



ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

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November - December 2007



Norval Public School – SS#7 Esquesing built in 1859 with the 1874 addition. This picture was taken by John Somers in 1978, the year it was demolished. EHS12494

TEACHER'S LOG BOOK

Norval, Ontario,
June 15, 1937

Since the early records of Norval Public School have been lost, the following are a few facts remembered by older citizens.

Until the early '70s the school was one-roomed but since the addition was made, there have been two rooms, with two teachers employed.

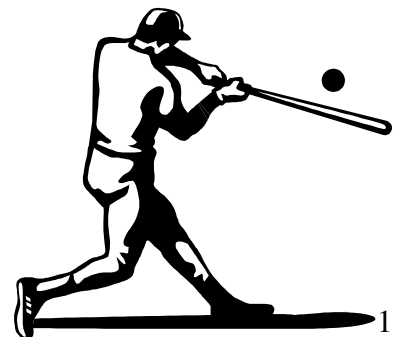
In 1920 more land was bought for a recreation ground which is now used by Norval baseball team for their exhibition games. During 1923 the electric lights and in 1925 the indoor toilets were installed.

At several meetings the teaching of music had been encouraged by several ratepayers but not until February of 1935 was it put into practice. Mr. W. E. Capps of Brampton is the instructor giving about forty minutes of instruction a week to the pupils. In April 1937, two contestants were entered in Halton Musical Festival at Milton, Olive Rankine receiving the gold medal for solo for girls under twelve years of age and Olive Rankine and Hope McMeekin the bronze medal for girls in rural sections. Since music has been taught by Mr. Capps, two Christmas concerts have been held in the Parish Hall in Norval.

With the beginning of the winter school term in 1936, religious instruction has been given in both rooms, one half hour a week, under the direction of Rev. R.V. Wilion, Rev. F. Jackson and Rev. N. McMillan.

Some of the members of the School Board in recent years have been Messrs. Geo. C. Brown, Chas. W. Copeland, R. H. Hunter, and the three now on the Board are Messrs. Harold Lyons, Frank Fendley and Oliver Hunter.

The teachers at Norval in June 1937 were Miss Phyllis McMeekin and Miss Anna Linklater.



ESQUESING TEACHERS 1951-52

SS#1 Ethel Brown
SS#2 Margaret McDougall
SS#3 Bessie Blair
SS#4 Mary E. Pickett
SS#5 Margaret MacEdward
SS#6 Jean Frank
SS#7 Douglas C. Copeland; Winogene
Cascadden
SS#8 Vivian Smith
SS#9 Jean Ruddell
SS#10 Herriotte Innes
SS#11 John R. Cantelon; Edna
Beaumont; Nellie Gardiner
SS#12 Muriel Brown
SS#13 Pearl Kennedy
SS#14 Kathleen Lawson
SS#15 Eva Presswood
SS#16 Marjorie Shaw
SS#17 A. C. Collins; Hazel Ball
SS#AE Nellie Jardine

GEORGETOWN: Henry Harold, Laura Scott, Luena Campbell, Mrs. Wigglesworth, Mrs. Evans, Wilma Stull, Marie Lindsay, Beatrice Hume, Val Stein and Mrs. Dwyer.

ACTON: Garnet McKenzie, Dorothy Capper, Miss McKay, Dena Braida, Kay Alger, Jane Gamble, Isobel Anderson, Annie Wilkinson, Daisy Folster, W.D. E. Smith.



