

AUCHMAR ADVOCATE

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BEYOND THE FRONT DOOR

Inside the Auchmar Manor House: Wildcat Walkout

Gore Park Fountain 1952.

GORE PARK GLISTENED in the early morning sunlight. People were heading to work at the Canadian Imperial Bank, the Birks Building or to the businesses in the Lister Block. The early shoppers arrived downtown on the new buses to visit Woolworth's, Kresge's and the Right House. Herbert Mills stood outside his storefront, chatting with the owner of Irving's Famous Clothes. A group of people sat near the fountain, reading the early editions of the Hamilton Spectator.

Tom Farmer sat in his office at the Hamilton Spectator reviewing the agenda for the editorial meeting. It was 9:30 a.m., his cup of coffee had cooled, and the meeting would start at 10:00 a.m.



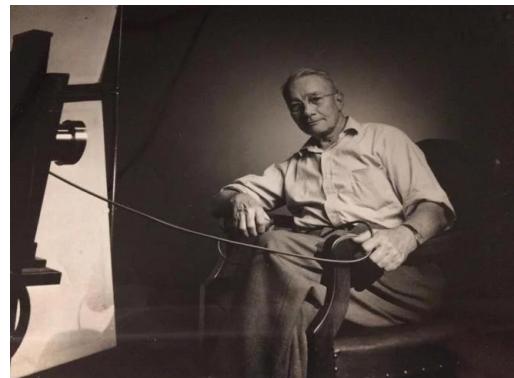
Gore Park in 1950

His secretary knocked on the door. She brought him a package which the courier had delivered a little while ago. He glanced at the sender's address – Ottawa, Ontario. Inside was a packet of letters. He recognized the handwriting instantly, as belonging to the Honourable Arthur Meighen, former Prime Minister of Canada.

Pete (Alan Vernon Young) waited for Bill (James V. Young) to arrive from Ancaster. Together, they travelled down the James Street hill to Beckett's Studio at the corner of Bold and James Street South. It was a corner building located in what the people called the Terraces of James Street.

They walked up the stairs and were greeted by Hubert Beckett. Beckett had established his studio 27 years ago and was now the photographer of the people and those within corporate circles. Alan was there for the portrait sitting. Bill would sit for his portrait in 1957.

When completed, these portraits graced the offices of the Hamilton Cotton Company.



Hubert Beckett

October 15th, 1952.

ALAN AND JAMES YOUNG had lunch with Hubert Beckett before going to the studio. Earlier, during the summer, Alan sat for his portrait. Today, Alan made time to review the prints at Hubert's request.

At the Tamahaac Club, Alan and Edna Young awaited the arrival of Tom and Doris Farmer for dinner. They looked out over the large grounds set within the rolling hills on the escarpment.

Over dinner, the conversations turned to the summer season, the cottage on Vernon Island, how they enjoyed the season and renovations ongoing at both Edgecliff and Fieldcote. Tom and Doris purchased the property on Sulphur Springs Road four years ago. James Young resided nearby at Brockton.

The Korean War was front page news in The Hamilton Spectator. To think that there would be three wars within 25 years seemed unimaginable, yet it happened. Once again, Canadians were overseas, fighting, this time in the cold hills of South Korea.



A.V. Young

Alan followed the Spectator's coverage of the strike at the Hamilton Cotton Company. Now the strike was going into the third week and negotiations were difficult.

WILDCAT WALKOUT



Hamilton Cotton Company Strike 1952

On October 1st, 500 employees staged a wildcat strike for a pay raise and walked off the job.

Confounding the walkout and negotiations was the fact that two different unions claimed to be the bargaining agents for the striking workers.

Both, the United Textile Workers of America (U.T.W.) and the Textile Workers Union of America (T.W.U) represented the striking workers.

The company recognized T.W.U. as the official bargaining unit for the workers. This created a split among the workers.

Looking back 6 years to the Stelco strike and the others such as Westinghouse which walked off the job to support Stelco, neither the city, the company nor the workers knew how long this would last.

