

Planes, Trains And Automobiles...

Seeking Transportation In Haldimand

By Brandy Fulton
The Haldimand Press

Aug 10, 2017

DUNNVILLE – Haldimand County is made up of roughly 10 towns. The geographical space is roughly twice the size of Toronto, but more than 58 times less the size in population. With the wide amount of space and rural country roads, lack of public transportation can be an issue for some residents.

On August 3, a group of community members, organizations and Chamber members met at The Minga in Dunnville to discuss the issue and look for an innovative way to get new forms of transportation into the area.

The group started with the big question: "Who can public transit benefit?"

To leave it in simple terms, the list included everyone: students, seniors, those with disabilities, children and parents.

Dunnville Bridges Out Of Poverty, a group that wants to help solve local problems with the involvement of the community, led the meeting. They guided the group through weighing the pros and cons of both a bus system and Uber, which is more like a taxi. The group discussed affordability, on-de-

mand travel, safety and making a connection to surrounding cities.

The meeting discussed how having a public transit system in the county could lead to more "people traffic" in some of the smaller towns or events in the larger areas. This will also aid people who need specialists for health reasons or who are seeking employment or education outside of their town. This could also increase the potential to expand for smaller towns.

However, Dunnville Bridges and the committee that has been formed to further this discussion want to ensure the residents of Haldimand have their say before any decision is made.

A Dunnville resident mentioned how the county has lost something they once had. Trains and boats were a huge part of transportation many years ago and could get you across Southern Ontario for a small price. With changing technology and passenger trains and boats diminishing, having to pay for a car, insurance, gas and maintenance is the only way people can get around if not in walking distance.

In a recent Facebook post from The Press, there was a lot of discussion on this topic on both sides.

"A small bus system would be beneficial to those who can't afford the luxury of a car but need to travel to run errands or just participate in a full community life. A bus system could also increase employment opportunities (hiring drivers, mechanics, even admin staff)," said Debbie McMillan.

McMillan continued: "Also, regular travel to and from Hamilton sites — like Mohawk, Jurivinski Hospital, maybe even Limeridge Mall for example — could be beneficial too."

"A bus doesn't make sense for this area. Uber would allow people to make some extra money when they are available," said Jonathan Kutyba.

The group will discuss a time and place for another meeting that will be open for all community members to come forward and express their opinions. Nancy Schuur, one of the co-facilitators for the committee, can be contacted at grantschuur@hotmail.com or by calling 289-237-5321 for residents who might have questions or concerns.

Dunnville Bridges encourages residents to continue the conversation until the meeting is held so that the community can make an innovative change to the county together.

An effect of the automotive revolution was the introduction of trucking firms, which grew naturally out of horse drawn operations.

In 1913 the late Bert Columbus Phillips operated his own team and dray from the March Knitting Co to the Grand Trunk Railway, the only railroad in Dunnville at that time.

When it came time to upgrade his vehicles B.C. Phillips added trucks.

In 1944 a new garage and office opened up at 105 North Cayuga Street, Dunnville.

