

## ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 51, Georgetown, Ontario, Canada L7G 4T1

[www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.com](http://www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.com)

Vol. 45 No.1

March-April 2020

# A Shadow of its Former Self; Mono Mills in the 19th Century

Mono Mills is a relatively obscure town, unknown to many

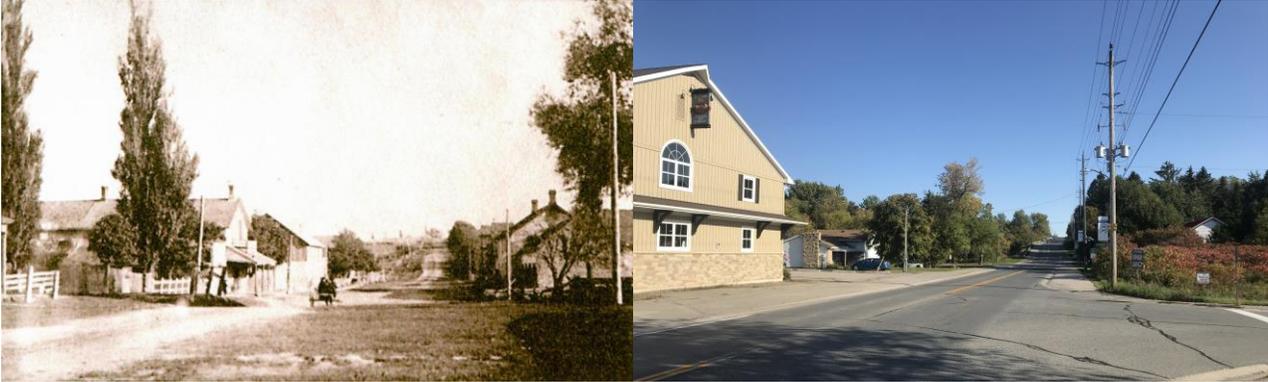


Ontarians outside of the Headwaters region because of our small size and lack of

Mono Mills Bicentennial Logo designed by Peter Smits

economic importance. Yet, over one hundred and fifty years ago this could not have been further from the truth. At the time Mono Mills was a booming market village that rivalled nearby Orangeville in size and importance.

By the 21st Century much of the glory days of Mono Mills have been long forgotten with no public commemoration of the critical role the village played as the oldest settlement in Dufferin-Caledon. When the anniversary of Mono Mills first settlers arrived in 2019 a renewed interest in the community prompted an investigation into the origins of Mono Mills. Several key questions arose. Why was Mono Mills the oldest settlement in Dufferin-Caledon? How had Caledon-East, Orangeville and Bolton eclipsed Mono Mills in importance? And finally, how could this information be brought to the attention of the Mono Mills community?

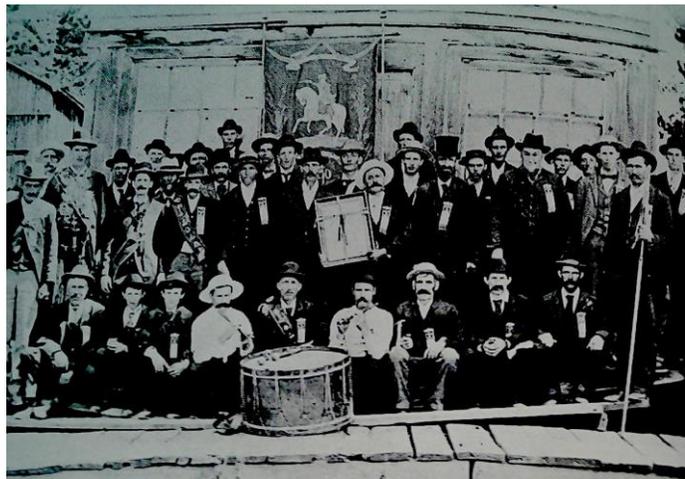


Left: Mono Mills in approximately 1910 Right: Mono Mills in 2019

Here is a brief overview of what we uncovered:

Mono Mills’ origins began with William Frank Jr., a United Empire Loyalist who constructed a wooden cabin in the modern hamlet, then known as Market Hill, after it was surveyed in 1819. More UEL settlers, by the names of Rawn and Moon arrived in 1821 after having fought in the War of 1812. By 1824 Irish settlement of the area began with Francis and Alice McLaughlin and their family.

