

Free Press Editorial Page

Not a world of peace

Ours is not a world of peace and good will.

In Africa, rival races of blacks and whites struggle — in the open and in secret, with and without violence — for dominance.

In the Middle East, great powers escalate each other's armament bids.

Fighting has become so commonplace in some places that newspapers hardly report it any more: Viet Nam, Northern Ireland, Cyprus... And the repression of an entire continent is ignored — in South America an unofficial alliance of military regimes tightens the screws on a hundred million poor.

And in Bangladesh and India the Sahel and who knows how many more centres of suffering, millions more die the slow agony of starvation.

There seems to be something incongruous about celebrating Christmas in such a world. For

Christmas speaks of kindness and love, peace and goodwill.

Yet we should remember that the first Christmas was not a peaceful one. The baby Jesus was born into a world of tyranny, of hate, of vicious dictators and treacherous politicians. In an effort to destroy that child, a pitiless Herod slaughtered all the children of Bethlehem. Nor was the life of Jesus particularly peaceful. He was always under suspicion, always under attack. His life was a conflict with forces of evil, forces which eventually brought him to the Cross.

So in celebrating Christmas, we should see in the one called Christ a challenge, not only to the Herods and Pilates of 2,000 years ago, but to those of every day, of every nation.

That was the hope, of Christmas then. It is still the hope, of Christmas today. But we need to work harder to realize that hope. —Unchurched editorials

A Christmas heresy

A Christmas cartoon showed a little hut bathed in a halo of light. The mother bent over her child in a manger. Shepherds approached from the fields, wise men from the deserts, and the night sky was filled with angels.

And the father came rushing out, shouting, "It's a girl!"

It's almost unimaginable. In this age of enlightened theology, a number of broad-minded Christians have managed to convince themselves that God might indeed be female as well as male. Or perhaps neither, or perhaps both. But to conceive of the Christ, the Messiah, as a woman? How ridiculous!

After all, you say, if Christ had been a woman, there would probably have been no great preaching journeys through Palestine, no going out in the boats with the fishermen, no driving the money-changers out of the temple. There would probably have been no trial, and no crucifixion. The great world-changing ministry of Jesus might have been restricted to a

single small town, an association with other women, perhaps a generation or two of children. Jesus a woman? Hah! Heresy!

If the thought of a female Christ horrifies you, maybe the heresy is yours. Certainly, the Bible says that Jesus was male. The heresy may be that because of Hebrew social standards God had no choice but to send a male Messiah. That makes God subject to human customs. It denies the limitless power of God.

Surely the real message of Christmas is not what did happen, but what can happen. What could be more absurd than one child, one unsophisticated carpenter's son in a troublesome little backwater of the Roman Empire setting out to change the world, even challenging death on a cross. If anything should be considered impossible, that should be. Even for God.

But that's what happened. Christmas says to all of us, then and now, "With God, even the impossible is possible."

Whither goes the mail

The Free Press was happy to hear that an Acton Free Press was delivered to a home in Agincourt on a Thursday — just one day after publication.

But how about those papers that don't get to Campbellville until Tuesday?

The ways of the mail are

strange. Most Acton mail now apparently goes to Georgetown for forwarding elsewhere.

After Christmas, when the rush is over, the Free Press would like to hear from people with good or bad tales to tell of the delivery of their hometown weekly papers in other towns and cities.

Of this and that

Nothing is quite so annoying as to have someone go right on talking when you're interrupting.

It has always been a little depressing to newspaper journalists to think about what people might be using their newspapers for after they are a day or two old. The thought of all those lovingly crafted sentences being wrapped around what's left of the fish, or pushed hurriedly under the

puppy, was just too dismaying to contemplate.

But in this area of Western Ontario, it cannot go without comment that government researchers in Japan have come up with a new wrinkle for old newspapers. They pour molasses over them and feed the mess to Holstein milk cows to provide a sixth of the animals' daily food. So far the cows are still yielding good milk.

Of course. How could anyone have expected otherwise? St. Mary's Journal Argus

The Christmas beat

I guess they'll lock me in the Clink, To spend the Christmas Day, You're safe for sure when I'm secure, There is no other way.

My friendly pal will pick me up, And drive me to the cell, With the coffee cup I'll sober up, The rest is sad to tell.

I'm just the usual Christmas Drunk, That ruins Christmas Day, To save the pains from scatterbrains, They'll take my car away.

You ought to thank the Boys in Blue, Who keep me off the street, They leave their folks, to pick up soaks, Around their Christmas beat.

They know that I'm not capable of Caring for my self, My foggy brain, will cause no pain, Tucked up on the shelf.

Now when they pull me over, I'll be calm as I can be, I'll tell my tale in full detail, 'Cause they're protecting me.

