

The Forgotten Capital

A Historical Atlas of Sandwich, Ontario

Donald Lafreniere
Douglas Rivet

NOTICE

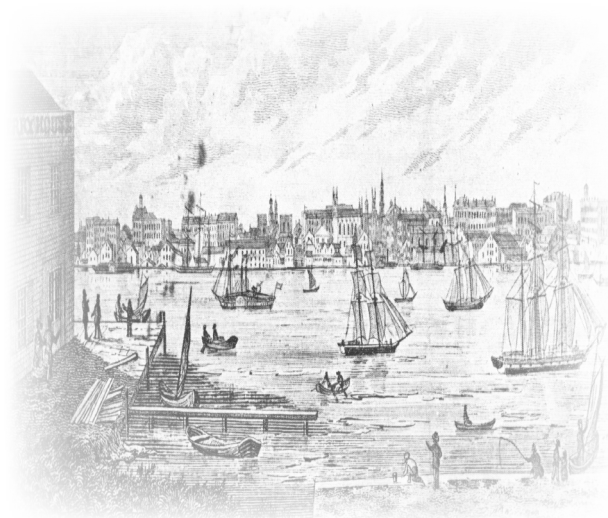
DISCONTINUANCE OF FERRY SERVICE

Our ferry service for vehicles
and passengers between Detroit
and Windsor will be discontinued
after Monday, July 18, 1938

There will be NO CHANGE in the operation of Bob-Lo Park and our Excursion Steamers "Columbia" and "Ste. Claire." The popular all-day excursion through the Flats (with stops at St. Clair and Port Huron) will continue to run every Sunday at 10 A. M. Both the Park and the Steamers have been greatly improved for the 1938 season, to add to your comfort, enjoyment, and safety.

DETROIT & WINDSOR FERRY COMPANY





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Introduction

This atlas was the culmination of research completed on the historical geography of Sandwich, Ontario. Sandwich is the oldest continuous settlement in Ontario and the former capital of the Western District of Upper Canada, a region that spanned from Detroit to Kitchener, Ontario. Using our mosaic maps, this historical atlas attempts to cartographically represent the impact of changing transportation systems on the rise and fall of Sandwich's regional importance. The atlas, with eight plates, represents the changing urban form and function of Sandwich, Windsor and Detroit from 1800 to 2000. Each map has a facing page with text, pictures and graphs that support the map by providing the historical and geographical context.

Urban historical researchers have relied on historical maps as a basis for determining the spatial extent and physical form of a city at a given time. Historical maps have also been used as cultural artifacts, to help reconstruct urban life in a particular period or to better understand political and economic relationships. Researchers have used historical maps to place events, people and infrastructure. Often researchers rely on a series of single maps, each depicting a different period in time, scale or extent. There are often spatial relationships influencing our understanding of history that are beyond the extent represented on a single map. Historically, cartographers often had to ignore the regional perspective and the situational relationship with nearby settlements because of the limitations of the fixed scale of their paper maps. This is notable in the experience of the Detroit River cartographers. Maps in which the British side of the river was the focal point often did not depict the American side. Similarly, American cartographers drew the Detroit side of the river with an amazing level of detail and sophistication, but fell short in mapping the British (later Canadian) side of the river. See figure 1 for an example. Our work is an attempt to address this deficiency.

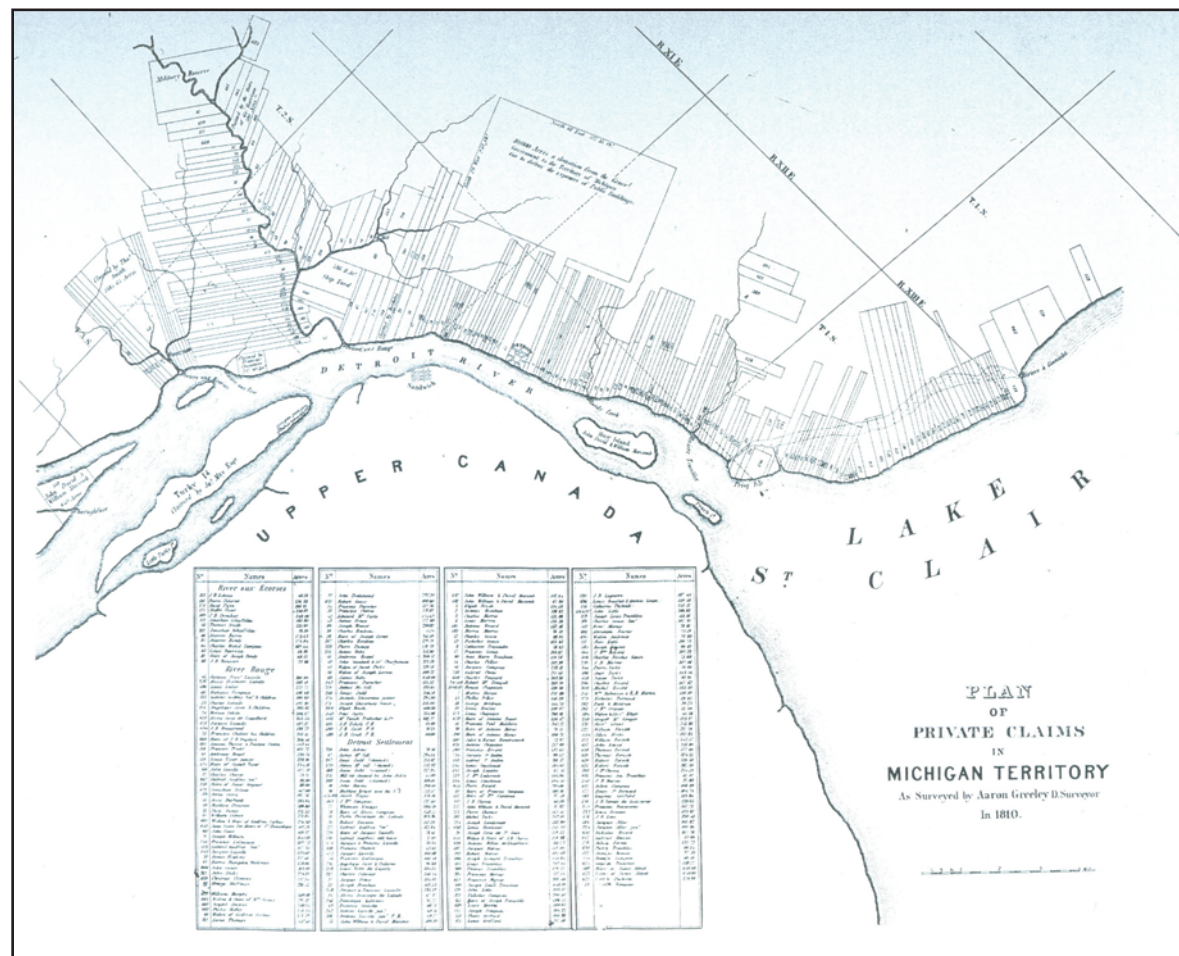


Figure 1

This atlas is comprised of georectified historical maps that have been fit together, much like a mosaic. A georectified historical map is a map that has been copied from its original into a digital image, which is then stretched and skewed using a computer-based Geographic Information System (GIS) to fit the modern geography it represents. By creating a mosaic with several historical maps that all represent the same time period, we are able to create a new map that depicts an urban place at a greater extent, while maintaining the original cartographers' historical perspectives. To our knowledge, no one has combined historical maps in this way before. This new methodology aids urban historical researchers by providing a tool that can be used to examine the external relationships of an urban settlement beyond the extent of a single historical map.

The left-hand side of each plate was created to provide the historical and geographical context to what was drawn on the corresponding map. Pictures and other historical maps are also included on the plates to provide a context for the map on the right side. In no way do we wish to leave the reader with the impression that this is a comprehensive review of the history of the Windsor area. For a complete history, we recommend consulting the literature we cite in our bibliography. The three most comprehensive books are Ernest Lajeunesse's *The Windsor Border Region, Canada's Southernmost Frontier: A collection of documents*, Alan Douglas' *Uppermost Canada: The Western District and the Detroit Frontier* and Dr. Neil Morrison's *Garden Gateway to Canada*. Lajeunesse's work covers the region from the arrival of the earliest Europeans to approximately 1800. Douglas' work covers 1800 to 1850 and Dr. Morrison's from 1850 to the mid-1950s.

We attempted to find historical maps that we felt accurately and completely represented the extent of the settlements at the time in which they were drawn. However, because of the inherent limitations of using archival records, we were obliged at times to use inferior maps. The most significant example is the map of Windsor's core embedded within plate 3. It was commissioned by the H. Belden Company, which produced illustrated historical atlases for each county of Ontario. The atlases were primarily a commercial venture, produced to record the achievements of the "solid" citizens, and were printed at their expense. In examining demographic and cadastral records from the period, we believe that the overall density of settlement projected by H. Belden may not be accurate. It was a common practice of late-nineteenth century railroad town boosters to exaggerate the density and sophistication of their towns as a way to encourage others to come there to do business or speculate on the town's growth; likewise, H. Belden may have exaggerated Windsor's density. Despite its dubious accuracy, we elected to include the map as it helps the reader visualize the rapid growth of Windsor in comparison with its sleepy neighbour Sandwich. See the inset bird's eye view map on plate 3 for what we believe is a more accurate representation of Windsor's density.

Methodology

The data for this atlas has been compiled from a combination of primary and secondary historical sources. We used a number of books and articles related to the history of the region to establish the state of the various transportation systems as well their location and impact on Sandwich and its neighbouring settlements. Archival records, such as property deed records and personal diaries, were used to verify the accuracy of some conflicting secondary sources. A full bibliography listing all of our sources can be found in the back of the atlas.

Upon completion of the literature review, we identified which time periods were to be represented in the atlas and determined the total number of maps to be created. An extensive archival search was completed to find historical maps suitable for placing in mosaics that depicted each time period we wished to represent. The original historical maps were

digitally scanned or photographed (if they were in a large format) and imported into Adobe Photoshop CS2 for enhancement. Unwanted artifacts from the digitization, such as specks of dust, were removed. Two or three historical maps were fit together to create a mosaic; we often used the Detroit River as the location at which individual maps were bonded together. The maps were cropped so that each completed mosaic map would show the same extent, making it easier to see the growth of the settlements over time.

We completed extensive fieldwork to obtain the current geographical coordinates needed to georectify the historical maps. A Garmin GPS III was used to acquire 84 ground control points. Using cadastral records available from Windsor City Hall, we compared many of the existing lots and streets in the field with the results of our literature review and the historical maps. We measured two blocks to verify the width of 40 arpents in the French long lot system that was used to divide much of the land in Windsor (the length of an arpent varied somewhat between France and the French Canadian colonies, and even from the St. Lawrence River valley to the Detroit region). We walked the shoreline of the river to verify our suspicion of mid-1960s land reclamation. While photographing an abandoned industrial site, we noticed a small ditch with cattails and a sulphuric smell. When we overlaid one of the historical maps with modern satellite imagery, we confirmed that we had located the remnants of the Sandwich Mineral Springs that are discussed in plates 3 and 4.

Using the ground control points obtained through our fieldwork, we georectified the cleaned and cropped historical maps in ArcGIS 9.2. The georectified Ontario Road File, provided by Statistics Canada, was used to double-check our ground control points during the georectification. The historical maps were then colour mapped in ArcGIS to remove the backgrounds of the maps in order to create a seamless mosaic. The georectified mosaic was then exported from ArcGIS at 600 dpi and loaded again into Photoshop. The seams between the maps were touched up to remove any areas that the colour map missed because of shading. The historical artifacts embedded within the maps, such as the advertisements that can be seen bleeding through the back of plate 4, were maintained as much as possible.

We used Adobe Illustrator CS2 to complete the symbology. On a series of maps such as the ones in this atlas, there is a host of historical processes and events that we could have portrayed. We elected to focus on three core areas: transportation, migration, and the movement of social, economic and political institutions. Transportation systems are symbolized using green lines throughout the atlas. We used green because it was a colour that didn't interfere with the background colours of the maps themselves; the colour was maintained throughout in order to aid in identifying change from map to map. The size and design of the green lines change with each transportation system. The red arrows seen throughout the maps illustrate the residential migration of people to, from, or around the region. They are weighted based on the number of people migrating. The purple arrows indicate the movement of social, economic or political institutions from one part of the region to another. Essentially, the purple arrows show the reader where the focal point of development and regional importance was in any given time period. The rural nature of the region from 1800 to 1840 afforded us an opportunity to use ArcMap symbology to show the extent of development of individual building lots on plates 1 and 2.

Acknowledgements

This project was completed as Don's undergraduate senior honors thesis for departmental honors in geography at Eastern Michigan University. While we worked together on this project, each of us made our own contributions to the work. Don did all the historical research, most of the archival work, and the historical GIS work on plates 1 and 2.

He wrote all the text, compiled the pictures, did the final editing, and made arrangements for publishing the atlas. Doug did the georectification of all the maps, all of the colour mapping, and all of the legends. Together, we did some of the archival work, the fieldwork, the work in PhotoShop to clean up the maps, and the symbology.

We learned a tremendous amount during the construction of this atlas. We were introduced to the wonders and frustrations of historical archives and fieldwork. We mastered skills and techniques in ArcGIS and with the Adobe software. We entered the immense world of cartography, a discipline in which we have both had a lifelong interest. While we know that our work on this atlas provided just the beginning of the lessons we will learn, we hope that it is also just the beginning of our contributions to the field of geography. Above all, we learned to collaborate with each other and with a long list of people who helped us create this finished work. Thanks go to the archivists at the several archives we visited while collecting the maps, especially to Leonard Coombs at the Bentley Historical Library in Ann Arbor. Financial support from Eastern Michigan University's Honors College made much of this work possible for us poor undergraduate students. Thank you to Dr. Chris Mayda and Dr. JoEllen Vinyard for acting as our research supervisors and for continuing to push us toward higher and higher academic goals. Rebecca Tanner and Rob Freeborn volunteered a fantastic amount of their personal time to create the beautiful layout of the atlas. Finally, thanks go to Don's wife, Erin, who not only devoted hours of editing to the entire atlas but also put up with Don's late nights and absent weekends while he toiled over this addicting project.