SS#3 Ashgrove School on Trafalgar Road. Parts are still standing. This picture was taken by Jean Ruddell. EHS12486



Keen interest was shown in the Acton Home and School Association when 120 attended the opening meeting. Trustee Wes Wolfe reported on the progress of the new school addition. Principal McKenzie and members of the staff described the new teaching methods... (*Acton Free Press*, 18 Oct. 1951)



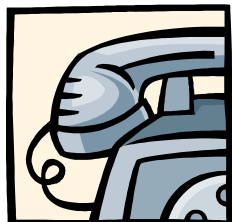
ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2007-8

- Wed. 14
November
2007 **Eyes in the Back of their Head!** – The EHS presents a humorous look back in time to teaching in Ontario. Florence Reihl will share some of her personal experiences as a teacher which was not unlike many teachers of the time.
KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Main Street, Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.
- December There will be no public meeting in December.
- Wed. 9
January
2008 **Sesquicentennial of Roman Catholicism in Acton and Georgetown** – Local historian John Mark Rowe will explore the early development of Catholicism in Esquesing area after a tour of the L’Eglise Sacré Coeur.
SACRE COEUR CHURCH, Guelph Street, Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.
- Wed. 13
February
2008 **Tombstone Tales** – This meeting belongs to members who would like to talk about the life of a person represented by a tombstone standing in Esquesing Township. Several members will explore the life of someone buried locally while we display an image of his or her tombstone. It’s not too late to sign up! Contact the executive to be added to the list of presenters.
KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Main Street, Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.
- Wed. 12
March 2008 Kevin Gray, local author and military re-enactor, will speak to the Society about the British conquest of Quebec and the regiments involved in this defining moment in Canadian history.
KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Main Street, Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT NO CHARGE!

Refreshments served from 7:00 p.m.

ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY EXECUTIVE MEMBERS



Stephen Blake	905 877-8251	President
Karen Hunter	905 838-2109	Treasurer
Dawn Livingstone	905 877-6506	Secretary
Sherry Westfahl	905 873-7145	Past - President
J. Mark Rowe	905 877-9510	Archivist
Jan Raymond	905 877-9172	Publications
Marj Allan	905 877-9985	Membership
Cathy Hunt		Social

Society Notes

INTERNET CONNECTIONS

The Esquesing Historical Society has an official web site on the World Wide Web. <www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.ca>

Send your e-mail to mrowe6@cogeco.ca or dlvngstn@sympatico.ca

EHS NEWSLETTER

John Mark Rowe prepared this newsletter with assistance from Karen Hunter and Dawn Livingstone. Submissions welcome. Beginning in September 2007, your copy of the EHS Newsletter can be sent electronically to an e-mail address you provide. There will be no extra charge for the service.

MEMBERSHIP

Our 2007 paid memberships stands at 115. The individual rate is \$10. The family or institution rate is \$12. Cheques payable to the Society can be mailed to our post box. Marj Allen, membership secretary, will accept your 2007 fee at the meetings. Our membership year runs from February. Renewals for 2008 are currently being accepted.

ARCHIVES

The EHS has applied to the Friends of the Archives of Ontario for a grant towards microfilming newspapers which have never been copied like *The Georgetown Leader* and *The Acton Tanner*. We are a "Friend" of the Archives.

Sideroads magazine has borrowed several photos for a centre spread in the next issue. Jan Raymond will be distributing copies of the powerpoint presentation "History of Georgetown" as a companion to the Georgetown book sets purchased by senior level schools in the area.

ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO

77 Grenville Street, Toronto 416-327-1600
www.archives.gov.on.ca

HALTON-PEEL OGS

Chinguacousy Branch Library, Lower Level,
150 Central Park Drive, Bramalea.

Call Betty Cameron at 905-792-0907

STREETSVILLE HIST. SOCIETY

The Society meets the 2nd Thursday of the month (Feb, Apr, Oct, Dec), 8:00pm, at Streetsville Village Hall, 271 Queen Street South. Call Norm Potts at 905.858.0070.

BRAMPTON HIST. SOCIETY

The Society meets at Heart Lake Presbyterian Church, 25 Ruth Ave. at 7:15 Nov. 15 Lewis Wagg on Blain Hardware Remembered

MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society meets at the Waldie Blacksmith Shop at 16 James Street at 8p.m. on the third Thursday of each month.

