

Seaforth Ward – Huron East



Retracing our steps northwards, we come to the town of Seaforth, once known as Guideboard Swamp. Seaforth's rise from a patch of swamp between the thriving villages of Harpurhey and Egmondville was no accident but resulted from the diligent efforts of several land speculators.

In the 1850s, Christopher and George Sparling were instrumental in convincing the Buffalo, Brantford and Goderich Railway to put its right of way through land owned by Christopher. Christopher then sold much of his land to three lawyers named Patton, Bernard and Le Froy.

The three towns continued to compete for an official station. When the trio of land investors offered free land for a station and the merchants in Egmondville and Seaforth financed the building, Harpurhey was left out in the cold when the rail-line became operational in 1858. The railway soon attracted merchants and manufacturers from the two older towns and Seaforth was on its way to becoming the area's dominant commercial centre.

The initial business in the town site was the buying and shipping of wheat to such an extent that in the 1860s and '70s, Seaforth was one of the busiest centers for this activity in the province.



Seaforth was incorporated as a village in 1868 and as a town in 1875. Soon after its incorporation as a village, salt was discovered boosting an already thriving economy.



In September of 1876, the town suffered the fate of many early Ontario communities. A devastating fire swept through the frame construction of the business section leveling much of the commercial district. Within two years, the business district was rebuilt with modern brick or stone structures many of which are still preserved in the downtown heritage district.

A railway still operates in Seaforth but the town's economy is oriented towards providing regional retail services complimented by an active commercial and industrial park. Leaving Seaforth we now go north on North Line (County Rd. 12) through the former McKillop Township.