

PETROLIA

CANADA

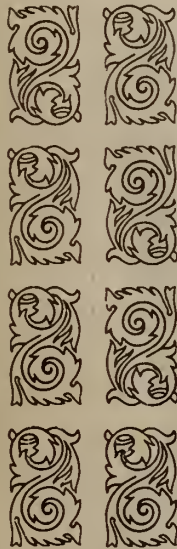
1908



The EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE
COLLECTION *of* CANADIANA



Queen's University at Kingston

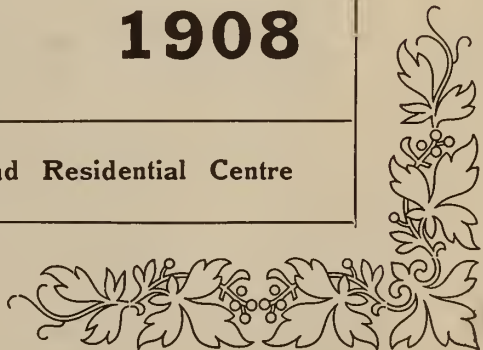


PETROLIA

CANADA

1862 . . 1908

Its Advantages as a Commercial and Residential Centre





MAIN STREET, 1866



MAIN STREET, 1908.
(Looking East)

Sketch of Petrolia's Early Days.

By J. H. FAIRBANK.



IN the beginning the Township of Enniskillen contained eighty-six thousand eight hundred acres. By Assessment Roll, of 1847, it had three hundred and ninety-six and a half acres under cultivation by 37 settlers, who owned thirty-four cows and sixteen dogs.

Very near the centre of this once grand hunting ground, where, sheltered by the towering walnuts, oaks and elms, the wild deer roamed in freedom, and the wilder turkey reared its brood, Petrolia was born. A spring showing oil was its father. It was named in 1861 by the first postmaster, Patrick Barclay, and three others.

At this time oil had caught the attention of George L. Thayer and other Boston gentlemen, who acquired lands, sank curbed wells (40 feet from the surface) to the rock where they found oil. They built a refinery. The oil found was heavy, an excellent lubricator but not adapted to make lamp oil.

Among those early in the fight were, S. J. Lancaster, Joseph Barrett, John Wattie, Oliver Chamberlin, Hugh Smiley, and Henry Canneff. A mile up stream, Bear Creek, ran a mill, where John Woodley ground food for the hungry.

During the years 1862-63-64, the infant Petrolia slept, while Oil Springs budded, blossomed, bloomed and faded. Its "rock poured forth rivers of oil," and the oil ran down the "river."

In those days there was no railway, no highway, no pipe line. From Wyoming, by Petrolia, to Oil Springs was only one mud-hole. It was twelve miles long, and of uncertain depth.

Oil men met—met frequently—and passed resolutions. Andrew Elliot built a plank road.

The last half of the year 1865 arrived. Lee and Johnson had surrendered. The American civil war was ended. Crude oil had touched \$10.00, gold. The thing was inviting. Americans, ballasted with greenbacks, invaded Petrolia. Hotels were quickly built, and quickly filled; William Boyce, at the Great Western; Lombard & Simpson, at the

United States; Fletcher & Boswell, at the American; also the Saginaw and New York, all in action. The "Boom" was on.

Amongst the arrivals were Col. Thompson, Dow Elwood, Col. Shoemaker, Frank Smith, Col. Parsons, Dr. Underwood, Horace Blackmore, Major VanTuyt, H. W. Lancey, Judge Avery.

There also came John D. Noble, John McMillan, J. H. Fairbank, Edwin D. Kerby, John Brake, and many others.

Amongst the early builders were Walter Oliver, Robert Paul, John Sinclair, Malcolm Scott. A little later came John Crosbie (the hunter), J. & J. Kerr, Robert Jackson, and others.

Of the early storekeepers were Thompson, McQuien, Bennett, McGarvey, McKenzie & Cary, Chris. McKenzie, and Father Bishop, a little later.

In those days the anvil of George Sanson, "Petrolia's Blacksmith," rang to the forging of drilling tools that, with Petrolia men who learned to use them, have carried the name of Petrolia to the ends of the earth. Tronson Draper's, and Hector McKenzie's machine shops finished up these tools. Later the mantle of these modern Tubal Cain's fell upon James Joyce, the sons of Hector McKenzie, McKee & Marwick, Mike Gorman, and others.

Peter Taylor was captain of transportation. With his 56 horses he moved anything that had two ends to it.

In those days Petrolia "took its medicine" from Dr. Buckham, supplied by Druggist W. H. Dale.

In the spring of 1866 there were four frame dwellings west of the bridge, Wheelwright, Col Thompson, Bennett, Fairbank.

June first, 1866, the fool Fenian raid occurred. It was a cooling bath to Petrolia. Late in the year the "King" well was struck, and Petrolia had "oil to burn," and a year later burned it. On the 17th of December, 1866, the Great Western Railway branch, Wyoming to Petrolia, was opened. Eleven years later came the Canada Southern Railway.

In September, 1866, came the first newspaper, "The Valuator and Petrolia Reporter," T. Galbraith, editor. It demised young. "The Weekly News-Letter and Petrolia Advertiser," came 30th of September, 1870, J. B. Dale, proprietor and editor. July 5th, 1872, R. Herring became proprietor and editor of "Petrolia Advertiser and Sentinel." March 20th, 1879, came the "Petrolia Topic," Lowery Bros., proprietors and editors.

In 1867 came the first election for Legislative Assembly. T. B. Pardee and Robert Rae, candidates for Lambton.

There was something to an election in those days—one polling place in all Enniskillen—two days polling. Booths convenient to poll—"lashins" of refreshments perfectly free to all. Here the "Free and Independent" openly recorded their choice.

John McDonald built stills for John McMillan. A year or so later William Stevenson and Arthur Kavanaugh built Parson & Co.'s 2,000-bbl. still.

By 1868, oil refineries were numerous here and elsewhere. At times they worked together, at times they did not. There was a surplus of crude. To aid export, a Crude Oil Association was formed, Dow Elwood, president; J. H. Fairbank, manager; John Brake, Alex. Craise, directors. Heavy sales for export only, at 60 cents, moved the surplus.

Among the many, who in these days pitched their tents in Petrolia, were, James Lawson, Joseph McDougall, R. A. Townsend, Samuel and William Stokes, Melville Parker, Henry Fish, Henry Rosenburg, J. C. Hyde, Robert Egan, Joseph Ward, D. M. Kennedy, William Lindsay, James Perkins (and here the Perkins boys grew), Hiram Cooley, W. H. Hammond, Patrick Gleeson, M. J. Woodward, Harry Kittridge, James Peat, A. T. Gurd, John Walker, James McCort, W. G. Fraser, John Fraser, J. W. Ford, "Mon" Crysler (another hunter), John Tracey, King Houston, Ai Moss, Adam Isbister, W. E. Reynolds, Lewis Lambert, Charles H. Errington, C. A. Farr, John Carmichael, Wallace Bell, H. H. Gore, George Denham, John Watson, Henry Prince, James Joyce, James Harley, E. A. Archer, George Moncrieff, W. K. Gibson, O. Simmons, Fred Reid, George Primmer, Charles Ribighini, John Shields, Duncan Sinclair, Neil Sinclair, J. S. Lougheed, Thomas Cochrane, R. S. Dunlop, John Rispin, Thomas Rutter, Donald Cameron, Marshall, and Goodrich, and many others. If not here just then, they were coming.

The churches kept step with the procession. Three of them built on England avenue, East End:

Methodist—Rev. G. W. Frazee, first minister.

Presbyterian—Rev. J. W. Chestnut, first minister.

Catholic—Rev. Henry Japes, first priest.

In the "trek" westward the Methodists and Presbyterians camped for a time on the Flats. Here, too, the Baptists (Rev. T. S. Johnston, first minister), first built. Rev. John McRobie came in 1874—He is here yet.

The Church of England first held service in Fletcher & Boswell's barroom. Congregation seated with backs to the curtained bar, listened to Rev. Wm. Brookman, the sailor preacher.

In the spring of 1869 came Charles Jenkins. Some years later, he with John D. Noble, R. D. Noble and others organized, built and operated the P. C. O. & T. Co., with its tanks, pipe lines and warehouse receipts.

