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Halton's Pages of the Past

## Speyside Looks Back to Century of Activity With Sawmills, Hotels, Hop Kilns and Quarry

BY GWEN CLARKE

and a log cabin. There were seven place its name of "St. Helena". streets all told. The registered plan of the village shows the main thoroughfare as Cruickshank Street. East of Cruickshank was Ashbury, Mill and Water Streets; west of Cruickshank, First, Second and Third Street. Speyside, with its little creek tumbling over the rocks, forming a miniature waterfall was named after the River Spey in Scotland.

It has a high elevation and from the top of the mountain road (Highway 25 there is a magnificent view from which the countryside is vis- Speyside. From Speyside they conible for miles around. In fact on a clear day the blue of Lake Ontario merges with the haze of the distant horizon.

Rocky and Well-Wooded Speyside is still a rocky and well- Looking around the wild, almost in- mained "St. Helena" to this day.

| wooded section of Esquesing Town-1 ship, so it is easy to believe that in Halfway between Milton and Ac- its early days great pines grew in ton on Highway 25 and No. 15 Side- the district. Many fine timbers were road, there is a very small commun- sold to the ship-building trade, but ity known as Speyside, consisting only hand-hewn timbers were aconly of a few houses, a general ceptable for this purpose, sawn logs store and gas pumps. A century were refused because hand-hewn ago the picture was very different. timbers were known to withstand There were several hotels at the weather better than those cut Speyside then, a tannery, sawmills, down with a saw. One of the first stone quarry, two general stores, sawmills set up was in the woods village hall, shingle mill, post office, back of the present Dufferin school. a considerable number of houses A curious little incident gave the

> received an order for such requirements and sent some of their men, headed by their chief engineer, William Hampshire, to look over the father of W. J. L. Hampshire, an octogenarian who still lives on Highway 25). The party drove through Acton, weaving their way among the

Haggard Brothers of Brampton,

makers of milling machinery, had

stumps on the main street of the village, and then proceeded south to tinued on foot through the dense trouble located a slight clearing than this section of Esquesing. which they presumed was the intended location of the sawmill.

A Personal Message to You

trom

Premier Leslie M. Frost...



FIRST POST OFFICE at Speyside, this early log cabin was located on old log cabin on the south-east corlocation. (Wm. Hampshire was the the south-east corner of No. 25 highway. It was also the dwelling ner of the crossroads. This was the place of the first postmaster, Robert McPherson, who was succeeded by Connelly, Plank and James Martin.

accessible territory Wm. Hampshire The mill—Tom Hume's sawmill exclaimed—"This must surely be St. did a considerable amount of cus- constructed building, was a very Helena!" Evidently he could not tom work and as a sample of the popular place for many years. It forest, and after considerable exile being much more desolate we will give one instance. James by D. D. Christie and the Hon. Dav-

> Stone from Hume Quarry The name stuck and it has re-

imagine the scene of Napolean's cost of lumber in those far-off days was one of the first places chosen Murray, on the Fourth Line, Es- id Henderson, M.P. as headquarters quesing, lost his barn by fire. He for North-Halton political cam-

curbstones were from 5 to 8 feet ever been. long, 5 to 6 inches wide and about two feet deep. When set into at least a foot into the ground.

Sawmills and Hop Kilns

buildings. However, there still re- Hampshire and Duff.

ed by Philip Drummond an Irish- loyal followers.

character." man named Taylor. The first gene- land known as "St. Helena". ral stores were opened by Kennedy and John Plant respectively. The By Dills Printing & Publishing Company present corner store, now run by

P O E T'S CORNER

WE NEED NOT KNOW By Mary Ellen Varley

We need not know so many things, Why the lark at dawning sings, Why the crickets at eventide, Bring peace to all the countryside.

The broken fragments of our

We may not understand, it seems, And yet another dream will come Before our thoughts are lost and

Mrs. William Douglas, was first opened by John Crawshaw on land bought from one of the early settlers, Ephraim Moore.

Popular Village Hall Until quite recently there was an first post office at Speyside. It was also the dwelling place of the first postmaster, Robert McPherson, who was succeeded by Connelly, Plank and James Martin.

