

From anchors to apples, business was booming



VINTAGE VIEWS

By Tim Mosher

Tavistock and District Historical Society

Jacob Wagner was a shrewd businessman when he chose this prominent location in Tavistock to locate his new general store only a few years after Confederation. The district was growing quickly and he could foresee the business opportunity of operating a general goods shop in Tavistock.

Only three years later Messrs. Adam Falk and Fred Krug purchased the property from Wagner's estate and constructed the south-facing addition on Woodstock Street, largely matching the style of the main building. They named it the Glasgow Warehouse.

By 1884, Krug became the sole owner and remained so for decades, keeping the Scottish name. He was an astute and very successful businessman, creating an early style department store here with each commodity having semi-independence. Upstairs was a millinery shop and, over the years, the community library as well. The post office and Bell Telephone were located here and a long list of businesses operated in the Woodstock Street addition over many decades.

Business was booming and had as many as 20 employees at one time in the main store. Mr. Krug would negotiate good discounts by making cash purchases in bulk, for example, sugar by the train-car-load retailing at 18 pounds (8.1 kilograms) for one dollar in 1900 and Brazilian coffee directly from the growers in Brazil, from which he passed on the savings to his loyal customers.

The Glasgow Warehouse and its proprietor prospered so much so that Mr. Krug bought a large property on William Street South in Tavistock, building a house that was truly palatial whether then or today. It had three storeys, a mansard roof and front yard big enough to easily accommodate a tennis court. Fred Krug was also very active in his church and community, serving on several local boards over many decades.

This photo is iconic in the Lemp Studio Collection of over 4,000 glass negatives housed at the Tavistock and District Historical Society. It's obvious the photographer, J. C. Sutherland (Jack Lemp arrived in 1905), organized this in advance because of how everyone came out of the shops and

posed in their finery, along with three dogs and bicycles.

One woman leans out of a window and there's one child on the right. There are no wires or utility poles yet as electricity would not arrive for another 24 years following this 1892 picture, however, a hard-to-read "Bell Telephone Co." sign is on one of the porch posts and a single lamp on the left post.

There's a horse tie-up and step on which people could descend from their carriages to the boardwalk on the left and the dirt road, weeds, small ditch and tiny bridge make it clear the village was still developing. Three large stained-glass windows are tucked high under the grandiose porch that seems to dwarf the people; two of these windows are still visible today. Curiously, the large sign on the porch says "F. Krug," instead of Glasgow Warehouse. Mr. Krug is standing on the steps right of the open door and his three sons are between the two left posts: Fred Jr., Dr. H. S. and John.

Numerous businesses have operated at this location over time, including one for 40 years – Harry Roppel's 5¢ and \$1 Store from 1938-1978 when it became Stedman's. This was where I purchased licorice plugs as a child that had a very racist name in the 1960s and sold some of my own pen-and-ink architectural illustrations reproduced on cards 20 years later.

Today, Home Hardware operates out of the main store, Krug's Meat Market is in the shop at the property's southwest corner and there are apartments upstairs. Fred Krug's grand home became the Maples Home for Seniors.

Fred Krug is a good example of immigrant success in early Canada. He had a humble start in life. Born in 1843 in Gartaw, Germany, moving here and working in the newspaper industry until his late teenage years, at one time delivering the journals on horseback to village and farm folk through summer heat and winter cold in Waterloo County.

He moved to Tavistock in 1860, was in business for himself by 1870 and was Postmaster in 1885. His Glasgow Warehouse presaged the modern-day department store,



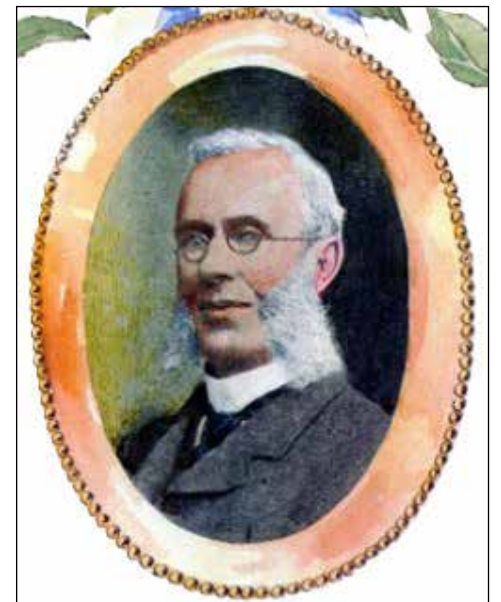
(PHOTOS COURTESY OF TAVISTOCK AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY)

Whether someone was passing through Tavistock 155 years ago or today, it's difficult to miss this prominent historic building at the five corners. The gingerbread trim, soffit brackets, Romanesque window curves, quoin corners and rare-for-a-retail-store stained glass all remain on this 1871 building. The grand porch, however, is long gone.

and his business acumen served him and Tavistock well, helping the district to prosper. Fred Krug retired in 1917 and died in 1925 at age 82. In his obituary, the Tavistock Gazette wrote that he was "... a veritable Moses among men."

Last week's History Mystery: The question was "How were the workers 'paid' for their labour helping to raise barns?" The first correct answer sent to me was "... they would be repaid in kind when they needed help for themselves on their own farms. Community solidarity!" sent by Trudie Julien of Lagorce, France.

This week's History Mystery: Why was this business called the "Glasgow Warehouse" for many decades, instead of a German name, considering Fred Krug's and the area's strong connection to das Vaterland? The first reader to send me the correct response at tim_mosher@hotmail.com will have their name, rural route number or community name in the next Vintage Views article.



Proprietor Fred Krug's mutton chops, clear blue eyes – even evident in black and white photos – and tall stature gave him a striking appearance.

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