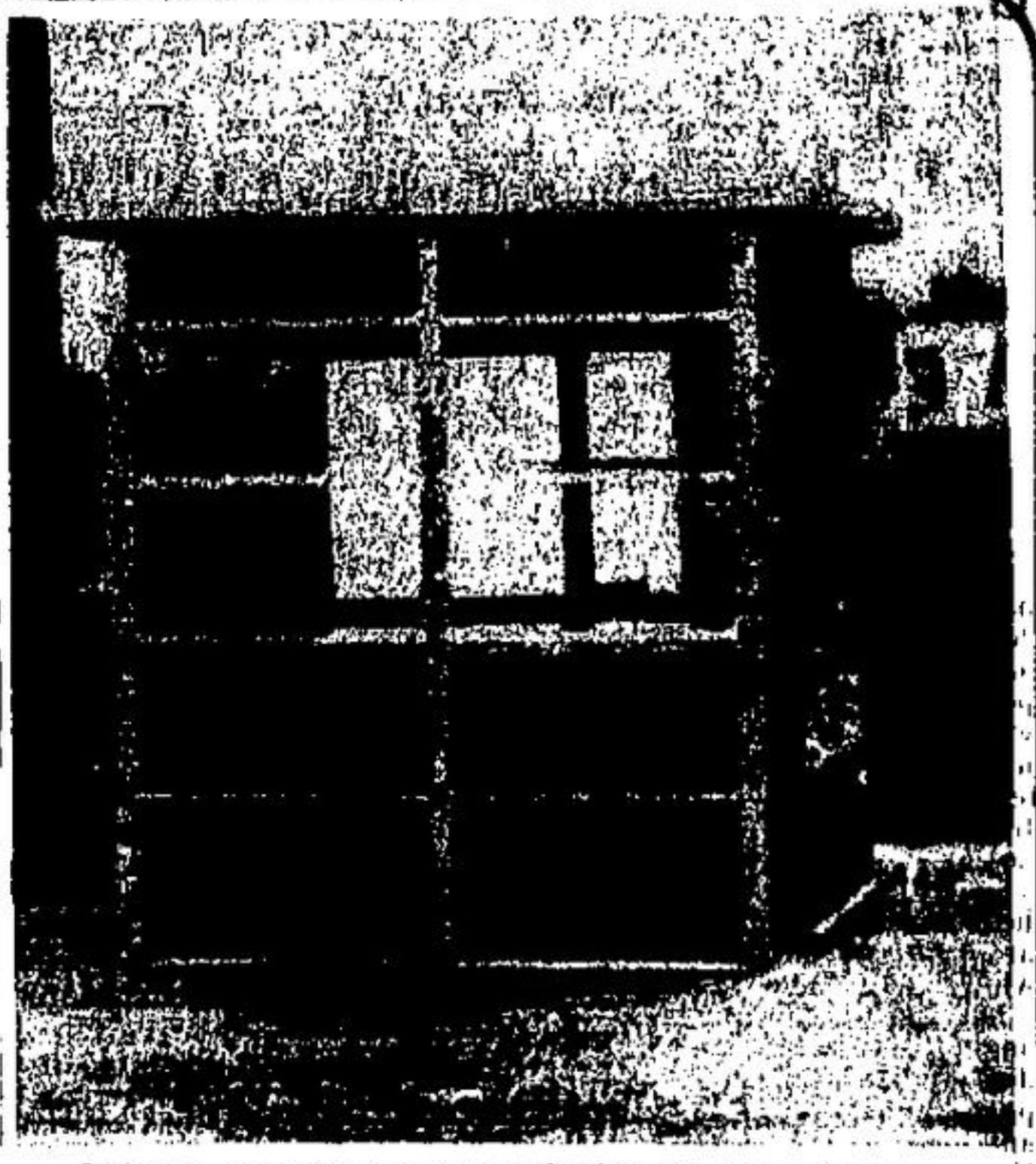




Acton's first Grand Trunk railway station.



The old station was replaced by a new one in 1905 and bore the name Acton West.



Acton's newest accommodation for travellers—a glassed-in kiosk.

## Glass windbreak now symbol of CN in Acton

This is progress? That's probably a first reaction to the three pictures of railway stations here since the first wood-burning locomotive thundered as far as Acton in 1856.

The first railway station is described in Acton's Early Days with evident distaste. "The convenience of the railway, its sidings and switches, were evidently carefully considered, but any consideration of the comfort or convenience of the public was

manifestly never in the noodles of the projectors of the road."

