

IRON STREET FIFTY-ODD YEARS AGO

When I graduated from law school in 1928 my first job was on Iron Street in Negaunee as assistant to the then county prosecutor, Clarence Lott, whose office was over the Negaunee State Bank, the angular building still standing on the southeast corner of Iron and Silver streets.

My main job was to handle the cases in our then widely scattered justice courts, and one day I might be rambling in my mortgaged Model A over to distant Michigamme to do my stuff and the next to far off Big Bay--much of which I have recounted in my two early D.A. books, Troubleshooter and Smalltown D.A.

But there were gaps in my ramblings, during which I often prowled colorful old Iron Street, then back in the "dry" days when in retrospect it seemed that every other establishment was what was then whimsically called a "soft drink parlor".

In what follows I'll try to recall some of the places and people I knew back then, purposely not cramming on the subject or pestering local old-timers like my old friend, Frank Matthews, but giving it off the top of my head, starting with the building I worked in.

In Clarence's front office sat the boss, of course, while out in the waiting room sat his new assistant and competent Impi Marie Martinen, our stenographer, who also, being the valedictorian of her high school class, frequently taught us how to spell even "misspell".

Down the long hall from Clarence's office was the office of the Connors Lumber Company, a busy place presided over by the bespectacled Mr. Connors and I think one of his sons and where Martha Thompson of Ishpeming held the fort when the men were out making another logging deal.

I'm not sure the labor union office was then in existence, but soon after that, at least, the space in between was occupied by union organizers Jack Powell and Joe Pascoe, and later by a young Dominick Jacobetti.

Up front was the dental office of another old friend, Dick Hirwas, who somehow managed to keep a civil tooth in my head, and who was married to one of the comely Barasa girls.

Downstairs was the office of my old friend of many years, Frank A. Bell, our circuit judge (who then also travelled 4 other

counties), who was also a fellow fisherman who showed me much about the art and also where to practice it. Near the front was the office of another old friend, ^{Alec} Maitland, the son of an old iron mining family, who also ran the Palmer mine in the days before pellet mining.

The downstairs bank itself was presided over by still another old friend, Thomas Pascoe, the cashier, who kept graciously renewing my notes for the money I'd borrowed for my education. I remember others in the bank, as well, but cannot recall their names--one reason I finally gave up politics!

Under the bank was a busy barber shop, run by Clarence Donithorne before he turned to selling cars, assisted by Harold what's-his-name and a friendly man called Kangas, as I recall.

Next to the bank building was Wehmanen's Jewelry Store, where I once bought a gold watch that still works, of all things, and next to it one of my favorite shops, the old Miner's Store, piled and loaded with all sorts of goodies that even a non-miner could use in the woods and out fishing. Next to it my memory

wavers a bit, so I'll settle for guessing it must have been another "soft drink" tavern. Back in those "dry" days the town seemed to have more of them than schools or churches put together--much like old Ishpeming, I hasten to add.

Next on my memory list was Teikar's Bar, presided over by tall John himself of the lovely Finnish accent and imperious handle-bar mustaches, who ran one of the busiest places in town, especially on pay days. In between I may have skipped a photo shop or even a shoemaker shop, for this was still back in the days when people didn't have to go to church in order to get resoled.

Beyond Teikar's my memory fogs again but I think there was a narrow restaurant that served dreamy homemade soup. Then, on the corner, I think there was a Ford agency (where Merrick's is now), possibly run by Dave Klinglund, one of the old pioneer auto dealers of the Peninsula, or maybe it was by Clarence Donithorne after he forsook the shaving mug.

Across the street I think Jim Nardi ran a gas station, then maybe there was a ladies' store, then another tavern (before Russo Brothers started an early store), then, across a sort of

pedestrian's alley, Jafet Rytkonen's Vista movie house (where Paul Bennett used to play the organ), then the Chocolate Shop, one of the local gathering spots, run by Victoria Groome and her husband.

Next door or nearby was another state bank run by a man who married the pretty Quinn girl, then the drug store run by the two Arneeth Brothers, then I'd guess another tavern or maybe it was an early A.& P. store---or was it Red Owl?--and was even before that a busy meat market run by some brothers who's name I clean forget. Next was my own favorite hangout, Torreano's Bar, run for years by the one and only Joe Torreano, who had that big round butt-scarred card table, underneath which one could in a pinch rest his "soft" drink on suspended little shelves.

