

THE FILES

portray the early life of Acton as a young and enterprising country village

Fire Completely Destroys Grist Mills Passing Freight Train Whistles Warning

April 13, 1882 - The grist mills of Messrs. G. and E. Tolton, situated about a mile east of this village, and known as the Glen Lawson Mills, were destroyed by fire about five o'clock last Friday morning. The employees of a passing freight train seeing the fire, and nobody apparently aware of it, gave the alarm by a prolonged whistle of the engine. This had the effect of arousing the residents of the vicinity who found that the whole interior of the mill was in flames and that nothing could be done to save it or the contents. They at once turned their attention to Mr. Tolton's residence, which is only about twenty feet from the mill, and by strenuous exertions saved it from the devouring element. At one time it was thought the house would have to go and the furniture was all removed.

When the millers, Messrs. R. Elliott and E. Lamb left work the night before they locked the mill but when the fire was discovered the front door was standing wide open, and it is supposed that a tramp, or tramps, had gained admittance and probably while intoxicated had accidentally fired the building. To substantiate this belief, a heap of charred remains having the appearance of human bones, was found in the ruins on Saturday afternoon, but they were so badly burned that it is impossible to say whether they are the remains of a human being or not. No other reason can be given for the fire.

McGarvin, Reeve Defeats Henderson

Nominations December 30, 1875.
For Reeve—D. Henderson, Dr. McGarvin.

For Councillors—John Speight, Edward Nicklin, John Secord, Chas. S. Smith, D. D. Christie, Horace Hall, Ransom Adams, Thomas Ebbage, Richard Hamilton, Duncan Kennedy.

Elected January 6, 1876.
Reeve—Dr. McGarvin.
Councillors—John Secord, D. D. Christie, Richard Hamilton, C. S. Smith.

Placed in Darbys Arraigned, Fined

September 12, 1875—Wm. Smith a railway labourer got outside of too much fire water and went on a "regular old tear". Bill Smith tore around and smashed furniture, stoves and things and created a furious commotion in his household. Drunken Smith was arrested and had his hands placed in the "darbys". Crazy Smith threatened mischief and vengeance; snakes troubled him. Sober Smith was arraigned before the reeve and fined \$4.

May 13, 1878 - Enterprise! Some of our merchants have been buying eggs ten cents a dozen and selling them at eight. Talk about enterprise.

Last Toll Gate In Vicinity Withdrawn Marks Advancement of Municipality

June 24, 1880 - On Friday night a second, but not very serious set of burglaries was committed in our usually quiet little town. The burglars visited four or five places and their principal idea seems to have been to obtain a good supply of provision. They first visited the residence of Mr. Samuel Moore, and entering the cellar from an outer door, helped themselves to ham several loaves of bread and a crock containing fifteen or twenty pounds of butter. They then proceeded to Mrs. Midgley's and after placing a ladder at an upstairs window proceeded to enter, but were alarmed by one of the inmates awaking and lighting a lamp. The next place at which they called was that of Mr. M. Kennedy. Here they took possession of a teapot, a can containing a quantity of sugar and a pair of small scales, and then decamped. Mr. Henry Smith was the next victim and here the unknown visitors were a little more bold than at the other places. After gaining admittance by a back door they proceeded to the bedroom where Mr. Smith and wife were sleeping and took Mr. Smith's pocketbook containing six dollars and a number of papers out of his pants and his watch from his vest pocket. The watch, a splendid English lever was left on the stove between the two flat irons. After helping themselves to another lot of sugar they took their leave. This is the extent of their work as far as we can ascertain. No clue to the perpetrators.

February 17, 1876 - The toll gate on the seventh line of Esquimaux, the only one that has been in existence in Halton for many years, has at last been removed. People may now travel on the only few miles of gravel road in the County without being compelled to fork over a dime.

October 6, 1881 - At the public meeting for the selection of a site for the new town hall last evening, it was resolved that the site on the south east corner of Mill and Egin streets be purchased, provided a good title could be given at a reasonable price, otherwise the selection be left with the council.

Late, Cold Night Animal Disgusted

March 15, 1877 - A young man from the country who attended an entertainment in Acton a few nights since, got into rather an awkward fix before he reached home. He had taken the young lady who had accompanied him to her residence, and had left his horse standing by the roadside while he went into the house to warm himself and talk "politics" with her. He remained rather longer than suited the animal's ideas of the fitness of things at such a late hour of a cold night, and when he returned to the roadside, the rig was invisible. The horse had either broken away, or had been unfastened by some mischievous individual and trotted off homewards. The young man was thus compelled to trudge four or five miles through the slush and snow.

Wristlet Party Entertains Novelty

February 15, 1877—Wristlet parties are the latest. The ladies furnish wristlets, and each pair is numbered. One of each pair, with the number, is put into the box and sold to the gentlemen by a committee, and corresponding wristlets with the numbers are worn by the ladies. The fun commences when each gentleman buys a wristlet and finds the owner of the mate to it, to whom he is to pay attention during the evening.

Bank Co. Formed Henderson, Head

August 18, 1881 - To meet the daily increasing demand for more convenient banking facilities a partnership has been formed by W. H. Storey, D. D. Christie and D. Henderson, under the name and style of Storey, Christie and Co., who shall on or about the first of September, be prepared to open a banking office in Acton for the transaction of general banking business, such as collecting and issuing drafts, discounting notes, drafts, etc., and receiving money on deposit on the most liberal terms. The business shall be designated "The Acton Banking Co.", and will be under the management of Mr. Henderson.

