

TOWN OF VERMILION SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR

First settlers arrived in 1904 – west of the current town site
Surveyors came in 1905 and then more people began to settle in Vermilion
In August 1906 Vermilion was incorporated as a town
Vermilion celebrated its Centennial in 2006

The original main street was 49th avenue – now it is 50th avenue

A defining moment in the town's history was the great fire of April, 1918 – only four buildings were left standing after the fire.

CIBC

- Canada Bank of Commerce was established 1905 on the heels of the railway – first branch office was the shed at the station
- 1906 – pre-fab building on what is now Scotiabank where it operated until the fire – building wasn't damaged but the company took advantage of the reconstruction in town and built what is now its current structure
- August 1918 grand reopening – renovated in 1980's and is an important part of our historic street scape

W. E. Mackenzie Block - Kins

- built in 1920 for a cousin of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King (William Ewen Mackenzie)
- Harry Doan occupied the building. He was a milliner – expanded into hand-made ladies wear, gowns, frocks and coats
- in the mid 1960's, the building was purchased by George and Dora Coran and became a café – since the 70's the space has been owned by a succession of Chinese food connoisseurs

BELL BUILDING – Vermilion Voice

- a doctor originally built it after leasing space next door – he had a surgery in the rear with the office facing the street
- in 1970 this building was sold to Monte Hunter who established Montes Men Shop – it underwent major renovations in 1978
- to this day, it is still referred to as “Monte's building”
- the building underwent restorations in 1994
- **Notable for its decorative corbelled brick cornice and tapestry brick patterned panels**

MOREN BLOCK – Hot Spot & Fantasy Flowers

- erected in 1950 for Moren's electrical appliance shop
- housed one of the towns first televisions – some originally thought that the town was too far from the broadcasting station but citizens were able to tune into programs daily
- in 1968 the building was divided into two retail outlets and it was renovated in 1992

BRASS AND DAVIES BLOCK – Apple Drugs WEST

- in 1940 two partners purchased space for a butcher shop
- it was then leased to a hardware store in the late 1940's
- became Vic's Pharmacy in 1960
- when Vic retired the building was sold to Susan Long and Craig Brown and it now operates as Apple Drugs

VERMILION FOOD LOCKER – Apple Drugs EAST

- built in 1948 – sad story – the patriarch of the family that built it – Paul Hareuther Sr. died 3 weeks before the grand opening
- Paul Sr. worked as a meat manager at Craigs until he decided to open his own business – offering town food lockers for cold storage of meat and produce in the days before home freezers were available
- A variety of businesses occupied this space
- originally renovated in 1992
- in 1999 Craig Brown purchased it to expand Apple Drugs.

Craigs East, Centre, West

East – John & William (Chum) Craig arrived in 1905 and established “Craigs” store. The great fire destroyed the two-storey building they were working out of but they rebuilt a 30x120 store out of fire resistant brick. It’s still a family business today and during its 90th anniversary in 1995, there were three generations of Craigs working along side each other

Centre (Nellis & Law Hardware)– in 1961 Craigs store expanded and took over this space. It originally operated as a hardware store before being bought by Craigs

West (Stephens Block)– department store run by the Stephens family until it was sold to Craigs in 1969. The brick façade of original storefronts was covered by siding in 1977 to unify the new expanded store

McWilliams & Long

- survived fire in 1918
- an early business in this location was a harness shop
- later operations were a menswear shop
- now owned by Cheryl Scott and Cowpokes who operate a clothing store and tack repair – keeping in line with the building history

Charles E Henry Building

- one of oldest structures in town built in 1905
- last of four buildings to survive the great fire in 1918

Buildings to Survive fire – Imperial Block, Standard, Cowpokes, Shirleys

FJ Richardson Block (Karen’s Klassic Cuts)

- built in 1945 for prominent Vermilion lawyer (Frederick Joseph Richardson) – he established his practice in 1924 and retired in the early 70’s. He was very active in the community and could be seen walking to and from his downtown office everyday.

Snapes / Key Block (Duncan Crerar law office)

- wood frame block believed to date back to 1919 – to house a hardware shop – the original was on the south side of Main street and was lost in the great fire
- in 1942 the Canadian Women’s Army Corps Training began at the School of Agriculture – three enterprising sisters – the noonans – opened the “Victory Café” in this building serving home cooked meals at all hours. The food must have been good as their business outlasted the war by several years

McLaughlin Block (L&K Television)

- 1946 brick & tile building owned by William & Leon McLaughlin – self service grocery store (cash & carry), which was quite groundbreaking for the time when other stores still had clerks fetching all items from behind one counter

Watkins Block (Richardson Denture Clinic)

- earliest building on this site housed the town's first school. Opened in January 1906 with 8 students.

Isley Block (Decals & Obsessions)

- built in 1949 and housed a local tinsmith, then a plumber
- Sold in 1959 to Dr. James Brown of Tofield who used the space as a vet clinic – changed hands several times to different vets up until 1993
- One of the vets who operated a clinic from 1792 – 986 was Dr. Stephen West. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Masonic Hall – built in the 1930's and is one of several long standing organizations in town. Prior to erecting this building, meetings were held at various locations, one of which was upstairs at the Standard.

Imperial Block

- Built in 1912 by British capitalists – intended the building for use as a luxury office and apartment block
- built from local bricks – Vermilion Factory 1906 -1914 at a cost of \$25,000
- survived the fire
- bricks – community centre link – were donated by LC and were salvaged from their fire in the 1980s
- another interesting note: up until 1928 this building was used to board students at the Agricultural school. In 1928 residences were built on campus

Vermilion Standard

- in 1909 Mr. Cooper began the publication
- first issues advertised for local businesses – some of which are still in operation today – Brunswick, Long's, and Craigs
- in 1916 this building was erected on the outskirts of town and therefore didn't perish in the great fire; it remains one of the oldest buildings in town

Safeway Block

- in 1929 the national grocery store chain moved in
- in 1941 Safeway had to close its doors due to a combination of weak economy and pressure by local independent shop-owners who regarded the store as an interloper

Thank you for your time – we hope you enjoyed your stroll through Vermilion's past! Please visit us again