

3514 PEMINA HIGHWAY – HOUSE (FORMERLY 931 AVENUE DE L’EGLISE)
Architect Unknown, c.1895



This residence remains as one of the few commercial structures in the old downtown district of the village of St. Norbert. The historic Pembina Trail, the highway that ran from the Red River through southern Manitoba to the border, routed traffic right into this village, literally to the doorstep of this house, until the main highway bridge was moved in 1922. St. Norbert itself was a major religious and commercial center for the considerable hinterland to the south. To avoid an extra fifteen mile roundtrip into Winnipeg, farmers purchased supplies in St. Norbert. The settlement, growing from a cluster of Metis farms, had evolved into a bustling village, with several general stores, a mill, a blacksmith, a post office, an hotel, a livery and a butcher shop. The church, convent, schools, orphanage and monastery in St. Norbert ensured the continued existence of the village.

This house, built c. 1895, contained the local butcher shop for thirty years and the post office after that. Photographs trace its evolution from a small gabled house to a larger mansard-roofed house and shop, with a large barn and a smoke house. Surrounding it were the various stores,

joined in 1922 by the large brick Banque d'Hochelaga. Butcher Joseph Dubois and later Louis Goguillon dressed and sold meat to townspeople and farmers. Goguillon, born in France, operated the butcher shop on the main floor of the shop while his family lived above.

Pembina Highway became prosperous with the relocation of the bridge in 1922. The shops in the village languished and then folded or relocated. The butcher shop at 931 Avenue de L'Eglise became the post office then a private home after 1927. It was divided into a duplex in 1963. The bank became a hardware store, but the post office remained in a home in this old commercial district until the 1970s.

St. Norbert continued to grow and prosper. While it is now a suburb of Winnipeg, its historical roots remain in buildings such as this old butcher shop.