



ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.com

Vol. 44 No.5

January-February 2020

DISCOVER THE HILLS

Discover the Hills is a new self-guided interpretive tour program that showcases the Town of Halton Hills' rich and diverse arts, culture, heritage and natural assets.

<https://www.haltonhills.ca/discoverthehills/index.php>

What would you like to see on a self-guided walking tour of Glen Williams and Acton? Catherine McLeod, Senior Arts and Culture Specialist with the Town of Halton Hills will present her pilot tours at our January meeting and is looking for feedback. Here are a few of EHS suggestions:



The **Roxy** Cinema at 6 Mill Street, E. Acton. *They were so Young*, starring Scott Brady and Raymond Burr is playing while a large poster between the theatre and the Bee Hive Restaurant advertises *Ma and Pa Kettle at Waikiki*."

This photo was taken in 1955. The theatre closed in 1961 and is now Crossings Community Church. EHS25052



A view of the new Merchant's Bank and J.D. McKee's shop at the corner of Willow and Mill Streets.

Acton. c.1901

PHOTOGRAPHER:

A.T. Brown

(1872-1955)

EHS21704

It was built as the Merchant's Bank in 1900, after cutting down the

landmark willow tree on the corner! The Merchant's Bank became the Bank of Montreal and moved across Willow Street in 1957.

Barraclough House on Mountain Street, Glen Williams, after an ice storm. It was built in 1901.

EHS00666



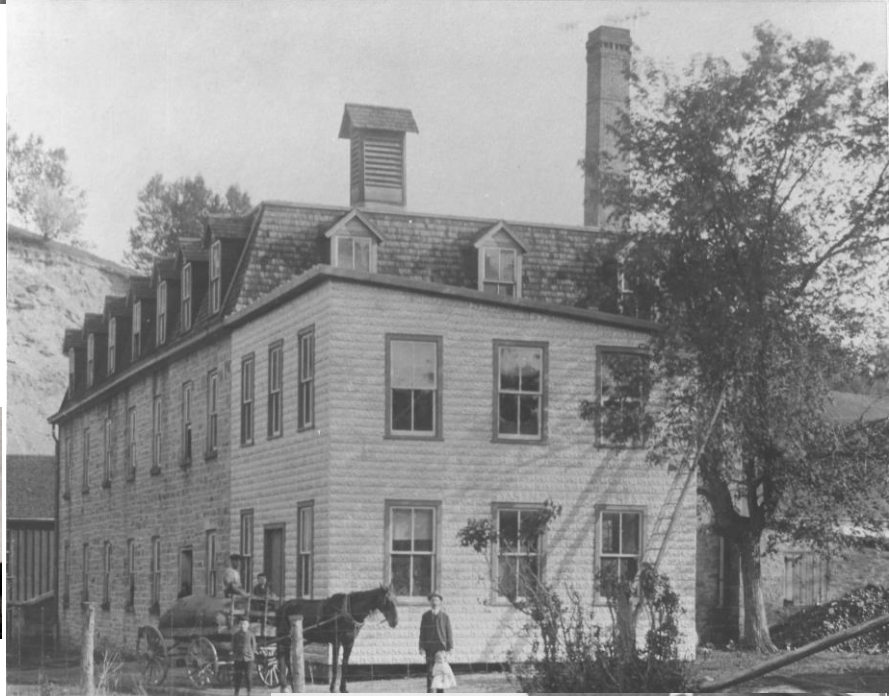
The chauffeur prepares to drive off in the open touring car from Barraclough House. c. 1919

PHOTOGRAPHER: John A. Wheeler (1874-1964)

EHS19782



Beaumont Knitting Mill at 586 Main Street, Glen Williams
c.1950 (above)
c. 1910 (right)
It now serves as the Beaumont Mill Antiques and Collectibles.