Also later in the year 1869 came L. B. Vaughn and opened a banking office—it is open yet. Shot bags of silver was the currency in these days. Some years later came A. C. Edward; George Denham came, when he got ready, and sold drugs; also as newspaper correspondent gave spicy items from "Quality Hill." George also built a brass band. Hardly on schedule time arrived J. L. Englehart and Harrison Corey, but after they came they "stuck to their job."

On the 30th of November, 1871, the bagpipes announced the birth of Petrolia's St. Andrew. As a child it was healthy, as a youth it was strong, in its manhood irresistible.

The last Crude Oil Association, "The Financial," was formed in 1886. Its prime object was to improve quality of Canadian burning oil. It did it. Fairbank, Smith, McMillan (James), Woodward & Bradley, directors. Woodward, Kittridge, Kerr (James), and The Imperial Oil Company did good work in this regard.

Among the prominent public men, who have visited Petrolia, are—Prince Arthur. Governors General, Earl Dufferin and Lord Stanley. Dominion Premiers, Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald, Hon. Alexander MacKenzie, Hon. Sir John Thompson, Hon. Sir Mackenzie Bowell, Hon. Sir Charles Tupper, and Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Hon. Sir Henri and Lady Joly also spent several days here, guests of John and Mrs. Fraser.

On the 8th of December, 1896, came Finance Minister Fielding, and Minister of Customs Paterson, two members of the Tariff Commission. They fully inspected the oil wells, how they were built and worked. When they left they understood the oil question as they could not have done without a personal inspection. This was a good day's work for Petrolia. Not a word was said concerning tariff. That was done later on at Ottawa.

The early Municipal record of Petrolia, is—

Incorporated as a Village, December 21st, 1866.

1867, first Reeve and Council—Moncrieff, Hunt, Barclay, Chamberlain; J. G. Bolt, clerk and H. Smiley, treasurer.

1868-69-70, Reeve and Council—Fairbank, Barclay, Taylor and Woodley.

1869, first Hook and Ladder Co.—Chamberlin, chief; Smiley, captain.

First Police—James Ryan.

1871-72—Joseph McDougall, reeve; P. Barclay, treasurer; Dr. Mearns, physician; William Lindsay, tax collector.

Incorporated as a Town, January 1st, 1874.

First Mayor—George Moncrieff. Council—Perkins, Dunlop, Cooley, Garner, Coryell, Chamberlin, Draper, Brake, McDonald, Mearns, Noble.

1874 to 1887—J. H. Fairbank, fire warden; W. G. Fraser, assisting during the last years, and succeeded him. T. G. Jackson, chief engineer steam fire engine.

1875—W. H. McGarvey, mayor. T. G. Jackson, chief of police.

1879—G. S. McPherson, for years reeve of Enniskillen, appointed town clerk.

The Fire Brigade has always been a marked feature of Petrolia—it has had much experience.

Greenwood Driving Park, Petrolia's play ground, was opened in 1882.

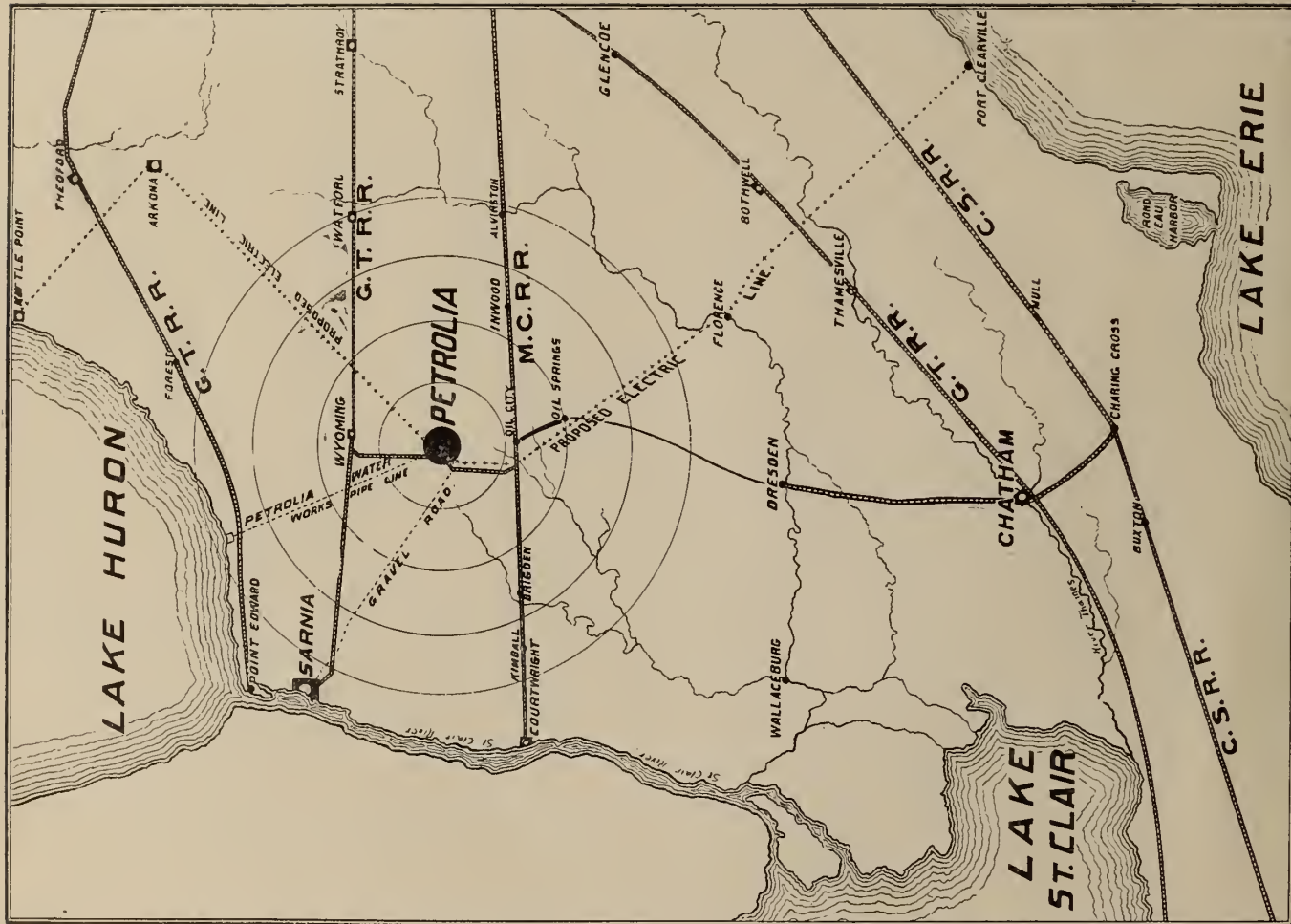
Lest we forget—a few dates: Great fire at King Wells, 3rd August, 1867; burning of 2,000-bbl. still, 30th July, 1872. (The writer is indebted to Mrs J. D. Noble for these two dates.)

The first really permanent business building was The Vaughn Block, 1879. Lancey Block was built in 1881; Town Hall was built in 1887; Masonic Temple was built in 1887; Iroquois Hotel was built by John Kerr in 1896; big fire at Imperial, 22nd of April, 1896; Petrolia Waterworks was built in 1896; Methodist Church was built in 1898.

Petrolia has always been an orderly, law-abiding, Sunday-observing, church-going place. It has representatives in every land who look back with pride and pleasure to the "Old Town."

At home and abroad, its men have been manly men, its women, womanly women, and its babies, perfectly lovely and numerous—at times, two on a stem. The baby carriage always has the right-of-way in Petrolia.

The "Old Town" looks with glad expectation to August, 1908, to the coming of the Old Boys and Girls.





CRESCENT PARK AND SURROUNDING RESIDENCES

Industrial and Commercial Petrolia.

LOCATION—

By reference to the map, found herewith, the position of Petrolia is central, in the western portion of the peninsula, in the County of Lambton.

RAILWAYS—

The Grand Trunk and Michigan Central Railways reach here from the north and south. There are ten passenger trains daily, making the best possible connections for the travelling public in all directions. In addition to the above lines, the Canadian Pacific Railway is likely to build a line through here, in reaching for the required outlet toward Chicago. The freight handling facilities and rates are very advantageous. The rate grouping places Petrolia in the same position as London and Hamilton. The effect of these advantages are shown in the large tonnage in all classes, especially in live stock and farm products. The freight handled in 1907 being 4,000 cars, carrying 100,000 tons. The passenger earnings during the same time being \$40,000.00.

