

# METROPOLITAN BLOCK

c1850s - 1969

## 82 - 86 King St. West

## 2 Storefronts



### DIRECTORY LISTINGS::

**1882:** R. Davis & Sons dry goods (86\*), Kyle & Barr, merchant tailors, dry goods (82\*);  
**1884/1885:** R. Davis & Sons dry goods (86\*), Manchester House Bar, merchant tailor, dry goods (82\*);  
**1886/1887:** R. Davis & Sons dry goods (86\*), Manchester House Grigg & Barr, merchant tailor (82\*);  
**1889/1900:** R. Davis & Sons dry goods (86\*), Lewis & Patterson dry goods (82\*), Orange Hall, Freemason Hall (84u\*)  
**1910/1917:** R. Davis & Sons dry goods (86), Lewis & Patterson dry goods (82), Masonic Hall (84u)  
**1919/1921:** vacant (86), Lewis & Patterson dry goods (82), Masonic Hall (84u)  
**1924:** vacant (86), Patterson dry goods (82), vacant (84u)  
**1926:** Island City Cafe (86), Leverette dry goods (82), Canadian National Amateur Athletic Assn (84u)  
**1929:** Island City Cafe (86), Leverette Store dry goods (82), Commercial Travellers Club (84u)  
**1931/1946:** Island City Cafe (86), Leverette Store dry goods (82), CNR Recreation Assn (84u)  
**1949/1951:** Island City Cafe (86), Walker Stores (82), CNR Recreation Assn (84u)  
**1956:** Island City Cafe (86), Walker Stores (82), CNR Recreation Assn & Dorothy's Dance Studio (84u)  
**1961:** Stewart Hardware (86), Walker Stores (82), CNR Recreation Assn & Dorothy's Dance Studio (84u)  
**1963:** Stewart Hardware (86), Walker Stores (82), CNR Recreation Assn & Dorothy's Dance Studio (84u)  
**1966:** Walker, show room (86), Walker Stores (82), vacant (84u)  
**1968:** nothing showing

The third floor had hall's, two in the 1800s, presumably one larger one after 1900. CNR Recreation Assn & Dorothy's Dance Studio were on the third floor.

**R. Davis & Sons** dry goods store was owned by Ralph Davis, (home: 13 Apple), with sons William H. (home: 13 Church) and Peter (home: 49 Pearl W.). The Davis's were constant at these addresses (modern address #s), found there in 1880s to 1910s. The dry goods store existed and was at this address from at least the early 1880s to 1918. The business advertised "dry good, groceries, hatters & furriers and ready-made clothing".

**Kyle & Barr** merchant tailors, dry goods, were owned by James Kyle and George Barr. Opening in 1881 or earlier, the business was only run by Barr (a death?) after 1883 under the name of **Manchester House**. It seems he wanted a partner as by 1886 he had B.W. Grigg with him in the business, as **Grigg & Barr**. It was gone by around 1888.

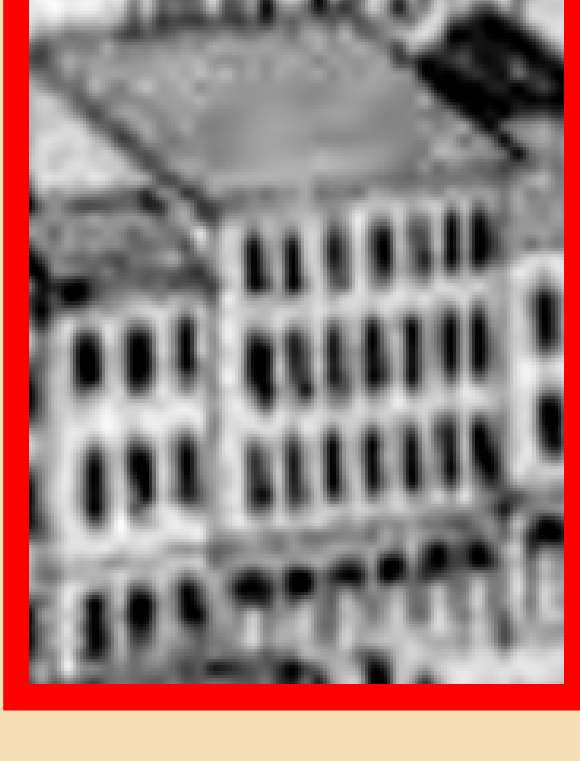
**Lewis & Patterson**, a dry goods store owned by George T. Lewis and Albert M. Patterson was in business here from 1888 to around 1922. The business advertised "dry and fancy goods, ladies ready to wear garments in jackets, skirts, blouses, white wear goods, carpets, oil cloths, curtains, draperies, blinds, as well as mens furnishings, etc.". So successful they were that they expanded to the second floor. Patterson continued on alone as **Patterson** dry goods until 1925.

