

McLean County Museum of History

Susie's Cafe Collection

Processed by
Cala Laible
Spring 2025

Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1970-1990's
RESTRICTIONS:	None
PROVENANCE:	Gift from Marcey Buford (granddaughter) of Elizabeth "Susie" Swearingen
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	Past Perfect #2025.0131

Brief History

The Susie in Susie's Cafe was Elizabeth "Susie" Swearingen. The cafe was first located at 108 E. Front St. in downtown Bloomington under the name The Happy Inn Cafe. In 1980, the restaurant relocated to 602 N. Main St. (still in downtown Bloomington). Built to seat about 50 customers, the "new" Susie's Cafe was expanded in 1988 to bring the total number of seats to 97. The cafe closed in the summer of 1997 after Susie's passing.

Scope

The collection includes menus, pictures, drawings and blueprints of building layouts, marketing materials, etc. related to the Susie's Cafe business.

Box and Folder Inventory

Folder 1: General

- 1.1 Donation agreement from donor (Marcey Buford) granddaughter of Elizabeth "Susie" King Swearingen.
- 1.2 Obituary, *Pantagraph*, Elizabeth Swearingen, March 20, 1997.
- 1.3 Email between Bill Kemp (museum librarian) and Marcey Buford (granddaughter of Elizabeth "Susie" King regarding materials donated.

Folder 2: Drawings / Blueprints

- 2.1 Main floor plan, August 26, 1988, ¼" = 1 foot.
- 2.2 Floor plan and mechanical drawings by Young Architects, March 7, 1980. 2 copies. (See also Young Architects Collection)
- 2.3 Electrical plans drawing (copy), undated.
- 2.4 Main floor plan, August 26, 1988, ¼" = 1 foot with notes (2 copies).
- 2.5 Main floor plan, August 26, 1988, ¼" = 1 foot with handwritten Laskowski plumbing mechanical placement notes.
- 2.6 Main floor Lentil Diagram, hand drawn in pencil, undated.

Folder 3: Wollrab Lease Documents

- 3.1 5-year lease – First floor and basement, 602 N. Main, Bloomington, Illinois, May 1, 1980.
- 3.2 5-year lease – First floor and basement, 602 & 604 N. Main, Bloomington, Illinois, October 1, 1988.
- 3.3 5-year lease – First floor and basement, 602 & 604 N. Main, Bloomington, Illinois, October 1, 1988 includes attached communications between Fred Wollrab and Elizabeth King concerning renovations.
- 3.4 Memo to Fred Wollrab from Elizabeth King concerning lease expiration, August 31, 1993

- 3.5 1-year lease – First floor and basement of 602 & 604 N. Main, Bloomington, Illinois, October 1, 1993.

Folder 4: Miscellaneous Personal and Business Finance Documents – Elizabeth King

- 4.1 (Personal) 1988 Mortgage Agreement between Elizabeth W. King and Marine Bank, unsigned.
- 4.2 Estimated projection of 2 years' (88/89) receipts, expenses, and profits, penciled draft.
- 4.3 Estimated construction costs – pencil draft.
- 4.4 Estimated projection of 2 years' (88/89) receipts, expenses, and profits – final (2) copies, 1 with estimated construction costs attached.
- 4.5 Application for Commercial Loan with Marine Bank for \$20,000 renovation/expansion.
- 4.6 (Personal) Adjustable-Rate Note, Marine State Bank, \$20,000, October 14, 1988.
- 4.7 (Personal) Adjustable-Rate Rider, Marine State Bank, 11.5%, October 14, 1988.
- 4.8 Reconciliation memo from Marine State Bank regarding Loan proceeds/charges, October 14, 1988.
- 4.9 Cashier's checks from Marine State Bank for charges (copies).
- 4.10 (Personal) Industrial Valley Title Insurance Report Schedule B 308-310 S. Clinton and 1014 E. Grove, Bloomington, Illinois October 14, 1988.
- 4.11 (Personal) IVT Title Insurance Report Schedule A & B 308-310 S. Clinton, Bloomington, Illinois.
- 4.12 Chicago Title Insurance 1014 E. Grove, Bloomington, Illinois, October 4, 1988.
- 4.13 Actual 2 Years' (88/89) receipts, expenses, and profits, June 1, 1990 (handwritten).
- 4.14 Letter to Mayor/Bloomington City Council opposing the sale of public parking lot south of Grand Café, signed by 15 other downtown business owners, July 24, 1980.

Folder 5: Newspaper Articles

- 5.1 Underground Gourmet Review, *The Pantagraph*, undated.
- 5.2 Underground Gourmet Review, *The Pantagraph*, Feb 17, 1989. (2 copies)
- 5.3 "If You Knew Susie..." by Pamela Lewis, *The Pantagraph*, March 5, 1989. (3 copies)
- 5.4 "Susie – A Bloomington Original" by Mike Matejka, *Union News*, May 1997. (2 copies)
- 5.5 "Razing Victims Must Look for New Homes" by Dave Haake, *The Pantagraph*, Feb 16, 1980.
- 5.6 "Susie's Serves up Charm in Jazz Setting" by Patty Poremba, *The Daily Vidette*, Feb 2, 1990.
- 5.7 Mention of Elizabeth King in *The Pantagraph* regarding a potential break in at Susie's Café, *The Pantagraph*, July 27, 1975.
- 5.8 Lloyd Schwartz Sr. death notice, May 16, 1979.

Folder 6: Miscellaneous

- 6.1 McLean County Food Permit, 1993-1995.
- 6.2 Marketing Calendar, Happy Inn Café, 108 ½ E. Front Street, 1970.
- 6.3 Seat Yourself sign from Susie's Café
- 6.4 40th Anniversary Laminated Menus (3 copies).

Folder 7: Photographs

- 7.1 Group behind the bar, Sept. 1999.

- 7.2 3 black and white photographs taken inside Susie's Café, March 1980's.
- 7.3 3 color photographs taken inside the restaurant of tables, unated.
- 7.4 Closeup of lunch plate, undated.
- 7.5 Susie King next to her car, May 1963.
- 7.6 Back bar at Susie's, 1991.
- 7.7 4 Exterior photos of N. Main Susie's Location, undated.
- 7.8 2 bar photos, undated.
- 7.9 6 color photos of interior tables and bar area, undated.
- 7.10 Black and white photo of family and dog. Undated and no names.
- 7.11 3 color photos of individuals alongside Susie King, undated.
- 7.12 3 color photos with unnamed individuals inside Susie's Café.

Folder 8: State Farm Marketing

- 8.1 Correspondence from State Farm Creative Services regarding participation in the production of the "No Fault" video, November 22, 1996.
- 8.2 Mock menu from State Farm Art Department given as memento.
- 8.3 State Farm Insurance Videotape – Public Affairs Department – "Auto Insurance Reform – What's In It For You?", November 1996.