

Ray Young

By Ian S. Robertson

Hanging on a rack on the third floor of Ray Young's tudor-style home on Paul Street in Picton are several old army uniforms covered in plastic to prevent dust and mildew from gathering.

A further glance around the attic room gives the visitor the feeling that he is standing in a museum... several walls filled with old muskets and rifles, bayonets, swords, helmets and other war memorabilia. A small workbench is cluttered with parts of an old rifle and several aerial photographs. Close by, a glassed cabinet contains more paraphernalia of a lifetime of collecting.

But suggest to Ray Young that he has a fine collection, and he is quite likely to raise an eyebrow and smile.

"They class me as a collector," he says. "But, honestly, I don't go around the County looking for things. I'm a pack-rat. What you see here is just the start of a good collection."

The 85-year-old retired army major, who rides his bicycle every day of the week to the post office to collect his mail, chat with friends and shop for his lunch, has a sense of history that goes far beyond his own experiences.

A descendent of Henry Young,

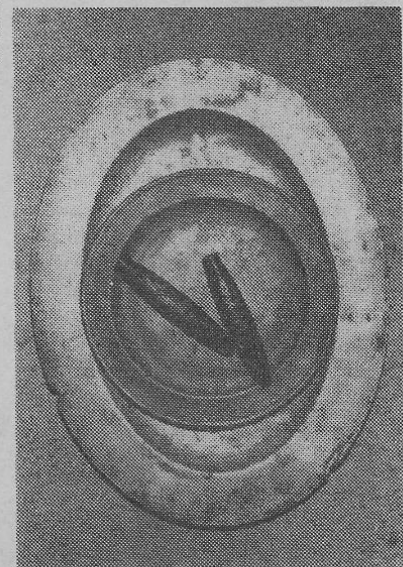
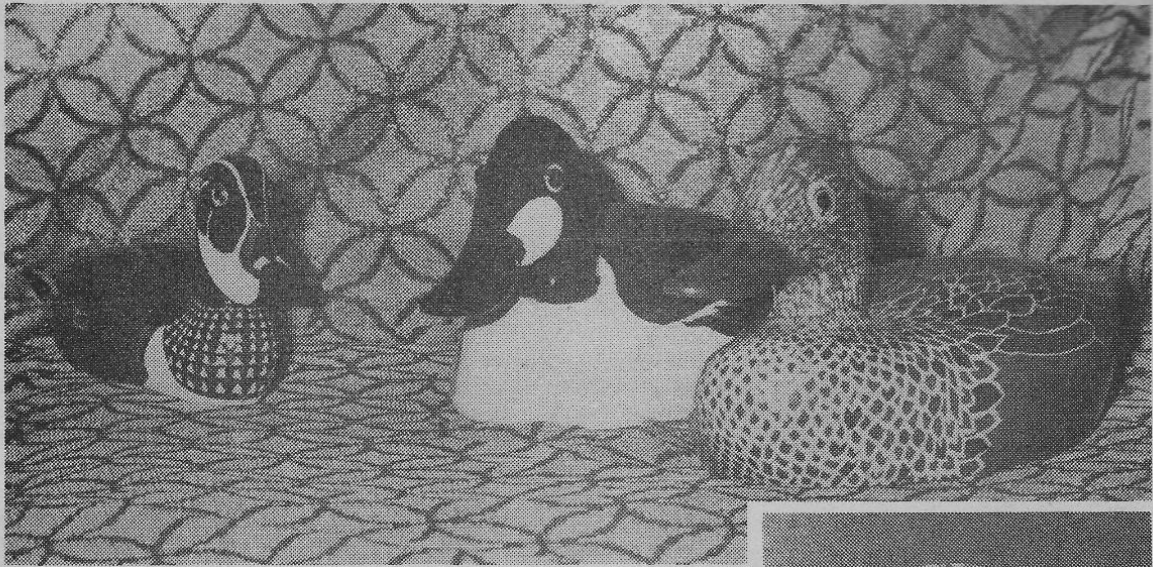
who is acknowledged by many to have been the first white settler of the East Lake area, he has spent a lifetime listening to the stories related by members of his family and friends.

"I presume I take after my old ancestor," he said, leaning back in his favorite black living-room armchair, reaching for his ever-present pouch of pipe tobacco. "I like to know about history. I like to sit back and really think of what it was like in those days."

