



Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
May 31, 2017

From time to time people send me ideas for the Face of Fillmore for which I am really grateful. Each of these ideas seems to open a new avenue for another idea and the column continues.

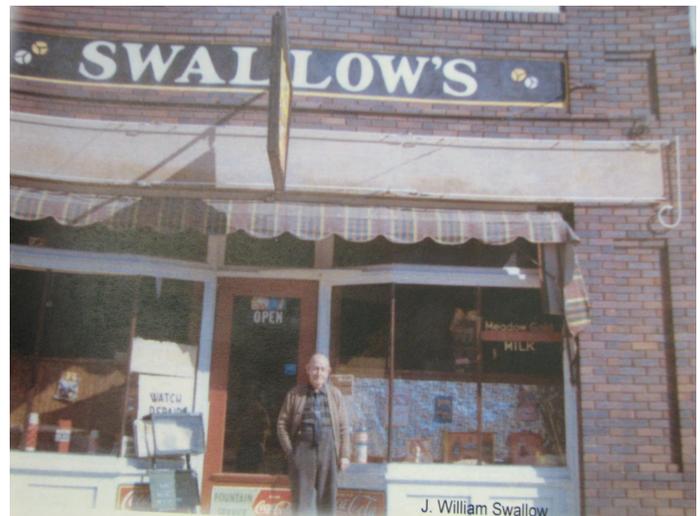
It is especially great when one of these coincides with a particularly busy month. This has happened again.

Duane Carling sent an article he wrote about Swallow's Confectionary and memories he had there as a young boy, as well as details of what happened to its contents. With his permission, I am using his article this week, with quotation marks, to bring back memories of a truly unique store enjoyed by so many.

"In the early 50's I used to "help" my grandfather Elmer Carling bring his two-horse wagon loaded with loose hay up from the Pahvant Valley to his barn in Fillmore. It took all day to make the several miles clip clop trip out and back, and the hot sweaty work often ended with a trip to Swallow's Confectionary in downtown Fillmore. Dangling my 8-year-old legs from the soda fountain stool, I always ordered the house specialty, a Green River. Mr. Swallow would spoon thick sugary green syrup into a special tall glass, followed by a stir of bubbling soda water, topped with a scoop of crushed ice and a long straw. All done with great ceremony, it was the highlight of an already great day.

"Mr. Swallow passed away several years ago, and an investor bought the old building with the idea a tearing it down to build a new bank. Two Utah based artists (no relation) Gary Smith and Dennis Smith, along with two other friends offered the new owner \$5,000 for the mirrored back bar, the soda fountain equipment and whatever else was in the creaky old building. Thinking he'd struck a great deal, the investor took the offer, but gave the partners only one week before demolition would commence.

"The Swallow family had taken everything they wanted from the building, including the never before emptied one cent weight / fortune machine which contained over 50,000 pennies, many of them Indian Heads.



“The Smiths and their two partners found a buyer for the soda fountain and the back bar, recovering their purchase price. As they ventured into the basement they found old Coca Cola advertisements, both enameled steel and some ultra-rare paper ads from the war years, most still in their wrappers. Hand done color lithographed advertisements from the days when they were actually done on “litho” stones, still lay in their shipping folders.

“Old Federal Reserve bank notes, some printed by a bank in Nephi, Utah were found in an ice cream freezer cylinder. A 2-inch roll of bills with 1920 as the latest date of issue was stuffed into a dark corner. Some silver coins were found in the basement directly under where the cash register sat, so the partners removed some floorboards and part of the wall, and found a few more.

“ ‘Basically anything associated with a drug store was still in the basement,’ said Gary. ‘Dishes, light fixtures, old toys, model trains still in boxes, some clothing, and old letters with stamps post marked long ago were all stacked two feet deep.’

“ ‘We weren’t there to make a lot of money. In fact in those days, before eBay, trying to find a buyer for that stuff was often more trouble than it was worth. If we found someone willing to pay almost anything we happily sold it. We finally had to move all the stuff to a friend’s basement. We had a ‘trade night’ every Monday evening. Anybody who really wanted something would agree to let someone else have whatever treasure they desired. There was some bargaining, and eventually the basement got mostly cleaned out. Nobody made a lot of money, but we had a lot of fun. It was a chance to look back at rural American life almost 100 years ago.’ ”

“The soda fountain and back bar supposedly still exists in Moab, but I haven’t been able to locate it. After that many years it could be almost anywhere. I’m almost sure I could teach the new owner how to make a Green River, and maybe someday I’ll have the chance to do that.”

Thanks, Duane.