

MARKETHOUSE HISTORY

MarketHouse News May/June 1995 Issue

The brick-laid streets of Lowertown were filled with the clopping sounds of horses. It was 1902, downtown St. Paul's wholesale and jobbing district was expanding. A "large and plain" six-story building with a "classical cornice with dentils" went up on the northwest corner of East 5th and Broadway.

We who live here know this building as MarketHouse. From the mid-1940s up to its residential development in 1983 it was called the Cardozo Furniture Company Warehouse. The historic preservation people dubbed it the Tighe Building. But for most of the first half of this century its name was McKibbin, Driscoll and Dorsey...a wholesale firm that manufactured and jobbed hats, caps, gloves and fur goods.

The multiple names reflect the history of the activity that has run under its roof. The building's original owner, Ambrose Tighe, was a local lawyer as well as being president of the Minnesota Water Works Company in Brainerd and vice president of both the Gotzian Shoe Company and the Security Trust Company in St. Paul. He married Conrad and Caroline Gotzian's daughter Harriet. Though Tighe financed the building's construction, it was the first occupants...the three general partners who ran the business and the many people who worked for them through out its six floors...that brought it to life.

The company was founded circa 1886 by Joseph McKibbin, president, William Dorsey, vice president, and Arthur Driscoll, secretary-treasurer, with Caroline Gotzian and Henry Hasenwinkle as special partners. Before moving to the new quarters on 5th Street, it was located at 379 Sibley and called both McKibbin and Dorsey and the St. Paul Fur Coat Co.

According to a newspaper clipping, McKibbin, Driscoll and Dorsey still held the same offices 40 years later when their company was described as "one of the best-established clothing manufacturing and importing firms in its line in the northwest". Branch offices were maintained in Boston and New York. This 1926 news story was announcing the St. Paul firm as headquarters of a new million-dollar merger with T.W.Stevenson Manufacturing of Minneapolis.

Next door to the west on 5th, at the corner of Rosabel St (now called Wall St.) was Crane & Ordway Co. The firm, listed at this address from 1905-1922, was a jobber in pumps, well machinery and gasoline engines. The building still stands, though vacant. You can see evidence of the Crane & Ordway name on bricks near the top of the building at back.

Along the east side of Broadway, at the point where 5th intersects, stood an imposing six-story building...Factory No. 1 of the Gotzian Shoe Company (Current

site of the Gillette Company).

Directly across 5th on the south side was the five-story Brokerage Building (now the north end of the Farmers Market site). This building stretched along the whole length of the block and housed a variety of businesses and offices, one of which for many years was the No. American Postal Telegraph Cable Co., located on the ground floor at Rosabel.

It may be that McKibbin, Driscoll and Dorsey remained in the building until the mid-1940s, when it became the Cardozo Warehouse.

Material for this report was gathered at the Minnesota History Center research library, and from notes prepared by Patricia Murphy and Susan Granger in 1981 for the National Register of Historic Places. Thanks to these sources, and to the St Paul Dispatch for collecting, then donating important photodocumentary materials to the historical society.

End of 1995 Article

Our building cost \$85,000 in 1902, and was designed by J. Walter Stevens (1856-1937), an architect whose work included the Noyes Bros Drug Warehouse on 6th and Sibley (Now the Park Square Building), and the Germania Bank Bldg at 5th and Wabasha (still present and recently renovated).

The main commercial entrance to our building was located at the SE corner of the building, featuring the cast iron steps .

Neighbors in 1905

The Crane & Ordway plumbing supply business next door supplied the venture capital for Mr Ordways investment in a promising new company called Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing. The investment turned out quite well for Mr Ordway,

To the East, across Broadway was St Paul's major distribution point for the major packing house firms. Armour was on 5th, in the Diamond parking lot, and John Morrel & Co. was in our parking lot. A spur line for the railroad ran about where the lot line between is located (100 years later, this would result in a lawyer-induced delay in our lot purchase).

Stables and wagon yards for delivery were off 5th street. The packing houses were cold storage and distribution centers. Slaughter operations were at the massive plants in South St. Paul, on Armour Ave.

To the North of MarketHouse, along 6th St, were an assortment of small businesses... a machine shop, pickle works, box and trunk factory, syrup and jelly producers, furniture manufacturers, and a sash, door and blind factory. All on the part of the block now occupied by 20 or so parking spaces for commuters.

The news photos in our lobby show the spectacular 1929 fire that burned out this entire row of shops, but fortunately the MarketHouse building was saved. That's our building behind the wall of smoke.

1903-04 Sanborn Insurance Map Information:

McKibbin, Driscoll & Dorsey, Makers & Jobbers of Hats, Gloves, and Furs

Basement: Shipping rooms

1st Floor: Main office

2nd, 3rd and 4th Floor: Stock rooms

5th Floor: Sewing & cutting

6th Floor: Storage & Dyeing

1903 McKibbin, Dorsey and Driscoll Wholesale Catalog:

Hats, Caps, Gloves, sheeplined Coats, Mackinaws, Cloth Coats and Ulsters.

"When you're about it, get a good coat."

Persian Lamb \$160-250

Mink \$150-225

Russian Buffalo \$15-60

Wombat \$15-24

Beaverized Wombat \$20-25

Siberian Buffalo \$12-!*

Raccoon \$30-125

Black Dog \$9.50-20.50

Persian Otter \$27-37

Hairseal \$30-55

Astrakhan \$35-110

Beaver \$185-265

Siberian Buffalo Fur Mitts (lamb lined) \$42-48

Deodorized (I should hope so) Lined Robes:

Gray Goat

Black Goat

Natural Gray Dog

Black Dog

Lowertown Trivia: Rosabel St, to the NW of our building, was changed to Wall St in the 20s, ostensibly to provide a more pretentious address for an insurance or financial company located there.