

Building Locations (1928-1934) in Perth, NB

Interview with Sewell V. Shaw by Vaughan DeMerchant

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My family moved to Perth in 1928. We're speaking of a period about 1928 to 1934. My recollection of Main Street begins where the Tobique Valley Railroad crosses the north end of the street where Harry Sadler lived. On the riverbank side, the first building was a large building owned by Miles McCrea used as a blacksmith shop. This is the same lot that the present day Automotive Village now occupies but not the same building.

The next building down the riverbank was the Sadler Garage. They had an agency to sell Chevrolet cars, Ralph and Harry Sadler. The first building on the opposite side of the street was the Canadian Legion building. It burned many years later (1960's). Next was the F. D. Sadler Company. They had a general store there and sold anything that anybody working in the woods would need, as well as groceries. The next building on that side of the street was a private home owned by Wally Lawley. He was a retired immigration inspector who had worked in Aroostook and lived there.

The next building down was the Perth Hotel my father bought in 1928. There was a livery stable and large building at the back. It is now the building Carolyn Stewart owns. (Just upriver from Carolyn's Takeout) It burned in 1933. It was a three storey building but after the fire they just took off the top storey.

The building directly across the street from that was a building owned by Justin Tompkins. He was a retired railroad man who lived there with his family. One of the humorous things I remember about that was he had a son named Basil. One winter Basil built a boat in the basement of the house and when it came spring in order to put the boat in the river they had to take one whole wall out in order to get the boat out. The next building on that side of the street (riverbank) was owned by John Lovely and afterwards sold to Hughie Rogers. Hughie had a barber shop there and a pool room.

Then there was another building on the riverbank next to the Rogers barber shop and it later became a dry cleaning place but at that time, in the late 20's, it was a store. There were several different owners that had a store there but the one I remember is Izzie Vinegar. Abe (Vinegar) started Izzie up in a meat market in that building. The humorous thing I remember about that is Izzie was quite a gambler. All us young fellers used to go in there and throw quarters against the wall' and whoever got the nearest to the wall got the money. One day we were throwing quarters and Gladys Pirie came in. She was just new in Perth and she asked Izzie if she could have a pound of sausage. He said "I haven't got any." She said, "But Izzie, there is some right in the window". Izzie said "Vel, help yourself". He was more interested in throwing quarters than selling sausage.

Directly across the street from that and south of the Perth Hotel was the Mabel Green Hotel. Mabel was the divorced husband of Burnus Green. South

of this building was the building owned by William McPhail. He was the father of Wilfred and Norval McPhail. He had a grocery store and an apartment upstairs. In today's terms we would call it a convenience store. Across the road from that was another building owned by John Lovely at it was a store. A man named of Brewer came there and opened up a store and he sold mostly meats.

The next building below that was a building that was occupied by Jim Woodland who was a shoemaker and on the other end of the building was an insurance business run by a man names Alex Stevenson. Across the street from that was the residence of Wilfred McPhail. Next to that, on the same side, was Daye's Hotel. You can see there were three hotels within 100 yards right along that street. Daye's Hotel operated many years and afterwards was sold to Izzie Vinegar who turned it into a clothing store. We used to call it the Vinegar Jug. The next building south of the Vinegar Jug was a building owned by Jim Neil. He had a grocery store there and sold all kinds of groceries. Many years later Roy Thibodeau bought the building and operated Economy Dry Cleaners until the building burned in the fire of `77. The next building down was owned by the George T. Baird Company. That was a department store. They sold everything: clothing, boots, groceries, furniture. You name it they sold it. That would be lawyer George Baird's father.

Sam Gamblin had a little store in behind but later, on the other side of the street, opposite Jim Neil's property; he built a large store on the riverbank. The next building going south opposite the river was the McPhail Hardware building owned by Norval McPhail. He sold all types of hardware and in the lower end of that building was the Post Office operated by a lady by the name of Mrs. Baird. She was one of the longest serving post mistresses serving in New Brunswick. She looked after the post office until they moved many years (1936) later below the end of the bridge (present day library).

