

ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

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May - June 2025

www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.com

HERITAGE PROPERTIES DESIGNATED IN 2024



Roe Block -49-57 Main St. South, Georgetown

The Roe Block at 49-57 Main Street South has physical and design value as a representative 19th-century commercial structure within downtown Georgetown. The two-storey building height with a centre block, red brick exterior with stepped crenellated cornice, vertical second-

storey windows with brick voussoirs and stone sills, and recessed entry doors, while reflective of typical commercial buildings constructed within Ontario during this period,

1894 Herald



**FOREIGN FRUIT
STORE !**

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Bananas, Oranges, Lemons,  
Pine Apples,  
Dates, Figs, Prunes, Raisins,  
Confectionery.  
All kinds of Canned Goods,  
Bulk Pickles.  
Cigars, Cigarettes, Tobacco.  
St. Leon (Mineral Water.)  
Oysters in Season.

**T. M. GRAHAM, - Georgetown.**  
Roe Block, No. 3.

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



incorporates several unique characteristics.

The Roe Block at 49-57 Main Street South has historical and associative value as it relates to Georgetown's original merchant, John Sumpter. It is directly associated with the Canadian immigrant story of Lee Sing (local laundryman) and the Chou family (local restauranters). It is also associated with the evolution of local

1903 Herald

politics including John Joseph Gibbons and his roles as barber, town councillor, town assessor, and ultimately Mayor of Georgetown.

The Roe Block at 49-57 Main Street South has contextual value as it is important in defining the built heritage character of the downtown. The existing two-storey building remains in its original location, physically and functionally linked to its surroundings as a commercial property on the Georgetown main street.

1917 Herald



Steve McNamara photo

## List of Heritage Properties Designated in 2024

|                                       |                                 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 12-16 Adamson Street South            | St. Paul's Anglican Church      |
| List 129 Main St. S. Georgetown       | John Morgan House               |
| 55 Mill St. E., Acton                 | Sunderland Villa                |
| 14 Tweedle Street (Glen Williams)     | Sykes & Ainley Worker's Cottage |
| 49 – 57 Main Street South, Georgetown | Roe Block                       |
| (50) 52 Main Street South, Georgetown | McKinley Dentistry              |
| 87 Main Street South, Georgetown      | Barclay Block Section           |
| 61 – 65 Main Street South, Georgetown | Armour Block                    |
| 46 Mill Street East, Acton            | Perryman-Mainprize Building     |
| 25 Mountain Street, Glen Williams     | Barracough House                |
| 8 James Street, Georgetown            | J.B. Mackenzie Lumber Site      |
| 116 Main Street South                 | Knox Presbyterian Church        |
| 499 Guelph Street, Norval             | Norval Presbyterian Church      |
| 9094 Regional Road 25, Scotch Block   | Chisholm Homestead              |
| 9156 Trafalgar Road, Ashgrove         | Currie Farm House               |
| 13 Frederick St N Acton               | James Moore House               |
| 5 Albert Street Georgetown            | Grey Vernon                     |
| 50 Queen St Georgetown                | Bailey-Thompson House           |
| 91 Mill Street East                   | Arnold House                    |
| 14-16 Queen St Georgetown             | Wright Family House             |
| 22 Queen St Georgetown                | UENI                            |
| 24 Queen St Georgetown                | ILLAHEE                         |
| 29 Bower Street Acton                 | United Church Parsonage         |
| 35 Bower Street, Acton                | Clark House                     |
| 41 Bower Street, Acton                | Henderson-Mason House           |
| 10 Noble Street, Norval               | Noble House                     |



Noble House, Norval



Chisholm House Scotch Block



## **ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

2025

Wed. 14 May

### **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 2024 designated buildings in Halton Hills. This topic was carried forward from the February 12<sup>th</sup> snowstorm.

***Knox Presbyterian Church, 116 Main St. S., Georgetown, ON 7:00***

Wed. 11 June

### **WALKING TOUR OF NORVAL**

Local historian Kathy Gastle will highlight the Lucy Maud Montgomery Garden for the Senses, the LMM Museum cottage and the former Manse, once home to LM Montgomery, as we wander through the village.

