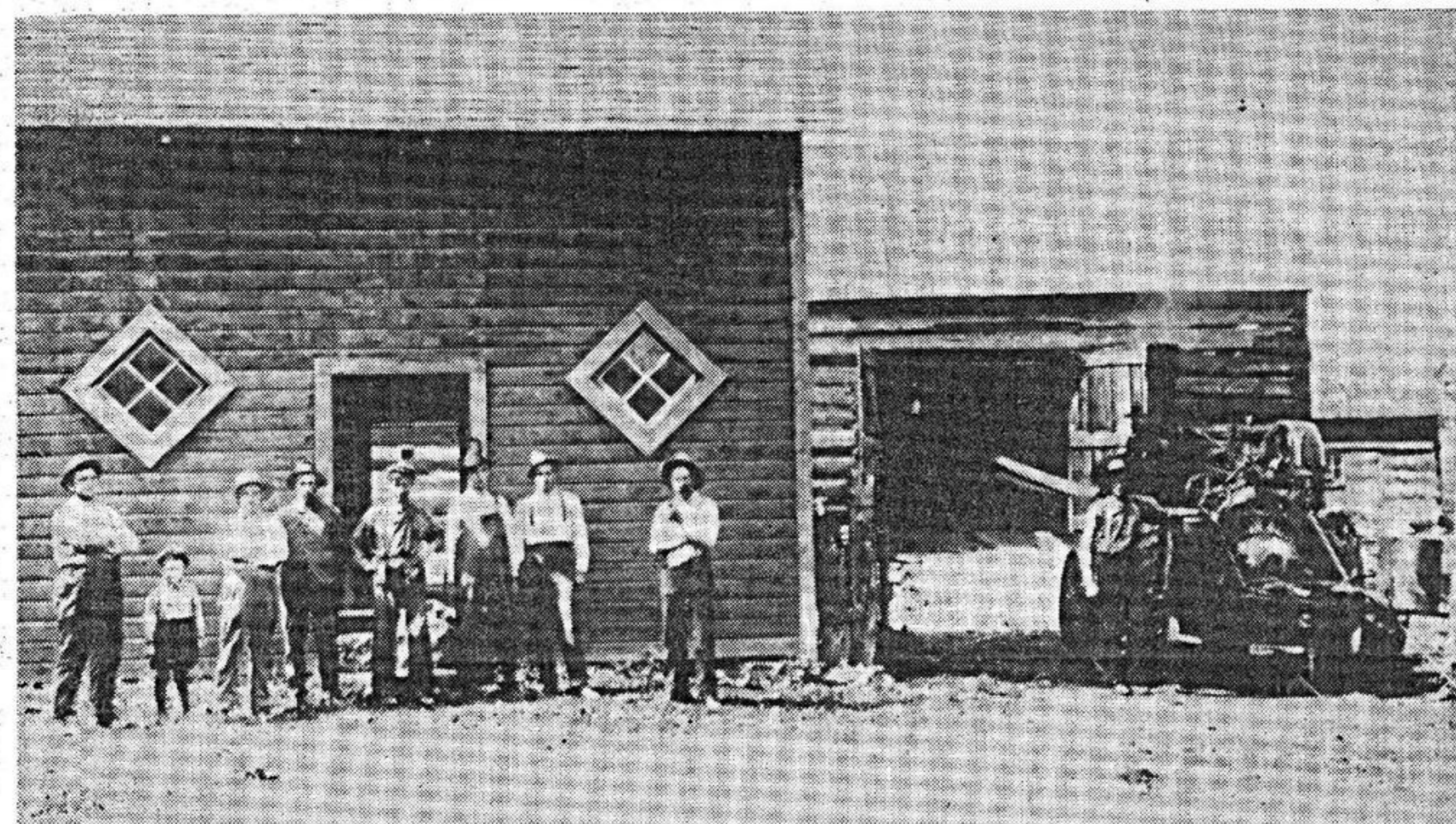




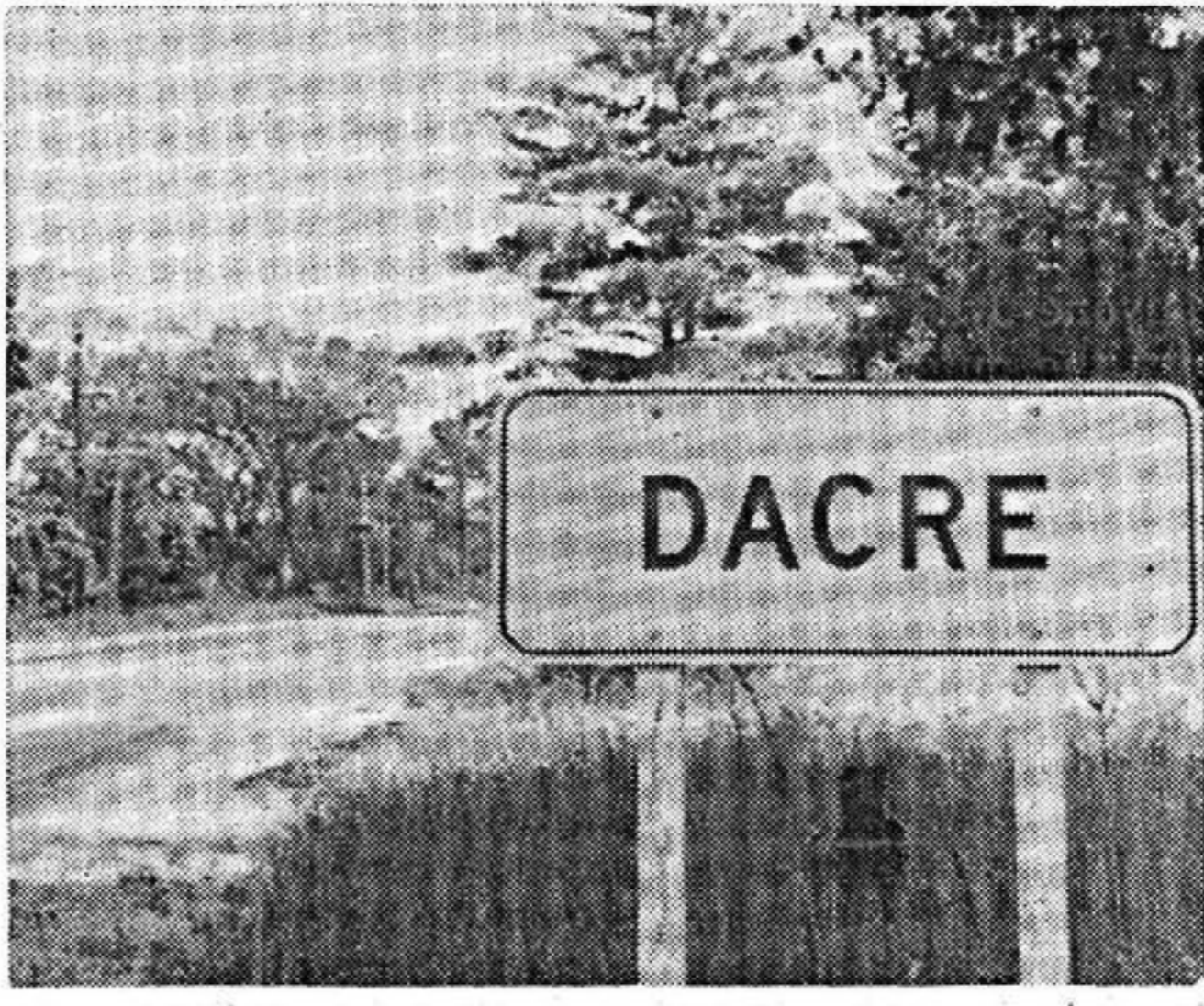
Dacre Post Office, one of the many "stopping places" in Dacre's early days.



