

Watt Street South Walking Tour

Across Watt Street at the south-west corner of Winterton Avenue was the East Kildonan Dry Goods Store and the East Kildonan Fuel Company in the 1940s. In 1950 it was the Chu Chong Chow Restaurant. It is now an empty lot.

485 Watt Street – now the home of Jeld-Wen Windows, in 1935 this used to be the site of the Radio Oil Refinery (ROCO), the first of its kind in Manitoba, who marketed gasoline for over 50 years. During the early 1970s the refinery was shut down, but the company remained in business and continued to expand its marketing locations, later selling out to Husky Oil in 1977. Willmar Windows, owned by William and Margaret Fast, established their company at this site in 1974 and became one of the leading window and door manufacturers in Canada. Margaret was the daughter of Henry Redekopp, who started Redekopp Lumber on Henderson Hwy. and later Allmar Industries on Riverton Avenue. William was the grandson of C.A. deFehr who came to Canada in 1926 from Russia and started a farm machinery company and later on expanded into selling furniture and appliances under the name C.A. deFehr and Sons. They had branches in Brandon, Manitoba; Saskatoon and Regina, Saskatchewan; Edmonton, Alberta and Fargo, North Dakota. Willmar Windows became a subsidiary of Jeld-Wen Windows in 1997 and continues to pride itself on offering a wide product selection, including wood, copper-clad wood, metal-clad wood and PVC vinyl in 14 standard colours and eight glazing types. In addition to the extensive window and patio door line, Willmar also offers steel insulated doors.

Here on the south-east corner of Watt and Winterton was the Expanded Metal Company of Canada Building Supply in 1965. It is now part of the Jeld-Wen Windows property.

501 Ottawa Avenue – this north-west corner property was the site of United Grain Growers in 1920. In the 1940s it was the location of Canada Dry Ginger Ale Ltd.; Golden Age Beverages Ltd. in 1955; Pacific Inland Express Ltd., also in 1955; Pepsi-Cola Company of Canada Ltd. in 1960; and Arrow Transit Lines Ltd. in 1960. It is now part of the Jeld-Wen Windows property.

Businesses west of Watt Street on Ottawa Avenue included: Eddie's Meat and Grocery; J.K. Grocery; DeLuca Grocery; Ottawa Grocery; Murphy's Grocery; Kildonan Sheet Metal; J.C. Grant Painter; Abatis Construction Company; Mr. T's Janitorial Services; Natural Steel Product Manufacturers; Safety Foot Wear and Dry Goods and Randall Townsend Advertising.

Another business further east at 546 Ottawa was Barney's Stoker Service.

As we carry on south down Watt Street towards Chalmers Avenue, a number of the former businesses along here were corner stores, and for many years they were the lifeblood of the community. Most of them were family owned, with the proprietors living either above or behind the business. In many cases the grocery store owners extended credit to customers, allowing them to purchase groceries when needed and pay for them at the end of the month. Many families would have gone hungry if it hadn't been for the generosity of these businesses.

Before large refrigerators and freezers became common household appliances, small ice boxes and basement or crawlspace cold storage areas were used for storing food, necessitating daily trips to the corner store for perishables such as dairy and meat products. And who doesn't remember spending their hard earned pennies on a bagful of candy? The glass jars on display held a tantalizing array of gum, liquorice, sugar babies and candy necklaces and a lot of time was spent selecting just the right assortment.

In the 1960s larger grocery stores and shopping centres opened up, providing consumers with more product variety at cheaper prices. With more households being able to afford vehicles, families could travel further to shop and the corner stores eventually became a thing of the past as they were unable to compete with the "supermarkets". As

businesses closed, the owners either extended their own living space or the buildings were re-purposed into other commercial establishments.

Washington Fuel was located across the street on the north-west corner of Watt and Washington in 1935. It is now an apartment block.

501 Washington - Thomas Trylinski had his grocery store here on the north-east corner in 1930. Later it was known as Johnnie's Grocery and then it became Washington Grocery. It is now a private residence.

