

Jessie Harper recalls . . .

Lincoln, Ontario, August 22, 1979

Up and down King Street: how it was 50 years ago

As Beamsville celebrates the 100th anniversary of its beginning, many thoughts are turned backward. At a recent Women's Institute meeting, members answered roll call by naming a former place of business in the Village.

This brought thoughts of when my family moved to Beamsville in 1927, only half a century ago. Let's take a walk down King Street and remember together.

Starting at the corner of Ontario and King street we walked east and on the corner is the Bell Telephone office with the cheery smiling operators always busy. Upstairs was the Public Library with Mrs. Kennedy in charge. Miss Louisa Kerr followed her as librarian and the library later moved to its present location.

The grocery store owned by L.E. Huntsman and Sons, Arnold and John, was a friendly place with good food and good service. This is the present Lay's drug store. W.G. Panter owned the department store next door (later Stedman's). It, too, was a nice place to shop with the clerks all friendly and willing to serve you. It was fun to watch the little cages go to the cashier with the purchase price of an article in them and see them return with the correct change.

Fred Jeffrey's men's wear was next, and you could always rely on any clothing bought there. Dr. Campbell, dentist, had an office upstairs. This was later the office of Dr. Charles Wray.

Beamsville's Post Office was the next stop with John Sinclair the postmaster. J.W. Buck and Son had the big furniture store next door. A stationery, gift and notions store owned and operated by the Greaves family was the next stop. It was later Sam Shore's clothing store. Comisso's grocery store in this location came later. The Royal Bank was located where Mountain's is now, with the late Mr. Simpson the manager. This was later purchased by Miss Norma Hermiston (later Mrs. Hatter) and became a variety store. Mountain's came next and are still there, we hope for many more years.

The village office was the building where the discount store is now located and all Beamsville business was conducted there. Who can forget Fred Brown's bake shop next door? Another family owned enterprise with friendly courteous service. At that time they also had an ice cream parlour.

Roy Saunders had the shoe store next door, with Sammy and Harry Prudhomme the jewelry store alongside. Upstairs over the Prudhomme store Bert Trevelyan had a tailor shop. McPherson's drug store was next later purchased by Frank Thomson, who also sold good ice cream. The hardware store owned by the McArthur family, with Clarence McArthur in charge, was also a place to rely on. Roy Hoshal's grocery store was next with

Dave Brough's butcher shop. These two stores are now Beckett's Red and White. Dr. Freeman, dentist had his office upstairs.

On the corner of Central Avenue, was a big new Dominion Store, with Alex Steele the manager. He was replaced by Walter Howard, who later opened his own grocery store where the Royal Bank now stands. Christie's Dairy is now where the Dominion store was located.

Continuing on our walk we come to S.M. Culp's Coal Office with E.B. Osborne's establishment next door. Sinclair's Hardware store (now Mario's jewelry) was well taken care of by Deed Sinclair. The most exciting place in town came next; the theatre, owned by the Harry Robinson family. It was there that I saw the exciting picture "Wings". Then came Beamsville's hotel (not licensed) owned by "Bill" Cosmos. The pool room part of the building later became Claude Tufford's butcher shop and still later the beginnings of IGA Hillview. Then the Wilcox Hardware store where you were always welcome, and who can forget the smiling face of "Mitt" Luey as he waited on you! Mahlon Tufford lived next door and had his livery stable in the barn at the back. Then the busy place of Merritt's feed store with the smell of the different grains that were chopped and mixed there.

Charlie Moore had a cobbler shop next door and was a busy man. We now

pass residential property until we reach The Hobden fuel office (later Laundry's) and the Hobden feed business where the co-op is now. Oh, I skipped the canning factory which was a busy place in bygone days. And we shouldn't forget the Cute residence, now Great Lakes Christian College.

We cross King Street at Hobden's and travel west. There are no business establishments until we reach the corner of Hixon and King Streets.

A big sign in Astle's hollow told the world that Jacob Beam had founded Beamsville some 150 years before "Pick" van Every's residence and next the Beam homestead occupied by Charlie and Teen Snure.

Of course, the basket factory was located on Hixon street, with Eddie Burton's butcher shop (now Doug's) on the southwest corner of Hixon and King. Clint Culp had the barber shop next door and Benny Levine had a dry good store where Dave Wright later had his grocery. S.J. Wilson's office was next and then the office of the garage, operated by Staff Atkinson; The Beamsville Express, with Fred Barraclough the publisher, where the bakery is now. Onga Law's Chinese cafe (good food) next door. Reid's Barber Shop was next where clients were greeted by the friendly face of Charles (Pete) Tallman and Gordon Book. Ethel Corcoran was in a little store next door and supplied the school kids with their books and candy. She later moved to a building that was torn down to make room for the present post office. The building on the south-east corner of Mountain and King was occupied by Ontario Hydro.

The Bank of Commerce was in its present location, with Mr. Henderson, the manager. Billy Jerome and family occupied the house next door (now Dandies) and operated a business in a building behind the bank. The home of Dr. Fairfield followed with his drug store in the present Kimberley office.

J.W. Buck and Son Funeral Home was an established business with the Buck home next door. Next a flour and feed business operated by Charles Waterworth. It later burned and was replaced by Bousfield's garage, later Richardson's, now the bookstore.

Dr. Orth, veterinarian had his home and office next.

Then C.H. Prudhomme and Sons owned a triangular shaped building on the southwest corner of Queen and King Streets, where they conducted their fruit shipping business and later nursery. To cross again to the north side of King street at William the car barns (now the gas bar) was a busy place. The cars of the Hamilton, Grimsby and Beamsville Railway were housed there. It was a lot of fun to ride those cars when you had the money for the fare.

There was a building on the northwest corner of Ontario and King Streets, the west side. At one time it was Leine's clothing store, later the Imperial Oil garage operated by Pete Robertson and George Seymour, and later still by Stan Gibson.

Just a short way down Ontario Street on the east side, there was another garage operated by Roy Hobden where the apartment building is today. A short way down Central

Avenue, the present home of the Post Express, was originally, I believe, a carriage shop, and later served as a garage among other uses. And who can forget Len Lindner's blacksmith shop on the West side of Ontario street, opposite and just north of May Street, where Len and Syd West laboured at their craft.

There may be discrepancies in this story. After all, one's memory does play tricks as we get older. Anyone knowing of these mistakes please correct them for us.

Jessie Harper

There was gloom around the Post Express office on Friday when the news arrived that Jessie Harper had died at West Lincoln Hospital. Mrs. Harper was our own "champion correspondent."

Jessie Harper's involvement in the affairs of her home community was widespread, and to use the word "dedicated" to describe the many facets of her life here is to give true meaning to that often-misused expression. She was an untiring worker on behalf of her church, the Women's Institute and the Lincoln Agricultural Society, and everything Mrs. Harper undertook was done with enthusiasm, a high degree of

competence, and unfailing cheerfulness.

The late Jim Sinclair was an earlier correspondent of note for the former Beamsville Express. After his death the Harper family took over. Husband Bill, daughter Barbara and Jessie in turn kept the news of fair board and women's affairs constantly in the pages of this paper, but for most of the past 25 years it was Mrs. Harper who almost every week saw to it that the news was written and delivered to us. Perhaps we shall never see her likes again.

To the Harper family, the Post Express joins the host of Jessie's friends in expressing sorrow at the news of her death.

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Margaret Strong
Tweedsmuir Curator