

WHERE WAS BILLY IDE'S PLACE

Revised: February 19, 2014

What follows is an example of the process for sorting out the various roadhouses and their owners and/or proprietors found along the Cicero Plank Road. There were no numbered addresses back in the 1890s and establishments were described in various ways. The particular roadhouse that is the main interest here had a watering trough out front and despite who was the owner or whatever name had been given to the establishment at that time, it was often referred to as the Watering Trough hotel, saloon or roadhouse. After a change of ownership the name of the former owner was often still used for labeling the roadhouse for purposes of identification in newspaper articles. All of this leads to confusion. The only solution is to lay out a map and a time line and get everything to fit on both of these documents by wiggling things around to minimize the inconsistencies. In the process it sometimes turned out that the newspaper reporter just got it wrong and sometimes they got it very wrong. Ley Creek was sometimes confused with Bear Trap Creek. Even the Cicero Plank Road and the Bridgeport Plank Road were confused once or twice.

Now we can begin to examine Billy Ide's very short career as a roadhouse proprietor. Billy Ide had run a saloon in the 1890s out on the Cicero Plank road, but he didn't run it for long. The best known road house on the Cicero Plank road was that of Pard Orton. Orton's place was located on the northeast corner of the plank road and 7th North street. The city line, at least in the 1890s, ran along 7th North street and so Orton's place was the very first roadhouse outside the city. Billy Ide was Pard Orton's son-in-law and this might make the point that saloons were a family thing.

In the same block along the plank road (Wolf street) was Adam Eller's roadhouse, at 1220. These street addresses were a later invention, from after the turn of the century, however they are useful in the telling of this story. For a while Louis Mautz ran a saloon in the next block after Eller's place and just before the railroad underpass. On the other side of the underpass and before Ley Creek was another roadhouse on the east side of the plank road. Just prior to 1900 this was Switzer's hotel. This was the establishment that will be referred to as the Watering Trough roadhouse. After Switzer's it was about another mile to the next roadhouse. This was the old Rose Lawn mansion that had belonged to the Baum family. In 1887 Cynthia Baum sold it to the Kelleys who turned it into a roadhouse. In 1892 Alfretta Kelley sold the roadhouse to Thomas Brady. Brady received a suspended sentence for running a disorderly house in June 1894. In January 1897 Thomas Brady of Salina still had a liquor license. In 1898 Brady was forced to sell due to his financial situation and the ownership went to George Zett, one of the mortgage holders. In 1898 Lizzie Gannon bought the old roadhouse from Zett. On the evening of February 24, 1899 Lizzie Gannon's roadhouse burned to the ground. That was the end of the old Baum mansion – Rose Lawn. In 1900 Hattie Hallock had another roadhouse built in its place.

Following the plank road up through Pitcher Hill and on toward Centerville (North Syracuse), the next roadhouse was that operated by Maud Wilson and Henry H. King. Their place was located on the east side of the plank road where West Taft Road now intersects Brewerton Road. In the 1890s the road coming from the west (from Liverpool) ended at the plank road. They were in business from the January 1891 until sometime in 1899. In 1904, while still being operated as a roadhouse, by another party, it burned to the ground.

Event	Ferrara	McGraw
Kelley Sale to Brady	1891	1892
Brady auction	1894	March 1898
Zett Purchase	1894	
Gannon Purchase	1897	March 1898
Rose Lawn fire		Feb 24, 1899

Ferrara gave no references for her four dates. All the McGraw dates came from: *Old Road House Burned*, The Evening Herald, Syracuse, NY, February 25, 1899. In the Ferrara data no months were given. In the 1899-02-25 article Brady was erroneously called “Kelly” when referring to his sale of the property. According to this telling of the story Gannon purchased the property from Brady at the mortgage sale (foreclosure?). George Zett was a mortgage holder for both Brady and Gannon.

FINDING BILLY IDE

So now the question becomes more apparent: Where was Billy Ide’s place? When he ran his saloon he was only leasing it from the owner, as did many of the roadhouse operators. The Deed books in the County Clerk’s office would not have recorded a lease so the search is going to depend on newspaper reports.

