

Former cook recalls hard work at old Diboll hotels

By ELLEN TEMPLE

Diboll doesn't have a hotel now but there have been three hotels in Diboll in years gone by and Cora Nash well remembers them all.

Mrs. Nash, who is now 80, worked at all three former Diboll hotels — the Beannery, the Star and the Antler Hotel.

Born in 1898, Mrs. Nash moved to Diboll on the 4th of July, 1919, when it was mostly just woods, and she's been here ever since. She was married to Robert Nash who worked for Southern Pine Lumber Co. until he died in 1951. She has two living children, one in Houston and one in Diboll, and about 27 grand and great-grandchildren.

For about 25 years Mrs. Nash cooked at each of three company owned hotels which served the needs of the men who came to Diboll to construct plants, work in

them, build roads and bridges, clear track right-of-way, lay pipeline, all those activities which characterize the rise of a bustling, lumber town.

Southern Pine hired various women managers to run these hotels. They worked hard, and a workday often stretched from 3 or 4 a.m. to 10 or 11 p.m.

Those women who operated the Beannery included Myrtle Copeland, Bobbie Copeland, Della Copeland Williams and her daughter Vera Burris.

The Star operators included Mrs. E. A. Estes and her daughter Ruth Pickle. The Antler operators included Mrs. Cammack and Bird Davis.

Operation of those hotels was often a family affair; husbands and children worked hard too.

Cora Nash cooked on a huge wood burning stove at the Beannery for 17 years.

The hotel stood on the corner of Thompson and Hines, across from today's Temple sales office. There was a porch with two swings and plenty of rockers for the 30 or 40 men who boarded there.

When her employer Mrs. Della Williams (who Cora describes as "smart as a clock") would have to leave, Cora would take over the operation, buying the groceries, paying the bills, and cooking until Mrs. Williams returned.

They'd serve family style on three long, white, cloth covered tables. Mrs. Nash would dish the food up in a big bowls and place them all along the table with a complete "set up" for each five or six men. Everyone would help themselves.

Cora Nash loved to cook. Her favorites were chicken pies, fried chicken or fish, berry pies, and angel food cakes with 22 egg whites. "The most gorgeous cakes you ever saw." She goes on, "Food was better then, not fast grown or treated."

After 17 years at the Beannery, Mrs. Nash then started working across the street at the Star Hotel located where the Temple sales office is now on the corner of Thompson and Hines.

Lufkinite Mrs. Sadie Woods knows all about the Star Hotel. Her mother Mrs. Estes and then her sister Ruth Pickle ran it.

Mrs. Woods remembers the Star's big, often smokey, living room with its wood burning stove surrounded by men smoking their pipes. There was one bathroom upstairs and one downstairs, each with one tub and running water. Hot water was never scarce. Since it came through the mill boilers, it was hot — so much so that a bather would have to wait for it to cool enough to use. Each room had a bowl and pitcher of water for guests to use to wash up.

Linens were washed outside in big black pots of boiling water and hung on lines to dry. Running that hotel was unbelievably hard work. Mrs. Estes would begin her day at 3 a.m. often enough. They had a garden behind the hotel, but Mrs. Estes bought most of her produce from Mr. Clark of Burke who came by the hotel early every morning, his wagon loaded with fresh vegetables.

Cora Nash cooked at the Star Hotel for about five years. She'd be at work at the wood burning stove by 4:00 or so, fix breakfast and pack lunches for 40 or 50 workers, and then have dinner ready for them that night.

Mrs. Nash recalls the huge coffee urn at the Star; "It was as tall as a table. I'd make up gallons of coffee every day." She used cistern water to make coffee and to cook with because, she says, "Diboll water would turn rice as yellow as gold."

The third hotel where Cora Nash cooked in the 1940's for three and a half years was the Antler Hotel or the "log cabin" as she calls it.

She describes it as, "the prettiest thing you ever walked into in your life. There were Mr. Cammack's deer heads, bear skins and snake skins on the walls. It was just a picture show to walk in there; it was beautiful."

