

RED DEER REVEALED

Heritage Walking Tours of Red Deer

SELF GUIDED TOUR 2

Saturday in the City

This section of Gaetz Avenue, or Little Gaetz as it's called, has many stories to tell. It's one of the oldest streets in the city and, for decades, it was the place to go for browsing, shopping, or visiting with friends.

Enjoy a leisurely stroll up and down the picturesque street and learn about the people and businesses that helped to shape Red Deer. As you go, be sure to stop and enjoy the variety of public art along the way.

“See you on Saturday!”

Little Gaetz wasn't so little in the first half of the 20th century; it was one of Red Deer's busiest streets and the main highway between Calgary and Edmonton. With so many people passing through, businesses flourished and the street became a shopping destination for residents and visitors alike.

Saturday shopping was also a social event, as people enjoyed the bright lights and fun of the city. Stores stayed open late – often until midnight – and Little Gaetz was abuzz with activity.

As you visit the sites of these early businesses, you'll get a glimpse into Red Deer's early days and experience a bit of your own “Saturday in the City.”



Greene Block, ca. 1940; P3229

Window shopping at S.S. Kresge Co., ca. 1940s; N1278

1 Builders' Hardware

Any new city needs tools and Builders' Hardware was always a popular destination for shoppers in Red Deer. Built in 1949, the minimalist, modern building was appealing to shoppers of the era, with dream windows dressed to draw in shoppers out for a Saturday stroll.

Image: Exhibition Parade, 1963; P116



2 Greene Block

In 1891, a general store opened at this location. Ten years later, George Wellington Greene purchased the store and moved it to the back of the site. He built the handsome sandstone structure you see today for his law office and private bank. The first meetings of the newly incorporated Town of Red Deer were held here in 1901.

Image: Greene Block, ca. 1912; P441



3 Snell-Dodds Block

For several decades, people visiting this building may have had a toothache, or perhaps they needed their eyes checked. Dr. Harold Snell, an optometrist, and Dr. Frederick Dodds, a dentist, had this building constructed in 1928 to house their professional practices.

Image: Snell-Dodds Block, ca. 1970s; P936



4 Scott Block

Charles and Margaret Scott moved to Red Deer in 1935 and soon opened a variety store just south of here. In 1946, they built this new 5¢ to \$10 variety store, which carried everything from small items to clothes. It also had a café, making it the perfect stop for an afternoon shopping trip.

Image: Courtesy the Scott family, ca. 1964





5 Mitchell & Jewell

In 1938, Alexander Mitchell constructed this building for his store, Mitchell Jeweller. Business expanded during the Second World War, when thousands of people came to train for war at Red

Deer's A20 Camp and the Penhold Air Base. In 1949, Robert Jewell partnered with Mitchell, creating the popular business Mitchell & Jewell.

Image: Mitchell & Jewell, ca. 1947; P212

6 Michener Bros. Garage

In Red Deer's early boomtown days, hoofprints and wagon tracks carved paths along Little Gaetz. With the arrival of the automobile, livery stables and harness shops were replaced by auto dealerships and garages. The Michener brothers – Frank, Norman, and Edward – were some of the early leaders in this industry and constructed this garage in 1918.

Image: Hepworth Motors, Courtesy Doug Free, ca. 1970s



7 Alberta Meat Market

Ed Barrett was one of Red Deer's longest-serving and most popular mayors but, before that, he was also a well-respected, likeable butcher. He built this store in 1954 for his business, Alberta Meat Market. Barrett's store received rave reviews, and customers who visited it were treated to friendly service from Barrett and his staff.

Image: Original Alberta Meat Market on Gaetz Avenue, ca. 1910s; P127



8 Eaton's Store

People have been shopping at this site since Red Deer's pioneer days. The W.E. Lord Department Store was built here in 1908 and operated until 1928, when the T. Eaton Co. took it over. In 1939, this new Eaton's Store was constructed and was heralded as the biggest, most advanced department store between Edmonton and Calgary.

Image: New Eaton's Store, ca. 1947; P213



9 Gaetz-Cornett Drug & Book Co.

For early Red Deerians, a shopping trip wouldn't have been complete without stopping at the Gaetz-Cornett Drug & Book Co. Halley Gaetz built the fieldstone and brick store here in 1903, and Roy Cornett became partner in 1907.

Customers appreciated the well-stocked pharmacy, with its book and stationery department.

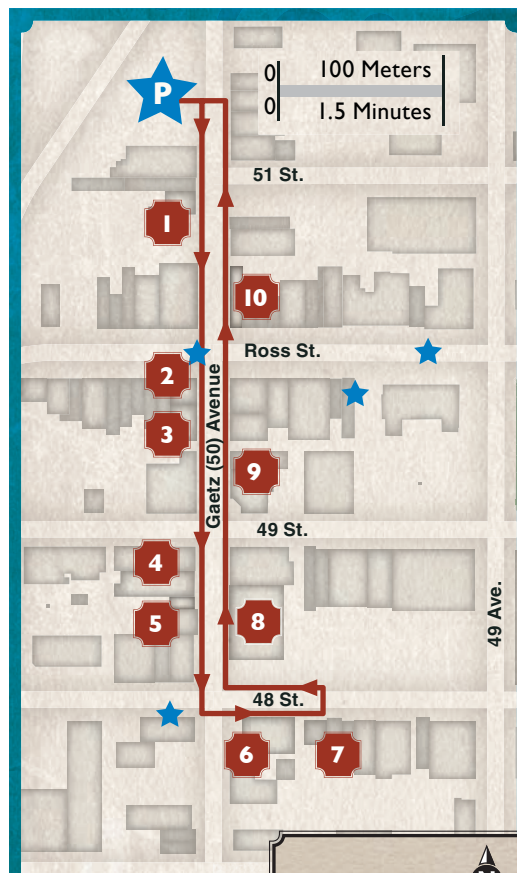
Image: Gaetz-Cornett Drug & Book Co.; Glenbow Archives, n.d.; pa-3689-701



10 Rollis Block

In 1949, Rufus Joseph Rollis constructed this building for his real estate and insurance firm. The modern brick building replaced the North West Mounted Police Stables, which had been here since 1893. Rollis had his new store built in sections – first the south half and then the north – so he could carry on business as usual.

Image: Rollis Agency staff, ca. 1940s; P154



Legend

- Tour start
- Tour site
- Tour route
- Point of interest