Don Lafreniere
Doug Rivet

April 2009

Sandwich

1800

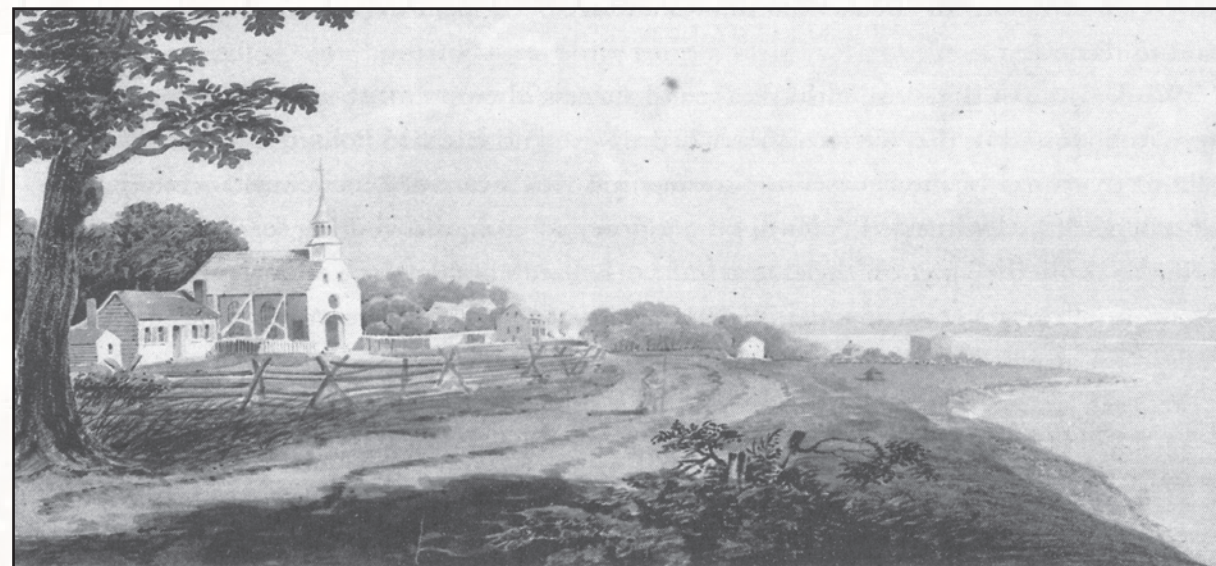
Plate 1

The end of the American Revolution with the 1783 Treaty of Paris, which made the middle of the Detroit River part of the international boundary, also led to the founding of the first two towns along the Canadian side of the river. In preparation for the handing over of Detroit to the Americans, the settlement of L'Assomption de la Pointe de Montréal du Détroit (later Sandwich) was chosen as the seat of government for the Western District of Upper Canada, and land opposite Bois Blanc Island (later Amherstburg) was selected as the place where the military post and naval station would be established because of its strategic position commanding the entrance to the river. In the decade following the Treaty of Paris, a number of British loyalists who were living in the town of Detroit crossed the boundary and settled on what is now the Canadian side of the river, mostly in the section of Petite Côte, north of La Rivière aux Dindes and south of the future townsite of Sandwich. Residents who remained in Detroit in 1796 were given a year to declare their intention to remain British subjects living in American territory; otherwise, they would be considered American citizens. A good number made the declaration; however, many others moved across the river, preferring to live under the British flag. Altogether, about 1,700 people moved across the river, approximately 1,100 to Sandwich and the remainder to Amherstburg. These included merchants and government officials who contributed much to the development of the business, social and cultural life of the area.

For the convenience of these citizens, in the summer of 1797, Peter Russell, President of the Executive Council, bought the Reserve at the Huron Church containing 1,078 acres on the Canadian side of the Detroit River. This land had been characterized by surveyor Patrick McNiff in 1791 as "of no consequence being only a barren sandy plain." It consisted of a triangular tract of land

whose base extended along the river nearly two miles from La Rivière à Gervais to the Assumption Huron Church. One side of this triangle ran along the church lands for about two miles. The other side was formed by a straight line from this apex to the point of beginning. An area of sixty-one acres along the river near the church was reserved for the use of the Huron Indians. Also excluded from the purchase were the improved lands of William Hands and Thomas Pajot at the easterly limits of the triangle. A part of the purchased tract lying near the river was divided into one-acre lots for settlement. Three streets were planned running parallel to the shore: Russell, Bedford, and Peter Streets. The town plot extended from Detroit Street to South Street. The other cross-streets were Mill (so called because it led to the Bâby Mill opposite lot 3 of Russell Street), Huron (now Brock), and Chippewa (now spelled Chippawa). The four corner lots at the junction of Bedford and Huron streets (now Sandwich and Brock) were reserved for the public. The jail and courthouse were built early in 1797 on the north-east corner, but burned to the ground later that year. A draw for the rest of the lots was held on July 7, 1797.

On December 9, 1797, Russell wrote, somewhat optimistically, to Lord Simcoe: "The British merchants at Detroit having solicited me to give them a town on the river, where they may reside and carry on their trade with equal convenience, I purchased from the



Assumption Church, completed in 1787, as it appeared to the artist John Elliott Woolford when he visited in 1821. The view is downriver with the town of Sandwich in the background. *John Ross Robertson Collection, Toronto Public Library. In Uppermost Canada. By R. Alan Douglas*

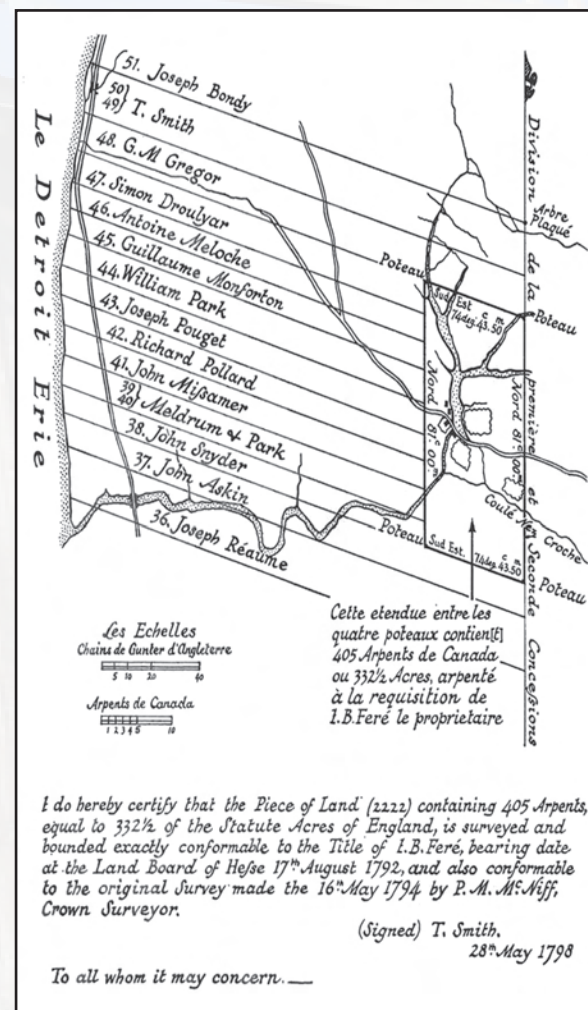
Indians the Gore near the Huron Church for their accommodation and named it Sandwich and I am informed that several houses have already been built there and that it promises fair to become soon the most beautiful town in the Province."

To encourage building in the town of Sandwich, Russell directed that those settlers who built the first houses should be given park lots of twenty-four acres to the rear of the townsite. The first four to receive this bounty were John McGregor at Russell Street lot 9, Richard Pattinson at Russell lot 1, Robert Innis at Russell lot 12, and William Park at Bedford West lot 5. The Hudson's Bay Company built a fur trading post on Russell lot 5, across from the ferry dock and the grist mill. This would later become known as the James Bâby Mansion.

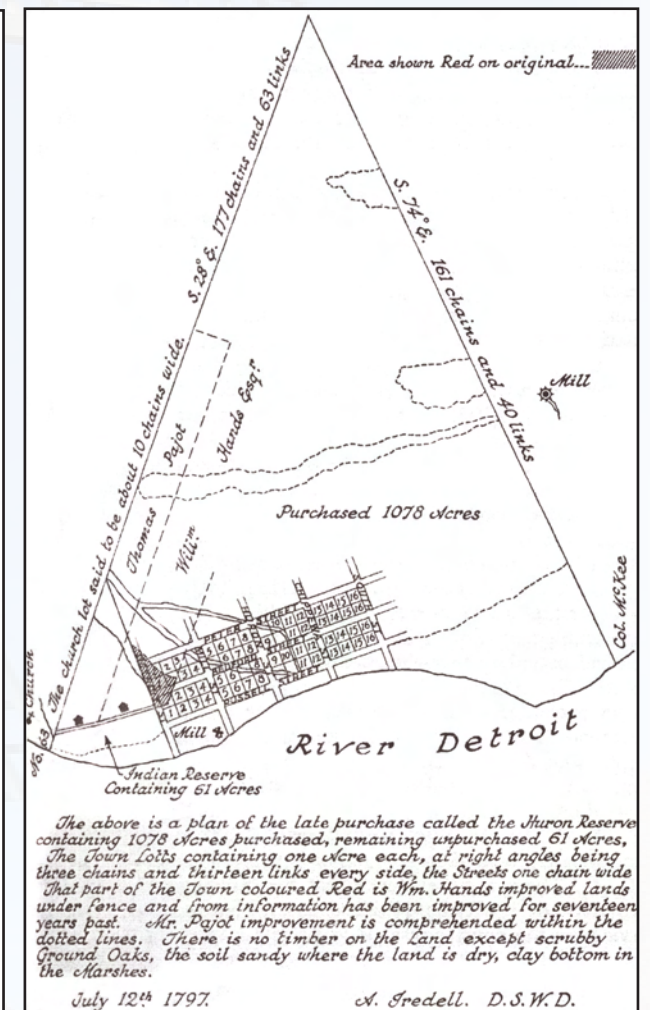
Up until the founding of Sandwich, communication between the two shores of the river was relatively infrequent. With the movement of the loyalists from Detroit to Sandwich, ties of kinship and business quickly increased traffic across the river. The earliest ferry service was established in February 1798 by John Askin, one of Detroit's wealthiest merchants. The ferry was nothing more than a large flat-bottom canoe and operated between the foot of Mill Street in Sandwich and the town of Detroit. Timber, market crops and furs were among the items traded between the two towns. It was a very successful operation and signified the earliest

trade over what would become the busiest international border crossing in the world.

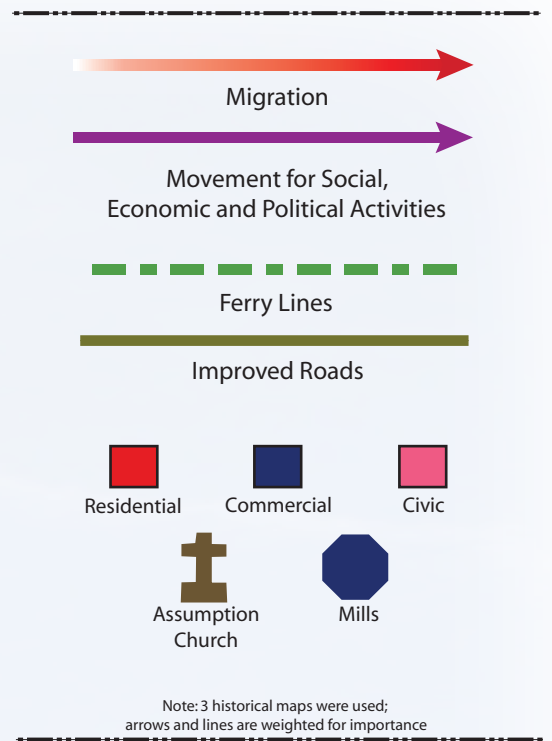
With the erection of public buildings, government inducements for the construction of private housing, and a successful transportation system for trade, one might have expected that the town would experience an immediate building boom. This was not the case. In 1800, a report was received by the Council at York from the Grand Jury of the Western District, asserting that a great number of the town lots granted in Sandwich in 1797 still remained unimproved, although the time stipulated for such improvements had passed. It stated that the settlement of the town had been greatly impeded, planned streets had not yet been opened, and only seven or eight houses had been built. The road from Sandwich to Amherstburg was described as a "partially cleared path through the wilds". Slow indeed was the initial development of the capital town of the Western District.

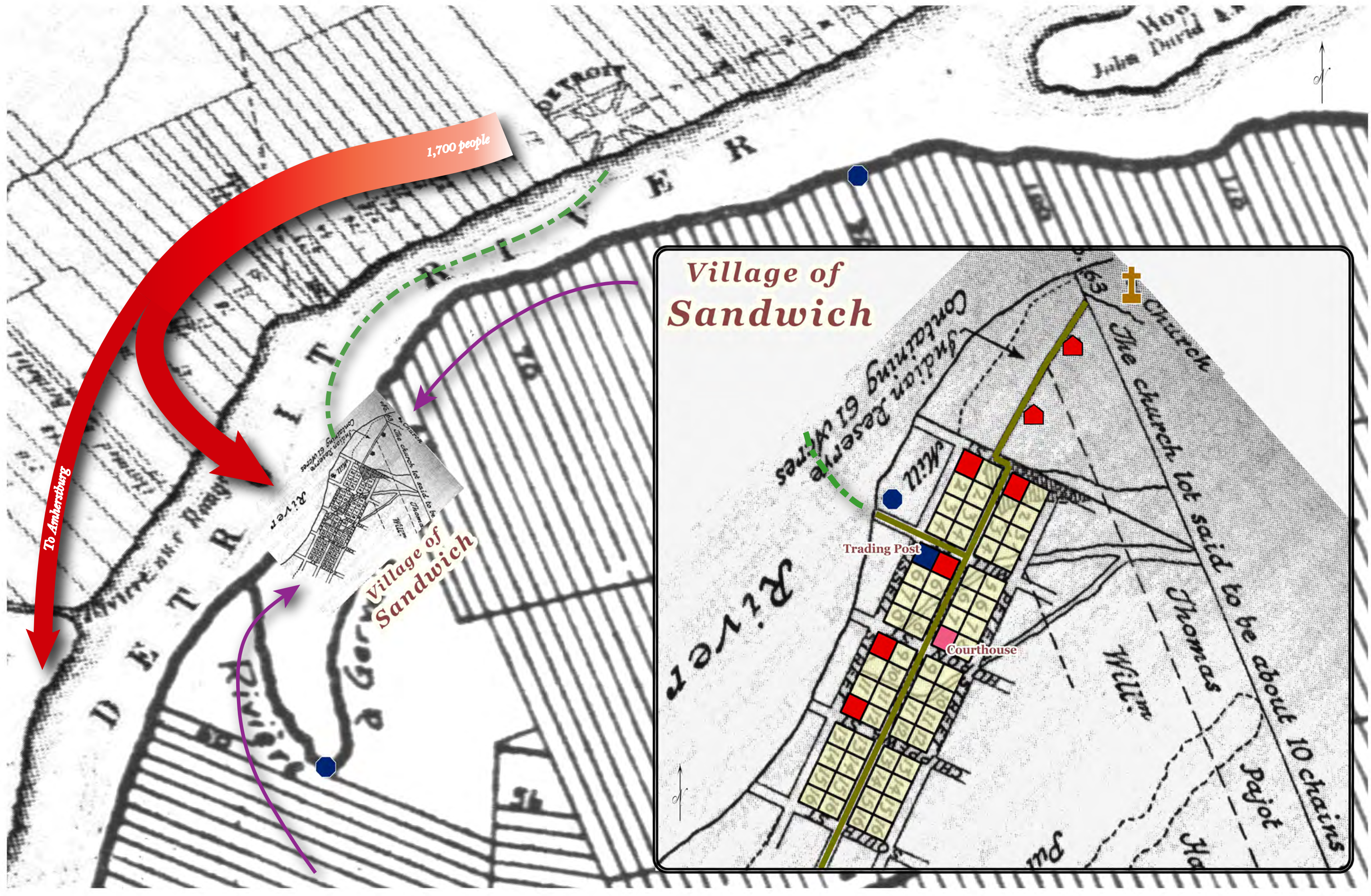


British Settlement in Petite Cote, south of the townsite of Sandwich *Plan of J.B. Feré's "Watermill on Turkey Creek." T. Smith. May 28, 1798. in The Windsor Border Region by E.J. Lajeunesse*



