

## Blast from the Past, Part 3

By Carol Woolridge

This is my favorite section of East Main Street, from Iron Street to Center. It's where I spent many relaxed hours shopping as a child, then as a teen, eating all the foods I try my best to stay away from now. My first trips to town began with my mom and dad, and later by myself or with friends.

First on the block at 64 E. Main was Eppley's Drug Store. It wasn't just a place to pick up prescriptions, they also had tobacco products such as chewing tobacco and cigars for men. (Hence the prank calls of, do you have Prince Albert in a can? Yes. Well, you better let him out.) They also had a wide selection of candy, over the counter medicines, suntan lotions, sunburn remedies, and many other day-to-day items. I remember a lighted, revolving display with nuts, either peanuts or cashews.

Upstairs at 62 E. Main was Consumer's Credit, a place you could borrow money if you needed. Nothing to report, I never had reason to visit them.

The Singer Sewing Machine Company at 58 E. Main, was the place to go for anything pertaining to sewing. Sewing machines, patterns, materials in bright colors and patterns, thread in a wide selection of colors, zippers, bobbins, and anything else needed to sew something beautiful.

Later when I was in Junior High, I had the chance to prove or, should I say, disprove my sewing skills. I had to sew a sleeveless dress that my teacher would later expect me to wear for a full day of school. Unfortunately, I underestimated the size I needed, and when I put the dress on for hemming, I found to my dismay, it was too tight and too short. It was, no doubt, the longest day of my life.

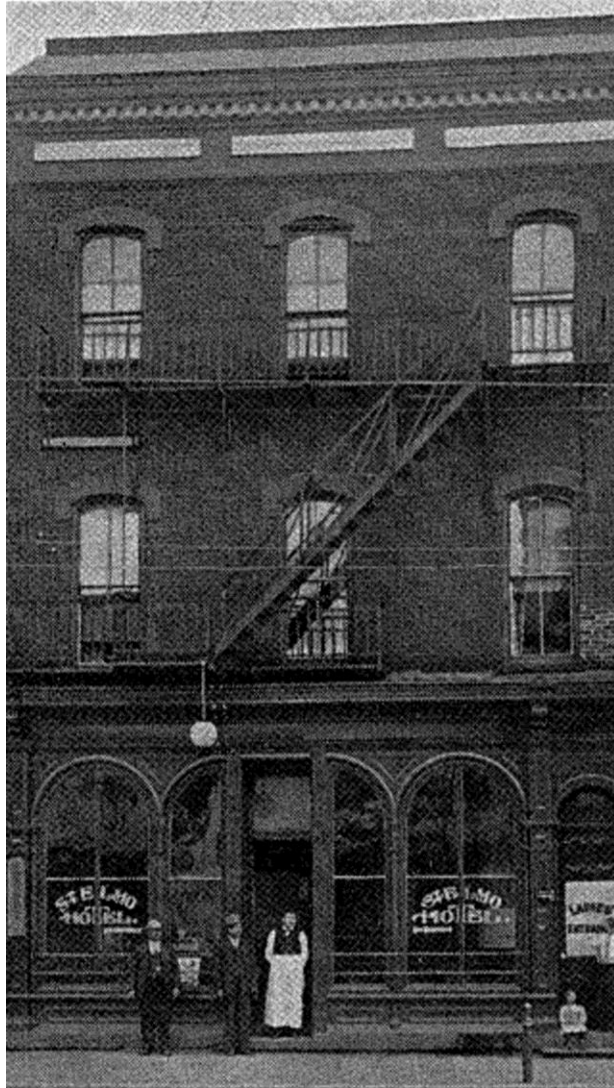


Endicott-Johnson Corp. was at 56 E. Main, and it was what I'd say was a small to mid-size shoe store. I remember they had what I considered ladies' comfortable shoes like Hush Puppies, boots, and sandals, most not the kind I felt suited me then. If they were still in business, I'm sure I'd feel differently now.

J. C. Penney at 50-54 E. Main was next, a store I spent hours in, especially in my teens. The clothes I bought then were certainly different from what you'd find now if they were still around.

It was back in the days of hot pants, Nehru jackets and hip hugging bell bottoms. Downstairs they had a customer service department with a gift wrapping counter, a wide selection of sewing items, materials, zippers, threads, pins, and hemming supplies.

J. J. Newberry Co., a department store, was located at 40 E. Main. They had clothes, household goods, toys, and games. I don't remember shopping there; I really don't know why.