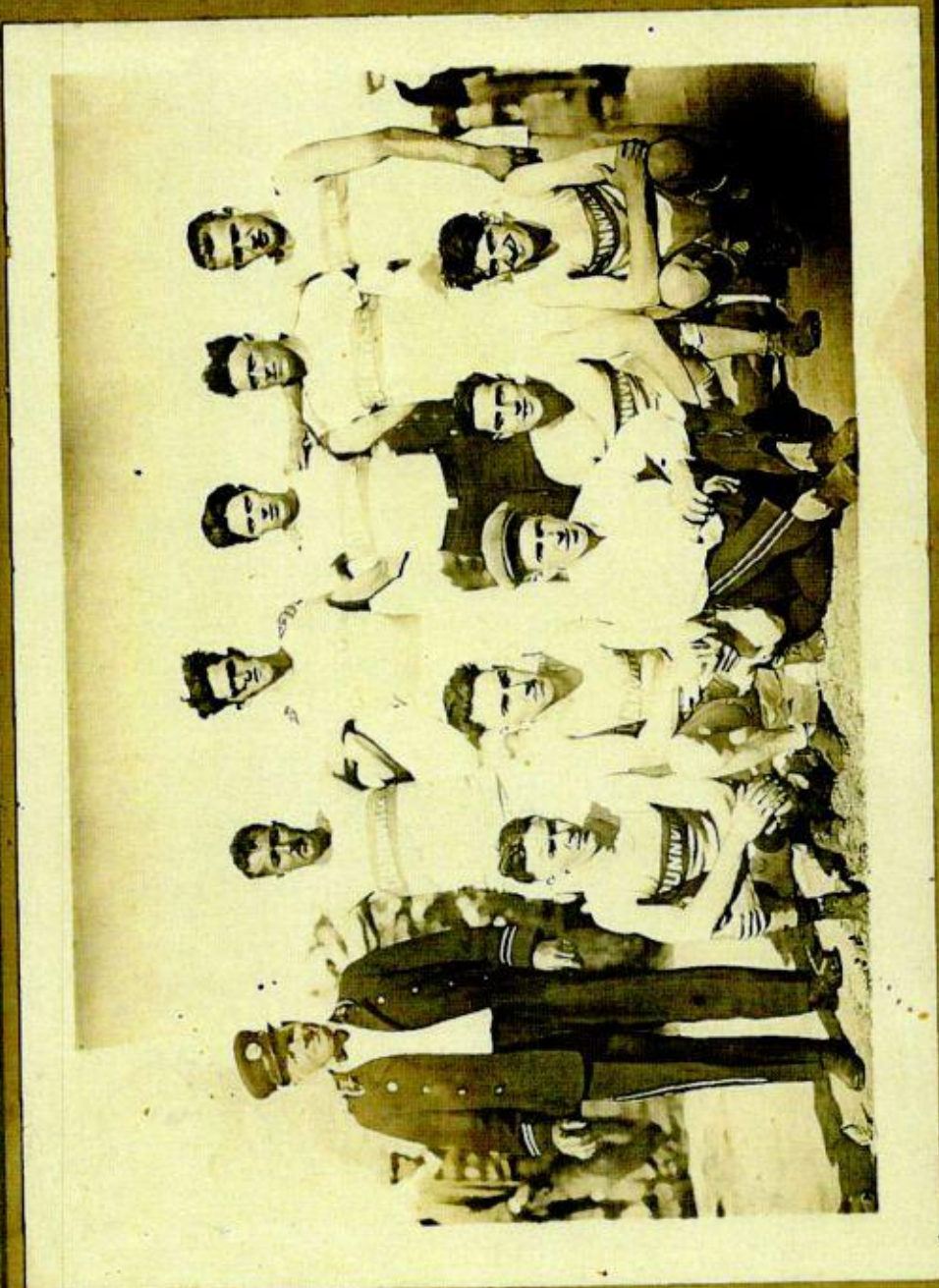
From these headquarters he shipped freight to Hamilton, Toronto, Simcoe, Pt. Colborne, Welland, St. Thomas and straight loads from Dunnville to all points in Ontario. After Bert Phillips died in 1952, the company he had established continued to flourish. Incorporated on January 25, 1952 it was one of the largest privately owned shipping

operations in the province of Ontario with
5'8 units on the road by 1960.

Just prior to 2nd war Bert C Phillips decided to
diversify his trucking business by adding a bus
service. Starting with a Coach and Body Co. bus, he
gradually expanded to four vehicles a Ford, Dodge
Reo and Fargo, plus an old International for extra
busy times. On regular runs between Dunnville
and Smithville, the front half of the bus carried
passengers, while freight was loaded in the rear.
In addition to linking Dunnville & Smithville Phillips'
bus made 5 trips per day to the air force training
school. In 1939 B. Phillips added a run to Welland.
In 1945 this license was purchased by a Canada Coach
driver and service was continued until 1960.

Fire Chief of Dunnville Dept.
1931







Bert C. Phillips Bus Line transported workers to booming Welland industries



The year was 1940...heavy industry in Welland was busily engaged in war work. No. 6 Service Flying Training School of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan was being opened in the Township of Dunn to train pilots needed to defeat Germany's Luftwaffe.

Transportation was necessary for persons commuting to work in Welland as well as the countless airmen travelling back and forth between the airport and Dunnville or other points on their way to and from 'leave'.

The late Bert C. Phillips was just the man to grasp this opportunity. A man of entrepreneurial spirit, he had seen the transport company he started 27 years before well on its way to becoming one of the largest privately owned carriers in Ontario. The firm was established in 1913 when Mr. Phillips operated his own team and dray between the Monarch Knitting Company and the Grand Trunk Railway. By 1940, Phillips Transports Limited was daily servicing centres from Toronto and Hamilton to Aylmer and St. Thomas and all points in between.

Mr. Phillips decided to embark in the bus business and going to the Brantford Coach and Body Company, he purchased a brand new bus, brown in color (which was pretty well all you could get then). Phillips already had the contract for freight and passenger service for the Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo Railway (T.H. and B.) and the increased service now covered Dunnville, Welland, Smithville and the airport.

As more and more people were employed in the Welland industries and traffic to and from the airport increased, the Phillips bus line grew to four buses — a Ford, a Dodge, a Reo and a Fargo, plus an ancient International that was pressed into service when necessary.

The regular Smithville bus was half cargo with seats in the front half. Passenger traffic to and from Smithville was heavy while the airport was in operation — airmen making their train connections at the Smithville station. "Four buses would line up on Sunday nights to take passengers to Smithville and bring airmen back," said Bob Rowe, one of many local men who drove bus for Phillips. Bob remembers the heavy passenger traffic to and from the airport. "We made five trips a day to the airport from Dunnville," he said. "The bus would be so full that many would have to

stand, a situation that really irked some of the officers who complained loudly," he remarked with a chuckle. "They were always threatening to report me for overloading the bus."