The McLaughlins opened the first gristmill mid-1820s on the northern reaches of the Humber River, leading to the expansion of the small frontier village. The McLaughlin family, Roman Catholics from County Tyrone soon became prominent businessmen in the area attracting more settlers particularly from Ireland. Despite the McLaughlin’s being Catholics,



Loyal Orange Lodge 192 in approximately 1900.

Mono Mills quickly emerged as a hub of Orangeism, boasting two Loyal Orange Lodges; LOL 192 and LOL 260.

The location of Mono Mills served two initial functions. First, it was a stopping point on the trek to Owen Sound because it was about one day’s ride from Toronto between Lake Ontario and Georgian Bay, serving as an important transportation corridor for movement of commercial goods and military units.

Teamsters carrying goods to and from Toronto, would stop in Mono Mills, which provided accommodation for “man and beast” as contemporary announcements read.

The taverns were good bar trade for profits but also meeting places for travellers and locals alike.

Secondly, Mono Mills' location near the Humber River allowed for the development of four mills. The mills provided flour and wool to the surrounding areas and became the beating heart of 19th century Mono Mills. It was often said the line outside the large three-storey stone gristmill was known to stretch over a mile. The mills and the flow of people heading north supported a diverse and prosperous settlement.



The Albion Hotel, no longer standing in 2019.

The Mono Mills of the 1850s/1860s boasted several taverns, five hotels, five stores, two blacksmith shops, several shoemakers, a wagon maker, a post office, a tannery, a butcher and eventually a cheese factory. At the village's multiple taverns and stores the community's favourite drink, whiskey, was sold in large quantities. The proprietors were compelled to sell whiskey for fear of going out of business if they did not include the drink. Whiskey in Mono Mills was apparently quite cheap and potent due to a number of illegal distilling operations.

Rural life was often harsh and required the settlers to persevere in the elements. The building of mills and houses, along with the clearing of hardwood forests required many hours of hard labour. Settlers could be troubled by bears and wolves; one settler reports wolves trying to attack a family by clawing through the roof of her house. As with many communities during the mid-to-late 19th century, a significant part of village life was based around its four main churches including Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican and Presbyterian denominations.

Despite Mono Mills' trailblazing and prominent role in settling the area around the Headwaters Region the settlement fell into obscurity by the 1890s. The decision to build the Toronto, Grey and Bruce Railway through Orangeville in 1871 led to the community's decline. The railway company cited high land prices, and street brawls in Mono Mills, as reasons to choose Orangeville. Shortly after the McLaughlins sold their lands and moved. Furthermore, a disastrous fire in 1893 solidified the decline of the village. It is not unreasonable to believe that the village could have developed as the prominent settlement along today's Highway 9 instead of Orangeville, if the railway had been run through Mono Mills.

Given the role Mono Mills played in settling what would become Dufferin-Caledon, it is astounding that none of its history has been publicly preserved. During the bicentennial celebrations this autumn, the citizens of Mono Mills, with the support of the Town of Caledon, were able to reverse some this trend by holding a community event and creating a commemorative engraved rock and plaque.



The Mono Mills Bicentennial Plaque installed at the Victoria Parks Community Centre.

Through the inspiration of our rough and tumble origins, Mono Mills has begun to honour our history and restore a sense of small town community spirit.

- Kurt M<sup>c</sup>Murray, Mono Mills Historical Society, 2019

### Bibliography

- Brooksbank, Jack. Mono Mills Village: in the Town of Caledon and Township of Mono. Hockley Village: Heritage & Art, 1989.
- Heyes, Esther. The Story of Albion. Bolton: The Bolton Enterprise, 1961.
- Leitch, Adelaide. Into the High County: The Story of Dufferin. Orangeville: County of Dufferin, 1975.
- Bull, William Perkins. From the Boyne to Brampton. The Perkins Bull Foundation, 1934.