WATER SUPPLY—

No factor has greater importance in every connection than the water supply, and Petrolia can boast of having a water supply unsurpassed on this continent. It is owned and operated by the town.

Source of supply—Lake Huron.

Standpipe capacity—250,000 gallons.

Pumping capacity—2,000,000 gallons per day.

Average pressure in mains—30 pounds.

Length of mains—25 miles.

Number of hydrants—100. These insure ample fire protection, and low rates of insurance.

SEWERAGE—

Petrolia enjoys the proud distinction of being one of the healthiest towns in the Dominion. This is due in a large measure to the purity of the water supply, and the perfect system of sewerage. There are no slums here.

STREETS AND SIDEWALKS—

There are ten miles of granolithic sidewalks. The main street is being paved with vitrified brick.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS—

Our Town Hall, with its complete suite of municipal offices, splendidly equipped Fire Hall, and commodious Opera House, with a seating capacity of 800, and clock tower, is one of the most imposing buildings to be found anywhere.

POST OFFICE AND CUSTOM HOUSE—

This is a handsome building, located on the corner of Petrolia and Wingfield streets, opposite Victoria Park.

EDUCATIONAL—

Petrolia's Educational facilities are among the best. The High School, with three teachers besides the principal, J. J. Bell, B. A., has a Collegiate Institute standing in educational centres throughout the Province. Four Public Schools, all of which are brick structures, and practically new, are situated at various points throughout the Town. Fourteen teachers, with R. J. Campbell as principal, are engaged, and the facilities offered are the best obtainable.

CHURCHES—

The leading denominations are represented, and have commodious edifices, which compare favorably with city churches, both as to architecture and interior appointments. They are centrally located and comprise, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, and Salvation Army. Their seating capacity range from 450 to 1,000. In addition to which they have well-equipped Sunday School departments and Lecture Rooms.

LODGES—

About twenty-five lodges, representing all the leading societies, with commodious lodge rooms, well-equipped in every way. They all have a large membership, and are in a flourishing condition.

HOTELS—

Petrolia offers exceptionally good accommodation to the travelling public, with its five first-class hotels; four of them being substantial brick structures, with all modern improvements.

FAIR GROUNDS AND DRIVING PARK—

These grounds contain about 30 acres, with up-to-date buildings and appointments. The half-mile track is one of the best in Western Ontario.

SPORTS AND PASTIMES—

The golf links, comprising some twenty-three acres, intersected by the Bear Creek, is beautifully situated for this fascinating game.

Baseball is represented by a three-club Town League, and a good game can be seen almost any evening.

Lacrosse, Football, and a flourishing Gun Club all have an enthusiastic membership. An up-to-date Roller Rink was opened this season. The beautiful grounds of the Tennis Club are situated in Crescent Park. The Petrolia Lawn Bowling Greens are favorably known throughout the Western Peninsula.

LOCATIONS FOR INDUSTRIES—

The two lines of railway run parallel through an important section of the Town, and lands between these lines are available and specially suitable for manufacturing plants. The Board of Trade of the Town is prepared to offer liberal inducements to new industries.

CANADIAN OIL COMPANY, LIMITED—

As Petrolia has been the centre of the Crude Petroleum production of Canada for upwards of forty years, so has this section been the chief centre of the refining industry for almost as long a time. The one refining plant located within our borders, and known as The Canadian Oil Refining Co., is owned and operated by the above company, and has been in steady and successful operation for over seven years. The plant is a model one, extending over fifteen acres, and all products of the crude are manufactured, from the lightest to the heaviest, embracing all products of the crude oil in every detail. A large number of men are constantly employed; and the excellency of its products are known throughout the Dominion, and are distributed from coast to coast by its own sub-stations. The works here are under the immediate supervision of Mr. Bruce Dunlop, who has been favorably known in the refining business for over twenty years.

CANADIAN TRANSIT CO.—

This company formed during the summer of 1906, was exclusively organized by parties interested in the Canadian Oil Co., Limited, to handle its products. At the St. Clair River it has its pumping plant, to which its oils are delivered by the iron barge, W. S. Calvert, and the oils are forced through its own pipe line, a distance of some sixteen miles. The low cost of such a means of transportation must be at once apparent, and besides placing the Canadian Oil Co., Limited, in a very advantageous position as regards its raw material and products, it also demonstrates clearly the great advantages also possessed by this Town, as a suitable place for the refining of petroleum oils. Edward E. Grant is manager of transportation, at Petrolia.

OIL PRODUCING INDUSTRY—

There are about 6,000 wells in operation, which gives employment to 500 men, and represents a capital of \$3,000,000. A large number of our population are actively engaged in different parts of the world in drilling and prospecting for oil and gas, also in sinking artesian wells.

PETROLIA WAGON COMPANY—

This is one of our leading industries. It was established in 1902. The buildings are plain but substantial, and planned to meet the requirements of a growing trade. The machinery throughout is of the latest and best design. They employ over 100 men, with an output of 4,000 wagons and 2,000 sleighs per year. A sample of the quality of their work can be seen in the Petrolia ambulance. Wm. English is manager.

STEVENSON BOILER AND ENGINE WORKS—

This industry was established in 1869 by Wm. Stevenson, and acquired by the present proprietor, J. H. Fairbank, in 1891. The manager is Arthur Kavanaugh. They manufacture boilers and engines, and iron and steel work of every description, and keep about 30 men constantly employed.

THE STEMPEL MANUFACTURING COMPANY—

The Stempel fire extinguisher is known as an efficient fire fighter all over Canada. Their factory is in connection with the Stevenson Boiler Works.

THE PETROLIA BRIDGE COMPANY—

They manufacture bridges and reinforced concrete work of all kinds. This company has erected a number of bridges in the Western Peninsula, which have given full satisfaction. Thos. Johnstone, manager.

J. & J. KERR COMPANY—

Established in 1863. This company is in the lumber and coal business. They have a large planing mill and factory, in which all kinds of woodenware are manufactured. The firm employs some 40 hands, and is very progressive. John Kerr, president.

THE LAMBTON CREAMERY COMPANY—

This industry has grown very rapidly. The amount of cash paid out is a great factor with the merchants. G. M. Cary, manager.

OIL WELL SUPPLY COMPANY—

This company has been in business in Petrolia for more than 40 years. They manufacture well-boring tools, and supplies of various sizes and kinds, employing about 30 skilled mechanics. Their machinery can be found in Russia, East Indies, West Indies, Austria and Australia, and many other countries. James Joyce, president; John A. McKenzie, manager.

BRICK AND TILE MANUFACTURERS—

Two well-equipped plants, the Amalgamated Brick and Tile Co., and the Howlett Brick and Tile Co., manufacture a vast number of both brick and tile. The product is first class in every way, and the supply of raw material is unlimited.

PEERLESS ROLLER MILLS AND ELEVATOR—

This has recently been rebuilt by A. Paling. It is doing a large and profitable business.

BANKS AND LOAN COMPANY—

Bank of Toronto, W. F. Cooper, manager.

Metropolitan Bank, A. E. Mellish, manager.

Vaughn and Fairbank's Bank (private).

Crown Loan and Savings Company, Wm. English, manager.

PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO—

Almost all the photographs, from which the cuts used to illustrate this publication, are from the studio of G. B. Robson, Archer Block, an up-to-date photographer.

BUSINESS PLACES—

There are about 70 stores representing all classes of business to be found in a progressive, flourishing town.

THE LEARNED PROFESSIONS—

Doctors, Lawyers, and Dentists are represented by skilful, experienced men.

BORLAND CARRIAGE WORKS—

This was formerly the Ryder Carriage Company, and was established in 1882. It turns out all kinds of the finest buggies and carriages to be found in Canada. R. Borland, manager.

