

The History of a Cimarron Landmark

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The Financial Management, Inc., Building at 101 South Main Street in Cimarron, Kansas, has a long and varied history.

According to Elsie Wagner's book, *Cimarron: The Growth of a Town*, the two-story structure was built around 1910 by Frank Hopper, and it first housed the Dorean Opera House on the second floor and the Hopper General Merchandise Store on the first floor.

A May 7, 1931, article in *The Jacksonian* newspaper announced in an article entitled "Friends, Here's a Great



Banquet held in Dorean Opera House, 1911. (Photo: Cimarron Library Digital Archives)

Ladies' Tailor Made Suits — Largest Stock of Dry Goods in Gray County

If Our Goods Don't Please You Tell Us

If Our Goods Please You Tell Others

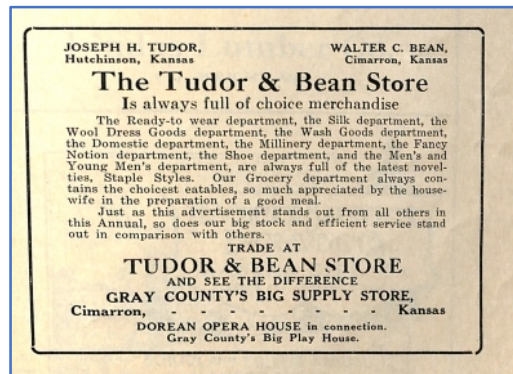
Men's and Boys' Suits — Clean Fresh Groceries

Ad for Hopper's General Store found in Cimarron Yearbook, 1911. (Photo: Cimarron Library Digital Archives)

Story in a Few Words," that "Eighteen years ago this week, the firm of J.H. Tudor & W.C. Bean bought the large Store Building and Stock of M.J. Hopper & Son."

That same article went on to add that "The firm of Tudor & Bean was later succeeded by W. C. Bean Merc. Co.—Mr. W.C. Bean, the present owner of the business having purchased the interest of Mr. TudorWe have sold our large store building and opera house (which has been a landmark in Gray County for the past 20

years.....) to the Odd Fellows Lodge Hall, with dining room and kitchen....The lower floor will later be remodeled into business rentals...."



Ad for merchandise in the Tudor & Bean Store, found in Cimarron yearbook, 1917. (Photo: Cimarron Library Digital Archives)

The Odd Fellows group was in need of a meeting building after a fire burned down the facility they had been using, a building which sat just kitty-corner across the street from the Hopper/Bean building. The group's original building is now the present site of a parking lot just northeast of Main Street's stoplight.

That May 7, 1931, *Jacksonian* issue also featured a Page-One story titled "Bean Trades Building to Odd Fellow Lodge." According to that article, "A trade was consummated last week whereby the W.C. Bean Merc. Co. acquired the Odd Fellow lot just south of Stubbs, and the Odd Fellows Lodge of Cimarron becomes the

owner of the Bean block where Mr. Bean has been in business for the past eighteen years. The deal was closed on the 18th anniversary of Mr. Bean's being in business here. He is announcing this week a stock reducing sale, and plans to cut down his merchandise to a point where he can handle it with less overhead....

"The Odd Fellows plan to start to remodeling the second story which they will use for a lodge room, kitchen, etc., about June 1. This will leave the town without an opera house for the first time in twenty years. When the opera house was first built and in its prime, it was used regularly by road shows and stock companies. But times have changed, and now the shows that come to Cimarron or any other small town are few and far between. The passing of the Bean Opera House will be the passing of an integral part of the town."

By June 4, *The Jacksonian* reported that "Work is being rapidly pushed on the remodeling of the old Dorean Opera House by the local Odd Fellow Lodge, which plans to be in the new lodge rooms by July 1st. The big lodge room, 28 x 64 feet, will be in the northeast corner of the second floor of the building. A modern kitchen will be installed in the southwest corner with gas stove and all of the appurtenances necessary to a good place where the good cooks of the lodge can show their ability to the best advantage. Just [east] of the kitchen will be the banquet room."

That article also gave a bit of history of the old opera house, by then removed: "The stage, dressing rooms, and scenery, etc., at the east end of the hall have all been torn out, as has the extra roof which allowed the raising and lowering of the scenery...."

There was also mention of what was happening with the rest of the building: "There is a possibility that the building's exterior of brick will be repointed and painted. The Bean Mercantile Co. has the lower floor rented until January 1st."