The next building below McPhail Hardware was a small building owned by Herman Stewart and at that time, Charlie Johnson, a man of Chinese descent, had a dry cleaning place there. Then across the street on the riverbank was the premise of H. F. Stewart. He had hardware, sold paints and had a plumbing business there. It was a large building with two apartments upstairs. It stayed there until the Power Commission bought them out in 1954 I believe. Across from that, next to the building that housed the dry cleaning place was a building that was owned by Harold Pirie. He came down from Grand Falls and bought that building and they put the liquor store there, around 1930 I believe. The next business below the liquor store was a little narrow place where Ronald Merrithew had a barber shop. The next building below that was H. N. Dickinson grocery store. Afterwards it was taken over by his son who many years later sold it to Cassie Bishop who sold it to Raymond Gamblin.

The next building down was owned by Marsden and King, an insurance agency. It was afterward, many years later, bought by Vesey Price and used as a grocery store and later sold to Halls and became Hall's Jewellery. Across the street from that was a building owned by Burnus Green. Burnus was an entrepreneur; I guess you would call him. He used to brag that he bootlegged in the summer and spent the winters in jail so they could feed his wife and family. The next building on the river bank was a little small building

owned by Lawrence Green who had a barbershop there. Before he moved in, it was owned by May and Sheldon Green who later bought the Green Hotel and had a department store there for many years. They had come back from Michigan and bought that little place and had a lunch counter there and she bought beer bottles and what not.

The next building below that was a building owned by Charlie Olmstead. In that building he had the magistrate's office upstairs, the Victorian newspaper was downstairs. Below that was a meat market, McCrea and Ingraham, operated by Herb McCrea & Amos Ingraham. Across the street was R. W. Estabrooks' store selling dry goods, clothing and all kinds of household goods. Ralph ran that store for many, many years. Then the tracks crossed the street and the next building on the riverbank below the tracks was a building owned at the time, I believe, by Herman Taylor. He had another grocery store there. Across from that Joe McQuade had a small building he used as a barber shop. The next building below that was the Guy Porter Ltd. building. They were potato brokers (presently the Bank of Nova Scotia building). The next building was owned by Ben Toole, a druggist. That's where Bill Lewis first started working for him as a teenager and eventually became a druggist.

Below that was a private residence owned by Columbus Craig and then his son Douglas Craig lived there. It is now owned by my son, Graeme. Below that was a home owned by a lady by the name of Hitchcock. She and her sister lived there for many years. The next building was the O. C. Johnson drugstore which OC ran for many years then turned over to his son Verdell who later sold to Hurles and now the Mackies¹ own it. Across the street from that was a large building owned by a man named Craig. For many years his wife had a restaurant and boarding house there. Eventually Ronald Merrithew moved his barber shop in the bottom part of that building. Bill Lewis bought Ben Toole out had a good drugstore on the riverbank until the Power Commission bought the properties in 1954. The next building below O. C. Johnson's building was the Bank of Montreal. It is the same site they are located on now.

Next was Gordon Graham's property. He had an undertaking business and harness shop. That building was there for many years. There was a driveway that went in towards the station where it presently goes beyond the bank building now and the next building below that was the Wade Drug Company building. The front housed the Bank of Nova Scotia and Canadian National Telegraph Office. Up stairs were several offices. My wife had her beauty parlour up there. Charles Elliot had a law office and Harry Mallory had an insurance office up there. The back part was used by the Wade Drug Company selling wholesale drugs and groceries all around Victoria County.

The next property down was bought by Imperial Oil and they set up the Imperial Oil service station there. It was first run by Harold Pirie, then Alfred Irving took it over until the war years, then acquired by Charlie Willett. The next property was a large building below that. It was the first schoolhouse in Perth. It was just an old hall and sat there for many, many years and in 1936

¹ The house has been torn down due to flood damage from the 2012 flood.

the Department of Public Works bought the property and built the first permanent Post Office in Perth (now the Library). At the back of that property was a business in there. Alex Thompson had a restaurant and in later years Bliss Hayward came down and established Hayward's Bakery. The next building below the big old hall was a private residence owned by Harold Pirie.

