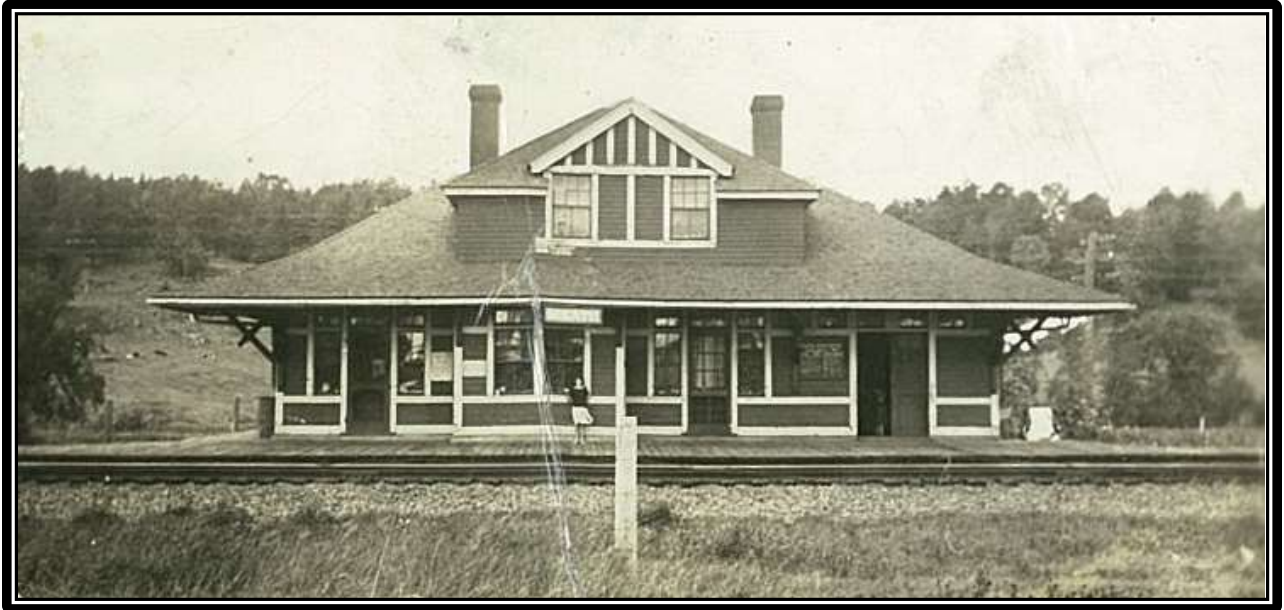
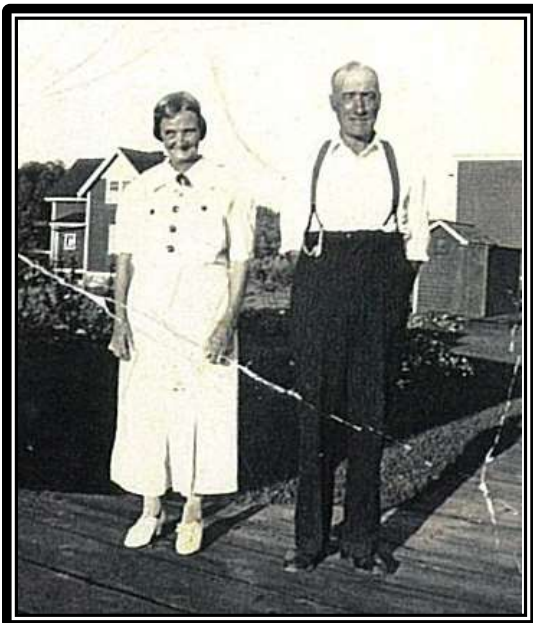


Meath Station



In the spring of 1924 Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Short, who later became my Dad and Mom, moved into Meath Station. The move into the station was overwhelming. Freight trains, passenger trains night and day roared past the station. The big bright lights of the coal engines could be seen from far off in the night, and the train whistles could clearly be heard while still miles away.



Mrs. Pricilla & Mr. Issac Short Snr.

On the Station Platform with the Section Foreman's house in the left background and the Freight Shed and the "Little Red House" on the right.

The station consisted of 10 rooms in total – an office, a baggage room, a waiting room and the family's living quarters.

The waiting room was very large with three big benches. Light was provided by one coal oil lamp attached to the wall. My Mother's passion for plants and flowers was very obvious, with plants in every window. The office was next to the waiting room with a split door that could be locked when needed. There was a wicket in case people needed assistance. A huge desk ran across the front of the office, under large windows which looked out on the tracks. Also on that wall were the telegraph phones and radios needed to run the Meath Station.

The living quarters in the station had a dining room, a parlour, a big kitchen and four bedrooms upstairs. The baggage room could be entered from the platform or from the kitchen. All the floors in the station were bare hardwood. There were no bathroom facilities in the station and no running water. Although there was a large sink in the kitchen. The coal and wood stove had a small water reservoir on the side so the water stayed hot as long as the fire was burning. The pump well was at the side of the station to be used by everyone. The 2 toilet outhouse was a little red building about 100 feet out from the station for men and women.

The station was heated by a large coal furnace in the basement. When we needed more coal, the coal car would transfer coal through a chute into the basement coal bin of the station.

