

A Panoramic View of Amherst with the plants of Rhodes Curry Company and the Canada Car & Foundry Company in the foreground. Hewson's Woollen Mills and other factories are also shown.

AMHERST—ANCIENT BUT MODERN

An Aggressive Manufacturing Centre in the Maritime Provinces

By D. OXON

An isthmus is a narrow neck of land connecting two large bodies of land. Do you remember how you used to confuse this geographical fact with that other no less important truth that a strait is a narrow passage of water connecting two larger bodies of water? Nature made an isthmus, connecting New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, but she didn't think much of her work, and by the aid of the sea tried to convert it into a strait with more or less success. The Acadians, who were there as elsewhere in the Maritime Provinces, first-class Indian fighters, made contest with the sea and drove it back by means of dykes—not the dykes of Holland, where the little boy held back the sea with his finger—but ordinary breastworks built, one cannot say how, strong enough, however, to have withstood the seas ceaseless attacks these two hundred years. The Acadians are there no longer, but when one wants a dyke repaired a French-Canadian is called upon to do the work.

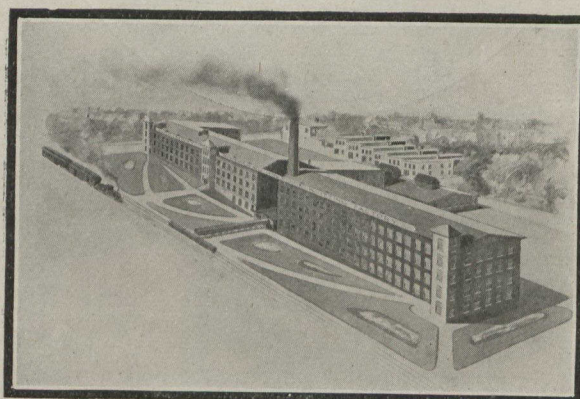
The busy manufacturing town of Amherst is built on the Nova Scotia portion of this neck of land connecting the two provinces. The waters that a strait would connect are the Bay of Fundy and the Northumberland Strait. An English syndicate endeavored to connect these two waterways by means of a ship railway and sunk several millions in the project. Ships find the all-water-way good enough for them yet. It is claimed that the then Dominion Government did not fulfil their part of the contract, and an appeal is being made to the present authorities to aid the trustees of the syndicate to convert the ship railway project into a regular steam road with trolley line extensions to Amherst, Nova Scotia and Sackville, N.B., and other towns and summer resorts along Northumberland Strait, the intention being to erect docks at either end of the steam railway, with the view of getting the agricultural products of Prince Edward Island to a profitable New England market. A town fast becomes a city once it is able to present a company with a street railway franchise.

Amherst is not a real city; in fact its only a short time since it was in the village class. You've heard of it, of course—have heard of it since there was an Amherst. It's one of those exceptional places which advertise themselves by the men they produce. Sir Charles Tupper, on the one hand, and Fred. Cameron, the marathoner, on the other, both first saw the light of day in Amherst. Sir Chas. Townsend, Chief Justice of Nova Scotia, and C. C. Chipman, chief commissioner of the Hudson's Bay Co., were born there. Col. Bigney, President Taft's right-hand man in Massachusetts, is a native of Amherst. W. Max Aiken, the youthful financier, and member of the British House of Commons, made his first money as an insurance agent in Amherst. D. W. Robb, of South Framingham, Mass., was born in Amherst, and made his engines famous in two countries. C. J. Silliker, who established the car works at Halifax, is also an Amherstonian. Nathaniel Curry, head of the Canada Car and Foundry Co., at Montreal, is also a product of the town. President Cutten, of Acadia University, was, and is, one of the boys. H. C. McLeod, formerly general manager of the Bank of Nova Scotia, claims Amherst as his birth-place. These are only a few of the men who have

gone forth to greatness from Amherst. In nearly every case they were men of consequence before they left the town—the greater field developing their greater abilities.

