

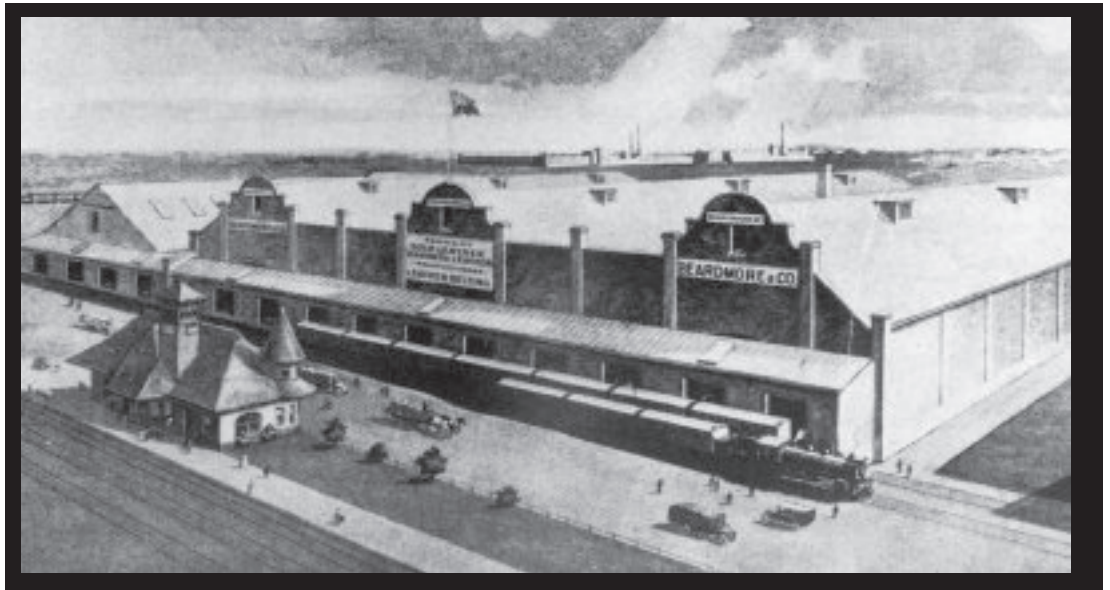
Leather goods from Acton, particularly gloves, were shipped and purchased across Canada and the northern United States. Rising costs and the removal of protective tariffs would eventually prove the death knell to the tanneries in the area, with the closure of Canada Packers, Beardmore's successor firm, in 1986. Unfortunately, with the passage of time, few markers remain of the industry that had such a profound impact on the community.

One architectural marker that has remained passes an important milestone this year. The Syndicate Housing on Bower Street in Acton celebrates 130 years. Built in 1882, these five buildings containing 10 homes were constructed in response to a high demand for local housing for the tannery workers and their families. These specific accommodations were intended for workers at the Storey Glove factory, which was the largest employer in town at that time.

In 1882, Acton did not have a bank, but individuals with some money could keep it in the safe of a group of prominent businessmen, called the Acton Syndicate. People could also borrow money from these businessmen, which included the tanner W.H. Storey. The houses were built by the Syndicate, from which they derive their name.

The Syndicate Housing was created using inspiration from the then very popular Second Empire-style, named after the period during which Napoleon III ruled France. The homes feature elaborate brickwork with contrasting colours and patterns. The tall windows, with their rounded brick, arch along with similarly adorned bay windows, and are just some of the Second Empire features which make these homes so attractive.

The properties are now all free-hold tenure homes, situated on the original lots. All have been altered



from the original to varying degrees. Some 50 years after they were first built, local newspaper editor Henry P. Moore noted about the houses:

*'There have been the scenes of much happy home life, and will continue to be. They have housed preachers and teachers; business men and professionals; manufacturers and employees; trades people and retired folk; young and old; none excessively rich, and no needy poor. Many citizens of high character have had them for home; and never was there a man arrested there for crime in the all the years.'*

Following the 120th anniversary of the construction of the Bower Street homes in 2002, a Syndicate Housing Heritage Conservation District was created,

**Built in 1882, the five Syndicate Housing buildings, containing 10 homes on Bower Street, were constructed in response to a high demand for local housing for the tannery workers at Beardmore & Company (above).**

*Esquising Historical Society photo*

officially designating the houses under the Ontario Heritage Act. Through this, the properties have been preserved and protected.

Both new and long-standing residents of the community are encouraged to take the time during the celebratory year to walk past and reflect on this important indicator of our heritage.



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