

Former park warden remembers the early days

by Shirley Whittington
Penetanguishene's George Lynn celebrated his 75th birthday last week. His Highland Point home is filled with mementoes that span five generations.

Mr. Lynn was born at Sundale Corners, but since he was six months old he has lived on property deeded to his grandfather, William Hoar, by Queen Victoria in 1846. Hoar was a seaman in Her Majesty's navy, and was appointed the Queen's guardian when she was aboard ship.

When he retired, he was granted land on the site of Penetanguishene's railroad station. "When the railway people wanted our land," says Mr. Lynn, "they traded it for 40 acres on this side of the Bay." As far as he knows, the Lynn property is the only one which stretches down to the water. The Crown reserves the right to expropriate that shoreline for naval operations, in time of war.

William Hoar supervised the building of the Christian Island lighthouse. His grave, and that of his wife, are among the earliest in the churchyard of St. James-on-the-Lines.

George Lynn grew up on the shores of the bay, and was overseas in the first world war.

After his return, he farmed the Crown grant land, and in 1931 he was appointed warden of Beausoleil Island National Park. He insists that Beausoleil is a misnomer. "It was named for a man who used to camp on the south end," he says, "but the Indians called it Bende-gog (Island Lying Across the Water) and as far as I'm concerned, that's its real name."

Honorary Indian chief

Until 1930, Beausoleil was an Indian reservation, and in his early days as Warden, George Lynn turned his attentions to the abandoned Indian graveyard on the island. "I made wooden crosses, and put names on them and built a monument," he says. To show their appreciation, the Indians made him an honorary chief and invested him with regalia which he still cherishes. "My Indian name is Og-a-Ma Ma-shin-awa, which means chief messenger."

Being made an honorary chief is not without its complications. A feast was essential, and hundreds of Indians travelled from as far away as New York State to attend the ceremony. "I remember," says Mr. Lynn, "I had to get in a side of beef, two pigs, two large bags of potatoes and a big bag of carrots. Mr. Preston from Midland donated 35 loaves of bread from his store and Mr. Wagg donated the services of his boat, the City of Dover, to transport the guests over to the Island. That was on the 24th of May, 1934, and it was some celebration!"

As Warden, Mr. Lynn supervised the cutting and marking of 75 miles of trails which he named inventively. "There's Panhawk trail, from a combination of Pancake Bay and Tomahawk Island, and Kitchiturtle trail, and Vimy Ridge Trail because it looked just like Vimy Ridge in France. And there was Sunset Trail and Lovers' Trail, and Porcupine Trail." Many of these names are still in use today.

George Lynn hasn't been back to the Island since he left in 1941. The story of the whitewashed stones explains his reluctance.

"When I was warden," he says, "I had a big sign made on a hill on the side of the island." Old Georgian Bay hands remember the enormous letters, made of whitewashed stones, which spelled out Beausoleil Island and formed a landmark which was visible for miles.

"After I left," says Mr. Lynn, "they bulldozed the



Honoured by Indian tribe

George Lynn will long be remembered in this area for the work he did at Beausoleil Island. The Indians were so

impressed with this white "messenger" that they made him an Indian chief. Staff photo

sign out. They said it was too hard to keep up." He snorts. "All it took was a couple of pails of whitewash once a year."

Other Beausoleil memories are more pleasant. "I always liked the animals," says Mr. Lynn "and when I left the Park there were 200 deer, and 22 elk, which had been brought in by truck, across the ice. Dr. Tanner brought them in."

These days, the deer remain, although there are no longer any elk. "Snakes?" says Mr. Lynn. "I've seen a six foot fox snake up there, but I've never seen a rattlesnake in my life."

Memories

Other good memories include the first dog derby, held in the National Park in 1931 and the times that Mr. Lynn would skate from the

Island to his home on Penetanguishene Bay. "In my day," he says, "campers were spread all through the island. Now the tents are all jammed together. That's not my idea of camping."

Local history

George Lynn has seen a lot of local history from his shoreline home. "I remember when there were log booms right across this bay," he says. There'd be sixty thousand pieces of wood in them. In the old days, we didn't need clocks. We just listened for the factory whistles, and there were lots of them - Gidley's boat works, and Tanner's, the foundry and Beck's."

His wife Millicent says she always enjoyed the sounds of the whistles. "They remind me of home," she says gently.

Home is in England. Mrs. Lynn was a 1918 war bride and she admits that the Penetanguishene countryside seemed pretty rough to her when she arrived. She's a slip of a woman with traces still of her old country accent. She looks as delicate as a piece of Dresden china, yet when her three sons were growing up she rowed them across Penetanguishene Bay daily, so they could attend school.

Mr. George Lynn's birthday was marked with a family celebration and the Lynn grandsons frolicked and whooped on the same land that was granted to their great-grandfather by Queen Victoria one hundred and thirty years ago.

In these fast moving times, that's a comforting bit of permanence.

Tay presents official plan

At a meeting of members of Tay council, planning board and Windland Associates, Tay residents were given one last reading of the proposed official plan last week.

Although over 75 people came to hear what the planners would say about the official plan the meeting was relatively quiet with only a limited number of people raising questions.

The questions were of the specific nature, as residents wondered what effects the official plan could have on their properties.

