

Rex Café Timeline

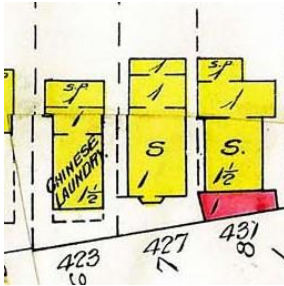
431 North Railway Street S.E.

Lot 8 Block 30 Plan 1491

Year of construction: 1920

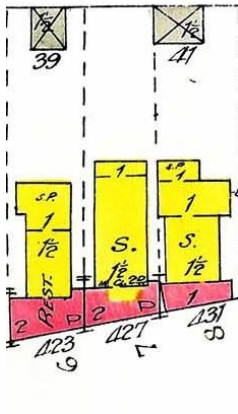
Mid 1890's: The original wood frame building was constructed on this site. The original usage is unknown.

1905: The original building as plotted on the Goad Fire Insurance map.

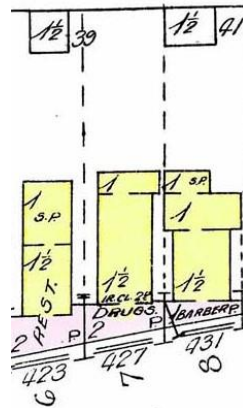


The building is frame (yellow) with a brick front (pink).

1910: The original building on the Goad Fire Insurance map. The adjacent bldgs. now have brick fronts adjoining 423, 427 and 431 North Railway.



1913: The original building as plotted on the 1913 map below:
Barbershop in the front brick area. Still frame with brick front.



Early 1913: 431 North Railway is being used as a barber shop, proprietor John D. Matheson. Within the year the CPR Men's Wear store moved to the Hartley Block at 505 North Railway.



Barber shop to the right. Original bldg. with brick front.
0919.0001

1917-1918: The Togo Café is operating out of 431 North Railway.

1919: The first Rex Café is being operated out of 431 North Railway, replacing Togo Cafe.

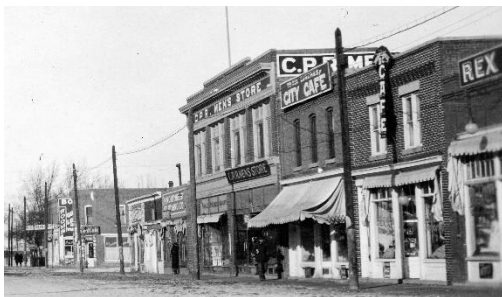
1920: The old building at 431 North Railway is demolished and a new brick building is constructed.

Permit Information:

July 29, 1920: Permit #27, Builders: George Hooff (Hooff was the foreman at the Preston Planing Mills in 1919) and Mr. Mckenzie. Owner: Kwong Lee
Material: Brick and hollow tile, 35.5' x 26 x 18 Cost: \$4200

c1921-1927

Photo below shows Rex Café to the right. At 423 North Railway is the City Café, at 427 is the BC Café.



0934.0027 cropped (Note: The C.P.R. Mens Wear store moved to 419 N. Rlwy. in 1921)



Rex Café after 1923. 0053.0004
Brick exterior, before being stuccoed.

May 16, 1930: Permit #27 is issued to Kwong Lee for an addition to the restaurant. The builder is P. Scanlon, the material is hollow block.

Photo, taken after 1929, the Rex Café is to the right, showing the brick exterior has been stuccoed.
0034.0016a



In the 1930's the restaurant is open 24 hrs. By the mid 1940's, the restaurant is open until 2:00 AM, for "CPR workers."

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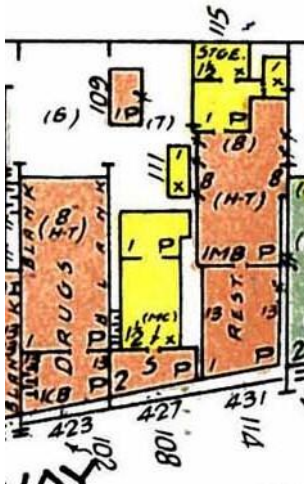
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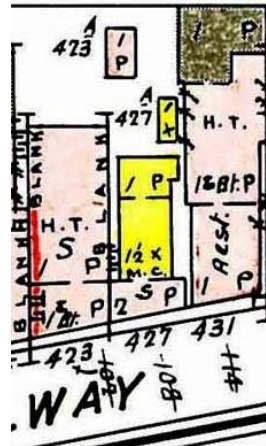
1920-1967: AGT phone books record the Rex Café at this address. From 1920 to 1921 it is listed under P.F. Woo. It is under Kwong Lee from 1922 until 1967.

April 1948: “Quon” (aka Kwong) Lee and Son (Chuck Lee) turn over the management of the Rex Café to new proprietors, Quang and Quan.

1955: Goad Fire Insurance map showing the entire building is now brick (pink). The original front façade is gone. 423 since replaced with a brick building, now a drugstore; 427 remains the same from 1910.



Below: **1964** Goad Map, changes in the far rear



Kwong Lee brief biography:

Kwong Lee was born in China in 1878. He came to Canada as a single man in 1902. He owned a laundry in Medicine Hat at 435 North Railway St. He also owned the property at 431 North Railway St. where he was proprietor of the Rex Café. His son Chuck Lee later joined his father in the restaurant business.

*Prepared by Sally Sehn
Heritage Resources Committee, City of Medicine Hat
July 7, 2020
Sources: Esplanade Archives, Medicine Hat News*