

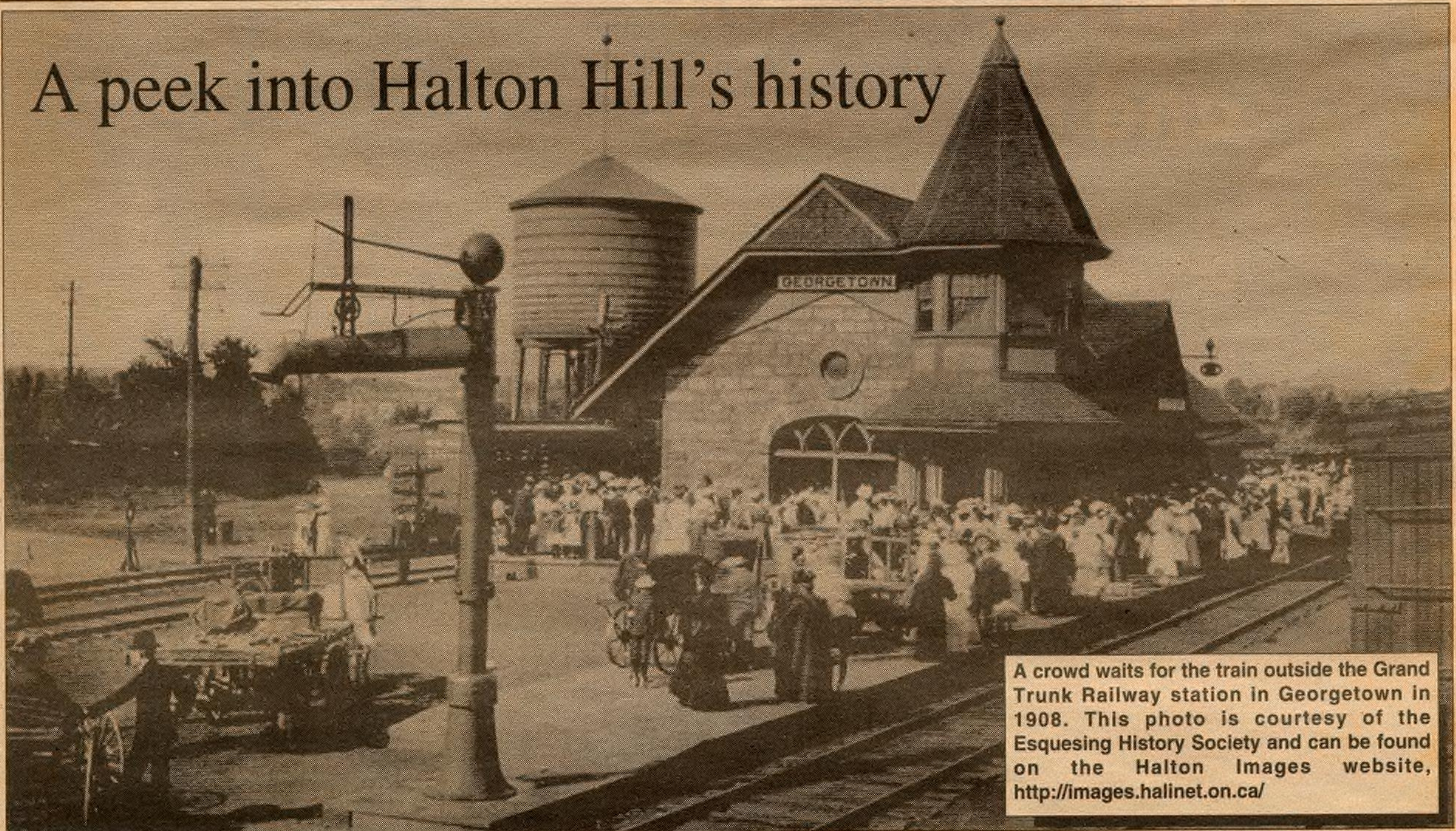
Looking Back

ACTON FREE PRESS

Friday, October 28, 2005

The Independent

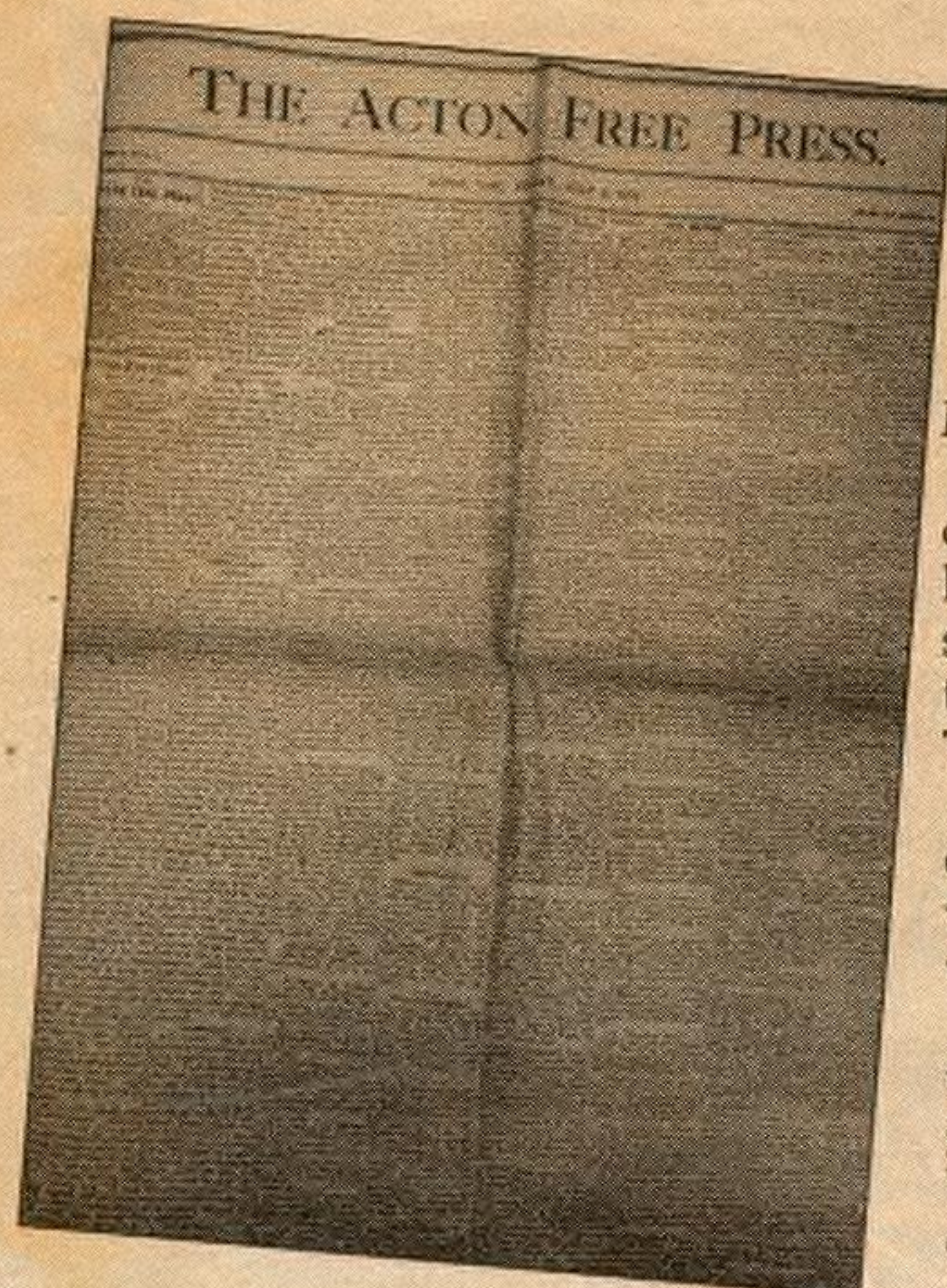
A peek into Halton Hill's history



A crowd waits for the train outside the Grand Trunk Railway station in Georgetown in 1908. This photo is courtesy of the Esquesing History Society and can be found on the Halton Images website, <http://images.halinet.on.ca/>

For 130 years

Our newspaper has been a part of this community's history



The *Independent & Free Press's* honoured presence in Halton Hills began 130 years ago when Joseph H. Hacking started the four-page broadsheet, *The Acton Free Press*, on July 2, 1875.

Topping the news in that very first edition (left) was the decision to start a monthly fair, new sidewalks were being laid, great quantities of lumber and shingles were now being shipped from the Acton station and the editorial cried "sell those ungovernable fencing breaking cows at the fair next Thursday."

The paper soon established itself an integral part of its community that continues to this day. Editor H.P. Moore, who, with his brother Albert, bought the newspaper in 1877, was known as the voice and conscience of Acton for 50 years.

In 1927, a longtime apprentice G. Arlof Dills took full control of *The Free Press*, and he and his sons would continue to guide the newspaper for another 50 years. In 1943, Dills bought *The Milton Canadian Champion* making him one of the earliest multi-title publishers in Ontario. Following in their

father's footsteps, Jim and David Dills took over *The Acton Free Press* and *The Champion*, and created *The Georgetown Independent* in October 1973. The Ontario Community Newspaper Association recently honoured the two as "50 People Who Have Contributed to the Industry in the Past 50 Years". In 1978, the Dills sold the three newspapers to Inland, which in the early 1980s became Metroland Printing and Publishing.

In the early 1990s, *The Acton Free Press* and *The Georgetown Independent* amalgamated to form *The Independent & Free Press*, as well as moving to a second weekend edition. However, demand has been high for even more local news in each community, and in 2004, the newspaper began re-plating page 1 and 3 of the Wednesday edition to provide Acton-only news in *The Acton Free Press*, and Georgetown-only news in the *The Georgetown Independent*.

In this edition of *Looking Back*, we take a look at progress and preservation, good times and bad times — all of which have formed our community today.

Halton Hills Award Winning Community Newspapers

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Weekend Edition & Free Press

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& Free Press

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