

LIFE / NEIGHBORHOODS / COMMUNITY ISSUES

# Everest Raymond Watrous – a Sugar House neighborhood business pioneer – Part I

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1169 Milton Avenue residence in Sugar House where Ray Watrous grew up.  
*Courtesy of James Brown*

On May 6, Salt Lake City will hold its second annual [Neighborhood Business Conference](#), designed to assist in the revival and survival of neighborhood business, which, up until recently, had become almost extinct due to changes in zoning laws and shopping habits that helped caused its demise. Part of the focus of the conference is to provide information on branding and obtaining grants and loans to assist in establishing or rather, reestablishing neighborhood businesses.

In light of that conference, it seems appropriate to highlight an example of a successful [Sugar House](#) neighborhood business from the past—*The Home and Garden Variety Store* and introduce, in a three part series of articles, the individual behind it, Ray Watrous.



Everest Raymond 'Ray' Watrous was born on September 12, 1909 in Big Cot where his family owned and operated the Lindell Lode and, later, Cottonwo near the Spruces; his father managed other mining operations in the area a family purchased a home on 1169 Milton Avenue (1650 South) in Sugar Hou: spent fall, winter and spring, returning to the family cabin in the canyon or a in Park City in summers.

It was during those early years in the mountains, year round until the move : love of the outdoors and the sports associated with it including hiking, fishir recreational at that time, was, instead, a necessary form of transportation in



Watrous attended Emerson Elementary, Irving Junior High and East High schools, and worked from an early age. According to son Tom, his father, 'loved to work and work was play.' During summers spent in the Big Cottonwood area, he helped his mother when she cooked for the miners, and when he was a little older, he assisted in a summer vacation cabin-rental business near the Spruces.

As a young teen, Watrous worked as a caddy at the Country Club golf course on the east side of Sugar House. Later he worked for a neighbor who sold produce, helping to take orders and later delivering those orders. He also worked at a produce stand operated by

that same neighbor on Highland Drive, where the Hawaiian once stood, moving on to work as a car hop at the infamous *Coon Chicken Inn* to the north, where he learned how to treat customers in order to get tips. He picked cherries one summer at the Gardner Orchard on 1700 South 2100 East. He later worked as a truck driver and deliveryman.

Watrous met wife Mildred in 1928. She was boarding with family at 1172 Milton Avenue while attending the University of Utah. They dated for four years before marrying in 1932.

By 1929, the depression was in full swing; jobs, including any possible employment in the family or other mining operations, also negatively impacted, were extremely scarce. Getting and keeping a job, however, became paramount in Ray and Mildred's plans to marry.

Part II – Watrous begins a Safeway career, marries Mildred, and purchases homes in Sugar House, the second on the lot where the Home and Garden Variety Store begins.

Source:

Conversations with Carolyn Watrous Taylor

Watrous, Thomas: *Everest Raymond Watrous: A Personal History*, March, 2009.

## **SUGGESTED LINKS**

- [Salt Lake Original: Coon Chicken Inn](#)