

Museum Around the Corner

The Georgetown County Historical Society Museum

Iseman's Drug Store ©

When strolling down Front Street, one can't help but admire one unique building noted for its brick arch. Ye Old Fish House, or locally known as Big Tuna, hasn't always been a purveyor of good seafood, but was once Iseman's Drug Store. At 807 Front Street, Iseman's was opened at least by 1887 when Dr. Myre S. Iseman came to Georgetown from Marion, SC. He graduated from the University of Louisville in 1880 and ran a drugstore in Darlington, S.C. Iseman practiced medicine in Atlanta, Washington, and Los Angeles. His store was a wholesale and retail drugstore which also sold stationary, perfume, fancy goods, and toilet articles.

A newspaper article in the Georgetown Times, date unknown but in the 1970s, tells of an interesting find that sheds a little light on the daily business at Iseman's. It reads, "Just recently, A.I. Fogel, proprietor of familiar "Fogel's Department Store", was walking out on the dock behind his establishment.

A warehouse having past affiliations with Iseman's Drug Store, one of the most venerable business locations in the City of Georgetown, was in process of being cleared out. Among the papers and debris awaiting disposal was an old charge book with the nearly indistinguishable "Iseman's" on its dilapidated cover. Fogel fished it out from its trashy company and found that the book bearing the dates ranging from 1895 through 1896 with many references to people long-gone who bore still remembered names here, accounts of their ailments indicated by various medicines prescribed by various physicians and their lighter shopping choices plus the costs all give fascinating peeks into the past of much of Georgetown County.

First, the well-known doctors of that day such as Dr. W.E.S. Sparkman, Dr. Olin Sawyer and Dr. H.D. Beckman were joined by many others...Dr. Block, Dr. Tayloe (not Taylor although there was a Dr. Taylor), Dr. Folk and a Dr. Wilson R. Buie, a retired Mayo Clinic surgeon. People of that day got their drugs and incidental needs from Iseman's and many prescriptions contained in the retrieved book showed that they also patronized the Drugs Department of Atlantic Coast Lumber Company and L. C. Crofts Drug Store located under the old Opera House on Front Street, now Fogel's.

Entries in many handwritings, most unreadable, gave the names, the articles and costs, some in a manner as to seem that the good druggists were more hurried than methodical. For instance, there was a prescription from ACL's drug department made out for "John Bull child" by the late Dr. Olin Sawyer (who eventually turned to politics and became a senator from Georgetown County). Reading the names gives one a nice feeling of "home-town-ness" since most of the people have descendants one knows today, although it is now 81 years after these Georgetown County-ites traded at Iseman's.

It is not too hard to visualize them going into Iseman's which was always a tightly-packed, many shelved emporium with a conglomeration of many medicines needed for man or beast, as the charges indicated. One can almost imagine them going in: businessmen with pistol-legged pants and celluloid collars and farmers in overalls, ladies with long frocks and perhaps the famed high-buttoned shoes, and maybe, barefooted youngsters, running to the store for mama. '

There was a prescription for "Mrs. C. W. Rouse's baby", made up of Mangani-Ferri, which if our chemistry recollections go not astray, means iron of some sort; one prescription was written, possibly as a doctor was cornered on the street, on the back of an envelope which was addressed to Dr. Armistead; Albert Horry bought Mustang Liniment and Nerve and Bone Liniment, both at 25 cents each; L.G. Walter, Chlorate of Potash, 5 cents; J.J. Hucks was a cash man, laying out \$7 at one time; J.B. Hutto bought a Harper's second grade reader for 36 cents; Moses and Brothers bought 64 cents worth of turnipseed; E.T. Porter purchased 55 cents in toothbrushes; Allard B. Flagg, cash purchase of \$5; W. Ehrich, Scotts Emulsion at \$1 and M. Moses invested 15 cents for three glasses of water, which was really not dirt cheap.

J.B. Steele was among several who bought one of the most requested commodities, quinine pills for 25 cents and C. Brightman bought 25 cents worth of cologne; Josiah Doar took home 20 cents worth of camphor balls and a lampwick and Captain Siau needed 25 cents of paregoric, as did W. Shackelford while L. G. Walker bought a lamp chimney for 15 cents.

L.C. Croft needed to take home some Pinkham's Compound and W.D. Morgan's purchase of Spts [sic] Pennyroyal at 35 cents left one in the dark as to whether he intended to drink it or smoke it, the price was too small for one and too steep for the other.

L.W. Lachicotte bought 20 cents worth of Ruta-baga seeds and A.K. Dill paid \$5 cash, didn't say this happened every time, perhaps just the once. J. Hazard got 10 cents worth of carbolic soap while F. Bellune improved someone's mind with books for \$3.22; W. B. Read paid 25 cents for a prescription and the same for a cigar, or maybe five or ten cigars; E. T. Porter came back for some quinine and D. W. Crowley, owner of one of the most beautiful buildings on Front Street [Crowley's Grocery], got 50 cent worth of headache powders.

Fogel said that an N.C. Sampson referred to in the book, was the grandfather of Mrs. Charlotte Kaminski Prevost and her brother Edwin Kaminski of Pawleys Island, while J.B. Steele was president of the Peiople's Bank; Walter Hazzard was a prominent attorney and John Harleston Read was the grandfather of Alan Read of this city.

History-wise A.I. Fogel preserved a book that holds much interest for Georgetown people, more that could possibly be touched upon here, but that's the way it was, some of it. "