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THE TOWN OF ESSEX

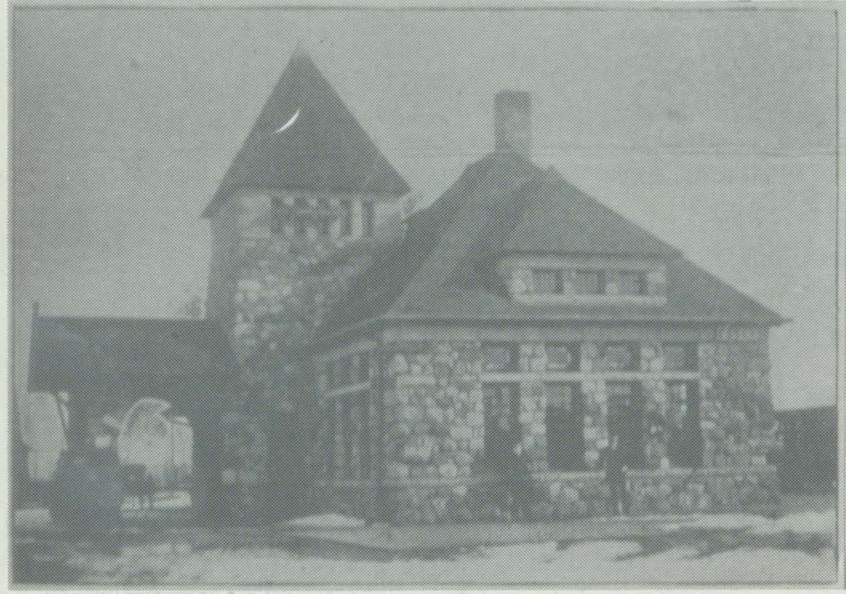
Historical and Descriptive Sketch of the Settlement.

Character of the Country when the Pioneers Arrived—The First Building on the Site—Gradual Development to Village and Town.

Present Business Enterprises.

It is not very many years ago, perhaps within the memory of the "oldest inhabitant" of the neighbourhood, whom it would not require to be an extremely aged man, when an inn of humble pretensions and unattractive appearance stood on the Talbot road near the north-east corner of the township of Colchester, County of Essex. This building, like all primitive dwellings in the early settlements of the province, was constructed of logs; and

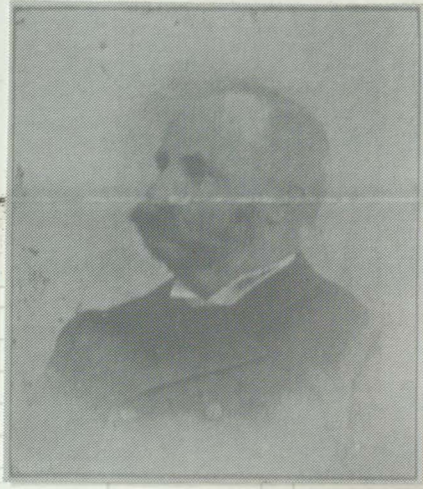
ments with each other. It was the only human habitation within an area of many square miles of a country as wild as when the waters of the deluge receded from it. Now well paved streets, lined with fine blocks of business houses and handsome private residences, meet the traveller at this point instead of the solitary log building so gratefully reached by the wearied passengers in the stage coach fifty odd years ago. The forest



MICHIGAN SOUTHERN RAILWAY STATION, ESSEX.

its rough exterior was quite in keeping with the wild character of the country by which it was surrounded. The forests, dense and far-extending in every direction, had not then been invaded by the settler; and the silence of their gloomy depths was broken only by the twitter of the birds during the best hours of the day, and in the evening by the shrill or hoarse croak of the frogs when they held their reunions in the dismal swamps with which the marshy tract abounded. The isolated position of this wayside tavern, and its rude, comfortless appearance, are not the features which commend it at this date to the affectionate remembrance of early travellers through the district, or entitle

has disappeared, and its place is broad acres of cultivated land. The marsh and swamps are no longer present to spread their poisonous odours, but the perfumes of choice flowers in the well kept gardens on every side fill the air during the pleasant summer time. The lonesome road which conducted the few travellers to the wayside inn is now a busy thoroughfare from

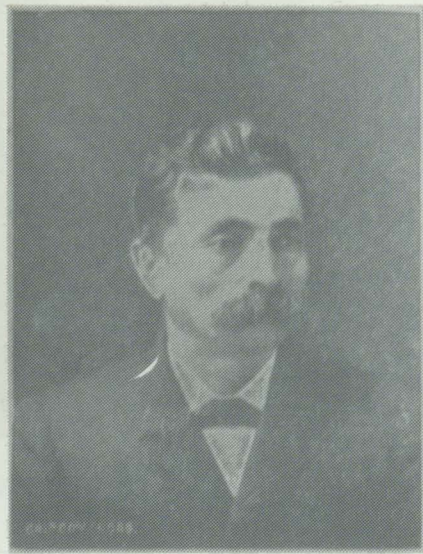


H. W. ALLAN, M.P.

limit to limit of a progressive town.

