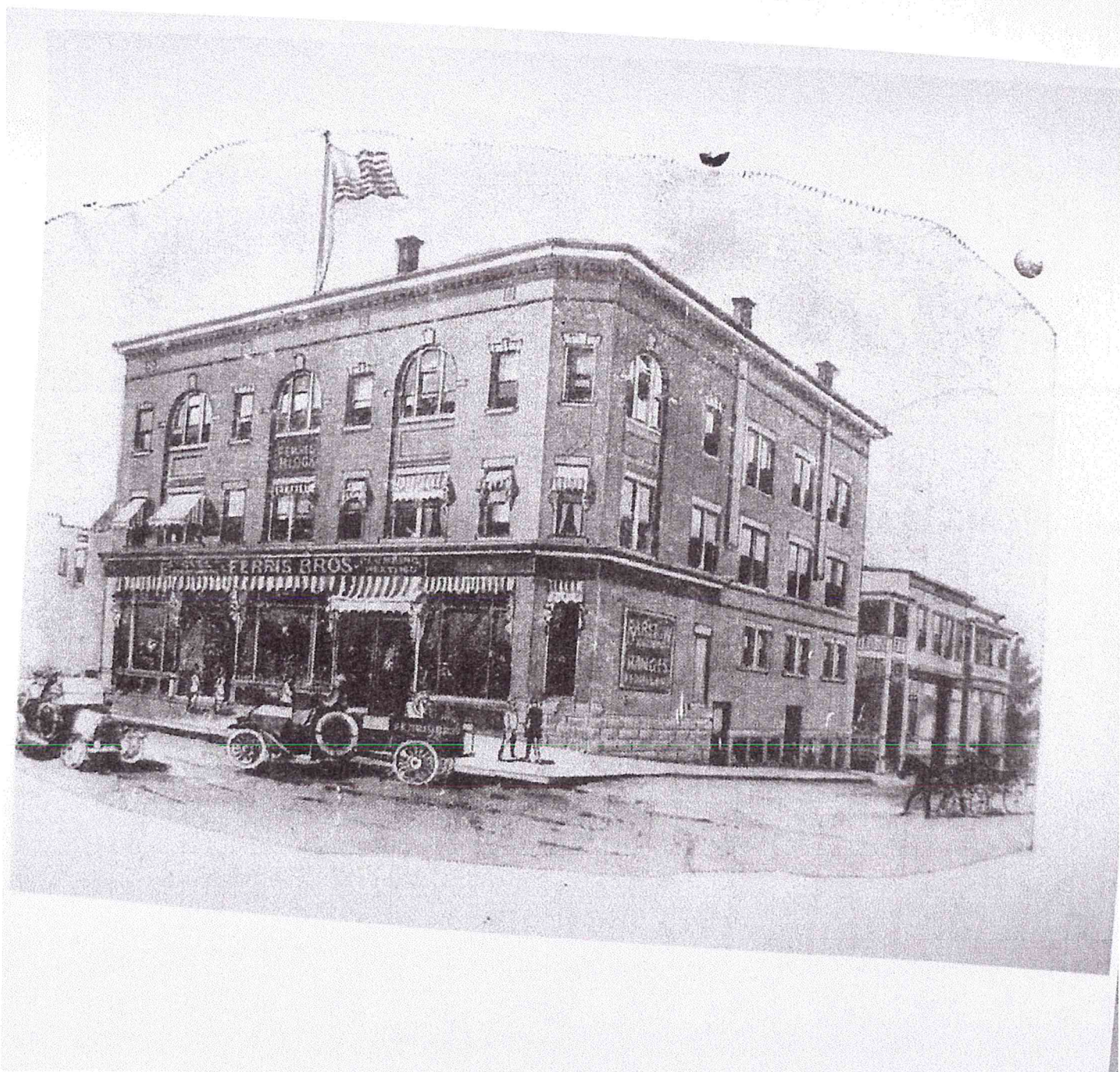


FERRIS BROTHERS 1880-1919



George W.
Ferris

William S.
Ferris

Edwin T.
Ferris

William Moses
Ferris

Charles H.
Ferris

(Photo probably taken about 1885)



PREFACE

In 1988, my father, Chester M. Ferris became curious to learn about the Ferris Brothers Hardware store and the fire which destroyed the buildings on the corner of Main and Oak Street in what was known as South Manchester, Connecticut in 1919.

He had visited with a cousin, Ford Ferris who stated that the move of the building was completed "in one week with all the tenants still in it, with the utilities still connected, and the mover never spilled a drop of water from a full tumbler on the roof during the moving."

He became curious to learn more and in 1988 he was given access to a private collection of bound volumes of the South Manchester News in which weekly reports were recorded, detailing the moving of the Ferris Block.

After searching through the newspapers, Dad photocopied articles pertaining to his relatives business.

