Jailhouse Stop

WHEN WE last visited the jailhouse-themed Convict Inn (Spring 1993, inside back cover), we knew owner William H. McAfee had modeled his roadhouse after an earlier version in Connellsville. This photo of it turned up in the Library of Congress, taken in 1935 by Ben Shahn for the U.S. Farm Security Administration.

Mac's Convict Bar-B-Q was located on U.S. 119, between Uniontown and Connellsville. According to Walter "Buzz" Storey, in his recent *Stories of Uniontown and Fayette County*, Mac's had "iron bars on the windows and black and white striped uniforms for the workers." Mac's was adjacent to an airstrip, so when McAfee bought the field, he renamed it Mac's Convict Bar-B-Q Airfield! In 1935, he also purchased a Ford Tri-Motor plane to offer rides.

"One of Mac's claims to fame, which went largely unnoticed at the time, was visits by flier-hero Charles Lindbergh.... Growing tired of being mobbed at big airports, he would bypass Pittsburgh and stop at Mac's to refuel, grab a hot dog, and take off again with no one the wiser."

For those familiar with the area, the "ramshackle frame thing" sat across 119 from where the Fayette County campus of Pennsylvania State University is now, Storey recalled by phone.

When photographed in October 1935, Mac's offered at least seven brands of gas and Uniontown Beer. Note the windsock on the roof and the signs announcing "Parachute jump every Sunday 3:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m." — *Text by Brian Butko. Photograph courtesy Library of Congress.* ◉

**Historical Society
of Western Pennsylvania**

4338 Bigelow Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Tel 412/681-5533