



History of 816 Main Street, Louisville, Colorado (Location of Colacci's Restaurant)

Legal Description: North 11 Feet, 8 inches of Lot 8 & South 1/2 Lot 9, Block 2, Original Louisville

Year of Construction: According to numerous sources, two historical buildings were remodeled and added on to in order to create the current building at 816 Main in 1955. Records indicate that the building that was on the left dates back to the late 1800s. The building on the right was built in the early 1900s, but is believed to have been destroyed by fire in 1926 and replaced not long after. The 1948 County Assessor card for 816 Main gave the estimate that the buildings on the site in 1948 had been constructed in 1900 and remodeled in 1928. The online County Assessor records give 1957 as the date of construction, but this is believed to refer to the year that the remodel was completed.

Summary: In 1955, Anthony Colacci had two historical buildings at this location remodeled to become Colacci's Restaurant, a family-friendly Italian restaurant that, with the Blue Parrot and other Italian restaurants in Louisville, made Louisville a destination for diners in Colorado and helped establish and solidify Louisville's reputation as a restaurant town. The Colacci's neon sign, designed by Anthony himself, went up in 1956 and included a beacon with a light on the top that could be seen for miles. The slogan "Look for the Beacon" was a recurring aspect of the restaurant's advertising, along with the stylized red cursive "Colacci's" name with a star as the dot over the "i."

Earliest Ownership of Property; Discussion of Date of Construction

This parcel is made up of the north part of Lot 8 and the south half of Lot 9. These each originated with Louis Nawatny as the person who platted Original Louisville in 1878, but for several years the lots were not owned by the same person. John Broadie owned the south half of Lot 9 from 1889 until 1906. The 1893 and 1900 Sanborn fire insurance maps for Louisville

shows that there was a dwelling on the partial lot owned by Broadie. The federal census records for 1900 also show John Broadie, who was a widower who was age 65 and from England, to be living in the vicinity and most likely at this location. Another widower was also listed as living in this household with his son. The 1904 Louisville directory listed John “Brody” as living on 2nd Street (today’s Main Street) between Spruce and Walnut, which is an accurate description of this property. (The 1893 and 1900 Sanborn maps do not show a structure on the north part of Lot 8.)

In 1907, Charles Heidloff acquired both parts of the lots. He then sold them in separate transactions to two prominent business partners and real estate developers, Irving Elberson and J.C. Williams.

The 1908 Sanborn fire insurance map shows that by that year, the building on the south half of Lot 9 housed a business, and another structure that appears to be identified as the telephone office had been built on the north part of Lot 8.

By 1911, the company of Williams and Elberson, the W&E Investment Co., was the owner of the two properties. In 1919, ownership was conveyed to J.C. Williams alone. When Williams died in 1929, his wife, Jane Williams, became the owner. (J.C. and Jane Williams were also owners of other properties on this block to the south of 816 Main.)

The following undated photo is an early shot of the east side of the 800 block of Main Street in the early 1900s. Although this has not been established with certainty, it is believed that the two small buildings at the left center of the photo are at what is now 816 Main. (The KJK Garage to the south burned in a fire in 1926 and the Hacienda Restaurant was later built on the garage site.)



The 1916 Louisville directory lists the United Mine Workers Store at this location with John Sidle as manager. Although little is known of this establishment, its existence appears to have been confirmed by Henry “Rico” Zarini (1889-1982), who in a 1975 oral history interview stated that the miners’ union operated a “commissary” at this location, selling food at cost to miners and their families.

Based on information in the 1921 Louisville directory, it appears that the Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph was located in the building on the right of this parcel, and also at that address was Tony D’Orio’s shoemaker / shoe repair business.

Tony D’Orio’s business appears in many directories from the 1910s to the early 1930s as being located in this approximate location, but he appears to have rented and not owned the property, and Louisville addresses had not yet been standardized, making this difficult to verify. There is no business listing for him between 1926 and 1930, which suggests that he was displaced by the 1926 fire. However, his business reappeared in this vicinity by 1930.

