

Cardno Block

Location: 39 Main St. South, Seaforth, Ontario

Year built: 1877

CARDNO BLOCK WAS BUILT in 1877, at a time when Seaforth was at an economic peak, and soon after the fire of 1876 had destroyed much of Main Street. It is the largest block in the town built in an eclectic Second Empire style. Belden's *1879 Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Huron Ontario* describes Cardno Block: "In it is located the celebrated Cardno Music Hall. The building is of white brick, two full storeys, besides basement and mansard; it is of very handsome design with brown stone trimmings, and slate-covered. The central part is surmounted by a beautiful tower of rectangular superficies, with truncated roof in two courses, in the upper one of which are circular openings for clock-dial, and the whole is crowned by wrought iron cresting resting on an ornate cornice, adding materially to the general effect. Mr. Cardno has placed, at great expense, a public clock in this tower, and a handsome or more conspicuous one is not to be seen in any city or town in the country. The works are from a celebrated Boston manufacturer, and cost about \$1000, packed and ready for shipment; and the adjusting and other necessary works in connection with its erection cost an additional \$1000. The whole structure cost over \$30,000 and is lighted throughout with gas manufactured on the premises."



The Cardno Block as pictured in *A Souvenir of Seaforth* published c. 1900

Cardno Music Hall opened on December 15, 1877. The large main ballroom has a 23' (7.7 m) ceiling and a stage with a handpainted curtain. The central section of the curtain depicts a fisherman in a boat on a stream, a castle in the background. It is bordered by advertisements for local businesses. The curtain was painted by Will Clarke, a scenic artist from Clipper, New York. There are also dressing rooms and a

Play and Dance
"Mary Made Some Marmalade"
 CARDNO'S HALL, SEAFORTH
 Tuesday, April 3rd at 8.15
 PLAY FOLLOWED BY DANCING
 Admission Including Dance 25c

Tickets for events held at Cardno Music Hall

Pass Out Check
 ELECTION DANCE
 Cardno's Hall, Seaforth
 GOOD ONLY
 Wednesday, October 6th, 1937
 NOT TRANSFERABLE

banquet hall. The long extended wooden benches that were used to seat the audience made set-up easy for a variety of events. Advertisements in the *Huron Expositor* announced entertainments such as a "grand dramatic comedy" or an "opera company" or "vaudeville show" to take place at Cardno Music Hall. Patriotic concerts were given during World War I, some led by Grace McFaul Mullen, a Seaforth native and singer who lived in the Lorne Villa. The Hall was a gathering place for events sponsored by local service

groups and a forum from which politicians could address their election platform.

Alexander Cardno emigrated from Scotland in 1852, coming to Seaforth in 1862. He opened a bakery, the first in Seaforth. He was also a provisions dealer, a pork packer, and a grocery store owner, and he ran a clothing and tailoring business.

When first built, Cardno Block had five stores. Two housed Cardno's bakery and the grocery store. A.G. McDougall & Co., general merchants, Laidlaw & Fairley, grocers, and Hoffman Brothers had the other three stores.



Two of the men here are Mr. Fairley, centre, and Mr. Haxby, right. James C. Laidlaw moved his store from Harpurhey to Seaforth. He had his store in the Dickson Block in 1869, moving into the centre store of Cardno Block in 1877.