



Built in 1899, the Beardmore warehouse at the Grand Trunk Railway station was a hive of activity in the early days of 1900. Beardmore had 175 employees when it was built, a number which had blossomed to 520 by 1926. After the company closed the operation there, Mason Knitting, an Acton company, occupied the premises until it closed. It was completely renovated and has been occupied by the old Hide House since November 1980.

Environmental clean-up of Beardmore land is complete

By Frances Niblock

Twenty years after the Beardmore tannery stopped producing leather, a Ministry of Environment approved cleanup plan for the former tannery lands is complete.

For the "foreseeable future" a landfill with two cells on the 160-acre property will be monitored and maintained, and nearby groundwater tested for contaminants as required by the site decommissioning plans.

The cleanup began six years ago, when property owner — Canada Packers, now Maple Leaf Mills — decided it wanted to decommission, or cleanup the lands and hired Connestoga Rovers Engineers to erase the environmental impact of years of tannery operations on the land.

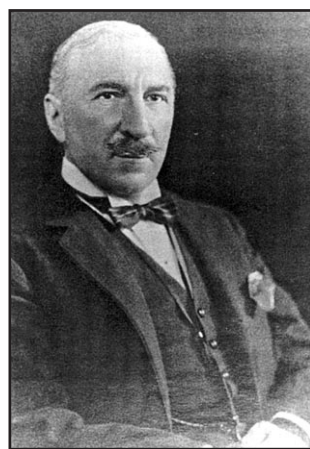
The Ministry of Environment required that the cleanup have no adverse impact on the environment or to human health and Maple Leaf took the cleanup further than required by Ministry regulations at the time.

Buildings that had not burned down were dismantled, a PCB-storage facility on the site was removed last fall, and this summer, Connestoga relocated contaminated soil from several spray fields. Beardmore sprayed water used in the tanning process on its land to get rid of it — to a two-cell landfill on the property, one visible from Highway 25 beside Superior Glove, and a smaller one to the east in the bush. The landfill takes up just 5 per cent of the total property.

Connestoga's project manager Robert Medsger said they are preparing a final set of drawings indicating how the work was completed to complete the files with the Ministry of Environment.

"Then, at that point, the site kind of goes into an operation, monitoring and maintenance phase. I don't know if it will be in perpetuity — but for the foreseeable future that will be going on and certainly taking care of the landfills will be a long term process," Medsger said.

Dorienne Cushman, a senior environmental officer with the Ministry of Environment said an annual report would en-



Alfred O. Beardmore (1859-1946). He was President of the Muskoka Leather and Acton Tanneries. Colonel Beardmore retired upon the sale of operations to Canada Packers in 1944.

sure that there is ongoing monitoring of the water runoff from the storm water pond and methane gas at the consolidated landfill that contains contaminated materials.

"The only remaining contaminate of concern is chloride in the groundwater, and it's localized pretty much in the vicinity of the landfill and that's why there is an ongoing water monitoring program at the site," Cushman said.

Just how bad was the contamination on the site? Cushman said she's "aware of other tannery sites (in Ontario) that were more contaminated," but would not compare the Acton site with any other location.

Cushman said landfill on the site is private and with the current approvals, can't accept waste outside waste sources.

She said the province is "not really privy to and don't really care," about future uses for the site, but if the owner wants to apply to have the zoning changed from industrial/commercial on the area of the closed landfill, it would need provincial approval for 25 years.

The Ministry also must be informed of any development within 500-metres of the landfill.

"For a more sensitive land use — say you were going from industrial/commercial to residential or a daycare — you have to file a Record of Site conditions," Cushman said.

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