

## **Chapter 5 - Theodore's Businesses Community**

### **Theodore's Early Retail Businesses**

The earliest description of the Village of Theodore dates back to December, 1903 when the Beaverdale Correspondent to *The Yorkton Enterprise* wrote following:

A visit to Theodore town discloses now quite a thriving little village where a few years ago the wilderness held sway. Among other buildings and enterprises we might mention are the hardware store of A. C. Tracy; the general store of W. Magrath; Allan Tracy's store and boardinghouse; Northern Elevator Co's. lumber yard under the management of A. Eckardt, March Bros. Large elevator; Winchcomb and Yemen's blacksmith shop; a fine railway station; and several other buildings.<sup>1</sup>

This description, together with the bits and pieces describing specific business and people in the village gives us a glimpse of Theodore's earliest businesses.

### **Rural Stores in the Theodore Area**

There were several businesses in the Theodore area before the village was established by the CPR. They were owned and operated by at least three of the early settlers in the Theodore area who, in addition to their farms or homesteads, had small retail outlets. Among them were Richard Seeman and the two Tracy brothers.

The first retail store in the Theodore area was located on the farm belonging to Richard Seeman, and was operated for the benefit of the neighbouring settlers.<sup>2</sup> It is mentioned in the application for a post office at Theodore dated 1892. During the 1890's the store was the target of several petty thefts. It is not known exactly when the store on the Seeman farm closed, but it is known that it had closed before William and Georgina Mercer used it as a temporary residence

during the winter of 1906-1907.<sup>3</sup> According to Seeman's granddaughter, Beryl, her father built their fine new home on the site of the original store in 1911 when he took over the farm.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. A. C. (Alva Charles) Tracy and little daughter Maribel took up residence on their homestead adjoining the seaman ranch in 1896.<sup>5</sup> In 1898 A. C. Tracy became Theodore's second postmaster, and ran the post office out of the store which he had build.<sup>6</sup> It is likely that A. D. (Alan) Tracy's store was opened on his homestead about the same time, but the earliest references to it is dated 1903.<sup>7</sup>

### **The First Permanent Retail Store in the Village**

It appears that the first two retail stores to open in the village of Theodore were located on Railway Avenue, within a block of the train station. In 1903 John McDougall erected a rough lumber two-story building on the corner of Railway Avenue and Henry Street and stocked it with a limited supply of groceries, boots, shoes and dry goods.<sup>8 9</sup> Nothing more is known about McDougal or his store which was sold to C. M. Abbot and torn down in 1907.<sup>10</sup> This property was the site for Theodore's first two hotels and later the post office.

The other store was owned by William Magrath, a well-know merchant in Yorkton, By the end of 1902 Magrath had completed the building and stocking of his store in Theodore, which he opened for business in January of 1903.<sup>11 12</sup> The building was a log structure located on the property, that would later be the site of the government liquor store on Railway Avenue.<sup>13</sup>

In 1906 Mr. Magrath sold his store to A. W. Wylie, Wylie who erected a large building where he carried on a general store, implement and blacksmith business.<sup>14 15</sup> William Wylie had been born on 3 September 1853 in Woodville, Ontario, the son of John Wylie and Euphemia

McInnis. William's first wife, Ellen Ann Coone, died in 1883, and in 1887 he married Sarah Archer of Brantford, Ontario. According to Carl Dusty, William was a blacksmith by trade, and the family moved first to Binscarth, Manitoba, and from there to Theodore, arriving in 1905. Here Sarah served meals to the farmers who came to Theodore on business and later operated a rooming house on Theodore Street.<sup>16</sup>

The first mention of Mr. Wylie in the Theodore news occurred in the fall of 1905 when it was announced that the CPR had installed a telegraph in his office, and that an operator was expected to take control in a few days.<sup>17</sup> Shortly after opening his general store in 1906, William Wylie hired Fred Wales, of Markham, Ontario, as a clerk, and a year later, in response to his growing business, he enlarged his store, and built a large warehouse as well.<sup>18 19 20</sup>

Theodore's early merchants were an enterprising lot. In 1907, for example, flour was in short supply in Theodore. Mr. Wylie and three other merchants in Theodore, A. D. Tracy, A. D. Eckardt, and J. S. Anderson, undertook to ship several carloads of flour into the village.<sup>21</sup> Then in 1908 several merchants in Theodore decided to open branch houses at Leslie, a newly formed community located on the CPR line west of Theodore. Along with Mr. Wylie who opened a general store, were Frank Reese who opened a hardware store, and Messrs Merkley and Tame who opened an implements business. The Theodore correspondent to *The Yorkton Enterprise*, wrote, "We wish them luck, but personally don't think much of Leslie."<sup>22</sup> Apparently, Messrs. Wylie and Reese didn't think much of Leslie either, because they sold their business interests there about a year later.<sup>23</sup> A third example of their enterprising nature occurred in December, 1909 when A. W. Wylie, J. S. Anderson, Dr. Ekins, and Kelson & Green were listed among the first subscribers to Theodore's newly installed telephone system.<sup>24</sup>

