

1878

DOUBLE SHEET TO THE SEMI-WEEKLY AND WEEKLY TIMES.

THE TOWN OF ST. THOMAS.

A "TIMES" REPORTER HAS BEEN ACQUAINTED WITH FACTS RELATIVE TO ITS 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.

The large area throughout the county that has been brought under cultivation, the thriving, busy centres of trade that have sprung up, the schools and churches that have been built are all so many guarantees of future prosperity—a condition of things that shall reflect the fullest credit upon those who have been co-labourers in the great work which fell first upon the earliest settlers, and to which the people of to-day have fallen heir. That work is the up-building of town and country—the careful fostering of those enterprises that give semblance, at least, of healthful life, as well as the discarding of those prejudices and the abatement of that sectional feeling which rivalry appears to always engender.

No one conversant with this portion of Ontario will for a moment dispute the assertion that it is the garden spot of the Dominion—destined, in the years to come, to support teeming thousands where now are hundreds. The fertility of the soil, the character and habits of the population, the present and prospective facilities by which the surplus products of our farms and workshops reach the great mass of consumers, the growth of educational, church and social interests are indicative of the future, and when the TIMES makes claims of present prosperity and future greatness for the County of which St. Thomas is capital it wishes its claim to be accepted in the fullest, most material sense. A glance at the map of Ontario will convey something of an idea of which we wish to make plain.

The observer will notice how the railway system affects the County. The Canada Southern road passes through every township but one; the London and Port Stanley branch of the Great Western bisects the County, and the Air Line gives us competition with the Canada Southern both to the east and west. As a natural result of these roads entering in St. Thomas, this immediate section has reaped the most pronounced benefits thus far, but they are benefits that are cumulative in their character, and the effects, following a natural law, radiate from centre to circumference.

As this report shows in detail something concerning the growth of the commercial interests of St. Thomas, so, by induction, it shows the growth

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 being a "backwater." These were the years, however, during which St. Thomas in years gone by should have been 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 this time not only has the "East End" sprung 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 meet at least a score of substantial business blocks now in progress of completion which are 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 lighted with gas, and a very efficient system of water works, with hydrants at required points, gives most excellent protection against fire.

In the matter of schools and churches there is much to boast of. Of churches there are ten—two Presbyterians, two Baptists, two Methodist Churches of Canada, one Methodist 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 Canada churches are especially noticeable for their architectural beauty and finish.

The educational advantages afforded by St. Thomas are in keeping with its church privileges. The St. David's Ward school house is a fine two-story white brick structure, and contains four rooms; the Central School contains nine rooms. The Roman Catholic school has just about completed a handsome brick school house adjoining the church, and work upon the elegant Alma College buildings is being pushed forward as rapidly as possible.

In ascertaining facts relative to the rapid development of St. Thomas during the past half dozen years, we have naturally gathered together memoranda relative to the marked growth of the "East End." It is here that the new sites that are being added to the town where are now railway depots, great shops, handsome business blocks, and scores upon scores of private residences, was nothing but a vast, desolate, and almost unpopulated tract.

The location of the depots and shops of the Canada Southern Railway was one great initial cause of the present, undulating section of a few energetic men has proved a continuing cause. These gentlemen have evidently believed that the "logic of events" pointed unerringly to a distant future when the "East End" should be the seat and centre of trade, and though it would be unwise in us as a journalist to advance an opinion as to whether or not these hopes are to be realized, it is our duty to show, as fairly as we can, what has been, is being, and will be done toward advancing the material interests of that portion of the town.

plotted. They are laid out at right angles, and, for the most part, are 66 feet wide. Forest Avenue, leading to the College, and West Hill, are prominent. Having a handsome thoroughfare. The grade of these streets is such that excellent and easy drainage can be had; and almost everywhere in the right direction toward setting out shade trees.

In view of the very large transactions in real estate in the "East End" during the past three or four 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 deal of his own money, as well as that of others, has been invested in the development of the town, and he has become owner of about 150 acres of land. From the outset he has had great faith in the growth of St. Thomas. He believed that the location of the railway shops and depots 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 sidewalks, and erecting iron fences and gates to the lots he sells, and he has done so in the most judicious manner. He has built a large number of houses, and he has encouraged working men and others to provide themselves with homes, and that, too, upon the most favorable terms. A large portion of the lots he sells are upon time, or else they are leased for ten years, at the expiration of which time he will sell or sell at a concession. His present interest in the "East End" comprises about 300 lots, ranging in value from two hundred dollars per lot to forty dollars the front foot. He has many more lots in this connection we may add that values are increasing very rapidly, scarcely a tract having been made of "East End" lots in the past three years, except at a material advance. Next year values will undoubtedly be much greater than those of the present year. He is erecting a hotel on the northeast corner of Talbot and Forest streets, which promises to be a handsome affair. The architectural designs are very fine, and he wishes to make such improvements as will enhance the value of his unimproved property, and he has no objection to his name being mentioned in connection with the same. He wishes to make such improvements as will enhance the value of his unimproved property, and he has no objection to his name being mentioned in connection with the same.

