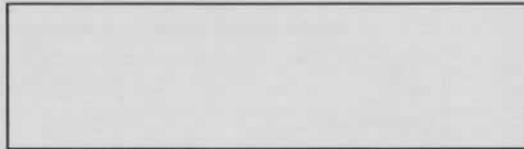


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"Peanut" Cline's Clothing Store

At about the time of his father's (Lawson Cline) death in 1899, Frank Cline, b. 1865, was in business at 440 W. Main. The two-story frame structure housed his men's clothing store. It was built c.1873 as part of the Smith-McPherson Addition with the coming of the railroad. A large wood awning over the plank walk protected shoppers. In the mid-20th century this was removed having been declared a public hazard. During the 1920's local apples were stored in the basement which made for a pleasant scent each fall in the store above.

Arthur M. Boylan joined the business for 14 years in 1913. Cline-Boylan Co. ran an ad in the April 8, 1914, issue of the Brighton Argus "Our stock of wool shirts consists of three of the best makes on the market, including the Moore garment with patent sleeves." In May 1920, the Argus noted "F.M. Cline was over to Battle Creek for two or three days on a tailoring trip." Althou' Frank was a tailor, fitting local men for well-tailored suits, he dressed in his own unique style wearing "....dark grey, baggy trousers and a blue work shirt over which he wore a button front sweater. Wide elastic armbands kept his sleeves pushed up. He wore ankle tennis shoes and when he walked to the post office or bank he seemed to bounce" writes Pat Brady Convery before her passing October 16, 2011.

Pat's father, Joe Brady, had a grocery and meat market across the street at 431 W. Main. She regularly worked in the store while attending Brighton High School. She recalled Frank often coming to Brady's store to purchase groceries. His usual request for "....two thirds of a dozen brown, not white, eggs... sent me scurrying behind the walk-in meat cooler to figure out what two thirds of the current price of eggs would be." Her father one day asked, "Frank why do you always buy two thirds of a dozen eggs?" " That's what my pan holds" he replied.

Perhaps because of Frank's partiality to peanuts which he always carried unshelled in his pockets, and the floor of his store was always cluttered with shells, he earned the nickname "Peanuts Cline". Cline also lived in the store, sleeping on the counter. Pat Brady Convery continues "It was impossible to see inside Frank's store through his front window. The interior was always dim and the windows cluttered with merchandise. Inside a long wooden counter ran the length of the store. Most of it was piled high with heavy work pants, sweaters, hats and long underwear. At the far end of the counter it was clear. Under the edge, hidden from view, was a cash drawer which opened when touched at a special spot. ...He recommended wide suspenders during the winter as they were warmer."

'Peanut' lived rather like a hermit but trusted everyone. Brady many times warned him to be more careful. Often Brady left a customer to quickly make change for the \$20.00 bill Peanut brought for change, because Brady knew the clothing store had been left unattended. April 26, 1949, two brothers, believing 'Peanut' had cash in the store, beat him so badly he died two days later. The cash drawer was found by police and Brady was able to touch the hidden spring revealing barely \$100.00. Main Street merchants, customers and many other local residents displayed the respect they felt for Frank M. Cline at his burial in Calvary Cemetery. Following Cline's murder the old store was repeatedly remodeled and renovated serving as the Argus office, medical offices, bakery, café, etc. , before being demolished in March, 2006.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from: Patricia Brady Convery writings; collected obituaries; Brighton Argus clippings.)

Additions/corrections requested, 810-229-6402