



Meals in Middletown, Courtesy of the Seeholzer Boys By John Taibi

When I was a youngster, the Taibi family rarely traveled off of Long Island. I can only remember two occasions when the family vacationed as a whole. The first time was a camping trip to Chenango Valley State Park where, along the way, I caught a glimpse of the Cadonia depot. A few years later we all went to New Hampshire's White Mountains, and despite the fact that the calendar said August, we all froze our buns off.

Most of the time when Dad piloted the family jalopy off of the Island it was to visit his old childhood friends in Sundown (deep in the Catskills) or to visit Marge and Vinny Versage in Cuddebackville (see NDB&B Dept. article "Summertime in Cuddebackville, NY"). He and I would pile into the Plymouth long before sunrise ("the car runs cooler", he would say) and generally the first stop to be made



was at the Red Apple Rest on Route 17 in Southfields, NY. Dad always traveled the old roads since that was the way he and his motorcycle buddies had done years earlier. If I had a dollar for every time he told the story of being on the Indian cycle and getting chased out of Tuxedo by the cops I'd be a rich man. Certainly I was rich for listening to the tale and I wish I could hear it again. Anyway, we'd pull into the Red Apple parking lot then head right for the bathrooms which at that time you could enter directly from the south side of the building. Then we'd go in and have a quick breakfast. I'd keep my ears peeled for the sound of a passing Erie train but most times it was all for naught. The Red Apple Rest was owned by, who else, "Red" Appel. He was the red headed brother of dark haired "Black" Appel. In 1923, "Black" opened up a hotel near Loch Sheldrake that later on became Brown's, where Jerry Lewis' fame began. "Red's" restaurant blossomed because it was on the main drag to the Catskills. It became a legendary stop for busses, hacks, private autos, and even motorcycles. Red wasn't as concerned about one's mode of transportation as was John-law in Tuxedo. During the Twenties, Thirties, and Forties, the place was always packed with hungry travelers. Even after the Harriman section of the New York State Thruway opened in the early 1950's the Red Apple Rest held its own. But, by the time Dad and I began making our trips the glory days for the restaurant were over. Still, when we were heading home, tour busses would oft times be parked outside while the riders were lined up inside waiting to get their silverware, place their order, then sit at the well worn tables to chow down. We'd use the bathroom, grab a hotdog at the outside counter, and hustle off before the busses could clog the highway. The business done at the Red Apple was organized chaos, I just witnessed it in its death throes.

If we were going to Cuddebackville, we'd continue up Rt. 17 and then get on Rt. 211 at Middletown. I didn't know much about the Ontario & Western then, but when we passed their Wickham Avenue station I knew it was one heck of a depot. Little did I know that at one time it had housed a restaurant whose activity at train time would have put Red's restaurant to shame on its best day!

The history of feeding the railroad's passengers goes all the way back to the Oswego Midland period of operations. The first Wickham Avenue depot, as well as the Main Street depot, were buildings 24'X60' in size. At the former depot a similarly sized structure located just to the north housed a restaurant whose Proprietor was Stephen Sweet. The eating house situated nearby the Main Street depot was operated by James T. Roe. These were the days when the railroad, and the community, couldn't quite decide which depot should be the main Midland station. That decision was left to the Ontario & Western who announced, on June 2, 1886, that the Wickham Avenue depot would become the main depot in the village and would now be referred to as Middletown. The *other* depot would be downgraded in importance and would be known as Main St., Middletown. "Heretofore, trains merely stopped for a minute or two (at Wickham Avenue) and then passed on to Main Street, and this station was of so little importance that the village omnibuses (which meet every train) were never seen there. Now, the omnibuses may be seen there regularly, and hotel porters are also on hand to solicit trade for their houses. It would seem as though pandemonium had been let loose."

The Middletown depot was thoroughly repaired and repainted for its emergence as the O&W's preeminent building. Situated on the first floor were the Ticket Office, waiting room, baggage room, and offices for Superintendent E. Canfield, and Train Dispatcher Hartigan. Offices for Master Mechanic Minshull, Paymaster Fowler, and Car Accountant McQueen were all on the 2nd floor.

