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The Marshall-Martinek Team



**David
Martinek**

**Your
Colorado
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Contact information:

Direct Phone: 719.687.1516
Toll Free: 800.905.3811
Fax: 719.687.0488
Cell: 719.213.9335

Web: www.davidmartinekc.com

[davidmartinek@
1stchoicerealtycb.com](mailto:davidmartinek@1stchoicerealtycb.com)

or

dmartinekhomes@gmail.com

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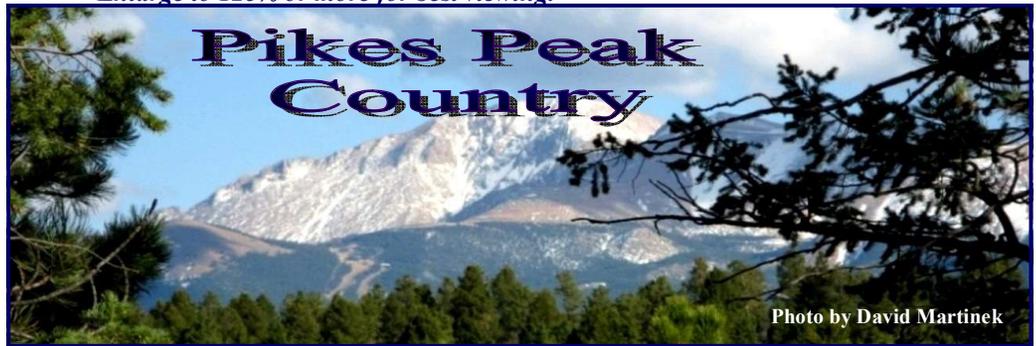


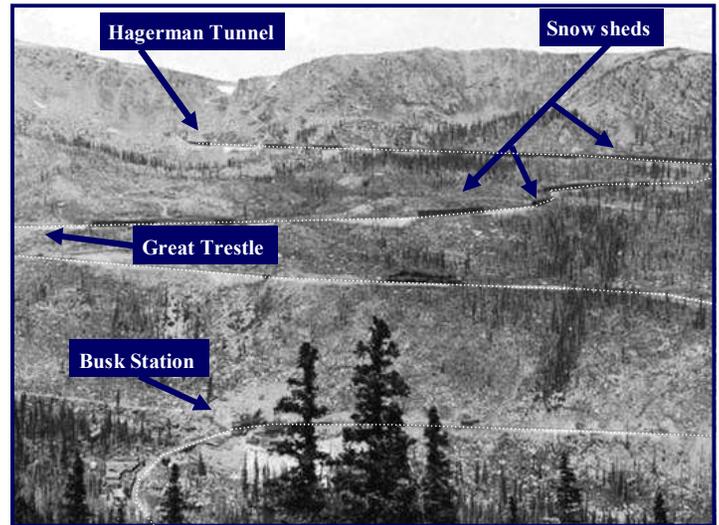
Photo by David Martinek

Hagerman Pass - a tale of two tunnels

Few who know their Colorado Midland railroad history can deny that the Midland's crossing of the Continental Divide via Hagerman Pass, just west of Leadville, was a spectacular achievement. In fact, it was probably one of the most outstanding feats of railroad engineering in the 19th Century.

The first standard gauge railroad to extend from the Front Range across the Rockies all the way to Grand Junction, some 256 miles, was planned to be two construction projects – an eastern division building from Colorado Springs to Leadville, and a western division building from Leadville to just southwest of Glenwood Springs. The western route was supposed to have been built first, and it was started first during the summer of 1886. The silver mines in Leadville and Aspen, the mills in Leadville and the coal reserves in Jerome Park and around New Castle made construction of the western route a logical choice, where lucrative revenues already existed, i.e., coal and ore transport.

But politics and the competition, namely the Denver & Rio Grande railroad, delayed the arrival of needed materials to the western



This straight-on view of Hagerman Pass showing the "high line" loops (dotted line), the great trestle location, snow sheds, Busk Station & the eastern portal of Hagerman Tunnel. *Denver Public Library*

division, so the eastern route from Colorado Springs to Leadville – up through Ute Pass, out across South Park to Buena Vista and up the Arkansas River valley – had to be constructed first.

But once the Colorado Midland reached Leadville on August 31, 1887, and the line began passenger and freight service shortly afterward (in fact, the very next day), rails were pushed further

west almost immediately into the Sawatch Range and the Continental Divide.

