

Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

*Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office, City Hall, Third Floor
808 Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, Washington 99201-3337*

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Vinther and Nelson Hardware Building
And/Or Common Name: The Hub

2. Location

Street & Number: 706 N. Monroe Street
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99201
Parcel Number: 35183.1410

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building	<input type="checkbox"/> public <input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure			<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> residential
<input type="checkbox"/> object	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes, restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other

4. Owner of Property

Name: TEC Investments
Street & Number: 8909 N. Mountain View Lane
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99218
Telephone Number/E-mail: 509-981-2006 (Liz Nelson); eahnelson@comcast.net

5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds	Spokane County Courthouse
Street Number:	1116 West Broadway
City, State, Zip Code:	Spokane, WA 99260
County:	Spokane

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Title: HPI form
Date:
Depository for Survey Records: Federal State County Local
Spokane Historic Preservation Office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Condition

- excellent
- good
- fair
- deteriorated
- ruins
- unexposed

Check One

- unaltered
- altered

Check One

- original site
- moved & date _____

Narrative statement of description is found on one or more continuation sheets.

8. Spokane Register Criteria and Statement of Significance

Applicable Spokane Register of Historic Places criteria: Mark "x" on one or more for the categories that qualify the property for the Spokane Register listing:

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Spokane history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory history.

Narrative statement of significance is found on one or more continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography is found on one or more continuation sheets.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: <1
Verbal Boundary Description: Post's Addition, Res & Ext S20FT of L10; N1/2 L 11 B 12
Verbal Boundary Justification: Nominated property includes entire parcel and urban legal description.

11. Form Prepared By

Name and Title: Stephen Emerson, Director
Organization: Archisto Enterprises
Street, City, State, Zip Code: W. 212 Dawn Avenue, Spokane WA 99218
Telephone Number: 509-466-8654
E-mail Address: semerson@ewu.edu
Date Final Nomination Heard:

12. Additional Documentation

Additional documentation is found on one or more continuation sheets.

13. Signature of Owner(s)

[Handwritten Signature]

14. For Official Use Only:

Date nomination application filed: November 18, 2015

Date of Landmarks Commission hearing: December 16, 2015

Landmarks Commission decision: _____

Date of City Council/Board of County Commissioners' hearing: 1/25/2016

City Council/Board of County Commissioners' decision: Approved

I hereby certify that this property has been listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places based upon the action of either the City Council or the Board of County Commissioners as set forth above.

[Handwritten Signature]

December 17, 2015

Megan Duvall
City/County Historic Preservation Officer
City/County Historic Preservation Office
3rd Floor - City Hall, Spokane, WA 99201

Date

Attest:
[Handwritten Signature]

City Clerk

Approved as to form:
[Handwritten Signature]

Assistant City Attorney



SUMMARY STATEMENT

Built in 1905, the Vinther and Nelson Hardware Building, located at 706 N. Monroe Street, was designed by Isaac Galbraith, an architect who practiced in Spokane in the first decade of the 20th Century. It is a good, although deteriorated, example of the brick commercial style that became the dominant architectural idiom in early urban America, especially after fire had ravaged many wood frame structures. Like many of the earliest of such buildings, it is a load-bearing structure, meaning that it stands alone, with the brick supporting its own weight; later buildings employed an interior superstructure to which the cladding was attached. Common early commercial style elements present in this building include brick arches, sills, and lintels, as well as the flat roof with parapets. Basalt foundations were especially popular in early Spokane due to the massive lava beds that underlie much of the interior Northwest. Although portions of the front façade of the building have been altered, some distinctive historic features remain, especially in the upper level.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

The Vinther and Nelson Hardware Building is a load-bearing brick structure with a rectangular plan. Although the windows of the front (west) and rear elevations indicate three levels of windows, the interior contains only two floors. The lower floor has a high ceiling, while the upper floor is of more normal height. In the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, the upper level is called an Intermediate Floor. The foundation is basalt stone. The roof is covered with built-up water proof material and has a parapet that steps toward the rear.

As noted above, the fenestration of the front façade is divided into three distinct levels. The lower level consists of three panels of brick cladding and truncated triangular openings. This level has a steeply-pitched, shed roof canopy with randomly placed, rusticated wood shingles. At the second level are four large window openings that have been covered for years and currently contain no glass. The uppermost level of the front is the most ornamental component of the building, with triangles serving as the basis of the

overall design. The larger triangle is outlined by basalt masonry, reaching to the apex where a pointed finial is attached. The upper portion of this triangle is stabilized from behind by a masonry support, creating a false front effect. The apex is defined by another triangle, again outlined by basalt masonry. Inside this triangle is an ornamental bas relief of either plaster or terra cotta in a scroll-like floral motif. At the center of the primary triangle are two round arched windows, currently missing glass, with basalt masonry sills. Above each window is a half-circle of basalt masonry containing radiating bricks. To either side of the main triangle, squaring out the top of the façade, are two smaller triangles containing more bas relief ornamentation, this time in a starburst design. The entire front façade is defined by brick pilasters to either side, each with a round finial at the top. These pilasters are intermittently striated with basalt masonry blocks.

The rear (east) elevation incorporates three levels, like the front. The upper level is composed of two window openings with brick segmental arches and brick header sills. The central opening also has a brick segmental arch above it, but lacks a sill. It is taller than the flanking window openings and may have been modified to serve as the door accessing a former fire escape. The central level of the rear contains three identical window openings with brick segmental arches and header brick sills. The lower level contains openings for flanking windows and a central door, all with brick segmental arches. The central door and the window to its left have been bricked in. The window to the right of the former entry has been bricked in, but later it was reopened and given a brick round arch. The original segmental arch remains above it. Ads painted on the brick above the upper and second level windows read “Vinther and Nelson” and “Hardware.”

