



Historic Gloucester

Newsletter of the

**GLOUCESTER
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

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Thomas William Richards and his wife, Phoebe Magdalene Evans.

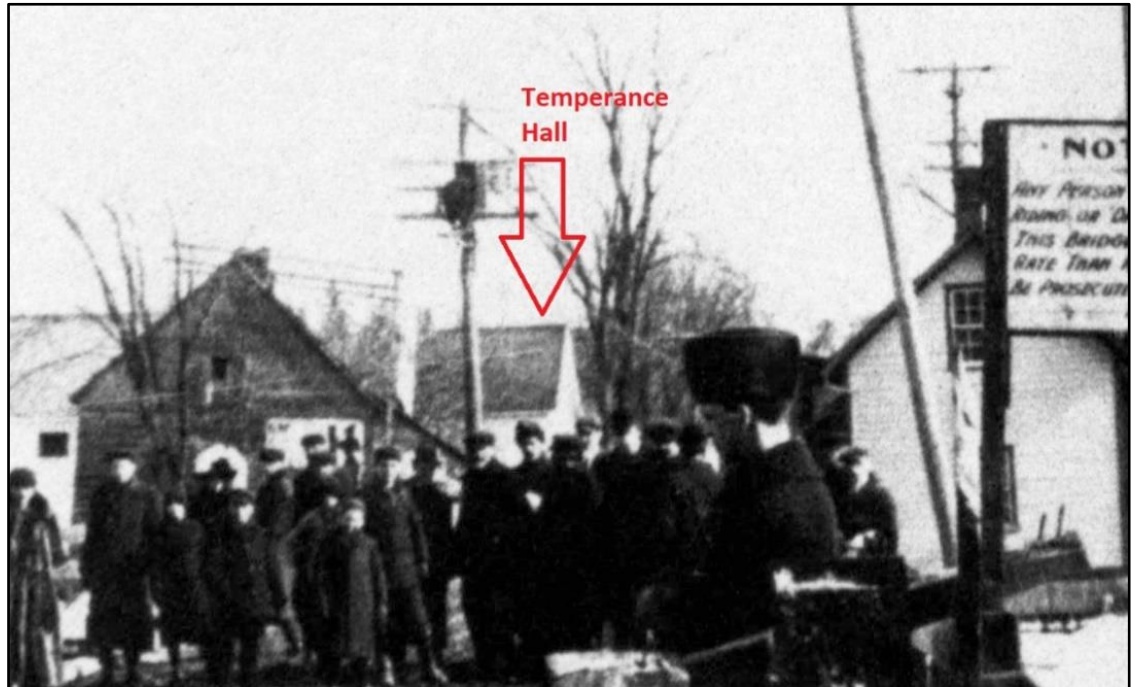


The Gloucester Historical Society acknowledges financial assistance of the City of Ottawa.

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*Temperance Hall
or Hornerite Hall,
Billings Bridge,
March 1913*



President's Report

By Glenn Clark

This edition of Historic Gloucester includes the second part of the story of the property just south of Billings Bridge that began its life as Temperance Hall. The second part brings the story to the present date.

Above is a recently discovered photograph dating from March 1913 that gives a better glimpse of Temperance Hall, or Hornerite Hall as it would have been known in 1913. To the left was the store operated by William Smith for many years and to the right was the tollkeeper's house. There was a tollgate at the south end of Billings Bridge.

Gloucester Historical Society Records

As you are well aware, the Grace Johnston History Room closed in October 2024. Our records were transferred to the City of Ottawa Archives the following month. Since then, they have been taken into the Archives operation, and some are now

accessible at their office at 100 Tallwood Drive in Nepean.

We have further assessed what remains at the Leitrim office on October 8, 2025 and identified what might require a further transfer to the Archives. Archives staff are to review this material in early 2026.

The GHS board met with Archives staff on November 18th to discuss progress, opportunities and future possibilities for our ongoing relationship. The GHS board will now choose the best route moving forward.

