

**The Storefronts
Replica
Built 1960**

Contributed by Molly Macdonald

The replica “storefronts” at Fanshawe Pioneer Village represent one of founding curator Wilfrid Jury’s special projects and were intended to display impressive artifact collections already in his possession.

Following the Second World War, Jury began to realize that the last of the area’s great craftsmen were beginning to pass away. To ensure that their work would not be forgotten, he set about acquiring the relics of these early trades. It was very important to Jury that “the equipment had been used- the old hand tools polished by the hands of our forefather[s], in such a manner that his story shall become our local history lesson”.¹

By 1960, Dr. Jury had collected enough artifacts to fill three shops, and construction of the Village Storefronts began that same year. The storefronts were built as one unit using a combination of new lumber, and pieces salvaged from older buildings in the area. At the time of construction, there were artifacts enough to equip a harness shop, gunsmith and general store, but the purpose of the fourth building was still undecided. When the storefronts were unveiled in the spring of 1961, the fourth business was set up as a barber’s shop.

Until the arrival of the Denfield General Store in 1997, the Johnson’s Store occupied the storefronts’ corner. In 1998 Johnson’s was replaced with a millenary shop. In developing the millenary, Village staff worked with the Wolf

family, who opened their first dress shop, “Artistic Ladies Wear,” in London in 1910.²

As part of Fanshawe Pioneer Village’s Capital Campaign, the replica storefronts will be renovated and relocated from their present location at the corner of Talbot Street and Concession I to Main Street in the “Town of Fanshawe.” While the millenary will remain, the Rigney harness maker will become a combination cobbling and leatherworking shop, and, the barbershop and Soper’s Gunsmith sections will be combined as one to house a tinsmith.

¹ Fanshawe Pioneer Village Archives (Storefronts Building Box). Wilfrid Jury, quoted in Tammy Coleman’s unpublished research paper, “*Wilfrid Jury’s Vision for Fanshawe Pioneer Village*,” 7.

² Fanshawe Pioneer Village Archives (Storefronts Building Box). File: Millenary #2, “The Artistic Ladies’ Wear,” author and date unknown.