



## Collective MEMORIES



## A Little Montréal: Merchants & Memories of Main Street, Windsor

Edited by Terra Barrett

Collective Memories Series #03

**COVER PHOTOS (from left to right):**

Cozy Chat. Photo courtesy of Georgina Bellows.

Bus to Grand Falls Station (Windsor). This model "A" bus transported shoppers from Grand Falls to S. Cohen & Sons, Windsor in the 1930s. Driver: Mike Cohen.

Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

Riff's. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

A LITTLE MONTRÉAL:  
MERCHANTS  
& MEMORIES  
OF MAIN STREET, WINDSOR

Edited by Terra Barrett



Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador  
Intangible Cultural Heritage Office  
St. John's, NL, Canada

Layout / design by Jessie Meyer

2017

# Introduction

In September 2016 I had the opportunity to travel to Grand Falls-Windsor to do a series of interviews around the merchants and memories of Main Street in Windsor. This project came about as a result of conversations with the Grand Falls-Windsor Heritage Society. Over the past couple of years the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador has assisted the GFWHS with the digitization of some of their archived materials. These materials include almost one hundred interviews by radio host Hiram Silk as well as a collection of interviews done by community volunteers in the mid 1990s to mid 2000s. The second batch of interviews were part of the town's centennial celebrations and focused on the AND company, the mill, and the former town of Grand Falls. In order to learn more about the Windsor part of the community the Heritage Society decided to do a project focused on Main Street.

As researcher and editor I had the opportunity to meet with many community members, and record their memories about living, working, playing, and of course shopping on Main Street. I was also tasked with the difficult job of sifting through the interviews and choosing short sections and memories to transcribe. The booklet is broken up into sections based on the different shops and services on Main Street as well as particular memories about the street, the train station, and the holidays. While the booklet provides an overview of Main Street there are still many untold stories and there is a page at the end of the booklet with an incomplete listing of Main Street businesses and services.

BY TERRA BARRETT

I encourage anyone who is interested in learning more about Main Street to visit the Grand Falls-Windsor collection on Memorial University's Digital Archives to listen to the full interviews or to contact the Grand Falls-Windsor Heritage Society.

Listening to people tell their stories and discuss their memories of the places they grew up is my favourite part of my job. Being able to talk to people about their life history and recording it for future generations of listeners is an opportunity I do not take for granted. During these fifteen interviews I learned so much about the history of Main Street. I learned how it developed around the train station in order to provide services to the railway workers and travelers, and to the community of workers who built up to the town of Windsor. I also learned about the day to day interactions among business owners who played cards together, visited one another, and helped each other whenever possible. As Corey Sharpe noted, "[Main Street] was like a little Montréal. A lot of different cultures and sights and sounds." The business owners came from all parts of the world and were from different backgrounds but worked side by side and supported one another. Through this booklet I invite you to learn a bit more about the interesting background history and story of Main Street, Windsor.

— *St. John's, January 2017*

# Introduction

One of the most fascinating aspects of the history of Grand Falls-Windsor is the relationship between the two towns that grew up as part of the mill development in the early 1900s.

When newspaper magnates Alfred and Harold Harmsworth of London were growing their publishing empire, they chose the Grand Falls on the Exploits River as their preferred site for making newsprint. The location offered everything they needed: access to wood, a labour force, electrical power, a shipping port, and a modern transportation link in the form of the Reid Newfoundland Railway.

This railway link was to prove a key factor in the development of the two towns of Windsor and Grand Falls.

The Harmsworths formed the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company to operate their paper-making enterprise, which included building a mill and a town to house the workers. From the very beginning, development within the town was controlled by the AND Company. It is commonly asserted in Grand Falls-Windsor that only company workers and businesses approved by the company could settle within the town limits, although historical or documentary evidence for this “rule” is unclear or yet to be found.

Here’s where the railway came into its own. As the town of Grand Falls grew, people who arrived in the area seeking work or business opportunities often settled near the train station, called

## BY THE GRAND FALLS-WINDSOR HERITAGE SOCIETY

Grand Falls Station, which was the first point of contact for all passengers — and their money to spend — coming into the area. Despite many setbacks in the early decades of its history, “the Station” became home to an astonishing range of entrepreneurial people and activity.



Several members of the Grand Falls-Windsor Heritage Society with Heritage Foundation staff. Standing L-R: Joe Shapleigh, Jim Locke, Dale Jarvis, Brian Reid, Terra Barrett, John Blackmore. Sitting L-R: Cathy Simpson, Audrey Burke. 2016.  
Photo by Kelly Drover.

In 1938, by the will of its residents, Grand Falls Station became the first incorporated town outside St John's, with an elected council, on the island of Newfoundland. The name "Windsor" was chosen in accordance with the wishes of the King that every part of the empire should have a town bearing the Royal surname.

When we at the Grand Falls-Windsor Heritage Society researched the names of Windsor's business people, an exciting fact jumped out at us: from the earliest times, Windsor had welcomed immigrants from outside North America, people whose families had travelled from war-torn Europe and even from Syria, to find safety for their families and opportunity for their children. Their names have become part of who we are in this town: Riff, Cohen, Münch, Becker, Boulas, Basha, Chow, and so many many more.

The effect was astonishing: the excitement, the bustle, the sheer life and variety of Windsor was a magnet for people not only from more staid Grand Falls but from elsewhere in the area, as some of our informants describe so vividly. Windsor truly was a melting-pot in miniature, with a vibrant and varied community life that contributed much to the development of both towns.

In 2016, as Grand Falls-Windsor marked 25 years of amalgamation, we wished to mark the singular cultural and economic contribution that "The Merchants of Main Street" have made to our history as a now-united community.



Main Street, Windsor. 1944. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

## MAIN STREET MELODY

*As I stroll down Main Street on a warm summer's day,  
My memories just happen to whisk me away.  
The sound of the soldiers as they head off to war,  
The sight of George Stewart inside of his store.  
A song and a memory so clear in my mind,  
I wish to walk longer, heading down the line.  
Looking in windows and catching a smile  
of the new generation, they do business with style.  
From the luxurious spas, to the great cuts of meat,  
You can even get some fancy shoes for your feet.  
No matter what you're looking for,  
Music, fabric or a comfy place to stay.  
Main Street is the place to go...  
We wouldn't have it any other way!*

AMANDA WILLIAMS, 2010

Printed in a Grand Falls-Windsor business advertisement pamphlet.

## MAIN STREET



Looking toward Main Street, Windsor from St. Joseph's Parish.  
Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

Main Street was alive, it was vibrant because it had all of these lovely cars and lots of people and the sweet little Cozy Chat and the smell of the French fries and it just bustled, it was vibrant.

YVONNE COURTNEY

Main Street was a centre for both towns because of the train. The railway station was a sort of central point of meeting at least once or twice a day when the trains came in. The merchants were smart because next to Main Street up, is a street called Bond Street and that was set up so that the merchants could have their storefronts on Bond Street with their backs to the station but they were smart and they said, "Look if all these passengers are coming on train and our business is coming on train why put our backs there, why not put our fronts there?" So Main Street became a street with all of the store fronts facing the trains and the train station.

## MAIN STREET



Main Street, Windsor looking east from S. Cohen & Sons. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

Everything happened there and when the passengers came they were usually there for 20 minutes to an hour depending on what trains had to do and how much maintenance was required. So they went across to the various establishments, especially the food establishments that were there. There were a couple of chip vans and there was two or three Chinese restaurants and again retail stores that were there at the time.

ROY OLDFORD

There was always something about Main Street. It was just a really cool spot, really different. It was fun to grow up there and especially hang out down there as a teenager. It is like the John Prine song, "Pinballs and pool halls and flashing red lights." It's as if he wrote it for Main Street.

COREY SHARPE

## MAIN STREET

Grand Falls was fine. We had High Street with businesses and stuff like that but Windsor was almost sometimes magical because it had a greater variety of stores and it was nice to go. That being said Bowrings and the Royal Stores were neat to go into as well on High Street but they were brought in. They were permitted to be in the town and it was like in Windsor it was what kind of couldn't be here so it was almost – not illegal or anything but there was a discrepancy between the two in how they set up.

MARY KELLY

The people just coming right at you and socializing, getting your plate of French fries and going over to the train station



Main Street, Windsor. 1944. L to R: Purity Café, S. Cohen & Sons, A. Peckford, King Edward Theatre, Brown Derby. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

## MAIN STREET

and looking in to see who was traveling or who was coming and who was going. The train used to leave Grand Falls at 8:00 in the evening and arrive in St. John's at 8:00 am in the morning.

JOHN CONNORS

This is anecdotal. This is from what mom and dad talked about. People would walk from this side of town, walk out to the train to see who got off the train or who was going on. It was an outing. People didn't just do it occasionally – they did it often. It was one of the things to do.

MARGARET SCOTT



Main Street, Windsor. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

## TRAIN STATION

At the station CN where I worked that would sort of be a gathering place in the mornings for a chat and talk things over with Laurie Alteen and Jim Basha and those guys, Pat Kearney. The stories they would tell and the things that they would do and things that they would play on each other. They were forever into something. They were good people. Interesting people.

JIM MERCER

The train station was across from Cohen's and living across from the tracks that was great. But there is one thing that really sticks out to me is that every night going to bed there was probably a train that passed by maybe 9:00, 10:00 and you could hear the whistle blow because there was an intersection there so they had to blow the whistle and I missed that when I left. That was the one big thing I remember, hearing the whistle.

ELIZABETH MÜNCH POWER

I grew up on Main Street as a kid, very very active community. 75% of the shopping done in Central Newfoundland, I would say, was done in Grand Falls-Windsor. Some of the names of the businesses were Stewart's, Cohen's and Riff's and these people attracted people from all over central and they were very successful businesses at the time. Main Street in Windsor was a really, really high traffic, high volume area and of course what added to that, too, was that the railway station was right on Main Street. Back in the '50s and early '60s I guess and '40s the express train used to get in at 8:00 every evening so that was the social thing, go and walk down and see who was going away, see who was coming home and this type of thing. It became a real area where people socialized and used the restaurants and supported the businesses of Windsor.

