

SCA

North Jersey

DINER TOUR

AND MORE

KEVIN PATRICK

AND THE

SOCIETY FOR COMMERCIAL ARCHEOLOGY

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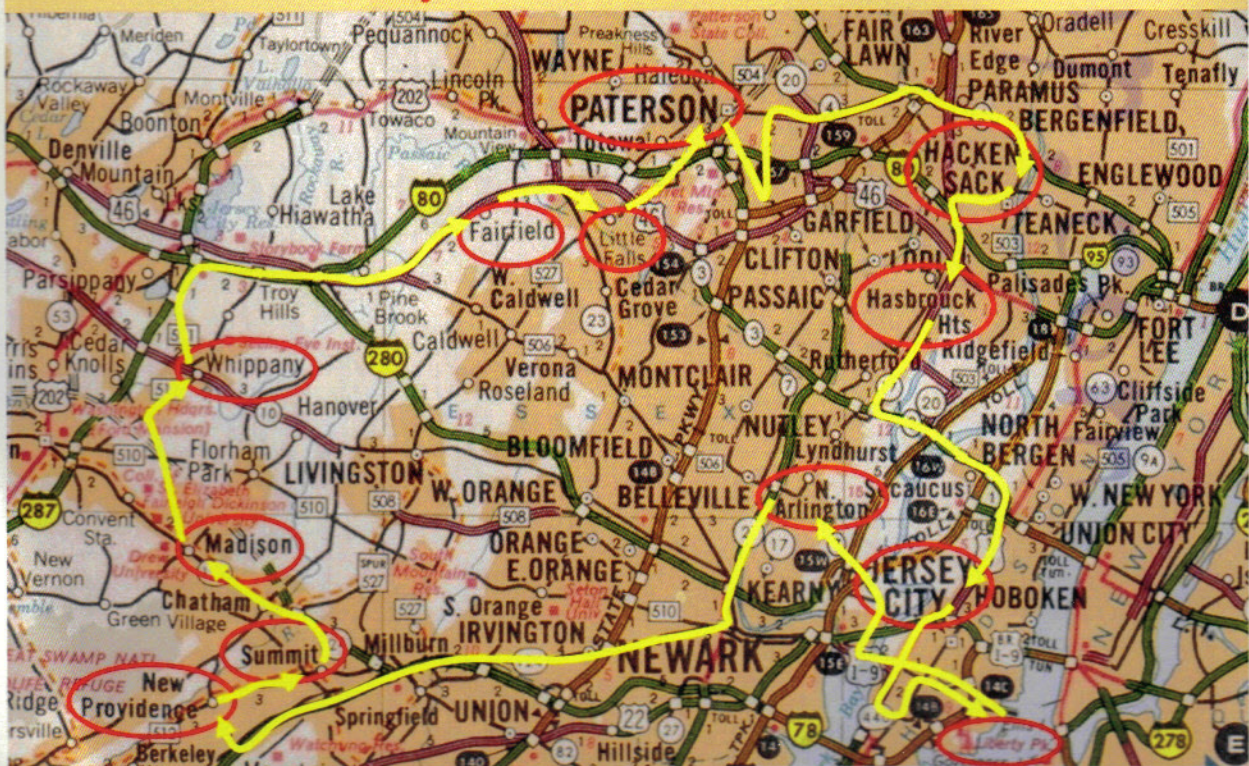
Broadway — Route 4 — Looking West
Fairlawn, New Jersey

NORTH JERSEY DINER TOUR

Diner manufacturing shifted from its late-19th century lunch wagon roots in New England to the larger markets in the New York metropolitan area in the early 20th century. Patrick J. Tierney started making lunch wagons in the Connecticut suburb of New Rochelle in 1905, surviving through his sons until 1933. The true center of diner manufacturing, however, was destined to be North Jersey with Jerry O'Mahony's first diner constructed in a Bayonne garage in 1913. In 1927, O'Mahony built a large diner plant in nearby Elizabeth that could turn out a diner a day. In that same year Kullman started building diners in Newark, and the Paterson Vehicle Company began turn out Silk City Diners. For the next 50 years North Jersey's diner manufacturing industry would be centered in, and around these three cities with builders, foreman, and managers using the experience gained at a pre-existing diner company to start up their own. In this way, Paramount Diners was hived from Silk City, and set up shop in nearby Haledon in 1932, and a year later Fodero Dining Car opened in the Ironbound section of Newark with skills learned from Kullman. Master Diners started manufacturing in the Paterson suburb of Pequannock in 1937, followed two years later by Mountain View Diners just down the road in Mountain View. Manno started making diners in the Newark suburb of Belleville in 1949, and Swingle in Middlesex, west of Elizabeth, in 1957. By the 1950s, there were more than a dozen diner manufacturers, and renovators operating in North Jersey turning out product that caused the region to accumulate the planet's greatest concentration of pre-fabricated restaurants.