The following two newspaper articles were describing robberies that had taken place while two groups of persons were visiting various roadhouses. The background information proved very useful in building the time line for the proprietors at the Watering Trough roadhouse and the timing of the transition between Billy Ide and Lizzie Gannon.

1894-12-06 – “They Pulled His Leg,” an article about the Wilson girls and Jesse Thompson. They went out on an evening of roadhouse hopping: Orton’s to Brady and to Ide’s.

“Pard Orton’s was the first place visited, Brady’s next and Ide’s last and at each place Thompson was urged to spend money.”

This article described Brady’s and Ide’s places as two separate roadhouses. However, it isn’t possible to assume from the above narrative that Ide’s place was further north along the plank road relative to Brady’s place.

1895-01-31 *Stole Lynch’s Watch*. The night of drinking took place on the evening of January 10, 1895.

“They started to drive out Wolf street visiting a number of resorts along the way. Finally they reached the place of Lizzie Gannon’s, *just out of the city limits* (my italics) on the Cicero plank road. The resort was formerly run by Billy Ide, who was driven out after the shooting affair which occurred at a dance held there.”

Lynch’s watch was stolen at Gannon’s place. This story takes place just a little over a month after the Wilson-Thompson affair above. In addition, Lizzie Gannon was in possession of the

roadhouse formerly “run” by Billy Ide. What initially appeared confusing, when associating Gannon with her later ownership of Brady’s place, now emerges as a key piece of new information linking Ide and Gannon together. The phrase “just out of the city limits” can be problematic since no reference length was included. It might be loosely interpreted to mean a location along the plank road that was between 7th North Street (the city line) and Ley Creek.

1899-06-26 Jacob Switzer Drowned in a Barrel of Water.

“Jacob Switzer, who had a saloon on the Cicero plank road *just outside of the city limits*, (my italics) either committed suicide or was accidentally drowned in a barrel of water in the rear of his home, between 3 and 4 o’clock this morning.”

Switzer’s saloon was located north of the railroad underpass and south of Ley Creek. Billy Ide and Lizzie Gannon had both run the same saloon as Switzer, in late 1894 and early 1895, respectively. This is consistent with all the above material. Gannon took over after Ide was removed and in March 1898 she moved up the road and purchased Brady’s old roadhouse, after a short stay at 1632 North Salina Street.

Billy Ide’s only appearance in the Syracuse newspapers, with the exception of being named as one of the survivors in an occasional obituary, was for the shooting that took place at his saloon on the Cicero plank road. Those articles ran over the period November 9-12, 1894 and one final article on February 27, 1895, published when the shooter was found not guilty. After that brief period of notoriety Billy Ide faded into obscurity.

In an article about a legal difficulty that involved Lizzie Gannon (1903-04-03 Syracuse Journal) it was stated: “Lizzie Gannon, who *has conducted several saloons in different parts of the city*, (my italics) was arrested at 1:40 this morning for street strolling.”

“Elizabeth Gannon was arrested this morning on an indictment charging her with violating the excise law in selling liquor on Sunday. Her bail was fixed at \$200. George Schilly signing the bond.” “Hard Lines For Elizabeth”, The Evening Herald, Syracuse, NY, Saturday, February 2, 1895

This reinforces the fact Lizzie was running a saloon in February of 1895. The 1903 article, above the 1895 article, demonstrates that Lizzie had run several saloons around the city. All of the information reviewed so far in this paper is consistent with Billy Ide running Switzer’s saloon for a little while and being removed after the shooting. Lizzie stepped in after Ide and stayed there until sometime before January 1897 when she was issued an Excise License for a saloon at 1632 North Salina Street. In March 1898 she moved up the plank road with her purchase of Tom Brady’s roadhouse in the old Baum mansion, Rose Lawn.

This exercise started with tracking down some information about one of the Wilson sisters taking a big spender for a ride. That raised some confusion about the exact location of Billy Ide’s place and an added layer of confusion involving Lizzie Gannon. When the dust settled the location of Billy Ide’s place had been determined and as an added surprise it was determined that Lizzie had also been running the same saloon, prior to taking over Tom Brady’s place a little further up the plank road.