Reaching to one of several stacks of papers and books in the



Left and above: Ray Young at home, surrounded by his hobbies.



Above: Some of the duck decoys carved by Ray.

Above, right: A pewter serving tray and plate, and two amber snuff bottles passed down from his ancestor, Henry Young.

Left: Capt. Ray Young at Aldershot with 'Little Chief', the mascot of the Hasty Pees regiment, after repairs and paint. The chief was abandoned during a retreat from France.

photo and trophy-lined room he produced a notebook with a handwritten history prepared by his late aunt, Annie Abercrombie Young. It is one of many historical accounts he has gathered over a lifetime, both from written his-

stories and newspaper clippings. Major Young's clear memory and attention to detail, mixed with the obvious pleasure he displays as a true story teller who enjoys sharing his knowledge with an interested audience, has

earned him the respect of many County people and his friends in the Prince Edward County Historical Society.

Born in June, 1897, he spent his early years on his father's farm on the Cherry Valley Road, one mile from Woodrous Corners.

Early on, he showed a talent for working with machinery and a determination to find out how things operate. "I've always been interested in mechanical things," he said. "Most of what I do now comes from things I've tried and experimented with. I'll read up on something if I have to, but I'd rather just tinker."

In addition to his well-known interest in guns... he cleans, repairs, test-fires them, then hangs them with the rest of the more than 250 pieces he has acquired through trading and as gifts... he makes many of his own parts on his lathe and on one of three work-benches.

"My first gun was an old muzzle-loading Enfield musket," he recalled. "It was so heavy, I couldn't lift it. I'd lay on the ground and fire it from there."

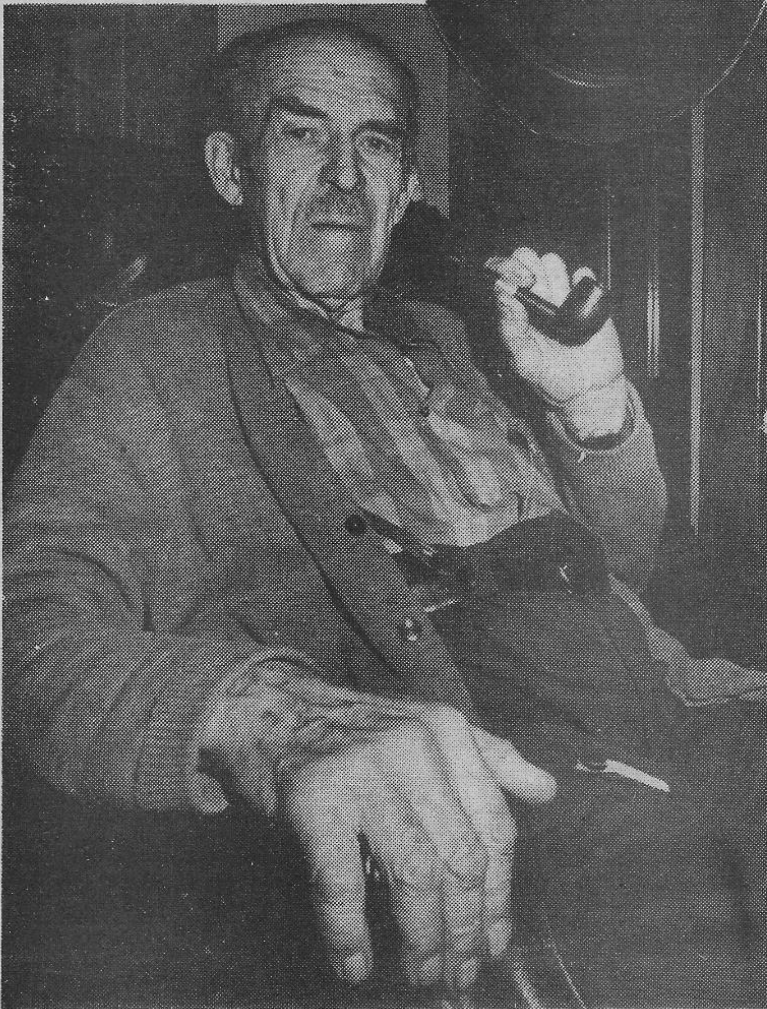
He learned gun-smithing "the hard way, out on the farm, where we had a blacksmith shop."

