

winter since, although 1855 and 1856 was nearly as severe. The snow lay from the 14th November, 1842, till the last week in April, 1843, and the first seed sown near Guelph was about the 6th or 7th of May. Towards the end of this year, 1843, the present respected pastor of Melville Church, the Rev. Mr. Smellie, made his first appearance in Fergus. The Rev. Mr. Gardiner died towards the end of the year 1841, and except occasional supplies there had been no regular services in the church, but the late Mr. Fordyce had kept up the wholesome practice of gathering the people together on the Lord's day by reading a sermon in the church and conducting the customary services of praise and prayer. There is no doubt that poor Mr. Gardiner's last illness was caused by his unwearied exertions, and long rides in very inclement weather. Mr. Smellie was duly placed in December, 1843, and has ministered faithfully and acceptably ever since. The disruption of the Established Church in Scotland in 1843 was followed by the disruption of the Presbyterian Church connected with the Scotch Establishment in 1844, and the Presbyterian Church of Canada was then formed, to which body Mr. Smellie attached himself. We have now five churches in the village instead of one, so that there can be little excuse for ignorance of religious things in this place, except the oldest and most prevalent of any, the want of will.

Towards the end of 1844 there was a general election, and a great sensation in Fergus and the whole County of Waterloo, which was the name of our County, as Mr. Webster was determined to beat Mr. Durand, the sitting member, and after a very hard struggle succeeded. The Warden, Mr. Fordyce, was Returning Officer, and appointed his own deputies. I went as deputy to Eramosa, and had a very pleasant time of it altogether, although there was a little excitement at first, but having had the command of a company of militia in Eramosa, I knew a good number of the voters, and we were very good friends. The queerest scenes I have heard were in Waterloo and Fergus. The German settlers had not taken the oath of allegiance, so under the then law could not vote, and at Fergus my old neighbor the Provost, the Returning Officer, was so determined that Webster should be our representative that he was, to say the least, barely civil to any one who wished to vote for Mr. Durand. I believe, too, some of the *tender sex*, who were freeholders, gave their votes, and their names were recorded, and indeed they had a much better right, as far as property goes, to vote than some of the free and independent in these more enlightened days. Mr. Durand protested, and there was a scrutiny, which resulted in Mr. Webster keeping his seat, both he and Mr. Durand spending a great deal of money for nothing, and the legal gentlemen and the scrutineers pocketing some very nice fees. After many vicissitudes both these gentlemen have come to anchor as honest, respectable County Registrars, a much quieter and happier life than that of a Canadian statesman. We have had many elections since, but none of them so spirited or so exciting as the Webster and Durand election.

During 1843 and 1844 the village of Elora, which had been quite abandoned by the Gilkison family, began to rise into importance under the active management of the Messrs. Ross & Co., who built new mills and a store, and under whose enterprise it soon rivalled Fergus, and afterwards under the late Mr. C. Allan's charge, and by his perseverance and tact outstripped it in the race of improvement.

I think I have now given a sketch (no doubt rather cursory) of the first ten years of the existence of Fergus, and as it is made entirely from memory I hope any inaccuracies or omissions will be forgiven. As regards what is now the village of Fergus, the retrospect on the whole is to an old settler like myself rather sad, as very few of the first inhabitants are left. Some