

Town of Stettler

# Downtown Historical Walking Tour



- ♥ Begin at the north end of Main Street (Town Office).
- ♥ Follow the map enclosed.
- ♥ Discover Stettler's historical downtown.
- ♥ Learn about trademark businesses that operated in Stettler, some even to the present day!

## Introduction

### Welcome to Stettler—the Heart of Alberta!

The town of Stettler was incorporated in 1905 and named after the beloved Swiss immigrant Carl Stettler. The initial settlement was 2 miles east, called Blumenau. Due to the Canadian Pacific Railway not being in close proximity, Carl Stettler put Blumenau on skids and moved it to what is now known as Main Street.

In less than six months, Stettler grew to host 70 businesses and over 700 residents. For the next several years, Stettler would be ranked as the fourth-largest trading centre in the province.

Early in its time, Stettler faced some devastating fires. The current site of the Stettler Hotel (50 St. 50 Ave.), housed two previous hotels that were destroyed by fires in 1909 and 1948. Stettler has also seen pillars of its community destroyed by fires such as, the school and the ice rink.

Stettler takes great pride in Main Street's vibrancy. On Main Street you will discover many locally-owned businesses at historic sites.



Carl Stettler  
1806-1919



Town of  
Stettler Crest

## What's Inside...

- ♥ 1. The Brick
- ♥ 2. Sutton Landmark Realty
- ♥ 3. Stettler Hotel
- ♥ 4. The Royal Hotel
- ♥ 5. 5011 50 Ave
- ♥ 6. Stettler Post Office
- ♥ 7. Royal Canadian Legion
- ♥ 8. Stettler IDA
- ♥ 9. Tom's Boots & Western Wear
- ♥ 10. Johnson- Connor Agencies
- ♥ 11. 4919 50 Ave.
- ♥ 12. Brennen Funeral Home
- ♥ 13. Stettler United Church
- ♥ 14. One Better Hair Design
- ♥ Buildings that have since been demolished



## 1. The Brick



5015 50<sup>th</sup> St.

Built in 1915, Jacobson and Petherbridge ran J&P Foods. This grocery store was fondly referred to as “the jump and push”. G&H Foods also operated from this site and was a great asset to Stettler.

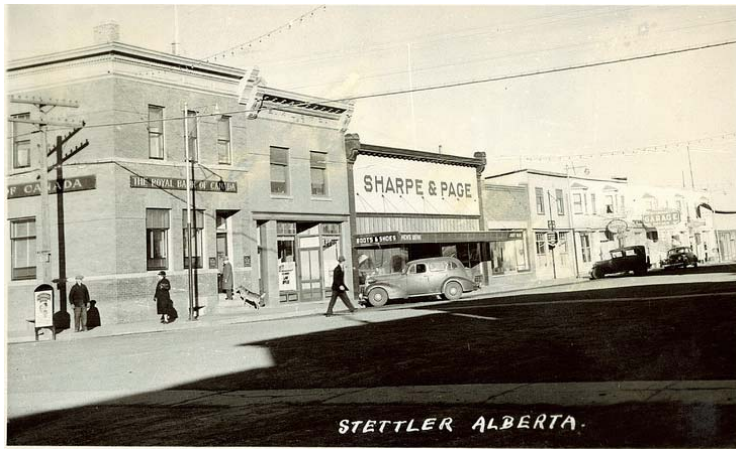
Jimmy's Hardware previously occupied the corner lot (south of J&P Foods). A town resident would have no problem finding an elusive item in the 3000 sq. ft. of store space. The original building hosted three suites upstairs. In 1986 the building was demolished and a new building was added onto the existing Home Hardware, combining the two properties. The building was then occupied by SEARS Canada as Home Hardware moved across the street.

The building add-on was occupied by Superfluity Thrift Store, but the not-for-profit business recently re-located to another building downtown. The main building is currently home to The Brick.

A current photo of The Brick Stettler



## 2. Sutton Landmark Realty



5010 50<sup>th</sup> St.

Built in 1938 as far as memory serves, this building has been the home of a butcher shop, a car dealership, an insurance agent, flower shop, and realtor.

B.J. Johnson Sr. operated his business here and when his son took over, a partnership was formed; creating Johnson-Connor Agencies. This business has become one of Stettler's prominent insurance agencies, still in operation today.

In 1944 the building was sold to Fran's Flowers & Fudge. The smell of flowers and fudge were always welcome on Main Street! In 2010, Fran retired, after 16 years in business.

Today the building is home to the local Sutton Landmark Realty offices.

**Sutton Realty on Main  
Street**



## 3. Stettler Hotel



5001 50<sup>th</sup> St.

