

A HISTORY OF PASADENA

(Land, industrial and commercial development)

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The Town of Pasadena, in this year of 1994, has gone through a number of legal changes since its incorporation as a community, the Community of Pasadena-Midland, in 1955. Later, it was renamed The Community of Pasadena. In 1963 South Brook was incorporated as The Community of South Brook. So, in 1969 Pasadena became The Town of Pasadena and in 1986 all three original communities integrated into The Town of Pasadena.

Therefore, to trace the land resource and industrial development of Pasadena requires a circumspection of three distinct communities and their beginnings.

South Brook

The oldest of those communities was South Brook named after the brook that flows beside it. It began circa 1921 as a typical woods depot serving the pulp wood harvesting industry around it. Buck-saw cutting and hauling of pulp wood took place during the fall and winter. Driving of wood on South Brook occurred during the spring and the sacking of the lake during the summer. As a depot, South Brook provided ancillary services for the wood's operation. A barn and pasture was provided for the draft horses that were used to haul wood from the cutting areas to the brook side. A store of goods existed to support the operation. A blacksmith shop was maintained to provide shoes for the horses and iron works for wharf and dam spikes and pick poles for handling wood on the drive and for sacking of the lake.

Additional activity was generated for a short while by quarrying rock from the rock outcropping in the community to be shipped by train to Deer Lake.

The railway maintained a station at South Brook to serve the area from Deer Lake to Humbermouth with mail, passengers and freight.

South Brook, also, was used as a fire protection depot. Equipment could be transported through the Humber Valley by the rail line using hand-powered vehicles and later by an engine-powered vehicle called "a speeder". An area, by the lake, later designated "The Bowater Park" was established by the original pulp and paper company, the International Pulp and Paper Company, as a recreational and termed The Junior Forest Warden Camp which emphasized forest protection among youth groups which would visit that area in the summertime.

The land in South Brook was divided into two parts: that approximately north of the present Trans Canada Highway and the area south toward the lake. The site south of the highway was owned and controlled by the I. P. & P. and later Bowater Pulp & Paper Company. That area contained all the company infrastructure, including an underground water system and other ancillary structures.

In the company base, building of dwelling houses and other structures were located in an orderly and controlled manner. Ownership of property was only at the pleasure of the company.

North of the highway, however, familiarly deemed "The Patch"; squatters built on Crown land without any controls exercised. It suffered disorganized residential placement similar to outskirts areas of Deer Lake and Corner Brook.

Superior Propane on the Trans Canada Highway operates a business distributing propane and related products to Western Newfoundland. That site once contained an automobile service station operated by George Murphy and prior to that Alison Seaward had a complex of service in automobile service and groceries. Other small businesses have been operated by Azzie Martin, Joseph and Yvonne Walsh and Patricia Seaward.

Pasadena

Apart from a very small community of railway maintenance men and their families who moved from Pynn's Brook and settled between the railway and the lake, on railway lands; the beginning and destiny of Pasadena was in the hands of one man - Leonard Earle, MBE. He was a farmer in St. John's, as well as an associate of a well-known fish and trading company of Fogo and later St. John's, Earle and Sons.

Mr. Earle's farm on Connaught's Hill in St. John's suffered a disastrous fire. In 1923, he investigated the restructuring of a farm in the Humber Valley. He discussed with Bowater the purchase of land east of South Brook but discovered that the land was part of the Reid family holdings.

Some ten years later the Reid connection sold a block of land 7 miles long stretching from Pynn's Brook to South Brook bounded in the north by the railway and three-quarters of a mile wide bounded in the south by a line that ran parallel to the railway. The 2000 acres is purported to have sold for one dollar per acre.

From Mr. Earle's estate was carved The Community of Pasadena and in addition to his own farm a number of other farm lots developed. They included that of his son-in-law Hugh Atkinson; Ernest Clouston; Alex Stentaford; John Dawe and William J. Lundrigan. Furthermore, a portion of the land was subdivided and with its serving roads formed the nucleus of the community. A surveyor from Curling Wilfred Verge was employed to measure and design the building blocks set out obliquely to the roads which created some serious problems.

Other substantial blocks of land were transferred to Stan Condon of St. John's, Jack Dawson of Bay Roberts, Max and Cecil Greening of Corner Brook, Bowater and Harvey and Company.