***Norval Park, 477 Guelph Street, Norval, ON 7:00***

Tues. 1 July

### **GLEN WILLIAMS WALKING TOUR**

Local historian John Mark Rowe will lead a Main Street tour of the village. It will conclude in time to get a spot to watch the Canada Day parade.

***Williams Mill, 515 Main Street, Glen Williams, ON, 10 a.m.***

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.***

**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](mailto:esquesinghs@gmail.com)  
<http://esquesinghistoricalsociety.com>



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### 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](mailto: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

Austin Foster, the Heritage Halton Hills student who also worked in the EHS Archives, finished his position on 11 April. He made a welcome contribution to the digitization of items in our Archives.

The Town of Halton Hills has prepared a plaque for the Barnes Family Cemetery on the Halton Hills’ Town Hall property. The site will be identified with a bench, the plaque and plantings. The plaque will read:

#### **Barnes Pioneer Cemetery**

*“War of 1812 veteran Christian Barnes and his family had a homestead here from 1820 to*

*1867.*

*Over the years, family members were laid to rest on this knoll, facing the morning sunrise.*

*When using the greenspace, please treat this burial site with appropriate respect.”*

The 2024 archival report, presented at the AGM is posted on our website.

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

### HERITAGE HALTON HILLS

Heritage Halton Hills 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](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca)

### HALTON-PEEL OGS

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

### STREETSVILLE HIST. SOCIETY

Leslie Log House, 4415 Mississauga Rd. Streetsville

May 31 -Tour of Oakville Museum

### BRAMPTON HIST. SOCIETY

15 May -Stewart Sherriff, *Lorne Scots Regimental Museum*

19 June -Kyle Neill, *Brampton's Archival Gems in the Peel Archives*

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

### MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

15 May -Mike Twiss, *Robertson Manufacturing*, 7:30 p.m.

19 June -Members’ only pot-luck dinner.

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

## OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

4 May -Afternoon tea at The Cottages at the Erchless Estate, 110 King St., Oakville

18 June -Ron Foss, *Canada's first successful gasoline motor car*, 7:30 at The Coach House, 8 Navy Street.

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

## NASAGIWEYA HIST. SOCIETY

[info@nasagiweyahistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@nasagiweyahistoricalsociety.com)

May 13 -Alan Ackman, Nassagaweya's Famous Animator @7:30 p.m.

June -Cemetery visit to be planned – see website.

## TRAFALGAR HIST. SOCIETY

May 16 -Open Archives at Palermo Schoolhouse 1:30-3:30

June 3 -Speaker night -John McDonald

June 20 -Open Archives at Palermo Schoolhouse 1:30-3:30

## LORNE SCOTS REGIMENTAL MUSEUM

55 Queen St E, Brampton.

June 11 -676 Lorne Scots RCACC Annual Ceremonial Review, Col J.R. Barber Armoury @ 7p.m.

## GLEN WILLIAMS' 200th

May 1 – Kids Glen200 Logo colouring contest

May 4 -Family Bruce Trail Hike

May 31 – “Canadian Maple” quilt auction closes. Bidding is now open for this quilt made by The Hobby Horse.

June 7 -en plein sketching / painting event

June 15 -Bell Ringing and Glen200 reunion

June 22 -Mississaugas of the Credit Flag Raising ceremony

July 1 – Mark Rowe historical walking tour @ 10 a.m. at the Williams Mill

Sept. 1 -Glen Photo contest closes

Sept. 6 -Corn roast and dance at St. Alban's Visit:

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

## ACTON 200th ANNIVERSARY

May 25 -Scott Brooks tour of Acton Pioneer Cemetery @ 2 p.m.

June 29 -Scott Brooks presentation at Rotary Bandshell in the Park @ 7 p.m.

July 20 -Scott Brooks leads downtown Acton tour from Mill-Main parkette @ 7 p.m.

August 24 - Scott Brooks leads downtown Acton tour from Mil-Main parkette @ 7 p.m.

