

Lance Sathoff's Book of Taverns in Monroe

Have you ever wondered how many taverns there were in Monroe, where they were located, or who operated them? Lance Sathoff started collecting tavern/bar tokens more than 15 years ago. Visitors to the taverns could usually exchange those tokens for a free drink. He needed something to do during the three months he expected to recuperate after receiving a valve replacement and pacemaker in May 2011. He had three tokens that he had no idea where those bars were, so decided that he would collect as much information about all of the taverns in Monroe as he could. He also thought that during retirement he would write a book about the history of those taverns from the end of prohibition to the present.

He started by making a list of taverns, their owners, and their locations as listed in the city directories from 1933 through 1988 (the last one published). He also went through the city records to record those who were issued liquor licenses, perused the files in the archives of the Green County Historical Society, and contacted and interviewed family members of those who owned the taverns. He also borrowed and photographed souvenirs of some of the bars. He later created a power point presentation which he showed to various groups to promote the project.

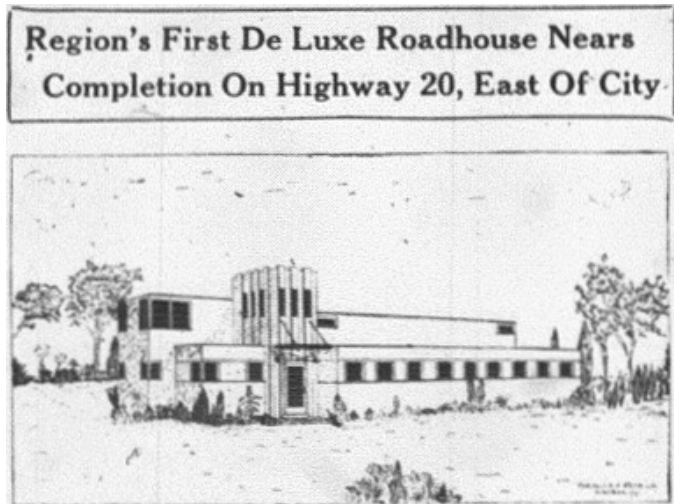
He went back to work sooner than expected, which put the project on the back burner due to work and family obligations. He continued to talk to others, accept information that was given to him, and occasionally do presentations. In the years since Lance started this project, I have passed on to him any pertinent newspaper articles that I come across; I'll share some of that information here.

Officers of Monroe Sand & Gravel and Albert D. Geigel, owner of the property, announced in the Monroe Evening Times on May 11, 1935 that they were going to erect a building in the 1100-block of 17th Avenue which would house a tavern owned by Mrs. Elizabeth Buholzer. Mrs. Buholzer, who was operating the Swiss Tavern at 1121 16th Avenue at the time, had signed a six-year lease and expected to move in by July 1. The new one-story brick building was 23 by 45 feet and filled in the last unoccupied spot in back of the Goetz Theatre.

An earlier article from December 16, 1933 stated that the building that brothers John, Roy, and Harry Teehan were having built just outside the city limits was nearing completion. The Teehan brothers were to be owner/operators of the first combined roadhouse, restaurant, dance hall, and tavern to be built in the vicinity of Monroe.

This building would become known as the Modern Club. It was to be 66 by 43 feet and finished in colored stucco, built with modernistic lines. Contrasting to the plain colored stucco on the body of the building was the red and blue tower in the foreground. The first floor had already been laid at this time; the walls were rising with the roof expected to be added the following week. The stucco to the exterior was to be done the following spring. It was expected to at least have the taproom facilities ready for use by the first of the year.

An ad appeared on June 24, 1937 stating that the building had been newly-remodeled and refinished with the grand opening of Teehan's Modern Club on Friday, June 25. Music was provided by the Harmony Maids, "a swell 6-piece band; all girl." It further stated that the ballroom had been completely refinished, sealed with ornamental wall finishes, and lighted with indirect illumination and decorative neon.



This is a sketch from the December 16, 1933 Monroe Evening Times showing the future Modern Club which was being built near the east edge of Monroe. This later became the location of J.D.'s White Elephant.

More than 50 years after the original article, Joe Donny announced that Gary Abduli “has purchased an interest in J.D.’s White Elephant Inc. (Mr. D’s Roadhouse) and Monroe Sports Inc. (The Ravine Ballpark).” This article, dated January 9, 1988, stated that Mr. D’s had been in business since 1966 and had recently been remodeled and redecorated.

Another article from the February 1, 1935 Times that I shared was about an unnamed tavern. “A lively patron tried a knife-throwing act in a local tavern last night, much to the discomfort of the tavern owner, and this morning had opportunity in justice court to do some dollar-throwing in the direction of city fine coffers.

“If the inebriated young man from out of town had intentions of sinking the knife into the tavern owner he did not fulfill them, for while the tavern man stood phoning for police the knife crashed harmlessly into a cracker box, according to the report.

“Officer A. E. Mitchell ‘cleaned out’ the place but was lenient and did not make any arrests. Shortly afterward the officer encountered the knife-thrower in a restaurant and, when the young man became ‘lippy,’ ejected him from that place.

“Still not willing to end his meanderings of the night, the knife thrower again met up with the officer in another restaurant and the former began his talkativeness all over again. By that time the officer’s ire was aroused to the point of definite action and when the youth declared his intentions of driving his car home, the officer commanded both him and his pal to report to police headquarters this morning.

“Both were charged with drunkenness and disorderly conduct and were fined.”

Lance retired at the end of May and is again working on this project. If you have anything that you haven’t already shared with him, you may contact him at lsathoff@yahoo.com. He is interested in any newspaper clippings and recollections you might have from one or more Monroe taverns. He is also interested in borrowing any advertising items (matchbooks, pens, shot glasses, etc.) so he can photograph them. Realize that he is still a busy man who likes to travel, so his response back to you may not be immediate.