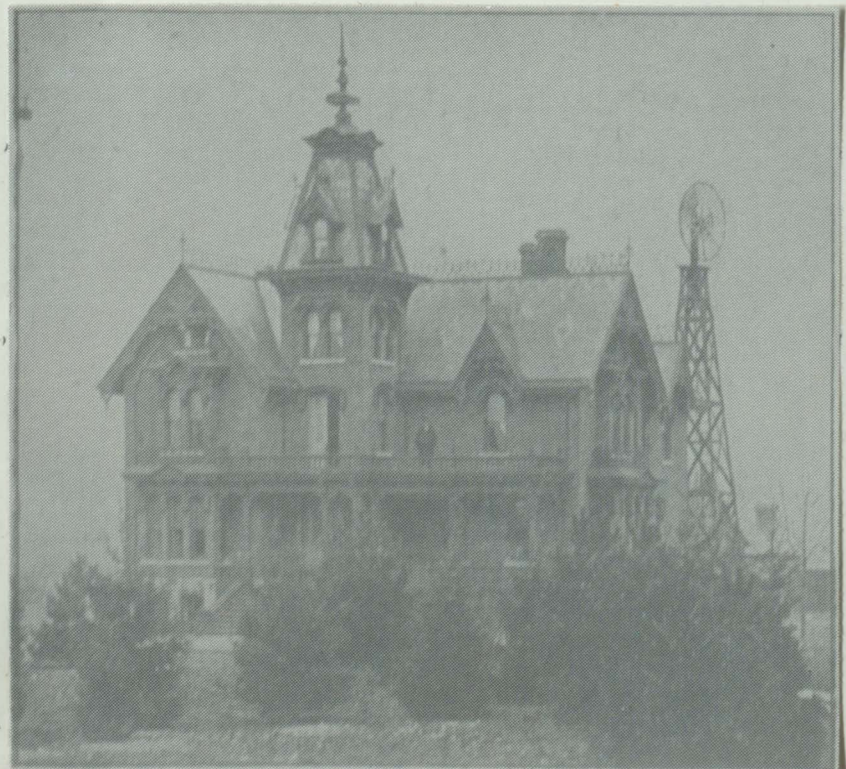
OPENING OF THE SETTLEMENT.

It was in 1831 that the ground was first broken by the harrow of the pioneer ploughman. John McEwan made his appearance in that year, and took up the lot numbered 281 north. For nearly twelve months he was alone, except for the company at the little inn, who continued to entertain occasional guests in passage from the settlements at either side. In 1832 lot 238 north was taken possession of by Mr. Tryon and family, and in the following year the lot lying between the McEwan and Tryon homesteads was secured by Mr. Joseph Irwin. The three families thus occupied the northern frontage on Talbot Street within Colchester township, and the first stage in the progress of settlement was reached. Two years later Mr. Storey arrived on the scene, and building upon lot 283 on the south side of the road gave to the appearance of the locality almost the importance of a village. It was not a rapid growth of population, however, four families in as many years, and four farms constituting the whole settlement. The development was not sufficiently remarkable, at all events, to attract other settlers in large numbers, and, as a matter of fact, quite a long period elapsed before the McEwans, Irwins, etc., had an opportunity of extending courtesies to new neighbours. There was absolutely no progress for several years, and little promise that at any time



MAYOR MILNE.

prosperous and steadily growing town of Essex. Not much more than half a century ago the little log inn stood in the midst of an unbroken forest, unbroken save for the one or two roads which pierced it and connected the widely distant settle-

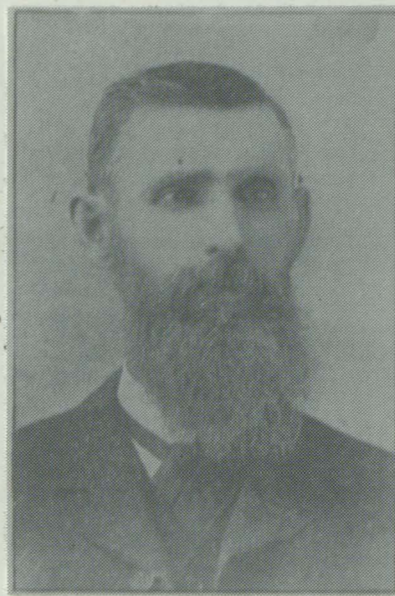


RESIDENCE OF MAYOR MILNE.

in a reasonably near future the place would assume an importance much beyond the very humble degree it had then attained. But it was destined for something much greater even than the most sanguine of the settlers in the district could have hoped for. The construction of the Canada Southern Railway through that section of the country presented pos-

Windsor, a distance of sixteen miles. At Windsor they were ferrid across to Detroit. This was a change not relished by Amherstburg, but it had decidedly beneficial influence for Essex Centre. It greatly improved the railway facilities of the latter, and it and the City of the Straits from forty miles down to

known to the Dominion, or, indeed, to the province, that it was necessary to indicate its position by the name applied to it. But it has outgrown its infant title, and Essex town is just as likely to be



MR. JAMES NAYLOR

confounded with Essex county as the city of Quebec is to be accepted as meaning the province of that name. Essex Centre was good enough for a budding settlement of broad farms and well stocked dairies, but for a progressive town with commercial and manufacturing enterprises within its limits the shorter name is sufficient to indicate its whereabouts.

PRESENT POSITION OF THE TOWN.

The town of Essex now possesses business interests of a variety of kind. In addition to the many ancient mercantile firms sustained through time and growing prosperity, there are manufacturing establishments in various trades steadily extending their operations. The presence of and achievement of these business institutions are at once an evidence of the progress of the town and



RESIDENCE OF THOMAS RUSH, P.M.

sibilities of which prompt avail was made, and as time passed these possibilities were gradually, although speedily, materialized into actual facts. Improved prospects stimulated enterprise, and enterprise conceived fresh plans for the development of the settlement. It started to grow again, and its increasing dimensions attracted attention that had very beneficial influences. On the first of February, 1873, Mr. Thomas Rush opened the first store in the village, and in the following May

perceived that a quick communication with the rising town of Windsor and the important city of Detroit provided through it for a large section of the frontier country, and gave the village a position which was strongly conducive to its prosperity. Essex Centre was incorporated as a village in 1883, and the first council elected was composed of the following: Dr. James Brien, reeve; Messrs. Thomas Rush, Francis Balfour, Francis Delmore, and W. T. Johnson, councillors; Mr. O. C. Barrie,



PECK & RICHARDSON'S BLOCK

a postoffice was established with Mr. Rush as postmaster. A few months later another building for commercial purposes was erected, and then followed the establishment of many business houses, which are in a flourishing condition today. Of course the "boom" encouraged some mercantile enterprises that should not then have been attempted, and which did not meet with the success which the promoters expected; but on the whole the growth of the village was steady and healthful, and its permanent progress has been long since assured. Among its merchants and manufacturers of wide repute and extensive operations may be mentioned Messrs. George Wilson, John Milne and E. J. Powell & Co. It was in the summer of 1873 that Mr. Milne became a resident of the village, and his connection with it has been to its great material benefit. He was a chief promoter of the Essex Centre Manufacturing Company, an establishment which has contributed largely to the progress and accompanying prosperity of Essex.

