

ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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TORONTO SUBURBAN RAILWAY

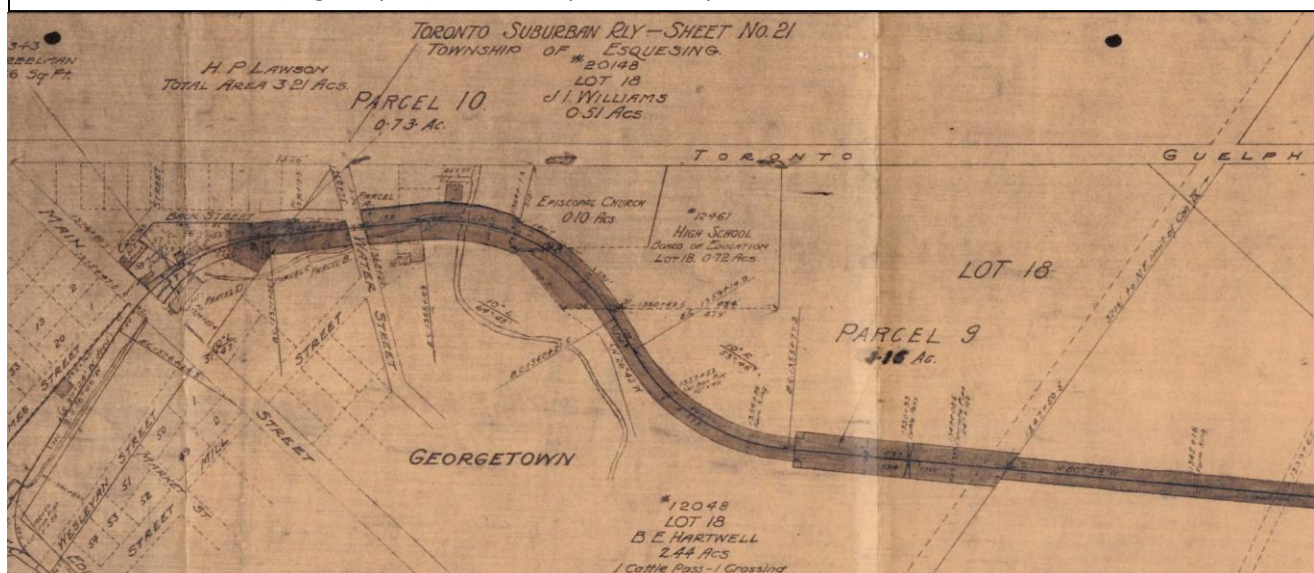
The most extensive line of the **Toronto Suburban Railway** was the Guelph radial line which operated between West Toronto and Guelph, a distance of 49 miles (78.8km). The line was surveyed in 1911, soon after William Mackenzie and Donald Mann took over the Toronto Suburban and construction began in July 1912 with most of the track laid in 1914 for 41.5 miles westward from Islington. The high bridge over the Humber River wasn't completed until 1916. The first car rolled through Halton Hills on 14 April 1917.



The Toronto Suburban Electric Railway Station, 29 Main St., Georgetown in 1922. The bell tower of the Town Hall can be seen in the background. EHS00044

In Georgetown a 96-metre wooden trestle was built spanning Silver Creek from behind St. George's Anglican Church and crossing Mill Street to an abutment near the former

A portion of the 1917 map showing the land purchases for the Toronto Suburban Railway. Guelph Street (Highway #7) is at the top of the map. EHS Archives MG12 A3 #21



"To collect, preserve and publicize the history of Esquesing"



A woman waits for the train at the Georgetown Station. The Creelman building is across the tracks (now demolished). EHS13417

Hydro Building, now the Georgetown BIA, at 66 Mill Street.

The Georgetown station was located at 29 Main Street South and being approximately at the midpoint, had an electrical sub-station. Service began with two roundtrips daily to Guelph and another as far as Georgetown. In 1923 it was taken over by Canadian National Electric Railways. In 1924 CN increased service to Guelph every two hours. In 1926 hourly service to Georgetown was added.

