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About This Feature Series

A new feature is this week added to the increasing list of articles carried regularly in the Acton Free Press. For some time interest has been expressed in the history of Halton County, but no concrete action has been taken in compiling the fast-fading facts of the county's early days.

Being one of the oldest established papers in Halton the Free Press felt a responsibility toward the preservation of this interesting subject. But compiling history factually and interestingly is no mean task and this paper has been fortunate in securing a writer of ability proven over a period of years. Mrs. Gwen Clarke who will contribute the feature each week, has for more than 20 years been the author of a column carried in the Acton Free Press and in 1943 syndicated to the Wilson list of publications, and a writer of features in other Canadian periodicals.

The first article in the series of Halton's history is carried this week as an introduction to the subject. There seems every possibility the column will later be published in book form, but comments from readers would be appreciated.

Because compiling history is a difficult task it is hoped items may be forwarded to Mrs. Clarke either through this office or to her directly, that will assist in the preservation of the early story of Halton.

We feel sure readers who have made their home in Halton for a number of years will find a great deal of interest in the new weekly feature and no doubt new residents will find equal interest in understanding the history of the county in which they now live. Being a subscriber is the only way of insuring that you may receive all copies of the paper carrying the column since stores are often sold out of some issues.

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—The Editors.

Halton's Pages of the Past

Hewn Out of Dense Forests, Halton Now in the Industrial Hub of Ontario

by GWEN CLARKE

Halton County is, geographically, the second smallest county in the Province of Ontario, covering an area of 363 square miles. It is also one of the most important. Strategically located at the western end of Lake Ontario, its modern waterways, highways and railways are the main arteries supplying the life-blood to many parts of the province.

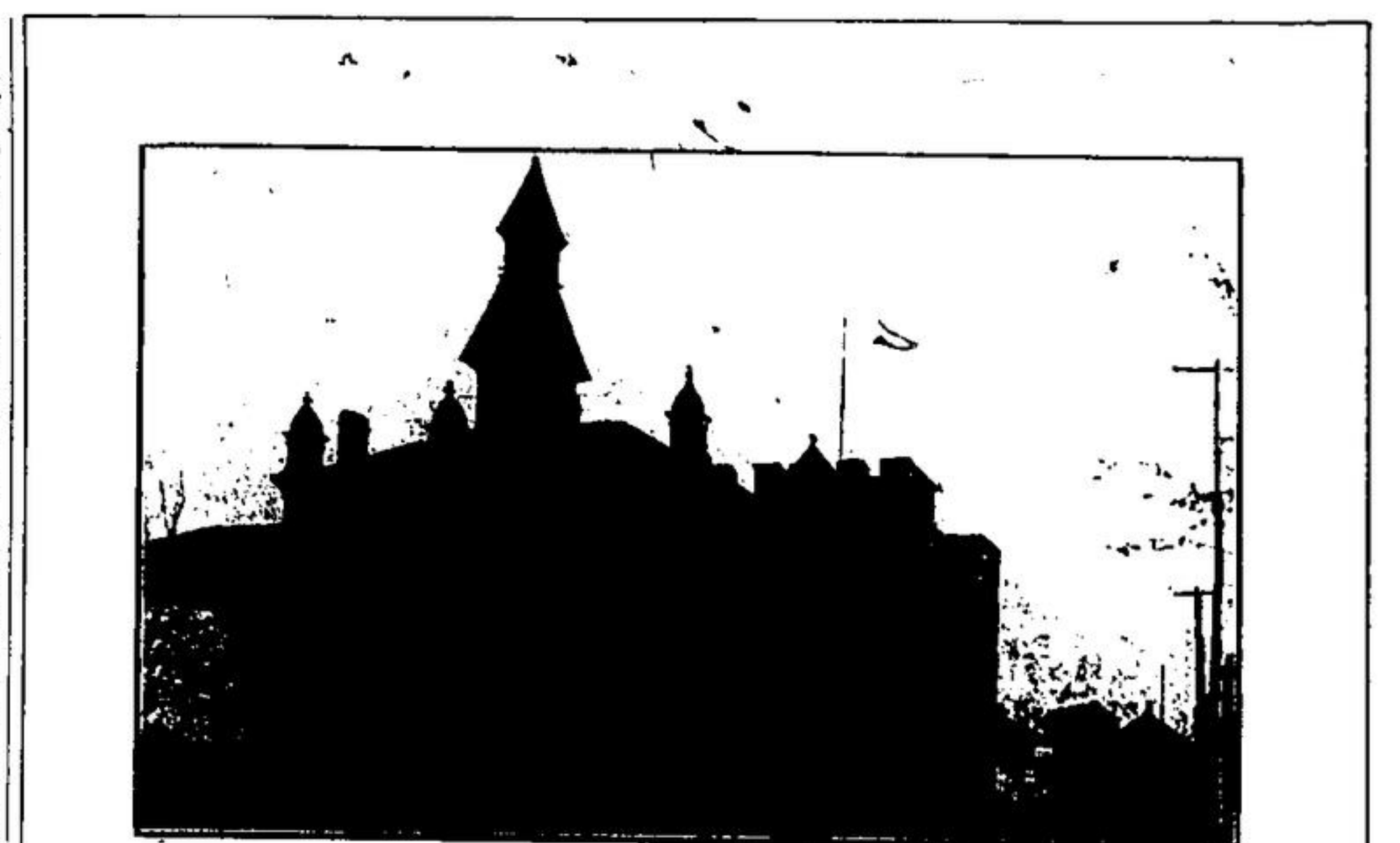
A range of the Niagara Escarpment follows the western borders, almost from south to north, forming a picturesque and protective background. The present boundaries of Halton include Milton, its capital, and the towns of Acton, Burlington, Georgetown and Oakville. Also the townships of Esquesing, Nelson, Nassagaweya and Trafalgar. Many large industries have located in Halton, including the new Ford Plant, bordering the Queen Elizabeth Way in Trafalgar township. There is also the Canadian Broadcasting Transmitting Station at Hornby, and now we have the Television Booster station high on the hills in Nelson township. Many parts of the county are served by both the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian National Railway.

