

Commercial Morrisburg, 1907

By Ian Bowering

Slightly less than one-third of the size of Cornwall, pre First World War Morrisburg, with its river location and prosperous rural hinterland was poised for growth.

Like any bustling market town, Morrisburg's merchants offered their clients all that was available. One of the oldest stores was W.&J. Meikle. Established just after Confederation, Meikle promised his clients "...the rarest and daintiest of novelties in fancy and staple dry goods, trimmings, ladies ready-to-wear skirts, blouses, gents' furnishings, carpets and oilcloths." Occupying two floors the business continued into the 1960s.

F.A. Nash claimed he was "your tailor." Started around 1900, Nash said, "The time was when clothing only comfortable and suitable for climatic necessities was called for, but now elegance, fit and superior finish are added, and no merchant or importing tailor can hope to become noted and eminent unless he meets these indispensable conditions." Nash, of course, was "a leader in this department," at his Main Street emporium.

Druggist F.B. Carman, opened his Main St. store around 1878 and represented "...one of the leading drughouses in Morrisburg, and as a prescription specialist assumed a prominent position in the minds of the people. " If you recovered from your ailments you could also purchase some stationery.

Agricultural implements could be purchased from W.H. Fetterley who opened for business around 1893. Along with farm machinery Fetterley sold pianos and organs, sewing machines, carriages, cutter, harnesses, stoves, windmills, road machines, milk separators, washers, etc.

Baked goods were available from George Cameron. In operation since the late 1860s, the bakery was "...nicely fitted-up and widely known to be neat and clean. Bread, fancy and plain biscuits, pastry of all kinds and similar table necessaries were baked here in first class style, and were in great demand because of their attractive appearance and digestible character." In addition Cameron was "...always ready and willing to show you the best chocolates, bonbons and all kinds of homemade candies that can be had, and which for delicacy and flavour are unexcelled."

M. Cassell and W.C. Coir were the town's most popular butchers. Located on Main Street and opened around 1907, along with meat they paid the highest prices for hides, skins, furs, and tallow.

General groceries could be purchased from W.G. Becksted founded around 1898. Becksted "...was a dealer in groceries, confectionery and fruits in season, and made a specialty of fine teas and coffees. The goods of the house were notes for their uniform excellence and low prices. Order system and cleanliness were carefully observed."

Or if you preferred you could purchase your food from G.W. Tracy, who took over R.J. Dillen's store around 1906. Tracy boasted: "The house has constantly and continuously been identified with the growth and development of our town's commerce (founded 1870). Mr. G.W. Tracy by his success has become an example of what may be accomplished by push, energy and ability.

The market is located on Main Street. Mr. G.W. Tracy is highly esteemed by all who know him while in commercial circles he is regarded as a man of pronounced integrity, honourable and fair in all transactions, and is held in the highest regard for his personal sterling wealth.