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# Royal Grocery Market

501 North Wahsatch Avenue

Built 1896

Architect Unknown

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Do you have stories, documents, or pictures of the Royal Grocery Market?

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## About

This building is a simple Mission form with a parapet. The front door is inset and flanked by display windows. A visible seam on the south side shows where the building was extended to the east.

In an era when people generally walked everywhere, neighborhood markets were essential to supply food for families in neighborhoods. Occasionally, a market would have an attached residence where the proprietor could live.

Ownership continued to change regularly over the years.



In 2013, *Welcome to Stoner's Laundry* by Mary Margaret Alvarado was published by [the Hairpin](#). Below is a copy of the article:

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Stoner's Coin Op Laundry is on the corner of Wahsatch Avenue and St. Vrain Street in downtown Colorado Springs. The white stucco building was built in 1904 and was, until 1958, the Ideal Grocery & Market; city directories note that it was vacant the following year. In 1960 it appears as Roy C. & Mrs. Betty Mason's Econo Wash Self Serve, on a line next to entries that indicate that this woman is the "wid" of "Chas Wm," and that this man is a "linemn" for the "Tel Co." The 1975 directory has it under the surname "Stoner." Some patrons swear it is a laundromat for stoners, and a banner of "Cannabis" graffiti is still legible under layers of mismatched white paint.

1975 was a prosperous year for the Stoner family; they had four "speed queen" laundries and a trophy room and taxidermy shop. Those are gone now, but their original Laundromat is still in business, though the word "original" has almost faded from the hand-lettered sign. It is open every day, from 7 A.M. until 9 P.M. In the daytime, the building's southern face is a gallery for branch shadows; in the evening, its western windows are a tableau by Hopper, in a scene made for Christenberry. At night, Stoner's looks like a lantern.

This is our deaf neighbor Lloyd and his dog, Little Bit. For five years we've lived three houses down from Stoner's, and across the street from Lloyd, his sister Wanda, and her husband Dave. Dave drives a decrepit minivan around town, the back window of which declares, "IF YOUR PASSING ME, YOUR SPEEDING."

When we get to our street my three-year-old daughter says, "There's Stoner's Laundry" to indicate that she's home. I took these photos in the late winter and spring of 2013, ducking out of evening dishes and bath time for the baby and running down the block with my dinky Panasonic DMC-Z56, which I didn't really know how to use. I told my daughter I was going to "my studio."

There is nothing to do at Stoner's laundry. There are no TVs, no radios, no magazines. There is one soda machine, and a rack for Thrifty Nickles that is usually empty. I've seen few so-called smart phones in the place. You can sit in a plastic chair, or you can sit in a metal chair. People talk, and some hold court for hours; they fold clothes; they head outside to smoke. At some point someone crawled under one of the three folding tables and drew intricate, skillful studies of a pinecone, a bird, and a tree by water. This woman drives over on Sunday nights in an Econovan with other people from her storefront downtown church. Her bible has Jesus' words in red.

Some people come because Stoner's has "the hottest dryers in town."

Others only like to come in the morning, when it's quiet.

Often there are one or two homeless men at Stoner's, especially when it's cold. The man in the orange hat brings a radio with him and stands before it, talking. The man in the red coat had a bad stepfather in Michigan; he's still trying to escape. I always ask people if I can take their photo; he said yes, but first he wanted to straig