Here I must pause to tell a typical Joe anecdote. The annual U.P.Fireman's Tournament was in full swing, and it took me five minutes to work my way in past the long 3-deep bar where I finally found Joe presiding over his busy card table:

"How's business, Joe?" I said.

"Rotten," he said, wagging his head and twisting his nose the way he did. "Want to buy the place?"

Beyond Joe's was maybe a restaurant or--big surprise-- another tavern, and then Lowenstein's Department Store (still running) one of the pioneer stores in the whole area and the early playground of my fellow-lawyer and old friend, Aaron. Then came Battoni's restaurant and bar, then presided over by the colorful Mr. Battoni and I believe his son John, and which I recall served lovely pasta.

Perkin's Drug Store was next, I guess (or maybe it was before Battoni's), presided over by the golf-playing Mr. Perkins, a distinguished-looking man even in plus-fours, then next I think the entrance to the busy upstairs Elks Club where old friend Otis Rule waved his magic wand and where tall Charley Sporley sat enthroned as the king of cribbage. Next was the third bank, the First National, this one run by another indulgent and note-renewing friend of mine, G. Sherman Collins. Included in his staff was a young teller from Ishpeming called Roy Johnson, also an old friend who now runs the bank.

Across Silver street, running west, was the Carlson shoe-maker shop, I think, then still another tavern and a sort of alley leading to the back-door upstairs entrance to Big Annie's, named after the busy head lady of her equally busy clinic devoted to comforting the lovelorn for a small cash fee.

Past Annie's I'd think there was a newstand (Miller's and still later Cains?), then pretty soon the old Lafkas Candy Kitchen (where one could get 3-decker banana splits for 15 cents), then somewhere in there Thoren's tailor shop (run by the brother of my old friend, Judge Theodore Thoren, who office and justice-of-the-peace courtroom was over the bank of the man who married that pretty Quinn girl).

Then I think we came to Tom Curtis' body shop, run by another old friend, whose younger brother Everett married the Elliott girl of the old hardware family. Then I think next door or near was the old closed Star Theatre, and early movie house which later became a bowling alley, I believe, and still later an excellent music and record shop run by Mr. and Mrs. Violetta.

Across the street was the towering old brownstone Sundberg Block, still standing, which I think in those days had a shop selling used furniture. Then next door was the old Sawbridge hardware store and next or close to it was the Black Diamond, a busy bar and restaurant run by old friends Mary and Tony Guizzetti, who also had music and dancing and served dreamy pasta.

Next I seem to draw a blank except for Bannon's Cleaners, with maybe a tavern or two thrown in, until I came to Levine's Store (another pioneer clothing store run by a pioneer family) then run by the brothers Abe and Phil Levine, also old friends, then helped by the red-headed Dewey Hansen (later sheriff) and Louie Ramberg, son of the bearded old travelling tailor from Ishpeming.

Next to Levine's I think there was a flower shop and still another tavern to aid the parched pedestrian, and then, on the corner, the old Winter & Suess grocery store (now Symons Hardware), one of the busiest places in town. While rosy-cheeked Joe Winter was still very much alive, he was not then active in the store, which was then managed by a local human dynamo called Sid Northey, who I can still see dapperly hopping and skipping across Iron Street on his way to or from the bank.

This brings me full circle, for all the gaps (which should be great fun for my fellow old-timers to fill in), but before I sign off I'd like to mention a few old timers not directly connected with Iron Street, as well as a few memories of an even earlier Negaunee.

When I was in high school the athletic rivalry between Ishpeming and Negaunee must have rivalled even that between Michigan and Ohio State. While Ishpeming didn't do too badly in basketball, ~~some years~~ during my time our football was a calamity. For Negaunee then had a tall powerful young fullback called "Totter" Sundquist, who rambled through Ishpeming like Riggins ran through the Dolphins not so long ago. And there were many others: Charlie Kangas, Red Farrar, the Scanlon brothers--I could run on and on...

