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A Metroland Community Newspaper

Wednesday, May 24, 1989

**AUSTIN REESOR** By JANE HENCHER

# Markham man leaves sweet, proud legacy

THE MEMORY OF AUSTIN REESOR is as fresh as the apple blossoms at the Markham District Museum.

Mr. Reesor died last October of a heart attack in his 85th year. One of his proudest accomplishments was the planting of a heritage apple orchard of miniature trees at the Markham Museum five years ago.

"He planted all different types of apple trees of various old varieties. It was his project up there and something which is a great memorial of him," says John Lunau, historian for the Town of Markham.

Mr. Reesor was one of the builders of the Markham Museum and was in charge of photography and the copying of pictures for the museum.

"Austin had a wonderful set-up of copy cameras and equipment to reproduce the pictures," says Lunau. "He took a great interest in that way and saved the community thousands of dollars," he says.

Mr. Reesor is remembered well for doing many great things and getting activities started in Cedar Grove. He collected and copied school class pictures and names dating back a hundred years from the Cedar Grove school house where he attended school.

The old school house was built in 1820 and four generations of Reesors served as trustees. Mrs. Austin Reesor (Olive Harrington) was the last teacher to teach there before the school became the Cedar Grove Community Centre in 1966, in which Mr. Reesor was a founding member.

Mr. Reesor was a lifetime member of the Markham District Historical Society and devoted much of his time and work to the museum. Most of his collections of antiques, cameras, phonographs and radios went to the museum. His apple-butter kettle and equipment is also kept at the museum in the Cider Mill.

His devotion to apple growing and the Cedar Grove community extended to the organization of the Apple-Butter Festival in 1962. The festival was a form of fund raising to maintain the upkeep of the Cedarena Rink.

Mr. Reesor was active in establishing the Cedarena outdoor rink in 1927. Because money was needed to pay for equipment and maintain the rink, the community started a Garden Party where local and Toronto professional talents came to perform.

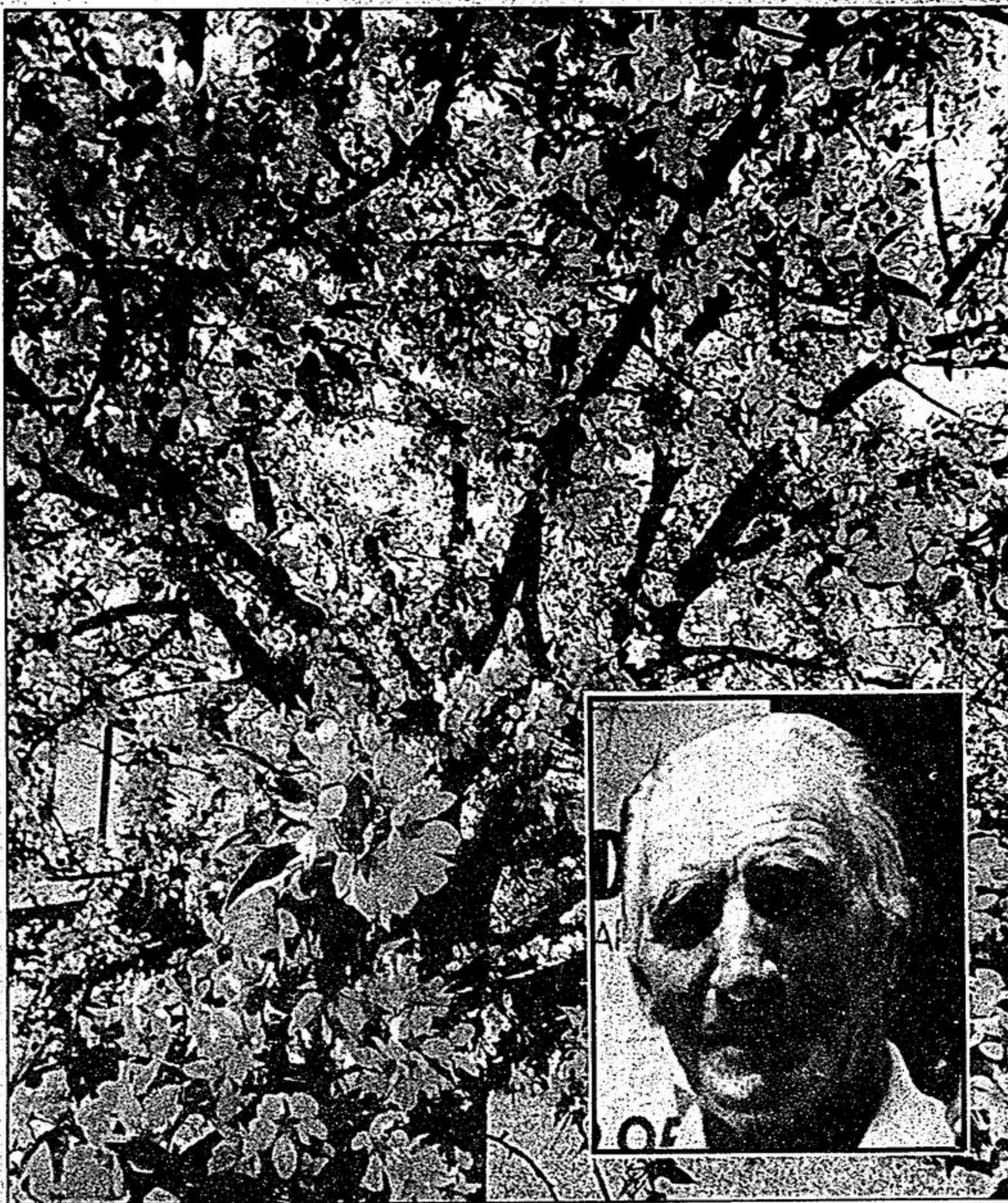
Beginning in 1928 and running for the next 34 years, on the first Saturday in July, thousands of people came along the Tenth Concession to attend Cedar Grove's Garden Party, an activity organized largely by Mr. Reesor.

