

Way We Were

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Title: From The Bank to Cicero's, and Everything in Between

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Before Daniel McPolin built the white barn so beloved today he dabbled in the saloon business. The building locals know as Cicero's was built in 1900 shortly after the Great Fire of 1898, and purchased by McPolin in 1902. It has had a host of names and owners since then, but has always been associated with the alcohol industry.

Unlike Mr. Spriggs' Oak Saloon, 306 Main never had an upstanding reputation in town. In 1909 Daniel McPolin himself shut down the bar for lack of business. Although it reopened, by 1916 the bar was shut down again, this time by local law enforcement. According to the Park Record, 306 Main, then known as The Bank, had a reputation for distributing alcohol to minors. Perhaps because it was such a hassle, McPolin cut his ties with this particular establishment by 1921, but the building would not leave the limelight for some time after.

Known again as The Bank during Prohibition, but under different ownership, the soft drink parlor found itself subject to a surprise visit from the Salt Lake City sheriff's department in December of 1925. According to the Park Record, "The Bank 'parlor' was also favored with a 'call' and 'wine with a kick' found and confiscated, and the proprietors, Frank [Lonovich] and John [Davis], placed in custody." Both Lonovich and Davis were released on bail, and 306 Main continued to cause trouble for the authorities.

The same Park Record article indicated that not only were there were some corrupt law enforcement officers in town, but everyone was on to the soft drink parlor facade. The Park Record states that on that night, "several 'parlors' were raided, including apparently heretofore 'protected' places." Whether certain authorities protected soft drink parlors from the onslaught of prohibition supporters is yet unclear, but those who wrote for the Park Record were aware of the underground alcohol sales, and believed local authorities were as well.

It would be difficult to say that 306 Main survived Prohibition, however it was continually shut down and reopened. A few years after Prohibition ended, John Davich purchased 306 Main and opened John Davich's Grill, or The Grill. By the 1970s it had different owners and was humorously dubbed "The Handle Bar." According to long-time Parkite Chicken Rosoff's 1970s oral history interview, Phil Thiman's bar was well known, though still not as popular as some other hangouts during that time. Regardless of owner or title, 306 Main has a history riddled with both controversy and infamy.



Image: 2008.5.3A

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Caption: 306 Main, the Handle Bar