



STAYNER HERITAGE SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Incorporated, 1998.

Fall 2018

Visit Us At www.staynerheritagesociety.com

In a continuing series, describing families and businesses in Stayner and surrounding area we are pleased to present the story of the "Stayner 5c to \$1.00 Store" owned & operated by N.A. "Pete" Oehm. Thank you to Marjorie Ridley (nee Oehm) for this article.

The story of "The Stayner 5c to \$1.00 Store" is as much or more about the people in Stayner and surrounding area as it is about a business owned by N A "Pete" Oehm.



After working for 18 years as a station agent and being laid off (1932) by the CPR, Pete decided he wanted to work for himself. He met Amos Alpress (a former clerk for the Bell Dry Goods Store in Stayner) who was then a salesman for the Stedman Variety Store Chain. Amos suggested that an independently owned 5c to \$1.00 store was feasible in

Stayner. Pete went to see Sam Stedman, Chairman of Stedmans, and found out he would need \$3000. to get started. Even with his life savings of \$2000., no bank would give a single young man a loan in the Depression. Sam Stedman said he would back an enterprising, honest looking man. Many years later when the store celebrated its 30th year in business, Mr. Stedman spoke at the event and said it was one of his best investments and told Pete his store was the premier example of the independent stores Stedmans supplied stock to.

In 1934 in leased premises (now part of Barb's Clothes Closet) and with the help to set up from Sam Woolver, the Stedmans Store manager in Orillia, the Stayner 5c to \$1.00 Store was open. Fred Maguire's transport service brought in the first (two ton) stock shipment. Over the years a lot of shipments came by rail as well. The first staff included Mrs. Mitchell, Lottie Schell (Mrs. Bob Oliver) and Mary Watson (Mrs. Tasker Grant).

The store was moved across to the north side of Main Street in 1939 in premises purchased from the McCrae family. The building housed Begg's Dry Goods and Miss Helen O'Malley's Dress Shop. After considerable renovations the store moved into its new quarters. Mrs. Ina Evans remembers being a young member of the staff that moved the stock by hand across the street after store hours (less traffic).

In the mid-1940s after a tragic incident, the outside stairs to the apartment above the store were replaced by indoor stairs, a store stock room and a 2nd storey sunroom at the back of the store. Pete also had an above the store open office (often referred to as his Crow's Nest) where he could keep an eye on things and still do his book work.

With the store's many departments: ladies and men's wear, hardware, notions, toys etc. and the ever-popular candy counter, it was a busy establishment that met a lot of the needs of the town's residents.

Another merchandising step occurred in 1960. The store was rearranged into a self-service operation. It was in keeping with things that were going on in the merchandising world at the time. At that time there were seven regular employees and twelve during the Christmas season.

Many people worked in the store over the years. In the 1940s you might find Elsie Payne, Gladys Bell, Velma Armstrong, and Grace Dickinson and in the 1960s Elsie Sheffer (latterly Assistant Store Manager),



Olive Clemence, Donna Brillinger, Norma Miller, Alice Levick, Marjorie Pifer, Clara Brillinger, Eleanor Black and after school and Saturdays Elaine Black and Marjorie Oehm.



These folks made sure that Pete's example of "service with a smile" and "the customer was always right" happened.



Over the years the store saw many seasons -- bustling Christmas time (even a Santa Claus parade day when the central plaster ceiling fell to the counters), Easter bonnets and baskets, summer clothes and beach balls for the holiday folks from the Beach and back to school supplies to mention a few. It was always interesting that the Christmas "Rush" didn't start until the snow came,

Main Street stores were closed on Wednesday afternoons and Sundays and open Saturday nights. Those Saturday nights were the most fun with people arriving in town to do their shopping but also visiting. After the store closed on a Saturday night you might find a few fellows solving the issues of the world and locally in the stock room at the back of the store and the ladies upstairs having a cup of tea with Muriel. The kettle was always on.

In 1938 Pete married Miss Muriel Lowick, a teacher at Byng Public School. She was his partner in life and silent partner in business. They had two children, Peter and Marjorie, who both worked at times in the store after school and holidays. Pete sold the store to Jim Williamson in 1968 and retired to continue serving his community on Council and County Council. He always said Stayner was very good to him and delighted in telling people the town slogan was

"The Town of Friendly People".

