



When was this taken?

By Karen E. Livsey, Archivist

At one time the railroad tracks that now cross North Main Street on the viaduct were at street level. A panoramic photograph in the collection of the Fenton History Center was taken from the ground level tracks looking north along North Main Street. Because it is a panoramic, the left of the photograph includes the old Railroad Station, the Hotel Everett and the building that faced North Main Street, then North Main Street in the middle showing buildings to the top of the hill and on the right side is the Arcade building and the Broadhead Mills along the tracks.

In the image there is a crossing gate that would be lowered to block the street when a train came through. There is a policeman or crossing watchman in the picture along with a few pedestrians, a horse and buggy, a horse and wagon plus the street cleaner with his cart.

So when was this photograph taken? It is the signs on the buildings and the city directories that can help narrow down a time period in which this photograph could have been taken. This photograph is a more modern reproduction of what was probably a larger photograph so there is no photographer's name from which to start.

In the Arcade Building, 24-32 North Main, is the Royal Theatre and that was there from about 1909 to 1924 so we can start with that time frame. Lally's fancy groceries is just up North Main a couple of doors at 30-32 and that was in the city directories from 1909 through 1915-16 but not in 1920 which is the next available directory. That narrows it even further. Barber poles next to the Royal Theatre agree with the Wright's Barber Shop from 1909 through at least 1915-16.

Across the street in the building facing North Main, (the Baker Block) there seems to be a number of businesses. Brown's Printery and Trantum's Second Hand Store are both there in that time frame. F. A. Venblow's Tin Shop is in the basement of the building in that time frame. A small building back from North Main and along the tracks is Breed and Jensen, Painters. They are not listed in the 1909-10 directory but Louis Jensen, Painter, is listed at the Allen Square Building which is just up North Main. The 1911-12 directory lists Breed and Jensen at 29 1/2 North Main so the photograph is now narrowed to late 1910 to 1915-16. It is Ralph B. Breed and Waldemar Jensen who are at 29 1/2 North Main.

But an interesting building is also on the corner of the Baker Block building and extends out occupying the space along the street but in front of the Breed and Jensen building that is set back at the rear of the Baker Block. The signs that were on the building are broken or unreadable. In 1909-10 through the 1915-16 directories, there are

addresses given for that building right next to the tracks. In 1909-10 George Peters was at 25 North Main where he sold fruits. George Piris had his shoe shine place at 27 North Main Street. In 1911-12 Antonio Kapreno had a barber shop there and Pandell Sotir is listed there but there is no alphabetical listing for him to know what he did there. In 1913-14 Chris Papas and George Beer had a shoe shine stand there and Antonio Kapreno is listed there as a barber. The 1915-16 directory has Vallone and Caprino, Barbers at 27 North Main, Abe Present, Jewelry and Pawn Shop at 25 with Papas and Beer at 23, so that small building appears to have expanded its use.

The only sign that limits this photo to a narrower time frame is the Pool Room at the Arcade Building. The only pool room at that address is listed only in the 1909-1910 city directory. There may be other clues that a magnifying glass will reveal but for now we can say that the photograph was taken about 1910.

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