

ADVANCING

Joseph Hacking Started All This

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During the 75 years since its young life has been trained in the art of printing and have gone out into all parts of Canada and the United States to pursue various phases in the printing field.

It is a matter of tradition that in the 75 years the Free Press has never missed a publication date, although we could tell of some long hours that were put in to maintain the record. Fortunately the Free Press only once suffered damage from fire and all the files through the three quarter century are complete from the first issue.

Early Days in Printing

The old steam engine that was used to power the printing press is now a story handed down to us from our predecessors. On press days (Saturdays and Wednesdays) it related the printer's devil spent some hours cutting slabs to fire the upright boiler, which was located directly back of the press feeder. In cold weather the press feeder was quite comfortable but in early spring and summer none envied the one who was press feeder and perched capiously.

We remember well the single cylinder gas engine which followed the steam engine. Gas engines of 1904 were not as dependable as they are today. Some days it did and some it didn't and on the days it didn't two of the lads seized the old lever arms on the cylinder of the press and supplied the motive power to get off the edition. Usually the speed exceeded that of the gas engine until the boss became wroth.

For the platen or job press, foot power was usual. Those were the days when you stood on one foot and pedaled the press with the other foot and used both hands for feeding the sheets and a constant eye for supplying the ink which was put on by hand as required. It is so different from the automatic, electrically operated machines of today which replace the foot power. Delicately regulated supply of ink uniformly fed and incorporated into the machine mechanism that replaces the hands of the feeder, and produces three to four times the quantity of better printed matter.

Until 1917 the Free Press was set by hand. A good compositor could set from 2 to 3 columns per day of ten hours by sticking close to his case. The Free Press was one of the first newspapers in Halton County to install a Linotype on which an operator will set a column of newspaper type in an hour. At present there are two linotypes setting most of the type for the two

papers owned by the present management. The Acton Free Press is the Canadian Champion of Midwestern as well as commercial print for both town and the district. Being an industrial section of Ontario this commercial printing is an important part of the local printing plant.

In 1909 when the present editor started his apprenticeship the starting wage was \$1.50 per week. The work week was from seven to six five days a week with paper days often running until after midnight. Saturday was until four pages of the paper was printed and rarely was finished at noon. Today the plant operates on a forty five hour week with all day Saturdays off every week. The capital invested is forty times that required 75 years ago. Electricity today supplies all the power and heat for melting the metal used in the plant and operating the stoker used for heating.

In 1909 the staff included five boys in various stages of apprenticeship and the editor. Today there is a staff of 9 and the editor in the Acton office and an office and news staff in Milton. The Rockwood Community Bulletin is also printed at the Acton plant.

The present staff of the Free Press is G. A. Dills, editor, Robert J. MacArthur, who has been with the business for 25 years as general foreman and in charge of newspaper production, David Dills is in charge of commercial printing, job presses and other mechanical work and also Free Press photography, Hartley Coles in operating and care of Linotypes, Wilfred Duxat Linotype operator and compositor, Roy Kirkness, hand compositor and press feeder, Lawrence Hemstley, apprentice, Miss D. Ryder, Linotype operator, Miss Evelyn Brandt in charge of the business office and Mrs. Dills who assists in the binding operations and office work. James Dills, who is at present attending the journalism course at Riverston Institute of Technology is on the staff in holiday periods and every week end. He has taken a large share in compiling this anniversary number and plans to continue the business on completion of his course.

In addition to their regular duties nearly all members of the staff assume reportorial duties, such as sports and other writing and news gathering.

The history of the Free Press is entwined with the history of the community. It has supported measures aimed at its progress and voiced disapproval of things which were considered not advantageous. It has told the story week by week for three-quarters of a century of the activities of this community, the joys and the sorrows. In its

files are recorded the people and the story of the things that have gone into making Acton what it is today. Editors may be important but regardless of who guides, its destiny the newspaper is part of the town.

Joseph Harding in 1875 wrote that Acton has just barely enough inhabitants to become incorporated, but he had faith in the outlook for future development. Seventy five years and four editors later Acton has become a town and justified that faith in his establishment of the Free Press.

Acton Flour Mills Continue, Progress

No fiction writer can lament on the old mill in Acton as a relic of early days. The industry upon which this town as well as all communities in this Dominion was built was the flour mills. Here the pioneers came to get their wheat ground into flour and around these centres sprang up the stores and the hamlets.