The following pictures were donated to Stayner

Heritage by Ina Evans (nee Brown)

Ina Brown, Pete Oehm, Effie Culham

Rear of Old Store at 7285 Hwy.26

1939



Ida Millsap, Pete Oehm, Ina Brown

Rear of Old Store at 7285 Hwy. 26

1939



*The following poem was written for Pete Oehm one Christmas
By Florence (Pounder) Bremner. Florence worked at
the store from 1944 to 1949*

Remember

How wonderful are memories of things we used to do.
And better still if they are shared, so I'll share mine
with you.

As Christmas rolls around again, I like to think once more
Of all these busy Christmases, when I worked in your store.
The shelves were filled with every kind of gift, and
Christmas trimming.
The counters, too, were loaded, and the stock room shelves were
brimming!
The windows were a child's delight, all filled with
games and toys.
Santa had no trouble there, when pleasing girls and boys.

Remember all the candy canes, the nuts and Christmas treats?
And you so generously letting us – sample all these sweets. The
customers were 'always first' – they'd come in with their lists,
Then we'd say, "May I help you – or in any way assist?"

Remember the sliding ladders? "Now be careful as
you pass".

Or remember the basement 'dungeon' – with its rows of shining
glass?

Remember the little radio on the shelf above the door?
Wafting Christmas Carols softly through the store.

The staff all worked in harmony, they were a friendly bunch.
The only way to make them mad – was to arrive back late
from lunch!

You had your corner office, perched up above the stair.
When we ran into problems – we'd always find you there.

And so, I hope these memories will make you happy too, And
realize my pleasure, when I remember you.



Christmas 1940

A Tribute to Catherine Walker



Catherine lost her battle with a rare disease, known as 'Progressive Nuclear Palsy' in September of this year. Catherine was a founding member of the Stayner Heritage Society and an integral part of the Stayner community. She brought a positive energy to everything she did. Always with a smile on her face, she led a full and wonderful life, nurturing all around her with love, faith and her passion for music.

PHOTO CONTEST RESULTS

“Historical Reflections of The Community of Stayner”

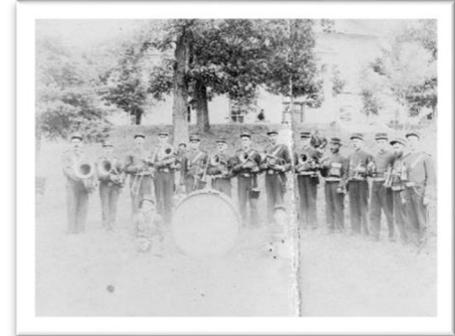
The Heritage Society would like to thank everyone who submitted contest photos to this first-time event. From the 30+ photos submitted, it was a difficult chore for the Heritage team to choose the best from each category. In our opinion, all were winners. Each photo received will be added to our picture library for future presentation. Photo winners will be posted to the SHS web site along with names of the folks in the photos. The contest was divided into three categories; namely,

- a: The oldest picture depicting our community.
- b: The best landscape or scene from our community
- c: The best portrait depicting a citizen or family

The winner in each respective category are as follows:

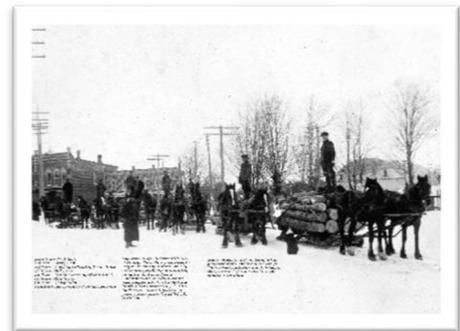
a:

Submitted by Katherine Allen
Stayner Band
1900



b:

Submitted by Jim McFarlane
Logging Teams Near Station Park
circa 1925



c:

Submitted by Elizabeth Ferguson
circa 1915



Stayner Heritage Society Events

Canada Day Celebrations



The Stayner Heritage Society and the Stayner Chamber of Commerce again celebrated Canada's birthday on July 1st as a joint venture. The event was held at the Stayner Arena following a pancake breakfast and parade. It was a very warm day, which resulted in a lower attendance. Most came early but did not stay for the entire afternoon. The Chamber's efforts in providing various activities for kids was wonderful. The new added "photo venue" was very popular! The displays were excellent and entertainment was enjoyed by all. Our thanks to the many financial supporters and volunteers who made this a great Canada Day!

