of the provincial hospital system administered by the ministry of Health. However, there is a local hospital board which defines hospital policy within provincial guidelines. As recently as 1979 the local board was at odds with the ministry over a proposed ruling which would cut out the bed capacity by six. After several months the hospital was able to convince the ministry such a cut was detrimental and the order was rescinded.

No one complains about the weather in Palmerston, but everyone brags about it, particularly the winters. Snow, as a rule begins to fall in October and continues through April. As one snowfall follows another, the sidewalks are shoveled and the main streets are plowed, but there is still snow everywhere. According to the local residents, Palmerston is on the edge of two snowfields:

one sweeps down from the northwest and the other in from the east, resulting in the greatest amount of measurable snow of any place in western Ontario.¹⁵ This claim is very possibly true for according to meteorological reports of the Department of Atmospheric Environment in 1977 during the 180 days from November 1 through April 30, snow, ice or freezing precipitation fell approximately sixty-eight percent of the time. In 1978 the percentage rose to seventy-two percent, but in 1979 it fell to sixty-one percent.¹⁶

The spring is short in Palmerston, beginning in late April and ending in June. Summers are invariably very hot through July and August. Temperature averages through this summer period for the years 1977 through 1979 were 20.7 celsius. Autumn arrives in early September and extends only through mid October. Temperatures drop almost overnight and by November winter has begun. In October the average temp-

¹⁵In a paper delivered before the Palmerston Women's Institute, one member describing her trip to Florida in the winter of 1978, found it highly amusing that on an overnight stay in Cincinnati, they found the city nearly paralyzed by what she termed a minor snowfall of six inches or so.

¹⁶Annual and semi-annual Meteorological Summaries, 1977 through 1979, Department of Atmospheric Environment for western Ontario, Mount Forest, Ontario.

erature is 7.1 celsius but by November it is down to 1.6 celsius from where it plunges to -13.4 celsius by January and February. ¹⁷

In Wellington and Perth Counties which contain the farms around Palmerston, the soil is preponderantly clay and sandy loam. For agricultural purposes about fifty-two percent is rated first class, about forty-one percent is second class, and the remainder is third class. ¹⁸ According to the provincial representative of agriculture at Fergus, "The soil is top quality around Palmerston, the best in Ontario," ¹⁹ where the farming is livestock-based with hog farms and cattle farms, both beef and dairy predominating. There are a few sheep farms and four white turkey farms in the area. The farms in the area are extremely valuable. Grant Murray, who farms 150 acres, estimated his beef cattle farm as being worth \$300,000, and claims it is one of the less important farms. Mrs. Charles Williams, owner of a hog farm in Minto Township, projected a gross income for 1980 of \$100,000 for her one hundred acres. Corn, white beans and soybeans are

¹⁷Annual meteorological Summary 1977-1979. Department of Atmospheric Environment, Mt. Forest, Ontario, pp.1-5.

¹⁸Geological Survey 1977, Geological Department, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, pp. 10-14.

¹⁹Mel Chamberlain, Agricultural Representative for Wellington County, private interview, September 1, 1979, Fergus, Ontario.

grown as cash crops in the area on a few farms, but most of the grains are grown by the farmers for fodder. When grain is grown by the farmers for cash it is generally on the home farm ²⁰ with farm one and farm two given to livestock and grain for fodder.

There are 2043 people living in Palmerston in 1980 of whom 1024 are male and 1019 are female. Over the past ten years there was an increase of 188 persons. Palmerstonians come from three major ethnic backgrounds: sixty-four percent are English, twenty percent are Scottish and fifteen percent are Irish. This ethnic division dates back to the founding of the town and has not been significantly altered since. One Chinese family of four, father, mother and two young sons, lives in Palmerston. Two Dutch families immigrated to Palmerston in the forties and still reside there, both consisting of husband, wife and two grown children. One black woman, who came to town in 1947, lives alone in the Senior Citizen's Complex, and there are three Pakistani families also living in Palmerston.

Of these 2043 people approximately thirty percent are over sixty years of age, thirty-eight percent are between

²⁰ A home farm is the original acreage of a farm. Any acreage added over the years is designated as farm one, farm two, etc.

eighteen and sixty years, and the remaining thirty-two per-cent are under eighteen according to statistics released by the Ministry of Health. With such a distribution Palmerston cannot be labeled a retirement haven with an already dead future. The potential of the eighteen and under group added to the established eighteen to sixty group represents a large pool of genuine talent, skill, and labor, which need only be utilized.

Palmerstonians glory in the fact that Palmerston is a small town. They are content with the slow tenor of life which gives them time for friends, and the closeness of the boundaries which permits them to know nearly everyone. Those who did move away return as often as possible, and many re-turn when they retire. The only reason ever advanced for leaving town was economic. Arthur Carr expressed it for many Palmerstonians, "We have everything here, all the facilities of the big city yet we're small enough to know everybody. In two hours I can be injoying myself swimming, boating, attend-ing plays...No, this is the perfect place." ²¹

This is not a completely prejudiced view, for Palmerston does provide excellent health care, educational opportuni-ties, and recreational facilities. A two hour drive will take

²¹Arthur Carr, private interview, October 12, 1979, Pal-merston, Ontario.

Palmerstonians to the Georgian Bay, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, or Lake Ontario for water sports, and the entertainment of the big cities of London, Toronto, Hamilton, Stratford, and Waterloo is just as easy and quick to reach.

Perhaps the best explanation for the love Palmerstonians bear their town was advanced by LaVerne Long, editor of the OBSERVER, who said, "Everyone knows everyone, everyone helps, its just one big family."²² This feeling is probably shared by the majority of the townspeople. E. F. Grey, retired educator, who could be said to represent the older inhabitants, tells of the pleasure it is for him to walk down Main Street and be able to greet everyone by name.²³ Roger McDonald, who is twenty-seven years old and has been forced to go outside town for employment as a teacher, returns each week-end because "it's home, friendly, slower-paced and I know almost everyone."²⁴

Young married couples say Palmerston is a good town in which to rear children, even though as adults those children may have to seek employment elsewhere. Parents feel the

²² LaVerne Long, private interview, August 10, 1978.

²³ E.F. Grey, private interview, August 2, 1978.

