

# The Rose Lawn Saga

By Michael F. McGraw

Revised: May 31, 2013

The Benjamin Baum family named this property Rose Lawn and it was their residency there that brought the property to prominence. The framework of the time line below is due to the extensive research of Sue Ferrara, Ph.D.<sup>1</sup> Those items from Ferrara start at the left margin. The indented items are items that I found in the Syracuse newspapers or the census records. Once things got rolling there were quite a few persons who sequentially leased the facilities at Rose Lawn for the purpose of running a business. The actual ownership of the property changed hands at a much lower rate. The current interest in this time line was to determine if an early fire (1889) that destroyed Rose Lawn had actually occurred, as noted in an obscure handwritten reference by Robert Henry. It turned out that the original Baum residence at Rose Lawn did burn down, but the year was actually 1899. Secondly, an attempt was made to flesh out some of the personalities involved in the history of the Rose Lawn site.

1866 - November 10 - Benjamin Baum purchased property on the Cicero Plank Road from Brown and Smith for \$5,000.

1880 - March 11 - L. Frank Baum bought Rose Lawn at a foreclosure auction (his father's mortgage) for \$3500.

1883 - L. Frank Baum sold Rose Lawn to his mother, Cynthia, for \$1

1886 - March 27 - "FOR SALE - The Beautiful Suburban home known as 'Rose Lawn' " B.W. Baum ran this ad in the Syracuse Standard.

1887 - Sept 24 - Cynthia Baum sold Rose Lawn to Alfretta Kelley for \$6000.<sup>2</sup>

1888 - March 9 - James Kelley *fitted up* the Baum place.<sup>3</sup>

1889 - June 18 - "**Mr. Kelley Still There**" Kelley was in prison serving a sentence for keeping a *disorderly house on the Cicero road*.<sup>4</sup>

1890 - August 2 - A trio of boys stole a horse and buggy from Rooney & Sons in Syracuse. They abandoned the stolen items "in front of *Kelley's road house* on the Cicero road."<sup>5</sup>

1892 - February 16 - The NY State Census listed Thomas Brady as a "Hotel Keeper" in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Electoral District of the town of Salina.

1892 - Alfretta Kelley sold to Thomas S. Brady for \$11,000. This was subject to a mortgage of \$4,000 held by the Skaneateles Savings Bank.<sup>6</sup>

1892 - Alfretta was listed in the Syracuse Directory as the widow of James H. Kelley.

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Family of the Wizard, The Baums of Syracuse*, Sue Ferrara, Ph.D., Xlibris Corporation, 2000, p. 78-92.

<sup>2</sup> Deed Book 255, p. 469, Clerk's Office, Onondaga County Courthouse, Syracuse, NY.

<sup>3</sup> The Evening Herald, Syracuse, NY, March 9, 1888; James Kelley boarded at the Hotel Candee at 23 E. Fayette St. according to the 1887-1888 Syracuse Directory.

<sup>4</sup> *Mr. Kelley Still There*, The Syracuse Courier, Syracuse, NY, June 18, 1889.

<sup>5</sup> The Syracuse Daily Standard, Syracuse, NY, August 2, 1890.

<sup>6</sup> *Old Road House Burned*, The Evening Herald, Syracuse, NY, February 25, 1899.

- 1893 - August 15 - **“Drove Away With The Horse”** *“Thomas Brady of the Plank Road house”* chased down and captured the person who stole a horse & buggy.<sup>7</sup>
- 1894 - May 28 - **“On Sealed Indictments”** *“The indictment of Thomas Brady, the Cicero road house keeper, was something in the nature of a surprise.”*<sup>8</sup>
- 1894 - June 23 - **“Sentences Moved”** *Thomas Brady* given a \$500 and a one year suspended sentence after pleading guilty to keeping a disorderly house.<sup>9</sup>
- 1894 - December 6 - **“They Pulled His Leg”** A rich high roller was partied around the city while his new “friends” emptied his pockets. Part of the spontaneous itinerary included: “Pard Orton’s was the first place visited, *Brady’s next* and Ida’s last and at each place Thompson was urged to spend money.”<sup>10</sup>
- 1897 - January 18 - **“The Raines Law”** The article gave a complete list of all persons licensed to sell liquor in Onondaga County. Neither Gannon nor Zett were listed, but Thomas Brady of Salina did possess a license.<sup>11</sup>
- 1898 - March - Brady “was forced to sell it for the benefit of his creditors.”<sup>12</sup>
- 1898 - Elizabeth Gannon bought the property, “the consideration being \$7000 subject to a mortgage held by Skaneateles Savings bank, and a mortgage of \$1650, held by George Zett.”<sup>13</sup>
- 1899 - February 25 - **“Old Road House Burned ... Fire Caught From Exploding Lamp.** “It was one of the most conspicuous on the road, being a 3-story structure, with a large veranda in front and on the north side. The grounds were always kept up in first-rate condition.” On the previous night, *“the house burned to the ground.”*<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Gannon was the owner.