The work buses that covered the Welland-Dunnville run made three trips daily to meet the midnight, 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. shifts. One bus went by Dain City and one followed No. 3 and 3A into Welland. They carried workers to and from Atlas Steels, Joseph Stokes Rubber Co., Union Carbide, and Electro Metals. Of course other persons also used the bus service to get to Welland and points in between.

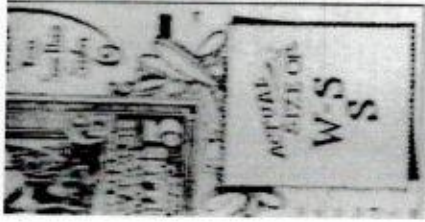
With all these bus runs every day, the vehicles were on the road constantly and quite a few drivers were needed. As well as Bob Rowe, some of the men who drove for Phillips at one time or another were Bert House (who mostly handled the T. H. and B. service), Hugh House, Harve Markey, Frank Barry, Bruce Currie, Peter Brooks, Don Bradley, Bill Harkness, Harold 'Had' Chittley, Fred Steinman and of course the "boss" George Phillips (son of the founder) who willingly took his share of driving — especially on Saturdays, "when no one else wanted the run," as he puts it. George Phillips was a fair employer well liked by his drivers. As Bob Rowe emphasized: "No one could ever say a word against George."

One of the Phillips buses is pictured above as it picked up a passenger on Highway 3 about four miles east of Dunnville. This photo, taken in 1943 or 1944, was kindly loaned by Madeline Worrall, who rode the bus to her employment at Joseph Stokes Rubber Co. before and after her marriage to Frank Worrall, one of many local men who also rode the bus to work in Welland. I had intended to list the names of some who rode the bus...but there are so many and they will remember regardless.

The bus pictured is the Reo, which while not the first, was also purchased new. Originally brown, it was repainted in the blue and white Phillips colors. Don Bradley drove this particular bus most of the time. As Bob laughing recalled: "He practically considered it his own."

Don Norton, who drove for Canada Coach Lines, purchased the licence from Phillips in 1945. The bus service continued to operate until about early 1960s.





1919

Fuel Controller was asking some of their motor vehicles on of those who on Saturday the garage until Monday for local press. "Save both ways not a bad idea now for a roads and threatened

ing urged in 1918 to help reduction of bacon hogs and organized and local banks of loans to assist farmers in

that ads pointing out the borrow money for the war on the money by buying objective, in the campaign as \$225,000, and \$106,159

By the end of the second 50) Dunnville had surpassed of the campaign in the third of \$390,000 subscribed in

nnville have always "come calls them to duty.

Paraded

Volume 3, January 30, 1980

re Order in Dunnville dates es to when Excelsior Loyal as instituted in 1827. Down 'arious bands have been an of the Orange Lodge.



1933

One band was the L.O.L. Flute Band as it appeared in this photo taken in 1933 on Canal Street (now Queen). Posing for the camera are: front row (left to right) — Lloyd Smith, George Kelly, Bill Kelly, Wilfred "Punch" Harkness, Wyn Hamilton, Stan Gifford, Ken Kelly. Directly behind the front rank are John Whitcher and Joe Buxton.

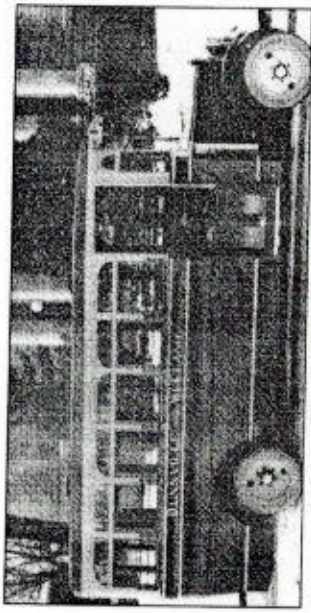
Back row (left to right) — Jack Mann, John Thompson, Bill Hines (bandmaster), Jim Armstrong, Lloyd McIntee, Jim Buxton, Elwood Thompson, Jack Spence. Behind the rear rank is Elmer McIntee.

Missing from the photo is Art Culp, who was busy taking the picture. Mr. Culp, who now lives in Hamilton, was kind enough to loan this photo.

Reo Bus Service's new coach "modern as a Pullman car"

Volume 3, February 6, 1980

On December 1st, 1923, Mr. Ellis Dorsey, proprietor of the REO BUS SERVICE purchased and put into service the bus pictured here. Three years before, Mr. Dorsey had located in Dunnville and since that time had supplied a much needed bus service between this town and Welland. His first bus had been a Reo, seating twelve people and when he disposed of it, had rung up 150,000 miles.



1923

A front-page article in the January 30, 1924 issue of the Dunnville Chronicle praised Mr. Dorsey's "enterprise in making such a large investment for the comfort of his patrons." The new vehicle was described as a "21 passenger pay-as-you-enter body, built on a

on the coming, weather heading system. The interior was cream coloured with rich walnut trim. The driver operated the modern folding door and there was also a rear emergency door.

The exterior displayed window guards, brass handles, front and rear coloured lights and a lighted destination sign box over the windshield. These accouterments, added to the light brown body paint and cream top, presented an attractive appearance.