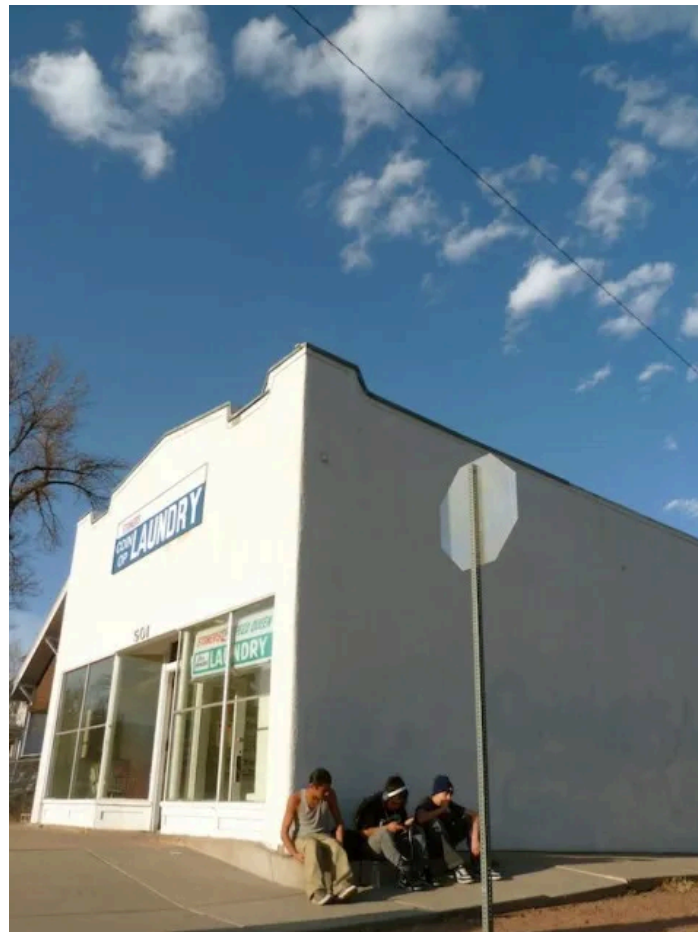
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One recently homeless man wrote a book of poems called *I Lost My Pants*. He travels with his two remaining possessions: a black plastic bag full of clothes, and his notebook. Over the poems he's written down the addresses of possible homes.

Stoner's feels like a public place. In the hours between when the doors are unlocked and locked again, it is an experiment in small-scale anarchy and communal property that works. The owner isn't around, and neither are the cops. People sleep here. They kiss. They charge their phones and wash up. It is not unusual for the neighbors to bring food to strangers who say they have nothing to eat.

Children seem to like it here. There are poles and baskets and things to climb on and floors to slide down and interesting, spinning machines. The mothers and fathers aren't up to much, and sometimes someone brings Funyuns or a ball.

This block was built up by people with tuberculosis, mostly black, who moved to Colorado Springs for the sanatoriums and the balm of high, dry air. Now the air smells like clean laundry. Most of the year, the doors of Stoner's are propped open and the sky and the people stream in and out.





# Timeline

## 1896



The earliest record of this market is in 1896 when the Royal Grocery operated. The proprietor, Thomas C. Beard lived around the corner at 519 North Weber, while two clerks resided in upstairs living quarters.

*Source: [Page 315 1896 City Directory](#)*

## 1898



By 1898, it was the Cooper grocery and meat market owned by H.H. Cooper & Co. The business partners are listed as H. H. Cooper, Fannie B. Root, and Mrs. H. H. Cooper.

*Source: [Page 318 1898 City Directory](#)*

## 1900



Richard M. Smith owned the Grocer. Richard resided at 614 N Tejon.

Miss Olive Harbert is listed as a boarder at 501 N Wahsatch Ave. Olive was an operator at the Colorado Telephone Company located at 118 E Kiowa.

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Source: pages 187, 346, 457, 517 [1900 City Directory](#)

## 1901

Nicholas M. Read owned the Grocer. Richard resided at 614 N Tejon. Nicholas resided at 629 N Corona with Mrs. Hannah G.



Grant M. Collins and Mrs. Goldie M. are listed as boarders at 501 N Wahsatch Ave. Grant was a conductor for the [Colorado Springs Rapid Transit Railway \(CSRT\) Railway](#) located at Tejon and the NW corner of Moreno Ave.

Source: Pages 110, 315, 498, 107 [1901 City Directory](#)

## 1902



The business was named Ebener Cash Grocery. Felix G. Ebener was the proprietor. Felix resided at 633 E Boulder with Mrs. Minnie E.