JOHN CONNORS

## TRAIN STATION

I think the biggest thing was the train station. People coming in there. You would get there and you'd watch the people coming off, and going on and see who you knew - any young girls who got off the train because we were young at the time. A couple of the stores at the time had these little alcoves. If it was misty or rainy you could get in those little alcoves and you'd stay dry. That was the biggest thing. Main Street was very busy because you did have quite a number of stores there. You had grocery stores and clothing stores but the train station was the big thing.

FRANK BESON



View of Windsor taken opposite CN station. Circa 1949. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

## CHIP VANS

In the evening when you were walking back and forth there were two chip vans. You had to decide which ones had the best chips. There was a fellow called Abe Lamb, he was related to the Cohens I think, he had a little chip van there and he had these crinkle chips. He had a cutter or something that used to make crinkle chips and we used to love to get a plate of chips every now and then.

JOHN CONNORS

I know Stroud had an arched building and they used to sell fish and chips out of it. My parents in their younger days would always go to Stroud's for a cone of fish and chips and they would put vinegar on it. They said once you were finished eating the fish and chips you would drink the vinegar out of the paper cone.

COREY SHARPE

As you were walking down Main Street and you were heading towards Stewart's there was this fantastic smell that came at you all the way down the street. It's like, "Oh my dear God. I want some of those chips." It was French fries and the smell of French fries was just wafting down Main Street as you were walking towards it and of course you were not going to ask for those things as a child because you knew better. You just didn't ask for those things. But sometimes my dad, if I was walking with him alone and mom was gone on with the girls, with the carriage or whatever, my dad would stop at the chip van. The chip van was semicircular in shape. I don't remember what kind of material it was made out of but it wasn't wood. It seemed to me to be made out of a metal and the man who was inside was a big plump man - well to me as a child he was a big, big, plump man.

YVONNE COURTNEY

## CHIP VANS



Stroud's Chip Van. Photo courtesy of Trudi Marie.

## POOL HALLS

Coming down Main Street in my time there was a massive pool hall which is one thing that we really had a lot of. The pool hall was a typical pool hall that you see in the Bowery or somewhere in New York City, downtown in Manhattan somewhere. It was rough, there were lots of fights, there were a couple of billiard tables and about eight or nine pool tables, eight ball we call them today and as kids we weren't really allowed in there but we snuck in because the game was so interesting. We learned to play pool and a lot of people played it very, very well. They were really good.

ROY OLDFORD

At that time Mr. Len Whiffen owned it and we'd go in there and there were some good pool players around that used to play eight ball. That was for money. We weren't good enough for that. I was only a rookie but after a while you got in there and you weren't old enough but you got in. You had to be a certain age to get in the pool hall. We'd go in there and enjoy ourselves while we got the chance because you never had much money at the time. Money was scarce but go in there and enjoy it. That was it.

FRANK BESON

There was a couple of billiard tables and then regular pool. One to fifteen ball and the cue ball. We played on Saturday mornings when the men, I'll call them, we were only kids in those days and basically we weren't allowed in there but we got in. But the men came there to play eight ball and they played for big money and if you got there early you became a racker so you racked the balls. There was only eight of them and if the eight ball went on the break when you snapped the cue that meant that the person who broke it won and of course if you were racking - in language that

## POOL HALLS

I won't use, "Get the \*\*\*\* out of here." So you always had a buddy. We were entrepreneurial, too, so I had a buddy with me and every time you racked you got a nickel. In a morning you could make five bucks there because it is a quick game. Three or four shots and it's over. Rack a game, another nickel, another nickel, another nickel and you were looking at nickels being 25 cents I can go to two shows tomorrow so that was important. But you racked and if you were lucky you stayed there the whole morning and if you let the ball go on the break then bingo you were gone.

ROY OLDFORD

Another place in our teenage years that we would hang out was Stroud's pool hall which was a super cool place when you were a teenager back in the mid to late '80s. Huge jukebox and all the latest tunes and the place was jammed and they wouldn't close until the last person left. I can remember one Christmas day it was even open so they were a diehard crew. We would play pool and pinball. When the video machines first came in we would play some of those and play the tunes on the jukebox which was deafeningly loud which I loved back then which was pretty cool, listening to Van Halen while you were playing pool or pinball.

COREY SHARPE

## BUSES

### *THE COHEN'S BUS:*

That was an idea that my father had as people had to go from Grand Falls to Windsor. There weren't very many cars in town those days so they had to go out on a bus and pay for it. So my father said, "We'll have a bus and anyone who wants to use it can pay for it but if they make a purchase at Cohen's it was free." That was his promotion. That was 1928 I'd say until the mid '30s. They didn't need it after that because cars came in to Grand Falls.

BOYD COHEN

The buses that went from Riff's to Grand Falls would bring in the lunches to the mill workers for a small fee and they would bring people to High Street and from High Street back to Windsor for a small fee. They would be lined off in front of Riff's so in order they would load up and go on. I remember that. I'm pretty sure that it was close to the end of that probably in the early '80s, mid '80s. That's a well known thing. Everybody knows about the buses in Windsor.

COREY SHARPE

They used to have the cars down around Main Street called buses. I remember going down with my father's lunch, giving it to the bus and it would probably be 25 cents to take the lunch to the mill. These guys, a lot of them, would pick up their lunches and take them all into the mill, probably might have 15, 20 aboard, probably more at times. Then there was also other drivers that went down to Stewart's and if you went in and got your groceries they would come out and put it in the car and take you home, bring them in for you and you would pay the driver. But all that is gone.

FRANK BESON

## BUSES

I'll tell you a story that I shouldn't tell you but what odds. A buddy of mine's father ran a bus, and, of course, when you finished your business during the day you took your sign off the bus and placed it in the vehicle until the next day and used it as a family car. I would imagine they would have to have insurance, special insurance but I don't know. At any rate, this night he picked me up to go out wherever. We had no money, not a jingle. So we saw these people in Grand Falls who were lined up waiting for a bus so he said let's go up here, stuck the bus sign on, picked them up, 25 cents each, made a dollar and a quarter and it was our night. We got the bus sign off and I don't think his father knew it to this day. But we get a kick out of it every time we get together now we get a kick out of that one because it was something that was silly but worked out for us anyway.

ROY OLDFORD

### *GERALD CONNORS' TAXI BUSINESS:*

One of the contracts he had with the taxi business was Dad used to transport the nuns back and forth to school every day. I remember a funny story mom used to say that when she was dating dad they weren't allowed to pick up any other passengers. Just the nuns. I guess they were very strict back in those days. He couldn't stop and pick mom up. She worked in Windsor out at Dubow's which was a clothing store. Anyway he couldn't pick her up so he used to slow down so two or three girls could hang onto the bumper and ski out to Windsor. So that was a story mom used to tell about how dad used to slow down so they could hang onto the back of the bumper because they weren't allowed in the car.

JOHN CONNORS

## BUSES



Bus to Grand Falls Station (Windsor). This model "A" bus transported shoppers from Grand Falls to S. Cohen & Sons, Windsor in the 1930s. Driver: Mike Cohen.  
Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

## BECKER'S JEWELRY



Becker's jewelry. Photo courtesy of GFWHS

## BECKER'S JEWELRY

*Ernst Becker of Becker's Jewelry came to Newfoundland in 1951 after placing an ad in a Swiss watch maker's magazine and receiving a reply from Corner Brook. Ernst moved to Ontario following a fire on Broadway in Corner Brook but returned to Newfoundland working first with Alteen's in Corner Brook and then in Grand Falls. After a short time in St. John's Ernst and his wife Dolores returned to Grand Falls where he worked with Riff's in Windsor before establishing a watch repair and jewelry store of his own.*

### MEMORIES

He got a job with Alteen's in Corner Brook and then he got transferred from Corner Brook to over here with Alteen's. Then somehow or another he got working with Mr. Riff on Main Street in Windsor. He had a great big clothing store and up in the corner was a little tiny jewelry department. So, Ern went there and there wasn't much business for him to be doing and Mr. Riff saw that. It was hardly worth having him there so he encouraged him to maybe go on his own somewhere. So he rented a little place a little further up the street. It was just an old, barn like place, a big drafty old place and the kids were right tiny then and Mr. George Stewart, who was up on the end with the big grocery, we knew George well. We would go to him for the groceries. So George used to come down and visit Ern in his shop. Ern couldn't leave because he was the only one there. So he would come and Wayne Morris would come, and George said to him one day, "There is a little tiny spot next to my store," he said, "you don't need to be in this drafty old place. Why don't you come up here?" It was 8'x32'. So he went up into it and Mrs. Basha and the Cozy Chat next door, she owned

## BECKER'S JEWELRY

that bit of land and George owned a little bit so he got the land from Mrs. Basha and built this little 8'x32' shop.

DOLORES BECKER

Becker had the smallest store in Newfoundland, I think. It was a jewelry store. He met you at the door when you came in. He was a German who moved here after the war and got married to a local girl and set up a jewelry business.

JOHN CONNORS

He sold diamond rings and wedding bands and a lot of people I meet now say, "I bought a ring at that shop and my wife's still got that wedding ring on." I say, "Good for you." He sold diamond rings and wedding sets and gold chains, things like that. He had real nice things, good things. People from the mainland who were agents would come and he would order things, real nice things.

DOLORES BECKER

I do remember going in with Mom at one point in time and I remember she brought in my grandmother's watch and as soon as I looked at Mr. Becker I knew he was different and as soon as he spoke I knew he was different so I listened carefully. I couldn't always understand what he would say and he often had to repeat things. I would say that was because people didn't understand him because he spoke really quickly. What amazed me about him was the tiny, tiny shop. He didn't need a big shop because he was a watch repair person and he sold jewelry but most of the work he did was repair stuff so he was very specialized. I can remember him always having some sort of mirror or something that would magnify or illuminate whatever he was working on.

YVONNE COURTNEY

## BECKER'S JEWELRY

Becker's was built between Stewart's and the next building – I think the Cozy Chat. Anyway, it was just like they put a little roof up between the two buildings - a slant roof. I can remember going in there and you almost had to turn side on to get in around the counter. I guess Ernst Becker - we knew him as Ernie Becker - he'd be there and I can remember he would always have the jewelers loupe in his eye. He would look up from something and look at you with the jewelers loupe and when I was a kid that was pretty intimidating to look up over the counter and see this guy looking at you with this one jewelers loupe in his eye.