The south elevation is partially obscured, abutting against the adjacent Holmes Block. An ad painted on the brick reads: “Floor Covering, Housewares, Sporting Goods, Toys, Gifts.” The rest of the wall is unadorned brick. The north elevation is also a blank wall except for recently created rectangular openings with metal support bars above them. A modern mural is painted onto the upper right corner. This wall was long partially obscured by an adjacent building that has been removed.

Currently, the interior of the Vinther and Nelson Hardware Building is mostly a shell and undergoing renovation. Stairs to the basement have been removed and the floor is bare dirt. The floor of the main level is wood. As a load-bearing brick building, there is no interior framework, only the brick walls, with several pilasters, some of which contain chimneys. The floor of the intermediate level above has been removed. Some original floor joists remain; others have been replaced with new joists. Two openings in the floor are directly below openings to the roof that once contained skylights. To summarize, the interior of the building is a tabula rasa, a blank slate with which to design and build new interior spaces.

ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS

The Vinther and Nelson Hardware Building has undergone extensive rehabilitations over the years, especially since the store was closed in the 1960s. This is the result of the subsequent revolving-door nature of multiple occupations. The street level of the front façade, originally consisting of display windows, a recessed entry, and awnings, has been completely replaced with the current odd truncated triangle appearance. The upper level, until recently, was covered with wall board for decades. The upper level, however, is nearly intact. The mostly blank and partially obscured wall of the south elevation retains its historic painted ad. The north elevation has had past openings bricked in and new ones created, but no windows and no doors. The rear elevation is partially intact, with all of the original fenestration, or at least remnants of it, still visible. The lower level openings have been bricked in, with the current rear entry being re-opened and a new arch built. As noted above, the interior is a shell, ready for renovation.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The origins of Spokane can be traced to two ambitious settlers named J.J. Downing and S.R. Scranton, who arrived in the vicinity in the early 1870s. Recognizing the energy potential of the powerful falls of the Spokane River, they built a saw mill near a channel of the river west of Havermale Island. In 1874 they sold their holdings to a partnership that included James N. Glover, who would in time be hailed as the “Father of Spokane.” Glover profited from the mill and other enterprises, as did other early entrepreneurs such as Fredrick Post, who built the first flourmill, A.M. Cannon, who started the first bank in town, J.J. Browne, who helped develop a new residential neighborhood west of downtown, and Francis Cook, who printed the first local newspaper in Spokane Falls. The “Falls” part of the name was later dropped. Another important early resident was Henry T. Cowley. Using logs from Glover’s mill, he and carpenter William Pool, built the first school in town, an enterprise that eventually led to the establishment of elementary and high school education in the area.

The town grew rapidly during the 1880s, reaching a population of 2,000 by 1886. Prosperous businesses were amassing bank capital, attracting more investments and commercial enterprise. The construction of railroads through the area turned Spokane into a transportation and commerce hub. The Northern Pacific was the first intercontinental railroad to pass through Spokane, followed by the Great Northern, the Union Pacific and, later the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul. Smaller rail lines that connected with Spokane included the Spokane and Palouse, which built into the rich wheat fields to the south; the Spokane Falls and Idaho, which reached toward Coeur d’Alene Lake and the nearby mining districts; and the Spokane Falls and Northern, which connected with Colville and Canada to the north. All of these lines brought further wealth into Spokane, spurring growth of both the economy and the population. Historian N.W. Durham reports that by 1889:

The banks of the city had risen in number from two to ten, the capital had grown to nearly \$1,000,000, with deposits of over \$2,000,000. Mercantile transactions

had swelled in proportion, the material results of the country had been developed, the manufacture of lumber had grown till the output of the mills was valued at \$150,000 per month. The flour mills had been enlarged and new ones built till the manufacture was 300 barrels a day. The manufacture of brick, the production of lime and quarrying of the beautiful gray granite of the country, had taken up large capital. Scores of fine business buildings had been built and occupied. Beautiful residences crowned the hills and points of vantage, where the owners could look out upon the permanent character of their work, and view with pride the thousands of happy homes around them, for in this brief period, the city had grown in population to nearly twenty thousand souls.

Into this scene of bustling prosperity, the threat of fire was occasionally interjected. The danger was great because the majority of structures within the rapidly growing community were built of wood, the cheapest and most easily acquired building material. Several early conflagrations had prompted the establishment of a volunteer fire department in 1884, but neither the volunteers nor the inadequate water supply system could stop flames that raced through downtown on August 4, 1889. As illustrated in a map produced by R.B. Hyslop, between the Northern Pacific tracks to the south and the Spokane River to the north, the fire cut a swath through the center of the main business district. In all, about 300 buildings were destroyed, only about thirty of which were brick or stone. The community rebounded quickly, conducting business on the streets from tents for a time. Several lessons were learned; a professional fire department was created and builders determined that future construction in downtown Spokane would be of masonry - brick, stone and, later, glazed terra cotta.

Among the first to suffer from the Panic of 1893 in Spokane was pioneer A.M. Cannon, who had overextended his investments, some of which subsequently failed. When he was denied funding from local banks to recoup, the bank that Cannon had founded, the Bank of Spokane Falls, closed its doors on June 5, 1893, insolvent. Within just days, a chain reaction of panic closed other major banks and people's savings were snuffed out. Before

things leveled out, many formerly rich men had lost their fortunes. But by 1896, the economy was well on its way to recovering. In that year, N.W. Durham wrote: “Spokane stands on the threshold of a new career. It is not a boast to say that the outlook, as we stand in the dawn of a new year, is better than ever for further progress and substantial development. With the planning here of national government interests, the establishment of new productive industries, and the rapid growth of mining interests, Spokane’s future is assured.”

During the first decade of the Twentieth Century, Spokane underwent a spate of growth unprecedented before or since. The population explosion was largely fueled by great numbers of blue collar workers who found employment in the climate of burgeoning industries and service businesses. This led to a boom in Single Room Occupancy hotels. These, along with new financial, civic, and medical facilities, led to the rapid expansion of the central business district.

