

shops, a drug store, a shoe-shine parlour, a postal station, a public library, a public school, a concert hall and a church. Besides these places for patient amusement and betterment there is a water-works plant and a sewage disposal plant operated in connection with the modern central heating building. The hospital has extensive market gardens, and raise their own poultry and hogs. Such a village would ordinarily be considered a place of some importance if located out in the country, especially if it were casually intimated that it had sufficient of interest to attract more than one thousand visitors a week.

OUR RAILROADS

The building of two railroads through the village did much to keep Weston on the map as a manufacturing centre.

On August 30th, 1851, the Government of the Province of Upper Canada passed an act whereby the Toronto and Guelph Railway Company was incorporated to build a railway from Toronto to Guelph. When the first survey was started, Mr. Samuel Scarlett, who owned a great portion of the land on the Etobicoke side of the river, offered to give the railway a right-of-way through his property, and this generous offer was about to be accepted. At this time Weston had just been subdivided on the York bank of the river, and it was a great disappointment to the land owners in the village to find that the railway was not going through on this side of the river. Messrs. John Porter, J. Stoughton Dennis, and J. A. Donaldson, who were large property owners in the village, went Mr. Scarlett one better by buying sufficient property in addition to what they owned, to give the Grand Trunk a right-of-way through this district. This generous action on the part of these early citizens, secured the Toronto and Guelph Railway for the village.

The Grand Trunk Railway was incorporated on November 10th, 1852, and by agreement dated April 12, 1853, amalgamated with the Toronto and Guelph Railway.

The line was completed, and the first train from Queen Street West in Toronto to Guelph, a distance of 46 miles, ran through Weston on the 1st of July, 1856. This was a gala day in the village, and a great many of the villagers and farmers in the district gathered on the Wadsworth property to watch the first train cross the high bridge over the Humber. Celebrations went on all day, and at night a gay dance was held at Bellas's hall.

The building of the bridge across the Humber was a great feat for those days, as it was one of the longest and highest bridges on the Grand Trunk Railway. The piers were made of brick, set on a stone foundation, and all the lime used in the construction of the bridge was made from stone obtained at William C. Grubbe's farm on the West Branch of the Humber. This bridge, with its brick piers, is still in existence, one of the few original bridges left on the C.N.R. The superstructure of the bridge has several times been replaced, and the brick piers have been encased in cement, so that it has lost some of its early appearance that will be so well remembered by the older generation. It was a common, though dangerous, practice for the boys of yesterday to drop down between the ties on to the top of the piers, and allow a train to go overhead. Years ago, when the farms were not so well fenced, horses and cows have been known to wander on to the bridge, and becoming confused and thrown offbalance, have fallen to their death in the valley. The next few years will likely see the removal of this famous bridge, and the greater part of it replaced by earth fill. Thus another famous landmark will disappear from our midst.

During a severe snow storm in the winter of 1896, a serious wreck occurred in the cut between the railway bridge and Concession "A". This deep cut was completely filled by the drifted snow, and the train due at Weston at eight o'clock in the morning, became stuck, and was telescoped by the noon train, with a heavier engine. Two persons were killed, and many badly injured, when the wooden

coaches caught on fire. This has been the only accident of any importance on the railroads in this district in a period of eighty years. In order to dig out the trains and rescue the passengers, men went from door to door throughout the village, enlisting the help of the citizens, and those who aided were paid at the rate of forty cents an hour, which was the highest wage paid in these parts up to this time. It is said that many availed themselves of the opportunity to make a few extra dollars at a time of the year when work was not plentiful.

THE TORONTO GREY AND BRUCE RAILWAY

At the first session of the Ontario Legislature in 1867, a number of leading merchants of Toronto petitioned for a charter to build a narrow gauge railway from Toronto to Orangeville. Up to the time when this project was brought before the public, the gauge of Canadian railways had been the standard or provincial gauge of five feet, 6 inches. The idea of a railway with so narrow a gauge as three feet, six inches, was entirely new to everyone in this country, and like most other changes which conflict with interest and prejudice, excited a good deal of hostile criticism and not a little ridicule. It was only after a severe test, first in the railway committee and afterwards on the floor of the House, that the charter was granted for the Toronto Grey and Bruce Railway. This railway really had its beginning in the village of Weston, as the company had permission to use the road-bed of the Grand Trunk Railway for a distance of nine miles from the city of Toronto, to Weston, the amount of compensation to the Grand Trunk being a certain sum for each passenger and for each carload of freight carried. By this means, a considerable saving in cost of construction was effected.