The Earle farm was a significant venture in Newfoundland terms. It was a mixed farm operation providing mainly vegetables and eggs to the local trade especially to the Newfoundland Railway. The production area lay east of First Avenue to Blue Gulch Brook and from Bowater transmission line to the railway.

In the later years of his life, Mr. Earle sold the main farm to Frank LeDrew with backing from Lundrigans Limited. Mr. LeDrew's plans were to develop a landing strip for small planes to extend his interest in a flying project with Ray Wellon and Wellon's Flying Service of South Brook. The plans went arry and consequently, most of the land, by default, fell into the hands of Lundrigan's Limited which retained possession until its own demise when the land was purchased by Green Acres Farm.

In the meantime, Mr. Earle developed a smaller farm unit adjacent to his new dwelling south of Church Street (the then provincial highway) with the following boundaries: in the north by the highway; in the west by 9th & 10th Avenues; in the south by Midland boundary and in the east by Blue Gulch Brook.

On that farm, Mr. Earle pioneered commercial strawberry growing that became well known throughout the province. He developed his own unique species of strawberries from his own experimentation. Furthermore, he dabbled into processing of farm products such as pickles and jams for sale to the public. For his contribution to Newfoundland agriculture, Mr. Leonard Earle was made a member of the British Empire by the King on the recommendation of the Commission of Government.

Sadly, when the Trans Canada Highway was constructed through the town in 1956 the highway bisected that new farm taking quite a swath from its very rich soil and leaving a southern section in the hands of the Department of Highways. After some protracted discussion, the Council; on behalf of the Community of Pasadena, took possession of it. Part of it was later subdivided for housing and sold to individuals while the other part was sold back to the Province to provide space for an administrative building for government services and a site for a government geological core library.

Another part of the original Earle farm, on the urging of the Pasadena Council, was developed by Lundrigan's into a private industrial park (unique in the province) on Stentafor Avenue and in the site of the Venture Centre, an industrial incubator (the first in the province).

The Venture Centre was created from a grant supplied by the Federal Government through DREE from initiatives of its Mayor, William Pardy, the Economic Development Committee and town manager, John Harries. The Provincial Government purchased the land from Lundrigan's Limited and donated it to the project.

The objects of the industrial incubator were primarily to foster and promote manufacturing and processing in the region by offering subsidized rent for five years, on a sliding scale, and giving ancillary services and support to new and fledgling businesses in their delicate embryo years.

The jury is still out on the success of this venture since it is still early in its development and it is not widely understood. It has gotten mixed support from the Provincial Government bureaucracy who are supposed to be partners in its success. However, as with any Newfoundland initiative, with a public profile, it suffers from narrow-minded jealousies and

politics.

One important result of the venture, as an aside to the plant activity, was the arousing of entrepreneurial interests in the region. Indeed, throughout the whole province there was interest in a program called "Awakening of the Entrepreneurial Spirit". Through various media use the general public, especially high school students, were made aware of business opportunities. Through that program also, the Junior Achievement Program was introduced to Western Newfoundland in which the Pasadena Academy has had tremendous success.

Another family business operated by Edith and Robert Skinner contributed much to the commercial life of Pasadena.

They came to the Town in 1958 and acquired a newly constructed motel called the Daisy Bank Motel owned by Leonard and Marion Hawes. From that nucleus sprang an increased hospitality business, with motel and cottages; an outfitting business for big game and salmon; a chip stand and a land-development business.

The land development included the acquisition of John Dawe's farm which was translated into a housing development on Dawe Place and Fern Place and an extension to the motel property. Land acquired from Cecil Greening was made into the West End Industrial Park. However since its inception the zoning has evolved to a mixed industrial - commercial use.

Land purchased from Max Greening adjacent to the Trans Canada Highway was recently sold to Pasadena Holdings Limited of St. John's and was designated in the early days of incorporation as the commercial site for a commercial-service centre. This is now challenged by Mr. Alberto Wareham of Arnold's Cove who has established a Sobeys' franchised grocery business in an area adjacent to the T.C.H. that was part of the original W. J. Lundrigan farm and had been zoned as highway commercial while the highway was deemed the provincial artery through the Town.