Glen Hotel, 524 Main Street, 1913

The YMCA building at 40-42 Mill Street, Acton, housing the Public Utilities Office, c.1935 EHS11321





ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

2020

- Wed. 8
January
2020 **DISCOVER THE TOWN'S NEW TOUR PROGRAM**
Catherine McLeod, Senior Arts and Culture Specialist with the Town of Halton Hills will present on the Town's new self-guided tour program 'Discover the Hills'. Pilot tours of Glen Williams and Acton will be presented for discussion and input.
KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 116 Main St., S., Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.
- Wed. 12
February
2020 **VINTAGE ACTON: THE CALENDAR COLLECTION**
Anne McIntyre will present slides and stories from a historical book published this year to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the naming of Acton. 'Vintage Acton: The Calendar Collection' was created on behalf of Heritage Acton drawing on the articles written for their annual historical calendar for the years 2003 to 2019. Anne is looking forward to the sharing of stories from those who are able to attend.
KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 116 Main St., S., Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.
- 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. This talk 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.

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	

**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

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

We currently have 76 members for 2019. Our membership year runs from February. It is time to renew your membership for 2020. 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

EHS ARCHIVES

Photo donations and items are continually being processed and added to our collection. A few large plaqued historic photos were received from Rose Anna Helson recently. As mentioned in the last newsletter a few additions have been made to Halton Images so take some time over Christmas holidays to browse.

HALTON-PEEL OGS

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

Jan. 26 -Show and Tell at Brampton Library, 65 Queen Street, at 2p.m.

DEVEREAUX HOUSE

Ann Lawlor at 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

The L.M. Montgomery Museum & Literary Centre, Norval, has been incorporated as a charitable organization and held their first board meeting in December 2019. The group, through the Heritage Foundation, used a Trillium grant to complete a museum feasibility study. The University of Guelph will be offering a winter semester course on a digital historic map of Norval. Planning continues towards the opening day of the new museum within a few years.

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.

BRAMPTON HIST. SOCIETY

Heart Lake Presbyterian Church at 7:15.

Jan. 16 – *Member's Show and Tell*.

Feb. 20 -Monica Polley, *Local Photos*

Mar. 19 -AGM – City of Brampton Heritage Update

MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

Feb. 19 -Kelly Matthew, *The Road to Marylake*, 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.

Jan. 13th -AGM

NASAGIWEYA HIST. SOCIETY

info@nasagiweyahistoricalociety.com

Mohawk Inn and Conference Centre on Guelph Line closed on Dec. 15th, 2019 after 53 years in business. A new hotel will replace it.

TRAFALGAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

All events at former Palermo Schoolhouse,
2431 Dundas Street West, Oakville.

Jan. 17th - Open Archives 1:30-3:30

Feb. 21st - Open Archives 1:30-3:30

TERRA COTTA HALL

Terra Cotta Community Hall rentals:

Contact Kathy Atkinson at

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/>

FAREWELL TO JOHN SUMMERS

John Summers, manager and curator of Halton Region Heritage Services has left Halton and moved on to become manager of Heritage Resources for the City of Hamilton. John started in 2014 as curator of the Halton Region Museum and was the principal lead in the transition to the new Heritage Services after the closure of the Museum.

Currently, the services team consists of Claire Bennett and Meredith Leonard.

TOWN HERITAGE PLANNER

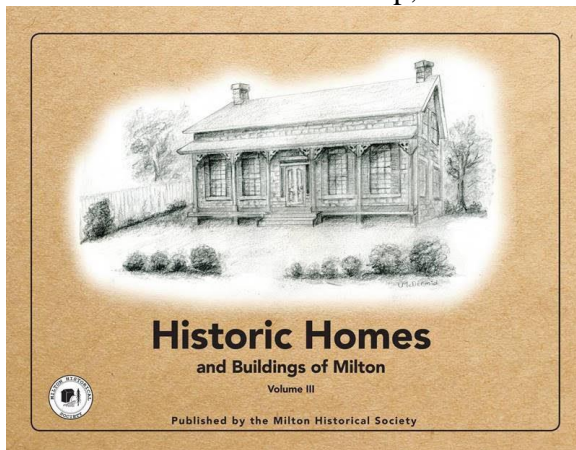
The Town of Halton Hills has hired Laura Loney as the Senior Heritage Planner to work with Heritage Halton Hills. Laura comes to the Town with experience in both the public and private sectors as a former Heritage Planner at the City of Toronto and a Project Manager and Team Coordinator at ASI - Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Services. Laura holds a Master's in Planning, a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and English, a Graduate Certificate in Museum Management and Curatorship and numerous professional certificates.

