

Acton, High Point Everybody Works

by Elizabeth Cuddy

Perched 1,150 feet above sea-level Acton is one of the highest points in Ontario, but it is not above manual labor—everybody works for a living and likes it.

"It's a workingman's town," boasts Mayor E. G. Tyler. "None of us have too much wealth, but it's a darn good town just the same." In fact His Worship implies that the very absence of large fortunes is an advantage to the community.

And undoubtedly he's right. It does away with little social cliques which too often keep town folk divided, and it puts everyone on an equal basis. When you come in contact with people in business during the day, you don't high-hat them in the evening.

Mr. Tyler himself owns a transport business and drives the school bus. Twice a day he makes a 45-mile circuit to pick up and return pupils from the surrounding country who attend the local high school. While this doesn't bring the genial mayor any extra votes at election time, it does give him many young friends.

From the bits of history available, it appears that even the early settlers paid tribute to the workingman. They first called the hamlet Danville, in honor of a young man who was clerk in the first dry goods store. However, sometime later, they reverted to the old practice of calling it after more distinguished settlers and it became known as Adamsville, after Ezra Zenas and Rufus Adams, three brothers who arrived in 1828 from New York State.

Saddle-Bag Preachers

Ezra and Zenas were "saddle-bag" Methodist preachers and doubtless saved many souls on their long trek through the bush to their new home. Records show that Rev. Ezra Adams preached the first sermon there in the spring of 1828 to the original settlers, who had arrived about eight years before.

But although the Methodists had a head start and held services in homes for many years, the Presbyterians built the first church. As always they were anxious that their children should have a religious education and in 1843 Sunday School was begun and four years later a frame kirk was opened and named for John Knox.

By building when it did, Knox congregation was able to claim the 40 pounds gratuity offered by Mr. Buchanan of Hamilton to each of the first 10 churches opened not later than that year. Baptists were also active in the village in those days and as early as 1842 held meetings in homes; and Roman Catholics and Anglicans were not much behind. Today all five denominations have thriving congregations.

Peopled originally by Old Country stock, Acton is proud of its British associations. In 1844 the hamlet obtained a post office and Robert Swan who had come from Acton, England, became the first postmaster. It was on his suggestion that the name was changed to that of his birthplace.

In recent years citizens visiting England have made a point of also visiting their namesake. This resulted in the mayor of Acton in the Old Country, Sir Harry Brittain, donating his town's shield to Acton, Ont. So now the two places have the same coat of arms, except that the English one has oak leaves on it and the Canadian maple leaves.

And Mayor Tyler can almost call Acton, England, his birthplace, but not quite. He was born in London proper and Acton is a borough of the British capital. Nor can he take any credit for settling where he did as he came to Canada with his parents at the age of four.