PROVISION OF RAILWAY FACILITIES.

Towards the close of 1882 the Essex Centre cut-off railroad line was opened for traffic. The opening of this railway was productive of considerable advantage for the village, giving it an importance

clerk, and Mr. W. H. Russell, treasurer. The population was then 800. In 1881 it was only 360, but in 1882 it had increased to 571. In 1889, when the town of Essex

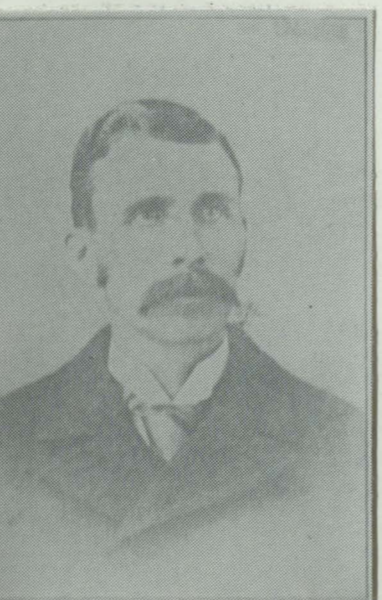
a promise for it of a still higher place in the commercial world. No part of a community can prosper without benefitting in some way the other portions, and the



DR. JAMES BRIEN'S RESIDENCE.

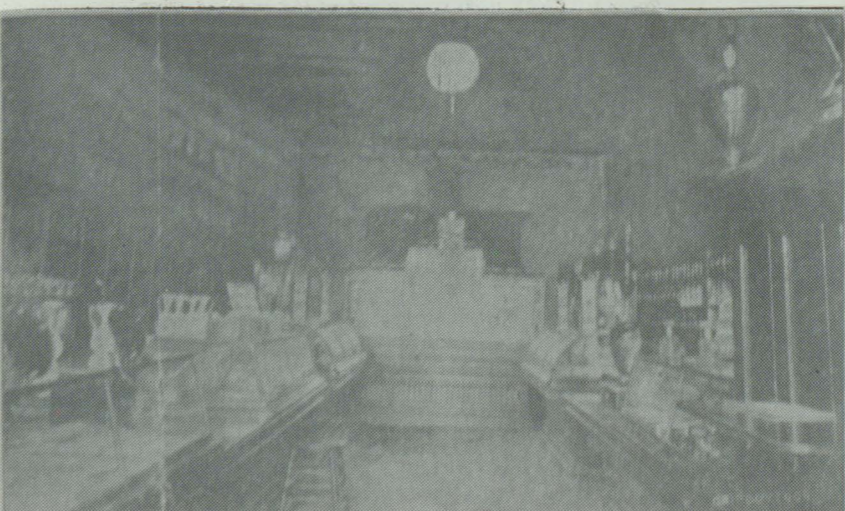
was incorporated, a census was taken, and it was found that the population had increased to over 2,000. The change of name was suggested by the apparent intuity of the descriptive half of the old appellation. The town had attained a prominence which rendered it unnecessary to impart, through its name, any

increased output from existing manufacturing, or the establishment of new ones, means an increased demand for labour which the town must supply. With a growing population the limits of the town must extend, and new stores must be opened to satisfy the wants of the new comers. This has been the position of Essex for



MR. C. F. NAYLOR.

which naturally assisted liberally in the extension of its commercial and other interests. Before the construction of this line the Canada Southern Railway crossed the river at Amherstburg, and continued its approach to Detroit on the American side. When the "cut-off" was built, trains left the main line at Essex Centre—Essex, as it is now called—and ran to



INTERIOR OF BRIEN & CO.'S DRUG STORE.

information respecting its geographical position in the county after which it was called. The name was suggestive of a place of small importance, the affix insinuating a belief that the town was so little

many years past, and its growth has been continuous and regular, as shown by the figures quoted above. At all times the prosecution of extensive industries demands the existence in the near neighbour-

hood of an institution dealing in cash exclusively, and this need is supplied by private banks established by Mr. R. C. Struthers, of London, and Mr. John Milne, and a branch of the Imperial Bank. In its equipment for a business, go-ahead town Essex is complete. It is in the centre of a fine agricultural country; it has men of money and enterprise with flourishing mercantile establishments and large manufactures, and it has all the railway facilities requisite to push its trade and manufactures. That it has been alive to its advantages is manifest from its steady advancement and prosperity, and no doubt it will continue to prosper and extend until it is second to no town in Western Ontario. The buildings of which it consists are generally handsome and substantial, and there is a look of solidity about them which augurs well for the stability of the place and its business institutions.

that time signed warrants for beneficiaries for over one million dollars. When he retired from the Finance Committee of that order he was unanimously elected Grand Foreman, and in 1890 became Grand Master. Upon the incorporation of Essex as a town Mr. Milne was elected mayor by acclamation, and was re-elected in the same manner in 1891 and 1892. He resides at "Maple Villa," which was erected in 1882, at a cost of \$18,000, exclusive of the site. He at present carries on a large banking and real estate business, and is the proprietor of the Essex Industrial Works. Of a retiring disposition, inheriting the caution proverbial of the men of the shire in which he was born, and possessing the indomitable will, characteristic of Scotchmen generally, Mr. Milne, although virtually a Canadian, has not failed to exhibit those inherited traits of character throughout his career; and allaying them to strict morality, honesty of



RESIDENCE OF DR. P. A. DEWAR.

