

TWENTY THIRD ANNUAL REPORT

of the

WATERLOO HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

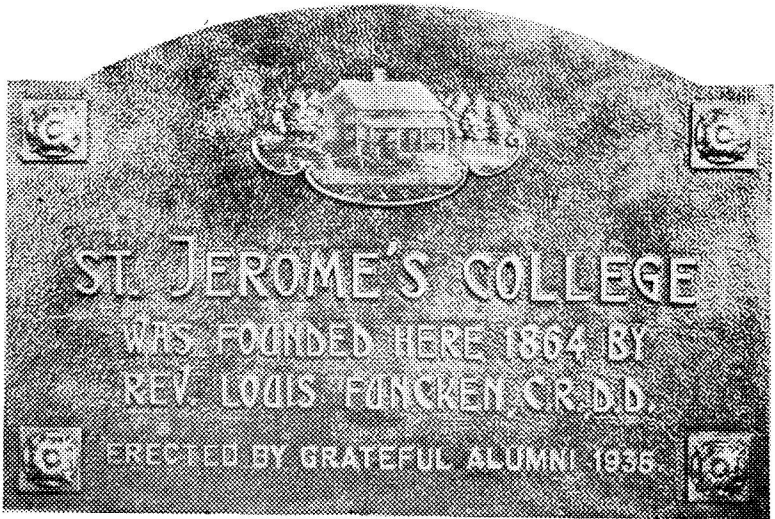


NINETEEN THIRTY-FIVE

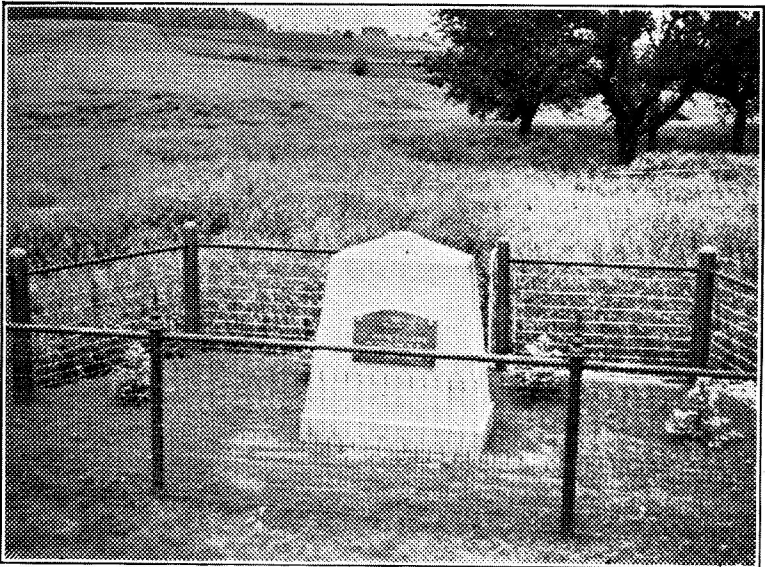
TWENTY THIRD ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
**WATERLOO HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**
1935



KITCHENER, ONT.
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY
April 1938.



Bronze Plaque



Picture of Memorial

Above: Bronze Plaque on Memorial at St. Agatha with inscription to commemorate founding of St. Jerome's College. The picture of the log cabin is an exact replica of the original building.

Below: Cement Memorial, six feet high, erected on site of first college, unveiled July 16, 1935, in connection with the reunion of St. Jerome's Alumni.

C O U N C I L

1935

President

D. N. PANABAKER

Vice-President

H. W. BROWN, B.A.

Secretary-Treasurer

P. FISHER

Local Vice-Presidents

KITCHENER—C. W. CRESSMAN

GALT—J. STAUFFER

PRESTON—A. GROH

HESPELER—W. KEFFER

ELMIRA—G. KLINCK

NEW HAMBURG—A. R. G. SMITH

ST. JACOBS—W. W. SNIDER

AYR—MISS E. D. WATSON

Members of the Council

W. J. MOTZ, W. H. BREITHAUP, W. V. UTTLEY,

MISS B. M. DUNHAM, B.A.

Museum and Publication Committee

W. H. BREITHAUP, W. J. MOTZ,

MISS B. M. DUNHAM, B.A.

C O N T E N T S

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Secretary Treasurer's Report..... | 159 |
| President's Address..... | 160 |
| Indian Trails to Highways. | |
| Early History of Elora..... | 164 |
| R. E. Mills, Elora. | |
| Huron Road..... | 168 |
| W. H. Breithaupt. | |
| The St. Agatha Memorial..... | 175 |
| Biography: | |
| John R. Connon..... | 177 |
| Jacob G. Stroh..... | 180 |
| A. J. Peterson..... | 182 |
| Illustrations: | |
| St. Agatha Memorial..... | <i>Frontispiece</i> |
| John R. Connon..... | Facing Page 177 |

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

The 23rd annual meeting of the Waterloo Historical Society was held in the Assembly Hall of the Galt Public Library on Friday evening, November 1st, 1935. The President, Mr. D. N. Panabaker, occupied the Chair. In his address the President reviewed the early history of the Town of Hespeler as it related to the early plan of the town.

Mr. Louis Blake Duff, Welland, gave a very interesting address on "The Lost Village of St. John" and illustrated his remarks by a series of lantern slides. No manuscript of the address being available the same has not been printed for the report.

Elsewhere in this report appears a list of the officers of the Society for 1936.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 1935

Receipts:

| | |
|--|----------|
| Balance on hand at Dec. 31, 1935 | \$299.00 |
| Members' Fees | \$ 49.00 |
| Sales | 15.60 |
| Bank Interest | 4.38 |
| Grants | 145.00 |
| | 213.98 |
| | \$512.98 |

Disbursements:

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Printing | \$278.52 |
| Cases and repairs | 44.99 |
| Postage | 17.06 |
| Janitor | 12.00 |
| Binding | 24.68 |
| Sundries | 40.00 |
| | 417.25 |
| Balance | \$95.73 |

Audited and found correct.

