



"There's gold in them there Mason Jars." Mason jars, the original container for home preserves, used to sell for 55 cents a dozen at the turn of the century but they are now worth from \$40 to \$50 each. Prices can run as high as \$150 for some types of the antique fruit jars. Today the Canadian successor to the original Mason Jar is being produced by Dominion Glass Company Limited. Production is centred at plants in Hamilton, Ontario and Redcliff, Alberta. The art of home preserv-

ing is gaining in popularity in Canada and the Mason jar is coming into its own again, but while the housewives of today are coming back to Mason jars, the hunt goes on for samples of the past. The Mason Jar itself goes back to 1858 when John Landis Mason of New York City obtained a patent for a glass container made airtight by a metal screw-on cap. Heating and then sealing of food in these containers paved the way for home preserving in North America.

I have three brothers-in-law. One is a railroader, one is a lawyer, and the third is pretty ill right now.

I've always felt lucky about them. Each of the three is a fine fellow, and we've got along with never an unpleasant word or experience between us.

That's more than lots of brothers-in-law can say. Left alone, they'd probably be fine, but when the women involved start getting their knives into each other, often a coldness develops among the poor devils of husbands.

My railroader brother-in-law went to high school with me, and we played football together on a couple of the best teams that ever came out of Perth Collegiate Institute and Lanark County.

My lawyer brother-in-law worked with me on a chain gang one summer, when we were students, and it was the best dog-work chain gang that ever worked for the Kodak company. We left no stone unturned in our constant vigilance to appear to be working when the foreman came around.

Both these chaps are around my own age, a bit tattered around the edges from raising families and paying off mortgages, but otherwise in good shape.

My third brother-in-law is a bit longer in the tooth, and I always looked on him as somewhere between a second father and second big brother.

Not that he acted either part. He treated me exactly as most boys would like their fathers to treat them. And he never, ever acted the bullying, know-it-all role of the big brother. He treated me as a human being.

He never implied that I was a kid and he was an adult. When he was twice my age, he talked as though we were equals.

He knew I was pretty callow when I was sixteen, but he never let on. We were two



Bill Smiley

men of the world together, and I've appreciated it ever since.

He'd take me fishing when I was a kid. There was no nonsense about him being in charge. We were just a couple of fishermen.

One fishing jaunt I still remember with particular pleasure. We were out in the middle of the lake when a summer storm caught us. No, or few, motors in those days. You rowed we were as wet as though we'd jumped overboard.

We got to shore, with the rain still pounding down. We found a cottage unoccupied and managed to get in. We put up the stovepipes, got a fire going and foraged. There was a half can of tea leaves. So there we sat by a roaring fire, drinking hot tea and feeling like Ulysses just home from the Trojan war.

It was not a miserable experience or a disaster. It was a joke, an adventure. Art sat there, smoking his pipe and regaling me with earthy stories, and I sat there, happy as a clam, feeling a real man, able to cope with anything.

He'd take me off to the cottage, when he was courting my sister, and I was about fifteen. What a nuisance I must have been, but you'd never know it, from him.

When I was courting, I dragged home the critter who is now my old battleaxe, and

her kid sister, who had tailed along. He drove the three of us to the same cottage, and he and my big sister accepted us and fed us without a question or a hint or a raised eyebrow.

When the war came along, he was of an age at which there was no need for him to join up, no question of being drafted. He joined the air force and spent four years of unheroic, uncomplaining service about two thousand miles from his family. He could have stayed home and made money as most of his contemporaries did.

He never said much, at times of family crises, though he was dragged into our large family. But he was always there, always steady, always the peacemaker.

He hated rows, and scab-picking, and soul-searching, and when people got into that stuff, he'd change the subject or quietly leave.

Like my own father, he very rarely got angry, but when he did, attention was paid.

He believed in the old adage, as did my mother, that, "If you can't say anything good about a person, don't say anything." And I never heard anyone say a bad word about him.

He's a good Christian, a good Catholic, but a down-to-earth one, not one of those pious bores.

He was no world-beater, and he didn't want to be. He was no intellectual, but he had a wit as Irish as his good looks.

