

Way We Were
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The Little Rascals: Park City Edition

"Last week the juvenile judge handled several cases of juveniles who were taken into custody for stealing gas, hub caps, chickens, beer, in fact most everything movable." –The *Park Record* June 3, 1954

There's always one or two in every bunch and in special cases a whole group. They are the "Dennis the menace" types who find joy in causing trouble and childish pranks. We've enjoyed comics, television shows, blockbuster movies and local folk tales of these said pranksters doing what they do best. A personal favorite for me is the Sandlot, a movie about a group of boys, their love of baseball and a special bond they shared for causing or getting into trouble. It is clear that they needed more to do in their free time and that their parents had their hands full.

The local newspaper the *Park Record* is full of reports on Park City's juvenile delinquents and the escapades they have gotten themselves into. One such incident occurred on April of 1912, when "two youthful burglars" gained access into a locked grocery store, where they stole twenty dollars worth of groceries, candy, and tobacco. The thieves also left behind evidence of a relaxed evening that they spent in the store; the police officers reported that the floor was littered with banana peels, orange peels, and cigarette stubs. Thankfully the intruders were caught and sent to a probation officer to dole out their punishment, and the police recovered most of the stolen goods in an old cabin in Empire canyon.

The youth of Park City, it seemed, got a bit out of control from time to time. Several articles highlight the issues with juveniles and that the punishment handed out wasn't severe enough to deter them from continuing to cause trouble. Though times have changed and children today are far more occupied by extracurricular activities, there are occasionally those bored with life who finds it appealing to rebel. What child in reality hasn't found their own way to rebel against their parents? In June of 1954, the issue had finally come to a head with the *Park Record* reporting that, "The officers are determined to 'clamp down' on juvenile delinquency, which has been running rampant for sometime past."



Image#: 1947.31.13 resized

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

Caption: Innocent until proven guilty...but these two look like they're up to no good! Marsac School 6th grade class, 1947.