



1938 - 2013



2013 75th Celebration

Rosanne Martin, Rebecca Martin,
Neil Martin, Mel Frey, Irene Frey,
Rick Frey, Joy Frey



Thank You for 75 Years of Memories!

On behalf of everyone at ESM Farm Equipment Ltd and the families of (the late Edgar) & Rebecca Martin and Melvin & Irene Frey we welcome you to our 75th Anniversary Appreciation Day. 2013 is a notable milestone for our family business and we are very grateful for all the blessings that are ours to reflect on.

To our customers, we offer a heartfelt THANK YOU. Many of you have become friends. We treasure the memories we have of so many of you, and the stories we have to reminisce, and re-tell at family gatherings and around our own dinner table. Thank you for the trust and confidence you have in us. We do not take that lightly. It has been a privilege to serve our community in this way and we will strive to continue serving you in this wonderful industry of agriculture which we share in together.

We thank our employees, those past and present, to each we offer our heartfelt gratitude. Your commitment and conscientious efforts in giving your best to our customers does not go unnoticed. Much laughter, building of friendships, and working together has allowed us to file away many years' worth of memories. You have all played a part in the overall success of ESM as we have worked together to achieve this noteworthy milestone.

We also wish to acknowledge all our product suppliers we have worked with these past 75 years. You have supported us as we have sought to provide products and service to meet the ever changing demands of our customers. Here again, we note that many friendships have been established.

As we look back and reflect over the 75 years we are amazed by all the changes that have taken place within the industry of agricultural machinery. The only constant is change! Change is constantly challenging and confronting all of us. No doubt this will continue as new ideas and innovations are introduced to the market. We have also witnessed the old saying "what goes around, comes around". Ideas come and go and sometimes they are even replaced with a 'constant', something old from the past that has always worked. Such is the path of innovation.

First, M. E. Martin in 1938 and then, Edgar S Martin Ltd 1965 and now ESM Farm Equipment Ltd since 2002, this is our family heritage. We are both humbled and honored by this rich heritage that is ours to enjoy. Like our fathers before us, we want to be quick to acknowledge God's blessings. Like them, we clearly understand that success is not earned by oneself and one's personal accomplishments, and our desire is to give credit where credit is due. Our fathers were and still are tremendous role models to us, and our present success is simply a continuation and legacy of the example these men have lived. Whether in business, church or family life, they strove to honour God in all that they did. And this too, is our desire.



Neil Martin



Richard Frey



Edgar S. Martin
& Neil Martin



Melvin Frey
& Richard Frey

“The Lord is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations.”

Psalms 100:5



M.E. Martin Family

**Back Row: Sydney, Rebecca, Orval, Selina,
Emil, Minevera**

Front Row: Lydia Ann, Alice, Manasseh

The hands of time have moved slowly yet consistently, counting generation after generation, marking births and deaths, hard times and good times, changes and progress. Today we celebrate 75 years of one family's business - a moment in time, here today and gone tomorrow. Four generations of family who have toiled and labored, serving one community as it too passed down generation to generation.

What would the man who started this family business make of the changes and progress today? Manasseh Eby Martin was born July 8, 1888. He grew up on a farm beside the St. Jacobs Mill Race. As a young man he married Lydia Ann Weber, and went on to raise a family of three sons and four daughters on a farm near St Jacobs, what today is the St. Jacobs Rod and Gun Club, where the house still stands. Later they moved to Creekbank to a larger farm where they stayed until the Great Depression forced him to sell. In 1933 the farm sold and Manasseh moved his family to Hawkesville, ON where he purchased a house on a 1.5 acre lot for \$450. (Many in our local community remember this house as “the low-wash line house” – though the low wash-line was not Manasseh and Lydian Ann's). Both Irene (Mel Frey) and Rebecca, (Edgar Martin) descendants of Manasseh still reside in Hawkesville today, (as do numerous other family members of both families).

It was Selina and Rebecca both daughters of Manasseh and Lydia Ann Martin who became interwoven in the family business down through the generations.

Rebecca born September 23, 1928 married Edgar S. Martin, who became the second owner of ESM as it is known today. Neil who is Edgar and Rebecca's son, a grandson to Manasseh, is a current owner.

Melvin Frey, a grandson-in-law to Manasseh through marriage to Irene (Gingrich) Frey, a daughter to Selina, born September 21, 1918, Rebecca's sister, bought into partnership with Edgar and passed the torch of ownership to his son Richard, a great-grandson to Manasseh and Lydian Martin making a fourth generation family business.