When the invention of television became a threat to the success of the Garden Party, since it robbed them of talent for their fund raising, Mr. Reesor came up with the idea of the old-fashioned apple-butter festival to continue to provide money for the maintenance of the Cedarena.

The festival was held at Mr. Reesor's Woodland Park during Thanksgiving weekend. It continued until 1973, when the land was expropriated by the government. He continued to make apple-butter at the annual Museum Festival, supervising the making after giving the equipment to the museum.

The Reesor family settled in Cedar Grove in 1804. Mr. Reesor worked on the Great Lakes on lake boats for 40 years as a wireless operator. During this time he gathered a fine collection of boat artifacts which he donated to the Marine Museum in Toronto.

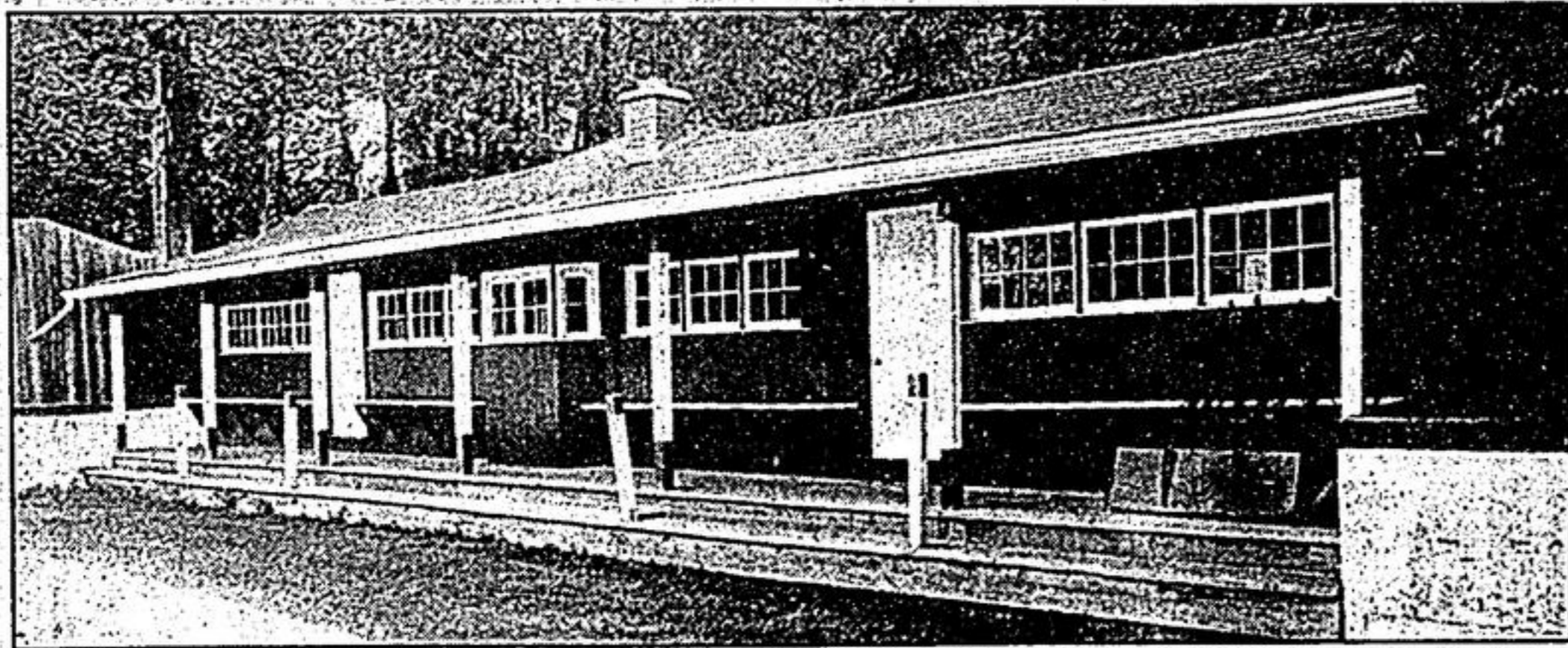
"He was a very community-spirited man and a great neighbor," says Lunau. "I worked cosely with him and learned many pages of history from Austin."