The bus was making two round trips daily, leaving Dunnville at 7:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., and returning leaving Welland at 9:45 a.m. and 4:20 p.m. There was an extra Sunday trip leaving Dunnville at 6:00 p.m. and returning leaving Welland at 8:30 p.m. Fare for the Reo Bus Service was 80 cents each way.

Many of Reo's passengers were "drummers" (travelling salesmen), who had arrived in Welland by train and were brought to Dunnville to be ensconced with their samples in local hotels. After a few days they would make the return trip. However, many other people availed themselves of the service to reach various centres. For instance, connection could be made at Welland Junction with the Radial Cars for Niagara Falls and St. Catharines. Direct connection was made with Ming's Bus for Port Colborne. Dunnville Terminal was the Victoria Hotel and Welland Terminals were the Regatta and Dexter Hotels.

The Reo Bus Service, operated between Dunnville and Welland until the early 30s and the hard times of the depression.

For a number of years there was no bus service between these two centres. When local men began working in Welland industrial plants in the early war days (1939), the B.C. Phillips Bus Service (which had been operating between Dunnville and Smithville for a couple of years) added the Welland destination. This bus service continued to operate until about the early 1960s (the last few years under the ownership of, first, Don Norton, and then Don Bradley).

This photo of Mr. Dorsey's new bus, taken in Welland, was kindly loaned by Bob and Fay Shaver (daughter of the late Mr. Dorsey).

New bridge was a good spot to watch raging river

Volume 3, February 13, 1980

This view of the Dunnville Bridge (which was always in the old days referred to as the 'Long Bridge') was first printed in a souvenir Historical Review, published by the Dunnville Gazette in 1904.



The photo was taken known local photographer daughters, the Misses Lill florid was probably looki viewfinder from upstairs Kohler and Sons, and late The waters of the G their annual spring ramps. It is easy to understand spanned the river down sharp bend in the cent turbulent waters like an i to their rigidity.

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... row (left to right) — Jack Mann, John ... son, Bill Hines (bandmaster), Jim Armstrong, ... Jim Buxton, Elwood Thompson, Jack ... Behind the rear rank is Elmer McIntee.

... and from the photo is Art Culp, who was busy ... the picture. Mr. Culp, who now lives in Hamilton, ... enough to loan this photo.

Bus Service's new coach as a Pullman car"

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... page article in the January 30, 1924 issue of ... Chronicle praised Mr. Dorsey's ... in making such a large investment for the ... of his patrons." The new vehicle was described ... passenger pay-as-you-enter body, built on a

Model W six-cylinder Reo chassis," and "modern as a Pullman car." Commercial Bodies and Carriages Limited of Guelph built the body. Its overall length was 197 inches, overall width 87 inches and standing height 72 inches.

The seats, 37 inches long, were luxuriously covered in brown Spanish solid leather. Windows were plate glass, set in non-rattle brass sash, with transoms of cathedral glass, and the double-ventilating windshield had a sun visor. The coach also contained sign card racks, dome electric lights, roof ventilators, handgrips on the ceiling, buzzer buttons at every seat and a fine heating system. The interior was cream coloured with rich walnut trim. The driver operated the modern folding door and there was also a rear emergency door.

