



Traveling through Solomon the other day my husband and I drove by the site of "Shorty's Café." Located on the east side of Bowie Avenue just across from the old bank building, is a slab of cement surrounded by weeds. Here was where the Café was open and thriving in the 30's,40's and 50's. Owned and operated by Cosme (aka Shorty) and his wife, Mary Enriques, this café offered some of the very best Spanish food in the Gila Valley and surrounding communities. People would travel from Globe, Morenci and further afield to eat at Shorty's in Solomonville as it was called then. The food was made fresh each day from "scratch" as one would say.

If my memory serves me correctly, I believe the building was a light pink. It was a small square type structure with a very small high window in the front by the side of the front door. In that window was an interesting item to say the least. Mary had had a pet dog that was crippled. She loved that dog, and when the dog died, she had it stuffed and put on display in the front window of the café. Granted it was a strange item to have on display in the window of a café, but the dog seemed to beckon us to come in.

In the back of the restaurant was a large room with about 10 booths. At the end of the aisle was a jukebox where we could play tunes that were currently popular on the Hit Parade. One would put a nickel in the jukebox and hear a 45 record play. At this moment in my mind reverberates the tune of Tennessee Ernie Ford singing about coal mining: "16 ton, and what do you get; another day older and deeper in debt. St. Peter, don't you call me cause I can't go; I owe my soul to the company store."

I found this old photo in a 1955 E A annual, *The Oasis*. Here you see Shorty stopping to visit and tell one of his stories. He enjoyed the young people; however, we

seldom saw Mary. She stayed in the kitchen making that delicious food.



Shorty sharing his good stories while we wait for the food

The day we drove through the town, we stopped and talked to a man who resided in Solomon. We asked if he remembered Shorty's Café. Much to our surprise, **Sylvestre Rivera** not only remembered the café, but told us a few interesting things. His mother, Carmen Rivera, had been the head cook at the café for several years! Darn, I forgot to ask him if he had any recipes to share. I thought I might have a recipe so I went searching through some of my loose recipes and did find Shorty's Enchilada Sauce which I will include at the end of this article.

Sylvestre said Shorty had been into healthy living habits for a long time, pumping iron and attempting to stay fit. Shorty always made the comment he was going to outlive his wife, and have a good time with the retirement money. However, when Sylvestre came home on leave from the military one time, he learned that Shorty had passed away leaving Mary to run the café.

When you went to Shorty's you waited at least 45 minutes to get the food. This is hard to imagine in this day where we want our food in less than five minutes! Never mind, though; the food was well worth waiting for, every time.

The high school and college crowds would come to Shorty's and bring a game to play or a deck of cards to pass the time. Occasionally one would hear a contest in the next booth of who could drink the most "hot sauce" before asking for water and not get sick.

A friend of mine who had played football for E A in the 50's said that for an initiation to see how tough the new football recruits from the East were, they would take them to Shorty's and treat them to Shorty's "hottest" food. If

they could tolerate that, they ought to be able to handle the football line. Some of them were quick to yell "foul!" It seemed that their delicate stomach linings could not take the fire power from the hot sauce!

Below is a picture of some Safford High coeds in one of the booths at Shorty's patiently waiting for the food. Standing l to r: Kay Phillips (deceased), Nancy Nuttall and Sue Dette Crandall. Sitting l to r: Jennie Lou Olsen, Judith Layton and Edna Rae Clawson. Photo taken in 1955.



If the readers have any other interesting items about Shorty's, please share it with us.

The writer extends special thanks to **Sylvestre Rivera of Solomon** for his information.

Submitted by Sue Dette Crandall Reed

Shorty's Enchilada Sauce (A Big Serving, however)

12 C water	1/4 C white vinegar
3/4 C Veg.oil	1 11 Oz Carton of Baca's frozen Red chili, thawed
1 T Salt	1 1/3 C Flour

Instructions: 1. In a large roaster place 6 C water, oil, vinegar and salt. 2. While that is heating, blend thawed chili and 2 C of water in blender for 2 minutes. Add blender contents to liquid in roaster and turn heat down to medium high. (No need to rinse blender)3. Blend 4 C water and flour until smooth (about 1 minute). Once it is smooth, add to liquid in roaster. Turn down the heat (cover the pot to prevent a thick top layer from forming). Simmer about 30 minutes stirring occasionally.

Now we just need someone to adjust this recipe to a smaller portion. Most of us probably won't need that large amount, especially when we are empty nesters.