

Way We Were
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Sarah Hill, Research Librarian
A paintbrush with roots

Art is all around us, especially here in Park City. It can be both man-made and a part of the natural environment. Whether we have a professional or untrained eye, we all see art differently. Along with that comes the cliché, “beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” Art can evoke a wide range of emotions, and the same piece can mean something entirely different to everyone who views it.

In an article published November 14th of 1968, the Park City Centennial Committee was preparing a schedule to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first noted records of two ore discoveries in the area. The find was “made in the year 1869 by Rufus Walker and Empriam Hanks. Their mineral finds brought more prospecting into the Park City District and within a short time the mining camp became world famous for its rich argenteriferous ore.” A part of the tentative schedule was the possibility of an art festival, and though that event never happened during the Centennial Celebration, it’s important to note that not two years later the town was celebrating its first annual Art Festival.

In the summer of 1970, Park City and other Utah artists were invited to show off their talents and sell their wares. The *Park Record* in June of 1970 published a piece discussing the ‘plans for an outdoor art festival.’ The two day event would not only include displays of adult artists, but also local school children’s art, which would be exhibited and judged with awards given. The first working committee members were Mike Dontje, Victor Buck, Jennifer Giddings, John Flanner, Linda Thille, Mike and Prudence Jones, George Hanley and Charles Barnes.

Just a few days after the first festival was over, the *Park Record* wrote an article with the headline, “Art Festival Called Finest Project” describing its success. Local artists raved about the turn out and sales they made. One such artist was Irene Chipman a painter from Salt Lake City, who “remarked that is was the best she has ever attended and is looking forward to next year’s event.”

Now celebrating its 45th year, the Arts Festival has become comfortably rooted in the history of Park City’s culture. People from all over the country visit Park City during the festival to meet the artists, watch them work and purchase one-of-a-kind pieces of art.

Don’t miss out on the festivities this coming weekend. While you’re on Main Street, if you would like to learn more about a painter who transformed American art, stop by the Park City Museum to see our traveling exhibit *Wild Land: Thomas Cole and the Birth of American Landscape Painting*, on exhibit in the Tozer Gallery through October 20, 2014.

The Park City Historical Society & Museum is celebrating 30 years of preserving, protecting, and promoting Park City’s history and heritage.



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Credit: Park City Historical Society & Museum

Caption: James Stewart works on a pottery wheel while spectators watch his creation take shape during an early 1970s Park City Art Festival.