The articles below refer to the hotel formerly run by Jacob Switzer on the Cicero Plank Road just past the city line. Switzer had suffered a strange death on June 26, 1899. His wife found him, at 4 am in the morning. “She stepped to the rear of the house and discovered him in a leaning posture, his head being completely submerged in a barrel of water.”<sup>15</sup>

1899 - September 26 - “Faatz and Daniel T. Evans, his co-partner, entered into an agreement with the defendant (Anna Switzer) to lease for one year the Jacob Switzer place on the Cicero plank road, which has a hotel.” The

<sup>7</sup> *Drove Away With The Horse*, The Syracuse Courier, Syracuse, NY, August 15, 1893.

<sup>8</sup> *On Sealed Indictments*, The Evening Herald, Syracuse, NY, May 28, 1894.

<sup>9</sup> *Sentences Moved*, The Evening Herald, Syracuse, NY, June 23, 1894.

<sup>10</sup> *They Pulled His Leg*, The Syracuse Daily Standard, Syracuse, NY, December 6, 1894.

<sup>11</sup> *The Raines Law*, The Syracuse Daily Standard, Syracuse, NY, January 18, 1897.

<sup>12</sup> *Old Road House Burned*, The Syracuse Evening Herald, Syracuse, NY, February 25, 1899.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Three Fatalities - Jacob Switzer Drowned in a Barrel of Water*, The Evening Herald, Syracuse, NY, June 26, 1899.

lease could be continued for five years. On March 12, 1900 Evans and Faatz dissolved their partnership and “Faatz kept on with the business.”<sup>16</sup> [1900 census - Faatz was living next door to the Switzer family]<sup>17</sup>

- 1901 - September 25 - **“Faatz’s Watering Trough Caused Him Trouble”** Faatz sued his landlady for not keeping the trough in front of his hotel filled with water.<sup>18</sup>
- 1901 - November 19 - **“Faatz Gets Judgment”** Theodore Faatz running a hotel on Cicero plank road in a building owned by Mrs. Anna Switzer.<sup>19</sup>
- 1902 - February 6 - **“Has Many Entries for Fox Chase”** 1<sup>st</sup> mention of Faatz hotel.<sup>20</sup> This article is between two articles that are obviously about the hotel formerly owned by Jacob Switzer. However, the hotel was referred to in this article as the “Faatz” hotel.
- 1902 - March 13 - **“Thrown From Carriage”** “Theodore Faatz, proprietor of the Plankerton house on the Cicero plank road, a short distance beyond the city line.”<sup>21</sup>
- 1905 - October 17 - John L. Wall was now the proprietor of the Plankington house and revoking his liquor tax certificate was under consideration due to his operation of a slot machine on the premises.<sup>22</sup>

The events from here on would appear to take place at the new structure at Rose Lawn

- 1902 - May 23 - An ad appeared: “FOR SALE - On easy terms, first class road house two miles out of city on Cicero plank road.” This is probably the new structure that replaced the Baum residence that had been destroyed by fire on Feb. 25, 1899. This became the Rural Inn.<sup>23</sup>
- 1905 - November 4 - Slot Machines Charges - “Against Theodore H. Faatz of the Rural Inn upon the Cicero plank road in the town of Salina, for running a slot machine on Oct 12 and Oct. 13.”<sup>24</sup>
- 1906 - April 16 - **“Interest in Coming Race”** 1<sup>st</sup> mention of Rural Inn.<sup>25</sup> [There were no details about the ownership or operation of the Inn.]
- 1906 - September 8 - **“Runaway Team Dashes Driver to His Death”** Faatz’ Hotel - Employee caught run away horse team. The horses belonged to Frank Matty.<sup>26</sup>
- 1907 - February 16 - **“Bible Class Saves Fire Doomed Hotel”** Rural Inn Hotel on the Cicero plank road. Theodore Faatz, owner of the hotel. A barn

---

<sup>16</sup> *Faatz Wanted Water*, The Syracuse Journal, Syracuse, NY, September 25, 1901.

<sup>17</sup> 1900 Census - NY, Onondaga, Salina, T623\1135\217B.

<sup>18</sup> *Faatz’s Watering Trough Caused Him Trouble*, The Evening Telegram, Syracuse, NY, September 25, 1901.

<sup>19</sup> *Faatz Gets Judgment*, The Syracuse Daily Journal, Syracuse, NY, November 19, 1901.

<sup>20</sup> *Has Many entries for Fox Chase*, The Syracuse Post Standard, Syracuse, NY, February 6, 1902.

<sup>21</sup> *Thrown From Carriage*, The Syracuse Daily Journal, Syracuse, NY, March 13, 1902.

<sup>22</sup> *Would Revoke His License*, The Evening Telegram, Syracuse, NY, October 17, 1905.

<sup>23</sup> The Evening Telegram, Syracuse, NY May 23, 1902.

<sup>24</sup> *War Against Slot Machines*, The Syracuse Journal, Syracuse, NY, November 4, 1905.

<sup>25</sup> *Interest in Coming Race*, The Syracuse Post Standard, Syracuse, NY, April 16, 1906.