The restaurant was still located in the building just to the north, some 16 feet separating it from the depot. The Proprietor at this time was W.G. Somers who also owned and operated West Shore Railroad restaurants at Weehawken, Kingston, and Syracuse. Mr. Somers ran a tidy operation. The walnut counters and wainscoted walls were always cheerfully decorated and adequately stocked for the convenience of the arriving O&W passengers, the railroad's employees and Middletown folks as well. Miss Annie Van Aiken was the cashier and other girls had sole duties to take care of the linens, silver, tea & coffee urns, ice boxes, and counters. Earlier on, in April 1886, another employee had been hired, as Manager, and he would eventually establish a national reputation for himself and for his Middletown O&W Restaurant.

William Seeholzer was born on April 13, 1862 in Poughkeepsie, New York. He was the first of three sons of Berthold and Magdalena (Flack) Seeholzer. Before he had become two decades old he had begun learning the restaurant trade in his hometown New York Central & Hudson River Railroad depot. This business prospered under the proprietorship of the Johnson Brothers, but eventually with the introduction of more dining cars on that railroad, the restaurant business suffered accordingly. "Billy", as all his friends called him, left the Poughkeepsie depot, crossed the Hudson River, and was hired by Mr. Somers to work in his West Shore Railroad restaurants located in the Kingston and Weehawken depots. It was from the latter location that he made his way to Middletown and the Ontario & Western Railway, a road which would always forsake the use of dining cars in lieu of feeding its passengers "on the run"!

Eighteen eighty-seven was a big year for the oldest of the Seeholzer boys. That year had hardly begun when, on January 22nd, he purchased the Middletown restaurant from Somers who wished to concentrate on his West Shore R.R. restaurants, which now included Cornwall and Haverstraw. Then, in the Fall, Billy took a bride. On October 26, 1887, Middletown native Minnie Conklin became the wife of the restaurant's proprietor. Afterwards, the happy couple set up housekeeping in a comfortable home at 6 Albert Street.

Now, with his personal life in good order, and with the railroad depositing ever increasing amounts of hungry passengers at his door, he invited his younger brother, John, to join him in Middletown. John was born on December 1, 1872 and came to Middletown in 1888 after cutting his culinary teeth at the Poughkeepsie depot restaurant as his brother had done. John, unlike his brother, put his personal life on hold and did not marry until Poughkeepsie native Christina Burt said "I do" on October 2, 1901. Because of John's age, the business relationship between the brothers was not so much a partnership as it was simply employer and employee. At this point in the history of the restaurant, Billy's right-hand-man was Lewis Sharp. As time, and John's age, wore on, he was given more responsibilities by the proprietor, eventually becoming the manager of food preparation and counter services. Billy was always the restaurant's owner, and since he knew the business "from the kitchen to the till", was responsible for the overall operation of the eatery. This arrangement between the brothers lasted until April of 1920. On April Fool's Day the boys announced that a new, and equal, business partnership between them had been formed, no foolin'! John had finally emerged from the shadows of his brother. But, I'm getting way ahead of the story, we've got to return to the nineteenth century.

This was the era when the Ontario & Western's passenger service was increasing by leaps and bounds, especially in the summer months now that residents of Gotham had discovered the hills, mountains, and rivers of the Catskills. If the O&W were carrying more passengers, then there were more passengers that needed to be fed by the Seeholzer restaurant in Middletown. The restaurant building quickly became too small to handle the crowds of people descending from the cars for the 15 minute (later reduced to 10 minutes on April 9, 1889) meal stops, so the railroad decided to give Billy more space. Beginning on May 1, 1888, ground was broken for an addition to the restaurant. The plan was to connect the depot and restaurant by enclosing the 16 foot gap between the buildings, the new space to be used by the Seeholzer establishment. Passengers would then have direct access from the depot into the restaurant, as well as more elbow room to eat once they got there. At the same time the appearance of the combined buildings was made uniform by extending the platform hood of the restaurant along the depot and addition as well. On June 15, 1888, the enlarged restaurant was opened and it was immediately approved by the traveling public.

As can be seen, the fortunes of the restaurant were directly tied to the well being of the railroad. On the other hand, the O&W acknowledged the importance of the depot restaurant since it was not in their plans to introduce dining car service to their trains. Neither the railroad nor the restaurant was disappointed by the travelers trade. Therefore, it was no surprise in November of 1889 when the O&W announced that it was planning to erect a new station in Middletown. It would be three years before construction began, but the time was used wisely by architect Bradford L. Gilbert (of 50 Broadway, NY) and Chief Engineer Edward Canfield to plan for the new structure. By the time ground was broken on October 25, 1892, everything had been worked out as to the size, appearance, and interior appointments for the new station.

