

Windsor Locks History

by
Melvin D. Montemerlo



Main Street before and after redevelopment

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Mel Montemerlo

Introduction

Windsor Locks' old Main Street, with places like the A&P, Ray LaRussa's store, Coly's Hotel, Sid's Modern Drug, Bidwell's, the Donut Kettle, Wuzzy's, Barberi's Home Style Bakery, and the Ashmere Inn, is now "history." That was the Windsor Locks that I grew up in. I moved away to start my career in 1970 when the "Main Street Re-development" project bought up and demolished all of the downtown businesses, which caused the old dynamic, vibrant Main Street to disappear into history. As of this writing in 2017, the young adults of Windsor Locks are too young to remember that historic old Main Street. Those of us who do remember are "senior citizens." Some of us still live in Windsor Locks. Some, like myself, are expatriates of Windsor Locks, who now live elsewhere, but still love the town we grew up in. We enjoy remembering the old Main Street. We are first or second generation offspring of the immigrants who came to Windsor Locks in the early 1900s. We remember our parents and grandparents and their stories and photos of the Windsor Locks of their time.

It occurred to me that the history of Windsor Locks from 1900 to 1975 needs to be written now, while those of us who lived the latter part of that timeframe, still remember. Luckily, my grandmother, Anna Colapietro, collected hundreds of photos of family, friends, places and events of Windsor Locks from 1904 to about 1950. She gave them to her daughter, Lena (Colapietro) Montemerlo, who was my mother. I was fascinated by those photos, so Mom and I spent a great deal of time going through the photos. She would tell me the names of the people, places, events and times of as many of those photos as she could. I scanned the photos, improved their quality, and added captions with relevant information.

In 2016, I started posting those photos on two Facebook Internet pages for people from Windsor Locks. Those pages were: the "You know you are from Windsor Locks When," and the "Windsor Locks Historical Society" pages. It was obvious from the responses that there was a good deal of interest in the history of Windsor Locks. I received feedback on the photos. People posted other photos from that time. There was a great deal of sharing of information. This led me to write an article about the early Ice Cream Stores of Windsor Locks, and to post the draft on those two websites. Folks posted additional information, asked questions, and made suggestions for the final draft.

That led to a second article on the early pizza and grinder shops of Windsor Locks. I slowed down after writing about 40 articles on the history of Windsor Locks. I received requests from John Karas, the editor of the *Windsor Locks Journal*, to develop short versions of these articles that he could put in his weekly newspaper. Tim Jensen, of the Enfield Patch, also requested short versions that he could publish.

Two former Windsor Locksians, one of whom is a Windsor Locks historian, and one of whom is a bookseller, suggested strongly that I turn the set of articles into a book. The historian, Phil Devlin, had already published a book about Dr. Carniglia, and offered advice on the publishing process. The bookseller, Robin Kaye Gutterman, told me that history books about small towns are valuable, and urged me to publish the book in paper form as well as a downloadable computer file. I was familiar with what had been written about the history of Windsor Locks. Only one history book about our town

has been written prior to this one. It is Jabez Haskell Hayden's *Historical Sketches*, which was published in 1900. It covered the history of the town from the 1600s to 1900. Jack Redmond covered the period from 1975 to 2000 with 1200 columns in the *Windsor Locks Journal*. So the only part of the history of Windsor Locks that hasn't been written is the period from 1900 to 1975, which was the primary focus of my . Some of the chapters, by necessity, go back to the 1700s and 1800s.

As I wrote my articles, which became the chapters of this book, I followed the advice of Jack Redmond, which he described in his first column in the *Windsor Locks Journal* on April 24, 1975. He said:

People want to hear and read about the people who make the news in Windsor Locks. People who have made their marks in our town by way of the political, civic, fraternal and coaching circles. My reasons are very simple ... people make the best stories. Events happen and mostly, in this day and age, for the worst, so the best items are still people.

I took Jack's advice and wrote most of the chapters in this book about Windsor Locks people who have "made their mark." To make the chapters more interesting and fun to read, I have included about 400 old photos, and about 150 old newspaper articles. It is informative and fun to read about people and events in the newspaper articles of their time.

You can download the book from the Internet Archive, which can be found at: <https://archive.org/>

You can do a computer search on *Windsor Locks History* to find other websites from which you can download the book.

For information on obtaining a printed copy of the book, please contact me at: mel@windsorlockshistory.com or contact the Windsor Locks Historical Society.

The Windsor Locks Historical Society is doing wonderful work in collecting, organizing, and disseminating information on the history of our town. I hope that this book can help them in their work.

I hope this book brings you much enjoyment. I hope that it helps you visualize "the old Windsor Locks," and helps you describe our town's past to your children and grandchildren.

Thank you very much.

Mel Montemerlo

November 6, 2017

Chapter 1

Growing Up in Windsor Locks in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s

This chapter attempts to summarize the things that characterized our environment when we were growing up in Windsor Locks in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. We all had different experiences. That's what makes each of us unique. However, there were cultural factors, places, people and happenings which almost all of us experienced while growing up in Windsor Locks at that time. This chapter takes a nostalgic look at our youth, and the things we had in common. These are the experiences that make us unique as the children of Windsor Locks of the 1940s, 50s and 60s. An occasional glance back at our roots is both instructive and rewarding. The following are things that most of experienced in that time frame. Let's take a look at what we had in common, back when we were lucky enough to grow up in Windsor Locks. They include:

- ethnic heritage
- being "Free Range Kids"
- services came to the home
- the birth of rock and roll
- the Cold War
- St. Mary's Park (now called Pesci Park)
- Summer jobs in the tobacco fields
- the ice skating rink on Center St
- St. Oronzo Day
- Dr. Carniglia
- the Rialto Theater
- the town dump
- ethnic markets (Johnny Cappa's store, Aldo's Oak Street Market, Preli's Market, Barberi's bakery and Sisitzki's Market)
- Bradley Field
- Babb's Beach
- East Windsor Drive-In
- Railroad Salvage
- Riverside Park
- ice cream stores (Wuzzy's, Tony's Soda Shoppe, Carroll's Pharmacy, Dairy Cream)
- pizza and grinder stores (ADs, Second Poquonock, H&M, Pizza Parlor)
- Main Street before re-development
- The Box from the Locks
- 1965 Windsor Locks Little League World Champions
- Blanche's Bowling Alley
- 1954 Windsor Locks Centennial Celebration

Our Ethnic Heritage (Family Life)

Life in Windsor Locks was a bit like life in the “Leave it to Beaver” series on TV, except it was much more “ethnic.” Windsor Locks, at the time, was home to immigrants, their children and their grandchildren. They were mostly English, Irish, French, Italian and Polish. The cultural heritage of our nationality played a big role in our childhood. We spent an enormous amount of time with our parents and our grandparents. Meals, gatherings and parties included their relatives and friends. In my case, they all had Italian names. The older ones spoke Italian when they didn’t want the children to know what they were talking about. They often they moved back and forth between Italian and English in the same sentence. While my family was Italian, my friends and classmates had names like: Ouellette, McKenna, Carroll, Dzurich, Czarnecki, Root, Pohorylo, Tomaczek, O’Leary, Gallagher, Harvey, Babiarz, Flanagan, Norieka, and Taylor. Of course, there were Italian names like LaRussa, Roncari, Taravella, Rossi, Marconi, Tria, Pesci, Ferrari, Barbieri and Quagliaroli.

But while we were brought up in very ethnic environments, our parents wanted us to go to school, to study hard, and to become good American citizens. I remember my uncles telling me that their father (my grandfather, Vito Colapietro) told them repeatedly: “No cigars, no mustaches, go to school, go to college. I want you to be good Americans.” Of course, much of this push for this was very practical. If you want to succeed in business in Windsor Locks, you can’t just speak Italian. I never saw trouble between people of different nationalities while I was growing up in Windsor Locks.

We were “Free Range Kids.” Our parents were not “Helicopter Parents.”

The late 1940s, 50s and 60s were a peaceful time. Our uncles had come back from WWII and were getting married and building lives. We (the kids) lived lives that were a bit idyllic. We rode big heavy one-speed bikes. We often left home early on Saturday morning and went off to play with friends. We went from house to house. Sometimes a mother would phone other moms to let them know where we were. Now, in 2017, kids who roam around without close parental supervision are called “Free Range Kids, and their parents are often admonished for letting their kids do that. Back then, we didn’t have “Helicopter Parents” who hovered over us. It was a time when the doors of our houses were often left unlocked. The back door of the house was usually open in the good weather, and an unlatched screen door was the only thing stopping you from entering.

We felt comfortable growing up in Windsor Locks. We visited friends and rode our bikes around freely. The group I went to kindergarten with walked about five blocks from Grove Street to the public elementary school on Church Street. We climbed trees and played games without any planning. Nowadays, there are things like “arranged play-dates” for preschoolers, where parents contact each other, make specific plans, drop kids off and pick them up. Back then we hopped on our bikes and went off for the morning, not knowing exactly where the group would be, but we found them and we figured out what to do.

School was much different back then. If a teacher or a principal called our parents, we would be asked "WHAT DID YOU DO WRONG?" Now, if a teacher complains about a student, the parents are likely to go to the school and complain about the teacher. To put it simply, life was much simpler back then.

Service Came to the Home

Technology was different back then. When we were in pre-school and in grammar school, we remember:

- leaving a note for the milkman to leave something extra today.
- the coal truck delivering coal to our homes
- the mailman putting mail in a mailbox attached to the house near the front door.
- the paperboy leaving the paper between the front door and the screen door if you asked him to. Of course, they expected a tip at Christmas for doing that.
- the man who made bleach and delivered it to your house.
- Viking Bakery delivered to your house
- Dr. Carniglia made house calls.

The Birth of Rock and Roll

The end of the forties was the end of the "old music": Perry Como, Vaughn Monroe, Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole, Dinah Shore, and Frankie Laine. It was the heyday of the Ed Sullivan Show. It was the beginning of ROCK AND ROLL. It was the time when 78 RPM records were going out of style, and being replaced by 45 RPM records. We spent a lot of time listening to 45s.

The Cold War

The Cold War was in full swing. In school, and on TV, we heard about building bomb shelters. We even practiced what to do in case of an aerial attack by the Communists.

St. Mary's Park

The formal name back then was "the Public Park," but we called it "St. Mary's Park" because it was right behind St. Mary's School. Now it is called "Pesci Park." This was the center of youth activity in Windsor Locks back in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. It was the place to find pickup games of sandlot baseball, basketball and football. It is where Little League Baseball was played. It had the swimming pool where we took swimming lessons on summer mornings. There was the green wooden building in which we did crafts during the summer months. On weekend evenings in the summer, there were outdoor movies and record hops on the basketball court. At the end of the summer, there were contests for the youngsters. For example, there were craft contests and contests for the best decorated bicycles and wagons. The side of St. Mary's school next to the parking lot was used for practicing tennis. Below is a photo of the swimming pool and of a newspaper article from the *Springfield Union* of August 27, 1955, giving the names of children who won swimming awards.



The pool at what is now known as Pesci Park.

Prizes Go to Children As Play Season Ends

Windsor Locks, Conn., Aug. 31—Closing exercises at the public park playgrounds yesterday afternoon attracted a large audience of both children and adults, and prizes were awarded for the various events as follows:

Doll carriage parade, prettiest, Corinne Ouelette; second, Jane Doyle; third, Irene Dell'Avare; most original, Vito Colapietro; bicycle parade, prettiest, Nancy Frost; most original, Melvin Montemerlo; tricycle parade, prettiest, Robert Dantelt, first; James Logan, second; wagon parade, prettiest, James Dwones; most original, Lynn Casey.

Costume parade, prettiest, Susan Grady; funniest, Rita Crowley; most original, Elaine Ouelette; hat parade, prettiest, Joyce Michas; funniest, Patricia Kennedy; most original, Patricia Samuelrich; pie-eating

est, Patricia Kennedy; most original, Patricia Samuelrich; pie-eating contest, five to nine years group, Douglas Quagliaroli; 10 to 14 years group, William Wegrzyniak.

Crafts awards, three to seven years group, Jack Kennedy, Jane Doyle, Irene Dell'Avare, Betty Logan, Phyllis LaRussa, Ellen Taravella, Robert Pastemerlo, Sharon Root, Ronald Quagliaroli; eight and nine years group, Susan Grady, Phyllis Quagliaroli, Patricia Kane, Jane Taravella, Donna Scott, Clair Gallerafi, Susan Root, Nancy Frost, Melvin Montemerlo; 11 to 13 years group, Patricia Samuelrich, Georg-

ine Glaney, Judy Gallerafi, Marieze Ciparelli, Marilyn Kennedy, Patricia Kennedy, John Lee, Virginia Kane, bean guessing contest, \$03 in the jar, Robert Alekson guessed \$40.

More than 70 children entered the various contests, and more than 500 persons attended the program, which was under direction of Miss Nancy Redway, supervisor of children's activities at the playgrounds. Judges were Mrs. Norris J. King, Mrs. William J. McCue and Mrs. Albert W. Mr. Robert Alekson guessed \$00.

More than 70 children entered the various contests, and more than 500 persons attended the program, which was under direction of Miss Nancy Redway, supervisor of children's activities at the playgrounds. Judges were Mrs. Norris J. King, Mrs. William J. McCue and Mrs. Albert W. Redway.

At the park swimming pool, the closing program included a water festival, and prizes were awarded as follows: balloon race, Sarah Wallace; relay race, Patricia Kennedy, Robert Fuller, Dale Harris, Gloria Zetterholm, Robert Oliva, Bernard Hanson; boys' races, seven to eight years group, Thomas Kane, first; Richard Colo, second; nine and 10 years group, Bernard Hanson, first; Peter Campbell, second; 11 to 13 years group, William Wegrzyniak, first, Robert Nevich, second; 14 to 15 years group, Edward Young, first, Robert Levesque, second; girls' races, nine to 11 years group, Karlene Ciparelli, first, Mary Ann Pa-luck, second; 12 to 14 years group,

Springfield Union, September 1, 1952

Playgrounds Close; Swim Prizes Given

Windsor Locks, Conn., Aug. 26—Closing exercises at the public park playgrounds on Chestnut St., were held yesterday afternoon. The program was in charge of Miss Nancy Fuller, supervisor. Judges were Mrs. Joseph C. Becker, Mrs. Robert H. Fuller, Miss Jane Ann Downes and Miss Carol Wallace.

At the swimming pool, awards were presented to members of swimming classes by Albert J. Holmes, Red Cross instructor, and William Price, assistant. The following received awards:

Intermediate certificates, Dorothy C. Barbieri, Helen Blakeney, Carole M. Castoldi, William Devlin, Mary Ellen Flanagan, Charla Jean McDonald, Brenda J. O'Leary, Cornelius P. O'Leary, Ann Marie Pikul, Dorothy Pilkington, Douglas Quagliaroli, Dagmar Woods, Dietmar Woods, Shirley Young and Peter Samuelrich.

Beginners, Richard Hinekey, James Allen, Joan Becker, Charlotte Mae Becker, Brian A. Burke, Susan Brown, Theresa Carroll, David Sheridan, Vivian Walters, Douglas J. Castoldi, Susan Pikul, Frederick Dearborn, David A. Draghi, Eugene Pilkington, Janice Daurick, June M. Pikul, Bradford Fuller, Donald Quagliaroli, Sherry Lee Gifford, Bruce Riggall,

Cornelius P. O'Leary, Ann Marie Pikul, Dorothy Pilkington, Douglas Quagliaroli, Dagmar Woods, Dietmar Woods, Shirley Young and Peter Samuelrich.

Beginners, Richard Hinekey, James Allen, Joan Becker, Charlotte Mae Becker, Brian A. Burke, Susan Brown, Theresa Carroll, David Sheridan, Vivian Walters, Douglas J. Castoldi, Susan Pikul, Frederick Dearborn, David A. Draghi, Eugene Pilkington, Janice Daurick, June M. Pikul, Bradford Fuller, Donald Quagliaroli, Sherry Lee Gifford, Bruce Riggall, John Goksey, Beverly Ann Sabine, John Kennedy, Alice Marie Shochman, William M. Meehan, Martina Sheridan, William O'Brien and Richard Taravella.

Swimmers' class, Thomas Kane, Melvin Montemerlo, Lewis Krupa, Jane Taravella, Patty Kane, Peggy Draghi, Ann Marie Barbicel and Robert Pasternorio.

Junior lifesaving class, Virginia Kane, Malcolm Berman, Gail Root, Susan Root, Patty Kane, Patty Allen, Jane Taravella, Peggy Draghi and Louis Krupa.

Activities at the playgrounds were brought to a close this afternoon although the public swimming pool will be open for another week.

Springfield Union, Saturday, August 27, 1955

The above article gives the names of the winners of a number of contest at the park, including prettiest doll carriage, crafts and costumes. Following is a photo of the baseball field in St. Mary's Park that was the scene of so many pickup and Little League games. You can see the bleachers behind the field. That was often used for hanging around even when no games were being played on the baseball field. No single place in Windsor Locks was the scene of so many youth activities as this park.



Baseball field at what is now known as Pesci Park

Summer Jobs in the Tobacco Fields

In Connecticut, you can work in stores or factories once you are 16 years old. From 14 to 16 years old, you can only work on a farm. For decades, Windsor Locks youths from 14 to 16 years old have worked on tobacco farms in and around the town. It has long been a “right of passage.” The pay is low. The work is dirty. The bus to take you to the farms leaves before 6AM. Yet Windsor Locks youths have found that the experience is worth it. You not only earned a few dollars, and got some exercise, you learned that you need to do well in school so you can get better jobs when grow up.

Connecticut tobacco is “shade grown” under massive white tents which protect them from the sun and the elements. This tobacco is used for wrapping cigars so the leaves have to be “unmarked,” that is, not flawed by creases, rips, cuts or holes. There are jobs under the massive tents, and other jobs in the tobacco sheds (barns). In the fields, teams of three boys pick the leaves. Two boys picked the leaves and one put the pads of leaves in a cart which he pulled along. In the barns, the girls “sewed” the leaves onto a long string. Those strings were hung up by boys in the higher levels of the shed.

Below are photos of tobacco fields without nets, and of tobacco leaves in a shed.



Tobacco field before nets are put over the wires

- Some of the tobacco farms which hired Windsor Locks youths were:
- Ritchie and Kenny Christian in Poquonock
 - Raffia in Enfield
 - Orie Champigny in Windsor Locks, and
 - Meyer and Mendelson in Windsor.



Tobacco leaves hanging to dry in a shed

The following photo shows that things haven't changed in the tobacco fields since 1927.



Tobacco workers in Enfield, 1927

The Ice Skating Rink on Center Street

Almost everyone who grew up in Windsor Locks in the 1940s, 50s and 60s, remembers the ice skating rink near the corner of Center St, and Whiton St. It was down the hill from the ballpark behind St. Mary's school. It wasn't fancy. There was a small shed with a pot belly stove where you could change into your ice skates.

Below are two photos of that ice skating rink. In the second photo, you can see the small warming shed. There were no covered ice skating rinks anywhere near Windsor Locks. This was a popular spot on winter days and early evenings.



Ice Skating rink on Center Street near Whiton St.



Ice Skating rink on Center St. Warming shed is on the right.

St. Oronzo Day Celebrations

Many of the Italian immigrants in Windsor Locks came from near the city of Bari in southern Italy. Just south of Bari is a small village named Turi. The patron saint of Turi is St. Oronzo. My grandparents, Vito and Anna Colapietro, came from Turi. Vito owned and operated Coly's Hotel, across from the Train Station. He became president of the St. Oronzo Society for a while in the 1940s. Here is a photo of the statue of St. Oronzo in front of St. Mary's Church, where it was housed every day except for St. Oronzo day, when it was taken out for the parade. Folks remember the strings of dollar bills were pinned to the statue as a donation.



*St. Oronzo celebration, St. Mary's Church, Windsor Locks, Conn.
Vito Colapietro, President of St. Oronzo Society standing in front of statue*

After the parade, which included an Italian band, marched through the downtown area, the celebration moved to a field where there was Italian food, music and games. At night, the celebration ended with a big fireworks display. In Windsor Locks, St. Oronzo Day is a bit like St. Patrick's Day. Everyone celebrates both. Often they were celebrated in Stella's Charles-Ten Polish Restaurant.

Dr. Carniglia

It was impossible to live in Windsor Locks in the 1940s and 50s without knowing Dr. Carniglia. He was everybody's doctor. He grew up in Windsor Locks and went to medical school at Harvard. He graduated in 1931 and returned to Windsor Locks to be the town doctor. After seeing patients all day in his office, his wife drove him around to make house calls in the evening. He was my grandparents' doctor. He was my parents' doctor, and my doctor. He set my broken arm, sewed up my chin, and got me through childhood diseases. His office and home was at 5 North Main St. He gave children a slip of paper that could be redeemed for an ice cream cone at Carroll's Drug store.

Dr. Carniglia spoiled us. He showed us what a family doctor could be. He was utterly selfless. No other doctor comes close to the standard that Dr. Carniglia set. He

also showed us, by example and not by words, that you can do well if you set high goals for yourself and work hard to meet them.

Dr. Carniglia was the most well known and well-respected citizen of Windsor Locks. He died in 1970.



The Rialto Theater

The Rialto Theater on Main St was the place for kids to go on Saturday afternoons for the Saturday matinee. We saw the 1940s cowboy heroes such as Hopalong Cassidy, Roy Rogers and Gene Autry in the 1950s. We saw cartoons. There was a special thing that the Rialto Theater often did at the matinees. They gave you a ticket with a number between 1 and 10 when you purchased your admission ticket. Before the main feature, there was a short film which showed a race of some sort. It was comical in nature, but serious business to the kids in the theater. If the horse, dog, car or human wearing the number on your ticket came in first in the race, you got a prize, which was popcorn or a drink.



The Rialto Theater, Main St. Windsor Locks, Conn

The Windsor Locks Town Dump

It might seem strange to put the town dump on a list of things that many of us experienced as we grew up. Back then, we didn't have trash pickup at our homes, so we drove it to the dump, where it burned. You would see fires everywhere. You parked your car where you wanted (not over a section that that was burning), and you dumped your garbage. A dump like this would not be permitted to exist today. Back then, we thought it was normal. Besides dumping our trash there, male youths often used the dump for target practice. The dump had a good supply of rats. Below is a 1960 photo of the town dump which was then located on West Spring Street. If you didn't know this was a dump, you might think the photo had a certain beauty.