In 1906, Stettler's founder Carl Stettler built the first of the three hotels that would occupy this site, The National Hotel. The National Hotel had burned down in 1908; a second hotel with the same name was being rebuilt in its place when Carl Stettler sold the hotel to R.L. Shaw who completed the building in 1909. The Stettler Hotel would be built in 1948, after the second hotel was also burned down by a second fire. The Stettler Hotel is still in this location and is still open today.





## 4. Royal Hotel



4919 49<sup>th</sup> St.

John Good was the first recorded owner of the Royal Hotel. Liquor licences and a listing of the names of all the owners and managers of the hotel can be found on site dating all the way back to 1925!

In 1946 Edward Ambrose Hart, one of the owners of the Royal, had the foresight to build his own residence nearby in such a fashion as to house the overflow from the hotel.

Heavy tamarack posts were used as the foundation for this sturdily-built hotel. Tamarack posts are made of extremely hard wood, and although they are not pressure treated, they remain strong and rot-free for many years. They can still be found holding the building secure and upright to this day. This has been beneficial as the downtown area has suffered some major fires in early history.

A large addition was added to the building in 1983 to house a restaurant, and now a laundromat.

Current photo of the Royal  
Hotel



## 5. 5011 50<sup>th</sup> Ave.



5011 50<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Vern Richardson, a local plumber, constructed the original building in 1925 and ran his business from the main floor. Richardson was responsible for the training of many early Stettler plumbers. Dr. Wright was a dentist who kept an office on the top floor of the building, in business until 1952.

Over the years, this building has changed hands numerous times, some businesses include: Heartland Promotions, The House of Beauty, Stettler Regional Child Care, and Alicia's Little Nail Place & Salon.

The building is currently vacant.

Alicia's Little Nail Place  
& Salon



## 6. Stettler Post Office



**5104 50<sup>th</sup> Ave. (Post Office)**

Constructed in 1954, the Town of Stettler's Post Office was directed by Jim McQuarry, the first postmaster.

The building was the original home of the Stettler RCMP detachment. The south side of the top floor housed living quarters for the Sergeant and other officers. The jail cells were located here as well, where the notorious Robert Raymond Cook (the last man hung in Alberta) spent plenty of time before being transferred to Ponoka for mental assessment.

The basement of the building houses a bomb shelter, a small room which remains stocked with water and rations to this day. Also in the basement was the RCMP firing range, which the Stettler Rifle & Pistol Club uses presently.

## 7. Royal Canadian Legion #59



**5010 50<sup>th</sup> St.**

Constructed in 1955 this building was the original home of Jenkins Groceteria.

After being purchased by Stettler & District Investors, the building was converted into a recreation center including a bowling alley and a pool hall. Clark Burlingham, the towns' first recreation director, was instrumental in establishing this Rec Center.

In 1973 the Royal Canadian Legion #59 converted the building to a dining room and canteen. They purchased the building in 1976. Major renovations were completed in the early 1980's.

The Legion began leasing the restaurant portion of the building to private operators. They currently operate the whole building.



**Royal Canadian  
Legion #59**

## 8. Stettler IDA



4934 50<sup>th</sup> St.

Jenkins Groceteria constructed this building in 1950 after one of Main Street's infamous fires, which claimed many buildings over the years. In 1956, Jenkins sold the building to John Ware, a local jeweler. After some renovations, he relocated his business from down the street. Wares Jewelers occupied half of the main floor as a wall was built and the Betty Shop leased the other half for a 20 year period.

Five offices were set up in the basement of the building, leased to hairdressers, the Fish and Game Board, Manpower Office, and a cemetery plot sales office (referred to as the "Graveyard Man"). The upstairs of the building was residential living space.

In 1958, a large exterior neon sign was constructed. Ware had written a letter to Rolex asking for assistance with the sign costs. Rolex agreed with the proposal and a company out of Calgary supplied the sign. The residents of Stettler have depended on this accurate time-telling device for upwards of 57 years!

After 66 years of serving the community of Stettler, the Wares retired and sold the building. The building currently houses Stettler's IDA Pharmacy.

## 9. Tom's Boots and Western Wear



4925 50<sup>th</sup> St.

This building was constructed in 1920 and was owned by the Randon family. History indicated that Mr. Adams then owned it from 1922-1925 at which time it was sold to Mr. Basil Armstrong.

Previously occupied by Robinson Stores, David Melvin purchased the building in 1976 and moved Mel's Shoes from its previous location.

The building is now occupied by Tom's Boot & Western Wear and is conjoined to the building directly north, which includes the rest of the modern business space.





## 10. Johnson-Connor Agencies



4921 50<sup>th</sup> St.

Built in 1909, this building was the original home of the Stettler Medical Clinic.

Over the years the building has housed a number of downtown businesses including, Lou's Fashions, Grahams Jewelers, and currently Johnson-Connor Agencies.