The Banking Interest of St. Thomas.
In preparing a report upon St. Thomas and its various interests it is but natural that detailed space should be accorded also to the banking interest. It is a fact that a 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 sought, except at a material advance. Next year values will undoubtedly be much greater than those of the present year. He is erecting a hotel on the northeast corner of Talbot and Forest streets, which promises to be a handsome affair. The architectural designs are very fine, and he wishes to make such improvements as will enhance the value of his unimproved property, and he has no objection to his name being mentioned in connection with the same.

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 1874, and since that time it has been the pride of the community. Its president, Mr. R. W. Workman, has been its pioneer and its guide. The bank has a capital of \$200,000, and its deposits are now over \$1,000,000. It is one of the most successful banks in the Dominion, and its success is due to the skillful management of its president and the co-operation of its directors and shareholders.

The Imperial Bank of Canada.
The Imperial Bank of Canada was established in 1874, and has since that time become one of the leading banks in the Dominion. Its capital is \$500,000, and its deposits are now over \$2,000,000. It is one of the most successful banks in the Dominion, and its success is due to the skillful management of its president and the co-operation of its directors and shareholders.

Molsons Bank.
The Molsons Bank is one of the oldest banks in the Dominion, and has since its establishment in 1827 become one of the most successful banks in the Dominion. Its capital is \$1,000,000, and its deposits are now over \$5,000,000. It is one of the most successful banks in the Dominion, and its success is due to the skillful management of its president and the co-operation of its directors and shareholders.

not a difficult matter for him to adapt himself to the role of manager. Having formerly been engaged in extensive merchandizing and grain transactions here he had an acquaintance that was of great value to the Bank, and that personal acquaintance has resulted in the opening of many an account with the Imperial. Under his management a good, healthy business has been built up, especially with the merchants and business men of the County. The same time the general trade with the farmers, manufacturers and others, constantly grows. The savings department is also in excellent shape, and though we might say that the entire business is satisfactory yet we wouldn't say imply that other owners are not wanting. That the Bank is disposed to not only to accommodate the business of St. Thomas but also to open branches in other parts of the County is a fact that is not to be overlooked.

Geo. T. Claris.
Having written in detail of our chartered banks we next find memoranda upon our note-book relative to private banking, and as a representative of that interest we here refer to Mr. Geo. T. Claris. He is to be accorded, too, 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 has now reached in this 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 some time in Ontario, and he had spent his banking office was at Toronto, and when he opened his banking office was at Toronto, and when he opened his banking office was at Toronto.

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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 he not only acquired to himself a large fortune but also left a legacy to the County that has done more to advance its prosperity than any other man who has lived here since the establishment of the "East End."

String & Co.
We may with equal justice place the firm of String & 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 to which they have been connected with the County, relative to it and the firm who control its destinies, to begin, the house has been in existence twenty years or more. Mr. R. Carro, now of Toronto, was its founder, he was succeeded by James G. Fie, and he gave place to the present firm, formed one year ago. Mr. W. Mickleborough has been connected with the house ever since coming here from Galt, where for some time he was engaged in business.

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. Carro, now of Toronto, was its founder, he was succeeded by James G. Fie, and he gave place to the present firm, formed one year ago. Mr. W. Mickleborough has been connected with the house ever since coming here from Galt, where for some time he was engaged in business.

Haggert & Cochrane.
That the success of an enterprise, mercantile or manufacturing, depends very much upon the men who conduct it is forcibly illustrated in the business of Messrs. Haggert & Cochrane, and in order to "point a moral" if not "to teach 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.

C. B. Spohn.
The wholesale liquor and cigar trade of St. Thomas finds an able representative in the 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-some as it is profitable, and he imports and distributes all the wines, whiskeys and brandies, the liquors of the Old World, and the cigars of the New World. He also imports and distributes all the wines, whiskeys and brandies, the liquors of the Old World, and the cigars of the New World.

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The Hutchinson House.

Visitors to St. Thomas naturally wish to know of the hotel accommodations of the town. Briefly stated, they may be said to be good, bad, and indifferent, and so far as space admits, we have space of speaking of each.

J. & J. McAdam.

One of the oldest established of our prominent business interests is the wholesale and retail grocery house of J. & J. McAdam. Mr. James McAdam began trade here about twenty years ago, the house then being a general grocery and provision business, and being located in the old Victoria Buildings.

C. Norsworthy & Co.

The history of the "Red Foundry" is pretty thoroughly identified with that of St. Thomas and of the County. It has been the best of how popular the enterprise has become, and how it has prospered.