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



## 175<sup>th</sup> FOR ERIN FALL FAIR

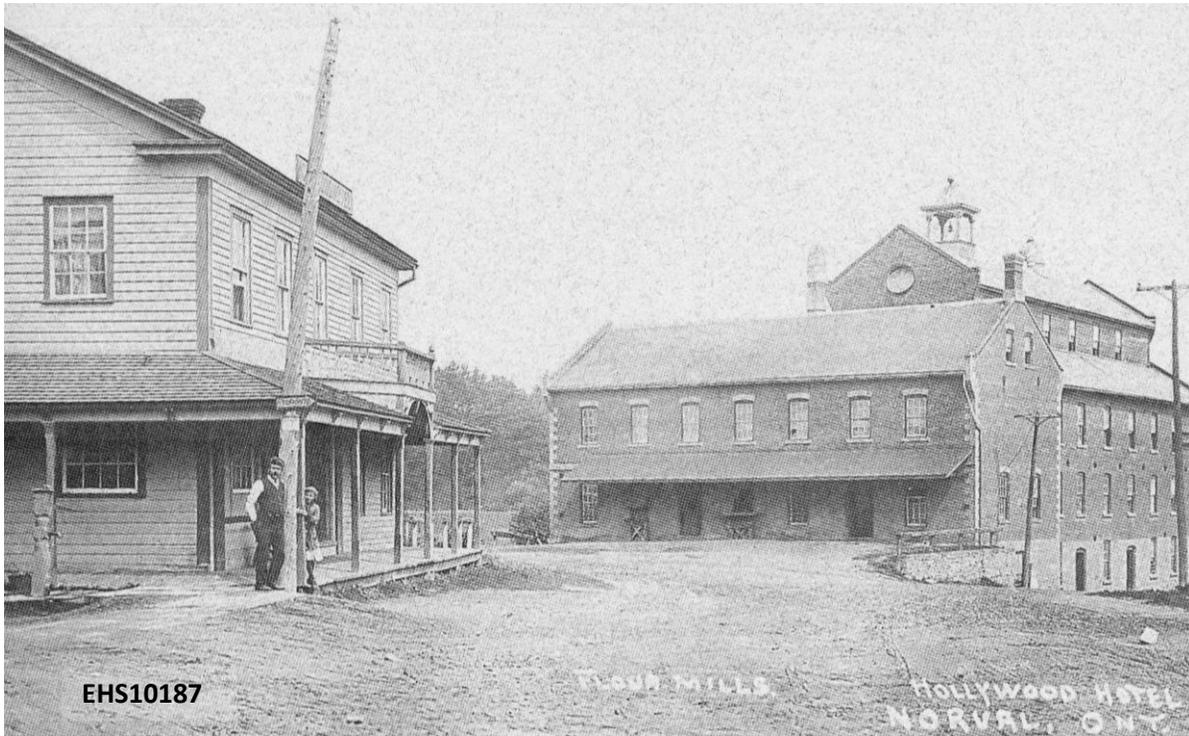
June Switzer's book on the Erin Fall Fair is about 50 years in the making, she says, but arguably it was much longer than that. She began working on it when she was a High School teacher in Erin. She produced a spiral-bound book in 2000 for the Ag Society's 150<sup>th</sup>. There will initially be a limited run of 200 copies. The \$30 book can be ordered from Switzer at [jswitzer@sentek.net](mailto:jswitzer@sentek.net)

## CHELTENHAM BADLANDS

**The Cheltenham Badlands will open for the season on May 9!** As one of Ontario's geological treasures, the Badlands is a must-see spot this season. Reservations only through Ontario Heritage Trust website. Fees range from \$10 to \$20 for a 90-minute visit.

## NORVAL -History of Village told to WI Members

...Dorothy McLean gave the history of the Norval Mills and the mill owners from 1820 to 1954, and the several changes to the road through the village. There is nothing to show today of where the mills were located – nothing but a busy highway with bumper-to-bumper traffic waiting at the main corner for the light to turn green so they can speed on their way through the village.