Then there was Bert Agnoli, an old friend, who seems to have held every elective or appointive office in Negaunee from mayor ^{on} down--or is it up?--a rare and colorful individual who was [^] also a fine chief of police, as was another old friend, Arne Pynnonen.

Willy Sharpe, a former iron miner, became justice of peace succeeding Judge Thoren, as I recall, a man who ran his court with a Cornish accent, but who was both as shrewd and compassionate as any law-trained judge I ever knew.

Most Negaunee people probably don't know that my grandfather Nicholas' third and last brewery, an old red brick affair, still stands boarded up on Gold Street. His first brewery was built in 1843 in Eagle Harbor, doubtless as a patriotic gesture toward the parched soldiers who would soon occupy nearby Fort Wilkins, to be completed the following year--the same year, oddly enough, *that iron ore was discovered in Negaunee,* formed the basic plot of his youngest grandson's second novel, "Laughing Whitefish", published 121 years later, and soon to be back in print along with "Anatomy of a ~~M~~urder". *which in turn*

And since I've detoured up Gold Street to resurrect Grandpa's brewery--not to mention a couple of old books--on the way back I'd better pause at the historic old depots, two of the busiest places in the country when the railroads still bothered to

transport mere mail and people along with logs and iron ore.

Today the old wooden freight depot has been both taste-
fully and intriguingly restored into a combined art gallery and
^{art} school and working studio run by a talented artist in her own
right, the potter, Marilyn Mutch, whose glowing and yet practical
plans for the place and the surrounding area could soon ~~help~~ put
Negaunee high on the cultural map of the whole U. P.

* * *

I could run on and on--after all I later campaigned all
over Negaunee when there were still three underground mines
running--but maybe I should hold that for the next centenary.
Instead I'll close with Clarence Lott.

When our old friends Clarence and Florence Lott and their
son Jim finally moved West (she was the granddaughter of Capt. and
Mrs. Piper and a half-sister of Marjorie's), I ran for his old job,
which I held for 14 years (the same as Judge Bell did in his day).
Since then I have known and observed many able lawyers but I still
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than Clarence was, especially in the courtroom.

John Voelker

February 1983

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Re-do 2 in final, please

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Street

(B. 778 IN 1st. hand draft)

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1st page

Ju in

No 9.

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~~Exam~~ ^{new} 9.

(B: now ^{take} 2nd hand draft)

2nd. page

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and the surrounding area

(B: New ^{just one} star ↑ * drop a space * then on to the end, starting at X, calling runner before // * whatever. I)

B: 2 final, please.
J. Thanks for the helpful tapes.

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But there were gaps in my ramblings, during which I often prowled colorful old Iron Street, then in the "dry" days ^{back} when in retrospect it seemed that every other establishment was what was ^{whimsically} then called a "soft drink parlor".

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Next door ^{or nearby} was another state bank run by a man who married the pretty Quinn girl, then the drug store run by the two Arneth Brothers, then I'd guess another tavern ^{or maybe it was an early A.P. store} and then my own favorite hangout, Torreano's Bar, run for years by the one and only Joe Torreano, who had that big round butt-scared card table, underneath which one could rest his "soft" drink on ^{in a pinch} little shelves. ^{suspended}

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"How's ^S business, Joe?" I said.

"Rotten," he said, ^{wagging his head and} twisting his nose the way he did.

"Want to buy the place?"

Beyond Joe's was ⁱⁿ maybe a restaurant or--surprise-- another tavern, and then Lowenstein's Department Store (still running) one of the pioneer stores in the whole area and the early playground of my fellow-lawyer and old friend, Aaron. Then came Battoni's restaurant and bar, then presided over by the colorful Mr. Battoni ^{and I believe his son John,} ~~himself~~, and which I recall served lovely pasta.

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John Voelker

February, 1983

Shoemaker Shop. ^{was} run by Carlson of Lohp. (Teacher Signe Carlson's father)

Mellers News? - later Cain's

Co-op Store?

Violettas

Bowling Alley

Skating rink (-ended Iron St on North)

Sawbridge Hdwr. on So side of street

Bannon Cleaners " " "

There was an

A-F Store

- later a Red Owl

run by Milt Cain
who later bought out

Mellers News.

(there were
beyond the Choc. Shop.)

Where was Erickson's candy store? Don says there was one.

