

# In old-fashioned Acton, everybody is somebody

By Celia Saxon

The move to a small town has been somewhat of an eye-opener for our three young sons, having lived most of their growing years in the sterile suburbs of Mississauga. Here, the people are friendly, the houses have charm. We have all the advantages of country and city living right here on our doorstep. In Acton, the boys have discovered "everybody's somebody and everybody's part of it."

Here, they've found, we're an identity. Our present distinction being "that new family that moved into the Bradley house next to the arena."

Shortly we hope to establish an identity of our own as the Saxons of Knox Avenue. Peeter Saxon, audio-visual consultant; our Mom, the reporter; and those three little

monsters with the nuisance dog from the end house. Jim and Geoff will be known as the boys in the band. Steve's our cartoonist and actor and all three belong to the skating club.

The decision to move to Acton was triggered last summer while Peeter was making a promotional film-strip of Halton County to be shown at the international ploughing match in Lambton County. The family travelled with him. We immediately fell in love with the countryside and the warmth and hospitality of the residents. We felt we belonged here, as though we'd always been here. So we've moved in.

Without further ado I'll let the boys tell it in their own words.

Steve, age 9: Acton is a small old-fashioned town and we would like to keep it

that way. We have the lake and the park right beside us and all the stores are right around the corner.

The people are friendly. When we came to paint the house, we made a million friends before we even moved in.

I love the old band shell right in front of our house. And I'm glad I got to be in the two storey old-fashioned school-house.

My Dad says don't say ain't, but if we're gonna live in this old-fashioned town we have to speak their language. Everybody says creek instead of creek.

Jim, age 12: When we lived in suburbia we had to go everywhere by car, but now we can walk to everything. The arena is so close, the bowling alley and the Y are just around the corner. There's lots of activities. I wish there was a theatre and more public

skating.

Acton looks more old-fashioned than suburbia. There's no high-rises and big buildings. In suburbia all the houses and apartments look the same and the people are filed by number. All the houses are furnished the same way. In Acton the people have nice old furniture that was their grandmother's, and things that they made themselves, like we do.

All my friends' Dads are somebody important. Like a fireman, the store manager, the owner of the hotel. And everybody's related to everybody else.

Geoff, age 11: At first we wanted to move to a farm so we could have a horse. But now we can have our horse anyway because there are lots of places close by where we can board it.

We have fresh air and a beach. In the winter there is snowmobiling on the lake. We would like to skate on the lake if they could clear a space.

Laura Wiles makes the best fruit and nut cookies anywhere. She has lots of stories to tell about Acton in the olden days because she came here in 1896. Her house has all beautiful old-fashioned things.

We like old-fashioned things, but picking up the mail every day is a bit too old-fashioned.

Mr. Elliott is teaching my brother and me to play the drums and the trombone. He took us behind the big old organ and showed us all the pipes.

