Memories of Campbellford

T'was Spring 1883, the bridge was a sight to behold, with it's architectural span of
steel and timber, connecting the thriving village known as Campbellford.

Note of Interest: In the spring of 1870 the river rose so high it was fully expected that the wooden bridge would be carried downstream. For several days it was not safe to cross. It was loaded with stones as it shook and swayed with the strength of the might waters, and trembled as huge trees struck it on their way to the Bay of Quinte. A new bridge had to be built because the dam, required for water power, made the water too deep to be forded. In 1877 a new iron bridge was erected. In 1884 two new arches were added making the bridge iron from end to end. This bridge stood for some 20 years.

Campbellford

Campbellford, one of the four towns in the United Countries, straddles the Trent River in Seymour Township, about 30 miles northeast of Cobourg. When the first handful of settlers arrived in 1806, the "ford" was surrounded by thick virgin forest. It was not until the early 1830's that settlers arrived in enough numbers to make a dent in the trees. Those settlers were of English, Irish and Scottish extraction; many of them military men taking up grants of land.

Two of these soldier settlers were Scottish-born brothers, Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Campbell and Major David Campbell, who arrived in 1831 and were granted 2,200 acres of Seymour Township land that had been surveyed in 1819. The land was situated at the end of the best ford in the Trent River between Crowe Bay and Percy Reach. This ford crossed the river from the vicinity of the old Baptist Church to a point lower down on the east side of the river. Here, at "Campbell's Ford" there arose a settlement, which, about 1854, was officially name Compbellford.

Robert, who had achieved an outstanding record in the Napoleonic Wars, died in 1836 and lies buried on the family farm just outside Campbellford. David had better luck, serving as Crown Land Agent for the township 1832-39. He later moved to Cobourg where in 1856, he formed a syndicate with Nesbitt Kirchoffer and James Cockburn to develop Campbellford. In 1876 it was incorporated as a village, at which time the Town Hall was taken over from the Township of Seymour at the cost of $600. It had been re-built in 1857. Campbell died at "Sidbrook", his Cobourg estate, in 1881. Campbellford was incorporated as a town on July 1, 1906. At this time there were 66 businesses listed in the community.

The area was heavily wooded at this time the settlers arrived and it had to be cleared before any farm product could be obtained, thus causing lumbering to be the first big industry which of course, depended on the Trent River.

In 1840 a wooden bridge was built across the river just south of the ford, and the factories, mills, blacksmiths' shops, hotels, stores and places of worship were established in the vicinity. In 1846 a power dam was built south of the bridge; a woollen mill was built on the west side of the river, and a sash and door factory. On the east side, Robert Cockburn built a good sized flour mill, and John Dickson a foundry and machine shop.

Fire and flood wrought havoc on the west side of the river, destroying the buildings. The Mirfield mill and Oulton's sash and door factory were soon replaced the the Trent Valley Woollen Mill, owned by the Gaults of Montreal. Later, when Hamilton Gault withdrew from the firm, the mill became the Campbellord Cloth Company.

The old stone woollen mill on the opposite bank of the river was built by a group of local men in 1848. The flour mill built by Robert Cockburn about 1846 was later owned my Mayor Hector Mcmillan.

The first hotel was that of Peter Millar on the site of the old St. Lawrence. Across the river was the Angel's Rest, operated by the Wellmans. Lumbering made hotel keeping profitable, and at one time there were seven hotels in Campbellford. The Dominion, the Windsor, and the Gibson House are now just memories.

Church services date back to 1835, if not earlier. Services were conducted by visiting clergy and laymen. Edwards Bowen, the first Anglican rector, conducted services at "The Patch" in 1854. It was this congregation that started to worship in Christ Church, the first church to be erected in the village.

The first Presbyterian Church was erected in 1861 on the site of the present church. In 1856 the first Methodist Church was built at West's Corners, and the Wesleyan Methodist Church appeared the following year. There was also an Episcopal Methodist Church where the present Baptist Church is, which, together with the Bible Christian Church united with the Wesleyans. In 1880 this church was torn down and replaced in 1926 when the church union took place, becoming the present day St. John's United Church. The first serving of Mass for Foman Catholics was in John Boland's school, some miles in the country. This was in 1874. For several years curates came in from Bellville until the first white painted frame church was built in the village. This fell prey to fire in 1899 and was replaced by the present stone edifice.