Dad wrote to Ford " *that it took over half a year, a hot summer and cold winter. Probably the tumbler was refilled with rain, snow, sleet and may even have frozen solid, unless that clever Mr. Street, the mover, put alcohol in it. At age 77, he was a more experienced man than his peers and had a positive determination than others.*"

"One story told to my father by a nephew of Elmore Watkins was that "Mover Street" halted the move half completed and demanded more money than the contract called for, because he ran out of funds paying his help during poor weather conditions that slowed the work. He was a hero, to the sidewalk observers and reporters."

Recently, I had the pleasure to see the FERRIS BROS. wooden store sign, which is owned privately. It got me thinking about not only the fire but about the buildings and people who lived and worked there.

This compilation of information is the result of memories supplied by relatives, family genealogy and those wonderful newspaper columns which recorded for perpetuity the details surrounding the Ferris Block.

Beth Ferris Albrecht

October 2020

FERRIS BROS. So. Manchester, Ct. 1880-1919

"In 1880 Ferris Bros. opened a hardware and stove store in a new wooden building on the northeast corner of Main and Oak Sts. It was a two-storied, flat-roofed building."

So begins an article published in the Manchester Evening Herald on Friday October 27, 1972. For six years, Knight H. Ferris (1888-1979) wrote a column entitled The Old Codger's Cogitations which was published weekly by the Herald. Knight was one of the sons of Edwin T. Ferris, (1855-1940) a founding partner of Ferris Bros. who along with his father William Moses Ferris and his brothers, George Washington Ferris (1851-1930), William Samuel Ferris (1853-1911), and Charles Henry Ferris (1865-1886) provided parts and labor to the residents of Manchester for many years.

The elder William Moses, (1826-1902) had come to America from England, married Maria Alexander, and worked as a boss carder and spinner in the woolen mills. He invented a governor that regulated the water from the wheels and moved his family around New England, New York, Ohio, and Michigan installing his invention in spinning mills. His last installation was at the Charter Oak Mill in Manchester, Ct. around 1872.

Eldest son, George Washington Ferris, was listed as a Hardware Clerk when he lived in Michigan in 1870. Later censuses show him as a tinner and engineer while living in Manchester. Although he was employed in the Cheney tinshop for 54 yrs., he maintained an interest in the family business.

William Samuels obituary stated that he was a tinsmith by trade and *"remained active in stove, tinware, hardware, plumbing, tinning, jobbing and heating business"* until his death in 1911.

Edwin Thomas Ferris, worked alongside his father and brothers. The youngest brother, Charles Henry Ferris died at an early age in 1886 only 6 years after the store opened. Grandchildren of William Moses were also known to work at the shop. William Moses died in 1902 so for the next 17 years, Edwin was the main employee of the firm.

Here is a description, provided by Knight Ferris, of what the first Ferris Bros. store looked like.

"The store took up the north part of the first floor and the senior William Ferris had an apartment above the store. The south part was two "rents" up and down stairs and facing with their porches on Oak St. sides and an apple tree and grape arbor beyond the building on Oak St. The store itself had a veranda quite wide in both directions and up a couple stair steps above sidewalk level. The sidewalks were only cinders from some boiler room.

The senior Mrs. Ferris had a door yard a little below the sidewalk level and occupying all the space where the Savings Bank of Manchester now stands (1972). Her clothes lines for drying the family washing were along side the Main St. sidewalk."

Knight Ferris "remembers that a fellow on a high wheel bicycle hooked his throat on one of those clothes lines while riding down her foot path. The wheel kept going but he didn't. On Main St. side the lawns were lined with square posts about a foot and a half high connected by loose hanging chains. Many falls were taken by boys trying to walk them, and some men

coming from the saloon next door with similar problems of balance fell over them without trying to walk on them.

Mrs Ferris' yard contained one nice apple tree and was bounded the full length of the north side with a bridge of rose bushes and some flower beds.

A driveway from Oak St. led to the tin and plumbing shop in the rear of the store; also to a two-story warehouse, a barn, a pigpen with two pigs, and a row of woodsheds. This was also the place that held No. 3's original fire hose pumper house. There was also a small shed in which were barrels of oil and gasoline, all to be drawn through spigots and measured with hand cans. There were no filling stations in Manchester then because there were no cars to patronize one.

In the late 1800s, the newspaper of the time was a weekly publication from SOUTH MANCHESTER NEWS published by W. J. Flood, office at 9-½ South Main Street and his residence was the Farr building, Main Street, South Manchester.

Below are some of the tidbits of local happenings.

Year 1894:

Ferris Brothers were advertising in the news that their selling price for barbed and twisted wire was \$2.75 the hundred pounds, and poultry netting for 60 cents the hundred square feet in full roll lots.

They advertised Kellogs Cottage Paints when they hoisted a sign up their flagpole.

A large fat hog belonging to Ferris Brothers was chocked to death last week. The writer forgot to tell the public just how the accident occurred.

E.T. Carrier was putting in the tin pipes for the hot air heating plants in Mrs. W. H. Cheney's two cottages on Wells St. Ferris Brothers furnished Richmond furnaces for same.

