William “Billy” Robertson emigrated from Scotland to the U.S. in 1889 when he was twenty-one years old. He came to the Sault in 1901 to work at the tannery, and by 1910 had opened a shoe store downtown. In 1922 he opened the “New Method Laundry,” which was renamed Robertson’s Laundry in 1930 when his son James joined him as a partner. This photo was taken in about 1935. Beneath the name on the side of the building is “Steamship and Family Services.” During the shipping season, laundry from the many steamships that passed through the locks made up a large part of their business.

It would be interesting to know what the theme of this float was! Each person aboard is wearing a different kind of hat, and they’ve obviously got the cart before the horse, which is also sporting headgear. The picture was taken in the 1930s, at the corner of Maple and Ashmun Streets. White shoes were quite popular back then.

(Below) This was Robertson’s Laundry’s lavish float for the 4th of July parade in 1955 — a big year in the Sault because of the Centennial of the Soo Locks. Owner James Robertson was mayor of the city from 1952 to 1956. Always a big booster of the Sault, it was fitting that he was in office during the Centennial.

(Above) This photo of the laundry was probably taken in the 1950s. By this time, one-story additions had been put on each side of the original building seen in the older photo. Owner Jim Robertson fashioned a moving display of “Dancing Dolls” on a conveyor belt system, which attracted attention to the long window along the south wing (on the left in the image). In the north window was another moving display. At the time of the photo, it featured a “Salute” to Old-timers, showing skaters, dancing couples, etc., cut from plywood.
SAVE THESE DATES:
CCHS Events

April 6, 7 p.m., Dennis Merkel, Associate Professor, LSSU, will speak about “Chippewa County and the Land Economic Survey” at CCHS’s annual meeting. It will be held at CCHS, 115 Ashmun St.

May 7, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., CCHS will have a photo display at the Earth Festival, sponsored by Sault Tribe’s Environmental Department.

June 25, 6 p.m., “Dinner with the John Johnstons” dinner theatre, Crows’ Nest, Cisler Center, Lake Superior State University, tickets are $20.

July 14, 7 p.m., Johann Ingold will speak about his life and career, from Switzerland to the Sault, at Bayliss Public Library, a joint CCHS/Bayliss Public Library program

July 29 & 30, Sault History Fest

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