

Way We Were
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Home Sweet Home
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Readers, welcome back to our series on the history of the Union Pacific depot, now 660 Main Street. As discussed last week, I am the Lone Survivor of Park City's once vibrant railroad infrastructure. This week you will learn about a wonderful family that considered me "Home Sweet Home" from 1957 to 1977.

By design I was a multipurpose building. The first floor was dedicated to commerce while the second floor served as the living quarters for the station agent and his family. The station agent was expected to be on call seven days a week. As such he was eligible for company housing. The main floor included a waiting room for passengers, a utility room, the station agent's office, a freight room and facilities for both the Railway Express Agency and the Western Union telegraph company. In terms of square footage, the largest area was the freight room.

In November 1956 station agent Paul Chester Stokes passed away after a brief illness. Paul had been Park City's station agent since 1938 and his Union Pacific career had spanned forty years. He was mourned by all who knew him.

In January 1957 Fay Dearden, Coalville's station agent, was transferred to Park City. Fay joined the Union Pacific in 1946 upon his honorable discharge from the Navy. He, too, would enjoy a stellar forty-year career with UP. Fay brought his wife, Donna, and their three young children to Park City as well. After being well-established in Coalville, the move came with some trepidation for the family. Any concerns were soon vanquished.

After an exhausting day moving into their new home, Donna needed a breath of fresh air. She stepped outside onto the second floor balcony. It was a crystal clear evening. Gazing up at the night sky - the firmament of the heavens displayed above her - Donna had a premonition that Park City was going to be good for the family. The next day her feelings were reaffirmed. Despite a heavy snowfall, residents stopped by to welcome the Deardens with open arms.

Donna set about to make the family's new residence safe and comfortable. First, she insisted that the Union Pacific install a fire escape as there was only one access to the second floor. UP obliged, installing a ladder on the second floor balcony. Second, Donna made it clear that the first floor of the depot was to be dedicated to Fay's UP responsibilities, while the second floor was strictly dedicated to family. The children welcomed their new surroundings, especially the excitement of living in an active train station.

The Park City local train number 226 visited six days a week usually arriving by 11am and departing by 3pm. After spotting their gondolas at the Judge and Ontario loading stations, the crew would discuss business with Fay then retire to the Cozy Tavern for lunch.

It was my honor that the Deardens considered me home for twenty years. They were the best family to ever live with me!



Photo ID: digi.54.19

Credit: Park City Historical Society and Museum, Marian Dearden McGuire

Caption: The view up Main Street from the second floor balcony of the Union Pacific depot, taken by Marian Dearden when she lived with her family in the depot from 1957-1977.