Urban development on the north side of the Spokane River was the product of two things: bridges and street railways. They opened avenues of transportation northward from the city center. Author Jeff Creighton discusses the early history of bridges across the Spokane River:

Between 1889 and 1896, a total of six bridges were built, only to be washed away by floodwaters, some within months of their completion. The lack of money, materials, and construction techniques added up to continuous problems with sound construction practices. Serious bridge building yielded a standard of construction on par with most major cities in the country. This watershed period began in 1907. After numerous problems with washouts and structural failures, the citizens of Spokane demanded solid, well-constructed bridges. Initially, steel replaced wood and, later, concrete dominated all bridge building within the city.

The Monroe Street Bridge is apt example of this pattern. The first bridge at the location, completed in 1889, was a wood trestle affair. It was built primarily to handle horse and wagon traffic. Early photos portray the bridge being dashed by heavy current downstream from the falls during periods of heavy runoff. The wooden structure was closed at least once after being damaged by fire. And it was inadequate to support the street cars that were becoming heavily used.

The Spokane Street Railway Company began running electrically powered rail cars in 1888. North Monroe was a major route, but when southbound traffic reached the Monroe Street Bridge, rails diverted it to the nearby and safer Post Street Bridge. Due to this inadequacy, the wood bridge was torn down in 1891, and replaced with a steel cantilever structure, which could handle the street railway traffic. The same year, the Washington Water Power Company began buying shares of the various street railway companies. By 1889, they had a near monopoly of the business. One of the major routes was the North Monroe-Cannon Hill, which serviced the Monroe Street commercial district and the residential South Hill. But as the network grew and expanded, resulting in the use of larger cars and the introduction of double-tracking, the steel Monroe Street Bridge was again deemed inadequate and street car traffic across it again ceased. It was not until a concrete arch bridge was built in 1911 that the problems were solved and street railway traffic resumed.

The improvements made to the bridges and the street railway network gradually transformed North Monroe from a street of wood frame saloons and lumber yards, to a thriving business district. More elaborate buildings went up and by 1920 Monroe Street was the largest urban commercial core north of the Spokane River. Into this thriving environment, two young men arrived from Denmark. They were cousins Samuel Vinther and Nels Nelson. Both appear to have begun their careers as common laborers for the railroads. Vinther and Nelson began their business partnership together in 1892 when the two came to Spokane and operated a baggage transfer line with “one wagon and a pair of

brass checks". After a few months, they pulled together a nest egg, and opened a new and used furniture store on the west side of Monroe.

The new and second hand store conducted by Messrs. Vinther and Nelson at 607 and 609 Monroe street, was established four years ago [article from 1896] and has attained much popularity. The premises occupied are spacious and well arranged for the accommodation of the stock carried. The assortment includes crockery, hardware, furniture and every description of second hand goods of all kinds. Second hand goods of all kinds are purchased, the best prices being paid for the same. This firm is composed of Messrs. S.H. Vinther and N.M. Nelson. Both are young men. They have by good management built up a large business and fully merit their success.

Both men, it seems, lived at the business. By 1903, they had move to more permanent quarters on Broadway Avenue, next door to each other. Their joint business venture must have prospered, allowing them to contract for a new and substantial building at the 706 N. Monroe Street address.

Erected in 1905, the Vinther and Nelson Building was designed by Isaac J. Galbraith, a Pennsylvania native, born in 1859, who attended Wesleyan University before taking an apprenticeship position with a prominent Pittsburg architect. In 1887, he moved to Montana for health reasons, where he designed the building erected to represent the state at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago. Five years later he relocated to Spokane and hung out his shingle as an architect in 1902, forming short partnerships, but mostly working independently. Although practically forgotten in Spokane, N. W. Durham, an earlier chronicler of local history had this to say about him:

Spokane stands high among the cities of the west in the appearance of its streets and buildings. Although its growth has been almost phenomenal, at the same time its builders have taken time to consider the effect of their operations. Its buildings

are both substantial and adequate and reflect due credit upon the architects, the contractors and the promoters of the city. Among its finer class of buildings are the First Methodist Episcopal church, the Corbet building and the Gandy building, all of which have been erected by the firm of Galbraith & Telander, whose offices are in the Empire State building and of which Isaac J. Galbraith is the senior member.

Mr. Galbraith also designed the Commercial Block (1906), the Holmes Block (1904) the Roberts-Lingston House (1904), the Sarsfield Farmhouse (1905), and the Julius Dutton House (1906). By 1910, Galbraith had retired from architecture to enter the contracting business with John Telander. Their most important project was the County Infirmary in Spangle. Galbraith seems to have left Spokane in about 1915.

Samuel and Nels rapidly expanded their store's inventory, increasing their personal income. They were able to both get married in the same year, 1913, Vinther to Magdeline and Nels to Kamma – the brides were sisters. The same year, they were listed as officers of the Vinther and Nelson Hardware Company, Vinther as president and Nelson as secretary treasurer. The 1915 Polk City Directory contains this ad: "Vinther and Nelson Co. Inc. Hardware, Furniture, Crockery, Paints, Oils, Glass and All Kinds of Household Goods." In 1926, they added Glidden Paints and Varnish to their in-store stock.

By 1932, Samuel and Kamma's son Alvin was working for the hardware store as a salesman. Nels and Magdeline's son Ernest would join Alvin as a salesman for the store in 1940. By then, Samuel Vinther has relocated his family to a comfortable home on the South Hill, moving up in the world, while the Nelson's remained on the North Side. Nels Nelson passed away in 1943. Samuel Vinther and Nels' widow Kamma became co-owners of the business the same year. But by 1949, the sons, Alvin and Ernest, had taken over ownership of the business, retaining the name "Vinther and Nelson Hardware Company." But the business seems to have gone into a decline; in 1950 the Vinthers moved back to the North Side. Samuel Vinther stayed on as a salesman for the hardware

store, but by 1952, he was dead, leaving the sons in sole control. In 1952, as co-owners, they ran this ad: “Hardware, Paints, Electrical Appliances, Sporting Goods, Builders Hardware.” In 1959, like their parents, the partners got married in the same year, Alvin Vinther to Marion, Ernest Nelson to Josephine. For whatever reason, the partners seem to have grown apart. Alvin began selling insurance for the Reliance National Insurance Company. The name of the store became “Ernie Nelson Hardware.” By 1963, the hardware store was out of business.

