

From the desk of our Hubbard County Historian... Frank Mitchell

Fires not only had a lot to do with the appearance of Park Rapids but also the history of the buildings and businesses in town. The first recorded fire was the partial destruction of the original courthouse. It was built in 1889 on lots 12-22 of block 6. After the fire the county gave the building to Todd Township to be used as the town hall.

Another historical fire made the headlines in the Hubbard County Enterprise of January 1, 1903 and it read, "The Hospital Lies in Ashes. Dr. W.A. Stone's Fine Sanatorium Totally Destroyed by Fire." Early last Friday morning temperatures close to 30 degrees below zero, the hospital and Stone's residence burned to the ground. There were 17 Patients, and with employees and family, all 30 people were moved to safety. The patients were taken to Germania Hall, which was used as a temporary hospital. The building cost Dr. Stone over \$18,000.00 with only \$2000 insurance on the building and \$500.00 on the furniture. A new and better hospital was built on the same location on North Park Avenue called "The Park Sanitarium."

In 1920, A.W. and Herbert Stone remodeled the building and made it into a rooming house and called it the "Rainbow Inn." Harold and Barbara Walsh owned the building in 1962 and this also burned to the ground.

The Albert Mercantile Store reported a fire on April 16, 1908. The loss amounted to about \$8,000.00 with fire, smoke and water damage.

On Tuesday evening in June of 1909, the Hubbard County Clipper reported a fire on the 300th block of Main Street. Two buildings were totally destroyed, one belonged to J.D. Ressler and the other to J.J. Breur. The Eddy family had a steam laundry in the Ressler building. Theirs was a total loss as they had no insurance. A

brick fire wall on the south side of the Gage building was all that saved the Gage building and possibly other buildings on Main Street. However, the roof of this building also caught on fire causing much water damage to carpets and rugs in Way's Furniture Store. This was insured but the other two buildings had no insurance.

On June 18, 1910, another fire destroyed the Park Rapids planing mill and also 10 structures on the 200 block of Main Street. This became known as "The Big Fire."

Some of the business' that burned were the Central House, the Baptist Church, Tony Szusitzky's Barber Shop, Dr. Cutler's Drug Store, the Bowling Alley, Cliff Tubles building, a ladies rest room and Frank Rogers Household furniture.



In 1910 fire destroyed buildings in the 200 & 300 blocks of Park Rapids' Main street. Picture made possible from the Park Rapids Enterprise's Hubbard County A Century of Growth 1900-2000 via a loan from Hubbard County Historical Society.

In 1914, the Akeley Tribune reported a "Bad Fire in Park Rapids." At 7p.m., a fire broke out in the basement of the Pure Food Store. This fire destroyed that store and three other buildings. With temperatures of 24 below and a north wind blowing, it was feared the whole village would burn. Even with a broken water main, the fireman were able to contain the fire to the Pure Food Store, W.S. Languth's Cigar Factory,

Johnson Meat Market and Mrs. Horton's Millinery Shop. The loss was over \$30,000.00 to the four buildings.

Bishop's Department Store burned in January of 1933 and was rebuilt on the same location, which was the corner of 1st and Main.

The second "big fire" on Main Street occurred late in the afternoon on February 6, 1936. This was the "Gage Block Fire." The fire started in the Gage Building, which was a rooming house in the 300 block and was owned by Mrs. Anna Gage. There was 17 tenants living in this building. This block was also home to the State Bank. The Park Rapids Enterprise had their office located here for over 25 years. A list of the losses occurring in this fire included the Gage Building, furniture, fixtures and personal property. This was all valued at \$25,000.00, Joe Driscal ice cream machine and café \$5,000.00, Park Rapids Enterprise printing equipment \$5000.00, Olinger-Johnson Land Agency Office equipment \$100.00, Roy Peabody sign painting and materials \$350.00, Dr. & Mrs. Beasley household goods and clothing \$2000.00, the Robertson Lumber Company damage to yard \$2,500.00, Mr. & Mrs. Lee Roy Hinds \$1,700.00, Mr. & Mrs W.J. Shanley \$750.00, Mr. & Mrs. Gilbert Fabrick \$450.00, Mr. & Mrs. R.E. McMillen \$500.00, Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Cusey \$400.00, Earl Erickson \$50.00, Floyd Finney \$400.00, John Haberer window glass \$200.00, Northwestern Bell Telephone Company \$100.00 and Minnesota Power and Light Company loss of equipment and lines \$200.00.

