

George Johnston turns 80!



Cutting the cake: George Johnston cuts the cake for his eightieth birthday on January 17. George and members of his family hosted an open house at Johnston Motors.

PHOTO BY BOB OWEN

Celebrating Colborne and a lifetime with cars

By Bob Owen
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For more than half a century he has been known in the community as George. For most of that time he was the man you went to if you needed a car.

George Johnston, a fixture in the Colborne community turned 80 on January 17 and he celebrated the occasion with friends and family at his second home, the GM Dealership on Toronto St.

Guests at the open house were treated to birthday cake and a sampling of pictures from his years in the auto business.

George Johnston started the family business in 1944 when he saw an ad in the Toronto Star and put down \$10 on an option to buy Colborne Garage, then owned by the Turneys. Not yet 21 years old, George had to have his dad's sig-

nature on the paperwork. It was March 15, 1944.

A lifetime with cars

But that wasn't his first foray into the world of automobiles.

In the 1944 provincial election George's dad, John, was the Returning Officer in the riding that included Mildmay where they lived. George was hired as one of his deputies. Together they collected the steel ballot boxes from the polling stations, loading them onto the back of a trailer towed behind the car. They turned one corner too quickly, the boxes jostled on the bumpy road and the contents spewed out. George's dad was unable to help pick them up, so George got at it, tossing the ballots back in. No election irregularities were reported.

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1944: After investigating three garage businesses advertised in the *Toronto Star*, and after two visits to the Colborne Garage owned by the Turney's, George Johnston put in a \$10 option-to-buy the Colborne garage.

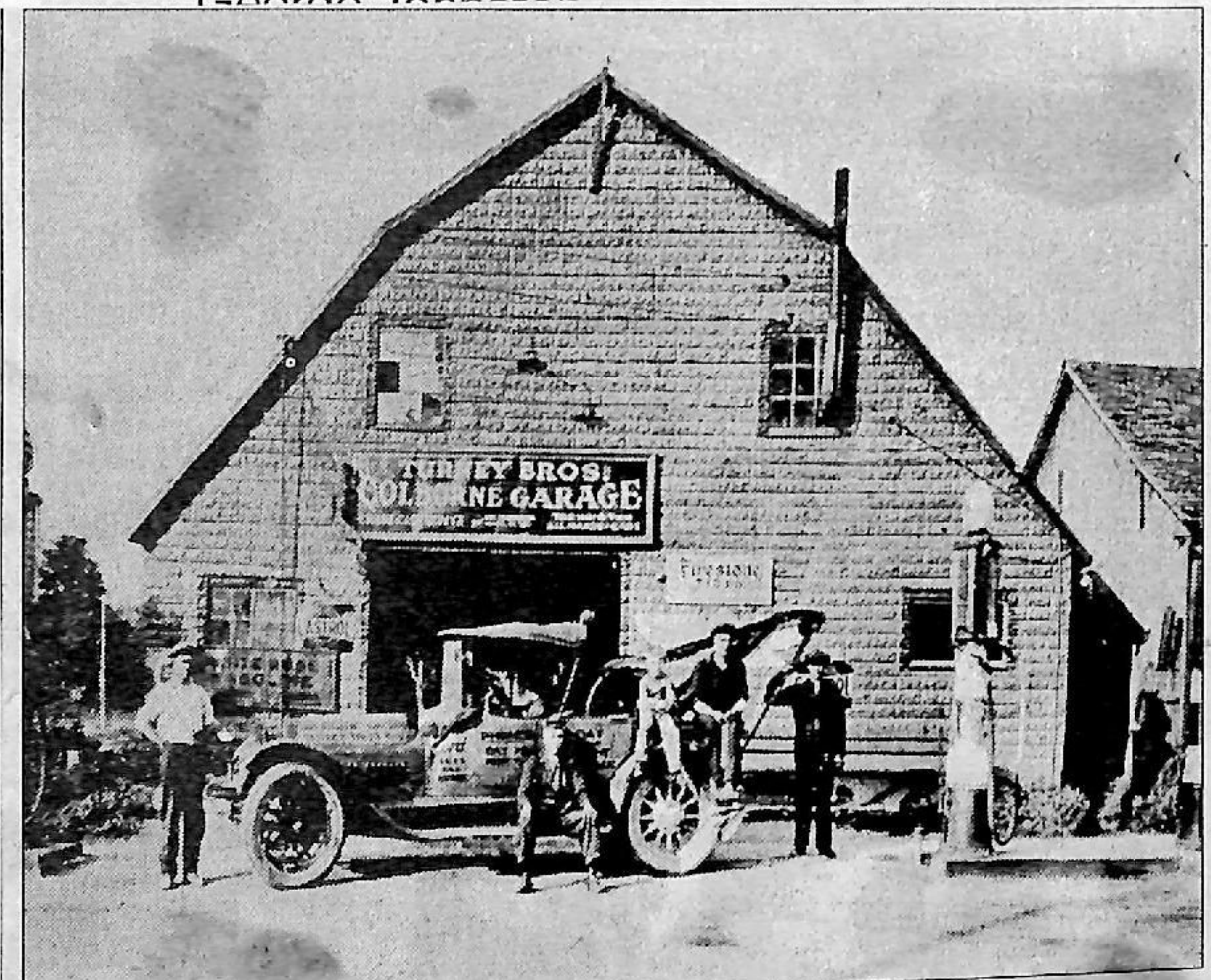


1961: Three new cement block service bays were built by local builder Charlie Teal at 17 Toronto Road - one large enough to accommodate trucks.



1949: George Johnston sold the Colborne Garage to Ed Wangen and purchased the milk truck storage building across the road. Colborne Motor Sales sold Ford Mercury and Kaiser-Fraser cars. George Westrope performed mechanical work. Norm Cheer worked as parts man, looked after accounts and pumped gas.

Photos courtesy of the George Johnston family



Circa 1924: The Turney Brothers Colborne Garage (phone 75, day or night) with staff, from left, Addie Teal, Bill Turney, Harold Turney (Ernest's son), Clifford Turney and Ernest Turney.