Ferris Brothers had the contract to make 36 tin cylinders for the Crosby Manufacturing Company of Glastonbury.

Ferris Brothers had the contract to place a tin roof on the trolley barn in course of construction at the center. Some three rolls of sheet tin were ordered for the job and 500 pounds of solder.

Year 1895:

Ferris Brothers had an order to place a galvanized iron ceiling in the picker room for the Crosby Manufacturing Company of East Glastonbury. They also were to place a tin roof on the Crosby residence. They had just completed the large order for the cylinders for the Crosby mill.

Year 1896:

Ferris Brothers are putting the piping and plumbing for running water in the residence of J. T. Robertson, No. 2 Edward Street. They also are doing the plumbing, piping, and tinning of the addition to Mrs. McDonalds residence on Church Street, are putting a tin roof on the Ogden Spencer house on South Main Street for Frank Cheney, and are doing the plumbing in Wm. Barretts new residence. They have all the business they can swing to at the present time.

Back to Knight H. Ferris' recollections:

"The older wooden store building was moved to the east end of the property and turned to face Oak St. The mover was a Mr. Blinn from Rockville. He had lost one hand and the end of his wrist was covered with a heavy cap of sole leather.

Knight remembers seeing him using that stub to hammer blocks and rollers around under the building. Also interesting to watch was the horse walking around the capstan that was anchored by driving large stakes into the gravel road on Oak St. and the man sitting beneath the capstan-bar pulling away the line as it came off at the bottom. His job was to keep the feed-off taut enough to prevent the other coils surging off.

The second floor became two apartments for the Wm Moses and Wm Samuel families. Two stores were on the first floor. In the east one Frank Balkner had a shoe store. In the west one a Mr. Johnson had a jewelry and clock store. It was later Miss Effie Richardson's millinery store. Once some sort of a reading or seance room and palmist had the east room."

Note: Ferris Bros at some point invested in a red Buick VIM ½ or ¾ ton truck. Knight's brother Maurice was known to drive it.

"After the old original store building was moved back from the corner of Main and Oak Sts. a new three-story brick building was built. A Mr. Mercer was the general contractor. From him, Knight got the job of attending the red lanterns kept where a board fence barricade detoured pedestrians into the streets out of danger of any falling objects. Before going to school in the morning, Knight collected all the lanterns, washed the globes, trimmed the wicks and filled the kerosene oil reservoirs. Just before dark in the evening the lanterns were lighted and hung in the proper places.

Ten cents a day salary. That's seventy cents a week. Who wouldn't go for that? THEN. The new building had three stores on the first floor. Next to Oak St was Wicks and Quinn drugstore. Later Oliver Wicks left and Mr. James Quinn employed Albin Peterson who later had his own drugstore in the north end of the Johnson building when it was built.

The north store was John Porter and later Ferd Williams grocery store. The store in the middle was Ferris Bros. hardware store. It extended to the rear of the building and then in a T shape across in back of the other stores taking up the width of the building there.

In the basement floor was a box-ball bowling alley and the South Manchester Rifle Club had a range for smallbore low power practice and contests.

The second story was occupied by offices and a studio with a small apartment in the rear.

The third floor was lodge rooms and facilities. "

Note: The artists rendition which was produced for providing a print block for making stationery for the firm, shows the face of the old first Ferris Bros wooden store after it was moved to face Oak Street. (refer to front of this document)

The headline in the South Manchester News for Friday, April 11, 1919 read:

**FIRE IN BUSINESS SECTION
DURING EARLY MORNING HOURS**

"The one-story building on Oak street owned by Ferris Brothers and located at the rear of and adjoining the Ferris block at Main and Oak streets was totally destroyed by fire in the early morning hours of Thursday. The interior of the three-story brick block of Ferris Brothers was also much damaged by fire smoke and water. The loss is estimated at \$30,000. The fire alarm was sounded at 12:30 am and the recall at 4 am. Two automobile pumps were sent out by the Hartford fire department with sufficient men to operate them. This was a great help in limiting the fire. Before the alarm was sent in the fire gained considerable lead.

Delay was caused in getting in to action by firemen breaking a valve on the hydrant at Main and Oak streets. Hose three's automobile pump was rendered inoperative because the coupling for the suction pump was missing. That left the work to be done by Hose Four and Hose One. This caused the calling in of assistance from Hartford which was timely and appreciated.

The night was calm and mild. Great throngs of people turned out to witness the spectacle. It is a question of just how or where the fire started. Some declare it originated in Ferris Brothers plumbers repair shop and adjoining the Oak street building and others are of the belief that it started in the barber shop at the east end of the Oak street building.

An explosion of gasoline in Ferris Brothers workshop early in the burning shattered the large plate glass window in Ferris Brothers store on Main street.

During the burning the chimney at the rear of the Ferris block fell but luckily no one was injured thereby. It dropped within the zone of the burning building and not into the street. The firemen did excellent work in saving the wooden garage and storehouse owned by Ferris Brothers adjoining the building. They also limited burning greatly to the Ferris brick block. Fire found passageway through the partitions and under the metal ceilings and was therefore difficult to reach.