The Bean family was apparently well respected in the town of Cimarron. On June 11, 1931, *The Jacksonian* article "W.C. Bean Disposes of Store to W. H. Fleeson" mentioned that "Mr. Bean came here 18 years ago from Spearville where he had made a notable success in the

dry goods and grocery line, and with J.H. Tudor bought out Frank Hopper's stock and building. Several years ago, Mr. Bean bought Mr. Tudor's interest and continued the store as the W. C. Bean Merc. Co. Since coming to Cimarron Mr. and Mrs. Bean have made many close friends both in the store and socially. They have been actively identified in all things that meant an improvement to the town."

Just two weeks after that article appeared, *The Jacksonian* reported that "W. H. Fleeson, who recently acquired the dry goods, clothing and shoe stock of the Bean Merc. Co., is inaugurating a big 'blow out' sale this week, and expects to clean out the entire stock of goods just as soon as possible."

By August 6, 1931, the Odd Fellows were in their new second-story quarters. As it turned out, such a facility had been a longtime dream of the club's members. After going through hard times during the late 1890s, the group had given up its charter. The August 6 *Jacksonian* article, "Odd Fellows Move into New Home," said that the group reorganized in "January 30, 1902, with fourteen charter members...." Though money was hard to come by, for \$50, the group purchased Lot 12, Block 11 in Cimarron as their first building site. Their building fund totaled \$1,332.60, and they managed to complete construction for \$1,288.61.

The article went on to say that, "Our old hall burned last February, leaving us without a home. The Masonic lodge very graciously offered up the use of their hall until we could build, for which we wish to sincerely thank them." After negotiations with W.C. Bean "...to trade our lot for the Opera House building, the trade was completed in June and the Odd Fellows lodge became the owner of the Lot 1 and 2, Block 5; the 50 x 100 foot two-story brick built by Frank Hopper in 1910."

The story described improvements: "The opera house has been remodeled and made into an up-to-date lodge room, 28 x 66 feet, with two good ante rooms, a dining room 62 x 19 feet, kitchen 14 x 16 with hot water, gas range, and equipped with the very best in the way of built-in cabinets, cupboards, sinks, and tables. The lodge hall and entire upper story is made modern in every way....

"The Rebekah Lodge has equipped the kitchen [and] placed a fine five-piece wicker set in the large ante-room....The ante-rooms are furnished with splendid built-in lockers for the regalia of the different lodges who will hold forth in the Hall, for the Masons, Stars, Woodmen and Royal Neighbors are sharing this splendid meeting place with the Rebekahs and Odd Fellows."

Downstairs, things were also changing. The August 6 article mentioned that "The lower room is rented to the Fleeson Dry Goods Co. The 50 x 100 foot basement is used as a storage room."

At that point, according to the article, members of the Cimarron I.O.O.F. No. 288 numbered 148.

Building completed, furniture moved in, the Odd Fellows planned a dedication ceremony.

On August 27, 1931, *The Jacksonian* reported that "State Grand Master L.E. Walsh of Independence, Kansas, will be here Thursday, September 10th, to dedicate the new Odd Fellows hall which has just been remodeled, over the Fleeson store. The program starts at 1:30 p.m., and the general public is invited to attend the afternoon's dedication exercises."

Kitty-corner across the street, the Odd Fellows' vacant lot was also undergoing changes. On September 17, 1931, *The Jacksonian* reported that W.C. Bean had plans to "erect a filling station on it immediately. They plan a neat and up-to-date brick structure that will add considerable [sic] to the appearance of the corner and to the business district of Cimarron in general....The new structure will be started immediately and rushed to completion as soon as possible."

By the time that article appeared, *The Jacksonian* was also announcing that "Last Thursday, Odd Fellows and Rebekahs from all over Gray County and other nearby towns, joined with members of the local lodge in dedicating the new Odd Fellow hall over the Fleeson store....A crowd that taxed the capacity of the new hall heard the talks made by the old members here and from other parts of Kansas...."

As with any other dedication, food was a must. *The Jacksonian* said that "It took more than twenty chickens, along with many other toothsome dainties to satisfy the more than 300 who sat down to eat in two shifts in the big banquet....The women in charge of the banquet say that they certainly appreciated the handy and well equipped kitchen, which, of course, is a necessary adjunct to a every dining hall....Practically everything was donated, and the cost of serving the several hundred cost less than \$5.00."

Things may have been going well for the Odd Fellows, but this was the Great Depression, and by 1933, after many months of advertised "close-out" sales, W. H. Fleeson sold his inventory to Barney Shamberg and Ralph Williams of Hutchinson, who "bought the Fleeson stock of the Wichita Credit Association, and plan to close it out in the next few days at rock bottom prices." *The Jacksonian*, June 5, 1934, reported that "They are now in charge of the sale, which will run until the stock is disposed of."