Steady Increase
According to the 1951 census Halton county boasts a population of approximately 49,876 people, and shows a steady increase from year to year, thus it is one of the most densely populated districts in Ontario.

Halton county has a fascinating historical background. After Niagara it was one of the first districts to be settled, according to official records. But there were undoubtedly white people living here before the first surveys, before the county was open for settlement, and before grants for Crown land had been approved and recorded.

The first settlers found Halton to be an area of dense forest, mostly hardwood and pine, so that most of the travelling was done by bateaux along the waterways, with only Indian trails through the forest connecting one waterway with another. It was truly "a happy hunting ground" as the woods and streams abounded with wild life of every description—fish, fowl and furs.

The Indians were, for the most part, friendly Mississaugas and gave



HALTON COUNTY held its first (provisional) County Council meeting following the separation of Halton and Wentworth, at Thompson's Inn, Milton, in 1853. James Young, reeve of Esquesing, was the first warden and the county buildings and registry office shown here were built later in Milton.

little trouble to the first white people.

In the southern part of the county the first settlers were mainly second generation United Empire Loyalists who had trekked into the district from Niagara or from across the border. But in the northern district settlers were largely immigrants direct from the British Isles. They apparently settled by nationalities, thus we have the Scotch Block, the Irish Block and the English Block. Apparently Welsh people were not so anxious to emigrate.

Origin of Name
In 1793 Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe made the first attempt to build military roads through the forests. Dundas Street was one of them. He was hampered in the construction by much of the land in that area being held as Indian Reserves.

Halton was originally part of the Gore district. "Gore" was so named

for the Lieutenant-Governor Sir Francis Gore, and "Halton" for Major Matthew Halton, secretary to Sir Francis.

