

ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

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September - October 2025

www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.com

HALTON HERITAGE SERVICES TO CLOSE

Heritage Services will close on January 1st 2026 through a motion by Halton Regional Council. In spite of claims to have consulted the heritage community, the Esquesing Historical Society was never consulted.

They will deaccession over 30,000 items. Mayor Ann Lawlor said, “There has been concern that artifacts reflective of our community’s history may be lost,” she said. “I want residents to know that the deaccessioning process will ensure that items of significance to Halton Hills and Esquesing Township will be preserved.” The Mayor will be working with the Esquesing Historical Society.

The *Toronto Star* published a long editorial on August 14th under the headline, “Halton Makes a historic unforced error.” Jamie Bradburn begins, “In an era rife with misinformation, in which governments increasingly attempt to control their jurisdictions’ historical narratives, public archives have become more important than ever... They create a sense of community, identity and continuity.”

The closing of the Museum is a betrayal of the trust that donors had when they donated items to the Museum to help document the past history of the County/Region. This is especially true since all items that are not taken by municipalities or museums will be auctioned off to the highest bidder, scattering items far and wide into private collections.

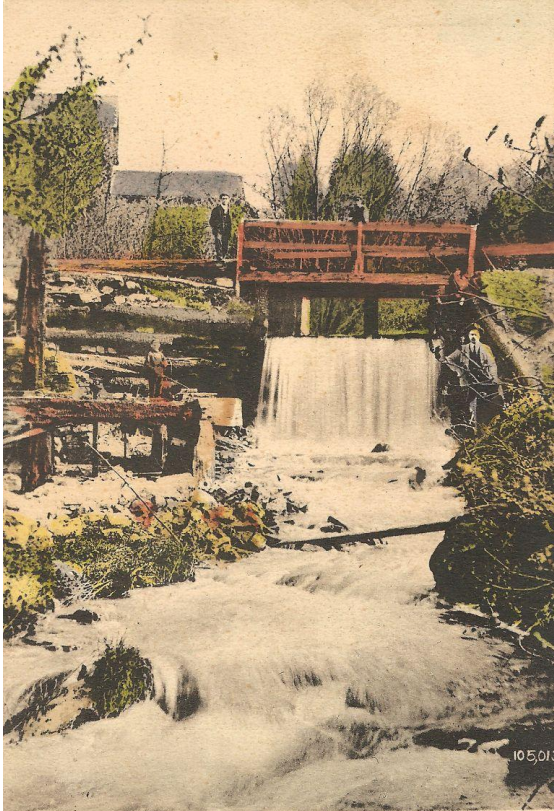
As draconian as this step seems, Halton Region has neglected their obligations to the Museum for decades. A lack of promotion and volunteers makes the decision to close seem inevitable.



An old sled is given to Halton County Museum by auctioneer Frank Petch and his wife Dora. Two children are also in sled. Roy Hendley is standing at left.
PHOTOGRAPHER: Peter Jones EHS02408

LIMEHOUSE

This quiet village was more lively than it has been for a long time over the holiday. The coming of the Nikators (a Sunday School class) from Toronto and the Boy Scout Bugle Band from Acton and the union of their forces here brought lively times and pleasant experiences. There were forty boys in the company and they certainly undertook to have



Falls, Limehouse, Ont., Canada

EHS21852

a real enjoyable holiday. The rugged scenery, the rocks and caves, the brooks and ponds, the falls, the kilns, the saw mill, all contributed to the pleasures of the outing.

Mr. E.J. Moore of Toronto...and Mr. N. F. Moore, Scoutmaster... explored everything about Limehouse, from the bottom of the pond to Jim Grant's hay mow.

The old church was their rendezvous. Here they bunked...

Saturday afternoon a base ball match was played with the noted Limehouse team. The home team outclassed the visitors. Mr. Gowdy started the saw mill to demonstrate for the edification of the boys the making of lumber. Each in turn was invited to take the lever and saw a board himself. Some went fishing and exploring was an hourly pastime. In the evening a series of limelight views was shown by Douglas Gowdy, the Boy Scout Band gave a programme, and brief addresses by each of the leaders and Mr. Gowdy filled an

enjoyable evening.

