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Fifty years... and the Wong brothers are still cooking at Acton's Royal Cafe

By **TED BROWN**
Staff Writer

When Jong Wong first set eyes on Acton's Mill Street, things were a little different.

There were no sidewalks, the Town of Acton had a population of 2,900, and at age 26, he was the new owner of Royal Cafe.

And the date was May 1, 1950.

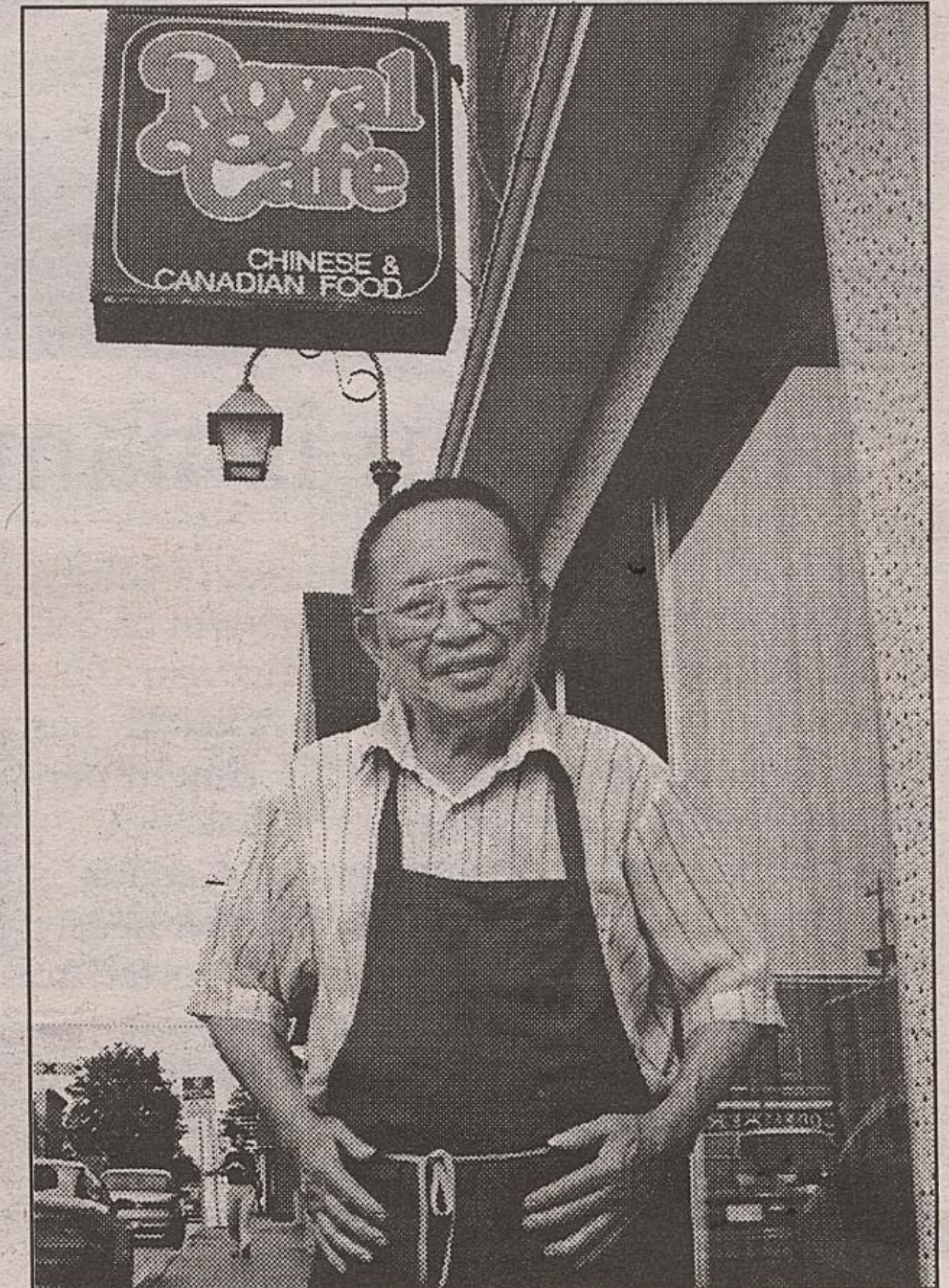
Now 50 years later, Wong and his brother Kong have been in the restaurant business, offering their Chinese food menu to Acton's residents throughout the years.

"When I first came here, the restaurant was on a septic tank, instead of sewers," says Wong. "The milk was delivered in town by a horse drawn wagon, and the town was a lot smaller."

The original restaurant was in need of upgrading, but the brothers managed to carry on their business with the existing facilities until 1972, when they decided to give the shop a full renovation, redecorating it, and adding all new furniture.

When asked about the most significant event that affected his business, Wong felt it was the closing of the Beardmore tannery. He found tannery employees were regular customers and the closing did have its affect.

Now, 50 years later, Wong at 76, and his brother, who is 70, are ready to retire. They would like to sell the restaurant, but so far, haven't had any takers.



Jong Wong stands outside the Royal Cafe on Mill Street in Acton, a proud owner for more than 50 years.

Photo by Ted Brown

"But we'll keep going for a while," says Wong, "And maybe some day, we'll sell it and retire."

Small businesses are honored this week

This week, Small Business Week, the contribution made by small businesses are saluted.

Small business is big business, according to Halton Region's Business Development Centre. They are this province's number one job creators.

About 98 per cent of Ontario's 312,000 business establishments employ less than 100 employees. About 57 per cent of Ontario's businesses employ less than five people.

Last year the Halton Business Development Centre registered more than 2,400 new small businesses. A typical new entrepreneur in Halton is between the ages of 30

and 49 and is starting a business as a sole proprietor from their home. The business is most likely to be a consulting business in one of three fields: health/safety/wellness; technical/computer or general business.

Halton Region celebrates Small Business Week with an open house and trade show, tomorrow (Thursday). The trade show features about 50 new businesses less than three years old. More than 400 people attended the event last year.

To attend the open house, 5-7:30 p.m. at the centre, 1151 Bronte Rd., Oakville, call 878-8113 or 853-0501. All small business entrepreneurs are invited.

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	12%	72/12	6

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