Future Book Launches

This coming winter will be an important season to focus on our two almost complete manuscripts on Honey Gables and Old Ottawa South. These are two of the largest projects undertaken by the Gloucester Historical Society in many years. We are very proud of both and look forward to bringing them to publication and to you. Please watch for announcements for both book launches in the coming months.

Temperance Hall, Billings Bridge, Part 2

(Continued from Historic Gloucester, summer edition)

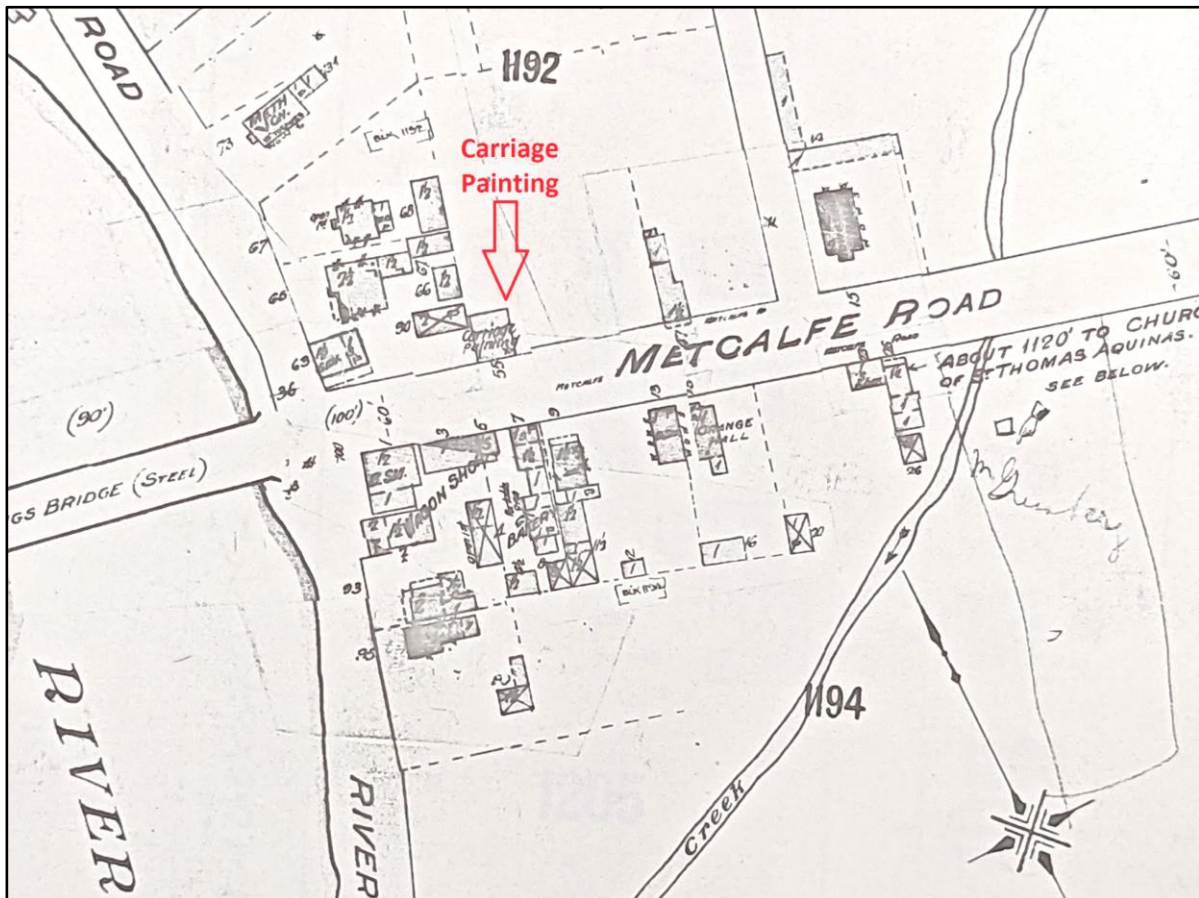
Carriage Paint Shop (1922-1932)

After the Holiness Movement Church became inactive, it transitioned into a Carriage Paint shop by 1922. It was operated by Thomas William Richards (1862-1952), one of the Holiness Movement trustees. The paint shop is shown on the 1922 insurance map. He also operated a wagon and carriage works at the southwest corner of Bank Street and Riverside Drive, which was originally purchased by his father James between 1879 and 1884 and passed to Thomas following his father's death in 1906. The Richards home was immediately west of the Wagon Works on Bowesville Road, now 2215 Riverside Drive.