E. HERNER, Auditor.

P. FISHER, Secretary-Treasurer.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS,
D. N. Panabaker

INDIAN TRAILS—BRIDLE PATHS—GRAVEL ROADS
CONCRETE HIGHWAYS IN WATERLOO COUNTY

I think one would almost give 'a right arm' for the privilege of traversing an old Indian Trail, if there were one left to us hereabouts. I do not know of a Waterloo County map which was made with sufficient care to even trace the old Indian trails in the district.

On the original survey map of our neighboring township, Puslinch, made about one hundred years ago, is found the tracing of an Indian trail commencing not far from what is called on that map "Panabaker's Clearing" in the east limits of Waterloo township and following roughly the course (down stream) of the outlet of Puslinch Lake and then up the larger stream—The Speed River, north-easterly in Wellington County to a point on the Brock Road leading from Guelph to Dundas.

Old Puslinch men with whom I have conversed have told me that they were familiar with this old Indian trail in their youth and from them I received a fairly clear description of its location.

I believe that the surveyors themselves made use of this trail and it is said that when the Brock Road was cut through the forest, this Indian trail formed a starting point and was regularly used by the men from this part of the country who joined in the work of constructing that military thoroughfare named after General Brock.

It is interesting to note, that when Waterloo, Wellington and other adjoining counties were finally formed, there was a balance of unpaid indebtedness outstanding against this Brock Road which had to be apportioned among the newly-formed counties as a liability which they had respectively to assume and liquidate in later years.

About fifty years ago, the distinguished American Naturalist, the late John Burroughs, in his sublimely descriptive style, wrote "FRESH FIELDS" telling of his visit to Great Britain and Europe and of the interesting foot paths in the Old Country, which though traversing miles and miles of privately owned property, were in reality

public walks, frequented by youths and maidens as "Lovers' Lanes" as well as by the citizenship generally in travelling from place to place.

Undoubtedly these Old Country lanes survived from the days of Ancient Britain, and how unfortunate it is that here, in our country we have practically lost trace of the Aborigines' trails, which later became "bridle paths" by which our pioneer settlers found their way into the country and over which they for some years carried their wheat to the distant grist mill and returned with sacks of meal and such other few commodities which they could procure by trade for their grain in the small stores located in the hamlet.

Bridle paths in American literature have been the subject of poems and writings much as have the foot-paths of old England and its lanes prompted its poets from the time of Shakespeare on. Milton sang the praises of "Arched walks of twilight groves."

While no doubt the roads over which our pioneers came to this country were in many sections little more than bridle paths, the settlers from Pennsylvania were familiar with better types of gravel roads and after reaching Waterloo they were not long in getting their country roads in the new settlement, improved by surfacing them with gravel.

John Burroughs also told of his finding in England and Scotland very little surface rock or stone and he believed it all to have been used in construction of houses and other buildings, bridges and magnificent roadways which he found there and he remarked upon the soft nature of the native rock, stating that it would be possible to destroy the arch keys in many of the old stone bridges of England with a pocket knife.

The hardness of our rock in this country, may have deterred our earlier road builders from more general use of it in road building here and I do not know of a single example of a stone arch bridge in this part of Ontario.

Our Waterloo County gravel roads were for almost a hundred years regarded as the "last word," although I recall that the road from Galt to Dundas was called a stone road, being built, as I suppose, with large stone as a road bed and surfaced with gravel and small stones.

These gravel roads were certainly a vast improvement on the mud or earth roads so prevalent up to fairly recent years in many parts of Ontario.

I recall very clearly the difference in a bicycle journey which I made over the clay road from Niagara to Ridgeway, as compared with one from Goderich down the Huron Road to New Hamburg and on through this county to Hespeler, all then surfaced with gravel. This was about 40 years ago.

When in England and Ireland about thirty years ago I saw, in some parts, very crude implements used in road repairs, being simply a sort of one-horse scuffler operated by a couple of men, but roads on which they were employed, were in wonderful condition, although rather narrow as compared with our 66-foot road allowances here. However there were also then being employed in other sections large road rollers operated with steam engines, forerunners of the modern heavy machinery now in use hereabouts, on our permanent type of roads.

It is of interest to note, that Waterloo County, was the first to take advantage of the Ontario Provincial-County road building system, which came into being July 15th., 1918 by the issuance from the Ontario Department of Public Highways, of its regulations, providing for a Provincial subsidy of 60% of the cost of roads built under its specifications, subject to the Department's approval of the road as coming under the classification of a Main County Highway.

Omitting the details of the discussions which took place early the following year, in this county, as to the desirability of building permanent types of road under this 60% subsidy from the Province, it is sufficient to indicate the time of transition from the idea of gravel roads for main highways to that of concrete construction.

Credit must be given to the Reeve of Woolwich, for definite action in beginning concrete road building in this county. Reeve Solomon Koch, then in office in Woolwich Township, had the courage of his convictions that gravel roads were no longer suitable for main highways.

Contrary to the majority of the road and bridge committees of the county, he blazed the trail and backed up the advice of the writer, then County Warden, that a

trial should be made of the more permanent type of construction on our main county roads.

After the formalities had been completed, it was on August 18th, 1919, that actual work of laying the concrete on a country road in Waterloo County commenced. A small section of the same road, in the village of St. Jacobs, had been put down a few years earlier under a five-year guarantee.

However this first work under the 60% subsidy plan, covered about 1½ miles, from the G.T.R. Railway crossing north of St. Jacobs, southerly to the village limits.

The contract was given to Lichty Brothers and the details of the finished work, were as found at the foot of this article. The new road was officially opened October 21st, 1919, by officials of the County Council and Township of Woolwich, and other representative citizens, occupying 12 automobiles, who passed over the concrete roadway, its entire length, and afterwards assembled at Welker's Hall, in St. Jacobs where were made appropriate speeches of congratulation to Woolwich and its enterprising Reeve and Council, for this first step in improved highway building in the county.

This official opening day was very wet, and after almost a 24-hour rain, the value of such a type of road was well demonstrated to those present who first saw it under such unfavorable weather conditions.