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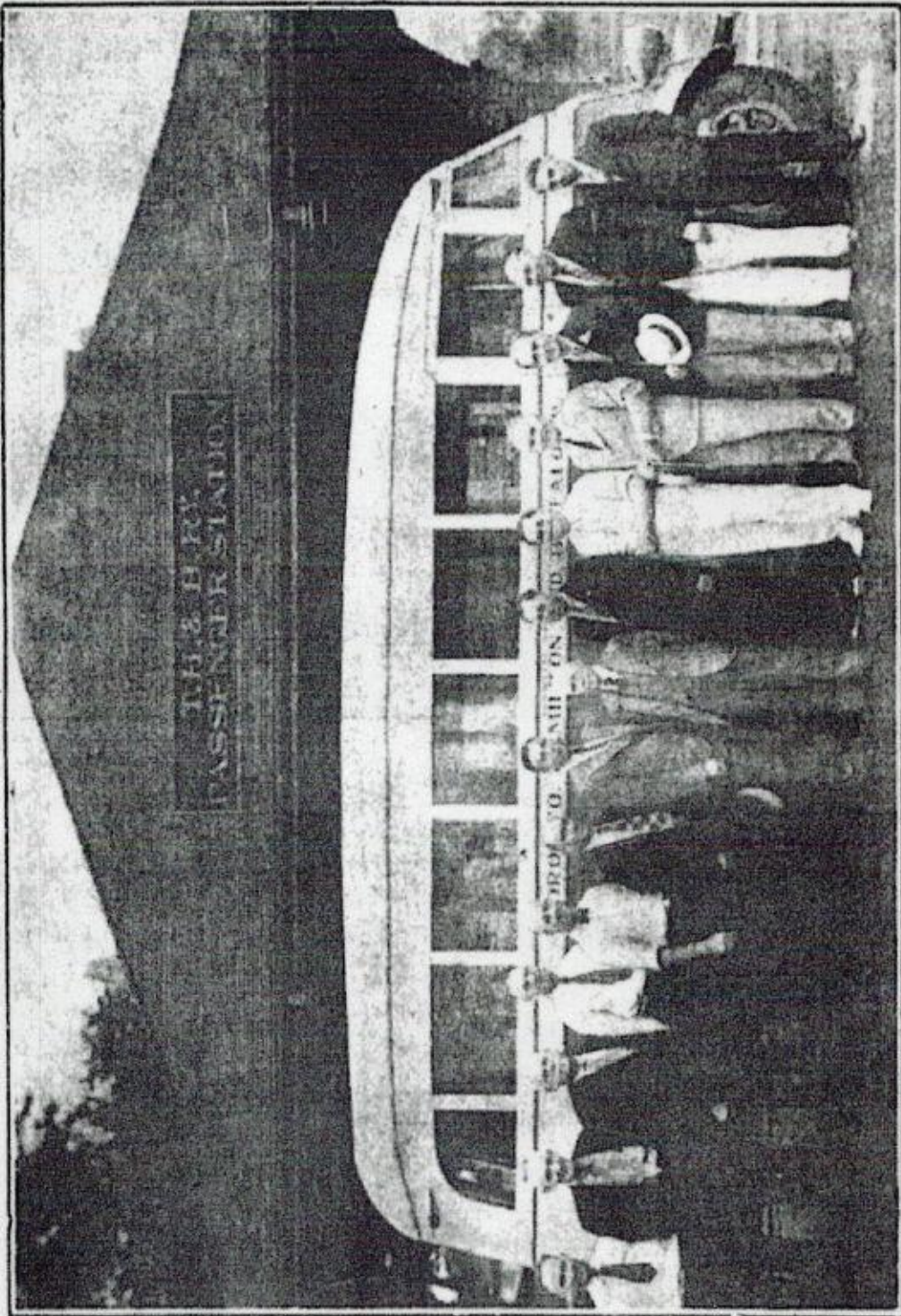
The fishing was along Dunnville



DUNNVILLE, ONTARIO, FRIDAY AUGUST 20, 1937

Welcome
New
T. H. & B.
Bus

Reading from
left to right—
Jos. Murray, E.
Chas. B. O'Dell,
Wm. B. Bilger,
M. A. Smiter,
Holste Webber,
John Clark, D.
Hastings, H. F.
Stonham, O. G.
Thomas, Row-
land F. Hill,
Mayor Shaver,
Deputy Reeve
David Brown,
Post House.



BUS SERVICE STARTED

Last Passenger Train To and From Smithville Ran on Saturday

The last passenger train on the T., H. & B. railway's Smithville-Dunnville branch operated Saturday, ending 23 years of passenger operation on that line. The service between Smithville and Dunnville will be carried on by a new bus, which made its first scheduled trip from Dunnville on Monday.

Originally intended primarily as a freight line, the branch was built in 1914 to connect the main line of the T., H. & B. with the company's Port Maitland-Ashtabula, Ohio, car ferry, which was discontinued in 1931. Passenger service was commenced on December 22, 1914, and has been continued ever since. The service entailed keeping an engine and crew at Dunnville, which made two trips each way connecting with passenger trains on the main line at Smithville daily, except Sunday.

Effective last Monday, Dunnville was discontinued as a terminal and freight service, and switching at Dunnville and Port Maitland is now done by the East Local, a way freight train which will now leave Hamilton at 9.30 a. m., proceed to Smithville, make a trip down the Dunnville branch, return, and proceed to Welland, repeating the schedule on the return trip. This train, which formerly left Hamilton at 11.30 a. m., will serve the local knitting mills and other industries which would be seriously inconvenienced should service be discontinued.

W. MacPherson, engineer of the Dunnville mixed train, and a resident of Dunnville, will take up residence in Hamilton and work out of that terminal.

The time table for the new bus service appears in another column, also a picture of the bus and members of the Council and leading citizens who welcomed it formally here on Monday, Aug. 9th. The stops for taking on and letting off passengers between Dunnville and Smithville will be as follows: C.N.R. tracks, Inman Road, Francoola, Gilmore's Corner, Campbell's Garage, Montague (M.C.R.), Schwoob School, Wellandport, Creamer Gas Station, Blamarek, St. Ann's and Nelson Garage. The bus will make three trips each way daily, except Sundays, and one trip each way on Sunday, and rail tickets will be honored on it just as on the former train service.

ough Mr. McCutcheon was unable to identify the man in the boat he said the man was rowing up Lock Street.



1913 - Photo courtesy of Nick and Leida Knol

Remember when? Tom McCutcheon and Wally Franklin do. This photo, taken in 1913, brought back childhood memories for the two lifelong residents of Dunnville. Mr. McCutcheon said he was on his father's boat when the picture was taken. His father is standing on the extreme right. At the time Mr. McCutcheon was 12 years old.

The boat was in the middle of the sidewalk on Lock Street and was covered with water as the photo shows. Though Mr. McCutcheon was unable to identify the man in the boat he said the man was rowing up Lock Street.

