

## **Dr. Joseph A Coogan(1849 - 1933): Physician and Businessman** by Mel Montemerlo

Dr. Joseph A. Coogan was one of the earliest medical doctors in Windsor Locks. He was also a business man and a community leader. At the turn of the 20th Century, there were fifteen “blocks” built along Main Street. A “Block” was a multi-purpose commercial building. That means it had some combination of stores, factories, hotels, rooming houses, and professional offices. Dr. Coogan was the owner of the southernmost of those 15 blocks. It was on the South corner of Main and State Streets. It was earlier known as “Brown’s Hall”. Here is an early photo of the Coogan block in which you can see the stores on the street level.



*The Coogan Block, corner of State St & Main St.*

Dr. Joseph A. Coogan was an extraordinarily accomplished man. He had a wide background for a small town doctor. He went to college at Holy Cross and Fordham, and received medical training at Bellevue medical college. He had travelled widely through Europe. Before settling in Windsor Locks, he had an office in Hartford for twelve years, and he had practiced medicine in Los Angeles. See the portrait of Dr. Coogan.



*Dr. Joseph A. Coogan  
Dean of Physicians of  
Hartford County, CT*

According to the Springfield Republican newspaper of March 23, 1930, "Dr. Coogan is a picturesque survival of the old type of family physician. .... In spite of his years, he is an energetic practitioner, going daily about his calls, for his practice is still large, though he commandeers a chauffeur to drive him on his rounds. He is known for the accuracy and range of his memory. .... Although there are four other physicians in town, Dr. Coogan is the dean, and he is ranked highly as a consultant.... Dr. Coogan was born in Windsor Locks. .... His father and mother came from Ireland in 1844. He lives with his wife and daughter in rooms over his offices. He has practiced in Windsor Locks for the past 40 years, returning there after a severe attack of pneumonia during his practice in Los Angeles, California. .... For many years, he was the general chairman of the Democratic town committee and, with his five brothers, has represented his county in the Connecticut Legislature."

The Springfield Republican issue of June 8, 1938 had an article about the Coogan block being torn down. The building had two stores on the first floor, three tenements on the second floor, and three meeting halls on the third. At one time, the ground floor was occupied by a drug store conducted by Joseph A. Coogan, while on the North side was the grocery store of Roscoe W. Prentice. Dr. Coogan and his family occupied one of the tenements on the second floor, while his sister occupied the other. The halls on the top floor served as the meeting places of the Riverside council of the Knights of Columbus from 1855 until 1921. The Euclid lodge of Masons had their headquarters on the third floor before they moved to the Converse Block.

Dr. Coogan died of pneumonia on Nov. 24, 1933, at the age of 84. The pneumonia, which followed an accident three weeks earlier, when he fell and broke his hip. His wife was Margaret E. Brady Coogan (1852-1939). They had a daughter, Mary Laurentia Coogan (1883-1939). Dr. Coogan was a man to be emulated. Coogan's Block was later replaced by the Barberi Esso Station, which later was owned by Vinnie Musco.

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