Thus is briefly detailed the transition of pathways in this county, from Indian trails to concrete highways.

The original small section of concrete roadway in St. Jacobs Village, was laid at a cost of about \$1.43 per square yard.

The 1½-mile section was of 16-foot width, concrete content being 1 part Portland cement to 4 parts of gravel and laid down seven inches in depth.

PROVINCIAL COUNTY ROAD, NUMBER 75

From St. Jacobs North to Railway Crossing.

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Concrete road 10,317 7-9 sq. yds at \$1.87 per square yard | \$19,294.60 |
| Grading, filling and rolling | 1,261.41 |
| Ritter culvert | 506.40 |

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Schmidt Culvert | 354.75 |
| Frey Bridge | 1,138.00 |
| Concrete tile | 83.85 |
| Fuel for road roller | 50.83 |
| Reinforcing for culverts, and freight | 451.00 |
| | <hr/> |
| Total cost | \$23,140.84 |

■

ELORA

If friends should forsake me and fortune depart
 Or love fly and leave a great void in my heart,
 O, then, in my sorrow, away would I flee,
 And hide my misfortune, Elora, in thee;
 Away from the world with its falsehood and pride,
 In yon lonely cot where the smooth waters glide,
 I'd commune with nature till death set me free,
 And rest then, Elora, forever in thee.

So wrote the poet, Alexander McLachlin, in the concluding verse of a poem headed "Elora," and it is a sentiment that has echoed and re-echoed in the hearts of many old residents, whose last wish was that their mortal remains might be carried back, to mingle with kindred dust in God's Acre, the community burying ground, on the west bank of the Irvine River, overlooking the Village of Elora. It is now (1935) a village of about 1,200 inhabitants, in area 365 acres, the smallest in Wellington County, and amongst the villages, (if we except Fergus, which though it has about 2,700 inhabitants, still prudently clings to the status of a village) it has the largest population. It is situated at the junction of the Grand and Irvine Rivers, and is famous for the beauty and grandeur of its river gorges, the scenery attracting thousands of tourists every year.

In early days the present site of Elora was known as the "Falls on the Grand River." Its history, so far as the white man is concerned, commences in the year 1817. On December 1st of that year there arrived at "The Falls" Roswell Matthews and his two elder sons, Anson and Abram. The mother and younger members of the family

had been left at the hospitable home of Captain Thomas Smith, on the east bank of the Grand River, near the confluence of the Grand and Conestoga Rivers. They came in the next spring, after a house had been erected and a small clearing made. They were then 11 miles from the nearest neighbor. Roswell Matthews was a native of Vermont, United States, and had come to Upper Canada prior to the war of 1812. He was a skilled woodworker and had received strong inducements from Col. Thomas Clark, of Burlington or Niagara, who then owned what is now a part of the Township of Nichol, to build a mill for him at the Falls on the Grand River. Shortly after Matthews' arrival, however, another mill was projected, about two miles down stream, by Major-General Pilkington, or his representative, and Col. Clark abandoned his scheme. Matthews then engaged to build this mill dam on the lower site, but failed to build one strong enough to withstand the heavy spring freshets. The family endured great privations for about 9½ years, then abandoned their holding and moved to Guelph, where the father met with an accident which resulted in his death, and he was laid away in the first grave in what is now the Royal City. Shortly after, the family scattered. The mother, however, lived to be over 93 years of age, and died at the home of a daughter, Mrs. Thomas Townsend, Woodstock, in November of 1870. The area first cleared in what is now Elora was on the east side of the Grand River. There is a house now on almost if not the same site, at the corner of High and Walnut streets, described on the local assessment roll as Lot 8, Walnut street, and occupied by Miss K. Reinhart. From a historic standpoint it is one of the most interesting spots in Wellington county. After the Matthews family abandoned this cabin and clearing, the house seems to have been used from time to time by Indians or others passing up the river.

The man who really founded Elora and gave it its name was Captain William Gilkison. He was born at Irvine, Ayrshire, Scotland, on March 9th, 1777. On leaving school, following the example of other members of the family, he took to the sea. In those days of international strife, he was twice a prisoner of the French, once for about a year. He managed, however, to escape on both occasions. He arrived in New York in 1796, with letters of introduction to John Jacob Astor, head of the Northwest Fur Company. Astor placed him in charge of a

schooner on Lake Erie, and for the next six years he sailed between Fort Erie and the Company's warehouse nearly opposite Detroit. In 1803 Captain Gilkison married Isabella Grant, daughter of Commodore Grant, who was in command of all the British shipping on the lakes. He assisted in the management of his father-in-law's extensive property interests in Michigan and in different parts of Ontario. In his will appears this statement: "I built the first house in Prescott in 1811; and now, in 1832, the first in Elora." But this is anticipating our story. In the war of 1812-14, Captain Gilkison was an Assistant Quartermaster-General, and at the close of the war he returned to Scotland, to provide for the education of his sons.

In 1828, he suffered a great loss by the death of his beloved wife, and in March, 1832, he sailed again for America. He purchased a farm near Brantford, which he named "Oak Bank," and which is now included in the area of that city. On September 4th, 1832, he bought from the heirs of the Rev. Robert Addison their half of the Township of Nichol—the southwest half—a strip of land 12 miles long and half the width of the township. It comprised about 13,816 acres, for which he paid 7 shillings and 6 pence per acre. Here he had a village surveyed, in which was the house and clearing, the former home of Roswell Matthews and his family. Here it should be said to Captain Gilkison's everlasting honor, that though he was under no legal compulsion to do so, he located and compensated Mrs. Matthews and family for the improvements they had made. Captain Gilkison called his new village, "Elora," after a ship commanded by his brother, Captain John Gilkison, the ship being in the India trade, sailing to and from Bombay. It is near Bombay where the famous "Caves of Ellora" are situated, where are temples carved out of the solid rock, and from this place, in turn, the ship had derived its name. In view of the rocky ravines and caves at the village, the name was peculiarly appropriate. The Irvine river, flowing into the Grand at this point, is named after Captain Gilkison's native place, Irvine, in Scotland. The name, "Ellora," as locally used, first appeared on a map which bears the date, Nov. 10, 1832.