In the summer of 1910 Alfred Wylie purchased the two corner lots adjoining his property on Railway Avenue.<sup>25</sup> He kept the two lots for a year and in 1911 it was reported that he had sold them to E. Hansen for about \$700, and that Mr. Hansen intended to erect a building suitable for his furniture and undertaking business. About the same time A. W. Wylie sold his store to Messrs. Tame and Kelson.<sup>26</sup> In the spring of 1911 Alfred Wylie left Theodore to live in Saskatoon and it was reported that he purchased shares in a joint stock company there.<sup>27</sup>

### **Louis Kelson**

According to his obituary, Louis Kelson was born in Mandal, Norway, on February 19th, 1864 and spent much of his boyhood as the constant companion of his father who was captain of a ship engaged in coastal trade. Louis, himself, became a seaman, and qualified first as a mate with a first class certificate, and later as the captain of a ship. At the age of 25 he went to California and remained there for three years. He later joined his sister, Mrs. Ekstrom, on her farm near Springside. He spent several years ranching near Rama until 1906 when he moved to Theodore.<sup>28</sup>

In April, 1908 Louis Kelson and A. E. Tame opened a butcher shop in Theodore.<sup>29</sup> The history of this business partnership is unclear, but it is known that in 1911 they added real estate to their other lines of business, and in 1912 they, together with a Mr. Birrell, purchased the hotel in Lockwood Saskatchewan.<sup>30 31</sup> It is also known that Tame and Kelson were popular fur buyers in Theodore. During the 1912-1913 season they had purchased 2,500 muskrat skins by mid December of 1912.<sup>32</sup> In the fall on 1913 it was announced that the firm was dissolved, and that Mr. Kelson was taking over the business.<sup>33</sup> Mr. Tame left Theodore at this time.



It appears that the Mr. Tame was not particularly interested in the butcher shop because in November 1909 the partnership of Kelson and Green purchased the building in which the butcher shop was located and apparently operated it separately from the Tame and Kelson general store.<sup>34</sup> In 1910 Kelson and Green bought a refrigerator for their butcher shop, and in 1911 they bought John Hope's furniture store with the intention of renting it out for a harness shop.<sup>35 36 37</sup>

Sometime before 1915 the partnership of Kelson and Green was dissolved, and in 1915, Sam Green was operating the livery stable located between the Leland Hotel and Kelson's store. In the spring of 1915 a fire broke out in the Leland Hotel, located on the corner of Henry Street and Railway Avenue.<sup>38</sup> The hotel was completely destroyed by the fire, while Sam Green's livery stable, and the hotel laundry suffered fire damage.<sup>39</sup> Kelson's general store and the post office were threatened, but escaped damage.<sup>40</sup> Yorkton's fire brigade was called, but the fire was under control by the time they arrived.<sup>41</sup> The people of Theodore pitched in and removed all Kelson's stock from the store in an effort to save it from the fire.<sup>42</sup> Louis Kelson later announced his thanks

to the people who so graciously helped him during the fire through an item in the Theodore news.<sup>43</sup> Following the fire that destroyed the hotel, Louis Kelson continued to operate his general store on this location until it too was destroyed by a second fire in 1924.

Kelson was a major buyer of cordwood and fence pickets. Between 1918 and 1921 he ran a series of advertisements in the Saskatoon and Regina newspapers in which he stated that his prices for cordwood was \$4.00 for day wood and \$5.00 for seasoned wood in carload lots f.o.b. Theodore which meant that the purchaser paid the shipping charges. Sharpened fence pickets were priced at 3¢ and 3½¢ each, depending on the year. In 1919 he also advertized that he was selling number one and number two feed oats.<sup>44</sup> An advertisement from 1922 reads as follows:

FOR SALE - SAWYER-MASSEY26-60 H.P. steam engin and 36-60 Great West latest separator with tank, pump and bets complete, all ready to haul out and thresh. Two thousand dollars if sold at once. Louis Kelson Theodore, Sask.<sup>45</sup>

Kelson's store like the other stores in Theodore sold a wide variety of items.<sup>46</sup> Items listed in various news reports about the business indicate that Kelson's store carried a wide range of merchandise that included coats, sweaters, shoes, moccasins, mitts, underwear, overalls, as well as chocolate bars and other tasty treats.<sup>47</sup> <sup>48</sup> Unlike some other merchants of that time, Louis Kelson was unafraid of the competition from the big mail order companies, and was willing to match the prices in the Eaton's catalogue. He even kept a copy of the catalogue so that his customers could compare prices.<sup>49</sup> In 1918 he had a generator installed on his property so that his store could be lite by electricity.