In March 1938 the Park Rapids High School was partially destroyed by fire and was replaced with the Middle School.

Many of these fires started from overheated stoves or improper chimneys. This gave rise to brick buildings, which replaced old wooden structures.

Lake Country Scenic Byway Ambassadors

Lake Country Scenic Byway Ambassadors are the key to discovering and sustaining our Byway experience. As an Byway Ambassador you are expected to meet monthly and

Participate in the Ambassador Work Program & Projects as follows:

- The Fall Color Tour as narrators and guides.
- Commit to working on a Byway Discovery project of your choosing.
- Contribute information on your project to the **Byway Buzz** Newsletter
- Act as a "Hop-On" Guide for bus tours upon advance request.
- Ambassadors also give Lake Country Scenic Byway presentations to regional groups and associations.
- Placemats/maps Distribution
- Passport content development
- Coloring Book
- At Your Service (customer service training) Participation

At Your Service Training will be offered on March 17 at the Park Rapids C'Mon Inn.

This program is made possible through a Partnership Grant from the University of Minnesota Central Region Partnership.

At Your Service - Program Content

At Your Service: Working With Multicultural Customers engages participants in defining and understanding culture and the foundations of customer service. Exercises encourage participants to conceptualize culture broadly and help participants realize the significant role culture plays in the service encounter.

Awareness and sensitivity to cultural diversity helps service providers adapt delivery methods to ensure that each customer receives quality service to meet their needs and expectations.

The *At Your Service* program encourages participants to think about personal benefits to be gained from providing excellent service, helping them connect individual goals with those of their organization and their community.

Foundations of Service

At Your Service exercises put participants in both customer and service provider roles to introduce the foundations of outstanding customer service, which we identify as the "Four A's" - Attitude, Attention, Action, & Appearance. Participants build their knowledge and service delivery skills in these foundation areas.

Program Content includes:

- Defining Culture
- Definitions of Culture
- The Culture Iceberg
- Customer's View of Service
- Moments of Truth

Attitude: Project A Service Attitude

- The Service Attitude
- How Attitudes are Formed

Attention: Focus on the Customer

- Perception and the influence of culture
- Customer Needs and Expectations

- Communication Dynamics
- Skills to Respond to Customer Needs
- Developing and Using Intuition

Action: Take Initiative and Respond to the Customer

- Know Your Job
- Know Your Community/Region/Organization
- Know Your Resources
- Service Standards
- The Power of Words

Appearance: Present Your Best Side to the Customer

- Personal Appearance
- Facilities/Surroundings
- Team Approach

Program participants surveyed recently give *At Your Service* high marks.

- 91% of respondents said *At Your Service* met their customer service training needs.
- Over 50% said the program definitely helped them improved their customer service skills.
- Over 70% report using the program's four main skills "often" or "constantly" on the job!

"After the training program was offered to employees in our community, I observed them doing a better job of customer service and they were also more aware of the customer and the customer's needs. I think that this speaks to the effectiveness of the [Minnesota] *At Your Service* program."

**Scholarships are available for Byway Ambassadors
Contact Katie at 218-732-4111 or email at katie@parkrapids.com**

Become a Member of the Lake Country Scenic Byway

Become a Member of the Byway Today.

Benefits include:

- Stakeholder in sustainability of the Lake Country Scenic Byway
- Newsletter Subscription
- Input in Key Byway and Highway issues.
- Email announcements
- Opportunity to attend Association Meetings if desired
- Input in Key Byway and Highway issues.

Byway Membership Levels

- 88 Mile Benefactor.....\$88
- Scenic Sponsor.....\$25
- Friends.....\$10
- Ambassador.....\$5

Organization

Name
Address
Phone FAX
Email