

# Memory Lane

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## 10 -14 James Street North

10 James Street North was constructed in the mid-to-late-19th century as two units in a related row, consisting of 10 and 12 James Street North. 10 and 12 James Street North housed a number of dry goods merchants and milliners in the late-19th century including: Thomas Watkins dry goods and exchange dealer (1860s); Egan & Bartindale dry goods and millinery (1860s); Thomas Mason hats, caps and furs (1860s); and McIlwraith & McMaster dry goods and millinery, importers of staple and fancy dry goods, manufacturers of millinery and mantles, and dress makers (1880s).

10 James Street North was occupied by Oak Hall Clothes from the 1880s to the late 1920s. Oak Hall was a retail store run by the W.E. Sanford Manufacturing Company, the first and largest manufacturer of ready-made clothes in Canada. In 1900, Oak Hall Clothes expanded into 12 James Street North, the warehouse was located in the third storey, and the two buildings were refaced with a unified front façade in the Romanesque Revival style.



The stretch of buildings on the east side of James St. North as of 1903. Grafton's is located to the left followed by T.H. Pratt & Co (these two stores would later switch locations). Stanley Mills & Co. and Oak Hall are also visible.



An Oak Hall advertisement from 1894. Eli William Sandford opened the first of his chain of Oak Hall retail clothing outlets in Hamilton and Toronto in 1881.

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# 10 -14 James Street North ...continued

By the mid-20th century the building was remodelled to once again contain two separate commercial units in the ground floor. 10 and 12 James Street North have housed a variety of businesses since, including a series of beauty and millinery shops (1928-1946), Darling Dress Shoppe (1931-1940), Artistic Ladies' Wear (1941-1954), a series of finance companies (1947-1966), jeweller Harry Minden (1955-1980s), and the Marvel Beauty School (1969-1980s). The third floor of the building also housed Moose Hall from 1915 to 1924. In 2012, 10 James Street North housed Happy Nails salon and 12 James Street North housed Cash Smart.



10-14 James before Core Urban redeveloped the property. The building now houses two restaurants on the ground floor, Earth to Table Bread Bar and Uncle Ray's.

14 James Street North was constructed in the mid-to-late-19th century as a five-storey brick building with a mansard roof and multiple rear brick wings. 14 James Street North was occupied by a variety of merchants from the mid-to-late-19th century including dry goods merchant and milliner James H. Somerville (1860s-1870s), merchant tailor Donald Smith (1880s), dry goods merchant and milliner James H. Somerville (1860s-1870s), merchant tailor Donald Smith (1880s), dry goods merchant and mantle maker S. Thorne & Company (1880s), and Pratt & Watkins Departmental Store (1890s).

Stanley Mills & Company Limited purchased the building in 1904 for the operation of its department store and renovated the building circa 1915 when it began to operate as the Mills Hardware Store. The renovated building totalled five storeys in height and was given a new façade similar to the façade of 11-15 King Street East, which was built in 1903, housed the Stanley Mills & Company Limited Department store and was designed by prominent architect Charles Mills, brother of Stanley Mills. Mills Hardware continued to occupy the building until 1934.

14 James Street North has housed a variety of other businesses including Tip Top Tailors (1939-1968), McDermott's Discount Store (1969-1977), Power Drug Mart (1981-1983) and the Sirloin Cellar in the basement which opened in 1969 and operated until 2013. The Bader family ran the Sirloin Cellar for 17 years. Then, for the last 26 years, it was run by Bill Villeneuve and his wife Anna. Bill's father had managed the restaurant. Tip Top Tailors renovated the front façade in the mid-20th century and the first two storeys were clad with tile.

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# 10 -14 James Street North ...continued



Pictured here is the 1917 fire at the Grafton store, now demolished (more information below). To the right we can see the Stanley Mills & Co building that still stands as 14 James St. North.

16 James St. North, now a parking lot, was once home to Grafton's Department Store. The original Grafton's Department Store opened in Dundas in 1853. It became highly successful and by 1900 had expanded to Hamilton, Brantford, London, Peterborough and Owen Sound. The Hamilton store was located on James Street North, just north of King Street. The four-storey building was constructed in 1895 and specialized in men's and boy's clothing. Later they added a line of women's clothing as well.

