

The Historian

A Quarterly Publication of the Fallbrook Historical Society

Winter 2023

Tommy's Restaurant



1940s Tommy's Restaurant was a landmark in Fallbrook from 1935-1960 on the west side of Main Ave. The corner of Fig Street is at the left. The two story El Real Hotel can be seen next door to Tommy's at far right of this photo.

Tommy was Thomas Elias Morris (1878-1966), an England born long-time resident of Fallbrook. The first mention of Tommy's Restaurant is when the Fallbrook Chamber of Commerce announced a luncheon meeting at Tommy's on October 22, 1935. (1)

Tommy's began as a small cafe' renting a narrow space in what was then known as the Tiffany building just a few feet away from the coffee shop located in the southeast corner of the older 1930 El Real hotel. (2)

Tommy's sat on the less savory side of Main Ave. On the south side of the restaurant was a pool hall. A liquor store anchored the corner of Fig Street.

Apparently, Tommy's with its menu of complete lunch and dinner with wine and beer was able to thrive in between these competitors. In December of 1936, Morris was able to purchase the whole building that he was renting space in. He expanded his dining room, taking over the space of other tenants. (3)

In the 1940s, Tommy Morris took on a partner named Sam Kostich (1896-1992) who took on the more visible role of managing Tommy's Restaurant. At the 131 S. Main Ave., Tommy's Restaurant, Kostich installed 2 shuffleboard tables, a mammoth jukebox, and red leather bar stools in 1951. (4) Shuffleboard tournaments were organized. Fallbrook trophies won against Vista or Oceanside shuffleboard teams were publicly displayed in the restaurant.

Fallbrook's varying dining preferences and demographics were reflected in Tommy's changing menus over the years. Tommy's would always be a place to get a steak dinner or BBQ sandwich and some cold beer. In 1949, spaghetti dinners were featured. Tommy's began to advertise "Spanish food", including tacos. By 1958, pizza pie was on the menu along with "Mexican food". Pizza delivery was offered. (5)

Tommy's Restaurant ended when it was sold in 1959 to Charles White. The restaurant then became known as Whitey's Cafe'. By 1969, the hotel coffee shop next door became known as Whitey's Bar. (6)

The history gets murky after this. The business changed hands a couple more times. It is not clear when the old Tiffany building, a.k.a. Tommy's/Whitey's Restaurant was torn down, leaving the vacant space that is a parking lot today.

~Tom Frew



2023. Tommy's Café was once located about here in this space between the 1930 El Real Hotel and the coffee shop at Fig St. & Main.

Footnotes:

- (1) Fallbrook Enterprise October 18, 1935
- (2) Fallbrook Historic Resources Inventory item #54, September 1991 prepared by Susan H. Carrico & S. Kathleen Flanigan for San Diego County.
- (3) Fallbrook Enterprise December 4, 1936.
- (4) Fallbrook Enterprise August 24, 1951
- (5) Fallbrook Enterprise August 7, 1958.
- (6) San Diego Union Tribune, June 19, 2005 by Betty Johnston

Dear Historical Society Member and Supporter:

It's that time again to renew your membership for 2024.

Last year, with your support, we were able to have an open house at the Heritage Center and an awards ceremony at the Reche Schoolhouse in September.

We put on a special program on Fallbrook resident, Duke Snider, and have made many display changes in the museum and Barn to encourage the public to visit us often.

A membership application is attached and if you are able, a donation of any amount would certainly help us to continue our efforts to preserve and educate the public on Fallbrook's rich history.

Thank you for your support.

**Roy Moosa
President**

*The Historical Society is a 501c/3 non-profit.
"The Fallbrook Historical Society's mission is to bring History to Life
by educating the community and others about Fallbrook's rich heritage."
Federal tax ID 51-019676*

Fallbrook Historical Society

P.O. Box 1375, Fallbrook, CA 92088

The Mission of the Fallbrook Historical Society is to collect, preserve and display the history and artifacts of the Fallbrook area. The Historical Society accepts donations that are related to Fallbrook history and are of interest to the general public.

New Member

Renewal

Date: _____ Name _____

Phone () _____ E-Mail: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS:

(Please note that Memberships are from January 1 to December 31)

Each membership has one vote. Patron receives a lifetime membership and has name placed on Patron Plaque.

Business/corporate sponsors will have space for signage inside the Heritage Center fence.

Business/Corporate patrons will have business signage as stated above plus their name listed on an Honor Plaque and ads in the Historical Society newsletters.

Family Membership \$30.00 **LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP \$250.00**

PATRON \$500.00

Business/Corporate Sponsor \$1000.00+

Business/Corporate Patron \$5000+

I'd like to be involved with the Historical Society.

Please contact me about areas of interest.

Mail check to: Fallbrook Historical Society

P.O. Box 1375

Fallbrook, Ca. 92088

Or you can sign up on line at: **FallbrookHistoricalSociety.org**

The Historical Society is a 501c/3 non-profit. Membership dues and donations are tax deductible.

Thank you for your support.

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Some Highlights of our Christmas Open House



Santa and Helpers



Carriage on Float with Mary's Booth

Museum Decorated for Christmas



Museum Entrance

Christmas Docents



The Fallbrook Historical Society's mission is to bring history to life by educating the community and others about Fallbrook's rich heritage



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Fallbrook Historical Society

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