

History of the Granite Creek Bar

Information from Nicholas Mills, former Manager of the Princeton Museum

By Diane Sterne

The Granite Creek Bar was used at the Granite Creek Hotel in Granite Creek. Brad Bains of Hedley (Antique Roadshow), examined the bar and determined that it had a value of \$3,000. He believed it was originally a department store display case. He said the top was not original (it is currently cherry) and he felt this top was put there as it was a durable piece of wood. So one would ask, why was a department store display case used as a bar in the Granite Creek Hotel? It is probably a fair assumption that this "display case" came from Foxcrowle Cook who purchased the Granite Creek Hotel by auction in 1913. Mr. Cook would have certainly had access to display cases as he owned three stores (in Coalmont, Granite and Princeton). It is believed that the bar originally had a marble front but no one knows what happened to the marble. The bar was also originally much longer. Current Princeton Museum Manager, Robin Lowe has pointed out that it would appear the bar was originally "L-shaped". If one looks at the left end of the bar, the trim is angled, implying there was another piece which joined to it at a 90 degree angle.

At some point, the bar was given to the Dominion Hotel in Tulameen. Not much was happening at the Dominion Hotel as they didn't have a liquor licence (because the nearby Coalmont Hotel had one), so they really had no use for it. Mrs. Olive Sootheran, who ran the Post Office in Tulameen (1956 - 1969) took the bar from the Dominion Hotel and turned it into a counter for the Post Office. This is probably when the bar was shortened because it was too long to fit into the Post Office. This could also be when the marble disappeared from the front. It should be noted that the bar also had a brass foot rail. It is said that Mrs. Sootheran used the foot rail for irrigation in her garden. Again, the foot rail was very long and couldn't be used in the Post Office. After Mrs. Sootheran died, the bar ended up with Darrell Tompkins in Tulameen. He had no use for it and offered it to the Museum in exchange for a tax receipt for \$15,000. This was when Brad Bains came into the picture and valued the bar at \$3,000. The Museum didn't have any authority to issue such a large tax receipt so someone else had to be contacted to give approval. That approval was given and Mr. Tompkins got the \$3,000 receipt.

The foot rail for the bar ended up at the Coalmont Hotel in the basement. Former Coalmont Hotel Manager, Peter Jack, offered it to the Museum, but it was too large to remove at the time and eventually it was forgotten about. Some say it was in an outbuilding at the Coalmont Hotel. Bill Montgomery was at the Coalmont Hotel with Nick Mills when Peter Jack offered the brass foot rail to the Museum. Also, there is a clasp on the bar and this was added by the Tulameen Post Office when they used that part of the bar as a till.

Today the Granite Creek Bar is housed safely in the Princeton Museum. It is a prominent display case that visitors are greeted with upon entering the Museum's doors.