

## Historic mill gutted by fire

A spectacular fire which attracted spectators from as far away as Highway 401 almost completely destroyed the historic Eden Mills grist mill Friday night.

J. E. (Ted) Barden runs the solid three storey stone building as a wood products factory. He estimated the loss at over \$40,000, some of which is covered by insurance.

Mr. Barden told The Free Press he will likely "start again on the same location on a smaller scale."

The fire in the towering landmark brought the Rockwood firefighters to the scene shortly after Mrs. J. W. Turner, who lives across the road, turned in the alarm. Mrs. Turner said she saw an unusual flash about 2 a.m.

By the time the Rockwood brigade arrived the old mill well over a century old was an inferno. They called in the Guelph fire department to aid but the flames had spread so rapidly there was little they could do but keep

the fire from spreading to neighboring houses. They pumped water from the mill pond.

Residents, awakened by the fire, served refreshments to the firefighters who stayed on the scene until nearly 7 a.m. The blaze, conquered but still burning among the historic old stone walls, drew spectators all day.

Owner Ted Barden felt uncertain about the fire's cause. Although the sudden flash seen by Mrs. Turner seemed to indicate the cause might be in the electrical system, he recalled installing a new service a little over a year ago with armored cable to guard against fire.

"I've no idea, really, as to what caused the blaze," Mr. Barden said.

The old mill, bought by the Barden family in 1917, was converted to a woodworking plant in 1953. It was one of the few left in Ontario which still used water power.

Its history goes back to the 1840's when the Kribbs brothers, founders of Eden Mills, built the dam and adjoining mill.

The Kribbs brothers sold the mill to Adam Argo in the spring of 1846. The whole deal cost Mr. Argo \$5,000. In 1855 Mr. Argo sold the mill to the Hortops who kept it in the family for decades. Other owners who owned the mill for a short time were a Mr. Leybourne, James Gray and Albert Tolton.

Mr. Barden said his business, making wooden vegetable crates and flats, will create some hardship for his customers because they are difficult to procure. He lost most of his machinery, including a newly purchased gang saw and mailing machine. The only products saved from the hungry flames were some crates loaded on a truck.

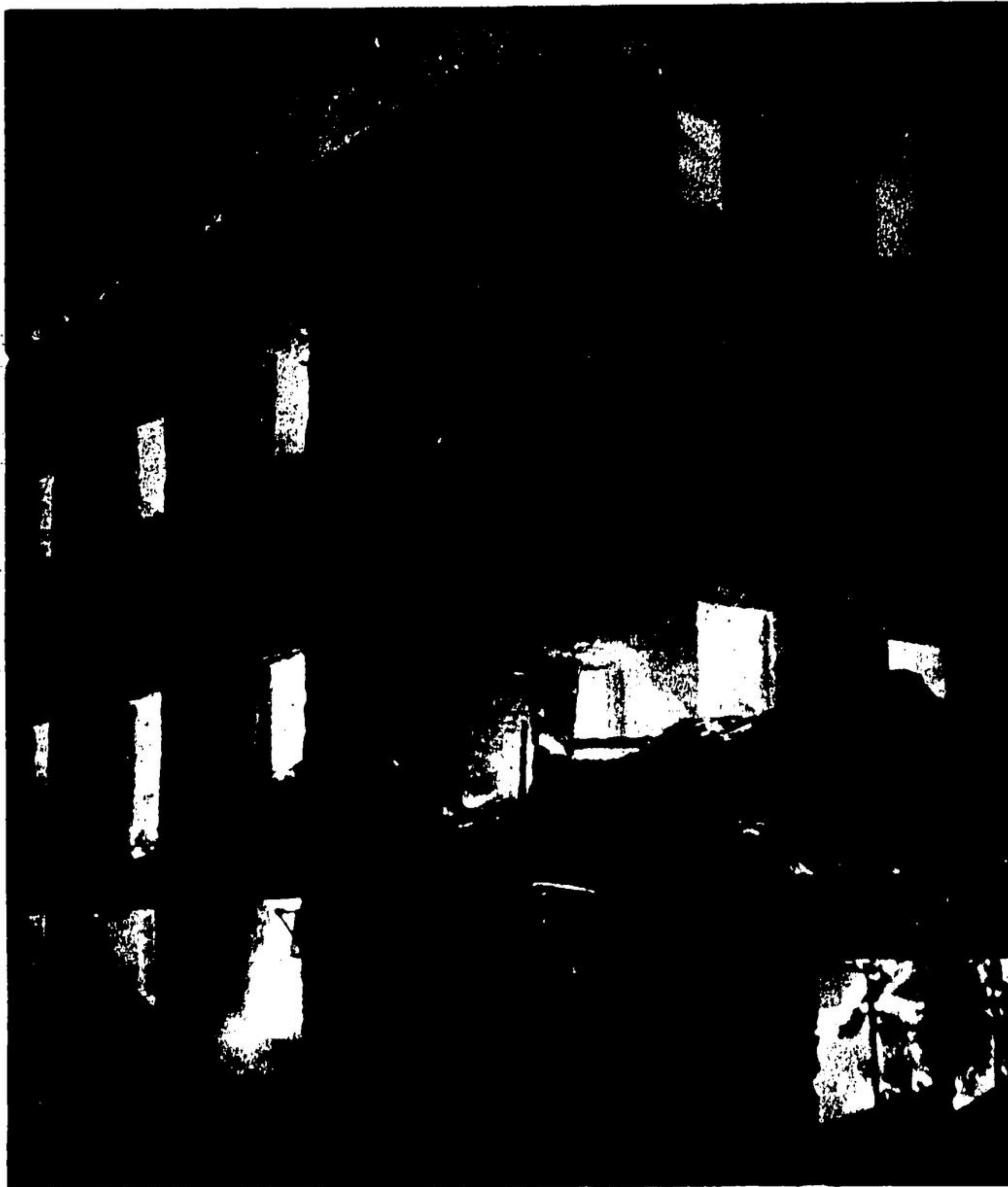
The Eramosa River keeps flowing, regardless of the mills built and destroyed along its banks. In its early years the mill was powered by water only but diesel power assists when the water is low.

