

Meadowvale On-The-Credit

By KRYSZYNA JONES

It's not a question of immediate survival but if the development springing up in Mississauga west continues heavily the village of Meadowvale-on-the-Credit may very well suffocate.

In anticipation of this possibility, a concerned group of citizens have formed a steering committee intent on preserving the village in its present state.

Already they have delivered a brief to the city calling for among other things the future diversion of Derry Road and Second Line around the village and the preservation of all historical buildings and landmarks.

According to the villagers the settlement is unique. "Where can the residents of Mississauga go, within the City boundaries, in their leisure hours, to feel the peace and solitude so needed by us all," their brief implores.

The gem of a village houses roughly 400 residents, some with roots as far back as 1827. The first settlers came to the area in 1820 and in 1836, John Simpson dammed up the Credit River and built a sawmill on which the community thrived.

Remnants of the past are clearly evident in the area as it stands now.

Beautiful Appletree Inn, sitting peacefully on Pond Street was once the meeting place of the famed Group of Seven, who met regularly in the tearoom at the back. Now the home of Ken Laine, the inn was established in the 1920's by two English ladies, Miss Mary Yates and Miss Helen Beardmore.

The village's charm captured the imagination of many artists including the well-known Fred S. Haines, who in 1912 painted an 18-foot-long mural on an old roller blind. The blind is still glued to a wall of a 101-year-old former schoolhouse in Meadowvale. The prized painting is hidden behind a plywood wall which was built to protect it when the school-house was transformed into the community centre. It portrays the Mississauga Indians paddling down the Credit in canoes and is the only mural Haines created.

Haines once lived in what is now the home of Marg Welch, constructed in 1884. The delightful structure is reportedly haunted, by whom the woman doesn't know but she has been trying to trace back in history to discover who may have died in the building.

"The ghost has appeared five or six times in the past two years" explains Mrs. Welch. "It wanders down the stairs and halts midway. I know it's there. It's a presence you can feel. My Lab Pixie turns dead still, with every hair on her body standing rigid until the spirit retreats back up the stairs. Whether running around the house or sleeping when that ghost appears, Pixie will go to lay waiting at the bottom of the stairway."

The famous Rowancroft Gardens in Meadowvale, which at one time shipped herbaceous plants all over the world has recently been discontinued. Former operator Minerva Castle who's been living in the village for the past 50 years, has closed her upstairs office with all her awards clinging to the walls. She remembers working 16 hours a day in those gardens.

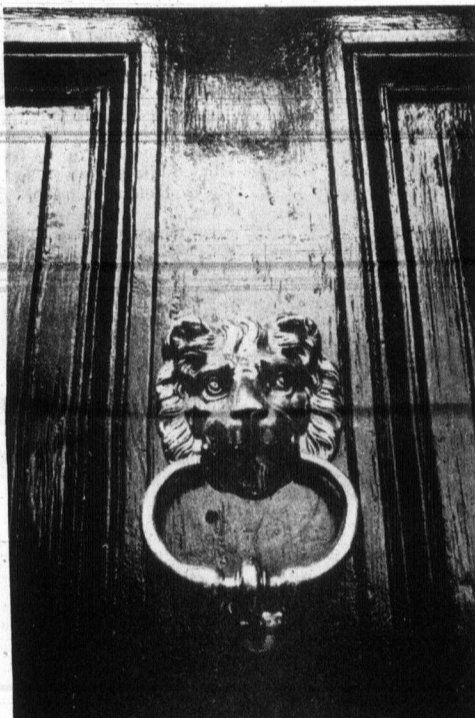
"Meadowvale is one of the prettiest villages in Canada" says Miss Castle softly. There are a number of buildings over the 100-year-mark still standing in the village. The Methodist Church, erected in 1863 is in use today on the corner of Derry Road and Second Line.

In 1868 the first brick hotel appeared on Derry Road, which is presently owned by Mr. and Mrs. G. Robson, who have converted it into a series of bachelor apartments, retaining its historical attractiveness.

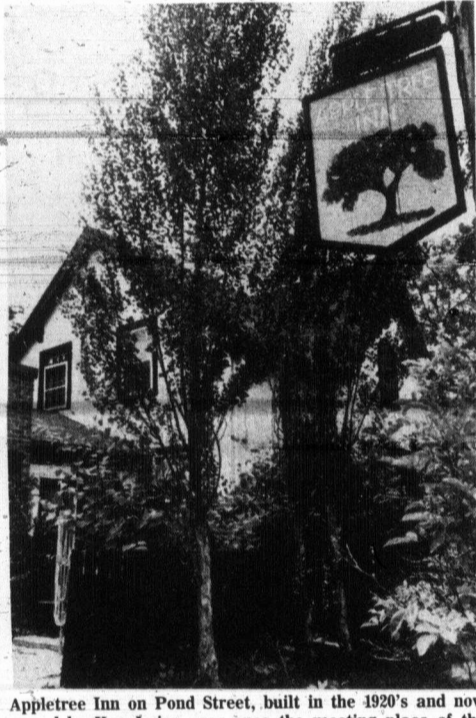
Countless other structures and personalities residing in the village portray the uniqueness of Meadowvale Village-On-The-Credit. To have such an area drowned by development would be a great loss to the City of Mississauga, villagers feel.

