Buffalo Peaks Ranch, Colorado

July 19 - 31, 2016

Project Partner: Rocky Mountain Land Library and South Park Heritage Area

Located in Park County, CO

History:

Established in 1863 by French immigrants Adolph and Marie Guiraud, Buffalo Peaks Ranch is one of South Park’s oldest ranches and is an excellent representation of the ranching lifestyle and history in Park County. While the Guirauds lived part time in Denver, the vacant ranch served as a safe house for the Reynolds Gang during their stagecoach robbing spree. It is said that Adolph knew Jim Reynolds and provided this shelter to him a few days before the gang was caught and killed. After Adolph’s death, Marie continued running the ranch with their 10 children, becoming one of the wealthiest women in Colorado and amassing one of the largest fortunes in the South Park Area. In 1942, the ranch was purchased by the McDowell family, who increased the ranch’s size and production even further.
The property is now run by the Rocky Mountain Land Library (RMLL), which is working to restore and preserve the ranch as a cultural heritage site. They hope to renovate the ranch buildings to provide space for libraries, class and workshop rooms, art studios, residential quarters, and a large kitchen and dining facility. Learn more about the history of the ranch here and here. In 2015, a great article on the RMLL was published in the New York Times.

This was HistoriCorps’ second season working at Buffalo Peaks Ranch. In 2015, our work on the property was featured on the Today Show and NBC Nightly News. Recently, HistoriCorps volunteer and author, Allison Amend, published an article about her experience on the project in the New York Times.

**Scope of Work:**

HistoriCorps returned for a second season of preservation work at Buffalo Peaks Ranch. The work was focused on preserving the property’s Cooks House, and volunteers worked closely with field staff to learn new preservation skills. The restoration of the Cooks House included:

- Scraping, priming and painting the siding
- Repairing and reglazing windows
- Priming and painting doors

**Project Location:**

Located in the center of South Park, Colorado’s high mountain grassland, Buffalo Peaks Ranch is situated along the Middle Fork of the South Platte River.

**GPS Coordinates:**

39.112733, -105.890513

**Directions:**

From US 285 at Fairplay, CO, drive eight miles southeast on Colorado Highway 9. Turn left into the driveway just before the South Platte Bridge. A developed parking area is immediately on the left, overlooking the ranch and river.

**Elevation:**

9,196 feet

**Closest town:**

South Park, Colorado