

A Walk to Remember...

Block E, Lots 14 & 15

Bluemoon Mercantile & Floral

This property, situated between the CPR right of way and Spencer Street, remained vacant and unused for many years when the town was first settled. Toward the close of the 1890s, a community rink was built on its western edge. A flawed design led to its demise when the flat-roofed building collapsed under the weight of a heavy snowfall prior to 1900.



Tom and Jack Elliot donated materials and labor to rebuild the rink under a 5-year agreement that gave them with ownership of the building at the end of that term. By that point the rink was considered unsafe. It was dismantled, and the lumber used to construct a barn north of town.

With a new rink built elsewhere, the property laid dormant once again except for the annual concert tours of Chatauqua and similar entertainers. It was a perfect spot for these traveling shows to set up their tents, entertaining with actors, musicians and other performers. It was a highlight for young and old throughout the community. Prior to the advent of motion pictures and radio, these shows provided many with their first exposure to 'cultural events'. Sadly, the depression and technology spelled the end of Chatauqua shows in the 1930s.

By 1919, J.A. Caulder was also using the property as a depot for buying cream and in that year decided to construct a creamery on the site. It was one of six opened in the province that year. Mr. A.J. Jones was brought on board as manager and under his guidance a butter making plant was added to the cream buying business. The creamery was very modern for its time with its large boilers, steam engine, copper pasteurizers and a butter churn with a capacity of 900 lbs. A separate ice house served as storage for cooling the cream.

Steam engineer Louis Anderson, working in the area with a threshing outfit from Mohall, ND used his previous experience as a water well driller to develop a well on the property. The artesian well flowed without an auxiliary pump

to supply and ground pressure alone could deliver a spout of water up to 8 feet into the air. Gathering in a cesspool the drainage from the well was delivered from the location by pipeline to the Antler Creek. The 'Creamery' slide has been a source of winter fun for tobogganers and families of all ages up to the present day.

Originally operating under the name Saskatchewan Creamery Company of Moose Jaw, Caulder's business underwent several name changes. From the beginning there was a shortage of cream volume to support the plant. Challenges were felt from being flanked by creameries in both Oxbow and Carlyle, while limited by provincial and international borders in the other two directions. Shares were sold throughout the community to support the struggling Caulder company, but the extra capital input could still not save the struggling venture.

The Saskatchewan Government took over the creamery in 1927 with local investors losing their capital. The government amalgamated all the creameries resulting in the establishment of Saskatchewan Co-operative Creameries and in 1931 the Carnduff operation was closed. Mr. Jones, having remained at the creamery through its duration was transferred to Oxbow which remained open. The Co-op Creamery Association used the building as an egg buying station for a period of time after the creamery was moved to Oxbow, but a drop in egg production in the area forced all operations in the building to cease in the 40s.

In 1949 a local Co-op association was established with Glenn Wilmot as the first president. The association took over the creamery building, and it was repurposed for their operation. By the end of the first year the newly incorporated co-op had 199 members and served the community with farm fuels, small hardware, livestock feeds and flour. The first manager of the Co-op was Royal Frith and Ab Unrau delivered fuel to local farms.

The contract for farm implements was taken over from The Wheat Pool, and the farm equipment was sold out of the property until CCIL established their depot in Carnduff. In 1953 lumber was added to the product mix and in 1957 the Co-op grocery store was built at its present location.

In 1978 the Co-op opted to sell the property. The purchaser, Charlie Sieberer operated it as Sieberer Lumber Ltd. until 1984 when John & Margaret Smith bought Charlie Sieberer's lumber business in partnership with brother, Bill Smith. John had been in the construction business in Ottawa since immigrating from Scotland in 1976. John's son Gordon managed the business while Bill and John worked in the lumber yard. Gordon, a bagpiper entertained at many bonspiels in the area before returning to Ottawa in 1988.

About the same time the Smiths purchased the lumber yard another entrepreneur, Susan McKennitt arrived in the community, opening her first hairdressing shop and soon a retail store on Broadway. Susan bought this property after the lumber yard was wound down. She repurposed the building into retail space for giftware and clothing. Selections on Broadway transitioned into the bigger space with a wider selection. The new store was called 104 North and included space for Dolly's Hair Salon, which was operated by Susan's daughter, Tasha. Susan, looking to innovate and try her hand at additional ventures, added fresh flowers and a greenhouse to the mix and Petals to the Metal was born.

In 2016, the business and building were purchased by Lynette Lang and her daughter, Victoria. They continue to operate a thriving business in the same building the creamery saw its start 100 years before!