Campbellford is the business centre of a large agricultural and tourist trading area. Straddling the Trent as it does, the town is a mecca for fishing, boating and water enthusiasts. No less than 30 nearby camps / resorts are busy Spring to Autumn catering to the needs of vacationing families.

In 1873 the "Herald" weekly was founded by T.J. Vosper – he edited it until 1904. In latter years it became known as the "Campbellford Herald".

Opening Campbellford's New Bridge – November 23, 1904
As we can see many of the villagers turned out for the grand opening of the Trent Bridge.
This photo was taken looking West, showing what was then known as the River Block.

River Block – Around 1850 – Today it's known as Bridge Street West
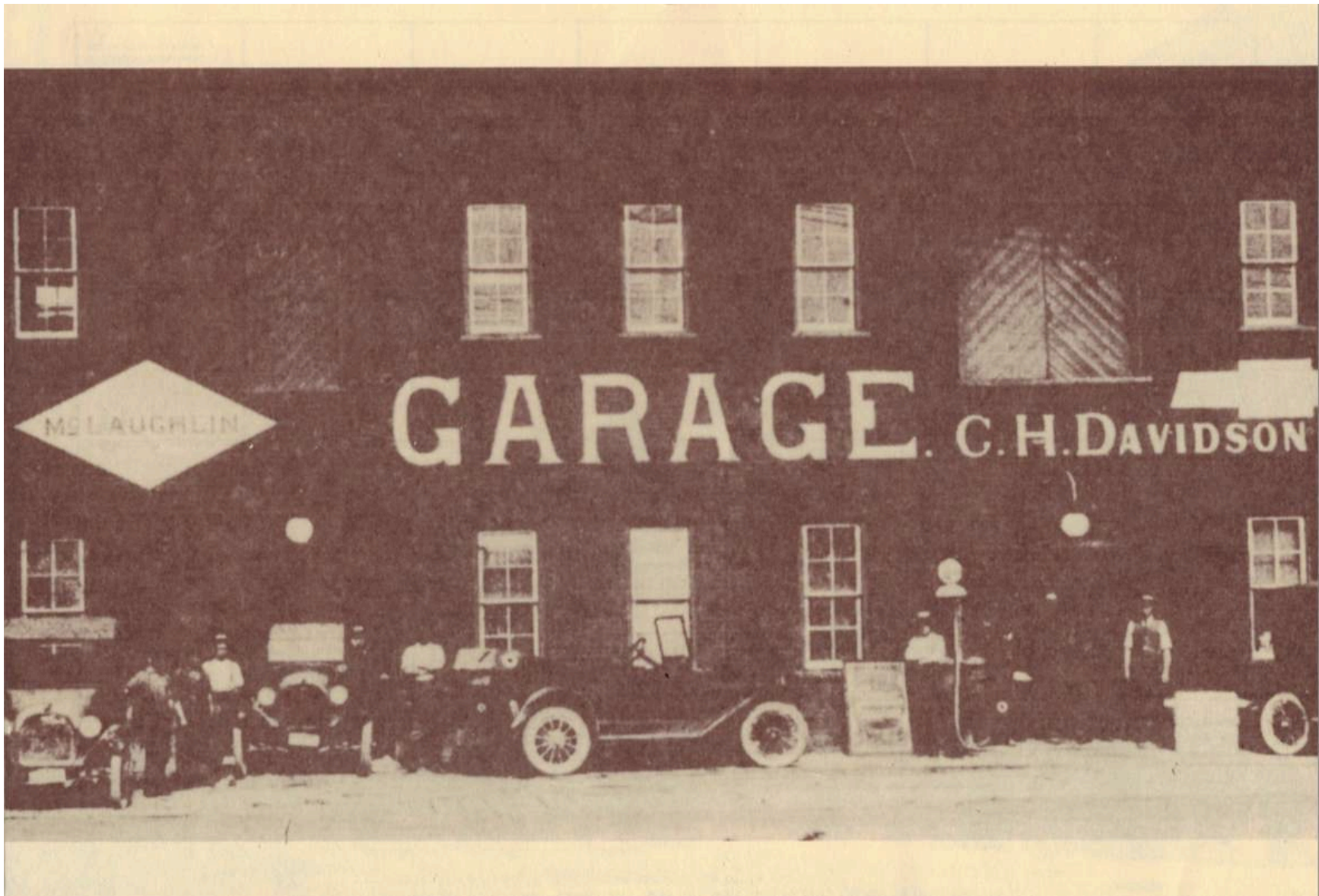This side of the river was a "bee-hive" of activity, with its many merchants busy from early dawn to dusk.
Among them were: C.W. Turner, a music shop, a Photo Co., a Harness shop, a Bank and a Butcher Shop.