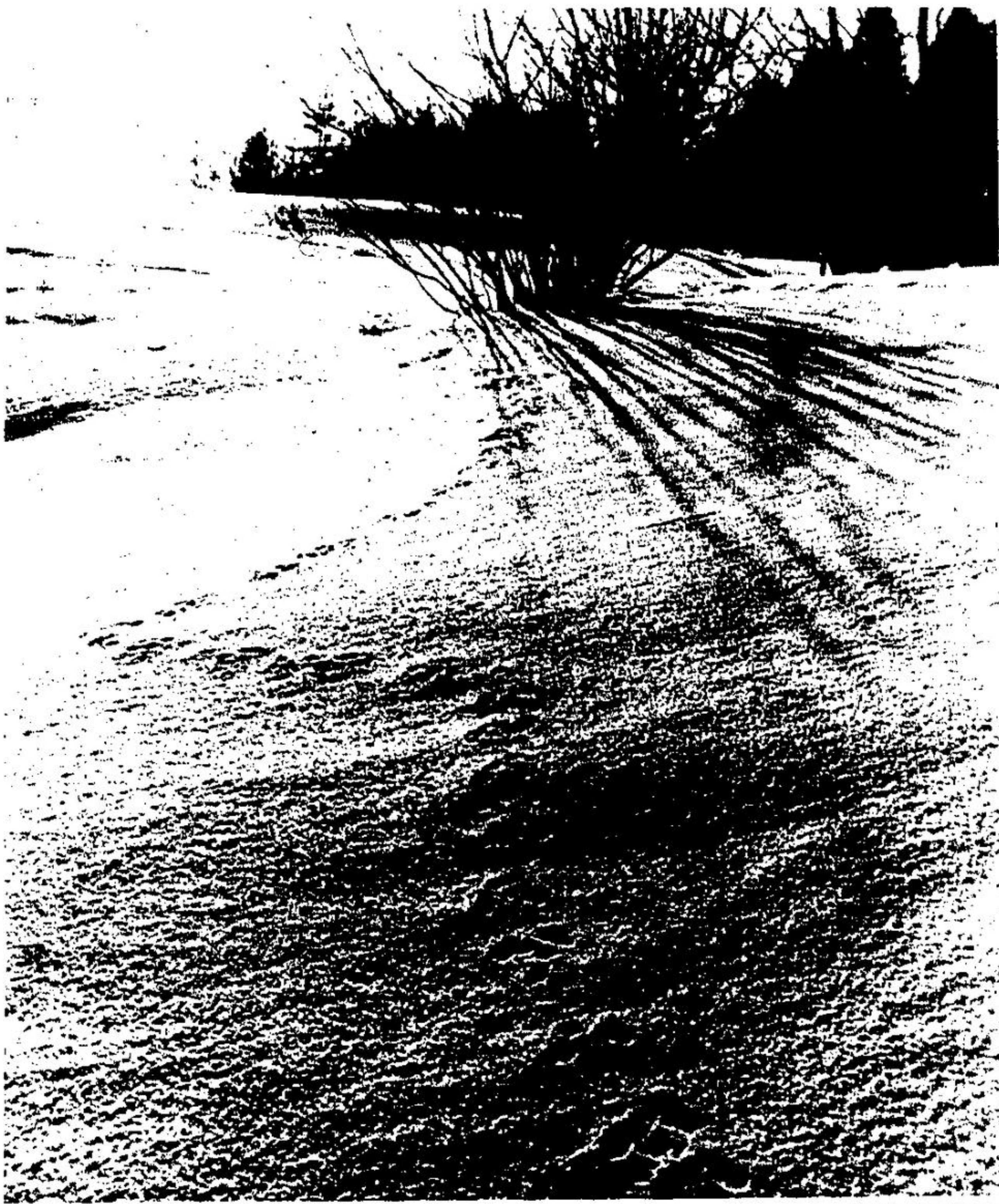
In Acton everybody is somebody and everybody is part of it. Now that my Mom is working for the Free Press and my Dad has



Celia Saxon

Celia is a newcomer to Acton, having moved recently from Mississauga with her husband, Peeter, and their three sons. They live at 11 Knox Ave.

moved his studio here, we're part of it too. Now all we need to make it perfect is peanut butter and jelly pop.



Long, long trail awinding

—Ian Wayman Photo

## Free Press Editorial Page

B2 The Acton Free Press, Wed., Feb. 13, 1974

### New concept for human services

Ex deputy reeve Peter Marks is excited about the new Halton Regional Human Services Council which was inaugurated at the Centennial Manor, Milton, last week.

The council is considered to be a new concept in the delivery of human services and has been endorsed by the Hon. Robert Welch, Minister of Community Services, who has also offered assistance through the various departments of his ministry.

The goal of the new Human Services Council is to promote efficient, effective, economic and humanitarian use of all available health, education, judicial,

correctional and social resources in the Halton Region, a laudable ambition.

The 25 member council is comprised of two elected regional councillors and 23 representatives of statutory and voluntary agencies. Members receive no remuneration — a fact which already sets them apart. They were selected for the posts from applications by a nominating committee set up by Halton County Council last year.

Mr. Marks notes that both provincial and county personnel involved with social services have noted problems associated with increasing costs, duplication and

the inequality of social service distribution through Halton. They devised the new council as a pilot project to clear up the problems.

Those who have been actively associated with social services in Halton have long complained of the inequities of the old system. The fact they saw the need for change is recognition services can be improved upon and achieves the first part of their goal.

Implementation of their objectives will be difficult and fraught with difficult problems but we are looking forward to an advanced system of dealing with social services in Halton which the province can use for a model.

### Board's fine financial report

Blowing your own horn is not an exercise which the public generally appreciates but in the case of the Halton Board of Education's recent financial edition of the Halton Education News it is easily forgiven.

It shows the costs per student in the Halton school system are significantly below the provincial average, even though some boards offer only the bare necessities of education. Halton, of course, is known throughout the province for the quality of its educational system and the ability to adapt to new innovations.

Cutting the educational pie into pieces first of all requires a knowledge of the ingredients which make it up. The biggest share — 60 per cent — comes from the province and accounts for \$28,149,666 of the total \$46,759,906 of the board's revenue.

