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The Marshall-Martinek Team



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Equal Housing
Opportunity



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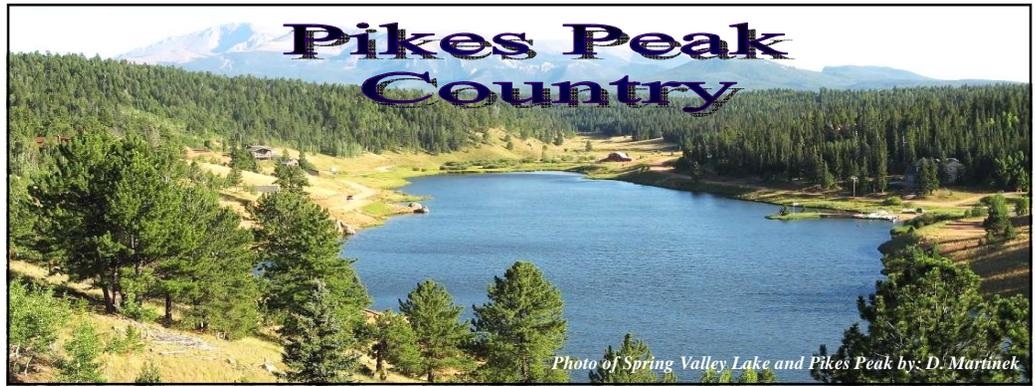


Photo of Spring Valley Lake and Pikes Peak by: D. Martinek

Crystola and Henry Clay Childs

Just a few miles west of the traffic light at Cascade on U.S. Highway 24 leading from Colorado Springs, up to an altitude of about 8,000 feet, Ute Pass opens into a broader valley irrigated by Fountain Creek, as well as other waters running down from the foothills of Pikes Peak, including: Catamount, Crystal and Crystola creeks. It was in the canyon along Crystola Creek, just east of Woodland Park (where the boundary between El Paso and Teller counties now meets) that Henry Clay Childs founded a settlement in the 1870s.

According to the *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, Childs was persuaded by his East-coast psychic to settle in the area, formerly called Langdon, and to form a town government led by psychics. There were even rumors of Saturday evening séances. Others maintain that Childs was really a religious man who hoped to create a colony of like-minded families. In fact, in December 1905, near the end of his life, the *Kansas City Star* ran an article about Childs and called him the “Tolstoy of the West” – reflecting, supposedly, on Child’s adoption of the fervent Christian and pacifist ideals that Leo Tolstoy expressed in such works as *The Kingdom of God Within You*.

Whether a psychic or religious zealot, what history tells us is that a settlement emerged back in the canyon along “Childs’ stream” and that Childs, along with a French Canadian called Joseph Thibodeau, and others, formed the Crystola Brotherhood Town, Mines and Milling Company. A decade later, when the Colorado Midland Railroad laid their tracks further down in the valley, the town moved from the canyon to be nearer the railroad. And when the Midland refused to build a station there, the local residents built a flag stop depot themselves, which the railroad later named Bison. Before the railroad, surface gold was discovered in the area and further west in Tarryall and South Park. Childs built a cyanide mill to reduce the ore hauled in by wagon. The mill was later used occasionally by Cripple Creek/Victor mine owners who didn’t want to pay the railroad’s freight prices to ship their ore all the way down to Colorado City or Florence. The settlement became a place where things and people met.



Crystola, cir. 1890, just east of Woodland Park, showing the Inn and the flag-stop depot.

Crystola was also the site where logging wagons met. By the mid-1870s lumber was hauled from

Dr. William Bell’s lumbering camp in Manitou Park, about ten miles north of Woodland Park, to a transferring station just west of Crystola - a site called Junction House. Four mules were hitched to a wagon to make the trip. Later the lumber was carried by Dr. Bell’s No Name railroad. At Crystola, different mules were hitched to the wagons, this time only two to a team, for the haul on down Ute Pass on the wagon road to Manitou and Colorado Springs.

It is possible that the meadows around Crystola were also referred to as Summit Park. Although other references place that area near Edlowe between Woodland Park and Divide, the Crystola location seems plausible since one reliable source says “*the country near the Junction House was called Summit Park at that time, and the post-office took that name.*” A post office *did* operate in Crystola from 1911 to 1913, and possibly earlier. A map from that era shows the Junction House located just west of Crystola on the Colorado Midland tracks (about where Walmart sits east of Woodland Park), and just east of the Silver Springs Ranch. The ranch, incidentally, has been operating since 1858; its original owners were one of the first to settle in the area. Reportedly, the first sawmill in Summit Park was started in Crystola on the Silver Springs Ranch in 1873.

