

MORE CAMPBELLFORD MEMORIES

By Francis W. Long

My sincere thanks to so many folks who have told me that they enjoyed my recent article on memories of a life in Campbellford! According to some readers, I even missed a few things. Well, let's see if I can fill in a few more details!

Many have reminded me that on the corner of Bridge and Rear Streets, where the funeral home now stands, there was W.W. Clark's feed store, with the grist mill at the back. This was later operated by Jack Clark until the 1980's. By that time, Canadian Tire occupied the property where the original feed store had been. Jack was a very interesting man. It seemed that Jack had a real passion for Indy style racing, and owned a very "sporty" car. Some locals will remember as well that Mrs. Clark was a long-time kindergarten teacher. Jack wasn't the only person in town who loved cars with a bit of "pizazz". A fellow named Eli Brunelle, a pulp mill officer had a fancy car called a LaSalle which turned a few heads too.

On the west side of the river, Charlie Ackerman had an ice cream store that was known for its nostalgic style wire leg tables and chairs. Just past the corner was the Fraser Garage, with a gas pump at the curb. Can you remember when they had gas pumps with a large gas tank at the top showing the graduations for gallons, imperial gallons, no less? There was a hand pump to bring the gasoline from the underground tank up into the glass cylinder at the top. Let's not talk about the price per gallon! It might be a bit depressing, given what we pay for a litre of gas today. On the west side as well, and across the street from Fraser's Garage, there was a pool hall which I missed in my original story. The owner was a man named Rowe, although I may stand to be corrected on that name.

On Queen Street, again on the west side of the river, was located Turner's garage. Wilf and Victoria Turner were the founding family. A lot of folks will remember Wilf's hobby. He was a racing boat enthusiast, and often raced on the canal, and at regattas around the area. Across the street was the Turner Building, and Turner's hardware. It was later to become Stu Anderson's hardware. On the upper floor, you could find the Masonic temple in those days. Mrs. Nelson Lloyd and Martha helped my dad cater to many banquets. Just down the street was the imposing house belonging to Dr. Longmore, a home now owned by Margaret MacMillan.

Speaking of Dr. Longmore, he was our family doctor at the time of my birth in 1920. In those days, babies were born at home with a mid-wife and the doctor on call. It seems ironic that we are going back to that system in modern medical practice. Dr. Longmore had an interesting winter vehicle with track wheels at the back to help him get around in the snow. In those days we were really in a snow belt area. Our community has been fortunate to have been served so well over the years by dedicated medical professionals. Here are the ones I can remember: Drs Cunningham, Haig, Stuart, Britnell, Baker,

Burgess, Vandervoort, Stephens, Hackett, Anderson, Robertson, Bright, Free and Scott (husband and wife) as well as Dr. Lloyd Richardson the dentist.

Back to business on the other side of the Trent, there were a few entrepreneurs we missed before. In the 70's, Ron Hazel had a grocery store on Front St. South, and across the street, Harry Cubitt had a shoe repair shop. Years ago, there was a Henson Shoe Repair on the west side of the river. Today, we discard our worn shoes, but in the days of Cubitt's and Henson's, people were pleased to have a skilled craftsman to help them get more wear out of their shoes, and save them some money too.

In the Burgis block, the Seymour Township offices were staffed by G.G. Stephens, and Wesley Stephens. The town offices, located in what was known as the Meyers block was manned by John F. MacGregor, and Elden Ibey. Today, of course, both municipalities are together as a portion of the municipality of Trent Hills. And of course, I would be remiss in neglecting to mention T.H. Burgis Hardware on Front St. South. It was later to be known as Burgis Pro Hardware.

My original story, it seems, didn't give fair treatment to the jewelers of the town over the years. Many years ago I can remember a jeweler named Maynard who was well known for the stately clocks in his window. Fred Rabethge came to town as a jeweler in the 1940's, and family members have been part of the same business for many years since. I remember that my father was a favourite customer of Fred Rabethge. I also remember another jeweler named Collins. In my last instalment, I mentioned about a restaurant next to Rabethge's operated by Ed. Stanbury. Well, Jim Dunk tells me that his mom and dad ran a restaurant at the same spot which pre-dates Stanbury's.

Another memory I would like to share is "recycling". Yes, there was recycling way back then. As a young boy, I remember washing out empty medicine bottles, and taking them to Ernie Birk's drug store on the corner. He paid the princely sum of 2 cents each for them, and he re-used them to make up liquid medicines, complete with a brand new cork. I guess no one worried about "cross contamination" in those days. The Campbellford Paper Mill was another recycler back in the 20's My grandpa, John Peeling worked there, and they sorted through bales of old paper, and cloth. This type of salvage was turned into paper. Sometimes Grandpa would find treasures among the bales, usually a watch or ring.

Today we buy milk in poly bags. Before that, there was the three quart jug. But do you remember the horse-drawn milk cart, or wagon that brought your milk right to the door in the wee hours of the morning? In those days, everyone was honest, of course, so you put your money in your empty milk bottle for return, or your milk ticket. As I recall, a \$2.00 bill would buy you 10 tickets. The milkman would leave your tickets along with the milk. There was never a question of dishonesty by the milkman, or anyone else for that matter. In the winter, when you brought the milk into the house it very likely had an inch or so of ice at the top of the bottle. Do you remember the unusual Silverwood's dairy bottle with a bump near the top. This would allow you to pour off the cream.