Only the historic old mills at Rockwood and Everton still exist along the river. The Rockwood mill still operates on water power alone. The Everton mill has been purchased by the Grand River Conservation Authority. All three mills were once the property of the Hortop family.

Jim Milne owns and operates the Rockwood mill.



HEAT GENERATED by the blaze kept spectators well back. The glow illuminated the sky for hours drawing spectators from as far as Campbellville. (Don Hills Photo)



DANE'S INFERNO could have been no worse than this roaring blaze which enveloped and gutted the historic Eden Mills. The thick stone walls, built to withstand the centuries kept the fire contained, although huge sparks threatened nearby

houses and business places. Ted Barden, owner and operator of the woodworking plant, estimated his loss at \$40,000, partly covered by insurance.

(Don Hills Photo)

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### Halton's "most wanted man" McCabe surrenders in Utah

Robert James McCabe, Halton's "most wanted" man, ended his 59 days of freedom Wednesday when he walked into one of the Salt Lake City, Utah, police stations and surrendered himself.

McCabe, with three other prisoners, escaped from the Halton Jail in Milton on September 15 after two jail guards were beaten up. The four escaped in a guard's car.

Dozens of policemen swarmed into the area when the escape was reported, and a Waterdown O.P.P. officer stopped the car and four escapees at Campbellville. Two of the escapees were captured but McCabe and one other slipped away. The third man was

apprehended near Milton about five hours later, trying to flee the area in a stolen car, but McCabe made his way to freedom when a heavy fog settled over the district.

Since his get-away police across Canada and the United States have been alerted. Sgt. J. K. Robertson of Milton Police and two senior officers of the O.P.P. went to Fort Erie Thursday to bring the prisoner back from the States, and he was lodged in Hamilton's Barton St. jail.

Like the other three, he has been officially charged with escaping custody but other charges are pending. McCabe was being held as a robbery suspect at the time of the escape.



ROCKWOOD FIREFIGHTERS climbed out of bed at 2 a.m. Saturday morning to fight this raging fire. They pumped water from the mill pond. Guelph firefighters sent a truck to assist. (Don Hills Photo)

### Straight road, lights urged at Stewarttown

A coroner's jury last week recommended better illumination on a turn on the Seventh Line Esqueness at the top of Stewarttown's north hill. They also recommended Halton County carry out a road straightening program through Stewarttown.

The inquest was held to determine the death of James Albert Guyette, 18, of Brampton who was killed when he lost control of his car, missed a right curve, raced along a road allowance for 139 feet and went

off the side of the gully and flew 94 feet before hitting the opposite bank.

County engineer D. J. Corbett said there was no proposed plan to straighten the road and suggested the jury may have been confused about a Georgetown transportation study calling for a Highway 7 bypass at Georgetown.

Constable Feldcamp said there was now a checkerboard sign at the curve but it is not a reflective sign.

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