



At Halton Museum

## Christmas past relived again

Flickering candlelight in the pine and limestone barn gives a romantic atmosphere to the Halton Region Museum at Kelso.

Built by the Alexander family in 1860, the barn now takes on a festive feeling. Red poinsettia, green wreaths and silver bells make one think of Christmas past.

The rough-hewn beams over the Great Fireplace are covered with cedar and hemlock boughs by the Friends of the Museum. Visitors enjoy a cup of tea and some Christmas cakes by the roaring log fire.

Long ago  
Later they will wander through the rooms, reliving childhood memories and telling tales of Christmases long ago.  
"I can remember when all we had in our stockings, Christ-

mas morning was an orange," one old lady is heard to say. "All our gifts were home-made and that's the very best kind," another remembers.

Music plays  
As the Christmas music plays throughout the building one can imagine ladies and gentlemen in their finest gowns arriving for a Christmas ball.

The old cutter outside the door spurs the imagination. One sees horses bedecked with sleigh bells and party-goers wrapped in animal skins to keep warm.

An old-fashioned Christmas tree is decorated with popcorn strings, carded wool and cranberries. Underneath are hand-made sleds, dolls with porcelain faces and a crudely-made tricycle.

THE GREAT FIREPLACE in the Great Hall of the Halton Region Museum's main building provides a setting reminiscent of a Wayside Inn during the middle of the 19th century. The fireplace was built in 1962 of cement block resting on six foot foundations. The face stones were collected from various old grist mills in the county. It measures 17 by 8 feet with a 17 foot long mantel of solid white oak. Surrounding the fireplace are a variety of iron, brass, wood and pewter kitchen and household utensils of the period. Holding young Coby Dowdell is Vi Slade, a friend of the museum.

## Great fireplace in main building

The original barn built in the 1860's has been restored, preserving the timbering, stone and ancient woodwork. It measures 106' X 40' X 35' and in it were kept the cows (Great Hall), horses, (Victorian Room) and crops in the hayloft. As well, saws, corn choppers and other machinery were operated in the barn from the water wheel which can still be seen in the Great Hall.

The water wheel was installed in 1880 and is fed from a reservoir 115 feet up the escarpment. It can generate 9 horsepower. A dynamo was added to the wheel in 1901 after Adam Alexander III corresponded with Thomas Edison. Thus the farm had electric power some 15 years before it finally became available to the area. The wheel was built by Spight and Brady of Georgetown.

Great fireplace  
The barn, constructed of pine and limestone, has three floors of displays. The focal point is the Great Fireplace in the Great Hall which provides

a setting reminiscent of a Wayside Inn during the middle of the 19th century.  
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Each floor  
The main floor also features a variety of lighting from the mid-light to the Coleman lamps. Also on view is a pine root bedroom set, and a collection of dishes, china, silver and glassware. The Victorian Room shows a large 19th-century and Victorian Parlor. Upholstery features a replica of the old Court House Coppers' Shop and a large collection of tools. The third floor features displays of iron artifacts, school articles and common household articles of the period.

WILL BURN  
Even at maximum moisture content, a tree will burn if flame is applied all around the base. Keep discarded gift wrappings away from the base of the tree, and make the Christmas tree area a no smoking zone.

FLOODLIGHTS  
Use only non-flammable ornaments and trim on the tree. Do not decorate metallic artificial trees with strings of electric lights, but illuminate by floodlight if desired. Some plastic trees, made from styrene materials, are flammable and may burn violently. Never use candles to decorate any tree.

FREE FROM WORRY  
Never leave small children alone at Christmas (or at any other time). The employment of a reliable babysitter is the best assurance of freedom from worry if you plan to get together with friends in your home at that time.

REMOVE EARLY  
Set up Christmas trees in doors just before Christmas, and remove them as soon as possible after Christmas. Keep trees away from heat sources, and do not allow them to block exits.



SERVING PUNCH after the C.G.I.T. vesper service are Judy Pink (left); behind the table Heather Reed, Rhona Slocok and leader Gail Lidkea. Mrs. Doris Kentner accepts a cup.