Other businesses on this block to the east include: Washington Cabinet Manufacturing; Kowalson Refrigeration Ltd.; Washington Drain Tiles; Washington Auto Body Supplies; Swano Soap Company; East Kildonan Auto Body; Janzen Builders Ltd.; Ken's Custom Automobile Paint; Star Machine Shop; Thompson Upholstery; Logan Auto Body and Washington Auto Service Ltd.

Businesses to the west included: Morgan Space Heater Service and K and N Building Movers.

451 Watt – now Huynh's House For Hair & Nail Salon, this was Helen's Lunch back in 1955; Watt Printing and Quiring Construction in 1955 and Marianne's Hair Fashion in 1965

447 Watt – was the British Canadian Electrical Company in 1965; Andy's Barber Shop in 1970; Community Self Help in 1975 and has been Andrew's Piano Service since 1990.

445 Watt – now the business of People's Choice Appliance and Sales.

440 Watt – across on the west side was where Tim's Book Exchange was located for many years. Before that it was Hanel's Dry Goods in 1950 and a branch of the Winnipeg Laundry in 1955, a temporary location for the Henderson Library in 1960 before the Rossmere Shopping Centre opened. The original building burned down in the early 1960s and this current building was erected on the same spot where it operated as Pinky's Coin Operated Laundry and Ricky's Lunch in 1965; Henderson Restaurant in 1970; Marfleet Cleaning Centre in 1980 and Lily White Laundry in 1990. It is currently The Blue Oasis Dive Centre, which opened recently. The owner's name is Jason and he used to work at 3 Fathoms on Henderson Highway. He tried to buy that business, but the owner wouldn't sell to him, so he decided to open his own shop. They sell and rent diving equipment and arrange scuba and snorkelling trips to local and exotic locations. Diving lessons for all age groups are conducted at the Y.M.C.A. on Kimberly Avenue.

439 Watt – on the east side of the street at Jamison, Mrs. Joseph Hanel had a Dry Goods Store in 1925 later moving across the street to 440 Watt. In 1950 it was the location of a branch of Fort Rouge Cleaners. In 1975 it was Watt TV Centre; Earthlore Hobby Shop owned it in 1980 and Aaron's Heating and Air Conditioning was here in 1990. It is now a private residence.

500 Jamison – here on the south-east corner, Grocer John Carrall had his corner store in 1925. It is now a private residence.

499 Jamison – across the street on the north-west corner, this was the Ukrainian Labour Temple which opened on September 17th, 1921. It was built by members of the Ukrainian Labour Temple Association who had previously been involved in the Social Democratic Party of Canada. In 1975 it was known as Jamison Hall. Over the years a number of people in the community rented this space for events such as bridal and baby showers. In 1985 it was the Kildonan Community Thrift Shop, later becoming the Mennonite Centre Committee Community Thrift Store in 2000 before moving to Chalmers Avenue. It is now the site of Durga Devi Mandir Hindu Temple and Shanti Seva Sabha & Cultural Centre.

498 Jamison – Jamison Food Mart has been on the south-west corner since 1995. Back in 1930 it was known as Frank Benderski Grocery and later Benderski's Self Serve.

Other businesses along the east side of Jamison Avenue included: grocery stores at 529, 549, 551 and 561; Kildonan Canning Company; Beaver Concrete; Kildonan Concrete Products Ltd. and Inland Steel and Forging Ltd., who made farm implements.

Other businesses down the west side of Jamison included Community Drug Store; Dave's Meat Market; Kehler's Grocery; Jamison Grocery; Pearce and McNulty Plumbing and Heating; John W. Perry Shoemaker and Sam Belasco General Contractor.

