

Big A Company cont'd.

especially on market days, she added.

"Those days we all went to the Market Square to buy fresh vegetables from the farmers selling their produce there," noted Reid.

During the war years, the Armouries next door was also a constant beehive of activity.

Another Belleville resident Bill Prentice was a longtime employee of Big A. Beginning as a salesman in 1951, he later went on to being the manager of the manufacturing side of the business which was located at a two-story building on Station Street. There, the company built car radios, he said. That building no longer exists today.

"The bigger part of our business was electronic equipment. We made a lot of money putting up antennas when they first came out. We brought them up from the States by the truckload. I went down to the States and I got the contract for Channel Master antenna system and we sold them by the truckload.

"I was supposed to distribute it all over Canada and then they took it back. The reason being that our operation here was too little and I ended up distributing only in Ontario," said Prentice.

Prentice recalled Bill Bell was the manager of the company at the time. Bell was married to the Big A owner's daughter, Joan, he said.

Under Bell's management, the company expanded to include branches in Ottawa, Cornwall, Kingston, Peterborough, and Oshawa. In later years the company began designing and manufacturing stereo systems for motels, hotels and apartment buildings.

"It was a good company to work for," concluded Prentice who kept working for Big A even after it was sold in 1963 to Zenith Electric. He stayed with the company after it was sold to a division of Northern Electric, which evolved to Nortel. By this time, the Big A was renamed Nedco, a short form for Northern Electric Distribution Co.

The doors of this company, once a provider of equipment that kept entertainment alive in the homes of Belleville and area, closed in 1975.

Contact Benzie Sangma at:
bsangma@cogeco.ca

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