



### **701 Main Street, Louisville, Colorado**

According to the Boulder County Assessor's website, the property at 701 Main Street is owned by 844 Main Street Associates LLC and occupies the south half of Lot 18, Lot 19, and the north half of Lot 20, Block 5, in Original Louisville.

This site has been the location of a few different buildings since the late 1800s. Most notably, it was the site of a large brick building in the late 1800s and early 1900s that was called the Miners Trading Co. for at least part of its existence. It had to be demolished due to subsidence caused by coal mining. This corner went from having the largest, most imposing building in town, at a major intersection of Original Louisville, to lying vacant for some time and then being the site of a service station and automotive repair shop for decades.

Another major significance of this site is its ownership by the Colacci family, one of Louisville's Italian families, for approximately 90 years. Mike Colacci apparently saw potential in the vacant site and borrowed money to be able to afford the purchase and start a business there. Some say that the Blue Parrot Restaurant was started in 1919 in the building on this property.

The Louisville Town Hall and fire station were situated on the north part of this site (the south half of Lot 18) for over fifty years. County records indicate that this half lot became part of 701 Main in 1971, long after the Town Hall building had been demolished.

Last, it should be noted that Boulder County Assessor records state that the current structure was built in 1956, but sections of the current structure seems to have already been present in the 1948 County Assessor's photo of the property. This issue is further addressed below.

### **The Development of Original Louisville**

Louis Nawatny platted Original Louisville in 1878 and named it after himself. Research of early Louisville history has shown that Nawatny likely worked for Charles C. Welch, a

prominent businessman in Colorado. Welch was vice president of the railroad, opened the first mine (the Welch Mine) in Louisville in 1877, and was the developer of some of Louisville oldest subdivisions along with his wife, Rebecca Darrow Welch. Rebecca was the sister of Louisville businessman Victor H. Darrow.

The earliest section of the chain of ownership could not be completed with certainty. It is possible that eventually, research of documents at the Boulder County Recorder's Office itself will be able to fully reveal this chain. Based on the online records, however, the early owners of Lot 19 and the north half of Lot 20 (after Louis Nawatny) appear to have been Victor H. Darrow, Rebecca Darrow Welch, and Charles C. Welch.

### **Earliest Use of the Site**

The 700 block of Main Street (then called Second Street) was developed early in Louisville's history. A copy of a hand drawn map of Louisville from 1885 acquired from the Western History Collection of Norlin Library at the University of Colorado indicates "V.H. Darrow" on this site.

However, no specific use of the site can be identified before the time of the early 1890s, and no historical photos of the site before the 1890s have been located.

### **Brick Trading Company Building on This Site**

County property records indicate that in 1890, Charles and Rebecca Welch sold the lots in question to the Louisville Mercantile Co. In 1891, the property was sold to Lyman E. Andrews and John S. Chambers, prominent businessmen in Louisville from this time period. "Andrews & Chambers" was an early "general merchandise" store listed in Louisville directories, although with no specific address or location indicated.

The earliest Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Louisville, for 1893, shows that on this particular site in 1893 there stood a large, two story, brick building being used to sell "general merchandise." Information on file at the Louisville Historical Museum states that this building was built "circa 1880," but this could not be confirmed. According to an item that appeared in the Boulder Daily Camera on October 6, 1891, the property was purchased in 1891 for \$7,000, a very high price for the town at the time that would indicate that the brick building was already located on the site.

The 1893 Sanborn Map also shows both sides of the 700 block of Main Street were already developed with a mixture of business buildings and dwellings.

County records indicate that the owner of this property from 1893 to 1910 was Boulder attorney Richard Whitely. He transferred the property in 1910 to Denver attorney James H. Blood.

Photos 1 and 2 show this building as it appeared in the early 1900s.