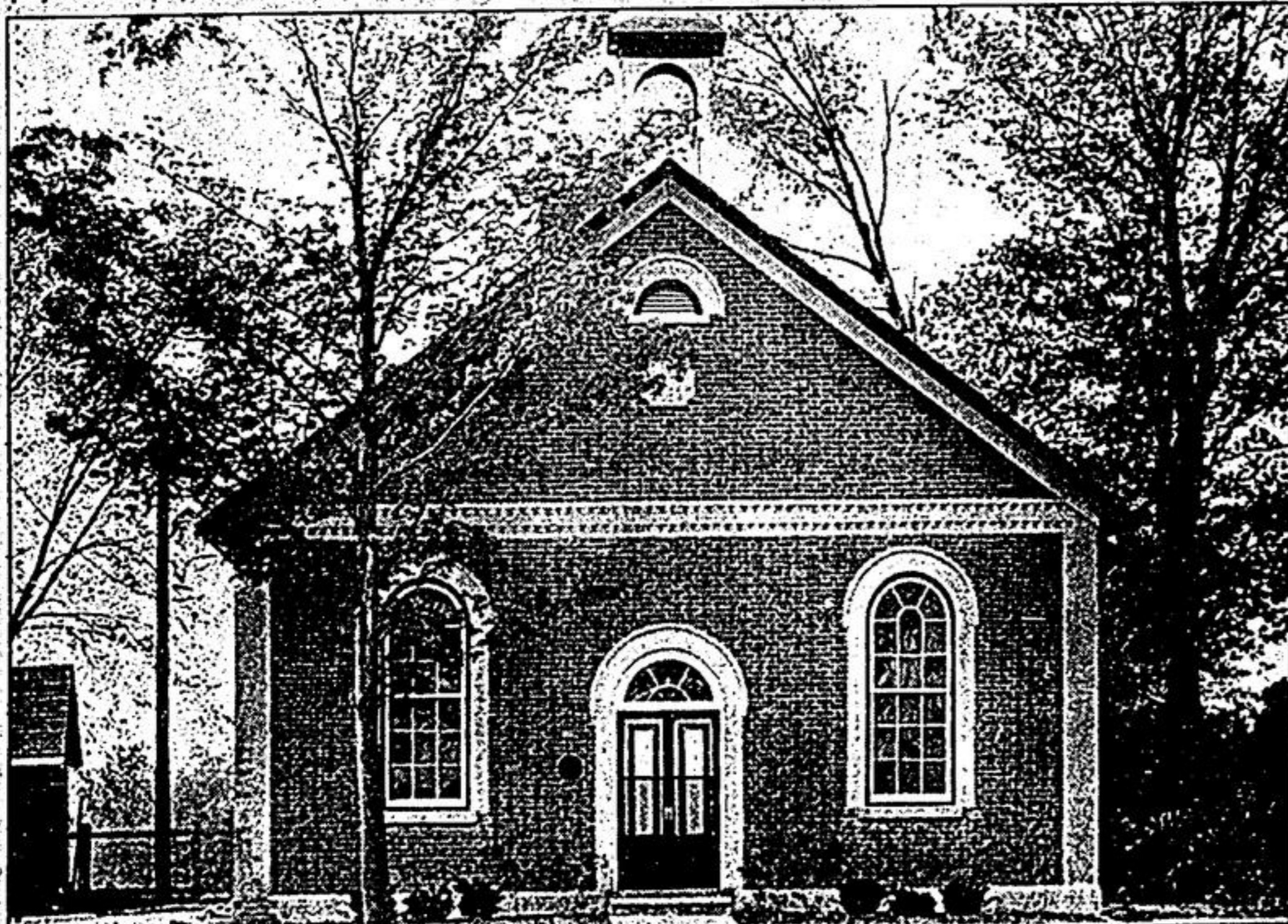
Photo/SJOERD WITTEVEN

One of Austin Reesor's proudest accomplishments was the planting of a heritage apple orchard of miniature trees at the Markham Museum five years ago. A tribute in appreciation of Mr. Reesor, who died last October at the age of 85, is being held May 29 at the Cedar Grove Community Centre.