It must not be thought that Amherst has trafficked solely in the export of brains—the demand of the home market has been such that a very hefty amount of grey matter still remains in the town incorporated under the name of The Pilgrims—the significance rather vague, but one name is as good as another providing the object aimed at is attained. It's an unique organization—one without parallel in Canada, perhaps not in America. The Pilgrim Father went forth seeking peace and quietness in a new country. The Pilgrims of Amherst are far from being peaceful or quiet, and instead of longing for fields afar, they are getting right down to making Amherst the finest little grazing pasture this side of the Pacific Ocean.

Ever since man first blew through a cow's horn and was startled by the effect he produced, he's been blowing his horn in more ways than one. This first man was so tickled with his new accomplishment that he called in the gang and got them at it. Thus was the beginning of the modern brass band, and the end is not yet. Some one had to be leader, and there were two or more aspirants for the baton.



The products of the Hewson Woollen Mills—tweeds and knitted goods—are sold throughout the Dominion.



The largest shoe factory in the Maritime Provinces is at Amherst—the Amherst Boot & Shoe Company



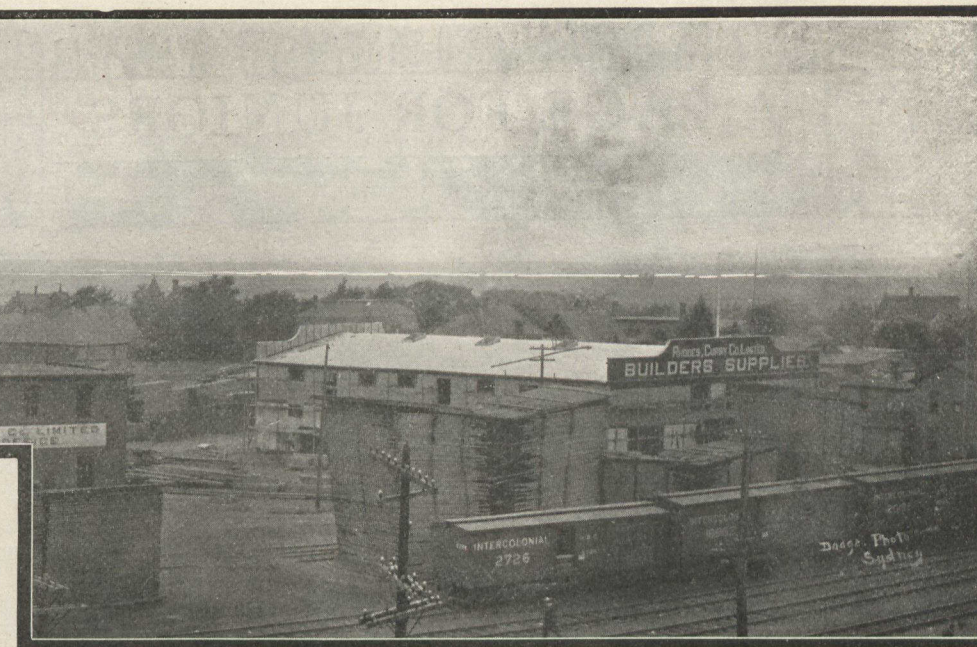
Main Street, Amherst, N.S., during Old Home Week. Nearly one hundred automobiles took part. Every man of prominence in town was in line.



A casket and trunk factory of unusual proportions



One of the large stationary-engine plants in Canada has helped to make Amherst's reputation. Robb engines are sold all over the world



In the background, beyond the Marshes, Chignecto Bay lies like a ribbon of silver. The Intercolonial Railway in the immediate foreground divides Busy Amherst into two sections.

Each put forth his qualifications as a leader of men—blew his own horn. Thus was the beginning of modern politics, and now they are agitating for government by commission. It was the cow's horn, or was it a ram's horn, that started all the trouble—street pianos, German bands, bands of hope that there would be no more bands—all attributable to that one little experiment of primitive man. Such was the case in Amherst—if a man wasn't a bandsman he was a politician, or both. They had a good band twenty-five years ago, and some of the then members are among those mentioned in a preceding paragraph. Time broke up this organization, and it remained for a blind man, William Casey, to reorganize it. The story of William Casey is one by itself—a page of romance stitched into the book of reality. But of that again.