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**PEEL** -Mr. Thomas Sparrow has opened a Temperance Hotel on the Mono Road. We wish him every success in the new enterprise and hope that the Temperance people there will do their share towards his success. -*Georgetown Herald*, 6 April 1876

**STEWARTTOWN** -Mrs. Jno. McCloskery spent a holiday at Mono Road and Durham. Mr. M. Stonehouse paid a visit to his sister-in-law, Mrs. McCloskery. -*Herald*, 24 Oct. 1906

**NASSAGAWEYA Death of Ira Stork, formerly esteemed resident at Mono Mills** -The remains of the late Ira Stork, of Mono Mills, who died on the 19<sup>th</sup> inst., were interred at Fairview Cemetery, Acton, last Thursday.... *Acton Free Press*, 29 Oct. 1914



## *ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY*

### SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

**2020**

- Wed. 11  
March  
2020     **A SHADOW OF IT'S FORMER SELF: MONO MILLS IN THE 19TH CENTURY** -Today Mono Mills is small hamlet that barely garners the attention of those who pass through, however, in the 19th Century Mono Mills was a busy village that played an instrumental role in the settlement of the Headwaters Region. Kurt M<sup>c</sup>Murray will trace the history of Mono Mills from its origins in 1819 to its decline in the 1890s, stopping at all the colourful moments along the way.  
**KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**, 116 Main St., S., Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.
- Wed. 9  
April 2020     **STORIES FROM THE HILL**  
Carol Hyde has researched family, church and community in northern Esquesing. She will share a look back into the history of the Swackhamer family and the Churchill community north of Acton.  
**KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**, 116 Main St., S., Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.
- Wed. 13  
May 2020     **THE GRASS IS GREENER IN CANADA (FOR THE COWS)**  
Jeffrey Streutker will discuss how the similarities of Canadian and Dutch cultures made it easy and attractive for Dutch immigrants to settle here and farm. A focus will be on the economic pressures of the early and mid 20th century that caused many to leave Holland. Jeffrey is the child of two Dutch immigrants who met in Weston and who moved to Georgetown in the early 70s.  
**KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**, 116 Main St., S., Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.
- Wed. 10  
June 2020     **PLAYGROUNDS OF HALTON**  
Bill McIlveen will explore the myriad entertainment choices open to residents of Halton over the years. From swimming and dancing to drag racing and the steam era, Halton has offered many diverse and entertaining options for residents.  
**KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**, 116 Main St., S., Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.

Stephen Blake	905 877-8251	President
Steve McNamara	519 856-1242	Treasurer
Karen Hunter	905 877-7363	Secretary
J. Mark Rowe	905 877-9510	Archivist
Jan Raymond	905 877-9172	Social
David Borrett	905 702-0737	Membership
Ray Denny	905 877-3890	Publications
Dawn Livingstone	905 877-6506	Consultant

**INVITE YOUR  
NEIGHBOUR TO  
BECOME A  
MEMBER!**

**Refreshments  
served at 7 p.m.**

## Society Notes

### INTERNET CONNECTIONS

<http://esquesinghistoricalsociety.com/> Note the new website address. Send your e-mail to [esquesinghs@gmail.com](mailto:esquesinghs@gmail.com)

### EHS NEWSLETTER

John Mark Rowe prepared this newsletter. Submissions welcome. Please consider an electronic newsletter sent to your e-mail address. Not only will you save the Society postage, you get to see the colour pictures!

### MEMBERSHIP

It is time to renew your membership for 2020. We currently have 51 members for 2020. Our membership year runs from February. The individual membership rate is \$20. The family or institution rate is \$25. The EHS is still very happy to accept personal cheques from our members. Please note that all cheques must be made payable to “Esquesing Historical Society”, fully spelled out. Membership fees can be mailed to our post box or payable by cash or cheque to our membership secretary, David Borrett at a public meeting.

### CANADIANA ON-LINE

<http://online.canadiana.ca/search>

### ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO

[www.archives.gov.on.ca](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca)

### EHS ARCHIVES

The Archival Report for 2019 was shared at the February AGM. It is available on our website. We are making progress on catching up with our photo donations and many have been added to Halton Images. We are pleased to have students from the University of Guelph using our Archives.

### EHS TREASURER’S REPORT

Steve McNamara, the EHS treasurer presented the accounts as of January 31<sup>st</sup> at the AGM. It opened with \$7904.20 last Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> and showed receipts of \$3656.97 with disbursements of \$4722.01, leaving the Society with a balance of \$6839.16. The membership approved the statement.

