

VOICES

The President's Message



Terry Merrick

The year 2009 is a very special year historically for the Town of Breckenridge, which celebrates its 150th birthday. Some very special activities will be taking place and historic sites, including those belonging to the Summit Historical Society, are being spruced up for the celebration.

The Briggles House, newly painted, is located at 104 N. Harris Street. It is a charming Victorian house built in 1896 which belonged to William and Katie Briggles. William was a cashier at the Engle Brothers Exchange Bank. The Briggles were socially prominent and the décor of the house reflects their fondness for entertaining guests. The house, acquired by the Society in 1983, is decorated with many fine examples of furniture and household items typical of that period. Portraits of local residents and other decorative objects, stylish clothing, books and interesting artifacts can be seen throughout the house. The kitchen furnishings include a wood burning stove and also a well-stocked pantry.

The Washington Mine is an interpretive mine site just off Boreas Pass Road, near the location of the 1880's Washington Mine, one of the largest in the area. It is designed to show how a hard rock mine operated and is filled with many tools of the trade. It includes a shaft house, a constructed portal and adit, an ore cart on a track and ore box. The Washington is a bit off the beaten path but well worth the 1.1 mile trip from town.

The Lomax Placer, site of a hydraulic mining operation, is located a short way up Ski Hill Road. Its three cabins and burro barn each contain many interesting artifacts and displays pertaining to different aspects of the mining industry. Outside is a well assembled display of equipment depicting the hydraulic mining process as it would have appeared during its operation in the 1860's and 70's. Of particular note, is the Tiger Assay Cabin, rescued from the abandoned mining town of Tiger in the Swan Valley. Moved to the Lomax site in 1985, it contains equipment and displays which demonstrate the assay process used to determine the mineral content of ores. The cabin has incurred some damage and will need to be repaired before it can open for tours. The tours at the Lomax include panning for gold.

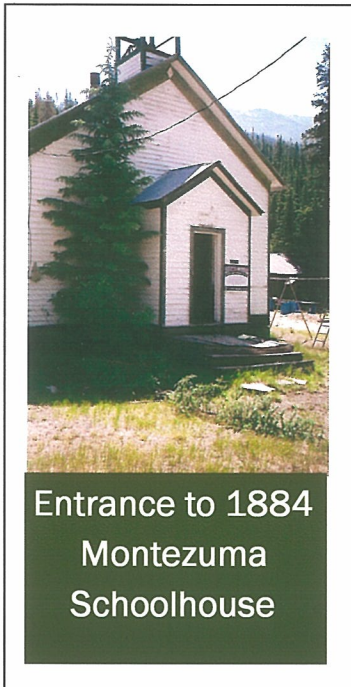
If you are not familiar with these sites or have not seen them in a while, you should make a point to visit them next summer. Other historic sites in Breckenridge will also be well presented under Direction of the Breckenridge Heritage Alliance during the 2009 tour season. Of course, you could make 2009 the year to visit all the historic places of interest in Summit County. Each area has its own place to focus on Summit County history. It all fits together and it is all very worthwhile. ##

Finally: new life for old schoolhouse ²

The Montezuma Schoolhouse served children living in the Summit mining communities of Montezuma and Sts. John for 72 years (1884 to 1956). Since then the structure has stood proudly, but in an ever-deteriorating condition, enduring the often-harsh climate of its once-bustling mountain mining community. Now, under the leadership of SHS commissioner, Tom Wheeler, the Society has acquired funding, primarily from the Colorado Historic Fund, permitting the restoration of this eminent SHS historic site. Work actually started on the project in 2008, with several Society directors, commissioners and friends providing services and assistance in all aspects of the work. As seen from these excerpts and photos from Tom Wheeler's report to the Society, much progress has been made. However, additional funding and on-site assistance will be needed to bring the project to a successful completion. Anyone willing and able to assist in providing either of these needs is invited to contact the Summit Historical Society at 970-468-2207, or mail@summithistorical, or call Tom Wheeler at 970-713-8450.

Montezuma Schoolhouse Restoration

Excerpts from the report by Tom Wheeler



The Summit Historical Society Project to renovate the Montezuma Schoolhouse got underway on July 16th, when we received the confirmation of the grant for funds for the project from the Colorado Historic Fund.

A sizeable portion of the project was completed this summer and fall by our volunteer work committee, comprised of Jim Cox, Jim McNaul, Duane Steward and Tom Wheeler.

Steve Hornbeck, the Mayor of Montezuma (and our General Contractor) advised the committee. Paul Hinkley, a Montezuma resident, volunteered his backhoe for the foundation excavation. The Summit County Sheriff's office provided some of the manual labor.

The major repair of the rotted floor and support beams and repairing the fieldstone foundation has been completed. The outhouses were removed, repaired and replaced on a new stone foundation. The site has been finish graded so the lot drains properly and eliminates the cause of the foundation deterioration. Work has now stopped for the winter, to resume in the spring. Remaining repairs are the rebuilding of the front porch and bell tower, trim and roof repairs, and painting the building.

On "Make a Difference Day" a crew of 10 or so did a super job of cleaning up the construction debris and the interior artifacts so the school will be ready as a museum again when the project is completed.

We cannot thank our volunteers enough—the work completed so far for only the cost of materials has saved over 20% of the project budget. This is significant because it reduces the size of the 25% matching funds the Society must provide. Although we have part of the funds from a Summit Foundation grant for this purpose, we would greatly appreciate donations to make up the difference. < TOM WHEELER >.

MORE PHOTOS ON NEXT PAGE