The village hall, a roomy, welldecided to rebuild and ordered paigns. Many of the old-timers sawn lumber from Hume's Mill at around Speyside had a reputation the rate of \$5 per 1,000 feet . . . for being hot-headed, hard-fisted partisans and Speyside became There was also the Hume Quarry known as "a good place for a fight." back of the present Glenspey But the village hall had other Farms. This was afterwards own- uses. Before Waterloo and Dufferin ed by a man named Loby, rented to schools were opened a community Eddy and then to Bates. Most of school was held in the hall for a the stone used in the building of number of years where the three R's Boston Church came from here and were imparted to a greater or lessmany of the bridges in Halton er degree according to receptive-County were constructed from stone ness of the students. When the hall from this quarry. Twenty stone was no longer required for the cutters were employed most of the above mentioned purposes, it was taken over by Mr. Taylor and be-Many orders were received from came a blacksmith's shop, and we the city of Toronto for stone curb- understand the blacksmith's forge ing, commonly used before cement was a greater attraction to the sidewalks came into being. These children than the blackboard had

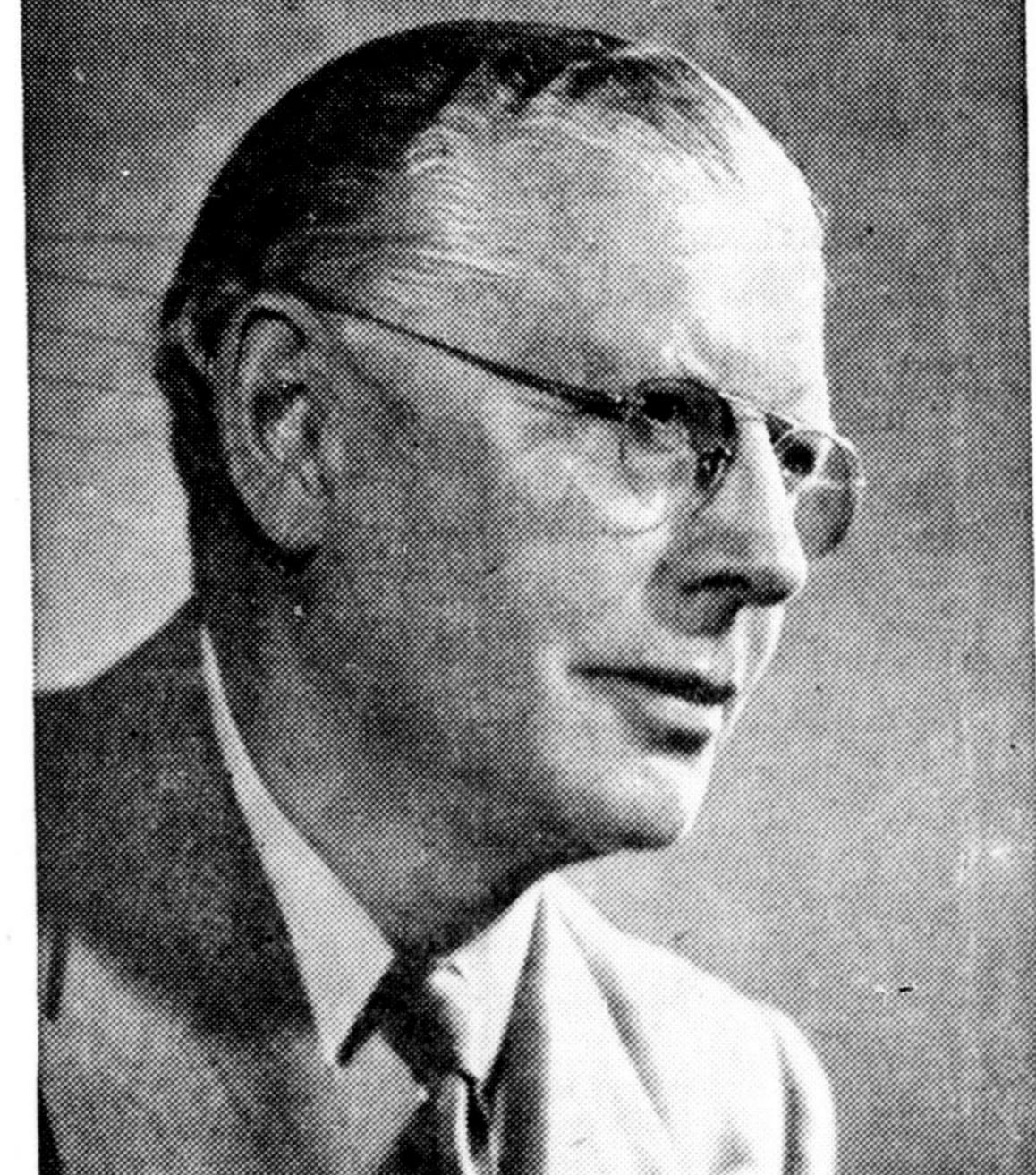
A Wonderful Panorama

The land around Speyside, when place the curbstones were imbedded cleared of rock and stumps, proved to be excellent sandy-loam soil, good for field crops, fruits and market gardening. This the early set-Hops were grown quite extensive- tlers were quick to discover and as ly in the Speyside district and were a result good, productive farms dried by farmers in their own kilns. were soon very much in evidence. Until a few years ago two of these Among the well-known farmers of kilns were on the property of Robert | that time we find familiar names Dredge but have since been de- such as Michie, McArthur, Mcmolished to make room for modern Naughton, Moore, Hume, Dredge,

mains on the Dredge farm, an old The four corners at Speyside now building, now used as a tool-shed hold little interest for travellers which was once a pioneer home. along the way but just south of the The first hotel in Speyside was intersection the view is just as owned by David Dewar who later good, if not better, than in the days sold out to Donald Stewart and of the pioneer. Here there is a wonthen removed to Milton to open derful panorama of the surrounding what is now known as the Commer- countryside from the highway that cial Hotel on Main Street, west. The is well-worth a trip to see. Look-Stewart Hotel was very popular and ing down into the valley "Craiglea" stood on the north-west corner of is plainly visible which, as we menthe cross-roads along with several tioned in a previous column, was houses. All have long since disap- the home of John Stewart, one of peared. There was a tannery, own- William Lyon Mackenzie's most

man, who, it is said, "was quite a Dufferin, the little red school house, has taken the place of the Another sawmill was owned suc- village hall, but alongside the cessively by Cruickshanks, a Mr. school there is still a steep, narrow Henry, and Peter Sayers. The mill and tortuous road, lying between did a lot of custom work in barrel treacherous rocks and gullies, leadstaves. The village smithy was a ing to the oddly named section of

