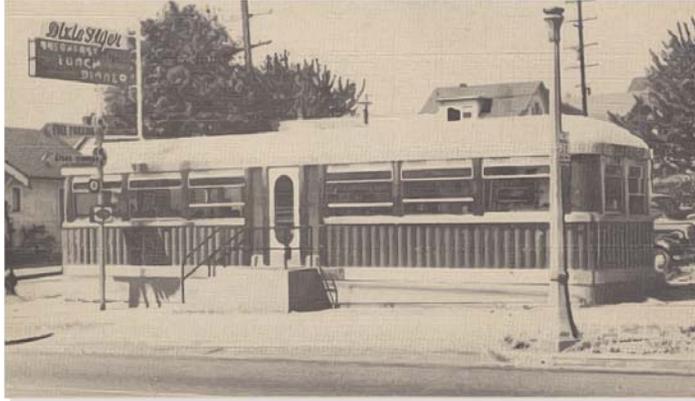


Lost: The Dixie Flyer Diner // Andy's Too Diner, Seattle, Washington

Motorists on Seattle's busy Aurora Avenue would have been surprised by a novel sight early in 1947 - a classic stainless steel-and-porcelain diner of the type common on the east coast but rare out west. In fact this diner, the Dixie Flyer, was the first of its kind, and one of only a handful ever erected, west of the Mississippi river.



When Clifton and Edna Prichett migrated to Seattle from Norfolk, Virginia in 1945, they realized that their new home city lacked a modern diner. They purchased a 1946 "Challenger" model from the Kullman Dining Car Company of New Jersey and had it shipped across country to Seattle on a flat car for \$1000.

The Prichetts waited nine months for delivery of the diner and in the meantime built a kitchen, pantry, and rest room behind where the diner would be sited.

The Dixie Flyer Diner opened in January, 1947 at 7701 Aurora Avenue in north Seattle. The gleaming new diner car immediately became popular with Seattleites and as a new-comer to the Pacific Northwest attracted scores of curious tourists from outside Seattle. The site was well-chosen. Since Aurora Avenue was a segment of U.S. Highway 99, the main north/south route from the Canadian border to Mexico, the diner drew in tourists and long-haul truckers as well as locals frequenting the busy Aurora shopping district.

The diner was open from 8 a.m. until 2 a.m. daily except Tuesday, when the staff - the Prichetts; Mrs. Prichett's sister, Grace Woods; Edith Snipes; Martha Freckleton; and ex-Navy chief commissary steward Johnny Clautier - took a well-deserved morning off. The four large booths and 15 stools seated 31 people, and there was often a line waiting to get in. Off-street parking for 12 autos was offered, with a rear entrance for convenience of those wishing to avoid Seattle's legendary rainfall.

According to an article in The Diner, July 1947, the Dixie Flyer's staff prided themselves on their Southern origins and home cooking. "We believe in southern hospitality," The Diner quoted Mrs. Prichett as saying.

"We do try to give the very best service and always with a smile. It gets to be a habit." Daily 50-cent lunch specials were offered, as were T-bone steak dinners, hamburgers and hamburger steak. The diner became famous for its Denver sandwiches and for serving breakfast - buttermilk hotcakes and ham and eggs - at all hours.

An additional point of pride was cleanliness. The Prichetts had no secrets about how they kept their diner sanitary and shining. "Just good old soap and water and keeping at it is the best way," said Mrs. Prichett. "We all wash and scrub all the time." Diner pastries were displayed in built-in glass cases; food was kept in tightly covered stainless steel pots.

Despite several years of success, by 1952 the Prichetts were apparently encountering personal difficulties. On June 13 that year the Seattle Times recorded the divorce of Edna from Clifton Prichett. A month later, the advertisement shown on the right appeared in The Times. While it's not certain that it was the Dixie Flyer that was being offered for sale, no other diner in Seattle matched the description.

Diners had humble beginnings as horse-drawn lunch carts in New England. Times changed; the lunch carts were surpassed by prefabricated (but still moveable) wooden structures specifically designed as eating places with kitchens, counters, and booths. By the 1940s wood gave way to stainless steel and porcelain - the classic "diner" look so iconic in American culture.

DINER
One of foremost diners in Northwest.
Stainless Steel equipment. Parking.
Fine location. Sell or trade for
income property. Call SE. 4151.
eves. AV. 0830.
ALBERG RLTY. 1919 5th Ave.

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Edna Prichett retained control of the Dixie Flyer; her name is listed as owner in Seattle business directories for the next few years. The only mention of Clifton yet found after their separation is the obituary notice of his passing in January, 1992 (Edna Prichett passed away in 2002.)

In June 1955, the diner was purchased by Andrew Nagy, who had opened Andy's Diner at 2711 4th in south Seattle in 1949 (see sidebar). By 1956 the Dixie Flyer had been renamed Andy's Diner. For the first several years after Nagy purchased it, the diner was managed by Andrew Yurkanin, who is also listed as VP of Andrew Nagy Inc.

Andy's Diner was opened by Andrew Nagy in 1949, in a recycled railroad car on Fourth Avenue South in Seattle's industrial district. In those pre-freeway days, Fourth Avenue was a major route out of downtown Seattle. Over time Andy's grew to include a half-dozen railroad cars and enjoyed great popularity for a number of years. By 2000, though, Andy's was falling on hard times; it was sold that year, and new ownership tried bringing it back. Andy's closed in 2008.

In 1958, the diner was moved from its north Seattle location to 6151 4th Avenue S, which is about a mile south of the original Andy's Diner. Just as the initial location of the Dixie Flyer Diner had been on the main highway north out of Seattle, this new location was along the principal route out of the city southbound. That same year found Edna Prichett employed as a waitress at Warling's Restaurant. Warling's address, 7115 Woodlawn, was just a few blocks from the original location of the Dixie Flyer.

At its new location, the diner received a few additions: a rear dining room behind and approximately the same dimension as the original diner; a 13' by 19', two-story addition built in 1960; and eventually a 20' by 50' dining room added to the rear of the original dining room. Behind the diner was a small building used for storage.



The name of the diner during this period is a bit of a puzzle. Contemporary photos clearly show a large sign reading "Andy's Too Diner" (or "Andy's Diner Too") streetside in front of the diner; but the Seattle business directories for the same period list the Fleet Diner at this address. It was apparently also referred to as Andy's Two and Andy's Diner No. 2.

Whatever its name, the diner seems to have remained in this location until 1964. By July of that year it had moved again, about a mile away, to 4125 Maynard Avenue S. The photo at right shows the diner and back-building apparently being prepared to move to its new location. It isn't certain that the diner ever reopened for business at the Maynard Avenue site. Property records list M.P. Yousoofian as the new owner. In the Seattle business directory, Mr. Yousoofian is noted as owning the Lander Street Café at 2701 Airport Way S, but no mention is made of a diner at 4125 Maynard S. In fact, there is no record of any business at all at that address for the period 1964-1969, other than a brief note that in 1966 something was "under construction" there.



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Sometime prior to 1968, the diner had met its fate: Seattle city property assessment data for 1969 notes that it had been torn down and was off the tax rolls. The location is now a vacant lot.

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