 Witnessing over a century of hustle and bustle in Holyoke's downtown, the building located at 110 S. Interocean Ave. has one of the oldest histories in Holyoke. Housing everything from hardware stores to the post office, it has accumulated its share of Holyoke memories standing just south of the intersection of Highways 6 and 385 or Denver St. and Interocean Ave.
 "Things have changed over the years—lots," said Nora Deaver who currently owns the building with her husband Steve. No one will argue that Holyoke's main street certainly has come a long way since the town's early days in the late 19th Century.
 According to Those Were the Days..., a history of Phillips County, the original structure was built in the 1880s and was much smaller than the present-day building. What we know as 110 S. Interocean Ave. today was initially two separate buildings. Deane Anderson, former owner of the building, said the north half of the structure was constructed in 1912.
 A variety of businesses occupied the building in its early history. One of the first owners, Dr. F.M. Smith, bought the building in 1907 and used it for a drug store for some time. It then sold in 1918. Those Were the Days... reports, "During the next 11 years it housed several businesses, including a clothing store, second hand store, restaurant and bowling alley." A later owner of the building, Ralph Anderson, set pins in the bowling alley as a boy.

Holyoke's Post Office
changes locations

 Holyoke's history wouldn't be quite complete without mention of the United States Post Office which also makes the list of occupants of 110 S. Interocean Ave.
 According to the history of Phillips County Post Offices compiled by Doris Scott, Holyoke's Post Office was established in 1887. From its first location at 207 W. Denver St., it moved to 110 S. Interocean in the early 1900s.
 The Post Office operated from the north building which is the northeast section of present-day Deaver Hardware Hank.
 Nora Deaver of Deaver Hardware Hank noted the Post Office had a skylight as well as a tin ceiling that can still be found under the ceiling there today.
 Postmasters around this time period included F.M. Smith, appointed in 1911; W.A. White, 1914; Cecil M. Richardson, 1922; Dwight L. Willis, 1926; and Ralph Anderson, 1929.
 Initially, the Post Office Department fell under the Treasury Department in the United States. From 1829 to the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970, postmasters were political appointments. According to the Phillips County Post Office history, the person selected was usually an active politician in his community and was often the central committee chairman of either the Democratic or Republican party. Therefore, when national politics changed, so did the postmasters.
 The third and fourth locations of the Holyoke Post Office were the buildings known as the "Big Brick Drugstore" and the "Kelly Building" (the former Phillips County State Bank). They were located on either side of present-day Scheunemann's, and the original structures have both burned down. Before moving to the present-day location, the Post Office was in the building which now houses Colver and Killin's law office.

Gambles store established

 After serving as postmaster, Ralph Anderson took on a significant career change. On May 22, 1934 he opened the Gambles store at 110 S. Interocean Ave. in the former Post Office building.

 Ralph's original Gambles store was only a 25 by 40 foot structure in the northeast part of present-day Deaver Hardware Hank. According to an article in the May 17, 1934 Holyoke

