

Turcotte's Grocery's, Weidemann confusion:

1911/3/14, 100 years ago (1911)

Fremond Turcotte will soon open a general store and a malt shop at the government dam works near Gull Lake. He will reside there and will move his family from Brainerd as soon as satisfactory arrangements are completed. His many friends wish him well.

1931/2/28, 80 years ago (1931)

(Adv.) To Coal Users of Brainerd: Our coal is the best, and now, for the convenience of customers, we have installed a steam plant. We now deliver coal absolutely dustless to your home. Come in and let us demonstrate. **Turcotte Brothers** - Brainerd.

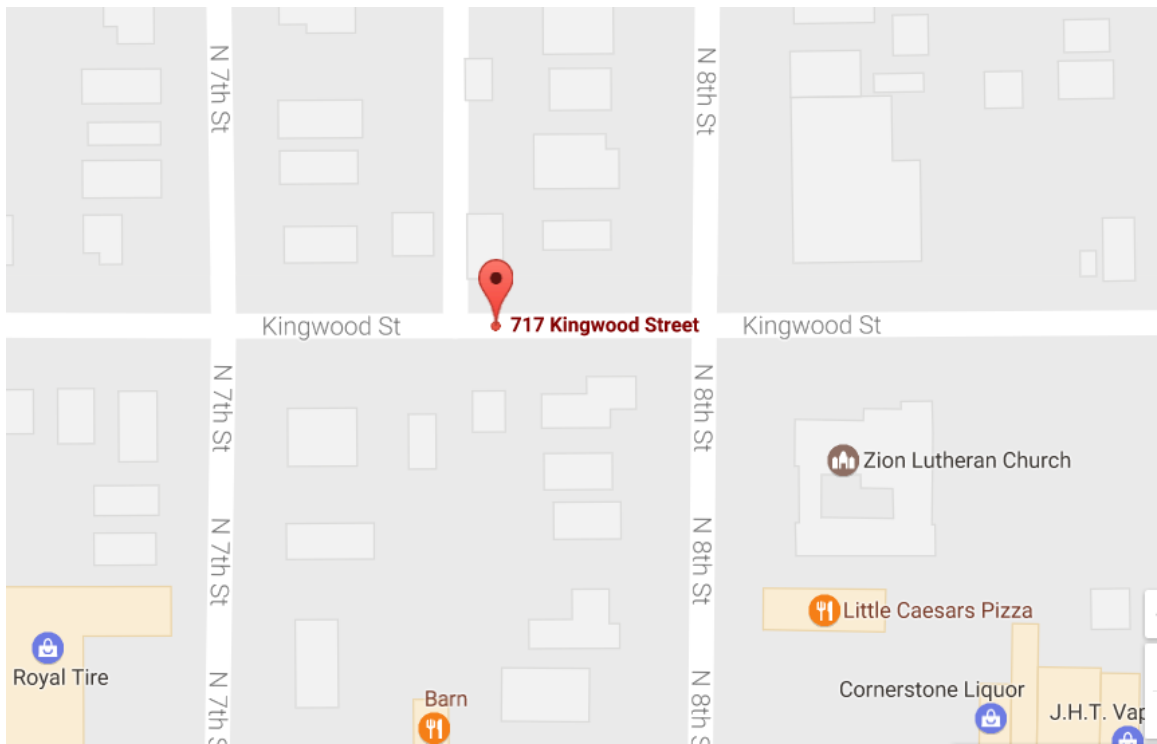
1952/5/28: 60 years ago (1952)

(Adv.) Memorial Day Sale! Try our homemade potato salad and homemade meat loaf. Pork and Beans – 2 cans 25 cents; Creamy Salad Dressing – qt. 49 cents; Kosher Dill Pickles – qt. 29 cents. Turcotte's Fairway Grocery – 717 Kingwood Street – Brainerd.

1953: BCD- Listed at 717 is Fairway Grocery in the 2007 street list, but Turcotte's Grocery AND Fairway Grocery in the alphabetical listing.

717 is not on the 2007 map below, but below it is a long, deep house that apparently was squeeze in on the old site, but on the 303 N. 7th St. lot! The lot must have been slit up after 2007, and the house built along the alley.





303 is Sampson, Donald (2007 map)

1957: Brainerd City Directory: 717 Kingwood, Robert A. Turcotte, Robt. A (Joyce; Turcotte Gro) h809 Grove [h=householder] See below; Bob started at the Dispatch in 1959.

1959 BCD:

Turcotte, Leo F., Johnson Cigar Co.

Turcotte, Robert A. (Joyce), grocery, 809 Grove St. ???