²⁴ Roger McDonald, private interview, October 4, 1979.

solid grounding in good basic principles of morality to be found in Palmerston will give their children an advantage when they are adults. Young adults are not eager to leave, either. One young girl expressed it this way, "I just hope when I marry he will be from here...he'd better be." ²⁵

Scott Vanner, architectural student at Waterloo University, knows he will be forced to live away from Palmerston but claims he will only consider a city close enough to permit his return each week-end. He wants his children to know and love Palmerston as he does. It is not enough, of course, just to wish to remain, the facts are indisputably against many being able to do so, but the desire is great for many.

No different in their attitude are those over thirty-five. Norman Bowes came to Palmerston with the railway and remained to run the Wagon Wheel restaurant. Larry Woodman commuted to Toronto for ten years rather than leave town when transferred to the railway depot there. Keith Askett claims he is mayor of "a beautiful little town in the best part of Ontario."²⁶

²⁵ Sara Tracey, private interview, September 22, 1979, Palmerston, Ontario. Sara is nineteen years old and a student at Tyerson Polytechnic Institute in Toronto.

²⁶ Keith Askett, private interview, September 18, 1979.

Retirees in town are obviously there because they wish to be. Men such as retired Army Major John Dyer and retired railway accountant John Nicoll returned, after long careers, to the town they liked best. It can best be summed up, perhaps in the remark of Sam Wald who, forced to live with his daughter in Toronto, when asked what he did with himself in the big city, replied, "well, we have this couch at home and I lie on it after a meal and wish I was back in Palmerston." ²⁷

Social classes, as they are usually understood, are nearly non-existent in Palmerston today. All the factors which tended to create class division in the past have lost much of their force. Religious affiliation with the leading and influential churches, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Anglican, is no longer any special asset as the churches' influence has waned. Masonic membership is no longer a necessity for success as it once was. Men have been turning to service oriented organizations at the expense of the earlier fraternal organizations. The economic inequities of wage standards have been adjusted through the efforts of the Trade Unions. And the bent of the provincial and dominion government has been toward programs and legislation which have had a leveling effect on society, through parity stan-

²⁷ The Palmerston Observer, July 1975, p. 43.

dards in working hours, working conditions, and paid holidays. These equalizing influences, coupled with free education, have almost eliminated all social differences in fact. There is always, to a greater or lesser degree, a banding together of groups with like interests, such as teachers, nurses, or firefighters, but in no way can they be considered social classes. Rigid classes are not to be found, for as one Palmerstonian expressed it, "everyone knows everyone so well, they tend to forget what they do for a living, or have as possessions, or to what clubs they belong or how far they went in school," ²⁸ and this tends to break down any social barriers which might exist.

Interested in their town and its future, Palmerstonians have a high percentage of eligible voters who participate in local elections. In 1978 eighty-nine percent responded, for 1976 eighty-four percent responded and in 1974 the count was seventy-seven percent. Since 1940 the lowest percentage has been seventy-seven percent, in 1942. ²⁹ In this year there was only one other candidate other than those who were already on council. Due to war conditions it had been

²⁸ Freda Carr, private interview, August 21, 1978, Palmerston, Ontario. Mrs. Carr is a home maker, journalist, and the mother of four.

²⁹ The Palmerston Observer, 1940-1980.

decided by the town, as proposed by council and agreed to by the citizens, to retain the incumbent officials. One other candidate was proposed to forestall any possible legal complications. Provincial and federal elections are not so highly regarded. In the 1979 federal election Palmerston had only a sixty-five percent rate of participation, and in the 1980 federal election the percentage dropped to forty-seven. Since 1940 provincial elections have ranged from the high of sixty-seven percent in 1972 to a low of forty-three percent in 1964. Federal elections ranged from a high of seventy-one percent in 1947 to a low of forty-two percent in 1963.³⁰ Such figures would support the premise that Palmerstonians vote where their immediate interests lie and they feel they have some control---the local elections. Other elections at the provincial and federal level generate much less interest.

At election times local campaigning is not difficult, for a candidate can stand on the corner of Main and William Streets and talk with nearly every voter at some time during the two week campaigning period. Or if more intense campaigning is in order every home can be visited easily during the period. Both methods have been used, but the former is the

³⁰ Voter's registration lists, Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Palmerston, Ontario.

more popular and is used by local, provincial and federal candidates.

No one person or no one group appears to control, or even unduly influence, the town in a political way. Prior to elections political discussions are frequent and widespread. In Mayor Askett's appliance store, for instance, more time is often devoted to political discussion than is given to selling the merchandise. Daily luncheons in the restaurants are continuous sessions on civic affairs. The OBSERVER office of the editor is a gathering place for politically oriented citizens. Everyone contributes to these discussions, businessmen, professional men, teachers, local farmers, retirees, clerks, salesmen, factory workers and homemakers.

Since councillors are not officially affiliated with any political party, they represent specific ideas and immediate solutions for Palmerston rather than political philosophies. Consequently a councillor receives support from those who agree with his particular plans for Palmerston. It is conceivable that one group of like-minded citizens may support a candidate, at an election, and that particular group may be of one profession. However, their support for one candidate and one issue at one election ends then, and is not a continuous organized political force.³¹

³¹ This particular phenomenon was suggested for the 1978 councilmanic and mayoralty election in Palmerston.

Life in Palmerston, on a daily basis is more leisurely paced perhaps, than in many other places, but it is still filled with activity. The day is well underway by 7:00 A.M. and everything but the restaurants are closed by 5:00 P.M. In those ten hours local stores, while never full of customers, are never entirely empty. The bank, library, and Town Hall have had a steady flow of patrons. There have always been a few people walking on the sidewalk or gathering in groups. ³² Main Street, being a highway, has had brisk activity, from passing trucks to farm tractors to automobiles to the Palmerston Police car slowly patrolling the area.

Palmerstonians are very fond of coffee breaks. Anything will serve as an excuse, but especially at ten o'clock in the morning and at three o'clock in the afternoon the four local restaurants are the places to be. In the front section of the Wagon Wheel, eight regulars meet each day to talk. Seven women and one lone man discuss "anything and every-

³² Frequently the center of a group will be Arthur Carr, former editor of the Observer, who in retirement is lecturer, horticulturist, television commentator, and after-dinner speaker. Carr is a spare man, with a shock of unruly white hair and bushy eyebrows. He is a skilled raconteur and a shrewd journalist who, while chain smoking, is capable of holding an audience enchanted for long periods of time.

thing," as they characterize their sessions.³³ Another group with permanent roots are the five male friends who meet each day and "talk about the railway, sports and horses only."³⁴ Other groups³⁵ meet in other restaurants but the Wagon Wheel is the most popular meeting place for coffee breaks. One other group gathering must be mentioned. Strictly a warm-weather group and termed the "sons of Rest" by Palmerstonians, it is composed of retirees who meet all day long under the protection of the Norgan Theatre marquee. This gathering fluctuates in number but has a nucleus of seven members, one or two of whom is always present.