On Sunday afternoon the forty lads marched to the Sixth Line Church to Sunday School... Mr. John Newton, of Sarnia, treated the boys to ice cream on Monday... - *Acton Free Press*, 27 May 1920

The Limehouse Indians baseball team are L to R standing, Eddie Dobbie, Rex Polkinghorn, Bert McDowell, Will Marshall, Ed Wheeler and Bill Milliere; sitting are Cecil Polkinghorn, Will McDowell, Alf Marshall, Roy McGill and Will Osburn. 1919
EHS21860





Former Limehouse Hotel 1948

EHS20797



LEFT: The powder magazine in 1973
EHS21819
RIGHT: Saw mill arch 1973
EHS21829



A view of the set kilns with protective lean-to roof, the draw kiln above them and box cars on the railway siding. C. 1891

EHS21849





ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

2025-2026

- Wed. 10 Sept. **LIMEHOUSE WALKING TOUR**
Local historian Mark Rowe will lead a tour focusing on the heyday of industrial prosperity in the village. We will be hiking over uneven ground in the Conservation Area.
School Parking lot, 11139 22 Sideroad, Limehouse, ON 7:00 p.m.
- Wed. 8 Oct. **THIEVES, BURGLARS AND INCENDIARIES**
Robberies, horse stealing, home invasions, counterfeiting and murder! Local historian Mark Rowe digs beneath the shocking headlines of the 1850s to identify the master criminal behind a resurgence of the Markham Gang in this area.
Knox Presbyterian Church, 116 Main St. S., Georgetown, ON 7:00
- Wed. 12 Nov. **THE WAR OF 1812**
The War of 1812 did not result in the change of any territory, but its effects were long lasting, with the war still making up part of Canadians cultural identity. Charles Veale will examine the war in Upper Canada and will examine a few local connections.
Knox Presbyterian Church, 116 Main St. S., Georgetown, ON 7:00
- December The EHS does not hold a public meeting in December
- Wed. 14 Jan. **HERITAGE HALTON HILLS**
Heritage Halton Hills has continued their designation work throughout Halton Hills. Heritage Halton Hills members John Mark Rowe and Ray Denny will provide updates on the 2025 designated buildings in Halton Hills.
Knox Presbyterian Church, 116 Main St. S., Georgetown, ON 7:00

INVITE YOUR NEIGHBOUR TO BECOME A MEMBER!

- All Meetings are FREE to attend -

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	Social Media

Send all inquiries to: esquesinghs@gmail.com
<http://esquesinghistoricalsociety.com>



Follow us on Facebook

EHS NEWSLETTER

John Mark Rowe prepared this newsletter with assistance from Karen Hunter. 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!

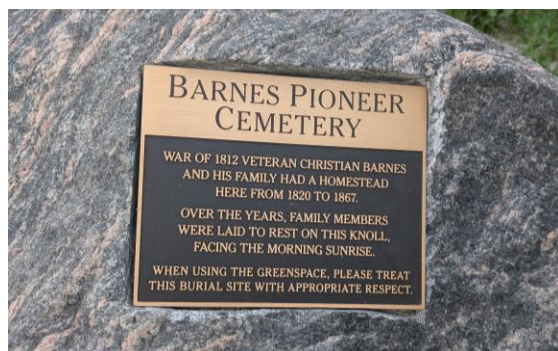
MEMBERSHIP

We currently have 77 paid 2025 members. Our membership year runs from February. The individual membership rate is \$20. The family or institution rate is \$25. Payment can be made via Interac transfer to

EHS.etransfer@gmail.com

The EHS will accept personal cheques from our members. Please note that all cheques must be made payable to "Esquesing Historical Society", fully spelled out. Cheques can be mailed to our post box, dropped off at the home of any executive member or at one of our meetings. Exact change can be accepted at meetings.

EHS ARCHIVES



The Town of Halton Hills has placed the plaque (pictured above) for the Barnes Family Cemetery in the Halton Hills Drive

parkette at 61 Halton Hills Drive.

Ray Denny has posted a great photo essay on the EHS website to mark the 50th anniversary of the Esquesing Historical Society.

The EHS accepted a Mohawk College student, Olivia Attrado, this summer to work remotely on adding images to Halton Hills Images from our collection. We now have 7035 images uploaded to Halton Hills Images.

EHS HISTORY PRIZE WINNERS

The Society once again offered a history prize of \$200 to graduates of the three Halton Hills High Schools. The winners were: Acton District High School: **Harlow Rhynold**; Georgetown High School: **Rylan Rutherford**; Christ the King Secondary School: **Alessandra Scorgia**.