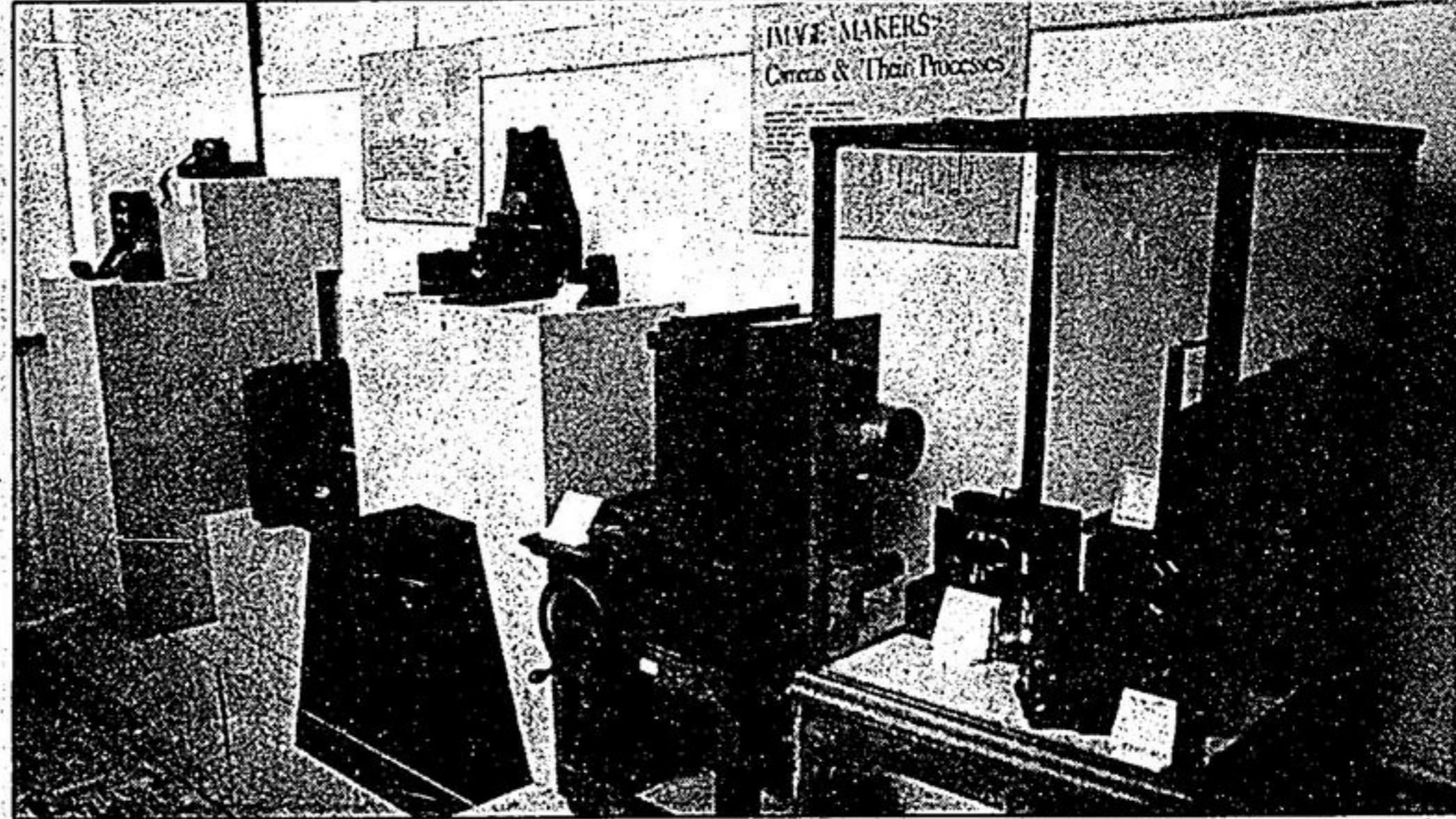
A tribute in appreciation of Austin Reesor is being held May 29 at the Cedar Grove Community Centre. The night is called An Evening of Nostalgia and there will be an unveiling of a scroll and a photograph of Mr. Reesor. A collection of photographs of life in Cedar Grove has been put together into a film, to be shown that night, as well as a shorter film of one of the Apple-Butter Festivals. The rest of the evening will be for reminiscing, with people bringing in old photographs, scrapbooks and memories.



