

# History

150 Years of Vision, Faith and Courage

## THE CHAMBER'S AMAZING STORY

Edward Smith, M.A. Pat Filer

**F**or one hundred and fifty years The Hamilton and District Chamber of Commerce has represented the interests of the local business community. Yet it has done so much more than that. Since its inception in 1845 as the Hamilton Board of Trade, the Chamber has been a part of every aspect of life at the Head of Lake Ontario.

In 1845, Hamilton, not yet a city, was already the commercial entrepot for the trade of western Ontario, then known as Canada's West. Grain from these 'western wheatlands' flowed towards the mills gathered where streams spilled over the Niagara Escarpment, at Ancaster, Dundas and on the Redhill Creek. The flour produced in these mills was collected at Hamilton before beginning its journey along lake and river to Montreal, and then to Liverpool. Hamilton has been selected and deliberately developed by far-sighted and ambitious entrepreneurs as the best site to tap the expanding regions of Ontario. By 1845 this vision was already paying off to the extent that local merchants, led by Isaac Buchanan, a Scot, prompted the formation of a group to better promote and organize the trading interests of the

region. Thus on the 17th of April 1845, the merchants of the town of Hamilton, Canada West gathered to put their signatures to an announcement of their intentions. Twelve days later, on the 29th of April the Hamilton Board of Trade officially proclaimed its birth. In the words of this first constitution, the Board was to

providing inspectors for food stuffs, in the absence of federal government inspectors; as well as a Board of Arbitration for settling commercial disputes.

### **The Board of Trade and Free Trade, 19th Century Style**

These latter words especially were to form the core of the

territory, and be carried on British ships. In turn the products shipped from the west through the port of Hamilton were protected by a system of tariffs raised against all non-British competitors. Within Britain itself, however, the manufacturers saw restrictions on trade as a hindrance to their progress. These first-ever advocates of free trade has been lobbying for some years for an end to this preferential imperial system of tariffs. Hamilton stood to lose, or gain much in this new situation, in a fashion all too familiar to the business people of today. The files left from those times are filled with petitions and correspondence on this issue. By 1846 the principle tariffs restricting trade had been suspended, but the laws prescribing the routes and means of trade for the British colonies were still in place. The Hamilton Board of Trade, in its first major lobbying effort, carefully calculated the total cost of shipping one barrel of flour, the principle item of export, from Hamilton to Liverpool. Firstly through the only legal route, from Hamilton to Kingston, then to Montreal and onwards to Liverpool. Secondly, and this was the subject of the petition to

**IN THE WORDS OF THIS  
FIRST CONSTITUTION, THE  
BOARD WAS TO "PROMOTE  
JUST AND EQUITABLE  
MERCANTILE PRINCIPLES,  
CORRECT ABUSES IN TRADE,  
AND PROTECT THE RIGHTS  
AND ADVANCE THE INTERESTS  
OF THE COUNTRY GENERALLY."**

"promote just and equitable mercantile principles, correct abuses in Trade, and protect the rights and advance the interests of the country generally".

In fact, the Board of Trade assumed some quasi-governmental activities in

Board's work over the next few decades. The trade of the British colonies of the two Canadas, now better known as Ontario and Quebec, has always formed a natural unit. Imperial law dictated that all the trade of the Canadas had to flow through British

follow, from Hamilton across the border at Niagara and along the Erie Canal to Oswego, down to New York City and from there to Liverpool. The cost was fully a third cheaper by the American route. Whether this petition had an impact on parliament at Westminster is doubtful, in any case within a few short years these restrictions too were removed. This established for the remainder of the nineteenth century a free trade area the extent of which GATT negotiators of today can only dream.

### The Board of Trade Grows Along with Hamilton

Early port records show that although Hamilton remained principally an export centre for agricultural products, it was involved in the production and distribution of finished goods. Settlers



*The Chamber was formed in 1845 to 'lobby on behalf of the area's business community'. In 1971 that hadn't changed.*

*Above, then President John Spearing (R) is seen pressing his point with Ontario Premier Bill Davis (former General Manager Burnie Gillespie (C) looks on.*

*Today lobbying is still The Chamber's core activity.*

heading west into the new Ontario hinterland funnelled through Hamilton, where they outfitted themselves for their new lives. Hamilton's business people were not slow to seize this opportunity at first importing boots and shoes, staples such as sugar and tools for these immigrants. They then turned to manufacturing. Iron stoves were the first of a long line of manufactured items produced in Hamilton for the needs of Canada.

### Boom and Bust

At mid-century, Hamilton became the centre of a new railroad venture, the Great Western, one of the predecessors of the Canadian National System. In those days the impact of a construction project of this order can only be compared with the oil sands projects of our times. For several years money, equipment, and

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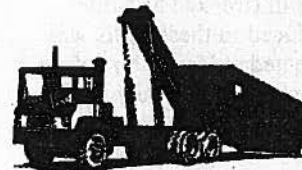
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## Years Of Achievement

The following is not complete. It never can be. It never will be. It's only a sampling. But it does demonstrate in a visible way the impact of Chamber activity in the community over its long, distinguished 150 year history.

Notice how each initiative is unique. Notice the breadth of Chamber influence. Notice the variety of activity.