Freight was usually milk, fish, coal and paper and sometimes bricks and cattle. However, it seems the locomotive actually spent more of its time hauling long trains of excursion riders going

The New Electric Route

The Toronto Suburban Railway is being well patronized. It is now the popular thing to go to Toronto by the trolley line. The coaches are of fine design, large, roomy and comfortable. A regular two-hour service will be put on as soon as sufficient cars can be secured. -*Acton Free Press*, 26 April 1917

to Eldorado Park (opened 1925) for a picnic than it did hauling freight. Another Park was opened off the 6th Line Nassageweya, south of Crewson's Corners. This spot is now Blue Springs Scout Reserve.

The electric railway never attracted enough business to pay the bills and the rise of personal motor cars made the business worse, especially once the Depression hit. The TSR went into receivership and shut down on 15 August 1931. Receivership ended on 13 September 1935 and the line was promptly dismantled.



The Georgetown Dairy office at 29 Main Street South in 1953. It was demolished in 1966. EHS21567

Dangerous and Unlawful

Complaint is being made by the officials of the Toronto Suburban Railway that a number of boys have the habit, while bathing at the Fairy Lake bridge, just west of town, of running over the tracks perfectly nude when the electric cars are approaching. By this unseemly habit they run grave risks of serious accident; they greatly annoy the motorman and conductor in charge of the car, and they violate the law by appearing without bathing suits... -*Acton Free Press*, 7 June 1923

The Electrician at the Toronto Suburban Killed

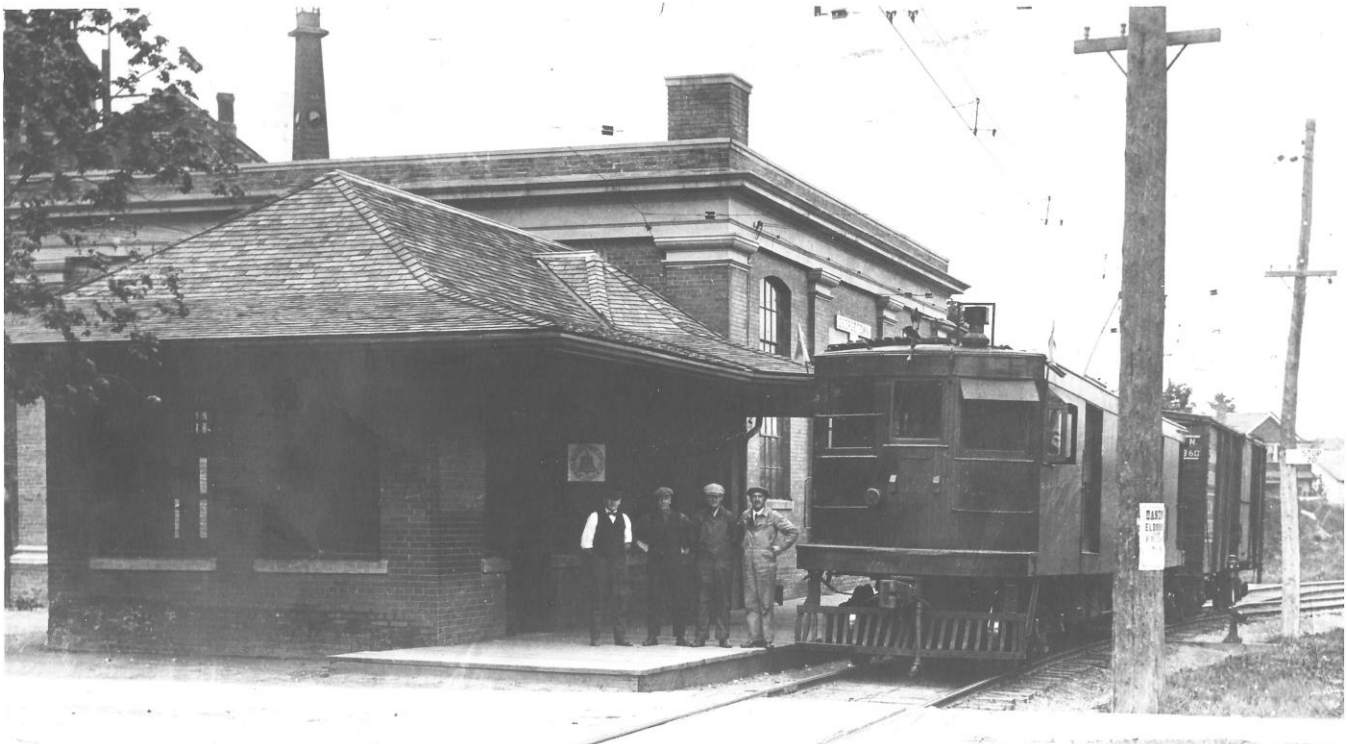
Norman Paul, the electrician in charge of the transformer station of the Toronto Suburban Station at Georgetown, received injuries on Saturday afternoon from which he died at nine o'clock that evening.