The two highest mountains in Colorado lay just 12 miles west of Leadville – Mt. Elbert and Mount Massive. Through the canyons to the north runs a pass reaching an elevation of 11,939 feet. Starting from around Turquoise Lake and moving up through those canyons, the Midland built a roadbed and a tunnel that consisted of approximately 10 miles of track laid in four serpentine loops, including a huge curved wooden trestle 1,084 feet long just at the beginning of the third loop, and a smaller trestle 420 feet long, as well as eight snow sheds. The pass was called Hagerman Pass after James J. Hagerman, the president of the Colorado Midland Railway, and the tunnel was named Hagerman Tunnel.

Both the roadbed and the tunnel had been started in the summer of 1886, before work was halted for lack of materials. With the Midland tracks nearing Leadville, it was completed in June 1887. At 2,060 feet long and 11,528 feet in elevation, Hagerman Tunnel was the first to pierce the central Rockies - most likely the highest bore in western railroad history at that time. It was certainly acclaimed to be the "gateway through the great Divide."

Continued on page 2



The great trestle was 1,084 feet long; it towered over the landscape. Trains passed over it very slowly (see picture on page 2).

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

Hagerman Pass - continued from page 1

As W. A. Douglas wrote at the opening of the Hagerman Tunnel, "Let us pause at the portal through which we have been admitted to this sublimest of sublunary scenery, and take note of the great industrial enterprise that enables us to peep into this hitherto double-locked thesaurus of nature. This is the great bore through the backbone of the continent, the gateway through the great Divide." (Tuesday, June 14, 1887 – *Leadville Herald-Democrat*)

Once through Hagerman Tunnel, the Midland tracks wound down the western slope from Hagerman Station (at the western portal) to Loch Ivanhoe at the source of the Frying Pan River, and then on down the Frying Pan and Roaring Fork river valleys to Basalt, Carbondale, Cardiff, Glenwood Springs and New Castle, eventually reaching the banks of the Colorado River (then called the Grand River). In a joint venture with the Rio Grande Western, the Midland shared track from New Castle to Grand Junction.

Construction of a standard gauge railroad up mountainous Hagerman Pass and through Hagerman Tunnel may have been an outstanding engineering feat, but it did not take the Midland management long to realize that the route up the pass, called the "high line," was a severe financial drain. "The impracticality of the Hagerman route was demonstrated to the Midland Company early in its existence, but it was not in a financial condition to better it" wrote the *New York Times* in November 1897.

In addition to the expense of running trains up and down 3% grades and around 16 degree curves, the clearing of the right-of-way during wild Hagerman Pass winters was an exhausting effort which kept rotary snow plow outfits on the move from November to March. During any of those months, the pass was liable to be buried under hundreds of feet of snow or the debris of destructive snow slides. It took six hard-working locomotives to shove the Leslie rotary plow through the snow, and the moisture and debris caused the maintenance of the snow sheds to be a constant chore. So after only a year or more of operation, as early as 1888, the Colorado Midland began surveys to

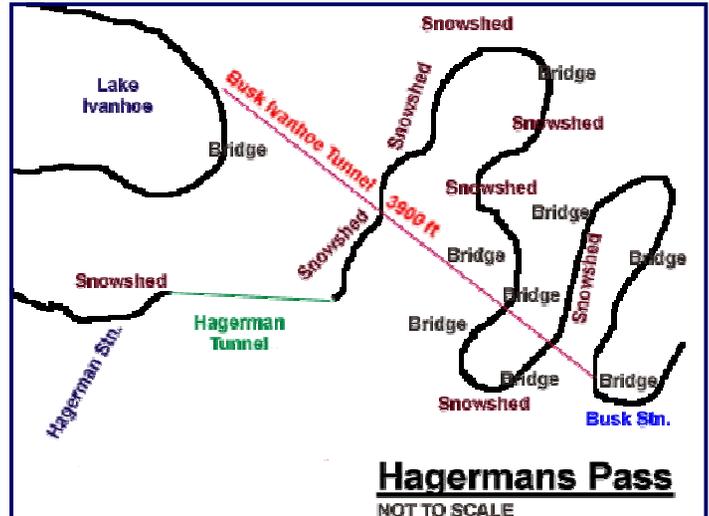


The tents of Douglas City, a temporary base camp for construction workers, are dwarfed by the size of the great trestle. Trains ran very slowly over both trestles.

