

DUNHAM BLOCK

1892-93

47 - 49 King St. West

1 Storefront



The Robert Wright & Co. (1893 - 1926)
Canadian Department Stores (1926 - 1949)
Eaton's (1949 - 1966)
Walkers (1966 - c1974)
Marks & Spencer (c1974 - 1978)
Victoria & Grey Trust (1978-1984)
VG National Trust (1984-1997)
vacant ?? (1997-2003)
Rogers AT & T Wireless (2003 - c2008)
Center For Business Excellence (c2008-c2010)
Rosemary's Optical Shop (c2013-c2016)
Tina's Golden Comb (c2016-pr.)

The Dunham Block was built in 1892-1893 by the Dunham estate, with George A. Allan as its architect. It was then put up for sale.

With the Dunham Block becoming available, the **Robert Wright Co.** consolidated their two existing locations in to one, in this much larger store. Wright's original manager was H.Y. Farr. It was the biggest store in the area, and many told him it was too big to be successful. He succeeded because he had one price for all and advertised heavily. Wright had joined the Scotch Syndicate in the 1880s, making annual trips overseas on buying sprees. His residence was a large mansion at [17 Sherwood Street](#).

After founder Robert Wright's death in 1921, the business went to his five sons. Only one of his son's, Alexander Innis Wright, was really dedicated to the business, so the business was sold. After the sale, Alexander continued the business on a smaller scale down the street in the Revere West addition. It continued for another quarter of a century, when his wife took it over after his death. The other four sons went into other fields.

The store was sold by the Wright brothers to an Ontario small town department store chain, **Canadian Department Stores Limited**. It was managed by Thomas J.A. Gamey, who lived with wife Mary at [7 Mabel St.](#) Two years after this, 1928, The **T. Eaton Co.** acquired CDS, which had 21 stores. CDS remained an independent chain, but copied Eaton's buying and marketing structure. Around 1930, The T. Eaton Co. opened a mail order location at the CDS store (#51). The chain advertised "Shop With Confidence! Goods Satisfactory or Money Refunded". Postwar years saw the store managed by Robert H. Ross, who resided with his wife Hilda at [119 King St. E.](#) In 1949, all CDS stores, including the Brockville one, were converted to Eaton's.

In 1949, all CDS stores were rebranded as **Eaton's**, including this one. Robert H. Ross continued as manager, staying for many years. In the 1960s, Wilbet F. Mesenheimer, who lived with his wife at [52 Seawoods Ave.](#) One of their more famous slogans were "It Pays to Shop at Eaton's!" In 1965, his store was one of six which were sold to Gordon Mackay Co. who owned the Walkers chain and converted three years later.

Walkers department store, which had been in business down the street in the Metropolitan Block for many years, took over the Eaton's location in 1966, but did not actually move here until 1969. The manager was Robert H. Fullarton. It's demise came when the entire chain became unprofitable as they moved into the 1970s.

Marks & Spencer took over from Walkers around 1974. They are British multinational retailer and were owned in Canada by People's Department Stores, Ltd. during this time. Like other M&S stores, it performed poorly and was one of 14 Ontario stores that closed in January 1978. This closure ended 85 years of a major department store at this location. M&S exited the Canadian market altogether in 2000.

Moving into the new century, in 1903, had the upper floors occupied by **Canada Life Assurance Co.**, **I.L.A. Stewart**, barrister, **C.C. Fulford**, barrister, **London Life Insurance Co.**, **Bell Telephone Co.** of Canada Ltd., **The Capsuloid Co.**, **Metropolitan Life Insurance Co.**, William Shearer, district manager, **North American Life Assurance Co.**, **Robert Craig**, hats and furs, and Mrs. Eliza Davies (wid. Ransom)

The **Victoria and Grey Trust** Company was the first departure from department stores at this location. Opening the branch in 1978 was manager Cecil R. Brown, who was there for the duration. The company was created by the 1950 merger of Victoria Trust and Savings Company, and the Grey & Bruce Trust & Savings Company. Victoria went back to 1895 in Lindsey, Ont., while Grey went back further to 1889 in Owen Sound.

The National Trust Company acquired Victoria & Grey Trust in 1984, going under the brand name of **VG National Trust**. This branch was managed by Peter Waller. The company had been incorporated on August 12, 1898. With the '84 merger, it became National Victoria & Grey Trust Company, later shortened to National Trust Company the following year. The business was acquired by Scotiabank in 1997 and this location was closed.

Rogers AT & T first opened in Brockville here in 2003. Around 2008, they moved to the 1000 Islands Mall and then, in 2018, to thier current location at 2447 Parkdale Ave.

