

A-Bell Family (03-02) P.1

25 July 73

# One man's dream is Cobourg's own little Smithsonian

One man's dream...

That's what Ray Bell has created at his recently opened "Bell Collection" on the Danforth Road on the northside of Cobourg.

We took a leisurely tour the other day through his attractive new building on the south side of highway 401. It is one man's own museum collection of hundreds of items that have interested him over the past 20 years, and he built a building to house them. There is a lot more room in his house now.

Ray Bell is happiest when he has a big wrench in his hand. His collection shows his appreciation of mechanical items. There are old steam engines, farm machinery, an old Model "T", an ancient "Indian" motorcycle, pumps, wagons, a "Chalk" buggy made in Port Hope. On the warm afternoon we visited, Ray was putting away with a huge Rolls-Royce engine. "It was a mammoth thing and came from "Miss Supertest", the Canadian powerboat which had made a world's record. This was the type of engine that had powered British Spitfires in the Battle of Britain. Ray pointed out the supercharger at its rear. "It's that supercharger," he said, "which saved Britain. It gave the Spits an extra few thousand feet over the German planes. People forget these things. Yes, people forget these things..."

But Ray Bell doesn't.

Then we walked around the big main showroom, and he pointed out



New building on Danforth Road

to the Spaulding Inn, up to Barnum House, then bring all the people back...But it would take four hours, and nobody has four hours anymore...Still, it might work..."

Ray Bell has started something in Cobourg. There is still a lot to be done as his collection takes form. He is interested in everything, so today's collection is a bit eclectic - from maps to fancy whisky bottles. But the strong theme of local technology is there. That is his real interest. He has reconstructed a blacksmith shop, a harness shop, and an oldtime kitchen. It is the

a few years will also be another attractive historic restoration, but very much in use for community purposes.

The Bell Collection is one man's dream. It is the beginning of something really great for the Cobourg community.

It is going to be around Cobourg a long, long time after Ray Bell is not, and he has carved for himself a bit of posterity.

As the years go by, obviously, he is going to narrow his collection lines, and specialize, and he knows this, too.

But as we looked across at the big CF-100 jet he has parked just behind an old steam engine bedecked in Union Jacks, we thought it would be a shame for him to try to specialize too soon.

A person needs a few surprises. And that's why Ray Bell is having so much fun.

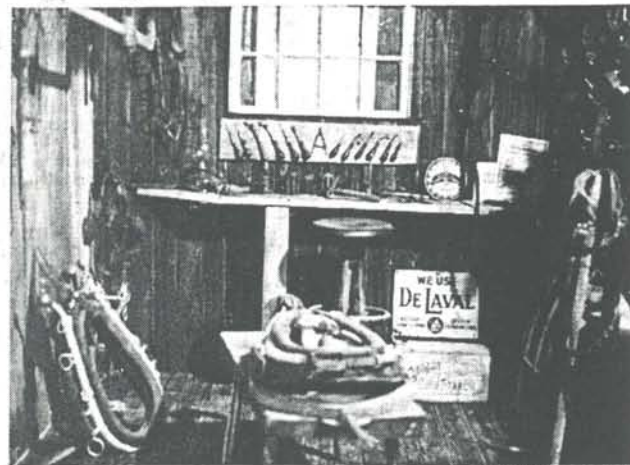


Photo by Donna Kennedy

Reconstructed harness shop

Lenah Fisher's preservation and commercial use of Marie Dressler's birthplace is a fine example - a bit of history saved and made into a delightful spot for this community and for visitors. Then there is Barnum House at Grafton. With the Haldimand township council as sponsors and the great work of Mrs. Luella Young, Barnum House has lived to bring enjoyment to many local people and to passing visitors.

In a somewhat similar fashion, the Goddard's "Spaulding Inn" at Grafton has been preserved as a delightful reminder of the old days,

25 July 73

# One man's dream is Cobourg's

One man's dream...

That's what Ray Bell has created at his recently opened "Bell Collection" on the Danforth Road on the northside of Cobourg.

We took a leisurely tour the other day through his attractive new building on the south side of highway 401. It is one man's own museum collection of hundreds of items that have interested him over the past 20 years, and he built a building to house them. There is a lot more room in his house now.

Ray Bell is happiest when he has a big wrench in his hand. His collection shows his appreciation of mechanical items. There are old steam engines, farm machinery, an old Model "T", an ancient "Indian" motorcycle, pumps, wagons, a "Chalk" buggy made in Port Hope. On the warm afternoon we visited, Ray was pattering away with a huge Rolls-Royce engine. It was a mammoth thing and came from "Miss Supertest", the Canadian powerboat which had made a world's record. This was the type of engine that had powered British Spitfires in the Battle of Britain. Ray pointed out the supercharger at its rear. "It's that supercharger," he said, "which saved Britain. It gave the Spits an extra few thousand feet over the German planes. People forget these things. Yes, people forget these things..."

