



THEN & NOW WALKING TOUR DOWNTOWN VALDESE

The Valdese Main Street Program began working on this unique project in the Spring of 2016. Since then, the Valdese Main Street Promotions Committee has put in numerous volunteer hours to combine stories and photographs in order to create this tour. The Promotions Committee wanted to offer a tour of the past to visitors and residents alike. From this project, the tall tales of Downtown Valdese began to emerge. These stories passed from generation to generation are shared as the visitor/resident strolls down Main Street looking at the featured buildings. This Valdese Main Street Project allowed the committee to capture pieces of history that could have been forgotten. The Then & Now Walking Tour will be offered to visitors at the Valdese Tourism Office located at the Old Rock School and on the Town of Valdese website, visitvaldese.com.

Mission Statement: The Valdese Main Street Program is a community based organization devoted to the redevelopment of Downtown Valdese as an ideal place to live, work, play and retire by embracing: 1) Our unique Waldensian Heritage 2) A positive environment for existing & new businesses 3) Opportunities and experiences for arts, cultural and recreational for all ages.

Become a part of the Valdese Main Street effort by calling 828-879-2129 or contact Morrissa Angi at mangi@valdesenc.com





OLD ROCK SCHOOL

400 MAIN STREET WEST

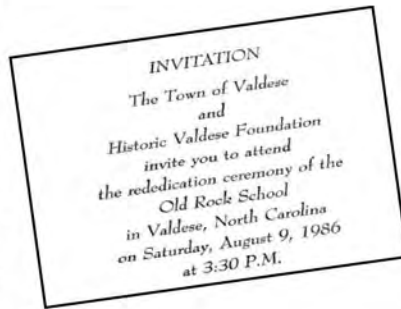
In the early 20th century, the children of Valdese were crowded into a one room schoolhouse. With the population growth, it soon became clear that there was a need for a new schoolhouse. On July 4, 1922, in the presence of a large gathering, the cornerstone for the new school was laid. The Rock School was built in 1923 and was able to accommodate the new population of students. It was the primary school for all grades. It closed as a school in the 1980's.

The Old Rock School, constructed of field stone, is one of the few remaining structures representing the Waldensian architectural style. Valdese bought the building from Burke County Schools in 1981 and has made it a center for community activity. Located at the Old Rock School are the Valdese Community Affairs Office, Rock School Art Galleries, Old Colony Players Community Theatre, Piedmont & Western Railroad Museum, and several locally owned businesses. The Old Rock School is also home to a variety of annual events and is available for public rental for all sorts of events including recitals, weddings and classes. -*What Mean These Stones*



OLD ROCK SCHOOL

400 MAIN STREET WEST



“Whenever students would get off the school buses everyone would pack into the basement hallway like sardines. We were packed in so tight you couldn’t even sit down.” –*Rheta Robinson*

“The rocks for the school came from a rock quarry owned by my grandfather John Peter Barus. This quarry supplied rocks to other Waldensian houses according to my grandfathers stories. The quarry later became the Barus fish ponds. Thus the name Barus Pond Loop.” –*Jeanine Barus*



“I still do not eat hominy to this day, the only thing I do not like, because of it being served so many times in the elementary school. That stuff is still gross. But, thank goodness for the “lunch line.” I think lunch was 25 cents. I always got my quarter as I walked out the door for school.” –*Ron*



1939





FAMILY DOLLAR

312 MAIN STREET WEST

A&P

The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co., or A & P, was originally opened in 1935 by Hall Williams at 152 Main Street which is currently occupied by Catawba Valley Staffing. The A&P was opened at the location of 312 Main Street West in the mid 1950's. This location later housed a 3D Giant Eagle store and a Lowe's Foods store.



"I went to work at A&P when I was 16 years old...Milton Pons was the manager when I was there. I worked in a red polyester smock and ran the largest cash register ever, with push buttons. I actually counted back the change to the customers. I loved grinding the coffee beans at checkout." -Donna Robinson Annas, daughter of Bueford Robinson

"I remember the Halloween costumed 'kid march' from the parking lot of the A&P up main street all the way to the gym, where fun-stuff booths were set up...and there was a scary walk thru the locker room downstairs that was supposed to be a haunted house. Fun, good times then....and way simpler." -Sherrill Keever



"The A&P was the only place in town with an automatic door opener. Remember the pressure pads inside and out? There was a short in one of the pads. If you crossed it barefoot and had one foot on the pad and one on the concrete it would shock the crap out of you! It's funny the things you remember. Lila and Ed Burney were two of the best folks in town." - David Owens

"My grandfather Hall Williams, opened the A&P in Valdese in 1935. It was on main Street at that time. He later went on to own and run Valdese Jewelry store. My mom was checker and bookkeeper for the A&P starting around 1959 and my dad started there as a bag boy in 1960. They met there and got married in 1961." -Mark Williams



MYRA'S

212 MAIN STREET WEST



I remember the Tastee Freeze!!! It was so great and I used to save up my pennies and buy baseball cards there! Me and my best friend Dicky Lampkin would save together, and buy them by the box full. I miss him still. -*Bob Brinkley*



Tastee-Freeez

Tastee Freez became a favorite hangout for locals in the early 60's and is remembered as a "Happy Days" kind of place. Later it became Circus Hall of Cream. Currently, the location is home to Myra's and has been a landmark in Valdese for over 40 years. Named after the owner, Larry Earp's aunt Myra the business is famous for their classic & antique car cruise-ins on Friday nights, ice cream and old fashioned milkshakes.