Captain Gilkison arranged for the building of a store at the new village, and sent Simon C. Fraser there with a stock of goods. The store was located on a property now owned by Mrs. Webster, opposite the Armory Hall, on the east bank of the Grand River.

Unfortunately for the new settlement, its founder died very suddenly. While returning from Hamilton, where he had been purchasing goods for the store at Elora, he stopped at the Tuscarora Parsonage near Brantford, and spent the night. Next morning, when about to resume his journey, he was stricken with paralysis, and died, April 23, 1833, aged 56 years. He was buried alongside the old Mohawk Indian church, at Brantford. His son, David Gilkison, lived for a short time at Elora, while settling his father's estate. Gilkison street, a short street leading from the Armory Hall property to the river, is the only tangible remembrance which remains to pay tribute to the founder of the village, who had glorious visions of its future, and had he been spared a few years longer, would doubtless have done much to help realize them.

Another representative of the Gilkison Estate at Elora was Andrew Geddes, a Crown Lands Agent, after whom Geddes street, one of the main thoroughfares, is named, while the other branch of the street, Metcalfe, derives its name from Lord Metcalfe, to whom Geddes owed his appointment.

Not till 1842 did Elora revive from the depression into which the death of Captain Gilkison had plunged it. Then Charles Allan and a number of associates built mills at the Falls, and opened a store on the north or westerly bank of the Grand River. Among those allied with Charles Allan and deserving of mention, were James Ross, Arthur Ross, Alexander Watt and David Henderson. Allan later became a Member of Parliament, died very suddenly at Hamilton, and was buried in St. Andrew's churchyard, at Fergus, where he had lived previously to coming to Elora.

About this time, also, the road to Southampton was built, and Elora prospered because of the trade which came through it from the great northern district. However, on July 1st, 1870, the Wellington, Grey and Bruce Railway was opened, from Guelph to Elora, and a few years later extended through to Lake Huron, cutting off a good deal of this trade. The Credit Valley Railway, later taken over by the C.P.R. came in 1880, its terminus being at Elora. A good deal of hard work had been done to secure it, and it was hailed as a boon, making Elora a railway competing point, with two outlets to Toronto, the heart of the province.

In 1858, Elora was incorporated as a village. The first council was composed of David Foote, Chairman (or Reeve); John Godfrey, John Mundell, Charles Clarke, and John Potter, Councillors. David Foote was the first representative in the County Council, after Elora's incorporation.

The oldest house now standing in Elora was built in the winter of 1833-34. It is on the east side of the Grand River, and was long the home of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander McLean. It was Elora's first Post Office. Two other buildings, not far from it, are deserving of special mention, and both are in use as dwelling houses. One is the home of Mr. and Mrs. P. Kirvan, at the corner of Woolwich and Victoria Streets, officially described as Lots 5 and 6, Woolwich street. It was the first Methodist Church in the village. Not far from it is a long frame dwelling, once the Boys' School. On the west or north side of the river, the oldest house was built in 1843, by Charles Allan, and is still used by one of his descendants.

Much more could be told, but lack of space forbids. Those who desire to know more of the story are referred to John R. Connon's "Elora," and to "Sixty Years in Upper Canada," from the pen of Col. Charles Clarke, one of Elora's first Councillors, Colonel of the 30th Wellington Rifles, Member of the Ontario Legislature, later its Speaker, and then Clerk of the Assembly. The latter book, wider in its scope, gives a good picture of the life of Old Ontario, socially, politically and otherwise, and also portrays some of the author's local experiences in the early days.

Elora, Nov. 12, 1935

RICHARD E. MILLS.



THE HURON ROAD

The Canada Company was organized in London in 1824, largely through the efforts of John Galt, traveler, novelist and man of affairs. The purpose of the Company was colonization in Upper Canada, the acquiring of land from the Canadian Government and selling in suitable parcels to settlers to be drawn mainly from the old country, England, Scotland and Ireland. In

December 1826 Sir Peregrine Maitland, Lieut.-Governor, issued a proclamation authorizing the Canada Company to commence operations in Upper Canada.

John Galt was born in Ayrshire in Scotland in 1779, and received his early education in Irvine, his native place, and in Greenock. In 1804 he went to London. He tried business, also law, without success. A British firm sent him to the Mediterranean on commercial investigations and he also travelled largely on the Continent. Returning to London he came into notice as a writer, and from 1820 on as a novelist. In 1826 he first came to America as secretary and chief local officer of the Canada Company. In 1827 he founded Guelph, long the headquarters of the Company. In 1829, after quitting the service of the Company he returned to England and fully resumed his occupation as a writer. Incidentally there is to be said that the municipality of Galt, not in Canada Company Lands, was so named in honor of his school friend, John Galt, by the Hon. William Dickson, proprietor of Block 1 Grand River Indian Lands, later the townships of North and South Dumfries.

While there were holdings in other parts of the province the main bloc of the Canada Company's lands was a triangular area, known as the Huron Tract, with truncated apex at the westerly limit of Wilmot township and large base extending about 60 miles along Lake Huron, the north and south extremities respectively being Colborne township in Huron and Bosanquet in Lambton County, the whole containing over a million acres. Two comparatively narrow strips extended across Wilmot township—nothing in Waterloo township which had long before passed to other owners—and most of the township of Guelph was included. Guelph, the administration centre, and Goderich, lake port, at east and west extremities of the Company's lands, were from the beginning the principal places.

The lands of the Canada Company were a vast tract of virgin forest and swamp. There were the rivers, which could more or less be traversed by canoe, and some Indian trails, but no other facilities of communication. Contrary to his associates, who held that settlers should come in first, Galt advocated roads as a necessary means of access. He early planned a road from Guelph to Goderich, thus connecting the two principal places of the Company

and traversing the land from its eastern extremity to the lake front. One difficulty was that the Company did not want to spend much money for this purpose, nor in general.

