

HOTEL LESLIE (1910-1921)

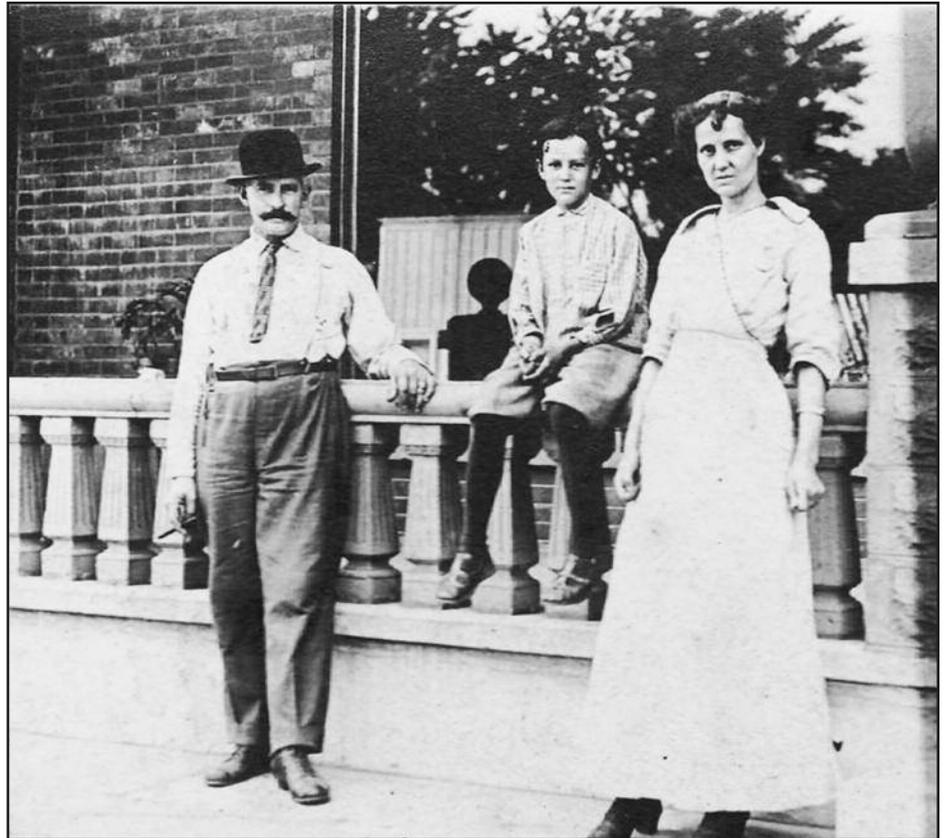
1206 Fourth Street

By Barbara Mask

The red brick building at 1206 4th Street once had the address of Lincoln Way. Fulton's Main Street during the 1920s and 1930s used the Lincoln Way name for its addresses; sometimes spelled Lincolnway. The 1913 Lincoln Highway entered our city at the east end of 15th Avenue and turned north on 4th Street to 10th Avenue. Thousands of travelers passed by 1206 and the porch, constructed in the same year the Lincoln Highway was organized, remained a popular place to watch automobiles, filled with tourists, pass by. The porch remains a popular place to still watch downtown activities; such as festivals and parades.

There appears to have been a building on this property prior to 1913 because L. E. Matthews was a proprietor here in 1896-98 before he was elected as a Whiteside County official. Research has revealed that the owner, Claus Bruins, a retired farmer is the one responsible for the building named, THE BRUINS, still evident today, in concrete near the top of the east side.

Claus Bruins rebuilt the hotel/boarding house in April 1913; one century ago. The current structure remains similar to the improvements made in 1913. The detailed plan was reported in the Fulton Journal on April 11, 1913. "The contract was awarded to A. W. Mead by the owner, Claus Bruins, for an addition and extensive improvements. The proposed plans were for the building to have a forty-seven-foot frontage on Fourth Street. It will be two stories high, the front built of red pressed brick. The addition on the south will be twenty-four feet by thirty feet deep. The frame part on the rear will be torn down and a brick structure the same size, two stories high, will be built adjoining the main building. The front will have two plate glass windows and a basement room for a barber shop. There will be two bath rooms. The entire building will be heated by steam and will have the latest conveniences. The front of the present building is rather old-fashioned and the brick work will be removed and a modern pressed brick front with plate glass show windows will be put in place. The blue prints show a handsome front and when completed it will be a fine hotel. This will be a valuable addition to the business blocks on Fourth Street," according to that article.



Hotel Leslie in August 1913 with Leslie family members



THE BRUINS was built in 1913 and its exterior has the same appearance today in 2013. The vintage photo above taken of the Leslie family in August 1913 was on the front porch. The concrete balustrade is still intact. The plate-glass windows installed in 1913 have been replaced with sets of three individual ones and topped with stained-glass transom windows. Currently, the 4-unit apartment building is owned by Linda and Robert North.

