



Walker Field Built For Class

The old Walker Field Airport Terminal, built in 1949, had that 1940s classic feel to it.

If you can remember when you wore dressy clothes to ride an airplane, you know what I am talking about. Men wore suits and ties. Women were in dresses or suits, high heels, hats and gloves. Little girls dressed up with their hats, gloves, frilly dresses, Mary Jane shoes and anklets trimmed with lace. Little boys were mini-images of their dads.

All of them, waiting to board planes to fly off to exciting places, lent a festive aura to the airlines waiting room.

To board, you walked from the terminal out to the plane. However, in the late 1940s, not all the runway area was paved. Mary Louise Giblin Henderson, former Daily Sentinel reporter, told me about one of her experiences in 1947 or 1948, when she and a friend were boarding a Frontier plane after a heavy rain. Frontier's boarding area was quite far out on the field, and passengers had to walk a considerable distance. ML had on a brand new pair of bright green leather pumps, there was no paving where they boarded, and she stepped into a puddle of mud, completely covering one shoe. She did get apologies from the plane crew, but they offered nothing about replacing the shoes or even getting them cleaned.

Today you still have to walk out to board some planes, but you don't have to watch for the mud puddles.

There was no baggage area, so when you deplaned you just walked over to the cart where the baggage handlers had loaded your luggage, found your bag and walked into the terminal.

The old terminal also had something else that was part of that special feeling--The Aeroplane restaurant.

This restaurant could have been a Hollywood movie set. The tables were arranged so that all seats faced the windows on the north and east sides that looked out onto the runway.

A long time friend, Doralyn Brodak Genova , said that she and her sister, Henrietta Brodak Connor, would get dressed up and go to lunch there as many times as possible. The two soon became friends with Dick Pond, owner of the restaurant, and he would save their favorite table on the east side of the room for them.

Their special time of year was winter, when passengers from all over the nation would land at Grand Junction before switching planes to continue to Aspen for skiing and other winter sports.

Doralyn said that she and Henrietta were quite sure at that time that they saw every movie star who flew into Grand Junction and made that plane change.

Dick Pond owned and operated the popular and successful Aeroplane Restaurant until the old terminal was closed and the new one opened. The city would not renew a contract with him for a restaurant in the new terminal, and it ceased operation. Pond also catered the food for the airlines, back in the nearly-forgotten days when ordinary passengers were served meals during a flight.

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