

The Canadian Champion, Friday, November 5, 1993—18

# A reader friendly, yet professional town history

**Moments in History: Reflections of Halton's County Town 1833-1864.** By Jim Dills. Research Assistance by Jack Charlton and Alex Cooke. County Chronicles Press. 198 pages, \$39.95.

One key point about this book on early Milton: it's reader friendly. That's not surprising since the author spent his whole working life as a newspaperman, including 28 years as publisher of *The Canadian Champion*. Jim Dills was a founding member and the first president of the local historical society. The "Moments" in the title refer to almost 100 episodes in the town's formative years. Each episode becomes a richly-illustrated, well designed two-page article. In total, the work contains more than 120 im-

## BOOK REVIEW

with KEN LAMB

ages — photos, drawings, maps, letters, newspaper articles. In one respect, the author has departed from his newspaper heritage. He has clearly designed this book to last. Unlike many local histories it has a

hardcover, sewn binding. It has a substantial feel and a coffee-table format. Its episodic design enables the book to encompass a wide range of subjects and treatments. Prominent figures are here — town founder Jasper Martin, Member of Parliament John White, medical men, judges and many more. So are key issues of the day: the fight to have Milton declared the Halton County town, building of the court house (now the Town Hall), and the Fenian scare.

But everyday concerns are prominent, too — the hazards of farm life, improvements in washing machines and the Queen's Plate horse race. The gnawing isolation of the early residents is brought home by a splendid illustration of a primitive corduroy road.

This reviewer was amused that some concerns Miltonians felt 150 years ago had a familiar ring. Protests about mail service and education spending; arguments about free trade and, of course, taxpayer dissatisfaction. One resident was outraged that the town had paid \$12.60 for a pauper's funeral. He wrote that "less than half the amount would have been amply sufficient."

The ordinary reader will be right at home with this book. Historians will appreciate the 1,000 entry index that links familiar names with specific activities.

The widely-researched photos and custom-designed sketches and maps of the community at various periods are other important features. Ken Lamb is the former president of the Milton Historical Society.

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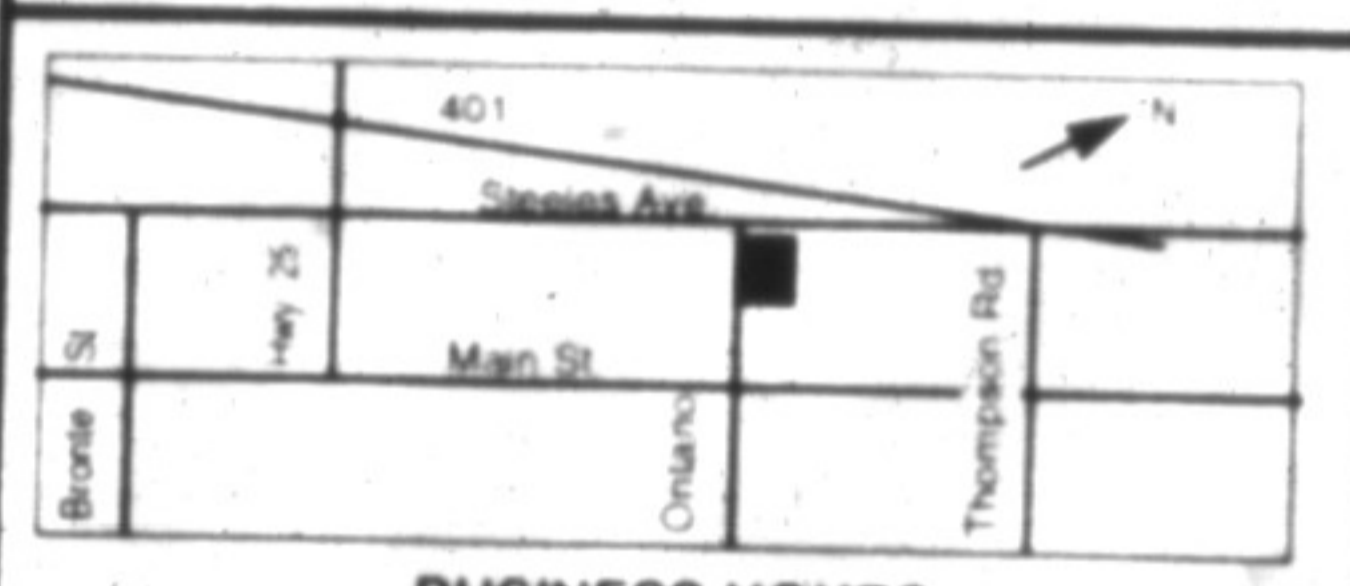
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