Mr. Paul, was at work at the sub-station alone at the time of the accident, and...it is assumed that he came into contact with a live wire... *Acton Free Press*, 3 May 1917

The Truth is Leaking Out

Growing out of the persistent rumours that liquor was present and consumed, and a number of persons were intoxicated, at the corn roast at Suburban Park, on Monday night, 10th inst., Inspector Reevely laid seven charges against those alleged to have been guilty of violation of the Ontario Temperance Act and the Motor Vehicles Act... *Acton Free Press*, 20 Sept. 1923

Toronto Suburban Railway will issue return tickets at single fare and one-third to the Royal Winter Fair at Toronto from Nov. 21st to 27th. For special cars see time table. -*Georgetown Herald*, 14 Nov. 1923



Standing outside the Georgetown station of the Toronto Suburban railway are (L) ticket agent Ray Coles and George Alcott (2nd from Left) with the crew of the electric train which stands on the tracks. It operated from April 1917 until August 1931. EHS21566



ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

2023

- Wed. 13 Sept. **TORONTO SUBURBAN RAILWAY WALK**
Follow the route of the Radial railway through downtown Georgetown with local historian John Mark Rowe. History of the TSR and the neighbourhood it passed through, will be shared for all the enjoy! Meet beside The Carpet Barn.
George Kennedy Mural, Mill & Back Streets, Georgetown, 7 p.m.
- Wed. 04 Oct. **GEORGETOWN WALKING TOUR**
Halton Hills Library are pleased to invite you to join local historian John Mark Rowe for an hour-long walking tour of downtown Georgetown.
Public Library Plaza, 8 Church St., Georgetown, 6 p.m.
- Wed. 11 Oct. **BUILDERS OF NORTH HALTON: MACKENZIE FAMILY**
Sandy Mackenzie will be sure to share some tales about his family as the EHS provides a slide show of pictures from the Archives. No study of buildings in Acton and Georgetown can be complete without knowing about J.B. Mackenzie and family.
Knox Presbyterian Church, 116 Main St. S., Georgetown, ON 7:00
- Wed. 08 Nov. **A SHORT HISTORY OF THE LORNE SCOTS REGIMENT**
The Lorne Scots (Peel, Dufferin, & Halton Regiment), the local Militia (Army Reserves) regiment has served Canada and the local community since before Confederation. While its official birthday is in September 1866, its history predates the War of 1812. A company of the regiment has been in Georgetown since 1863 and has included many residents who have served in war and peace. Charles Veale will present the history of the regiment starting with the 1793 Militia Act and continuing to the COVID-19 Pandemic and will touch on a few more recent developments.
Knox Presbyterian Church, 116 Main St. S., Georgetown, ON 7:00
- Wed. 10 Jan. **HALTON HILLS: THE SUM OF IT'S PARTS**
Helson Gallery, 8 Church Street, Georgetown, ON 7:00 p.m.
INVITE YOUR NEIGHBOUR TO BECOME A MEMBER!

- All Meetings are FREE to attend -

MEETING UPDATES: Visit <http://esquesinghistoricalsociety.com>

INQUIRIES: esquesinghs@gmail.com

Society Notes

EHS EXECUTIVE

Stephen Blake	President
Steve McNamara	Treasurer
Karen Hunter	Secretary
J. Mark Rowe	Archivist
David Borrett	Membership
Ray Denny	Publications
Charles Veale	

Send all inquiries to: esquesinghs@gmail.com

EHS website:

<http://esquesinghistoricalsociety.com>

EHS NEWSLETTER

John Mark Rowe prepared this newsletter.

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 paid 2023 members. 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, dropped off at the home of any executive member or at one of our meetings.