British Settlement in Petite Cote, south of the townsite of Sandwich *Plan of J.B. Feré's "Watermill on Turkey Creek." T. Smith. May 28, 1798. in The Windsor Border Region by E.J. Lajeunesse*





To Amherstburg

1,700 people

Village of Sandwich

Trading Post

Courthouse

The Church

Gordon Reserve Containing 61 Acres

The Church lot said to be about 10 chains

DETOIT RIVER

Gordon's River

Block	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	

Sandwich & Windsor

1840

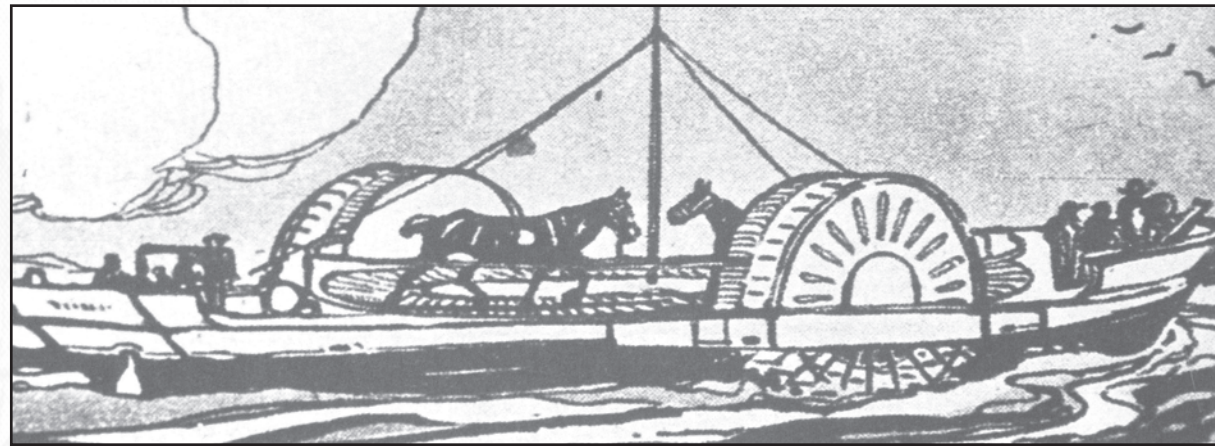
Plate 2

At the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century, Sandwich was still experiencing slow growth and little investment. The British town only had approximately two dozen houses. The river road was still a dirt path, ten feet wide, through the prairie grasses and hardwoods. Some progress was being made in the establishment of public buildings. St. John's Anglican Church was built in 1803 to serve the Protestant population in Sandwich as well as the Michigan Territory across the river. In 1808, the Grammar School of the Western District was built at the south-west corner of Bedford and Huron streets across from St. John's, where General Brock Public School is now located. The establishment of these institutions did little, however, to aid in attracting more settlers or investment to the town. In 1811, Richard Pollard, the pastor of St. John's, reported to his superiors that many of the merchants and traders of Sandwich were moving to Amherstburg to be near the garrison. He asked to be moved, claiming that he was sought after to establish a much-needed church and school in the military town. Later that year, he received the acting chaplaincy of the garrison at Amherstburg.

Amherstburg was at the centre of the earliest confrontations of the War of 1812. However, Sandwich was not immune to American aggression. The grammar school served as barracks for General Brock's British regiment and both St. John's and the trading post, then owned by the prominent politician James Baby, were briefly occupied by General Hull's American troops. St. John's suffered the greatest loss during

the occupation; it was set ablaze by the retreating American brigade, which had been using it as a stable for their horses. The church was rebuilt in 1818.

The focus of activity on the south side of the river had moved elsewhere, and the elsewhere in question was the crossing upriver. As early as 1802, Etienne Pacquet was operating a ferry at the foot of lot 76. This ferry was short-lived. However, by 1804, François Baby had built a primitive wharf at the water's edge of his farm at lot 80 and commenced offering a simple ferry service (ferry 1 on map). Jean Baptiste St. Amour was granted a license in 1820



This sketch of the horse ferry the Olive Branch shows the bulk of the boat. It was the first vessel able to carry large cargo across the river. In *The Ferry Steamers* by William Oxford

to operate rowboats from the foot of Woodward Avenue in Detroit to a landing on the front of Charles Ouellette's farm on lot 82 (ferry 2 on map). To compete, in 1825, Baby replaced his fleet of seven rowboats with the Olive Branch, a side-wheeler driven by two horses on a turntable. This horse powered ferry was large enough to carry loaded wagons with their teams attached; the era of flat-bottomed canoes was over.

When the steamboat Walk-in-the-Water thrashed its way to Detroit in 1818, the residents of both shores saw, for the first time, the fruits of the Industrial Revolution in the form of a device that could do more work than a horse. It would take another eleven years before the first steam ferry would operate on the river. The Argo was built in 1829 and operated from the Baby

dock. She was made with two whitewood logs joined by a light deck and was powered by a four horsepower engine. Despite its simple design, the arrival of steam-powered ferry service combined with the advantageous situation of Sandwich Ferry (the earliest toponym given to this settlement; it was named Windsor by 1836) solidified the settlement as the dominant border crossing.

In 1835, Joseph McDougall, a newly arrived entrepreneur, bought lot 85, east of Ouellette's, and called for it to be divided into a town plot. But unlike the pattern of Baby's subdivision where the axis ran parallel

to the river, thus limiting his plot to the width of his farm, McDougall ran his plot lengthwise of his single farm lot with a road down the middle. This pattern was repeated far back into the interior, with cross streets extending as far as the side lines of the farm. The McDougall model was reproduced extensively in the future Windsor, creating a pattern which is clearly seen on later maps. As trade with Detroit was the focal point of the settlement, McDougall too operated a ferry, which is indicated as ferry 3 on the map.

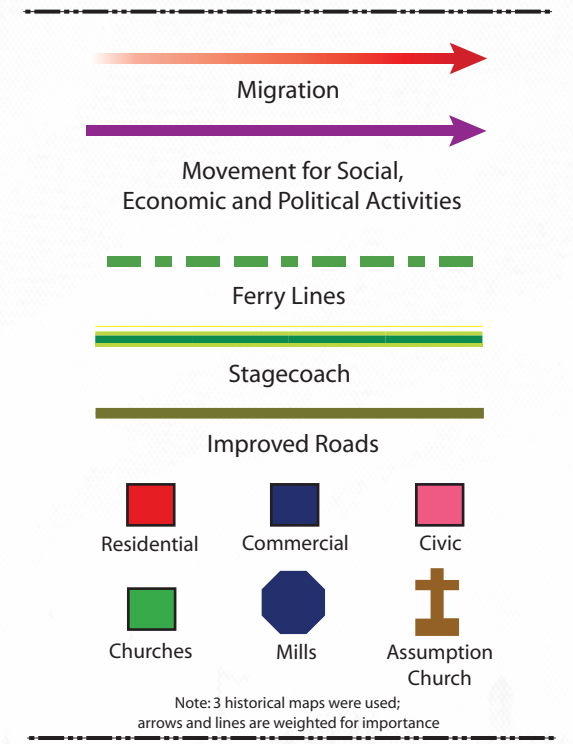
The hamlet that became Windsor was off to a solid start. In 1833, Patrick Shirreff, a Scottish farmer who traveled across the region surveying British North American agricultural practices, forecasted the future of Sandwich and Windsor:

"About a mile and a half above Sandwich is the ferry at Detroit, at which there are fifteen or twenty houses on the Canadian side of the river, and several brick buildings were being erected at the time of my visit. This place will soon eclipse Sandwich, and may rival Chatham. Detroit is the great market of Western Canada, and the ferry possesses advantages, in proximity and access during winter, above every other situation."

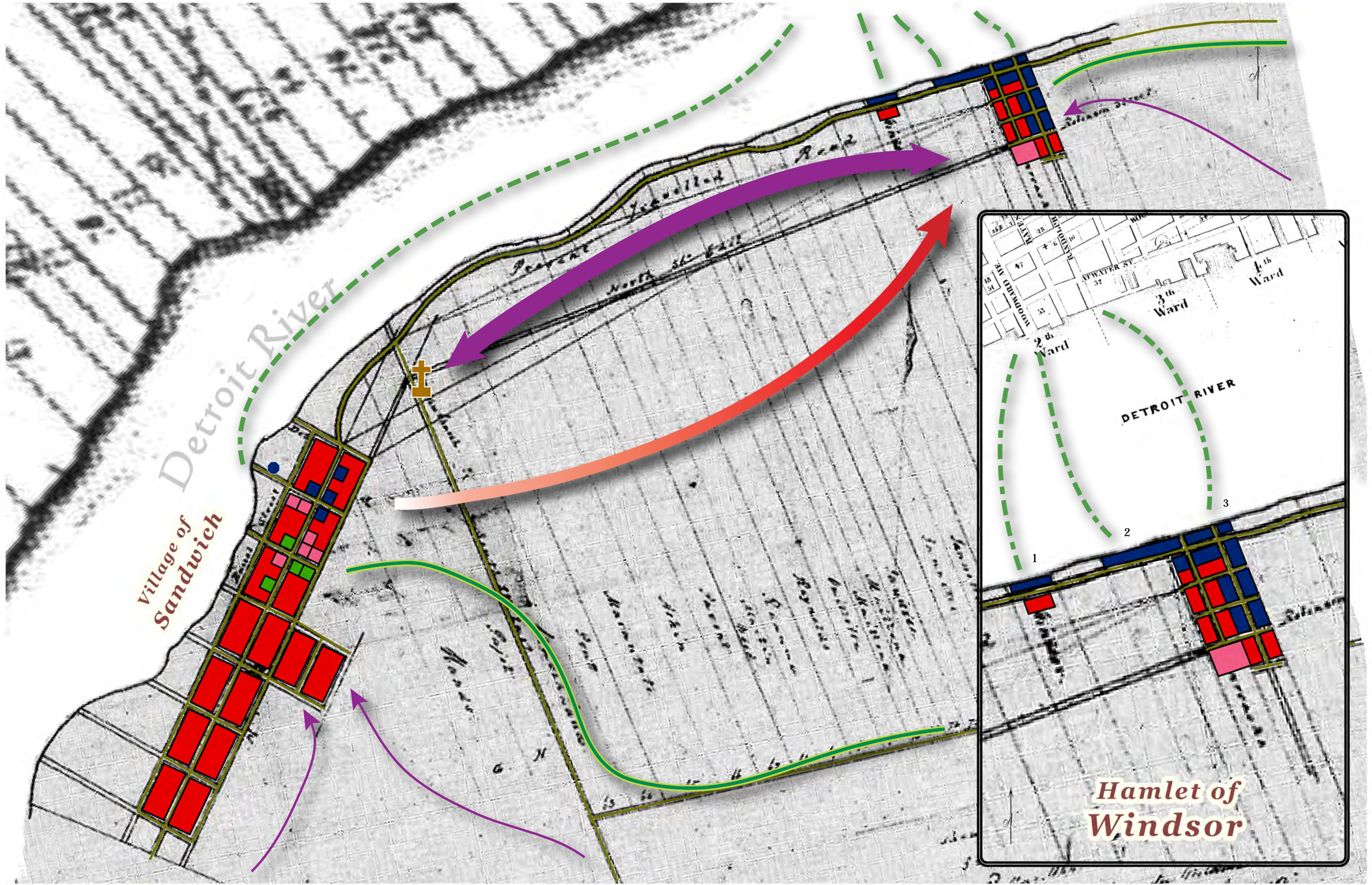
Sandwich did see growth, primarily in residential development, during the 1830s and 40s. Sandwich's population began to rise thanks to the opening of the Erie and Welland canals, as well as the building of Huron Church Road (adjacent to the Assumption Church) and the Back Road (future Tecumseh Road) at the rear of the first concession of farm lots. Mail service arrived in 1828 via a stagecoach from Queenston on the newly-opened Talbot Road. Sandwich still held the District seat as well as the prominent Assumption and St. John's Churches. The river road was improved and residents of both settlements frequently travelled back and forth, Sandwich residents to engage in the growing commercial district in Windsor and Windsorites to Sandwich for social and civic engagements. Both settlements continued to grow; however, a new technology was about to arrive that would forever change the focus of development of this isolated region: the railroad.



The Argo was the first steam ferry boat on the Detroit River. This is the Argo II shown here. In *The Ferry Steamers* by William Oxford



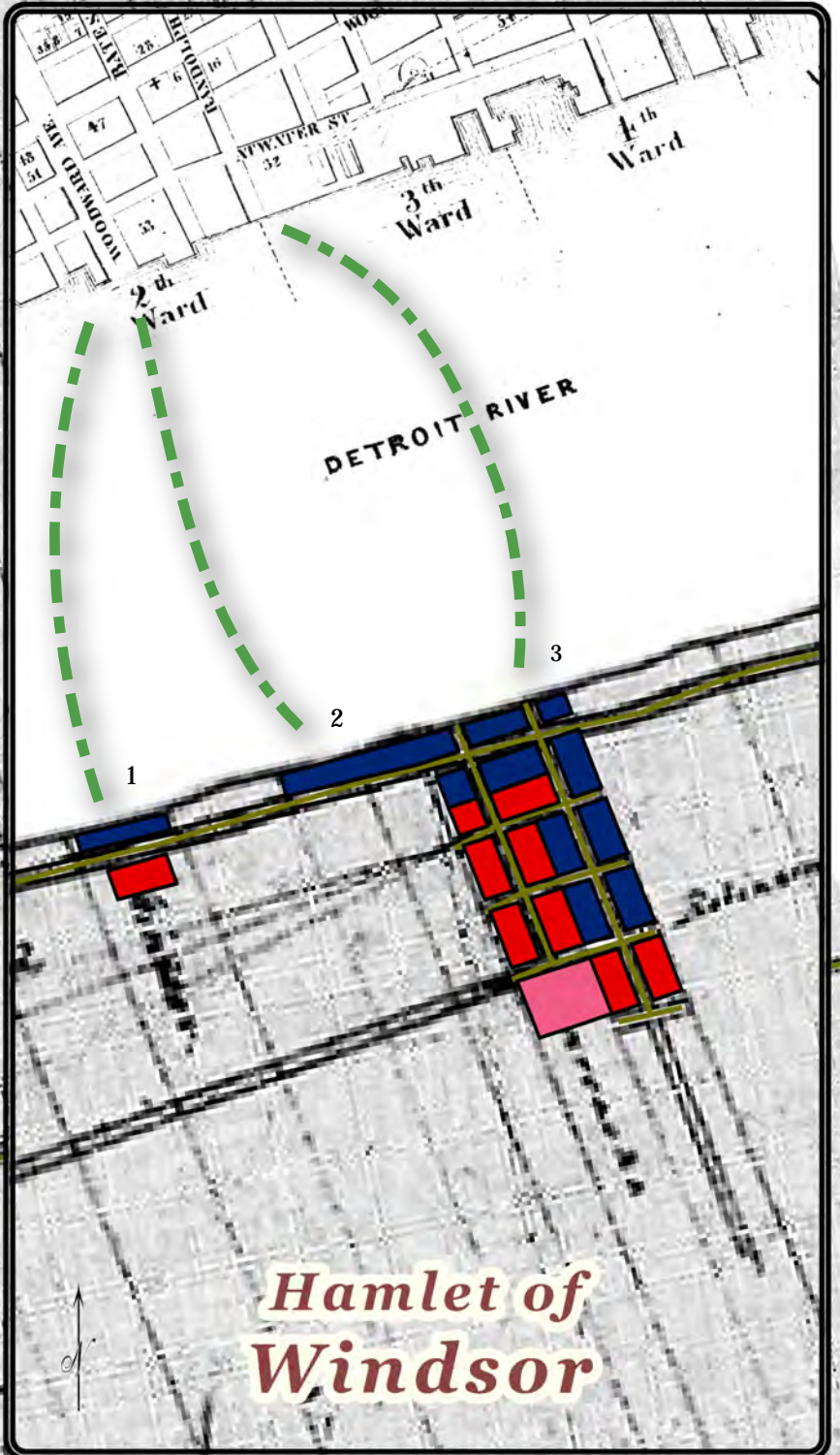
The coach shown here delivered mail between Sandwich, Windsor and Amherstburg until 1907. In *The Township of Sandwich* by Fredrick Neal



Detroit River

Village of Sandwich

Hamlet of Windsor



Windsor & the Railroad 1880

Plate 3

It was Tuesday, January 17, 1854. The crowds had been gathering all day at the newly erected railway station at the foot of Upper Ferry Street in Windsor. It was a day of intense excitement and celebration for residents of both Windsor and Detroit and properly so, since for the first time this region was in railroad communication with New York and the East. Windsor and Detroit closed up business for some hours in honour of the great occasion. The first train on the Great Western Railroad (GWR) was scheduled to arrive in Windsor at 2 p.m., but it was about three hours late. When the locomotive was seen, a salute of cannons in Detroit greeted the arrival. The importance of the event was encapsulated by the Detroit Daily Free Press: “To-day the ice fetters will be broken, for the last link [Niagara to Windsor] in the great

chain of communication between the east and the west is finished... Never more will our city be icebound during four or five months a year.” Before the railroad came to Windsor, the hamlet was reached either by the Great Lakes or by stagecoach on the Talbot Road. In the winter months, ice severely limited water travel, and both modes were limited in the bulk of goods and number of people that could travel. The railroad revolutionized how this region communicated with the rest of the continent. By 1856, the GWR, in combination with the Michigan Central Railroad, was providing 30-hour service between Chicago and New York.