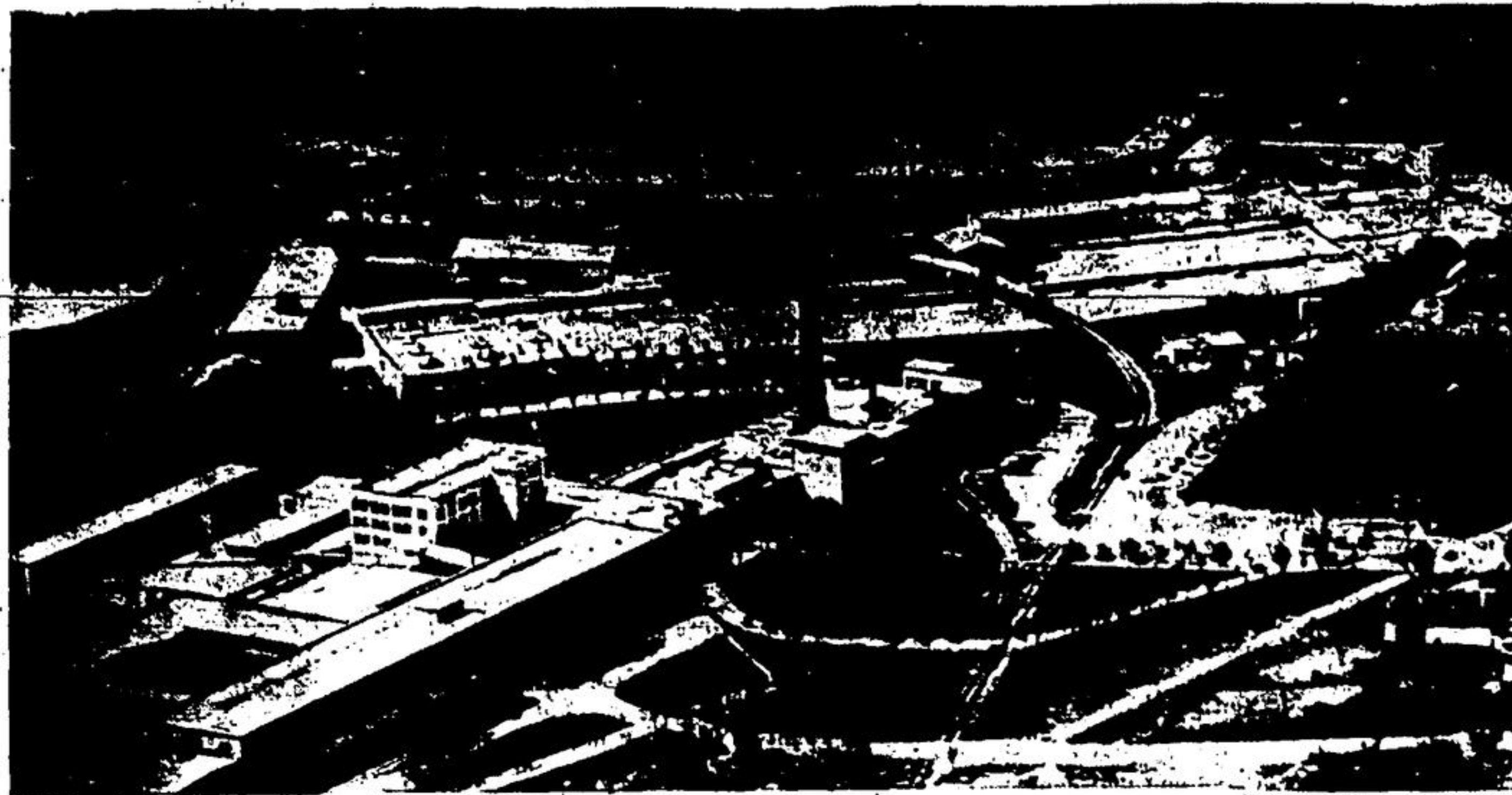
But the ties go deeper than just names or gifts. Two World Wars have shown that the loyalty of Acton's ancestors has not diminished. During World War II when the population was only about 2,400, enlistments numbered 357 men and women while those who stayed at home raised \$30,000 for war relief.

Starting with a grist mill located on the little river, Acton is now an industrial town with 19 factories of various sizes and kinds. However, flour is still ground on the original site although the first mill was destroyed by fire.

Today the town boasts of the largest tannery in Canada—Beardmore and Co. Ltd.—which celebrated its centenary in 1944, though it has not always been located in Acton. George L. Beardmore, an Englishman from Devon, first invested his money in a tannery in Hamilton which was later burnt out and then in 1865, bought a tannery in the town. The Acton Tannery was established by A. Nellis in 1840 and had several owners before Mr. Beardmore took it over.

In order to get large quantities of water necessary in the tanning process, Beardmore dammed the river and formed a big millpond. For years it was known as just that

A Toronto Telegram Saturday Feature Shows Acton As Outsiders See It



AMONG ACTON industries is the Beardmore Tannery which celebrated its centenary in 1944 and is the largest and oldest tannery in Canada specializing in sole leather. Here it is seen from the air.

AT RIGHT, the oldest employee at Beardmore Tannery is Jack Bauer who has been with the company for 49 years. Mr. Bauer is seen at work on a rolling machine.



His Worship Mayor E. G. Tyler



ABOVE Michael Bennett, 8; Barry Kirkness, 9; Margaret Sunter, 9; and Blair Hotchen, 10, try one of the windows of the large public school addition for size. The addition adjoins the present school.

AT LEFT, Mayor E. G. Tyler of Acton. In the transport business, Mayor Tyler brings 45 country pupils to the high school each day.

AT RIGHT, Jacqueline Currie holds nylon being processed at the Wool Combing Corporation of Canada, Ltd., another Acton industry.

Pictures and story, a Toronto Telegram feature, by Elizabeth Cuddy and Harold Whyte.



Acton's Crest Adopted from Acton, England.



and became the old swimming hole for the boys. Then one day an English woman moved to town—Mrs Sarah Secord—who thought it disgraceful that such a beautiful lake should be known by such a prosaic name. So Fairy Lake she named it and Fairy Lake it has remained.