The picket line was a place where tempers flared continuously, name calling became a sport, pushing and shoving occurred and occasionally violence erupted. The Hamilton Police initially were put on standby and monitored the line. After 2 weeks, it was decided that the police would have a constant presence on Mary Street where the line was largest.

Every workday, the company management would cross the line.

The strike continued into November and an agreement was reached on November 11, 1952. But, ill will among the workers persisted. Over 300 workers continued to block access to the plant entrances, as the returning workers tried to enter. By November 17, tempers had calmed down, and the full workforce returned. It was back to work.

ANCASTER, ONTARIO.

OVER COFFEE and dessert, Tom and Doris spoke about a future exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario which would feature a retrospective of the work by Frederick Horsman Varley, from war correspondent in the Great War to Group of Seven.

Varley was deeply affected by the battlefields of Europe in 1918. The Great War was a grim memory for Alan and Edna too.

Tom shared part of a letter which he had read. Varley wrote to his friend Arthur Lismer.

"I tell you Arthur, our wildest nightmares pale before reality. How the devil can one paint anything to express such is beyond me. The Story of War is told in the thousand and one things that mingle with the Earth – equipment, bits of clothing unrecognizable, an old boot...."

After their coffee was refilled, Tom picked up the conversation, this time about the Honourable Arthur Meighen, former Prime Minister of Canada.



Tom and Doris Farmer

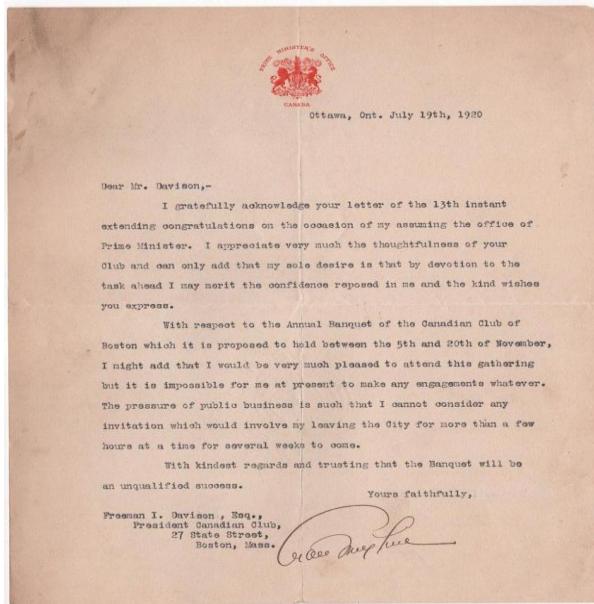
Years ago, Meighen had begun a correspondence with Tom. The scope of it included Meighen's years in the House of Commons and the Senate, and now retirement. His correspondence to Tom was mainly about public events and creating an accurate account for a fair historical legacy.

Among this trove of letters were some to various chapters of the Canadian Club, in which Meighen sought support towards his leadership during the 1920s.

It was getting late in the evening. Both couples, Alan and Edna and Tom and Doris, had full schedules of appointments the next day. They agreed to have dinner together again in the future.



Arthur Meighen



Arthur Meighen Correspondence 1920

T.W.D. Farmer, Tom, passed away in 1975. His correspondence and his papers were donated to the McMaster University Research Libraries and Archives.

The Honourable Arthur Meighen correspondence is voluminous. It is spread across several university archives and the Library and Archives of Canada.

TORONTO, ONTARIO 2011.

David Miller Young passed away in February of this year.