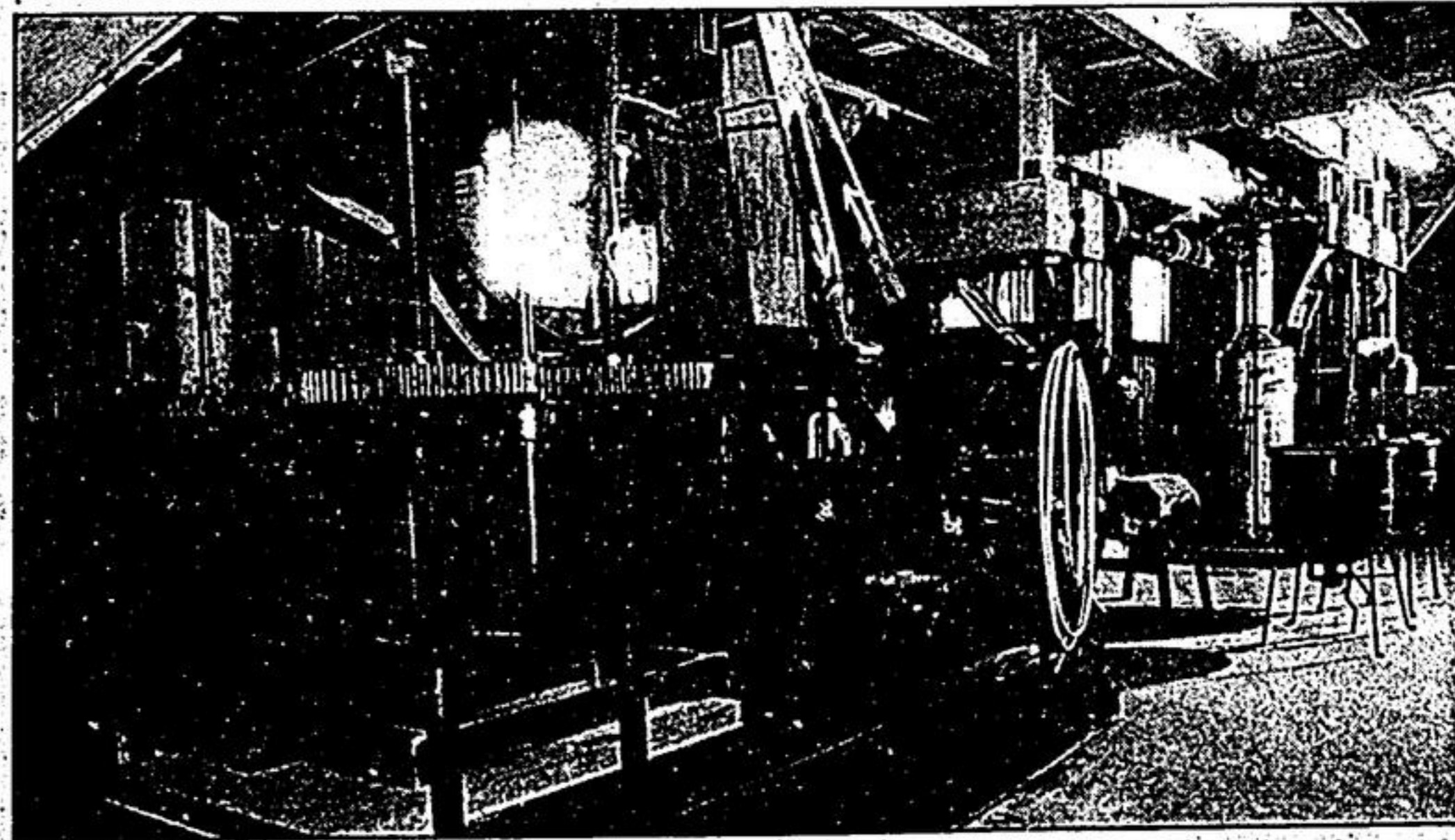
Mr. Reesor was active in establishing the Cedarena outdoor rink in 1927. Because money was needed to pay for equipment and maintain the rink, the community started a Garden Party where local and Toronto professional talents came to perform.



Four generations of Reesors served as trustees at the old Cedar Grove School House before the school became the Cedar Grove Community Centre in 1966. Mr. Reesor was a founding member.



One of the builders of the Markham Museum, Reesor was in charge of photography and the copying of pictures for the museum. Most of his collections of antiques, cameras, phonographs and radios went to the museum (above).



Most of Mr. Reesor's collections of antiques, cameras, phonographs and radios went to the museum. His apple-butter kettle and equipment is also kept at the museum in the Cider Mill (above).

**Moving on**

**Bobby Bolton**



**Tribune news**

If you're receiving Focus on its own this week, you're missing news about other happenings in Stouffville and Whitchurch. This week in our Tribune news section, you missed a breakdown of the 1989 Ontario budget.

As well, a developer has made a move toward putting 10 apartment units in a local shopping complex, a local merchant hopes to build a patio onto his restaurant despite some resistance and the Tribune shows how town road officials acted quickly to prevent a broken water main from flooding local houses.

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**Rebuilding**

**Charlie Warriner** makes the long road back from serious sports injury

