

# Glen Williams' proud past

By J. MARK ROWE  
Herald Special

Recorded history of Glen Williams begins 162 years ago when the Crown gave 200 acres to John Butler Muirhead of Niagara, no doubt a loyalist. Death claimed him, however, before he saw his land in Esqueving township. His heirs sold the 200 acres of lot 21, Concession 10 to another loyalist, Benajah Williams in November, 1825. So, 61 year old Benajah, his third wife Elizabeth and some of his children arrived to begin the task of clearing the forest, and tilling the soil.

It wasn't long before Benajah's sons realized the potential of the Credit River. They all helped with the building and running of a flour and saw mill where apple Products and the ball park are today. But it ended in the possession of the second son, Charles. The third son, Jacob began woollen mills where the ruins are located nearly opposite the Anglican Church. The eldest son, Joel kept up the farming, also being a blacksmith. In 1838 he bought lot 21, Concession 11.

Outsiders started to move into the valley in the 1830s, the first sale of land going to Peter Fox (1833) and George McEivry (1838). In the next decade more lots were sold to people like Thomas Frazer (1847), Hugh

Duff (1848), Marley Wilkinson (1849), Peter Ackert (1842), Archibald Smith (1847), Thomas McMaster (1849), William McClure (1849), James Hillis Jr. (1849), and William Alexander (1848). The settlement was known as Williamsburg.

As the village grew so did the business transacted at the place. Hotels, general stores, blacksmiths, tailor, tanner, woollen, flour, and saw mills were all part of life in the Glen. A post office was soon needed but there already existed a Williamsburg post office, so the name was changed to Glen Williams in 1852.

Modern day Glen Williams developed in several stages. The original Glen Williams is comprised of the Williams land now known as Main Street, Prince Street, Mountain Street, Forester and Tweedle Street. A village plan was surveyed and drawn up, probably in the early 1850s. Jacob Williams owned all the water front lots, the east side of Main St., north of the dam bridge and all up Mountain Street. Charles Williams owned all the inland lots north of the dam bridge and all the lots south of the bridge including the flour and saw mills. Charles built himself 514, Main Street (Beaumont residence) to live in while Jacob Williams built himself 15 Mountain Street (Goodfellow residence) to live in.

Glen Williams grew after this in several stages. The first was David Reesor's Survey followed by the Joseph Tweedle survey. No other growth took place until the late 1850s.



## Wedding bells!

The Esqueving Historical Society invites you to enjoy our wedding photos collection on Wednesday, Nov. 12 at Knox Church Georgetown. The Society will share some of their photo collection and invite everyone to bring in their own family photos to share. This week's photo features Mr. and Mrs. William Glass, posing outside St. George's Anglican Church after their wedding. The bride was Joan Penrice, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Penrice of Georgetown. The photo appeared in the Thursday, June 12, 1963 issue of the Herald. (Photo courtesy Gordon Campbell, Brampton)



COURT CAPERS—Herb Richie used to listen to the court cases held inside the Acton Town Hall. During the prohibition period, the trials could get a little heated, he remembers. One judge said to a drunkard, "I won't throw the book at you, I'm going to throw the whole library at you." (Herald file photo)

## Herb Richie remembers Prohibition, town jail

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above article is re-printed from a March 14, 1984 edition of The Herald.

Acton's Herb Richie was a young pup who learned to play hockey the tough way. Learning shanny on a pond near his present home on Crescent St., Mr. Richie said, "If you couldn't take it (the roughness) you stayed away from it."

Born in 1900 in Acton, Mr. Richie has led a fulfilling life in the town he grew up and worked in until his retirement a number of years ago.

He has worked for companies that have been recognized as giving Acton its identity as 'Leathertown'. He fought in World War One, lived through Prohibition in town, and remembers court cases and musical shows at the old Acton town hall.

Although he didn't live on a farm growing up in town, Mr. Richie said his family and others raised cows and other livestock in their backyards.

