

Title: Loblaw's. Page 1/3

Creator: A group of students from Ryerson Polytechnical Institute called Writing Your Recollections.

Subject: Alliston, T.P. Loblaw, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, Elmgrove, Eaton's, Mr. Milton Cork, Loblaw Groceterias Ltd., Empire Avenue.

Description: Various recollections of T.P. Loblaw. The accuracy of some of the statements in this document are questionable.

Publisher:

Contributor:

Date: 1983-10-21

Type: Document

Format: JPEG / PDF

Identifier: 0135

Source: Local History Vertical File - New Tecumseth Public Library: Alliston Memorial Branch.

Language: En

Relation:

Coverage:

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LOBLAW'S

ALLISTON
FILE

Theodore Pringle Loblaw was born in *Elmgrove near Alliston Ont.* on *July 11, 1872*. He was orphaned at an early age, and came to Toronto to work at Eaton's during their Christmas rush some time in the 1870's.

I don't remember who he was, but someone told me that Mr. Loblaw either worked ^{for} or owned a hay and feed store three doors from the south-east corner of Queen and Logan in Toronto. That would be in the early 1900's.

When horses became a less-important part of our lives, Mr. Loblaw, along with Mr. Milton Cork (born in Alliston) opened a grocery store in that Queen-Logan location. The loading dock for the hay and feed store was on the east side of Logan near Queen where there is an apartment house now. When I was young, I thought that apartment house was the grandest place to live.

At that time, when grocery shopping, you would enter ^a the store and be waited upon by the storekeeper. Often those groceries would be delivered to your home by a boy on a bicycle, and very often the cost of the groceries would be charged until the pay-day of the purchaser.

Mr. Loblaw and Mr. Cork opened their store in 1919 on the self-serve principal. They were not the founders of the self-serve idea, but they were amongst the pioneers who believed in that concept. That is you entered the store, picked up a wire basket, walked along looking at the food on the shelves, and selected what you wanted and put it in the basket. Before you left, the cost would be totalled by a cashier who was stationed close to the entrance/exit, and you would hand over the cash for your purchases.

In 1921, Messrs. Loblaw and Cork raised the capital to found Loblaw Groceries Ltd.

Empire Avenue is close to Logan, and we did some of our grocery shopping in the first Loblaw's store. In that store, there was one aisle down, a half-aisle in the middle, and one aisle up. That constituted the entire store, and you could go there and buy a complete line of groceries. There was a cheese counter at the back where the girl would cut off the exact amount of cheese you wished. They sold no meat, however.

~~In that store,~~ We bought sugar bags even, which were made into pillow slips. My mother was particularly fond of Pride of Arabia Coffee and I remember when it went up to 69¢ per pound.

I remember visiting Mrs. McGee, a member of WoodGreen United Church, who lived over a store on the north side of Queen, directly across from Loblaw's. I was surprised when I recognized Mr. McGee as someone I had seen before. It turned out that he had been the manager of our Loblaw's. (I wonder if it was Mrs. McGee who told me about Mr. Loblaw and the feed store? She is no longer living, unfortunately.)

Mr. McGee told me ~~later~~ that ^{later} her husband was manager of the ~~sm~~ Loblaw's store which opened on the east side of Broadview, just south of Gerrard. She helped him to fill the shelves on the Sunday before the store opened on the Monday. After that work was done, they went off to attend the Loblaw's picnic which had to be held on a Sunday because the men worked every week-day. Later Mr. McGee managed the store on Coxwell Avenue just above Eastwood Road.

Another store that I remember was opened on Danforth Avenue, near Langford. Meat was sold in that ~~store~~ ^{store}. An unbelievable thing to go into one store and make all your food purchases.

The stores were open until 6 o'clock on week-days, and 10 o'clock on Saturdays.

I'm not sure when the store at Logan and Queen was closed. I do know, however, that with more and more people having electric refrigerators, and even freezers, our shopping habits changed. At least one week's provisions were bought at a time, and often this necessitated driving a car to the store. Parking, therefore became a necessary part of shopping. There were no empty spaces in the location of Queen and Logan, and parking for any length of time was not allowed on ^{the street} ~~Queen~~.

Now the present-day Loblaw's are wonderful stores, but you have to be prepared for a route march when you enter one. They are large, there are many choices, and they sell everything from a needle to an anchor. Parking seems to be as important a part of the new stores as the food they sell.

However, I often long for a 2 1/2-aisle store in which to shop.

June 10, 1983.