In the spring of 1924 a second fire ravaged the block in which Kelson's store, the hotel and the livery barn were located. This time the new hotel, which had been constructed on the site of the old Leland Hotel, escaped destruction with only a scorching of its paint. The fire broke out

in what had once been Sam Green's livery barn, but was now owned by W. Hockman. It totally destroyed the barn, Hockman's residence, Kelson's general store, his merchandise and his residence. A large stock of machinery and implements, the flour and feed warehouse, and large piles of cordwood, wagons, hayricks, et cetera were also destroyed.<sup>50</sup> The total loss was estimated at about \$25,000, and only a small portion of the loss was covered by insurance.<sup>51</sup>

Within a few days of the fire, Kelson rented another building and re-opened his store.<sup>52</sup> After two years in his new store, he decided in the fall of 1926, to discontinue it, but kept the implement agency.<sup>53</sup> In the spring of 1927 he erected a large implement warehouse on Railway Avenue near A. P. Swallow's new hardware store which had been built beside the new hotel.<sup>54</sup>

In January 1930, it was announced in the Theodore news that Louis Kelson was very ill, and over the ensuing month there were several reports of his hospitalization in Yorkton.<sup>55</sup> He died of cancer at the end of May, 1930.<sup>56</sup>

### **Theodore's Second Permanent Retail Store - A. C. Tracy**

Almost immediately after William Magrath opened his store in Theodore, he faced competition from Alva C. Tracy, locally also known as "Charlie." Tracy, had been born in Ontario and at some point in the 1890 had moved with his wife, Margaret (nee Hare) to Saltcoats. According to grandson, Gordon Lewis, both the Tracy and Hare families could trace their ancestry back to United Empire Loyalists who settled in Ontario after the American Revolution.<sup>57</sup>

After they had moved to Saltcoats where, their eldest daughters were born, The Tracy family moved to Theodore where they operated a store and the post office on their homestead a few miles east of Theodore.<sup>58</sup> Because Charlie Tracy served as Theodore's post master from 1898

to 1912, it is likely that had opened his store sometime before 1898. Four more children were born to the Tracy family while they lived in Theodore.

In February of 1903 it was reported that A. C. Tracy was busy hauling logs for his new store in the village which was located on Main Street.<sup>59</sup> The building was torn down in the late 1930s.<sup>60</sup> The Theodore Credit Union would later occupy the site.

Tracy soon faced competition who in 1907 built a large general store directly across the street from him on property that would later be occupied by Theodore's town hall.<sup>61</sup> <sup>62</sup> The second story of Eckardt's new building was used as a community hall and the Theodore News columns contain several references to "Eckardt's Hall." The list of events held in the hall includes numerous dances, religious services, wedding anniversaries, a masquerade ball, a bachelor's ball, banquets, lectures, motion picture shows, concerts and political meetings. In 1912 A, D, Eckardt purchased half interest in the Foam Lake Hotel and moved his family there.

The Tracy family also built a house on Main Street which nearly burned down in 1909.<sup>63</sup> The house was later moved to another part of the village, and 1917 the property was sold to P. C. Larson who later built his own house on it.<sup>64</sup> <sup>65</sup>

The influx of new settlers into the Theodore area created such a demand for goods that in 1907 A. C. Tracy was able to build an addition to his store.<sup>66</sup> Although there is little mention of the Tracy family in the Theodore News columns of that period, a few items have survived that do give the modern reader some insight into the business. The first such item appeared in 1906 and stated that A. C. Tracy had been appointed telegraph operator at Theodore, a position that had been vacant for some time, and had caused considerable inconvenience for merchants and others.<sup>67</sup> A second news item from 1918 stated that Mr. Tracy was establishing a butcher shop in

the old post office building.<sup>68</sup> The third, was a single sentence that indicates the high quality of goods and services the Tracys provided, “Theodore people expect the best and they are never disappointed when they go to A. C. Tracy’s meat market.<sup>69</sup> In 1919 A. C. Tracy installed an “Eclipse” refrigerator in his meat market, and a week later it was announced that, “Mrs. Tracy has opened her ice cream parlor.<sup>70 71</sup> In 1920 A. C. Tracy expanded his business when he purchased the butcher shop that had been operated by the Young brothers.<sup>72</sup> For a short time Theodore has two butcher shops.