The Middletown newspapers advised their readers of the plans for the O&W's most important building. "The building is being put up on the site of the old restaurant. The material used in the erection of the building is Hudson River red brick, with the first story to be of Scranton (sand) stone finished in rock face, massive and simple in detail. The Wickham Avenue end of the building will be carried up three stories and used for administrative purposes and for local officers. The central portion of the building has been arranged for public service and will contain a very fine and commodious waiting room with large open fireplace, private retiring rooms for ladies, and general ticket and telegraph offices. The north end of the building has been arranged for train service and can be used for restaurant purposes. This large, airy, and pleasant dining room, with its hard wood finish and open fireplace will certainly be appreciated by the traveling public. The kitchen exterior (with dormitories above) is placed in a wing on the Low Avenue side of the building.

"The station will be 175 feet long by 35 feet wide, the kitchen extension being 30'X30'. The width of the Wickham Ave. front is 45 feet, which is three stories high for 30 feet in depth. The total length of the building, including an annexed express building and awnings is 285 feet.

"The restaurant will be 86'X32', and the ceiling dome is 16 feet high. It will contain over 200 running feet of lunch counter and a handsome stone mantel over the fireplace. The kitchen annex contains a serving pantry 11'X27', and the storage room is 8'X14'. Over this are four good-sized bedrooms, ranging from 12'X13' to 13'X15' in size.

"The general waiting room in the station proper is 30X32 feet, with a massive and simple mantel and seats around the walls and in the center. The ladies have a cozy little waiting room for themselves, 15X17 feet, with toilet, 9X13 feet adjoining. The men have a toilet 11X14 feet. The ticket and telegraph offices are very commodious. On the Wickham Ave. end of the building is the baggage room, 15X16 feet, and the Station Master's office, 10X15 feet. Also the Trainman's room, 16X16 feet, and the locker lobby, 10X12 feet.

"The second story is devoted to railroad business, and will contain offices for the Chief Engineer, 12X21 feet, the assistant engineer, roadmaster, and draughtsman, 15X27 feet, and an additional office of 14X27 feet. This floor also has offices for the Supt. of Motive Power, 13X15 feet, one 13X18 feet for his draughtsman, and one 13X20 feet for his clerks. The Asst. Supt. of Motive Power and his clerks have an office 13X20 feet in size. The Train Dispatchers office is 16X17 feet, and the Trainman have a lobby of 8X13 feet in which to make reports to the dispatcher. The toilet room on the floor is 10X13 feet.

"The third story is devoted to the Officials and contains two large offices of 16X17 feet, one 13X26 feet, and also one of 13X14 feet with an adjoining toilet. There is also a very large general attic for storage over the entire building, but for the valuable books, papers, etc., fireproof vaults 9X13 feet on the third story (and on the second story connecting with the Chief Engineer's office) have been provided.

"A cellar 14X36 feet is provided under the main building for a 20 horsepower boiler, coal storage, etc. The heating of the restaurant is provided for in the cellar under the kitchen extension. Electricity will be installed throughout the entire structure.

"The building is to be completed May next, and will cost about \$50,000. Darling Bros. & Company of Worcester, Mass. have been awarded the contract for building this handsome new O&W depot at Wickham Avenue."

The building was not quite finished on time, nevertheless, on June 7, 1893, Billy Seeholzer opened the new restaurant for business. There were polished cherry counters, and specially made tables (see photo) for the convenience of serving the waiting patrons. Mr. William Hasbrouck had charge of the kitchen. Three weeks later, on August 1st, the O&W's officials and clerks moved into their new quarters in the station. Situated in the building were General

