

Vets, pets or people – Lemp's Pharmacy

VINTAGE VIEWS

By Tim Mosher

Tavistock and District Historical Society

John Lemp (1884-1957) was a man of many abilities and interests. Pharmacist, ophthalmologist, photographer, musician, civic and church administrator, business and family man, he made major contributions to the life of Tavistock and beyond.

In this photo, he's posing with Billy Leonard, his first cousin, showing much of the interior of his pharmacy in 1920. He took three photos from this angle over a 20-year period, posing similarly behind the counter illustrating how his shop changed in products and arrangement.

This photo was set up by Mr. Lemp with his big camera on a tripod and an assistant tripped the shutter. It's a beautiful illustration showing a wall of about 75 medicinal flasks with glass stoppers and boxed medicines for man and beast as he did double duty selling both veterinary supplies as well as medications for locals.

A folding camera with a pneumatic shutter release (to reduce camera vibrations) is in front of him, box cameras and brushes in the cabinet on the right and his pharmacy studies diploma overhead behind him. On a shelf is "Old Fashioned Spearmint Chewing Gum" similar to today's product. The framed item on the upper left says "Postage Stamp Permit" because as a wise businessman, Mr. Lemp knew that Saturday was when many farmers came to town to do their weekly shopping, but the post office was closed so they'd go to his store to buy stamps and per-

haps other things.

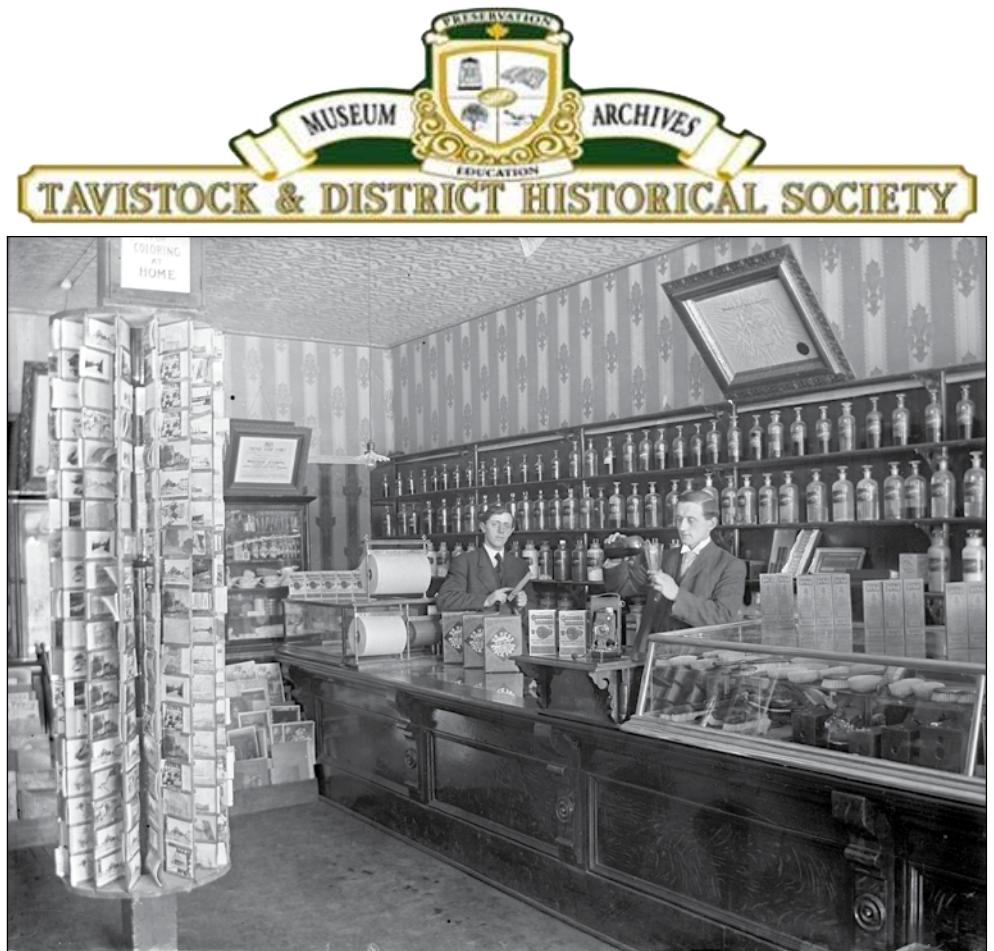
The carousel on the left features cards of all types including post cards of scenes of Tavistock. Mr. Lemp took the photos for these cards and had them printed to sell in his shop. Postage stamps for them were just two steps away.