Denver Public Library

locate another tunnel site at a lower elevation.

By November 1889 they had mapped out plans for a major line relocation running from the Busk Station near Busk Creek at 10,953 feet (see Page 1 map and map below) to the northern shore of Loch Ivanhoe, a straight-line distance beneath the Continental Divide of 2.9 miles. The tunnel itself would be 9,394.7 feet long and would eliminate the wooden trestles, seven miles



This drawing of Hagerman Pass shows the "high line" route and Hagerman Tunnel, as well as the Busk -Ivanhoe Tunnel. (Note: the 3,900 foot length is an error; the tunnel is actually 9,394.7 feet long.)

of lariat loop track rising up to the Hagerman Tunnel, the steep 3% grades, as well as save 572 feet in elevation.

Not wanting to take on more debt, the Midland chose to contract with an independent company to build and operate the tunnel. The Busk Tunnel Railway Company was incorporated on June 16, 1890 with a secured 999-year contract from the Colorado Midland promising revenues of 25 cents per ton of freight and 25 cents per passenger that was carried through the tunnel. The Midland also agreed to keep the tunnel and its approaches in repair. The long-term contract was necessary to raise capital for the construction, estimated to cost \$782,000.

The boring contract was awarded to Keefe & Company of Butte Montana in July 1890, and the tunnel was completed, with some difficulty, on October 18, 1893. It was designed for a single track with a shaft that was 15 feet wide and 21 feet high, reinforced with timbers. The western portal at Loch Ivanhoe was 133 feet higher than the eastern portal at Busk, which provided good drainage and, the designers hoped, a natural chimney for escaping smoke and gas. Trains began running through the bore by December 17, 1893. The actual cost of construction was \$1,260,000 for which bonds were sold.

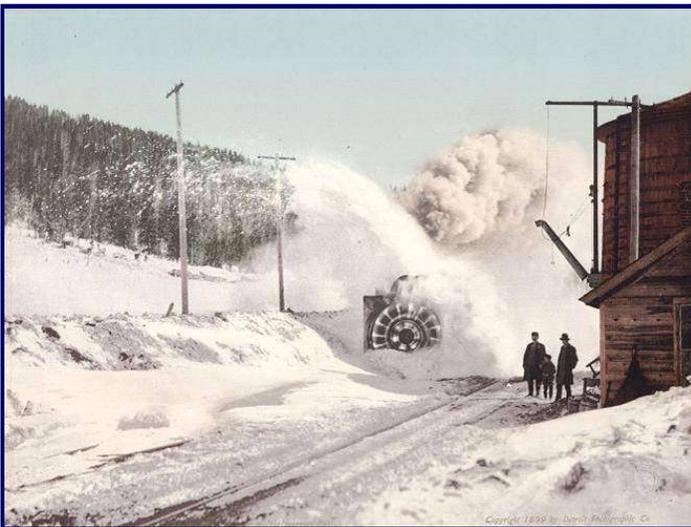
While the accumulation of smoke and gas from trains going through the tunnel turned out to be a constant problem, train collisions were not. Midland operating rules stated that only one train could occupy the tunnel at a time. The engineer of any train would obtain a staff signal instrument at the entering station which was electrically interlocked with identical instruments at the other portal. Trains were not allowed in the tunnel without the staff instrument. Withdrawal of an instrument at one end automatically locked both instruments so that withdrawal by another train was impossible. Once a train

Hagerman Pass - continued from page 2

arrived at the distant portal and the staff instrument was re-inserted at that station, the instruments would be unlocked and ready for the next train.

The Busk-Ivanhoe Tunnel saved the Colorado Midland \$70,000 annually in maintenance for the old "high line" in addition to large savings in the general cost of running trains across the Divide. The maximum grade to the Busk-Ivanhoe Tunnel from Leadville was only 1.41%, compared to the 3% grades up Hagerman Pass, and the approaches were located in such a way as to be practically free from snow drifts or avalanches. Although operations over the "high line" were suspended by January 1894, all trackage and facilities were left intact as insurance against rock falls and other mishaps which might occur within the new tunnel.