Windsor Locks Town Dump, West Spring St. 1960

Windsor Locks' Ethnic Markets

There were many ethnic markets in Windsor Locks back then: Johnny Cappa's, Aldo's Oak Street Market, Preli's Market, Barberi's Home Style Bakery, and Sisitzky's Market. Let's take a quick look at each.

Johnny's Market, run by Johnny Cappa was on Chestnut St, near St. Mary's Church. It always had a bunch of bicycles parked in front of it. It was the place where all the kids went for penny candy. In front of the cash register there was an old time Coke cooler with a lift-up lid. When you lifted the lid, you saw bottles of soda sitting neck-deep in very cold water. Above the water was a hose through which the water was pumped. To test his toughness, a boy would put his hand in the stream of water and see how long he could leave it there. Of course, Johnny didn't let it go on too long. He'd yell at us to close the lid. Below is a photo of Johnny's Market.



Johnny Cappa's Market, Chestnut St, Windsor Locks, CT

Aldo Sartirana ran the Oak Street Market, which was on Oak Street, just up from Main Street. Aldo's was the place where you went for a nice loaf of REAL Italian bread, and Italian cold-cuts. However it wasn't just Italians who went there. Here is a photo of the interior of Aldo's market, the formal name of which was the Oak St. Market. Like any good Italian market, Aldo's smelled good. It was a unique piece of Americana. Prior to being the Oak Street Market, it was owned by Joe Borracci and was known as "Joe's." Aldo opened his market in the 1950s, and it lasted until the Main Street re-development which razed all of the stores in the 1970s. He was in business for 22 years. He always had a couple of high school boys working there after school. They not only stocked shelves and worked the counters, but they also did deliveries after school and on Saturdays. Chet Pohorylo and Jim Roche were two of those high schoolers, and both claim it was the best job they ever had.



Aldo's Market (Oak Street Market)

Bert's Market on North Street was a popular neighborhood market on North Street, near Suffield Street.



Bert's Market, North Street, near Suffield Street

Finally, there was the unforgettable bakery on Main St. in Windsor Locks. It was Barberi's "Home Style Bakery." That was the place to go for doughnuts, cakes, cookies and all sorts of baked goodies. It was a popular place for the kids to go for a treat. It was where you got birthday cakes. It was a place to go on Sunday after church.

Bartholomew Preli ran an Italian Market on lower Grove St, across from Blanche's Bowling Alley. He had excellent sausages as well as sliced processed meats and cheeses, and a vast assortment of Italian specialties.



Barberi's Home Style Bakery, Main St.

Sisitzky's Market on Main Street had exceptionally good meats. Markets such as these were the early convenience stores. See photograph below.



Sisitzky's Market, Main Street

Bradley Field

Bradley Field played a large role in our childhood in Windsor Locks. There was always a number of cars with parents and kids who visited the "old Bradley Field" for the thrill of watching the propeller planes take off and land. Many of us remember the old wooden buildings. The folks at Bradley Field were very nice to Boy Scouts. If you were doing your aviation merit badge, they would take you into the tower. They let me turn the lights on the runways late one afternoon. That was a thrill. Kids loved going into the terminal and then out to the platform where you could stand outside and watch the planes come and go. Those were the days before high airport security.

If someone in the family was going to take an airplane trip in the late 1940s and early 50s, it was a BIG THING. No one took an airplane trip unless it was important. When a family member was going on a flight, family members got all dressed up and went to the airport to wish them good luck. There were machines at the terminal into which you could insert quarters to buy insurance for the person who was going to take a flight. You couldn't let a relative take a flight without buying them some insurance. Looking back, that seems like a gruesome thought, but it seemed right at the time.

Bradley Field was not just a terminal where airplanes took off and landed. It was also a high-tech employment area. There was Hamilton Standard, Kaman Aircraft, Pratt and Whitney and other prestigious companies. Fathers of friends worked there. That opened my eyes to the possibility of the aviation industry when I grew up. Eventually, I spent a decade in the field of aviation and the rest of my career at NASA. There is no doubt that the aviation industry at Bradley Field pushed me in that direction. While at NASA, I worked with Hamilton Standard, which built NASA's space suits.



Babb's Beach

Back in the 40s, 50s and 60s, air conditioning didn't exist. In the summer, the kids liked to get away from town and go to a place to swim and cool off. Babb's Beach on Lake Congamond is only a few miles away in West Suffield. It was a place to swim, and it had a roller skating rink and there were dances. It was a popular place to go for the teenagers to go. Babb's was not new. It started in the 1890s. By the 1940s, it had big bands like Tommy Dorsey and Harry James. In the 1950s, the roller rink opened up, and it became a "cool" place to go. It was a favorite with the Windsor Locks crowd. It is now on the National Register of Historic places.



East Windsor Drive In

A big part of growing up in Windsor Locks was going to the Drive-In movies. The East Windsor Drive in was just across the river. Prices were low. Families went there with their kids already in their pajamas. It was a popular place for teenagers to go on a date. The place had a park with swings for the kids to use before the show, and it had a refreshment stand. It was a quintessential old-fashioned Drive-In. Research didn't turn up any photos of the East Windsor Drive-In. However, it did produce an aerial photo of the theater taken in 1962. Notice the area that looks like an amphitheater.



East Windsor Drive in - Arial View 1962

Railroad Salvage

Just as Dexter Plaza was one of the first Shopping Centers in the United States, Railroad Salvage was the first of the closeout stores in the Northeast, and one of the first in the nation. Now places like Job Lots and Odd Lots are everywhere. The Railroad Salvage store in East Windsor was not far from the East Windsor Drive-In. It was a place that Windsor Locks folks flocked to, to get bargains on everything from Hai Karate cologne to rugs, beds, outdoor furniture and CB Radios.

Ruby Vine, the man who founded Railroad Salvage was a World War II veteran, who lived in New Haven. In WWII, he was captured at the Battle of the Bulge, but he survived and returned to the US to become a first class entrepreneur. The TV commercials that he and his wife did were hilarious by today's standards. He was goofy and boisterous, edgy and cheesy, but it worked.

If you were among the many from Windsor Locks who frequented Railroad Salvage, you probably met and knew Ruby, Below is a photo of Ruby and his wife.



**Ruby Vine and his wife "Choo Choo"
in a Railroad Salvage commercial**

Following is a photo of the Railroad Salvage store. This photo may or may not be one of the store in East Windsor. In any case, this photo evokes the spirit of that store.



Railroad Salvage Store

Riverside Park

Growing up in Windsor Locks, we often left town for some excitement, not just to Babb's Beach, the East Windsor Drive in and Railroad Salvage, but also to RIVERSIDE PARK. Riverside Park was the only amusement park around. It had a speedway where we watched Jocko Maggiacomo race. We roller skated, rode the bumper cars, the old wooden roller coaster and the Ferris wheel. We showed our strength by hitting a metal plate with a hammer, trying make the ball hit the bell, ate cotton candy and played the carnival games. It is fair to say that boys went there to meet girls, and girls went there to meet boys. Going to Riverside Park wasn't something you did once a year. You went as often as you could. If you didn't have much money, and most of us didn't, you just went there to hang out with your friends and look for some excitement.



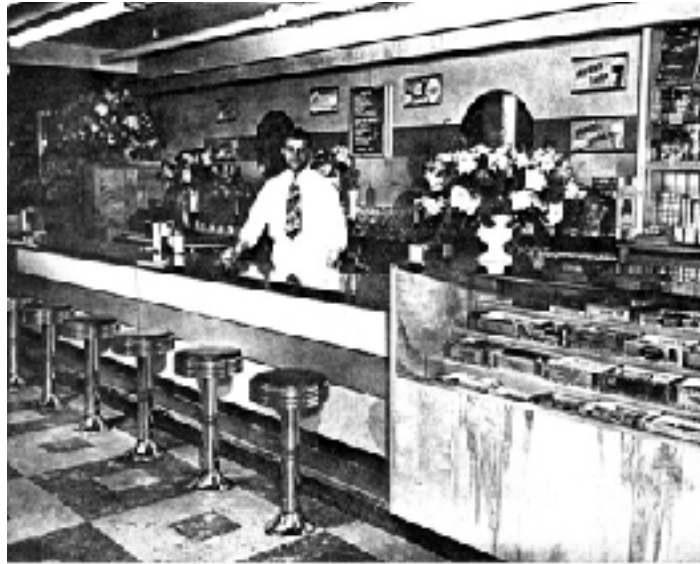
Riverside Park, Agawam, Mass.

Going Out for Ice Cream

In the decades prior to air conditioning, going out for an ice cream in the summer was almost a necessity. It was something that we did a lot of in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. There were a number of places you could go for ice cream, but four were the most popular: Wuzzy's (Marconi Brothers' Luncheonette), Tony's Soda Shoppe, Carroll's Pharmacy in downtown Windsor Locks, and the Dairy Cream on Turnpike Road by Bradley Field. Each had its own niche. Wuzzy's was the teen-age hangout. It was popular. It was an institution that could not be duplicated. Tony's Soda Shoppe was a more traditional ice cream parlor. They didn't serve meals. Carroll's Pharmacy was primarily a pharmacy, but the kids at the time didn't seem to know that. It was where you went for an ice cream cone. The Dairy Cream introduced Windsor Locks to the wonders of soft serve ice cream. It is the only one of the four ice cream stores mentioned above which is still in existence in 2016. It has expanded and is flourishing. Here are photos of those four unforgettable ice cream stores.



Marconi's Luncheonette on corner of Spring St. and Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn., was usually called "Wuzzy's".
A great Ice Cream Store and teenage hangout .



Tony Colapietro at opening of Tony's Soda Shop, around 1950



James P. Carroll in his store. About 1955



Pizza and Grinders

Along with Ice Cream, growing up in Windsor Locks meant Pizza and Grinders. Windsor Locks has had a love affair with pizza and grinders since they were introduced to the town in the 1940s. Getting pizza for parties at home, or going out for a pizza was something we all did in Windsor Locks as we grew up in the 40s, 50s and 60s. The craze has not slowed down. The “Big Four” pizza and grinder shops in Windsor Locks were (and still are): AD’s, H&M, Second Poquonock and the Pizza Parlor. Back then, there were others such as Piccolos, Tanya’s, and Franks. We all had our favorites. The Big Four have expanded since they first opened, and all four are still going strong as of this writing in 2016. Here are photos of the Big Four pizza/grinder shops.



AD's original Pizza and Grinder shop on Main St.



Pizza Parlor Restaurant, 255 Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn - Since 1975



H&M Pizza and Giant Grinder Shop - the original store - 1972



The “Box from the Locks”

Everyone who lived in Windsor Locks in the 1960s remembers a black hearse with the words “The Box from the Locks” painted on the side. It was the prized possession of Richard Quagliaroli. It was absolutely unique. Richie’s mother often gave him grief over his car, but he kept it for quite awhile. Ritchie graduated from Windsor Locks High School in 1960. You could often see him on Main Street, or stopped in front of Marconi’s, or in Dexter Plaza with his friends, Harold Sutton and Tommy Taravella. The “Box from the Locks” was known from Hartford to Springfield. Below are photos of the hearse. Richie is in the first photo.



1965 Windsor Locks Little League World Champions

In 1965, Windsor Locks won the Little League World Championship. The team members were: Bruce Akerlind, Francis Aniello, Jr., Wayne Arent, Albert Barrett, Thomas Billick, William Boardman, Robert Creech, Jr., Philip Devlin, Edward Holmes, Russell Mattesen, Dale Misiek, Michael O'Connor, Robert O'Connor, Michael Roche, Stephen Scheerer, and Howard Tersavich Jr.

The 1965 championship used the single elimination technique. If a team lost a single game, they were out of the tournament. They had to win 13 games in a row to win the championship. Worldwide, there were 6,300 teams competing. The Windsor Locks team had two great pitchers, Bill Boardman and Mike Roche. who had a combined Earned Run Average of .5, which was phenomenal.



Windsor Locks 1965 Little League World Series Champions

Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop

It has been said that the one place that shows up in most wedding photographs that were taken in Windsor Locks is Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop. Photos taken from the front of St. Mary's church of newlyweds leaving the church had Tony's place in the background. Everyone went to Tony's to get new soles, heels and other repairs. He opened his shoe repair shop at 29 Spring Street in 1929, and it remained open for 43 years, until he retired in 1972. Below is a photo of Tony in his shop.



Tony Basile

Blanche's Bowling Alley

Blanche Bianchi ran a small bowling alley on Grove St, just up from Main St. Bowling was very inexpensive. There were no automated pin-setters. Blanche had "pin boys" who set the pins for you. Unfortunately, Blanche's bowling alley burned down on February 4, 1972. I could not find a photo of the bowling alley which was taken before the fire occurred. Here is one which was taken after the fire.



Blanche's Bowling Alley after the fire

The upper floor of this building used to be a movie theater. It was known as the Princess Theater and later as the Palace Theater. It operated as the Princess Theater as early as 1914. No information could be found on when the names changed but we know that in 1929, this building, with the Palace Theater on the top floor, was sold and the new owner installed four bowling alleys on the ground floor.

Windsor Locks Centennial Celebration - 1954

The Enfield Falls Canal was finished in 1829. A new settlement formed near the locks of the canal, in the area called Pine Meadow. In 1854, it was incorporated as Windsor Locks. One hundred years later, Windsor Locks celebrated its Centennial. There were festivities, a Centennial Ball, an afternoon of sports contests, and a fishing derby. Below is a photo of Governor Lodge, Jane Pastamerlo, the Centennial Queen, and other dignitaries.



Gov. Lodge Howard White Windsor Locks
Jane Pastamerlo Loretta Rooney, Rev. Peck Centennial
Centennial Queen 1954

MAIN STREET

There is one single thing that everyone who grew up in Windsor Locks in the 40s, 50s and 60s will carry with them forever. That is the memory of the old Main Street, as it existed before re-development in the late 1960s. It didn't matter whether you lived downtown, in the Southwest section or in the northern section of Windsor Locks, you spent an enormous amount of time on Main St. You went to Sid's Modern Drug, the Rialto, Wuzzy's, Bidwell's Hardware, the First National Bank, the First National Grocery Store, Bianchi's Restaurant, the A&P, AD's, Barberi's Home Style Bakery, Swede's Jewelry store, the Donut Kettle, LaRussa's appliance store, Bianchi's Shoe store, the Post Office, the Library, and certainly the train station. Main Street is where we went to shop, to hang out, and to live the Windsor Locks life.

The sound of the train whistle and the hustle and bustle of a small town center are embedded in our memory forever. Main Street was the vital center of small town life. It was a big part of growing up in Windsor Locks. Below are photos of Main St before and after the re-development of the 1970s. The difference is overwhelmingly obvious.



Main Street before and after redevelopment

CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this chapter was to bring back those nostalgic memories of the town we grew up in, by describing the things we had in common while growing up in Windsor Locks in the 1940s, 50, and 60s. These are the things that give us a special bond. We looked at 42 old photos and two newspaper clippings about the shared events of our youth. We took a brief historical trip through the time of our youth.

Chapter 2

Ice Cream Stores of Windsor Locks

The citizens of Windsor Locks have a long-standing love affair with ice cream. Ice cream stores have been a prominent fixture in Windsor Locks since before 1900. This chapter presents photographs and stories about the ice cream stores of Windsor Locks from about 1888 to the 1960s. It was in the 1950s and 60s when two new trends started. One was that small, locally owned stores started to be replaced by stores of large chains such as Friendly's. The second was the introduction soft-serve ice cream, such as that served by the Dairy Cream on Ella Grasso Turnpike, across from Bradley Field.

The ice cream stores which are discussed in this chapter are:

- **Pasquale Colapietro's store**, in the Mather Block of Main St.
- **Dominick Alfano's store**, in the Barrett building on Main St., just south of Church St.
- **Leo Viola's store**, in the Barrett building on Main St., just south of Church St.
- **Vito Colapietro's store**, which at the Main St. level of Coly's Hotel
- **The Co-op Pharmacy**, Main St.
- **Carroll's Pharmacy**, on Suffield St
- **Marconi's Luncheonette (Wuzzy's)** on the corner of Spring St and Main St.
- **Tony's Soda Shoppe**. Vito Colapietro turned his store over to his son, Tony.
- **Dougherty's Drug Store** in Dexter Plaza
- **Friendly's** in Dexter Plaza
- **Dairy Cream** on Ella Grasso Turnpike, near Bradley Field

While ice cream could be purchased in other stores such as the A&P on Main St., this chapter focusses on the stores to which families, groups of friends, and individuals went to relax, have conversations, and enjoy an ice cream cone, an ice cream sundae or a milkshake.

Pasquale Colapietro's Ice Cream Store

Below is a 1906 photo of Pasquale Colapietro's store. In that photo, Pasquale Colapietro, known as "Patsy Coly" is sitting down on the left. His daughter, Pasqualina, who was known as Esther, is by his side. It was common for Italian immigrants to Americanize their names because non-Italians found the Italian pronunciation to be difficult. Patsy's dog can be seen beside Esther. Patsy was the oldest of four Colapietro brothers. One of his brothers, Vito, who came to the US in 1905, is in the center of the picture, behind the dog. To the right of Vito is Patsy's wife, Grazia, who was called "Grace." On the right, behind the counter is another of the Colapietro brothers, Leo, who later moved to Springfield, Mass, and opened up the "Windsor Locks Grocery Store" on Main St. in Springfield.



Pasquale Colapietro's store, Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn. about 1906.
 Pasquale (seated), daughter, Pasqualina, Vito Colapietro,
 Grazia (Patsy's wife), Leo Colapietro behind the counter.

The 1913 "Aero view" map of Windsor Locks indicates that Patsy's store was on the Mather Block, which was the block of Main St between Spring Street and Church Street. Information on that map shows that Patsy's store also sold fruit, cigars, tobacco, groceries, confectionary, post cards, and toys, and imported olive oil.

It was the custom of the time for the first Italian sibling who moved to the US to help his other siblings to come to this country, and to help them when they arrived. All three of Patsy's brothers came to the US. Here is a photo of the four Colapietro brothers. Only one, Giovanni, returned to live in Italy.



*The Colapietro Brothers
 Vito, Giovanni, Leonardo and Pasquale*

Dominick Alfano's Ice Cream Store

This is a photograph of a very early ice cream store in Windsor Locks. You can easily read the name of the store in the window "Dominick Alfano Co." on the front window. Under that are the words "Ice Cream" and "Soda" in large, bold, fancy letters. On each of the left side windows is the word "MOXIE." This store is in the Barrett Building on the corner of Main St. and State St., across Main Street from the bridge to Warehouse Point. If you expand this photo on a computer screen, you will see the word "Grocery" appear on the scalloped awning on the front window.



Dominick Alfano Co. Ice cream shop, in the Barrett Building, Corner of Main St and State St., just south of Church St.

When did this store exist? Look at the next photo, which came from the Windsor Locks Historical Society's website. Both stores are on the same corner of the Barrett Building. The store has the same Moxie signs on the left window, the same slanted corner wall where the door is, and a scalloped front window shade. Underneath that photo on the Windsor Locks Historical Society website, it says: "The *Windsor Locks Journal*, June 8, 1888." Now we know that Alfano's store existed in 1888.



The Windsor Locks Journal
June 8, 1888

Leo Viola's Ice Cream Store

Below is a 1913 photo of Leo Viola's Ice Cream Store.



Main Street, Windsor Locks, Connecticut 1913

By looking at the three previous photos, you will see that this store is in the same location (The Barrett Building) as Dominick Alfano's store. You can't read the lettering on the scalloped awning on the front window in the above photo. Below is an expanded view the section of this photo which has the front window awning. You can clearly see that this is store of Mr. Leo Viola. The 1913 Aero View Map of Windsor Locks lists Leo Viola's store and says that it also sold confectionery, cigars, olive oils, etc. Now we have two pieces of information saying that Leo Viola's store existed in 1913. It is the same store, but under new management.



Image expanded and enhanced to show the name
"Leo Viola" on the awning of the store

Leo Viola store also sold plates with a calendar and a decorative painting of fruit. The plate below has a 1929 Calendar on it, so we know that Leo Viola's store, which had been in operation in 1913, was still in business in 1929.



Advertising plate for Leo Viola's store
with fruit painting and 1929 calendar.
Store was in Barrett Bldg., Main St. Windsor Locks, CT

Vito Colapietro's Ice Cream Store

Earlier in this chapter, you saw a photo of Pasquale Colapietro's Ice Cream Store. Pasquale's younger brother, Vito was in that shop. Vito worked for his brother when he first came over from Turi, Italy. Turi is a tiny town, south of Bari, Italy. The patron saint of Turi is St. Oronzo. Everyone from Windsor Locks knows the name "St. Oronzo." Besides working for his brother, Pasquale, Vito also worked on the bridge to Warehouse Point. Around 1917, he purchased the Byrnes Hotel on Main Street, across from the Train Station. It became known as the Windsor Locks Hotel, and later as Coly's Hotel. On the street level of the hotel, there were three stores. Vito rented out two of them, and used the one on the corner of the Hotel next to the driveway, as an Ice Cream Store. Below is a photo of Vito Colapietro in his store in 1917. Notice that while this store was a bit larger, it is not all that different from Pasquale's store. It had an ice cream and soda counter on one side, and a counter on the other side for selling tobacco products, magazines, candy, post cards, etc. The sign on the right lists the following drinks: grape juice, orangeade, root beer, milk shakes, malted milk. The bottles on the shelf on the right are the syrups that he used. The Coca Cola lamp has a cut glass lamp lampshade that would be worth a small fortune today. The counter was marble.



Vito Colapietro's Candy Store 1917

Vito Colapietro had the following photo "Retouched" for purposes of advertising. It was taken in 1927. You can see Vito in front of his store, wearing a white apron. The man standing next to him was Michael J. Fitzpatrick. The boy with them was Vito's son, John. Notice the other two stores on the street level of the hotel. The one next to Vito's store was "The Boston Store." The one to the left of that was the "Windsor Locks New Market." In the photos of the Dominick Alfano and the Leo Viola stores, you saw the same style of awning over the front window.



*1927 photo of Coly's Hotel "retouched" for advertising.
Michael J. Fitzpatrick, Vito and John J. Colapietro standing*

Vito's Ice Cream Store went through a number of transformations between 1917 and the redevelopment of Main St., but it always had that same style awning. I remember getting out the long metal rod that was used to roll the awning up and down,

and operating it often. Later, the other two stores became a shoe store which was run by Mondo Bianchi, and a Package Store run by Bill Armstead. Back then, liquor stores were known as Package Stores.

