

Bethinking of Old Orleans

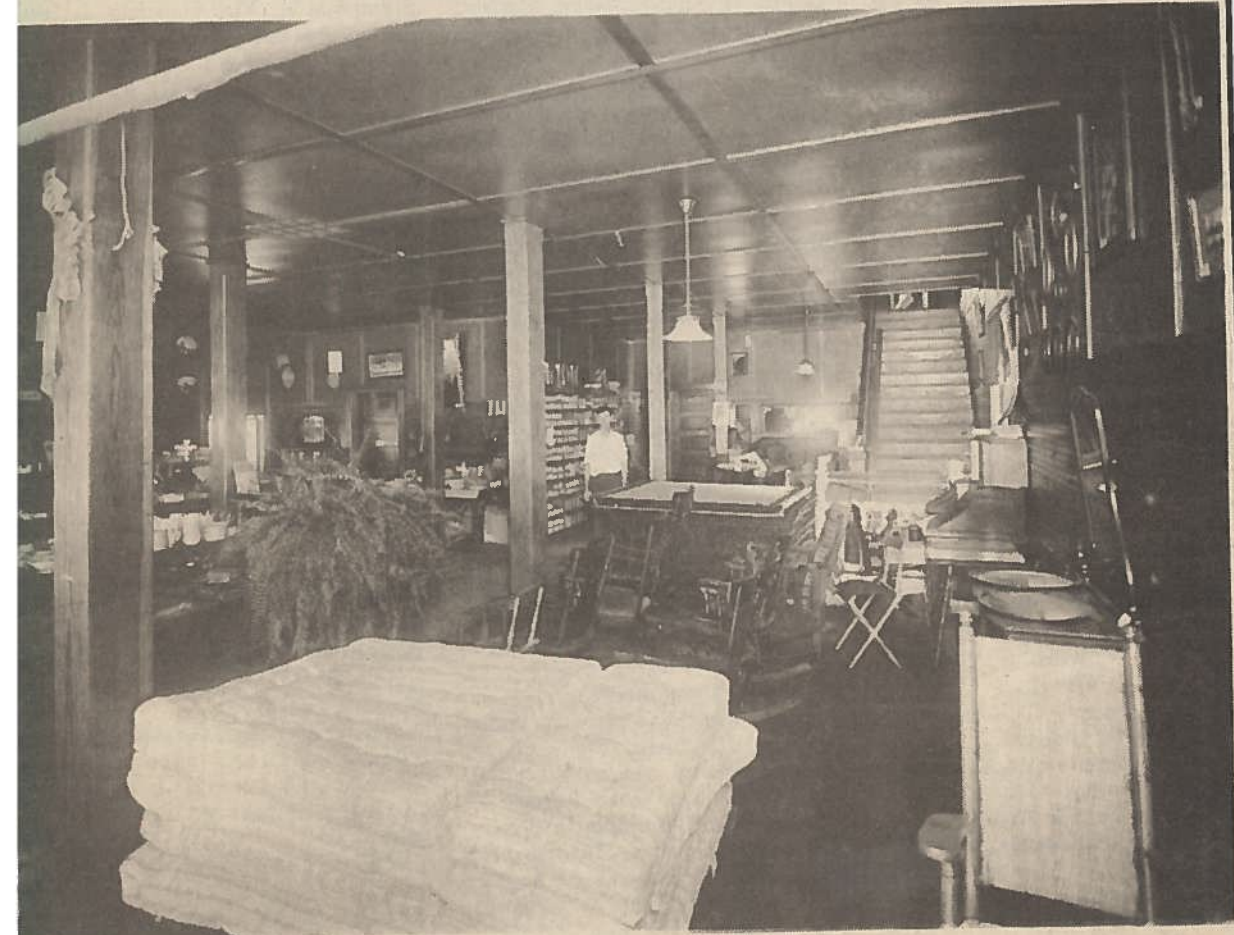
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N.A. STEVENS STORE - KENDALL



This old photo is simply identified as "Nelson Stevens, Furniture Store - Kendall, early 1900's." In the foreground there appears a stack of mattresses and a rocking chair. In the middle ground we see more chairs in two rows plus a bureau and pictures hanging along the walls. To the far left, dishes are displayed on shelving. Next to the young man in the background is a stack of bed springs and behind him it appears that Mr. Stevens may have sold rubber boots or footwear as well. And like many furniture dealers of yesteryear, he was also an undertaker. The lighting fixtures which are suspended from the ceiling are of the type that were used to burn acetylene gas.

Nelson Stevens had three stores in Kendall over a period of years because of destroying fires. His first store which was located on the west side of the Main Street in Kendall, burned in 1901. This fire began on the other side of the street and spread rapidly, burning almost the entire business district of Kendall.

In 1914 another fire broke out, this time starting in the Odd Fellows building and spreading next door to the Masonic building in which the Stevens store was located. Both buildings were completely destroyed and both were re-built on the same sites. This time, Mr. Stevens built a new furniture store on the north street which was later used as a hardware store by Leon Shaw. I'm not sure whether the photo was taken in the Masonic Building that burned in 1914 or if it is from the store built after 1914 on the other street.

As a side note, the Odd Fellows building where the fire started in 1914, was considered fire-proof. Because of this, the firemen kept the fire hoses there. Consequently, when this building caught fire, the firemen were helpless even though they had a brand new fire engine. Hence the Masonic building burned too, which was at the southwest corner of the main intersection. Rebuilt, it was again destroyed by fire in 1956.