

Catching The Spirit of Tyrone

by Charles Taws

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The year the Village of Tyrone was founded is now lost to time, but records indicate it must have been about 1828-1830. Pioneers had been settling in that area for about a decade. With Bowmanville a full day's journey away a settlement to serve the needs of the increasing population was needed. Like Bowmanville, Tyrone's place on the map was selected because of its natural site to erect a mill and take advantage of the abundant supply of water power.

Many of the earliest settlers came from Ireland. In the 1840's Englishmen established themselves in the area particularly at the eastern edge of the growing village. The western or Irish side was known as Tyrone and the eastern or English side was called Mount Hope. To decide what the growing village should be called a cricket match between the two sides was held in 1840. The western side won and it has been exclusively known as Tyrone ever since.

Tyrone and Bowmanville have always shared strong ties. Many of Tyrone's early settlers went on to greater prosperity in Bowmanville. James McFeeters who built the Tyrone Mill went on to become Bowmanville's first mayor. Barrel maker Abraham Younie was Bowmanville's mayor for 1888-89. The Grays, Hughes, McClungs and McLaughlins all did well in both communities. Perhaps the most suc-



Tyrone Blacksmith Shop - This unique structure is one of the architectural gems of Clarington. Built in 1860 for blacksmith George Emmerson, it is best remembered for his apprentice, Robert McCullough, who ran the shop from 1895 to 1950.

Above: Byam's General Store: Byam's store was a Tyrone landmark for 117 years. The building itself was built as a hotel in 1835 during the area's pioneer lumbering days. Frederick Byam started his store in 1887 and moved to this location in 1894. Right: Lionel and Cliff Byam - Frederick's son, Lionel, took over the store after his return from World War One. His son, Clifford, took over in 1965 and operated the business until January 2004. When Lionel died in 1982 many local people remembered that if it wasn't for his kindness and generosity their families would not have survived the Great Depression of the 1930's.

Tyrone's Tasty Offerings Are Legendary

Continued from Page 1

Successful Tyrone pioneer was John McLaughlin. His son Robert constructed a horse drawn sleigh in a small shop on their Tyrone farm property. This led to the establishment of the McLaughlin Carriage Company, first in Enniskillen and then in Oshawa, eventually becoming General Motors of Canada. Robert's son, Sam (Robert Samuel or R.S. for short), eventually took over General Motors, but his oldest son John also achieved success. He went to school in Toronto and became a chemist. He started a business known as The J.J. McLaughlin Company, Manufacturers of Hygeia Beverages. This would evolve into the very popular "Champagne of Ginger Ales - Canada Dry".

Tyrone has many notable historic buildings still standing. The stone blacksmith shop is especially notable. It was built for George Emerson in 1860. It was purchased and operated for many years by his apprentice Robert McCullough. Despite a 1946 fire the building is well preserved and is one of the gems of Clarington. The stone work, done by Richard Trenouth, can be seen in other stone structures in the northern Clarington area. At one time Andrew Morrow, in the village of Kirby, had

a blacksmith shop that was identical to the Tyrone one. Unfortunately, it was taken down when the highway was widened.

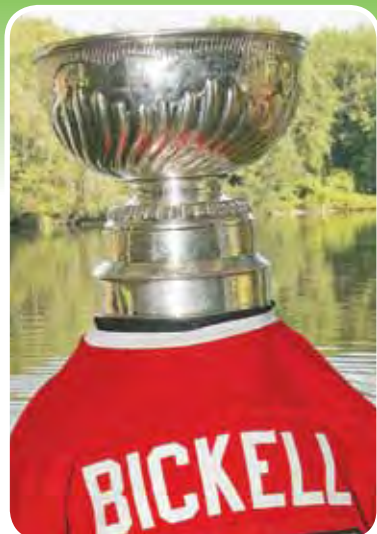
No history of Tyrone is complete without mentioning the famous Tyrone Mill. What other community in Ontario can boast a fully functioning, commercially viable, water powered saw and grist mill that has been operating since 1846. Many visitors to Clarington marvel at this anachronism of days gone by. Bob Shafer has owned the mill since 1979 and is kept busy supplying lumber and flour to his customers. The mill has a shop where he sells doughnuts, specialty jams, spices, cheese and other food items. It's a great place to stop while on a country tour.



The Tyrone Mill's picturesque pond continues to be the power source for the Tyrone Mill which began in 1846. Today the mill is operated by owner Bob Shafer who continues to produce custom lumber to order.



Pictured above is Colin Shafer (son of Tyrone Mills owner, Bob Shafer) who demonstrates ironwork at the blacksmith shop at Tyrone Mills.



This event is sponsored in part by:

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All proceeds to Clarington Food Banks & Orono Minor Hockey.
When: Friday July 8, 2011 (time TBA)
Where: Black Diamond Golf C.C.

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