A threshing gang at Harry Legris' pose for the photographer, about 1916. From left, Harry Legris, Harold Collins, Johnny Gowienke, Albert Blimkie, —, Bud Potvin, Johnny Collins and Charlie Collins. Joe Colterman is standing by the engine.



The Harry Legris home, built in 1909, had a small portion of it set aside for the office of the Department of Lands and Forests. Mr Legris, who died in 1950, was the first forest supervisor for the Dacre area. About 1926 the office was moved to larger quarters in the village and in 1954 the new offices were built about a mile west of the village on highway 132. This picture was taken a few weeks ago.



Highway sign on outskirts of Dacre.

First settlers

John Morrow was one of the first property owners in Dacre. He built and owned the present James Collins home, owned the adjoining land and operated a general store on the corner of the present lot. His storehouse is now Felix Potvin's garage.

James Potvin owned some 200 acres of land just west of Dacre and was a foreman in the lumber camps and on the spring drives.

Other familiar names in the early days of Dacre
John Wark — land owner, store-keeper and postmaster.
Abe Munson — land owner.
Phil Bradley — foreman for Carswell's, in shanties and on river drives.
Jim Spencely—stone mason.
A Bruno—shoemaker.
Alex Duplessis—carpenter.

Bill Hunter owned and operated a grist mill, also a farm on the Constan Creek, about half a mile from Dacre and about 200 yards off the Dacre-Caldwell road. The mill, operated by water power, ground wheat to flour between two large revolving stone wheels imported from France. The farmers for miles around brought in their wheat, had it ground and paid the miller in toll (a certain amount of their wheat).

Alfred Legris owned some 300 acres of land on the south range of the Opeongo. He owned and operated a hotel called the California House. About 1895 he gave his son Joseph an acre of land on the corner of which he built a house and general store. This was later taken over by his brother Alfred and is now operated by Alf's son, Frank. About 1900 he sold about an acre of land to a creamery syndicate which built and operated a successful butter factory.

Ben Hunter was one of the farmers who with team and express conveyance picked up the cream from the farmers and brought it to the creamery where it was made into butter. Later, this butter factory closed and cream was taken to nearby town creameries. In 1924 the creamery building was moved by Mr Dooling of Douglas to a site near Harry Legris' other farm buildings, where it stands today. The Phil Bradley home which stood ¼ mile back of the present school was moved to the former creamery site. It is now owned and occupied by John Windle and family.

Dacre Today

Dacre is on highway 132, 17 miles southwest of Renfrew. Today the motorist travels that distance in less than half an hour over the wide, paved highway. A hundred years ago it was an all-day trip.

The village has 19 homes and 66 residents, two stores and a Post Office, two schools and a church.

About one mile west of the village, at the junction of highways 132 and 41, is the headquarters of the Department of Lands and Forests where about 12 men are stationed under chief forest ranger Michael Mulvihill. Their duties include fire protection, granting of permits and licenses, fish and wild life management, research work on old claims, scaling and measuring of logs and trespass inspection.