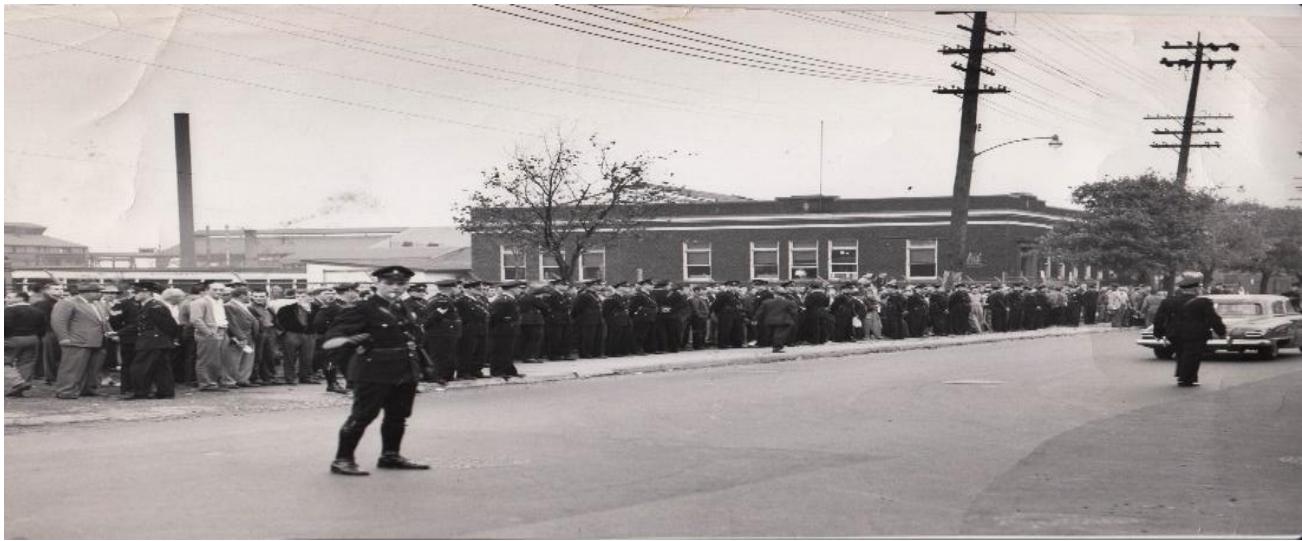
He was the brother of Bill Young, Georgina “Babs” Woods and Ben Young.

David’s professional career encompassed the Hamilton Cotton Company and its successor company, Hamilton Group Ltd., to which he contributed greatly.

When news spread of David Miller Young’s death, the son of a former employee, Mark Howe, wrote on behalf of his father, Glover Howe.

“Glover worked for the Youngs for 40 years. From A.V., J.V., Bill, to David and Ben.

Favourite memory: leading management team through the picket lines on Mary Street before losing his glasses, and having to scramble on the ground, searching for them.”



Hamilton Cotton Company Strike 1952



Hamilton Cotton Company Strike 1952

FRIENDS OF AUCHMAR

News, Events, Partnerships.

Friends of Auchmar Annual General Meeting

The Friends of Auchmar Annual General Meeting will be held on October 27, 2025 at the Chedoke/Balfour Estate.

This is a F.O.A. members only event.

Among the keynote addresses are the City of Hamilton Auchmar Restoration Update and Century Manor Adaptive Re Use.

Please check your email for details or visit www.friendsofauchmar.ca for more information.

Please reply to membership@friendsofauchmar.ca to confirm attendance.

Upcoming Events.

Currently, there are no other upcoming events. Visit the website www.friendsofauchmar.ca for more information.

THE AUCHMAR CHALLENGE FUND



AUCHMAR CHALLENGE FUND

The Auchmar Estate was retained by the City of Hamilton as a Community Restoration Project. Heritage Hamilton joined the community with an Auchmar Challenge Fund in which the Foundation will match dollar-for-dollar donations from the community for an approved restoration project at the Auchmar Estate up to \$25,000.00.

Donate today by following this link → Donate to the Auchmar Challenge Fund

After clicking the above link, please include a “message to charity” on the donations page, indicating that you are donating to the Auchmar Challenge Fund. A charitable donation tax receipt will be issued by Heritage Hamilton Foundation for all donations.



National Trust of Canada -APT Joint Conference 2025.

The conference will be held in Halifax Nova Scotia October 23-25, 2025. Among the topics this year is The Power of Place and Story: Voices, Built Heritage and the Land.

