

# CAMPBELLFORD CENTENNIAL MEMORIES

## The Story of Ice Cream

By Francis Long

This has been an incredibly HOT summer!!! Good for the ice cream business! Years ago, making ice cream required a lot of ice and salt to say nothing of a good bit of labour. My earliest memory of my father's ice cream plant was seeing a big brine box with "briny" water pouring over lumps of ice, with a big freezer cylinder mounted on a cement base, and leather pulleys turning wheels. But what I really remember is the dish of delicious fresh strawberry ice cream, soft at that stage, which I was asked to sample. I don't remember ever refusing that opportunity, and I always approved of the taste, of course.

In those days it was necessary to hold ice cream in a cabinet in 5 gallon stainless steel cans and lids that were approximately 20 inches high. That meant that each inch of ice cream was equal to one quart. The cans of ice cream were surrounded with pieces of ice and salt which melted and kept the ice cream hard. It was necessary to draw off the melted briny water every day. Long's ice cream was always a favourite at summer and fall fairs in the area. We had heavy wooden barrels full of ice in which to keep the ice cream in good shape while attending the fairs. A man named Nelson Lloyd, who operated an ice house, kept us supplied.

Making ice cream was certainly a family affair. My maternal grandfather, John Peeling, in the years prior to 1929, operated a wooden hand freezer which took a lot of cranking, but produced a very good ice cream which our customers really enjoyed.

In 1929, there was quite a revolution in ice cream making for our business. In that year, we got our first electric ice cream cabinet; a six hole Frigidaire unit with stainless steel top and insulated round lids. It turned out to be a real workhorse as it was still in operation when the store was sold in 1974. The refrigeration unit in the basement was a big contraption with a large belt and electric motor surrounded by many feet of copper tubing running up to the ice cream cabinet. Perhaps you might remember the first home refrigerators, with a big box of tubing coils stuck on top! This unit was similar in appearance, but it made all the difference to our ability to produce, store, and sell a quality ice cream product. In later years, my dad coined the phrase "Satisfy that longing", a motto that was printed on the ice cream cartons, or "bricks" as they were called.

In 1937, a salesman named Morris Feldburg came in to the store, preaching the benefits of counter ice cream freezers and cabinets. Mills Novelty Co. was the maker. The salesman took our family to Cobourg to see one of his units in operation. The ice cream parlour was operated by a Mr. Wenn. We were convinced, and the new cabinetry got us into home-made ice cream in a big way. The mix, a rich 10% product, made up into a flavourful ice cream that tasted great but was probably pretty high in calories too. But who cared in those days? The mix was shipped via the morning train from Quinte

Creameries in Wellington in Prince Edward County. It arrived at 6 a.m. in 8 gallon insulated cream cans. Our new machinery could make about 2 gallons of ice cream per batch, and if we worked hard we could produce 2-3 batches per hour. My dad spent many hours at that freezer which operated flawlessly. We were very lucky during the war years. We seem to be able to acquire a good ice cream mix quota, so people in Campbellford and area could still enjoy Long's ice cream during those difficult times.

In 1952, another salesman came by with a new machine, known as a SWEDEN, soft serve machine. Again, we were sold, and became the first outlet in the area which served hard and soft ice cream. We were into the soft serve business well in advance of the likes of Dairy Queen. As a way of promoting our new product we put a coupon in the Herald for a free cone for children. It probably comes as no surprise that we gave our new machine a very busy baptism that week.

Ice cream was sold in the traditional cones which came in various shapes, much as today. But just as common was the pint carton of ice cream, known more often as a "brick" for its obvious shape. People, especially in the 1930's had a real hankering for Long's ice cream, and would "split-a-brick" with a friend. The pint of ice cream would be split in two, and served on a couple of platters. Just as often, customers would consume the whole brick themselves which sold for the princely sum of 40 cents. If you wanted something a little more exotic, you could try one of the myriad of sundaes that became a Long's tradition. How about a Tin Roof, Banana Split, or the like; all made with Long's ice cream and toppings made on the premises. Our ice cream freezer did yeoman service for us over the years, but finally gave up the ghost in 1960. It was so old that we couldn't get parts for it. We started to sell the Borden's line of ice cream. Pint bricks were 5 for 99 cents, while you could enjoy a half gallon for 99 cents as well.

My dad, Frank Long, as you can see, was a man who was a little ahead of his time to say the least. He was an avowed gadget person who didn't limit his purchases to ice cream making machinery. His friend and fellow business man Frank DeCarrol sold Dad fluorescent lighting for the restaurant. This was a new concept which provided pleasant looking, even lighting of a room. As the years went by, this new lighting style proved to be really economical. I would say Mr. DeCarrol's lighting units were a quality product. There are 4 of them still in use today at the old restaurant location, occupied by IN SEASON GIFTS.

Saturday night was the evening the farmers in the area came into town for a treat. That treat usually was purchased at Long's Restaurant. On one particular hot Saturday night back in the 30's we tried a new idea. We opened up the back door of the store, to allow a few river breezes to circulate. But better still, we placed a big tub of ice near the back door, and blew a fan across the surface of the ice. Could this have been the first primitive Air conditioner? Frank DeCarrol talked my dad into trying the real thing in 1945. Long's became the only air conditioned business in Campbellford. There were two ceiling blowers, with fans and coils and fins, one for each side of the store. Wow! Did it work well? Some of the first customers in the store actually complained about the draft.

My father thought it was time to limit smoking in his air conditioned restaurant. He put up signs, saying "Please refrain from smoking while you enjoy the conditioned air". The ban didn't last long. Customers complained bitterly about missing their cigarette with their dinner. I guess my dad was just a little too far ahead of his time on this issue.

This year sees Centennial celebrations in Peterborough. Next year it is Campbellford's turn to shine. We were incorporated as a town on July 1, 1906. These 100 years have produced many fine memories for all of us, and we can all plan to celebrate and put Campbellford on the map. There will be lots of activities to enjoy, and we hope that many folks who have left the area over the years will make a special effort to return to their roots for a visit. We can promise you a great time in 2006.