

# PETER BAUBY

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*"As a business man, he was successful. As the head of a family, he lived to see his children distinguished in their chosen fields. As a patriarch of the community, he was respected and esteemed by all who knew him."*

— Waterbury Republican, October 26, 1934

Peter Bauby was born in Moconesi, Italy during September of 1847 and in the early 1870s, his family became the earliest known Italian immigrants to settle in Waterbury. In Italy, the family name was Di Barbieri.

In 1872 Peter and his brother, Joseph, started a fruit business. They stored the produce in a Bank Street basement in Exchange Place and set up shop in front of Apothecaries' Hall.

As the business grew, they bought the buildings at 8 and 8 1/2 Bank Street, two doors south of West Main Street, and added imported foods, cigars, newspapers and magazines to their stock. Around 1916, Peter took over the cigar and newspaper business and Joseph ran the fruit and confectionery business next door.

"Bauby's Corner", the colloquial name given to the area surrounding the corner of Bank and West Main Streets, became the most popular meeting place in downtown Waterbury. From early morning until late at night all types of people gathered there; buying newspapers, talking about sports, politics or current issues or just congregating since "You always met someone you knew there." The friendly atmosphere was ideal for people-watching since "The Beach", as it was sometimes called, was the mainstream of Waterbury social life.

With the hope for employment in Waterbury's booming brass industry, a steady immigration of venturesome Italians, influenced by Peter Bauby, arrived in the city. Mr. Bauby, honest, hard-working merchant and property owner, served as a role model of the "American Dream" for these newcomers. He operated his business for over 50 years, was a trustee and founder of the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes and a charter member of the Barcelona Council of the Knights of Columbus. The Italian house at the Settlers Village exhibit in 1935 was dedicated to honor Peter Bauby and his brother, Joseph.

Bauby, who died October 24, 1934, saw Waterbury grow from a town to a major industrial center and could trace its history from memory; naming most manufacturers, retailers and individuals.

"Bauby's Parklet on the Plaza", located on the corner of West Main and Leavenworth Streets, was dedicated by city officials in 1995 to honor the memory of one of the dynamic and influential families of Waterbury history.

