



Photo of the Dillon Schoolhouse courtesy of Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

## *New Exhibit at the Main Street Museum Booze, Brothels and Baptism, Life and Leisure at 10,000 ft.*

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**Special Insert:**  
**2002**  
**in Review**

There is a new reason to visit the free Main Street Museum at 111 South Main, Breckenridge. The title, *Booze, Brothels and Baptism* suggests the historical order and style of leisure pursuits that followed the miners of nineteenth century Colorado.

Early miners almost always brought liquor with them, if only for medicinal purposes. Alcohol was a primary ingredient in the leisure activities of the miners. It was to play an important role in leisure activities for the next 150 years.

Brothels soon followed, providing recreational outlets for the rough, mostly male workforce. Houses of "ill fame," as they were called in Breckenridge, were important landmarks of the area, marking the "good" and "bad" sides of town.

As new townships were settled, wives and families appeared on the scene. Itinerant preachers arrived to save souls, baptize the faithful and bring a new sense of decency to the maturing social order.

The exhibit is open 10:00 a.m.—7:00 p.m.

## *Early Breckenridge* By Rick Hague

This is the final article in a series that traces the history of the Pikes Peak gold rush from the early discoveries near Denver to the discovery of Breckenridge and early mining in the area. The full series is available on our web site:  
[www.summithistorical.org](http://www.summithistorical.org)

The early mining history of Summit County definitely revolved around placer mining for several reasons: placer gold was relatively easy to find and cheap to mine; it was amenable to one- and two-man operations and did not require sophisticated means to recover the actual gold; it did not require extensive capital, machinery, and effort for mine development; and it did not require an extensive transportation system. Large-scale underground mining required extensive infrastructure that had not yet "arrived".

That is not to say that no underground mining was done or that so-called "lode" claims had not been filed. It is only natu-

ral, when working a valley placer, to gaze into the surrounding mountains and to wonder where and how the placer gold originated. Many of the early prospectors, of course, did this and prospected in the mountains throughout the area, particularly above known placer districts. According to one U.S. government report, in 1870 there were over 4,000 lode claims filed in Summit County, most by placer miners. The problem arose from actually working these lode claims. Reportedly, most of the claim owners were busy mining their placer claims that required very little investment capital to develop.

## Breckenridge...from page 1

Contributor Rick Hague is vice president of the Summit Historical Society Board of Directors. He is active as a tour guide at the Washington and Lomax Mines as well as in maintaining the Summit Historical Society website. Hague recently retired from PriceWaterhouse Coopers Management Consulting practice and is a graduate of the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, Colorado.

As early as 1864, silver/lead/zinc deposits were being worked near Montezuma. In 1866-67, about 20 gold/silver/lead/zinc/pyrite lodes had been claimed near Buffalo Flats. In 1869, silver/lead ore was shipped from near Lincoln City in French Gulch, and, in the same year, similar ore was shipped by wagon to Denver from the Laurium Mine, near the eventual Washington Mine. The Quandary Mine near Hoosier Pass was located in 1860 as were several other claims in the same area.

The problems for these early underground mines can be summed up in four words: concentration, smelting, zinc, and transportation. The raw ore had to be concentrated and the waste removed for economic transportation. Once concentrated, the processed ore had to be smelted to recover the valuable metals. But there was no mass transportation, like a railroad, to either

bring in concentration or smelting machinery easily and economically or to transport ore out to Denver for further processing. Additionally, many of the Summit County ores contained zinc, which the metallurgy of the day was not able to handle effectively. Investment capital was, or course, required for all such infrastructure.

An early (1865) stamp or concentration mill in French Gulch was built but remained idle for unspecified reasons. A small smelter was also erected in French Gulch and processed ore from the Cincinnati Mine. At least three other hardrock mines – the Minnie, the Union, and the Lucky – operated in the area prior to 1880 but development was not extensive.

Most of the underground development work of the 1870s was done in the Montezuma area where a number of concentration mills and small smelters were built. However, few were successful due to the zinc content of the ores and to the difficulty of transportation. Late in the 1870s, a number of underground mines in the 10 Mile District (south of present-day Copper Mountain) were opened with associated concentration mills and smelters.

A series of annual U.S. government reports through the 1870s paint a picture of limited placer mine production and limited but increasing exploration for and development of lode deposits. The story for most of the period was the same – lack of transportation and hard-to-process ores. However, the 1880-81 report states: “within the last two years, lode mining commenced on an extensive scale and during the last year assumed such proportions as to place Summit County high on the list as a bullion-producing county of the state.”

Contributors to this issue: Karen Fischer, Rick Hague, Louise Henderson, Karen Musolf, and Barbara Yost.

*Summit Historical Society Voices* is published quarterly. Articles, Letters, Calendar information and other items may be e-mailed to the editor, at BarbaraJY @ msn.com. The editor also receives U.S. mail addressed to Barbara J. Yost, 3531 Bryant Street, Denver, CO 80211 when she is not sailing on Lake Dillon, dancin' at the amphitheater or at home in her little Dillon condo.

Deadlines:

Winter issue, December 1	Spring issue, March 1
Summer issue, June 1	Autumn issue, September 1

Design by BJ Communications & Promotions.