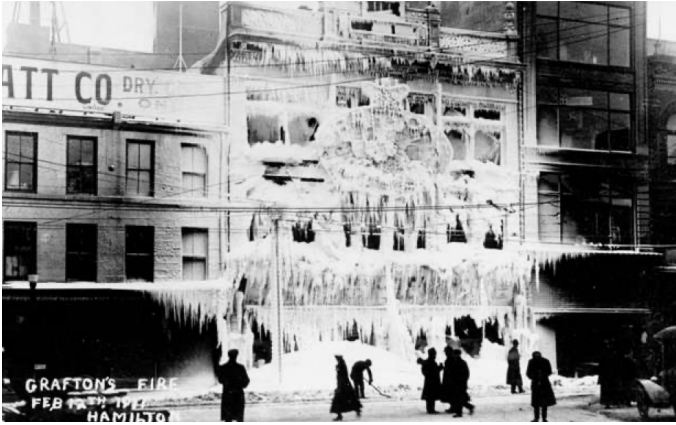
On February 12, 1917, the store was completely destroyed by fire. Thousands gathered to watch the fire department fight the blaze in sub-zero temperatures. As fast as they poured water on the building it froze. The building became encrusted in ice as did the firefighters fighting the blaze. The store and its contents were completely destroyed. Other businesses damaged by the fire were T. H. Pratt, The Right House, Stanley Mills China Shop and Fong Young's Chinese Restaurant. They had to wait until the weather improved and the ice melted before they could proceed with demolition and the building of the new store on the same site. The new Graftons opened on Saturday, January 5, 1918. The Graftons stores were merged with Jack Fraser in 1967 but the opening of Jackson Square, right across the street marked the death knell for the store. They held a closing sale in June of 1973 put an end to a 78-year tradition in downtown Hamilton.



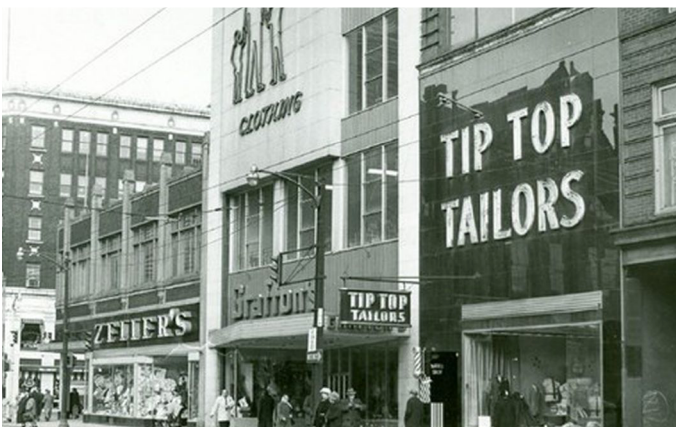
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# 10 -14 James Street North ...continued



Grafton's fire of 1917. The cause of the fire was unknown due to the extent of the damage. The entire Hamilton Fire Department was called out to fight it. Over 3,000 people came to watch. The Grafton and Company Store was a total loss but the new store reopened in 1918.



A view of James St. North at King William St. in the 1960s. The Tip Top Tailors building still stands as 14 James St. North but Grafton's and Zellers have since been demolished.

Zellers opened on March 23, 1929 as the Shulte-United. The site had been the former T.H. Pratt Company and the new store was erected, including demolition, in a record breaking 56 days. In 1931 Schulte-United was declared bankrupt and Walter P. Zeller acquired the rights to the Canadian stores. It reopened as Zellers on November 12, 1931. The store was remodeled and enlarged in 1951 at a cost of \$750,000 making it the most modern store in the entire chain.

The Zellers lease ran out in 1988 and the owner applied for a demolition permit. City Council refused to designate it as a historic building as the owner wanted to build a new building on the site.

The last day it was open as a Zellers was September 10, 1988. The building was demolished and remains a parking lot to this day.



Zellers was located at the corner of King William Street and James Street for over 50 years.