



## UTE PASS HISTORICAL SOCIETY & Pikes Peak Museum

P. O. Box 6875 / 231 East Henrietta Avenue

Woodland Park, CO 80866

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### Unsolved Mystery!

## Charles Cooley, Night Telegraph Operator at Cascade

*Steve Plutt, February 19, 2025*

North Carolina native Charles Alonzo Cooley was born on September 4, 1878 to Mary and Confederate Civil War Veteran, Joseph Cooley. Charles moved west in his early twenties and settled in Boone, Colorado, where he worked for the railroad. After a short stint, he went to work for the Colorado Midland Railroad as a telegraph operator in Cascade.

Brown hair, blue eyed Charles was a short and slender man. He married Daisy Thomas in Colorado Springs on May 2, 1902. Daisy had several relatives living in Florissant and Divide.

Fifty days prior to his marriage, he was working at the Cascade depot, which back then was a remote stop along the Midland. It was four o'clock on a Wednesday morning. He was the only person there, relaxing in a chair in the ticket agent's office.

Silently and carefully, a masked man entered the room!

He approached Charles from behind and pressed a revolver against his head. The robber demanded his gold watch and chain, then forced him to open the money drawer.

State of Colorado Division of Vital Statistics		No. 1734
<b>MARRIAGE RECORD REPORT</b>		
County EL PASO		
Husband's Name COOLEY, CHARLES A.	Age 23	Race w
Wife's Name THOMAS, DAISY	Age 22	Race w
Place of Marriage COLO SPRS COLO	Date 5/2/02	
Name of Official who Performed Ceremony EVANDER MCHAIR		
Title MIN	Address COLO SPRS COLO	
Reported by.....		
Address.....		
1009-9-13-40-BRADFORD-ROBINSON, DENVER		

### MASKED ROBBER HOLDS UP LONELY RAILROAD STATION

Woodland Park, Colo., March 11, 1902 – C. Cooley, the night telegraph operator at Cascade Cañon, a lonely station in Ute Pass on the Colorado Midland Railroad, twelve miles from Colorado Springs, was held up by a masked robber with a gun about 4 o'clock this morning. *The Denver Post, Tuesday March 11, 1902*

After stuffing \$25 in his pocket, the thief locked Charles in the toilet room and fled with the railroad money.

Ten minutes later the victim broke out of the WC and telegraphed an account of the robbery to the Chief Dispatcher's office in Colorado Springs.

Later in the morning, Sheriff's Deputy George Dayton rode up and interviewed Charles. Charles described the robber's cool and careful manner, who showed a familiarity with the details of the office. He also told the deputy that the man

was dressed in striped overalls and wore a black mask. He noted the invader's extremely white hands that were apparently not those of a man accustomed to manual labor.

Charles only saw one man involved in this robbery, but outside, there were the tracks of two men in the new, overnight snow, and they were headed towards Colorado Springs.

This crime was never solved. Charles continued working for the Midland. He and Daisy were the parents of two children, Annie and Robert. Daisy died in 1951 in Florissant and Charles died in 1964 in Illinois.

## Events and Activities



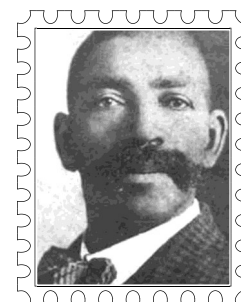
Thirty-six souls braved a chilly January afternoon to attend our annual patron luncheon at the Pikes Peak Community Club building in Divide. They were rewarded with delicious homemade soups, sandwiches, desserts and lots of engaging conversation. President Charlie Chambers thanked the attendees and recognized the hard work of board members/volunteers Pat Hyslop, Mike Bryant, Ramon Ranoco and others. Jean Rodeck shared the history of the *Colorado Posse of the Westerners* and the recent award we received. Board member Steve Plutt treated patrons to the fascinating history of the PPCC from its inception to UPHS ownership.



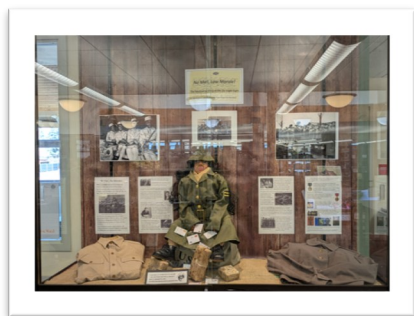
We continued the tradition started by Judy Perkins in celebrating **Black History Month** in February at the African-American Historical and Genealogical Society of Colorado Springs organized by Candace McKnight. UPHS members Pat Hyslop, Steve Plutt and Mike Bryant set up a booth for the event using materials prepared by Karla Schweitzer and Ramon Ranoco.