William Belknap who is employed by J. H. Quinn & Co. was injured on the head in an automobile collision. He was using Mr. Quinn's delivery Ford removing goods from Mr. Quinn's drug store to the Quinn garage when a touring car crashed into the faithful Ford spilling Mr. Belknap on the ground and crippling the Ford materially. Two young men in the Ford with Mr. Belknap escaped injury.

Bosco Agenu fell and broke one of his arms while endeavoring to remove an automobile from Ferris Brothers garage.

A two-tenament wooden building on Oak street next east of the Ferris building was more or less scorched but the firemen saved it from destruction.

Hot coffee was served the firemen while at their work by Selectman James J. Johnson, proprietor of Johnson's Restaurant on Main Street. It was greatly appreciated.

Persons whom the fire in the wooden building drove out were Delafara Brothers, tailors; Antonio Cicero, barber; Battaglia shoe repairing.

Those in Ferris Brothers brick block damaged by fire, water and smoke, Ferris brothers, stoves, hardware, etc; J. H. Quinn, drugs; War Bureau; Herald sub-station; Knights of Columbus, social rooms; Mrs. Ellen L. Bockus and Ernest Bengston, wife and child; dwelling; Mrs. Bockus, rooming house; E. L. Tucker and mother, dwelling; Dr. John L. Renahan, dentist; Americanization headquarters, Mrs. Florence Hillsberg, director; Rev. George G. Scrivener, D.D. automobile injured.

Most of those doing business in the Ferris Brothers building carried more or less insurance."

SOUTH MANCHESTER NEWS May 2, 1919

More New Stores coming to Oak Street

"Although Ferris Brothers have not as yet cleaned out the debris from the recent fire, and what was once a nice business block is presently but a mass of blackened and charred ruins, it doubtless will be but a short time before phoenix, like a new _____, will arise from the ashes and ruins of that property.

While untimely and unbidden fires have wrought sad havoc with the wooden structure which Ferris Brothers formerly constructed there, it may move them to try a substitute of either brick or concrete in their next venture. It is clear that the wooden buildings at that point are a source of continued danger and a menace to the community. While fires might occur in either brick or concrete structures, the chances are that the damage would not be so great or the destruction so complete as has been the case in the instances when the fiery God worked his vengeance on the Oak Street property of Ferris Bros. "

"Therefore, given modern brick or concrete business buildings by Ferris Brothers, and next adjoining on the east, attractive brick stores and residence property by Mr. Burke, the corner of Oak Street near the junction of Main would be greatly enhanced in attractiveness as well as in value."

"The outlook for Oak Street as a business thoroughfare is coming more and more prominently to the fore. There are men entering into business arena in South Manchester who are prepared to invest their earnings and savings in business properties there. All which have ventured in so far have proved successful. The prospect for the future is now more encouraging."

SOUTH MANCHESTER NEWS Friday May 9, 1919 read:

**WATKINS BROS. BUY FERRIS
BLOCK FOR FURNITURE STORE**

*Trust Co. Acquires Land
for New Quarters..*

*J.W. Hales Co. Also
Paving Way For En-
larged Store*

"Announcement was made this morning that Watkins Brothers bought the Ferris block at Main and Oak streets. That the Manchester trust Company bought the open lot next north of Ferris Brothers store. That the J. W. Hale Company bought from Harry M. Burke the land on Oak street next east of the Ferris property and down to Keeney Place. "

Note: I believe Keeney Place was later renamed Purnell Place

"Watkins Brothers will remodel the Ferris Block and use it in its entirety for their furniture business. The Manchester Trust Company will erect a bank building on the new site. The J. W. Hale Company will remove the two story building on Oak street next east of their store to the opposite side of the street on land purchased from Mr. Burke. The J. W. Hale Company will enlarge their store on the east end by building on Oak Street down to the Circle Theater. Mr. Burke will remove the two-story wooden building that stands on Oak Street next east of the Ferris block to a site on Keeney place. Mr. Burke will also remove the Chinese laundry building from Oak street to Keeney pace. The Ferris block is located right in the heart of the business section of South Manchester. The tenants of the Ferris building are the J.H. Quinn Drug Company, Ferris Brothers hardware and plumbing, the Manchester War Bureau, south end office of the Evening Herald on the main floor. On the second floor are the K of C parlors and the dental office of J. L. Renehan, while to the rear and on the third floor are living apartments. There is also a lodge room on the third floor. It is understood that all tenants will be asked to vacate. Watkins Brothers will use the present building at Main and School streets for a morgue. For undertaking salesrooms, for second hand furniture and also for storage purposes. At present time they maintain storage houses in several different buildings about town and these will be discontinued and the stock moved into their present furniture building. With the acquisition of the Ferris building Watkins Brothers will be enabled to have one of the most modern furniture establishments between New York and Boston. Their business has been growing so fast during late years that additional quarters were greatly needed. The firm had plans for enlarging their present structure in November 1914, but because of the war the building was deferred. Following the Ferris fire Watkins Brothers saw an opportunity to get into the heart of the business section and made an offer to a ferris Brothers which was accepted. The actual sale has not been fully completed as yet. There has been a deposit made on the deal and

the transaction will be complete as soon as deeds can be drawn.