Participating in the conference are the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals and the Indigenous Heritage Circle

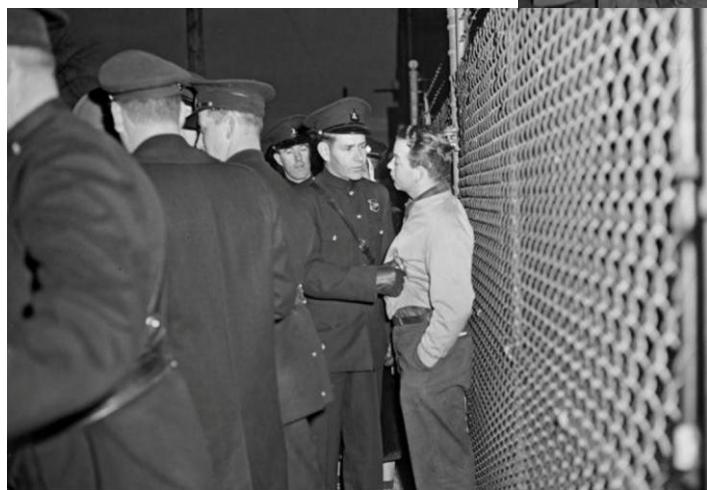
A call for papers and presentations is posted the National Trust of Canada website.

For more information, visit info@nationaltrustcanada.ca



THE PHOTO GALLERY

This issue is dedicated to the Hamilton Cotton Company Strike of 1952.





CONTACT US

LOOKING TO REACH the Friends of Auchmar and not sure how? Do you want to attend our public meeting? Would you like a little bit of information? Do you have a comment? Would you like to become involved? Do you have a memory or story about Auchmar that you wish to share?

Here are the ways:

Website: www.friendsofauchmar.ca

General Information Email: info@friendsofauchmar.ca

Membership: membership@friendsofauchmar.ca

X: @FOAuchmar.ca

Facebook: www.facebook.com/friendsofauchmar

OR

Just come up and speak with us.

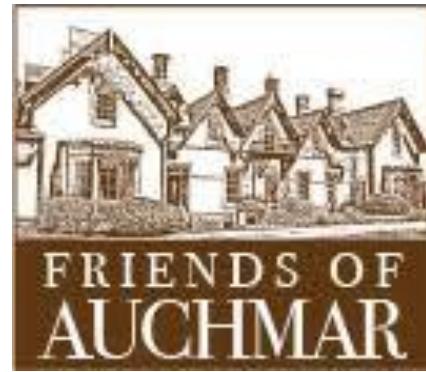


PHOTO CREDITS

Page 1: (1) Windows, Auchmar South Side (www.militarybruce.com) (2) Hallway (J.Kajaste) (3) Windows, Auchmar West Side (Doors Open 2022) (4) Gore Park 1950 (Perc E. Powell (from Doreen Lee) Vintage Hamilton/Facebook).

Page 2: (1) Hubert Beckett (March 4th, 2025) Hamilton Spectator (The Hamilton Spectator Archives) (2) A.V. Young by Hubert Beckett 1952 (Courtesy of Anne Young Lindsey).

Page 3: (1) Hamilton Cotton Company Strike 1952 (Hamilton Public Library, Local History & Archives) (www.collectionscanada.gc.ca) Industrial Timeline of Hamilton.

Page 4: (1) Tom and Doris Farmer (Hamilton Spectator Archives)

Page 5: (1) Arthur Meighen, Official House of Commons Portrait (Wayne Cuddington/Post Media) (Library & Archives Canada MIKAN 3357104). (2) Arthur Meighen Correspondence 1920 (www.worthpoint.com).

Page 6: (1 & 2) Hamilton Cotton Company Strike 1952 (www.collectionscanada.gc.ca).

Page 8. (1) Auchmar Estate (University of Toronto Library Archives).

Page 9: (1) National Trust of Canada Poster (National Trust of Canada).

Page 10: (1-3) Hamilton Cotton Company Strike 1952 (www.collectionscanada.gc.ca).

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REFERENCES

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3. The Hamilton Spectator Collections at McMaster University Research Collections and Archives.
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6. Arthur Meighen Correspondence 1920 www.worthpoint.com.
7. Berton, Pierre. Marching As To War 2001 pps.268-269 (Varley Letter to A. Lismer).
8. Hamilton Public Library, Local History and Archives.