1926 Fire and History of the Buildings to 1955

In 1926, a fire damaged or destroyed the buildings on the south part of the east side of the 800 block of Main Street. This fire is believed to have affected the building on the south part of this particular parcel and led to the buildings being remodeled in about 1928.

From the 1930s until the early 1950s, there were two distinct businesses at this site, with the buildings touching one another and the building on the left being slightly larger. For many or most of these years, the business on the left was a billiard hall and the business on the right was a barber shop.

In the 1930s, the billiard hall was operated by William “Buck” La Salle. He also purchased the property from Jane Williams. (The deed was recorded in 1937, but the sale may have been dated earlier.) La Salle had been one of the leading baseball players in Boulder County, but was injured in the Centennial Mine while working as a miner. According to his obituary, his pool hall was known as “Buck’s Place.” Buck La Salle died in 1938 at the age of 45. According to La Salle’s two daughters, their father’s pool hall and the barber shop next to it were never torn down but were simply remodeled by Anthony Colacci in 1955.

Following the 1938 death of Buck La Salle, Buck’s wife, Mary La Salle, rented the billiard hall to Buck’s brother, Tony “Boney” La Salle. Harry Mayor, who was born in 1918, has written that each the three pool halls that figured in his youth had a distinct character, with Boney’s having the younger, boisterous crowd that was involved with baseball teams and the volunteer hose teams. Boney was lenient and allowed Harry and his friends to play a few shots of pool in exchange for racking up a few games of pool, although their mothers had forbidden it.

According to 1941 and 1943 directories, the business was then operated by both Boney La Salle and Edward J. "Eddie" Jordan as partners. The name "Louisville Billiards" first appeared in a Louisville directory in 1943. By 1946, Eddie Jordan alone was operating the billiard hall. By 1949, Harold Jordan had become the operator of Louisville Billiards.

Eddie Jordan is remembered by residents for his pool hall where he would host gamblers from Denver who would gamble in the basement of the building, sometimes for a whole weekend at a time. Authorities typically looked the other way. Eddie Jordan later moved from Louisville and is remembered for having operated the Wolhurst Country Club in Littleton.

This photo from the 1948 County Assessor card shows the billiard hall, called Louisville Billiards:



This photo from the 1948 County Assessor card shows the barber shop on the right:



While the building on the left was being operated as a billiard hall, the smaller part on the right had a different business. Following the 1926 fire, it appears that Tony D'Orio's shoe repair business was here until around 1935. In the 1940s, a barber shop in this location was operated by Walter Jordan, then George Coberly, then Fiori Tesone until the early 1950s.

The following photo taken in the late 1940s shows the left part of 816 Main in the center of the photo with the sign “Billiards”:



In the early 1950s, Toney W. La Salle’s Furniture Store located to 820 Main, just north of today’s 816 Main, and also inhabited the former Louisville Billiards building at 816 Main. La Salle also had the Maytag appliance business in town. (After 816 Main became the location of Colacci’s in 1955, the La Salle Furniture Store stayed at 820 Main and expanded his business northward into the Pellillo’s Shoe Shop building. These buildings were later incorporated into the Marketplace Building.) The following photo shows a Maytag sign outside of 816 Main in the early 1950s:



Establishment of Colacci’s restaurant and its Operation by the Colacci Family, 1955-1993

In 1955, Williams “Buck” La Salle’s wife, Mary, and their daughters, Catherine and Hannah (who had inherited the property upon the death of Buck La Salle in 1938), sold 816 Main to Anthony

and Rita Colacci. (“Colacci’s Restaurant” would become the legal owner of the property in 1968.)

