

YESTERDAY

News from the Tavistock and District Historical Society

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FILL 'ER UP: OLD CARS AND GARAGES - AUG.1-OCT.31

The executive of the Tavistock and District Historical Society poses with Bob Rudy's 1928 Model A Ford in front of the Museum/Archives on Maria Street in Tavistock. The current theme of the Museum (August 1 to October 31) is "Fill 'er Up" including memorabilia about old cars and garages in Tavistock. Left to right, seated are Ed Pellow, Sherrill Calder, Paul Bartlett, and standing: Roy Erb, Bruce Halliday, Shirley Wagler, Barb Matthies, and Bob Rudy, leaning on his car. Executive absent from the photo are Tim Whitlock, Bill Gladding, and Tim Mosher.

**Tavistock & District
Historical Society**

Executive:

Secretary – Sherrill Calder
Treasurer – Bob Rudy

Directors:

Paul Bartlett
Sherrill Calder
Roy Erb
Bill Gladding
Barb Matthies
Ed Pellow
Bob Rudy
Shirley Wagler
Tim Whitlock

Tim Mosher

Honourary Director:

Bruce Halliday

**Tavistock
& District
Historical
Society**

37 Maria Street,
Box 280,
Tavistock, Ontario,
Canada NOB 2R0

**MUSEUM
HOURS:**

Saturdays
10am-12 noon

Other times
by appointment

Fill 'er Up - AUGUST 1-OCTOBER 31

by Barbara Matthies

Do you remember when Tavistock had everything you needed in life and you didn't go shopping to Stratford, Woodstock or Kitchener for it?

One night, as I lay awake, at the time when we didn't have a grocery store, I remember when we had five grocery stores operating all at the same time, and all were very successful. As one thing leads to another as you lay awake, I went back to the 1950's and pictured in my mind all the businesses at that time. Mostly on Woodstock and Hope Streets, but others on side streets and some operating from their homes. I came up with over 85 business establishments. "Wow!" Tavistock was a booming town back then. Everyone had work and made a good living.

Tavistock Garages have also been very busy and successful over the years. Let's start with Jickling's Garage which later became Dyck's; Meisner's Garage and snack bar which became Schaefer's Service Station, then Mountain's and then Jutzi's; McDermott's Garage and then McDermott Motors with Michael, sons Frank, Norman and Stan and now grandson Ron. Horman's Garage became Ruby's and then Gummerson's Garage. We had two Supertest stations, one on Woodstock Street run by many proprietors over the years, A.B. Roth, Fred Weicker and Paul Kalbfleisch, Mike Steinman, "Red" Hannon. George Parkinson, Albert Wettlaufer, Ky Osborne, Gordon Neeb and Bob Stere. It then became Tavistock Auto Service run by Jim Weicker and Bruce Holst. After that it became Tavistock Car Clinic run by Mike Fahlenbock and Rob Gingerich.

On Hope Street was Mike's Service, also a Supertest Station, which later became Johnny's. Bourne's Garage later became

Zehr's Esso and Art Sippel's Garage which was taken over by his son Earl, Bricker's Garage and Fuel Distribution, Gus Strahm's Garage, Diehl's Garage and Bob's Garage which was formerly Houghton's.

Nuttal's and Horman's were in the implement business but also had gas pumps. Did you know Nuttal's sold Austin cars?

Then there was Russ Houghton and Bruce Schmidt who specialized in Auto Body Repair. Houghton also sold cars - mainly Volkswagen. Bourne's sold Chevrolet, Sippel's sold Chrysler products - mostly Dodge, and McDermott's first sold Chevrolet and Essex, then Plymouth.

Jicklings sold Model T Fords.

Can you imagine all these garages operating in our town, some of them continuously?

Visit us at the Museum on Saturday mornings from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Reminisce, see our display of garage memorabilia, calendars, old car parts, license plates, pictures of these garages and their history, and a display of vintage model cars from the early 1900's to the 1950's.

Below, a metal workbench from one of the local garages with tools and a collection of old license plates.



Schaefer's Sunoco Station, 5 Woodstock Street North



MUSEUM CALENDAR:

Please mark your calendar, check your attics, scour your basements and plan to participate in the 2009 lineup.

Displays feature items related to the theme loaned by people in the community as well as artifacts from the Historical Society's permanent collection of Tavistock and area memorabilia.

