

01. December 2023

City history

City history: The "Arab Café" on Karolingerstraße

Historical photo of the month December // Series of the Bocholt city archive

At the turn of the 20th century, a pub with the unusual name "Arab Café" was located diagonally opposite St Josef's rectory in Karolingerstraße. The Bocholt city archive's photo of the month for December is a reminder of this.

It was a time when the town of Bocholt expanded enormously in the course of industrialisation and the population grew to over 16,000. For example, the area around the Siekenhof alone developed into a small suburb with more than 90 families and almost 500 inhabitants at the end of the 1890s.

In the house with the old Feldmark number 322, the invalid Gerhard Bußmann was given permission to run a tavern in 1892. Four years later, Theodor Geuting from Spork took over the business, built a three-storey residential and public house and received the licence on 30 December 1896. In 1900, he rented the pub to Alois Wienen before Geuting took over the business himself again for five years in 1905.

The interior of the "Arab Café" was decorated in an oriental style in keeping with its name. To emphasise the exotic and orientalist appearance, the Arab Café made use of colonial-looking people to put them on public display for café visitors. One example of this was the coloured waiter "Henry" from Surabaya (Indonesia).

After a short period of business by the landlord Franz Dücking in 1910/11, the business representative Johann Brabender was granted the licence. Police inspector Korn stated at the time: *"There is a need for the continued existence of the pub, because the loss of this beautiful and prosperous pub has increased the frequency and importance of the neighbouring small and unsuitable pubs."*

However, the First World War with all its shortages and deprivations led to a decline in social life, so that the pub was no longer profitable. In September 1918, the last landlord Brabender had the entire inventory sold by an auctioneer and moved to Münster. In response to an enquiry from the municipal tax department, the police administration announced in the summer of 1920: *"The business (the Arabisches Kaffee pub) has been dormant since January 1918."* After the postman Bernhard Bauhaus acquired the property, the business licence expired.

Text: Wolfgang Tembrink / Bocholt town archive



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The photo of the month December