

MANSFIELD MEMORIES: Saying goodbye to Sannie's - again

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Local history aficionados are taking note of what appears to be the imminent demolition of a genuine Mansfield landmark: the former Sannie's clothing store of North Main Street.



The Billings Building, once widely known as the A&P grocery store, dates to the early 1900s. In the 1970s the location was a Cumberland Farms store, and later became the Fabric Care Center. [Courtesy/Mansfield Historical Society]

Sannie's was founded by the four Farinella brothers: Santino (Sannie), Charles, Anthony and Frank. Initially Sannie's occupied the southerly part of the building, which was once three stories high. Sannie's purchased the Wasserman Block in 1958 and expanded the store all the way to Thomas Street. Shoppers came from all over the area to the store "Where Mansfield Styles Begin." Decades of children recall doing their back-to-school shopping at Sannie's. Others reminisce about the unusual ramp that separated the

original store from the newer section below. And many fondly remember the tall exterior “Sannie’s” sign that became a local landmark.

Business boomed at Sannie’s in the second half of the 20th century. But as time went by the Farinellas reached retirement age, malls had become the “place” to shop, and in 1992 Sannie’s closed its doors. The building was sold and divided into retail space in the style of a mini-mall. It was anchored by a breakfast restaurant at the corner of North Main and Thomas Streets, known over the years as the Bagel Train, Devon’s Place, Driscoll’s, Aunt Aleda’s and the Looking Glass Café. In the 1990s Knapp Video offered VHS movie rentals at the southerly end of the building. Colonial Insurance later occupied that space.



Also slated to come down is the Billings Building of Thomas Street, once widely known as the A&P grocery store, and better known in recent years as the Fabric Care Center. [Courtesy/Mansfield Historical Society]

Also slated to come down is the Billings Building of Thomas Street, once widely known as the A&P grocery store, and better known in recent years as the Fabric Care Center. That building dates to the early 1900s. In the 1970s the location was a Cumberland Farms store, and later became the Fabric Care Center, a combination laundromat and dry cleaner.

In between Sannie’s and the Billings Building was the Spaulding house, a large homestead that once belonged to jewelry manufacturer Doliver Spaulding. The Spaulding house was moved twice. Originally located at the corner of North Main and Thomas (then Chauncy) Street, it was moved a few hundred feet west up Thomas Street next to the Billings Building. The home was moved again on Jan. 21, 1994, from Thomas Street to 80 Pratt St. where it still stands today. The Mansfield Bike Shop was between Sannie’s and the Spaulding house, which later became Sannie’s Little World and featured children’s clothing.

That busy corner has seen a lot of traffic and a lot of change over the years. But to those who lived in Mansfield in the second half of the 20th century, it will always be where Sannie’s once stood.

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