

# Travelling Salesmen



We don't realize how many people make a living selling door-to-door today. The home-maker gets calls from all the girls, who are going to make her more beautiful: Avon, Sarah Coventry, Beauty Counsellor, etc., as well as many people selling products for the home: Amway, Fuller, Tupperware, Bestline, as well as Rawleighs and Watkins. Then there are the magazine and book salesmen. One has to learn when to say "no."

The working force gets calls from safety shoe trucks, the garages have tool trucks calling, and the lunch truck arrives daily at most work places. All this does not include the dozens of salesmen and good-will people, who make a living from calling on business and professional people.

Probably the housewife of years ago faced the same thing. When our town was young, a tinker, driving a van-like horse-drawn vehicle would ply the town and surrounding farms, selling pots and pans and an endless array of household items.

The patent medicine man didn't call at houses, but would set up a small stand by the old post office corner, and after warming his prospective cus-

tomers up with a show, would commence to sell all manner of cure-alls: health salts, herbal medicines and elixirs, and linaments for both man and beast.

Of course, many of us can remember when the Indian squaws from Chippawa or Cape Croker would appear each summer with their beautiful handwoven baskets and sweetgrass containers. And their men would come selling Indian furniture. These people would often accept used clothing in return for their wares.

Until fifty years ago, a rag and bone man would drive his horse and wagon around town calling "Rags and bones! Rags and bones!" Periodically a man would arrive on the street with a large grinding wheel to sharpen milady's knives and scissors. Some summer days, the ice cream man would come by on his bicycle and side car, ringing his little bell. Sometimes a popcorn vendor made his entry with his steam whistle.

All this was besides the weekly call from a fish truck (all fish on ice) and the daily calls by the milkmen, breadman and the iceman.

# Two Stores On Jackson Street

## ETHEL MAY'S

Before the turn of the century, Walkerton had a livery stable operated by John May. In 1906, Walkerton's first car made its appearance.

Perhaps John felt this prophesied the end of the livery stables, because, about 1910 he changed business and opened a grocery store on Jackson Street in a small building, now gone, and on the present site of MacDuff Motors, three doors north of the Queen's Hotel.

After John May died, his daughter, Ethel, carried on the business. By today's standards it was a small operation, but was complemented by Arscott's butcher shop close by (later Sparlings). She did a steady business.

Ethel also had a large candy counter that attracted a good flow of kids spending their pennies at her place. She operated the business until 1934, when she closed shop. Later she married John Potter, who was employed for many years by the Walkerton Electric Company (later P.U.C.).

## GOODE AND MacKAY'S

Just a short distance north of May's store was another larger and busier grocery store, — Goode & MacKay's. This store, in business before the turn of the century, was operated by Bob Goode and "Wig" MacKay. They had a more modern operation and also provided delivery service.

"Wig" MacKay was a jovial man who didn't believe in patronizing barber shops. His long hair earned him his nickname. His partner, Robert Goode, was the bookkeeper and had a keen business head.

Bob Goode's family lived at Maple Hill and ran the Maple Hill post office from their big red brick home in the 1800's. His dad, John Goode, also operated a store there at one time.

Bob worked hard for Walkerton over the years, both on council and various committees. He lived with his mother in the large house just west of the Baptist Church (now owned by Ross and Ruth Hobley).

Wig was a bachelor and liv-

ed on Jackson Street, where the new Lutheran Church was recently built.

Goode & MacKay was one of the last stores in town to have open barrels of various bulk grocery items from which shoppers could purchase. The store was later modernized by Bob Marriott, who operated stores in Mildmay and Walkerton. Later, Jack Schnurr, his brother-in-law, took over the store. Gradually the merchandise changed to clothing and general merchandise and later still, Bert and Irene McCullough bought the business.

When the Bank of Montreal decided to build a new and larger bank about 1970, the store was demolished.

The parking lot behind the new bank uses the lot where Bob Goode and Wig MacKay spent most of their lives.

**FOOTNOTE:** The following was submitted by Bert Disch in answer to Richard Skiba's enquiry. A story about effects the cold winter of 1934 had at the Dairy will follow later.

This taxes my memory going back 50 years, but I will try to answer his enquiry as best I can.

## I Price of Milk

Milk was sold in pint and quart glass bottles and I believe the price was 5c a pint, 9c per quart. Buttermilk was sold in quarts only for 5c. I think butter sold for about 20c lb., cream was sold in half pints and pints for 7c and 12c, and whipping sold for 10c a half pint. Tickets sold took the place of cash.

## II Number of Homes Served

I think I would be quite conservative in saying, the route I serviced entailed about two hundred calls or thereabouts, encompassing the east, south and west side of the town.

## III Winter Delivery

The wheels would be removed from the summer wagon and replaced with front and back runners which were installed by blacksmith Neil Smith. The horse would be shod with special rubber winter shoes which prevented slipping and provid-