

Way We Were
April 27, 2016
Do Unto Others
David Nicholas, Researcher

In 1944, in anticipation of a post-war economic downturn, the Safeway Company initiated a cut-and-run maneuver and closed the retail store they'd been operating for ten years at 350 Main Street. Mrs. Belle Brand had been leasing the building to Safeway since closing the Golden Rule Mercantile, which she and her husband had operated under their cousin James Cash (J.C.) Penney's ownership. Two years after Safeway left, in 1946, Brand sold the building to Earle Reseigh and his wife Thelma. The Reseighs intended to restore both the original market and its "golden rule" principles. The name was changed to "Earle's Market."

Earle was born in Leadville, Colorado on November 26, 1903. He moved to Park City when he was eighteen and accepted a position with the Silver King Mine. Earle was transferred to the Silver King commissary on Woodside Avenue, a company-owned store at which Silver King employees could buy groceries, clothing and household items on credit. While working at the commissary Earle met and married Thelma Barry.

At their market, Earle and Thelma embodied the principles of J.C. Penney's "golden rules" of customer focus and service. Free delivery was offered on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Should a miner lose his job, credit was extended without interest charged.

Earle was active in Park City politics, business and fraternal organizations. He served as mayor for four terms, was a member of the Chamber of Commerce and a Mason (Wasatch Lodge #1).

In 1948, Earle started selling appliances. In doing so, he was taking advantage of new federal legislation ending power companies' exclusive franchise to sell consumer appliances. In the late 1950s Thelma's brother, Hank Barry, opened a hardware store in the basement of 350 Main Street. In 1965 the state liquor store moved into Earle's as well. Thus Earle and Thelma realized one of their dreams for customer convenience: "one-stop shopping."

Earle's provided local employment opportunities as well, both full and part time. This included students from Park City High School. Working at Earle's, they could experience first-hand "golden rule" principles. Earle was also known to provide generous holiday bonuses for his employees.

After a heroic battle with lung and throat cancer, Earle passed away on May 27, 1971 at 67 years old. All Park City mourned the loss of such an outstanding person. In 1973, Thelma sold the business to Gerald Day but retained ownership of the building. In October 1979, Day closed what had by then become the oldest continuously operated market in Park City. You can still shop at Day's Markets in Heber and Provo where the legacy of the Golden Rule continues.

The next time you dine at 350 Main take a moment to consider the building's retail history and the unconditional love that Earle and Thelma offered Park City, their employees and customers. We can learn a lesson from them!

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Caption: Pictured here on a beautiful October afternoon in 1977 is Day's Market at 350 Main Street. If you look closely, you can see customers entering and exiting the store.