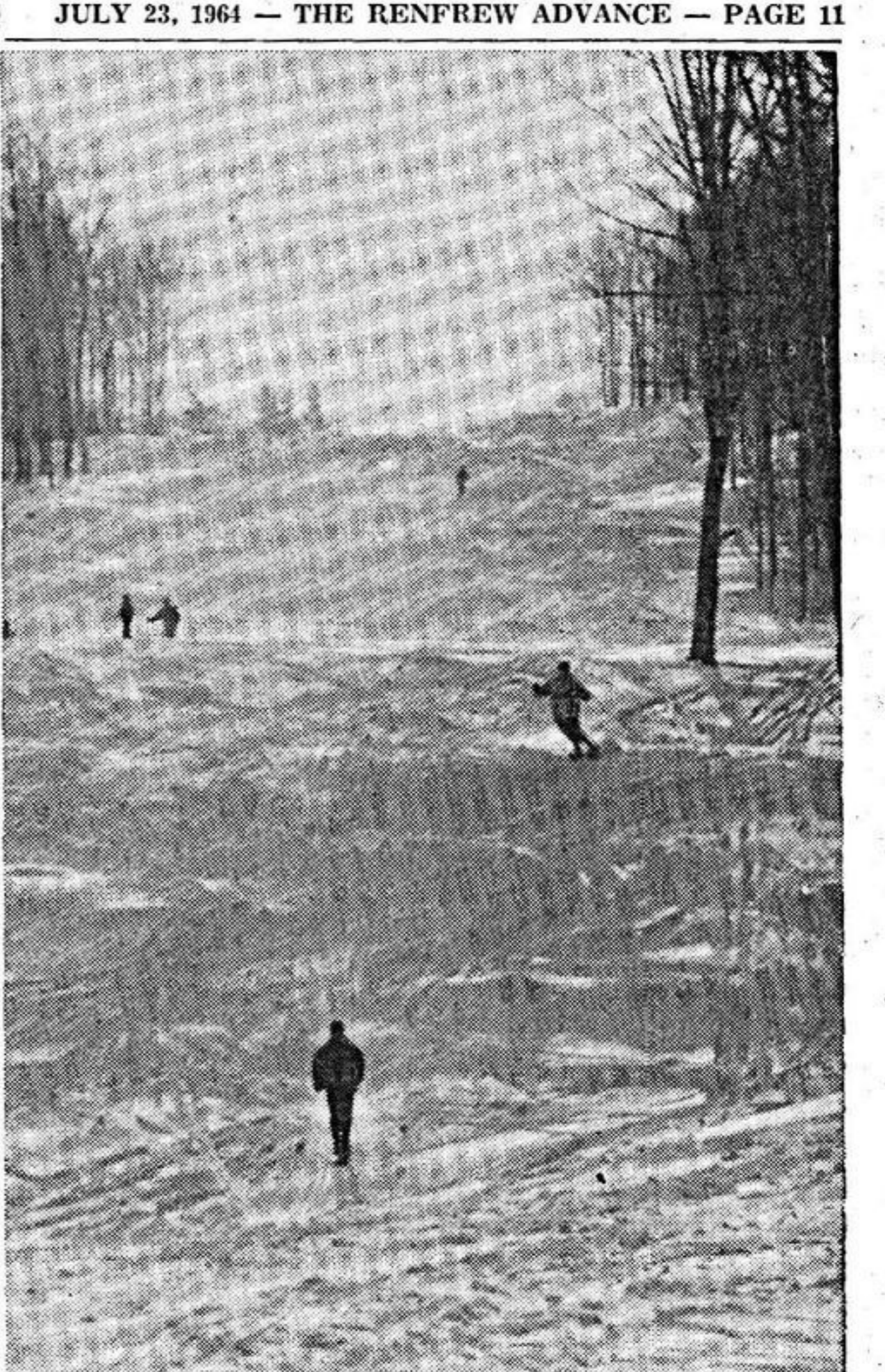
On the opposite corner of the intersection is the Department of Highways headquarters for the area.

Two miles south of Dacre, on the Mount St Patrick road, a ski slope was developed two years ago. With ideal natural facilities, Candiac is rapidly becoming known all over Ontario and the prospects of its becoming a much larger project look very bright. The slope is the third longest and highest in Southern Ontario.