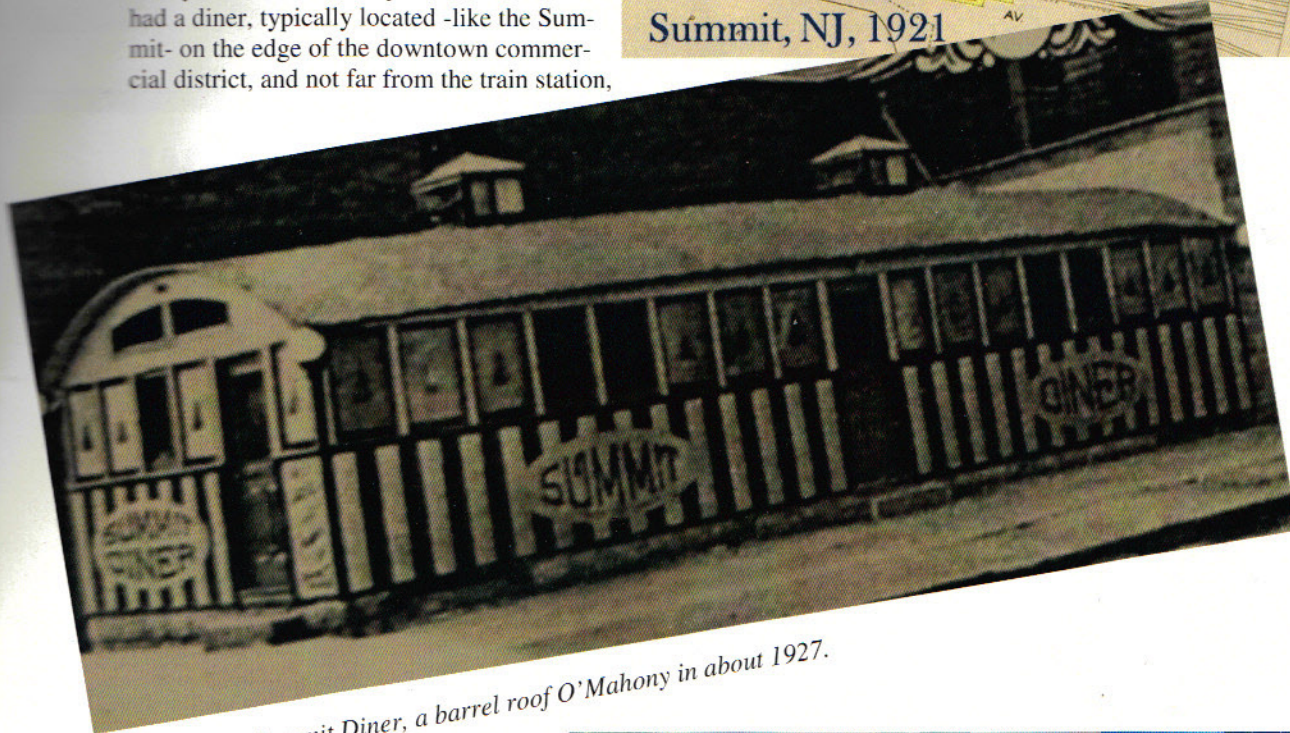
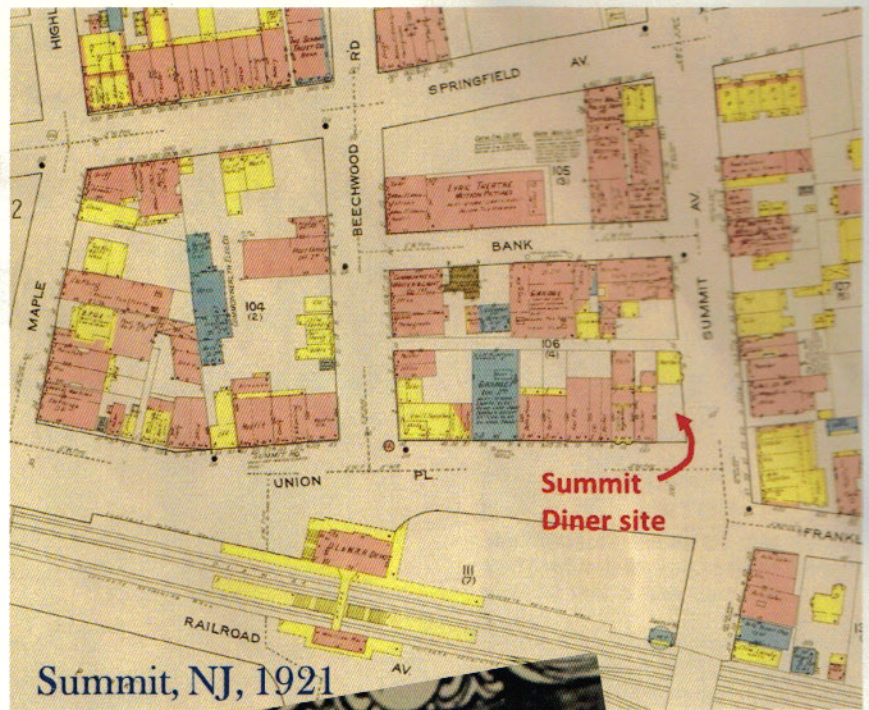
The Society for Commercial Archeology North Jersey Diner Tour highlights the heart of this one-time center of the diner universe in search of diners, diner manufacturing sites, and other roadside wonders along the way. From the Murray Hill Best Western in New Providence, the tour will get coffee at the Summit Diner in Summit, move on to breakfast at the Nautilus Diner in Madison, and stop for pie at the Whippany Diner in Whippany. For lunch, Main Line Pizzeria in Little Falls will serve the pizza, followed by sliders at both the White Manna in Hackensack, and the White Mana in Jersey City, and milk shakes from the Bendix Diner in Hasbrouck Heights. In addition to a variety of other drive-by diners, sites will include the Hinchliffe Stadium, and Great Falls in Paterson, the Wilson Carpet Giant, Pulaski Skyway, and Liberty State Park in Jersey City. For super, we'll arrive at the Arlington Diner in North Arlington just as the gathering dusk initiates the lighting of its rooftop neon sign. The adventure continues on Sunday with a trip to New York City's Outer Boroughs for breakfast at the Jackson Hole Diner in Queens, followed by a stop at the Long Island Motor Parkway, and a exploration of the

