

History of Bowmanville Valley Part I

by Charles Taws

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Introduction

Harold and Helen Hammond have been museum supporters for many years. They recently came to the archives to find information on the Bowmanville Creek and the valley that surrounds it. The new fish ladder is a wonderful improvement to the area, but the Hammonds wanted people to know more about the valley's history and its importance to Bowmanville. I was able to supply them with information and pictures and their request is the inspiration for this article.

The Beginning of Bowmanville

Few people realize that Bowmanville didn't begin where it is now. It began as the Village of Darlington Mills in the valley just south of where the Vanstone Mill is today. No one today can tell you when Darlington Mills actually started but it must have been around 1810 or so. The first pioneers came here in 1794. They were three Loyalist families from the United States: The Burks, Trulls, and Conants. For the first few years they stayed near the lakeshore, but as time went on they pressed into the unbroken forest. The Burks discovered a site ideal for the erection of a mill and built the first mill on the site of the Vanstone Mill. Around this little mill the small village of Darlington Mills grew.

Here is a description of this early community. It was written by Bowmanville historian David Morrison Sr. in 1939:

"There were several



Bird's Eye View, Bowmanville, Ont., Canada

When the Vanstone Mill was in operation it harnessed the waterpower of the Bowmanville Creek with a dam. This created the mill pond which was a great place to swim in the summer and skate in the winter.

houses down that way [in the valley] and today they are all gone except one loan brick dwelling which was then known as the Williams' Home...[the valley] was the principle business section of this corporation where besides an oatmeal mill there was also Jacob Nead's Foundry...A woodworking shop, and a machine shop. All those works got their power from the dam below the bridge...Then there was Gifford's Tannery...The Milne Distillery with its long rows of cattle shed...The soap making works...The old pottery works on the west part of the Vanstone Pond. The big departmental Burk Store and the Squair Grocery Store."

In the early 1820's an enterprising Scottish merchant by the name of Charles Bowman came to town. He bought the Burk Store and Mill and the land to the east of the valley. He began surveying and selling lots and the growth of the town shifted from the valley eastward along what is now King

Street. By 1830 Darlington Mills had become Bowmanville. The original name of Bowmanville Creek was Barber's Creek. It was named after early pioneer Augustus Barber. He appears to have been a prominent settler but did not stay in this area for very long. It is not clear when the name changed but it happened many years ago.

The Bridge across Highway #2

A book could be written about this bridge that spans the valley at Highway # 2. The current bridge is the fifth bridge to cross Bowmanville Creek. The first was much further south and it was an old log bridge. No dates are known about this early pioneer structure, but the location of the bridge was soon moved further north to its current location because the grade there was easier for horses to pull their wagons over the western side of the valley. This also explains the northward slant of Highway # 2 as you travel west from Liberty Street. Half of Bowmanville was surveyed

off the north slanting King Street and the other half off the vertical Liberty Street. This is why you get Division and Centre Streets converging at Lowe Street.

Two more wooden bridges, about which we know almost nothing, were built at the Highway # 2 location. The next bridge, we know of, to cross the creek was a stone one with beautiful arches. This bridge is believed to have been built in 1835, but succumbed to a storm in 1876. It is surmised that the arches collapsed but the remaining pillars were kept and a new wooden bridge built over them. However, it is possible that an entirely new bridge was built at this time.

On June 5th 1890 a cloud-burst to the north created a surge of water that knocked out five bridges and damaged two others. The Highway # 2 bridge was the most important and had to be replaced quickly. A steel bridge was constructed by

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the Weddell Bridge Company of New York State. The new bridge was 170 feet long and 18 feet wide. There are many people in town who can still remember this old bridge as it wasn't replaced until 1973. In recent years the appearance of the new bridge has been enhanced with street lights.

