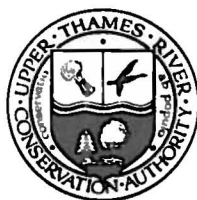


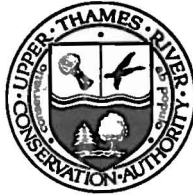
**TWENTY FIVE YEARS**  
**of**  
**CONSERVATION**  
**on the**  
**UPPER THAMES WATERSHED**

**1947**



**1973**

**Published by the**  
**UPPER THAMES RIVER**  
**CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**



The Authority crest was designed by Dr. A. H. Richardson in 1953 and embraces important phases of the conservation program: the sheaf of wheat for land use; the Canada goose for wild life; wavy lines for the rivers and trees for forestry. The Latin inscription conservatio ab populo is interpreted as Conservation by the People.

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## PREFACE

Conceived in the wake of a devastating flood in 1937, nurtured by recurring, though less serious floods in succeeding years, and born in 1947, The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority marked its 20th anniversary on September 18, 1967, the year of Canada's Centennial.

The Authority didn't accomplish everything it set out to do in those two decades, but despite disappointments, disagreements, and frustrations, progress was made. By the time it was 20 years old, the Authority controlled land and facilities valued at nearly \$15,000,000 and was recognized as a leader among the Authorities in the province in its record of achievement.

That so much was accomplished in such a comparatively short time was due, in large measure, to the dedication, zeal, and determination of its originators who laid a firm foundation, and to the vigor and enthusiasm of those who followed in their footsteps.

Looking at the Authority, a casual observer might get the impression that the municipalities in the watershed welcomed the opportunity to form an Authority with open arms. This was not quite the case because some of the townships were afraid that the cost might be too great. Pains had to be taken to explain the Authority's aims and the benefits that could be derived by collective action.

Indicative of the stature of the Authority in the eyes of the experts was a comment made at a seminar on civic design, held in Stratford in July, 1962. After examining the plan and hearing it explained by L. N. Johnson, Authority secretary-treasurer and field officer, one of the experts said: "This (Upper Thames) design has benefitted a majority of the people, both recreationally and economically. It is therefore a good civic design."

The word "conservation" has a wide connotation and can mean many things to many people. A former minister of the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, Hon. J. W. Spooner, once described it "as a way of life forced on us by modern conditions if we are to maintain our standard of living."

Another definition, used down through the years in conservation authority literature, grew out of a meeting held in London in October, 1944, called to consider river valley development in Ontario. There, conservation was described as "The wise use of all natural resources of a river valley, for all the people living in the valley for all time."

The Thames River rises in the highlands of Perth and Oxford counties and carries its water more than 190 miles to Lake St. Clair. The Upper Thames watershed comprises the drainage area of the river above the confluence of Dingman Creek with the main river 10 miles southwest of the city of London. It measures 51 miles in length (north and south), has a maximum width of 37 miles, an average width of 26 miles and an area of 1,325 square miles. Approximately 415 square miles are in Middlesex County, 420 in Oxford, 480 in Perth and 10 in Huron.

The watershed is drained by two main branches of the Thames and their tributaries. The North Branch and the South Branch meet at "The Forks" near the southwesterly limits of downtown London. The Middle Branch is the main tributary of the South Branch, its confluence being approximately 16 miles above "The Forks" at London. Main tributaries of the North Branch are the Medway Creek, which joins the North Branch about three miles above "The Forks", Trout Creek which joins the North Branch at the town of St. Marys and the Avon River which joins the North Branch about four miles above St. Marys.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I deem it an honor to have been invited to compile a history of the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, but there were times when I scolded myself for having undertaken the task, because of its magnitude.

The scope of the program developed over 20 years has, to me, been nothing short of amazing. Researching its manifold aspects was a challenge, but the help and encouragement received on every hand was most heartening.

To the following I extend sincere thanks for the demands made on their time and for the material they so graciously placed at my disposal:

A. S. L. Barnes, director, Fred Jackson, L. N. Johnson and Craig Leuty, of the Conservation Authorities Branch; Dr. A. H. Richardson, retired director of the Branch; R. D. McCall, G. W. Kelly, R. H. Bishop and the clerical staff of the Authority; G. W. Greenwood, W. B. M. Clarke, and Fred Janser, of the Department of Lands and Forests; John E. Milne, senior information officer, Department of Energy and Resources Management; Chas. D. Dingman, publisher of The Beacon & Herald; W. Ivor Williams, managing editor of The London Free Press; Harry G. Link, public relations officer, and John G. Bell, chairman of the education and public relations advisory board of the Authority; James Jones, of Kilborn Engineering Limited; Municipal clerks in the watershed, and to Authority chairman Norman A. Bradford and other members and former members, to whom I had occasion to turn for information.

Photographs were obtained from the Authority files; the Ontario Department of Energy and Resources Management; The London Free Press; The Stratford Beacon-Herald; Ron Nelson, McKittrick's, Fred Muscat, Arthur A. Gleason, London photographers.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "T. J. Nelson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page.

# AUTOGRAPHS

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1937 FLOOD SCENES AT LONDON



*Wellington Street Bridge Looking North.*



*Cavendish From Wharncliffe Bridge.*



*Labatt Park From Dundas Street.*



*Fetterly Home on Richmond Street N.*