1. B: ~~1 mi draft~~, please. J.

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2
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I'm not sure the ^{labor} union headquarters were then in existence, but soon after that, at least, the space in between was occupied by union workers Jack Powell, Joe Pascol and ^{later, a grand} Dominick Jacobetti.

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4 other →

34B

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and then my own favorite hangout,
Torreano's Bar, run for years by the
one and only Joe Torreano, who had
that ^{round} ^{big} butt-scared card table,
underneath which one could rest
his "soft" drink on little shelves.

Groome) →

Here I must ^{have to} tell a Typical Joe
anecdote. The ^{cardinal} U.P. Fireman's
Tournament was in full swing, and
it took me five minutes to work my
way ^{way} past the 3'-deep bar, ^{where I}
found Joe back at ^{my} ^{card} table.
"Have a burger, Joe?" I said.
"Batten," he said, ^{trusting} his nose
the way ^{to} he did. "Want to buy the place?"

6.

-- surprise --

Beyond Joe's was maybe a restaurant or another tavern, and then Lowenstein's Department Store (still running), one of the pioneer stores in the whole area and the early playground of my fellow-lounge and old friend, Aaron. Then came Battoni's restaurant and bar, then presided over by the colorful Mr. Battoni himself, and which I recall served lovely pasta.

I guess ^(or maybe before Battoni) Perkins' Drug Store was next, presided over by the golf-playing Mr. Perkins, a distinguished-looking man, then I think next the entrance to the busy upstairs Elks Club where Olin Rule waved his major's wand and Charley Spodley was the king of croquet. Next was the Third bank, this one run by another indulgent and gracious friend ^{of mine}, A. Sherman Collins, and included in his staff was a young teller ^{called} Roy Johnson, who now runs the bank.

tall

Across Silver St, running west, was
 a shop, I think, then still another
 tavern, and then an alley ^{way leading} or opening
 to for the back-door ^{named after the} upstairs entrance
 to Big Annie, the busy ^{lady} head lady
 of a busy ^{clinic} establishment devoted to
 comforting the lovelorn! ~~Then~~
 Past that ^{there were} I'd guess some more taverns, then pretty
 soon the old ~~Laikas~~ Candy Kitchen (where
 one could get 3-decker banana splits
 for 15 cents) then somewhere in there
 Thoren's Tailor shop (run by the brother
 of my old friend, Judge Theodore Thoren,
 whose office and justice-of-the-peace
 court ^{was} over the bank of the man who
 married that pretty Danni girl).

Annie
 Past that
 1

Then I think we ~~came~~ ^{ran by} to Tom
 Curtis' body shop, another old friend,
 whose brother Everett married the Elliott
 girl of the old hardware family. Then
 I think next door or near was the old
 closed Star Theatre, an early movie house
 which later became, I believe, a ^{restaurant} messie
 and ^{and food shop} ~~shop~~ run by ^{Mr. Violette} ~~Mr. Violette~~ and his wife,
 parents of

my old friends

Across the street was the towering
 old Sandberg Block, still
 standing, which I think in those
 days had a ~~store~~^{shop} selling used
 furniture. Then next door or near
 was the Black Diamond, a
 busy bar and restaurant run by Mary and
 Tony Buzzell, who ^{had music and dancing and} served
 creamy pasta. ^{Next} I draw a two
 block with maybe a tavern ^{or} ^{bar}
 in until I come to Lemmie's Store
 (another pioneer clothing store run by
 a pioneer family) ^{then} run by the
 brothers Abe and Phil Lemmie,
 helped by the red-headed Dewey
 Hansen (later sheriff) and Louie
 Ramberg, son of the old travelling
 tailor, and ~~only~~ ~~seems~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~the~~ ~~only~~
~~one~~

9

next to Lemmie's

There, I think there were ~~another~~ a
flower shop and still another Tavern and
then, on the corner, the old Winter & Seers
grocery store, ^(now Kim's Hardware) one of the busiest places in town.
While rosy-cheeked Joe Winter was still
alive, he was not active, and ^{my} the store ^{was}
managed by a ^{local} human dynamo called Sid
Mortley, who I can still see ^{shopping} and
Iron Street on his way to or from the bank.

then

10

directly connected
with Iron Street, as

This brings me full circle, for all the gaps (which should be great fun for my fellow old-timers to fill in), but before I sign off I'd like to mention a ^{few} ~~old-timers~~ ^{old-timers} ~~not~~ well as ^{a few} ^{when} ^{an} earlier Nequamee.