Valley Industries

Today, the Bowmanville Valley is a quiet peaceful place for a walk. There are woods and fields to see as you stroll along the path or the creek. But, in days gone by the valley has seen a considerable amount of indus-

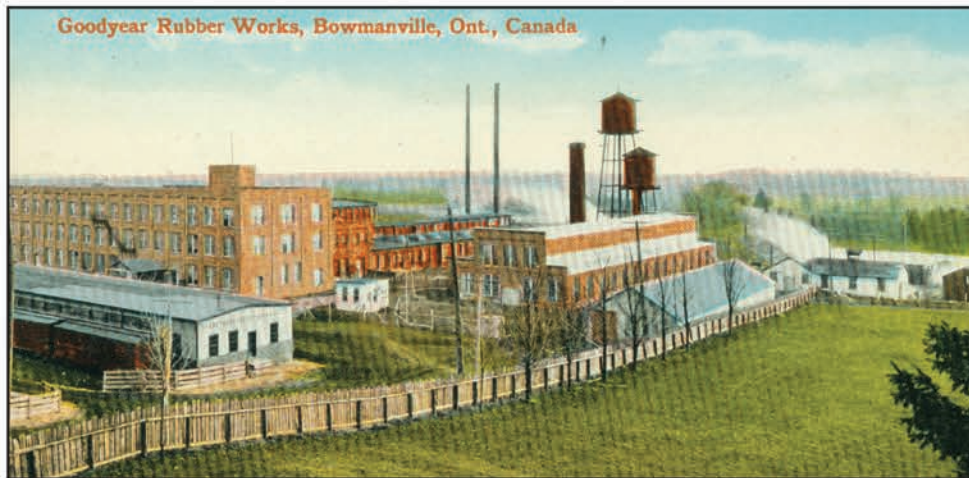
try and commercial activity.

In the pioneer period the only power available was water power so many mills and factories established themselves near the creek. The Vanstone Mill still stands as a reminder of this forgotten time. Other early industries that flourished alongside the creek were: a pottery works, distillery, soap-making works, oat-meal mill, a foundry, wood-working shop, machine shop and a tannery. The earliest hydro-electric plant was also built beside the creek.

In more modern times larger industries such as Goodyear established themselves near the creek. Not

for power, but as a way to get rid of their waste products- a practice that is frowned upon today but was very common back then. Goodyear is an American Company, but their Canadian operations here in Bowmanville were actually a homegrown organization. It began on King Street in 1896 as the Bowmanville Rubber Company. They soon became the Durham Rubber Company and moved to their current location in 1905. In 1910 Goodyear bought them out and expanded the factory. They are still here today, but are known as Veyance Technologies Inc.

In 1919 The Ross Can Company moved from Toronto and established themselves by the creek. They built a large factory to produce tin cans of all sizes. It is still there today just north of the CPR Tracks on the west side of Scugog next to the Bowmanville Foundry. They made metal cans until the mid-1920's but the building is best remembered as the R.M. Hollingshead Building. This was an American firm that made all kinds of automotive oil-based products. One of their most popular ones was a car polish called "Whiz" and the structure has been known



A postcard view of the Bowmanville Goodyear Factory. The original part of the factory was built in 1905 along the edge of the Bowmanville Valley.

as the "Whiz Building" ever since. In later years a flea market operated from this location and today it houses several businesses including Kingscourt Catering.

Further south, but north of the Baseline a canning factory established itself. This was the Canadian Canners Limited. They didn't make tin cans but processed and tinned various vegetables there. It ran from 1912 to the early 1960's. In 1962 the Bowmanville Furniture Company established themselves here, but the building succumbed to fire in 1979. Until recently, the ruins of the foundations could be

and his creditors, a Montreal firm, took over the operation. It was run successfully for many years by James T. Steele and then Allan Lockhart.

Eventually it was sold to James McDougall and it was during his ownership that the mill had its golden age. James' brother George ran the mill profitably for a few decades before selling to a Mr. Stevens. It was under his ownership that the mill caught fire (not to be confused with the Stephen's Mill further north at Bethesda).

Rumblings about electric lights can be found as early as 1884, but it was in 1887 that the Bowmanville Elec-

today) was the first.

