

Main Street Comments

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A week ago a prospective customer walked into a local store and surprised the clerk by asking "Have you any slate pencils?" The answer: "Slate pencils? I haven't sold any of those pencils for years, not since I quit school, and that wasn't yesterday".

Slate pencils, the kind that sometimes scratched, and squeaked and oftentimes broke are an educational article of the distant past. At times they may be noticed in stores selling toys, such as Don Scott's of Lindsay, but even then they are not the long thin slate pencils of those "good old golden rule days". The Christmas package is usually sold as a toy and it consists of small slate and one small pencil.

They still can be a lot of fun, especially if one has enough saliva and a big sleeve to moisten the slate and erase the scrawls and drawings.

There were times in the old days when the girl with pig-tails slipped a slate with the right answers back to the boy with the short stove-pipe pants three seats away. In those times some school children had more money than others and the guys with the money brought to school a slate neatly bound with red cloth, a real classy article, and one which did not make a loud clatter when it fell to the floor.

Getting back to the customer who wanted the old fashioned slate pencils, just by chance she happened to visit the Sam Welch store in Minden, and at first was informed by the clerk that slates went out of fashion years ago and have disappeared. The highly respective owner, however, overheard the enquiry and delved into a remote section of a remote shelf and came up with a box of the old fashioned slate pencils. Another satisfied customer at the Welch emporium.

The Sam Welch store is a remarkable place of business,

just about as old as the hills, filled with merchandise of this modern age, and every now and then customers find articles they have been unable to find in other stores.

A few years ago a movie picture outfit searched high and low in Toronto and in other parts of the country for a pair of ladies high buttoned shoes. The search was almost given up and the producer was exasperated when these articles could not be found for a movie of the olden days. Lo and behold three pairs were located in the Welch Store at Minden. They were handed over with same cheerful smile the proprietor has greeted his customers with for many decades past.