<sup>26</sup> *Runaway Team Dashes Driver to His Death*, Syracuse Post Standard, Syracuse, NY, September 8, 1906.

- behind the hotel was on fire and the bible class helped prevent it from spreading to the hotel.<sup>27</sup>
- 1907 - November 13 - **“In Smashup”** “Theodore Faatz, proprietor of the *Rural Inside Inn*...”<sup>28</sup>
- [1910 census - Faatz and Krantz were living at the Rural Inn]<sup>29</sup>
- 1910 - August 22 - Rural Inn “owned by Faatz and Crans” on Cicero plank road.<sup>30</sup>
- 1912 - September 19 - **“Warren Convicted”** James Warren was arrested for the theft of \$27 from Theodore Faatz at his hotel on the Cicero plank road.<sup>31</sup>
- 1912 - December 19 - **“Mendel Gets Four Months Because He Sold Bad Pork”** Theodore Faatz still at Faatz Hotel.<sup>32</sup>
- 1914 - September 30 - George & Mary Gronau sell Rose Lawn to Theodore Faatz.<sup>33</sup>
- 1916 - May 8 - Rural Inn Hotel, Cicero Road - Woman wanted for cooking. “James”<sup>34</sup> [This is probably *James Wheeler*. See 11/30/1918].
- 1916 - July 18 - Rural Inn Hotel, Cicero State Road. For sale - Brown Mare, wagon and harness. “Phone James”<sup>35</sup>
- 1917 - May 29 - **“Indict Keepers of Road Houses; Both Arraigned”** *Theodore Faatz* pleads not guilty to running a disorderly house.<sup>36</sup>
- 1917 - June 27 - **“Hotel Proprietor Given a Suspended Sentence”** *Theodore Faatz*, proprietor of Faatz’s hotel on the Cicero road gets trial postponed.<sup>37</sup>
- 1918 - November 30 - **“Charge Couple with Stabbing Hotel Manager”** *James Wheeler was the proprietor* of the Faatz hotel.<sup>38</sup>
- 1919 - March 20 - **“Hotel Owner Surrenders to Sheriff”** *Charles Wheeler, proprietor of Faatz Hotel* in the Cicero road, surrenders. The March 8, 1919 raid was mentioned.<sup>39</sup> [The name “Charles” must be a typo].
- 1919 - May 2 - **“Hotel Proprietor is Given 4 Months”** *“James Wheeler, former proprietor of the Faatz hotel* on the Cicero plank road, pleaded guilty...to allowing his premises to becoming disorderly and a violation of the excise laws.<sup>40</sup>
- 1919 - November 19 - **“Faatz Takes Stand in His Own Defense”** He was following the trolley and traveling slowly (7 or 8 mph) and was only in second gear. He claimed he had just started “when Margaret Fuller stepped from the trolley in front of his car.” Faatz was subsequently

<sup>27</sup> *Bible Class Saves Fire Doomed Hotel*, The Syracuse Post Standard, Syracuse, NY, February 16, 1907.

<sup>28</sup> *In Smashup*, The Syracuse Daily Journal, Syracuse, NY, November 13, 1907.

<sup>29</sup> 1910 Census - NY, Onondaga, Salina, T624\1055\37B.

<sup>30</sup> *Stricken in Room at Rural Inn on Plank Road*, The Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, August 22, 1911.

<sup>31</sup> *Warren Convicted*, The Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, September 19, 1912.

<sup>32</sup> *Mendel Gets Four Months Because He Sold Bad Pork*, The Syracuse Journal, Syracuse, NY, December 19, 1912.

<sup>33</sup> Deed Book 444, p. 11, Clerk’s Office, Onondaga County Courthouse, Syracuse, NY.

<sup>34</sup> Want Ad, The Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, May 8, 1916.

<sup>35</sup> Want Ad, The Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, July 18, 1916.

<sup>36</sup> *Indict Keepers of Road Houses; Both Arraigned*, The Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, May 29, 1917.

<sup>37</sup> *Hotel Proprietor Given a suspended Sentence*, The Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, June 27, 1917.

<sup>38</sup> *Charge Couple with Stabbing Hotel Manager*, The Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, November 30, 1918.

<sup>39</sup> *Hotel Owner Surrenders to Sheriff*, The Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, March 20, 1919.

<sup>40</sup> *Hotel Proprietor Given 4 Months*, The Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, May 2, 1919.

indicted for manslaughter in the second degree but was acquitted at trial by jury.<sup>41</sup> When asked about his interest in the hotel in the Cicero Road, “He said that he sold the hostelry about three years ago and has since lived in a house some distance from it.”<sup>42</sup>

1920 - May 4 - **“Proprietor of Faatz Hotel Held for Jury”** William Cory, proprietor of the Faatz hotel, was arraigned on charges of violating the liquor laws. He was being held for a Grand Jury hearing.<sup>43</sup>

[1920 census - Faatz was living on the Cicero plank road, near George Skiff, not at the hotel]<sup>44</sup>

1921 - November 1 - **“Bootlegger Slaying Involves Officials”** “William E. Corey is the proprietor of the place. He became the reluctant host of the ambush party about dusk, according to his statement.”<sup>45</sup>

“Faatz’s is a tight-shuttered barn of a place, set back about 150 feet from the road among elms that border a semi-circular entrance road. It was a midnight-and-after resort frequently raided by sheriff’s men for years.”<sup>46</sup>

1923 - Mr. Faatz sold the property to Delphine A. Brown

1924 - May 12 - **“Woman Among 6 Held After Sheriff’s Raids - Arrests Made at Three Roadhouses - Denied Ku Klux Klan Had Any Part”** “Roy Westbrook, proprietor of the Westbrook Inn on the Cicero Road, formerly the Jay Faatz place.”<sup>47</sup> [This was a mistaken references to the wrong Faatz brother.]