Nov. 15 Ken Lamb – Milton Remembers WWI

Dec. 20 – Christmas pot luck at 6 pm

OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Admission Free * Donations Welcome

For information about the Oakville Historical Society and the collection, please telephone (905) 844-2695.

Nov. 21 Remembering Trafalgar Township - Ruth Blair

Dec. 7 Members' Wine & Cheese, OHS office, 110 King St.

NASAGIWEYA HIST. SOCIETY

The Nasagiweya Historical Society meets the second Tuesday of each month at Nassagaweya Presbyterian Church in Haltonville at 7 p.m. President Eli Daigle 905-854-2628



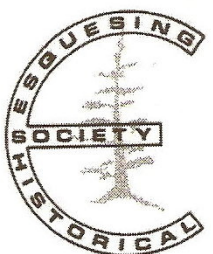
THE GEORGETOWN BOYS

-drama by Georgetown Little Theatre Youth Company

-directed by Sam Hancock

On July 1 1923, fifty children, orphaned by the Armenian genocide, arrived at the Georgetown Boys' Farm. Their arrival marked the first time Canada provided international humanitarian aid and went down in history as "Canada's Noble Experiment". The orphans' new lives were filled with wonder as they left the atrocities of the past behind and learned to deal with Canadian customs like porridge, indoor plumbing, and tobogganing. Altogether, Canada saved 109 orphans. In 2007, the Youth Company will explore this moment in our local history by researching, adapting and creating an original theatrical production premiering in Spring 2008.

Esquesing Historical Society



Preserving and Promoting Local History

- ❖ **Archive** – located at Halton Hills Public Library
- ❖ **Public Meetings** – 2nd Wednesday of each Month
- ❖ **Publications** – recent books on Acton and Georgetown
- ❖ **Newsletter** – 5 issues each year
- ❖ **Web Site** – www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.ca

Visit the Historical Society in person or online.
New members always welcome.

EHS ADVERTISEMENT

Have you noticed our display advert in the Fall and Winter Parks and Recreation Community Guide? It is on page 98. Let us know if you've seen it!

“Historian Rowe Honoured by Region”

Mark Rowe was honoured recently when he was selected by the Ontario Heritage Trust for a “Lifetime Achievement Award” through its Heritage Community Recognition Programme. It is a well deserved honour, and we at the Esquesing Historical Society are all proud of him and his achievements. Our whole community owes him many thanks for all his hard work in keeping our history alive and preserved for future generations. As well as teaching grades 7 & 8 at St. Bridgid School, Mark is active with our own society, Heritage Halton Hills, and many other local committees. Behind all his hard work and community time, Mark has always had the support of wife Kelly, and his family, who also deserve thanks for sharing him so generously.

Well done Mark. Your EHS friends thank and congratulate you.

MERRY CHRISTMAS and all the best for the New Year from the Executive of the ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY





Lest We Forget

My Experiences of the War From August 1914 to Oct 1915. Wilfred Coles



At the ready! Acton recruits pose outside the Drill Shed (currently the Fall Fair Poultry Barn). Wilfred Coles is at the back, centre.
EHS11341

Enlistment Bugler Lea sounded the "Fall in", as fine a soldier as ever walked. When the call "Fall in" sounded through the streets of Acton, I was delivering a bag of feed. This call was quite a familiar one to me. I had been used to answering it in the old days & when I heard Corp'l Lea sound it on Aug 4th 1914 it came as an order to me. An order is an order so I fell in with some 17 other men & took the oath to serve his

Majesty overseas until such time as the war should end.

The people of Acton & their idea of matters as they stood on Aug 4th

These 18 men were uniformed in the dark green of the 20th Halton Rifles & on the 8th of August we were marched to the station & went to Georgetown. The people of Acton were inclined to treat the whole affair as a big joke. Many was the jibe thrown at us. The most complimentary remark I heard was "Well it shows that they are willing anyhow."