Mrs. Nash cooked with cistern water at the Antler and used a big butane gas stove instead of the wood burning kind of the past. Clyde Thompson, who's eaten in all three of those hotels that have long since been torn down, remembers that Cora was a "wonderfully good cook."

Although she's long since retired and now blind, Mrs.

Nash is still as hard working as ever as "Mother of her Church," the Shiloh Baptist in Diboll. She's been a member for 57 years and everyone calls her "Mama Nash." As Church Mother, Cora raises money, invites people to church, talks to sinners, and encourages children to come.

Last year her flock honored her with "Sister Nash Day" when women dressed in bonnets and long dresses served dinner on the grounds.

Mrs. Nash has a lot of love in her heart. In fact, "love" is an important word in her vocabulary. She told me how she loved to cook, how she used to love to party and play cards, how she loved her employers and how she loves her friends like Katherine Temple.

And out of her love for people, she raises money for all the churches in her community, simply by asking for contributions.

And Cora Nash is a great influence on young people. She sets a wonderfully hardworking, church-supporting, loving example.



THE STAR HOTEL was one of two hotels available to Dibollians in the early 1900's. This photograph reportedly was made about 1913 when the hotel was

operated by Mr. and Mrs. Ike Estes. A large front porch was later added for the convenience of boarders.

Second meeting slated to organize PTA here

By ELLEN TEMPLE

Twenty-six enthusiastic people met on Tuesday, May 9 at 7 p.m. in the elementary school cafeteria to begin organizing a Diboll Elementary School PTA (Parent-Teacher Association).

Parents and teachers at the meeting were apparently interested in providing a forum for the exchange of ideas about education and an organization which works to help children. Money raising will not be a primary goal. Teacher attendance and involvement in PTA will be strictly voluntary.

Patsy Hines, district PTA president-elect, presided at the meeting and presented a program describing the history of PTA and its organization. She said that PTA initially grew out of one mother's efforts in 1890 to get a public school education for her daughter who at that time was denied admission simply because she was female. That effort evolved until today PTA is a national organization whose purpose is "to help all children."

She also discussed PTA projects which can enrich children's education. Possibilities include a preschool PTA program to help prepare children for kindergarten; a cultural arts program to implement what the school system provides; a volunteer group who help the teachers in any way that the teachers want; special projects to stimulate pride in the school, such as a talent show or an art show or a music festival.

Mrs. Hines stressed that each local PTA can design its own program and shape the organization to fit its needs. Donna Smart, by-laws committee chairman, and her committee will meet to draft by-laws which will be discussed and then voted upon at the organizational meeting.

That organizational meeting for the Diboll Elementary School PTA will be Tuesday, May 23 at 7 p.m. in the elementary school cafeteria. An 11 person membership committee chaired by Johnnie Archer will publicize the meeting and urge people to come.

Every parent and every teacher is invited to come. Every person has something to contribute. This new PTA effort in Diboll needs your support.

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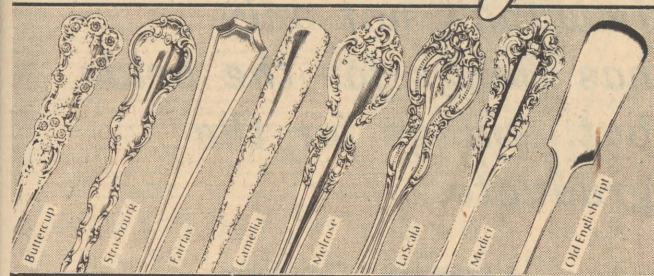
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Shawnee Prairie event planned

The annual Shawnee Prairie homecoming will be combined with the Angelina County Singing Convention on Saturday night and Sunday, May 20 and 21.

The church is located at Farm Road 844 and South Highway 69 just south of Huntington. There will be singing by quartets on Sunday, with everyone bringing basket lunches for the noon meal. The singing Saturday night begins at 7 p.m. and again at 10 a.m. Sunday.

R. B. Ricks is president of the convention, Alton Lee is vice president and Annie B. Ricks is secretary.

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