### HALTON-PEEL OGS

<https://haltonpeel.ogs.on.ca/>

Mar. 22 - Barbara J. Starmans, *Tracing Your Ancestors Through Social History*, at Brampton Library, 65 Queen Street, at 2p.m.  
Apr. 26 TBA

### DEVEREAUX HOUSE

Ann Lawlor at [ann@devereauxhouse.ca](mailto:ann@devereauxhouse.ca)  
Open Thursdays 1-6. Drop-in visitors welcome!

### HALTON HILLS SPORTS MUSEUM

<http://haltonhillssportsmuseum.blogspot.ca/>  
Open Sundays 1-4 p.m.

Sport Kid of the Month nominations are open. See the website.

### L.M. MONTGOMERY MUSEUM

Friends of the L.M. Montgomery Museum will meet next on 12 March and 9 April at 10 a.m. at 404 Draper St., Norval.

### STREETSVILLE HIST. SOCIETY

The Society Library and Archives are open Wednesdays and Sundays 1-4 p.m. at the Leslie Log Cabin at 4415 Mississauga Road.  
Apr. 19 *It's Good to be Green Tea*, Benares House, 2 p.m.

### BRAMPTON HIST. SOCIETY

Heart Lake Presbyterian Church at 7:15.  
Mar. 19 -AGM – City of Brampton Heritage Update

Apr. 16 Bill McIlveen, *Changes in Birds in Peel and Ontario within the Last 100 Years*

### MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society meets in the Waldie Blacksmith Shop at 16 James Street at 7:30 p.m. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month.

Mar. 19, CFUW, *The 100 Years, 100 Women Project*.

Apr. 16 Pepper Parr, *Milton's Development*.

### OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

<https://www.oakvillehistory.org/>

Apr. 15 -Michael Johnson, *A History of Canadian Peacekeeping*, 7:30 p.m.

Speaker's Nights are hosted in February, April, May and November.

### BURLINGTON HIST. SOCIETY

Burlington Public Library at 7 p.m.

March 9<sup>th</sup> and April 14<sup>th</sup> TBA  
**NASAGIWEYA HIST. SOCIETY**  
[info@nasagiweyahistoricalociety.com](mailto:info@nasagiweyahistoricalociety.com)  
**TRAFALGAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

All events at former Palermo Schoolhouse,  
2431 Dundas Street West, Oakville.  
Mar. 3<sup>rd</sup> - Open Archives 1:30-3:30; AGM  
@ 8 p.m.

Mar. 20<sup>th</sup> - Open Archives 1:30-3:30

Apr. 17<sup>th</sup> - Open Archives 1:30-3:30

### **TERRA COTTA HALL**

Terra Cotta Community Hall rentals:  
Contact Kathy Atkinson at  
[terracottaeventbooking@gmail.com](mailto:terracottaeventbooking@gmail.com)

### **LOCAL DIGITAL RESOURCES**

Our Digital World, host of Halton Hills  
newspapers, Halton Images and Halton  
News hosts newspapers from across Ontario.  
You can start searching at:

<https://ourdigitalworld.net/>

### **FINAL NEWSLETTER**

If you haven't renewed your EHS  
membership yet, this will be your **final**  
newsletter. Don't miss out! Send in your  
\$20 fee to P.O. Box 51, Georgetown, ON  
L7G 4T1

## **1920 NEWS**

### **Georgetown and Glen Form Hockey League**

A meeting was held on Monday January 5<sup>th</sup>,  
to organize a Hockey League in town, to  
play for a Cup to be given by Mr. A. Bethel  
and Mr. W.J. Patterson.

The organization is to be known as The  
Georgetown and Glenwilliams Hockey  
League.

The following officers were elected:

President – Reeve LeRoy Dale; Vice-Pres.-  
Mr. J. M. Moore; Sec. Treas. – Mr. C. E.  
Ruddy. The executive for the G and G  
League are Mr. G. C. Mackay, Mr. E.  
McWhirter, Mr. B.G. Arnold, Mr. Lin  
Beaumont and Dr. F.R. Watson.

Each team is entitled to 12 players.