He was always a kind, and, at the risk of seeming maudlin, I would say a sweet man. I hope he reads this and knows how much his young brother-in-law thought of him when he was an impressionable kid, and ever since.

And I hope the day is not too far off when he's out of that hospital bed and we can crack a jug together.

Mini-Comment . . .

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture criticizes the province's land-use plans for the Niagara Escarpment and Parkway Belt system for not setting aside land strictly for livestock and poultry production so producers could live without being continually harassed by complaints about odor. The Federation is correct but we don't think it is necessarily the Government's concern. When people live near a farm they must expect odors because, so far as we know, there is no deodorized manure being produced as yet.

We have been receiving many comments on the cartoons Dave Waddell has been producing for the Free Press in the last few weeks. He has the knack of putting his finger on a situation with a few lines that thousands of words could not describe.

Ken Hulford wrapped up another year of writing the bowling news at his Main St. kegeling establishment last week. He signed off with his usual "adios amigos and goodnite Concord City" which, since some of you have asked, is a greeting to his daughter and family in California. Ken will be back again in the fall (we hope) but until then it will be au revoir and goodnight Kilty Springs.

Georgetown councillor Bill Hunter's decision to throw his hat into the mayoralty ring for the new North Halton borough brings the number to two. Esqueusing Reeve Tom Hill announced his decision to run the previous week. So far no one from Acton has indicated a desire to run for the top office and only Reeve G. W. (Pat) McKenzie, among all the councillors, has expressed his intention to run for council. It is too early yet but if elections are held in October, as it seems they will be, it is time to start thinking seriously about it.

One of the weaknesses of the new system of regional government as we see it will be the trend away from the grass roots to the makings of more professional politicians. Most working men will not be able to spare the time necessary to run a borough of 35,000

people and only those with the time and money will be candidates. Likely this will create a new breed of full-time-part-time local politicians, a new departure but also another step away from public opinion and thought. Walter Mulkevic, the NDP candidate in the last provincial election, has suggested this might be overcome with a system of community councils within each ward to ensure the community was involved in the decision making process. It is a good thought but will never likely be exercised.

The program to impress bicycle safety

on students in Acton's two public schools is worthwhile both from a safety viewpoint and as a means of introducing youngsters to the rules of the road. Results can be seen on town streets as youngsters stop at stop signs, signal for turns and follow regulations which were ignored in many instances before.

"Certainly, something is seriously wrong when the meanings of words get turned upside down. Mutual tolerance, live and let live, has meant for a long time, liberation, freedom from hatred, persecution, and violence. There is now a very active school of thought that attacks tolerance as a form of repression. It tolerates evil which is itself the defeat of virtue. When the police intervene against violent disorder to protect citizens as they go about their lawful occasions, the police are said to be guilty of a particularly wicked form of violence. This kind of verbal jugglery expresses a scorn for our constitutional principles. It is designed to keep us from discussing to any purpose, and to turn the society upside down." Dr. J. A. Corry, Kingston, former principal of Queen's University.

Our readers write

R.R. 3 Acton, Ont.
May 30, 1973.

Dear Mr. Dills:

The Greenock Women's Institute wish to express their thanks to the Acton Free Press for coverage of our meetings during the year.

We are lucky to have a press that prints all that is sent in. We hear complaints from other localities that their press prints half of what is sent in and for that reason some have stopped sending in material. Thanking you again.

Yours truly,
Jean Johnston, P.R.O.

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Untidiness of Acton's main stem

The main street of any community should be the show window—the place you can show off to visitors. Alas, Acton has a bad reputation, deservedly it seems.

An editorial in the Stouffville paper recently mentioned that the editor took a three day trip and as is his custom, compared the tidiness of the Main Streets of different communities they passed through. This is what he says:

"The thing that impressed us first on entering individual urban areas was the tidiness of the main

street. Places like Preston, Galt (now Cambridge), had an immaculate appearance. In Acton, however, the opposite was true; refuse of every kind description littering the sidewalks and curbs.

"It was Sunday noon, and I thought of the similarity between Acton and Stouffville, at a similar time in the week. Our town, too, leaves much to be desired."