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## Calendar of events

### January

Exhibit

*Booze, Brothels and Baptism: Life and Leisure at 10,000 feet*

10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. every day

Main Street Museum, 111 South Main Street, Breckenridge

Free Admission

Tue 14 Board of Directors Meeting

5:30 p.m. Carter Museum

111 North Ridge Street, Breckenridge

Mon 20 Exhibit Opening

*The History of Ullr Fest*

10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. every day

Through Friday February 28

Main Street Museum, 111 South Main Street, Breckenridge

Free Admission

Tue 21 Book and Adventure Club



*Sand Creek Massacre*

7:00 p.m. Carter Museum

111 North Ridge Street, Breckenridge

Suzanne Bailey, Facilitator

Wed 29 Lecture Series

*The Big Snow of 1898-1899*, a slide presentation by Maureen Nicholls.

7:30 p.m. Breckenridge Town Hall, 150 West Ski Hill Road.

Admission: \$5.00 for members, \$8.00 for non-members.

Contact: (970) 453-9022

### February

Thu 6 *Ullr Fest for Kids*

Learn about the history of Ullr Fest and make your own "crown of horns." For kids of all ages.

10:30 a.m. Main Street Museum, 111 South Main Street, Breckenridge.

Free Admission

Information: (970) 453-9022 for

Tue 11 Board of Directors Meeting

5:30 p.m. Call (970) 453-9022

for location.

Fri 14 Victorian Valentine

High Tea at the 1896 William A Briggles House, 104 North Harris Street, Breckenridge. 4:00 p.m.

Admission: \$15.00 per person

Information and Reservations

(970) 453-9022

Tue 18 Book and Adventure Club

*The San Juans*

7:00 p.m. Carter Museum



111 North Ridge Street, Breckenridge

### March

Tue 11 Board of Directors Meeting

5:30 p.m. Call (970) 453-9022

for location.

Tue 18 Book and Adventure Club

*Western Trails*

7:00 p.m. Carter Museum



111 North Ridge Street, Breckenridge

Steve and Pat Larson, Facilitators

### Book and Adventure Club



The purpose of the Summit Historical Society Book Club is to enrich participants' understanding of Western history and literature. During fall, winter and spring it meets on the third Tuesday of the month. It is open to members and their guests.

For further information please check the Society's web site:

[www.summithistorical.org](http://www.summithistorical.org).



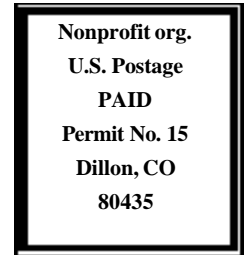
### A word from Karen Fischer...

Spring is right around the corner and Volunteering is in the Air... Many Volunteer Opportunities exist. For those interested please contact Karen Fischer: 970-453-9022 or [mail@summithistorical.org](mailto:mail@summithistorical.org).

Also...If you have any creative ideas on how we can add to the Summit Historical Society's already fabulous tour schedule please pass along your ideas to Karen Fischer: 970-453-9022 or [mail@summithistorical.org](mailto:mail@summithistorical.org). Ideas in the Air include a Cemetery Tour and Bucyrus Dredge Site Interpretive Program.

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We're on the 'Net!

<http://summithistorical.org>

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## *Breckenridge...from page 2*

Nearly all such mining occurred in the Montezuma and Ten Mile Districts, not Breckenridge, although there was a continuation of previously limited lode mining in the Breckenridge area.

No particular explanation is given in the government reports for the sudden growth. The arrival of the railroad was still two to three years away (late 1882) but there were three stamp (concentration) mills and three smelters in the Breckenridge area (others were located elsewhere in the county). Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that enough rich lode deposits had been discovered (principally near Montezuma and the Ten Mile area) to attract both moneyed interest and money and rumors of the railroad's near-term arrival caused events to finally "come together" to spark the second of Breckenridge's three mining "booms".

An additional driving force in the late 1870s was the discovery of rich silver/lead/zinc lode ores in the Leadville area. This development brought miners and moneyed interests into the area that had "hardrock" experience, recognized the wealth which lay buried in the ground throughout the area, and could raise the capital necessary to develop the lode deposits which had long been known in the Breckenridge area.

Additionally, the Leadville experience provided the necessary technical focus to develop metallurgical processes to deal with the difficult zinc problems that had plagued earlier smelters. It probably is no coincidence

that one of the richest mining areas in Summit County, centered on Kokomo, south of Copper Mountain and now buried beneath the enormous settling ponds of the Climax Mine, lay directly on the route to Leadville.

In 1878, William Iliff, one of the original Spalding party members and a resident of Breckenridge throughout the 1870s, returned to Breckenridge after gaining some experience in Leadville. In October of that year, he discovered a rich lode deposit on what became Shock Hill, to the west of Breckenridge and now on the road to the Peak 8 ski area. Other discoveries in the same area quickly followed.

The exact events leading up to the discovery and development of the claims that came to comprise the Summit Historical Society's Washington Mine are not known at this time. It is known that Illinois Gulch and Barney Ford Hill were extensively prospected from the initial days of the gold rush in late 1859. Placer mining was done throughout the 1859 to 1883 period. Undoubtedly the lode claims that comprised the Washington property date from these very early days of the rush. Research to date has not tracked their history during this period.

-RH