



# UTE PASS HISTORICAL SOCIETY & Pikes Peak Museum

P. O. Box 6875 / 231 East Henrietta Avenue  
Woodland Park, CO 80866

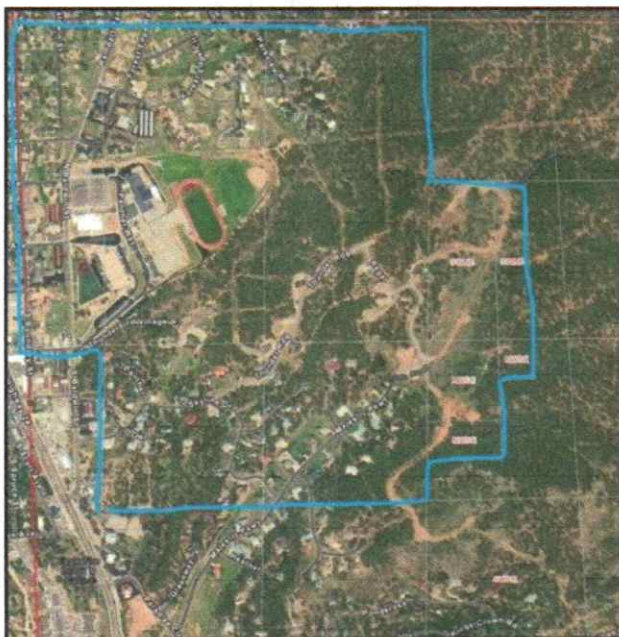
(719) 686-7512 • [uphs@utepasshistoricalsociety.org](mailto:uphs@utepasshistoricalsociety.org)



## Friendfield Turkey Farm Woodland Park, Colorado © 2021 Steve Plutt

In the 1930s there was a large commercial turkey farm business that thrived in our area. The 301 acre Friendfield Turkey Farm was located on the east side of Woodland Park where Grace Episcopal Church's Thunderbird Ranch Camp was later located. The acreage also included the area where Gateway Elementary and the Woodland Park High School grounds are today and additionally stretched down to the Woodland Park Cemetery.

Thousands of turkeys were raised here in Woodland Park and shipped all across the United States during the years they



were in business. According to a news article of the time, *the high altitude, sunshine, shade, cool nights and expert feeding have combined to produce birds of exceptional quality.....* Friendfield Turkey Farm was established by two Colorado Springs ladies, Miss Laura Gilpin and Miss Elizabeth "Betsy" Forster.

Back in those days, the two women had to keep their love for one another hidden due to a strict intolerance and narrow-mindedness towards gays.

The name *Friendfield* was used for the farm as it came from Betsy's heritage in South Carolina where her grandfather, Dr. Alexius Forster, III, ran the Friendfield Plantation.

The map to the left shows the roughed-in blue outline of the 301 acre Friendfield Turkey Farm. This acreage originally was the James Baldwin Homestead. The Baldwin Family are known as the "founders" of Woodland Park.

*(Continued on Page 2)*



## The Life of Laura Gilpin & Betsy Forster

Laura Gilpin was born in Colorado Springs on April 22, 1891. Her father Frank was a pioneer resident of Colorado Springs. He was a miner, rancher and was known throughout Colorado and the West for his hand-made, hand carved furniture of rare woods. The family was well known in the high society circles of Broadmoor and Colorado Springs including friendships with Charles Tutt and the Spencer Penrose family. In the early 1900s, Frank was owner of the 1800 acre *Figure Four Ranch* near Austin, Colorado, but maintained his Colorado Springs home. For a time, Frank was also the manager of his friend Dr. Wm. Bell's Manitou Park Hotel north of Woodland Park.

Laura became interested in photography when she got her first camera, a Kodak *Brownie* on her 12<sup>th</sup> birthday followed by a developing tank that Christmas. These gifts initiated her lifelong passion for photography.

Her mother, however, encouraged her to study music and enrolled her in the New England Conservatory of Music from 1904 until 1908 (13 years to 17 years old). Despite that education, she decided her life's path should be in photography after all.

When Laura returned to Colorado Springs in 1909 (18 years old) she refined her photographic techniques and taught herself how to photograph using the autochrome process. In 1909 she was professionally producing autochrome still-lives and portraits taken in and around Colorado.

At 22 years of age (1913) Laura needed to subsidize her photography career. So she borrowed \$600 and started her first poultry business (Woodland Park was her second) at the family ranch in Austin. She started with 400 turkeys and that business ended up being a huge success.