Robert Nelson.

The jewellery trade of St. Thomas has a number of representatives, and the various houses as a class will compare very favorably with those in any other town in the Province.

The New York Singer Sewing Machine.

Hardly a lady in the land but knows of the merits of the "Singer" Sewing Machine. There is scarcely a nook or corner of the civilized globe where these machines have not been found.

J. H. Tonkin.

Two flour and feed business of Towns find a representative in the house of J. H. Tonkin. The interest is a new one, having been established in March last, but it has, in a quiet unpretentious way, worked up a really good trade.

to extend the business, and we are glad to see the results so far have been quite satisfactory. The seed trade is a specialty, too, a fact that our farmers will do well to bear in mind.

J. H. Still.

For the past sixteen years the gentleman of whom we now write has been connected with the seed trade here from Home, New York, and his connection with our mercantile interests began with a clerkship for a gentleman now some years deceased, Mr. J. H. Still.

J. W. Cheswright.

"Medical Hall" is far from being unknown to our people. It is a building of some years ago, and is now under the management of Mr. J. W. Cheswright.

J. O. Kains.

The development or present status of a business interest is not always to be gauged by the number of years of its existence, and yet where a liberal-minded, progressive man is concerned, the years usually mark many changes.

J. E. Smith.

Mr. Smith is to be classed among the pioneers of town, although not among the oldest residents, he having lived here only about eleven years.

George Wegg.

The carriage making interest of St. Thomas finds its leading representative in the gentleman named above. His business is an old-established one, too; the oldest of its kind in the county.

as a matter of course, they have been very much enlarged and improved. Mr. George Wegg, Sr., continued the business until 1841, when he was succeeded by his son, the present proprietor.

J. J. Blackmore & Co.

The stove and house furnishings trade is an important feature of the business system of any town. Here in St. Thomas there are a number of firms who handle more or less of these lines of goods.

W. Roberts.

This issue of the "Times" will show that the many leavens of grocery and provision merchants in St. Thomas—indeed, their name is legion, and we have almost to refer more or less in detail to all those who may be considered as having a share in the trade.

G. I. Walker & Co.

We hardly think any one will dispute the assertion that G. I. Walker & Co. have the handsomest front to their salarion of any in town—indeed, we can't call to mind any store in Western Ontario that surpasses it.

Smith & Now.

Another of our dry goods houses is that presided over by Messrs. Smith & Now, of the East End. Their business has now been established for nearly three years, and has been so conducted as not only to give friends, but a patronage of the most desirable character.

J. H. Secord.

Mr. Secord is to be accredited with having been one of the first to establish trade in the east end. He is a native of this vicinity, and in 1840 he opened a general grocery and provision store in what was almost the center of that time.

Stacey & Tucker.

The Erie Iron Works have accomplished a good work since they were established. The original firm, formed two and a half years ago, was Stacey, Tucker & Wright, and the present firm of Stacey & Tucker dates from the time this house was established.

The Criterion Restaurant.

There are not many cities of twenty thousand inhabitants or so in the Province that have a restaurant as elegant as the "Criterion." In extending it a hearty support the people maintain a really metropolitan affair.

second flat, which is reached by a hallway from the street. Brussels carpet, well dressed tables, glittering silverware, and all the appointments of a stylish ladies' dining-room are noticeable, and even the appearance of the room is surprising.

George K. Creighton.

There is "another Richmond in the field," and it would seem, from appearances, at least, that those to whom we now refer are doing battle right faithfully and well.

Cripps & Doggett.

The "Elgin Marble and Stone Works" are worthy of mention in the report which the "Times" makes to-day upon a large proportion of the trade interest in the county.

John Powell & Co.

One of the best business stands in town—corner of the market—has lately been leased by the firm of John Powell & Co., and on Saturday the sign was put up.

R. L. Chandler.

Old Bellows' Block is the abiding place of only several of the leading business industries of the town, but it is the trade headquarters of a number of other gentlemen, concerning whom we make mention in this issue of the "Times."

J. B. Lewis.

Last February Mr. Lewis opened a photographic gallery in the Southwick block, Talbot street, and since then the rooms have been well patronized by those of our people who are desirous of securing pictures.

James Lilly.

Unfortunately for the great masses of the people, no reliable system of living without eating has yet been devised, so we are, to a greater or less extent dependent upon the grocers—and we must confess they do help, in an extraordinary manner, to make life enjoyable.

Dr. W. E. Smith.

Another of our druggists who has worked up an excellent business is the gentleman whose name heads this paragraph. Dr. Smith has been in the Province for nearly half a dozen years, coming here from Carlisle, in the County of Middlesex, where he was engaged in the practice of medicine for ten years.

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