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Vol. 5 Issue 11, December 2010

The Marshall-Martinek Team



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Colorado
Realtor**

Equal Housing
Opportunity



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Fire in the gold camps; the burning of Cripple Creek and Victor

At one o'clock on a Saturday afternoon, April 25, 1896, six pistol shots rang out in succession across the hills of Cripple Creek, the camp's dreaded fire alarm signal. On that day, fire roared through several blocks of the city's business district. The old wooden buildings, tender boxes waiting for a match, were quickly consumed. Four days later a second inferno destroyed the reconstruction that had already begun.

Fire was always a major threat in early mining camp towns, and true of the Greatest Gold Camps in Cripple Creek and Victor, as well. Candles, wood and coal, stoves, lanterns and oil lamps all provided a constant danger.



The long, searing tongues licked roofs and dropped sparks. Black and gray smoke billowed above the Cripple Creek valley. Photo from *Cripple Creek Days*

The Cripple Creek fires proved that complacency can be just as big a danger as the flames. In an interview published by the *Cripple Creek Morning Times* just prior to the fires, Mayor George Pierce was quoted saying, "Our splendid system of water works and well-disciplined firemen makes it possible to control and extinguish the most serious conflagrations; henceforth, our citizens can be free of this terror."

After the second fire, the Mayor was no longer as confident.

The first fire started in the Tenderloin District. The exact cause was unknown but some suspected arson initially, a view that was later discarded. When the big engine rolled out of the firehouse to combat the blaze, the water coming out of the hose had no more effect than a lawn sprinkler. The long, searing tongues licked roofs and dropped sparks, shifting first eastward than reversing. In no time, it gobbled up the wooden structures like kindling. Crapper Jacks Saloon, the Ole' Homestead brothel and the Topic dancehall were destroyed. The *Morning Times* building was the first to burn, but not completely and the printing press was saved. The newspaper set up shop in a hotel the next day. It was not so fortunate after the second fire.

Hysteria was rampant. Exhausted fireman, breathing through wet sponges, had little effect. Local men helping fight the blaze eventually went home to protect their families. The fire was just too intense. Horses bolted and ran wild down the streets, sometimes pulling wagons; women were screaming; men stood helpless; people were watching in fear, wondering how they were going to save their homes. Black and gray smoke billowed high above the valley (see picture).

Prisoners from the jail escaped in the confusion and began looting the saloons and the stores along Bennett Avenue. Most were captured later and housed in the basement of the Midland Terminal depot. Men with sticks of dynamite roamed the streets ahead of the flames in an attempt to blow up potential fuel before the blaze, including houses and businesses, to no avail. Some were confronted by homeowners and turned away at gun point. But explosions could be heard across the city, aided by drunks and hooligans who stole dynamite unloaded at the railroad depot or the result of the fire reaching combustible material near the mines.

When the day ended, the middle of the Cripple Creek business district was in ruins. People were in shock. But reconstruction began immediately. Mayor Pierce was arrogantly optimistic, saying "It will take more than a destructive conflagration to crush a city that is founded on gold, for as everyone knows, gold is refined by fire." Four days later, on April 29, the mayor's rhetoric changed to silence when a second inferno broke out caused by a grease fire at the Portland Hotel.

By that time, the water in the reservoir that was used to quench the first fire was gone, leaving only a muddy pond. Still, as mine whistles shrieked from every hill in the district, crowds of people gathered near the reservoir thinking that it might be the only safe place to go.

The second fire was worse than the first. It burned the rest of the central business district to the ground, including the remainder of the *Morning Times* office. Bennett Avenue was gone, totally destroyed. There was no newspaper for awhile after the second fire.

In all, forty acres of the World's Greatest Gold Camp was reduced to rubble and smoldering ashes. Property loss was beyond estimate. But the two railroad depots were saved.

