

**History Note – Hospitality**

# WILNO TAVERN RESTAURANT

Over a hundred years ago the Wilno hills rang with the sound of loggers and cross-cut saws harvesting square timbers from the vast pine forests. Soon the hearty Irish, Polish and German pioneers followed, attempting to tame the rugged land.

In 1894 the railroad snaked its way through the Madawaska Valley creating a link to the growing Prairies and opening the beauty of our lakes and hills to the outside world. While working on railroad construction, Ignacy Slominski decided to settle his young family in Wilno. He bought the "Stopping



*Exchange Hotel (1910), Wilno, Ontario*

Place" from John Burchat opposite the new Wilno train station. A dining room, kitchen and more bedrooms were added. The establishment was named the Exchange Hotel.

The village grew quickly serving local farmers and a booming logging industry. As many as twenty trains a day passed through Wilno in the heyday of steam railroading. In 1913, Wilno blacksmith Frank Shulist bought the Exchange Hotel. For seven decades Frank Shulist, his son Tom, and their families developed a spirit of warm hospitality which they shared with travellers, neighbours and friends through times of prosperity, prohibition and change.

The building itself has changed somewhat since 1894. But the legacy of hospitality has been inherited by today's Wilno Tavern and is combined with a pride in the tradition of Wilno's founding pioneers.





*Wilno Tavern Restaurant, 2018 (formerly Exchange Hotel)*

Source: Wilno Tavern Restaurant ([Facebook](#)), January 2018

© 2018, Madawaska Trails Group  
23 January 2018  
Rev. 2025