

A Walk to Remember...

Block 3, Lot 1A

The Olive Branch

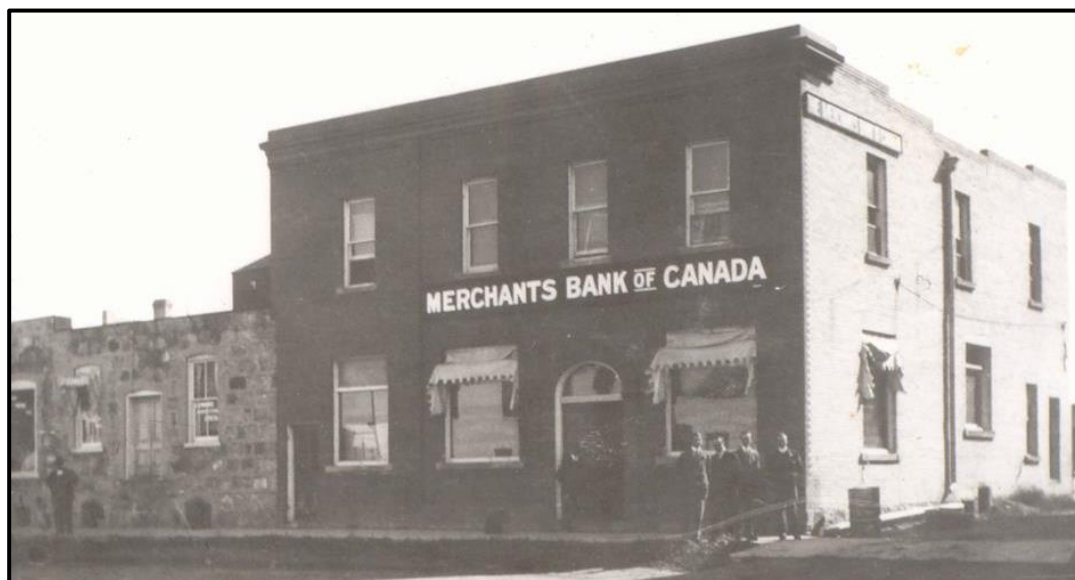
In September of 1902, when the village of Carnduff was still in its infancy, the Merchants Bank of Canada opened its doors in space provided within the hardware building just south of this location. By 1908, the bank had grown substantially. After years of renting space in the Smith's Block at the south end of Broadway a decision was made to build a spacious, new brick building on this location. By late 1909, the Merchants Bank moved into their new home and remained there for the next 57 years.

By 1922, the Merchants Bank, headquartered in Montreal had grown to over 400 branches across Canada when it was acquired by the Bank of Montreal. During the acquisition process, controversy erupted bringing to light questions of Merchant Bank's financial stability. This led to changes in banking legislation regarding regulation of banking practices. The local branch, however, was on solid footing and would continue to be, under the new banner of Bank of Montreal. In 1968, the Bank committed to the community once more investing in another new building on the opposite side of Broadway.

The old brick building has continued to survive with a variety of owners and occupants through the years. Forells Hobby and Music owned by Larry & Lorna Chalmers occupied the space in 1979 and lived in the suites on the upper floor. They were forced to relocate the business across the street when fire damaged the building.

The building was purchased and rehabilitated by Bill Smith and was home to various enterprises including Deb's Hair Hut in 1996 and the boutique of Joanne Greenwood. In 2001 Barb Paradis opened Floral Expressions, a flower and giftware business on the main floor of the building. With the sale of the building, Floral Expressions relocated to a building across Broadway.

After a successful start to her unique restaurant in smaller premises across Broadway, Angie Bird (Haider) bought this building. After renovating, she moved into this location in about 2004, expanding the Olive Branch Bistro from its original 36 person format to a larger space accommodating 58 people. Insistent on maintaining an atmosphere small enough to be 'hands on' to ensure quality control, Ms. Bird continues to impress guests from near and far with her unique blend of personally selected ingredients and individually crafted menu items.



Block 3, Lot 1A Merchant's Bank of Canada (c. 1909)