"Tastee Freez had a truck that came to neighborhoods - They would ring the bell and we would all lineup with 5 cents or 10 cents to get our favorites. My favorite was the pushups, creamscicles, and snowballs." -*Carla Berry*



Myra's enlarged the Tastee Freez building in later years. We used to go there and get a "chocolate dip"...soft serve vanilla ice cream cone, dipped down into chocolate syrup that hardened on the ice cream. yummy! also used to get chocolate nut sundaes there. a real treat! -*Lucinda Watson*



MIMOSA BEAUTY SALON & SALON DI BELLEZZA

158 MAIN STREET WEST



Garreen Jewelers



In the 1950s, Johnny Gardner and his wife Edith Tise Gardner owned the jewelry store at this location and a Garreen's located inside Belk Department store in Morganton. The repairman was Howard Swofford and his wife Frances was a beautician (located at Mimosa next door). The Gardners sold the jewelry store to Lawrence McMahon in the 60's when they moved to Florida and the name changed to Laureen Jewelers. Memories of the store: \$1.00 grab bags with jewelry, Green Stamps, gift wrapping was offered, visiting with Elmer Winkler and Joyce Mahaffee of Duke Power next door (where Mimosa is now), enjoyed visiting with owners and repairman Edith and John's son, John and his wife, Deborah live in Colorado. Later came Duke Power and Valdese Insurance which was owned by Joe Maffahee.

"I worked there after school, Saturdays and holidays during high school, 1950-1954. I cleaned displays, waited on customers, wrapped gifts. Loved Johnny Gardner and his wife, visited with Elmer Winkler most every day. Became friends with the watch repairer and his wife. Even filled in at the Johnny's Soda Shop one day. Good times." -Pat Turner Mitchell

"My Uncle John and Aunt Edith (Tise) Gardner had the jewelry store. The repairman was Howard Swofford and his wife Frances was a beautician also on Main St. Edith and my mother were sisters Marie (Tise) Bollinger. My mom and dad ran the Colonial Soda Shop next to the theater. Madeline (Tron) Tise was their mother. She owned buildings and land all along Main St. The Gardners sold the jewelry store to Lawrence McMahon in the 60's when they moved to Florida and the name changed to Laureen Jewelers. I remember them having \$1.00 grab bags with jewelry inside and they also gave "Green Stamps." Edith and John's son, John and his wife, Deborah live in Colorado." -Dawn Hess



PLAY IT AGAIN RECORDS

150 MAIN STREET WEST

"They had first security system in Valdese them ladies watch you like a hawk." -*Earl Berry Jr*

"This store was the optimum on homeland security. You were watched should after entering and most of the clerks were very trim women to move through the tight aisles and openings. Great was the wooden and glass candy case." -*Butch Leger*



"I remember working there and was told to keep a close eye on others. One day, I watched a couple kiddos pocket a few small items and leave without paying. I guess they didn't think I worked there because I was so young. I told Ms. Craig and followed them up the street. They had the nerve to come back to the store only to suffer her wrath. Bet they didn't do that again." -*Linda Odom*

"My first job was at Roses and I made \$1.25 per hour. Mrs. Craig was strict, however, she was a really good woman. I grew to love all of them: Mrs. Grill, Miss Berry and Mrs. Craig's sister worked there." -*Nancy Braswell*

"I remember the ladies who ran the store too. My Grandmother and I would look through the printed dresser scarves. We would pick one out and she and Mom would teach me embroidery stitches. When I was very young, I got tired of waiting so I climbed inside one of the wooden display cabinets and fell asleep. I was told they looked all over and the lady up front was adamant that I did not leave the building." -*Lana Carswell Holley*



VALDESE HERITAGE ARTS CENTER

146 MAIN STREET WEST

"My mother Juanita Pearson, worked there after she left Becker's and stayed until it closed. Elizabeth Williams managed it, and her mother Mrs. Canipe was the district manager. I worked there after school and Saturdays. I can still see those wooden floors and high ceiling. It's was so exciting on the days they changed the window displays. I spent nearly everything I made, on the clothes I hung back when new inventory came in. Dana Williams and I worked together. Now with our mothers working there, don't you know we had it as hard as the other workers. I loved going out to lunch with Dana on Saturdays. They don't make mothers like that anymore, because we had the best. I remember Elizabeth and my mom being dressed in the old attire for the centennial celebration and working that way. They had the bonnets the aprons in the full skirts with hoops. They had lay-a-ways and always a fresh pot of coffee. The thing I remember the most, is that people loved being there. Customers were in no hurry to leave. Everyone just liked to hang around and talk. My mom knew the customers so well, that they could call that they were on their way and what occasion they needed something for, and she would have outfits put together for them to see. They always loved what she chose for them."

-Lana Pearson German



Benlee's became the Gold Shop - Ben & Lena Krieger were the owners of Benlee's and lived on Rodoret Street. John Wilson was the custodian at the Gold Shop. He took over for Danny Masser after school each afternoon. Betty Wilson was about 6 years old when she was in a Benlee's fashion show at the Colonial Theater. She wore a wool hat, coat, leggings and was burning up!