COREY SHARPE

It was very narrow as you can imagine. So you went in the door and you were right in the shop. On one side were the showcases and the window - the display window - a long showcase and behind that was a couple of shelves on the wall with little items. This wall had big clocks he had for sale. He had a little tiny workbench with drawers on each side where he had everything pertaining to watchmaking. He had a little tiny place. The big desk with all his things in it was here and Mr. Stewart would sit here and Wayne would sit there and Ern would sit at this desk and you could look out and see if any customers came in. That's where he did most of his sizing of rings, his watch making trade and there was a little tiny washroom in the back of that. It was all very small and cramped. But he enjoyed his days there.

DOLORES BECKER

## JOSEPH BERNSTEIN

Another guy had a small store on Main Street before my time, way back. Joseph Bernstein who was a tailor. He had a little shop near Stewart's. When Joseph first came to Newfoundland he came to St. John's. He set up a theatre and then he set up the American Ladies Tailor, the first ladies tailor of St. John's he boasted. He decided to move to Windsor in I'm thinking the late '30s, early '40s. So he operated this tailor shop on Main Street. He also had his residence and a candy store, convenience store up on King Street. He did palm readings and tea readings. The kids would go in and he would charge them a lower price and he would do fortunes.

COREY SHARPE

## COHEN'S

*Boyd Cohen of Grand Falls-Windsor grew up in the family business and continues to run the real estate aspect of Cohen's today. Boyd's mother Frieda Shenk and her sister Norma Shenk moved to Newfoundland from Poland in 1926. Boyd's paternal grandfather, Simon Cohen, moved to England from Ukraine in the 1890s and to Newfoundland between 1904-1906 with his wife and three sons. Simon worked for a clothing factory in England which sent cutters and tailors to Newfoundland to start the Newfoundland clothing company. Simon and family went to the United States in the early 1900s where he worked for a time in an ammunition factory. In 1919 Simon, his wife, and family including their five sons and two daughters returned to Newfoundland and established a store in Grand Falls Station.*

*This store established by Simon and his eldest son Charles carried everything from hardware and nails to ladies hats. In time Simon's younger sons Arthur, Michael (Mike), Jacob (Jack), and Maurice joined the family business. In time the eldest brothers moved on to Bell Island and Corner Brook leaving Mike and Jack to run the family business. Unfortunately Boyd's father Mike died of a heart attack in 1946 just after the store expanded so Jack was joined in business by his wife Norma (Shenk) Cohen.*

*Two years later after one year in Mount Allison University Boyd returned home to Grand Falls-Windsor and joined his aunt in running the family business. Boyd introduced furniture into the business and expanded the Main Street store to include a furniture department. He also established a store on High Street, Grand Falls. Boyd continued to expand Cohen's Home Furnishings into other communities and in 1985 when Boyd decided to sell the business there were 13 Cohen's provincewide with a further 3 in the works.*

## COHEN'S

*Boyd continued to be involved with Cohen's Home Furnishing as the Managing Director until his retirement in 1994. Boyd was also involved in the Central Cable Systems launch in Grand Falls and in the real estate industry particularly in Central Newfoundland. Today Boyd is 86 years old and still heads to his office to work every day.*

### MEMORIES

#### *DISCUSSING HIGH STREET IN GRAND FALLS:*

The company, to guarantee services like stores, gave monopolies to the Royal Stores, and the Co-Op stores and probably two or three others. Which meant that anybody coming in, like Cohen and Dubow and the travelling salesmen, they set up mostly in Windsor at the time because they probably weren't allowed to have an establishment in the town.

HARRY PINSENT

Next to Mr. Kearney there was another big establishment and that was S. Cohens and Sons. They were a Jewish family who set up. Again they were dry goods, furniture, clothing and they lasted a long time in Windsor.

ROY OLDFORD

My father was 14 when he started. One of his brothers with him - they opened a clothing store and everyone worked there. They didn't need any employees - at first anyway.

BOYD COHEN

I went through high school. I went to Mount Allison for one year and I didn't like it and they didn't like me either. Basically it was the

## COHEN'S



Simon Cohen. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

## COHEN'S



American Gents Furnishing Store S. Cohen & Sons. Photo courtesy of Boyd Cohen.



S. Cohen & Sons. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

## COHEN'S

wrong school for me. And my uncle wasn't really a businessman. He was a football player, he was a football, basketball, and baseball player but he didn't have the same interest in the business. So he worked at it and he wasn't lazy or anything but he just didn't want to run it. He didn't want the responsibility. So, two brothers married two sisters, and so my aunt said to me, "Boyd are you going back to university?" and I said, "Not if I can help it." So I stayed home and helped her run the business.

BOYD COHEN

Cohen's in my childhood had a big, large window. That's where I saw my first doll carriage and I saw my first bicycle. Cohen's as a child was a place where I saw things that I really wanted. Cohen's was spectacular when I was older like 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. Cohen's had totally refurbished the place and they were no longer a basic dry goods place. They were a fashion place. Total fashion place.

YVONNE COURTNEY

Norma, my mother's sister, was a very smart woman and her work ethic was super. As a matter of fact she was tougher at it than I ever was in the hours. I don't know how she did it. My uncle Jack's wife she lived to be 97.

BOYD COHEN

Every season there was a new line of clothing and they had these fashion shows. Riff's would have had those fashion shows, too, but I remember at some point in time Cohen's having a fashion show right there on the floor. When you walked into Riff's clothes were tightly racked. Everything was tight. You had to squeeze and squat between and try to maneuver. You went to Cohen's and you had this big open floor plan. Everything was laid out so beautifully. You could walk around and browse around. You didn't

## COHEN'S

have to fight with the racks. They just had the real way of doing it. It was a real pleasure trip. And I remember Cohen's advertising in their windows, and all of a sudden there would be a bunch of flags flying up to the top so you knew there was a big sale coming down. Then there would be all these signs in the window large, painted signs with anniversary sale or 50% off or end of season sale and stuff like that.

YVONNE COURTNEY

My aunt was super and that was her whole business. They had a wedding shop long before anyone else and a millinery ladies hats and she was modern. We brought in a design group from Toronto redesigned that store in Windsor. The interior was all done by a firm called Cameron McIndoe and they had done a lot of modern stores.

BOYD COHEN

Cohen's had elegance right off the magazine covers. They had changed the shop completely. When you walked in everything downstairs, girls and ladies, and you could find fantastic bikinis, everything you wanted was down there and dry goods and on the other side was men's stuff and on the back walls there were dry goods etc. But when you walked through the store and went up, there was a staircase on the left hand side and a staircase on the right hand side you went to the gent's area and you went to the ladies fashions. Well when you walked up those steps on the left hand side and entered the world of Cohen's fashion you were just blown away. Everything was gorgeous. There were velvet coats or fur coats, fur-lined coats, there were hats like you had never seen before, there were shoes that were really today's shoes with a clutch purse to match and the clothing was just gloriously beautiful and there was carpet on the floor and the dressing rooms were snazzier. Everything about Cohen's was just snazzy,

## COHEN'S

totally snazzy and big floor length mirrors, 2 or 3 of them in a row. You could stand there and see everything and you could stand there and just admire putting on a coat or whatever. Cohen's really had a fashion sense that was a cut above. Cohen's had a way of presenting it that was in a league of its own.

YVONNE COURTNEY

They had everything. It was like a department store and I added a piece 25 by 75 for a furniture store. That was when I was doing the veteran business and then I built a furniture store downtown.

BOYD COHEN

I started a furniture business and that was right after the Second World War, just before confederation and we were doing okay. When confederation happened all the Newfoundland war vets were given the same treatment as the Canadian War Vets and they all got these allowances for furnishings and homes. The Canadian government came out with allowances according to the time you served for furniture and nobody knew how to apply for the allowances. I phoned St. John's Veterans Affairs and they said, "Why don't you come out to St. John's and we'll show you what to do." I got on the train and 13 hours later I was learning the ropes. We were the only ones for maybe three years who could do it and that's how I got an interest in the furniture business

BOYD COHEN

Cohen's Furnishing - Boyd Cohen built that into an empire in Newfoundland and Labrador. Boyd is a sweetheart and he's a shrewd businessman, a very shrewd businessman.

MARY KELLY

## CONNOLLY'S SHOE STORE

It was a typical shoe store except that they had seats with little stools that were on an angle and you put your shoe on. They had shoe horns and little mirrors in front of you so you could see your shoes and this sort of thing. The Connollys were I believe a Jewish family related to the Bashas or Boulases and they ran that for years. It was a nice spot to go and while a lot of the shoppers got their shoes at Riff's or Cohen's because they ran that as well, Connolly's was a place where you specialized in shoes.

ROY OLDFORD



Connolly's shoe store second from left. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

## CONNORS & BROWN DERBY

My grandfather moved here, P.J. Connors, in 1905. He worked with the Reid Newfoundland Railway and he set up the station in what is now the former town of Windsor. It was called Grand Falls station. They prepared themselves for the opening of the mill. There were a lot of products coming into the area for the construction of the mill and he set up the station and became the first station agent in Grand Falls railway station.

JOHN CONNORS

My father who was the youngest began at the age of 17, 18 working on his own. He started a taxi business, The Ideal Taxi Business, and then he started a trucking company. During the war years between 1940 and 45 he set up a beverage company called the Crystal Spring beverage and supplied soft drinks to the armed forces in Botwood. In 1945 after the war was over he applied to the town of Grand Falls because at that time in order to continue with the beverage business he had to have proper water and sewer which the town of Windsor didn't have but the town of Grand Falls did. Because the town of Grand Falls was a closed town you had to be approved by them and so it was a very difficult situation. This started out to be an issue for a lot of people and this is the establishment of the business section in Windsor. I'm sure you know about the other businesses that came here and couldn't establish in Grand Falls so they set up in Windsor. That's the Cohens and the Riffs, Kearneys and all these people.

