

MN July 4, 1973

Perrelete, Henry

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# Old Henry

By LINDA REED

Old Henry came to the door without a shirt.

Despite his 92 years his brown skin is supple and he sprints across his cluttered flat and pulls up a red rocker.

A pair of faded blue jeans with hammer loops are fastened by a carved belt with ivory buckle. His belly is wrinkled as a dehydrated coconut. Eaton's is doctoring his hearing aid so he cocks an ear to your face and his eyes listen for the words.

### ONLY 27 DAYS

A few tries. His eyes light up and he rushes to a cupboard for a letter. It's an eviction note. Old Henry has only 27 days to find a new place to live. The note is wrinkled from much handling and Henry explains that he found it under his door last week.

"I have to get out," he says.

Henry Perrelete has lived in the east hall of a trim cottage at 1673 Lakeshore Rd. in Clarkson for six years. When he's not driving his 1940 Chevy truck to a gardening job at a nearby estate he sits in front of his house in a rocking chair with overhead umbrella. He usually smokes an Impala cigar because he likes the pretty girl on the package. In winter he watches Clarkson from his picture window. Residents have become accustomed to chatting with him when they pass.

He sleeps on a lumpy bed at the far end of his converted flat between an old refrigerator and a television. Two greasy pots are sitting on a hot plate. His cupboard is stacked with empty chocolate and lamps without bulbs.

His front room is dominated by a 10-foot long clothing rack filled with castoffs from employers. Everything is cluttered with pipes, cigar boxes, trinkets, letters, old hats and a large box from Dobb's of New York.

Henry digs soul music. He brings out a record called Sam and Dave Soul Men. It has no scratches though and his record player looks unused.

### ARTHRITIS PROBLEMS

When his arthritis isn't bad Henry is as spry as a four-year-old. (He can bend over a box of photographs for 15 minutes without a creak or groan.)

Until this spring he has always worked as a gardener on nearby estates. He keeps a fleet of mini tractors and mowers in a basement at Clarkson Interiors. Some days it takes him about 15 minutes to get the truck started.

Since he's deaf he can't tell when he's grinding the gears and roaring the engine. Sometimes he starts off in high gear and blows the clutch mechanism. Most of his



## NEEDS A PLACE TO LIVE

# evicted from Clarkson home

PEEL COUNTY - BIOGRAPHY

Rd. and roar up Meadow Wood Drive.

#### **MONEY STOLEN**

He lives on wages from gardening and a monthly pension cheque. His rent is \$80 per month. Recently he was ripped off by a girl who offered to cure his arthritis for \$5. She advised Henry to lie on the bed so she could rub his back. Then she grabbed his wallet and fled.

He came to Toronto about 60 years ago. He did various jobs — working on the railway and farms. He ran a bulldozer for several years at Clarkson Loam and Fill where he lived in a small home.

Henry says he used to own a house and

farm but they were taken away from him. He couldn't read or write so was unaware when his property was stolen. He hired a lawyer and got \$5,000 in damages.

One of the first people to hear about Henry's eviction was Norm Shilliday of Oakville. Mr. Shilliday became friends with Henry when he worked at Clarkson Interiors.

#### **WANTS TO STAY**

Mr. Shilliday says Henry wouldn't want to live in a senior citizens' home. He loves Clarkson and wants to stay in the community with his friends.

Anyone who is interested in helping Henry is asked to call The News at 279-2211.

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