

# Unidentified human remains found after fire

On January 18, at approximately 9:21 a.m., members of the Wellington County Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) along with the Town of Erin Fire and Emergency Services responded to a structure fire that com-

pletely destroyed a residence located on the Eighth Line near Side Road 17, Town of Erin.

Unidentified human remains have been found and sent to the Centre of Forensic Sciences for further analysis.

At this time, the homeowner is unaccounted for and the Office of the Ontario Fire Marshall is at the scene. The investigation is still in the preliminary stages and the cause of the fire is unknown.

The Wellington County

OPP Crime Unit, Forensic Identification Services Unit (FISU) along with investigators from the Office of the Ontario Fire Marshall continues to investigate this incident.

Any person with information regarding this

incident should contact the Wellington County OPP at 1-888-310-1122.

Should you wish to remain anonymous, you may call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS) or submit a tip on-line at [www.csgw.tips](http://www.csgw.tips). You may be eligible for a reward from Crime Stoppers of up to \$2,000.

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## Remembering Beardmore - memories shared

By: Harry Rudolfs

The Beardmore Tannery was an integral part of the Acton community for over a century. So it's not surprising that the "Remembering Beardmore" event, sponsored by the Absolutely Acton series at the Acton Town Hall on Sunday, drew a sizeable audience that included many former employees.

Displays of leather-working tools, publications and artifacts from the Beardmore era were set up in the auditorium. Local author Kathleen Dills introduced historian John Mark Rowe who presented a historical slide show about the rise and the fall of the world-renowned tannery. From its humble beginnings in 1865 when George Lissant Beardmore bought the tannery from Abraham Nelles, to its rise as the largest tannery in the Commonwealth, to its eventual demise in 1986, the industry touched every aspect of community life in Acton. The company whistle blew seven times each workday and could be heard as far as Limehouse.

The second part of the program was thrown open to the floor for reminiscences and comments from former workers.

"I started working when I was 16. My whole family worked there," said Steve Vos, whose father George and mother Corry were long time employees.

Paul Youngblut got a job at the complex at the age of 14



**Past Beardmore employees:** Front row - Joyce Erskine (left), Lorraine Kingsmill, Thelma Jordan, Helen Fowler, Corry Vos, Hugh Patterson, Ted Tyler. Back row - Hennie Van Dam (left), Elma Timbers, Cathy Forbes, Bill Nelles, Steve Vos, George Vos, Jim Lindsay, Jerry Buchanan, Paul Youngblut, David McIntyre.

for \$1.21 per hour. "That was good money back then," he said. "People from out of town would complain about the smell, but I'd tell them, 'That smell is our bread and butter.'"

The work was physically demanding, often unpleasant, and sometimes dangerous. Both Bill Nelles and Dave McIntyre fell into the lime vats at one time or another. But despite the difficult working conditions, most old timers have fond memories of their employment at the tannery.

"We had a lot of fun," said Jerry Buchanan, who worked at the plant in the 1970s.

Among the highlights were the Christmas parties and the company picnics at Prospect Park. The Beardmore family also gave back to the community, initiating the construction of a golf course, boat house, tennis courts and lawn bowling greens. A full-time gardener was hired to look after the lavish gardens at the front of the property, which at one time included peacocks. The company

also provided subsidized housing to some employees.

Ownership of the tannery passed to Canada Packers after it was sold by the Beardmore family in 1944. The end came on September 12, 1986 when the plant was shut down and 329 people lost their jobs. Lorraine Kingsmill remembers that time well. "I was among the last to leave because I worked in the accounting department," she said. "I've got 25 years of stories."

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