

Jager describes McBain's 1930s Main Street as "echoing ten thousand other little Main Streets all across America." The storefronts were three-story facades on two-story rectangular buildings with "flat bland faces that would face the flat bland faces (of the storefronts) across the street."

Jager describes "trading," or doing business at Jim McBain's general store at the corner of Main Street and "the main road" (M-66).

He remembers the "piles of Rockford socks," and the "sweet-smelling stacks of blue bib overalls." He recalls the cast iron stove with chrome trim and the "bottomless barrel of dried salt herring."

Jager remembers his family trading eggs, fresh pork and strawberries at McBain's general store for groceries.

He also remembers when the competition came to town, a new store with "newfangled features - freezer locker, self-service, cash register, tape instead of store cord for binding packages." It was then that Jim McBain retired.

The 1930s was a time of scarlet fever, whooping cough, polio and diphtheria. Jager warmly recalls McBain's doctor, Dr. Masselink, "a country doctor of the old school."

Jager describes Dr. Masselink as an imposing figure who was both "portly and kindly." The doctor wore a dark suit and vest, carried a black bag and would sometimes give candy to children. Dr. Masselink lived in the largest house in McBain and made house calls day and night.

Dr. Masselink treated the common ailments of the day - innumerable thyroid problems (from a lack of iodine in the soil and water), appendicitis and removal of tonsils ("tonsils were removed by the hundreds," recalls Jager).

"Today, I've little doubt that many of the colored pills and bitter liquids that Dr. Masselink left in his wake were placebos, but it's also true that his attention and counsel and his dark suit and the stethoscope and the black bag and the pills and the bitter red fluids almost always left the patient feeling better, whether the working was biological or psychological or merely mysterious."

Dr. Masselink practiced in McBain and the surrounding rural area for 55 years. During that time, he delivered more than 4,000 babies into Missaukee County - delivering his last baby at the age of 83.

Jager remembers Dr. Masselink as "a very good and able man who never took a vacation and devoted his life to others."

Jager describes Floyd Teft's drugstore as having McBain's only soda fountain and the "best candy bar display."

It was at Teft's Drugstore that you could obtain the staples of a 1930s medicine cabinet: salves, iodine, rubbing oils, hydrogen peroxide, cloves, cough syrup and Epsom salts.

Finally, Jager recalls McBain's weekly newspaper, the McBain Chronicle, with an annual subscription rate of \$2.

Jager mostly recalls Ben Minier, the Chronicle's owner, reporter, editor, typesetter and publisher. Minier is described as a huge man with a large mane of gray bushy hair and a face that was knotted and gnarled "like an old pine stump" and sporting a bulbous nose. "He looked like a man with a past. Seeing him, I thought of pirates," writes Jager.

It appears that Jager's youthful perception of Minier was closer to the truth than perhaps he knew. Presumably to collect the insurance money, Ben Minier burned down his printing shop, sending years of McBain's written history up in smoke. But, as Jager recalls, the only thing Minier collected was "lasting notoriety and a new home in the county jail."