JOHN CONNORS

In 1943 my father had been in the trucking business and the taxi business. He decided to get into the restaurant business. So he happened to be in New York in 1942-43 so he noticed this restaurant Brown Derby Restaurant. So that's where he got the idea. He came

## CONNORS & BROWN DERBY



Brown Derby. 1944. Photo  
courtesy of GFWHS.

home and decided to build a restaurant and that's what they'd call it, the Brown Derby. So that's where the name came from.

JOHN CONNORS

They bought a building in 1943 and started a restaurant 1944. November of 1944 it was destroyed by fire. The whole Main Street, or the better part of Main Street, was destroyed by fire. So after that they rebuilt a restaurant and back in those days in the '40s Newfoundland wasn't a part of Canada and products had to be brought in to supply the restaurant. Chocolate bars and chewing gums and tobacco, that type of thing had to be brought in from outside of Newfoundland, and it had to be brought in in bulk. So my father used to bring in chocolate bars from England

and Wrigley's Chewing Gum from the mainland and Camel Cigarettes from the US. They used to import from three or four different countries and they used to have to bring it in in bulk and because they had to bring it in in bulk it was almost too much for one restaurant so they got the idea of setting up a wholesale business and selling to small family owned convenience stores in

## CONNORS & BROWN DERBY

the communities of Windsor, Grand Falls, and Bishop's Falls. So this is how Brown Derby Wholesale developed.

JOHN CONNORS

Then we come to the smaller establishments a family of Strouds had a van right across the road from the railway station. They owned a fair bit of land there and next to Stroud's there was an establishment which is still in town today owned by Connors and Strouds and that was the Brown Derby. The Brown Derby was a little café you went in and sat down. There were seats. They had a jukebox and roller seats around the counter and that was a pretty popular place for people to go and have a meal or whatnot especially if you came in on the train. We spent a lot of time at the Brown Derby and it was a typical teen and other place at that point in time.

ROY OLDFORD

My father worked at that business and he had a partner, a man by the name of R.D. Stroud. They operated that business on Main Street until 1961 when we constructed another building which was strictly wholesale. We got out of the restaurant business in the early '60s and just went strictly into the distribution business. We ended up moving out of the business on Main Street because it couldn't accommodate the product and we moved to Hardy Avenue in Grand Falls in the 1980s. We've been there ever since. It's a third generation company. My father started it, he died in 1961, my mother worked in the business, I worked in the business when I was that high, going out and delivering with my father. I ran the business until - well I'm still involved there but my son does the day to day stuff now.

JOHN CONNORS

## COZY CHAT

The Bashas I do believe operated the Cozy Chat and that was a like a jukebox diner back in the day. I was sad to see that go. But that was a popular spot. I'd say a lot of people met their significant others on Main Street in those places.

COREY SHARPE

It was one of the prettiest places on Main Street. It was just beautiful. I always wanted to go in there. Cozy Chat was directly across the street from where all the trains would come in. When we were older probably eleven or twelve mom and dad would take us in there to get a soda or a banana split or something like that. There was a big window on the front and when I walked in it was the most amazing place I had seen as a child because it looked like things I had seen in a magazine. There was lots of red and lots of black and a big long counter and the counter had round stools and the stools were on funnel shape bases and there was a huge mirror on the back on this side and at that counter there were the drawer handles and of course you were sitting in the booths.

YVONNE COURTNEY

The Cozy Chat was a milestone of a place. Everybody went there. After Sunday mass, Dad would bring us to Cozy Chat and they would have the soda fountain there so you would get a drink. They also had a display of comic books so we were allowed to get a comic book as well and he would let us eat all this stuff and we would go home and of course mom would have Sunday dinner on and we'd all be full of the ice cream and the drink. That's it, it didn't matter, it was a joy for Dad. He would give us all this stuff and he loved it.

ELIZABETH MÜNCH POWER

## COZY CHAT



Wedding of Florence Hollett and Jack Maloney inside the Cozy Chat.  
Photo courtesy of Anne Warr.

Close to the train time, the place would fill up. People would come in and get a soda or get a cup of tea or whatever you are going to order waiting for the train. The cars would start bustling on Main Street. The place would get thick with cars and you would hear the train. The train would have the most distinctive sound and smell. You would smell the smoke of it as it entered. It just permeated everything. The train coming in and all the cars are going crazy trying to get a place to park. People are in the Chat and going out of the Chat and going across the street to meet who is coming off those trains. You are just sitting and watching all of this and you can see out the big window, here's the train station, here's the train and there's all the people and all the cars coming and going and the cars were amazing.

YVONNE COURTNEY

## DUBOW'S

It was a general store much like Riff's and the fire back in the '40s it was wrote that he suffered the greatest loss. So I think it was probably '44. I'm guessing his losses were up around \$200,000 which was pretty significant for back then so after the fire he pulled out of Windsor and went to Montreal.

COREY SHARPE



## ECONOMY STORE

It was a typical hardware store like today. A small scale Kent. They had lots of tools, screws, nails, hammers, saws, that sort of stuff. Everything for plywood, 2 by 4 all this type of thing. It was a local store. You could pick up all kinds of hardware there, all kinds of tools. It was great for the people of Windsor because houses were built and then rebuilt and then built on and so on as you went.  
ROY OLDFORD

Economy Store second from left. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.



## FLIGHT'S DRUG STORE

There was a pharmacy, a drug store we called it in those days. Mr. Flight had a drug store on Main Street as well so that you also got your services for your prescriptions filled by Mr. Flight.

ROY OLDFORD

There is one other place that I remember well and that was the pharmacy. You had no prices for any prescription drugs like you do today, Mr. Flight had a habit where he would hum as he was filling the prescription up and people always said that if you wanted to get away with five dollars then you always had five dollars in your hand or ten dollars because whatever you had in your hand that's what it would cost you. But that was the custom, that is what they said about the drug store and Mr. Flight. He was a tremendous man and very professional pharmacist who mixed drugs as well.

ROY OLDFORD

## GIBSON'S

George Gibson ran a theatre. He also used to bottle drinks, Crystal Spring Beverages in the '30s. The Connors had a little bottling plant as well on Bond Street. But George Gibson had a farm too up around Corduroy Pond.

COREY SHARPE

## THE GLOBE RESTAURANT & MAIN STREET CAFES



Globe Café. Photo courtesy of  
Madeline Chow Healey.

*Harry Chow from Hoi Ping, Canton, China came to Port aux Basques, Newfoundland in 1935 as a laundry man at the age of 24. After paying the Chinese Head Tax he settled in St. John's where he worked for a period of time before moving to Windsor. In Windsor he worked in the Globe Cafe before purchasing the cafe and changing the name to the Globe Restaurant.*

*Harry Chow did not speak English very well and as an immigrant was unable to*

*obtain a bank loan when he was looking to purchase the restaurant. Through the generosity of a well known local Windsor businessman Harry was able to borrow money to buy the restaurant. Harry's daughter Madeline Chow Healey noted that her father was a hardworking man who hired many people from Windsor and gave back to the community. Harry was also known for sponsoring fellow Chinese immigrants and helping them establish themselves in Newfoundland.*

*Harry Chow married Marjorie Breen who worked with him at the Globe Restaurant and the couple raised their family in Windsor. Harry had a close relationship with many other merchants and business owners on Main Street and loved to play a game of cards, and watch NHL hockey or the local Grand Falls team.*

# THE GLOBE RESTAURANT & MAIN STREET CAFES

## MEMORIES

The Globe Café was run by Harry Chow and Marg and as youngsters you could go in and get your chips and your coke or whatever and there was meals being served there.

FRANK BESON

All the cafes on Main Street, before my time there was Red Rose Café, the Maple Leaf Café, the Station View Café, The Globe Restaurant started out as the Globe Café so I'm sure it was a hopping spot.

COREY SHARPE

Because of the closed policy of the AND Company and the town of Grand Falls there were no Chinese restaurants in Grand Falls so the Chinese families settled in Windsor. So you had the Globe which was owned by Harry Chow - Mr. Chow was basically the sponsor of the Chinese families for central Newfoundland, he brought in a lot of families. Three or four doors down there was another restaurant called the Red Rose. These are original names I mean they were phenomenal and way down the street there was another Chinese place called the Maple Leaf. These were cafes. They weren't like the Chinese restaurants that you see today when you go in and order Chinese food. You would go in and sit down and have a meal if you wanted to but usually a beer or whatever you wanted to drink and go from there.

ROY OLDFORD

I can remember it having wicked good food. Really good food and the generation before me, teenagers I guess, the fries and gravy were the best apparently. I think Mrs. Chow used to make the pies,

## THE GLOBE RESTAURANT & MAIN STREET CAFES

exceptionally good pies. That was a pretty cool spot. We used to go there I know frequently but every Christmas Eve we would go there, the whole family, go there for Chinese food.

COREY SHARPE

See Wayne's World I think is where Chow's was because it all went down through the family - Chinese people in other parts were known for Chinese laundry but out here it was Chinese food, restaurants. You had them out on Main Street, you had the one on Lincoln Road, there was a Chinese restaurant Sunset take out or something like that and then there was Tai Wan here on High Street so there was several Chinese restaurants.

MARY KELLY



Globe Restaurant. Photo courtesy of Madeline Chow Healey.

## THE GLOBE RESTAURANT & MAIN STREET CAFES



TOP: Chow family. Photo courtesy of Madeline Chow Healey.  
LEFT: Harry Chow and Marjorie (Breen) Chow. Photo courtesy of Madeline Chow Healey.  
RIGHT: Purity Café. Photo courtesy of Peter Curran.

## HISCOCK'S DRIVE IN

Hiscock's had a little store. I think it was the best soup I ever ate. When we would come out of a teenage dance from Father Meaney's or St. Joseph's youth club we would all go to Hiscock's. Chips and wieners, dressing and gravy or a bowl of soup and a hot dog or something.

FRANK BESON

Oh yeah, Hiscock's Drive In, everybody knew that. That was the place to go on a Friday or Saturday night after you did anything at the Arts and Culture Centre you'd go to Hiscock's for a feed of wedge fries. And that wasn't around as long as the other businesses. When I was a kid I don't remember much about Hiscock's. Hiscock's is something I remember from say high school time versus younger than that.