All of which makes us wonder how different things might have been if The Chamber, through its tens of thousands of volunteer members, hadn't acted as it did.

- \* Founded the Hamilton Region Arts Council
- \* Brought "Crime Stoppers" to Greater Hamilton
- \* Saved Chedoke Civic Golf Course from oblivion
- \* Introduced skiing as a secondary use at Chedoke Civic Golf Course
- \* Operated a "Consumer Protective Division" for many years before introducing the community to the Better Business Bureau
- \* Brought the "United Way" to Greater Hamilton
- \* Annually hosted, organized and managed "Corporate Challenge", the area's only corporate fun day
- \* Published the area's first Business Directory
- \* Established "Youth Volunteer of the Year Awards" in Ancaster and Dundas
- \* Primary force behind the creation of the "Dundas Cactus Festival" and "Ancaster Heritage Days"
- \* Provided the necessary leadership to create the area's first "Economic Development Commission" and "Visitor & Convention Bureau"
- \* Arranges on an annual basis the area's only "Economic Forecasting Dinner"
- \* Headed the local effort to bring McMaster University to Hamilton
- \* Brought the first "Miss Canada Pageant" to Hamilton
- \* Produced the first ever film of Hamilton, called "A Portrait of a City", for screening around the world
- \* Presented the first chain of office to the first chairman of The Hamilton-Wentworth Region



### BRILLIANT STARS MAKE CHAMBER LOGO GLOW!

The Chamber's  
Anniversary Logo was  
specifically designed  
to reflect a celebration

of the organization's 150 years of service on behalf of its membership and community.

Designed by the GRANT MARKETING GROUP, the brilliant stars rising above the word "HAMILTON" symbolize The Chamber's numerous accomplishments, and its contributions towards the betterment of life in the Greater Hamilton Region (see YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENT above)

people poured into Hamilton to build factories and foundries and to boost all the ancillary services required by a new population.

Unfortunately bust followed boom when construction was complete, and when some local entrepreneurs too optimistically convinced the city to invest in other less certain railway ventures. Hamilton could not pay the interest on bonds issued for these investments and the

for its treatment of the new working class. Yet the record of the Hamilton Board of Trade does not bear out this image. The members of the Board knew well and early that capitalism needs contented workers to thrive. In 1903 a strike by the teamsters employed by William Hendrie had threatened the conduct of business locally. In the more informal and face to face world of those times, a

**"CHAMBER PRESIDENT  
ISAAC BUCHANAN PURCHASED  
THE CITY'S SAFE AT PUBLIC  
AUCTION THEN STORED IT IN  
HIS WHOLESALE WAREHOUSE  
FOR THE USE OF THE CITY  
CLERK."**

sheriff had the unenviable task of attempting to enforce special tax levies and of selling off the furnishings of city hall to satisfy creditors. Individual members of the Board came to the support of the city on which their fortunes were based. Isaac Buchanan purchased the city's safe at public auction, then stored it in his wholesale warehouse for the use of the city clerk. By 1864, both the city and the Board chastened somewhat, had reorganized their affairs. The city issued debentures to pay off its bond obligations; The Board of Control incorporated to protect the private affairs of its members.

### The Board of Trade and Labour Relations

The beginnings of industrial Hamilton brought with it a large and permanent force of factory workers. Through the works of Charles Dickens and others, the nineteenth century has a dark reputation

delegation from the Board of Trade visited Hendrie at his offices. No doubt politely, they asked him how long he thought the strike by his teamsters would last. His reply is not recorded, but the next morning the strike was over. That same year, the Board received a proposal from the Trades and Labour Council of Hamilton that a joint arbitration board be created. The Board of Trade agreed, and a committee composed equally of trade unionists and Board of Trade members was composed to arbitrate labour disputes before harmful strikes could occur. In the following years the Board was not afraid to express its support for labour unions at a time when this was not a general attitude.

### Drinking Fountains, Ship and Free Trade (again!)

The new century saw the Board pursuing some of its traditional interests, while broadening out to include

## Chamber Champions Crime Stoppers

Over all the years Reg Whynott served as Executive Director of The Chamber, few can claim to have seen him with a puzzled look on his face.

But one long term employee can.

The year was 1983. The Chamber was located in Jackson Square, not too far distant from Central Police Station.

The telephone on Whynott's desk rings. It was Gord Torrance, then Hamilton-Wentworth Chief of Police. The Chief asked if he could come see him.

Now this was not the way the Chief and The Chamber had done business in the past. Out of respect for the man and the office he held, it was The Chamber which always went to the Chief.

Moments later Whynott left his office and came next door to Jim McDowell's, and as Jim remembers it "with a very strange look on his face".

"Just had a call from the Chief" said Whynott, "Have we done anything wrong? Have I done anything wrong? Have you done anything wrong? Have you any idea why the Chief would want to come see us?"

Neither Reg or Jim could find a reason so they simply awaited the Chief's arrival.

After the normal pleasantries the Chief cut to the chase.

He had just returned from a convention in the southern U.S. where he had been introduced to a program called "Crime Stoppers".

Had we ever heard of it? No. Would we like to? Yes.

