

TERWILLIGAR, Wilson

Postal clerk retires after 35 years

By MARGARET HAYLOCK
Staff Reporter

PICTON — Postal clerk Wilson Terwilligar retired Wednesday, after almost 35 years in a job he says drew him close to many residents of the community.

While there were no outstanding events in his career, the 15 years he spent working on the wickets brought him into daily contact with people from all walks of life.

"I liked to joke and tease," he says, recalling the humorous exchanges he enjoyed with customers.

The former Camp Picton was an active military base, when Terwilligar worked at the wickets and many of the Canadian Guards traded quips with him while getting their mail.

The postal clerk says he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force at 17 years of age and served during the last two years of World War 11.

He then took a job with Roblin's Dairy in Belleville but relocated to Prince Edward County, a short time later, to work for SunJoy Canning in Bloomfield. Terwilligar held this job for six years, before becoming an employee of the Picton Post Office on Aug. 3, 1955.

He reports "no great changes" at the local post office in the past 34 years, but does remember selling three-cent stamps.

Before he started his job as a postal clerk, the town's old post office had undergone major renovations. The original building had approximately six rooms and different floor levels. The new post office, located at the same site is on one floor.

"There is only one person left from the old gang, Elmer Hewton," Terwilligar says, observing several of his early-day co-workers have retired or died.

He worked under five postmasters — Ross Greenfield, Robert Carter, Morley Galt, Keith Gourlie and John Thibault. Terwilligar has served as acting postmaster and assistant postmaster, during his career.

While his job may have seemed somewhat routine, much of the time, Terwilligar does recall one exciting event — the discovery of the famous inverted Seaway stamp, which was sold through the Picton Post Office before the error was found.

The stamps were sold from just three outlets in Canada and now are worth substantial sums of money to philatelists. Locally, the stamps were sold to Lake Ontario Cement Ltd. and the Bank of Nova Scotia.

Terwilligar and a co-worker handled the stamps but did not observe the error and were unaware of their potential value. He says if they had spotted the mistake they would have been required to report it, immediately.

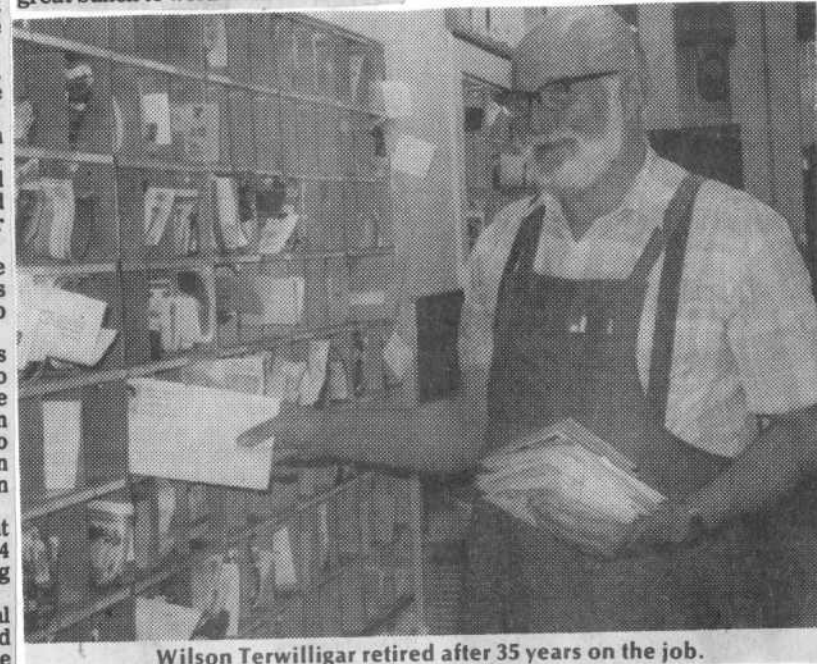
When the postal clerk joined the staff of the post office here there was no union, just an association.

"We did go out once and picket but it was not legal to strike," he says. The right to strike was granted in the 1960's and Terwilligar served as area councillor for the union for three years.

Terwilligar says he plans to spend his retirement enjoying his hobbies of golf and curling. He is also a member and past president of the Kiwanis Club of Picton and expects to become more involved with club activities. He and his wife, Clara, also hope to travel in eastern Canada.

As he prepared to leave work, for the last time, yester. day, he observed, "This post office and the people in it have all tried to serve the public to the best of their ability. I have had a great bunch to work with."

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