CANADIANA ON-LINE

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

ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO

www.archives.gov.on.ca

EHS ARCHIVES

Heritage summer student Madison Hendricks has been working on digitizing parts of the Archives over the summer.

The Acton Monthly is a small paper put out by Scott Brooks. Seven issues have been added to the Halton Hills Newspapers website.

A detailed listing of our archives is available at <https://www.archeion.ca/esquesing-historical-society>

HERITAGE HALTON HILLS

Several properties are being prepared for heritage designation.

HALTON HERITAGE SERVICES

To book a research time with Heritage Services at Kelso, please get in touch at

<https://www.halton.ca/The-Region>

HALTON-PEEL OGS

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

LIMEHOUSE MEMORIAL HALL

Sept. 9 -BBQ & Corn Roast 4:30-6:30 pm at 12389 Fifth Line, Limehouse. All funds raised support the Limehouse Hall.

HALTON HILLS SPORTS MUSEUM

<http://haltonhillssportsmuseum.blogspot.ca/>

L.M. MONTGOMERY MUSEUM

The L.M. Montgomery Museum website is now live at

<https://lmmontgomerynorval.com/>

STREETSVILLE HIST. SOCIETY

The Leslie Log Cabin at 4415 Mississauga Road is open on Wednesdays and Sundays from 1-4 p.m.

Sept. 14 – *Imran Hasan*: Peel Crime

Stoppers in Heritage Room at the Streetsville United Church. 7 p.m.

BRAMPTON HIST. SOCIETY

Sept. 21 -*Ted Barris*: Battle of the Atlantic

Oct. 19 -*Glenn McFarlane*: Lending a (Canad)arm to Space

Meetings are at Heart Lake Presbyterian Church at 7 p.m. \$5 fee for non-members.

MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Waldie Blacksmith Shop at 16 James Street, Milton.

Sept. 21 – *John McDonald*: Milton and the Temperance Movement, 7:30 p.m.

OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

<https://www.oakvillehistory.org/speakers-nights.html>

Nov. 13 -*Alan Norton*: Tracing the Norton Family Tree at 7:30, St. John's United Ch.

NASAGIWEYA HIST. SOCIETY

info@nasagiweyahistoricalociety.com

Sept. 12 -*Anthony Wong*: Milton Heritage at 7:30, Nassageweya Presbyterian Church

TRAFALGAR HIST. SOCIETY

<http://tths.ca/>

Sept. 30 -Heritage Fall Fair

Sept. 15 & Oct. 20 -Open Archives -1:30-3:30. Palermo Schoolhouse, 2431 Dundas St W, Oakville, ON

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/>

THE CROSSING

Sept. 23 – Visit Lion’s Valley Park and explore the new Moccasin Trail; find out about Proudfoot’s Hollow; learn about the first settlers and take a tour of Knox Sixteen heritage church. 1150 Dundas Street West, Oakville, ON

RCMP MUSICAL RIDE

Campbellville Community Association has been chosen as hosts for the 2023 RCMP Musical Ride Cross Canada Tour to recognize the RCMP's 150th birthday! Visit Woodbine-Mohawk Park Racetrack in Campbellville on Tuesday September 19 and Thursday September 21, 2023.

MISSISSAUGAS MEET THE KING



Chief Stacey Laforme, of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, met King Charles at a damp garden party at Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh in July. At Charles’s instigation, members of the delegation spoke with the monarch for the first 15 minutes or so of the two-hour event, with conversation touching on treaty, the wildfires in Canada and other issues. Laforme said it’s difficult to put into words what he hopes could come of the relationship with the Crown, but he sees potential for many opportunities. It was the first time a delegation from the Mississauga Nation had met with the

monarch since Nahneebahwequa (Catherine Sutton) met with Queen Victoria in 1860.

Members of the delegation had dinner in Toronto with Ontario Lt.-Gov. Elizabeth Dowdeswell in August, to discuss the visit.

-Monarchist League of Canada

ONTARIO’S NEW LT.-GOVERNOR



The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau on August 3rd announced the appointment of Edith Dumont as the new Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. When she assumes office, Ms. Dumont will be the first Franco-Ontarian Lieutenant Governor in the province’s history.