On June 21, 1933, according to *The Jacksonian*, "The Covert Drug Store has leased the north 25 feet [of the building], which will be partitioned off and a new entrance made at the northeast corner of the building. It will be ready for occupancy by July 1st."

Plans must have taken a bit longer, however, because the next mention of the Covert Drug occurs in *The Jacksonian* on July 19, 1934, with an article saying, "The Odd Fellow building has been completely remodeled for business, with a modern front, new and modern windows for an effective display of merchandise and nicely finished inside. A partition has been put in the center of the 50-foot building, giving Covert a 25-foot front. It will make one of the most

attractive corners for a drug store or other business, afforded by any town in Southwest Kansas.”

That article estimated that Covert Drug would be open by July 28. It also mentioned that the south side of the building had not been rented at that time.

On August 2, 1934, Covert Drug announced that its official opening would take place in two days, on August 4. *The Jacksonian* proclaimed that the remodeled building’s “new modern plate glass front gives much light to the interior and a wonderful appearance from the outside....Under the guidance of Mr. Covert, it is one of the strongest and most outstanding stores of its kind in this section. They carry a large and complete line of prescriptions, besides the very best in Rexall and other drug supplies and sundries.....Despite the prevailing drouth [sic] conditions and lack of business generally, Cimarron and Gray County are to be congratulated on the well-stocked store and high quality of service....”

A *Jacksonian* article published the week following, on August 9, mentions that “1,000 servings of ice creams were given to the youngsters who came in. Over 400 souvenirs were given out to the ladies who made the store a visit.” That same article also credited Frank Morris, owner of the local Morris Theater, as being the person who did electrical work on the flood lights and signs used to light up the north side of the building so that it could “be seen for quite a distance by tourists going through on South 50.”

By August 30, 1934, the bus depot had been transferred from the Dickerson Café to the Covert Drug Store. *The Jacksonian* reported that “The bus rest room will be at the rear door of the drug store and the west door on the north side of the building will be used by bus patrons.”

By July 25, 1935, the Odd Fellows were still making improvements on their property. *The Jacksonian* mentioned that, “‘bossed’” by R. W. McFarland, members of the club constructed a cement parking area “around the corner at Covert’s Drug Store.”

By August of 1935, the Odd Fellows had the south half of their building rented. This time, it was occupied by Farmers Grocery, which advertised, among other things, “Round Steak, young, tender,” at 22 cents per pound.

According to an ad in September of 1935, however, that name had changed to Trainer’s I.G.A. Store.

Covert Drug Store on the north side of the building, advertised on October 17, 1935, letting *Jacksonian* readers know about their own bargains, such as “Milk of Magnesia



Covert Drug Store ad, announcing their opening. (Photo: The Jacksonian, August 2, 1934.)

Toothpaste,” two for 40 cents. Their ad also announced the bus schedule, with a trip to Denver featured at \$6.20.

Business may not have stayed brisk for too long, however. After all, this was in the middle of the Great Depression. A tiny article in the October 14, 1937, *Jacksonian* mentions that “Thayne Covert left Sunday for Portland, Oregon, to join his family, who has been there for several months. Mrs. Covert has leased a small store near their home, which is in a suburb of Portland.”

The north side of the ground floor of the building did not stay vacant long. By May 5, 1938, *The Jacksonian* was announcing that Lloyd Tuggle, who had married a Cimarron girl and who had once worked as a pharmacist for Covert Drug, had returned to Cimarron to purchase the business and move his family to town.



According to *The Jacksonian*, the

Main Street, Cimarron, 1941, looking east. Sign for Tuggle Drugstore is at bottom right. (Photo: Kansas State Historical Society, Kansas Memories)

business “was sold the first of the week to Mr. Lloyd Tuggle who has been associated with the store since 1930....Tuggle promised good things, saying that “The store under the new management will continue to be progressive and up to the minute in every respect.”

The south side of the building was also going through changes in ownership.

On March 30, 1944, *The Jacksonian* announced that Frank Trainer had died from a heart attack. The article mentioned that Frank Trainer was mayor of Cimarron, and that “Frank had run the grocery store for a number of years, recently purchased by Mr. Fisher, and sold out because he had said it was too much for him to do.”

Fisher kept the grocery store in that location until 1961. On August 31 of that year, according to *The Jacksonian*, “Howard and Edna Fisher have let the contract for a big new ultra-modern building to house their I.G.A. Grocery in Cimarron...The building will be on the former Crusinberry lots a block east of Main Street on Highway 50.” They evidently needed more space and room for modern conveniences.

