

Long history in town

Oyster suppers to prohibition Dominion had its ups and downs

The Dominion Hotel has a long history - almost as long as Acton's own. The first tavern on the site was a log building, which was torn down to make way for a fine brick building in the 1870s. Part of that building still remains, incorporated in the present hotel. Stories of the ups and downs in the career of the building are found in the book Acton's Early Days. Highlights follow, somewhat abridged.

The first hotel on the lot, the Anderson House, was a log building. Robert Agnew built the Dominion Hotel, which under the supervision of himself and his able housekeeper, Mrs. Agnew, was for many years one of the popular hostelrys in the province.

Seek fortune
Mr. and Mrs. Agnew left their old country home, near Carlisle, Scotland, shortly after their marriage and came to Canada to make their fortune. For several years they kept the big boarding house at Smith's Mills in the first concession of Esquesing.

Then they and their little family came to Acton and they leased the old California House on Main St. which stood near the Main St. creek. This tavern they conducted for a number of years, and then decided that it would be advantageous to get nearer the centre of town.

Tore down tavern
The old Anderson lot was purchased, the old log tavern torn down and the new Dominion Hotel grew up on the site.

An engraving of this new hotel appeared in the county atlas issued by Walker and Miles in 1877.

From the day the doors of the new Dominion House were opened it was largely patronized by travellers, all of whom had a good word for the treatment received. "Bob" was a genial host and Mrs. Agnew was "mother" to every lonesome commercial traveller on the road

and every one of them, old and young, called her mother most familiarly but with every sense of respect.

Banquets a favorite
In the early days hotel banquets were frequent. The lodges, the Councils, even the School Boards celebrated the conclusion of the year's business with an oyster supper or a more formidable spread at one or the other of the four hotels in town. There was naturally a good deal of rivalry among the hosts and hostesses as to which would furnish the most comprehensive and appetizing menus. It was conceded that the "Dominion" generally "took the cake."

These midnight suppers were often the scene of frolicsome experiences. In December one year the council of the year, about 1876, were having their annual supper. Mrs. Agnew's lengthy menu had been pretty well waded through, and the liquid refreshments from Bob's department had been freely imbibed. Most of the members and their guests began to be rather mellow and plastered each other with butter - Mrs. Agnew bought the finest gill-edged butter and the best butter-maker in Nassagaweya could produce in those days.

Banquet to Dan
It was at this same Dominion Hotel that the banquet to the late Sir Donald Mann, when he was just plain Dan Mann, was tendered. Dan and his brother Alex had their first business venture as partners on a stony farm near Crewson's Corners. Their farming experience was disastrous. Within three years Sheriff MacKindsay sold them out for debts. Dan went west and prospered and saved up money to return, hunt up all the men he owed, and pay back every last cent.

A few days later the fortunate creditors put their heads together and banqueted Dan and Mr. and Mrs. Agnew set out the finest spread that had ever graced their board.

The Agnews retired and settled on Lake Ave. and then Park Ave. where they resided till their death.

Bar closed
Away back in the 70s when the Scott Act swept over Halton and many other counties in Canada, and the little sign over the door of the popular 10 x 14 room "Licensed to sell spirituous and malt liquors" was ordered down, and the bar was closed and the cellar locked, Bob Agnew was naturally wrathful.

The day the prohibitory act came into force the people found, bright and early in the morning, a padlock on the hotel pump, a lock

on the gate to the sheds and stables and no accommodation for the tired and hungry and thirsty man and beast. But about 24 hours of the "lock-out" was sufficient for the landlord.

Albert Lehman, late of Berlin (now Kitchener) purchased the business. A few years after securing the hotel he enlarged and improved it, veneered it with brick and added a third floor.

His respect for the law was meagre; time after time he was summoned to court. At one time the officers came to town unheralded, pounced upon his weekend supply and got a dryload of beer. It was locked up in the cells until the day of the

trial. Penalties of \$600 and costs were imposed and the beer was ordered to be destroyed.

