

Signs from outer space?

An item in the One Hundred Years ago column today is worth another look — and a rethink. It refers to "the first female child born in Eramosa township."

This pioneer family came from England, probably, and she was born about 1825.

She may well have been the first female child born in Eramosa.

But where does the north-south Indian Trail in Nassagaweya lead to?

Where did those Indian arrow-heads come from? Outer space?

Everybody loves a mystery

It's interesting to see another letter this week concerning the old bottle found in a house on Scene St. The house had been built by the Caswell family in 1911.

Recent hot issues such as Acton patients' use of Guelph hospitals, the introduction of a separate school to Acton, proposed changing

of duplicated street names in Acton and Georgetown, increased taxes to pay for parking—all are headline issues.

But letters tell of remembrances of the past evoked by the discovery of the bottle and its enigmatic message.

Everybody loves a mystery.

Not taken from Queen

Halton's expert on heraldry, Dorothy Stone, had news for us this week. The Prime Minister's office has not taken away a traditional duty from the Queen, as we thought in last week's Free Press. This change was approved in fact in 1947, when all the sovereign's powers and authority were vested in the Governor-General.

She also explains we are wrong to compare the Queen with the Maple Leaf. The maple leaf is the badge of loyalty of citizens. A coat of arms is the symbol of the Queen's authority.

With heraldry expert Miss Stone in our midst, we are all made aware of the importance of being correct in these matters!

Free Press Editorial Page

No need for groundhogs

No groundhog with a brain in his groundhog head would put his groundhog nose above ground Monday in a foolish effort to see his shadow. The creature wouldn't have to depend on superstition to realize winter is going to be here for many more weeks. The

temperature was about 15 degrees below (Fahrenheit, of course) at early groundhog peeping time and the countryside was covered deep in a new snowfall.

Stay under, gopher. We can predict perfectly well without you this year.

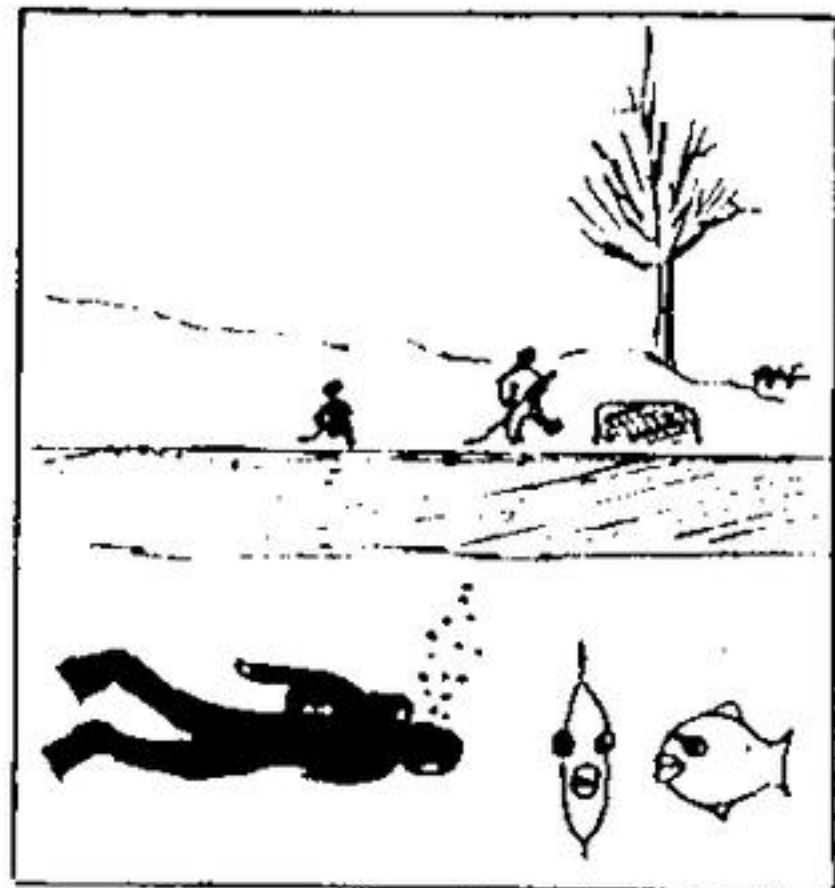
Names that spell history

The matter of changing street names in Acton and Georgetown to avoid mix-ups is mentioned again in today's Free Press. A quick scan through the phone book shows which names are duplicated in each town — Queen, Guelph, John, River, Church, Churchill, Elizabeth, Victoria, and of course, Mill

and Main. Apparently the settlers of Georgetown had different family names—Edward, Mary, Charles and Henry, while here in Acton we have Wilbur, Frederick and Agnes. All these names mean something special to the history of each town.

