

The Beehive Building by Mel Montemerlo

The “Beehive Building” was the nickname of a large apartment house at the North corner of Grove and Main Streets. The name gives the impression that the building was shaped like a beehive, but that was not the case. The building got its nickname from the sound that came from the halls of the building. It was filled with small apartments. Since there was no air conditioning back then, the doors to the apartments were often open, and it was a crowded building. The sound of much action and much talking caused people to refer to it as the Beehive building. See the photograph for a view of what the Bee Hive Building looked like in 1925.



MAIN STREET,

WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.

Photo taken in 1925

Edwin P. Eagan

*Coly's Hotel
before 1927 fire.
Central Cafe is
the store on the
left on street level.*

*Bee Hive Building was an apartment house
on north corner of Main & Grove Streets
with chimneys on roof with large overhang.
Was owned by Mr. Shea. Mr. Botasso
had a meat market on bottom floor*

In the photo, the building on the left was Central Hall. The building to the right of that was the Windsor Locks Hotel, which had been purchased in 1917 by Vito Colapietro. The next building to the right was owned by Moses Goldfarb. He had a haberdashery business on the first floor and rental stores on first floor. The top floors were apartments for rent. Later, Bianchi's Restaurant and Shonty's Bar and Grill were in this building. To the right of Mr. Goldfarb's building was Grove Street.

The building on the North side of Grove Street in the photograph was the Bee Hive Building. You can recognize the building by the large overhang on its roof, and the three chimneys on the roof. The Beehive Building was owned by a Mr. Shea. In the Springfield newspapers, there were four articles published between 1895 and 1907, which referred to the "Shea block". However, none referred to it as the Beehive Building. That was a local nickname. The Feb. 22, 1895 issue of the Springfield Republican said that Mr. George N. Kent opened a meat market in January, but it could not meet expenses, so he had to turn over the store's fixtures to Mr. H. L. Handy to settle his bill. The April 10, 1898 issue of the same newspaper described a knife fight between two Italians. One of the men was slightly injured. The other was taken away by the Police. The August 26, 1898 issue of that paper described a "free for all" fight that took place at an Italian christening party after midnight. Several people were severely pummeled. The August 18, 1907 issue of that newspaper said that a fire broke out in the meat market of Pauline Bottasso on the ground floor of the Shea Block.

Between 1895 and 1913, there were two references in the Springfield Republican to Joseph Bottasso's meat market. All of the references to the Shea Block and to the Bottasso meat market mentioned Italians. The inhabitants of the large apartment house were primarily of Italian descent. Mr. Bottasso died on Dec. 21, 1956. He had been a resident of Windsor Locks for 58 years. He was born in Italy on Dec. 27, 1876. He came to the US in 1898.

The building was knocked down in the 1930s or 40s. Later this location had Red Leary's store on it, as well as the Mayflower Restaurant, Mac's Package Store and Ray's Lunch. Over the years, those stores changed hands a number of times. When it was the Beehive building, it was a multi purpose building, with stores on the street floor, and rental apartments on the upper floors.

Now you know the story of the Beehive Building. If you would like to read other of my articles on Windsor Locks history, you can download them from my website at: windsorlockshistory.com