

Second Glance

SOME SHOW - CASE STORIES

By Viva Richmond Graham

A country's cultural heritage is the gift of its people. — Anon.

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One of Belleville's well-known stores on Front Street, was the McFee Jewelry Store.

The business was founded in 1860 by Mr. Angus McFee, then later taken over by his nephew, John McFee, upon whose retirement in 1953, was closed.

Today at the Hastings County Museum, "Glanmoe House", curator Marten Lewis points out:

"The show-cases in this room are from the Angus McFee Store; a gift to the museum by Angus McFee, son of the late John McFee. Also, here is an excellent photograph of the store's interior, which shows the arrangement of the cases in which the merchandise of jewelry was displayed."

Angus McFee, Foster Ave., son of the late Mr. John McFee, who presented the cases from his family's store to the museum recalls:

"Though they are not antique, they are beautifully designed mahogany cases which were custom-made at the Jones Firm of Dundas, Ontario, in 1913, without benefit of nail or screw.

"The entire wall-cases which are alternate bay (round-shaped) and flat, as well as the horse-shoe floor cases are bolted together, thus allowing, by law, their removal, at the time my father retired. The cases would be extremely expensive to duplicate today."

"I shall always remember what a beautiful jewelry store was McFee when I came to Belleville as a bride, in 1929," reminisces Mrs. Edson Logan whose late husband was the well-known manager of the store.

"My husband, whose father at one time operated a hotel in Belleville was born, however, in Hastings. As a boy of 14 years old, he wanted to be a watch-maker. Later he went to Toronto where he found an opening at Kents Jewelry Store, on Yonge Street.

"One day he heard a manager for a jewelry store was needed in Belleville, through a traveller in the business; applied, was accepted and thus began our married life here, where Mr. Logan remained with Mr. McFee until his retirement in 1953.

"The following year, my husband went into business for himself, on Bridge Street, East, and so remained until his passing in 1973—twenty years later. Our son-in-law, Mr. Lynch is now in charge of the business on Front Street."

A friend and business associate of Mr. Logan's was the late Adeile Stacey of Brockville. By the kindness of Mrs. Logan, we met, and wish to present, as well as, thank Mrs. D.E. Moran, McDonald Ave., a former Brockvillian, who remembers the Stacey Jewelry Store as a child, and relates:

"The Stacey's, a wealthy English family, owned a beautiful home in the east end of Brookville, were, you might say, the aristocracy of the town.

"Their jewelry store, as long as I can remember, occupied the same location,

and was the same shade of green. Its interior was and still is beautifully adorned by the same exquisitely hand-carved mahogany showcases. Cases such as are never seen any more; so rare, so beautiful, installed in 1863, when the business was founded.

"I have an uncle, now 90 years old, who started as a junior clerk there and never worked elsewhere, until he retired. Only men were employed. I do not remember ever seeing a woman as a clerk there. The men wore dark suits and whenever I went there I felt I was in church; the atmosphere was so formal and dignified.

"Should another customer enter the store while one clerk was engaged, the clerk would never leave his customer to call another clerk at the back of the store. Instead, he used a little clicker kept in his pocket. It's click summoned help at once.

"Adeile, who never married, maintained his own apartment above the store when he took over the business upon his father's retirement. After his parents passed on, he lived, until his death, in the family mansion, which is now turned into apartments.

"In his will, Adeile stipulated that the clerks (there were four) would inherit the store and the name Stacey be removed.

"The name of the senior clerk was chosen. Today the jewelry store, its showcases as beautiful as ever, is no longer known as Stacey's but ...Winfield's."

McFee Family

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