For the next four years, Midland trains operated through the new tunnel regularly. But in 1897 the Colorado Midland Railway went into bankruptcy and was being reorganized. The reorganization committee, led by a receiver named George Ristine, felt that the rental for use of the Busk-Ivanhoe was too high. The committee wanted to retire the bonds securing the tunnel construction (worth \$1,260,000) and consolidate the tunnel with the railroad by issuing new bonds. The Busk Tunnel Railroad Company (and their bondholders) objected, protesting that the value of the Midland bonds were in question, and soon both parties began issuing ultimatums to one another.



A rotary plow like this one near Lock Ivanhoe Station, and others borrowed from the D&RG, helped clear the snow from the tracks along Hagerman Pass and relieve stranded passengers and crew during the January to April blizzards of 1899. *Denver Public Library*

Fed up with the argument, in September 1897 the Midland people put crews to work to rehabilitate the Hagerman Pass "high line" and the Hagerman Tunnel, and by October had surrendered possession of the Busk-Ivanhoe Tunnel to its owners. As the Busk-Ivanhoe bore could not be reached by any other railroad, its desertion by the Colorado Midland rendered it absolutely worthless. Litigation was certain to follow.

All through the winters of 1897 – 1898 and the following summers, the Midland kept pushing its trains over the old "high line" and through Hagerman Tunnel much to the surprise of the

Busk Tunnel Railroad Company. But the onset of the winter of 1899 changed everything.

It started snowing in January 1899 and didn't stop until April. Blizzard after blizzard closed the "high line" for 78 days straight, stranding trains, passengers and crews, collapsing snow sheds and bringing commerce along the Midland line in that region to a screeching halt. The Midland had to borrow rotary plows from other railroads and divert traffic on those lines in order to respond to the crisis. Crews out of Leadville were even hired to hand-dig the snow off the tracks.

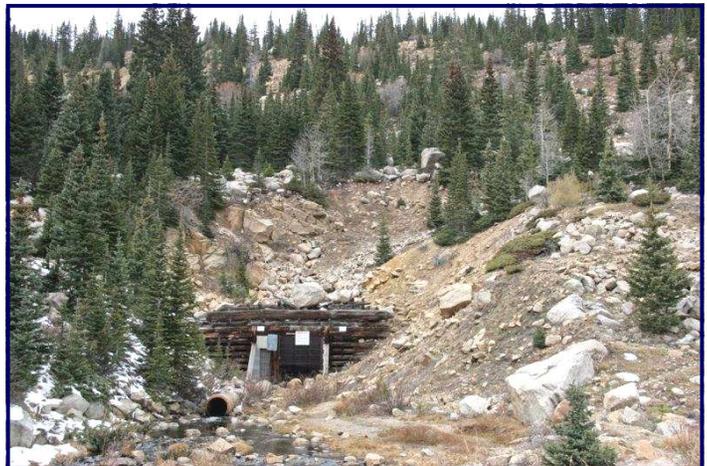
Once relief was accomplished, the Colorado Midland and the Busk Tunnel Railroad Company began earnest talks to consider reconciliation. Very quickly, within weeks, the Midland approached the tunnel company about an outright purchase of the tunnel and operation. On May 12, 1899 the deal was struck and within 14 days trains were again running through the Busk-Ivanhoe Tunnel.

In the autumn of 1899, the Hagerman Pass "high line" was officially closed for good after salvaging ten miles of 60-pound rails and usable lumber and timbers from the snow sheds and trestles. Hagerman Tunnel, the first "gateway through the Divide," was abandoned.

For the next two decades, the Midland's use of the Busk-Ivanhoe Tunnel was uninterrupted. After the Midland ceased operations in 1918, the tunnel (called the Carlton Tunnel at that time) was converted to automobile traffic. From 1922 to 1943 (when the tunnel collapsed) it was a one-lane toll road, State Highway 104. Since 1962, the tunnel has been part of the Frying Pan – Arkansas Project, moving water across the Divide between Lock Ivanhoe and Busk Creek.

Hagerman Pass is still accessible by unimproved road using four-wheel drive vehicles or by hiking. The large trestles in the loops have been filled in with rock. Stream crossings and rocky sections, as well as occasional fallen trees, make the pass difficult to traverse. But it is generally open from late May through the first heavy snowfalls in autumn. DM

Sources: Denver Public Library; Wikipedia; The Colorado Midland - A Short History by R. Phillips; The Midland Route by Mel McFarland; the New York Times; the Leadville Herald-Democrat; and The Railroad Gazette.