North Jersey Diner Tour and More



SUMMIT DINER, SUMMIT, NJ

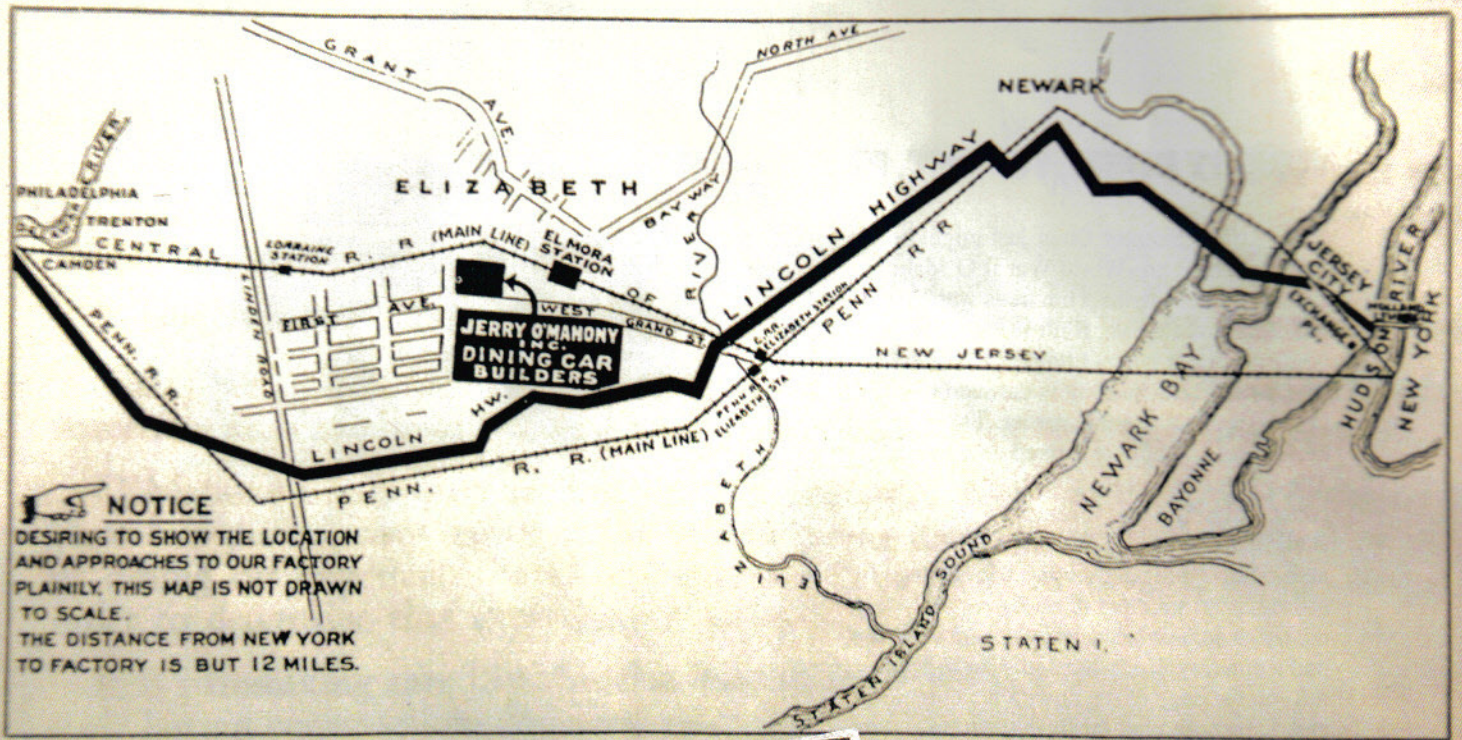
The Summit Diner just might be the best preserved pre-World War II O'Mahony Monarch in existence. Hundreds were manufactured, few survive. Built in 1938 with white porcelain enamel flanks, and wood trim interior, the Summit is the second O'Mahony to grace this corner. The first barrel roof O'Mahony arrived around 1927. The Summit is a classic "depot diner," located within walking distance of this railroad suburb's train station. Before the age of the automobile, diner geography was dictated by railroad, and streetcar lines. By the 1930s, nearly all of North Jersey's railroad suburbs had a diner, typically located -like the Summit- on the edge of the downtown commercial district, and not far from the train station,



The original Summit Diner, a barrel roof O'Mahony in about 1927.

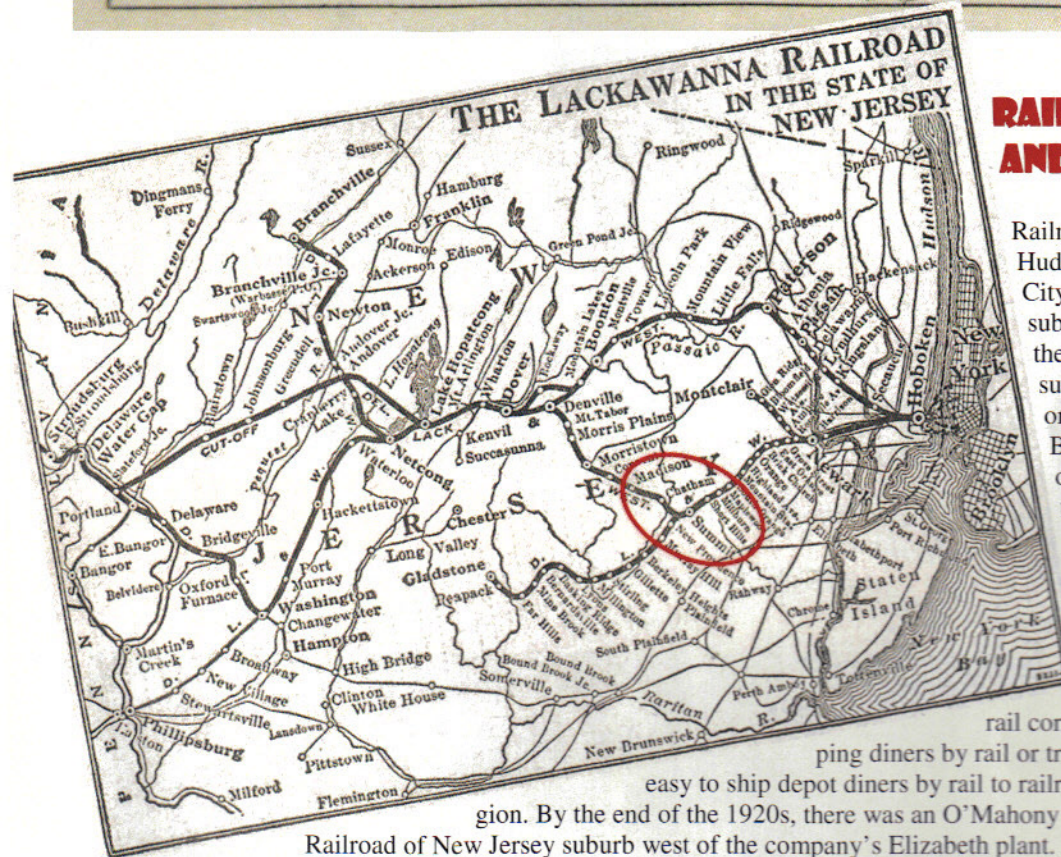


The Summit Diner, a 1938 O'Mahony Monarch.