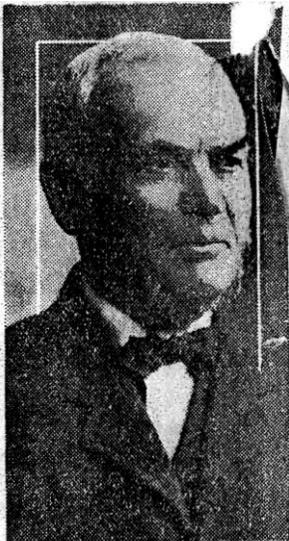


The mills were a short distance east of the Hollywood Tavern (Norval Convenience) and the road curved around south of the mills for one hundred years. In 1920 when the highway came through they changed the road to curve around north of the mills. However, to make room for the widened road the Hollywood House lost a large portion of the front of the building.

James McNab built the dam and first mills in the early 1820s. They included a saw mill, a flour mill and an ashery to make soap. A flax mill (that in later years became a woollen mill), a grist mill and a cooperage shop to make barrels for shipping the flour soon followed around which the village quickly grew.

James and William Gooderham of the Gooderham and Worts Co. had a distillery near the mills and rented the mills for a few years. They also had a tannery and general store here. In the flats below the mills were a saw mill, a brass factory and an ashery. Farmers supplied the ash when they burned trees as they cleared the land.

When Robert Noble purchased the mills from a bank in 1868 he rebuilt them. He also built a new storehouse, cooper shop, and

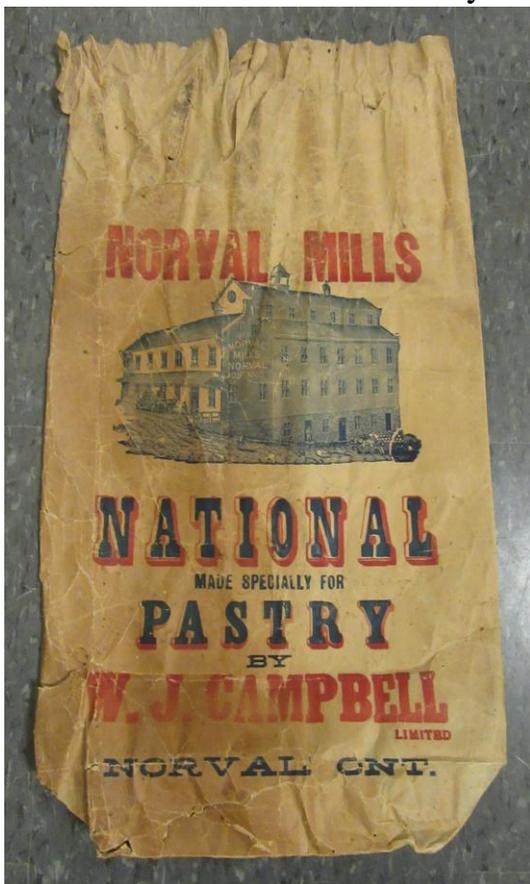


ROBERT NOBLE, of Carlisle, England, who took over the original McNab mill in 1868.

barrel sheds. The woollen mill burned down and was replaced by a new grist mill. In later years Robert was joined by his son Colonel Alex Noble. They continued increasing the plant until the output was 400 barrels of flour a day. Farmers hauled their wheat in and their flour home for 16 miles around. Flour was shipped all over Canada and to many countries in the world. During this time the industry supported some 20 to 30 families.

During these years the saw mill did a booming business turning out 200 000 feet of lumber a day. There was a plentiful supply of white pine from the farmers as they cleared their lands. Boat builders in England were among those supplied with this choice lumber.

The mills were owned by the Nobles for 50 years until 1919.



made Norval a busy and prosperous village.

The highway that was supposed to bring business to the village did just the opposite and people went to town to shop. Farmers changed from growing wheat to dairy farms, beef cattle and market gardening and business gradually declined.



COL. ALEX. NOBLE, 20th Halton Rifles, until 1919 proprietor of the Noble Mills at Norval, who made "Noble" and Norval" synonymous with good flour.