Other businesses came, went or still exists over time. A pioneering general store was operated early by a Mr. Elliot of Humbermouth adjacent to the Railway. It was later sold to Archibald Watton who, in time, sold it to members of the LeDrew family. He was also the operator of the first post and telegraph office. Arthur Norman operated a grocery business on Church Street with living quarters above the store. This was sold to Cecil Mews of Buchans, who operated it until 1956 when he moved the business to the new T.C.H. Later it was sold to Gerald and Evelyn Mercer who operated it as a grocery and gasoline filling station. It was further transferred to George Hann who operated it for a few years prior to its being acquired by Irving Oil Limited which operates it as a filling station and convenience store.

Allan French and Associates purchased the chip stand from Edith Skinner and a restaurant from a Mr. Gagnon on opposite sides of the T.C.H. The chip stand, on the site of the present post office kiosk disappeared with the upgrading of the highway and the restaurant lost business from a change in elevation from the highway. The restaurant, the Highway Diner, was later sold to James Brennan.

Mr. Brennan started his business in Pasadena by purchasing a convenience store from Robert Clarke who had acquired it from a Mr. Mahoney. The complex now contains a restaurant, a gasoline and propane filling station, a grocery business and drug store-medical clinic.

The Western Industrial Park, as earlier stated, has evolved into a mixed bag. Jerry Raymond converted the old Catholic church-school into a mixed service building; Lloyd Thoms and heirs operated an auto body shop; Derek Garcin established an auto body and child-care business where Stowe brothers had a masonry shop; Sam Major combines a hardware-lumber business with a liquor retail business. Builders World of Corner Brook, presently operates the hardware-lumber business. Derek Mercer has turned his mining-support building into a mixed commercial enterprise; Karl Diemer, as Nova Photo Limited, operates a photographic processing business while Atmus Heavy Equipment gave way to the present operator, Ray Johnson of Humber Village. Reid of Chapel Arm has a complex containing a warehouse, doctor's clinic and physiotherapy clinic. In the Eastern Industrial Park, besides the location of the Venture Centre, is property owned and operated by : Daigle Lumber of New Brunswick; Quinnsway Trucking of St. John's which bought out Fred Tipple; Universal Helicopters; Marine Contractors headquarters; a waste - disposal business operated by Clyde Pardy and Sons and a warehouse owned by Harold Duffet of St. John's which purchased the property from T. & M. Winter and Sons.

Since the Town's inception, land integration has been taking place. Green Acres Farm acquired the land of John Dawson and of Lundrigan's Limited north of Church Street as well as Mr. Earle's latest dwelling house and environs. The original Lundrigan farm went through many changes going from Lundrigan's to Frank LeDrew and returned. It is now dispersed into a two residential subdivisions - Elmwood Crescent, Watton's Grove and Well's Dale. Some is used by the T.C.H. while the new Foodland store has taken a portion of it. Ernest Clouston's land, along with others, was acquired by William Maxwell who turned it into a cottage-trailer-park-club-resident complex. Alex Stentaford managed to project his holdings into the Midland Community and dispersed it to Messers Joseph Batiste, Paul Lomond and Albert Finlay.

Land north of the Railway belonged to the Crown and the Canadian National Railway respectively. Some of the Railway land gave way to summer cabin development which has since become permanent residences. The area, originally the site of section-men families, was for awhile abandoned, being only served by the Railway rite-of-way and Fisher's Path. Now, however, Stentaford Avenue has provided access and an opportunity for regrowth. Land between that and the Rod and Gun Club was to have been transferred to the Town.

Pasadena Beach Park, at the mouth of South Brook, was granted to the Town which had difficulty maintaining a community park that was used primarily by citizens residing outside Pasadena. Consequently, when Corner Brook unions complained about the privatization of the Bowater Park in South Brook, the Moore's administration passified the complaints by creating a provincial park on the site.

The area east of the Rod and Gun Club was Crown land that was possibly, the first cabin area in the region where the properties have changed ownership many times.

MIDLAND

In 1934 Newfoundland's independence, as a dominion of the British Empire, voluntarily came to an end and the governing of Britain's oldest colony was relieved by a commission of government appointed by the United Kingdom Colonial Office. The commission consisted of three British commissioners and three Newfoundlanders.

The country that the commission inherited was in a very deplorable state; suffering from the burdens of World War I, political ineptitude, a poor fishery and a worldwide recession.