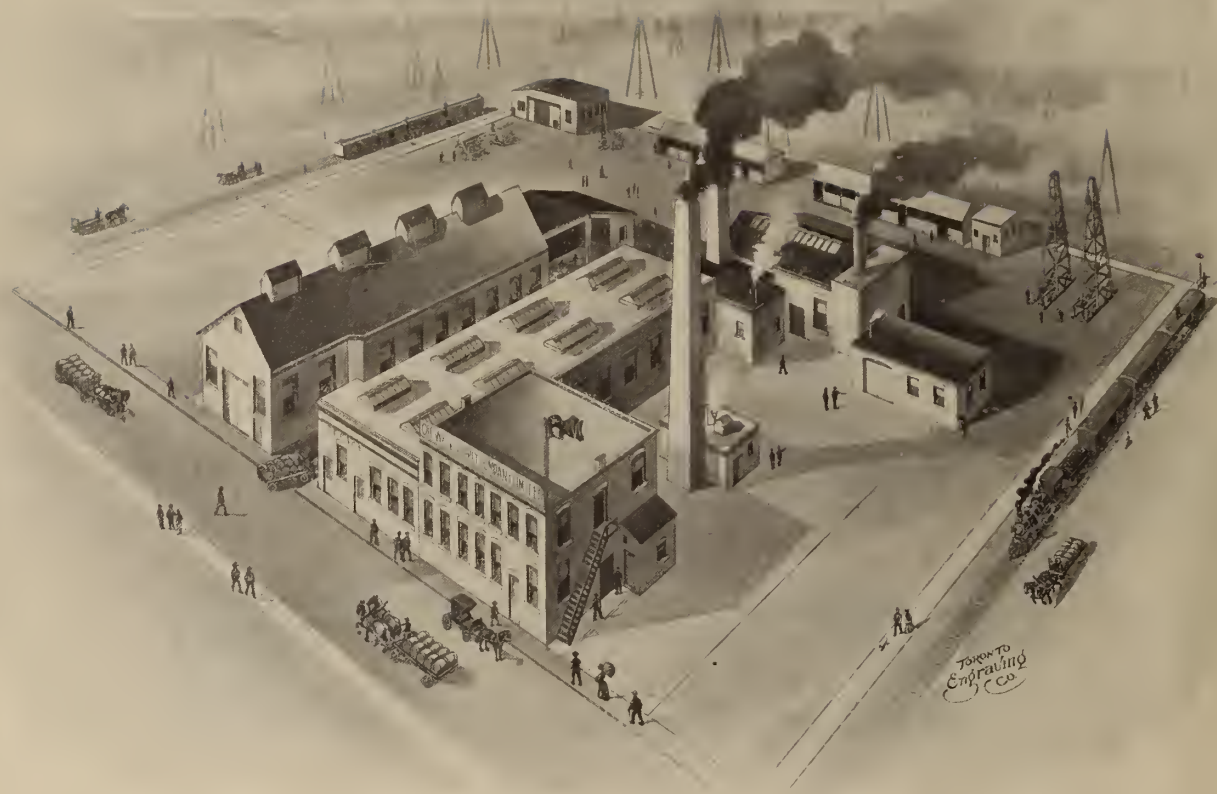
ENTERPRISE STEAM LAUNDRY—

An up-to-date laundry is in operation, under the management of Gorman Brothers.

PETROLIA ELECTRIC LIGHT AND GAS COMPANY—

The Town is splendidly lighted by 39 arc lights on the streets and an unlimited supply of incandescent lamps for indoor use. The gas is principally used for domestic purposes. J. J. Ashworth, president.







THE STEVENSON BOILER WORKS.



W. S. CALVERT, M.P.,
President.



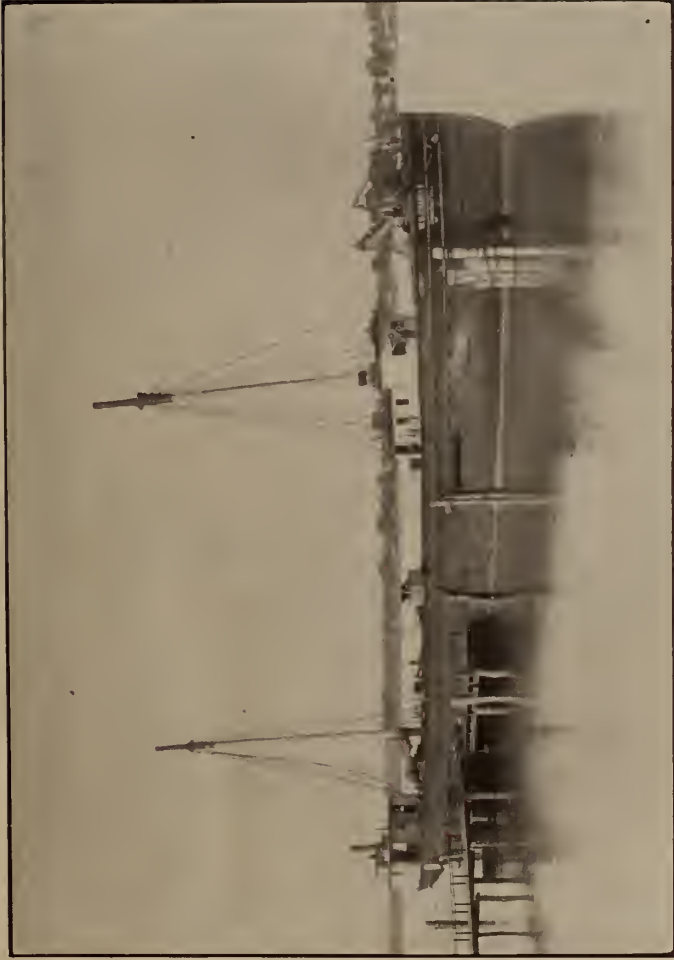
B. DUNLOP,
Superintendent.



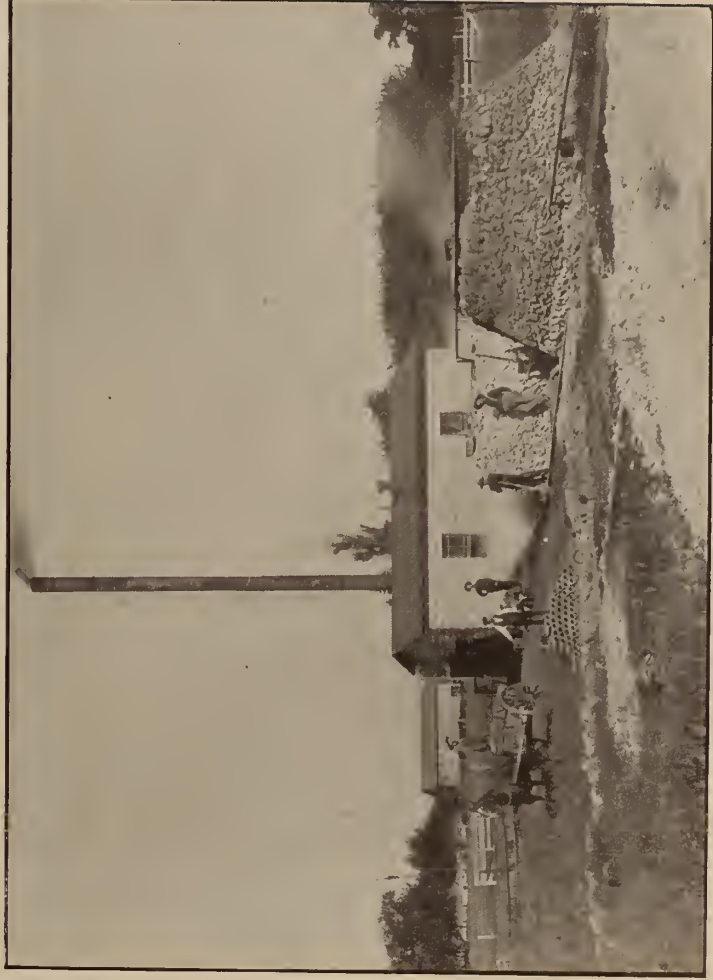
T. H. HAMILTON,
General Manager.



THE CANADIAN OIL REFINING COMPANY, LIMITED,
Operated by Canadian Oil Company, Limited, Toronto, Canada.