MARY KELLY

That was super. They had - I'm not going to say - a limited menu. The menu they had was perfected. Whatever you ordered you knew what you were going to get. They were consistent. Very sad to see that it's gone. They had a cool building, cool atmosphere, they had a jukebox and I can remember my friend sleeping over to my house one night and we were probably ten or eleven. He was a bit more of a hard case than myself and anyway if you are having a sleepover then you are staying up all night so I can remember 1:30 in the morning my parents were asleep and he looked at me and said, "I'm starving." I said, "I'm pretty hungry too, we'll get something to eat." "No," he said, "I'm going down to Hiscock's." I said, "You're not going down to Hiscock's." "Yes I am," he said. So he snuck out of the house and went down there on his bike and

## HISCOCK'S DRIVE IN

brought back the wedge fries. But yeah a good many people went there after drinking and stopped into Hiscock's. But they started out as a store in the early '60s and went on to develop the wedge fries and I mean anybody who came here went to Hiscock's.

COREY SHARPE

Hiscock's was always the place to go. You went in and asked for mini wedge and gravy. Wedge fries are chunks of potatoes and they used to put this seasoning on them. The gravy could be a food group it was that good. It was just delicious. That was the joke you go in and ask for a mini wedge with gravy and you would go off with your little individual and a pop. The parking lot would be full of cars.

BRIAN REID

## KEARNEY'S

Kearney's was a little store, wasn't very big but it had a lot of clothes and I remember buying a lot of mine there as I made that transition to university. Kearney had good clothes and again it was stylish stuff for the day. Racks and racks and racks of sport coats and suits and coats and shirts and this sort of thing. In those days Kearney's was a good store, a well respected gentleman came over from Ireland and started and developed a good business there. But it was a little place, it wasn't very big.

ROY OLDFORD

One shop that I did go into with my father was really, really different. It was called Pat Kearney's. It was a small shop and what I remember most about that shop, every event that I ever went in there when I was a child and especially when I got older, was I walked through the door and it was like, "Oh my god the smell of this place is beautiful." I couldn't identify it but I knew it was the stuff that was in there, and as I'd look around at the beautiful sweaters there, beautiful, they were white and they were cable knit and then there were beautiful gloves. The wall had haberdasher units. They were drawers that you pulled out, these beautiful wooden doors with glass. They would pull out and there were hats, and the hats were different textures or they were different tiny, tiny, plaids or just solid tweed or they were a hounds tooth. I was amazed at all the different types of hats because well the men always wore hats in those days. All the men, every man alive in those days wore hats. It was just the thing to do and it would look great. This was the place where they got it all obviously. This place was extra special because it smelled like some place special in the world. It was like a little replication of something out of Ireland and the smell was the beautiful wools, the tweeds, the leathers. All those things. It was just that smell was beautiful.

YVONNE COURTNEY

## KEARNEY'S



P.F. Kearney's shop on the right. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

## TONY KIM'S

Another place we used to go to was Tony Kim's. I went to Tony Kim's every day of my life, me and my friend. He loved to see us and we were regulars and a lot of people in Windsor who grew up in the '60s, '70s, and '80s went to Tony Kim's faithfully. So it started out his father had a take out there, a café way back, it had booths and when Tony took it over he eventually transformed it into a pinball place convenience store so that I guess that's why I like pinball so much. I went there every day of my life.

COREY SHARPE

Just up from Main Street going up towards Second Avenue there was another Chinese place there, Tony's. Tony and his father ran that and they were Kims. Tony Kim and his father Mr. Kim were there a long, long time and that was basically a hang out joint where you went in and bought simple stuff. There was all kinds of pinball games and usually the pinball games were the attraction for us guys so we spent a lot of time in there as well.

ROY OLDFORD

## MAIDMENT'S

The hotel which is still there today was back in those days Maidment's. They started the hotel and then it became Spencer's and I knew it as Spencer's. Next to the hotel was Maidment's garage and Maidment was one of the first families to settle in Windsor and they had a garage there for a long period of time as well.

ROY OLDFORD



Maidment's. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

## HERMANN MÜNCH

*Hermann Münch was born in Sandhausen, just outside Heidelberg, Germany and his wife Gabrielle (nee Bozec) Münch was born in Douarnenez, Brittany, France both in the year in 1920. The family moved to Quebec, Canada in 1951 following the Second World War through a sponsorship by the Gagnon family. Hermann worked in a logging firm and a concrete factory during his time in Quebec before learning of an advertisement looking for a shoemaker in Grand Falls, Newfoundland. After interviewing with Joe Byrne the family moved to Grand Falls in 1952.*

*Hermann worked with Joe Byrne in his sporting shop on High Street in Grand Falls for some time before Hermann decided to open up a shop of his own on Main Street. The first shop he owned was next to the pool hall and the Globe Restaurant. The Münch family and Chow family became very close during this time period. In 1964-1965 Hermann moved the shop further down Main Street where the family had a home. The shop was set up in an old warehouse owned by George Stewart.*

*In 1974 the family moved to St. John's where Hermann worked for the prosthetics and orthopedics department at the General Hospital. This move meant that Hermann and Gabrielle's children were able to go to university while living at home and the job provided Hermann with a pension.*

### MEMORIES

I mean the main thing, what people remember about the store is the smells, the smells of the leather and of the glue and things like that when you come in.

## HERMANN MÜNCH



Elizabeth Münch Power in front of Hermann's Shoe Shop.  
Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Münch Power.

Dad was a shoemaker by trade and unless there was a profession specifically for his trade they pretty much took the immigrants and put them where the work was most needed. Dad, I think initially went to work with a logging firm in Quebec and a concrete factory but after about 7 or 8 months there was a guy from Grand Falls by the name of Joe Byrne who either had or wanted to open a sporting shop and I believe it was said that you can open a sporting shop but it would be great if we could get a shoemaker. So Joe Byrne who was from Quebec put an ad in the paper there. It was picked up either by mom or the sponsor family and said, "Here look here's an opportunity to work in your trade." Dad responded, Joe Byrne came to Quebec, interviewed Dad and took him to his shop to see how his work was, and hired him. So then they came to Newfoundland.

ELIZABETH MÜNCH POWER

## HERMANN MÜNCH

Hermann Münch came here after the Second World War. He came from Germany and he was a shoe maker and that was his profession here in Grand Falls for a long time. Then he moved to St. John's and he worked for one of the hospitals in St. John's. He used to make orthopedic stuff. Anyway he worked for me in St. John's when we opened the store on Water Street the furniture store. He didn't work in the store. He did all the repairs to the furniture. He could do anything.

BOYD COHEN

He also had a sewing machine. Oh, now dad could sew. I mean anything! Because you would have to sew and there's a lot of stitching in a leather shoe but he also used to fix things like the – let's say the hockey team. If there was some hockey equipment because at the time all the pads and things were leather so he would be able to sew that up as well. Belts he could fix, purses. He got into making his own little things.

ELIZABETH MÜNCH POWER

The cobbler shop was dark and as soon as I opened the door and went in it had the most glorious smell. It was beautiful and I recognized the smell but I had never ever smelled so much of it before. It was the smell of polish - shoe polish and leather. That's what the smell was. I recognized the smell of shoe polish and it was oily and it would get on your hands and stain your hands. Anyway I could smell this in his shop. The shop was dark, I remember the shop being dark like it needed to be brightened up with paint and there was all kinds of shoes and shoes that needed to be repaired. There was nothing new in there. And as soon as Mr. Münch came out and spoke I knew immediately this is somebody new. He was very dark hair, black, straight long hair

## HERMANN MÜNCH



Hermann Münch on left. Circa 1950s. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

## HERMANN MÜNCH

on the top of his head. He was a tall, tall man. His hands were big hands, working hands, and they were always dark with that shoe leather polish and his speech was completely different. It was a thick, thick speech and he had a dark heavy voice and I was just enthralled with him and how he spoke and if you thought he was interesting – wait till his wife came out in the shop. She was different sound altogether and she looked completely different and you knew these were not Canadians. They were not Newfoundlanders. These were another culture. So it was so nice, Main Street was just an awesome place to experience another culture. It was beautiful. Later on when I was an adult, that shop he moved out of there and his cobbler shop became a part of his house way down the other end of Main Street.

YVONNE COURTNEY

After a while, I don't know exactly how many years, he decided he would like to go out on his own and have his own store. The first shoe shop was next to the pool hall. It was on Main Street and at that time it was next to the Globe, Chow's restaurant. Mom and Mrs. Chow got to be very good friends over the period of the businesses being side by side. They were there until 1964 or 1965. They then got another shop further down Main Street closer to our house. It was on the same property as our house. It was the corner of Main Street and Seventh Avenue. It was a warehouse that belonged to George Stewart who was another businessmen on Main Street and he rented that warehouse to Dad so he could set up a bigger shop. And that house being on the property also came from George Stewart so it was a better fit for all of us.

ELIZABETH MÜNCH POWER

## HERMANN MÜNCH

It was a long, narrow kind of shop and when you'd open up the door and you'd go in there was a counter with the cash register in front of you. On each side of the walls there were just shelves that all of the shoes were put in. I think there was one side for the shoes that were fixed and one side for the shoes that weren't. There was a little sofa for people to sit in and then a telephone next to it. So you had your counter, mostly mom would be behind the counter, or dad, or both of them. And there were little tickets. I remember you'd write out your tickets, attach them to the shoes and then give the person their little stub and there was a little box under the counter where you would put all of the used tickets and Dad would keep the big boxes of tickets and on Bonfire Night every year we would have this big bonfire across the tracks in a field and Dad would bring them down and burn them all on. It was great.

ELIZABETH MÜNCH POWER

The shop was a big part of our lives obviously. I mean you remember your day to day stuff. I remember dad getting up every morning and going into the shop probably by 8:00 or 9:00 in the morning and he was there till 9:00, 10:00 at night. He worked long hours. Saturday dad worked but not long, he didn't work in the night I don't think. He just worked part of the day. Sunday morning we would get ready for church and then come home. But the big thing for Sunday's, Sunday's were Dad's time with the family.

