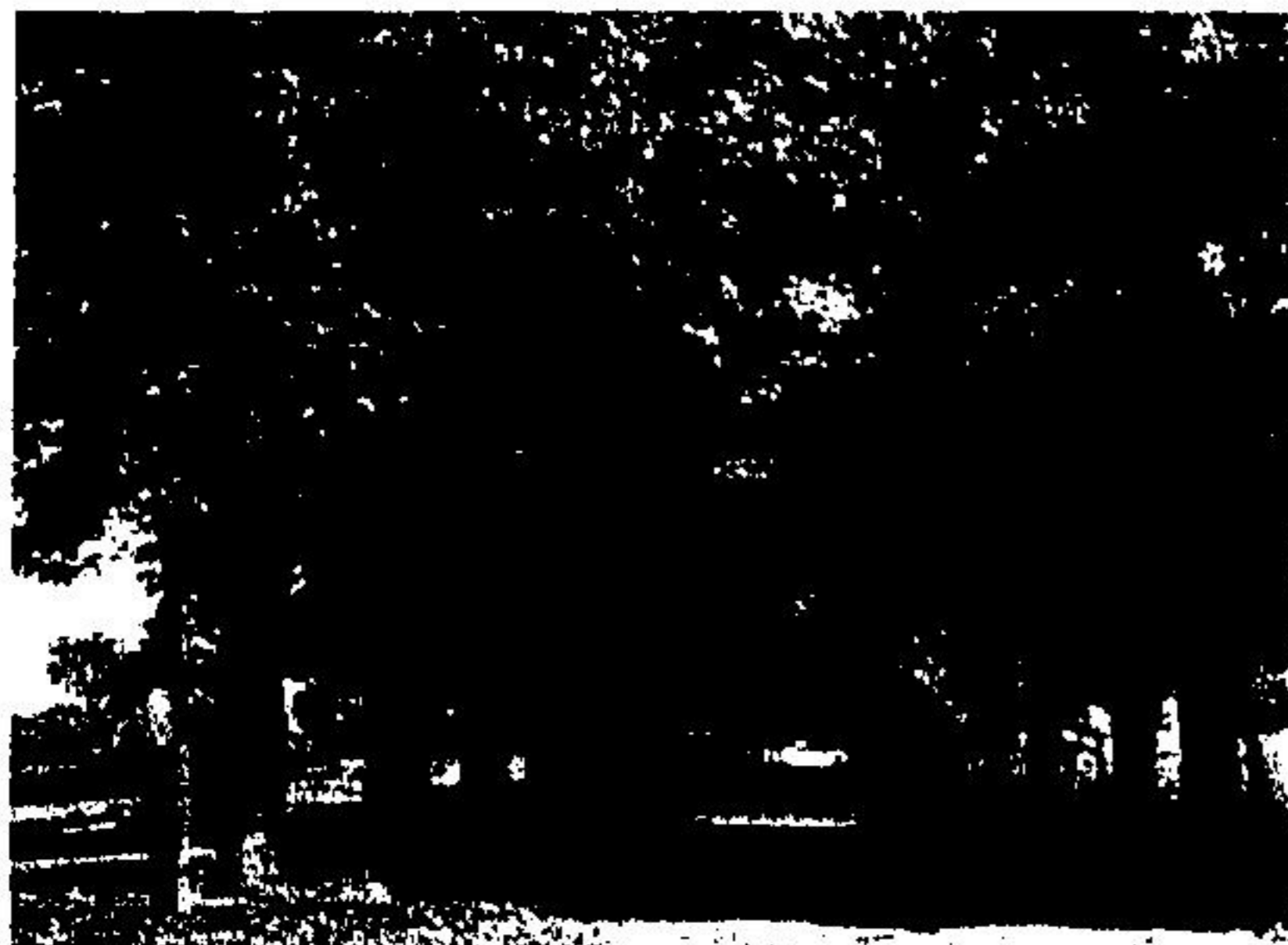




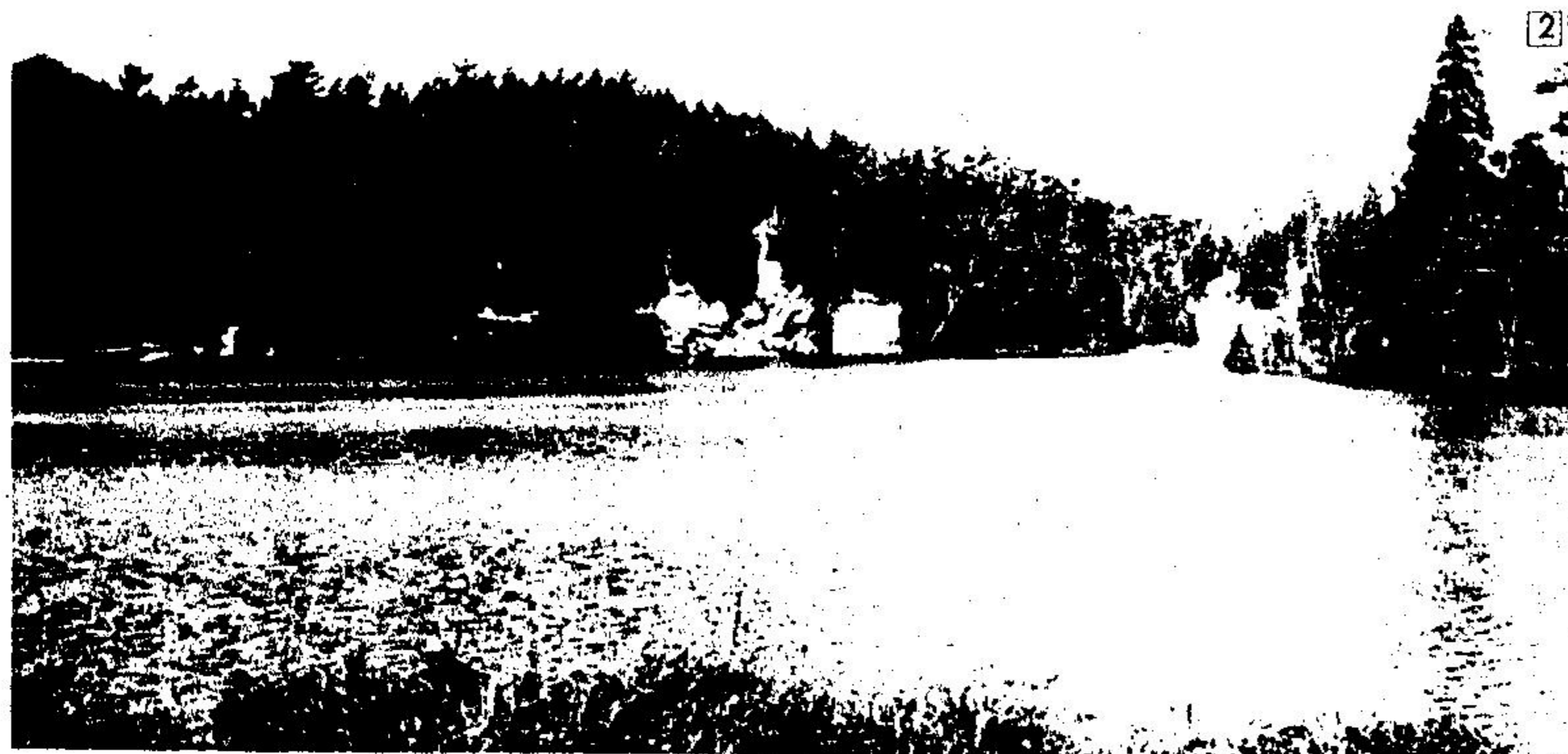
THE STREET entrance to Rockwood Conservation Area is flanked by tall maples, ablaze with color. The street ends abruptly but one can leave the car and walk down the Valley Road adjoining the river, past the ruins of the Harris Woolen Mills, producers of high quality blankets in the 19th Century.



Country lanes festooned with color



Picturesque farms dot the countryside



PRECIPITOUS LIMESTONE cliffs hang over the Eramosa River where it wends through the Rockwood Conservation Area, penned up by a large dam before slicing through more rocks on its way to Eden Mills.



SPIRITS ALONG this stretch of the Eramosa River, bridged by the Indian Trail? Nearby residents attest to the presence. Others scoff. The area is called Spirit Valley.

Thanksgiving weekend tour could include color, history

The colors of autumn may have faded some, but the countryside still offers views which have no parallel at other times of the year. riotous color has been replaced by delicate hues which blend into the ever-greens, birches and limestone in more subtle beauty.