The lawn and flower gardens were the beauty of the station and people passing thru on the trains would always gaze out the windows at the flowers. All the flowers would be supplied by the CPR Company after Mother became known for her passion for flowers.



Isabel & Mabel
In front of station garden.

Mr. Short, my father, started his day at 4 o'clock in the morning or sometimes during the night. He had to know what time trains would be coming through or if the trains would be pulling into the sidings for other trains to pass through on the main line. Some nights the freight train engineer would have to use the telegraph phones and my father had to be available at all times. The section foreman, Mr. Leonard Pryer, who was in charge of the tracks going west, would come into the office in the morning for his orders for the day. My father would then walk two and one half miles down the track to the little red office where the other workers were waiting. They would then get on the hand car that would take them to where they were working that day. The hand car was not engine driven so the men had to be physically fit for the job. The phones in the office were out of bounds to everyone except railway employees on business and the station was only open at certain times of the day.



Isaac Short Snr with Alex Arbour and Frank Goltz
On the Hand Car ready for work.

The first train arrived at 8 am. The boys and girls from Meath took that train to high school either in Cobden or Renfrew. The three Robinson brothers, sons of Joe Robinson who owned a farm in Meath, took that train to Renfrew. Clarence, Clayton and Cecile all became doctors. Elmer Goltz, the son of Frank Goltz who worked on the railroad, went to Renfrew. Elmer became owner of Goltz's leather store in Pembroke. Hazel Davidson, Ruth Warman, Glen Kenny also took the train from Meath to high school.

The next passenger train came in at 12 noon from Ottawa. It would stop and pick up people and take them to Pembroke, then continue on to Chalk River. It would return at 2pm on its way back to Ottawa bringing the people back that had been shopping in Pembroke. There was another train at 6:30pm from Ottawa and this train would return the boys and girls from high school.

The freight shed was at one end of the platform. It housed the freight materials that the trains would unload. My mother could not read or write so people would get their materials after my father finished his days' work. The freight shed also housed the coal for the section house. Mr. Pryer, the foreman, for the tracks going west lived in the section house.

The cattle yards were a quarter mile from the station. They were quite large and the wooden rails of the cattle yards were painted all white with the red buildings. In the spring and fall the farmers would pass the station on foot, herding the cattle, the sheep or the pigs. No one was allowed outside on these days. Highway 17 was almost shut down until all these animals were safely off the roads. The animals were later loaded onto the cattle cars and taken away to the slaughter houses.

My father ruled the station with an iron fist. No one was allowed to loiter or play on the platform or in front of the station. When he retired he was quite proud to be acknowledged by the CPR Company for keeping safety and priority at Meath Station.

Trains, trains, Meath Station was always busy. My mother and father were always there to serve the people.

The War Years

The depression of 1929 was still lingering and jobs were very scarce when the Second World War started in 1939. Many train loads of young men, who had joined the army, navy or air force, passed through Meath Station. Most of them too young to realize what lay ahead.

There were many young men from Greenwood and Meath that were among those brave young soldiers including: Lyle Lemkie, Alvin Carnegie , Peter Pappin, Harry Warman, Irwin Lebow, Cecil and Clayton Robinson, Pursy, Herbie, and William Blackmore. William was killed in action in 1944.

I went to school with many of these young men. The Blackmore and Warman families had immigrated to Canada in 1918-20.

Sometimes the trains were moving so fast, past the station that we were not able to see the faces of the men looking out the windows of the trains.

Sometimes the trains would have to pull into the siding to let another train pass on the main line; usually it was another troop train.

My mother always had a 'Union Jack', and little flags with red, white and blue hats for my sister Isabel and me. When the troop trains would pass the station, Mother, Isabel and I would wave our flags with glee. When the train windows were open the soldiers would wave and yell greetings back to us. Isabel and I heard our parents talk about the war, but we were too young to really understand what it was all about. This is one of the few occasions when we were allowed in the station or on the platform. With the trains and customers coming and going, a train station was just too dangerous for two little girls to play.

During the summer of 1943, or early in 44, 5 Airmen lost their lives on Highway 17 at Meath Station. They were returning back to Petawawa Military Camp from a night out in Ottawa. The midnight train was to pass through Meath, but hit the car the Airmen were travelling in. All five men were thrown into the Muskrat River. Railroad workers were called out to recover the torn bodies from the river. It was the most horrific accident to happen at Meath.

Isabel and I started school at SS No 9 in 1938. I was almost 7 years old, but Isabel and I had to go together. It was 2-1/2 miles along Highway 17 and even in those early days, it was a dangerous hike. There was a large rock cut along Highway 17, near the bridge over the Muskrat River.

Mr. Abe Patterson, a wood carver, would spend all day during the summer months whittling away at his carvings. Abe was also a pupil at SS No 9. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. David Patterson of Greenwood. On our way to school in the early spring, Isabel and I would be so excited to see Mr. Patterson. He always had a handmade whistle or two to give us, along with a warning to watch for cars.

Mr. Patterson became a famous wood carver of Pembroke. His carvings became quite famous and can be seen across Canada and in many places around the world. One of his pieces of work is a replica of the first Greenwood Methodist Church, which he carved before it was torn down, a few years ago. This historic piece is on display in the new Greenwood Methodist Church as a memorial and tribute to the pioneers of the

community. One of his beautiful carvings is on display in the museum in Pembroke; which I love to visit on my many visits to the town.