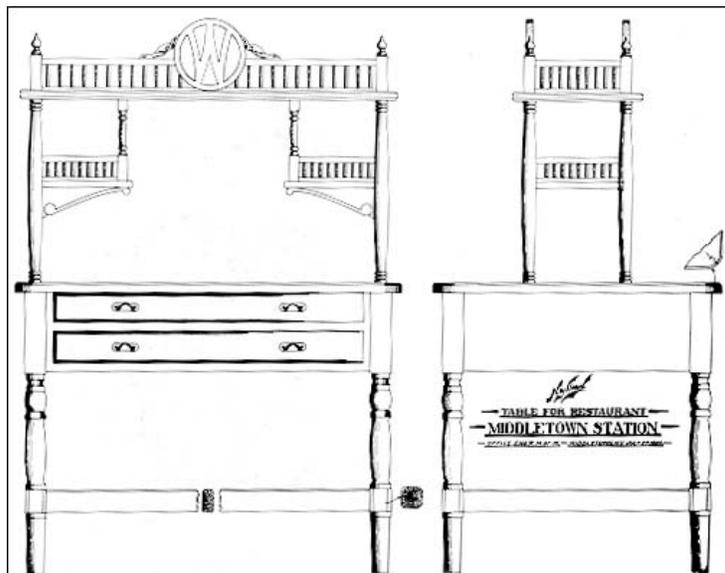
Superintendent Bradfield's office on the third floor, along with his staff consisting of W.E. Norris, H.F. Walker, W.L. Ireland, and G.H. Makepiece. On the second floor are the offices for Chief Engineer Edward Canfield, Asst. C.E. Louis D. Fouquet, Chief Clerk John H. King, and clerks K.W. Staib, and F.W. Elliott. Offices on this floor were also provided for: Car Accountant W.D. McQueen (his clerks being G.H. Harris, E.J. Macksie, H.B. Little, F.W. Smith, G.A. Wolcott, and Fred B. Williams), Claim Agent George Marsden, Superintendent of Motive Power George W. West (his stenographer Carrie Stewart, and clerks James H. Messenger, E.B. Quick, Wm. H. Bull, Geo. Guppy, C.W. Lyon, and J.S. Browning), Division Superintendent C.H. Hopkins (Melvin J. Edwards, Private Secretary), and dispatchers offices for Dispatchers E.A. Hamilton, J.C. Mercy, and William Fitchey. Yardmaster A.E. Ludington (assistant Osmer N. Gregory), Ticket Agent Edward VanHorn, Telegraph Operator W.F. Crans, and Baggage-master G. Irving Edwards all have offices on the ground floor. At this same time the old Wickham Avenue depot was sold to George Watts who was to move it to a lot on Low Ave. The final cost for the new Wickham Avenue station was \$44,213.00.



The restaurant in this new station was where fame and fortune for the Seeholzer boys took flight. It was as if Billy's restaurant experience and imagination were reborn and soared to a higher level of catering to the physical and visual needs of his hungry clientele. A large wooden sign was fabricated by the O&W's sign/paint shop and hung at the entrance to the restaurant that announced to everyone that the O&W Depot Restaurant served meals and lunch to everyone inside. (A photo of the sign led off this article.) Once inside the establishment you could grab a ready made sandwich (or order a meal), down a half pint of milk (or a beer from the bar), and polish off a piece of fruit for dessert all in 5 minutes. Charge? 20 cents! Gentlemen could then top off their meal by purchasing one of the Seeholzer O&W brand of cigars for 5 cents. If you took the time to take in the restaurant's fittings and decorations you'd notice that the walls were pleasingly decorated with handsome engravings from the Canadian Pacific Railroad, the wooden tables were topped with O&W logos, and the counters (all 196 feet of them, 64 feet would be added later!) looked more inviting than a fruit exhibit at the Orange County Fair! If you hadn't noticed how comfortable the atmosphere was inside the restaurant, the pleasant condition was caused by 10 electric fans that constantly circulated the air around the room. When the railroad no longer allowed newsboys on the trains (July 1896), Billy opened a newsstand in the restaurant that carried all the needed publications. If the rush at the counter was too much for some travelers, Billy prepared box lunches that were brought on board the train by a butcher and could be eaten without getting out of your coach seat, 35 cents, please. Ladies got a free fan with their box lunch, complete with a Seeholzer restaurant advertisement on the back. Billy didn't miss a trick.