Turcotte's Grocery, 717 Kingwood St., Robert Turcotte

??? The Grove St. location is where I used to "buy" candy with buttons! By the time we hit Van's, Midway, Little Farm Market, and Turcotte's, we were broke. The woman there for some reason let us use shirt buttons for money here. The entrance was on the west, 8th St. side, and the small white building had a false front on it. The map seems to show it more on Grove St., with a south entrance.

2017/4/5:

Brian Marsh It's interesting to learn that a Turcotte grocery was on Kingwood. In 1910, Turcotte & Sons operated a grocery business at 318-320 S. 6th Street. In 1918, they were in the auto business. From about 1924-1938, Turcotte Brothers had a flour, feed, fuel, etc. business at 315-317 S. 6th Street.

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Michael Roberts We lived on 714 Kingwood next to Turcotte's store. **It is a house now at 748 Kingwood.** Next to the alley. **748 does not seem to exist, at least now. -CF**



1961 NW Bell phone book: No Turcotte Grocery listed

I used to go to Turcotte's all the time to buy Lik-M-Aid and Popsicles, but that must have been when I was 7 or 8 or so, or at least before 1961, and I can't find it now! There is no 717 on this 2007 map, so maybe it was next to the 713 address. It must have been torn down. What was 7171 must now be that long, deep house to the right/east of the ally and electric pole.



I wish I had a 1950 SUCH ADDRESS MAP!

1952/5/28: 60 years ago (1952)

(Adv.) Memorial Day Sale! Try our homemade potato salad and homemade meat loaf. Pork and Beans – 2 cans 25 cents; Creamy Salad Dressing – qt. 49 cents; Kosher Dill Pickles – qt. 29 cents. Turcotte's Fairway Grocery – 717 Kingwood Street – Brainerd.

1957: Brainerd City Directory: 717 Kingwood, Robert A. Turcotte, Robt. A (Joyce; Turcotte Gro) h809 Grove [h=householder] See below; Bob started at the Dispatch in 1959.

1961 NW Bell phone book: No Turcotte Grocery listed, but the 717 address is now Kingwood Grocery. I have no idea who owned it.

2009/2/7:

Bob Turcotte kept in touch with a growing Brainerd

THIS WAS BRAINERD

Posted: Saturday, February 07, 2009

MIKE O'ROURKE

Associate Editor

Bob Turcotte's "part-time" phase at the Brainerd Dispatch - from 1985 through 2008 - would amount to a full working career for many folks.

That second segment of the former Dispatch advertising manager's long career constituted a gradual tapering off of a newspaper journey that began nearly 50 years ago - on Dec. 1, 1959.

Turcotte had plenty of business and life experiences before he started working in newspapers. His newspaper advertising career followed experience running his own grocery store and fighting in World War II.

Although Brainerd has always been Turcotte's home, it's been a full life for the recent retiree.

Bob Turcotte, a former advertising manager who worked for the Brainerd Dispatch for more than 49 years, relaxed in the newspaper's office.

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For nearly half a decade, Turcotte's presence at the Dispatch was as constant as the smell of ink and the deadlines he met for decades. The first work day he woke up and wasn't compelled to go to work was a bit unsettling for the 88-year-old Turcotte.

"It was strange," he said. "I took an extra half-hour's sleep."

His memories of the advertising business in Brainerd conjure up store names that today's young adult shoppers have only heard their parents talk about: S & L, Scott's, Montgomery Ward, Bye Clothing, Paul's Shoes, Burton's, the Frances Shoppe and Red Owl. In Turcotte's heyday of ad sales he was able to talk directly to the business decision-makers and not referred to a corporate office. There was a more personal relationship with the owners and managers then, he said.

"I enjoyed calling on store managers and owners or ad personnel," he said. "I enjoyed putting ads together."

Seeing the good results a newspaper ad would yield for a customer was satisfying to Turcotte who often labored after hours on the composition of the ad so he could make calls on customers during the day. That work ethic and dedication to his job was appreciated by his longtime Dispatch publisher, the late Bill McCollough

"Bill didn't want to see you at your desk all day," Turcotte remembered.

A 1938 graduate of Brainerd's Washington High School, Turcotte graduated from Hamline College in 1942. By fall of 1942 Turcotte was in the U.S. Army and on his way to combat in Italy. His memories of World War II include enduring the bitter cold and snow of that winter and his duffel bag with all his clothes and bedding accidentally ending up in the drink upon his arrival by ship in Naples.

During one particular sales slump, Turcotte remembered McCollough telling the ad staff he was interested in solutions not excuses for the sales drought. Turcotte's response was to start at one end of Oak Street and stop at every commercial enterprise he could find, including those that had never advertised with the newspaper before. One key to success, he found, was to make up a mock ad in advance to show the prospective customer.

"If you don't have something to show them, you have nothing to sell," Turcotte said.

