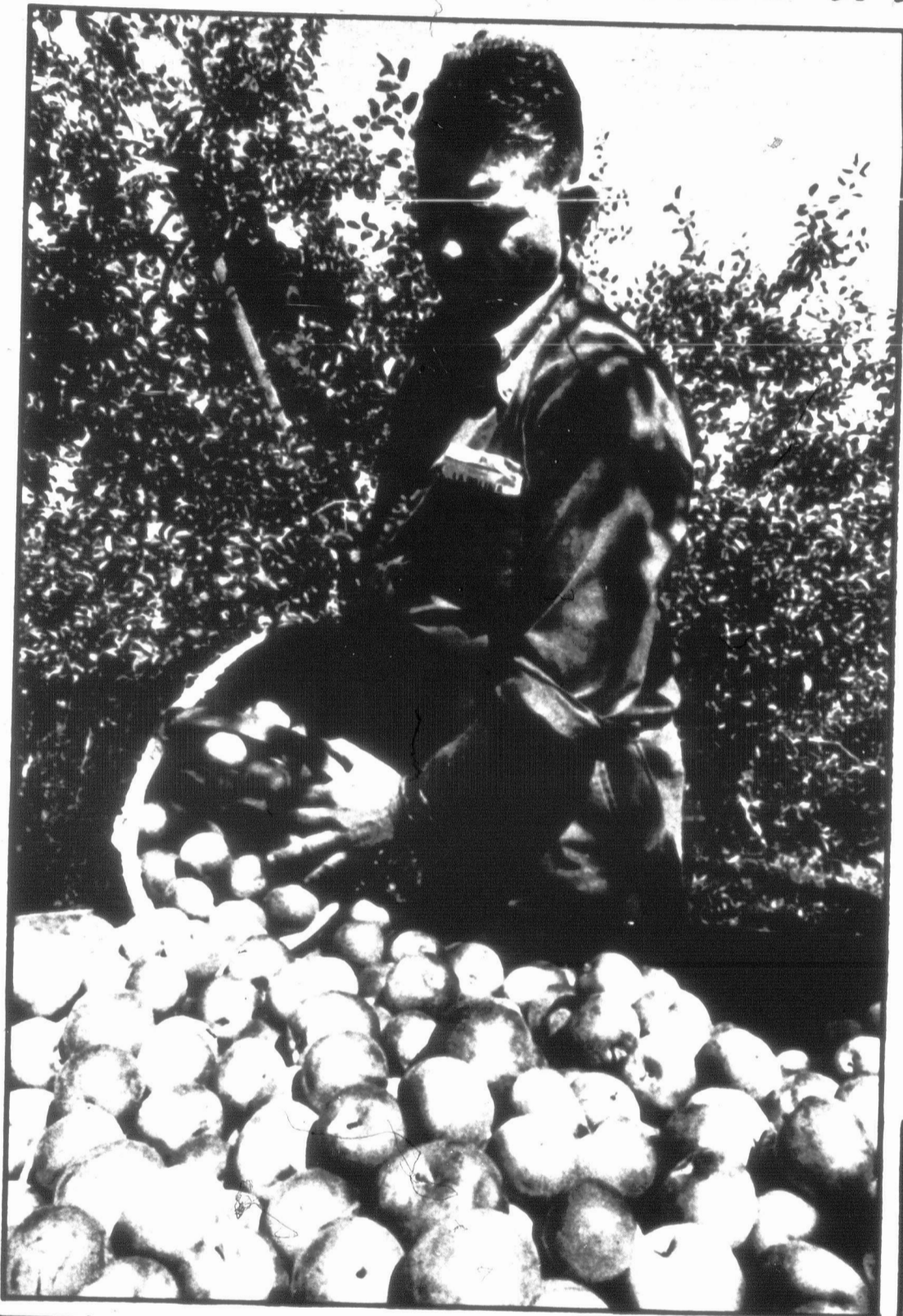


# Community

## Harvest homes in Mississauga



By JO ANN STEVENSON  
Times staff writer

What's the definition of a farmer? It's a man outstanding in his field. It's an old joke but talk to a few local farm families and you'll find people unusually involved and satisfied with their chosen work.

**Pat and Don Herridge** farm 50 acres in the southwest corner of Mississauga, on property owned by Ontario Hydro. Don starts each day at 5 a.m., setting up the family's large market stands on Southdown Road, which are open eight months of the year. Then, back on the farm, he works the apple and pear orchards.

For the Herridges, keeping the family down on the farm is no problem. Their family business of 29 years is operated by nephews, nieces, sons and daughters.

"We have a riot together, unloading pumpkins and packing apples," says Danette Savery, niece. "And we're guaranteed a job if we work. I guess you have to be born into farming to stick with it as we have, but we couldn't imagine another kind of life."

Herridge produce makes its way each Thanksgiving to the harvest table of Clarkson Road Presbyterian Church.