Photo 1, circa 1905, Louisville Historical Museum E-M N-6

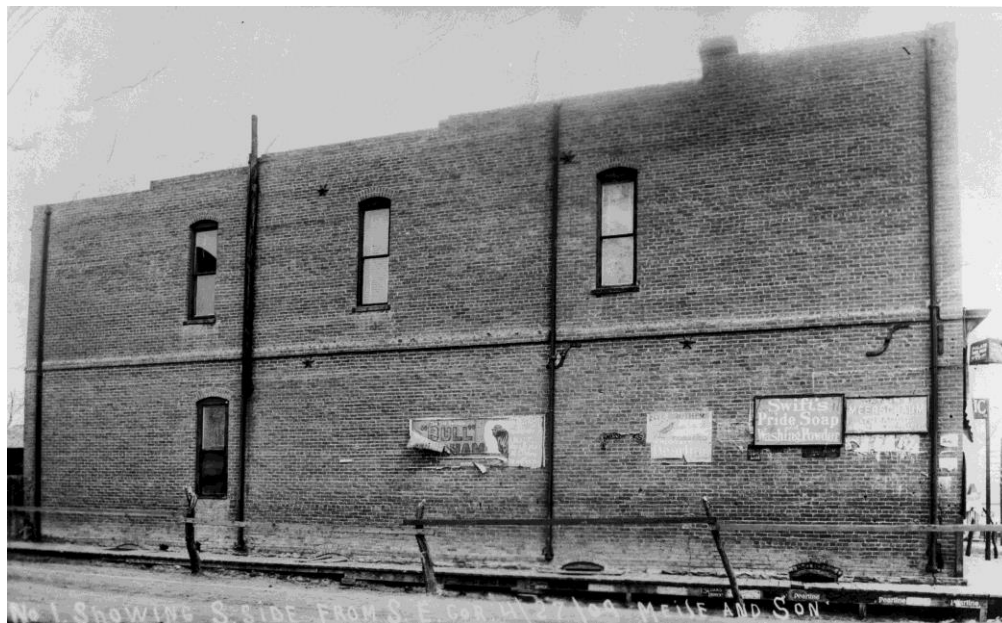


Photo 2, Louisville Historical Museum E-A N-12

Something that is not known with certainty is why the building was called the “Miners Trading Co.” Carolyn Conarroe, in her 1978 book *The Louisville Story*, refers to it “the old company store,” but later information that has come to light indicates that Louisville was not a company town where miners and their families had to shop at one store. Also,

the property records indicate that it was not owned by a mining company until after the building was condemned due to subsidence. The 2000 Historical Survey states that “the Miners Trading Company was Louisville foremost business which supplied equipment for the coal mining industry,” but this statement could not be confirmed. The Sanborn maps indicate a general merchandise store at this location.

The second floor of this brick building was used as an IOOF (Independent Order of the Odd Fellows) Lodge Hall, as indicated on both the 1893 and 1900 Sanborn Maps.

Photo 3 shows a close-up of what is believed to be the front of this building with a boys’ band.



Photo 3, Louisville Historical Museum

The last Sanborn Map for Louisville, made in 1908, indicates that there was in 1908 a restaurant along the south side of the building.

Photo 4 gives the overall setting on Main Street for this building, which appears on the left, and shows the Town Hall located just to the north of it and the picket fence in front of the Austin-Niehoff House (now the Parks & Recreation Department for the City of Louisville) just beyond. The current building at 700 Main (the Huckleberry Restaurant) had not yet replaced the building shown in the photo.



Photo 4, circa 1900-08, Louisville Historical Museum E-R N-1

In the early 1900s, coal mining activities by the owner of the Acme Mine in Louisville caused subsidence that led to significant structural problems with this large brick building. By 1909, it was condemned, and it is believed to have been demolished by 1914, when permission was given to build a fence around the vacant property, according to local historian Carolyn Conarroe.

Boulder County property records indicate that by 1911, this property had been conveyed to the Northern Coal & Coke Co., and by 1912, this property was owned by its successor in ownership of the Acme Mine, the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company. (It can be speculated that the Acme Mine's owner became the owner due to a settlement that came about as a result of the subsidence damage, but this issue has not been separately researched.)

Photo 5 shows the vacant property in circa 1915. (The numbers on the photo are believed to indicate where people were standing at the time of a crime that took place in October 1915.)





Photo 5, circa 1915, Louisville Historical Museum 90-11-5D

### **Ownership by the Colacci Family; Large Frame Building Moved to Site**

Boulder County property records indicate that in 1916, Rocky Mountain Fuel Company transferred ownership of this property to Rocky Mountain Stores Company. County property records further indicate that the property was then transferred from Rocky Mountain Stores Company to Mary Colacci in 1922, although this could be a reference to the date when the deed was recorded with the date of the transfer of ownership having taken place earlier.

According to Carolyn Conarroe's book *The Louisville Story*,

A large wood frame building, which had provided housing for miners and then the Federal troops [who came at the time of a strike in 1914], was moved from north Main Street onto the vacant lot on the northwest corner of the intersection by Mike Colacci where he opened a restaurant about 1919.

Photo 6 shows this building, possibly just after having been moved given the presence of the horses in the photo and given the fact that it appears to sit just above the ground.



Photo 6, circa 1919, Louisville Historical Museum E-S N-2

Some histories of the Blue Parrot Restaurant state that Mike and Mary Colacci started the restaurant in the building on this site in 1919. Although the Blue Parrot Restaurant came to be located catty corner to this site on the southeast corner of Pine and Main, the Colacci family continued to own the property at 701 Main until 2008, following the death of son Joe Colacci in 2007 at the age of 90.

