

Georgetown paper industry

By JOHN MARK ROWE
Herald Special

Georgetown and paper. The place and the product went together as surely as Acton and leather or Limehouse and lime! For 137 years, the town of Georgetown, in the township of Esquesing, County Halton, produced paper of every description. Newsprint, wallpaper, envelopes, magazine paper, white paper, blue paper, glossy paper and the list goes on.

It has all been relegated to history now. Another chapter in Canada's industry story is finished. On March 31, 1991, Provincial Papers, owned by Abitibi-Price, closed its doors for economic reasons.

Provincial Papers were descended from the original paper manufacturers of Georgetown, the Barber Brothers. They got into the paper business quite by chance. William, James, Robert and Joseph Barber purchased the woolen mill operation of George Kennedy in 1837. They prospered on the banks of Silver Creek, a tributary of the Credit.

Finally in 1855, the Barbers decided to consolidate their woolen operations in Streetsville, leaving Georgetown for good. However, in 1854 they were approached by David Forbes from Galt to build a paper mill on the Credit River and rent it to him. He doubtless chose this spot because the Grand Trunk Railway was under construction nearby. After filling the facility with the latest machinery, he

could not meet his obligations. The Barber's were in the paper business.

James Barber was the brother chosen to superintend this operation. By 1857, another structure, equal in size to the first was built. These buildings are captured in pen and ink on the 1858 Tremaine map. The large rambling structure portrayed in the 1877 Atlas more closely resembles the complex which now sits beside the Credit River.

In 1869, the Barber brothers official divided up their holdings. James' son, John Rolf Barber took over the management of the paper mills. The mills continued to prosper and expanded until all possible sources of power were being used.

Therefore in 1888, Barber constructed an electric power dynamo downriver from his mill. He transported the power over two copper wires, under the railway bridge, the distance of a mile and a half. This is presumed to be the first long-distance industrial use of hydro-electricity in North America.

In 1905, John R. Barber decided to build a separate plant for coated papers, now being used in magazines. He imported a Michigan expert, Edward Fleck to superintend Canada Coated Papers. This was the second of Georgetown's paper mills.

John R. Barber's many business interests included Barber Ellis in Brantford and another paper mill in Cornwall. After a heart attack, Barber created a limited company in 1911 to run what became known

as the upper and lower paper mills. Provincial Papers was created in 1912 to run both operations.

The lower mill, the original Barber Paper Mill was closed by Provincial papers on November 15, 1948.

In 1910, Fleck left the employ of the Barber family and formed a limited company with John Willoughby. They opened Georgetown Coated Paper Mill. It was the first local building constructed of reinforced concrete.

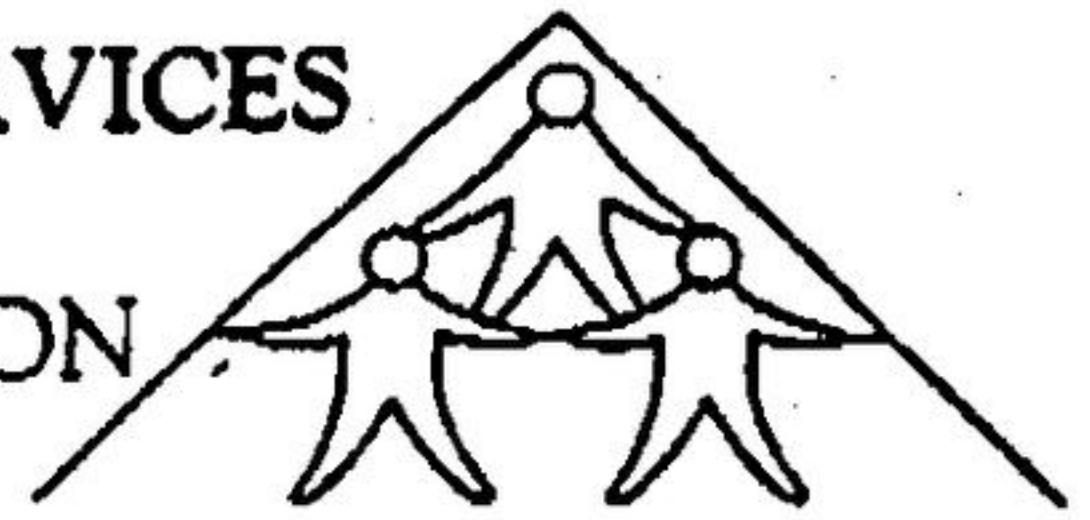
They manufactured coated book papers and bristol board. Two famous customers were Laura Secord Chocolates and Saturday Night magazine.

