

HOCKEY CHAMPS FOR DECADE

Group Champions for Nine Seasons Tanners Have Been in O.H.A. Seventeen

Although hockey flourished in Acton at the turn of the century and in subsequent years, much of its history is of fairly recent origin. Until the year 1929 when a closed arena was erected, Acton had no teams in organized O.H.A. hockey and that accounts for the fact. The teams of the pre-'29 era played the game on an outdoor rink at the foot of Frederick and Maria Streets, where the Beardmore bunk-house is now located.

However primitive the outdoor rink facilities compared to those of today, they had no bearing on the calibre of the hockey and the teams. This burgh produced some fine hockey teams on the old outdoor rink. Invitations were issued to clubs in most of the accessible parts of Ontario to play home and home matches. Invariably the Acton club won these tournaments and it was then their reputation began to grow.

Sixty-Minute Men

The teams of those days, in striking contrast to today, carried no more than one or two substitutes. Players in their crew-neck sweaters remained on the ice the full sixty minutes. In the event of an injury to a regular, then one of the substitutes got the chance to play.

There are some who maintain that the "real" hockey played in Acton was on the old rink. With games against neighbouring towns like Milton, Hornby and Georgetown to put them in shape, Acton often took on clubs of Senior company from Toronto and other points on the map. It was an event when they lost a game.

Periodically, however, one of the neighbouring towns imported players to take the Acton club down a peg or two. Georgetown was the most consistent offender in this respect. It is related that on one occasion a game was scheduled for Georgetown and the Papertown rink, just a dammed up creek, was not enjoying the best of ice. There was a rink in Glen Williams then and Acton agreed to play the match there.

The Acton club of that year was a small light fast skating club and although the team wasn't aware of it, the Glen Williams rink was little bigger than a postage stamp. Georgetown, well aware of the rink's dimensions, decided to show the egotistical Acton club a thing or two. Craftily the Georgetown officials went out and hired a team of lacrosse players, fellows who could hardly skate but were as big as the proverbial mountain.

When the two teams met it was just a case of who could push who in what direction. The lacrosse giants had more push and the carnage of Acton players was a pity to behold. That was one of the few times Acton lost a game.

Championship in '39

In 1929 an indoor arena was approved by the ratepayers and erected in the park. One of the first things done was to enter an intermediate team in the O.H.A. The Tanners of '29 created a precedent



GROUP CHAMPIONS OF 1947, Acton Tanners depicted above after defeating Orangeville decisively for their third straight win of the best-in-five group finals. The team eliminated Preston in the first round before bowing out to Grimsby in a dramatic goal-to-count series that saw each team win one game. Grimsby went on to win the Int. "B" title.

for ensuing Acton teams by winning the group composed of Milton, Georgetown and Brampton. Since their first year in Int. hockey the