**Leverette's** was a dry goods store owned by Dalton D. Leverette, who, prior to this, was a salesman at Robert Wright Co. in the Dunham Block. He took over the long time Lewis & Patterson (later Patterson) dry goods outlet on March 29, 1925. The name changed to Leverette's shortly after with them advertising "Women's Ready-to-Wear, House Furnishings, Men's Furnishings, Etc". He lived with his wife Carrie at [114 Water St. E.](#) The long time business of Downey's was acquired around 1927, and it briefly became a second location. With the stock market crash, igniting the Great Depression, the two stores consolidated at this location. Leverette's was taken over by Walker's, c1947, after a 20 year run.

**Walker Stores** were a division of Gordon MacKay & Co., Ltd., a national chain and, after acquiring Leverette's, opening a store here around 1947. It's first manager was William Steele, who lived with his wife Grace at [54 Buell St.](#) They advertised "Dry Goods; Women's and Children's Ready-to-Wear, House Furnishings, Men's Wear, Etc".

(Photo above from The Recorder & Times, 1969)

## POSSIBLE ERROR



A line in the Architects in Brockville page states that the Metropolitan Block was built in 1888 by Architect George Alexander Allan. This seems to be wrong for several reasons. First, a similar list in the Dictionary Of Architects In Canada does not show this. The line is shown below with links to both sites.