When I was in high school the athletic rivalry between Ishpeming and Nequamee rivaled even ~~that~~ ^{between Michigan and Ohio State}. While Ishpeming didn't do too badly in basketball during my time, as I recall, our football was a ~~total~~ calamity. For Nequamee ^{then} had a young fullback called "Tutter" Sundquist, who ~~he~~ rumbled through Ishpeming like ^{from the jungle} ~~the~~ ^{the} Dolphin. And there were many others: Charlie Kangas, Red Farrow, the Scanlon B brothers; I could run on and on...

Then there was Bert Agnoli, an old friend, who seems to have held every elective or appointive office in Megamuck from mayor down -- or is it up? -- a rare and colorful individual who was also a fine chief of police, as was another old friend, Arne Pignoneu.

Wally Sharpl, a former ^{iron} miner, became justice of peace succeeding Judge Thoren, as I recall, a man who ran his court with a Cornish accent, but was both, ^{as} shrewd and compassionate as any law-trained judge I ever knew.

Most Megamuck people probably don't know that my grandfather's third and last brewery, still stands boarded up on Gold Street (his first was built in Eagle Harbor in 1843, the year before iron ore was found in Megamuck).

I could run on and on -- after all I
later campaigned in Mequon when there
were three underground mines still
running -- but maybe I should hold
that for the next century. Instead
I'll close with Clarence Lott.

115

and Florence
Tott,

~~I could run on and on~~ ~~until~~
~~time to close.~~ When Clarence ~~Tott~~
finally moved West (she was the grand-
daughter of Capt. and Mrs. Piper, and
a half-sister of Marguerite), I
ran for his old job, which I held
for 14 years (the same as Judge
Bill did in his day.) Since then I
have known, and observed many
able lawyers, and still don't think I've
ever known, ^{or observed} a more capable one than
Clarence, especially in the courtroom.

John Vaether
Feb. 1983

Iron Street Fifth ^{odd} Year Ago

I began graduated from the
Mich. Law school in June of 1928, and that
fall went to work as the assistant to
^{my old friend} ^{for many years} ^{the} ^{county} ^{prosecutor,}
Charles Lott, whose office was over the ^{McQuinn}
State Bank, ^{the angular building which stands} on the south side of
Iron Street in Marquette.

My main job was to ~~take care~~
handle all the ^{scattered} justice court cases,
in those days a wide-ranging affair,
with a trial one day up in Michigamine
and the next perhaps in distant Big
Bay or Wells, ^{that} ⁱⁿ ^{that} ^{county,} before the district court
^{system, concentrated,} the lower court
^{and hearings largely} ^{cases} in St. Marquette and Ishpeming.

But there were gaps in the churning,
and during the lulls I learned quite
a bit about Iron Street, some of which
I'll now try to recall, though I'm ^{an} surprised
at the gaps in my ^{knowledge} memory
as I am at the ^{gaps} ^{where} ^{buildings}
once stood, recalling that of Ishpeming,
where ^{virtually} every downtown fire
means ^{the} ^{then} ^{new} a new parking lot.

Even in high school
Megawee was memorable, especially
when its' football team had
runners like "Fotter" Sundquist,
as unstoppable as a tractor, who
I recently thought when I watched
Rizguit gallop through the Dolphin.
appointing or

Then there was Bert Agnoli, who
seems to have ^{held} ~~held~~ every office in
Megawee, a rare and colorful
^{his} individual who was also a fine
chief of police, or was another old
friend, Arne Pajononen.

Clarence Lott moved west and ^{so}
ran for his old job, which I held for
14 years, and while I ^{have} seen and watched
many lawyers ^{my} in my day, I still don't
think I ever ^{saw or} knew a more powerful
and successful trial lawyer.

Next door was the bank building over which I worked, so I guess we come full circle, perhaps only proving how much I've forgotten.

Things like where the several places where Dave Hurland had his car dealership. Or the old upstart Elks Club where Otis Rule distributes hospitality and cheer, not to mention my old friend Charley Sporley and his son Everett.