497 Bowman - now a private residence, this business on the north-west corner used to be Andrew Shtybel Grocer in 1930; William Romaniuk Grocery in 1940; Carl's Barber Shop in 1945; Nicholas Barber Shop in 1955; Gertha's Hair Styling in 1965; Bonnie's Hair Designs in 1970; Mostoway's TV and Electronics in 1975 and Our Unisex Hair Design in 1985.

498 Bowman - Michael Maslowski had his barber shop here on the south-west corner in 1930. In 1950 it became the site of Dan Melnyk's Shoe Repair, later known as Melnyk's Shoe Clinic. When Mr. Melnyk died in 1981, a number of items from the interior of his shop were donated to the Canadian Museum of History in Ottawa. The exhibit is titled "the Melnyk Shoe Clinic Oral Histories from Ukrainian immigrant Dmytro (Dan) Melnyk, who owned and operated a shoe clinic in a multi-ethnic, working-class suburb of Winnipeg from 1948 to 1980". The former shoe clinic is now a private residence.

501 Bowman - businesses at this north-east corner included Jacob Steinberg Grocer in 1920; Matt Dopolinski Barber in 1930 and Jack's Snack Shop in 1940. Now it's a private residence.

500 Bowman - this building on the south-west corner was the site of Nick Mysek Grocer in 1920; Petries Bakery in 1935 and Roper's Grocery in 1950. It is now a privately owned two-storey duplex.

Other businesses along this block on the east side of Bowman included: Bardal Plumbing; Hayman Kowalson and On Line Photo. The next block down is the Bowman Industrial Park which has shop space for 49 different businesses, such as Co-op Implements in 1945; Chemcrest in 1975; AJ Industrial Wood Products; Princess Auto Machine Distributing Warehouse in 1980, East End Collision Repairs Ltd.; Aero Metal Welding; Fineline Decorating; City Wide Appliance Service and a number of trucking and storage companies.

Another long time business here was Big Deal Custom Casings, established in 1976 by Gary Dealey who grew up in this area of Winnipeg. It began as a response to the damaged cases and equipment he saw while working as a touring tech for music acts such as Pat Benetar, Trooper and Burton Cummings. All custom cases are manufactured exactly to the customer's specifications and Gary has built equipment and wardrobe cases for many international bands, including Bryan Adams; professional sports teams such as the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and Winnipeg Jets, including a case for the Grey Cup trophy; art installations at the Met in New York City, magicians, medical equipment and NASA. Down the west side of Bowman, businesses included: Saunders Bake Shop and Michael's Grocery.

392 Watt – on the west side of the street was the business of Sonney the Tailor for many years. It is now Mint City Coin and Collectibles.

Larsen Avenue was called Montrose Avenue until 1963.

497 Larsen – across on the north-west corner Shoemaker Michael Kozyk had his business here in 1925. It's now a private residence.

496 Larsen – Hemp Haven Tobacco Shop has occupied the south-west corner since 2003, although the current owner bought it six years ago. He does not sell actual cannabis, but has hemp lotions, CDs, tobacco products and hemp yarn. He used to stock hemp clothing, but due to their high price, they didn't sell well. Former businesses at this location included Benjamin Hechter's Grocery in 1925; Union Grocery in 1930; Salvation Army Thrift Store in 1980 and Harry's Grab a Sandwich in 1985. A steel wall that was part of the freezer during the grocery store years still remains in one corner of the shop.

501 Larsen – here on the north-east corner was Stephen Kisil's Grocery store in 1925. It's now a private residence.

260 Watt – now the business known as Vape Haven, this used to be Watt Barber Shop in 1955.

Businesses further east down the block of Larsen include A and A Insulation Specialists and the East End Community Club, which was later known as East End Cultural and Leisure Centre at 575 Larsen. It is still open days, evenings and weekends for scheduled programs run by the City of Winnipeg, including Gymnastics and Dance classes for young children. There is also a Status 4 free music program for children and a parent/caregiver and child drop-in program.