Source: pages 155, 569 [1902 City Directory](#)

## 1903–1905



Dennis H. Sullivan is listed as the grocer. Dennis resided with Mrs. Nellie at 1014 N Corona.

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In 1904, Denis and Nellie had moved to 332 E St Vrain.

*Source: pages 434, 596 [1903 City Directory](#), pages 455 & 626 [1904 City Directory](#), pages 530 & 629 [1905 City Directory](#),*

## 1906



William H. Bartleson is listed as the grocer. William resided with Mrs. Alice at the building.

Lola C. Bartleson is listed as a Colorado College student boarding at the grocer.

*Source: pages 98, 573 [1906 City Directory](#)*

## 1907



James S. Banks is listed as the grocer. He resided at the building with Mrs. Edith M.

*Source: pages 86, 602 [1907 City Directory](#)*

## 1908

J.J. Killian Grocer and C.W. Hesser Meat Market were operating in the building.

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John J. Killian was the grocer and resided with Mrs. Mary A. at the grocer building.

Charles W. Hesser is listed as the meats grocer. He resided with Mrs. Adelaide A. at 711 E Platte Ave.

*Source: pages 291, 341, 672, 692 [1908 City Directory](#)*

## 1909–1912

In 1909, Charles L. Binkert is listed as the grocer. In his City Directory listing, he advertises “Fancy and Staple Groceries and Meats, Fresh Vegetables the Year Round”. Charles resided at the grocer building with Mrs. Nora. A. Telephone number 1024 is listed for Charles – indicating that this is the first year the grocery building had a phone.



In 1911, the grocer is named Square Deal Grocer, Groceries and Meats.

In 1912, Charles and Nora Binkert moved from the grocery building to 816 E Cache la Poudre. Charles S. Ronberg moves into the grocery building as a boarder. Charles Ronberg works as a [motorman](#) for [Colorado Springs and Interurban \(CS&I\) Railway Company](#).

*Source: pages 109, 766 [1909 City Directory](#), page 105 & 756 [1910 City Directory](#), pages 186 & 685 [1911 City Directory](#), pages 173, 465, 608 [1912 City Directory](#),*

## 1914–1927

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Walter L. Smith is listed as the grocer. Walter resides at 1217 N Institute with Mrs. Effie M. The grocer's telephone number is still listed as 1024.

In the 1921 City Directory the grocer is listed under Meat Markets. Walter's listing has his business advertised with the line "A Full Line of Fancy Groceries, Bakery Goods and Meats". Two telephone lines are listed: Main 73 and 1024.

In 1922 Walter and Effie moved to 503 N Wahsatch Ave.

*Source: pages 134, 503, 601 1914 City Directory, pages 510, 604 1915 City Directory, pages 141, 495, 586 1916 City Directory, pages 475, 554 1917 City Directory, pages 347, 407 1920 City Directory, pages 341, 562 1921 City Directory, pages 345, 597 1922 City Directory, page 376 1927 City Directory,*

## 1930–1943

Ideal Grocery is listed as the business. Ralph C. Pettinari was the owner. Ralph resided at 529 N Wahsatch Ave with Mrs. Adele B.

Ideal Grocery was a family business with Adele B. Pettinari working as a clerk, Anna M. Pettinari working as a clerk, John R. Pettinari working as a meat cutter (he resided at 317 E St Vrain with Mrs. Leta), and Jos N. Pettinari working as a driver.

In 1933, Leta K. Pettinari passed way at 18 years old.

In 1943, Jos N. Pettinari was the manager of Ideal Grocery and Market. He resided at 1326 E Willamette. Ralph C. Pettinari was listed as the owner and living at 1326 E Willamette. Mrs. Adele Pettinari was listed as working at Ivywild Inn and residing at 1326 E Willamette Ave.

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Ralph Pettinari passed away on September 9, 1949. His obituary in the Colorado Springs Free Press reads:

**Ralph C. Pettinari, Resident Here 18 Years**

*9/9/1949*

Mr. Ralph C. Pettinari, 65, a Colorado Springs resident since 1918, died late last night at his home at 2346 East Platte Ave.