Memorial Tribute

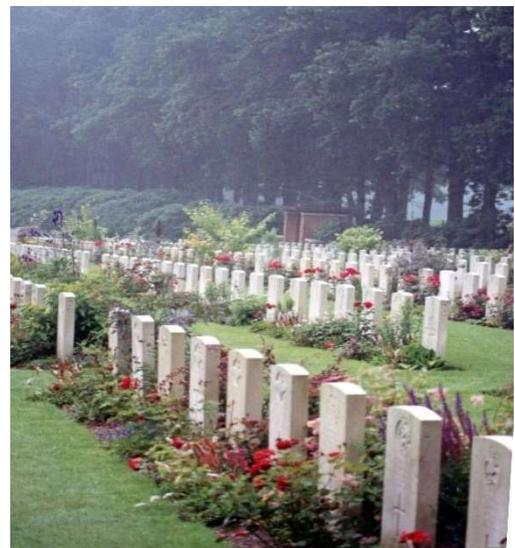


The Stayner Heritage Society purchased a park bench in memory of Dorothy-Anne Millsap. The bench is placed in front of the Exit Realty Welcome Home Office (formerly Aikens Bakery). A dedication of the bench was held on June 19, 2018. Our thanks to Rev. Wim Kreeft, Councilor Robert Walker and Brian Pounder - who participated in the dedication.



A DVD of the dedication will be posted on our website for viewing.

The 9th Annual Remembrance Day Observance



The Stayner Heritage Society will host the 9th annual Remembrance Day Event on Saturday, November 3rd, 2018 at Jubilee Presbyterian Church. Tickets are \$5.00 and are available from SHS members or at Barb's Clothes Closet, Main Street, Stayner. A continental breakfast will be served at 9:00am. Following the opening ceremonies, guest speaker, W.O. Jason Sutton, will share his experiences while serving in Afghanistan and Turkey. Other guests include Mike Linke, Don Doner, June Flynn and Ken Parton.

Our "Stayner Heroes" DVD will be shown as well. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend this inspirational morning to honour the men and women of our community who served and continue to serve our Country.

Stayner Heritage Society Projects

Stayner Walking Tour of Historical Homes



A project is currently underway to identify and research homes within our community that have historical significance to Stayner's past. To date, we have identified about 10 to 12 homes. Over the summer we have researched and obtained photographs of each home. We have had several discussions on how best to create a user-friendly self guiding format. A small booklet containing a centre fold map has been suggested and we are presently pursuing this idea. Stay tuned as this project becomes reality.

Stayner Heroes Memorial Flags

As mentioned in our spring newsletter, we continue to work on creating memorial flags of our veterans. This is a major project the Heritage Society has undertaken, and we are disappointed the flags will not be available for this November's observance. However, the first phase of this project is complete; i.e., the identification of approximately 25 local veterans with accompanying picture and service background. Phase two which encompasses the physical design and making of the flags will be completed for the fall of 2019. If you would be interested in supporting this very worthwhile project by way of a donation, it will be appreciated.

Stayner Heritage Society Membership

We are pleased to see our SHS membership has increased this year. The SHS executive would like to thank all its members who have renewed their memberships until May 31st, 2019. Your support is appreciated and plays an important part in making our projects possible as we strive to maintain the heritage of our community. If you have not renewed your membership, but would like to do so, please complete and return the enclosed form as soon as possible. Thank you.

The Stayner Heritage Society Museum

Each Thursday night throughout the summer, the Township of Clearview hosts "Music in the Park" at Station Park in Stayner. This event affords people with the opportunity to visit the SHS museum. This past summer saw an increasing number of people visit the Museum. The SHS appreciates this patriotism and we would like to thank everyone who attended and volunteered their time to host guests.

Historic Items Available for Purchase

The SHS have several items available for purchase that make excellent gifts. Items include a variety of memorabilia and DVD's that reflect our past. These gifts are available by contacting our Executive Committee or through our Web site.

Happy Fall.

