

Way We Were
November 21, 2018
Battle of the Miners
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Nothing captures the fascination of a small town like the local high school football team playing for a state championship late in November 1941. Not even the deadly crash of an Air Corps B-18 bomber on a mountain side two miles from Main Street.

The football team shapes and inspires the community, holds it together and keeps it going through boom and bust. The team's success is a source of community pride; the heartbeat that keeps the town alive. The people of Park City loved their team and almost all had a personal connection to at least one of the boys on the 1941 squad.

The final Park City High School football game of the season kept folks' minds off their everyday problems. In a battle of Miners, Park City would meet Bingham High School for the Utah Class B State Championship on November 21. The game was to be played at the University of Utah's stadium Friday at 2 p.m.

Arrangements had been made for the Park City High School students and fans to occupy the east side of the stadium. Stores throughout the city closed at 12:45 p.m. so that employees might attend the game. The teams were very evenly matched and an excellent game was predicted - well worth the fifty cent price for admission.

Park City's Miners found themselves in the Class B state title game despite getting no better than a scoreless tie with the Tigers of Orem's Lincoln High the previous Thursday. For the first time in history, an obscure Utah High School Athletic Association rule was used to break the deadlock. The U.H.S.A.A. ruling awarded tie games in semifinal grid battles to the team making the most yardage. Not once in the past had two teams tied in the state semi-finals. After spending a long, long time on the athletic shelf, the rule was used to give the Park City top honors for the day.

With the country on the brink of World War II and a Utah state high school football championship up for grabs, news of the bomber's crash on Iron Mountain did little to garner the attention of Park City's residents. Despite gaining national headlines, a short article in passing on the Park Record's front page was the only local offer of what little information was known about the accident that took the lives of two airmen.

The Salt Lake Tribune described the title game as "a rock'em, sock'em grid duel." Bingham's Miners blasted aside the Miners of Park City 13 to 0 in front of more than 1,000 fans on a bitter cold afternoon. According to the Tribune: "to single out any one player on either team for special mention would be an injustice to every lad who saw action. They all gave everything they had." Many of the boys on the gridiron that November day would go on to distinguish themselves on the field of battle in WWII as would the five survivors of the B-18 bomber crash.

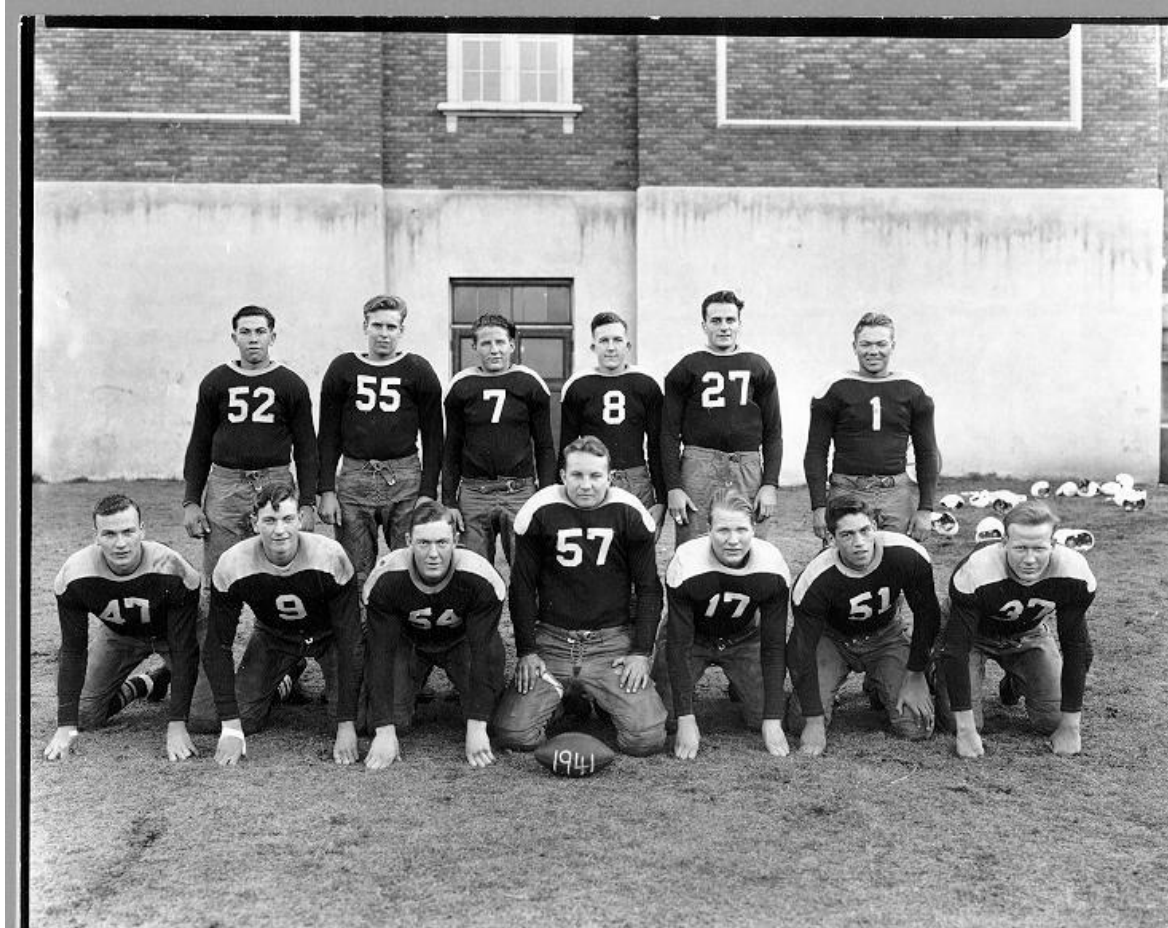


Image ID: 1987.2.165

Credit: Park City Historical Society and Museum, Pop Jenks Collection

Caption: The 1941 Park City High School Miners football team pictured here lost only one game that season: the final Class B State Championship against Bingham High School Miners.