

Map to T or C

**ALBUQUERQUE**  
NEW MEXICO

I-25



**TRUTH OR  
CONSEQUENCES**  
NEW MEXICO

**EL PASO**  
TEXAS

THE LITTLE GIRL WHO GREW UP  
IN THE TOWN WITH  
THE BIG  
NAME



Short stories of growing up in  
Truth or Consequences, New Mexico  
United States of America  
during the 1960's and 70's

By Susan Brandt

BOOK I

One former employee of the smoke shop said when they worked their for his older sister, they go down into the basement. (Note: you had to lift the door off the shop floor and climb down these rickety steps). He brags about how they and other employees (during World War II) would smoke a cigarette while down there.

When shop owners in the building in the 2019, discovered the cigarettes butts they were relieved to know of the origin. There was a small thought of ghosts at the time.

Between the two shops, there was an lady's boutique/closing shop. Clea sold custom bras. Her marketing motto at the time was "Sometimes all a girl needs is the support of a good bra."

Oh, almost forgot about campho-phenique! I was in the dentist with my mom. Dr. Rodgers was the doctor. She went to him. He was a really tall man, big shoulders and big hands. He tended to mom's tooth ache that day. Then said he had something he wanted her to put on it for the next few days. When he came back it handed mom a small brown bottle. From a larger bottle applied some to her. She wrinkled her nose and said, "Doc, this smells just like campho-phenique?"

"Someone had to invent it," he said. He said he was out of med school and didn't have the money to promote it or package it the way it needed, so he sold the patent. "If I would of known what it was going to do, I would of found a way to come with the money." He shook his head, chuckling, walking out and telling mom how much she owed for the day's visit and to pay the receptionist.

Speaking of jobs, you see the commercial about where was your first job. Well, around here it's was either the drive in or the locally

owned grocery store. The drive-in downtown, was called Ray's Drive In for what seems like centuries. It's now A and B Drive In and the tradition continues.



The grocery store, Bullocks, is still a great place for your first jobs. It is not uncommon to put some in the store who will you when they got their first job and what it was Bullocks. How long they worked their and all the jobs they had done while employed their.

Since I mentioned about jobs, it makes me think bout the author of Peyton Place. Grace Metalious had lived in T or C for some time and two years after she left, the book came out. The old-timers would sit around the coffee shops and compare notes on character. It was a very serious task for them to match characters up to local residents that they know.



There are stories how the pilots from El Paso who would fly up the Rio Grande practicing bomb runs on Elephant Butte Dam.

In Tom Cruise fashion, they'd flip around and come up the down town area, breaking the sound barrier and cracking a few windows. Yes, merchants had called the pilot's commanding officer.

Then back on the corner of Foch and Main, there is a glass window store. As far as I know, there was a smoke shop, twice a dress shop, a tailor, a print shop and that just scratches the surface of businesses there.

# THE LITTLE GIRL WHO GREW UP IN THE TOWN WITH THE BIG NAME



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BOOK I



These people and their willingness to believe in magic still exists in the world have contributed in some way in making this books and other books on our website possible.

**Elroy Germishuys**

SOUTH AFRICA

**Susan Brandt**

UNITED STATES

**Carol Anton**

UNITED STATES

**Anis Akermi**

ITALY

**Ruth Shannon**

UNITED STATES

**Robert P Avila**

UNITED STATES

**Daniel Bothma**

SOUTH AFRICA

The "real" Ruth is an absolutely wonderful retired elementary school teacher. She is not party to these stories other than I talked her into letting me use her wonderful caring personality to tie the stories I had collected together.

The world needs a lot more "Ruths" in it.

Her list of good qualities is longer than most people's arms - won't even try to list them. If you have ever been lucky in meeting her, you will go away a happier, better person.

Thank you, Ruth, for saying yes. I'm glad we're been friends all these years.

- Susan Brandt

Another Adoquin Roca book. Published in December 2023

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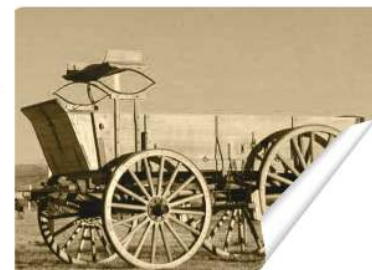
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canned: eggs, chicken, pork, beef, fruit and vegetables galore. Some of the canned items were dated back 20 years.

There was another way people got exercise over the years. It was dancing at all the dance halls in the area. Doctors told many of their patients to go out dancing and get rid of their crutches and canes. So they did. I think some of the names that came to town over the years included: Porter Wagoner, Hank Williams, Ferlin Husky, Dan Seals, Buck Owens, and that only scratches the surface. It was easy to get big names to shop here, I m told, we were a great place to play between appearing in the big cities.

Do you know the train would bring supplies to the station at Engle. Buckboards would be loaded up and the supplies to the Elephant Butte dam construction area, T or C, Cuchillo, Winston, Hillsboro and Kingston.



In the late 1950's the new math teacher came to town from back east, via train to Engle and then on to town "riding on the back of a buckboard". The teacher would often fill the air with his tales as he came into town from Illinois. Road train to railroad station and then got on a back of a buck board and road into town. Here he met his true love and the love story began.

On a sadder note, there were individuals who lost their lives in the construction of the Elephant Butte Dam. Some would still be in the huge cells working and didn't get out before the cement came tumbling down. Because it was during the depression, long lines of people would stand at the base of the dam, waiting for someone to get hurt or killed, so they could have their job.