The land which Watkins Brothers purchased has a Main Street frontage of 70 feet and extends back on Oak street for a distance of 132 feet. As soon as the tenants of the Ferris building vacate work of remodeling the Ferris building will begin. There will be four large plate glass display windows on the Main street side with a large entrance. On the Oak street side large plate glass windows will also be put in. Not only will the present brick block be fully occupied by the furniture store, but the three-story addition on the east of the present building will be constructed so the entire site will be covered, excepting for a driveway to the north of the building."

SOUTH MANCHESTER NEWS Friday May 30, 1919

MOVING BUILDINGS TO KEENEY PLACE

"The two-family house which was partly destroyed by fire when the old Ferris block burned recently is being moved to a lot on the west side of Keeney place to make room for the restaurant building which is to be moved from oak street. The removal of the restaurant building will make room for the addition to the store of the J. W. hale company, work on which will be started as soon as possible. It was originally intended to place the partially burned double tenement on Oak street on a line with the Ferris Brothers warehouse, but this plan has been changed. Wednesday afternoon men and teams were set at work making excavation for the building to rest on the lot next south of the double tenement in which Alfred Rollett lives in Keeney place. Mr. Rollett had a garden planted. Mr. Holl, the new proprietor made arrangements whereby Mr. Rollett is not to lose anything by relinquishing the garden space. He was seeing to it that nothing was permitted to go to waste. That is following out the lines of thrift taught to many Americans by the late cruel war. It is intended to move the restaurant building on Oak street to the west side of Keeney place on a line with Ferris Brothers storehouse.

The Chinese laundry is to be removed to the brink of the dry brook at the Oak street bridge. Mr. Burke owns the lot there. He is to have a concrete wall built on the edge of the brook for a foundation to the laundry building. Mr. Burke intends to enlarge the laundry, paint it and improve its appearance generally. By the removal of these buildings Watkins Brothers will have ample room to bring the brick Ferris block around the corner and have its front on Oak street at the junction of Keeney place. "

Note: So another Ferris building is being moved.

SOUTH MANCHESTER NEWS Friday June 6, 1919

**POSSESSION OF PROPERTY
ACQUIRED YESTERDAY**

"Possession of the land on Oak street next east of the Ferris building recently destroyed by fire passed yesterday from the ownership of Harry M. Burke to that of the J. W. Hale Company. This action was followed by the transfer of the plot of land to Watkins Brothers, for whom it was originally intended. The legal documents changed hand yesterday and Mr. Burke received cash in full. When the legal transfer of the Ferris property can be made Watkins Brothers will own the brick block to Keeney place. The footage on Keeney place thus acquired will equal that of the Ferris block on Main street. "

SOUTH MANCHESTER NEWS July 4, 1919

Want Ruins Removed

"The ruins of the Ferris building on Oak street have become an eyesore to people living in that vicinity and many complaints about this matter have reached the selectmen. At Wednesday night's meeting it was voted to notify the owners of the property to have the debris removed and the premises put in better condition. Watkins brothers came into possession of the property Tuesday. It will devolve upon them to have the premises put in order."

SOUTH MANCHESTER NEWS July 4, 1919

Ferris Block and land Officially Transferred

" The deeds transferring the Ferris block and lands at Main and Oak streets into other hands were exchanged last Tuesday. Watkins Brothers then became the owners of the Ferris block and the land extending east on Oak Street to what used to be the Purnell property. The Manchester Trust Company at the same time became the owner of the open lot directly north of the Ferris block on Main street.

For nearly 40 years Ferris Brothers owned the property at Main and Oak streets starting in business in a small way as stove dealers and tanners. This business they developed and enlarged by the addition of plumbing, steamheating, hardware, cutlery, paints, etc. The recent fire changed all of their plans and they finally decided to go out of business.

E.T. Ferris and George W. Ferris are the surviving members of the original firm. Their father William Moses Ferris, and a brother, William S. Ferris were also members of the firm at starting. Those to have passed from the scenes of world activities. George W. Ferris is now and has for a goodly number of years been employed in the tin shop of Cheney Brothers. He did not give scarcely any of his time to the work of Ferris Brothers in so far as actual activities were concerned. He was

always in touch with the business however in an advisory capacity."

"Ferris Brothers were pioneers in the business section of Main street, South Manchester. They were among the first to start business north of Main and Charter Oak streets. In the old days Cheneys store practically dominated all of South Manchester in a merchandising sense. This applied particularly to Main street. The world do move however and things have wonderfully changed. The trend to the north has been and now is strong and the old corner of Main and Charter Oak streets has lost most of the whilom importance as a business center.

