



Queen Street in Killaloe was a busy place with a store, coffee shop, jewelry shop, car dealerships, garages and more. In this photo, the white building in the photograph is being moved and is now located near the curling club. At the far right of the picture, Calvary Baptist Church can still be seen on the hill, probably the only thing in the photo which has a semblance still today. (Photos courtesy Pearl Murack.)

## Demolition of Killaloe business brings back lots of memories

By Debbi Christinck  
Staff Writer

**Killaloe** – As the large excavator took another swipe at what once was a downtown block in the village housing a restaurant, mercantile, general store, home and jewelry business, Pearl (Burke) Murack looked on and tried to envision in the rubble where the store her father built was located.

“I was just able to tell because of the grate there in front. That was right in front of his store,” she recalled.

After a few swipes of the large excavator, the downtown of Killaloe changed for what most would consider would be the better with the demolition of an abandoned building which became in recent years an eyesore and even health hazard with the roof caved in and the structure in danger of collapse. However, it wasn’t always so. This block of the village was once a shopping place, restaurant and gathering stop for many, as well as the first home for others in the original home and later apartments there.

Now in her 80s, the site was the location of Mrs. Murack’s first home and where her parents lived and worked for the early years of her life. Calling Killaloe her home for most of her life, she has a keen memory of the now demolished buildings and the village which has changed so dramatically in recent decades, especially since the by-pass came through and took away the through traffic which had made

the village hum.

“The stores were all open from 8 to 6, closed Wednesday afternoons and on Saturday they would be open from 8 in the morning until 10 at night,” she recalled. “It was business like you would not believe.”

Her parents, Daniel and Elma (Layman) Burke were part of the business community in the village in the 1930s and her father built the store at the corner of North Street and Queen Street. She noted her parents borrowed \$1,500 from a friend around 1936 and purchased the house there as well as the Palubeskie’s Grocery Store and restaurant next door. Her dad turned it into the structure people were familiar with in the village when he added on to the front and joined the buildings together.

“An apartment was built over the top of the house and grocery store, combining both buildings into one unit,” she explained. “The apartment became home to the Burke family – Dad, Mom and a growing family.”

They would move when she was a young child to a new home in the village.

In joining the buildings, her father built out in front of the home to make it into a store, she noted. The home was in essence enveloped by the new store and combined buildings. The old home was clearly visible when the demolition began – it was a yellow building hidden for about 80 years behind the store.

“The lower part of the combined

buildings became a clothing store,” she said.

There were two entrances to the new store – one for women’s clothing and accessories and one for men’s.

“Dad was a self-taught jeweler, mainly watch repairs,” she said. “He started his own business in the men’s section of the clothing store.”

Meanwhile, the restaurant was renovated and became part of the business block. While her mother tried her hand at running the restaurant – all the while raising a growing family – it did not pan out. So, in 1942, Dan Wagner and his wife rented out the restaurant, but it was a tough time to run a restaurant with war rations and scarce supplies. They closed it after a short time.

“Sometime in the latter part of the 40s, Bert Keetch and Clayton (Slim) Lang, who were both new to the area, decided to try their hand at managing the restaurant,” she recalled. “Seemingly, it wasn’t ‘their cup of tea.’”

By 1948, the store and restaurant were sold. Charlie and Augusta Rhode from Sebastopol purchased the store and their daughter Marilyn, and her husband Lawrence Krieger purchased the restaurant. Mrs. Murack pointed out as well she found a newspaper clipping about a Mr. John Moran being the proprietor of the restaurant there at some point, which was most likely a bit earlier in the 1940s.

“The restaurant at the time was called *The Royal Grill*,” she said. “The Kriegers named the restaurant *The Coffee Shop*.”

Meanwhile, her father continued with the watch repair business in a newly built shop at the north side of the restaurant. He remained there until 1972, when her brother, Paul Burke, took over the business and ran it there.

A few years later, Paul and his wife, Doris purchased the former liquor store on Lake Street and moved the business there. The “little” store on Queen Street was sold. There were several businesses there including a hairdresser and Barb Miller’s Fabric and Needle Corner, she recalled. At some point later the Burke’s would re-open a jewelry store there in the small shop again.

### History of Restaurant

Mrs. Murack said in 1948 when the Kriegers purchased the restaurant they built a two-storey living quarters behind it. They lived there until 1959. The business was then sold to Bud and Lorraine Browne. They ran it for a bit and there have been additional changes in the last 60-plus years.

“The restaurant took on a few new owners from 1960 until the business block was permanently closed down,” she noted.

