



*Continued from page 14*

walls: rectangular stone patches where windows used to be; old doorways boarded up and whitewashed; ghost-like reminders of the mill workers who went about the business of washing, drying, carding, and spinning wool that came, not only from local sheep farms, but from as far away as New Zealand.

Samuel Beaumont, originally from Great Britain, had an international perspective of business, according to current owner, Malcolm Black. When Beaumont bought the mill, he realized, says Black, that local wool supply wasn't enough to meet market demands. So mill workers skillfully blended, spun and manufactured socks out of many varieties of wool.

Beaumont passed the reins to son, Joseph, in 1900, who brought glove-making to the enterprise through his purchase of Dominion Glove Works in 1906.

A 1913 souvenir edition of *The Georgetown Herald* says, "Thousands of persons all over Canada are wearing socks and leather mitts made by Joseph Beaumont."

The mill was inherited jointly by the Beaumont brothers- Harpin, Joseph, Arthur and Harold- until 1953 when Arthur purchased his brothers' shares for \$15,050. He ran the Beaumont Knitting Mill from 1943 to 1957.

In 1957, Sam Penrice, Gordon Graham and Frank Grew bought the property, (Grew was tragically killed in an airplane accident shortly afterwards.) During their ownership, new equipment was installed to modernize and improve efficiency.

Sylvia Graham worked at the Mill from 1951 until her marriage to mill owner, the late Gordon Graham, in 1970. She had worked her way up from turning socks (so the toe could be closed) to the looping machine, (closing the toes) to the finishing room- all piece work.

"If you weren't fast," says Graham, "you didn't make any money."

She then worked in shipping, and finally moved up to the office as 'Girl Friday', responsible for accounts payable and receivable, payroll, as well as imports and exports.

Most of the 50 employees were local, says Graham, with a few from Terra Cotta, Inglewood, and Georgetown.

"It was a small company in a little village," explains Graham. "We all knew one another, and it was very much like a big family."

In 1974, Gordon Graham retired, and Penrice's son, Doug, entered the partnership. In 1978, the business marked its centenary, then closed in 1982, after being sold to a Quebec firm.

A decade after the knitting mill celebrated 100 years of production, Black bought the 23,000 square foot building in 1988, to house his business, Blackbox Automation Inc, which supplies radio remote control equipment to crane operating businesses.

But his main reason for taking on the old stone mill that had been vacant for six years was his passion for preserving and restoring heritage buildings.

He had the building designated as such by the Halton Hills Heritage Committee.

"I wanted to start restoring it and make sure its history would never be lost," he said.

Even an original 500-pound motor is a permanent fixture on Black's