NOTICE

DESIRING TO SHOW THE LOCATION AND APPROACHES TO OUR FACTORY PLAINLY, THIS MAP IS NOT DRAWN TO SCALE. THE DISTANCE FROM NEW YORK TO FACTORY IS BUT 12 MILES.



RAILROAD SUBURBS AND DEPOT DINERS

Railroads radiating away from the Hudson River terminals to New York City established some of the earliest suburbs in North Jersey, establishing the population centers subsequently surrounded by sprawling auto-oriented housing developments.

Before World War II, pedestrian oriented depot diners located on the edge of railroad suburb downtowns. After World War II, newer auto-oriented diners set up in the burgeoning highway commercial strips at the edge of these towns. North Jersey diner manufacturers located in

rail corridors to have the option of shipping diners by rail or truck. It was therefore relatively

easy to ship depot diners by rail to railroad suburbs throughout the re-

gion. By the end of the 1920s, there was an O'Mahony diner in nearly every Central Railroad of New Jersey suburb west of the company's Elizabeth plant. After World War II, the company focused on trucking diners west to sites along US 22. Most of the older railroad suburbs are even now served by a local diner. The old Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad suburbs of Maplewood, Summit, New Providence, Chatham, Madison, Morristown, Morris Plains, Denville, Dover, and Boonton all have operating diners.



LACKAWANNA SUBURB DINERS

A closer look at Bloomers Floral Shop in Chatham reveals it to be a 1949 Silk City slid onto the narrow Main Street lot edge-wise to the sidewalk. This was the old Chatham Diner. Tony Tunnero operated the diner until 1990. Although gutted in its repurposing to a flower shop, the diner's vaulted ceiling is still apparent..



Mama C's Subs is a c.1946 Kullman dinette on Main Street in Madison. It is typical of the smaller diners manufacturers started to make right before World War II to serve the small hamburger chain market. The popularity of the dinette continued after the war. The dinette could fit into a short-menu market niche in towns that already had a full-service diner, like Madison's Nautilus Diner located closer to downtown.





NAUTILUS DINER, MADISON

Dating back to the 1920s, the first generation diner was a little brick lunch room followed by a streamlined restaurant known as the Madison Diner, which was replaced by the first Nautilus Diner, a c.1958 Kullman Princess (below) that was itself replaced by a 1974



The Nautilus is a 7-section diner with two diner sections, two dining room sections, two kitchen sections, and a vestibule. The section seams are along the axis of the peaked ceilings. Although the 1970s décor (below) has been re-modeled, the large-chunk, white terazzo floor, popular at the time, remains.



WHIPPANY DINER, WHIPPANY

The Whippany Diner is another classic from the 1970s, a white rock Mediterranean diner popular after the fad for stainless steel-clad modernism had faded. The diners could seat more people in a diner section or dining room, with a larger kitchen, and a more efficient design, and were therefore more profitable. The Mediterranean styling also better reflected the Greek heritage of the owners who had by then come to dominate the diner business. The Whippany was built by DeRafefe in 1975, replacing a 1950 Mountain View with fluted porcelain enamel panels. Like other 1970s-era diners, the Whippany has a white, large-chunk terrazzo floor, and brick interior arches that frame intimate booth alcoves.

Owner Tommy Karadimas runs the Whippany with his





WHIPPANY RAILWAY MUSEUM, WHIPPANY

The Whippany Railway Museum is located on a branch of the Morristown & Erie Railroad, a short line that was built between the Lackawanna Railroad in Morristown, and the Erie Railroad in Essex Fells between 1903 and 1906. The railroad collection was started by Earle Gil in 1965, and includes steam locomotive excursion trains, equipment from surrounding railroads, a Hutchison Track Indicator from New York's demolished Penn Station, and various replica railroad buildings set in and around the 1905 Whippany Depot made of cobbles de-

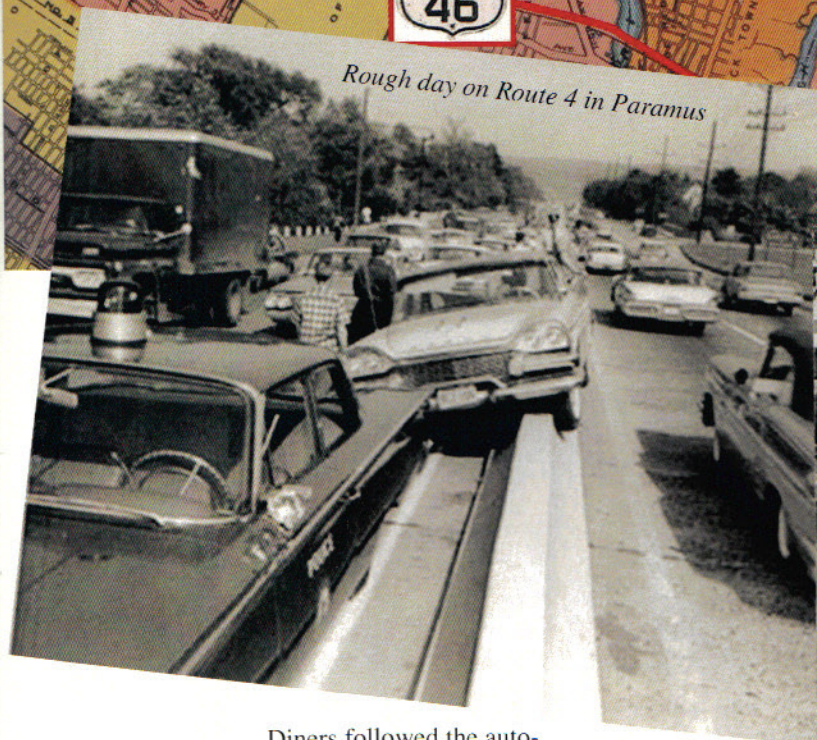
NORTH JERSEY HIGHWAY DINERS

With the opening of the Holland Tunnel to New York City in 1927, New Jersey began to build its first generation superhighway network, which like the railroads before it, radiated out from key Hudson River links to Manhattan, including NJ Route 4, and 6 (a.k.a. US 46), which were built west from the George Washington Bridge after its opening in 1931, and NJ 3 built west from the Lincoln Tunnel after 1937.