Mrs. Margaret Tracy was a teacher who taught at Theodore in 1917 and it was reported that she sometimes gave her students extra tuition when they needed it.<sup>73</sup> In addition to teaching at the Theodore School various items in the Theodore news columns reported that she taught at Guernsey in 1919, Drobonatz in 1920 and 1921, Savoy River School in 1922, Westbrook in 1923, Rokeby in 1925, and Stornoway in 1926.

When she secured the principalship of the school at Otthon, the store at Theodore, which was now primarily selling meat and groceries was sold to P. C. Larson in early September of that year.<sup>74</sup> In the spring of 1927 Theodore’s second retail business came to an end when it was announced in the Theodore new column that:

Mr. Wesley Quinton who recently took over the P. C. Larson butcher and grocery business has decided to discontinue the business, and the stock will be disposed of to some of the other dealers in town.<sup>75</sup>

### **Theodore’s Third Retail Outlet**

Like Theodore’s first retail outlet, the third retail store also had a series of owners. These men included; A. D. Eckardt, Frank Reese, J. S. Anderson, John Smith, and Jack Yemen.

A. D. Eckardt is first mentioned in the 1903 description of Theodore by the Beaverdale correspondent to *The Yorkton Enterprise*, where he was identified as the manager of the Northern Elevator Co's. lumber yard which was located on the corner of Main Street and Railway Avenue.<sup>76</sup> Sometime in the summer of 1904 he entered a business partnership with a Mr. Simpson and opened Theodore's first hardware store on Henry Street.<sup>77 78</sup> Business was good in Theodore and it was later reported that Eckardt and Simpson were able to sell about \$200 worth of merchandise a month.<sup>79</sup> It is not known how long the business partnership lasted because Mr. Simpson isn't mentioned again. In 1905 both A. D. Eckardt and A. C. Tracy completed additions to their stores, and a year later Mr. Eckardt built a new home.<sup>80 81</sup> By 1906 the hardware store appears to have become a general store and was sold to Frank Reese who entered into a business partnership with J. S. Anderson to operate the general store.<sup>82 83</sup> The reported that the new owners were doing a large trade was confirmed many years later when a news story stated that the business had receipts of about \$350 per month.<sup>84</sup>

In the summer of 1907, J. S. Anderson bought out Frank Reese's share of the business, but there is little information in the Theodore news about the business.<sup>85</sup> Perhaps one of the reasons that there is little news of J. S. Anderson's store in the Theodore news column from that time is that J. S. Anderson was also the Theodore correspondent to *The Yorkton Enterprise*, and was reluctant to give himself any free advertising. The Yorkton Times, however did on occasion mention that he was holding a sale such as the "great clearing out sale of dry goods, larigans (a knee-high boot of oiled leather with a moccasin foot), boots, shoes, Overcoats, etc."<sup>86</sup> In 1911 Anderson sold the business to John Smith.<sup>87</sup> According to Wrigley's Saskatchewan Directory J. S.

Anderson was still managed the store for Smith in 1921.<sup>88</sup> In 1924 Mr. Smith purchased the building in which his store was located.<sup>89</sup>

John Smith had been born in Warwickshire, in 1880 and emigrated to Canada in 1906. He first took out a homestead near Willowbrook, but in 1907 he moved to a farm a few miles west of Theodore. According to his son, Gerald, there was a corral at the rear and side of the store and this corral was sometimes used on Saturdays for bronco busting. There was a stoop at the rear of the store which served as a sort of grand stand to view the proceedings.<sup>90</sup>



In a 1921 article, *The Theodore Tattler* described the store which was brightly lit in the evening as one of the most up-to-date stores in the village and a cheery place to go anytime. In the ten years that Smith had owned it, the business had “grown from \$10,000 to approximately \$50,000 in annual sales.” It was also stated that the business was known as the “People’s Store.”

In 1908 S. M. Flickinger of Buffalo, New York, developed the first store brand product, cans of coffee, and named the brand Red & White after the colors of his store shelves. Over the

next ten years, a wide variety of Red & White products appeared. By 1921, there were Red & White stores throughout upstate New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio. The stores were independently owned membership in the Red & White system was voluntary. Merchants belonging to the system received training, discounted store fixtures and professional window display for initial store openings to help avoid the failure of thousands of corner grocers. After the Red & White trademark had been registered in the USA, wholesalers from Canada received permission to set up similar operations.<sup>91</sup>