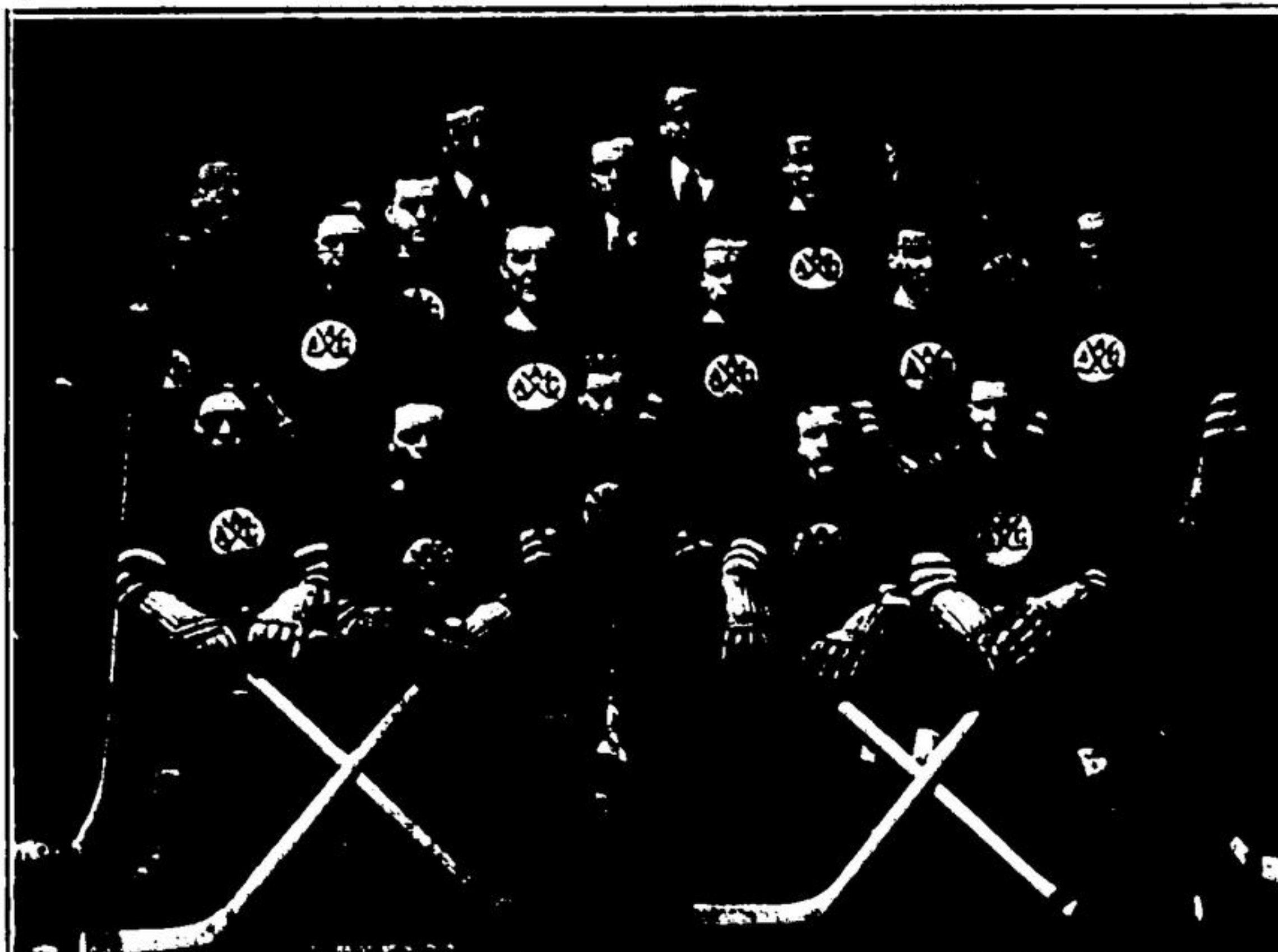
Tanners have repeated that feat nine times out of a possible seventeen and made Acton a by word for top teams in the amateur hockey world.

In 1939 after coming close for several years previous, the Tanners went through to the O.H.A. Int. "B" championship of Ontario. To their loyal fans it was only fitting. They finished on top of a group of 12 teams entered the play-downs. At many times were on the brink of elimination, but fought back to get real champions to wrap up the coveted cup emblematic of Ontario supremacy.