Campbellford had lots of dairy operations over the years. I remember one operated by the Wright family many years ago, and also a dairy owned by Coleman Boros. For the slightly younger set, most folks will remember Rutherford's and Anderson's Dairies. They were still around in the 60's and 70's. You may also remember an incident when a younger member of the family, Wally Rutherford, was killed in a motorcycle accident on Highway 30. My earliest memory of milk was going across the street to John Hay's barn to get milk in a pail. In the early 1920's, when we went to my dad's homestead near the Auburn Mill in Peterborough, my Uncle Will had a jersey cow named Rosie. I was fascinated by the wooden butter churn that my Grandma Long would use. She first put the butter in a wooden bowl, and later made it into a square shape. Talk about fresh! Uncle Will was a bit of a hero to my brother Doug and myself. He had a model T, an open car with side curtains. He once took us over the floating bridge across Chemong Lake at Bridgenorth, with the water washing the wheels. The model T was a kind of fluid drive car, with three foot pedals, one of which, thankfully, was the brake.

The milkman was not the only early morning visitor at your home. The bread wagon operator came right to your door with a whole tray of baked goods, including bread, of course, but also items that we might regard as treats.

Do you remember the old dime bank? It held 50 dimes, and contained \$5.00 when full, the same number as in a roll of dimes. There was also a tin cash register bank that held coins and tallied them up on a display. The bank would magically open when the total reached \$25.00. That was a lot of money in those days, and some pretty "hi-tech" gadgets for that era.

The founder of the Campbellford Legion was Major Bygott. The legion has been in its present location on Bridge St. pretty well since its inception right after WW 2. Campbellford oldtimers with good memories might recall a picture in the Campbellford Herald of Major Bygott, and my dad Mayor Frank Long together in a horse drawn carriage in a parade celebrating the end of the war, and the allied victory.

The present building which houses the Masonic temple and court room, was the Regent Theatre back in the old days. It showed silent films. Would you possibly remember the piano players? They were none other than Mamie Benor, and Herb Leonard. You might have memories of Leonard's Clothing Store on Front Street, which was carried on by Mrs. Leonard for years after her husband's death. Campbellford needed a tailor. We had Ernie "Stitch" Lee. Mrs. Lee was a seamstress. Another prominent local name, Archie Meyers was the architect who transformed the Regent Theatre into the Masonic Temple, an imposing structure, even today. Mr. Meyers is perhaps better known as the founder of Meyers Transport.

Peter Barnes came to town in the 1950's as the new owner of the Aron theatre, and bought the building where Harold Douglas has his barber shop. In those days, Mrs. George Airhart ran a dress shop for Mr. Barnes at this location. Barnes also bought the Irwin block across the street and renovated it. It was to become the liquor store under the

management of Keith Bailey. Next to it was the Becker's Milk Store run by Maurice and Pam Dunn.

My first memories story didn't give you much background of some of the industries which have been part of our history in Campbellford. For instance, what about our very successful chocolate factory? Well, before its evolution into candy making that site near Centre Street was an alfalfa mill. It dried alfalfa for cattle feed. Sounds like a fire trap, doesn't it? It caught fire frequently, although it was a going concern with its own railway spur line. About 1953, a man named Bill Wolfe came to our store. He represented the World's Finest Chocolate Co. of Chicago. They were starting a factory in Campbellford. The product was a 12 inch long rectangular bar of milk chocolate with almonds. It would remind one of a railway tie. The idea was that your store's name would appear on the label. This would also apply if a charity were selling the product. Mr. Wolfe said that for display purposes on the counter the bars were to be piled in a square pyramid. Pyramid power might have had its start right here in Campbellford. I can tell you that there were a few doubters around. But over the years we have all watched with delight as this company has become a very big and successful company.

Another entrepreneur from the past was Ernie Ayrhart. He took the town by storm in 1946 when he was elected mayor. He established Ayrhart Industries. Over the years he built the bowling alley, a hardware store, and a cement plant. Dart Cup was a later development. It continues to be a major force in town with the increased use of poly containers.

Years ago, there was a separate school as well as the public school I mentioned in my original story. It was located on Margaret Street. In those days the present site of St. Mary's School was a tree lined lawn, where I remember Father Phelan holding summer garden parties. Next to that was the convent. Many young people in Campbellford learned to play the piano from the nuns at this convent.

It doesn't seem that long ago that we were lucky enough to have a Salvation Army major at the citadel here in town. That meant that there was a little group of musicians holding forth on the street corners on Sunday mornings, and at other important times. Great memories!

My mother, Violet Peeling, was a proud purveyor of church music too. While she apprenticed at the Weston shoe factory for \$4.00 per week, she was able to buy a piano from the Riendeau Music Store at 50 cents per week. This provided Violet with practice time to perfect the bible songs she used in her nursery class at the Presbyterian church for 30 years.

Does anyone remember the great mural on the walls of my dad's ice cream parlour? It showed a view of an old car traveling around Trent hills as viewed from an outdoor porch. That mural was painted by George E. Morrison in 1911. Long's was a relatively new business in those days.

Over the years, the Trent River has been an important factor in the life of our town. There was even a little bit of rivalry at times as to whether you lived on the east or west side of the river, or what types of businesses were located on one side or another. Getting across the river has sometimes been a challenge. Fortunately, we have come a long way from the days when the Campbell brothers “forded” the Trent, and decided it was a nice place to settle. It was certainly great to have our current bridge installed, so that we didn’t have the constant delays of the old lift bridge. The new bridge has giant springs or cables in the cement roadway that take up the shock of the traffic. You can certainly feel the effect of these springs or cables as you are crossing the bridge. We all appreciated the new bridge even more as we had to cross the “mighty” Trent on the old black bridge or at the swing bridge down by the locks south of town for a time during construction. These were single lane bridges, and at certain times of the day, getting from one side of town to the other was a real ordeal.

Thanks again for your kind comments of my first memories article. I hope that this story will further jog your memories and make you appreciate even more the proud Campbellford heritage we share.