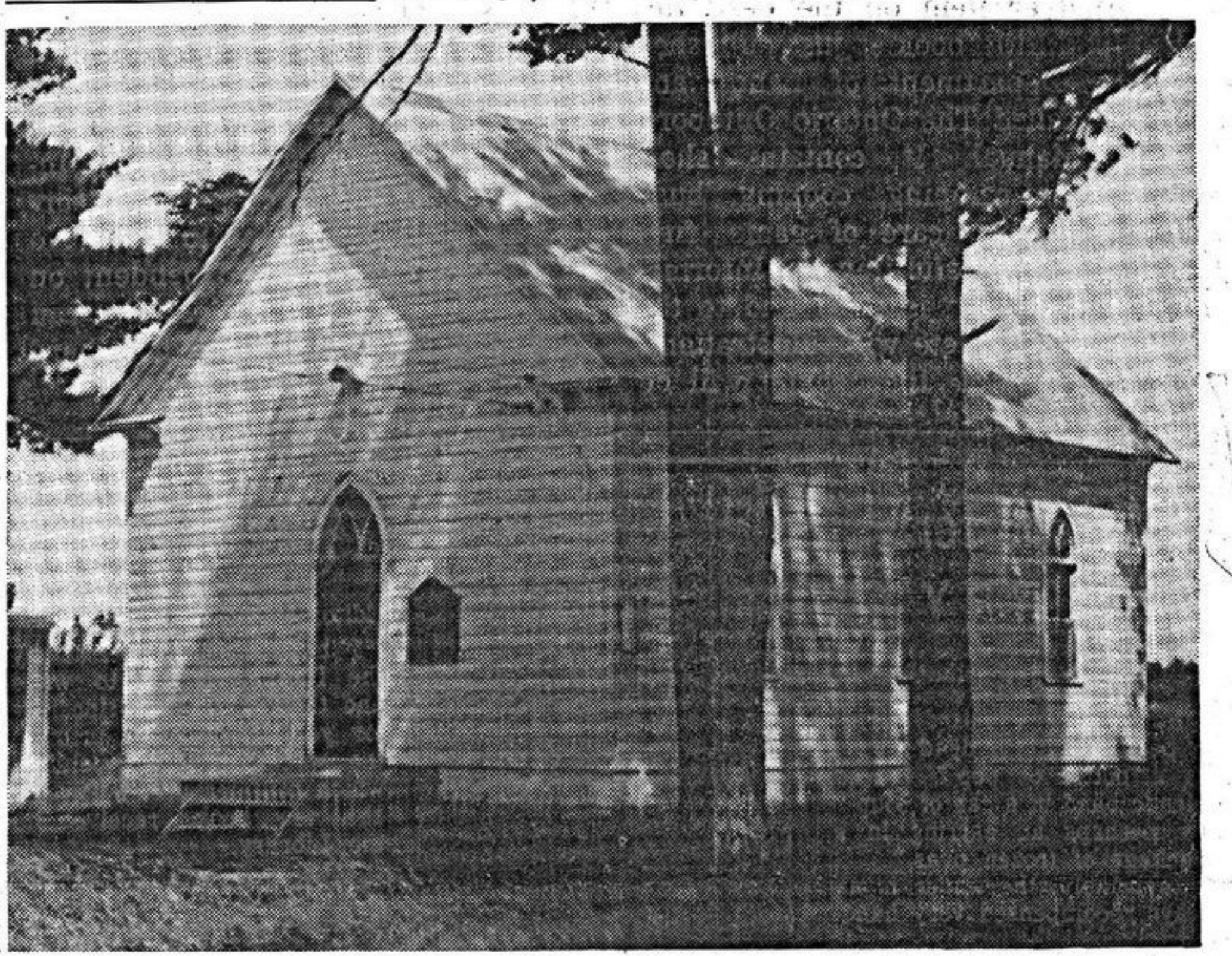
At what was once Foy's Mountain, one of the old stopping places on the Opeongo Line, the government has built a radar station but part of the old name has been retained. The new RCAF station, part of the Pinetree Line, is called Foymount.

Dacre was named after a British colonial officer, Major O'Dacre.

