

RECALLING THE DAYS OF LONG AGO

William Luckham Remembers too
The Little Log School House Of The
Early 40's

As a further chapter in his narrative of early life in Lambton county William Luckham of Sarnia, who has lived in this district for over ninety years, recalls that the first trip through the village of Watford from his home in Warwick was made in an ox drawn sleigh over corduroy roads.

His first knowledge of the existence of what was then known as Port Sarnia came from the conversation of his elders. In order to obtain supplies such as flour and other necessities the pioneers had to make the long drive either to London or Port Sarnia and carry flour back through the woods distances of twenty-five or thirty miles. The flour, Mr. Luckham believed came to Sarnia by boat as there were no flour mills in the county then.

Speaking of his first visit to Sarnia in the 40's, the narrator said he came with his father on a load of hay drawn by a team of oxen. This hay was to be sold in Sarnia. They travelled all night so as to reach their destination the next day at a time when they would most likely find a buyer for the hay. The names of personages in Sarnia at that time which he remembers were Durand, Malcolm Cameron and Hildecock.

EARLY SCHOOLS

Turning to early educational facilities Mr. Luckham said there were no schools in the early days but later little log schoolhouses were built in each neighborhood and each section employed a teacher at a wage of \$8 or \$10 a month. The pedagogues boarded at the homes of the settlers week about. The first schoolhouse was built on what was known as the Kingston estate near Warwick and a young man named Joseph Little who later became a popular figure in the country, was the tutor at this school for a while. Little was brought out as an overseer for the Kingston estate. In addition to his teaching Little conducted religious services in the different schoolhouses and in the homes of the settlers.

The first school Mr. Luckham attended was a Sunday School! conducted in a neighbor's house. There young children learned to read and the older ones studied the Bible. From that home started the movement which culminated in the founding of first congregational church, a missionary coming from New York to conduct the services.

A PREACHER

Mr. Luckham recollects one school which a man and his wife had come from the old country to look after. They lived in the school building. There was a fire-place in one end of the structure and sleeping facilities for the teacher and his wife in the other and when the children went out at noon for recess they prepared their own dinner and after school hours they looked after the remainder of the domestic duties.

Going back to the career of Little who became affectionately known as "Uncle Joe," Mr. Luckham said he used to travel through the woods from house to house holding religious meetings.

Little was a Methodist who had been converted in Ireland, and subsequent to his pioneer work he became a local preacher and had charge of a circuit from Lake Huron to Lake Erie. Some years later he went as a Missionary to Anticosti and died in the latter place shortly after his arrival. His body was brought back to Warwick and interred near Warwick village.

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TALES OF WATFORD "FIFTY YEARS AGO"

"Pluckers All"

By James Craig, Watford

"Keep far from me, Snacknasty Jim, And let him join the 'Pluckers'; And then when they get through with him He'll wish he hadn't stole the suckers."

The above is the last stanza of a satire written by Mr. Alexander Symington, a well-known local bard who lived in Watford in the early seventies. The "Jim" referred to was Captain James McPherson.

Away back in the early seventies Watford was blessed with a bunch of jolly carousers who would stop at nothing short of breaking the laws of the land to accomplish ways and means of getting up a bit of sport. The organized a fake secret order or club to which they gave the name, "Pluckers All." They put forth the plea, when canvassing for members, that the Order was a great boon to young men going from town to town who might get stranded or in trouble of any kind. The entrance fee was one dollar, (or as near to it as they could get.) A dollar at that time would buy quite a few drinks of whiskey.

The initiation ceremony was quite similar to the "hazing" the young freshmen used to get in their first year at college.

One of their first victims was Anthony Hollingsworth, a middle-aged colored barber, the first that ever struck Watford. He was somewhat of a sport in his simple way. He kept a record of all the fast horses and pugilists of the time; he could also sing and dance and drink whiskey and he was in great demand to call off for the young folks at their country dances. Nothing gave him more pleasure than to assist the boys in some of their sport, and he never seemed to think that he more often did it at his own expense.

Soon after he joined, the "Pluckers" decided to send a delegate to visit the fraternity at Petrolia and of course he was elected for the trip, and to make him more conspicuous, they dressed him in flowing red robe, with the words, "Pluckers All," in white letters on the back of it. They escorted him to the train, gave him the Password and Grip (he was told the "grip" would pass him free anywhere on the Great Western Railway System.) While some bade him goodbye, others put the conductor wise, gave him the magical "grip" and a ticket for Wyoming. After the train was well under way, when the conductor came through collecting tickets, Anthony arose and shook hands with him, giving the "grip." The conductor returned the compliment and passed on. But the old man got a jolt when he changed to the Petrolia train at Wyoming. As he afterwards expressed it, "That bloomin' Petrolia conductor didn't have the grip and he had to pay full fare."

But when he arrived in the Oil Town a few of the sports, who had been advised of his coming, met him at the station, led him to one of their rooms, where they had a high time; the old man entertaining them with his songs and dances. I can not recall how he got home, but I presume he took off his robes of high office and travelled as an ordinary passenger.

The old barber stayed in Watford till the end of his days, and unconsciously made sport for the boys until the time of his death and after. Although they took care of him and brought him comforts during his sickness, they made a playhouse of his little den for card games and such. And when he came to die they prevailed on him to make his will. The "Will" was drawn up in legal form, signed and witnessed, and his few belongings were bequeathed to prominent parties here and there throughout the neighborhood. After his death these articles were duly posted or expressed to them at their expense. "Tip" Corey, Petrolia's famous hotelman, paid the express charges on the old man's slop bucket, which was willed to him.

This novel will afterwards came out in the London Advertiser. I am sorry I have no copy of it for this article.

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Plan Now to Re-visit the Old Town! Sunday, Monday, Tuesday

DUTTON MOTORISTS USE HONEY AS "ANTI-FREEZE"

Dutton, Feb. 20.—It may be an extraordinary thing for automobile owners in certain parts of the United States to use honey in the radiator of their cars, but it is an ordinary thing in these parts. Motor car owners here have all winter provided their cars with honey and not a single car has suffered any trouble.

The recipe used here is ten pounds of honey and enough water to fill the radiator. Before the honey is put into the radiator it is mixed with half a gallon of water and heated thoroughly. This gives a water-like solution.

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EAST LAMBTON ORANGEMEN

The County Orange Lodge of East Lambton met in Watford Orange Lodge rooms on February 5th, with a large attendance. After general business was over, the election of officers took place, resulting as follows.

Past county master, Bro. Paul Kingston took the chair for election and installation of officers: County master, Bro. Geo. Pike, Watford; D. county master, Bro. D. Faloon, Warwick; C. Chaplain, Bro. Rev. Walker, Forest; C. treasurer, Bro. Gordon Smith, Brooke; 1st lecturer, Bro. Elton Freer, Brooke; 2nd lecturer, Bro. C. Jackson, Jura; County marshal, Bro. George Smith, Warwick. After the officers were duly installed short addresses were given by the newly elected members, after which lunch was served by the Watford brethren.

The Exeter Horticultural Society will hold a bird house competition in March and a flower show in August and will offer prizes for the best kept premises.

1924 FALL FAIRS

Strathroy	Sept. 15-17
Watford	Sept. 18-19
Petrolia	Sept. 22-23
Wilkesport	Sept. 23
Indian Reserve (Sarnia)	Oct. 7-8
Sarnia	Sept. 24-26
Brigden	Sept. 29-30
Forest	Sept. 30, Oct. 1
Wyoming	Oct. 2-3

Florence	Oct. 2-3
Alvinston	Oct. 6-8
Thedford	Oct. 2-3

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