

Way We Were
October 4, 2017
The Dream Team
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Welcome back to our second article on the Oak Saloon, one of Park City's most popular saloons and certainly its most friendly. This week we'll discuss the "Dream Team" that co-managed the Oak for thirty-eight years.

In 1923 two best friends became business partners of the Oak - Bill Neil and Leslie Roach Sr. This "Dream Team" co-managed the Oak until 1961. To patrons of all ages they were known as Uncle Bill and Cappy. In this photo Uncle Bill is on the left, Cappy is on the right. Uncle Bill liked fishing and baseball, frequenting semi-pro games in Provo.

Unlike other taverns in town, the Oak welcomed patrons of all ages. Cold soda from a local bottling company, the best ice cream in town and a variety of candy bars, salted peanuts, chocolate covered peanuts and pretzels satisfied both the thirst and hunger of the underage crowd.

For those old enough to consume alcoholic beverages, the Oak served what some claimed was the coldest beer in town. Though bottled beer from a variety of brewers was offered, draft Coors was the beer of choice. More than a few patrons were heard to say that they were looking forward to enjoying some "pure" Rocky Mountain brewed spring water.

The price for an eight-ounce glass of Coors was ten cents; a twelve-ounce glass cost twenty-five cents. The smaller serving of those two sizes was the most popular. For cash-strapped miners two eight-ounce servings were the best deal. And besides, the beer warmed up in the larger glasses.

The Oak was closed on Mondays for cleaning. In the early 1960s two teenage friends were entrusted with the janitorial duties. They remember the Oak as being dark with the aroma of stale beer and cigarettes. They would wipe down the bar and the red vinyl-covered stools, wash the floor, restock the glasses, and wash the windows and mirrors. Once finished they would enjoy a cold "Mc's pop" from the McPolin bottling works - the best soda bottled in town and the only brand sold at the Oak.

Alas, good things don't last forever - even for dream teams. Uncle Bill retired in 1961. Cappy followed suit in 1967. With their departure, the "magic" that made the Oak the friendliest bar in town departed as well. The building eventually became My Favorite Things, a women's clothing store. In August 1973, the building was incinerated in one of the worst fires in Park City's history. Today the property is a "pocket park" hosting social events under the watchful eye of Jim Ivers - one of town's most famous miners memorialized in bronze.

Uncle Bill passed away on September 21, 1969. Cappy joined his best friend on June 4, 1974. Reunited once again, rumor has it that they've opened a new establishment called the Pearly Gates serving the coldest beer and the best ice cream in their new town - to patrons of all ages!

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Image ID: 1957.214.18b

Credit: Park City Historical Society and Museum, Kendall Webb Collection

Caption: The Oak Saloon featured the best bartending duo in town. The Dream Team of Uncle Bill (left) and Cappy Roach (right) would answer the call for thirty-eight years.