



## 927 Main St. History

**Legal Description:** South 1/2 Lot 2, Block 5, Original Louisville

**Year of Construction:** circa 1900; exact year of construction not known at this time

**Previous Addresses of this Property:** 432 Second Street (Second being the former name of Main Street); 436 Main; 422 Main (under Louisville's old address system that ended in the late 1930s); 925 Main; 921 Main; 929 Main

**Summary:** William Pearson, a Scotsman, had a jeweler and watchmaker business at this location in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and the Pearson family also lived there. From the early 1920s until the 1930s, the building was used for a few different Italian groceries and was also a residence. For many years from the 1950s to the 1990s, a laundromat was located at 927 Main.

### Earliest Ownership; Date of Construction

The Boulder County Assessor gives two different dates for when this building might have been constructed. The County Assessor card for 927 Main, which dates from 1948, states that it was constructed in 1900, while the County website indicates that it was constructed in 1925. The County has sometimes been found to be in error with respect to the construction dates of historic buildings in Louisville. It is very possible that the 1900 date was an estimate by the County and that the 1925 date was actually the date of a remodel. The exact year of construction is not known at this time.

Looking back at the earliest ownership of this property, Louis Nawatny sold Lot 2 to Thomas Knight in 1879, one year after the establishment of Louisville in 1878. John Harris purchased it in 1880. The identities of the owners between 1880 and 1885 could not be located. In 1885, Henry Cope acquired the property through a public treasurer's deed. In 1890, Henry Cope sold Lot 2 to Pascal James and Pietro James, who were Italian-born brothers (the original name being DiGiacomo) who were among the first

people of Italian heritage to own real property in Louisville. Ownership of the property was then conveyed to Mary James in 1895.

The Sanborn fire insurance map for 1893 shows a building in this location on the south half of Lot 2, Block 5 of Original Louisville, though the exact layout of the entire building is not shown on this map because it is cut off on the north side:



The Sanborn fire insurance map for 1900 shows a similarly shaped building on Lot 2, although as with the 1893 map, it comes up against the top of the map and may go beyond just the south half of the lot:



The third and last Sanborn fire insurance map for Louisville, from 1908, shows a different layout, with two separate buildings being indicated on the south half of Lot 2:



The Drumm's Wall Map of Louisville, dated 1909, is similar to the 1908 Sanborn map in that it also shows two separate buildings, one in front of the other, on the south half of Lot 2:

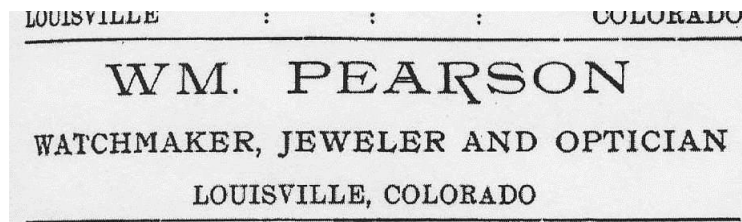


These somewhat crude building outlines suggest that in at least 1908 and 1909, there were two small buildings, one in front of the other, at this location. Since it appears that there were both a jewelry business and the Pearson residence at 927 Main at that time, it is possible that the store was primarily in the front and the residence consisted primarily of the building behind. If so, the buildings were clearly remodeled at some point, as there is just one main structure at 927 Main today. An examination of the building itself could reveal whether the current building is made up of two structures that were attached to one another. Since the County website indicates the year 1925 as a significant date in the history of the building, perhaps it was remodeled that year.

### **William Pearson Ownership, 1896-1918**

William Pearson purchased the south half of Lot 2, Block 5 from Mary James in 1896 and used it for his jewelry and watchmaker business. The 1896 directory for Louisville shows that he was already in business in 1896, and he did not own any other real property in Louisville, so it seems very likely that his business was at this location (though it is unclear whether the building that was there in 1896 is the same as the current building).

The 1903 Louisville directory shows that Pearson was also an “oculist,” or eye specialist, in addition to having a jewelry business, and the 1909 directory lists him as also being an “optician.” This is probably an indication that he also sold eyeglasses. The following is an advertisement for Pearson’s business from the 1909 Louisville directory:



William, his wife Mary, and their daughter, Mamie, also resided at 927 Main. William had been born in Scotland in 1840, while Mary had been born in England in 1841. They married in about 1881 and came to the U.S. Their only child, Mamie, was born in 1883. The federal census records for both 1900 and 1910 show the Pearsons to be living at what is very likely this location.

Mamie Pearson became a teacher in the Louisville school and continued to live at home. In circa 1915, she married Isaac Vogan.

William Pearson continued to work as a jeweler at 927 Main until he was about 76 years old, as the 1916 directory shows that he was still working and living at 927 Main. The 1918 directory, however, lists only his residence and not a business as being at what is today 927 Main. The 1920 census shows William and Mary Pearson moved away from

Louisville to join their daughter, Mamie, her husband, and her young daughter at their home in Pueblo, Colorado

### **James and Frona Wardle Ownership, 1918-1920**

In 1918, James and Frona Wardle purchased the property at today's 927 Main from William Pearson. Whether they used it as a business, a residence, or both is not known.

### **Emilio Staffieri Ownership, 1920-1923**

In 1920, Emilio Staffieri purchased 927 Main. The 1921 directory shows that he and his wife, Mary, were the first of several people of Italian heritage to operate a grocery store on the property. They had been born in Italy and were both in their thirties.

### **Luigia Ferrari Ownership, 1923**

In 1923, Luigia (also called Louisa) Ferrari of Louisville purchased the property and operated a grocery store there for a short time. She had recently been widowed. She had been born in Italy in about 1878 and was about 45 years old.