The Richards family were pioneers of Billings Bridge arriving in 1873. Father James built one of first houses in Gateville, up the hill above the original

village and the bridge. The house was located on the south side of Creek Street, now named Ohio Street (Plan 46 Lot 19) and was regarded as a landmark for many years. The house was destroyed by fire on September 9, 1932, and the lot remained vacant until Thomas sold the property in 1942. Mr. & Mrs. John McCallum and their six children were renting the house, and left homeless by the 1932 fire, which also destroyed a neighbouring double tenement house occupied by the Charlebois and Gravelle families¹⁶. At the time, Thomas Richards and his family were living at their other house on Riverside Drive. The location of the fire is now occupied by apartment buildings and parking lots.

Thomas officially purchased the church on February 10, 1928 from the Holiness Movement Trustees for \$1,000. When Thomas Richards retired in 1932, the "Wagon Works" were demolished and replaced in 1933 with a Red Indian Service Station, which later became a Little Chief, McColl-Frontenac



1922 Insurance Map

and Texaco Service station. In 1940, it was operated by James Wesley Presley.

The old church was also converted into a “garage” in 1932.

The Ottawa Citizen published Thomas Richards’ remembrances of early Billings Bridge on January 29, 1938 and some are shared as follows:

“When the good ship “Scandinavian” nosed her way into Quebec harbor in the summer of 1873, a curly-headed, bright-eyed lad of twelve restlessly paced the deck awaiting the moment when he should first set foot on the land of promise about which he had heard so much back in the old land. That lad was Tommy Richards, who today is known far and wide throughout the township of Gloucester as the veteran carriage-maker of Billings Bridge – and incidentally, as the father of Dr. Wes Richards, able coach of the Ottawa Senators. (Editor Note – Dr. Richards was the first coach of the Ottawa Senators of the Quebec Senior League after the NHL team folded in the 1930s. He also practised dentistry at 2 Hopewell Avenue from 1928 until 1981).

Back in the old land, the elder James Richards had followed the occupation of farming. It was but natural, therefore, that he should turn his hand to the same worthy occupation shortly after getting his bearings in the new land. After a brief sojourn on the old Hurdman farm on the River Road, he acquired some land from the Billings estate in what was then known as the “Gateville” settlement, just south of where the Roman



1928

Catholic church stands today. There he built a house and settled down to cultivate the soil. That house stood until about five years ago when it was destroyed by fire which started in an adjoining building.

Having spent the first three years of his boyhood working at different occupations, the relator of this story decided to learn a trade and for that purpose apprenticed himself for a few months to Charles Sabourin, who had a brief sojourn in the village as successor to William Angus, one of the early carriage-makers at the Bridge. After serving for a time with one of the city carriage-makers, young Richards returned to Billings Bridge and completed his training under W.E. Loper, who had succeeded Sabourin. The old Angus workshop was on the site presently occupied by Mr. Richards’ home, in fact the kitchen of the latter is part of the original workshop. When Angus retired from business, the property was taken over by Mr. Richards’ father and leased in turn to Sabourin and Loper.

Princely Salary

The young apprentice certainly couldn’t boast of great riches during the first three years at learning his trade. He tells that for the first year, he received the princely sum of thirty-five dollars (for the whole year) and his board. The second year, he fared a little better and pocketed forty-five dollars, while for his services at the end of the third year, he received sixty dollars.

Having mastered the trade of carriage-making, practically all of which was done by hand in those days, young Richards, in the fall of 1880, set up in business for himself on the southwest corner of the Metcalfe road and the Bowesville road, where he continued to do business for a great many years.”



