

I'm not sure that I can explain this story adequately but this is our try. Here come the Witnesses in the neighborhood! Our Soo Michigan trip mid September 2006 would bring a marriage into the family and more gum shoeing.

I had asked my wife if she had any stories in her life that we could write about and I got the affirmative. Pat (my wife) met a very interesting man many years ago (she) as a young school student. It wouldn't be easy to write about due to a dim memory but she was attempting to get her watch fixed and a handicapped fellow was known to do good work. So she and her school pals set out to get her watch repaired.



This is a tender true story of a memory to learn what became of a bedridden middle aged man, that loved life enough to hold a repair business in his room. In fact we came up with more than one person matching our attempts to learn about the 1950s - 60s handicapped watch repair man. Pictured is 313 Dawson with a dim memory.

The suspects, a Mr. Don Waggoner & Emile J. St. Amour. The third gent didn't fit the profile of our man. We arrived at the Soo, in late September 2006, we visited Dawson Street to size up the house that Pat visited with her school pals. We came into Dawson Street from Bingham Ave. and there it was, 313 Dawson. For some reason the house didn't seem quite right, the porch was the problem. Pat remembered walking up dimly lit stairs leading to a second floor room where a middle aged fellow repaired watches and jewelry, he was paralyzed and had a board across his chest for a work space. Continued

A peg board was close by with repaired items with stickers to know the owner's item. A shortwave monitor close by beamed out ship traffic in the very busy Soo Locks Corps of Engineers. It was as if our subject was on duty with the Lake carriers.

Attempting to narrow down our search of another handicapped jeweler reported living at 105 Arlington Street, a Mr. Don Waggoner. Arriving down town we noticed the local Newspaper The Evening News. Our 105 Arlington address which is now the Soo Development Office and next door Walsh's Barber Shop at 101 Arlington at the corner of Ashmun. I stood amazed watching the presses roll and odor of the news print from the front opened windows. The press men had their headsets on and the presses were noisy with a high pitched whine from the press machinery.

Pat didn't think this was the area (no vibes) in her memory near the Sault Evening News, she visited as a young teenager where our watchmaker subject lived. We took some pictures of the Development office and dropped in and asked a few questions, they were helpful and making a few calls for us in the matter.

We walked past the Walsh Barber shop next door to the development office and Pat decided go back and drop in, I was thinking too that the local barber should have the old time scoop. This was a good idea she had because the barber should know his local history.

Walsh knew Don Waggoner and gave us some personal history, Don was handicapped and capable of getting around and even drove a car, so that narrowed the search back down to our man Emile St. Amour. We brought up the subject "Dorothy's Hamburgers" that really got some clamor and comments. That was a most helpful run over there on Arlington and glad we took the time. Barber owner Walsh was our step fathers barber too. Back to Dawson Street to jog the old memory bank.

We stopped at the church parking lot across the street from 313 Dawson where we thought St. Amour lived from the library city directory and Pat took a few pictures.

Then Joanne Whitehead of 325 Dawson appeared, she explained an elderly guy lived around there and didn't want to alarm him with strangers, she would explain what we were doing if he asked. We talked about Emile St. Amour and she said "Yes" I remember him, He rented from Captain Small at 313 Dawson in the upper apartment and his bed faced the south or the front street.

Mrs. Monroe at 317 Dawson would bring him (Emile) his meals and Mrs. Small did his laundry. It was quiet around there because Captain Small was out on the ore boats most of the year. She said "Emile had a relative a block or so away." Continued

Ms Whitehead was a Soo Hi grad of 1960. She seemed to have a good memory of Emile but did not know when he expired and the cause. It was nice of her to help out and we knew more now than before. Next stop, the Chippewa County clerk for any record of death cert.

Pat was on target with this story and it was nice to make some headway. Pat, my wife, didn't mind my many questions over a period of two or three years, after all that was a long time ago. Anything for a story, right?

I had previously called the county clerk at the court house to ascertain how to obtain a death record, the clerk was curt and stated she was by herself and had 3 workers off that day. This was not going to be easy, she said no genealogies and only one name.

As we entered her office at the court house we noticed the clerk was stressed, she was short handed and we offered to search the book. Pat found our subject Emile right away, he died in 1962 and was age 63.

Emile expired of a collapsed lung and was buried right there at the Soo. He was born in Quebec Canada and had Canadian parents. He had never married and no record of military service, raised by his family in Marquette, MI.

Why he was flat on his back, we did not learn however there was a time when Polio was running around the nation and he could have been afflicted that way. The City Clerk via email advised Mr. St. Amour is buried in the Catholic section at Riverside City Cemetery. Another visit another time.

Next - Over to the City Library for an obituary, which we found. We were making good progress and the only thing pending was the long standing problem of where to obtain a picture of "Dorothy's Hamburgers." Our old haunt (This was solved too)

Are we going to dig out "Timber Tony, the regional boating and long distance sports traveler?" I don't think so, now that we have gone as far with those old time memories! Age has a tendency to allow one to enjoy memories of past years.

Pat's mother had died earlier in the year and we found ourselves back in July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend 2007 as our family gathered at the Sault to dispose of household goods as the family dwelling was sold facing a necessary thing of life.

Our estate sale went well and we had good crowds and weather both days of the sale. I would eventually slip out and check into the St. Amour story.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> city offices were open and I did some research at the library and over to obtain a lot number for Emile St. Amour in order to pay respects. Continued

Riverside is a considerable distance from the city line down off of the St. Marys River and first the Protestant section then a large Catholic section where St. Amour rests with his brother and mother/father.

Riverside is well kept and I found the grave of Tony Andary, local realty agent and attorney.....who was our landlord who had given us some grief in past years, when we resided there in the 60's with the Coast Guard.



The Catholic officials and nuns were buried in their own section with large crosses away from the regulars. Always a pecking order. So be it.

Emile rest in peace, you are not forgotten, your courage and tenacity should be known to one and all. Befitting the secluded resting spot, as the HF monitor that Emile had listening to the shipping traffic in those

sometimes lonely hours at number 313 Dawson. The occasional Laker boat horn would sound in the close by shipping channel at Riverside Cemetery, leading to the Soo Locks. One - two and three blasts.

The boat radio traffic is now all VHF FM style with good clarity and strong signals. The Soo Locks Canal operated by the Army Corps of Engineers, continues on however the older style ore carriers of the 500 to 800 foot lengths have all been replaced by the super ore carriers of 1 thousand feet and more.

It is a different world now and I wonder how many will ever come along again with the ambition, knowledge and willingness, to operate a business as Emile J. St. Amour did? RIP dr OM.

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