The story of Louisville’s Colacci family members and their competing restaurants is well known. Mike and Mary Colacci started the business that became the Blue Parrot Restaurant in around 1919 and moved it to 640 Main (its current location) in about 1922. Their sons, Joe (1916-2007) and Anthony (1918-2006) worked in the family business, which for a long time was the only restaurant where one could go to get Italian food in Boulder County. After Mary Colacci died in 1949, Mike Colacci returned to his native country of Italy and brought back a new wife with her grown children. Family dynamics led to a rift, with the result that Mike (followed by Joe) continued to operate the Blue Parrot, while Anthony split off and opened Colacci’s Restaurant up the street with his wife, Rita, serving much the same food as what was being served at the Blue Parrot. The following photo shows Rita, daughter Mary, and Anthony in 1943:



There ended up being plenty of business for everyone, as the two establishments less than two blocks apart solidified Louisville’s reputation as a family-friendly restaurant town that drew customers from all over the region seeking spaghetti, chicken, and shrimp dinners and other Italian specialties. Many recall these years and remember that visiting families generally tended to favor one restaurant or the other, but if the line at the preferred restaurant was too long, one could just go to the other one. The fact that Louisville was not a “dry” town like many of the surrounding communities (including Boulder) added to its appeal, and the bars at Colacci’s and the Blue Parrot both did well. Later, Mike Colacci’s stepsons opened “Luigi’s” and “Pasquale’s” on Main Street, also serving Italian food. Other restaurants in Louisville where one could get similar food included the Three Coins Restaurant at 525 Main and Berardi’s on South Boulder Rd. (at what is now Union Jack Liquor).

Anthony “Joe” Madonna was the contractor for the remodel of the existing buildings at 816 Main. According to several sources, he remodeled the existing buildings and added a kitchen to

the back. This photo from the *Daily Camera* archives at the Carnegie Library for Local History shows the buildings during the remodel:



In August 1955, Colacci's Restaurant held its Grand Opening. (See the end of this report for a *Daily Camera* article describing its layout and amenities, which included a bar with a piano and a kitchen on the back with a walk-in refrigerator.) The following newspaper photo from August 1955 shows the interior:



THE NEW COLACCT'S—The grand opening of the new Colacci's restaurant in Louisville is scheduled for this Saturday night. The new Colacci's bears little resemblance to the old restaurant popularly called by the same name, as the above picture shows. This view looking toward the rear of the new location shows a portion of the interior. The bar is at the left with three rows of booths to the right extending through the archways. The kitchen is in the right rear.

The following undated photos from Boulder's Carnegie Library for Local History show the exterior of the building and diners inside:



According to an April 30, 1958 *Denver Post* column written by regular columnist Red Fenwick:

Tony's restaurant, his spaghetti and homemade sausage have made this little northern Colorado town moderately famous. Dignitaries, common folks, movie personalities and sports world figures have come here from all over the country to dine at Colacci's. . . . Coal mining has waned in this once-lusty town between Denver and Boulder . . . , but Tony's restaurant has supplanted it as a local industry. . . . If he had to depend entirely on trade within his own town, Tony's volume would drop to a fraction of its present size. So what's the secret of his success? Why should a comparatively small restaurant and bar in a tiny town removed from the main highway enjoy such patronage. The answer is simple: Plain good cooking, home preparation of the ingredients, sanitation, courtesy, fair prices and a native ability to turn out good Italian food.

The column also stated that Tony Colacci's annual gross was well over a quarter-million dollars and that he employed 43 people, with a payroll of near \$60,000 a year. Among the celebrity diners mentioned in the article were Bing Crosby, Harry Belafonte, and

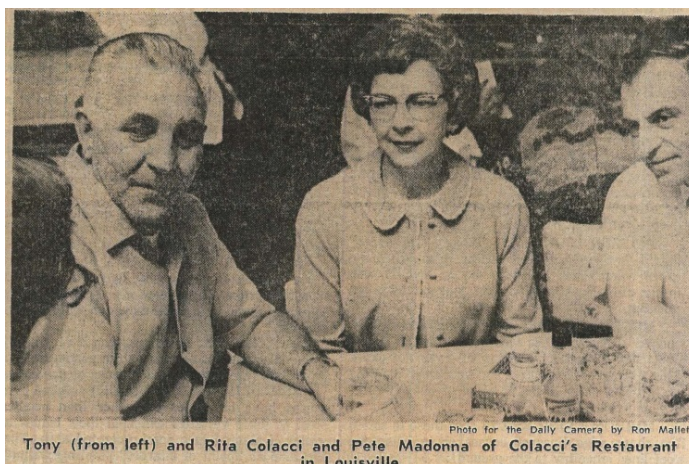
Casey Stengel. The column also stated that the guest register had names of visitors from most states as well as from at least four foreign countries.

