

Photo of the month - December 2023

The "Arab Café"



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In its monthly series, the Bocholt city archive is this time commemorating the "Arab Café" on Karolingerstraße with a historical photo.

At the turn of the 20th century, diagonally opposite St Josef's rectory in Karolingerstraße, there was a pub with the unusual name "Arab Café".

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 Sienhof 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.

Exceptional concept

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 publicly display them to café visitors. One example of this was the coloured waiter "Henry" from Surabaya (Indonesia).

After a brief 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.

The **photo of the month** is presented once a month by the Bocholt City Archive.

Photos and text information come from the holdings of the city archives. The contributions to the picture are written by the following employees of the city archives.

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The picture series was launched at the Bocholt Culture Day 2006 and showed the first photo with the "Meckermannin *Langenbergpark*" in October 2006.

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