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LESLIE M. FROST, Prime Minister of Ontario

## Dear Friends:

Your community-along with a thousand others-forms the keystone of Ontario's progress and prosperity. As your population grows, Ontario grows. As your schools, hospitals, utilities and roads improve, Ontario improves. And as you and your community prosper, Ontario forges ahead as the greatest province in Canada.

To keep Ontario—and all its people—going forward to greater progress and prosperity, I ask you to re-elect your Progressive Conservative government in the Provincial Election being held on June 9th. Give the Progressive Conservative Candidate in your riding the opportunity to carry on your government's excellent record of making Ontario a better place for you and your family. As proof of that record, look at these facts:

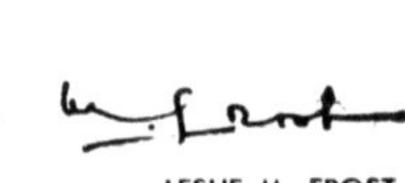
- 1. This year, government grants to municipalities amount to \$165 million, or more than 44% of all provincial revenues. This large sum of money will help build new schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, community centres and other services. All this will be done at a saving of about one-third of all the local tax bills.
- 2. We believe that every child in Ontario has an equal right to free education—and that Ontario should have the finest schooling in the country. In 1955, your government will spend over \$102 million on education, including the greatest school building campaign in our history.

- 3. Your Progressive Conservative Government has helped bring the modern convenience and comfort of Hydro to over 85% of rural Ontario. Half the cost of bringing in rural Hydro lines has been paid for directly by the province.
- 4. Jobs for over 175,000 people will be provided by the \$700 million construction program of the province and its municipalities, which is now underway.
- 5. Your provincial government was the first in Canada to make discrimination illegal. Every citizen of Ontario-regardless of his race, colour or creed—has the opportunity to live where he likes, to work at any job he chooses, and to rise as high in life as his own ability can take him.
- 6. Ontario's government has provided grants for 74 new homes for the aged, 25 thousand new hospital beds. We have secured Old Age Pensions for all at 70 and for the needy at 65. Ontario is the first province in Canada to provide pensions for the totally disabled and the blind at 18.

The spectacular achievements of the past three and a half years have been accomplished with no new taxes—and with some tax reductions. Ontario's taxes are the lowest in Canada.

On June 9th, I ask for your support of my government. I urge you-in your own best interests-to elect the Progressive Conservative candidate in your riding . . . for the prosperity and progress of everyone in this great province. Forward ONTARIO!





Forward ONTARIO



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