When Colacci's opened, the alcove on the right of the building, which faced the street, contained a liquor store. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, this liquor store was operated by Laura Enrietto and was called Laura's Liquors. According to the Colacci family, this liquor store had to be discontinued due to state regulations that would not permit a state liquor license to be used for two businesses.

An article in the April 17, 1966 *Daily Camera Focus* profiled the popular Colacci's Restaurant, stating:

Tony Colacci is quite a guy. In 11 years he's built a small town Italian restaurant into a business that grosses almost one-third of a million dollars a year. Colacci's has customers from all over the state, the nation, the world. Those that can, come back. . . . The Italian food is all homemade, much of it by Tony himself. Last Saturday night the kitchen was packed with food in preparation for the Easter dinner rush. The walk-in cooler was piled high with steaks, and two tubs were coiled to the top with homemade sausage. Sixteen cases of bread lined the wall at the other end of the large, bustling kitchen. Ice boxes were filled with ravioli, spaghetti, and other good things. Colacci's feeds an average of 2,500 people each week, and the record for an eight-hour shift is 1,100 diners.

The following 1966 photo accompanied the *Daily Camera* article:



A Colacci's menu in the collection of the Louisville Historical Museum shows that the dining options included such dishes as spaghetti or ravioli with meatballs or sausage, steak, chicken cacciatori, veal parmesan, and shrimp scampi.

Rita Cook Colacci Byrd still resides in Boulder County and is now age 92. She was an intrinsic part of the success of Colacci's for about 38 years and filled many roles, including that of hostess. She had previously worked at the Blue Parrot and learned many of the family recipes from her mother-in-law, Mary and her father-in-law, Mike. According to her daughter, it was not unusual for Rita to let a couple enjoy their meal in peace by holding their baby for them while she moved around the restaurant, helping customers. The Colacci daughters also helped in the restaurant. Rita and Anthony Colacci divorced in 1968 and Rita is recognized as having taken over the operation of the restaurant.

Waitresses who worked at Colacci's for more than 30 years included Myra Nelson, Doris Channel, and Mary Ross, according to an undated *Daily Camera* article. Dozens of other local residents worked at Colacci's or the Blue Parrot, or both at different times. Louisville's Pete Madonna was a manager at Colacci's for many years.

The Colacci family stopped owning and operating the restaurant in 1993, and Colacci's Restaurant continued under other ownership until 2000.

Colacci's Sign History

According to Rita Colacci Byrd, the neon Colacci's sign was installed in 1956, the year after Colacci's opened. The Colacci family believes that it was made by the Gordon Neon Sign Company of Denver.

According to a *Daily Camera* article (March 9, 2000) reporting that Pasquini's was submitting a plan to retain the original Colacci's sign (but with the name Pasquini's), Anthony Colacci himself designed the sign and almost every aspect of it represented something personal to him. "The sign is supported by a large number seven, which is Anthony Colacci's lucky number." The beacon, which had a lighthouse-style light on it, was said to have been put there for a relative who was in the military. Historical Museum records further indicate that the star for the dot above the "i" represented Anthony Colacci's mother, the apostrophe represented his father, Mike, and the "s" represented himself. In an impressive example of branding in this small town, the stylized, cursive red "Colacci's" name was used consistently in the restaurant's advertising for years.

