

Glen once thriving industrial community

Another instalment in the History of Halton series written by Esqueing historian Ben Case for the Halton W.I., follows. The Free Press is publishing excerpts from the history from time to time in the interests of keeping Halton people better informed of the county's origins.

For more than a century from 1824 onwards, Glen Williams was a thriving industrial community, owing its prosperity partly to the abundant water-power supplied by the Credit River and also to the practical knowledge and enterprise of several generations of the Williams family. The original owner of the 400 acres on which the village is situated was a Mr. Muirhead of Niagara, no doubt a Loyalist or the son of one. He sold this land in 1824 to Mr. Benajah Williams of Lincoln County in the Niagara District, also undoubtedly of Loyalist stock, who was the first actual settler.

A characteristic of many Loyalists, with their American background, was a skill and ingenuity in the building and operating of mills of various kinds and the Williams family were no exception. In 1825 Benajah Williams built a saw mill on the site of the building now occupied by the Apple Products Ltd. This saw mill had been running continuously up to 1878 at which time it was owned by Charles Williams. The Atlas says: "The mill has been refitted twice. The capacity is 14,000 feet a day and a large quantity of lumber has been manufactured here." It continued in use as a saw mill for many years after 1878 and the building was eventually built of stone. At the beginning of the century it was converted into an electric light plant supplying Georgetown with electricity for lighting purposes. Prior to the First Great War the plant was acquired by the Ontario Hydro and shut down.

Across the mill race from the saw mill was the flour mill, an imposing white frame building two and a half stories high and still standing and being used for storage purposes by the Apple Products Ltd. The Atlas says "The flour mill is now (1876) owned by Joseph Williams. It contains three run of stones, driven by water. The mill does a large custom business and also grinds large quantities of flour for foreign markets. It is run night and day and is capable of turning out 400 barrels of flour a

week using about 1,600 bushels of wheat a week or 85,000 per year." Again we quote from the Atlas. "First among the manufactories of the village is the magnificent Woolen Mill owned by Mr. Benajah Williams, who, by his energy and perseverance and a thorough knowledge of his business, under the most discouraging circumstances has succeeded in establishing a factory second to none in Canada. The mill was first a wooden structure, erected by the late Jacob Williams, Esq. in the year 1839, and after his death, which occurred in the year 1854, the property was purchased by Chas. Williams, Esq. He carried on the business until 1867, when it was totally destroyed by fire. It was rebuilt the same year of stone, on a very much larger scale, and carried on under the management of Mr. B. Williams, the present proprietor. It was again destroyed by fire in 1875, when Mr. B. Williams became the proprietor, and rebuilt it. The building is now a handsome structure, being 52 feet wide, 100 feet long and two and a half stories high. The mill is now running at its fullest capacity and employs 55 to 60 loads regularly. He manufactures principally yarns and knit goods of every description — which have been taking diplomas and prizes wherever exhibited. The whole establishment was built at a cost of \$32,000. The amount of business done is something enormous. The mill uses daily 450 pounds of Canadian wool, making about 130,000 pounds a year, which manufactures nearly 100,000 pounds of yarn. These goods are obtaining a very high reputation with the wholesale trade of the Dominion, and are fast taking the lead over all other Canadian goods of similar manufacture. The whole machinery is driven by a 40 horse power Lefol water-wheel."

"Halton's Pages of the Past" continues: "On June 11th, 1887, the mill was taken over by the Sykes and Ainley Manufacturing Company who carried on till 1907 when it became a limited company with most of the



Glen Williams taken from hill opposite old school about 1908.

shareholders living in England. Mr. E. Y. Barraclough became manager and continued as such until his untimely death in 1938."

It might be noted that the mill supplied yarn for many years to the Toronto Carpet Co. and later specialized in blankets. The dam

which was located just below the Anglican Church and which had also supplied power to the other Williams mills burst during a

flood in the early 40's and operations ceased. The mill was finally destroyed by fire in 1954 and "only the scarred and battered walls remain of the once proud structure."

The Beaumont Knitting Mills at the north end of the village was and still is a thriving business. The mill was established in 1878 by Samuel Beaumont formerly a woolen manufacturer in England. He took over a building with water power from a Mr. Bradley who had a shoddy processing plant. In addition Mr. Beaumont operated the tannery and glove manufacturing plant, the building for which still stands on the west side of the street just south of the second bridge. Finding the tanning of hides too onerous he moved the glove making machinery to the knitting mill and bought the leather and carried on this part of the business under the name of The Dominion Glove Works. At the turn of the century the combined industries turned out dozens of pairs of gloves.