259 Watt - Members of the original Holy Eucharist Church purchased this property on the east side of Watt Street for a sum of \$1,240. A small shanty was on the site at the time and this was used for meetings, the Ukrainian School and Catechism classes. In July of 1919, the shanty was torn down and a 100 foot by 25 foot rectangular wooden building with seating for 300 people was built. Built in the Byzantine architectural style, the church boasted two cupolas, one large one above the altar and a smaller one housing the bell over the entrance, two side altars, a main altar and twenty-two pews built by Messrs. Wawrysh and Komaranski. The building was completed at a cost of \$6,000. Bishop Nykyta Budka blessed the church on October 29th of that year, and the first parish priest was Reverend Michael Pelech, who had been the first Ukrainian Catholic priest educated and ordained in Canada. The building is now used as a banquet and meeting hall.

255 Watt – in 1965 this was Harbison Pharmacy and since 1990 it has been the Video Cellar Video and Convenience Store.

254 Watt – on the north-west corner of Watt and Harbison, this site was Watt Street Barbershop in 1965; Pastrick Realty Ltd. in 1980; Harbison House Used Furniture in 1985; Tobacco Connection and Tobacco Products in 1995; A Plus Custom Creations Mounting and Picture Frame in 1995; and Boudewyn Illustration in 2000. It's now the business of Kildonan Upholstery.

430 Harbison West – this location on the south-east corner was the site of L. Kowalson, Grocer in 1915; Harbison Grocery in 1945; Boxer Grocery and Meats in 1955 and Imperial Ice Cream Palace in 1975. It is currently an ice-cream parlour known as Kool Deelites.

Other businesses on the east side of this block included Western Cemetery Lettering Engravers; Paul's Carpets and Upholstery Cleaners; Watkins General Store; Clean Care Building Maintenance; Wrecking Yard Warehouse and Harbison Athletic Club.

Down Harbison Avenue to the west were the businesses of David Solomon Grocer; Mrs. Jennie Lloyd Grocer; James C. Graham Grocer; Shop Easy Store; Harbison Groceteria; Harbison Food Store and Frank C. Jones Plumber.

237 Watt - is where Sol Convenience Store has been in business for many years. Before that it was David Jenner Grocery in 1920; Tony's Grocery in 1950 and Ben's Grocery in 1955.

Other businesses to the east on this block included Don Carlson School of Driving; Stewart Sheaf Loader; a City Hydro Substation; Louden Machine Company of Canada and Elmwood Auto Wrecking.

Down to the west was Simply Sweet Chocolate Maker in 1995.

411 Union West – across on the north-west corner is the building where Dr. Semeon Hrushovetz, one of our Society's members, had his medical practice, starting in 1972. In 1974 he started the Kildonan Institute of Gerontology out of this same building. Sam is now retired and just turned 92 years old. This building is now owned by Elmwood Appliance Service.

412 Union West – a number of grocery stores and restaurants were at this south-west corner, including Emil Radsikov Grocer in 1915; Union Grocery and Provision Company in 1920; Hyman Kowalson Grocery in 1930; O'Neil's Lunch Bar in 1955 and Jack's Lunch Bar in 1970. Since 1985 it has been Plaza Northern Chinese Restaurant.

At the south-east corner of Union Avenue was Dominion Foundry. This building has now been taken over by the MCC Thrift Shop.

Other businesses on the eastern side of this street over the years included Lazar Bereskin Grocer; Filtersoft Ltd.; Schwartz Manufacturing Company; Newman Millworks Ltd.; Dale's Auto Service; Prairie Foundry Ltd.; Kildonan Custom Cabinets and Hilton Collision Centre Auto Repair which is still in operation.

Down Union Avenue to the west is Kildonan Lock Service. In the early days there were a number of grocery stores as well as Henry Krouchuk Shoemaker; Robert Taylor Plumber; Amazing Carpet and Upholstery Care; Morris Bargain Centre and Ultra Carpet Service Ltd.

