

History Of Summerside Stores, Churches Reviewed

A most interesting review of the history of some of Summerside's mercantile establishments of the present and past was told Tuesday to the Summerside Rotary Club by Mr. J. Frank Arnett, charter member and past president of the club.

Mr. Arnett also summarized the history surrounding some of the churches in Summerside, and the following is the text of his address:—

The stores of Summerside are one of the town's greatest assets, and regarded the finest for any town of like size in Canada. The stranger coming to town is impressed with the large mercantile establishments which line Water Street.

R. T. HOLMAN, LIMITED.

The largest of Summerside's stores and one with the longest history in control of one family is R. T. Holman, Ltd. This firm was established by the late R. T. Holman 98 years ago. His store was on the north side of Water Street, about where James A. MacNeill and Sons' present business stand is located. It was a small building being about 15 x 20 feet. The stock was limited, being purchased on borrowed capital. The proprietor was physically small but great in ability, energy and business vision.

For a number of years Mr. Holman conducted the business alone till about the year 1896 when his son Harry, became associated with him and a little later his other son, J. E. Roy.

BRICKS FROM BEDEQUE

A steadily expanding business was carried on in the store built in 1895 of bricks manufactured at Bedeque in a brick yard owned by the firm of F. W. Strong Company, and operated by John MacLure who was formerly from Union Corner. It was found, however, that additional store accommodation was necessary. Accordingly, about the year 1917 new crockery, house furnishings, and furniture departments were added to the main building, giving a frontage on Water Street of 270 feet with a depth of 125 feet, the additions being four stories high, making it, at that time, the largest departmental store east of Montreal.

In addition they had 17 warehouses and one of the largest wharf properties in the Maritime Provinces. The Holman plant, therefore, comprises practically everything in the merchandise line.

CHARLOTTETOWN BRANCH

Another event in the history of Holmans was the opening of a branch store in Charlottetown in 1923.

In the following year the firm bought out Beer and Weeks in Charlottetown and established their present business on the north side of Grafton Street.

At this branch, which is in charge of Mr. Alan Holman, grandson of the founder, furniture, crockery, wall paper, stoves, furnaces and many other lines are sold.

Under capable management this branch has steadily grown, floor after floor being added until now it has 20,000 square feet of floor space.

SINCLAIR AND STEWART LTD.

The progressive firm of Sinclair and Stewart, Limited, whose large departmental store occupies a whole block on the south side of Water Street, was founded in the year 1874, and in spite of extraordinary loss by fire and periodical depression in commercial life, is still going strong and marching in the van of progress after 70 years of successful business.

The president, Mr. H. G. Muttart was born in Alberton, coming to Summerside and entering the employ of the firm some 36 years ago.

The first new brick store had three floors, including basement, the first floor taking care of the men's furnishings, boot and shoe, dry goods, men's clothing, and grocery and hardware departments.

On the second floor is the house furnishings department and the millinery department. The general offices, private offices, and ladies' rest room and cloak rooms, etc., occupy the mezzanine between the first and second floors.

This firm later opened a basement store, where practically every line of goods could be pur-

chased. Here also was an ice cream parlor where customers could rest and have a social afternoon after shopping.

The founders of the business were the late Neil Sinclair, William Stewart, and William Minto. They started business in the building which is now occupied by Chan's Restaurant.

In 1885 Mr. Minto retired and his name was dropped from the firm, which continued to prosper, and it became necessary to seek larger quarters. In 1900 a very fine brick store was built with a floor space of about 19,000 square feet. This building, equipped with an up-to-date cast system and every modern convenience was opened in 1901.

Mr. Sinclair retired from the business in 1908 and the firm then became an incorporated body.

FIRST PRESIDENT

Mr. Stewart became president and manager, and associated with him were members of the staff who had been for some time heads of their departments and had practically grown up in the business. On the directorate at that time were the late T. D. Ramsay, who became vice-president; H. G. Muttart, the president; J. A. Smallman, and G. W. Phillips.

