

## Greece History

### Greece "Roadhouse" by Alan Mueller

A Roadhouse according to a recent dictionary is: Roadhouse: a tavern or inn along a country road, as in the 1920s.

**John Frank Maier** was born and grew up along with his siblings on Hague St. in Dutch (Deutsch) town. Both his parents were immigrants from Germany. His father, Wenzel, was employed by a local brewery, but also was involved in a local Rochester restaurant. During the summer season young John F. worked for the Beatty family at the Island Cottage Hotel.

He became familiar with the western area not too far from the Island Cottage Hotel. John was just 19 years old in 1919 and eager to own some property in the area of Dewey Avenue and Latta Road. Farmlands spread out in all directions. John purchased a large plot of land at the north east corner of Dewey and Latta Roads. Within a few months a low white building appeared at the corner with MAIERS name above the row of front windows. John was in the hot dog and sandwich business. This business prospered just as the automobile was becoming more available. Thanks to Henry Ford and the Dodge Brothers the price of cars gradually came down and were more reliable. The wage earner and his family could now journey to the Lake or take an afternoon trip all the way to Hilton on improved gravel or stone main roads. On the return trip, the hungry family spotted Maier's 'hotdogs, sandwiches, cold drinks' sign. "Can we stop there, Pop?", went up the cry. Stop they did and enjoyed Maier's "eats"!

Fast forward a few years to 1923. John is recently married to **Olive Hager** and they are looking for a home close to the hot dog stand. It's at that point they decide, why not build a roadhouse and live on the second floor? The main floor would be a full-service restaurant. Much to the surprise of the local farmers a full two and a half story building appeared in front of the hot dog stand, which, after a bit, became a two-car garage. Neon signs were just becoming vogue, so up went a nice sign on the top of the building advertising Maier's Restaurant. The second floor had several bedrooms that could be rented out to boarders. Through the years, family members in need of temporary housing were always welcomed.

Prohibition, the 18th Amendment and the Volstead Act became law in January 1920 so there was no bar built in the restaurant. But there was a small bar in the basement where liquid refreshments could be had by select patrons, friendly politicians and the local constabulary who might wish to wet their whistle!

A great story related to me by one of John F.'s grandchildren was about three "occasional-Rum Runners". The occasional runners were all women! John's wife Olive, her sister, Midge, married to John's brother, George, and a friend from Island Cottage Hotel would take an inboard motorboat, on a calm day, from Island Cottage to across the Canadian line into Canada. They loaded the boat with good Canadian liquor and scoot back to Island Cottage. The border patrol never stopped them. The three women were just out for a pleasure cruise! Women don't smuggle booze????

The depression was full blown by 1933, the year Prohibition was repealed. John quickly closed the basement liquid refreshment bar. Remodeling of the first floor was in order. The kitchen was enlarged and moved to a new addition on the buildings rear. The former kitchen became the new Bar with entrances from the outside and from the Dining room. A small combo group, pianist or accordionist performed in the dining room and those who wished, danced in a modest area near the music.

Other small changes occurred as time went along. After WWII, the Bar was again given a facelift with new bar chairs, and a Juke Box was added. The main kitchen staff for many years were **Jim Davis** and **Eddie Surrige**. The wait staff changed through the years with members of the family, young and old, pitching in to help. In fact, the Maier Restaurant was the hub of most family special occasions and every holiday. That gradually diminished after Olive's passing in 1958 and then John's in 1965. The family gathered for the last full-service dinner in August 1968. The bar limped along alone for a couple more years. A petroleum company made an offer to buy the land for a gas station. It was accepted, but all the buildings would be demolished. By chance, a Mr. Wagner heard about that and mentioned his interest in buying the main building. It was agreed he would buy the building, sans the one-story kitchen, for one dollar, then move the building to another location at his expense. There was just one problem. The new location was north of the Lake Ontario State Parkway and the underpass was too low for the building to pass through. The moving company solved the problem by going up the down ramp, over and down the up ramp to its new location on Kirkwood Rd. John's "Roadhouse" was saved and has been a single house ever since. John F. and Olive Maier would have been quite happy...

(See pictures and more on page 7)

## Greece History (cont'd)

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*A grateful THANKS to John Maier III for sharing with the Greece Historical Society the photocopies of his grandfather's restaurant and other family photos, as well as his help in sharing many family memories of the restaurant operation. Without John, this article could not have been written.*