ELIZABETH MÜNCH POWER

## MURPHY'S BARBER SHOP

That was a super place. There was a chair, and the barber of course. Mr. Murphy had a white shirt on, a white coat and then all of the smelly stuff was located in front of the mirror of course. And these things you shook back in those days. I don't know what it was but it made you smell right nice. The haircuts ranged in style from complete crew cut in the summertime where everything was cut off flat to whatever style you wanted back in those days. I remember him telling me that a bunch of bloody Englishmen ruined my business. That was in '63 when the Beatles came out and of course the mop flop and the long hair. We all went then to long hair. And of course business went downhill. Every kid, nobody got a haircut every two weeks or three weeks. Everybody wanted to be looking like the Beatles and so on and it killed a lot of the traditional barbering business. He was forced to close up and go and look for another job in the '70s. But it was an interesting place and the mirror was there and you sat down and waited your turn. You knew everybody and knew what you wanted and you had little kids crying and you had big kids coming out saying you cut off too much of my hair or you didn't cut off enough and so on and so forth but he took it all in stride and was a great old guy I must say.

ROY OLDFORD

## AMBROSE PEDDLE

Ambrose Peddle was the member for the area at one time and he for a time period he had a novelty store right near George Stewart's. They just had knickknacks and souvenirs. I would class it as a novelty store. He had a business there for a while, a few years.

JIM MERCER

## PADDOCK'S

He sold different things there. It was a grocery store but he also had toys and so forth and in the back he had a little meat market. People liked soup on Saturdays, so go in and get a soup bone at Paddock's, might cost you 25 cents or 50 cents. They were nice people. You go in and get your meats, your pork chops, whatever.  
FRANK BESON

Paddock's had a store. There was a meat shop in the back so they had a butcher shop, and then in the front was I guess what you could call a convenience store now and that was the place to go after school. So everybody would pile in there because they had



E. Paddock & Sons. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

## PADDOCK'S

ten cents worth of rubber candy. You'd go up and say, "Can I have ten cents worth of rubber candy?", and they would put them into little bags. Or the bubble gum, or they would have exercise books or pencils on your way to school if you didn't have one. Then it has got to be the most annoying thing for the people who were serving: we would all be there, there would probably be ten or fifteen people, kids in front and we'd all be there with our coins, tapping our coins on the counter. Everybody waiting to get served and they would be tapping and tapping.

ELIZABETH MÜNCH POWER



Paddock's interior. Photo courtesy of Jim Paddock.

## RIFF'S

*James (Jim) Riff arrived in Newfoundland sometime in the late 1930s and started off as a travelling salesman selling various items in the communities of Millertown and Buchans before establishing a store on Main Street in Windsor in the mid 1940s. This initial general dry goods store was called the Windsor Style Shop before being renamed and expanded as Riff's. Through the year Riff's expanded into clothing and furniture and also across the province especially in rural areas. Riff's can still be seen around the island today.*

*Over the years Riff's also opened a shoe shop and the much awaited Toybox during the Christmas season. Riff's would frequently send buyers to Montréal on buying trips for the new seasons and the Riff family eventually made the move to Montréal themselves.*

*James Riff's two sons' Donald and Ivor Riff also worked in the family business and Ivor and his wife continue to operate Riff's today. Although the shop on Main Street no longer exists Riff's continues to have a presence in the Grand Falls-Windsor through their store on Hardy Avenue and through their real estate business.*

## MEMORIES

They were fabulous owners. All I can say is good stuff about the Riff family and how they ran the business. Whether it was the father who started, or Don Riff who took over when his father died. They were fabulous people to work for.

MARY KELLY

Riff's they were great merchandisers. Its funny how some of these people started. Some of them started out by moving here and then

## RIFF'S

walking the tracks to go up to Buchans to sell clothing because Buchans mine was on the go, and Millertown and all those places.

JOHN CONNORS

Riff's was the department store here in Grand Falls. Well Windsor is where it set up because of the rules that the AND company had about businesses back in the day. You had to have approval from the AND company to have your business set up in Grand Falls. So you saw the Royal Store and the Bay and things like that setup on High Street and the Co-Op but businesses, and a lot of them were Jewish owned businesses, didn't have permission to come inside the boundaries so they set up in Windsor Station. Several businesses set up there. Riff's was set up by Jimmy Riff, James Riff, who came here after or during the Second World War.

MARY KELLY

It had originally been the Windsor Style Shop. That was the original name of the building and then they started to name it after their family name. It was a huge store and when you were a little kid it seems twice as huge. It was massive when you were a little kid looking at it. It was always a thrill to go there because there was always so much stuff to look at. I thought it was a great place when I was a kid.

MARY KELLY

Donald Riff, boy he had great stuff. He used to go to Montréal and he used to go to these fashion fairs with his buyer. They would pick out these clothes - I tell you there was nothing like Riff's clothes. They had great stuff.

ELIZABETH MÜNCH POWER

## RIFF'S



Riff's. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.



Riff's staff Christmas party. Photo courtesy of Mary Kelly.

## RIFF'S



Riff's Shoe Store staff in 1960s. Mr. Dutton (Manager), unknown, unknown, Eileen Warr (Jewer), unknown, Marie Decker (Saunders), Lloyd Gregory.  
Photo courtesy of Jim Paddock.



Riff's staff inside the shop. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

## RIFF'S

They started here. This is where they started and they had success here. Then they branched out across the island with their dry goods business. I went to Fogo a couple of years ago, Fogo Island, and the only major department store in Fogo is Riff's. So that's where they went. To the smaller communities that could sustain it if it was the only store. Some of them are still around. A lot of them have closed out over the years. The youngest son of the family, Ivor Riff runs it, or his wife runs the business now and they run it essentially from afar. So it expanded. I think at one point and time they had over 30 locations province wide and gradually as competition came in like Wal-Mart it decreased.

MARY KELLY

My mother worked at Riff's. As a matter of fact she worked at the two stores. There was Riff's shoe store and Riff's clothing store. So she worked at them and I remember going in there. As you went in through the doors, if you went in through the set of doors there was a desk on the back, right at the back of the wall, kind of high up and you could get cheques changed there. The store was full all the time. Not full of people but full. You could buy almost anything there, especially clothing. They had different people you got to know, and it was an experience to go in there because we were only youngsters at the time. Riff's shoe store disappeared and then they had their clothing store, and then they moved in on another street here on Hardy Avenue.

FRANK BESON

My aunt worked there for over 32 years. When she passed away they closed the store for her funeral, and they put a half page ad in the newspaper recognizing her work for them. She had been sick for over a year before she died. She had had a massive stroke

## RIFF'S

and was off work but they paid her full salary the whole time she was off which is something you didn't hear of back in the day. So the compassion that they showed their good employees was what I really wanted to give as a story. They were good to their management. They were good employers and good people. I remember when I was a kid, Mr. Riff, anytime he went to Montréal on buying trips I ended up eating bagels for weeks because he'd be bringing back the bag of bagels to his management team. So they were a very giving people.

MARY KELLY

The ladies department was always tight. The racks were sometimes circular, and then sometimes rectangular. Always silver, lovely chrome looking racks but they were so tight with clothes it was hard to pull them apart to just move the stuff to see the fashions. But they were really smart because they would have mannequins around the areas so you saw something you like - hey Austin knew where it was and what size it was going to be in, etc. Ladies too. I found Austin really, really, I wouldn't call it helpful. I would say knowledgeable because he could look at you and say, "Oh, I've got just the thing for you. I know exactly what would look great on you." And he was usually right. He knew what was going to be absolutely chic on you kind of thing.

YVONNE COURTNEY

Well the buyers would be the managers of the different departments. Austin Clarke managed the ladies department so he'd go off and purchase. I guess they would have one for the men's department as well. They used to go on buying trips each year and pick out what was going to be shipped in and come back. That was it. Whatever Austin thought was going to be it that year

## RIFF'S

was going to be what everyone was wearing. Everybody would have it. If you had one, everybody had it, the same thing. You'd all have the same snowsuit or you'd all have the same dress at grad in a variety of different colours.

MARY KELLY

We used to go out to Windsor with our mother shopping on Main Street at Riff's. I remember Joanie Thompson and Blanche Lacey – they were so sweet. They had beautiful clothes. It was really a great time for us to go out with our mother. She used to buy out winter coats and all our clothes.

SHEILA POWER



Windsor Style Shop Ltd. Established in 1946 Main Street, Windsor.  
Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

## RIFF'S



Riff's. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

## ROACHE'S GARAGE

I remember Roache's Garage I think it was an Esso garage. They had a cooler - a drink cooler on the outside. And I remember the first one was the old Coke bottle vending machine but it was like a deep freeze, it wasn't standing up. What you did is you put your money in and the bottle came out and you would have to grab hold of the neck of the bottle bring it over to the side drop it and then the hole got wider and you could take out your Coke or your Pepsi. Then when the cans came in they also had a vending machine that was outside so as kids we would all come up and get our money, put it in and get our drinks.

ELIZABETH MÜNCH POWER



# STEWART'S



Stewart's during the early years. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

Stewart's store before being torn down in 2010. Photo courtesy of Carmel Barry.



## STEWART'S

He had the first supermarket in Grand Falls. George read a lot, he never traveled a lot, but yet he knew everything.

BOYD COHEN

George Stewart always had this terrific brown hat. And I remember seeing him at the store and he always seemed to wear a white apron and sometimes he would just have the pants and the shirt. He was a tall slim man and distinguished looking but this hat, this brown hat, it seemed like it went with him forever.

