

95 Mountain Memories Column # 95, Sept 2021
SHARING ENTERTAINING MEMORIES
By Robert Williamson

According to Glenn Simpson who lives a short walk from the Mountain Brow near Sam Lawrence Park, memorable experiences are a blessing to be retrieved and shared with others. All you need is an ignition point.

Recently, two events kindled Mountain Memories for Glenn. The first was Father's Day. His son, Matthew, gave him a rare, collectors item, an original roll of **tickets for the Summers Mountain Theatre c.1914**. Each ticket entitled the purchaser to a theatre performance and a free fare on the Wentworth Street Mountain Incline Railway. Glenn believes this century old artifact belongs in a museum. To be sure he promptly reached for his copy of the Summers family biography, "**Our World's A Stage**", to retrieve information about this windfall depicting Mountain history that happened literally on his doorstep.



Photo by Robert Williamson

This roll of Summers Theatre tickets was a passport to a thrilling ride up and down the escarpment, a pleasant summer's evening of live entertainment, a view across the city, the bay and the lake from a large theatre patio, all for 20 cents. The tickets, authorized by Summers Theatrical Enterprises Ltd and the Hamilton Mountain Park Co Ltd, were printed by Southam Press Ltd.

The second event was also theatre related. Glenn read about "**Fond Memories of the Lyceum Movie Theatre**" in the July 8th Mountain News. It recalled memories of what he described as the best job he had as a teenager. Working at the Mountain Theatre from 1951 to 1958 he earned \$3.00 for changing the marquee and movie posters twice a week. There were spin-off jobs as well such as selling ice cream bars during the double feature intermission in addition to general cleaning. But the supreme perk was free show admission six days a week.

The marquee had to be changed every Wednesday and Saturday night. As Glenn got older, the Saturday requirement became an inconvenience but it had to be changed to catch the interest of Sunday morning Church goers. At that stage he was given the responsibility of composing the text. For the movie, "Susan Slept Here", he got too creative, using, as his by-line, the theme from Goldilocks and the Three Bears - "Who's Been Sleeping in My Bed". The theater manager, Duncan Campbell, deemed it inappropriate wording for the Sunday Church goers.

Glenn's entrepreneurship truly began as early as 1945 when he attended the regular summer Sunday evening Singsong at the Mountain Drive Park. Located on the brow at the head of Upper Gage Avenue it was the former site of the City View Snack Bar and popular outdoor covered dance pavilion. While the family joined the singing and light entertainment at the edge of the brow, Glenn was collecting discarded empty pop bottles worth two cents each. They represented a small fortune when cashed in at Sam Shaw's Snack Bar.

However, his first real paying job was as a Spectator Paper Boy in the Upper Wentworth neighborhood on East 21/22 streets between Concession and Brucedale from 1948 - 1956. He still remembers the elderly lady near Queensdale who gave him a chocolate bar when he collected the paper money.

However, Glenn's best memory was the Dymac Electric & Appliance store on the southwest corner of East 21st and Concession streets. It was the early 50s and television was just becoming affordable. To promote the sale of TVs, Mr. Mogk, the proprietor of Dymac Electric, would mount a TV in the store window tuned-in to Hockey Night in Canada with the voice of Foster Hewitt and Glenn's beloved Toronto Maple

Leafs. He and his friends even got to watch the 1953 Grey Cup in the store when Hamilton beat Winnipeg 12 to 6. **Wow, what a great Mountain Memory that was!**



Photo by Robert Williamson

Today at age 82 Glenn stands at the front entrance of the former Mountain Theatre with his original Spectator delivery bag and folded newspaper in hand. Above his head the theatre marquee appropriately reads; **"the stuff dreams are made of".**

Mountain Memories by award winning writer Robert Williamson appears monthly for the Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society. See <Hamiltonheritage.ca> for more information.

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