

### Horsepower for Cundell still horses

The following article by Debbie Hannah, special correspondent, is reprinted from the Ottawa Citizen of February 25:

A trip down a narrow laneway in the Byward Market whisks a visitor back to the era of cobblestone streets.

Tucked behind the house at 115 York Street is a remnant of early Ottawa, the last remaining livery stable in the city.

It has stood for more than 85 years and proprietor Fred Cundell is quick to point out that horse-trading and cartage have provided a way of life for his family for generations.

Mr. Cundell's father, William, established the livery in 1880 and at one time owned more than "100 of the finest work and carriage horses in the city".

But now the family tradition is down to two chestnut mares that pull two sleigh rides a week.

Twenty-five years ago it was more prosperous. Mr. Cundell's horses ploughed snow off city streets until the city replaced horsepower with mechanical snow-removal equipment in 1956.

Mr. Cundell feels the streets have not been as thoroughly cleared since then.

Mr. Cundell claims he seldom purchased or exchanged horses in Ottawa. Better bargains could be obtained in the United States.

"One time when I was in the States I left my motel room and went outside because I heard shouts. Men were selling horses and I bought 18 that night.

"People looked at me and laughed. I heard one person say 'My God, what's that fat fella going to do with the horses, eat them?' But he wasn't very smart, the horses were going for a low price. Each one cost me \$100," he said.

#### Cheap back then

About 30 years ago an expensive horse cost \$300. Now, the average work-horse sells for \$1,000 to \$1,500. Mr. Cundell said these high prices and automobiles have cut his horse trades from one or two a day to about two a year.

The Cundells have offered sleigh rides for decades, but the demand has never been as low. Twenty years ago the family had six teams of horses, which would pull about 50 rides a weekend.



Fred Cundell's two chestnut mares pull a sleigh-load of happy children through the streets of Ottawa.

Horse-feed prices have drastically increased recently. A bale of hay which could be purchased for 20 cents four years ago now costs \$2.

"I drive a dump-truck now, make a living, pay my taxes, and everything is fine. But I'd sooner drive the horses if I could make enough. I don't make money on sleigh rides," he said.

Mr. Cundell not only loves horses but also has a way with them. He normally buys a new team every spring.

The difficulties of breaking in horses and training them to disregard the noise of passing cars are no problem for Mr. Cundell. Time and patience are all that is required to accustom horses to busy city streets.

However, on a few occasions the horses have reacted to the bustle of the city.

"There was this time some damn fool kept spinning his car wheels and scaring the horses. But that type of person is always around and always breaking the law," he said.

When a horse is frightened, a dangerous situation can develop. It's a tough job holding back nearly two tons of fleeing horseflesh.

"I can't put a brake on my horses like a man can put his foot on the brake of his automobile," he said.

Mr. Cundell said he drives his team carefully, giving all vehicles the right of way, even though he legally has the right of way over cars. His cautious and defensive driving has prevented

him from having an accident in more than 40 years.

"Sometimes in the summer I'm sitting on the front porch and I see people from the sight-seeing bus take a picture of our sign. They hardly ever see the stable, though.

"The kids love to see horses. Many of them hardly ever get a chance to see animals."

The charge for a two-hour sleigh ride is \$35. The trip begins in the Byward Market and runs to Rockcliffe Park. If customers live close to the Cundell home they may be picked up at their residences.

Bare city streets have never prevented him from hauling a load. If the street pavement is bare, a wagon replaces the sled.

Mr. Cundell's stable has survived the years of downtown expansion, and if he has his way it will exist as long as he's there.

"I'm happy as old hang. I've done this thing most of my life and I'll continue."

### Dancer on arts council

Veronica Tennant of the National Ballet of Canada, has been appointed a member of the Province of Ontario Council for the Arts. Miss Tennant enrolled in the National Ballet school at the age of 9. Since joining the National Ballet, in 1964, she has been applauded by critics around the world.