Aug. 1 – Oct 31

"Fill'er Up"
memorabilia from
garages and old cars.

Nov. 7 – Jan. 31

"Tavistock Artists"
grand opening of
Tavistock Art Exhibit

SEE US AT THE FAIR!

A weekend display of farm-related photos, tools, artifacts and machinery from days gone by.

Century Farms catalogued

by Shirley Wagler

Farming is a way of life still alive and well around Tavistock. We invited family farms to send us pictures, deeds, and stories from their families. Many were put on display at the Tavistock Museum in the spring of 2009. We were hoping for farms that had been in a family for a hundred years or more and we weren't disappointed. Many were designated Century Farms in 1967, the year we celebrated our Centennial Year in Canada, 1867-1967.

Family farms in East Zorra and South Easthope townships were labour intensive operations. First they needed to chop down massive trees, clear the stumps, saw the lumber to build a house and barn, then plant the crops and gardens. They had not heard the term "leisure time" and it's a good thing because they didn't have any time for leisure with one exception – the Sabbath Day of rest was a welcome relief from their labours.

Lutheran, Catholic and Mennonite congregations immediately began to organize and build churches. Many came from the same regions of Europe speaking the German dialect that you still hear today from the older generation. But all were eager to converse in English to be able to communicate with neighbours and local businesses.

Neighbourly help is still available if one has a

fire or flood but now there are also restoration companies that rush in. Times have changed! Many barn raising pictures and stories tell the tale of days gone by. The men prepared, measured and cut the lumber so it was ready to go. You will notice that women are usually in the picture. The women worked hard in the days before by planning what food would be served and preparing what they could in advance. Then the day the barn went up they had to cook for over a hundred men and boys.

Raising large families also meant raising cows, pigs and chickens to provide meat for the whole year. Butchering was usually shared by several families helping each other and was also a fun time. A welcome chance to share good times together. A huge garden meant a busy summer of picking and canning fruits and vegetables for the winter months. Glimpses of these labour intensive activities were hinted at in the pictures and stories.

Cutting woodlots for heating the homes in the winter was certain that wood heated twice. Grain was taken to the mill to grind for cattle feed and also used in flour to use in baking bread.

Family names were Bender, Blum, Brenneman, Kaufman, King, Mogk, Nicklas, Roth, Ruby, Schumm, Stock, Wagler, Weil, Wilker, and Witzel, to name a few.



Above, a local butchering operation.

Games people play



From our first game of Tiddlywinks to victoriously yelling “Bingo” to that sinking feeling of landing on Park Place with two hotels, all of us like to play games. We had games and toys galore set up at the museum for viewing and for play from May 2 to July 25. What fun we had! Some of us lost at checkers. Some learned a local game called Figmill that, in the old days, was often drawn on the back of the calendar and played with buttons. Others reminisced about tea parties with their favourite dolls. Still others told great stories about birthday parties where it was almost mandatory that “Pin The Tail On The Donkey” would be part of the fun. We also learned a few things about the games that we play.

Did you know that Monopoly is the most played game in the world? More than 750 million people have won and lost fortunes playing Monopoly. Did you know that pick-up-sticks can be traced back to 500BC? Did you know that Crokinole had its start right here in our community?

There’s always lots to see and do and learn at our museum.



Farm free-for-all!

Earlier this year the Historical Society went on a search. We were looking for photos related to farming so that we could chronicle, in picture form, what life was like in this farming community. People brought in wonderful pictures that told fabulous stories of life on the farm in years gone by. Some of our favourites depicted a big event in days gone by ... butchering day. Some farmers believed butchering should always be done when the moon was “filling up” as that would produce more meat. Others simply chose a clear cold day and went to work ... from sunup to sundown. The reward, of course, was a fine meal of homemade sausage (with pie, of course!) at the end of the day. Even the kids got involved although often on the hijinks end. Time for true confessions. How many of you remember tying a pig’s tail to the apron strings of one of the butchers and stifling your giggles until it was finally noticed?



NEED HELP?

Looking for help with your family history? We have a broad-based reference section ... several binders of obituaries, cemetery transcriptions for neighbouring townships, census records, old newspapers, family histories, school histories, church records and personal knowledge of many of the older families in the area. If a family member was part of the Armed Forces then perhaps we have the information you are looking for. Come in for a visit or call Mary at 519-655-9915.