The other day I drove up and
down downtown Iron Street in
Mequinee to try to prod my memory
of what it used to be ^{like} back in the
1920's and early '30's. Instead I
was struck by how many places are
no longer there, which made me think of
my native Alpena, where it seems that
after every fire the town ^{gains} a new
parking lot.

At the end of the hall on our
floor was the Connors Lumber Company,
a busy place in which there seemed to
be a constant shuffle of people dealing
mostly in pulp.

1
a man who became a close friend,

Back in 1928 I worked on Iron Street for a couple of years as assistant to Clarence Lott, the county prosecutor. I had graduated from law school that June and Clarence's office was on the second floor of the old Menominee State Bank, the angular building still standing on the south side of Iron Street.

During those years my main job was to chase drunk drivers and game and fish violators around the many scattered justice courts in Marquette. But there were days of respite, during which I learned ^{more about} the geography of Iron Street, some of which, after more than fifty years, I'll now try to recall, starting with the building where I worked.

I was born in Ishpeming in 1903, so I also in a sense "grew up" in Megannell, then even more closely connected by streetcars, which stopped at the old Breitung Hotel, as I recall.

In 1928 I went to work for Clarence Latt, then county prosecutor with affairs over the ~~the~~ State Bank, then presided over by our mutual friend, Tom Pascoe, so ~~then~~ for a few years I saw quite a lot of Iron Street, some memory of which I'll now try to dredge up, though, as usual, I'll probably remember the people better than their names.

Starting at West Iron Street,
I think the old Star Theatre on
the ^{north side} corner had already
closed, later replaced by
_____ 's music store,
which I visited often. Near
there was Tom Curtis' body
shop, also the Laffer candy
kitchen (3-decker
banana splits, 15 cents!)
then I have a gap, probably
filled by a few "soft drink"
joints (remember, the country
was still "dry"), then Big
Annie's pay-day rest home
for the lonesome -- so I'll go
back up to the south side.

I can't seem to recall who
was in the old 3-story
Sundberg Building, but next
door ~~to~~ I think it was, the
lovely old Sawbridge ~~the~~
hardware store was still
running. Nearby was the
old Diamond Club, run
by Mary and Tony —
where the kids could romp
and everybody dine on
delicious Italian food. Near
there, I think, was ~~Banagon's~~
Dry Cleaners, ^{another} ~~think,~~ Tavern
or two.

Across Gold Street, on
Iron (my grandfather's old red
brick brewery still stands
there, ^{on Gold} this ~~third~~, closed, but

heard, in the 1880's, later a garage, and now boarded up).

on Iron
Lerone's Store ran ^{east} ~~north~~ half a block, and I knew Abe and Phil and also red-headed Dewey Hanson, who worked there before he became our Sheriff. Then there was the old Winters & Sues grocery store, then managed by busy Sid Northey, who I can still visualize shipping his way across Iron Street.

Rosy-checked Joe Winters was still alive, but not Mr. Sues, and I guess I ^{distantly} am related to the Dan Sues and William Mass, as our grandmothers, I believe, were

sisters from Milwaukee
called Longdorf, if I spell
it right.

Getting corner from the
store was the First National
Bank, presided over by another
old friend, G. Sherman Collins,
then I think the Patton's restaurant
and bar, where I often went, then
Berkin's Drug Store (I used to
dance with his daughter Elizabeth),
then the old Lowenstein Department
Store, a real pioneer landmark,
then a rash of tavern, including
that run by a dear old friend,
Joe Torreano, then in there
somewhere in there was another
bank, run by a man who
married the pretty Jewish girl.

Next was the Vista Theatre,
run by a megawatt pioneer,
Jafet R. , and in which
I recall Paul Bennett of Sibley
daily played the Wuritzer organ.
Then another tavern or so and, I
think a gas station.

Across Iron Street was a
car sales, I believe, then a
restaurant & then Long John
Tikari's bar, provided over by
John himself, with his ~~the~~
almost Prussian handlebar
mustache. Then I have a
memory gap until we come to the
old Menner's Store, only recently
closed and then Wehmanoni
Jewelry Store, a lovely place where
I once bought a watch that still runs.