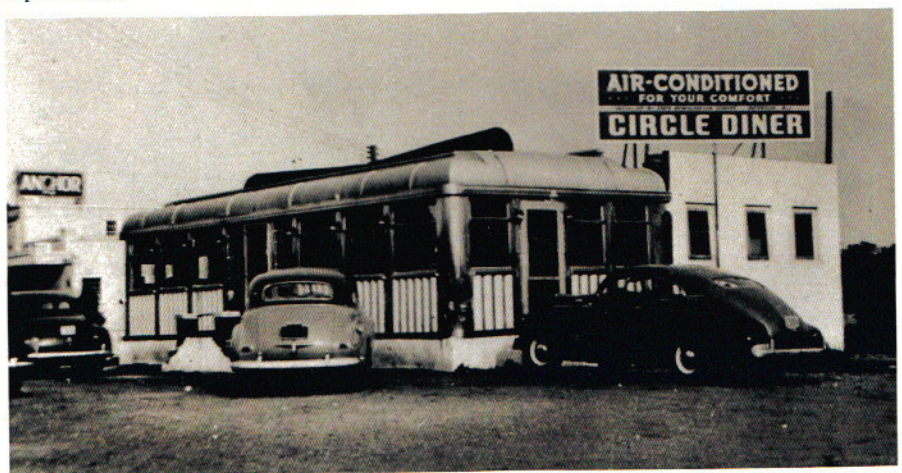




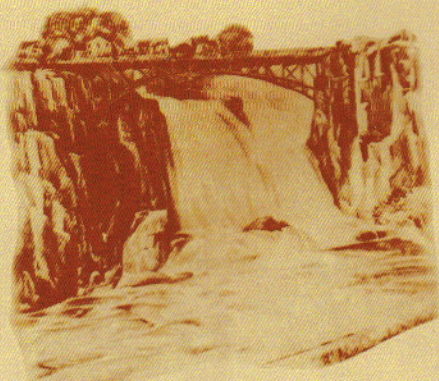
Rough day on Route 4 in Paramus



Diners followed the automobile traffic to the new superhighways, which contained some innovations like median strips, traffic circles, and grade-separated interchanges, but also had cross-traffic intersections, and roadside commercial development. In many cases, diners were the first businesses to pioneer a newly opened stretch of highway, especially circles with their heavy concentration of traffic. Ralph Carrado brought the Silver Dollar Diner to the US 46 Little Ferry Circle in 1946 where it stayed through a name change to Rosie's Farmland Diner until 1990 when it was moved to Michigan (above right). The Circle Diner (right), also in US 46 operated at the Wayne Circle until



PATERSON



William Carlos
WILLIAMS

Revised edition prepared by Christopher MacGowan

Modern poet William Carlos Williams immortalized Paterson in his epic 5-book poem written between 1946 to 1958