Two years later she sold it for a reported \$10,000. That same year of 1915, the Gilpin's attended the Panama-Pacific Exhibition in San Francisco and the Panama-California Exhibition in San Diego. This family vacation renewed her interest in photography. So with the profits from her poultry business she enrolled at the Clarence White School of Photography in New York City which she attended from 1916 to 1917 (25 and 26 years old). Laura left the White school only because of contacting a severe case of influenza in the beginning days of the 1918 Spanish Influenza Pandemic, coming back home to Colorado. At her parents' home in Colorado Springs, Laura suffered from a heart lesion brought on by her bout with the flu. So her mother hired a nurse to care for 27 year old Laura. That nurse was 32



Navajo Woman with Corn, 1974  
Laura Gilpin

(Continued on Page 4)

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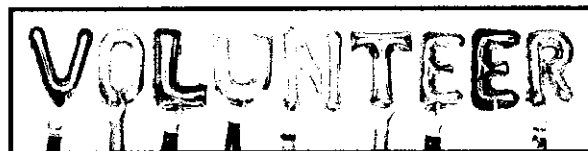
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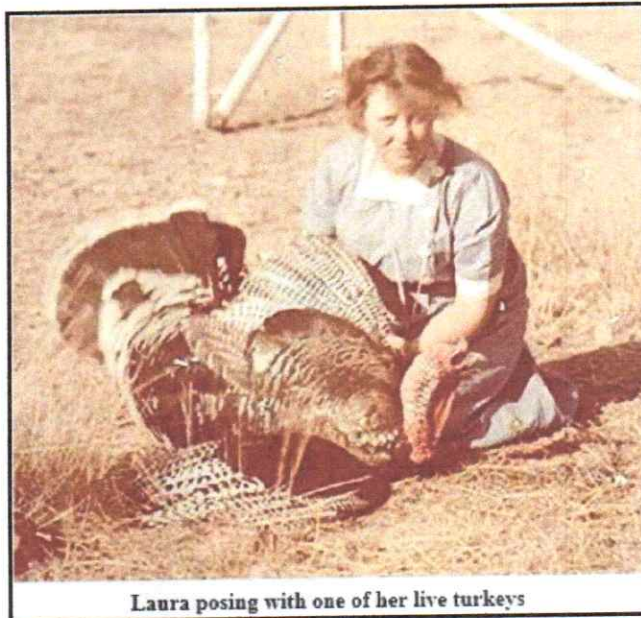
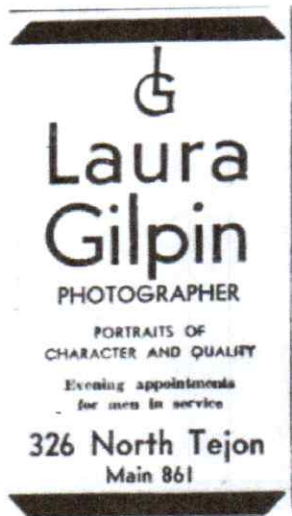


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old Elizabeth "Betsy" Forster. Betsy was a director for the Cragmor Sanatorium and president of the Visiting Nurses Association. The two women fell in love and among other travels together, would often stay at the Gilpin Family cabin in Woodland Park. In 1919, fully recovered from the flu, Laura began her career in earnest. She started up a studio in the new arts center at 30 W. Dale Street (today's Fine Arts Center). By now Laura's photography skills were well acclaimed with exhibits in the U.S. and overseas. In 1920 she made her first trip to New Mexico and that started her relationship with the Navajos and her documentation of them and the Southwestern landscape.

In 1925 she started up the Gilpin Publishing Company in Colorado Springs producing two books on photography, *The Pikes Peak Region* and *Mesa Verde National Park*. During World War II, Gilpin was publicity director for Boeing Aircraft in Wichita, Kansas, where through her photography she promoted Boeing and discovered aerial photography. Laura went on to become one of the most prolific female photographers of the 20th century with a career spanning over 70 years. She has 10 of her photos permanently housed in the Library of Congress and to this day is still regarded as the only significant woman landscape photographer of her era.

Ansel Adams referred to Laura as *one of the important photographers of our time*. The Amon Carter Museum of American Art of Fort Worth, Texas holds over 6,000 prints and about 20,000 negatives by Laura. Laura died on the Navajo Reservation on November 30, 1979 of heart failure. She is buried in Colorado Springs' Evergreen Cemetery.