After 5:00 P.M. a hiatus occurs in the outside activity as Palmerstonians eat dinner and prepare for the evening. With over sixteen fraternal and social organizations,³⁶

³³ This group has an average age of sixty years and is composed of a nurse, teacher, two journalists, and four homemakers. All but one is retired.

³⁵ This group has an average age of sixty-five years and is composed of three railway men, an electrician, a salesman and a farmer. All but two are retired.

³⁵ There are fourteen such groups on a more-or-less permanent basis. A consensus drawn from interviews with them form the basis for the above conclusion that political power is not in the hands of any one particular individual or group.

³⁶ See Appendix E for a listing of these organizations.

church groups, civic meetings, educational classes, and sports events there is no dearth of evening activity. Palmerstonians usually belong to four or five different organizations and according to the records of these organizations attend regularly. Many of these meetings are open to the entire town in the form of a fair or dinner. Thus much of Palmerstonians' evenings are spent in the company of fellow Palmerstonians. Especially is this true in the winter.³⁷

Other evening activities are the night classes given at Norwell District Secondary School consisting of crafts, hobbies, and technical classes. The enrollment has averaged around 450 adults each year. At Midwestern Regional Centre extension classes are held by Waterloo University where average attendance is fifteen to seventeen per class.

If the citizens of Palmerston do remain at home to watch television they have twelve channels from which to choose, three English and one French commercial channels from Toronto, two from Buffalo, and one each from Barrie, Wingham, Hamilton and Kitchener. There is also an educational channel and a community service channel. This community service channel, or country cable as it is termed, is

³⁷ Such wide intermingling is another possible explanation in the lack of social class structure which Palmerston enjoys.

a non-commercial channel which covers the immediate area around Palmerston. Financed by the subscriber fees of \$102 per year, country cable is almost a one man operation, ³⁸ and is in operation eight hours per day seven days a week. Eighty percent of the programming is pre-recorded and the rest is live. To justify its license country cable must put on a minimum of twenty hours community service each week, which it fulfills through announcements of coming events, interviews with local visitors, and an analysis of the news appearing in the communities it serves. In addition there is a weekly Bingo game which can be expanded to fill the last of those twenty required hours. Country cable serves the communities of Palmerston, Harriston, Listowel, Mount Forest, Wingham and all the farms which are on the cable lines in between those towns.

According to Chief Warboys, Palmerston has about the same crime rate as the national average for Canadian small towns. The biggest problem in Palmerston for the adults is alcoholism,³⁹ and vandalism for the teenager. Chief Warboys

³⁸ Former head soundman for NBC, Fred Tudor, operates, directs, programs, and manages every phase of country cable alone, except for repairs to lines and equipment.

³⁹ Mr. Shearman finds alcoholism the major cause of family distress among the parishoners of Palmerston United Church.

feels the police are more of a preventive force in Palmerston than anything else. They try to instruct the citizens before the crime is committed by campaigns such as the ones conducted to teach Palmerstonians to lock their doors, to describe the ravages of drugs, and to explain the newest compulsory vehicular law of the province. This approach has been successful in many instances; the use of drugs in Palmerston is very low, for example; approximately sixty-five percent below the national average.⁴⁰ Warboys does not claim sole credit for this, giving acknowledgement to the schools and churches.

The clergy of the five churches in Palmerston all affirmed that drug use among the young was very low to non-existent in their parishes. The Palmerston Missionary Church and the Anglican Church both claimed to have no drug problem. The Presbyterian, the United Church and the Roman Catholic listed it as very minor. It should be noted, however, that all church records reveal there are few young people active beyond grade nine or ten, except for the Palmerston Missionary Church.

The question could be asked whether religion plays much of a role in the lives of Palmerstonians. Most of the laity

⁴⁰ The national average was quoted by Chief Warboys as seventy-one percent for 1978. This figure includes marijuana which accounts for it being so high.

appear to think not and they attribute it to a variety of reasons. It is claimed by some that the churches have not become concerned in making the world a better place but have remained too fundamentalist, and so appeal only to older people. Those under forty are not impressed and "if it were up to them all the pews would be empty."⁴¹ Others say there is too much other activity on Sunday to have time for church services, that if services were held only on special occasions they would be well attended, but every Sunday is too much. Finally the complaint is voiced that more can be learned about helping people in meetings than in church. If these responses are analyzed it is found that Palmerstonians prefer their church, or the church they used to attend, to concentrate on humanitarianism and downplay the idea of Devine Worship. According to Mr. Shearman of Palmerston United, "they want a visible clergy who will open civic events, bless community projects, and preside at their personal landmarks of baptism, marriage and death."⁴² Mr. Dowdles of Knox Presbyterian agrees that his flock needs more sprirtual orientation. Mr. Fuller, Vicar of St. Paul's Anglican Church feels his parishoners, "have a spirituality

⁴¹ Robert McEachern, private interview, October 1, 1979.

⁴² Mr. John Shearman, private interview, October 10, 1979.

that is uplifting."⁴³ He is alone among the clergy in this feeling, although Fr. Mazerous of St. Mary Immaculate "thinks his parish is pretty good spiritually."⁴⁴

One of the things of which Palmerstonians make mention most often is their non-conforming voting record in provincial and dominion elections. It is claimed that if Ontario has a liberal government, Palmerston sends a conservative to Toronto, and if Ontario is under the conservatives, Palmerston sends a liberal to represent them. It is further claimed that this holds true for federal elections as well. The election held for the Dominion in February 1980 bears this out as Canada voted in a liberal government and Palmerston helped to return Conservative Perrin Beatty to Ottawa. In the 1978 elections in Ontario which returned a conservative majority, Palmerston sent liberal Robert McKessock to Toronto.⁴⁵

⁴³ Mr. Douglas Fuller, private interview, October 10, 1979.

⁴⁴ Fr. Andrew Mazerous, private interview, August 19, 1978.