Hockey teams in Georgetown are Paper  
Mill, Oddfellows, Town and GWVA

(Great War Veterans Association).  
- *Georgetown Herald*, 7 Jan. 1920  
**CREWSON'S CORNERS**

Mr. Morgan Crewson is excavating  
in his cellar for the purpose of installing a  
furnace. Mr. Jas. McMillan, having sold his  
farm, is holding an auction sale next  
Tuesday. Mr. Victor Watson who sold his  
farm on account of ill health, is removing to  
his brother Robert's farm near Rockwood.  
**DUBLIN**

Mrs. Fred Tuck and her son, Master  
Mervin, of "Hillside View Farm", seventh  
line, Trafalgar, spent a few days lately at the  
home of Mr. and Mrs. John F. Robertson,  
First Line. The "flu" has been a very  
unwelcome visitor in several of the families  
of this locality during the past few weeks.

-*Acton Free Press*, 4 March 1920

### **REX THEATRE**

Saturday – "Stolen Orders" special, a  
stirring story of diplomatic intrigue, cast  
includes Kitty Gordon, Carlyle Blackwell,  
Montague Love, June Elvidge...

### **GLENWILLIAMS**

Mr. S. McClure is our temporary  
mail driver from Georgetown to the Glen.  
Mr. Bert Hill arrived home from Guelph  
Hospital, Saturday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, slightly  
improved. Miss Eva Brennan was operated  
on for appendicitis Saturday at Guelph  
Hospital. Mr. Jos Fry is taking a military  
course in cabinet making at Guelph. Mr.  
Jack and Rob Fry are out again after being  
quarantined with diphtheria.