The second station built in 1905, it is recorded, was "commodious, modern, artistic and substantial and in its construction throughout the first concern has evidently been for the comfort and convenience of the travelling public." It was torn down this year.

What can we say about the third (and final?) accommodation of CN passengers? Editorial writers of the past would have blistered the

railway with adjectives and complaint, no doubt, for building a windbreak in place of a regular facility.

But times have changed. The town does not rely principally on a railway for transportation.

Still, we wonder if the CN strategists have looked far enough into the future? The energy crisis and the congestion on roads has brought a new era for public transportation — a development the slide rule people of the CN seem to

have missed. They were so intent on wiping out passenger service to small cities and towns they've failed to feel the pulse of this nation.

Now when public transportation is being revived along Canada's railway networks (supposedly) Acton is without an adequate railway station. Adequate passengers must either travel elsewhere or board the two trains which stop here each day.

At the end of this year the GO

Train system, a joint operation of the Ontario Government and the CN, is extending its operation from Union Station in Toronto as far as Georgetown. Theoretically Acton and district will have a station because the town and Esquesing will all be part of the new town of Halton Hills. Geographically we are just as far from an adequate railway station as ever.

Back in 1903 businessmen and citizens presented the Grand Trunk Railway with a petition asking for a

new station with the signatures of 117 on it.

We doubt anyone could drum up that much support now but in the next few years who knows what will happen?

The station that was torn down in favor of a glass windbreak may be sorely missed and it is quite possible residents of this area could be drumming up another petition which would be an object lesson in history repeating itself and a slap at the short-sighted planning of the railroad.

## Bill SMILEY



I've mentioned this before, but of recent years there seems to be a feverish desire to "get back to the land."

There are many aspects of this, of course. There is the young people's determination to get away from it all: the pollution, the commercialism, the materialism - and live a simple life, close to nature, communal sharing, organic foods grown with their own pink little materialistic hands, and so on.

This usually ends in failure. Not because they don't mean well, but because they simply don't have a clue about the land. Most of them are the products of middle-class life, and when it comes to doing something, they can't do anything.

They can't milk a cow. They can't nail two boards together without making a hand saw. They're used to staying up all night and sleeping all day, and the land doesn't go for that. And they don't realize that among every group of people who live at close quarters, there is at least one coward, one rotter who can't eat turnips, and one who should have been born a pig.

These things lead to a certain amount of disillusion. Oh, they have serious meetings, and they set up committees, and they study their novels. But it usually winds up the same. Mervyn, who is a slight, ephemeral poet, winds up chopping all the firewood, along with his foot.

George, the vital, hairy, press-on type, likes to sleep until 11 a.m. and complains for the rest of the day about the food. Sylvia, the frail and fragile folk-singer, carries eight buckets of water and feeds the pig (they always have one pig). And Voluptua, strong as a bull, gets up late, demands coffee, strums her guitar, and

complains about the bugs. Myrtle, who dropped out of university because life was so "irrelevant", winds up doing all the dirty dishes.

John, the third-year drop-out from architecture, is given the job of building a backhouse. With compass and calipers, he lays it all out. He even digs the hole. He completes the building, the grand unveiling takes place, and it is discovered that the hole is three feet wider than the structure.

Peggy, the drop-out oceanographer, is put in charge of the water supply. There is a well, though slightly decrepit and full of frogs and snakes. With commendable courage, she dumps a quart of potassium cyanide in the well. It is not well done, and for the next month, they walk three miles to the nearest farmer's for fresh water.

And so on.

This is just a sample and I'm not knocking it. These people are learning something besides writing essays, demonstrating against practically everything, and smoking pot. Eventually, Cyril will discover that you can't milk a dry cow. Janice will learn that if you pick up a long-tailed, sweet little kitten, you might get a shot of exotic perfume. Good for them all.

Then there's the other type of back-to-the-landers. They are new immigrants. Europeans who wouldn't have had a hope of owning some land in the old country. They will buy practically anything, as long as it's land.

They form a syndicate of families, move in, work like dogs. They live in the city because that's where their skills are. But when they attack a piece of the land, they

move. Everybody works. There's a stone mason or two, a carpenter, a roofer, a plumber, and electrician, and a farmer.

They are used to the big-family, communal life. Within weeks, they have everything working. They'll have a cow that's not only milking, but producing a calf. They'll have a sow that's going to deliver sixteen piglets. They'll have hens that are laying. Their women can produce a huge pot of something out of nothing. Kids happy, mosquito-scarred and everywhere. Bless them.

