



DOUBLE SHEET TO THE SEMI-WEEKLY AND WEEKLY TIMES.

THE TOWN OF ST. THOMAS.

A "TIMES" REPORTER HAS BEEN ACCERTAINING FACTS RELATIVE TO IT AND ITS TRADE.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN.

Its marked growth during the past few years indicates that it will become

AN IMPORTANT CITY

OF THE DOMINION.

OUR MANUFACTURERS, BANKERS AND MERCHANTS.

ITEMS RELATIVE TO AYLMER AND ITS TRADE.

Together with such other "Mem." as our Note Book shows.

It has not been long since quite a detailed history of the County of Elgin was published; we have therefore decided to refrain from any attempt at history in the following resume. In the comments which fill these columns it has been, as a matter of course, necessary to make more or less allusions to the past by way of contrast or for the purpose of tracing the growth of many of the enterprises of which we speak. Our design has been to make such a showing of St. Thomas, and incidentally of the County as may serve to attract attention and cause inquiry—if it results in that our purpose will have been fully accomplished.

It is within the memory of many residents of the County when we save here and there, this whole section of the country was a veritable wilderness. The work accomplished by the last and present generations has been a work of more than ordinary magnitude; and even now, if it scarcely holds true that "the chaos of a mighty world is rounding into form" it is true that "the rudiments of empire here are plastic yet, and warm," and that the development of the past promises to be more than equalled by that of the future.

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As we have said, in 1871 this part of St. Thomas was a farm property, and the town had a population of scarcely more than 1,800. Now we find the erstwhile farms platted into town lots. Streets have been laid out and graded, parks set aside and great public and private improvements have been carried to completion, or are in progress. The Canada Southern Road, half million or more of dollars, and the Great Western fifteen to twenty thousand, and hundreds of thousands have been laid out and graded, parks set aside, and the growth of the "East End" was given by the location of Alma College, upon which seventy-five thousand dollars are being expended. This summer, especially, has witnessed a really wonderful work of improvement. Residences and business blocks have been built as if by magic—from early dawn till dewy eve the sound of the mason's trowel or the carpenter's hammer has been heard, and buildings could scarcely be built rapidly enough to meet the wants of an untiring population. The same prosperity appears betokened for next summer, and property owners naturally feel jubilant.

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of the country that sustains the town. We would have liked to have presented in these columns detailed reports upon all the villages of the County—indeed that was our original design, but already the limits of the paper are filled, and much, very much matter already prepared is excluded.

St. Thomas derives its name from Thomas Talbot, one time an officer in the British army, and the recipient of large grants of land here. About the year 1845 St. Thomas had a beginning as a village, and from that time until 1870 its growth was slow—indeed it gained anything but an enviable reputation in the outside world as lacking enterprise. These were the years of the judgment upon St. Thomas in years gone by should visit the town now, and see for themselves what progress has been made—a progress that is almost unparalleled in the history of any Canadian town. This development, both in population and in the variety and extent of trading interests has been most noticeable during the past six or eight years. With the year 1867, the "East End" sprang into being but in the old town have been built some of the finest business blocks, banking houses and private residences that are to be found in the Province. And even at this late season of the year there is remarkable activity in building matters.

Upon Talbot street, the main thoroughfare, one can count at least a score of substantial business blocks now in progress of completion which were but little more than begun. The village incorporation dates back to 1853, the population of St. Thomas then being 1,300. In 1861 it numbered 1,631, and in 1866 but few more. In 1870 it was less than 2,000 and in 1878 it approximates very closely to 7,000.

The secret of the growth of the town during the present decade is largely owing to railway enterprise. The great disbursements made by the various railways not only stimulated every branch of business but awakened into new life the dormant energies of the people. Enterprising, energetic men from all portions of the country found their way here, and Canadians, Scotchmen, Englishmen, Americans—indeed all nationalities have seemed to vie with each other in their efforts to promote their own and the general good. The contrasts presented by this lapse of time are necessarily very great. Since 1874 the town has been lit with gas, and a very efficient system of water works, with hydrants at required points give most excellent protection against fire.

In the matter of schools and churches there is much to boast of. Of churches there are ten—two Presbyterian, two Baptist, two Methodist, one Roman Catholic, one Protestant Episcopal, one Roman Catholic, one Bible Christian and two Church of England. Seven of these are brick structures, and all are nearly new, neat and comfortable. The Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Methodist, and Church of England churches are especially noticeable for their architectural beauty and finish.

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Molsons Bank.

Of all the chartered banks of the Dominion none stand higher in the public esteem or command the respect of the general body of the people than the Molsons Bank. And there are abundant reasons why this should be so. It is paid up capital of two million dollars, its surplus or reserve fund nearly half a million more, and so many arguments in its favor. Then too, its record is the best, and the principles upon which it is conducted are the soundest and most equitable.

