

## History of Road Creek Inn

Road Creek Inn, located near Capitol Reef National Park, Fishlake National Forest, Canyonlands National Park and the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, is a historic hotel in Loa, Utah that now serves as Southern Utah University's "University of the Parks" field station.

The current building replaced the Loa Co-op originally built in 1904 that was destroyed by fire on Dec. 11, 1911. A fresh water pipeline supplying Loa with water from nearby Road Creek was finished in 1911, unfortunately, a fire hose had not been constructed yet or the old building might have been saved. The new Loa Co-op building would go on to house many merchants, including being a part of the Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution (ZCMI) from 1912 to 1920 managed by W. Scott McClellan. Others operating in the mercantile business after McClellan were Loren Webster, Nelden Ellet and Reed Brian from 1920-1928.

In 1928, a Jewish immigrant from Russia by the name of Isaac Wachs, later changed to Wax, purchased the Loa Co-op store, at the time known as "Ikie's Store," and managed it from 1928-1940. Wax and his wife, Sadie, had four children; Harry (1906), Yetta (1908), Ida (1913), and Morris (1920). In 1945, after completing his military service, Harry bought the small company San Diego Janitor Supply and Chemical Company and was later joined in business by Morris. The company was renamed Waxie Sanitary Supply in 1954 and now has outlets in California, Oregon, Colorado, Washington, Alaska and Utah, employing more than 800 people. Wax's grandson, Charles Wax, is the current CEO of Waxie Enterprises.

"The Wax family was known for going above and beyond to care for their customers, and many people in the Utah communities still tell stories of their extraordinary customer service," according to the Waxie Sanitary Supply website. "This is where our story begins."

During the The Great Depression, dancing helped raise the spirits of Wayne County residents as one of the more affordable amusements. Wayne County High School teacher Sam Chidester organized the Chidester Orchestra in 1920 that would go on to perform 9,050 concerts and dances. The youth of Wayne County always knew where a dance was, and in Loa, they traveled to the Loa Co-op or old Billings Store to dance the polka, schottische, quadrille and Danish waltz. Locally accomplished performers such as Enoch Sorenson and Nettie Brian were crowd favorites, and dancers could move between the two floors on the same night for the price of one ticket.

Wayne County government officials also leased part of the building from 1912-1940 until the Wayne County Courthouse was constructed. The Waxes' moved to Aurora in 1940 and sold the Loa Co-op to the Utah Poultry Association. Myrtus Adams and Virgil White maintained offices

in the back of the building while candling eggs in the basement. In 1952, the building was sold to the Wayne County Poultry Association.

Dixie and Anne Leavitt purchased the historic building in 1979 and established the current Road Creek Inn. The hotel was completely renovated in 2012, and today, with 15 guest rooms, large gathering areas, and a full kitchen, Road Creek Inn is perfect for educational programs, family reunions, weddings, youth camps and conferences. Now more than 100 years old, Road Creek Inn offers state-of-the-art amenities such as Internet access, a sauna for relaxing after a day of hiking, in-room microwaves and refrigerators, standard king and queen rooms and two deluxe suites with three king-sized beds.

SUU's Road Creek Inn near Capitol Reef is now open to the community for rental, and to SUU student groups. This beautiful, quaint facility is the perfect getaway surrounded by several historic Mormon pioneer towns and buildings, national parks, lakes, Native American ruins and protected forest lands, and a great environment for student clubs and large groups to get away to another of Utah's phenomenal outdoor activities. The acquisition of the historic Road Creek Inn hotel, located at 98 South Main Street, in Loa, further solidifies Southern Utah University's title as the official "University of the Parks."