

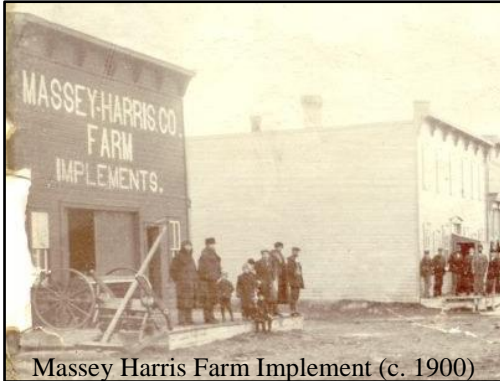
A Walk to Remember...

Block 3, Lot 5 to 10

The Fire of 1923

Block 3 Lot 5 & 6

In 1892 Smith & Hamilton General Store was built on the western lot of this parcel. Above the store was a hall used as the meeting place of many groups, including all three denominations of worship in the area at that time. Church services had been held in the district since 1883, most frequently in the home of James Preston. With the relocation of the town, Smith & Hamilton's provided more suitable space and all three churches continued with services until each established their own independent church buildings in the community



Massey Harris Farm Implement (c. 1900)

J. H. Elliott arrived in town as the C.P.R. agent about the same time Smith & Hamilton began their business. In his role as agent he was responsible for receiving telegrams regarding grain pricing and communicating those to the competing elevators and grain buyers in the community. Unfortunately, his support of the locally owned elevator led to allegations that he was giving preferential treatment to the locals. Given the 'opportunity' to transfer to another station, Mr. Elliott opted instead to leave his career with C.P.R.

Mr. Elliott partnered with J. A. Thomson, the local Massey Harris agent, and purchased the general store from Smith and Hamilton. The hall above continued to be a major home for entertainment to the community. Each winter the Oddfellows and Foresters jointly hosted 'At Home' evenings of dining and dancing. The hall hosted school and ladies' fancy good exhibits for the annual Carnduff Agricultural Fair. Christmas presented another special time with parties and gifts for the children along with magic lantern shows, the pre-cursor to motion pictures.

By the 1900s Mr. Elliott bought out Thompson's interest in the business and ran the store as J.H. Elliott's. During his ownership, the first motion picture in town was presented in Elliott's Hall. By about 1910, Mr. Jenkins from Deloraine arrived on the scene, hosting Jenkins' Movies in the hall every Saturday night. In addition to local talent and motion pictures, the hall attracted many traveling music shows. Each year the Kickipoo Medicine Man returned with his sidekick 'Indian' selling cure-alls for everything. A further highlight was the visit of poet E. Pauline Johnson who performed in the hall.

The adjacent lot to the east of Thompson & Elliott's remained vacant for some time before being purchased by Roger and Co. from

Winnipeg. Dick Curle was hired to manage their liquidation business. Harry Campbell partnered with Mr. Curle to buy the store and they continued to operate it as Curle and Campbell until 1902 when Curle was bought out by his partner.



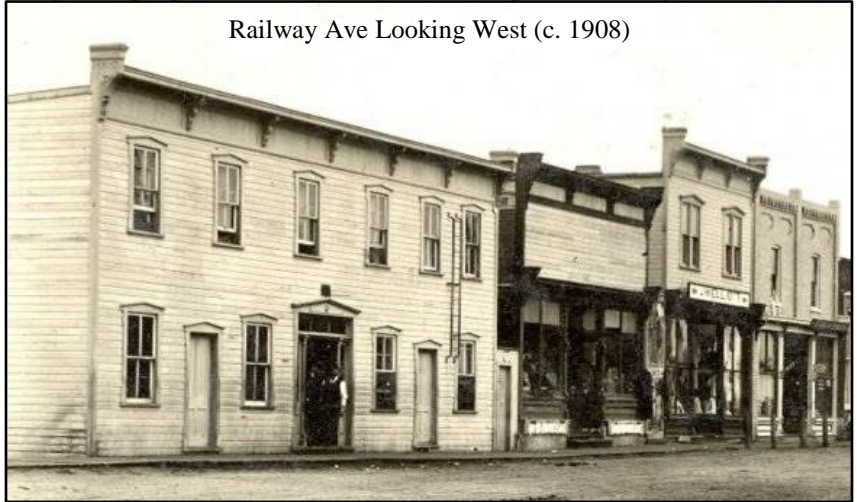
Queen's Hotel (c. 1905)