⁴⁵ Some of the ridings (voting districts) in Ontario have been realigned eight times in the past forty years and Palmerston has been a part of five different ridings. They have been a part of Grey Riding since 1976. Approximately ninety-two percent of the time Palmerston has had a representative of a different political party than the government majority at Toronto, and eighty-eight percent of the time at Ottawa, according to information in the files of the Palmerston Parliamentary Members at Toronto and Ottawa.

The citizens of Palmerston have always wanted to keep the town small yet they realize it must be kept progressive or it will cease to be a viable community. Mayor Askett probably speaks for the majority of Palmerstonians when he cites the absolute necessity of getting small industry to settle in Palmerston. He and the council reject the idea of the town as a commuter-retiree center. He points out that the tax base falls too heavily on home owners as a result of Palmerston's lack of industry.

The introduction of such industry will not be accomplished easily because of two factors: due to the sewage disposal problem only a dry industry, such as an assembly plant of some type, can be supported, and the town does not have available land. The land necessary to guarantee a building permit to any interested industry must be owned by the town. At the present time Palmerston can only negotiate with a prospective industry, but without the land in hand it can give no iron-clad guarantee of a building permit.⁴⁶ Therefore Askett is actively promoting the purchase of land by the town, with the long-range object of bringing industry to Palmerston. He must convince the townspeople to authorize the purchase of such land. Palmerstonians are, for

⁴⁶ The sewage disposal problem Palmerston has in common with many other small towns, but the land problem is less common.

the most part, convinced of the vital need for industry, but are slower to accept the need of the town to purchase land. This is most certainly due to the fear of financial over-extension and the rise in taxes which would follow.

Mayor Askett feels that there will indeed be a large initial outlay but that this will be repaid easily when industry comes to Palmerston. He feels his position is to convince the people of this fact. He and the entire council are engaging in a campaign to present the proposition of land purchase to the town. ⁴⁷

Former councils also discussed this situation and the solution to it as outlined by Mayor Askett, but action was never taken and finally even discussion ceased. The councils of the mid and late seventies turned to the promotion of Palmerston as a dormitory town or retirement community, as evidenced by the minutes of those councils. As Mayor Askett pointed out, the commuters, due to gasoline prices, are an unknown quantity and retirees do not generate revenue. Therefore Palmerston must rethink its future.

Throughout 1979 and 1980 there has been raging in town

⁴⁷ Ordinarily any matter regarding municipal land purchase is the preserve of the council's Industrial Committee, one of the six standing committees of the council. The other five are Finance, Light and Fire, Property, Public Works, and Police.

a controversy over tax arrears. Palmerstonians had neglected to pay their taxes in large numbers and those who had paid their taxes were irate over the inability of the Town Council to collect those in arrears. The controversy arose over how to make these overdue tax collections. On a percentage basis, Palmerston had outstanding taxes, based on 800 households, of sixty-eight percent. This is extremely high when compared to the six percent of Listowel or the eleven percent of Mount Forest or the national average for small towns of seven percent. Adding fuel to the controversy was the fact that the taxes in Palmerston were raised 16.9 percent, nearly twice the increase of Listowel's tax rise of eight percent, and four times the increase of Harriston's taxes for the years 1979-1980.⁴⁸ The Mayor and Council must deal successfully with this problem before they can hope to persuade Palmerston's inhabitants to authorize any land purchase scheme.

Palmerstonians are a warm and friendly people, quick to open their door to strangers and eager to be of service in every way. They tend to smile easily and their greetings are spontaneous and sincere. They are slow to criticize their

⁴⁸ The above figures are from a report by Councillor Jack Cronesberry submitted to Council, April 10, 1980, in his capacity as Deputy Reeve.

fellow townsmen yet swift to recognize each other's strengths and weaknesses. They are tolerant compassionate and sentimental. Their enthusiasm for Palmerston is quite unrestrained and they are unashamed to show their affection. Yet they are not blind to Palmerston's failings, though frequently bewildered as to the solution to the problems of the town.

Intelligent and social minded, their concern is for the betterment of their town and its people, rather than the larger context of province or dominion. The prevailing attitude seems to be one of apathy where non-local affairs are concerned.

Although they are not regular in church attendance, Palmerstonians exhibit a real sense of justice and charity which appears to be as natural to them as breathing. If there are personal scandals and private dishonor in Palmerston, and obviously there must be, they are left undisclosed.

Somewhat narrow in outlook and often deeply opinionated, Palmerstonians reflect their past. They tend to cling to the past, traditions are terribly important to them, and are retained frequently beyond feasibility. Yet they are eager to accept new concepts and explore new ways. Palmerstonians are a vital, active, forward-looking people, leavened with the experience and principles of the past. ⁴⁹

⁴⁹Generalizations are subject to error, but the above analysis is the result of five months spent in observation.

CONCLUSION

Palmerston never realized the future forecast for it in 1875. The hopes of its early settlers, that it would develop into a power in Ontario, remained unfulfilled. It did attain a certain prominence as the railway hub of western Ontario during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but it was only a reflected importance which vanished with the fading railway. When the railway junction closed, Palmerstonians felt it was a tragedy from which they would never recover. However, the town did continue, and soon the inhabitants realized there were other paths they could take. The railway years are remembered but not regretted.

Although Palmerston found no quick panacea for its problems it managed to adapt and to prosper through diversification. It turned to the field of health, to education, and to its quiet small town image as an ideal place to live, in order to survive. It is encouraging industry to locate in Palmerston for the future.

Although it has broadened its outlook in recent years due to provincial legislation which has drawn the town more into the mainstream of provincial activity, it has never shaken off its pre-occupation with its own local affairs.

Present day Palmerston, while harassed by economic conditions, is a pregressive small town capable of instilling fierce loyalty in its inhabitants.