Valdese N.C. 1959



"I worked as the custodian at the Gold Shop for Mrs. Hilda Hoppes from Drexel. They sold women's clothing. The main floor was just a large room with tables/racks of clothing. I'm pretty sure that the office was on the upper floor along with more merchandise. On the right side of the main floor was a staircase that led to the upper level. Also, I think that a staircase was on the right side that led down to a basement. I remember that on Halloween my "friends" really fixed me up... they wrote all over the plate glass windows in the front of the store with candles. Took lots of ammonia and elbow grease to clean that mess off!"

-John Wilson



COLONIAL BUILDING

130 MAIN STREET WEST



Colonial Soda Shop 1970

The Colonial Barber Shop was the third business in the "Colonial" family Jeff Buras started the business and over the years many barbers followed, such as: David Oaks, Henry Glasco, Nash Fite, Barney Griggs, Robert Bonum, Leon Foss and Ed Young. In the 50's, Jim Page also shined shoes.



Looking back...

Thomas Lail loaned us today's old photograph made on Main Street in Valdese in front of the Colonial Theater. And yes, the marquee on the theater and the writing on the car both say "Roy Acuff and the Smokey Mountain Boys." The Colonial

Theater has been closed for more than two decades, of course, but it remains a cherished memory in the minds of many Burke County residents. Watch for other "Looking back..." photos in upcoming editions of The News Herald.

Looking Back... Thomas Lail loaned us today's old photograph made on Main Street in Valdese in front of the Colonial Theater. And yes, the marquee on the theater and the writing on the car both say "Roy Acuff and the Smokey Mountain Boys". The Colonial Theater has been closed for more than two decades, of course, but it remains a cherished memory in the minds of many Burke County residents. Watch for other "Looking Back..." photos in upcoming editions of The News Herald. -Excerpt from the News Herald 8/17/1995

The Colonial Soda Shop was first managed by John Gardner, then Marie Tise Bollinger and her husband Junior, commonly called "Bull" ran the business.

Their hamburgers were handmade fresh daily and the buns were brought in locally from the Waldensian Sunbeam Bakery. One could purchase a hamburger "all the way" with chili, slaw and onions for 25 cents. They were also known for their Townhouse fried pies with ice cream and their old-fashioned milkshakes. The local mills would call in their orders and most times, Mrs. Bollinger would personally deliver the lunches with the names handwritten on the bags. Adults and kids alike would also stop in for the latest TV Guide and the wide assortment of magazines. The Colonial Soda Shop closed in 1983.

COLONIAL BUILDING

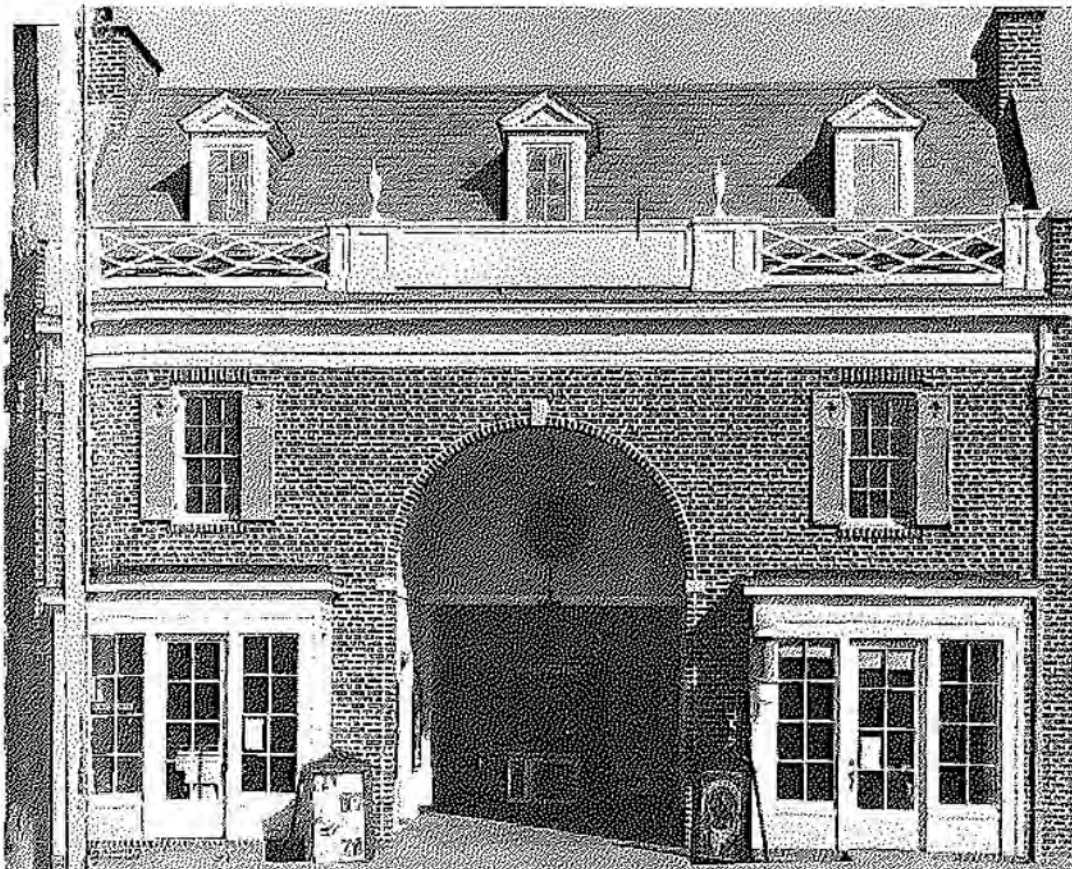
130 MAIN STREET WEST



"Collector, Dawn Hess, shared images of a ticket hopper from the Colonial Theater with some tickets still inside. "My family owned several buildings on Main St. My grandmother, Madeline (Tron) Tise had them built beginning in the late 1920's. My mom got it when the theater was gutted." - Dawn Hess



