Looking at

Our Drug Store

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by

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Prophetstown Area Historical Society
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Introduction

With the closing of our drug store I though it appropriate to put this together. First, a little background. About 20 years ago when my good friend, Bud Thompson, was mayor I told him it would be interesting to know what businesses have been in all of the buildings in our business district. He answered with: “Why don’t you find out?” It was one of those “light bulbs” moments that I used to see in the old comic books that went off in my head and I thought “sure I can do that.” The first thing I did was to get pictures of all the buildings. Then came the search, looking thorough old newspapers and telephone books, along with talking to people who had lived here a while. In the beginning my assumption was that we might have had around 500 businesses here since our first settlers came in 1834. Wow! Was I wrong. As of now my records show we have had over 2,700 businesses here. And there would be more, but the ones that existed between 1834 and 1871, (our first newspaper started in 1871), are very difficult to find any information on.

What will surprise many Prophetstown folks today is that the original drug store was in the north part of the building, while other stores were located in the south portion. That is where the cards and gifts were located today. Take a look at the picture below. On the left (the south portion of the store) you can see it held the R. C. Forkey Grocery with C. W. Fenn Jewelry and Drug Store in the north portion.



318 Washington Street

The south portion of the building has the 318 address and held the businesses listed below. Keep in mind that the information here was gleaned from a number of sources. If you have any corrections please inform me.

Called the Hazel McNamara Building in 1941

Graham's Cash Shoe Store (there in 1899)
G. E. Graham owner. Opens on March 4, 1899. Still there in 1902.

R. C. Forkey Grocery & Dry Goods (there in 1910)
Moved stock to Keiser & Keiber (335 Washington St.) in February 1933 to finish his closing out sale. Had been in this location for 35 years.

ABC Food Stores (moved here in 1933)
It was the Red & White Grocery and was located at 351 Washington, in the north half of Dudley furniture and Undertaking. The name was changed and the store moved here about 1933. Royal Blue Grocery then moved into the Dudley building in early 1934.

Home Restaurant (moved here in May 1934)
Moved here from 315 Washington, when it was vacated by the ABC Food Stores. In the former location it had been the Nels Lundell Restaurant, before being purchased by Mr. & Mrs. G. W. Hawkinson in May 1925. E. J. Diehl purchased the equipment and stock of the Home Restaurant in August 1936, when the Hawkinsons closed the business. The Hawkinson family returned to a farm east of town. There they also had a restaurant, which gained quite a bit of fame in the ensuing years. They purchased the Brown Restaurant in 1938 and reopened the Home Restaurant.

Dr. Tascher-upstairs (there in 1910)
Owned Tasher Flats Apartments, located on the southwest corner of 2nd and Washington, where the motel now is.

Dr. R. G. Dingman, Veterinary (there in 1915)

Diehl Variety (there in 1930)
Moved from here, the McNamara Building, 1/2 block south to the Head Building (336 Washington) in 1930.

Roth Insurance Agency (there in 1943-44)
He started in 1917 and had been at 338 Washington St.

Reichard Insurance Agency (there in 1951)
Purchased Roth Agency in July 1946. Was located here until it moved to 320 Washington St. Suzanne's Shop had been at 320, but closed August 1, 1951.

Moline Dspatch (there in 1946)

Bettergas (at 318 in 1949)

Sullivan Upholstery (upstairs in 1952)

