

# Scandals, accidents still made news

The issues of the day were surprisingly familiar - the weather, the hops and grain crops, births, marriages and deaths. Even abortion and divorce are in the news. World news came to Actonians through the Free Press which related accounts of elections, accidents, murders, politicking, the doings of the Royal family,

bribery trials and assorted scandals. Federal and provincial politics got plenty of space for obviously interested Actonians. But "the present hard times" are often mentioned. Acton market prices were recorded weekly. Accidents Accidents frequently meant runaways "showing a rather

lively disposition on the part of the horses in this vicinity." One spring would supply drinking water for many families. About a dozen of our bright young men had gone to the Cariboo gold fields and only two came back with some gold nuggets, Robert Warren and John Burns. The willow tree which gave

Willow St. its name was growing steadily. It was planted in 1853 by William Steel and was 16 feet, nine inches in circumference when it was cut down to make way for the Merchants' Bank at the Willow-Mill corner. People complained about a village like ours not having a fire engine, (nor plumbing nor electricity).

Fairy Lake, then as now a beautiful place, was created years before by the damming of the stream to create water power for the mill. The land for the park was bought about 1880. Gruff Ransom Adams raised special white carrots for his horses here at "The Point".

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## Acton Free Press

JOE H. HARRISON, EDITOR

THURSDAY MORNING, FEB. 17, 1974.

### COMPLIMENTARY SUPPER.

According to announcement in last week's Free Press, a complimentary supper was tendered by the citizens of Acton last Thursday evening, to W. H. Storey, Esq., ex-Reeve, and ex-Councillors Hill, Nicklin and Speight. The committee who had undertaken the management spared no pains to have everything prepared in a creditable manner, and we believe we but express the feeling manifested by those present, when we say they succeeded admirably. The novel features of the entertainment were the presence of a large number of ladies and the entire absence of intoxicating liquors. Shortly after eight o'clock, the chair was taken by Dr. McGarvin, Reeve, who was supported on the right and left by the guests of the evening. The vice-chairmen were Col. Clay, of Norval, Dr. Robertson, of Milton, Messrs. D. Henderson and Geo. Tolton, of Acton. Two tables running nearly the length of the Hall, were filled with ladies and gentlemen, principally residents of Acton. After the clatter of spoons and forks had subsided, and the oysters and things had ceased to flow, the chairman announced that he was prepared to proceed with toasts and sentiments. The usual loyal toasts were responded to by all joining in singing a patriotic song. The chairman then gave "The Ontario Legislature," coupled with the name of Col. Clay, who responded in a felicitous manner. He joyfully alluded to his having been recently defeated in this county when he wanted to become a member of the Legislature, and thought it scarcely fair that he should be called upon to respond to this toast. The ladies have certainly lost something, for, he said, if he had had a seat in the Legislature he should have voted for the bill to allow the ladies to vote on municipal laws, which was only lost by a majority of two. He paid a warm tribute to Mr. Storey, a gentleman with whom he had had much pleasant intercourse in the County Council. Had never met one more courteous, or with better business habits; wondered at the people of Acton for allowing him to retire from the position he so admirably filled. The chairman then gave "Our Guests," referring briefly to the valuable services rendered by our ladies, and the retiring members of the Council. Mr. Storey responded in a warm and full of great response. In thanking those present for this mark of their esteem, he said he needed not this evidence of the kindness of the people of Acton, amongst whom he had lived the past twenty years, for he had ever found the spirit of kindness and generosity one of their leading characteristics. He was not so vain as to accept this as a purely personal honor to himself and colleagues, presuming the compliment to be mainly intended as a recognition of their past services in the Village and County Councils. As Reeve of this municipality, he had done nothing more than was his duty, and he had always felt a degree of pride in doing all that he could to further the interests of the village. He referred to matters in connection with the incorporation of the

