



An American Tour: 110



Villa Ridge's *Diamonds Restaurant*

The first Diamonds, built in 1927, was constructed in the shape of a baseball diamond, hence the name. Touted as the "World's Largest Roadside Restaurant," the business was established by Spencer Groof and also sold Phillips 66 gasoline and rented cabins across the street. In 1948, the restaurant burned to the ground in a fire that blazed so furiously that Route 66 had to be temporarily closed. Rebuilt, the Diamonds continued to operate at this location (west of exit 251) until 1967 when it was bypassed by the interstate. Picking up, lock, stock, and barrel, including their vintage sign, the business moved two miles eastward, but still did not survive. The original Diamonds then began to house the Tri-County Truck Stop and Restaurant, which ironically, did live on beyond the Diamonds Restaurant. However, it today is also closed. [<http://www.legendsofamerica.com/mo-graysummit.html>]

The old Diamonds Restaurant, now named the Tri-County Restaurant is located on Old Highway 100 in Villa Ridge, MO. This site burned down and was rebuilt, a second new Diamonds Restaurant was opened closer to Pacific and has since closed down. Reportedly, the old site is now haunted. "We first became interested in this site after hearing the stories from the staff of people having experienced the ghost of someone tapping them on the shoulder when using the restroom, and of children panicking when seeing what they describe as a blood monster on the stairway."

[<http://www.missourighosts.net/villaridge.html>]