1924 - May 18 - **“Sheriff Davis Opens Drive on County Dives - Children Getting Hooch, He Asserts”** “The raids a week ago on ...the Westbrook Inn, formerly the Jay Faatz Place, on the Cicero road, were the forerunner of the sheriff’s ‘clean up’ drive.”<sup>48</sup> [This was a mistaken reference to the wrong Faatz brother.]

1925 - January 26 - **“Frances Kunz Calls Raid on Inn ‘Frame-Up’** ““Faatz’s place” raided. No alcohol found.<sup>49</sup>

1935 - February 14 - *Hofbrau* ad. Joe Hoffbrau bought the business and rented site from Mrs. Brown.

1937 - February 18 - Mrs. Brown signed the deed over to her husband George J. Brown.

1939 - Restaurant run by Elisa May Bull

1940 - Edward F. Zaleski took over the restaurant and renamed it the Normandie Inn.

---

<sup>41</sup> *Faatz Freed On Charge Of Killing Girl*, The Syracuse Post Standard, Syracuse, NY, November 20, 1919.

<sup>42</sup> *Faatz Takes Stand In His Own Defense*, The Syracuse Post Standard, Syracuse, NY, November 19, 1919.

<sup>43</sup> *Proprietor of Faatz Hotel Held For Jury*, The Syracuse Post Standard, Syracuse, NY, May 4, 1920.

<sup>44</sup> 1920 Census - Onondaga, Syracuse, Salina, T625\12250\172A.

<sup>45</sup> *Bootlegger Slaying Involves Officials*, The Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, November 1, 1921.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Woman Among 6 Held after Sheriff’s Raid*, The Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, May 12, 1924.

<sup>48</sup> *Sheriff Davis Opens Drive on County Dives*, The Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, May 18, 1924.

<sup>49</sup> *Frances Kunz Calls Raid on Inn “Frame Up,”* The Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, January 26, 1925.

- 1940 - November 17 - **“Cast on Broken Neck is Cracked as Auto Hits It”**  
Accident report - the victim was “Carried to the *Normandie Grill Rink* (and) was given first aid treatment...”<sup>50</sup>
- 1945 - Mr. Brown sold the property to Kenneth P. Buckley
- 1947 - Carroll Barber & Joseph Hoffman ran the *Citizens Restaurant*
- 1948-1949 - William Knowles ran *Toots' Tavern*
- 1956 - September 9 - Public Notice: Vincent Gatto receives liquor license for *Gatto's Fine Food Restaurant* at 2249 Brewerton Road, Mattydale.<sup>51</sup>
- 1957 - October 15 - **“Fire Sweeps Sports Center”**<sup>52</sup> “Proprietor Vincent Gatto was tending bar when the fire started (about 1pm). He said someone detected the odor of smoke and raced to the kitchen. Not able to locate the fire there, a basement door was opened and flames shot up in the air, he said.” “The building is owned by Norbert Alletzhauser of 4 Holly Rd., North Syracuse.” “The building contains a restaurant and bar downstairs, with six bowling alleys in the back and a six-room apartment upstairs. The apartment is occupied by Gatto and his family. The basement was damaged by flames, but most of the other damage was caused by water and smoke.”
- 1958 - April 19 - **“Sports Center Ruins Leveled By Flames”**<sup>53</sup> “The four story building burned to the ground as firemen from Hinsdale, Mattydale and North Syracuse poured water into the mess of flames and huge clouds of smoke....The building dated back to the days of the old plank road through the Mattydale area. It was estimated the structure was 100 years old [actually 58 years at most] ...Before Vincent Gatto took over the building and operated it as a restaurant and bowling alley three years ago, it was known as the Normandy Hotel, the Hofbrau and originally as the Faatz Hotel.” “...last night’s fire broke out in the second floor which faces Brewerton Road.”
- 1978 - March 1 - Kenneth Buckley sold the property to D. Riab Incorporated. They still owned the property in 2000.

---

<sup>50</sup> *Cast on Broken Neck Is Cracked As Auto Hits It*, The Syracuse Herald-American, Syracuse, NY, November 17, 1940.

<sup>51</sup> Public Notices, The Syracuse Herald Journal, Syracuse, NY, September 26, 1956.

<sup>52</sup> *Fire Sweeps Sports Center*, Syracuse Herald-Journal, Syracuse, NY, October 15, 1957.

