

Town Hall Tales



CAST POSED for a group photograph after a play in the town hall. Addie Hurst Wylie lends the picture but doesn't know the date. It's likely about the beginning of World War I. Those identified in the picture are Minnie Stalker, Stan Russell, Jim Smith, Alex Mann, Tom McClure.

In the Beginning (Part 2)
By George Elliott

The Town Hall neared completion early in 1883. A news item on January 25, 1883, in the Free Press reported the bell had been placed in the tower and would soon be ringing out over the town, morning, noon, and night, with a "clear, sweet tone". Apparently there was a bit of back biting between Georgetown and Acton over that bell. The Georgetown Herald commented smugly that Acton's bell had cost a great deal of money. The Acton Free Press responded righteously that Acton had to pay \$100 duty on the bell whereas Georgetown, being sharper, I suppose, had obtained their bell more cheaply by claiming it as a church bell and thus avoiding the customs fees. Rivalry between the two towns began at a very early age.

Preparations were already underway for the advent of the Hall to the town's active life. Council began setting up procedures for management. The tender of Thomas Easton was accepted for caretaking and that of Luther Lyman for lighting the lamps. Acton did not have electricity at that time. Funds were also approved to provide furnishings for the hall.

Because the hall would be used for community social events the Free Press felt compelled to comment on a controversy which must have then been agitating many of the citizens. There would be dancing in the hall and some churches frowned on this as being entirely evil and the work of the devil among sinful men. Undoubtedly strong feelings were aroused on the issue. The Free Press marked out its position clearly. Dancing was not sinful unless abused. Private dances were probably not harmful to anyone's morals but public dances, where all classes of society mingled together, were probably "harmful and pernicious." And so the press took what was then a middle of the road stand; most of the townsfolk probably supported it.

The Free Press also editorialized on the setting of fees for the new facility. Local groups should receive favored treatment but since a political campaign was soon to be launched the town fathers should make sure the hall was ready for campaign activities and people should be able to see a sizeable return in fees for these activities.

The council had their first meeting in the new council chambers on Thursday, March 8, 1883. Previously they met in Matthews Hall (what used to be Holchen's bakery). With Reeve W. H. Storey in the chair, business concerning the new hall occupied most of Council's time. Chandeliers to cost \$189.38 were approved and Mrs. J. Adams was paid \$10 for cleaning up the hall following construction.

At this time a controversy over the ringing of the Town Hall bell surfaced which was to occupy the town fathers for some time and several meetings. It had been proposed to ring the bell at 7 and 12 a.m. and 6 p.m., the hours of beginning and ending work. A petition was presented however requesting the bell ring at 6 a.m. as well. No doubt this was to waken the villagers so they could get to work at 7 a.m. There it was the problem of ringing it on

Jean Stalker, Herb Ritchie, Laura Akins, Minnie Bennett, Bertie Speight, Bertha Brown, Art Brown, Ernie Barr, Pearl Baker, Jennie Matthews, Laura Gray, Mary McClure Forbes, Miss Graham, Mrs. A. T. Brown and Stan Russell.

And so there it was; Acton's Town Hall launched sedately on an 80 year career in the service of its townspeople. Full of pride, hope, and great expectations they welcomed a symbol of sophisticated civilization in their midst. The activities there over the years proved Actonians knew well how to use this Hall for the improvement of life in their community.

dered and the music of the Italian orchestra pleased all present. The ball at the close of the concert was, as far as attendance and receipts go, a consummate failure. There seemed to be some satisfaction in reporting this failure because it indicated the morals of the community were still intact and not led astray by all that public dancing.

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Elson brothers star

The Halton Hills swim team finished fourth out of nine in the TOMAC Regional championships in Mississauga.

Mississauga won the meet with 554 points, followed by Hamilton-Wentworth with 228, Fairfield with 177 and Halton Hills with 154.

Eric Elson had an excellent day for Halton Hills winning both the boys' (13-14), 50 metre freestyle and 50 metre butterfly.

