

## **John Macaluso and His Market** **by Mel Montemerlo**

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' and Aldo Satirana'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. 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, below is a photo in an 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.

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