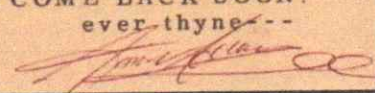
Laura posing with one of her live turkeys

*July 8 1959*

Dear Laura----Just a rushline to thank you for your letter. I hope you got home safely. My back is STILL out and I am MAD. But, otherwise all is well. It was WONDERFUL having you with us. I shall write at greater length just as soon as I can.

Please phone Witter Bynner and tell him I am thinking of him and will write! Thanks a lot!

Love from us all AND COME BACK SOON!  
ever thynne--



July 8, 1959 letter from Ansel Adams to Laura

Story continued in December Newsletter



### Crystola Bridge Honored as Historic Site

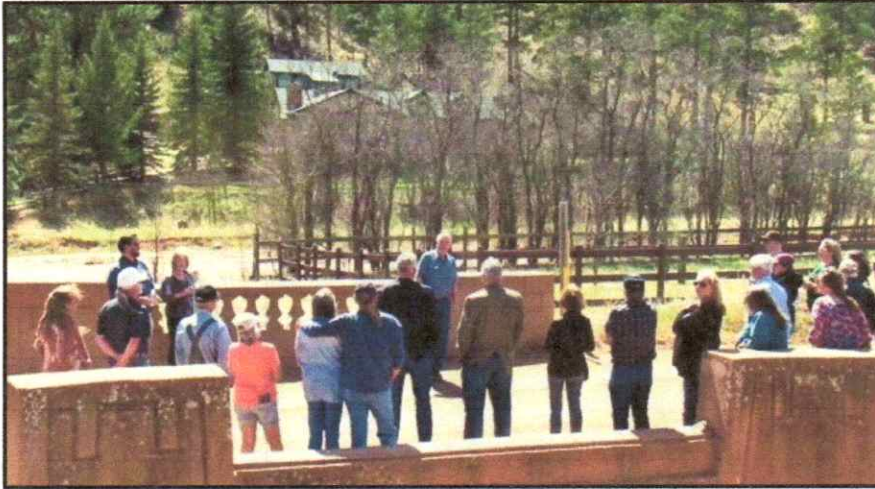


Photo by Kim Plutt

## Pat Hill

Pikes Peak Courier Reporter

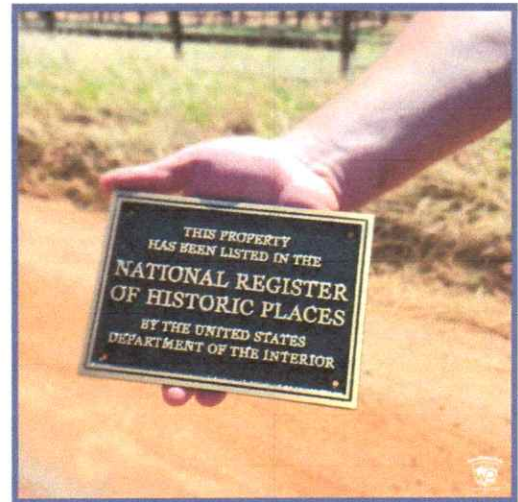
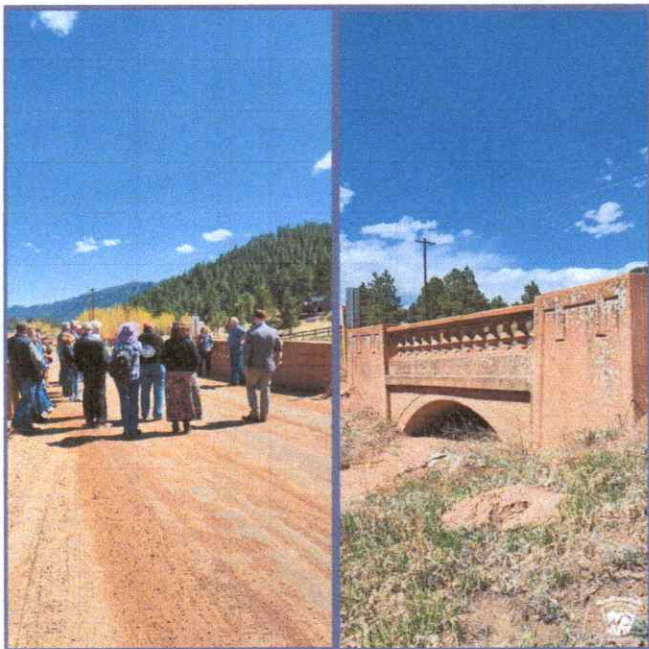
Once a landmark on the Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway in the 1950s, the Crystola Bridge as a historic site was chiefly forgotten. Forgotten, that is, by all but Steve Plutt, who spent hours researching the significance of the bridge on Teller 21, about a mile north of the Crystola Roadhouse.