SOUTH MANCHESTER NEWS August 8, 1919

CLEARING AWAY ON OAK STREET P. CALHOUN BUSY

"Patrick Calhoun and a number of workers are actively engaged clearing away the wreck caused by the burning of the Ferris block on Oak street some months ago. The work of destruction is rapid. Soon there will be neither track nor trace of the ruin. The brick crosswalls were pulled down with horses. The wooden partitions were torn away by men. The cinders charred wood and other evidences of the wreck are being carted away. Householders on Keeney place near by have taken possession of the charred boards and timbers. These are piled up in back yards and will be cut into size for kindlings and housewarming generally.

Mr. Calhoun has the contract to make the excavations on Oak street and construct foundations. The Ferris block at Main and Oak streets and to be removed to Oak street and Keeney place. When in its new position it will face on Oak street, the length of the building will be north and south. This will leave a large space for the proposed new furniture store which Wartkins Brothers are to erect at Main and Oak streets, fronting on Main. There have been many delays about getting this work started. Now that it has got underway it will be pushed steadily forward.

Ferris Brothers experienced considerable difficulty in disposing of merchandise which was saved from the burning. This has been practically accomplished however and they have totally vacated the premises. They have opened an office in the Park Building where they can be found during business hours.

The work of moving the J.H.Quinn drug store is being conducted by Watkins Brothers. Merchandise from the Quinn cellar is being transferred to the new location in the Orford hotel building where Mr. Quinn is to do business where Mr. Quinn is to do business hereafter. This is being prepared for his use. He has agreed to relinquish his lease in order that Watkins Brothers may not be delayed in erecting their proposed new furniture block."

SOUTH MANCHESTER NEWS August 15, 1919

STOREHOUSE SOLD

"Robert J. Smith and Angelo Bosco have bought the large wooden building used by Ferris Brothers as a storehouse and will have it removed to Oak and Cottage streets on the Manning lot which they recently purchased. Messrs. Bosco and Smith intend to remodel the building into two stores on the ground floor and tenements on the second floor. "

SOUTH MANCHESTER NEWS November 21, 1919

TURNING FERRIS BLOCK

"The three-story Ferris block which has been moved from Main and Oak streets to Keeney court and Oak street is now undergoing the process of being turned so that the front of the building will face on Oak street. This will require a quarter turn of the whole building. The work is attracting a great deal of attention."

SOUTH MANCHESTER NEWS November 28, 1919

HOUSE MOVER STREET

NEARING FINISH

"House Mover Street keeps steadily on at the task of moving the three-story Ferris brick block to its new location at Oak street and Keeney place. At present he is making the turn. The task assigned to Mr. Street continues to attract much interest and attention. It is the largest, most complicated and most dangerous project of the sort ever undertaken in town. Expert Engineers told Watkins Brothers in the first place that the building could not be moved and refused to take the contract. This after an exhaustive examination. Mr. Street differed with these men. He determined that the building could be moved. He backed up his belief by naming a price for the work. This was accepted by Watkins Brothers. Mr. Street thereupon set himself out to perform the difficult and dangerous experiment. Thus far he has been successful. He has demonstrated that his findings are correct. Indications point to the successful completion of the undertaking. Everyone here hopes that Mr. Street may accomplish the task. He is a man 77 years old. The fact that he dared to assume such a responsibility is sufficient proof of his extraordinary ability, skill, pluck and grit as a mover of buildings. He dares to lead. "

SOUTH MANCHESTER NEWS December 5, 1919

MAIN AND OAK
BUSY CORNER

Pushing Improve-
ments Along as
rapidly as Possible

Building Concrete Founda-
tions for Watkins Brothers new Business Block
making Excavations for
Ferris Block

"Aceto & Smith are pushing along the concrete foundations for the new Watkins block at Main and Oak streets with all possible dispatch. The west, north and south walls are receiving attention. The frames are in place on the three sides named. The east side is purposely kept open until the last. This is done in order to permit access to the interior of the basement. What with the concrete layers, carpenters and laborers at work at the intersection of the streets named above, considerable activity is manifest there every fair day. It so chanced that the weather has been propitious most of the time during the month of November.

Outside work has not been hindered to any appreciable extent because of stormy weather. The builders have been greatly favored in this much. Patrick Calhoun has a force of men steadily at work digging the new foundations for the Ferris block which is to be located at Oak street and Keeney place. He is endeavoring to make the excavation in time for the concrete foundation builders to follow his work, men and teams are pushing that part of the task along as expeditiously as possible. Building Mover Street has now turned the brick Ferris block around so that it faces on Oak street instead of on Main. It is located directly west of the proposed basement which is now being excavated at the junction. As soon as the new foundation can be prepared Mr. Street will push the brick block easterly until it rests directly over the foundation. The lowering down of the building will be the last of the operations which he has to perform in the Herculean task which he cut out for himself. Everybody about town is hoping to see his efforts crowned with success. He showed grit, determination, skill and goodcheer in undertaking the task. The community at large will unite in rejoicing with him when his labors there shall have been successfully completed.

