



**87 KING STREET & 88 ARTHUR STREET**

**ANNE BUILDING & ARTHUR BUILDING  
(BLUE RIBBON BUILDING)**

HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

23 February 1983

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This brick warehouse was erected in 1901 to house the Blue Ribbon Manufacturing Company, a division of G.F. & J. Galt. Galts was a large grocery wholesale house that had been based in Winnipeg since 1882.<sup>1</sup> The main Galt warehouse was at the corner of Princess and Bannatyne. Since 1887, teas, spices, cigars, brandies and common grocery products had been packaged and distributed throughout the west from this location. The Blue Ribbon line, which included teas, coffees, spices and baking powder, expanded to take up large amounts of space. Consequently, the decision was made to move Blue Ribbon to a separate building.

Initially, the Blue Ribbon operations leased space on Elgin Street until a site was purchased for the construction of a permanent warehouse.<sup>2</sup> The new location, near the corner of McDermot and King was less than a block away from the parent company. The new building, constructed in 1901, ran from King Street through to Arthur, with identical façades on both streets. Warehouse shipping was facilitated by three loading docks that opened onto a side lane.

James H. Cadham, a prominent local architect, designed the Blue Ribbon Building. (See Appendix I for biography). Cadham was firmly established in the design of warehouses, with several of his buildings remaining in the downtown area. In 1904, he added a fourth storey to the main Galt warehouse on Princess.

Cadham worked on the Blue Ribbon Building with the contracting firm of Saul and Irish. John Saul and his brother David built the main G.F. & J. Galt warehouse in 1887. As well, they built many warehouses in the city, beginning as early as the Benson and Bawlf Blocks on Princess in 1882. The Bate Building (1883), the Silvester-Wilson Building (1904) and the Dingwall Building on Albert (1910) are just some of the many buildings to their credit.<sup>3</sup> In the lean years after the boom in 1882, the Saul Brothers moved out to rural Manitoba where they designed and built many prominent local structures. On the Blue Ribbon Building, they worked in tandem with another well-known contractor, J.J. McDiarmid.<sup>4</sup>

The warehouse is four storeys high, made of solid brick on a stone foundation. With dimensions of 56 feet by 99 feet, the estimates of its cost ranged from \$23,000 to \$30,000.<sup>5</sup> The design is typical of Cadham's work: the heavy, stylized form of Richardsonian Romanesque. The three-bay façades were recessed behind large brick arches, reproduced on a smaller scale by the window trim and the heavy stone arch over the main door. Until 1946, the doors on both the King and Arthur façades were centred with hallways leading to a stairway in the very centre of the building that was flanked by two elevators.<sup>6</sup> Some kind of fire wall divided the building in half crosswise and the Blue Ribbon Building shared a party with Gaults on the north side. In 1946, the entrances were moved to the left on both façades, and two new stairways added.<sup>7</sup>

From their new warehouse, the Blue Ribbon Company blended and packaged teas, coffees and spices for sale to retailers across the Prairies. The company was very successful, more so in fact than the parent company G.F. & J. Galt, but for some reason, this building did not prove suitable. In 1909, Galt's commissioned J.H.G. Russell to build a new Blue Ribbon Building at 334 McDermot between Adelaide and Hargrave.<sup>8</sup> Blue Ribbon expanded, was formed into a limited stock company in 1928, and bought out in 1959 by one of the largest spice companies, Brooke Bond.<sup>9</sup> It still operates from the McDermot site.

When Blue Ribbon had completely vacated the original building in 1911, it became in effect two distinct buildings that were never again related in function. Each was able to show a full façade to the street and it was only upon closer inspection that anyone would realize that 87 King Street and 88 Arthur Street were the same building.

The 87 King Street side was re-named the Anne Building. A wholesale boot and shoe firm used the building until 1925 when Great West Electric took it over. This company closed down mid-way through the Depression, leaving the building vacant until 1942. From this time on, a series of smaller wholesale businesses have leased space in the Anne Building. The furrier Oscar Dorfman has been there since the early 1950s and Milton Footwear since the early 1960s. There are a large number of vacancies in the building at present.

For many years, the Arthur Building at 88 Arthur Street hosted the Wine and Spirits Vaults Ltd., a liquor wholesale. Marantz boots and shoes and hardware merchants by the name of Wood, Vallance Ltd. occupied the building in the 1920s. Like the other side of the building, the Arthur Building was vacant from c.1935 to 1943, when the present owner, Mondell Importers, took it over.

FOOTNOTES--

1. R.R. Rostecki "Galt Building 103 Princess St." Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings, Volume V, 1976, p. 158.
2. Henderson's Directory, for Winnipeg 1900.
3. C.I.H.B., op. cit., Vols. II - V.
4. City of Winnipeg Building Permit No. 365 6 July 1901. The actual permit is missing, but the information was cross-indexed in the Permit Abstracts.
5. The building permit estimated the cost at \$25,000. Newspaper reports gave the cost as \$23,000 and \$30,000. "Will Build New Block" Manitoba Free Press 3 July 1901 and "Winnipeg's New Buildings of 1901" Manitoba Free Press 28 November 1901.
6. Fire Insurance Plan of Winnipeg Western Canadian Fire Underwriters' Association Winnipeg 1918 folio 202. One freight & one passenger elevator.
7. Permits, op. cit., No. 5475 1 November 1946. The fire escapes were also added at this time.
8. J.H. Cadham had died in 1907.
9. "U.K. Interests to Buy City Tea, Coffee Firm" Winnipeg Free Press 15 October 1959.