HERITAGE HALTON HILLS

Heritage Halton Hills organized four tours of Prospect Park this summer, led by Scott Brooks or Mark Rowe. The committee continues to work towards designating as many heritage buildings as possible before a government-imposed deadline.

HALTON HILLS SPORTS MUSEUM

<http://haltonhillssportsmuseum.blogspot.ca/> The Sports Museum are currently working on plans for a virtual museum in the lobby of the MoldMasters SportsPlex.

L.M. MONTGOMERY MUSEUM

<https://lmmontgomerynorval.com/>

CANADIANA ON-LINE

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

ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO

www.archives.gov.on.ca

HALTON-PEEL OGS

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

STREETSVILLE HIST. SOCIETY

Leslie Log House, 4415 Mississauga Rd. Streetsville

Sept. 18 Omar el Sharkawy, *A re-enactor with the 2nd York Regiment of Militia*, Streetsville Legion, 101 Church St. @ 7p.m.

Nov. 20 Ted Barris, *Battle of Britain: Canadian Airmen in Their Finest Hour*,

Streetsville Legion, 101 Church St. @ 7p.m.

BRAMPTON HIST. SOCIETY

Sept. 18 Gregory Klages, *Bush Friends All Around: A ranger's experience of early 20th-century Algonquin Park*

Oct. 16 Adam Bunch, *The Toronto Book of the Dead & The City's Morbid Past*

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

MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sept. 18 Susan Arness, *Basics of House History and Land Record Research* 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 16 Nancy Cuttle and Patrick Gallagher, *Celebrating our Heritage*, 7:30 p.m.

Waldie Blacksmith Shop at 16 James, Milton at 7:15 p.m.

OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Coach House, 8 Navy Street.

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

Sept. 18 – Ross Noel, *Stonehooking*

NASAGIWEYA HIST. SOCIETY

info@nasagiweyahistoricalsociety.com

Sept. 9 – Picnic / BBQ

Oct. 14 -TBD

TRAFALGAR HIST. SOCIETY

Sept. 9 -Tom Holbrook, *Canadian canning jars – a way of preserving more than food*, 7 p.m.

Sept. 27 – Fair- *Agricultural History of Trafalgar Township* at Palermo Schoolhouse

LORNE SCOTS REGIMENTAL MUSEUM

55 Queen St E, Brampton.

GLEN WILLIAMS' 200th

Sept. 6 -Corn roast & square dance @ St. Alban's

Sept. 14 -Bell ringing and Historical worship @ St. Alban's 10 a.m.

Sept. 27 -Glen Williams Bicentennial Day 11-4 at Glen Ball Park, Town Hall, St. Alban's and Martin barn.

-Carnival games; heritage crafts; Public School reunion; Agricultural competition; Heritage War Museum; Glen Williams Photo display; Historical Walking Tour (1p.m.); lawn bowling demos; blacksmith demos; heritage weaving

and spinning; food vendors! Visit:

<https://glenwilliams200.godaddysites.com/>

ACTON 200th ANNIVERSARY

Oct. 19 -Scott Brooks leads a tour of Fairview Cemetery @ 2 p.m.

LIMEHOUSE BBQ & CORN ROAST

Sept. 13 @ Limehouse Hall 4:30-6:30

BANK NOTES OF THE KING

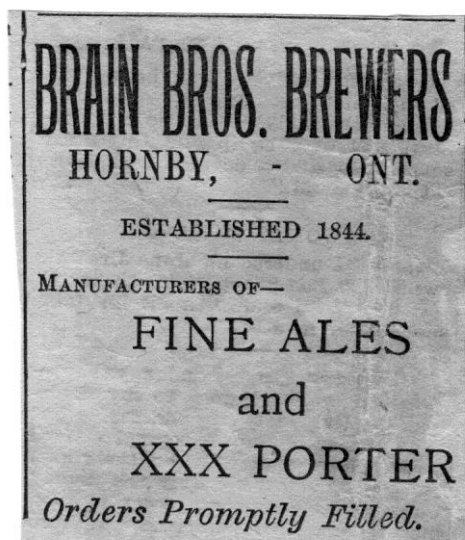
On May 6, 2023, the Government of Canada announced that the next \$20 bank note will continue to feature a portrait of the reigning monarch, King Charles III.

