

Buffalo Tales

March/April 2013

Plane View Café and Restaurant

By Vicki Brown



My Aunt and Uncle owned a restaurant and a Dairy Queen franchise here in Kearney in the 50s, 60s, and the beginning of the 70s. The summer of '69 when we came back here to live, we spent the summer living in my Aunt's apartment that was built on the room of this restaurant. It was like a dream come true... like living in a carnival for an 8 year old. And after living dirt poor my whole life, it was just incomprehensible that we could just ask for any food we wanted and get it... gratis.

In the "front" was the café. By the time I got there, there was a glass "vestibule" built in the front. It had glass bricks that rounded one corner where there was a curved booth. Those bricks were so cool for the little kids that were stuck in the middle of the booth... Kearney looked different through those bricks and it could entertain you all through dinner. There were 4 booths, 4 tables, and the counter with stools. There was a cigarette machine and a glass case where you paid that had candy for sale. There was a lass, refrigerated case with mirrors in the back to display all the made-fresh-daily pies. There was a large "shadow box" on the wall with different antique items of interest and that was covered in chicken wire. There was a small jukebox at each table. I loved it when "Aquarius" played in there... it was magical.

Then, you went into the kitchen. Oh man! Why did I fall in love with cooking? Because of that kitchen. I fell in love with the dishwasher, the potato peeler and those HUGE containers of pie filling! There was a screen door that was always open and a radio on that was always tuned to Kearney's station, KGFW. I can still remember the jingle they used to play 25 times per hour.

The walk-in freezer... the most AWESOME place in the entire WORLD! I would volunteer to get anything from "walk-in" on a hot, summer day! Then, there were those flapping doors with windows in them for the waitresses that led to the restaurant part of the building. The restaurant was only open at night. So all day, it would be dark and cool.

I could go back there and walk behind the bar... I soon learned how to turn on the "bar lights" and the muzak. The back wall of the bar

was all mirrored with glass shelves that were filled with all the different shaped glasses. All the different liquor smells intermingled and created a sweet smell. But all the coca cola you



candle glowed at the center of each one. There was one wall with a huge mural on it. It had its own lighting and there were curtains hung on either side. It was a beautiful scene of a mountain lake all done in blues and

wanted coming out of a spray nozzle-nirvana!

There was a large organ back in the restaurant. A woman named Susan would come in in the evenings and play for the customers dining pleasure at 7 pm. Susan would play all those wonderful Broadway melodies and she'd get playful when she played "Alley Cat"-she could make the organ "meow". She'd sit behind that organ in the darkened room with only the light for her music lighting her face and she was beautiful.

I wanted to be like Susan. I wanted to someday play the organ at the Plane View. The bedroom I stayed in upstairs was right above where Susan would play and I'd lay down at night to go to sleep and listen to her playing.

In the restaurant, the carpet and curtains were red. All the tables had beautiful, white starched linen tablecloths on them and a red

greens. There was yet another room in this long building called the "back"- or the party room. One big room with tile flooring and long tables. One whole wall was a window and had vertical blinds... long before vertical blinds were so common. There was a small bar towards the back that was only stocked when there was some function. Men's clubs would meet back there and women's clubs would have luncheons. Lots of people had their wedding receptions in that room, too.

The first time I was asked to go back and help set up the "back" it was awesome. For an obsessive-compulsive like me, setting out all those table settings perfectly, lining up the chairs and make sure everything was just right was a dream come true. But there was another draw in the "back"... a piano. I could go back there during the days, shut the door and mess around with the piano as much as I wanted!! As loud as I wanted!!

Outside the "back" was a garden hemmed in by tall evergreens... sigh. I loved it back there. It had that green fiberglass corrugated stuff as a canopy... so it was always shady back there with a green tint. There was a cement path going straight back to a waterfall. I think there was a bird-bath back there, too. It was just peaceful. People could use that part when they rented the party

DINNER	
Choice T-Bone	\$4.50
Luscious Sirloin Steak	2.75
Chopped Sirloin	2.25
Chicken Fried Steak	2.25
Jambie Grouper	2.95
Sociable Fried Chicken	1.95
Grilled Pork Chop	1.85
<small>*Menu orders include French, Salad, Bread and Butter Coffee</small>	
SANDWICHES	
Roast Beef	1.25
Cold Beef	.80
Hot Beef (plus food)	1.10
Hamburger	.80
1 lb. Hamburger	1.05
With Cheese	2.15
Hamburger Deluxe	1.30
<small>Includes French, French Fry</small>	
Bacon, Lettuce, Tomato	1.00
Bar-B-Q-Beef	.90
Beefed Ham	.60
Egg Sandwich	.50
Egg Salad	.50
Ham & Cheese	1.05
Club House	1.25
French Dip Sandwich	1.40

room, too. That was my favorite place to roller skate.

I am glad that I don't have too many pictures of the Plane View... it stays perfect in my memory this way. My memories of the Plane View are more about sounds and smells and feelings that about vision. Like the way the old cook's hand felt when he'd ask me to "shake" his hand, and he'd slip me a quarter. (What happened to those men?) The sounds of dishes clattering and the hollow sound of the back room. The sound the door in the front vestibule made when you entered... like a sucking sound. The way the sun felt coming through those glass bricks in the late afternoons... smells of fresh made glazed donuts and coffee in the mornings. Change had falling in between the bar and the bumper over the years and when you hit it with

your fist, you could hear all the change. (Yes, when they took the bar down after the restaurant finally closed its doors, there was hundreds of dollars in there!)