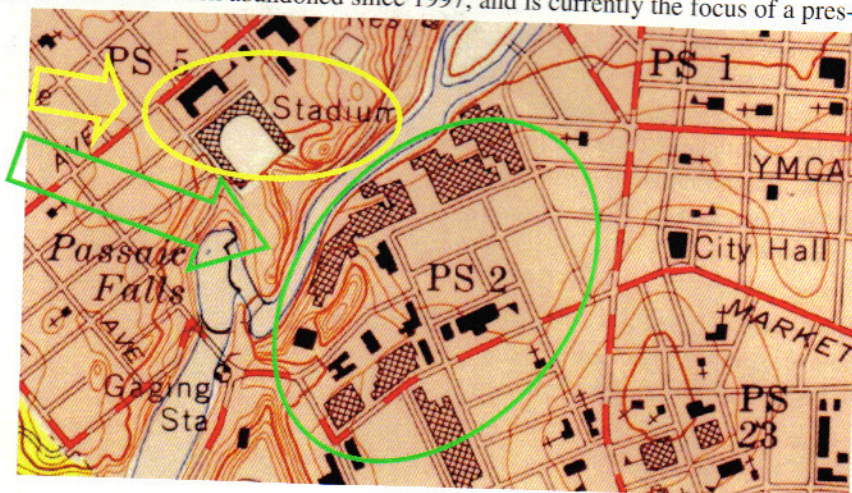
PATERSON, NJ

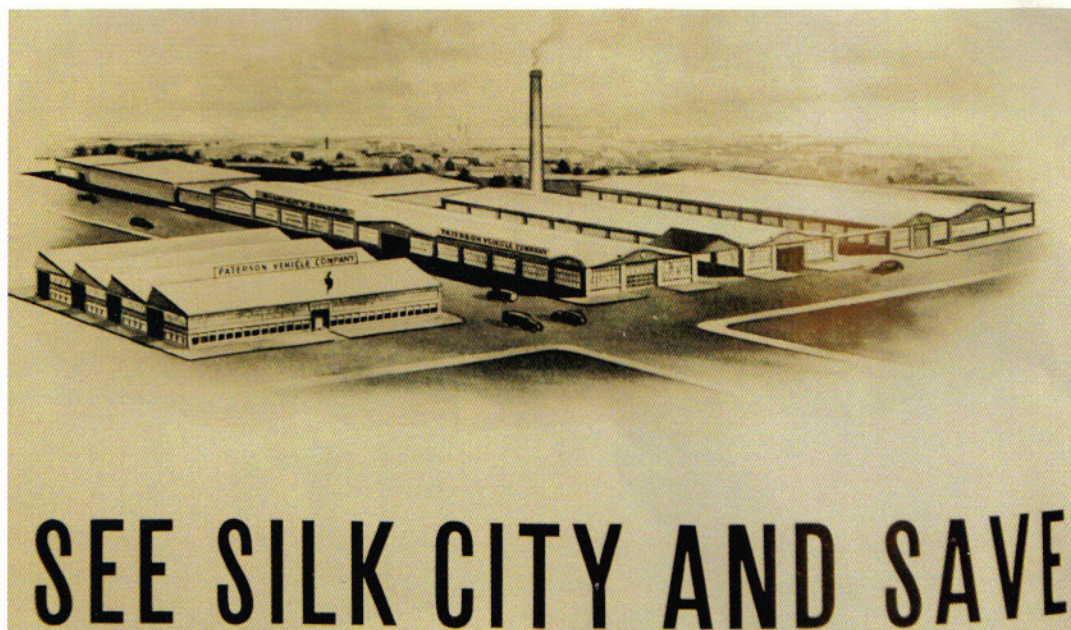
Alexander Hamilton witnessed Great Falls of the Passaic River thundering over its massive basalt ledge during the Revolutionary War, and was instrumental in developing its potential with the founding of the Society for Useful Manufacture in 1791. The S.U.M. built an upstream dam to channel river water into a series of stair-step canals along which water-powered textile mills operated making Paterson one of the earliest mill cities in America's industrial age. The city filled with factory workers that attracted two dozen diners at its peak between the 1930s and 1950s.

Built near Passaic Falls in 1932, Hinchliffe Stadium was used by the Negro League Black Yankees from 1933 to 1945, and later as a stadium for Paterson high school sports. Incorporating tile work, and a hint of streamlined modernity, the Spanish Colonial stadium has been abandoned since 1997, and is currently the focus of a preservation initiative.

Hinchliffe Stadium

Great Falls Mill District





PATERSON DINERS, AND THE PATERSON VEHICLE COMPANY

The Paterson Vehicle Company started building wagons in 1886, and after 1906 truck, and bus bodies. From their, it was a short technological shift to diners, which it produced under the name Silk City (a Paterson nickname) from 1927 to 1964. Most of the plant along the old New York, Susquehanna & Western tracks still stands at the corner of E. 24th Street & 18th Avenue.

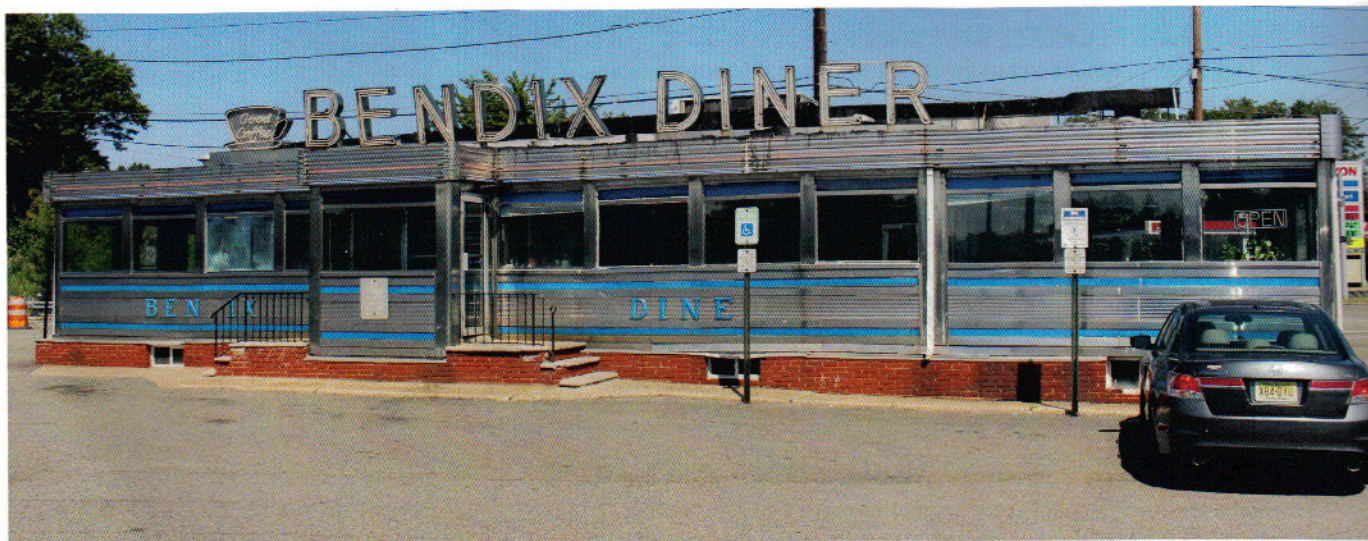
Several diners still operate in Paterson such as a trio of factory district diners in South Paterson that include the Egg Platter, a 1940 Master at Getty & Crooks Avenues (above right), the now closed 1954 Silk City Grill (right) on E. Railway Avenue, and the Nicholas Diner right up the street that Erfed remodeled in 1962, and 1964.





LITTLE FALLS DINERS

Manno Dining Car moved from a Belleville backyard to a small shop in Fairfield around 1960. It specialized in little diners that required a lot of exaggerated features to be noticed on the roadside, none better than the folded-plate roofed, and canted visual fronted Main Line Pizzeria on Main Street in Little Falls. Not far away on Paterson Avenue is the long closed Little Falls Diner, a c.1946 Kullman opened as DeYoung's Diner. Over on NJ Route 17 in Hasbrouck Heights, Eva Diakakis has commanded the Bendix Diner, a 1947 Master Enduro model, since 1982, witnessing a parade of commercial, television, and movie film crews who come to the Bendix any time they need a classic diner setting.



