



## UTE PASS HISTORICAL SOCIETY & Pikes Peak Museum

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### 1913 blizzard buried Bald Mountain

By Martha Gayler

Printed in March 24, 1983

Ute Pass Courier

Our recent Christmas blizzard brings to mind stories of the big snow of 1913. That snow began on Wednesday, Dec. 3, 1913, and raged for more than 23 hours, burying the entire Pikes Peak region under a great blanket of snow. It was called the worst storm in the history of the state. On Bald Mountain this snow drifted to heights of 20 feet, and it was more than four feet deep on the level. This meant that the homesteaders and their families who lived there would be snowbound for the next 60 days.

Bald Mountain got its name from the bald knob that can be seen from Woodland Park looking east to the Rampart Range. At the time of the 1913 blizzard, there were eight families comprising around 35 people living on Bald Mountain. Each family lived on a 160 acre tract of land they were granted under the Homestead Act of 1862. For the land to become their own, they had to live on it and farm the land for five years.

Being snowbound tested the courage and initiative of these hearty homesteaders, and it wasn't long before they learned how to make skis out of old boards and barrels staves. They would heat the ends of the boards to make them turn up like ski tips. These homemade skis were from four to eight feet long, and four to five inches wide. Once they learned to manage their skis, the homesteaders were mobile and could visit each other, skiing from ranch to ranch.

Madge Mitts Kloepfer, who was a girl of 16 at the time, tells of skiing to the top of the Kentucky Trail, which is on what is now the Armentrout Ranch, and then wading down the trail through waist deep snow into Woodland Park. The Kentucky Trail comes out at the Woodland Park Cemetery. This trail was a popular shortcut into Woodland Park from Bald Mountain. Madge said that by the time she reached the General Store in Woodland (owned by John Carroll and George Sadler), her clothes would be soaked, and she would be shivering with the cold. She would warm herself by the pot-bellied stove in the store before trudging back up the trail with her backpack full supplies for her family. Her father, Steven Mitts, homesteaded the ranch that is now the Teen Challenge Ranch on Bald Mountain.



Blizzard of 1913 on Bald Mountain

*Mrs. Lynn Gayler*

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**Upcoming Event:**

Ute Pass Historical Society & Pikes Peak Museum  
Annual Patron Luncheon

Saturday, January 25, 2020  
Ute Pass Cultural Center  
Doors open for Patrons at 12:15 pm  
Buffet Lunch: 12:45 pm  
*Doors open to the Public: 1:15 pm*

Silent Auction from 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm  
Winners announced immediately after the program  
Cash or checks only, please!

Program: 1:30 pm



Liz Duckworth as  
*Poker Alice Tubbs*

*Poker Alice Tubbs, a lady gambler, lived and played in mining boomtowns across Colorado, South Dakota, and the west. Her stories of adventure, risk, and reward take a fresh look at mining towns like Creede, Leadville, and Central City in Colorado, Silver City in New Mexico, and Sturgis and Deadwood in South Dakota. Local author, Liz Duckworth brings Poker Alice's story to life — wearing Victorian costume and speaking in first person. Liz is the author of Poker Alice Tubbs: The Straight Story, a book that debunks myths and tells the truth about a legendary lady who smoked cigars and won her way in a man's world.*

**Long Time UPHS Volunteer Fred Zobel Honored at Recent Get Together**

When it comes to Midland Train history, Fred Zobel has been the organization's go to guy for many years. You could find Fred at the Saturday History Park tours in the Carroll Den, telling stories and history of the trains that once roared up and down Ute Pass.



Fred was honored for his many years of service with a plaque at the UPHS' Volunteer Social recently. No matter what, Fred was always ready to share at school tours and wherever he was needed. Along with all the other wonderful volunteers at UPHS, the work and dedication shown is inspiring. The organization could not get along without our wonderful volunteers.



**THANK YOU!!!**

*Photos by Renee Rowcliffe*

**Thank you to ...  
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Paul Loyd  
Peak Internet

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Madge said skiing was the only recreation the young people had during those snowbound days, and in the evenings they would ski to each other’s homes for coffee and fellowship.

At the end of the 60 days, when the homesteaders saw there was a chance of opening up the road into Woodland Park, they all banded together and pooled their horses—more than 50 head—to break a trail into Woodland Park. This was quite a strenuous ordeal for both man and beast. When the lead horses would tire from fighting the heavy drifts of snow, fresh horses would be brought up from the rear to take their place and carry on. The homesteaders persevered with this trailblazing through the snow until they had a road open into Woodland Park, which they could travel with horse and wagon.



Roberts Homestead on Bald Mountain, 1916  
*Fred Roberts*

Here are the names of the heroic families living on Bald Mountain at this time: the Hackmans, the Mittses, the Turners, the Colliers, the Gaylers, two families of Roberts and two families of Treats. The school teacher, who lived with the Gaylers during the big snow, was Miss Mary Blair. There were also several bachelors homesteading on Bald Mountain at this time. Among them was Kie Gayler.

We salute these hearty pioneers.



**Thanks to our Amazing Volunteers!**

- Larry Black \* Jack and Mary Ann Davis
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**And UPHS recognizes our  
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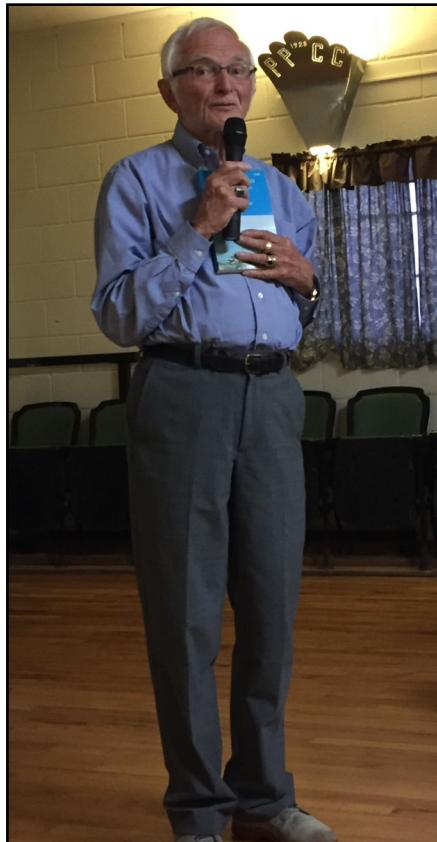
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## Hitching Post and Brockhurst Cabin Sign Installed



October 3, 2019  
Volunteers Dick Lass and Dan Taylor installed the Brockhurst Cabin sign and hitching post in History Park.

## 2019 Annual Potato Soup Supper



Larry Black presented  
*Where oh Where in Colorado*  
Photo by Jean Rodeck



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***UPHS is a 501 (C) (3) non-profit organization***

***THANK YOU!***

*The Ute Pass Historical Society's Board of Directors is grateful to our loyal patrons and enthusiastic volunteers. Without your generous financial contributions and dedicated volunteer service, we would not exist. Thanks to all of you for supporting our mission to preserve and share the history of the families and communities of the Ute Pass area of Colorado.  
It is an honor to serve you!*