CHRISTMAS carols are sung by Vi Slade and Kathryn Boyle at the antique spinet on display at Halton Region Museum. The music is read by candlelight.



## Holly grown on Vancouver Island

It is not widely known that most of North America's annual crop of Christmas holly is grown on Vancouver Island.

Holly is everywhere around homes, trimmed to ornamental shapes in parks and in front of hotels, even growing wild along the highways.

The bigger growers raise from 150 to 500 trees on lots ranging from four to six acres.

The female holly bushes produce the berries.

The next holly you buy will most likely have come from this part of Canada, shipped in refrigerated transport at 33 degrees, after a special dipping in chemicals right after cutting.

These sprigs, with care, will keep for up to three months. Put them in water and wax any cut ends. They should stay bright and fresh.

## 1830 log cabin at Halton Museum

Built about 1830 by Alex Campbell (after whom the Village of Campbellville is named) the cabin was originally located near the present Mohawk Raceway on the Currie Reforestation Tract. The first occupant may have been Alex Campbell or perhaps another of the early settlers in the area.

At any rate, by the middle of the 19th century it was the home of Robert Currie and his family. Early in his century the Currie land reverted to the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests and the cabin became the home of Jim Ferrer, the local forest ranger. During 1962 and 1963 the cabin was moved from its original site several miles away, log by log, to its present location.

Furnished in the period of the 1830's, the sparse furnishings show the crude but comfortable life of the early settler. The two storey cabin is constructed of pine logs and cedar and measures 24' X 14'. It originally had a dirt floor and was "painted" inside with a blue and yellow concoction of a "most vile smell".

Open since 1961

## Halton Museum

The present museum site was originally part of a 20-acre farm settled and operated for four generations by the Adam Alexander family. In 1959 one hundred acres of the Alexander farm were purchased by the old Sixteen Mile Creek Conservation Authority for a dam and flood control project. The setting and the unique water wheels resulted in the site being proposed as the home of a county museum.

Thus, in 1961 the County of Halton passed a by-law establishing such a museum. In 1962, with the museum unofficially open, restoration began under the direction of the first Curator Major H. J. Newman.

In 1963 the charter of the Halton County Museum Association was obtained and in 1965 a new 99 year lease was

signed by Duff Alexander, the Museum and the Halton Region Conservation Authority giving the Museum the use of all buildings and five acres of the farm.

In the same year a new by-law formalizing this agreement and reorganizing the Museum was passed by the County.

The Museum remained under the County of Halton until 1971 when responsibility passed to the Community and Social Services Committee of the new Region and the Museum became known as the Halton Region Museum.

The initial restoration and collection was carried out under a major five-year program which was completed in 1967. Today the Museum has, in seven buildings, some 10,000 square feet of display, storage, office and workshop area.

## Log house at Museum

The log cabin at Kelso was removed log by log from the Lands and Forest area known as the Currie Tract in Campbellville. It was built by Alex Campbell and has been rebuilt and furnished in the period of the early 1830's.

One can imagine the sparse Christmases in this little house. The tree would naturally be cut from the woods nearby. Decorations were simple, made of materials found in the home.

Cold mornings  
Christmas morning would be as cold as any other morning. The bedwarmers would be cold and children would snuggle together under the home-made quilts and blankets until their parents stoked the fire.

Candles would be used in place of oil lamps due to the price of oil.

Air house  
In November 1837, John Macaulay wrote to his mother in Kingston, "We live in a very airy house. The wind almost blows through it."

His mother answered, "If I were commencing life again in the woods I would not build anything of logs except a shanty or a pigsty; for experience has plainly told me that log buildings are the dirtiest, most inconvenient, and the dearest when everything is taken into consideration."

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AS IT WAS long ago when Adam Alexander came to Canada from Scotland with his wife in 1836. He settled at Kelso, having been struck by the awesome beauty of the escarpment and called his new home Glen-Eden.