

Way We Were
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Out of Sight, Never Out of Mind (or Heart)

“If we live to be a hundred, no matter where we roam or what our estate, no locality will ever supplant dear old Park in our hearts.... It is good.... to forgather once a year, renew old acquaintance... and have one’s faith in human nature restored.” Park City Pork Chop, July 1926

Parkites are quite fortunate to live here. We enjoy a unique natural setting with a rich history and a community of active, engaged people we can call friends. As the July 19, 1929 *Park Record* said, “...the mountain homes nestled closely together in the narrow canyons have the effect of drawing the hearts of the people together”.

Our forbears from Park City’s early days felt the same as we do today. Some moved to other locales but did not leave in spirit. In places where there were concentrations of former Parkites, informal gatherings were organized. Sometimes these evolved into formal reunion picnics.

The first, attended by 150 people, was held July 1915 at Liberty Park in Salt Lake City. Interest was expressed in making this an annual gathering but that did not happen immediately; in August 1930, the “First” Annual Park City-Salt Lake Picnic was held, again at Liberty Park, and attended by over a thousand former and current Parkites. Following the picnic, a permanent organization was created to hold annual picnics. This commitment was upheld until 1938; perhaps it was just easier to drive up Parley’s Canyon and join in local events.

Many former Parkites resided in California. The first, and longest lasting (started as early as 1920), California reunion picnic was held in Los Angeles. In April 1922, Lawrence Raddon, a student at USC, reported that 50 Parkites had gathered in Santa Monica. The following year, all former Parkites living in California were invited to attend a formal reunion at the Santa Monica Pier. Close to 100 showed up and it was agreed that another would be held the next Summer. Due to the successes of these reunions, in 1925, a permanent Park City Picnic Association of Southern California was created to manage names and addresses of all Parkites living locally and to organize the annual reunion. By 1929, there were 350 families included as members of the picnic association. This picnic tradition in LA lasted until June 1981, when it was ended due to low attendance.

In May 1928, ML Condon penned a letter to *The Record* suggesting a reunion in San Francisco, as there were numerous former Parkites living there. This inaugural picnic took place in June 1928 at Golden Gate Park with 35 people attending. The Northern California picnic was held annually until 1957.

Some Parkites living in the Seattle/Tacoma area already had been holding informal get-togethers. The first annual Park City-Northwest picnic was held at Atlantic City Park on Aug 10, 1941. The last mention of a Northwest picnic was in the August 1952 Record, so it’s assumed formal reunions ended at that time.

Please read next week's article to learn more about the picnics and the people who attended.

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



Image# 2000.5.2

Credit: Park City Historical Society & Museum

Caption: Parkites learned at a young age how to enjoy a good picnic with family and friends. As some moved elsewhere, they took this appreciation for picnicking with them. Here, Edward Berry and his family take an outing to Weber Canyon in style, using their 1929 Nash automobile.