

# REFLECTIONS

OF

## Walkerton's Past

BY

### The Cordwainer

# Sparling's Butcher Shop

1984



Hil Sparling is shown with a prize beef he bought at the Christmas Fair about 1940.



Clare Sparling pins a corsage on Mrs. Wm. Scheffter on his last day in business.

— PICTURES COURTESY CLARE SPARLING.

When Hilliard Sparling came back from serving Overseas during the First World War, he wasn't long finding work. John Arscott operated a butcher shop on Jackson Street, just north of the Queen's Ho-

tel and he needed help.

By 1920, "Hil" had entered into a partnership and the store became known as "Arscott and Sparling's." At that time, grocery stores handled very little meat, so their only opposition was Krueger and Lettner's Butcher Shop (where Stark's grocery is now).

The first customer to come in for meat, early on the day the partnership started, was Dan Krampp, who remained a steady customer until the store closed. Mrs. Wm. Scheffter was another customer that first day, and she also remained a regular customer for over the succeeding fifty years. She even came in and placed a meat order on her wedding day.

In those days, the shop opened at 6:30 in the morning and closed at six p.m. daily. Saturdays the store closed at midnight. There were few telephones in Walkerton, and the early opening allowed factory workers a chance to place their order as they went to work. It was delivered by horse and rig to the house during the morning.

The delivery service was an important part of Sparling's business over the years. A horse and rig was driven on daily rounds, not only to deliver orders, but also to take orders for delivery the next day.

Sparling's had one horse called "Jack" that pulled their rig for years. Jack became so familiar with the regular route, with its stops, that the driver would walk door-to-door as the horse stopped along the road. Jack was even taught to shake hands.

By about 1950, delivery vans were replacing the horse and rig, so Sparling's sold Jack to some Mennonite farmers near Elmira.

A couple of years later, Ray Giesler (who worked for Sparling's) was passing through Elmira, when he saw a black horse tied in front of a store. He stopped, went over to the horse and said: "Jack, shake hands!" Sure enough, it was Jack.

Over the years, Sparling's had many loyal customers, as well as many loyal employees. Ray Giesler learned butchering from Sparling's. Henry Schultz worked for many years behind their counter, after first working for Krueger & Lettner's. Among their other help over the years were: Gerry Hesch, Norm Freiburger, Cyril VonHatten and Roy O'Hagan.

In 1942, Clare Sparling left school to work with his dad and learn the butchering business. For over twenty years they worked as a team, until Hil's death in 1963. Clare car-

ried on the business, with the aid of his wife, Ethel, for another eleven years.

In October, 1974, the doors

of Sparling's Meat Market opened for the last customers, and Mrs. Wm. Scheffter was one of the customers that morning.

## The Cordwainer

# James Warren

One of the men who was very involved with the planning and development of our area in the early days was James Warren. He was born near Acton in 1937, his parents having come from Scotland.

Warren was interested in surveying from an early age and by 1864 had earned his surveyor's certificate. He carried on this career in Lucknow and area for some years, then went to Kincardine where he married.

In 1893 James Warren, with his wife and two daughters, Winifred and Agnes, moved to Walkerton where Ruth was born later. In 1902 he built the fine brick home at the corner of Colborne and Jane Streets where Ruth (Mrs. McBurney) now lives. This home has always remained in the family. Neither Agnes nor Winifred married; Winifred devoted her life to missionary work, spending many years in China.

James Warren was not only an engineer and surveyor, but also earned his teacher's certificate. When reading the history of our area, his name often turns up. He drafted the plans for the bridge over the Teeswater River at Pinkerton in 1901. This bridge served until 1953 when a truck broke through the flooring into the river below.

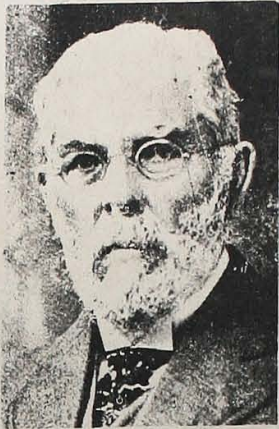
After moving to Walkerton, Mr. Warren still spent much of his time away from home on government surveys, often as far away as the Prairie Provinces. Of course, all his trips had to be taken by train or boat, as well as the trusty horse, into the remote areas. Many stories can be told of the rugged conditions he encountered on some of the trips. Indian relics he brought home from the West, have been donated to the Royal Ontario Museum.

In 1901, James Warren was hired to survey the Town site of Tobermory. He decided to take his wife and young daughter, Ruth, with him. To get to Tobermory they drove to Hanover by horse and buggy, then travelled by railway to Warton. From there a boat called the "Dixon" was boarded for the trip north.

The survey work took a month, during which time Ruth and her mother stayed in a boarding house overlooking the Tobermory harbour. The beau-

ty of this remote spot in those far-away days, is something Mrs. McBurney will never forget.

The return trip from Tobermory entailed an even longer boat ride. The "Dixon" headed north with supplies for the lighthouses on Flower Pot and



LATE JAMES WARREN  
Pioneer Walkerton Surveyor.

Cove Islands, then on to Gore Bay on Manitoulin Island, before heading east to Killarney and then south again to Warton; then the train home again.

James Warren's life could fill the pages of a book. His survey work brought order out of confusion in many a wilderness area. He was also an ardent church worker and supporter of projects that furthered the growth of our town. In 1914, when our library was opened, he was chairman of the board. Three years later he died, and is buried in Kincardine.