Georgetown

On arrival at Georgetown we quartered in the drill shed there & for 3 or 4 days were given drill & short route marches. On the 12th of August we left for Valcartier.

Valcartier

When we arrived at Valcartier it was raining & it was quite a while before we found [the] officer who was to guide us to our camp. Valcartier at this time was a big expanse of bush. It continued to rain all that day & of course everybody was thoroughly soaked through. However the men were enthusiastic & it's a good job they were for their enthusiasm was needed under the circumstances. The food we got that day was one slice of bread & jam & a drink of coffee....

Embarkation.

On the 26th of September we embarked at Quebec & after laying in the river for 3 days

steamed as far as Gaspé Bay which is at the mouth of the St Lawrence away back out of sight of the shipping route. When we arrived here we found our escort.

The Naval Escort.

The escort consisted of 6 battleships the names of which I am unable to tell you. I know that 3 of them were the Princess Royal, Glory & Lion. These men-o-war took up their positions, two on each horizon & 1 before & 1 behind the fleet of transports.

The Fleet.

The fleet consisted of 33 ships & we left Gaspé Bay in 3 long lines, each line 1/2 mile apart & each transport about 500 yards behind each other....

Reception at Plymouth

The reception accorded us was a magnificent one. An officer of the 4th Batt. said that that was all the English people were fit for to do a lot of flag waving. If he had only looked around him a little to see what men his battalion was made up of he might have had a different opinion. You all know the percentage of Canadians among the first contingent. I tell you there was something more than flag waving at this time in England especially in the feeling of the people towards the Canadians or the men from Canada. Many were the thanks showered upon us on every hand. The English people appreciated our coming and showed it in a very practical way....

Plymouth to Salisbury

The journey from Plymouth to Salisbury was done partly on the G.W.R. & partly on Shank's Pony. At every station huge crowds greeted us & showered upon all kinds of delicacies until we arrived at a place called Lavington....

Leaving Salisbury

During the first week in Feb the 5th Batt packed up & left Salisbury plain. The 1st Brigade left during the last few days of Jan. Many were the guesses as to where we were going to get our ship.

Those of us who were acquainted with the west of England we[re] able to determine that Avonmouth would be our embarkation point. This proved to be correct & we worked all night getting our stores aboard & lay in Avonmouth Docks for 2 days & then off to France escorted by 2 destroyers, by a roundabout course through the Bay of Biscay to St Nazaire in the South of France.

Arrival in France

Here we lay in the roads outside the harbour for 2 days & then steamed into our wharf. It was amusing to hear the French boys trying to sing Tipperary in English. The French people received us very kindly the reception they tendered being almost as good as that of the English people.

Off to the Front.

A lot more hard work unloading the transport & reloading the stuff on to the train & off we go for the front in box cars.

The Box Car ride

The box cars in France are about 1/2 as big as the Canadian cars. Into these cars we packed ourselves from 36 to 40 in each car. The doors were opened on each side & as many as could do so sat down & hung their feet & legs outside. When night came on of course we had to get inside & such a picnic as we had trying to find space enough to lay down to sleep. Of course

it could not be done, & we were glad when the journey which took about 3 days & nights was finished....

Going to the trenches.

When a Batt lines up for trench duty, they are a jolly lot of men. Supplies have to be carried to the trenches & it is quite a novel sight to see soldiers loaded up with all kinds of stuff for their own comfort as well as material to be used in the improvement of the trenches. One man has a bag of charcoal another a bundle of wood, another a small stock of bread, butter tea & sugar. Then there is scantlings & fine chicken wire to keep the walls of the trench from falling in boards which are used as floorings & huge wheels of barb wire which someone will have to take out into "No man's land" sometime during the night. We start off marching in fours then as the traffic becomes very thick we proceed two deep. Then as the trenches are approached we go in single file each man about 5 yds behind the other.

My first trip to the trenches.