As the brief states: "The heritage of every Canadian lies in the past and in our efforts to retain our village lie the hopes of all Canadians."

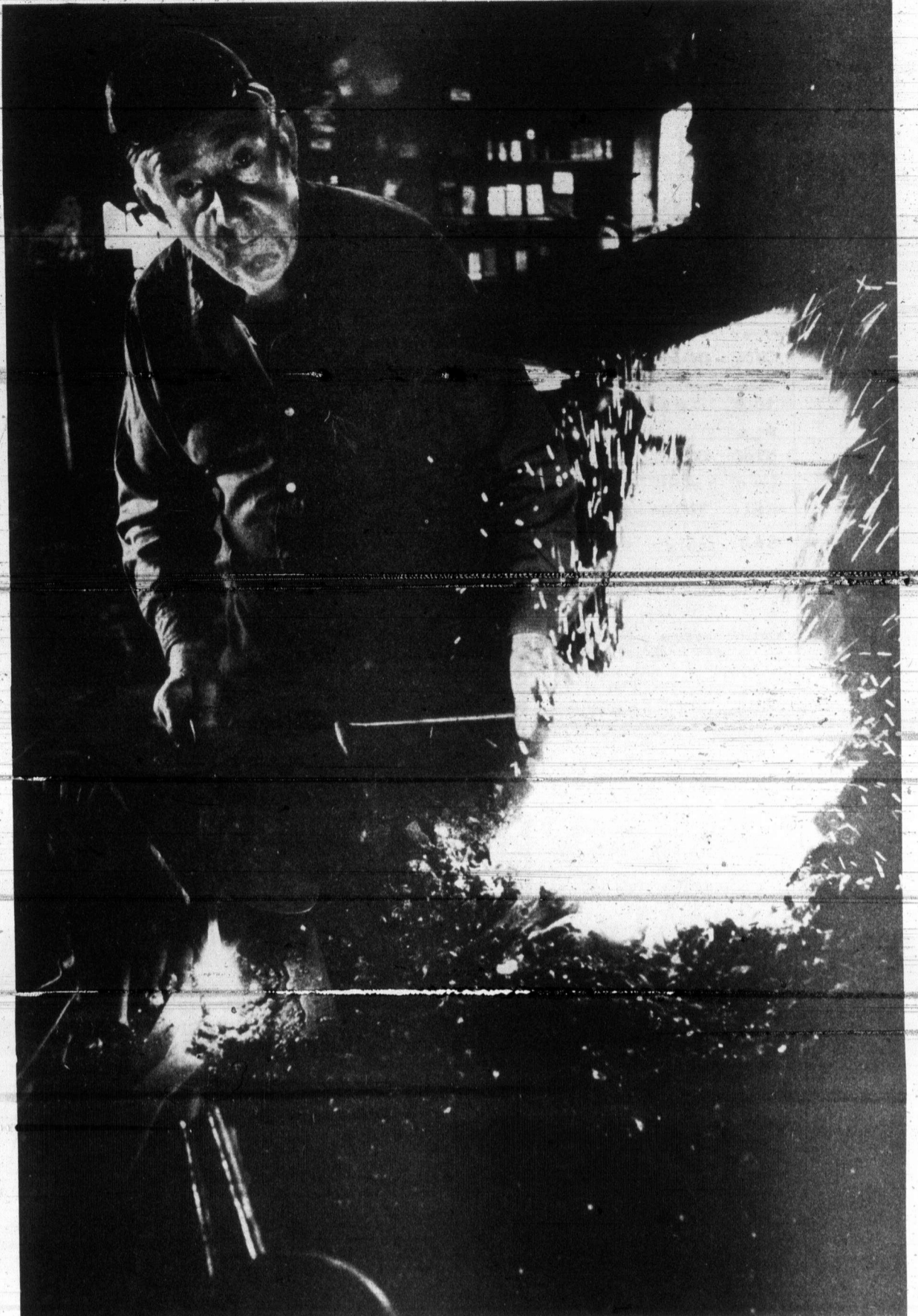
Photos by Ron Pozzer



An ornate lion's head door-knocker adorns the entrance to Appletree Inn on Pond Street, now the home of Ken Laine.



Appletree Inn on Pond Street, built in the 1920's and now owned by Ken Laine, was once the meeting place of the Group of Seven when Miss Mary Yates and Miss Helen Beardmore ran the outfit.



Ernest Martin, Blacksmith, is still at it in his shop, which was built in 1939 in Meadowvale. As he produced a bill-head from his father's shop, stating "J. Martin R.S.S. (Registered Shoing Smith) — 1920" he said: "I used to

do shoes at one time too you know." He and his 75-year-old tools are rare to find in Peel.



View of the Derry Road looking west through Meadowvale taken in the mid 1800's showing on the right the first brick hotel to be erected, built in 1852 and now owned by Mr. and Mrs. G. Robson. Left of the photo is a small saw mill once owned by Mr. A.S. Lambe.