"My Dad had his business beside the Colonial Theater. Every Saturday morning I would go to the shop until the movie opened and around noon would pay my 15 cents to see a movie (I want to say it was 9 cents). I would watch the cartoon as a warm up, then the cowboy serial, and then the featured movie. Oh yeah, my Dad would give me a quarter, so with the remaining 10 cents I would buy the "kits" peanut butter stuff, popcorn and a drink. After I saw all the above once, I would then throw balled drink cups and popcorn bags at my friends for the rest of the day. I would leave around 5pm (unless I was asked to leave earlier) in time to ride home with my Dad. The "big-gest" movie I ever saw at the theater was Ben Hur or the Ten Commandants. Cannot remember which one, maybe both." -Jay Spencer Jr.



Madeline Tron Tise began the "Colonial" businesses in Downtown Valdese in the late 1920's. The Colonial Theatre opened in 1931 and quickly became the center for entertainment in Valdese. Management was known for their creative advertising and later on, newsreels about the war became very popular. In the 50's and 60's, James Benfield & Steve Perrou were managers. During that time, kids lined the streets to watch double-featured movies on Saturday mornings, including movies such as "The Lone Ranger," and films with stars such as Elvis, Annette Funicello, Frankie Avalon and Hayley Mills. Although it had been a mainstay for many years, the theater closed in 1969.



CLASSIC PLASTIC TOYS & COLLECTABLES

108 MAIN STREET WEST



The Style Shop

This building was built by the Guigou Brothers as a US Post Office in 1929 and remained so until the early 1940's when it became "The Style Shop". The Alder, Robinson and Kaplan families started this ladies apparel store which closed in 1979. The Thistle Cottage, owned and operated by Janice Rostan, was a gift shop. In 1992 a series ensued. The next business called "Puddle Ducks" was opened originally as a children's clothing store and later expanded into a daycare for children which existed until 2005. In about 2008 a printshop & photography shop opened and was operated by Mark Rostan and Brady Linkous. In 2011 Waynette Allison opened a consignment store named "Full Circle Consignment" which closed in 2015. The building is currently home to "Classic Plastic Toys & Collectables". -Phyllis Jacumin



S&A ANTIQUES

100 MAIN STREET WEST

This building was part of the larger building built in 1927 by the Guigou Brothers. The corner section of the premises was leased originally by the Burns Brothers. Mr. Ross Burns was the grocer and Mr. Ralph Burns was the butcher. It was called "B&B Market". After the grocery store left, the store became "Carolina Five & Ten" and was managed by the sister of the manager of "Roses Five & Ten". This was during the early 1940's. Other leasees of this location were Suzzane's, Morganton Hardware, a Small World Children's Clothing Store, Dolls & Designs, Cornerstone Antiques, and the present S&A Antiques & Collectables that moved in 2 years ago. - *Phyllis Jacumin*



D&W Dime Store





Gladys Abee
Modeling for Belk in 1958

Belk-Broome Is 40 Years Old Today

Mrs. Maxine. She says there's always something different to do every day. And although she doesn't know what it means to have Saturday off, she has



BELK-BROOME
COMPANY
YALDRESE, N. C.

Sherrill is the Manager of Bell-Broome Company.

Belk-Broome Company
This building was built in 1935 by the Guigou Brothers for the express pur-

This building was built in 1935 by the Guigou Brothers for the express purpose of housing Belk-Broome department store. In order for the building to be constructed the original Guigou family home place had to be relocated. The Guigou home place was built in 1904 and was home to 9 children. The Guigou home place is now located on the corner of Guigou & Rodoret Street and was most recently occupied by lawyer, Barry Crawford.

Belk-Broome Company, a modern department store, and one of the contributing factors in making Valdese a popular retail shopping center. The modern and up-to-date department store of Belk-Broome is not only "Valdese's Shopping Center," but is one of the outstanding mercantile establishments of Burke County. Efficient merchandising methods, liberal and progressive policies in their relation with the public, trained personnel of fifteen employees, and extensive stocks supported by the immense purchasing power of the 225 Belk Department Stores, are some of the reasons for the local stores pre-eminence in the retail circles of a popular merchandising center. G. Parks Sherrill was the Manager of Belk-Broome Company.

The building has also been home to Silcon Manufacturing, Valdese Video, John Harvey Guigou Shoe Store, Alba Waldensian Outlet Store, Jamie's Dance Studio, Downtown Delights and currently 100 Main Restaurant.

