

2167 Columbia Avenue – Morrison & Bryenton Grocers



Morrison & Bryenton Grocers - 2018

### **Heritage Register – Building**

- 1) **Historical Name:** Morrison & Bryenton Grocers
- 2) **Common Name(s):** Conservative Building/Salvation Army
- 3) **Address:** 2167 Columbia Avenue
- 4) **Date of Construction:** 1899
- 5) **Design, Style, Architecture, Architect:** Boomtown

### **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**Description:**

Morrison & Bryenton Grocers is a two-storey wood-frame false-fronted commercial building located on the south side of Columbia Avenue in the historic downtown of Rossland.

**Heritage Value:**

Morrison & Bryenton Grocers is valued as an example of a surviving early commercial building with apartments above, dozens of which once filled Rossland's main street. Its two-storey, wood-frame Boomtown (or Western) style, with false front and street level business space, represents an aesthetic and design characteristic of the early mining era in Rossland, as well as of other mining towns in BC and North America. The first business in the building, a grocery store, as well as the first few resident families in the upper storey apartments, represent a typical economic, professional and social scenario that would have existed in dozens of other similar buildings in early Rossland - basic or mining related services (in this case - groceries), working-class jobs (stenographer, nurse, tailor etc.) and a relatively fast, regular turn-over in occupancy for both the street-level business and the residential tenants.

Constructed in 1899, this building is valued for its associations with Rossland's early mining development and boom period and with its original owners Howard Sylvester Wallace and Charles Staynor Wallis who built it as an income generating property. The building stands as a monument to the kind of success that was possible for the most financially, economically, and socially astute citizens of a frontier boom town in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is notable that H.S. Wallace, who came to Rossland in 1895, was a fundamental player in the establishment of the city, and became Rossland's second mayor in 1898. He also ran a series of successful department stores that served miners and their families, and allowed him to speculate in real estate and develop his wealth and prosperity through buildings such as this one.

This historic place is also valued for its association with the political governance of the West Kootenay region, and in particular with the Conservative Party, between the years of 1913 and 1923. Robert F. Green, a 'staunch Conservative', was the owner of the building during those years.

Another significant aspect of this building's history lies in its use as the Rossland Salvation Army from 1923-1968. The presence of the Salvation Army in Rossland as early as 1896 is reflective of the mission of this religious group to provide guidance, services, and salvation to people who may have been likely to stray from a path of righteousness; a reality that was highly evident in frontier boom towns in the late nineteenth century. The ongoing presence of the Salvation Army in Rossland until its disbandment in 1968 indicates a sense of steadfastness and commitment to the spiritual and physical growth of the city, even during its years of decline. The 45 years that this building served as a centre of hope, faith, and service for the community are a key aspect of its heritage values.

**Character-Defining Elements:**

- Original location on Columbia Avenue in Rossland's historic downtown and main commercial street.

- Continuous commercial and residential use since 1899.
- Boomtown commercial building design as reflected in its two-storey height, false-fronted facade, wood frame construction, full lot coverage from street to alley and commercial storefront with a recessed entry at street level.
- Gable roof.
- Three window openings on the upper facade storey (now slightly smaller than original openings).
- Distinguishable design of the false-front parapet with a central peak that matches the profile of the gable roof behind it.
- Evidence of wood siding throughout.
- Historic window and door openings on all four façades.

## **HISTORY**

This building is linked to many historic figures.

From 1899 to 1902, the store was occupied by Morrison & Bryenton Grocers, with clerk Isaac Petch and employee Miss Lake. "Miss Lake" was likely the Nellie Lake that was famous for being the paramour of the forger, Walter B. Collins. Collins was captured in a Morrison property when he snuck into Rossland to visit Nellie Lake. In April 1902, she arrived from England searching for her beau. Low on funds she accepted Morrison's offer of a job and housing. In addition to groceries, Morrison and Bryenton acted as a mail distribution point and the clerk there was able to identify Collins as the one collecting Graham's mail (Graham was Collins' alias). The love story and courtroom antics provided fodder for the area newspapers. Collins' capture was the precipitous event that led to Alex Stewart's future as a policeman. Ex-patrolman Stewart had already finished his last night shift, after being fired earlier in the day, when he spotted Collins sneaking into town. Stewart was promptly rehired and promoted to number 1 patrolman.

From 1913 to 1923, Robert Green and Lorne Argyle Campbell owned this building. Robert Green was the first mayor of Kaslo from 1893-1897, was MLA for Slocan and Kaslo from 1898-1907, was appointed Minister of Mines, Education and Lands and Works for BC in 1903, was elected as the Member of Parliament (MP) for Kootenay in 1912, and West Kootenay in 1917, and was appointed to the Canadian Senate in 1921. Oral histories indicate the building was used as the Conservative Party's political regional headquarters during Green's ownership.