The options facing the commissioners to ameliorate the situation were few. One, not unique in our history, put forth with some conviction by Commissioner Thomas Lodge would move fishermen from their homes to develop land with an agricultural potential.

Lodge was able to sell the concept to his colleagues, especially Sir John Hope Simpson, that it was possible to change fishermen to farmers.

Land settlements, as they were designated, beginning with Markland, were established in various places throughout the island of Newfoundland. One such land settlement was Midland.

So the story goes: Mr Leonard Earle; having met John Dawson, a government employee, while riding on the train from St. John's; convinced him to establish one of those government-sponsored communities south of the Earle estate and being part of the South Brook Valley. So, in the spring of 1936, Midland was born.

Government buildings were constructed as a bunk house, a store, a school of two classrooms, a manager's house and a teacher's residence. Then, during that year some 25 family farm units were established which contained a simple cottage costing between \$700 and \$800 constructed of locally-produced lumber.

The first attempt at farming was very pathetic. The manager, John Dawson of Bay Roberts, gained some experience at Markland and Harvey French, a settler from Baranood, Conception Bay, brought some experience from that area. But, the majority of settlers, who were from Red Island, Placentia Bay and the Burin Peninsula, had absolutely no knowledge of farm practices. Nevertheless, through hard work, some good luck and good soil on the Community Field bisected by Blue Gulch Brook, bumper crops of cabbage, rutabagas, potatoes and carrots were realized.

As settlers were given their own holdings, the original communal farm evolved into individual plots that became less and less used. Consequently, in 1955, after the Community of Midland

and Pasadena amalgamated into incorporation, the council persuaded those settlers, who divided up the farm among them, to forsake any perceived claim, for the benefit of the Community, at large. Then the Provincial Government gave the Community a long-term lease to the property as long as the land would be used for recreation.

For a number of years that Community Playing Field remained idle since their prevailed a very negative attitude toward recreation. Parents, who had such a hard time coming through the Depression considered athletics idleness and 'a waste of time'.

The communal farm section east of Blue Gulch Brook was later transferred to the Federal Government. It became a forestry field station as part of the government's research work.

In 1936 some 25 settlers were assigned lots mainly narrow and elongated. Seven of these earlier settlers soon returned to their former homes leaving space for replacement by relatives of the original settlers from Red Island.

The Land Development Act passed in 1944 governed the future actions of the land settlements. So, in 1945 each settler was granted freehold title to their holdings on payment of a small fee. Those dwellers south of the present Midland Row, had a single grant of land while those north of that street not only were granted the land on which they lived, but were given additional acreage in the eastern part of the Community. The land grants, however, contained a proviso which forbade the subdividing of each parcel of land.

In order to promote more independence among the settlers, in addition to granting ownership to the land and dwellings, were paid bonuses for land clearing and additional cultivation. This provided the settlers with some cash as the government gradually weaned them off other government support.

The store was donated to a consumer co-operative - Midland Co-operative Society Ltd. - which gained the support of all the citizens of Midland as well as the surrounding area. It developed into a very thriving business and through the Government's extensions program insured the running of the store by knowledgeable co-operators. The store was not merely a consumer co-operative, but a kind of bank, a wholesale marketer of vegetables and a welfare institute.

All this success started on downward slope with the construction of a new store which was built on government-donated land on the jib of land at the corner of Midland Row and 10th Avenue. Financing for the new construction was limited to borrowing from a government-backed co-operative - Terra Nova Credit Ltd. The mortgage rates were far in excess of the standard rates of banks and other lending institutions. So, its recovery was in jeopardy, as shopper support started to fall away.

Consequently, its demise was assured as it fell victim to Newfoundland politics. The new Moores administration, with John Crosbie as minister, demonstrated no sympathy for co-operatives in its early days and the store was ordered closed with the assets disposed of to satisfy

the government-backed loan. The investments of local citizens, mostly from Midland who were mostly heirs of the original settlers, were lost. The new building was sold to Russell Pike, who re-established a grocery business, and the old building became the property of the local Lion's Club.

The school, which was non-denominational but administered by the Salvation Army division of the Department of Education, was gradually abandoned in favour of denominational-run schools in Pasadena and South Brook respectively. A part of the school building was hauled to a site in Pasadena to become a church building of the United Church.