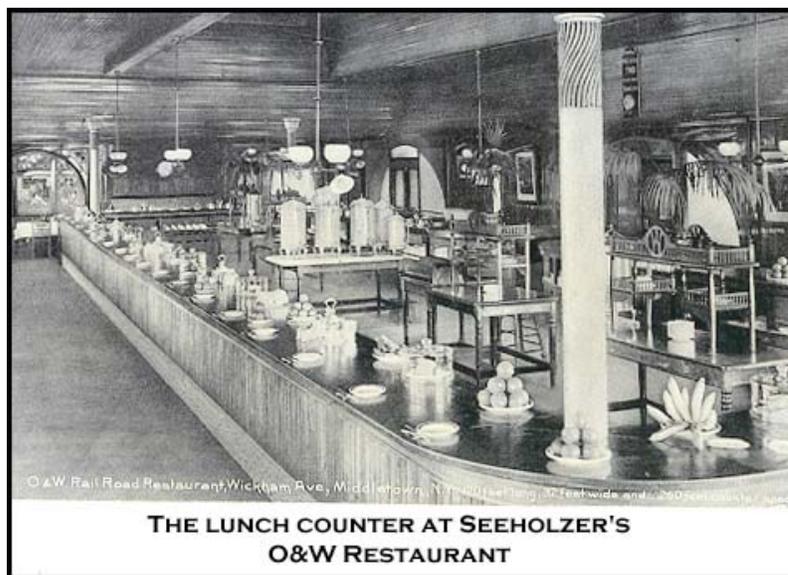
How did the Seeholzer's serve the descending swarm of humanity in only 10 minutes? Simple. They went down to J.E. Iseman & Sons bakery and bought 200-300 loaves of bread. (The amount varied according to the season, in the summer sometimes upwards of 500 loaves

were needed.) Then they made up an assortment of sandwiches which were then put out on the counter prior to the arrival of the next train. The amount of sandwiches sold was the barometer by which a good days business had been done. In the busy season the selling of 4,000 to 5,000 sandwiches a day and the downing of 1,000 quarts of milk was the norm. You can well imagine that the restaurant staff kept mighty busy during the 10 minute lunch stops.



In the old restaurant there were 7-10 employees, but when the new depot restaurant opened 17 people were needed. By the turn of the century 25 people were employed, and by 1910, 30-40 people were needed depending upon the time of year. It's hard at this late stage to determine how the restaurant staff made sure everyone paid for their meal. It may well have been on the honor system as the following story from July 1893 illustrates:

"A traveler at the Wickham Avenue depot picked up a sandwich at the restaurant and then walked over to the bar and ordered a bottle of beer. He lunched quietly there until the train Conductor announced 'All Aboard', when he produced 10 cents for the beer and started off. The girl had watched him and as he was going out the door she called out shrilly, 'Come back and pay for your sandwich!' The fellow paid no attention, but the other fleeing passengers, to a man, turned about. Four of them went down into their pockets after 10 cents and started to apologize. The girl kept her eyes on the one who didn't come back. She called again in unmistakable terms: 'You with the speckled shirt, come back here and pay for your sandwich!' That was the last seen of the young man, the girl was semi-paralyzed, the other waitresses laughed. The tension was relieved by John Seeholzer who called out 'One hundred sandwiches for #1, heavy train'." Later that same month some of the money was recouped as the following story recounts. "A pompous looking man called for three cups of coffee at the Wickham Avenue depot when the noon train came in. He carried them into the train along



with one of those beautiful new silver milk pitchers on which was engraved the Seeholzer name (Author's note: There was also monogrammed flatware and dishware). He didn't come back. The girl has a small amount of change which was due the customer but she would rather have the pitcher!"

In addition to the regular schedule of trains the Seeholzer restaurant also catered to the needs of any special train being run. Whether it was the 33rd Company from Walton going off to war (soldiers always got free cigars), a train load of immigrants going off to the promised land, the Board of Directors of the Borden's Company on their way to inspect their facilities, or O&W officials aboard inspection engine #26, everybody was fed before they went on their way. And, if children were involved, they always got a free straw hat purchased by Billy for them from the store of Charles Wolff, Jr.

Any successful business has to have good management and dedicated employees and the O&W Restaurant was no different. More importantly, Billy Seeholzer cared about his employees and showed it by providing them with an annual excursion, picnic, or dinner. There was a trolley excursion to Goshen where everyone dined at the St. Elmo and enjoyed informal dancing. On another occasion 25 employees went by autobus to a swimming party at the old D&H Canal basin in Cuddebackville. I've swam there too, so I'm sure the Seeholzer gang had a great time. Not only were the employees cared for by the boss, but they cared for him as well. On the occasion of Billy's 25th anniversary at the restaurant (1911) a grand party was held where employees, railroaders, and general folks as well could thank him for his fine service and loyalty to them. Over 200 people attended the gathering, including Louise Cheald who made the famous crullers at the restaurant for 18 years, Nellie Cockreli who tended to the counters for 17 years, and Florence Pierson who helped serve the customers for 6 years. It was a wonderful association between the Seeholzer's and their employees, and it only helped to make the success of the restaurant more rewarding.