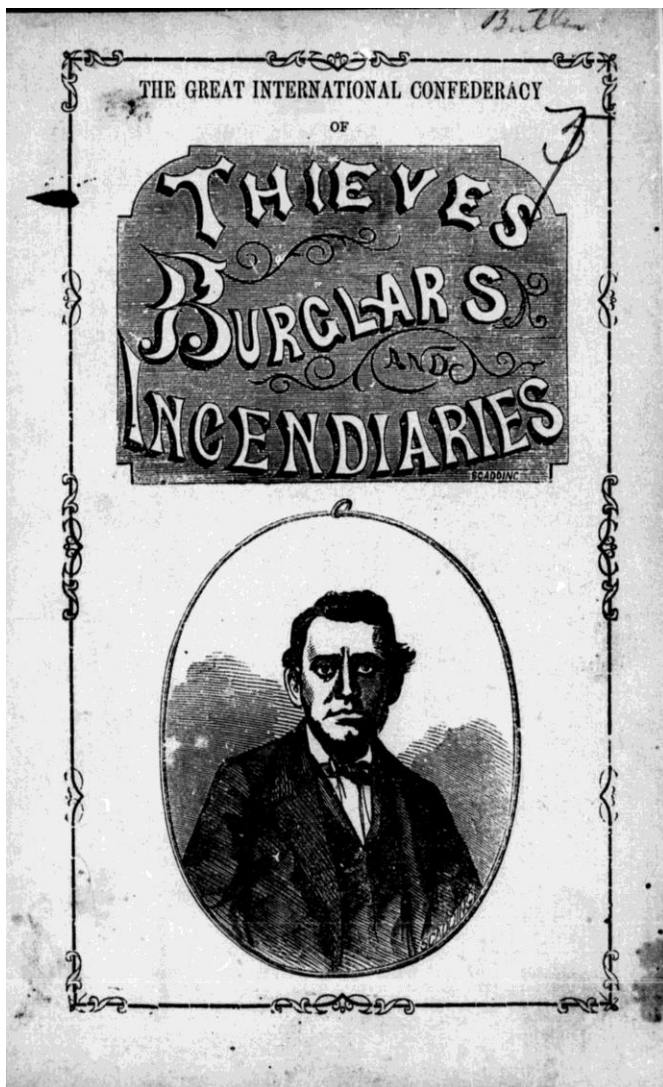
The Minister of Finance has now also confirmed that the Canadian National Vimy Memorial will remain on the back of the note.

We expect the new \$20 note to begin circulating in early 2027. In the meantime, our current \$20 note featuring Queen Elizabeth will continue to circulate.

EHS ARCHIVE LOAN FEATURE OF OAKVILLE EXHIBIT

Oakville Museum at Erchless Estate will feature the record book for beer sales for Brain Brewery, Hornby in their new exhibition – *Good Libations – A History of Alcohol in Oakville*. Opening 25 October 2025, the book covers all sales from 1864 to 1871. The advertisement below is from 1901.





Was the “Markham Gang” Ever Broken Up?

Nine years ago, the public was startled by evidence of the existence of an extensive band of robbers, burglars, and horse thieves extending over a considerable portion of Upper Canada and having connections in the United States. To these formidable marauders the local name of the “Markham Gang” was given; but if it was intended to designate the township of Markham as the sole location of these thieves, it did injustice to that place, and gave to the gang a name far more limited than there was reason to believe, was the scene of their operations. Some slight inroads have been made upon this gang of banded robbers and thieves, and we are led by recent circumstances to ask whether it was ever broken up? The prevalence of horse thieving over nearly the whole of Upper Canada, with several indications, seem to attest the existence of the organization in more than its original strength. We shall touch upon some of the

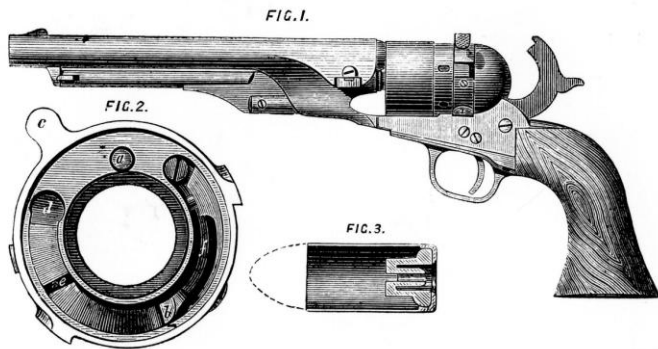
evidence that goes to establish this view of the case.