The building became host to a long succession of enterprises. During the mid-1960s it was occupied by Towne Equipment Company, selling wholesale industrial supplies. By 1969, however, the building was vacant for the first time. The next year it was re-occupied by something called the Red Feather Recreation Hall. In another year, the Tri-State Vending Machine Company had moved in. In 1974, the building was vacant once again. Beginning in the following year, a beauty shop, Status West, began a relatively long run in the building. The owner sub-divided the building into smaller spaces, which were leased to other small businesses. Among them were Jerry McGougan Investigations, Inland Empire Timber Management, and All-Out Bail Bond. Several apartments were rented out as well. One of them was occupied by then building owner Hector Berroteran. For a few years in the early 1990s, Espresso Delizioso Café joined Status West as a primary occupant. Beginning in 2001, that space was occupied by the Mercury Cafeteria, which by 2006 had become the Merq Café and Liquid Lounge. Status West was last listed in 2001. By 2009, the building was vacant again. More recently, it was occupied by The Hop, an all-ages music venue. It has now remained vacant for several years.

ELIGIBILITY STATEMENT

The Vinther and Nelson Hardware Building is eligible for placement on the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category A for its contributions to the economy of the Spokane area, especially as it developed on the north side of the Spokane River, leading the way for expanded opportunities for growth made possible by new bridges and the street railroad system. The story of two humble immigrants making a go at it, and finding

financial success in an environment of bustling commercial activity, surviving even the major mid-century economic downturns, is riveting. The tale of Samuel Vinther and Nels Nelson is a *leitmotif* of the story of early Spokane.

Despite its deteriorated and altered appearance, this building is also eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category C, for architecture. As noted above, some design elements remain; others will be restored, and jarring modern alterations, such as the triangular windows and shed roof canopy of the front, will be removed. Planned restoration efforts also include the second, or mezzanine, level storefront, which was previously covered by wall board for many years. One of the most remarkable features of the building, as revealed in historic photographs, was the presence of floor to ceiling display windows, not just at the street level, but on the next level up. This was a departure from the usual scheme of the street level storefront topped by rows of windows that often lighted offices and SRO hotel rooms. Fortunately, when the wall board was removed, the window openings were found to be intact. Planned renovations will restore the building's original glass façade.

More importantly, the building is a key component of an intact historic street scene along several blocks of N. Monroe. Some buildings have already been removed, leaving gaps in what could arguably be determined a historic district. The gap to the north of the Vinther and Nelson Hardware building was the location of a former historic commercial building. This lot will be developed as a courtyard, preventing its being supplanted by modern infill. The preservation of this building is not just about the individual structure, but also about one of the last blocks of intact commercial buildings left in Spokane.

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R.L. Polk and Co.

Various years Polk City Directories for the City of Spokane.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Company

1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, City of Spokane

The Spokane Chronicle

1940 *Partners for Fifty Years: N. M. Nelson and S.H. Vinther Have Run
Hardware Store for Five Decades. (2/19/1940)*

1896 *Vinther & Nelson. (1/27/1896)*



VNH-1 Historic photograph of the front (west) façade, ca. 1905. Photograph by T.W. Tolman, courtesy of the Eastern Washington Historical Society. Note the tools and toys on display.



SCB-2 Historic photograph of North Monroe Street, ca. 1930. Photograph by T.W. Tolman, Courtesy of the Eastern Washington Historical Society. Ricardo Building in center foreground. Note the Vinther and Nelson Hardware Building to the right, with the triangular false front.



VNH-3 West (front) façade, view to the east.



VNH-4 West (front) façade, view to the southeast.



VNH-5 West (front) façade, upper level, view to the east.



VNH-6 West (front) façade, lower level, view to the east.



VNH-7 East (rear) and south facades, view to the northwest.



VNH-8 South elevation ad, view to the northwest.



VNH-9 East elevation arches, old above and recent below, view to the northwest.



VNH-10 Floor joists, old, view to the west.



VNH-11 Floor joists, new, view to the east.