It was always so much fun. Dad would pick his spot. Then he'd have us climb up in the next chair. He'd open the right drawer, pull out of an apple and give it to me. Then he'd give dad a shine you could see your face in. Then he'd tell me to put my shoes up in the horn and he'd give them a pretend shine. It was so great.



I heard after I got of high school, that the Martin Luther King's Freedom Bus come through T or C. It was hard not to, the major highway ran through town in those days.

The story I heard was the buss pulled up across the street. As they walked across, Grayson, Arnold and another man stood n the entrance the entrance. As the three men from the bus got to the door. Grayson told them they wouldn't served there, and to turn around and get back on the bus.

The leader said "What you're one of us? Or have they white wash you."

The two white men just stood there. Grayson was still at the front, "We don't have any problems here, and we don't need any. So you can just get your black ass back on that bus and keep on going. Cuz the road that brought you in will take you out." Shocked at this attitude, backed by Grayson's large broad shoulders, the three men signaled the others and they all got on the bus and left.

Up the street was this really big two story building. It holds endless stories of the wondrous work of Magnolia Ellis.



You can read lots about her if you go to any search engine.

What folks may not know is that long after she passed away. New owners of the building found rooms and closets, packed with canned goods. Not like you get at the store. These were home



I didn't really grow up in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico.

My family lived on a ranch outside of town. We would come in for groceries, feed, doctor appointments you know the kind of stuff.

Unlike the kids in town, we only went to the store once a week, so lots of times we'd have to wait on stuff. While they could get it right away. Sometimes

I don't think city kids understand at all.

I tell you this because it explains why my stories are what momma would call gossip. I'd hear these tidbits as I traveled about with my folks. There had to be some truth to them to get started, wouldn't you think.

On Main Street there was a big department store, Barnes Department Store. It was two stories with a big



basement. The front of the basement is where they sold shoes. Most adult clothes were on the main floor and on the second floor were the "delicates", as mom called them, and also kid's clothes.

It is said, that you could set your watch by Mr. Barnes. Eight o'clock every morning, he would go out front and sweep the sidewalk. Rain. Shine. Wind. He was out there with his broom sweeping.

One day, the local district judge came downtown to buy a new tie on his lunch break at the court that day. Mr. Barnes had a huge circle-rack of ties. For almost an hour, Mr. Barnes would hand the judge a tie and then the judge would tie it in his special way, put it on, and say "No. This just doesn't go with my suit, Joe."

Then Mr. Barnes would hand the judge another tie.



"Joe, I got to go back to court. I'll come back and try another time, when I'm in town," finally, said the judge.

"Wait one minute! I got one back over here."

"Okay," said the judge.

Mr. Barnes reached around untied the tie and handed it to the judge. He tied it. Looked at it. "Joe this is perfect! You held the best back for the last!" He paid for the tie and walked out a satisfied customer - all smiles in the same tie he walked in with,

Mr. Barnes put the money in the cash register chucking as he did it. That could be when the gang across at the Rexall Drug Store started referring him as "Mr. Money Bags." Which brings about the day many months later when Mr. Barnes discovered his nickname.

My friend Lizzie had seen this pretty dress in the big front window of the store. Mostly we wore jeans and tops, but every time Lizzie came to town for months, she would eye that dress - hoping it was still there. If I remember it was about 1972, and the dress was \$25. Lizzie did every chore she could think of. Finally she had the money. She came to town with her dad. At 12, she was so proud to buy the dress on her own. She headed to Barnes and her dad headed across the street to the drug store.

Lizzie went in. Pointed the dress out to Mr. Barnes and told him how she had worked to save the money. He carefully went into behind the big show glass and very carefully got it off the mannequin and wrapped it in tissue before placing it in the big bag. "\$25.94" Mr. Barnes said.

Stuttering, "The sign said \$25, Mr. Money Bags,"

"What did you call me?"

"Mr. Money Bags. That's what daddy and his friends at the Rexall always call you," she blurted out in all innocence.

"Dear, you are right. Where is your daddy right now?"

Lizzie pointed, "Oh, across the street at the drug store waiting."

"Okay dear, you take the dress and go on over and join your daddy." Said the lean, but not skinny man. Lizzie gladly obeyed.



She went to the counter and sat where her father had told her. The big counter formed the south side of the store. It was such a treat to go there. So many choices. All right there before you - huge sundaes and banana splits made just the way you wanted them.

After she had situated herself on the stool, her father asked, "Lizzie, what did you call the gentleman across the street?" Lizzie told him. He just smiled, turning and headed across the street, thinking "out of the mouth of babes".

Changing the subject a bit, I did learn years later, during the days of prohibition, there was a door that went below the pharmacy to a rather nice "speak easy". No tales have I ever heard. It just the fact it existed.

There were three pharmacies back then. One of those pharmacies was run by, Skinny Davis and Cliff Fleck. Not too



exciting, except the next block over and down 2/3 of a block there was a doctor, Dr. Malone. Each morning the doctor and Mr. Fleck would chat and come up with a story of the day. The doctor would tell the first patient the story and then the pharmacist would wait to see how long it took and how different it was when he got it.

As you walked down the block, half way between the two was a bar called Arnold's Bar. Dad would only take me in there when he needed to get his "Sunday-best-boots" shined. The "shoe shine man" was one of three black people in the town when we were growing up. He manned the shoeshine stand. Plus he ran errands for the elderly and shut-ins, I was told.