The Lemp family was already well known in the area because John's father, John K. Lemp, was a respected mechanic who owned the village's first horseless carriage. As well, when he was 30 years old, he hand-built both the enormous wooden case and the internal mechanics of a grandfather clock. Forty years later, he built four more immense clocks, each of different hardwoods and slightly different designs and again, the internal metal works all as gifts for his family. One is now at the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa and the Tavistock and District Historical Society (TDHS) acquired the mahogany clock earlier this year.

A central part of the TDHS collection is the huge archive of glass negatives that John Jr. took and developed in his tiny darkroom at the back of his pharmacy. These glass negatives and the negatives that he kept from multiple photographers who preceded him by 30 years before he started in 1905, comprise an extraordinary look into the past that merits the envy of other historical societies.

The Lemp Studio collection of photos is a time machine.

Last week's History Mystery was: "What is a hint in this picture that might lead someone to think that the barmen had a sense of humour but in fact was not intended as humour at all?" It was a photo of the barroom, the proprietor Otto Jung and two employees posing for the camera at the Commercial Hotel in Tavistock in 1895. No one submitted the correct answer, which is, at first glance, it appears they're serving two glasses of water as you could see on the bar.



(JOHN LEMP; LEMP STUDIO COLLECTION #0460)

Proprietor John Lemp (right) measures medicine, while employee Billy Leonard looks on. Mr. Lemp took innumerable professional photos in his purpose-built studio of the citizens, landmarks, farms and local villages from 1905 to almost 1950. He saved five earlier photographers' negatives going back to 1875 which, altogether, has created an extraordinarily good photographic record of local life now housed at the Tavistock and District Historical Society.

However, very close inspection reveals that the glasses both have a pouring lip, which means that this water was used to cut (dilute) some types of alcohol, especially rye whiskey.

This week's History Mystery is: What is in this photo of Lemp's Pharmacy that tells

you the picture was taken after 1915? Send your answer, your first and last names and the name of your community or rural route number to tim_mosher@hotmail.com. The first reader to answer this correctly will have this information published in the next edition.

The great fireworks debate: When should they be allowed and how should the rules be enforced?

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Galen Simmons



As the sun sets in the leadup to Canada Day, or any fair-weather holiday for that matter, the sound of fireworks going off is rather commonplace.

Similarly, complaints on social media about scared dogs, lost sleep and the debris left behind by fireworks found on neighbouring properties and in nearby parks and green spaces the next morning are

also rather commonplace.

It's a pattern that seemingly repeats itself year after year. So, let's ask ourselves, are consumer fireworks more harmful than they're worth, or is the age-old tradition of setting off colourful explosions against the night sky worth keeping around?

Personally, and I say this knowing I'll rustle some feathers, I

don't much care for fireworks. I'm not really a fan of craning my neck to watch a display that is both too loud and too bright, and in the case of your standard backyard fireworks, leaves much to be desired.

And while I totally understand the concerns around fireworks for pets, livestock and wildlife, as well as the fire hazards they can pose when handled by someone who's maybe had a little too much to drink, I can't, in good faith, recommend their abolishment altogether.

I understand there are many who love fireworks displays and look forward to them as a final sendoff to our much-beloved summer holiday weekends, and I would never take that away from them. In my opinion, if you don't like them, go

inside and close the windows for a couple hours.

But I do agree there are those who abuse fireworks, setting them off at inappropriate times or in ways that unjustifiably disturb the peace in otherwise quiet communities.

In this week's Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette, I reported on Wellesley council's approval of a bylaw amendment limiting the setting off of fireworks in the township to between 8 and 11 p.m. on just three days a year – Victoria Day, Canada Day and Labour Day. The amendment also limits the sale of fireworks to brick-and-mortar stores, thereby eliminating roadside fireworks stands as of 2026, and imposes a \$500 fine for anyone setting off fireworks outside the prescribed days and times.

According to the staff report to council, the provisions in the Wellesley bylaw amendment are being considered by the councils of other Waterloo Region municipalities.

Personally, I think this is a good way of addressing noise and safety concerns while maintaining a beloved summer tradition. Set off your fireworks for a couple hours on the holidays themselves and leave the rest of the weekend for those of us who don't appreciate the noise to enjoy in peace and quiet.

Do you think these restrictions adequately address the concerns around fireworks, do they go too far or not far enough? Send your thoughts in a letter to the editor to thewtgazette@gmail.com.