

MARNER, Frances + Wally.

□ PEOPLE

Marner couple recalls meeting

By Bill Hunt

The Intelligencer

When Frances and Wally Marner first met in England in 1946, it hardly seemed they were destined to spend the next 50 years together.

Wally was in the Canadian army and Frances was chief clerk for the Canadian Chaplain Service Overseas when the young soldier went to her and lodged a complaint about something.

"I wasn't about to take that," she recalls, noting she'd followed the correct procedure. She stood her ground. Before long the couple were dating and as Wally remembers, "after a long, 10-week courtship, we were married, Jan. 2, 1946."

The couple returned to Canada where Frances joined Wally behind the counter at the corner grocery store they operated for decades on the north-east corner of Queen and Albert streets.

Wally had started working there after his father, Fred, bought the store March 23, 1932. He was 14 and delivered goods on his bicycle. In 1942 he joined the army and went overseas.

The couple was to return home on the same ship but ironically, Frances got bumped on the passenger list by a British war bride. However, they arrived home within a week of each other, she says.

The store, which was attached to their house, would become a regular



Intelligencer photo by Bill Hunt

Wally and Frances Marner toast 50 years of marriage.

stop for many of Belleville's east end residents during the decades ahead. The long wooden counter became part of their living quarters after they closed the store Mar. 31, 1984 and converted the area

Today the Marners have a daughter, Linda of Manotick, Ont., son Wally Jr. of London, Ont. and two grandchildren, Rob and Renee.

When asked what he liked about working at the store, Wally replies without hesitation, "the people, there's no doubt about that."

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