In his autobiography John Galt says: "Of one thing at this time (1828) I do not hesitate to say I was proud, and with good reason, too. I caused a road to be opened through the forest of the Huron Tract, nearly 100 miles in length, by which an overland communication was established, for the first time, between the two great lakes, Huron and Ontario. The scheme was carried into effect by Mr. Pryor. All the woodmen that could be assembled from the settlers to be employed, an explorer of the line to go at their head, then two surveyors with compasses, after them a band of blazers to mark the trees in the line, then the woodmen to fell the trees, the rear brought up with wagons with provisions. In this order they proceeded cutting their way through the forest until they reached Lake Huron, then turned back to clear off the fallen timber.

"For this undertaking I was only allowed £3,000., a sum prodigiously inadequate and therefore the work was imperfectly accomplished; but I paid part in money and part in land at a certain price. The cost was nearly £5,000., there was upwards of £1,900. profit by sale of land. One morning 40 men were afflicted with ague. The directors did not allow hiring of a doctor. I ordered a surgeon to be employed as clerk and gave him compensation for his skill."

Absolom Shade, member for Galt, said in the Upper Canada Legislature (1831) that the Canada Company had paid £43. per mile for cutting and clearing out a road one chain in width from Wilmot township to Goderich; that the tender for the same work at £40. had been rejected because the person tendering had refused to receive three quarter payment in land and that the person doing the work had accepted that condition; that causeways for which the company paid 15 shillings per rod, giving three quarters in land, had been tendered for at 10 shillings cash.

A picturesque figure in the early history of the Canada Company was William Dunlop, a Scotchman, British army surgeon and as such active in Upper Canada in the war of 1812 and later in India. In 1826 he was ap-

pointed Warden of Forests for the Canada Company and made his second voyage to Canada where he became at once one of the most efficient assistants of John Galt. Physically Dunlop and Galt were a great pair, both exceptionally tall, Dunlop, of Herculean strength; with hair an extreme red, while Galt's was black as that of a raven. Dunlop on Galt's instructions made an exploration trip from Guelph to Goderich early in 1827. With him were John Brant, son of the Mohawk chief, and Surveyor Macdonald, who laid out Guelph. They emerged on the shore of Lake Huron at the mouth of what was called the Red River, renamed by Dunlop the Maitland in honor of the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, and here, the place soon named Goderich, Dunlop made his home for the rest of his life. Galt and a small party proceeded overland to Penetanguishene where they took a sort of war vessel, the "Bee", placed at their disposal, up Georgian Bay and around the Bruce Peninsula, then skirted the shore of Lake Huron until they came to a river and saw a log hut, which housed Dunlop's party.

Galt's charge when he returned to Guelph was to find a contractor to cut the Colonization Road, as it was called, from Wilmot to Goderich. The route was from Guelph to Hespeler (called New Hope until 1857) and Preston, then up the steep hill and straight westward to the Grand River, at Bechtel's where there was a bridge built by Preston to facilitate trade from the west to that village. Klotz speaks of this bridge in his history of Preston published by the Waterloo Historical Society in 1917. It was carried away by floods about 1865 and never replaced. The crossing is still somewhat used as a ford. The road continued beyond the river up the steep west bank on to Strasburg and Haysville. About six miles beyond Haysville it turned northward, then followed the township line, about a mile, to a point just west of the Nith river bridge on the present Provincial Highway No. 7, thence along it and along Highway No. 8 through Stratford, Mitchell, Seaforth and Clinton, to Goderich.

From Guelph to the point spoken of in the west limit of Wilmot township, existing roads mainly were made use of, but from there westward it was new work, and for this Galt was seeking a contractor. The direct route, west through Kitchener and New Hamburg, was not available until some years later.

Another notable figure now appears on the scene, Anthony Van Egmond, a native Dutchman of the noble family of Egmont of Holland. His country being under Napoleonic domination when he became of military age, Van Egmond served in the French armies, was in a number of battles and finally took part in the Moscow campaign. Later he was in Wellington's army at the Battle of Waterloo.

In 1819, at the age of about 48, Van Egmond decided to emigrate to America with his family. He settled in Pennsylvania and was active there for 8 years, as farmer and storekeeper. Then he moved to Upper Canada and located in Waterloo County. He was thrifty and had by this time, with what he brought to America and accumulated since, fairly become a man of property.

Later in the same year he came to Canada, 1827, Van Egmond made the acquaintance of John Galt, in Guelph, and soon had dealings with him. Galt had as yet found no one who was willing to take the Colonization Road contract with payment largely in Canada Company land. This requirement suited Van Egmond who was ready to invest in land. His tender, though materially higher than a previous one, in which payment was wanted all in money, was accepted, and soon the work began, with winter the most favorable season for cutting and clearing off the heavy timber.

The contract was from the Wilmot Township line westward as already spoken of. Van Egmond as contractor and the Company, as represented by Galt, agreed that the contractor should construct, or rather cut out, a road of approximately fifty-five miles, 4 rods (one chain) wide. The whole was in charge of a supervising officer, Mr. Pryor, and the Company also supplied the surveyors, Macdonald and Strickland. The laborers Van Egmond drew from the settlements wherever he could get them, Scotch, Irish, Pennsylvania Dutch and Germans, a motley crew. It is on record that a number came from Woolwich and other parts of Waterloo County. The contract, Wilmot line to Goderich, was roughly completed in 1828, but it took years to make the road a fairly passable highway. A good deal of it was through swamps and this at first was rough corduroy.

One stipulation was that the contractor should erect

three houses of accommodation for the use of incoming settlers on their way; one in the Township of South Easthope, one in Ellice and one three miles beyond the present town of Seaforth. These houses as taverns no doubt left much to be desired. A writer in 1828 describes them as three shanties. Nevertheless they were much better than nothing and to a creditable extent fulfilled their purpose of assistance to settlers locating on the Company's lands. On its part the Company granted the contractor some thousands of acres of land on both sides of the road, in the present counties of Perth and Huron, and a cash bonus for each of the three inns, forty, fifty and sixty pounds respectively; a condition being that travellers should be entertained at prices prevailing in the older settlements.