Enterprise, the interior of the building was remodeled for the new business.
 The next week the paper reported, "The store deals mainly in light hardware, automobile supplies, radios and radio supplies, paints and electric refrigerators and washers. There are over 800 of these stores in the middle west."
 Ralph had read about Gambles in a magazine and decided to pursue the business venture, starting out with only $1,000. An article in the March 24, 1983 Enterprise reports Anderson's Gambles store was the first in Colorado and was very successful for being established in the depression years.
 The first Gambles store advertisement promoted refrigerators as low as $79.50, toilet paper at 10 for 39¢ and gallon paint for $2.69.
 Having grown up in the store, Ralph's son Deane said Gambles brings back many memories. He remembers going to Sterling with his father in their Model A and trailer to pick up merchandise. Among many jobs at the store, Deane worked there at age 9, sweeping the floors for 50 cents a week.
 Years after establishing the Gambles store, the Andersons also bought the building to the south and expanded the business. Deane said when the store first opened, Hester's Dry Goods occupied the southern part.
 The north part of the store was rented from Will Heginbotham, and Deane recalls negotiations with him about knocking out a door between the two buildings. He knew what it would take to win over Heginbotham—money. After Deane convinced him it would save money since only one employee would be able to watch both buildings instead of two people, they constructed a door to connect the north and south sides of the store.
 Other structural changes later on included additions to the west of the original structures. Removing part of the wall in the rear then allowed for more room for merchandise. A brick wall was added to the front of the north part, matching the south building as much as possible.
 Ralph was not the only family member to work in the Post Office as his wife Hazel served as a clerk there from 1929-1947. (Their sons Dale and Deane would later work at the Post Office as well.) Hazel joined Ralph at Gambles in 1948. For the next 10 years she took care of the north side of the store selling dry goods, toys and clothing as well as hats sent by consignment from New York.
Anderson's legacy continues
 On Jan. 1, 1958 Deane and his wife Bijie bought the business from Deane's parents. Ralph and Hazel semi-retired after operating the store for over 20 years.
 According to the Dec. 26, 1957 Enterprise issue, Ralph and Hazel continued to oversee the "north store" (dry goods), but it adopted a new name—Andersons.
 In the 1983 article, Deane described Gambles as a "general store" which features "hardware items, furniture, appliances, garden tools, auto accessories, bicycles, toys and housewares." He said, "We try to be everything to everybody and to satisfy people's needs."
 Deane started out with only $2,000, and had to come up with some big money-making ideas in a hurry when his first order came to $5,000. Having worked in the store for many years as a youth, Deane was already well accustomed to salesmen techniques. This new challenge was fun and exciting for Deane and would be the first of many promotions for the store.
 How to Beat the Pants off Your Competition is a book Deane has written to feature over 100 promotion ideas for small businesses, all of which he tried out in his own store. Deane started compiling his out-of-the-box campaigns for the book in the '80s and finished after selling the store a few years later. He said, "I have had to weather the storms of competition, recession

and declining population. Without these promotions, I might not be in business today."

 One promotion was having customers guess the weight of "Chester the Pig" kept in a freezer at the store. Of course word got out around town, and everyone flocked to the store to see the over-sized pig. Deane thought the best part was watching women scream when they opened the freezer.

 "Free Diamond!" was the name of another of Deane's promotions.As many as 450 customers came to the store for a chance to find a diamond frozen in one of 1,100 ice cubes. It worked perfectly for Deane as customers browsed the sale items while waiting for their ice cubes to melt.

 Other promotions involved using photos of the Andersons' baby girl Elisa as well as dropping ping pong balls from an airplane onto mainstreet.

 A monumental change came for the Andersons in 1982 when the Gambles company took out bankruptcy and folded. At this point, Deane and Bijie decided to switch to United Hardware Company (Hardware Hank Stores), which is a member owned cooperative. Interocean Avenue's longstanding Gambles name changed to Anderson Hardware.

 Even though the store is always changing, some things remain consistent. Ever noticed the massive elk head towering over merchandise on the south wall of the store? For almost 50 years, this trophy animal has been a unique enhancement to the store's decor. Deane said his cousin Gerald Millage shot the elk in 1961 and even made the headlines in The Denver Post.

Deavers buy hardware store

 The Anderson family tradition came to a close on March 2, 1991 when Deane and Bijie turned over the business to new owners Steve and Nora Deaver. In its 18th year, Deaver Hardware Hank is still a strong asset to Holyoke today.

 With a grand opening event April 25-27, 1991, Deavers started business with a bang. Newspaper advertisements boasted hard-to-beat sales and grand opening prizes including enough paint to paint your house, a free VCR and free baseball caps.

 Nora said they continued to do much of the same business ventures the Andersons had started. An Enterprise article noted in the first year of ownership, the Deavers added trees, bedding plants and baby chickens to their inventory. Lawn and garden season is still one of the most important times of year for Deaver Hardware Hank.

 Everything from lawnmowers and patio chairs to flowers and bicycles are displayed on the sidewalk outside the store, inviting customers to check out the rows of merchandise within the building.

 While much of the inventory stays the same, the Deavers are always trying out new ideas to provide Holyoke with a variety of services that aren't available elsewhere in town. Notably, within the last four years, they branched out to areas including locksmith services, repair on electric scooters and E-bay assistance through consignment.

 "Always gotta change something—you get bored if you don't," said Nora.

 Grandma's New To You is Steve and Nora's latest endeavor. New and used antiques and collectibles are now displayed in the northeast section of the store.

 Deaver Hardware Hank is much more than just another hardware store, and it will continue to evolve through time. Every year the store adds another handful of memories to the collection that makes up the extensive history of the unforgettable building at 110 S. Interocean Ave.