

# A Walk to Remember...

## Block 2, Lot 18 & 19

### Bank of Montreal

One of the earliest businesses established in Carnduff's early days was that of the blacksmith. Bob Gordon established his trade in the original townsite of Carnduff before 1890 in a sod shop. When the railway came through, and the town relocated so did he, along with another blacksmith Walter Stovin. Mr. Stovin had been in the district since 1887 and when the new town location was surveyed in 1891 he opted to buy 2 lots on the east side of Main Street.



Gordon and Stovin combined to bring in the first load of freight to reach Carnduff by rail and had soon set up shop: Bob on Railway Avenue just west of the grocery store, and Walter in a shop he built on the present location of the Avonmore Hotel.

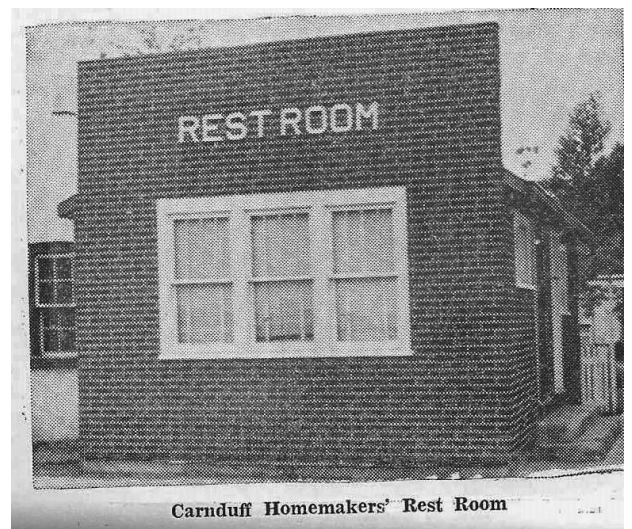
Mr. Gordon's shop prospered in the early years. In addition to being a gathering place his shop was known as the home of the vegetable displays during the annual Ag Society fair. It was gradually transformed into a machine & farm implement shop. He also added auto sales prior to 1909 when he sold out to W J Fairbairn. Several more changes in ownership took place

before the property was sold to the Co-op. A portion of the building was dismantled while the balance became warehouse space for the new grocery store and garage.

Mr. Stovin, meanwhile, was building his blacksmith shop into one of the most successful and well-known in the district. At the rear of the lot on the east side of Main Street, Gavin Middleton added a woodworking shop. With business growing and the opportunity to sell his existing land to A H Foulds for a lumberyard, Walter Stovin built a modern, stone blacksmith shop across the street. (at this location). It was very well-equipped and Mr. Stovin employed 2-3 men most of the time he was in business here.

Wilfred Corbett, a blacksmith from Ontario joined him in 1899, with Walter specializing in ploughshares and Mr. Corbett being a skilled farrier and wheelwright. Just five years later Mr. Corbett married and built his own shop and home on Connell (1<sup>st</sup> Street E), but the Stovin shop continued to thrive. Mr. Middleton had followed Walter across the street, once again setting up his woodworking shop at the back of the lot. Unfortunately, when his health began to fail in 1902, Gavin Middleton was forced to sell out and Walter Cottis took over the building.

In 1923, Walter Stovin passed away and his property subsequently reverted to the town. The town, having continued to grow was experiencing an increased need for protection services. The fire department, outgrowing its facilities in the original school building on Pacific Avenue, opted to relocate to the stone blacksmith shop. Renovations added a large cistern under the building for water supply. At one point the rear of the building was used as a residence, and for a period it was also used as the town's jail cell.



During the 1940s an additional building was erected on the northern portion of the property. The Carnduff Homemaker's Restroom as it was known provided a public restroom for the community. The small building also provided a meeting space that was utilized by the Homemaker's club, 4-H and at times other organizations.

In 1966, with the opening of the new joint town and municipal office on Railway a new firehall was built as well. This property was sold to the Bank of Montreal and Stovin's stone blacksmith shop was demolished to make way for the new bank building. The Homemakers Restroom building was moved north of town where it sat for years on the Phair property.

The first bank in Carnduff was the Merchant's Bank which got its start in A.H. Foulds stone hardware building on the corner of Railway and Main Street (Broadway). After a brief time there, it was relocated to the manager, Mr. Galloway's house while waiting for space to open in the new Smith Block constructed on Main Street, just across from the Methodist church.

Just a few short years later, the Merchant Bank in town continued to grow and in 1908 began construction of their own bank building, moving into the building in 1909. After 13 years at that location, the banner changed to Bank of Montreal with the acquisition of Merchants Bank by the Bank of Montreal.

After another 46 years in that 2-storey brick building still easily recognized across the street, the modern new Bank of Montreal opened on this location in 1968. Further innovations such as multi-branch banking and an ATM have been added, and in 2002 BMO celebrated 100 years in the community of Carnduff. They continue to be a committed and relevant partner to our community.