THE LITTLE WHITE MANNA/MANAS

The White Manna in Hackensack, and the White Mana in Jersey City are the most famous little, white hamburger diners in the state. They were both opened in 1946 as part of Lou Bridges' White Manna Hamburger chain, but have long since come to have two different owners. They were both built by Paramount, which designed the circular Jersey City White Mana as a prototype displayed at the 1939-40 New York World's Fair. After the fair, the unit was dismantled, and put in storage until Bridges reassembled it at the corner of US 1-9 (Tonelle Ave.) and Manhattan Avenue. The square Hackensack White Manna was the hamburger unit Paramount actually built, and sold after World War II to a new generation of grill men who brought fame to the little hamburgers unofficially but widely known as sliders. A sign mistake caused the Jersey City White Mana to lose its 'N', which the owner, Mario Costa thought was a good way to distinguish the two burger joints.



White Manna, Hackensack (above left), and White Mana, Jersey City (above right, and below).



The White Diamond that John Baeder photographed in the 1980s on US 1 in Elizabeth (below) proves that Paramount built, and sold other circular hamburger units like the 1939 Jersey City White Mana. The White Mana was remodeled to accommodate carhops, and curb service in the 1950s.





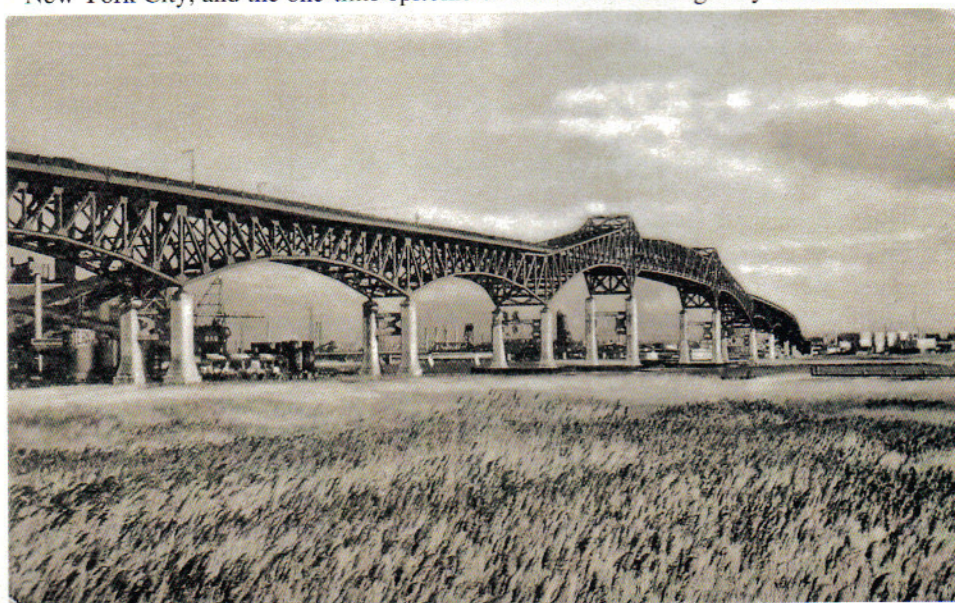
PULASKI SKYWAY

Squatting beneath the black dragon-like Pulaski Skyway on Central Avenue in South

Kearny, the 1966 Skyway Diner is famous for Soprano fans as the place where mobster Christopher Moltisanti got shot. Surrounded by warehouses, abandoned factories, Meadowland swamps, railroads, and constant truck movement, all that falls in the shadow of the skyway is iconic, working class, industrial Jersey, which is why *The Sopranos* loved to film here. The Pulaski Skyway opened in 1932 as a 5-mile long, elevated superhighway that stepped over the Meadowlands between Newark, and Jersey City. This was the route of US 1, the approach span to the Holland Tunnel, and New York City, and the one-time epitome of what a modern highway should be.



The Wilson Carpet Giant stands beneath the Pulaski Skyway overlooking Truck 1-9.

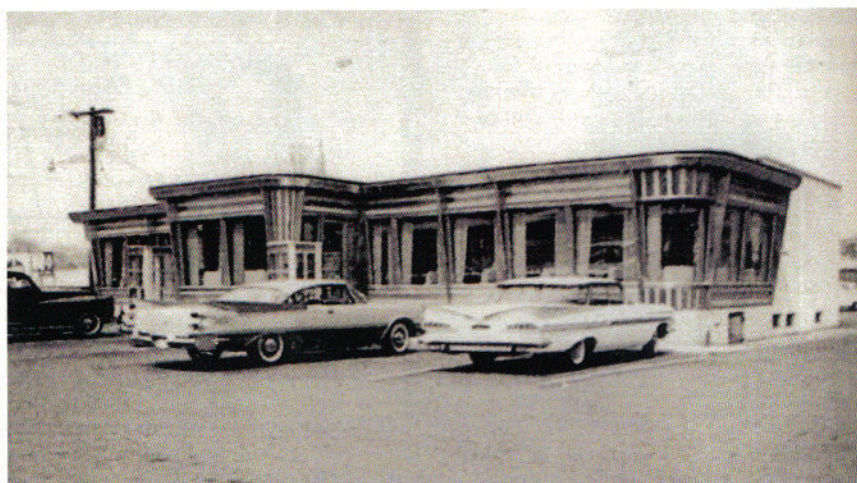


MISS AMERICA DINER, JERSEY CITY

German immigrant Fritz Welte bought Cherico's Diner soon after World War II, and renamed it the Miss America. Business boomed, and around 1953 he replaced it with this stainless steel sided O'Mahony that has become the landmark of the West Side.

ARLINGTON DINER, NORTH ARLINGTON

Over the years, the Arlington Diner has represented three generations of Kullman craftsmanship, beginning with the exaggerated modern 1958 Kullman with the flared eaves, replaced by a Kullman Colonial in 1966 that was given a Kullman Postmodern retro remodel in the 1990s.