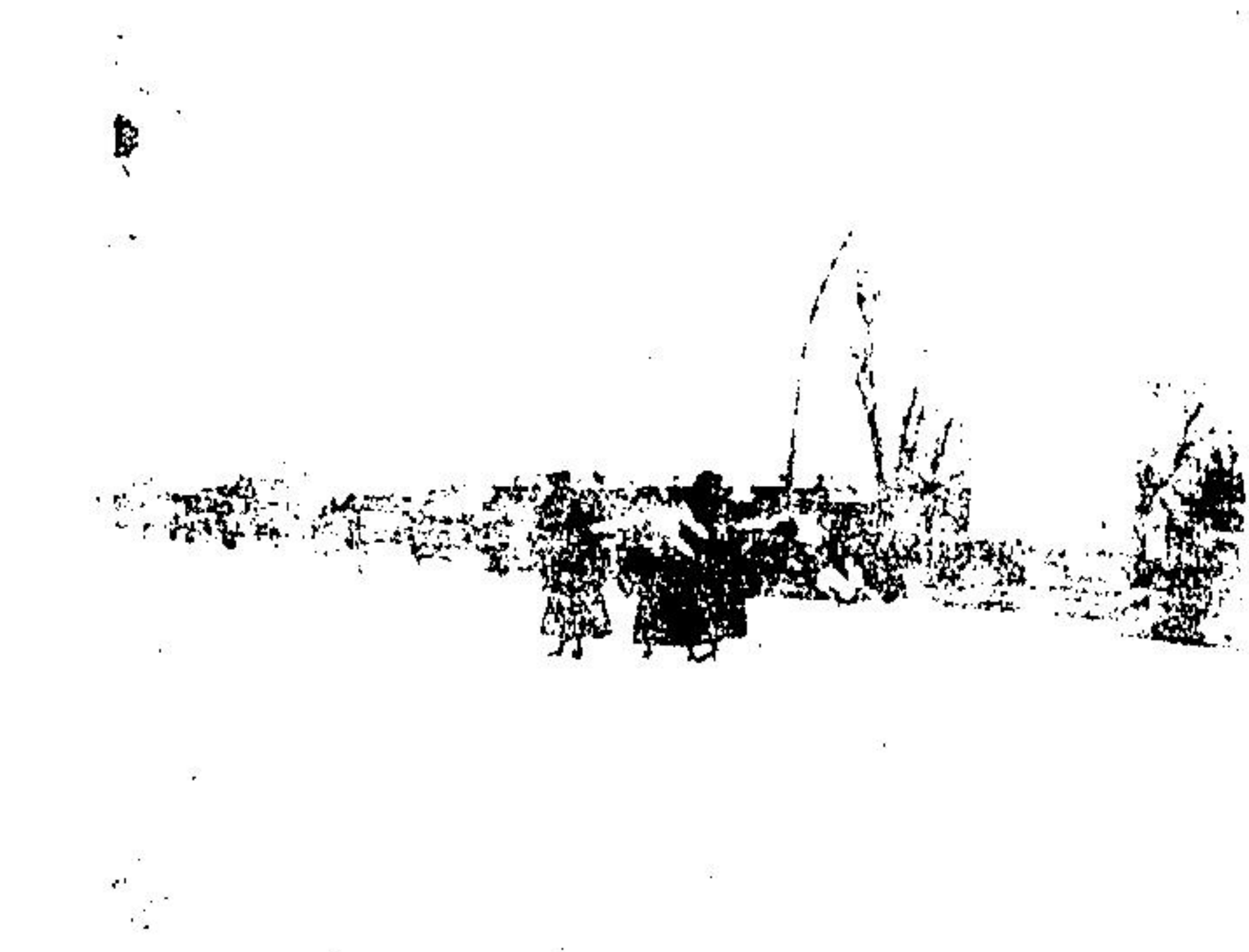
village and the difficult work that Council had to undergo the first year; his intercourse with the public men of the County had been of a very pleasant nature; had found the members of the County Council gentlemen of country, with whom it was a pleasure to do business. During the three years since incorporation, our village has made very substantial progress, and he was pleased to be able to remark that while the whole Dominion was laboring under serious commercial depression, it had not been felt here to any appreciable extent. Our people were emulators, and took a commendable interest in encouraging any enterprise that tended to promote the progress of the village. He had commenced business here in a small way, a number of years ago, as most of our best business men had done, at the bottom of the ladder, and worked gradually upwards, and naturally felt a deep interest in the prosperity of the place. Although he was not now in the Council, he felt that the affairs of the municipality were in good hands, and he believed the public interests would be guarded with the utmost care. He again expressed his heartfelt thanks for the honors thus showered upon him. Mr. Hill briefly expressed his appreciation of this flattering acknowledgment of his past services in the Council. Mr. Speight made a lengthy speech, touching upon a little of everything. To do it justice would require much more space than we can possibly spare. The best we can do is to say our notes, thus: "Did not enjoy oysters. Couldn't see why he was entitled to a supper after being kicked out of Council. Had many thoughts. Men don't think as they ought to. Thought because four Methodists - four Temperance men in Council - (No gin theology, anecdote) - In Council (ill) 11 o'clock - License law - By-law in Council - Removal of By-law; snow on sidewalk - Went back 30 years - Had to get our letters at Stewarttown - Had not then been a buggy over the roads - Felt rather flat - 3 or 4 houses in Acton. Have no reason to complain of people of Acton - thought flat time had got a supper - Two Justices of Peace - put me in Constable - took prisoners to my private house - A railroad through Acton - Gathered a meeting of inhabitants - A deputation to go to Toronto - Under ground crossing - went to lawyer - made approaches good - Sons of Temperance - First Worthy Patriarch - Perhaps only one in Acton opposed to bonus - Village out of debt - never be again if bonus is given. Thanks for honor of the supper. Mr. Nicklin in a few words expressed his thanks for the compliment conferred upon him as a member of the late Council. Dr. Robertson, Mayor of Milton, made a good speech, in which he paid a high compliment to the people of Acton for their enterprise and energy in doing all they could to foster the manufacturing interests of the place. He suggested a little caution in respect to giving bonuses. The "Manufacturing Interests of Acton," was ably responded to by Mr. W. H. Storey, and the "Mercantile Interests," by Mr. D. D. Christie, of Acton, and Mr. D. H. Fraser, of Guelph. The "Free Press," was acknowledged by Messrs. Jones of the *Advertiser*, *Intervenor*, of the *Harold*, and *Hacking* of the *Acton Free Press*. The toast of the Corporation of Acton was given by Mr. Jones and responded to by Dr. McGarvin, after which the health of the ladies brought the formal portion of the meeting to a close, the remainder of the evening being spent in pleasant social chat, paper games, &c. The whole affair passed off in an exceedingly pleasant manner, reflecting great credit on the committee under whose management it was got up.



ACTON GOLF course on land owned by Beardmore and Co., and the first tee was behind the location of the industrial building at the end of Frederick St. The second hole was back of the tannery over one of the filter beds. At that time, there were no houses on the east side of Main in the area. Play ended up where the Crescent is now located. The filter beds were no small hazard in 1902.



ROWING on Fairy Lake has been a popular recreation for over a century and was particularly in vogue when the Aquatic Club's boat house sat picturesquely at the lake's edge. It was situated somewhere near the present Cameron St.



IT WAS THANKSGIVING of 1881 when A. T. Brown took this picture of happy Actonians skating on Henderson's pond. This area, between the rear of the Bower homes, the present Free Press and hydro building and the tracks, was flooded for years.