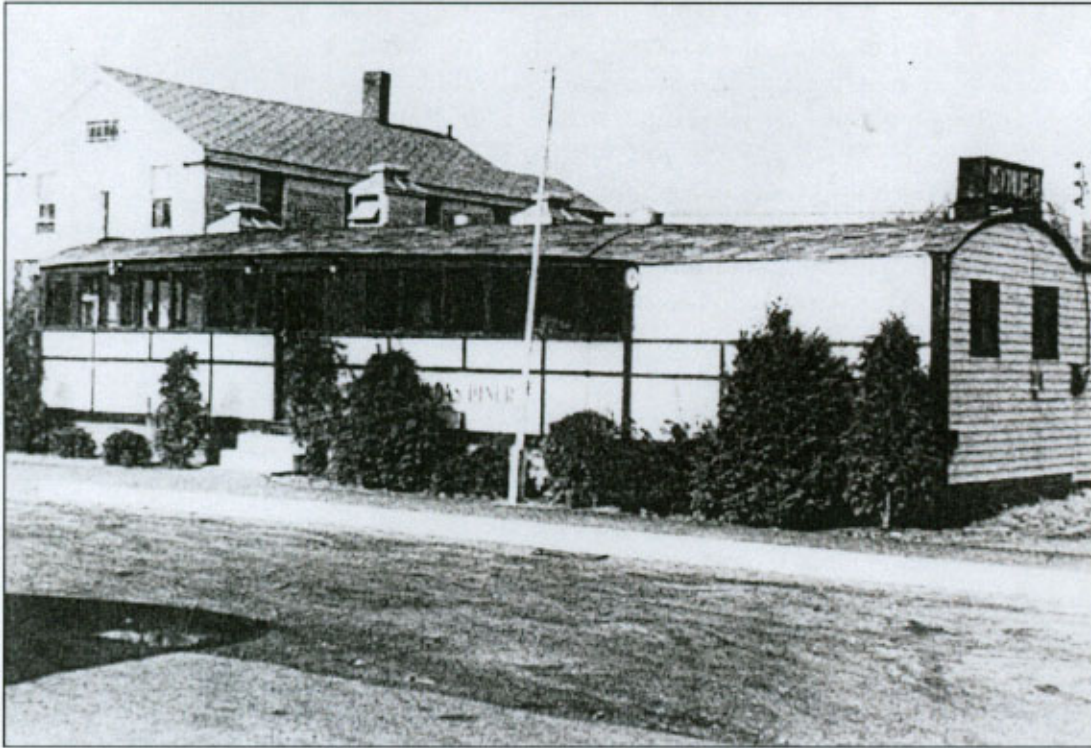


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Number 7

Hilda's Restaurant



Hilda's Restaurant

Many years ago when a person wanted to open a restaurant they would simply order one – complete and ready to open. It would be shipped and set down where they wished. Included was everything necessary – booths, a counter with seats and a kitchen. These ready-made restaurants were called “Diners”.

A woman named “Emma” who lived in Madison bought a diner from the Jerry O’Mahoney Company of Elizabeth, New Jersey and set it up on Main street about where the Cumberland Farms Store stands today. She called the diner “Em’s”.

During that time there was no I-95 and the Boston Post Road was the main route used by people going between New York and Boston – right through the center of Madison. Summer was a particularly busy time until 1958 when I-95 opened.

Em's diner was a good place to stop for breakfast, lunch, or dinner and truck drivers especially liked it. Often at night the Main Street would be lined with trailer trucks while drivers stopped at Em's for a meal.

After several years Emma sold her diner to Hilda Wagner who renamed the diner "Hilda's". She ran the diner until 1955 when she sold it.

Hilda's became well-known among truck drivers and local residents. When Hilda closed the diner it was reported that it had been sold to a couple who were moving it to Mystic where it would be re-opened. There is some confusion about where the diner really went. It was reported in one news article that it been moved to Guilford and then to Durham where it was operated for many years before being moved to New York State.

Wherever it is, Hilda's Diner left fond memories beyond with longtime Madison residents who recall good times associated with Hilda and her diner.

After selling her diner Hilda opened a fabric shop called "Florilda's" which was last locate at # Wall Street.

Directions to the former location Hilda's Restaurant: Hilda's stood just west of Madison Hose Company #1 where Cumberland Farms is located now. Hilda's was closer to the street.