They have a busy Christmas day, Just sorting out the punks, To save our lives, they leave their wives, To tuck away the DRUNKS.

Victor Smith, R.R. 2, Rockwood.



"Christmas is a' coming..."

THE AUDIENCE at Speyside School's Christmas Concert was delighted with the kindergarten classes rendition of Christmas is A'coming" Wendy Thom-

son's camera caught the enjoyment of the song on the little faces.

Robert Noble and heirs played prominent part in Norval history

The village of Norval, as we know it today, developed from the pioneer enterprise of John McNab and sons, Scottish settlers who came from Vermont in 1820. In fact, the village was called "McNabville" until 1840 when the first post office was opened in the community.

James McNab (a son) dammed the Credit River and built a frame grist mill in 1828 which was later replaced by a brick structure and once stood near the entrance to the "Credit Valley Club," originally known as the "Riviera."

The mill was always the hub of Norval's industry. Several descendants of mill employees still dwell in the village.

James McNab met with an unfortunate accident soon after the mill's erection. A mill stone slipped and crushed his leg and it had to be amputated above the knee. The mills were then leased to John Barnhart in 1830 but were sold to a General Adamson in 1838. Adamson's son-in-law, Col. Mitchell, ran the mills. From 1845 to 1859 the grist mill was leased to Gooderham and Worts of the famed distilling families.

Robert Noble of Carlisle, England, reputed to be the last miller in Canada with faith in the old stone grinding system, bought the grist, saw and woolen mills in 1868 from the Bank of Ontario, which had control of the property by this time.

Robert Noble was well acquainted with the grist business in England. He apprenticed in Dundas and eventually worked in mills at Elora and Freeleton in managerial positions. He arrived in Canada in 1852.

For more than 50 years, Robert Noble and his son, Col. Alexander Noble, steadily increased the flour mill production until the names Noble and Norval became synonymous in Canada's flour industry. In 1880, Noble rebuilt the mills and in 1889 changed to the "modern" roller system.

Some grain was purchased from the prairies but the main supply came from local farmers. It was not unusual to see a string of wagons filled with grain awaiting their turn to weigh-in on the scales at the Noble Flour Mill. The neighbouring Hollywood Hotel would be a welcome site after a long dusty ride into the village. A hot full course meal could be had for 35c, which included a thick slab of hot apple pie.

After 1856 the mill was always serviced by the Grand Trunk Railway which had its station about 1 1/2 miles above the village. A group of land owners asked too much money when plans for the railroad route were being made. Both parties held out so the railway was put through on the present CNR line north of the village.

The station was a shipping point for the Noble Flour which was mainly sold throughout the Quebec and Maritime regions, England and Scotland and even the West Indies.

Noble had two elevators used for storage of grain — one at Georgetown and another at Acton railroad stations.

Norval's Grand Trunk Station was closed on July 12, 1926, partly because local farmers had changed their business from grain growing to dairying or stock raising. By this time modern trucks could be the means of transporting goods right from the farm to the market.

Had it not been for the bargaining stalemate bet-

ween landowner and the GTR, the railroad would have passed closer to the village, thus inviting more industry. In this regard Norval's industrial potential certainly suffered.

The Toronto Suburban Railway which ran just south of Norval, on the hill, had a siding which ran directly to the flour mill. Radial freight cars began shipping carload lots of flour from the time the TSR's first car passed through the village in April 1917.

Norval was to have been the new site for Upper Canada College during the 1910's. Over 600 acres were purchased from the Noble farm but the outbreak of World War I prevented plans to relocate the college in 1914. It took some time to recover from the effects of the war but the intention was to move once more in 1929. This time the stock market crash put an end to the plans.

In 1934 two residences were added to the Upper School, and in 1936 a large gym and pool were built. Along came World War II in 1939. By the time it was over, much work was done on the old existing building in Toronto. Sentiment centered around it, so the plan was changed to utilize the Norval property as an outdoor educational facility and a reforestation area.

To this day, senior boys of Upper Canada College spend



ALEXANDER NOBLE and family in an old photograph. Sitting on her father's knee is Mrs. Marion Reed, who still lives at Norval and seven-month-old Ethel is on her mother's knee. The picture was taken in 1909.

Halton sketches

by John McDonald

a week at a time on the grounds which were once a part of the old Noble Farm.

With the large volume and the integrity of his business, Robert Noble provided a banking service for customers until 1907 when a branch of the Farmers Bank was established in Norval. However, it closed in a short time.