This period included Merville and Marcella Kuehl – with *Marcella’s Coffee Shop* which many locals still recall fondly.

“Marcella was known for her pies,” she recalled.

Then it was Joe and Joanne Murray with *Murrays*, followed by Sue and Delmar Gienow with *Del’s Diner*. Extensive renovations took place then and the diner had a 50s diner vibe to it.

“Sue was known for her butter tarts,” she recalled.

The next owners were Sandra Welk and Shelley Madigan for a short period and the final owner was Dan Prak, who was also the final owner of the clothing/general store.

### History of Clothing Store

When the Rhodes purchased the clothing store, they added another apartment to the existing one.

“They resided in the upstairs apartment over the store from 1948 to 1960,” Mrs. Murack said.

In 1960, the store was sold to Orville Kuehl, as well as the two apartments.

“Orville renamed the store *‘Kuehl’s Korner’*,” she said. “It too housed a clothing selection and other miscellaneous goods.”

She recalled Mr. Kuehl sold a wide assortment of items. It was during a time when people could purchase everything they were looking for in the village. Into the 1990s, his wife, Geraldine and their daughter, Cheryl Murray ran the store with a large selection of yarn, among other things. “In 2000, Orville sold the business

and building to Dan Prak,” she said.

Mr. Prak operated both the diner and the store for over a decade. He called the restaurant *Dan’s Diner* and the store *East of Algonquin*. In the store, he sold a bit of everything, including products which had been discounted for a variety of reasons. However, after awhile, it appeared both were in trouble. Eventually the businesses were closed, then abandoned and the decay began to set in the buildings.

The buildings were boarded up and eventually Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards Township council decided to have the buildings demolished.

### Memories of Store

For Mrs. Murack, there were many memories looking on the pile of rubble and seeing the glimpses of what had been her childhood home when she was an infant.

“I don’t remember living in the apartment over the store, but the memories of the store are still very real,” she said. “Buying school supplies, clothing, Christmas gifts. Even as a young teenager working Saturdays at the 5 cents to \$1.”

The old house behind the store was of unknown date, she said, but it is her understanding it was already old when her parents purchased it in the 1930s. The area around Killaloe

was settled by the Irish, Polish and Germans beginning around 1849.

When she was young, the village was not only a busy place for locals, but the travelling public went through Killaloe.

“The bypass ended it,” she said. “It literally died. At one time there were five taxi drivers in Killaloe and I could tell you the name of each one of them.”

“I remember the soldiers coming through town and we would wave at them,” she said. “We loved the big army trucks.”

The soldiers were coming from Trenton to Petawawa and this was the route, right through the village.

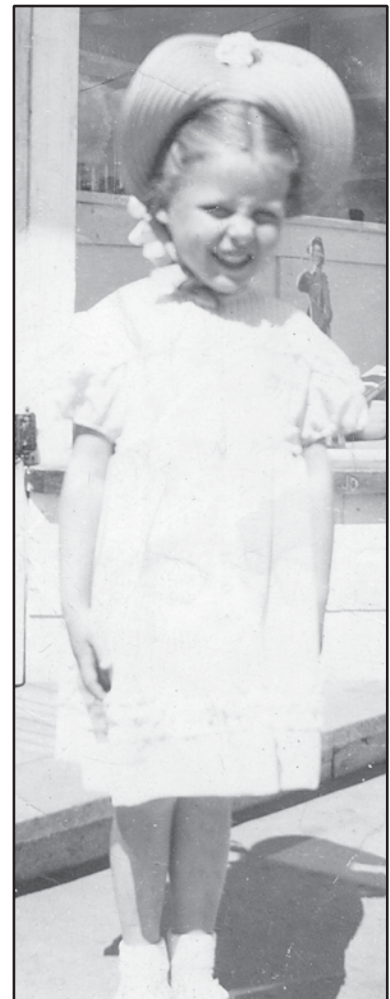
“Everything came through here and the train came every day,” she said. “It is very different now.”

This recent change is one more of many as the old store and home was torn down, but Killaloe still remains home as it has for most of her life. Her connections to the community and village and her church are strong and looking back on the old pictures makes her smile. There is a picture of her as a child in front of the old house behind the store, a glimpse back 80 years.

“For all my life it has been there, but that is all different there now,” she said.



Elma (Layman) Burke standing in front of the home which was eventually enveloped inside the outer building and store.



A young Pearl (Burke) Murack outside the store in Killaloe.



The restaurant went through many different names. In this time period it was known as the Royal Grill.

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