

Memories of a Herndon Drug Store

By Barbara Glakas

Many long-time Herndon residents remember Sasher's Pharmacy - or Drug Store - that used to be located on Station Street, at the intersection of Lynn Street. The pharmacy building was formerly located next door to the building that now houses the Cushman Insurance Company and the Maude Hair Salon at 775 Station Street. The old pharmacy building is no longer there; the space was later filled with the north/west extension of Lynn Street.

That old building was not originally a pharmacy. When it was first built circa 1908 it was the Hutchison and Mitchell building, home to a company that sold agriculture equipment. That company was not very successful, however, and ended up renting out their space.

Doctor Ernest Robey moved his pharmacy building into the Hutchison and Mitchell building after his pharmacy on Pine Street burned down in the 1917 Big Fire. Ralph Chamblin had been a manager for Robey. After completing his duty in World War I, Chamblin purchased Robey's pharmacy business and it subsequently became known as Chamblin's Pharmacy. Doctor Bert Sasher bought the store in 1934 and the Sasher family ran the pharmacy until the 1960s. It was later sold and became The Pet and Hobby Shop. The building sustained heavy damage in a fire and it was eventually torn down, c. 1971.

Generations of Herndon residents remember going to the local pharmacy on Station Street, not only for medicines but also for household items, gifts, and tasty fountain sodas.

In 1979, a former Herndon resident and free-lance writer, Virginia Downs, wrote an article in the *Herndon Observer* newspaper, recounting her fond memories of Herndon's local pharmacy. At the time she wrote her article, improvements had recently been completed in the heart of downtown Herndon, installing new brick sidewalk around the Town Hall square (then the town's municipal building) and extending Station Street behind the west side of the Herndon Depot and Town Hall so that it would connect with Spring Street. The old abandoned train depot building had also been recently renovated.

We are re-publishing Mrs. Down's article in full here:

Reflections in Passing – The Drug Store

By Virginia Downs

Well, the new town square is handsome and as soon as I get used to circling behind the municipal building to get through town, I'm sure I'll be able to admit that it's a big improvement. It's lovely to see the old railroad station standing so spanking fresh in new paint,

and the neatly patterned brick sidewalks are certainly attractive. But...still... somehow, something is missing. And I think perhaps what it is, most of all, is the old drug store. It was more than a drug store – it was an institution, a mecca, a place to be, not just for the young, but for everyone.

There on summer mornings about 10:30, the housewives used to gather in the cool, dark interior. Even though I know they arose early to get their husbands off to D.C. on the commuter train, I am still amazed to think they could have their day in order by mid-mornings and have time to stroll down the street, powdered and fresh in their blowing cotton dresses, to spend an hour or so chatting and drinking lemonades.

Perhaps such leisure was due to the fact that they didn't have to prove they were anything else – not business brains, not liberated females, not super women who had dynamic outside interests, plus raising precocious children, cooking gourmets meals, and contributing to the welfare of the world through some worthwhile volunteer role. I doubt that many of us now would feel justified in spending time that way every day; and I know that I, personally, could never have my house in order and myself presentable to my whole world at such an early hour. But what a pleasant world it seemed – we look back with a bit of envy.

Around noon, the housewives drifted away to do their daily shopping and returned home. Then the businessmen of the town came in for their lunches of a sandwich, coffee and pie a 'la mode. They must have been as comfortable and at ease with each other as husbands and wives over the breakfast table.

By mid-afternoon, the elderly ladies (who weren't so swift with the housework and didn't have children arriving home from school) came in for their dish of ice cream, served in a saucer, with a little metal spoon. Along with refreshments, they picked up some anti-acid pills and the latest news to take home.

At 3:30, the high school students arrived, to sit long over a 5 cent coke. You could even get a dash of cherry or lemon squirted in at no extra charge. A package of "nabs" cost 5 cents, also. So for 20 cents a boy could treat himself and his girl and have a pleasant tete-a-tete in the back booth, or join the rest of the crowd for some suave talk and hilarious humor. Many a romance flourished there; perhaps many a marriage was made.

In the meantime, the little kids were getting for 5 cents the biggest one-dip ice cream cone ever seen. Those who didn't have a nickel that day could have great fun twirling around on the soda fountain stools, and maybe getting a lick or two from a friend's cone.

At night after the movies, the dating couples (a little older and more solvent) came in for sundaes and sodas. On nights when the high school team played at home, half the audience turned up afterwards at the drug store. And it wasn't just kids this time – all ages, whole families. The entire town took basketball seriously. No teams have ever had such unanimous support as those

did and when the members finally arrived on the scene after showering and dressing, they were heroes whether they had won or lost.

Anyway, that's what I think. I miss – not just the building, but something special which it embodied. And since it isn't going to come back and there's nothing to replace it, I'll resolve to take pleasure in the sight of the beautiful new square, and comfort in the words of the poet Alvin Reiss: 'Pick your memories from the tree of change before they wither. They will grow in another climate.' ”

About this column: “Remembering Herndon’s History” is a regular Herndon Patch feature offering stories and anecdotes about Herndon’s past. The articles are written by members of the Herndon Historical Society. Barbara Glakas is a member. A complete list of “Remembering Herndon’s History” columns is available on the Historical Society website at www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org.

The Herndon Historical Society operates a small museum that focuses on local history. It is housed in the Herndon Depot in downtown Herndon on Lynn Street and is open every Sunday from noon until 3:00. Visit the Society’s website at www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org, and the Historical Society’s Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/HerndonHistory> for more information.

Note: The Historical Society is seeking volunteers to help keep the museum open each Sunday. If you have an interest in local history and would like to help, contact HerndonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com.