

**Tota's "Ye Olde Homestead Tavern"**  
**1804 West Water Street**  
**Town of Elmira**  
**1933 to 1944**  
**By: Scott W. Deming**  
**Town of Elmira Historian**

Tota's "Ye Olde Homestead Tavern" was once a local tavern located at "The Point" (at the junction of Church St. and Water St.) in West Elmira. The tavern was located on the property where West End Beverage is currently and was opened on December 9, 1933 by proprietors Anthony (Tony) G. Tota and Anthony J Rossi (a long time baker in Elmira). The Tota/Rossi partnership did not last long and was dissolved in March of the following year with Tony Tota taking on full ownership in 1934. It appears from photos that the building was newly built in 1933 and the Tota family lived in the upstairs portion of the tavern. It was advertised as being able to accommodate 200 cars which meant the property most likely extended to where Dollar General (formerly the A&P) is today. The tavern became well known locally for their southern style barbeque, Italian homemade spaghetti and Sunday breakfast and dinners but also catered to the drive-in trade for sandwiches. The only alcoholic beverage the tavern served was beer and it was one of the first restaurants to offer "drive-in" service in the Elmira area.

Tony Tota started in business with a peanut stand at the corner of East Water and State Street (near where Clemens Center Parkway is today) in Elmira in the late 1800's and later he was the proprietor of an ice cream parlor on North Main Street which was one of the most popular in Elmira at the time. Tony married the former Marie Kahl on April 14, 1903 and they celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in 1953. Tony also ran the cafeteria at Kennedy Valve Manufacturing Plant prior to opening the Homestead Tavern. He was very active in the early growth of the Arctic League in Elmira. World War II gasoline and tire rationing caused a pleasure driving ban that resulted in closure of the tavern on January 1, 1944. Tony leased Homestead Tavern to Patsy Clate in September 1944 who ran the tavern until it was torn down and replaced with a gas station around 1946. The Tota's owned a summer cottage on the Chemung River west of Fitch's Bridge. Tony also ran the Penney Arcade at Eldridge Park and retired from that role after failing health. He died at the age of 87 years old on Monday July 4, 1966.

**Writer's Note:** As a boy growing up in West Elmira I had a Star Gazette paper route that covered much of the area around The Point. Mrs. Tota lived in the house on the western corner of Groff Ave and West Water Street and she was one of my paper route customers.

I continue to look for historic subjects (people, places, homes, historical events, old schools, family history, etc) about the Town of Elmira to write about. If you have any suggestions or information for future articles please e-mail them to me at [demingsw@yahoo.com](mailto:demingsw@yahoo.com) or call me at 607-426-2957.

# Ye Olde Homestead Tavern

## OPENS SATURDAY, 4 P. M.

*Specializing  
In a  
Real  
Southern  
Barbecue*

*On Main  
Highway to  
Corning and  
Points North  
and West*



Showing the Beautiful Ye Olde Homestead Tavern  
Parking space for 100 cars. Located on through highway

*Dinners  
a la Carte  
Special  
Sunday  
Breakfasts  
and  
Dinners*

*Open Until  
Wee Sme'  
Hours*

**Located At Junction West Water and West Church Sts.**

<p><i>All Food Will Be Home Made. Baked in Our Big Sanitary Kitchen</i></p>	<p><i>We Will Also Feature Real Italian Spaghetti At All Times</i></p>	<p><i>Curb Service Just pull into our large parking space and we will give you service in your car.</i></p>	<p><i>Beautiful Surroundings The rare beauty of the hills adds to the peaceful quiet of din- ing in our restaurant</i></p>	<p><i>Home Made Ice Cream and Exceptionally Fine Fountain Service</i></p>
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Homestead Tavern - Exterior  
Star Gazette Dec 8, 1933

Homestead Tavern-Interior  
Star Gazette Dec 23, 1933

**Wed 50 Years Ago Next Sunday**



Tony and Marie Tota's  
50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary in 1953  
Star Gazette April 5, 1953



*TOTA'S ICE CREAM STORE* 904 NORTH MAIN STREET ELmira, N. Y.  
(Near Corner Second Street)

Tota's Ice Cream Store  
Star Gazette May 22, 1931