-Phyllis Jacumin



REYNOLDS FAMILY WELLNESS

152 MAIN STREET EAST



"John Steven Perrou's memoirs, titled "My Life" stated that the Waldensian market where he helped Ellis Zimmerman in the meat market part-time as a butcher: On page 94, reads: "In 1940, The Valdese Food Shoppe (formerly across the street from the Rock School) owners built a new store on Main Street across from the Waldensian Presbyterian Church. (This was the Waldensian Market pictured above) The store was owned by Mr. Jim Harris, Mr. Robert Walsh and Mr. Clyde Baird. Mr. Harris ran the new store and Mr. Walsh, Mr. Baird stayed at the Food Shoppe (across from the Rock School). Ellis Zimmerman was in charge of the meat department." -*Courtesy of Kenneth Murray*



"One Christmas Parade, I was little, so maybe late 60's-early 70's, I was watching the parade in front of the Waldensian Market and a guy fell off the float and got his leg run over....anyone remember that? It freaked me out." - *Sherry Anthony Hollar*

"My Mama would order her groceries by phone and tell them she had a twenty dollar bill and they would have exact change. They were so nice and helpful. Can you imagine groceries for \$20.00?" -*Jo Ann Johnson Gragg*

BURKE HOSPICE THRIFT & GIFT

148 MAIN STREET EAST



"As a child, I remember walking to Major Electric with Elizabeth and Carol Anne and we would pick out a bike from the street display and ride it all over town."

-Karen Benfield Jonakin

"There were amusement rides every summer and one year I walked away..I was 3...and someone working at Major Electric brought me home to Italy Street." *-Allan Bonner*

Major Electric

Owned & Operated By John & Betty Lou Guigou



"I was a child in the sixties. I remember going to Major Electric or Western Auto and looking at the toys and telling my mom and dad and my grandma what I liked and wanted for Christmas. Most of my toys were purchased there and I am sure because half of Valdese probably had an account there. One of my favorite toys was a doll made by Mattell. It was a Scooby Dooby Beatnik Doll. You pulled its string and it would say things like "groovy" and "what's happening." *-Marie Gilleon*

"Once a year Major Electric would have customer appreciation night. They would send an invitation with a ticket to get in. Reps from the different manufacturers would be there and they gave free hot dogs and drinks, and held drawings for prizes. I loved going to that...might have had something to do with the hot dogs!" *-Janice Glassbrooks Creason*



BIMBO BAKERIES

320 MAIN STREET EAST

HISTORY OF WALDENSIAN BAKERIES, INC.

Waldensian Bakeries, Inc. is a prime example of the American dream of building a successful business through hard work and determination. The bakery was founded in Valdese, NC in August 1915 by J.P. Rostan, Sr. and his brother-in-law Filippo Ghigo. J.P. came to America from the Italian Alps region in 1903 and worked in restaurants until he and Filippo partnered in starting a bakery in NYC in 1910. Bread was baked at night and delivered door to door in the city. The winters in NYC were fiercely cold and icy conditions made deliveries difficult and dangerous. In May 1915, they decided to move south to Valdese, NC, a town founded by Waldenses in 1893, and to open a bakery there. Rostan and Ghigo were both Waldenses and they joined friends and relatives from their native villages in the Alps. The first baked loaves were produced in August 1915 in a two story stone building where the coke-fired oven was in the lower level and their families lived in two apartments on the upper level. The small town of Valdese did not provide enough customers, so the bread was delivered to Morganton and nearby communities by wheelbarrow or train, then horse and wagon, and finally a 1920's truck. The business outgrew the small building, and in 1929 a new plant was built a few blocks away on Main Street. Several expansions occurred over the years and when the company was sold in 1994, it had over 600 employees in North and South Carolina and Tennessee and was one of the most automated bakeries in the world. - Insert from Jim Rostan



BIMBO BAKERIES

320 MAIN STREET EAST



"I was on the clean-up crew at the bakery in the mid-sixties. Scraping grease and other matter from around the machines with a putty knife, mopping, and having an occasional food fight with the 'rising dough' was all part of the day." -*Sherrill Kever*

"We always went into the bakery shop and got our favorite things like fresh peanut butter bars. All birthday cakes were ordered there. While my now ex-husband Paul Shuping worked at the bakery, he brought home warm bread every night. I gained 20lbs in one summer because of that delicious warm bread!" - *Carla Berry*



"There was a Wednesday Night movie every week, and on the walk home we would stop at the bakery. They would sell us bread so fresh it wasn't even sliced yet, for 10 cents. We ate it the entire walk home." -*Rheta Robinson*



The first bakery in Valdese opened in 1915 with two employees, John P. Rostan and Fillippe Ghigo, brothers-in-law who had worked in bakeries in New York City but had decided to join their countrymen in the Waldensian colony in Valdese. Today the bakery employs more than 700 people and can produce enough bread daily to make sandwiches for the entire state of North Carolina.





FUTURE HOME OF OLD WORLD BAKING CO.

149 MAIN STREET WEST

"The Crump's co-owned and operated the Sav-A-Center in Valdese for 30 years. Every morning before school some of us kids would go by the Sav-A-Center just to see Herman and say hello. He would stop whatever he was doing and talk to us kids about different things. Sometimes about the family or maybe just about life in general. He always took the time to really listen and was willing to offer helpful advice."