But Ray Bell doesn't.

Then we walked around the big main showroom, and he pointed out an oldtime outboard motor. "You hear a lot about return-exhaust these days," he said, "It is supposed to cut down on pollution. Well,



**New building on Danforth Road**

to the Spaulding Inn, up to Barnum House, then bring all the people back...But it would take four hours, and nobody has four hours anymore...Still, it might work..."

Ray Bell has started something in Cobourg. There is still a lot to be done as his collection takes form. He is interested in everything, so today's collection is a bit eclectic -- from maps to fancy whisky bottles. But the strong theme of local technology is there. That is his real interest. He has reconstructed a blacksmith shop, a harness shop, and an oldtime kitchen. It is the mechanical side of pioneer life and community life which interests him.

Lenah Fisher's preservation and commercial use of Marie Dressler's birthplace is a fine example -- a bit of history saved and made into a delightful spot for this community and for visitors. Then there is Barnum House at Grafton. With the Haldimand township council as sponsors and the great work of Mrs. Luella Young, Barnum House has lived to bring enjoyment to many local people and to passing visitors.

In a somewhat similar fashion, the Goddard's "Spaulding Inn" at Grafton has been preserved as a delightful reminder of the old days while also being a commercial business. Cobourg's Victoria Hall is

a few years  
attractive  
very many  
purposes

The Bell  
dream.  
something  
Cobourg

It is going  
long, long  
and he hopes  
posterity.  
As the  
going to  
and speed  
too.

But a  
CF-100  
an old  
Union J  
a sham  
too soon

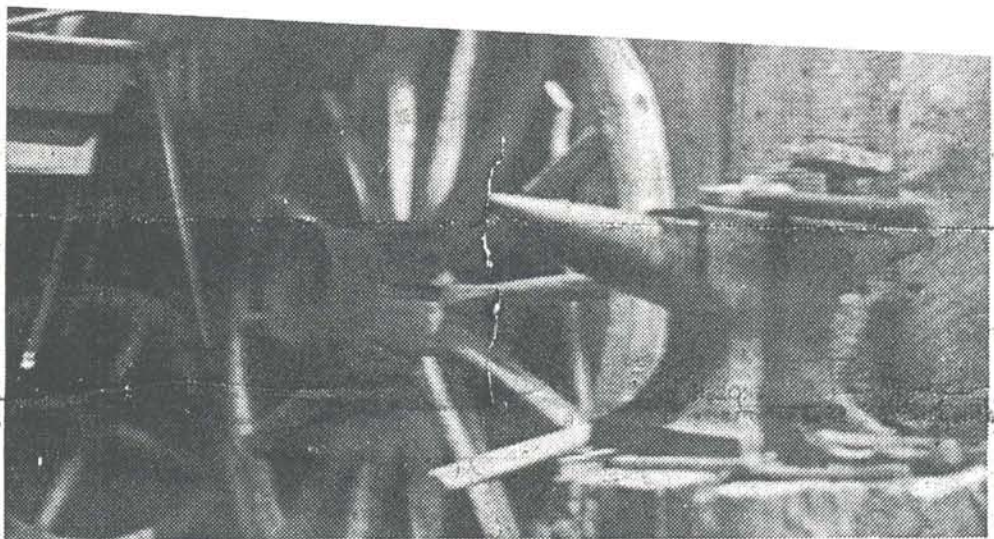
A pe  
And th  
much

there's nothing new under the sun. This old motor had a return exhaust 30 or 40 years ago."

There was a single-cylinder pump from a dairy -- a simple little thing. "You just hook a steam pipe on here," he said, "and away it goes. This little engine ran the whole factory." And he climbed around to the side and spun the wheel himself. He made it so realistic, we expected to see steam gush forth from the empty pipe. After all, if steam could make the wheel go round, surely the reverse would be true and if Ray Bell's muscle power made the wheel go round, surely this would make steam.

We walked out into the big field to the east. All around its perimeter are farm wagons, a manure spreader, and other implements.

"See that old wagon. That delivered coal all around Cobourg. I'm going to work on that threshing machine. It's a beauty...I've thought of running a stagecoach down the old Danforth Road...I don't know if anybody would take the time now, though...I'd stop off at the Halfway House where Jack Beech lives, then go on down to Grafton, spin around



Wheel, anvil in blacksmith shop

But just to save things, he picks up everything until he finds a better use. "See that big crest over there. It came off the depot in Cobourg. They were throwing it out. In five years, no one will ever know what the depot was in Cobourg. But it was a mighty important part of the life of this town..."

Our thoughts went to other collections, and other restorations.

A-Bell Family (03-02)  
P. 2