There are strong grounds for supposing that Whitchurch and not Markham, is the headquarters of the gang, and the organization is believed to extend over the counties of York, Ontario, Peel, Simcoe, Grey and Halton.

The circumstances connected with the arrest of one Reinhart, who lived at Silvercreek, Esquesing for burglary, strengthen the suspicion that this gang is still in existence. About a fortnight ago, two men entered the house of Major Barnes, in Esquesing; one of them masked, and the other with his face blackened. It was in the night and Major Barnes was in bed. The burglars demanded his money, presenting a revolver at his head. He had a pistol; but the robbers took it from him and compelled him to give up his money, amounting to two hundred and forty dollars. Reinhart has been arrested; Captain Barnes recognized him by his voice and build, in spite of the mask. Since the

The burglars demanded his money, presenting a revolver at his head.

THE COLT BREECH-LOADING
REVOLVER.



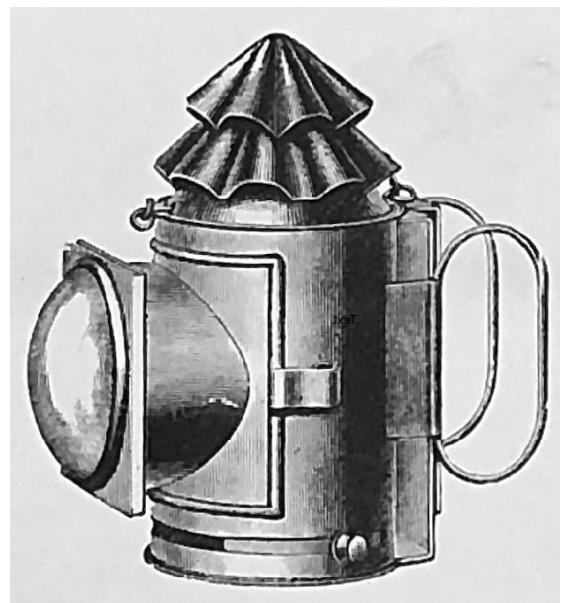
arrest of Reinhart, a circumstance has been recalled which fixes suspicion on him as a horse thief.

It is this: Last Fall, a horse was stolen near Paris; and very shortly afterwards, a man answering to the name and description of Reinhart, was in Peterboro' offering for sale a horse at a price that excited suspicion of his being stolen. The person offering him was assailed with this suspicion, when, with a great effort at boldness, he tried

to laugh down the accusation by saying he was Mr. Reinhart of Silvercreek, Esquesing. He, however, took the first opportunity to decamp, leaving the horse behind him. The animal was, we believe, restored to his owner. The owner of the animal or the authorities of Peterboro' should see that Reinhart be put on trial for this theft if, on examination, there be good reason to believe that he is the person. For some time past, a year or more, there has existed a strong suspicion in Esquesing against certain persons that they were connected with a gang of horse-thieves; and that their places were the rendezvous of these worthies, a sort of central point from which their operations diverged; but till now no one has been bold enough to express suspicions.

On the same night that Major Barnes was robbed, another robbery was attempted at one of the labourers' villages, on the Grand Trunk Railway, two or three miles west of Georgetown. This occurrence took place about three hours after the robbery of Major Barnes, and there can be hardly a doubt that the same parties were guilty of both acts.

A person of the name of Matthews, a butcher who was known to have money, and who resided nearly in the centre of the village of shanties, had his dwelling broken into by two persons, who struck him with a club that rendered him for a time, insensible. His wife escaped, and the robbers, after ransacking some boxes went off without getting any money; Matthews having his cash in the pockets of his trousers, which were put under his bed. In ransacking the house, the robbers used a dark lantern, the lamp of which they left behind. They were probably hurried away by discovering that Matthews' wife had gone, and fearing that she might bring a force to arrest them. The dark lantern lamp may probably lead to further discoveries and arrests.



Last Fall another person residing near one corner of the township of Esquesing, supposed to be connected with this gang of horse thieves was arrested; and is to be tried this spring at Guelph. Suspicion had long since rested on this man as the associate and harbourer of horse thieves.

