



Wilbur Beers Kept the Wheels of Wysox Going Round and Round

Whether it was in and out of the parking lot of their Midway Mart, around the wooden floor of their iconic skating rink along Route 6, driving away from their dealership in a used car, or riding one of their many school buses, Wysox Township residents can credit Wilbur Beers and his family for keeping them rolling along for many generations.

Born in 1927 in nearby Rome to Wilbur W. and Miriam Beers, the younger Wilbur E. Beers moved to the Wysox area with his family in the mid 1940s. He attended Towanda High School but left to enter the service as World War II ended. His first two stints in the army led him to North Carolina and Japan. But Wilbur preferred the company of family and friends over the whatever adventures a peace-time service might have offered. He opted for the Reserves the third time he was called to duty.

“I could have taken a position in Europe, but I declined,” he noted during an October 2014 interview. “I wanted to stay home.”

At time time, Beers explained, Wysox was still largely rural. Fields still bordered the future Golden Mile along most of the stretch between Route 187 and the Towanda bridge. “There were only a few businesses along the highway,” he recalled.

Among those was Beers Roller Rink, which was opened by the elder Wilbur Beers and his wife Miriam in the late 1940s, occupying the site of the former Arthur & Goodrich Garage. The younger Wilbur met his future wife, Beverly Ingerick, there in the 1940s, marrying her in February 1948.

WYSOX ROLLER RINK



WED.
&
SAT.

8:00
TIL
11:00

OPEN TO PARTIES OTHER NIGHTS

NEXT TO DINER



The Beers family continued to develop businesses on property bordering the north side of Route 6 west of Route 187 and stretching back to a farm and stream. The array of ventures involved family members, including son and daughter Bob and Linda, in a variety of combinations.

Some had more longevity than others. Beers Midway Mart, for example, was open for just three years in the early 60s, while Wilbur was simultaneously taking over the roller rink and developing an interest in the used car business.

“Andy Benjamin took me to an auto auction, and I was hooked,” Beers related. He and his son Bob would routinely attend auto sales in Horseheads and Syracuse, NY, with George Greiner and George Franklin to bring vehicles back to Wysox to sell.



Many a home-cooked meal and tasty slice of pie were enjoyed at Beers Diner, a boxcar-like restaurant open from the 1960s into the 1970s. The Beers family also invested locally in real estate and a fleet of school buses that ferried students around the east side of the Towanda Area School District.

Wilbur and Beverly first resided in Monroeton before moving to Wysox. They moved east of the village to the Route 187 home where they still reside in 1978. Bob and Linda also attended Towanda schools and settled nearby. Wilbur and Beverly both drove school buses after she retired from GTE Sylvania in the early 1990s. They eventually sold their 14 buses and several student transport vans at the end of the decade. Beers Auto Sales and Tags was closed in 2009, last operated by grandson, Rob.



In addition to a varied career, Beers was one of the founding members of the Municipal Authority and remains a board member. He was a charter member of the Wysox Chamber of Commerce and longtime member and supporter of the Wysox Fire Company and Wysox EMS. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge and the American Legion, serving as Sgt. Of Arms for the latter. He has also served as Deacon at the Towanda United Methodist Church.

In addition to the aforementioned, Beers recalls among his esteemed allies in commerce fellow Municipal Authority member Jim Lenox and Chamber co-founder Budd Clark, Sr.

The biggest challenges cited by Beers in his half century as a business owner in Wysox Township were shifting tastes, a fluctuating marketplace and two disastrous floods. Bob recalls his father stood at the front door of the roller rink, using a broom to keep water pushed into the parking lot by passing motorists during the 1972 flood from ever reaching the precious hardwood floor. In 2011, a flash flood quickly overran the property, reaching a foot deep in the old roller rink, which is now a four wheeler and recreational vehicle dealership.

Wilbur insists that he enjoyed equally driving school buses, selling cars, maintaining rental properties, and working at the roller rink.