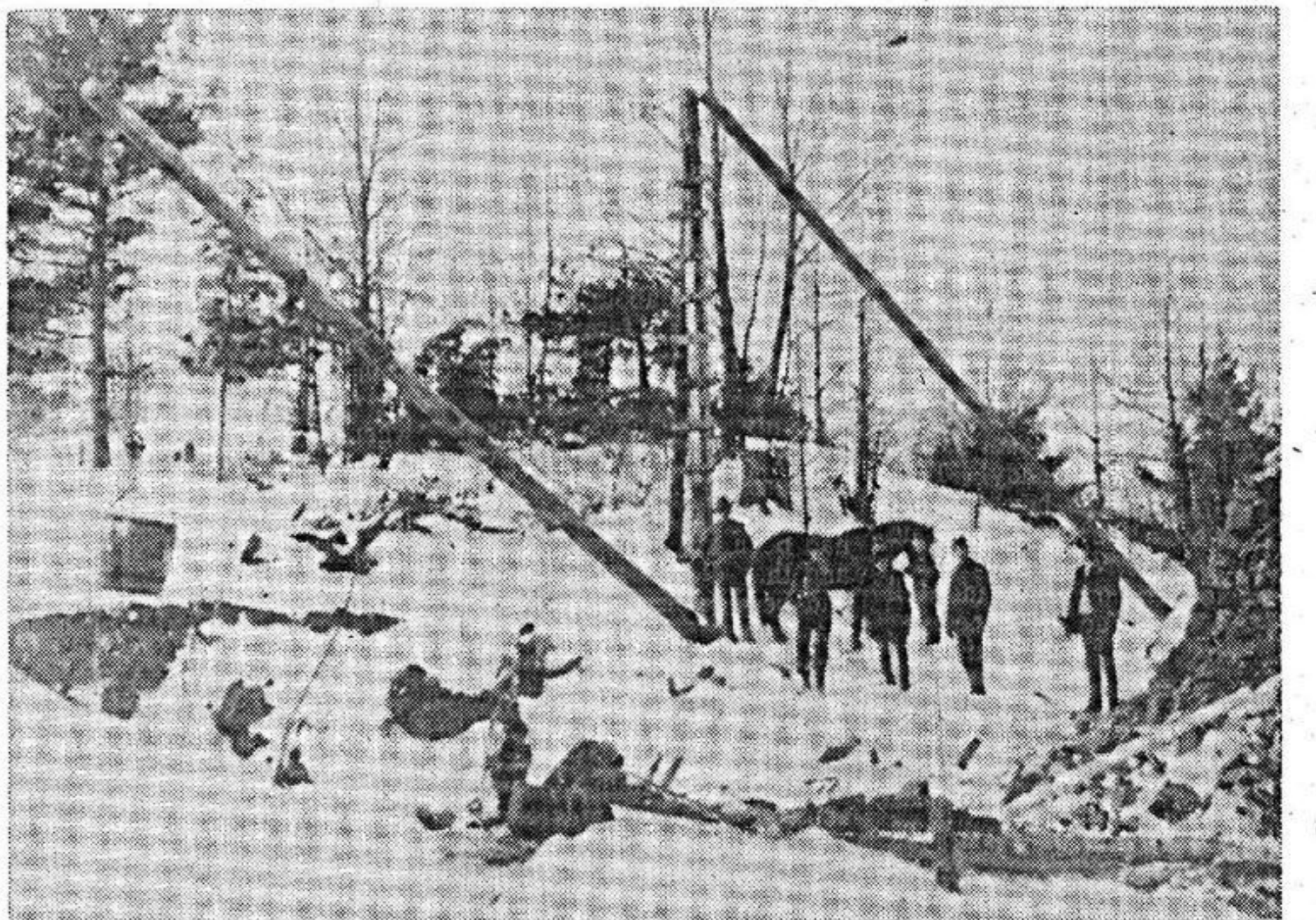
Although officially it is on highway 132, the old names of the "Dacre Road" or the "Dempsey Road" still hang on locally. Over the years the late Jim Dempsey, MPP, referred to the improvement of the road in several elections but



Skiers swoop down the long hills at Candiac Skiways, near Dacre.



Dacre Baptist Church, built about 1860, on land donated by the late William Hunter, and still in use today.



The old iron mine owned by the Legris family and situated about a quarter of a mile from the village, along the Mount St. Patrick road. The picture was taken in 1903.

