

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

by Deane W. Malott

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“For a small town, Abilene had many attractions. It was safe, sane, moral, with genuine friendships and pleasures. I have seen my Mother and Father leave our home in formal evening dress—white tie and tails, trailing dresses for the women and with dignity go right next door to a dinner party and to spend the evening at Duplicate Whist. No liquor was ever served; it was not a subject of discussion. After a delicious dinner at card tables for four, served by Mrs. Hershey (white) or Mrs. Hampton (Negro), whose husband, Sonny Hampton, was a jack-of-all-trades, especially good at taking up carpets for the annual ritual of spring house-cleaning. After the dinner the gentlemen would repair upstairs to smoke cigars and pollute the bedrooms for weeks to come; then downstairs to cut for partners at the card tables.

Life was simple but pleasant. People went out for drives with horse-drawn carriages until the advent of the automobile about 1914; although the Humphreys had relatives from Enid, Oklahoma, chugging over the roads as early as 1904.”

Courtesy of Robert H. Malott