

Way We Were

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Growing up on Ferrell Alley, part one

By Emily P. Beeson, archivist

Richard “Dick” Mon stopped by the Research Library this summer with his family. He was kind enough to sit down and talk about growing up in Park City. His niece Patty Mon furnished family photos that illustrate Dick’s stories.

Born in the Canton region of China, Robert Mon, or “Bob,” as he was known, immigrated to the United States around 1911. Around 1923, he moved to Park City with his family to help out an uncle, Charlie Chong, in his restaurant, the Senate Café. After a disagreement a couple years later, Bob decided he would open his own café, the King Far Low, at 338 Main Street, north of the Egyptian Theatre. He changed the name to Bob’s Café at the end of 1935 (photo).

Dick remembers his parents working long hours—the 1940 census reported Bob worked an average of 80 hours per week. He rose early to stoke the coal stove, made pastries and sandwiches for miners to take to work in the morning, and often didn’t get home until after 10pm. Dick remembers his father never wasting any food. During the Depression, rather than throw food away, he placed leftovers on the sidewalk. He also let people who couldn’t pay for meals punch meal cards which would presumably be paid when the patron had the money.

Despite being a quiet man, Dick remembers his father loved discussing politics in the café with his customers, and he was a big fan of President Franklin Roosevelt. He contributed to miners’ funeral expenses, sponsored a softball team, contributed to the high school band, hosted meetings, and donated to the Park City baseball team. In 1939, the *Park Record* reported that Bob was going to close his café. He must have found a way to carry on, however, since he is shown supporting various endeavors and advertising in the *Record* into the first half of 1942. For the next two years, Bob Mon commuted to Salt Lake for work. (Photo, 1943. Notice the Egyptian Theatre’s imposing back wall in the background.)

According to the *Park Record*, the family moved to Berkeley, California in August 1944. The *Record* also reported Bob’s death nearly 20 years later in 1960, writing Bob was “a recognized, fine businessman of Park City,” and the Mon family was “well-known and highly respected residents of Park City for many years.”

Keep an eye out for next week’s “Way We Were” when we look at Dick Mon’s childhood in Park City.

Caption(s): Robert leaves for work in Salt Lake around 1943, after he closed his restaurant, the back of which can be seen in the shadow of the Egyptian Theatre.

Insets: Here, the King Far Low Café sign hangs next to the Egyptian Theatre’s. It later Americanized its name to Bob’s Café, but still advertised “Noodles” and “Chop Suey” on its sign.

Photos courtesy the Mon Family Digital Collection, the Pop Jenks Collection, and the Park City Museum.

Digi.44.8 (Main photo)



1987.3.96(38) (Inset)



19872.180 (1) (Inset)