APPENDIX A

OCCUPATIONS PALMERSTON 1979

Retired	233	Nursing Home Residents	80
Housewives	505	Factory Workers	57
Midwestern	32	Health Fields	40
Municipal	13	Civil Servants (provincial)	21
Students	81	Railway Workers	33
Merchants	21	Sales Clerks	21
Teachers	43	Newspaper Workers	7
Bankers	7	Insurance Agents	10
Mechanics	27	Construction Workers	5
Salesmen	9	Restaurant Employees	17
Laborers	16	Barbers/Hairdressers	10
Electricians	6	Hotel-Motel Workers	18
Secretarial	4	Plumbers	4
Janitors	10	Accountants	5
Carpenters	11	Real Estate Agents	4
Clergymen	6	Stationary Engineers	3
Farmers	3	Livestock Insemination	
Grocers	3	Technicians	3
Painters	3	Other	38
Millers	3	Unknown	24

APPENDIX B

POPULATION STATISTICS

Year	Population	Assessed Acreage	Amount Assessed
1875	1595	125	\$ 43.520
1890	1800	280	132.000
1910	2700	479	450.020
1920	2793	512	1,027.320
1940	1570	649	1,586.480
1960	1614	655	1,650.641
1979	2043	681	1,798.423

POPULATION by SEX

Year	Population	Males	Females
1879	1595	897	698
1979	2043	1024	1019

POPULATION by AGE 1979

0-10 years	301
10-20 years	393
21-35 years	334
36-50 years	289
51-65 years	355
65-over	346
unknown	25
Total	2043

APPENDIX C

Annual Provincial Holidays* And Events In Palmerston

*January 1	New Years Day
March	Nurses Benefit Dance (to provide extra equipment for Palmerston and District Hospital).
*May	Victoria Day (usually the third Monday).
July 1	Dominion Day (Confederation of Canada).
*August	Civic Day (usually the first Monday). Pioneer Days (three days celebrating founding).
*September	Labour Day (first Monday).
*October	Thanksgiving (usually the second Monday). Fall Agricultural Fair
November 11	Hospital Bazaar. Rememberance Day (laying of wreath on cenotath honoring Palmerston's war dead.). Lion's Frolic (sponsored by Lions Club to provide civic extras).
*December	Santa's Parade (usually first Saturday).
25.	Christmas Day
26.	Boxing Day by Mayor's Proclamation
31.	Legion Dance.
*Spring	Good Friday

APPENDIX D

Brief Chronological History Of Palmerston

- 1871 Land sold by Thomas McDowell and William Thompson to Wellington, Grey, and Bruce Railway. Station opened.
- 1875 Incorporation of the town of Palmerston, Minto Township, Wellington County, Ontario, Canada by special Act of Parliament in Toronto.
- 1883 First trade union in Palmerston, The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen #181.
- 1885 Dr. Alexander Stewart opened first Vaccine Farm in Ontario.
- 1899 Farmers' Cooperative opened Palmerston Pork Factory.
- 1903 Palmerston Library built with Carnegie grant.
- 1905 Trunk Sewer Lines laid, the first in a small town in Western Ontario.
- 1908 Hawthorne Hill Telephone Company opened.
- 1909 Palmerston Hospital opened, one of the first private hospitals in Ontario.
- 1914 Post Office built.
- 1923 Canadian National Railway takes over the Grand Trunk Railway.
- 1925 Town takes over hospital by special provincial legislation, making Palmerston one, of only two municipalities in Ontario to operate a hospital.
- 1932 Sewage Treatment Plant opened, the first in a small town in Western Ontario.
- 1941 Palmerston High School dedicated.
- 1947 The Norgan Theatre opened. The worst blizzard on record occurred, paralyzing Palmerston for nine days.
- 1952 "Old 81" was unveiled as civic monument.

- 1954 Car Department, Palmerston station, closed.
- 1958 Freight Sheds, rip track closed.
- 1961 Stores Department, round house closed.
- 1963 Norwell District Secondary School opened by the province, teaching academic subjects and giving technical training.
- 1964 Bell Canada bought out Hawthorne Hill Telephone Company.
- 1966 Midwestern Regional Centre opened.
- 1967 Ontario took over the hospital, now called Palmerston and District Hospital.
- 1971 All passenger service was discontinued and the station was closed.
- 1975 Municipal Hall Complex opened.
- 1978 Arena Complex is dedicated.

APPENDIX E

Organizations

Adults

Women's Christian Temperance Union, founded 1923, 23 members, meets monthly, President: Mrs Earl Askett, purpose: to eliminate liquor and drugs.

Blair Lodge #314 Masonic Order, founded 1874, 130 members, meets monthly, Worshipful Master: James Bullock, purpose: fraternal organization.

Peace Chapter #52 Eastern Star, founded 1904, 100 members, meets monthly, Purpose: Masonic Ladies Auxiliary.

Carry On Girls, Federated Women's Institute, founded 1914, 40 members, meets monthly, President: Mrs. R. Fotheringham, Purpose: for home and country and the betterment of Canada.

Palmerston's Women's Institute, founded 1903, 30 members, President: Mrs. Lester Roloson, meets monthly. Purpose: The betterment of women of Canada.

Palmerston Agricultural Society, founded 1897, 49 members, meets monthly, President: Roy Walter, Purpose: the betterment of agriculture and horticulture.

Rebekkahs, Britannia Lodge #215, founded 1920, 55 members, meets monthly, President: Mrs. Isabelle Johnson, Purpose: to cultivate those charities which heal and soothe and bless.

International Order of Oddfellows, Gordon Lodge, founded 1877, 8 members, still hold charter but inactive since 1956.

Grand Orange Lodge #655 Vimy Ridge Lodge #248, founded 1871, 10 members, no officers, Purpose: to support and promote the Protestant religion. Inactive since 1942 but still hold charter.

Lions Club, founded 1939, 54 members, meets monthly, Purpose: a service club to aid Palmerston. Lions stand for Liberty, Intelligence and Our Nation's Safety.

Canadian Legion #409, founded 1946, 45 members, President: Ralph Morphy, meets monthly, Purpose: social and fraternal.

Palmerston and District Hospital Auxiliary, founded 1967, 27 members, meets monthly, President: Mrs George Mc Arthur, Purpose: to provide extras for hospital.

Palmerston and District Businessmen's Association, weekly meetings, Purpose: to further business in Palmerston.

Canadian Foresters, Palmerston Court #96, founded 1879, 27 members, meets monthly, Purpose: fraternal organization.

Palmerston Snowkings, founded 1968, 120 members, irregular meetings, President: John Neilman, Purpose: sport and rescue operations.

Palmerston Sports Teams:

- Lawn Bowling
- Hockey
- Curling
- Baseball
- Tennis
- Figure Skating

Young People

Girl Guides, 35 girl guides, refounded 1978, Purpose: the good of the girl.

Brownies, 25 Brownies, founded 1934, Purpose: the good of the girl.

Boy Scouts, Troop #401, founded 1912, 45 members, Purpose: for God and Country.

Four H Clubs, founded 1923, 87 members, Purpose: Dairying and domestic skills for boys and girls.