He remembers coming to school with muddy feet and having to wash them off with the cold pump water. "Back in those days spelling wasn't an option," he said laughing.

### APPLE TREES

He figures in the 1920s the town's population was about 1,500 and all the young boys knew where all the good apple trees were. At the bake shop youngsters would gather around a homemade ice-cream maker.

Boys were preoccupied with fishing or playing baseball or hockey using 'spring' skates where the blades had to be attached to the boot separately.

Mr. Richie was promoted to Sgt.-Major in the First World War where he spent four years overseas. He returned to town and began working for W.I. Storey Glove (formerly known as Acton Glove Works).

The building was torn down around 1922 and some of the bricks were used for the IGA building. Mr. Richie began working then for Torrance Beardmore. The Beardmores were kind people who would often

straighten out a poor worker rather than fire him if he had a family, he said.

One of Mr. Richie's jobs was to water trees on Poplar and Crescent Streets which, ironically now, is causing problems with sewers from the gigantic roots. He lives in a house built by the Beardmores around 1905, one of a number they constructed near the factory for their employees.

### HAULING

Mr. Richie did a lot of outside work for Beardmore, hauling supplies from the train station. Hemlock bark came off the trains from Bracebridge and Huntsville where it was used for coloring and stability in leather making, he said. Nowadays chemicals are used instead of bark.

Mr. Richie worked for Beardmore for 20 years, then he left to work again for Storey Glove who sent their leather gloves across Canada until they closed down in 1950.

He finished his working career with Micro Plastic and with the town recreation department.

The old Acton town hall was a place to watch concerts, plays, minstrel shows and even the occasional amateur night which was a lot of fun considering the amount of heckling from the crowds, he said.

### SMALL JAIL

The town hall was also a courtroom with a small jail. As a young boy Mr. Richie used to sneak down and listen in on some of the cases.

He remembers as a young adult the battles in the early 1920s when liquor was banned from town. Men were fined \$200 for bootlegging whiskey plus a possible jail sentence.

He remembers one judge saying to his friends about a bootlegger: "I won't throw the book at him, I'll throw the whole library at him!"

Mr. Richie has three children and 6 grandsons. His mother's family came to Acton from the Scotch Block while his father's family came to Acton from Grey County.

## Halton's History 15 years ago

Don Kyle is the manager of the new Bank of Montreal. The bank just opened at the Georgetown Market Place at 294 Guelph Street.

Progressive Conservative MP for Halton East Jim Snow was swept back into Queen's Park. He turned his narrow 1967 margin of victory of 164 votes to an 11,000 vote victory in 1971. Liberal Bob Blake was the nearest challenger.

Progressive Conservative George Kerr of Halton West was part of one of the largest victories on record in a provincial election. Mr. Kerr took 59 per cent of the vote in his riding. He won over 200 of the riding's 214 polls.

The new Canadian Tire opened its doors Oct. 15 at its Mountainview Road and Guelph Street store. Owner Murray Lawton bought the store from Lloyd Marks in February 1970 when the store was at the corner of Guelph and Water Street.

## 10 years ago

"This class is the best in recent years," said Georgetown and District High School principal F.J. Furlong. Of the 443 students who graduated 100 students from grades 12 and 13 were on the honor roll. Doug Gray was the valedictorian.