In 1928, they amalgamated with Howard Smith Papers and became Alliance Paper Mills. In 1959, Domtar Fine papers purchased the operation.

Resident manager Jack Crichton, whose father was also plant manager under Edward Fleck, notified workers in October 1976, that the plant was to close on February 25, 1977.

Georgetown still had a paper industry for another 14 years, but recent changes in consumer paper uses have forced the industry to improve its competitiveness. Georgetown, now merely a branch plant operation, was the victim of these measures. Perhaps Georgetown will become known for another product or for an attraction, like the Dominion Seed House. But the powerful influence of the paper industry which dominated Georgetown for over a century will never again be felt.

ACTON SOCIAL SERVICES AND INFORMATION CENTRE



Seniors hard at work

The Acton Seniors Centre Committee have not been on vacation during the summer of 1991. They have been hard at work. They have developed four sub-committees. The Programme Committee has been examining possible activities and equipment, space and instruction necessary to initiate these programmes.

The Facility Committee are examining space possibilities and how to make the best, most innovative use of available space.

The Fund Raising Committee have had numerous events in the past and continue with the collecting of bar codes from certain food items and the circulation of bubble banks. They have recently purchased memorium cards that can be obtained from Shoemakers Funeral Home or the Smoke Shop (A-56 Mill Street). Their newest project is a cash prize raffle - Tickets available at the Acton Fall Fair. ASSIC has tickets for early bird purchases.

The Public Relations Committee has been putting together information and displays to keep all informed on the progress of the overall committee. Their display will also be at the Acton Fall Fair.

September 12th is the date of the Regionally sponsored Golf Tournament at Blue Springs Golf Course. The Seniors Centre Committee will be assisting that day. Half of the profits will go to their cause.

All four sub-committees are looking for new members. (The Programme Committee needs a man's touch). They are also developing a list of "Activity Volunteers" - people who wish to help with events, but do not wish to attend committee meetings. If you are interested in helping, please call Eric Balkind, 853-0461 or Acton Social Services (Sue), 853-3310.

Lung Association clinic

The Lung Association - Halton Region can help! We are offering a 7-session, 5-week "Countdown" smoking cessation course in Bronte at The Lung Association's office at 2200 Speers Road, Oakville. The course which covers such topics as Stress, Behaviour Modification and Diet, starts on September 23rd. The cost is \$95.00 and is limited to 15 registrants. To register, and for more information regarding the program, please call The Lung Association - Halton Region at 847-1033.

Prices effective thru Saturday September 7, 1991

We reserve the right to limit quantities to normal family requirements. Coupon items limited to two.



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WITH THIS COUPON **SAVE 70¢**

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REGULAR OR DIET

Pepsi-Cola or 7-UP

CASE OF 24 - 355 mL TINS (Unit cost 7.0¢ per 100 mL) **5.99**

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CUT FROM CANADA GRADE "A" BEEF, BONELESS

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Beatrice Yogourt case of 12-125 g-175 g tubs **5.99**

LIMIT: 1 case per coupon. LIMIT: 2 coupons per customer. Offer valid Sept. 3 - Sept. 7, 1991. (Feature price without coupon 6.99) S.C. #634

WITH THIS COUPON **SAVE \$2.00**

REGULAR OR DIET (Unit cost 7.0¢ per 100 mL)

CASE OF 24 - 355 mL TINS

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WITH THIS COUPON **SAVE \$1.00**

BEATRICE, FROZEN, ASSORTED FLAVOURS

2 LITRE CONTAINER

Classic Ice Cream **2.99**

LIMIT: 1 container per coupon. LIMIT: 2 coupons per customer. Offer valid Sept. 3 - Sept. 7, 1991. (Feature price without coupon 3.99) S.C. #636

WITH THIS COUPON **SAVE \$1.00**

ULTRA STRENGTH 4 LITRE BOX

ABC Detergent **3.99**

LIMIT: 1 box per coupon. LIMIT: 2 coupons per customer. Offer valid Sept. 3 - Sept. 7, 1991. (Feature price without coupon 4.99) G/P S.C. #633

WITH THIS COUPON **SAVE 60¢**

SELECTED VARIETIES 400 g BAG

Peek Frean Cookies **1.99**

LIMIT: 1 bag per coupon. LIMIT: 2 coupons per customer. Offer valid Sept. 3 - Sept. 7, 1991. (Feature price without coupon 2.59) V.C. #