

Arterial Scrapbook No. 13



ATTACKED FROM REAR - The Main St. front of these old structures was maintained to the end and passersby went their way without awareness that the demolition squads were attacking from the rear line. The several buildings were given conformity as the Empire Market was expanded in the 1940's.

Origin of the structures is lost along this section of East Main St., one of the oldest business sections of Amsterdam, and the only timing standard would be geared to the question: How long before the Gay Nineties? Main St. traffic will connect with the planned Arterial lanes at this point. (Donlon)

Long Familiar Main St. Block Going

Age of buildings on the south side of East Main St. from Bridge St. east offers opportunity for guessing.

Adding to difficulty of finding reliable records is the fact that face-lifting has taken place from time to time, not only display windows altered frequently but also the fronts of the structures have been changed, both individually and in combination.

What the present generation will recall as "The Empire Market" would be recognized as easily, or better, by Old-Timers quick to refer to "Wilkie & Platt's." Actually, retailing history shows that there were five separate stores in the "Empire" — bearing the addresses of 7-9-11-13-15 East Main Street.

Shoppers of the Gay 90's found here, easterly 7 to 15, the William D. Reese furniture store; John J. Hand, dry goods and carpets; James Adcock, shoemaker; James L. Shuler, shoes; and Foster & Charles.

At the turn of the century, James Shuttleworth was selling furniture at No. 7 and east was the clothing firm of Quiri & Wilkie. Next was William B. Foster's haberdashery, known to a generation as "Foster, the Hatter."

A few years later, in 1905 Quiri & Wilkie gave way to Wilkie & Platt that extended along the main artery for a quarter of a century before fading as the John H. Wilkie store. Foster's Hat Store at No. 15 was maintained over most of the same period.

Familiar over a couple of decades at Nos. 13-15 East Main, during the latter part of the W. & P. regime was the Endicott-Johnson store. Shoe store occupancy was concurrent with that of the Empire Market occupancy at 7-11, intermittently from 1934.

Various shops, including the Smart Shop and Martin's Speciality were in and out of the mercantile row until finally the entire 7-15 area was used by the Schaeffer Stores, which were later taken over by Grand Union.

The central location of these buildings assured steady occupancy of the second and third floors through the years, and again many names familiar to Amsterdam business life are recorded among occupants of the upper sections of these buildings.