

Tucson Gay LGBTQ Museum And Library



The Lil Brown Jug

(cocktail lounge-steak house restaurant)

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Text, Audio, And Photographic Format Exhibit



Lil Brown Jug Exhibit©

Audio Link To 1869 Song 'The Lil Brown Jug'

www.youtube.com/watch?v=07T7rREzYMc

The **Lil Brown Jug** (cocktail lounge-steakhouse-restaurant) 1956-1963 – was founded and owned by Dennis 'Denny' Smith. The establishment located on the then dusty dirt road at 431 E. Grant Road (well outside of the City of Tucson in Pima County, Arizona at that time) became both very popular as well as very profitable for the owner.

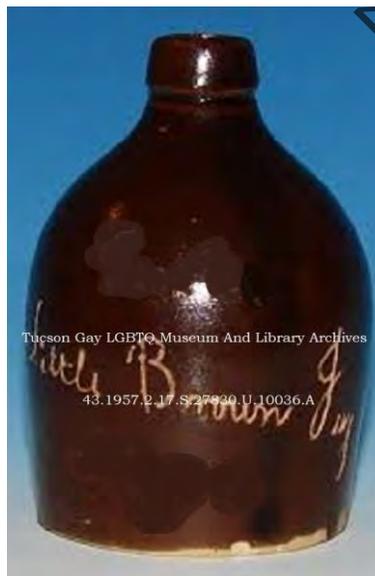
The operation 'officially opened' to the public and was open at 'certain hours freely' to *homosexuals as a combination cocktail lounge and steak house on the warm summer Tuesday afternoon of June 12, 1956 just north of Tucson in Pima County, Arizona.



1956 A Straight Cocktail Lounge And Steak House Afternoons And Evenings.
Then, A Swinging Gay Bar All Night Long.

At the same time, the Lil Brown Jug was vigorously being advertised in the 'underground *homosexual publications' all around the United States and drew also a nationwide *'homosexual tourism appeal' for a number of its early years as many from around the United States made their own *Homosexual Pilgrimage just to visit and experience the Lil brown Jug lounge.

For lounges *homosexual patrons there were many items available to them that were never offered to the 'straight public' including the lounges very popular and both famous and infamous refillable take home 'Lil Brown Jugs' filled with various requested liquors, live late night Drag and other 'family themed' entertainment shows, 'Beat Era' Poetry readings, along with *homosexual networking in finding local professional 'family friendly' services including legal, business, personal, and health care.



1957 Original 'Lil Brown Liquor Refillable Take Home Jug'
Sold Only To Its *Homosexual Customers After Midnight.
An Archived Exhibit Of The Tucson Gay LGBTQ Museum And Library

The Lil Brown Jug cocktail lounge and steak house's location outside of the Tucson City Limits and its early hours "camouflage/cover" operation as a 'straight' cocktail lounge and steak house allowed its late at night *homosexual patrons to be out with 'family' until the sun came up the next morning. Additionally, they avoided being harassed, arrested for being a *homosexual, and or physically assaulted by the Tucson Police Department of that time period from 1956 to 1963.



That outside of the City of Tucson location left the Lil Brown Jug basically alone by the Pima County Sherriff Department which had law enforcement jurisdiction in that area of Pima County. Statements from deputies of the time period generally included the words or meanings, *'There are just too many far more important things to do. Besides, that's where my father in-law and my mother in-law take the wife and me to have really great steak dinners on our wedding anniversaries. And, those drinks have to be the best I've ever had!'*

It was later at night after the straight adult crowd that had come to the Lil Brown Jug for some of the best cocktails and steaks available in the area had left that the lounges atmosphere quickly tilted very noticeably *homosexual.

At that time each night the front door was locked, and the *homosexual crowd then entered and exited very discretely through a side door under the cover of the darkness out in the Lil Brown Jugs rear dirt parking lot.

Young 1950's era upcoming Hollywood 'swinger' actors and actresses including Robert Wagner, Joanne Woodward, Virginia Leigh, and Jeffrey Hunter were known to frequent the establishment when they were in town.



1956 Inside The Lil Brown Jug Lounge And Steak House

On March 12, 1963 a new business competitor for the Lil Brown Jugs late night *homosexual patrons came on the local scene which opened as the **Corner Cocktail Lounge** with its then out of the way location, always welcomed *homosexual patrons hours, a huge interior, and along with its airy high ceilings atmosphere made the Corner Cocktail Lounge an instant hit taking many of the Lil Brown Jug bar's local 'family customers' away.

As those 'family customers' shifted their business over to The Corner Cocktail Lounge under ownership of JW Thornton located at 1749 Miracle Mile Strip, later renamed North Oracle Road, The Corner Cocktail Lounge quickly became "The Place To Be, And The Place To Be Seen!"

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Although still popular with some locals at its location, on March 12th 1963 the Lil Brown Jug bar, after its seven year (7) run as Tucson's defacto *homosexual 'family' meeting place and center of action, The Lil Brown Jug closed its doors forever fading off into history along with its many wonderful and special memories for the many *homosexuals and bisexuals of every gender who had made the Lil Brown Jug both their home and their safe haven away from home.

That during a time period all across the United States when *homosexuality was a crime punishable by jail, loss of ones job, being asked to vacate or forcibly vacating a person from their rented living space, public ridicule, physical attacks, and the possibly of being subject to barbaric surgical medical procedures (Frontal Brain Lobotomy-Surgical Brain Section Removal) meant to 'permanently cure a person of that serious mental disorder-disease.'

* The word and context 'Homosexual' is used in this Historical Exhibit in order to give the visitor to this exhibit some sense and historical understanding and or perspective of the time period this exhibit covers, prevailing public sentiment, legal sentiment, and mainstream mindset of that time period.

This historical museum exhibit is compiled from State, County, City, Federal, FBI, Police, Fire Department, Newspaper, Television, Radio, Tucson Historical Society, Tucson Gay LGBTQ Museum And Library Archives Collections, Tucson LGBTQ Historical Society, Interviews, Audio Recordings, Archives, And Or Records.



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