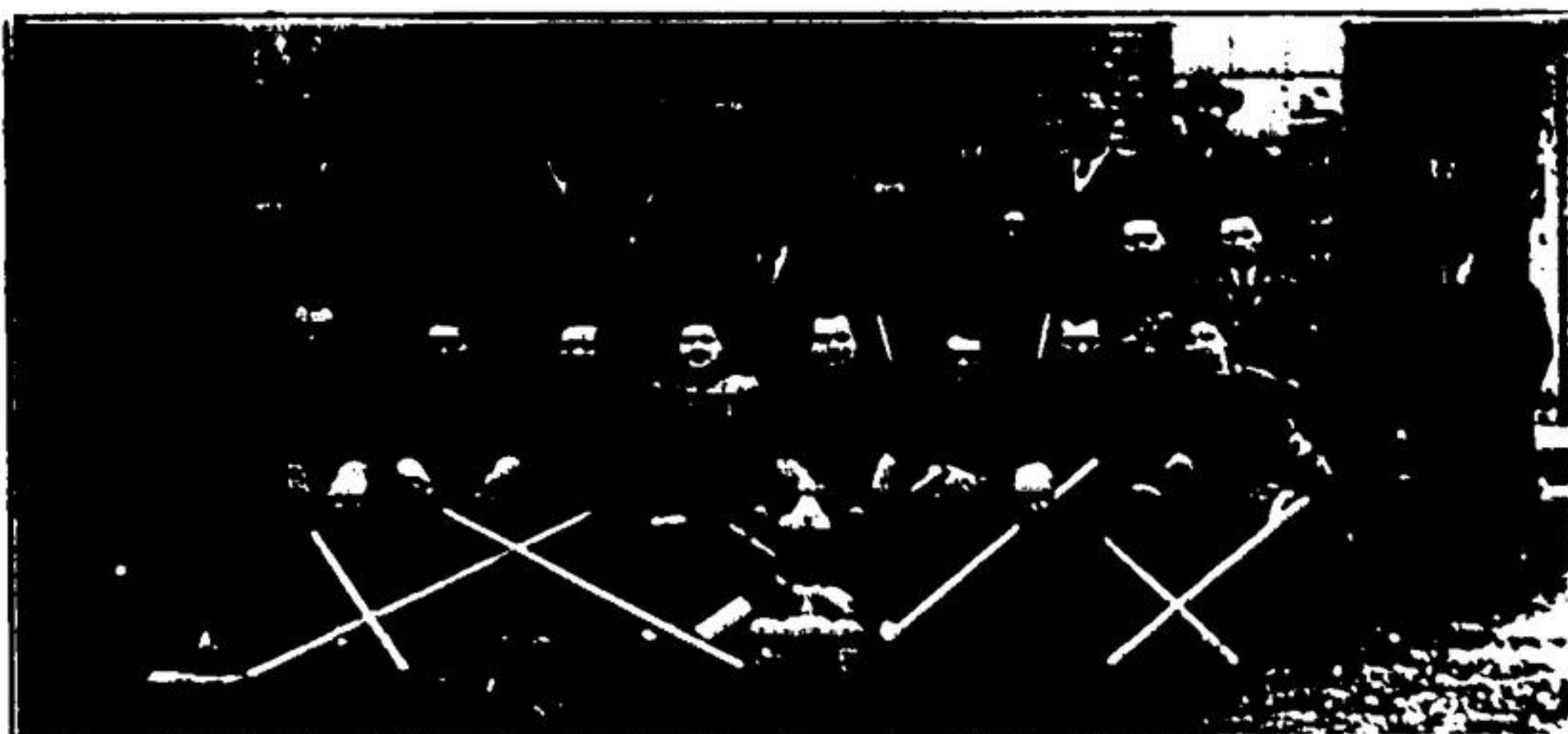
Wool in Arena

War interrupted Acton's participation in the O.H.A. for four years. To accommodate the wartime production shortage, council agreed to store wool in the arena until hostilities ceased. Enlistments were so high it was virtually impossible to get any semblance of a team from there rejected from the arena's forces. However after the war the Acton entered the hockey world again in a winning role.

Minor hockey in Acton has at all times been fortunate in having older players to shape the future stars. Many a player of professional ability had his start on the ponds and rinks of Acton. In recent years there have been two or three Junior clubs of note. Perhaps one of the best Junior teams to represent Acton was in 1949. The Redmen of that year went to the provincial semi-finals before being eliminated by Orono who won the title.



GROUP CHAMPIONS OF 1930-31, Acton was grouped with Burlington, Oakville, Georgetown and Brampton. Eliminating Burlington in group finals, the club next ousted Caedonia and Eira. In the third round Acton lost to Stratford 3-1 in the first game but won the second in Acton, 2-1.



HOCKEY HOLDS THE SAME significance to Canadians as baseball does in the United States. The game is probably the fastest team sport in the world and it becomes Actonians to speak a mite proudly of the hockey played in these parts since the game evolved from the "shinny" stage to present day streamlined standards. There have been championship teams from Acton in practically every decade, but at no time has a club reached the heights of success as did the 1938-39 Ontario Int. "B" Champions, Acton Tanners, pictured above. Their feat in wrapping up the trophy was all the more remarkable in that day. Population figures didn't enter into Int. classifications as is the regulation today and many fair-sized cities had entries in Int. "B" hockey.

Seventeen Years of O.H.A. Hockey

The following is a year by year account of the trail the Acton Tanners led in their seventeen years of O.H.A. hockey.

- 1929-30 Won Group, lost in first round of play-downs to Paris.
- 1930-31 Won Group, Eliminated by Stratford in third round.
- 1931-32 Won Group, Eliminated by Oakville in first round.
- 1932-33 Eliminated in Group Finals.
- 1933-34 Lost in Play-down in City of Etobicoke.
- 1934-35 Won Group, Eliminated by Durham in second round.
- 1935-36 Won Group, Eliminated by Durham in third round after a one goal margin, consecutive victories.
- 1936-37 Won Group, Eliminated by Simcoe in second round.
- 1937-38 Int. "A" Group Finals, lost to Preston in four games.
- 1938-39 **WON GROUP—COPPED CHAMPIONSHIP OF ONTARIO**
- 1939-40 Lost in Waterloo in Group Finals.
- 1940-41 Ousted in Group Play-offs—Guelph-Acton Combine.
- Between 1941 and 1943 no hockey was played in the Acton Arena.
- 1944-46 Lost the group but ousted by Georgetown in Group Semi-Finals by one goal margin.
- 1946-47 Advanced into Ont. play-downs, ousted by Grimsby in the second round.
- 1947-48 Advanced right to Ontario finals before being eliminated by Bucko McDonald's Sundridge Beavers.
- 1948-49 Lost to Georgetown in group semi-finals.
- 1949-50—Poorest year in history but team had one striking characteristic compared to opposition—all "home-brew".