

# A Vibrant Downtown



In 1900, the intersection of Main and Allen streets was a busy place. Haberdashers, restaurants, barber shops, coal merchants, grocery stores and law offices lined the sidewalks. People shopped along the sidewalks and had chance meetings with friends and neighbors. Some of the men

liked to stop in at Curley Pianfetti's tobacco and sandwich shop on Main Street and gossip with its gregarious Italian owner. You could find almost everything you needed in Winooski's downtown. If you had to go to Burlington or Essex Junction you could just jump on the trolley car.



Anchoring the downtown was the Winooski Block, the large three story brick building facing East Allen Street. Built shortly after the Civil War by two Winooski businessmen, Francis Leclair and Charles Lafountain, it contained retail stores, apartments, and a large function room called the Concert Hall. Architecturally, the structure is more reminiscent of old Montréal or New Orleans's Latin Quarter than of New England. (Image courtesy of the Winooski Historical Society.)



Big supermarkets were non-existent around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This A&P Store stood on the site now occupied by the Winooski Post Office. Take a look at the food on the shelves. How would you compare today's supermarkets with a store like this? (This image and main image of Main Street courtesy of the Winooski Historical Society.)