Sports Teams:

Minor Hockey for Boys

Figure Skating for Girls and Boys

Baseball

Football

Curling

APPENDIX F
BIOGRAPHIES
of
PROMINENT PALMERSTONIANS
1870-1980

Bridge, George was born on a farm southwest of Palmerston in 1893. He married Elizabeth Moore in 1914 and had four daughters and three sons. He farmed for forty-five years and then became a farm implement agent. He is a member of the Masons, Lions, United Church and Agricultural Society. Forty years of municipal service include the Palmerston School Board, Wellington County Council, Palmerston Hospital Board and Town Council. He is retired.

Carr, Arthur was born in Sudbury Ontario in 1912. He married Freda Thuel in 1937 and has a daughter and three sons. He came to Palmerston as a journalist in 1934, and became editor-publisher of the Palmerston Observer in 1938. He is a charter member of the Lions Club (resigned) and of St Paul's Anglican Church. He served six terms on Council and was a member of the Norwell District School Board, the Fire and Light Committee, and Town Planning Board. In 1974 he received the coveted "Citizen of the Year Award" of Canada for his dedication to the journalistic profession and community service to his fellowman. Now retired he has a weekly news show on Country Cable TV and is in demand as a public speaker throughout Ontario.

Donaldson, G.Y. was born in 1868 in Stratford, Ontario. In 1888 he married Annie Patton and had three daughters. He came to Palmerston in 1890 as the manager of Scott and Son Bank. Later he was an insurance agent, tax collector and notary public. He was a member of Knox Presbyterian Church and Blair Masonic Lodge. He served on Council from 1903-1905. He was the leader in the purchase of an electric plant for the town and in getting a Carnegie Library grant. He died in 1947.

Dyer, Gladys was born in 1888 in Kent, England. She came to Canada in 1910 and married Richard Dyer, carpenter, in 1911, coming to Palmerston in 1912. After the death of her husband she trained as a nurse and served at Palmerston Hospital until 1945. After retirement from

nursing, she became librarian at the Palmerston Library. She had two sons and one daughter. Son John is on Council in 1979. Now 92 she lives in a Palmerston Nursing home.

Edmunds, Dorothy was born in Toronto, coming to Palmerston with her husband, Arthur, in 1948. She has two sons and two daughters. She has served as President of the Palmerston Hospital Auxiliary, Chairman of District 3 of the Provincial Hospital Auxiliary Association and President of the Ontario Hospital Association. She is a member of the Hospital Board, Girl Guides, Eastern Star, Norgan Theatre Board, and the United Church. She was Chairman of the Palmerston Centennial.

Edwards, J. Fred was Palmerston born in 1902. He married Thora McCartney in 1925 and had one daughter. He was a member of the Canadian Legion, Blair Lodge, the I.O.O.F., and the Orange Lodge. A druggist in Palmerston, he served as MPP from Perth from 1945 to 1967. He was responsible for locating Midwestern Regional Centre in Palmerston. He died in 1977.

Grey, E.F. was born in Huron County in 1911. He married Eilene Seigner in 1940 and has two sons. He came to Palmerston in 1934 as a teacher, serving as principal of Norwell District Secondary School from 1940 to 1973. He is a member of the Masons, Lions, and the United Church. He has been active on civic committees and was an educational leader. Now retired he devotes his time to fishing and civic activity.

Henderson, Kenneth was born in Wallace Township in 1914. He married Elsie Thackeray in 1943 and has a son and daughter. He is a member of the United Church, Blair Lodge, Lions Club and Canadian Legion. He has also served on the school board. As an officer in the Lions and Masons he has been instrumental in directing these organizations toward needed civic projects.

Johnston, Elizabeth was born in Palmerston and married her husband, Fred, in 1948. She is a member of Palmerston United Church, the Library Board, and the Hospital Auxiliary. She has taught for forty years in the Palmerston Primary School. She was chairman of the Invitations

Committee for the Palmerston Centennial. Now retired, she is remembered by several generations of Palmerstonians as a strict disciplinarian.

Logan, Louella was born in York County and came to Palmerston after marrying her husband, Robert, a teacher at Norwell District Secondary School. She has three daughters and a son. She served on Council for ten years and was the first woman deputy Reeve (1973) and first woman Reeve (1975). She was chairman of the Norgan Theatre Board and the Palmerston Finance Committee. Now retired from politics, she is active in civic affairs as a volunteer.

McEwing, Hugh was born in Inverness, Scotland, in 1839. He married Ann Watt and had one son. Later he married Ellen Moore and had two sons and a daughter. Coming to Palmerston in 1871 he was one of the leading citizens of the town in its early years. He owned a feed store as well as considerable property in town. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church, I.O.O.F., Orange Lodge, Blair Masonic Lodge, and Canadian Foresters. He served four terms on Council and was the second Mayor and the second Reeve of Palmerston. He died in 1898.

McDowell, Thomas was born in Ireland in 1827. He came to Wallace County in 1852, married Sara Thompson and had six daughters and four sons. He was at various times a stone cutter, farmer, and factory owner. He sold the original land, Lot 19, to the Wellington, Grey, and Bruce Railway for the station at Palmerston. He headed the committee which sought incorporation for the town in 1875 and served as its first Mayor. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church, I.O.O.F., Orange Lodge, and Blair Lodge. He died in 1886.

McLachlin, Eldon was born in Mount Forest, Ontario, in 1928. He was married to Edna Walker in 1951 and has one son. He is a member of the Lions, Blair Lodge, Canadian Legion, Western Ontario Athletic Association and United Church. Active in coaching minor league hockey and softball in Palmerston, he received the Mike Weichel Trophy as contributing most to minor hockey in 1973. He was a member of the school board for seven years.

Oliver, John was born in Perth County in 1844. In 1871 he married Agnes Davidson and had two sons and three daughters. He came to Palmerston around 1880 and opened a

farm implement store, acting as an insurance and real estate agent on the side. He invested heavily in the industry of Palmerston. From 1906-1923 he served as Postmaster. He was a member of Knox Presbyterian Church, 100F, Orange Lodge, Blair Lodge and Canadian Foresters. He died in 1923.

Ranton, Adam was born in Ireland in 1826, coming to the Palmerston area in 1847 to farm in Wallace Township. He married Mary Browne in 1848 and had nine children. He was a member of the Methodist Church, Blair Lodge, I.O.O.F., and the Orange Lodge. He served one term on Council, refusing to run again as he preferred to be active in civic affairs as a non-political leader. He died in 1889.