The following photo is of Vito's store in 1932. Vito, as always, was wearing a white apron. Next to him are Moses Goldfarb and Vito's son, Leo. Later in life, Leo became a Navy pilot, and was given the nickname "Pete," which stuck with him to the present day. That nickname came from the fact that his Navy buddies couldn't pronounce his last name "Colapietro." The correct pronunciation is "Co la p yet tro." They had trouble with the "p yet" part, so they simplified it to "Pete." When they pronounced his last name, it was "Cola pete tro." Many still use this Americanized pronunciation. Moses Goldfarb ran a rooming house on the upper floors of the building that you seen on the right of the photo.



*Vito Colapietro, Moses Goldfarb, Leo,
in front of Culy's hotel 1932*

By 1933, the Ice Cream Store was transformed into a "beer tavern," as you can see in the following photo. Notice the sign in the right of the photo which said that Vito was not allowed to sell alcoholic beverages other than beer.

The bar was made of two inch thick cherry. The bar was removed later, when he turned the store back to an Ice Cream Store. The bar was removed and stored in a barn behind the hotel. When I started to build a Soap Box Derby car, Vito's son, my Uncle John, remembered the two inch thick cherry bar that had been stored in the barn for decades, and brought it down for me to use as the floorboard of the car.

Below is a photo of me in that Soap Box Derby car, whose floorboard was once Vito's bar top. My brother, Lenny, is in the truck behind me. My car was sponsored by C.H.Dexter & Sons, Inc, which is where my dad worked. They let my dad use their pickup truck to drive my car to the Soap Box Derby track in East Hartford. I built this car in the basement of my dentist, Dr. Sullivan, on the corner of Spring St and Center St. He had an excellent woodworking and metalworking shop in his basement, and he was very generous with his time in helping me build that car.



Vito Colapietro's Beer Tavern 1933



*Mel Montemerlo in Soap Box Derby Car.
His brother Lenny in the truck. About 1955.*

Co-Op Pharmacy (and ice cream store)

Below is a photo of the Co-Op Pharmacy, which was on Main Street in Windsor Locks in 1930. James P. Carroll Jr. and Art Logan worked there part time. Art left to join his brothers in the plumbing business. You can see the Ice cream and soda fountain counter and stools on the right.



Co-Op Pharmacy, Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn., 1930
Art Logan (left) and Jim Carroll Jr. (right) worked there part-time.

Carroll's Pharmacy (which housed a great ice cream store)

James P. Carroll Jr. opened Carroll's Pharmacy in 1945. Unlike the Italians we have just been discussing, who came over around 1900, his ancestor, Richard Carroll, arrived in the US in 1861. By the time James P. Carroll his Pharmacy on Suffield St. in 1945, his family had deep roots here. Charles Carroll, son of James P. Carroll Jr. provided the photo of the Co Op pharmacy and the following photos of Carroll's pharmacy, as well as the information about them.

Below are four photographs of Carroll's Pharmacy around 1955. The captions on the photos provide the names of the people in the photos.



James P. Carroll in his store. About 1955



Jim Carroll, in front of Carroll's Pharmacy. Since Jim was also the Fire Chief, he had a store window dedicated to Fire Prevention Week.



Charles Carroll between his grandfather, James P. Carroll Sr. (left) and his father, James P. Carroll, Jr (right), in Carroll's Pharmacy, Circa 1955



James P. Carroll Jr and Louise Naie in Carroll's Pharmacy

Dr. Ettore Carniglia, who seemed to be everyone's physician in Windsor Locks, used to give his young patients vouchers that could be redeemed for an ice cream cone at Carroll's. Charles Carroll said that in the days of Carroll's Pharmacy, many prescriptions were compounded by hand, and the capsules were filled by hand. He also said that the Pharmacy was on the ground level, and his family lived above the Pharmacy. They built a Cape Cod style house next to the Pharmacy and moved into it in 1963 when the Pharmacy closed. The photos and stories that Charles provided bring back pleasant memories of Carroll's Pharmacy.

Marconi's Luncheonette (affectionately known as Wuzzy's)

Marconi's Luncheonette was on the corner of Spring St and Main St. until the reconstruction of Main St. It was a lot of things to a lot of people. Teenagers will remember it as a hangout. There were booths in the back which were great for hanging out. There was a time when Ella Grasso, who later became the Governor of Connecticut, had breakfast at Marconi's often. The singer, Gene Pitney, went to Marconi's a number of times, always without advance warning. The popular radio announcers, Bob Steele and Brad Davis would visit Marconi's and mention it on the air.

Folks from Windsor Locks remember the booths in the back, the pinball machine, the Cherry Cokes, the homemade meatballs and tomato sauce, the burgers and fries, home fries, sausage grinders, and the list goes on. They also made a chopped pickle and bologna sandwich.

The Marconi brothers were Johnny, Louis and Angelo, who was called "Wuzzy." There is a story about how he got his nickname. The story is: Angelo was supposed to serve Mass one Sunday but he didn't show up. Fr. Grady asked his friends "Angelo wasn't sick, **was he?**" The "was he" sounded like Wuzzy, and ever since, Angelo was known as Wuzzy. Is the story true? Who knows? Back then people didn't have cell phones which could record video of everything. See photo below.



Marconi's Luncheonette on corner of Spring St. and Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn., was usually called "Wuzzy's". A great Ice Cream Store and teenage hangout.

Some people still remember that guitar lessons were given in the floor above Marconi's. Some remember their parents telling them that they couldn't go to Marconi's. Some remember playing "church hooky," and going to Marconi's instead of St. Mary's on Sunday morning. A Saturday night ritual was to stand in front of Marconi's and watch the cars and girls go by, before heading out to Riverside Park. Some who worked as paper boys remember going to Marconi's the day they got paid, and spending too much money on the pinball machine. All of the Marconi brothers had been altar boys at St. Mary's. Marconi's luncheonette was unforgettable.

Tony's Soda Shoppe

In about 1950, Vito Colapietro's son, Tony, took over the ice cream store, and it became known as Tony's Soda Shoppe. Below is a photo of Tony in his store, on opening day. The store was completely remodeled. Notice the newer style stools at the counter. Notice the cigar and cigarette counter on the right. I remember cigarettes selling for as low as 15 cents per pack, but that might have been back when Vito Colapietro ran the store.

The store was decorated for its grand opening as Tony's Soda Shoppe. You can see the vase of flowers on the counter on the right. I remember asking why "shop" was spelled "Shoppe." I also remember not understanding the answer. Uncle Tony let me help take care of customers on that opening day.



Tony Colapietro at opening of Tony's Soda Shop, around 1950

The fact that his son, Tony, was managing the store didn't stop Vito from working there every day. Here is Vito in the store in 1950.



Vito Colapietro at opening of Tony's Soda Shop, around 1950

In the above photo, Vito is at the counter which was toward the back of the store. You can see the stool of the Ice Cream counter at the right of the photo, From the 1950 opening of Tony's Soda Shop until it was closed for the redevelopment of Main St, the store didn't change much. Vito continued to run the hotel from the Ice Cream Store. That's where people paid their hotel bills and where all hotel business was conducted.

Dougherty's Drug Store and Friendly's

In the 1960s and 70s, there were two other ice cream stores on Windsor Locks's Main St. They were in Dexter's Plaza. Dougherty's Drug Store had a classic Ice Cream Store counter. It served everything you would expect from an Ice Cream Store, and it had a lunch menu too. I worked there in the summer of 1962. It was a good experience. I already knew how to make the ice cream dishes. The really interesting thing was learning how to be a short order cook. It was a great summer job.

Just a few doors down from Dougherty's Drug was the new Friendly's. It was much like all the other Friendly's stores in the US. It was a fun place to go. It signaled a change. It signaled the introduction of large chains of ice cream stores. I couldn't find any photos of Dougherty's Drugs or of Friendly's. Here is a photo of Dexter Plaza, where they were located.

Dougherty Drug Store was in the corner at the end of the road that you are looking down. It was to the right of Grant's. Friendly's was also to the right of the road, but closer to the cars are parked on the right.



Dexter Plaza, 1965

DAIRY CREAM (on Ella Grasso Turnpike, near Bradley Field)

The Dairy Cream on Ella Grasso Turnpike near Bradley Field was a big step in the parade of ice cream stores in Windsor Locks. It was founded in 1954. It was the first of the soft-serve ice cream stores in Windsor Locks. It quickly became very popular. There were days and evenings when the parking lot was full and the lines were long. It was, in the tradition of ice cream shops such as "Wuzzy's" (Marconi's Luncheonette), a gathering place for family and friends. It

was a hangout, but in a different sense. People hung out in their cars and in the beds of their pickup trucks in the parking lot instead of in the booths or on stools at an ice cream counter. It was the first place I remember seeing people in the beds of pickup trucks, leisurely enjoying an ice cream treat. It was a place where folks with antique cars met to show off their cars. It is the longest lasting ice cream shop in Windsor Locks. 1954 to the present day (2017) is a half century. Here are five photos of this great Windsor Locks ice cream institution.



Antique Cars in parking lot of Windsor Locks Dairy Cream



Bradley Field Dairy Queen at night



CONCLUSION

Why would anyone bother to write a history of the ice cream shops of a small town like Windsor Locks? Well, if you ask such a question, you are probably not from Windsor Locks. I know from my grandparents, Vito and Anna Colapietro, that ice cream stores were a big part of Windsor Locks culture in the early to mid 1900s. I lived in Windsor Locks from the early 1940s to 1960, and knew Tony's Soda Shoppe, Carroll's Pharmacy, Marconi's Luncheonette (Wuzzy's), Friendly's and the Dairy Cream very well, and I worked at Dougherty's Drug Store's ice cream counter for a summer. All the kids that I knew loved to go out for ice cream. Going out for ice cream in Windsor Locks is a longstanding tradition. It was and is a popular thing for families, friends and for groups of kids to do. Of course, it is a great place to go on a date.

My grandfather, Vito Colapietro, had the ice cream store on the Main Street level of Coly's hotel, and I visited my grandparents at their apartment in the hotel at least two days a week. I was in the ice cream store every day I visited my grandparents. My grandfather taught me how to play the pinball machine in his store before I was three years old. He would lift me up onto the top of a wooden soda box in front of the pin ball machine. He showed me how to use "body English" on the machine; that is, to hit the machine with my body to make the ball go where I wanted it to, but without pushing it so hard that I would "tilt" the machine. He taught me how to make ice cream cones, ice cream sundaes, milk shakes, and banana splits. He showed me how to get the partially frozen gallon of "Lemon Blend" out of the freezer and use an ice pick to loosen it up, and pour a glass for a customer. He taught me how to roll the awning outside the store up and down, and how to stock the shelves in the candy section. You can see why I have such an interest in the Ice Cream Stores of Windsor Locks.

I went to St Mary's Elementary School. One day, something that my grandfather taught me, got me in trouble in math class. The Sister was teaching us fractions. She gave us a worksheet with drawings of fruit and other foods and told us to draw a line on each which cut it in half. Everybody was expected to get 100% on this simple test. I believe I was the only one to disappoint the nice Sister. When it came to the banana, I drew a line across the banana the long way. I remember distinctly that the Sister reprimanded me in front of the entire class, saying: "Why would anyone ever cut a banana the long way? Everyone cuts a banana in half by slicing it across middle (the short way)." I was flabbergasted and astounded. I remember responding, "Well Sister, I guess you have never made a Banana Split." She was very unhappy with my response. I told my mother about this when I got home from school. My mother reprimanded me for being disrespectful to a Nun. All of this was because of ice cream.

Chapter 3

Earliest Pizza & Grinder Shops of Windsor Locks

This chapter presents a history of the earliest pizza and grinder shops in Windsor Locks. When did the first ones open? Who were the early entrepreneurs in this business? How did these businesses change? Anyone who has lived in Windsor Locks knows of the popularity of pizza and grinders in their town. Now it is time to take a look at how it all started. But first, let's take a brief look at just where pizza and grinders started.

The word "pizza" was first documented in the year 997AD in Gaeta, Italy, and it probably has its roots in the Italian flatbread known as foccacia, which was and is often topped with foods and sauce. However, pizza is not only an Italian thing. The ancient Greeks had a flatbread called "plakous" which was flavored with herbs, onion and garlic. In the sixth century BC, the soldiers of Persian King Darius baked flatbread covered with cheese and dates on top of their battle shields. It was, however, the Italians who brought pizza, as we know it, to America when so many Italians immigrated to the US between 1890 and 1930. (*Wikipedia* article on pizza)

The giant sandwich that folks from Windsor Locks call a "grinder" is also an international phenomenon. In the US, the grinder is also referred to as a: submarine, hero, hoagie, Dagwood, and a Po' Boy, but in Windsor Locks, it is a "grinder." Internationally there are the Mexican cemitas, the Cuban "Cuban," the Chilean chacarero, the Vietnamese Banh mi, the Indian vada pav, the Japanese Katsu sando, the Chinese Rou jia mo, the English Butty, the Greek gyro, the Danish Smorrebrod, the Polish zapiekanka, the Israeli sabich, the South African gatsby, and the Australian Vegemite sandwich. The world has been eating grinders for centuries. (from menuism.com)

Now let's take a look at the earliest pizza and grinder shops of Windsor Locks.

Frank's Restaurant

One of the earliest places in Windsor Locks to serve grinders was named "Frank's Restaurant." Frank's was an informal hamburger and hot dog shop on the corner of Elm St and Route 75. It was owned by owned and operated by Frank E. Hancock Sr and his brother, Albert, from the early 1950s to the mid 1960s. They stopped putting ads in the Yellow Pages somewhere between 1973 and 1978. Below is a photo of Frank's that was taken sometime in the 1950s. The photo was made available by the Hancock family.

According to Albert Hancock's obituary in the *Hartford Courant*, Albert also owned the Dairy Cream on Turnpike Road since 1955. Albert later went on to be a food inspector for the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection for 22 years.



***"Frank's" served hamburgs, hot dogs and grinders 1950s
Elm St. & Route 75, Owned by Frank E. Hancock Sr.***

Below is a photo of Frank's Diner during the 1979 Tornado. It was destroyed that day, and it never reopened.



Frank's Diner during 1979 Tornado

Teddy's Restaurant

Teddy's Restaurant at 220 Main St, had the following ad in the 1957 Yellow Pages. According to the ad below, Charles Smith was the "Host." They served sandwiches and grinders "of excellence." It was one of the earliest real Grinder Shops in Windsor Locks. We don't know when Teddy's was founded, but we know it was in existence in 1957, and that it specialized in grinders. It didn't show up in any of the later Windsor Locks phonebook's that I found. It may have been short-lived, or it may have opened long before 1957.



Shonty's Restaurant

Shonty's Restaurant was located at 200 Main St., next to Bianchi's Restaurant. While it was a full service restaurant with steaks, chops and chicken, it also served pizza. Interestingly enough, they called it "La Pizza." The earliest Windsor Locks Yellow Pages I could find was 1957. There was a Shonty's ad in it. Shonty also had ads in the 1967 Yellow Pages. It closed in 1969 during the redevelopment of Main St.



From right to left: Shonty's Restaurant, Bianchi's Restaurant, Culy's Hotel.
At right is corner of Grove St. and Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn.



Tommy's Restaurant

Tommy's restaurant, which was at 180 Turnpike Rd, had an ad which said: "Italian and American Cuisine - Steaks, Chops, Spaghetti, Lasagna, LaPizza." Both Shonty's and Tommy's referred to pizza as "LaPizza." Tommy's had an ad in the 1956 Yellow Pages and had them as late as 1967. Tommy's was on Turnpike Road (Ella Grasso Highway), not far from Tony's Pizza Palace, Tanya's Pizza Palace and Piccolo's Pizza.



The Bridge View Restaurant

The **Bridge View Restaurant**, at 68 Main St, across from the bridge to Warehouse Point, had the following ad in the 1957 Yellow Pages. They specialized in Italian-American home cooking and grinders to take out, as can be seen in the following 1972 Yellow Pages ad. The Bridge View Restaurant has been around for a long time. I haven't been able to determine the year of its founding. Below is another photo of the Bridge View Restaurant during the 1936 flood.



Main St. Windsor Locks during 1936 Flood. Above the left side of the bridge, you can see a "RESTAURANT" sign. That is the Bridge View Restaurant.



Here are two photos of the Bridge View Restaurant before and after remodeling in 1955.



Bridge View Restaurant (toward left, with striped awning)
Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn.



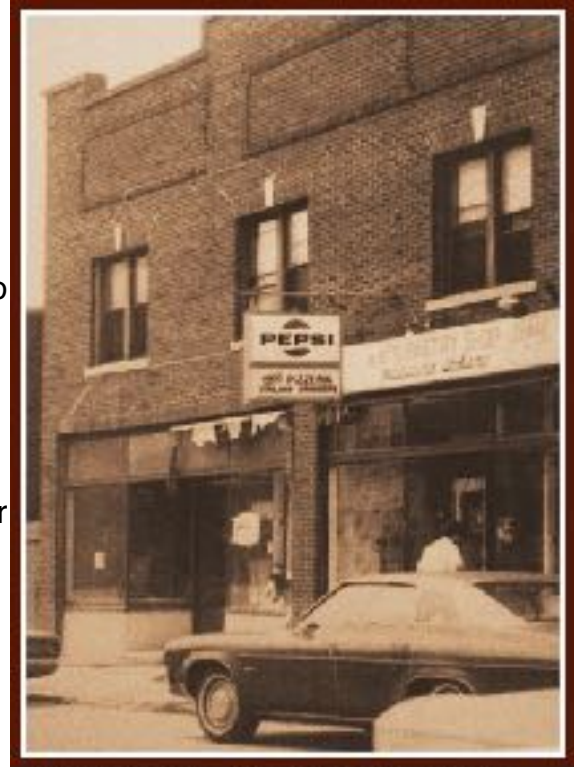
Bridge View Restaurant after 1955 remodeling

AD'S Pizzeria Restaurant

Giuseppe Albano and John DeLeo opened AD's Pastry Shop on Main St. in 1958. Below is a photo of that shop. Their last initials (Albano and DeLeo) provided the name "AD's." They sold pastry, but they featured pizza and grinders, as you can see in the sign in the photo below the word "Pepsi." The Main St. location only seated about eight customers. Its popularity grew.

In 1995, they opened a much larger restaurant on Center Street, near Rt. I-91. While the giant pizzas and grinders are still their featured items, AD's developed a wider menu of Italian specialties. They have a lunch and a dinner menu with a wide variety of Italian specialties. Their new name is "AD's Pizzeria Restaurant."

Below are photos of the new AD's Pizzeria Restaurant, and of its interior.



AD's Pastry Shop, Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn. 1958



In 1995, AD's moved to its new location at 377 S. Center St.



AD's Pizzeria Restaurant on Game Day

After John DeLeo passed away, the job of running the shop went to his wife, Anna, and their two children, Joe and Alfie. The restaurant adopted another feature. It also added a sports bar, with a big emphasis on the Pittsburgh Steelers, although Alfie sometimes wears a Cowboy's jersey on game day. You can see the Pittsburgh Steelers fan club in above photo of the interior of the restaurant. AD's reviews on various restaurant rating websites indicate the place is well liked. They have some customers who have been regulars for more than 20 years.

Susan Famiglietti of Windsor Locks remembered that AD's Pizzeria was at the end of a little strip mall on South Center Street for years right next to their current building.

Karen Pappa said: "I worked at AD's in the late 1960's and 70's. The original owners were Giovanni and his daughter Joanne Albano, the DeLeos only worked part time back then. Joanne and her younger sister, Francis, worked there back then. Anna was a young mother and only came in once in a while. John was a barber full-time, and only worked there part-time. When Joanne and Francis went back to Italy with their husbands, the DeLeos took over full time."

Tony's Pizza Palace

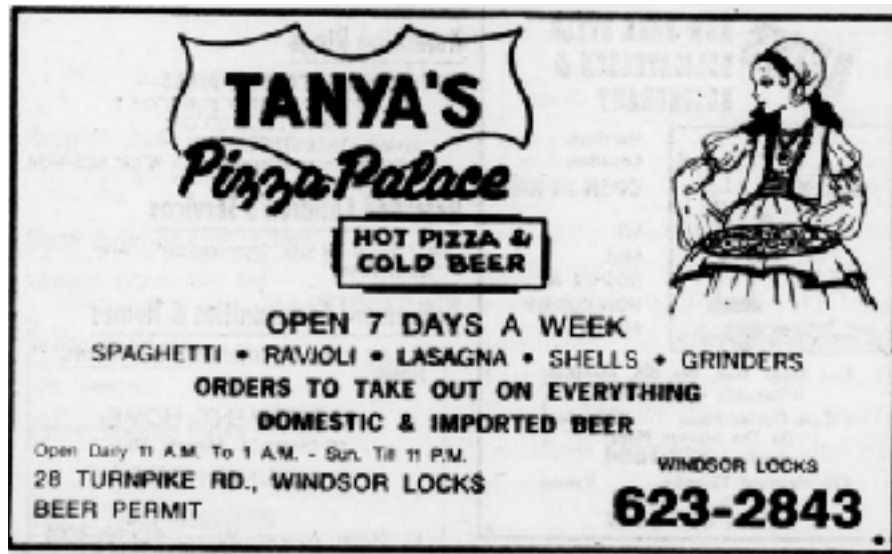
Tony's Pizza Palace had the following ad in the Windsor Locks Yellow Pages in 1970. I have not been able to find any other references to Tony's Pizza Palace on the internet or from contacts in Windsor Locks. From the ad, you can see that they also had Italian specialties such as spaghetti, ravioli, lasagna and shells. Tony's Pizza Palace was at 173 Turnpike Road, between Tanya's Pizza Palace and Piccolo's Pizza, which are discussed later in this chapter. All three of these Pizza shops were near where the Double Tree Inn is now.



Tanya's Pizza Palace

Now, in 2016, many Windsor Locks residents remember Tanya's Pizza Palace fondly. As with Piccolo's, photos of the store could not be found. Below is an ad from

the 1972 Yellow Pages. Tanya's was near Piccolo's, which was on Turnpike Road (Ella Grasso Turnpike) , where the Double Tree hotel is now. Robert Butryman, of Windsor Locks, said that he loved Tanya's Pizza. Tanya's Pizza Palace located near Piccolo's Pizza and Tony's Pizza Palace.