-*Georgetown Herald*, 10 March 1920

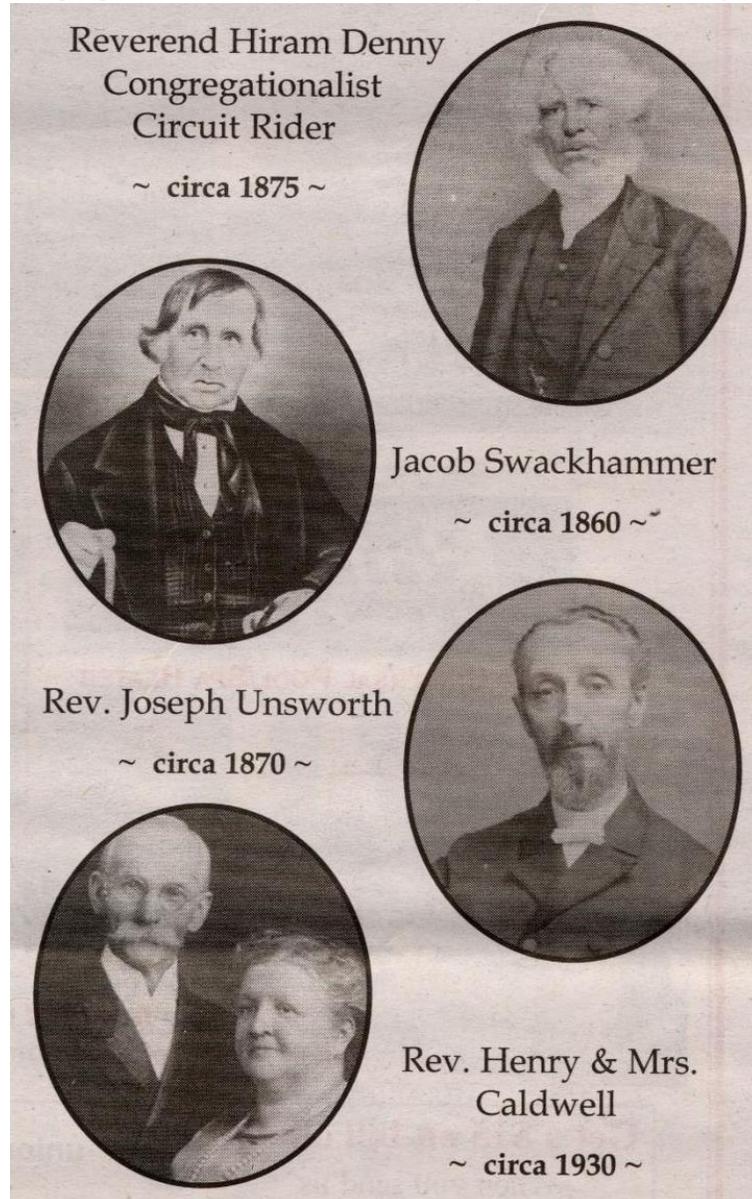
### **BALLINAFAD**

Mr. William Swindlehurst has been elected  
Superintendent of the Methodist Sunday  
School to succeed the late Robert H.  
Henderson. Miss Robson has been appointed  
assistant bible class teacher. The influenza  
has raged here for a month. Nearly every  
home has been affected by it.

-*Acton Free Press*, 11 March 1920

## CHURCHILL CHURCH

In 1836 the Congregational church in England sent Rev. Hiram Denny to Guelph to replace Rev. E. Parkin and become a circuit rider in Canada West. He visited his flocks which met in schools, homes and businesses. Rev. Denny established congregations at Alton, south Caledon, and Georgetown. A group formed in the school house on the property of Jacob Swackhammer on the west half of Lot 32, Concession 4. The first minute book records: On Saturday, February 4, 1838 a congregational church was formed by the Rev. H. Denny in the school house, situated on Jacob



Swackhammer's farm in Esquesing, consisting of the following persons: Jacob Swackhammer, William Swackhammer, John Gibbons, Peter Masales, Hannah Swackhammer, Sarah Swackhammer, Mart Swackhammer, Sarah Harris, Mary Denny, Nancy Ann Gibbons and Mary McCutcheon. Peter Masales and Jacob Swackhammer were the first appointed deacons. Plans were soon underway to build a church edifice. At a meeting held in the summer of 1839, it was resolved that Jacob Swackhammer, John Smith and Peter Masales be trustees for the meeting house and that the bank for the deed be held by Jacob Swackhammer. The price of the land was £1, part of the east half of Lot 32, Con. 3 and was purchased from Jacob Snyder and was located across the road from the school house located at Lot 32, Con. 4. This property later became the Churchill cemetery. The men of the congregation cut the timber and built the church themselves...

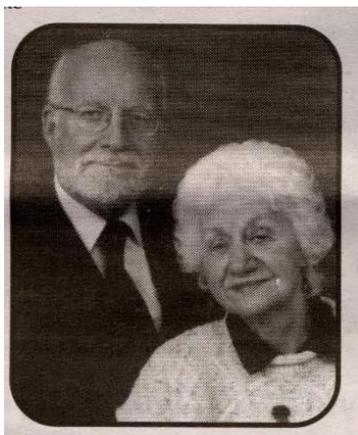
The seats were planks with a support at each end and one in the centre and a four or five inch rail across the back. A later style had

posts at the end with oil lamps in brackets. During the ministry of Rev. Henry Caldwell in the 1930s the original interior was renovated with new seating and hardwood floors installed. Electricity was added during the ministry of Rev. G.I. Stephenson. In 1953 a new foundation was added. Prior to that, many church festivities were held in the drive shed beside the church. This shed was later taken down and part of it used for an addition at the back. Prior to 1954 the men held a wood-bee for donated wood for fuelling the church's box stove. However, an oil furnace was installed that year...

Through the years many fine ministers served the pastorate. Rev. Denny, who led the first

congregation, lived on a property south of the church from 1838 to 1854. He was followed by Rev. Joseph Unsworth from 1854 to 1876...

From 1884 to 1897 the church formed a joint charge with Greenlaw Church of Caledon and was later supplied by ministers of Acton Baptist Church. After Church Union in 1925 Rev. Henry Caldwell was the first minister of the newly formed Churchill, Glen Williams and Limehouse charge. He stayed on his new pastorate for seven years... Mr. Caldwell was followed by Rev. George Stephenson and Family... Rev. Charles Joliffe followed... His ministry celebrated the local church's centennial. In 1940 after Limehouse closed and Glen Williams was placed with Norval, Churchill joined a charge with Ballinafad and Melville, with Rev. A.O.W. Foreman as minister and then Rev. Flindell. In 1949 student ministers followed until 1966... After Melville closed, Churchill was served informally by Trinity in Acton. In 1968 Churchill became an independent community church rather than close... The congregation was well served in ministry by Robert Hyde as student minister, Rev. A.H. Fosbury, Rev. J.L. McFadden and Mrs. Eleanor McFadden as joint pastors and Rev. Emrys Jenkins of Emmanuel College who came in 1979 and celebrated the church's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1988. Rev. Jenkins was the minister at Churchill in 2002.