And then there's the third type, like a couple of colleagues of mine. A few weeks ago they bought 100 acres of — uh — land. Mind you, there was a house on it, and a barn.

One is a Doctor of Philosophy, whose thesis was on Wordsworth's influence on 19th Century Political Thought. The other is a civil engineer, who is extremely uncivil when he has to do any engineering. He has been known to tear off a screen door when he couldn't get it to fit, and has been heard by reliable witnesses to attack the furnace with a shovel and appropriate language, when it wasn't working satisfactorily.

They've both been working like maniacs. They tore all the shingles off the side of the old log house and apparently put them on the roof. They have to walk only three-quarters of a mile to get to the homehead.

Their only real problem now is to build a bridge across a stream, for access to the property, and then a half-mile road to the farmhouse.

I would cross a bridge built by my civil engineer friend only with water-wings. And I would drive up a road built by the Doctor only with a helicopter. However, it takes all kinds. And I did promise to come up and cook for them for a few days. They are living on beans, out of the can. Perhaps a good steak and salad might drive them on to greater and worse efforts, while I sit on the porch, with gin and tonic, directing some of their more incredible efforts.

## Another viewpoint

### The bureaucratic octopus

St. Marys Journal - Argus  
Canadians are, in the view of many, slowly being "strangled" by the ever burgeoning of the bureaucratic "octopus" in this country. At the present rate of bureaucratic growth, we must soon reach the stage where half the population of Canada will be working to pay the other half. Perhaps we have reached this stage?

The stranglehold of the public service mandarins in Ottawa, who remain in office and perpetuate their kind and thinking as new recruits are added, while our elected representatives come and go, is becoming apparent even to the less observant citizen. It is these mandarins who formulate policy at all levels and more and more become convinced that they know a lot more about running the

country than do our elected politicians.

Projecting this state of affairs down the scale, we have the almost unbelievable maze of civil service strongholds attached to the ten Provincial governments. The various departments are re-organized and re-named every other day, so it seems. With every change a new "little Caesar" gets a foot-hold and immediately begins to press for more staff. The more staff under his or her authority the higher he or she goes in "grade". Habbits are pikers in growth ratio compared with the civil service.

On down the line, we observe similar trends in new regional set-ups. Jobs once filled by elected representatives at little or no salary are taken over by "experts" who confuse and muddle every

issue to the point where that valuable commodity of most elected representatives, plain commonsense, hasn't a chance to cope, thus feeding the bureaucratic octopus.

Indeed, many taxpayers wonder to what extent the same situation prevails on county school-boards? Does the tail of the administration wag the elected head of the trustees on numerous occasions?

The growth of bureaucracy in this country, in our opinion, is a matter which should be of equal concern to the present oil crisis, welfare problems and so forth. Do we, by fair means or foul, give the country back to the people or do we remain so bewildered by the jungle of red-tape created by those who are supposedly "servants" that we drown eventually in a sea of heavy taxation?

## Back Issues of The Free Press

20 years ago

50 years ago

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, December 10, 1953.

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, December 12, 1923.

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, December 1, 1898.

E. Tyler was elected mayor of Acton for 1954, defeating the other candidate T. Cooke 408 to 232. A. Service was named reeve of Nassagaweya.

A second nomination meeting was held Tuesday but just one more councillor was secured for the two vacant seats on Acton council. From the six nominations John Hargrave was the only one to qualify. Returning officer Jack McGeachie says it will be necessary to have a third nomination meeting.

Acton citizens also approved an increase in the Public Utilities Commission members, effective for 1955, at the election Monday. Numbers will be increased from three to five.

A total of 640 votes were cast. Two Acton girls, Ella Jany and Agnes Huisman, placed first and second at the public speaking competition between pupils of Acton, Milton and Georgetown public schools. Susan Wilson of Acton received an honorable mention. Ella spoke on the Russian invasion of Hungary and Agnes on her trip from Holland to Canada.

Sam Tennant was elected chief of the volunteer firemen, deputy-chief J. Newton, captain M. Holmes, lieutenants W. McEachern, Bern Van Fleet, secretary Don Van Fleet, treasurer Owen Masales.

At the second meeting of the newly-formed men's club of the United church Dick Bean was elected president, G. W. McKenzie vice-president and Bruce Shoemaker secretary-treasurer.

Acton friends gathered at Halton Centennial Manor to honor A. T. Brown on his 81st birthday. Janice Woodburn and Barbara Symon took part in a piano recital in Goelph. They are pupils of Miss Lampard. Ed Bilton was auctioneer for the United couples club box social.

