

# The Old Mill...a legend in own time

Edward Grigg was born in Tiny Township near Waverley and married Mary Ann Chapman of the same community. They were blessed with three children, Charles, Esther (Mrs. L. H. Spring) and Rose (Mrs. Percy McConnell).

Mr. and Mrs. Grigg were living at Allenwood on the farm now occupied by their grandson Clifford and in 1906 moved to N $\frac{1}{2}$  Lot 13 Concession 3, Tiny and built the first mill on the Wye River, about 200 feet south of the roadway, Concession 4. In the flood in 1912, the mill dam and all were washed away.

Not being discouraged, Mr. Grigg rebuilt the mill in the same year, 1912, at the present site by the road, the township building the bridge and helping with the dam.

On March 15, 1913, when the water started to rise Mr. Grigg and

Bert Wright were removing the planks to let extra water away. They had the planks out, but Mr. Grigg was standing on a block of ice and the rush of the water swept Mr. Grigg away with the ice, and he drowned. Bert Wright had his feet on a plank and he escaped the rush.

Mr. L. H. Spring came and took over the mill, that same year. It was always a treacherous task to remove the planks at flood time.

The mill pond was a place for many good times. In the winter the boys would keep a part of the ice cleared of snow and the young and not so young gathered for skating parties.

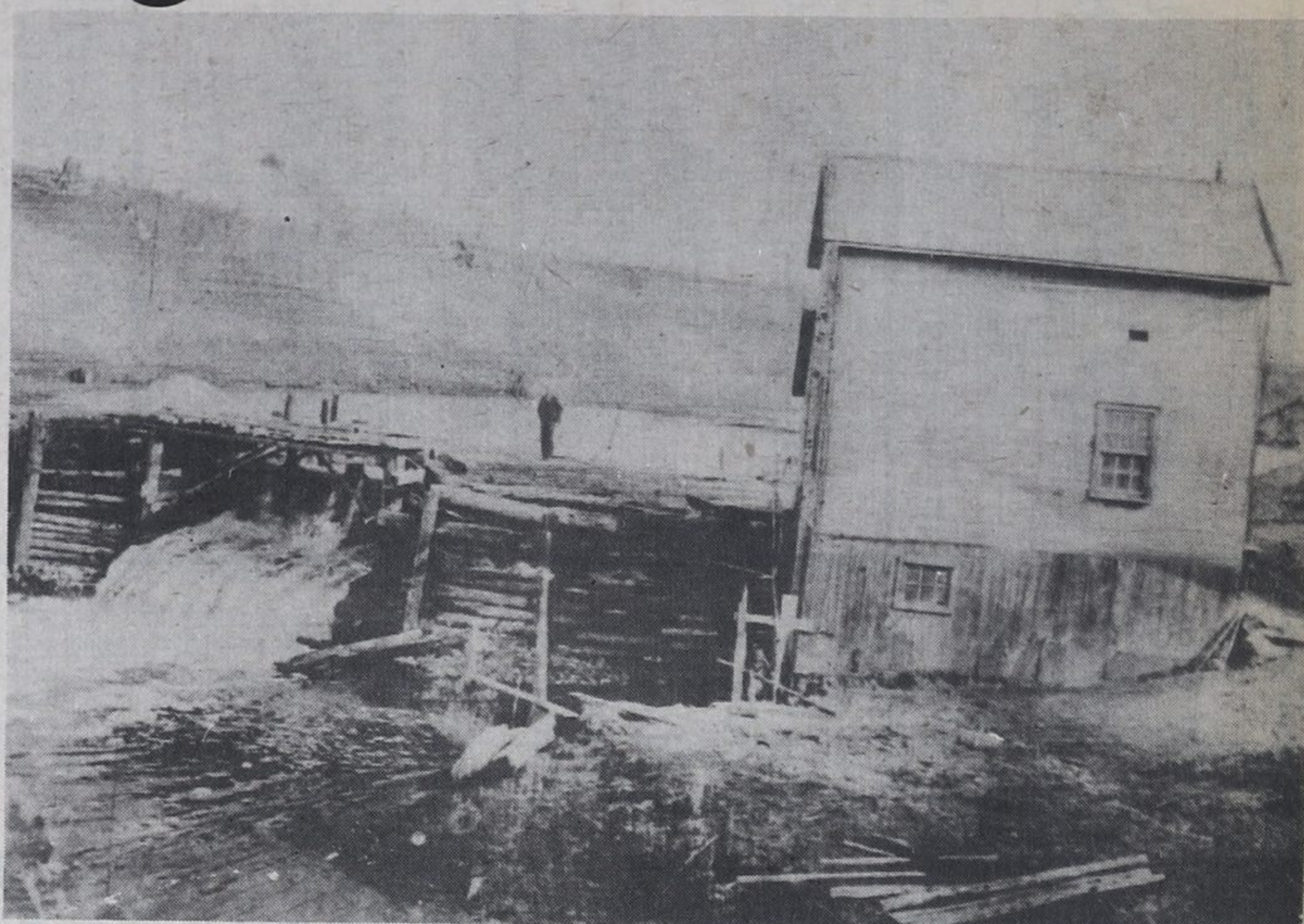
A large bonfire of stumps in the centre provided light and warmth. Tobogganing in the hills around provided many thrills. In the spring the fishing was good and is good yet.