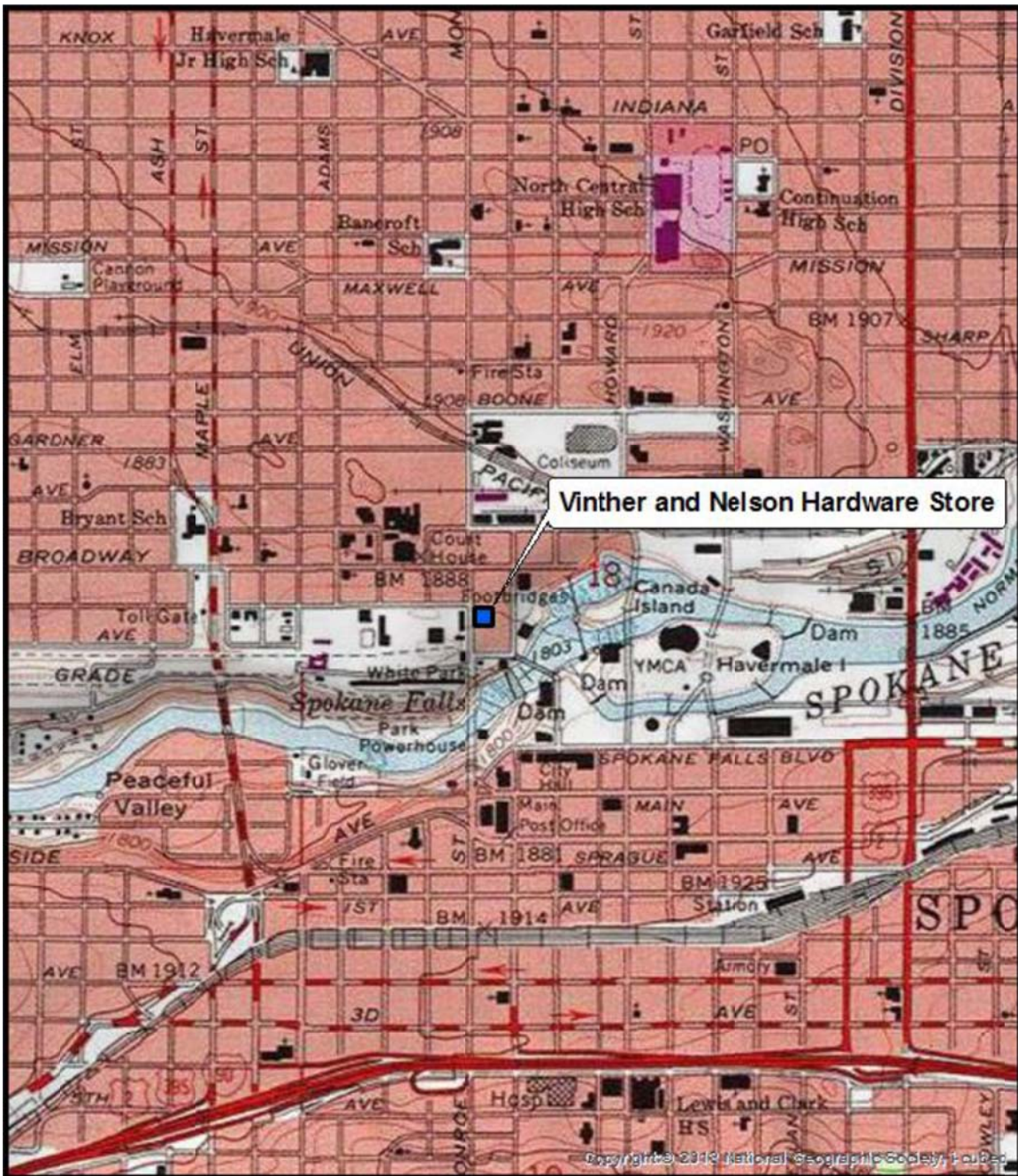
VNH-12 Interior space, view to the northeast.



VNH-13 Interior, chimney pilaster, view to the south.



VNH-14 Imprint left by stair removal, view to the northeast.



Vinther and Nelson Hardware Building, N. 706 Monroe Street.

VINTHER-NELSON MARK ANNIVERSARY

The Vinther-Nelson company will celebrate its 48th anniversary as a North Side furniture and hardware concern March 15.

"In the years we have been in business we have seen some important changes made in the styles of homes and home furnishings," said S. H. Vinther. "One of the most notable of these is the change to better hardware. Home owners now are paying as much as three times the price of the old fixtures for the beauty and durability given by the new ones.

"Another important development is the use of synthetic bases for paints and enamels which give a better surface at a much higher drying speed," he said.

Spokane Daily Chronicle, March 10, 1939

HARDWARE MAN TAKEN BY DEATH

N. M. Nelson, a Spokane pioneer who for a half-century had been in the hardware business, died this morning at the family home, W2628 Kiernan.

He had been ill for some time, but death came suddenly. Members of the family were with him at the end.

With S. H. Vinther, his partner for 50 years, Mr. Nelson came to Spokane in 1889. Three years later the two young men founded their first hardware store at N607-609 Monroe. Later the business was moved to N706 Monroe, its present location. Through the decades, the Vinther & Nelson Hardware store became widely known in Spokane and the Inland Empire.

The death of Mr. Nelson separates a partnership and a deep and lasting friendship. The two partners married sisters.

The elder sons of the two partners, Ernest Nelson and Alvin Vinther, have been associated with the business for many years and will carry on the store under the family name, it was said.

Surviving Mr. Nelson are his wife; two sons, Ernest and Miles, and two daughters, Helen and Stella. The body is at the Hazen & Jaeger funeral home.

Spokane Daily Chronicle, March 9, 1942

Vinther Tells Jury of Storing Paper

A. C. Vinther, partner in the Vinther and Nelson Hardware company, N706 Monroe, returned to the stand today in what may be the final day of the company's \$46,000 suit against two insurance companies.

Attorneys indicated the case may go to the jury in Judge Raymond F. Kelly's court late today.

The defendants, Northwest Mutual Fire Insurance association and the Indiana Lumbermen's Mutual Fire Insurance company, contend that the fire which destroyed most of the interior of the store January 4 was set deliberately.

He Placed Paper

Vinther said that he had placed the shredded paper, which the defense contends was the source of the fire, under the store's basement stairway some time before the fire.

It was contained in two cardboard boxes, and the flaps were closed securely.

The paper, he said, was packing from wedding gifts which his daughter had received the month before. His wife had asked him to save the packing, he said, which first was stored in his home basement.

Thinking it a possible fire hazard, he boxed it, he said. He took the two boxes to the store, intending to burn the contents in the store incinerator, he said, but his wife again asked him to save the packing, and he complied with her

request, leaving it in the two boxes in the basement.

He was so stunned by the fire, he said, that, in his excitement, he didn't remember the paper incident when firemen asked him to identify a pile of burned material under the stairway, and he said that he told them he didn't know.

Later, he said, he remembered the packing, and realized that the charred material was its burned remains.

Under cross-examination by defense attorneys Del Cary Smith and Del Cary Smith Jr., Vinther admitted that he had told firemen that he had a feeling January 4 that someone else was in the store at about the time he opened it in the morning.

He said, however, that if there had been someone, he "very probably" would have been detected during the day.

In response to a question, he said that he knows of no enemies, either of himself or of his partner and cousin, Ernest M. Nelson, who would set fire to their store.

Mrs. Vinther, called by plaintiff's attorneys, R. Max Etter and Hugh Dressel, said that she went out to their truck near the store's rear loading platform while her husband went back in to lock up the store shortly before the fire.

