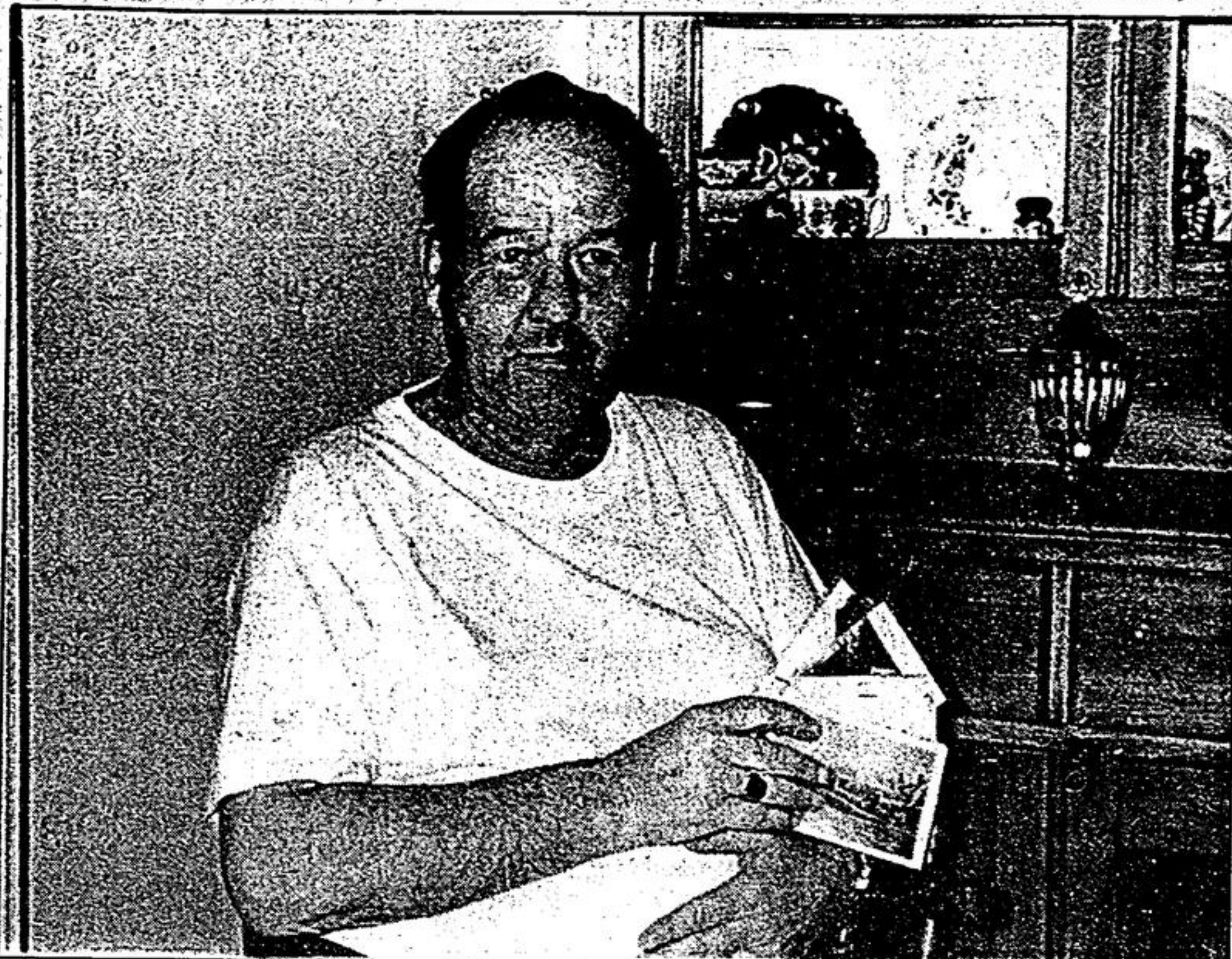


Old postcards delight this collector

Stouffville resident Bill Brown collecting old postcards when he first got hooked on his hobby of receiving two which caught his imagination; one of Gormley Station from his mother-in-law, the



Photo/KATE GILDERDALE

Stouffville resident Bill Brown shows off one of several thousand old post cards he has collected over the past six years. He especially likes cards with old train stations and historical scenes of York Region communities.

other of the Mennonite Church in Markham from his mother.

