

CELEBRATE WITH US THIS YEAR  
A CENTURY  
OF PROGRESS

# PENETANGUISHENE 1875 1975

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UN SIECLE  
DE PROGRES

100th  
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PENETANGUISHENE



## Foundry started booming empire

The Payette family, like the Becks who were the lumber barons of Penetanguishene, made up one of the dominant influences in the community in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Above is the old P. Payette Company Foundry, which was located where Grew Boats Ltd.'s warehouse now stands near the waterfront. Founded by Peter Payette in 1880, the foundry

eventually was taken over by his nephew, J.T. Payette, pictured at left, whose slogan "Business and more business", marked the man who quadrupled the business within eight years of taking control, and whose interests spread to land speculation and horse racing.

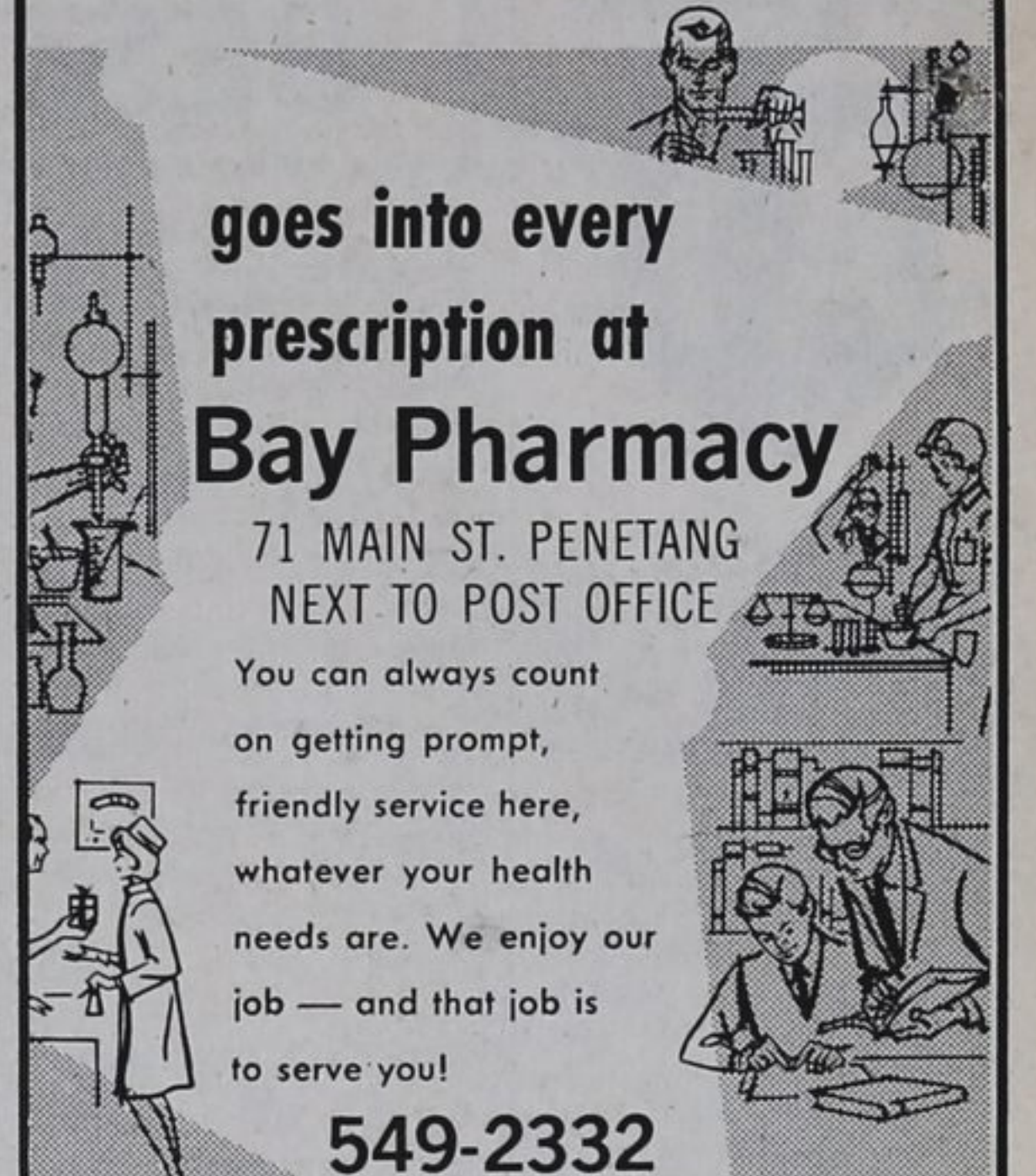
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## Payette spelled wealth and power