See "Fire" continued on page 2

See past issues of *Pikes Peak Country* at <http://www.davidmartinekcb.com>

"Fire" - from page 1

Soon, special relief trains from Denver, Colorado Springs, Pueblo and other towns along the front-range rushed to assist Cripple Creek survive the devastation and to rebuild. Carloads of food stuff, clothing, bedding, supplies and tools began to arrive. Medical people hurried to the scene. Saw mills started up and worked day and night to turn out enough lumber, and the railroads picked it up and delivered it to the city. Brick from Ohio was also shipped in by rail. Donations were collected from as far away as London, New York and San Francisco.

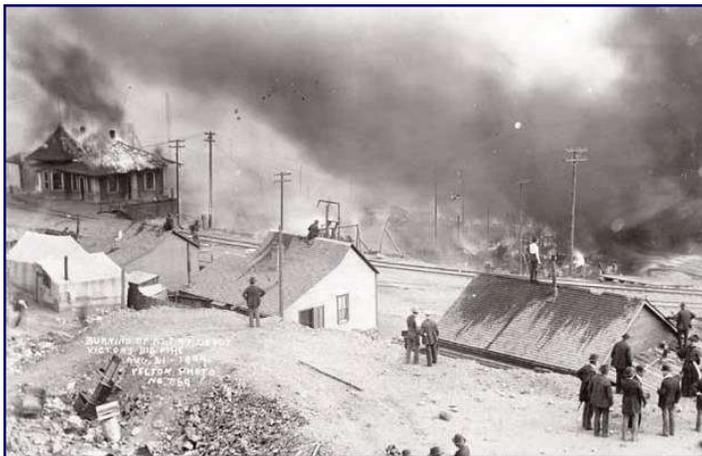
Once more rebuilding began, this time for good - changing the face of Bennett Avenue and Cripple Creek forever.

The railroads benefited from Cripple Creek's tragedy. And they offered a free trip to anywhere within 500 miles to anyone wanting to leave the district.

Three years later, on August 21, 1899, Victor burned. The downtown area was destroyed in a roaring crimson inferno. Mines located in the heart of town were damaged. The Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad depot was destroyed and the Midland Terminal depot building was gutted, its roof partially consumed. Even cars in the yards burned. (See pictures below)

The relief effort for Victor fell short of that which had helped restore Cripple Creek, but Pueblo, Colorado Springs and Denver pitched in and the relief trains came. Victor, the mines and the railroads began to rebuild, as well.

The World's Greatest Gold Camps had been refined by fire.



(above) Victor burns on August 21, 1899. (below) The Midland Terminal depot roof is aflame. Photos: Denver Public Library and Cripple Creek Days.

Story sources: Article from the 1999 issue of the Divide Dispatch; Cripple Creek Days by Mabel Barbee Lee; Denver Public Library.



Happy Thanksgiving!



Merry Christmas!



Happy New Year!

From all of us to all of you, may you be thankful and joyful and as optimistically expectant about 2011 as we are. We are thankful for you; we wish you peace and happiness during the holidays and always; and prosperity in the new year.

Dave Martinek

The Marshall-Martinek Team
of Coldwell Banker 1st Choice Realty

Colorado Springs (Pikes Peak area) #6 for Investors

According to the November 22 issue of the *Colorado Spring Real Estate Journal*, a recent Forbes article listed the Colorado Springs area as the sixth most popular area for investor real estate purchases. Using information gathered by the Cary, NC-based Local Market Monitor (LMM), which analyzed markets with populations over 400,000, Colorado Springs came in so high due mainly to long-term job predictions and population growth. Denver came in #8.

1. Raleigh-Cary, North Carolina
2. McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, Texas
3. Austin-Round Rock, Texas
4. Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro, Tennessee
5. San Antonio, Texas
6. Colorado Springs, Colorado
7. Albuquerque, New Mexico
8. Denver-Aurora-Broomfield, Colorado
9. Springfield, Missouri
10. Indianapolis, Indiana

A variety of factors were analyzed, including historic population growth, job growth, housing price changes and the mix of employment opportunities in the area (using data through September 1, 2010). (See the entire article at forbes.com)