We started out in the manner I have already described having previously been entertained to tea by the Essex Reg't who were going to instruct us in trench warfare. When we got to within 200 yards of the trenches the Germans opened fire on us with their machine guns. Before this happened, however, star shells were sent up which lighted up the country for a mile around. This is a signal for everybody to get as close to the ground as possible, & as you may imagine it is a very comical sight.

The man with the charcoal throws his bag one way & himself dives in the opposite direction. The men with the heav[y] loads just fall down, & when the thing is over & another start is made everybody sees the humour of the thing & has a quiet laugh over it. When we arrive at the trenches we are

Trench Duty.

taken by the people who we are going to relieve & shown around & told of anything that might help us with our work. Sentries are then posted 1 man out of every 4 being put on Sentry Go, or as it is called in the Trenches "Look out." He does 1 hour on & 3 off. The rest of the men on the 1st night in busy themselves with the repairing of the trench or pumping the water out. When this work is done there is nothing to do but sit down or lie down & make yourself as comfortable as possible. Our first trench 40 yds from the German Trench

Although we were only 40 yards from the German Trench we did not see a German while we were there & the only casualty we had was 1 man who put his head over the parapet twice in the same place to note the effect of the British shells on the German trenches. after a week of trench duty here we went to Fleurbaix which is a 2 days march from Armentiers. We had our own trenches here which proved to be a quiet spot for a couple for days, & then the enemy's artillery started to shell us. Fleurbaix is a far sized town & when we went into it there was not much damage done except for bullet holes in the doors & window frames which told us that there had been some stiff fighting at some time previous. We stayed here for two weeks during which time we were shelled every day but came off rather lucky losing only 6 killed & wounded. One morning a shell came right over the house where I was billeted & crashed into a house on the other side of the road & struck the house low down & got inside before it exploded. When it did explode it blew the head off a woman who was washing her breakfast dishes. Two minutes after that another shell came & killed 2 artillerymen. Our next move was to Estaires where we had a supposed rest of two weeks. We were not bothered much here except for aeroplanes. Here we found a hot bath waiting for us & a change of clothing....

JEWISH FARM SCHOOL - GEORGETOWN

The green concrete “barn” on the 8th Line (Main Street) at 15 Sideroad was demolished in October 2007. It was part of the Jewish Farm School. The National Archives offers some clues to its history in the excerpts that follow:

The Farm and Corporation were operated by Morris Saxe who was President. S. Levine of Toronto and later J.J. Glass served as secretary. The farm on which the school was located as known as the “Old Eaton farm”. It was located on the west half of lot 15 and the east half of lot 14 in the 9th concession of the Township of Esquesing, County of Halton and originally comprised some 207 acres. It appears from the files that they may have acquired an additional 200 acres of land on which they had an option.

Funds were raised in Toronto and Montreal at mass meetings to establish the school which had some difficulty in its early years, although apparently there were some adult students trained at the school from the Canadian Jewish community. The school trained in market gardening, poultry raising and dairying. In a memorandum of 22 March 1926 Mr. Saxe is noted as having been in Canada for 25 years farming in western Ontario for some five years. He had completed a course in agriculture at the Ontario Agricultural College and operated two farms at that time as well as a creamery...

In general the school does not appear to have had success with adult students as few could afford to stay at the school for very long even though small wages were paid to adult students. Some 12 adult Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe were approved for entry into the school and Canada in 1926. In a note of 27 May 1926 F.C. Blair states “We may never have another so good chance to demonstrate our willingness to assist Jewish land settlement.” On 10 June 1926 it is stated “up to 50 entries will be considered”.

In 1927, the Department approved the immigration of 50 Jewish orphans from a Warsaw orphanage along with a teacher and two domestics subject to all of them passing the medical examinations. Visas were granted to 38 orphans and the three attending adults at Danzig and they sailed for Canada on the ship *Estonia* on 14 June 1927. Lists of names are given in the file. They consisted of both boys and girls aged between the ages of 13 and 17. Most of the girls were placed as domestics in Jewish homes in Toronto after a few months, while the boys often stayed at the school for several years before being placed on farms either in Ontario or western Canada. A few of the boys became carpenters in Toronto.

