

Perrin's founded in 1934

Flower shop ready to mark its 50th anniversary

Perrin's Flower Shop in Midland is about to mark its 50th anniversary.

The following article was written by the firm's founder Mac Perrin:

I came to Midland about Oct. 1, 1934 to see about the possibilities of opening a flower shop. I found no flower shop on the main street but there were six empty stores. Interviewing the various owners of the stores I decided to rent Mrs. Frank McMurtry's store at 287 King St. This store is presently the location of Lamers Paint and Wallpaper store.

After spending some time "casing" Midland I returned home to Newmarket where I decided I would put all my efforts into opening a store in Midland. I spent some time trying to raise enough money to get a business going and finally amassed the princely sum of \$250.

Come back to Midland on Oct. 15, 1934 rented the store from Mrs. McMurtry and proceeded to get the store ready to open as soon as possible. I had no car, but managed to do all the work necessary to prepare the store, myself. I put a moveable wall about 25' back from the entrance to the store and built suitable tables and benches for display purposes.

I made two rooms in the back of the store and had a quebec heater for heat and cooking my meals. I brought as much in the way of furnishings from home, as I could muster, such as a bed, an old table, two chairs, odds and ends of dishes, and some old tools.

I finally had a fairly presentable store ready by Nov. 20, and decided I would open on Dec. 1, 1934.

Of course I had to do some advertising, but save some money to buy stock for opening day. I had 1,000 hand bills printed and decided to deliver them myself after dark so no one would see me.

I put every hand bill between doors or in a place I was sure they would not blow away. I covered the whole town in three nights and every house got a hand bill.

I was then ready to purchase my stock as I had about \$50 left.

Vera's parents loaned me \$200 to buy stock so I had a huge total of \$250.

Just as I was planning to go buying, the Town on Midland informed me that it was necessary for me to have a transient trader's licence before I could open my shop. A licence would cost \$250.

So what was I going to do about buying stock? In desperation I phoned Vera's parents and they gave me another loan of \$250.

My brother Howard came to Midland with his car and together we went to Toronto and bought my first stock. Having had three and a half years experience in

a flower shop in Toronto before I went to O.A.C. in Guelph I was well received by wholesalers. I bought only what I could pay cash for, as I knew I could not get into any further debt.

My store opened as advertised in The Free Press and hand bills on Dec. 1, 1934 and much to my surprise and delight I sold out my entire stock that first Saturday and returned to Toronto the next day to get more stock for Monday.

My opening special was roses at 79 cents a dozen, Jerusalem Cherry trees at 39 cents each and pom pom 'Mums with 25 flowers in a bunch for \$1.49.

I was disappointed that I did not receive encouragement from most of the business people on the main street.

They predicted that at best I would survive for no more than six months.

However, they did not know that Mac Perrin had a lot of determination and ambition which seemed to be lacking among the population of Midland as one-third of the population was on "relief".

The only factory operating at that time was the Midland Planing Mill and it was soon to go.

Customers gradually began to accept me and business flourished. I had some funeral business and a small wedding.

I made a tremendous effort for Christmas and had a lovely display of Poinsettias, Azaleas, Cyclamen and Cherry trees, primulas, ferns, etc.

I sold everything out to the bare walls, and employed my brother with his car to do the delivering.

Needless to say I was very thrilled with my Christmas business so

decided to visit Vera in Kitchener. So with all my money stuffed into an old club bag I went to Kitchener via my thumb.

Everyone was surprised to see all the money and I paid off my loan to Vera's parents. I had money left to buy stock for the New Year's business.

I was overwhelmed with the New Year's Eve business. I made nearly 50 corsages for \$1. and \$1.50 each.

In the new year I got fairly continuous business for hospital bouquets, funeral designs, etc. For funerals I made a "flat" spray for \$2.00 and a "Casket" spray for \$3, a wreath for \$5, and up and a pillow for \$7.50 up.

The business flourished and Vera and I decided to get married and she was determined to help keep things going in Midland. I had several offers from friends to look after my store while I was away so we decided to get married on March 9, 1935.

As luck would have it I got busy with funeral business on the Friday before the wedding and did not get away until nearly 7 p.m. on the Friday evening.

I was still using my thumb for transportation, but got down as far as Little Bros. In Richmond Hill where I bought my first car. It was a Ford and had gone 100,000 miles but had been completely over-hauled with four brand new tires and ran like a new car. I arrived at Dale's greenhouses in Brampton at about 11 p.m. and purchased orchids and Lily of the Valley for Vera's bouquet and Roses for the bridesmaid's bouquet. With Vera's help I made the bouquets and corsages in the basement of her home on the morning of the wedding.

Our honeymoon was a buying trip in Toronto. We arrived back in Midland, married, with a car, and a load of merchandise. The weather was very mild with slushy snow.

With Vera's help our business flourished and eventually we built a little sash greenhouse in the back yard, so we were able to carry more pot plants. We worked very hard and found that if we did seven dollars worth of business in a day we had one dollar to live on. However, some days that did not happen. We eventually moved to a seven room apartment above the store, where we needed 3 stoves to keep warm.

Both our children were born while we lived in that apartment. This arrangement was best as it was possible for Vera to help in the store while keeping an eye on the children, until we finally could afford to employ a girl to help in the store.

In 1942 we built the first greenhouse of the old "skating rink" property and business continued to prosper.

After receiving eviction notice in January 1942 we built our little Orlyte store in January 1943. I built the chimney for the store in 10 degrees below zero weather. We found this a very attractive little temporary store. In 1946 we began building

This Week in Canada On Nov. 28, in 1871, the Canada Post Office issued its first post-cards, and in 1907, dial telephones, believed to be the first in Canada, came into use in Sydney Mines, Nova Scotia.

the present store and from June 1 to Oct. we did business from our

garage behind our present location. We finally realized

our dream of having the finest flower shop north of Toronto.



She'll be missed from radio room

Long-time Midland Police Department civilian radio operator Lorna Shewfelt retired from the force last week to take up studies soon at a

Dallas, Texas, area college. Picture was taken on Lorna's last day on the job. She'll be missed, her colleagues say. -Special photo

It's a girl!

Mr. and Mrs. Pierre Quesnelle of 246 Hanby St., Midland announce the birth of a girl on Nov. 9, weighing 8 lb. 8 oz.

Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Daniels of 325 Gill Rd., RR 1 Midhurst announce the birth of a girl on Nov. 12, weighing 7 lb. 14 oz.

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Donald D'Aoust of RR 1 Perkinsfield on November 23, weighing 6 lb.

It's a boy!

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Terry Arthers of 265 Elizabeth St., Midland on November 22, weighing 8 lb. 12 oz.

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