**Kay Adams** has sold home grown produce from her stand on Winston Churchill Boulevard for 12 years, and every year for the past five she's threatened to close up shop. "I'd love to travel," she says, "but somehow I always re-open in June instead."

By 6.30 a.m. Kay is working in the fields and by 1.30 p.m. she's ready for lunch and a little soap. "Market gardening has kept me in good shape for an old gal," she says. Still, each Thanksgiving, Kay shouts a glad cry skyward. "Thank God it's almost over."

**Stan Jackson and Barbara Smith**, both graduates in agricultural studies, rent a house and land on the southwest corner of Highway 10 and Burnhamthorpe Road, across from Square One. "We started growing vegetables on an acre of rented land seven years ago and expanded every year to our present 50 acres," says Barbara. "Heaven knows there's enough va-

cant land in Mississauga to rent."

Farming pays for their equipment and their food, but each holds other employment. This year they experimented with 20 varieties of corn, some with great success. "Others just bombed and we left them in the fields," says Barbara. Their corn business is booming in spite of competition from the farmers' market across the street at Square One.

With the help of a wine chemist, the couple is developing a high quality wine as a hobby but they hope to establish a small winery in the Niagara grape belt.

Stan theorizes the time is coming when California fruit and vegetables will barely meet the demand in the U.S. "Salt levels in the soil there means declining productivity," he says.

In terms of the fresh produce consumed by Canadians, Stan warns that Mexican produce is grown with compounds and chemicals long banned in the U.S. He adds, "It's folly for Canada not to be self-sufficient in food."

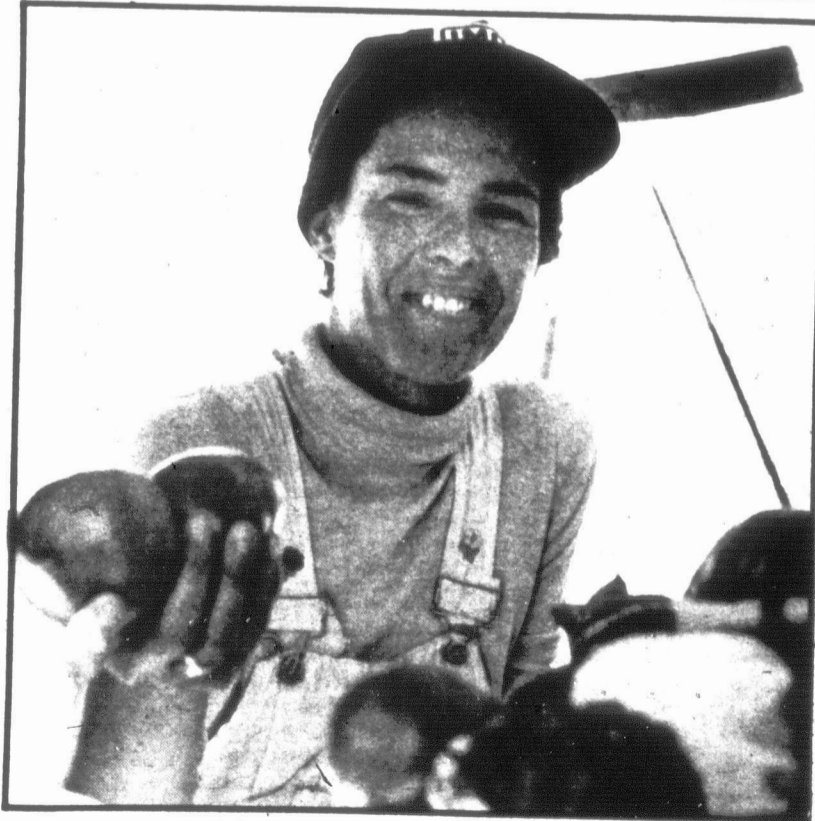
Farming amidst towering urbanization seems a contradiction in lifestyle but there is a twist of irony. "The tall buildings actually extend my season, protecting the fields from frost," he says.

**Laura and Stephen Hewick** recently sold all but 25 acres of their farm, which is east of the Credit River and south of Eglinton Avenue but they will continue to supply corn to St. Lawrence Starch from their remaining acreage.

Laura recalls the past 40 years. "When there was a whole community of farmers each would help the other with equipment, farm hands and solving problems. We'd all get together on Saturday nights for euchre and dancing. It was an intimate time, low on money but high on pleasure."

Laura says people today have a much higher standard of living but fail to take the time to enjoy it. Although this is the last Thanksgiving harvest for the complete Hewick farm, the couple say they'll reap a continuing harvest of good memories over a lifetime on the land.

"We all have much to be thankful for," says Laura.



Don Herridge (top left) sells his own produce from Herridge's market, on Southdown Road, south of Royal Windsor Drive. His market stays open until Christmas.

Barbara Smith (left) sells in the red and white chuck wagon stand across from Square One on Burnhamthorpe Road.

Kay Adams (right) closes her stand on Winston Churchill Boulevard near Lakeshore Road in mid-November.

Photos by  
Gorm Larsen