"The collection just accumulated from there," he grins, "I cleaned both our mothers out of post cards and then started looking around for more to add to what I had."

That was about six years ago. Since then he's travelled to flea markets and auctions across the region and is a frequent visitor at Harbourfront; his special interest is York County and railway stations.

"When I go to Harbourfront I take a list of the railroad stations I already have because I don't want duplicates." His whole collection, he estimates, comprises "a couple of thousand. I'm interested in collecting as many as possible." So far he's never advertised, relying on word of mouth to learn about new sources of supply.

Seniors will often keep old postcards, he says, but when he visited Parkview Home in the hopes of adding to his collection, he found many of them had burned their cards when they moved in, because they didn't have anywhere to store them. "It's getting really hard to find them now."

When Bill goes to auctions and bids for whole albums, he'll often find the owners have removed all the street scenes, leaving him with greeting cards and Christmas cards he doesn't want. He does collect greeting cards

which specify they're from the area; one in his collection shows a young couple with the words "we will be lovers all the time" printed on top, with "in Ringwood" stamped underneath.

Other more professional looking efforts offer greetings from Stouffville or Gormley, with the names of the towns printed in ornate gold lettering.

All his cards date from around the turn of the century and among his extensive collection he has postcards featuring all the churches in Stouffville, a large selection of scenes from Musselman's Lake (also called Muzzelman's Lake on one card) and pictures of a camp at Shadow Lake which was owned by Eaton's and used by its employees.

Postcards of Stouffville Junction show a handsome brick building which has since been demolished, with well maintained railroad tracks alongside.

Bill also has views of Goodwood and Uxbridge stations. He's very grateful to his mother-in-law for giving him her postcard of Gormley station, "I've never seen another one since."

He estimates he has about 450 cards featuring railway stations, "now you see why I have to take a list with me when I'm looking for more."

Two of his cards feature a store in Mongolia which burned down in 1922 and another shows the old hotel which once stood at

Ringwood.

He has various views of Stouffville's Main Street, including some of the Mansion House in its heyday. He also has cards showing the Orangeman's Parade of 1909.

His hobby, he notes, has taught him a lot about the history of the area and he has several pictures of the International Motors building, where Walter Atkinson first started the Stouffville Sales Barn. He's also got to know quite a few people in his efforts to add to his collection.

A lifelong resident of Markham, Bill recently moved to a beautiful new home in Stouffville with his wife Edna.

Postcards are not his only interest; the Browns also have extensive collections of china created for local communities such as Markham and Uxbridge, some of which were crafted in Germany.

They have a keen interest in antiques, and among other treasures Bill has picked up are a copper plunger with a wooden handle which was used for washing clothes, a wooden shovel and a yoke for carrying milk buckets, all of which decorate the area around the sitting room fireplace. Bill also owns three antique cars.

With a keen eye for the unusual and an enthusiastic interest in area history, it's unlikely Bill Brown will ever lose his passion for collecting.

Farmers declining Statscan reports

The total number of persons in all-farm operator households declined by 13 percent between 1981 and 1986, Statistics Canada announced recently.

This decline can be explained by the decrease in the number of farms, (eight percent), and the drop in the average size of farm households from 3.6 persons in 1981 to 3.4 in 1986.

The average farm family income also decreased from \$37,343 in 1980 to \$35,382 in 1985. This drop was greater than for the total population, where average total family income went down from \$39,107 in 1980 to \$38,652 in 1985.

The number of spouses contributing to family farm income increased six percent from 1980 to 1985. Furthermore, when farm operator spouses are self-employed or paid workers, their contributions to the total family income is significant: three out of five spouses contributed 25 percent or more of the total family income in 1985.

On the other hand, the contribution of the net farm income to the family income has decreased. Net farm income represented 23 percent of total family income in 1985, down from 30 percent in 1980.

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