There was nothing unusual about his manner or appearance when he returned, she said, and she detected no gasoline fumes. When they arrived home, she said, their daughter ran out of the house to

tell them that the store was on fire.

She got out of the truck, she said, and Vinther turned around and hurried back to the fire.

She knew that he had taken the boxed paper packing to the store previously, she said.

Edward C. Bergman, W503 Twenty-first, president of Citizens Savings and Loan society, testified Vinther had called him the day of the fire to make application for a \$7500 loan on his house.

The loan probably would have been approved if Vinther had followed up with a written application, he said. The house was appraised by the society on the basis of the oral application, he said.

C. V. MAGUIRE, PIONEER, DIES

(See other obituaries, page 17)

Charles V. Maguire, 77, W418 Cleveland, an Inland Empire resident for 76 years and a Spokane resident for 48 years, died today in a Spokane hospital.

Funeral services tentatively are planned for Thursday morning in Colfax with burial there. Rosary services will be held Wednesday night at Hennessey's.

Born in Baltimore, Mr. Maguire was brought to Whitman county in 1879, when only one year old, by his parents, the late Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Maguire, who homesteaded in Whitman county near Colfax.

He was associated with New

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Tom Gavenport/Spokane Spokesman-Review
 Lisa Sisson pores over historical family photos on Sunday with her daughter Marget Sisson at the 100-year reunion of the Vinther and Nelson families on Priest Lake's Eight Mile Island.

History revived

Families gather at Eight Mile Island for 100-year reunion

By Winston Ross
 Staff writer

PRUEST LAKE—Every year, the same thing happens.

The green hallway of trees along state Highway 57 bleeds burgundy, fire orange, mustard yellow. The ground turns cool and wet. People move and grow, things live and die.

And through the past 100 of those years, a stalwart cabin on Eight Mile Island has remained.

In its longevity, the cabin is as spectacular as the families it has tied together for 100 years: the Vinthers and the Nelsons.

On Sunday, 130 distant and nuclear relatives of Samuel Vinther and Nels Nelson gathered at this historic spot to celebrate the centennial.

"It makes me cry," said June (Vinther) Bech Linke, 89, Vinther's daughter. "I cried all day long."



A bottle of Prohibition-era "medicinal spirit" is among the relics found in the museum room of the families' cabin.

To look around, the reunion seemed like any other. Relatives gathered in groups of three or four, talking or gossiping over beers about their uncles and aunts and brothers and sisters.

Others told stories, the same tall tales they've been spreading all of their lives, of childhood accidents, adventures, lost loves.

The family dogs ran from group to group, panting, exhilarated at the unbelievable number of shoes to sniff. The kids were the same way, jolled with a boundless, unceasing energy of play.

Teenagers slunk off into the woods in packs, to do cool stuff like stroll down dirt roads with their hands in their pockets.

Cameras were the most important prop, save perhaps for the cannon with which Jim Bech, a Vinther

Continued Reunion/A5

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Region

Reunion: Cabin was built for use in mining operation

Continued from A7

grandson, insisted upon blasting blanks at wooden boats.

Cameras have helped keep this stream of relationships together for so many decades. Photo albums lined a table on the porch of the cabin that's now a museum.

Its caretaker is Stan Vinther, and he can't restrain himself from giving people the grand tour.

The cabin was built in 1897, for use in mining the Deer Trail Lode. It was sold shortly afterward to a homesteader, who cleared much of the landscape to raise livestock.

Samuel Vinther and Nels Nelson, two cousins and partners in the hardware business, bought the cabin in 1900.

But because politics kept a mining claim from going through, Vinther and Nelson had to forgo their ownership for a special use permit, granted by the U.S. Forest Service in



Tom Gavenport/The Spokesman-Review

The outhouse graffiti at the Vinther and Nelson cabin documents some of the family history of the historical property.

1909.

"It's kind of a semi-public, private place," Bech explained.

"When the state of Idaho found out about this, they were excited. This is the oldest

building on Priest Lake."

For the next several decades, the Vinther and Nelson families spent memorable summers on what would be renamed Eight Mile Island.

"We used to come here as kids," remembered Newt Vinther, 91, Samuel Vinther's son. "Folks took a train to Priest River, then a horse-driven stage to the halfway house (named because it was halfway between the river and the lake), then we'd chug up here in a steamboat and land on the point.

"Then we had to go back to Coolin. We rowed eight miles, to Coolin and back."

In 1980, there was talk of tearing down the cabin. So after considerable efforts, family members got the cabin registered as a national historic site.

Today, the hand-hewn fir and larch logs are stacked stiff in defiance. The antique wood-burning stove informs its users they can cook food from warm to hot to very hot.

Old product cans, unearthed from the yard, let visitors see history. There's a bottle of mange medicine, complete with precipitated sulphur. Another bottle, of Old Taylor Whiskey made by the American Medicinal Spirits Co., has a prescription label on the side: "One-half ounce every four hours," Bech reads of the Prohibition relic.

"This was 1932, during the Depression," he chuckled. "You have depression, so you buy a' depressant."

A washboard sits in the sink, for laundry. A chair is nearby, its wood held together by wires.

Outside, a makeshift church, complete with an arch made of branches and pews and a pulpit of 2-by-4's. A rickety outhouse. A nine-hole putt-putt course. A shed, all preserved for so long.

And walking through it all, a family preserved for just as long.

"My father would bring up both families, remembered Jeanne (Vinther) Danzer, 80. "Then he'd go home, Uncle Nels would come take over for the rest of the summer.

"My favorite thing as a child was to steal the rowboat and go out in the roughest water I could."

In Danzer's eyes, a glint of sadness shimmered, as she realized there won't be many more reunions for her.

"This means the last trip I'll make here," she said.

But the next generation promises to carry on.