Most of the land Col. Van Egmond later sold. For his own use and homestead, which he began to occupy in 1828, he selected a generous acreage a short distance east of the present Clinton. Here he erected a combined house and tavern and proceeded to clear the land. By spring, 1829, he had one hundred acres cleared and ready to cultivate. This was the first farm on the Huron Road. The same year it produced the first regular crop of wheat in the Huron Tract and the first harvesting was celebrated by a dinner which Van Egmond gave to Dunlop and other friends from Goderich.

While the Huron Road was open by the end of 1828 it was years before it became tolerably passable for vehicles. As late as 1833 a Scotch gentleman, Patrick Shirreff, traversed it from Guelph to Goderich. He was pleased with Van Egmond's tavern where he found "a wealthy looking place for the country with a store of miscellaneous goods, large barns and a tolerably good garden." He describes the roads as two thirds corduroy or cross-way and that occasionally a large tree had been left standing in the middle of the road. Of the size of trees in the Huron Tract a farmer's dugout made of a pine trunk gives an idea. The dugout was 26 feet long and 3 feet 9 inches in the beam, requiring a log of more than 4 feet in diameter. As to the corduroy on the Huron Road Shirreff goes on to say that most travellers speak of it with horror, but that without meaning to praise it he could say that it was the best and smoothest portion of the road. The roots projecting from the stumps in a slanting direction kept the

wheels and axles of the wagons moving up and down like the beam of a steam engine.

The Huron Road was from the beginning a main road. Gradually it became improved, eventually to a good macadam road. For many years it was the main stage route. Stages from Galt ran regularly to Goderich, and Galt, the main trading centre for the whole district westward to Lake Huron, drew trade all along the road, from as far as Goderich. The road continued as a stage route until the Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway was opened through to Goderich, in 1858.

Since 1928 the Huron Road has been a paved highway all the way from Wilmot to Goderich. The last section, Seaforth to Clinton, was officially opened on the 3rd of September that year on which date there took place the centennial celebration of the Huron Road. The ceremonies began at Freyfogel's east of Shakespeare, and continued at Stratford, Seebach's, Mitchell, Harpurhey, Clinton and Goderich. (See Waterloo Historical Society Annual Report for 1928). A tape was cut at Harpurhey by the Ontario Deputy Minister of Highways, Hon. R. M. Smith, thus officially opening the last paved part between Stratford and Goderich. And various memorials along the road, now Number 7 Provincial Highway to Stratford and Number 8 Provincial Highway from there to Goderich, were unveiled.

At Freyfogel's about a mile east of Shakespeare there is a cairn bearing a tablet with the following inscription, "Erected 1929 to commemorate opening of the Huron Road by the Canada Company, 1828. This marks place of log building occupied by Sebastian and Mary Freyfogel, first settlers in Perth County, 1829." Six miles east of Mitchell a cairn, on the north west corner of a crossroad, surmounted by a log and axe in stone, bears the following inscription, "Erected in memory of Andrew and Eva Seebach, the first settlers in Ellice Township, 1828." In Mitchell there is a cairn just across the street from where Col. John Hicks built the first tavern in the settlement. The inscription is: "This cairn erected in memory of the first settlers, Colonel John and Elizabeth Hicks, 1837, by the citizens of Mitchell, 1928." Another cairn east of Clinton, on Van Egmond's farm is inscribed: "This cairn erected in 1928 in commemoration of the opening of the Huron Road by the Canada Company in 1828. Near

this spot Anthony Van Egmond, who had the contract to build the Huron Road, had his residence and grew the first wheat in the Huron Tract." At Goderich a cairn was erected, in Harbor Park, on the bluff just above the harbor. The tablet, supplied by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, with a commemorative inscription, was duly unveiled. It was later transferred to one of two stone pillars which form the eastern gateway to the town.

W. H. BREITHAAPT



THE ST. AGATHA MEMORIAL

Between 200 and 300 former students of St. Jerome's College gathered at the institution, July 16th, 1935, for the quinquennial meeting of the alumni association. Featuring the day's celebration was the unveiling of the Memorial at St. Agatha, marking the site of the original log cabin in which the college was started, 71 years before, by the venerable Father Louis Funcken.

Groups of alumni registering at the college represented Quebec, Ontario, New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, New Jersey, Missouri, Texas and other U.S. states.

The program got underway at 2 o'clock when a meeting of the alumni executive committee was held, Rt. Rev. Msgr. William Gehl, vicar general of the Hamilton diocese and president of the alumni association presiding. Most Rev. Joseph O. Sullivan, D.D. Bishop of Charlottetown, P.E.I., first vice-president, who was to have been present was unable to leave his diocese.

Registrations continued up to 4 o'clock when a procession of between 50 and 60 cars, gaily decorated with the college colors, proceeded to St. Agatha for the unveiling of the Memorial, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Gehl, president of the alumni and W. J. Motz, past-president, representing the clerical and lay members of the association, were designated to unveil the stone which marks the historic spot.

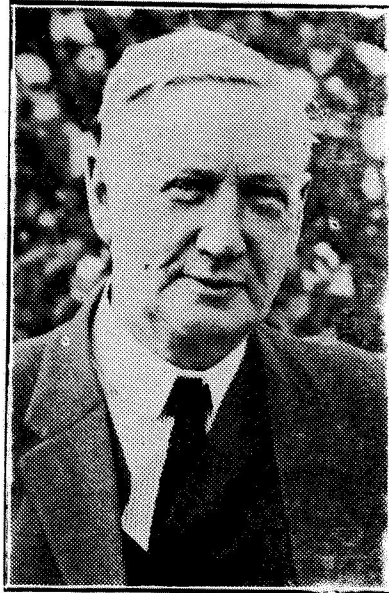
Those delivering addresses at the unveiling were

Very Rev. W. A. Benninger, C.R. Provincial of the Congregation of the Resurrection in Canada, D. N. Panabaker, Hespeler, president of the Waterloo Historical Society, George Kloefer, vice-president of the Liberty Bank Buffalo and Hon. W. D. Euler M.P. Other invited guests were Peter Wagner, Reeve of Wellesley; M. Schmidt, reeve of Wilmot; Mayor J. Albert Smith, Kitchener; Mayor H. E. Ratz, Waterloo; Alex Edwards, M.P. for South Waterloo; Hon. N. O. Hipel, Speaker of the Ontario Legislature and member for South Waterloo, and N. Asmussen, M.L.A. for North Waterloo.