Norval was on the stage coach road from Toronto to Guelph via Streetsville. At one time a plank road came up what is now Winston Churchill Blvd., to Norval and on to Georgetown. It made a lovely boulevard until the planks and sleepers began to rot and then it was holy terror!

Travellers on the stage coach road had to have a place to rest and eat and their horses looked after. There were four hotels (the Hollywood Tavern the only one remaining), 3 blacksmiths, 3 saddlers and harness makers, a carriage maker, as well as two general stores, a butcher shop, a bakery, a tailor, a book agent, a broom factory and various other businesses. All this added to the industrious mills



EHS16975



Early one cold January morning in 1930, the flour mills burned to the ground in a spectacular fire. They were owned at that time by W.B. Browne & Co. with W.G.M. Browne as manager (Joan Carter's and Gordon Browne's father). The grist mill was saved but in 1954 Hurricane Hazel damaged the building so badly it had to be torn down. No more mills for the road to wind around so in 1973 the road was filled in and the highway straightened through the village. To make the road straight for the convenience of traffic, one house at the east end of the village had to be demolished and a new bridge built. Norval's busy prosperous mills are buried beneath the paved highway with not even a memorial stone to mark the spot... -*Georgetown Independent*, 19 Nov. 1986.

Nels and Laura Robinson and children, Dunc and Patsy, in their back yard at 4 Adamson Street. The burnt-out shell of the Norval Flour Mill is in the background. **EHS20697**



The abandoned Norval grist mill in 1961, which was damaged in Hurricane Hazel. Hollywood House is in the background. It was demolished to make way for a new Highway #7 route. **EHS02326**

## Norval Telephone Service

In 1884, the first telephone line came through on the poles beside the Grand Trunk Railway, north of the village.

### 1907 NORVAL BELL TELEPHONE LISTINGS

|                                              |                                     |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 20a Grand Trunk Railway agents' office       | 20b Freight sheds                   |
| 62a R. Noble, Flour Mills (public telephone) | 62b Depot                           |
| 62c W.J. Barnhill, General Store             | 62f Dr. S. Webster, Physician       |
| 62h Thos. Leslie, Farmer                     | 62i J.L. Clark, Farmer              |
| 62k Mrs. J. Watkins, Farm                    | 62n F. Anthony, Stoves and Hardware |
| 62r J. Buie, Thresher                        | 62s R. Groat, Cheese Factory        |
| 62w H. Clark, Cattle Dealer                  | 62x Wm. Early, Farmer               |
| 62y Mrs. J. Watkins, Residence               |                                     |

In the 1920s-1930s as Norval was on the boundary of Halton and Peel, you had a choice of having either the Brampton exchange or the Georgetown exchange. It was ten cents to call Brampton, unless you went to a neighbour with a Brampton phone. That was a lot of money as a chocolate bar, or an ice cream cone was five cents, and it was a cent for five licorice "black babies." The Flour mill and Barnhill's Store had both exchanges. But you could write to Brampton, a stamp was only two cents.

We were all on 'party lines,' so you didn't have a very private conversation, as some were 'listeners.' Our phone ring was 90 ring 2 – two long cranks of the handle. You called your friends by cranking the handle, if you were on the same line. For other calls you had to press a button and give a long crank of the handle to get the operator.

- "Telephone Service," *Norval History 1820-1950*, Joan (Browne) Carter, 1997.

### Norval Postmasters

|                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| William Clay          | 1836-1862 |
| Joseph Kyle           | 1862-1864 |
| William Clay          | 1864-1875 |
| William Buchanan      | 1875-1876 |
| William Clay          | 1877-1885 |
| David W. Vance        | 1885-1891 |
| Dr. Samuel Webster    | 1891-1897 |
| William Barnhill      | 1897-1907 |
| Everett Barnhill      | 1907-1950 |
| Hardy H. Barnhill     | 1950-1956 |
| William John Kirkwood | 1956-1957 |
| Norman Early Fendley  | 1957      |
| Ormie Carter          | 1958-1970 |
| Joan Carter           | 1970-1990 |

