

# Bell Shirt Company

2

Canada Ltd. bought it from the company in 1932 and sold it to Finkle and Hibbard a month later.

At the time it was bought by Finkle and Hibbard, the building consisted of three separate structures. The Bell Shirt company used all of the building's north section and the second floor of the centre building, the main floor of which was rented by 'Burkholder's Garage'. The southern portion of the building was occupied by a business called 'City Battery Service.' Kuntze said the southernmost building was built prior to 1874 and was the livery stable for the Windsor Hotel that once stood on the north west corner of Bridge and Coleman streets.

Two years after the flood, fire broke out in the factory and brought it to a standstill. Ten days later, it was up and running again.

The Bell Shirt company's employees numbered between 60 and 75. Mostly women and girls were employed to work in the sewing room while men and boys worked in the cutting room.

Kuntze recalled a story told him by a friend.

"Joe Burke told me a while ago that when he was a boy his father owned a small restaurant at the corner of Bridge Street West and James Street and the women at Bell Shirt used to phone each afternoon for an order of coffee and goodies. Joe was dispatched to deliver the order. He tied a basket (containing the coffee and goodies) to the rope, which the girls had made from shirt parts, lowered from the second floor washroom window so that Mr. Hibbard would not discover their afternoon 'coffee break'."

Through the decades, the company successfully produced men's and boys' cotton flannel workshirts and the well-known 'Lumberjack Shirts' and the upscale 'Camper Coats'. Their products were sold across Canada in most of the large retail and catalogue stores like Eaton's, Robt. Simpson, The Bay, Jack Fraser Stores, Woodward Stores in B.C., Stedmans, Beamish Stores and Woolco amongst others.

The Kuntzes sold the company to the Lanning family in April 1978 just two months before the company's 50th anniversary.

*You can reach Benzie Sangma at [bsangma@hotmail.com](mailto:bsangma@hotmail.com) with comments on or story ideas for Remember When.*