In a ceremony last week, city and county officials, local historians and a few residents, celebrated the bridge as an historic site. *This designation takes a tremendous amount of work*, said Eric Newcombe, who represented History Colorado. *I guess that's why more places don't get listed on the national register.*

Completed in 1920, the Crystola Bridge was once CO 18, later, US 40 South. *The bridge was also part of the Colorado Springs-to-Leadville route*, Plutt said.

With the designation as a property on the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of the Interior, the bridge is now eligible for state historical grants. First up would be to replace missing balustrades.

Newcombe presented the gold-plated plaque with the inscription to Donna Finicle, president of the Ute Pass Historical Society. Plutt is a member of the society.



Photos by Laurie Glauth

**2024  
Green Mountain Falls Edition**



Ute Pass Historical Society & Pikes Peak Museum  
Woodland Park, Colorado

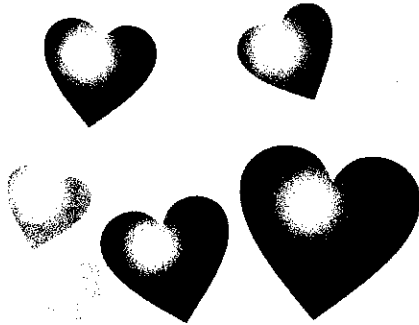
**2024  
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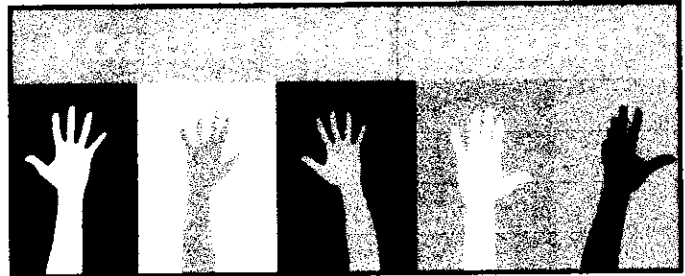
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Only at the Ute Pass Historical Society Gift Shop located at 231 E. Henrietta Avenue,  
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Special thanks to volunteer Cindy Bills for stepping in and putting together the Ute Pass Edition of the 2024 calendar!



Have you ever considered volunteering? We are always looking for new volunteers: History Park tour guides, gift shop coverage, cleaning and building maintenance.

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**Upcoming Events**

**Potato Soup Supper**      **Friday, October 13**      **Divide Community Club**  
**David Martinek-Divide Depot**

**Annual Crafts Fair**      **Saturday and**      **Chipita Park**  
**Marcroft Hall**      **Sunday, Nov. 4 and 5**

**Holiday Craft Fair**      **Saturday, December 2**      **Sallie Bush Building,**  
**Green Mountain Falls**

*Speaking of potato soup, here's a recipe that is sure to take the chill out of a frosty fall morning. Serve it with a crisp green salad and crusty bread. Then, sit down and wait for the compliments!*  
**Creamy Potato Soup**

- |                                |                             |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 6 pieces of bacon, cooked      | 1 pt. heavy cream           |
| 3 T bacon drippings            | 1 T thyme                   |
| 5 stalks celery, diced         | 3 T cornstarch              |
| 4 carrots, sliced              | 1/3 C of milk               |
| 1 medium onion, chopped        | 1 can of sweet corn         |
| 8 medium potatoes, cubed       | 1 c. cheddar cheese, grated |
| 3-14 oz. cans of chicken broth |                             |

In a large soup pot, put 2 T bacon drippings. Add celery, onion and carrots. Cook until tender. Add potatoes and remaining 1 T drippings. Cook until potatoes are slightly done; then add chicken broth. Simmer approximately 1 hour, or until potatoes are tender (not mushy). Add cream; bring to a slow boil, stirring constantly. Stir in corn starch mixed with milk to thicken. Reduce heat; add thyme, corn and cheese. Crumble bacon into mixture. Makes 8 servings.



**NATIONAL  
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 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.



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***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!*