Rebecca remembers a time when life was simple. She remembers picnics beside the river and romping through the fields on their way to school. She tells a story of her older siblings finding a gramophone, down by the St. Jacobs dam, complete with the large horn but minus the crank. The children took the music box home and were able to play a phonograph manually circling the record by hand. The gramophone moved with them to Hawkesville.

1938 – 1940's

Rebecca remembers helping her father Manasseh in his shop, after school. Manasseh worked in a wagon repair shop, which he bought from his employer, David Weber in 1938. This 30 foot by 50 foot lot with an old church building, was the start of ESM as we

know it today. (Today Neil's brother, Steve runs his furniture business from this property.) The business was named M.E. Martin. Manasseh repaired buggy and wagon wheels. Rebecca remembers cutting the metal bolts that held the wooden wagon wheels together. Sometimes she received five cents in payment for her hard work and sometimes she enjoyed an ice cream cone on her walk home.

In the beginning Manasseh worked at the wagon repair shop for twenty-five cents an hour. His interests however, had always been mechanical, so he included water pumps into his repair business, and soon became a Beatty Equipment dealer as well as Delaval dairy milk machines. As his business grew so did his busyness. He was a one man operator from 1938 to 1950. He took on additional lines such as Otaco, Fluery Bissell, and Frost & Wood which was later purchased by the Cockshutt Plow Company of Brantford, ON. (This became White Farm Equipment in 1969.)



When Manasseh's business called him into the community for service calls he was in the habit of leaving his shop unattended, but open to any customer who might need a part or can of gas, his only request was the customer leave his name and description of what he took for later billing purposes. The story is told of a man who was talented in portrait charcoal drawings, who was in need of a can of gas. He left his pencil drawn portrait and the item he took on the front desk. It was not necessary for him to sign his name; the portrait he left of himself was fully recognizable.

1950's - 1960's

Edgar Martin was born and raised on a farm on the Fourth Concession of Peel Township. He married Manasseh's daughter Rebecca on September 27, 1950. Rebecca recalls living with her parents for a couple of years after their marriage. Later they built a new house in Hawkesville, where they lived for four years before moving to the house beside the shop and then later to the house across the street where Rebecca still resides with her daughter Shirley and her family. Edgar became Manasseh's first full-time employee on October 15, 1950. Edgar took over the pump repair. He also did the roadwork. He took a bit of teasing from the “city slickers” in Brantford when he came with his little pickup truck, with a six foot, four inch box, to haul a manure spreader or #11 seed drill back home. His departing shot to them was **“You shouldn't laugh because I can still haul more than I can afford to pay for.”**

At times there was a tractor that needed to be brought back home from Brantford; Edgar would take someone with him to drive the tractor home. He jested, **“It's only a four and a half hour drive.”**

1960's

Things took a tragic turn in November of 1960. Manasseh was accidentally run over by a heavy truck in front of his shop. He died two and half weeks later in hospital from complications.

Melvin Frey was a young man who had just started working for Manasseh in October of 1960. He recalls the morning of the accident. Manasseh was repairing a Delaval cream separator and Mel commented to him that he must have very good eye sight to

be able to work with detail and precision, to which Manasseh replied; **“My eye sight is good, my hearing is not.”** It was hours later that Manasseh's hearing disability took his life.

Mel's memories go back to the Hawkesville buggy repair shop as a child and teenager. He remembers going with his father to take old thirty-two or forty inch farm wagon wheels to the shop, to have the large wooden spokes cut back to almost the hub to make a smaller wheel. Once the wheels were cut back, a car tire rim was installed so a rubber tire could be attached, making a much easier riding wagon wheel.

In the 1960's Mel remembers repairing buggy wheels with Edgar – using Asbestos paper to hold the heat for welding the wire to hold the rubber together on the wooden wheels.

Mel lived with Edgar and Rebecca before he married Irene Gingrich, Selina's daughter, Manasseh's granddaughter, in 1961. He remembers an old rusty City Service gas sign which swung above the gas pump, in the front of the shop. He recalls the squeak and creaking of the old metal sign on a windy night as he tried to sleep.

The business kept growing, Rebecca fondly remembers **“her front yard being a little full of farm equipment”**. Safety today would be a factor, but in those days one did what one needed to do, out of necessity.