229/227/225 Watt – these three storefronts are now vacant, but some of the businesses that used to be here included Northeast Winnipeg Family and Child Extended Social Services; New Faces Community Action Services; Winnipeg Child and Family Services Elmwood Agency; Ann's Ceramic Studio (later A & A Ceramics); Braeside Electric Ltd. and Accurate Paintings and Decorations.

The two-storey side by sides across on the west side at 208 and 206 Watt Street and around the corner at 409 and 407 Chalmers are run by Forward House Ministries, which is a half-way house for men recently paroled from prison.

200 Watt - across on the south-west corner was Acme Garage in 1930, Elmwood Fuel Company Yard in 1940; Elm Batteries Ltd. in 1945, N. Williams, Garage in 1950, Winnipeg Bed & Spring Company in 1955, Westward Motors in 1960, and is currently the automotive business of M. Power & Collision.

419 Chalmers - this site on the north-east corner was formerly Western Steel and Iron Company Ltd. in 1910; Powell Equipment Company in 1920; Fire and Waterworks Municipality of East Kildonan in 1925; Radio Oil and Gas Company in 1930 and Henderson Oil Company in 1940. The building was later demolished and is used as a parking lot for the MCC Thrift Store.

445 Chalmers – this is currently the Kildonan MCC Thrift Shop, run by the Mennonite Central Committee. It used to be located at 447 Watt Street and 499 Jamison Avenue.

Further down on the east side was David Thompson Junior High School, which later merged with Elmwood High School, offering classes from grades 7 to 12. Munroe Day Nursery has operated out of the west wing of the school for many years.

Watt Street was originally two separate streets having two different names. The area between the St. Boniface boundary to Thames Avenue was called Montcalm Street, where it dead-ended as there was no roadway across the CPR tracks there at the time. Watt Street began here at Chalmers Avenue on the other side of the railways tracks and continued north to where it ends at the Rossmere Golf and Country Club.

Back in 1955 on the south-west corner by the billboard sign used to be the Arctic Ice Self Service ice house where people could come to get blocks of ice for their fridge or cooler.

On the south-east corner at 197 Watt Street is Venture Auto Rentals & Sales. They also do repairs for Autopac claims.

Beyond the car rental business and behind the townhouses at 431 Thames Avenue is Horizons Learning Centre.

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church was located on the west side of Montcalm at Talbot Avenue in 1910. The Parish Hall was at the corner of Montcalm and Riverton Avenue.

At the corner of Montcalm and Tweed was Peterson and Hermanson Butchers in 1915; Joseph Bailey Meats in 1925; and A. Danell Grocery in 1930.

Further east down Chalmers Avenue at Grey Street was a motorcycle clubhouse during the 1990s. Back in 1967 the Spartans Motorcycle Club was created in Elmwood by Graham Sylvester who was the older brother of Darwin and Kevin. At that time the Spartans had a rule that you had to be 21 years old to join. Soon afterwards the Los Brovos were formed in St. Boniface with no age requirements. Some members of the Los Brovos later joined the Hell's Angels. The clubhouse closed and is now a private residence. There is another rumor from an anonymous source that in 1968 the Spartans used a garage on Henderson Highway, just north of McLeod Avenue at the former Redekop Lumber location as a meeting place, but this information has not been verified.

480 Chalmers – our last stop on the tour is Chalmers Community Centre, which has been here since 1955. This is also the home of the Elmwood Giants Baseball League who uses the baseball diamonds to the east of the clubhouse.

Interested in learning more history of these areas? Do you have stories/pictures to share? How about attending one of the *NORTH EAST WINNIPEG HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC. (2011)* monthly meetings? Optional \$10.00/year membership *ALL WELCOME!*

NORTH EAST WINNIPEG HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC. (2011)

- ***Fourth Wednesday*** of the month
- **Bronx Park Community Centre, 720 Henderson Highway**
- **7:00PM**
- **For more information:**

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'To Record and Preserve the Histories of East Kildonan, North Kildonan and Elmwood for Present and Future Generations.' We respect the history of All.