1933

Beyond Mr. Richards being an expert carriage-maker and loyal member of the Holiness Movement Church, he was also fervent believer in education. He had served as a trustee of Billings Bridge Public School SS#6 for 50 years. On his retirement in June 1944, the Ottawa Journal reported on June 27th: *"Pointing out that 50 years as trustee with the school board was a very unique accomplishment, Mr. Maxwell (Thomas Maxwell, school inspector for Carleton County), acting on behalf of the community, presented Mr. Richards with an armchair and a Bible. It was the feeling of the community that during all these years, Mr. Richards had given of his time and efforts to the betterment and progress of the school and that it was most fitting he should be honored in this way."*

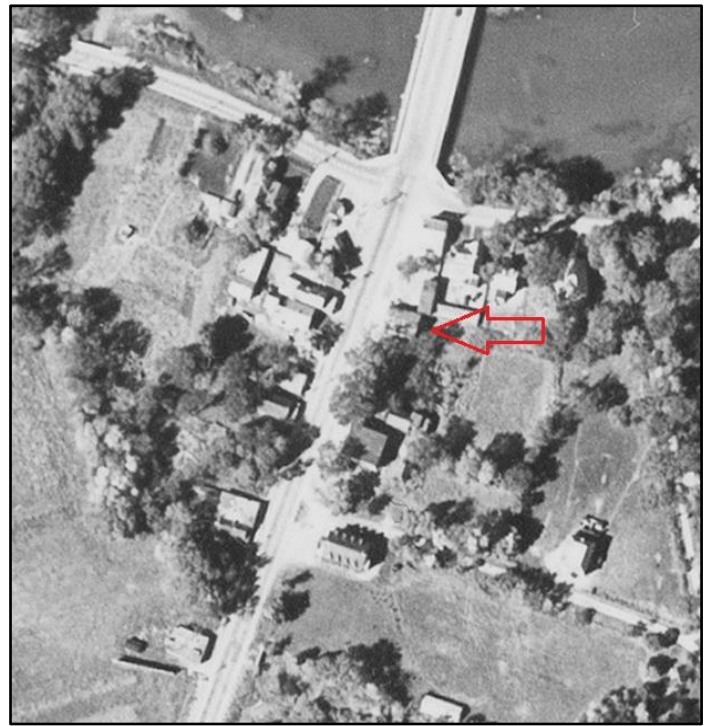
Garages and Various Automotive and Transportation Businesses (1932-1964)

From 1932 to 1939, James Wesley Presley (1900-1963) operated Presley's Garage at the old church site.

History on Fire

December 23, 1938 brought an end to Presley's Garage which was once Temperance Hall and the Hornerite Church, a one-storey frame building with a peaked roof.

The Ottawa Citizen reported:



1938

"Garage Burns at Billings Bridge

Breaking out from an unknown cause early this morning, fire completely destroyed the frame one-storey garage conducted by J.W. Presley on the Metcalfe road at Billings Bridge, a short distance from Gloucester township hall. In addition to the building, which is owned by Thomas Richards of Billings Bridge, a motor car, tow truck and a quantity of equipment were destroyed. The damage is estimated at about \$2,000.

Mr. Presley left the garage at eleven o'clock last night, when everything appeared to be in perfect order, there not being even a fire in a stove in the place. At 4:45 a.m. Sergeant Thomas Gleason, on duty at the police station, received a call stating that there was a fire at Billings Bridge, and immediately relayed it to the fire department. Men and apparatus from 9 and 10 stations responded with Deputy Chief Gray Burnett and used an



1945 Air Photo shows the new flat-roofed building

1,100-foot hose stream from within the city limits to get the fire under control."

Gloucester Township Had No Fire Department

A discussion on the agreement between Gloucester Township and the City of Ottawa concerning fire-fighting service followed the Presley fire. Gloucester had no fire department at the time and was dependent on the Ottawa service with limited effectiveness beyond the city limits where there were no fire hydrants and poor access to water, so critical to firefighting. The following appeared in the Ottawa Citizen on December 29, 1939:

Approve Reducing Gloucester Bill Owing to Ottawa

It was agreed by the Board of Control yesterday afternoon to reduce by half a bill sent to the Township of Gloucester by the city for services rendered by the Ottawa fire department in the Presley garage fire, Billings Bridge, on December 23, 1938. The bill was \$375 made up of \$100 for a ladder truck at the fire for 59 minutes, \$100 for a pumper at the fire for 22 minutes but not used, and \$175 for a hose truck at the fire for three hours and fifty minutes.

