

Way We Were

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Title: The Lawrence Boarding House

The historic homes of Park City have all lived many different lives. Some of these lives and stories have been lost to history while others have managed to survive. The home at 305 Park Avenue is one of the lucky ones. The current structure on this plot was restored in 1991 using historic photographs to a house built in 1896 by Gilbert and Elisabeth Gregor. They built their home in a two-story version of the pyramid style architecture. Pyramid style architecture is much more commonly found in single stories than in two stories. This makes the home at 305 Park Avenue even more unique with only ten two story pyramid style homes found in Park City. Trademarks of pyramid style architecture include a square floor plan with the main door set slightly off centre between two groups of windows.

The Great Fire of 1898 is one of the challenges that the home at 305 Park Ave has had to face merely two years after its construction. Miraculously the house survived the Great Fire when the two smaller homes next door were covered in wet burlap.

The passage of the Boarding House Law of 1901 took the home at 305 Park Ave from being a family home to a boarding house. Prior to 1901, unmarried miners were required by territorial law to live in company bunkhouses. The mine owners fought for this territorial law so that they could have mine workers close at hand at any hour of the day. However they also charged exorbitant rates of one dollar a day, which amounted to a third of the miner's total wages! The passage of this new law was watched very closely by Parkites and the Park Record received many requests to print the law which they did verbatim in March of 1901. The Boarding House Law of 1901 allowed unmarried miners to choose their living accommodations. A flurry of new boarding houses opened up. Mary C. Lawrence and her husband John Lawrence, a local saloon owner, bought the home at 305 Park Avenue and Mrs. Lawrence opened and operated the Lawrence boarding house.

Interested in learning more stories about our historic homes and their infamous owners? Join the Park City Museum for its annual Historic Home Tour on Saturday, June 15, 2013. For more information contact the Park City Museum at 435-649-7457.



Caption: Before and After. 305 Park Avenue as a one story home after a chimney fire destroyed the second story in 1960. 305 Park Ave as it stands now restored to the vision of Gilbert and Elisabeth Gregor.

Credit: Park City Historical Society & Museum (both images)