

Print Culture in Old Saint John

THE SHOP OF Saint John bookseller Dave Shoots stands at the latter end of a long tradition of printing and bookselling in the city. The first press arrived in the city in fall 1783 with William Lewis, who had previously published the *New York Mercury* from 1779. Biographers note that the press was likely the same one used for the *Mercury*, and Lewis, together with business partner John Ryan, held a monopoly on printing in Parrtown (as the settlement was known prior to 1785, when Saint John became the first incorporated city in what we know as Canada).

The field broadened with the arrival in 1785 of Christopher Sower, the grandson of North America's first German-language printer.

During the first half of the 19th century, names well-known to those familiar with New Brunswick history appeared: Henry Chubb of the *New Brunswick Courier*; George Fenety of the *Saint John Morning News*, the first penny paper in the British Empire; and the McMillan family, whose printing and stationery business continued to operate until the early 1990s.

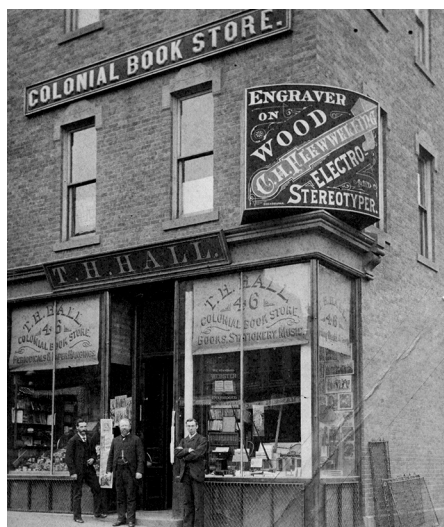
Many of the city's early printers located on the main commercial thoroughfare of Prince William Street—Chubb's Corner, where Henry Chubb had his shop, remains a landmark till today—but later generations of printers located a block east on Canterbury Street. By the 20th century, many printing establishments had shifted out from the core, onto Prince Edward Street and beyond.

Meanwhile, booksellers such as the Colonial Book Store took premises on King Street, a key retail street running from King's Square to Market Slip. Following the fire that razed the city in 1877, the Colonial and other established businesses rebuilt their premises in stone or brick.

~ Peter Mitham, editor



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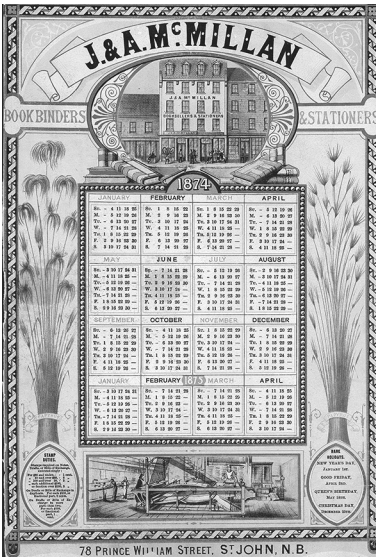


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Top: Globe printing office, Prince William Street (c. 1878). Bottom: Colonial Book Store, corner of King Street and Germain Street, Saint John (c. 1895). (New Brunswick Museum/Musée du Nouveau-Brunswick photos)



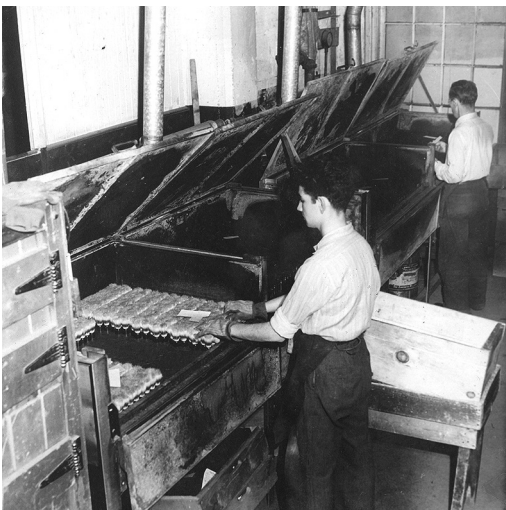
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Clockwise from top: J.R. Hopkins printing office, 139 Brussels Street, Saint John, showing, left to right, pressman Harold Scott with proprietor John R. Hopkins and his son Harold F. Hopkins (c. 1915); Detail of a stereograph by James Ramsay Woodburn showing the Methodist Book Concern, Saint John (1865–1873); Percy Darlow and Percy Butler, printer, at T. S. Simms and Co. Ltd., Bridge Road, Saint John (c. 1945); A calendar for the year 1874 showing the premises of J. & A. McMillan at 78 Prince William Street, Saint John.
(New Brunswick Museum/
Musée du Nouveau-Brunswick photos)