In view of the very large transactions in real estate in the "East End" during the past three years, we have "interviewed" a number of gentlemen who are more or less largely interested in property or property improvements in that section of the town. Among those called upon were Mr. Edward Horton, one of our old residents and a leading barrister, the owner of the Canada Southern railway, and others. Mr. Horton has, in a certain sense, stood God-father to the "East End." A good many of the men within the corporation limits of the town, and also has become owner of about 150 acres. All told he has plotted about 150 acres. From the outset he has had great faith in the growth of St. Thomas. He believed that the location of the railway and docks would eventually centralize trade in that locality, and he has proved his faith by his works. He has laid out large sums of money in grading streets, building houses, and erecting a large number of lots to those intending to build, but in many instances he has advanced money to assist individuals in building houses, and he has not only advanced money to those intending to build, but in many instances he has advanced money to assist individuals in building houses, and he has not only advanced money to those intending to build, but in many instances he has advanced money to assist individuals in building houses.

The Banking Interest of St. Thomas.

In preparing a report upon St. Thomas and its varied interests it is but natural that detailed space should be accorded also to the banking interest of the town. The majority of enterprises, public and private, are carried forward, and the contents of their reports, and the influence and lever for which Archimedes might have wished, except at a material advance. Next year values will undoubtedly be much greater than the present, and the great increase in the value of the town will be manifest to all eyes. The banking interest of St. Thomas is a subject of great importance, and one which we feel disposed to give him a deserved compliment therefor.

Merchants Bank of Canada.

As all the monetary world knows the Merchants is an outgrowth of the old Commercial Bank. The Merchants, as a distinct bank, was incorporated in the year 1871, and has since that time been under the management of its present president, Mr. J. M. Cramb, now of London, Ontario. The bank has since its incorporation been characterized by a rapid growth, and the bank has simply passed the seven tenor of its way, gaining friends and patrons as it went along. The bank has a capital of \$1,000,000, and a surplus of \$250,000. The bank has a capital of \$1,000,000, and a surplus of \$250,000. The bank has a capital of \$1,000,000, and a surplus of \$250,000.

The Imperial Bank of Canada.

Those of our readers who are familiar with the banking interest of this Province, will readily call to mind the old Niagara District Bank, which for nearly or quite two decades has been the only bank in the country. Five years ago might have been written of it the old legend, "It rested in 1870, and was re-opened in 1871." The bank of the Niagara District Bank was merged into that of the Imperial Bank of Canada, and the latter bank has since that time been the only bank in the country.

Strong & Co.

We may with equal justice place the firm of Strong & Co., with either the manufacturers or merchants of Town, for they are both. In other words they are furniture manufacturers and dealers, and as the house of the firm is situated in the County, we refer to it somewhat in detail. The present co-partnership, comprising J. H. Strong and W. H. Triggerson, was formed two years ago, then succeeding to the firm of Strong & Sons, that had been established some six or seven years. Both of the co-partners are genuine and native Canadians, and they are both men of means well known in the County.

Geo. T. Claris.

Having written in detail of our chartered banks we next find memoranda upon our notebook relative to private banking, and as a representative of that interest we here refer to Mr. George T. Claris. He is to be accorded, both with having been the first here, of late years at least, to engage in such an enterprise, and his success in promoting the interest to the point it now holds in the County is highly commended. Mr. Claris embarked in private banking in 1871. He was, by no means a stranger to this community, for he had spent in Chicago five years or more of his life, and he had been in this country when he opened his banking office with a view to competing with the banks of the city, but to supply the people with conveniences that did not then exist. The result, in a pecuniary sense, has been more than was expected, and a business here has been established that the community would hardly be willing to dispense with.

Haggert & Cochran.

The success of an enterprise, mercantile or manufacturing, depends very much upon the men who conduct it. In this respect, Haggert & Cochran are a most successful illustration. The business of Messrs. Haggert & Cochran, and in order to "point a moral" if not "to adopt a tale," we here make a synopsis of what they are doing as well as what they propose to do. Everyone who is familiar with St. Thomas knows what a really first-class establishment is presided over by these gentlemen. The architectural appearance of the building is especially noteworthy. Each of the corner works are of brick, four stories in height, and are built upon the same site as the works which there is a commodious L. on Hinks street. The ground area is much larger, and it still further accommodates the business of the firm. The firm has recently purchased five lots in the rear of the main building. Heretofore the only serious objection to the location was its distance from the railway; now the Canada Southern has agreed to put in a switch, thus connecting the shops with the main line, and which will be completed in a few days. There is little to wish for in the way of facilities.