Piccolo Pizza

Piccolo's used their own methods to make grinders. Kathy Case-Driscoll of Windsor Locks remembers that they hollowed out the bread in order to put the meatballs in. Piccolo's was near Tanya's Pizza Palace, where the Double Tree hotel is now (2016). You are probably getting the idea by now that there were a number of pizza places in close proximity.

The first Yellow Pages ad below I could find for Piccolo was in 1972. There was another of their Yellow Pages ads in 1978. Piccolo's probably began in the early 1970s. It was still in business in 1978, but I could find no information as to when it closed.



On April 14, 2008, BusinessWest.com did an article on Domenico Piccolo and his son, Guy. It said that in the early 1970, Domenico Piccolo , a "long-time owner of

Piccolo's Pizza in Windsor Locks" bought a lot of land near Bradley Field, in hopes of relocating his restaurant and lowering overhead. This gives a hint that in the early 1970s, Piccolo Pizza had already been around for a while. The article goes on to say that the land he bought was never used for relocating the restaurant, but rather was used for the airport parking venture which his son, Guy, built. That investment did well.

Kelly Savery of Windsor Locks remembered that the owner of Piccolo's would get a couple guys to lift her Dad in his wheelchair up the steps so they could dine in, and he always gave them quarters for the pinball machine!

H&M Pizza and Giant Grinder Shop

The *Hartford Courant* of Jan. 7, 2002 had an excellent article on the H&M Pizza and Giant Grinder Shop, and its owner, Mahmoud (Moe) Hussein. Moe and his father-in-law opened his original shop in 1972 in a rented storefront on Spring Street. It was a classic pizza and grinder shop. It was a small and unassuming building, but the pizzas and the grinders were very large and very good. The first time I went there, I got a pastrami grinder that could have fed three hungry men. I was hooked. Below is a photo of the original H&M Pizza and Giant Grinder Shop.



H&M Pizza and Giant Grinder Shop - the original store - 1972

In 2003, Moe moved his business to a larger lot beside his original store. The new store has room for about 50 customers. He bought that lot in about 1980, with the intention of expanding his business. He was thinking ahead. From the start, it was a family business, with the whole family pitching in. Moe, who grew up in Jerusalem, immigrated to Connecticut when he was 17. He wears a constant smile.

The new store has an expanded menu. In addition to the giant pizzas and grinders, Moe serves a number of Italian-style meals and salads. H&M doesn't disappoint. The next two photos show the exterior and the interior of the new store.

Kelly Savery of Windsor Locks remembers that Windsor Locks Little League teams often celebrated the end of a season with a Party Pizza from H&M. She said that one ham grinder could feed you for a week.



The new H&M Pizzeria and Giant Grinder shop - 2003
490 Spring St., Windsor Locks, Conn.



Interior of the new H&M Pizza and Giant Grinder shop

The Second Poquonock Giant Grinder and Pizza Shop

Fazza Saleh opened a pizzeria in Poquonock in 1969, after he get back from his military service in Vietnam. In 1975, he opened the Second Poquonock Pizza and Giant Grinder Shop at 75 Old County Road in Windsor Locks. It was a family

operation. The pizzas that you get at the Second Poquonock Pizza and Giant Grinder Shop are big and thick. Their Party Pizza was one of the largest pizzas I had ever seen. Their grinders are enormous, as you can see in the photo below. The food from Second Poquonock is always a party favorite. It is rare that anyone is surprised by the name of a pizza shop, but “Second Poquonock Giant Grinder and Pizza Shop” gets your attention. If you go to Second Poquonock during lunch, you can find a long line. It’s a great place to stop in for just a slice and a coke, as well as to get ready for a party.

Kelly Savery of Windsor Locks remembered that Fazza was well known for making wonderful fried dough at the annual Fireman's carnival.



Second Poquonock Giant Grinder and Pizza Shop
75 Old County Road, Windsor Locks, Conn



Interior of Second Poquonock Giant Grinder and Pizza Shop



Second Poquonock's Giant Italian Grinder

The Pizza Parlor Restaurant

Gus Kostantakis opened the Pizza Parlor Restaurant back in 1975. It is at 225 Main St. in the little shopping center, across from where the old Post Office used to be.

Kelly Savery of Windsor Locks remembered that the Pizza Parlor was once located across the street for many years, and was owned by someone else before Gus. Lynne LaChance Solak remembered that the previous owners were George and Kaye Bonatsakis. That would make it one of the earliest pizza and grinder shops in Windsor Locks. Kelly also remembered that Gus would also let local teenagers fold boxes in exchange for a soda and chips.

The Pizza Parlor Restaurant is not just a pizza shop. It is a full-service, full-menu restaurant with daily specials. The pizzas are excellent. If you check the websites such as Trip Advisor, and you find that the Pizza Parlor gets excellent reviews. As with the other pizza places in Windsor Locks, low prices and good food are the reasons for its longevity. It's a nice place to go for a family gathering or with a group of friends. They can easily handle groups of 15 with only a days notice. Here is an ad taken from a Windsor Locks phone directory of the 1970s. Below are an ad for the Pizza Parlor from the 1978 Yellow Pages, and photographs of the exterior and interior of the store.





Pizza Parlor Restaurant, 255 Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn - Since 1975



Interior of the Pizza Parlor Restaurant

Pizza House (Warehouse Point)

While this chapter is on the early Pizza and Grinder shops of Windsor Locks, it is appropriate to mention the Pizza House, which is located just across the river, in Warehouse Point. It used to be where the Main Fish Market now is, and it was owned and operated by the father of the family who now runs the Fish Market. Gary Todaro was a co-owner. The ad below is from the Windsor Locks Yellow Pages of 1972.



Years in which ads for stores appeared in Yellow Pages

To get a better idea of when the Pizza and Grinder shops were in business, I found some Windsor Locks telephone books, and checked to see if the stores had advertisements in the Yellow Pages. I was only able to locate phone books for six years: 1956, 1957, 1967, 1970, 1973 and 1978. While it would have been better to have the Windsor Locks phone books for every year from 1950 to the present day, the five years that I found cover the range of years in which the early pizza and grinder shops opened.

The following spreadsheet shows the years that each of the Pizza and Grinder shops of Windsor Locks had ads in the six Windsor Locks Yellow Pages that I had access to.

Since all pizza and grinder shops depend heavily on their carry-out business, we can feel confident that this spreadsheet which shows when they were running ads in the Yellow Pages is accurate. Obviously, it would be more precise if we had the Yellow Pages for all years, but that was not possible.

	1956	1957	1967	1970	1973	1978
Frank's	X	X	X	X	X	
Tommy's	X	X	X			
Shonty's	X	X	X			
Bridge View	X	X	X	X	X	
Teddy's		X	X			
AD's			X	X	X	X
Tony's				X		
Piccolo's				X	X	X
Pizza House				X	X	X
Tanya's					X	X
H&M						X
2nd Poquonock						X
Pizza Parlor						X

Conclusion

As we have seen, the first pizza and grinder shops came to Windsor Locks in the 1950s. At first, you could get pizza and grinders at full-service restaurants. Then came the specialty shops which focussed on pizza and grinders. Some of the early pizza and grinder shops of Windsor Locks lasted a long time. AD's, the Second Poquonock, H&M, and the Pizza Parlor are all still going strong as of this writing in 2016. AD's and H&M replaced their initial shops with larger quarters and expanded menus.

The citizens of Windsor Locks have had a long love affair with Pizza and Grinder shops. Why not? They are comfort foods that can be enjoyed out or at home without having to dress up to go out. The service at these locally owned, locally operated shops can't be beat, and the prices are very reasonable.

There were two "centers" of the pizza and grinder business in Windsor Locks. One was Main Street. The other was Turnpike Road, also known as Route 75 and the Ella Grasso Turnpike. Main St. had AD's original store, Shonty's, Teddy's, the Bridge View Restaurant and the Pizza Parlor. Turnpike Road had Tonya's, Piccolo's, Tommy's, Tony's, and Frank's. Of course, in between Main St. and Turnpike Rd, there are three heavy hitters in the pizza and grinder trade: AD's, H&M, and Second Poquonock.

In the Introduction, we saw that pizza and grinders is not just Italian foods. They are international phenomena. As we looked at the pizza shops of Windsor Locks, we see that the pizza and grinder entrepreneurs were ethnically diverse, which is as it should be. Windsor Locks is a town of immigrants, and it was some of those immigrants and their families who built and operated our pizza and grinder shops.

Ideas for this chapter were actively discussed on Facebook's private group page named "You know you're from Windsor Locks when." A number of the people from that group provided information, photos, and suggestions for this chapter. They are: Kat Arbacheski, Lisa Bellinger, Robert Butryman, Lisa Mund Calsetta, Kathy Case-Driscoll, Carol Gagnon, Justine Gamache, Judy Greene Cyr, Shirley Diane, Mickey Danyluk, Kathy Case-Driscoll, Lori DeLuco Deleel, Susan Famiglietti, Larry Ferrari, Alyson Gray, Harvey Jacobson, Rose Anderson Johnson, Celeste Gail Jordan, Joseph McGloin, Gerry Morel, Lee Valbona Moule, Bob Rossi, Karen Pappa, Kimberly Avery Pease, Michael Persuitte, Debbie Hinkley Pham, Donna M. Phillips, Chet Pohorylo, Jim Roche, Mary-Sue Ruiter, Kelly Savery, Carol Schwarz, Lynn LaChance Solak, Nancy Rosa Willard, and Lee Ruggiero Zononi.

Chapter 4

Johnny Cappa and “Johnny’s Market”

Kids growing up in downtown Windsor Locks in the 1950s, 60s and early 1970s knew Johnny Cappa and frequented “Johnny’s Market” on Chestnut St., across from St. Mary’s Church. “Johnny’s” was a place where you could get the normal things you would get in a small market, but it was far more than that. Every time you passed Johnny’s, you saw a number of bicycles lying on the sidewalk in front of his shop. It was the place where kids stopped for penny candy or for a Coke. He also had a stand with comic books. You could get comic books without covers for a nickel.

In front of his counter, he had a Coca Cola cooler in which the bottles sat in very cold water. The door was on the top. You had to pull it up in order to open it. Then you saw the bottles sitting in the water, and you also saw a stream of extremely cold water coming out of a pump. Boys would try to hold their hand in the stream of cold water as long as they could. It was a mark of “strength and power.”

Kids stopped at Johnny’s on the way to or from school, on the way to Pesci Park, on the way to Union School for basketball practice, and on the way to St. Mary’s school for catechism class or choir practice. In the eyes of the youth of downtown Windsor Locks in the 1950s and 60s, there were two iconic stores: Marconi’s Luncheonette, which we called “Wuzzy’s,” and Johnny Cappa’s Market, which we called “Johnny’s.”

Adults frequented Johnny’s too, although for different reasons. Let’s look at some of those reasons. Johnny made fresh grinders for you. You could get a salami, cheese, lettuce and tomato grinder for 50 cents. Johnny’s Market was a single small room, but it was a very tall room, and there were shelves all the way up to the ceiling. Those shelves were packed. He had a few each of lots of items, and he would get them down with a long stick with a claw on the end. Johnny operated that device with great skill. Nothing ever fell.

The Italian community in Windsor Locks loved a brand of bread made in Hartford. It was made by the Moon Bakery. They made the classic round loaf of Italian bread with a thick crust. It came in a white bag. The only problem with this delicious bread was that if you didn’t eat it in about a day, it got as very hard. Of course, even then you could toast it, or dip it in various things like milk. My grandfather, Vito Colapietro, loved to dip it in a glass of wine. Moon Bakery also made grinder rolls. These might have been the best grinder rolls ever made. You could buy them at Aldo’s, Maria’s, the A&P, and Johnny’s. However, Aldo’s, Maria’s and the A&P ran out early. Somehow, Johnny’s always seemed to have them. You could get them there in the evening. Those Moon Bakery grinder rolls cost 5 cents apiece.

There was one more thing which made Johnny’s really special, and way ahead of his time. Johnny’s market was one of the first grocery stores anywhere to make deliveries. His brother, Eddie, had a pickup truck and he made deliveries all day. That gave Johnny’s an advantage over the other markets. Back then, not everyone owned a car. The deliveries were something many people depended on.

Johnny Cappa was born in 1912 and died in 1983. He ran his Market for 28 years, from 1947 to 1975, when he retired. However, none of us really knew Johnny. We just went there for penny candy, a loaf of bread, a Coca Cola or a comic book. We went there as part of a group on bicycles.

Just how popular Johnny Cappa was back then became clear to me this evening when I put up a single, grainy photo of Johnny's Market on the Facebook website known as "You know you are from Windsor Locks when," and it got 45 "likes" and 15 responses in the first three hours it was up. On the spur of the moment, I decided to try to learn what I could about Johnny Cappa by doing a search on the Internet. A search of the *Springfield Union* newspapers yielded seven newspaper articles. They shed a bit of light on the life of Johnny Cappa -- not much light -- but it was very satisfying. I learned more by reading those seven news clippings than I did from visiting his store an uncountable number of times. All seven of those articles are included below.

The first things that came to light were the dates of his birth and death, the year he started his market and the year he retired. All this was stated above. Two articles show that he was a member of the Parent Teacher Association. Another described a break-in at his home, and yet another described how a car smashed into his house. When the car smashed into his house, those who were hurt were attended by Dr. Ettore F. Carniglia. Finally there was the announcement of Johnny Cappa's death.

As I look back at my years growing up in Windsor Locks, I can say that Johnny Cappa and Johnny's Market made a good life even better. He was a boon to the community. He left a good feeling in the minds of the kids and adults who knew him and frequented his market.



Johnny Cappa's Market, Chestnut St, Windsor Locks, CT



Umberto Pesci, Fidelio Giannuzzi, Eddie Cappa, Leo Montemerlo 1927

MRS. TERSILIA CAPPA
Windsor Locks, Conn., Aug. 28—
 Mrs. Tersilia Cappa of 18 Church St., widow of Frank Cappa, died at her home yesterday, following a brief illness. She was born in Italy, and had resided in this town the past 50 years.

She leaves two daughters, Mrs. Virginia Hancock of this town and Mrs. Frank Sabonis of Broad Brook; three sons, Anthony, John and Edward Cappa, all of this town; also one grandson.

The funeral will be held tomorrow morning at 8:30 at the Johnson funeral home on Oak St., followed by requiem high mass in St. Mary's Church at 9. Burial will be in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Springfield Union
August 29, 1955

Groups of PTA Are Announced

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn.—
 Mrs. William Levine, president of Windsor Locks PTA, has announced chairmen of the committees for the year. The PTA includes the high school, Union School and North Street School.

Chairman of the ways and means committee is the first vice-president, Mrs. Lawrence Costello of Circle Dr.; program, the second vice-president, Chester Babiarz of Elm St.; publicity, Mrs. James Hanley of Circle Dr., and Mrs. Chester Babiarz of Elm St.; representative to scholarship committee, Mrs. Norman Green, South Main St.; refreshments, Mrs. David Bazyk of Circle Dr. and cochairman, Mrs. John Cappa of Suffolk St.; hospitality, Mrs. Lawrence Savote of Sunset St. and cochairman, Mrs. Edward Olinsky, Sunset St.; bulletins and publications, Mrs. Edward Janssen, Middle Dr.; printing of Chatter, Mrs. William Fitzgerald of Wedemeyer St.; editor of

Springfield Union
July 28, 1959

ANTHONY J. CAPPA

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn. — Anthony J. Cappa of 18 Church St., died Wednesday in Hartford Hospital. Born in Argentina, son of the late Frank and Theresa (Portoluppi) Cappa, he spent most of his life in this town. He leaves two brothers, John A. Cappa and Edward J. Cappa, both of this town; two sisters, Mrs. Sherman Hancock of this town and Mrs. Frank Sabonis of Broad Brook. The funeral will be held Saturday morning at 8.30 at Johnson funeral home on Oak St., with a requiem high mass in St. Mary's Church at 9. Burial will be in St. Mary's Cemetery. Friends may call at the funeral home from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9.

Springfield Union
Feb. 5, 1960

Windsor Locks Briefs

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn. — The Ladies Auxiliary of Smalley Brothers Post, VFW, will meet Sept. 8 at 8 at the post home. Mrs. Charles Hirth, department president, will make her official visit.

Police are investigating a reported break at the home of John Cappa of 57 Suffield St. According to police, the break occurred between 7.40 and 9.40 p. m. Wednesday. Entrance to the home allegedly was made by breaking a window in a kitchen door and opening the door from the inside. The kitchen and a bedroom appeared to be ransacked but nothing was reported taken.

Springfield Union
Aug. 21, 1965

WINDSOR LOCKS BRIEFS

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn. — A special meeting of Windsor Locks PTA will be held in Union School on Church St. next Wednesday evening, Feb. 10, at 8 p. m. "Brotherhood" will be the theme for the meeting. Guest speakers will be Raymond A. Rotcari, presently national director of the Catholic Men's Retreat Movement; Rabbi Louis Kaplan of the Beth Hillel Synagog in Bloomfield; and Rev. Henry A. Peck, pastor of Windsor Locks Congregational Church. The Junior Choir of St. Mary's Church, under direction of Frank Borchetta, and the Junior Choir of the Congregational Church, under direction of Miss Ethyl Bacon, will sing for the program. Room mothers of the fourth grades of the local public schools and Mrs. Landers' morning kindergarten class will assist Mrs. David Bazyk and Mrs. John Cappa, refreshments chairmen.

Springfield Union
Feb. 6, 1960

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn.—A car owned and operated by Mrs. Ann Marie Bennett of East St., Suffield, got out of control Friday night near Suffield St. and Ahern Ave. and went onto the front lawn of John **Cappa** of 57 Suffield St. It crashed into the front of the **Cappa** home and halted with the front of the car in the living room.

Injured Seriously

Mrs. Bennett and a passenger, Michael Sullivan, also of East St., were seriously injured and were rushed to Springfield Hospital in the Lions Club ambulance. They were attended at the scene by Dr. E. F. Carniglia. Much damage was done to the car and the front of the home. Patrolmen Theodore Fisher is in charge of the police investigation.

Cappa, who operates the Chestnut St. grocery store, had just arrived home. He and his wife were in the rear of the house about ready to eat supper when the crash occurred.

Springfield Union
Dec. 9, 1961

John **Cappa dies at 71; once ran grocery store**

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn. — John A. **Cappa**, 71, of 57 Suffield St., retired 28-year proprietor of a Chestnut Street grocery store, died Friday at home.

A lifelong resident of **Windsor Locks**, he retired in 1975.

He was a communicant of St. Mary's Church.

He leaves his wife, the former Almema Maine; and a brother, Edward A. of **Windsor Locks**.

The funeral will be Monday morning at Kania Funeral Home and in the church with burial in Grove Cemetery. Donations may be made to American Heart Association, or **Windsor Locks** Lions Club Ambulance Fund.

Springfield Union
Sept. 18, 1983

Chapter 5

Sisitzky's Market

From the turn of the century to the 1960s, Windsor Locks was home to a number of small family-owned "markets." Although the town had a large A&P and a First National supermarket, these small neighborhood markets thrived. Each had a cadre of loyal customers. These were the early "convenience stores." In the 1940s, 50s and 60s, Windsor Locks had: Johnny Cappa's, Maria's, Bert's, Aldo's and Macaluso's. There were many earlier markets of this type, such as:

- C. Colli's Meat and Groceries, which was the earliest
- The A.B.C. Company on Main Street
- Preli's on Grove Street
- Joe Balboni's Market predated Bert's on North Street
- Hagerty's Market predated Malec's Market on School Street
- F. Barbari **
- A. Sfreddo **
- J. F. Wallace **
- Joe Borracci's Market predated Aldo's on Oak Street *
- P. Casinghino at 9 Spring Street *
- S. Fisher at 202 Main Street *
- D. Garbarino at 176 Main Street *
- Italian Co-operative Store at 202 Main Street *
- Keever Brothers at 40 Main Street*
- R. M. Montagna at 178 Main Street*
- P. Tenerowicz at 1 South Street * (was small Polish Market under the Tenerowicz duplex)
- Sisitzky's Market at 112 Main Street *

* Those with single asterisks were in a list of markets in a White House Coffee advertisement in the *Springfield Republican* of January 9, 1931

** Those with a double asterisks were in a list of markets in an Armour Co. advertisement in the *Springfield Republican* of October 11, 1924.

While information about Johnny Cappa's, Bert's, Aldo's and Macaluso's are available, not much could be found about the earlier markets. A computer search of area newspapers for articles on most of the early markets yielded few results. However, a computer search on the name "Sisitzky" yielded 64 newspaper articles in the 1900-1961 timeframe. Not all of those articles are about the Sisitzky market of Windsor Locks. There were Sisitzkys in Springfield, Thompsonville, and Windsor. There were at least six markets in the area run by people named Sisitzky, some of whom were related. Besides operating markets, David Sisitzky of Windsor Locks, and the Sisitzkys of Thompsonville owned and rented tenements, stores and offices.

This chapter covers David Sisitzky, the Sisitzky Market of Windsor Locks, and the Sisitzkys of neighboring towns. Below is a photo of the Sisitzky Market on Main Street. Notice the building that it is in, which is between the First National Stores on the left, and Carlisle's on the right. The building has four storefronts on the street level. The building also contains offices and tenements. David Sisitzky bought the entire building, and was in the business of renting stores, offices and tenements, as well as running his market.



Sisitzky's Market, 108 Main St, Windsor Locks, Conn

DAVID SISITZKY

From the 1910 Census, we learn that his name at birth was David Jisitzky. He was born to Aron and Sarah Jisitzky in Russia in 1893. By the time of the 1910 US Census, he had four sisters, Rachel (21), and Bessie (21), Julie (15) and E. Bessie (11), and one brother, Max (19). In 1910, at the age of 17, he and his parents' family were living in Brooklyn, New York. At that time, his father was 47 and his mother was 44. We learn from his World War I Draft Registration form that he was born in Kovno, Russia. His parents and siblings were also born there. They immigrated to the United States in 1908.

In the 1920 Census, the family name had changed to Sissitzky. Notice the double "s" in the middle of the name. His father was no longer listed on the Census. His mother was listed at the head of household. They were living in East Windsor, Connecticut. His family could not be found in the 1930 Census.