Late in the winter the ice-harvest started. The ice cutters used a saw to cut the ice in to blocks, they were hauled out onto the ice with tongs and were drawn home on sleighs by the farmers where the ice was packed in sawdust and kept for summer use.

Mr. and Mrs. Spring raised a family of two boys, Victor and Homer and in 1915 William Withall came to live with them. In 1941 Mr. and Mrs. Spring moved to Wyevale and the mill was taken over by William Withall who was married to Hazel Wood. They were blessed with four daughters and a son, Aileen, Grace, Mae, Ross and Marilyn.

Mr. Withall still operates the mill. There have been two additions made to the building to include the sale of concentrates, fertilizer, etc.

Written by  
Mrs. Howard Grier  
1966



Mill on the River Wye

## Wyevale history linked to railroad

by Grace Marcellus  
The line of railway which travelled through Wyevale was built by the North Simcoe Railway Co. which was incorporated on March 24, 1874, under the Ontario Statutes; and the two terminal points being Colwell and Penetang, Ontario. The

length of the line between these terminal points was 33.7 miles and it was open for traffic about December 1878.

It was a time of rapid railway expansion. The large stands of white pine and various hardwoods made it profitable. The advent

of the railway was a natural sequel to the Old Penetang Road which was originally built to convey military supplies by horse-drawn vehicles.

Prior to the building of the railroad, the huge trees were cut down and the logs and cordwood taken out in the winter

to Georgian Bay beaches, to be rafted over to Collingwood and other ports.

The telegraph line followed as a quick means of communication. Peter Clute worked with his horses in the winter clearing and grading the right of way. He would leave

home before daylight in the morning and not get home until well after dark.

In bonuses and stock the people of Simcoe County, through their municipal councils, gave more than a million dollars towards the construction of this railway. The Township of Tiny paid \$2,000 every year from 1880 - 1950.

The Canadian Northern Railway Company leased the line of rail under an agreement dated Jan. 14, 1878. This route along with the North Simcoe Railway and several other companies amalgamated with the Grand Trunk Railway Company on Apr. 1, 1893. All previous bonds and debts were taken over at the same time by the new owners and the Grand Trunk Railway became a part of the Canadian National Railway on Jan. 31, 1923.

### Lumber boom

With the establishment of this new transportation the lumber trade produced a boom. Several lumber mills had spur lines into them, and the trains burned wood and later coal. The "Flyer" was run from Toronto to Penetang carrying the aristocracy on holidays to catch boats to their summer cottages in Muskoka and Parry Sound. It went through about 1 p.m. and returned about an hour later. They travelled non-stop.