A selection of Black Western history books were available for purchase, including our ever-popular children's book on Black Colorado lawman *Bass Reeves* who inspired "The Lone Ranger"!



A "Can You Name Me?" game was set up to educate attendees on some of our famous black westerners. Young and old joined in the games and enjoyed some traditional "soul food."



Celebrations for Women's History Month in March include Steve Plutt's fun stories on our website: *Women Motorcyclists Pass Through Woodland Park* and *Teller County's First Female Undersheriff*. A library exhibit prepared by Julie Snyder and Karla Schweitzer honors the "Six Triple Eight" Black battalion of the U.S. Women's Army Corps that managed postal services during World War II. The "No Mail—Low Morale" exhibit has our locally famous Santa figure reimagined as a female soldier! (Learn more at [armyhistory.org](http://armyhistory.org), [Smithsonianmag.org](http://Smithsonianmag.org), and *The Six-Triple-Eight* movie on Netflix.)

Watch for new website/Facebook stories in April, including a library exhibit on boxing legend Jack Dempsey!

## **Thank you to our new and renewing patrons (as of March 21st, 2025)**

### **Individual Level**

Marsha Carra \* Charlie Chambers \* Joan Compton  
Marilyn Cummins \* Ann Esch \* CDR Paul Edwards USNR Ret.  
Steve Elak \* Dave Martinek \* Jason Pearce \* Judy Perkins  
Bill Phelps, Jr. \* Steve Plutt \* Toni Ratzlaff \* Geri Reffel  
Renee Rowcliffe \* Julie Snyder \* William Stevenson  
Kathy Stockton \* Eric Swab \* Laurie Waalkes

### **Family and Associate Level**

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\* Historic GMF Foundation \* Pat Hyslop \* Ellin Jensen  
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### **UPHS recognizes our Honorary Lifetime Patrons**

Larry Black \* Paul & Patricia Crowson \* Jack Davis  
Donna Elder \* Claudia & Jim Eley \* Donna Finicle  
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\* Dick & Jane Lass \* Gary & Anna Litchenberg  
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Doug & Marianne Young

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Doug & Debby Hydeman  
Jim & Evelyn Irving

### **Special thanks to our Historical Club Patrons**

CORE Electric Cooperative  
Dirk E. Johnson Family Foundation  
Christian Keesee Charitable Trust  
Kirkpatrick Family Fund

### **Thanks to our Amazing Volunteers!**

Larry Black \* Michael & Maria Bryant  
Charlie Chambers \* Claudia Eley  
Katie Gardner \* Laurie Glauth \* Suzie Graf  
Pat Hyslop \* Jane Lass  
Michael & Kathy Lockwood \* Marla Lopez  
Steve and Kim Plutt \* Ramon & Renarose Ranoco  
Geri Reffel \* Jean Rodeck \* Renee Rowcliffe  
Darlene Ruth \* Ted & Karla Schweitzer  
Monica Shaney \* Julie Snyder \* Bill Stevenson  
Anita Wallace \* John Yantorno



## A Whirlwind of Activity at UPHS



You may have seen it in social media or read in the newspaper. The Pikes Peak Community Club building is now part of the Ute Pass Historical Society! Since the transfer of ownership, board members have been busy renovating the interior. Lots of heavy cleaning, painting, etc. has taken place as we reimagine the use of this historic building that has been a meeting place for the Teller County community for decades. Exterior work and landscaping will take place as soon as weather conditions permit.



Watch for news of an *Open House* soon as we reintroduce the building to the public!



The ***Pikes Peak Community Event Center*** will host community activities and be available for rental for events such as meetings, weddings, and fundraisers.

For more information and to book an event, please contact PPCEC Event Coordinator Geri Reffel at [greffel@yahoo.com](mailto:greffel@yahoo.com)

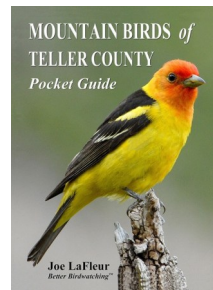


## Celebrating our Culture and History



Local wildlife enthusiast Joe LaFleur has partnered with us to teach local folks about birds in Teller County. He has hosted two presentations at UPHS this year and written a pocket guide on birding in our region.

[Mountain Birds of Teller County, Colorado. Pocket Guide Joseph A. LaFleur](#) . Available at [buteobooks.com](http://buteobooks.com).