In the 1940 United States Census, he had changed his name to David Sisk. The names of his wife and children had also been changed to Sisk. As of the 1940 Census, he was 47 years old and living in Hartford with his wife, Pearl (44), their three children: Alvin (18), Robert (11) and Sidney (8), and their maid, Phyllis Oliwa (33). Note that in

1940, David and Pearl had an 18 year old son, indicating that they were probably married in 1921, right after the 1920 Census had been done.

No other US Census records could be found on his family. Connecticut Death Records show that he died on October 7, 1979 at the age of 87, while living in Bloomfield, Connecticut.

SISITZKY'S MARKET AND REAL ESTATE BUSINESS

Sisitzky's Market was at 112 Main Street in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. Even though David Sisitzky changed his name to Sisk, the newspapers continue to refer to him as Sisitzky. The name of Sisitzky's Market did not change as it went through three different owners during its existence from about 1915 to about 1962.

The story of the Sisitzky Market on Windsor Locks' Main Street is a rich one, with three major characters: David Sisitzky, William Buckley, and James Price. David Sisitzky opened his market in about 1915, when he was only 22. While we don't know when he purchased the whole building, he did it was before 1920. The June 9, 1920 issue of the *Springfield Republican* had an article which said that he was renting tenements to 150 people. He was also renting stores on the street level of his building and offices and tenements in the rest of the building. In other towns, it would be amazing that an immigrant who was less than 30 years old could buy a large, two story, brick building on a prime location in downtown Windsor Locks. However in the early 1900s, Windsor Locks had a number of young entrepreneurial immigrants who rose to wealth in a relatively short period of time. They included: Charles Colli, Leo Viola, Dominick Alfano, Moses Goldfarb, Tommaso Zaccheo, the Colapietro brothers (Vito, Pasquale, and Leo), and others.

The first mention of Sisitzky's Market in regional newspapers was in the April 22, 1916 issue of the *Springfield Republican*. The market was in a list of stores that sold Armour Star meats. Since his store was not listed on the 1913 Aero Map of Windsor Locks, we can assume that the market started between 1914 and 1916.

Sisitzky's Market had advertisements in a number of newspapers in 1916, and in that year, he also advertised for a butcher to work in his market. The meat advertisements were mostly ads for Armour Star meats, which listed the names of all of the local markets at which those products were sold. These ads continued into the 1920s, at which time a similar ad appeared for "White House Coffee."

In the June 9, 1920 issue of the *Springfield Republican*, there was an article which addressed David Sisitzky's attempt to increase rents for 150 tenants by an average of \$10. The article says that he repudiated the charge of being a "rent profiteer." He said that the rent increases were needed to put the tenements in good order and to get a fair return on his investment. At a meeting on June 9, he backed down from the rent increases, declaring that they were a mistake, and that rents would not increase.

In 1936, he leased an office on the second floor of his building to the Democratic party of Windsor Locks. (October 27, 1936 *Springfield Republican*)

In 1940, he took a motor trip to Florida and to other Southern points. The 1940 Census reports said that, his family had a maid. Based on these things, we can

conclude that the Sisitzky family was doing pretty well. (*Springfield Republican* of March 9, 1940)

On September 1, 1951, Dr. Michael Eilbergas leased an office in the Sisitzky building. He got his medical degree in Zurich, Switzerland, and was moving to Windsor Locks from Queens General Hospital in New York City. (*Springfield Union*, August 25, 1951)

In 1957, Mr. Sisitzky joined with Mr. Graziani to sell adjoining pieces of land to the town of Windsor Locks for use as a parking lot behind the First national Bank building. (*Springfield Union*, April 22, 1957)

Now we return to a focus on Sisitzky's Market. Mr. Dan Kervick of Windsor Locks remembers "Dave" Sisitzky very well. He remembers going to the store in the late 1940s. He found Dave to be a friendly, outgoing person. He often saw Mr. Sisitzky help elderly customers. He also remembers the two men who took over the Market so that Mr. Sisitzky could focus on his large rental business. They were Mr. William Buckley and Mr. James Price. Originally, Mr. Sisitzky hired Bill Buckley as a butcher, and a young James Price, as a delivery boy. Bill Buckley taught Jim Price the butcher's trade.

The April 8, 1952 issue of the *Springfield Union* had a reference to the "Buckley and Price" market on Main Street. We do not know whether Bill Buckley and Jim Price owned the business jointly for a time. It is likely that Bill Buckley bought the Market sometime in the 1940s. We know that Bill retired from the Market business in 1958. Beth Price Knecht, Jim Price's daughter, thinks that her father bought the store from Bill Buckley in about 1955.

From 1958 to 1961, Sisitzky's Market had a bowling team that participated in a league at the Villa Rose bowling lanes. The results of their matches were often found in the *Springfield Republican* newspapers from 1958 to 1961. Jim Price was an avid bowler.

Both Bill Buckley and Jim Price were well known and well liked citizens of Windsor Locks. Bill Buckley was born in Holyoke, MA, on June 26, 1892, so he was about the same age as David Sisitzky. He resided in Windsor Locks for 45 years. He was a member of St. Mary's Church, the Gens-Viola Post of the American Legion, and a member of the Lions Club. He had served with the Army in World War I. He married Barbara Krauss. (*Springfield Union* issue of January 7, 1957)

Jim Price was born on August 8, 1920. He was a butcher for a long time. He learned the trade from Bill Buckley at Sisitzky's Market, before buying the Market. After Sisitzky's Market closed in the 1960s, he worked for Shop Rite Supermarkets for 22 years. He was in the Navy in World War II. He was a member of the Smalley Brothers Post 6123 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He married Louise Osborn. They had a son, Richard, and a daughter, Beth. He died in September 1991. He was an avid sportsman, hunter and angler. He collected antique cars and was a breeder of golden retrievers (*Springfield Union-News*, Sept 18, 1991)

MEMORIES OF SISITZKY'S MARKET

Two people who spent much time in Sisitzky's Market have offered comments which provide insight into the store.

Beth Price Knecht, the daughter of Jim Price, knew the store well. She remembers the following: "My dad, Jim Price, bought the store from Bill Buckley. The Sisitzky family owned the building. I remember it had green and white tile floor. There was Dreikorn bread and other brands of bread in the front and to your left as you entered. The cash register was in the front of the store. I think there were two aisles. The meat counter was in the back. My dad was a meat cutter, so that was his domain. I remember him grinding fresh hamburger and cutting roasts to suit each customer's needs. Everything was wrapped in butcher paper back then. The walk-in cooler was in back, and to the left. I remember my dad making me a cup out of folded paper, so I could get a drink of water. On Fridays, they would sometimes do a barbecue at Pesci Park. You brought your own food and the staff would cook it. My mom would wrap up a couple hot dogs in paper, squirt some mustard into waxed paper and fold it up, add hot dog rolls, dessert and a drink, and I'd go off to the park for the day. When the store closed, we had the chest freezer in our basement for many years. The very best part of Sisitzky market was that they used to deliver groceries after you called in your order. My dad was a delivery boy in the late 1930s. He delivered groceries to my maternal grandparents farm in Warehouse Point. That's how my parents met! If not for the market, I wouldn't be here!"

She continued: "The store kept the Sisitzky name. I would guess that my father bought the business in around 1955. I vaguely remember Bill Buckley. My mom worked in the store on Fridays. The store closed down around 1961"

Dan Kervick said: "My dad owned Kervick's Express, a trucking Company that operated between Hartford and Suffield, and in surrounding towns. My dad would have stops at Sisitsky's at least two times a week, bringing fresh meat from Hartford meat packing houses such as "Armour." Each delivery usually included a leg of beef and a whole lamb."

Kervick continued: "In the large walk-in cooler in the market, there were two wooden barrels. There were pickles in one and corned beef in the other. Dave Sisitzky bought cucumbers from local farmers and put them in Bill Buckley's special brine. Soon you had great pickles, and they only cost a dime. You could go into the store and pick out a piece of meat for corned beef. Bill Buckley would mark the piece of meat with a colored stick, and then record in a little book, and put the meat in the wooden barrel for you to pick up a week later. You got "melt in your mouth" corned beef which was perfectly flavored. I had personal experience selling fresh eggs to Dave from chickens that I raised. I also sold him shad from the canal. I would catch a shad or two. I was not a fisherman. I speared them. I would get on my bike, and take them to Sisitzky's and sell them for ten cents per fish. On the way home, I would stop at the Windsor Locks Bakery and buy one jelly doughnut for a nickel."

SISITZKY MARKETS AND BUSINESSES IN NEARBY TOWNS

A search of newspaper articles mentioning the name "Sisitzky" between the years of 1900 and 1950, showed that there were Sisitzky businesses in Springfield, Windsor, Thompsonville and Windsor Locks. The Sisitskys of Windsor and Windsor Locks were relatives. The Sisitzky's of Thompsonville were also of Russian descent, but no evidence could be found that they were related to the other Sisitzkys.

David Sisitzky of Windsor Locks and Max Sisitzky were sons of Aron Jisitzky. Both of them later changed the spelling of their last names to Sisitzky. Max was born in 1891 and David was born in 1893. Both were born in Kosno, Russia.

Max moved to Springfield where he lived on Groveland St. He operated the Longmeadow Market before moving to Windsor, Conn. In Windsor, he operated the Plaza Market for 30 years. After retiring from his market, Max and his wife, Nellie, moved to Miami Beach, Florida, where he died on March 16, 1960.

The April 7, 1914 *Springfield Union* shows two markets in Springfield, Mass. One was owned by Aaron Sisitzky at 417 Walnut Street. The other was owned by J. Sisitzky at 99 Eastern Avenue. No information could be found on either of them in the United States Censuses or elsewhere.

The Sisitzky family of Thompsonville was very active in business. The July 31, 1910 *Springfield Republican* has a story that states: "The new Sisitzky theater on Asnuntuck Street, which is fast nearing completion, will be one of the most substantial buildings for theater purposes between New York and Boston."

Miss Flora Sisitzky, daughter of Nathan Sisitzky of Thompsonville, married Max Block in October 1912. After her father retired in about 1910, Flora assumed control of both of his stores. She then also assumed management of the family's Majestic Theater. Miss Sisitzky was one of the few women to take a lead role in business in this time period. (October 12, 1912 *Springfield Republican*) It should be noted that the theater was very large. It had 1200 seats. It was for live performances, not movies (May 21, 1910 *Springfield Republican*)

The June 6, 1912 issue of the *Springfield Republican* says that the 5 and 10-cent store in the Sisitzky block on South Main Street of Thompsonville was robbed. From this we see that they owned a "Block," that is, a large multipurpose commercial building in town.

The *Springfield Union* of April 7, 1914 shows P. Sisitzky of Thompsonville owning a meat market. That would be Philip Sisitzky.

The January 13, 1915 *Springfield Republican* announces the marriage of Philip Sisitzky, son of Nathan Sisitzky, to Miss Eva Saffire of New York City. Her father is a diamond merchant.

The September 18, 1935 *Springfield Republican* has an article stating that Nathan Sisitzky is demolishing the business block on Pearl Street that he owns. The building was formerly occupied by his father, Philip Sisitzky as a market and grocery store, and by various other lines of business in the adjoining stores. It goes on to say that Nathan Sisitzky plans to clean up the ruins of what was formerly the residence of the late John L. Houston, who for many years was the head of the Hartford Carpet Company.

The January 17, 1940 *Springfield Republican* has an article announcing that Philip Sisitzky of Thompsonville, owner of the Longmeadow Public Market, is going to retire from the business. Philip Sisitzky plans to move to Miami, Florida for his retirement.

We know that Max Sisitzky of Windsor, Connecticut once owned the Longmeadow Market, and then retired to Miami, and that Philip Sisitzky of Thompsonville later owned the Longmeadow Market and then retired to Miami. That would seem to indicate some form of relationship between the two. However, no evidence of this could be found in the US Censuses or elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

This chapter focussed on David Sisitzky and his market on Main Street in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. We saw that he was also into the business of owning a large building in which he rented out stores, offices and tenements. He hired Bill Buckley and James Price to work in his Market. Bill was an experienced butcher. James was brought on to be a delivery boy. Bill taught Jim the butcher trade, and he later bought the market from David Sisitzky. Later, James bought the business from Bill. The market existed from about 1915 to the early 1960s. It did not change its name even though ownership changed. It was a well known and well liked market which sold all of the things you would expect to find in a market, but specialized in excellent meat.

We saw that there were Sisitzky Markets in Springfield, Longmeadow, Thompsonville, and Windsor well as in Windsor Locks. Max Sisitzky of Thompsonville and David Sisitzky of Windsor Locks, were brothers. Philip, Nathan and Flora were active entrepreneurs in Thompsonville. David Sisitzky was an active real estate entrepreneur in Windsor Locks, in addition to owning a market. One can only conclude that the Sisitzkys were accomplished, successful business persons, both in grocery markets and in real estate.

SOURCES

1. *Springfield Republican* of January 9, 1931 - White House Coffee ad
2. *Springfield Republican* of October 11, 1924 - Armour ad
3. 1910 US Census - David Jisitzky
4. 1920 US Census - David Sissitzky
5. Connecticut Death Records - David Sisk
6. *Springfield Republican* of June 9, 1920 - Article on David Sisitzky rent rise
7. *Springfield Republican* of April 22, 1916 - Armour ad
8. *Springfield Republican* of October 27, 1936 - lease office to Democratic party
9. *Springfield Republican* of September 1, 1951 - lease office to Dr. Eilbergas
10. *Springfield Union* issue of April 22, 1957 - sold land to town for parking lot
11. *Springfield Union* of January 7, 1957 - William Buckley obituary
12. *Springfield Union* of April 13, 1954 - Armour ad
13. *Springfield Union-News*, Sept 18, 1991 - James Price obituary
14. *Springfield Union* of April 7, 1914 - Armour ad
15. *Springfield Republican* of July 31, 1910 - Sisitzky builds large theater
16. *Springfield Republican* of October 11, 1912 - wedding of Flora Sisitzky
17. *Springfield Republican* of June 6, 1912 - Sisitzky store robbed
18. *Springfield Republican* of January 13, 1915 - Wedding of Philip Sisitzky
19. *Springfield Republican* of January 18, 1935 - Nathan Sisitzky demolishing old stores
20. *Springfield Republican* of January 17, 1940 - Philip Sisitzky retiring to Florida
21. *Springfield Union* of March 16, 1969 - Max Sisitzky retiring to Florida

Chapter 6

Bert's Market

Hubert F. "Bert" Nussbaum, was the proprietor of Bert's Market. He was born in Buffalo, NY, the son of Norman and Lorraine (Boyle) Nussbaum. Bert and his wife, Ruth (maiden name - Lugauskas) had two sons, James and Robert, and a daughter, Noreen.

Bert's Market served good fresh food. He went to Barberi's Home Style Market each morning to get fresh bread, rolls and other goodies. He was his own butcher. He and his wife, Ruth, made their own German potato salad. He carried a wide variety of groceries and household needs. He sold beer, soda, milk, ice cream, etc. Of course, he had variety of penny candy for the children. He carried products of the Sweet Life Co., whose plant was behind Hood's Ice Cream plant in Suffield.

Like the other small Markets of Windsor Locks in the 1900s, Bert's Market was a forerunner of the Seven-Eleven convenience store. Like Johnny Cappa's Market and Aldo Sartirana's Oak Street market, Bert had a delivery service. It is easy to forget that back in the 1950s, not every family had a car. Like the other neighborhood markets, Bert hired local boys to work in his store. One of them was James Hanley, who has fond memories of his job at Bert's.



Bert's Market, North Street, near Suffield Street

Joe Marinone owned the land that Bert's Market was on. He bought it from Joe Balboni, who had been operating Balboni's Market there. Bert got a 25 year lease on the property and operated his market there from 1947 to Dec. 31, 1972, when his lease ran out. However, Bert was not ready for retirement at that time. He worked at Macaluso's Market on Turnpike Road until his new business, Bert's Spirit Shoppe, was ready for business. It was on the corner of North Street and Turnpike Road. Bert and his wife, Ruth, worked together at his new store, as they had for more than two decades at Bert's Market. As of this writing (2017), Bert's Spirit Shoppe is still in alive and well and being operated by Bert's son, Jimmy. See the photo of Bert's Spirit Shoppe.



Bert's Spirit Shpppe, North St and Route

During World War II, Bert was in the Army, where he was a Supply Sergeant at Bradley Field. His wife, Ruth, also worked for the 6th Army Supply Office at the military airfield in Windsor Locks. However, he met Ruth one day while he was hitchhiking to a USO club dance in town. She stopped to pick him up. Getting into the car, he tripped and fell into puddle by a sewer drain on the curb. Later, at the dance, he asked her to dance. His opening line was: "I'm the one who fell for you earlier today."

One day, Lt. Eugene M. Bradley was in Bert's office when he was a supply sergeant with the 6th Army Air Corps supply office at the air field, just hours before he went on the training flight in which he crashed and died. The airfield was named Bradley Field after him.

Bert was an active member of Riverside Council #26 of the Knights of Columbus, a commander of the Gensi-Viola Post #36 of the American Legion. He was also a commander of the Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 17-2. He was one of the original drivers of the Windsor Locks ambulance.

Bert was a successful Windsor Locks entrepreneur, a husband, a father, a veteran, and a community leader.



Bert Nussbaum

Chapter 7

Aldo Sartirana's Oak Street Market

Aldo Sartirana was the owner and operator of the Oak Street Market. Aldo and his store were fixtures in the Windsor Locks' downtown area prior to the "redevelopment" of Main Street, which eliminated all of the downtown retail stores and rental housing. From 1900 to 1970, there were a number of markets (Aldo's, Maria's, Johnny Cappa's, the ABC Market, Spinelli's, Sisitzky's, etc.) and a couple of Supermarkets (A&P and the First National).

All of these grocery stores, except for the A&P and the First National, were small "Mom and Pop" operations. They were strictly family businesses whose success was dependent on the skills and drive of a single person. While their families were crucial to their ability to survive, the businesses really depended on the person who ran the store. That person had to know the meat business, the grocery business, and all aspects of running a business.

Aldo graduated from Windsor Lock High School, which was in the old Union School in 1934. The graduation class only had 34 students. While in high school, their gym class was held on the third floor of the Central Hall Block, which was where the A&P was located in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. At the time, the Central Hall block had shops on the first floor, the telephone company on the second floor, and a room on the third floor that was used for basketball, boxing, and dances. Aldo worked after school at the A&P, which was then on the corner of Church and Main Streets. He made 17 cents an hour. After graduation, he took a full time position at the A&P, working for Mr. Jimmy Franklin. He was promoted to Produce Manager. See the photo below of Aldo behind the counter of the A&P in the late 1930s.



Aldo Sartirana, A&P produce manager. Late 1930s

Aldo left the A&P after six years and went with Coca-Cola. He was with them from 1940 to 1951, except for the three and a half years he spent in the Army. He rose to the level of Sergeant Major. He was on Omaha Beach on D-Day. Luckily he survived the war and returned to Windsor Locks to continue his life. He married Yolanda Campominosi when he left the Army in 1945.

It was about 1952 when he started his own Oak Street Market, just up the hill a short way from Main Street, on the North side of Oak Street. Previously the store had been Joe Borracci's meat market. Although small, the store was packed with Italian specialties. In the photograph below, Aldo and his father in law, Tony Campominosi are in front of Aldo's Oak Street Market.



Unidentified man, Aldo Satirana, Tony Campominosi 1957

Aldo really focused on the customer. It didn't matter if all you wanted was a loaf of bread or a few slices of processed meat, you were treated well. Tony's father-in-law, Tony Campominosi, worked there, as did Aldo's son, Bobby, who is seen in the next photograph, behind the counter. The boy on the right in that photo is Jim Roche, who had a part-time job there while in high school.



Aldo's son Bobby, and Jim Roche, who worked at the store

Jim Roche and Chet Pohorylo were both high schoolers who worked for Aldo in the 1960 timeframe. Both have said that they enjoyed working for Aldo. Aldo's store was one of the first markets in Windsor Locks to make home deliveries. Aldo operated his store for 22 years. It closed in about 1974, when Main Street and the area to the west of it were torn down during the redevelopment of the Main Street area.

Aldo was an active citizen of Windsor Locks. He was active in the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and in the Knights of Columbus. While being interviewed by Jack Redmond, he said: "The greatest thing that ever happened to me was meeting and marrying Yolanda."

From about 1910 to about 1940, there was another Italian grocery store on Grove Street, not far up from Grove St. It was owned by Bart Preli. Below is a photograph of Preli's store. It was on the ground floor, on the right. Aldo Sartirana's wife was Yolanda Camponimosi. Bart Preli and his wife, Theodora, were Yolanda's uncle and aunt. Even more interesting was the fact that in 1920, Bart Preli was renting a section of his house out to the family of Joseph "Red" Ambrosetti. Mr. Ambrosetti was an owner of the ABC Market on Main St. There was a tight-knit group of Windsor Locks folks who owned the Italian grocery stores.



Preli's Grocery Store, 24 Grove Street, Windsor Locks, Connecticut 1920's

Below is a photo of Joe Borracci's market, which preceded Aldo's Oak Street Market in the same location. Notice the hand-painted sign saying: "JOE'S," which is directly above the man who walking down the street.



*Joe Borracci's Market on Oak St.,
Later became Aldo's Oak Street Market*

Chapter 8

Marconi Brothers Luncheonette

The Marconi Brothers Luncheonette was on the corner of Spring Street and Main Street. It was a lot of things to a lot of people. Teenagers remember it as a hangout. The booths in the back were a great place to relax with friends. There was a time when Ella Grasso, who later became the Governor of Connecticut, often had breakfast there. The singer, Gene Pitney, went there a number of times, always without advance notice. The popular radio announcers, Bob Steele and Brad Davis often visited Marconi's and then mentioned it on their radio shows.

The Marconi brothers were Johnny, Louie and Angelo. Angelo's nickname was "Wuzzy." There is a story about how he got his nickname. On one particular Sunday morning, Angelo was supposed to serve Mass at St. Mary's Church, but he didn't show up. Father Grady wanted to find out why, so he asked some of Angelo's friends: "Angelo wasn't sick, was he?" The "was he" sounded like Wuzzy, and it became Angelo's nickname. Below is a photo of the exterior of Marconi's Luncheonette.



Marconi's Luncheonette on corner of Spring St. and Main St.,
Windser Locks, Conn., was usually called "Wuzzy's".
A great Ice Cream Store and teenage hangout .

Two of the Marconi brothers were amateur boxers as young men. The January 20 and 23, 1929 issues of the *Springfield Republican* had articles showing that Angelo and Louie Marconi were in boxing matches in Central Hall. Central Hall was the building which preceded the A&P, across Main Street from the Railroad Station.