President of Windland Associates, Mike Brodigan told the people they will have one last chance at voicing their objections to the plan by sending in a written submission to Tay council within the next 21 days. Council will review the objection and endeavour to resolve it. If the problem cannot be resolved it will be sent to the Ministry of Housing for further study, said Brodigan.

"This is the time now to make your objections known because council can and will do something about it," he said.

Brodigan said the official plan is a document, which lays down the uses to which the land will be put but is not a zoning bylaw.

Brodigan explained the plan to the residents and put maps on the wall which outlined in diagram form the uses of land as designated by the official plan.

Brodigan said outside the urban designated areas (Midland, Penetanguishene and Victoria Harbour) major growth will not be permitted.

Georgian courses

Officials at the Georgian College this week announced the slate of fall courses offered in the Midland and Penetanguishene area. Georgian's peninsula campus, with offices at 260 King Street, Midland,

"This is a constraint, it is there and there is no way we can alleviate it," he said.

At one point in the meeting, one resident stood up and asked Brodigan if he would tell the group his feelings on the proposed annexation to Midland.

Brodigan simply said, "No."

Several of those attending the meeting voiced skepticism that their letters of objection would be answered by council.

Brodigan assured those people all written objections have been answered in the past and council would continue to answer those coming in within the next 21 days.

Course registrations will close one week prior to the starting date at which time a decision will be made on whether or not the course will start.

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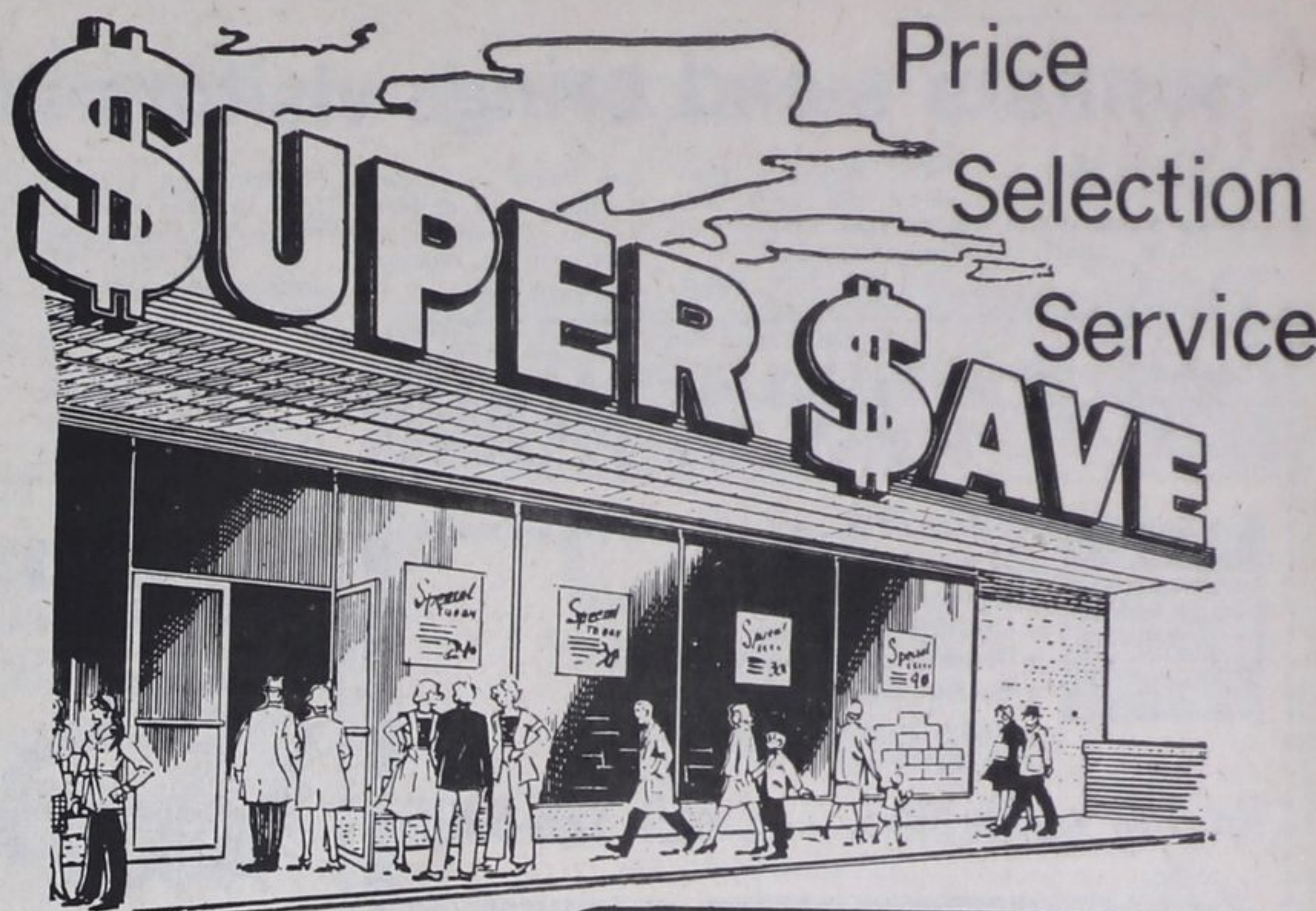
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