Serving the community since 1987, Johnson-Connor Agencies has been a long-standing business in the Stettler downtown community.



**The current  
Johnson-Connor  
Agencies**

## 11. 4919 50<sup>th</sup> St.



4919 50<sup>th</sup> St.

This downtown office building was constructed in 1907 with the main floor later occupied by a real estate agency run by Mr. Ernie Salt. This was also at one time a dry-cleaning outlet and a man's clothing store.

Prior to the 1950's the upstairs housed the law firm Benner & Feir. Feir left the practice to join the military and upon his return he was appointed a judge in Lethbridge and later became Chief Judge for the south half of Alberta.

In 1954 the law office of Legg & Sloan took over the building. They stayed in partnership until Mr. Legg moved to Edmonton to become a magistrate.

Building renovations were completed in 1984 with the Stettler Telephone Answering Service entering in 1997. The building is currently unoccupied.

## 12. Brennen Funeral Home



4819 49<sup>th</sup> St.

The building was one of the first churches constructed in the Town of Stettler, constructed in 1906 by the Knox Presbyterian faith. The original church still exists today as the front chapel portion of the funeral home.

In 1925 the church was sold to the Stettler Baptist congregation as it became available due to the union of the Methodist and Presbyterian congregations (becoming the Stettler United Church). During the next 22 years major renovations took place: a basement was placed under the church in 1947, the sanctuary expanded in 1954, the entrance enlarged in 1964 and a two story Christian Education wing in 1969.

John Brennen added the garage in the present building in 1978 when he purchased the church and moved his business from its smaller location on Main Street. The original pews from the Baptist congregations are still in use today. Brennen Funeral Home has endeavoured to keep in use many of the original items from the building, hoping to preserve its history.



**Brennen Funeral Home**

## 13. Stettler United Church



4820 51<sup>st</sup> St.

This site was originally a Swedish Lutheran Church, built in 1906. The church was destroyed by a fire and the United Church of Canada subsequently purchased the property.

The original sanctuary was dedicated to the “Glory of God” in January, 1928. This united the Presbyterian and Methodist congregations of Stettler. The sanctuary was enlarged to seat 250 people in 1952. The Casavant Memorial pipe organ was dedicated in 1955.

In 1967 the Christian Education (CE) wing was added to enhance the community-focused ministry of the Stettler congregation of the United Church of Canada.



## 14. One Better Hair Design



4822 50<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Built in 1952, the original owner of the building, Jim Davis ran an accounting firm. He sold his business to an up-and-coming accounting firm, Gitzel, Krejci, Dand & Peterson. This firm is well-known in Stettler. The original; duo of Gitzel & Krejci rented the building until 1963 when they relocated to the offices that are currently known as Gitzel & Co. Ed Gibson purchased the building at this time and rented to the local school board office (the school board now shares an office with The Town of Stettler at the end of Main Street). The building was then rented to the Stettler radio station, Q14 (now Q 93.3). In 1979 the building was sold again and renovated to house Penny's Knit Shop. The building was purchased by One Better Hair Design in 2012 and is still operating today.

**One Better Hair Design on  
Main Street in Stettler**



## Stettler Cigar Factory



\*vintage store-front display at Main Street Park\*

**50 Ave. and 47<sup>th</sup> Street**

Stettler Cigar Factory was originally located where Jewel Theatre is now; it was later moved east of Alberta Avenue. Fred Carter was the manager when it opened in January of 1912. Their slogan was "Stettler Heart of Alberta Beats Them All". Their Christmas boxes (of 10 Panama Queens) sold for \$1.00. The company continued to grow with increased production from 1600 cigars per day in June 1912 to over 40 000 per month with a total of 12 men employed at the time in December 1912. In June 1915, they produced 6500 cigars per day and employed 65 men. It was once one of the largest cigar factories in Western Canada. In 1917, the Stettler Cigar Factory moved to Vancouver as an additional branch, but would soon become the main factory.



## Demolished Buildings

### 5018 50<sup>th</sup> Ave.

The old town water tower was once located where the Party Maxx building now stands.

The SAAN store was at this location for many years, across from TD Canada Trust.



### 4930 50<sup>th</sup> St.

John Optiz built this structure in 1920. Many older gentlemen around the town can tell you stories of the exciting events that could be found taking place inside the local Pool Hall! Along with a good time you could receive a wonderful trim from the resident barber. On the north wall, a large buffalo head hung on display.

In 1924, Star Bowling Lanes was developed in the basement. The lanes were mounted overtop of slate which was laid as the floor. At this time, there was a common basement underneath the Pool Hall and the Club Café next door! Young boys were hired to rest the pins at the bowling lane and were paid \$0.05 per game.

The building has since been demolished.