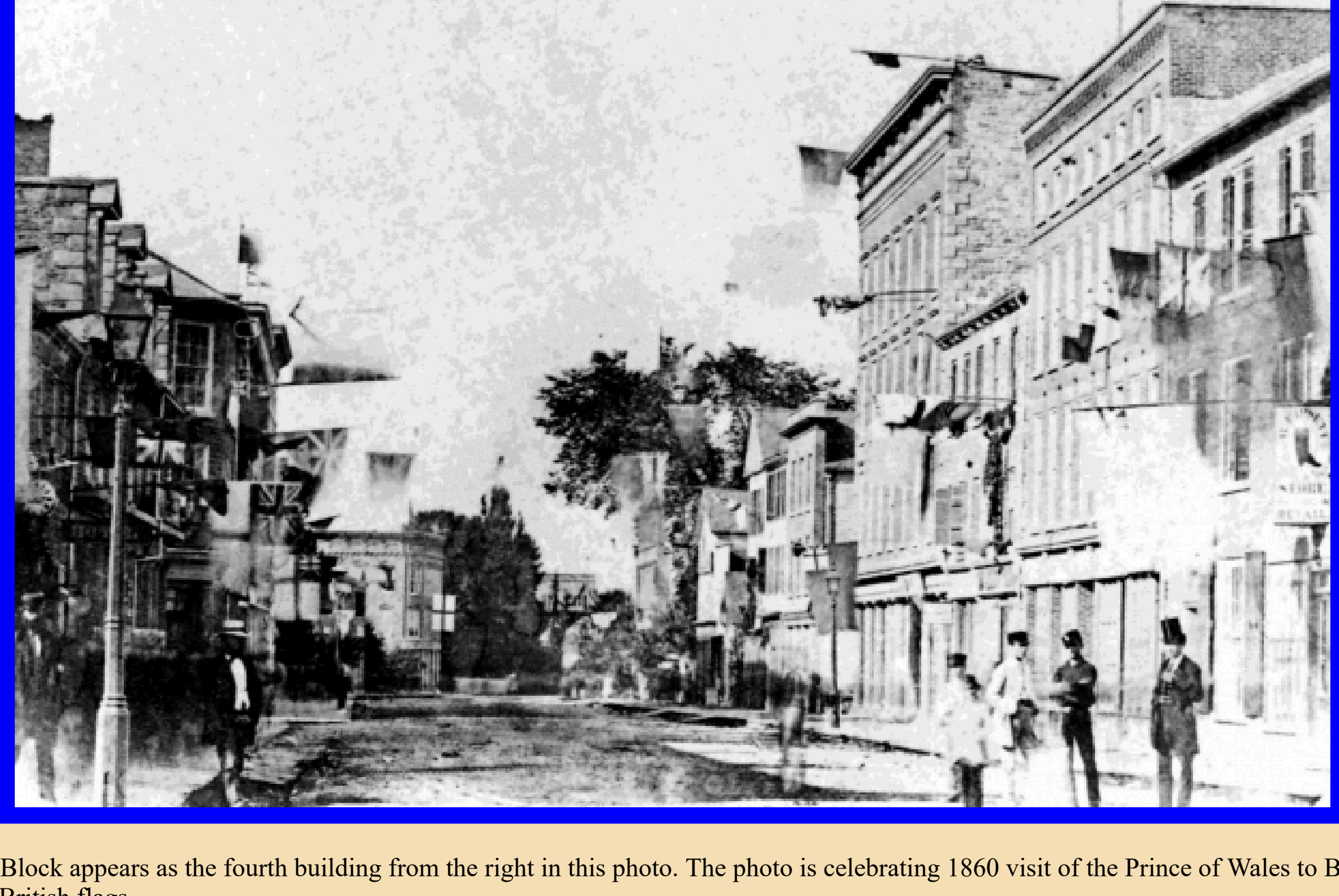
· Metropolitan Block (1888). 82, 84, 86 King St. W., Brockville. Owner Samuel Flint.

[Architects in Brockville](#)  
[Dictionary Of Architects In Canada](#)

Second, the drawing of the building above from Herman Brosius's 1874 drawing map of Brockville shows this building there long before 1888. There were very few four story buildings on King St. at this time and this was the only one between Buell & Court House Ave. Third, R. Davis & Son, dry goods was in the same location in 1885-86 as it was for many years after 1888. If they had to move while a building was demolished and replaced, they probably would have stayed in the other location...not move back.

Perhaps the most important evidence is the photo below. Metropolitan is standing tall and proud, in 1860. I would say this was built in the 1850s. Being 4 stories with a brick facade, I cannot see it being any older.

## METROPOLITAN BLOCK ... in 1860



The Metropolitan Block appears as the fourth building from the right in this photo. The photo is celebrating 1860 visit of the Prince of Wales to Brockville. This is the reason for the British flags.

## STOREFRONTS



## ADVERTISING

**MANCHESTER HOUSE,**  
NO. 205 KING STREET.  
STAPLE AND FANCY  
**DRY GOODS,**  
MILLINERY AND MANTLE-MAKING.  
---  
MERCHANT TAILORING AND GENTS' FURNISHINGS A SPECIALTY.  
**GEO. BARR,**  
SUCCESSOR TO KYLE & BARR.  
McGowan & Son, Commercial, Brockville, Ont.