<sup>53</sup> *Sports Center Ruins Leveled By Flames*, Syracuse Herald-American, Syracuse, NY, April 20, 1958.

## **The Personalities of Rose Lawn**

In the following pages several of the early owners and operators of the businesses at Rose Lawn are examined in detail. This was an attempt to understand if they fit the profile of hotel/saloon owners. In some cases the persons started as just a name on a list and once their history was discovered their place in the community could be determined. While some of these individuals seemed to be born for the role, others were not a good fit at all. Elizabeth "Lizzie" Gannon was the person who owned the Rose Lawn property when the old Baum house burned to the ground. Lizzie was in the building when the fire started in the kitchen. George Gronau had been a local farmer. Why he tried to get into the saloon business remains a mystery. Theodore Faatz had the longest tenure and seemed to take to the role naturally.

### **James H. and Alfretta Kelley**

Alfretta Kelley purchased Rose Lawn from Cynthia Baum on September 24, 1887. In January 1888, James H. Kelley was operating "Kelley's Oyster and Chop House," at 37 Warren Street.<sup>54</sup> Kelley and his wife Alfretta were the first persons to own the property after the Baum family. James Kelley was the person who "fitted up" the Baum place (March 9, 1888) so that it could be run as a tavern, roadhouse or saloon. They represented one of the few examples of Rose Lawn owner-operators. In subsequent years the owners usually rented the facilities to others and did not operate the businesses themselves. In 1892 Alfretta Kelley sold the property to Thomas S. Brady for \$11,000. This was subject to a mortgage of \$4,000 held by the Skaneateles Savings Bank<sup>55</sup>

### **Tom Brady**

Tom Brady ran the roadhouse on the Cicero plank road and was involved in boxing matches. Some he ran secretly at his roadhouse and others he attended at other secret locations. Like most roadhouse operators of his day, he consistently violated the excise laws by serving alcohol after hours and on Sundays. For this he was periodically arrested and charged. And of course there were the occasional charges of running a disorderly house. Brady ran into financial troubles and was forced out by his creditors in 1898. He surfaced later that year as the proprietor of the St. James Hotel at 1626 North Salina Street, at the corner of Wolf St. From there he continued his support of the boxing sport and ran his saloon. Due to the financial difficulties that had brought about his exit from his plank road establishment he put all his current assets in the name of his wife Min. While convenient and necessary at the time it would later prove unwise.

On Tuesday, February 13, 1900, under the pretense of paying a bill to a furniture store, his wife took some money from the till and left. When Tom checked at the furniture store the next day, after his wife had not returned home he found that she had never been there. It turned out that Min and the proprietor of a Butternut St. saloon had taken a ride together to Brewerton. Returning to the St. James hotel Tom discovered that his wife had taken all their money and he wasn't able to pay his suppliers that were waiting for their money. Brady was forced to close his business.

---

<sup>54</sup> Advertisement - Kelley's Oyster and Chop House, The Evening Herald, Syracuse, NY, January 20, 1888.

<sup>55</sup> *Old Road House Burned*, The Evening Herald, Syracuse, NY, February 25, 1899.

Later, when he tried to remove some of his furniture from the hotel he was prevented by the fact everything was in his wife's name. It was said that Min was planning on returning to her business, but with her new man and Tom would be out in the street. Although Tom threatened to fight the situation in several different ways it appears that he was unable to follow through.<sup>56</sup> A later article from July 1900 referred to Brady's declining health. His testimony was considered material in a divorce action (not his) and the attorneys sought his deposition. According to the article: "Mr. Brady is near to death's door at Star lake in the Adirondacks with consumption."<sup>57</sup> After this Brady's name was not found again in the newspaper records.

### **Elizabeth Gannon**

In 1898 Lizzie Gannon bought the old Brady roadhouse when Thomas Brady had to sell it to satisfy his creditors. The price of \$7000 was covered with a mortgage from Skaneateles Savings Bank and a second mortgage from George Zett for \$1650.<sup>58</sup> A great mystery is why a single, 34 year old women, would have purchased such a place. It was described as "one of the most notorious in this section of the State, having been frequented for many years by people of sporting inclination."<sup>59</sup> Whatever her plan was she never got to pursue it for very long. On February 24, 1899, at about 7:30 in the evening, a kerosene oil lamp in the kitchen fell on the floor and broke. The oil ignited and in a few minutes the whole kitchen was on fire. Lizzie and the other occupants left quickly and attempted to get help in putting out the fire. Help arrived and a bucket brigade was formed, but it was mainly a battle to save the barns behind the house. They managed to save the barns but "the house was burned to the ground."<sup>60</sup> Lizzie had \$6000 worth of insurance on the house, furniture and fixtures. It isn't known if Lizzie was the person who rebuilt the house on the site. She probably needed the insurance money to pay off her mortgages, since she now had no source of income. By June of the following year (1900) Lizzie was running a boarding house at 235 West Washington St. in the city of Syracuse.<sup>61</sup> The building that she was renting was among a group of at least three other hotels or boarding houses.