The arrival of the GWR forever changed the settlements of Sandwich and Windsor. In anticipation of the arrival of the GWR, the prominent Sandwich resident John Prince spearheaded an effort by the village to annex Windsor. They saw this as a way to forestall the feared total eclipse of their village. The attempt failed, and eighty years later, the reverse happened when Windsor absorbed Sandwich in 1935.

The influence of the railroad was quickly felt in both villages. A significant number of prominent residents, merchants, and lawyers moved from Sandwich to Windsor. Lawyer

S.S. Macdonnell moved from Sandwich in 1854 and became the first reeve of the village of Windsor. Saw and grist mills, blacksmith shops, a furniture factory and a brickyard all sprung up in the growing border village of Windsor. Hotels were also erected to serve the tired and thirsty as they arrived from the east and awaited their ferry to cross the river. In 1851, three years prior to the arrival of the railroad, Sandwich was home to approximately 500 residents and Windsor 300. By 1861,

Sandwich had grown to 988 and Windsor had exploded to 2,501 residents. A mere five years later, Windsor had nearly doubled to 4,500 residents, while Sandwich was stagnant with just over 1,000. Responding to this great influx of population, the Bishop of Toronto, the Right Reverend Armand de Charbonnel, called for the erection of St. Alphonsus Church on Goyeau Street to meet the needs of the Catholic residents. Parishioners from St. John’s also recognized the need to support the Anglican faith in the rapidly growing village. In 1857, All Saints’ Church was erected. Not only did the focus of many residents’ spiritual lives move to Windsor, so did the focus of education. The grammar school was moved from Sandwich to Windsor in 1857.

Changes to the political landscape also affected Sandwich’s growth. The Municipal Act of 1850 called for the subdivision of the Western District into the counties of Lambton, Kent and Essex. As a result, Sandwich lost its far-reaching importance as the District seat but did maintain a status as the county town. The late 1850s saw the establishment of Walkerville. The town’s namesake and founder, Hiram Walker, began acquiring lands east of Windsor in 1856. By 1858, he had commenced his distillery business, which soon employed upwards of 400 people. In 1858, both Sandwich and Windsor were incorporated into towns.

Clearly, Windsor was outpacing Sandwich in both population growth and growth in regional importance. However, there were some highlights for Sandwich during this period. In the mid-1860s, the oil craze reached Sandwich and drilling began. Instead of oil, the drillers found sulphur water, which led to the development of the Sandwich Mineral Springs. Sulphur springs were believed to relieve the body of such ailments as rheumatism, neuralgia, and asthma. The Mineral Springs, located near the corner of Bedford and End Streets, quickly revitalized the town. Americans, crossing by the ferries in Windsor, flocked to the springs in increasing numbers on weekends and holidays. Towards

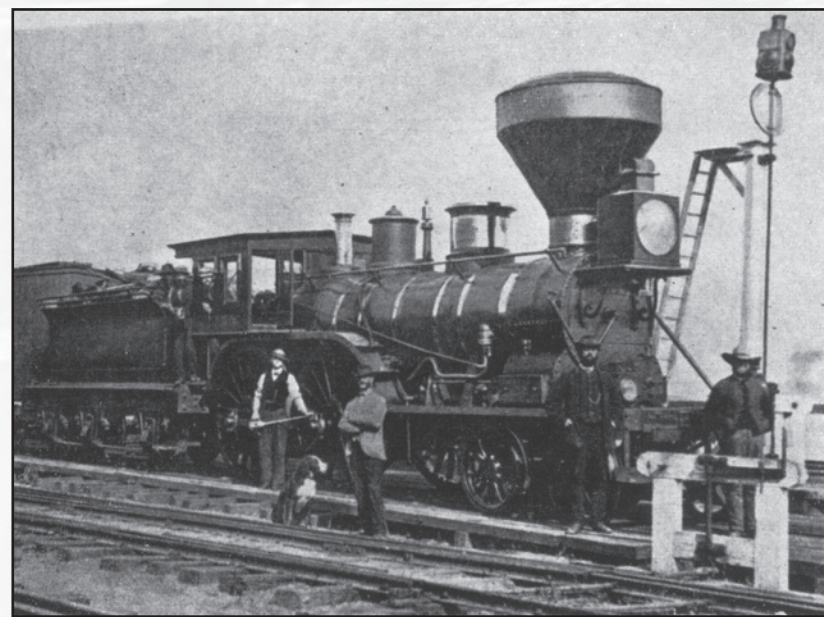
the end of the 1860s, crowds of health- and pleasure-seekers made the trip to the Springs. Bathhouses, hotels, and restaurants were built to accommodate the visitors. In response, the first interurban railway was built between the ferry landings in Windsor and the Mineral Springs. On July 20, 1874, six handsome, new horse-drawn cars began running regularly. During the winter months, omnibus sleighs heated by stoves provided transportation to the public travelling between the two towns. As a result of this rapid, reliable transportation, affluent industrialists and merchants built homes in Sandwich, escaping the noise and pollution of Windsor. Thus, during the 1860s and 70s, Sandwich was transformed into both an early suburb of Windsor as well as a summer tourist destination.



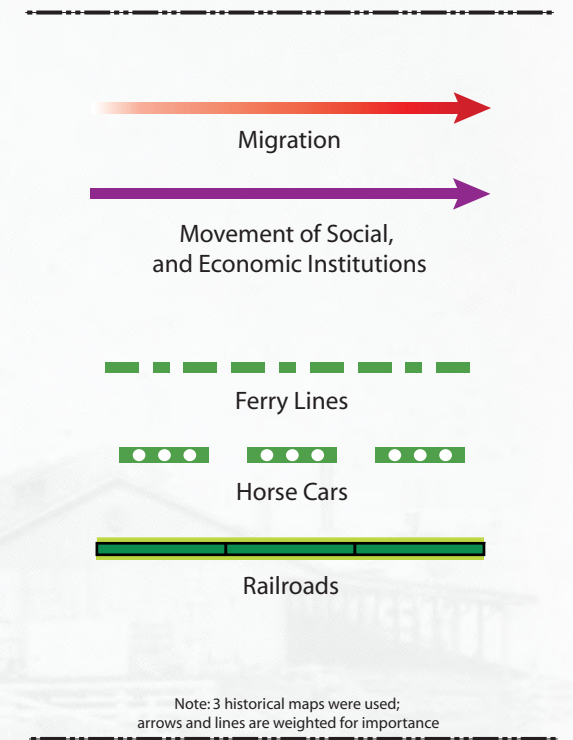
Horse car on the street railway connecting Sandwich and Windsor. In *Garden Gateway to Canada* by Neil F. Morrison

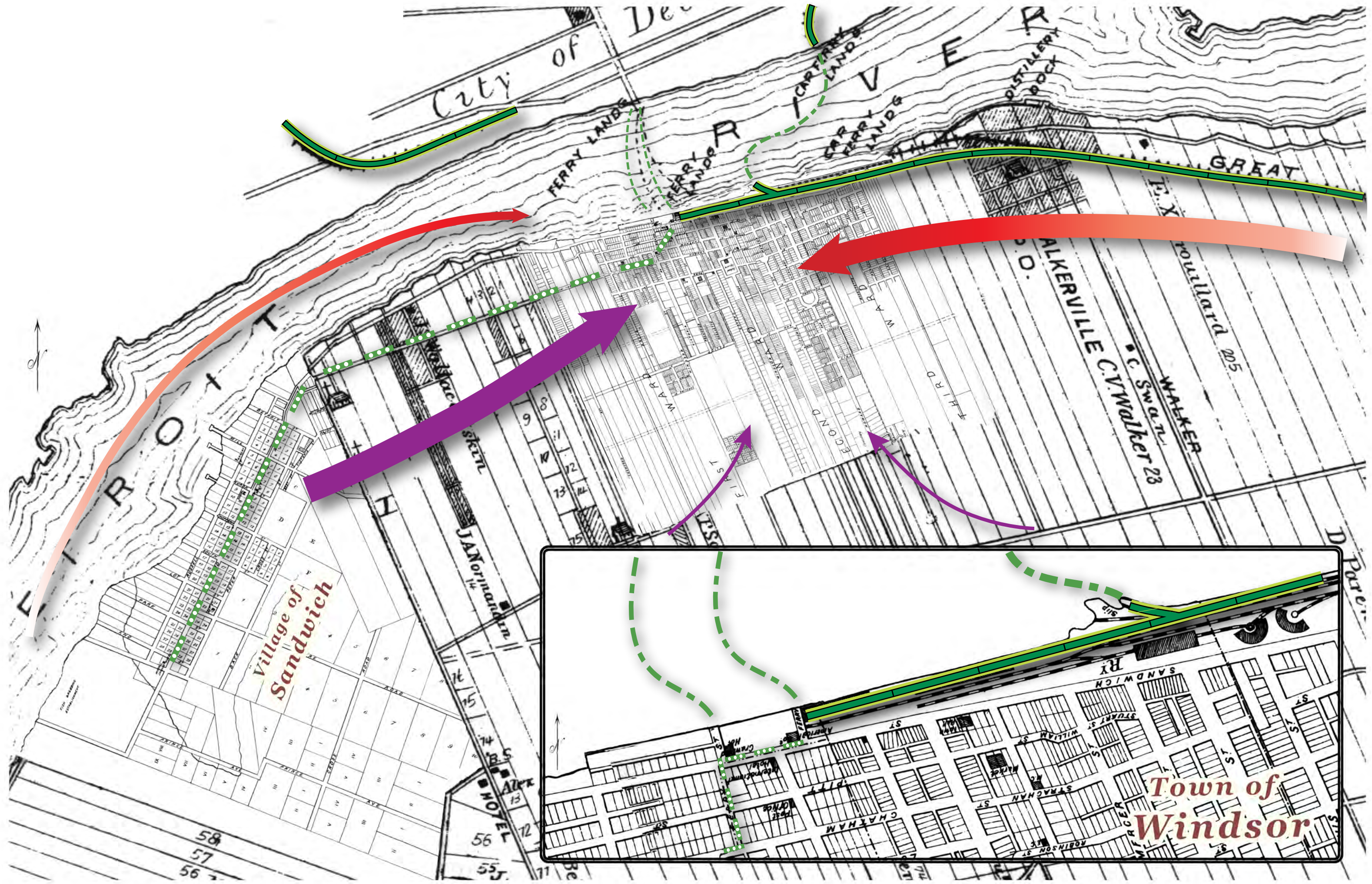


This early aerial photo of Windsor shows the extent and density of the early town. Notice how the roads and lots follow the original French farms. Drawn by T.M Fobler in 1878. Windsor Community Museum Archives, Windsor, Ontario.



An example of an early G.W.R steam locomotive that ran the line from Niagara to Windsor. In *Garden Gateway to Canada* by Neil F. Morrison





Electrification

1895

Plate 4

The last decades of the twentieth century was a period of intense modernization for both Windsor and Sandwich, but especially Windsor. The telephone arrived in Windsor in February 1880. By March, the town boasted twenty subscribers. A submarine cable was laid across the river from Windsor to Detroit in early 1881. By 1885, long distance lines allowed calls to be made from Windsor to Montreal. The earliest available record of subscribers in Windsor, dated January 1885, lists fifty-six subscribers. Only five are listed in Sandwich, three of them at businesses and one each at the county and town clerks' offices. There were only six residence telephones: four in Windsor, one in Walkerville and another in Petite Côte. By contrast, Hiram Walker's distillery was home to seven lines. The bulk of the region's subscribers were businesses in Windsor including the rail yards, banks and hotels.

Windsor's modernization surpassed Sandwich in more than just access to telephony. Civic improvements were extensive during the 1880s. Water works and tile sewage systems were constructed, which replaced most of the open drains and ditches that previously carried off the town's sewage. Public health increased significantly thanks to the ready access to potable water and sewers. Roadways were paved with flag or flat stone or were macadamized with a mixture of lake gravel and broken stone. Present-day Howard Avenue, then called Gravel Road, was among the first roads paved. Reliable electricity was also a product of this decade. Soon after its arrival, electric lights were installed in the most prominent locations of the town. The Windsor Record newspaper lauded its town as one of the most advanced in the country because of the wonder and advantage of streets lighted by electricity.

Although street lighting was a marvel to most visitors to the border town, the introduction of the electric streetcar was perhaps even more amazing. Canada's first electric street railway commenced operation June 9, 1886. The Detroit Free Press reported the event:

"At 2 o'clock yesterday there stood on Sandwich Street, Windsor, 1349 persons.... the eyes of this vast multitude were all turned towards Walkerville as if expecting the arrival of a load of products of that alcoholic town. A sad voiced bus man shouted at intervals, "alla bo-o-ord for Walkertown," but nobody went aboard. More modern ways of reaching the classic precincts of Walkerville were at hand. By and by, around the bend of the road, there came bowling along the electric car at a lively rate. It looked like a streetcar gone crazy. There were no horses, no steam, no visible means of propulsion, the car was full.... As the car stood there the citizens had a sight of three different stages of travel. Bradley's antiquated bus, an old ark on wheels, stood at the south side of the road. This represented the last century. In the center of the street stood the Sandwich car... It represented the present

century, soon to close. On the north side stood the electric car representing the next century."