The Toronto Suburban Railway is taking aggressive steps to give the public real service on their line between Toronto and Goelph. Additional cars have been purchased and the service will be doubled commencing next Saturday. Cars will leave West Toronto daily for Acton at 7:05 a.m., 10:05 a.m., 1:05 p.m., 4:05 p.m., 6:40 p.m. and 10:05 p.m. Passenger fares have been reduced. Single fare from Acton to Toronto will henceforth be 60c and the return fare \$1.45. This is the beginning of a new era in the history of the road. Passengers will take Dundas street cars at Runnymede Rd. for down town points, but it is fully expected passengers may before long proceed to Parkdale or Union Station. The trip takes one hour and 28 minutes. There may possibly be a limited service between Toronto and Goelph with stops only at Georgetown and Acton. Toronto people will commence to take up residence out in these sections; manufacturers, anxious to escape the high taxes of the city, will erect plants here and numerous benefits will accrue.

A number of small stills have been seized within the past year but Tuesday officers seized the largest outfit that has been seen in this section for some time. The veritable moonshine camp was located on one of ex-Warden D. Campbell's timber farms in Nassagaweya township.

Bessie Alberta MacDonald and Earl Vincent were married at the Methodist parsonage.

The burning question of the hour is: Who will get up and start the fire?

If you can't get home for Christmas write a nice long letter to the home folk.

Hewitson and Co. now have 80 employees at their shoe factory here.

The anxiety of members of the Council is considerably lessened. The haggard, hunted look which had prevailed has given place to the customary smile. The reason for this change is due to the fact that the army of representatives of engine and boiler manufacturers, electrical apparatus houses, etc., who began to camp in the town the day after the electric lighting by-law has been passed, has decamped. During their stay members of Council were button-holed morning, noon and night with sounds and visions of dynamos, compound condensers, ampères, transformers, Wheelocks, Corliss tubes and pulleys, isolators and cut-offs, power houses, building sites and greased lightning. Now, this all has passed. The contracts have been let.

While the enjoyment of skaters was at its height on Henderson's pond on Thanksgiving afternoon, Mr. E. J. Moore and Miss Ada Fyfe had an accident which gave them an unpleasant experience and cooled the ardor of the skaters generally. Suddenly the ice gave way and they were precipitated into the cold waters. Young Moore, being accustomed to the water and possessed of a cool head, supported Miss Fyfe till they were rescued as soon as a scumling was obtained.

A chartered bank for Acton is within the probabilities for the future.

A promising young man of leisure in town while taking a walk to Lameshow decided to give up the filthy habit of chewing tobacco. He deposited the remainder of his quid under a large stone. Next morning his craving for the narcotic was so intense he took a second trip down the track, found his plug and fringed happily back home chewing the weed he despised the day before.

## Request for blood donors Dec. 10

## Lament for our mayor

25 McGillivray Crescent, Georgetown, Ontario, December 1, 1973.

Dear Mr. Editor:

May we please ask for space to print this letter for promotion of our December 10 Blood Donor Clinic at the Holy Cross Church Auditorium, Georgetown.

Christmas is that time of the year that people are "giving". During the season holidays more blood is needed than usual—accidents. Let's make sure that blood is there, one of our own people might need it. So if possible at all do make that so important visit to the December 10 clinic and give your "Gift of Life", that might just be needed to save that one life.

Again we are expecting special requests for blood for heart surgery at Toronto hospitals. Let's be ready to fill these and make a special effort to attend the clinic on Monday, December 10, in Georgetown.

Any type is rare if needed and not there! Yours sincerely, Connie Nieuwhof, Public Relations Chairman, Georgetown and District Branch, The Red Cross.

Our little crowd can weep out loud, We've lost our local mayor, We'll pay the price for the bigger slice, Of this "North Haltonshire".

We've lost our own identity, By giving up our mayor, With some folk glad and others sad, It's strictly our affair.

In this world so full of changes, There's really nothing new, It isn't fair to give our mayor, But nothing else would do.

Now to this big Town "North Haltonshire" We little folk belong, While "Centralshire" and "Oakvillehire" Now castles of the strong.

Like Dukes and Lords of yesteryear, Dividing up their spoils, They'll levy tax on little backs, And squeeze wealth from their soils.

They'll get their fill on capital hill, To build those castles rare, With pompous waste, to suit their taste, Make changes everywhere.

Victor Smith R.R. 2, Rockwood.

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