

Teens hung out at A&W

Thirty-four years ago, a new restaurant opened that became a favorite teenage hangout in a flash.

Many Belleville residents fondly remember heading over to the A&W Drive-in on Dundas Street for a Papa, Mama or Baby burger and the only frosted glasses in town. Really, though, they were there to socialize.

"It was a younger crowd. It was quite a hang-out for the teenagers," recalls Mac Smith, who built the restaurant in 1961.

Building a hamburger joint wasn't Smith's idea. A&W management from St. Catharines proposed the new location.

"I think they dropped in and wanted to know if I'd sell. I didn't want to."

Instead, Smith negotiated to build the restaurant and rent it to A&W.

"They signed a lease and they operated it until I sold the property to Loblaws."

Except for the servers, the staff was not local. "The manager and (senior staff) were from out of town. They hired younger people."

Smith remembers watching the staff mix the syrup with other ingredients to make root beer in the restaurant basement.

"They had these big, stainless steel tubs to mix it up. They were pretty particular when they were making it."

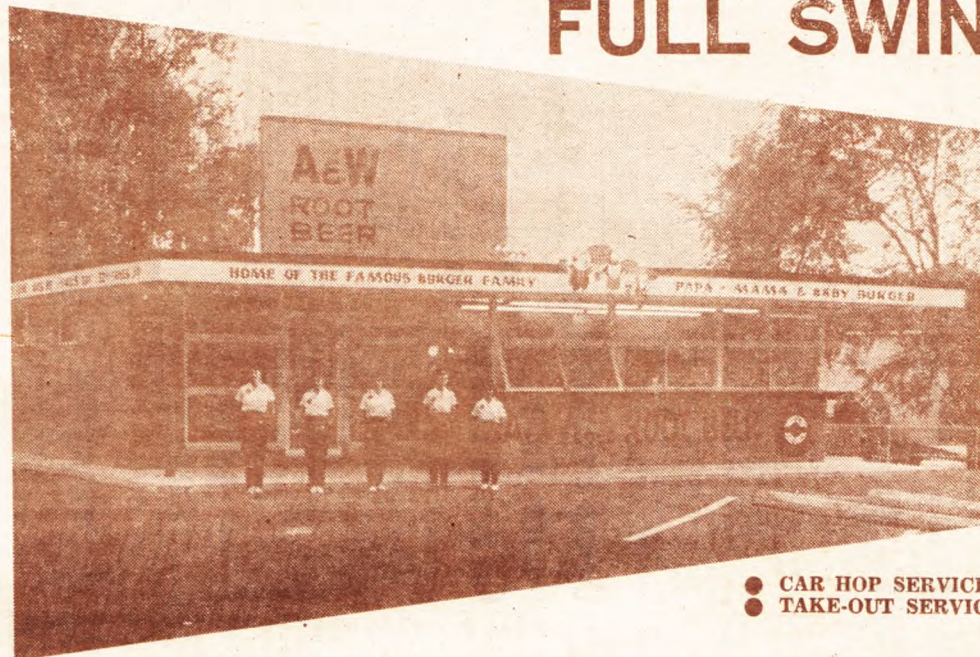
The little restaurant with the long parking lot — where burgers were served to customers while they waited in their cars — sat "just about in the centre of where Semple's is now." Homes sandwiched the joint, one of which was owned by a Mrs. Winters.

In 1979 — or late 1978 — A&W closed when Smith sold the land to Loblaws.

GRAND

OPENING

STILL IN
FULL SWING



● CAR HOP SERVICE
● TAKE-OUT SERVICE

A & W DRIVE-IN

EAST DUNDAS ST. AT ALBERT ST.

JUST EAST OF THE SWIMMING POOL

HOME OF THE
FAMOUS

- ◆ PAPA BURGER
- ◆ MAMA BURGER
- ◆ BABY BURGER

FREE
ROOT BEER
With
ALL BURGERS

WOW

SPECIAL OFFER ON
Take Home Orders of

ROOT BEER

Gal. **69c** 1/2 Gal. **39c**
Plus Deposit Plus Deposit

Shortly after the A&W Drive-in opened on Dundas Street in September, 1961, this advertisement appeared in the Ontario Intelligencer.