A discussion in 2016, among people who used to frequent the Marconi Brothers Luncheonette, led to some interesting memories. One remembered that guitar lessons were given on the floor above the Luncheonette. A few remembered that their parents told them that they weren't allowed to go to Marconi's. Some remember playing "church hooky" on Sunday morning, and going to Marconi's instead. One remembered the Saturday night ritual of standing in front of Marconi's, trying to get a group together to go to Riverside Park. A few, who worked as paper boys while in high school, remembered going to Marconi's on payday, and spending too much money on the pinball machine. One remembered that all of the Marconi brothers had been alter boys at St. Mary's.

There were booths and a pinball machine in the back. They served delicious Cherry Cokes, homemade meatballs and tomato sauce, burgers and fries, and sausage grinders. They also made an excellent chopped pickle and bologna sandwich.



**Interior of Marconi Brothers Luncheonette.
Louie Marconi is on the left. Waitress not identified**

In the 1960s, the town of Windsor Locks decided to redevelop the Main Street area. It required all retail business owners along Main Street to sell their businesses to the town. Some of the businesses did so readily. Some fought it. The Marconi brothers held out the longest. Eventually, they and the rest of the holdouts lost the battle, and had to sell. The three brothers were rightfully proud of having fought the good fight. They were one of the few businesses which moved to another location. The "Donut Kettle" moved to another location in Windsor Locks. The Marconi Brothers moved their luncheonette to Suffield. Below are two newspaper clippings about the end of the Marconi Brothers Luncheonette on Main Street.

Below are two newspaper stories of the last days of the Marconi Brothers Luncheonette on Main Street, and a high school photo of Louis.



Last Main St. business to sign

John, Angelo, and Louis Marconi take a moment off from their work at Marconi Bros. Luncheonette this week. Yesterday, in signing with the Redevelopment Commission for the sale of their building on the corner of Main Street and Spring Street, they became the last of the Main Street businesses to sell to the agency. The only other business remaining within the urban renewal area which has not yet been acquired by the Redevelopment Commission is the Windsor Locks Journal. Louis Marconi and family will be opening up business on May 20 in Suffield in what is now Buster's in the John's Foodtown shopping plaza. John and Angelo report that they will be retiring temporarily. However, no closing date has actually been set for the present luncheonette, with the two brothers planning to continue until the Redevelopment Agency requires them to leave. Louis described his new Suffield situation . . . not like moving into a strange town." He . . . had just . . . hometown of his wife.

Babysitting To End in Marconi's

By BRUCE FERGUSON
Staff Reporter

Enfield

WINDSOR, LOCKS — The summer, since Louis Marconi's development agency has bought B. White's sight out the "best baby-sitters in town."

Ellis Black bow the standing mess the collar of his white shirt, Louis Marconi stood in back of Marconi Brothers luncheonette and grinned as he said, "Is the future, parents will have to apply somewhere for babysitters."

Louis, Angelo and John Marconi sold to the agency. At work, the building that houses the Main Street luncheonette they have operated since 1949.

"The people in Windsor Locks will be losing their best babysitter," said Louis as his customers sipped coffee, eating breakfast and talking over the morning news.

"Parents will say in their kids, 'here, here's some money.' Go down to Marconi's," Louis continued. "And the kids will come here and drink coffee . . . parents call here all the time for their kids."

It's possible that Suffolk parents will gain the babysitting Windsor Locks from this

It certainly will be a change from the newstand the Marconi brothers opened up in October of 1929, a business that was abruptly closed down by a hurricane in 1938, Louis said.

When Natalie T. Am bush, uncle of gubernatorial candidate Edna Grasso, bought the Rialto Theater Building around that time, the Marconi brothers were operating an ice cream parlor in the first floor of the building. The theater itself was on the second floor, the pool office in part of the first floor as well.

When the brothers moved in to their present establishment, they had to convert a grocery store into the luncheonette that over the years became a gathering place for youth and workers from the nearby factories.

One such workman, Dexter employee Frank Wolgas, has been coming to Marconi's for over 25 years, and said of the fare: "You get the best . . . grade 'a,' whatever you want to call it."

The brothers have also had steady customers of better known town residents. "You came a half hour too late," Louis said Friday. "Our

future governor was here," he added, referring of course to Mrs. Grasso.

"She's a steady customer, when she's in town."

If the luncheonette was going to be around for a while longer it could possibly have served as a debating forum for gubernatorial candidates, since Louis also said that whenever Bob Steele is in the area he stops in for a bite to eat.

"He always orders a pastrami sandwich," Louis said.

The brothers have served as "babysitters" to a generation of kids, served lunch to workers and possible protesters, and in their youth they also served a variety of rich-croissants, left books and jobs to opponents in the beating, according to T. Am bush, who said he has known them all his life.

Kindly Louis and Angelo were at one time prizefighters, sparring in local rings, including one located in a dried up pond off Spring Street.

"I don't know how much money they got," T. Am bush said, "but I don't think they were fighting for nothing."

"They were quite happy."



MR. AND MRS. LOUIS MARCONI
Windsor Locks' loss, Suffolk's gain

—(Times Photo by Ed Sullivan)

Below is a high school photo of Louis Marconi



Chapter 9

Stella's Charles-Ten Restaurant of Windsor Locks: 1942-2016



The Charles-Ten Restaurant was:

- the longest-operating restaurant in Windsor Locks
- a family owned and run restaurant
- the place where everyone knew your name
- host to five generations of patrons
- a restaurant that asked you to eat before you come because the wait for food is long
- a Polish restaurant that served great Italian food, and was fun on St. Patrick's day
- a restaurant/bar with a fiercely loyal clientele
- A WINDSOR LOCKS INSTITUTION

The Charles-Ten Restaurant was founded in 1942 and closed in 2016.



- This chapter presents the intriguing history of the Charles-Ten restaurant using:
- photographs of the Charles-Ten Restaurant,
 - a 1992 column by Jack Redmond about the restaurant,
 - clippings from various newspapers.
- This is the history of the entrepreneurship, hard work and tenacity of Charles and Stella Tenerowicz, their daughter, Ann, and their long-time bartender, Brian Rocheleau.

The Charles-Ten Restaurant opened in 1942

Here is the advertisement that appeared in the *Springfield Republican* newspaper of Friday, March 31, 1942 that announced the opening of the Charles-Ten Restaurant. Below that is a poster announcing the opening of the restaurant.



Springfield Republican, Friday, May 31, 1942



For those who knew the Charles-Ten as a Polish restaurant, it is interesting that both of these initial advertisements focus on seafood, chicken and steak dinners. Nothing succeeds without an initial plan followed by modifications to suit the reality of the day. The restaurant evolved to a focus on Polish and Italian cuisine. It may also have had the smallest kitchen in the history of modern restaurants.

Jack Redmond's 1992 History of the Charles-Ten Restaurant

In the April 24, 1992 issue of the *Windsor Locks Journal*, Jack Redmond wrote an excellent column about the history of the Charles-Ten Restaurant. It was based on extensive interviews with Ann Tenerowicz, who was the owner and manager of the restaurant at that time. That article hung in a frame on a wall at the restaurant. The entire column is included below. It begins and ends with a row of asterisks.

Cabbages and Kings, Jack Redmond, *The Windsor Locks Journal*, page 12,
April 24, 1992

Where Everybody Knows Your Name

In 1942, it was Charles and Stella Tenerowicz's restaurant. In 1970, with the death of Charles, it became Stella's.

In 1983, their daughter, Ann, took over the popular "Charles-Ten" restaurant on South Main Street, and it continues today, as one of the town's landmarks and "where everyone knows your name," in the tradition of Charles and Stella Tenerowicz.

This month marks the 50th anniversary of "Charles-Ten" the restaurant built by "family and friends" with hard work and dedication, according to Ann, a local girl, who now operates the eatery and bar, and was gracious to share with us, the history of this family business.

Ann wanted the restaurant to be the focal point of the story, and it certainly deserves the recognition after the faithful years by Charles and Stella, but we should list a few informational notes on Ann, who runs the business, Sunday to Fridays, four to eleven, with Polish food and good cheer its specialty.

Ann attended St. Mary's school and graduated from a local high school, going to Chandler Junior College in Boston.

She stayed on in Boston, taking on a secretary position for seven years.

When her father passed away, her mother wanted Ann to help out with the restaurant just for a year, she said. However, Ann has stayed on the past two decades.

When her mother became ill, Ann took over the operation in 1983, and became the cook and manager.

A Loyal Bartender

Ann has had the same bartender for more than twelve years, Brian Rocheleau. Ann said, "You can set your watch by him." He added: "you could also call this restaurant "Brian's Place."

Ann does the cooking. Brian tends the bar, in what Ann calls, "a very unique place." As for steady customers, Ninety percent of the customers are "regulars." Four generations of folks from Windsor Locks have been coming to Charles-Ten over the years. Ann admits: "I may work an 80-hour week, and if I have and free time... I enjoy the movies, live theater and a diner."

Before getting into Ann's descriptive and meaningful history and recollections of the past and present of her restaurant, a few personal observations of this landmark.

The bar: comfortable and sociable with its framed sayings, pennants, and her father's war memorabilia and numerous pictures, the small, but very attractive dining room, with polished oak chairs and tables, two booths, old dresser, pictures and newspaper items on the wall, a letter from Ella Grasso and in a corner of the room, a spiral staircase up to Ann's office.

Noticed an item on the wall that contained an original menu of 1942, with the following prices: Shrimp Cocktail 30 cents, spaghetti and meatballs, 50 cents, Hamburgers 15 cents; Steak Diner for \$1.50 and Beer 10 cents.

Also caught this on the bar wall, "What you see here, What you hear here, When you leave here, let it stay here."

A Look Back

But what we saw there, listened to, we could not leave there, and with Ann's blessings, the following are excerpts from her own story of 50 years of Stella's Charles-Ten.

In the 1930s, Charles Tenerowicz started the "Subway" bar in his father's South Street apartment cellar. The clientele grew rapidly, and in 1942, the family and friends built the "Charles-Ten Restaurant."

The building is constructed of three layers of brick, fire-stops 1 1/2 feet apart, steel frame and cellar beams from "Old Hull's Brewery." The family lived in the small apartment above the restaurant.

When the restaurant first opened, it employed two chefs, seven waitresses, with live music for entertainment and the legal drinking age was 21.

At the time, there were few restaurants in Windsor Locks, and the Charles-Ten customers waited in lines extending as far as Dexter Road. As the town grew and more competitive restaurants opened, the Charles-Ten slowly became a "man's" bar.

Ann's father enjoyed television, sports, off color joking, dice, black jack and drinking to the health of his cronies. "NAZDROWIE."

He worked 16 hour days, 7 days a week. He never took a vacation except for one week each summer which he spent at the beach in New London with his family.

The only time he could not be found at the Charles-Ten was when Uncle Sam called for World War Two, and was part of the Normandy invasion. He returned from the war in 1947, with two Purple Hearts and various military decorations.

Bullet wounds to one arm left it without feeling and wounds to his leg left him weak, but he continued his lifestyle right up to his death from cancer in 1970.

Business and Marriage Partners

Ann's mother, was not only Charles' marriage partner, but his business partner as well. She too worked in the restaurant, at first as a waitress and in later years as a cook.

When Ann inherited ownership of the Charles-Ten in 1983, she knew many changes had to be made in order to compete with the large volume of local restaurants.

Her decision was to close for the not so profitable lunch hours, due to antiquated kitchen equipment and limited staff, and spend that time completely renovating each room from top to the bottom, of the entire building.

No major renovation had been done since 1942. She said, "Like my parents I was extremely fortunate to have the dedicated work force of my relatives and close friends to accomplish this task."

"In order not to incur large financial debt in these times of economic uncertainty, I chose the "pay-as-you-go" method. The road has been much longer than expected,

but look back with a great deal of pride in all that my family and I have accomplished with our own hands. They say the 'ole neighborhood tavern' is a dying breed of Americana. "Well, they cant prove it by Stella's Charles-Ten Restaurant"

When it came to management style, Ann had this to say about herself, "I'm a combination of both my parents, inherited my father's dry wit, patriotism and dedication to work, and my mother's strict adherence to the laws, good clean family atmosphere and the "the customer isn't always right" attitude.

One Great Lesson

"Unlike my parents, I have learned one great lesson. No business is worth precious family time or personal health. The clientele will always be here, as we can now boast fourth generation customers. So my own retirement is planned far earlier than my parents, while I still have my own good health and to enjoy life's pleasures."

Ann said this year will be completed with a new modernized kitchen, full staff and expanded business hours.

In retrospect, Ann said, "Finally in 1992 will bring Stella's Charles-Ten to full circle once again. How appropriate, the family's 50th year of business."

The Tenerowicz family has made their restaurant a town landmark, and have earned a special place in the history of Windsor Locks."



Ann Tenerowicz and Brian Rocheleau

That concludes Jack Redmond's column, which was published in the April 24, 1992 *Windsor Locks Journal*.

Jack's column was written when Ann Tenerowicz was the owner/operator of the Charles-Ten. Ann was still the operator/owner when the restaurant closed on Thursday, July 28, 2016. Ann took over in 1983. She ran the restaurant for about 33 years. Her parents had it from 1942 to 1983, which was 41 years. Ann had it almost as long as her parents did. Back in 1988, when Jack wrote the column, Ann said that she wanted to be able to retire "while I still have my own good health and to enjoy life's pleasures." When the restaurant sold in 2016, it had been for sale for years. This fits with what Ann said back in 1988. Ann made her plan come to fruition.

Here are two newspaper clippings about the Charles-Ten restaurants in its earlier years. The first is an ad for a cook that appeared in the June 16, 1946 edition of the *Springfield Republican*. The second is an article in October 8, 1953 edition of the *Springfield Union* about a fire at the restaurant.

CHIEF FOR NIGHT work. Good pay. Pleasant surroundings. Steady position. On main highway. Charles-Ten Restaurant, Windsor Locks 749.

Springfield Republican, June 16, 1946

Restaurant Fire Quickly Checked


Windsor Locks, Conn., Oct. 7—A serious fire at the Charles-Ten Restaurant on South Main St., was averted at 11.30 this morning by quick response and effective work of the Fire Department.

In answer to an alarm from Box 6, firemen found the building filled with smoke. Investigation revealed that the fire was caused by blazing grease in the kitchen, but this was quickly extinguished before any fire damage was caused the building. The only damage was to the broiler equipment, and slight smoke damage to the furnishings.

Below is a Feb. 12, 1944 announcement of the restaurant's new Italian chef.

HERB MILLER Proudly Presents
THOMAS SALVATORE
 former head Chef for fifteen years at Ferdinand's
 Italian-American Restaurant in Brooklyn, N. Y.
 Now in the same position at the
CHARLES-TEN Restaurant


Meet
 Our
 Chef



Open until
 1 A. M.
 Sundays
 until
 9 P. M.

Mr. Salvatore invites you to try his Brozzoltti Langue and Vent Scalloppini
 We guarantee it's the tastiest Italian dish you ever ate.
 Spaghetti All Day Hours, With Cream Sauce, Mushroom Sauce, Marinara Sauce, Meat or Tomato Sauce
 Fried Chicken or Chicken Cacciatore All Kinds of Sea Food
 And For A Real Treat Try Lobster a la Fro-de-ara-**EVERY FRIDAY**
 We can give quick service for the Business Man or hurry snack with our Noon-day Special for those who want the best, in
 Pleasant Surroundings. Make it a steady habit at Herb Miller's Charles-Ten Restaurant.
 As Luffy says "Where The Elite Meet To Eat"

We Welcome
 The Public
 To Inspect
 Our Kitchen



Dine In
 A Truly Home
 Atmosphere

CHARLES-TEN RESTAURANT
 Main and South Streets **12-2-1944** Windsor Locks

Below is a portrait of Charles and Stella. Beside it is a photo of Charles' war mementos, including his Purple Hearts and the bullet that was taken from his arm. Charles was a true World War II hero.



Stella and Charles Tenerowitz

Photographs of the Charles-Ten Restaurant

We saw the facade of the restaurant in the photo on the first page. Now let's turn to the interior of the building, where the action took place. Words can describe a place, but only photos can bring it to life. As mentioned above, the regulars at the Charles-Ten called it "Stella's" or "Stella's Charles-Ten".

Some of the photos here are meant to show the rooms. Others are meant to show the people. In the latter case, the names of the people in the photos are included in the captions. I want to thank Michael J. Moriarty, who was a "regular" of Stella's Charles-Ten, for his help in identifying the people in the photos.



Ann in the kitchen



Brian Rocheleau and Customer Jamie McNamara process first credit card at the bar, March 10, 2010





Michael J. Moriarty and Tanya Petrovets



Grandfather Ray "Frenchy" Oulette, Candi Motuzick, granddaughter Olivia Mikan, daughter Beth Motuzick, mother Elaine Mancino. Five generations at the Charles-Ten.



Tommy Matesen, Ann Tenerowicz, Michael J. Moriarty, Michele Taylor
and 34 year bartender, Brian Rocheleau



The Dining Room

Stella's Wit and Wisdom

Stella's wit, wisdom and philosophy are well stated in the following signs.



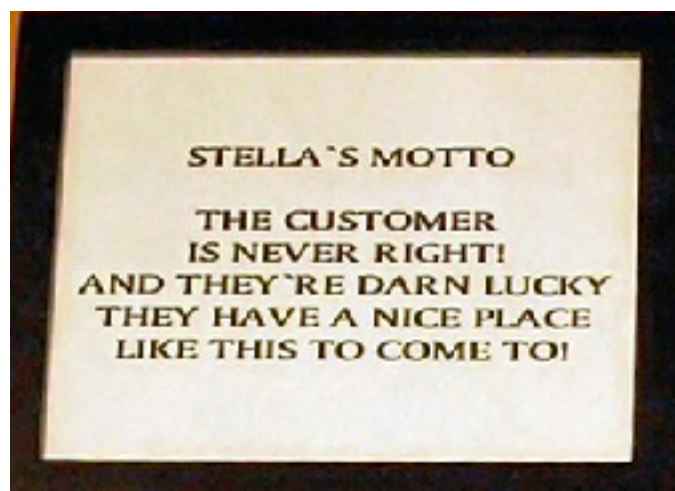
In 1942, along with family and close friends, Stella and Charlie Tenenowicz built this restaurant brick-by-brick. The decor consists of memorabilia collected throughout some sixty years. From the east to the west coast, various newspaper articles have been written about our cozy tavern, which is now the oldest existing eatery in the town of Windsor Locks.

Stella's Charles-Ten Restaurant takes pride in continuing to prepare meals in the traditional form of "home-style" cooking. We do not engage in modern methods of fast foods and microwave ovens. Instead, we cook each order individually in cast iron frying pans, from our own family recipes.

Not only is the food traditional, but our fourth generation clientele is as well. From blue collar workers to the renowned Boston great Carl "Yaz" Yarbrowski, people from all walks of life have been steadily congregating here with a true feeling of comradery. We are proud to be a symbol of the "Old Neighborhood Tavern," a melting pot of Americana.

Welcome and Ma'Zdrowie!

Seasonal Menus Available \$3.00 Color



Below the Painting is Stella's motto, followed by the Best Kept Secrets of Windsor Locks.



STELLA'S MOTTO: "Eat before you come here to eat."

Because the food can be as fast as, hardly as, rules as, as slow as, but it's not. All parking is limited to just one or all drive
 Therefore, to avoid any impatience, if you're in a rush, please ask for the "waiting time" before you order food

The Best Kept Secrets of Windsor Locks!!

- HOME OF THE LATE ELLA T. GRASSO, THE FIRST WOMAN IN THE UNITED STATES TO BE ELECTED GOVERNOR ON HER OWN!
- HOME OF THE ONLY OPERATING CANAL AND LOCKS IN NEW ENGLAND!
- HOME OF THE ONLY AIR MUSEUM IN NEW ENGLAND!
- HOME OF BRADLEY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT!
- HOME OF THE DEXTER CORPORATION, THE OLDEST AMERICAN CORPORATION LISTED ON THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE!
- HOME OF HAMILTON STANDARD, THE COMPANY WHERE THE ASTRONAUTS' SPACESUITS ARE MADE!
- AND, THE ONLY TOWN WITH A ONE-SIDED MAIN STREET!
- *Come and bring the Family . . .*
Discover even more about Windsor Locks!!

The Closing of Stella's Charles-Ten in July of 2016

When this chapter was originally written in July of 2016, the Charles-Ten restaurant was for sale. It had been for sale for a long time. As we saw in the column by Jack Redmond, Ann had long wanted to retire while still in her prime. She got her wish. The restaurant was sold, and the last day of operation was Thursday, July 28, 2013. Ann had made known that the restaurant was closing, and the last week of operation was an extended fond farewell. A silent auction was held to sell much of the memorabilia that had been in the restaurant for decades

Below are photos taken in Stella's Charles-Ten in the last two days that it was open.



JoAnne Roache, Anita Bates, Theresa McKeon, Heather Clem, Tracy Dargenio, Mary Ellen Paul, Terrie Becker



Ann with last batch of galumpkis



Brian behind the bar on the last day



Ann on closing day. 7-28-2016

Conclusion

This chapter has been a brief history of Stella's Charles-Ten Restaurant. We began with a 1942 advertisement that announced the opening of the restaurant. It focussed on seafood, steaks and chicken dinners. Later we saw how that original focus morphed into a focus on Polish and Italian dinners. We saw newspaper clippings about hiring of a chef in 1944, a night cook in 1946, and a fire in 1953.

Then a photo of a framed newspaper column on a wall of the restaurant, which turned out to be a history of the Charles-Ten Restaurant, was transcribed and included here in its entirety. It was an excellent column by Jack Redmond which had been published in the *Windsor Locks Journal*. Jack had spent a great deal of time interviewing Ann Tenerowicz, and the result was a very personal account of the history of the restaurant.

To make this historical review more visual and visceral, a number of photos were presented. They were of Charles, Stella, Ann, Brian and their guests in the bar, and in the dining room. We ended with some of the unique wit, wisdom and philosophy of Stella.

Jack Redmond's 1988 article quoted Ann as wanting to retire at an appropriate time in her life. In March 2016, there was a sign in front of the restaurant, showing that the business was up for sale. Ann made good on her promise to herself. She closed the restaurant on July 28, 2016. More power to her for doing that.