The wedding of Clarence Leslie and Marie Gilbert (Jacqueline Leslie Pollard's parents) took place here on March 11, 1920. His father, William S. Leslie was the proprietor of the 'Leslie Hotel and Rooming House.' (See information at bottom of the page.) The newspaper announcement stated that the love affair was the outgrowth of the bride's visiting at the Leslie Hotel in Fulton and a Dr. Tilton's home in Clinton, Iowa. "The happy couple will make their home at Fulton."

This writer could not determine when or who converted the hotel/boarding house into apartments, but a well-known Fulton couple, Louise and Harold Klooster, lived there during the first year of their marriage in 1952-53. They lived in the south apartment with laundry facilities in the basement. Other residents who called 1206 4th Street their home for many years were Waneta Barsema and Winnie Loftus. Waneta lived in the south apartment for 14 years and lived there when a fire occurred in an upper apartment in June, 2004. The 18-inch walls (1913 rebuild actually created two buildings) prevented damage into the other apartments. Another long-term resident, Winnie Loftus, lived in the north apartment. Her residence was known by all the downtown cats whom she faithfully fed on a daily basis.

At an unknown date, the plate-glass windows installed a hundred years ago were replaced with a set of three windows in both the north and south side apartments. The stain-glass transoms are still attractive and intact in both apartments that are fronted on 4th Street.

The Tucker Inn
On the Lincoln Highway
FULTON, ILLINOIS
 Big Chicken Dinner served every Sunday—60c.
 Modern, and re-furnished rooms.
 Special rates for day or weekly boarders, also all transients and tourists.
W. M. TUCKER, Prop.

March 3, 1911

LESLIE'S NEW HOTEL
AND ROOMING HOUSE
 Finch building—Base St. near Wall St. **FULTON, ILL.**
 Entire building newly and neatly furnished—Board by day or week—Meals served at any hour during the day.
 Twelve well ventilated sleeping rooms: Terms reasonable.
WILLIAM LESLIE, Proprietor

January 23, 1925

HOTEL LESLIE
1206 4TH STREET (LINCOLN WAY)
OWNERS:
 The property ownership changed many times before Oliver Finch purchased it.
1912—O. E. Finch sold to Jacob Musk \$2600 (included a fine auto)
1913—April 11 & 18—improvement plans detailed—Jacob Musk to Claus Bruins \$3000 (rebuilt in 1913 by Bruins) paid sewer tax and paving levy
1915—July 23--Claus Bruins to Jacob Musk (\$6000)
1915—November 9—Jacob Musk to Charles Voss \$6200 (part payment 24 acres of land near the bluffs for \$2000). His sons, Charles C. and George, inherit it upon his death. They sold it to Homer Miller in 1929.
1930—Amelia Miller inherits the property and owns it for 17 years.
1947—John Isenhardt & heirs
1976—Isenhardt heirs sold it to George and Loretta Wiebenga.
1994—current owners--Bob and Linda North purchase property from George and Loretta Wiebenga

HOTEL LESLIE PROPRIETORS:

L. E. Mathews
 1896-1898
 William S. Leslie
 1910-1921

1-1-22 Peter Kopenga 1 year
 Hotel Fulton paid \$1400 for equipment

George Goff and Roy Jamison
 Changed name to Hotel Fulton from Hotel Bruins
 Brief ownership 1921-1922

1-23-23 W. M. Tucker
 Tucker Inn
 Chicken dinner 75 cents
 5-15-25: Chicken dinner 60cents
 6-9-25: Kiwanis met there
 Bobby Toole was the program



Leslie-Libert
 At the Leslie Hotel at Fulton, Ill., on Thursday, March 11, 1920, Mr. Clarence Leslie of Fulton Ill., and Miss Marie Gilbert of Kilbourne, Iowa, were united in marriage, the double ring service being used by Rev. E. B. Morton of Gilson, Ill., a cousin of the bridegroom. The bride is a popular young lady of Kilbourne. The love affair was the outgrowth of the bride's visiting at the Dr. Tilton home at Clinton, and at the Leslie Hotel at Fulton. The groom is highly spoken of by his neighbors. The happy couple will make their home at Fulton, and the best wishes of many friends will go with them.

Jacqueline Leslie Pollard spent several years of her childhood living on Fulton's Fourth Street. Her grandfather, William S. Leslie, was the proprietor of the Hotel Leslie for eleven years (1910-1921). Her mother and father were married in the Hotel (See wedding announcement right). Later, her grandfather purchased a pool hall at 1109 4th Street and the family lived in the upstairs apartment. She graduated from Fulton High School in 1939 and recently she and other classmates met to discuss their recollections of classmate, Allen Wiersema, who was one of Fulton's WWII Fallen Heroes.