In April 1903, Lizzie Gannon, who according to the article had conducted several saloons in different parts of the city, was arrested. At 1:000 AM on April 3<sup>rd</sup> she was arrested on West Washington Street for "street strolling."<sup>62</sup> In a separate report of this incident Lizzie Gannon was associated with an underage girl named Bertha Topp, who was 16 years old. The police held Lizzie while they investigated further her actions involving the young girl.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> *Min And Tom - First Ward Hotel Keeper Has His Troubles*, The Evening Telegram, Syracuse, NY, February 15, 1900.

<sup>57</sup> *Brady Is Dying*, The Evening Telegram, Syracuse, NY, July 14, 1900.

<sup>58</sup> *Old Road House Burned*, The Evening Herald, Syracuse, NY, February 25, 1899.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> 1900 Census - NY, Onondaga, Syracuse WD14, T623\1137\126A.

<sup>62</sup> *Lizzie Gannon Jailed Again*, The Post Standard, Syracuse, NY, April 3, 1903.

<sup>63</sup> *Criminal Assault - Martin Wall Has Bertha Topp as His Accuser - Lizzie Gannon On the Rack*, The Syracuse Journal, Syracuse, NY, April 3, 1903.

From there the trail gets a bit cold. There was no Lizzie/Elizabeth Gannon in the 1910 or 1920 census records for Onondaga County. But trails never go totally cold, there are always some little clues, if you look carefully and understand what your are looking at. There was an obituary in the Syracuse Herald for John McAuliffe who died in Utica, NY on March 26, 1936.<sup>64</sup> Four of his five surviving siblings were living in Syracuse. His wife was Elizabeth Gannon McAuliffe. Among his sisters was a Mrs. James J. Kelley. Could this have been Alfretta, wife of James Kelley of the road house, the same one that was also purchased by Lizzie Gannon?

### **Theodore Faatz**

The Faatz family of Syracuse came from Weedsport, NY. Their parents were born in Germany but I believe that all the children were born in Weedsport. Jay Faatz came to fame early, during his career as a baseball player and later as a manager in the International League. He settled in Syracuse after his retirement from baseball and for a while he sold insurance and managed the Syracuse Stars. It hasn't been determined exactly what his brother Theodore did prior to 1900 but during their time in Syracuse it was Theodore that generated the more notorious headlines in the local newspapers.

Syracuse had a large German population, especially on the north side. The breweries naturally followed this group of avid beer drinkers and by 1880 there were about 40 breweries in the city of Syracuse.<sup>65</sup> Needless to say there were a large number of saloons in which that beer was being consumed and that led to problems. The Raines Law, that went into affect in April 30, 1896, drove 303 of these establishments out of business. In 1897 there were 415 establishments in Onondaga County that were licensed to sell alcohol by the glass. The Raines investigating committee visited Syracuse in January 1897 and was not pleased with what they found. A member of the committee, Senator John H. Ford, expressed their displeasure, "Syracuse is wallowing in a slough of vice and crime and is glorying in it. A most deplorable state of affairs exists and the apathy shown by the city officers toward the [Raines] law is disheartening."<sup>66</sup>

For a while, just before the turn of the century, the Faatz brothers ran a saloon at 201 Walnut Avenue. They also ran a hotel across the street at 1201 East Washington Street for a while. On January 5, 1900, in a short item on Theodore Faatz's divorce from his wife Clara, it stated: (Theodore) Faatz *formerly* conducted a place in (1201) East Washington St. (with his brother Jay). The 1900 census showed that Jay, their uncle William and their father Jacob were living at the East Washington St. establishment.<sup>67</sup>

By November 19, 1901 Theodore Faatz was the proprietor of a hotel on the Cicero plank road. The hotel was in a building owned by Mrs. Anna Sweitzer. This hotel was just over the city line and had been run by Anna's late husband, Jacob Switzer. The first

---

<sup>64</sup> *McAuliffe*, The Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, March 28, 1936

<sup>65</sup> Brewing in Syracuse... from 1804 to the Middle Ages, by Peter A. Ensminger  
<http://hbd.org/ensminger/syracuse.html>

<sup>66</sup> *The Raines Law*, Syracuse Daily Standard, Syracuse, NY, January 18, 1897.

<sup>67</sup> 1900 Census - NY, Onondaga, Syracuse WD17, T623\1138\15A.

appearance of the name the “Faatz Hotel,” on the Cicero plank road, occurred in the Syracuse Post Standard on February 6, 1902.

Some time after the destruction of Lizzie Gannon’s roadhouse in February 1899 George Gronau and his wife Mary must have come into possession of the property. Being a farmer, perhaps Gronau felt that the ruins could be cleared and the land used for agriculture once more. However, then as now, main road property has too much commercial value to be used for farming. At some point the structure was rebuilt and the old roadhouse tradition lived on in the Rural Inn. The first mention found of a roadhouse on the Cicero road of this name was in 1905. In the November 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the local paper an article describes the charges against Theodore Faatz for running a slot machine at the Rural Inn on Oct 12 and Oct 13.

