

Frank L. Fry's Drugstore: A Pharmacy Dream Renovation

By Mary MacCara

Let's step back in time to Halifax, Nova Scotia in the late 1940s and meet Frank Fry. Frank Fry was a pharmacist who owned a drugstore at the corner of Morris and Queen streets, where Atlantic News stands today. The drugstore was on the street level and he and his family lived upstairs. His colleagues described him as a professional pharmacist with a thriving business. They spoke of him making effective use of product displays in his front windows, filling 30-40 prescriptions per day and operating a profitable soda fountain. Student nurses and military personnel lived in barracks close by and they often came into the drug store for a tasty treat at the soda fountain counter.

In 1948, Frank Fry decided it was time to make his dream drugstore come true. He completely remodeled the store. Where once there was a single dispensary, he installed two. These dispensaries were custom built, each equipped with a hardwood counter, a sink and Schwartz sectional wooden pill cabinets. The walls were paneled with mahogany, new light fixtures were mounted, and a special communications system was installed. This system allowed staff to use Morse Code to communicate with each other in all parts of the store. His renovations were both innovative and unique.

Frank Fry was born in Halifax in 1884 and received formal pharmacy education as a member of the first class at the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacy during 1911-12. He served overseas in the First World War at the No 9 Stationary Hospital. Frank Fry worked in drugstores in Sydney and Halifax prior to purchasing his Morris Street store in 1934.

Was Frank Fry happy with his remodeling? Did the changes serve him well? I wish I knew. He was in his mid-sixties when he made the changes. He developed serious health issues and sadly passed away five years later. Many of us contemplate a time when we will practice pharmacy in our dream drugstore. How would that look for you? (Reference: History of F.L. Fry Drug Store, Dalhousie University Archives MS-13-82, Box 24 Folder 40.)

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