-Monarchist League of Canada

CRAWFORD LAKE DEFINES ERA

Crawford Lake is a rare meromictic lake, which is a type of deep lake with two layers of water that never intermix. In July 2023, researchers proposed that we look at the sedimentary layers and the stories they reveal about human-caused planetary change to help determine a new geologic epoch: the Anthropocene.

FORMER LT.-GOV. BARTLEMAN

James Bartleman, a member of the Chippewas of Rama First Nation, was an advocate for Indigenous people. He used his time in the viceregal position to fight racism and discrimination, especially around mental health issues, and to uplift young Indigenous people. The retired career diplomat died 14 August 2023 at age 83.



Georgetown Planing Mill

GEORGETOWN PLANING MILL – J.B. Mackenzie, Prop.

Although only 37 years of age, J.B. Mackenzie is the owner of two large and prosperously busy planing mills—one in Georgetown, the other in Acton. ... He started carpentering and contracting, after a boyhood spent on the farm in Esquesing, where he was born in 1876. His contracting led him to become a dealer in lumber, and the growth of both businesses led him to establish a planing mill in Acton in 1900. In

1909 he acquired the Georgetown planing mill from Mr. H.P. Lawson, who had operated it for twelve years, and has been running both planing mills since. The Georgetown mill is a splendid structure, 60 x 80 feet, three stories, of solid stone—handsome in appearance and durable, and worth a goodly sum as buildings cost to-day. It is situated at the corner of Draper and James Streets. The mill is equipped on the ground floor with a surface planer, rip saw, four-sided sticker, buzz planer, variety saw and re-saw. Upstairs is located the sash and door machinery. The product of this well-equipped mill is planed lumber for the trade and for local sale, all sorts of sash, doors, mouldings, etc., also interior fittings for banks, stores, and offices. ... A large dry kiln, capable of holding twenty thousand feet prepares the lumber for use. ... In addition to operating the two mills, this energetic young



man ... takes contracts for buildings of all sizes and sorts... This season he has handled perhaps two dozen large contracts, one of these being the addition to the public school. Numerous very fine houses have been erected by him in the past years. ... Mr. Mackenzie is fortunate in having as his manager of the mill Mr. Sydney Young, who has been with him since he purchased the business, and had been with his predecessor for ten years, and ... Mr. R.J. Waldie is manager of the contracting department, and has been with Mr. Mackenzie since he began contracting fourteen years ago...

-The Georgetown Herald, 17 December 1913

Portrait of J.B. and S.J. Mackenzie. Photo taken by Sherman of Milton on 12 January 1931. EHS08541

J. B. Mackenzie: Builder to North Halton

-by John McDonald

J.B. Mackenzie had many sub-contractors who worked for him over the years and accepted payment without question, knowing that the deal would be fair. Mackenzie added to or remodelled almost every building on the main streets of both Acton and Georgetown over the years and contracted additions to most schools.

John Boyd Mackenzie was born on the Esquesing-Nassagaweya Town Line, just south of Acton, in 1876. He farmed with his father, and eventually started a carpentry and contracting business in Acton, which resulted in the opening of a carpentry shop and planning mill in 1900...

His first contract in Georgetown was to remodel the livery stables on Mill Street for John A. Willoughby. This building is now the home of the Georgetown branch of the Royal Canadian Legion...Mackenzie also subcontracted the building of the Georgetown Coated Paper Mills at 2 Rosetta Street, which once housed Domtar Fine Papers and was the first building in the area to be constructed of reinforced concrete.

One of his contributions to the appearance of Georgetown was the Mackenzie residence known as "The Birches" at 75 Mill Street which was built in 1915...

Mackenzie also built two buildings which once served as theatres in Georgetown and Acton: The Gregory Theatre on Mill Street, Acton and the Mackenzie Building which housed the Roxy Theatre on Mill Street in Georgetown until a devastating fire in 1958...

In 1907 Mackenzie married a Rockwood girl, Eliza McQueen... J.B's four children all had an interest in their father's business. Daughter Jean served for many years as bookkeeper, while son Sam operated the store and office



The Birches, at 75 Mill Street, about 1925, was built in 1915. It remained in the Mackenzie family until 1959. EHS17074



for many years. Marjory, the younger daughter, a dietician, always gave a helping hand at home. Upon returning from the RCAF in 1945, the younger son Ken managed the Acton branch until his death in 1950. Mackenzie served many years as a school trustee, water commissioner, member of the Georgetown Council and as mayor of Georgetown from 1930 to 1933... John Boyd Mackenzie died...in 1947.

