

continued.

He helped them see life in the county

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life in Picton? Earl Grubin explained that his father was a watchmaker and jeweler and ran a small shop in the village of Stouffville. As was the case in those days he also sold eyeglasses to people who needed them.

"There were no tests then. People just came by and picked out a pair of eyeglasses with lenses so they could read," he said.

One day a manager with the optical laboratory in Toronto came by the shop and suggested Earl Grubin attend the College of Optometry which then was connected with the University of Toronto.

"I thought about it and enrolled in 1926," said Dr. Grubin. The tuition then was a moderate fee, about \$200 per year. During the two year program he studied such subjects as optics, anatomy, physics and biology, and optometry.

He graduated in 1928 with a class of nine men and one woman. He met one of his former classmates last year at a convention, "He is the only one I've seen since then and he is still an optometrist," said Dr. Grubin.

In the first summer after

his graduation he worked six weeks in Brantford.

Then he set up his own office as an optometrist in Stouffville. "The equipment was similar back then," he explained, "We used a phoropter to test eyes. It's a machine made up of a battery of lenses. It was a little more primitive back then but things haven't changed too much."

He bought his equipment for about \$100. "Today it would cost \$25,000 to get started," he pointed out.

"It was slow going for a while," said Dr. Grubin, of his days in 1929 and 1936 in Stouffville. That was the time of the depression and economic conditions weren't good, he added.

He had to travel each week to other centres to see people who wanted their eyes tested. "The equipment was fairly portable then," he said.

It was in August of 1931 that a traveller working for one of the optical laboratories came through Stouffville and mentioned that Picton and Lindsay were in need of an optometrist.

Dr. Grubin decided to look into the situation further and said it was too costly to set up in Lindsay and that he thought Picton

was too small. At that time the town had a population of 3,300 and Dr. Grubin said he wanted to work in a town of at least 5,000.

Duncan D'Esterre operated a jewelry store then at 255 Main Street and the optician's office was in the same building. After deliberation Dr. Grubin made the move and has been in Picton ever since.

It wasn't until about ten years ago that he remodelled the interior of the building, after Mr. D'Esterre moved his store to another location in town. It was business as usual until about two years ago.

Things were getting a bit hectic and there seemed to be less and less time for eye examinations as more and more time was spent with people trying to decide which frame to chose from the thousands available.

"It was when I ordered samples and before they got here I was told they were discontinued that I decided to turn that part of the business over to someone else," commented Dr. Grubin. Picton Optical Vision Centre now handles all sales of frames, at 255 Main St. The office used to be the waiting room for Dr. Grubin's patients.

What has he done to keep up with any changes in the field of optometry over the years? "I've kind of thought things out for myself and

devised ways that are my own system," responded Dr. Grubin.

His decision to retire was affected in part by change. "I can remember taking an order to the post office on a Tuesday and getting the lenses back by Thursday, all the way from Montreal," he explained. Now, he added, it takes two weeks at least.

"I feel in a way I've had enough. Things are getting hectic," he commented. When Duncan D'Esterre moved off Main St., "I think I became the oldest man in business here," he said.

"I've looked after a few families here for four generations," he said.

He measures his success, he added, by the number of satisfied patients. He has seen an average of 65-70 people each month and over 53 years that is a lot of pairs of eyes.

Commenting on op-

tometry as a career today, he said, "The expectations of young people are too high. They expect everything to be handed on a platter and that includes a big income."

"I used to charge \$2 for an eye test and if the person needed new lenses and could use the same frame then it cost \$7 or \$10," said Dr. Grubin. Now an eye examination costs \$21.70 (at least that's what OHIP pays), and frames can cost as much as \$70.

What about the future for optometrists? Dr. Grubin said, "What is happening to the auto industry could happen to optometrists." Twenty-two years ago I wrote a letter to a Toronto paper and asked why the automobile manufacturers were trying to commit suicide. Selling imported eyeglass frames is doing the same thing to Canadian and American made frames."

Everyone has different ideas about style, "When it comes down to the final

decision it's only what the person can wear that really counts," he said.

"I wrote Bausch and Lomb in Rochester, who make frames, and suggested changes in design so they could be more competitive, but no change happened," he said.

He is welcoming his retirement so he can spend more time with his wife Beatrice (Jones) whom he married in 1935. They live in their house on Paul St. which they built 30 years ago.

Besides being able to spend more time with his wife, Mr. Grubin said they both will enjoy visiting more often with their son Vernon and his family in Sudbury.

Dr. Grubin also plans to spend time enjoying his favorite pastime, boating. "I've always liked the water and boating and Picton has both. I think this is the best place in Ontario to live."

Grubin, Dr. Earl Alexander

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