Laura can be reached at 905.873.2601 x 2358 or lloney@haltonhills.ca

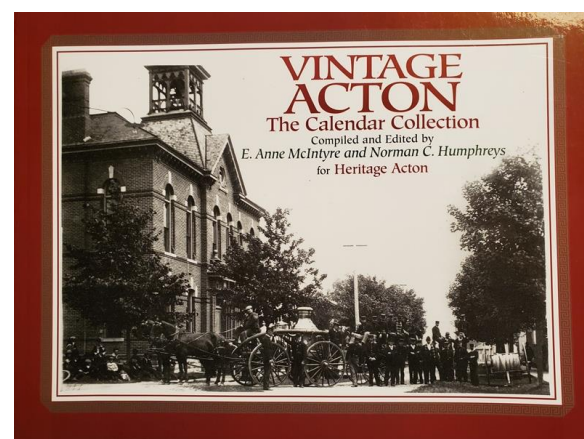
NEW MILTON PUBLICATION

Almost 30 years after Milton Historic Society published *Historic Homes of Milton*,

Volume I, the Society has published the third edition of this historically important work, ***Historic Homes And Buildings Of Milton, Volume III***. It was released December 14th, at the Waldie Blacksmith Shop, Milton. The



book sells for \$30. Mike Boyle, editor - Written by local historian Marsha Waldie with supporting research contributed by Brenda Bousefield, Kaye Hogg, Gloria Brown, and the late Jim Dills, the editorial effort also includes architectural descriptions from Anne Fisher, photography by Mike Boyle and cover artwork courtesy of Ursula McDermid.



Vintage Acton: The Calendar Collection, edited by Anne McIntyre and Norman Humphreys is now on sale with proceeds supporting the Acton Town Hall centre. The book has taken years of calendars about Acton history and compiled them into this great coffee table volume. \$40.

NORVAL NEWS

6 Oct. 1864 -*Canadian Champion* Esquesing Teacher's Association

The next meeting of the above Association will be held at Norval, on Saturday, Oct. 15th at two o'clock in the afternoon and 7 o'clock in the evening. The essay for the afternoon will be read by Mr. T. Smith: subject-Geography. A lecture will be delivered in the evening.

10 November 1915 -*Herald*

NORVAL –The siding to the Robert Noble Milling plant is ready for the steel. The apple barrel factory has had a busy season and still the barrels go out. The Norval boys have donated the sum of \$8 to the Red Cross, the proceeds of their last dance. The Norval Women's Institute have sent a bale {of night shirts, towels, etc.} to the Red Cross... also \$43.75 to the British Red Cross.

6 March 1918 -*Herald*

NORVAL – Corp. John Fincher, one of Norval's returned heroes, was given a royal reception by the citizens of Norval and vicinity in Campbell's Hall last Thursday evening. He was presented with a well-filled purse.

1 April 1918 -*Herald*

PROHIBITION BEGINS!

**Makes Your
Baking a
Success**

When you use our flour. If you are making pies you will find the pie crust from this flour to be delicious—crisp, flaky and very tasty. Cake layers are superior when made from our flour.



Norval Flour Mills

W. B. BROWNE & CO., Prop., Norval, Ont.

KING'S CHOICE
Bread Flour

NATIONAL
Pastry

NORVAL
Blend

Bell 90 r 2—PHONES—Municipal 827 r 3

6 January 1926 -*Georgetown Herald*

NORVAL: Our school has reopened with Miss Max and Miss Malcolm in charge. Teachers of the Toronto Public schools who spent the holidays at their home and have returned to the city are Misses R. and M. Russell, Miss Sarah Early, Miss F.R. McPherson and Miss Bessie Laird. The Rev. R. Borland of Toronto preached an able New Year sermon in the Presbyterian Church on Sunday last.

