

The Tigerstedt Block



Albert Tigerstedt was a prominent local photographer in business for over 55 years, retiring only two years prior to his demise in 1989. He and his wife Jean lived in east Crescent Heights, and two of their homes are still standing. His initial foray into business involved graduation photos, and the nearby high school proved to be a lucrative and constant source of business. One of Albert's subjects was his wife-to-be Jean, who came in to have her picture taken when she was an art student graduate in 1937. Albert then asked Jean if she would be interested in colourizing some of his wedding photos. She agreed to do so, and they too were married four years later. During WW2, Albert put his skills to work as a photographer for the Royal Canadian Navy, but resumed business operations when the war was over. Over the years,



his subjects ranged from individual studio portraits and group pictures to Depression-era photos of unemployed men riding on boxcars to commercial buildings to Stampede Parade floats. The U of C has a representative selection of these photos in its Glenbow collection.

The Tigerstedt Block itself is actually two separate buildings. The northern section with the Art Moderne neon sign was built in 1952, on the site of a service station; Coward's Super Service. The older section to the south was built in phases from 1928 to 1935, and it was there that Albert Tigerstedt first ran his photographic business before relocating in 1952 to the



new section. Over the years, the block has seen a variety of retail businesses. Some reading this will remember the Electrolux Canada outlet there, or an even longer-term tenant- Jensen TV and Appliances.

A bit about the neon sign. It originally read Tigerstedt Studio- see inset- and dates back to 1948 when it was first displayed outside Albert's business premises in the old section. In 1952, the sign was moved to the new building. A likely

supplier for the sign was a Crescent Heights company called Neon Sales and Service, which had established itself farther north on Centre Street in 1946. Prior to Albert's demise in 1989, the photography business was sold, but it had ceased to exist by the early 1990s. The sign was then amended to read "Tigerstedt Block". Although there are plans to demolish the block to build a six-storey retail/rental building, the sign itself is to be refurbished and incorporated into the new building. And in the interim, the current owners are fully responsible for the bustling character of the old space, not to mention the vibrant community hub it's become.