The next building was the Perth Baptist Church. Then below that was the residence of Dr. R W Earle. This is one of the older houses in Perth (presently owned by Louise Stewart). Then there was the street that went into the station and the next property down was owned by Murray L Wright who had a Ford agency and garage for many years. At the rear of that property he had an open air rink and all the kids my age and younger skated there in Wrights skating rink.

The next property down from that was a property bought by J. Clark and Sons and they put up a building there. It is now the Station Square building. Just below that was another private residence owned by Mrs. Myles McCrea. She had a boarding house there. She had a lot of rooms. She had ten or twelve boarders. The next property belonged to Charles Lewis. His wife had a little store right on the corner of the street going into the present new post office. He also at that time sold caskets. He had a lumber mill across the street where the Irving Convenience Store is now located.

The property below that was owned by Harry Blakesley. He was a retired CPR station agent. His daughter, Louise, was blind and gave piano lessons. The next property was owned by Newt Rogers. He was a chartered account who worked for Porters. He built the house art McLaggan lived in. (house next to present day post office). The next was the residence of H. M. Dickinson who had the store uptown. He built that house in 1920's; I suppose '27 or '28. Izzie Vinegar lived there for years and now Dr. Peter Moore lives there². Haden Inman owned the next property. He was a barber in town and raised his family there.

The next property was the Perth Superior School. It is nearly on the same location where the School Board Offices are now. I graduated from High School there. It burned years later (1960's).The next property down, side opposite the riverbank, was a private home owned by Don Whitman. The next house was owned by G. N. King. Next, a Hopkins man owned the stone block house.

From the riverbank side of the street down from the mill was a canoe factory owned by Henry Lewis (Milton's Uncle). This would be on the site of where the Irving convenience store is today. The next property below that was owned by Henry Lewis. He and his wife lived there. The next home was Murray Wright. A few years later his son Raymond built a home next to that property. The next home was owned by a man named Len Coogle, a station agent of the CPR. This home would be where the Sisters live now. The next house was built by a man named Morehouse for his son Frank. The next home was owned by a CPR Conductor, Charlie Grant.

² Dr. Moore's home is presently unoccupied due to flood damage from the 2012 flood

The next home down was the H. S. Stewart property where he and his family lived. Herman Stewart also owned the next house which he rented. The next property down was an old barn. The property across the street had been a farm at one time. It was owned by a family before I came to Perth. Wetmore Davidson tore the old barn down and built a house there. He also built what is now the Elks Club and lived there with his family. He built the next home below that and rented it to the Bank of Nova Scotia for their managers many years. The next home was built by Avard Whitman, Donald Whitman's father. It was the home Evelyn Mallory lived in for years. There were no more properties until we get to the property of Charlie Elliott. Charlie's daughter (Marion) married Doug Monteith and they lived there for many years. The home was moved after the flood (presently on Birchwood Street owned by Paul Kinney).

There were several vacant properties until we get down to the home of George Armstrong but across the street from George's property was his garage. He sold Hudson cars and had a Ford agency. He owned the first car that was ever in Perth. Below George's home was the home of Harry Wade who owned the Wade Drug Company. Tony Earle lived there for many years after that. The next home below after that was Charlie Armstrong's home. After Charlie built a new house next to it (Anna Moore's home) he sold it to George Baird. It was moved after the flood. The rest of that side was clear until you get to Ann's Tea Rooms and Cabins. She had cabins all along the bank. At the lower end of that property was the Tea Room and Hotel.

Across the street was the Armstrong Golf Club (presently Hotel Dieu Hospital). The Golf Club was built in 1930 and opened in 1931. I was just a youngster and worked there. It closed in 1940 because there was nobody around to play golf; everyone was away in the war. The present day hospital is situated on the exact spot where the number nine green was. The tee was up on the hill where Dr. McCauley lives and you hit down over the railroad tracks to the green. That pretty well covers the main street of Perth.

It is interesting to note that at that time there were 11 grocery stores in Perth, now there is none except for the convenience store. At that time there were a shoemakers shop, two hardware stores, a plumbing business, and three barber shops all along the street and all making a living. The two drug stores are still here. I was postmaster for 36 Years. The present Post Office was built in 1974. The first Post Office (now the library) was built in 1936.

The fire of '77 took the guts out of Perth and then the flooding of later years finished the job.