King Edward's Coronation was the occasion of the re-assembling of the old band—soft-lipped and stiff-fingered many of them—but a bandsman or a politician never forgets how to blow. The result was rather good. But it was not until an Old Home Week was proposed that the reorganization found itself. Now, Old Home Week last year was one grand revelry by night and day—six or seven of each. The far-faring Amherstonians came back

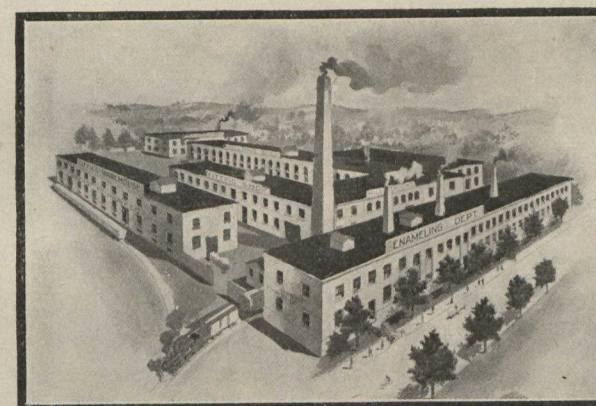
from all corners of the earth. The home-staying ones welcomed them—the tailor shops never had such a demand for quart-sized hip-pockets. The centre illustration gives one an idea of a street parade they gave. One had to be there to appreciate all they did. One notable feature was a mysterious midnight assemblage of the men of affairs, and when the procession rounded the corner old men and young, professional and business men were outwardly arrayed as if for the *chambre a coucher*.

The Pilgrims, sixty strong, twenty of them comedians, did much to make the week memorable. Principal Cutten, of Acadia University, was a gorgeous drum major, followed by the most prominent men of an ex-Amherst. Though the Pilgrims did their part nobly, the committee in charge of the demonstration were faced by a deficit. Here was work for the Pilgrims—not alone had they to wipe this out, but their instruments had to be paid for. That *esprit de corps*, that has made Busy Amherst, arose to the occasion. The means they took to painfully extract the money from a willing public was a mock court, with a breach of promise case, conducted by the leading lawyers of the town, and a King's counselor as presiding judge. The trial lasted three nights—the result augmented by receipts from a bazar, and a monster circus in the Winter Fair Building, and a masquerade ball, cleaned the slate and gave them a handsome surplus.

The surplus was the beginning of a permanency to this body of enthusiasts. Having done something worth while, and having a musical organization of nearly sixty excellent musicians, they set about increasing the surplus to \$20,000, as an endowment fund for the hospital.

Busy or industrial Amherst has among other things one of the three enamel bath factories of Canada, in the Amherst Foundry Co. From a little planing mill of twenty-five years ago, has developed the Rhodes, Curry Co., and the Canada Car and Foundry Co. Likewise, Christie Bros. little mill has grown into a big casket and trunk factory. The Robb-Engineering Co. developed from a small stove foundry, until to-day the Robb-Armstrong engines are world famed. The Hewson Woollen Mills, famous for their Canadian tweeds, knitted goods and worsteds, erected their immense plant in Amherst a few years ago. The Amherst Boot and Shoe Co. are the largest shoe manufacturers in the Maritime Provinces. There are cap factories, worsted mills, flour mills, aerated water works, and, as one wag said, that a naked man could be clothed from head to foot by Amherst manufacturers, and he could have an Amherst trunk or an Amherst coffin on his choice of trips. The Maritime Coal, Railway and Power Co., developing electric power at the mouth of the mine, offer very cheap light and power, and the town is one of the best illuminated in the East.

It will not be long until the other two trans-continental railroads will be serving Amherst, giving it a commanding position as a manufacturing and distributing centre. Coal is abundant within twelve miles. Gypsum is a stable product of a neighboring district. Amherst brown sandstone has gone into some of Canada's finest buildings. It is a town most generously situated, and being the geographical centre of the three Provinces, has become their common meeting place.



One of the three enamel bath plants of which Canada can boast is an Amherst institution.