It appears that in 1929 an additional 5 girls and 12 boys were permitted to emigrate from orphanages in Warsaw and Lemberg (Lvov). At least one additional adult instructor was also admitted from Poland. There appears to have been some cooperation with the Armenian boys school at Cedarvale in that one of the English instructors taught at both schools. They appear to have had classes in the morning and practical work in the afternoon. The school appears to have closed down in 1931 or earlier, although extensive correspondence continues through the 1930s from Mr. Saxe with F. C. Blair and others of the Department of Immigration. In 1932 Mr. Saxe reports that most of the boys were still in farming some 15 in the Georgetown area and another 15 in Leamington. Other students had left for farms in western Canada....

ACTON FREE PRESS

DECEMBER 1899

7 December 1899

CREWSON'S CORNERS: James Ramshaw has been building a new paint shop in connection with his blacksmith shop. Three rail cars wrecked here on Thursday morning on GTR. A load of furniture from Eatons was reduced to kindling wood, however the sheep escaped without a scratch.

GEORGETOWN: Electric lighting for residences is growing more popular.

ACTON: Crescents Lacrosse team invite everyone to Town Hall Friday night for an "At Home". The entertainment will include the latest concertograph.

James Clark, miller of Acton has left to lease well-known Haynes Mill in Cheltenham. He was on municipal Council for two years.

The facade of the new leather warehouse being erected by Messrs Beardmore & Co. at the GTR station, presents quite an imposing edifice.

14 December, 1899

GEORGETOWN: A.G.H. Luxton has been honoured as President of Western Hockey League. Local president is E. B. Nicklin. Election of reeveship will probably be between Reeve Kennedy and Frank J. Barber.

ACTON: Mr. A. T. Brown, president and Dr. Forster, convenor of the Literary Committee, entertained members of the Epworth League Reading Circle in Matthews Hall last evening.

Tuesdays terrific gale blew down one of the electric lamps on Mill Street.

A meteor of exceptional brilliance crossed the heavens last Wednesday evening.

21 December 1899

CREWSON'S CORNERS: Mr. Wm Bryers of Acton preached in Methodist Church last Sabbath. Mr. Wansborough honoured for service as organist and choir leader for Methodist Church.

BALLINAFAD: Policeman Shortill of London is spending a couple of weeks at home. Come and see our large store since it is finished. Mr. Bett is a hustler. Mr. Graham, teacher will leave this week, to be replaced by Miss McKinnon of Hillsburg.

LIMEHOUSE: We take pleasure in complimenting Mr. McDermid on the way he decorated his store window for Christmas.

ACTON: The Commercial Hotel was thrown into confusion late Sunday evening when Miss Mabel Thompson, a maid, swallowed a large pin. Drs. Macdonald and Forster were called, but could not remove it. She was taken to Guelph General Hospital on a freight train, but on the operating table was seized by a violent coughing spell and brought it up.

A long series of Christmas entertainments will be inaugurated in the town hall this evening by St. Alban's Sunday School.

A smash up at Rockwood delayed the Tuesday evening trains two or three hours. Postmaster-General Mulock was amongst passengers delayed at Acton. He was entertained to supper by landlord Clark at the Campbell House.

28 December 1899

CREWSON'S CORNERS: Many went to ball at Eden Mills on Christmas night.

BALLINAFAD: Hunters and dogs are out but report game rather scarce.

GEORGETOWN: Ministerial Association meeting held at home of Mr. Crawford on 18th.

GLEN WILLIAMS: A shooting match was held here Christmas afternoon.

STEWARTTOWN: Reeve Stewart entertained council to dinner at Hill's hotel on 15th.