But after the hamlets grew to villages and towns very often the old mills were abandoned and water power allowed to lapse. The farmers sold their grain to the big milling companies and a pioneer industry was absorbed in a big company.

That hasn't happened in Acton. The flour mill that was built has been operated always and today is busily turning out 150 barrels per day and shipping a product not only for domestic use but for export trade.

David H. Landsay purchased the mill property thirty two years ago. He has put in modern equipment, built grain elevators for storage and the plant is busy at all times. In fact a little too busy for Mr. Landsay who would enjoy an opportunity for some leisure.

There's another difference at the old mill. No longer does Fairy Lake and the water wheel supply the power to grind the flour. Electric motors and diesel engines are the motive power.

The history of the mill is not recorded in any place we have been able to find. It appears to have been established shortly after the Adams family came here in 1828. Among the owners of the mill we can recall are John Harvey, the Cheyne Bros, Wm. Glebe, Robert Mosher, but we know there were others before these proprietors. It is quite evident that the longer and most successful operation has been that of Mr. Landsay.

Hall By-Law Passes By Large Majority

September 1, 1931. The election on the Town Hall by-law last Friday caused considerable comment in town, but notwithstanding the stir a comparatively small vote was polled. It is hardly necessary to state that the by-law was carried by a large majority, the poll being 50 for the by-law and only 14 against. This, we think, clearly shows the spirit of enterprise possessed by the freeholders of our village.

There are still some non-progressive electors and specially non-ratepayers who object to building a town hall, but the building of the hall now being a certainty, and a well understood necessity, by a large majority of the electors who voted for it, would it not be well for the non-progressive party of electors who opposed it—to gracefully submit to have the village improved and the value of the property increased by this, one of the best investments of public funds yet made by the electors through the village council.



OVER 1000 ISSUES of the Acton Free Press have been put to press by Shop Foreman Bob MacArthur. Here he prepares another issue, and the presses are ready to roll the presses that reach back from you the Acton Free Press. Bob MacArthur has been with the Free Press for 23 years. He has the answers on every phase from setting down through and operate any machine in the plant production.

Acton's Present Day Industrial Plants Play Important Part in Life of Town

Of the early industries we have written fully. Just let us take a quick glance at the industrial Acton of today. Until twenty five years ago Acton's industries included Beardmore and Co., Storey Glove Co., the flour mill and saw mill. All of these foundation industries remain except the saw mill but have been supplemented by many more manufacturing concerns of a wide variety of products.

Industrial statistics show Acton with 19 industries and a gross production of \$11,071,460.00 and an annual wage and salary payroll of \$1,540,107. Employees are given a 10% raise in the latest statistics. The Beardmore Co. still remains not only the oldest manufacturing establishment here but also the largest.

The Last Quarter Century
Let us briefly look at the industrial growth of the last twenty five years or so.

The Mason Knitting Co. was established by Amos Mason and manufactures children's underwear. First started in the old municipal power house, added to this building several times and then purchased 30,000 square feet of Beardmore warehouse and moved the plant there.

Force Electric Products took over the shoe factory building to manufacture rangettes, toasters, irons, etc. Have made two additions to the building to meet growth of the industry.

Ajax Engineers took over a building erected for a monument factory. Have had steady growth and enlarged the property where radio towers, cooling tanks, lannery and manufacturing equipment is made and shipped to all parts of the world.

Acton Machine Shop started by Charles F. S. Blow in Main Street expanded and secured buildings east of C.N.R. tracks and manufacturing presses and other special equipment.

The industry was also the result of building the Block Foundry here to make castings for the machine tool. Another industry, Acton Machine Co. under C. H. Harrison started here, moved the plant to the west a few years ago.

Beardmore Laboratories, who produce medical supplies and instruments for hospitals purchased the Mason Knitting Co. plant for re-erected and added new buildings and purchased additional property to meet an expanding demand for their products.

Wood Combining Corporation purchased a building from Beardmore and Co. about ten years ago. Several large extensions have been built necessary for the processing of wood and now various types of wood products are also being processed in this plant.

Plastics Plant, just east of N.R. built a new plant to manufacture expanded plastics. Started with one extruder and now operates three extruders and have this year doubled the size of the building to cope with the demand for their products.