**MANCHESTER HOUSE,**  
205 KING STREET.  
---  
Staple and Fancy Dry Goods.  
MILLINERY AND MANTLE-MAKING.  
---  
MERCHANT TAILORING & GENTS' FURNISHINGS A SPECIALTY.  
**GRIGG & BARR.**

**Special Announcement.**  
**R. DAVIS & SONS**  
---  
Are showing a large assortment of ---  
DRESS GOODS in all the newest colors.  
BLACK & COLORED SILKS,  
HOSIERY, in all qualities and makes, GLOVES, &c.  
**TAPESTRY AND WOOL CARPETS,**  
OIL CLOTHS, MATS, AND GENERAL HOUSE FURNIS.  
---  
See a call solicited by  
**R. DAVIS & SONS.**

**Ladies' Wool Coat Sweaters**  
  
You will want one of these nice warm wool sweaters that we have just received in colors: Rose, Sage, Paddy and Coral, all sizes, special price \$8.50.  
  
These coat sweaters will be sold very quickly as they are very special quality and style.  
  
**R. DAVIS & SONS**  
Brockville

**BARGAINS IN JANUARY.**  
**They Appeal to Thoughtful Intelligence.**  
Don't be prejudiced. Everybody knows that the newspapers are full of dull advertisements of ridiculous "January Clearing Sales." The days are not long past when the phrase, "Only an advertisement," was sufficient to one damn sured adverting. But there are proper appeals to your intelligence and self interest--advertisements worth your time and care in reading. Such as ours.  
Do not let rapid statements of doubtful facts gain mastery of your mind. Accept truth, even though it come to you as an advertisement. Do this and it will pay you.  
If you are in need of a new dress you certainly should not miss this opportunity. Our winter stock is well assorted and at the prices we now offer them it is greatly to your advantage to buy.  
**Black Dress Goods** Wonderfully attractive price too in this gathering of Dress Goods.  
Black Henriettas, Black Estamine Serges, Bedford Cords, Self Checks, Black Silk Wraps, Black Cheviots, Satin Solids.  
If you have a lurking doubt as to values--compare--there's the certain test.  
TELEPHONE 161. **LEWIS & PATTERSON.**

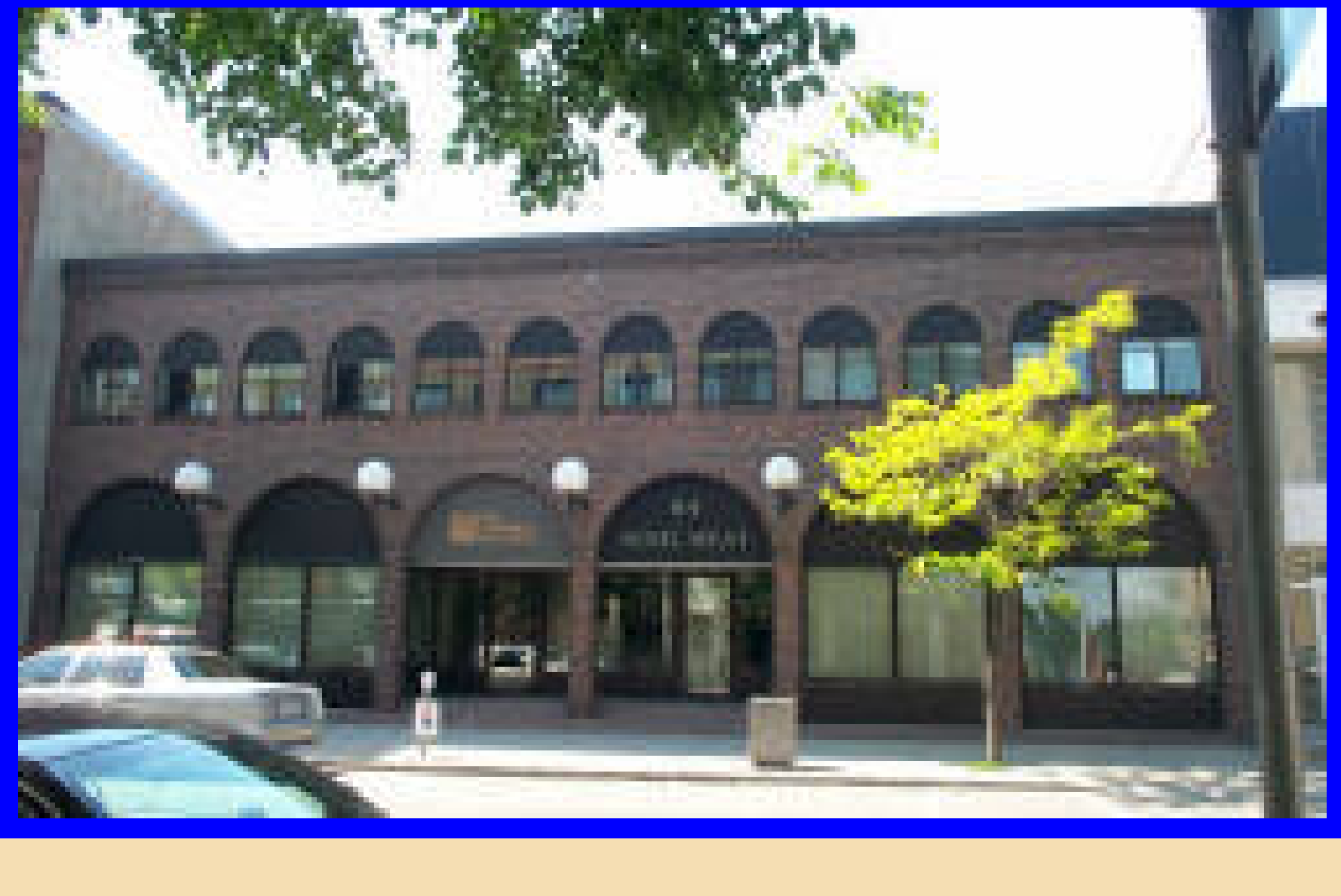
"GOOD FOOD" "GOOD SERVICE"  
  
