

Another Stayner Business Story – Dalton R, Lowe & Sons Construction

The Stayner Heritage Society is happy to highlight one of the longest running family owned businesses in the history of Stayner.

Stayner Business Hits 65 years

In 1952, Dalton Lowe at 18 years old started a sand, gravel and trucking business that would grow into his life's passion. Working on tanks and heavy equipment for RCME at Camp Borden during the day, he



worked evenings, nights and weekends trucking for himself. As a young boy, Dalton was influenced by his older brother Ken who was a mechanic and by some of the locals; Lou Swinton, Clarence and Ian Henderson, Lou and Harvey Bellwood and JA Dickey who taught him how to drive different kinds of machinery and trucks. Although he helped in the family butcher business he really wanted to work at what he loved...trucks and equipment.

At that same time, Dalton met and fell in love with Viola Lee, a waitress at Lamberts' Hotel on the Main Street of Stayner. Viola became his wife and business partner. Together they worked hard to start the company, D. R. Lowe. Ralph Hackett and other

locals called Dalt "doc" or "DR" because of the letters on the truck.

In the early days of the business, he worked at as many jobs and as many hours as he could to pay the bills and survive. He had to make deals and come up with

creative ways to finance his business. An example of this was when he bought two trucks from John Dickey. Dickey wanted to purchase Lorne Walters' building (Russ Baker cannery)...so Dalt got the trucks by providing gravel to Lorne for his cement work business and paid installments of cash to Mrs. Walter every Saturday night until the trucks were paid for. All three businessmen were happy and got what they needed. You had



to figure out ways to make things work. It wasn't easy to get financing when you were young, self-employed and had a family. You had to be 21 years old to sign a contract so some of his early job contracts had to be signed by his mother. He bought his first bull dozer when he was 19.

Dalt purchased property at the corner of Superior and Mill (now Perry) Streets where he housed his trucks next door to his home. In 1962, he was able to move his operation to its current location on Hwy 26 next to Reinhart Vinegar. In 1980, the building and some of the equipment was burned in a large fire. He rebuilt the operation.

After years of trucking gravel and sand, Dalton R. Lowe and Sons Construction, started crushing aggregate products and doing work for mining companies in Lanark and for municipal and regional



governments throughout Ontario. In winter months, he had sanding and snow removal contracts with the Department of Highways. One of his memorable projects was filling in the Collingwood Harbour with granite rocks weighing 2-10 tons which were taken off 42 farms in the area.

Dalton and Viola raised 7 children, 3 girls and 4 boys. Who all learned the work ethic of self-employed small family run business. The kids were used to their dad being up before dawn and not finishing his work day until dark. The boys worked Saturdays and summers to help build the company. Dalt and Viola's work ethic was to work hard 6 days a week and spend Sundays at church and with family. With the flexibility of being self-employed, Dalton and Viola could give back to the community through many organizations (hockey, figure skating etc.) and many positions within the Good Shepherd Anglican Church.



Dalton credits the business's success to Viola, his family and his staff. He also is very grateful to the local Stayner businessmen who mentored him, such as; Clarence Brownridge, Aubrey and Webb Perry, Clarence and Ian Henderson, Jack Dickey, Irvin Millsap, R.O. Dickey, Angus and Leighton Campbell, Doug, Ed and Jim Hanna. They all who taught him that hard work and doing what you love to do makes a successful business.



Today Dalt goes to the shop each day to check in with Bob and Tammy who run the operation. He still loves working on heavy equipment and enjoys getting antique construction equipment ready for the

Simcoe County Museum's heritage construction equipment exhibit and designing miniature equipment with his childhood mecano set.

65 years in business...pretty amazing for 2 young adults with a love of trucks!