

Byers Cold Storage

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Parish House Museum Director

Leslie R. (Babe) and Evelyn Byers owned and operated Byers Cold Storage from 1941 until 1980.

It was located on the SE corner of Hwy 60 and Parish Ave.



Leslie (Babe) Byers, his wife Evelyn, and their young daughter Barbara moved to Johnstown in 1937 where Babe worked as a butcher for Hays Market. In 1940, he worked at the Red and White Grocery for Ed McClure until he purchased the Community Cold Storage in November 1941. He renamed it Byers Cold Storage.

The building had living quarters attached, and there was a separate, privately-owned gas station next door on the corner to the west that had once been the Geisler Opera House in the early 1920s. It was torn down and its flooring was saved and used for the walls of the gas station.

In addition to 365 frozen-food lockers for rent, Byers Cold Storage featured a full line of groceries. Evelyn saw to the day-to-day operations of the store and Babe was the butcher and grocer. He sold ice, Christmas trees, and skinned and butchered deer and elk. Skinning the wild game was a family affair – Evelyn and Barbara helped.

Babe also butchered beef and pork. On top of the meat case (as a conversation piece) he had cans of french-fried ants and grasshoppers, chocolate covered ants, and rattlesnake meat. No one ever opened these cans.

Evelyn worked alongside her husband in the store; she was also a seamstress, sewing for family and friends and later she was the head seamstress for the Fashion Bar store in Greeley.

Barbara's role in the family's operation grew as her parents aged. In 1961, she added a small side building and ran Barbara's Beauty Haven there, and a few years later, she added onto the house. In 1980, she remodeled the cold storage and turned it into a convenience store.

Babe worked in the store with his wife, daughter, and granddaughter, Leslyn, until his death in 1984. That year, Barbara bought the gas station next door and had a portion of it torn down, and she moved the garage off the site, keeping the gas pumps. She named the new business Byers Busy Corner, Groceries and Gas. She sold the business in 1987. The Byers family enterprises served the Johnstown area community for 46 years.

Sources: Written historical account, undated; Barbara Byers Duncan, Johnstown Breeze, July 19, 2007.



The Historic Parish House and Museum

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