SOUTH MANCHESTER NEWS February 20, 1920

LOCAL PARAGRAPHS

"Building Mover Street has been slowly but surly and safely lowering the Ferris block down to the required level for the new foundation at Oak street and Keeney place. This work has been going steadily on for several weeks past. It will be recalled that Mr. Street removed the Ferris block from its station of many years at Main and Oak streets. This has been a long drawn out task. Mr. Street is to be congratulated upon the success which is greeting his efforts."

Notes by B.F.A.

It's important to note that Ferris Bros. wasn't just a building but an important business established in South Manchester when the "city of village charm" was just in it's 'toddler' age (1880s). The United States had just celebrated their centennial. North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana and Washington were added as the 39th-42nd states. The Coca Cola company had just been incorporated, and the Eiffel Tower was completed in Paris.

People celebrated birthdays and marriages. Many experienced tragedies in their lives. In Johnstown Pennsylvania, a dam collapsed and killed more than 2200 people. In the 1890s an economic depression brought on the panic of 1893 and there were many industrial strikes.

The 1890s saw mass production of the automobile, the women suffragettes were formed. Susan B. Anthony spoke at Cheney Hall, which the Cheney's had built as a cultural center and later was used as a hospital during the flu epidemic of 1918. The Cheney's operated Silk Mills and many people were employed by them, lived in houses built by them, shopped at the Cheney Store on Charter Oak Street and rode on the train that the Cheney's built.

In the 1900 decade, US President McKinley was shot at the PanAm exposition in Buffalo and died 8 days later.

The Ferris Bros. weren't exempt from tragedies, such as deaths of members of the firm as well as other family members. The elder William Moses Ferris died in 1902. The first son Charles had died in 1886 just 6 years after the business opened. William Samuel died in 1911 leaving George Washington Ferris and brother Edwin Thomas Ferris to manage the firm. George was employed by Cheney Bros. in their tinshop for over 54 yrs so he was more a "silent partner".

Edwin raised his family in South Manchester, his son Knight being the "Old Codger" whose cogitations graced the pages of the local newspaper for many years.

Edwin was the main force behind the success of the business for many years. There were many prominent townspeople of that day who utilized the resources of Ferris Bros. Below are only a few of the names taken from a receipt book the business produced in 1916:

The Town Of Manchester purchased 5 gal Raw Oil, chalk line, 1 doz. Hose rubber washers and 1 cut saw for a total of \$6.65

Mr. R. E. Richard of Bolton bought 4 crates of berry baskets

Mrs. F. Spencer of 195 Spencer St. purchased wicks for her Perfection Stove for \$.30

The Pentacostal Church purchased a lawn mower for \$5.50

Boy Scouts- Austin Cheney purchased an enamel coffee pot for \$1.50

Mrs. W. C. Cheney bought a nickel plated soap and sponge holder and 1 doz hooks for \$1.03

Other names of customers were ;

Ralph Cone

W. J. Crockett

W. S. Coburn

Case Bros.

Wm. England

Hilliard Mfg. Co.

C.C. Holmes

J. W. Hale Co.

House and Hale Co.

Italian American Club

Keith Furniture

Manchester Lumber Company

9th School district (Lincoln)

and many more

SOURCES

OLD CODGERS COGITATIONS - published by the Manchester Evening Herald located at 13 Bissell St. Manchester, Ct. Column written by Knight H. Ferris and published from April 11, 1970 till March 19, 1976

Knight grew up during the years when Ferris Bros was a thriving business in So. Manchester. He claimed to have been conceived during the blizzard of 1888 when approximately 50 inches of snow covered New England in 3 days. His father, Edwin T. Ferris could not make his way from their home on the corner of Cottage and Maple Street to the store due to the deep snow.

Photos and statistical family data, The Ferris Family genealogy and family member recollections.

The Manchester News, established in 1893 and published until April 1922, was an eight page weekly and from then until May 1923 as semi-weekly. At the latter date it was converted into a daily and its title was changed . In 1922 under the management of Joseph W. Flood, son of the founder, the News moved into new quarters on Cottage Street. As a daily the News was not successful and publication suspended in July 1924
(ref: The History of Manchester page 161 1924)

The excerpts and articles cited in this document can be found in South Manchester News published by W. J. Flood, office having been located at 9-1/2 South Main Street and his residence was the Farr Building, Main Street, South Manchester, Ct.