There were four regular trains a day. Passenger trains - 8 a.m. - 9 p.m. and Freight trains - 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

There was a station of frame construction, a tool house and a dwelling also of frame construction. This was living quarters for the agent and his family. The station had an insurance value of \$1,800 and the dwelling an

insurance value of \$1,500. The McKeeggie Company also operated a grain elevator which was on the railway property.

The first freight shipped out consisted of logs, pulpwood, and cordwood. Men were paid \$1.25 a day to load wood on the train. Later freight consisted of cream, eggs, grain and pigs, which sometimes came from as far away as Laurin. Mr. Herb Clute the local Postmaster and merchant sent large bags of mail daily. And Les Spring took stock to Toronto once a week. He would go down one day and back the next. The last large freight trains were loads of Christmas trees en route to many distant places in the United States.

The worst enemy of the new railway was snow. And passenger trains and even snowplows pushed by three engines became stuck. Following winter storm in 1943 there was no train service for 14 days. Bill Withall tells of how the snow blocked the tracks and all available men around cut the snow in big squares and piled it up to make a wall. Spring's Hill was often heavy, as well as a stretch two miles in length north of the village. For many years it was the practice in the winter to remove the pilot of the engine, which was assigned passenger service, and replace it with a small V-shaped plow.

Vera, daughter of Herb Clute tells of going by train to high school at Elmvale, and later Barrie. She would leave at 7:30 a.m. and return at 9 p.m. A commuter ticket cost her \$4 a month. This was in the days of the high laced shoes and she tells of how the whistle could be heard as it sounded at the sixth concession, and how she would rush

out the door tying the laces of the high shoes in time to get across the road and meet the train without delay.

### Station agents

No records seem to have been kept of the station agents, but from speaking with their families and some older people of the community this information was gained:

Mr. Wm. Askey 1874 - 1906; Mr. Wicket 2-3 years; Mr. Norm Ritchie prior to 1909-1919; Art Fallafield - Fredric Hill -

Fredric's son Walter, was section foreman for years. For inspecting and fixing the tracks a hand powered jigger was used. It was later replaced by gas power.

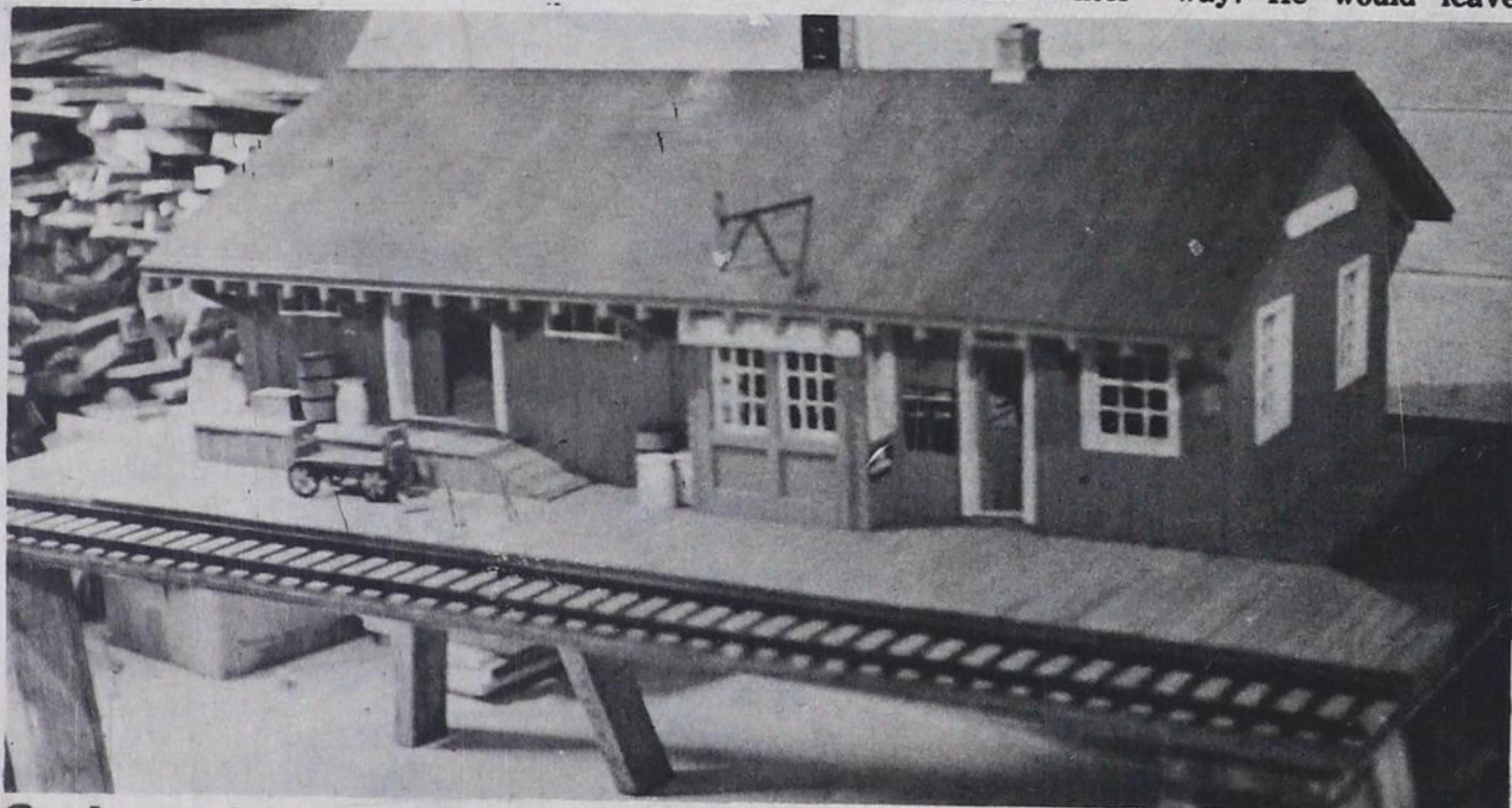
Victor Spring bought the weigh scales in the 1940's and they were removed to just below his hill where it is in use as a storage shed.

