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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SANTA CLARA MERC
by: ETHEL H. McARTHUR

THE EARLY CITIZENS OF SANTA CLARA, UTAH WERE TIRED OF HAVING TO GO, BY WAGON, TO ST. GEORGE FOR THEIR MEAGER SUPPLIES. A GROUP GOT TOGETHER AND DECIDED TO OPEN THEIR OWN STORE. NONE OF THEM HAD ANY EXPERIENCE RUNNING A MERCANTILE BUSINESS BUT THEY CHOSE JOHN G. HAFEN, MY GRANDFATHER, TO BE THE MANAGER.

THE BUSINESS WAS HANDLED WITH THE STRICTEST HONESTY AND SMALL PROFITS WERE PAID ON THEIR INVESTMENT. DISSATISFACTION, HOWEVER, GREW AMONG THE STOCKHOLDERS SO THE COMPANY WAS DISSOLVED.

GRANDPA HAFEN BOUGHT THE OTHER STOCKHOLDERS OUT PERSONALLY AND WITH THE SMALL CAPITAL OF TEN DOLLARS BEGAN TO BUILD UP A MERCANTILE BUSINESS. GRANDFATHERS WORK TOOK HIM FROM HOME SO MUCH THAT THE WORK IN THE STORE WAS DONE LARGELY BY GRANDMOTHER. THE STORE WAS A SMALL ROOM IN THEIR HOME, BUT THE BUSINESS CONTINUED TO INCREASE, SO IN 1900 A SMALL BRICK BUILDING WAS ERECTED ADJOINING THE HOME ON THE WEST. PRESTON HAFEN'S HOME IS BUILT ON THE SITE WHERE THE STORE ONCE STOOD.

THE BUSINESS REMAINED AT THIS LOCATION BUT GRANDPA RETIRED IN 1917. HE SOLD CHIEFLY TO HIS SON ADOLPH (MY FATHER) AND HIS GRANDSON GUY AND GRANDDAUGHTER JESSIE HAFEN FREI. IT CONTINUED TO BE A GENERAL STORE, HANDLING ALL VARIETIES OF GOODS NEEDED BY A COMMUNITY. IT WAS THE ONLY MERCANTILE ESTABLISHED IN SANTA CLARA.

IN 1928 A NEW MODERN BUILDING OF CEMENT BRICK AND ADOBE WAS CONSTRUCTED JUST WEST OF ADOLPH'S HOME AND A BLOCK FURTHER WEST FROM THE OLD SITE. BESIDES A LARGE STORE A LARGER AREA WAS BUILT FOR A GARAGE AND RENTED TO THE STUCKI & WITWER PRODUCE COMPANY. A GAS PUMP WAS ALSO INSTALLED OUTSIDE THE STORE.

THE NEW STORE WAS NAMED THE SANTA CLARA COOP AND WAS STILL OWNED CHIEFLY BY ADOLPH HAFEN WITH GUY HAFEN AND JESSIE HAFEN FREI AS THE OTHER STOCKHOLDERS. THE STORE CONTINUED TO PROSPER AND GROW, THEN THE WAR CAME IN 1939. FROM 1939 TO 1945 MERCHANDISE BECAME EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO BUY AND THE INVENTORY DWINDLED TO ALMOST NOTHING. WHAT WITH RATIONING, ALL THE BUYING HEADACHES AND ADVANCING AGE, MY FATHER DECIDED TO SELL.

THEIR DAUGHTER ETHEL AND HER HUSBAND HORACE McARTHUR AND SON DOUGLAS HAD BEEN LIVING IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA FOR ELEVEN YEARS AND WERE ANXIOUS TO RETURN TO UTAH SO AFTER THE WAR IN AUGUST 1945 THEY MOVED BACK AND BOUGHT THE STORE. ETHEL'S FATHER AND MOTHER CONTINUED LIVING IN THE HOME UNTIL THEIR DEATHS.

HORACE AND ETHEL TOOK OVER THE STORE SEPTEMBER 1, 1945. MOST OF ADOLPH'S BUSINESS WAS RUN ON CREDIT AND THIS TRADITION CONTINUED, EXCEPT THEY ASKED FOR PAYMENT ONCE A MONTH. THE STORE WAS NOW McARTHUR'S SANTA CLARA MERC.

THEY MADE MANY CHANGES. ADDING NEW LINES AND DROPPING OTHERS, LIKE THE DRESSES, SHOES AND FABRIC YARDAGE. THE WAR BEING OVER THEY WERE ABLE TO BUY ALL THE MERCHANDISE THEY WANTED.

THEY KNOCKED OUT THE ENTIRE EAST WALL AND DOUBLED THE SIZE OF THE STORE. AN ADDITION WAS MADE ACROSS THE BACK AND DIVIDED INTO TWO ROOMS. ONE ROOM HELD THE HARDWARE, TOOLS. AND GARDENING EQUIPMENT WITH A LARGE FREEZER FOR STORAGE.

THE OTHER ROOM HAD A LARGE WALK-IN REFRIGERATOR AND AN AREA TO CUT OR GRIND MEAT. THEY WERE NOW ABLE TO HAVE A FRESH MEAT AND FRESH VEGETABLE DEPARTMENTS.

LATER THEY OPENED PART OF THE NORTH AND WEST WALL INTO THE GARAGE AND MADE A LARGE DAIRY AND SOFT DRINK SECTION.

IN 1960, HORACE'S AND ETHEL'S SON, DOUGLAS WAS MADE MANAGER BECAUSE HORACE WAS NOW WASHINGTON COUNTY TREASURER. HORACE DIED DECEMBER 25, 1973 SO DOUGLAS CONTINUED AS MANAGER AND DOUGLAS AND ETHEL OPERATED THE BUSINESS UNTIL JULY 1, 1986. THEY SOLD THE STORE AND FAMILY HOME TO ISLAND MARKETS INC. OUT OF SALT LAKE CITY.

OVER THE YEARS THEY GAVE EMPLOYMENT TO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEY WERE ALL HONEST AND GOOD WORKERS. ARVENA HAFEN, CLAUDIA WEST, DARRIN BIRD AND CURTIS PAYNE. THEY WERE VERY SPECIAL TO US AND OUR CUSTOMERS. THEY WERE VERY GOOD HELP AND VERY DEDICATED.