

## Changing Faces of a Village

### General Store in Kilbride Dates Back to 1850's

How time does change the face of a community!

The "business section" of the village of Kilbride — eight miles west of Milton — today contains two buildings. On the south-west corner is Coot's General Store and Post Office, while on the south-east corner stands Watson's Esso Service Station.

The building housing the store is 98 years old, but its history as a general store goes back to the 1850's. The present service station is only a few years old, but the corner has been used as a garage since 1940, and before that an apple evaporator and a hotel occupied the corner.

According to early files of The Champion and Gwen Clarke's "Halton's Pages of the Past", a history published in 1955, the general store was the focal point in the village long before Timothy Eaton established his small dry goods store in downtown Toronto in 1869 — and had a better selection of goods, too.

**Thriving Communities**  
John Bell was the store's founder, and T. L. "Tom" Whyte took it over from him. In those days Kilbride and nearby Cumminsville were thriving industrial communities. Tom Whyte took advantage of the prosperity of the times and made his shop into a first class department store, offering merchandise so

varied and attractive the village folk would not be tempted to shop in the city. He also owned a smaller store at Dakota, one mile to the south.

He enlarged the store and made the back part into a millinery department, where seven or eight hands were employed as trimmers. The tailoring department was upstairs, where five men and eight women worked full time. There was also a

shoe store with everything from boots for lumberjacks to ladies' evening slippers, as well as a harness shop.

Groceries, farm supplies and hardware were stocked, as well as liquor. But Mr. Whyte really excelled in the dry goods department. He bought dress goods from the best wholesalers houses or manufacturers in England and Scotland. He employed 22 clerks, and sometimes more.

But one day the store burned down when a clerk struck a match near some coal oil barrels, and dropped it on the floor into some spilled turpentine and coal oil. Mr. Whyte rebuilt the store in 1866 and the same building exists there today. At the time the village business community also included a drug store, hotel, bake shop, tailor's, blacksmith shop, barber shop and a tavern, "the dusty miller."

Soon the timber began to run out and the bulk of the Kilbride population drifted away. Then the nearby Cumminsville Powder Mills blew up and the population declined once more. Mr. Whyte sold out and the next owners, MacNab and Parker, went bankrupt.

And the other businessmen gradually closed up shop through a decline in trade.

History on the business firms occupying the south-east corner are vague. At one time there was a large hotel on the corner, and it was burned to the ground. A new one was erected, and it was eventually turned into a

wagon-maker's shop operated by Joshua Worthington.

During the first war, the land was purchased by Carey Bros. for a processing plant and apple evaporator. They did a good business for several years. One deed lists Louis S. Town as the owner of the land, and he sold it to William Mitchell in March, 1940. Mr. Mitchell remodelled the wooden building into a garage and erected a separate "booth".

In 1956 William Watson purchased the business and in 1959 he tore down the old garage and began building the new one. It was occupied in 1960 and the service station was added in 1962. The old booth was moved to Jim Wetherell's.

Kilbride's only other business firm today is Gorter's Florists at the west end of the village.

The face of Kilbride is constantly changing as the old makes way for modern improvements. But the "main corner" will continue to be the centre of the village's business community for years to come, as it has in the past.



THE OLD "BOOTH" and the ancient garage at Kilbride are shown in the background of this snapshot, taken in 1957. Both have been removed to make way for the new garage.