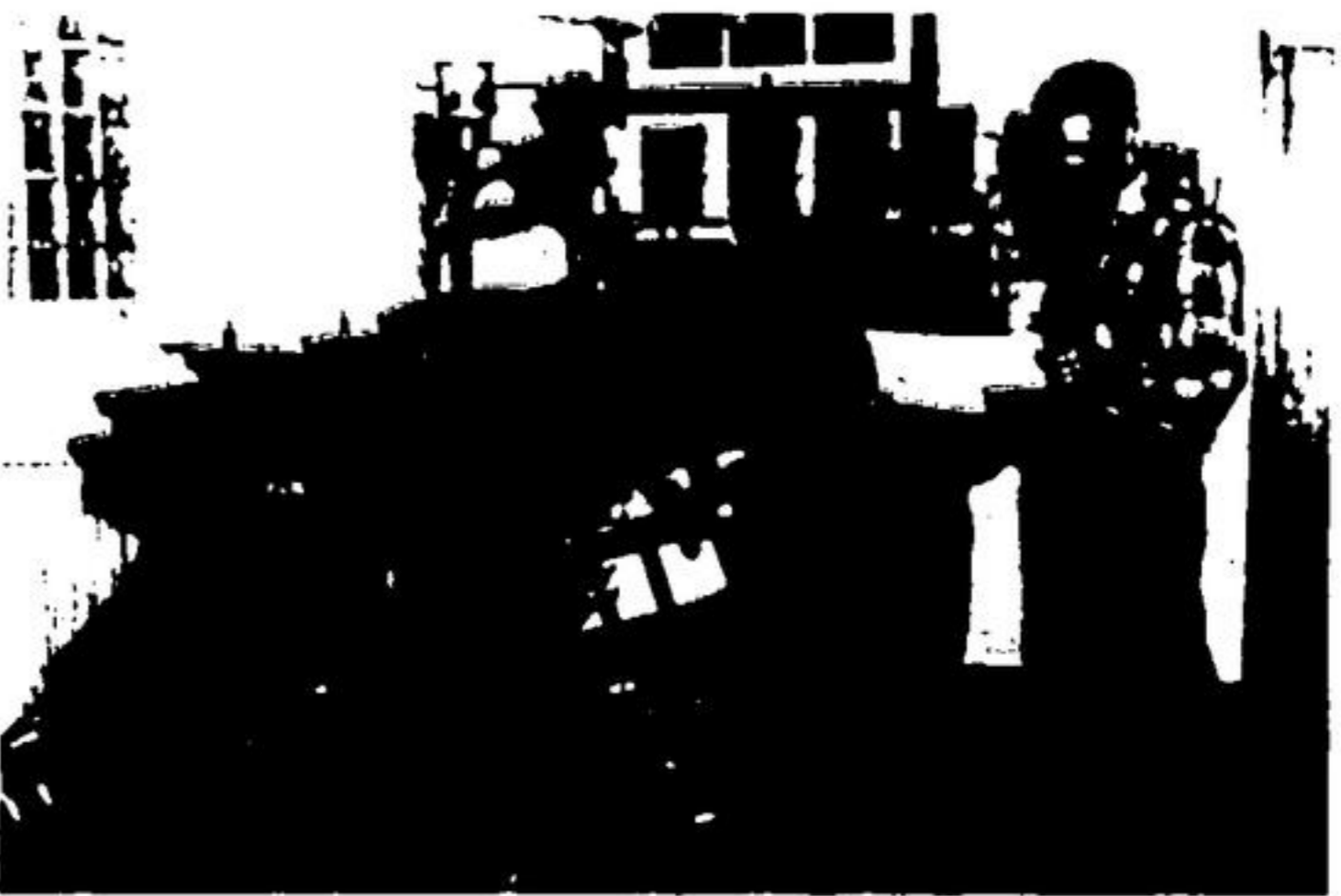
Supreme Glove Works manufactures work gloves. Started by the late J. O. Mowat and now operated by his son.

These are some of the industries that have added to Acton's development in the last quarter century.

Electronics is perhaps the latest industry to start operations in Acton. Main Street next to the Dominion Hotel produces moulded plastics.



LEARNING THE COMPLICATED locations of type in the "Case" was Lawrence Hemstley's first job and here the apprentice puts to good use this knowledge by setting the headline for this issue of the Free Press.



AUTOMATIC PRESSES that turn out quality printing in the job work department are pictured above. Apprentice Roy Kirkness shows a piece of work to Press Foreman Dave Dills for approval. Dave is in charge of routing all the jobs through the various departments and scheduling them for quick delivery.