Your weekly smile

The underwater dive at Fairy Lake two weeks ago inspired an Acton cartoonist to take up his pen. His amusing concept of the unusual swim appears here. He promises to send in more of his cartoons soon.



I see they're letting anyone in the neighborhood these days!

Sorry, wrong number

With the new phone books came a printed notice explaining why each residence was being given only one book this time. It goes on to say anyone wanting another telephone directory should phone

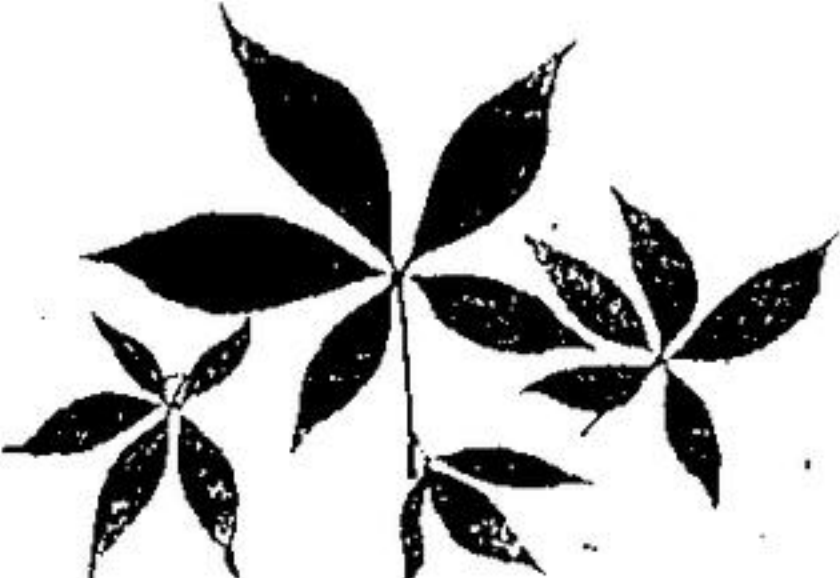
579-3640. Did you try it? You get a recording that says in an understandably nervous male voice "The number you have dialed is not in service!"

Leaves from England

This Christmas card was especially chosen to be sent to The Free Press from London, England. The sender, Nora Smout, explains that the leaves came from the garden of a friend of hers who lives just near the Acton—Chiswick boundary.

The leaves were picked and mounted by her friend.

The card arrived well after Christmas, but was especially welcome.



Of this and that

The figure of 70 rooms in the old Beardmore mansion, appearing in last week's Free Press, is disputed by others who remember the home. It was large all right, but wouldn't have had 70 rooms.



ONCE A SHOWPLACE, this old house is slated for demolition. It was built about 1880 and at one time was known as Rose Cottage. It will likely be replaced by a store.

They called it Rose Cottage

A descendant of one of Acton's first settlers built the charming old frame home on Mill St. near the C.N.R. tracks which is due for demolition shortly.

John Kovacevic bought both the boarded-up house and the Force Electric plant behind it recently. He intends to build a store on the property facing Mill and to renovate the factory building. It must have been about 1880 when the original section of the house was erected, complete with the delightful "gingerbread" wood trim which was so popular at the time. In years gone by the trim little house was surrounded in summer by lilacs, roses, iris and peach trees. Lately it has been vacant, used by Force Electric for storage.

Sad now "It's a sad looking place now," says one of the people who used to live there. Mrs. Mae Dumarsh "I guess it's the end of an era."

When she moved into the house in July, 1946 it was already considered one of the oldest in town. But it always had a lot of character. A delapidated verandah was torn down after the Dumarshes moved in and the clapboard, painted mustard-brown, was replaced by insid siding.

Mrs. Dumarsh recalls that the house was purchased by the Force family from the

Campbells. The Dumarshes lived there until 1958.

Others who lived there upstairs or in the addition at one side since 1946 have been Ross and Kay Swackhamer, Sue and Cooper, Marie and Orval Chapman, Julie Lesniwick, John and Marg Creasey, Gord and Lil Wagner.

For the past five years the house has been vacant.

Acton's Early Days, a book published in 1939, had this to say of the old house, formerly called Rose Cottage:

About sixty years ago Messrs. Stafford and Melvin Zimmerman, descendants of Acton's early settlers, who built the first tannery erected here, built the house now occupied by Mrs. John Gibbons and her daughters. They lived there for a time, but were among those who were attracted by the boom of the western town and sold out and went out to Portage la Prairie, Man.