H. W. ALLAN, M.P.

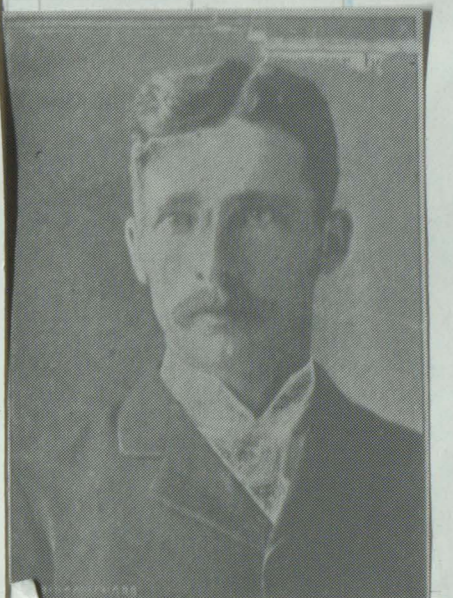
Born of Scotch parentage in the town of Niagara, on the 20th of December, 1848, the present member of the Dominion Parliament for South Essex engaged in mercantile pursuits at an early age, and was at one time the largest general merchant in the County of Norfolk. He was subsequently one of the heaviest dealers in produce in Western Ontario, owning and utilizing no less than fifteen elevators and warehouses in the County of Essex at the same time. He is now senior member of the firm of Allan Brothers, merchants and produce dealers in the town of Essex. Mr. Allan entered the arena of politics in 1878, having been an unsuccessful candidate for the House of Commons for South Norfolk. He was first returned to Parliament at the last general election. He is a Liberal in politics, and in favour of a large measure of reciprocity with the United States.

MAYOR MILNE.

John Milne is one of the best known business men in Western Ontario, and is recognized as a man of extraordinary ability. He was born in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, in the year 1838. When about four years of age he was brought to Canada by his father, who was a shoemaker by trade. Several of his early years were spent in the then village of Woodstock. At twelve years of age he struck out to make his own living, and was several years an errand boy and clerk in Toronto. He thirsted after an education and spent all his spare time reading and studying, and when 18 years old passed examination as school teacher, and was appointed to a school near Markham Village. He taught in Markham, Stouffville, and adjoining schools for ten years with great acceptability, but his health failing he was advised to take some out-door occupation for a time, and accordingly he went to the oil fields of Pennsylvania, where he made money, but through a wreck on the Ohio river lost it all. From there he engaged in the construction of the C.S.R. as a contractor and improved his position financially. He located in Essex Centre in 1873, when there were only two log houses in it, and took an active part in building up the place. He built saw mills, stove works, machine shop, plough works, planing mills and handle works, employing from

LEIGH GROVE.

Leigh Grove, the home of Thomas Rush, postmaster at Essex, is a shaded retreat in the suburbs of the town, plain, but substantial and commodious. Mr. Rush was born in England in the year 1835, and emigrated to America in 1857. After spending several years in the West, Mr. Rush decided to make his permanent home under the old flag. A few years later he voted to farming in the township of Maidstone where he followed by a cantile career in the village of stone Cross, from whence he moved miles to the centre of the county.



DR. P. A. DEWAR.

1873 opened the first general store in what is now the town of Essex. About the same time he received the appointment of postmaster, which position he has ever since held. Mr. Rush sat three years in the village council, and as a director in the Agricultural Society performed his part in consolidating the agricultural societies of the county, for the purpose of holding a united annual exhibition in the central town of the county.

JAMES BRIEN, M.D.

Doctor Brien's parents emigrated from Enniskillen, Ireland, in 1846, settling in the township of Howard, Elgin County,

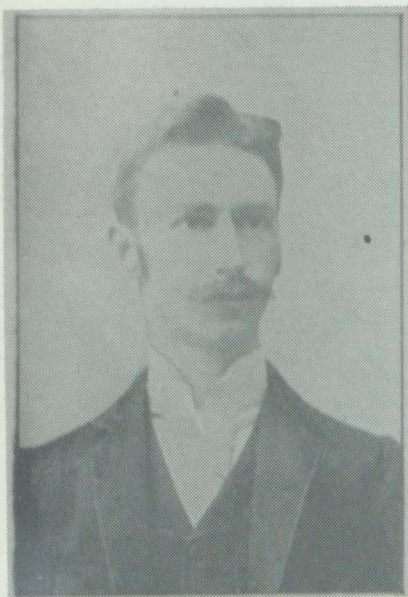


RESIDENCE OF DR. GEO. MCKENZIE.

100 to 125 men, and is universally acknowledged to be the lather of the town. In 1875 he was instrumental in getting a Division Court established in Essex Centre, and has been clerk of the court ever since. Mr. Milne has been several times pressed to accept nomination for the Local and Dominion Parliaments, by the Liberal party, but has always pleaded pressure of business, never falling, however, to take an active part in helping to elect the candidate of his party. Mr. Milne is also a prominent figure in the A.O.U.W. He was chairman of the Finance Committee for ten years, and during

Ont., where our subject was born on the 4th of February, 1848. He was educated in London and at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons in Kingston. The doctor came to Essex Centre in 1872, and commenced practice. On May 7, 1880, he was married to Miss Addie Burdette, the only daughter of the Rev. C. Burdette, formerly pastor of the Methodist church here. Dr. Brien was elected reeve of Essex Centre on its incorporation in 1883, and filled that position for three years, doing much during his term of office to promote the interests of the village. As reeve of Essex Centre and a member of the County

Council, Dr. Brien always put public interests above personal considerations. He is a man of great public spirit and generosity, and has been lavish in the expenditure of his time and means to further the interests of his constituency. He has always taken an active part in the promotion of agricultural interests, and was for many years a director of various agricultural societies in Essex. When the Liberal Convention met in November, 1885, to select a candidate to contest the South Riding of Essex, he was unanimously selected for that position. The general election was not brought on until February, 1886, and although he had a hard man to run against in the person of Mr. Lewis Wigle, who had been surnamed Wellington from his unbroken series of victories, yet the doctor succeeded in being elected by a



MR. EDWARD A. WISMER.