M. T. Moore.

We could hardly hope to mention a name in this report which the Times makes upon St. Thomas that is better known throughout this section of country than that of the late M. T. Moore. The St. Thomas Tannery owes its origin to him, and to his energy and perseverance and that of his sons may be traced the fact that for next assuredly to which we here allude has gained. If we are not mistaken, Mr. Moore came to Canada from the United States in 1826, and in 1830 he located in St. Thomas. He purchased an old and small tannery that stood upon the site of or near the present building of the St. Thomas Tannery. He built a new tannery—the present one—which, however, has been largely added to in the years intervening since then. Mr. Moore remained proprietor of the business up to the time of his death, in 1874, and since then E. and W. H. Moore have continued it, though under the old name. The tannery is located in the "East End," upon Talbot street, central to all parts of the town. It is operated by steam power, and its production may be fairly stated at 160 sides per week. This production comprises slaughter stock, calf and kip skins, harness leather, &c., all, or nearly all, being of the best quality. Twelve or fourteen persons are employed in the tannery, and the trade extends throughout all the adjacent country, but the only regular customers are furnished the large manufacturers. Adjoining the tannery the firm has a large warehouse and saleroom, where they keep not only full lines of leather, but of findings and other material, and through the home goods most of the goods made at the tannery are sent to the other parts of the County. The business has a general attention—occasionally one of the other takes to the road, and they reply to it as being an excellent shape this fall—that is, an active demand exists for all the tannery can turn out.

The Messrs. Moore, father and sons, have done much for St. Thomas besides establishing the largest tannery in this section of the country. They have built one of the largest brick blocks of four stories, as well as three frame stores, and in donating the land upon which Alma College stands they gave existence of their real interest in the welfare of their town. They have built one of the finest houses in the County, and the firm have opened a boot and shoe house, to which we elsewhere refer. In conclusion we can but tender them our congratulations upon the success of their business enterprise, and wish them well for the future.

J. & W. Mickleborough.

The "Scotch Warehouse" is known far and wide throughout the County of Elgin, and the Times reports the liberality of telling the thousands of readers of to-day's paper "what he knows," or thinks he knows, relative to it and the firm who control its destinies. To begin, the house has been in existence twenty years or more. Mr. R. Carrie, now of Toronto, was its founder; he was succeeded by James G. Gie, and gave place to the present firm, formed one year ago. Mr. W. Mickleborough has been connected with the house ever since coming here from Guelph, where for some time he was a partner in the present firm. He also was from Guelph, where for some time he was a partner in the present firm. He also was from Guelph, where for some time he was a partner in the present firm.

Items relative to Aylmer and its trade.

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S. Fraine.

There are few merchant tailoring establishments in Ontario that equal the one of Fraine in point of general appearance or stock carried. As regards the work done here, everyone hereabouts knows, for the reputation of the house has not been bid under a bushel by any means. J. Fraine, Mr. Fraine is an Englishman, but he moved from New York City to London, Ont., about twelve years ago, and from London he came five years ago. Very soon after he opened a merchant tailoring house under the firm of Denton, Fraine & Co. In the past few years he has conducted the business alone. He has a really elegant establishment in the Opera House building, and unexcelled taste is displayed in the arrangement and show of goods. We noticed, during a recent visit, that there were all the lines of tweed, cloth, etc., a very large per cent. of all the material handled by Mr. Fraine is of European make—a customer has a wide range of choice, and for this fall and winter trade the styles and goods are very attractive. But even though the finest material, everything depends upon the cut, and in that respect Mr. Fraine may well rest his reputation and his business upon his work. And since he has been in the business, so much of that time has been kept very busy, having given employment to an average force of sixty workmen. The principal products of the works are stoves, repairs and mowers, and the firm are now engaged in the manufacture of portable engines or farmers' use upon an extensive scale. Some idea of their anticipations of next year's business may be inferred from the fact that for next assuredly to which we here allude has gained. If we are not mistaken, Mr. Moore came to Canada from the United States in 1826, and in 1830 he located in St. Thomas. He purchased an old and small tannery that stood upon the site of or near the present building of the St. Thomas Tannery.

C. B. Spohn.

The wholesale liquor and cigar trade of St. Thomas finds an able representative in the house and person of C. B. Spohn, and we have collated an item or two bearing upon him and his business. The origin of his business dates back some seven or eight years, when it was established under the auspices of the firm of Spohn & Lindop, and that co-partnership continued until October 1877, since when Mr. Spohn has been alone. His trade, as we have intimated, is as whole and adjacent countries. Both imported and domestic liquors are handled—one can find in stock the best grades of old Scotch, Irish or Canadian whiskey; the vineyards of France and other countries supply pure wines and brandies, while the lovers of "Old Tom" or "Holland" can find the juice of the juniper in packages of all sizes. In brief, the stock carried by the house is one in every way worthy of it, and whether it be in wood or in bottle, whether wine or liquor, or in any other form, the quality of the goods is of the best. A considerable—may we say a great portion of the trade comes to the house of C. B. Spohn, and usually with the most gratifying results. The cigar business is also one of the very large ones, and it, like the other departments of trade, is constantly growing. Last year's business was the best in the history of the house—this year the trade has shown increase over that of last year, and the prospect is encouraging. Mr. Spohn is quite an old citizen of St. Thomas; he has been here since 1853, then coming from Amster. For thirteen years he was connected with the dry goods trade of town and county, and he is well known for a present business, as a distinctive one, has developed very largely, thanks to his own efforts, and the future promises to be equally prosperous.