A slogan used frequently in the Colacci's advertising was "Look for the Beacon." The beacon above the Colacci's sign worked like a lighthouse beacon and could be seen at least as far away as Highway 287. Employees would use a switch located near the cashier's stand to turn it on at around 5 PM and would turn it off when the restaurant closed at night. A local resident has recalled that on occasions when Lafayette would lose its power, Lafayette citizens would look for the Colacci's beacon to see whether Louisville had also lost its electricity.

Older photos of the Colacci's sign show that there used to be a clock located under the sign and just above the door. This 1978 photo shows the clock:



The following photo from the *Louisville Times* (May 19, 1982) shows the sign at night:



The following photo is from the *Daily Camera* in 1999:



The following photo of the sign is also dated 1999:



The following undated photo from the *Daily Camera* archives at the Carnegie Library for Local History shows the sign during the 1990s or in 2000 at the latest, based on other things that appear in the photo:



The following advertisement appeared in a 1970 issue of *Town & Country*, a Boulder County weekly publication:

Look for the BEACON
Colacci's
restaurant

Home-Made
SPAGHETTI
WITH DELICIOUS WINE
OR
YOUR FAVORITE COCKTAIL
COMPLETE MENU

We Cater to Parties

816 Main
LOUISVILLE
666-9979

COLACCI'S
RESTAURANT

The exterior and interior of this Colacci's matchbook both shows the slogan "Look for the Beacon," and a martini glass and the stylized cursive "Colacci's" also appear:



This original hand-hammered copper menu cover from Colacci's also has the slogan "Look for the Beacon":



The following photo from the late 1960s or early 1970s is a view of Main Street, looking south. In addition to showing the Colacci's sign and beacon on the left side of the photo, the photo shows many other examples of Main Street signage.



The following photo from 1979 is a view of Main Street, looking north. In addition to showing the Colacci's sign and beacon on the right side of the photo, the photo similarly shows many other examples of Main Street signage.



The following photo from the Colacci family shows the restaurant's trucks, believed to have been used for home deliveries and other purposes, in 1989-91:



The following image shows an ashtray from Colacci's with the cursive name and star as the dot over the "i" clearly apparent:



Decision by Louisville City Council in 2000 to Permit the Retention of the Sign

In 2000, the Pasquini family purchased 816 Main in 2000 with the intention of opening Pasquini's Restaurant, instead of having the restaurant continue as Colacci's.

According to the *Daily Camera* article (March 9, 2000) reporting that Pasquini's was submitting a plan to retain the original Colacci's sign (but with the name Pasquini's):

'The sign is nonconforming in all aspects of the code,' Paul Wood, city planning director, said. 'But the downtown design handbook does say it's important to recognize 1950s storefronts.' The sign takes up about 300 square feet and is the largest three-dimensional sign in the downtown area, said Wood, who is reviewing the Pasquini's application.

The article also stated, in connection with Pasquini's request to the City of Louisville to retain the sign, that Tony Pasquini wanted "to be sensitive to the family and the community." This article is also attached as an appendix.

A *Daily Camera* article dated August 16, 2000 (also attached as an appendix) reported that the Louisville City Council decided in May 2000 to allow the requested change to the sign, rather than lose the sign completely. Pasquini's was allowed to retain the sign and put its own name inside to replace the name "Colacci's." Instead of one yellow star to dot the single "i" in Colacci's, the name "Pasquini's" had two yellow stars dotting the two letter "i's." The article stated that Melinda Pasquini noted that she felt that the sign was a landmark, and a Louisville councilman was quoted as explaining the decision by saying that "[t]he council felt the sign was a piece of downtown Louisville and the people wanted to continue that heritage."

Accompanying the article was this photo of the sign being updated with the Pasquini's name:



The Empire Lounge & Restaurant opened in 2008 and the writing on the neon sign was changed to say "The Empire Lounge." Echoing the original Colacci's sign and the Pasquini's sign, the dot on the "i" in "Empire" is represented as a star.

Owners of 816 Main since Colacci Family Ownership (1993 to present)

In 1993, Colacci's Restaurant sold 816 Main to Hunt Kitchens, operated by Jack Hunt. It continued to be operated as "Colacci's." In 1997, it was purchased by Eric and Gail Dixon, who also continued to operate it as "Colacci's" and with many of the same Italian dishes.