The first meeting of the New Year of the Norval Young Peoples Society took the form of an "Old Time Night" and social evening...Old time songs and costumes dating back a century. Recitations by Mr. L. Greenwood and Mr. Harold McClure were much appreciated. The Norval United Church Young Peoples Society held their regular meeting Monday evening...

21 March 1936 -*Georgetown Herald*

NORVAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION – The following scores are for March 18th, of 90 and over out of the possible 100: F. Johnson 99, H. Nurse 98, W. McCurdy 96, C. Skerrett 93, W. Robinson 93, F. Robinson 93, W. Wilson 92, F. Hustler 92, E. Gollop 92, T. Howden 92, N.A. Robinson 90.

On Thursday (to-day) March 21st, the No. 9 Police Station Rifle Team, Toronto, will have a match with the Norval Rifle Team at Norval.

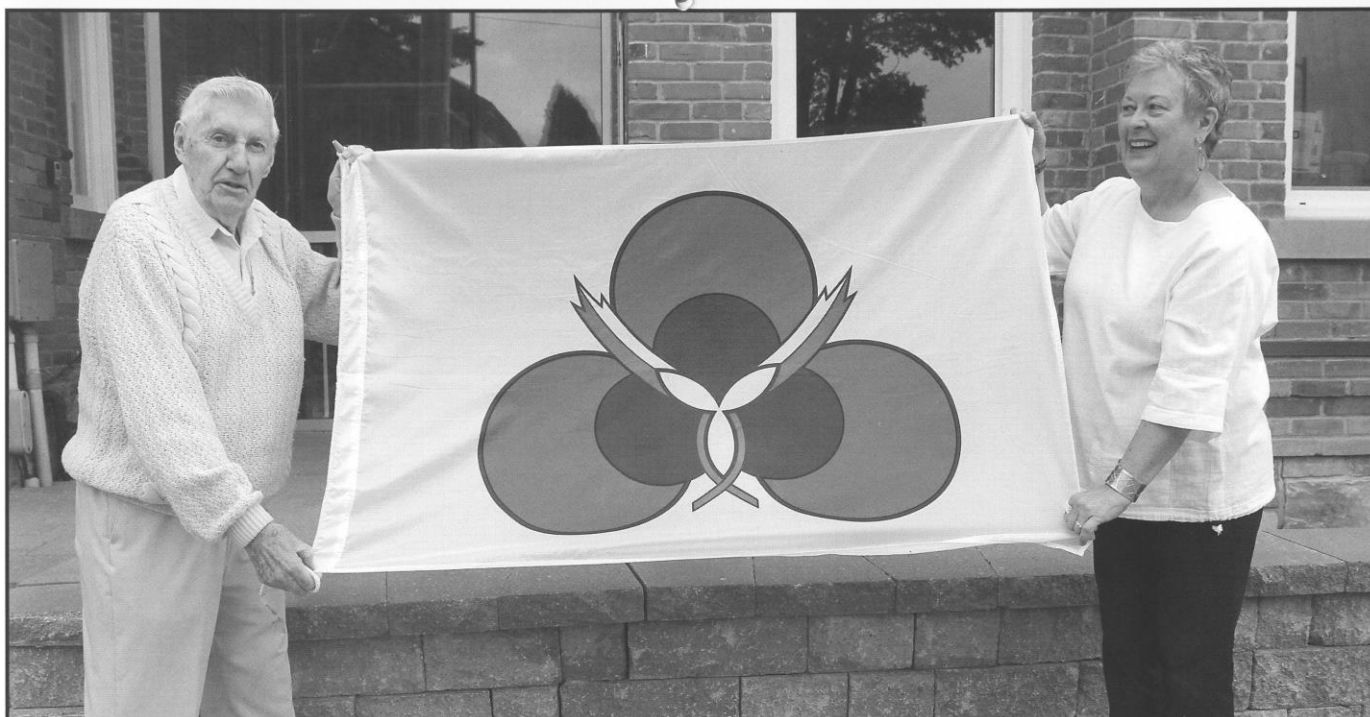
On April 2nd, the Brampton Militia Rifle Team is having a match with the Norval Club at Norval.

