

A Tour of Main Street: #3700 – Youngman’s Variety Store - Part 4 By Gordon Youngman

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. Part 4 features ownership by Gordon and Katie Youngman. Thank you to Gordon 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.

(All photos courtesy of Gordon Youngman)

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

In 1950 Katie and I rented the variety store from Joe and Lorraine Finley and I moved my ice cream business from the “little store” across the road. In 1963 we purchased the building from the Finleys. By 1965 we had expanded the inventory to a point where we needed more retail space so an addition was added on the north side and back of the store to double the floor space. This made it possible not only to add to the original inventory but to offer new items. Doing business under Youngman’s Variety Store we carried such items as all types of dry goods including clothing, footwear, sewing accessories, toys, jewelry, patent drugs and drug sundries, school supplies, greeting cards, records, and candy.



1965: Before the addition to the north and back of the store.



1965: Gordon supervising the remodeling project.

Aaron Fernaays, Gordon’s and Katie’s grandson, said “The biggest highlight of this store was the soda fountain. Customers could stop by for a Coke or a milkshake and relax for a while. Youngman’s Variety became a social place for people. Most of their customers were regulars that they knew well. Kids also liked the store because they could pick up some candy or a comic book.” The soda fountain was removed in 1978.



1977-78: On the right Youngman’s Variety/ on the left, Walworth Hardware.



After the addition to the north and back of store.



I bought the Walworth Hardware store, the former Knights of the Macabees (K.O.T.M.) building to the south of the variety store, from the estate of Jack Wick in 1972. I had a walkway built between the Walworth Hardware store on the south and Youngman’s Variety Store on the north. This made it easy for customers to visit each side of the store. I kept both stores the same. Jack’s former building was still a hardware store and my business remained a variety store. Although both stores were now under the same ownership, they were run as separate stores.

To Be Continued: Part 5 – Walworth Hardware