

Rem and Jack Shaw: Owners of the Shaw Drug Store

The Shaw Drug Store: Times of long ago, apart from being interesting to read about, are somewhat the opposite of the future, memories only include the past. And those earlier periods have so many great moments that create exciting reminiscences. Rem and Jack Shaw of Lac du Bonnet, the Allard building which housed their store, the streets and structures around and the people who frequent these location, had great stories to tell. In the case of the drug store I believe Rem was the druggist while Jack was the full time helper, if awake and alert. Rem never allowed medication to leave the store without checking more than once that the right meds were destined for the right persons or places. This was done to perfection, sometimes unwrapping and rewrapping several times... to the frustration of the waiting customer. It must be included here that I did not hear of anyone having complained, at least to Rem. The store sold various commodities other than meds, like bars, nuts, magazines, drinks and such. While Rem 'did-his-thing' as the druggist, Jack, in the rest of the store did his, which included chair sleeping and other diverse duties.

I mentioned above of *"the streets and structures around and the people who frequent these locations, had great stories to tell"*. The four way corner which included the Lakeview Hotel, the Post Office, *Shaw's Drug Store*, Levasseur's Meat Market, the Lakeside Café, the Winnipeg River Dock and the aircraft businesses that surrounded it was one of these special corners. All had such an enormous effect on making this intersection and the town of Lac du Bonnet a "treasure-of-the-times". A few of the tales from that famous crossroads follows.

Saturday evening, eight thirty in the town of Lac du Bonnet, a mile and one half from our farm, was mail time, delivered by the train probably. The small post office, in the centre of the village, was attached to the home of the Brown family next door to the Lakeview Hotel. The line up for the weekly delivery started much earlier though. It became a time to visit neighbours and friends, to discuss the happenings of the last seven days and suggest plans for the coming week. Mrs. Brown, always on time opened the mail wicket, a little door on an inner wall of a long, narrow lean-to. The noise of its upward slide alerted the assembled to shuffle



immediately for first advantage. Mrs. Brown then peered out and without demanding name or number handed the proper mail to those gathered. And in turn Mr. Brown peered painfully out from the background... in a very scowling manner at those in line, who innocently peered back at

him. *Hotel and Post Office...* Note the post office sign, centre on right side of picture. Story time, during the years... circa 1943/45.

The Winnipeg Eaton Store catalogue was in! It contained sections upon sections of different goods complete with pictures of all that was available in that magical, magic book. From the neatest gum rubbers, with or without felt liners, to horse harnesses that would make the oldest nags look like the Queen's parade best. The selection was tremendous, the items incalculable. Memories say that horse harnesses were only available at Eaton's. It also said that Eaton's was the store that sold the first prefab homes from the pages of that "oh so *useful* book". In addition, my memory tells me the houses had four gables, one for each direction of the compass.

Our visits after mail time spared moments to look at the new catalogue and to wait, if we were old enough, for the closing of the local "watering hole" in the Lakeview Hotel. There was a "Saturday Night Special" brewing, a routine you would not miss if you were apprised of its coming. Across the street from the hotel, in front of "*Shaw's Drug Store*", on a fairly wide frontage, combined with the area of the hotel was the appropriate place, the closing of the beer parlor doors from further business, the appointed time.

Saturday evening was set aside by a local religious group to preach temperance and sobriety among other topics, and to play instruments and sing on that special intersection. When these two events coincided... a Saturday night special ensued. The inebriates who streamed from the parlor had but to grab a partner, male or female, and joyfully dance to the music. Others danced partner-less, with just as much delight, and all this to the utter dismay of the serious, devoted performers in front of Shaw's.

There is always some opposition to such sacrilegious goings on. People took sides. The inevitable happened when drunk disagreed with not so drunk and the sober tried to interfere... a colossal donnybrook, a "*Saturday Night Special*", developed. It was an evening of unique entertainment; mail was collected, great pictures in the magic book and a Saturday night special all in one setting, all for the price of... time! Later, during the 'by necessity' walk home, a future trip to that great Winnipeg Store with the neat rolling stairway may be planned and maybe just maybe a chance to purchase cheaper clothing in its basement, where all good deals happened.

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