

# Sustaining Memories

TULSA CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY



Left to right: Mary Elizabeth Babcock, Dottie Davis, and Tita Linehan brush up on their tea room skills.

## of the Tea Room

Try to remember the times of September

The year the Tea Room opened in  
nineteen twenty four.

Try to remember the times of September

When our backs didn't ache and our  
feet weren't sore.

Try to remember the times of September

When waiting tables was hard but  
was never a bore.

Try to remember the times of September

Of cinnamon buns, salads, and style  
shows of splendor.

Deep in December it's nice to remember

The pink pinafores and frilly aprons  
we wore.

Deep in December it's nice to remember

The treasures of friendship and girl  
gossip galore.

Deep in December it's nice to remember

The joys of September we all know  
of yore.

So try to remember and if you remember

Enjoy these funny memories of Tea  
Room lore.

Hark back to a day in 1942, when the Junior League Tea Room was resplendent with flowers, logs crackling in the living room fireplace, awaiting the arrival of important out-of-town guests to sip sherry before proceeding to the dining room and a special luncheon table. Two of our best waitresses had been assigned to the table — their uniforms immaculate, their aprons stiff with starch. Lo and behold, as luncheon was being served, a sheriff from the Mayor's office appeared and served divorce papers on his Junior League waitress wife. After much sobbing, hysterics, and substitutions, business continued as usual.

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As "mickey-mouse" as waiting  
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fringe benefits.

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In the olden days, we often used our waitress working time to sell our horse show tickets, Town Hall memberships and raffle tickets, and attempted to finish our Community Fund donation cards. However, one Junior League meeting day, our illustrious president announced "From this day forward, no waitress shall 'solicit business' in the tea room." Well really!

The big days at the Tea Room were the Wednesdays we had fashion shows. These show days required twenty waitresses, four kitchen helpers, ten models, two cashiers,



two hostesses, and one piano player. On these days the fire department or the board of health could and should have closed the Tea Room. The stairways were completely blocked between the noon and one o'clock luncheons by the arriving and departing guests. Between shows the girls working in both kitchens briefly sloshed the dishes in soapy water and dried them with dingy towels to be used again for the one o'clock sitting. Being a cashier and working in the kitchen were two cushy jobs and were reserved for the gals with bad backs or an enceinte condition. At the end of three hours' work for everyone scheduled, we were all rewarded with a divine luncheon costing the huge sum of thirty cents and six mills.

Reflect on the year 1945, when two entire meetings were spent discussing and deciding on whether to have organdy or dotted swiss aprons. God alone knows where we could

have found enough discussion material about the materials in question. Suffice it to say that organdy won! We did, however, take ten minutes out to allocate twenty-five thousand dollars for an addition to the Children's Hospital.

*The big days at the Tea Room were the Wednesdays we had fashion shows.*

Recollect the year when AJLA demanded that all tea rooms should be abandoned (wouldn't you know that Texas resisted) and our Tulsa president returned from conference to inform us that we were not meeting the minimum standards of AJLA. That momentous meeting was called to order and it was a bitter time and many things were said that should have been left unsaid. One funny statement we both remember — "My father did not send me to Miss

Finch's to learn the art of waiting tables and slinging hash." When the vote was taken, the Tulsa Junior League followed the wishes of AJLA, and rented the building to Adams and Leonard. It was the end of The Tea Room and the end of an era.

As "mickey-mouse" as waiting tables was, there were fringe benefits. It was a time of good communication and lasting friendships. We may have griped a little, we may have gold-bricked a little — we may have been social butterflies and a bit of fluff at times, but we always knew that most of the leg work in all civic enterprises was done by women. We always knew we had done our share in building a wonderful children's hospital and providing love and care for the crippled and handicapped child. We also knew that we had provided a meeting and eating place for this beautiful and caring Tulsa community.



*Pauline Walter (Mrs. F. P.) appeared in this 1926 ad from the tea room.*