When he owned a grocery store Turcotte said he never liked high pressure sales, so he took a low key approach. He said personality and getting to know your customer were the important elements in ad sales.

"Personality is very important," he said. "You have to be able give up a lot of time."

An accomplished gardener, Turcotte temporarily resumed his role as "plant manager" at the Dispatch. He stepped down from his part-time job at the newspaper at the end of 2008.

» Purchase reprints of this photo. Brainerd Dispatch/Steve Kohls

Turcotte always counseled businesses that advertising was important regardless of whether the economic times are good or bad.

No matter where his fellow soldiers hailed from, Turcotte remembered they always talked longingly about their hometown. The Brainerd native was no different.

"I couldn't wait to get back home," he said. "You learn to appreciate your town and state."

Returning home from World War II, Turcotte worked at a Fairway grocery store co-owned by his father, Art, and his uncle.

Later, Turcotte ran his own grocery store on Kingwood Street for six years. He said Brainerd grocers, in the 1950s, looked forward to when the wives and children who spent the summer at lake cabins would drive into town to buy groceries. The husbands, he said, would settle up the grocery bills at the end of the summer. Similarly, Brainerd customers routinely would charge groceries to their account and pay at the end of the month, Turcotte said.

"Tourist business was great," Turcotte said. "Nisswa didn't have the stores they have today. My dad's business tripled in the summer."

When he wasn't working, Turcotte and his wife of 57 years, Joyce, kept busy with their shared interests of dancing, gardening and golf.

They were charter members of a 1960s dancing group called the Fifty Two-somes. The group danced to Howie Hill's Orchestra and other live bands at LaGuyal, Harold's Club and the Starlite dinner club.

The Turcottes' knack for growing flowers led them to a variety of gardening jobs, some paid and some volunteer, for the Brainerd Dispatch, the Lakes Area Senior Activities Center and the Pine Meadows Golf

Course, which formerly was located along Golf Course Road in Baxter. They received compensation for their work at the golf course but hauling water and caring for the flowers kept them busy.

"I don't know when we had a chance to golf but we did," he said.

He and his wife have a son, Rob, and a daughter, Wendie, who also worked for many years at the Brainerd Dispatch. The Turcottes have two grandsons, Mike and Chad and a great-grandson, Jeron.

When he was selling ads in the downtown business district decades ago Turcotte never imagined the growth of retail businesses that have sprouted up in Baxter on Highway 371.

"Absolutely not," he said.

When businessman Joe Gustafson opened his Super Valu to the Tyrol Hills mall on the west side of the Mississippi, Turcotte said the mindset among many people was that no one was going to go out there to shop.

The unexpected expansion of the Brainerd area's commercial district was just one of many changes Turcotte saw in nearly 50 years at the Brainerd Dispatch. And much of the change he recalled in print for readers when he compiled the This Was Brained for many years for the Commentary page.

"I just enjoyed working with everyone here, from the employees up to our bosses," he said. "Everyone was always good...willing to listen."

To review, the Turcotte's/Weidemans confusion:

Turcotte's, the one I knew in the late 50's, early 60's, and bought my Lik-M-Aid & Fizzies at, was between 7th & 8th, at 717 Kingwood. It has also been known as Fairway Grocery & Kingwood Grocery, but has been replaced with a long, deep house right along the alley on its east side. Strangely, the last address map I have in 2007 shows just 303 8th St. on the NW corner at Kingwood. A 2017 Google map shows a NEW house as described above plopped on 303's west side. No clue what the address is. I hate driving around town looking for addresses, as about a third of the houses have no such thing. I would never be a pizza delivery boy in Brainerd!

Weidemann's was a block to the east on the NW corner of 9th & Kingwood Sts. the brick one Andy posted a photo of. I have always wondered why it looks so similar in construction, especially the bricks, as the Northwestern Hospital building, now the Senior Center. Was it built as a part of the hospital, perhaps a separate pharmacy, as was typical? This Weideman building is now 823 Kingwood, but at one time the back apartment had a 9th St. address, may still, just not on the 2007 map. Ray G. Weidemann may have bought out an Arthur C. Weber here, coming from 802 10th St. N. as early as 1937, later Casper-Stigen, then Anderson Grocerette, then my Button Store below! I don't recall this building as a store in the Lik-M-Aid days. Our route was counter clockwise from the park: Van's, Midway, Little Farm Market, Turcotte's, then the Button Store, where the gal let us buy candy with buttons. Maybe we were out of pennies by the time we left Turcotte's and never got that far east. No wonder my teeth are junk. You can see a list of grocers by street here under "lists", duh, on the Research page here, by no means complete, and this discussion WITH images:

<http://fertfaust.wixsite.com/brainerd-history/services>