

“Abilene in the First Two Decades of the Twentieth Century”

by Deane W. Malott

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“The ‘Pacific House’ or the railroad station hotel was well known—an elegant hostelry for those days. The spacious dining room presided over by the owner, Charley Estes, had perhaps three rows of four tables each, and square tables seating eight.

Society congregated there for noon dinner after Sunday Church services. And each family or couple had his regular seat. There were the Ellisons, with their sons, my good friends Homer and Burns, the Wyandts with their two children . . . the Hazletts, [and] Grace Peters (Cashier of Crooks Yard Goods Store, where on week days she presided in an airless balcony office hung under the ceiling, with trolleys going out to the various counters conveying cash, receipts, charge slips, and all the panoply of hand-kept records). Grace, a lady of uncertain age, always took her Mother for Sunday dinner. The ladies, of course, all wore hats and many wore gloves, and winter fur pieces were a necessity, as almost everyone walked.

During dinner we always enjoyed the arrival of the noon train (#104) from Denver en route to Kansas City, the huge locomotive bell ringing and the locomotive, hissing as it slowly passed the dining room separated from us only by the width of the covered station platform. I was always interested to see whether the Pullman ‘Aldine’ was on the train as it so often came through Abilene on the Kansas—Denver run.”

Courtesy of Robert H. Malott