On Mr. Beaumont's death the business was carried on by his son Arthur until he sold out to the present owners and still runs successfully under the management of Mr. S. Penrice. Another business which should be mentioned is the blacksmith shop and carriage works of William Tost who also manufactured and patented Tost's Iron-Beam Harrow which was popular among farmers of an earlier day. The well-built brick shop may still be seen just east of the community hall but the business succumbed a generation or so ago along with the horse and buggy.

There are two churches, the United formerly the Methodist and St. Alban's Anglican church just north of the second bridge. The latter, an architectural gem, was built of stone and is comparatively new having been built in 1902. The old two room school just up the hill from the blacksmith shop has been converted into a dwelling and its place has been taken by a consolidated school of seven rooms to which children are bussed from the surrounding district.

Of the two stores operating in 1876 the red brick Wheeler store alone remains but another more recent store at the corner of the 9th line and No. 20 sideroad

operated by George Preston carries on successfully.

There are several fine residences that deserve passing mention. The most imposing, perhaps, is that built by Charles Williams, a man of substance in his day who was universally known as Squire Williams. It and its spacious grounds are situated "kitty-corner" to Wheeler's store and is now occupied by Mr. Arthur Beaumont. Three other red brick houses are found further west along the street and all were built by members of the Williams family. They are all of

pleasing lines which could well be copied by present day architects. Just above the woolen mill on Mountain St. is another fine residence on the site of the former home of Benajah Williams II. This was built by Mr. Sykes and later occupied by E. Y. Barraclough. Across the street was the Ainley home built in the style of the latter part of the 19th century.

The above information on Glen Williams has been gleaned from the Halton Atlas and Gwen Clarke's "Halton's Pages of the Past", and with the help of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Beaumont.

\$8.1 million budget Grand Authority

Members of the Grand River Conservation Authority gave unanimous approval to an \$8.1 million budget proposal presented in Kitchener during the annual general meeting of the authority.

The budget includes about \$3,533,000 for water management projects, including land acquisition and design engineering work for the Guelph reservoir on the Speed River, and for land acquisition and preliminary engineering work on the Everton, Hespeler and Ayr dam sites.

Provincial grants total more than half the budget (\$4,450,000) with more than \$2,142,000 of this being allocated to the water management Authority member municipalities will contribute \$714,058 toward the program on the basis of a cost-benefit formula. The remaining \$676,000 represents funds raised but not spent in 1971.

Capital projects — The \$2,925,000 will be spent on capital projects, many of which were requested by individual municipalities. Government grants will cover more than \$1,748,000 of these costs with the balance being made up by directly benefiting municipalities (\$634,847); general municipal levies (\$506,215) and miscellaneous sources of revenue (\$35,348).

The Authority's 74 member municipalities will contribute a

total \$905,474, or about \$1.74 per capita toward the authority's general operations in 1972. This figure is up about 10 per cent from last year's general levy of \$1.59 per capita.

Other major budget allotments with last year's figures in brackets are: administration, \$770,855 (\$705,000); dam operation and maintenance, \$141,000 (\$160,000); conservation areas \$585,708 (\$302,000); waterfront properties, \$52,000 (\$56,000); Doon Pioneer Village, \$77,040 (\$76,428) and outdoor education, \$43,350.



McIntosh apple is "home brew"

A single tree in Dundas County, Ontario, is the source of all of today's McIntosh apple orchards across Canada and throughout the world.

In 1811, while clearing land on his homestead in Dundas County, John McIntosh discovered apple trees growing wild near the ruins of an earlier attempt to settle. They were possibly seedlings from apple trees carried to Ontario by settlers moving west from Quebec.

John McIntosh transplanted the trees and one of them produced a fragrant juicy apple, crisp and sweet. Seedlings from the popular tree were sold to neighbors, but failed to produce the same fruit. It was not until 1835 the true variety was successfully reproduced.

Graft tree A farmhand taught John McIntosh's son how to take a

branch from the McIntosh apple tree, and graft or join it to a tree root which would support its growth to produce another tree exactly like the original.

Today, Ontario harvests over six million bushels of apples a year. Half of these are McIntosh.

Will build concrete planks

Spancrete of Ontario, a firm manufacturing precast, prestressed hollow-core concrete planks for roofs and floors, is Milton's newest industry.

The firm has acquired the large manufacturing plant in Esqueving Township, on Highway 25 two miles north of Milton which was vacated last year by Systems Construction Ltd., and expects to be into production with a small staff by the first or

second week in April.

Spancrete is a division of Spancrete Limited, a subsidiary of Dominion Lime, Montreal. The parent firm already has a large plant producing concrete planks at Longueuil, Quebec.

Jim Connelly, plant superintendent, said the plant will employ about 14 to 16 employees on the line, plus engineering, office and sales department personnel.



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