**ISLAND CITY CAFE**  
86 KING ST. WEST  
BROCKVILLE, ONT.

Manchester House, 1885 & 1887; R. Davis & Sons, dry goods, 1884 & 1917; Lewis & Patterson dry goods, 1893; Island City Cafe;

## THE REPLACEMENT

## FLOWER SHOP BLOCK

c1974



### DIRECTORY LISTINGS::

**1976/1980:** Mr. & Mrs. Creative Hair Styling (84); The Flower Shop (82);  
**1990/1995:** Delilah's Hair Design (84); The Flower Shop (82);  
**1996/1997:** Flowers N' Such by Davis Ltd. (84); vacant (82);  
**2000/2023+:** RBC Dominion Securities (82);

While the Metropolitan Block was demolished in 1969, Vernon's directory shows nothing here as late as 1973.

### Out of Town

### BACKGROUND

## THE BIRTH OF WALKER STORES

### HAMILTON, ON

365 km from Brockville



The fore runner of Walker Stores was Gordon & Mackay, established in 1855, who set up a shop bringing in imported goods on Main St. W. in Hamilton, ON. By 1860, with the railroads now in operation, the shop moved to Toronto. Through the years it became a major wholesaler. After Mackay's death in 1908, James W. Woods took over. Moving into the 1900s, Gordon & Mackay got into manufacturing, buying out a number of factories. In 1911, they bought a couple of retail stores and added to this over the next few years. In 1927, they consolidated all of their retail outlets under one name, "Walker Stores". There was major expansion in the postwar years, with the wholesale expanding across Canada, the retail growing in Ontario. The company remained successful and profitable until the end of the 1960s (\$500,000 profit / 1969). They had acquired an number of Eaton's outlets in 1965 (including Brockville),

As the company moved into the 1970s, everything turned to the worse, with major losses. It was sold to Peoples Department Stores, the Canadian division of Britian's Slater Walker Securities Ltd. At this point Gordon Mackay ceased to exist, after 117 years. Gone with it was Walker Stores, as PDS owned the Canadian rights to Marks & Spencer, through Slater Walker. All Walker Stores were re-branded to Marks & Spencer.

Marks & Spencer was a major British retailer since 1884. It did not do well in Canada and all M&S stores were closed by 1999.