Rev. Emrys and Joan  
(Waldie) Jenkins -1996

## Churchill Church Orchestra

~ circa 1988 ~



Back Row, L. to R. - Philip Levy, Elizabeth Cooper, Vern Denny and John Duenk. Front Row - Keith Barber, Marie Anderson and Aleda Martin.

-Carol Swackhamer & Betty Brownridge,  
*North Halton Compass*, 3 June 2002

**Acton Veterans Buy Storey Home,  
Last Thursday – Will Proceed at  
once to Fulfill Conditions and  
Promises Made to the Public  
THE SPACIOUS LAWN WILL BE  
OPENED AS A PARK**

The deal for the purchase from Mr. W.A. Storey of Sunderland Villa, the Storey family residence, was closed last Thursday February 26 by the Great War Veterans of Acton.

Arrangements will be gone on with immediately to fulfill conditions and promises made of the Veterans in regard to their Soldiers' Home and grounds.

The fences surrounding the grounds on Mill and John Streets will be taken down as soon as the weather conditions will permit and the grounds will be thrown open to the public as a park. Proper seats will be provided in different parts of the grounds for the convenience of the citizens, the farmers and their friends.

The rest room will be opened at the earliest possible moment that circumstances will allow. The room will be furnished in a complete manner. There will also be accommodation of bath room and lavatory in connection with this room, making it second to none in the Province for towns as a much larger size than Acton. The Veterans assure the public that it will be a credit to the community.

There will also be accommodation for travellers, such as writing room and bed room accommodation for at least two travellers per night, which will equal to any way they are now getting between Toronto and Sarnia.

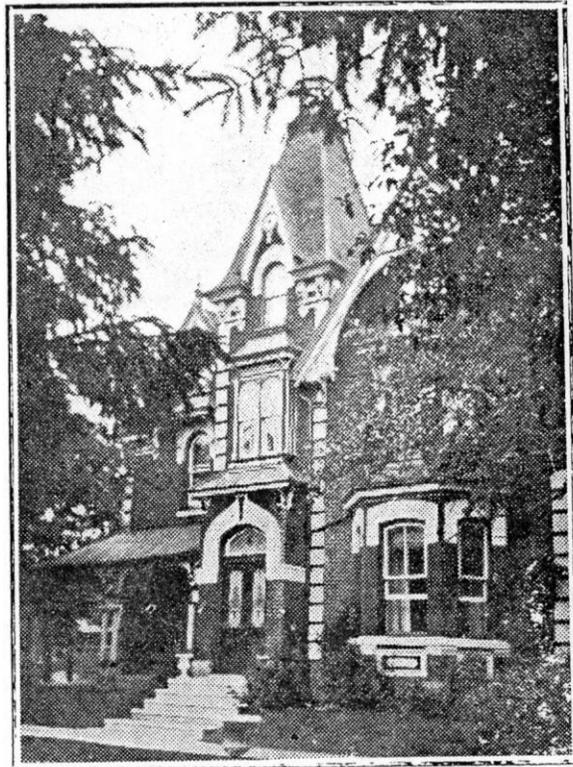
The remaining four large rooms on the ground floor the Veterans are offering to the public to be utilized to the best advantage for the citizens generally, such as quarters for the ladies' societies in town or any other object which may be of public benefit.

A caretaker and housekeeper will be installed who will be responsible for the keeping of the Home in the best of order. The upkeep of the grounds and Home will be taken care of by the Branch as a whole, thereby eliminating all expense. In connection with the upkeep of the property, general repair work being done by the Veterans who offer their services to meet conditions as they may arise....

-Acton Free Press, 4 March 1920

*The caretaker and housekeeper mentioned above were Wilfred and Alice Coles. This building is now the MacKinnon Family Funeral Home at 55 Mill Street East, Acton.*

**Soldiers'  
Community House**



ACTON, ONTARIO