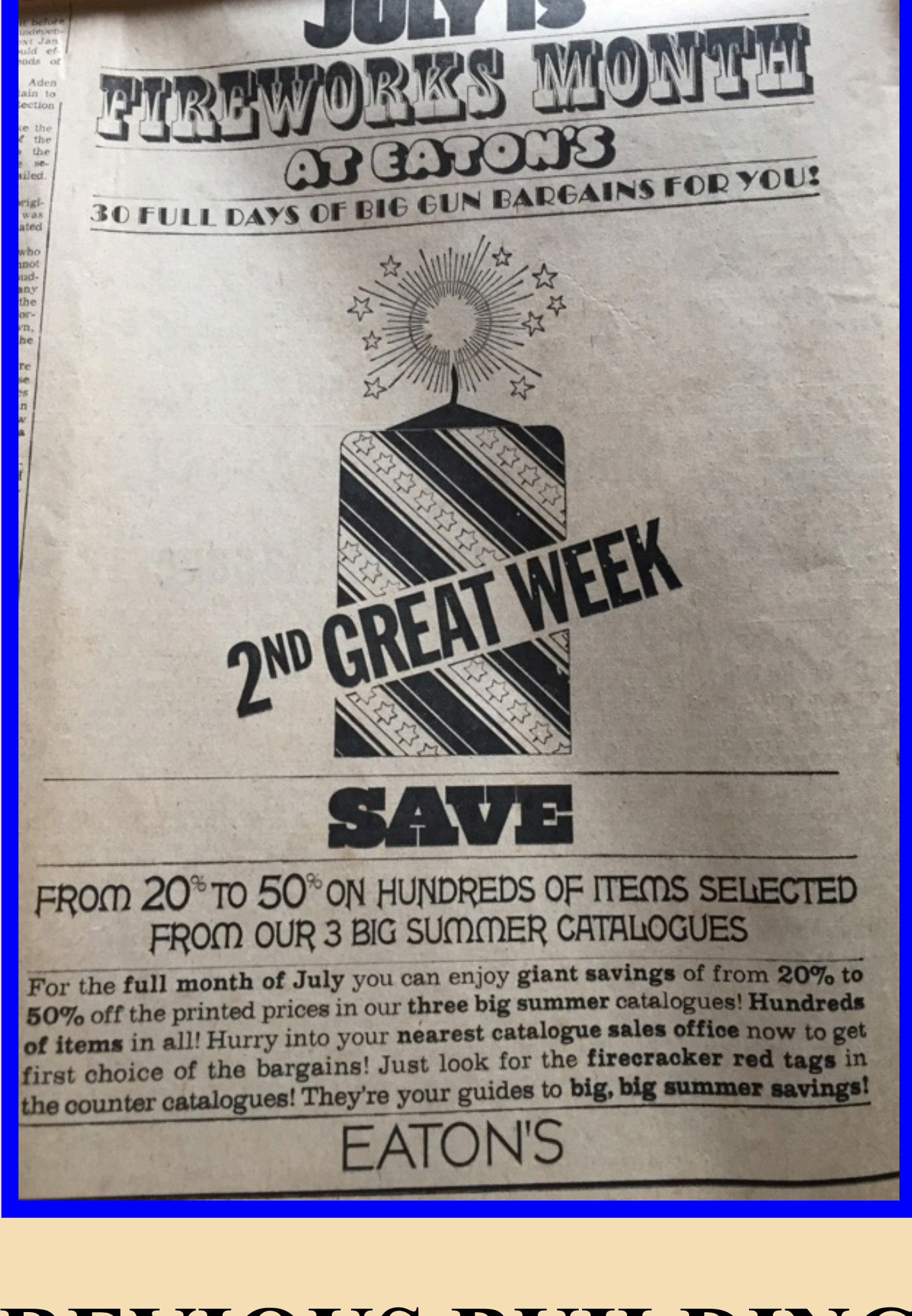
Rosemary's Optical Shop was opened around 2012 by Rosemary Coleman next door at #55. A year or so later, the business moved here. She offers a complete line of eyewear including repairs. "We pride ourselves in Offering Fashion and Function all at the same time!" Eye exams were part of the business in the early years, but recently dropped. Rosemary's closed out this location in early 2015 and moved to the 1000 Islands Mall. Their stay there was short as the mall closed and Rosemary's moved to their current location of 163 Ormond Street in The Town Centre Plaza.

Tina's Golden Comb was launched on May 24, 1983 by Tina Milligan (later Tina Polgar, Tina Gardiner) at the young age of 20. Its first location was at 151 King St. W. It then moved to 143 King St. W. around 2007 and finally here, its third and final location, around 2016. At age 38 she was diagnosed with severe health issue and was advised to quit her business because of the contact with the products that were used. Instead of giving up, she began researching, and found Kevin Murphy Haircare products which were "sulfate free, paraben free and cruelty free". Kevin Murphy has been used since 2005. The business continues to this day.

STOREFRONTS



ADVERTISING



Eaton's Department Store, 1958;

PREVIOUS BUILDINGS

