

## Barranco's Serves Fairport for over 100 Years

By Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian

For generations in Fairport, if you needed a new pair of shoes, there is a good chance you would buy them from a man named Barranco. One hundred years later, you still can. As early as 1912, members of the Barranco family were repairing shoes in the village. Three brothers, James, Joseph, and Angelo, left Santa Caterina, Sicily for America as young men, and arrived in Fairport on September 1, 1912. They left behind their parents, Cologero and Angela, and several other brothers and sisters. A 1918 newspaper story in The Monroe County Mail reported that five of the Barranco brothers were serving their country in the military – three in Italy and Angelo and Joseph in the United States. The sixth brother, James, was awaiting the call from Washington to report to duty, but by then the war was winding down and his service was not required.

Like many of Fairport's Italian immigrants, the name Barranco could be found on the roster of those working at the enormous can factory on Parce Avenue. Soon Joseph opened a shoe repair business, and his brothers joined him. The storefront changed locations over the years, with stops on South Main Street, and several locations on West Avenue. The 1920 census report listed the occupation of all three brothers as shoemakers, living and working at 41 West Avenue.

By 1923 James opened his own shop, renting a small store at 28 North Main from Fairport's coal man, Dewey Jackson. With success came the need for more space, and James relocated again and again, each time renting shops in the village's north side. In 1928 James stopped renting and bought the old Deal block at 32 North Main Street. He and his wife Josephine and young children Angeline and Charles moved into living quarters on the second floor of the wood frame building. With a larger store, James was able to expand beyond the shoe business, and included clothing for men, women, and children. His brother Angelo joined him in the business for many years.



*Two generations of the Barranco family have run the family business in Fairport for 103 years. The store has been located at 32 North Main Street since 1928.*

The Deal block was an important building on Fairport's north side. When built in the 1880s, the upper floor was a photography studio operated by Frank B. Clench. The first floor was the longtime home of the Fairport Herald newspaper, and its editor, Andrew J. Deal.

Eventually Angelo Barranco retired and moved to California. James continued on, and in 1962, after a half century in business, turned the keys to 32 North Main Street over to his son, Charles Barranco. Weeks after graduating from Fairport High School in 1945, "Charlie" enlisted in the Navy and served aboard the Bon Homme Richard aircraft carrier. He soon followed in his father's footsteps in the shoe business, and after operating the Chili Bootery for many years, took charge of the family business. Charles Barranco and Ruth Koerner married in 1961, and raised their family in Fairport. He continues to open the store to customers most days, although he closes to spend time with his children and their families in Florida over the winter months. The store's array of merchandise includes men's clothing, garments imprinted with the familiar "Fairport" name and logo, and of course shoes, which is how the business first began.



*Charlie Barranco in his store at 32 North Main Street*

Often small businesses come and go, and longevity can be rare. The Barranco store has proven to be the exception, having operated in the same location for 87 years. In total, the family has served the Fairport community for over a century, with just two generations at the helm. Occasionally a "Closed" sign on the door will advise that the proprietor is working on his golf game, but if you miss him, stop back again. A trip to Barranco's is a unique experience.

*Written by Bill Poray, Perinton Town Historian*

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