

Aldo Satirana's Oak Street Market **by Mel Montemerlo**

Aldo Satirana 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 in Windsor Locks. They included: Aldo's, Maria's, Johnny Cappa's, the ABC Market, Spinelli's, Sisitzky's, Bert's, Macaluso's, 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.



Unidentified man, Aldo Satirana, Tony Campominosi 1957

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 of Aldo behind the counter of the A&P in the late 1930s.



Aldo Satirana, 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, and saw a number of supply depots being put together. He was on Omaha Beach on D-Day. 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. Although small, the store was packed with Italian specialties. In the second photograph, Aldo and his father in law, Tony Campominosi are in front of Aldo's Oak Street Market.

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,

Aldo's 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 in the redevelopment of the Main Street area.

Aldo was an active citizen of Windsor Locks. He was a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and of the Knights of Columbus. Once, while being interviewed by Jack Redmond, he said: "The greatest thing that ever happened to me was meeting and marrying Yolanda." That one sentence said a lot about the man.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR: If you would like to read my other articles on Windsor Locks History, you can find them on your computer at my website: windsorlockshistory.com