-Daniel Michael Martinat



Sav-A-Center



Sav-A-Center was co-owned and operated by Herman and Ruth Crump.

They were super nice. About this time 1976, I accidentally walked out without paying for something. I realized it at my car. Went back in so embarrassed. Mrs. Crump just laughed and said, "I knew you would be back." *-Lana Carswell Holley*

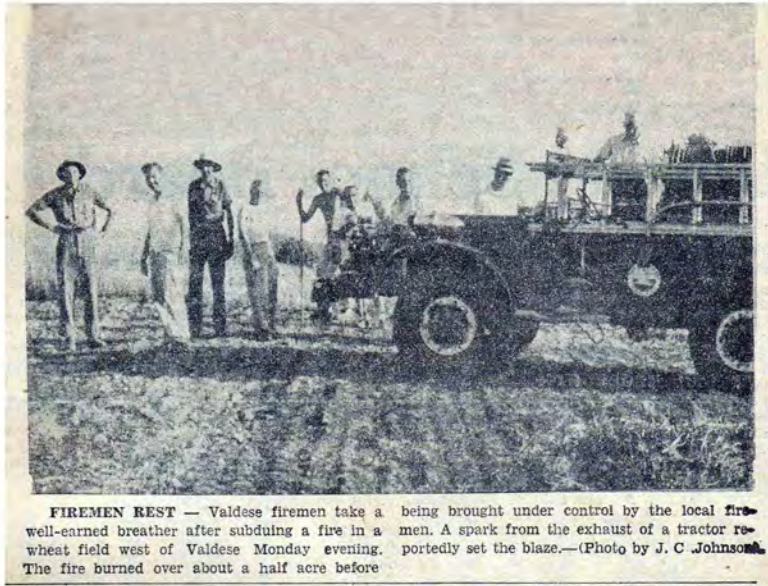
"I loved them so much. I can still remember how the store smelled and walking up that slanted floor into the store. He was partially deaf from when he was in the military and he told me my voice was high pitched and hard to hear So i would speak extra loud for him. I loved her too. So sweet." *-Lennie Allen Surujbally*



VALDESE FIRE DEPARTMENT

121 FAET STREET

The first organized fire fighting unit in Valdese was formed in 1932 and was totally volunteer. The membership was twenty strong with Town Manager Lee Ribet serving as Fire Chief. The first fire truck was a 1917 Model T. Edward Pascal, former town councilman, recalls the fire truck being housed in a one-car garage at the present site of the First United Methodist Church. Shortly after the department received a brand-new 1932 Mack Pumper. This truck is still used today by the department for parades.



TAXI SERVICE



From 1950-1970, there were at least 4 cab companies operating at different times. They were located in parking lots with just a phone hanging on a pole or off the side of a building. Known locations were: To the right of Wells Fargo, Beside Mimosa Beauty Salon, Back door of Rock Drug, beside Foothills Thrift Store.

Charlie's Black and White Cabs – only used Chevrolets, located at Wells Fargo Lot

Buff's Cab -Wilson Buff, operator – located in Thrift Store Lot

Speedy Hatley (Mayor Jim Hatley's dad) had a taxi service in the 50-60's (would take kids to school and deliver groceries)

Virgil and Duke Martin drove for a taxi service



BUFF'S CAB

VALDESE, N. C.

PHONE 874-~~XXXX~~

YOUR BUSINESS WOULD BE APPRECIATED

A CAB DRIVER'S PRAYER

Our heavenly Father, make us safe through the perils of all types of travel. Protect those who accompany us from harm by thy mercy.

Bless us as we travel day or night in all kinds of weather.

Help us to pray for peace and forgive us for our sins for ever and ever for Christ sake. Amen

At least one of these cab companies had a location on the corner of Main St. and Faet, where this structure stood.



THE RAT HOLE

MAIN STREET EAST (NEXT TO LAUREL HOUSE DESIGNS)

The Valdese Sandwich Shop – 1945

Harlon O'Quin moved to Valdese in 1939. He worked at Valdese Weavers and grew to dislike Valdese. O'Quin planned to leave as soon as he had enough money. But Valdese grew on O'Quin and he decided to stay. In 1945 he opened the Valdese Sandwich Shop located on Main Street. The building was a renovated gas/service station.

Since the shop was started during World War II, supplies were hard to get and the "Valdese Sandwich Shop" sign didn't get put up right away. Children began calling it the "Rat Hole."

"I got to tell you," O'Quin said, "at first it made me mad, but I couldn't beat them, so I joined them and started calling it the 'Rat Hole' myself."

Mill hands, merchants, high school students, and tourists (before the building of I-40) stopped in regularly for a bite to eat. In 1945 you could buy a milk shake for 15c and a hot dog for a nickel. And sometimes, if you were hungry but had no money, O'Quin would feed you anyway.

O'Quin was also an avid fan of Valdese High School football. After every game the team ate at the Rat Hole. And once a year, he would treat the team to a meal of steak, potatoes, fried pies, ice cream, and milk.

During the time O'Quin was in business, the Rat Hole was THE nightspot in Valdese. But over the years, he was forced to close earlier and earlier.

"As television came in, people quit going to movies," O'Quin said. "It didn't justify me staying open. But then, some nights, I'd have to blink the lights to get everybody to leave."