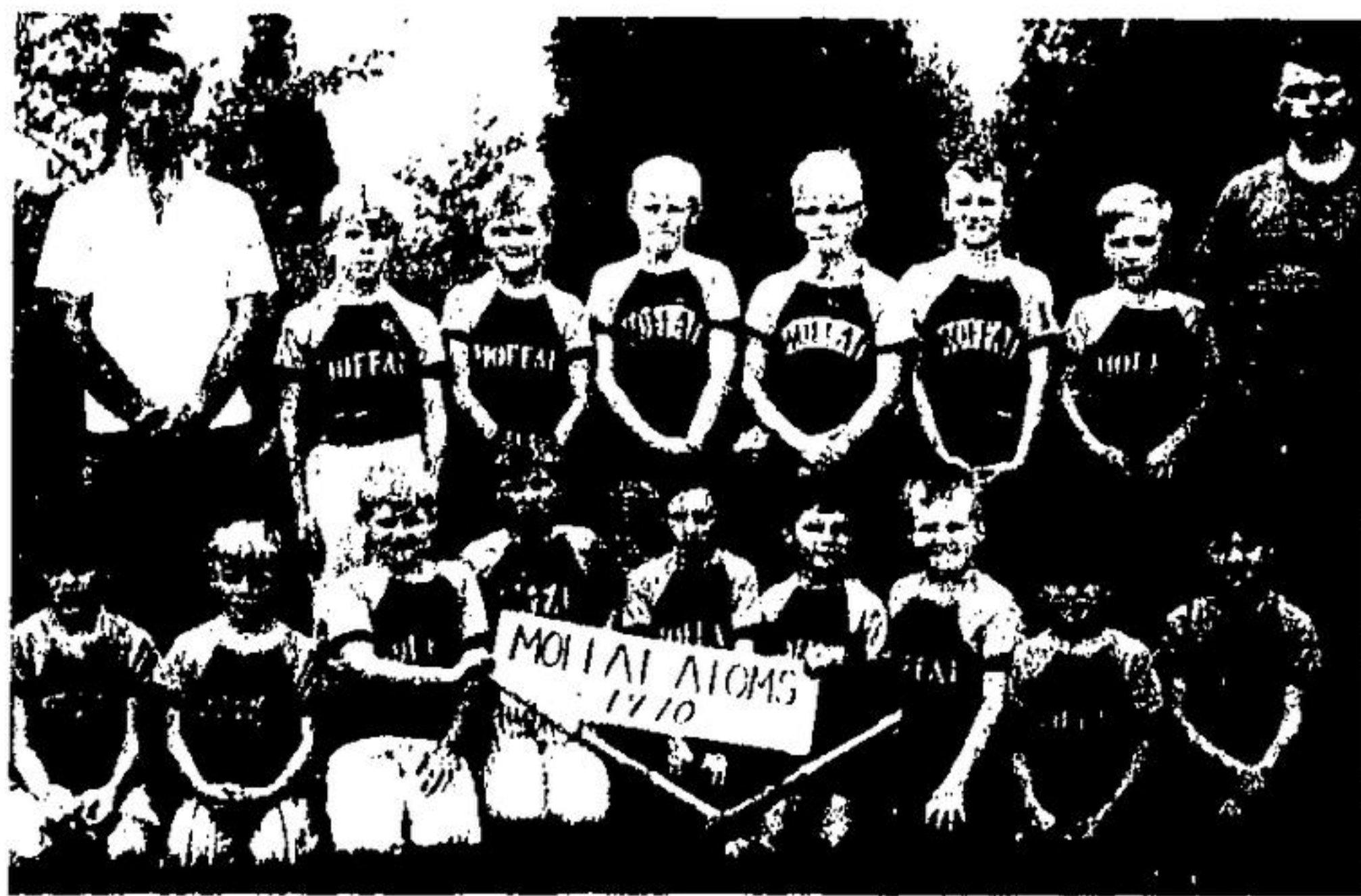
Then there followed a spectacular scene on Willow St. at the door of the town hall, when 110 gallons of the foaming beer were sacrificed. A crowd of citizens viewed the destruction.

Prohibition
Mr. Lehman finally sold out the business to Charles Decker of Oakville who continued the business successfully until 1910 when prohibition came into effect. The Ryder and Mowat Glove Works then leased the premises.

The glove business was discontinued in 1910. Then the premises was rented in small apartments and jovial John Mellon ran a boarding house. This continued until the sale of beverages was again legalized.