"We'd spend the bulk of a summer up here as children," said Jim Bech, Vinther's grandson. "It was just a handful of people. Now there's 150."

chronicle Feb. 19, 1940

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PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Baggage Checks Mark Old Partnership

CH - 2-19-'40



It is just a pair of old brass baggage checks that Samuel H. Vinther has dug up reminiscent of a partnership with Nels M. Nelson that has existed since 1892. When the two came to Spokane early in that year they began operation of a baggage transfer line with one wagon and a pair of brass checks. After a few months they opened a hardware store in the N600 block on Monroe, later gave up the baggage wagon and since have confined themselves to hardware lines. *They believe theirs is the oldest partnership in Spokane today.

Partners for Fifty Years

*N. M. Nelson and S. H. Vinther
Have Run Hardware Store
for Five Decades.*



Not only has the firm of Vinther & Nelson been intact for 50 years in Spokane, but the name will continue as their sons are already in the business with their fathers. Below, left to right, are S. H. Vinther and N. M. Nelson, founders of the business, and above, left to right, Alvin Vinther and Ernest Nelson, the second generation in the business here. The boys have grown up in the business. (Photo by Nelson.)

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VINTHER & NELSON

Fifty years is a long time for any man to remain in business in the same community. It is seldom that a partnership endures that long. It is even more unusual for a concern to occupy business quarters all that time within a block of the original location. In the west, of all places, population shifts constantly, districts run out and business concerns are often forced to move elsewhere if they are to stay in business.

Spokane has several half-century business men and concerns, a few still in the hands of the original founders. Vinther & Nelson, hardware dealers on North Monroe, have been in business together for 50 years this month. N. M. Nelson and S. H. Vinther have been the proprietors all that time. Their story is unusual.

First cousins, they came to America together from Denmark when Mr. Nelson was 16 and Mr. Vinther was 15. Four years later they returned to Denmark to visit their families. Eight years later Mr. Nelson visited his native land at the time of the death of his father.

Came in 1889.

The young men came to Spokane in 1889 but did not launch their store until 1892. The location was N607-609 Monroe. Old pictures show that it was quite a store even for the early days. An exterior

shot shows buggy whips, horse collars, whiffle-trees and drivers' whips featured on the sidewalk.

Interior views show a line of base-burners and another of kitchen ranges down the center of the main floor. On the top shelf is a row of wash boilers, more whips hanging from the ceiling and fancy hanging lamps with elaborate decorations. Alarm clocks and jackknives are on the glass showcases.

Not long after launching the business, the partners married sisters. Mr. Nelson married Kamma Meyer and Mr. Vinther married Magdalene Meyer. The sisters had come to Spokane with their parents from Copenhagen when small youngsters.

Carrying out the partnership idea to their times of recreation, the business men in 1900 jointly purchased their summer home on Eight Mile island in Priest lake, still jointly owned by them and

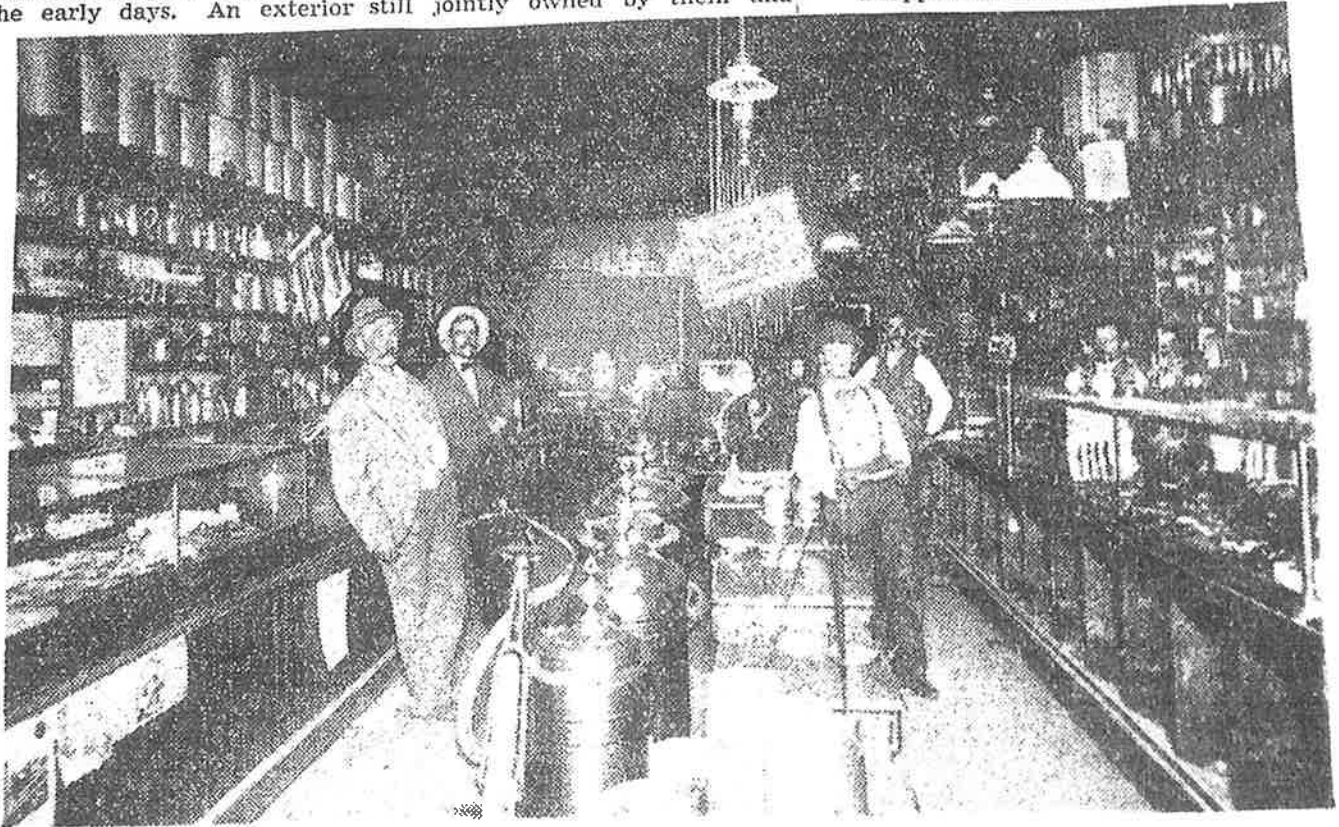
shared by their families each summer. They have owned a number of boats, probably some of the first on the lake.