After operating for a brief time on his own, Mr. Campbell sold the building to J.H. Elliott. Elliott, who now owning both buildings, remodelled joining the two with an archway to make one big store. By the late 1900s, Olson & Bliss who ran their hardware in the massive stone building on the corner were struggling. An agreement was struck to swap buildings with J.H. Elliott and Olson & Bliss moved their hardware into the Curle & Campbell portion of the building. With the closure of McGregor's barbershop in the brick building to the west, Olson & Bliss opted once again to down-size moving into that location. Having suffered a fire in his Massey Harris building to the west, W.I. Richardson moved his insurance and general agency into the building while his implement agency was rebuilt.

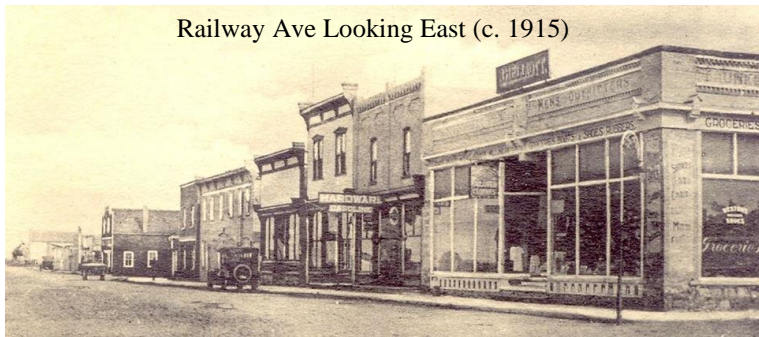
Carnduff saw its share of fires within the community in the early days with the loss of livery barns on several occasions, the Massey-Harris dealership on another, and one of the grain elevators in a third. Only one home, the residence of Norman Ask is known to have been destroyed in the early fires, and fortunately, while Colonel Robinson had lost a valuable horse in a livery fire, no people lost their lives.

After Richardson moved back to his original location the stores were used briefly as a barber shop and bowling alley. A long period of vacancy followed with the buildings deteriorating to the point of becoming uninhabitable.

In the fall of 1923 a fire of unknown origin swept through the properties along this block. Despite efforts by the volunteer fire brigade to halt its progress, the fire could not be contained. The blaze would claim the five buildings in its path making it the most devastating fire in Carnduff's history to date. Gone were the buildings known as: Massey-Harris, Carlton Café, Queen's Hotel, Curle & Campbell and Smith & Hamilton. Only the brick wall of Lloyd Heller's Hardware withstood the heat and halted the fire in its westward progression. The west wall foundation of the original Smith & Hamilton General Store remains visible there today, a stark reminder to history lost and the power of fire so greatly feared in the early days.



By 1926 the gas plant in the community was beginning to show its age and become unreliable. An electric plant was purchased from the town of Mohall, N.D. who were putting in hydro and the light plant was moved into a building on this location. By 1929 the Montreal Engineering Company made an offer to supply light, power and heat to Carnduff. The electric plant was dismantled and sold and the building demolished.



In 1946, James Partridge and his son Vernon Robert (Bob) went into partnership building a garage and implement dealership on the site. John Deere implements continued to be sold by Partridge & Son for the next 33 years and in 1949 a General Motors agency was added. Shortly after James retired from active involvement in 1970, Bob added Versatile equipment to

the inventory. In 1983, health issues resulted in the closure of Partridge & Son and the property was sold the Avonmore hotel. The building was demolished and is now used as parking for the motel portion of their business.

Block 3 Lots 7, 8, 9 & 10

Edward John (E.J.) Huxley built Carnduff's first hotel, a two-storey wood frame on this location in about 1892. On completion it opened to the public as 'Elliott House', a tribute to its first manager. Elliott House was known for its rowdy crowds and late night poker games such as Whiskey Tonk played in the back rooms. In 1895 the hotel was sold to G.F. Weir, best described as a gentleman, not at all familiar with the ways of the 'less-refined' hotel clientele of the time. Weir, quickly became convinced it was not a family friendly business abruptly sold out to Robert Beatty and headed to B.C.

