A History of the Pattullo Fountain

On December 29, 1903 Andrew Pattullo died in London, England. He left a bequest of $1000 to the City of Woodstock to purchase a fountain in his memory.

Andrew Pattullo was born in 1850 in Caledon Township, Peel County. He was educated at the public school of Blenheim Township, County of Oxford, Dundas High School, St. Catharines Collegiate Institute and attended London University. In 1875 he entered the Sentinel newspaper office in Woodstock as a junior partner. In 1880 he bought out his brother’s interest in the Sentinel and amalgamated with the Review to form the Sentinel-Review. Mr. Pattullo was recognized as one of the most able editors west of Toronto. He was president of the Canadian Press Association of 1890, 1891 and 1892, and was the founder of the Ontario Good Roads Association and the Oxford Historical Society.

Andrew entered the Ontario legislature of 1896 as a supporter of Premier Hardy and championed improved roads throughout Ontario and improved methods of dairy farming.

The long delay in the decision by the City of Woodstock to select a fountain was due to the plan to construct a new City Hall, planned since 1906. In 1912 plans were approved by City Council, and the Pattullo Fountain was incorporated into the new design. However, the outbreak of WWI forced the cancellation of these plans and the Old Town Hall remained.

On June 15, 1915, the City of Woodstock formed the Pattullo Fountain Committee composed of Mayor Kemp and Aldermen West and Montgomery. This committee worked closely with Major G.R. Pattullo, brother of Andrew, to select an appropriate fountain in Andrew’s memory.

On August 25, 1916 a fountain called “The Maid of the Mist” was ordered from J.L. Mott and Company of New York, the price being $1050. It was 16 feet and 8 inches high, topped by the figure of a woman pouring water from an urn, and had two water pans. The fountain was made of cast iron, assembled and factory finished and shipped to Woodstock by train. It arrived in sections in Woodstock on November 20, 1916 after almost a month delay due to the heavy congestion of freight traffic. Street Superintendent Collins picked the fountain up from the rail station and moved it to the site in front of City Hall. The committee “recommended that a park scheme of beautification for the square be authorized in order to provide a proper setting for the fountain. Several expert landscape gardeners were called into consultation and the scheme which is at present being carried out was decided on. When completed it will provide a circular walk all round the outer basin of the fountain and diagonal walks radiating to the four corners of the square with lawn plots in between”.

The flowerbeds were planned with tulips by the Horticultural Society of Woodstock and its friends. The original basin had a diameter of 20 feet with a cement rim and cut stone and was constructed locally.

On December 4, 1916 the fountain was turned on and tested. “Approval of the fountain is apparently unanimous but a number of citizens are asking why, with 12 years in which to plan, arrangements were not made for lighting it by means of an underground conduit, which could have been installed when the trench for the water pipes was being excavated at very little additional cost”.

On May 29, 1917, the formal opening of the fountain took place. Because of the inclement weather, most of the ceremonies took place in the City Hall auditorium. Alderman Gahagan, chair of the special Civic Fountain Committee, turned on the water and G.R. Pattullo handed the fountain over to the city. Major West accepted it on behalf of the Council and the citizens. There was a speech by George R. Pattullo and there were special tributes to Andrew Pattullo by MPP N.W. Rowell, John F. McKay of the Toronto Globe, John A. McKay of the Windsor Record, John Markey of the Sentinel-Review, Lieutenant-Colonel John White, Malcolm Douglas and Dr. Welford.

In 1927, during the Woodstock Old Boys Reunion, two plaques were installed on the fountain, one honouring Pattullo as MPP for Oxford and one honouring Pattullo as the first president of the Ontario Good Roads Association.