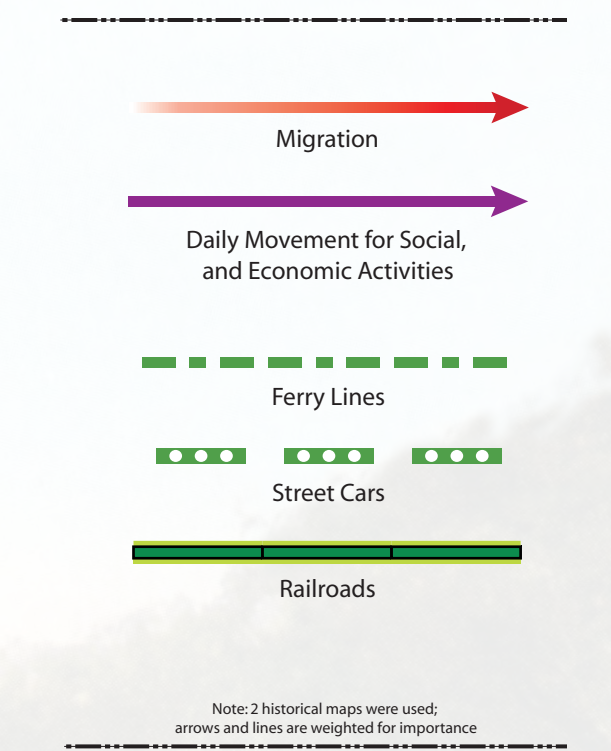
The electric age had begun, but the focus of this industrial wonder did not connect Windsor with Sandwich, but instead with its neighbour to the east, Walkerville. Electrification of the railway between Windsor and Sandwich did eventually take place in August 1891. The Windsor Record reported, "Old, rickety, springless closed cars, drawn by older plugs, and more often by mules, are no longer realities to the many visitors to Sandwich." In the fall of 1891, another electric line to Walkerville was opened along Wyandotte Street. A few months later, a line along Ouellette Avenue was opened extending southward to the outskirts of town. The opening of the Ouellette line meant that travellers could travel from Sandwich to Walkerville via the electric rails.

The coming of the last two big railways to reach Windsor, the Michigan Central in 1883 and the Canadian Pacific (CPR) in 1890, was a factor in Windsor's growth. The CPR gave Windsor a direct connection with the transcontinental railway line that had recently been completed. The coming of this railway to Windsor had an unexpected effect, in that in the very right of way that the CPR bought through the city, significant salt deposits were found. They started the Windsor Salt Company, which provided the eastbound return freight needed to make the CPR line to Windsor economically sustainable. Other significant industries were beginning to move into the border region, including two pharmaceutical companies, Fredrick Stearns in Windsor and Parke Davis in Walkerville. Located just west of the foot of Ouellette Avenue was the Evans and Dodge bicycle factory, and just upriver, the Milner-Walker mammoth wagon works factory was built. This increasing growth of Windsor led the town to gain city status in 1892. A few years later, the Dodge family became famous in the new automobile industry.

The Milner-Walker wagon works building became the first unit of the Ford Motor Company of Canada.

Another border settlement also experienced significant growth in the late nineteenth century. Walkerville, which gained town status in 1890, was aided by the construction of the Lake Erie, Essex and Detroit River Railway which linked it with the agricultural centres of Harrow, Kingsville and Leamington. The Walkerville and Detroit Ferry Company provided cargo and passenger service across the river. Walkerville was quickly outpacing Sandwich in its regional importance.

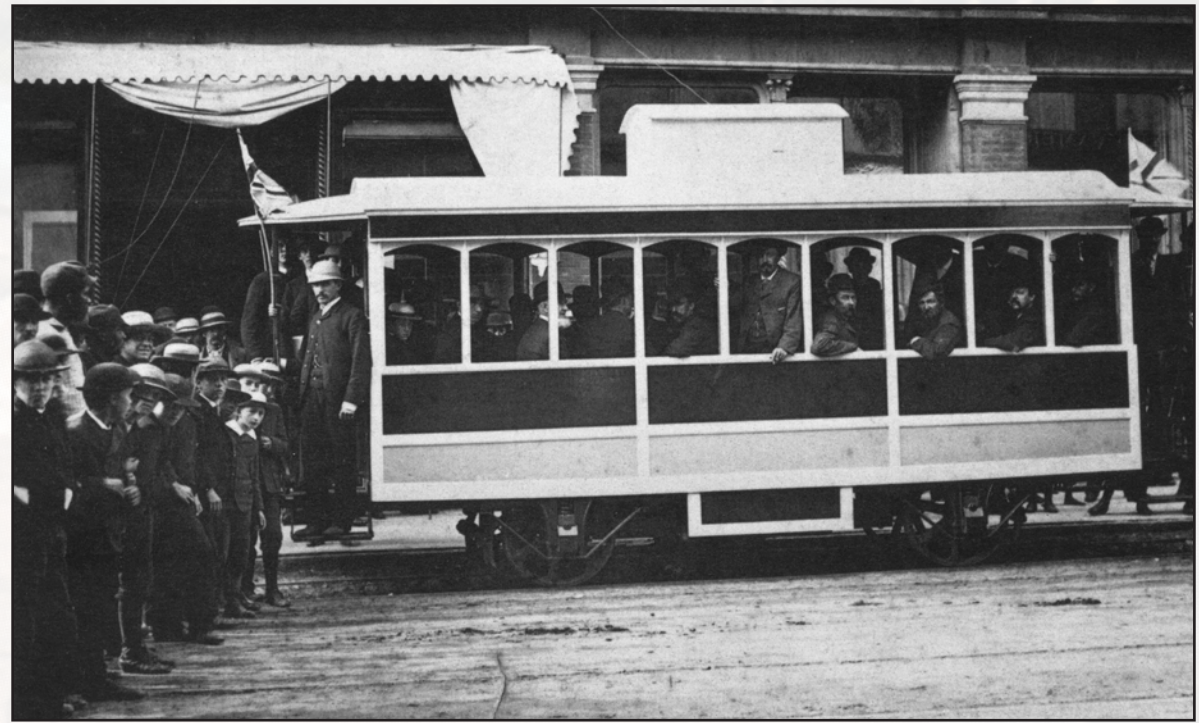
Sandwich suffered during this period. The mineral springs were still drawing tourists by the thousands, but this industry was limited. The economic depression of 1893-5 in the United States affected Sandwich, as the majority of visitors arrived from that side of the river. One bright spot was the establishment of the Sandwich Fish Hatchery (see map 3), just south of the town. It was reported in the Amherstburg Echo that the hatchery would place in excess of 5 million whitefish into the Great Lakes fishery. Sandwich was clearly on the decline and the rapid growth of Windsor



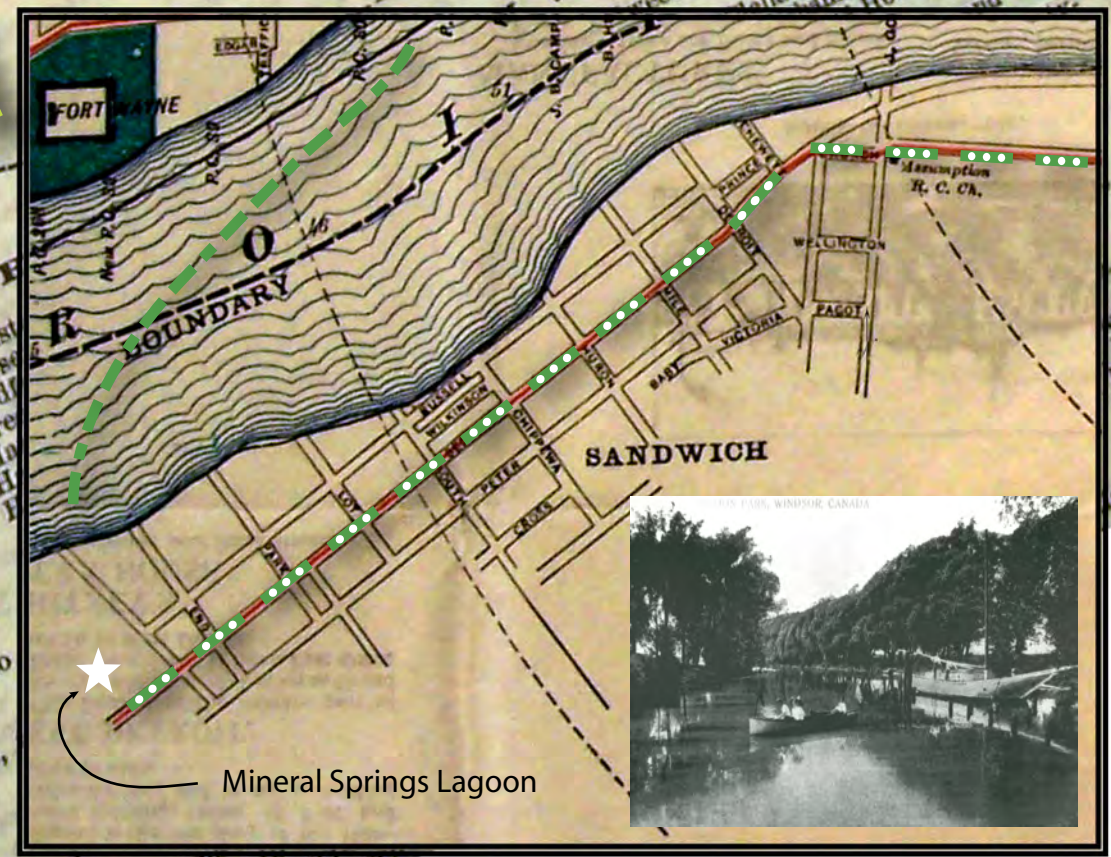
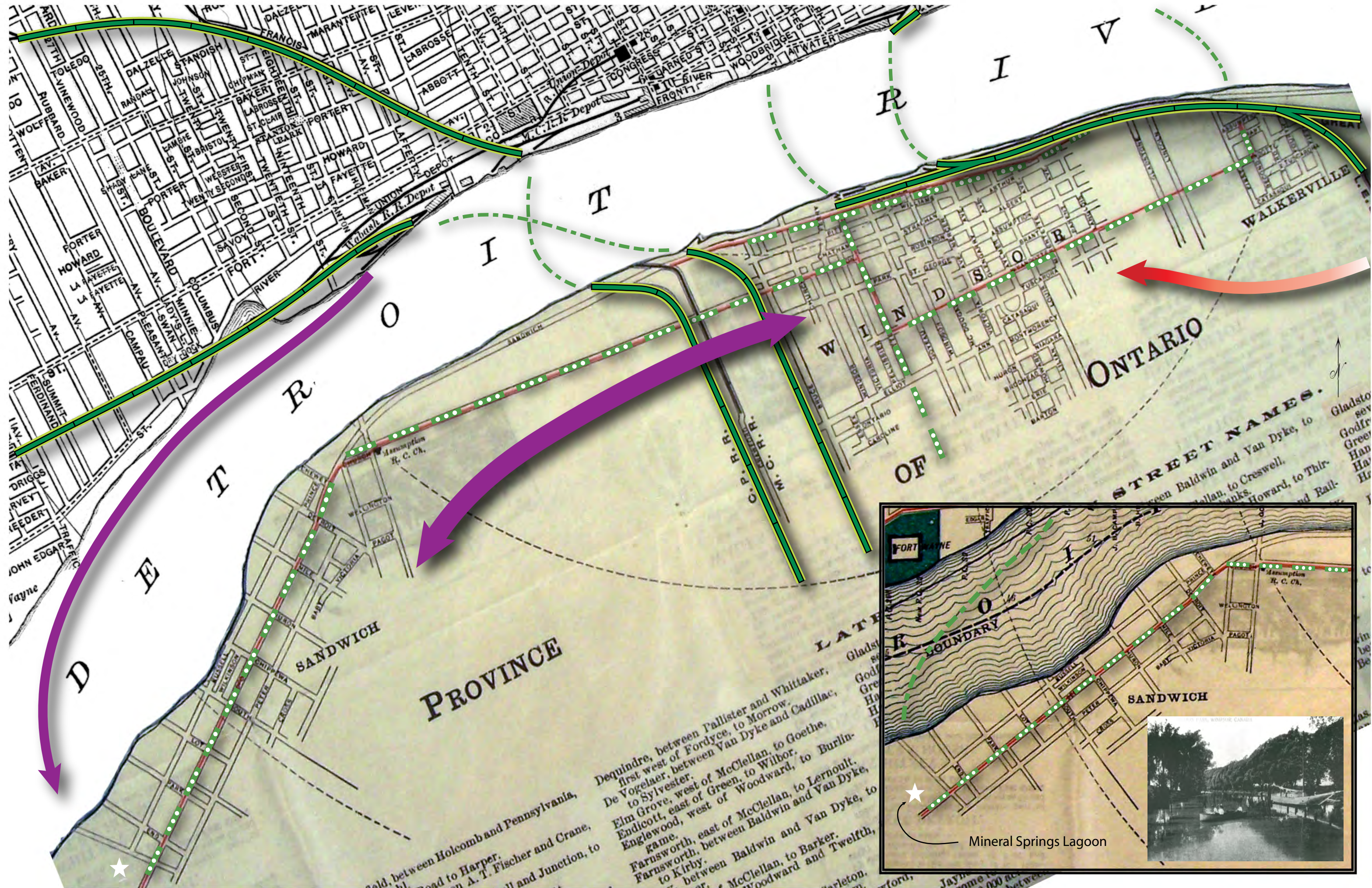
and Walkerville were precursors of bigger things to come. The start of the Ford Motor Company of Canada in 1904 was the first step in the development of what was to become Windsor's great automotive industry.



This postcard is an example of the sewers that were installed in the late 19th century. Many of these sewer lines are still being used today. In *Postcards from the Past, Vol. 1* by David L. Newman.



This photo was taken May 24th 1886 after the first run of Canada's first electric streetcar. In *When Eastern Michigan Rode the Rails* by Jack E. Schramm.



old, between Holcomb and Pennsylvania,
road to Harper.
A. T. Fischer and Crane,
and Junction, to
Dequindre, between Fallister and Whittaker,
first west of Fordyce, to Morrow.
De Vogelaer, between Van Dyke and Cadillac,
to Sylvester.
Elm Grove, west of McClellan, to Goethe.
Endicott, east of Green, to Wilbor.
Englewood, west of Woodward, to Burlin-
game.
Farnsworth, east of McClellan, to Lernoult.
Farnsworth, between Baldwin and Van Dyke,
to Kirby.
between Baldwin and Van Dyke, to
McClellan, to Barker.
Woodward and Twelfth,
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Green Baldwin and Van Dyke, to
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Industrialization

1915

Plate 5

On March 6, 1896, the Detroit Free Press reported that a “horseless wagon” had made its appearance on Woodward Avenue in Detroit. It was not long before this invention had an impact on the Canadian side of the river. The first automobile firm in the Windsor area was the National Cycle and Automobile Company, started in 1899. The company produced steam-powered cars in a small building near the corner of Ouellette and Pitt Streets. By the winter of 1902, the small operation failed—the technology was still quite crude and the public complained that it scared the horses. In March 1904, a group of Windsor businessmen, including Gordon McGregor, started negotiations with the struggling Detroit inventor, Henry Ford. In August, the Canadian franchise of the Ford Motor Company was born. The first factory, located in the Milner-Walker wagon works building, employed 17 people and turned out 117 cars during its first year of operation. Its location on the river’s edge near Walker Road was ideal, for the cars were assembled one by one as the parts arrived by ferry from across the river.

