

Way We Were
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Food for Thought
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Welcome back to the next article in our series on the history of Deer Valley. Last week we learned why Deer Valley was considered “the other side of the tracks.” We’ll continue our history lesson by walking up the tracks to today’s Deer Valley Plaza. Most of us associate the Plaza as the place for excellent food and service courtesy of the Deer Valley Cafe.

Historically, the area encompassing the Plaza and the Aspen Wood condos was a large flat field. There were no ponds. In the early 1890s there was a straight track for horse racing. In 1897 the property was purchased by George Smith, Sr. Thereafter it was called Smith's Field. By the 1950s the name had been simplified to Smithfield.

George operated a butcher shop on Main Street directly across from City Hall (today's Park City Museum). Over the next fourteen years the business would be called Smith and Brim, Smith's Meats, Palace Meat Market and Smith Butchery. George prided himself on delivering the freshest quality products to his customers, providing “fair and courteous treatment and full value for the money.”

To accomplish his goal George maintained a slaughterhouse, feedlot and barns. Let's face it - the processing of animals for human consumption is messy and those activities needed to be away from town. Smith’s Field was his production facility.

George's "out of sight, out of mind" production strategy proved fortunate. In the Great Fire of June 1898, his store, like most in town, was incinerated. However, with his inventory and production facilities on “the other side of the tracks,” he recovered quickly. Within days he was operating out of a temporary location by Hartwell’s blacksmith shop (in close proximity to the High West and the old Kimball Art Center) and rebuilt his prime Main Street location in six weeks.

Over time, George faced increased competition. By 1911 there were four other butchers in town. His premium products carried a premium price. He was unwilling to compromise and his business suffered. He sold the business to his son George, Jr. and moved to Heber City.

Despite the change in ownership, economic conditions continued to deteriorate for the Smith butchery business. Around 1916, George, Jr. closed the slaughterhouse and sold Smith’s Field to the Judge Mining Company. In 1920, the business was purchased by George Hoover, head butcher of the E.D. Sutton Company.

The next time you enjoy the cuisine, service and "farm to table" commitment of the Deer Valley Cafe think of Smith’s Field.

Look for more articles coming up on the history of Deer Valley.



Image ID: 1988.8.1

Credit: Park City Historical Society and Museum, Earl Smith Collection

Caption: George Smith opened his store, pictured, at 515 Main Street around 1897.