St. Elmo Hotel stood at 38 E. Main and was a popular, pleasant hotel. Their license as printed in the Columbian Newspaper, item 20 on the page, on Friday, 12 January 1894 was as follows:

*H.F. Dietterich, residence Bloomsburg, Hotel situate in the town of Bloomsburg, on the south side of Main Street, between the hardware store of J.R. Schuyler & Co., and the clothing store of D. Lowenberg's Estate, and known as the St. Elmo Hotel.*

Photo Service Inc. was a photography store, located at 36 East Main; our family used their services often. We took our films there to develop, I remember how worried I'd be, questioning if my photo skills would be up to par. Photos weren't so much an exact science as they are today. I

remember we had a photo of my maternal grandfather who died in January 1955, and my maternal grandmother who died in December 1964. They managed to blend their two separate photos together, making it look like they sat side by side.



Rea & Derick, Inc. was a drugstore located at 34 E. Main; it was one of my favorite places to eat in town. Hamburger, cheeseburger, and hotdog baskets, tuna, egg, and ham salad, french fries, hot fudge sundaes, banana splits, CMPs and VMPs, ice cream sodas, and many other goodies. They had medicines and home remedies like Sweet Oil which my family used for earaches. My dad loved Old Spice, and we got him a gift set for Father's Day one year. They had ladies' colognes and perfumes in the front, which was handy for me and my friends. When we were teens, we often stopped to try different scents,

promising to come back and buy once we saved up.

The Dixie Shop at 26 E. Main was on the other side of Miller Avenue, the alley between the two businesses. The Dixie Shop had lovely, upscale clothes, just not in the style that normally appealed to teens.



J. S. Raub Shoe Store at 24 E. Main was a great place to buy shoes in town. The owner, Paul D'Orazio and his wife JoAnn ran the store. I remember Paul, who had dark curly hair and a ready smile, as a genuinely nice man. He sat on a small stool which had a ledge to place the foot measuring gadget, called a Brannock device. It was black and silver and had adjustable slides, which measured your foot, both length and width. It wasn't like shopping nowadays, where you put a shoe on and hope it fits. Before you left, Paul would check the fit while it was on your foot, to be sure it didn't poke or pinch anywhere.



W. T. Grant Co. was a department store at 22 E Main which I have to say, had everything. It was an earlier version of the store that later moved to Route 11. They had a luncheon area, perfect for when you got hungry while shopping. Burgers, beer battered fish, french fries, ice cream sodas and sundaes, and my favorite drink, vanilla Coke. When I wanted to mix it up, I got a chocolate Coke.

Lee Pat's at 20 E. Main, was a men's store that had everything a man needed to be stylish and dressed to the nines. From what I'm told by several men who shopped there, they had an excellent selection of ties, suits, belts, shirts, anything a man would need.

Sharping Inc. was a shoe store at 16 E. Main, quality shoes like the other stores, but a little higher priced for my budget at the time.

F. W. Woolworth Co.—leaving the best for last. Woolworth's was a large store, reaching from 2-12 E. Main. From the time I was old enough to walk, I remember this store. First, the floors were wooden, squeaking and creaking as you walked across them.

As you entered the glass double doors, you'd see artificial flowers and a register on each side as you went in. To the side of the right register was a section of 45s, albums, record cases and supplies—my first venture into collecting. I had an excellent supply of each.

The luncheonette was to the right of the record supplies. They had hamburger, cheeseburger, and hot dog baskets, always served with a healthy serving of fries. What the waitresses did was rub the buns across the stainless-steel butter wheel, then put the bun in a toaster press to toast both sides at the same time.

When my mom was shopping and lost sight of me, she didn't have to go any further than the lunch counter where the waitresses had already served me my vanilla Coke. (I had those wonderful ladies wrapped around my little finger.) You could get hot fudge sundaes and banana splits for free, one cent, or up to I think \$1.49, depending on which balloon you chose to break from its hanging place on a yellow and green umbrella.

Woolworth's had large, heavy, wooden display cases with storage underneath. The display cases had glass dividers which held their assorted items and were easy to take apart and clean. They had

a vast selection of little dolls, knick-knacks, trolls, jeweled pins, bracelets, necklaces, and small toys and games which you could buy for little money. Coloring books and small, medium, and large boxes of crayons to color with were also available. They also had clothing, shoes and baby supplies for the whole family. It was an everything-you-needed store.

In the early to mid-sixties, they had a back door on the right side of the store. Just before this door, they had a selection of free-standing ash trays. I remember mom and I got my dad one of those ash trays with a metallic finish for Christmas one year. It had a Greyhound stretched across the top, just in case dad needed to pick it up and move it from one chair to another.

On the left side of the building at the back, was a tall, long display of fish tanks. They had all the tanks, supplies and a variety of fish. They also had small animals like mice, guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils, parakeets, finches, and canaries, and all the food, cages, and treats you needed for each. After they closed off the side exit, they moved the pets to that side and made a back exit with a register.

That's our last stop for the day.