Front Street
These Buggies were call "Carrie-alls" and they were used to carry passengers
from the village to the train station which was on the west side of the river.

C.H. Davidson Garage – Opened in 1913 – Photo take 1918
C.H. Davidson came to Campbellford in 1890 at the age of 17 years. He had 25 cents in his pockets.
He worked at and operated a bake shop. In 1910 he began selling McLaughin automobiles.
He acquires the old Dickson Building on the west side of Mill Street.

Campbellford Fire Brigade – 1907
A. McDonald, J.Caskey, G. Salter, A. Donald, G. Cock, F. Dinwoodie. T. Mills, R. McDonald,
C. Keir. G. Haig, E. Little, W. Tait, W. Lows, A. McDonald, Capt. Irwin, Capt Darginson, Chief Davidson.

Hunting and Fishing
Straddling the Trent as it does, the town is a real mecca for fishing, hunting, and boating enthusiasts.

Mill Street – Showing Dickson Bros. Foundry, Boot & Shoe Factory and Fire Hall
Dickson Bros. was established in 1859. Power supplied by water power. The Dickson firm was advertised
as "Manufacturers of Agricultural Implements, Church Bells from native copper, $100.00 to $1,000.00".
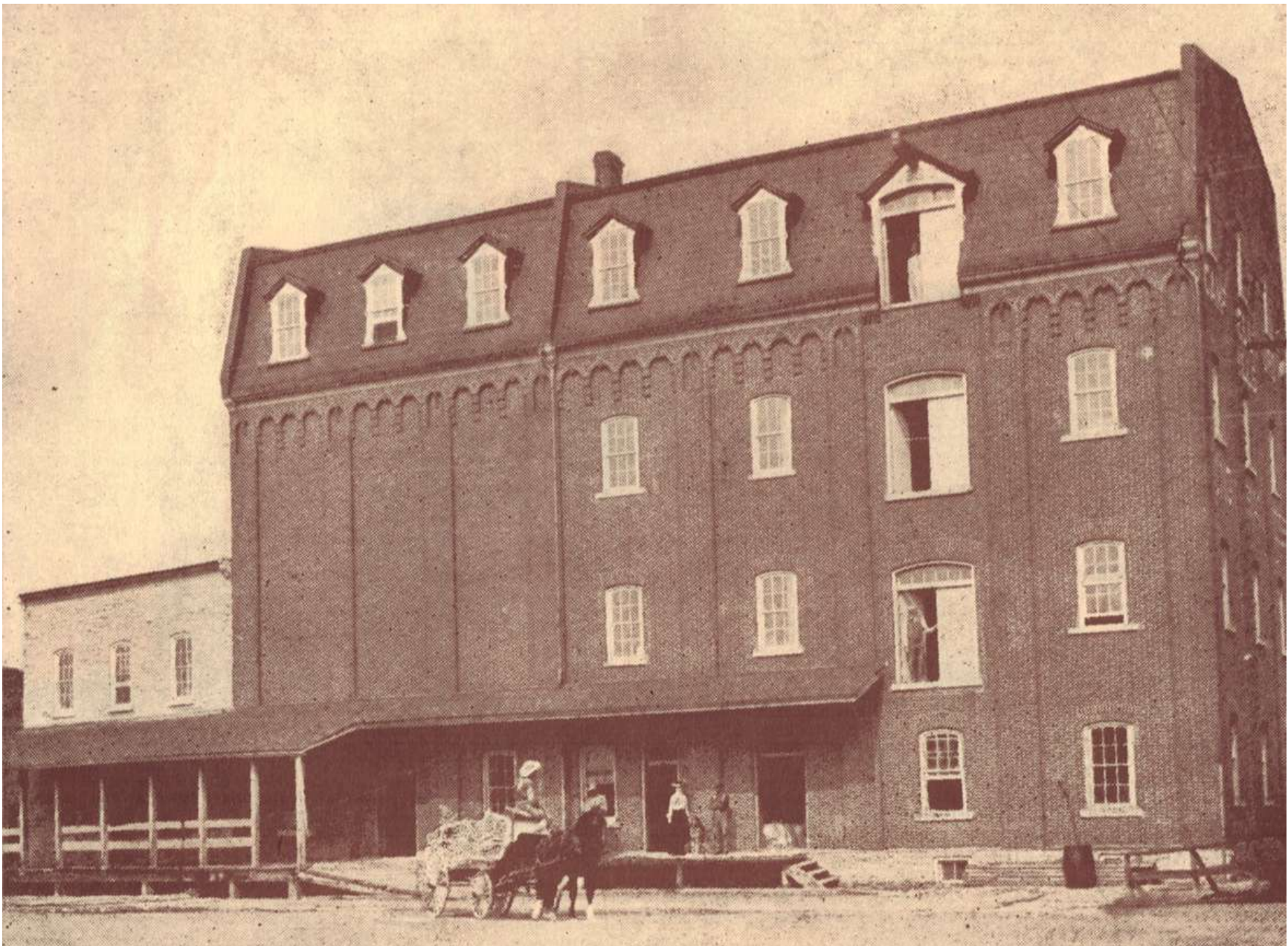
Charles Smith – Flour Mill built by Robert Cockburn about 1846
The year 1881 was one of considerable importance to the history of the village. Charles Smith of Warkworth
purchased the large flour mill formerly owned by Mr. Robert Cockburn. In later years the mill was owned by Mayor Hector Macmillan.
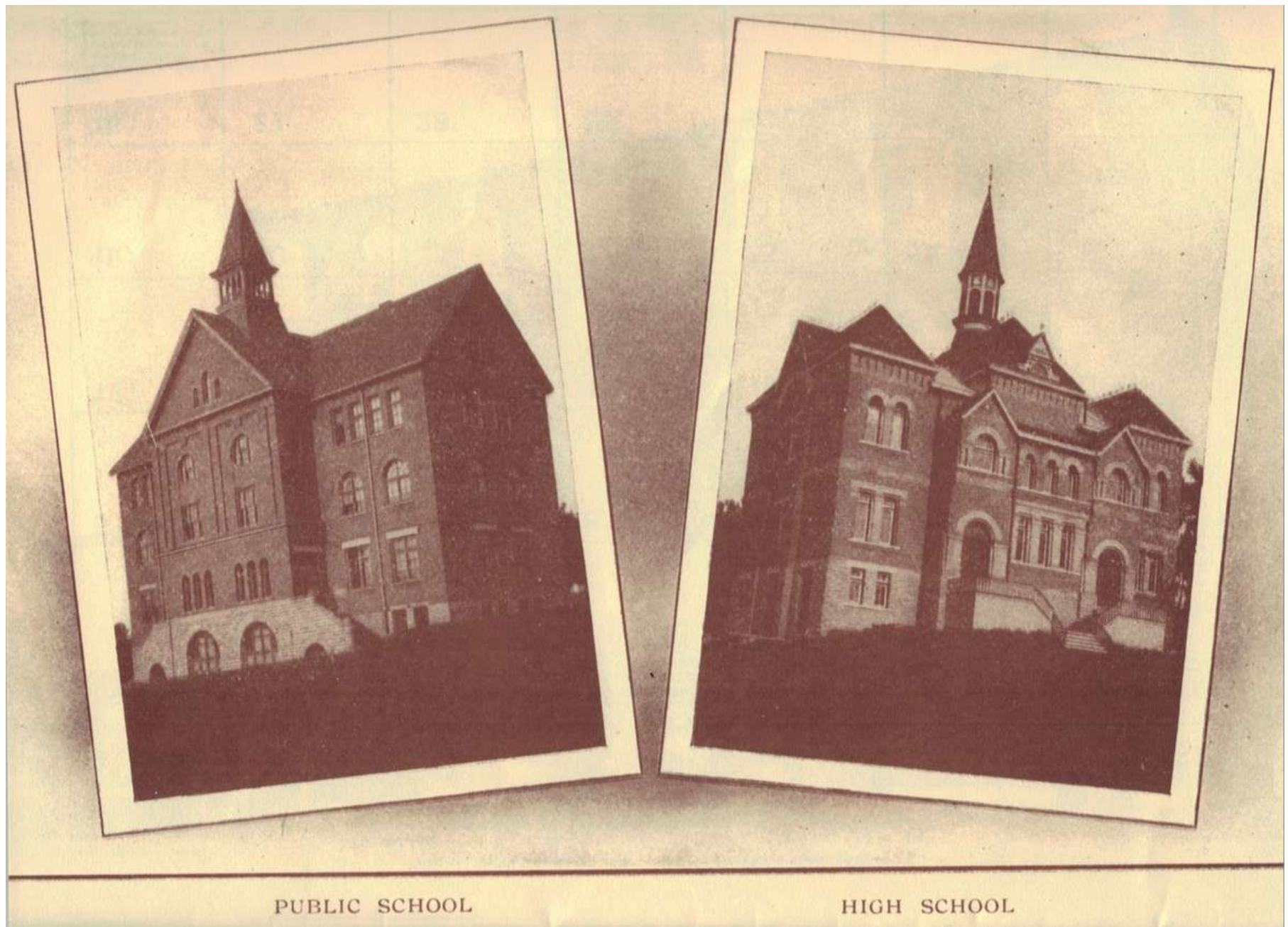
PUBLIC SCHOOL   HIGH SCHOOL