The last week of the restaurant was a joyous party. A number of people came down for the last set of galumpkis that Ann made. There was a silent auction and sale of many of the things that were in the restaurant. It was a bittersweet celebration of people and a place that has meant a lot to Windsor Locks from its inception in 1942 to its closing in 2016.

Those of us who are from Windsor Locks owe a large debt of gratitude to Ann and to her parents, Charles and Stella, and to Brian for making the restaurant into a lasting, unique and wonderful Windsor Locks phenomenon.

There is no more fitting way to end this chapter than to re-use the sentence that Jack Redmond used to end his column on the history of the Charles-Ten Restaurant:

“The Tenerowicz family has made their restaurant a town landmark, and have earned a special place in the history of Windsor Locks.”

Powodzenia Ann i Brian. Niech moc będzie z Tobą.

which is Polish for:

“Good luck to Ann and Brian. May the Force be with you.”

Chapter 10

John Macaluso and His Market

A central feature of the culture of Windsor Locks in the 1900s was the small neighborhood market. Most of these little markets were on or near Main Street. They included: Sisitzky's, Johnny Cappa's, Maria Casinghino's, Bart Preli's, Bert Nussbaum's and Aldo Sartirana's. The fact that these were near Main St. is not surprising. Main Street is where the town of Windsor Locks began. The town expanded from Main Street towards Turnpike Road and Bradley Field in the 1950s. Macaluso's Market was located at 178 Turnpike Road, and it was in operation from 1954 to 1997.

John Macaluso was born in Hartford, Conn. in 1923. He was the son of Damien and Santa (Alberti) Macaluso. He lived most of his life in Windsor Locks, where he was a member of St. Mary's Church, the VFW, the American Legion, and the Knights of Columbus. John was in the Marine Corps during World War II. He married Anna M. (Auretta) Macaluso and they had two sons, John and Thomas.

Macaluso's Market evokes the memory of an earlier era -- one before supermarkets and convenience stores. Its inventory was diverse, from wristwatches to sandwiches to clay pots for plants. His market was well known for its grinders and other lunch specials.

Kelly Savery remembers frequent shopping trips to Macaluso's market, with her father, who used a wheelchair. She remembers that the man behind the counter often gave each of the children a slice of cheese. She also remembers that the folks who worked there actually moved things out of the way so that her father could get his wheelchair where he needed to go. Alfred Bologna's favorite grinder was a combination of sausage, meatballs and sweet onions.

John Macaluso was a butcher, a cook and a businessman. He delivered hamburger and other foods to Windsor Locks schools, and he also catered parties and events. Although no photo of Macaluso's Market could be found, here is a photo/ advertisement that appeared in the Windsor Locks High School's yearbook of the Class of 1969.



Advertisement in
1969 WLHS Yearbook

Local newspapers reported one theft at Macaluso's market. The May 17, 1968 *Springfield Union* said that three youths were involved in a theft of doughnuts from Macaluso's Market on Turnpike Rd.

In a story on the eve of the closing of the store, John Macaluso said that in the 1950s, Route 75 was a dirt road lined by tobacco fields -- long before the motels and car-rental agencies. He said that back then, Bradley International Airport was more like a country airfield. See the aerial photos of area around his store in 1934 and also in 1990. No aerial photo of that area in 1950 was available.



Area near Macaluso's Market in 1934 and in 1990

During the 1950s, John was a member of "The Windsor Locks Poker Club," which was actually a small group of friends to get together on Thursday evenings to play poker. The members were Joe Raccone, Cappy Raccone, Charlie Alfano, Leo Montemerlo and John Macaluso.

Bert Nussbaum, the owner of Bert's Market, worked at Macaluso's Market between the time he closed Burt's Market on Clay Hill, and the time he opened Bert's Spirit Shoppe on the corner of Turnpike Rd and North Street. After closing his Market in 1997, John Macaluso worked for a while at Roncari's Express Valet Parking.

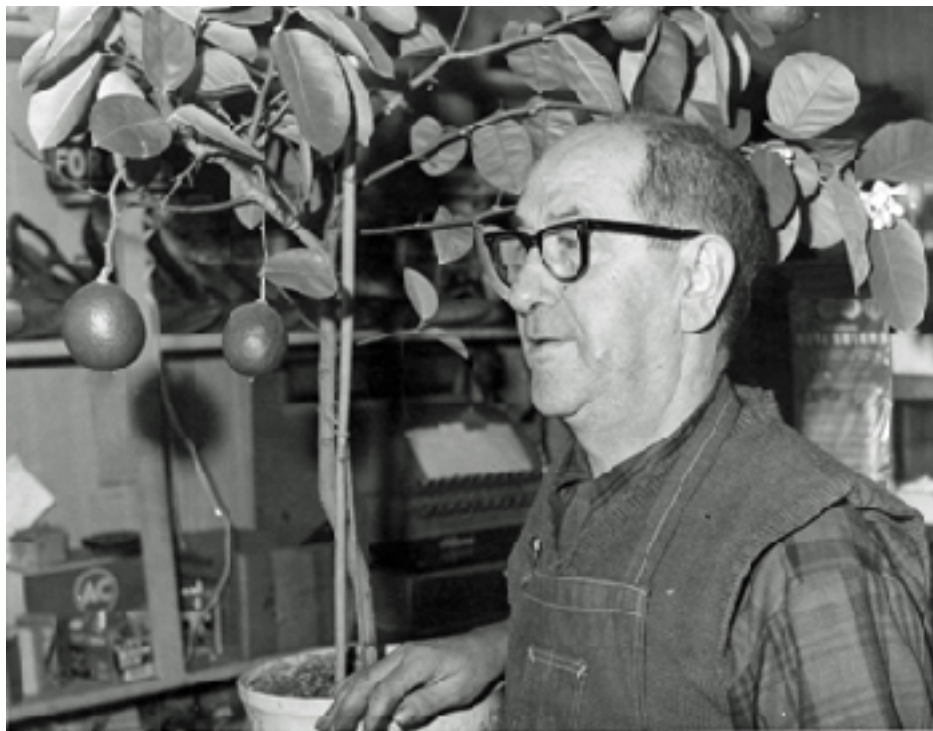
Macaluso's Market, like the other small Markets in Windsor Locks, had a level of personal service which is not matched by today's supermarkets. John Macaluso died on July 8, 2001. His was the last of the old style Windsor Locks markets.

Chapter 11

Tony Basile and his Shoe Repair Shop

Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop was across the street from St. Mary's Church in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. Those were the years before "athletic shoes" such as Nike and Adidas became so popular. The Converse Co. had been making canvas shoes since 1917, but non-leather shoes were a very small percentage of shoes worn when Tony Basile had his shop on Spring St. In those days, men and boys wore leather shoes whose soles and heels had to be replaced when they wore out. Even women's shoes needed to have their heels replaced periodically. Windsor Locks' premier shoe repair store in those days was Tony Basile's shop. It was a different time. It was a time when top craftsmen were considered professionals. Tony Basile was such a man. He took justifiable pride in his work.

Below is a photo of Tony next to his lemon tree. He is wearing his apron. It's the way Tony looked in his shop.

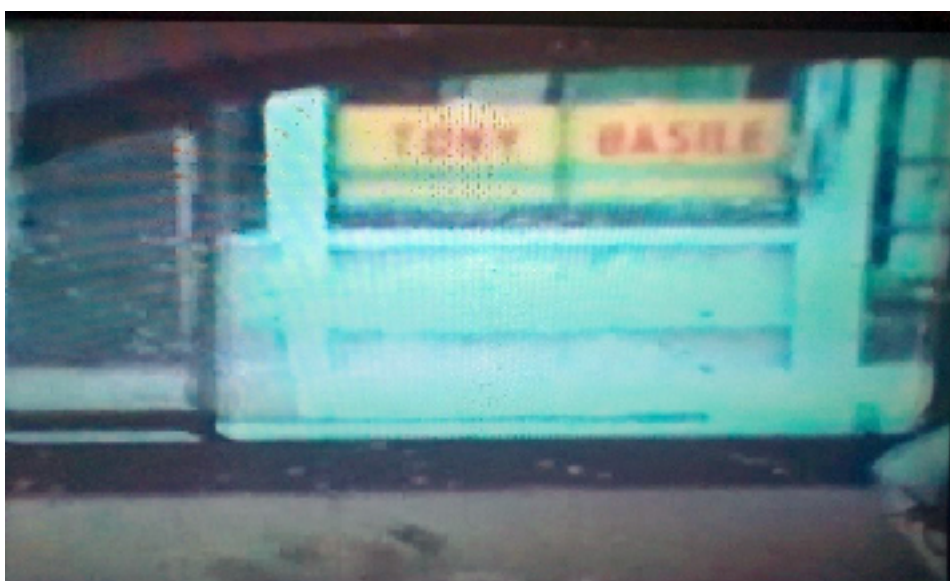


Tony Basile

If you walked out of St. Mary's Church, you saw Tony's Shoe Repair Shop, just off to your right. When you got married at St. Mary's church, snapshots were taken from the steps of the church. Below is a photo of Lester and Janet Marinone, who had just gotten married at St. Mary's Church, followed by a photo of Tony's shop taken from inside of their car as they left the Church.



Lester & Janet Marinone in front of St. Mary's Church



***Tony Basile's Shoe Repair shop.
Photo taken from car of newly married couple.***

Below is an early photo of the interior of Tony's shop. Tony is on the left. At the right in that photo is Tony DiPinto, who was a friend of Tony's, and who helped out at the store once in a while.



*Interior of Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop.
At left is Tony Basile. At right is Tony Dipinto.*

It was common in the 1930s and 1940s for small businesses to print up advertising items such as calendars and ink blotters. When most people wrote with a fountain pens, everyone used blotters. Now we have ball point pens which eliminate the need for blotters. Tony Basile had the following ink blotter printed up as an advertisement.



Tony Basile's advertising blotter

Tony was born in Springfield, Mass. in 1905. He married Anna Christopher, who was also from Springfield. He opened his shoe repair shop at 29 Spring St. in 1929, and it stayed open for 43 years, until he retired in 1972, three years before he died in 1975.

Tony and Anna had two children, a son named John, and a daughter named Mary Ann. You will see later in one of the newspaper clippings that Mary Ann was a gifted singer, who excelled in high school musical plays.

John married Barbara Ann Perdoni on Nov. 7, 1954. They had a son, John Anthony, who was born on Sept. 15, 1955. He was born in Dallas, Texas, near Arlington, where his parents lived at the time. John Basile was an aeronautical engineer with the Chance Vought Corp.

Tony Basile's daughter, Mary Ann, married Felix N. "Phil" Giannelli on May 4, 1957. Phil had an automotive repair shop at 457 Spring St. Here is a photo of Phil and Mary Ann Giannelli. It was taken sometime during the 1970s.



Phil & Mary Ann Giannelli

Phil and Mary Ann had four children: Cecilia, Peter, Anthony and Anna. They resided at 50 Spring St, next to Mary Ann's mother, Anna.

Phil and Mary Ann's son, Anthony, who was called Tony, married Karen Starr, who is now (2016) with the Windsor Locks Historical Society. Karen is the person who provided the photos of Tony, his shoe repair shop and the ink blotter for this chapter.

Tony Basile belonged to a number of organizations, as you will see in the newspaper articles which follow. He got his fireman's badge on Oct. 19, 1951. He was a member of St. Mary's Church, of the Italian Fraternal Society of New Britain and of the Senior Citizens Center of Windsor Locks.

What did Tony like to do on his time away from the shop? His daughter, Mary Ann Gianelli recently provided the following information. "He loved to visit his in-laws, the Christopher family, at their family farm in Agawam, MA. He enjoyed gardening, and spending time in his back yard. He took many vacations to Italy. When he was

younger, he played clarinet at the German Club in Broad Brook. That clarinet was passed down to his nephew through marriage, Anthony Campanelli, a life-long musician who recently retired from his position as Music Teacher and Band Director for Somers Middle School, Somers, CT. Tony's father, Nicola Basile, was musically inclined, and was in a band in Italy. There is a long tradition of music in the Basile family."

Part of the research done for this chapter was a search of newspaper articles in and around Windsor Locks. This search provided a number of articles from the *Springfield Union* newspaper, dating from 1937 to 1975. The earliest article says that Tony and his wife Anna just returned from a one week automobile trip to Maine, Vermont and Canada in June 1937. There is another article which says that Anthony Basile and his wife went to visit their son, John, in Texas on March 26, 1956. They left from Bradley Field and would stay in Texas for two weeks. Another article from April 18, 1950, said that Tony added a new front porch to his house. Those articles end with his obituary. The *Springfield Union* newspaper articles are presented in chronological order at the end of this chapter.

Tony Basile's Shoe Repair Shop was a fixture in Windsor Locks for over 40 years. Everybody knew Tony. He wasn't only well known, he was well liked and well respected.

Mr and Mrs **Anthony Basile** and family of Spring street have returned home following a week's automobile trip through Vermont, Maine and points in Canada.

Springfield Union
June 23, 1937

Windsor Locks, Conn., April 17—The Zoning Commission has announced that the spring season has given them one of the busiest weeks since its existence with the issuing of the following permits:

Mr. and Mrs. Max Woinick, Walton St., dwelling on North Main St.; Mr. and Mrs. Frank Rachel, North St., dwelling and garage, Webb and Second Sts.; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sheridan, Suffield St., repairing and enclosing side porch at present home; Michael Murkowiez, Old County Rd., dwelling on South Elm St.; Willard E. Sullivan, South Main St., dwelling on Webb St.; **Anthony Basile**, Spring St., addition of front porch and remodel present home; William D. Ranney, Elm St., dwelling on Anthony and Elm Sts.; Aceme Building

Springfield Union, April 18, 1950

Firemen Given Their Badges

Windsor Locks, Conn., Oct. 18—At a program at headquarters of the **Windsor Locks** Fire Department, 12 Civil Defense enrollees were presented badges by First Selectman Henry O'Leary, on completion of a course of training as Auxiliary firemen.

At this ceremony, the auxiliary firemen were addressed by Acting Chief C. Harold Wallace, First Selectman O'Leary, Chief Herbert Rockwell of the Bradley Field Fire Department, Richard E. Stanton, local Civil Defense Director, and George D. Clee, assistant.

The following auxiliary firemen received badges: Dominick Ruggiero, Joseph DiPento, **Anthony Basile**, Frank McCann, Harry Preator, Sr., Walter Pohorylo, Nicholas Ruggiero, Raymond Ermellini, Harry Richard, Charles V. McCoy and Oliver Nash.

Springfield Union
Oct. 19, 1951

Miss Perdoni Engaged

Windsor Locks, Conn., Sept. 24—Mr. and Mrs. John Perdoni of Elm St. announce the engagement of their daughter, Barbara Ann, to John P. **Basile**, son of Mr. and Mrs. **Anthony Basile** of Spring St. The wedding will take place in St. Mary's Church on Nov. 6. Miss Perdoni is a graduate of Mt. St. Joseph Academy in West Hartford and St. Francis Hospital School of Nursing in Hartford. She has a position with the Transocean Air Lines at Bradley Field as a flight nurse. Mr. **Basile** is a graduate of Cathedral High School in Springfield and Indiana Technical College. He is now employed by Chance Vought Co. in Dallas, Tex., as an aeronautical engineer.

Springfield Union
Sept. 25, 1954

Windsor Locks, Conn., June 15—Students of Our Lady of the Angels Academy in Enfield will present "The Slinger in Naples," a musical comedy in two acts, at Enfield Town Hall on June 17.

Plays Leading Role

The leading role will be played by Mary Ann **Basile**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. **Anthony Basile** of Spring St., this town. She is a member of the senior class at the Academy, and has a major part in the school's dramatic offering last year.

Other **Windsor Locks** girls in the cast are: Joan Traversa, Rose Borrucci, Patricia Gantley, Jane Pastormerlo, Francis Biardi, Elleen Itabett, Rena Cole and Carol Tenerowicz. Tickets for the affair are now on sale, the local girls on the ticket committee being Frances Biardi, Carol Tenerowicz and Elaine Quagliardi.

Springfield Union
June 14, 1952

BARBARA PERDONI WEDS JOHN **BASILE**

Windsor Locks, Conn., Nov. 7—Miss Barbara Ann Perdoni, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John A. Perdoni of Elm St., was united in marriage to John P. **Basile**, son of Mr. and Mrs. **Anthony Basile** of Spring St., in St. Mary's Church yesterday morning at 10. Rev. August M. Finnance officiated.

Miss Mary Ann **Basile**, sister of the bridegroom, was maid of honor. Bridesmaids were Miss Ann Marie Raccone, the bride's cousin, and Mrs. Paul R. Ferras of Hartford. Robert Raccone of this town, cousin of the bride, was best man. Ushers were Guy Mercadanti of Agawam and **Anthony Basile** of Bristol, cousin of the bridegroom.

A reception and dinner took place at the Italian Progressive Club on Suffield St. The couple left on a motor trip to Florida and New Orleans, en route to Texas where they will live in Dallas. Mr. **Basile** is an aeronautical engineer for the Chance Vought Corp., there.

Springfield Union
Nov. 8, 1954

SON TO BASILES

Windsor Locks, Conn., Sept. 23-- Mr. and Mrs. John **Basile** of Arlington, Tex., are parents of a son, John **Anthony**, born on September 15 in Dallas. Grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. John Perdoni of Elm St., and Mr. and Mrs. **Anthony Basile** of Spring St. Mrs. Perdoni has been spending the month with her daughter, and Mr. Perdoni left here by plane today to join them.

Springfield Union, Sept. 24, 1955

Engagement Announced

Mr. and Mrs. **Anthony Basile** of Spring St. have announced the engagement of their daughter, Mary Ann, to Felix N. Giannelli, son of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Giannelli of Springfield Gardens, Long Island, N. Y. The wedding will take place in St. Mary's Church here on Saturday, May 4.

Springfield Union
Jan. 31, 1957

BASILE

In Hartford, Conn., May 19, 1975.
Anthony Basile of 52 Spring St.,
Windsor Locks; husband of Anna
(Christopher) **Basile**; father of
John **Basile** and Mrs. Mary Ann
Giannelli. The funeral will be
Thursday at 8:30 a.m. from the
Johnson-Kania funeral home, 105
Oak St., **Windsor Locks**, with a
Mass of Christian burial in the
Church of St. Mary at 9 a.m.
Burial will be in St. Mary
Cemetery. Friends may call at
the funeral home today from 2
to 4 and 7 to 9 p.m.

Springfield Union
May 21, 1975

Anthony Basile,

Retired Cobbler, Dead at 69

Anthony Basile, 69, of 52
Spring St., **Windsor Locks**,
Conn., died Monday in
Hartford Hospital. He was
born in Springfield and had
lived in **Windsor Locks** 45
years.

Mr. **Basile** was the owner
and operator of Tony's Shoe
Repair Shop in **Windsor
Locks** for 43 years until his
retirement three years ago.

He was a member of the
Church of St. Mary, **Windsor
Locks**, the Italian Fraternal
Society of New Britain and
the Senior Citizens Club of
Windsor Locks.

He leaves his wife, Anna
(Christopher) **Basile**; a son,
John **Basile** and a daughter,
Mrs. Mary Ann Giannelli,
both of **Windsor Locks**; two
sisters in Italy and six
grandchildren.

The funeral will be
Thursday morning from the
Johnson-Kania funeral home,
Oak Street, **Windsor Locks**,
with a liturgy of Christian
burial in the Church of St.
Mary. Burial will be in St.
Mary Cemetery.

Springfield Union, May 20, 1975



Basile Family Gravestone, St. Mary's Cemetery

Chapter 12

D. F. LaRussa and His Appliance Store: A History

If you lived in Windsor Locks in the 1940-1965 timeframe, you knew the **D.F. LaRussa** appliance store and its proprietor, Don LaRussa. Actually, his name was Dominick J. LaRussa, but, he went by the name of "Don." Don was an entrepreneur. He opened an appliance at a very opportune time. It was when television was being introduced to the public. He was not just a businessman. He was president of the Rotary Club, president of the Chamber of Commerce, an active member of the Knights of Columbus, and he was very active in Little League baseball. He was also generous in helping the less fortunate.

He was born on April 25, 1915, to Anthony and Antonina (Saladino) LaRussa in Birmingham, Alabama. He had six brothers: Angelo, Joseph, Samuel, Philip, James and Thomas. He had two sisters: Mrs Joseph Scavatto and Mrs. Edward Ambrosini. In 1937, he married Dora DeCaro of Thompsonville. They had two sons, Anthony and Raymond.

The First D.F.LaRussa Store

Right after they married, Don and his wife moved to Windsor Locks. From 1936 to 1937, Don was the manager of the Carlisle Hardware store in Windsor Locks. Later, he opened a Western Auto store at the corner of Oak St. and Main St., next to the A&P. In 1947, he replaced his Western Auto store by opening the "**D. F. LaRussa**" appliance store at the same location. Below is a photo of that store.



Santa Claus Rides High



HELICOPTER bearing Santa to Windsor Locks hovers over high school field. Pilot of Kaman ship is William R. Murray. Novel means of transporting St. Nick to town was conceived by D. F. LaRussa, owner of general store, but his son Anthony, 8, really did promoting. Mrs. LaRussa and other son, Raymond, 3, were also among 2,500 who greeted 'copter-minded visitor. Insert, upper left, shows Santa with one of his young welcomers.

Hartford Times, December 4, 1948

Televisions were brand new at the time, and the phenomena of TV caught on quickly. Don's business did very well selling televisions and appliances. Don was an excellent businessman. He knew how to get the public's attention. Shortly after opening his store, he came up with the idea of having Santa Claus fly into Windsor Locks by helicopter, and then going by means of a parade, to his store to distribute presents to the children. The following Hartford Times article describes the event.

Santa Arrives By Helicopter

Special to The Hartford Times

Windsor Locks—About half the town's 5,000 inhabitants, including seemingly all its children, were at the high school field this morning to greet the first Santa ever to arrive in these parts by helicopter.

There to receive the red-frocked visitor officially were First Selectman Henry O'Leary, State Aeronautics Commissioner Dexter D. Coffin, Charles H. Kaman, president of the company which produced Santa's whirring-bladed conveyance, and D. F. LaRussa, the event's sponsor.

Reprinted from
The Hartford Times
of December 4, 1948

BEFORE SETTING the helicopter down, Pilot William R. Murray eased it sideways along the edge of the field so the crowd lining it could get a good look at the airborne St. Nick.

