

Way We Were

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An Imperial legacy

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John Bogan was a Park City pioneer. He emigrated from Ireland to Illinois in 1857 where he met and married his wife. In 1877, they made their way west, living first in Dry Fork, then Alta before arriving in Park City by 1879. Bogan began prospecting and soon established a profitable claim, the Bogan Mining Company, which was later incorporated into the Silver King Consolidated.

The legacy he left for Park City is also tied in with the 1901 passage of the Boarding House Bill. Prior to 1901, mining companies required unmarried miners to live in company-run boarding houses on or near mine property. The Boarding House Bill revoked the companies' rights to establish such requirements. Given a choice of where to live, miners almost immediately left the canyons for Main Street. The exodus prompted a flurry of construction to accommodate demand, and several private boarding houses were quickly built in the following years. In 1904, John Bogan acquired property and completed construction of the Bogan Boarding House at 221 Main Street, known to many Parkites today as the Imperial Hotel.

The building has had a colorful history over the last century. After John Bogan's death in 1907, the boarding house remained in the family for several years until it was sold by his sons John and James. During the 1918 "Spanish Flu" pandemic, it was converted into an emergency hospital. By the 1920s it had been rechristened the Imperial Hotel and was operated by Peter Pedrotto and his wife Mary. The 1920 census shows 22 boarders, mostly Italian and Spanish immigrants.

At the height of Prohibition in the 1930s, the hotel was owned by Barney Lazaro. One afternoon in May 1930, the "anti-vice" police squad raided the hotel. According to a report in the *Park Record*, the police found "more than 300 gallons of intoxicating wine" in the basement. One tank was "so imbedded in solid cement that it could not be destroyed." Instead, the police siphoned the wine from the tank into the gutter outside. Lazaro was arrested and pled guilty to possession. He was released after paying a fine of \$275.

In 1940, a fire destroyed the upper floors of the hotel and caused \$3,000 in damage. The owner, Mrs. Ramon Sanchez, unfortunately had just spent \$9,500 in the purchase and renovation of the building. The Imperial was repaired and continued to be operational.

During the 1960s, David Chaplin and Gordon Despain ran it as an apartment house serving the emerging ski industry. They affectionately nicknamed it the "Impossible Hotel." By the early 1970s, it had fallen into disrepair and was condemned by the city. Most of the historical furniture and hardware was sold in a "giant garage sale." A few years later it was reopened and continued to serve as a hotel until 2006. It was purchased by Riverhorse last year and the old building will once again be a part of Main Street's charm.

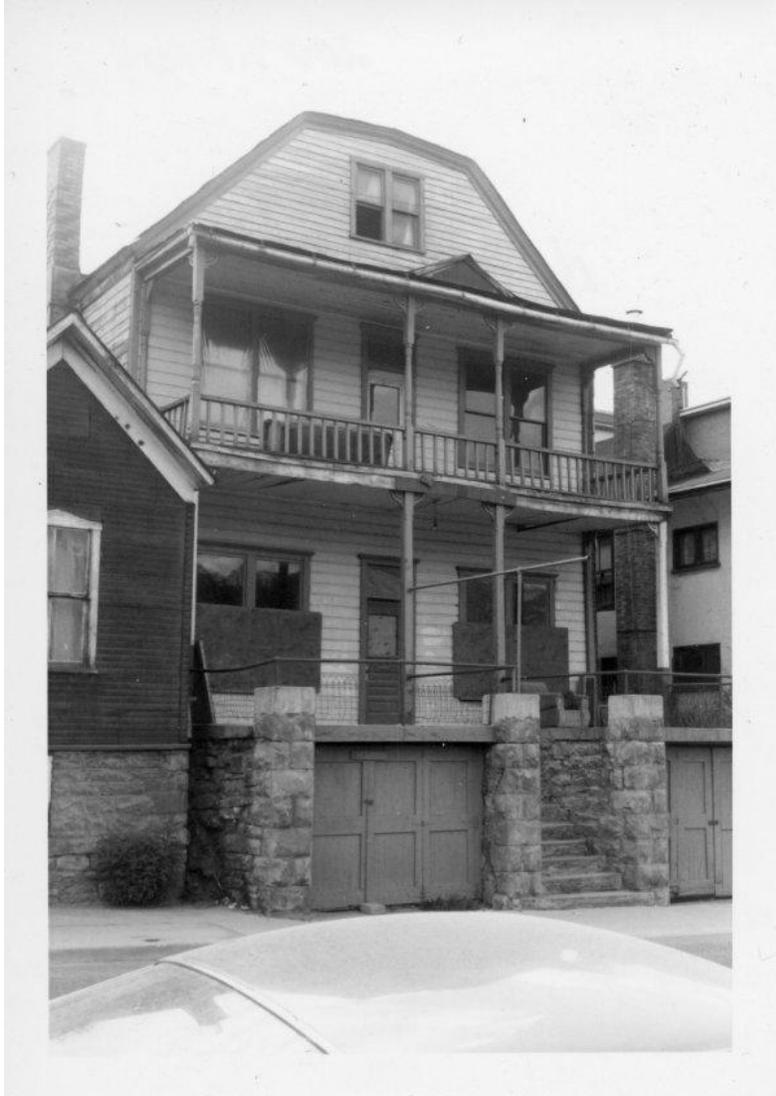


Image: 2007.1.104

Credit: Park City Historical Society and Museum

Caption: The run-down conditions of the Imperial Hotel during the 1960s are clearly evident in this photo from 1968.

Sources:

“The Boarding House Law,” *Park Record*, Mar 30, 1901

“Another Pioneer,” *Park Record*, Apr 13, 1907

1920 census, District 0127, Park City, Summit County, Utah, p.2

“Police Court,” *Park Record*, May 23, 1930

“Hotel Destroyed by Fire,” *Park Record*, Jan 25, 1941

Park Record, June 29, 1972

Intensive Level Survey, Historic Site Inventory, Main Street Historic District, compiled by CRSA, 2015