

Way We Were
July 19, 2017
Welcome to the Neighborhood
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Welcome back to our series following the history of the Union Pacific Depot, in its own words.

Last week, I told the story of the 1957 assignment of Fay Dearden as new station agent and the subsequent relocation of his family from Coalville. Let's welcome them to the neighborhood with an introduction to their surroundings, both past and present.

Back in the day this area of town was both industrial and commercial. Directly across Heber Ave at the bottom of Main Street was the home of Ab and Bessie Smith. Ab owned Utah Coal and Lumber. The remaining structures are now part of the Sky Lodge complex. In the early 1960s, Ab built a nice apartment for his family. Ab's son Mason and his wife Darlene converted the property into the Snow Palace. Their burgers, shakes and service were locally famous. The Silver Queen Hotel now stands on this location.

To my right across Pacific Avenue was Eley Motor Company, known as Eley Garage. The main floor featured a Pontiac dealership, Chevron gas station and automotive service facility. The building also housed Bill Neil Trucking Company, specialists in transporting ore from United Park City Mines to the Union Pacific loading platforms, located several blocks behind me.

The Garage was constructed in 1929 on the old Kimball Livery site. The livery dated to the 1880s, providing local transportation for passengers arriving by train. In 1975 the Garage became the Kimball Art Center, a nationally recognized entity and lead sponsor of the Park City Arts Festival. There is no relationship between the heirs of the Kimball Livery family and William Kimball, benefactor of the Art Center. Today this building is being converted into residential and commercial property. For a glimpse at its history, take a look at the outside back wall: the name Eley Motor Company is partly visible. Please hurry as this "glimpse" may disappear due to ongoing redevelopment.

Behind me on Main Street once stood the tallest (85 feet) and most famous building in town: the majestic Silver King Coalition Terminal Building. It was an integral component of the famed Silver King aerial tramway - a sophisticated system used to transport ore and supplies to and from the mine. The tram closed in 1951 after 50 years of continuous operation. For the Dearden boys, the "big red building" was an adventure to explore - while a young Lloyd Evans (Park City's future police chief) and their sister stood guard!

The building's designation as a National Historic Landmark and use as symbol for Park City's developing ski resort failed to protect it. In 1981 this iconic building was cremated - a victim of arson. I, too, was a target of arson, in April 1985. Fortunately I survived thanks to the heroic efforts 25 firemen and three pumper trucks.

From 1957 to 1977 the Deardens and I would witness together the remarkable transformation of Park City from a decaying mining town to a world renowned skiing destination.

Many thanks to the Dearden family for sharing their stories with us.



Image ID: digi.2.13022

Credit: Park City Historical Society and Museum, Himes-Buck Digital Collection

Caption: The Depot in September 1964. The Silver King Terminal looms large and one of Bill Neil's trucks is parked on the left. Mrs. Dearden's flowers are resplendent on the second floor balcony and gondolas spotted to the right.