Lorne Argyle Campbell was elected as the Conservative Member of the Provincial Parliament (MPP) for Rossland in 1912, and Minister of Mines for British Columbia in 1915, and served the community as a politician until 1920. Campbell was also the president and General Manager of the West Kootenay Power & Light Company, and was considered the strategic leader behind the massive industrial development of this region of British Columbia. The connection of this place with both Campbell and Green, highly significant figures in Rossland's

and Canada's history, is an affirmation of the solidity of status that this building had in Rossland's early years. This place is a reminder of the strategic and prominent political status that Rossland held in the region at that time.



Morrison & Bryenton Grocers (2<sup>nd</sup> building on the right) with enlargement showing Salvation Army vertical sign 1933

**Best Butter in Town**

Just received, in 14, 20 and 28 pound tins, also one pound bricks, in Jersey, Government Creamery and Hazelwood. Freshest Eggs in the city.

**MORRISON & BRYENTON** 124 E. Columbia Ave

**Just Received.**

Just Received a Fresh Consignment of 'Armour's Pickled Pork, Bacon Hams and Lard.

**MORRISON & BRYENTON** 124 E. Columbia Ave

Two Ads in the Evening World newspaper for the Morrison & Bryenton Grocery. First ad May 1, 1901 and second ad July 8, 1901.

### Historical Information - Chronology

| Year        | Event  |
|-------------|--|
| 1898        | Lot owned by H.S. Wallace - no improvements on property.   |
| 1900        | Property owned by H.S. Wallace - \$1000 improvement. C.S. Wallis owned lot 14. C.S. Wallis was an attorney from Ontario, and former Attorney General of Manitoba, who played a major role in the economic development of Western Canada and was a director in many mining development companies such as the Black Opal Syndicate.  |
| 1899-1902   | The building shows up in Rossland directories as 124 E. Columbia (store) and 122 E. Columbia (apartments). The store is occupied by Morrison & Bryenton Grocers, with Clerk Isaac Petch and employee Miss Lake. Three apartments are occupied above by John E. Taylor and family (tailor with Taylor & McQuarrie), John Bluntish and family (male nurse) and Walter N. Everett and family (stenographer) |
|             | As these specific addresses didn't appear in subsequent directories, it is not possible to confirm what business and tenants occupied the building after 1902 if at all. According to Insurance maps, the building appears to have been vacant in 1912 and until 1924 when the Salvation Army bought it.   |
| 1901-1902   | C.S. Wallis listed as owner. Wallis was Secretary of the Black Opal Syndicate Ltd. at this time. Wallis was an attorney, and later went on to become Attorney General of Manitoba. He passed away in 1938 in Edmonton.   |
| 1903 – 1905 | Black Opal Syndicate, C.S. Wallis listed as owner.   |
| 1906        | Black Opal Syndicate, H.S. Wallace listed as owner.  |
| 1907 – 1909 | H.S. Wallace. Black Opal continued to own Lot 14 next door.  |
| 1910        | In approximately 1910, the building became the property of Walkem's estate, likely due to an outstanding \$12,000 mortgage he was owed by the Black Opal Syndicate, Ltd., and was subsequently inherited by his daughter, Mabel S. Langley of Victoria.  |

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 1911             | Walkem Estate – of Morsley & O’Reilly Victoria, BC, listed as owner. George Anthony Walkem was a Supreme Court Judge, and served as Premier of BC. from 1874-76 and from 1878-82. Walkem was also considered a major player in the confederation of Canada. Walkem passed away in Victoria in 1908. The connection of this place with such a prominent political figure speaks to the important role Rossland played as a centre for governance, administration, and justice in the Interior of BC in the early twentieth century.   |
| 1912             | Mabel Sophie Langley – of Morsley & O’Reilly Victoria BC listed as owner. Langley was the daughter of the honourable George Anthony Walkem and wife of A.G. Langley, a mining engineer. Ms. Langley passed away in 1916 in Victoria.   |
| 1913 – 1923      | Robert Green of L.A. Campbell. Lorne Argyle Campbell also owned lots 16-19 next to this one. Robert Green was the first mayor of Kaslo, serving from 1893-1897, was MLA for Slocan and Kaslo from 1898-1907, was appointed Minister of Mines, Education and Lands and Works for BC in 1903, was elected as MP for Kootenay in 1912, and West Kootenay in 1917, and was appointed to the Canadian Senate in 1921. He passed away in Victoria in 1946 at the age of 86. Oral histories recall that the building may have been used as the Central Conservative Association’s headquarters during the years of Green’s ownership. |
| 1924 – 1970      | The Governing Council of the Salvation Army listed as owners. During the Salvation Army tenure the apartments above continued to be rented out.  |
| 1970s            | David V. Thompson carpenter repair shop – Thompson is listed as repairman or carpenter in voters’ lists.   |
| 1973-1985        | Wayne’s TV   |
|                  | Jelly Bean Junction  |
| 1999 ? - current | Joe Bye wood carver  |