Childs died in 1910 and was cremated in Denver. His obituary, published in the *Denver Republican* in February of that year, stated that his “*wife died several years ago.*” His only living relative known at the time, a sister, was Mrs. Ella Parmalee Biddle of Florida, but “*his last words were a command that she not be notified of his death,*” wrote the *Republican*.

History records a sad commentary about Crystola compared to the kind of community that Childs envisioned. In the later days of the railroads and gold discovery in Cripple Creek, instead of a colony of Christian pacifists, or even psychics, the town became a rough and baldy place, full of ruffians, prospectors, railroad employees, saloons and prostitutes. Today, people drive by Crystola on their way up or down Ute Pass and see only a flat-topped green and yellow building sitting off to the south with a few adjacent cabins. The Crystola Roadhouse, rebuilt in 1945 after the original Crystola Inn burned, is a great place for a beer, a good hamburger and Saturday night bands. The road and parking area in front of the roadhouse is the Midland’s track bed. The canyons leading up Crystola Creek are now National Forest lands. In a small way, the Crystola Bar and Grill (as it is called) has maintained the individuality and character that was once the rugged community that thrived there over a century ago. (DM)

Sources: Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph; Wikipedia; US GenWeb Archives; Mel McFarland; and the History and Mysteries of the Catamount Ranch Open Space.

October 2009

To view more properties, go to my website: www.davidmartinekc.com/properties

Dave's Buyers' Guide

Cabins, second-home and land specials offered by Coldwell Banker 1st Choice Realty →

Prices and status effective as of September 30, 2009

To inquire, please email or call 719.687.1516

(Marshall-Martinek Team listings are boxed)



\$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 getaway. Unique! #474569



\$139,900

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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\$209,900

11105 Midland, Green Mtn. Falls 1920s Get-Away. Very cute mountain home. Relax on the deck and listen to the stream. 2BR/1BA and 1198 S.F. on a 0.15 acre sloping lot. Plenty of history here. Wood-burning FP; large MBR. #592887



\$250,000

416 Arrowhead Dr., Florissant Log Home. 2BR/1BA; 1206 S.F. on 2-acre private wooded lot with view of the mountains. Loft bedroom; 4" oak flooring. Stainless appliances. Large 32 x 9' front porch. Custom log structure. This is a great cabin in the mountains! #526682



\$16,000

2856 Blue Mesa Dr., Divide Lake Front. This heavily treed lot in Highland Lakes (1.67 acres) slopes down to Beaver Lake No. 2. Strategic tree cuts will make room for a driveway and a building site. After that, a dream home can happen. Come and see this beautiful lot. #457747



\$224,850

34 Beaver Lake Cir, Divide Lakes and Mountains. Enjoy the view of the private fishing lake from the deck. 1.08 acres; 3BR/3BA/1GAR, 2336 S.F. Wood-burning stove, walk-out w/ office. Relax in the hot tub! #629175



\$269,000

105 Deer Circle, Guffey Modified A-Frame; Acreage! Great cabin in the woods on 36.18 acres. All wood interior, large deck, prow-front windows; all furnishings and appliances included. Just bring your suitcase. 2BR/1BA/1GAR; 1010 S.F. #578964



\$19,000

0 Commanche Trail, Florissant Mountain Top. The views from the top (where the lot is) are outstanding. Rock formations dominate this 2.3 acre lot in Valley Hi Mountain Estates. There is no legal access to the property, so it is being sold as a "recreational" lot only. Hike up and enjoy the view! #470091



\$230,000

190 Illini, Woodland Park Great Views. Open floor plan, wall of windows; T&G ceiling. Large family room downstairs. Passive solar. Wood-burning and gas fireplaces. 3BR/3BA; 2360 S.F. on .37 acres lot. #633820



\$295,000

996 Cottonwood Lake, Divide Recently Remodeled. Spacious home, lots of windows, open floor plan. Forced air & radiant heat. Secluded redwood deck, heated garage; large rooms. Built-in safe. 3BR/3BA/2GAR, 3527 S.F. 1.69 acres. #556925



\$24,900

86 High Chateau, Florissant Beautiful Land. Just a couple of acres overlooking some trees and a great view of Pikes Peak. Easy access from High Chateau Road; utilities at the property line. 2.15 acres of level building sites. If you want to build a cabin, here's the place. #433314



FEATURED PROPERTY

\$283,900

105 Pennsylvania. Woodland Park. Sitting on 2.17 acres, this spacious rancher has a Peak view from the front deck and plenty of room to stretch out inside. New hardwood floors in a cozy little kitchen, carpet throughout, four bedrooms, three baths and a huge living room with fireplace add up to 3264 square feet of living space. Just minutes from Woodland Park and the Springs. Add an attached 2-car garage and finished basement, and you might want to give this home a second look! #547690