J.T. Payette

The Payette name was synonymous with wealth, success and power early in the 20th Century in Penetanguishene.

Starting with a foundry he eventually took over from his uncle Peter's estate, J.T. Payette built an empire of land, racehorses and industry — and constructed the "best half-mile (harness racing) track in Ontario," according to Frederick Gilmour's The Story of Ontario's Industrial Progress.

A business that began with the production of saw mill machinery in 1880, J.T. grabbed the business op-

portunities offered by the First World War, branched into marine repair, took over the Adams Engine Works, and was soon producing custom cast iron pieces of record proportions.

The Dominion Ship Building Company of Toronto ordered a 70,000 pound double-ended, self-acting punch. The order was filled. For the war effort, the firm built a 2,600 pound brass casting for the propeller shaft of the Canadian ship Logger. The casting was made, shrunk and fitted at Penetanguishene.

To keep up with orders from saw mill clients,

Payette often had men working 24 hours a day for months at a time — a rarity before the 1920's.

According to Marcel Belleumeur of Penetanguishene, Payette first saw the opportunity for cottage development along the shore, and started the cottage subdivision at Crescentwood Beach.

But one of his main passions was horse racing, and he built Penetanguishene's half-mile track, regarded as "the best in Canada" when it was new. Every July 1, for years, he staged his annual racing meet, which was one of the

top social events of the year in this part of Ontario.

He owned a high class stable of horses, including the Lucy L, which raced on the Grand Circuit and once broke the two-minute mile — still a top standard at harness tracks across the continent.

There are no Payettes left in Penetanguishene, as J.T.'s only son died. The family lived at the old home that stands behind what is now the Huronia Motors car lot on Robert Street West. In later years, J.T. saw a good part of his fortune eaten away by disastrous fires at property he owned.

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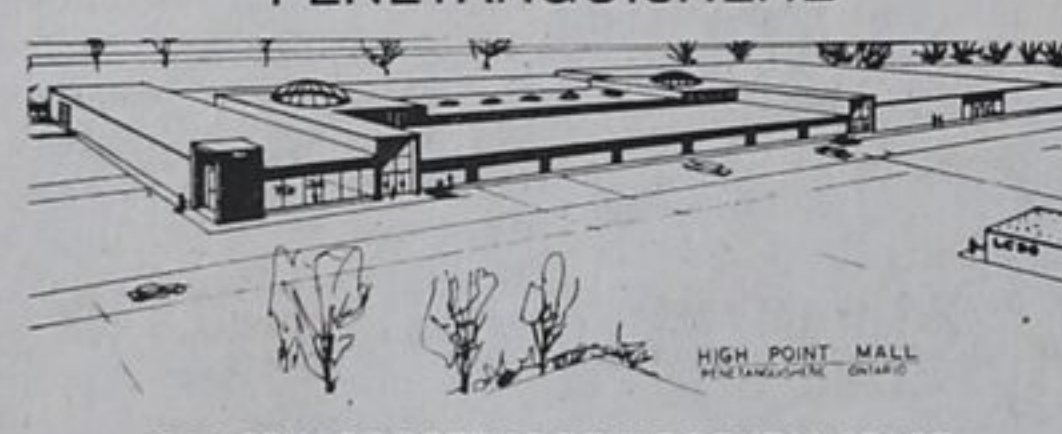
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PENETANGUISHENE

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