The Stouffville editor goes on to suggest the town should purchase a mobile sweeper to do the job on a daily basis. He says Stouffville, the main urban area in a municipality

of 12,000, has outgrown the "broom and shovel brigade" that performs the duty on a somewhat irregular basis.

No comment other than the Stouffville editor's needs to be introduced here. It is scathing enough and done without axes to grind and without the holler-than-thou attitude some visitors might have.

We received the clipping from an Acton resident with the note, "You had better tell the town fathers of council to clean up." Enough said.

Free Press Editorial Page

B2 The Acton Free Press, Wednesday, June 13, 1973

Exploit the beauty of Fairy Lake

Formation of the new North Halton municipal council will open many new planning avenues impossible while the north is still divided into four municipalities. For instance, control of land around Acton's Fairy Lake has been divided between Esqueving and the town. And they don't always see eye to eye on the objectives. In the future one municipality will decide its future.

Although the lake is privately owned by Beardmore, the land surrounding the 88-acre body of water is mainly in the hands of private people and this could spell trouble if mercenary interests decided to exploit loopholes in planning in favor of an "incompatible" development.

We think purchase of the land is the only effective way the municipality can control access and egress. It needn't be all that expensive. It could take the form of

a broad band of green such as presently exists in part of the Lakeview subdivision. A publicly owned strip around areas which have not been developed tied in with right-of-way easements through connecting links on private property would be ideal. In this way the public would have full use of the water.

This area has two distinct natural advantages - the Niagara Escarpment, where air is several degrees cooler, and Fairy Lake, largest inland body of water in the county. The escarpment has been looked after by the provincial government. The lake has always been the focal point for recreation in Acton. As population pressures increase, the need for more parkland will be evident.

Benefits may not be quickly apparent but future needs will be met without the necessity of resorting to expropriation.

Several years ago members of the Acton Board of Parks came out with the idea of a walkway from Fairy Lake, along the School Creek as far as the music centre on Wallace St. It was an excellent suggestion, never fully explored beyond a few drawings and a certain amount of enthusiasm.

At the time there were more pressing problems which gobbled up all the available funds, discouraging the idea of opening the park system with a broad entrance along Main St. N., in the vicinity of the School Creek as well.

What a lovely vista it would make if Prospect Park could extend from Main St. completely around Fairy Lake with a walkway providing easy access from Wallace St. as well. It may sound fatuous but is still within the realm of possibility.

In a few years it may not be so.

A new rural dynasty coming

Amidst all the general press approbation for the provincial government's announcement of the Niagara Escarpment planning area and a two pronged parkway belt, it is difficult to inject a note of pessimism. However, it is evident that efforts to prevent urban sprawl and preserve the escarpment are also meant to keep those of modest means out.

Estate type developments will be allowed in some of Ontario's most scenic beauty spots along the escarpment to provide the affluent with country retreats, while those who could never hope to own such a residence must remain in the ghettos provided for them.

If the Government was really serious about preserving the escarpment and the parkway they would ban all future development -

not restrict it to those who can afford to pay the price.

If estate type developments are allowed then why not a few well built houses more within the range of the ordinary taxpayer?

We note with dismay that this is the pervading philosophy behind all rural planning in the province. Those of modest means will be grouped in the villages, towns and cities while those who have the dough can avail themselves of the choicest land in the province - the scenic view, the choice farm land.

The end result will be a rural aristocracy not unlike what we have in Britain - the country squire on his domain with the serfs huddled in their villages in long rows of town houses.

No one, of course, would support planning which provides for jerry-

built boxes along the rural routes such as we now have in some places. These were constructed at a time when community planning and environmental studies were unknown except in a few more enlightened centres.

A small home can, however, be just as attractive and as easy on the environment as a large manor, providing the proper safeguards are imposed.

We believe that if this province is to set up official plans and zoning by-laws to regulate the use of land there should be no discrimination in favor of those who can afford to pay for large houses and taxes.

It is easy to pin the blame on economics when often it is really a case of exclusiveness that has no place in Ontario or any other part of Canada.

Back Issues of The Free Press

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, June 18, 1953.