A branch of the Metropolitan Bank was opened on February 6, 1914, at the request and with the influence of Robert Noble. With the decline in business after the sale of the Noble Flour Mill to W. J. Campbell Ltd. in 1919, plus the fact Upper Canada College decided not to relocate, the bank closed April 25, 1931. It had then amalgamated with the Bank of Nova Scotia. The former bank building now houses D & E Groceries at the village "four corners".

The lovely Noble farmhouse which still stands "across the river" was built by Alexander McNab (another son of John McNab the original settler). The residence was rebuilt by General Adamson in the mid 1800s. The front portion was added to house the guests for his daughter's wedding and is now a complete apartment for Robert Noble's granddaughter, Mrs. Marion Reed.

In 1924 Alex Noble and his family leased the house and farm to the United Church which established a hostel for boys on the premises. Young men between the ages of 16 and 19 were brought over from England, Scotland and Wales to work on farms in Ontario and were housed there until placed with a farmer.

When the depression set in during the 1930's the United Church could no longer maintain the scheme and the Alex Noble family returned to the farm in 1934.

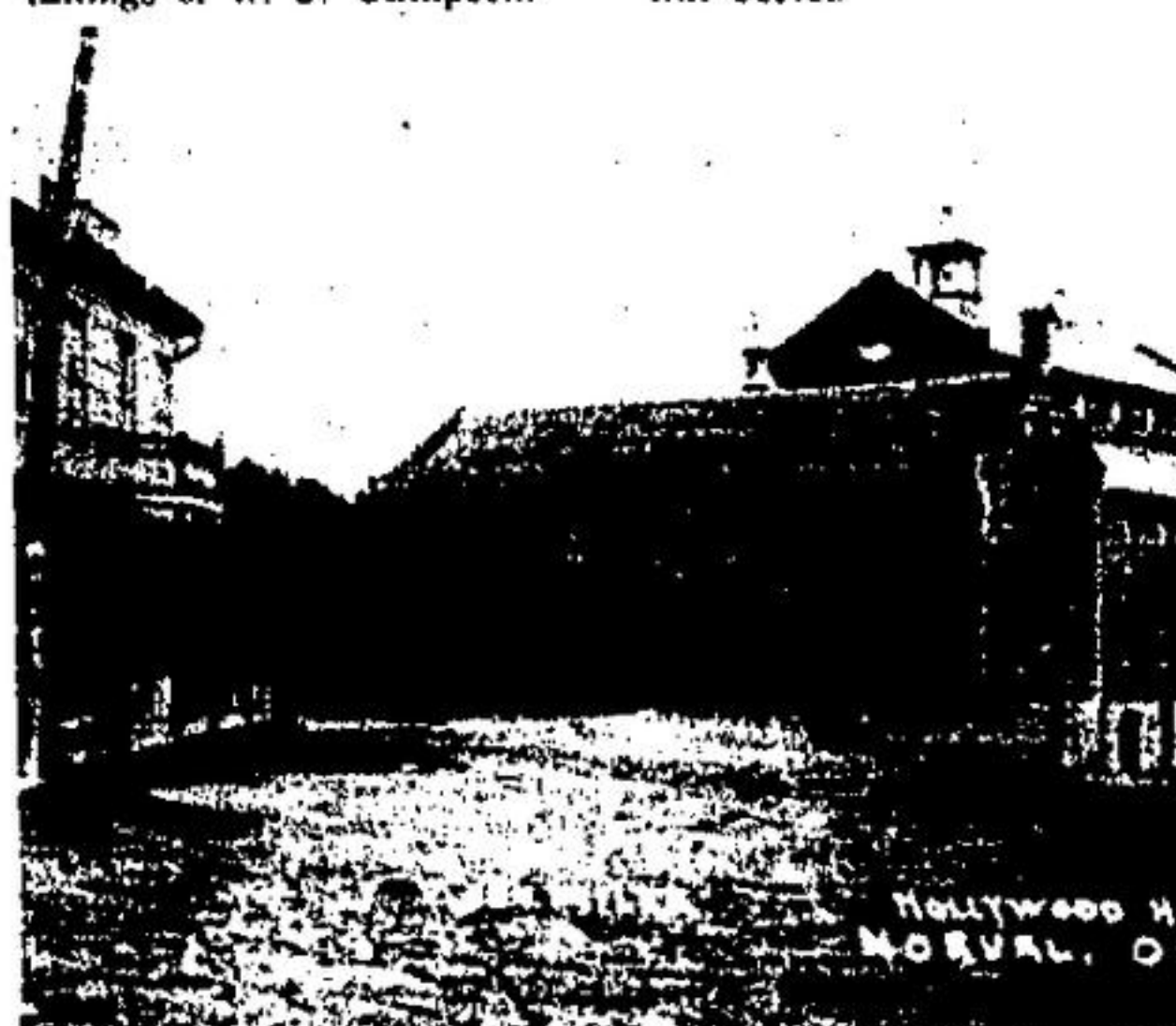
The mill burned in January 1930 but was still in operation up to 1952 under Browne and Co.