Municipal taxes make up 38 per cent of the total accounting for \$17,560,005 while other sources supply the remaining two per cent

which is still a healthy \$1,050,235.

Slicing the pie into six pieces should be a relatively easy task for the efficient housewife but becomes a more complex job for the board once the 72 per cent of its revenue goes for instruction, which is teachers' salaries and supporting personnel, classroom supplies, equipment, books, etc. It totals \$33,842,862.

Debt charges make the next piece 11 per cent a trifle larger than the 10 per cent slice plant operation takes. Transportation takes a relatively minor three per cent but represents \$1,131,625, a figure we find astonishingly minor when one considers the amount of school bus traffic seen on the roads. Other expenses account for another three per cent while business — the expense of the business office and elected trustees — takes a relatively minor one per cent or \$646,010 of the total.

The Halton board provided education for 32,500 elementary school pupils, 18,428 secondary

school students, 123 trainable retarded school pupils, 1696 summer school and 5,069 adult education students.

The Halton board is often criticized for its alleged and real deficiencies through the course of the year. We think this is one occasion when the accolades should flow and freely.

### Complaints about teachers

February 7, 1974

Dear Editor: I am very pleased to see people complaining about teachers' long holidays and short work days.

On top of this they have the nerve to stage a one day strike and act like a mob demonstrating. A great example of maturity.

They aren't interested in our children but just the almighty dollar and even more time off.

Please do not sign my name or my kids will suffer for it.

## Bill SMILEY



Women, as any man can tell you, are a different mix.

Some are like beer. They slake your thirst, but make you feel a bit logey, and you wind up with a headache. Others are like an 8 to 1 martini: cold, very dry, and they hit you right between the eyes.

This is an interesting metaphor, but I think I'll pursue it some other day. Like when Women's Lib has crumbled back into a cringing sounding-board for male egos. Don't hold your breath waiting for that column.

Anyway, there I was, living the happy, blissfully peaceful, sordid life of a guy who is batching it. Newspapers all over the floor, ash-trays looking like Mount Vesuvius, dishes in the sink piled so high I couldn't see the taps. Cosy, like.

My wife seemed to be so fascinated by her grandson that I thought this idyllic existence might go on for months. I'd make a duty call every second night or so, and, as a matter of course, ask her if she missed me. "No," she'd reply cheerfully.

One night I got carried away, and told her that I missed her. Ah, fatal error. "You do?" she chirruped.

"Yeah. Well, you know. It's not the same without you." Thinking of the facts: a pile of soiled socks, down to my last shirt, the one with the peckaboo look where the seams are ripped; nothing but TV (creech) dinners for the last four days.

She took another, romantic meaning, and it didn't help when I added, in jest, "Yep, and I'm sick of that big, strapping blonde I had to hire to do the housework. Maybe she's only 28, but I think that bosom of hers is practically obscene. She should be in burlesque."

My wife was home on the next bus. It didn't seem to help her normally furious

disposition that I was out curling when she arrived.

She was completely unsympathetic when I got home at midnight and explained the hour by telling her that I'd had to go through the usual exchange of chewing gum, marmites and recipes for cheap wine that we male curlers have to put up with after each game.

She was reading a book when I came in. Dangerous sign. "Hello, Bill", without looking up. Icicles. Proffered kiss was offered a forehead. Then the dam broke.

The deluge began as a low, penetrating monotone, and built up into something closely akin to a fire siren.

"How can you be so filthy?" This was the theme of the ensuing monologue, during which your faithful servant stood around with rosebud mouth and baby blue eyes agape, an innocent abroad.

Now, look. There wasn't a dirty dish in sight (though she did find some in the cellar-way). I'd run the carpet-sweeper over a couple of dirty-grey spots on the rug. I have no sense of smell, so how could I know that the whole joint smelled like a cat house? I hadn't made the bed for three weeks, but, hell, we changed our sheets only once a month in prison camp. So, O.K., her plants were dead, but who can think of watering plants when his mind is filled with the anguish of the human race and whether or not the Leafs are going to make the playoffs?

What am I supposed to do, just because her feet go "Squish, squish", when she walks around the kitchen floor? It never bothered me. I wore my toe-rubbers.

Dust? What dust? As she writes her name on the coffee table.

Beer bottles? What beer bottles? They're all down the cellar except those three on the counter.

I was pretty hurt and disappointed. I can tell you. I had sweated and slaves and torn my guts out for at least 20 minutes, sprucing up the place so she wouldn't have a mess to come home to.