Taking Turns.

In 1905 the families had the urge to visit Denmark. The men could not leave the store at the same time. The Vinthers made the trip first, leaving in the fall and spent six months abroad. They returned in the spring of 1906. The Nelsons then sailed for Denmark, also staying six months and visiting in London and Liverpool before returning.

In 1907 the business was moved to the present location at N706 Monroe, within a block of the original store. Early pictures again tell the story and also indicate changes in merchandise.

Stoves again held the center of the main floor, but of a more modern type. Builders' hardware was prominently featured. Stable lanterns hung beneath the balcony, and the balcony was crowded with ornamental iron bedsteads. Paints and saws were in evidence. Showcases were modern and carried a large stock, but the whips, hanging lamps and whiffle trees had largely disappeared. Fish reels were some-



This is the interior of the first Vinther & Nelson store launched at 607-609 North Monroe in 1892. S. H. Vinther and N. M. Nelson have been in business together for the entire period, always within a block of the first location. The partners are in the background, right.

thing new in their day.

In the early days the partners met the trains and hauled baggage. When a train whistled, the partner who was least busy donned the single baggageman's cap, also joint property, and drove the horse-drawn vehicle to the depot.

Shared Spectacles.

The partners even went so far as to share the same spectacles. These reposed on the cash register for the use of both men. If one should forget and wear them when he left the store, the other partner was just out of luck until he returned.

They recall that getting to Priest lake in the early days was quite a different thing from the present two-hour spin by auto over good roads. Way back it was a three-day journey. They went by train to Priest River and stayed all night there. From Priest River they went by horse-drawn stage to a log building halfway between the town and the lake. On the east road, it is still known as the Half-way house.

There they had their lunches, which sound like banquets today. There was no end of homemade breads and pastries, jams and jellies and always four or five kinds of meat, including wild game.

Summers at Lake.

Here also the tired team was replaced by another and the journey was continued to Coolin on the lake. They spent the second night in a hotel there. The next day they went by steamboat to their cabin eight miles up the lake. It was usually several days before their baggage caught up with them.

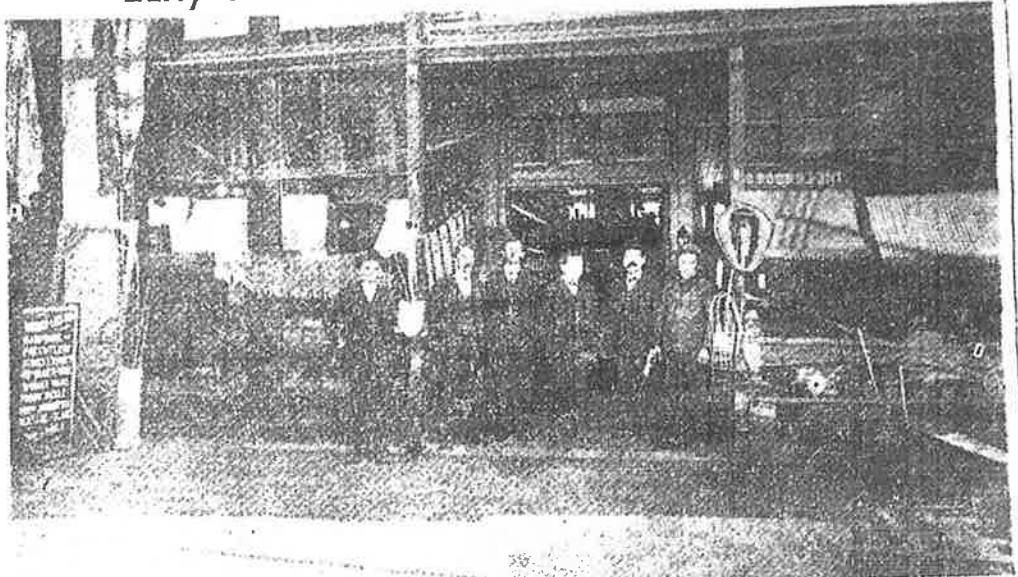
The mothers and children remained all summer at the lake. The men took turns, remaining six weeks each. There was no running back and forth. Often there were aunts and cousins in the group.

Ernest Nelson and Alvin Vinther, known to many as Ernie and Al, are the elder sons of the partners and have been associated in the business with their fathers since the close of the World war. They will carry on the store under the family name when they succeed their fathers. Ernie Nelson was overseas in the last war for two years. Both men came under the registration age in this war.

The Vinthers have five other children and eight grandchildren. The Nelsons have three other children and five grandchildren.

The relationships between the partners have been entirely harmonious throughout the 50 years. Their sons are fully as congenial as the founders.

Early Store Front Shows Goods in Demand



This is the exterior view of the first Vinther & Nelson store on North Monroe. Note the whips, horse collar and whistle-tree in the first sidewalk display. The partners and sales force stand in the doorway. The partners also met trains to deliver baggage.

Second Store Became Permanent Location



In 1907, Vinther & Nelson opened this store at N706 Monroe, within a block of their original store, N706 is the store location today, modernized to keep abreast of the times. Building hardware and sporting goods had been added when this picture was made soon after the opening 35 years ago.

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Vinther & Nelson.

The new and second hand store conducted by Messrs. Vinther and Nelson at 607 and 609 Monroe street, was established four years ago and has attained much popularity. The premises occupied are spacious and well arranged for the accommodation of the stock carried. The assortment includes crockery, hardware, furniture and every description of second hand goods of all kinds. Second hand goods of all kinds are purchased, the best prices being paid for the same. This firm is composed of Messrs. S. H. Vinther and N. M. Nelson. Both are young men. They have by good management built up a large business and fully merit their success.



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