North Halton and the neighboring South Wellington townships of Erin and Eramosa are particularly delightful for a Sunday afternoon or Thanksgiving Day drive. You can also recall some of the early history of the area by landmarks, particularly in the hamlets and villages along the way.

A sample drive? Start at Speyside and drive east on 15 Sideroad to catch a glimpse of the pines that pioneers commemorated in the name of Esquesing—the Indian word for Land of Tall Pines. Go as far as the Sixth Line and turn left (north) just before you get to Georgetown following the Sixth to 22 Sideroad. Turn left (west) at 22 and drive slowly through Limehouse, noting the historic frame Presbyterian church and cemetery which is almost a page out of an early Canadian history book.

Drive past the village store and where the drive forks at Limehouse school bear left over the railway tracks staying on the Sideroad until you reach the Fourth Line. Turn right here passing the huge Indusmin quarry on the left and the colors on your right. Pass over the tracks and go as far as where the Black Creek crosses the road. Just beyond this the Fourth goes up a steep hill but turn left on the Given Road through Dolly Varden instead of going up the hill. Dolly Varden looks like a scene from Wales.

The sumacs on the hills here are a splendid splash of color. Keep going and join the Third Line as it changes into Churchill Road and almost marks Acton's eastern boundary.

Continue through Acton across 7 Highway through new subdivisions until the road starts to climb to a

frame white church on the left—Churchill. The church is another example of early Canadian ecclesiastical architecture, being built in 1830.

You are now over 1200 feet above sea level at this point and on a clear day the skyline of downtown Toronto is easily visible. The vista is a patchwork of colors.

At this point you can either keep going north along the Third Line to 24 Highway or turn left along the Town Line and travel as far as 25 Highway and turn north (right) motoring along 25 until you reach Osprunge and 24 Highway. You are in Wellington County now and 24 Highway passes through delightful farm land festooned in colors.

Travel as far as the turn to Everton in Eramosa township, turn left and continue through the hamlet where the Eramosa River tumbles through a gorge and an old grist mill, once belonging to the Hortop family still sits beside the river and mill pond. The mill race is there.

Continue along the paved road which turns into gravel at the Kitchener Scout and Cub camps, until you reach 5 Sideroad, a paved road which will take you past stump and rail fences and hardwood bush into Rockwood's Harris St. by turning right.

Rockwood is a treasure trove for history buffs, antique lovers and nature enthusiasts. Join 7 Highway here and continue along past the stone mill which sits beside the Eramosa River and is still operated with water power by Jim Milne and son.

If you are history minded the old Rockwood Academy now being restored by sculptor and artist Yosef Drenters is worth a visit. It's on Rockwood's southern boundary along 7 Highway on the way to Acton. Founded by a Quaker it was one of Upper Canada's first boarding schools. Many prominent men were educated there.

Or visit the Rockwood Conservation Area. It contains delightful nature trails bordering the Eramosa River

which flows through precipitous limestone cliffs. The park looks like a piece of transplanted Muskoka. Also in the park are pot holes left by glaciers of the ice age, which makes it a geological rarity. There are mysterious caves, for the adventurous, which some say go for miles. But don't try that out — too dangerous.

Instead leave the conservation area and its pretty valley road and take the Fourth Line, Eramosa south as far as the Indian Trail, an unmarked road which was once used by Indians of the area. The pioneers apparently just followed the trail rather than find a new route.

The Indian Trail crosses the Eramosa River in Spirit Valley, which also is the site of an Indian graveyard. Spirits? Some residents say the Trail has been the scene of some strange happenings. Cynics laughingly say spirit sightings were the result of too much of the bottled kind. The tar-topped Trail ends at the road which connects Eden Mills to Highway 7 on the west side of Rockwood. Turn left and follow the hard top road to Eden Mills turning left at the legacy left by Scots settlers—stone Eden Mills Presbyterian Church.

See the old stone mill in Eden Mills, now used by Ted Barden for sawing wood for crates. Continue through the village until you reach the Guelph Line. Turn south (right) and follow the Guelph Line through the former township of Nassagaweya (now Milton) noting the unusual stone barns, unique in Halton. Look for the electrical railway museum on your left.

Keep on the Guelph Line until you reach 15 Sideroad. Turn left and plunge into the heart of old Nassagaweya.

The scenery is alternately pastoral and primeval rocks and bush, much like the early settlers first saw it.

Continue to Speyside and you are back where you started. The 40 mile trip can be done easily in a couple of hours or could be stretched into a full day's outing.

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