William Henry of Gainsborough bought the hotel from Beatty but management continued to change frequently, including Richard Porteous, Andy Wilson, Jason Tice and Fenwick & Musson. Mr. Wilson rebranded the property as the Queen's Hotel, believing a high-toned name would attract American land hunters and the "Queen's" reflected the name of one of

the leading Winnipeg hotels at the time. During the partnership of Fenwick and Musson, the name changed again to the “Clarendon”, a name which Mr. Fenwick subsequently used when he operated a hotel in Estevan.

Herb Swayze and George Slyford became the last operators of the Clarendon in about 1907. Mr. Slyford sold his interest to his partner and Herb continued to run the hotel until the new Avonmore Hotel opened on Broadway in 1909. The hotel property remained vacant from that point on, except for a brief period when the lower portion was used as a poultry killing station.

To the east of the hotel stood a small building which housed Edwin Brokenshar’s insurance business as well as Carnduff’s early dentists.

When Mr. Brokenshar relocated, his building was replaced by the two-storey brick restaurant of Jack Yee, known as Carlton Café. Further east, anchoring the corner lot was the Massey Harris business, originally established in 1892 by J.A. Thompson. Mr. Thompson sold out to William Ira (W.I.) Richardson who developed a very successful dealership. In addition to his sales of Massey Harris, Mr. Richardson was a car dealer for Overlands, and sales agent for Hart-Parr tractor engines and Waterloo tractor and threshers.

Just after 1900, a fire broke out in Richardson building. The fire reportedly was started by an intoxicated man upsetting a coal oil lamp. In addition to the business’ contents, all the guns and ammunition of the Carnduff Rifle Club which were stored in the office were lost. Fear of explosion from these contents led to reluctance in fighting the fire and the building burned to the ground. Mr. Richardson was forced to relocate to the Curle and Campbell building down the street while rebuilding.

In the fall of 1923 the W.I. Richardson’s implement dealership was demolished in another devastating fire, this time of unknown origin. It would not be contained and would claim five buildings including the Massey dealership, Carlton Cafe, the Queen’s Hotel property and the two buildings comprising J.H. Elliott’s original store. Fortunately the brick wall of Lloyd & Heller’s hardware withstood the heat and halted the fire in its westward progression.

Mr. Richardson rebuilt the Massey agency once again but never seemed to really get over this fire. He had added the marriage licensing and general insurance agency of Mr. Brokenshar and continued to operate for a few years before retiring from the implement business. In 1936 the dealership was re-opened by Jim Spencer. In 1937, Joseph (Joe) Boyes became his partner. Along with Massey, Spencer & Boyes operated a vehicle repair garage, sold BA oil products, a Dodge dealership and parts business through the late 30s. The end of the depression brought better times and the business continued until 1968. The shop was closed in 1968 and the building sold to Clayton Chrest.

Jack Yee also rebuilt after the fire, this time a single storey café with living quarters housed below. He used many of the bricks from the original building, and their smoky, blackened edges could be spotted throughout the walls. In the late 1930s poor health forced Jack to retire and he sold the business to his nephew Charlie Yee Gee. ‘Charlie the Chinaman’ as he was affectionately referred to with no disrespect intended continued to operate for many years with a solid base of patrons.

Charlie was followed in the early 50s by Joe Yung, ‘Big Joe’. His restaurant became known for its pumpkin pie a la mode, king sized Coca-Colas and for the neat old pay phone mounted on the wall. Joe was joined in the café in 1958 by his daughter Rose and son-in-law, Ying who became labelled ‘Little Joe.’

When telephone service became a public utility, SaskTel acquired the properties of the former café and Massey dealership. This location presently houses their switching station. As for the hotel location, its legacy as a lodging place continues. The Avonmore Hotel expanded in 1984 to include a ten-unit motel on this site. Known by locals as ‘The Igloos’, these units continue to serve guests to Carnduff in 2015.