In 1910 the Town purchased the Electric Light Plant and promptly sold it to the Seymour Light and Power Company a year later. They were able to provide much better 24 hour electrical service and to continue to supply the ever increasing demands of individual homeowners and businesses. They provided electricity for Bowmanville, Oshawa, and Whitby from their plants near Campbellford. They built an electrical station behind Goodyear (the building is still there today). They had no need for the old Bowmanville Plant so it



This photo shows the original Durham Rubber Company building (built 1905) on the right side and the newer Goodyear building on the left (built 1910). Also on the left are the Grand trunk Freight Sheds.

Are We Being Lulled Into A False Sense of Democracy?



by Jim Abernethy, Editor

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How would you answer the following question: "Do you support the direct election of the Chairperson of the Region of Durham?" I dare say that 80% of us would answer "yes" to that question, and we would do so without really understanding the consequences of our "yes" vote and how it will change the landscape of our Region.

Over the last 7 years, I have observed a small group of individuals, and one politician in particular, who have been leading the charge to influence public opinion to effect a change in the way we elect the Chairman of the Region of Durham.

I have followed their very negative campaign which seems to be more focused on the need to have a different Chairman, rather than explaining why their alternative is democratic and the status quo is not. Thus their justification for the need to change the way in which the Chairman is elected..... simply to get rid of the one we have.

Their campaign to influence other people and politicians has used one simple argument..... our current system is not democratic.

They have used this argument effectively to create a "wedge issue" which has divided the general public into two groups, forcing us to believe our only choices are to be for or against democracy.

Does anybody out there want to be against democracy?

No, I didn't think so..... however I do believe that is what the majority of us were thinking when we voted during the 2010 municipal election on the question about the "direct election" of our Regional Chairman.

Currently, and since Regional Government was formed, our Regional Chairman has been elected by our 28 Region of Durham Councillors. Every 4 years, following each municipal election, our 28 Regional Councillors determine who will lead our Regional Council.

The role of the Regional Chairman is to provide leadership to Council and to preside over Council meetings so that its business can be carried out efficiently and effectively.

Currently, any person who resides in the Region of Durham can stand and be elected for the position of Regional Chairman. However, only our 28 Regional Councillors vote to determine who will lead Regional Council.

Not the Canadian democratic way you say?

Sure it is..... otherwise the process Canada has been using to choose our Prime Minister and the Premier of Ontario is un-democratic.

Canadians do not direct-elect the leader of our Country or our Province. If we did, we could have a scenario with a majority Conservative Party being led by the leader of the

NDP, or vice versa.

Not the best formula to carry out the business of the Country efficiently and effectively?

In Canada, the winning Party candidates decide who will lead the Country or the Province, not the people of Canada or Ontario, as do our 28 Regional Councillors decide who will lead Durham Council.

So why change? What has brought about the need for this change, besides what appears to be the personal vendetta of a small group of individuals and one politician in particular?

Is that enough reason to change the entire landscape of Durham Region?

How much time and money have we spent considering this change?

Will this change give more power to the vote rich urban areas of Oshawa, Pickering, and Ajax where the movement for this change began?

Will this change mean less populated municipalities like Clarington, Brock, Scugog and Uxbridge will have less say in Regional financial matters?

How will the candidates raise \$200,000 to fund their election campaign? Who will donate those funds, developers, corporations or taxpayers?

How will those funds be spent?

Will the newspapers and local media benefit from the spending by numerous Candidates of their campaign war chests when vying for the Chairman's position?

Who will speak for the rural people of Durham, the less populated rural communities like Clarington?

Will this change bring us closer to Party Politics at the municipal level?

Will this change bring us one step closer to the City of Durham?

These are all good questions which should have been considered, discussed and debated prior to going down the road we now find ourselves.

It is important to know how we elect our Regional Chairperson and the fallout that may result from change. Our Clarington Council and Regional Councillors are preparing now to vote on the issue of changing this process.