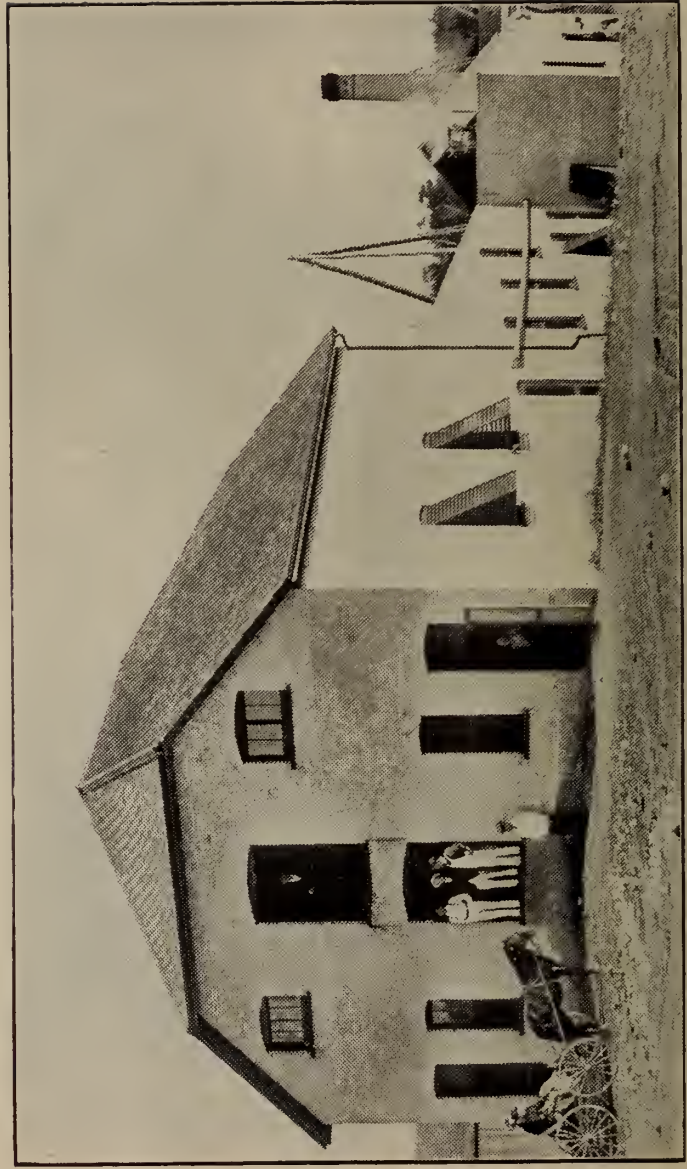
CANADIAN TRANSIT CO. IRON BARGE "W. S. CALVERT."



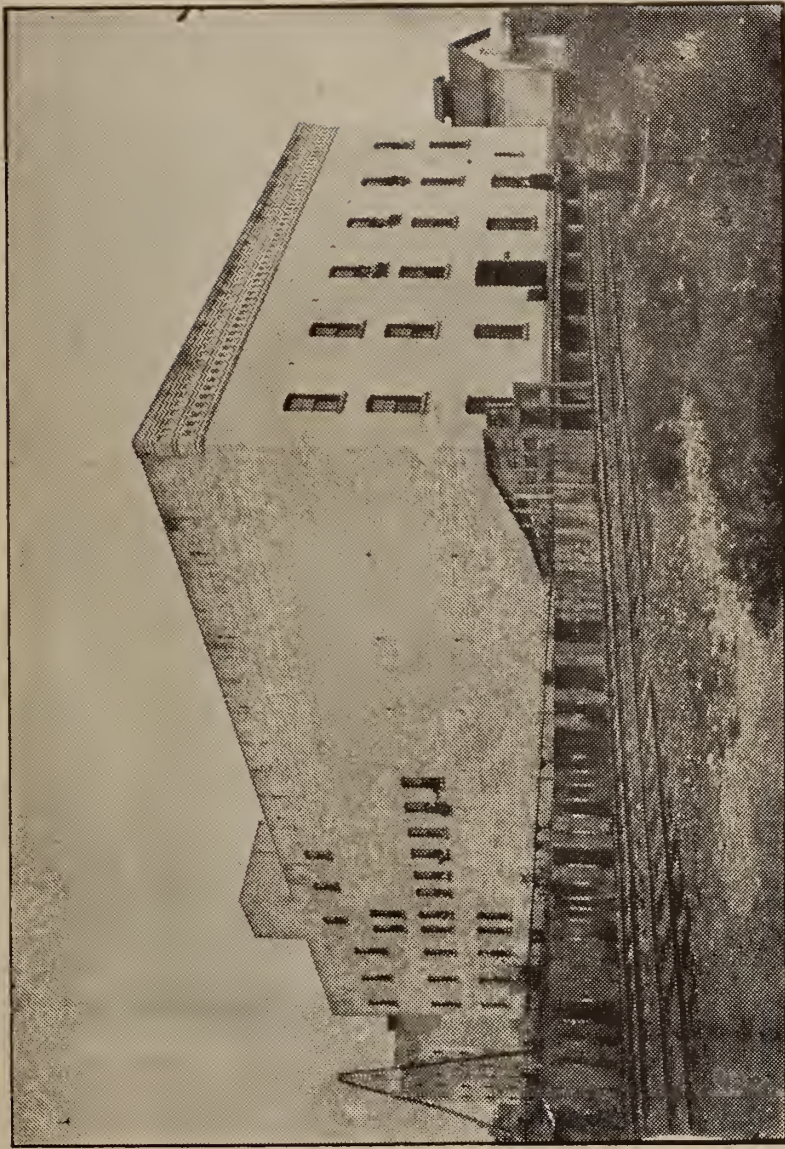
CANADIAN TRANSIT CO. PUMPING STATION.



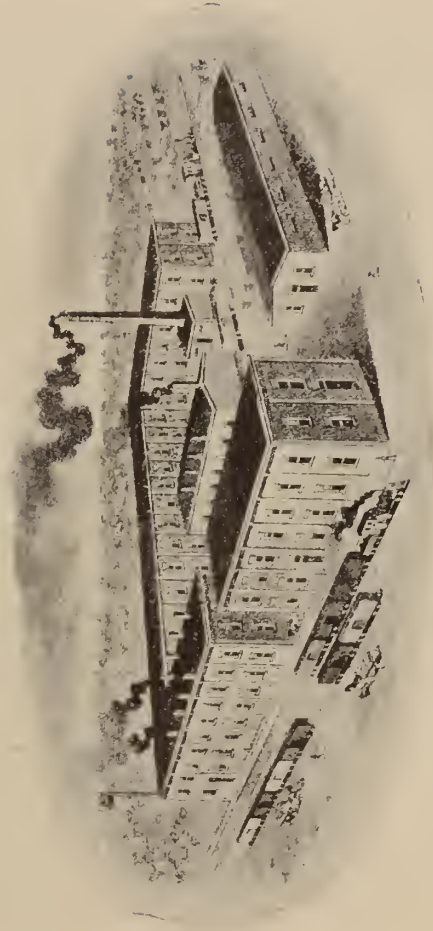
WOODLEY BRIDGE (BUILT BY PETROLIA BRIDGE CO.)



LAMBTON CREAMERY COMPANY, LIMITED.



PETROLIA PACKING CO., LIMITED.



PETROLIA WAGON CO., LIMITED.



J. & J. KERR COMPANY, LIMITED.



WATERWORKS PUMPING STATION, LAKE HURON,



WATERWORKS STAND PIPE.



WATERWORKS ENGINEER'S RESIDENCE, LAKE HURON.



PETROLIA AMBULANCE (BUILT BY PETROLIA WAGON CO.)



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.



ST. PHILLIP'S CHURCH (R. C.)