He went on to layout the program in detail, emphasizing over and over that it was a community based program, not one driven by the police department.

"I need The Chamber to run with it. You're the best in the Region at doing this kind of thing. Would you be interested?"

Whynott assured him that The Chamber Board of Directors had been very supportive of this type of activity in the past and saw no reason why they would not be again. A short time later the Crime Stoppers proposal was presented. Approval was almost instantaneous. "Make it work" said the Directors.

A citizens board, many of them Chamber members, was selected with former General Manager Burnie Gillespie as Chairman.

With help from the area media it didn't take long for word to spread. Crime re-enactments were introduced to CHCH-TV news viewers (where they've been seen every Monday ever since). Funds were raised. Brochures designed. And a tips line installed (522-TIPS). The program was an instant success, and still is today.

Reg Whynott followed Burnie Gillespie as Chairman. When his term ended he was elected to the Board of Crime Stoppers International, went on to become International President, and was proud host when CSI brought its international convention to the community.

Over its 12 year history a lengthy list of Chamber members have associated themselves with the program and their efforts were rewarded. It has won many prestigious awards, can be credited with taking over \$4.8 million dollars of illicit drugs off our streets, and returning \$3.4 million worth of stolen property to its rightful owners.

From the start The Chamber designed Crime Stoppers to be self-sustaining and self-supporting. Its record shows it has been

support for increased quality of city life. Among these issues were Hamilton's familiar system of public drinking fountains. It was felt at the time that people should have at least the same consideration as horses in the provision of good water in public. Years later a member of the Board committee which had lobbied for the fountains, G. C. Martin added a note which suggested other motives, when he wrote, "Give the kiddies lots of good water and they will not hunt for beer".

The Board of Trade was also early and vociferous in the promotion of the Mountain Brow as parkland, opposing city plans to use the former Bull family land as a quarry.

In other issues, the Board endorsed and promoted the provision of electric power in Hamilton, whether supplied by private company or by

## HISTORY

### THE BOARD OF TRADE

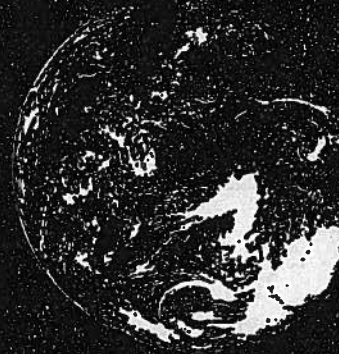
"... felt that people should have at least the same consideration as horses in the provision of good water."

"... was vociferous in the promotion of the Mountain Brow as parkland ..."

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public utility through the newly formed Ontario Hydro. This care not to take sides in what was an acrimonious debate at the time reflects the diverse membership of the Board where both sides in the dispute were represented. On a lighter note, the new holiday of Thanksgiving Day became an issue too, with the

dominance of the Royal Navy. Canada was asked to contribute either ships or money directly to the imperial navy to counter this threat. Wilfrid Laurier, the Liberal Prime Minister, proposed instead to organize a Canadian navy which might be loaned to the Royal Navy in time of need. This national

**ON A LIGHTER NOTE THE NEW HOLIDAY OF THANKSGIVING DAY BECAME AN ISSUE TOO. WITH THE BOARD FAVOURING MOVING ITS CELEBRATION FROM A THURSDAY TO A MONDAY TO LESSEN THE DISRUPTION OF TRADE**

Board favouring moving its celebration from a Thursday to a Monday to lessen the disruption of trade.

On the international diplomatic scene, Germany was building its fleet in an attempt to break the

and international debate found its counterpart at the Hamilton Board of Trade, which passed a resolution supporting annual cash donations directly to the imperial government for naval purposes. This



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## The Regional Chairman's Chain of Office



*The Region of Hamilton-Wentworth was created in 1974. The Chamber marked the occasion by presenting to its 1st Chairman, (Anne Jones) the ceremonial Chain of Office. Successive Chairmen have continued to wear it (Bill Sears, Reg Whynott, Terry Cooke). The chain is highlighted by a map of the Region and the crests of each of the six member municipalities.*

resolution matched feelings of attachment to Britain which were still general in English Canada, and pitted them against the opposite view in Quebec. At the same time the Laurier government was approached by the Americans over the restoration of free trade. For ten years from 1854 to 1864 free trade had existed between British North America and the United States. the ambivalent attitude of the British colonies towards the American civil war combined with a mood of protectionism in the U.S. had served to end the treaty just as Hamilton was beginning to pull out of its financial difficulties.

