



## 1st CHOICE REALTY

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The Marshall-Martinek Team



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Equal Housing Opportunity



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Mixed in with the parlor houses and brothels were the saloons and dance halls. For 25 cents a miner could dance with a pretty girl at the Red Light Dance Hall, just down the street from The Bon Ton, and have a glass of beer. At Crapper Jack's saloon, the girls made 12 1/2 cents for every 60 cent bottle of beer they sold. Some would go upstairs and sell more intimate 'refreshments.'

If a miner couldn't afford a parlor house girl or a tussle upstairs at one of the saloons, he could find the cheapest girls in the cribs for as low as a quarter. Cribs were located near the railroad tracks and other locations. They were typically one to two room shacks, and were sometimes built as row houses with adjoining walls. The girls worked by themselves and were usually older than their parlor house counterparts - the 'faded ladies' of Cripple Creek. Of course, "old" for an 'easy woman' was 25 or 30. The crib girls kept an oil cloth at the end of their beds because their customers weren't expected to remove much more than their hats. The cloth kept the bed linens from being soiled by dirty or muddy boots or shoes. Pay-day was always a busy time.

Just about every kind of girl was available, depending upon a miner's money and fancy. In 1900 the 500 block of Myers Avenue included a variety of ethnic and foreign nationalities: French, German, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, American, African American, Mexican and Indian (i.e., Native American) - a sexual smorgasbord. The Parisian, for example, was a brothel consisting only of French ladies. It sat on the corner of Myers Avenue and Fifth Street.

After 1900, the dance halls and cribs began to disappear in favor of gentlemen's membership clubs. Since gambling had been outlawed, the clubs afforded patrons privacy to both gamble and cavort with prostitutes. Lowell Thomas, who grew up in Victor and delivered papers to several brothels, guessed that there were still over 300 prostitutes practicing along Myer's Avenue in 1904. Census records show that some painted ladies, or former ones, were still residing (and maybe practicing) in Cripple Creek until the 1930s. So that's the history...and the reality. DM

Sources: *The Working Girls of Cripple Creek* by Susan Roach; *Ladies of the Tenderloin* by Linda Womack; and *Brothels, Bordellos and Bad Girls – Prostitution in Colorado, 1860-1930* by Jan McKell

# Pikes Peak Country

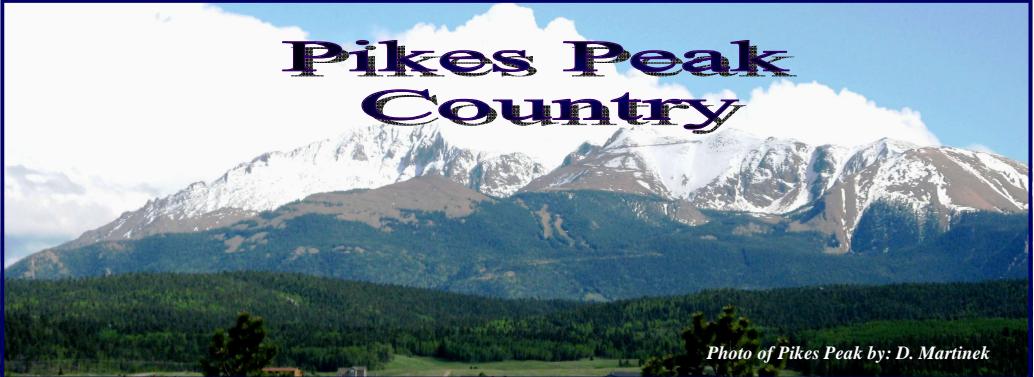


Photo of Pikes Peak by: D. Martinek

## Cripple Creek's "Tenderloin District"

by Dave Martinek

Soiled doves, working girls, hookers or 'nymph de pave' – the list of names is a lengthy one, but they all describe women who sold sex as a profession. In the May 2007 issue of *Pikes Peak Country*, I featured a story about the famous Cripple Creek madam, Pearl DeVere, and her equally famous parlor house, the Old Homestead. After a couple of recent segments on TellerNetCast.com about prostitution in Cripple Creek during the gold camp days, it seems appropriate to revisit the subject with a little more history and reality.

They came to the gold fields from all walks of life, many from prominent and educated families back east. In the 1998 issue of *Trail's End Magazine* a 1859 survey of 2000 prostitutes was shown, asking why they took up the profession. It revealed that 525 were destitute, 258 were seduced or abandoned, 164 were abused by parents, relatives or husbands, and 71 were persuaded to come to work by other prostitutes. The rest succumbed to various vices at hand (in other words, they wanted to rebel against a Victorian age, party, dance, kick up their heels and have fun). It is interesting that fully half of all those surveyed chose to become prostitutes. For the large majority of women, it was a serious business.

In the Cripple Creek census records, prostitutes were called "sporting women;" the first *sporting woman* came to Cripple Creek in 1891, not surprisingly at the request of Bob Womack. Blanche Barton, later called French Blanche, took the stage up Ute Pass from Colorado City and opened for business in Poverty Gulch in a striped tent. Womack was a frequent visitor and carouser in Colorado City and probably knew Blanche well. She was immediately successful. Blanche often took partial shares in mining claims instead of cash for her services and eventually acquired enough mine ownership to be quite the entrepreneur. On one occasion, she realized that she had 22 one-eighth shares in the same mine!

