

## Belmont Heritage Commission commemorates 150th anniversary

BELMONT — Heritage Commission chair Vicki Donovan and Priscilla Annis held the first session of interviews with certain Belmont residents who were there by special invitation to share their stories of living near Main Street.

Janet Leroux, Lillian Leroux, Lucille Leroux, Albert Akerstrom III, Alyce Akerstrom Jewell, and Everett Weeks attended the session.

To help celebrate Belmont's 150th anniversary, the Belmont Heritage Commission has established a goal of recording and documenting the town's history through stories told by community members, so generations to come will be able to learn the history of the town by listening to residents' past experiences and memories.

Heritage member Jack Donovan opened up the discussion by asking questions about how things have changed, and businesses from years past.

All of the interviewees remember Prescott's Pharmacy. They told special stories about parents and grandparents, transportation by horse and buggy, and times when only one family in town had a television.

All attendees also remember the Saturday night dances at the town hall, and celebrations of Old Home Day.

The Leroux sisters mentioned that

St. Joseph's Church is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year. They added that their father and grandmother both worked at the Belmont Mill.

Janet Leroux and Alyce Akerstrom Jewell remember venturing to Mooney's Farm to go sledding. Albert Akerstrom, Alyce's brother, recalled the gas station, post office and barber shop on Main Street. Akerstrom later became Belmont's fire chief, telling stories of the department and community combined effort to build a new fire station. Many of Alyce and Albert's children and grandchildren also live in town.

Everett Weeks brought photos to share with the group, many of them from his grandfather and father, of the railroad that traveled behind his home. Weeks enlightened the group with names of Belmont residents that he has known through years of farming.

All interviewees were asked what they have enjoyed most about living in Belmont. They all agreed that the people in Belmont can be counted on. Akerstrom said people come out of the woodwork if someone needs help.

The Heritage Commission is grateful for the John M. Sargent Fund's support of oral history video production for Belmont's 150th.



Lillian Leroux, Lucille Leroux, and Janet Leroux sit with interviewer Jack Donovan. (Courtesy photo)

Other interviews will be planned in the months ahead as the commission moves their focus from Main Street to other areas of Belmont.

Community members can send pictures and stories for the oral history project to Vicki Donovan at [events@belmontnh.org](mailto:events@belmontnh.org).