### **Biella Family Ownership, 1923-1946**

In 1923, Marietta (also called Mary) Biella purchased 927 Main from Luigia Ferrari. Marietta and her husband, Joe Biella, had emigrated from Italy in 1900 and came to Louisville in 1903. They had three daughters: Lela (born 1900), Josephine (born 1903), and Inez (born 1905). The following photo from the collection of the Louisville Historical Museum shows the family in about 1912:



The 1926 Louisville directory shows that Joe and Marietta Biella started a grocery store at 927 Main and lived there with their daughter, Inez. Marietta Biella then died in 1926. The property passed to her estate and their daughters, who conveyed it to their father, Joe Biella. Joe continued to operate a grocery store in the building and also resided there with his daughter, Inez, who helped in the store.

The next image shows the advertisement for Joe Biella's store that appears on the canvas stage curtain for the Rex Theatre. It is one of twenty-two advertisements for downtown Louisville businesses that appear on the curtain, which dates from 1927-28.



Joe's grandson, Vernon Zurick, who was born in 1925 and now lives in Erie, recalls his grandfather operating the store at 927 Main in the early 1930s and remembers sitting on the front step of the store as a young boy.

The following undated photo is believed to date from roughly around this period (or earlier, judging by the automobiles) and is believed to show 927 Main on the right:



Joe Biella married Michelina ("Lena") Tomeo, a widow, before 1936. They lived at 927 Main, and may or may not have operated a grocery store together. (The lack of references to the store in directories from the mid-1930s on suggests that the Depression may have led to the scaling back or closure of the store.) In 1938, Joe Biella transferred ownership of the property back to his daughters, and continued to reside

there with his second wife, Lena for several more years. Joseph Biella passed away in 1945. At around that time, Lena Tomeo Biella began to reside elsewhere in Louisville.

The following photo shows 927 Main in circa 1943-44. This is a screen capture from Louisville's World War II film showing servicemen when they were home on leave, "Our Boys and Girls in the Armed Forces, 1943-44." Hilton Cable is shown walking in front of his family's home at 932 Main, and 927 Main is in the background:

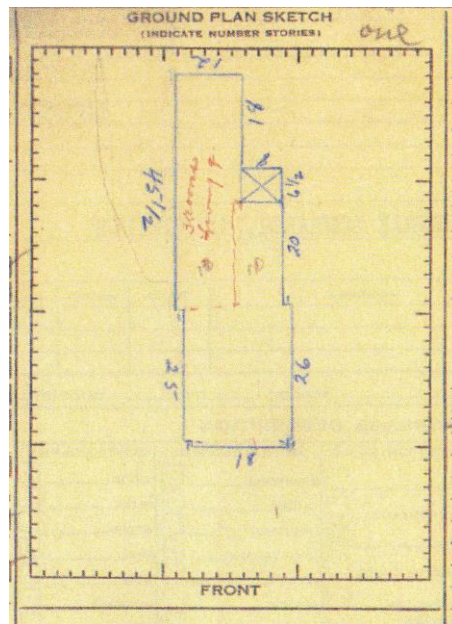


### **Jennie Lombardi Ownership, 1946-1965**

In 1946, following the death of their father, Joe Biella, the three Biella daughters (Lela Zurick, Josephine Stevens, and Inez Paprocki) sold 927 Main to Jennie Lombardi. She lived from 1896 to 1985. It was during her ownership that the store began to be operated as a laundromat, as the 1951 directory shows the "Louisville Cleaners" at "929" Main operated by Merrill and Betty Kvaall. They also lived in the building. Such an establishment certainly would have met a need in Louisville, where many people still lived modestly and may not have had the funds or the space for laundry appliances in their typically small homes.

The following images are from the 1948 County Assessor card for this property, at the time of the ownership by Jennie Lombardi, and show the building in 1948 followed by the image of the ground layout.





This photo was taken in circa 1950 and looks south on Main Street, with 927 Main on the right:



The following photo dates from 1952 and shows Patricia Cable (Lester) in front of her grandmother's house at 932 Main, looking east towards 927 Main:



In 1953, the building was still owned by Jennie Lombardi, and it was still called the Louisville Cleaners, but it was now operated by William F. Bentley.

#### **William and Katherine Prime Ownership, 1965-1973**

In 1965, William and Katherine Prime purchased 927 Main. William Prime passed away in 1966 and the property continued to be owned by Katherine Prime. It is not known for certain whether the building was operated as a laundromat during their ownership (and if so, what the business was called).

#### **Teddy & Dorothy Putnam Ownership, 1973-1980**

Teddy and Dorothy Putnam, who purchased 927 Main in 1973, operated a laundromat in the building. According to the 1974 directory, it was called "Katie's Laundromat." By 1977, the name had been changed to "Mom & Pop's Laundromat." In 1978, it was called "Mom & Pop's Speedwash." In 1979, Mountain High Construction, operated by Rory Goscha, was a second business listed for 927 Main in addition to Mom & Pop's Laundromat.

The following photo, made of three photos taken from different views and attached together, shows 927 Main in 1978:





The following photo shows 927 Main in the 1970s or 1980s:



### **Alton & Connie Rucker Ownership, 1980-1995**

In 1980, Alton and Connie Rucker purchased 927 Main. Directories show that they operated a laundromat business called Mom & Pop's Laundromat into the 1990s.

### **Kenneth Heusman Ownership, 1995-1998**

Kenneth Heusman owned the building for three years between 1995 and 1998.

### **Current Ownership, 1998-Present**

Mark and Jacquelyn Zaremba purchased 927 Main in 1998. Starting that year, the building was the location for their advertising and graphic design business, Zaremba Visual Communications, now called Zaremba Graphic + Web Solutions.

### **Sources**

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