Robert Preston, reeve; William J. Perrault, deputy reeve; Councillors J.C.S. Wolff and J.D. Boyce and Carman Guest, clerk, met the board and at length discussed the bill in particular and the whole arrangement for assistance from the Ottawa fire department. The board agreed that the \$375 charge was probably high. The agreement under which the charge was made expired in 1937 and was not renewed.

Discuss Agreement

The delegation said the 1940 council would give consideration to the renewal of the agreement. The member of the deputation, however, frankly stated that the Ottawa fire department could render little assistance with its present equipment and the lack of water facilities in the township. What would be most effective would be a tank which would contain 500 or 600 gallons of water; with pumper attached. The tank could be taken full to a fire and be replenished by a bucket brigade from wells.

Myers Motors Company Limited Appointment



MR. HUGH MERKLEY

Mr. C. B. Fearn, General Sales Manager of Myers Motors, announces the appointment of Mr. Hugh Merkley as a General Motors Truck Sales Specialist.

Mr. Merkley is well qualified to advise truck owners having had several years experience operating a truck fleet while associated with Ottawa Brick and Terra Cotta Company.

Mr. Merkley invites his many friends and business associates to avail themselves of his services by calling on him at Myers Motors.

Mayor Lewis suggested that the township should pay a stand-by charge and that there be a lesser cost for the use of equipment. The deputation did not seem enthusiastic about renewing the agreement but promised early consideration by the new council."

New Building

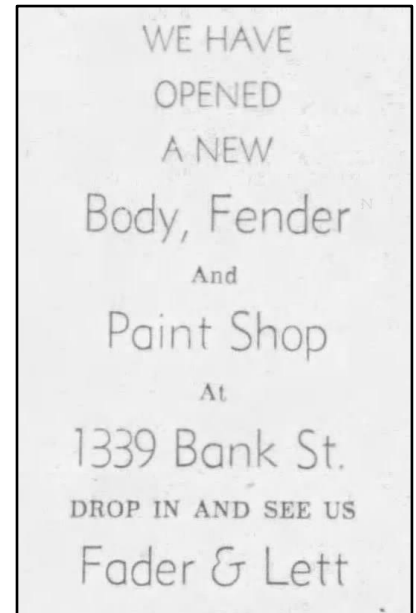
Following the 1938 fire, a new 'fire-proof' building was constructed on the same footprint as the original structure. It was later described as a brick garage measuring 29 feet by 51 feet and had a flat roof. Presley's Garage returned to the new building but relocated to the service station on the opposite side of the street in 1940.

Craig's Garage, operated by George Borden Craig (1914-1998), took over the site until he joined the RCAF in 1941. This then became Merkley's Garage run by Hugh John Merkley (1919-1999) until 1948. Following his father's retirement in 1952, Hugh became Vice-President of the

