

Summer Vacation

04-07-2014 by Harry Zirkelbach

The halcyon years after WWII and before marriage, were times for independence without employment, living off savings accumulated while in the Navy; an era of few dollar obligations or responsibilities. It defies the imagination; consider; three consecutive years of deliberate unemployment. Summer vacation all year, enough spending money to enjoy endless vacation days.

Well, it wasn't all that much money. The moment arrived, 1950, when employment was needed. That employer had slightly more than 500 other men, mostly married with families; vacation was voted on the basis of seniority; vacations evenly distributed throughout the year. Before half had chosen, no summer months remained.

Those next in seniority began opting for consecutive days as near as possible to the June-July-August first choices. The most recent hires stepped forward to choices at both ends of the calendar. Few found a reason for liking a winter vacation. As one of the last to select in 1951, he found it odd that none chose the first two full weeks of December, 4th through 15th.

With Christmas pending, there would be employment in businesses bulging with part time work because of Santa's imminent generosity.

An easy scan. The same employers nationwide needed willing hands. His employer had a national reputation for honesty, and locally employees thoroughly familiar with the city streets.
An obvious fresh-air choice, business delivering anything.

Multiple choices quickly winnowed to a Liquor store, and the U.S. Post office.

The Liquor Store chosen, now long gone, no longer needing the publicity, can be identified as **Harry Hoffman's Liquors, 935 18th Street (at 18th and Curtis), phone ALpine 3456, Free Parking and Free Delivery.**
The employer for his first 15 day work vacation.

What a delightful choice for part time work. The employer; great guy, Harry Hoffman himself. Never a complaint from the permanent staff, split between sales and other. The "other" did everything else; occasionally working sales.

Christmas help, the "other" category, if qualified, delivered liquor to home, business.

Summer Vacation
04-07-2014 by Harry Zirkelbach

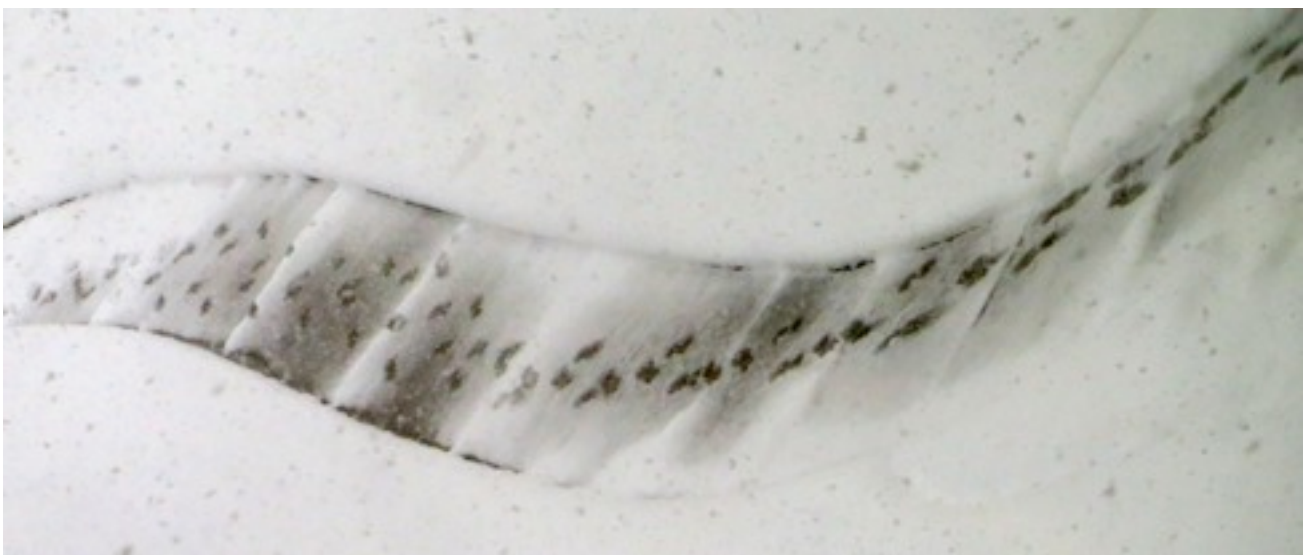
The State of Colorado Liquor Law is almost unique in America. Licenses for Sale of Liquor are issued rather freely, but only one license can be granted to any entity. (This has been assailed continuously, without effect.) Thus Harry Hoffman, anyone, any business, can be granted only one location (license).