Over the first decade of the twentieth century, the prejudice against the automobile

began to die. More and more families were exposed to the automobile and the weekend jaunt to the ‘county’ became a desirable pastime. Ford of Canada, like its American counterpart, began to grow after the introduction of the Model T in 1908. The original Walkerville plant expanded into a four-story factory. In 1913, the first assembly line arrived in Canada, allowing Ford to produce 27 cars in a single day. The Village of Ford City was founded in 1913 just east of Walkerville as a result of workers migrating to work in the plant and Henry Ford’s distrust of local governments. By 1915, Ford City was granted town status.

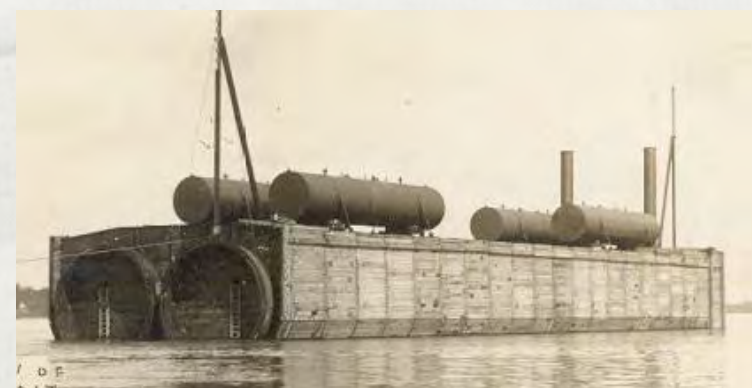
The steam railways that served the region were very active during the first decade of the century. American companies recognized the advantages of the shortcut from the East to the Mid-West across south-western Ontario. Thus, in 1903, the Pere Marquette Railway acquired the Lake Erie, Essex and Detroit River Railway and extended its service east to Niagara. The Essex Terminal Railway (ETR) was built in 1908 to link Walkerville, Windsor and Sandwich to each other and to service the new site of the Canadian Salt Company in Sandwich. By 1918, the ETR was extended to include Amherstburg.

Ice conditions and general operational delays at the Detroit River crossing presented the railways with a serious problem. Should a bridge or tunnel be constructed and where should that crossing be located? The first proposal was for a ten million dollar bridge to cross the river near Amherstburg. However, lobbying by the powerful Lake Carriers’ Association to maintain the width of the navigable channel in the river caused the bridge project to be abandoned, much to Windsor’s content. The second proposal was for a tunnel to be constructed under the Detroit River. Commissioned by the Michigan Central Railway (MCR), construction began in 1906 and the railway tunnel opened for service in 1910. The MCR shared use of the tunnel with the Canadian Pacific Railway. The other railways serving

Windsor depended exclusively upon ferries for the cross-river connection.

While the automobile was forcing its way into the early twentieth century, the electric streetcar was enjoying a period of great popularity. The Sandwich, Windsor & Amherstburg Railway (SWA), which had been organized in the early days of the horse-car railway, provided the first electric service to Sandwich in August of 1891. By 1903, the SWA had instituted interurban service through extension of the electric line to Amherstburg. By 1907, a line was extended along the riverfront from Windsor to the emerging eastern suburb of Tecumseh. The trip from Windsor to Tecumseh took 75 minutes; from Amherstburg to Tecumseh, two hours. Also during that year, the Windsor, Essex & Lakeshore Rapid Railway (WE&LS) was completed. The line started at the corner of Ouellette and Pitt Streets and ended near the Heinz tomato products factory in downtown Leamington. It connected the rural villages of Maidstone, Essex, Cottam, Ruthven and Kingsville to Windsor and to Heinz. The WE&LS was an instant success; farmers hauled their produce to points along the line to quickly access either the processing plant or the markets of Windsor and Detroit. The service was indeed rapid; the 58 kilometre trip from Windsor to Leamington could be completed in just over 90 minutes.

Windsor and its neighbours saw a tremendous population increase during the first 15 years of the century. The employment opportunities provided by the rapid industrialisation of Windsor made the urban centre appealing to new immigrants and rural residents of the county. According to the 1901 census, rural dwellers still outnumbered urban dwellers in Essex County, but that changed by 1921. Windsor had 9,500 residents in 1901; by



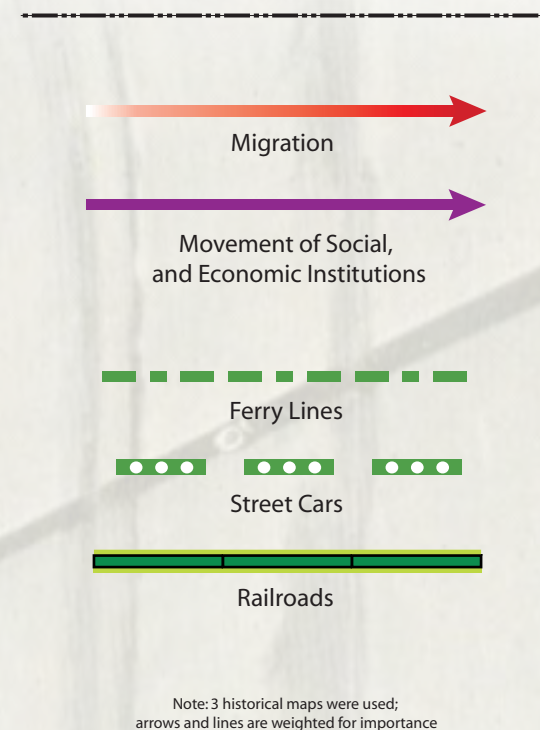
A section of the Michigan Central Railroad tunnel on its way to Detroit. 1908. Photo by Louis James Pesha, Windsor Municipal Archive.

1911, 22,000 people lived in the city. Walkerville doubled in the same decade to a population of 3,300. The area that became Ford City had less than 100 people in 1911, but by

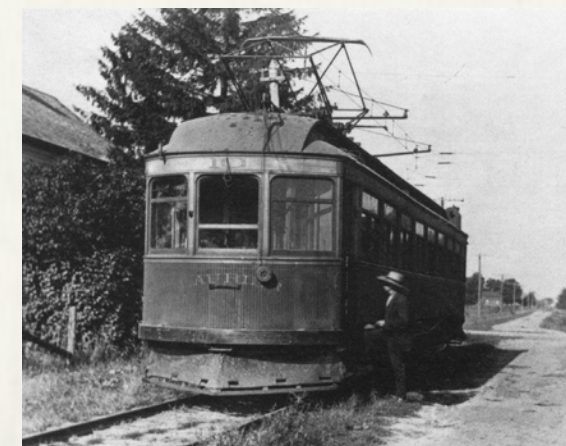
1921 boasted over 5,000. Sandwich also grew during this period, but at a more sedate pace; from 1,500 in 1901 to 2,100 in 1911.

Sandwich also was affected by industrialisation during this period, but the benefits to the county town were less dramatic. The ETR had arrived and was servicing the Canadian Salt Company and the Pittsburg Coal company. However, no passenger service was ever run on the ETR. Two other major companies arrived in Sandwich during this period, Cadwell Sand & Gravel and Mullen Coal. These industries used the shore of the river for port operations, physically changing the Sandwich shoreline into what is today the Port of Windsor. Although Sandwich was starting to acquire a gritty character, there were positive developments. Essex Golf Club opened in Sandwich during the summer of 1902 and provided recreation to the growing upper class. Marlborough Park, located in the apex of the Sandwich ‘triangle’, was subdivided in the 1910s and lots filled quickly.

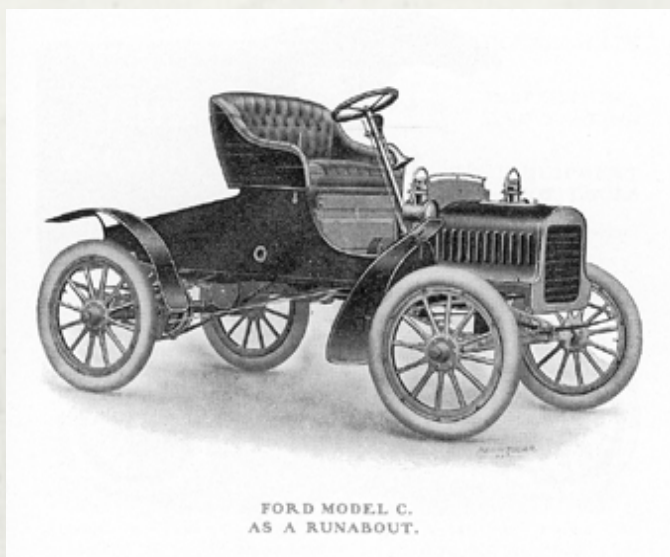
While tourism still drove Sandwich’s economy during the early period of industrialisation, it soon came to an end. The Sandwich Mineral Springs ran dry in the mid-1890s and the resort closed in 1908. Tourism interest moved to an island amusement park downriver on Bois Blanc (Bob-Lo) Island. Other attractions pulled tourists away from Sandwich. Windsor was home to the area’s first motion picture theatre, the Royal. In 1909, the city opened Wigle Park, the area’s first urban park, with athletic fields and an outdoor amphitheatre. Two jockey



clubs opened in 1916, Devonshire and Kenilworth, both located in south Windsor. Later that year, though, a murmur could be heard in Sandwich that something big was coming to town...a bridge over the river to Detroit.

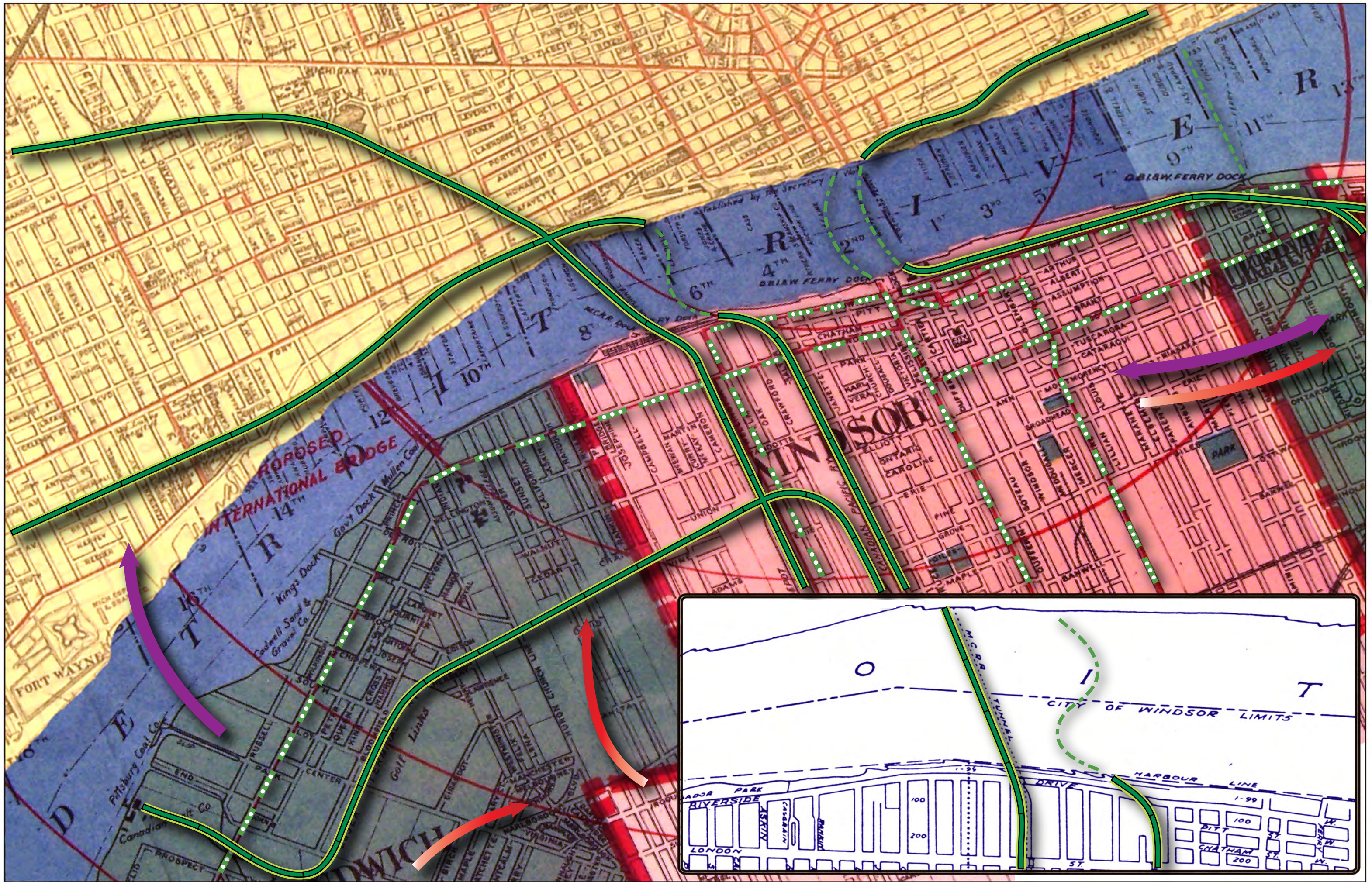


Interurban rail car near Ruthven on the Windsor, Essex & Lakeshore Rapid Railway. In *When Eastern Michigan Rode the Rails* by Jack E. Schramm.



FORD MODEL C. AS A RUNABOUT.

1904 Ford Model C. The Canadian models were built with both a right and left hand drive. Photo courtesy of the Henry Ford Museum.



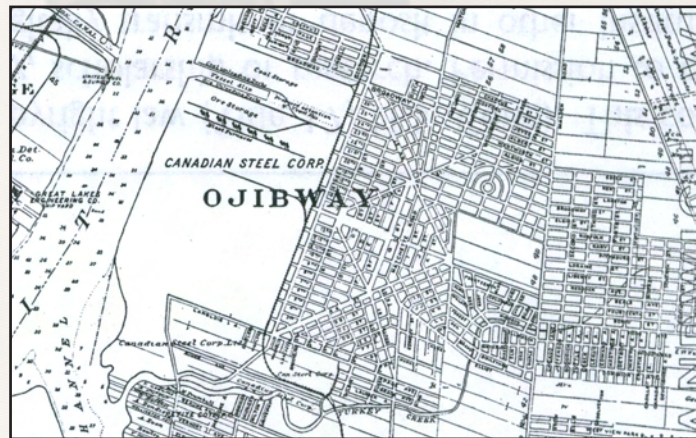
The Crest of Prosperity

1930

Plate 6

The original French settlement of Petite Côte, a rural area to the south of the Town of Sandwich, came to be known as Ojibway. An announcement was made on January 1, 1913 that the United States Steel Corporation had purchased 1400 acres of land in Ojibway as the site of its future Canadian plant. A real estate boom developed; prices of adjacent farm land soared to over \$1,500 an acre. Speculators from all over the continent purchased lots, buying into the dream that Ojibway would become the next Gary, IN or Pittsburgh, PA.