"Mr. Paul Jarvis and family lived here for a time. After the marriage of their daughter to Mr. William Shaw, miller, Mr. and Mrs. Jarvis removed from Acton."

The next purchaser was Mrs. Jennie B. Cameron. She enlarged and improved the residence and, by skillful arrangement of flower beds and shrubs and a well-kept

lawn, made Rose Cottage and its surroundings a beauty spot, which attracted every visitor to town as they left the G.T.R. grounds and stepped on to Mill Street. The residence was always kept neatly and attractively painted and was for years one of Acton's "show places" among our pretty homes. The rear lot, on Church Street, was secured by Mrs. Cameron's son, Mr. John B. Cameron, now of Gloversville, N.Y. He intended to build himself a home there, in fact went so far as to put in the foundations, but his plans were changed and he removed to Gloversville. When Mrs. Cameron became Mrs. R. B. Wood, and went to reside in Guelph, Mr. John Gibbons bought the property. He resided in Rose Cottage for a number of years, until he purchased a farm in Esquimaux, where he passed away. Mrs. Gibbons and her daughters now reside there. The rear lot was sold as the site of the shoe factory building.

Hewitson Shoe Factory later became Force Electric building.

Near commons Acton's Early Days also says that one of the original settlers, Ransom Adams, piled his cordwood where Force Electric plant is now. The location adjoined the old village commons.

Sugar and Spice

by bill smiley

Holy Ole Moly, I must be getting on! Just walked in the door, picked up the mail, and there was an invitation to a retirement party for Pete Hvidsten, publisher of the Port Perry weekly newspaper. Say it isn't so Pete!

Per (Pete) Hvidsten is a friend of more than a quarter of a century, but it seems only yesterday that he and I were the life of the party, waltzing the girls off their feet, watching the dawn come up as we sat in the bow of one of the old passenger steamers sailing up the St. Lawrence, while everybody else, including the very young, had gone to bed.

This retirement gig is a trend that deeply alarms me. All my old buddies are putting themselves out to pasture. They don't seem to spare a thought for me. I have to teach until I am eleveny-seven to get a pension.

About a year ago, three old and close weekly newspaper friends phoned me from a convention in Toronto: Don McCuaig of Renfrew, Gene Macdonald of Alexandria, and Pete Hvidsten. It was all about midnight and they weren't even flying yet. I sensed something wrong. I thought they needed Smiley there to get some yeast into the dough. They sounded tired.

McCuaig is semi-retired, a newspaper baron of the Ottawa Valley. Gene must be either dead or in tough shape, as he wasn't at the summer national weeklies' convention, which he never misses. And new Pete.

Migawd, chaps, I'm just getting warmed up in the teaching profession. I reckon I have another 20 years to go, leering at the latest skirt-length, telling and re-telling my four jokes, trying to sort out the difference between a dangling participle and a split infinitive. How dare you "retire," when I have to go on working?

Well, maybe I know, at that. You've quit because you've worked like a dog for

There's another type, among the young. They refuse to believe that a weekly editor should be poor but proud. They work on the cost of a column-inch rather than records of peoples' lives. They won't die broke. They believe in holidays and fringe benefits and all those things we never heard of and couldn't afford.

Maybe it's all for the best. We were suckers. We literally believed that an editor's first allegiance was the betterment of the entire community, not himself.

Weekly newspapers, to-day, are better-looking, fatter richer. They are put together with scissors and paste, printed at a central location on a big, offset which doesn't break down, folded and bundled with dispatch. The only thing that hasn't improved is the postal delivery.

But a great deal of that personal involvement is gone. The editor is not as close to his reader as he once was. When I was in the game, I was always introduced to strangers as "This is our editor." Not the editor of our paper, but our editor.

Pete Hvidsten, green pastures. Keep your nose out of it, and let the young guys make a mess of the paper. We had a good session at the oars of the galley. And any time you want a game of arthritic golf, you know where to come. As a practically barely almost middle-aged school teacher, I think I can handle a "retired" editor any time.

Of this and that

The Niagara and Midwestern Ontario Travel Association has issued a shiny, colorful brochure to advertise this part of the country.

The promoters picked up the name Festival Country, and the writers make this sound like a perfect place to live.

Luckily, we do live here. But you wouldn't know it from the brochure. Acton is missing from the maps and has nothing to offer in the list of attractions.