Born in Ostra, Italy, Feb. 20, 1884, Mr. Pettinari journeyed to the United States in 1905. In 1907 he married Adele Biondini at Greenville, Miss. The couple move here in 1918.

He was a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church, the Eagles and Modern Woodmen of America.

Mr. Pettinari is survived by his widow, two sons, John R. and Joseph N. Pettinari of Colorado Springs, five grandsons, Ralph Jr., Donald E., Lawrence J., Richard Jr. and Joseph N. Pettinari, all of Colorado Springs. Mr. Pettinari also leaves two granddaughters, Pauline A. and Pamela Pettinari, also of Colorado Springs.

Services are in charge of the Nolan Funeral Home and will be announced later.

*Source: page 354 & 672 1930 City Directory, pages 319 & 627 1933 City Directory, pages 346 & X 1943 City Directory*

## 1958



This was the 62nd year and the last year the building is used as a grocery store.

*Source: [Medium](#)*

## 1960–1963

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Mason's Econo Wash Self Serve is listed as the business. Roy C. Mason and Mrs. Betty are the owners.

*Source: page 179 1960 City Directory, page 130 1963 City Directory*

## 1975–2017

In 1988, Stoner's Speed Queen Laundry (coin-operated) is listed as the business. Stoner's was owned by Roy E. Stoner.

In 2006, Stoner's Laundry had a horrible incident that resulted in an employee being injured. The Gazette covered the story:

### **Man hurt in robbery released**

*10/10/2006*

A Colorado Springs man has been released from Memorial Hospital after being seriously injured during a robbery Sunday night. Robert McKenna, 41, an employee at Stoner's Original Coin Laundry at 501 N. Wahsatch Ave., was allegedly punched and choked by Leonard Forbes, 30, during a robbery at the laundromat about 10 p.m. Sunday. Forbes was arrested on charges of attempted first-degree murder and robbery, said Colorado Springs police Sgt. Hugh Velasquez. An off-duty El Paso County sheriff's deputy saw Forbes at the business and called police, Velasquez said.

### **Man sentenced in beating**

*4/13/2007*

A man who savagely beat a Colorado Springs Laundromat employee during a robbery was sentenced Thursday to more than a quarter century in prison.

Leonard G. Forbes, 31, of Colorado Springs was sentenced to 26 1/2 years in prison for first-degree assault resulting in serious injuries. He pleaded guilty in December.

Forbes admitted beating and choking the 41-year-old victim Oct. 8 at Stoner's Original Coin Laundry, 501 N. Wahsatch Av  
County sheriff's deputy reported seeing Forbes at t

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victim suffered head injuries and a broken nose.

Forbes could have been sentenced to a maximum of 32 years in prison.

In 2017, Anna Lois Stoner, wife of Roy E. Stoner, passed away. Donald Stoner, her son, and Margaret Ann Lois, her daughter, inherited the property. The property was sold the same day to Jonathan Goddard. After 57 years, the building would no longer be used as a laundry business.



Anna Lois Stoner,  [Gazette](#)

Source: El Paso County Colorado Assessor record, [Medium](#),  
page 1057 1988 City Directory

2018

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Jonathan Goddard sold the property to 514 Wahsatch LLC, which was run by Adam R. Rae.

*Source: El Paso County Colorado Assessor record*

## 2023



514 Wahsatch LLC sold the building to Simple Wealth Solutions LLC, which is also run by Adam R. Rae.

*Source: El Paso County Colorado Assessor record*

## Additional Resources

- [Drive Folder](#) – a collection of documents compiled during the Historic Uptown Neighborhood's historic preservation efforts.
- [Help Shape the Future of this Building](#) – The Historic Uptown Neighborhood Association Board is trying to collect neighborhood voices to urge the current owner to restore a grocery store in this historic building. Email [Ethan.Shafer@coloradosprings.gov](mailto:Ethan.Shafer@coloradosprings.gov) to share your voice!

## Comments

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