

DEDICATION

Teri Pachter O'Connor My Sister-of-the-Heart

A heartfelt tribute by Ann Hauprich

A bonus blessing during my *Mornings with Morley* sojourn was the gift of the presence of Teri Pachter O'Connor.

Our paths first crossed while Teri, who is now Village Clerk, occupied a spacious work station adjacent to History Consultant Maurice "Christopher" Morley's office. A resident of Ballston Spa since his birth in 1922, Chris had known many of Teri's ancestors – including her great-grandfather, Jacob Steiner.

How Chris relished finding creatively designed display ads on microfilm and in old city directories that shed added light on the community-minded founder of the once flourishing Steiner's Department Store!

Copies of the historic documents would inevitably be placed on or near Teri's desk. When she strolled over to express her gratitude, Chris would often regale us with additional stories linked to her Family Tree – one of which was published as a History Lesson in *Ballston Spa Life* shortly before Christmas 2010. Chris had earlier contributed to a chapter in *Ballston Spa Legacies Unlimited* (Peckhaven Publishing, 2009) that additionally honored Teri's maternal grandfather, Emil Steiner as well as her father, Irv Pachter, and her brother, Jim.

It was during a related 2008 photo shoot that unfolded outside of the historic landmark that my admiration and respect for Teri began to deepen. Photographer Antonio Bucca had invited Teri to bring along props for the portrait sitting. Witnessing the reverence with which Teri, who had donned an heirloom Steiner's apron, unwrapped keepsakes ranging from a pipe that had been smoked by her great-grandfather to sewing supplies that had stocked Steiner shelves prior to its 1988 closing was a moving experience. (Kindly turn page to enjoy a sampling of the pictures.)

Because both Teri and I have daughters who were members of the Ballston Spa High School Class of 2011, our paths also occasionally meshed in that setting during the four years that culminated with the June graduations of Keegan and Kiersten.

But it wasn't until the final days of Chris Morley's life that Teri became my Sister-of-the-Heart. Our shared memories include a visit to his hospital bedside when, despite battling terminal cancer, Chris was determined to dictate a History Lesson saluting VFW Post 358. Teri and I were also given Marching Orders to ensure a display honoring Civil War veterans who served with New York's 115th and 77th regiments was completed in time for a Saratoga County Fair exhibit.

Attending funeral services at which Chris received full military honors for his heroic service in the US Marines during World War Two further strengthened the bonds of our friendship as we leaned on one another for comfort and support. Although there would be no more Mornings with Morley, we pledged to stay in touch and to do our part to keep alive memories of the extraordinary octogenarian Teri had eulogized in a newspaper story as having been "The heart of the village."

Among the holiday presents I've received from Teri over the seven years since Chris passed away is a heavenly magnet that reads: "*Good friends are like angels. You don't have to see them to know they are there.*"

Amen, Sister-of-the-Heart. Amen.



Ann Hauprich and Teri Pachter O'Connor as photographed by Rich Gorman on June 30, 2018. Inset image reveals detail of the cherished angel magnet featuring original art by BJ Lantz that Ann received from Teri following Chris Morley's 2011 passing.

Steiner's was much more than a department store

The following story has been adapted from a chapter Ann Hauprich originally researched and wrote in 2008.

Nowadays one must either look way up at a stone cornice or way down at some inlaid ceramic tiles in the doorway of an antique shop at 221 Milton Avenue to see letters spelling out STEINER'S.

But for the better part of a century, Steiner's was a household name in the village, thanks to the community-minded owners of a department store founded in 1901 by Jacob Steiner. Operation of the once bustling business was passed along to Jacob's son Emil around 1940.

While Jacob's great-granddaughter and Emil's granddaughter Teri Pachter O'Connor is far too young to have memories of the landmark during those bygone eras, she has vivid recollections of the period when the business was operated by her father, Irv Pachter, in the 1960s and 1970s and by her brother, Jim Pachter, in the 1970s and 1980s.

The younger Pachter, now best known for his a professional photography skills, joined his father in running the family business in 1984, but made the heart-wrenching decision to close its doors four years later due to sluggish economic times. At the time of the 1988 closing, Jim was quoted in an area newspaper as saying that he convenience of shopping malls had contributed to the demise of the historic family business. A lack of parking along Milton Avenue (Route 50) was also cited as a reason for the closure that was lamented by many longtime village residents.

Rather than dwelling on the sadness that surrounded Steiner's closing three decades ago, however, Teri chooses to celebrate the joyful memories of The Way It Was so that the caring legacy carved by her ancestors may be kept alive for members of this and future generations.

Among Teri's most cherished keepsakes are the faded black and white photographs and newspaper clips from the early to mid-1900s that are reprinted in this chapter courtesy of her family and The Maurice "Christopher" Morley Collection. Other possessions prized for their sentimental value are also pictured on a previous page. Included are great-grandfather Jacob Steiner's pipe, colorful spools of thread stored inside of an antique wooden box, hand-cut stencils and an apron, a yardstick and trading stamps imprinted with the Steiner's name.