50th wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Mackenzie, in 1963. EHS06861



Sandy Mackenzie stands in front of the panel about him on a downtown Georgetown utility box cover, on 28 June 2017. EHS24003

History of John Mackenzie (1792-1846) and Descendants in Canada

by J. A. "Sandy" Mackenzie

John Mackenzie was born on the Isle of Seil in 1792. His father George had a pub next to the Clachan Bridge which was the only way to the island. The bridge was only about 50 feet wide over the salt water. The island had a slate mine which was worked until the 1870s, when a big storm crashed the wall of the mine and flooded it. The last time I was there, it was a vacation spot. The isle is a mile or two south of Oban, on the west coast of Scotland.

John Mackenzie learned the masonry trade and in August of 1815 signed up for the 14th Corps of Royal Sappers and Miners, to 31 December 1833. His Regiment stood in reserve at the Battle of Waterloo. He served somewhere in the Mediterranean, and a good deal of time at Chelsea Barracks in London.

He was discharged in Quebec City and was given 100 acres and a cow, south-west of Acton, Ontario, at 20 Sideroad and the Townline. His wife Hanna Cox, he met on the boat coming to Oakville. She was from Plymouth, England. They had six children. They had to walk from Oakville to Acton.

The third born was Samuel John Mackenzie, on March 13, 1839. He was in Acton and was a mill wright. His wife was from Goderich, on Lake Huron, where he learned his trade. They had two children, John Boyd Mackenzie and Mary, who lived her married life in Guelph.

J.B.'s life is well described in *Halton Sketches Revisited* by John McDonald. My father (Sam) and myself (Sandy) followed in J.B.'s footsteps in the lumber and construction business. Over the years all of us have worked on the Legion Building.



Legion Entrance 1960 EHS05683



Legion 2012 EHS06225

200 YEARS AGO – 1823 NEWS

At a meeting held on Monday 6th January 1823 at the home of Christian Barnes, on lot no. 18 in the 8th concession, by virtue of a warrant from James McBride and Daniel O’Kiley, Esquires, two of His Majesty’s Justices of the Peace for the Gore District, the following persons were chosen as Town officers for the current year, viz.: Charles Kennedy, town clerk; Wardens: Peter McCallum and Thomas Stephens; Collectors: Charles Kennedy, Hugh Black & Adam Stull; Poundkeepers: James Lawson & Christian Barnes; Pathmasters: George Crawford. John Menzie, George Thompson, James Lawson, Robert Shortreed, Dan Toebes, George Darling, William Mei____, Stephen Marchelles, John Sterrat, William Hilt, Morris Kennedy.

POPULATION in 1823: 693 persons

Heads of Families	Children under 16	Children age of 16	Servants
173 males	161 males	33 males	3 males
125 females	169 females	27 females	2 females

A second school for the Township was founded at Lot 12, Concession 4 and students from Stewarttown walked here. This school eventually became known as SS#5 Waterloo.

TO: William Lyon Mackenzie Toronto, 31 January 1823

Dear Sir,

The bearer Jean Douglas, a Scotch girl, is of unimpeachable sober character and I am pretty certain she will suit you well – I have told her your proposition and she satisfied to stop with you as long as you may be mutually pleased with each other – Her parents and family are respectable people.

I have not been home – Do not forget to cause some one call for the cash of ____ at Manns Tavern. Remember me to Mrs. McKenzie. I am yours truly, Thomas Fyfe

BAPTIZED Alexander, son of Arthur and Jane Graham, aged 11 years, on 21st January 1834 by Rev. Adam Elliot in Esquesing.

Summer 1823

In 1823, the Rev. Andrew Glen, a missionary from Scotland, who settled in Lower Canada, preached and dispensed the Sacrament. -*Records and Memories of Boston Church in the "Scotch Block", Esquesing Township, County of Halton, Ontario, Canada, 1820-1920* / by John McColl, D.D

BAPTIZED James, son of Alexander and Elizabeth Ross, born 17 August 1823, on 16 Feb. 1837 by Rev. Adam Elliot in Esquesing.