The residence of Dr. P. A. Dewar, Waverly place, is situated on the corner of Talbot and Wellington streets, and was built in 1887 at a cost of \$6,000, site included. Doctor Dewar was born near Sarnia, County of Lambton, Ont., on the 4th of September, 1850. He was educated primarily at the Sarnia Collegiate Institute, and studied medicine at Trinity Medical College, Toronto, from which he graduated in 1885. Soon after graduation he located in Essex Centre, entering into partnership with Dr. James Brien, who then had the largest practice in the county. Dr. Dewar is now senior member of the firm of Dewar & McKenzie, Dr. Brien retiring in 1888. Dr. Dewar is an active and influential member of the town council, and was formerly a member of the High School Board, serving as secretary of the same. He is at present vice-president of the Essex Reform Association.

former being compelled to relinquish his practice on account of his political engagements. On the 10th of March, 1890, Dr. McKenzie was appointed associate coroner for this county.

at the Berlin High School, and began his law studies in the office of Mr. John King, Q. C., Berlin. He was graduated at Osgoode Hall, Toronto, in 1886, immediately after which he entered into practice here. In January of the current year Mr. Clark retired, leaving Mr. Wismer, who is solicitor for the Imperial Bank, and acting solicitor for the town, in possession of the practice and good will of the firm. Mr. Wismer is a Mason; a member of the A. O. U. W., and secretary of the Essex High School Board.



THE DUNSTAN BLOCK.

Mr. George J. Thomas. One of the pioneer business men of Essex Centre was the late Mr. George Wilson, who at an early date was largely identified with the commercial and real estate development of this section. The gentleman whose name heads this sketch came here from Sarnia in 1876 as Mr. Wilson's bookkeeper, and at Mr. Wilson's decease succeeded to his landed interests in Essex and vicinity. Mr. Thomas, besides being possessed of considerable property in this locality, is a dealer in real estate,

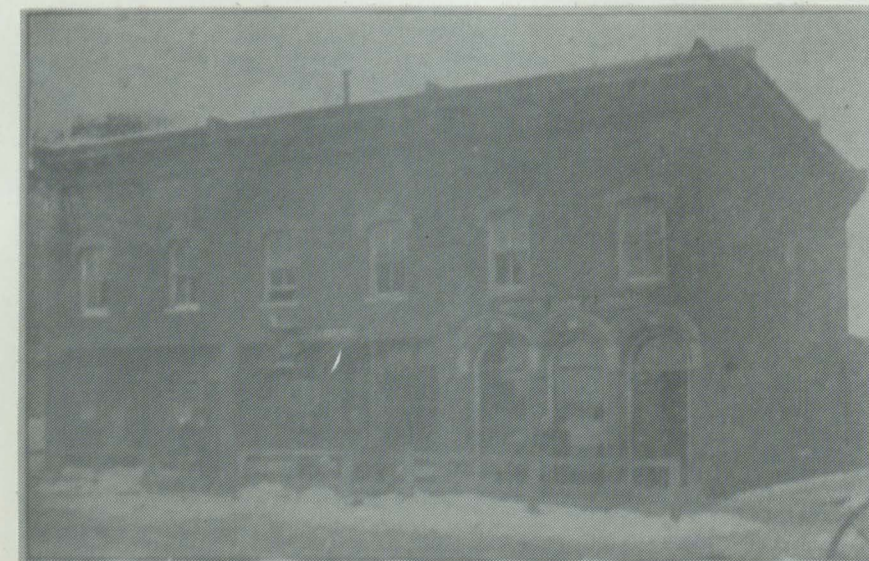
A neat gothic brick cottage, erected by Mr. H. W. Allan, M. P., stands fronting on Talbot Street, north of the Michigan Central railway tracks. Its present owner was born on the 23rd of July, 1857, on the Atlantic ocean, while his father's family were en route from Scotland to Canada. Dr. McKenzie attended school in Warwick village, in the County of Lambton, where his parents settled, and obtained his medical education at Trinity Medical



ALLAN BROTHERS' STORE.

College, graduating from that institution in the spring of 1886. Immediately thereafter he engaged in practice at Poplar Hill, County of Middlesex, where he remained two years, when he located in Essex Centre, purchasing the interest of Dr. James Brien in the firm of Brien & Dewar, the

Richardson & Brother, implement dealers, of which Mr. J. W. Richardson is the junior member. This firm was formed in the spring of 1885, and has ever since done a good and growing business. Their warerooms are located on Talbot street, opposite the hardware store. They are agents for all kinds of implements from the best makers, and keep a large stock of repairs on hand. The residence of Mr. W. H. Richardson, elsewhere illustrated, is situated on Alice street, and was built in 1888. It is a fine structure of red brick, of modern architecture, and is surrounded by handsome lawns and walks.



ESSEX BRANCH, IMPERIAL BANK OF CANADA.

conveyancer and local manager of the Bell Telephone Co. He was made treasurer of the High School Board upon the organization of that body, and held the position until he resigned to enter the town council, of which he is still a member.

but erected in 1885 by Edward Dunstan of unsavoury memory, who not long since "skipped by the light of the moon," leaving many sorrowing friends to mourn their loss. The building is a three storey red brick, 62 by 80 feet in dimensions, and is devoted to office, society and mercantile purposes. Among its wide awake occupants are

Richardson's Block. Adjoining Peck's Block on the west, and inseparably connected therewith, is the Richardson Block, erected in 1884 by Mr. W. H. Richardson, who located in Essex



