

ON THE MAIN STREET

with FORD MOYNES

In this day and age when fantastic and fabulous space ships are sailing through the star lit sky and when strange highly mechanized scientific contraptions are orbiting the earth and others are endeavouring to make a soft landing on the Moon, mundane things on Earth are mere commonplace and hardly worthy of news mention.

One Senior citizen, Frank O'Connor, 63 Russell Street East was heard to remark a few days ago: 'It is all so wonderful and times today in line of endeavour have noted many changes. I think of how the common ordinary barnyard fowl has practically disappeared, the old hen house with its roosting hen's nest, the farm women gathering up eggs in their aprons, the proud crowing of the rooster and the cackling of Mrs. Hen. What a

difference today in this aspect of farming. Today there is the miraculous incubator and the chickens are hatched by hundreds of thousands.'

Mr. O'Connor finally came "down to earth" to tell the story of the hen, chicken and egg business at one time operated by William Flavelle on King Street. "It was one of the largest cold storage plants of its kind in Ontario in those days. Farmers brought hens by the hundreds to the "Chicken House". The busy days were between the dates of the Lindsay Fair and Christmas when the staff was added to by men and women seeking work at plucking hens. The pluckers were paid by the bird and the fastest hands and fingers could disrobe birds of their plumage at the rate of forty a day. In fact they were not allowed to pluck any

greater number. The chicken house was a holy sight -- lines of men and women sitting shoulder to shoulder and the feathers flying all over the place. It was a common sight to see feathers knee deep on the floor. The feathers were bundled and sold -- perhaps for feather ticks. The birds were sold all over Ontario and some went as far as the Canadian West and into the nearby States."

Our informant went on to tell of the hundreds of cheeses brought from cheese factories in the district, most of the cheese cases were of veneer—made by the firm of Ryder and Kitchener which was located on the river bank at the foot of Ridout and Russell Streets. Later the firm built a mill on the Scugog's banks south of the C.N.R. railway

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bridge, known as the iron bridge.

Mr. O'Connor added, "Then came the disastrous fire in the Fall of 1917 when the packing house, chicken house and the entire buildings were destroyed. "That was a distinct loss to many people. It was a spectacular fire and I remember seeing what appeared to be hundreds of white rats leaving the burning building and seeing them scurry to the edge of the water. I also recall the tons of melted cheese, butter, lard and eggs which flowed from the building, across the railway tracks, down the river bank and into the Scugog River like molten metal."

Some of the employees at the old Flavelle cold storage plant included:

Howard Graham, W. McGill, Bill Balance, Frank Robe, Frank Ranson, Harry Abercrombie, Blondie Henderson, Dan Winn, Bill Crowley, Ed O'Neill, Mike Burke, Charles Burke, Frank Beamish, Adam

McCabe, Sam Bissette, Joe O'Neill, Ginger Arnot, Frank O'Connor, Joe Laundry, Lou Penrose, Herb Wendt, George Henderson, Herb Jackson, Bill Stalker, T. Grozelle, Abe Hartley (Engineer), Bill Grey (Engineer), Frank Burke, Paul O'Neill, Dick O'Neill, C. O'Neill, Art Parkin, (Manager), W. Hartley, and Jack Balance.

Extra help employed during the chicken plucking season included: L. Porter, Ned Bissette, Fred Taylor, C. Taylor, R. Sadler, Earl and Gordon Henderson, Joe White, W. Stalker, W. Jackson, Hank Mallon, Andy O'Leary, Pat and Bill White were employed at the time as salesmen and buyers.

In closing an interesting conversation, Mr. O'Connor added: "The people of this Town, merchants and others owed a great deal to the Flavells and the Carews -- they paid good wages in those days and these two firms were the means of providing for many Lindsay families."