

# Plummer's Trading Post

Harold and Elsie Plummer moved to Powell, Ohio June 18, 1941. They had purchased a general store business from Virginia Violet Hess operated by her parents Charles Violet and his wife. Someone else owned the building and after a year or so Harold was able to purchase the building. Harold continued to work as a home deliveryman for Moore's and Ross Milk Company in Columbus for about a year. They called the new business Plummer's Confectionery. Merchandise was: Fresh meats, canned goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, coffee, (ground fresh), soda pop, penny candy, ice cream cones (two large scoops for a nickel), sundaes with two tables for seating, school supplies, soaps and some patent medicines. In front was Shell oil and gasoline (with hand pumps at first) and out back was an icehouse. In the early 1940's a lot of people were still using ice boxes, especially out in the country where there was no electricity yet. By December 1941, World War II was in progress and people were working again after the great depression. People had money to spend and with so many things being rationed, you could sell anything available.

Elsie, Harold and daughters, Evalyn (10) and Carol Jean (3) lived in the back end of the store with kitchen, living room, and two bedrooms. There was a potbelly stove in the living room and in the kitchen was a large wood burning range with a warm water reservoir at one end. Water was from a cistern with a pitcher pump at the sink and the toilets were outside. These were normal things for the early 1940's. As stock in the store grew, the living room grew smaller until it was gone. No time to use it anyhow. The school did not have hot lunches yet, so Elsie served soup and hot dogs to the school kids. There were 6 stools at the counter for seating. The two tables were soon gone, but the stools stayed.

Closing time was when the last customer left. No regular hours. No days off except Christmas. It was wartime and this, too, was normal. Vacations were unheard of. After two years, Harold purchased the house next door to the west from Eliza Weaver where Ed and Lillie (Weaver) Smith and their four children lived. The intention was to remodel the house as permits were not being issued for new houses due to the war. But as the old house was being torn down there was not much that was usable so it became a new house. Since it was wartime, construction materials were hard to come by because everything was being used for the war effort. The wood trim in the house was all birch because pine was not available. (Beautiful substitute) It took two years to complete the house which was the first one built in the village for many years. It had a living room with a fireplace, kitchen, dining area, one bedroom and a half bath downstairs and a den, three bedrooms and a bath upstairs. You would expect a new house to have a bathroom, but an extra half-bath downstairs was a real luxury! There was no basement, but a utility room two steps down from the kitchen. In there was: an electric hot water heater, a fuel oil furnace sending hot water to the cast iron radiators in every room, a water pump used to pump water from the cistern, wringer washer and two cement rinse tubs. Harold, Elsie, Evalyn and Carol Jean moved into the house in spring 1945. This gave Harold two more rooms in the store to expand the store and stockroom.

In 1949 Harold decided to sell out the store at auction and pursue other business interests. The building itself did not sell and stood empty. After only a few months Harold realized he missed being with the people and so he remodeled the store and opened up again in 1950.

The remodeled store had bright florescent lights, knotty pine walls, tile floors, and air conditioning. He was in business again. The gas pumps were gone as was the icehouse. There were still groceries, milk and ice cream (no tables or stools) and they added magazines, greeting cards, gifts, work clothes, souvenirs, hot mixed nuts and penny candy. When the store reopened it was called Plummer's 5 & 10 to reflect the addition of work clothes, gifts, etc.

Later on, Harold traveled to Arizona and liked some things about the southwest area, so he changed the name of the store to Plummer's Trading Post with a big western style sign out front. And this time they had regular business hours. 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. After Harold died of a heart attack in 1955, Evalyn and her husband Andy helped Elsie run the store. They added frozen foods, toys, home permanents, paint, some hardware, costume jewelry, baby gifts, yard goods, and sewing supplies. This was called a general store at the time. Now a store that carries all these things is called a super market. In the 1960's Grace-land Shopping Center was built with a J.C. Penny store and a Kroger and Big Bear super markets. This cut into the business of the small stores. By now most families had two cars and super markets were the place to go. The Mom and Pop type general stores were phasing out. In June 1973 Plummer's Trading Post sold out at auction and Elsie retired.



**1941 Harold behind counter  
Mel Morgan with Cocoa Cola**



**1942 Plummer's Confectionery**



**1951  
Harold In front of store Called Plummer's 5 & 10**



1942



1951



**Harold behind the counter  
In remodeled store-1951**



**Candy case in the remodeled store**

In the spring of 1942 when Elsie, Harold, Evalyn and Carol lived in the back portion of the store, there was an outbreak of Measles in the neighborhood. If Evalyn or Carol should happen to get the measles, the store would be quarantined and closed. To avoid the possibility of closing the store, Harold bought the trailer pictured below to use as a bedroom. It seems crude now, but was the usual type of thing for 1942.

Note the wooden sidewalks. This was the type of sidewalk leading to the coal shed and to the two door outhouse. The wooden walks were treacherous to walk on, especially when wet. It was not too long before Harold replaced them with concrete walks. The back yard was all grown up in weeds. Little by little as Harold mowed the area he got the weeds under control and it became a yard we could play in.