By November 15, 1961, the Fishers were announcing a grand opening of their new store, and *The Jacksonian* mentioned that “Mr. and Mrs. Fisher have been in their present location 18 years, when they purchased the grocery store from Mr. and Mrs. Frank Trainer.”

The Fishers’ move out of the building left room for a new occupant. Eleanor Schoen, who had bought out the Cimarron Café, previously owned by George and Cleo Phillips, decided that that vacant space on the south side of the Odd Fellows building would be perfect for her new eatery. In February 15, 1962, *The Jacksonian* reported that “They are moving into their new location one door south of Tuggle Drug Store in the building formerly occupied by Fishers I.G.A.....They have completely remodeled their new location through-out [sic]. The walls are of mahogany paneling, new lighting, back bar, tables and chairs, with seating accommodations for seventy.”

That was in 1962, but only two years later, on September 10, 1964, *The Jacksonian* announced that “Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Skidmore who formerly operated a restaurant in Cimarron have leased the Cimarron Café, which has been closed for several months, and expect to open their business, Monday September 14. They are now operating a restaurant in Montezuma.”

The Skidmores were there until 1965. Then *The Jacksonian* of November 11, 1965, let readers know that “Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Skidmore, who have operated the Cimarron Café just south of Tuggle Drug store for some time, have closed their restaurant at that location and are opening on Wednesday at the smaller restaurant between the Chaplin Service station and the Fisher-Newsom I.G.A. store.”

The Tuggles may have expanded their merchandise to that empty south side for a time after the Skidmores moved out because an ad in the November 25 *Jacksonian* shows them offering lots of new merchandise: Imported Italian glass ware, General Electric and Sunbeam kitchen appliances, and Hallmark Christmas cards, to name a few.

By 1966, more changes were coming, this time to the north side, Tuggle Drug. In May 26 of that year, *The Jacksonian* featured an article headlined “Tuggle Drug Sells to Clarks and Koehns.” The article noted that “the new owners [Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Clark and Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Koehn] took possession of the new store on Monday of this week....The prescription service from the former Tuggle Drug Store has been moved to the Clark Pharmacy. The remainder of the store will continue to operate as it has in the past, and will be known as a Sundry store.” A later *Jacksonian* article, dated January 22, 1975, explained that “In 1966, the



Mr. and Mr. Harvey Skidmore, formerly of Montezuma, announce the opening of their Cimarron Café on the south side of Tuggle Drug Store. (Photo: The Jacksonian, September 10, 1964.)

Clarks [had] purchased the drugstore and an adjoining restaurant, combined the two areas, making their present store into one of the finest and largest drugstores in Kansas.”

On June 16, 1966, *The Jacksonian* ran a small ad announcing that “B.J. Ramsey, jeweler,” would be moving his watch and clock repair business into the building with the Clarks.

On January 13, 1975, Jim and Sandi, both graduates of Cimarron High School, had bought out the Koehns and Malee Trainer Clark Knight. *The Jacksonian* of that week informed readers that Jim, while earning his degree from the University of Kansas, had “spent his summers working at the pharmacy and, since April 1, 1974, [had worked] as Clark Pharmacy’s registered pharmacist.”

The Coast family and their pharmacy, gift store, and compound pharmacy provided for the community for almost 40 years, expanding services and adding family members into the business over the years.

In 2013, however, the Coast family followed tradition by passing the building on to new owners, Matt and Kimberly Monical, who were both Cimarron graduates, and Matt worked for a time for Jim at Clark Pharmacy. On December 4, 2013, *The Jacksonian* reported Jim as saying, “That was part of why we hired Matt in the first place.

He and Kimberly wanted to move back here, and they were interested in ownership, just like Sandi and I were back when we purchased the business.”

Major changes to the property came again in 2019, when Gilbert and Beverly Benton bought the building from Matt and Kimberly Monical. The Bentons rented out the ground floor to Kay Vandergiesen and her antique shop. They also began major construction to the second floor, adding large support beams and updating electrical work to accommodate their business, Financial Management, Inc.

The November 13, 2019, issue of *The Jacksonian* reported that upstairs there would be 18 separate offices, a conference room, and a kitchen break-out room. A large generator came with the move. “The building was not in bad shape,” said Gilbert Benton, “but due to the increased weight [desks, computers, printers, etc.], we had to add a number of beams for support.” Financial Management, Inc., is planning the move to their new building in March of 2020.

Over the years, that two-story red brick building at 101 South Main Street, Cimarron, has had a variety of owners. It has served many purposes. It has survived tough times. But it’s still standing, still a beautiful local landmark, still open for business.



***Clark Pharmacy viewed from the Northeast, 2018,
when owned by Matt and Kimberly Monical.
(Photo: Lynne Hewes)***