Don Elson won both the 50 freestyle and 50 breaststroke for boys 11-12 and finished second in the 25 butterfly.

Other Halton Hills swimmers copping gold medals were Mark Howie in the 25 backstroke, Jennie Lusby in the same event for girls, Cheryl Thompson in the 50 backstroke, Theresa Pollitt in the 25 breaststroke, Heather Thatcher in the 50 breaststroke.

Theresa Pollitt also placed second in the 50 freestyle.

Beth Stewart second in the 100 breaststroke and Cheryl Thompson third in the 50 freestyle.

The Halton Hills mixed medley relay team of Sheila McDonald, Eric Elson, Heather Thatcher and Malcolm McLeod swam third as did the mixed freestyle relay team of Mark Howie, Jennie Lusby, Theresa Pollitt and Andrew McLeod.

In the Kelly Cup competition, Halton Hills finished third with 163 points. Hamilton-Wentworth won the competition with 348.

The Elson brothers once again were the top Halton Hills swimmers. Each finished first in three events.

Jennie Lusby also won a gold medal for Halton Hills in the girls' 25 metre backstroke.

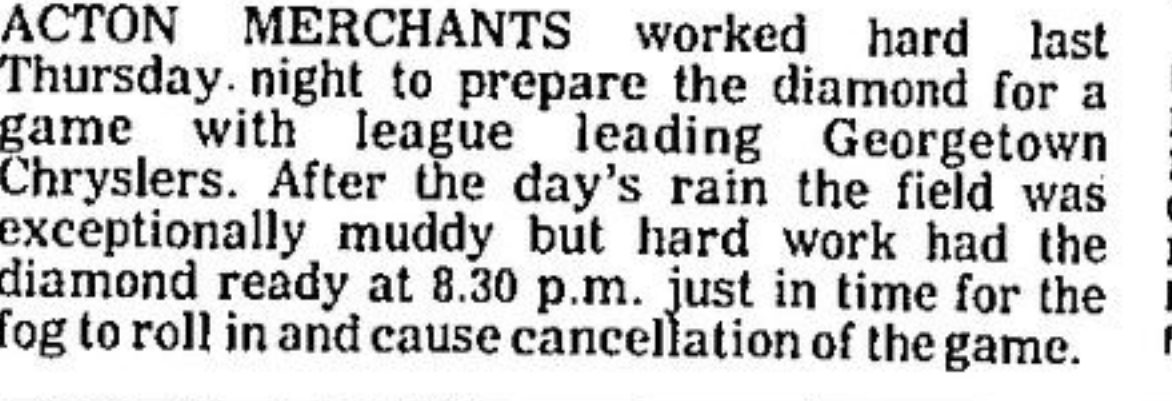
Andrew MacLeod was second in the 50 freestyle, Theresa Pollitt second in the girls' 50 freestyle, Mary Lynn Morrow second in the girls' 100 freestyle.

the 25 breaststroke, Andrea Arbic in the 50 breaststroke, Heather Thatcher in the 50 breaststroke, John McFarlane in the 100 breaststroke, Adrienne Little in the 25 butterfly, John McFarlane in the 50 butterfly and Andy Stapleton in the 50 butterfly.

AIBL tourney

The Acton Industrial Baseball League is planning a fastball tournament for Prospect Park on September 30 and 31.

Tournament organizer David Allen said the reason for the tournament is that any one team from the league can beat another on a given day. Wellington Place and North Halton Sports from the Condo League will join Station Hotel, J and T Sports, Family Cleaners, Vans Welding, Halton Hills Electric and Halton Hills Catering in the friendly tournament.



ACTON MERCHANTS worked hard last Thursday night to prepare the diamond for a game with league leading Georgetown Chryslers. After the day's rain the field was exceptionally muddy but hard work had the diamond ready at 8.30 p.m. just in time for the fog to roll in and cause cancellation of the game.

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