Ojibway was incorporated as a town in the autumn of 1913 and improvements were undertaken. A new road was built to bypass the winding Highway 18, providing a direct connection between Ojibway and Sandwich. The ETR extended a line to the site. Concrete sewers and water lines were installed. World War I halted the building of the plant, but the site was still prepared for the arrival of the steel company and its future employees. A central town plaza was cleared from the surrounding black oak forest and several streets and sidewalks were built. Despite this preparatory work, market conditions following the war led to US Steel's decision to abandon plans for a Canadian plant. Although Ojibway's



A map showing the subdivision of the Town of Ojibway. Most of these roads were never built yet maps continued to show them until the early 1980s. Map of Southwestern Detroit by William Sauer. 1918

population never exceeded 100 people, the planned streets can be seen on maps of the Windsor area up to the early 1980s. Some of the roads and sidewalks that were constructed can still be found in the nature preserve that now occupies part of the former town site.

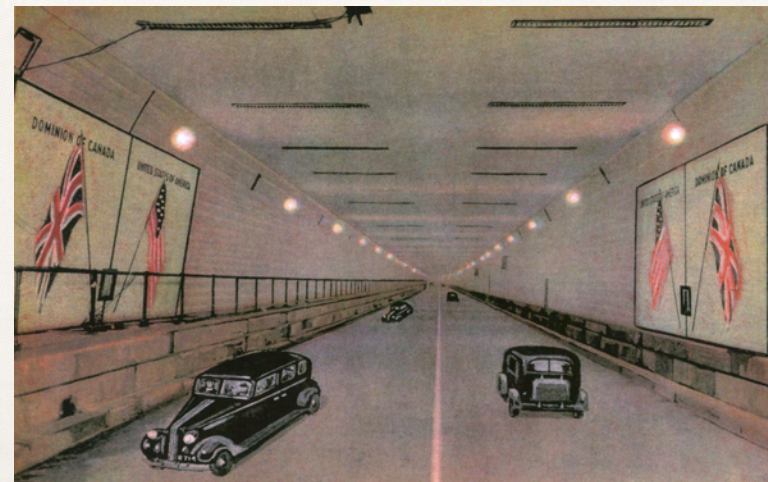
Although the US Steel project never came to fruition, the 1920s was a time of great prosperity. Windsor's factories were activated during the war to produce arms for the Allied troops. Ford Motor Company expanded its facilities inland from its original waterfront location. Chrysler established a site at Tecumseh Road and McDougall in 1925. Chrysler acquired Dodge in 1928 and soon after built a plant at Tecumseh and Drouillard Roads, where their mini-van plant stands today. General Motors began building engines in Windsor and Studebaker had a plant as well. Numerous automotive feeder industries opened new plants or expanded existing ones to support the "Big Three" manufacturers. Outside the automotive industry, the Canadian Salt Company expanded their operations in Sandwich. Downriver in Ojibway, the Canadian Steel Corporation opened a wire mill and a tin plate mill next to the proposed US Steel plant site.

Essex County and particularly the Windsor area saw a marked population increase during the 1920s. Workers migrated to the region, lured by the high wages found in the automotive plants. The 1931 census showed an urban population increase of more than 70% over the figures for 1921, while the increase in rural and suburban areas together was less than 20%. The population increase experienced by Ford City and Riverside was especially striking. On June 1, 1929, the Town of Ford City became the City of East Windsor. In 1931, East Windsor's population topped 7,000. The Town of Riverside lay to the east of East Windsor. At the time of Riverside's incorporation as a town in 1921, its population was 1,155. Ten years

later, its inhabitants numbered 4,432. Riverside offered attractive living conditions removed from industrial congestion, similar to the status held by Sandwich at the time of the arrival of the earliest railroads.

The streetcars and interurbans expanded during the war years and into the early 1920s. Lines were run to Marlborough Park in south Sandwich as well as down many of the major thoroughfares of Windsor and Walkerville. An interurban line was built to connect the southern areas of Riverside and Ford City. In the summer of 1922, motorbus service began between Windsor and the village of Harrow. By 1925, bus service reached all of the towns and villages in Essex County.

Ferry service across the Detroit River was profoundly affected by what was taking place in the automobile world. The ferry companies were now carrying cars and busses, which took up more space than horses and buggies. In July 1920, "clockers" employed by capitalists who were in favour of building a bridge reported that approximately one million passengers crossed the river each month by ferry. On Sunday, May 14, 1920, more than 20 cars and 200 passengers were to be compelled to remain



The Detroit-Windsor Tunnel. Finished in 1930, it connects the downtowns of both cities. In Postcards from the Past, Vol. 1 by David L. Newman.

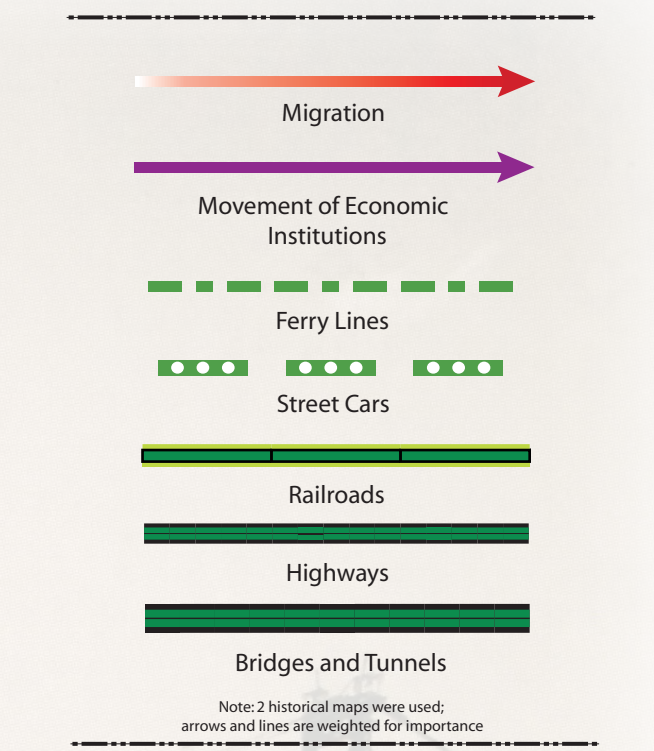
overnight in Windsor because of a lack of ferry capacity; this became a common minor crisis. The ferry companies responded by building larger and larger ferries and docks through the 1920s. Substantial as these improvements were, they were not enough. In the prosperous days

of the later twenties, some 15,000 Canadian residents crossed daily to their employment in Detroit. On Sunday, July 7, 1929, 20,000 cars and 100,000 visitors were said to have made the return trip to Detroit after the American Independence Day weekend. Lines several miles in length were reported at both the Windsor and Walkerville ferry terminals. Obviously, another form of cross-river transportation was needed.

First action was in favour of a bridge. Spearheaded by Detroit Joseph Bower, construction began on the Ambassador Bridge in May 1927. The bridge was heralded by its supporters as a sign of progress and friendship between Detroit and Windsor. After much debate as to its location, it was decided in a plebiscite to locate the bridge to the west of the downtown city centers. Within Sandwich, support for the bridge's location in Sandwich was decisive; 1,556 "yes" to 104 "no". What many in Sandwich did not realize was that the bridge, although good for the growing automobile industry, would divide the town. The bridge, running down Huron Church Road and alongside the Assumption parish, both physically and psychologically separated Sandwich from Assumption and the City of Windsor

after its completion. When it was completed on November 11, 1929, it was the longest international suspension bridge in the world. The original plans called for an SWA streetcar to run in the center of the bridge, connecting Sandwich with the Michigan Central Railway station on the Detroit side. This plan had to be scrapped when it was realized that the incline of the bridge was too steep for a streetcar to ascend. The decision was made to install a sidewalk instead. The four-lane Ambassador Bridge still stands today and serves as the busiest international crossing in the world.

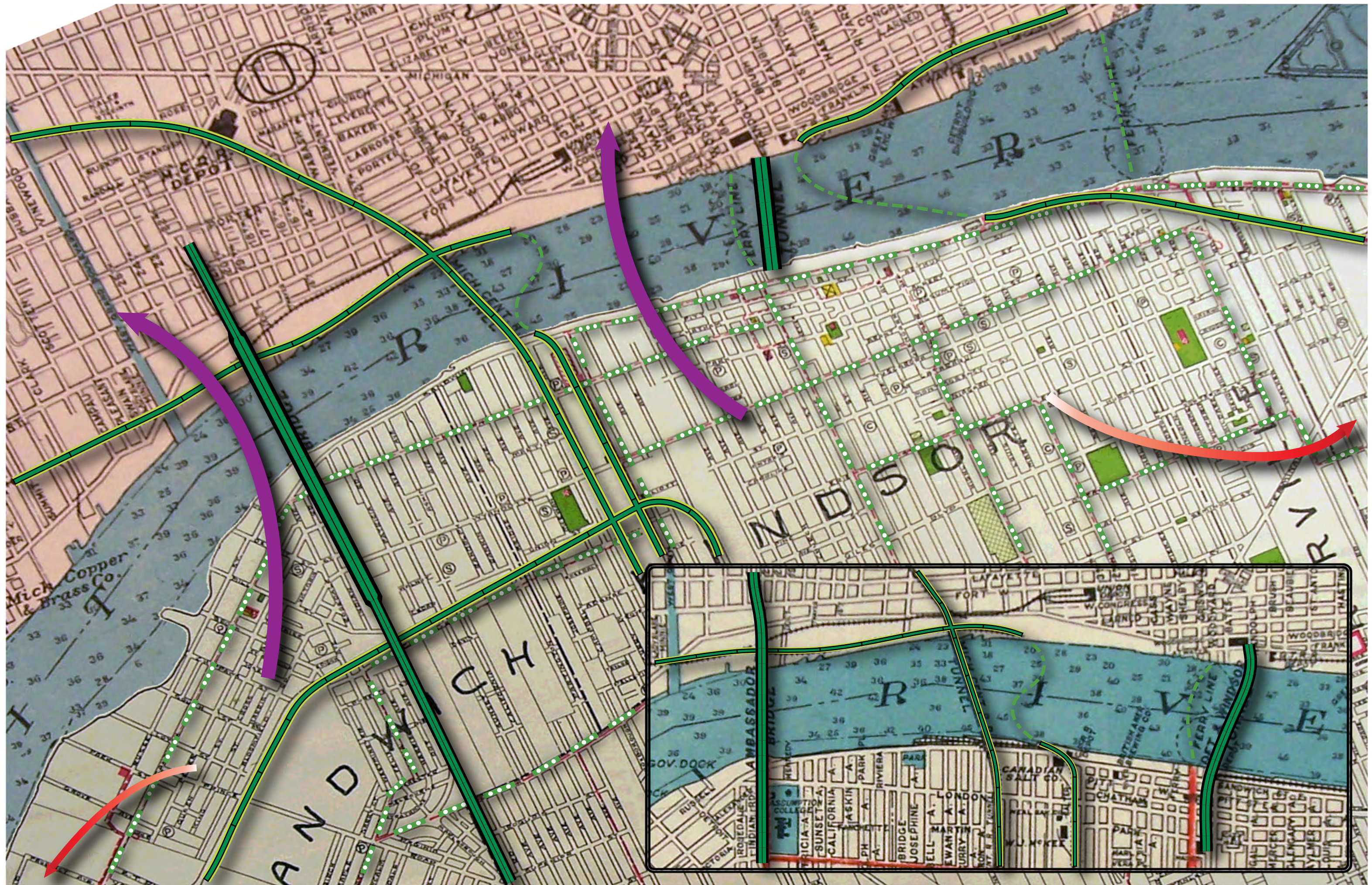
A vehicular tunnel was also built in the later



'20s when some extremely optimistic capitalists are said to have prophesied a population of a million for the Windsor area. Construction began at the same time on both sides of the river and was so synchronized that the task was completed in ten months, two years ahead of schedule. The tunnel opened November 3, 1930. Within months, regular tunnel bus service was established; service continues to this day. Together, the bridge and tunnel represented the crest of prosperity for the border region.



The Ambassador Bridge. The busiest international crossing in the world. In Garden Gateway to Canada by Neil F. Morrison.



On Four Wheels

1960

Plate 7

In 1852, John Prince forecast that Sandwich would one day fall victim to its neighbour, Windsor. Eighty-three years later, his prediction came true. Effective July 1, 1935, the towns of Sandwich, Walkerville, and East Windsor were amalgamated into the City of Windsor. The main reason cited for the amalgamation was the towns' critical shortage of operating funds during the Great Depression; however, the three amalgamated towns resisted the takeover. The former towns were relegated to the status of neighbourhoods within the City of Windsor. The first city ward boundaries after the amalgamation reflected the lines of the former towns. The only remnants of Sandwich's prior status as regional capital were the county government, courthouse and jail, which remained in Sandwich. The village of Ojibway remained independent from Windsor until 1966.

The border towns were not alone in disappearing from the landscape during this period. Many people at the time found it difficult to appreciate the great change in transportation that was taking place. The St. Mary's Journal summarized popular sentiment in the summer of 1929: "Practically every highway in the province now has its motor busses. The passenger bus business appears to be settling down into permanent shape following a period of mushroom growth and frequent bankruptcy. While the bus idea is gaining headway in cross country transportation, the street railway is still and will continue to be the backbone of city transportation." Despite this assertion, the WE&LS interurban line was closed in September of 1932 after experiencing significant revenue shortages during the deepening depression. It was replaced a few days later by a bus route. In February 1938, the SWA was operating eleven routes with 54 cars on over 55 miles of track. Faced with mounting debts and needing new equipment,



The downtown S.W.A bus depot in 1940. These buses replaced the streetcars. In *Reflections of Windsor*.

the decision was made to convert to busses; sixty-six Ford busses were initially purchased to replace the streetcars. The Amherstburg line was the first SWA streetcar line to close, in March 1938. By the end of September, only two car lines remained, requiring just twelve cars. On May 7, 1939, the last line was closed, ending nearly 65 years of streetcars in the region. The greater convenience and flexibility of routes provided by motor vehicle transportation, both busses and private cars, proved decisive in bringing about what must be regarded as a natural step in the evolution of transportation.

The opening of the Ambassador Bridge in 1929 and the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel a year later brought Windsor within a few minutes' drive of Detroit and at a nominal fare. At the same time, it led to the end of the long established ferry connection across the Detroit River. On July 18, 1938, notices appeared on the doors and walls of the Detroit & Windsor Ferry Company offices and on the boats themselves. The notices confirmed what had been speculated ever since the building of the bridge and tunnel; ferry service from Windsor to Detroit was discontinued. The Walkerville ferry, operated by a separate company, lasted another four years. Although the rail companies continue to freight rail across the river, the oldest

mode of passenger transportation in the region, the one that until that fateful summer day linked both sides of the river, came to a close.

"Out with the old and in with the new," was the motto in transportation during this period. Aviation's arrival in Windsor was signalled by the construction of the Walker Airport in 1928. Built on the Walker family's land, it allowed the establishment of air mail service between Windsor, Toronto and Montreal by the summer of 1929. Following the amalgamation of Windsor in 1935, the City of Windsor became interested in the airport and the land was purchased from the Walker family in 1939. Trans-Canada Airlines began using the airport, renamed the Windsor Airport, for airmail, express and passenger service in the summer of 1940. During World War II, the airport was home to a flight training school.