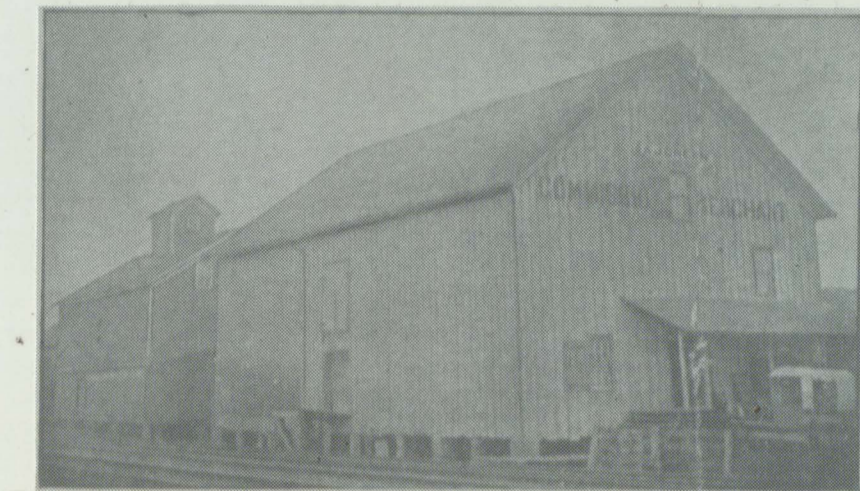
ESSEX INDUSTRIAL WORKS

former under the management of Mr. G. E. Smith, the latter presided over by Mr. G. W. Smith, while the Essex store is and has been from its inception three years ago in charge of Mr. A. H. Smith. Without attempting a detailed description of their stock, it may be truthfully said that G. E. Smith & Co. deal in all kinds of merchandise usually kept in a general store.

Mr. A. J. Green, the largest grain and produce merchant in the County of Essex, was born on the 30th of March, 1855. He came to Essex Centre immediately after the completion of the Michigan Central railway, and conducted a commission business until 1878, when he began operations on his own account. Mr. Green does not confine his transactions to the town of Essex alone, but owns and utilizes elevators at Harrow, on the Lake Erie and Detroit River railway; at Belle River, on the Grand Trunk railway; and at Maidstone Cross, on the Michigan Central railway; all of which are extensive buildings, one larger even than the Essex elevator shown in our illustration, the five furnishing storage for 105,000 bushels of grain. In addition to handling grain and seeds he deals in the season in dressed hogs. Mr.

years' clerkship took charge of the business, which is still under that gentleman's supervision. The store, of which we show an interior view, is tastily shelved, cased and countered, and a varied and carefully selected stock of drugs, proprietary medicines, toilet articles and fancy goods are attractively arranged thereon or therein. Brien & Co's. dispensing trade is unusually large for a town of this size, upwards of 100 prescriptions having been recently dispensed in one day. The firm also handle stationery and the leading daily papers, and are the local agents for the G. N. W. Telegraph Company.

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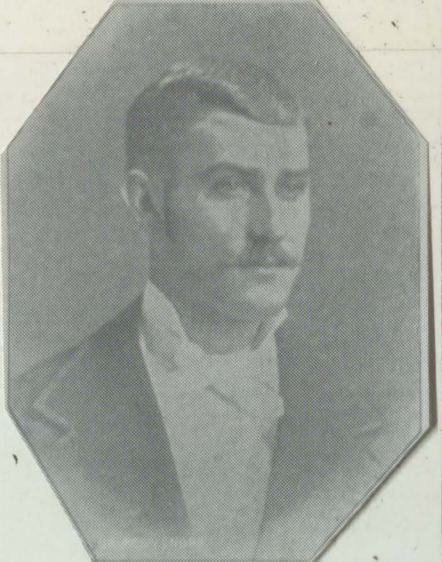


GREEN'S ESSEX ELEVATOR AND WAREHOUSE.

Richardson & Brother, implement dealers, of which Mr. J. W. Richardson is the junior member. This firm was formed in the spring of 1885, and has ever since done a good and growing business. Their warerooms are located on Talbot street, opposite the hardware store. They are agents for all kinds of implements from the best makers, and keep a large stock of repairs on hand. The residence of Mr. W. H. Richardson, elsewhere illustrated, is situated on Alice street, and was built in 1888. It is a fine structure of red brick, of modern architecture, and is surrounded by handsome lawns and walks.

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MR. A. J. GREEN.

This structure was built in 1883, by Mr. J. O. Peck, who occupied the premises as a general store from the time of its erection until March, 1889, when he disposed of his mercantile interests here. In the spring of 1890 he removed to Windsor, and founded the leading clothing and gents' outfitting establishment in the County of Essex, retaining, however, the ownership of the Essex property. Peck's Block is a tall two storey brick building, 26 by 90 feet in dimensions. The lower floor is still utilized as a general store