Mike and Mary Colacci had emigrated from Italy. According to a 1985 article in the Boulder Daily Camera, Mike and his brother, Jim, had started a dairy business that failed in around 1919. Starting then, Mike and Mary Colacci began their cafe at Pine and Main which has now involved several generations of the Colacci family. Written sources at the Museum credit Mary Colacci with having been the driving force behind the founding of the Blue Parrot Restaurant. The business started as a sandwich place with spaghetti served only on Sundays. During the early years of the business, Mike Colacci continued working as a coal miner.

The 1928 directory for Louisville shows that Mary Colacci had a grocery store at the site of today's 701 Main, even though the Blue Parrot business was by then located at 640 Main.

### **Service Station Usage**

Carolyn Conarroe in her book *The Louisville Story* states:

L.J. Mossoni went into business with Colacci in the 1920's when Mossoni talked Colacci into moving the building back from the street. Mossoni installed several gas pumps and ran the front end while Colacci ran the back end as a café.

The 1936 directory for Louisville shows that Lawrence Mossoni had a "gasoline and oils" business at this site, which was then called 200 Main under Louisville's former address system. Mossoni, like Mike Colacci, had been born in Italy, joined Louisville's growing Italian population, and became a leading businessman in the Louisville community.

Photo 7 shows a close-up of an aerial view of Louisville from the 1930s, with the site at 701 Main shown on the far right and the Town Hall next to it.



Photo 7, circa 1930s, Louisville Historical Museum 99-09-01 (section enlarged)

Photo 8 taken by the Boulder County Assessor's Office in 1948 shows "Tony and Jim's" on this site:

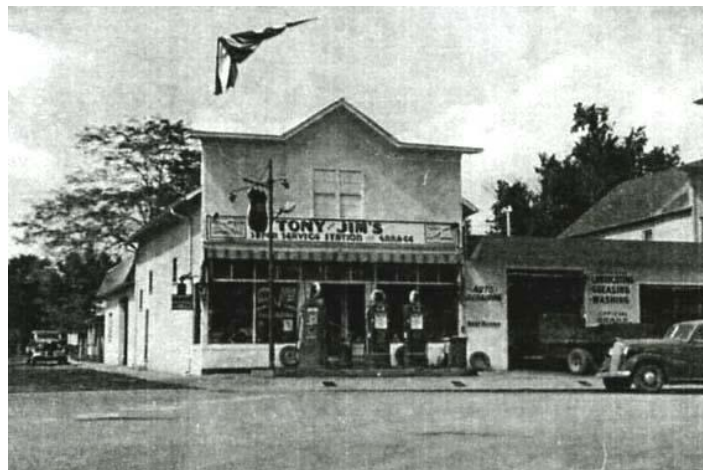


Photo 8, 1948, Boulder County Assessor's Office photo, Carnegie Branch Library, Boulder, Colorado



Something that is not completely clear from the available evidence is whether the structure in Photo 8 is the same structure as the frame building that was moved to the site, shown in Photo 6. The 2000 Historical Survey seemed to imply that it was the same structure, but did not specifically address this issue.

Photo 9 (though more of a map than a photo) shows the layout of a structure at 701 Main. Though undated, it would appear to have been drawn in the period of 1948-56. The square footage of the building was stated to be 3,293.