Shortly after this new building business made it necessary to occupy the three-story brick block known as the Carbe block. This gave them an additional area of 15,000 square feet.

A few days before Christmas 1916, fire, which originated in the basement of the Sinclair and Stewart building, wiped out a large section of the business houses on Water and Central Streets.

Sinclair, including the Crabbe block, was burned to the ground. The firm carried on in temporary quarters in premises west of the Journal building for most of the year 1917.

In October 1917 the present handsome building was completed and occupied. Although the exterior has continually been remodeled to present day requirements in business and an ever increasing trade.

The directorate at this time was composed of H. G. Muttart, J. A. Smallman, G. W. Phillips, G. M. Muttart, and H. V. Ramsay.

BECOMES SMALLMAN'S

Later the business was acquired by Mr. William Smallman, son of the late John Smallman, a former director of the firm of Sinclair and Stewart Ltd., and the name changed to Smallman's Ltd. who also acquired the Gourlies Drug Store building which was changed to provide grocery and hardware departments with offices on the second floor at the present time; the first floor being now occupied by the Summerside Co-operative Supermarket, and R. W. Woolworth Co. variety store.

Mr. Smallman continues the business, consisting of dry goods, men's furnishings, boots and shoes, and well stocked bargain basement in the building which originally was Sinclair and Stewart's, and is now Smallman's Ltd.

F. W. STRONG CO. LTD.

Another of Summerside's old mercantile establishments was F. W. Strong Co. Ltd. This firm was originally established at Central Bedeque by Hon. W. G. Strong, grandfather of the head of the firm.

The firm was established in Central Bedeque in 1845 and for many years "Strong's Corner" was the popular trading centre in that part of the Province. The Summerside store was established in 1873 by the late Frederick W. Strong as a branch of the Central Bedeque business.

The Summerside business was successfully managed by the late Frederick W. Strong until his death in 1917. Just previous to this the entire business, consisting of store, office and warehouse, together with the greater part of stock was completely wiped out by a disastrous fire which started on the south side of the street and spread to the north side, destroyed a large portion of the business section of the town.

After the death of the founder and in accord with his directions, the present firm was incorporated under the name of F. W. Strong Co. Ltd., with his son, Wm. F. Strong as president, assisted by Millicent Strong and C. E. Stroug, the latter being son of the late Hon. W. G. Strong and father of Hon. Heath Strong, at one time speaker of the House.

Temporary quarters were arranged during the erection of the new brick departmental store on the old site, corner Water and Central streets where the firm carried on a general merchandising business.

In 1947 the business was sold to Mr. Wm. Smallman, owner of Smallman's Ltd.

BRACE, MCKAY AND CO. LTD. The firm of Brace, McKay and Co. Limited had its origin in 1889 when J. A. Brace and W. K. McKay formed a partnership under the firm name of Brace, McKay and Co. Shortly afterwards James McLeod was admitted.

Beginning in a modest way in a wooden building on the site of the present Bank of Nova Scotia building, the business continued with this personnel until 1892, when W. K. McKay resigned and the business was continued by Messrs. J. A. Brace and James McLeod. The entire staff at that time was four.

In 1893, J. A. Brace purchased the site occupied by B. L. Woodside and moved to the opposite side of the street where the present store is located.

In 1897 a brick building 40 x 80

and three stories high was erected, replacing the old B. L. Woodside building.

In 1899 Mr. James McLeod died and Mr. A. S. McKay was taken into partnership. This continued until 1901, when a joint stock company was formed with J. A. Brace, Mrs. Brace, Creelman McArthur, A. Stirling McKay and D. L. Allen as charter members.

In 1905 these comparatively new quarters being found to be inadequate, Mr. Brace bought the large Campbell Hotel, which was torn down and a larger addition made to the original store.

Later the business was taken over by the present owners who carry on an extensive business with a large stock to supply requirements of their many customers. Mr. Forbes, a director, retired in 1954 and Mr. Claude Ives became associated with the firm.

