

Way We Were

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A long walk

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How far would you hike for \$50? In 1913, Annie and Teenie Wilson, Mazie Kerr, and Freida Young did over thirty miles in one day.

April 1913 saw the dawn of spring in Park City. Residents around town were preparing their gardens, ordering chickens, and cleaning up the town. Struck with spring fever, the Wilson sisters, Mazie, and Freida believed they could hike from Park City to Salt Lake City in eight hours and accepted a \$50 wager to do so.

Twenty-one year old Annie was a bookkeeper at the local power company. Her sister Christina (Teenie) was in her final year of high school. Teenie's friends Mazie Kerr and Freida Young were also local high schoolers.

According to reports, the girls "trained actively for two weeks" as Park City slowly warmed up and the weather improved. At 5 o'clock in the morning on April 26, they set off. Their goal was to reach the Rio Grande depot in Salt Lake City. They planned on seven hours of active hiking with a one hour "grace for rest and nourishment on the way."

Local businessman C.W. Hodgson came across the girls around 7:15am while he was riding his horse near Gogorza. He took several pictures of the intrepid young women (which he later displayed at his jewelry store) then wished them well on their way. Their early-morning start and anticipated time frame meant that the girls had predicted a 2pm arrival at the Salt Lake depot. However, by 4:30pm, no word had been received.

The *Park Record*, and presumably many Parkites, had doubts that the girls could make the journey. When no word was received of their arrival, many supposed that they were "hiding in the neighborhood of Snyderville, waiting for darkness to sneak back to town." "Girls," the paper said condescendingly, "Salt Lake is a long way for frail limbs and tender feet."

Word came later, however, that the girls had in fact completed a thirty-mile journey. The reason no one had heard from Salt Lake? The friends had gone the wrong way by mistake and ended up in Henefer. Their wrong turn took them "through brush and dust" and a waist-deep creek. Along the journey, they "[performed] many pedestrian stunts that would have done honor to our boy scouts."

The young women caught a train back to Park City the following morning. "It is safe to say that when the girls reached home...they had a warm spot in their hearts for their newly made friends in Henefer," the *Coalville Times* reported.

Annie, Teenie, Mazie, and Freida weren't done yet, however. After all, they'd proved themselves capable of such a long journey and there was still \$50 on the line. Two weeks later, on May 11, the four set off once more. This time, "slightly footsore but in good spirits," they successfully reached Salt Lake in just seven hours.



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Credit: Park City Historical Society and Museum

Caption: Charles Hodgson, left, stands in front of the jewelry store he owned on Main Street. As a photographer, he also sold photography equipment and often took his camera out on weekend excursions or early morning rides. It was on such a morning that he came across the Henefer hikers.