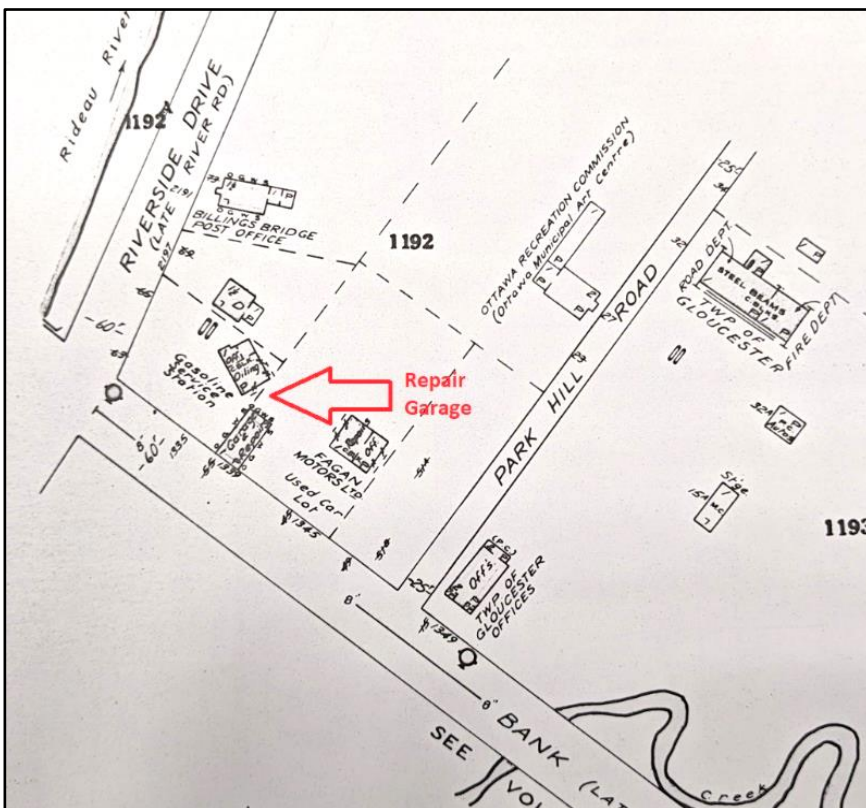
Ottawa Brick & Terra Cotta Company Ltd. (Merkley's Brickyard) and in 1963 he joined Myers Motors as a truck sales specialist.



Ottawa Journal,
April 29, 1954 p.42



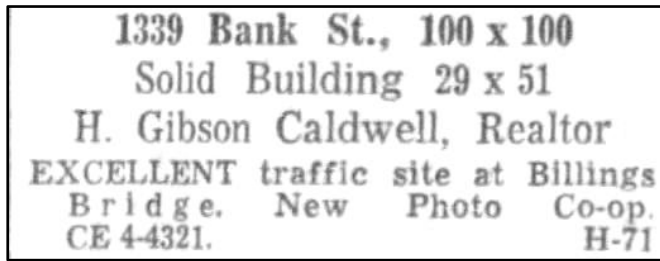
Ottawa Citizen,
October 29, 1955 p.37



1957 Insurance Map

In 1948 and 1949, it became Phillip's Garage. By 1943, the gas station was branded Supertest. The property was sold to Supertest Petroleum Corporation Limited for \$5,000 by Thomas Richards on March 28, 1946. When numbered street addresses were assigned by Gloucester Township in 1948, the Supertest Station was given 1337 Bank Street but later became 1339 Bank Street. The Supertest Station remained through 1963 but was also leased out to various other businesses.

In 1950, it became Elmer's Auto Electric Service, which relocated to 1075A Carling Avenue in September 1954. For the first half of 1955, it became the temporary home of Fagan Motors, a used car lot. Fagan Motors' main address was the neighbouring 1345 Bank Street, but in 1955 they replaced the original 1924 building with a new structure.



Ottawa Citizen, May 16, 1960 p.38



Ottawa Citizen, June 22, 1960 p.8

Fagan's was followed in October 1955 with the Fader & Lett Body, Fender and Paint Shop, which continued through the early part of 1956. In the latter part of the same year and until May 1957, it was Neidy's Auto Body Shop.

For the remaining existence of the building, it was occupied by various transport companies. Meanwhile, Len Brulé demolished his father's old store next door at 1331 Bank Street and redeveloped the site as a modern service station that initially operated under the Regent banner. It opened in 1956 as Monette's Service Station that continued until 1964 when it became Cutts Motors.

Supertest sold the service station and associated building on April 29, 1958 to Lavigne Transport Limited for \$25,000 but leased back the station for a 20-year term. It was then resold to Double L Transport Limited on May 4, 1958 for the same price. The building was put up for sale in 1960 and was vacant in 1962. Its final use was by another transport company, Clarke Traffic Services Ltd, (Lyttle Cartage & Moving Ltd,) in the fall of 1963. The building was put up for rent in March 1964.

The property was finally sold by Capital City Cartage (1962) Limited to Harvey's Food Limited on June 15, 1964 for \$35,000, and the 1939 building was demolished.