Dave's Buyers' Guide

Cabins, second-homes and land specials from Coldwell Banker 1st Choice Realty →

Prices and status effective as of November 30, 2010



Happy Holidays



\$214,850

14891 Evergreen Pl, Sedalia Westcreek. One block from the Nat'l Forest and a walk to the lake sets this home apart. 2003 S.F. on 2.35 acres. 4BR/3BA/2GAR. Bright & open w/ breakfast bar, lovely deck. County maintains road. Wildlife! #643331



\$169,900

29 Glacier Circle, Florissant Cozy Mountain Home! Remodeled & freshly painted. 1904 S.F. on 2.16 acres. 3BR/2BA. Spacious and bright w/ wood burning, river rock FB; large kitchen, MB suite and family room. Lots of Ponderosa pine and seclusion. Close to attractions. Privacy. #698311



\$159,850

3716 Blue Mesa Dr, Divide Log Cabin! Absolutely charming on 2.02 acres. 2BR/2BA/2BAR, 1236 S.F. Updated, remodeled, new HDW floors, carpet and appliances, bath fixtures. T&G ceiling, wood-burning stove. 800 S.F. of redwood decking. The place is in great condition. #590190

To inquire, email or call 719.687.1516

(Marshall-Martinek Team listings are BOXED)



\$585,000

1150 Forest Hill Pl Woodland PK Coveted Home! 4.93 beautiful wooded acres. 3BR/3BA/2GAR, 2586 S.F. Moss rock FB makes for cozy atmosphere. Remodeled kitchen, new appliances. Large deck, borders Nat'l Forest. Unobstructed view of the Peak #688411



\$349,900

REDUCED!

211 Rutgers, Woodland Park Colorado Living! 3BR/3BA/2GAR, 3030 S.F. on 4.04 acres. Very clean & well maintained. Lots of windows; view of Pikes Peak. Spacious bedrooms and a loft office. Lower level family room, wine cellar and large safe. #660705



\$105,000

380 Paradise Cir, Woodland Park Condo! Perfect for weekends in the mountains. Unit C-3 has 1BR/1BA and an upgraded kitchen and bath. 600 S.F. New LR window. Walking distance to Safeway and Walgreens. Easy commute to Colorado Springs. #663316



\$24,900

2847 N. Mountain Est, Florissant Double Lot! A 1.18 acre double lot; several building sites. Lot of mature pines and aspens. Pikes Peak and Sangres views. Close to Dome Rock. Two miles in CME. Don't miss it. #635122



\$399,900

REDUCED!

1000 S. Fourth, Cripple Creek Investment! Rambling ranch on 4.79 acres carved up into 6 rental units. Overlooks historic Cripple Creek. The 3505 S.F. home has 9BR/6BA/2GAR and a 10-space storage shed. A money-maker! #627984



\$299,900

120 Broken Arrow, Lake George Overlooks 11-Mile Reservoir! Has views everywhere. 2272 S.F. on 0.70 acres. 3BR/3BA/2GAR. Quality construction, long list of amenities. Attention to detail in this bright and sunny home. Privacy and seclusion close to water's edge. #657826



\$16,000

1001 S. Mtn Est. Rd, Florissant Meadow! Two acres of meadow and trees and some nice building sites in beautiful Colorado Mountain Estates, south of Florissant. Easy access to nearby Fossil Beds and Cripple Creek. #530773



\$33,400

127 Carlton, Florissant Dream Site! A 2.04 acre lot for a dream home. End of cul-de-sac sloping towards CME valley. Very picturesque. All utilities, perk test, fire mitigated. Building plans available. Come and see. #676197



\$359,900

33 Still Forest, Woodland Park Main Level Living! 3792 S.F. on .45 acres. 5BR/3BA/3GAR. Very clean, huge MB suite, vaulted ceilings, large family room, freshly painted and ready to move in. Fenced backyard, rock patio. Over-sized garage. #628603



\$145,000

REDUCED!

971 CR 61, Cripple Creek Secluded Bungalow! 1BR/1BA 936 S.F. on 8.1 private acres w/ aspen, meadows and views. Cute galley kitchen and loft BR. Built in 2002. A wonderful get-away. Contingent on a short-sale. #686211



\$16,000

2856 Blue Mesa Dr., Divide Fronts Water! 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. See this beautiful lot. #457747

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