

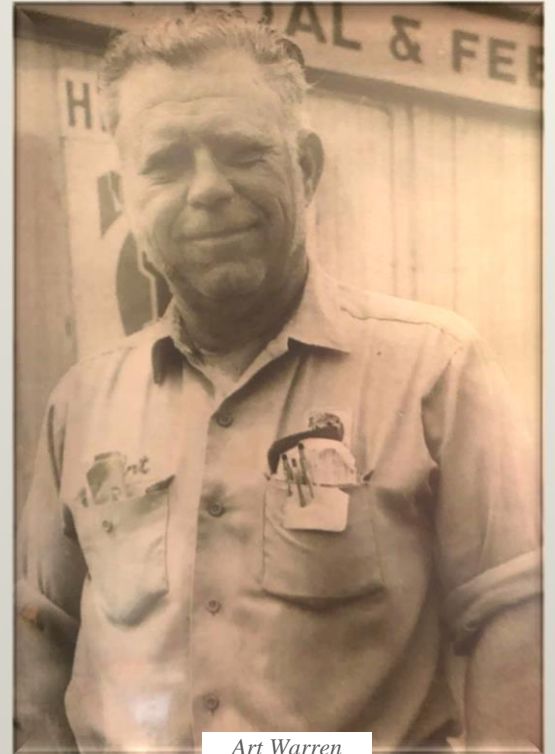
Looking Back at Lake County – Beloved Businesses #2

This month, our look into the hidden gems of Ohio's smallest county will include this entrepreneurial success.

Perry Coal & Feed

Located on Main Street in Perry, Ohio, **Perry Coal & Feed** has been in business for well over a century. Founded by **J.M. Brown** in 1916, this local business originally sold feed, fertilizer and flour to small, local family farms. Later, investors added a building to the five-acre property to store milling equipment for on-site production and sales. **Archie Horner**, manager, and **Art Warren** ran the business located near the railroad tracks in the 1950s. At one point in the multi-building history, one structure served as a freight depot.

Warren assumed control of the business when



Art Warren



Horner retired. **Warren's son Rick** joined the family enterprise in 1968 at age sixteen. At that time the nearby streetscape stores included Bailey Lumber, two grocery stores, a garage/gun

shop, hardware store, and a fire station.

When his dad retired in 1990, Rick Warren assumed control. His dad relinquished the title of owner in 2002. The family business has annual sales approaching one million dollars. Birdseed has been added to the product list, and locals benefit from the mill room which is operational daily and can handle customized requests.

A community wide BYOB & hog roast at the Feed Store marked the 100th anniversary on September 17, 2016.



If you visit, local history awaits you. Inside the building, Rick has discovered the signatures of two men dating back to 1899. That year saw an addition and a cement basement added for onion storage. In that era,



onions were shipped by rail. An original solid brass cash register with a hand crank (that only reaches \$99.99) is on display. It remained in active use through 1995. Other notable artifacts on hand include measuring cups, scoops and rafter items.

Rick, part of that fifth generation, continues to run the family business today. In addition, he still works his Perry farm, which features cattle and turkeys.

Flying is his other love.



Sources: The News-Herald, August 24, 2016, November 30, 2019, November 24, 2023. Hidden History of Lake County, Jennifer B. Engelking, 2021 Concord Township archives, Perry archives.

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