The Rat Hole was sold to Essie Murphy in 1970. Murphy later sold the property to Silver Knitting Company to be converted into a parking lot.



1960



Rat Hole 1970 Becky Murphy

"My Dad always said you'd order a sandwich and a cockroach would come out and visit you."

- Allan Bonner



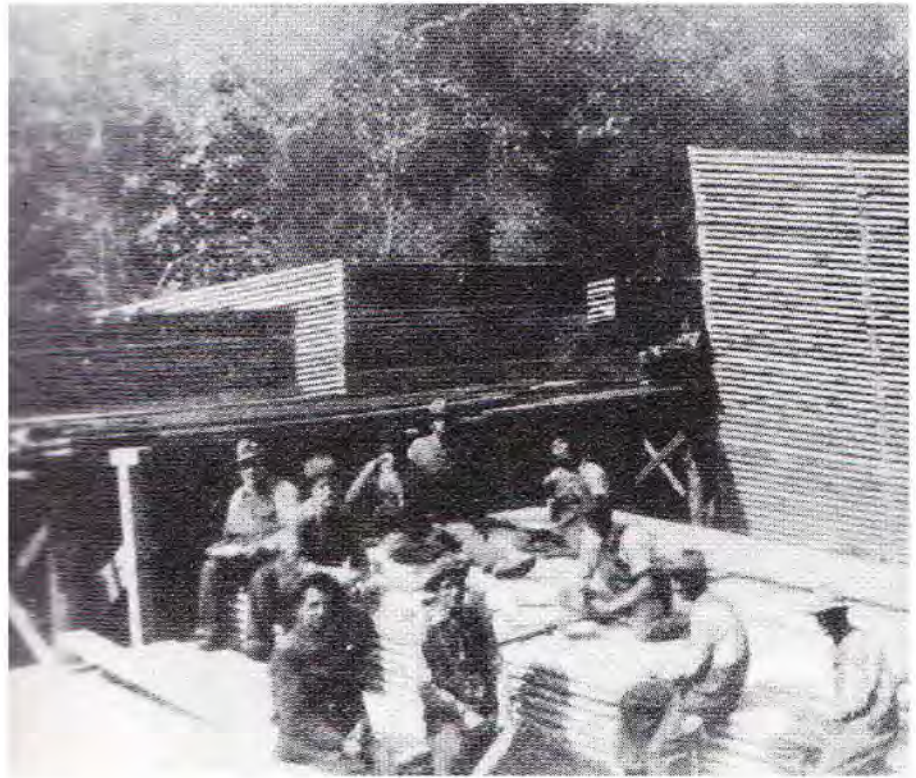
Since the Rat Hole was the local hang out for Valdese teens, Glenn and I spent a lot of time there. Mr. and Mrs. O'Quinn, the proprietors, were like family to all of us and always treated us so special. In 1958, when Glenn decided to propose and give me a diamond ring, it was in the front booth of the Rat Hole. Of course, a lot of our friends were there and joined in on our exciting occasion. I am sad that the teens of Valdese are missing out on such a remarkable experience that we all shared at the Rat Hole. -Pat Zimmerman



MCDONALDS

443 MAIN STREET WEST

"The hardware store was directly across the street from the rock school. My grandfather was instrumental in building the Rock School. I went by and talked to JD at the lumber company today about the history. JM Brinkley was manager at Pitts Lumber Company in Glen Alpine and moved to Valdese in 1916 to start his own business. When he left Pitts, he was told that he would come back to Glen Alpine and be able to bring all he had back in a wheelbarrow. He had a vision and come to Valdese and bought the store from Bobo Garrou in 1917. He and his son Clyde ran the business until 1925 when my father, John Dallas, came to work with them. JM gave Dallas 1/2 interest in the business around 1925. The store was located behind now McDonalds across from the meridian plant. JD says the lumber yard was located just to the southeast, near the old Alba box plant and had rail access. When JM passed away in 1944, Dallas and Atlee wound up owning the business and split it into 2 separate businesses-hardware and lumber. Atlee moved the hardware to the corner of main where Autozone is now located and dad, Dallas, moved the lumber company to the corner of main and Church Street. The office was later built in 1952 and was located on the corner of main and church. It is now occupied by the nails place. That's all that JD could remember about the businesses. He is now 89 years old and has worked at the lumber company for over 68 years and still goes in to work every day. And they are having 100th anniversary this year. And that's the story as I have been told." -Jim Brinkley



Brinkley Lumber



FRANCIS GARROU HIGH SCHOOL

CHURCH STREET



"My favorite lunch while attending Valdese Junior High was tomato soup and grilled cheese." - Robert Heilman

"When I was a senior, I walked to Roses and bought a little bottle of Ben Hur (really) perfume during lunch break. It was wintertime, pretty cold. I took that perfume to my...would it be 5th period class? I took it to the class I was having after lunch while nobody was there and poured it all over the hot radiators in the back of the classroom. It was EDELL HIATT'S class. I never told a soul." -Judy Gragg Chavez

"Valdese High School Band led the parade welcoming Maria Beale Fletcher home when she came back after being crowned Miss America in 1962. One other funny memory from the band is that the drum majors would mix brown shoe polish with lotion to tan their legs." -Judy Jones

"In home economics, we had to make aprons with a french seam and we had to model them. Ms. McCall cooked for the teachers at Valdese High School and made the lunch meals." - Bootsie Vanhorn Seabock





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In 1938 it became necessary to build a new high school, named in honor of Francis Garrou (regarded as champion of education), to provide for the children of what was called at this period "North Carolina's Fastest Growing Town". Over the entrance were these words; "Education is the True Foundation of Civil Liberty," values highly prized by pioneers of Valdese and by Garrou himself. Thousands of students would pass under those words between 1938 and the time of the facility's final closing - as Valdese Junior High School in 1992. And during that time there would be many milestones and many changes.