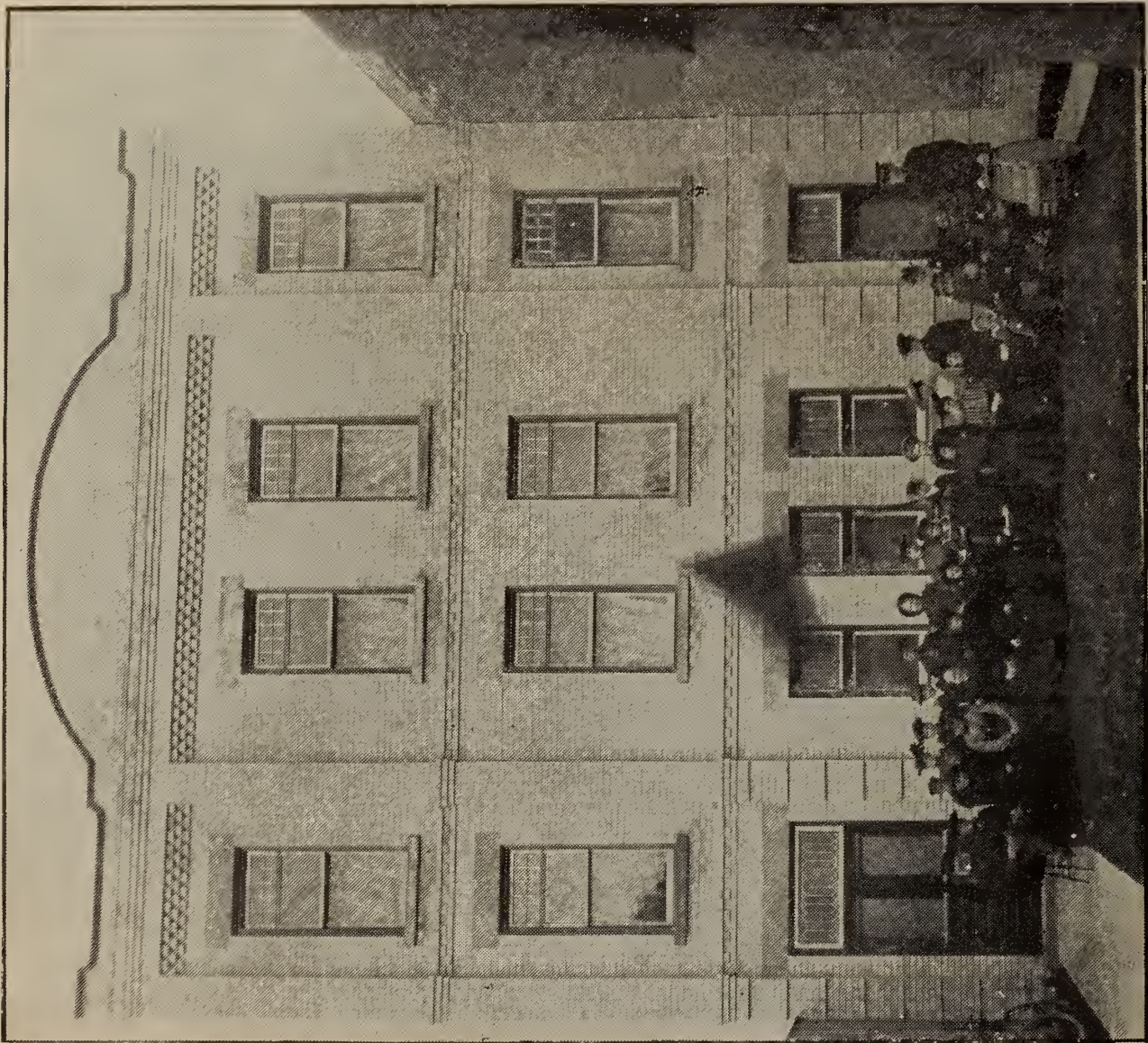
CHRIST CHURCH (ANGLICAN).



BAPTIST CHURCH.



METHODIST CHURCH.



SALVATION ARMY BARRACKS.



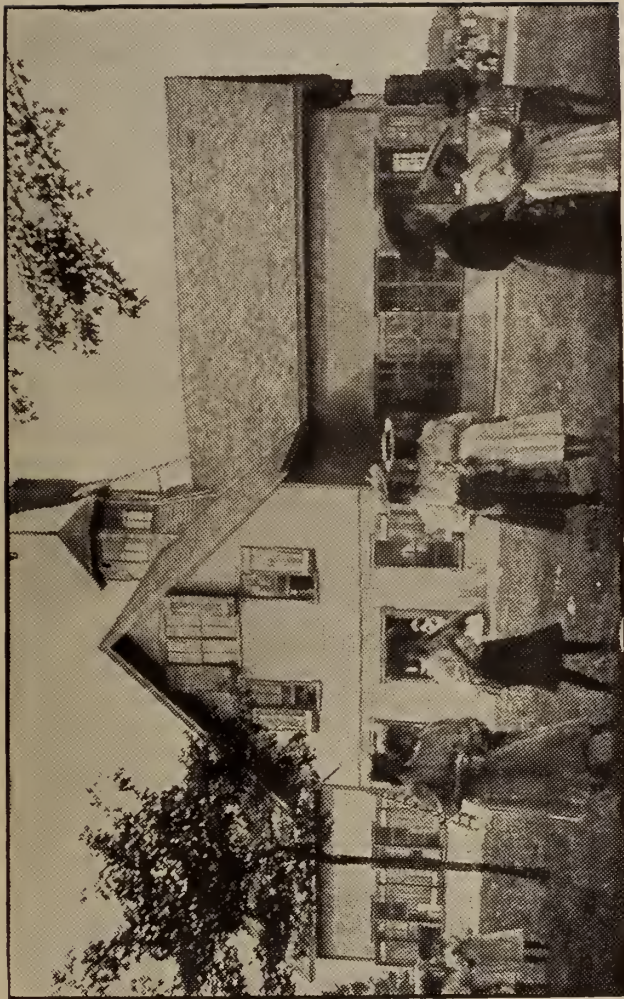
PUBLIC SCHOOL (EAST END)



HIGH SCHOOL.



CENTRAL SCHOOL.



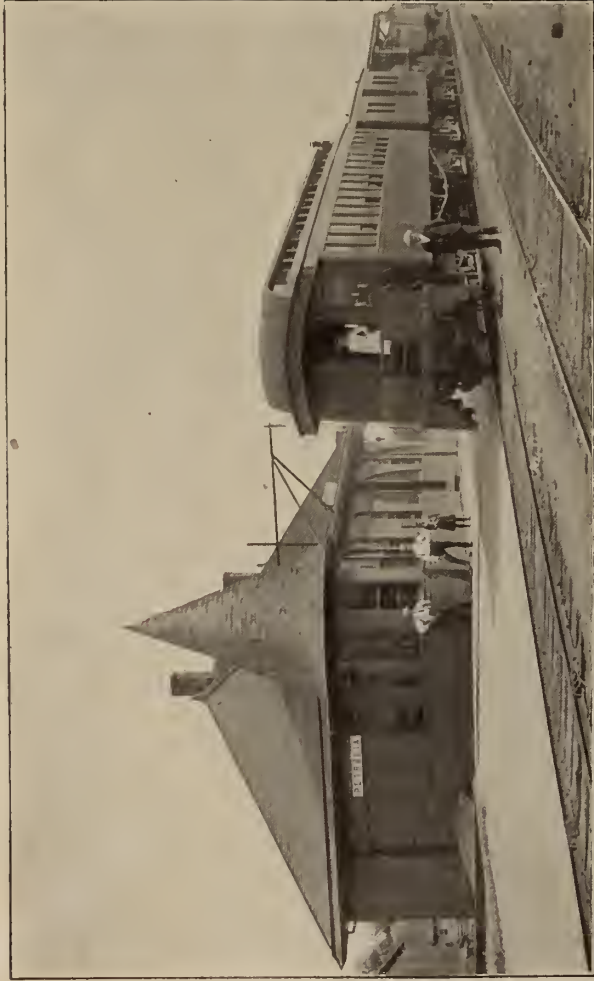
AGRICULTURAL HALL (FAIR GROUNDS).



POST OFFICE.



WINDOW DISPLAY, W. W. FERGUSON'S STORE.



MICHIGAN CENTRAL RAILWAY DEPOT.



GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY DEPOT.



BANK OF TORONTO.



IROQUOIS HOTEL.



METROPOLITAN BANK.



POLLARD BLOCK.



LANCEY BLOCK.



PETROLIA COMPANY (27TH BATTALION.)



