Remembrances of Long Pond and Latta Roads in the late 1940’s to 1955 by Alan Mueller

The crossroads of Long Pond and Latta Roads are now a very bustling area. Back in the late 1940s and early 1950s it was very much a rural area with farms in all directions. The 19th century one room school, just northeast of Long Pond Rd., was then still educating students. Crowding the school to the immediate west was the "Windmill Grocery and Gas Station" (see photo). An enterprising Henry Maurer and his wife Bessie had been the early owners since the late 1920s, when automobile traffic began to increase. Improvement in main roads hastened the new car owners to venture out (on sunny days) into the near country side for a Sunday drive!

After World War II gasoline and rubber tires ceased to be rationed. Travel by car increased year by year. It was very grueling operating a grocery gas station seven days a week. The Maurer’s had sold the “Windmill” to Ken Lindsay just after the War. He and his wife made improvements as time went by. “Flying A” Gas (later Sunoco) was still dispensed by an attendant along with gratis wind shield washing. You paid the attendant, who might also mention, as he counted out your change, “your left rear tire could use some air”. Free air was always available to all, bicycle, motorcycle or car! The bicycle crowd liked the grocery because there was always candy available or other snacks. Often several boys would pool their money and buy a quart bottle of Orange Pop to quench their thirst after a ride north on Long Pond or east on Latta. The grocery was popular since the larger groceries, such as Wegman’s, Star and Loblaw’s had yet to move into the still rural area.

The one room school house would not be operating too much longer, since consolidation and new K-8 schools had already been anticipated or built, prior to the war. The explosion of school age children was just beginning. Most children ate lunch at their desk. To walk home and back took too much time away from the lunch break, especially during bad weather. It just so happened that young Gretchen Howe’s family lived on the former Frank Beattie Farm at the south west corner of Latta and Long Pond Roads. Gordon Howe, was then town supervisor and her father Beverly Himes and her family lived on the north-west corner. Note the article on their never absent, never late record. Both girls could be home in five minutes. Ken Lindsay would bring the bottles of milk over each day for the teacher to distribute to the children at lunch time.

Thanks to a lifelong resident of Latta Road, Gary Clum, we recently obtained a photo (see below) of the second-grade class at that school in June of 1954. The lone teacher for all grades was Gleenice Heald, standing behind the children on the school steps. Young Gary is first at the left in the top row!

Mr. Lindsay sold the “Windmill Grocery” to Mr. M. Vereecke in the late 1950s or early 1960s. Progress soon engulfed the entire area and the Windmill, along with the store, came down, replaced by a modern self-serve gas station. The Windmill Grocery and Gas Station was one of the pioneer gas and convenience stores in the area, not unlike the Speedway and similar convenience-gasoline stores of modern times. Geisler Realtors now occupies the one room school, the last surviving building that remains from the Windmill Grocery-Gas Station era at Latta and Long Pond Roads.