Oh, I got a little ahead of myself again. I must be in a hurry to get to the part of how all of this is associated with the Northern Division. Anyway, it seems that all of this success at the restaurant and improved business on the railroad necessitated more additions and improvements at the depot. In late 1903 some of the offices in the depot were moved across the tracks to the new freight house. After other offices were re-arranged and added to the second story, the restaurant was enlarged by 32 feet. This made the total length of the dining facility 120 feet 8 inches with 260 feet of counter space. These new additions were planned by Edward Canfield's son David who also superintended the work. On July 16, 1904, the improved restaurant facilities were opened. For 15 years this efficient restaurant served the

O&W passengers, the trolley lines riders, and everyone in general. But, on October 23, 1919 disaster struck the Seeholzer business for the first, and only, time.

About 6 o'clock in the morning Billy was awakened from his sleep by the sound of the fire alarm. He looked out the window at the front of his home and saw reflection of flames against the sky but did not realize that his business was burning up. A few minutes later a telephone call advised him of the bad news. While the exact cause of the fire was not determined it was thought that a fire under one of the coffee urns in the kitchen started the blaze. After all was said and done, the kitchen and dining area were completely ruined as were all the provisions that had been laid into the cellar. Other offices in the station were made uninhabitable by the smoke and water, and portions of the roof were destroyed by the flames as well as by holes made by the firemen to vent the building. The fire was declared out at 8:55AM and it was

later estimated that \$20,000 damage had been done, half of that to the restaurant.

Immediately the railroad had David Canfield draw up plans to rebuild and improve the station, notably adding an entire 3rd story, and two weeks later the Seeholzer boys were back in the lunch business, not in the station, however. Federal Manager Nuelle (this was war time) arranged to have two passenger coaches switched into a siding just north of the station and have them converted for restaurant purposes. The coaches, #107 & 34, had their seats and fixtures removed and the former car was outfitted into a first class cooking car while the latter car became the lunch room, a long counter replacing the rows of seats. Because the summer season was over, the Seeholzer's judged this arrangement to be satisfactory until their old "home" could be rebuilt. This new "restaurant" was opened for business the second week of November 1919.

Work on the depot improvements and the rebuilding of the restaurant were hampered by a shortage of materials brought about by the late war, but it was hoped that the eatery could be ready by Memorial Day in 1920.

It was at this time that the Seeholzer brothers formed their partnership, so that when they could finally move into their new facility they shared equally all of the responsibilities for running the restaurant. As had been hoped the restaurant was able to open as planned and the brothers set about continuing their much acclaimed business. But, times were changing on the railroad. Passengers began forsaking the coaches for their own private autos or busses. Those were the people who once raced into the O&W Depot Restaurant, now they just raced to get to their Catskill destinations. Stopping no doubt at "Red" Appel's Rest along the way. As the years wore on less and less business was done at the depot diner and though the railroad employees and general public still enjoyed eating at Seeholzer's, surely the glory days were in the past.

On June 30, 1935, at age 73, William M. Seeholzer passed away. He had been ill since the previous December, and despite the constant attention of his physician, he was not able to recover. He was survived by his wife Minnie, a daughter, a grandson, his brothers John and Charles, and three sisters. He was laid to rest in Poughkeepsie's Rural Cemetery.

Now, brother John carried on the tradition of operating the restaurant, assisted by his wife Christina. But nine years later, at age 72, John decided to close the restaurant on October 31, 1944. He and his wife retired to their home at 132 Cottage Street in Middletown. That same month the O&W purchased, subject to the approval of the Reorganization Court, all of the ranges, kitchen utensils, dishes, silverware, glassware, coffee urns and all the other equipment in the Seeholzer Restaurant for \$1,500. When the purchase of this equipment came before the court on November 3, 1944, Judge Murray Hulbert had some interest and advise for the sale. The discussion between the Court and the railroad went as follows:

"Court: Petition for order No. 435, request by the Trustee to spend \$1,500 to continue the further operation of a restaurant at Middletown, New York. Has the operation of the restaurant been profitable?"

Mr. Oakes (attorney for the Trustee): It has supported William Seeholzer for his lifetime and has supported his brother who has run it for the last 10 or 15 years (sic) under a lease from the railroad, and they have served the passengers traveling back and forth as well as rendering some local service, mainly to the employees.