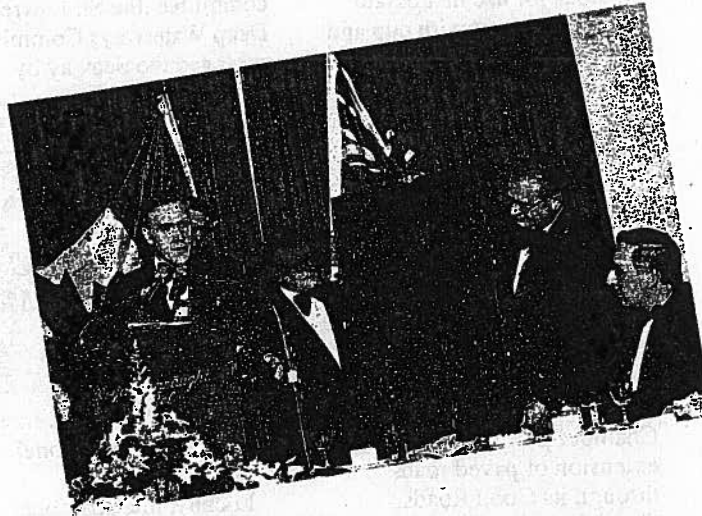
Times were now changed, and the Liberal government had not read these changes. The business of Hamilton was now manufacturing and not international trade. Hamilton's business leaders were concerned with carving out and keeping a domestic hinterland for products made

in Hamilton, a policy which did not welcome competition from Americans. This new mood was reflected in the comments of W. J. Southam as newly elected President of the Board in 1910. He waxed philosophic on the use of land for speculation, proposing that those who speculated in land should be taxed at a higher rate than those who actually produced things. Land, as a gift of the creator and not the product of man, should be treated specially, he said. This more than anything showed how Hamilton and the Board had changed since 1845. Hamilton had been founded by men speculating in land; it owed its very existence as a place for manufacturers to produce and become prosperous to far-sighted land speculation. Now it had changed with the times and decried anything which might make the cost of doing business, manufacturing business, that is, higher or more difficult.

## Metamorphosis, or The Board of Trade Comes of Age

The Board of Trade continued its activities during the first world war, but in a reduced and constrained fashion as the energies of its members were taken over by involvement in the war. Its major effort in this period was in the bond and stock issue which financed the Royal Connaught Hotel. After the war, the world which had been hinted at in W. J. Southam's address of 1910 had arrived. The 1920 leadership realized this and set out to wholly reorganize the Board to function in this new and modern environment. A firm of consultants, the Canadian City Bureau, was hired to study, investigate and propose change. Within a few months the report was received and acted upon, producing the Chamber of Commerce as we know it

## Chamber Award Recognizes Excellence in Policing



*Mid 1970's The Chamber introduced the LEONARD G. LAWRENCE AWARD to pay tribute to the former Chief of Police. It is presented annually to an individual(s) in the Police Department for extraordinary service.*

*Above from R to L W. A. R. (Bill) Filer, B. W. (Burnie) Gillespie, H. K. (Harold) Embree, R. L. (Bob) Cordingly, and Gordon Torrance (Chief of Police) unveil the award.*

today. A campaign in April of 1920 resulted in a membership of 1,100 even at a fee of \$25.00 per annum. While small by today's standards, this sum represented an increase of 250% over the pre-war dues. Membership was now open to anyone in Hamilton and District, where before it had been restricted to people engaged directly in business, or finance. The mandate of the old Board of Trade had been restricted to trade issues, though in practice straying beyond these bounds. The new Chamber of Commerce was to make these formerly side issues central to its mandate. The Chamber was to "promote the economic, civic and social welfare of the people of Hamilton and vicinity". Thus while the new body had broadened its local interests, it had largely abandoned its former concern with the trade of the country as a whole.

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### Potatoes and Vigilance

The new Chamber of Commerce involved itself in local issues with a vengeance. During the twenties, the car was taking over city streets, but neither the city nor drivers were as yet settled into a familiar relationship. The Chamber lobbied for traffic lights and stop signs, but more importantly for driver education and for enforcement of traffic laws. In April 1929, the Chamber formed the Hamilton Vigilance Committee of the Ontario Safety League. The members of this committee signed pledges to be vigilant in spotting traffic violations and reporting them, even if necessary to appear in court against the offender. One wonders how successful this was.

Russell Kelley, the founder of the advertising firm, and then also Chairman of the Agricultural Committee

devised a plan to advance the training of young country farmers. He proposed to collect money from members to purchase 50 bags of potatoes for use in a potato growing contest with cup and cash prize awarded annually.

Burlington Beach Ship Canal to handle the larger ships expected when the new Welland Canal opened to traffic. Likewise, another committee, the St. Lawrence Deep Waterways Committee presaged the Seaway by

the citizens of Hamilton and area, the Chamber of Commerce was involved in the formation of co-ordinated welfare agencies. Early among them were the Council of Social Agencies, the Family Welfare Bureau and the Community Fund, forerunner of the United Way.

LOCALLY THE CHAMBER INITIATED THE ORGANIZATION AND BUILDING OF CHEDOKE CIVIC GOLF CLUB AND HEADED THE LOCAL EFFORT TO BRING MCMASTER UNIVERSITY FROM TORONTO TO HAMILTON

On more serious notes, the Chamber promoted the extension of paved roads through its Good Roads Committee, headed by Thomas Mahony, known for his extensive work in government at all levels in this field. In a more traditional vein, the Chamber lobbied the government to widen and deepen the

promoting the improvement of Hamilton's traditional trade route.