Riddle, John Rutherford was born in 1899 in Toronto. In 1926 he married Elma Hembly and had two daughters and one son. He was the leading physician in Palmerston for many years. Active in civic affairs, he served on the Norgan Theatre Board, the Norwell District Secondary School Board, and the Hospital Board. It was due to his efforts that the Provincial Hospital was located in Palmerston. He was a member of the Canadian Foresters, Lions, Blair Lodge, Eastern Star, and Knox Presbyterian Church. He died in 1978.

Seidler, Joy Dyer was born in Palmerston. She married Erik Seidler in 1949. A registered nurse, she became Director of Nursing at Palmerston District Hospital in 1965. She served as a Lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Army Corps during World War II. She is a member of the United Church and Registered Nurses Association of Ontario. She is the daughter of Gladys Dyer.

Stewart, Alexander was born in Toronto in 1845. He married Sophie Spencer in 1875 and had two sons and four daughters, one of whom is still living in a Toronto Nursing Home. He was one of Palmerston's early doctors. He was a member of the I.O.O.F., Blair Lodge, Orange Lodge and the Canadian College of Surgeons. He served on Council from 1875-1884. He is distinguished for having established the first Vaccine Farm in Ontario in 1885. He died in 1911.

Thompson, William was born in Devon, England in 1840. He came to Perth County and married Henrietta McDowell

in 1862. Disliking farming, he became a hotel manager in Toronto. He used his profits from Management to invest in land in Wallace Township. He became manager of the Queen's Hotel in Palmerston in 1871. Active in civic affairs, he served four terms on Council as Reine. He was a member of the Methodist Church, I.O.O.F., Blair Lodge, Orange Lodge, and Canadian Foresters. He died in 1892.

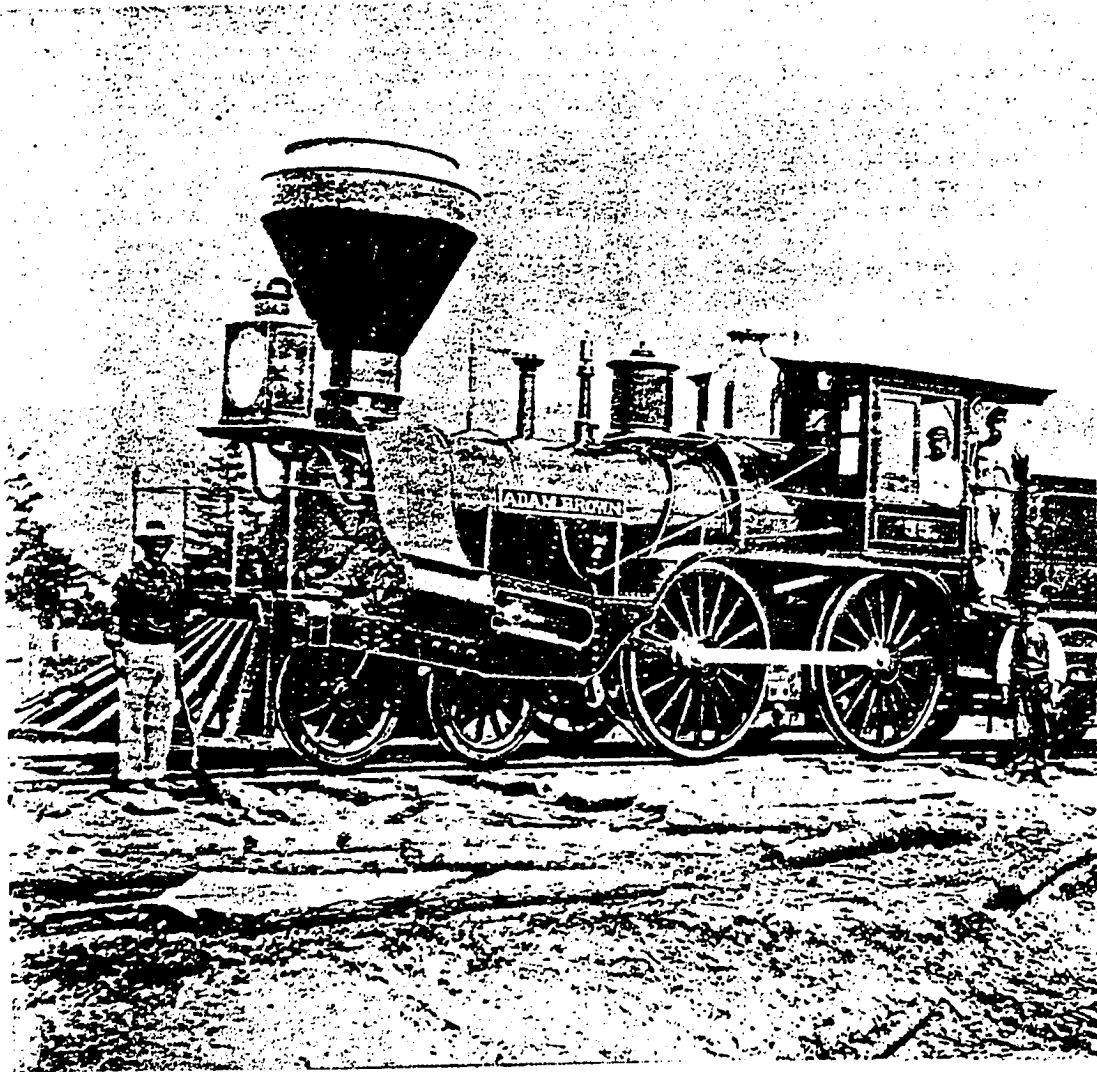
Wald, Samuel was born in Czechoslovakia in 1899 and came to Palmerston in 1924. In 1928 he married Esther Zupnik and had three daughters. He is a member of the Lions, Eastern Star, and Blair Lodge. He was the only Jewish resident of Palmerston for thirty years. A poultry merchant he was active in civic affairs serving on Council and as Mayor for eight years. He is now retired.

White, Walter was born in Toronto in 1866. He married Ruth Stuart in 1895 and had three daughters and one son. He was a member of the Agricultural Society, Blair Lodge, Eastern Star, and the United Church. He was on Council for several years and served as Mayor twice. He was the Assistant Superintendent of Palmerston Railway station. He was influential in acquiring a skating arena and a town park for Palmerston. Always active in civic affairs, his services were so valued the town named White's Road for him. He died in 1949.