At Norval last night, the Norval Rifle team defeated the Guelph OAC Rifle Team by 3 points, the players being, GUELPH: F. Morwich, W. Golding, C. Weeks, W. Blackwood, M. Fraser, D. Paterson =561; NORVAL: H. Nurse, F. Johnson, W. Robinson, F. Robinson, W. Browne, W. Wilson =564

8 February 1967 -*Acton Free Press*

Jerseys in Norval, Milton are "ton of gold" Producers

Rosegate Castor Charm 2, 336018, Very Good, a Jersey cow in the herd of Mac Alexander, Norval, has just been awarded a Ton of Gold certificate. In 1361 days, she produced 2035 lbs of fat. She is a daughter of the Senior Superior sire, Kingshurst Really Royal Castor and a winner of two silver medals and a gold medal...



Acton's Flag

Did you know that Acton has its very own flag?

In 1972 as part of a county-wide initiative to promote tourism in Halton, Jack Carpenter and Hartley Coles were sitting around one day having a coffee, discussing this project and looking at a map of Ontario. On the map, the large urban centres of Hamilton, Toronto and Kitchener-Waterloo were represented by large red circles. The smaller cities of Guelph, Brampton and Oakville were represented by the colour blue. Jack began to sketch and eventually created a design in which he arranged the circles as though they were pushed together and overlapping one another. With this sketch Jack and Hartley noticed that a trillium shape was created which represented Ontario's provincial flower. The design was further refined by extending lines outward from the centre of the

trillium. These bands represent the escarpment, coloured green for spring and summer and white for the winter season. The gentlemen also noticed that Acton was located right in the centre of the six cities and so they decided to keep this design which symbolized the centrality of its location within the population centres of Southern Ontario.

The flag was further promoted in 1974 – the 100th anniversary of Acton being incorporated as a village.

In 2019 Acton will celebrate 175 years of being named 'Acton'. For such an auspicious occasion our beautiful flag might be found flying all over town. The photo shows Jack Carpenter and Anne McIntyre holding the flag in front of the Acton Town Hall Centre.

Anne McIntyre (pictured above) will present several calendar vignettes at the February EHS meeting. A few calendar pages are reproduced here. She will bring copies of *Vintage Acton: The Calendar Collection* to sell at the meeting, with proceeds supporting the Acton Town Hall Centre. The book is divided into three sections: People, Places and Events and Anne hopes EHS members and visitors will share their own stories of Acton with everyone there.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

Tennis Court & Lawn Bowling; Curling; Acton Speedway; Education; Beardmore; The Hide House; Storey Glove; Agriculture; Banks; Hewitson's Shoes; Force Electric;; Whitham's Garage; Tyler Gas & Trucking; Corona Shoes; Baxter Labs; Acton Free Press; Roxy Theatre; The Clans-Mann Restaurant; H.K. Porter; Superior Glove; Keates-Geissler Organs; Watson's Restaurant; Acton Bowling Lanes; Acton Jersey Dairy; Frank Toth's Shoe Repair; Bradley's Meat Market; Hinton's; Newton's; Acton Golf Links; Halton Rifles; Acton Home Furnishings...



G.W. McKenzie, Rev. A. H. McKenzie, Laura Dittrich, Tom Hill, Dr. Frank Oakes, Joe Hurst, Les Duby and Professor W. Ormsby at the plaque unveiling.



The Founding of Acton Plaque as it is now in Memory Garden at the corner of Mill and River Streets.

