

MJ-65

Joyner Family fonds. - [textual record, graphic material]. - [191-? - 1994]. - 5.00 cm of textual records. - 28 photographs.

Box V-68

Administrative history

Walter L. Joyner was born in Gloucestershire, England. He emigrated to Canada and spent a number of years in the retail industry in Quebec and Ontario. In 1911, he took a trip west to explore possible sites for a retail store. In his opinion, the best choices were Fort Edmonton and Moose Jaw. He chose Moose Jaw. He returned in 1912 and purchased the business of J.M. MacLeod (or M.J. MacLeod in some sources) on the west side of Main Street between Manitoba and River.

The building had been built by M. McBride in 1892 after the previous structure had been destroyed by fire. Another source says the building was constructed by William Chalmers (other sources refer to a James Chalmers) in the 1880's and it survived the fire of 1891. Both may be correct. The date of purchase is unclear but at some point, a second floor was added to Chalmers' building and both were joined to become what Moose Javians knew as Joyner's - Chalmers' half in the north and McBride's half was the south portion. A third, one story section south of McBride's portion was also incorporated into the business at some point.

Walter Joyner reopened the store on June 13, 1912 and during the next few days sold much of the existing stock of merchandise at sale prices. After using these funds to pay MacLeod, he had little left for operational or personal expenses. His personal contacts with eastern suppliers allowed him to obtain merchandise on credit until his cash flow improved. It was one of the largest family owned and operated department stores in Western Canada. The store was nicknamed "The People's Popular Purchasing Place".

His wife, Ellis Virginia Joyner arrived in late June 1912 with their children. There were four children. Two daughters, Maude and Alice and two sons, Charles and Frank Joyner both served overseas during World War I but Charles was killed. Frank returned and later took over the store from his father. Walter died in 1944, followed by his wife in 1948.

Frank Edward Joyner was born in Ottawa in 1897. He took over the family business from his father and operated it for many years. He served on the Moose Jaw City Council and was involved with numerous charitable, sports, business and veterans organizations including the Boy Scouts and St. John Ambulance. He and his wife Lillian had two daughters and a son, Ted, who took over the business from Frank. Frank Joyner died in 1983.

Ted Joyner operated the business until ca. May 1994 when he sold the stock and fixtures (with the exception of the cash cable car mentioned below). His wife Kathy and daughter Kelly were also involved in the family business. Their son Jay studied law and engineering.

In the days of malls and retail franchises, Joyner's Department Store was one of the largest remaining family department stores in Canada. Joyner's also became one of the largest Canadian distributors of blue jeans, selling in smaller quantities to smaller stores who could not afford the bulk purchases of major chains.

Joyner's became a tourist attraction in later years as it had one of only two working electric cable cash carrier systems in Canada. Small metal boxes would be attached to a cable by floor staff to carry cash and sales receipts from each department to a central counter. Change and customers receipts would return the same way. Installed by Walter Joyner ca. 1915, it continued to operate while other businesses switched to pneumatic systems and later to cash registers.

Joyner recognized the importance of the cable cash carrier system to Moose Jaw heritage so it was not sold and remained in the building and was used by later occupants.

The building and contents were among the businesses destroyed in the January 1, 2004 fire that burned the southwest corner of Main and River Streets.

Scope and content

This fond consists of various photographs, correspondence, newspaper clippings, advertising and histories relating to the Joyner family and Joyner's Department Store in Moose Jaw. It does not include business records of the store other than some advertising materials.

Conservation note

This fonds was re-boxed and foldered in 2004.

Note of immediate source of acquisition

Donated to the archives by Ted Joyner, November 20, 1996

Finding aids

See file list.

File List

001 - Histories and related documents [197-? to 1992]

002 - Advertising Flyers [192-?]

003 - St. John Ambulance 1964

004 - Boy Scouts 1961

005 - Newspaper clippings - advertising, family information and historical information primarily re: Moose Jaw history [191-?-1994]

006 - Heritage Canada re: street lamps [1985]

007 - Walking Tour of Downtown Moose Jaw- map and building histories. [198-?]

008 - Mossbank Hotel café menu [ca. 1934]

009 - "Saskatchewan Farmer" (contains Joyner's advertising) 1926

010 - Signs [19-?]

011 - Colour photographs [196-? to 198-?]

012 - Black and white photographs [192-? to 196-?]