In 2000, the Pasquini family purchased 816 Main, and in 2005, ownership was transferred to Pasquini LLC. Pasquini's Restaurant opened in the building in 2000 and offered dishes such as pizza, calzones, pastas, and salads in a casual atmosphere. The decision by the City of Louisville to allow the sign to remain is described above.

In 2008, the Empire Lounge & Restaurant opened in the building. The current owner of record is Pasquini's LLC.

Appendices:

Daily Camera article, "Colacci's Open in New Location in Louisville," Aug. 19, 1955.

Daily Camera article, "Louisville Colacci's Sign May Stay," Mar. 9, 2000.

Daily Camera article, "A Sign of Change in Louisville," Aug. 16, 2000.

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

Colacci's Open In New Location In Louisville

The same popular food in completely different surroundings is now being offered by Tony Colacci of Louisville.

The new Colacci's is now fully open for business in the Boulder county community east of Boulder. Located on Main street about a block and a half north of the old site, the new restaurant is in entirely new surroundings and has a new "atmosphere." The personnel is the same, however, headed by Tony Colacci, and the menu is the same with spaghetti still the specialty of the house.

From the brick front, glass doors and minature sign which marks the entrance to the modern softly lighted interior with its comfortable booths, new tables and other fixtures and including the streamlined kitchen, Colacci's is new in location and decor but old in service and food. The "atmosphere" of the new restaurant even includes air conditioned atmosphere.

Tony Madonna Contractor

Aided by Tony Madonna general contractor, and Ludwig and Patterson, Denver equipment engineers and suppliers, Colacci has produced one of the outstanding restaurants in the area. Madonna designed the building around Colacci's ideas and Ludwig-Patterson's fixture plans and also designed and supervised the interior decoration.

The new restaurant is 125 feet long and averages 33 feet in width. Colacci's adjoining liquor store in the front and the kitchen in the rear narrow the width of the food service areas in these parts of the building. The restaurant can accommodate up to 160 persons at one time in parties ranging from singles to 40 persons.

The bar is in the center of the north wall of the building. Behind and above the bar is a piano where entertainment can be centered. Since the serving area is the widest in this area, three rows of booths are located south of the bar. Toward the front of the building are tables and more booths while toward the rear are additional tables which can be arranged for larger parties.

Decor Tones Of Brown

The entire restaurant area is decorated in light brown shades: carried out in naturally finished birch panels, the plastic-impregnated bar top and front, booth upholstery, wall covering and paint.

The acoustic tile ceiling has recessed white spot lights focused on major food serving areas and modern fixtures to provide colored lighting.

Half of the width of the rear portion of the building is devoted to the kitchen. Almost all the surface space in the cooking area is cooking equipment of some sort ranging from burners to huge grills.

Refrigerated storage for food and meats ready for cooking is built-in under the surface cooking units. One end of this area opens into the serving area and includes a counter for the preparation of trays and their delivery to waitresses.

Walk-In Refrigerator

The other end of the cooking area gives access to one of two walk-in refrigerators in the building. This one is used for the quantity storage of meat and other foods which are ready for serving. The other one in the basement is for storage of large sections of beef. Part of this kitchen refrigerator opens onto the dining area where butter, salads and other foods needing chilling are kept with sliding glass doors giving the waitresses easy access to these items.

Rotary Offering Fine Band Shell Program Monday

Exceptionally fine entertainment has been arranged by the Rotary Club for the program it is sponsoring Monday night in the band shell of Central Park in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce. The program, which starts at 8 o'clock, is free to the public.

Ray Smith and his popular square dancers from Central City have been secured for a full half-hour exhibition. These talented dancers entertain before and after each evening's presentation of the Central City opera season.

Close harmony will be sung by a favorite quartet composed of E. J. Hilty Jr., Larry Cline, Duane Eggleston and Kenny Stone, all 1955 graduates of Boulder high school.