Schools: The High School – built in 1876. The Public School – built in 1890

In 1890 there were three teachers at the High School with 110 pupils. In 1890 the Public School was one room, 1 teacher and 85 children. The first school house in Campbellford was a log building on Ranney Street. The Campbellford School, which was both public and a high school was the "finest ever seen", built in 1872. The public school built in 1886 was destroyed by fire in 1889 and the succeeding building suffered the same fate in 1966.

Trent Valley Woollen Mills

On August 23rd, 1877 the Gault Woollen Mill burned to the ground. When it was rebuilt it became known as the Trent Valley Woollen Mills.

In July 1881 the brick carriers on the construction of the Trent Valley Woollen Mills went on strike against the wheeling of brick to the third story of the mill. A hoist was made and they were soon back on the job.

Campbellford was one of the first municipalities in the province to have it's own generating station. When the canal was built in 1914 Campbellford was given the righ to use surplus water at the Crowe Bay for the generation of electric power. The station is still operating today.

RESIDENCE OF A. H. McKEEL

RESIDENCE OF E. T. MORTON,
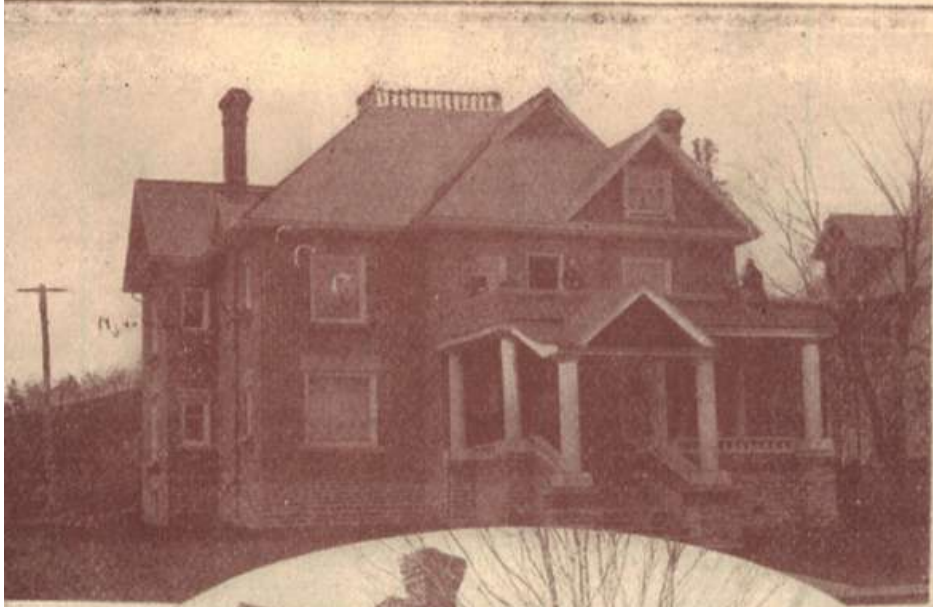
RESIDENCE OF J. E. DIAMOND
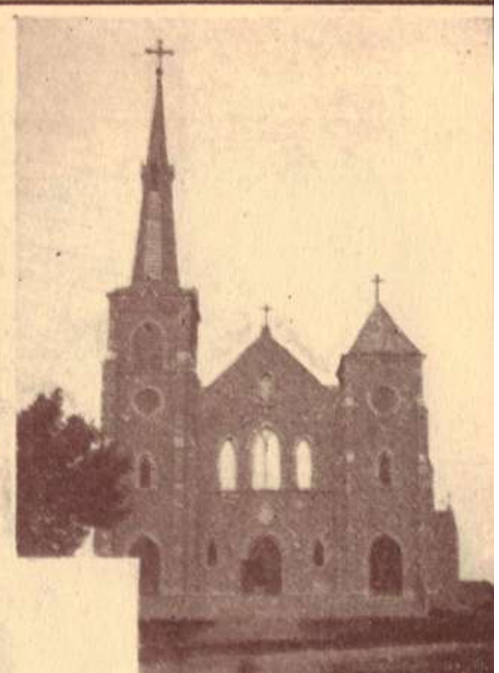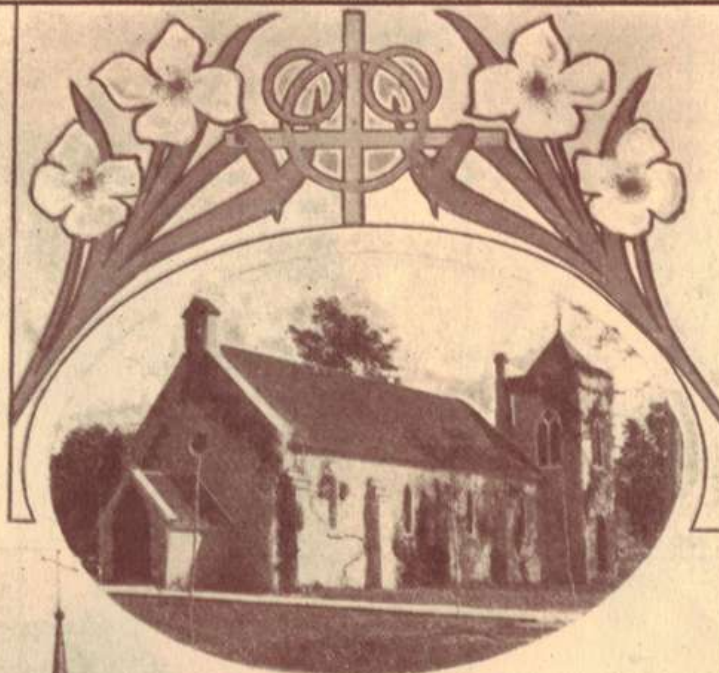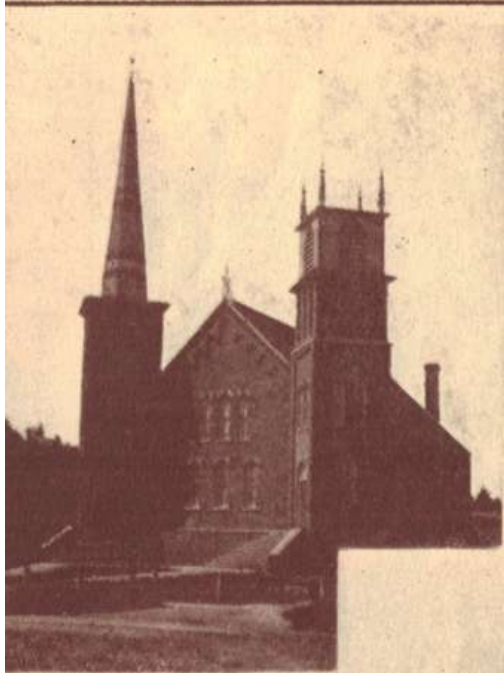
RESIDENCE OF A. A. MULHOLLAND

Pictured above we see a small example of the many stately homes that can be found in and around Campbellford.

METHODIST CHURCH ANGLICAN CHURCH ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