I didn't make that mess behind the downstairs toilet and then pull the toilet-lid cover down to hide it. The cat did.

I didn't break that saucer in her favorite coffee set. The cat did.

I didn't put that burn-hole in the rug. It was the cat. He was smoking a cigar-but he'd picked up on the street.

My wife is the type who has the kitchen floor so clean you can eat off it. So, who wants to eat off the kitchen floor?

### THE ACTON FREE PRESS

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## Back Issues of The Free Press

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 11, 1954.

Funeral rites for the father and two sisters of an Acton woman were held in Hornby's St. Stephen's church on Tuesday, two days after Emerson Laver and his daughters Beryl, 18 and Linda 6, perished in the wind-lashed flames which charred and levelled their Hornby-area home in less than an hour. In fair condition in Milton hospital after escaping from an upstairs window are Keith 13, Gordon 16, and Edwin 20. Mrs. Laver was treated for shock and released. Plans for assistance to the family are underway. Mrs. June Elliott of Acton is another daughter.

John Hognvaldson has a spinning wheel on display at the Hobby and Homecrafts show in Toronto.

About 40 young people attended an undenominational fireside gathering in Knox church, Ernest West, Kitchener, addressed the group.

A presentation for Mrs. Percy Smith and Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Law, who moved to Guelpch, was made in the Everton school house.

Employees of the Highway Department have been busy with improvements on the approach to Rockwood's bridge over the river. New posts have been put in to protect the pipe railings which have been damaged on two occasions by motorists crashing into the bridge.

New president Mrs. Stella Adamson presided for the meeting of the Friendly Circle. Mrs. Marie Bellamy, who is moving to Winnipeg, was presented with a cup and saucer.

Acton Rotarians enjoyed a travel talk on England and Scotland by Fred Wright who spent the past year in the British Isles. We need some new signs at the highway approaches to Acton.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 11, 1924.

The Thomson factory is now to be run by the Acton Machine Co. The business of Thomson Motor Supplies Limited and Acton Machine Company for several years has been closely related as the former had purchased a large share of the output of the latter company.

The two companies have gotten together and formed an arrangement by which the Acton Machine Co. will take over the new Thomson factory and machinery. Council will hold the Thomson Company to the terms of the agreement they entered into and will hold the securities given to them to cover the guarantee of the bonds for which the bylaw was passed last year. With Messrs. Blow and Harrison at the head a large business and considerable employment of labor may be confidently looked for.

For over 50 years a worthy citizen, honored and useful, George Hynds J.P. was called to his eternal rest. On Thursday forenoon the flags on the town hall and post office were observed to be at half mast.

Enquiry brought out the sad fact that Mr. Hynds, for many years associated with Acton in her church, municipal and private life, had been summoned to the great tribunal from which none return. He was a pupil of the revered Robert Little. A watchmaker, he went into business here with his brother Charles in the old post office store.

Patterson, the meat man, has a supply of buffalo meat from Alberta this week. It has been on the menu in a number of homes the past week.

Who says Acton is not cosmopolitan? Our population comprises Canadians, English, Irish, Scotch, French, United States, Polish, Swede, Russian, Austrian, Maltese, German, Chinese, Ukrainian.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 9, 1899.

The last piece of the electric lighting plant machinery was placed in the power house Saturday morning and on Saturday evening the current was turned on both the street and domestic circuits. Considering that all the machinery was intricate it was a genuine surprise that everything went without a hitch and that the plant was continued in uninterrupted operation from dusk until midnight on its first day. The citizens generally were delighted that at last electric light was an established fact and that the streets were brilliantly lighted in every part of town. The contrast over the old coal lamps was striking. Similar satisfaction was also expressed by our merchants and hotel men, the majority of whom have installed the lights in their places of business, as well as by those who have had it put in their residences.

Special credit is due Reeve Pearson and the Fire and Light Committee.

Mrs. Jennie Matthews, who has been handling the bread of G. Weston, Toronto, for several months, is making a success of the business.

The pioneers of Acton and vicinity are rapidly being called to their rest and today Acton mourns the demise of her longest continuous resident in the person of Alexander Grant Esq. He came from Scotch Block to Acton in 1838 when there were only two houses on the present site of the town, those of the Adams and Zimmerman families. He enjoyed the hunting and fishing and often recounted to the younger generations the fact that he had shot deer on Main St. He was appointed Justice of the Peace over 50 years ago and was associated with the Knox church since its inception.