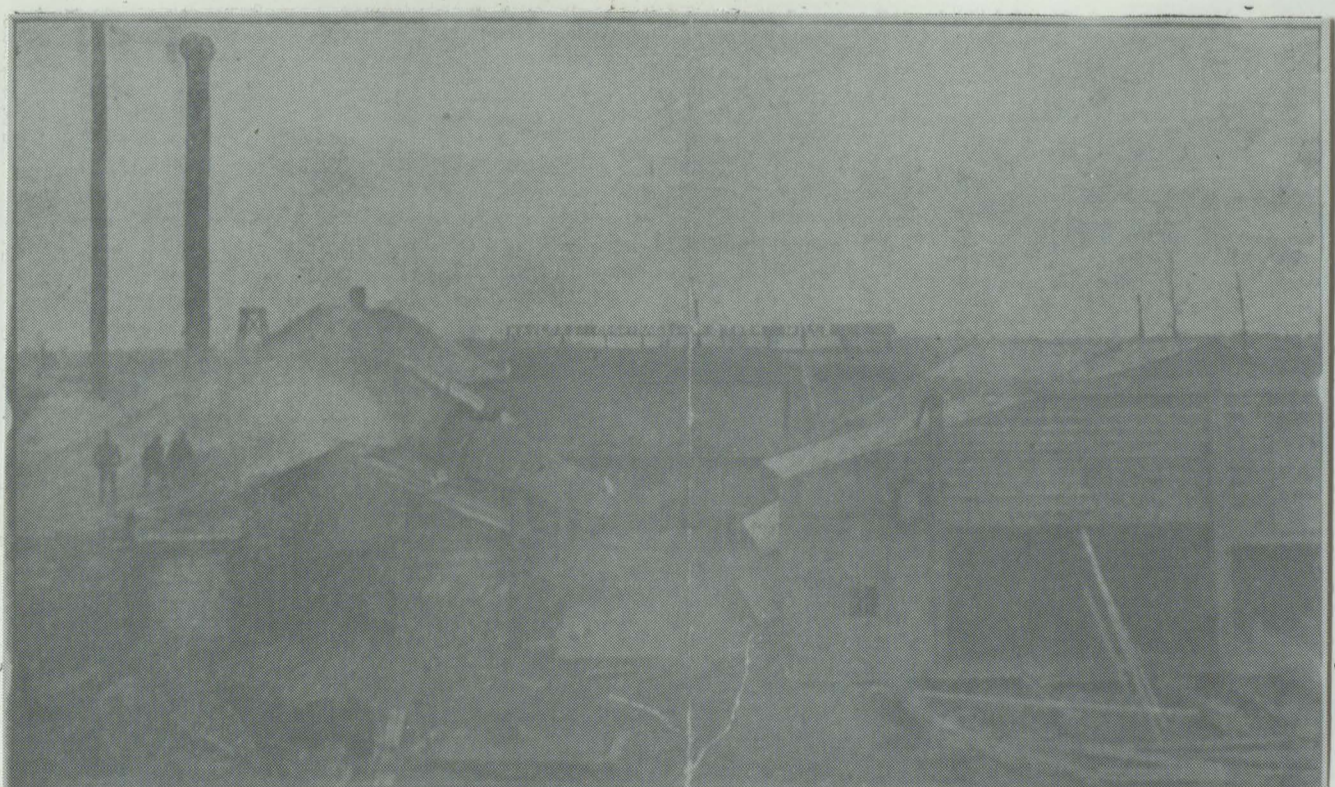


THE HANLAN SAW AND STAVE MILLS.

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NAYLOR'S COOPERAGE STOCK MILLS

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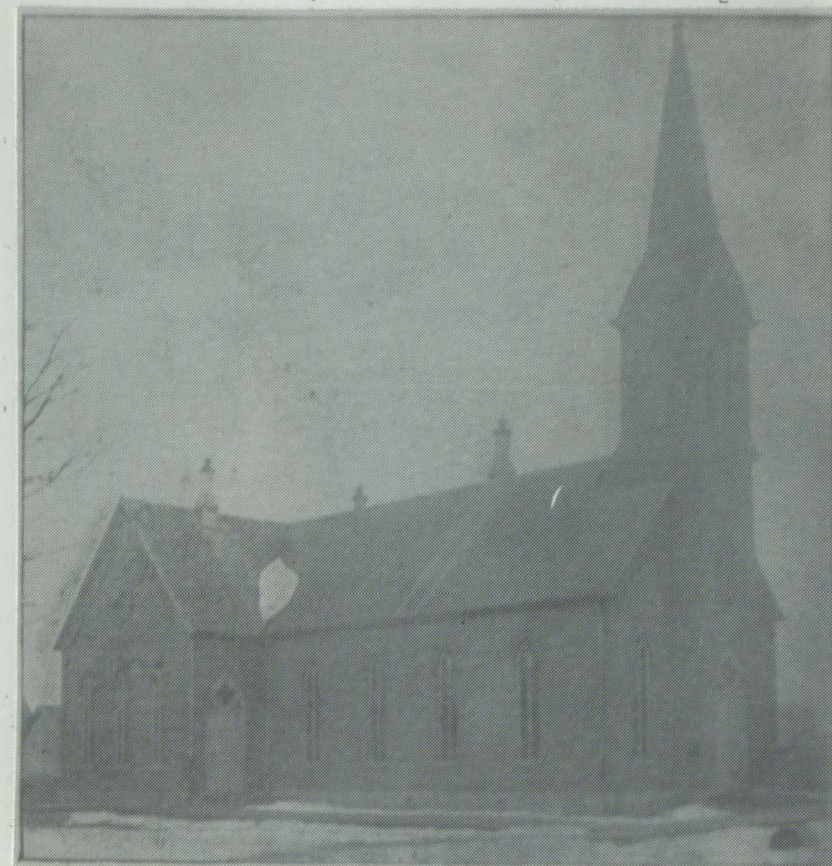
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they number among their patrons many of the best families in town, as well as the thrifty farmers for miles round about the "Hub."

Imperial Bank of Canada. The Essex branch of the Imperial Bank, the only chartered financial institution in the town, was opened on the 1st of March,

struction of the Canada Southern railway, now the M. C. R., did more to bring the village into prominence than any other event connected with its history. The works are of brick and were erected in 1884. The main building is three storeys high, 240 feet long and 40 feet wide. The foundry in the rear is 40 by 100 feet in

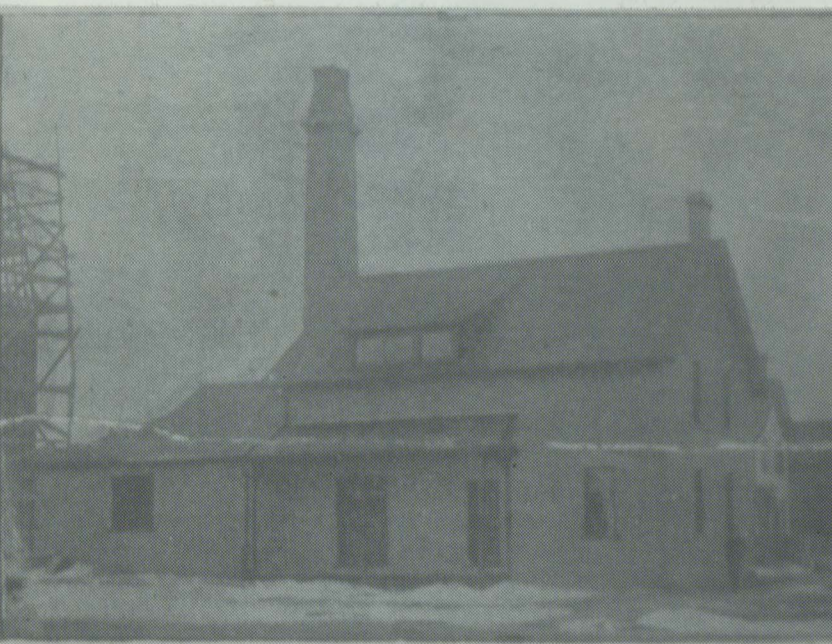


METHODIST CHURCH, ESSEX.