BAPTIST CHURCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Churches
"Unto Him Be Praise"
The forerunners of our present state of advancement were men of great faith. Their complete strength lay not in their arms and legs but in the quality of their faith. They needed that faith just as surely as they had need of strong limbs. Their chief form of association with one another was when work was done and the Sabbath was at hand.
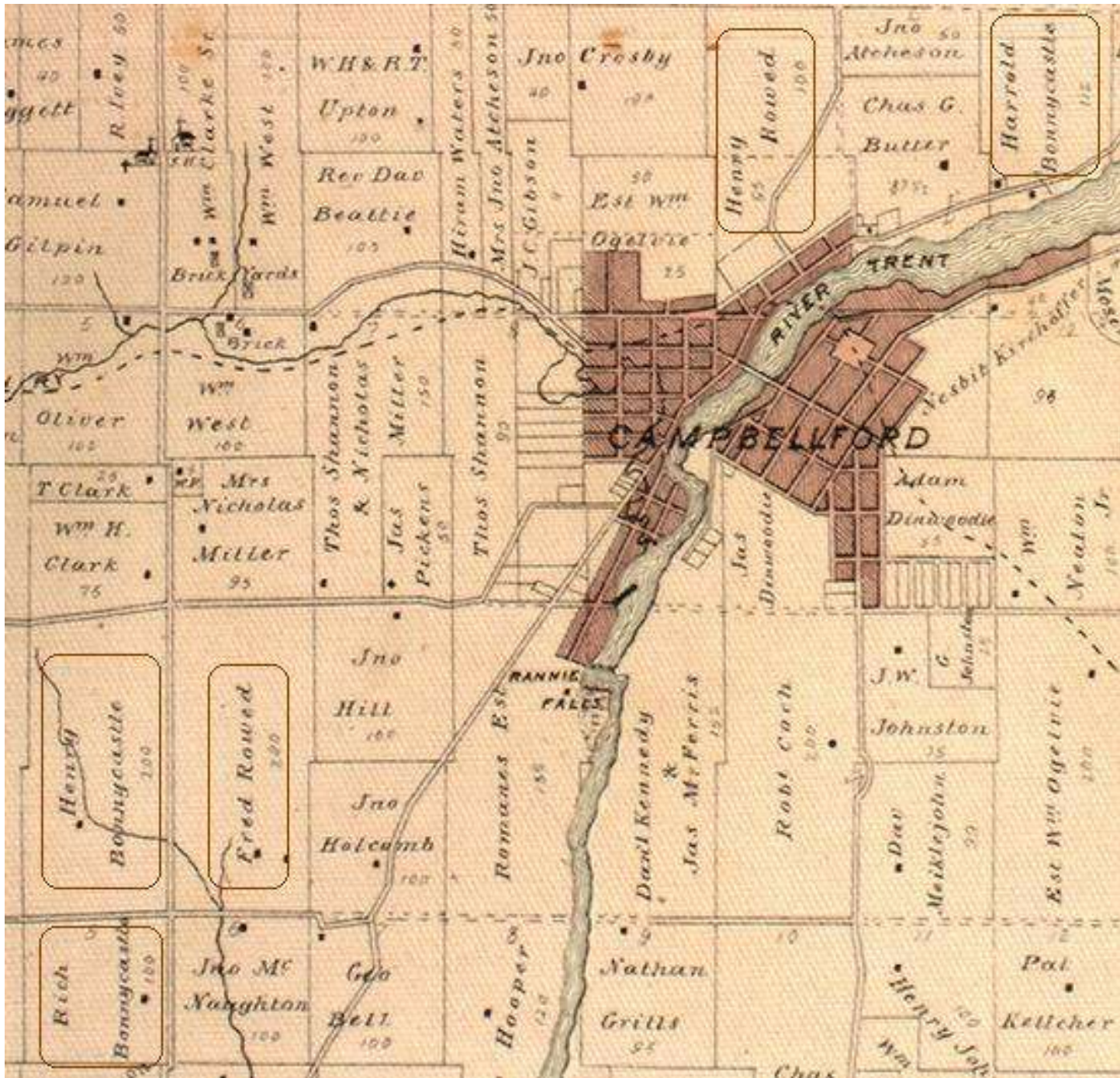
Seymour Township (Campbellford), Northumberland, Ontario 1878

SOME MEMORABLE DATES

1830
April 27th   Major Campbell came from Cobourg to the Campbellford area.

1845
March 25th*   Sir Richard Bonnycastle had a narrow escape at Healey's Falls.

1854
September 20th Christ Church was open, it was the first church to be erected in the village.

1870
March 2nd   Worst flooding in the towns history.

1873
December 9th   The Herald Weekly was founded by J.T. Vosper who edited it till 1904.

1874
March 5th*   Terms at auction sales: "one year's credit on sales over 10.00"'
May 12th*   Ely & Young Cabinet Factory burned.
May 24th*   The first baseball teams in Campbellford were called "The Fear Not's" & "The Lone Stars".
August 9th*   The first serving for Mass for Roman Catholics was held in John Bolands School outside of town.

