

Springwater Books and Curio Shop Fulfills Dream

by Eleanor Stothard of the Hilton Record

September 23, 1965



The Schnucker's Store in Springwater NY in 1965. Courtesy of Hilton Record and Eleanor Stothard.

In the picturesque and historic village of Springwater a thriving business built on a life-long dream occupies the hearts and minds of a Hilton couple. It is there that Dan and Dorothy Schnucker of Lake Avenue Hilton have combined their interests in a charming and fascinating antique shop. His deep and knowledgeable love of books and her appreciation of beautiful china and other memorabilia has blossomed from a hobby to a full-time operation.

Mr. Schnucker left his position at Wollensak Optical Co. in 1961 in order to pursue his interest. He had avidly collected books for 30 years and Dorothy had assembled antiques for about 15 years. The collection had filled all available storage space in Hilton and the shop was the natural outcome of that

growth. Their opening four years ago saw 2,000 persons attending.

The building, in the heart of the business section of the village of Springwater was bought at public auction in 1959. It was built in 1840, and at one time or another had housed a bank, a drug store, a clothing store and a hardware store. Deep storage drawers have been re-located in the store and serve the present purposes well.

The massive book stacks, ten in all, hold some 100,000 volumes. Rare and out-of-print books are Mr. Schnucker's forte. Some date back to 1540. Many wonderful friendships have been developed by the Schnuckers as people come from all over the world to visit and browse in the shop. Persia, South America, Canada, Australia and Japan are some of the countries which have been represented in their customers. School children in the area are welcome to borrow volumes for their research and Dan helps them with their homework.

Every day holds the promise of an interesting experience. One of the most rewarding was the visit one day of a Dutch tulip salesman who saw an ox yoke on the porch of the store and stopped to visit. He found a 5-volume Dutch history printed in Rotterdam in 1632 and illustrated by copper plates. It turned out in the conversation that he was a personal friend of the late Ernest Hemingway, and owned an original, autographed copy of a little-known Hemingway work. Only five copies exist in the world. He traded his treasure for Dan's and upon his return to Holland, sent the priceless copy by mail.

The assistant director of the Chicago Symphony orchestra comes to the shop twice a year to get old music, particularly Americana, western style. Customers have come to buy "a yard of books" to acquire a library that fits their book shelf measurements. Some buy books to carry out a color scheme in their decorating. A lawyer purchased his library for prestige purposes by choosing only elegant bindings. A prominent Rochester couple acquired their "culture" by getting the set "The Thousand Best Books of the World." And

then there are the true book lovers who arrive to browse and enjoy stimulating conversation with Mr. Schnucker.

Mr. Schnucker balked when, one day, an adamant matron stacked several beautiful books with just the right proportion and then announced she intended to cut out the centers to make a lamp base.

Mr. Schnucker has a degree in journalism from Rutgers University. His father owned 1500 books in his library - all written in German - and Dads' early association with them whetted the love for good books which has culminated in this enterprise.

Over in the other half of the shop, it's a woman's world over which Dorothy holds court. The hours slip by as one finds first one treasure and then another. There are silver, china, jewelry, glass curios and furniture to take the eye. We saw an Irish shawl, assorted canes, mechanical banks, music, cigar molds, a children's harpsichord dating back to 1850, ship's lamps, spice chests, primitive utensils and even a fireplace toaster.

Open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., nine months of the year, the Schnuckers find the shop an almost totally absorbing venture. However, there is still time for them to enjoy their family. Their son, Allan, and his wife live in Penfield Their daughter, Barbara, and son-in-law, Robert Luffman, and their two daughters are in Bath, where Bob is principal of the grade school there. Three months in Florida during the winter season give refreshment and rest to the couple.

Plans for the future? Yes. A return to their beloved Hilton NY to make their home and to perhaps open a shop there!

The Hilton Record

Eleanor Stothard

Use of all photos and/or text in this article have been approved and granted use courtesy of
www.HemlockandCanadiceLakes.com and www.ConesusLakeNY.org

Click on or copy and paste the link below to go to the page that was referenced.
http://www.hemlockandcanadiceLakes.com/hcl_business_springwater_schnuckers_book_and_antique_store.htm