There are also priceless stories handed down by her mother, Marilyn Natalie Steiner. They include hearing how her great-grandfather Jacob who lived above the store with his wife Rose and their three children used to dress up as Santa and arrive in the village by train then walk from the station that occupied Low Street along Front Street to Milton Avenue. He would toss candy to the children who lined up to greet him along the way.

Tales of Grandfather Emil Steiner, meanwhile, include hearing about his days as a Justice of the Peace as well as a shopkeeper.

"My grandmother told me that Grandpa Emil would sometimes get awakened late at night by couples knocking on the door wanting to elope. My grandmother would peek around the corner to watch the ceremony," smiles Teri. "She also told me that my grandfather used to create his own ads using a big drafting table in his cellar. He even did all of his own calligraphy. The result was that his ads for Steiner's were camera-ready when they were submitted to the newspapers and other periodicals."



Color photography by Antonio Bucca



1925



Comfort Slippers

JUST THE THING TO GIVE
 You will exclaim when you see them. Include several pairs on your list—they are very inexpensive.

Beautiful Gilted Satin, Old Rose or Blue 95c

Fine Quality Felt, ribbon trimmed in all colors 95c

Children's Felt Booties, Red or Blue 85c

... Our assortment of ...

Beacon Bathrobes

was never so complete as this year. We have a style and pattern for every taste, no matter how particular or discriminating. Every robe is made of the famous BEACON Bathrobe material and will surely please the wearer.

Women's Robes	\$2.98 to \$6.98
Men's Robes	4.50 to 7.98
Children's Robes	1.98 to 2.98

STEINER'S

BALLSTON SPA'S LARGEST STORE

The number of ads on public record during Emil's tenure as the store's owner leads one to surmise that he must have burned the midnight oil on more than one occasion. Indeed a program that was compiled for the August 1940 Saratoga County Fair contains proof that Steiner's had three stores at that time in history.

According to the large display ad, Steiner's was "Famous for Wallpaper & Paints" which were available to both "Wholesale & Retail" customers at 438 Broadway in Saratoga and 11 Warren Street in Glens Falls as well as at the Milton Avenue location in Ballston Spa.

It is little wonder that the store was popular given the fact that old-timers like Chris Morley recalled as recently as 2008 that no matter the hour, if there was an emergency, the store would be opened. "The people at Steiner's had a reputation for being big-hearted and for bending over backwards to keep their customers happy," smiled Morley, whose parents Edward and Mabel Morley patronized the department store long before their youngest son was born in 1922.

One published account told of an incident that took place at three o'clock in the morning. According to the report, a snowplow operator blew a rubber washer called an "O" ring in the middle of a blizzard. Although the item had a value of just 46-cents, Steiner's opened its doors so street plowing elsewhere in the village could be completed.

Another story detailed how a customer's wife gave him a list of goods to buy at the department store such as stockings, house wares and cleaning supplies. The list also included paper towels — which at the time were not sold at Steiner's, but were available at Hannah's Grocery Store across the street. Rather than sending the customer home to a disappointed wife, the clerk (reputed to be the late Harvey Morris, a longtime Steiner's employee), walked across the street, bought the paper towels and sold them to the waiting customer.

That Steiner's did not have any paper towels of its own to sell that day may come as a surprise to many former customers for in its heyday the store had a reputation for carrying everything from dainty dolls for little ladies to rugged toys for boys to paint and wallpaper to decorating kits with stencils, plumbing, heating and electrical supplies — even screens and glass panes for windows. The store also rented such items as linoleum rollers and carpet cleaning equipment.

In fact, says Teri, the store also carried men's, women's and children's clothing and footwear. The latter product stands out in her mind because of the photo on the facing page (and others being added to www.LegaciesUnlimited.com) concerning a contest sponsored by Steiner's that involved having customers guess how much time it would take for a block of ice to melt — thus freeing a Wolverine brand work boot that had been frozen inside.

"I'm pretty sure the contest had something to do with proving how tough the Wolverine boots were. But it was also a way to draw customers into the store. It's clear to me from the old newspaper ads that both my great-grandfather and my grandfather were superb promoters."

Given the outstanding job Teri did of sharing their story with us, one can't help but think that if they walked among today, Jacob and Emil would publish an ad thanking their descendent for responding to a request involving Steiner's Department Store long after closing time.