Court: Does the recipe for the doughnuts that he serves up there go along with the sale?

Mr. Oakes: I do not believe it does, but he has a large stock of dishes, utensils, coffee urns, chairs, and so forth.

Court: That is very important to get the recipe for the doughnuts. I think that is one of his best assets.

Mr. Oakes: I do not doubt I can get it, but he reached the age he wants to retire.

Court: What is that?

Mr. Oakes: Well, it is never going to be with me if I can help it, but with him I think he is 70 years of age, and not well, and he asks \$3,000 for this and the Trustee told me that he would pay \$1,500 and no more, and so he has agreed to accept it.

Court: Does anyone else desire to be heard. This is the purchase of the equipment in the restaurant in the station at \$1,500? Approved."

Judge Hulbert had a little fun with Elbert Oakes, but apparently the good natured advise went right over the head of the serious attorney. In any case, the reign of the Seeholzer's in the depot restaurant had come to an end. What had begun in June of 1886 had come to a close with the Nov. 3, 1944 sale. On August 10, 1945, the Trustee requested the Court to approve a sale of the restaurant equipment to Mr. U. Frajman, of 2540 Broadway, New York for a price of \$1,600. This time, without remarks, Judge Hulbert approved the sale on September 29, 1945.

John Seeholzer's retirement lasted for 13 years. On November 4, 1957 he passed away and was interred in the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery and united with his brother. He was survived by his wife, two daughters (Miss Dorothy E. Seeholzer, and Mrs. Eleanor S. Roe, all of Middletown), as well as two sisters (Mrs. William H. Schrauth and Mrs. Henry Jackson, both of Poughkeepsie).

So, why should all of this fall under the banner of the Northern Division Bridge & Building Dept.? Well, as it turns out, the Middletown depot restaurant was not the only restaurant operated by the brothers in an O&W depot.

During May of 1889, Billy Seeholzer took over the operation of the restaurant in the O&W's station at Oswego. While information on the Seeholzer operation in Oswego is sketchy, at best, it does appear that the elder brother was not at all happy with the amount of business done at the northern end of the railroad. It's possible that he ran the restaurant there for about four years before concentrating again solely on the Middletown facility. There was one other aborted attempt at operating another O&W depot restaurant. In November of 1911, John, along with his family went up to take charge of the eatery in the Walton depot. But, the following week he returned to Middletown with the only explanation being that he could not find suitable housing in the area.

During the course of doing research for this article I have discovered that it is virtually impossible to find any mementos of the Seeholzer years in the depot restaurant. If you read this story closely, you'll have noticed that the Seeholzer boys had monogrammed silver milk pitchers, flatware (silverware), dishes, railroad logoed cigar boxes, and advertising fans. Most likely there are menus out there somewhere as well. I suggest to all of you who are collectors of O&W artifacts that you should get busy and discover the booty that must be out there waiting to be found. I know the next time I'm in Middletown I'm gonna check out the Middletown phone directory and see if there are any Seeholzer's still living in the area. If you

find a photo of Billy or John let me know. The experts on the Antiques Road Show may not think of any of these items as being valuable but they are certainly an important part of the history and heritage of the Ontario & Western Railway.



Nowadays I don't often travel south of Middletown. But on the rare occasion I do, I always pull into the parking lot of the Red Apple Rest. Nestled between the old Erie mainline and Route 17 (the mainline to the Catskills for a legion of travelers) I remember those days when Dad and I stopped for nature's call and a hotdog. I envision the crowds of people that descended from the buses to the order counter, not unlike the O&W's passengers flocking into the Seeholzer's

restaurant in Middletown. Most times now there are only a handful of people to be found inside, the parking lot is empty, the outside entrance to the bathrooms has been sealed off for years, and the open air hot dog stand is permanently closed. Having memories and imagination of past times is both wonderful and tragic at the same time. We smile because of the experience, and just shake our heads at how time, and the modern world, have taken their toll on institutions that we remember so fondly. I hope this article brings only smiles and pleasant thoughts to those of you who grabbed a sandwich off the counter of Seeholzer's Depot Restaurant. I hope you plunked down your dime for it as well!

Now, did I ever tell you the story of how my Dad and his motorcycling buddies always got pulled over by the long arm of the law in Tuxedo? Maybe some other time. I'd like to keep that story to myself for awhile longer.