It appears that John Smith did a large volume of business in Theodore. In early January, 1919, for example, he brought a railway car to Theodore loaded with potatoes which he sold directly from the car.<sup>92</sup> He did the same thing with apples in 1924 and flour in 1927.<sup>93 94</sup> In 1931 he improved the storage capacity of his Red and White Store by placing a cement walled cellar underneath it which provided him with the ability to store fruits, vegetables and dairy products and assure his customers of fresh goods at all times.<sup>95</sup>

The Manager of Western Grocers, Yorkton, visited Theodore in June 1929 to establish a Red and White Store in the village and it was announced that John Smith, would install the new system in his general store.<sup>96</sup> After being painted red with white trim the store was opened with a special sale on 17 August, 1929.<sup>97 98</sup> In November, 1930 John Smith opened a branch of his Red and White store in Springside.<sup>99</sup>

In January, 1936, after some twenty-five years of doing business in Theodore, John Smith relinquished the management of the Red & White to Jack Yemen, who had been associated with Mr. Smith for many years.<sup>100</sup> In 1940 John Smith moved to Yorkton.<sup>101</sup>

### Theodore's Beer Store

During the First World War Saskatchewan had enacted laws which prohibited the sale and possession of alcoholic beverages. Prohibition was repealed in the province in the early 1920's, but it was left to each local community to decide for itself whether or not the sale of alcohol would be permitted. After several years of strong opposition from those who supported the prohibition of alcohol, Theodore finally voted to permit the sale of alcohol in 1924. Prior to the vote, however, there was a strong campaign against allowing the sale of alcohol in Theodore by those who favoured prohibition. The following announcement appeared in the Theodore news:

[The subject] of prohibition will be considered next Sunday at Beaverdale, Creekside, and Theodore. Be sure you understand your ballot. Do not allow yourself to be misinformed concerning the real issue. Literature will reach your home within the next two or three weeks. Study it carefully and do not allow yourself to be guided by anything but facts and careful examination of both systems. Prohibition will stand very favourable comparison with Government sale. Be sure that your vote is an intelligent and unprejudiced one.<sup>102</sup>

Theodore's beer store was finally opened in 1926. The following items from *The Yorkton Enterprise* chronicle the weeks preceding the opening.

A government beer store will be opened here about March 1 with Mr. F. Reese as manager in charge. The premises now occupied by Mr. A. McDonald, in the Reese block, will be used for the purpose.<sup>103</sup>

Mr. Frank Reese, manager of the government beer store, that will open here on March 1st, is making preparations to welcome the stock on arrival, by digging a cellar under the premises, arranging storage, etc.<sup>104</sup>

Contrary to expectation, the beer shop did not open on March 1, but the stocks are expected to arrive on Wednesday, March 8.<sup>105</sup>

The government beer store will open here about April 1, with Mr. Frank Reese in charge.<sup>106</sup>

A large consignment of beer was unloaded here Wednesday for the Sask. Govt. beer store just opened today [7 Apr 1926].<sup>107</sup>

While the Liberal government in Saskatchewan was prepared to permit the sale of alcohol in bottles, it was not prepared to permit the sale of beer by the glass. A largely signed petition was submitted by the Saskatchewan Hotelmen's Association calling for the opening of beer halls in Saskatchewan, and another petition with almost as many signatures opposing such a move was submitted by the Prohibition League. In spite of these two opposing points of view, Premier Gardiner, decided that the people of the province were fairly well satisfied with the state of affairs, and refused to pass the legislation that would allow for such a vote and settle the matter.<sup>108</sup>

The Liberal Party formed the government in Saskatchewan from its inception in 1905 until 1929 when the Conservative Party was elected. It is interesting to speculate as to whether or not Frank Reese's strong support of the Liberal Party played any part in his selection as manager of the beer store or its closing in 1931 by the Conservative government lead by Premier Anderson.

Announcement was made on Tuesday that six more liquor stores in Saskatchewan will be closed shortly. This will bring the total number closed within the province in recent months to 70. The stores to be closed are at Crane Valley, Ogema, Fife Lake, Lockwood, Theodore, and Edenwold.<sup>109</sup>

The local beer store has been ordered to close on December 1st and will probably do so. However, there are a large number of citizens of the town and district, who are of the opinion that the closing of the beer store will encourage the manufacture and sale of home brew and for this reason a petition is being circulated, requesting the Liquor Board to allow the beer store to continue to operate.<sup>110</sup>

The Government Beer Store at this point closed up on Thursday and the stock removed, this owing to the fact that the store was no longer paying its way. It will probably be reopened when conditions warrant. There will be some thirsty ones for a while, who may have to return to such harmless beverages as tea, coffee, and home brew.<sup>111</sup>

In the provincial election of 1934 the Conservative Party which had governed the province for four years was soundly defeated, and was replaced by the Liberal Party. Within a year the beer

store in Theodore was reopened under the management of Frank Reese. Mr. Reese kept his position as manager of the beer store until his retirement in 1944.