At some point Faatz had left the hotel he leased from Anna Switzer and moved up the road to the hotel that replaced the old Baum residence. Discovering the exact time of that switch is the current challenge. The newspaper article mentioned in the last paragraph showed that Faatz had made the switch by late 1905. The rest of Faatz’s news clippings have been parsed for clues as to the exact timing of the switch but none have been found.

On February 15, 1907, at about 8 o’clock in the evening, a fire broke out in the barn behind the Rural Inn on the Cicero plank road. Theodore Faatz, the proprietor of the inn, and two of his employees were engaged in trying to confine the fire to the barn. The fire was spreading quickly and it appeared there was every chance that it would reach the hotel. At about 8:25 the members of a bible class from the city of Syracuse, on a sleigh ride outing, were approaching the hotel and saw the fire. They stopped and began organizing a bucket brigade. “A ladder was placed against the rear of the hotel and three of the boys mounted to the roof of the building. Two others remained on the ladder and passed up pails of water as rapidly as they were brought from a nearby well.”<sup>68</sup> They continued for the next half hour until the hotel was past its greatest danger. After rendering assistance the bible class continued on their way to Cicero where they dined at the Parker House. The roof of the hotel was scorched in a couple places but otherwise suffered no harm.

#### The Change in Ownership

The identity of the event or events that brought the ownership of the property into the hands of George and Mary Gronau is still unknown. The Gronaus sold the property to Theodore Faatz on September 30, 1914, and that transaction was recorded in the Clerk’s Office at the Onondaga County Courthouse, in Syracuse, NY.

Even though Faatz later said he had sold his interest in the hotel back in 1916 he was arrested on May 29, 1917 and pleaded not guilty to running a disorderly house (i.e. running a brothel). The next month he went on trial and on June 27<sup>th</sup> he received a suspended sentence.

---

<sup>68</sup> *Bible Class Saves Fire Doomed Hotel*, Syracuse Post Standard, Syracuse, NY, February 16, 1907.

On March 8, 1919 a raid was conducted on the Faatz Hotel, where James Wheeler was then the proprietor. Theodore Faatz still owned the property but he had stepped back from the operation of the hotel. Wheeler escaped the arm of the law on the night of the raid but turned himself in on March 20<sup>th</sup>. Wheeler had been indicted on charges of “allowing his premises to become disorderly” and violating the excise laws.<sup>69</sup> At the conclusion of his trial on May 2<sup>nd</sup> Wheeler was sentenced to four months in the penitentiary.

An unfortunate accident occurred on September 30, 1919 while Theodore Faatz was driving his automobile behind a trolley car on Wolf Street. Faatz hit young Margaret Fuller, with his car, as she exited the trolley on Wolf St. near 3<sup>rd</sup> North St. Faatz placed the injured girl in his car and raced her to the hospital. He then went to police headquarters to report the accident. Margaret Fuller died later that day in the hospital. Faatz had actually hit two young girls but the other one bounced off his car and was not seriously injured. Theodore Faatz was arrested and the case went before the Grand Jury. For the next seven weeks the newspapers were filled with the coverage of this evolving story. Faatz was indicted for manslaughter in the second degree. The trial started in Syracuse on November 17<sup>th</sup> with jury selection and ended three days later on the 20<sup>th</sup> with a verdict of acquittal.<sup>70</sup>

During his trial, in November of that year, Theodore Faatz took the stand in his own defense. The questioning touched on the subject of his hotel on the Cicero plank road. He was asked what his interest in the business was at that time. Faatz testified that he had sold his interest in the hotel three years ago.

Probably the most exciting thing to ever happen at the Faatz hotel happened when Theodore Faatz was not present. It was Halloween day in 1921 and the enforcement of the prohibition laws was still in its infancy. A well known local bootlegger, named Bruno Nestico, had previously sold two barrels of water to a customer for \$600 while telling him it was filled with whiskey. The dissatisfied customer decided to set a trap to get even with the bootlegger. He had a friend place an order with the bootlegger for two barrels of whiskey for \$1000. The delivery was set for about 7 o'clock that evening at the rear of the Faatz hotel. After the trap had been set the dissatisfied customer sought out two prohibition officers and they in turn recruited two city policeman to back them up.

William Corry was the proprietor of the Faatz hotel at the time and the prohibition officers told him that his place had been selected for the scene of this trap. Since Corry was at that time still on probation for a violation of the liquor laws, from back in May of that year, the prohibition officers might have used that fact to solicit his cooperation.

When the truck arrived at the hotel it contained “two barrels of water, with two quarts of raw spirits, near the bungs.”<sup>71</sup> In this way, when the contents were sampled, the potential customer would sample whiskey even though the barrel contained mostly water.

---

<sup>69</sup> *Hotel Proprietor Is Given 4 Months*, Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, May 2, 1919.

<sup>70</sup> *Faatz Freed on Charge of Killing Girl*, Syracuse Post Standard, Syracuse, NY, November 20, 1919.

<sup>71</sup> *Bootlegger Slaying Involves Officials*, The Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, November 1, 1921

When the truck stopped behind the hotel the two prohibition officers stepped out from their hiding places and with flashlights shining on the two suspects in the truck, told them to get out of the truck with their hands up. The driver obeyed but the bootlegger approached one of the officers, shots were fired and the bootlegger went down.

