

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## "CABINS"



This post card photo of Millers Cabins was probably taken back in the 1940's. These were located just west of the hamlet of Gaines on the north side of Route 104. This establishment was owned and operated by Glen and Anna Miller, who lived in an adjacent brick house. There were four or five cabins and a roadside stand where Anna Miller prepared breakfast and light meals for travelers. This same stand also sold soda pop and ice cream to local people who dropped in during the summer. The back of the photo post card advertises "Millers Modern Heated Cabins with private toilets and showers, Home cooked meals at Reasonable Prices."

When I was a boy forty years ago this was a common sight along our busier highways before the advent of motels. Individual "cabins" as these were called, housed the weary tourist overnight. These were usually Mom and Pop establishments with a small snack bar or restaurant as part of the complex. I remember Glen and Anna Miller worrying about keeping their business going when the New York State Thruway opened in 1954. Like

many business establishments along the Ridge Road, they depended upon the heavy traffic for survival. The opening of the N.Y.S. Thruway as a major east-west route took away the traffic from Route 104.

Unfortunately the Millers were right, and several seasons after the thruway opened, the Millers closed out their business. Eventually the property was purchased by Barney and Jo Ogden and they removed the cabins.

Tourist cabins started to appear on our landscape in the 1920s when the American public became much more mobile with better automobiles. Millers cabins were put up back when the Ridge Road was nicknamed "Honeymoon Trail." But as the public demanded better and more accommodations, motels began to replace the small, often unfinished interiors of individual cabins. A few cabins remain in "tourist courts" as a kind of nostalgic statement of a bygone era of traveling accommodations. But most of these charming little utilitarian pieces of architecture which once dotted our roadsides, have vanished.