Locally, the Chamber initiated the organization and building of the Chedoke Civic Golf Club and headed the local effort to bring McMaster University from Toronto to Hamilton. In fulfilling its new mandate to promote the social welfare of

**The Great Depression**  
During the Great Depression, the Chamber of Commerce was directly involved in the provision of relief. An 'Unemployment Committee' was formed to collect funds from members to direct to local families who had fallen on hard times and could not make their monthly rent payments. Each case was considered separately, and if accepted, rent money was issued so the family would not be evicted. The Chamber also began a system of 'garden plots' where the unemployed could grow their own vegetables. At the height

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of this program, 3,500 garden plots were under cultivation.

On a broader scale, the Chamber sponsored exhibitions of Hamilton made products for the first time in 1933, and later of Canadian made products, and provided customs and export information for local businesses which could not afford to hire expertise in these areas. In 1937 the Chamber took on the task of promoting tourism with the organization of a Tourist and Convention Committee, partly assisted by City funds. Meanwhile its own membership was affected as each year's annual report listed a falling away of members who could no longer pay their annual dues, or who had gone bankrupt.

#### Post War Revival

Once again the advent of world war had put a damper on the Chamber's activities. On April 1, 1944 when

Colonel Healey who had guided the day to day operations of the Chamber as Managing Secretary for a generation gave way to William McCulloch, there were only 445 members. A year later the impending end of war had raised that count to 802. Perhaps because of the uncertainty of war's end, the Chamber's 100th anniversary was celebrated relatively quietly with a banquet and a full page of articles in the Spectator. It was early in W. J. McCulloch's tenure, that the Chamber adopted a motto, "Vision to See, Faith to Believe, Courage to Do".

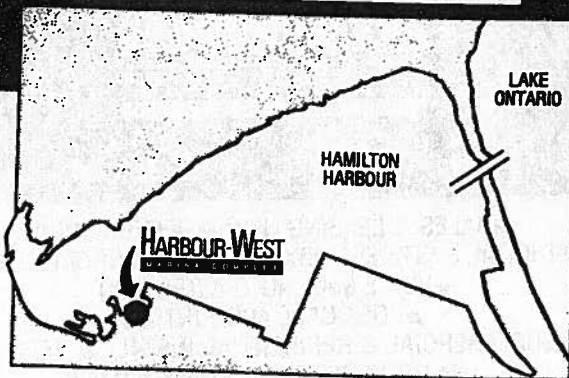
The end of the war was a time of economic uncertainty throughout Canada. the first World War has been followed by hard times and many feared the same following this war. In September of 1945, the Chamber commissioned a survey of employment prospects among

its members. The answer, when it came in November, was a forecast of better times to come. All the members indicated that they no longer employed the numbers of a war-time economy, but all indicated employment of 25-75% higher than the last year of peace, 1939. The Chamber issued a final totting up of its support for Bomber Squadron #424 of the R.C.A.F. Overseas. This effort, for the squadron which was christened the City of Hamilton Tiger Squadron, had sent 220,000 cigarettes, 10,000 packages of gum, 6,000 packets of lifesavers, 500 Christmas boxes, and one football to the flyers over the course of the war. Civilian flying and the use of Mt. Hope airport became an issue, as it was to be continuously from this time. In concert with the federal government, the Chamber of Commerce conducted a survey of local people

through a questionnaire placed in the newspapers. Foreign trade became a topic once again, principally as it had for a century the issue of British tariffs, but significantly for the future trade with China and South America. Some members expressed fear that local industry could never compete with the low wages paid in China. In the first of many promotional ideas, William McCulloch proposed issuing membership plaques, rather than wallet cards, based on those used by the Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce. The 1946 celebration of Hamilton's Centennial as a city brought the revitalized Chamber of Commerce fully awake again as William McCulloch served as one of the driving forces behind the celebration. As a part of the July festivities, the first Miss Canada pageant was held, with the national and international contacts of the

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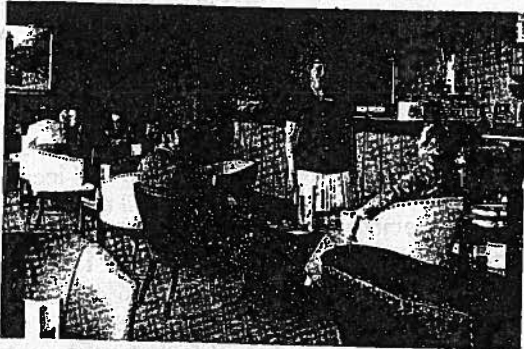
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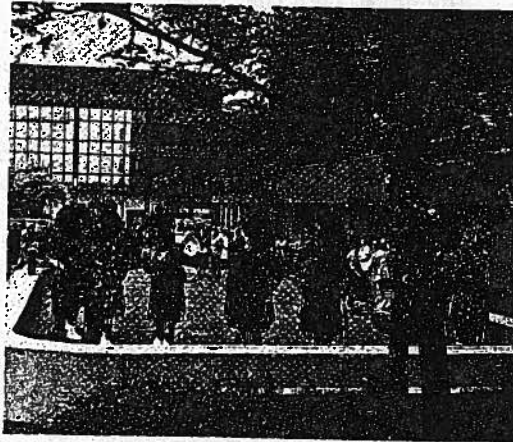
## The Chamber Club Through The Years



Pipes and drums heralded the opening of The Chamber's new Club and administrative centre in Lloyd D. Jackson Square in 1980.