On the 3rd of October, 1869, the first sod was turned at Weston, by Prince Arthur, who later became the Duke of Connaught. This great event took place at a point almost opposite Oak Street, and was attended by many notables and

citizens from Toronto and district. An amusing incident occurred during the solemn turning of the first sod. The young Prince was having difficulty pushing the silver spade into the clay soil, and David Maguire, the Shoemaker, broke the tenseness of the occasion by calling out, "Put your foot on it, my boy, it will work better". This caused the Prince to smile, and he accepted the advice with marked success, turning over a huge sod. The audience cheered him lustily, and the Prince, in a few words, wished the officials success in their undertaking. Children and adults rushed forward to shake the Prince's hand, which courtesy he returned with evident pleasure.

By the 1st of May, 1871, the track had been laid to Orangeville, a distance of fifty miles, and all grading and bridging had been completed to within a few miles of Orangeville. Ten stations were placed at points between Toronto and Orangeville. In 1873, the line from Orangeville to Owen Sound was completed. The whole cost of the line, including rolling stock and equipment, was \$16,000 per mile. The rails and rolling stock were all in proportion to the gauge. The rails weighed 40 lbs. to the yard, of best English iron. The locomotives consisted of three classes, ranging from sixteen to forty-nine tons in weight, and were built by the Avonside Engine Company, of Bristol, England. The passenger cars were 85 ft. long, weighed 2,000 lbs. each, and accommodated forty passengers.

The line was a success from the start, and played an important part in the early development of Weston, as well as of other villages along the line. It was leased to the Ontario and Quebec Railway for 999 years, on the 26th of July, 1883, and was included in the perpetual lease of the Ontario and Quebec Railway to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, January 4th, 1884.

The first station on the Toronto Grey and Bruce was at a point opposite Oak Street. It was a low, ramshackle sort of place, and there was no regret at its passing. Unfortunately the station that replaced it, which was near John Street,

was also of very poor construction, and when it burned down some years later, there were no tears shed. The same year, the Grand Trunk Station, which was almost opposite, burned down during a violent thunder-storm. Some of the volunteer firemen at this fire got into the oil house, some distance away, and kerosene was thrown on the burning building, by mistake. The late Frederick Hill, a member of one of our pioneer families, was station-agent for the Grand Trunk here for over forty years.

GEORGIAN BAY SHIP CANAL

In 1844, Rowland Burr, the well-known local architect and builder, conceived the idea of a canal running up the Humber, and continued via the Holland River, Lake Couchiching, Lake Simcoe, and the Severn, to Georgian Bay. He walked over the route once or twice, and made rough sketches of its course, and from these he was able to interest other prominent citizens of Upper Canada in his scheme. In 1857 the question was discussed by the Parliament of Upper Canada, who had the proposed route surveyed. The idea was finally abandoned, as the cost would have been too great for the amount of traffic available.

WESTON PLANK ROAD

About the year 1841, the old corduroy road was changed into a modern Plank Road, the building of which was started by Mr. John Grubbe, who came to this country from Scotland in the year 1833. Mr. Grubbe had been an authority on Plank Roads in the Old Country, and became the first President of the Weston Plank Road Company. The road was 18 miles long, and ran through Weston, to Thistletown, to Claireville, and finally to Coleraine. The building of the road took 2,250,000 feet of pine planking, which was purchased from the mills around Weston, at \$4.00 per thousand feet.

The road was privately owned for many years, but was

given up eventually to the County, by the owners, because it was too costly to keep in repair. There were toll gates at the north and south ends of the town, and although a fee of five cents was charged, the traffic was not great enough to pay for the necessary plank replacements. When Weston dug her Main Street up years later, to lay sewers and water mains, the old planks and not a few logs, which had become deeply buried, were a source of trouble to the contractors. With the disappearance of the Plank Road, the Main Street became a notorious mud road, and at certain seasons of the year was almost impassable.

During the winter months, when labour was plentiful, due to the closing down of the mills, river stone was dumped along the roadway, and fifty years ago, and even later, it was a familiar sight to see a gang of men with long-handled hammers cracking this stone, which would become incorporated in the mud as the frost came out in the spring. In this way the road-bed was improving year by year, and it was possible to haul heavier loads through the village.

At certain street intersections, brick crossings were built, so the villagers could get from one side of the street to the other without becoming mired in the mud. These brick crossings were about four feet wide, and it was the duty of the village constable to keep these clean. If, on Sunday, the ladies gathered mud on their skirts crossing the road, the poor constable would be severely reprimanded at the next meeting of the village council.

TORONTO GORE OR MALTON ROAD

The building of the Toronto Gore or Malton Road did much to help the mills at Weston, in the early days. Previous to 1828, when the Wadsworth Brothers purchased the Farr mills from the government, the only road available to the farmers from Toronto Gore and district, was the old Albion Plank Road. This was a much longer haul, and meant the loss of business to the mills at Weston. Some of the enterprising business men in the village petitioned the Govern-