Volume 27 Feb 28, 1916 thru Feb 20, 1920 (No. 1 thru 52)



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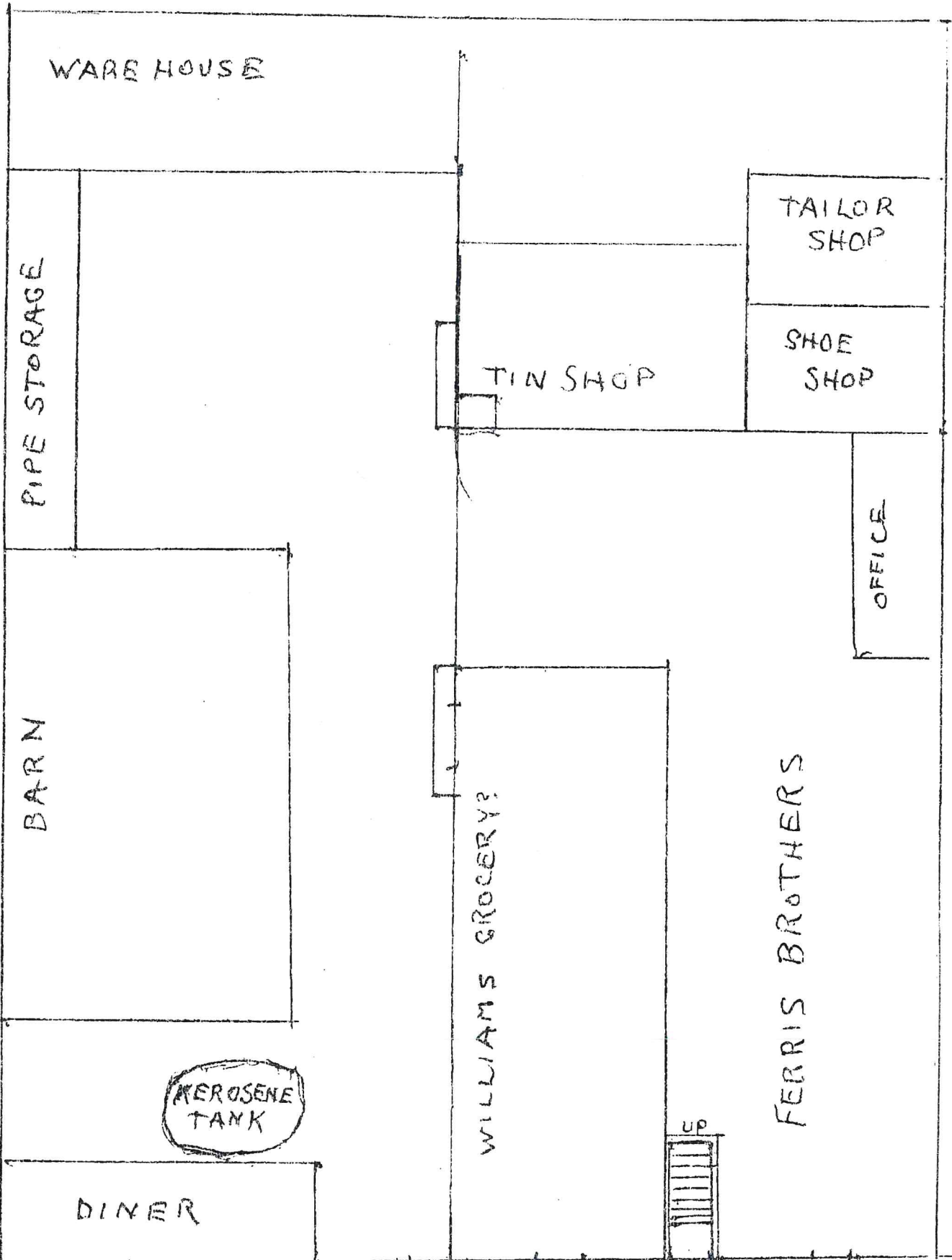
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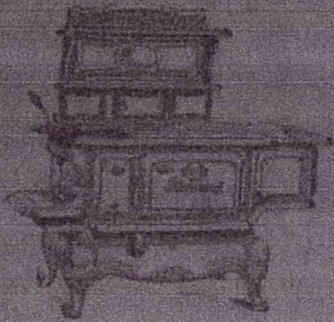
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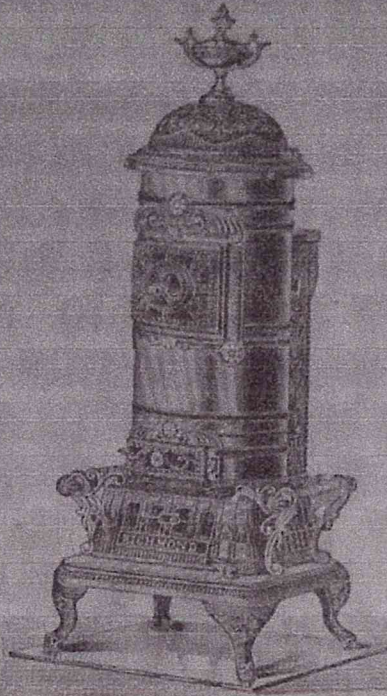
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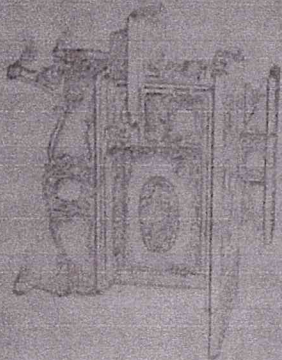
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