The names of the two principal creeks—Sixteen and Twelve—have puzzled many people, especially as other creeks in the province were similarly named—Five, Twenty and Forty. The explanation is simple. According to early history, if on the north shore of Lake Ontario a creek was named according to its distance from Burlington Bay. If on the south shore, from Niagara. The name of the Credit River came about in a unique way. At one time the French Canadians sent men each spring to trade with Indians near the mouth of the Creek. They were given supplies "on credit" for which they paid the following spring with furs. Thus it became known as the "Credit River."

Reform Supporter
Halton has never been the scene of a major battle. The crimson blood of warring nations never once stained its soil. But it has been a refuge for the hunted and oppressed fleeing from scenes of hostile activity in nearby regions.

Halton was definitely linked with the Reform movement during the time of William Lyon Mackenzie. Mackenzie himself is known to have been in hiding in various parts of the county where he had many friends and supporters.

Joseph Brant, Mohawk warrior and Chief of the Six Nations Indians is an honored name in Halton.

Colonel William Chisholm, 1788-1842, was responsible for much of the subsequent prosperity of the townships bordering Lake Ontario and the Sixteen.

Esquesing Reeve, Warden
A number of Halton physicians and surgeons were graduates of Dr. Rolph's School of Medicine, the first of its kind in the Province.

The first (provisional) County Council meeting, following the separation of Halton and Wentworth, was held at Thompson's Inn, Milton, in 1853. James Young, Reeve of Esquesing, the first Warden.

In its early days lumbering, milling, farming and allied industries were the chief means by which settlers made a living. As the country developed other industries followed. In this column we hope to bring you historical details of various parts of the county — its schools, churches, stories of pioneer families; of farms and of vanished industries, as we follow the progress of the county through the years.

Preserve Local History
We do not promise to be one hundred per cent correct as bygone historical records are quite often contradictory. In some cases we shall depend upon the experiences and anecdotes of the pioneers handed down by word of mouth through many generations. Nor will these stories be in chronological order but will be given as material comes our way—by research and by the help of those well versed in the history of Halton.

Our aim is to preserve for readers of this paper local history that might otherwise be lost—as so much has, unfortunately already been lost. Any pictures or helpful information sent to this newspaper office will be greatly appreciated.

SNACKS
Snacks for the crowd may be served with ease if you dot split wieners rolls with cheese and spread with condensed mushroom soup. Heat on the broiling pan for 3 minutes and serve.
Add some diced left-over cooked ham (or chopped crisp bacon) to onion soup if there are left-over shrimp or sardines, add these to vegetable soup along with crushed crackers.

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WIDE-AWAKE FIRE departments may soon be turned out in a new heat-resisting suit built on the general lines of the old-fashioned nightgown. Made of reflective aluminum foil, this outfit gives the hook-and-ladder lads a lot more protection from extreme heat.

Canadian farmers have the same idea when they build their barns of aluminum sheet. Not only is aluminum fire-resistant but it also keeps barns cooler in summer because it reflects the heat of the sun; and in winter reflects back into the barn heat that would otherwise escape. In fact you might say that in the products of Canada's aluminum industry are reflected countless aids to better living — on the farm, in the city, in your own home. Aluminum Company of Canada, Ltd. (Akan).