"We never had too many of them (floods)," he said but that was a dandy that year. When you get pictures and see them it brings back memories."

Mr. Franklin, who didn't remember this particular flood, was able to provide some history about the buildings in the background, some of which still exist today.

The white building on the right, which now contains a barbershop and laundromat, was at one time a church and was moved to its location on Lock Street.

The dark building in the background was Rochefort's Pool Room up to 1919 when the Franklin family bought the store for its plumbing and heating business. Today the building contains the main showroom of W.E. Franklin Furniture and Appliances.

On the ground floor of the building on the left were several stores including two Chinese laundries, the Dunnville Gazette and Happell's Shoe Repair.

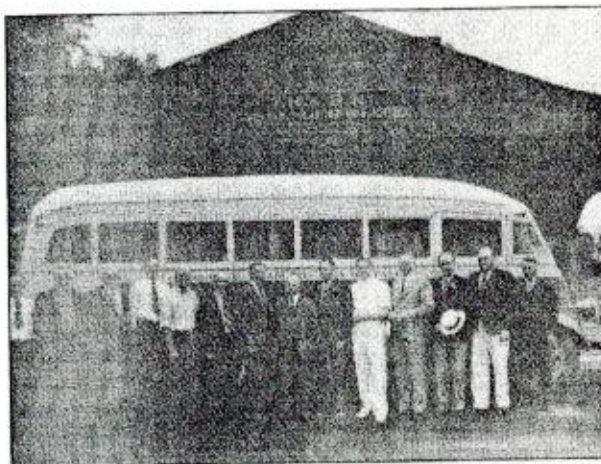
The second and third floor contained an opera and a doll factory but a fire in late 1918 destroyed the third floor of the building.

The photo may give the impression that the trees are in the middle of the street but in fact they are on the boulevard and some stand to this day.

According to Mr. Franklin, Lock Street was paved only as far as Chestnut Street at the time the photo was taken and "beyond that it was all mud."

Dunnville-Smithville express made 3 round trips daily

Volume 1, May 18, 1977



1937 - Photo courtesy Joe S. Murray TH & B Agent

Railway passenger service was on its way out and new bus service was being started back in August 1937 when these 14 gentlemen got together for a picture.

The picture was taken in front of the old TH and B railway station on the site of the present A and P Food Store. According to Joe J. Murray, who appears on the extreme left the TH and B Railway was starting a bus service from Dunnville to Smithville and the men posed in front of the bus. The bus service provided Dunnville residents with a connection to the main TH and B passenger line from Buffalo to Toronto after passenger service in Dunnville was discontinued.

The bus made three round trips a day from Smithville to Dunnville Mr. Murray said. The original price for a round trip was about 90 cents he said.

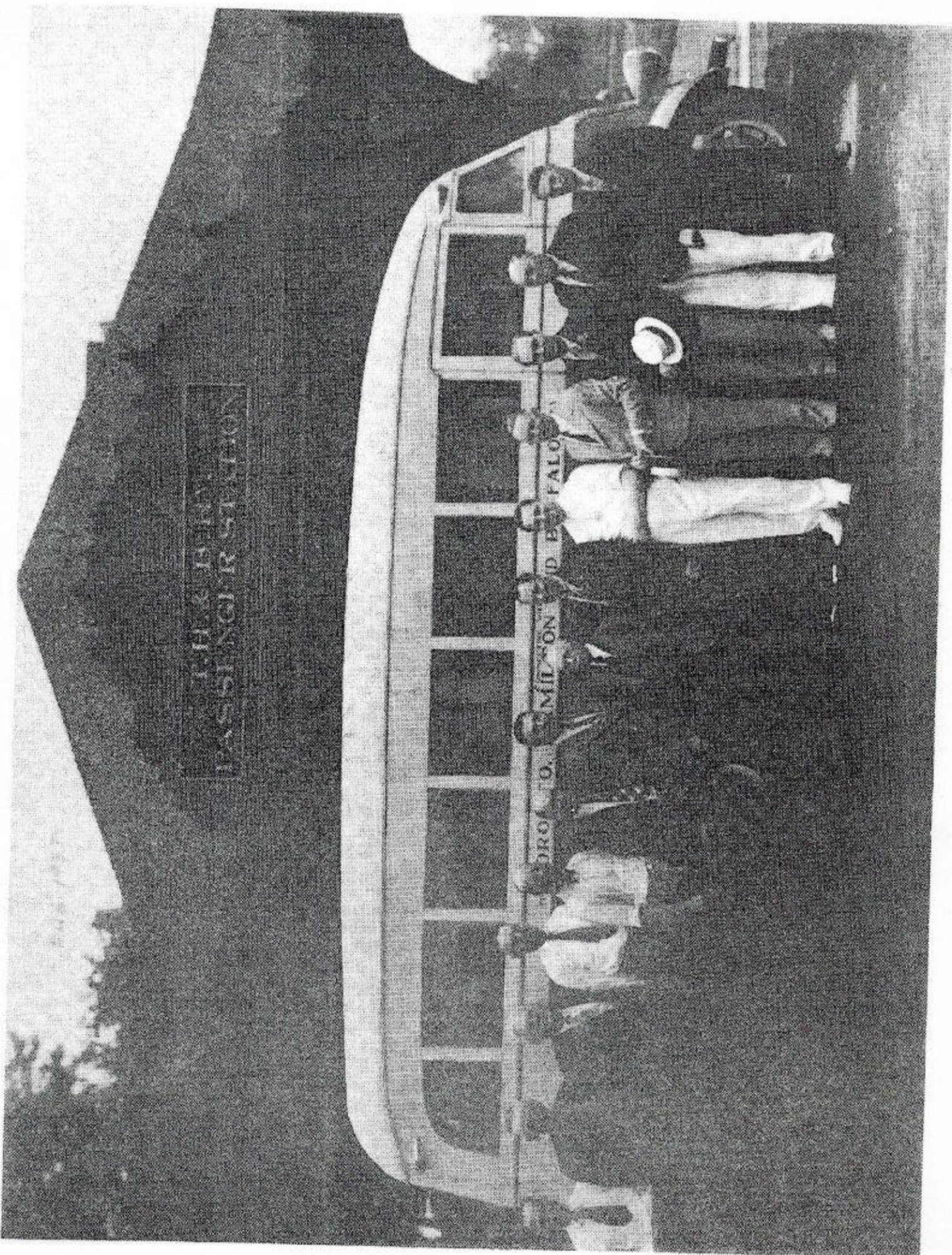
The men from left are; Joe Murray, Chief clerk, Ed O'Dell, TH and B agent, Charlie Bilger, Manfred Schire, "Holsie" Webber, William Warnick, TH and B superintendent, John Clark, Dave Hastings, Dunnville Gazette publisher, Herb Stonham, Dunnville Chronicle reporter, Chester Thomas, R. Hill, TH and B freight and passenger agent, Marvin Shaver, Dave Brown and driver Bert House.

