

Bert's Market

by Mel Montemerlo
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Hubert F. "Bert" Nussbaum, was the proprietor of Bert's Market. He was born in Buffalo, NY, the son of Norman and Lorraine (Boyle) Nussbaum. Bert and his wife, Ruth (maiden name - Lugauskas) had two sons, James and Robert, and a daughter, Noreen.

Bert's Market served good fresh food. He went to Barberi's Home Style Market each morning to get fresh bread, rolls and other goodies. He was his own butcher. He and his wife, Ruth, made their own German potato salad. He carried a wide variety of groceries and household needs. He sold beer, soda, milk, ice cream, etc. Of course, he had variety of penny candy for the children. He carried products of the Sweet Life Co., whose plant was behind Hood's Ice Cream plant in Suffield.

Like the other small Markets of Windsor Locks in the 1900s, Bert's Market was a forerunner of the Seven-Eleven convenience store. Like Johnny Cappa's Market and Aldo Satirana's Oak Street market, Bert had a delivery service. It is easy to forget that back in the 1950s, not every family had a car. Like the other neighborhood markets, Bert hired local boys to work in his store. One of them was James Hanley, who has fond memories of his job at Bert's.



Bert's Market, North Street, near Suffield Street

Joe Marinone owned the land that Bert's Market was on. He bought it from Joe Balboni, who had been operating Balboni's Market there. Bert got a 25 year lease on the property and operated his market there from 1947 to Dec. 31, 1972, when his lease ran out. However, Bert was not ready for retirement at that time. He worked at Macaluso's Market on Turnpike Road until his new business, Bert's Spirit Shoppe, was

ready for business. It was and still is on the corner of North Street and Turnpike Road. Bert and his wife, Ruth, worked together at his new store, as they had for more than two decades at Bert's Market. As of this writing (2016), Bert's Spirit Shoppe is still in alive and well and being operated by Bert's son, Jimmy. See the photo of Bert's Spirit Shoppe.



Bert's Spirit Shpppe, North St and Route

During World War II, Bert was in the Army, where he was a Supply Sergeant at Bradley Field. His wife, Ruth, also worked for the 6th Army Supply Office at the military airfield in Windsor Locks. However, he met Ruth one day while he was hitchhiking to a USO club dance in town. She stopped to pick him up. Getting into the car, he tripped and fell into puddle by a sewer drain on the curb. Later, at the dance, he asked her to dance. His opening line was: "I'm the one who fell for you earlier today".

One day, Lt. Eugene M. Bradley was in Bert's office when he was a supply sergeant with the 6th Army Air Corps supply office at the air field, just hours before he went on the training flight in which he crashed and died. The airfield was named Bradley Field after him.

Bert was an active member of Riverside Council #26 of the Knights of Columbus, a commander of the Gensi-Viola Post #36 of the American Legion. He was also a commander of the Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 17-2. He was one of the original drivers of the Windsor Locks ambulance.

Bert was a successful Windsor Locks entrepreneur, a husband, a father, a veteran, and a community leader.

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Bert Nussbaum