

## Douglasville's First Drugstore

Did you know that popular Douglasville eateries like the Red Velvet Bistro, or the former restaurant, Irish Bred Pub, were once places where many sought medical comforts, or a community place to help people connect with loved ones on the telephone? The building now occupied by Red Velvet Bistro was formerly known as Selman Drug Company, Douglasville's very first drugstore.

I'm Rylee Govoreau from the Conference Center and Tourism Department, and I am here with Steve Jones from the Community Relations Department. There's a lot of history connected to Douglasville that these buildings tell, from the outside architecture to what activities went on inside of them. We have a lot more history to share with you on our Audio Tour, so stay tuned while we step back in history and tell you more on your tour to Discover Douglasville.

Rylee: Hey Steve, did you know that this building is one of the oldest in the entire historic commercial district of Douglasville?

Steve: I didn't, but that is cool. Tell me more!

Rylee: I'd love to tell you more! Red Velvet Bistro, popular for its southern fare, steaks, and live entertainment, was built by G.G. Hudson and Dr. J.B Edge in a Victorian style known as Italianate, featuring grand entrances, tall ceilings, bay windows, and arched moldings. Many of the building materials were from Georgia and the red bricks were made just outside of town at James Marion Abercrombie's brickyard! The intricate original iron clad molding around Red Velvet Bistro is a testament to post Civil War ideas of reconstruction and how a proud town should look. Amazingly, this building was built in 1885, and to this day, the original red brick building remains in place as they were in old picture archives.

Steve: Wow, so these are the original red bricks from 1885?

Rylee: They sure are! This building once occupied the very first drugstore in Douglasville. The drugstore was built by and named after the owners, Hudson, and Edge but was later sold and bought by J.L. Selman and became Selman Drug Company. They sold nostalgic drugs that are no longer sold in most modern drugstores today, including products such as “Foley’s Honey and Tar”, which helped with Bronchitis and was made with ingredients such as pine tree tar, or “Castoria” which helped with constipation and was made with castor oil. As demand increased, the named changed to J.L. Selman and Company to reflect the addition of items to the store other than pharmaceuticals.

Steve: What other items did the store start to sell?

Rylee: I’m glad you asked! The new and upgraded drugstore was able to boast having the first soda fountain in Douglasville! Interestingly, Asa G. Candler, the founder of the Coca Cola Company, bought the secret recipe from coke inventor John Pemberton’s estate, a Douglas County native from Villa Rica. No doubt, many Coca –Colas were first poured from Douglasville’s first soda fountain at Selman’s!

Steve: Woah, now that is awesome!

Rylee: It is awesome! That’s not all. Selman Drug Co.’s founder J.L Selman really had a heart for assisting people in Douglasville. At his drugstore, he provided eye glass fittings and advertised this service with the trademark statement “at a moderate price.” Even outside of the pharmacy, Selman provided citizens with needed services, including founding the Douglasville Canning and Preserving Company. When Selman retired, his successor, Dr. O’Neal never skipped a beat in providing outstanding customer service and pride in the Douglasville community.

Steve: Wait, Dr. O’Neal – that sounds familiar. O’Neal like O’Neal Plaza?

Rylee: You would be correct! As a tribute to his great citizenship, this popular gathering place in downtown Douglasville is now named “O’Neal Plaza”.

Steve: Wow, thanks Rylee. I really learned a lot. I can't wait to eat at Red Velvet Bistro and catch an event on O'Neal Plaza.

Rylee: Me either, let's go sit down and enjoy an entree at Red Velvet now! Remember, there's a lot of rich history in this area and more to still learn, so if you haven't listened to the whole Audio Tour yet, stay tuned and head to the next stop!