



Join Us Up On Cripple Creek

By Tim Dietz – SSA VP, Communications & Government Relations

This spring's SSA Convention and Trade Show celebrating the Association's 35th Anniversary will be hosted at one of the nation's most beautiful and unique venues: The Broadmoor Resort in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This old gem has quite a history, starting with its colorful builder, Spencer Penrose, who was not unlike many of the successful real estate professionals who will gather in its hallways in April. He had an eye for a deal, knew how to turn land into personal fortune, enjoyed a good time and traveling, was a philanthropic champion and appreciated the benefits of family business.

Penrose was one of five brothers within a demanding and wealthy Philadelphia family that included a famous senator, Boies Penrose. Unlike his brother, Spencer stayed out of politics, seeking his destiny out west where he demonstrated a knack for mining and later real estate, eventually earning the nickname "Speck." Speck made his first fortune at Cripple Creek, Colorado. A century before that term was a catchy classic rock tune, Cripple Creek was the site of one of the last great gold rushes in Colorado—and nobody profited more on Cripple Creek than Speck.

Convention attendees will be immersed in Penrose's flavor for early 20th century grandeur. His idea for the hotel came from the opulent European properties, which he hoped to

recreate in the Rockies. To Speck, the man who built the Pikes Peak Highway, the Broadmoor was a personal trophy, an extravagance like no other in the region. He was an impeccably dressed, hard drinking socialite who enjoyed gathering with the well-to-do of Colorado Springs. His success did not come without a certain amount of vanity. Later in life, Penrose ordered a hand-painted eyeball to match the one he had just lost to an injury, complete with a bloodshot pattern to reflect his years of drinking.

Speck Penrose was also one of the country's first wine storage operators. During Prohibition, the hotel and various warehouses in the region stored the second largest private collection of alcohol in the country. Some of those bottles are still on display.

But Speck Penrose became much more than a partying playboy. He was the region's most generous philanthropist, starting a foundation that encouraged a healthy and progressive future for the people of Colorado. Also on the grounds of the Broadmoor were the first U.S. Olympic training facilities for hockey and ice skating, providing those sports with a boost to compete with the European countries where they originated. It all makes for an intriguing background, one as rich in history as it is in beauty. ❖