Hospital fitting memorial to fallen soldiers

Volume 1, May 25, 1977



1920



TH&B bus service ca. 1937 – ls – 1b

T.H. & B had discontinued its rail service. Bus ran from Dunnville to Smithville to connect with T.H. & B. rail there. 3 round trips daily. Railway station in background; now (2015) location of grocery store.

In Photo, l to r: Joe Murray, Chief clerk; Ed. O'Dell, T.H. & B. agent; Charles Bilger, Manfred Schier, "Holsie" Webber, William Warnick, T.H. & B. sup't.; John Clark, David Hastings, owner of *Dunnville Gazette*; Herb Stonham, reporter for *Dunnville Chronicle*; Chester Thomas, B. Hill, T.H. & B. freight and passenger agent; Marvin Shaver, David Brown, driver, Bert House.

Bert Pettigrew Makes Final Run

Herbert Pettigrew of 116 Park Ave. West, Dunnville, will no longer be pulling into Corey's Appliances on Lock St. at 6 p.m. sharp every weekday.

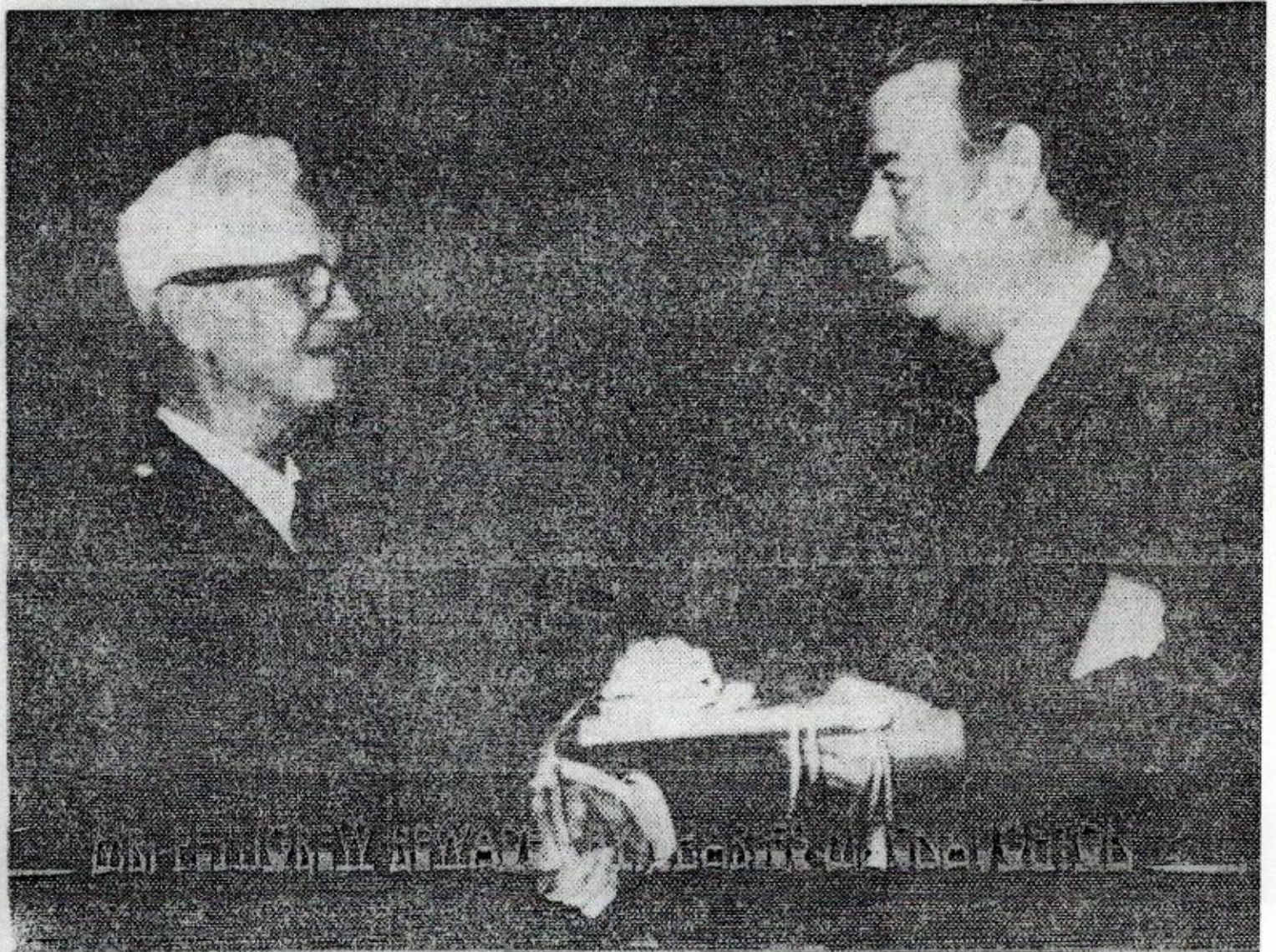
After 41 years and over one million miles of safe driving, Mr. Pettigrew made his last run as a Canada Coach Lines bus driver Friday evening.

