

Schuyler Notables:

Bob and Charlotte Collins, owners of the Collins Sawmill in Cayuta

By Elaine Dalrymple

CAYUTA, June 16, 2015 -- Charlotte and Bob Collins have lived in Cayuta nearly their whole lives. Charlotte and Bob's parents resided in Cayuta, but Charlotte moved away to Waverly for a short time when her father, who worked for the Lehigh Valley railroad, was transferred there.

Charlotte can remember her father commenting on the removal of the local railroad tracks back in the 1950s as "the biggest mistake they are ever going to make."



Bob and Charlotte were married in 1956 and lived on Varney Hill for a while, but because the school buses would not go up there back then, and their children were in early elementary school, they decided to move to their present location in the valley, on Conkrite Road. This is where Collins Sawmill is located.

Bob has been sawing timber since he was a young man. He got interested in sawing by watching his father, Earl, who worked for Cotton-Hanlon for 30 years. Bob worked for Cotton-Hanlon for 25 years and was their head sawyer. He not only sawed local wood but wood that came from around the world, including mahogany -- very hard timber to saw. Bob left Cotton-Hanlon in 1974 and started his own sawmill, which has been in business ever since.



Bob works with his nephew, Joe Eberhart, and they produce all sorts of wood products including molding, flooring and paneling, along with rough-sawed wood. They have a planer and they kiln dry wood. Joe does most of the sawing now, but Bob still helps in the mill every day. Charlotte keeps the books, with the assistance of their daughter, Debbie. Charlotte and Bob also have a son, Tim, and together there are six grandchildren, two step grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

Bob and Charlotte love living in Cayuta and Schuyler County, saying, "There is no better place to live. It is good country and the place you want to be."

Bob served as the Cayuta Town Supervisor for 12 years, and was on the Cayuta Town Board for 20 years. He was also a County Legislator for two years. Charlotte has been on the Cayuta Town Election Board for 40 years.

Bob was a very good friend of John Hall of Odessa, who passed away recently. He and John would travel all over the United States and Canada buying horses. Bob also traveled to find antique tractors, which he fixes up and shows at various fairs, and which he and his daughter drive in local parades. His favorite models are Fords. Bob has also raised beef cows and crops with his son and son-in-law.



The Collins home has lovely floors made by Bob, and the location of their home and sawmill business is picturesque.

Collins Sawmill remains an important Schuyler County family business and has succeeded through the honest, hard work of Bob and Charlotte, their children and now their nephew. It is a business, and a family, and a spirit that has helped make the county the thriving, unique place that it is.

Photos in text:

From top: Bob and Charlotte Collins; entrance to the Collins Sawmill in Cayuta; and flooring made of three types of wood (cherry, hickory and hard maple) and located in the Collins home. *(Photos by Elaine Dalrymple)*

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