In spite of considerable opposition on the part of those who were strongly opposed, the Liquor Board has seen fit to re-open the beer store in Theodore. This is at the old location in the Reese block and will be operated by Mr. F. Reese. At the provincial elections held last June, the vote taken on the question of beer-by-the-class showed a vote of about eighty per cent of the electors opposed to any action being taken to establish beer parlors here, and the establishment of this beer store would for this reason seem to be against the wishes of a large majority of the people who in this case have had to yield to the minority, at least for the time being. There is considerable ill-feeling in the town and district over the matter and more will probably be heard of the subject.<sup>112</sup>

The new Liberal government was more open to the idea of selling beer by the glass, and in the fall of 1935 it was announced in the Theodore news column that a vote would be taken to decide whether or not the majority of Theodore's electors were in favor of a beer parlor in the village.<sup>113</sup> The result of the vote was that 90 people voted against the beer parlor, 29 people voted in favor of it, and 50 people whose names were on th voters' list failed to express an opinion.<sup>114</sup>

### **Theodore's Butcher Shops**

The first butcher shop in Theodore was operated by Mr. Pendlebury of Springside in 1904,<sup>115</sup> and, like many other early businesses, is reported to have "filled a long-felt need."<sup>116</sup> This shop was probably sold to A. E. Brown who operated it until the spring of 1907 when Frank Archer announced his purchase of the shop with an advertisement in *The Yorkton Enterprise*: In the advertisement Archer stated that he was "prepared to furnish choice meats at all times at reasonable prices" and that he paid the highest prices for fat stock and hides.<sup>117</sup> Mr. Archer who was from Markham Ontario was considered to be quite an acquisition to the football team.<sup>118</sup>

Mr. Archer did not stay in Theodore very long and in the following spring announced that, Louis Kelson has opened up a butcher shop in Brown's old stand, Railway Street.<sup>119</sup> The butcher shop was operated as a separate business from the general store mentioned above, and the building in which the butcher shop located was rented from Mr. Brown. In 1909 Louis Kelson and Sam Green purchased the butcher shop property from A. E. Brown.<sup>120</sup>

In 1911 Peter Hanson and his son Charles rented the butcher shop from Louis Kelson and announced that they intended to build an up-to-date slaughter house.<sup>121</sup> Prior to Peter Hanson's death in 1911 the business was sold to Conrad Luckfield and Martin Hanson returned to his farm.<sup>122</sup> Apparently Conrad Luckfield ran the business until he left the village and moved to his farm in 1916.<sup>123</sup> There is no other information on Luckfield's butcher shop.

At some point around 1914 Mr. and Mrs. Bert Edge moved into Theodore.<sup>124</sup> It is unknown whether or not he opened a butcher shop at that time, but there is mention of him operating a butcher shop in the spring of 1917.<sup>125</sup> In 1918 Mr. Edge added a stock of groceries to his meat business.<sup>126</sup> Bert Edge died in 1918 from influenza.<sup>127</sup>

When a new butcher shop was announced in January 1919, Mrs. Edge was quick to state in a letter to *The Yorkton Enterprise* that there was no new butcher shop in the village, that since the death of her husband she had kept the business going to the best of her ability, with a good supply of fresh meats and groceries and that she would continue to give the best service until such a time as she could get a good purchaser for the business.<sup>128</sup> <sup>129</sup> Shortly after writing her letter Mrs. Edge found a buyer for her business in the person of a J. A. McNutt of Balder, Manitoba who took over the business the following April.<sup>130</sup>

In August, 1919 it was announced that Mrs. Mary Tracy had rented her property to a gentleman from Maple Creek, who intended to open another butcher shop in Theodore.<sup>131</sup> It does not appear, however that a second butcher shop ever actually opened. In the fall of 1919. McNutt leased the property to the Young brothers who were to continue the butcher business for a term of five years.<sup>132</sup> However, a year later the Young brothers sold the butcher shop business to A. C. Tracy.<sup>133</sup> In the Spring of 1921, McNutt, who still owned the property advertised to for sale.

Arthur Austin purchased the McNutt Store in the spring of 1922, and opened a butcher shop and grocery shop.<sup>134</sup> According to his niece, Joyce Essar, Austin began his business by buying meat from local farmers. However, he was soon butchering his own animals which he fed and fattened in his own feedlot. The story is that he would kill and butcher an animal early in the morning before he opened the store for the day's business. His niece claims that he made his own sausages from a secret recipe, and that these sausages were known far and wide.