One of the hardest battles ever fought in Halton county council was experienced at the regular session last Tuesday when Burlington members sought to have the equalized assessment by-law amended to increase the taxes paid by municipalities in the south and to relieve the northern municipalities. Recorded votes were taken on each question. The by-law as recommended by county assessor Ford Rogers and J. P. Coombs, municipal consultant, was approved by a 15-3 vote.

Staff members of the P. U. C. held a party for Jean Harris and Kerwin McPhail at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bob MacArthur.

Tenders will be called immediately for the new high school buildings at Acton, Milton and Georgetown.

At the meeting of the Music Study group at the home of Mrs. J. Jany, presentations were made to Miss Clara Grindley and Miss Willa McKay who are leaving town. Former members attending were Mrs. Grant MacDonald of Orangeville and Mrs. Doug Maplesden of Guelph.

The urgency of constructing a new bridge on Maria St. was stressed by council.

Seven large cartons of refused clothing were packed for Korean refugees in Limehouse hall last week.

Ukrainian Catholics of Acton attended Mass at St. Joseph's under the Ukrainian Rite Sunday.

Public school field day champions are Robert Heatley, Pat Smethurst, Ken Dodds, Ruth Landsborough, Keith Mainprize and Lynda Lovell.

Dr. J. E. Nelson, who practised in Acton for 20 years, died in California.

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, June 14, 1923.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church has spoken on the great question of organic union with the Methodist and Congregational churches. By the vote of more than three to one the governing body of Presbyterianism in Canada decided in favor of proceeding immediately with the consummation of union. The decision commences over 20 years of work, agitation and controversy. It is significant that it was the Presbyterian church that made the first overtures to the other churches in 1902. Immediately the vote was announced dissent of the minority was registered in a long document.

So far as the operation of the local churches in places like Acton is concerned the union will make no difference in the near future. When put into operation the union will have far-reaching results in unifying forces, reducing costs and advancing the Kingdom of Christ.

H. P. Moore, editor of the Free Press, has been a member of the church union committee since its inception, representing the Methodist church.

A foot-ball team has been organized which will be known as the Acton Rangers, composed largely of English, Scotch and Irish players who played on some of the best teams in the Old Land. Mr. Gordon Beardmore occupied the chair for the first meeting and is Hon. President. Hon. Vice pres. is Peter Smith, Esq., and Hon. Treasurer John Clarke Esq. President is David Preston, Treasurer Bud McDonald, Secretary J. M. Garvey, Manager J. Tyler and Captain J. Blichie. For financing the club it has been decided to take up a collection. Collectors are Mr. Tyler for the village, Mr. Brenull for the glove factory, Mr. Redburn for the harness leather tannery; Mr. Hedley for the sole leather tannery.

Taken from the issue of the Free Press Thursday, June 9, 1888.

Our honored and earliest living settler celebrates his 89th birthday today. Asa Hall Esq. saw the light of day at St. Andrews, Que., in 1810. He came to Acton 65 years ago this spring and settled on the farm on Main St. bordering the north-westerly limits of the present corporation boundaries. He had purchased his property two years before from the Canada Company. When he came here there were but two houses in the new settlement, one of which is still standing in the rear of the residence of D. Henderson M.P. Bower Ave., and the other was on the site of the residence of Mr. Adam Cook, Main St. They belonged to and were occupied by the Messrs. Adams, the founders of Acton. There was no clearing above the creek on Main St. and the place had neither name nor post office. Mr. Hall is still vigorous and attended with much pleasure the session of Conference of the Methodist church at Guelph during the past week. His reminiscences are always listened to with genuine interest by the rising generation.

Mr. Blacklock, near Campbellville, raised a fine bank barn by block and tackle last week and on Thursday gave a social dance to the young people who assisted.

Landlord Bennet of Milton, formerly of Acton, now controls the hotel business in the county town. He owns the Bennett and Commercial Hotels and has recently leased and moved into the Wallace House.

J.P. Worden, the old reliable, has opened a barber shop in George Adams late stand. The cornet band rendered several selections from the band stand on Town Hall square Monday evening but the programme was suddenly terminated by the alarm of "fire" at the tannery. The new street sprinkler has not been so much in demand the past week.