

Way We Were

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Building Community

Jenette Purdy, Director of Education at the Park City Museum

Park City has come together in both dark times and celebration to build the community we love. Whether it was rebuilding the town after the devastation of the Great Fire of 1898 or building Olympic spirit through thousands of volunteer hours, Park City has a strong tradition of community pride.

Maybe it was because this town saw its share of disasters, but Park City residents were quick to help others in need. In 1895, they raised \$1,000 to send to Alma, WY where 60 miners had been killed in a coal mining accident. A few years later, another coal mine accident devastated Scofield, UT and Park City residents raised \$2,000 for support. And after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, Park City sent \$4,000 and a railroad car of supplies to help aid the troubled community.¹

The greatest contributions, perhaps, were those given in Park City by the many community groups, fraternal organizations, and church groups. Fraternal organizations helped raise money for families of miners who died in mine accidents and from miner's consumption.² In 1883 Society Hall, the scene of entertaining plays was built through subscriptions by the fraternal organizations.³ The *Park Record* also printed many thank you notices to community groups for their support in the face of death, illness, and tragedy.⁴

Other projects through the years included beautification of the Glenwood Cemetery by the fraternal organizations and of the City Cemetery by the Park City Kiwanis Club, Park City Fireman, the Women's Athenaeum Club, and the Park City Elks (1931)⁵, "vocational training for disabled soldiers" organized through the Elks Lodge (1919)⁶, a victory garden contest organized by the Kiwanis club during World War II (1945)⁷, and the Works Progress Administration offered adult education classes (1939) about which the *Park Record* reported: "Park City holds the record of the entire state for attendance at these classes and for interest and improvements in the various classes."⁸

Today, some of those historically popular groups, such as fraternal organizations, have dwindled in membership, but Park City continues the work of building community, through individual

¹ Treasure Mountain Home, pg 72

² Treasure Mountain Home, pg 40

³ Treasure Mountain Home, pg 30

⁴ One Example: Park Record, January, 13, 1928

⁵ Park Record, May 29, 1931

⁶ Park Record, May 9, 1919

⁷ Park Record, May 24, 1945

⁸ Park Record, Feb 9, 1939

citizen work and the approximate 85 non-profits in town. These nonprofits might echo the sentiment reported in the *Park Record* from remarks given in 1925 regarding the “Work of the Woman’s Athenaeum”: “From a financial point of view we have not been as successful, but from the standpoint of what our real work is meant to be—civic and literary—the work has been a success.”

While the goal of nonprofits is not necessarily financial in nature, financial contributions are crucial in moving the work of these organizations forward. On November 8th, Park City will come together for 24 hours of giving through Live PC Give PC. Visit http://livepcgivepc.razoo.com/giving_events/LivePCGivePC13/home to find out more.



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Caption: During the Christmas season of 1949, The Lions Club, along with fraternal organizations, the High School, Boy Scouts, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Veterans Auxiliary, the Woman’s Athenaeum, and the Kiwanis Club, helped make the holiday drive a huge success.

Photo Credit: Park City Historical Society & Museum, Kendall Webb Collection