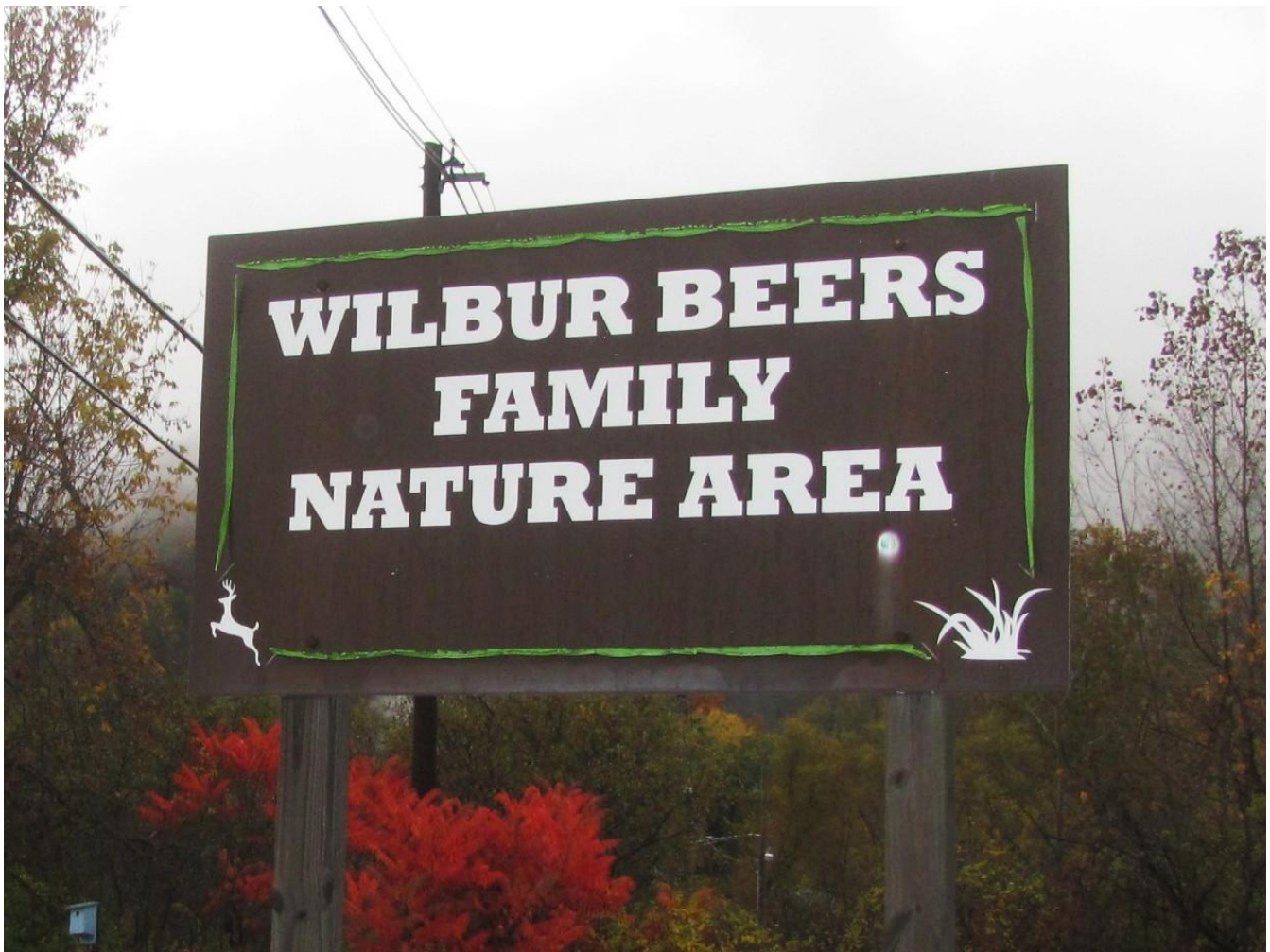
But it was Beers Roller Rink, which he took over after his father passed away in 1962 that might most endear the Beers family to area residents. Many long-term (and even not so long-term) couples will attest to having met there. Certainly many a first kiss occurred there between the old-time games, contests, and music that remained the mainstay for many more

years than other rinks of the era.

In addition to the laughter of children and their parents who enjoyed the experience and helped maintain roller skating as a tradition, Beers remembers with a wink that he also witnessed the mischievous side of youths who were often left in his care. “It was fun unless the kids wouldn't mind,” he said. The roller rink continued into the 1990s with Rob and Stacy Beers handing off the baton to Calvin Vanderpool.

Bob related that the floor initially buckled after the flooding, before settling back into place. He suggests with a smile that it might still be usable for roller skating after a good sanding.

Another part of Wilbur's legacy is the the Wilbur Beers Family Nature Area located along Lake Road near the Fire Company and ball fields. Beers donated the marshy former farmland in the late 1990s. The discovery of an unusually wide variety of swamp wildlife there led to development of the area by the Bradford County Conservation District into an accessible park and learning laboratory with walking paths that is used by local residents and many students.



Looking back over his career, Beers regards the arrival and development of the natural gas industry as the greatest change experienced by township residents. Having invested in the area himself for so many years, Beers fully understands why Wysox has become a hub of gas-related activity.

“Wysox is a great location for business,” he stated.