In 1950, Denver dominated Colorado; one of three Colorodans lived in Denver.
Harry Hoffman dominated Denver Liquor sales.
Sales volume creates power; retention of power necessitates sales.
Harry the great salesman, businessman, firm gentleman.

A friend, business manager for a Wholesale Liquor Distributor reported Harry Hoffman bought direct from his lines in such volume, that Harry sold bottles for less than that company's cost.

Those years the New York Times reportedly wrote,
there are three great things to see in Colorado,
Pikes Peak, Denver's Mint, Harry Hoffman's Liquor store.

Imagine delivering booze in unmarked white vans throughout Metro Denver
greeting whoever answered the door
"Harry sent me",
the receiver smiling in return.
"Like in Bootlegger days.'
Fun job/summer vacation,
on a magic carpet.



Summer Vacation
04-07-2014 by Harry Zirkelbach

Harry Hoffman was the oligarch for the Harry Hoffman Liquor Store, kind of. A perpetual seat at the cash register was occupied by his wife who collected payments for all purchases.

This may seem cumbersome; was not. While as many as ten clerks completed orders, it was Mrs Hoffman who inspected, counted and processed the order; collected payments with a smile and unbelievable competence. There were few waiting lines at her Cash Register. And after only a few visits, she would know customer's name, treat them as family. Every employee agreed with whatever she decided. Most days, several bank runs were made depositing the cash collected.

At the store, all observed a business arrangement between husband and wife. Socially, they were prominent in civic, political, circles, always dressed for that occasion.

The Liquor store sales volume belied the space available. That was the result of space allocation; the availability of a full basement for less popular liquors. One stairwell descended from the first floor. Once the store opened there were infrequent trips down these stairs; veteran employees knew what was not on the on main floor shelves, called the merchandise, quantity, to those basement employees. Most employees where not permitted to descent into that warren.

There, a few Japanese employees, small in stature usually, responded to any request for bottles not on first floor shelves; shelves covering every inch of wall. In an age before computer inventory control; these basement men had legendary recall for the location of every bottle residing there.

And daily reported to Harry the product and quantity to be ordered.

Then and today, liquor is strictly a cash transaction. Many small bars bought from Harry Hoffman Liquors. Buying in small quantities, they paid less that the Wholesale Liquor Distributors would charge; besides if their past delivery hadn't been paid, the next order would not be filled.

Another liquor oddity. It was not uncommon to have a major beer truck driver enter, talk privately to Harry. That quiet conversation, usually provided Harry 100 or more cases of that popular beer at an outrageously low price; because the intended buyer could not pay for the delivery and warehouse owner did not want the cases returned for whatever reason. A hand shake confirmed the purchase, Mrs Hoffman prepared the check, and that diver wheeled in the cases, stocking them on the floor wherever Harry indicated. Big **SALE** sign added, **bargain price proclaimed**; these cases easily sold, Harry gaining a generous profit before his check could be cleared.

Summer Vacation

04-07-2014 by Harry Zirkelbach

Also not uncommon, large four figure orders, from thirsty customers living a distance from Denver. Often from outside Colorado. These customers were known to management. On entering, greeted by Harry, be waited on by Adolph, the Sales Manager. Adolph's order handling differed. He prepared the order. When completed, Adolph and one of the basement employees would collect the merchandise, cover cases and individual bottles with a manila color paper, place on the appropriate dolly, wheel it to the buyers' vehicle, carefully load the disguised merchandise so as not recognized as liquor by anyone seeing the delivery.

Harry Hoffman advertised generously. Still none of his delivery vehicles had any identification. Deliveries too were not identifiable as liquor or beer.

Neighbors could not report they **saw** a Harry Hoffman

liquor delivering to any resident.

Harry Hoffman Liquors, an early merchandiser completely knowing their customer.