

Once thriving hamlet Glen Lawson now scenic part of Town

Coles' Slaw

with
Hartley Coles



My generation generally referred to the scenic, hilly area just south of Acton on Churchill Rd. S. (Third Line) as "Dolly Varden." Until a few months ago, when Mac Sprowl loaned a brochure he wrote and photos of "Dolly Barden," I hadn't realized there were two separate hamlets in the area.

The valley I always referred to as Dolly Varden was actually Glen Lawson. The hamlet of Dolly Varden was started about 1872 on Lot 24 along the railway between the Third and Forth Line and contained about ten homes for workers on the lime kilns, now all part of the huge Acton Quarry operations.

Glen Lawson, of course, occupied the most scenic part of the glen where the Black Creek continues on its path from Fairy Lake to its eventual confluence with the Credit River in Norval. According to the pamphlet, which Mac wrote for the Equising Historical Society in 1998, the settlement was likely named after Graham Lawson who owned a large tract of land on Lot 24, Con. 4, in Esquesing Township, for which a Crown grant was issued in October of 1836.

It wasn't long until a log school house opened with John Newton the teacher. Long before free public education was established, families paid for tuition. Settlers in the area who supported the Glen Lawson school included names such as Burns, Scott, McTavish, Dempster, Lawson, Lamond, McBean, Stalker, and Mathieson, some of whom still are familiar names in the area.

Around 1855 the school house was moved to Lot 22, Con. 2, and designated SS#8, popularly known as Dublin School since it was in an area populated by Irish settlers known as Little Dublin.

Glen Lawson wasn't really a busy place until about 1856 when the Toronto and Guelph Railway, later the Grand Trunk and eventually Canadian National Railway, went through. Its proximity to the rail line and the water power

of the Black Creek soon attracted the entrepreneurs. Soon there was a grist mill operated by George and Edward Tolton. The mill was driven by water brought down a mill race from a nine acre point on the west side of the railway.

The hamlet continued to prosper, with three houses, three barns and the mill, until 1882 when fire destroyed the mill. The Toltons then decided to build a new mill in 1882 at the Grand Trunk Railway depot in Acton and later sold out to James Matthews, the Acton postmaster and businessman. That mill burnt in a spectacular fire in the 1930s.

The three storey stone mill at Glen Lawson was rebuilt later for use as a light leather tannery. In 1894, Acton glove manufacturer Herbert Thomas Arnold paid \$800 for the building and the land. Arnold opened a glove factory in Georgetown in 1901 and maintained the tannery until 1910 when it was sold to the Toronto Lime Company, which later became United Aggregates.

Graham Lawson, Glen Lawson's patriarch, eventually sold his 65 acre property in 1900. With it came the venerable stone house at the corner of the Third Line and Glen Lawson Rd., and two barns. In 1913 Robert Sprowl tore one barn down using the material for a new barn on his other farm on Lot 26, Con. 4.

In 1913 the Toronto Suburban Railway came through Glen Lawson on land bought from Robert Sprowl. The trains ran on electricity and were commonly called "The Radial." Glen Lawson resident James Plant lived in the hamlet for over 50 years, working for the Toronto Lime Company and then in the harness division of Beardmore & Co. in Acton before retiring in 1932. He died in 1944 two years before the worst disaster ever hit the hamlet.

In March, 1946, the Beardmore tannery's 30 ft high dam, which held back the effluent in a 30 acre filter bed broke and a wall of red-coloured fluid followed the Black Creek completely flooding Glen Lawson, washing out the Third Line bridge as well as undermining the CNR bridge on Lot 25. The hamlet was covered under 15 feet of red-coloured water which also went down the creek into Lime-

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BEFORE 1900: The hamlet of Glen Lawson as it was photographed before 1900, from the top of the Third Line (Churchill Rd. S.) hill. The Black Creek wends its way through the glen passing under the Grand Trunk Railway line to the photo's right hand corner. Lime kilns can be seen up higher, now the scene of the Acton Quarry. - Photo loaned by Mac Sprowl

Angela's 'cellular nightmare'

Most people who know me, know that I am far too attached to my cell phone. Disaster struck about a month ago when my cell phone, which I had for only a few months, started acting very strange. It was so obscure that I found myself back at the cell phone store for repairs.

The store quickly gave me a replacement phone and promised that my cell phone would be back within two weeks. The "loner" phone was horrible to say the least. Because of this it was probably the longest two weeks of my life. After two weeks I still hadn't figured out how to really use it. I was grateful for the substitute phone but, holy cow, did I hate that phone. I couldn't wait to get mine back.

When the two weeks were finally up, I called in anticipation to get mine back. That was when it started. I was about to have a cellular nightmare.

I was told the repair could take longer than two week period. It could actually take up to seven weeks, but they weren't sure. As I pressed for more precise answers I was told that they sent the phone back to the manufacturer and it was still scheduled to be repaired. To me it indicated it hadn't even been started.

As I continued to pursue answers,



By
Angela Tyler

I found more and more they didn't have any. When they tried to fluff the responses it only made the situation worse and infuriated me more.

I think what upset me the most was when I asked for the "manager." The person who answered implied he was the manager, but wasn't. When I finally did get a "manager" every response or statement they made ended with "right?" Were they telling me something or asking me a question?

Getting nowhere with the store, I moved on to the corporate website to find some stress relief and let them know about their service which had a really irked this customer. I clicked on customer service and found where I thought I should send my beef to. Before I knew it I had the official automated response promising a response to my concern within 24 hours. Five days later their response arrived.

The funny thing is after I sent my "Angela's irked e-mail" my phone suddenly and miraculously was found. The store called informing me it was ready to be picked up. I

was so thrilled to have my phone back and to get rid of the piece of junk loaner phone that the process of voicing my concerns was no longer a priority. That was until I read their belated response.

The following is an excerpt from their email response... "We at XXX strive to provide you with the highest level of customer support and we would like to take this opportunity to apologize for the less than stellar customer service you may have received. If you would like to place a written complaint with the office of the president, the address is as follows: Office of the President, 855 York Mills RD., P.O. Box 41258, STN.BRM B, Toronto, ON."

I thought the response was odd. Why couldn't I just send the President an email? So, I asked and with that they then responded, "We apologize; the Office of The President does not have an email address"

Does anybody else find this odd? The president of a multi-million dollar national company that provides cellular, home phone, cable t.v. and Internet services does not have an email address?

With that I gave up. I had my cell phone back and quite frankly that was all that mattered.



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