

The History of the Site of Manny's Too

If the Cossmans could see their corner today, I think they would be impressed with what the Castro family has accomplished on their corner.

COSSMAN: THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH

Peter H. Cossman came to Fulton in 1869 and opened a blacksmith and machine shop in a building on the northeast corner of 11th Avenue and 3rd Street. Nicholas Nelson had opened a smithy there in 1866 after he purchased the land from Henry Fellows; an early proprietor. Cossman was a skilled mechanic having once worked in the McCormick Reaper plant in Chicago, IL. He invented (unfortunately, not patented) a machine for cutting a flat thread for screws which was adapted for making a variety of screws and presses. He purchased part of the property in 1872 and the other half in 1874. In 1875, he invented a gun (canon-type) that he claimed would send a ball 250 yards. In an interesting personal advertisement reported in an 1874 Fulton Journal, Cossman was "offering a four-month class in German with a guarantee that at the conclusion the student could not only read but speak the foreign language freely." No follow-up testimonials were ever noted so one wonders how many signed up or successfully completed the class.

Henry Hubert Cossman, Sr. continued the smithy business at this location when he purchased the shop and lot from his father in November, 1908. He was severely injured while shoeing a horse. "He was struck in the breast a vicious blow by the horse's foot." A physician was called to the home to treat the ribs and the news item stated, "the kick would have put a weaker man down and out for good." Henry was in partnership with his son, Louis, for a few years, but the partnership was dissolved in 1919 and Henry became the sole owner.

The two-story brick building, currently the east section of 'Manny's, Too,' was erected in 1914 by H. H. Cossman, Jr. His blacksmith shop was located west of the new building and on the corner lot which he mortgaged with the Fulton State Bank to erect the new brick building. It replaced a wooden-frame residence formerly occupied by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Cossman. The Fulton Journal reported that the new building would be, "thirty by forty-eight feet with solid brick walls. There will be a basement under the entire building. Mr. Cossman has entered into an agreement with George E. Harms and others for a lease of the new building for a period of sixteen months." Harms had a saloon in the New Senate Building on the northwest corner of 3rd Street and 10th Avenue (current site of the Brinkman Storage Building) and moved his business to this location and, thus, began a span of history of a tavern-type of business. (Note: the word, 'saloon,' was used prior to the National Prohibition Act of 1918. After the repeal in 1933, tavern became the common usage for establishments selling liquor.) At one time, Aurelia Hassler operated a beauty shop here using her first name as the business name. Mr. and Mrs. Donald Murray rented the upstairs apartment from Henry Cossman when they first arrived in Fulton in 1946.

KANE'S TAVERN

George Birt and Leland (Chris) Kane purchased the brick building in 1947. According to an account of the history of the building in the Fulton Journal, the lower level of the building stood vacant for many years prior to the Birt/Kane purchase. A Cossman presence was still in place as Gloria Cossman, daughter of Henry Cossman, Jr. was married to George Birt. They operated a tavern as partners for seven years and until George died. Kane became the sole owner and continued the business as Kane's Tavern until 1969 when Gene Field purchased it. Marialice Bush and Chris Kane were married in 1935. Chris Kane was employed by her father, Burnie Bush, owner of Bush's Café, at the time of their marriage. Both were graduates of Fulton High School. The Chris Kane family moved in 1956 and lived in the upstairs apartment for many years.



Henry Hubert Cossman Jr. is shown in the Cossman Blacksmith Shop. He is the grandfather of current Fulton residents Jerry Cossman and Phyllis Cossman Jones.



Originally Birt & Kane, this business was here 1947-1969.

GENE'S PLACE

Gene Field purchased the east building and lot from Leland (Chris) Kane in May 1969 and operated a restaurant and tavern for over 26 years. His wife, Becky, was the cook and a full menu was offered. A specialty was the Italian Beef Sandwich. In 1976, a new one-story building to the west was added on to the two-story, brick building. The former bar room was remodeled into a family dining room and named the 'Steamer Room.' The 1976 Fulton High School State Champion Football Team was the first to be served dinner in the newly-designated room. Many of us can recall the family-night spaghetti dinners available on Wednesdays. The Gene Field family lived in the upstairs apartment for 22 years. Field purchased the small, white house from Andy Anderson across the street on the south side of 11th Avenue in 1972. The Fulton Fire Protection District burned it to make room for a parking lot which currently remains there and is still owned by Gene Field.



West wing erected in 1976 by Gene Field. The bay window on the west side, a popular gathering spot, has been replaced with a video gaming area.

MANNY'S TOO

Manny Castro, owner of Manny's Pizza Parlor in Savanna, IL, purchased the business and property from Gene Field in November, 1995 and opened Manny's Too. The reputation of a unique and delicious pizza already established springboarded the new business here in Fulton. The restaurant/tavern operation by the Castro family continues to enjoy success. In 2007, the Castro family purchased a storage building and body shop and the lots owned by several Fulton residents, to the north of their building. Back in 1924, the City leased this parking area for hitching up horses. "Since the advent of automobiles, hitching posts have been removed from the principal streets around the business portion of the city and this arrangement will furnish a much needed convenience to all." Later, it was owned and used for storage by the A. D. Mitchell Grocery Store and rented for storage by B & B Hardware Store. They were razed to make room for Manny's Too expansion and new development of a banquet room in 2008.

Celebration last week focused on the newly-remodeled dining and bar rooms to create the same appearance and atmosphere found in the banquet room. Everyone agrees the attractive setting enhances the dining experience. The Cossman Blacksmith Shop, Gene's Place, Kane's Tavern and now Manny's Too have all continued in the long tradition of quality service on this corner of Fulton City.

Article Sources: Jerry Cossman, Gene Field, John Wierema, Fulton Journ



WELCOME TO MANNY'S TOO!

The logos on the door handles are among the many personal touches in the new renovation.