Lights Erected, Blaspheming Lady Walks All Recorded in Acton Free Press Files

November 11, 1880—Moved by W. H. Storey, seconded by D. D. Christie, that the committee on streets and sidewalks be instructed to erect as many street lamps as they deem necessary, not exceeding twenty, arrangements to be made for lighting with the persons opposite whose premises they are situated, with a view to making them as inexpensive to the corporation as possible.

Moved by D. D. Christie, seconded by W. H. Storey that the offer of J. E. McGarvin of fifty cents per lamp for the privilege of advertising on the street lamps be accepted provided that the style of advertisement be approved of by a committee consisting of the reeve, the mover and seconder.

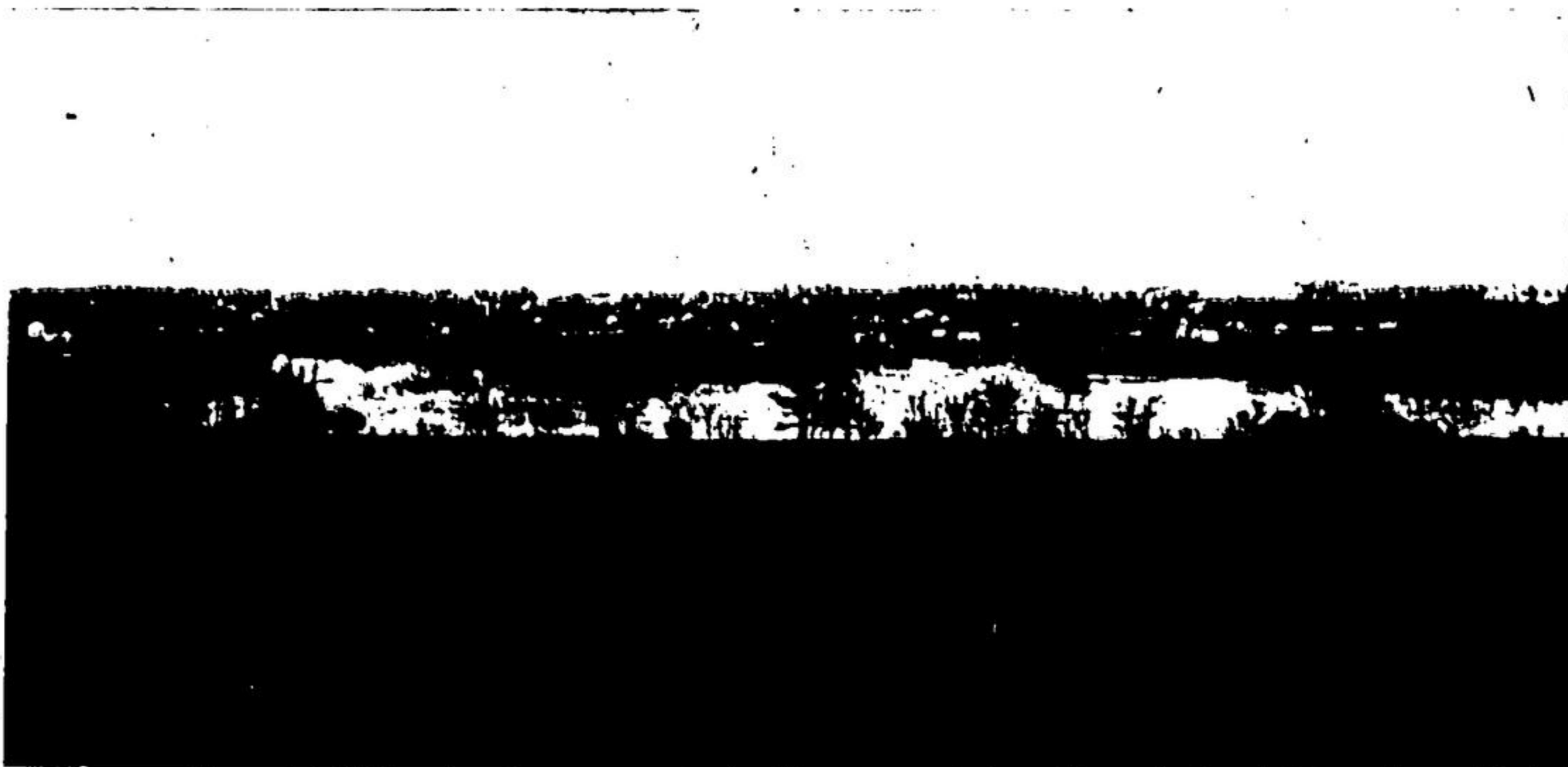
July 9, 1875—Mothers should see that two-year-olds are not allowed on the streets on Fair Days. The crowds of people are apt to trample them.

August 8, 1878 - A lady was put off the 517 train at Acton station, going east, Monday evening, because she had no ticket and unfortunately had no money to purchase one. She had expected her husband to meet her on that train at Guelph, but as he didn't come she got on the car to dead-beat her way to Toronto. But it was no go. After amusing herself for some time at the station, by swearing at the conductor and all the officials, she attempted to borrow enough money to take her to Toronto, but as she also failed in this, she proceeded, after telling everybody to go to some warm place, to walk to the city.

March 1, 1877—Our boys may store up in their memory the fact that they have been able to play marbles on the sidewalk nearly every day during the month of February 1877.



CHANGE HAS AFFECTED this old Acton street as can be noticed by comparing the picture above with the present day scene. The first church was built on the corner of this street and John street when the village was called Adamsville.



EARLY SETTLERS viewed Acton from the Breezes and this is what they saw. The cluster of buildings does not bear much resemblance to the scene of today but Prospect Park and Fairy Lake are still guiding landmarks. From this place today the view is obstructed and the only remaining vantage point of seeing the town is Bilton's Hill since another old landmark, Cobble Hill, disappeared this year.