You Save the Jobber's Protit When You Buy Your SWEATER Here

SPA-NIT Sport Coats—Good quality, brown or Green, Heather, sizes 34 to 46, worth \$3.00	Our Price...\$1.98
Same with four pockets instead of two.....	\$2.25
Heavy Quality Coat—two pockets.....	\$2.25
Heavy Quality Coat—four pockets.....	\$2.50
Fine Quality Worsted Sport Coats, (like illustration) ribbed, excellent fitting, light enough to be worn with comfort under your coat, yet warm.....	\$4.00
Dark Oxford or Brown Heather.....	\$4.00
Men's Heavy Weight Shaker Knit Sweaters, roll collars, Navy Blue, Brown or Grey.....	\$2.98
Men's Heavy Weight All Wool Sweaters, Blue or Brown.....	\$4.50
Very Fine Quality "Pull Overs," Colors.....	\$4.98
Very Fine Quality "Pull Overs," Pure White.....	\$5.98
Heavy Weight Cotton Sweaters, all sizes.....	\$1.50
Good Quality Pull Over Sweaters.....	\$1.69
Boy's Good Quality Sweaters, a good percentage of wool, Brown or Blue, sizes 28 to 34.....	\$1.98
Boy's All Wool Sweaters, Brown or Blue, sizes 28 to 34.....	\$2.98
Boy's "Pull Overs," Navy Blue with Orange collar and body stripes, heavy weight.....	\$2.25
Other styles as low as.....	\$1.98

Our Guarantee "Satisfaction or Money Refunded"

Santa Claus will be at our store between 1 and 4.30 o'clock tomorrow (Saturday) afternoon. He will have a grab bag wherein everyone may take a present for ten cents.

STEINER'S

The Christmas Store



Memories frozen in time

Department store founder Jacob Steiner posed for posterity with sons Emil and Gene and some unidentified others in 1913 (above) while Emil's son-in-law Irv Pachter made newspaper headlines in May of 1952 when he took an active role in sponsoring a promotion to prove that Wolverine boots were the roughest and toughest around. To prove their point, Irv and Emil froze a boot in a block of ice and then invited customers to guess how long it would take for the ice to melt. Perhaps Cunningham's Ice will team up with Wolverine in the future!



Remembering when Santa came to town on a train

**By Maurice “Christopher” Morley
As told to Ann Hauprich
November 2010**

It was the week before Christmas and all though the village, children clad in warm woolen attire were headed for the D & H Railroad Station on Low Street. Santa Claus was due to arrive from The North Pole on the noon train and excitement filled the air.

The year was 1926 or 1927 and I was but a wee lad, holding onto the hand of my big sister Muriel as we eagerly awaited the sight of Jolly Old St. Nick stepping off the train with a great big bag on his back.

We both knew that candy Kisses would soon fly through the air as Santa began to make his way from the train station (later the location of a grocery store and a restaurant), past the Civil Sam monument and then onto the corner of Front Street and Milton Avenue where Leahy’s Drug Store (now O’Brien Pharmacy) was beautifully decorated for the holidays.

The next business to be passed was Butcher’s Barber Shop on Milton Avenue, but before Santa could reach his destination – Steiner’s Department Store way down by St. Mary’s Church – two naughty boys popped out of their hiding place and pulled down Santa’s trousers!

Santa had no choice but to put down his sack in order to pull up his bright red britches and I watched in disbelief as the juvenile delinquents dumped part of the contents of his sack onto the snow-covered sidewalk.

As a little child, I wept for what the bullies had done to Santa Claus who was as close to a Super Hero as a kid my age had in those days of long ago.

Happily, there was still enough candy left in the sack for Santa to carry on in the direction of Steiner’s Department Store (now Ballston Spa Antique Center) where holiday festivities awaited the long line of children who had followed him from the train station at the other end of the village.

Only later in my life did I learn that the man in the Santa costume was none other than Jacob Steiner, great-grandfather of Teri Pachter O’Connor.

Even when out of his costume, Jacob (who lived above the business with his wife Rose their three children) was widely admired and respected as big-hearted gentleman who was deeply committed both to customer service and community service.

In those days, Steiner’s – which was founded in 1901 and remained in business until 1988 — was Ballston Spa’s largest store. (Teri’s grandfather, Emil Steiner, later ran Steiner’s followed by her father, Irv Pachter, and her brother, Jim Pachter.)

Old-timers agree that Steiner’s was looked upon by children of all ages as a miniature North Pole because of the splendid decorations and broad assortment of toys that were on display leading up until Christmas Eve.

Aside from the pranksters who tried to ruin the village’s holiday parade, the Christmas when I was still too little to walk downtown without someone holding my hand ended up being a great one for me.

I got an orange in my stocking – a semi-luxury in those days and my maternal grandfather gave me a large chocolate bar from Bischoff’s Chocolate Factory. I’m pretty sure it was what we called “a pounder” because I can still hear my mother Mabel saying to my father: “Don’t let him eat it all at once, Edward.”

I also got three “Big Little Books” from my Aunt Nellie Schaeffer. Best of all, that was also the year my dream of receiving a wind-up train to place around the bottom of the Christmas tree came true.

Each time I watched it wind its way around the tracks, I remembered Santa stepping off of the train at the Low Street station with a large sack of candy. And with the passing of each Christmas since, I have grown even fonder of my memories of the man in the bright red suit: Jacob Steiner.

And so I wish you all a very Merry Christmas!