The Harvey's Restaurant Era

Harvey's Restaurant was under construction in December 1964¹⁷ and opened in 1965. It was a small drive-in fast-food outlet. The first franchisee was John J. Watts who received a 25-year lease on March 2, 1965.

The neighbouring property at 1345 Bank Street was a used car lot named Fagan Motors, which operated from 1929 until 1967. In that year, the property was purchased by Murphy Oil Company Limited, which ran a Shell and Spur gas bar on the former Fagan site. This in turn was sold to Foodcorp Limited, owner of the Harvey's Restaurant chain, on February 3, 1977 for \$90,000. This enabled Harvey's to open a larger sit-down restaurant on the new property in the early 1990s. The 1965 building was demolished to expand the parking lot. The new enlarged restaurant remained open under the Harvey's name until a fire closed it in 2020. It, along with neighbouring gas station (formerly Cutts Motors), was demolished in December, 2020. As of this writing in November 2025, the site is vacant.

Starting Monday, September 23rd!

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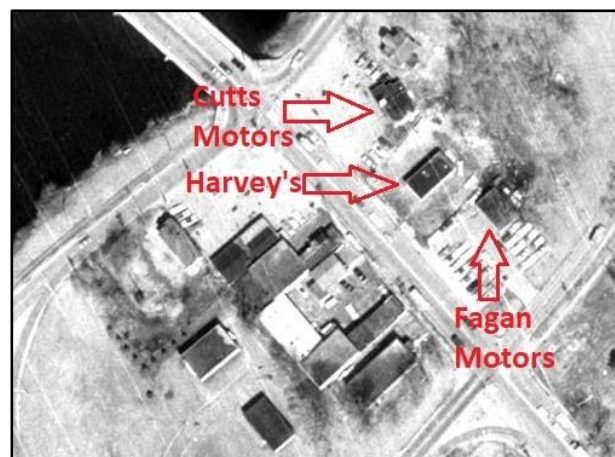
TORONTO: 210 Old Weston Road, Phone 763-5601
Pick-Up: "Ask for Clarke Dispatcher" 364-6411



Ottawa Citizen, September 14, 1963 p.9



1963



1965

STORAGE, warehouse, transport. Brick garage, 1,500 sq. ft., oil furnace, large lot, Supertest pump. 1339 Bank. \$250 monthly. 729-7117, Realtor, Gibson Caldwell 31

Ottawa Citizen, March 5, 1964 p.43



Harvey's Restaurant Demolition, December 16, 2020, Photo supplied by Glenn Clark.

The Future?



*The proposal for 1335-1339 Bank Street
Ottawa Citizen, July 8, 2021.*

References

- 1 Ottawa Citizen, December 8, 1865 p.2
- 2 Ottawa Citizen, August 23, 1879 p.3
- 3 Ottawa Citizen, December 27, 1866 p.2
- 4 Ottawa Citizen, December 14, 1869 p.3
- 5 Ottawa Citizen, October 17, 1876 p.4
- 6 Ottawa Journal, August 12, 1890 p.4
- 7 Ottawa Citizen, January 17, 1889, p.9+
- 8 Ottawa Citizen, January 29, 1885, p.4
- 9 Ottawa Citizen, February 3, 1885 p.4
- 10 Ottawa Citizen, July 5, 1889. p.2
- 11 Ottawa Citizen, May 9, 1889 p.2
- 12 Ottawa Journal, August 2, 1916 p.9
- 13 Ottawa Citizen, July 11, 1914 p.3
- 14 Ottawa Citizen, November 23, 1927 p.5
- 15 Ottawa Journal, May 28, 1900 p.8
- 16 Ottawa Journal, September 9, 1932 p.3
- 17 Ottawa Journal, December 26, 1964 p.29
- 18

https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/horner_ralph_cecil_15E.html

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**Membership Form – Gloucester Historical Society/Société historique de Gloucester
(Membership year runs from April 1 to March 31.)**

Annual membership: \$20.00 for one year _____ 10-year membership: \$150.00 _____

NAME: _____ E-mail address _____

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