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The story of the old arena

By MAC SPROWL

Acton Fair's September, 1941 arena show featured Blondie and Athabaska providing fun and Ginger Oil, an acrobatic horse. On Dec. 25, 1941, it was noted that the war played havoc with hockey the previous year with only rural hockey. Previous to the war Intermediate, junior and rural hockey was played at the arena.

On Dec. 24, 1942, Reeve McDonald reported that arrangements had been completed and the arena was leased for the duration of the war, probably a year after, for the storage of wool. The rental was \$65 per month.

The Reeve and Clerk were by motion authorized to sign any necessary document with the Wool Controller of Canada or the authorized agent. The opening of an outdoor rink was discussed.

On April 29, 1943, Chief

Harrop reported the fence back of the arena was damaged during the wool storage.

On Sept. 2, 1943, it was a big disappointment to many that the arena was not available for the fair. The Fair Board announced that the big night show would go on as usual outdoors.

The following July 20, 1944, it was announced that a grand concert would be held in the Town Hall on the Friday evening of the fair with a dance to follow the concert. It was felt the first night performance must be obtained when the arena was available again.

On Jan. 29, 1945, it was reported that the arena would probably be clear of wool before next season. On July 5, 1945, a letter from the Wool Administration pointed out



The building of the old arena on Oct. 20, 1929. - Photo submitted by Bob Landsborough

the wool stored there had all been sold and the building would soon be available and free of storage. On July 12, 1945, there were still millions of pounds of wool in the arena. It stated there had been a great deal of conjecture and anxiety about when the arena would be clear and back to its intended use.

Acton council had written about the termination of the lease and in the past few days there had been a movement of wool from the building for shipment. An estimated million pounds of wool were stored there. It was done up in bales weighing approxi-

mately 800 pounds each in about 1,250 bundles. The curling rink was covered with bales. Part of the ice surface and seating was piled to the steel girders. The entire storage space used was covered with railway ties and planking. The trucks plying between the arena and station carried about 10 bales each trip so required 129 trips to be cleared in one month.

On Sept. 14, 1945, there was still wool in the arena. It had been occupied for almost three years. Finally, on Dec. 27, 1945, the first intermediate hockey game was played in the arena.

Historical Society meets

The Esqueing Historical Society meets in Georgetown's Knox Presbyterian Church on Sept. 9 at 7:30 p.m. Ontario Genealogist Brian Gilchrist will speak on family history and its role in local history, (or stories you'd rather your future in-laws not know until after the wedding!)



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12 Noon on Saturday September 19, 1998

Assembling at 11 am • Parade Theme is Optional
Parade will assemble on Acton Boulevard in front of
McKenzie-Smith Bennett School and end at Prospect Park

ENTRY FORM

Name of Group: _____
Contact Person: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Brief Description of Float: _____
Overall Length of Float: _____

Please return this form no later than
September 13, 1998 to Michael Arnott,
40 Maria St. Apt. 112, Acton, Ont. L7J 2C7
or call 853-2549

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