



Colorado Biographies



Spencer Penrose 1865-1939

- He was born November 2, 1865 in Philadelphia and nicknamed “Speck”.
- Speck came to Colorado Springs in December of 1892.
- With his friend, Charles Tutt, Penrose invested in Cripple Creek real estate, gold mines and Utah copper mines and mills, making them wealthy.
- In 1906, Penrose married a wealthy widow, Julie McMillan.
- During 1911 and 1916, the Penroses built the Pikes Peak Auto Highway and founded the Pikes Peak Hill Climb auto race.
- The Broadmoor Hotel opened in 1918. In 1926, Penrose built a zoo on

the slopes of Cheyenne Mountain for his animal collection. (Cheyenne Mountain Zoo)

- Between 1929 and 1938, Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo, Will Rogers Stadium, Broadmoor World Arena, Broadmoor Art Academy (Fine Arts Center) and the Will Rogers Shrine of the Sun came to be because of the work of Spencer and Julie Penrose.
- In 1937, the Penroses created the El Pomar Foundation, as a “charitable trust for the general well-being of the inhabitants of Colorado” with the money to be used in Colorado. Fountain Valley School was among the first organizations to benefit from the El Pomar Foundation.
- Spencer Penrose died in 1939 and was buried at the Shrine.

Great Resources on Spencer Penrose

- Bertozzi-Villa, Elena. *Broadmoor Memories: The History of the Broadmoor*. Missoula, MO: Pictorial Histories Publishing, c1993. pp. 32-128.
- Bueler, Gladys. *Colorado's Colorful Characters*. Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing, c1981. pp. 86-88.
- Sprague, Marshall. *One Hundred Plus: a Centennial Story of Colorado Springs*. Colorado Springs: Colorado Springs Centennial, Inc., c1971, pp. 29-42.
- Olson, Robert C. *Speck: The Life & Times of Spencer Penrose*. Lake City, CO: Western Reflections