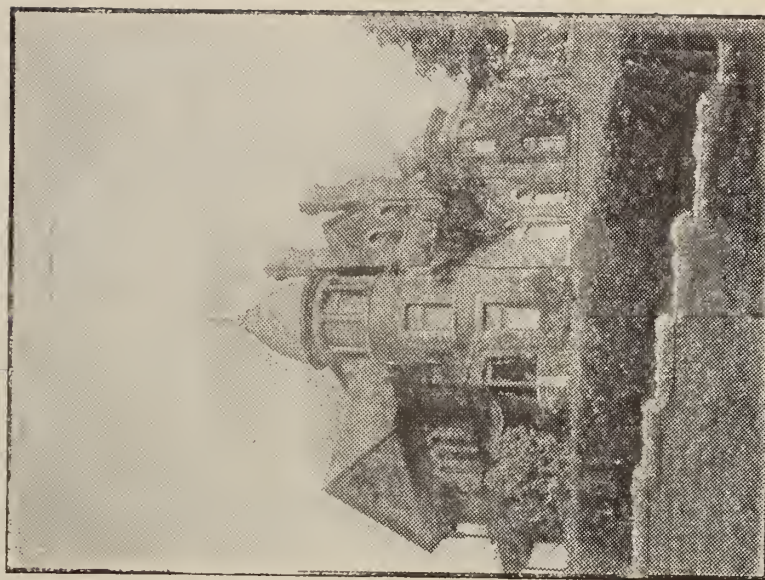
TECUMSEH HOUSE.



VAN TUYL & FAIRBANK BLOCK.



RESIDENCE C. EGAN.



RESIDENCE J. H. FAIRBANK.



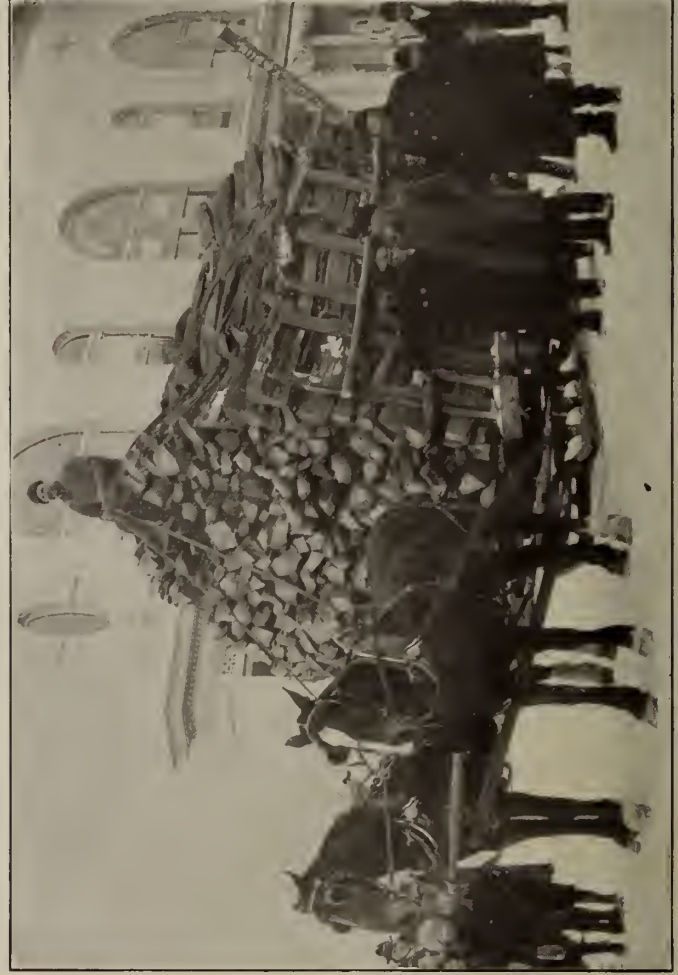
RESIDENCE JOHN KERR.



RESIDENCE DR. R. M. CALDER.



1886 OX TEAM IN PETROLIA.



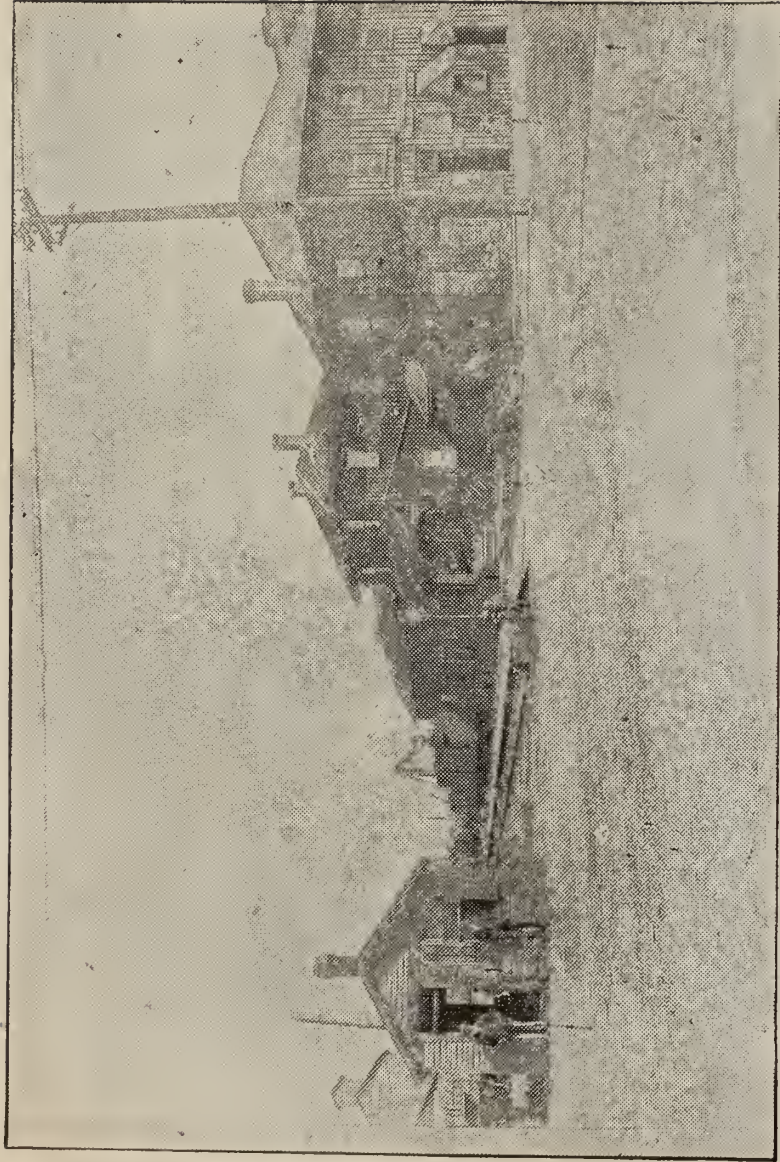
CHAMPION LOAD OF WOOD, 16 CORDS (WM. EWING).



PETROLIA IN 1874 (LOOKING EAST).



PETROLIA IN 1874 (LOOKING WEST).



OLD GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.



FIRST SYSTEM OF DRILLING (SPRING POLE).



GROUP OF OIL WELLS.



KING STREET (LOOKING SOUTH)



DUFFERIN AVE. (LOOKING EAST).



DUFFERIN AVE. (LOOKING WEST)



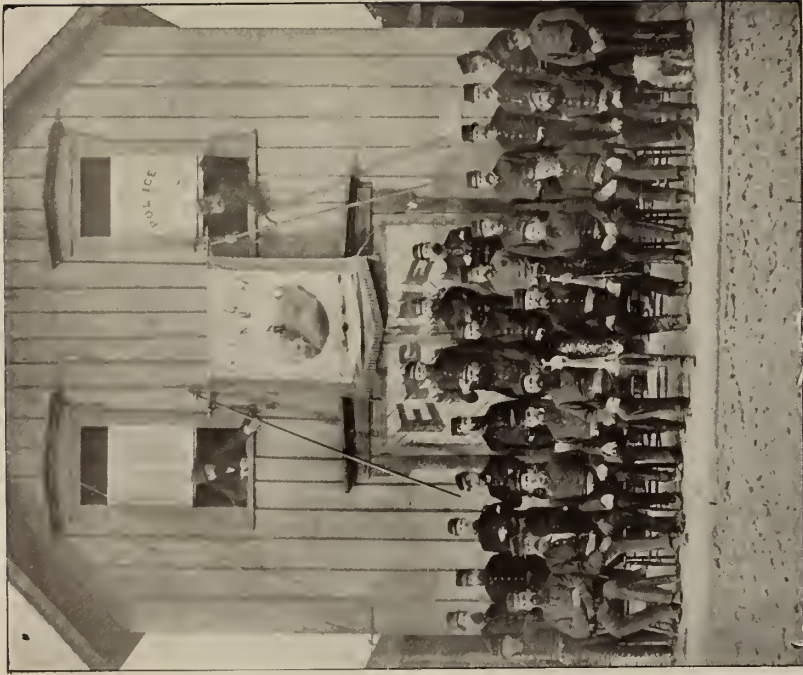
PETROLIA STREET, EAST FROM AMERICAN HOTEL.