When the First World War began in 1914, he was eager to do his part. His future military career began at the old mill at Glenora, where a munitions factory was established. It was one of several such factories in the Quinte area.

Ray Young worked in the machine shop of the Glenora Muniton Plant, which was located in the building that now houses the Glenora Fisheries Research Station, operated by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Working on a bench lathe, he turned out steel base plates for artillery shrapnel shells. Not content simply with his routine tasks, he studied how the shell was built, how it worked, and how it could

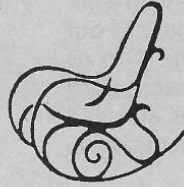
Right and below: Two different eras for Major Young.



Holiday Greetings!

NO DIP

Furniture
Stripping
by
Taber's



142 Main St.
Wellington
399-2772

Hours— 10:30-5:30
Closed Mondays

- Antiques
- Collectables



MOVING

isn't half so

HECTIC...

When it is followed by a
Welcome Wagon call!

Phone Mrs. Helen Williams
393-5630



department then confer with Sir John Johnson under whose direction and care I have committed the settlement of these disbanded Troops and Loyalists in the Upper country.

In another long letter to Sir John, I find a part of much interest to our own particular settlement of 5th Town: Enclosed is a list of seeds I have collected for their use— addressed to Captain Maurer to be delivered by him to Baron de Reitzenstein³⁷ a German officer who with another and about 16 men discharged from the Brunswick Regiment,³⁸ will set out tomorrow to settle at Catarqui, or wherever you think it will be best to place them, they will be followed by 30 or 40 more, who are at present employed in the King's works for whom it will be necessary to reserve lots where the others shall be placed.

The Governor further states, at this time, I would not have the townships named but comprehended under the title of Royal Seigneuries and numbered, 1, 2, and upwards. Mr. Collins has built a Saw Mill³⁹ near Catarqui, which I have taken for use of the King and have prepared for work for the Public good of the Loyalists who will have planks and boards for their houses gratis.

Next Issue:
The Loyalists find a home in
5th Town

³⁷ Baron G. Reitzenstein, an officer of the Brunswick troops. He was discharged June 26, 1784 and his party drew lots for land in 5th Town (Marysburgh). He himself lived in Kings Town.

³⁸ Brunswick Troops. Many writers call these troops 'Hessians', but their Commander refers to them as being from the Brunswick Regiment.

³⁹ The first saw mill built in what is now Ontario.



COUNTY MAGAZINE

Ray Young

Continued from Page 35

be armed for mid-air or ground explosion.

He recalls an incident that gave the workers quite a start, bringing home the dangers of working with high explosives. "I was on the night shift. All of a sudden, there was a terrible crash and the lights went out.

"A lot of the fellows were scared. We were worried about the danger of sabotage." But when

they investigated the source of the noise, they discovered that one of the shells had rolled loose from its pyramid stack, jamming in the power generator flywheel, knocking out the electricity.

Shortly after this incident, Ray and a friend travelled to Kingston, planning to join a battery being formed in that city. But when they arrived, they were told that the ranks were full.

"I turned to walk away and he called out after me, asking me what I did. I told him I was a blacksmith and his face lit up. He said he was short two farriers."

"In those days, before mechanization, everything was hauled by horses."

Sworn in, he was given several days' leave to travel home and set his affairs in order, before taking basic training. He put that short holiday to good advantage.

"I rushed over to Cherry Valley, to Fred Smith's blacksmith shop. I told him I needed to know how to weld on a shoe cork. I'd fooled around our blacksmith shop back home, but I really didn't know much."

The budding army smithy spent the day with Smith the smith, and learned everything he could.

"In Kingston, believe it or not, I never saw a horse. I heard they were looking for young men for the air force, so I put in for a transfer to learn to be a pilot. I took my basic training in the air force."

Among the many photographs that line the wall of his bedroom are several taken with fellow fliers, at training stations around Toronto. He travelled to such varied posts as Camp Mohawk near Deseronto and Fort Worth, Texas.

But Ray Young never flew in action during that war. In fact, he never flew a solo flight, despite his training in the eight-cylinder J.N.-4, the well-known Jennie biplane.

"Flight training was really a sensation," he recalls. "You controlled the whole issue. The instructor was right behind you and he'd rap you on the head if you did anything wrong."