Bud Caston tore the station down in the Spring of 1963. The sign off of one end is still in use as the village name sign. A man from Collingwood bought the frame for a driving shed.

The elevated grades at the sixth and eighth were removed in 1975, and the subway at the fourth concession was removed in the fall of 1976.

The grainhouse was situated on the east side of the track just a little distance south of the station. Farmers brought their grain where it could be cleaned of weed seed and then sent to various places by train. It was sold to Victor Spring, and torn down in 1971.

On May 4, 1978 the Township of Tiny purchased the railroad property for the sum of \$10,000. A committee was formed to develop this land as an open trail. It is now used for riding, snowmobiles and hiking.



Scale model

## A labour of love provides look into past

After approximately 125 hours of work and well over 1,000 construction pieces, Bill Large of Wyevale has completed his labour of love, a scale model of the railway station previously situated in the hamlet.

Large, a carpenter by trade, was assisted by his son Shayne on the project eventually measuring 64" by 40" and built on a one inch to the foot scale. The majority of wood used in the construction process was of white pine, of significant importance to the town throughout the years, and was copied from photograph and information provided by members of

the community and the Pine Ridge Women's Institute, all of whom were very encouraging to Large.

When asked why he undertook such a big project Mr. Large indicated he's an individualist, not the type to join committees and this was his contribution to the Centennial celebrations.

One of his earliest memories of the station was a trip to Barrie taken on the train by Mr. Large at the age of eight, some 30 years ago. He passed by the station every day on his way to school and distinctly remembers two loose boards on the south end of the building

which provided youngsters such as himself, a secret hiding spot.

Now, through his patience and carpentry

skills, the station will become a memory for others as seen through the eyes of Mr. Large and the people of Wyevale.

## Getting to know Wyevale...again

For those people returning to the hamlet of Wyevale after a prolonged absence, there will be many changes to adjust to.

Depending on your age or the number of years you have been away, these tips may help you to re-acquaint yourself with the area.

The railway and station have been removed as well as the grain shed. Two new subdivisions have been developed and one is presently in the early stages. The United Church Centre has been modernized and the cemetery has been expanded and improved upon.