

Soda Fountain in West Virginia Appeals to Nostalgia, Memories

今回は、レトロな雰囲気が漂う「ソーダファウンテン」の話題です。かつてのアメリカでは、薬局に併設された飲食カウンターで人々が飲み物や軽食を楽しみ、自然と会話が生まれていました。薬を受け取る場所でありながら、地域の憩いの場でもあったようです。ちなみに「pharmacy」は「薬局」という意味で、薬剤師は「pharmacist」といいます。今も一部にこうした場所が残っており、レトロな空間で思い出を語り合う人々の姿が見られます。あなたの地域にも、昔のままの雰囲気が残るお気に入りの場所がありますか？



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

In 2023, if you visit a [pharmacy](#), you might be sick and in need of medicine. If you were to visit a pharmacy 100 years ago, you might go there to buy medicine. But you might also go there for a soda or tonic – drinks with carbonated water from a soda fountain. You might also even eat lunch while waiting for your medicine.

These businesses, called soda fountains, were widely popular in the first half of the 20th century. But over the last 70 years, most soda fountains have closed.

There are still a few soda fountains out there, however. One is in Kenova, West Virginia. It is called Griffith and Feil Drug. The business is 131 years old.

Ric Griffith is the owner of the soda fountain. He is keeping the tradition going. He explained that soda fountains were not just a place to eat lunch.

"It was a place where you had an experience. When you had a soda fountain, people would stay longer, they'd sit down, and they'd share stories," Griffith said.

Both Griffith and his daughter Heidi are pharmacists. Pharmacists are people who prepare and give out medicines in a store or hospital. Their pharmacy employees work in the back of the store, while the front is a restaurant and soda fountain. The restaurant offers daily lunch and dinner choices.

People go there not just for the food and drinks, but they also take in the retro surroundings. There is a jukebox that plays music, neon-pink signs, vintage chairs, a metal ceiling and black-and-white pictures.

Carbonated drinks became popular in the 1800s. Acid phosphate drinks were later developed. Pharmacists would mix acid phosphate into the drinks for those seeking treatments. This is why soda fountains were often found in pharmacies.

As soda fountain [manufacturing](#) improved, so did the recipes and flavors. Food choices were then added. As customers waited on their [prescriptions](#), they were able to eat and have a soda.

Behind the soda fountain counters are soda "jerks" -- the people who prepare old-fashioned phosphate drinks. They are not called "jerks" because they are mean; the term "jerk" also describes the movement that is used to pull the device on the soda fountain machine that makes liquid come out.

Malli Jarrett and Nathaniel Fornash are the soda jerks at Griffith and Feil Drug.

"It's fun working at a place like this, watching all the customers come in, looking around, taking a step back in time and telling me about how a lot of them used to work here when they were younger," Jarrett said.

During the late 1950s, many small family-run pharmacies started changing their business practices. Soda fountains were replaced with shelves for food and home supplies. Government rules became stricter. And fast-food restaurants and large pharmacies became the norm.

Pharmacies with soda fountains could not keep up and many closed forever. A few stayed open as either ice cream places or gift stores. Some closed either the soda shop side or the pharmacy side of the business.

In the past five years, many of the country's oldest soda fountains, like The Highland Park Soda Fountain in Dallas, Texas, and The Central Drug Store in Bessemer City, North Carolina, shut down.

But in recent years, there has also been a return of soda fountains.

Ric Griffith does not have any memories of his father's original soda fountain. That is because it was removed in 1957, when Griffith was just 9 years old. In 2004, he put another soda fountain in his store.

After he reopened the soda fountain, he recalled a man and his granddaughter sitting in a [booth](#). The man shared stories about his younger self many years earlier.

He would sit at the same booths after school and order a cherry Coke. Griffith recalls the look on the granddaughter's face as, "...wonderful... She'd never thought of her grandfather as ever having been young. He was always her grandfather."

Griffith is glad to offer a place for people to sit around the soda fountain and share stories, instead of just getting fast food.

"And so, when we preserve history, we're not just preserving [artifacts](#)," Griffith said. "We're preserving a style of living, a way of interacting. The soda fountain has blessed me in many ways."

I'm Faith Pirlo from Morgantown, West Virginia.

And I'm Anna Mateo from Weirton, West Virginia.

John Raby wrote this story for The Associated Press. Faith Pirlo adapted this story for Learning English.

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. pharmacy (n.) a shop that sells medicine or prepares medicine ordered by a doctor

You can pick up your medicine at the [pharmacy](#) across the street.

2. manufacturing (n.) the process of making things, often in a factory

[Manufacturing](#) and tourism are two major parts of the local economy.

3. prescription (n.) an order for medicine, prepared by a doctor

I have a [prescription](#) for some cold medicine.

4. booth (n.) a special kind of seat in a restaurant in which people face each other

We sat in the [booth](#) at the Italian restaurant and had a wonderful dinner.

5. artifact (n.) an object that is left over from a past culture or society

This stone tool is an [artifact](#) from over ten thousand years ago.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What is a soda fountain?

2. What kinds of things did people do at a soda fountain?

3. Why did most soda fountains close in the late 1950s?

4. Why do you think Ric Griffith chose to reopen his father's soda fountain?

5. What kinds of traditional restaurants or services in Japan have started to disappear over the years?