

A Tour of Main Street: #3700 – Finley’s Variety Store - Part 3 By Gordon Youngman and Aaron Fernaays

Editor’s Note: Our tour of the east side of Main Street continues from our last issue. The building at #3700 was the site of many businesses, eventually Walworth Hardware. Part 3 features ownership by Joe Finley. Thank you to Gordon Youngman and his grandson, Aaron Fernaays, for sharing their memories and for the time they spent researching and documenting the information about the stores located at 3698 and 3700 Main Street.

The following are excerpts from information documented by Gordon in March 2000:



On December 4, 1944, Joe Finley purchased the store from Irvin and Anna Salyerds and the Post Office was moved to Buckley’s store to the south. Joe put in a line of dry goods – small and large appliances, linoleum runs, paint, school supplies, candy, ice cream, etc. Soon afterwards Joe moved the ice cream, candy and patent medicines to the little store next to the Masonic Temple on the west side of Main Street.

**(Left) 1944: Finley’s Variety Store.
Photo courtesy: Gordon Youngman.**



In 1948 Joe sold the dry goods store to Norman Hulbert and continued on with just the little store. After two years Norm couldn’t make a go of the dry goods store and let it go back to Joe. In April 1949 I purchased the ice cream store from Joe, borrowing \$25.00 from my mother for change in the register, agreeing to pay Joe \$25 a month for the stock and equipment, and paying Dewitt Tuttle \$15 a month rent. Meanwhile, the dry goods store on the east side of Main Street stayed empty after Mr. Hulbert closed out the stock.

(Left) Mid 1940’s: Finley’s Variety Store on the left and Buckley’s Hardware and Grocery on the right. Attached to the post at the right above the car is a sign that reads “Town Clerk.” Jean Buckley was the town clerk. Note Buckley’s Esso sign and gas pump. Photo courtesy of Gordon Youngman.



In November 1950 I decided to move my ice cream business into Joe’s empty store and also sell dry goods. My wife Katie and I moved into the apartment above the store so for \$65.00 a month we had a store and living quarters. We just got the business going at the end of 1951 when I was drafted to serve in the Korean War and I was given 30 days to get rid of the business.

Joe and Lorraine Finley agreed to purchase my inventory and operate the store until I returned. After serving two years in the Army Counter Intelligence Corp, I returned to Walworth. Joe and I inventoried the merchandise and I was back in business.

**(Left) Mid 1940’s: Joe and Lorraine Finley.
WHS file photo.**



At the time Joe purchased the store from Mr. Salyerds in 1944, ownership of the house to the north was separated from the store property and sold to Milton and Charlotte Bradshaw. In 1955 the Bradshaws sold the house to Elton and Anna May and Katie and I purchased the house in 1958. In 1963 we purchased the store from Joe so the two properties were back under the same owners.

**(Left) 1944: Joe Finley on steps of his variety store.
Youngster to the left is Harvey Curran.
Photo courtesy of Gordon Youngman.**

(To Be Continued: Part 4 – Youngman’s Variety Store)