

ELMHURST HISTORY HIGHLIGHT: Glos Commercial Block

Henry L. Glos (1851-1905) was a prominent citizen of early Elmhurst. During his lifetime he was a teacher, grocer, real estate entrepreneur, banker, and civic leader. He built the Glos Block to house his business interests in 1874 on the southeast corner of York Street and Park Avenue. This building became a landmark in the growing community.

Grocery Store – Henry Glos opened a grocery store in his building in 1874. Stock included groceries, dry goods, and fabric. Business was good, and in 1884 he built an addition to the south. In time, Mr. Glos sold his grocery store and moved on to other business ventures. However, a grocery remained in the Glos Block for many years.

Bank – In 1894, Mr. Glos opened the first bank in Elmhurst, the Private Bank of Henry L. Glos. Elmhurst State Bank was organized in 1904 as a successor to the private bank, and there has been a bank on that corner since 1894.

Post Office – The Glos Block housed the post office in Elmhurst circa 1884 – circa 1918.

Public Hall – In 1896, recognizing the needs of a developing village, Mr. Glos expanded the Glos Block again by adding a third floor for a public hall. The Elmhurst Enterprise newspaper reported, “the improvements on Henry Glos’ business block are about finished, making it one of the finest buildings in the county. (December 11, 1896) The hall was used for a variety of activities including dances, piano recitals, patriotic pageants, etc. Elmhurst High School held graduation exercises for its 3 graduates in the Glos Hall on June 26, 1908.

Elmhurst Public Library – On March 22, 1916, Elmhurst Public Library opened in a room in the Glos Block. The Library opened with 820 volumes and was open Wednesdays and Saturdays 2-5 and 7-9. The library remained in the Glos Block until it moved to the former Wilder Mansion in Wilder Park in 1922.



Glos Block at 101 S. York Street circa 1905, M 2013.1.115

The Glos Block was torn down in 1927 to make room for a larger, more modern building, which still stands today at 105 S. York Street. In the photograph of the Glos Block, several decorative finials (capping ornaments) can be seen along the roofline. When the building was razed, two of the finials were saved, and they are now on exhibit on the south lawn of the Elmhurst History Museum. At that time a local resident, Frederick C. Harbour, wrote in "The Passing of a Landmark":

"A new building is about to rise on the old site. I have seen a picture of it. It is a beautiful structure, ornamental, architecturally beautiful, graceful, dignified, useful and necessary...that old building which has just been demolished, was the inspiration, and is the urge, the spirit, the soul, of the new (September 23, 1927)."

By Nancy Wilson, Elmhurst History Museum Staff, Updated October 2021