Gambles

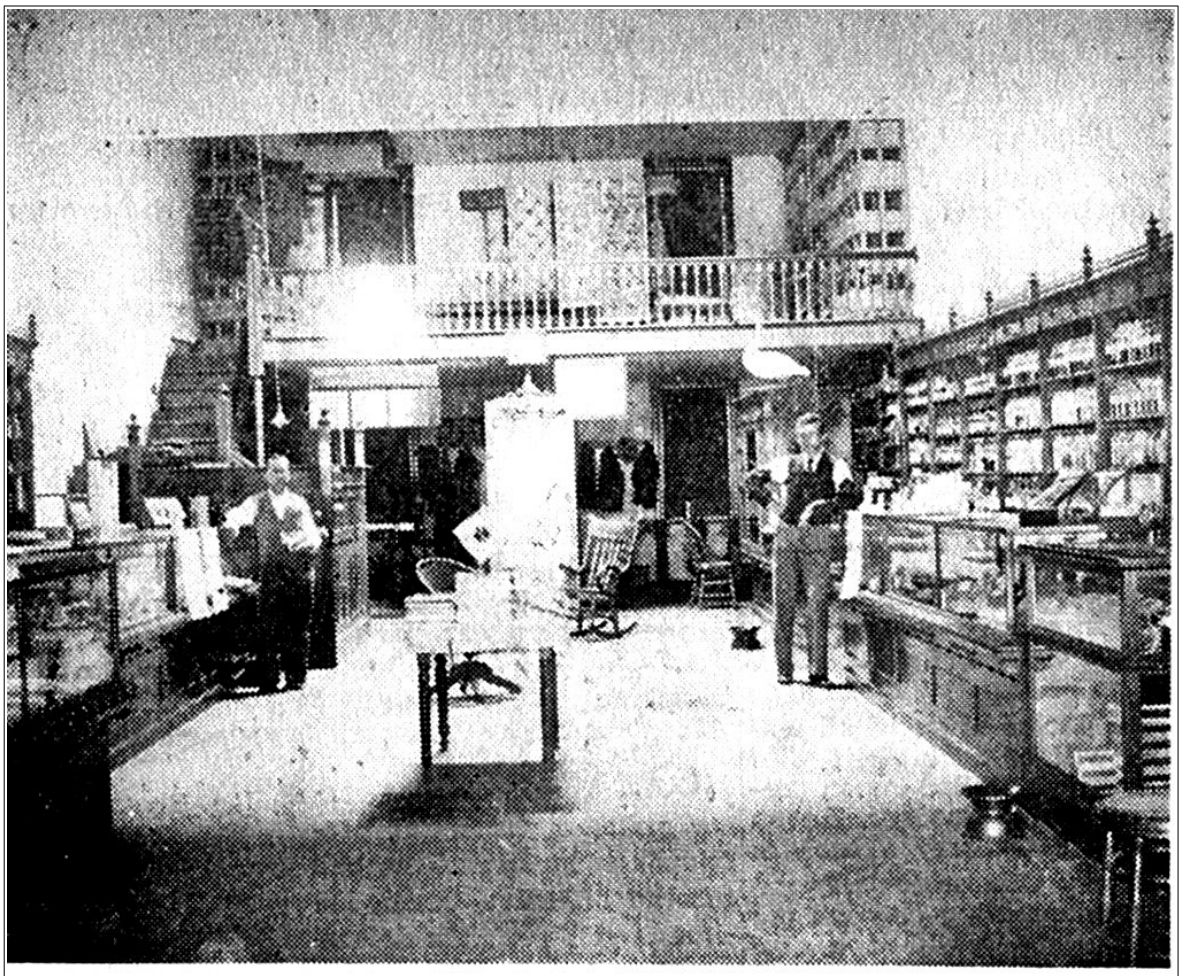
From its beginning to 1951 the store was at 340 Washington St. It was here at 318 from 1952-60, then moved to 334 Washington St., where it remained until it closed. Walter Marshall managed the store in the 1920-30 time period. Often it was known as simply Marshall's.

Tots & Teens

Maxine Shine & Vi Vittitow first owned the store. It was then purchased by Marilyn Wait and Charlotte Dumbauld in 1963. When Jim DeFore came to town, in 1965 and purchased Fenn Drug and Herald Drug, Char moved the store to the former Herald Drug Store at 326 Washington St. Eventually, she moved to 312 Washington, where the store was located when she retired.

316 Washington Street

This is the north portion of the building which held the pharmacy. The inside has changed considerably since the beginning. Here are some pictures from the Fenn Drug early years. Notice the two spittoons sitting on the floor on the right hand side. Many chewed tobacco back then.



Fenn's Drug Store in the Early Days

One probably would not recognize Fenn's Drug Store today if he were looking at this picture.

Kenneth Fenn supplied this picture to us of the store when his father, C. W. Fenn, was owner of the store. In those days there was no center aisle and the balcony was not enclosed as it is today.

Mr. Fenn is at the right in the picture and at the left is F. L. Adams. inventor of the first Eclipse lawn mower. Mr. Adams was a jeweler in the Fenn Store for a number of years before he invented the lawn mower.

The picture is believed to have been taken around the turn of the century, or shortly after.



The drug store

A VERY EARLY PICTURE of Fenn Drug. Things sure look different now.





You will notice that in the early years there was a balcony up above where the pharmacy is. It was there when I came to town in 1964 and you could see it when you entered the drug store. It is still there but has been covered up. Below is what I found in an Echo from years a go.

The writer was up on the balcony of the C.W. Fenn & Son store this week where they wallpaper is stored, and from the looks of the stock there is enough to paper every room in every house in this section.

Yes, Fenn Drug sold wallpaper and paint and had a jewelry section. One elderly resident old me that during the 1930s when the Great Depression was raging every morning there would be unemployed fellows standing outside the front door offering to paint for anyone who exited the store with a can of paint.



This building once sat where the present drug store building is. The sign on it says “Drug Store.” The store was owned by William McNeill, who sold it to C. W. Fenn. Fenn had the present brick build constructed.

A Short History of the Drug Store

Address: 316 Washington St.

Fenn & Daggett Druggists and Importers (1890s)

C. W. Fenn purchased the drugstore from William McNeill in October, 1890. Fenn built this building in 1895. Kenneth Fenn took over from his dad.

Fenn Drug had been in Prophetstown for 69 years in 1959.

Adams Jewelry (there in 1902)

Fred L. Adams owner. Was located in Fenn Drug. Yes, this is the fellow who invented the Eclipse lawn mower in his parent’s garage.

Dr. Holland, Dentist-upstairs (there in 1910)

Slocum-Devenney Real Estate-upstairs about 1920

Enter Jim Defore

Jim Defore bought both Herald Drug and Fenn Drug in 1965. He closed Herald’s. Before Herald Drug it had been Cleaveland Drug, owned by Frank Cleaveland. Nicole, who was our Hardig druggist up to the drug store’s closing, was the great, great granddaughter of Frank Cleaveland.

Gib Haggenjos bought Fenn Drug in June 1968. He closed in 2001.

Fitzgerald Drug (2003-2006)

Druggist left. Another could not be found, so store closed

Hartig Drug (2006-2026)

Lack of certified personnel was the stated cause of the closure.