Rt. Rev. Msgr. Joseph Englert, Hamilton, past-president of the alumni, presided as chairman at the unveiling. Following the exercises a picnic luncheon was served at the parish hall of St. Agatha's church.

Kitchener Daily Record.





JOHN ROBERT CONNON

BIOGRAPHY

JOHN ROBERT CONNON—Historian.

Born: May 26th, 1862. Died: January 18th, 1931.

John Robert Connon was the elder son of Thomas Connon and his wife, Jean Keith, and was born May 26th, 1862. His father was a native of the parish of Udny, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, who, after receiving a good education, served an apprenticeship as a wholesale grocer in the city of Aberdeen. He emigrated to Canada in 1852, and came to Elora, Ontario, in March, 1853. He engaged in the general store business, became interested in photography, and in 1859 engaged in it for profit, selling his general store business in 1867. Mrs. Connon was the eldest daughter of John Keith, one of the first settlers at Bon Accord, upper Nichol. It is worthy of note that she was the first white child born on the west side of the Grand River in what is now the Village of Elora, perhaps in Wellington County, on March 19th, 1835. Mr. and Mrs. Connon were married on November 4th, 1854.

With such a background, it is not to be wondered at that the subject of this sketch should be particularly interested in the early settlement of this country and in his father's art, in which he, too, was a pioneer.

John R. Connon received his education in the Public and High Schools at Elora, and with the exception of a short sojourn in New York city, practically his whole life was spent in his native village. He early began to take an active interest in his father's business, became an expert photographer, particularly at outside work. His photographs of scenes along the Grand and Irvine Rivers are of outstanding merit, and those who possess one or more of them have something which they should prize very highly.

Of all his school-teachers, the late John Connon was most influenced by David Boyle, Principal of the Elora Public School, afterwards David Boyle, LL.D., first Provincial Archaeologist of Ontario, first Superintendent of the Provincial Museum, and first Secretary of the Ontario Historical Society. With Mr. Boyle he maintained a life-long friendship. As a result, he took a more than ordinary interest in geology, and was also interested in astronomy, having one of the best telescopes in this part of Ontario. It was also through Mr. Boyle's influence that

he finally commenced the preparation of the history of the early settlement of Elora, including also an account of the first settlers in the Townships of Woolwich, Pilkington and Nichol. This work first took definite form in January of 1906, and was completed and published in the latter part of 1930, just a few weeks previous to the author's decease. The subject matter was first published in weekly instalments in the "Elora Express", then put into book form. An interruption occurred in this arrangement at the time of his mother's death. She it was who spurred his literary efforts, and after her death he seemed for a time to lose heart in the enterprise. When later the work was taken up again it was largely through the influence of Mr. Hugh C. Templin, the Fergus historian, and the same arrangement as with the "Elora Express" was carried out with the Fergus "News-Record." The book was illustrated with pictures provided by Mr. Connon's camera. An edition of 400 copies was printed, and in face of the unprecedented depression, commercially and industrially, the History had a good sale, and today only a comparatively small number of copies are available. It is a pleasing thought to the writer of this biography to remember that Mr. Connon lived long enough to receive many congratulatory letters and messages, and to know that his History of Elora was not only appreciated by those whose opinions he valued, but was a financial success as well.

While the History will probably be Mr. Connon's most enduring monument, it is worthy of recording that he and his father made outstanding contributions to the advance and improvement of photography. Mr. Connon, Sr., in 1881, designed what was afterwards called a roll-holder, in which the gelatine emulsion on which the photograph was made was placed upon something like a roll of ribbon, instead of, as formerly, on a glass plate. In August of 1887, Mr. John R. Connon received his American Patent for the first camera ever made which would photograph the entire circle at one exposure, familiarly known as a Panoramic Camera. Unfortunately, neither he nor his father reaped much financial reward as a result of their inventions, as the story told in the closing pages of the "History" reveals.

Mr. John R. Connon was also a pioneer in the electrical field, and the writer remembers a motor designed by him, assisted by Mr. Wm. Walker, a Fergus machin-

ist, which was in use in the Fergus "News-Record" office, where we were an apprentice, over 40 years ago. He was also a musician of no mean order, and played the piano, organ and violin with more than ordinary ability.

The author of the "History of Elora" was buried in the family plot in the Elora Cemetery, the last resting place of many of the pioneers whose story he has so graphically told, and whose names he has perpetuated. As a man, he was loyal to his friends, sympathetic and helpful to the aged, and ever ready to give aid and counsel to those who consulted him, and they were legion. He was always especially interested in the new-comer to this country, and many an immigrant, especially the foreign-born, has occasion to remember him with the deepest gratitude. He was generous to a fault to his friends and to those whose condition aroused his sympathy. To fellow-authors, historians, newspaper men, or to those seeking information about Elora or the Elora community, he was always available, and out of the abundance of his knowledge was usually able to meet their needs. His memory will long be cherished by those who were privileged with his friendship, and we believe succeeding generations will acknowledge the debt of gratitude which the whole community owes to him, appreciate him more and pay a tribute to his life and life-work that his contemporaries sometimes failed to accord.

—Richard E. Mills.

Under date of January 20th, 1931, the Toronto "Globe" said:

A host of friends in many parts of Canada and the United States today mourn the passing of one of Elora's best-known native sons, John Robert Connon, who died at his home January 18th, after a severe heart attack following two years of failing health. He was in his sixty-ninth year.