YVONNE COURTNEY

I used to go in there and I used to go see George from time to time and he'd tell me some stories and I would have a few questions for him. I know the early early beginnings of Stewart's. His father Colin was one of the first people to set up on Main Street. And he actually set up in a canvas tent and he would cater to the trains and the early workers. I know from a picture the sign on the tent said, "Stewart's home of good drinks". So he would have mugs hung up inside and I think his wife, Bertha, would be working there. And people would come over from the trains. They would get tobacco pipes, a snack or whatever - and she would serve them mugs of drink. Hanging on canvas signs overhead from the counter would be all the drinks and the prices and whatnot. So that was the humble beginnings of Stewart's. Stewart's operated for a hundred years with two owners. Colin Stewart and his son took it over in the late '40s - George did. George said Stewart's was the first self-serve grocery store in Newfoundland according to him. You could walk in and not walk up to the counter and give the clerk your order. You could go around and pick up what you wanted. He had a little advantage there in that he would bring it in, he would order stuff by the carload, the train carload. So I guess he would get a

## STEWART'S

deal on stuff and he'd order in a full carload of whatever. So he had a pretty good set up there and he was pretty successful. He also had a delivery service which was a plus.

COREY SHARPE

Stewart's was a grocery store and he was doing more volume business than the two or three in Grand Falls. He worked on low margins and high volume. There was times when he had probably as high as 8 or 10 boxcars of freight sitting on the siding and there was no trouble for him to bring in a boxcar full of carnation milk, for instance. That's one item that was very popular in the early days in Newfoundland because fresh milk wasn't available. So anyway there is approximately 800 cases in a box car and he would sell that within two or three weeks. It's just amazing how people flocked to Windsor to shop.

JOHN CONNORS

In the early '50s I remember as a young kid growing up not only did you go to buy your groceries there but you left them with him and he delivered them, horse and cart. So the cart would come up. Groceries would be on the back and they would stop at your house and bring in the groceries and away to go. It was a tremendous service. And Mr. Stewart was a very wealthy man eventually but worked very, very hard for his livelihood and people really appreciated all of the things he did for the area, no question about that. Went on to own his own plane, had a place on Rushy Pond where he landed his plane.

ROY OLDFORD

He had the best prices in town and had the first shopping bags that I remember. They were paper with a handle and it was

## STEWART'S



Stewart's interior. Photo courtesy of Carmel Barry.



Stewart's paper pick n pay bag. Photo courtesy of Carmel Barry.

## STEWART'S



Stewart's money system. Photo courtesy of Carmel Barry.

## STEWART'S



Stewart's store being torn down in 2010. Photo courtesy of Carmel Barry.

called pick and pay, printed on the bag. You had no credit, all money with George. So pick and pay but he had real good prices and everybody went there. He was always working like the dog himself, filling the shelves and all that.

DOLORES BECKER

Now the hustle and bustle inside and outside Stewart's was like you knew you were heading to Stewart's because the place was buzzing. There were cars. There were people inside and outside and as soon as you walked through the door it was zing, zing, zing, zing. You could hear machinery now, not just cash register machinery because there were little tiny cans flying across the ceiling.

YVONNE COURTNEY

## STEWART'S

The store was really noisy with cash registers and people were milling around. You went in and you went up and the first stop was the sale aisle. They had everything in boxes put out on sale. It was all in one spot. That is the first place you went to see what was on sale. Then you went over and they had wooden barrels full of salt meat, salt riblets and fat back pork. I remember mom going there and the man came there with the apron on. He had a big metal hook and he shoved it down in the barrel and hauled it up. Mom would say, "No, no, no. That's too fat." So he would throw that one down and dig around in the bottom and haul up another one. That way he got a bit of salt meat that mom liked.

BRIAN REID

That was a classic. Everything was done by hand. Notebooks – three cans of milk, everything was written down and when you paid for it they had a system. The only other system I saw like it was in the Royal Stores in Grand Falls, whereby you put the bill and the money in a little container and that - whoosh - was whisked along on an overhead line up to the office. The change was made up in the office and then - whoosh - down it came over the line again to the clerk at the counter and she passed you out your change and your receipt. That's the way it was always done there. Salt beef was in barrels and prices were really, really fair.

Of course they lasted a long time even after Sobey's and these people came to town because he was a shrewd businessman.

If he saw Sobey's was doing a particular item cheaper than he was, then down it would come. Bingo. It was a classic store no question about that.

ROY OLDFORD

## VOGUE

The first movie theatre in Windsor was built in the 1930s and was called King Edward theatre and for some reason that closed down or was destroyed in the fire of 1942, I think. Destroyed the whole of Main Street the fire did. Mr. Basha came to town, Jim Basha and he built a theatre. It was called the Vogue Theatre and that was the place to meet. I mean there were matinees on Saturdays at 2:00 and you saw Roy Rogers and Gene Autry and Allan Rocky Lane. The Vogue theatre had shows at 2:00, 5:00, 7:00 and 9:00 and they were usually filled. I mean it was a good spot.

ROY OLDFORD

The Vogue Theatre was run by Mr. Jim Basha and I remember going there. Both sides and up the middle there was seats and up top you could go up there and have a smoke - the crowd that were old enough to smoke. You'd go to the theatre and you'd get a bar, a bag of chips and a bottle of drink, and you'd get into the theatre for a quarter. I remember that and you had a little booth there. You would just get your ticket there and then you had your drink machine where you put in the money and you haul your drink down through the slot and haul it up.

FRANK BESON

I can remember my father saying going there as a kid they would have cowboy suits, holsters and guns up on tickets for the boys. He said, you go into the movie, it was whatever 25 cents, and it was 5 cents for a ticket or something so back then the cowboys and Indians in the movies right. All the young fellows wanted those suits.

COREY SHARPE

The Vogue Theatre, Basha's, now that was a fabulous place. We used to go there for the movies and it was an awful place. The

## VOGUE

kids would get the bags of Adams chips and you would eat your chips and inevitably at some point in the movie somebody would be throwing chip bags at the screen and somebody would have to come down and say, "You know you've got to stop." But we saw plenty of good movies in the Vogue Theatre.

ELIZABETH MÜNCH POWER

Father Meaney started a theatre so that we had two theatres. We had Father Meaney's which we called it and then the Vogue. You could go to Father Meaney's at 2:00 and back to Vogue at 5:00. It would cost you ten cents a movie and if you were lucky and had a quarter you would get a bottle of pop and a bag of chips. So it was a great Saturday.

ROY OLDFORD



Vogue Theatre on right. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

## HOLIDAYS ON MAIN STREET

I can remember when we were kids walking up the sidewalks, especially around Christmas time, was almost like you were in Times Square with the amount of pedestrian traffic. I mean just bumper to bumper walking on the sidewalks and that type of thing. It was really amazing.

JOHN CONNORS

It was busy. It was very busy and at times they used to have the Salvation Army down there going around different places with their musical instruments and they were playing their Christmas noels. That was exciting. About the middle of December we'd come out of school because the school was very close and the first place we'd make for probably on a Monday morning was Paddock's store. Here were the dolls and the guns and the toys for Christmas right in the window and everybody was gathered around looking at this. We're going to get this, and that was exciting. Christmas was busy down there and the stores probably didn't open down there until the last two weeks probably in the nighttime. And the stores would be busy.

FRANK BESON

Riff's Toybox was there which was a very exciting place to go when we were kids. That would be where the Windsor Style shop was to and when he built his bigger Riff store across the lane from it that was a place, probably a couple of months prior to Christmas that would be loaded up with toys. It was a very exciting place and all the kids would bug their parents to bring them there and pick out all their toys and what not so it was pretty exciting.

COREY SHARPE

## HOLIDAYS ON MAIN STREET



Cohen's interior during the Christmas season. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.

Christmas on Main Street – Oh my God the most important thing about Christmas on Main Street was the window. They would have all these sheets, Advertiser pages or samples covering lots of window and you couldn't see anything for what seemed like ages to a child. It seemed like a long, long time waiting for Toyland, waiting for those papers to come down. When they took all the papers down there was the big, big windows and everything you ever wanted was in those windows. That was Riff's Toyland. It was just beautiful. There were all kinds of dolls, big dolls, walking

## HOLIDAYS ON MAIN STREET

dolls, little dolls, ballerina dolls, Scottish dolls, and little toy trains. Beautiful, beautiful things in those Toyland windows. Riff's Toyland for Christmas was spectacular – the window was.

YVONNE COURTNEY

Oh, the whole of Main Street loved Christmas. I mean Christmas was great. There was a store called Peddle's Gift Shop that was on Main Street just before you cross the street to go to Stewart's. They had all little Christmas decorations in the window and then you had Cohen's and Riff's. I mean you go into Cohen's and they would have their toy department up in the back and Riff's had a toy department as well. It was festive, people were festive.

ELIZABETH MÜNCH POWER

I remember Christmas you would go out and it would be all the lights. There would be turkey draws and raffles with spinning wheels on the corner. It was just a different time.

BRIAN REID

Seasons changed in the windows, every particular season. Easter was special at Cohen's in the window because there would be flowers in the window. They would decorate the windows with flowers, little artificial flowers and things like that.

YVONNE COURTNEY

Labour Day was another big one because you would have the parade that would go down the street. I think it would go down Main Street and up Bond Street as well. But the kids would get out bikes and decorate our bikes and go into the parade. Labour Day was a big day for both Grand Falls and Windsor.

ELIZABETH MÜNCH POWER

## POST OFFICE

The post office was a big thing on Main Street. A big thing that I remember because not everybody had post office boxes so a lot of the time the mail was kept in the back. So you would go into the post office and coming home from school whether it was lunchtime or after school the place would be flooded with kids going in and getting their mail because their parents would say, "On your way home pick up the mail." So you would go into the post office and it would be flooded. They would say, "So-and-so Smith your mail."

ELIZABETH MÜNCH POWER

## FIRES ON MAIN STREET

The other thing I remember about Main Street is when Stewart's - sometime in the '50s - Stewart's itself burnt down and that was a major major fire. Luckily it didn't spread to the other buildings but it was a major fire.

ROY OLDFORD

I must have been around seventeen or eighteen probably, maybe '48, '47 or something. Now don't know for sure but I remember we all trotted off to Windsor. We had to see this blaze and we thought about all the bars and the candy that was going. A friend of ours, who was really big, managed to scatter off with a box of bars or something and of course we were all after him to get the bars. Everybody walked to Windsor and walked home again.

DOLORES BECKER



## FIRES ON MAIN STREET

Well we know what happened in the Alteen building. They were soldering jewelry or something, repairing it and a fellow got a phone call and went to it and left the butane tank and the soldering attached to it on and for some reason or another it blew. This was in the '40s and the fire started way down the street and took the whole street except for the Cozy Chat and George Stewart's.