◀ The lounge of the 1st Club located on the 10th floor of the Professional Arts Building, 155 James St. South (1960-1980).



◀ In 1990 The Club was moved to its present location on Hamilton Harbour (555 Bay St. North). At the time The Chamber referred to its new waterfront home as "The community's Final Frontier".

Chamber used to promote the contest, and at the same time the city and its businesses. In other ways the Chamber began to settle down to more ordinary, but necessary issues. It looked for the development of east Hamilton industrial sites; retail members worried over competition from co-operatives; arguments raged over the conversion of hydro-electric power from 25 to 60 cycles.

In 1946, the Managing Secretary conceived a promotional film for Hamilton which received its first screening two days before Christmas. Its \$10,000 cost was borne in equal shares by the City and the Chamber, and the film, called 'Portrait of a City' was soon in demand at Canadian Embassies, High Commissions and trade posts around the world.

The Chamber carefully kept silent on the year of

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## PANORAMA'S FRONT COVER

Photo by  
Roy Timm

The 1st Constitution of the HAMILTON BOARD OF TRADE (later changed to The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, and later still to The Hamilton and District Chamber of Commerce.

The signatures belong to the original members of the organization and its 1st Board of Directors.

It was signed at a public meeting in the Royal Exchange Hotel on April 29th, 1845 at 3:00 p.m.



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## Chamber Celebrates Historic Moment at Dundurn

In 1970, The Chamber's 125th anniversary year, the Board of Directors convened its Anniversary Board Meeting in the dining room of Dundurn Castle.

President at that time was A. R. (Alf) OLIVER (Steel Company of Canada Ltd.) who can be seen standing at the head of the table.

strikes in 1946 in Hamilton. If not a return to the old policy of co-operation with labour, at least there was no desire to exacerbate the situation. At only one point was the collective ire of members aroused. In July, Mayor Sam Lawrence had marched with strikers through the city, and then addressed them in a highly partisan fashion. At a special meeting of the Chamber directors the possible impeachment of the mayor was considered. His oath of office which called for him to represent all the citizens of Hamilton was considered the

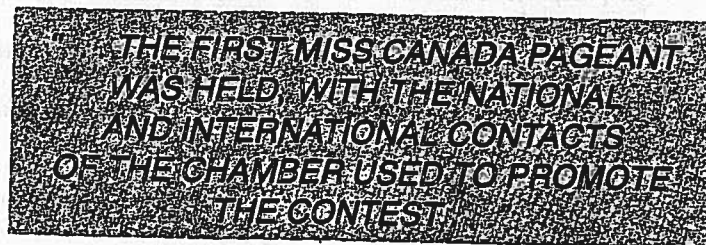
grounds for such an action. Only in 1950 did the Chamber become openly involved in a labour dispute, the national railway strike of

Commerce was given the task of organizing the construction of a civic centre. Originally conceived as an arena at a cost of 1.5 million

senior Chamber, which resulted in an acrimonious joint meeting of the two boards of directors. For Hamilton, the result was a delay of twenty years before a new, and even more ambitious civic centre began with the construction of Hamilton Place.

### Difficult Times

William McCulloch had left in the summer of 1947, to be replaced by the news director of CKOC, D. A. Robbins. He continued McCulloch's initiative of film, with a second called 'Doorsteps of Opportunity'. The 1951-52



that year, but only in organizing the trucking of necessary supplies into the city.

In that same year, the Junior Chamber of

dollars, it ballooned quickly into an arena, auditorium and gymnasium complex. the Junior Chamber announced this expanded project publicly before informing the

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year saw the Chamber promote tourism by providing a staffed information booth in Gore Park. Membership continued to increase, reaching 1,300. Many of these, however had neglected to pay their annual dues, some for many years, and for a time the Chamber experienced financial difficulties. At the beginning of 1952, the Secretary resigned and the directors considered closing the Chamber entirely.

Rather than take this drastic step, J. H. (Jack) Moore was hired effective January 1, 1953, with the new title of General Manager and the task of re-organizing operations. He immediately set out to purge the membership rolls of non-paying listings. On a more positive note he promoted communication with members through a new journal, the Chamber of Commerce Reporter. In the second year of his tenure, the

deficit was dealt with by introducing a system of graduated fees which better reflected costs than the still extant flat rate of \$25 per year. April 1, 1954 saw the consolidation of bylaws and a revised constitution and the return to more normal operations. Tourism, especially through conventions, continued as a concern of the Chamber. A roving tourist guide was hired, and the booth in Gore Park kept in operation. A study looked once again into the prospects of Hamilton's airport at Mt. Hope. This time even the Chamber concluded that there was not enough call for regular air service. Instead, Trans Canada Airlines, the precursor of Air Canada, was petitioned for a limousine service to Toronto airport at Malton.

In the mid 1950s, the Chamber moved its offices from the decaying Terminal Building to the Canadian

Bank of Commerce at 15 King West. It added its voice to the 1957 adoption of a one-way street plan, continuing the Chamber's long term interest in transportation at all levels. In the summer of 1955, the Gore Park tourist booth was moved to the Rock Garden area, where it remains today, though no longer an operation of the Chamber. A survey of its operations had revealed that three-quarters of the queries handled in Gore Park were from Hamilton citizens. As an added public relations move, the Chamber expanded the Business Protective Division to handle complaints and queries from the public. This service continued until an independent Better Business Bureau was set up in 1973.