1875
April 9th   Fifteen business and two hotels went up in smoke.

1876
April 10th   By-law was passed to purchase a fire truck.
May 28th   Planing Mill burned.
June 20th*   Examinations written at high school. Seven gentlemen from the village assisted.

1878
September 18th Roderick Keelar, an exporter, had to that date in that year, shipped two tons of frog legs.

1879
June 10th   The first train, Engine No. 38, huffed and puffed across the Trent.

1880

June 24th*   First Railroad Station in Campbellford was officially opened. The train was packed with 400 people.

July 8th   Nineteen tons of cheese was shipped from Campbellford to Hoards Station by train.

September 30th M.A. Hawley introduced the telephone: "the little instrument served as a communication between his house & his store in the Trent Block".

December 6th   First train from Belleville to Peterborough went through Campbellford.

December 12th* Gibsons field had an open ice rink for hockey. Charge $0.05.

1881

July 21st   Major Campbell passed away at the age of 96.

1882

June 14th   Presbyterian Church cornerstone was laid.

1884

July 3rd   A by-law for the "Prevention of Vice and Immortality" was passed.

December 15th Seymour Agricultural Society purchased land for the Fair Grounds.

1885

January 1st   The Herald reports the Post Office was moved to a new office in the Ferris Block.

May 5th   Mr. D. McColl or Seymour drove into town on his bob sleighs.

May 8th*   "Saved Army" built a barrack in Campbellford (Salvation Arm).

1886

November 10th J.W. Dinwoodie built the first covered curling and skating rink.

1887

April 15th   The Citizens Band was first formed by Mr. James Dickson.

1888

January 20th*   A full course meal cost $0.15 and cigarettes $0.05. A telephone cost $15.00 per year.

July 16th*   J.M. Ferris was chosen as Police Magistrate.

1889

January 16th*   The Standard bank had to increase its staff from 1 to 3.

May 9th   A Jubilee banquet is reported as having been an event in the history of the "Saved Army" in Campbellford.

1890

March 7th   The first electric lights were turned on.

1891
July 10th   "Saved Army" held an open air camp meeting.
October 7th*   The first Public Utilities Commission was installed by acclamation.

1893
June 3rd*   A man named Scriver was fined $1.00 for fishing on Sundays in Hastings Village.

1894
September 1st   The first Labour Day was proclaimed.

1895
September 25th   Seven bike riders ran a competitive relay race against Cobourg. Campbellford won the first four places.
November 1st*   There was so much snow on the bridge drivers were asked to walk their horses.

1896
April 17th   The Burnbrae Church burned due to an electrical storm.

1887
September 15th   Deer were offered for sale at $0.04 a pound. No takers.

1898
January 10th   A gala carnival marked the opening of the Victoria Skating Rink.
February 3rd*   Charles Horsman manufactured soda water and ginger ale.
February 14th*   J. McGregor & F. Tomkins repair business would repair anything but "locomotives & bones".

1899
February 28th*   Horse racing on the ice at Crowe Bay. Trotters and pacers were entered in competition from neighbouring towns.
February 29th*   Serious outbreak of typhoid fever – vaccine fee was $0.25.
June 8th   A tremendous electrical storm. The village was without electricity for one week.
August 10th*   First frame construction Roman Catholic Church burned; to be replaced by the current stone edifice.
August 26th*   A cheese factory was built in Campbellford below the electric light station. The old Tannery was used as a curing room.
September 17th   Locations for 22 street lights were selected.

1900
February 8th*   A grand ball was held in the music hall (Masonic Temple) – dancing 9-1. Lunch was served; then more dancing till dawn.
May 20th   The Roman Catholic Church cornerstone is laid.

1904
November 23rd   The new bridge was opened.
November 28th   H.H. Little built two toboggan slides, each 400 feet long, near the Anglican Church.

1906

March 13th*   Campbellford's population was 2,521.
July 1st   Campbellford was incorporated as a town.

* Means events actually took place in the year stated but not necessarily in that month, nor on that date.

CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Campbellford-Seymour Chamber of Commerce
The Campbellford-Seymour Chamber of Commerce proudly presented in the year of the ONTARIO BICENTENNIAL in 1984, this first annual pictorial souvenir calendar, displaying a small part of Campbellford's heritage. The Chamber, consistently, throughout the years promoted this area for residents and it's many tourists. Proceeds from this and future sales are directed towards continuing the Chambers interest in the community. (*President Lillian Turner - 1984*)

President

Lillian Turner

Lillian Turner (1984)