1960's - 1970's

It seemed all of Hawkesville was “the shop.” Murray, Neil and Rick (being they grew up in Hawkesville) spoke of machinery scattered throughout the little village. It was the neighbourhood playground for after supper Hide and Seek and Flashlight tag games after dark.

Laughingly, Neil describes the swimming pool in their backyard. It was constantly being replaced with a new one as the prior cattle watering trough was sold. Their “swimming pool” was perfect for doing somersaults across the metal centre bar. These watering troughs were stored in the backyard of their home, in amongst the machinery, and at times their frolicking was interrupted by a potential customer strolling up and down the rows of machinery, which sent the swimmers scampering for the cover of home, because they didn't own swimming suits.

Neil, Murray and Rick recall having to fill the coal stoker of the old furnace in the shop basement. Neil recalls the basement being a damp, dark place and an especially terrifying place to go all alone, on those times when he forgot to do his daily chores before the shop closed for the day. He had to trek to the basement alone to fill the coal stoker. He learned quickly, that it was better to get his chores done prior to supper, even if it meant it cut into play time a bit. It was also Neil's job to run to the post office – which didn't take long except when there were statements to mail. He remembers the awful taste left on his tongue of licking the stamps.

Murray being the older, forerunner male sibling, remembers Grandpa Manasseh with more clarity than does Neil. Murray remembers grandpa chasing him through the shop – out one door and in through another. (Now, two generations later Murray plays the same games with his grandson.) He also recalls the big roll top desk that grandpa sat at with the stool on wheels (that is still in ESM's memorabilia archives). Murray recalls sitting on Grandpa and Grandma's front porch as a very young child, enjoying a ‘before supper’ snack of bologna.

Neil has little to no memory of Grandpa Manasseh, but he vaguely remembers the day of the accident, as a two year old. Rebecca, Neil's mother, talks of Grandpa acknowledging Neil's curious presence as he lay on the couch of their home – next to the shop, awaiting the ambulance.

Both brothers remember working in the shop at a very young age. Murray has recollections of mounting rubber on wooden buggy wheels and assembling metal chicken feeders. Eventually he too learned the

Business Owners from 1938 - Present



Manasseh E. Martin
1938 - 1960



Edgar S. Martin
1960 - 1995



Melvin Frey
1965 - 2007



Noah Weber
1988 - 2004



Neil Martin
1986 - Present



Richard Frey
1988 - Present

task of tractor and combine repairs, learning how to split tractors to make clutch replacements and installing new concave bars on combine cylinders. **"I would be remiss not to mention that I learned the art of sweeping a shop floor from an early age."** He jokes.

Certainly many of Neil's memories and boyhood tasks relating to the business were shared by both brothers, but Neil being four years Murray's junior remembers feeling the unfairness of the business world. Neil remembers the first tilt-and-load truck that Edgar S. Martin Ltd bought. It was a big deal to have such a truck for one's business and Neil had dreams of being the primary truck driver of this wonderful piece of equipment. Jealousy poked its head up when Murray was allowed to drive it. It was difficult for Neil to understand the injustice of not being paid to be a passenger as he rode along.

It was hardly fair that Murray at the ripe old age of twelve years old was allowed to drive a tractor across Hawesville to what is the Community Centre now and show off to anyone watching, as he tried out the side brakes of the tractor, achieving perfect "doughnuts" on the icy patches of snow.

The brothers would often ride with their father, Edgar, to the Canadian Cockshutt Manufacturing & Parts Depot Plant in Brantford, for parts and equipment. **"We sat patiently in the chairs as dad did his business, moving from one office to another. Dad used to brag that his kids could likely find their way down and back"** Neil recalls. **"He'd play this game with us as we drove, he'd ask us to give him the directions, telling him where to turn left or right. We would always crouch under the dashboard as we passed under the railroad overpass in Cambridge - (yes this was before the seat belt era) and then stop for a refreshing cold drink of water from a spring right beside the highway."**

Just prior to Manasseh's death, Edgar had been working out details in taking over the business from his father-in-law. He became the sole owner after Manasseh's death until Mel Frey; Edgar's employee became his business partner in 1965.

The two partners combined a business and by the late 1960's Edgar S. Martin Ltd. had four employees working in the plumbing and electrical department and four employees working with farm equipment department and one office employee for both. All of this was happening on a quarter acre lot -in a 2,800 square foot building, with machinery scattered throughout Hawkesville, until a three and a half acre lot, with an 8,000 square foot building, was bought in 1972 and the farm machinery business was moved to Wallenstein with Edgar overseeing this part of the business. In 1973, the new Wallenstein business hosted the first Open House as a Cockshutt dealer.