The central portion of the high school was constructed in 1938 and served grades 8-11. Right and left wings came later, as the town continued to grow and a state ruling in 1942 added another year of schooling - 12 rather than 11 to requirements for graduation. Other additions were made to the education complex over the years including a gymnasium, band/industrial arts building, and home economics cottage.

Years of memories are stored in those walls - laughter, tears, friendships, special memories of classes, teachers and club meetings, assembly programs, dances, trips, forensics, play rehearsals, band and chorus recitals and contests, pep rallies, bonfires, athletic events, homecomings, and so many more. Those memories became all more precious when the Valdese High School reorganized in 1974 after the completion of East Burke High School in Icard, and became Valdese Junior High. The building would later close its doors in 1992 with a goodbye ceremony after the completion of Heritage Middle School. Mayor Jimmy Draughn stated, "The building is the place, but the people were the institution." - *What Mean These Stones*



"During the months of June, July and August when I was between the ages of 13-18, I rarely put on anything except a bathing suit. No shoes, no shirt, no shorts, just a bathing suit, and I went into every business in Valdese. I went to swim practice at 7am, taught swim lessons until the pool opened, life guarded all day, had another swim practice, and then finished up the day during the Community Center night swim...I didn't have a clue that other people actually wore clothes in the summer. During the summer, nothing was better than 50 cent french fries from the gym, treats from the bakery and bbq sandwiches from Myras. I treasure my childhood...It couldn't have been better!" -*Laura Brittain*

"On the front stairs of the Old Rock School we had something called May Day. It was always a huge deal. Children would be dressed in costumes and a May Queen would be named. The only May Queen I could remember was Pat Melvin, later Pat Mitchell, she was so beautiful." -*Rheta Robinson*



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"When Hugh Fletcher passed away, a story was told at his funeral: Hugh went into the Pontiac Dealership to get his car serviced for free...He picked up his car and as he pulled onto Main Street, all four tires came off because the lug nuts weren't tightened down! The Pontiac Dealership was owned by Hugh's brother Ray Fletcher." -*Allan Bonner*



"Henry Garrou running Western Auto and Pig Iron Yancey came in. He was a textile worker. He said if he didn't die, he would come by and pay for an item that he needed from Western Auto. Pay Day came and Pig Iron was a no-show, so Henry sent him a funeral wreath and put it on his door! His wife came to Western Auto to find out what was going on...Henry said, 'I'd just figured he'd died!'"
-Allan Bonner



"Remembering the wave of kids getting out of school and walking home...eating 79 cent Big Deluxe from Hardees, stopping by the Soda Shoppe for water, going to the Rathole before school to buy baseball and football cards, swimming on the swim team at VCC, being a lifeguard at the pool, teaching kids and adults swim lessons, throwing bowling balls off the roof of the rec into the pool...some would jump, but not me, I'm too chicken...asking for broken cookies at the bakery and if, by chance, I had a little money, buying a Long John. Of course the bomb shelter explosion...I was less than 500 feet from it when it exploded and could have very easily been down there. Sad day. But YES, I'M PROUD TO SAY I GREW UP IN VALDESE." -Bill Viggers

"I used to walk from my grandparents house from the dead end on Rodoret Street to the Post Office to buy stamps for my grandmother, Madeline Wilson, wife of P.O. Wilson Sr. The Post Office was on the corner of Bobo and Rodoret, right behind what was then the Belk-Broome Company. When I was 7 years old, my grandmother and I were walking to the Waldensian Market, wagon in tow for hauling groceries, and she found a 1926 Liberty Silver Dollar in the gravel on (then unpaved) Bobo Avenue. I still have it." -Timothy M. Robinson

"I remember working there and selling tickets. I loved westerns and would go on Saturday morning and watch them over and over!" -Jo Ann Johnson Gragg



"I remember going there with my mama as a child. I once saw Edith Lynn put her son David (the Dog) in a sandbox in the trunk of her Cadillac while she shopped. Kinda quirky, but that was "Gitty"(Edith). It did keep a wild child contained." -Linda Becker Moore





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MAP & KEY

1. Old Rock School
2. Family Dollar
3. Myra's
4. Mimosa Beauty & Salon di Bellezza
5. Play It Again Records
6. Valdese Heritage Arts Center
7. Colonial Theater Building
8. Classic Plastic Toys & Collectables
9. S&A Antiques and Collectables
10. 100 Main Restaurant & Bar
11. Reynolds Family Wellness Center
12. Burke Hospice Thrift & Gifts
13. Bimbo Bakeries
14. Old World Baking Company
15. Valdese Fire Department
16. Valdese Taxi Service
17. The Orrison Building
18. McDonalds
19. Site of Valdese High School