The factories of Windsor and Detroit were retooled during World War II to produce, among other items, trucks, tanks and planes for the war effort. Although Willow Run Airport was built in 1941 in the western suburbs of Detroit as a sending point for war production, an additional airport was needed. In 1945, the Detroit Metropolitan Aviation Planning Authority, in collaboration with the

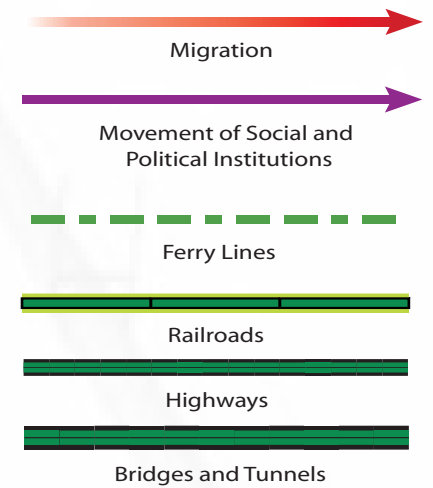
Windsor Chamber of Commerce, proposed that a new Detroit-Windsor International Airport. It was to be located on a site seven miles south of the Canadian approach to the Ambassador Bridge, in an area between Malden Road and Huron Church Line—the outskirts of the former town of Sandwich. The site was

ideal because of its level terrain, low development cost and minimal transit time to the bulk of industry and population of the region. The City of Detroit put up the \$14 million needed for land development and construction of the terminal building. The Canadian side was to purchase the 2200 acres needed for the airport, which was slated to open in 1952. However, the plan failed because of immigration and customs issues at the international border and a number of squabbles between local politicians on both sides of the river. Instead, in 1947, construction began on the Detroit Metropolitan Airport, which still serves today as the major international airport in the region.

In the 1950s, two brothers from Detroit dreamed of building a cable car system across the river. They coined it the AmeriCanada Teleferry. They completed engineering studies and market research. In 1963, they proposed a structure similar to a ski lift, suspended from two 266-foot towers located 2500 feet apart on either side of the river. The cables connecting the towers would be designed to support 42 gondolas, each capable of carrying four passengers. The ride would take ten minutes and the price would be 75¢ per person. The project was quickly approved by all necessary government officials, including Lyndon Johnson, who signed a Presidential permit. The project would cost \$1.5 million to build. Most of the money had been raised when, in 1967, the City of Detroit decided it needed the land



A conceptual drawing of the AmeriCanada Teleferry, a proposed gondola system between Windsor and Detroit. From *Daytripping in Southern Ontario*.



Note: 3 historical maps were used; arrows and lines are weighted for importance

being leased by the Teleferry company. Thirteen years of court battles ensued and eventually the enterprising brothers simply ran out of money. The AmeriCanada Teleferry was never built. The proposed route is shown on the 1967 map that we used within our mosaic. Joe Louis Arena now stands where the US boarding site would have been; the Canadian boarding site would have been located near the current CBC Television building on Riverside Drive.

By the 1960s, the automobile was thoroughly established as indispensable throughout North America. The United States embarked on an ambitious infrastructure development project in building the Interstate Highway System. Major highways radiated out of downtown Detroit, providing a means for people to migrate out of the city into the "open spaces" of the suburbs. To a lesser extent, the same processes happened in Windsor. King's Highway 401, a limited-access four-lane expressway that linked Windsor with London and eventually with Toronto, Montreal and Quebec City, was completed in 1956. King's Highway 2, a simple two-lane road from Windsor to eastern Ontario, was improved during this period. While Windsor remained the industrial and commercial centre, more and more Windsor residents migrated to the suburban towns of Tecumseh, LaSalle and Essex during the middle decades of the twentieth century.



NEW YORK CENTRAL RAILROAD TERM

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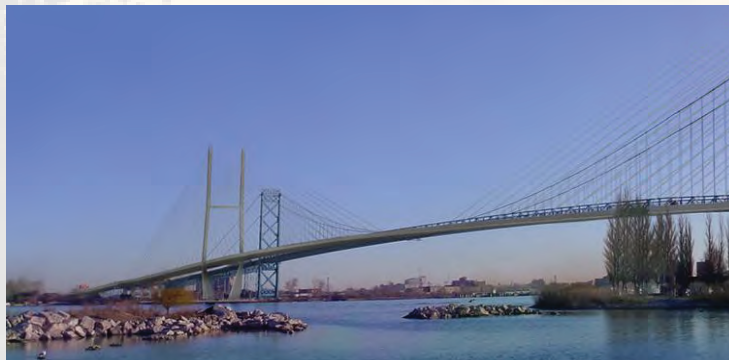
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Now and the Future 2009

Plate 8

It was a clear day on a Texas ranch when Canada began a new economic relationship with the United States. On January 16, 1965, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed a limited free trade agreement formally called the Canada-United States Automotive Products Agreement. Dubbed the Auto Pact, the agreement signalled a marriage between North America's auto industries. Trade tariffs were eliminated under the pact and, in manufacturing terms, Canada and the United States became like one big car-making country. Without tariffs, the United States could build bigger, more efficient automotive plants to



Artistic rendering of the replacement span for the Ambassador Bridge.
Courtesy of the Ambassador Bridge Company

serve both countries. In turn, Canada got a chance to expand its own automotive industry and Canadian consumers benefited from a larger selection of less-expensive cars. The Auto Pact was limited free trade because there were safeguards for Canada. For every car sold in Canada, one had to be built there. Each vehicle built in Canada had to have 60 percent Canadian content in parts and labour. No longer serving just the tiny domestic market, Windsor's factories quickly integrated into the new North American industrial strategy. Plants were built or expanded to

accommodate the increased production opportunities. Windsor was booming. In 1969, a proposal was drafted by City Council to build a highway in Windsor that would provide rapid east/west travel through the city, connecting auto workers with their plants. In 1974, construction began on the E.C. Row Expressway, named after the president of Chrysler Canada; the expressway wasn't completed until 1982. Located in the southern part of the city, it has been expanded to reach the Town of Tecumseh and plans are now in the works to extend it to the Town of Belle River.

The Auto Pact and its replacement, the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), have had a profound effect on the amount of goods traded between the United States and Canada. From 1994 to 2000, trade between the US and Canada increased from \$243 billion to \$406 billion. In 2004, it was estimated that 28 percent of this trade crossed at the Windsor/Detroit border.

In 2007, the Ambassador Bridge Company reported that over 10,000 trucks were crossing the bridge every weekday. While it is the main crossing for trucks, it is not the only one. A truck ferry was started in 1990 and operates from the shoreline that was prepped for US Steel's arrival in Ojibway in the 1920s. The truck ferry, however, can only transport a maximum of 480 trucks a day. Ironically, the same year that the truck ferry began, Canadian Pacific Railway ceased operating the last railcar ferry that was still crossing the river.

None of the 130 other crossings between the US and Canada is as felicitously placed as the Ambassador Bridge. 40 percent of all truck shipments from the US to Canada cross this span. However, the 80-year-old Ambassador Bridge is out-of-date, its four lanes too narrow and its approach too steep. There has been discussion of a second bridge across the river since the 1970s. Today, in 2009, three proposals are being considered for

a new border crossing.

The first is, in fact, not a bridge but a tunnel. A proposal put forth by the Detroit River Tunnel Partnership (DRTP) calls for the construction of a new, taller rail tunnel. The 99-year-old MCR rail tunnel is not tall enough to accommodate the double-stacked cargo containers that are frequently sent by rail today. The existing rail tunnel would then be converted into a two-lane truck tunnel.

The two leading proposals both call for an additional bridge to cross the river. The Ambassador Bridge Company proposes to construct a six-lane cable-stayed bridge over the Detroit River, just west of the existing Ambassador Bridge. The new bridge would connect directly into the existing plazas in both Detroit and Windsor. Once the new structure was completed, the existing Ambassador Bridge would be taken out of service indefinitely. The Ambassador Bridge Company has been preparing for the twinning by purchasing residential properties just west of the current span. In an attempt to halt this project, Windsor City Council passed a no-demolition bylaw, ostensibly to prevent demolition of historically significant buildings while the Sandwich Heritage Study was completed. The bylaw has prevented the bridge company from demolishing the houses they purchased to construct the second span. This stalemate has been going on since September 2006 and has resulted in over forty houses being left vacant to become blight on Indian Road, the street adjacent to the Ambassador Bridge.

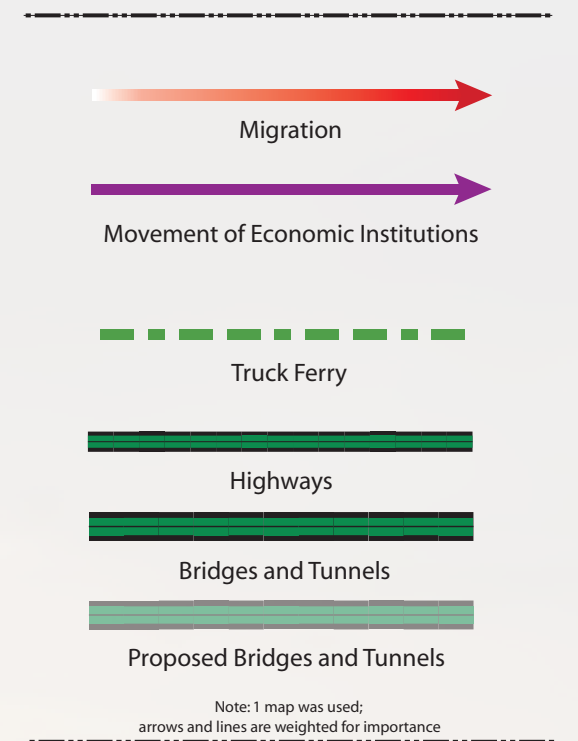


Artistic rendering of DRIC proposed bridge.
Courtesy of DRIC

An alternative bridge project comes from the bi-national Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) Study. DRIC proposes that either a suspension or cable-stayed bridge be built in the industrial area in the southern portion of the old town of Sandwich. This proposal appears to have the greatest public support. The contentious issue lies in the approach to the new bridge. The portion of Huron Church Road south of the E.C. Row Expressway is currently a four-lane at-grade highway, lined by dense suburban residential developments. DRIC is proposing a below-grade, partially tunnelled, six-lane route through the area, called the Windsor-Essex Parkway. The City of Windsor has countered with its own proposal for a completely tunnelled route called GreenLink Windsor. At this time, both proposed access routes, as well as all three crossings, are in the environmental assessment phase of their projects.

Environmental and social impacts are central to the debate over the best new border crossing. Those who live in the former town of Sandwich and the neighbourhoods of South Windsor are concerned about the impact a new bridge and its access route would have on air quality, noise and neighbourhood aesthetics and cohesiveness. The City of Windsor is fighting tenaciously for its more costly GreenLink access route because of the belief that it will have a better long-term impact on residents. The DRTP claims their plan would have the least impact on the environment and the residents of Windsor.

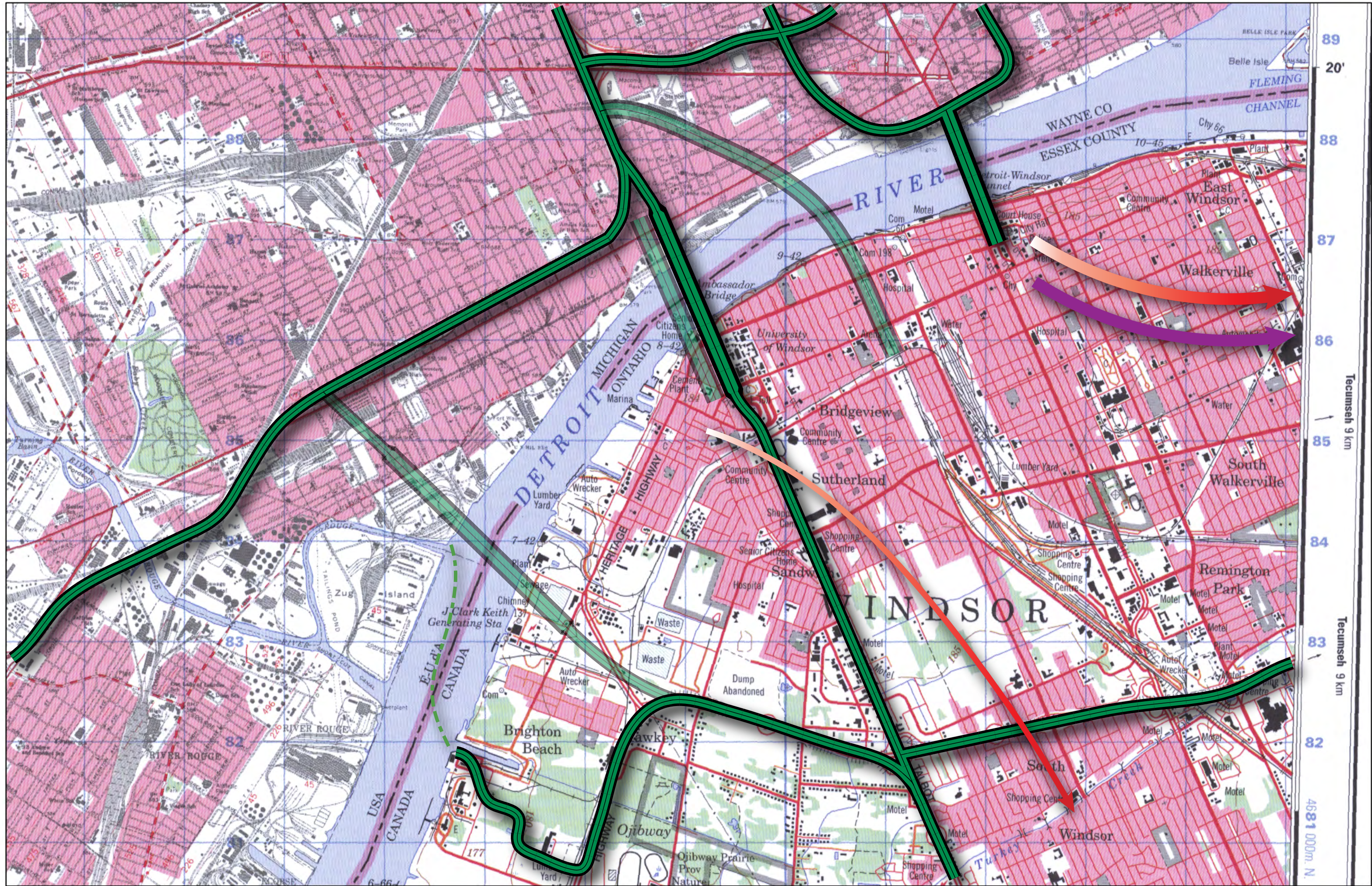
Sandwich is today an impoverished urban residential neighbourhood in the City of Windsor. In 2001, the median income of Sandwich residents was only 53% of that of their neighbours elsewhere in Windsor. 30% of the income of Sandwich residents comes from government transfer payments. 74% of all housing in Sandwich is rental housing, with an average tenure of less than five years. These demographic indicators and others have been trending downwards. In recent years, the battle over the border crossing has left Sandwich with scars on its landscape—



abandoned housing that cannot be torn down because of the municipal demolition control bylaw. However, there have been some positive developments in Sandwich. There is a movement by concerned residents to beautify and protect the historical elements of the former town. A community library has recently been built, and an annual heritage festival now celebrates Sandwich's history. Over more than two hundred years, Sandwich has experienced dramatic effects from the rise and fall of various modes of transportation. It remains to be seen what impact a new border crossing will have on the forgotten capital.



Abandoned housing on Indian Road in Sandwich. The Ambassador Bridge Company owns these houses but the City of Windsor will not let them be demolished.
Photo by Don Lafreniere



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