Open House 1973 - with plumbing division

Mel continued the plumbing and electrical division in Hawkesville. During the early 1970's he was required to do a practical test in Toronto at the Department of Labour where he received his plumbing

license. He was also certified as a Domestic and Rural Electrician in order to do wiring on water heaters. He remembers Ontario Hydro's promotional Cascade 40 water heater that they promoted where they sold a block of energy at a cheaper rate to sell electrical energy heaters to replace the gas heaters.

Mel recalls the day he was buried alive in a trench that caved in. He was helping to install a water line from the main trench to the house when the side of the trench caved in burying him to the chin. He doesn't remember how long he was buried before a trencher came by and dug him out.

He tells the story of an employee who was checking to see if there was water in a well or if it had dried up. As the man stepped on the rotten boards covering the well, the boards gave way and he fell through. Mel pulled his water drenched employee back unto dry land - their question answered; the well indeed had water in it and had not dried up.

In the 1960's and 1970's, the David Martin community was buying up the old claw footed cast iron bathtubs as people were upgrading to the new porcelain lined steel tubs. Mel remembers re-installing these used bathtubs into the homes of the David Martin people. It seemed to be the custom back then to have them hidden away, so Mel installed these bathtubs with a "tub surround" made of wood which off times included a lid, to hide them away.



Rick remembers these days, as he often travelled with his father to fix a pump. As a very young child he remembers going with his father to repair some plumbing on a farm. He remembers the day he backed into an egg washer and couldn't get himself out of it. The farmer found him sitting in the egg washer machine, wet clear through to the skin. He pulled him out and took him to his house where his wife got him into dry clothes.

He remembers another time, going with his father to install a generator at a farm during an ice storm. He laughed at this memory because while his father was out in the ice and snow storm getting wet, Rick was snug and dry watching TV up at the house - something very new and different for him - because they had no TV in their home as a child.

Once he went with his dad and watched him dig a new spring fed well with a backhoe and install a pump. He also remembers going to the St Jacobs Flour Mill where his dad was working on some plumbing, and the fascination of climbing into the basement with his dad to see the water wheel working. These experiences implanted in him, a fascination of running water and the power of channeling water to this day.

Rick remembers going with his father to pick up water pumps and water bowls, as the business required them, at Beatty Brothers Equipment in Fergus. (This was later bought out by General Steelware.) After 1965 when Mel took over the plumbing end of the business he continued working with companies such as Beatty Brothers, Knells Hardware and J.B. Allen in Kitchener for his plumbing supplies. He installed and serviced water pumps and bowls for cattle as well as water heaters.

1970's - 1980's

Mel retired the plumbing end of Edgar S Martin

Ltd. in 1976. Mel and Edgar sold the plumbing inventory in a two day auction. The Hawkesville property was sold to Way-Mar. Mel joined the team in Wallenstein where the two business partners continued to sell farm equipment. Knell's Hardware and J.B. Allen were used for supplies, as needed, for internal use in their shop in Wallenstein.

In 1978 a new 60'x 93' addition was built onto the shop.

ESM became a spring board into the work world for a number of both Neil and Rick's siblings. Besides Murray, who worked at the parts counter, two of Neil's sisters, were employed full time for a number of years, as well. Ruth Anne and Sharon had various office responsibilities. Rick's brother Tim worked in the shop as a mechanic. Other siblings, as well as the children of Neil & Rick, worked part time hours, as summer help, in the shop, or cutting the grass, burning garbage and other custodial duties.

Other changes took place. In 1986, Ford Motor Company purchased New Holland from the Sperry Group and then in 1987, Versatile was purchased and brought into the Ford New Holland product line. Then in 1991, Ford Motor Company sold their agriculture division to Fiat from Italy.

The Fiat name became instrumental twenty years later as we were planning ESM's 75th Anniversary, when Neil and Rick purchased a Fiat 500 as a company car to celebrate the occasion.

1990's - Present

In 2002, the business name changed from Edgar S. Martin Ltd. to ESM Farm Equipment Ltd. as it remains today.

Edgar retired in 1995 and passed away in July 2012 - just a few short months before our 75th celebration year.

Mel retired in 2007.

A brother-in-law of Neil, Noah started working at ESM in April 1986 and became a partner in 1988 then sold his shares in 2004.