Mr. Connon was the son of the late Thomas Connon, designer of the film roll holder and the late Mrs. Connon, Jean Keith, who was the first white child to be born north of the Grand River. He was educated in the Elora Public, Grammar and High Schools, and was a pupil and lifelong friend of David Boyle, LL.D., first curator of the Ontario Museum in Toronto. Through Dr. Boyle, Mr. Connon became greatly interested in astronomy, geology and archeology. Dr. Boyle was also the

great influence that led Mr. Connon to carry out his greatest work, the writing of the history of the pioneers of Elora and the surrounding country. This history published in book form has been off the press for only two months, but during this time the author was made very happy by the wide demand for his work. Mr. Connon was the inventor of the whole-circle panoramic camera. For a short time Mr. Connon worked in the City of New York at photography, but soon returned to Elora where he lived the greater part of his life gathering material for his book. Surviving him is one brother, Thomas G. Connon, Canadian Pacific Railway freight agent in Goderich. His sister, Elizabeth, the late Mrs. James Grant, of Chesley predeceased him on Christmas morning, 1925.

JACOB G. STROH

1848 - 1935

Jacob G. Stroh was born in Berlin, Canada West, as it then was, September 25th, 1848, and died after illness of about a month, at his home on Erb street east in Waterloo, on Thursday, May 23rd, 1935.

He was intimately connected with the history of Berlin. His father was Henry Stroh, by trade a shoemaker, but engaged in various business enterprises, in 1855 with Karl Kranz as a merchant. Henry Stroh had a spacious house on south Queen street standing a little back of the street about where now is the Fischman Spring Co. The house was rough cast, a favorite mode of building in the early days of Berlin, and had a verandah along the front.

Jacob Stroh's mother was Susannah, a daughter of Frederick Gaukel, hotel keeper and public spirited citizen, who built a hotel on the west corner of King and Queen streets in 1835, after his time known for many years as the Commercial Hotel, and standing until replaced by the first building of the present Walper House. Frederick street and Gaukel street in Kitchener are named after Frederick Gaukel.

He learned his trade in the tannery of Louis Breithaupt and later had a modest tannery of his own on the Bridgeport road in Waterloo around the corner from his house on Erb street. Here he was in business for many years, until he sold his tannery.

He was a noted local historian and naturalist and accumulated a great collection, the largest in the county and begun when he was 12 years old, of Indian artifacts, arrow heads, spear heads, stone axes, skinning tools, etc. He donated three very interesting specimens to the Waterloo Park: a huge stump, or rather tree section, showing the size of primitive pine in this vicinity, and two large boulders, one of them hollowed out on one side for grinding corn as was done by pounding and rolling with a handstone, and the other with a smooth, flattened top, used for dressing skins and for general purposes. He was also a botanist, self taught, and had a wide knowledge of indigenous trees, flowers and plants generally, of this region. Troops of school children, whom he used to take on botanizing trips to the woods, delighted in what he could tell them of rare wildflowers and show them where to find them. In collaboration with Mr. Joseph M. Snyder he contributed to the Waterloo Historical Society (See 18th and 19th Annual Reports W.H.S.) a very valuable series of reminiscences giving, in detail, the buildings and occupants of the streets of Berlin in the early days. He was foremost authority on early Berlin history.

For forty years Jacob Stroh was a member of the Public Library Board in Waterloo. He was also for years member of the Waterloo Town Council, and of the Board of Health.

In his younger years he was a volunteer in the Berlin Company of the 29th (Waterloo) Militia Regiment and was called out for service with his regiment in the Fenian Raid of 1866.

As a lifelong Liberal he always took active interest in county as well as in general provincial political campaigns.

In religion he was a Swedenborgian and keenly devoted to his church. He was member of Carmel church of the New Jerusalem from its inception in 1891.

His wife, Elizabeth Seyler Stroh, died in 1913. One son, Nathaniel Stroh of Kitchener, four daughters and thirteen grandchildren survive.

ANDREW JACKSON PETERSON

Supplementary to his history of Henry William Peterson in the Nineteenth Annual Report, 1931, of the

Waterloo Historical Society, A. E. Byerly, D.O. of Guelph contributes the following:

On February 5, 1841, Henry William Peterson wrote on the leaf of a small diary kept by his father the following: Markham, February 5, 1841 (Saturday) I write these words as a memorial of my present visit to my two aged parents, who are both well, thanks be to God for His goodness. I am not well. I fear I have an affection of the lungs and liver both. But, if God please, I shall once more recover. On the same date he also records in this diary: I purpose to return home to Berlin (Upper Canada) on Monday next (February 7), if the Lord please, accompanied by my brothers, P. Frederick Peterson, J. Henry Peterson and sister, Mary Ann Spies. I shall go by way of the City of Toronto, etc.

Of the children of Charles Lewis Peterson, **Andrew Jackson Peterson**, born on December 12th, 1823 in Somerset County, Pa., came with his parents to Berlin where he lived most of his life and died. Many years ago, late in the 1860's probably, he wrote out a sketch of his life as follows: "In 1835, I, Andrew Jackson Peterson, was apprenticed to the printing business with my uncle Henry William Peterson, with whom I remained until August 1845. In 1843 my uncle (appointed registrar in 1842) moved to Guelph. I went with him and conducted a job printing establishment and was also deputy registrar. On the 3rd of August, 1845, I married and was foreman in Henry Eby's printing office in Berlin for one year. I then moved to Woolwich and taught school at Conestoga. In 1847 I moved to Wilmot where I taught school until May, 1850. Purchased a bush lot in the Township of Hay and commenced bush-whacking on the 9th day of May, 1850. When the County of Waterloo was set apart, in 1853, and D. L. Shoemaker was appointed registrar, I moved back to Berlin and was appointed deputy registrar and continued until Mr. McDougall was appointed registrar. I was appointed registrar of the Surrogate Court on the 28th day of April, 1856, by His Excellency Sir E. W. Head, and on the 9th of May, 1857 I was made clerk of the first division court for the County of Waterloo."

The family of Andrew Jackson Peterson consisted of Julia, Rebecca, Elora, Charles Lewis, Dr. Henry, Dr. David William and Andrew J. Rebecca married Robert Smyth (who died May 31st, 1933) a former wellknown and prosperous merchant of Kitchener for many years.