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## **McGraw Park showcases Bailey history**

by Margo Hamilton



Keystone Bridge at McGraw park during the 2012 Bailey Day. Photo by Art Hall.

Michigan pioneers Edward and Blanche McGraw forged their way to Bailey, Colorado, and were so taken with the beauty of this tiny berg that they decided to put down stakes.

Purchasing land from William Bailey, the pioneer for whom the town is named, the McGraws settled into this beautiful valley in 1804 and established the Bailey Ranch. They also built a hotel.

Mr. McGraw worked for Hallack and Howard Lumber Mill, and Mrs. McGraw opened Bailey's first general store, which stands today known as Bailey Country Store.

The McGraws' son, Alanson Richard, married Jane Mills Skegg and their daughter, Helen, had a deep love and devotion for the Colorado and Southern Railroad that operated in the late 19th century that initiated its pilgrimage

during the mineral boom.

The train ascended from Denver to Platte Canyon and traversed South Park.

Helen esteemed her grandfather, Edward McGraw, who helped build the track, and quipped, "We got our food, news, everything from the train; it meant everything to us. I just loved trainmen, too. All my romantic images and dreams were of trainmen. I would hang over the fence and wait for them to wave at me as the trains went by."

In April 1937, the Colorado and Southern Railroad made its last run, and Helen was aboard filming her beloved train's final journey.

Helen McGraw Tatum donated land to the Park County Historical Society in 1969, which the society beautifully transformed into McGraw Park.

It is here Platte Canyon Historical Society established a base to preserve and promote the amazing history and heritage of Park County.

Many of Park County's antiquities now claim the park as their home, including: Entriken Cabin, a caboose and wait station from Colorado and Southern Railroad, the Shawnee School, the Keystone Bridge and McGlone Cabin.

A Maddox Ice Boat is also on the site. The Maddox Ice Company, a pioneer Bailey business, shipped ice to Denver, taken from two lakes where Platte Canyon High and Fitzsimmons Middle Schools now stand. Maddox shipped ice to Denver on the narrow gauge Colorado & Southern Railroad.

Today McGraw Park's 20-acre parcel is precious persevered and extends on both sides of the North Fork of the South Platte River. Eighteen acres on the southwest side of the river has a rough trail system, constructed over 10 years ago. Two acres on the north side of the river provide a permanent location for a number of Park County historic buildings.

Become a volunteer to help restore the beloved wooden caboose, which is in need of scrapping and painting. Assist to plant and care for Morrow Park's lawn and flower beds, and come one and all to their monthly lectures.

For more information, contact Arthur Hall at 303-816-1735 or Dee Brown at 303-838-6025 or visit the Park County Historical Society's web site at [www.parkcountyhistory.com](http://www.parkcountyhistory.com).