

Way We Were

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A happy few hours

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July of 1918 was a busy month. July 9 saw the worst train wreck in the country's history in Nashville, Tennessee, when two trains collided at 60 miles an hour. Over one hundred were killed and another 170 injured. On July 17-18, the Russian royal family, the Romanovs, was executed in the midst of the Russian Civil War. And throughout nearly every region of the world, the Great War raged on in its fourth year. Though affected by these larger events - World War I in particular - life in our little mountain town went on.

Herbert Walter Deighton, a resident of Park City, sold war bonds to Parkites to support the troops. He and his wife Alice were not untouched by the war, but on July 28, 1918, a sunny Sunday, members of the Deighton family found reason to be jolly. Relatives and friends drove up from Salt Lake City to join those already in Park City for an excursion. The large group spent time at the Midway Hot Pots before returning to enjoy a "lawn lunch" at Herbert and Alice's home. The guests also included family members from New Mexico.

Perhaps the outing and picnic served as a welcome distraction for Mr. and Mrs. Deighton. Their son, Herbert Harper, had registered for military service after graduating from Northwestern Dental College in Chicago in the spring of 1918. He was to serve in the Dental Corps and had left the day before to report for training and service.

Earlier in the July, Park City had received notice of the first war death of a Summit County resident, Frank E. Peterson. The consequences of violence were not far from Parkites' minds. Surrounded by over a dozen family members, Mr. and Mrs. Deighton did not have to dwell on the fact that one of their children had just left to join a devastating war and the very real possibility that they may not see him again.

For the most part, the town remained optimistic about all of the boys who left and Deighton's departure was no different. As the Park Record noted a few days later, the town expected "some interesting letters from 'Bert' later on." In the same issue, the Record also recounted the picnic at Bert's parent's house. "It was a happy crowd," the paper said of those gathered.

While the paper did not include specific details, the group might have played lawn games like croquet or cheered on the children in short races. Food included, among other things, apples, as seen in the picture. Mrs. Deighton had submitted a recipe for celery relish to the *Rocky Mountain Cook Book*, compiled by the First Congregational Church in 1915. Perhaps she served her relish on July 28, on crackers or sandwiches or in a salad. Regardless, "various and varied 'stunts' made life very happy for a few hours" on the Deighton's lawn.



Image ID: 1991.8.1

Credit: Park City Historical Society and Museum, Herbert Deighton Collection

Caption: Members and extended members of the Deighton family at a picnic on July 28, 1918. Herbert W. Deighton sits on the far left; his wife, Alice Deighton is seated fourth in from the right.