

# DINING FAVORITES

Everyone has a fond remembrance of their favorite restaurant or two. So many restaurants came and went in Mattoon, it would be impossible to profile them all. We have selected a memorable example from several categories.

Peter Sutter, born Sotiripoulou in Aegeon, Greece, teamed up with fellow Greek, John Katsinas in 1919 and opened the Victory Café at 1814 Broadway. It was an instant hit and in 1923 they moved the restaurant to 1710 Broadway.

The Victory was known for quality food and as a place to gather. During the war years they served thousands of hungry soldiers, passing through on troop trains. For a brief period, Sutter and Katsinas also operated Beef Steak Mikes and The Castle Inn.

Katsinas left in 1930 to open a restaurant in Champaign and Sutter continue to operate the Victory until 1957 when it closed.



Harold and Grace Gill began working for Gus Belt, the founder of Steak 'N Shake, in 1934 when he opened his first restaurant in Bloomington, Illinois. Over the span of 15 years the pair opened 13 Steak 'N Shakes for Belt. In 1949 they left to open their own restaurant with a pact from Gus Belt that they would not open near a Steak 'N Shake and he would not put a restaurant in Mattoon.

They purchased the Cozy Corner restaurant and grocery at 12<sup>th</sup> & DeWitt and opened as Gill's Drive-Inn on April 30, 1949. It quickly caught on and their curbside service was very popular.

Mattoon's Baby Boomers came of age "cruising Gills". At the height of the drive in's popularity as many as 7-8 "curbies" worked the lot nightly.

The Gill's opened Gill's Walk-In at 1507 Broadway in 1957. It was a popular downtown lunch spot but never hit the stride the drive-inn did. They sold it in 1972.

After the Gills sold and retired in 1979 the restaurant changed hands a couple of times.



**Little Mexico**  
Will move to 1901 Charleston from Paradise Lake. Open daily 6 a.m. to midnight, closed Sundays. Serving breakfast, special lunches and Mexican food every day. Opening day Oct. 30.



Harold and Ruth Griffith moved to Mattoon from New Mexico in 1965. They purchased a small café and bait shop at Lake Paradise and served basic café fare with some of Ruth's native German dishes as well. But it was the Mexican food served on Saturday night that started bringing in crowds. Ruth used the Mexican cooking techniques she had picked up in New Mexico to introduce Mexican dishes to Mattoon.

By 1969, they had outgrown the Paradise location and located to 1901 Charleston and named the restaurant Little Mexico. Along with Ruth's signature tamales and enchiladas, Little Mexico offered some of Ruth's favorite German dishes.

In 1973, again bursting at the seams, they opened a second restaurant in the converted Dog 'N Suds stand at 1700 Rudy. Eventually they closed the Charleston Avenue spot.

In 1978, Harold and Ruth sold Little Mexico to Don Myers, who had successfully operated the Little Venice, Italian restaurant in Charleston for many years.

Little Mexico has since changed hands several times.

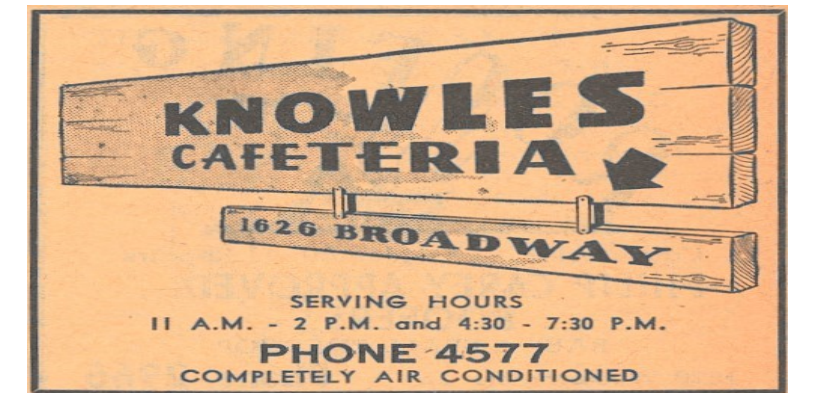
In 1945, LaVerne Knowles purchased the Buckler-Moore Cafeteria at 1626 Broadway. The cafeteria had been in business since 1914.

Knowles had been in Mattoon since 1934 operating the Snappy Service Lunch Room. He continued to operate it.

Knowles Cafeteria was a popular downtown lunch spot and did a brisk evening business as well.

In 1953, Knowles also opened the Little Chef on South 17<sup>th</sup> Street.

Dwain Knowles took over the cafeteria and in 1989, his daughters Nancy and Peggy took it over, selling it in 1992.



**"Little Chef" Lunch Room Opens Today**



**JOE'S PIZZA**  
PRICE CHANGES

**CHEESE PIZZA**  
10 Inch .. Small .. \$1.25  
12 Inch .. Med. .. \$1.65  
14 Inch .. Large .. \$2.00  
16 Inch .. Family .. \$2.50

**CHEESE & SAUSAGE**  
10 Inch .. Small .. \$1.50  
12 Inch .. Med. .. \$2.00  
14 Inch .. Large .. \$2.50  
16 Inch .. Family .. \$3.00

PHONE 235-5...



