

JOHN CLAUS, North High School Class of 1959



John Claus, David LeRoy Lewis, Bill Phares c:1959

Chicken Poop

I still love to eat chicken, any style. Why? That's a good question.

My grandfather had a neighborhood poultry area on the corner of 32nd Avenue and Tejon St. The building is still standing after all these years. That intersection was, I believe, the end hub of the trolleys that came from downtown, past Olinger's Mortuary and north those few blocks. I remember finding, while biking that area a few years ago, some old trolley steel tracks wearing through the asphalt in the old streets leading up to that intersection.

Dad, like many North High family members, came from Nebraska, in his case from the area of Culbertson and Scottsbluff. He began his venture into the poultry business in the heart of Denver about 21st and Curtis Street in about 1936. It was quite an operation, in that he (we, but I was small then) would go to the chicken farmers, catch the chickens, haul them in the wooden lath-and-wire chicken coops back to his place of business, Dale's Poultry on Curtis street, kill, dress and prepare them and sell out the front door to the locals. I loved/hated this over those years, as you might imagine. I became involved in nearly every facet from when I was eight years old to about 16...some of which was not fun! The worst??... cleaning the chicken poop off the trays under each coop!!

Dad's business grew, (and thankfully I got involved in various sports and out of this smelly and hard work) and by the late 50's he became the largest poultry operation in Colorado. Mountaire Poultry (his new name) sat next to Colorado Ice and Cold Storage under the Colfax Viaduct for many years (both buildings

JOHN CLAUS, North High School Class of 1959(2)

are nearly gone, now...but a very faded Mountaire sign just barely peers through the newer paint on an old wall of what's left.

I have many photos of lines of customers (of all walks of life and all races) for nearly two blocks long waiting to walk into Dale's Poultry on those special advertisement days to get (no more than two) fryers or hens per person at 13 cents per pound, if I remember correctly. His tireless efforts and great work ethics and honesty rubbed off on me, I'm thankful to say.

So, that's a little bit of how I became the cute, lovable person I am today.