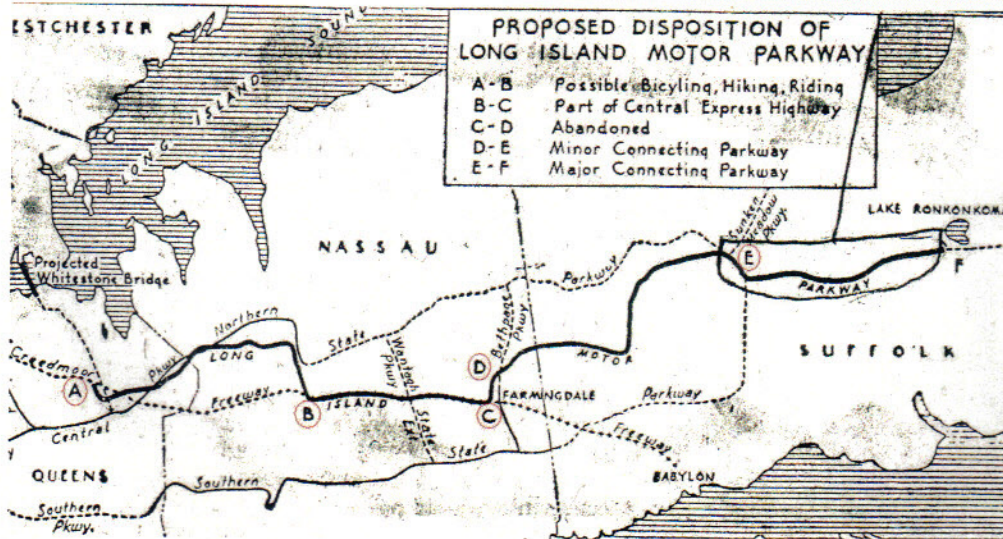
EXPLORING NEW YORK'S OUTER BOROUGH

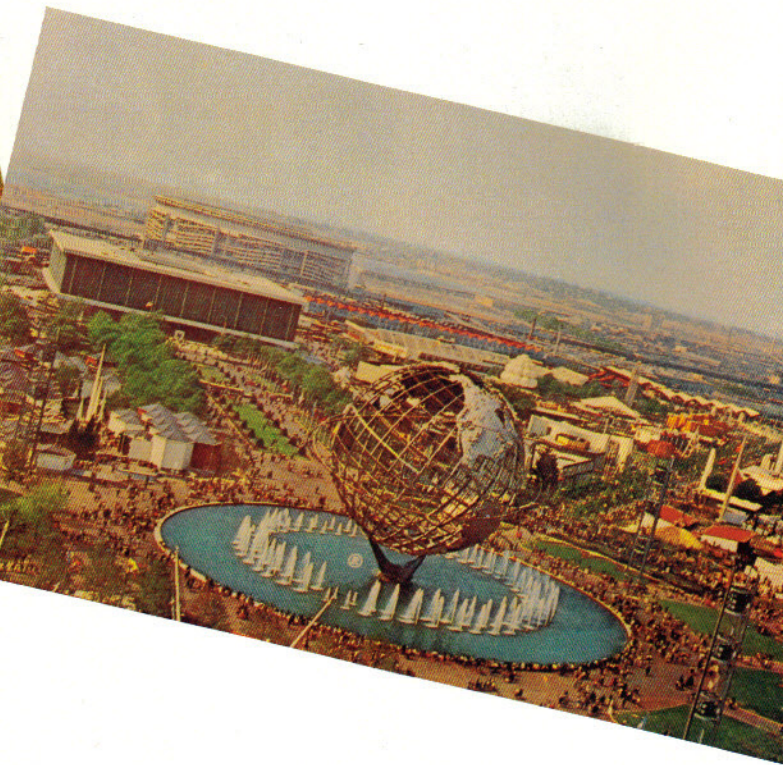
The Jackson Hole Diner on Astoria Boulevard in Queens is a 1952 Mountain View once known as the Airline Diner after nearby LaGuardia Airport. The vintage sign of working neon still flash a Lockheed Constellation from the era of the diner. It has since been joined into the Jackson Hole chain famous in and around New York for their large hamburgers. The Air Line made a cameo in the 1990 movie, *Goodfellas*.



LONG ISLAND MOTOR PARKWAY

Almost as soon as the automobile was invented, auto owners started racing them. Born already rich and famous, William K. Vanderbilt II acquired a passion for automobile racing, sponsoring the Vanderbilt Cup auto race in 1904. In 1908, he started building a private 48-mile long parkway from Queens to Lake Ronkonkoma on which to hold his race. Completed in 1910, the parkway only hosted two Vanderbilt Cup races before fatal accidents caused the state to ban the activity on all roads but designated race tracks. The parkway was also designed to be a leisure drive toll road to help pay back some of the costs of building it. It was never profitable, and sold to the state of New York for back taxes in 1938. New York parkway builder, Robert Moses considered the Motor Parkway to be an obsolete, white elephant. Whereas parts of the parkway in Nassau, and Suffolk counties were incorporated into the local street system, the part in Queens was designated a bike





NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR, 1939-40 **NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR, 1964-65**

After reclaiming the Corona Ash Dump, the city of New York used the Flushing Meadows site to host the 1939-40 World's Fair. Centered on the Trylon and Perisphere (above left), the World's Fair was given a neo-Baroque plan of broad boulevards radiating out from grand circles, and expansive plazas, along which exhibition pavilions located. The site was re-used for the 1964-65 World's Fair centered on US Steel's Unisphere (above right). The Unisphere, survives in addition to a few other pieces of artwork, and artifact, including the Philip Johnson designed New York State Pavilion (below).



CONEY ISLAND

Ever since the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the presumed education, and enlightenment offered by the World's Fairs contrasted with the amusement, and entertainment presented by the adjacent Midway. Developed in the 19th century with the extension of railroads, subways, and streetcars from Manhattan (bottom map from 1898), Coney Island developed as New York's Midway by the sea. At its peak, three amusement parks lined the Boardwalk, and Surf Avenue: Steeplechase Park, Luna Park, and Dreamland. The automobile, and suburbanization changed leisure habits, and Coney Island now is a mere shadow of its former self, but a few landmarks survive among the smell of hot dogs from Nathan's Famous: the 1920 Wonder Wheel built on site by the Eccentric Ferris Wheel Company; the 1927 Cyclone Roller Coaster, and the non-functioning remains of the Parachute Jump built for the 1939-40 World's Fair, and then relocated to Steeplechase Park.