Acton's Historic Plaque

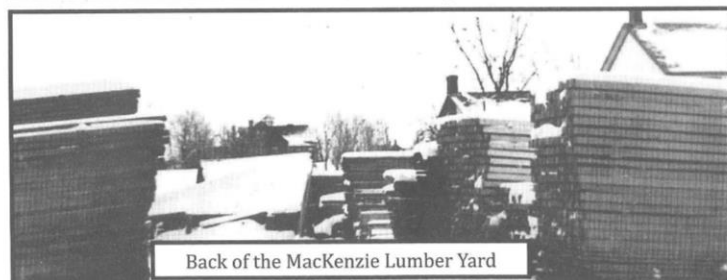
On July 1, 1974 a historic plaque was unveiled on the property of the Acton Library, celebrating two birthdays: Canada's 107th and Acton's 100th. The actual 100th anniversary of Acton's incorporation was January 6, just after Regional Government made the town part of the newly-decreed municipality of Halton Hills, but it was decided to postpone the celebration until the weather would be better. The day began with a fishing derby at 7 a.m. and ended with "a giant burst of fireworks after dark" finishing at 10:30 p.m. In between there were people in centennial costumes, a family picnic in the park, a concert by Acton Citizens' Band, musical selections from the Acton Legion Choraliers, a chicken barbecue dinner and draws, as well as the unveiling of the plaque in the afternoon. Lucky draw winners of negotiable centennial coins were Wesley Romano (5 years old), Laurie Archibald (from Guelph) and Fr. V. J. Morgan (St. Joseph's pastor). Dr. Frank Oakes (former mayor and warden) was Master of Ceremonies for the unveiling ceremony. Acton townspeople were discouraged about losing local town government to a regional setup just as the town reached century-hood and Dr. Oakes encouraged the audience when he said, "Don't give up. I think there'll always be an Acton". Other speakers at the ceremony were Professor W. Ormsby (Historical and Museums Branch of the Ministry of Colleges and Universities), Hon. George Kerr (Halton M.P.P.), G. W. McKenzie (Regional Councillor and former reeve) and Rev. A. H. McKenzie who dedicated the plaque in an "evocative and thoughtful prayer". Acton's last mayor, Les Duby, unveiled the plaque and former clerk-administrator Joe Hurst read the inscription. After the ceremony, Alice Duby and Penny Bristow served coffee and fruit bread inside the library.

