

Title: It's People Who Make Beeton A Good Place. Page 1/2

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Subject: Beeton, Robert Clark, Clarksville, Tecumseth, D.A. Jones, Canadian Beekeepers' Association, Canadian Bee Journal, Beetown, Beeton World, Women's Institute, War of the Worlds, Miss Edgar's Muddy Water Hotel

Description: A newspaper article describing life in Beeton in the late 60's/early 70's. The article also gives a brief history of the village, as well as biographical information on D.A. Jones.

Publisher: Source Unknown

Contributor:

Date:

Type: Newspaper Article

Format: JPEG / PDF

Identifier: 0008

Source: Beeton History Vertical File - New Tecumseth Public Library: Beeton Branch

Language: En

Relation:

Coverage:

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BEETON

It's people who make Beeton a good place

BY ROY GREEN
Staff Writer

"What I like best about Beeton is it's not on the road to anywhere."

The speaker is Doug East, who only moved to Beeton this past summer. And, if his statement appears, at first glance, to be less than complimentary, East is quick to point out he means it as a glowing testimonial to his new home, the Village of Beeton.

"Hwy. 27 is on one side of town, the 10th Line is on the other. There's nobody driving through Beeton to get to someplace else. It's a great place for kids, it's small and there's no plans for multi-home subdivisions in the near future. I love it here."

Judy Smith, who has lived in Beeton since 1972, agrees.

"The village itself is very nice, but more than that, it's the people here who make it such a good place. You never have to worry about where your kids are."

Beeton, situated on the CNR line and about 12 miles southwest of Bradford, is in Tecumseth Township, Simcoe County. To get there, you drive up from Tottenham (or down from Alliston) on the 10th Line to the Con. 8 and make a right turn (or left).

Or, you drive west on the eighth from Highway 27.

The first settlers arrived there in 1827 and, in 1852, when a certain Robert Clark arrived and started a blacksmith and gunsmith shop, it became known as Clarksville. It began to thrive and the Tecumseth post office relocated there in 1860. The name was then changed to Tecumseth but there was also a Tecumseth in Essex Township and, for a few years, mail to both Tecumseths sometimes went astray.

It was about this time one David Allanson Jones arrived. Born in York County, Jones had been living in the United States but came to Clarksville-Tecumseth to open a general store. Jones branched out into lumbering, building, gardening, land speculation and development on an increasingly large scale. He was also named postmaster.

The book, Simcoe County: The Recent Past, tells us more about Jones. "He was one of Canada's first real estate developers, dividing some of his holdings into building lots (which he advertised as available at 'a price to suit the purchaser'), laying out streets and planting rows of shade trees which helped to beautify the village long after his death."

But the thing which put Jones and his village on the map was bees. He purchased two swarms of honeybees from a neighbor in 1870. That became a full-sized factory of beekeeping supplies and equipment. He established apiaries as far away as Georgian

Bay and made trips all over the world to study breeding methods.

He became known as the "Bee King of Canada", founded the Canadian Beekeeper's Association, hosted dozens of international seminars and still managed to write and publish the Canadian Bee Journal, the Canadian Poultry Journal and, in 1885, began the 'local' paper - the Beeton World.

Yes, by then the village had undergone another name change. Tired of their problems with that other Tecumseth in Essex Township and itching for a chance to properly honor Jones, the name was officially changed to Beeton, later shortened to Beeton.

By 1890 Beeton could boast of no less than 77 business enterprises, including seven general stores, six shoe stores, four hotels, four stationers, four carriage makers, four blacksmiths, two barbers, a weekly newspaper, a millinery and a bookbinder.

The Beeton World, with a staff

of 14, editorialized "The boom is coming."

Today, with a population of 2,200, Beeton is not a boom town. And that seems to sit quite well with most Beetonians. Not that it is a town on the wane.

"There's room for more housing," says Judy Smith who is co-owner of Magic of Fabric in Beeton (quilting and knitting fabrics, pillows). "There's a bit of a hold-up with water right now, but there will be some development in the future. But nothing large."

In short, Beeton's unique quality appears to be in no danger of disappearing.

Doug East likes it that way. "One day this summer I walked down the main street and there were some young girls standing outside a store. They had pony tails and were drinking pop. For me, it was like a flashback to 20 years ago."

And 32-year-old antique dealer Rob Sage says he wouldn't change a thing. In spite of the fact he's still a bachelor, he likes the

laid-back attitude in Beeton.

"My family came here when I was two and I was very happy growing up here. And you can still walk down the street and know most of the people. The barber still comes out of his store to talk to you."

There's no shopping mall in Beeton and folks go to Newmarket, or Alliston, or Barrie for everything but food shopping. "We've got an IGA on the main street," says Judy Smith, "and everyone goes there. It's plenty for us."

And when Smith passes on a telephone number to this inquirer, she gives out only four numbers. Everyone in Beeton has 729- in front of his or her telephone number, there's no need to repeat it.

And when things do get a little hectic, people in Beeton tend to adjust and make the best of it. Like, when the television people came this summer.

"Everyone was out watching them shoot," says Smith. "I think everyone in the village will be watching the program, to see if they can find themselves on camera."

War of the Worlds, a new television series, came to Beeton and closed the main street for two days for one of their episodes. The script calls for Beeton to stand-in for a small California town. "Look for Beeton, California in episode seven," says Smith. "The whole thing, I'm told, only lasts for 12 minutes, but there are a lot of local people who served as extras."

And, when they moved on, the regulars at Miss Edgar's Muddy Water Hotel went back inside and Beeton returned to its laid-back pace.



THE BEETON Women's Institute added color and song with their float in the town's centennial parade of 1956.