I saw a bidet for the first time at the Plane View. The bathrooms in the back that were for the evening diners and each had two stalls in them... and when I opened that corner one for the first time in the women's I didn't know what the heck that thing was! I still have no clue as to why any woman would have a need to use one when they were out for dinner in the evenings... no, I never asked my Aunt why.

And ice machines... ah! Glory! Coming from Southern California where I had to drink the hot water from the hose outside, having all that ice for water or whatever! Wow! You took a big, metal scoop to scoop down and retrieve all the ice you wanted.

One of my Aunts was a cook in the Plane View when I got there and she'd let me watch her make pies... lots and lots of pies! I examined all the cooking utensils and pots thoroughly. The day we walked on the moon, my brother, Martin, and I were downstairs washing dishes... running that dishwasher was far more fun than watching a man in a white bubble suit walk somewhere!! I especially like the glass washer... it was the round scrub brush sticking straight up and when you held a glass over it and pushed down, it would automatically start turning fast and scrub the glass!

My Aunt taught me how to read music and I could pick out things on the piano. Of course, I let my desire to play the organ be known and I did get treated to lessons. I could go back in the restaurant and turn



on the organ and sit with just the light for my music on my face in the dark, red room and practice to my heart's content.

That's the view I have of the Plane View that sticks out the most... the fantasies of a 10 year old sitting behind that giant organ, making loud, beautiful music to a dark and empty room. I dreamed of putting on a beautiful dress every evening, having my hair, makeup, and nails all done and sit like an angel in darkness in the corner smiling and playing beautiful music. Watching the large brandy snifter as it filled up with tips in the evenings!

Nope, I never did finish the lessons and I never got to play for an audience at the Plane View. We moved to Arizona and the following year, thank to the popularity of Kearney's new McDonald's restaurant just blocks away, the Plane

View closed. I wasn't even old enough to wait on tables before we left. I never got to "work" there like my older brothers and sister, but I got the best. I got endless hours of observations, and all the time and space I wanted to explore and play and dream... in my own "carnival."



Note From the Editor

Greetings! I hope you all are well!

I am excited that I get to share with you something unique today! In a past Buffalo Tale, "Kearney Army Air Base: A Photographic Journal (Vol. 32, No. 5) to be exact, I included a picture labeled "Unidentified man working in the photo lab at KAAB."

Well, a few months ago, Jennifer received an email from a gentleman that she quickly forwarded on to me. I was astonished when I read it. It was from the

"unidentified" man's son, Gary Youngs! He told us that the man was "my father, then Captain Lyman G Youngs the first Area Engineer in the building of the Airbase."

It is these rare moments that make me love working on Buffalo Tales even more than I normally do!

-Katherine



BUFFALO TALES is the official publication of the Buffalo County Historical Society, a non-profit organization, whose address is P.O. Box 523, Kearney, NE 68848-0523.

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Katherine Wielechowski, Editor

2013 Annual dues, payable January 1, are:

Individual.....	\$35.00
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Institutional Membership.....	\$50.00
Supporting Membership.....	\$75.00
Silver Engineer.....	\$125.00
Gold Engineer.....	\$250.00

We have replaced the word 'Basic' to 'Family'.

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2013 Calendar of Events

February 29: Don't Come Event

Sunday, April 21 from 1-3 pm: BCHS Annual Meeting

Sunday, June 9: 6th Annual ½ Marathon/5K: Buffalo County Stampede—Reg. @ 6 am. Race @ 7

Saturday, June 29 from 10-2 pm: 28th Annual Wagons West Celebration

Tuesday, August 27th from 6-9:30pm: 7th Annual Trivia Contest & Dinner

Saturday, Oct. 26 (time TBD): 3rd Annual Old-fashioned Halloween Party

All of November: Christmas Decorating (during regular business hours)

Saturday, November 30 from 12-1pm: Members Only Preview of the 26th Annual Christmas Tree Walk

First two weekends in Dec. (Nov. 30/Dec.1 and Dec. 7/8) from 1-5 pm: Open to the public: 26th Annual Christmas Tree Walk

Education notes:

Ghost Hunting classes with the **Midwest Paranormal Investigators**

Fabulous Fridays will continue to be held on the 2nd Friday of each month.

Kearney Public Schools have the museum reserved for two weeks in May 2013!!

Volunteers, chairpersons, and sponsors are still needed. Please contact the office for more information on supporting your Buffalo County Historical Society!

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We hope you enjoy these stories about Buffalo County. We would love to have a stock pile of Buffalo Tales ready so they can go out in a more timely manner. Please submit your memories and stories to us by e-mailing them to bchs.buffalotales@hotmail.com or sending them to the post office box: BCHS, PO Box 523, Kearney, NE 68848.

We appreciate your support!

Director's Report

-Carol Cope's phase one of their collection has been inventoried by Mary Beth and Vicki and hauled down to the museum by those two and Mary Beth's son. Phase one included clothes, hats, purses, shoes, and a few items from their shoe store. More is to come. Sherry Morrow is orchestrating all of this and she is giving BCHS first dibs on whatever we want.

-We nominated Wyatt for an award through his UNK Work Study. He is an amazing attribute to BCHS. He has a great work ethic and is amazing with customers. We should find out in April if he won or not. He does not know that I nominated him. I hope we can keep him for a long time, but I believe his engineering degree will move him to a larger school.

Be sure to join the Buffalo County Historical Society group or the Buffalo County Historical Society/Trails & Rails Museum fan page on Facebook!



Trails & Rails Museum

Buffalo County Historical Society

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