

# More Memories of Campbellford During Our Centennial Year

By Francis Long

As folks who have called Campbellford home over the years will already know, our proud town celebrates 100 years incorporation in 2006. Together we share lots of memories of interesting people, buildings, landmarks, events, businesses, achievements and a few tragedies. Over the next few months I would like to help you recall a few of these special memories as we approach our centennial year. This story recalls our own “pop” man, a place called a “frosty” locker, as well as a short history of our bridge across the Trent.

This was a warm summer, and even the fall has brought us some hot and humid conditions. It has surely been a good season for cold drinks. Do you remember the so-called “juice joints” at the fall fairs, with their “pink lemonade-made in the shade”. Get your glass ice-cold! Then there was “pop” in bottles, wash tubs with a big chunk of ice surrounded by soft drinks of various flavours. The vendor wore a bottle opener around his neck on a string. Bottles of pop were always served with a straw in those days. The price—the princely sum of 5 cents with no bottle deposit.

Horsman beverages started operations in the 20’s, on Pellisier Street, a stone’s throw from Trout Creek, and across from the current location of Paul Smith’s law office. Charlie Horsman lived in a big brick house next door to his bottling plant. I suspect that there are still some old wooden crates that held 24 bottles around, stenciled with the business name: Chas L. Horsman-Beverages. Charlies had some great flavours including Orange Crush, Cream Soda, Grape, Hires Root Beer, Mandalay Punch, Ginger Beer, Lime Ricky, Lemon Soda, and Ginger Ale. In later times Horsman’s Beverages became the franchise bottler for Pepsi Cola.

In September each year, the rural schools held “school fairs” and my dad, Frank Long had the franchise for the only refreshment booth at the half dozen or so of these school fairs around the district. In the hungry 30’s, Charlie would arrive with his truck of soft drinks at 6 a.m. My uncle Morley and his wife Annie loaded up the tent, the tubs of ice, and of course, cases of fair taffy. Then it was off to the fair, where the children competed in races and games, for coveted blue ribbons, and a free bottle of pop. Charlie supplied not only the truck, and a good bit of pop, but also worked in the booth the whole day. He was paid \$8.00 for his efforts, which by today’s terminology made Charlie a good corporate citizen of the town.

The Horsman Beverage site on Pellisier street had the fortune of having a wonderful spring water well available for their use in making their products. Today, you will find apartments in that location. What crystal clear water they must have! You will also notice a row of houses across the street of similar design, along Trout Creek. Those houses were built by James Blue, a brother of my Grandma, Fanny Blue (Peeling).

Because most people didn't have a freezer in their homes in the old days, an entrepreneur named Bert Taylor could help you out should you have a large amount of perishable food to store. Bert called his business Taylor's Frosty Lockers. It was located on Saskatoon Avenue, right beside the Trent River. There wouldn't be much called for such a business anymore, but it did flourish for many years in that location.

Today we think of all the different places you can get a pizza or a coffee and donut in our town. In those days egg grading stations were a popular business enterprise. I can recall one run by Tommy Baker on Front Street, and another owned by Peter and Edith MacMillan on Bridge Street East. It was later to be owned by Eldon Carlaw.

The MacMillan's son Hector was in the air force during the war, and upon his return became a notable entrepreneur, and local politician. He started MacMillan's IGA, where Giant Tiger is today, and then operated Campbellford Chrysler in the old dance hall on Doxsee Avenue. In later years he was the proprietor of MacMillan's Convenience Store and Gas Bar. His son Hector MacMillan Jr. is the proprietor of the Ultramar gas station on Front St. Both of these gentlemen have served the town as mayor. Hector Jr. is our current mayor. His father passed away while in office.

I notice that our current bridge is undergoing some major re-surfacing at the present moment. It was built in 1967, Canada's centennial year. But do you remember the bridge before that? It was made with steel girders, encased in cement piers. The sidewalks consisted of wooden boards. By today's standards the bridge was pretty narrow. Two smaller vehicles could pass each other on the bridge, but if you weren't a very careful driver, you would touch your bumpers along the side boards of the bridge. Can you imagine what that would do to the so-called bumpers on our modern cars? It was a lift bridge with a huge block of cement to act as a counterweight. The bridge operation was under the able direction of Joe Poulton Sr. who sat in a little green control box office beside the bridge.

There was probably one-tenth of the traffic at that time compared to today, but there could be some dandy hold ups when the bridge was in the "up" position to let boats through, especially at the Queen Street end. Can you imagine the line ups and frustration the day the bridge mechanism malfunctioned while letting a boat through? We didn't fully appreciate our bridge's vital importance to the town until we couldn't get across it the rest of that day. Back in 1906, when we first became a town, I understand that we had a bridge with rounded arches. The Trent Canal was built in 1914, with cement core-walls containing the sewers.

Over the next few months as we approach our centennial in June 2006, why not take time to study some of our history and heritage? You will soon see why we have a 100 years well worth celebrating.