Flying was precarious in those early days. In the corner of his attic is the broken piece of a laminated oak propeller... a grim souvenir of the crash of Vernon Castle, a well-known dancer. Castle, a frail man, was a flying instructor at Fort Worth. One day, Ray said, "a trainee froze when it was his turn to go solo. There wasn't anything Vernon Castle could do. He wasn't strong enough to take over with his stick, and the plane crashed."

Pilot-trainee Ray Young didn't get a chance to unnerve his instructor, however. "I never had the pleasure of flying alone. I was all ready to take my solo flight, when I developed Spanish influenza. I was in the Christie Street hospital in Toronto when the armistice was declared."



Share the magic of the season

*Flowers
by Marvin*

297 Main St., Picton 476-7012

Wellington's only authorized
Canadian wire service Florist UFC.

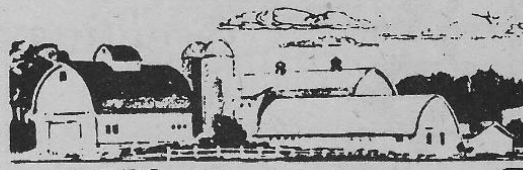
Send your greetings with

special  care

around the County and
throughout the world

PRINCE EDWARD INSURANCE AGENCY LTD.

SPECIALIZING IN FARM INSURANCE



Life Insurance Agent

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM

BILL MOORE

Home
476-4263

Office
476-2114

188 MAIN ST. -- PICTON



Black River Cheese Co.

Makers of Fine Cheddar Since 1901
New, Medium, Old, Extra Old, Wine Cured,
Colby, Brick, Garlic Flavoured, Onion,
Caraway Seed, Curd, Mozerella, Bacon Bits

Closed Mondays
Tues.-Sun. 9 to 4:30

8 Miles Southeast of Picton on
County Road 13

Bill Gibson, Cheesemaker
R.R. 2 Millford, Ontario Phone (613) 476-2575



Beach and Main
Wellington Ontario
399 - 2815

Holiday
Greetings
from

THE
TIMES PAST
SHOP

With a chuckle, he counts his record in that war as quite unusual. "My discharge papers list me as a blacksmith," he said. Canada is not renowned for its flying blacksmith corps.

After the war, he joined the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment as a private. Commissioned in 1935, he was detailed as air liaison officer for the regiment, at the newly-built Canadian Forces Base at Trenton, where he took instruction in preparing in-flight co-ordinates and radio operation.

When the Second World War broke out, he travelled to England as a captain with the Hasty Pees 'D' Company. The regiment immediately began training for the invasion of France.

But once again, fate stepped in and prevented Ray Young from getting into battle. The Hasty Pees were dispatched three times from Aldershot Training Camp, only to have their journey called off because of bad weather. In June 1940 they were ordered to Dunkirk.

"After our third trip to the coast, I was pulled off and put into the Air Defence Branch because I knew a little bit about flying," he said. During the Battle of Britain, his branch filtered enemy radio transmissions and mapped the movement of hostile aircraft.

While he was co-ordinating bomb disposals at Aldershot, he met a young officer who had defused a 500-pound bomb that had crashed through the roof of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, but had failed to explode after landing in the crypt.

"There was only so much time he had to do it. While the bomb officer worked, he talked, radiating everything he said back to base." A mistake could mean instant death for the disposal crews, but the radio transmissions could provide vital information if an error occurred.

The Times published a photograph of the officer removing the timer from the St. Paul's bomb. "A few days later," Major Young said, "the Germans came out with a detonator that would go off if it were removed from the casing."

Promoted to the rank of major, he was sent back to Canada in 1943. "Naturally, you're pleased to get home, although I wouldn't have hesitated to go back. I really did think I'd be over here for a short time and then go back over." But having reached the age of 47, he was discharged in 1944.

Until the end of the war, Ray Young was officer-commanding at the Armories in Picton, overseeing the training of young recruits. "It gave me something to do," he said.

Six years after the war, he went back into uniform, as a member of the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires, spending more than 20 years as

a guard at Mountain View Station, where the Royal Canadian Air Force stored its fleet of moth-balled aircraft. In 1979, at the age of 82, he worked a number of holiday shift reliefs at the former training base.

Ray Young has always had a love for the out-of-doors, and still travels annually to a hunting camp near Madoc. "I don't hunt deer anymore," he said. "But I like the company and I like to get out in the woods."