BOYD COHEN

Stewart's fire. Photo courtesy of GFWHS.



## INTERNATIONAL WOODWORKERS OF AMERICA STRIKE

I do remember one thing very very well. I was at a 7:00 show at the Vogue Theatre and about three quarters of the way into it. This was in 1958 and it was unusual then to see your father in the movies. I was 12 or 13 years old then, you didn't want to see your dad. But he came right into the movie and he said come on we've got to get out of here. I went out and the place was blocked. The building that Strouds owned, at that time was owned by the union - the IWA, the International Woodworkers of America. That was the year they had their major major battle with the Newfoundland government. They ended up calling the RNC and RCMP into Badger which was a logging town. During the fight that broke out up there Constable Moss of the RNC was killed. The body of Constable Moss was brought down to Windsor that night and was being transported by train to St. John's and all hell broke loose on Main Street. I mean there must have been two or three thousand people there. When I got out of the movie it was just two doors up and people were throwing rocks and cans and everything at the IWA office. The two leaders of the IWA were taken out through the back door and were frisked away by car, I assume into Grand Falls and then on from there. After that they were never able to prove who killed Constable Moss because of the fracas between the loggers and the police but Joey Smallwood, the premier at the time, came out and started another union and basically forbid the IWA from ever coming to Newfoundland again. It was an amazing time and one of the things that I really do remember well.

ROY OLDFORD

I was on duty, I was working in the office when the IWA riot took place on Main Street, Windsor. Some of the buildings were damaged and things done and I am pretty sure it was the same night that Constable Moss was killed at the IWA strike in Badger and his body went on the train from Windsor.

JIM MERCER

## CAMARADERIE

The relationship between a lot of the business people on Main Street was great. They helped each other out. They really did. Mr. Stewart helped mom and dad out a lot. He was a very sort of quiet man onto himself but boy he could be a really kind man and his wife was really kind as well. So Mom and Dad and Mr. and Mrs. Stewart developed a good friendship.

ELIZABETH MÜNCH POWER

## AMERICAN REPEATER STATION

The American Relay Station was on Main Street. They operated the communication line that was set up in the war from Harmon to Argentia, the air base to the naval base. There were a bunch of Americans that were stationed up there so it was always known as the relay station.

COREY SHARPE

The American Repeater Station was there where the Americans were stationed. A bunch of them there, I don't know how many were there but quite a few American servicemen there and they maintained a communication line across the island. I had two telegraph keys. One was maintained by the Americans and one by our group. If we had a problem with communication we would just contact them and they would be going out over the road on speeders and checking the lines and things like that. They were there when I came there and they were there for a long time after.

JIM MERCER

## ON APPROVAL & CREDIT

At that time in the stores like Riff's and Cohen's you would be able to get things on approval. So you would go in and there were three or four dresses that you liked but you weren't sure so you would bring them home, all three of them. They would write out a little slip for 24 or 48 hours so you could try them on. You could either bring them all back and buy whatever. And you didn't have to put any money on this stuff.

ELIZABETH MÜNCH POWER

They were all pretty shrewd business people they set a rapport with the people of Windsor who were not permanent employees and Mr. Riff and Mr. Cohen you know they gave credit not like today with the credit cards and visas but they gave credit themselves to people who they knew couldn't afford it. Mr. Flight who was the druggist, the pharmacist he had a rapport with the people too and set up some kind of a credit system whereby if you couldn't afford all the drugs you could pay so much and so on and forth so that was interesting the way they did that.

ROY OLDFORD

## MULTICULTURAL

I would think this side of Montréal - it was very small - but it was like a little Montréal. A lot of different cultures and sights and sounds. The business owners on Main Street came from China, Lebanon, Syria, Russia, Norway, Ireland, United States, England, so it was a melting pot of cultures.

COREY SHARPE

Windsor was a community that grew up outside the Grand Falls district. Those people who set up merchant shops for Windsor weren't particularly allowed to set up shop in the community of Grand Falls because they weren't employed by the mill. As far as I understand it, Windsor became a very thriving merchant community outside of Grand Falls where everybody shopped. It was wonderful because they had the bustling, what I would call, the melting pot of cultures. As a child who grew up within Grand Falls who only knew basically the British town and community, when we went to Windsor to shop which was two or three times a week I experienced seeing people who were different to me and I thought that was really interesting because they were so colourful. That is what I found very appealing – the type of language they spoke, how they looked immediately struck me and the way they greeted you. So I call it the melting pot of cultures because well it is a cliché to use but it certainly was Windsor.

YVONNE COURTNEY

There were a lot of different cultures. Lebanese people owned businesses on Main Street, Jewish people owned businesses on Main Street, P.F. Kearney, Pat Kearney came from Ireland. He used to have this Irish accent and we used to enjoy listening to him. He loved Irish whisky. They were all accepted into the community of Windsor but the AND Company didn't open their doors for any of

## MULTICULTURAL

these people. Like Alteens, they started out in the town of Windsor and moved into Grand Falls after. The shoe store there Si Boulas he was Lebanese. The Bashas were Lebanese. They all had businesses there for years and years. They had a restaurant there called the Cozy Chat. There were a lot of different ethnic groups that lived in the town of Windsor.

JOHN CONNORS

They were all real personal friends. My father was really close with the Lebanese. He used to bring them to the house and get them to cook Lebanese meals. I remember one was cabbage rolls. We used to love them. Myself and my brother would have a competition to see who could eat the most cabbage rolls.

JOHN CONNORS

*IF THERE WAS ONE THING THAT YOU THINK PEOPLE  
DON'T KNOW ABOUT MAIN STREET OR WINDSOR,  
WHAT DO YOU THINK THAT WOULD BE?*

All the different cultures, and the people that were there. Back in the day they considered it a haphazard almost like a vigilante community but those people were smart people. I mean they were super smart and they had a lot of nerve to come here to set up and take the chance and I'm willing to bet that their kids and the next generation went on to do wonderful fabulous things. So I would like Main Street to be remembered as the little melting pot of cultures.

COREY SHARPE

## INCOMPLETE LIST OF MAIN STREET BUSINESSES & SERVICES

Although the Grand Falls-Windsor Heritage Society and the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador worked hard to learn and record memories of all the shops and businesses on Main Street due to the nature of oral history interviews and the short time frame we were unable to gather stories for all the businesses. In light of this we have decided to include an incomplete list of Main Street businesses. If you have any further information including photos and memories of the businesses and business owners listed below or suggestions of who else should be included please contact the Grand Falls-Windsor Heritage Society.

Wilansky & Sons. This store was situated on the corner of Patrick Street and Main Street. It was purchased by James Riff in 1945 and a second story was added.

Photo courtesy of GFWHS.



*Abey Lamb's Chip Van*  
*Alteen's*  
*American Repeater Station*  
*Anderson's Store*  
*Becker's*  
*Bernard Dubow's Store*  
*Bluebird Taxi*  
*BMO*  
*Brennan's Pool Hall*  
*Brown Derby*  
*Churchill's Supermarket*  
*Cohen's*  
*Connolly's Shoe Store*  
*Cozy Chat*  
*Dave's Barber Shop*  
*E. Paddock & Sons*  
*Economy Store*  
*English's Jewelry Store*  
*Flight's Drug Store*  
*Gibson's Movie Theatre*  
*Globe Café / Globe Restaurant*  
*Goodyear Humber Stores*  
*Hermann Münch's Shoe Repair*  
*Hiscock's Drive In*  
*Hoffer's Optometry*  
*Independent Co-operative Store*  
*IWA Union*  
*Joseph Bernstein*  
*Jubilee Store*

*P.F. Kearney*  
*King Edward Theatre*  
*Maidment's Hotel and Garage*  
*Maple Leaf Café*  
*Murphy's Barber Shop*  
*New Deal Store*  
*New Star Café*  
*Peckford's Singer Sewing Machine Agency*  
*Peddle's Gift Shop*  
*Post Office*  
*Purity Café*  
*Red Rose Café*  
*Riff's*  
*Roache's Garage*  
*Shallow's Gym*  
*Spencer's*  
*Stewart's*  
*Station View Café*  
*Stroud's Chip Van*  
*Stroud's Pool Hall*  
*Tony's*  
*Train Station*  
*Tuma Jeweller's*  
*Victory Store*  
*Vogue Theatre*  
*Voss's Garage*  
*Wayne's World*  
*Wilansky & Sons*  
*Windsor Style Shop*

## THANK YOU TO:

Carmel Barry	Jim Mercer
Dolores Becker	Jessie Meyer
Georgina Bellows	Elizabeth Münch Power
Frank Beson	Roy Oldford
Audrey Burke	Jim Paddock
Madeline Chow Healey	Harry Pinsent
Boyd Cohen	Philip Power
John Connors	Shelia Power
Yvonne Courtney	Brian Reid
Peter Curran	Margaret Scott
Kelly Drover	Corey Sharpe
Grand Falls-Windsor Heritage Society	Cathy Simpson
Denise Fraser	Melissa Tobin
Dale Jarvis	Doug Wheeler
Mary Kelly	Amanda Williams
Trudi Marie	Windsor Historical Facebook page





## About the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador

The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador is a nonprofit organization which was established in 1984 to stimulate an understanding of and an appreciation for the architectural heritage of the province. The Foundation, an invaluable source of information for historic restoration, supports and contributes to the preservation and restoration of buildings of architectural or historical significance.

The Heritage Foundation also has an educational role and undertakes or sponsors events, publications and other projects designed to promote the value of our built heritage. The Heritage Foundation is also involved in work designed to safeguard and sustain the intangible cultural heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador for present and future generations everywhere, as a vital part of the identities of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and as a valuable collection of unique knowledge and customs. This is achieved through policies that celebrate, record, disseminate, and promote our living heritage.



The **Collective Memories Project** is an initiative of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Office of the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, with funding provided by the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development.

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## COLLECTIVE MEMORIES PROJECT

Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland & Labrador

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2017 • ISBN 978-0-9937456-6-9