Hide Eyesore

Tannery officials began to realize that a factory doesn't have to be an eyesore and started landscaping and improving their property. Now the entrance resembles an estate with broad lawns, trees and shrubs as well as a miniature sprayed stream running through it.

Another pioneer industry is the Storey Glove Works which was founded by W. H. Storey in 1868 and down through the years has provided hundreds of families with livelihood. Mr. Storey was a public-spirited man and when Acton was incorporated as a village in 1873 he became its first mayor.

More recent industries include the Baxter Laboratories and the Wool Combing Corporation of Canada Ltd. Baxter's is known throughout the country for its medical supplies and solutions for hospitals and the Wool Combing Corporation is the only one of its kind in Canada.

"We don't own a pound of wool," stressed Stanley Wilkins, general manager. The plant simply washes and combs the raw wool, preparing it for use in spinning mills. Nylon is also processed into continuous slivers and then passed on to manufacturers. It is a unique concern in so far as it sells only its services.

With all its industries and churches, Acton finds plenty of time for pleasure. Up until the turn of the century, cricket was the game—but now baseball and hockey have supplanted it.

Very Sporting Town

"We are a very sporting town," says Mayor Tyler, "and at present have a midwest baseball team in the O.P.A. finals. Also for years we won the intermediate championships in hockey but we are handicapped now through not having artificial ice."

Another outstanding feature of Acton is its YMCA, which was built through a legacy left by Jas. A. Murray, a former traveller for the Storey Glove Works. "Mr. Murray left \$20,000 for a Y but by the time we got around to building it (1934) interest had brought it up to \$24,000," explained Editor G. Arlof Dills, of the Acton Free Press. "Citizens won't forget 1950 for a long time for not only did the Free Press celebrate its 75th anniversary but the municipality took on the status of a town. "When the population reached 2,000 no one bothered but when it got to 3,000 we thought it better to incorporate it," said Mr. Dills.

This gave townfolk a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and they made the most of it. Leading in the parades for all such occasions is always the Acton band which can trace its history back to 1875.

The last four or five years have seen a large increase in this Halton County town and there is every

indication it will continue. A sewage system has just been completed which is a great advantage and also Highway No. 25 has recently been completed. This makes Acton the junction of Nos. 25 and 7, as well as being the hub of a good farming district and industrial district.

The Douglas fir tree of British Columbia often grows to a height of 3000 feet and a diameter of 10 feet.

FASHION NOTE FROM BRITAIN

In lieu of any violent change in silhouette this year British designers have concentrated their attention on details, which calls for the most skilled cutting. Many of the details have the waist endeavour, as a *raison d'être* to attract the eye towards a slim waist or at any rate try to make the waist look smaller than it actually is.

For this reason deep stitched tucks make the back look broader above a waist-line which is elasticised to give it narrowness, or the bodice is buttoned at the back over four deep tiers of material. A criss-over collar may be cut into the dress to finish half-way down the back where it buttons. In the same way, elongated claw revers finish at a nipped-in waist in front and curved pockets emphasize a rounded hip-line; or large low all levers are set off by a single waist button on a tailored suit.

Poot's Corner
NO HOMEWORK!

Each day I find some treasured thought
Opinions held demolished;
Ye editor claims that it is time,
That homework be abolished.

It's more important, so 'tis said
That children have their leisure
And thus they place Crosby ahead
Of Ancient Julius Caesar.

The three "R's" now take second place
To all the social graces
For study only puts deep lines
In all their dear young faces!

Brains formative; do not expose
To history's oft told lies,
As majorities just bare their limbs
To countless staring eyes.

And everything's important but
The fruit of honest labour,
In later years too oft they find
The salt has lost its savor.

But I am glad my teacher did
Not hold to that sad tenet
I know that I'm a better man
Because of M. Z. Bennett.

For she believed in honest toil
God dignified the man,
And 'twas we did, for when we
shirked.

Our youthful hides shied 'an
But hard and learned we called
forth,
In heart and mind conditioned,
Untrained the runner cannot win,
Thoughts too, must be conditioned.
M. Z. B. Student,
Toronto, Ont.

Sliced side breakfast: Bacon 65c
lb. at Rockwood Market.



It's the friendly way to travel. You see all the sights along the way. You have more to spend on other things because fares are low.

ROUND TRIP
(Subject to Change)

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PITTSBURGH	17.20
DETROIT	11.20

(Surcharge Extra)

HAROLD WILES
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