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A RECENT SURVEY SHOWS ABOUT 150 EATING PLACES IN FRISCO TODAY. A mind-boggling fact for some of us, but of all those places, have you ever dined in the trolley? Some of you will remember eating at Stark's Corner Trolley, a popular family restaurant here in the 1950s and 60s. Did you know you could still eat there— if you can find it? Stay with me and I'll tell you where it's hidden.

More later about the impact Shorty and Georgia Stark had on Frisco's food service business, but first, let's take a backward glance at how our city's restaurant business has changed over the years. Having more than two or three cafes or hamburger joints here at any one time seems unreal to us old timers. Dorothy Keeran recalls, "A little town like this didn't need many eating places, 'cause nobody had any money."

Soon after Frisco's birth in 1902, businesses began to move here from nearby Lebanon and Little Elm. One of the first to come was Sapp's Café known for years as the place to get a great steak lunch for a quarter. Then, in those early days, there was always a boarding house style hotel where transients could get a good family style meal. As the town grew, Charlie Triplett opened his café to give Sapp's some competition. His specialty was a bowl of mouth-watering chili for only a dime. By the way, the devastating fire of 1922 started in Triplett's Café.

Time saw many eating places come and go. The key to survival was innovation and good food. For example, when our school had no lunch room, the children brought their lunch or walked to town to get a hamburger and Coke for ten cents at

McTees. Seeing a need, Mrs. Hayes started bringing a pressure cooker full of hamburgers from her café to school at lunchtime. She sold them to the kids six for a quarter. It helped keep her in business.

Even good "eateries" have their critics. One of our pioneer business men tells of the time when a stranger in a big, shiny car skidded to a halt near the local "spit and whittle club," a group of older men gathered on the downtown sidewalk. The driver stuck his head out of the car's window and demanded, "Where can I get something to eat in this town?" Without even glancing up, one of the men said, nodding first to the right, then to the left, "There's one café at this end of town and one at that end. If you eat at one you'll wish you'd ate at the other!" The stranger promptly headed for the next town.

Most small towns have a favorite coffee shop — a place where the locals gather once or twice daily to share the news. Frisco has always had and still has its share of such places. Some

that come to mind are the Royal, Hermenia's, the Dairy Queen, Henry's, Johnny Mart, The Depot and Stark's Café.

But dining in Frisco has changed. Our choice of eating places now is almost unlimited. For many years practically all businesses were located on Main Street, which today continues to attract some of our best restaurants. Then, in 1993, Mariano Martinez built the La Hacienda Ranch restaurant "in the middle of nowhere" on Preston Road. That same year, our first-ever "Golden Arches" — McDonalds — opened, and Frisco felt it had become a city. Soon Burger King came, and the floodgates of eating places were open.



The "Hidden" Trolley

photo by Chris Johnson

the case of the hidden trolley

by bob warren

But, back to the story of Shorty and Georgia Stark, a well-liked couple, both now deceased, who with daughter Gloria were in the restaurant business here for about thirty years. Ask old timers about the Stark's food, and you will hear, "Shorty's hamburgers and Georgia's pies were the very best!" In 1955, after having been in business in downtown Frisco for years, they bought an old trolley car in Lake Dallas, moved it to the corner of Preston and Main and called it "The Corner Trolley". It soon became a popular eating place for all three meals – and was a gathering place for the "pie and coffee crowd." Not only was the food delicious, but also Georgia kept the customers entertained. It is said, "No one ever made anything off Georgia, but believe me they tried." One of her daughters, Gaynelle Fox, recalls the time when a regular customer jokingly insulted Georgia by leaving her a penny tip. The next morning the customer came in for his usual breakfast and found the penny cooked in the top of his pancake. The crowd had a good laugh, and went back to their coffee, waiting for the next episode.

Today, the place that started as the Corner Trolley and became the Stark Café is, after many additions and changes, Randy White's BBQ. As you enter Randy's, look to the left and you will find the "hidden trolley". When you get your food, take it in the trolley dining room and find a comfortable seat. Close your eyes and pretend you're eating one of



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Shorty's hamburgers followed by a big slice of Gloria's meringue-topped chocolate pie. Perhaps your little fantasy will make the good food taste even better, 'cause that's the way it was in Frisco's early days.