An extensive robbery of a store at Rockwood, last Fall, was supposed to be the work of...

Some time ago, a person from the neighbourhood of Short Hills went to reside near Silvercreek, taken there it was believed, by a person of considerable means. This man passed for a "Yankee" doctor: but there is reason to believe that the "doctor" was assumed as a cloak to his real profession, which was not discovered while he lived. He lived obscurely in a small house; and with his medical pretensions contrived to get along without exciting any active suspicions. At length he died; and after his death it was discovered that a fire was kept in the house, which ought to have been empty, on Sundays. Suspicion was aroused by this circumstance; and an investigation of the mystery was determined on. Barber and Young of Georgetown, opened the way to the exploration of the premises, wherein were discovered dies, metals and all the apparatus for coining. But as the "doctor" was dead, he became the scape-goat; nothing to warrant the arrest of any particular party having been elicited, although suspicion rests on several. The connection of this person with some known or strongly suspected of having belonged to the "Markham Gang" years ago, is a circumstance of strong suspicion, tending to establish not only the continued existence of this band of desperadoes but their extension over parts of the country, where they had not at first a footing.



It is suspected that the double murderer, Townsend, belonged to this gang. The expression "Townsend Gang" has been heard in the mouths of parties arrested for robbery. Townsend, it will be remembered, first shot Mr. Nelles, near Cayuga, through the panel of his door, and then shot the constable who tried to arrest him. A strong suspicion is said to exist, that Townsend, dressed in women's clothes, stopped at a small house near Georgetown, one night during the winter; a man disguised as a woman having gone in after dark and begged a night's lodging. It will be remembered that a youthful imitator of Jack Sheppard, now in Toronto gaol, was, at the time of his arrest, heard hurraing for the Townsend Gang; and the conspiracy into which he enticed several of the prisoners to enter, to break gaol, and even to commit murder if necessary, in doing so, are especially the first evidences he may be of that gang.

These facts, which many others of strong corroborative tendency might be added, leave little room to doubt that this formidable band of marauders is still unbroken; and that it is even extending its nefarious operations. Can no plan be devised for breaking it up and ridding the country of this infamous organization?

-*The Daily Leader*, Toronto, 3 April 1855

THE CHALLENGE OF CONSERVING HERITAGE WINDOWS

By Don Taylor -*CHOnews*, Summer 2025

The importance of retaining original windows in heritage buildings is strongly emphasized in all heritage conservation guidelines...

Owners and contractors who promote replacement windows often do not take into account that such windows will themselves have to be replaced after about 30 years due to the failure of the insulated glass units. Heritage windows are typically made of excellent quality wood, and if they have already lasted over 100 years can continue indefinitely with occasional maintenance. Storm windows, however, may eventually deteriorate due to their extra exposure to weather...

If the use of storm windows is judged to be unacceptable, there are several alternatives. At the outset it should be noted that there is no accepted best way, even among window experts, for upgrading heritage windows to modern thermal standards...

An early approach... was to replace them with aluminum storm windows... Another approach, more recent and better, is to construct a slim interior frame for holding glass panes. This frame structure does not affect the appearance from the outside, and if carefully constructed, is not very noticeable from inside... they have significant operating and window-washing issues.

Another approach... is to replace the original glass with a single insulated glass unit installed in the outer frame of the existing sash.... This approach leaves muntin bars in place on the interior, but the exterior portions have to be cut away to allow the glass unit to meet the muntins flush... has advantages of only minor impacts on appearance... and eliminates the need for storm windows. Its major disadvantage is that the insulated glass units will require replacement after several decades... Of course, replacement of the original glass means that the characteristic irregularities of the period glass is lost, and in some cases, this may be regretted...

Another approach... is much less expensive and less intrusive. A pane of Lexan or glass of 2 mm thickness is fitted to the interior of each glass pane, separated from it by 3x3 mm Lexan spacers around the circumference, The edges are sealed with caulking that can be painted to match the wood sash. It is invisible from the outside, hardly noticeable from the inside, is totally reversible with no damage and retains original glass... If the window has many small panes an alternative method uses a single large pane covering the entire glass area. It would be sealed around the circumference with caulking and held in place with unobtrusive wood or metal strips...

-excerpt from three-page essay