Oh, well, "Every day's a fun day in Festival Country," says the big brochure. So we might as well keep smiling.

The Free Press Back Issues

20 years ago
Taken from the issue of the Free Press, February 9, 1956.

Acton Junior Farmers are presenting their one-day play, Tiger Lily, at the Junior Farmer drama festival in Oakville tomorrow evening. Director Joe Hurst is in charge of the production with the assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph McKeown in the make-up department, Mrs. Don Matthews as promoter, Jack Marshall, Mac Sprowl and Lawrence Hensley as stage assistants. In the cast are Kathleen Stanley, Marjorie McDonald, Donald Matthews, Sandy Buchanan and Bill Price.

Latest night time intrusion by an unknown person or persons was reported last week, this time at Acton public school. According to police no doors or windows were broken to gain entry and no apparent damage was caused by the intruders.

Milton OPP Constable Howard Gunn, his wife and son Billy are now living near Georgetown. The family moved a few weeks ago to the William Gramar farm house on the 8th line on south Main St. The Gunns formerly lived at R.R. 1, Acton. Constable Gunn makes his headquarters at Milton and his police duties take him to various parts of the northern section of Halton.

The Y.M.C.A. Board of directors has named Cyril Buchanan its representative at the annual meeting of the National Council in London this weekend. General secretary Bob Brayshaw will also be attending the London session, particularly the workshop on small associations on Thursday and Friday.

50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, February 4, 1926.

Mr. J. B. Mackenzie was elected vice-president of the Ontario Retail Lumberman's Association at their convention in Toronto. Mr. Mackenzie, one of our leading businessmen, occupies a commanding position among the lumber and coal dealers in this province and beyond.

Monday morning's storm was the first which has effected the trains this winter. The morning mail from Toronto was an hour late.

The new catalogues of this year's purchases of new books for the Free Library have been issued. Every reader will desire a copy and may obtain such from the librarian.

It is now the young girl who has not her hair bobbed, who is the odd one, is the most noticed. Queer how soon one will become accustomed to the feminine conformities to the goddess, fashion.

The turnip buyers report that there are still large quantities of turnips in the hands of the farmers. The markets now are very slow.

Complaints have been made to the police respecting certain doings at the home of an Italian on Beardmore Cres. Persons under the influence of liquor are alleged to have been leaving this place and a complaint said he had been in a fight there. A search was made and 260 gallons of wine seized, and later destroyed.

100 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, January 27, 1876.

Angus Cameron's ash wagon came to grief the other day when crossing a small bridge near the railway tank-engine house. We have not learned that anyone was hurt.

A complimentary supper was tendered to George Easterbrook Esq. last Tuesday evening at Stingle's Hotel, Nassagaweya, as a token of the appreciation of his valuable services for many years in Township Council. About 40 of the intelligent yeomanry of the neighborhood and several from a distance assembled at the tables and full justice was done to the bountiful supply of good things provided by mine host Stingle. King Alcohol was strictly forbidden from entering the room. There were many toasts and speeches. Mr. Ramsey, Reeve of Nassagaweya, noted the many improvements which have taken place. Who he was a young man this township was connected with the old Gore District and all the municipal business was done in Hamilton. But one representative was sent from this township twice a year. Now that each municipality has control of its own affairs, our interests are better represented.

Mr. Ramsey claims to be one of the oldest residents of the township now living in it. He was born on the western boundary of the township 50 years ago when it was almost a wilderness. One of his sisters was the first female child born in Eramosa.

Mr. Wm. Reed "The Mayor of Knatchbull" related some humorous experiences of 30 or 40 years ago when there were no roads. He once got stuck fast in the mud with eight bushels of potatoes which he was taking to Hamilton.

THE ACTON FREE PRESS

PHONE 853-2010

Business and Editorial Office

FOUNDED IN 1875 and published every Wednesday at 39 Willow St., Acton, Ontario. Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation, the CNRA and CNA. Advertising rates on request. Subscriptions payable in advance, \$7.50 in Canada, \$10.00 in all countries other than Canada; single copies 15 cents. Carrier delivery in Acton, 15 cents per week. Second class mail Registration Number 6313. Advertising is accepted on the condition that, in the event of typographical error, that portion of the advertising space occupied by the erroneous item, together with reasonable allowance for signature, will not be charged for the balance of the advertisement will be paid for at the applicable rate. In the event of a typographical error advertising goods or services at a wrong price, goods or services may not be sold. Advertising is merely an offer to sell, and may be withdrawn at any time.

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