About three years ago, he began carving duck decoys. He has a large stock of cedar, which he uses for this hobby. "I began carving when I was a boy," he said. "I started to carve a duck, but the more I carved, the more it looked like a crow."

His skills have improved since then, and last year he sold a flock of 150 to a hunter. Several friends have painted his decoys, a step which he says he is tempted to try.

On the wall of his small second-floor workroom, which overlooks Paul Street, is a row of old wristwatches ... which he keeps in running order. Several clocks sit on a shelf, ready for him to start his repair work.

"I couldn't say when I started tinkering with alarm clocks," he said, "maybe sometime when they were first invented."

Down the hall from the small sun-lit workshop, he has left several large baskets of walnuts, which he loves to munch on through the winter months. Next to the landing is most of his collection of ship paintings and prints, yet another reflection of his multi-faceted interests.

Ray Young's house, which he bought in 1951 and "never plan to leave," holds the treasures and memories of hundreds of years.

While he has stored documents, articles and books, he has not written any of his own memories down, despite requests from his children.

He wants to write down some of his stories. His Aunt Annie Young, for example, "told me about the Indians coming by canoe on Lake Ontario, through Outlet River, to meet her father for their gifts." John Abercrombie was named by the government after the Gunshot Treaty to give gifts of grain, cooking utensils, gunpowder and shot to the Indians.

"Annie was crippled in one leg and was viewed by the Indians as special," he said. "There were no crippled Indians. They used to carry her on their shoulders."

John Abercrombie, he said, "was a great political friend of John A. Macdonald," when Canada's first Prime Minister was practising law in the village of Hallowell. Somewhere in his house is one of Macdonald's handwritten notes to Ray Young's great-grandfather.



Gordon's Mens Wear

*Season's
Greetings*

Let Merry Xmas
for the man in your life
start at GORDON'S.

195 Main St.
Picton



Decibel Audio

Where Audio
Know-How makes
the Difference

NAD—LUXMAN—KENWOOD
CONCORD—JENSEN
MIRAGE—BLAUPUNKT—MISSION

962-4300

232 FRONT ST.—MAZE MALL
Belleville



W.H. Williamson

& Co. Ltd.

Insurance

Frank A. Wright - Proprietor

All Types of General Insurance

Fire - Auto - Jewellery - Furs - Liability

Farm - Marine - Floaters

178 MAIN ST PICTON
476-2881



*Christmas
Blessings*

The Stop Light

Wishing you health, happiness and peace
this Christmas Season

Open all day Wed. and Fri. till 9

151 MAIN STREET

(The Globe Building) Picton

476-5555

Though he is well-known for his dozens of collections and hobbies, perhaps the most valuable collection in his large house are the anecdotes that Ray Young has to share.



COUNTY MAGAZINE

Glowing Madonna

Continued from Page 37

and the restaurants as we passed by them. I remember how our stomachs moaned as we looked through the steamed windows of a restaurant because it was near our supper and we were hungry. Then as we passed by one small window Misha and I saw such a wondrous thing that we stopped. We did not even notice the cold as we stood at the shop window examining the treasure. It was so beautiful we wanted Mother to see it! But she had continued walking, and was half a block away before she turned and called to us not to dawdle.

"Mother, please come and see!" we shouted.

She stood there, her kerchief flapping in the wind, probably thinking that we were awestruck over another ridiculous toy.

"Hurry! Please come and see!" we called.

After a time she gave into us and came to the window.

"Well what is it this time?" Basha sighed.

"Look!" we said, "The Holy Mother!"

Basha looked through the window of the tiny shop at the most magnificent statue of the Madonna that we had ever seen. She was over one foot in height and she wore an immaculate white gown with a golden border and stood barefoot on a bed of roses with her arms outstretched to the world and her glorious face was solemn for all the suffering. A card with elegantly printed information concerning the Madonna leaned against its base.

"Isn't she beautiful!" we said.

Mother said nothing, but I judged by the lustre of her green eyes that she too was captivated. The three of us stood sniffing at the window while the cold wind pushed against us until finally Basha thought of Casimir.

"Come now," she said, starting to leave, "your father is waiting for his supper."

"Wait!" we said. "You must read the card, this is a miraculous Madonna!"

She looked at me helplessly. I had forgotten that she could not read it. She knew very little