You can influence how they vote. You should be asking them..... would a directly elected Regional Chairperson serve us better and if so, why?

Don't be lulled into a false sense of democracy!

By the way, we are still formulating the many suggestions received regarding how best to spend the \$10 Million Clarington will receive sometime later this year from the Federal Government, as per the terms of our Port Granby Host Community Agreement. If you have an idea how Clarington should spend that \$10 Million, please send your emails to: jimabernethy@claringtonpromoter.ca and letters to: Jim Abernethy, Editor Clarington Promoter - 23 Lowe Street, Bowmanville, Ont L1C 1X4.

Enjoy the Easter Holidays with your family!

How To Grow Your Business



by Peter Hobb

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Most business owners want to grow their businesses. As a business grows the profitability of the business should improve driving up the value of the business. There are really only four fundamental ways to grow your business. These four ways are:

1. Increase the number of customers of the type you want.
2. Increase the number of times customers come back to buy from you.
3. Increase the average value

of each sale you make.
4. Increase the effectiveness of each process in your business.

Any growth strategy that you develop should fit into one of these four categories. Any strategy that doesn't fit into one of these categories, such as cutting costs, will likely not be a growth strategy. Cutting costs is normally a temporary measure and is not a strategy for long term growth. Actually, cutting costs will likely reduce your capacity reducing your ability to take on new business.

In this article I have written about increasing the number of customers of the type you want, the first way to grow your business. I will deal with the latter three in upcoming issues of this paper.

Before I get into the meat of the topic I want to emphasize that you want the right type of growth for your business. The growth has to be manageable. Also, you don't want to make a

sale just for the sake of increasing revenue if the sale isn't going to realize a reasonable gross profit or you're selling to someone who is never going to pay you. Focusing solely on sales growth can lead to insolvency if you're not focused on all aspects of your business.

One strategy to increase customers is to develop your "Unique Core Differentiator" (UCD). Why do customers buy from you versus someone else? The reason gives you your UCD and you can use this to attract other customers. What makes your service or product unique when customers compare you to other suppliers or service providers? Is it free same day delivery or you can bring your service right to your customer's door. Why is your business different? If you are not sure survey a sample of your customers. What you learn will likely be invaluable in helping you grow your business.

Someone who is good at sell-

ing usually has a sales system. They approach each customer the same. There is a pattern to the way they do things – how they get the prospect interested, how they keep them interested, how they handle objections, how they deal with questions about price and how they finally ask for the sale. They usually can do this by building trust and understanding with the prospect as they go along. If you have a high performing sales person in your organization you should be using that person to train your other sales representatives. Understand what this person's sales system is and use it across your organization. It may not work perfectly for everyone but it will probably give people a good base on which to develop their own system. No matter what the level of sales skills, having a system will increase the chances of making more sales.

Do you have a budget for what you spend on advertising

and promotion? Do you know how effective your advertising is and what your return on investment is? Do you know what the most effective form of advertising for your business is (e.g. flyers, newspaper advertising, radio advertising, etc.)? Do you have a schedule for the advertising activities you will be doing? Do you set goals for your advertising campaigns? All of these are essential elements for a promotions plan. Without a promotions plan your advertising efforts are likely a hit and miss scattergun approach which will eat up your advertising dollars while contributing little to your business. Ask your customers how they found out about you. Track how much each customer is spending and when they spend. Track sales after a major advertising campaign and compare this to periods when you do less advertising. Compare the impact of the effect on sales of different advertising mediums. Once your

advertising and promotion activities become more focused it is likely that you will dramatically improve sales activity.

I have just touched on a few strategies that can be used to increase the number of customers of the type you want. To finish I am going to focus on the last part of the previous sentence "customers of the type you want". You need to understand who your ideal customer is and their needs so that you can focus your business development activities on going after that customer. We have all learned the hard way that it normally doesn't pay to take on every prospect that is willing to do business with you. In fact, businesses who have fired customers have found that business performance has improved. This is because your good customers drive profitability. They like doing business with you and they value what you bring to the table.