

CHATHAM,

The county seat of Kent, is situated a little west of the exact center of the county at the junction of the four townships of Chatham, Dover, Raleigh and Harwich. It is on both sides of the river Thames, 18 miles above its mouth, 60 miles southwest of London and 46 east of Detroit, Mich. The first settlement of the place dates back to the year 1830 or thereabouts, and Chatham was fixed upon as the county seat of Kent, which up to the year 1847 formed a part of Essex. Railway communication was established about that time by the opening of the Great Western Railway. When the Canada Southern Railway was completed some six years ago an effort was made to build a branch road from this place to Charing Cross, on that line, which is only seven miles south. Although a large bonus was voted and the project was decidedly popular, yet the measure was by some influence defeated, and the result was that a portion of the trade from the southern part of the county was diverted to other points. This, however, will be remedied by the completion of the Erie & Huron Railway, now in an advanced state of construction, which will give the Town direct communication by rail with the north and south parts of the county, and by connecting with the Canada Southern will give the place all the advantages to be derived from a competing line east and west.

Chatham is surrounded by a fine agricultural country, and is one of the largest grain and produce markets in the western portion of Ontario. It is estimated that the shipments of wheat alone from here for the present year will be in excess of one million bushels. Besides this, enormous quantities of flour, barley, malt, beans, eggs and farm produce generally, together with live stock are exported annually. The products of the forest form a considerable portion of the shipments from here, and include hardwood lumber, square and ship timber, railroad ties, staves and stave timber and immense quantities of cord wood, nearly all of which is shipped by water direct, the river being navigable for vessels drawing 10 feet.

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