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Historical Society tours Guanella Pass

By Pat Mauro

The Park County Historical Society headed up Guanella Pass last week to the home of Julie Holmes, located on the pass at Duck Lake.



Private tour

The Park County Historical Society visits the home of Julie Holmes at Duck Lake on Guanella Pass and enjoys a picnic lunch on the south bank of Duck Lake. (Photo by Pat Mauro)

Julie, a resident of Duck Lake since 1967, was very gracious as our host to the site. 20 attendees met at the town of Grant and travelled together to the site.

We noted some of the historic structures there, such as the old blacksmith shop, post office, and former Maddox Ice home (moved there from Platte Canyon High School).

As we started our ascension of the pass, we stopped at the other former home of Louise Porter (aptly named the “On the Way” home). The large home is now part of the Tumbling River Ranch, and is a magnificent stone structure that Louise and John built.

The architect of the home was Jack Benedict, a well known Denver architect. We climbed further, and stopped at the falls, lo-

cated on the s-curve (Falls Hill) as we climbed to Geneva Park (Cowboy Flats). Driving past the former Geneva Basin Ski Area, we arrived at Julie’s home on Duck Lake.

Louise Porter and her husband John built the home between 1921-24. Louise was the first-born child of Adolph Coors, born in 1880 (nicknamed LuLu). She married John Porter (Porter Hospital was named after the Porter family), and they had both the Duck Lake and Stone House at Tumbling River Ranch built.



History stands

Ruins of the Timberline Lodge, looking south, can be seen at the former property of John and Louise (Adolph Coors daughter) Porter at Duck Lake on Guanella Pass. (Photo by Pat Mauro)

The land parcel of the site is on 50 acres, including Duck Lake, which is a natural lake. The lodge, named Timberline Lodge, was a three-story structure with eight rooms, and a covered swimming pool.

Julie explained that the lodge burned down after one of the wood/coal furnaces caught fire Oct. 31, 1957. We were able to peruse the ruins of the once grand lodge, with its lake front view. The swimming pool was filled in, but we were able to imagine its glory, nestled in the trees on the north side

of the lodge. Remnants of the structure were scattered around the area.



Connecting with the past

Julie Holmes (right, with cane) speaks to Park County Historical Society members on the history of Timberline Lodge at Duck Lake. (Photo by Pat Mauro)

Julie also explained that Bill Holmes had a ski lift built on the property in the 1950s. The power for the lift was a former Sherman Tank.

We made our way down to the south bank of Duck Lake, and everyone enjoyed their lunch in great beauty of the pass and lake.

This concluded another spectacular adventure of the Park County Historical Society. Join the society, to keep history alive in Park County! www.parkcountyhistory.com