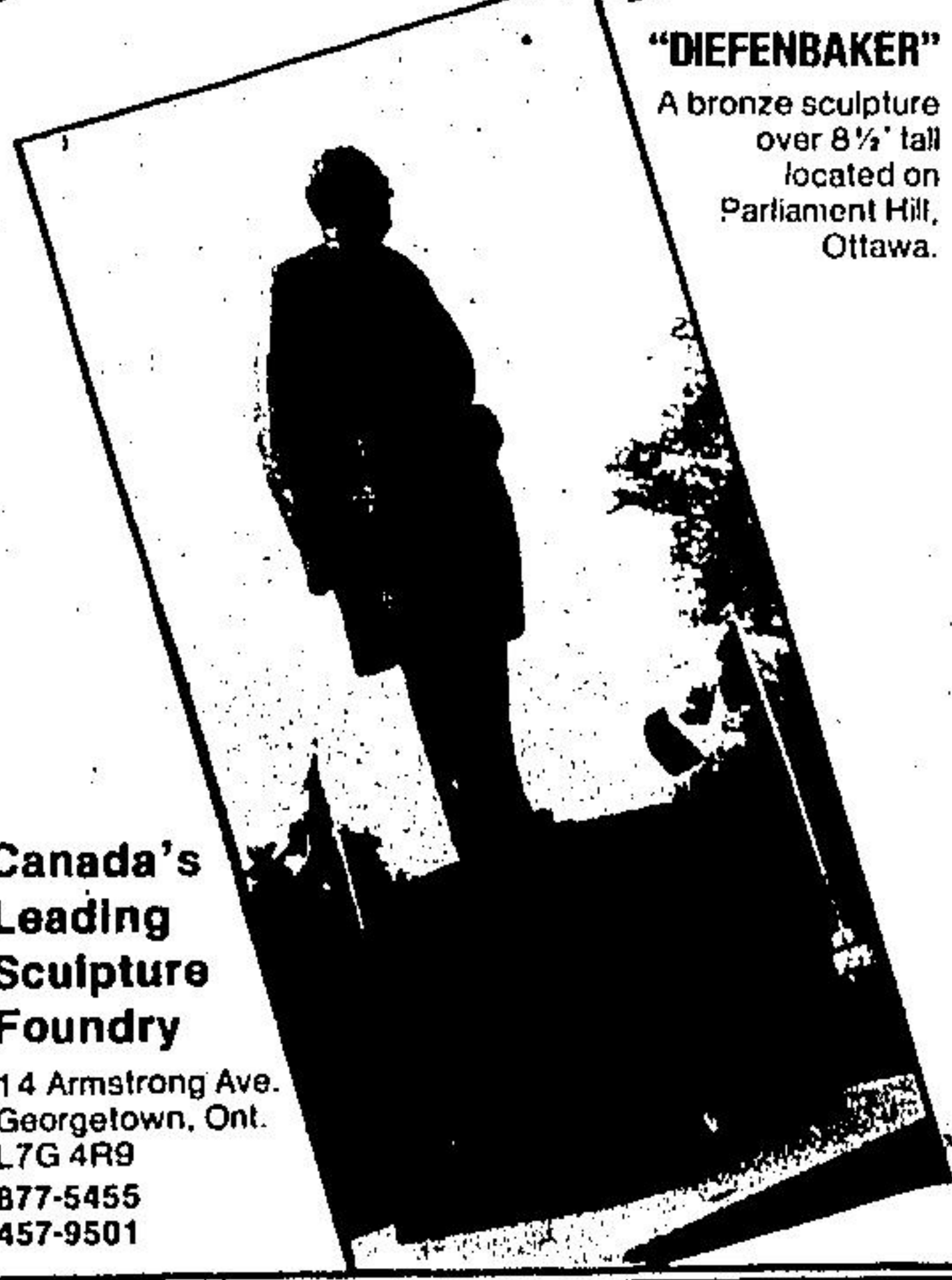
Among the 33 awards given to graduates of Acton High School, two were to commemorate John McHugh and Kevin Brostad who died with five others in a head-on crash March 6. Andy Thomson was the valedictorian for the 122 students who graduated.

## 5 years ago

Ronnie Hawkins, "a legend in his spare time", performed two shows at the John Elliott Theatre. He played his own brand of music (a blend of rock, country and honky tonk).

Susan Budge of RR3 Terra Cotta won the United States orienteering championships last weekend. She won the title in Buffalo. Her mother Ann Budge won the Ladies 43 and over title, and her father finished third in the Men's 43 and over category.

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