### St Patrick's Day Parade



in Woodland Park

The chilly (but fun!) parade was held on Saturday, 3/15. Several UPHS members joined the festivities, riding in Charlie's truck or walking the parade route with candy. The Donner race car was a hit, but leprechaun Ramon Ranoco and his wife Rose stole the show!



A lovely toy cradle-board with doll was recently donated to UPHS.

An analysis of its composition and beadwork by a museum professional at the Southern Ute Museum in Ignacio suggests it dates from the 1880s to 1910s.

The artifact is now on display in the Ute room in the Steffa Cabin with other Native American artifacts.



## Upcoming Events

### Woodland Park Cemetery Crawl

Escape the July heat with a trip to our past in Woodland Park this Independence Day! Meet some of the pioneers who helped build our community.

Do you enjoy sharing history? Consider filling a role as one of the pioneers. Training and script provided! Contact us at <https://www.utepasshs.org>.



### Marigreen Pines—July 19th/20th

We are fortunate to be hosting the **Marigreen Pines** tours again this year! The dates are July 19th and 20th. The ticket and tour process will look a bit different this year:

A. Guests will start the tour at the Joyland Church in Green Mountain Falls, where a 25-minute video will be shown. A chartered bus will take them to the Estate. Private vehicles are not allowed on the property.



B. Docents will assist guests as they self-tour the mansion, cottage, and grounds, with novices available to answer questions and give direction. Light refreshments will be available in the courtyard.

C. Guests will be shuttled back to Joyland Church throughout the day.

D. Tickets will be available for credit/debit card purchase online in May on the UPHS website, tentatively priced at \$35, with group discounts available. Updates will be posted soon at <https://www.utepasshs.org>.

Thomas Cusack, billboard king of the early 20th century, built the Cascade estate for his family. The property remained in the family for generations. Ann Cusack Johnson, an early benefactor of the Ute Pass Historical Society, donated the property to the Congregation of the Holy Cross in 1979, with the stipulation that UPHS tours are allowed of the property every three years as a fundraiser for us.

We are grateful for the opportunity to present the tours and look forward to seeing you there in July!





It has been an exciting year for the Ute Pass Historical Society! We have been making the transition with a new president and office staff.

After nearly 100 years of service to the Divide area, the *Pikes Peak Community Club* decided to donate their building to the UPHS in hopes we can keep it functioning as a center for the community. We accepted the task! Since early January, we have rolled up our sleeves to give the building a bit of a make-over to attract new users.

We started on the inside and did some deep cleaning, added a coat of paint and some new curtains. The kitchen has a new tin ceiling which coordinates well with the sconces around the front room. We have hired an event coordinator, Geri Reffel, who is excited to help you put together a wonderful event.

This spring we plan to turn our focus to the outside with some landscaping, paint and a new sign. We are calling the building the *Pikes Peak Community Event Center*. The club's name will remain on the building in remembrance and the new sign will be clear to all that this is a place for family, friends, neighbors and organizations to gather and make our community stronger. Look for information on our open house and check our website for details and updates.

Wishing you a happy Spring!

Best regards,

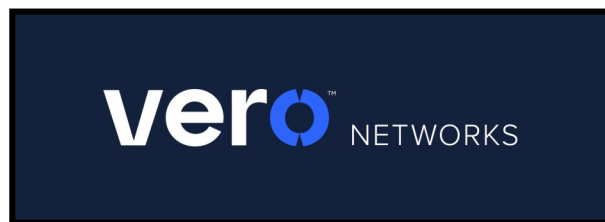
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*Pat Hyslop*



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES

Funding for these grants has been provided by Colorado Humanities, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and the NEH Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan (SHARP) initiative.



KIRKPATRICK FAMILY FUND

Ute Pass Historical Society  
& Pikes Peak Museum  
P.O. Box 6875  
Woodland Park, CO 80866-6875



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*Dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of Ute Pass families and communities since 1976*

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PPCEC Event Coordinator: Geri Reffel

**Office Telephone: 719.686.7512**

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**Website: [utepasshs.org](http://utepasshs.org)**

***UPHS is a 501 (C) (3) non-profit organization***

***THANK YOU!***

*The Ute Pass Historical Society's Board of Directors is grateful to our loyal patrons and enthusiastic volunteers. Without your generous financial contributions and dedicated volunteer service, we would not exist. Thanks to all of you for supporting our mission to preserve and share the history of the families and communities of the Ute Pass area of Colorado.*

*It is an honor to serve you!*