An outstanding group of baton twirlers from the summer recreation music program will demonstrate their skills, and there will also be community singing led by Berton Coffin.

BB Pasquini's

Louisville 'Colacci's' sign may stay

New owners have submitted plan to keep sign, change name to Pasquini's

By Pam Regensberg 3-9-00

Camera Staff Writer

LOUISVILLE — Sally Colacci was born the same year her father built the large Colacci's restaurant sign on Main Street.

After growing up and laboring in the family's Italian restaurant, she has mixed feelings about the imminent change to the sign that has commanded a presence in downtown Louisville since 1955.

"My father actually designed the sign," said Sally Colacci, the youngest daughter of Anthony Colacci.

Under a plan submitted by the Pasquini family of Denver, the Louisville landmark would remain atop the restaurant at 816 Main St. The only change would be the name. Instead of "Colacci's" the sign would say "Pasquini's."

The Louisville Historical Commission on Wednesday suggested leaving the sign where it is.

"I kind of don't want to see it go," said Virginia Caranci, a member of the historical commission. "Once you take down those kinds of signs, everything is flush. You lose the downtown feel."

City officials haven't made up their minds about the sign.

"The sign is nonconforming from all aspects of the code," Paul Wood, city planning director, said. "But the downtown design handbook does

say it's important to recognize 1950s storefronts."

The sign takes up about 300 square feet and is the largest three-dimensional sign in the downtown area, said Wood, who is reviewing the Pasquinis' application.

The sign is supported by a large number seven, which is Anthony Colacci's lucky number. The martini glass — the apostrophe — represented the family's matriarch, Mary Colacci, who tended bar. The yellow beacon, which hasn't worked in years, was put there for an uncle who served in the U.S. Army.

"It has a lot of sentimental value," said Sally Colacci, who, with her father, opened Tony and Sal's in Longmont about eight years ago.

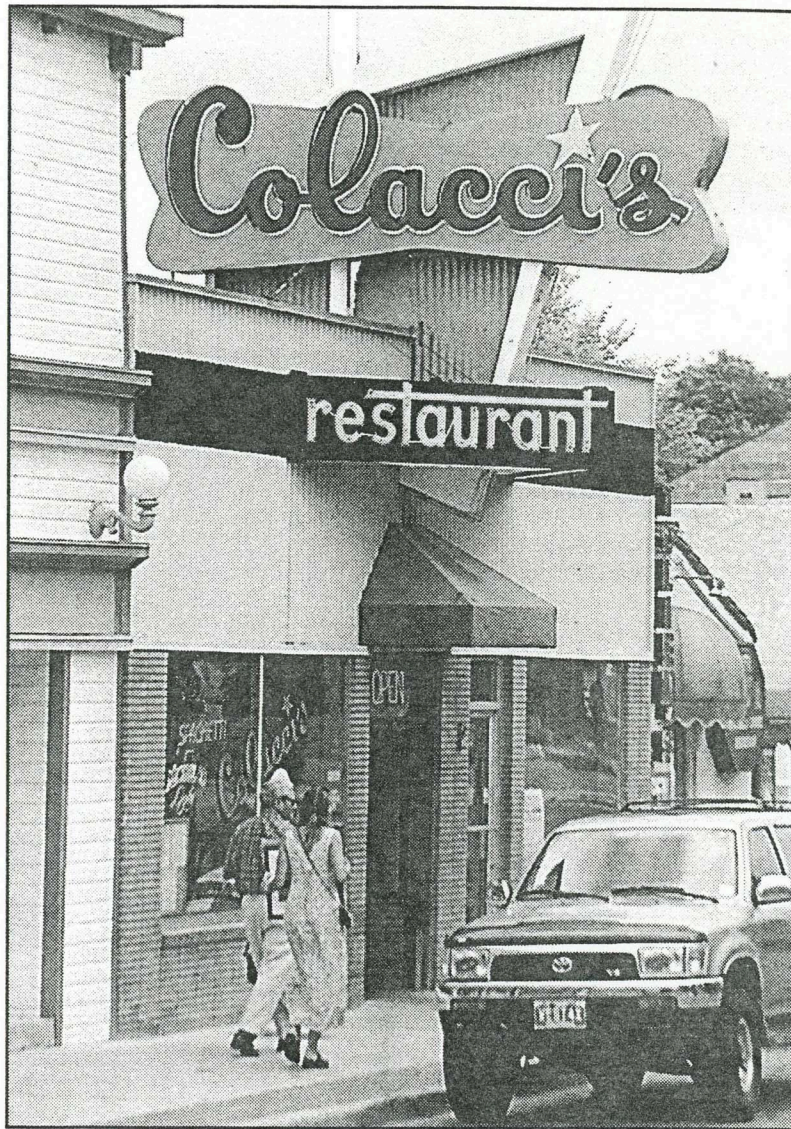
"It'll still be kind of neat to see the sign. The name will be different, but the memories will still be there."