**Oldest pizza business in city reopens**

In 1980 they closed the Broadway location and after a short "retirement" opened again at 2600 Charleston where they operated until 1990.

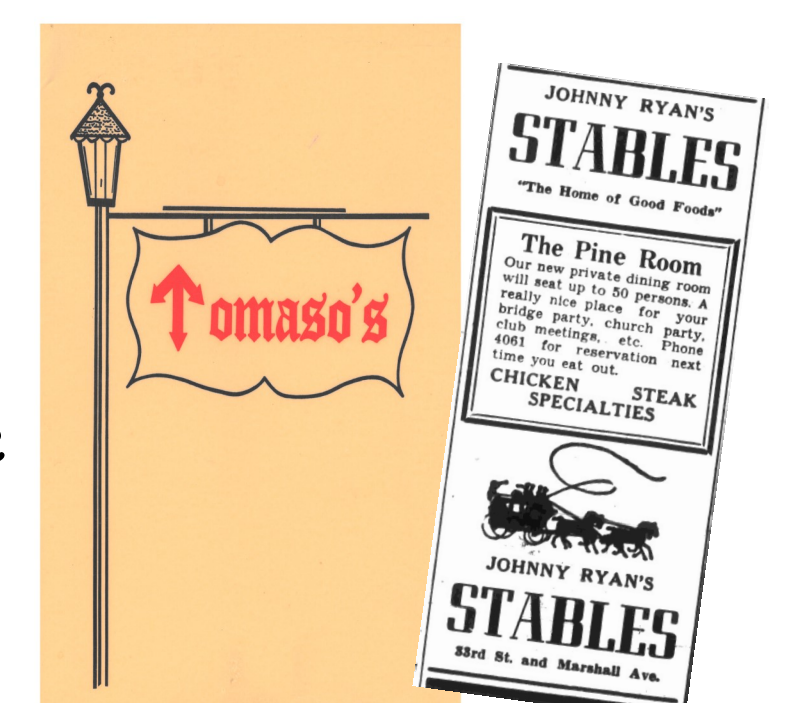
Joe's is remembered for bringing Pizza to Mattoon. Joe's was particularly known for the house made sausage and the special bread that he brought in from Chicago for the Italian Beef sandwiches.

Tom and Jacqui McKibben bought Johnny's Stables at 3300 Marshall in 1966. They operated the restaurant as the Stables until 1968 when they renovated the building and reopened as Tomaso's.

The restaurant featured Italian food, pizza, steaks and chicken and was a popular, cozy evening destination. The restaurant was especially known for Tom's collection of Pinocchio and other Disney memorabilia as well as many original paintings.

People today still pine away for the famous Tomaso's sub sandwich.

The McKibben's sold the restaurant in 1995 and it closed in 1989.



**My Favorite Bill: Tomaso's**  
23 1/2 Friendly Dishes & More!!  
... "Who is the Master of all that is... especially these dishes!"

This is a family owned business since 1966.

| Steaks                                                                                                                                                     | Children's Garden |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| T-Bone 14.95                                                                                                                                               | 2.95              |
| Rib-Eye 12.95                                                                                                                                              |                   |
| Rib-Eye (Extra Large) 14.95                                                                                                                                |                   |
| Filet Mignon 14.95                                                                                                                                         |                   |
| Chopped Sirloin 8.75                                                                                                                                       |                   |
| Combination Salad, Hot Dinner Bread, Coffee or Tea & Dessert<br>Choice of Potato - French Fries, Baked, or Twice Baked<br>(Blue Cheese Dressing, 3¢ extra) |                   |
| Medium Rare - Hot, Warm                                                                                                                                    |                   |
| Medium Well - Hot                                                                                                                                          |                   |
| Well - Done                                                                                                                                                |                   |
| Sea Food                                                                                                                                                   |                   |
| Shrimp Platter 8.25                                                                                                                                        |                   |
| 2 Fillet of Fish 8.25                                                                                                                                      |                   |
| Choice of Potato, Combination Salad, Dinner Bread                                                                                                          |                   |
| Soup                                                                                                                                                       |                   |
| Chili 1.50 2.00                                                                                                                                            |                   |
| Broccoli & Cheese 1.50 2.00                                                                                                                                |                   |
| Sandwiches                                                                                                                                                 |                   |
| Tenderloin (served) 3.50                                                                                                                                   |                   |
| Cheeseburger 2.05                                                                                                                                          |                   |
| Hamburger 1.75                                                                                                                                             |                   |
| B-B-Q 3.50                                                                                                                                                 |                   |
| Fish 2.95                                                                                                                                                  |                   |
| Chicken Fillet 2.95                                                                                                                                        |                   |
| Tomato extra 1¢ Lettuce extra 1¢                                                                                                                           |                   |
| From A Very Special Recipe<br>Submarine Sandwich<br>Served Hot on Hearty-Baked<br>Sour Dough Bread                                                         |                   |
| Chop Sirloin on large<br>bun with pizza cheese<br>and grilled onions                                                                                       |                   |
| "Green's" Special<br>4.95                                                                                                                                  |                   |