## **Recent Times**

In 1960 the old tradition of appointing a weigher & gauger was revived with the selection of Earl M. Perkins. The Chamber added its voice

in favour of the purchase of the Hamilton Street Railway and its subsidiary Canada Coach Lines, so long as they were run on a non-profit and non-political basis.

The following year the Chamber moved to brighter and expanded quarters on the top floors of the new Professional Arts Building. Here a restaurant called appropriately 'The Club' was opened for members. The Chamber now had a space where members could meet informally to foster contacts on a business and social level.

The mid sixties saw some old business and some new. Transportation was on the agenda with a call for the widening of the Skyway Bridge, and so were protests over the selection of Burlington as the terminus for the provincial government's proposed 'Lakeshore Commuter Service'. The Chamber's 1967 Centennial project was



begun in 1965. It was a book entitled 'They Built a City' recording the accomplishments of the businessmen who had built Hamilton. In Centennial Year itself, the Chamber participated closely in organizing the 'Miles for Millions' walk to raise funds for charities involved in African relief. That year Jack Moore left to head the Hamilton Economic Commission on the recommendation of the Chamber. He was replaced by Burnett Gillespie who was to stay at the helm until 1974. Attention to civic projects continued into the early seventies with management seminars being given by the new General Manager, and with assistance given to the creation of the archives at the Hamilton Public Library.

In the Fall of 1973 a revised constitution was adopted which returned to the more purely business principles of the old Board of Trade. Many of the activities formerly handled and indeed started by the Chamber were now run by different levels of government. The name of the Chamber was changed to the Hamilton and District Chamber of Commerce to reflect a wider membership and a wider concern for the promotion and protection of business. This too was not new, for the Board of Trade of 1845 represented not just Hamilton, but the old Gore District, roughly co-terminous with the newly proclaimed Hamilton-Wentworth. Earlier that year the Chamber had presented to the first regional Chairman, Anne Jones, a chain of office. On it were engraved crests of Ancaster, Beverly, Binbrook, Dundas, East Flamborough, Glanford, Hamilton, Saltfleet, Stoney Creek, Waterdown, West Flamborough and Wentworth, along with a map of the new municipality. In the Fall of 1974 Bernie

Gillespie left to start his own consulting business. Reg Whynott, who had been assistant manager five years before was hired to replace him. In 1975, he oversaw the introduction of a new publication of the Chamber, a magazine called Panorama.

In 1980, the offices and

British governance in Hong Kong turned the Chamber's attention to fields afar in a manner reminiscent of the old Board of Trade. 1984 saw the creation of a Chinese Division to investigate bringing Hong Kong capital to the city. This period saw too the introduction of the annual

1930s when economic hard times hit, and to the present where the 'Lakeshore Commuter Service' (alias GO Transit) finally has a terminus in Hamilton, the Chamber of Commerce has been central to fighting the good fight.

The adoption of a new name in 1920 represented a fundamental shift for Hamilton business. The old Board of Trade had been concerned primarily with the expansion of trade in Hamilton, in Canada and in the British Empire — because all these were intimately related. In a sense, although the new Chamber of Commerce had wider purposes socially, it operated in a narrower field. The old Board of Trade had often pronounced on national and international affairs through resolutions and petitions. It realized how vital these affairs were to the prosperity of its individual members. Even so, towards the end of its life, the Board of Trade had begun to become concerned with living conditions. Thus its concerns ranged from deepening the Burlington Canal to drinking fountains. In this sense the Chamber of Commerce continued and continues the work of the Board of Trade. The promotion of roads, local welfare, beauty pageants and civic centres all serve the same ends the businessmen of 1845 pursued. It is thus appropriate that the Chamber's new offices look out at Hamilton Harbour, which was the foundation of both the city and the Chamber of Commerce one hundred and fifty years ago. For the prosperity and progress of the people living at the head of Lake Ontario, economically and socially, has always been and will continue to be, the chief concern of the Chamber of Commerce.

## L A I D L A W

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dining room were moved to the heart of downtown in Jackson Square where they remained for nine years before moving to premises shared with the Yacht Club. The 1980s saw other initiatives which demonstrated the continued engagement of the Chamber with improvement in Hamilton. The third Crime Stoppers programme in Canada, and the first in the east was initiated under the Chamber's aegis. Also begun was the 'Corporate Challenge', a day each year where representatives from member firms gathered for sporting competitions of a kind. The approaching end of

Business Achievement Awards. In November of 1988, Reg Whynott was elected Chairman of the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth. His replacement, hired from a field of twenty candidates, began work the following March.

#### Final Words

It has been said that if the Chamber of Commerce were shut down today, someone would have to start it again tomorrow. Hamilton is a city which has always had to fight hard for advantage. From the 1840s when British imperial trade was the issue, to the 1850s and 60s and again the

Over its 150 year history The Hamilton and District Chamber of Commerce has attracted tens of thousands of outstanding men and women to its membership.

