

# HERITAGE CORNER

## St. Clair Township native became integral part of Apollo space program

~ With files from Heritage St. Clair ~

The history of St. Clair Township is rich with pioneering spirit and courage. From the early days of Sombra and Moore Townships up to the present day, people from this municipality continue to make their mark on the world stage.

Take Owen Maynard for instance; he was born in the small hamlet of Terminus in Sombra Township in 1925 and attended the Terminus Public School until entering Grade 4, when the family moved to Brigden. When it came time for high school, the Maynard family moved into Sarnia where Owen attended SCITS, but he dropped out at the age of 16 to work at the Mac Craft plant in Sarnia helping to build the Fairmiles. (Those who are familiar with local shipbuilding will know that the Fairmiles were small motor launches used as minesweepers during World War II. Because they were small, they provided a less visible target for enemy air attack.)

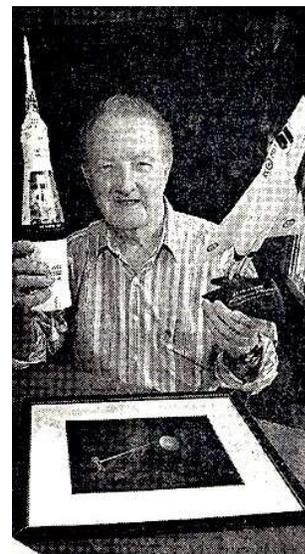
In 1942, he enlisted in the RCAF and served in England as a Mosquito pilot during World War II. He later earned a B.A.Sc. in Aeronautical Engineering at the University of Toronto.

His career began with the A.V.Roe Company, working on the CF-100 fighter and the AVRO Jetliner. He also did engineering design and analysis for the CF-105, the ill-fated "Avro Arrow".

The resulting cancellation of the CF-105 project left Owen Maynard free to participate in the newly formed NASA Space Task Group in Langley, Virginia. He was one of 29 AVRO engineers hired by NASA to work on the Mercury program, which later led him to a top position on the Apollo program. He was at the forefront of the American race to the moon.

During this period, he became known as the person most responsible for the design of the lunar landing module that would carry Apollo astronauts to the surface of the moon. He became the Chief of Systems Engineering Division and eventually manned the station of Chief of Mission Operations in the NASA Apollo control room. It was his work that developed the *A to G sequence* for Apollo test flights that led to the historic first lunar landing during the Apollo 11 mission.

Before he retired in 1992, Owen Maynard became an advocate for solar powered satellites and for satellites that could collect solar power and relay it back to earth. He lived in Waterloo, Ontario with his wife, Helen, until he died in 2000. His cousin, Shirley (Arnold) Ross still lives in Sombra village.



Owen Maynard in later years. Archival photo



Owen Maynard with a model of the Apollo lunar module (LEM). NASA photo

**VOLUNTEERS** are always welcome at the Moore Museum, 519-867-2020, and Sombra Museum, 519-892-3982 (seasonal). Many volunteering opportunities are available, from helping with major projects to staffing the special events that take place throughout the season. Call to find out how you can help and make new friends, too.

## Three great local books still available at the Sombra Museum

Even though the Sombra Museum's summer season has ended, three fascinating locally-authored books are still available for purchase at the in Sombra at the Pic and Pay Variety Store. *Sombra Farms, Number Two* has something of interest to all as it features 14 stories and many photos that illustrate the area's rich agricultural and rural heritage.

*Thornyhurst School-A Bygone Era* by Margaret Devin will be available beginning Aug. 2. This heartwarming volume describes life at a local one-

room schoolhouse that still stands along Highway 40 in Sombra Township.

And in *St. Clair's Allies In Arms: The Men of Sombra and Moore Townships in WWI*, the names of 500 local men, 40 of whom paid the ultimate price for their service, along with local women who served as nurses, are listed. Stories of their struggles, along with background on the Lambton 149, the local recruitment battalion, are included. This volume is also available at the Book Keeper in Sarnia.