The east portal of the Busk-Ivanhoe (Carlton) Tunnel today. Once a one-lane toll road from 1922 - 1943, since 1962 the tunnel has been used to divert water from the western slope to the Arkansas River valley via the Frying Pan - Arkansas Project (note the pipe).

Dave's Buyers' Guide

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

Prices and status effective as of April 30, 2012



\$555,750

1192 County Rd 112, Florissant Open Valley Views! Custom home on 37.7 acres. 3BR/3BA/3GAR with 3853 S.F. Great room with cherry cabinets/granite counters. All BRs have a walk-out. Slate floors; 2 of 3 FPs have granite hearths and stacked stone to the ceiling. Artist studio. #738857

Obscure Real Estate Laws

Unusual laws affecting real estate occur with some regularity, but here are 5 during the last year that deserve highlighting:

1. To stem the potential problem of manure left in from of properties, Watertown, NY is considering a law to require horses to wear diapers.
2. Hedges encroaching on sidewalks must be trimmed in Plattsburgh, NY. The city can trim overgrown hedges and bill the owners. A similar law in Harlingen, TX allows the city to mow residents' lawns whenever their grass grows over a foot.
3. "Toy ranches" in Pitkin County, CO are no longer considered agricultural property. A property is considered a toy ranch if the land around the house is used for grazing but the house itself isn't part of the ranching operation.
4. Homeowners in South Carolina who want to recycle copper pipes must obtain a permit from the sheriff - to curb illegal copper stripping.
5. And, residents in Illinois (except in Chicago) are now permitted to paint their trees purple to keep trespassers off their property.

To inquire, email or call 719.687.1516

(Martinek Team listings are BOXED)



\$399,900

1340 Masters Dr, Woodland Park Luxury Living! 4BR/4BA/2GAR, 3940 S.F. on 0.38 acres. Walk to the golf course. Gourmet kitchen; cherry cabinets, upgraded, vaulted ceilings, lower level family room w/ wet bar. Landscaped. #764018



\$399,850

1704 Wildhorn Rd., Florissant Crystal Peak! 3BR/3BA/6GAR, w/ 2602 S.F. on 35 acres. Log home, rock wall FP, 2000 S.F. shop, wood beam ceilings, wood stove, huge deck. 2 acres have posts to fence in horses. Serene setting! #721052



\$294,500

148 Club Dr., Woodland Park Westwood Lakes! Close to new hospital! 3BR/2BA/2GAR, 2245 S.F. on 0.44 acres. Window seat and breakfast bar, floor to ceiling FP, fenced backyard, large deck, spacious bedrooms! #759390



\$234,000

881 CR 32, Florissant Horse Property! 3BR/3BA/0GAR and 2894 S.F., 5.82 acres. Updated interior, cabinets, counters, floors, appliances and roof. A-frame with additions. Entire acreage is fenced. A few miles off Hwy 24 near Lake George #726025



\$223,500

1874 Vagabond Creek, Lake Geo. Renovated! Open kitchen, cherry cabinets, floor to ceiling windows, radiant hot water heat, lower level FP. 3BR/3BA/2GAR, 2602 S.F. on 5.05 level acres. Great views of Pikes Peak. Just northeast of Lake George. #733245



\$185,000

730 N. Walnut St, Woodland Pk. Family Friendly! Close to parks, schools, shopping. Clean and well maintained. 3BR/2BA/2GAR w/ 1296 S.F. on 0.28 acre lot. Back deck, sunroom, fenced yard. Cozy wood stove and vaulted beam ceilings. Needs a new family. #732453



\$33,900

127 Carlton Cir, Florissant Building Plans! This 2.04 acre lot is ready to go. Perc test done, fire mitigation trees cut, building plans available. A well permit is waiting. This is a beautiful parcel overlooking the CME valley. A dream lot for a dream home.



\$19,900

2847 N. Mountain Est. Florissant Two Lots! Two adjacent lots on a corner that total 1.18 acres. Several building sites are among the many Ponderosa and Fir trees. A selective build produces a great view of Pikes Peak.



\$15,000

317 Blue Spruce Dr, Florissant Scenic! 1.61 acres lot with the building sites is on the ridge line. Then the lot slopes severely down to Four Mile Road. View of the Dome Rock area. Secluded and very private. #756145



\$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



\$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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David Martinek, P.O. Box 1088, Divide, CO 80814

davidmartinek@1stchoicerealtycb.com