1885, with Mr. J. Watt in charge. In 1889 Mr. Charles White assumed the local management, since when this branch, which is housed in a neat two storey brick structure on the corner of Centre and Talbot streets, has steadily increased its business and gained in public confidence. The Imperial Bank of Canada has an authorized capital of \$2,000,000, of which \$1,850,000 is paid up, with a rest of \$950,000. The head office is, as is generally known, at Toronto, and there are twenty-one branches in various parts of the Dominion—five of which are in the North-West Territory and Manitoba.

dimensions. The buildings were subsequently sold to Mr. Milne, who operates the machine shop and boiler works on his individual account, and furnishes power to no less than six other large and flourishing concerns. The buildings, which are heated by steam throughout, originally cost with contents, exclusive of machinery belonging to tenants, twenty-five thousand dollars. This establishment is creditable alike to its owner and the town in which it is situated.

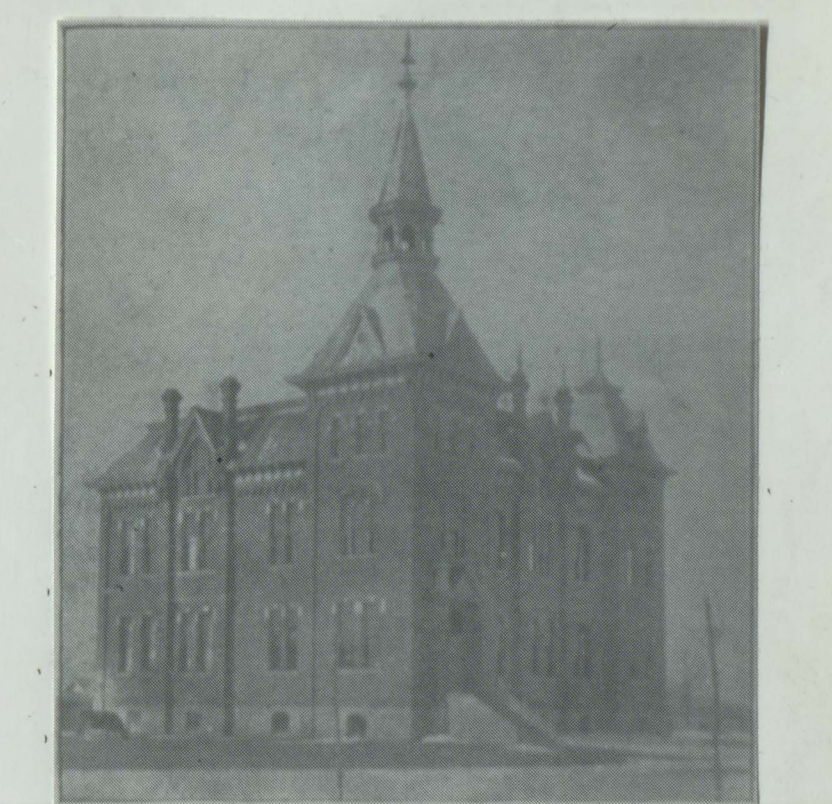
Naylor's Cooperage Stock Mills. This enterprise was started by Messrs. James and Charles E. Naylor in 1882 as



ESSEX WATER WORKS, PUMPING HOUSE.

Mr. A. J. Green, the largest grain and produce merchant in the County of Essex, was born on the 30th of March, 1855. He came to Essex Centre immediately after the completion of the Michigan Central railway, and conducted a commission business until 1878, when he began operations on his own account. Mr. Green does not confine his transactions to the town of Essex alone, but owns and utilizes elevators at Harrow, on the Lake Erie and Detroit River railway; at Belle River, on the Grand Trunk railway; and at Maidstone Cross, on the Michigan Central railway; all of which are extensive buildings, one larger even than the Essex elevator shown in our illustration, the five furnishing storage for 105,000 bushels of grain. In addition to handling grain and seeds he deals in the season in dressed hogs. Mr.

a saw and stave mill, and has rapidly grown to its present proportions. The mills are situated on Arthur street, about a quarter of a mile east of Talbot street, the office being in a separate building a few yards from the entrance to the mills. In September, 1891, Mr. Charles E. Naylor purchased his father's interest in the concern, and is now sole owner of the business. He has about 8,000 feet of shed room, and a large dry kiln just completed with a capacity for drying the entire output. The saw mill, which is one of the best on the line of the C. S. R., contains the latest improved machinery in the shape of a large gang edger, cut-off saws and top saws, and has a capacity of 30,000 feet per day. The stave machinery is of the latest improved pattern, and has a capacity of 35,000 to 40,000 per day, while the head-ling machinery can make from 100,000 to 125,000 head-lingings per day. The patent hoop ma-



HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING.

Green has other extensive commercial and industrial interests elsewhere, being largely concerned in the Joliet & Chicago Stone Co., and the Douglas & Keltie Stone Co., both of which are at Joliet, Ill., with business offices in Chicago. He has also interests in landed property in various sections of Canada and the United States.

chinery turns out from 20,000 to 25,000 hoops per day, and the heading machinery, including planers and joiners, is capable of making from 4,000 to 5,000 heads each day. Power is derived from two large boilers and two engines—one of 100 horse power and a smaller one of 20 horse power. The operation of the cooperage machinery, especially the patent hoop machine, is an interesting process to watch, and will well repay a visit to the mills. Mr. Naylor manufactures hardwood lumber, staves, head-lingings and headings, and makes a specialty of patent coiled hoops. He employs about sixty hands, and pays out for

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