In the spring of 1929 Mr. Austin rented the William Mercer's building and moved his butcher shop and Grocery business into it with the intention of rebuilding his store which had recently burned down.<sup>135</sup> After clearing away the rubble from the fire, construction on the new building was begun by his brother Harry Austin in April, and completed by early June.<sup>136 137</sup> It was described as the most modern shop in the village and well fitted to serve his many customers with the least possible delay.<sup>138</sup>

After the Royal Bank closed in Theodore in 1936 there were several attempts to open another in the village. In February, 1937 John Smith made alterations to the bank building to accommodate the up-to-date butcher shop that would be opened by E. V. Jones the following April.<sup>139 140</sup> It appears that the business failed, and a year later a second attempt was made to

establish a butcher shop in the old bank building.<sup>141</sup> This business also failed and A. B. Austin continued to operate his business until the end of the second World War.

### **Confectionery Stores**

While there are several references to a confectionery store in Theodore during the very early years of Theodore's existence, there is very little information on any of them. The exact nature of the business, and the names of the owners are sometimes unknown. There is a report that Mr. W. Golding, of Merkley Brothers and Company, installed three new phonographs in the confectionery store, and that many pleasant evenings were spent there, which indicates that confectionery stores may have served as social centres for a time.<sup>142</sup> There is also a report that a Mr. Krushen of Yorkton, has opened a fruit and candy store in Theodore in the spring of 1916.<sup>143</sup>

The first glimpse into the business occurred in 1915 when it was announced that Rasmus Frederickson had purchased the confectionery business formerly owned by Mr. J. Hansen.<sup>144</sup> The business was resold to Hugh Walker, "the genial and popular grain buyer for Canadian Elevator Co."<sup>145</sup> At some point the business must have been sold to Sam Kriklevitz who in turn sold it to N. J. Bilokreli.<sup>146</sup> By 1920 Bilokreli had given up the confectionery business, sold out his stock, and leased the building to George Paley, who planned to open a pool and billiard parlour.<sup>147</sup>

One of Theodore's better known confectionery stores was owned and operated by Lawrence L. Larson, a Dane who had settled in Theodore in 1907. Prior to the first World War he had operated a pool room and barber shop which were closed when he enlisted in the Canadian army. On his return from Europe he re-opened his pool room and barbershop. In February, 1919, he added confectionery, soft drinks and cigars to his pool and barber business and was reportedly

doing a good business.<sup>148</sup> At the end of July it was announced that he had discontinued the pool business and disposed of the pool tables, and was turning his large building into an up-to-date confectionery, fruit store, ice cream parlor and barber shop.<sup>149</sup>

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Willard's Chocolates - Perrin's Candies  
Jones's Creamola Toffee

Larson's confectionery store became a social centre for many of Theodore's young people. In September 1921, for example, it was reported that the young people had met in Larson's store and after clearing the room had spent several hours dancing to music supplied by one of Larson's new Brunswick phonographs, which according to an advertisement sold for "only \$150."<sup>150</sup> <sup>151</sup> Activities of this nature were, no doubt, of great benefit to the business as were such announcements as the following:

The Candy and Confectionery manufacturers of Canada have chosen Oct. 8<sup>th</sup> as "Candy Day" for this year. From now on one day will be set aside each year on which candy can be bought at a very low price. Be sure to take advantage of the low prices on Saturday.<sup>152</sup>

In an article describing the business *The Theodore Tattler* dubbed Larson's Confectionery "the Brightest Spot in Town, for it is always nicely lighted and is a nice 'home like' place to

go.”<sup>153</sup> In addition to confectionery, soft drinks, and smokers’ supplies, there was also a tea room at the back of the store where hot lunches could be purchased by the many farmers who came to Theodore every day. Under Mr. Larson’s ownership the business grew steadily and by the end of 1921 was reported to be one of the liveliest businesses in town.<sup>154</sup>

### **Theodore’s Drug Store**

The history of Theodore’s Drug Store begins in August 1906 when it was announced in the Theodore news column that Mr. W. A. R. Mason, of Markham, Ontario, who was visiting with L. A. Wylie was looking for a suitable location for a drug store and considered Theodore to be as good a place as any.<sup>155</sup> It seems that he failed to follow through on his intention and the next time a drug store in Theodore is mentioned is in October when another announcement stated that Mr. Mahlone, Theodore’s latest arrival, intended to open a drug store in the village.<sup>156</sup>