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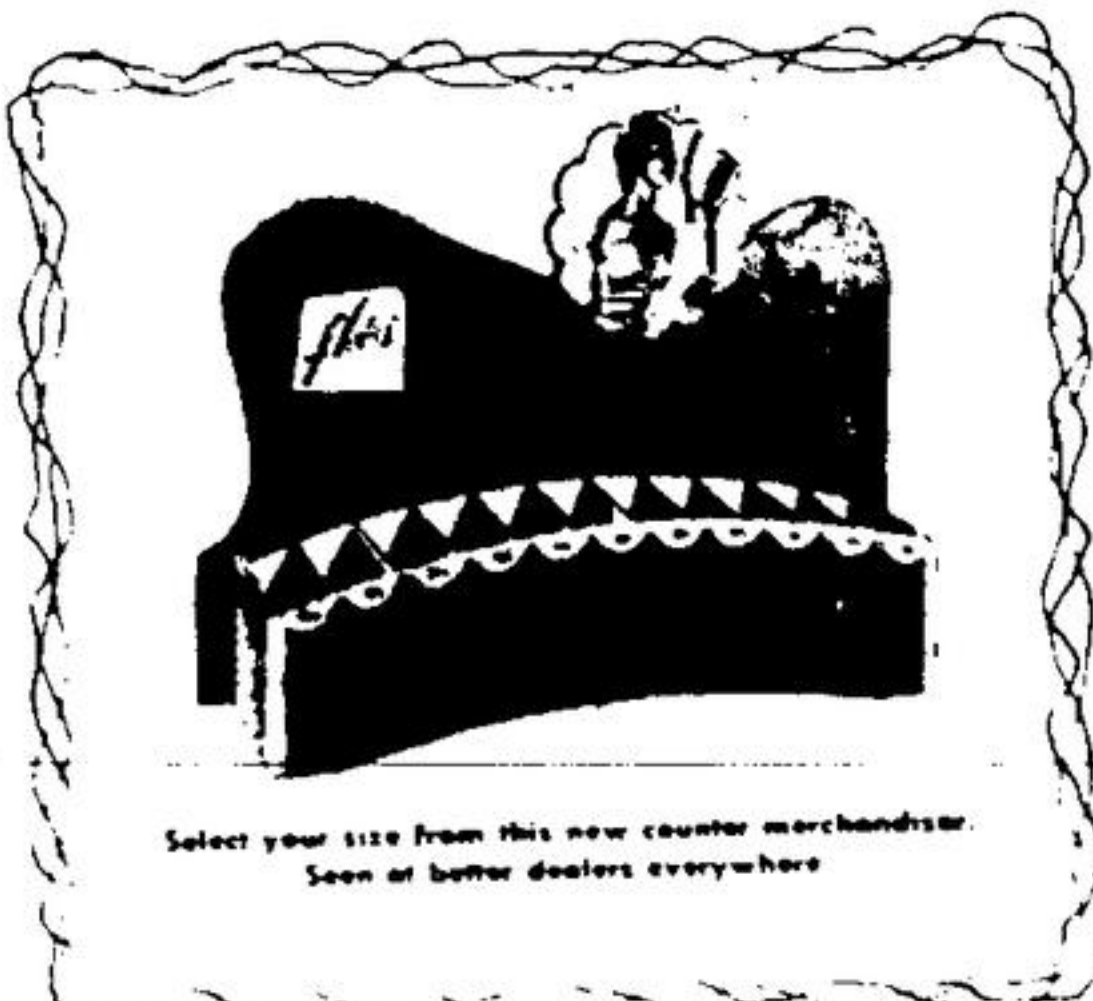
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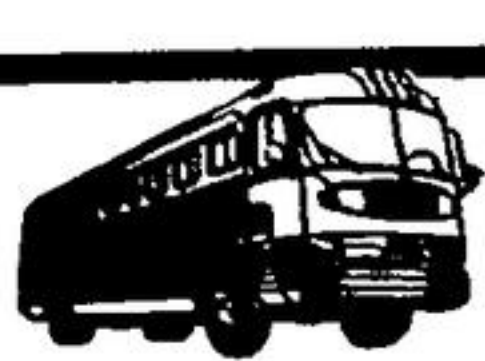
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are invited to join in
DECORATION DAY
SUNDAY, JUNE 20
3 P.M. AT FAIRVIEW CEMETERY

● Decoration Day, sponsored by the Canadian Legion, Women's Institute, Legion Auxiliary, Acton Fire Brigade, Duke of Devonshire and Lakeside I O D E Chapters, is designed to honor the dead of two World Wars by the placing of flowers at the cemetery, cenotaph and at St. Joseph's cemetery. Citizens are invited to partake in the ceremony and at the same time, decorate the graves of their own loved ones.

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