Many of them ultimately served on its committees, task forces and Board of Directors.

Through their volunteer service they assisted the organization develop policies and initiatives which would impact positively on the area's business sector and community generally.

Annually one of them would be singled out for special recognition. Through the democratic election process their fellow members would accord them the honour of serving as President.

From Isaac Buchanan in 1845 to Ron Foxcroft in 1995 The Chamber's "PRESIDENTIAL HONOUR ROLL" reflects everything for which the organization stands - "VISION TO SEE - FAITH TO BELIEVE - COURAGE TO DO".

Individually each President was blessed with an abundance of those qualities. They were The Chamber's leaders. As leaders we salute them. As individuals we thank them.

## Presidential Honour Roll

### PRESIDENTS - HAMILTON BOARD OF TRADE

1845 Isaac Buchanan  
1846 Isaac Buchanan  
1847 Isaac Buchanan  
1848 John Young  
1849 John Young  
1850 John Young  
1851 John Young  
1852 Isaac Buchanan  
1853 Isaac Buchanan  
1854 Isaac Buchanan  
1855 W. P. McLaren  
1856 John Young  
1857 John Young  
1858 Adam Brown

Record of Presidents  
1859-1877 unknown

1878 B. E. Charlton  
1879 John Harvey  
1880 Alex Turner  
1881 G. E. Tuckett  
1882 W. H. Glassco  
1883 T. H. McPherson  
1884 T. H. McPherson  
1885 T. H. McPherson  
1886 W. H. Gillard  
1887 W. H. Gillard  
1888 J. B. Fairgrieve  
1889 F. C. Bruce  
1890 J. Knox  
1891 G. E. Bristol  
1892 J. W. Lottridge  
1893 H. N. Kittson  
1894 H. N. Kittson  
1895 J. Hoodless  
1896 W. A. Robinson  
1897 W. F. Findlay  
1898 S. Barker  
1899 S. Barker

1900 J. A. Bruce  
1901 J. A. Bruce  
1902 F. C. Fearman  
1903 H. N. Kittson  
1904 H. N. Kittson  
1905 J. W. Lamoreaux  
1906 F. R. Close  
1907 R. A. Robertson  
1908 R. A. Robertson  
1909 W. B. Champ  
1910 W. J. Southam  
1911 H. L. Frost  
1912 H. L. Frost  
1913 F. J. Howell  
1914 D. B. Wood  
1915 G. C. Copley  
1916 W. Parke  
1917 G. C. Marlin  
1918 R. T. Kelley  
1919 A. C. Garden

### PRESIDENTS - THE HAMILTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

1920 G. C. Copley  
1921 W. R. Drynan  
1922 J. P. Bell  
1923 W. H. Cooper  
1924 W. J. Westaway  
1925 G. R. Kerr  
1926 E. V. Illsey  
1927 F. M. Morton  
1928 J. R. Marshall  
1929 J. C. Callaghan  
1930 L. R. Greene  
1931 R. C. Douglas  
1932 J. M. Pigott  
1933 T. P. Peacock  
1934 C. Peebles  
1935 R. T. Kelly

1936 H. M. Dunlop  
1937 T. P. Pinckard  
1938 W. H. Funston Jr.  
1939 H. T. Malcolmson  
1940 C. H. Boothe  
1941 W. M. MacLean  
1942 K. C. Brown  
1943 H. S. Thurstans  
1944 T. M. Mayberry  
1945 P. N. Cooke  
1946 H. A. Cooch  
1947 T. H. Simpson, Q.C.  
1948 R. Cooper  
1949 J. J. Taylor  
1950 T. A. Rice  
1951 H. H. Leather, M.B.E.  
1952 P. A. S. Todd  
1953 G. F. Clark  
1954 N. B. Welr  
1955 H. J. Lang  
1956 H. M. Griffith  
1957 G. E. Grundy  
1958 W. R. Carter  
1959 J. F. Reesor, Q.C.  
1960 T. E. Robertson  
1961 J. G. Smith  
1962 W. P. Pigott  
1963 H. J. Clawson  
1964 G. H. McVean  
1965 S. M. Fletcher  
1966 S. Smurlick  
1967 D. O. Davis  
1968 A. R. Prack  
1969 H. K. Embree  
1970 A. R. Oliver  
1971 J. S. Spearing  
1972 W. McCullough  
1973 R. L. Cordingly  
1974 R. E. Alden  
1975 W. P. Cooper

1976 R. G. Forsythe  
1977 B. K. J. Bragoli  
1978 E. B. Priestner  
1979 D. O. Moffat  
1980 T. VanZulden  
1981 J. R. McMurrich  
1982 M. C. Carter  
1983 R. D. G. Stanbury  
1984 A. Murray  
1985 N. B. Preece  
1986 W. D. McCraney  
1987 B. R. Boatman  
1988 J. Mongeon  
1989 E. D. Shaker  
1990 D. P. Luzzi  
1991 J. Wood  
1992 W. A. H. Filer  
1993 J. Michaluk  
1994 J. Buschhausen  
1995 R. Foxcroft

*Vision to see. Faith to believe.  
Courage to do.*