J. B. MacKenzie & Sons Lumber



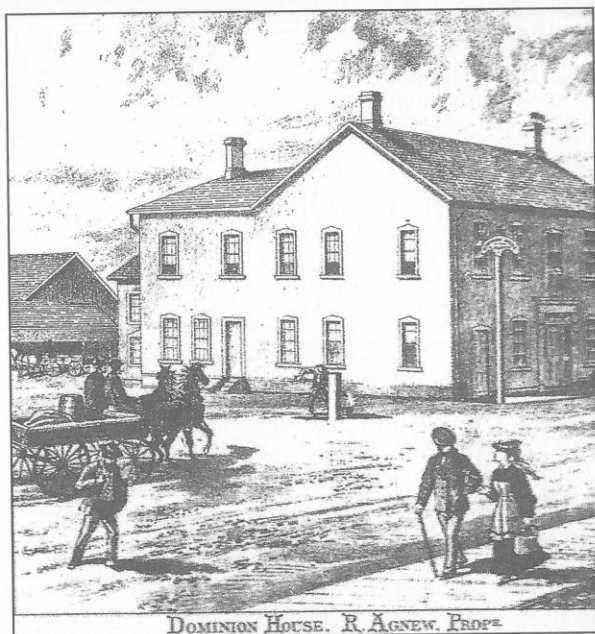
John Boyd MacKenzie

This enterprise was started by John Boyd Mackenzie who was born south of Acton where he then farmed with his father. He took up carpentry and contracting and opened his own planing mill in Acton in 1900 when he was only 24 years old. Nine years later he opened a second planing mill in Georgetown, creating a family business that would continue for several generations. For some years they cut their own trees and manufactured doors, stairs, cupboards and mouldings. In 1906 contractors were having difficulty placing the clock in the Acton Post Office on Mill Street. John used a series of pulleys and ropes hitched to his Model "T" to raise the clock and set it in position. An important part of the business was general contracting and John's business philosophy was "A deal isn't a good one unless it works for the two people concerned". Many of Acton's homes and businesses were built by the company, including the 1953 addition to Acton Public School (now Robert Little), M. Z. Bennett School, Acton High School on Acton Blvd. (which became McKenzie-Smith Middle



Back of the MacKenzie Lumber Yard

School in 1977) and the Murray Memorial Building (YMCA) on Mill Street. One of the early projects was the widening of Mill Street; over a period of two years they moved many of the buildings back to accommodate the new street line. MacKenzie Lumber was a very successful family business in Acton for decades until its doors closed in 1988.



Dominion Hotel on Main Street North

The first hotel at this location was a log tavern known as Anderson House. For a number of years Mr. & Mrs. Robert Agnew ran a tavern near the Main Street Creek ("school creek"), then decided it would be better to get nearer to the centre of the village. They bought the Anderson property, tore down the old log tavern and built the new two-storey Dominion Hotel. It was noted in Acton's Early Days that the hotel "was for many years one of the most popular hostelries in the province". The sketch (engraving) of the hotel appeared in the 1877 Atlas of Halton County.

The Agnews had a reputation for "wholesome food and comfortable lodgings" with many of the residents working at the saw mill. In the early days the hotel was the location for community banquets (local lodges, council, school board). When the Agnews retired because of poor health, Albert Lehman from Berlin (now Kitchener) bought the business and property. After a few years he enlarged and improved

the building by adding a brick veneer and constructing the third storey.

Mr. Lehman sold the business to Charles A. Decker of Oakville who ran a successful business until Prohibition came into effect in 1916. At that time the Ryder & Mowat Glove company leased the building and operated their glove business there until 1919. After that the building was rented out in small apartments and John Melton ran a boarding house until the sale of liquor became legal again. During this time the building was owned by Harry Holmes whose sons Harry Jr. and Charles reopened the hotel. Under their management the hotel continued the good reputation it had enjoyed under the ownership of Mr. & Mrs. Agnew.

Over the years the Dominion Hotel was a popular 'watering hole' for many in Acton and it provided employment for a great number of our citizens until the building was destroyed by fire in 1979.

The property is now the parking lot for several businesses, including Dollar Stretcher Daze and Giant Tiger.

Scotiabank - The Bank of Nova Scotia

On July 28, 1910 the Metropolitan Bank (which originally opened for business in Toronto in 1902) opened a branch in Acton. The first manager was Arthur M. Brown; John P. H. Crosby and Robert A. Storey served as juniors. On November 14, 1914 the Bank of Nova Scotia (incorporated in 1832 in Halifax) bought the Metropolitan Bank. In 1921 the bank signed a ten-year lease (at a cost of \$350.00 per year) for space in Neil Patterson's building on the north-west corner of Mill and Main Streets. Other tenants were the Royal Exchange Hotel, Acton Creamery and two upstairs apartments. The lease was renewed several times, always at the same cost and this building remained the home of the bank for twenty years. In 1938 the bank purchased a lot at 36 Mill St. East in order to construct a new home for the branch. In 1941 the Acton branch of the Bank of Nova Scotia opened for business in its newly constructed building. The photo (right) shows the manager's office and the accountant's wicket located at the bank entrance (where the automated bank machine is now). There have been renovations over the years, but this building still remains the bank's home. On July 28, 2010 the Acton branch of the Bank of Nova Scotia celebrated its 100th anniversary in Acton.

Bank notes from the Metropolitan Bank are now collectors' items. There are approximately twenty \$5.00 bank notes still in existence today. The prices for these rare items start at about \$2000.00 and go up based on the condition of the notes.