Tony Pasquini said he wants to be sensitive to the family and the community. The Pasquinis own Pasquini's Pizzeria, a popular Denver restaurant on South Broadway. The Pasquinis bought the restaurant from Gail and Eric Dixon and hope to open their pizzeria later this month.

"There's a lot of sentimental value in the sign," Sally Colacci said. "But I wish the new owner a lot of luck."

Wood said he will pass the historical commission's comments on to the planning commission, which will discuss the sign Tuesday.

Contact Pam Regensberg at (303) 466-3636 or regensberg@thedailycamera.com.



The 'Colacci's' sign, a landmark in downtown Louisville since 1955, may undergo a name change as new owners take over the restaurant.

LANDMARK CHANGES NAMES



JON HATCH / Daily Camera

Alan Holt, left, and Mike Seabaugh examine the new ^{AB} Pasquini's sign Tuesday afternoon in Louisville. Ad Lite Signs is installing the new sign over the old Colacci's sign, a Louisville landmark.

A sign of change in Louisville

Colacci's sign on Main Street replaced with Pasquini's sign after 45 years

By Chris Barge

8-16-00

Camera Staff Writer

LOUISVILLE — It's over for Colacci's.

On Tuesday, workers replaced the Colacci's sign at 816 Main St. with a nearly identical sign bearing the name of the restaurant's latest owner — Pasquini's.

The other noticeable change to the sign that has commanded a presence in downtown Louisville

since 1955 is two yellow stars dotting the two "i"s in Pasquini's instead of one yellow star to dot the single "i" in Colacci's, owner Melinda Pasquini said.

The minor change took some major doing. Since its construction, city codes have been created to ban large signs downtown. The Colacci's sign took up about 300 square feet and was the largest three-dimensional sign in the downtown area. When Pasquini bought the building, the city required her to bring it to code.

Pasquini bought Colacci's Restaurant from Gail and Eric Dixon this year.

"It was way against city code,"

Pasquini said of the sign. "But it's a landmark. We wanted to keep it because it's cool and it has so much history."

Because the downtown design handbook says it's important to recognize 1950s storefronts, the City Council decided in May to allow the change, rather than lose the sign completely.

"The council felt the sign was a piece of downtown Louisville and the people wanted to continue that heritage," Councilman Jay Keany said. "And the building is really nothing without the sign."

Sally Colacci's father, Anthony Colacci, built the large Colacci's restaurant sign.

The sign is supported by a large

number seven, which is Anthony Colacci's lucky number. The martini glass — the apostrophe — represented the family's matriarch, Mary Colacci, who tended bar. The yellow beacon, which hasn't worked in years, was put there for an uncle who served in the Army.

The new marquis above the old restaurant is the sign of another family attempting to establish its own Louisville tradition.

The Pasquini's own two Pasquini's Pizzerias in Denver. The original restaurant opened 14 years ago, when Melinda was 12 years old.

Contact Chris Barge at (303) 466-3636 ext. 128 or bargec@thedailycamera.com.