According to *The Theodore Tattler* the business was owned by Martin, Bowle, and Wynne Co. of Winnipeg and managed by Mr. H. E. Mahlone.<sup>157</sup> Mahlone was said to have had years of experience in England and Canada.<sup>158</sup> By the end of January, 1907 the Theodore Drug Store under Mr. Mahlone’s management open for business carrying a full line of drugs, stationery, and school books.<sup>159</sup> According to *The Theodore Tattler* Mr. Mahlone left the village for Winnipeg and was succeeded for a short while by a Mr. Vance

In the fall of 1908 Dr Ekins, who according to *The Theodore Tattler*, had purchased the drugstore erected a new building on Main Street to house both his drug store and his offices.<sup>160 161</sup> It is interesting to note that there is no mention of a pharmacist in the Theodore news column during the years Dr. Ekins owned the business. There were, however, a number of local people

who were employed to serve customers who were buying things other than drugs. Among those mentioned in the Theodore news as “looking after” the drug store were Clara Larson, A. D. Eckardt, and Alvin Reese.

In the fall of 1920 Dr. Ekins sold the drug store to McIntyre and Sanders from eastern Canada.<sup>162</sup> One of the new owner of the drug store, Thomas Sanders, was a graduate of Ontario College of Pharmacy, and had more than eight years experience before moving to Theodore. He soon acquired the reputation of being an obliging and accommodating merchant, willing to serve his customers at all hours.<sup>163</sup> Thomas Sanders operated the Theodore Drug Store until 1960.

### **Theodore’s Hardware Stores**

Although there is almost no information on it, one of the longest lasting retail businesses in Theodore was a hardware store originally owned and operated by W. H. Hope in 1907.<sup>164</sup> Like several other businesses in Theodore it was owned and operated by a succession of people. Frank Reese, purchased the business from W. H. Hope in 1908, and sold it to P. C. Larson in 1909.<sup>165 166</sup> Mr. Larson operated the business until the spring of 1918 when he sold it to Henry Markham of Yorkton and moved his family to Saskatoon.<sup>167 168</sup> In 1925 Henry Markham sold the business to A. P. Swallow of Willowbrook, who hired Bert Spencer to manage it.<sup>169</sup> In the late fall of 1926 Mr. Swallow built a new store next to the Theodore Hotel on Railway Avenue and moved his stock to his new location in early 1927. Shortly after Swallow moved his stock out of the building, Larson who still owned the property treated his friends, and future patrons to an old timers' dance in the building just prior to moving in new stock and opening his own hardware store.<sup>170</sup> P. C. Larson and his daughter, Emma, operated the business until 1981.

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THEODORE, SASK.

In 1927 A. P. Swallow moved his family to Theodore and took over the operation of his hardware store.<sup>171</sup> Mr. Swallow operated the hardware store until 1945 when he sold it to Charles Bell in order to better serve his constituents as a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

### Theodore's Lumber Yard

Lumber was in great demand during the village's first decade and was occasionally a scarce commodity.<sup>172</sup> The lumber yard was first owned by the Northern Elevator Company and managed by A. D. Eckardt.<sup>173</sup> At some point before the 1909 photograph was taken, A. D. Tracy acquired the lumber yard which on his death in 1910 was sold to William Thomas, formerly of Foam Lake, who by 1912 had in turn transferred ownership to his son, O. A. Thomas.<sup>174 175</sup> In 1915 a new office was built at the Lumber yard and in 1916 a new lumber shed was built.<sup>176 177</sup>

In the spring of 1920, D. Kirstiuk and Co. was expected to open another lumber yard on Yorkton Avenue, and it was reported that stock had placed on the ground. While it was expected that an office would be erected that summer, there is no further news of this venture in the Theodore news.<sup>178</sup>

In the fall of 1920 it was announced that O. A. Thomas had sold his lumber business to The North American Lumber Company.

The largest cash deal ever pulled off in Theodore took place last week when O. A. Thomas sold out his lumber business, stock and office yards and offices to the American Lumber company for spot cash. The price being \$20,000. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas will spend the winter in California before deciding on any future location. Your correspondent is safe in saying that no one will be more missed in Theodore than the inimitable "Tommie" as he has always been called. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas have been the best of citizens and we are sorry indeed to part with them, but trust the change may be to their advantage and our best wishes go with them.<sup>179</sup>

With the change of ownership came a series of new lumber yard managers who only stayed in the village for a few years before moving on to other communities.

During the 1930's many of Theodore's residents began switching from using wood as their primary fuel to using coal. To meet the demand for this new fuel the North American Lumber Company erected a coal shed on the CPR right of way near the Bawlf Elevator in 1937.<sup>180</sup> The also installed a weigh scale in their lumber yard which provided a valuable service to coal dealers, cattle shippers and other merchants, as well as farmers who could weigh their produce by the wagon load.<sup>181</sup>

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