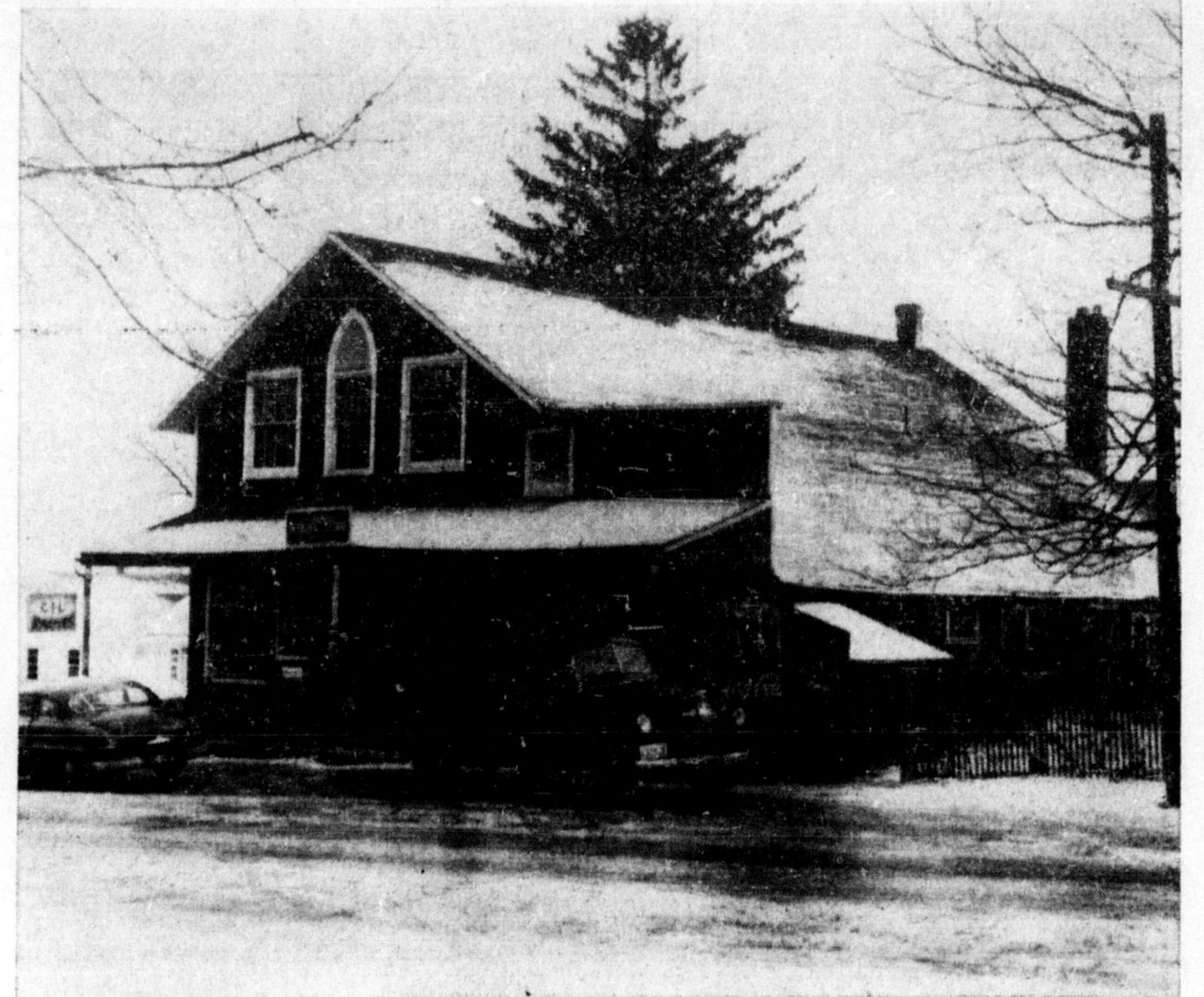
THIS IS WATSON'S STATION today, standing on the site where once a hotel and later an apple evaporator stood. This new garage was erected in 1960.

**CONTROL OF SEA**  
The three-mile limit to a nation's control of the seas which wash its shores was determined by the distance an 18th century cannon could shoot.

### Holstein Breeders Plan Annual Meeting

The directors of the Halton Holstein Breeders' Club and their wives met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Brock Harris, president of the club. Plans were made for the annual meeting of the association, to be held at Palermo Hall, on Friday, January 17. The meeting will include the famous dinner, prepared by the "Holstein Ladies". The guest speaker will be D. A. McArthur, farm management specialist with the Ontario Department of Agriculture.

In addition to regular annual meeting business, there will be reports of current activities of the local and parent organization.



KILBRIDE'S GENERAL STORE, a mainstay of the community since the 1850's looked like this in 1954. At that time the wooden verandah was evident and there were still hitching rings for the farmers' horses.

### Our Readers Write

#### COURSES AID UNEMPLOYMENT

Another record breaking month was experienced at the Oakville National Employment Service with a greater number of persons being placed in employment than in any previous December; a five per cent increase over December 1962 was recorded.

Construction workers found themselves being laid off to a greater extent than in any month since April. It is anticipated that Municipal Winter Works Projects in the area will provide employment for some of these tradesmen and laborers.

Due to the Christmas rush at the local Post Office approximately 150 persons were hired for temporary work. An interesting factor regarding hirings for the month is the sudden increase in the number of women finding work.

New classes to develop further skills sponsored under Program 5 of the Canadian Vocational Training Act will commence in mid-January. Vacancies in the present Clerk-Typist and Stenographic courses are still available — hours of attendance are from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., 5 days per week at Oakville-Trafalgar High School.

A second Homemakers' Course is planned and is available to women who have an interest in serving their community. Further information as to the time and place can be obtained at the local National Employment Office. With the exception of only a few persons, all former graduates from previous Canadian Vocational Training Courses have found employment and it is hoped that local residents will take advantage of these opportunities being offered.



THIS IS KILBRIDE STORE TODAY, following a remodeling after the fire that damaged the building last year. Present owners are Mr. and Mrs. Coot, who bought it from Mr. and Mrs. Vern Johnson.

Training to upgrade the academic standing of those who have insufficient education to commence a regular course will be made available shortly. This will permit students to attend short term classes and obtain certificates in Grades 9, 10 and 11. This particular course should be of considerable interest to young men who are desirous of becoming apprentices in trades where a Grade 10 minimum is required. Any person with Grade 8 or less should take advantage of this chance to acquire education as it offers them also a chance for employment.

(Miss) E. L. Hartwell,  
Manager,  
National Employment Service.

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