The manager's house was moved to W. J. Lundrigan's farm to become the home of Albert Neville, a caretaker for the farm. James Smith came in possession of the teacher's residence. The bunk house, which was used for awhile as a community social centre, was the first meeting place of the community council after some refurbishing. At that time it was owned by the Midland Co-operative store. It was later sold to the Lion's Club and ultimately became the possession of Russell Pike who moved it to his farm for farming purposes.

The only plot of the original commercial block that became freehold property of a settler was that of Joseph Whalen that kept up production on it later than others. It was later purchased by the Town of Pasadena to contain part of the complex that make up the outdoor rink, machinery depot, garage and fire hall.

The originally-owned Community building combined the council chambers with a fire hall on the site of the present fire hall. In 1963 it was consumed by a fire. Being an unheated building, outside the Council chambers, an electric device was used to prevent the freezing of the emergency water tanks on the fire truck. Apparently, the heater, enclosed with gasoline-driven pumps, caused the building and contents to burn. Those contents included a small dozer tractor, a dump truck and a locally-built fire truck along with many accessories. The only thing, of value, saved was the filing cabinet and part of its contents in the council office.

According to the objectives of the Commission of Government, Midland was a failure. No full time or second-generation farmers were created. As root-crop farmers non survived with dependence on their own holdings. Each family farm became a part time activity after being attracted by cash generation on the American bases, World War II participation, the lumbering woods and the industrial and service industries of Corner Brook.

No real effort was made by the government to teach the techniques of farm husbandry and land use. Nothing outside of imparted chemical fertilizer and seed went into the soil. Therefore, by the time that root-crop farming came to an end the soil was in a very poor state. Club root in rutabagas, the main crop, was prevalent throughout the Community. Very little effort was made, beyond root crop production, to diversify agriculture. In more recent years two attempts were made to produce eggs; one by Leach Critch, a newcomer, who operated a poultry barn for a short time in the Western part of the Community and Harvey French's family, an original

settler, who operated a commercial egg-producing farm for a number of years. The only attempt at dairy was done by James Dyke, from Eastport, who operated a small commercial, but successful, dairy operation on a farm formerly held by James King, the son of an original settler, Hezikiah King from Lamaline. In very recent years Eugene Tiller has been building up a fur-bearing farm in the eastern part of the Community.

Two events all but completed the demise of agriculture in Midland: The competition from the mainland after Confederation and the act of the Hon. William Keough, Minister of Agriculture, in the Smallwood administration, who allowed the removal of the proviso from the original land grants. That permitted free subdividing of land with the consent of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Midland soon became a residential area with its relatively level and friendly land for building construction. The quality and cheapness of land attracted many citizens that would work in Corner Brook and Deer Lake. In common with Pasadena, the land increased in value as water, sewer facilities and paved streets became available. After the original installation of that infrastructure the Council declared future land developers would be responsible.

Many young people discovered they could not afford to purchase a building lot in Corner Brook and get a house far enough in development to get a mortgage. However, by purchasing a cheaper lot in Pasadena-Midland-South Brook a house could be built. Then, after a few years they could leverage the equity in the Pasadena home to move to Corner Brook.

The Town of Pasadena has, up to this point, become a bedroom town for Corner Brook and the dependence on services in that city has become somewhat of a culture.

Russell Pike and his family has added much to the commercial life of Midland. Having come to Midland in 1959 and having purchased the land previously owned by Wesley Foote and Hezikiah King, the Pike's started a grocery store in competition with the Midland Co-op store. However, with the closing of the Co-op Russell Pike was able to purchase those premises and operate from that new site. The family later expanded into a general construction business, house building and land development. The latest acquisition of land are holdings of Dr. Allan Klevatorick, which were originally owned by James King - James Dyke as well as an unassigned lot adjacent to Carroll's estate where Leach Critch had his poultry farm.

Frank Murley of Corner Brook and Humber Village has purchased the major part of the land owned by Alderbrook Farms which was originally a substantial part of the lots owned by Joseph Wagg and Albert Walsh.

The Town of Pasadena acquired two other blocks of land from the Crown: Part of a triangular block that now contains the Town's administrative building and library and the Senior's building and a lot in the eastern part of Midland which was used as a landfill project until the Town dump was moved to Forest Drive extension. Apparently, an attempt to obtain the community lot in the eastern part of Midland was never consummated.