

New Toronto Historical Society Volume 2 No. 3 September 2000

Upcoming Events

Mimico Estates

Join us on September 19, 2000 at 7:30 pm at LAMP for a presentation and slide show on the *Mimico Estates* by Michael Harrison.

Hurricane Hazel Remembered

This will be a joint meeting with the Alderwood Historical Society, Long Branch Historical Society and the Etobicoke Historical Society on **October 18, 2000** at the Franklin Horner Senior's Centre beginning at 7:30 pm. The guest speaker will be Steve Pitt.

Join Us !

Join us to learn more about the history of the Town of New Toronto. New Members welcome ! Please phone Wendy Gamble at 251-1349 for more information.

New Fire Hall For New Toronto

Building Designed To House New Pumper - To Cost \$17,000

New Toronto fire equipment will be housed on a new solid brick building 50 feet by 50 feet, trimmed with out stone. The hall, located on Eighth St., west side, new Lake Shore Rd., will cost about \$17,000. A band room will be on the second floor. New Toronto council decided on the new building to house the new fire-fighting equipment, consisting of a 600-gallon a minute pumper and a new ladder truck. The building was designed by James, Proctor, Redfern and H.A. McIntyre, architects and engineers.

The Advertiser August 10, 1930

Recalls Old Times In New Toronto

Many Changes Have Taken Place in the Last 35 Years - John Slatter
- Built First Shop in New Toronto
- Saw Factories Locate

Thirty-five years ago a blacksmith looking for a place to open a shop decided on trying his luck some ten or twelve miles out of Toronto in what is now the Town of New Toronto. In looking about he found a spot in the corner of a wheat field on a farm that faced what is now Seventh Street. Here it was that John Slatter built the first shop to be erected in the locality that a short time later was called New Toronto.

Mr. Slatter is now 80 years old and resides with his daughter, Margaret, in Muncie Ind. They are in town this week renewing old acquaintances and talking of old times.

Mr. Slatter well remembers the early days when he first came to this district. Before he could build his blacksmith shop he first had to cut the green wheat that was growing in the field where he built. Then there were no roads in the district except the Lake Shore Road, but that was almost impassable many months of the year. There were no crossroads, no telephones, but they almost had gas lights.

Those were the days when a number of promoters from Toronto believed that a great future lay ahead of the district that John Slatter choose [sic] for his blacksmith shop. We wonder what they would say if they were able to drive around the town to-day ?

A syndicate composed of Messrs. McDonald, Sheeriden [sic], Roberts, Howard, Barrett and several others

bought up a tract of farm land laying between what is now 5th and 8th Streets. They proposed building a number of factories and open up a new town. The factories and houses soon appeared and the community took the name of New Toronto.

Mr. McDonald built a tin factory, and his building forms part of the Ritchie Ramsey present plant.

The Morrison Brass Works was erected on the ground where now stands the new Boxer Factory.

Mr. Sheridan built the Peace Foundry on the ground which is now the Anaconda on 8th Street.

The Barbed Wire Plant erected the building, or rather part of the building, now occupied by Donnell Carman & Mudge Leather Works.

A Veneer and Planing Mill occupied the first building that was erected on the ground where now stands the Ritchie-Ramsay Paper Mills. Some of the products of this old mill are still to be seen in some of the older houses in New Toronto.

The men who came here in those early days were progressive and desired to have something better than oil lamps for lighting their plants and homes, and a company was formed to drill for gas. Mr. Jos. Barrett was one of the promoters, and it is told that he sold his own stock a short time before the well was shot and greatly bemoaned the loss of a fortune that the "high pressure" well looked to be when struck.

Things were just the same in those days in that it takes money to make the mare go. The promoters arranged to have an excursion train run out from Toronto so that the city people could see with their own eyes that New Toronto was the place to sink their money in a paying gas well. The drilling was carried on for some time and finally it was decided to "shoot her." Great excitement prevailed in the hamlet. Farmers came for miles about. The nitroglycerin was brought here from Buffalo to do the work, and when it arrived it was lowered in the well and exploded and gas was flowing in New Toronto.

It was now that the promoters decided to bring out the city people with their bundles of money, but before the train arrived the well seemed to become lazy and was in the act of giving up when the promoters thought that perhaps if the well was capped for a little time it would be in better health. This was done. The excursion finally arrived, money and all, but the casing still rears its head above the ground. Yes, it is capped, you can see it any day back of the old tin factory on 8th Street.

When those first factories came there were no houses in New Toronto except the few farm houses. However, Mimico boasted of a settlement with a post office, station, general store and everything. Mr. Slatter built his home in Mimico and walked through the field to and from his shop.

Mr. Cris. Reed built the first business block in town. The building on the Highway now occupied by the Public Utilities and the Public Library was the first store in town and it was in this building that the first post office was opened.

With the boom that came with the factories, a number of houses were erected on 5th and 6th Streets, and for a time houses were very hard to get. Then came the bad days and the boom was over. The bottom had fallen out of everything. Houses were offered for rent at \$4 a month. In some cases people were offered homes to live in for the keeping of them in repair. Even with free rent it was impossible to get tenants, and the greatest excitement the village knew in those days was when word went around that one of the late Wm. Hennessy's horses had fallen through the floor of an empty house and the help of all was required to pull the animal out of the basement.

The shop that Mr. Slatter built here 35 years ago still stands on 8th Street and is now used as a garage.

The Advertiser , September 3, 1925 .

Reg. N. Boxer In Wallpaper Merger

A merger of four wallpaper factories of the Dominion has just taken place. The Watson Foster Co., Inc., Ltd., of Montreal; Colin McArthur Co. Inc., of Montreal, the Reg. N. Boxer Co., of New Toronto and Staunton's Limited, Toronto, have been merged into Canadian Wallpaper Manufacturer's Association Limited, with headquarters in Toronto.

The Canadian merger was promoted by the combine in England of wallpaper manufacturers T. Chasney, who is now in the city, is chairman of the executive [sic]. Each of the four manufacturers have a representative on the new executive. The capitalization of the English combine is \$25,000,000.

As a result of the merger four old established business houses of Canada disappear as individual concerns, ranging in age from 17 to 50 years. It is expected that the number of representatives and employes [sic] will be reduced. The Colin McArthur Company of Montreal have closed their factory and the machinery from it is being moved elsewhere.

The Advertiser July 14, 1927