

Tales of the Wasatch presented by the Big Cottonwood Canyon Historical Society



The Old Brighton Village Store

The Brighton Store was originally built in 1870 by homesteaders William and Catherine Bow Brighton. It replaced a building dating back to 1857 that was used by the Pioneers who traveled up the canyon to celebrate their 10th anniversary in Zion.

The Brightons added a hotel in 1871, and the area quickly became known as Brighton's Camp. When the Brighton Camp era ended, the store was sold in a Sheriff's sale just before World War I. It went through a couple of owners before being bought in the mid-1950s by Ray Watrous. He was a friendly man who enjoyed cabin owners and visitors alike. He served food, sold groceries, fishing

tackle, candy, and camping and hiking gear. People were drawn to Ray as he told tall tales about fishing the lakes and streams in Brighton. He had a "digger" game in the corner where kids spent many a quarter digging for candy and toys. Ray retired in 1974 and the store was purchased by Don Despain in 1976.

Don was the first owner to keep the store open year-round. He and a small staff served breakfast and lunches including hamburgers, fries, sandwiches, homemade soups, salads, a great burrito, and of course, the famous carrot cake (see recipe below). Visitors could also buy gasoline, skiing and fishing supplies, t-shirts, groceries, and all kinds of trinkets. In winter and summer, people stopped by the store to grab a bite and hash the canyon news.

Jolene and Don married in 1979 and worked together at the store for the next 15 years, most of it with 3 kids (Dallas, Chelsea, and Whitney) in tow. In the fall of 1980, Don had an idea to add a fine dining restaurant in the upstairs of the store. Dinner was served Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at the "Blind Miner Restaurant." The menu changed weekly, serving soup, salad, appetizer, and entrée for the price of \$12.50. Jolene waited the tables and made desserts while Chef Don cooked dishes such as Filet Mignon with wild mushroom Madeira sauce, silver bass with Pernod Sabayon, fresh trout quiche, and other interesting market fresh dishes. A favorite of restaurant patrons was the Pumpkin Shrimp Soup...baked in the pumpkin and brought to the table "en gourde".

The Brighton Store was sold to Boyne Company (Brighton Ski Resort) in 1993. The hundred-year-old structure had to be razed in 1995 because the logs had rotted out and couldn't be saved. The store was moved to the building that Ray Watrous named the Bowery. Long-time resident Rod Morris lamented, "The old store was relegated only to memories of the countless hours spent by generations at this familiar Brighton meeting place; front porch rides on the mechanical bucking horse, soft ice cream, trips to the only phone in Brighton, the diggers, juke box and pinball machines and Ray Watrous' famous Brighton Burger of which he claimed, *"Seven days without a Brighton Burger will make one weak."*

Brighton Village Store Carrot Cake

- 4 eggs
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup oil
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 cup white flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 cups grated carrots
- ½ cup raisins
- ½ cup nuts (walnuts or pecans)

Blend eggs and sugar until smooth. Blend in oil gradually. Add half of flour and other dry ingredients. Blend well. Add remaining flour, raisins, and grated carrots. Pour into greased, lightly floured baking pan. Bake at 350° for 1 hour 15 minutes until golden brown. Cool and frost with Cream Cheese Frosting.

Cream Cheese Frosting

- 2 packages (3 oz. each) cream cheese
- 1 egg white
- Dash salt
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon triple sec (or orange flavoring)

Blend and soften cream cheese with egg white and salt. Add powdered sugar until frosting is spreadable. Add vanilla and orange flavoring. Be sure there are no lumps.