The building was owned during these years by Harry Holmes. Harry Jr. and Charles came back to Acton and under the direction of their father put the premises into inviting condition for travellers.

Next owners were Jack Royston and Harry Dedels, before Louis Wasowicz took over.



MOFFAT ATOMS wound up a successful season with a party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Stan Bowen, near Acton Saturday. Moffat reached the Tri-County league finals, before bowling to Ponsonby. Pictured front row 1. to r. Ralph Bowen, Doug Joss, Jay Kitching, Gregg Kitching, David Brown, Scott Beeler, Dennis Jennings, Harvey

McLeod, Wayne McLeod. Back row 1. to r. are: coach Gabe Rosenbersky, Peter Musellus, Jim Hadden, George Brown, Martin Osso, Wayne Thomson, Tom Rosenbersky, assistant coach Dave McIntyre. Missing when photo was taken were Earl Essery and Mike Thomson.-(Photo by Jim Jennings)



DOMINION HOUSE, R. AGNEW, PROP. ACTON WEST ONT.

IN 1877, THE Dominion Hotel was pictured in the county atlas. It was operated then by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Agnew. A log tavern had been torn down to make room for the fine new hostelry.

Ebenezer

147th anniversary marked at church

By Mrs. R. McLean
Ebenezer's 147th anniversary was celebrated with the return of Rev. Bill Slinn, of Ridgeway, who was the pastor 14 years ago. The Slinns' two younger children, Barbara, age 11, and Stephen, 7 accompanied them. Two of their older daughters are married and they are the proud grandparents of three. Bill, their elder son, was married two weeks ago.

The scripture was from Acts 3, dealing with Peter and John's gift from an empty purse to the lame man. This is a reliable account of an historic event. The world is waiting with outstretched hand. What are we going to give it?

The world's atmosphere is full of impulses, which we can't see or hear until tuned in. Each cell of our bodies is a record of everything that happens to it. What is the material from which human bodies are made.

Creation continues
Mr. Slinn spoke of meeting a slight Japanese gentleman, the president of the Astrophysical Association of the world, who drives 100 miles to take an active part in his church every Sunday. A third of the delegates at this convention were from behind the Iron Curtain. 95 per cent of these most advanced scientists accept the fact of a Creator Being. Matter simply appears. Creation is continually going on. New matter is being created at the rate of 100,000,000,000,000 tons per second.

The mind of Jesus Christ was illuminated from within by the Creator God. The same spirit that was in Jesus Christ is in you to the extent that you will allow it - the spirit is the same.

Man is equipped through the creativity of his own mind for total destruction. Like always attracts like. It is easier to live by a law than by a spirit. Mathematics, art, science have improved tremendously in 5,000 years. Are there not any changes in the concept of the personality of God? If we had followed where Christ left off, the world would be a harmonious place. Only through His spirit can we move on into life as it is meant to be.

One gift
"If only I had the money, I'd do this and so." The easiest thing in the world is to drop a coin in a hat. Disciples then and now are called on to give the one gift that is really worth giving to anyone, the love of God. Loneliness is the greatest enemy of our time. You

don't need a purse to give yourself. The disciples didn't try to save a penny, by saying a prayer. They substituted God for gold. We are vehicles for the transmission of the personality of God. The healing was done not in the name of Peter, but in the name of Christ. There are still all kinds of miracles. Trying to build up the organization of the church is a waste of time. God has placed it in us to give, and this is what the church must do.

Visit over lunch
After the service, the large congregation enjoyed visiting over lunch.

At the evening service, the choir of Duff's Presbyterian Church, with Mrs. Don Schwartz, sang Lane's anthem There Were 90 and 9 and Landon's Praise Ye the Lord very beautifully.

Next Sunday, World Wide Communion will be celebrated, with reception of new members.

R. N. Degree
Mr. and Mrs. John McLean and Mr. and Mrs. Ron McLean attended the graduation exercises of the Mack School of Nursing, St. Catharines, when Dorothy McLean received her R. N. degree.

Birthday greetings to Mrs. John Henry, Mrs. Dave Boles, Mrs. Keith Anderson, Horace Blyth, Mrs. Amos, Kevin Diamond, Corinna Pries, Mrs. Darby, Rob Blyth, Mrs. Mervin Thomson and Mrs. Richard Evan Jones.

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