Wooldridge, Major was born in England in 1846. He married Marion Callon in 1870 and came to Palmerston in 1872. He had seven sons and three daughters. He was a member of the I.O.O.F., the Orange Lodge, Blair Lodge, and Knox Presbyterian Church. He was active in all civic affairs serving three terms on Council. A factory owner and builder, he constructed most of the businesses and homes in early Palmerston. He died in 1910.

Wright, George A. was born in Wellington County in 1908. He married Myrtle Wetzel in 1929 and had two daughters. He was a member of the Lions, Blair Lodge, Wellington County Junior Farmers and the United Church. A merchant, he devoted much of his time to Palmerston serving as Fire Chief from 1943 to 1952, Council member from 1953 to 1963 and Mayor from 1968 to 1978. He was elected unopposed and by simple acclamation during his terms as Mayor. He is retired.

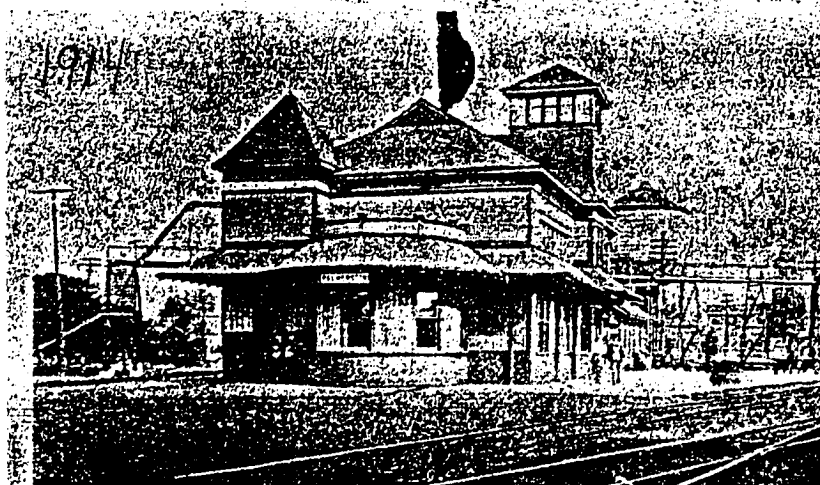
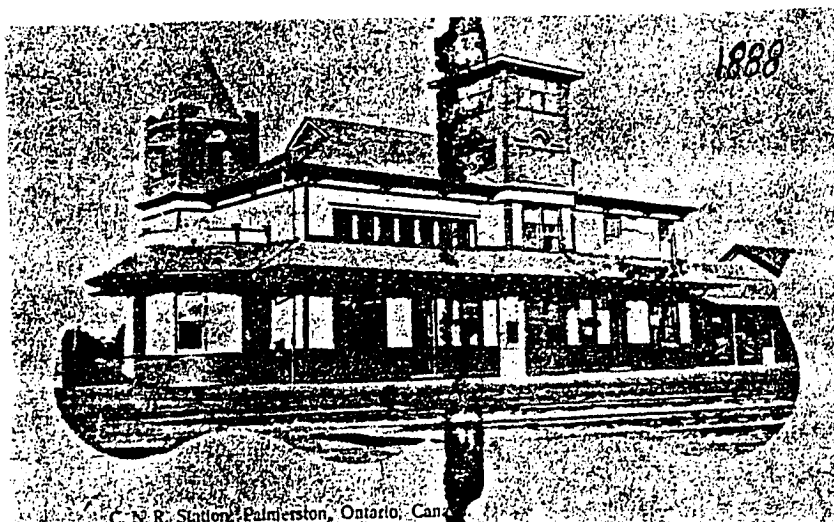
APPENDIX G
THE ADAM BROWN



This ceremonial locomotive was the first one into each new station of the Wellington, Grey and Bruce Railway.

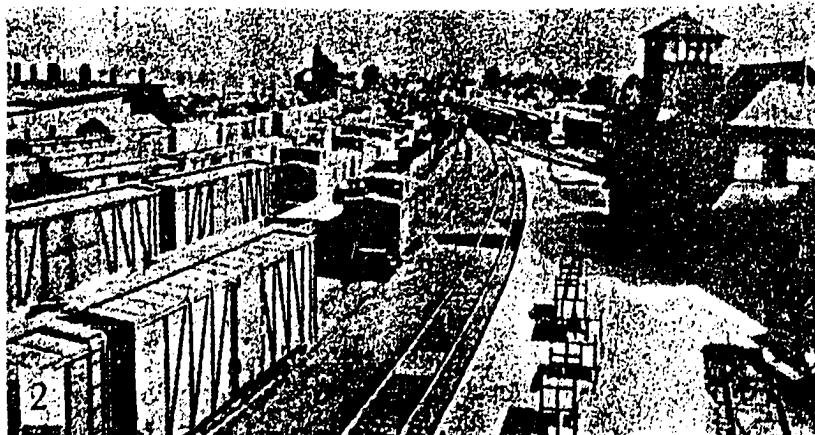
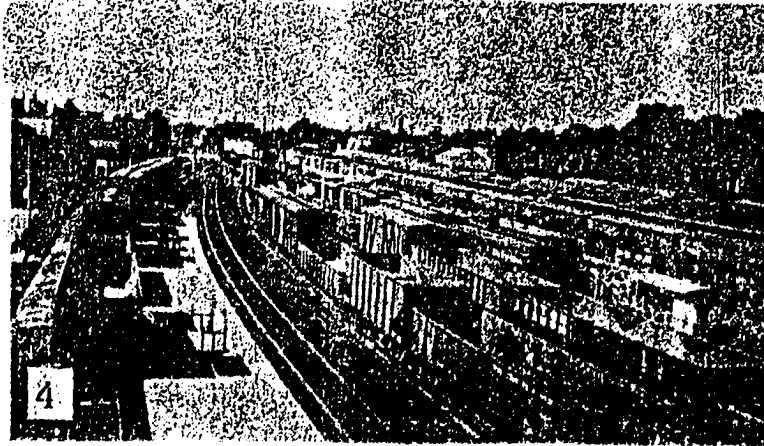
APPENDIX H

PALMERSTON RAILWAY STATION



1935

APPENDIX I
PALMERSTON FREIGHT YARDS



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