

face painting, crafts, music and more...all at the market, where a seed was planted and a community grew!

Artex Woollens Ltd.

by Lary Turner

This is the fifth in a series of articles tracing the history of the old industries that provided employment for the citizens of our community.

From the very start this has been a textile town. The original company founders built on the river to provide water power to the various businesses that sprang up, grew and flourished. By the 1970s, Hespeler was known as "Canada's Textile Capital". Many of the early company names have been forgotten, but some may be familiar; Hespeler Woollens Ltd., Randall & Farr Co., Schofield Textiles Ltd., Star Woollen Mill Co. Ltd., A.J. Brodie Woollens Ltd., R. Forbes Co. Ltd., Dominion Woollens & Worsted Co. Ltd., Silknet Co. Ltd., Artex Woollens Ltd. and Waterloo Textiles Co. Ltd. (the only survivor still operating in Hespeler). These companies were the mainstay of our local economy for a century and a half until Canada's textile industry was sacrificed at the altar of free trade when the Federal Government removed the tariffs on imported fabrics, thereby condemning them to a slow death. In 1933, the largest of these local companies, Dominion Woollens & Worsted Co. Ltd. was on strike. Mr. Claus From acquired two hand looms and in 1934 started weaving fabric for man's scarves and ties in his garage on Oak St. (now Shepherd Ave).



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Did you ever think that if you visited the Cambridge Farmers' Market that you'd not only be buying great locally grown/produced goods all within a 100 km radius, but you would also leave with new found knowledge of our farming community, the importance of supporting local farmers or even a history lesson from veteran vendors or loyal customers who have attended for decades? Market vendors who take pride in the Cambridge Farmers' Market would be pleased to enlighten you with their knowledge of how products are grown/raised or made and share secret recipes or tips passed on through the generations. Ask and you may hear stories of historical facts about Cambridge and experiences from veterans who have attended the market for up to fifty years. The Cambridge Farmers' Market has been in continuous operation on behalf of Hespeler, Preston & Galt for close to 180 years (circa 1830) and unbeknownst to many, located in the original market building. Located next to Cambridge City Hall, the market offers a unique variety of vendors to satisfy any

local produce and products, musical entertainment and a free craft and activity area for the kids each Saturday.

True to the mandate as a true farmers' market, you are not only guaranteed great quality goods and customer service but an atmosphere of a market that has stood the long test of time. The Cambridge Farmers' Market is the third oldest market in Canada and has maintained a reputation for quality, freshness and friendly atmosphere and continues to meet these standards to this day. Join in the fun October 30th

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Brothers John and Paul joined the operation as partners, along with Mr. Earl Constant, all of whom were weavers at the "big mill". As demand for their product grew, Clous From bought a power loom and by 1936 business had increased to the point that larger premises were required. The fledgling company, now known as Artex Woollens Ltd., was relocated to the old Karch Foundry building at 103 Queen St. West, additional power looms and more employees were added. In 1941, new orders for military cloth were received from the Federal Dept. of Munitions & Supply and the company again relocated to bigger premises, leasing the vacant Canada Machinery Corporation building at 25 Sheffield Street. After a major remodel, which included large extensions, new machinery was added and production began that November. To provide the capital needed to finance the move and expansion, Henry Griesman from Toronto became a partner. During the war years production of military cloth was maintained at a very high level and the employees over-subscribed to each of the War Bonds Drives. The company purchased the premises and in 1948, Mr. Griesman bought out the From brothers. As other investors came on board, ownership of Artex passed to Textile Sales Limited of Montreal, run by Mr. Alan Salter, Chairman and Mr. Jean Picard, President. By now, the company was famous for its plaids and tartans. It was also manufacturing a quality line of Ladies Dress Wear and Sportswear and had become one of the most modern mills in Canada. Managed by Mr. Don Robertson, the plant with over 200,000 square feet of manufacturing area and the fastest weaving machines on the market, could produce 4,000,000 yards of the highest quality cloth each year. Using 40 automatic looms, Artex produced a foot of cloth, 60 inches wide, each minute of production. The company also had state of the art spinning, dyeing, finishing and bonding operations which produced wrinkle-resistant, water-resistant, permanent press miracle fabrics such as polyesters, bonded acrylics, wool washables, and bonded turbo Orlon washables. Artex also turned out hand

knitting yarns. At the height of its production in the 1970s, the company employed 168 men and 84 women with a payroll of over \$1.5 million. Artex closed for good in 1989.

Editors note: Clous & Paul From went on to found Fromm Brothers Textiles on Elgin St. in Galt, before losing control of that company to other investors and John From founded Clearview Textiles at Hespeler and Pinebush Roads, where he operated for many years.



St. Mary's of the Visitation Fire

by Lary Turner

Most Hespelerites were not around in 1916 and therefore do not remember when St. Mary's of the Visitation Church was located further up Cooper St. at the site of the dentist's office and the rear entrance to the W.G. Johnson Centre. Following a disastrous fire, the congregation purchased and remodeled the old Presbyterian Church building, then known as Alexandria Hall. There was small cemetery at the rear of the old Catholic church and O'Krafka Brothers Co. Ltd. received the contract to disinter the graves and move the remains to a new Catholic Cemetery on Cooper St., across from New Hope Cemetery, so the fire ravaged property could be sold.

Mar. 18, 1916 – Galt Daily Reporter Pg. 1 Hespeler R.C. Church Is Destroyed By Fire

Well Known Religious Edifice Destroyed In Early Morning Blaze

The Loss Reaches \$8,000 Water Pressure Low and Forbes Pumps Had To Be Put In Operation

Early this morning fire broke out in the Roman Catholic Church, Hespeler and laid the edifice in ruins. Shortly after five o'clock flames were seen issuing from the rear portion of the building and an alarm was rung in for the services of the fire brigade. Considering the early hour it was not long until the fire apparatus was on the spot but owing to low pressure at the pumping station the pumps at the R. Forbes mills had to be used as an auxiliary to the waterworks pumps. The fire having gained considerable proportions in the meantime, it was almost difficult to cope with the situation and but little of the edifice, with the exception of the stone walls was saved. The origin of the fire is not known but it is attributed to the fire in the furnace. The loss will be felt keenly by the Roman Catholics for the building which is valued at from six to eight thousand dollars, covered by insurance, was the first church in Hespeler, erected in 1857, for that denomination. During the past decade a building fund was created by members of the church for the purpose of erecting at some future time a much larger and more imposing edifice for the ever growing membership. It was intended that the old church should be used as a Separate school. This morning's fire in all probability will mature the plans for a new church at an earlier date than was intended. The sympathy of citizens of all denominations in Hespeler will be sincerely extended to Rev. Father Meyer, the present incumbent and the members of the R.C. church in the loss sustained.



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