The Noble family and the flour mill have both played important roles in the development of the village of Norval. The Noble brand name, "Noble" for pastry flour, and "King's Choice" for bread flour, were known throughout the Dominion and overseas.

Robert Noble also served on the local school board as secretary and was a magistrate. His son Alex Noble served as a Lieutenant Colonel of the 20th Halton Rifles, which is now known as the Lorne Scots.

Alex played an important role in keeping the new Presbyterian Church building inside the village when it was erected in 1878, as opposed to having it located on the hill "outside the village."

It is interesting to note how the village of Norval thrived at one time, compared to its present "commuter" status. Other aspects of the history of the village are forthcoming in this series.



AN UNUSUAL shot of the Noble flour mills and Hollywood Hotel. The hotel's front was taken off when 7 Highway was cut through the village.

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, December 21, 1854.

Citizens prominent in municipal affairs in Halton County and other centres were guests last Thursday evening of Warden J. J. Stewart at the Annual Warden's Dinner in the Windsor Room of the Royal Hotel in Guelph.

Discussion prior to first reading of a by-law to provide some \$15,000 for sewer extensions into the Glenlea, Cobble Hill and Wool Combing subdivisions centered heavily on means of apportioning assessment on all costs involved at the final regular session of 1954's town council Monday evening.

The entire slate of 1954 officers and committee members in the Acton Citizens band was returned for next year Wednesday evening when the band gathered for its annual meeting. Bandmaster A. Perrott, who conducted the election, was unanimously returned to his position, as was assistant bandmaster R. Spielvogel.

Presbyterian Young People's group members from Campbellville and St. Andrew's church, Galt were entertained by Knox church, Acton P.Y.P. at a Christmas party on Saturday, December 18. After carol singing Joe Jany led in games.

At their annual meeting, the Men of Knox elected Charles Kirkness as their president for 1955. Other officers are vice-president, Stanley Norton; secretary, Clarence Coles; treasurer, Russell Patterson; pianist, Ted Hansen.

A fine sheet of ice in the arena made possible the first skating of the year last night.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, December 25, 1894.

The hardest worked people in town the past week have been the Post Office staff. Under the capable superintendence of Mr. J. Chester Matthews the enormous volume of mail matter has been skilfully handled with ability and promptitude. Courtesy has prevailed under exceedingly trying conditions and the public has been served with general satisfaction.

The Warden's dinner tendered by Reeve Barber of Acton at Milton on Wednesday evening in the County Council annals of the week. The dinner was held at the Milton Inn and was highly spoken of. Warden Barber's invited guests from Acton were: Chief McPherson, Officer W. J. Reid, Municipal Clerk Farmer, N. Forbes, Thomas A. Morton, John McArthur, W. D. Mooney, W. D. Anderson, Beatty Arnold, L. E. Atkinson, Hiram Swackhamer, John Leishman, J. M. McDonald, Frank Holmes, James R. Anderson and W. J. Patterson.

On Monday the residence of Mr. Basil Johnston, second line, Erin, had a narrow escape from destruction by fire. A quantity of ashes from one of the stoves had been emptied in the snow at the side of the woodshed. The high wind which prevailed blew sparks against the walls of the shed, it is supposed, and the sheeting was ignited. The fire burned through and got into the wood piled in the shed. This blazed up and when discovered had nearly reached the living quarters. Mr. Johnston and the neighbours, who were summoned by telephone were able to subdue the flames before more serious damage had been done.

75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, December 21, 1899.

The Commercial hotel was thrown into confusion on Sunday evening by an unfortunate accident occurring to Miss Mabel Thompson, one of the maids, who swallowed a large pin. Drs. Macdonald and Forster were called, but the pin had descended into the esophagus to within four or five inches of the stomach, and it was found impossible to remove it. She was taken to the General Hospital in Guelph, on a freight train to be operated upon, but just as the surgeon was about to commence operating, the young lady who was on the operating table, was suddenly seized with a coughing spell which fortunately resulted in dislodging the pin and bringing it up. She has since returned home and feels no serious effects from the accident.

The popular annual event, the Georgetown Fire Brigade's Ball and Supper, will take place on Friday, December 29. No doubt Acton will be well represented. The annual Christmas entertainment of the Baptist Sunday School will be held on Wednesday evening, 27th inst. A musical and literary programme of interest will be rendered by members of the school and the choir of the church. The admission fee will be ten cents.

The retail prices of brooms will shortly be advanced about 20 per cent to meet an advance in manufacturers' prices.

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Business and Editorial Office



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