Mail Service

The first regular delivery of mail to Dacre was inaugurated in September 1851, according to a letter written to the Ottawa Citizen in September 1951 by C L Cole of Hyndford.

Mr Cole said it was carried by horseback from Renfrew via the Opeongo Road and delivered to Cole's Tavern on the banks of Constan Creek. The owner of the tavern was the writer's grandfather.

The mail came through three times a week and was carried by John Morrow.

"The westward thrust of the mail was the key that opened up the whole Opeongo country," Mr Cole stated in his letter.

After the building of the railway, the mail came from Ashdad Station on the K & P via Mount St Patrick. Martin Sheedy ran the mail three times a week.

Today the mail goes by truck from Renfrew to Douglas and is picked up there by

it did not become a reality until his successor, the late Jim Maloney, MPP, was in office.

carrier and delivered to the Dacre Post Office. There is daily service for incoming and outgoing mail.

The Dacre Post Office is in a building which was once a stopping place along the Opeongo Line. It was called Ontario House and was operated by Tom Holmes. Subsequent owners were Michael Ryan, Joe Varrin, M Finucane, Arthur Collins and Felix Potvin.

The present Postmaster is Mrs Dora Potvin.

The first telephone line was built from Douglas via Dacre to Mount St Patrick in 1907. The old-type wall phones were replaced by dial phones in 1962.

In the early days, candles made from rendered suet and tallow were used for lighting. These were followed by coal oil lamps and lanterns. In 1949 electricity was made available to residents.

Ode to Dacre

In the early days
(Written at the turn of the century)

Dacre is a charming town,
It now is growing fast;
We thought by its appearance
It surely would be last.
When you hear its population
You'll think it quite a town;
And when you go a-fishin',
Don't try to run it down.

John Wark, he is the merchant;
He keeps a general store.
While Mick Ryan, the inn-keeper,
Sells liquor in galore.
McEwen, he makes the harness
And sews them good and tight;
Bruno boots the people
And sometimes he is tight!

Mrs Kimberley, the dress-maker,
Can fit you very neat;
The hotel, kept by Legris,
You know it can't be beat.
Pender, the parson,
Is surely on the list;
Will Hunter, the miller,
Can turn you out a grist.

We have a little schoolhouse
With scholars fifty-five;
Miss Rankin is the teacher
A lady that will rise.
The poet dwells amongst us,
Give him his honour due;
He's worth a half a dozen
Of the rest of all the crew.

Churches... and Schools

A Baptist church built almost 100 years ago stands on the northern hill of the village. It is still in use. Land for the church was donated by William Hunter.

Roman Catholic residents of Dacre belong to the Mount St. Patrick Parish where Rev. T J Brady is parish priest.

Well over 80 years ago a public school was built some 100 yards south of the Baptist church. It was a union school for Grattan and Brougham townships. The first teacher was Drucilla Hunter, later Mrs James Davidson.

In 1917, due to overcrowding and an increase in the number of Catholic families, a Separate School was built on one acre of land donated by Harry Legris. He was the first secretary - treasurer of the school board, a position he held for over 30 years. The first trustees were Alfred Legris, Martin Hanniman and James Potvin. The school was built by George Garrow, assisted by men of the section.

Today, the enrolment in each of the two elementary schools is about 25.

Appreciation

The material for this story came from Mrs Harry Legris of Dacre who, although not a native, has lived in Dacre since 1906 when she went there from her home in Ashdad to teach at the public school. In 1909 she married and has lived there ever since. She was the former Margaret Quilty.

Some of the facts about the community, she has compiled herself. Others were contained in dozens of newspaper clippings she has saved over the years.

Articles by Harry Walker and Joan Finnigan, a letter from Clifford Cole of Hyndford and the work of many unknown writers have been incorporated into this story.

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Pilgrimage

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Sermon and Benediction by Bishop R. J. Windle of Ottawa at 3 p.m.

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