PETROLIA STREET, WEST FROM G. T. R. DEPOT.



KING STREET (LOOKING SOUTH).



OLD TOWN HALL AND FIRE DEPARTMENT.



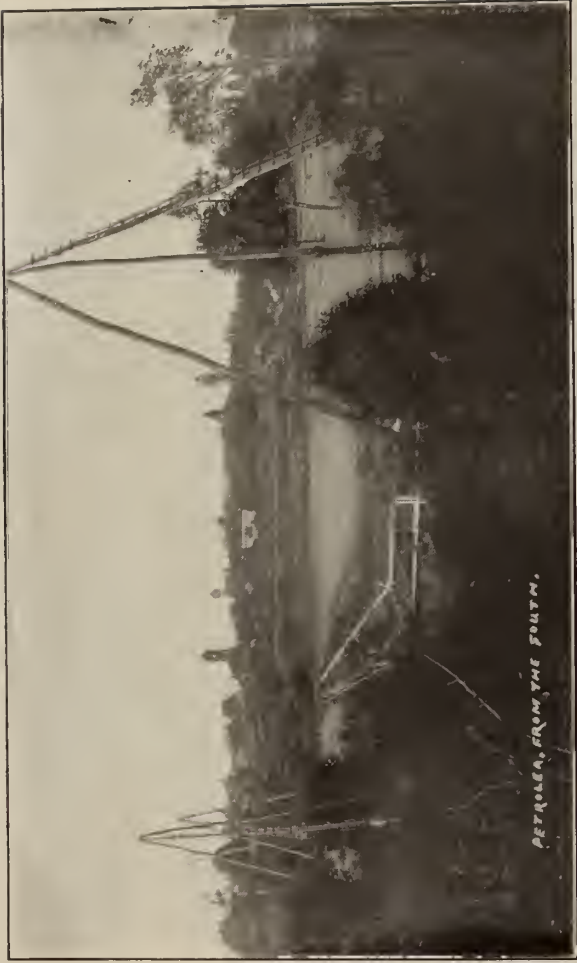
PRESENT FIRE DEPARTMENT.



EX-CHIEFS FIRE DEPARTMENT.



FIRE DEPARTMENT, 1906.



PETROLIA, FROM THE FIFTH.

J. L. ENGLEHART'S GOLF LINKS.



KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS BAND.



TOWN HALL.



(WANDEROO)
RESIDENCE OF MR. B. P. COREY.



Thos. Johnston,
Reeve.



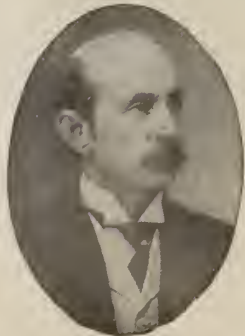
R. Stirrett.



D. Hawken.



N. Healy,
Dep. Reeve.



Dr. C. O. Fairbank.



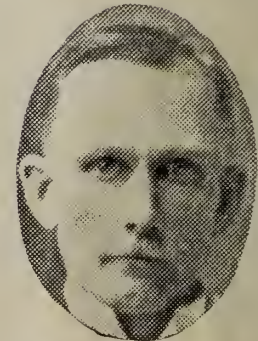
W. J. Clarke.



A. C. Edward, Mayor.



Ed. Pollard.



Jas. Stewart.

TOWN COUNCIL, 1908.



James Peat.



John McDonald.



Geo. T. Moneriff.



Dr. C. O. Fairbank.



A. E. Mellish,
Secretary.



Charles Jenkins,
President.



G. S. Pitkin, Vice-Pres.



John Fraser.



G. M. Cary.



R. Stirrett.



J. A. McKenzie.



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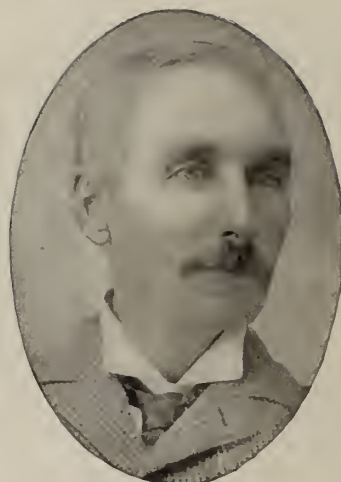
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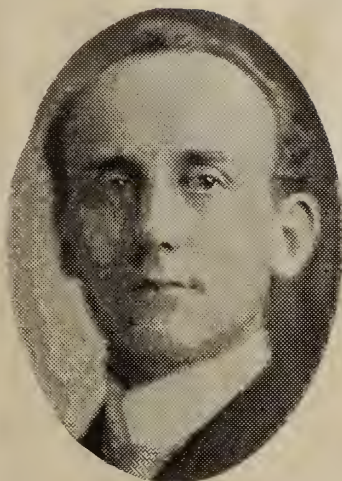
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Canon Craig,
Christ Church.

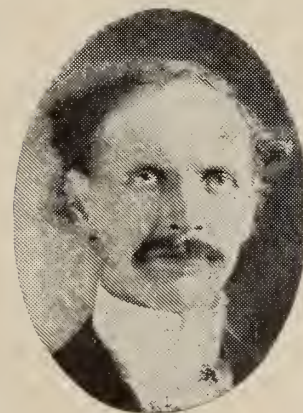


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Baptist Church,
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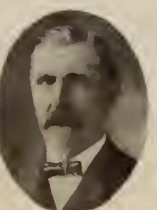
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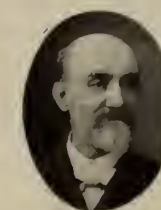
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Dean Swift.



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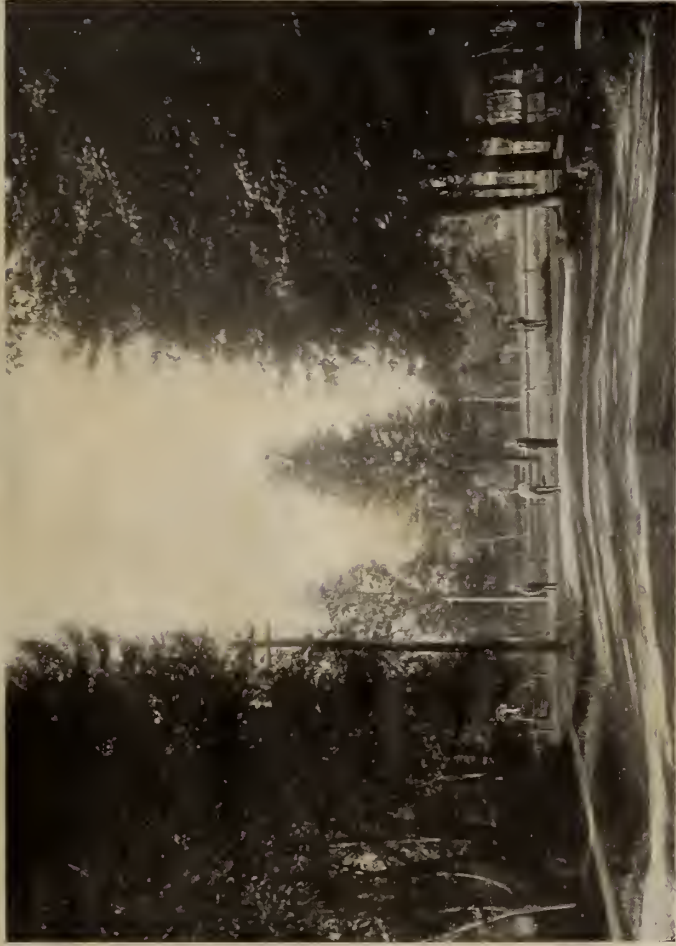


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