

Po-Po is not just your ordinary restaurant. It has a unique history with a cast of unique characters and circumstances, a matchless plate collection, as well as some of the best food in the Texas Hill Country. It is located six miles North of Boerne about 1/2 mile off I-10 at the Welfare exit #533. If you have ever been there, you will never forget the good food and nostalgic experience.

The structure was first built as a dance hall in 1929 by a rancher and dairyman, Edwin Nelson. There were just gravel roads in the area then. First he built a gas station and then the dance hall. Nelson City was put on the map at that time and still is on the Texas Highway map, although there is no post office now. Edwin's son, Harold, said he was twelve years old at the time and his job was to cook hamburgers at 5¢ apiece. Soda pop was also 5¢. Another interesting thing was that it was during prohibition so no alcoholic beverages were allowed inside the dance hall. That didn't seem to be a problem however outside the building because bootleggers peddled moonshine for 25¢ a shot. You could buy larger sizes of moonshine up to \$3.00 a gallon.

This is also a story of the times of the Great Depression. At the Nelson Dance Hall they started out with a bang with a dance every two weeks. The orchestra, when there was one, played from 8:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. and was paid \$25.00. Sometimes there was just old-time music with a violin and guitar and the two were paid a total of \$5.00 to play. Admission started out at 25¢ each but as the depression became worse, the price dropped to a dime and then finally just the passing of a hat. People didn't have the money to buy gasoline to get there and the dance hall failed.

Just ask Alvin Sueltenfuss or Hilmar Bergmann about those days. They will tell you all about it because they were there at Po-Po.

Po-Po was sold in 1932 to Edwin "Ned" Houston, a very colorful rancher across the road, who is well known for his large export operation of cattle, mules and other animals to Latin America. His children,

Rena and "Fritz," have said that he sold to Pancho Villa in Mexico, Batista in Cuba, Trujillo in the Dominican Republic and Somoza in Nicaragua.

Ned Houston started a restaurant in what used to be the Nelson Dance Hall and named it Po-Po Cafe. The name is generally accepted as coming from Popocatepetl, the great Mexican volcano. This was well known to him in his Mexican ventures and it is said that he wanted a short, punchy name.

Houston sold Po-Po to Willie Reinhard in 1934. It changed hands several times and had some hard times until it was sold to Luther and Marie Burgon in 1950. This is the time that the great restaurant days of Po-Po began when it became a family restaurant.

They began operating Po-Po, developing the reputation of its being one of the finest restaurants in the area. It was the place to go for the well-known families in San Antonio and residents of the Hill Country alike.

Luther and Marie travelled one month a year and were not satisfied with photos as a reminder of their many travels. They then began collecting plates which now adorn the walls of the two large rooms of Po-Po. They now number about 2,100 on display, many of which were donated and each with a special story behind it for you to see and enjoy. The Burgons kept Po-Po as a family restaurant until 1981.

In 1983 it was sold to Jerry and Jenny Tilley and son, David, and was opened as a fully operating family restaurant. With the addition of a sound stage, covered dance area, outdoor patio area and a complete kitchen, Po-Po is capable of serving up to 200 people outdoors for private parties. As of June, 2004, the restaurant was sold to Sam Bournias; with the hope and desire to continue this Texas Tradition for another 75 years.

Whatever your family, party or corporate entertainment needs — Po-Po is here to serve you.



"A Texas tradition since 1929. . .
as you remember it."

Po-Po Family Restaurant

829 FM 289

Boerne, Texas 78006

(830) 537-4194

www.popofamilyrestaurant.com

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