This all caused quite a problem in law enforcement circles. "The killing of a bootlegger last night in the Cicero road threatened today to shake government and city police organizations with investigations of dry enforcement operations." For several days no one could "remember" who had shot Bruno Nestico, the bootlegger. The two city police officers that had helped out on the trap were operating a couple miles outside the city, the limit of their jurisdiction. The ramifications of that little operation echoed through the law enforcement organizations for a couple years.<sup>72</sup>

After that, things were quiet out on the old Cicero plank road. At some point in 1923 Theodore Faatz sold the Rose Lawn property to Delphine A. Brown. At the time of his brother Jay's death, on April 10, 1923, Theodore was still in Syracuse. By June 16, 1926 Theodore H. Faatz had moved to Alton, NY. That was a small village just east of Sodus, in Wayne County. On September 2, 1927 there was a Mrs. Theodore Faatz mentioned in the social columns of the local paper, The Lyons Republican. From that point on, the trail of Theodore Faatz goes cold and so far no obituary has been found for him.

### **George and Mary Gronau**

George Gronau came to the US, from Germany, at the age of two, in 1872. Where the family first settled is not known. The 1900 census found George and his wife Mary living on their farm in the town of Cicero. They had been married for 9 years and they were living with the surviving four of their seven children. By 1910 the family was living on their farm on the Cicero side of Town Line Road between the towns of Cicero and DeWitt. They had six surviving children out of eleven by this time.

The Rural Inn had a continuous presence on both sides of the time when Gronau sold the property to Faatz. The 1913-1915 interval was an unusually quiet period in the Syracuse newspapers. During that time there was no mention of Theodore Faatz or his place on the Cicero plank road.

The Gronau connection to the former Rose Lawn property is documented in the deed books in the Onondaga County Clerk's Office. The claim of Gronau actually running the Rural Inn was found in the notes of Edward Monarski's in a file at the Onondaga County Historical Society. However, the credibility of Mr. Monarski had recently suffered irreparable damage<sup>73</sup> before he passed away in November 2005.

---

<sup>72</sup> *Dry Agents' Guns For Defense Only*, The Syracuse Herald, Syracuse, NY, May 24, 1923

<sup>73</sup> *No Matter the winner, lesson was same*, Syracuse Post Standard, Syracuse, NY, November 12, 2002; *Korean vets group is not legitimate*, Syracuse Post Standard, Syracuse, NY, June 4, 2004; *Phony veteran 'leader' thrives on confusion*, Syracuse Post Standard, Syracuse, NY, June 10, 2004.

How the Gronaus came into possession of Rose Lawn is not known but perhaps it was via a friend of a friend within the German community in the northeastern part of the town of Salina. In 1910 John Michael Kirsch and his large family were living on the next lot to the south of Rose Lawn. Kirsch's father, Michael, had a 40-acre farm on Sand road that straddled Military Lots 3 and 4. It was just SW of the point where the towns of Salina, DeWitt and Cicero come together. The Gronau farm was on Town Line Road and ran along the border between the Towns of Cicero (north) and DeWitt (south). The Gronau and Michael Kirsch families were neighbors, in the farmer sense of the word. Both farms had been purchased by the U.S. Government, for the construction of the war time Army Air Base. They are now part of Hancock International Airport.

The motivating factor that would make a farmer want to own a saloon, and one with a somewhat dubious reputation at that, is difficult to discern. Other than Monarski's typed notes,<sup>74</sup> no evidence has been found that supports his assertion that George Gronau actually managed the Rural Inn himself. When the Gronaus sold the property to him on 9/30/1914,<sup>75</sup> Theodore Faatz had already been running an establishment, called The Rural Inn, on the site since at least 1906.

George and Mary Gronau and three of their children were living at 713 Court St., in the 1<sup>st</sup> Ward of Syracuse, in the 1920 census.<sup>76</sup> They were living in a two family house that they owned free of a mortgage. George's occupation was listed as a "Laborer" and he was employed working on someone else's farm.

And then a final irony; George and Mary Gronau had six children that survived to adulthood. Their youngest son was Irving Gronau who married Betty and had two sons: Robert and John Gronau. John "Jack" Gronau started a Dance Studio in Syracuse and also provided dancing lessons for the students of various schools in the area. In the late 50s the St. Margaret's School Mothers' Club sponsored group dance lessons, in the evening, for the students at the school. Jack Gronau, whose grandfather had briefly owned Rose Lawn, was giving dance lessons to myself, and my siblings, during the same fall semester that Gatto's Restaurant, the much-renovated Rural Inn, just three blocks away, burned down.

---

<sup>74</sup> *The Family of the Wizard, The Baums of Syracuse*, Sue Ferrara, Ph.D., Xlibris Corporation, 2000, p. 88.

<sup>75</sup> Deed Book 444, p. 11, Clerk's Office, Onondaga County Courthouse, Syracuse, NY.

<sup>76</sup> 1920 Census - NY, Onondaga, Syracuse WD01, T625\1247\20B.