## APPENDIX I

### James H. Cadham

J.H. Cadham was one of the self-trained architects who learned his profession from years in the building trade. He was born in London, Ontario, in 1850 and trained as a carpenter. As a young man, he came to Winnipeg in 1870 and joined Wolseley's historic Red River Expedition in the confrontation with Riel.<sup>1</sup> He remained in the city, where he worked for over twenty years as a contractor. Since 1895, he worked almost exclusively as an architect, primarily on the construction of large warehouses and stores.<sup>2</sup> From the following partial list of Cadham's designs, it is clear that his influence was formative to the appearance of Winnipeg's warehouse district. He died in 1907.

Cadham adopted a heavy masonry style for his buildings which drew their influence from H.H. Richardson of the eastern United States. He repeated the use of massive forms and plain materials to give impact, choosing window and door details to compliment this effect.

This is an incomplete list of Cadham's Winnipeg buildings:

- 1897 - Merchants Bldg. 250 McDermot (originally George D. Woods Bldg.)
  - 1899 - R.J. Whitla Bldg. 70 Arthur
  - 1901 - Galt Bldg. on King & Arthur; G.F. Stephens Warehouse on Market
  - 1902 - Gregg Bldg. 52-56 Albert
  - 1903 - Addition to Gaults Ltd. on Bannatyne; Kemp Manufacturing Bldg. 111 Lombard; Stobbs Sons & Co. 275 McDermot
  - 1904 - Miller Morse Bldg. 317 McDermot; Scott Block on Main; addition to Whitla Bldg. 70 Arthur; addition to Galt Bldg. 103 Princess
  - 1905 - U of M Medical College on Bannatyne; addition to McLaughlin on Princess
  - 1906 - Frost & Wood Bldg. 230 Princess; Kemp Mfg. addition; McIntyre Block addition, Main
- Also: Rat Portage Lumber Co; Prairie Lumber Co. warehouse and the Champion Bldg.

### FOOTNOTES--

1. Frank Schofield "Frederick Todd Cadham, M.D." in The Story of Manitoba Vol. II The S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., Winnipeg 1913 p. 331.
2. "J.H. Cadham Died Today" Manitoba Free Press 11 December 1907.

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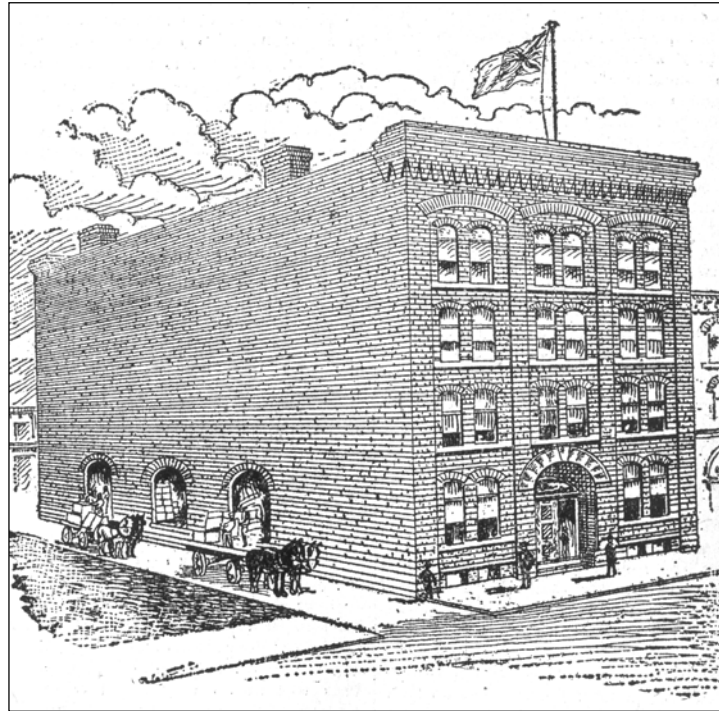


Plate 1 – 87 King Street (88 Arthur Street), the Blue Ribbon Building of the G.F. & J. Galt Company, 1901. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba.)



Plate 2 – 87 King Street, the Anne Building, 1970. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Architectural Survey.)

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Plate 3 – 88 Arthur Street, the Arthur Building, in 1970. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Architectural Survey.)



Plate 4 – 88 Arthur Street, altered loading dock, 1970. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Architectural Survey.)



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Plate 5 – 87 King Street, Anne Building, 1983. (City of Winnipeg, Planning Department.)



Plate 6 – 88 Arthur Street, Arthur Building, 1983 (City of Winnipeg, Planning Department.)

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Plate 7 – Typical interior warehouse space, no date. (City of Winnipeg, Planning Department.)