CHURCHES

St. Mary's Anglican Church was built in 1861 and was an off-shoot of St. John's Church, St. Eleanora, which was built about 1826. St. Mary's has always been attached to St. John's Church.

The first rector was Rev. Dr. Jenkins. In the first disastrous fire of 1906 the original church was destroyed, and the erection of the present brick edifice was begun the following year.

The church in connection with the Church of Scotland was formally opened for worship on Sunday, February 24, 1899. Rev. Mr. Goodwill officiated.

Those who were instrumental in and largely participated in organizing and building of a church for the Anglican denomination in Summerside were Thomas Hall, Neil MacKinnon, Ronald Campbell, John Ramsay and Alex MacEonally.

The Summerside Baptist Church was organized May 27, 1868, with seven members. Rev. M. P. Freeman was the pastor; Steven Baker, clerk; Isaac Howatt and Steven Baker, deacons.

EARLIEST CHURCH

Possibly the first regular place of worship in Summerside was the Methodist Church, now part of St. Paul's parish on First Street. About 1850 the Methodists began to hold religious services at what was then called "Green's Shore". There being at that period no church of any denomination in the place, services were held in the old West End School, at the corner of St. Stephen and First Streets. About that time Joseph Green and his wife, who appear to have taken a deep interest in the moral and spiritual

welfare of the people of the village, donated the lot now occupied by St. Paul's Hall to the Methodists upon which to build a church.

In 1854 a building committee was formed, consisting of W. G. Strong, George W. Doull and Joseph Green under the superintendency of Rev. Wesley Beals to proceed with the erection of a church. In 1860 the building was completed and formally opened.

The Presbyterian Church was erected in 1861. At that time it is said there were only about six Presbyterian families in the town and the congregation was under the government of the church at Lot 16.

About 1871 the Summerside section severed its connection with the Lot 16 Church and became a self-sustaining congregation. In 1877 a Presbyterian Church was organized at North Bedeque.

The first Roman Catholic Church in Summerside was dedicated in 1854. It stood on the ground which is now the beautiful garden of the Holman homestead. According to the records, this church and the old convent were hauled from Indian River, and the first parochial house, part of which forms the residence of the Holman homestead, was hauled from Ft. Lenox, where it had originally been erected as a convent. This church was used as a place of worship till 1874. The Very Rev. James MacDonald, vicar general, was the pastor over Indian River Parish at that time and held services in Summerside once a month. In 1869 Rev. James MacKenna became resident pastor.

The first brick church was started in 1866 but was not finally completed till 1876. The first convent was opened in 1869.

The present convent was built in 1885, and the Roman Catholic cemetery on Central Street, was opened in 1862.

'Side Pres. Evening Circle Packs Toys

The Evening Circle of the W.M.S. of the Summerside Presbyterian Church met on Monday evening. Meeting opened by singing hymn, "O Come All Ye Faithful." The scripture was read by Mrs. Keith Johnston. In the absence of the president, the vice-president, Mrs. Russell Hunter, presided. Pianist for the evening was Mrs. Emmett Ranahan.

It was decided to pack a box of toys to be sent to Mrs. Beryl Miller. A letter was read from Mr. and Mrs. George Malcolm, thanking the Circle for their used Christmas cards which had been sent to help them in their work in Formosa.

The new study book, "They Reach for Life," was introduced and the first chapter was read by Mrs. Russell Hunter.

Mrs. Clarence Marchbanks, Mrs. Mrs. Russell Hunter, Mrs. Elmer Offer, Mrs. Russell Hunter and Mrs. Donald MacKay.

HUGE TRANSPORT ARRIVES

MONTREAL (CP) — A huge Blackburn Beverley air freighter, with a payload capacity of 22 tons, arrived here Wednesday from Britain for demonstrations and RCAF winterization trials in Edmonton. The four-engined transport, which can carry 162 passengers, was flown by an RCAF crew.

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