Among the first to reach the side of the craft were two mothers with snowsuited tykes in their arms. The children soon were in the arms of the helicopter's occupants, Murray taking one, Bill Jr., and the man from the North Pole the other. The latter turned out to be 3-year-old Eugene Barberi, son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Barberi of Windsor Locks.

The gift-laden fellow with the pilot, Mrs. Barberi softly volunteered, was Master Eugene's "d-a-d-d-y."

* * *

THERE WAS some snap in the air, so the 'copter riders both wore sheepskins. The red in Santa's face wasn't entirely the result of rouging.

The Warehouse Point Fife and Drum Corps led a parade that brought Santa to LaRussa's store, where there were presents for all the boys and girls who tagged along. A fire truck, an ambulance and a balloon vendor gave added color to the celebration.

The Hartford Times article points out that this was an important event. First Selectman Henry O'Leary participated, along with Charles Kaman, owner of the company which produced the helicopter, and Dexter Coffin, who was Connecticut's Aeronautics Commissioner.

The following article from the Dec. 2, 1948 *Springfield Union* provides details that the Hartford Times article left out. You will see that the helicopter first went to the County Home in Warehouse Point. Each of the children was given a present by Santa. After the helicopter flew to Windsor Locks and landed at the High School's field, there was a parade which went to the D.J.LaRussa store on the corner of Oak and Main Streets. It included the Warehouse Point Fife and Drum Corps.

Santa Claus Coming To Windsor Locks By Helicopter Saturday

Windsor Locks, Dec. 1—Everything is in readiness for Santa Claus' visit to Windsor Locks, via helicopter, Saturday morning at 9.30 at the high school field, when he will be greeted by the youngsters of the community as well as the officials and the Warehouse Point Fife and Drum Corps. After a program at the field, the drum corps will lead the parade to Don LaRussa's store on Main St. where Santa will be a guest for the day to meet the youngsters and present them with a gift.

Before his flying visit to Windsor Locks, Santa will land by helicopter at the Hartford County Home grounds in Warehouse Point at 8.30 and bring presents to the children there.

Springfield Union, Dec. 2, 1949



Following are four photographs of the event, which the citizens of Windsor Locks will never forget. Fred Barberi played the role of Santa Claus.



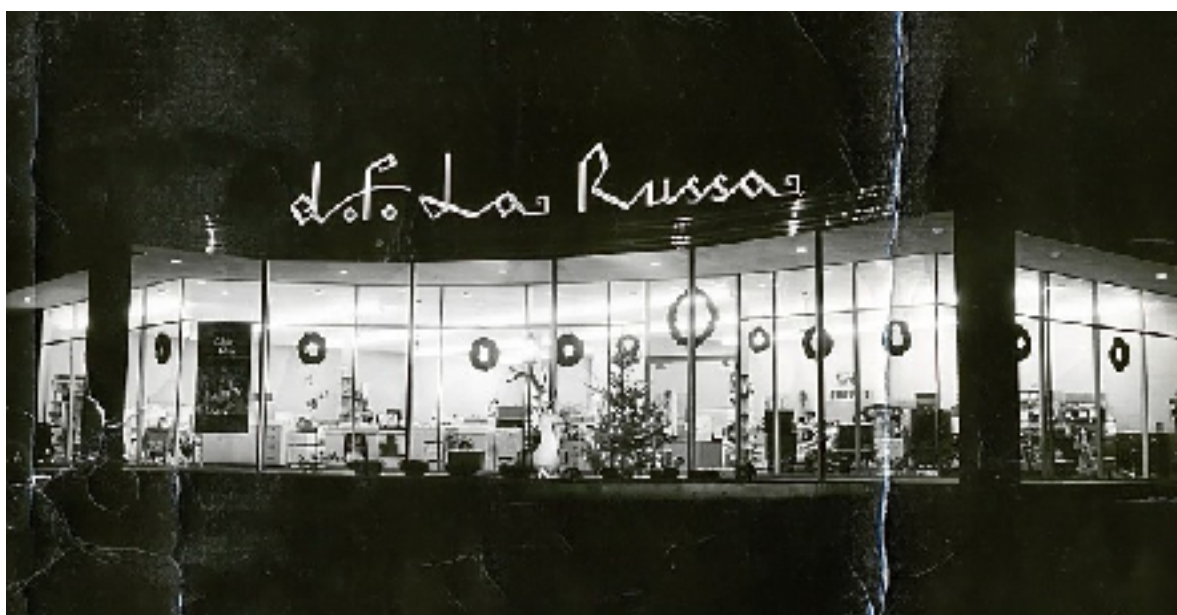


The next photo was taken in the “downstairs” of Don’s store. Don LaRussa is holding the box. Fred Barberi is Santa. The boy and girl are Peter and Patricia Samulrich.



The Second D. F. LaRussa Store

Don’s business thrived at its location at the corner of Oak and Main Streets, but Don wanted to expand his inventory and the types of items he carried. Always an innovator, Don’s new store was the first store in the new Dexter Plaza, which hadn’t yet been built. In the next photo, you can see the Ashmere Inn on the left, the new high school in the back, and the new **D.F.LaRussa** on the lower right. This was in 1958.





Following are two photos of the interior of the new store.



Since 1948 was the initial year of the **D.F.LaRussa** store, the 12th anniversary must have been about 1960. Below is the story of Don's 12th anniversary contest.



Clifford Pierce, a young gentlemen from the County home, is shown as he handed the winning ticket for the 17" table model Westinghouse Television to Don LaRussa. The winner is Marion Briggs, 11 Bridge St., Warehouse Point. Clifford also drew the name of P. J. Nolan, 66 Spring St., Windsor Locks which entitles Mr. Nolan to a table model Westinghouse radio.

Drawing was held last week for a Westinghouse radio-phonograph and the name drawn by cute little Carol Islieb, also of the County Home, was C. Szymczyk, 14 Ahearn Ave., Windsor Locks.

The “Other” LaRussa Store

Folks who lived in Windsor Locks remember another LaRussa appliance store in Windsor Locks, and there was yet another LaRussa store in Thompsonville. However, there was a difference in ownership. Don’s store could be identified by the sign “**D. F. LaRussa.**” The other store in Windsor Locks and the one in THompsonville had signs that just said: “**LaRussa.**”

The explanation is as follows. Don’s brother, Angelo, opened a TV and appliance store which he named “**LaRussa**” in Thompsonville. Later he opened another store with the same name, in the old F. S. Bidwell building on Main St. in Windsor Locks. Angelo’s store did not have the “D.F” in the name.

Following is a pair of ads is from the 1954 Yellow Pages. You can see the difference in the names, and you can see that Don’s store was still at the corner of Oak and Main Streets, by the fact that the address is 170 Main St.

<p>La Russa APPLIANCE STORE</p> <p>12 PEARL ST., THOMPSONVILLE</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ZENITH• PHILCO• WESTINGHOUSE• MOTOROLA• SYLVANIA• RCA <p>Expert Installing & Repairing</p> <p>TELEVISION SALES & SERVICE THOMPSONVILLE Riverview 5-5595</p>	<p>for TELEVISION in WINDSOR LOCKS Call D. F. LaRussa</p>  <p>SYLVANIA <i>and other popular makes</i> TEL. WINDSOR LOCKS NATIONAL 3-7365 SEE OUR COMPLETE DISPLAY at 170 MAIN ST. WINDSOR LOCKS</p>
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1954 Yellow Pages

Below is a photo of Angelo's store in the old F.S.Bidwell building. Look at the sign in the lower right of the photo. It says: "LaRussa," although it is difficult to see here). Angelo's store was two stores north of Wuzzy's (the Marconi Brothers' Luncheonette).



Don LaRussa's Other Roles

We have seen Don LaRussa's entrepreneurial prowess. Following are some newspaper articles which show Don's involvement and leadership in the Chamber of Commerce, in the Rotary Club, and in Little League baseball. The first two articles are about Rotary Club activities. He later became President of the Rotary Club.

The regular meeting of the Windsor **Locks** Rotary club will be held in the dining hall of St Mary's school Monday, luncheon to be served by the Catholic council at noon. The nominating committee has made the following selections for directors: Arthur G. Bissell, **Don LaRussa**, Clemence J. Clark, William W. Prout and Fred S. Bidwell. These directors will present a list of club officers who will take office on July 1.

Springfield Republican, Apr.8. 1939

This article shows another Rotary Club activity in which the children from the County Home in Warehouse Point are taken on a trip.

The Suffield and Windsor Locks Rotary Clubs will join forces again this year to take about 95 children from the State Receiving Home in Warehouse Point on the annual outing to Riverside Park and Shady Lake. Committee members from the two clubs are Suffield—H. Clyde Taylor, John D. Casson, Daniel F. Sullivan, Charles Pysz, president; Windsor Locks—Angelo Alfano, Herbert E. Russell, Don LaRussa, Henry Holcomb, Joseph Raccone, president. Plans include a police escorted ride from the Home to Riverside where the children will be given tickets for the various attractions. At 5 p. m. they will go to Shady Lake for a swim and a hot dog roast, returning home by dark.

Springfield Union, July 15, 1956

In the following article, we see Don's involvement with baseball for Windsor Locks youth.

Windsor Locks, Warehouse Point and Suffield Teams Will Participate

Windsor Locks, Conn., Jan. 29—The Windsor Locks Rotary Club will sponsor the Windsor Locks Little League, which promotes baseball activities of boys between 8 and 12, includes the towns of Windsor Locks, Warehouse Point and Suffield, having four teams in the league. Two teams are from this town, as the Lions Club and the Windsor Locks Rotary will each sponsor a team.

The following committee from the three towns has been appointed to complete the arrangements: Warehouse Point, Scott Vining, John Shaughnessy and Albert W. Redway; Suffield, H. Clyde Taylor and Daniel Sullivan; Windsor Locks, Francis Coll, James L. Conley and Don F. LaRussa. The officers of the league are: President, Don LaRussa; vice-president, Francis K. Coll; secretary, Daniel Sullivan; treasurer, James L. Conley.

It is planned to have the baseball field at the public park grounds put in good condition and new uniforms and equipment will be purchased for the boys.

Springfield Union, January 30, 1950

Don LaRussa's Extraordinary Final Business Venture

Don was the first to get involved with Dexter Plaza, which was the first Shopping Center in that entire area of the country. Shopping Centers were a new thing in the United States. Soon Shopping Centers would become a national phenomenon. But in the beginning, that was not obvious. Don's store thrived in Dexter Plaza, but he didn't stop there. He took control of a large retail space next to him. He subdivided the large area, and leased the smaller spaces to tenants which included Roth's Men's Wear, Connecticut Light and Power, Gicones Barber Shop, and Dr. Bacharach, the dentist. This was a brilliant entrepreneurial move. It was not something that he learned from others. He was one of the first to do it in Windsor Locks.

The Passing of Don LaRussa

Don LaRussa was a successful and visionary businessman, a civic minded community leader in the Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Knights of Columbus. We have seen his involvement with the County Home in Warehouse Point. He left his mark on Windsor Locks. He was a role model, a man to be emulated.



This is how we remember Don LaRussa.

Unfortunately, Don died much too early, at the age of 49. His obituary, which appeared in the *Springfield Union* on May 6, 1964, is below.

D. F. LaRussa Dies at 49

WINDSOR LOCKS, Conn. — **Dominick F. LaRussa**, 49, of 119 Elm St., died Monday night in Mercy Hospital, Springfield. He was the owner of D. F. LaRussa furniture and electrical appliance store in Dexter Plaza, and was active in many civic organizations.

Born in Birmingham, Ala., April 25, 1915, son of Anthony and Antoinetta (Saladino) LaRussa, he spent his early years in Thompsonville.

From 1936 to 1937 he was manager of the Windsor Locks Carlisle Hardware store. After his marriage in 1937 to the former Dora DeCaro of Thompsonville, he moved to this town and opened his own electrical appli-

ance business on Main St. He later moved the business to Dexter Plaza and added a furniture line.

He was past president of Windsor Locks Rotary Club, past president of Windsor Locks Chamber of Commerce, a member of Riverside Council K. of C. and of St. Mary's Parish. He was also organizer of the Little League baseball in this town.

Besides his wife, he leaves: two sons Anthony J. and Raymond R., both of this town; six brothers, Angelo N., Joseph P., Samuel J., Philip P., and James J., all of Enfield, and Thomas N. of Springfield, Mass.; two sisters, Mrs. Joseph Scavatto and Mrs. Edward Ambrosini, both of Enfield, and two grandchildren. Funeral will be Friday at 8.30 at Thomas W. Johnson funeral home with a solemn requiem mass at 9 in St. Mary's Church.

Burial will be in St. Patrick's New Cemetery, Enfield. Calling hours are tonight from 7 to 9 and Thursday from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9.

Riverside Council K. of C. will meet at the council home Thursday at 7.30 to take action on his death and to name a delegation to attend the funeral service.

Springfield Union, May 6, 1964

Chapter 13

The Beehive Building

“Beehive Building” was the nickname of a large apartment house at the North corner of Grove and Main Streets. The name gives the impression that the building was shaped like a beehive, but that was not the case. The building got its nickname from the sound that came from the halls of the building. The building was made up of many small apartments. Since there was no air conditioning back then, the doors to the apartments were often open, and it was a crowded building. The sound of much action and much talking caused people to refer to it as the Beehive building. See the photograph below for a view of what the Bee Hive Building looked like in 1925.



Edwin P. Eagan

Coly's Hotel
before 1927 fire.
Central Cafe is
the store on the
left on street level.

MAIN STREET, WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.

Photo taken in 1925

Bee Hive Building was an apartment house
on north corner of Main & Grove Streets
with chimneys on roof with large overhang.
Was owned by Mr. Shea. Mr. Botasso
had a meat market on bottom floor

In the photo, the building on the left was Central Hall. The building to the right of that was the Windsor Locks Hotel, which had been purchased in 1917 by Vito Colapietro. The next building to the right was owned by Moses Goldfarb. He had a haberdashery business on the first floor and rental stores on first floor. The top floors

were apartments for rent. Later, Bianchi's Restaurant and Shonty's Bar and Grill were in this building. To the right of Mr. Goldfarb's building was Grove Street.

The building on the North side of Grove Street in the photograph was the Beehive Building. You can recognize the building by the large overhang on its roof, and the three chimneys on the roof. The Beehive Building was owned by Mr. Patrick Shea. In the Springfield newspapers, there were four articles published between 1895 and 1907, which referred to the "Shea Block." However, none referred to it as the Beehive Building. That was a local nickname. The Feb. 22, 1895 issue of the *Springfield Republican* said that Mr. George N. Kent opened a meat market in January, but it could not meet expenses, so he had to turn over the store's fixtures to Mr. H. L. Handy to settle his bill. The April 10, 1898 issue of the same newspaper described a knife fight between two Italians. One of the men was slightly injured. The other was taken away by the Police. The August 26, 1898 issue of that paper described a "free for all" fight that took place at an Italian christening party after midnight. Several people were severely pummeled. The August 18, 1907 issue of that newspaper said that a fire broke out in the meat market of Pauline Bottasso on the ground floor of the Shea Block.

Between 1895 and 1913, there were two references in the *Springfield Republican* to Joseph Bottasso's meat market. All of the references to the Shea Block and to the Bottasso meat market mentioned Italians. The inhabitants of the large apartment house were primarily of Italian descent. Mr. Bottasso died on Dec. 21, 1956. He had been a resident of Windsor Locks for 58 years. He was born in Italy on Dec. 27, 1876. He came to the US in 1898.

The building was knocked down in the 1930s or 40s. Later, this location had Red Leary's hardware store on it, as well as the Mayflower Restaurant, Mac's Package Store and Ray's Lunch. Over the years, those stores changed hands a number of times. When it was the Beehive building, it was a multi-purpose building, with stores on the street floor, and rental apartments on the upper floors.

Michael Shea, a grandson of the owner of the Beehive Building, contacted me early in 2017. He sent information about his grandfather and about the Beehive Building, to add to this chapter. His grandfather's name was Patrick Shea. Michael Shea sent me:

- a genealogy of Patrick Shea and his offspring,
- the death certificate for Patrick Shea, which was signed by Dr. Joseph Coogan,
- the marriage certificate of Patrick Shea and Nora Connors,
- a newspaper article about the death of Patrick Shea,
- some Windsor Locks town documents related to Patrick Shea,
- an advertisement for the Bottasso Meat Market which was on the first floor of the Beehive building, which was the Shea Block.

Patrick Shea was born in 1856 in Ireland. His wife was Nora J. Connors, who was also born in Ireland. Patrick and Nora were married in Massachusetts, February 1896. Patrick died in Windsor Locks on June 15, 1902. According to Patrick's death certificate, he was survived by his wife and five children, and he is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery. His wife, Nora, died in MA, 1912.

Here is some information from the newspaper articles that Michael Shea sent. According to the December 17, 1901 issue of the *Springfield Republican*, Mr. Shea paid \$6000 in tax to the town of Windsor Locks in that year. The June 17, 1902 issue of the

Springfield Republican said that Patrick Shea died in his home on Main Street. The January 27, 1913 issue of the *Springfield Republican* said that the estate of Patrick Shea paid \$8000 in taxes in that year.

Below is an undated newspaper advertisement of the Bottasso Meat Market that was on the first floor of the Shea Block (The Beehive Building).

Special Prices on Meats
THIS WEEK.

Short Steak,	22c lb.
Sirloin Steak,	20c lb.
Round Steak,	16c lb.
Shoulder Steak,	14c lb.
Fresh Pork,	20c lb.
Fresh Shoulder,	15c lb.
Smoked Shoulder,	12c lb.
Rib Roast,	16c lb.
Bacon,	18c lb.
Leg of Lamb,	16c lb.

Washburn & Crosby's **\$6.50** per bbl
Gold Medal Flour

Bottasso's Meat Market,
Shea Block, 7 Main Street,
WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.

**THE MARKET OF QUALITY
AND LOW PRICES.**

JOSEPH BOTTASSO, Proprietor

Bottasso Meat Market was on first floor
of the Beehive Building

The Beehive building is a fascinating piece of Windsor Locks history. It was more difficult to find information about this building than any other building on Main Street. It was an apartment building which mostly housed Italians but it was owned by an Irish couple. That fact speaks well about the immigrants who built Windsor Locks.

Chapter 14

The Rialto Theater

The Rialto Theater opened on October 25, 1922. It was owned by Dominick Alfano and Leo Viola. We know from the 1913 Aero Map of Windsor Locks that Leo Viola had a confectionary store in the Barrett block in 1913. Dominick Alfano had a confectionary store in the same location prior to Leo Viola. According to the October 25, 1922 issue of the Springfield Daily News, they built a magnificent movie theater which held 625 people, a stage with an asbestos curtain, a fireproof projection room, concrete floors and stairways, and it was all built to the latest safety standards. It also had two stores to rent on the street level. There is one store on each side of the theater entrance. At one point, Swede's Jewelers was in one of the stores and the optometrist, Dr. Gottesman, was in the other. So it was a true multi-purpose building. Below is a photo of the Rialto Theater.



The Rialto Theater, Main St. Windsor Locks, Conn

The stage was used for putting on plays and musicals. It was often used for high school plays. Fraternal organizations used the stage for shows to raise money for charitable works. It was used as a place for politicians to give speeches, and for meetings of both the local Democrat and Republican parties. The stage was used for



1934 Advertisement for the
Rialto Theater



1940 Advertisement for the
Rialto Theater

school graduations. In the World War II years, there were stars such as Kate Smith and Joan Fontaine, who came to the Rialto and led war bond rallies.

According to the October 20, 1929 issue of the *Springfield Republican*, there were two movie theaters in Windsor Locks. One was the Rialto, and the other was the Palace theater on the North side of Grove St., near Main St. The Palace Theater was previously called the Princess Theater. The owners of the Rialto, Leo Viola and Dominick Alfano, bought the Palace theater and closed it down in 1927. The reason was that the competition was making it unprofitable for both theaters. They then sold the Palace theater to Harold Lavigne, the husband of Blanche Bianchi, who turned the lower floor of the building into a bowling alley.

In the December 16, 1930 edition of the *Springfield Republican*, it was reported that there was a hunting accident, and one of the owners, Leo Viola, was shot accidentally by his hunting partner, Joseph Gatti, who was also his nephew. Mr. Viola died quickly. The coroner was summoned, and he declared it an accidental shooting. Mr. Viola had immigrated here from Italy. He was unmarried. He had become a successful businessman.

According to the *Springfield Republican* of June 10, 1939, a major renovation of the interior of the theater was done. They installed new spring cushion seats, the latest sound reproduction system and extra thick carpeting in the lobby and aisles to reduce noise, a modern heating system, a complete lighting system, and the walls were modified to decrease unwanted sounds.

The *Springfield Union* of January 9, 1954, said that the Postmaster, John L. Quagliaroli, was having a new Post Office building built on his property on upper Main St., opposite Leach's coal yard, and that it would be ready for occupancy in April. Mrs. Quagliaroli, the wife of the Postmaster, leased the new building to the Post Office on a long term lease. The Windsor Locks Post Office had been in the Rialto Theater from 1924 to 1954 (*Springfield Union*, Nov. 2, 1954).

The March 11, 1967 *Springfield Republican* said that the theater was owned by Michael Halperin of Hartford. The theater shut down for a while to fix the cornice on top of the three-story structure.

Dave Magliora managed the Rialto Theater for 25 years. He also owned the Brown Derby for eight years. He died on June 18, 1973. (*Springfield Union*, July 19, 1973)

Natale Tambussi died in January of 1986 at the age of 77. He started in business with the Windsor Locks Bakery, and later the T&T Tavern. He operated the Rialto Theater, the Windsor Locks Machine Co and the Windsor Locks Lumber Co, from 1947 to 1960.

The owners of the Rialto were:

- Leo Viola and Dominick Alfano - from 1922 until Leo Viola died in 1930.
- We can assume that Dominick Alfano owned at least part of it until it was sold to Mr. Tambussi in 1947.
- Natale Tambussi owned it from 1947 to 1960.
- After that, it was owned by Michael Halperin of Hartford.

We know that all of the businesses on Main St. were demolished in the 1970s for the "re-development." We know from advertisements in the *Springfield Union*, that the theater was still showing movies as late as March 11, 1967. Mickey Danyluk remembers going to movies at the Rialto as late as 1972 or 1973. The Rialto Theater was demolished about that time, during the redevelopment of Main Street.