But by 1893, Blanche had competition. In fact, there were so many prostitutes around that men could scarcely go into downtown Cripple Creek without being propositioned. This fierce competition led City Marshall Hi Wilson to move all the girls and dance halls to Myers Avenue. Many of the brothels and saloons were already there, so the move just completed the migration. But the act concentrated a "red light district" and confined the sin. The girls were allowed to shop downtown on Mondays but were fined if they were caught there on any other day of the week.

Blanche and her peers helped begin what became a string of parlor houses, dance halls, saloons, brothels and cribs stretching from the railroad tracks at the top of Bennett Avenue south all along Myers Avenue, an area commonly called the "Tenderloin District" of Cripple Creek. Over time, such notorious

establishments as The Bon Ton, The Library, The Parisian, The Old Homestead and the Homestead's chief rival, The Mikado (just to name a few), provided the ultimate in bawdy entertainment for the mostly male and rowdy population of the gold camp.

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August 2009

To view more properties, go to my website: [www.davidmartinekcb.com/properties](http://www.davidmartinekcb.com/properties)**Dave's Buyers' Guide**

A sampling of properties offered by Coldwell Banker 1st Choice Realty.



Prices and status effective as of July 31, 2009



\$139,900

**60 E. Aspen Drive, Divide Rancher.** Remodeled rancher, inside and out. 3BR/2BA, 1309 S.F. on .44 acres, including an adjoining lot. New carpet, plumbing, wood stove and roof. Fenced w/ outbuildings. Quiet cul-de-sac in Sherwood Forest. Ideal for a permanent residence or vacation get-away. Unique! #474569



\$149,900

**192 Silbani, Divide Like New!** A well-maintained manufactured home with 3 BR/2 BA on 0.7 acres. 1736 SF. Features a new deck and improved excavation in front. Erected in 2004, this corner lot in the nicely treed Arabian Acres subdivision is minutes from Woodland Park. Great as a vacation home or a permanent residence. #559973

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To inquire, please email or call **719.687.1516**

(Marshall-Martinek Team listings are boxed)



\$180,000



\$229,900



\$239,900

**9585 Mountain Rd., Ute Pass Charming in Cascade.** Charming 1939 home has 2 BR/3 BA & 1942 S.F. Inside are log beams and a wood-burning FP w/ rock wall. MBR w/ adjoining bath. Patio in the rear. Short Sale. #562204



\$269,000

**1037 Cottonwood Lk. Dr, Divide Excellent condition.** Quiet, private w/ many upgrades. Open floor plan, lots of windows and light. 3 BR/2 BA, 1922 S.F. on 1.03 acres. Beam ceilings, cedar siding, wood stove. Come to the country. #477093



\$289,900

**32 Teller Circle, Florissant Log-sided.** Sit on the large deck and enjoy the views. 3 BR/3 BA & 3-car GAR. 1812 S.F. 2.06 acres & adjoining 6 acres for sale. Country kitchen, large LR w/ wood stove. In Colorado Mtn Est. #530828



\$298,900

**151 Deer Circle, Guffey Cozy A-Frame.** 2BR/1BA, 1010 S.F. & 1-car GAR on 38.18 acres. Includes all furnishings. All wood interior, many upgrades, heavily treed. Secluded yet close to Hwy 9. A great get-away or a permanent residence. #578964



\$309,850

**7220 Catamount St., GMF Green Mountain Falls.** 4BR/2BA, 2 GAR, 2294 S.F. .45 acres, on the sunny side. Remodeled kitchen w/ Corian counters, oak cabinets and new appliances. New roof, doors, flooring and windows. This home is a true pleasure. #550030



\$374,850

**105 Pennsylvania, Woodland PK Pikes Peak View.** 2.17 acres hosts this spacious rancher with a Peak view from the front deck. New HDW floors and plenty of room to stretch out. 4BR/3BA/2GAR; 3264 S.F. Minutes from Woodland Park and the Springs. #547690



\$560,000

**164 Joshua Rd., Divide White Fences.** Family-friendly home on 1 acre in Meadow Park. 3 BR/3 BA/2 GAR, 3100 S.F. 4 levels & a bright, open floor plan. Lots of windows, huge kitchen w/ cherry cabinetry. 5-piece MBath w/ jacuzzi tub. Peaceful setting, great views. #458219

**1371 Evergreen Hgts. W PK Craftsmanship.** Popular ranch w/ the ultimate in quality. 2 BRs, LR, laundry & kitchen on main level. Stainless appliances, Corian counters. 4 BR/3 BA/3 GAR, 3188 S.F. on .28 acre lot. Gas log FB. Lower lever ready for entertaining. #471706

57 acres of sunsets!

\$728,500

**FEATURED PROPERTY**

#563797

**189 Choctaw Drive, Florissant.** Amazing views! Sit on the treks-floored deck and watch the sun rise and set in full view of Pikes Peak, Mt. Pisgah, the Cripple Creek Valley and the Sangres. Built in 2008, this home has beautiful wide-plank soft pine floors (stained walnut), radiant heat, 4 fireplaces, 5 ceiling fans, a delightful gourmet kitchen and many more features. 2248 S.F. Custom alder wood cabinets surround a large pantry, ample counter space and a range-top center island with down-draft vent. A huge adjoining bath complements the walkout master bedroom - 4 bedrooms total. 57.4 very private, wonderful acres!