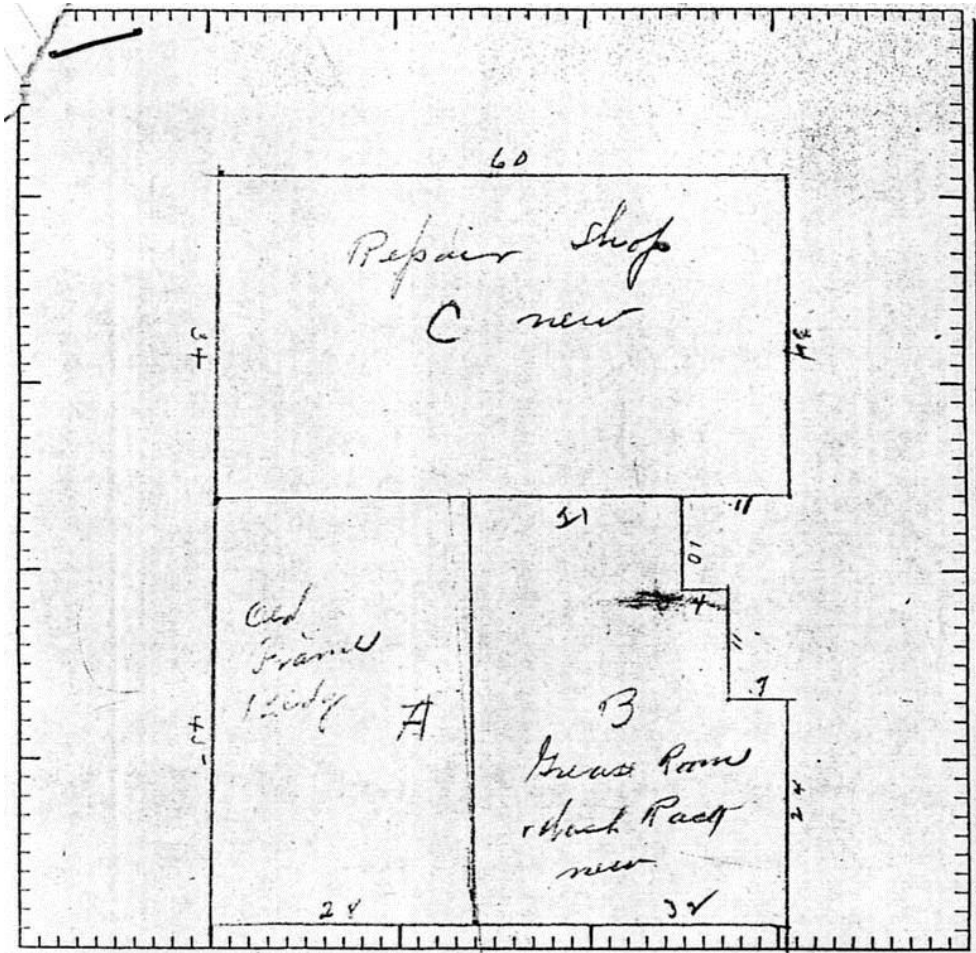


Photo 9, circa 1948-56, Boulder County Assessor's Office photo, Carnegie Branch Library, Boulder, CO

The business was known at different times as Mossoni's Economy Store (with Lawrence Mossoni leasing the property), Tony and Jim's, Tony's & Jimmie's Service Station, Tony & Jim's Super Service operated by Ron Leggett, the Louisville Oil Company, the Louisville Phillips 66, and Waveform Automotive Repair.

Photo 10 shows the current building in circa 1978:



Photo 10, circa 1978, Louisville Historical Museum 2000.008.004

The 2000 Historical Survey stated that the gas pumps were removed from the site in the 1990s.

### **Former Town Hall Site Incorporated Into 701 Main**

The south half of Lot 18, which is part of the 701 Main parcel today, has a separate history. The 1893 and 1900 Sanborn Maps show that it was where the town's hose cart was kept for the volunteer fire department. Soon after 1900, a Town Hall and Fire Station was then constructed on the site. This building was torn down in the 1950s and was sold by the Town of Louisville to members of the Fischer family, then to Herman and Virginia Fauson, then in 1971 to Joe Colacci who incorporated it with his existing property at 701 Main.

Photo 11 shows the Town Hall when the service station building did not yet extend to the northern edge of Lot 19:



Photo 11, circa 1940s, Louisville Historical Museum E-C N-3

Photo 12 shows the Town Hall with the north part of the service station building on the left:



Photo 12, Louisville Historical Museum E-A N-20

Photo 13 shows the site (the south half of Lot 18) in circa 1978 when it was vacant and apparently being used for parking:



Photo 13, circa 1978, Louisville Historical Museum 2000.008.004

## **Date of Construction of the Current Building at 701 Main**

Unfortunately, the Boulder County Assessor records have been found to be in error with respect to the dates of construction of many historical buildings in Louisville. Part (though not all) of the problem is that at times, renovations of buildings resulted in the County adopting a completely year date of construction as the official date. Therefore, it is important to look at all of the evidence for when the original part of a building was constructed.

The Boulder County Assessor records state that this building was constructed in 1956. The 2000 Historical Survey stated that “[i]n 1956, the old wooden building was torn down, and a new concrete block service station was constructed,” and appeared to depend upon the County date of 1956 as an “actual” date of construction of the current building.

However, the 1948 Assessor’s photo (Photo 8) shows a section of the building on the rear, south side that appears to have been incorporated into the current structure.

Also, looking at the photographic evidence, it appears that the garage area on the right of the building shown in the 1948 Assessor’s photo (Photo 8) is still in evidence as part of the current building (see Photos 10, 12, 13).

The photographic evidence suggests that while a section of the prior building was torn down in around 1956, another section or sections were retained in the current building.

The preceding research is based on a review of relevant and available online County property records, census records, oral history interviews, Louisville directories, and Louisville Historical Museum maps, files, obituary records, and historical photographs from the collection of the Louisville Historical Museum.