Mr. Pettigrew was a well known driver with the Canada Coach Lines. He made daily trips between Dunnville and

Hamilton, often travelling the old River Road during the middle of winter under hazardous conditions.

Mr. Pettigrew was awarded for an enviable achievement this past July when Charlie MacNaughton, minister of transport and communications, made a presentation on behalf of the Canada Coach Lines.

The award recognized his maintaining a 25 year one million mile accident free record.



Bert's bus was full for two trips daily

Many miles were driven and many friendships formed during Bert Pettigrew's 41 years as a bus driver. He began in 1930 and for most of those 41 years (except for perhaps the last six) made two round trips daily between Dunnville and Hamilton, rolling up 1,200 miles per week.

It was during the depths of the Depression, when Bert began driving for Dominion Power and Transmission. His first bus was a "Reo" and his memories of that vehicle centre on its stopping capabilities. "You had to stand right up on the brake pedal," he chuckled, "and pull the emergency brake on at the same time."

In those days, which he describes as "pre-union," Bert made two return trips daily, leaving Dunnville at 7:40 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. — "and that was seven days a week." Time-off consisted of two part-days a month. "I never got a Saturday or holiday off." But during those economic hard times, Bert emphasized that he "was glad to have a job!"

His route took him from Dunnville to Cayuga, Caledonia and Hamilton — picking up and discharging passengers all along the route, both ways. The fare was \$1.35 one-way. During the war years — with so many airmen stationed at No. 6 S.F.T.S. Dunnville — servicemen were given a special rate of 65 cents one-way.

In earlier days, the county road between Cayuga and Caledonia ran alongside the Grand River and was flooded every spring. Bert remembers driving along "pushing waves in front" and making detours at York to complete his run. Sanding and salting were unknown and he experienced "some really awful trips." No one was more appreciative than this bus driver when the county road was replaced by the new Highway 54!

Bert's career as a driver spanned three company changes and a dozen different types of buses. Dominion Power and Transmission became Highway King Coach Lines; then Canada Coach Lines, and ultimately a branch of the Hamilton Street Railway. Bert doesn't have a photograph of his first bus, but is



seen here standing in front of a "White" bus he drove in the late 1930s. The next bus to take him over the familiar route during the early 1940s was a "Flexible," with a straight-8 Buick motor in back. "That was my idea of a bus," he said.

Bert's accommodating manner and genial personality made him a favorite with all who rode his bus. Countless persons came to know him not only as their driver...but as their friend. To many regular passengers, Bert WAS Canada Coach Lines. He also built up an enviable reputation with the company as the driver who was always on time.

Highlights of his career came as

he was honored for acquiring 20 and 25 year accident-free records while driving well over a million miles.

After 41 years and nine months, Bert made his last run as the year 1971 was drawing to a close. When he retired, his cap badge bore the number "1," signifying his seniority. With understandable pride, he said "I started with badge No. 63."

Due to declining passenger usage, the service between Hamilton and Dunnville was discontinued early this year (1983) with the final run being made on Friday, February 25. According to Bert, it was different in the old days. "My bus was always full."