Presently, in the year of our Lord 2013, ESM Farm Equipment employs seventeen people.

Neil Martin, who began working for Edgar S. Martin Ltd. in July 1977, became a business partner in 1986. He is a grandson to Manasseh E. Martin and remains an owner of ESM.

Rick Frey, who joined the business as an employee in February of 1985, became a business partner in 1988. Currently he has a son-in-law, Tim Jay working at ESM since 2008. Rick's grandsons, Lucas and Carter, frequently visit ESM to see "Papa" own New Holland toys. These boys make a sixth generation for Manasseh E. Martin, being their great-great-great grandfather. Rick is a great grandson to Manasseh E. Martin and remains an owner of ESM.

Written by: Joy Frey



Richard Frey Family - from left to right:
Adults: Tim & Monica Jay, Rick Frey,
Mel & Irene Frey
Children: Carter & Lucas Jay

In Memory of Edgar S. Martin

Sixty Years And Some

Father and son-in-law became a team. Cockshutt tractors and plumbing their theme. City Service gas pumps in the yard were found; Equipment and wagons, the children's playground. An unexpected accident brings change.

Edgar S. Martin must now take the reins. Responsible and cautious he always remains. Soon business outgrows the Hawkesville block. Room is needed for office, shop and dock. A move to Wallenstein will meet that need.



A business partner joins; his name is Mel, And some years later, their sons Rick and Neil. Edgar found people to be his interest. Employees and customers, where he invests. No wonder that many have called him their friend.

Time has a way of marching on. Youth and business have come and gone. Edgar retires with grace and ease, willing to sell cars; if you please. Little black datebook and cell phone rings, pick-ups and drop-offs, of people and things. Meeting many people; making many a friend; enjoying life's journey to the end.

By Edgar Martin's Firstborn: Pauline Weber



Spring 2012



Past & Present



1973 Open House



2003 Open House



2013 - Celebrating 75 Years

ESM Family Business Tree

Manasseh E. Martin & Lydia Ann (n. Weber)

Sydney Gingrich & Selina (n. Martin)

Edgar S. Martin & Rebecca (n. Martin)

Melvin Frey & Irene (n. Gingrich)

Neil Martin & Rosanne (n. Martin)

Richard Frey & Joy (n. Brubacher)

..... indicates the blood line
 ————— indicates the business line

Points of Interest

- ✓ Edgar remembers his father's first tractor, which he bought in 1941 costing him \$1,100.
- ✓ Edgar sold his first tractor in 1951- a Cockshutt 30 on rubber tires. It sold for \$2,232.
- ✓ In 1940 a 32 hp Cockshutt 70 complete with spade lugs and a muffler sold for \$976. If you added a starter and lights it cost \$1,052. If you wanted it with rubber tires it would cost \$1,132.
- ✓ In 1958 a Cockshutt 540 tractor, with 31 hp and power take off sold for \$2,770. In 2013 a new 270 hp New Holland T7.270 tractor costs \$180,000.
- ✓ In 1940 a Cockshutt #6 combine with a 5' 7" cut and bagging attachment sold for \$885. In 2013 a new CR6090 combine with corn head and a grain head costs \$390,000.
- ✓ Manasseh started working for a wage of twenty-five cents an hour in his wagon repair shop.
- ✓ Minimum wage in 1938 was 25 cents an hour, in 1955 it was 75 cents an hour.
- ✓ Secession Statistics show that only about 30% of family businesses survive into the second generation. 12% are still viable into the third generation and only 3% into the fourth generation or beyond.
- ✓ Cheryl Martin-Gray has been ESM's accountant since 1974.
- ✓ Anne Weber has been ESM's secretary since 1984.
- ✓ Mahlon Bauman was ESM's first parts man from 1970-1996.
- ✓ Allan Brubacher is ESM's longest working employee, 1977 -present. His starting wage was \$4.25. His first repair job was on Manasseh's son Sidney's white 2-85 tractor.
- ✓ ESM has employed 107 people from 1938 until 2013.

Edgar S. Martin Ltd. had a tractor traded in from a customer, a local farmer, Edgar B. Martin in 1973.

They were aware of a need for a tractor at Conestoga Bible Camp.



This 540 Cockshutt tractor was donated to the camp for their use until it was no longer needed.



It was returned to ESM in 2001 after which Edgar had it restored to its originality and it has been retired to showing in antique tractor shows since.